

T H E

CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

Edited by E. RAYMOND TURNER.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. "Wastdale Head at Easter" By LEHMANN J. OPPENHEIMER	3
II. Ode on a Very Distant Prospect By A. GODLEY	23
III. A Fortnight in Skye By R. E. T.	25
IV. Climbs in the Tarentaise By W. E. CORLETT	32
V. Esgair Felen By G. B. BRYANT	43
VI. Welsh Notes By P. Y. G.	47
VII. Notes and Correspondence	48
VIII. Reviews	53
IX. New Publications	58
X. Committee Notice	59
XI. List of Office-Bearers	60

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THE

CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

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[No. I.

“WASTDALE HEAD AT EASTER.”

By LEHMANN J. OPPENHEIMER.

IT seems hardly credible that a village lying at the foot of some of the grandest hills in England, and only a few miles from crowded tourist centres, should be undisturbed by the accompaniments of a civilization to which so many of our most beautiful spots have fallen victims ; yet, thanks to the inconveniences of approach, Wastdale Head has escaped. As yet, no signboards point the way to the best scenery, the waterfalls are unenclosed, the mountain sides undesecrated by railways. Many a day have I spent rambling with an ecstatic sense of perfect freedom over Great Gable and Sca Fell, seeing no one from morning till dusk, and hearing only the far-away roar of the becks below or the shivering clatter of scree beneath my feet. Yet if anyone should go to Wastdale at Easter, hoping to enjoy the mountain solitude—“the sleep that is amongst the lonely hills”—though other and unexpected enjoyments may be thrust upon him, in his hope he is likely to be disappointed.

In my mind's eye I see a pedestrian, rejoicing in his escape from town after three months of work and worry, hurrying up from the coast to reach Wastdale in time for breakfast. As he nears the hotel, with appetite whetted by a night in the train and a dozen miles walk, he hears an unwonted hum of voices, and entering the yard he finds a group looking up at

and shouting to a man who seems stuck like a fly some ten feet up the rough wall of the barn, feeling with one hand amongst the open joints of the stonework for a hold higher up. He stares a little at these antics, but being on the wrong side of breakfast he wastes no time, and passes on to more important business. From the hall he catches sight of the innkeeper's daughter passing from the kitchen to the coffee-room with a huge dish of ham and eggs, and shouts out, "Good morning! can you give me a bedroom for a few days, and something to eat at once."

"I'm afraid not, sir," she says shyly, and glides past into the room.

"What! I can't have breakfast! What's the meaning of this?" he says to himself, following her in astonishment to the coffee-room door.

"As I'm alive, some day-trippers have forestalled me and taken possession of the place. What a rough lot they look—what a Pandemonium."

He waits to waylay the lassie as she returns with a pile of empty porridge plates, but meanwhile the kitchen door opens again, and a fine old fellow with the face and gait of a Cumberland shepherd appears.

"Ah! good day, Mr. Tyson! I wanted breakfast and a room for a few nights, but it seems doubtful whether my wants can be satisfied."

"Eh, sir! every room in the house was taken two or three weeks ago: there's some folks a-sleepin' i' the smoke-room, and some i' the barn—not a bed to spare nowheere, and they're full up at Burnthwaite too."

"How provoking—I've often been here in the height of the season and never had any difficulty in getting a room; I thought at this time of the year I should almost have the place to myself. Some trip from Barrow or Whitehaven, eh?"

"Eh, no: there's only a two three gentlemen fro' these parts: mostly they're from all over England—London and Oxford and Yorkshire and Manchester, and I dunno wheere all: they come up every Eastertide, a lot of 'em—a daft lot."

But there'll be a second breakfast presently—there are some hangin' about outside waitin' for it."

At this moment a wild-looking, unshaven individual enters, without collar or tie, and with knickerbockers well torn and patched : he gazes abstractedly at the traveller, and passes on into the coffee-room.

"Who in the world is that Bohemian?" our friend asks.

"Oh, he comes fro' some place down i' the South—they say he writes verses and plays, but I dunno much about that sort o' thing. An awfu' clever sort o' chap, but ye can never mak' out what he's drivin' at. There are some comin' out now ; they'll have finished, so if you're wantin' summat to eat you'd better get a seat afore some other body comes in."

Breakfast is proceeding merrily : the talk at the table is loud and jovial, for the majority in the room have met at least half of those present before, either here or at Pen-y-Gwryd or amongst the Alps, and have plenty of tales to tell and experiences to compare. The Bohemian combs his hair with his fingers before joining the company, which, however, seems hardly to expect such a work of supererogation from him. Only three very proper young men, with well starched collars and cuffs, turn and look up with wonder as he takes a vacated seat next to them, one dropping the lower lip slightly and another raising an eyeglass. But indeed, he is not the only unconventional figure at table. Most of the others wear jerseys or coarse flannel shirts without collars : some are breakfasting without their jackets, which are still at the fire recovering from the vicissitudes of the previous day. The only one whose attire can be called dainty is the Christ Church undergraduate. He wears a white flannel shirt, fastened by a silk cord with tassels, instead of a stud, and he has no waist-coat to hide the hardly visible white embroidery down the front. The patches on his jacket have been so carefully sewn on as to be inconspicuous. His watch is carried for safety in a small leathern pouch fastened to his belt, but he does not take the same care of an exquisite Greek cameo which he wears set in a gold ring of Venetian workmanship, for the

scars on the back of his hands shew that it has been often in peril of a too close acquaintance with the rocks. He and the Bohemian represent opposite tastes in dress, but, though extremes in appearance, they are extremes that in higher matters meet.

Much of the conversation at breakfast takes the form of speculation and prophecy. Various parties are inquiring how much the barometer has fallen and discussing whether the day will be better for rocks or snow, arêtes or gullies.

Presently the three faultlessly dressed ones retire. "Do you think those men are climbers?" the Bohemian asks loudly, looking round the room with affected doubt in his face, amidst roars of laughter. "I merely ask," he continues, "to acquire information, and seeing that they display some interest in the subject. One of them made some inquiries about the lunatic who was performing on the wall outside, meaning, I presume, our friend the Photographer doing the barn-door traverse."

"It's like you to call me names in that underhand way," replies the Photographer, "but we're in the same boat you know—'the lunatic, the lover and the poet,' as your friend says."

"Do I look like a lover?" the Bohemian asks with feigned simplicity.

"Oh, you're not going to entice me into flattering you by saying you look like a poet."

Several men now move off, laughing as they go. The room is gradually emptying. The Yorkshire party has been in earnest over breakfast, hardly stopping to talk, but the Christ Church man, though one of the first down, is still dallying with his knife and chatting with a member of the Alpine Club beside him.

"I must confess," the latter is saying, "that I like these little English climbing expeditions better in many ways than the Swiss ones. A good English breakfast and a night's rest at the back of it are delights to begin with. You go out into the fresh morning air readier to enjoy the mountains than after

having been rudely wakened at one or two in the morning, sitting down cold and half asleep to a roll and cup of coffee, and tramping for an hour or two along interminable moraines and glaciers by the feeble light of a candle."

"But then, think," replies the undergraduate, "of sitting down to breakfast at dawn amongst the snows; the solemnity and stillness of it all: the great Alps towering above in sunlight through the mists of the morning, to say nothing of the meat and wine and raisins and honey, tasting as food never tasted in an hotel."

"Oh, yes! I grant all that: I don't mean what I said quite seriously; but at the same time there are certain enjoyments connected with English climbing that you don't get amongst the Alps, and do you know, too, I think that whilst there isn't the hundredth part of the danger, the standard of difficulty is higher here."

"Oh, how can you say so?" the Christ Church man ejaculates.

"Well, of course I know that any of the English mountains could be climbed by a boy of six or seven if he took the easiest way, as people do amongst the Alps as a rule, but a different system prevails here; the difficulties are hunted for, and in misty weather often can't be found. You've been up the Grépon, haven't you?"

"Yes, I climbed it with our Oriel friend last summer."

"Well, there you have one of the stiffest Chamounix climbs, but it's hardly as difficult as the end gully on the Screes or Kern Knotts Crack or half-a-dozen other recognised ascents here."

"I'm afraid you have me in a corner now, for I was beaten by Kern Knotts Crack only yesterday; still I won't give in, because there are more than mere gymnastic difficulties in the Alps. No, to my mind the only great advantage that England has over Switzerland is the absence of the professional element."

"Well, as far as that goes you needn't take guides unless you wish."

"That may be all right for you after all your experience," replies the undergraduate, "I wouldn't like to attempt it; but there is a great charm about the compulsory reliance of two or three firm friends on each other here. I shall feel far more delight if we succeed in getting up the crack to-day by ourselves than if Simond or Burgener led the way."

How long the conversation will continue seems doubtful; the room is becoming deserted, and we will follow the deserters into the hall. In it stand three pairs of well-blackened shining boots, and some forty or fifty others streaming with oil; strong and heavy, the soles and heels completely surrounded by curiously shaped nails. All the men who can crush into the little standing room left are trying to discover their belongings; outside some are hammering fresh nails into gaps made the previous day, and on the stairs others are attempting to extricate their ropes from the many which wind up the staircase, strained tight round the newel posts, reminding one of Wordsworth's Yews—

"A growth
Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Up-coiling and inveterately convolved."

In groups of two or three the climbers stroll off with their ropes and ice-axes, and their pockets swollen with lunch. A couple of hours more, and the cliffs of Sca Fell and Great Gable will be ringing with voices, and the hotel will have resumed its wonted quietness. Our disappointed friend has departed with his knapsack to try for better luck at Rosthwaite, and the three tourists, attired in mackintoshes, are wandering along the road towards the lake.

"Well, I'm awfully glad to get away from those rowdy fellows," says the man with the eye-glass.

These tourists look wonderfully alike at the first glance; they have all such a monotonous air of conventional respectability about them, but their uniformity is merely superficial. The most sensitive and æsthetic of them is revelling in the scenery, and hoping in vain for some expression of appreciation from his companions. Half way down the lake they turn and

stand long looking back towards the head of the valley. "What a splendidly buttressed pyramid the Gable is," he says to them, "and just look at those clouds blowing along between its peak and those sharp rocky teeth just beneath it."

The bumptious little tourist puts up his eye-glass. "Yes, awfully jolly—like washing day, isn't it? That's where those fellows at the hotel must be: I asked one of them where that awful looking rock was that there are so many photographs of in the dining-room, and he told me it was up there. They'll be getting drenched in the cloud and seeing nothing: I'm blessed if I can imagine where the fun comes in: it can't be much of a lark fagging up those insane places in the wet."

"Brag, sir! merely brag—that, I have no doubt, is their enjoyment," adds the eldest of the three.

"Do you see that faint line across the mountain, lower down?" asks their more refined friend.

"Well, what of it?"

"That's the path Gray writes about in one of those letters that are so much ridiculed to-day. He tells about coming up Borrowdale under the guidance of someone who informed him that beyond Seathwaite all access was barred to prying mortals; that there was only a dreadful track, impassable except by the hardy dalesmen, and open to them but for a few weeks in the year. That is the track, and as far as I remember he speaks about the pass at the top as the abode of Chaos and Ancient Night."

"What rot! Why, the fellow we left at the hotel was going that way with quite a big knapsack: those old chaps talked a lot of nonsense about the hills: I don't think they believed what they wrote themselves: I guess they wanted to blow a bit about the terrible places they'd been to."

"I'm not so sure about that: mountains seem to exercise a very disturbing influence on our accurate observation of fact even now, and I believe they had a much greater effect in times past. I rather think our susceptibilities are getting blunted, to our great loss. Why have we come here now? Simply because we wanted something grander and more

impressive than the scenes round Derwentwater and Windermere: we have got so accustomed to the hills there that we begin to think them a little tame. Well, as far as I am concerned, I wish I could take Gray's place, enjoying all the luxuriant beauty of Keswick and Ambleside, and yet imagining the scenery there to be also savage and sublime, the roads 'only not perpendicular,' the cliffs impending and threatening to overwhelm. At least, I'm glad that the view before us satisfies my craving for grandeur, and that I haven't to risk my neck with those climbers in order to find it."

The elder tourist, somewhat uncommunicative as a rule, settles the matter by adding—"No one could find it in such company—men struggling to degenerate into the apes from which they have risen."

"How do you make that out?" asks the little man.

"Well, it is generally admitted that the hands and feet of infants are peculiarly adapted for climbing——"

"What's that got to do with it? You're going to prove we ought all to be climbers."

"My dear sir, as I was about to remark, these adaptations are vestigial; they indicate our ancestry: as we develop they become imperfect—the anthropoid ape in man tends to disappear; but those fellows at the hotel will not let it die; they attempt to return to a stage that is past."

"By Jove! I must play that card off on someone at dinner time. Oh! I say, rain again! What an infernal nuisance—let's turn and make for lunch."

All this and many other things I hear and see in imagination, as I plod with two friends up the breast of Lingmell, leaving conversation for flatter ground, but at last the shoulder of the hill is turned and the tourists forgotten as we stand gazing at the sunshine far away over the sea, and the solemn purple gloom of the Mosedale amphitheatre of mountains. The cliffs, whither we are bound, are still hidden from view

"In fleecy cloud voluminous enwrapped,"

but we can see the base of the great precipice, and that is enough to call up visions of the happy days we have spent on

it, and to make our hearts leap with joyful anticipation. A mile more of easy tramping up a grassy tongue between chattering becks, then a scramble up the scree-shoot that comes down from Lord's Rake, and we are at the foot of the cliff whose top is Sca Fell Pinnacle. Here we have a rest and a smoke, sitting where we can look up into Deep Ghyll, and watch the snow gleaming weirdly through the mist, high up the gully, like a phantom light between its dark, dripping walls.

At last we rouse ourselves to action, tie on the rope, sling the ice-axes over our wrists, and start clambering slowly round and up the base of the precipice into Steep Ghyll. Soon we are in the cloud, but the dampness is a trifle compared with the drenching we get from the rocks. We pull ourselves up on to a ledge, and the water trickles down both sleeves: we back up a narrow chimney, and are suddenly aware of a cold sensation about the patched part of our trousers, and finally we grow callous. Then comes some step cutting up the snow in Steep Ghyll, which we soon leave and work out again on to the face of the cliff as far as an almost isolated shelf, beyond which all further traversing seems impossible. Our only way now appears to be straight up, for the shelf ends abruptly and falls precipitously on all sides but the one by which we have reached it. A deep narrow cleft severs it from Sca Fell Pinnacle, and whether we look over the opposite edge or the one facing Deep Ghyll we can see nothing but perpendicular rocks beneath us descending into the mist. Ten or twelve feet above us, on the face of the main cliff itself, a fine looking chimney starts, though we don't feel sure that it leads to the top of the Pinnacle, and the rock on the opposite side of the cleft offers very few hand and foot holds by which to reach the chimney's foot. Instead of tackling it at once, we all three, finding the shelf just large enough, sit down on it with our backs to the difficulty, and for a while watch the cloud whirling round and below us. One of my companions is a strong, broad-shouldered, cautious fellow; he is appreciating the scene round our airy perch to the full, but he says nothing about it. The other is somewhat of a contrast. He is wiry and six foot

three high ; beside him I feel but a dwarf, and he has a reach long even in proportion to his height. It is a pleasure merely to watch him striding away over the mountains with his cap stuffed into his pocket and his face brimming over with delight. Whatever strikes him he says straight out, and often expresses for us what we all feel. As we sit on our perilous ledge, suddenly some huge dark object appears, moving steadily towards us. For a moment a shiver runs through us, then an exultant thrill, and my tall friend shouts out—" Oh, man ! how grand it is to be alive ! " The cloud is dispersing, and the vague shape of terror is resolving itself into the cliffs on the opposite side of Mickledore. A patch of blue sky follows, and presently there is sunshine on all the mountains round. Thin clouds form and trail and vanish again below us, and we hasten to get out of the shadow of the great cliff and into the warmth ourselves.

The difficulty proves by no means so serious as it looked. We steady the tall man as he reaches a high hand-hold on the opposite side of the cleft, and struggles into a place of security. Then we join him, give him a shoulder at the foot of the chimney, and follow him up it to the lower peak of the Pinnacle. Here we are in full view of the top, to which the Low Man is joined by an arête some fifty feet long, like an acute roof ridge tilted up at one end. This is the most sensational piece of the ascent, and at the same time the easiest. The ridge has to be crossed straddle-wise, one leg pointing down right into Steep Ghyll and the other into Deep Ghyll. Then comes a scramble over some broken rocks, and we are on the summit of the Pinnacle.

Here, in one of the grandest spots in England, with the snows and rocks of the Sca Fell chasms beneath us on either hand, a tumult of mountains round, and a distance of fertile valleys, glistening lakes and azure sea, our first thought is, sad to confess, of lunch. Pockets are soon emptied : bread and butter, potted meat, raisins, prunes, chocolate, crystallized ginger and brandy—a queer mixture, truly, and no doubt the three tourists lunching quietly at the hotel would have pitied

us as much as we pitied them. As I am spreading the meat on the bread and butter with my penknife, our tall friend says, "I wonder if either of you remember an old picture by Tenniel of a large modern plate-glass window, filled with tinned fruits and potted meats ; outside, Romeo, in antique garb, is looking wistfully at the nineteenth century grocer's stock, and below is the legend,

'An' if a man did need a poison now,

Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.'

However," he says, taking a large bite, "after your trouble in bringing the pot up that chimney, I'll do my duty at all risks. Here's to you, grand old pinnacle ! But bury that pot under a stone, you lazy chap, and pick up the silver paper."

"What ho !" shouts a familiar voice, and turning round we see the merry face of the Photographer appearing over the edge of the rocks on Sca Fell itself, followed rapidly by four others.

"Another first ascent ?" we shout back, inquiringly.

"Not to-day ; we've been in Moss Ghyll taking the direct finish ; none of the others had tried it. Which way have you come ? Steep Ghyll ? Grand fun along the arête, isn't it ? You know there's a new way now to the ledge below Slingsby's chimney ? O. G. found it out. Right up the angle of the cliff."

The Photographer's knowledge of the crags is most amazing—not only every climb, but every variation seems familiar to him. His party is a right jovial one, and finishing our lunch we descend from the Pinnacle to join it by the "Easy Way." "How are the mighty fallen." Before Haskett Smith made the first ascent, a shepherd was asked if he thought such a feat possible.

"Eh, mon !" he said, "nobbut a fleein' thing 'll ever get up theree." Now it is the "Easy Way," and which is the difficult one there is no telling for any length of time. Until six years ago the route by which we have just ascended held the place of honour, and now there is some doubt whether the impossible looking one which then displaced it has not fallen in its turn. Soon those anxious to make ascents in new ways

will have to adopt the tactics of an old hand at the game, who last year succeeded in climbing a famous boulder, near Wastdale, feet uppermost.

By the time we have descended from the Pinnacle another group of men has joined the Moss Ghyll party, and Sca Fell presents a lively scene. One of the Photographer's companions bursts into song, and the Photographer himself tells us all kinds of stories about famous climbers who have been here. My friends are reminded of Professor Wilson's doings on Sca Fell Pike, and suddenly start a wrestling match in his memory, the tall man being thrown.

At last we separate, and our party makes off for Mickledore Chimney. We drop over the top blocks and cautiously cut steps downwards in the hard snow and ice with which the gully is choked. Lower down the snow is softer, and the leader, steadied by the rope above, can kick out holes for the feet, and as we near the bottom we indulge in a glissade. This proves so intoxicating that the strong man of the party, after unroping, rushes some way up the chimney again and again to enjoy the exhilaration of the rapid descent. Time after time he plunges up the snow, each time going a little higher and whizzing down more rapidly, until at last he loses his balance and ungracefully rolls over on to the scree below, amidst the laughter of less energetic onlookers. After this he thinks it might be well to sit on Mickledore Ridge and watch other mountaineers for a while, so we lazily look on at the desperate but futile efforts of two men to get up the first few feet of Collier's Climb. We tried the same thing ourselves for an hour the day before, so we take an envious interest in their struggles, and, our vanity being soothed by their defeat, we go round to shew them a way of circumventing the difficulty, invented by the Photographer.

On our way back to the hotel the tall man insists on our trying a few first ascents of our own on some fine looking boulders, and by the time Wastdale Head is reached, we are warm and damp and dirty and hungry enough to think of nothing but cold water, dry clothes and dinner.

Several parties have returned, and are lolling about in the hall waiting for the sound of the gong. As we sit down on the stairs to take off our boots the Bohemian walks in with his companions, remarking to the company at large, "'My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh faileth of fatness.' 'Bring me a cup of sack!' Good Lord! what two fools belong to those laths in the hat rack? Bamboo alpenstocks!—tin ferrules tacked on to look like spikes!—spiral coil of summits burnt in and varnished at half a franc apiece——"

"Don't talk so loud, old chap! they're just in the smoke room round the corner."

"Grindelwald, 3468 feet," the Bohemian shouts, "a noble peak to start with—Wengern Alp, 6184—how I can see them ascending by the cog-wheel railway—Pilatus—Righi—Stanserhorn——" we hear him proclaiming down below as we make for our rooms to prepare for dinner.

At last the gong sounds, and the dining-room is rapidly filled. With what eager expectant faces all the company await the soup—everyone has plenty to tell of what the day has brought forth, but talk is not free until the first course is over: then the ring of voices rises, and dinner slowly proceeds to the accompaniment of a merry clamour of tongues.

The Bohemian has donned a tie and combed his hair, and the three faultlessly attired tourists begin to look on him as a fellow man. He first addresses my neighbour across the table. "Pray, have you seen two most egregious swells with lofty bamboo sticks?"

"Oh, those men with the marvellous alpenstocks? Yes, I saw them leaving the hotel in a trap shortly before dinner."

"Aha! I am glad of it—their accent was of 'Stratford-atté-Bowe,' and I hold with old Christopher North that although a cat may look at a king, a Cockney should not be allowed to look at a mountain."

"I suppose there were lively times at Wastdale when Christopher North descended on it," says the literary tourist, anxious to get on to safer ground. "I once read an account of his pranks in a book of Edwin Waugh's."

"You observe that grey-haired old boy making yawning gaps in a leg of mutton? A Liverpool doctor—used to come here forty years ago, and knew Will Ritson well. Ask him. 'Verily,' he will say, 'the former days were better than these.' 'Foolhardy gymnastics,' he calls our climbing, though he tramps all over the hills to watch us. If you want to know about Wilson and Tyson and Ritson and the olden times, ask *him*."

"What sort of a man was Ritson?"

"Behold his portrait at the end of the room, with his clay pipe and mug of beer; the man who boasted that Wastdale had the highest mountain, deepest lake, smallest church, and biggest liar in England."

"Indeed!" remarks the tourist, "I've heard before of the first three, though the third is disputed, but never of the fourth. Who was he?"

"Why, Ritson himself, of course, while he lived, and though he is dead, Wastdale still maintains her supremacy. You will be convinced after dinner when you have heard the stories that will be told—climbing with teeth and eyelashes—sticking on to seamless perpendicular cliffs by the mere friction of tweed trousers——"

"Well, after looking at the photographs round these walls I am ready to believe almost anything. By the way, you yourself seem to have been trying to stick on to a cliff by the friction of the back of your hand: I hope you haven't injured yourself."

"A mere scrape—I foolishly jammed it in a crack—the smart is trifling, and 'the labour we delight in physics pain.'"

"That was not what you said at the time," interrupts the gentleman on the other side of the Bohemian.

"I probably said 'Damn,'" he replies.

"I would have respected you more if you had: as far as I remember you said—'Verily my flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen, and my bones that were not seen stick out.'"

"You probably don't remember how that most apt utterance was followed by a noise as of 'the crackling of thorns under a pot.'"

"Oh! I admit that we were not very sympathetic, but it was too ridiculous to watch your pretended indifference to the scrape until you had got out your inevitable quotation."

After this interruption the tourist continues—"How appropriately, from your point of view, this room is decorated. You have photographs of all your climbs round the walls to refer to, and at the end you have Ritson, whom, I suppose, you would claim as a kindred spirit, to remind you of the days that are past——"

"Yes, and you have a card forbidding smoking in this room at the other end, which reminds you that to-day is not as the days that are past, and is quite inappropriate from my point of view: but you'll see we'll remove the obnoxious document after dinner," the Bohemian adds.

The unsociable elder tourist now hastens to get a word in. "While you are talking of appropriate decorations," he interjects, "don't forget the portrait hanging in the place of honour, looking down between those needles and cliffs and gullies like the corpse at an Egyptian feast: a powerful sermon, but you are all heedless of what it——"

"Sir, will you dare to say that if the Professor could come back to us now he would not approve——"

"No, no, no—I don't want you to take it that way: I know he had the climbing fever like all the rest of you. I spoke with an eye on my friend here: I am afraid he is being seduced by the prevailing enthusiasm, and I wished to remind him that there is 'mountain gloom' as well as 'mountain glory.'"

The Bohemian regards him with scorn, saying—

"'Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.'"

Dinner over, the company is scattered about the hotel, yet every room seems crowded. Some remain in the dining-room discussing the possibility of new ascents with the aid of the large photographs on the walls. In the smoke-room the sofa and chairs are all occupied, and several men are lying on the floor round the fire, leaning against other people's legs, renew-

ing the adventures of the day and garnishing Swiss experiences of the summer before with lively flights of imagination. The veterans have a stock of stories about their guides, and every exploit recounted suggests to some one else another still more thrilling, humorous or improbable. As coffee is passed round, and the room fills with smoke, criticism slumbers: the narratives become more imaginative, and relate to far off periods: jokes from Leslie Stephen and Mummery pass as original, and raise a laugh for the hundredth time, and gradually the company settles down into a blissful dreamy state, thinking lazily of past victories and defeats that rise and pass and fade with the flickerings of the fire.

Meanwhile, the more energetic may be found in the billiard-room, shouting and laughing as the ball rebounds or flies off the table to the imminent danger of someone's head. "By Jove, what a game! No wonder we couldn't play this afternoon," the bumptious little tourist remarks to his laconic friend, "the ball must be covered with notches." The table is being used for a game of fives, and the partners are rushing wildly backwards and forwards, or into their opponents. The Bohemian stops to take off his coat—"Not that I love warmth less, but freedom more." And now, yet oftener, the ivory ball flies off and adds to its many dinges, until at last a collision between it and an enthusiastic spectator suggests a change. "Let's have the passage of the billiard table leg." All congregate round a corner of the table to watch one after another make the attempt. Only the Gymnast succeeds. He begins by sitting on the table, despite the warning notice above him of a half-crown fine for such an offence; he lets himself down gently, and, suddenly twisting round, he braces his legs firmly against the cross-bars underneath; from above nothing can now be seen of him but one hand clutching the cushion, but all are watching down below to see that he does not touch the ground. After a struggle his other hand and his head appear on the opposite side of the table leg, and a moment afterwards he is sitting breathless on the table once more, amidst loud cheers. Then the respective advantages of tall and short men

in climbing are discussed, and the heights and reaches of all in the room are marked on the wall. Next the billiard-room traverse is suggested, but no one responds. After much pressing the Gymnast consents to try. He takes off his coat and shoes, and placing his hands on the edge of the billiard table, he walks backwards up the wall to within a yard of the ceiling. Then he moves along the table and wall simultaneously with hands and feet, avoiding the framed chromolithographs as well as he may. With an enormous stride he reaches from one wall to another at the corner of the room, and is just saved from upsetting some half emptied glasses of whisky on the mantleshef by the terrified shouts of the owners. The next corner is easier, and in the middle of the third wall he can rest his legs awhile on the window ledge. The fourth wall is more difficult again : it contains a large recess, too deep to reach from the billiard table, and only a foot lower than the ceiling. All round the angle of this he must pass before he arrives at the door, which is set diagonally across the corner of the room. This is the *mauvais pas* of the performance. The Gymnast cautiously brings one foot down until his toe rests on the latch hold ; then, supporting himself from the corner of the billiard table with one hand, he reaches the top of the door lintel with the other, lets go with the first, swings round in the opening, and catches the lintel on the opposite side also. Here he gets the first rest for his arms by jamming himself tightly in the opening with his back and legs. To complete the traverse in the orthodox way he has still to work along the passage as far as to the smoke room, and this, after an uncomfortable rest, he quickly does with back against one wall and feet against the other, finally opening the smoke room door and descending to *terra firma*. The tales and visions of the company there assembled are interrupted by cheers, and those who have missed the performance unreasonably clamour for a repetition. An old hand insidiously suggests that there are three variations of the move into the doorway, and the Gymnast is dragged back once more to try them. Then there are tests of balance, of wriggling through narrow chair backs, of hanging

on the rope and lifting people with it, and the evening wears away in attempting or watching all kinds of mad antics.

Outside, in the cold clear starlight, the literary tourist, having deserted his two companions, is walking up and down with the Oxford man, looking up in reverent silence at the dark silhouette of Great Gable, or discussing how best to enter into the spirit of the mountains.

"My own experience," the undergraduate says, "leads me to think that only by spending the night alone on the fell tops can you fully enjoy the grandeur and solemnity and the weird mystery of the mountains."

"If you feel so, why do you desecrate them by climbing about in their most secret recesses with those noisy fellows inside? I myself have at times felt a very strong inclination to climb amongst the rocks, but I have always been deterred by the thought of approaching them in such company—and perhaps by the danger that everyone talks about. I would like to go alone, but I am too afraid of getting into a fix."

"Well, do you know, you cannot have every kind of pleasure at once: there are joys of exertion and victory and of jovial company as well as of meditation amongst the lonely hills. As to the danger, I am afraid a very exaggerated idea of it prevails. Many people have certainly been killed on these fells, and I would not advise you to go rock climbing alone, but no serious accident has yet happened in the Lake District to any properly roped party, and a great amount of climbing is done here. I remember when I was a boy hearing that not half-a-dozen people had ever reached the top of the famous Pillar in Eunerdale; that there was only one way, and it was necessary to start with a particular foot first, for if you failed to do this you arrived at a difficult corner in such a position as not to be able to advance or retire. Well, of course this was all nonsense: there were at least six routes known even then, and plenty of people climbed it. Now there are nine principal ways and many variations: I should think over a hundred ascents are made every year, many of them by the long and difficult routes on the north face, so you may feel

assured that the danger is not so considerable. Will you come there with us to-morrow? I am sure you would enjoy it. The views are grand; every muscle will be called into action; ingenuity has to be exercised continually to overcome obstacles, and I promise it will make you feel alive in every fibre. But my enthusiasm for climbing is running away with me. You see I'm a believer in Scott—

‘Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.’”

“Well, many thanks for your invitation: if my companions will allow me to desert them, I will go with you gladly. Merely as a lover of Wordsworth, I would like to see the Pillar.”

“Yes, but don't come in a Wordsworthian frame of mind: if your brain is pre-occupied with that ‘something far more deeply interfused,’ you won't do your share of looking after the rope. But I see candle flickerings in some of the upper rooms, which means bed-time, I suppose. I warn you, by the way, that you won't find the clothes you sent to be dried, outside your door in the morning. You'll have to hunt for your stockings amongst some four dozen pairs hanging over the stair rail, and someone else is sure to have run off with your underclothing by mistake—it's one of the amusements of the place. Good night, and good luck on the morrow!”

While writing these notes of my impressions of a Wastdale Easter, the joy of many visits to the place returned to me, and lightened the dreariness of Manchester for a while, but, in an evil hour, I shewed them to those who know, and they have rudely disturbed my tranquil enjoyment. My tall friend reminds me that my climbs with him were in the broiling heat of summer; asks me if I don't remember how we tramped over from Keswick; how some Oldham trippers rattled past us in a waggonette, shouting out, as they caught sight of our ropes—“Eh, sithee! they're goin' a 'angin' sumbody;” how elated we were when one of our heroes, who has taken part in half the first ascents in the district, also overtook us on his bicycle, and got off to shake hands, and to wish he were free

to go along with us. He reminds me also of the bilberries we found on our way up the north side of the Pillar, when the heat of the day had parched our throats, and of the wonderful stride he managed to take in getting up Collier's climb.

My brother, too, says that I went up Sca Fell Pinnacle with him, and not with the tall man; that the three tourists and many of the incidents belong to the year before, and, above all, that I haven't made the people half jolly enough.

This cannot be denied, and I begin to remember myself that I have described the snow in the gullies from a still earlier Easter, when the Engineer was kind enough to initiate me into the mysteries of the game. Truly, I seem to have got into hopeless confusion.

But, after all, why should I be bound down by fact? Why should I omit incidents, typical of the place and season, because they happened a mere year or more too soon? From a higher standpoint than that of correctness of detail my account is true, and I would fain hope that some fellow-climbers, reading these notes of what I have most vividly retained of the delights of Eastertide at Wastdale Head, may be reminded of their own experiences there, and live them over again in memory.

The time passes all too quickly. For barely a week the overflowing hotel resembles topsy-turveydom, and the hills are dotted with pigmies. Then comes a sudden change. The climbers drive or tramp off. Once again the hotel is left to hardy pedestrians and lovers of quietness, disturbed only by occasional coaches bringing people up from Seascale for the day. Once again the mountains resume their lonely spell. Cragsmen will come at times, but their manners will be more reserved. Tourists will appear at breakfast, wearing cuffs and ties without exposing themselves to derision, and may even hire ponies and guides to Sca Fell Pike without being looked on contemptuously.

But the climber will find delight at Wastdale, whether he go in or out of season, and will be puzzled to decide whether he enjoys most the wild seclusion at the one time or the outlandish life and good fellowship at the other.

ODE ON A VERY DISTANT PROSPECT.

By A. GODLEY.

IN the steamy, stuffy Midlands, 'neath an English summer sky,
When the holidays are nearing with the closing of July,
And experienced Alpine stagers and impetuous recruits
Are renewing with the season their continual disputes—

Those inveterate disputes

On the newest Alpine routes—

And inspecting the condition of their mountaineering boots :

You may stifle your reflections, you may banish them afar,
You may try to draw a solace from the thought of "Nächstes Jahr"—
But your heart is with those climbers, and you'll feverishly yearn
To be crossing of the Channel with your luggage labelled "Bern,"

Leaving England far astern

With a ticket through to Bern,

And regarding your profession with a lordly unconcern !

They will lie beside the torrent, just as you were wont to do,
With the woodland green around them and a snowfield shining through :
They will tread the higher pastures, where celestial breezes blow,
While the valley lies in shadow and the peaks are all aglow—

Where the airs of heaven blow

'Twixt the pine woods and the snow,

And the shades of evening deepen in the valley far below :

They will scale the mountain strongholds that in days of old you won,
They will plod behind a lantern ere the rising of the sun,
On a "grat" or in a chimney, on the steep and dizzy slope,
For a foothold or a handhold they will diligently grope—

On the rocky, icy slope

(Where we'll charitably hope

That the aid they get is Moral from the presence of a rope) :

They will dine on mule and marmot, and on mutton made of goats,
They will face the various horrors of Helvetian table d'hotes :
But whate'er the paths that lead them, and the food whereon they fare,
They will taste the joy of living, as you only taste it there,
 As you taste it Only There
 In the higher, purer air,
Unapproachable by worries and oblivious quite of care !

Place me somewhere in the Valais, 'mid the mountains west of Binn,
West of Binn and east of Savoy, in a decent kind of inn,
With a peak or two for climbing, and a glacier to explore,—
Any mountains will content me, though they've all been climbed before—
 Yes ! I care not any more
 Though they've all been done before,
And the names they keep in bottles may be numbered by the score !

Though the hand of Time be heavy : though your ancient comrades fail :
Though the mountains you ascended be accessible by rail :
Though your nerve begin to weaken, and you're gouty grown and fat,
And prefer to walk in places which are reasonably flat—
 Though you grow so very fat
 That you climb the Gorner Grat
Or perhaps the Little Scheideck,—and are rather proud of that :
 Yet I hope that till you die
 You will annually sigh
For a vision of the Valais with the coming of July,
For the Oberland or Valais and the higher, purer air,
And the true delight of living, as you taste it only there !





VIEW FROM SGURR DEARG.

*From a photo. by G. P. ABRAHAM,
KESWICK.*

A FORTNIGHT IN SKYE.

By R. E. T.

IT may perhaps be of interest to the readers of the *Climbers' Club Journal* to have some account of a most enjoyable fortnight spent in the Cuchullin Hills, from May 26th to June 10th of the present year. The party consisted of Messrs. C. J. Slade, G. R. Slade, A. T. Fraser, and myself. We made Sligachan Inn our headquarters.

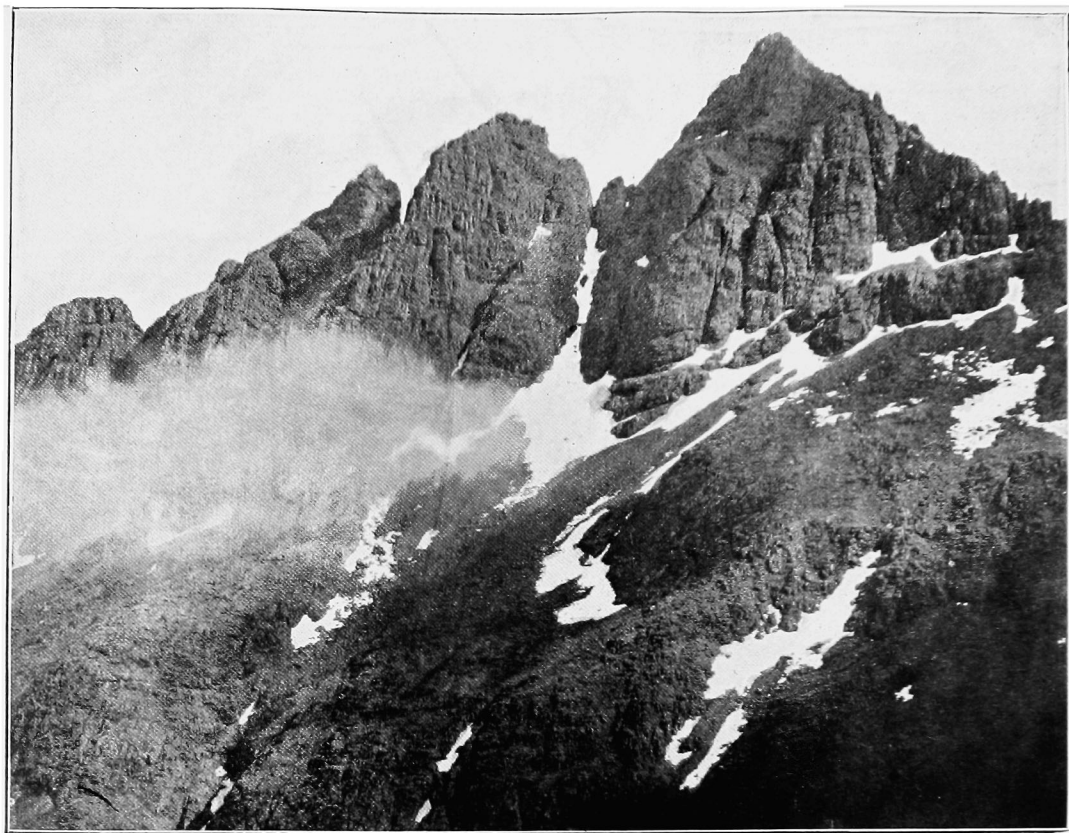
The fact of the ground being new to all of us necessitated our finding our own way, and making our own mistakes, thus rendering the expedition all the more instructive and interesting.

There is something peculiarly fascinating in wondering "Where is it?" and "Will it go?" as opposed to the "This is it:" and "How ought it to be done?" of Cumberland or any other well-known district. The Cuchullins have not been the subject of much climbing literature. There is still ample opportunity for exploration, and many climbs remain unclimbed, simply for lack of climbers. The mountains of Skye may be placed somewhere midway between the hills of Cumberland and the vast ranges of the Alps. Our first view of that beautiful arête of the Sgurr-nan-Gilleán—a long black-toothed ridge standing out against the evening sky, its couloirs of snow disappearing below into a thick white band of hanging mist—was one that even in Switzerland would have left a lasting impression.

The chief distinction between the climbing in Cumberland and in Skye is, that whereas in the former district you generally have to hunt for your climb, in the latter every mountain is a true peak, and there is no easy way up—that is to say, not too easy. There being but scanty hotel accommodation in the island, it is desirable, and, in order to reach some parts, almost necessary, to camp out.

Given good weather, nothing could be more pleasant ; but, with bad weather—and, as we discovered, it *can* be bad in Skye—it is correspondingly unpleasant.

We found Mr. Pilkington's map, corrected and enlarged from the Ordnance Survey, exceedingly useful. On May 28th, C. J. Slade led us up the Sgurr-nan-Gillean by the north-east or five pinnacle arête. This is a climb of sustained and varied interest, and it took us five hours from the base of the first pinnacle to the summit. We afterwards found we had started east of the usual route, thereby letting ourselves in for a more difficult piece of work than we encountered during the whole of the remainder of the climb. We descended about half way down the south-west ridge, and thence by a snow couloir which just permitted of a standing glissade. May 29th. Went to camping ground in Harta Corrie, and next morning crossed the Drium-nan-Ramh ridge into Coir-uisg, pitching our camp at the head of Loch Coruisk. Rain began about 2 p.m., forcing us to abandon the camp. Walked back to Sligachan by Camasunerie, getting in about 11 p.m. At 10 a.m., on June 1st, we set out from the hotel in company with Messrs. Wordsworth and Levi, who had kindly volunteered to shew us the way to a certain big gully in the Corrie na Creiche, known as the waterpipe ; by no means a misnomer. This gully leads up to the summit of the peak on the end of the north-west spur, stretching from the three-peaked Bideindruim-nan-Ramh. We started from Sligachan by the path leading to Glen Brittle, striking off to the left after crossing the watershed. This brought us to the foot of our climb at mid-day. Having lunched, shortly after one o'clock we attacked the first pitch, consisting of either a chimney on the left or a nice traverse on the right wall. C. J. Slade and I took the traverse, the rest went up the chimney. We then found ourselves on a loose stony platform, where we roped. A second chimney followed ; short, wet, and quite interesting. Next came what is generally known as the 80 ft. pitch, which had never before been climbed direct. Former parties had evaded the difficulty by traversing out to the right, passing a



THE FIVE PINNACLE ARÊTE OF SGURR-NAN-GILLEAN.

*From a photo. by G. P. ABRAHAM,
KESWICK.*

small mountain ash tree, and cutting into the gully again above the chimney. Our party having congregated well under the overhanging rock to be out of the way of falling stones, the leader started upwards.

The first 40 feet consist of a very wet and perpendicular chimney, in the lower part rather too narrow to chimney with comfort, and the hand and foot holds are chiefly conspicuous by their absence. At the moment when you begin to wonder if your wind will last the struggle, the left hand grasps a welcome ledge, where you can fix yourself with comparative comfort, and give a sigh of relief (?) as you look up and realize that the hardest part is yet to come. The second part consists of an overhanging and very wet chimney, at the top, curving slightly to the right. Like the first part, this is also about 40 feet in height. The final step out on to the scree shoot above is rather sensational. At about 2.30 p.m. we halted for food, continuing about 3.15. The next obstacle was a short, wet chimney, which gave no trouble. This led up to what is known as the "Jammed Stones" pitch, consisting of several huge blocks jammed at varying intervals, one above the other, with very steep beds of fallen rock between. Then came rather an open piece of gully, with loose rock lying at a high angle, to be scrambled over. Above this came a choice of three short, steep chimneys, all rather difficult. We selected the left hand one, and climbed it by throwing the rope over a projection, and coming up with its assistance. Then followed a long series of stone shoots, which required extreme care, as the stones lay at an exceedingly high angle, and fell on the slightest provocation. The next obstacle of note was a long, narrow, and very wet chimney on the left, ending in an awkward traverse out and over to the right. It was nearly midnight when the tail of our party came over this portion, and it was by no means rendered more inviting by the bad light. This being accomplished, all that remained were four short pitches over large jammed rocks, which, however, took us a long time, owing to the darkness and the looseness of the rock. We emerged on the top at about 1 a.m. After a short

rest on the summit, we descended by the arête, returning along the same path by which we had come the previous day, and at 4.45 a.m. we reached the hotel. Our excellent hostess, Mrs. Sharp, had left us a most luxurious supper, to which we did ample justice, and for which we were duly grateful. We had been absent from the hotel about 18½ hours, over twelve of which were spent in the gully. I think the time taken is fully accounted for by the size of our party, and the great care required in passing over loose and rotten stone shoots, lying at very high angles. A good party of three should not take more than five or six hours.

June 3rd being very wet, we spent a quiet day. The buttresses of the stone bridge over the river can be recommended for an off day. June 4th. Still very wet. Some small gullies on the west shore of the loch, about half-an-hour from Sligachan, were explored by a portion of our party. June 5th. Still wet. About 11 a.m., C. J. Slade, G. R. Slade, and I, started for Loch Coruisk to fetch our tents, which we had left there on May 30th. On the Druim-nan-Ramh ridge, I got separated from the others in a dense mist, and later on lost myself. I found my way back to Sligachan about 7.30 p.m. Having dined, I returned as far as Harta Corrie, where I met the other two carrying the baggage. They were exceedingly glad to see me, as they had brought the tents and two rucksacs over from Loch Coruisk, and the packages being soaked through, were about three times their ordinary weight. We got in about 11 p.m.

June 6th. G. R. Slade and I, with Messrs. Wordsworth and Levi, started about mid-day for the gully between the third and fourth pinnacle of Sgurr-nan-Gilleann. We reached the snow couloir leading up to our climb at 3.30, and kicked steps up the snow. Levi took the lead for the first pitch, which was easy, consisting of a series of short, open chimneys, and rough scrambles in the gully. We then came to two longer chimneys, deeply cut, and very wet and mossy. The leader, by traversing a little to the right, avoided the first; he then anchored himself in a mossy niche, where the second man

joined him. From this position it was obvious that the second chimney, if taken direct, would be impossible ; so Wordsworth and I traversed out below the two leaders, and ascended an interesting chimney on their right, over several jammed stones, and finally over a traverse, which put me in a position to rope the others up the difficult pitch. This brought us to within about 25 feet of the top of our gully. Here, however, we were forced to turn back, as the only exit we could find was an exposed bit of work over steep rock, which was so rotten that we preferred not to attempt it. We returned down the chimney by our previous route. The inn was reached at 9 p.m.

June 7th. We left the inn at 11 a.m. for the Tooth of Bhasteir. Making straight for Sgurr-nan-Gilleann, we passed directly under that peak, traversing to the right and upwards until we struck the ridge below the tooth. Here we lunched. At 3.20, G. R. Slade took the lead and attacked the west face. The climb commenced with a horizontal traverse from the col, of about 40 feet along the west face. Then followed a vertical ascent of about 14 feet to a small recess with sloping floor, affording good holding ground. Up to this point the rock work was easy, but sensational. From the recess, a traverse of about 30 feet followed, past a large perched block, which in turn was succeeded by 20 feet up a nearly vertical face, with hand-holds no more than sufficient, and commencing over a projecting corner. Here good anchorage was reached, and the remainder of the climb consisted of about 25 feet of steep crack, leaning over to the right. Upon getting out on to the top, a scramble of about 50 feet brought us to the highest point on the "Tooth." We came down the south ridge of the "Tooth" into Lota Corrie, and thus into Harta Corrie, and home by Glen Sligachan, reaching the inn at 10 p.m. The ascent of the "Tooth" by the west face is a very sensational piece of work, and was admirably led by G. R. Slade. The descent into Lota Corrie is also interesting, and the view was superb.

June 8th. Leaving the inn at 9.10 a.m., we drove to Brittle House, arriving there at 11.40. At 11.50, we left the farm for

the "Inaccessible Pinnacle" on Sgurr-Dearg. Had lunch by the small loch at the head of Corrie Labain. Struck up the edge of the scree, hitting the ridge to the east of the "Pinnacle." Followed the arête, which we found very rotten and loose, to the west ; traversed to the right hand of the summit of Sgurr-Dearg ; descended a chimney, and rounded a corner to the left,



THE BHASTEIR TOOTH.
(NORTH FACE.)

From a photograph by G. P. ABRAHAM, KESWICK.

which brought us on to the col below the east arête of the "Pinnacle." Of the "Inaccessible," I can only say that we found it eminently accessible. Several of us led the west, or difficult side, and C. J. Slade came up the east arête alone,

by which route we all descended. To do it justice, however, I must say that it is a most fascinating piece of rock, the long east arête being particularly attractive, with its razor-like edge and sheer drop on either side. Whilst we were on the summit, and also during the descent, we were lucky enough to see the " Brocken Spectre " several times.

It took us five hours from Brittle House to the summit of the " Pinnacle," and about two hours coming down. We then drove back to Sligachan, getting in about 11 p.m.

I should mention, before closing this article, that for an off day there exist several very interesting little problems in the shape of chimneys, in the " Eagle's Nest Crag," a short hour's walk south-east from Sligachan Inn. There is one in particular whose exit may perhaps remind future climbers of " the camel and the eye of a needle." I must also say that our kind hostess, Mrs. Sharp, and her family, spared no pains to make us comfortable.



CLIMBS IN THE TARENDAISE.

By W. E. CORLETT.

To those who would see some of the beauties of the Alps and yet avoid the now crowded neighbourhoods of Zermatt, Zinal, the Oberland and Engadine districts, it cannot be too strongly recommended that they should make their first acquaintance with the Alps in the Tarentaise.

Lying between the valleys of the Isère and the Doron de Salins and embracing some of the highest mountains in France this district presents Alpine scenery of the highest order, and a variety of aspects such as few other districts in the Alps can show. Yet, strange to say, it is very little known to the English climber or tourist, and, in proportion to its accessibility, is undeservedly the most neglected portion of the Alps.

If the Inns in the Tarentaise were as dirty and rough as in 1859 and 1860 when Mr. William Mathews, Junior, made many of the first ascents of the neighbourhood, or as they are still in some parts of the Maritime Alps, it would be easily explained, but at both Pralognan and at Val d' Isère there are now Inns where good accommodation can be obtained at much lower prices than in more fashionable centres.

As a subject for my article I have chosen two ascents made in this beautiful neighbourhood, in the hope that perhaps some members of our Club may feel tempted at no distant date to visit a district where Nature has certainly been lavish in all that tends to make a country picturesque.

THE GRAND BEC DE PRALOGNAN.

In the early portion of the Jubilee week of 1897 my friend M. K. Smith and I found ourselves at Moutiers, the terminus of the Paris, Lyons and Mediterranean Railway, en route

to Pralognan. As a rule the climber finds Moutiers a warm spot, but on this occasion we arrived chilled to the bone, which was not very surprising considering the thermometer read only 40° Fahr. in the shade. It is only 16 miles further to Pralognan, and when we arrived at our old haunt we found the season the latest on record, deep snow extending almost into the valley, and climbing looked entirely out of the question for many days to come.

But on Jubilee day came a wonderful and welcome change, the sun burst forth in all its glory, and in a day or two made a wonderful alteration in the scene, and, after a couple of days spent in training walks we decided to cross to Le Bois, a hamlet on the north side of the Grand Bec, for the purpose of making the ascent of that peak.

The magnificent roads made by Napoleon III. in 1860 constitute one of the features of the Tarentaise, and, as we strolled down the well-kept and gently-graded road leading to our destination, we could not help thinking of the contrast it afforded to the stony and roadless wildernesses of Dauphiné. A short cut, some two miles through the forest, can be made to Le Bois, and as the day was extremely hot, and the shade more than grateful, we gladly followed that route.

At 4 a.m. on Saturday, the 26th June, we left the Hotel Ruffier, crossed the stream which comes down from the Becca Motta Glacier, and were soon plodding up the steep and broken ground lying at the foot of the Grand Bec. The local description as to the route to be followed to the base of the Peak being extremely vague, we of course went a long way round, but in some three hours or so we found ourselves traversing the Glacier to the north of our mountain, and noticed with some concern the extremely corniced condition of its ridges and the generally bad state of the snow.

It is exceedingly difficult to describe the appearance of a mountain without the aid of a draughtsman, but our Peak from where we stood appeared somewhat like—though on a much bigger scale—Crib Goch, as viewed from near Pen-y-Pas. The face was too steep and in too bad condition to be attempted.

The north ridge with two or three tempting pinnacles certainly looked none too easy, and, as the east ridge had been climbed before, we decided to adopt that route. For some time we cut straight up the face of the mountain, but as the slope became steeper and ice began to show itself, we bore off to the left and hit the ridge some 600 or 700 feet above the Glacier. From here the ridge ought to have been easy, but bad snow in large quantities makes even easy places difficult, and it was only by using the utmost care that we could slowly make our way along it, and mid-day had come and gone ere we reached the summit after cutting our way through a troublesome snow cornice which overhung the arête and extended about 300 yards towards the top.

The Grand Bec is 11,165 feet high, and standing out as an outlier of the main chain, of which the Grande Casse is the monarch the view from it is one of the finest in the Alps. But, while admiring the view, we could not help noticing that the sun was not shining quite so brilliantly as during the morning, and certain ragged and ominous looking clouds were seen fast gathering on all the distant mountains. A grander spectacle can scarcely be imagined than a thunderstorm when viewed from a snug hotel in the valley, or from a club hut, but the climber as a rule prefers to be off the summit of his mountain before the warring elements are let loose, and we were not long in packing up our sacks and preparing to depart.

Our route up had not been a pleasant one, and we thought that we might find an easy descent on to the Glacier to the east of our Peak, and thence on to the Vanoise track and home, but we found the snow too treacherous to be trusted, so we hastened back to the summit, and after a hurried consultation decided to attempt the descent by the south face, which, though being far from easy, was fairly free from snow and had the merit of taking us into the valley leading to Pralognan. Short of time as we were, we could not help admiring the awe-inspiring spectacle of the storm raging all round us, though we well knew that before long we would ourselves be experiencing the fury of the elements. We had scarcely

left the summit, when all the winds of heaven seemed to beat down upon us. Hail and snow fell incessantly, and though we knew that on no account must we delay, we had at times to cling to insecure supports in order to prevent ourselves being blown away bodily. How it thundered and lightened! How the hail streamed down the rocks, and smote us on the face and on our bare hands, while the first man, having carefully negotiated difficult bits with the aid of the rope, gently entreated the last man to hurry up. But certainly Providence had a care for us on this occasion, and although we had to descend very steep and almost smooth rocks, and cross snow gullies filled with loose, incoherent snow resting on ice, we found ourselves some $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours later on the snow at the south foot of our Peak, safe and sound with the exception of finger tips, knees and garments somewhat the worse for wear.

After congratulating ourselves on our escape from what might have been a very unhappy experience we hurried down the valley to the south of the Point de la Vuzelle, and, after descending some 2000 feet, sat down on a rocky knoll by the side of a beautiful green tarn, and admired the magnificent view before us. The thunderstorm had just ceased, the sun was again shining, and Nature looked its loveliest. Behind us lay a glorious corrie walled round by magnificent cliffs, down which we had descended; in front of us lay the Pralognan Valley, some 3000 feet below looking most beautiful, and, amid the murmur of the torrents, could be faintly heard the tinkle of the cow bells from the meadows below. Down in the valley almost at our feet lay our hotel with the smoke lazily rising from its roof, and, as we had been out 13 hours with but little to eat we thought of the good dinner and the ease we intended to enjoy that evening. Somewhat foolishly we threw the remains of our provisions into a rapid torrent foaming on its downward course, and made preparations for our departure. We crossed the stream, and with some difficulty followed a track which ran downward, but after a time it lost itself on a wilderness of bare limestone

rocks, so we followed the stream at some little distance. After a short time we came to a forest, through which we forced our way, but finding the ground falling somewhat steeply we made for a huge boulder which had fallen from the cliff of the Pointe de la Vuzelle. From this point of vantage we discovered that the valley ended abruptly, and that immediately in front of us was a sheer drop of over 1000 feet, down which the stream, swollen by the storm, leaped in one magnificent cascade!

It took some time before we realised the situation. We hurried first to one side of the valley and then to the other, but there was no possibility of traversing round the buttresses on either side, and it would have been hopeless to attempt to descend such a cliff as lay before us. It was our first climb of the year; the snow had been so bad that we had taken over eight hours to make an ascent which can usually be done in four; we had been compelled to descend the hardest side of the mountain under the most difficult conditions; and when within sight of home, Nature had interposed a barrier which we had never expected to encounter.

Our only way was to reascend some 2000 feet, cross the Col between the Points de la Vuzelle and the Grand Bec, then trust to good fortune to find a track to lead us down to Planay and then a long trudge up the valley to Pralognan.

What a toilsome grind we had up that apparently never-ending slope, how soft and tiring was the snow down which we had glissaded only a short time before, and how empty we felt as we at last gained the Col at 7.30 p.m., with just an hour's daylight before us in which to find a short cut to the road. But short cuts are not easy to find at eventide, and night had quite set in when we at last hit the road near Planay and had only four miles steady walking to our hotel.

It was oppressively hot in the valley, and in the woods through which the road runs there seemed to be no air at all; but at last we reached Pralognan only to find the hotel in darkness and securely locked up. Smith pulled the bell with a vigour I scarce thought he possessed, while with the

knocker I gently insinuated that somebody desired admittance, and after a very lengthy delay a sleepy-headed waiter fumbled at the door, and we stepped inside having been $18\frac{1}{4}$ hours making our passage across from Le Bois.

THE GRANDE CASSE.

One of the most beautiful views from Pralognan is that obtainable from a low rocky knoll, whence you have a delightful peep up the Glière Valley, with the Mighty Casse and its 4000 feet of apparently vertical snow and ice forming a charming background to the picture.

Although we had spent a number of weeks at different times at Pralognan, the Grande Casse—thanks to bad weather—had never been climbed by us, and we accordingly were very anxious to try conclusions with the Monarch of the Tarentaise. Situate almost due south of Mont Blanc, and being the highest point between it and Monte Viso, it commands a magnificent view, extending from Monte Rosa on the east to the Cottian and Dauphiné Alps on the south and west. It is joined to its great neighbour on the east, the Grand Motte by a long and very jagged ridge, the passage of which has never yet been made, but by means of an extra early start we hoped to climb the Casse, cross the ridge to the Grand Motte, and descend on to the head of the Leisse Col and thence reach the comfortable little inn at Val d' Isère in one day. It was a somewhat ambitious, and certainly a long day's programme, and meant, in addition to plenty of climbing, covering many miles of ground, but we were satisfied as to the weather and hoped for fate to be kind to us on this occasion.

At 12:40 on the morning of the 29th June, 1897, we (*i.e.*, Smith and myself) shouldered our somewhat heavy sacks, and, by the aid of our lanterns and a brilliant display of stars, we steadily marched up the steep Vanoise track. There was plenty of snow all the way from the Glière Chalets, which, however, was frozen hard and made it fairly good walking

and at 4 o'clock we halted at a spring issuing out of the Moraine at the foot of the Casse and had a leisurely breakfast, while we discussed the probabilities of carrying out our day's programme.

From where we stood the whole of the route up the mountain could be clearly seen, and from the quantity of snow on the rocks to the right (true) of the Glacier, it was very plain that the Glacier would have to be followed throughout. Putting on the rope, we started from the Moraine at 5 a.m., and for a time the way was easy, and gave no trouble.

Owing to the immense quantity of snow on the mountain the crevasses, sometimes very troublesome, were easily passed, but the upper portion of the Glacier, which lies at an angle of over 45 degrees seemed steeper than usual and the brilliant sun of the past week had turned the snow into an icy slope upon which vigorous kicking made no impression, and the axe had to be called into play. Luckily the leader was desirous of some good practice in step cutting and got it to his heart's content. At first the angle was easy and moderate steps sufficed, but as we rose the angle steadily increased, the ice crust got thicker and harder, and the steps required to be cut larger and closer together.

The views over the Vanoise chain were very beautiful, but as we had a long day before us we pressed steadily on, and the leader, who was in an obstinate mood, cut almost continuously for 2 hours and 35 minutes, until the slope eased off sufficiently to dispense with the axe, and after wading through some troublesome soft snow we finally reached the summit about 9.45.

Our first thought was of the ridge leading to the Grande Motte. Will it go? Alas for our hopes! One look was sufficient. In front of us extended the ridge, some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles long. Instead of the easy route that we had hoped to find there lay before us giant towers, jagged gaunt pinnacles, serrated edge after edge, with lovely snow cornices overhanging the cliffs below, and, except where the rocks were absolutely vertical, they were covered with ice and snow in

extraordinary profusion. It needed no arguments to convince us that, under such conditions, the ridge was impracticable, so, with a sigh, we turned our back upon our enemy and started upon our second breakfast. It was a lovely day—not a cloud even flecked the sky, and a charmingly soft wind agreeably tempered the fiery rays of the sun. Pralognan lay apparently at our feet, though 8000 feet below, and the contrast between its beautiful green meadows, the pine woods above them, and the snow-clad mountains now encircling us on every hand was very striking.

But unfortunately Father Time will not wait even for mountaineers, and so, at 10:30, we started downward and in a few minutes descended to the depression between the two summits, and from there prospected the descent which we proposed to make direct into the Leisse Valley; a much shorter route for us if it were feasible.

On this the south side the Grande Casse is furrowed by immense and innumerable couloirs. For a long way we could see a route downwards, then a series of cliffs intervened, and the rest of the way had to be imagined. Some kind (?) friend had informed us there was an easy way down this side of the mountain, so, with light hearts, we bade good-bye to our plateau, and started off. For a short time the way was easy, though the snow was beginning to soften rapidly under the sun's brilliant rays, but easy rocks were at first readily available and we made rapid progress. But very shortly our rapid progress became slower, the snow slope became steeper and softer, and now and again huge sheets of snow would become detached from the surface, and slide down, with ever-increasing quantity and speed, to disappear over the cliffs still far below us. Using almost the full 100 feet of rope, the leader cautiously advanced, until he could get to some kind of anchorage when the rear man would carefully descend to the same spot.

It was not long before we found out that we had made a mistake, but unfortunately it was too late to retreat. Mid-day had come and gone, it would have taken a long time to

regain the summit, and to retrace our steps down the Glacier would have certainly taken longer than we could have spared if we desired to reach Val d' Isère that night ; moreover, as the Chalets at Entre-deux-Eaux, in the Leisse Valley, were still unoccupied, we would have had no alternative but to return to Pralognan, which seemed to us out of the question.

Luckily there were a few rotten ridges of rock along which we could cautiously continue to descend whilst all around us the snow began to play, first in tiny avalanches, and as we crept slowly downward, in ever increasing volume, until above, around and below there seemed to be nothing but snow in motion. How carefully we had to thread our way across gullies filled with loose, unstable snow ! and how, as we hung on to a friendly rock, we would get bespattered with the dust of the avalanche tearing valleyward at express speed, and whose nearer acquaintance we had no desire to make ! But we still pressed steadily on, and at last we stood on the edge of the cliff which separated us from the valley below. To our amazement it fell almost sheer for two or three hundred feet, and further progress in that direction was hopeless. With some difficulty, and keeping a watchful eye upon the avalanchy snow above us, which ever and anon raked the cliffs as we traversed along to the northward, we at last found a tempting-looking gully leading down on to some broken rocks, from which a devious way might be found to the valley, still far below. No snow had apparently reached it that day, and though it was somewhat steep and wet, yet it was quite practicable, but we had a haunting dread of that loose snow above, so we decided to leave it alone and follow the cliff still further along, the wisdom of so doing being soon brought home to us.

After going some 50 yards or so further, we forced a very difficult passage down some steep and dangerously rotten rocks, which gave us infinite trouble to descend, and great care was necessary to avoid bringing huge quantities of rock and debris upon our heads. When we were only half way down we were suddenly astonished to hear a terrible roar on our

left, while the whole cliff seemed to tremble, and, holding on to whatever support we could, we saw the gully which we had nearly entered swept by a huge avalanche of snow, ice, mud, stones and debris of every description.

After descending a few hundred feet over steep slabby rocks, we came to a further cliff down which we could see no feasible way, and our only means of escape was to cross a huge couloir some hundreds of feet wide, down which a regular procession of avalanches was falling. We were still nearly 3000 feet above the valley. The couloir was fed by a Glacier, which extended up to the summit of the mountain, and séracs upon séracs towering high above, in every kind of decaying attitude, seemed as if they dared us to venture. But necessity is a stern taskmaster, and we had no alternative but to go on. We waited patiently until a huge avalanche had gone tearing past, and, with our hearts in our mouths, we made a mad rush across, and reached a friendly rock on the far side, safe and sound, only the last man getting a dusting from the advance guard of another avalanche.

From here our route should have been fairly easy, but steep and smooth rocks covered with the filthiest of black debris made our progress very slow, and it was with a sigh of relief that we at last crossed on to a grassy ridge, which seemed heavenly after our former experiences. We had now to descend into the valley by a smooth rock gully, which we found very disagreeable, but at last a beautiful snow couloir was found, down which we descended by delightful glissades into the Leisse Valley, and somewhere near the track, which was, however, hidden by deep snow, we at last sat down, having spent $6\frac{1}{4}$ hours upon the most dangerous descent we had ever made.

Looking upwards from where we stood, we could scarcely imagine that a descent could be made down the route we had followed, and a resolution was immediately carried that that was our first and last descent of the Casse into the Leisse Valley.

We had not stopped for a moment on our way down and we were both hungry and thirsty, but we had still a snow col

to cross and Val d' Isère to reach, so, after a hasty meal, we shouldered our sacks, with the addition of a now dirty, wet, and very heavy rope, and at 5.30 put on full speed for the Col de la Leisse. Fast as we went darkness came on faster and a dirty wet night had set in as we reached the summit of the Col at eight o'clock.

The beautiful view of Mont Blanc from this Col—almost the finest of its south face obtainable—was not to be seen to-night, no friendly moon assisted us over the tedious Col de la Freisse or down through the forest into Val d' Isère, but with some luck and the aid of the lantern we found ourselves at last on the road, and at 11 p.m. were kicking at the stout pine door of Monsieur Moris's Hotel. We had been 22 hours and 20 minutes crossing from Pralognan, and a fairly hard day we had experienced. But dinner and bed soon puts the mountaineer in trim, and part of the next day was spent in the pleasant company of two enthusiastic members of the Climbers' Club who were making their first tour in the Alps.

We were informed that our descent of the Grande Casse by the route described above was a new one, and, as far as we are concerned, it will be the last, for in addition to its difficulty, it is too much swept by avalanches ever to be safe.



ESGAIR FELEN.

By G. B. BRYANT.

THERE may be some, even in the Climbers' Club, who will need the information that Esgair Felen is an arm of the Great Glyder, and, furthermore, that the Great Glyder, with its brother, the little G., worthily occupies the space inside a roughly-drawn line from Ogwen Lake to Capelcurig, Pen-y-Pass and Upper Llanberis. It may save the Editor many letters from irritatingly accurate members if we at once admit that a little corner of the aforesaid space is taken up by Tryfan, whose praises may be sung on some other occasion.

In high society at Pen-y-Gwryd the phrase, "an easy day on the Glyders," generally means a warming walk up 2000 feet or so of open ground (stones and heather), to the ridge right or north-east of the summit of Glyder Fach. At this stage everybody usually shows a good-natured desire to spare everybody else's wind. Once on the ridge, and walking west and south-west over the heaps and stacks of broken-up rock which form the summits of both Glyders, no great variation of level is encountered, the mile and a half of distance keeping between 2800 and 3275 feet of altitude. Soon after passing the last-named height, at the summit of the Great Glyder, the rough scrambling is exchanged for the remarkably smooth surface of the broad slope of Esgair Felen, which breaks off abruptly in the cliffs overlooking the lower end of the Llanberis Pass.

On some other easy day, which the climber may be spending in Cwm Glas or Cwm Glas Bach, on the opposite side of the Pass, his eyes will dwell with appreciation on the south face of these Esgair Felen cliffs. The sunshine, when there is any, has a way of bringing out their warm tints which make them doubly attractive to the man who is in shadow, having all Snowdon between him and the sun, and who is chilling himself

on wet moss and slimy slabs. The details which the sunshine is bringing out are of a nature to appeal to his memory, or to whet his anticipation, and in either case to tempt him nearer.

Of these the chief are the precipitous rocks which stretch across the face immediately above the road. They terminate on the right, in the impressive tower overlooking Pont-y-Cromlech, which is worthy, in the highest degree, of closer examination. Above their upper edges are steep slopes of grass and scree. The latter is sent down from the splendid group of cliffs, formed of basaltic or columnar rock, which crown the slopes, reaching a height at the little cairn of about 2800 feet above sea level.

The lower cliffs are seamed with two or three short gullies, usually occupied by water, and therefore interesting to climbers only in very dry weather. But from the Snowdon side one gully will be seen, the course of which can be traced, with here and there a break, from its watercourse under the road to the notch in which it terminates, to the left of the cairn.

Regarded, with a little indulgence, as a single gully its height cannot be much under 2000 feet. It has no doubt often been climbed, but, nevertheless, some of its details may be of interest.

The road must be left soon after passing below the Cromlech stones, and before reaching the gateway on the left which leads to the uppermost cottages. The water has ripped a way through the screes, and this can be followed up to the rocks some 250 feet above the road where the true gully is entered. There is a good-sized mountain ash tree on the right wall, which may be of assistance in identifying the place.

The climbing in this lower section is not difficult, but the work is lively and exhilarating. The first special feature is a cave, about 8 or 9 feet high, from which two practicable exits can be found through the roof. Some of the rocks of the roof seem rather delicately poised, and care is not thrown away. The pitches which follow are very moderate, but in one place an oblong rock of some 30 or 40 feet gives a good climb over water-worn surfaces, and up a narrow cleft to the right. In

about an hour we emerge into comparatively open ground, and from this point there is a fine glimpse downwards through the rift up which we had climbed, to the road and cottages below.

The second section commences here, and has nothing noteworthy in it. The water has cut through grass and scree to the blue rock below, and for about half-an-hour we work up narrow clefts to the base of the red cliffs, which form the third and concluding section of the climb.

The character of the gully now undergoes an entire change. A straight-up climb of about ten feet brings you into a spacious hole with a level floor, walled on the left with an unclimbable cliff 60 or 70 feet in height, but on the right there is good hold. In the centre the rock is mixed with quartz, and covered over most of its face with loose tufts of grass and slimy vegetable matter. Slightly to the right of this we find our way, with a little care and patience. The weather had been dry, and it is probable that, with more water about, it might be necessary to escape from this place by the right wall above referred to, which would be reasonably dry at all times.

Not far above this we encounter a steep bit of 12 or 15 feet, entirely covered with slime, which can be avoided either right or left. Nothing is gained by climbing its centre.

The gully now broadens, and the rock-work is upon a larger scale, developing into deep hollows, the first of which takes some little time to negotiate. The high wall on the left, which slightly overhangs, is of the ordinary rock, and very untrustworthy, flaking out in fairly large pieces, but the right-hand bank looks like a compacted cindery substance. Its face is very irregular, and rises some 30 or 40 feet. The way up the centre, where the two formations meet, requires circumspection, offering no secure handholds, and being generally of the loosest character. The landing, about 30 feet up, is over an overhanging ledge or lip, which is very shaky. Fortunately this rather objectionable bit of climbing was on a fairly dry surface, although its want of solidity is no doubt due to its water-holding capacity.

After this we gladly meet good solid rock of the Crib Coch order. The gully seems to divide, but a climb along a shelf on the left-hand side leads into a semicircular hollow, showing no trace of gully form, and the way returns over a rib to the right-hand branch, which ascends pretty sharply. A little higher it is again divided by a spine of rock, but no divergence is necessary.

Hereabouts a brief lunch was disposed of, shelter from a stinging shower being found in a small hollow about 550 feet below the summit. We shared it with a well-nourished and contented-looking toad, living there in apparent freedom from all family cares.

After this the bed of the gully, for about 250 feet, is not easy to find, and the ground is open. But the trail is again picked up somewhat to the left, at a little cave of unfinished construction, conscientiously climbed by the more serious members of the party, and thence a chimney-like shoot is followed, possessing a jammed stone of its own, which, having no likeness to the rocks on the spot, and no icefield to arrive from, was no doubt dropped by the Devil.

The time occupied in our leisurely ascent was slightly under three hours. The rope was used only twice, and was perhaps not absolutely necessary at either place. It is worth mentioning that one of the party was provided with 40 feet of hemp rope, differing from the Alpine Club manila rope, in that it was somewhat harder and closer in texture. When dry it was apparently heavier in comparison.

Our time at the cairn was cut short by rain of the energetic Welsh variety, and, whilst two unfortunates went down into Cwm Patric against the wind, the others made a "dead run" to Pen-y-Pass in 28 minutes.

The general verdict was that, whilst containing nothing to attract the seekers after glory, yet it was an excellent gully.



PEN Y GWRYD.

From a photo. by T. WILLIAMS.

WELSH NOTES.

By P. Y. G.

WILL no one go and explore the climbs upon Moel Hebog? As one stands at the door of the Saracen's Head at Beddgelert, the cliffs of the mountain facing you invites discussion, and an hour and a-half is sufficient to bring you to the cairn at the top. The climbs, of course, are on the north-east face, and while there is plenty of work to be done, there is certainly one descent which, but for about eight feet, can be used by a perambulator. Some one should make a serious examination of the whole cliff.

* * * *

MYNYDD MAWR, too, on its south face, the part more particularly called Craig y Beri, betrayed possibilities this summer to the ardent enquirer. With Castell Cidwm it should make an interesting chapter.

* * * *

WHEN is the book going to appear which shall do for North Wales what 'Rock Climbing in the English Lake district' has done for Cumberland? It is an open secret that Mr. Owen Glynne Jones, up to the time of his death, contemplated, and was indeed preparing, such a book. Has he left no material? There are several competent climbers conversant with the district, to whom the editing of such a book could be entrusted. Though it will be many years before Mr. Jones' successor can be found, yet a good deal might be done by co-operation, and a committee could easily map the area out in sections.

* * * *

MR. COBDEN'S Hotel at the head of the Llanberis Pass makes slow progress. Though it was to have been ready for visitors this summer, yet the contractor has so far broken his contract that up to this month the window frames even were not in. The Hotel is promised, however, for next season; and with the over-demand for accommodation at Pen-y-Gwryd this summer, it should prove a welcome addition.

NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.

THE death of Mr. Owen Glynne Jones on the Dent Blanche has caused a vacancy in the ranks of English Climbers that will not easily be refilled. Few, if any, of the Lake District mountaineers knew the Cumberland Hills as he knew them, and in his "Rock Climbing in the English Lake District" he produced a work that is likely to remain unrivalled for all time. When the formation of the Climbers' Club was first mooted, Mr. Jones at once gave the scheme his strongest support, and, both as a member of the Committee and as a contributor to the *Journal*, he never ceased to do all in his power to make the Club a success. His enthusiasm was remarkable, and climbing, pure and simple, has had no stronger advocate.

Only a few days before he left England on what, sadly, has proved his last visit to the Alps, he was detailing to us his plans for a Himalayan expedition. That he was contemplating the production of a book on Welsh Climbing is, we believe, common knowledge: indeed, his visit to Ogwen Cottage this Spring was only the commencement of what was intended to be a systematic exploration of the Welsh Mountains. His untimely death is a sad blow to all mountaineers, an especially sad one to those, and in this Club there are many, who could claim his friendship.

* * * *

WE have been asked to publish an account of Messrs. Reade and McCulloch's ascent of the West Jordan Gully on the Pillar Rock. The following is a copy of the note made by Mr. Reade in the book at Wasdale Head:—

Pillar Rock, West Jordan Gully, 1st Ascent.

W. P. McCulloch and W. R. Reade climbed the above on 21st July, 1898, after having taken the precaution to examine it from above, and to remove several loose stones which could not have been grasped without serious risk. At first sight the gully appears to consist of one great pitch about 100 ft. in height, but on closer inspection it is found to be divided

into a serious of cave pitches, all overhung by the great jammed stone at the top. At the first pitch a narrow chimney is seen on the left, ending in a small cave. Mounting a series of jammed stones on the right, we reached a point a little below the floor of this cave, and backing upwards and outwards succeeded in reaching it. Here the gully was too broad to brace across; but only 20 feet separated us from the point we had reached from above. Holds seemed almost absent for the traverse outwards, and the leader was forced to accept assistance. Threading the rope through a jammed stone in the cave, he mounted the second man's shoulders, and with difficulty drew himself into a very small cave, scarcely visible from below. With the assistance of the rope the second man climbed to the level of the leader, and backing outwards assumed the lead, and climbed over known ground to the top. The former leader then quickly followed. The whole climb took 90 minutes. (Signed) W. R. READE.

Following the above entry in the Climbers' Book at Wastwater Hotel, is the following:—

The 2nd recorded ascent was made on Aug. 22nd, 1898, by a party consisting of G. F. Broadrick, H. C. Broadrick, and R. W. Broadrick. The method was the same as that employed by the first party. The leader required no assistance.
(Signed) R. W. BROADRICK.

* * * *

THE STYHEAD ROAD.—Now that the whole of the land on both sides of the Styhead Pass has been purchased by Mr. John Musgrave, of Wasdale Hall, and therefore every obstacle in respect of the ownership of land removed, we understood that that gentlemen is contemplating the revival of the subject of the construction of a road in the County Council. The County Council have by employing their own staff of officials and workmen made a new road at Park Brow between Troutbeck Station and Patterdale, and it is suggested that if they would follow a similar course in regard to the proposed Styhead Road on condition that Mr. Musgrave and others interested raised the required one-half of the cost, some of the difficulties at all events which stand in the way of the projected road being made might easily be overcome.—
(*Carlisle Journal*.)

ALTHOUGH no formal proceedings have been taken regarding Christmas meets, any member proposing to spend Christmas or the New Year at either of the climbing centres is asked to communicate with the Hon. Secretary.

* * * *

JUST after we go to press the fate of the Muckcross estate, Killarney, will be settled. The sale takes place at Dublin in November. Messrs. James H. North & Co., are the auctioneers.

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WE shall be glad to receive original sketches or photographs for reproduction. These need not necessarily illustrate any special article, but should be of mountaineering interest.

* * * *

To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

18th August, 1899.

DEAR SIR,

THE CRAZY PINNACLE.

Your correspondent, "Old Etymology," gives an interesting quotation from "Paradise Lost" (xii., 210), but, by the insertion of an unnecessary capital letter, imparts to the passage a meaning exactly the opposite of what the poet intended. The Archangel Michael did not wish Adam to believe that God would look forth to trouble His own host and craze their chariot wheels, but to trouble the host of Pharaoh.

The point would be unimportant, were not this overlooking of the matter in pursuit of the word curiously characteristic of the whole letter. Your correspondent tells us much about the word *crazy*, but nothing of the sense in which he considers it applicable to The Crazy Pinnacle.

Let us all agree that the word *crazy* is a good one, and of good descent. "Of virtuous father virtuous son" (Milton still). Let us admit the middle English *crasen*, and the early modern English *crasig*. Let us admit the recondite suffix *y*, and (being in Miltonic vein)—

"What the Swede (*krasa*) intends, and what the French" (*écraser*);

but are we any nearer to understanding how the word *crazy* could be adopted as the name of a strong well-preserved pinnacle between the year 1873 and the year 1890? In the case of an ancient name etymology is our sharpest weapon, but here all we can hope from its aid is the discovery of a by-meaning which, though not in general use, has survived in some nook or corner of the land. Cannot another etymologist help, or (better still) cannot the original sponsor be called on to justify the title?

These picturesque names (though sadly overdone in the Lakes) appeal strongly to me as both useful and stimulating, and the present case is a good example. The pinnacle needed a name, and the name given has imparted fresh interest to it. Everybody wants to climb (or to see and not climb) so weird an object.

Yours faithfully,

HENRY GALE GOTCH.

To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

3 NORFOLK CRESCENT,
HYDE PARK, W.

DEAR SIR,

Referring to the notice of "Baddeley's Guide" in the June number of the *Journal*, the same error as regards the Pig track has crept into the "Gossiping Guide," where the upper pony track is called the "Pig track," and the Pig track proper is called the High Pig track.

As regards the suggestion in the *Journal*, "Should it be P-y-g track?" I think not. The Bwlch at the top of the track, which you cross just before coming in sight of Llydaw, is called Bwlch Mohr, which I have always understood to be the Welsh for wild boar, hence the name Pig track. It would be interesting to ascertain the correct origin.

Yours truly,

H. R. BOYCE.

*To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.*OXFORD, *Sept., 1899.*

DEAR SIR,

BADDELEY & WARD'S GUIDE TO NORTH WALES.

I notice that it is stated in this book that Moel Tryfan can be seen from the summit of Snowdon. Is not this an error? I have often endeavoured to discover the three-headed mountain from Y Wydfa, but without success. I have come to the conclusion that it must be hidden by the intervening mass of Glyder Fach. Can you enlighten me on this point?

Yours truly,

OBSERVER.

[The authors are perfectly correct. The summit of Tryfan can be seen from Y Wydfa, but it is not easily distinguishable. It lies somewhat to the left of the summit of Glyder Fach. The point is not open to question, as from Tryfan the cairn and flagstaff on Snowdon are easily recognisable. —ED.]

*To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.**22nd September, 1899.*

DEAR SIR,

MOUNTAIN TEMPERATURE.

The thermometers on the summit of Y Glyder fach were examined on the 30th August. The minimum temperature registered for the past winter (1898-9) was 13° Fahr. The table on page 84 shows that, during the years 1867 to 1898, it ranged from 8° to 26°, the average being a little over 16°. The minimum last winter was, therefore, 3° below the average, notwithstanding the mildness of the season. It appears that snow fell on only two or three days, and not sufficient, it is believed, to affect the readings of the instruments. We now have the results of two mild winters, with little snow, and a cold one, with heavy snow, would help to settle the question whether some of the previous high readings were due to the instruments having had a thick covering of snow.

Yours faithfully,

W. P. B.

REVIEWS.

BEDDGELERT : ITS FACTS, FAIRIES, AND FOLK-LORE. By D. C. JENKINS. With translations of Poetry by the Rev. H. Elvet Lewis, and an Introduction by Principal John Rhys, M.A. (Portmadoc : Llewelyn Jenkins.) 1899. 8vo.

THE appearance of this volume, the preface of which is dated in June of this year, calls for recognition in this journal. Let us say at once that the work has been exceedingly well done. A local guide, with a local imprint, is not seldom a compilation of inaccurate knowledge, bad taste, and vile type. Mr. Jenkins' work, of 378 pages, fairly illustrated, and published at the respectable price of six shillings, is admirably conceived, admirably executed, with hardly a superfluous paragraph in its whole extent. Each valley and section is treated separately, and, for the most part, each house in the valley, for Beddgelert is not too large for such treatment. The legends are treated in a thoroughly scientific spirit, and, unless we are greatly mistaken, much of the folk-lore connected with the district will reach English readers, well acquainted with the Snowdon district, for the first time through Mr. Jenkins' book.

It is not necessary, however, in these pages to devote much space either to the local etymologies, here very clearly dealt with, or the antiquities, for we should be compelled to quote a large part of the book. The book must be read for its own sake, and whether the reader will stare most at a mention of Pen y Gwryd, though not by name, in the year 1198, or at the history of the legendary city in Nant Gwynant below, at the tradition of the wood 'so thick that a man on a white horse could not be seen from Llyn Dinas to Pen y Gwryd, except in two places;' or at the fact, new at least to the present writer, that the last battle of King Arthur, according to the local tradition, took place just at the back of Lliwedd, that the name Bwlch y Saethau refers to that event, and

that Carnedd Arthur in Cum-llan marks his grave, it is not necessary to conjecture.*

The book has a real importance to anyone who, having once set foot in Cwm Dyli, or looked down upon Glaslyn, comes back to it for a second time. The full history, real and legendary, of both is here set forth. We must not pilfer with Mr. Jenkins' property, but it will be impossible now to forget that the cottages at Gorphyspha, for instance, stand on the site of a cairn, round which, not many years ago, a man would say the Lord's Prayer nine times before passing.

The references to the late Mr. and Mrs. Harry Owen, in this volume, will be received by the readers of these pages with special interest. The romantic history of Mrs. Owen's early life, as maid to the Coventrys at Plas Gwynant, is here set forth, and a considerable passage, which it is perhaps desirable to quote, is devoted to Mr. Owen. Speaking of the farms of Gwastad Annas, Cwm Dyli, Penlan and Genfron, Mr. Jenkins writes:—

"All these were thriving farms up to about twenty-seven years ago, having well-stocked pens and cattle-folds. On the four farms there were about forty milch cows, about eighty or ninety cattle of all sorts, and no less than three thousand sheep. Mr. Owen worked up the sleeve of Sir Richard Bulkeley's agent, and got all the land which had been connected with some of these homesteads for centuries attached to the hotel, with results that are quite painful to observe. Instead of the lively movements of living beings, the sound of the meal-time horn, the crack of the team-driver's whip, the neighing, lowing and bleating of horses, cattle and sheep respectively, together with the hundred other features of farm life, we have only a few stray sheep, a cow, or an ox here and there, and perchance a living being, far from the reach of gesture or voice."

We give this for what it is worth, and it is best to remember that Mr. Owen died as long ago as 1891.

* Since this note was written I learn from a private source that the writer discovers Carnedd Arthur to have been, not at Bwlch Saethau, but on an old path that goes up above Haford y Porth. The statement is apparently based on an old manuscript. This pile of stones has not yet been identified.

On two points more light is desirable. The Lliwedd legend, as previously told, is that there is an army of Welsh horsemen asleep in the cave, at the mouth of which is a bell. When the bell is rung the army will wake, and there will be a battle at Bettws Garmon, after which the mill at Nantlle will turn for three days in the blood of the Irishmen. Mr. Jenkins' version is that, after the death of Arthur, all his men ascended the peak of Lliwedd, and descended thence to a cave. When all had entered the mouth of the cave closed, a small hole only being left. The men fell asleep, leaning on their shields, so as to be ready for Arthur's second coming. Very many years ago a sheep fell on to a ledge of the precipice, and a shepherd descending, saw a light burning and the men asleep. Going in, he knocked his head against a bell, and the whole army awoke with a terrific shout, from which the shepherd never recovered. Which of these two versions is correct?

The other point is with regard to Merlin's treasure, buried under Dinas Emrys. According to earlier accounts, this consists of the enchanter's golden throne and diamond sceptre. Mr. Jenkins mentions the former, but not the latter, though he mentions his treasures in general. What is the correct view? Neither of the authors quoted gives any reference to authorities.

Enough has been said, perhaps, to show that the volume is one of premier importance to frequenters of Snowdon, the select brotherhood who may, without presumption or immodesty, claim for themselves the time-worn and still-honoured name of The Men of Eryri. With no personal knowledge of Mr. Jenkins, or of Mr. William Jones, on whose life's-work this volume has been composed, with no request from the publisher for a notice, the above lines have been written in deep gratitude to Mr. Jenkins for his invaluable work.

C. E. S.

* * Should the book ever reach a second edition, it is to be wished that a full index may be added. In a book so rich in detail, moreover, it is a pity that attention has not been drawn to the find of coins of the reign of Queen Anne, just south of Pen y Gwryd, and recorded in the six-inch Ordnance Survey.

THOROUGH GUIDE SERIES. NORTH WALES, Part II. Llangollen, Bala, Dolgelly, Barmouth, Oswestry, Shrewsbury, Welshpool, Llanidloes, Machynlleth, and Aberystwith Sections. By M. J. B. BADDELEY, B.A., and C. S. WARD, M.A. With 14 Maps and Plans and Panorama from Cader Idris, by Bartholomew. Fifth Edition (London: Dulau and Co.). 2/6 net.

ALTHOUGH Messrs. Baddeley and Ward always carefully avoid giving details of any routes that are not easily within the powers of the ordinary tourist, they have succeeded in producing a series of guide books, exceedingly useful, even to that now numerous class of mountaineers whose object is to discover, not the easiest, but the most arduous, method of ascent. To waste the best hours of the day wandering among the bogs on the lower slopes is irritating to the most even-tempered climber, and the knowledge (derived from the Ordnance Map) that the longed-for cliff is barely a mile away "as the crow flies" does not tend to soothe his rising ire. Of course, given fine weather, a map and compass, and a disregard of wet feet will carry the enthusiast anywhere without undue circumambulation, but in hilly districts, more especially in North Wales, the climber who waits for a mistless day before setting out on his journey will most probably return from his holiday with the greater part of his surplus energy still undisposed of. However, those who will accept the guidance of the "Thorough Guides" may rely upon being taken with the least possible delay to the commencement of the actual climbing.

Experience has shewn us also that the authors have a discriminating eye for rock, and a careful study of the pages of Baddeley and Ward's North Wales will often lead to the discovery of new, or at least unrecorded, climbs. A reference (in Part I.) to two "unscaleable" gullies on Moel Siabod has been the means of opening the eyes of the Pen-y-Gwryd frequenters to the fact that that much despised mound offers some really magnificent climbing, and we shall not be at all surprised to

hear that some seeker after the unknown, after perusing pages 64, 65, 70 and 147 of Part II., has discovered on the Rhinogs, gullies and aretes that will tax all our powers to the utmost. Certainly a cwm "surrounded on three sides by a girdle of well-nigh impassable rocky crags" and a "gloomy little lake with a sheer wall of rock on its eastern side" sound promising, and the geological note to the effect that "the rocks are mostly greenish-grey grits, with some bands of slate traversed by many dykes of igneous rocks," lends colour to the idea that the Rhinogs have remained too long unexplored.

The authors' predilection for mountain hotels becomes manifest in the following paragraph :—

As it is quite possible that ere long mountain hotels will come into fashion in Great Britain, the writer ventures to say that there is no mountain so well adapted by nature for one as Cader Idris. On the rough and broken, yet sheltered, ground, a few yards south of the summit, an inn, and, say a small observatory, might be erected, without offending the eye of the most aesthetic mountaineer. They would be absolutely unseen, except perhaps from the Tal-y-Llyn road. As to the commercial outlook, we remember one fine August day, some years ago, climbing the mountain twice in twenty-four hours. On the first occasion—day-time—we found more than a hundred people on the top ; on the second—sunrise—forty. Without any vulgarisation, Cader Idris might be made the most enjoyable mountain in Great Britain—sacred to ponies and pedestrians.

Is not the sacrifice of Snowdon sufficient? Must it be that Cader Idris too will be given over to the hotel builder, and made sacred to bottle hurlers and sardine tin sprinklers?

Notes on fishing and where to fish, on hotels and hotel tariffs, some special pages of road routes for cyclists, and a geological section, add to the usefulness of an exceedingly interesting book.



NEW PUBLICATIONS.

- GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE "ALPINE GUIDE."
Hints and Notes Practical and Scientific for Travellers
in the Alps. By the late JOHN BALL. A New and
Revised Edition. Prepared on behalf of the Alpine
Club by W. A. B. Coolidge. (London: Longmans,
Green & Co. 1899. Price 3/- net.)
- HOURS OF EXERCISE IN THE ALPS. By the late JOHN
TYNDALL. A New Edition with an Index. Edited by
Mrs. Tyndall. With Illustrations. (London: Longmans,
Green & Co. 1899. Price 6/6 net.)
- THE PLAYGROUND OF EUROPE. By LESLIE STEPHEN.
A New Edition, with 4 Illustrations. (Longmans, Green
and Co. 1899. Price 3/6.)
- THE EARLY MOUNTAINEERS. By FRANCIS GRIBBLE. With
48 Illustrations. Size $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$, pp. 352. (London: T.
Fisher Unwin. 1899. Price 21/-.)
- THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB JOURNAL. Edited by
THOMAS GRAY. Vol. I. No. I. July, 1899. 2/- net.
(Leeds: The Y.R.C., 10 Park Street. London: T.
Fisher Unwin.)
- VOLCANOES: their structure and significance. By Prof.
BONNEY. With Illustrations and a Map. (London: John
Murray. 1899. Price 6/-.)
- THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT FISHERIES. By JOHN
WATSON, F.L.S. 5/-. The Anglers' Library. (Lawrence
and Bullen.)
- THE EASTERN ALPS: a Handbook for Travellers. By
Karl Baedeker. Maps, Plans, and Illustrations. 9th
Edition, revised. 10 marks. (Leipsic: Karl Baedeker.)
- THE CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL. Edited by A. I.
McCONNOCHIE. Vol. II. No. 12. 1899. 2/- net.
(Aberdeen: The Cairngorm Club.)

COMMITTEE NOTICE.

AT a Committee Meeting, held on the 27th October, the following resolution was passed unanimously upon the motion of the Rev. J. Nelson Burrows, M.A., seconded by Mr. W. P. Haskett-Smith :—

“The Committee desires to put upon record its deep sense of the loss which the Club has sustained by the death of their highly-valued colleague, Mr. Owen Glynne Jones, whose services upon the Committee have always been most zealous and unremitting.”

The following new members have been elected since our last issue :—

W. R. Oppenheimer, Esq., 144 Withington Road,
Whalley Range, Manchester.

Lehmann J. Oppenheimer, Esq., 8 Manley Road,
Alexandra Park, Manchester.

William Edward Webb, Esq., 18 Grove Terrace,
Highgate Road, N.W.

Herbert W. Walker, Esq., Oak Lea, Whitehaven.

J. Harold Newman, Esq., Totterbridge Park, Herts.

G. F. Broadrick, Esq., Border Regiment, Bareilly, India.

Edward S. Reynolds, Esq., 13 East Street, Bridport.

James Main Nicol, Esq., 5 Norwood Road, Headingley,
Leeds.

John Tenney, Esq., Exchequer and Audit Dept.,
Somerset House, W.C.

Richard Francis Backwell, Esq., Exchequer and Audit
Dept., Somerset House, W.C.

W. G. Young, Esq., Harrow School, Middlesex.

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