

THE
CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

Edited by E. RAYMOND TURNER.

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ISSUED QUARTERLY.

PUBLISHED BY THE CLIMBERS' CLUB.

Copies can be obtained from the Editor, or from

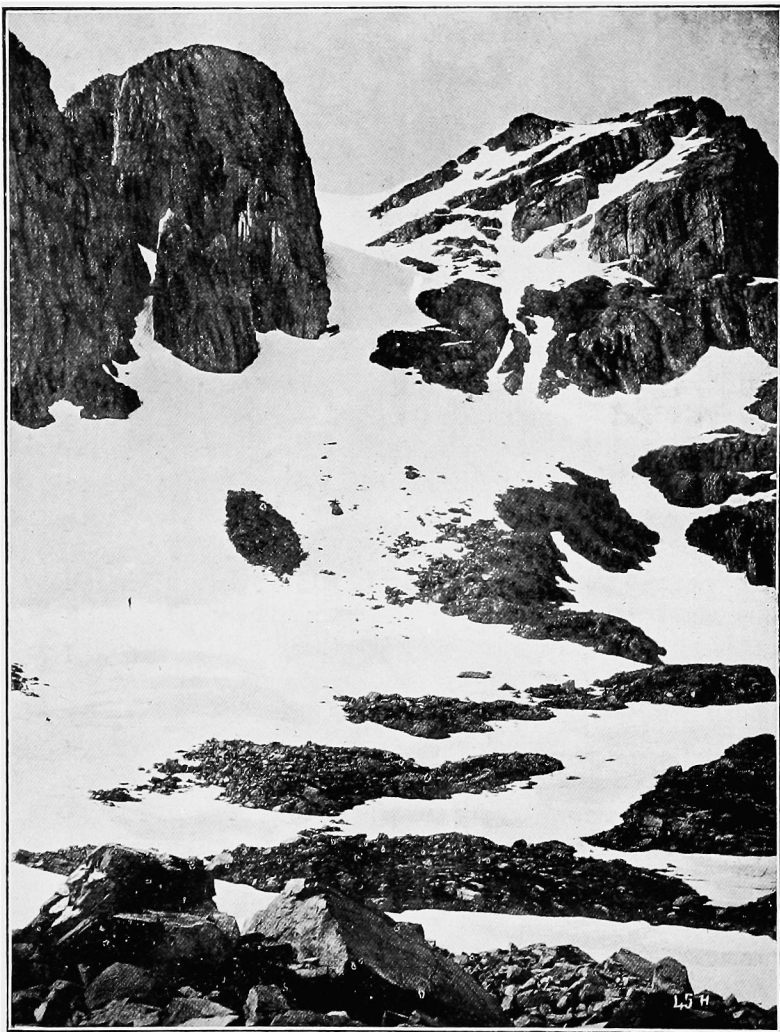
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SOUTH CASTLE STREET, LIVERPOOL.

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THE MIDLAND EDUCATIONAL CO.,
CORPORATION STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

FRANK MURRAY, MORAY HOUSE,
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"THE CHURCH DOOR BUTTRESS" from Coire nam Beith.

Photo. by G. P. ABRAHAM & SONS, KESWICK.

T H E

CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

VOL. III.]

DECEMBER, 1900.

[No. 10.

THE "CHURCH DOOR BUTTRESS" ON BIDEAN NAM BIAN.

By J. W. PUTTRELL.

IN response to pressure from many fellow "C. C." members, I have great pleasure in giving an account of an ascent of the now famous "Church Door Buttress" in Glencoe. In reviewing our plan of campaign for a visit to Scotland late last May, we found that one of the choice bits offered for our climbing delectation, and borne in mind by us, was none other than that of the very ecclesiastical name of "The Church Door Buttress" on Bidean. Those of us who were happily versed in the annals of the past regarding this interesting climb, remembered with some trepidation the trials and difficulties of those who had gone before—for many attempts were made by the gallant "S. M. C." ere success was finally achieved. The *Cairngorm Club Journal* (July, 1900), rightly said that "the ascent of the buttresses of Bidean was for season after season vainly attempted by some of the most eminent members of the Alpine Club, and it is to the credit of Scottish mountaineering that the first, and, as yet, the only ascent of the great right-hand buttress has been made." The ascent referred to was accomplished recently by a party of members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. The first recorded attempt to scale this adamantine Door was made by

Dr. Collier with Messrs. Collie and Solly in March, 1894. Easter, '96, was the date of another unsuccessful attack, when three persons, equally well known in the climbing world, essayed the task, viz. :—Messrs. Hastings, Bowen, and that accomplished cragsman, Mr. W. P. Haskett Smith. In July, '95, and September, '96, further desperate attempts were made by "S. M. C." members to open the Door, and again at Easter, '97, when more than a dozen members of the "A. C." and "S. M. C." were refused admittance. Other attempts were also made in September, '97, and Easter, '98. But there is an end to all things, and these Sisyphean efforts of the past were ultimately crowned with success. Scotsmen never know when they are beaten. The grit and perseverance of the Scotch are world-renowned, and it is these peculiar qualities, which have somewhere been facetiously termed "stickatitiveness," which gives them so conspicuous a place amongst the nations of the earth. For evidence of this, one need not search political or military records—the climbing journals supply sufficient proofs !

July 16th, 1898, will ever rank as a red-letter day with Scottish mountaineers, for was not the "Church Door" opened on that eventful day? On this date, then, quite a gathering of the clans was to be seen at the "Clachaig," assembled for the avowed object of turning past defeat into a well-earned victory. The party of six thus determined was eventually reduced to four, two of its members standing down at the last moment, the better to ensure success. As a result of the inevitable spin of the coin, Messrs. J. H. Bell and Raeburn were elected leaders over the first and last portion of the climb respectively. In my opinion, this tossing for leaders is not conducive to good sport, and is altogether a mistaken policy when applied to special work of this character. Let the onus and honour of leadership depend *not* upon the vagaries of chance, but rather upon past experience and the mutual understanding of those concerned. This by the way, however. Suffice it to say that the climb for the first time was safely accomplished. "'Twas a famous victory," indeed,

as old Kaspar would have remarked, and, in consequence, "S. M. C." circles were mightily proud of the result, and rightly so, as nowadays captures of this sort are few and far between.

Readily do I recall the brilliant May morning journey from Kingshouse Inn down the sunlit—*not* sullen be it remembered—Pass of Glencoe, when, prior to sighting Clachaig Inn, our eyes for the first time gazed admiringly upon one of Scotia's noblest landscapes—the shapely peak of Stob Coire an Lochan, 3657 feet in height, set like a gem at the head of Coire nam Beach. Here was a perfect picture, symmetrical to a degree, and nobly flanked or framed by the "massifs" of Aonach Dubh and An' t Sron, on its east and west sides respectively. Despite the fact that June was about to enter upon its Midsummer Term, the prospect appeared quite Alpine in character, for above the 3000 feet line there stretched extensive snow fields edged with fantastic wind-swept cornices—a strikingly effective study in black and white. Of greater moment than all these, however, to our climbing eyes was the simple fact that away yonder on the left was to be seen Bidean's famous "Church Door Buttress," rising some 300 or 400 feet sheer above the surrounding snowfields. At last, then, was the enemy sighted, and in obeisance we doffed our caps, yet hoping that within the next 24 hours victory would be ours. Accordingly we were early astir the following morning, Saturday, 27th May, time, 5 a.m. To our regret Mr. Ernest A. Baker of Derby, who had ably assisted in the direct Crowberry Ridge ascent earlier in the week, was called away on business: thus the bagging of a brace of records on his part was altogether out of the question. The party now consisted of only three members, viz. :—the well-known Keswick Brothers, Messrs. George and Ashley Abraham, and the writer. It was a glorious morning as we bold Sassenachs strolled out of homely "Clachaig" in search of pastures new. Crossing the steep grassy shoulder of An' t Sron, however, was anything but pleasant in the early morning sun, laden as we were with photographic and climbing

impedimenta. Entering Coire nam Beach above the waterfall, we halted to take stock of our magnificent surroundings. The Y Wyddfa-like peak of Stob Coire an Lochan stood out bold and clear ahead of us, and on our left we had a detailed view of the furrowed crags of Aonach Dubh. Across the pass, with Loch Triochatan some 2000 feet beneath there was no mistaking Aonach Eagach with its thin serrated edge set sharp against the northern sky : from summit to base we observed its striking contrasts of colour ; from naked black rocks to verdant meadows and placid lake. Having feasted to the full on the beauties of nature we recommenced the ascent, zig-zagging our way upward in a desultory manner until we gained sight of our objective, when we turned well to the left. Being suitably located for photographic operations, my friends brought their camera into play—the writer meanwhile occupying his spare time in boulder-climbing. Again resuming our march we soon encountered our first snow slope, the one leading to our climb. It was here, whilst pushing ahead of my artistic friends, that I was peremptorily requested to assume an attitude of defiance whilst they “snapped” the “Church Door Buttress” and myself—the latter, I presume, as an insignificant set-off against the whole. This ordeal over, we made tracks up the snow-slope, kicking steps all the way to Collie’s Pinnacle which, sentinel-like, guards the approach to the Church Door. Of course this prominent Pinnacle at once attracted attention, and up we scrambled, not merely to taste of its climbing qualities, but to inspect at close quarters the redoubtable adversary we had come to conquer. Having noted its special features as minutely as our vantage point would permit, we descended, and after cutting steps across the intervening snow couloir, soon reached the foot of the climb. Before operations actually commenced, we partook of lunch, and then opened up the attack in grim earnest. George Abraham, as leader, mounted the ledge, and at once faced the 30 feet crack now in front, the writer following ; Ashley Abraham, after taking sundry photos, bringing up the rear. The snow and ice inside the crack were a little troublesome to the leader, especially in

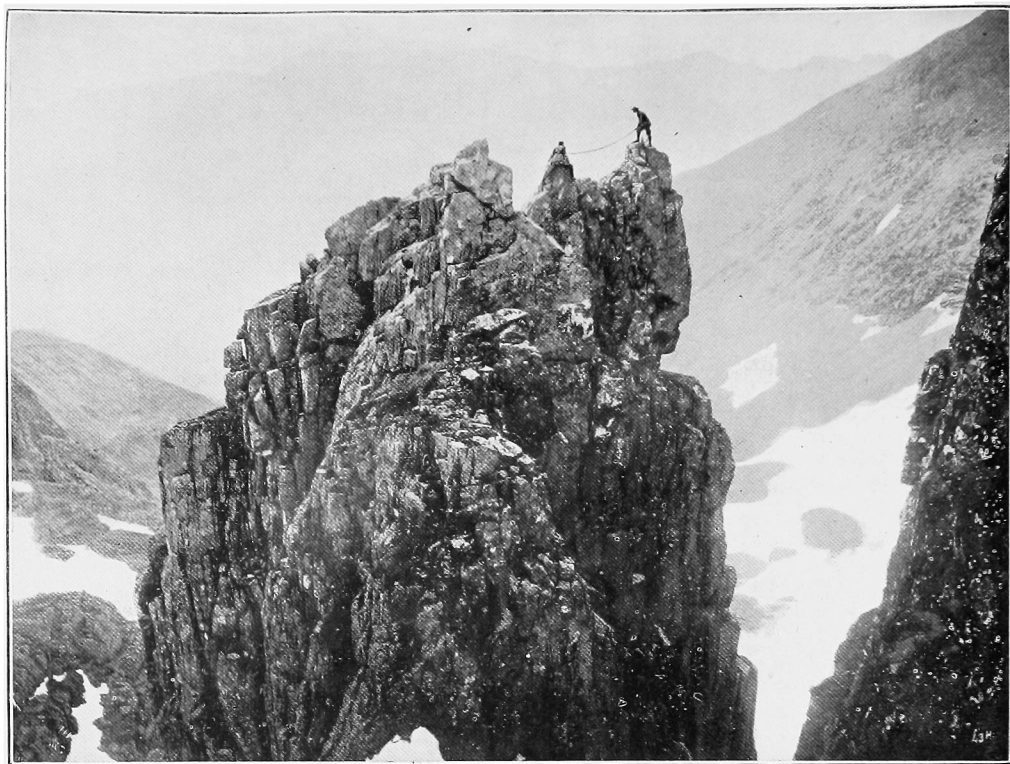


ASCENDING THE CRACK, "CHURCH DOOR BUTTRESS,"
Bidean nam Bian.

Photo. by G. P. ABRAHAM & SONS, KESWICK.

passing through the sky-light exit above. Apart from the inside route, which is really very interesting, we found it also possible to climb this crack by the outside, thus going over instead of under the topstone. The writer, in fact, was caught in the act of proving its possibility, but the leader ordered an immediate retreat, bidding him "follow the rope," or, in other words, "follow your leader." With respectful obedience back he went into the icy crevice, then slowly wriggling through the aforementioned skylight, soon issued forth into the bright sunshine above. Our next difficulty now confronted us in the shape of an 8 foot corner, the rounding of which required care and a fair amount of balance. This was safely negotiated, and for a time the rocks, easing off in their technical difficulties, allowed of an easy and quick ascent until the natural bridge was reached. This bridge, which is composed of variously sized rocks, is a marvellous example of the constructive power of Nature, spanning a chasm 200 feet deep without any under support whatever! To tell the truth, we didn't feel quite at home on that bridge, each expecting it to collapse at our every movement. Further progress now appeared well-nigh impossible, as besides the clear drop of 200 feet on our left and the smooth sloping slab ahead, there was only the 100 feet wall of rock on the right upon which we might exercise our skill. We were not long, however, before we espied the very exposed chimney, just beyond the slab, which had proved so difficult to its early explorers. At first sight it seemed easy of accomplishment, but a more minute inspection revealed to us the fact that without doubt good sport was to be had there, and sport of a character to test our climbing powers to the utmost. Highly elated at the prospect of a keen struggle, George Abraham boldly advanced up the inclined slab of rock leading to the foot of the chimney. Here he stopped for a few moments to take a final survey of the situation, unconsciously striking the attitude of an artist before his canvas. Then, with a word of caution as to our manipulation of the rope, &c., the leader stepped off a small snow patch into the chimney.

During the next five or six minutes there reigned a dead silence. The situation and the exceptional circumstances demanded it, for if once the leader slipped it meant a roll and a rush down the smooth incline of rock, and away over its rounded edge into the abyss below. In the event of this happening, however, we on the bridge, with rope in hand, and withal safely belayed, felt confident we could hold him securely. We knew, however, that the stout heart and resolute bearing of our leader would carry him through, and indeed, faith was justified of her children, as the result proved. Inch by inch, little by little, he forced his way upward, progress hereabouts being of the 'slow and sure' order. Every movement of hand and foot was closely watched, and as he neared the top, we thought he would effect an easy exit from the chimney, as the top stone, viewed from below, showed an apparently good gripping-edge. Alas and alack! when the eager climber reached up to this promising hand-hold, he found it perfectly smooth and rounded, and of no practical use whatever. Other tactics perforce were then brought to bear upon the difficulty; and the leader ultimately emerged successful from the chimney, while his comrades below rent the air with lusty cheering. Ashley Abraham now essayed the task, making a fairly rapid ascent. The writer then unroped, and, tying all the baggage together, signalled to those above to haul up. After the latter was safely landed and detached, the writer again received the rope, which if only for its moral support was most necessary hereabouts. In fact, any one attempting this portion of the climb without the rope simply courts disaster. The writer vividly remembers with what eagerness he sallied forth to try the chimney, but this same eager, fearless spirit quickly evaporated as difficulty after difficulty demanded his serious attention. These, however, were tackled in right good earnest, and the writer, the last man on the rope, eventually joined his friends in safety. After a brief rest, during which our recent experiences were individually reviewed, we betook ourselves to the top of the Buttress, a distance of about 100 feet. On our way we



COLLIE'S PINNACLE, BIDEAN NAM BIAN.
(Which, sentinel-like, guards the approach to the "Church Door.")

Photo. by G. P. ABRAHAM & SONS, KESWICK.

climbed the 15-foot corner mentioned by previous writers, which was certainly an awkward bit, but not particularly difficult.

Thus was the "Church Door" unlocked upon the occasion of our first visit, and delighted were we above measure at our success. The standard difficulty of the climb is about on a par with Dr. Collier's route up Moss Ghyll, but the difficulties are much more concentrated—the exposed chimney leading off the bridge platform being probably more difficult than anything in Moss Ghyll. In a word, it is a very ingenious climb, and merits the attention of all members of the craft, the rock scenery being magnificent, and some of the situations unique. In crossing the Bridge, for instance, one can look down without obstruction through a small gap on the screes 200 feet below. "What a pity it isn't double the height," said one of the party, as we reluctantly moved away from the scene of our exploits, and this remark aptly expressed our one and a half hours' happy acquaintance with Bidean's famous "Church Door Buttress."

THE NORTH ARÊTE OF CYFRWY.

By T. K. R.

CYFRWY has probably been climbed more often than any other cliff on Cader Idris. Within easy reach of Dolgelley, attractive in appearance, and full in view of every wayfarer who proceeds up or down the Foxes' Path, it cannot have escaped the observation of the most transitory visitor to the district. However, there seem to be still one or two climbs on it destitute of recorded ascents, and it is said by Haskett Smith in his book that one of these, the North Arête, "has probably not been ascended." On September 3rd, F. W. Rose and I tried the route and found it pleasant and interesting.

Starting from Llyn y Gader, we struck across the screes to the arête and found ourselves conducted naturally to a scree ledge with some rocks below, which remained for future investigation. The broad straight scree gully mentioned by Haskett Smith lay only a few yards to our right, and a shallow depression hardly to be called a gully (not marked in his sketch "elevation" of the cliff), and apparently offering an easy route upwards, was a little to our left. The way lies straight up for the first 130 feet, and the last pitch, 10 feet high, in this part of the climb may be turned on the right by working up a loose pile of rocks hanging over the gully.

From this point the arête is much sharper and more defined. It turns to the left, the grass slopes to the right being avoided. For the next 100 feet the scrambling is safe and easy, but entertaining to those who are fond of Cuchullin ridges—and who is not? Large loose rocks were abundant, and some were necessarily sent down. Passing the top of the flat gully on the left already mentioned, the arête turns again

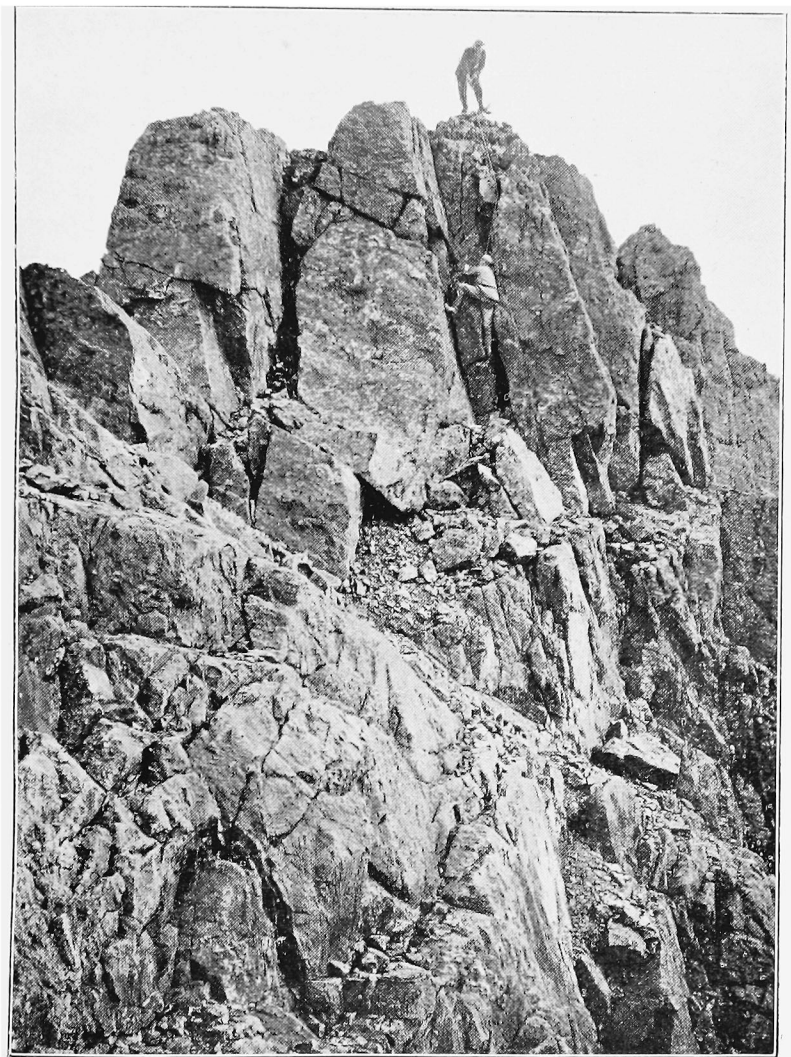
and leads straight upwards, affording fine views of the impregnable slabs to the east, and at 300 feet from the foot of the climb the summit of the pinnacle is reached. The gully leading up from the left to this point appears from above to offer an interesting climb, but on the ridge the descent from the pinnacle to the mountain side is only about 10 feet.

The next 50 feet presents the only serious difficulty in the climb, and after inspecting it, the counsels of laziness and prudence prevailed, and we turned, it by an easy route to the right, immediately returning to the ridge at the top of the pitch. Finally, at 100 feet above the top of the pinnacle, and 200 feet below the summit of Cyfrwy, the climb ceases and becomes a promenade. Speaking generally, the arête hardly fulfils the promise its appearance seems to make. It resembles the east arête, and, with the elements of uncertainty of an unknown climb removed, it would perhaps be pronounced easier.

EXTRACTS FROM A RAMBLER'S DIARY IN ROSS-SHIRE AND SKYE.

By A. L. BAGLEY.

Saturday, June 2nd. Left the Kinlochewe Hotel at 8.30 A.M., *en route* for Slioch. It was a grand morning, but too hot, and I very soon began to feel the effects of the blazing sun. Reached the Bannisdail burn at 9.40, and followed the path straight on to the gamekeeper's cottage at Smiorsair, where I was interviewed by the gamekeeper. He was, however, perfectly civil, and made no attempt to stop me; he merely thought it his duty to enter a formal protest, so I gave him my card, and he finished by pointing out the best way up, and wishing me good luck. At the Smiorsair burn, just below a pretty little waterfall, I halted at about 11 o'clock for lunch, and progress became very slow, as it was excessively hot. Obeying the gamekeeper's instructions, I followed this burn almost to its source, until I came to the foot of a very steep grass slope, and then struck straight up the latter. Before long, however, the grass slope ended in some magnificent rock masses, considerably below the summit, and east thereof, and I began to realize that I was on the wrong grass slope, and that a rather awkward gully lay between me and the right one. The far side of the gully consisted of the gravelly edge of the other grass slope, but the near side was a stiff rock-face, with very small hand and foot-holds, which I traversed with some difficulty and much caution. This, however, was the only spot on Slioch where I had any excitement. Proceeding slowly and laboriously up this steep grass slope, I emerged at length on the ridge a few yards west of the summit, and reached the cairn at 1.15. I suppose this is wretched time



THE SUMMIT OF SGURR-NAN-GILLEAN.

Photo. by G. P. ABRAHAM & SONS, KESWICK.

from Kinlochewe, but it was an exceedingly hot day, and rapid progress was quite impossible; even taking it easy, as I did, I felt a little bit done up by the heat, and lay on the shady side of the cairn for about half an hour, resting, and drinking in the magnificent views. It was certainly a perfect day to *be* on the top of a mountain, whatever it might be for the arduous toil of climbing the same. The sky was of the deep blue which one usually associates with Italy and the Mediterranean, rather than with the Western Highlands; there was not a cloud to be seen, except a tiny flake of white here and there; the vista of Loch Maree, with its cluster of islands, was lovely, and beyond the Minch I could see the long dim line of the Outer Hebrides. The mighty mass of Ben Eighe, with which I hoped soon to become better acquainted, dominated the southern foreground, and to the right, and far beyond, a mass of jagged, needle-like points, which could belong to no other cluster of mountains in Britain but the Cuchullins. Northwards, the most interesting feature to me was the Promised Land of the Chalichs, a noble mass, upon which for a long time I have had my eye; mentally, that is, for my bodily optic now beheld them for the first time. I had hoped to have walked across to Dundonnell, and to have ascended the Chalichs, but circumstances and a cruel fate combine to separate us, and I fear I shall have to leave them. I felt like Moses on Pisgah, but shall hope to ascend them on a future occasion, which was a consolation denied to Moses.

Just below the summit of Slioch was a mighty triangular field of snow, out of the lower point of which trickled a tiny streamlet of icy cold water. Here I stopped for lunch, at which iced whisky and water was decidedly the *pièce de résistance*. Tearing myself away from here, at about half-past two, I went a little way along the southern ridge, and then struck across to the eastern ridge of Slioch, which looked much bolder and more interesting, and which ends in a finely-shaped peak, Sgurr an Tuill Bhain, just over the magic limit of 3000 feet. This side of Slioch is quite spoiled by being all grass; the ridge leading up to the Sgurr is better, and the northern

precipices, falling to Loch Garbhaig and Loch Fada, are very fine, but the descent from the Sgurr an Tuill Bhain to Glen Bannisdail, being excessively steep and mostly grassy, is very tiresome, and I was glad that I had not ascended by this route. Glen Bannisdail, a wild and narrow gorge between Slioch and Ben Mhuinidh, is very fine, and was alone almost worth the toil and heat of the day. At one spot I saw a lovely colour-effect, viz., the sun shining through a waterfall, and throwing a rainbow effect upon the rock beyond, a thing I had never seen before.

Reached the bridge over the Bannisdail burn at 6.25, and the Kinlochewe Hotel at 7.45 P.M.

Monday, June 4th. Left the hotel again at 8.30 A.M., for Ben Eighe. Notwithstanding the most superhuman exertions I can never succeed in getting off before 8.30; I represent to myself the night before, the wisdom of an early start, so as to get well on my way before the heat of the day gets overpowering. I even succeed—occasionally—in dragging myself out of bed at unearthly hours, but I don't think I ever succeeded in getting away from the hotel before 8.30. Followed the Loch Maree road for 10 minutes, and then turned up the path which leads conspicuously up the hills; continued along this path until I was opposite the great white face of Ben Eighe, which is such a conspicuous object from almost anywhere round about Kinlochewe. I was undecided which ridge to ascend, and left it for circumstances to decide; finally I ascended neither. The great white face, though terribly steep, still seemed feasible, and I struck straight up it, through the great grey masses of rock, which are also clearly visible from Kinlochewe. It was, however, a far stiffer job than I had bargained for, not so much from the steepness, though that was formidable, as from the fact that this face, and indeed the whole upper surface of Ben Eighe, except where here and there a mass of grey rock protrudes, is simply an enormous heap of loose bits of quartz, *i.e.*, quartz screes. I had not at all expected that this face would be scree, it looked steeper than any scree that I had ever seen; I had

never been on quartz before, and knew not its little ways. I hate screes at any time, but quartz screes are, of all screes, the most hateful. It was a boiling hot day, and the rays of the sun were reflected with peculiar intensity from the glaring white quartz around me ; the stones seemed peculiarly sharp, and to pick one's way up a very severe slope of these loose, razor-like bits of quartz, constantly slipping back, and vainly clutching at other loose bits to save oneself, was agonising, heartrending. Moreover, when I at length arrived at the summit of this eastern point of the mountain, at 11.40, I was disgusted to find that there was no cairn, and that I had had that awful scramble for the sake of a nameless point, which too, I am afraid, did not quite reach 3000 feet. If I could have proceeded comfortably, or indeed otherwise, along the ridge to Sgurr Ban, I would not have minded, but I soon found that this was impracticable. I started gaily enough along the ridge, and climbed the first pile of rocks, only to find an absolutely sheer drop on the other side, so had to come down again, pick my weary way round the various shoulders of Sgurr Ban, and finally repeat the heartrending scramble up another steep quartz scree to the summit. I felt much inclined to give it up ; but, whate'er betide, I felt that I must attain a cairn of some sort, and kept grimly on, until at length, at one o'clock, I stood on the summit of Sgurr Ban. The misery (for it was really nothing less) of this ascent was intensified by the fact that I had not come across any water since about 10 o'clock, and, being so early, I had then only had a little drop ; practically, therefore, I had had nothing to drink since breakfast, at 7.30 A.M. The quartz always seems to be waterless ; it was again an excessively hot day, and I was parched. I had stopped a few minutes at a snow patch just below the ridge, but there was no water issuing from it, and frozen snow is a poor substitute. It was very unfortunate, for I should otherwise have followed the ridge from Sgurr Ban to the point marked "3000 feet" on the ordnance maps, but, so far as I know, nameless ; then I had hoped to go on to Sail Mhor, and possibly to Ruadh Stac Mhor ; this would

have made a grand day, but I felt so parched that I was afraid I should collapse, if I did not very soon get some water. This drink question is really a very serious problem in weather such as I have been favoured with. I had some whisky with me, but too strong to drink without some more water; if I had mixed it weak enough to be drinkable, no ordinary flask would have held enough to last a climber throughout a long day, and it would, besides, have got so warm as to be almost undrinkable; on the other hand, taking it in my flask either neat, or mixed strong, I was entirely dependent upon chance burns and springs, and these are almost entirely wanting on the upper portions of Ben Eighe. On this occasion this great drink problem spoiled my day; I had plenty of sandwiches, but was too dry to swallow a mouthful. I carefully scanned the mountain sides to find the nearest spot where I was likely to find water. A descent on the right, into the deep valley between Sgurr Ban and Ruadh Stac Mhor looked risky and difficult, and it was impossible to tell how far I might have to go before striking *ile*, otherwise water. On my left, in a huge corrie, or basin, below the summit marked 3000 feet, I could distinctly see water, and, as it seemed the nearest spot where I was certain of finding it, I started for it down that horrible quartz scree. It was further than I had thought—screes are very deceptive—and took me an hour—an awful hour—to get down. By this time I was suffering tortures of thirst, and was beginning to wonder how long it would be before my remains would be found, if I came to an untimely end. I arrived at the conclusion that it would probably be some years before anybody else would be foolish enough to tackle Sgurr Ban, and that it was hardly worth while to compose my own epitaph, since nobody would be likely to see it, when, soon after leaving the loose quartz limit, I suddenly discovered a tiny well, by almost sitting down in it. My foot slipped on a bit of damp moss, which led me to look about, until I discovered a well about the size of a large breakfast cup. I reckoned that it saved my life, and christened it "Salvation Well." I was loth to leave it, and lingered for

nearly an hour. After tearing myself away, I struck a burn or spring about every ten minutes, and was so afraid of having to undergo my previous troubles all over again, that I felt impelled to stop at all of them, and progress was consequently exceedingly slow for some time. I was now in a vast corrie, with a very sharp point (not quartz) projecting on my left, towards the Torridon road, and a ridge in front, which did not look very formidable. After considerable hesitation, I decided to mount this ridge, and find out whether it would be possible to ascend Sail Mhor before returning to Kinlochewe. The ridge, however, was *very* formidable ; it was much steeper than it had looked, and when I got to what had appeared to be the top, to my excessive disgust I found myself again, for the third time, on a very steep quartz scree. I really do not know why I was foolish enough to go on, as it was getting late, and it was hardly possible now to ascend Sail Mhor, but I hate to knuckle under, even to quartz screes, so kept on, thinking I should at anyrate get to the cairn marked 3000 feet on the maps. When, however, I emerged at length on the top of the ridge, I found myself at a natural cairn, only a few yards as the crow flies from the 3000 feet top, but separated from it by a deep cut in the ridge, which looked impracticable. Then I caved in. It was now 5.15, and I was again in agonies of thirst ; I did not feel that I specially yearned to stand on that 3000 feet top, nor, indeed, on any other top, if it were only attainable by making a long *détour* over that ghastly quartz, so I came down as straight as I could, a great part of the way doing a sort of glissade down the quartz scree. After leaving the quartz there was still a lot of rough and tiresome work to be done, and it was 7.50 when at length I stood on the Torridon road, not far from the 5th milestone, and 9.30 when I reached the Kinlochewe Hotel, having been 13 hours absent, about the stiffest and hardest day I have ever had. In a few years' time I shall look back upon the day with pride, and shall imagine that I enjoyed it ; at present I can only say that I never wish to see another quartz mountain as long as I live, and to those who

contemplate the ascent of Ben Eighe, my earnest advice is: "Don't." All the same, I am glad I went, as otherwise, in blissful ignorance of the actual conditions of the ascent, I should have always regretted not having gone. In cooler weather it would have been far less trying, and I might then have carried out my original programme, including Sail Mhor and Ruadh Stac Mhor; as it is, my chief impression of Ben Eighe is a sort of nightmare; a Sisyphean toiling up and down successive quartz screes, myself all the time consumed with a raging thirst.

Wednesday, June 6th. Again left the hotel, as usual, at 8.30, driving to the 7th milestone on the Torridon road, *en route* for Liathach. Hitherto the weather had been perfect, though too hot, and this morning, when I started, it looked like a continuance of fine weather, although the wind certainly was getting up in rather an uncanny manner. My driver opined that it would be a fine day, but I had ample proof before the day was over, that his opinions, both meteorological and topographical, were very broken reeds to lean upon; his prophecies in the former department, and his advice in the latter, were alike dismal failures. As a result of my own experience, not only on this occasion, but also in former holidays, I offer the following advice, emphatically:—*Never*, except in very exceptional cases, consult local talent; if local talent persists in offering its advice, disregard the advice absolutely. Local talent, as a general rule, knows nothing of the mountain which rises from its back door, but will die rather than admit its ignorance. Reconnoitre your mountain, and make up your mind as to your route, and do not confide your intentions to local talent, or the latter will do its level best to choke you off.

Driving along the Torridon road, Liathach shows to great advantage, but I had never read a detailed account of an ascent, and had never seen it from the Torridon side, and somehow got a very wrong impression of it. The easternmost spur, opposite Ben Eighe, is a very fine peak, but nameless and cairnless; this I took to be Spidean a Coire Leith.

Further on, towards Torridon, a bold black mass of rock projects from the main body of the mountain; behind this black mass is a peak, upon which a cairn may be just distinguished from the road, and which I took to be Mullach am Rathain. Too late, I found this latter to be Spidean, and I did not discover my error until, after a toilsome but interesting climb, I stood at length on the summit of the extreme eastern point of the ridge. Then I had the mortification of seeing the peak of Spidean far to the west, with a few miles (apparently) of ridge between; a grand ridge certainly, with magnificent precipices and some fine gullies to the north, but hard work. I had traversed the ridge, and stood at length at the foot of the final cone of Spidean—another hour would probably have taken me to the top—when I realised that a storm was coming on. There had been a little rain before, and I had sheltered under an overhanging rock. I had noticed that great masses of mist were approaching rapidly, and really ought to have gone straight down from the eastern spur, but had hoped it would pass over. It was very aggravating, but obviously the only thing now was to get down as soon as I could. Liathach is by no means a mountain upon which one should be caught in a storm or mist; on the contrary, the peculiar terraces, which are so conspicuous from the Torridon road, make it particularly dangerous in a thick mist; they are awkward enough at any time, as I soon found. I descended through the great corrie, which stretches in a noble amphitheatre from the bold, black rock before mentioned, to the ridge along which I had passed. Two or three times I came to the verge of a wall of rock, one of the afore-mentioned terraces, resembling a tier of the Coliseum, where for a few moments I appeared to be stuck fast, but soon found a weak spot, or a crack or groove in the rock, where I managed to clamber down. In fine weather this great corrie would be magnificent, but the storm had begun soon after I left the ridge, the mist was rapidly smothering everything, thunder and lightning were playing around me, and all my energies were devoted to getting down as soon as I possibly could.

Even under these circumstances I stopped now and then to admire the mighty rock masses and remarkable Coliseum-like terraces. It was 4'45 when I at length reached the Torridon road, a few hundred yards west of the point where I had started in the morning. The mountain, and indeed the whole country-side, was all swathed in mist, and the rain was descending in that steady, pitiless downpour which seems a peculiar patent of Scotch rain. I had still $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles to go, and was already thoroughly drenched. When I reached the hotel, at 6'45, I must have looked, as I certainly felt, a most miserable object. I regretted very much not having gone up Liathach yesterday, which had been a splendid day, and which, from a mountaineering point of view, I had wasted in a 20 miles tramp to Loch Maree and back. However, before the storm came on, I had enjoyed some interesting climbing, and had, at any rate, learned something of Liathach. I shall hope on some future occasion to stand upon the summits of both its peaks, and to pass along the intervening ridge.

Friday, June 8th. Weather prospects were not encouraging this morning. Ben Eighe was invisible, and there was far too much mist about for mountaineering. Yet, although all day it has looked and felt like rain, it has not actually rained. I succeeded in getting away from the hotel at the unearthly hour of 7'45 A.M., in order to catch the early steamer up the lake from Rhu Noa. A man at the hotel had told me of a fine walk, from Letterewe, by a path over the hills to the east end of the Fionn Loch, thence down Glen Tulacha and along the shores of Loch Fada, and back by Glen na Muic and the Heights of Kinlochewe. This programme I carried out to the letter, and I think it was the finest Highland walk I have ever had, with the single exception of the walk from Braemar to Aviemore over the Larig Ghru. My informant specially mentioned the grand cliffs at the back of Ben Lair, and they certainly are magnificent; one long wall of grey rock down the entire length of Glen Tulacha, making this glen, which would otherwise be merely a filthy bog, one of the wildest and finest bits of Highland scenery that I have ever seen. I had

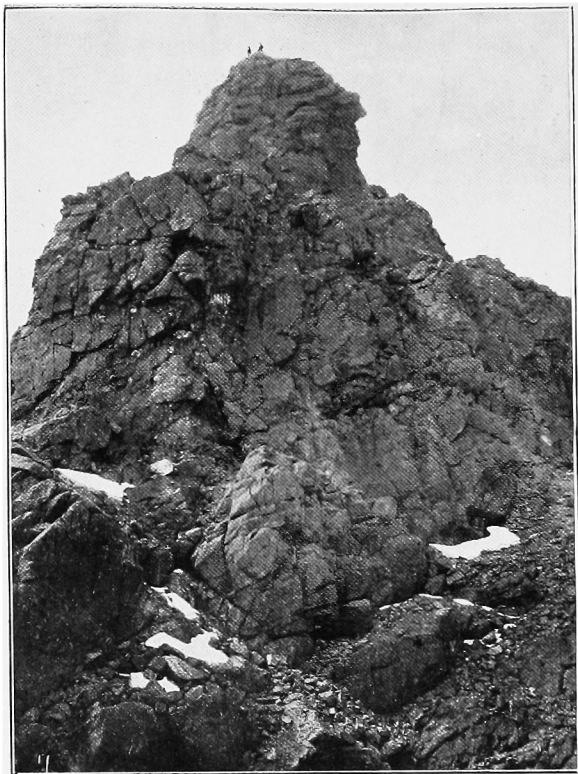
thought of ascending Ben Lair, but, as it was smothered in mist, I thought I had better leave it alone.

I do not remember ever to have seen these northern cliffs of Ben Lair mentioned in any mountaineering records, and recommend them to the notice of any enthusiastic climbers, who may honour me by reading these notes, as it seemed to me that they would afford some very pretty climbing. As, however, their tops were in the mist, I could form no idea of the height. It is a little more than an hour's walk from Letterewe, over an excellent path, to the head of the Fionn Loch, and before the latter is reached, immediately after passing the col, the grey rocks of Ben Lair begin, and the path for Glen Tulacha and Loch Fada branches to the right. This path, however, very soon vanishes into the *Ewigkeit*, and for the next 8 or 9 miles one has to painfully pick one's weary way through one long bog, until at length, after four or five hours' hard work, the path down Glen na Muic is reached, at the east end of Loch Fada. The ordnance maps mark a path down the whole length of Glen Tulacha and a third of the length of Loch Fada to "Claonadh," but the latter is a ruin, and the path is merged into bog, although there are signs here and there that a path once existed.

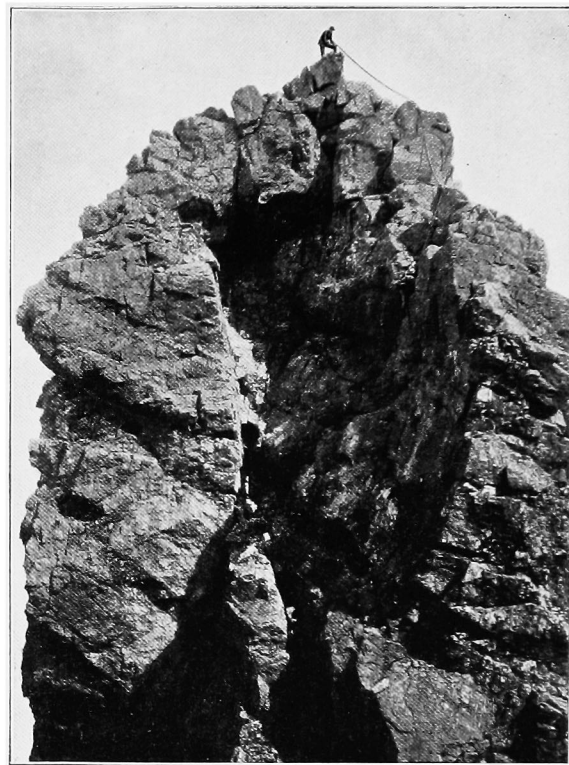
Sligachan, Monday, June 11th. Came here on Saturday in typical Skye weather. Had intended to be out early this morning for Sgurr nan Gillean, viâ the Pinnacles, but did not succeed in getting away from the hotel until 8.50. To my urban eye it looked a bad morning, and the summits were all invisible, but everybody assured me—and I consulted every available native—that it would be a fine day, and for once they were right; which, however, is the less to their credit, inasmuch as they always prophesy the same thing, and consequently their prophecies must occasionally come true, even in Skye. Certainly, to-day the mists cleared off in a remarkable manner, the sun appeared before I got away from the hotel, and it turned out a blazing hot day; consequently I took it very easily, and it was 11.10 before I reached the foot of the Pinnacle ridge. I suppose this is shockingly bad time, but it

was far too hot to worry about records, and I had halted for lunch just before reaching the ridge, as there was no knowing when I should strike water again, and it seemed probable that I was to experience a very dry day—a foreboding which was amply fulfilled. How I sighed, not for the wings of a dove—though it would have simplified matters considerably if I could have flown from one pinnacle to the other—but for the stomach, or rather stomachs, of a camel! What a blissful dream, to be provided with a string of reservoirs in your inside; what a vista of delightful ideas is opened up! Can a camel fill each of its stomachs with a different liquor, and turn on the tap, so to speak, of each one in turn, according to whether it fancies claret or champagne, a wee drappie, or a modest half-bitter? If so, it is deeply to be regretted that we human creatures cannot be built on the same lines, internally, as the camel.

I had intended to note times of arrival at each pinnacle, but find that I have only four times noted, viz., 11.50, 12.30, 1.30, and, summit of Sgurr nan Gilleann, 2.20, and think I must have omitted the first pinnacle. It was easy enough until the top of the third pinnacle was reached; I did then begin to wonder whether I should ever leave it again, for retracing my steps was not to be thought of, and at first I could see no other means of leaving the pinnacle, for on the left and in front it appeared an absolutely sheer drop. However, I presently found a way down, by retracing my steps for two or three yards, and then working down a chimney on the right. There was an awkward moment just before reaching this chimney; I had to slide down a smooth rock face, with no holds, to the top of the chimney; this was easy enough, but the chimney passed under an overhanging rock, at right angles to the direction in which I was going, and the awkwardness lay in the fact that I could only see the top of the chimney, and could not tell what the lower part of it might be like, or even whether it had a lower part at all. This was decidedly awkward, as it would be impossible to climb up the smooth rock face again; I doubt whether even a very tall man could



The Third Pinnacle, Sgurr-nan-Gilleann.



The Third Pinnacle, Sgurr-nan-Gilleann.

Descent, shewing bad step.

Photos. by G. P. ABRAHAM & SONS, KESWICK.

have done it alone, and the holds were certainly out of my reach. However, I could see no other way, so slid down the rock into the chimney, which was fortunately fairly easy; half way down there was a jammed stone, but I had no difficulty in getting round it, and was soon in the gully between the 3rd and 4th pinnacles. The latter is much on a par with the 3rd, but I had no particular difficulty anywhere on it, nor on the summit. I suppose five and a-half hours from Sligachan to the summit of Sgurr nan Gilleán is shockingly bad time, but it was very hot and close; long before I got to the top the mists had all cleared off, and it was a gorgeous day to be on a Cuchullin peak, but I was bathed in perspiration, and (as usual) parched with thirst; a case of moisture in the wrong place; an example of the cursedness of things in general. Besides, being alone, I was naturally rather longer over it, as the route was totally unknown to me, and one has to be extra careful when alone, when there was probably not a human creature nearer than Sligachan. I doubt whether the Pinnacles have often been climbed by a solitary individual before; at anyrate by one who was among the Cuchullins for the first time in his life.

The view from the summit was of course magnificent, but I was too dry to stay up there long, and soon descended into the Bhasteir Corrie, where I found a spring of icy cold water a few hundred yards below the ridge; here I stayed for a prolonged rest, and a gorge of iced whisky and water and sandwiches. I had some vague hopes of also doing the Bhasteir and Bruach na Frithe, and have regretted since that I did not do so, but it was now about 4 o'clock, and a mirage of the hotel dining-room floated before my eyes, myself, as the central figure, doing ample justice to the excellent dinner usually provided by Mrs. Sharpe, and imbibing large quantities of claret and soda. The last sandwich was gone, the last drop of whisky had been squeezed out of the flask, and had found its way to the bourn whence no whisky returneth; the mirage was too much for me, I turned my back on the Bhasteir, and reached the flesh-pots of Sligachan at 6.40.

Tuesday, June 12th. Had intended to have a quiet day, as it seemed really too hot for climbing, but there are no short walks at Sligachan, and nothing to do except climb, and it really seemed a pity to waste such a splendid day, so I started about 10 o'clock for Bruach na Frithe, by the usual route. I had a little trouble in getting across the burn, as it was rather full, but crossed it at last, and then struck as straight as possible across the bogs and moor, and up the Fionn Corrie. When I got opposite the gap in the north ridge of Bruach na Frithe, I left the corrie, as I was getting rather tired of the monotony of mere walking, and wanted something more exciting, and struck up the scree on the right, and thence over the rocks to the ridge; there was, however, nothing really sensational. Reached the summit at 2 o'clock, but had not such a good view as yesterday from Sgurr nan Gilleann, as it was very hazy. From the summit I went on to the Bhasteir Tooth, which I much wanted to climb, but, after an inspection of it from both sides, I did not see how I was to do it alone, except by the old route from Lota Corrie; this, however, meant a long descent over screes, and I hate screes; moreover, my interior was by now in its usual parched condition, resembling a lime-kiln, so I adjourned to the burn at the head of the Fionn Corrie, and spent half-an-hour in vain attempts to moisten myself; it was like trying to water the Sahara with a penny squirt, but the process was agreeable while it lasted. When this delightful occupation began to pall upon me, I found it was nearly 4 o'clock, and the vision of the previous afternoon again presenting itself with overpowering force, the not too willing flesh proved lamentably weak, and I returned to the hotel, which I reached about 6 o'clock.

Wednesday, June 13th. Another blazing hot day. I had been turning over the Bhasteir Tooth in my mind, and had resolved to have another look at it. Left the hotel at 9.50 on the same route as yesterday, but crossed the burn earlier, and kept on the east side of the Fionn Corrie. Taking it very easily on account of the great heat, and halting occasionally for an interval of repose and refreshment, I did not reach the

Bealach a Leitir until 1:25. I first ascended the Sgurr a Fionn Choire, as it is just over 3000 feet, and I was determined to have at least one top of that magic height, to show for the day's work. Yesterday I had unaccountably omitted it. It is an easy little scramble, and in 15 or 20 minutes I was down again on the Bealach a Leitir, and proceeded to the Bhasteir Tooth. First I went to inspect the caves on the north side, but came to the conclusion that the game was not worth the candle, as the caves were so wet and dirty; then I got on the col, just below the overhanging nose, with the intention of trying Naismith's climb, as described in a late number of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, but soon decided that it was rather too risky by myself, and gave it up altogether.

On my way back to Sligachan, I had an experience of what a Skye storm can really be. Soon after leaving the Bhasteir Corrie, the sky became gradually overcast, and I hurried on in a vain attempt to reach the hotel before the storm broke. I had just reached the boggy, open moor, where there was no shelter for miles, when the heavens suddenly opened, and the blizzard burst upon me. In three minutes I felt as though I had not a shred of clothing on me, and was being soundly whipped. It got very dark, too, and on the open moor, with no path, and no visible landmarks, I could only retain the vaguest idea of the direction in which lay Sligachan; occasionally I slipped into a boggy hole or ditch up to my knees, and when I arrived at the hotel I was in the filthiest condition imaginable.

Whether this experience damped my ardour (it certainly damped everything else that I had on or about me), I don't quite know, but the deplorable fact remains that during the remaining three days of my stay at Sligachan, I did nothing more, except the usual walk round Camasunary and Loch Coruisk. I think the heat was the principal deterrent agent; it really required great strength of mind to start out for a climb in the great heat which prevailed up to the last day of my stay there, but, since my return to my native plains, I have greatly regretted the deplorable waste of those three days.

WASTDALE NOTES.

By G. D. A.

SINCE the last Wastdale Notes appeared, the second and third ascents of Walker's Gully have been made. On July 4th, Messrs. Parsons and Riley showed that the ascent was possible under ordinary conditions, and in September, Messrs. Claude and Guy Barton repeated the climb, though their route up the first pitch was partly on the right wall. The route followed on both occasions was practically the same as that taken on the first ascent, and the opinions of the various climbers as to the difficulties of the different pitches are, as usual, somewhat at variance. It may be roughly stated that the top pitch, if climbed in the right way, has not retained the reputed standard of difficulty which the earlier explorers gave to it.

One hears no mention of falling stones, the "bogey" used by certain climbers to scare off youthful and thoughtless aspirants; but Walker's Gully can never be considered safe from this great danger, which is probably the worst feature of the climb.

Wastdale was a busy place during September and early October, several large parties of climbers being hard at work. Among the more difficult ascents may be mentioned those of the Engineer's Chimney on Gable Crag, the Ling Chimney on the Eagle's Nest Arête, and the West Jordan Gully by Messrs. Barton. Messrs. Slade, Fraser and Simey made the third ascent of the Pisgah Buttress, and the two former spent some days on variations of the Shamrock Chimneys.

A mysterious party of climbers spent some days on the direct north face of the Pillar Rock, and spoke vaguely of new routes and of overhanging places where suckers and

claws would be absolutely necessary ; nevertheless we hear of nothing new being done, and the leader who takes a party safely from the waterfall directly up the north face of the Low Man will have much to be proud of.

On October 2nd, a serious accident befell a tourist who was indulging in solitary walking over Pavey Ark. The unfortunate victim was a young medical student from Leeds called Sowerbutts, and the details of the accident will probably never be known. It may be mentioned that the day of the accident was decidedly stormy and misty, so that to anyone unaccustomed to mountains, the Upper Craggs of Pavey Ark must have been extremely dangerous. The body was not found until late on the following Thursday on the large screes near the lower end of Jack's Rake, and just below the Rake End Chimney. From the state of the remains the fall must have been a considerable one: the Craggs are about 400 feet high at that point. Many years have passed since our Cumberland mountains have taken revenge on any of those who explore them. Solitary scrambling is almost universally condemned, and its advocates have still another example of its dangers and risk.

KYNDWR CLUB NOTES.

ELDEN HOLE. As already noted, a visit was paid in August to this mysterious chasm, and Bagley descended about 80 ft., without, however, ascertaining much about the nature of the Hole, except that it is a very dirty place, as his clothes will permanently testify. It was then resolved to attempt a descent to the bottom with no more elaborate apparatus than an A.C. rope, and early in September this project was carried out by Mr. J. W. Puttrel, of Sheffield, the originator of a scheme for exploring this and various other limestone cavities in Derbyshire, at the head of a party including Messrs. A. L. Bagley, E. A. Baker, H. Bond, J. Croft, R. McCrum, and F. Wightman ; two villagers from Peak Forest lent valuable assistance. No other exploration has been made without the aid of a windlass and other mechanical appliances, the last recorded descent being that of Rooke Pennington in 1873. There was not only more interest in using rock-climbing methods so far as possible, but as it turned out the affair was attended by some thrilling incident. It is not worth while in these notes, however, to give more than a rough account of the descent.

Bagley climbed down the wet and slimy rocks, which are inclined at an angle approaching the vertical, until he reached the brink of an overhanging cliff, where he was quickly joined by Baker, while three others took up a position a few yards higher. Some 400 ft. of rope was used to connect the men and keep a good length in reserve, the depth of the Hole being 180 feet. It was manifest at once that further climbing was impossible ; Bagley fell off the ledges at the side, where he was examining the lower reaches ; there was a tremendous strain on the rope, and Bond and Baker had to let him down

gently to a small niche, 70 feet below them, where the latter was sent to join him as soon as the others could find a suitable anchorage. Baker then let him down the last 30 feet single-handed. There was now an excited discussion among the party upstairs as to what should be done, for they found the job stiffer than had been anticipated. They decided to pull Bagley up at once so as to test their hauling powers, while Baker stayed in the niche to prevent any accident to the rope.

The trial of strength was so severe, the difficulties being aggravated by the sloping and treacherous nature of the spot where the hauling party had attempted to wedge themselves, that it was determined only one more member, and he the lightest of the party, could safely be let down. Baker was thereupon allowed to finish the descent, then Wightman was sent down, and a few minutes afterwards a Gladstone bag, containing camera, fireworks, electric lamps and batteries, string, and provisions, was carefully despatched to the bottom.

To summarise the remaining incidents of a memorable day, these two men explored the inner cave, took a number of flashlight photographs, which unfortunately were not very successful, and, after a good deal of delay, due to the lack of assistance, came up again about 5 p.m. to the foot of the Hole and shouted to be hauled up. The other party, being engaged in climbing on the edge of the cavity, did not immediately attend to the summons, and dusk was deepening rapidly into total darkness when they reached their former lodgment 80 feet down. Wightman was restored to his friends soon after 7 p.m., but, through the entangling of the rope, and, worse still, through an accident to the baggage, the other man was not got out till an hour later, having spent altogether nine hours in the Hole; and, as may be imagined, the return journey, with all the luggage tied round his body, was a difficult and painful one, both for those who were hauling and the man hauled.

A fresh descent will shortly be made, with suitable apparatus, so as to secure some good photographs of the

interior; and, apropos of this subject, it may be mentioned that the Club has been given the opportunity of a special visit to the wellknown Speedwell Mine, near Castleton, for purposes of exploration.

ANNUAL DINNER, &c. The Annual Dinner, at Derby, gathered together most of the members on October 16th. On Nov. 5th and 6th, Mr. E. A. Baker gave lantern-lectures on Mountaineering in Scotland, and exhibited a large number of slides illustrative of the climbs on Buchaille Etive, Bidean-nam-Bian, and the Cuchullins, which were highly appreciated.

SCRAMBLING IN SOUTH WALES.

By P. A. THOMPSON.

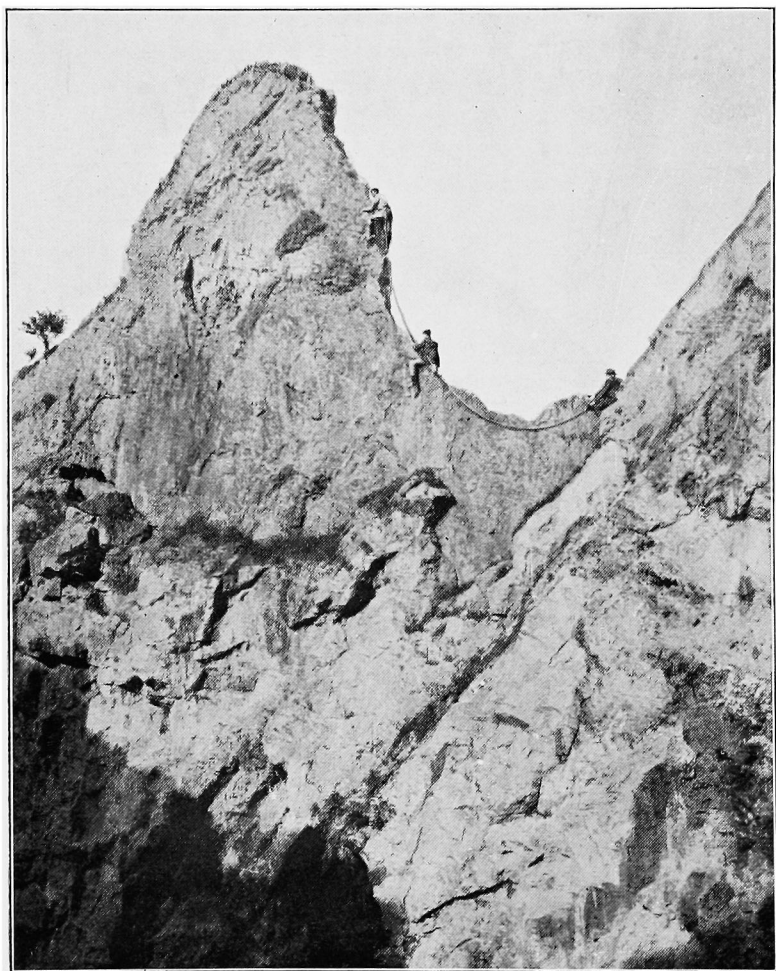
THOUGH the enthusiastic climber in South Wales must be content with "wayside problems," we, in Cardiff, are perhaps more fortunately placed than most in having close at hand a really excellent practice ground in a disused limestone quarry. Most of the climbs there would probably be classed amongst the late Mr. O. G. Jones' difficult courses ; one might even be counted exceptionally severe. A fifteen minutes' journey on the Taff Vale Railway brings us to Taff's Well, and a foot-bridge outside the station leads into a road above which, amongst the woods of the Little Garth, the quarry can be seen. One might imagine that the quarrymen had conducted their operations under the direction of the Climbers' Club, which, anxious to provide a suitable gymnasium, had ordered some miniature Dolomites to be hewn out. It is said, however, that these remarkable fragments are composed of the substance known as "bastard rock," and thus, being useless, they have been laid bare by the removal of the surrounding valuable material.

As one enters the quarry the most striking fragment projects straight towards one like a wall, nowhere more than four feet broad at the top, and in places narrowing down to the merest knife-edge. Where it springs from the back of the quarry a col is formed, whence in a few feet the Wall attains its greatest height ; then it suddenly descends, and afterwards rises to a sharp pinnacle, beyond which it runs to the ground in a final descent. The second and more prominent point, about 100 feet in height, had for long been known as the Taff's Well Matterhorn, and had gained a perhaps undeserved reputation, though few attempts were made upon it before the present year.

On a bitterly cold day last March it was ascended by P. S. T. and the writer, by means of a great ledge, which runs obliquely up its western face, some 12 feet beneath the north arête. At a height of 20 feet from the ground the ledge shelved outwards, and required care for a short distance. The rest was perfectly simple, and after following the ledge for 60 feet the arête above was reached by a pull up over somewhat rotten rock, close to the small tree in the photograph. I fear that the second man had a bad time here on that first occasion, but most of the loose pieces have now been sent down. The final grass-covered slope presented little difficulty. Whilst we were on the summit a few flakes of snow fell, so we hurried down, for the bad bit of ledge would be a very nasty place if wet, and almost impassable when the rocks were glazed.

On a later date the arête above the ledge was climbed throughout its entire length. The first few feet are decidedly stiff, and in working on to the less severe slope above one must, if possible, resist the temptation to assist the finger-tips with nose and chin, a form of climbing with one's head which is both painful and inelegant. This *mauvais pas* accomplished, the climber finds himself on a slope so regular that it seems like the top of a buttress of masonry. The small weatherings which enable him to advance are invisible from below, and the slope looks dangerously smooth and steep. This part of the climb is, however, more arduous than difficult, and the older route is joined at the easier part above.

The south arête of the "Matterhorn" gives a delightfully sensational climb from the deep notch between the two peaks. An easy scramble of nine or ten feet from a bank on the eastern side of the Wall enables one to reach this point, but once there it is somewhat startling to find an abrupt drop of quite 50 feet to the level floor of the quarry on the west. In front one sees only the thin ascending edge of the wall, which seems of appalling steepness, whilst near the top it leans over towards the west, very slightly, but enough to give any falling body a clean drop to the bottom. In reality the angle is not



TAFF'S WELL MATTERHORN.

Shewing first ascent by South Arête.

excessive, and the arête can be overcome without serious difficulty by swarming up it.

It may be mentioned that it is possible to reach the notch from the west, up ledges which look easy from below, but the general run of the holds is so bad that as yet this has only been accomplished with the moral support of a rope held from above. This was at more than one point so nearly converted into actual support that no ambition has been felt to repeat the climb without this precaution.

The summit nearer the back of the quarry is perhaps 20 feet higher than the "Matterhorn." It may be ascended directly from the notch or by the rocks which run up on either side to the col behind it. The western climb contains one difficult pitch which for long resisted all our efforts, and only yielded at last to a strong party of five, including an Alpine Club man and two members of the Climbers' Club.

A week after the first ascent of the "Matterhorn" a rather lower but more difficult rock was climbed. This stands a little to the west of the Wall, and is completely isolated, so that one can walk all round it. The first 40 feet, up to a small tree on the northern arête, gave little trouble, the handholds being small but good, and the footholds sufficient for scarpetti. The tree has since been reached in several ways, the most obvious, along the oblique ledge presently referred to, being far from the easiest. Above we were stopped by a more than perpendicular step, 12 feet high. To the left a smooth sloping slab led to a still higher overhanging wall. To the right a comfortable platform ended in a narrow ledge, encumbered with large, loose flakes, which left little room for the feet outside them. A way was tried by a traverse lower down into the oblique ledge which now makes part of the west face climb, but that day the difficulties at the critical point proved too great. Eventually the upper ledge was passed, almost entirely by balance and without disturbing the unstable blocks. In a few feet fair handhold could be reached, and it was then possible to regain the arête. This passage is not exactly difficult, but it is not unusual to see much modesty

displayed here in coming down. The last few feet on the arête are steep and the holds are shaky.

The alternative route by the west face is certainly harder. From the platform above the tree I paid out the rope while the leader crossed two-thirds of the face by a rather poor ledge, which starts near the foot of the north arête. Owing to the upward trend of the ledge the rope soon ceased to be any protection, and when the ledge came to an end a very exposed and difficult bit had to be conquered. Then fairly easy rocks led to the south arête, close to the summit, our full 80 feet of rope being out between this point and the platform, where I remained until the leader had finished the climb. On a subsequent descent by this route, however, we found two intermediate places from which we could safely use the rope, and leaving the ledge 30 feet from the ground, finished by a projecting spur, a very good variation.

The same daring leader found a third way up this pinnacle by the terribly steep south arête, a *tour de force* in which the writer followed with touching confidence in the ability of a good Alpine Club rope to save him from disaster. The first 20 feet are the worst. One climbs straight up under an overhanging rock, and the outward slope of the holds is so pronounced that only Scarpetti or stockings could be used here with any success. Then an awkward corner brings one on the face to the right, by means of which the overhanging rock is turned, and for a few feet the work is easier. Here I joined the leader, whom I found clinging to an old rock-drill, and made myself as secure as circumstances would permit, whilst he attacked the almost vertical rocks above. Owing to the artificial nature of the rock, we felt entitled to use any artificial aids on our way, but the drill lay so closely against the face that it could scarcely be grasped firmly, much less used to make a hitch for the rope, and it was with no small degree of apprehension that I watched the rope run slowly out for another 30 feet. The last obstacle surmounted, we found ourselves on a sharp ridge, along which we could walk to the top. The climb is by far the hardest that has yet been

done, legitimately, in the quarry, and in future it would probably be better for the leader to climb the first 60 feet straight away.

The best climbs are undoubtedly found on the three pinnacles which have here been described, and to them our attention has been almost entirely confined, but the possibilities of our playground are not yet exhausted, and up the back and on the sides of the quarry some interesting courses may yet be worked out.

It must be remembered that the rock is limestone, and therefore requires careful handling, though one is more often troubled by the scarcity of holds than by holds which are insecure. A party of two can go on any of these climbs with 60 feet of rope, though three have been known to take enough to reach to the top of their rock and down again. Owing to the prevalence of outward-sloping holds the climber must rely more on his power of balance than on strength of grip, and scarpetti are almost essential.

Each of the summits is now marked by a small cairn enclosing a tin box, but up to the present very few have availed themselves of the opportunity of leaving their cards there. The hope that others in the neighbourhood may be induced to add to their number must be the excuse for this article.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

THE first provincial dinner of the Climbers' Club was held at the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham, on Saturday, 5th December, with the President, Mr. C. E. Mathews, in the chair. Among those present were Messrs. H. Barrow, W. Barrow, O. Morland, C. E. Mathews, C. M. Mathews, F. V. Milward, F. S. Pearson, A. W. Southall (Birmingham), R. Williams, T. Williams (Birkenhead), T. E. Lowe (Burton-on-Trent), E. A. Baker (Derby), M. T. Pickstone (Edinburgh), E. R. Turner (Epsom), T. Arnold, Jun. (Greenwich), G. W. H. Ellis (Guildford), G. R. Jebb (Great Barr), T. Cox (Hampton-in-Arden), H. G. Gotch (Kettering), P. H. Thorp (Leigh), J. S. Sloane (Leicester), H. Bond (Lincoln), W. E. Corlett, P. O. Weightman (Liverpool), R. F. Backwell, G. B. Bryant (London), L. E. Whitaker (Newton-le-Willows, Lancs.), E. R. Kidson (Nottingham), C. H. Pickstone (Radcliffe, Lancs.), C. W. Nettleton (Streatham), A. Caddick (Sutton Coldfield), and G. T. Glover (York).

After the customary loyal toast, the chairman welcomed the members of the Club to Birmingham in an appreciative speech that held the attention of his audience for nearly twenty minutes. It is an exceedingly trying position for a speaker to have to follow Mr. Mathews when he is in one of his brilliant moods, but the speeches of Mr. F. Sternberg, who proposed, and Mr. R. Williams, who responded to the toast, "Our Club," would seem to shew that mountaineering and oratory go hand in hand. Mr. F. S. Pearson, in a few well chosen words, proposed "Our Guests," to which Mr. O. T. Bainbridge replied, and "Our President," by Mr. T. E. Lowe, called forth another delightful effort from Mr. Mathews, which closed the proceedings.

On the following day Mr. Mathews hospitably entertained those of the visiting members who were able to remain in Birmingham, at The Hurst, Four Oaks, an excellent lunch being preceded by a ramble through the Forest of Arden.

COMMITTEE NOTICE.

THE following gentlemen have been ballotted for and elected members of the Club :—

Rev. H. J. Chaytor, Merchant Taylors' School, Crosby,
Liverpool.

Wynnard Hooper, Esq., 13 Sumner Place, London, S.W.

Waldron Griffiths, Esq., 134 Market Place, Cirencester.

John Henry Arthur Phillips, Esq., c/o Messrs. Hesketh
and Stokes, 110 Cheapside, London, E.C.

A. J. Fontannaz, Esq., 6 Castle Street, Liverpool.

Walter J. Douglass, Esq., 14 Clifton Terrace, Brighton.

Philip S. Thompson, Esq., 83 Colum Road, Cardiff.

Harold Stuart Thompson, Esq., 30 Waterloo Street,
Birmingham.

Arthur L. Bagley, Esq., 28 St. Nicholas Street, Coventry.

John W. F. Forbes, Esq., The School, Warwick.

NOTES.

CAUCASUS CLUB.—Mr. W. R. Rickmers informs us that in Vienna the "Caucasus" Club has just been formed. Its chief feature is the rule that only such climbers will be considered qualified who, during their Alpine career have given sufficient proofs of their independence on the mountains. The number of members will be limited to one hundred, and the candidates will be subjected to a stringent ballot.

* * * *

BEQUEST TO THE SWISS ALPINE CLUB.—The *Athenæum* learns from the Central Committee of the Swiss Alpine Club that Herr J. H. Huber, who died in April, 1900, has bequeathed to the Club 20,000 francs, the interest of which is to be employed in grants to needy widows and orphans of "pratented" Swiss mountain guides who have perished in the exercise of their calling.

* * * *

ACCIDENTS.—None of the accidents referred to in our last issue appear to have been climbing accidents, and fortunately one has proved on investigation not to have been fatal. The fall of Mr. Wilfred McInnes on the Cyfrwy arête of Cader Idris is fully described by Mr. Fred. W. Jackson on page 000, and, as Mr. Jackson suggests, it certainly seems to shew that the human frame can endure more than would at first sight appear possible, but we venture to think that few could repeat Mr. McInnes's experiences with any hope of survival.

* * * *

ACCIDENT ON PAVEY ARK.—The full particulars of the death of Mr. Sowerbutts on Pavey Ark are never likely to be known. Such details as have come to hand are given on page 000, in Mr. Abraham's "Wastdale Notes." Accidents to solitary pedestrians, however much they may be deplored, can

scarcely excite surprise. Those who do not know the dangers of our British hills too often despise them, and shew their contempt by venturing, without the slightest precaution, in places where the expert would use the greatest care. When we think of the numerous tourists we have seen running gaily, in nailless boots, about the grass slopes that overhang Cwm Glas and other similar places, we can only wonder that fatalities are not of more frequent occurrence.

* * * *

ACCIDENT ON TRYFAN.—In August last, two tourists, whose names we have been unable to learn, left Bethesda with the intention of crossing the shoulder of Glydr Fach to Pen-y-Gwryd. The morning was misty, and instead of reaching the nameless bwlch which connects Tryfan with the steep serrated north ridge of Glydr Fach, they appear to have got on to the main ridge of Tryfan considerably to the north of the summits. Quite unconscious that they had deviated from the correct line, they commenced the descent of the east face towards Cwm Tryfan, but had only proceeded a short distance when one of them slipped, and, falling some fifteen or twenty feet, was so shaken and hurt that his companion persuaded him to remain where he was until he could procure assistance, and with this object recommenced the descent alone.

Later in the afternoon, the injured man decided it would be best to make an attempt to return to Bethesda, and recrossing the ridge he succeeded in getting down into Cwm Bochlywd; and eventually reached Bethesda. Here he found no news of his companion, and the next day, enquiries at Capel Curig and Ogwen proving fruitless, search parties were organised, with the result that the body was discovered on the heather at the foot of the eastern crags of the north ridge. It would appear probable that he was near the foot of the rocks before he slipped, as the cliff at this point is not continuously steep.*

* Since the above note was written, Mr. J. M. A. Thomson of Bangor has furnished us with further details of this accident. These will appear in the March number.—ED.

By the kind permission of Messrs. Hutchison & Co., of Paternoster Row, we reprint the following beautiful "Mountain Prayer," which appeared recently in one of their publications. It is from the pen of H. M. Queen Margherita of Italy :—

O SWEET JESU, the bold son of the mountains invokes Thee, as Lord of the eternal snows and Sovereign of the lofty peaks. Incline Thine eyes towards these white plains, that have the likeness of Thy robe, spotless and snowy ! Deign, O Lord, to soften the horror for mortals who go through the frozen ways ; lead them, protect them in the dangerous paths ; and if any should fall by the way and die, receive him into Thy pitiful arms. Softly spread over him the gentle cold shroud ; and as soon as his soul abandons his earthly body, may he ascend to God's throne. O Blessed One, hear my prayer ! Look Thou on all the deeds of his life ; find out the noble thoughts that have sprung from his heart, and scatter them like fragrant mountain flowers before the feet of God, that, when his spirit reaches the face of the Lord, the Lord may in His infinite mercy welcome him. And may the golden light that crowns the Alps, which is an emanation of the Divine light, enfold him in glorious peace for ever ! Amen.

* * * *

MR. C. W. NETTLETON, of Thirlmere Road, Streatham, Surrey, will be glad to hear from any member wishing to dispose of copies of parts 78, 79, or 99 of the *Alpine Journal*.

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PARTS 1 and 3 of the *Climbers' Club Journal* are now out of print. The Editor is open to purchase a few copies of each at a small premium.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

November 9th, 1900.

DEAR SIR,

MOUNTAIN TEMPERATURE.

The minimum temperature recorded by the thermometers on the Glydr Fach for the winter of 1899-1900 was 14.5° Fahr., being a little below the average.

On this subject there is a note in the Appendix to Whymper's "Scrambles amongst the Alps," 1860-69, page 421, referring to Signor Giardano's ascent of the Matterhorn in September, 1868. It is as follows :—

"He" (Signor Giardano) "left a minimum thermometer upon the summit in 1868. This was recovered by I. A. Carrel in July, 1869, and was found to register only 9° Fahrenheit below the freezing point. It was supposed that it was protected from the winter cold by a deep covering of snow. The explanation is scarcely satisfactory."

The minimum temperature recorded on the Glydr Fach (3,262 feet above sea level) since 1867 is 8° Fahrenheit. This is sufficiently surprising, but it is nothing to a minimum temperature of 23° Fahr. (only 9° below freezing) for a winter on the Matterhorn, 14,780 feet in height. The only possible explanation is that a mistake was made in the reading, or that the instrument was defective.

Yours faithfully,

W. PIFFE BROWN.

To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,

In the September number of the *Journal* you ask for information about three reported fatal accidents. So far as the one on Cader Idris is concerned, it may be assumed that it relates to a mishap that occurred to Mr. Wilfrid McInnes on the 14th September last. Happily, the accident did not end fatally, although a rumour got out that it had done so. It is desirable at the outset to say that this cannot by any means be described as a climbing accident in the ordinary acceptation of the term, for Mr. McInnes had never climbed a mountain before, and was really out on a cycling tour. For the credit of the sport of climbing, and because the case seems to possess considerable interest of a surgical nature, it may be of use to record the facts, otherwise I should have suggested suppression of any further reference to it.

Passing through Dolgelly, Mr. McInnes was recommended to make the ascent of Cader Idris, as customary with visitors. It was found that by making an early start next day this would fit in with his arrangements, and allow him to reach Barmouth in the evening. Accordingly the ascent was made by the beaten track and the Foxes' Path. The latter is but a rough way at the best, and Mr. McInnes found it most trying, having only shoes without nails. Rather than face the descent under such conditions he preferred to try another way, and so, crossing the Saddle, reached the top of Cyfrwy. Your readers will be aware that this portion of Cader Idris, as it runs westward, forms a precipice about a mile long, tapering from some 600 feet away to nothing. At the foot there is scree. Proceeding westward for about a quarter of a mile from the summit of Cyfrwy, Mr. McInnes thought he could venture to try down. The grass was dry, and the soles of his shoes were now very slippery. When the slope had become too steep to be safe he endeavoured to retrace his steps

but could not do so. At length he reached a point where it appeared to him that if he could pass it he would be able to climb down the rest, not knowing that he was on the edge of an almost sheer drop. To secure a better grip he took off his shoes and threw them down. He remembers sitting astride a piece of rock, but nothing more until he regained consciousness five or six hours later. He has no recollection of slipping or of feeling any fear, so that the explanation would appear to be a momentary vertigo. About 6 p.m. he awoke sick and faint, and found his clothes soaked with blood and his hair a clotted mass. In the fall he had lost his eyeglasses, without which he could not see fifty yards. He made such search as he was able for his shoes, cap and glasses, but never found them. Very soon it grew dusk, and he recognised the hopelessness of his position, so he selected a large block of stone, and lay under the lee of it all night. That night there was a hoar frost, but he slept fairly well, and each time when he woke up he did not feel particularly chilly. He supposes it would be about 7 o'clock next morning that he started to walk, more by instinct than anything else, in the direction of Dolgelly. He was very weak, and fainted several times on the way. Crossing two or three streams he at length came to a wall, and followed it until he found a gate. Passing through this he kept descending until he heard dogs barking. Proceeding in the direction of the sound, it was not long before he reached a farmyard, and there sank down exhausted, having rambled some two or three miles. After their first alarm at his deplorable appearance, the farm people did what they could for him, and carried him, as gently as a cart without springs would permit, the three miles to Dolgelly. The services of a doctor and the district nurse were at once obtained, and in a very short time the patient was made comfortable and his mother telegraphed for. The medical examination showed that his injuries were sufficiently serious. He was cut and bruised all over, and the right arm had lost its power. The skull was fractured, causing severe compression of the brain. There were four bad cuts on the head, the longest $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

He was feverish, but quite conscious, and free from pain. In a very few hours the feverish symptoms disappeared, and it was evident that there was no fear of a fatal termination.

Ten days after the accident I travelled down to see Mr. McInnes, and to try to find the place where he fell. In this I was entirely successful, recovering his shoes and cap and photographing the place. I estimated the distance he must have fallen as about 80 feet, and this has been corroborated by a shepherd and a guide. The precipice is so steep, and the rock so smooth, that I could not by any means climb higher than 30 feet from the ground. That the consequences of a fall from such a height as 80 feet were not even more disastrous may be attributed to some most fortunate conditions. In the first place, the rock being so steep Mr. McInnes would probably, after touching once or twice, fly outward clear of the rock. Secondly, exactly where he fell there is a patch of ground, some 20 yards square, entirely free from scree, and covered with coarse grass, ferns and bilberry bushes. Further, this patch lies at such a sharp angle that he would strike a glancing blow, and either slide or roll a considerable distance: in fact, when he regained consciousness he was almost at the lower edge of the green patch. I surmise that he fell on his right side, and that the injury to the arm, the effect of which passed off in a month, was caused so. A fortnight after the event it was possible to remove him, and after a month at home he was ordered away by a doctor for three months of absolute quiet in the country, as there were indications of brain trouble. He is now making a complete recovery.

I have entered thus fully into detail because this case shows how much the human body can stand, and several questions present themselves, upon which the opinion of some of our medical members would be interesting. For instance, is it possible that the profuse bleeding from the head saved the brain from more serious injury? Would the clotted blood, exposed all night to the freezing air, have the same effect as applying ice, and so, as it were, automatically prevent inflammation? Would the night's exposure tend to cause or prevent

high fever? How is it that, in spite of the injury to the brain, Mr. McInnes can clearly remember everything that happened up to the moment of falling and after he recovered consciousness? I may add, in conclusion, that he had everything in his favour in that he is young (22), of good healthy habits, and was at the time in excellent physical condition.

Yours, &c.,

FRED. W. JACKSON.

REVIEWS.

THE ASCENT OF MOUNT ST. ELIAS (ALASKA). Narrated
by FILIPPO DE FILIPPI. (A. & C. Black.)

EXPLORATION of the world's greater mountain ranges is proceeding apace. The last three years have seen the ascents of some of the highest peaks of the Andes, of Kenia in Africa, and of St. Elias in Alaska; and to these we must now add the recent exploration of fresh fields in the Eastern Himalayas.

We can well understand the charm of these expeditions. With the sense of freedom which is given by a few weeks' walk forward, with all our worldly goods, for the time being at least, upon our backs, most of us are familiar; and we can imagine the fascination of a longer journey, through a region far from the nearest human habitation, amid such scenery as all great mountain chains afford, with the stimulus of the need of absolute self-reliance, and the knowledge that no man has ever passed that way before; that we are the first to break in upon the solitude of Nature. What a change from the trammels of ordinary civilised life!

But in these days, when a trip round the world forms part of the education of the ordinary youth, the man who would explore new country must be prepared for difficulties; and few undertakings of the kind, we should think, can have been more arduous than the ascent of Mount St. Elias by the Duke of the Abruzzi. Eighteen thousand feet above the sea is of course not much of an altitude nowadays; but fifteen thousand feet above the snow-line is surely a creditable elevation to attain. The party had to traverse more than 100 miles of ice and snow; they camped out for weeks on glaciers, they carried with them, for the greater part of the journey, over 1000 lbs. of luggage; and this in a country where bad weather, even in the most favourable season of the year, is the rule and not the exception. The mosquitoes, too, are so numerous and so aggressive that, after camping out for one night on the

Malaspina moraine, the Prince and his party were unrecognisable. We do not think Alaska will ever become the playground of America. No Zermatt will ever come into existence there: there will be no Riffelalp, no Gornergrat Railway, no rope-festooned Matterhorn.

But let us turn from these melancholy reflections to the bright pages of Dr. Filippi's volume. The majority of readers will, we think, find Signor Sella's illustrations the most attractive feature of the book. The full-page photographs are very good, and admirably reproduced; and many of the smaller views, such, for example, as "In the channels of the Archipelago," show that capacity for choosing a subject with a view to composition and pleasing effect which seems to be confined to amateur photographers. Much of the text is worth reading, though it occasionally seems to be illustrating the photographs, as if the writer were giving a lecture with the aid of dissolving views. Special attention must be drawn to a foot-note on page 35, in which Dr. Filippi shows conclusively that a glacier may recede without flowing backwards.

Our only regret is that the party did not make a better map of the district. The "Sketch map of the Mount St. Elias region" appended to the volume shows nothing north of the St. Elias ridge; and is admittedly based on the work of Mr. Russell, who explored the district ten years ago. This defect is, however, to some extent repaired by Signor Sella's panoramic views, which are placed together at the end of the book. They give an excellent idea of the general character of the region, with its peculiarity of vast and almost level plains covered with glacier. The view of the country to the north is especially interesting. It shows a region into which no one has yet penetrated. Members of the Climbers' Club who are not already aware of the fact will be glad to hear that there is a higher mountain than St. Elias in this quarter, and that it would probably not be necessary to cross more than 300 miles of glacier in order to ascend it. Those who do not propose to visit the district are recommended, at least, to peruse Dr. Filippi's book.

L. C.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

IN THE ICE WORLD OF THE HIMALAYA, AMONG THE PEAKS AND PASSES OF LADAKH, NUBRA, SURU, AND BALKISTAN. By FANNY BULLOCK WORKMAN and WILLIAM HUNTER WORKMAN. Illustrated. (London : T. Fisher Unwin. 1900. 16/-.)

WALKS AND EXCURSIONS IN THE VALLEY OF GRINDELWALD. By the Rev. W. A. B. COOLIDGE. With the Government Map and several Illustrations. 8vo. (Grindelwald : Luf. 1900.)

ALPINE PLANTS. By W. A. CLARK, F.R.H.S. With eight Illustrations by Clarence Elliott. (London : Upcott Gill. 3/6.)

THE ALPINE JOURNAL. Edited by G. YELD. Vol. XX., No. 150. Containing :—Mountain Sport. By Hugh E. M. Stutfield. A Pyrenean Centre. By Henri Brulle. In Memoriam. John Garforth Cockin. Alpine Accidents, &c., &c. (London : Longmans, Green and Co. Nov., 1900. 2/-.)

