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CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

EDITED BY
E. RAYMOND TURNER

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The north face of Lliwedd.

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FIRST ASCENT OF THE EAST BUTTRESS OF LLIWEDD.

By J. M. ARCHER THOMSON, A.C.

IN a revolutionary age, when the words of the wise are on every climber's tongue, and the intention to obey them in few climbers' minds, it is refreshing to record a striking instance of strict adherence to one of the cardinal canons of orthodox mountaineering.

We have been advised that before we try to climb a mountain we should look at it, and in the present case this unquestionable counsel has been conscientiously followed. We had looked at the East Buttress of Lliwedd for twenty years. It had indeed become a habit, if not with all climbers in the Snowdon cirque, certainly with those who knew by heart their West Buttress, to pause in passing, and scanning "with head awry and cunning eye" the gaunt slabs of the sister peak, to discuss the possibility of ascent. In conformity with this custom, O. Eckenstein and I, on our way down from Bwlch Goch on April 23rd, freshened our recollection of the main features of the face. Sundry streaks and dots of snow so far aided our survey as to enable us to trace out to our complete satisfaction an elaborate route which seemed to

promise success, or at least to be by far the most favourable line for an attack upon the formidable fortress.

Early in the afternoon of the day following we were seated on the grassy *boncyns* above Llyn Llydau, reconsidering our plans.

A glistening ribbon of snow and ice filled the sinuous crack, by which we were to have forced a route up the lower slabs. The question whether we should go up or forbear was referred to me for decision. The weather was bright and the rocks were dry, but the wind was blowing fresh from the north-east, and it was a matter of experience that even at this season the north-easter does not "stir our Vikings' blood" to the extent of rendering us immune from frost-bite. The route upon which we had fixed our hopes was definitely abandoned.

We now turned our attention to a small ledge a little above the scree, which may be said to run out horizontally from the east side to the centre of the Buttress. It was impossible from our standpoint to form any opinion whatsoever of the character and potentialities of the slabs above, but the ledge would obviously serve as an initial base of operations. So, without more ado, we reached the rocks and roped.

Our route lay up steep slabs and shallow chimneys of the type that may be loosely described as triangular in horizontal section. At the height of 150 to 200 feet, we reached one of those places which engross the whole attention at the time and afterwards dwell in the memory. Our line of ascent struck a niche in the rock having a sloping floor of the size and shape of a boys' kite, heather-grown and overspread with a thick layer of loose snow. The scarcity of good holds was all the more noticeable as the possibility of the turf sliding bodily away like a toboggan appeared by no means remote. Such spots we are apt to reach with satisfaction and to quit without regret. Dry summer weather would widen the margin of safety. It may however be useful to mention that from a view obtained later, it appeared that a cleft on the right might

prove a good alternative. At a slightly higher level it came as a surprise and a pleasure to discover a tapering rock standing stately as a statue in a recess on our right. So excellent was the anchorage afforded by this colossal belaying-pin that a burnt offering was forthwith decreed to the Spirit of the Mountain—Eckenstein officiated in the sanctum, while I scrambled a little higher and, cowering into a sheltered nook, contributed my quota to the fragrant fumes that came curling in graceful columns along the grey rocks below.

Immediately above me there rose an oblique chimney which was found to give out upon a smooth wall, but nature has favoured the climber here, for from the upper exit the sharp arête of a thin rib can be reached without real difficulty.

The descent on each side of this rib is sheer, but its crest gives an excellent line until, some 50 feet above, it terminates abruptly in a vertical wall, and progress in precisely the same line is effectually barred. The position here is very exposed, but the climber can hitch himself to a spillikin of rock and contemplate at leisure a striking view of the imposing crags that surround him.

Though disinclined to believe that we had arrived at an *impasse*, we anticipated difficulty in effecting an advance from this point. Stepping down from the arête on to a little ledge on the wall, we traversed a few yards to the left and discovered a chimney which had been invisible from above, and this proved to be furnished with holds sufficient for solving the problem.

At a higher level we entered a narrow chimney in yellow rock; the upper part is in my estimation decidedly puzzling, until the right hand can grasp a small peg of rock so placed as to test somewhat severely the length of one's reach. We emerged upon a heathery shelf, which we reckoned to be 400 feet above the scree. It was the first spot we had struck large enough to afford sitting-room for the two of us. We made therefore a prolonged halt at this welcome *gorphwysfa*, enjoying besides the familiar views, a very interesting outlook upon the West Buttress.

The steep wall above would offer a distinctly formidable obstacle were it not curiously ribbed and furrowed, bearing some slight resemblance to the shell of a pecten, so that, when the groove first chosen ceases to be convenient, we have merely to adopt the simple expedient of stepping round an intervening rib into a parallel trough, for all give out eventually upon a good quartz ledge, which trends from this point westwards in the direction of Central Gully.

After constructing a cairn to mark our route, we followed this horizontal ledge to the foot of a snow slope some 80 feet in height, and kicked steps up it. I was about to attack the rocks above, when Eckenstein called my attention to a narrow strip of snow on our left, indicating the existence of a ledge of some description, and proposed traversing along it. This proved an excellent suggestion. Stamping steps with great care along this narrow ribbon, we gradually worked back to the centre of the face, and reached a conspicuous corner, marked by a massive block of white stone. From this *omphalos* it seemed tolerably safe to prophesy that the chief difficulties of the ascent had been overcome, for we had reached the lower termination of a bold, sharply-defined arête, which appeared to offer a practicable and interesting line of advance. Upon its jagged crest we found climbing of a particularly pleasing and exhilarating kind, and finally came out upon the summit ridge at the foot of the cairn.

The ascent occupied nearly three hours, exclusive of halts. No part of this time was either wasted in following false scents or devoted to exploration. Indeed, opportunities for lateral deviation are very restricted. On the other hand, progress was never rapid, as we took the precaution of moving one at a time practically throughout the whole climb.

While no very close comparison can be established between ascents of our own mountains and those of the Alps, yet *mutatis mutandis* this climb resembles in character that of the difficult part—between the shoulder and the summit—of the Petit Dru. In both, a number of chimneys play an important part in the scaling of a generally smooth face. On

the Swiss peak, one short pitch—that above the fixed stanchion—is of greater technical difficulty than any encountered on the present climb, on the other hand, the opportunities for safe anchorage are relatively abundant. The time taken on both occasions was the same, but we were a party of five on the Chamounix Aiguille.

The trite dictum that “whatever number on the rope is right, two is unquestionably wrong,” may contain as much truth as any other proverb, but cannot, in my view, be regarded as applicable to ascents of every description. On the climb under consideration, as it is nowhere necessary to resort to combined tactics, a third man can add nothing to the strength of a party, while the presence of a fourth man on the rope would be so inconvenient as to materially increase the difficulty, and, in fact, to seriously imperil the safety of all.

That the climbing on the East Buttress would prove severer than upon the West, has always been anticipated, for the face is seen to be both steeper and smoother. It is, indeed, remarkably devoid of ample shelves and grassy ledges, such as occur so frequently and form so important a factor in the ascent of the sister peak. Other noticeable points of difference are the soundness of the rock and its freedom from vegetation, and these are advantages of no little importance in a climb of which the uniform steepness of gradient is perhaps the most characteristic feature.

J. M. ARCHER THOMSON.

MAUVOISIN TO THE PANOSSIERE AND THE MULETS DE LA LIAZ.

By JOHN C. MORLAND and J. B. FARMER.

ALTHOUGH the following note deals with a Swiss mountain, yet so many members of the Climbers' Club will be familiar with the district in question that we think a short account of our experience may be of some general interest.

Amongst the routes by which the Panossière Hut or the Corbassière Moraine may be reached from Mauvoisin, the Col des Otanes North of the Grand Tavé is that most often used, but south of the peak there is another mentioned by Ball and by Conway, known as the Col de Botzeresse. We had determined to go by this Col, which is very seldom taken, and so far as we could find had not been traversed by any guide of the Val de Bagnes, but as a matter of fact crossed the ridge by what is apparently a new Col, situated north of the Col de Botzeresse, and directly south of the summit cairn of the Grand Tavé, and well in view of the comfortable inn at Mauvoisin.

We started with Maurice Bruchez after lunch on August 5th, the heat, until we had passed through the dense willow scrub and reached the open Alp, was intense, and we did not hurry. Soon afterwards we were in the shadow of the ridge, and went faster up the steep grass slopes and moraine débris to the foot of a well marked snow-filled couloir noted from below as the most direct route to the Col. The snow was steep and not over sound, and a rock outcrop soon forced us on to the rocks to our left, which we traversed for some distance to the head of another couloir, invisible from below, which would perhaps prove the easiest route up; from here over snow to

the Col, only 150 to 200 feet below the cairn on the Grand Tavé, was easy going. A great scree-filled couloir ran directly down to the Corbassière Moraine, within five minutes of the Panossière Hut, which we might have reached in half an hour, but having no extra clothes with us we strolled down slowly, reaching the hut at 7 o'clock. From Mauvoisin to the Col had taken $4\frac{1}{2}$ hours easy going, including at least half an hour's stop for refreshment. To our surprise the hut was empty except for ourselves. It is often over-filled with pic-nic parties from Fionnay in addition to the regular climbers.

We were off at 4:45 next morning, our object being the Tournelon Blanc, a somewhat interesting snow peak with a grand view of the Combin range. The usual route is up the right moraine of the Corbassière glacier for half an hour, then over steep ice and snow slopes to the ridge connecting the Tournelon Blanc and the Grand Combin, which is followed to the top. At 5 o'clock, when we were directly under point 3454 on the Swiss ordnance map, Bruchez suggested that we should attempt to climb the very steep rocks of the Mulets de la Liaz to the Col between the Mulets and the Tournelon Blanc, thus making a new and much more direct ascent. He warned us, however, that we might very probably have to return, as the rocks had not to his knowledge been climbed, and they were evidently exceedingly steep and probably rotten. We took the risk, and after scrambling over 500 feet of scree reached the rocks. They certainly were not tempting. An intricate mass of shattered gendarmes, with steep rotten gullies between them, and no obvious route for any distance almost drove us back. We started on the least objectionable ledge at 5:45, and for the next $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours had about as bad a time of it as could be imagined. There was hardly a sound piece of rock on the whole mountain, handholds came out with annoying frequency, and footholds had a habit of disappearing bodily. Our only reason for going on was that nothing would induce us to go back. Bruchez led splendidly, finding a way up by a most complicated series of gullies, arêtes and traverses. Twice we thought we were stopped, once by a hideous ice-choked couloir, only

forced after our courage had been revived by a second breakfast at the bottom, and again when we were within 200 feet of the top, and found an overhanging or quite unclimbable wall in front, no possible traverse to the left, and to our right a steeply sloping ledge covered with slippery scree running up to a short gully capped by shattered blocks very loosely held, and with no cover for the second and third man below ; we traversed the ledge with great caution, and kept very close together in the gully which, we found, landed us on the ridge within five minutes of the top of the Mulet de la Liaz. It was then after eleven, and too late to climb the snow slope of the Tournelon Blanc. We therefore came directly down the great ridge to Mauvoisin, taking five hours in descending, as we lost much time at first in trying to traverse the rocks to the glacier of the Tournelon Blanc, bad snow and smooth slabs driving us back.

It should be noted that the Swiss ordnance map places the Mulets de Liaz between the Tournelon Blanc and the Grand Combin. This is evidently a mistake, as in the Val de Bagnes the rocks directly above Mauvoisin, and immediately over the Alp de Lia, culminating in point 3454, are always called the Mulets de la Liaz, whilst the rocks between the Tournelon Blanc and the Grand Combin are called by the obviously appropriate name of the "Rochers de Zessetta."

SHAKESPEARE AS A MOUNTAINEER.

By the PRESIDENT.

II.

IN our last number we had the pleasure of following our Bard through the early stages of his climbing career. We have traced out his youthful experience on orchard walls, the "quiet walks" among the hills which delighted his adolescence, and finally we have seen how he was led on (or, as some would put it, away) by enthusiastic friends from the roads to the rocks, until the *cacoethes scandendi* had spread its subtle poison through every fibre of his being.

It will probably be conceded that up to this point the case has been fairly proved. The later stages of that sequence have in the present day become normal for all active young men, and that human nature three or four hundred years ago was extremely like what it is now, is conclusively proved by Shakespeare's own plays. But this argument may be turned against me. It may be urged that the young man of the present day has not tasted long of the joys of home climbing, before he begins to yearn for an acquaintance with the great mountains and the eternal snows.

"If human nature has not changed; if, as you make out, Shakespeare's climbing development followed so closely our modern lines, the resemblance would not have stopped there; it would have gone farther; in a word, Shakespeare would have yearned for the Alps, and not merely that, but he would have triumphed over all difficulties and would have got there." My answer to this is very simple. He did. The Swiss trip was probably suggested by the same friend who had introduced

him to the sport. At all events, the idea met with no encouragement in his own domestic circle, and we gather that his relatives at first refused to provide the necessary funds. As a theatrical man, he naturally had no money of his own so as to buy his ticket without their help, but that did not daunt him. Like Brutus, he was "an honourable man." His word was given, he said, to meet his friend in Switzerland, and he intended to:

Meet him were he tied to run afoot,
E'en to the frozen ridges of the Alps,
Or any other ground inhabitable,
Wherever Englishman durst set his foot. (*Rich. II.*)

Probably his friends did not take this bombast seriously, for even in those days the future poet's form was beginning to shew a tendency to that *embonpoint* which marked it in later years, but for that very reason his next argument was more effective.

He implored them not

To mew up
Your tender kinsman and to choke his days
With barbarous ignorance and deny his youth
The rich advantage of good exercise. (*K. John.*)

No doubt his family smiled at this plea of youth, for later on we shall see reason to believe that he was hard upon forty, but the need of "good exercise" for one who was already—

A good portly man, i' faith and a corpulent.
(*Hen. IV., Pt. I.*)

was very obvious, and apparently they waived their objections to the trip.

Our novice entered on the task of equipment for the mountains with enthusiasm. He began at the foundation:

Give me my boots I say. (*Rich. II.*)

and went on as he says to

Buy hobnails by the hundred. (*Hen. IV., Pt. I.*)

and again

Here is now the smith's note for shoeing.
(*Hen. IV., Pt. II.*)

This seems to refer to the use of *crampons*, for elsewhere he says :

Their adoption tried

Grapple them to thy sole with hooks of steel. (*Hamlet.*)

though most editions obscure the sense by giving the absurd spelling "soul."

We have, too, traces of somewhat hasty shopping; one messenger returned with a rope, which evidently had no red strand, and was at once rejected with scorn—

Take up those cords, poor ropes, you are beguiled.

(*Rom. and Jul.*)

I sent thee for a rope. (*Com. of Err.*)

The more important articles he felt he must himself choose :

I'll go fetch an axe, (*Tet. Ands.*)

though at that time, for anything that he knew of the real uses of an axe, the following quotation shews that he might as well have been artist to an illustrated newspaper.

I could hew up rocks and fight with flint.

(*Hen. VI., Pt. II.*)

In the phrase :

A canvas climber. (*Pericles*.)

there is a suggestion of disdain for the Burberry style of clothing. On smoked glasses being suggested he is at first indignant—

I can see yet without spectacles. (*Much Ado.*)

and happening to try them on, when crossing the Channel, he was again annoyed—

And called them blind and dusky spectacles

For losing sight of Albion's wished coast.

(*Hen. VI., Pt. II.*)

Arrived in Switzerland, his poet's heart expanded with joy.
At every turn he beheld—

A towered citadel, a pendant rock,

A forked mountain, or blue promontory.

(*Ant. and Cleop.*)

Nothing impressed him more than the power of the avalanche

and the melting of the snows. He expresses the idea somewhat coarsely—

Rush on his host as doth the melted snow
Upon the vallies, whose low vassal seat
The Alps doth spit and void his rheum upon. (*Hen. V.*)

He instantly recognised that one great charm of the mountains lies in their appeal to man's yearning for freedom, and embodied it in a phrase which has become proverbial—

Free as mountain winds. (*Tempest.*)

The phrase which he afterwards used so effectively—

White his shroud as the mountain snow. (*Hamlet.*)

shews what a deep impression was left on his mind by the purity of the Alps. But he had not come to the Alps merely to loaf and pick up poetic material, he meant to work. At his first arrival he was in very poor condition, what he called—

Fat and scant of breath. (*Hamlet.*)

Probably he had not considered himself "tied to run afoot," and travelled after all like other people. Indeed we have a highly significant question—

Where is the rascal Cook? (*Tam. Shrew.*)

implying in his impatience an unfavourable impression of the firm, which, no doubt, subsequent dealings entirely removed.

On the other hand he was—

Enchanted with Gaze's. (*Love's L. L.*)

or rather with a predecessor of that firm, for he calls it—

Gaze o' the time. (*Macbeth.*)

Consequently he found himself soft and his friends hard.

Eight yards of uneven ground is three score and ten yards
afoot with me, and the stony-hearted villains know it well
enough. (*Hen. V., Pt. I.*)

Their jeers at his expense were useful to him afterwards, when he came to describe Falstaff—

He sweats to death,
And lards the lean earth as he walks along.
Were't not for laughing I should pity him.

(*Hen. IV., Pt. I.*)

but with his marvellously quick insight he soon detected the grand principle—

To climb steep hills requires slow pace at first.

(*Hen. VIII.*)

and to the sorrow of his guide followed it up with a second maxim, which, silently acted upon, has been the making of many an “eminent mountaineer”:

The great one that goes upward let him draw thee after.

(*K. Lear.*)

On his next expedition he and his friends must have pushed this principle rather far, and he draws a painful picture of the guide—

Bowing his head against the steepy mount,
To climb his happiness, . . . his dependants
Which laboured after him to the mountain top,
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

(*Tim. of Ath.*)

from which we may conclude that the guide was so sick of his “dependants” (expressive word!), that on reaching the top he glissaded down and left them, having possibly been paid in advance.

The next hill he did in better style—

He is walked up to the top of the hill. (*Hen. IV., Pt. I.*)

(not on all fours this time), and his friends consider him fit for higher game. In laying plans for his first big expedition, they warn him that an early start will be necessary:

Deep night, dark night, the silent of the night,
That time best fits the work we have in hand.

and he joyously exclaims in reply:

The day shall not be up as soon as I,
To try the fair adventure of to-morrow. (*King John.*)

He was provided with a—

“Travelling lamp.” (*Macbeth.*)

but, knowing perhaps how oil delights in getting spilled over the provisions, rejected it and called for—

My guide and lantern to my feet. (*Hen. VI., Pt. II.*)

which gave a better light than he had expected—

How far that little candle throws his beams !
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

(Merchant of V.)

On later expeditions, though we should probably make some allowance for humorous exaggeration, he seems to have tried an ingenious experiment, relying for light on that bibulous friend or porter, whom he afterwards caricatured as Bardolf.

Thou art an admiral. Thou bearest the lantern in the poop,
but it is in the nose of thee. Thou art the Knight of the
burning lamp. . . Thou hast saved me a thousand marks
in links and torches walking with thee in the night, but the
sack that thou hast drunk would have bought me lights as
good cheap at the dearest chandler's in Europe.

Apparently they slept out for their peak

I abjure all roofs and choose
To wage against the enmity of the air ;
To be a comrade of the wolf and owl. *(King Lear.)*

and it was a cold night—

This field-bed is too cold for me to sleep. *(Rom. and Jul.)*

the early start was very unpleasant and such phrases as—

The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold,
It is a nipping and eager air. *(Hamlet.)*

and again—

The air is raw and cold. *(Rich. III.)*

shew that the early start was a feature of Swiss climbing not particularly pleasing to the poet. At that hour of the morning he had no desire to race, and approved of the custom of going in Indian file because it checks competition in pace :

Take the instant way,
For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast ; keep then the path,
For emulation hath a thousand sons.

(Troil. and Cress.)

In due course they reached the glacier, and some discussion arose, probably about the route or as to where they should

breakfast, and our poet, who could never quite shake off the staginess of the stage, sought to emphasise his opinion by an almost childish exhibition of violence—

In an angry parle,
He smote his leaded pole-axe on the ice. (*Hamlet.*)

where we adopt the reading suggested by Moltke in place of the old and obscure “sledged polacks.” Soon it became necessary to put on spectacles, and here we are confronted with an epithet—

Heart-hardening spectacles. (*Coriolanus.*)

which requires some explanation. It is said of a great Alpine climber (probably without a grain of truth), that his confidential guide always carries for him glasses of two kinds, one pair of ordinary darkness and the other almost opaque. A judicious mixture of *bouvier* and *schnaps* elicited the fact that the ordinary glasses were for use on snow, and the extraordinary for use on the rocks, as the great climber’s nerves put all steep places out of the question unless he was practically blindfolded. We can understand that a man who could not look over Dover cliffs without exclaiming :

How fearful
And dizzy ’tis to cast one’s eyes so low !
. I’ll look no more
Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong. (*Lear.*)

must have been the very man to want “heart-hardening spectacles” among the precipices of the Alps. However, the time for their employment was not yet. They were now quitting the smooth glacier and advancing towards the more hummocky portion below the ice fall, the part of which he speaks so enthusiastically, wishing his—

Delighted spirit to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice. (*Meas. for Meas.*)

and it became necessary to put on the rope. The question of knots gave a good deal of trouble. The first attempt evidently

produced a "granny," which he stigmatizes as

Churlish knot of all abhorred. (*Hen. IV., Pt. I.*)

then came—

Another knot five-finger-tied. (*Troilus and Cr.*)

an absurdly complicated one, then a slip knot, and finally the expert of the party made a series, calculated, as he told the rest :

To make you brothers and to knit your hearts

With an unslipping knot. (*Ant. and Cl.*)

Crossing the glacier without incident, their difficulty in getting off the ice is recorded in the picture :

As fearfully as doth a galled rock

O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,

Swilled with the wild and wasteful ocean.

where the last word suggests that the "confounded base" of this great climb rose from the neighbourhood of the *Mer de Glace*. The party now had to take to the rocks, and it is not too much to say that the Plays fairly bristle with references to this part of the day's work. We have space only for a few but they scarcely require any comment, and most of them are repeated in other plays.

The stone's too hard to come by. (*Cymbeline.*)

Wilt thou set thy foot o' my neck. (*Tw. Night.*)

Set your knee against my foot. (*Hen. VI., Pt. I.*)

The firm fixture of thy foot would give an excellent motion to thy gait. (*Merry IV. IV.*)

I told ye all,

When we first put this dangerous stone a-rolling,

T would fall upon ourselves. (*Hen. VIII.*)

And the first stone drop in my neck. (*Ant. and Cleop.*)

Fix thy foot. (*Coriolanus.*)

Thy knee bussing the stones. (*Coriolanus.*)

With my nails digged stones. (*Hen. VI., Pt. I.*)

With a two-fold vigour lift me up

To reach at victory above my head. (*Rich. II.*)

Till that my nails were anchored. (*Rich. III.*)

Hold him up with ropes. (*Tw. Night.*)

(where the ordinary edition reads "hopes," which would, of course, be absurdly inadequate to the purpose). These examples could easily be multiplied, but they are enough to shew that this was the climb of the poet's life. His excitement carried him along, puffing and blowing, but full of enjoyment, and with an eye for every incident of the day. Even the effect of the fierce Swiss sun on a rock-climber's face did not escape him. As the party straddled along a narrow arête he recorded their mottled appearance in the phrase—

Ridges horsed with variable complexions. (*Coriolanus.*)
and in this picturesque attitude we must leave them

To witch the world with noble horsemanship.
(*Hen. IV., Pt. I.*)
until our next number.

(*To be continued.*)



UNJUSTIFIABLE CLIMBS.

By H. V. READE, A.C.

NOTE.—*The writer desires to state that this article was composed before the accident on Scawfell in September.*

THAT some climbs are unjustifiable, no climber who knows his business will deny. In the field of mountaineering proper, there is a general agreement, if not as to the actual expeditions, at any rate as to the kind of expedition, which should not be undertaken. It is recognised that places which are regularly swept by avalanches, or by falling stones, ought to be left alone, and that bad weather, or bad conditions, may make almost any climb unjustifiable. The accounts of some recent exploits at Wastdale Head make one realize, very forcibly, that even in English rock-climbing there are things which ought not to be done. It is, of course, impossible to lay down rules by which every case can infallibly be decided. But some general principles may be noted. It will be admitted that there is a limit to the risks which should be taken by a party, or by any member of it. "A line must be drawn somewhere," writes O. G. Jones, "to separate the possible from the impossible," or let us say (for this is evidently his meaning), to separate the justifiable from the unjustifiable. Even the easiest climb involves some risk to the leader, in the sense that if he slips, when some way ahead of the others, he may be seriously injured. The security lies in the relation of the climb to the climber. So long as the work is well within the power of the climber, the risk may be considered *nil*, and it follows that the risk does not necessarily increase with the difficulty. The danger that arises from climbers attempting what is too hard for them is, of course, one that will always exist. The spectators

of a recent attempt on the new West Climb of the Pillar Rock saw all four members of the party "come off" at one time or another, and even on the much easier north face of the Rock two men fell at once, and were barely held by the third! But apart from that, as difficulty increases, a point will often be reached when even a thoroughly good climber begins to be uncertain whether he can manage what lies before him. He may see exactly how it is to be done, but he may be doubtful whether he can do it. Or it may be evident that it can only be done by trusting entirely to loose or rotten holds. It then becomes necessary to consider what will happen if he slips. In many cases he can be "belayed" to some extent, in others the difficult passage may be so short that a fall could be checked before it became serious. The essential condition is that the rest of the party shall be absolutely secure. If, then, in a place of this kind, the leader is so far ahead that he is practically climbing alone, or if the others are so situated that they could not withstand the shock of his fall, it is surely clear that the attempt ought not to be made. Places where the leader cannot make himself firm enough to stand a jerk, ought equally to be left alone.

The soundness of these simple principles will probably be admitted. They are merely those upon which, deliberately or instinctively, good climbers habitually act. Many instances of their application could be quoted from "Rock-Climbing in the English Lake District," for example. It is not possible, indeed, to maintain that good climbers never transgress them. "The line which separates the difficult from the dangerous is sometimes a very shadowy, but it is not an imaginary one. It is a true line, without breadth. It is often easy to pass, and very hard to see. It is sometimes passed unconsciously, and the consciousness that it has been passed is felt too late."—as Mr. Whympster writes.* To go on may then be the lesser evil. But if this has happened, the duty of the climber is clear. He must either leave no record of the route, or describe it in such

**Scrambles amongst the Alps*, Chap. V.

a manner as will warn others to avoid it. Should the party have any doubt, afterwards, as to the character of what they have done, let them consider whether (as Mr. Freshfield puts it),* it is "an ascent which their consciences will allow them to recommend in cold blood to their friends." If not, they may certainly conclude that it was unsafe. And when an ascent of this kind is repeated, one can only say, to continue the quotation from Mr. Whympers, "if the doubtful line is crossed consciously, deliberately, one passes from doing that which is justifiable, to doing that which is unjustifiable."

These remarks may seem tolerably—or intolerably—obvious. But the reason for thus summarising the rules which ordinary prudence dictates is simply that, to judge from several recent records, there is an increasing tendency to ignore them. Take, for instance, the case of Savage Gully, on the north face of the Pillar Rock. Many years ago, one of the best known of English mountaineers left a brief record in the Wastdale Climbing Book, to the effect that he had examined, both from above and from below, the section beyond the point where the ordinary route leaves the gully, and that it was quite impracticable. O. G. Jones is known to have expressed the same opinion. In 1902 this section (about 200 feet) was ascended by a climber who was safe-guarded, though not assisted, by a rope from above. So far the feat was perfectly legitimate. But he proceeded at once to climb the worst part of it without the rope above him. His written account, and that published in the *Climbers' Club Journal* by his companion, put it beyond doubt that the climb was utterly unsafe. He speaks of having to cross a central rib five times, these crossings being "always sensational, and one . . . very difficult, the freshly cleared holds being wet and greasy," and of another traverse, "kneeling on a shelving ledge, with small hand-holds," and his companion adds that the first and most difficult pitch consisted of "110 feet on almost vertical walls

* *Alpine Journal*, Vol. VII., p. 230.

with poor holds, and no chance of backing up," and that he declined to follow even with the aid of the rope. Yet, in the face of this, the climb was deliberately repeated. The account states that "the difficult traverse over the slabs was made in stockinged feet, and would be extremely risky in any other way," and ends with the remark that "the climb is disappointing, owing to the reliance that has so often to be placed on grassy tufts, which are occasionally none too firm to stand on." Disappointing! Imagine the feelings of a good Swiss guide (let us say), if he were asked to let the security of himself and his party depend on shaky grass tufts! *Disappointing* would hardly be his epithet. And is it not evident that traverses which would be extremely risky, unless made in stockinged feet, ought not to be made at all? As Savage Gully has been ascended a third time, by a party which merely states that it was more difficult than the *Eagle's Nest Ridge*, it would seem that there are climbers to whom such descriptions as those quoted are positively attractive.

Some other climbs near Wastdale may be referred to more briefly. Those who have written about *C. Gully* on the Screes, are unanimous as to the dangerously rotten character of the rock. On the first complete ascent a ledge gave way with one of the party, on the second, the same thing happened to the leader (Jones himself), who had a serious fall.* The detailed account (in the Wastdale Book) of another ascent emphasises the danger, and warns climbers to avoid the gully. But the advice has not been followed. Opinions may differ as to the *Eagle's Nest Ridge* on Great Napes. The rock is perfectly sound, and its difficulty is in no way concealed. It may be sufficient to note the opinion of O. G. Jones, that "no man should attempt to lead up it who has not already explored the ground with the safe-guard of a rope from above."† If any one has done so, and finds it within his powers, there is no reason why he should not lead a party up it. But is it

* *Rock-Climbing in the English Lake District*, p. 205, 2nd edition.

† *Op. Cit.*, p. 159.

worth while? He has proved his competence to do the climb—for a rope from above, with a foot or two of slack, is of no real assistance—to do it again without the safe-guard is surely little better than bravado. It is known that the discoverer of the climb considers it an unwise one.

A climb on Scawfell which has recently (June, 1903) been recorded in the Wastdale Book—the complete ascent of the crack in which the *Keswick Brothers'* climb finishes—has been unreservedly condemned for its riskiness by a party which tried to repeat it. Whether this will deter other climbers remains to be seen. It may be noted that the first ascent was accomplished by the leader inserting his “finger-nails in infinitesimal cracks,” and that the party completed their exploits by climbing, on the two following days, the *Eagle's Nest Ridge* and *Savage Gully*, both of which they considered less difficult. Again, it seems to have become fashionable, lately, to go straight over the “nose” on the north face of the Pillar Rock, “needless to say,” writes one climber, “without any previous ascent or descent of the place by the leader, and without any help from below or above.” The utmost that can be said about this is, that for a man with a long reach it may possibly be safe, though even that is denied by some who have seen it done and have followed on the rope. The amount of risk involved will be satisfactorily settled when some leader has “come off.” To all appearance, the most skilful management of the rope could not prevent the fall being a very serious one. It is certain that the early explorers of this face—some of the best climbers who have ever visited Wastdale—refused to attempt the passage. Another way of passing the same place, the famous “Hand Traverse,” is, by comparison, safe.

If recklessness of this kind is not to end in disaster, it must be condemned by a healthy public opinion. We of the Climbers' Club may well apply to ourselves what Sir Leslie Stephen wrote, in 1875, of the Alpine Club.* “One object of the Club is to promote Alpine climbing. But the most absurd of all

* *Alpine Journal*, Vol. VII., p. 312.

ways of promoting a noble exercise is to associate it indelibly with foolhardiness. If the end of the Club be to induce men to risk their necks in pursuit of childish objects, the sooner it is dissolved the better. I hold that we can best promote Alpine climbing by enforcing with all our power a code of rules which will make it a reputable pursuit for sensible men." Contrast this with a remark which was recently overheard at Wastdale, "I believe X to be the finest climber in England, but I dare not tell him so, or he would go and break his neck." What a light this throws on "fine" climbing, as some people understand—and practise—it! Let us make it our business to insist that fine climbing is safe climbing, and bear ever in mind the story that our first President tells* about the greatest of all guides, Melchior Anderegg. A first-rate climber wanted him to take a course which he deemed to be imprudent, "'Es geht, Melchior,' said the climber. 'Ja,' was the immediate answer, 'es geht; aber ich gehe nicht.'"

H. V. READE.

* *Mountaineering* (Badminton Library), p. 371.

A HOLIDAY AMONG THE LAKES.

By the late Professor TYNDALL.

With Notes by W. P. HASKETT-SMITH.

[The subjoined paper, which appeared in the *Saturday Review* nearly half a century ago, is of great interest, and of course now difficult to procure. Prof. Tyndall reprinted a similar article, which he wrote on the subject of an ascent of Snowdon, but I cannot find that this one ever appeared in book-form.]

A HOLIDAY among the Lakes—far from the smoke and din and wear and tear of London! There is health in the very thought, and body and mind grow strong by anticipation. On the 15th April we started—reading at intervals, watching the landscape, the clouds, and the blue sky between them, and listening to a sanctified Bolton manufacturer, who would persist in singing hymns, and in whistling hymn-tunes when his larynx was weary. The cold augmented sensibly as we sped northwards, and the vegetation seemed much less forward than that which we had left behind. In the month of January, the same temperature reigns from the English Channel to the Shetland Isles. The isothermal lines then run north and south through England and Scotland; this equalization being effected by the Gulf-Stream which washes our northern shores. But it is only in mid-winter that this effect is produced. At mid-summer the isothermals run sensibly east and west, the influence of the Gulf-Stream being then masked by the more potent influence of latitude. In the month of April the latter influence also tells, and the further we travel northward the colder it grows.

On the morning of the 16th, while a sunny gleam shed itself over woods, and hills, and water, we pushed from the

shore of the lake at Windermere village, and rowed towards Ambleside. But nature is fond of quick mutations amid the mountains—the “gleam” vanished, and an angry scowl from the clouds blackened the water. Our prudent oarsman suggested the propriety of making for the land. Two of us, therefore, quitted the boat, while a third doubled a cape and took us in again in a sheltered bay, at the opposite promontory, at which we again landed and watched the storm for nearly half-an-hour. The little lake looked quite grand in its anger; the wavelets rose and spluttered, and shook their little manes, as if in mimicry of those of the ocean; while their crests were doubly white by contrast with the unilluminated water. Large snowflakes scudded horizontally through the air as if deprived of all tendency to fall towards the earth; and these were succeeded by a light hail, which became even feebler, until at length the wind sank, and the heavens unfolding themselves like a blue banner in the north, invited us to proceed.

So much for the aesthetics of the scene—let us now look at its science. The whiteness of the crests of waves is known to be due to the air entrapped and broken up in the water when the summit of the wave falls over. The “murmurous” sound of the waves is due to the rupture of the air bubbles thus formed. The rippling sound of streams is due to the same cause; where a ripple is heard bubbles may always be detected. With regard to the billows themselves, everybody knows that the advance of a wave is the advance of a form merely; the water which composes a wave at any instant does not move forward. A waterfowl, for example, on the crest of a billow is not borne onwards, but has apparently an up and down motion, imparted to it as the waves pass under it. In reality, however, the motion is not up and down. The fowl is carried round, as if upon the circumference of a wheel; it describes a curve more or less approaching to a circle, and every individual particle of water which constitutes the wave does the same. But experiment has proved that small waves propagate their motion downward through a depth of 350 times their own height. Assuming, then, that the waves of

Windermere, on the day in question, were two feet high—which is a moderate estimate—they would probably be capable of producing a motion similar to their own at a depth of twice 350, or, 700 feet. But the greatest depth of Windermere is only 270 feet; so there is little doubt that the whole lake was agitated to its bottom. We are therefore warranted in concluding that, while the storm continued, all the particles of water which the lake contained were running round in circles. And they could do this without any confused jostling, because their revolutions were successive, one particle communicating its motion to another, and accepting in turn, from a neighbouring particle, an equivalent for what it had lost. Such is the rhythmic dance of atoms—such the soft circling of liquid wheels—which a gust of wind can call into action!

At Ambleside two of us landed, and bidding the third goodbye, we walked through the little town, and visited the now forsaken nest of Wordsworth, at Rydal Mount. The odour of poetry seemed to hang round every shrub, and seat, and grassy knoll. Thence to Grasmere, where we spent a quarter of an hour by the poet's grave. A clear streamlet ripples near him, a few trees rustle their branches overhead, and a slab of dark slate, which might be purchased for five shillings at the quarry's mouth, bears the name of William Wordsworth, and marks the poet's place of rest. Our object that day was to scale Helvellyn; and diverging from the Keswick road a little beyond Grasmere,* we ascended a gorge,† to the right, Grisedale Tarn being our first landmark. At some distance in front of us was a barrier stretching quite across the ravine, and over its centre a white cataract fell.‡ We supposed that the tarn must lie behind the dam, but on mounting the latter we found at the other side a grassy basin, which might have been the mould of a tarn in ages past. It was clasped round by hills, and the air was so calm, and the sun so warm, that a local summer seemed to reign there, while ice and

* The usual track turns off quite a mile from Grasmere; probably, therefore, the Professor took the path which begins not far from the "Swan" Hotel.

† *i.e.*, Tongue Gill.

‡ *i.e.*, Tongue Gill Force.

winter ruled the heights around. A higher barrier was still in front of us, and here we encountered the keen greeting of the north wind. The snow at the summit had been melted and recongealed, so as to form masses of solid ice. The same process had taken place along the entire slope which we now descended—the liquified snow seemed caught in the act of trickling down, and was frozen to mimic glaciers upon the mountain side. All the summits round us were white, and it required no great stretch of imagination to fancy ourselves in the heart of the Alps. Grisedale Tarn was now before us, dark and lonely. We passed it, and assailed Helvellyn at the end of a long ridge* which juts southwards from the mountain. We were soon above the snow line, and found the top of the ridge thickly covered. As we walked towards the summit, the mountain fell precipitously to our right, and along its tortuous edge ran a beautiful snow cornice, bending gracefully in and out so as to suit the indentations and protuberances of the mountain. The north darkened as we advanced; and dense cumuli continued to overlap each other, waxing ever gloomier, until at length, in one direction, the blackness of a starless midnight met the gaze. The northern mountains,† raised by an optical illusion to far beyond their usual heights, projected their blackened forms against a ghastly neutral tint which lay behind them. A keen wind now swept over the mountain, and augmented in strength as the blackness drew near. The cold was intense, and seemed to split and scarify the skin of the face. The storm for a time seemed divided by the mountain, advancing right and left, and pouring its frozen contents into the flanking valleys; but minute crystals of snow, flying through the air with arrowy velocity, at length began to hit us. These quickly thickened to large flakes, and we were soon amid the densest gloom, battered by the blinding meteor. Here was surely an antithesis to the heavy air of a London laboratory. The wind entered our clothes, and seemed

* *i.e.*, Dollywaggon Pike.

† These would be Saddleback and the Caldbeck Fells.

to search our fibres through and through. We felt the contrast and enjoyed it :—

“There was freshness in the mountain air,

And life that sleepy ease could never hope to share.”

The gloom gradually diminished as we advanced, the descending snow dwindled to a feeble hail, the wind lowered and finally we emerged north of the storm, with an unclouded heaven above us, and the most perfect calm around.

It was a day of wondrous atmospheric effects—indeed, we had scarcely seen anything grander among the Alps themselves. The successive snow storms resembled a series of undulations. There was first a rush, then a lull, then another rush—the middle point between two rushes being absolutely without motion, as if each storm, like an elastic ball striking upon another of equal mass, had yielded up its entire motion to the neighbouring air and come itself to rest. The motion, however, was a true translation, as testified by the snow driving past us from its birthplace in the north. The snow was indeed an admirable indicator of the state of the atmosphere at a distance. Right and left of Helvellyn it fell copiously, and as it descended it was drawn into long vertical striæ, which again grouped themselves into distinct columns which brushed with their ends the mountain sides. The effect of friction was well shown. The lower portions of the snow columns were retarded by the earth, while their upper portions moved forward unimpeded ; and the consequence was, that when the columns were seen at right angles to their line of march, they leaned forward. Storms have been predicted by the barometer hours before they were felt, and these leaning striæ furnish us with a key to the phenomenon. The whirl of a cyclone, for example, which reaches high into the atmosphere, may be active in the air vertically over a place, and this affect the barometer long before the base of the cyclone, which is held back by friction, has reached the same locality.

The summit was now at hand. Upon the highest point a mound of stones is erected, which bears the weathered stump of a flag-staff, once used as a signal by the Ordnance Surveyors.

Northward the mound was backed by snow, but on its south side were warm rocks and brown sunny shingle. Here one of us lay down while the other descended to inspect Striding Edge and the Red Tarn. The western face of the mountain is wild and grand, presenting the appearance of a vast crater, the centre of which is now occupied by the tarn, while Swirl Edge on one side, and Striding Edge on the other, resemble ridges of scoriæ which had been ejected from the crater at some distant date. Swirl Edge expands at its extremity, and thrusts forward the bold buttress of Catbedecam. The setting of Scott's poem was all there, except "the eagle." With regard to the Edge which proved fatal to Mr. Gough,* it is by no means formidable-looking to a practised mountaineer. In foggy weather it might perhaps be difficult, but under ordinary circumstances a second or third-rate climber, with his muscles in good condition, would be quite safe among its crags. But it might be otherwise with an exhausted man; and there is scarcely anything more bewildering, or which robs with greater certainty the heart of hope and the limb of energy, than a snow storm amid the difficulties of a mountain. After long battling, a dull apathy seizes the climber; he longs for rest, and perhaps lies down; an irresistible drowsiness assails his numbed faculties—he falls asleep, hoping perhaps to wake again, but it proves to be the sleep "which knows no waking."

While we remained upon the summit, the north again blackened. No shelter was near save the mound of stones, and here we resolved to remain and witness the storm. Dancing for ten minutes upon the shingle, we warmed our wet feet; and when the north sent its squalls upon us we betook ourselves to our shelter. The wind was furious, and the air all thick with the flying snow. Looked at against a brighter portion of the clouds, the flakes seemed like a multitudinous flight of insects. Added to the snow of the clouds was the snow of the mountains, which was tossed hither and thither,

* The causes of Mr. Gough's death are, of course, quite unknown, but there was nothing to show that he was a climber, or that he was trying to ascend the Edge.

twirled round and round, and carried forward in cloudy masses, which reminded one of the stalking sand columns of the Sahara. The play of the wind, like the chant of a High Mass which we once heard, was elevating for a time, but like the latter it lasted too long, and we wished to see the end of it. At 5 p.m. it lulled for a moment, and we set out; but the end of the storm contained its chief energy. It caught us on a plateau,* where the snow lay deep, and shook us furiously. At times we had to incline our bodies considerably from the perpendicular to counteract the atmospheric thrust; while the sudden withdrawal of the resistance often caused us to stagger. There was something suggestive of madness in the demeanour of the wind—a wild unreasoning fury, like that of a woman with strong feelings, and little intellect to guard them. The frozen crust which here overlaid the snow was torn up, and the softer stuff beneath was whirled round us and dashed against us as if urged by personal hate. This exacerbation ended, the storm lulled again, the sun appeared on the western slope of heaven, and we scampered down the face of the mountain to the Keswick road.†

Between Legberthwaite and Keswick we were again assailed by a snow-storm, which continued for an hour. Evening now drew near, and the west brightened and kindled, until at length the clouds that floated there burned with the hue of a carmine-coloured flame. Behind us was Helvellyn, and the aspect of the mountain, for a time, had in it more of heaven than earth. The sky above it was of a pale ethereal hue, but the mountain seemed to be changed to something of a similar essence. It rose, light, airy, and unsubstantial, as if it could tremble in unison with every thrill of the ether above it. The appearance was quite magical, and is by no means common; for, during a subsequent excursion of five days, we never saw it once. As evening advanced, and the sun's beams

* This may be the shoulder of Raise, just above the summit of the Sticks Pass, or else near the point where the pony track from Thirlspot joins the main ridge.

† At Thirlspot or, north of it, at Stanah Gill.

had to traverse more and more of the atmosphere, the redness of the illumination augmented. A last snow shower moved with its trailing hair along the sides of Blencathra and through the adjacent valleys. The sun had just set for us, but the evening glow fell upon the descending shower, and produced an extraordinary effect. The air became more calm, and the west for a time more beautiful. The sun himself, exciting evaporation and disturbing the thermic equilibrium of the air, was no doubt the cause of the squalls and storms which we had encountered during the day. After his withdrawal peace was proclaimed, and the tinted clouds hung in the west with scarcely sensible motion. One by one their glories faded; the bloom of the transmitted light was gradually replaced by the reflection from the sky; and the floating masses at length lay dead and ghastly in the cold grey air.

On the morning of the 17th April, we slowly climbed the slopes of Skiddaw—a mountain of noble mass and fine form, with warm brown heather clothing his haunches like fur. The summits seen from Keswick are not the real ones—the highest point lies nearly a mile behind. We mounted them in succession, and found ourselves finally in shelter of the Ordnance Surveyor's mound. Two posts were erect there, to which the snow clung, being drawn out by the wind like the filaments of a white beard.* The structure of these clotted masses was remarkable. In the solid condition, the particles of ice must have exerted their crystalline forces, and laid themselves, in obedience to these forces, side by side and end to end—the result being a structure which resembled a frozen moss. On the windward side the particles had built themselves into little white cockades, having central stems and branching feathers; the central portions being delicately veined at right angles to the direction in which the snow had been urged. It resembled a microscopic case of glacier lamination, and the very pressure to which the latter is ascribed seemed to have its representant in the force of the wind.

* The finest specimens I remember in this country were on Snowdon one January a few years ago. Some of the snow-feathers were fully 18 in. long.

Among the fragments of slate upon the summit we found numerous examples of cleavage and stratification running across each other. It has long been known that both phenomena are distinct; and, many years ago, a German observer inferred, from the condition of the fossils contained in slate rock, that the mass containing them had been forcibly compressed. The subject has been recently revived in this country, new cases of pressure have been discovered, and it has also been shown that pressure is sufficient to produce the cleavage. Slate rock may be triturated to a mud similar to that of which it was originally composed; and this mud may be converted by artificial pressure into fissile slate. Thus it appears that to produce our writing tablets and roofing materials, nature has been squeezing, probably for ages, the sediment of ancient rivers in her adamantine presses.

We descended the mountain by a route* which bristled with the spikes of weathered slate, towards Bassenthwaite Water. All along we found ourselves in the track of the sun's reflected rays, while the ripples ran and trembled in burnished curves over the surface of the lake as if their motions were regulated by music. Next morning we rowed from Keswick to Lodore, where we landed and advanced up Borrodale. The slate quarries on our way interested and instructed us, and near the so-called Bowder Stone we discovered the evidences of ancient glacier action. The rounded forms of the rocks first attracted attention, and closer examination left no doubt upon the mind as to the agency by which they had been rounded. Weathered as most of them were, it was difficult to detect the finer scratchings; but the larger flutings and scoopings-out were as palpable as they are to-day in the glacial valleys of the Alps. Arriving at the junction of two valleys,† we left that which led up to the Stake Pass on our right, and ascended Greenup, from the high plateau of which

* By Carlside.

† Professor Tyndall has overlooked the fact that he must have already turned out of the main valley near Rosthwaite.

we could plainly see the extended field occupied by the ancient glaciers. Our aim now was the Langdale Pikes; and, through swamps and snow, we reached two summits* which we supposed to be the ones we sought, but which really took us far away from them. On the second of those summits we discovered our mistake, and soon repaired it. We climbed the Pikes in succession. They are not lofty, but precipitous and bold, and they command a charming prospect.

Descending from the Pikes, one of us proceeding in a vertical plane, climbing and descending as the land required, towards Angle Tarn†; the other made an easier circuit round the pass of the Stake. We met and crossed Eskhause together. Great End was at our left, with huge icicles dependent from its ledges, and on the summit of the "hause" the snow lay deep. As we approached Sprinkling Tarn, magnificent cases of glacier action unfolded themselves. Round about the Tarn the rocks are all ground and polished, some flat, some dome-shaped—their associations with the Tarn suggesting the idea that the hollow which it fills had also been scooped out by the same agency. On some of the "domes" we found angular blocks which had been stranded there when the glacier retired. The sphere of action was so distinct, and its character so pronounced, that the imagination involuntarily restored the ice to its ancient reign, and the Scawfell glaciers were presented to the mind's eye as they existed before the advent of man.

These facts are not without their application at present, when glaciers constitute a topic of such general interest. A warm contest was waged for a considerable time between the adherents of the so-called sliding theory of Saussure and the viscous theory of Professor Forbes. The facts most favouring their own views, were, of course, brought most prominently

* At the head of Greenup they may have turned left (north) instead of right, and so found themselves on Ulscarf.

† To proceed from either of the Pikes to Angle Tarn "in a vertical plane" (which is professorial English for "a bee line"), would involve a precipitous descent of 1500 feet or more, and a subsequent ascent of nearly as many. The shortest reasonable route is more like a quarter-circle than a straight line.

forward by the rival advocates, but the supporters of the viscous theory had the inestimable advantage of being better acquainted with the actual phenomena than those were who happened to be their opponents. The consequence has been that the points favouring the viscous theory have been so multiplied, and so ably handled, as to drive the antagonistic hypothesis completely from the field. But let us look soberly on the facts above cited. What is it that grinds, scratches, and polishes the rocks, and scoops the land into basins which form the moulds of mountain lakes and tarns? Assuredly all these actions must be due to a sliding of the glacier over its bed. In the bottom of the glacier, stones and pebbles are set like emery (?) and it is the bodily motion of the gigantic polisher that accomplishes the work. Hence the sliding theory is indubitably true; but it is far from being complete. Ice possesses a power of yielding to great pressure, of which Saussure had no notion, and which Forbes was the first to bring prominently forward; and to this physical quality, call it what we will, a portion of the motion is also due. So that instead of either theory being true to the other, both of them must be invoked to account for the observed phenomena.

At Wastdale Head we were in the vicinity of the highest land in England, and felt a natural desire to stand upon the topmost stone. On the morning of the 19th we quitted the farmhouse* in which we had found good food and shelter, crossed the valley, and climbed one of the spurs of Scawfell.† Mr. Ruthven's map, and a few words from our agricultural host, constituted our only guidance. Turning to our left when we reached the top of the ridge, we proceeded gently upwards until a point was attained‡ from which we could see Sty Head Tarn across a shoulder of the mountain. Here we turned to the right, and picked our steps amid snow and broken boulders, until the brow of an incline being attained, we saw

* This may be either Burnthwaite or Rawhead.

† *i.e.*, The shoulder of Lingmell.

‡ Between Lingmell and The Pikes, and near the head of Piers Gill.

the summit of Scawfell Pike before us. Crossing a plateau we reached a heap of disorganised stones—the ruins of a huge mound, with which nature had capped the mountain, but which the frosts had torn to fragments. Stepping from stone to stone we reached the small artificial mound which marks the highest point, and on the sunny side of which we unlocked our scrip and brandy-flask, and allowed ourselves the refreshment which we had earned by our climb. It was a glorious day, the sky bright and blue, the sun warm, though the breeze was keen, while mountains, and valleys, and lakes, were all revealed without cloud or mist to mask their forms. We lay in the shelter for an hour, cozy and warm, permitting the scene around us to get more intimately woven with our thoughts. But Scawfell rose to the right, turning towards us a black precipitous flank, and separated from us by the chasm of Mickledore. We had found appalling accounts of this gorge in all the guide books, and we inferred that it was a rift in the mountain, bounded by terrific precipices, which one or two “adventurous dalesmen” had succeeded in crossing at the imminent peril of their lives. The picture drawn of the dangers of the place naturally rendered it an object of interest to us; and though we had no intention of placing our necks in peril, we thought we might, without risk, inform ourselves of the general character of the gulf. We therefore descended towards it, and seldom has it been our lot to witness so strong a divergence of the actual from the ideal.* The gulf dwindled to a practicable little ravine, and the passage of Mickledore was not even effected by crossing it; but was made along a little saddle which stretched with a gentle curvature from mountain to mountain. We thought of the brave damsels whom we had seen tripping across Les Ponts, scrambling down l’Angle, or squeezing their decrinolined bodies through the cleft of the Agralets. What would they have thought of Mickledore? Scawfell and its Pikes, and Mickledore added,

* It is not quite clear what kind of “gulf” they expected to find. Possibly they had imagined that it would be necessary to pass through a ravine with walls on either hand, instead of crossing it.

would have been merely an appetizing morning ramble for these fair Amazons.

The fact is, Mickledore can hardly be called a chasm at all. There are some noble crags near it, and the echoes of the place, bounded as it is on one side by Scawfell Pike, on the other by Scawfell itself, are wonderful. As we shifted our positions they babbled to us now from one crag, now from another, like the voice of a ventriloquist—the sound appearing to come to us at different times in totally different directions. The difficulty connected with Mickledore belongs, not to the gorge, but to the ascent of the opposite mountain.* This, we confess, would be rather formidable to a lady, and on the day to which we now refer, its difficulties were a little augmented by the frost and snow. We tried the cliffs at one place,† reached a platform, rounded a crag, and found ourselves upon a ledge with smooth vertical walls above and below us. We retreated and tried a neighbouring point.‡ The mountain was broken into rocky ledges, from the edges of which long icicles hung like stalactites, while stalagmitic heaps lay upon the ledges beneath them. These we were obliged to remove to render our footing secure, but, this being once effected, the danger was very trifling. Fifteen minutes' effort carried us over all serious difficulty; and the ascent afterwards, though steep, and sometimes demanding both hands and feet, was perfectly easy. Of course this is altogether a term of relation. There are people to whom Primrose Hill would not be easy, and, to persons given to giddiness, or lacking sufficient sureness of foot or strength of grasp, Mickledore is not recommendable; but, to any ordinary cragsman it presents a pleasant bit of mountain practice, and nothing more. It might, perhaps, be stated generally, that as far as the mountains are concerned, one

* This cliffs, between which a gorge lies, are surely part of the gorge itself.

† This is easily identified, being at a spot only slightly to the east of the line of Mickledore ridge.

‡ This is, of course, the usual route, starting a few paces east of the point where he made his first attempt.

might undertake to walk through Cumberland and Westmoreland, in any given direction, without deviating a hundred yards from a straight line.*

From the summit of Scawfell we scanned the grouping of the surrounding mountains, examined the magnetic condition of its rocks, and, having secured a mental photograph of the scene, descended. A steep slope covered with loose shingle led down to the valley to our right, and choosing a place where the debris was fine, we glided down the mountain as Alpine climbers descend slopes of snow. At first we stood erect, but subsequently tried sitting. The shingle glided beneath us, and heaped itself at intervals as a barrier in front, but a slight pressure upon the staff lifted us over the barrier, and we slid swiftly down amid the rattle and ramble of companionable stones. The day continued fair till sunset, but, as evening advanced, Great Gable appeared to carry on a conflict with a grey cloud which assailed his summit, and which boded no good for the morrow. The morrow came, and streaks and patches of dirty clouds disfigured the blue of heaven, while the general air was thickened by a dusky haze. We started early to ascend the Pillar mountain, which had been pointed out to us by our host. Its apparent summit was in sight, and one of us went straight up the mountain towards the top,† while the other pursued a more gently sloping couloir to the left. On reaching the topmost ridge, each found himself alone, enveloped in impenetrable fog, which rolled, and boiled, and eddied from side to side of the mountain. The fog tearing itself asunder at intervals, high precipices and deep

* Many people have, after reading this passage, expressed a strong desire to lay out a course for Professor Tyndall on these lines. It must, however, be remembered that there are few cliffs which are unclimbable for a continuous width of 200 yards, so that one could hardly find a really impossible course.

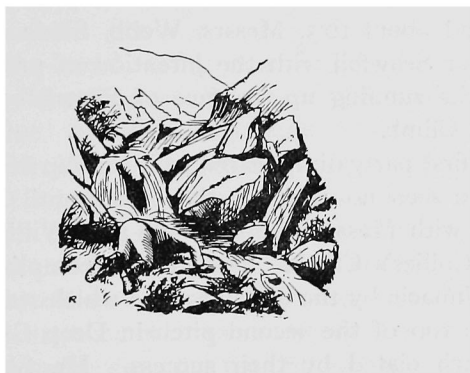
† This is not easy to follow if we are to take it literally. Any man in his right senses would either incline right towards Blacksail, or follow up Mosedale on his left to Windy Gap. Probably one (no doubt the same who took the short cut from Stickle Pike to Angle Tarn) went up direct from the foot of Blacksail, and the other by Windy Gap.

black gorges showed themselves to the right. Half-concealed and half-revealed, their gloom added to their grandeur. With compass in hand we clambered over the craggy ridge in search of our companion, shouting his name, but receiving not even an echo in reply. We at length met each other, and before we got clear of the mountain, had occasion to feel the blessed aid which the magnetic needle renders to man. Returning along the ridge, we met a shepherd, and he undertook to point out to us the direction in which the Great Gable lay. His instructions finished, we took out our compass to secure the bearing; but on looking at it, he exclaimed that he was wrong. In the gloom he had mistaken his position, which he now corrected, taking us to another point, where we parted company. We crossed Blacksail, and walked for an hour over broken boulders along the mountain side.* Coming to a steep gorge, partially filled with snow, we inferred that it would lead us to the summit of Great Gable. We ascended it, the fog cleared a little, and we found ourselves upon the top of Kirkfell.† The air, by fits, became clearer, and we saw Great Gable in front of, and above us. We descended Kirkfell, crossed the saddle, assailed Great Gable, and soon found ourselves upon its weathered apex. The view was grand, and the mutations of the atmosphere were wonderful. We chose the shingle for our descent, and in manner already described, went swiftly and pleasantly down the mountain. Next day we walked, partly by path and partly by no track, over the mountain heads to Coniston, wild icy winds having cut our cheeks upon the shoulder of the Old Man. In the valley, below the copper mines, we found some excellent specimens of striated rocks; the substance was hard, and had been protected from the weather by a layer of drift. The groovings were as plain and sharp as if they had been cut by the glaciers last year. At Coniston we remained a night, and saw there the magnificent

* Probably tending upwards into Baysear Slack on the Ennerdale side.

† This is one of the commonest mistakes, and even now when the hills are so much better known, it is constantly made by climbing parties in foggy weather.

streamers of the 21st. The next day we walked to Windermere, and that same evening were immersed in the smoke of Preston.



THE SCAWFELL ACCIDENT.

Monday, September 21st, 1903, was a black day for our Club. On that day, four of our most skilful climbers lost their lives in essaying the ascent of the North Face of Scawfell Pinnacle.

About 9.40 a.m., Messrs. R. W. Broadrick, A. E. W. Garrett, S. Ridsdale and H. L. Jupp, left Wastdale Hotel, intending to climb Scawfell Pinnacle from Deep Gill. A few minutes later, Messrs. Lucas and Marples followed in their steps, and about 10.5, Messrs. Webb, Slade and Williamson set out for Scawfell with the intention of prospecting one of the cracks running up the face of Scawfell to the West of Collier's Climb.

The first party disappeared over the top of Brown Tongue, and were seen no more by the others until 1.35, when they lunched with Messrs. Webb, Slade and Williamson near the foot of Collier's Climb. They had accomplished the ascent of the Pinnacle by the difficult route which starts immediately from the top of the second pitch in Deep Gill, and were all very much elated by their success. Mr. Slade commented upon the short time it had taken them to climb the Pinnacle, and they laughingly referred to their being in good condition. After lunch, Mr. Webb's party, quite unaware that the others intended further serious climbing, left them sitting on Rakes Progress, and climbed up the crack to the right of Collier's Climb, prospecting hereabouts for some time, and subsequently climbing down and up Collier's Chimney in Moss Gill. On the Broad Stand side of Scawfell a heavy wind was blowing from the S.E., but the face of Scawfell was in a dead calm, and they found the rocks warm, dry and in perfect condition for climbing. It was now about 5 o'clock, so they descended

Broad Stand to Mickledore, and here Mr. Webb announced his intention of going along Rakes Progress to the spot at which they had lunched, in order to get his rucksack.

Messrs. Slade and Williamson accompanied him, and whilst they were sitting eating chocolate and chatting, they heard a shout in the distance. It seemed to come from the direction of Pikes Crag, and thinking it might be from Messrs. Marples and Lucas in difficulties there, Mr. Slade went a little way along Rakes Progress to get a better view of the gullies. Seeing nothing, he looked down into Hollow Stones, thinking they might be there, as the shout had been very faint. In working further along Rakes Progress, Mr. Slade came in sight of Lord's Rake, and at the entrance of it saw four figures stretched out on the screes, and lying quite still. In a disconnected way he thought at first they were asleep, then what a peculiar place it was to fall asleep in, and then suddenly the awful reality flashed upon him. He ran along the Progress calling to the others, and found only Mr. Ridsdale still alive. His first words were, "I've been shouting for hours ; I'm afraid the others are all gone, but look after them, and don't mind me." As he feared, they were past human aid, and death had evidently visited them with merciful swiftness, for their bodies were already cold. At what time the accident happened we shall never know, for the two watches they had with them were still going, and Mr. Ridsdale was so badly wounded that he had lost all estimate of the time. It was now 5:40 by Mr. Broadrick's watch, and with commendable thoughtfulness, Messrs. Webb and Slade at once despatched Mr. Williamson (a much younger man than they) to Wastdale for help.

From that time until nearly ten o'clock they did all that lay in their power to alleviate the sufferings of poor Ridsdale, who was in great pain. It got dark before 7, and their lonely vigil, with the wind howling in the summit crags above their heads, their three friends lying around them, and poor Ridsdale moaning and but semi-conscious most of the time, must have been a dreadful experience.

Poor Ridsdale's heroic appeal to them to tend the others before him, and, afterwards, Messrs. Webb and Slade's manly efforts to help and sustain their dying comrade through the long hours of waiting, are two of the brightest spots in this terrible affair, and to them we must always look back with a feeling of pride and satisfaction.

In the meantime, Mr. Williamson had raced down to Wastdale in slightly over half an hour, arriving in such an exhausted state that he could hardly speak.

He soon faltered out his news, however, and ere long the valley was roused, and he, with Dr. Fearnhead of Lytham and Mr. Marples (who had returned from Scawfell sometime before, knowing nothing of the accident), was soon breasting the shoulder of Lingmell, and making for the scene of the disaster.

Dr. Norman Mead of Bradford soon followed, and after came Mr. Whiting with the hotel visitors, accompanied by dalesmen carrying two hurdles and a lantern.

It was now quite dark, and the going was necessarily slow, but shortly after nine the two medical men, guided by Messrs. Williamson and Marples, arrived at the foot of Lord's Rake and attended to Ridsdale's injuries. Soon after, a contingent of the main party arrived, but they had left their hurdle at the foot of the screes, thinking to carry Mr. Ridsdale down to it. This was found to be impracticable, however, so they had to return for it and bring it up. After a heavy struggle they did so, and in spite of the heavy wind that was blowing, and in spite of the bitter cold, willing hands were soon padding it with their coats. By about eleven o'clock a start was made for Wastdale. The screes leading down to Hollow Stones are steep and rough at the best of times, but with a heavy hurdle, bearing the weight of poor Ridsdale, and a lantern the only means of light, the journey was fatiguing and trying in the extreme.

After what seemed interminable stumbling and slipping down the screes to Hollow Stones, followed by a long weary grind down Brown Tongue, at the foot of which the wall had to be levelled, they at length came in sight of the hotel lights.

At this point they were much cheered and encouraged by the knowledge that their burden was still living, and that their arduous efforts seemed assured of a fitting reward. Great was their sorrow and disappointment an hour or so later, when they reached the hotel, to find they were too late, and that Mr. Ridsdale had expired before gaining its shelter.

The descent from Lord's Rake had occupied them from 11 p.m. till 3.30 a.m.—four hours and a half of strenuous labour and wearing suspense. I should like to take this opportunity of marking our appreciation of the efforts of all those who went out on to Scawfell that bitter dark night, to succour their unfortunate fellow-men, and in this I am sure that I but voice the heartfelt thanks and appreciation of our entire club.

After waiting for daylight, others set out and brought down the three remaining bodies, reaching the hotel about 3 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon.

Such is the plain account of this most terrible accident, and of how the visitors and dalesmen generously hurried to the aid of our four unfortunate club-mates.

After the inquest—the verdict of which was “accidental death”—Mr. Broadrick's body was conveyed to Windermere for burial, and Messrs. Ridsdale, Garrett and Jupp—companions on many a jolly climbing expedition—were laid to rest in the S.E. corner of the little church-yard at Wastdale, almost in sight of the magnificent face of rock which had afforded them so much sport and pleasure, and which at last cost them so dear.

Many causes have been produced to account for the accident. After a most careful sifting of them all in the light of the evidence that we have been able to glean, it cannot be denied that the real and only cause was the terrible and elementary one of the leader slipping (how or why we shall never know) and pulling down the rest of the party. So much was gathered from Mr. Ridsdale while they were awaiting the rescue party. This, and the fact that when they started the climb Mr. Broadrick was leading, and that he subsequently gave way to Mr. Garrett on the rope.

It seemed at one time that this was a mistake, and that when Mr. Broadrick could not manage it the party should have turned back, but Messrs. Marples and Lucas saw them change places practically at the foot of the climb. Also, Mr. Garrett was quite justified in taking over the lead, because Mr. Broadrick had cut his hands badly a few days before in a cycling accident. Further, Mr. Garrett was not only in most excellent training, but was a man of wide and long experience as regards rock-climbing.

The conditions were most suitable for climbing ; there was not a weak or inexperienced member in the party ; the face of rock upon which they were climbing was entirely sheltered from the wind ; all were in excellent training, and it is safe to say that all had done climbing of as great severity as they had accomplished when the slip occurred. It is quite true that three or two would have formed as strong a party as four for this particular climb, but in this case the inclusion of the third or fourth man would seem to have had no bearing on the actual slip made by the leader.

It has been mentioned to me that the party were unwise to attempt such a difficult climb after already having once ascended the Pinnacle. Most men, in my humble opinion, climb their best after an hour or two of fairly hard exercise. We have also the precedent of the only other party who have accomplished this face. It was after four o'clock when Messrs. Jones and Walker started up it, and they had both been climbing hard all day.

I have the assurance of Mr. H. C. Broadrick, that he and his brother had inspected the face beforehand, so we cannot urge that the ill-fated attempt was the outcome of a hasty decision.

I am glad that it is in my power to believe that this accident was an accident pure and simple, that it is questionable if any of the canons of our sport were violated, and that no blame can be rightly attached to our late friends.

A recent inspection from below and from above on a rope, leads me to the conclusion that they were not trying the

climb made by Messrs. Jones and Walker in 1898, but that they were essaying the ascent of the Pinnacle direct from its foot. Their scratches were obvious, leading up from the grass ledge at the base of the Pinnacle between Deep Gill and Steep Gill. They followed Mr. Jones' route only for about 50 feet. Here his climb trends to the left (looking up), and finishes at a point about 60 feet below the Slingsby Chimney, on the ordinary route up the Pinnacle from Steep Gill. Mr. Broadrick knew of the existence of a route up the "nose" of the Pinnacle (*vide* Jones' "Rock Climbing," 2nd edition, page 87), and I know that he was anxious to find a suitable party with which to try it.

About 50 feet below Hopkinson's Cairn, and about 250 feet above the entrance to Lord's Rake, is a long ledge, fairly wide at the right hand extremity, and narrowing away to nothing as it approaches the crack at the foot of the Slingsby Chimney. This ledge was scored with new nail marks, and, as all the previous recent parties on this face have climbed in stockinged feet, it is safe to assume that, as the scratches suddenly ceased here, it was from this point the party fell. At the right hand end of the ledge the rock was much scratched, and it looked as though an attempt had been made to climb straight up from here.

Then the scratches (not so numerous, and as though made by one man) led along the ledge to where it got narrower, as though the party had given up the direct ascent and were attempting to join the crack below the Slingsby Chimney. The scratches could be traced to within 25 feet of the crack (and safety) when they suddenly ceased. From this ledge it would have been an easy matter for one of them to have climbed down on the rope to the start, and so round to the foot of the Slingsby Chimney, where he could have helped the others with the rope from above. Probably they were not *in extremis*, however, and it is most likely that, out there on one of our finest rock faces, with all the conditions most favourable to the accomplishment of a new ascent, the thought of disaster was far from them, and that it came with a suddenness that left them no time in which to realize it.

Before leaving the sad story of this tragedy and the consideration of its causes, and turning to other matters, it may be as well to mention that Mr. Broadrick's boots were missing when the party was found. It cannot be inferred, without doubt, from this that he was climbing in his stockinged feet. It is possible, even probable, that they came off as he fell, as he was not partial to climbing without his boots. His position as second man on the rope would hardly lead him to try the experiment, as it would rather diminish his power of holding the leader than otherwise.

Such is a brief review of the leading points that have been ventilated as causes conducive to the accident.

It would seem that our sport was such an integral part of our late members' lives, that an account of their last climb would be incomplete without some further reference to their previous climbing records and modes of life.

Wilfred Broadrick was a fine type of all that an Englishman should be. Topping six feet in height, he was broad, muscular and well-built in proportion. Somewhat quiet and reserved with those he did not know intimately, his was one of those strong personalities that leave a lasting impression on those with whom they come in contact. Born in 1872, he was educated at Haileybury and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he obtained a 2nd class in the Moral Science Tripos of 1894. Having studied modern languages in both France and Germany, he returned to England, and occupied a post as assistant-master at Bedford Grammar School. From there he went to Fettes College, Edinburgh, and was a master there at the time of his death.

While at Cambridge he was a distinguished oar, and was very well known in musical circles. He was President of the University Musical Society, took a leading interest in its welfare, and, according to Mr. Gerard F. Cobb, "sang charmingly."

Always fond of athletics, he ultimately took to fell-walking and climbing, almost to the entire exclusion of other sports. He was a member of the Alpine and Yorkshire Ramblers

Clubs, and was keenly enthusiastic about all matters pertaining to the mountains.

He did much good climbing in Switzerland, and with Mr. A. E. Field, in 1902, made the first traverse of the Aiguilles sans Nom and Verte in one day—one of the finest expeditions ever accomplished in the Mont Blanc district. He also, amongst other things that year, climbed the Ecrins (traverse), Meije (traverse), Southern Aiguille d'Arves, Col and Pic du Clot des Cavales, Pic d'Olan, Aiguille du Plat (traverse) and the Dent du Requin.

His great physical strength and marvellous staying powers rendered him a first-class man in the Alps, while his athletic training and great knack as a rock-climber enabled him to undertake, with safety, rock-climbs that most of us are content to read about.

He had climbed almost all our Cumberland climbs, and, to his credit stand some of our most difficult first ascents—notably, two of the most formidable of the Dow Crag Gullies. The mountaineering feat he was proudest of, however, was his huge fell-walk.

Starting at Rosthwaite he climbed in the following order Great Gable, The Pillar, Scawfell, Scawfell Pike, Great End, Bowfell, Fairfield, Helvellyn, Blencathra and Skiddaw, returning to Rosthwaite 28 minutes inside the 24 hours. And this in spite of being lost for more than an hour in the mist and darkness of Skiddaw Forest! With this, however, he was not satisfied, and the last time I saw him, a few days before he went to Wastdale for the last time, he told me he would not rest until he had done the same walk within 21 hours.

And such were his powers on a fell-side, that, had he been spared, I feel convinced he would have succeeded.

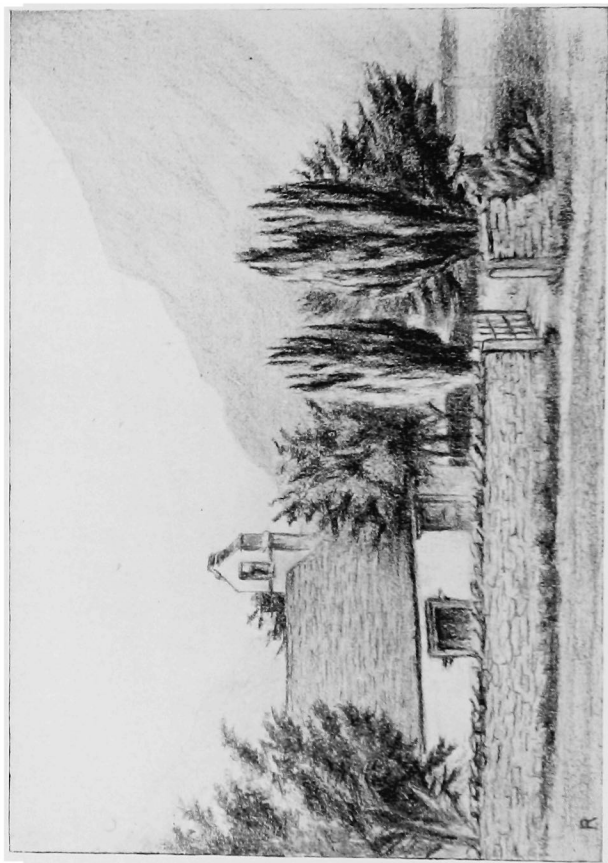
As a climber and as a man he will be long and deeply regretted, not only by those who had the privilege of his friendship, but also by those who admire a manly man, and to whom his powers as a climber and his charming personality were but hearsay.

Messrs. A. E. W. Garrett, S. Ridsdale and H. L. Jupp had never climbed in Switzerland, but were rock specialists of a very high order. They, with Mr. Broadrick, were types of Englishmen that we as a club were proud of, and with him they shared a love of the mountains that was truly a "ruling passion."

Mr. Garrett started serious climbing so long since as June, 1895. On a walking tour in North Wales he, with Mr. J. V. Brett, met the late Mr. O. G. Jones at Capel Curig, and were so infected by his enthusiasm that they accepted his friendly offer to take them for a climb. They climbed the North Gully on Tryfaen, descending by the South Gully, and enjoyed themselves immensely. Little did that merry party dream, that ere ten years had elapsed, the mountains would have claimed two of their number, or that these two would meet their fate in such a peculiarly similar manner.

The following year found Mr. Garrett at Wastdale Head, accompanied by Messrs. Jupp and Brett, and since that time these three friends have climbed together, spending a part of all their holidays amongst the fells of Cumberland and North Wales, and gaining such an all-round knowledge of the rocks and rock-climbing as is equalled by very few of our members. In perusing a list of their climbs, one is struck by the correctness of their methods, and by the fact that in the early days they chose only those climbs that were suitable for beginners, working up later, as they gained experience, to the more difficult courses. How unlike some of the present day visitors to Wastdale, who, on arriving there for the first time, ask for the most difficult and dangerous climb, and straightway go and climb it! It is a strange irony of fate that these latter men should go "Scot free," and our four late club-mates—skilful, careful and modest—should be chosen.

Probably the best climb they did together was the Slanting Gully on Lliwedd, in June, 1902. Mark the date. Not until they had been climbing for seven years did they try it. This they made the third ascent of, Mr. Jupp leading. In a letter to my brother at the time, he said that it was due to Mr.



THE CHURCH, WASTDALE.

From a drawing by C. E. Ross.

Garrett's courtesy that he had had the honour, and that Mr. Garrett could have led up it comfortably. Such was the generous spirit that marked their intercourse.

Mr. Ridsdale joined the party some four years ago, but what he lacked in experience he made up for by extra athleticism.

He was above the average in most sports, but especially excelled as a swimmer and lacrosse player. Indeed, as a lacrosse player he was quite famous, and played for the West London Club.

He finished his education with Mr. Garrett, at Ouchy, in Switzerland, and it is more than likely that their first love of the mountains was inspired by the sight of the Dent du Midi and the serrated peaks which form the back-ground of the beautiful Lake of Geneva.

Mr. Jupp was educated at the Whitgift Grammar School, and took a leading part in the Old Boys' Gym. and Cricket Club.

I cannot say more in honour of their memories than their old friend Brett says in a letter to me: "This thing I can say for them, and surely it embraces all, that no man could have wished for better friends or truer comrades than these."

ASHLEY P. ABRAHAM.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

ACCIDENT ON SGURR NAN GILLEAN.—On the 25th July, Mr. Allen and Mr. Mark Leicester, while on a cycling expedition through Scotland, arrived at Sligachan Hotel. The following day they visited Lochs Scavaig and Coruisk, and climbed along the ridge that separates the latter Loch from Hart-a-Corrie, and some way up the face of Bidein-Druimnan-Ramh, but on meeting difficulties descended into Hart-a-Corrie. The following day they set out up Sgurr-nan-Gillean and found themselves on the pinnacle route.

On arriving at the top of the third pinnacle at what is known as the "Bad Step," having no rope, no nails in their boots, and no knowledge of what difficulties lay beyond, they wisely decided not to go any further, and descended the pinnacle on the Glen Sligachan side. When some little way down, Mr. Leicester suggested they should make a detour and go for the summit. Mr. Allen, however, did not think it was worth the trouble, more especially in view of the fact that they were contemplating a long cycle ride in the evening. It was then arranged that Mr. Leicester should go on alone, and rejoin his friend at the Hotel later in the afternoon. Their parting was of the most casual description, and as the day was perfectly clear it never entered Mr. Leicester's mind that there was the slightest risk in separation. He skirted the fourth pinnacle and climbed to the summit, and then descended by the pinnacle route, climbing the point on the third pinnacle which they had hesitated to descend together. On arriving at the Hotel at five o'clock, found his friend had not returned. After having tea, being alarmed at Mr. Allen's non-appearance, Mr. Leicester set out to look for him at six o'clock. He searched the pinnacle route as far as the foot of the third

pinnacle, and when darkness came on descended the mountain in the direction of the Hotel, and soon came upon a search party which had been organised from the Hotel. They spent the night on the mountain, and resumed the search with dawn. All the next day the search was continued in vain, and it was not until about 11.30 on the following day that John Mackenzie, one of the guides, discovered the body of the unfortunate tourist hidden amongst the rocks at the foot of the crags which rise up from the moorland to the first pinnacle.

Miss Tait of Dartford, who, in company with John Mackenzie, has since thoroughly examined the spot, states that the fall could not have been more than about 20 feet, as they discovered Mr. Allen's footmarks in the scree above. In falling he had struck his head against the rocks, and death must have been instantaneous. The accident appears to have been occasioned by such a slip as might happen to anyone at any time. Mr. Allen was a good athlete, being both a cricketer and a football player. Mr. Leicester had never climbed with him before, but on the previous day had noticed that he climbed with ease and pleasure. He was, moreover, of a very cautious disposition. The Cuchullins were new ground to both.

Mr. Leicester, from whom we have obtained this information, says he can hardly find words to express adequately all his gratitude to those who so kindly shared in the fatigue and strain of that long search. Among the visitors at the Hotel, Dr. Ellis Milne, M.A., of Aberdeen, and Miss M. S. Tait of Dartford, shewed exceptional energy in organising the search parties, and Mr. Campbell of Sligachan Hotel gave every assistance in his power.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A JOURNALIST ON ROCK-CLIMBING.

To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

SIR,

Although we doubtless all wish that the newspaper accounts of the Scawfell disaster had been limited to a brief record of the melancholy facts, and a lucid description of the Pinnacle itself, it may be instructive and interesting to study the methods by which the enterprising journalist works up an article on a subject he knows nothing about. The cutting, from which the following extracts are taken, was sent to me by a friend. I confess that, notwithstanding the distressing circumstances through which the article came into being, I was a good deal amused till I came to the last sentence. Then I ceased to be amused.

Our friend, the journalist, either by inspiration or the commands of his chief, set about writing an essay on Mountain-Climbing in Great Britain. The first thing to do was obviously to read up books on the subject, so he selected those by O. G. Jones, W. P. Haskett-Smith, and my own unworthy self, with a sentence from Mummery at the commencement as a *hors d'oeuvres*.

Then he gets to work.

"The way chosen by the late ill-fated quartette was up the Deep Ghyll."

This needs no comment, especially in view of what follows.

"In the *Alpine Journal* there is a thrilling account of its first conquest by Mr. Slingsby and two companions."

I do not believe he ever consulted the *Alpine Journal*. He took it straight out of Haskett-Smith (p. 32).

"Difficulties began where it was necessary to reach a tiny ledge by raising the leader on their shoulders."

This is somewhat involved, but it is nothing to what follows.

"He then drew up the others with a rope," which is his version of "Mason and I found it no child's play to follow him with the rope."

Our journalist then proceeds to get up the second pitch, "using the knees, elbows, thighs and body as only expert cragsmen can, for in the absence of hand and foothold it is necessary to creep upwards like a caterpillar." This is doubtless what Mr. Slingsby and his companions found it necessary to do on the first ascent, but a generation of climbers has altered all that. At least that is not the way I got up the second pitch. But then I am not an expert cragsman.

"The final exit to the skyline" (*sic*) "is a narrow sloping traverse, or, in simple language, a wall of rock" (this is very good), "along which the climber by clinging with his hands to the top, and doubling his knees against the rock, moves sideways, hand after hand and knee after knee."

I don't think he got this from Jones; I fancy he must have done me the honour of being struck by the photo of Ashley Abraham on the Castle Head Hand Traverse (p. 114), because, to judge from the letterpress, Jones did not "double his knees." Anyhow our friend has taken a long step, be it to the North Face of Pillar Stone, or to Derwentwater.

"Scawfell Pillar is *another* arduous climb." (The italics throughout are my own. We must recollect that the accident took place whilst climbing Deep Ghyll, *not* the Pinnacle.) "Here the climber hauls himself to the top of an overhanging slab by means of a convenient crack in which his left hand can be inserted."

This gets me. The insertion of the hand into a crack sounds as if he had harked away with Jones to the Needle—"being thrust into a thin horizontal cleft rough enough to offer some friction for the back of the hand as well as the palm" (*Rock Climbing, 1900, Ed. p. 173*); or more probably it is a

version of "the left hand can find a thin crack good enough for a handhold" (p. 71). But where does the overhanging slab come from?

"At the top he slides cautiously down to the edge of the main cliff" (this is another puzzler). "Merely by letting go he would reach Wastdale Valley, 2,000 feet below" (and clean through the Pinnacle, the Craggs that buttress Lord's Rake, and about a mile and a half, horizontally, of thin air) "in about four seconds."

Then "he clings his way to the top, without any resting place for his feet, the whole of the work being thrown on the arms." This is his version of "where the hands and body have to do the bulk of the work" (see p. 33 Haskett-Smith). Anyone unacquainted with the Pinnacle can verify the newspaper statement by a reference to Messrs. Abraham's well known photo in Jones' book (facing p. 69.)

After this, further description seemed to pall, but I was mistaken. There was the Napes Needle, "the *most sensational* rock climb in England," the lower part of which is "easy to an expert," "but in rounding the edge of a ledge he must thrust a cautious hand to grip a crack" (our friend would grip a gully if it came his way). He works up this crack, as yet undiscovered, to the mantelshelf, whence "steep crawling follows," always with an "unbending" abyss below, until "the climber hauls himself on to the blunted *nose* of the needle." To "stumble" during this climb, is "to be dashed to the valley below."

After a visit to the Pillar Rock, my breath was fairly taken away by the ascent of the "Great Gable of the Eagle's Nest," "another strenuous climb," at one point of which "the climbers have to hang on to an overhanging ledge, and swing their bodies to another foothold over an abyss hundreds of feet deep." And who says the Wastdale climbs are exhausted?

We then pass on to Jones' "gallant attempt" on Iron Crag Gully (I always thought "attempt" signified failure), and so to the Cambrian climbs, which are esteemed *next* to the Cumbrian Fells. Our friend would be *persona gratissima* at Pen-y-gwyd,

but, on the subject of Welsh climbs, I am as profoundly ignorant as he is of the Cumberland crags.

This was all very well so far, but the last sentence was unpleasant.

"Indeed, Mr. C. E. Benson declares that fatalities are not so common as they ought to be, and attributes such as do unfortunately happen to wanton carelessness."

Now this, apparently *apropos* of the Scawfell accident, is not a nice thing to be credited with having said, and I hastened to reply. When I wrote those words I thought my meaning was obvious. It had been anticipated in the Journal (Vol. III. p. 85) as applied to ordinary tourists, and by Haskett-Smith (pp. 10 and 11), whom I ventured to quote, to tyro climbers.

But, Sir, I find that not only have I been misunderstood by some, but that more than one member of the Club noticed the sentence in the article, and doubtless formed his own opinion, but did not see my reply. I should be glad therefore, if you could see your way to publishing it, as a complement to this letter.

Yours faithfully,

CLAUDE E. BENSON.

To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

SIR,

Your recent article on "Mountain Climbing in Britain," contains the sentence, "Mr. C. E. Benson declares that fatalities are not so common as they ought to be, and attributes such as do unfortunately happen to wanton carelessness."

I fear that, as the article commences, "The recent fatal accident on Scawfell," these words may be taken as my expression of opinion with regard to that accident. This suggestion I hasten to emphatically repudiate.

The passage, which is taken from a book published twelve months before the disaster, runs :—

“Fatal accidents are not so common on the Fells as they ought to be, though more common than is generally supposed. . . . Climbing fatalities proper, so far as I know, there are none. . . . I can find no record of a fatal accident to a member or members of a roped party engaged in serious climbing.”

Anyone who reads “Crag and Hound in Lakeland” through will recognise that these words are intended to apply to the multitude of tourists who with ill-nailed, or un-nailed, boots, without map or compass, without provisions in case of emergency, wander over the Fells as if they were as innocent of danger as Primrose-hill, and to those “fools who rush in,” ill-equipped, “straight from the desk in a crowded city, with unseasoned lungs and muscles, in the cold and the wet, alone or with chance companions, to attack” climbs which a strong party of experienced cragsmen, perfectly equipped and in perfect condition, treads with a caution akin to fear.

A great deal of nonsense has been written, and more talked, about the recent accident by people who, it is abundantly evident, know next to nothing, if anything, about the crags on which the catastrophe took place, and rather less about rock-climbing. These critics would do well to reflect :—1. That their opinions are quite valueless. 2. That such opinions may inflict an accentuated pang on the bereaved relatives, who may mistake them for the sober judgments of people who have some idea of what they are talking about. I would commend to their notice the verdict of the coroner on the first-hand evidence of an expert witness of unimpeachable veracity, viz. :—It was an accident ; no one was to blame.

Yours obediently,

CLAUDE E. BENSON.

Park Hotel, Keswick.

FIRST AID.

To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,

I have heard with great pleasure that the Committee of the Climbers' Club are taking steps to provide "First Aid Appliances" at some of the chief climbing centres. This is a step which should meet with the approval, not only of members of the Club, but of all frequenters of the mountains.

The fact that intelligent "First Aid" is often the means of saving life, and of preventing perhaps a life-long deformity, cannot be too strongly impressed on everybody; and now that the Club has taken the first step by providing the appliances, it is to be hoped that the members will take every opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the principles of "First Aid"; for the value of the Committee's action will be but small if this knowledge is wanting.

Perhaps I might draw attention to the points upon which, in my opinion, it is most important to acquire knowledge—

1st. How to handle and lift an injured man.

2nd. How temporarily to fix a fractured limb.

3rd. How to carry a stretcher, without jolting, or causing any unnecessary discomfort to a patient.

4th. The use of stimulants, more especially in cases of hæmorrhage, or of head injuries.

It should not be difficult for any one to obtain instruction, because ambulance classes are now held in most towns; and, failing a class, much valuable information may be obtained from the little hand-book, "First Aid to the Injured," published by the St. John's Ambulance Association.

But it must be remembered that no amount of reading can take the place of practical instruction.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

E. C. DANIEL.

EPSOM.

