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NEW CLIMBS IN COIRE LABAIN, SKYE.

By G. BARLOW and H. B. BUCKLE.

THE TEARLACH GULLIES.

FROM the western slopes of the seaward end of Glen Brittle the summit of Sgurr Tearlach cannot be seen even in clear weather. Its ridge slopes upward from the clearly marked Mhic Coinnich gap and then disappears behind the shapely cone of Sgurr Alasdair. An examination of this ridge reveals the fact that in places it is broken by small gaps, and from these, gullies may be seen making their way down the mountain face.

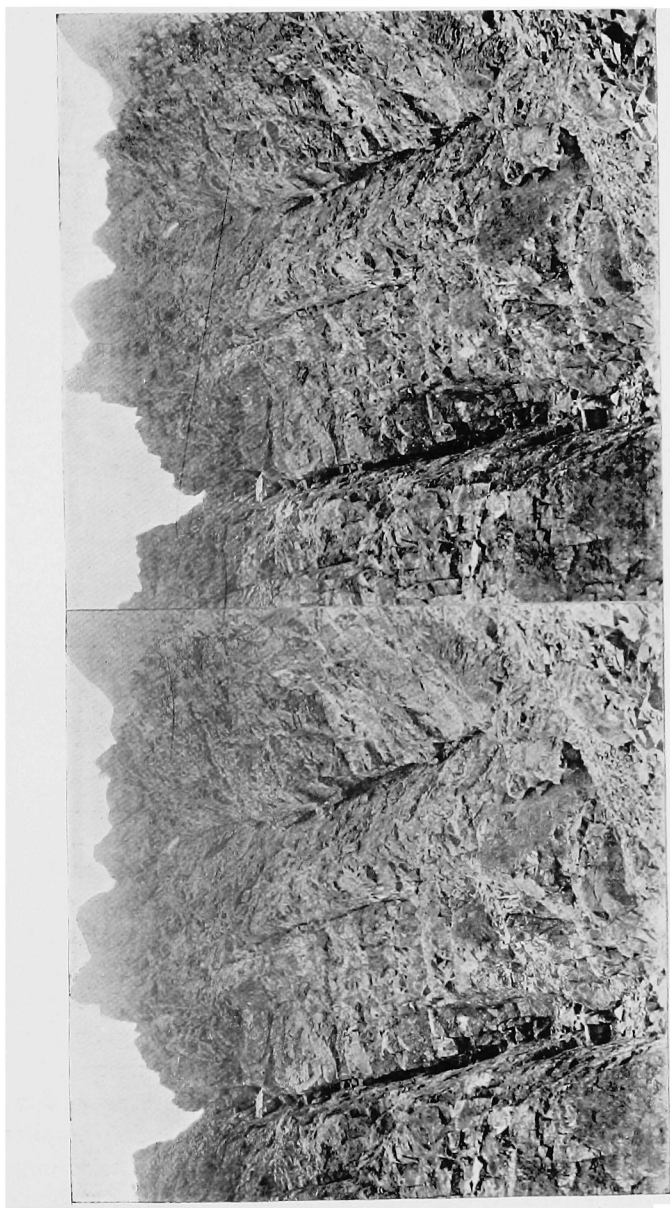
Sgurr Tearlach, unlike its neighbouring peaks, could lay claim to no distinctive climbs, with the exception of the well-known traverse of its main ridge, and it was in the hope of bringing this neglected peak into greater repute, that the writers endeavoured to find some climbing in the above-mentioned gullies.

It is perhaps worthy of remark that the ideal starting-place for these climbs would be from a camp on the shores of Loch an Coire Labain, but the weather of last September was sufficiently wet to effectually prevent the use of sleeping-bags at this delightful camping ground. Some compensation

was, however, given by the general lowness of temperature at this season, and the walk up from Glen Brittle could hardly be described as toil.

One day was spent in a vain search for our mountain, to say nothing of the gullies. We reached the upper corrie only to find ourselves enveloped in relentless mists, and after spending an hour or so on the screes above the loch, and finding nothing clearly recognisable, we beat a retreat for Glen Brittle and early tea. Our second attempt was more successful, for on this occasion the mists favoured us so far by their absence as to leave the lower portions of the gullies clear. We were now able to see where we had spent our time so fruitlessly on the previous day. The Tearlach gullies abut on to the Alasdair Stone Shoot, and from the foot of the Shoot a huge out-splayed scree descends to the loch. Some unnecessary toil in reaching the Stone Shoot can be saved by making up the scree to the rocky spur of Alasdair on its right, where a dyke at the base of the steeper rocks will be found to give a comparatively pleasant ascent to the foot of the Shoot. Having arrived at this vantage-point the Tearlach gullies can be studied more in detail. The one on the extreme left with a funnel-shaped upper portion, which for distinction we will call the A gully, was not attempted, as it did not look so inviting as its right-hand neighbours. It may nevertheless contain good climbing, and reward a future explorer. All the gullies are alike in being well defined, and with the descriptions here given there should be no difficulty in distinguishing them.

The B Gully starts some distance higher up the Stone Shoot, and is identified by having a narrow traverse beginning about fifty feet to the right and leading back into the gully above the lower pitches. Still higher up the shoot, the C and D Gullies can be seen cutting vertically into the face with only a narrow stretch of rock between them. The C Gully is the easiest of these three and is the one which was first climbed, this being accomplished on Sunday, 30th August, 1908, by Messrs F. and A. H. Doughty and the writers.



C and D Gullies, Tearlach, from the Stone Shoot ($+40^{\circ}$).

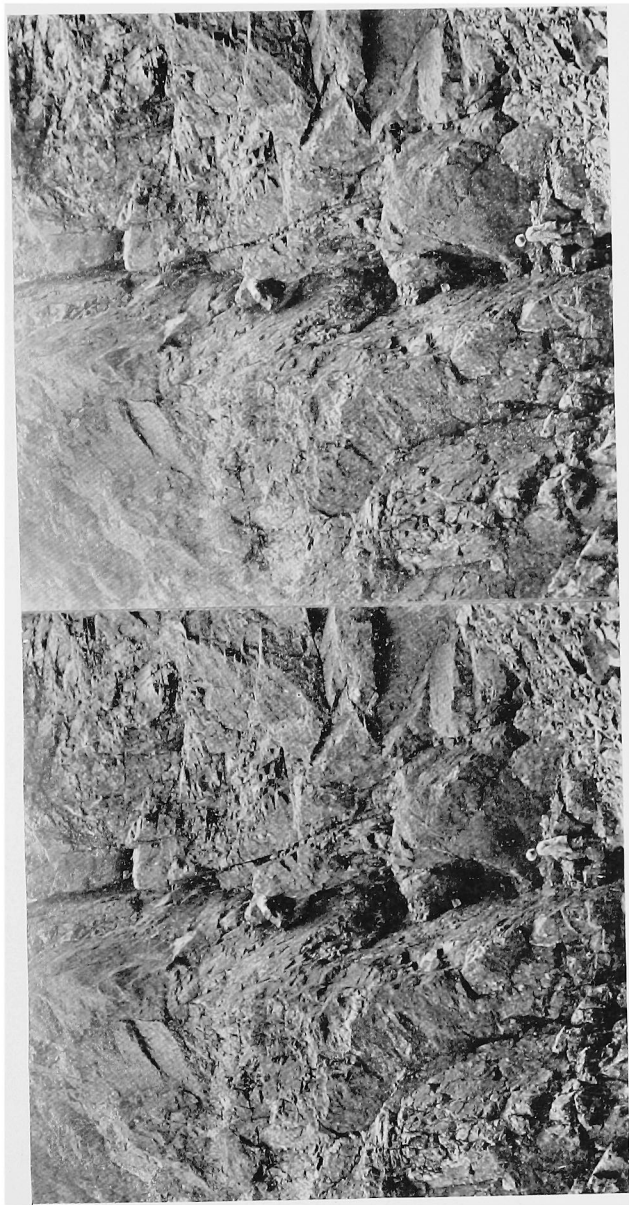
A horizontal stone jammed across in the bed of the gully marks its foot, and a cairn was built on the rocks to the right of this. The gully at once becomes a very deep and narrow fissure, with dark recesses penetrating into the mountain. Near the outside of this chimney are two large jammed stones, the higher one being the farther out. These form two useful resting places for the ascent of this pitch. The first stone was reached from the outside by climbing straight up the chimney facing the left wall, the holds being small until the stone itself can be used. The passage outwards from the first to the second block is short but involves a little difficulty unless use is made of the foot holds on the right wall, which are not easily seen. The second block accommodates two climbers, and from this point follows another short pitch consisting of jammed stones, progress being made with the feet on the right wall. A general instability of the rocks in this part of the climb provided some excitement, the presence of one large unstable block of rock between the second and third members of the party causing combined tactics to be adopted. Fortunately it was reserved for the last man to allow it to pursue a graceful trajectory over the lower pitches and to find its equilibrium in fragments scattered on the screes below.

Grass ledges now lead off to right and left, while in front is a fine cave pitch composed of rough rocks. There is, however, a through route of ample dimensions, only made awkward by the presence of the sharp edges of some projecting blocks. Above, the gully is more open, with a very steep dyke forming a crack on the right. Following the main gully we cross over a well-like cavity, and a neat scramble up a crack filled with splintered blocks leads to a walk of a few yards terminating in the ridge line of Tearlach. A cairn was built on the left several feet below the ridge.

The B and D Gullies were climbed by the writers on the Tuesday following. Fortune favoured us by sending fine weather on this particular day, for there was a strong north wind blowing, with very high clouds, and though exposed

climbing would have been rendered disagreeable, in the shelter of the gullies all was calm. The walk up Coire Labain was delightful, the air being cool and clear. Every feature of the Sron na Ciche face was visible, and our attention was interestingly absorbed as we journeyed upward, for in this corner of the British Isles there still remains the joy of the search for that which is new, with a fair surety of reward.

The B Gully is the second one reached in passing up the Stone Shoot and is similar to the others in being well defined. A cairn was built on the rocks to the right of the foot of the gully. The first three pitches are arched over by a pair of boulders and present no special difficulty. When these are passed, the gully is found to narrow considerably, and at once becomes steeper, forming a splendid 60 foot chimney with vertical sides and an average width of eighteen inches. The climber keeps well outside at the start and faces the right wall, a position which he must maintain for practically the whole length of the pitch. About two-thirds of the way up is a small jammed block not well fixed, but capable of standing a downward pull, and when just below this, the climber may wedge himself comfortably while he considers the next move. A small triangular indentation serving as a foot-hold in the right wall is now reached by working up directly, and this is perhaps the hardest bit of the climb, as only very slight holds aid the process of backing up, and the presence of a bulge of rock on the right wall forces the climber outwards. Fortunately the edge of rock on the right wall is well broken up, and one is soon able to get on to it. Although the chimney is now more open, owing to part of the right wall having fallen away, it needs great care, as the rocks are loose in many places. One large projecting block on the right gives a good take-off, but it does not appear to be perfectly firm, and it is certainly advisable not to put much pressure on it. At this point a small fragment of stone wedged in the narrow part of the crack is used by the left hand to steady. The final pull up to the little scree patch is awkward, but a good hold exists high up and well to the right on rough rock. It is



B Gully, Tearlach—The difficult sixty foot chimney is seen at the top ($+30^{\circ}$).

perhaps worthy of mention that the second man may follow to just below the jammed block and use it as a belay while the leader is engaged with the upper and more difficult part of the pitch. In this position the second man is somewhat sheltered from loose fragments of rock which may be dislodged from above, as the present climbers can testify.

Above this interesting pitch, the gully opens out and its general angle falls off. After passing over eighty feet of scree and easy rocks we come to a cave, which may be surmounted by facing the right wall and backing up. A choice of routes is now offered. On the left is a long and narrow chimney of trap rock, and the leader started up this, but finally traversed over a steep buttress into the wider pitch on the right. This consists of a two-storey cave, which finishes the climbing, and leaves one about thirty feet below the main ridge. A large cairn was built on the left. During the ascent of this gully one obtains impressive views of the Alasdair rocks above the Stone Shoot, these giving rise to a very sharp and quick echo.

The wind was still blowing freshly as we gained the ridge, though it had lessened very considerably from the gale of the previous night. With the exception of a slight mist on Sgurr nan Gilleann, the whole of the main ridge was clear, but there was nothing exceptionally fine about the view, such as one rather expects from the Coolin Peaks. Our sacks were on the Stone Shoot below, but we had some fruit in our pockets, and while we ate this we recalled a scene we had once beheld from one of the peaks of Bidein.

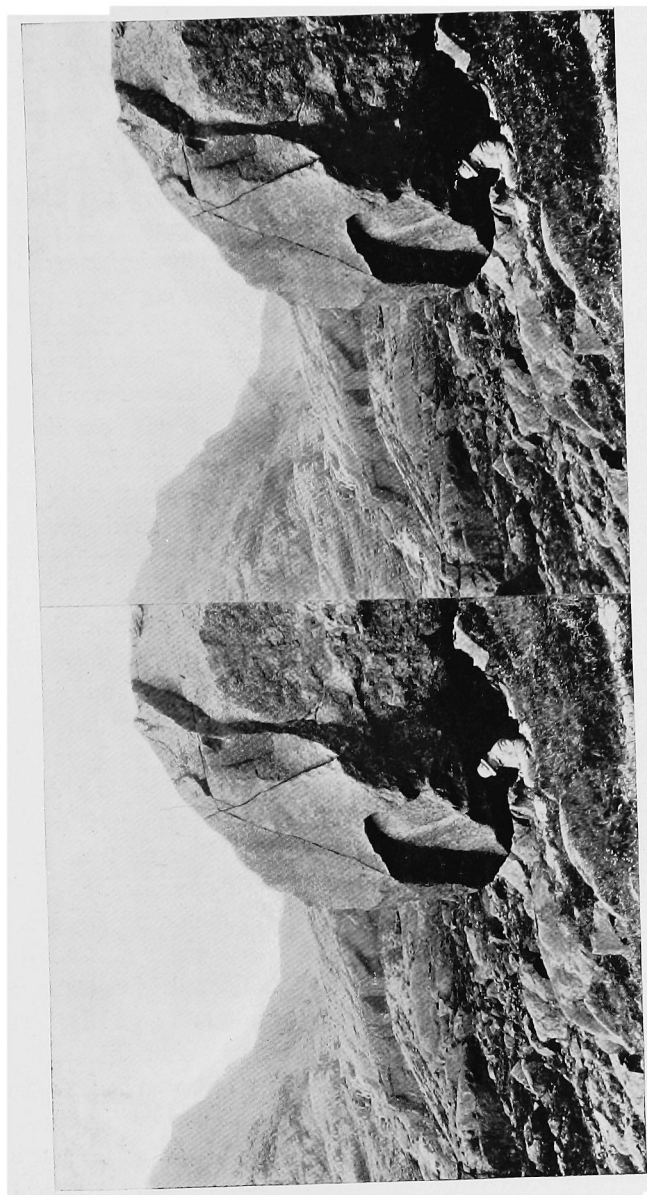
On that day we had been enveloped for many hours in thick mists, which suddenly cleared towards evening. The sea beyond Loch Scavaig appeared as a sheet of pale rippled blue; the mountains of the mainland were low robed in soft rolling clouds, through which their peaks showed sharp and clear, and still above these rose higher banks of saffron-tinted cumuli. The immediate prospect was greatly enhanced by the white mists which chased each other like ghosts through the Coolin corries, and majestic Blaven was a sight to be wondered at, as seen in the light of the then fast westering

sun. Look which way we would the scene was enchanting: the purple-black ridges of the Dubhs rose like an island from the white mists at their base, with the pale sea as a background; far away was the mainland with its thousand peaks; immediately around us were the sharp crags of the peaks of Bidein; while lending an added glory to the whole scene came a flood of golden light from over the western sea.

But the measure of reward is a variable quantity on the hills as elsewhere, and on the present occasion of being on the ridge of Tearlach we were not sorry to bring our light lunch to an abrupt conclusion, and to scramble along the ridge towards the summit in order to find our way down by the still unclimbed D Gully.

As viewed from the Stone Shoot this gully is seen to contain a fine chimney pitch near its base, but the upper part is hidden, so that we were quite ignorant as to what was in store for us. The upper termination of the gully is just north of the south cleft in the Tearlach ridge, the cleft forming the top of another gully containing a great deal of scree and no interesting climbing. Mistaking this for the D Gully we descended it for some distance, and then on making a traverse over the buttress on the north side we found ourselves in the D Gully, and face to face with its topmost pitch—a fine 100 foot chimney designed in the perpendicular style. A return to the ridge was therefore necessary, and the climb commenced from the scree patch above the great pitch. The leader moved cautiously downward facing the right* wall. At first the crack is filled with jammed stones, so forcing one outside. The handholds over the top stone are good, and the left hand is soon able to get holds inside and underneath. As soon as possible one works in underneath the jammed stones. The crack is now so narrow and rough that there is no difficulty in jamming, indeed the chief difficulty is to avoid sticking fast in the narrowest part. The chimney follows right down until it terminates below the level of a large arch stone which spans

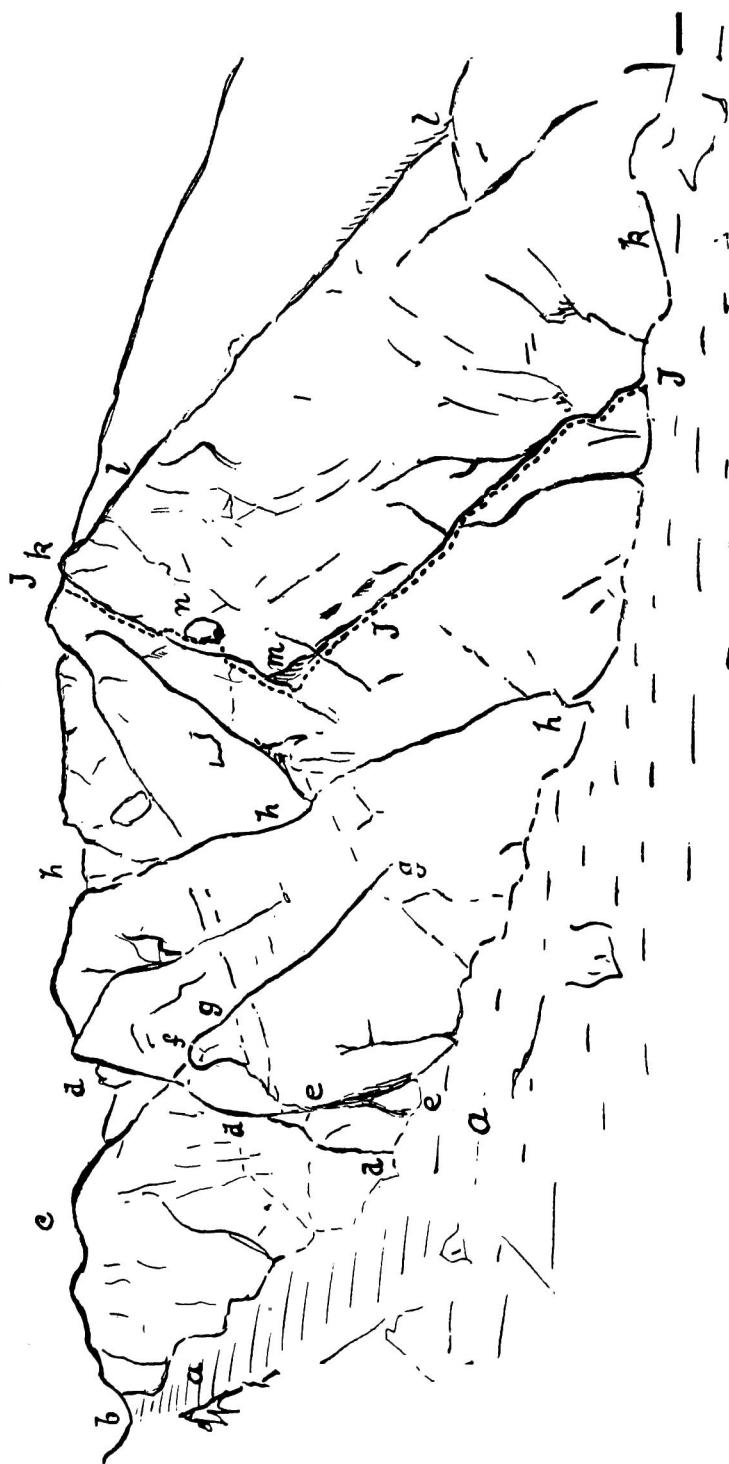
* In all cases "right" and "left" refer to looking *up* the gully.



Making Tea—Coire Labain.

the gully. The left wall contains some good though small ledges, and it is possible that this might be climbed without making use of the chimney at all. Passing under the arch we reach a cave pitch which is a little awkward, and then another cave pitch about fifteen feet in height, with a hole through, in which case the outside route was taken. Next comes a fifteen foot chimney with exceedingly rough walls, which will doubtless prove much harder work ascending than descending. A rather difficult thirty foot pitch must then be climbed. This is another chimney with ledges on the left wall, and it is this wall which is faced. After descending to the lowest ledge, which is narrow but good, it appears best to lean back across the gully and to work inwards and then downwards. Then comes a short jammed stone pitch which requires backing down, and so to the big boulder which blocks up the entrance to the gully. It is now easy to walk off on the south side, and on this side a cairn was erected.

Our climbing was finished on Tearlach for that day, but, as if in reward for our labours, Nature here bestowed on us one of the delights which at various times are the sure reward of the mountaineer. During the last part of the climb down the gully we had been enveloped in a thin mist, but now this had cleared and from across the mighty Atlantic to the hills of Skye, resting as it were at the foot of our climb and turning the mists to a purple glow, came a shaft of rich golden light. Our thoughts at once turned to the view from Sgurr Alasdair, so we struggled up the Stone Shoot and on to the summit. Here, unfortunately, there was no view for us, for the mists had once more descended, and we had perforce to be content with our previous measure of reward. The rapidly deepening gloom soon warned us that the sun had already set, and we made haste to leave the summit and get clear of the Stone Shoot before the twilight completely failed. That night saw us happily plodding our way over the moorland to Glen Brittle, cheered by the rays of candle light.



THE PRECIPICE OF SRON NA CICHE.

- a Sgumain Stone Shoot.
- b Bealach Coire Ghrundda.
- c The Eastern Buttress.
- d The Eastern Gully.

- e The Little Gully below the Cioch. (This gully gives a direct and interesting route to the foot of the Cioch Slab.)
- f The Cioch.
- g The Cioch Gully.
- h The Central Gully.

- j West Central Gully and Buttress Climb.
- k The Western Buttress.
- l The Western Gully.
- m The Nose.
- n The Great Boulder.

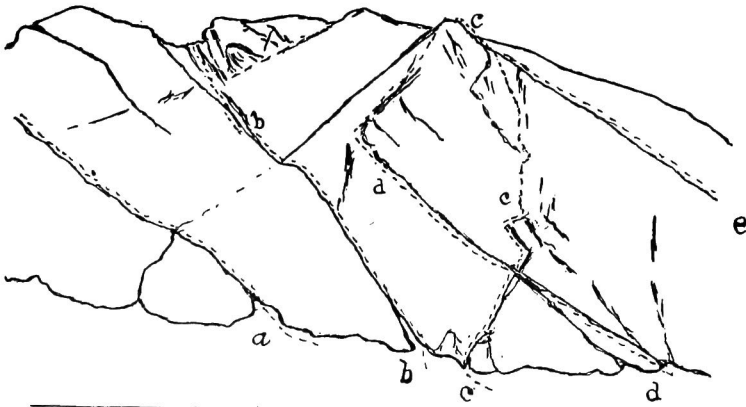
WEST CENTRAL GULLY AND BUTTRESS CLIMB:

SRON NA CICHE.

The third of September, 1908, proved to be an ideal climbing day, and we had previously decided to spend it on the precipice of Sron na Ciche. On our numerous journeys up Coire Labain, and also from the ridge of Sgurr Dearg which runs down towards Glen Brittle, we had made a fairly careful study of this face. We were in consequence of the opinion that it was well worth while making an attempt to climb the crack which runs obliquely across the mountain westward of, but in a direction similar to, the Central Gully, though not at so steep an angle as this latter gully. But as at a point rather more than one third the way up the face the crack becomes very thin, and after passing below some undercut rocks appears to vanish altogether beneath a prominent "nose," it seemed that a continuation of the climb could only be made by leaving the crack at a lower point and forcing a way up the formidable western buttress. We were therefore quite prepared for partial failure, although our real hope lay in the knowledge we had previously gained of the deceptively difficult appearance of the climbing on this face. Before we first climbed the Cioch Gully in 1906 we had examined it with a glass from the corrie, and from there it appeared to us like a mere crack, scarcely wide enough to admit more than an arm or leg, whereas with actual experience we found it to be a gully of considerable dimensions. This knowledge was very encouraging in this projected attempt on Sron na Ciche. Certainly the weather favoured us in every way, for the day was bright with little wind, and yet the air was fresh and cool. So we left our sacks with the camera in the corrie below, and made directly for the foot of the gully, for which the name *West Central* appears most suitable.

The first section of the climb consists of two converging cracks, either of which can be followed. The writers took the western branch, and found this part of the climb to be a mere

walk, rather like Jacks' Rake on Pavey Ark. Above the junction of the cracks the narrow gully is now overhung by the rocks on the right. Several small easy pitches are passed, and then the gully narrows to a mere crack, and the climbing becomes more exposed. The climber is now often forced to work outside, with hands in the crack and feet on the slabs below. Good belays can be found, and one in particular just where the crack is interrupted, and one traverses over several



Western Buttress of Sron na Ciche.

a Crook Gully

b Central Gully

c. Western Buttress, direct. June 1909

d. West Central Gully & Buttress
(Messrs. Barlow & Duckles' climb)

e Western Gully.

feet of slabs to a safe corner. Near this point we cross a trap dyke and obtain grand views down the slabs, while the general rock scenery around is magnificent. We now move upwards over some twenty feet of steep but excellent rock, which is deeply cracked. This leads to a small ledge in a right-angled corner, formed by the above-mentioned overhanging "nose" on the right, and a vertical wall in front. In the extreme corner is a thin vertical cleft, too narrow to enter, which contains a jammed stone about five feet above

the ledge. This may be used to belay. The crack is only about ten feet high, but owing to its steepness was found to offer scanty aid. The leader therefore climbed the more exposed wall on the left. Here a one inch foot-hold can be used with a take-off from a stone block on the ledge. The holds on the top of the wall are not very satisfactory, and it is a little awkward to draw up over the top. As soon as the knee can get on the sloping slabs above, the rest is easy.

The crack, forming the corner cleft referred to, now continues upward as a narrow shallow gully in slabby rock, and leads to the right at an easy angle. At this point, therefore, the direction of the climb makes a sharp bend to the right. We are now above the "nose," and at last get a view of the upper rocks. The gully was kept to for about thirty feet, where it terminates. Here a substantial cairn was put on the right. Up on the left we saw a very large and shallow trap gully, which looked easy for some distance.

Immediately above the cairn rises a wide buttress, which now forms the general line of ascent. Crossing over somewhat to the right we at once reached the Great Boulder, which rests on a wide rock slope on the right of the buttress. There is a recess on its left between it and the buttress, forming a small cave with a chimney above. This was climbed, and a cairn was built on the top. A few feet higher up we returned to the centre of the buttress by means of a shallow crack which cuts up on our left. This crack is about forty feet long, and terminates at a grass platform where another cairn was built. An easy traverse into the trap gully is here again possible; above, the rocks are steep. Passing a few feet to the left we climbed up a broken crack which slopes to the left, forming a short chimney at the top in which the holds are not too good. In this part of the climb some special care is needed, as there is not much anchorage and the leader may require a run-out of fifty feet of rope. Another grass patch was soon reached and duly cairned. The broken face of rock above, rises upward at a moderate angle. We started to the right of the cairn, and kept nearly straight up for about 150 feet, till the

climb terminated abruptly on the very narrow rock *arête* which connects the western spur of the cliff with the main mass. From this point one overlooks the screes at the head of the Western Gully. The final cairn was built here four hours after starting from the foot of the precipice, this time including an interval for lunch.

We had certainly expected to meet much greater difficulties than were actually confronted, and our ideas as to the deceptively difficult appearance of these rocks had been amply justified. Just before reaching the summit ridge the leader was attending to the rope and so looking downward when he saw an unexpected sight—two human beings in Coire Labain near the foot of the climb, 1000 feet below—and certainly their presence added to the sensationalism of the climb. From the ridge the view was delightful, for the sun shone on the green fields of Glen Brittle, while the sea—that ever present charming accompaniment of climbing in the Coolin—was one vast sheet of grey, broken by innumerable bands of glistening silver, and in the far-off west, rose what might have been enchanted islands of the main.



JUNE DAYS IN THE COOLINS.

By E. W. STEEPLE.

IT is generally acknowledged that the Coolins of Skye give the finest climbing obtainable in the British Isles, on remarkably sound and rough rock. The roughness is a great feature, and one which can hardly escape attention. Although long the happy hunting-ground of Scottish Mountaineers, it is only of recent years—if one may except a few well-known pioneers—that the wild corries of the central and south-western parts of the range have been penetrated by English climbers. Recent books and magazine articles will no doubt have the effect of making these remoter climbs much more popular, but there is room still for a great deal of work of an exploratory nature.

The impressions one receives of these Coolin peaks vary so much from time to time, due of course, to some extent, to the great variability in climatic conditions, that an account of a short holiday spent in this district in June, 1909, although for the most part dealing with climbs which have been described elsewhere, may not be without interest to those intending to visit Skye in the near future.

Our party consisted of Messrs. Robertson Lamb, H. E. Bowron, and myself. We reached Sligachan in two sections, of which I formed the first. I had spent a week in the neighbourhood of Fort William and Glencoe, and, having a day or two to spare, decided to go on ahead to Sligachan, and investigate some of the easier climbs on Sgurr nan Gilleann. I found this arrangement altogether satisfactory. The fine-weather views from the summit were delightful, and, incidentally, I discovered a charming spot for making afternoon tea beside the 'stream in Coir' a Bhasteir, where an excellent view is obtained of the Pinnacles and their respective gullies.

Lamb and Bowron arrived on June 12th, and we spent the following day on the Bhasteir Tooth, climbing the Bhasteir Nick Gully and Naismith's route on the Lota Corrie face. The former partakes of the nature of pot-holing, the latter is a very neat little face climb, all too short. Several interesting little problems may be found on Am Basteir itself, on the side which overhangs the Tooth, while the long cleft running up its north-west side was explored at the end of June, I believe, by a party of Glasgow men.

On the 14th we made an assault on the *bête noire* of the northern Coolins, the Deep Gash Gully of Mhadaidh. We failed, as many others had done before us, but we nevertheless had a good day.

Lamb turned the first pitch by means of the smooth slabby wall on the right, a route which he does not recommend. With the rope above I made a half-hearted attempt to climb the pitch directly over the chock-stone, but with no result beyond a thorough drenching. We then traversed in by way of the terrace starting some distance to the right of the gully. Lamb now made a determined attack on the second pitch, but eventually had to give it up. There is a hole between the outer and inner chock-stones which suggests a through route, but our leader thought it would probably be too small to squeeze through. There is a still smaller hole behind the inner chock-stone.

The gully is too wide to back up, so Lamb climbed the right wall to the level of the inner bridge. It then appeared to him that in order to reach this bridge it would be necessary to swing away from the last visible foot-hold, and if the through route was found impracticable, it would be almost impossible to return in safety. The chock-stones overhang the pitch considerably, and the drop from the outer stone to the gully bed would be over 100 feet.

The fact is that this pitch is on too large a scale for men of ordinary size. It is not worth the consideration of a party unless they have at their command abundance of time, abundance of rope, and abundance of engineering capability and

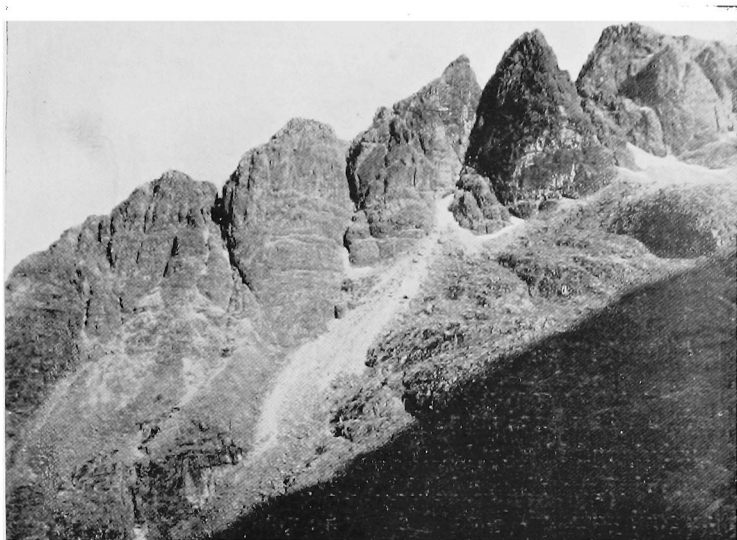


Photo. by H. E. BOWRON.

The Pinnacle Ridge, Sgurr nan Gilleann.

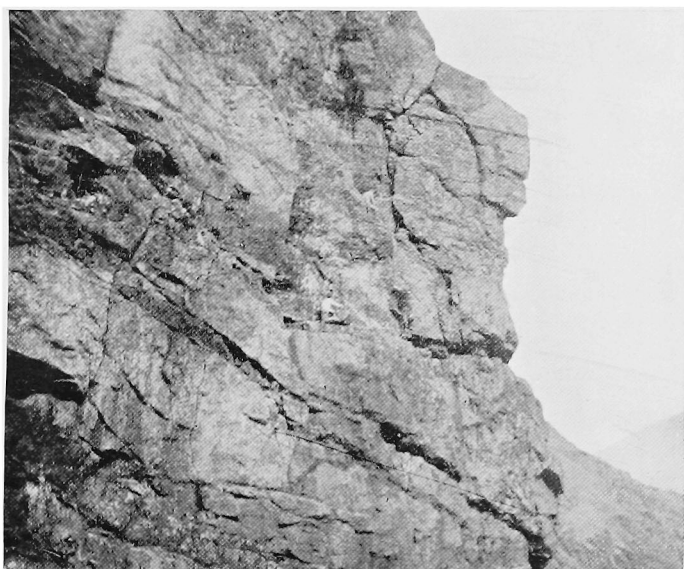


Photo. by H. E. BOWRON.

The Face Climb, Bhasteir Tooth.

experience. Dry weather, of course, will be a *sine quâ non*. It appears to be the sort of place which, like Piers Ghyll, may be done "during an exceptionally dry season."

After this we had a slack day on the First Pinnacle of Sgurr nan Gillean. We looked into several things, but did nothing, an occupation which we found sufficiently tiring. On the 16th, however, we had a very nice little day, beginning with the Sligachan Gully and ending with the Forked Chimney of Sgurr nan Gillean and a descent of the West Ridge. The weather was fine, and the view from the summit as charming as ever.

The walk across the moor to Sligachan was a delight in itself. The Red Coolins showed up in their true colours in the sunset glow. Blaven towered up across the glen, looking a veritable "King of the Coolins," the pinnaced ridge from Clach Glas standing up sharp and clear against a primrose sky. The little pools of water on the moor became perfect gems in the evening light, one in particular, filled with the delicate blooms of the bog-bean, making a pretty picture, the charm of which was enhanced rather than lessened by the presence of a pair of red-shanks, who had built their nest on its banks, and whose incessant piping followed us across the marsh, and was still faintly distinguishable as we turned into the road at the back of the inn.

On June 17th we migrated to Glen Brittle. We sent our bags round by road, and took the Slanting Gully of Mhadaidh *en route*. This is a delightful climb, on very sound rock. The overhanging crack at the top looks as though it might "go" some day, but we were anxious to have a look at the exposed corner on the right, and therefore finished the climb in the usual way. I can thoroughly recommend this gully to any strong party wishing to take a climb on the way from Sligachan to Glen Brittle. We made good time in the gully, taking exactly two hours, and the whole journey from house to house, including the third and fourth peaks of Mhadaidh, only took $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Our first day at Glen Brittle was very misty. There are

occasions when Alasdair and his brethren are bathed in glorious sunshine. We had one such day. But now, having recollections of previous experiences at this end of the range, we spoke rather disparagingly of the "regular Glen Brittle weather." If we had read the newspaper reports, which we did not do, we should have found that it was incomparably better than the weather which was being experienced in England.

Being thus in unhappy ignorance of our good fortune, we devoted the day to the exploration of an unknown peak, and grumbled a little when it turned out to be Mhic Coinnich. We had rather thought it was going to be Dearg, but we had penetrated farther up Coire Lagan than we were aware of before striking up the scree. However, it was quite immaterial, as we were only out for another "slack" day.

The next day was clear, so we did a little prospecting in Coire Lagan. On a previous visit in 1907 I had received the impression that there might be good climbing on the west wall of Mhic Coinnich, which looks rather fine when viewed from across the corrie. As a matter of fact, with the exception of the buttress first climbed by Mr. Abraham's party, the cliff is too much broken to give any climbing of a satisfactory nature. I wished to prove this, however, by practical demonstration, and I started therefore, much to the disgust of the other men, up the well-marked crack near the north end of the crags. The "crack" turned out to be an easy gully, with little to recommend it, but our perseverance in plodding up it was rewarded by the capture of a rather neat pitch near the top—a 20 foot crack of the kind which tests the durability of one's trouser-knees. We afterwards spent an hour on the lower slabs of the great West Buttress of Sron na Ciche.

This buttress is defined on the east by the great slabs that spring up to the right from the "Amphitheatre" on the Central Gully climb, and on the west by the Western Gully. As seen from the head of the lower corrie, it has the appearance of the gable-end of a house, on a rather large scale. I thought it might be possible to bisect this triangle by making



Photo. by H. E. BOWRON.

The Cioch from the Terrace.

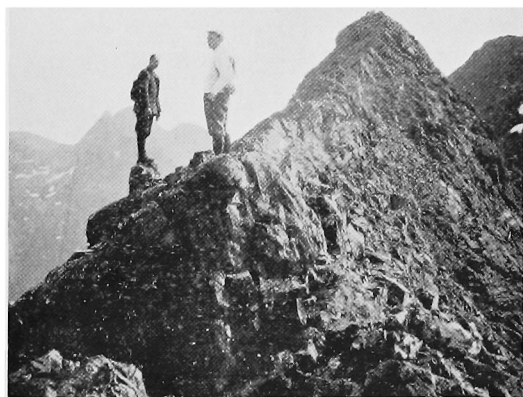


Photo. by R. LAMB.

The North Peak of Sgurr a' Mhadaidh.

a route up the middle of the face. It looked very stiff, but appearances are often deceptive on the Coolin ridges, so on our third day Bowron and I proceeded to put this idea into execution.

The morning was a most suitable one—that is to say, it was raining. It is often advisable to commence a new climb under bad conditions. One can then enlarge upon the difficulties, whether they are really present or not.

About 45 yards west of the foot of the Central Gully, and at the point where the rocks of the buttress encroach farthest upon the scree, a thin crack cleaves the lower slabs. We chose this crack as the commencement of our perpendicular (I speak of course from a Euclidian point of view), and built a small cairn. The “vertex” of the triangle appeared to be O.H. ; but could evidently be turned on the right.

The crack took us gaily upward for 40 feet, when it commenced to overhang slightly. This would go well enough in dry weather: we turned it by traversing to the right for a short distance to a good ledge, and working back over easy rocks to the top of the crack. We then continued straight on, to a fairly long slope of steep grass, the existence of which is not suspected when viewing the crags from the corrie. We named this place the “Cricket Pitch.” Above the grass on the left an easy chimney took us in about 12 feet to a deeply-cut oblique cleft, which sloped up to the right, and provided just sufficient exercise to bring warmth to our benumbed fingers. It took us in about 100 feet to a spacious ledge at the foot of the lower mass of overhanging rocks so well seen from below. This overhang is cut by two fine chimneys. The one immediately in front had an air of impossibility about it which a nearer inspection only tended to confirm. The lower part appeared to be holdless, the upper part was occupied by a waterfall.

The left-hand chimney was reached by first climbing a broken corner for a few feet, and then traversing an exposed slab. We found this rather difficult, but Bowron braced himself firmly on a little ledge in the middle of the slab, from

which he was able to give me a "send-off" over the awkward part. The chimney above is about 35 feet in height, and rather stiff, and the exit at the top gave us trouble, necessitating a pull out on to a small patch of steep grass. We then traversed back to the right for a few yards to the foot of an almost vertical wall. This wall is well furnished with holds, however, and took us clear of the overhang to a small rock recess. We continued upward, bearing slightly to the right, until we arrived below the second overhanging mass of rock. This is in reality a series of large undercut slabs extending almost to the top of the buttress. A fairly wide ledge runs up to the right at the foot of the lowest slab. We followed this for about 30 yards, and taking advantage of the first break in the rocks on the left, traversed back across the slab until we could look over its edge. The rock scenery here is very fine.

The route might be varied at this point, but the slabs bearing up to the left appeared very smooth and exposed. We therefore took to a long chimney of weathered trap, which we followed to the broken ridge on the right of the buttress, some distance below its crest. Here we built our last cairn. Away to the right we could see another cairn, which we took to be the one built by Dr. Collie when climbing the buttress near to the Western Gully. We then hurried up the broken rocks to the top of the buttress and across the narrow neck connecting it with the main ridge, where the sun was now shining brightly. The climb had taken $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. We went slowly, no doubt, as the state of the rocks made it necessary to move rather deliberately. The height appears to be about 1000 feet, or rather less.

At the time of the ascent I was not aware that any climb had been made on the face of this buttress. I afterwards discovered, however, that the long crack which runs diagonally across the face, almost parallel to the lower part of the Central Gully, had been climbed by Messrs. Barlow and Buckle in September, 1908.* Their route crosses the top of the "Cricket

* See page 11.

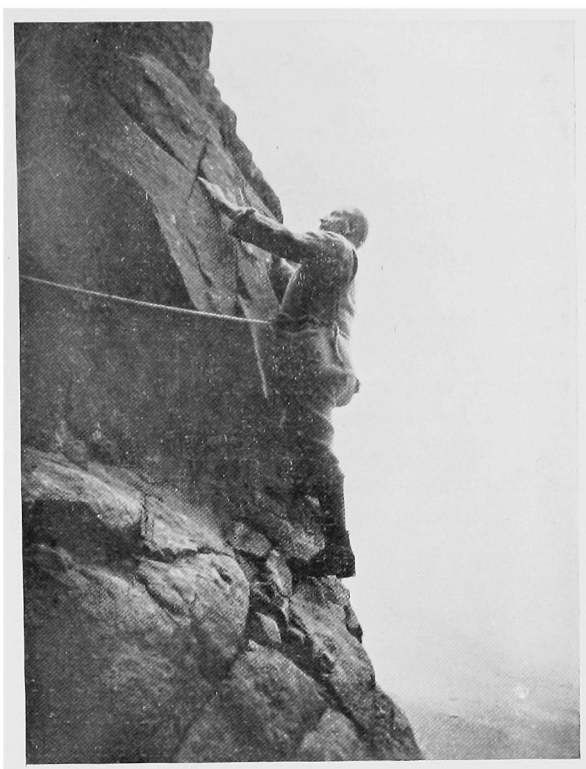


Photo. by H. E. BOWRON.

The Exit from the Cave Pitch, Sligachan Gully.



Photo. by H. E. BOWRON.

A Halt for Refreshments.

Pitch," passing the foot of the "deep cleft," and running below a continuation eastwards of the undercut slabs previously mentioned. This should make a good climb, and there appear to be several other feasible routes on the face of the buttress which would be well worth investigating.

We celebrated the longest day of the year by ascending the now famous Cioch by the direct route from the corrie. The first ascent by this route was made by Messrs. Harland and Abraham in 1907, and we endorsed their opinion of its excellence. It contains more genuine climbing in comparison to its length—some 400 feet—than any other climb in Skye with which I am acquainted. I do not think that any other ascent had been made in the meantime, and it may therefore be of interest to mention that at the point where a large mass of rock was dislodged on the first ascent the climbing is still difficult, and the leader will generally require a little assistance in mounting the shelf on which the block previously lay, though a fine handhold will be found in the crack on the right. We also had some trouble higher up, at the parallel cracks (see "Rock Climbing in Skye," p. 249). Lamb, who led, found that his reach did not permit of his grasping the knob of rock by means of which the swing over into the left-hand crack is effected, and was obliged to climb straight up, over a bulge of smooth rock, a rather trying operation. Bowron and I, with a slight advantage in the matter of reach, found the transfer to the left more satisfactory.

The Cioch is a noble crag, and the view from its summit is superb. The short climb from the Terrace at the back bids fair to become as well polished by climbing boots as the easy way up Scafell Pinnacle.

We descended by the long crack in the Great Slab, an interesting and quick route to the foot of the Sgumain Stone Shoot. It should be noted, by the way, that in ascending by the Slab route, it is not necessary to walk over into the Eastern Gully from the end of the crack. A better finish to the climb is up a stiff little chimney in the Slab itself, which lands one on the Terrace about 15 or 20 yards from the gully.

Our last climb in Coire Lagan was on the Alasdair Buttress. The ascent was made by Dr. Collie's route—at least, that was our intention, but its commencement was not easy to find in the mist, and the first 200 feet were climbed by a variation of our own, up some rather awkward slabs with insecure holds. Even these holds were not easy to find, and they are now still more scarce, as we threw a number of them away. We struck the right route eventually, however, and arrived at the cairn much sooner than we expected.

We followed the ridge over Tearlach and down to the well-known Tearlach-Dubh Gap. There was a strong wind blowing up from Coruisk, causing a terrific turmoil at the bottom of the Gap. The rocks also were cold and moist, so that the short wall on the Dubh side was found quite difficult.

We pushed on as far as Dubh na Da Bheinn, hoping the mist would clear. It did not do so, however, so we descended into the head of Coir' a Ghrunnda, where a glorious surprise awaited us. We came rather suddenly below the mist, and were quite awe-struck with the beauty of the view down the corrie. A stretch of blue sea, with Rum in the back ground, the little island of Soay, quite close to the coast, its western side golden-brown in the sunlight; the whole framed most effectively by the steep rock walls of the corrie; at our feet the lochan with its tiny islet, across which the wind blew sheets of spray high into the air—all went to make as perfect and charming a picture as one could desire, one which no photograph could adequately reproduce, though we sighed for the cameras which were "awa'." The tremendous quantity of curiously weathered rocks in this upper corrie would alone make it worth a visit. Some looked like gigantic sponges, others bore a grotesque resemblance to E. T. Reed's prehistoric monsters. The corrie is closed by a ridge of glaciated rock, stretching from side to side, through which the stream has cut a little channel for itself, the only perceptible break in the line. The lower corrie is also quite rocky—a rather unusual feature in Coolin architecture—consisting of a huge amphitheatre of smooth slabs.

The evening was very fine ; so fine, indeed, that we paddled on the shore of Loch Brittle until after ten, watching the marvellous cloud effects over the head of the glen.

On the next day we journeyed back to Sligachan. We had an easy day, walking round into Coire na Creiche and climbing the spur of Sgurr an Fheadain, on the left of the waterpipe. We then struck across to the main ridge, and over the Castles to Bruach na Frithe and Bhasteir corrie. One energetic member of the party took in the three peaks of Bidein in addition, and was rewarded by an unusually near view of a fine golden eagle, which sailed out from the rocks of the central peak. We reached Sligachan in good time for dinner, and left for Portree and the south on the following morning.

The hotel now boasts of a motor-car, so that it is no longer necessary to start at 5 a.m. in order to catch the early morning boat. We were whirled down easily in half an hour.

It will be observed that we paid no visit to the Inaccessible Pinnacle. We had all climbed the "Old Man" by various routes on previous occasions, and were anxious to devote the short time at our disposal to something fresh. I should like to suggest, however, that any strong parties who are fond of problems of the Kern Knotts Crack variety would do well to inspect the crack on the south-west side of the Pinnacle. It requires a rather long rope, as there is no safe place to bring up a second man until the leader is close to the top of the crack, which is about 100 feet in length. It is rather easier than Kern Knotts, though decidedly sensational, and one of the neatest problems in the district.

The tower known as An Stac, leading from the Mhic Coinnich-Dearg col to the Pinnacle, was climbed by our party in 1905 and again in 1907, and forms a more interesting approach to the Pinnacle than the usual route by the scree on its west side. Some care is required, as the lower part is composed of very loose trap. The most popular route nowadays to the "Inaccessible" is by the Window Tower in Coire na Banachdich, and along the ridge of Sron Dearg.

There is a remarkable gorge on the stream in Coire a Ghreadaidh which I had intended to mention. We looked into it from above while on our way to Glen Brittle, but I have since learned from a friend that its recesses have been explored from below. In one place some horizontal "chimneying" has to be done over a pool 10 feet deep, and a wet and narrow ledge followed along the wall to the foot of the final pitch. This, of course, is normally a waterfall, and as a slip on the part of the climber would result in a swift plunge into the "Maelstrom" below, the sporting character of the place will be easily recognised.



TWO GREAT HILL-WALKERS.

By W. P. HASKETT-SMITH.

DURING the last twelve months we have lost two very remarkable men. Neither of them was a member of this club, but both were such as we are proud to see among us. Henry Chichester Hart and Count Henry Russell were both Irishmen, both men of splendid physical and mental endowment, both members of the Alpine Club, and travellers who had visited great mountains in other countries, but only to return with increased appreciation of the hills of the land in which they had been born. For a full and life-like picture of Hart, reference should be made to the sympathetic notice by one of our members, Mr. R. M. Barrington, in the *Irish Naturalist* of December last, from which we may be allowed to quote a few passages. "He was a well-known athlete, tall (6 ft. 1), a powerful swimmer, and the champion walker for some years at the College Races [in Dublin]. He was conscious of his athletic superiority, and most walking companions who could not keep up with him were left behind unnoticed, and for this reason many of his botanical expeditions were made alone." His biographer humorously adds that the only chance of keeping up with Hart was to suggest the ascent of some difficult gully or a traverse along the ledge of a nasty precipice. Hart did the Irish part of the second volume of *Climbing in the British Isles*, and in it described briefly some of his tremendous walks, such as:

From Terenure, just outside Dublin, to the summits of Gravale, Duff Hill, Mullaghclevaun, Tonelagee and back; about 50 miles in 14 hours.

From Glendalough to Dublin summits of Tonelagee and Mullaghclevaun to Terenure; about 62 miles in 20 hours.

From Terenure by Lough Bray, summits of Lugnaquilla, Tonelagee, and Mullaghclevaun back to Terenure ; about 75 miles in 23 hours 50 min. On this last walk, before which even the best of our fell-walkers might well quail, he was accompanied by Sir Fred. Cullinan, A.C. Mr. Barrington's comment is "It may be well to warn readers of these little volumes that some walks and climbs in this country mentioned therein in a light and airy fashion would be quite impossible for an ordinary man to accomplish in the times given." He adds a most amusing anecdote, showing how, on one occasion, he and his friend outbraved at once "British Hill Weather" and each other, but it is too long to quote.

My own personal acquaintance with Hart was much less than I would have wished. For a long time I knew him only as a contributor, somewhat uneven as to quality and terribly erratic as to time, but, while maintaining a vigorous, but for the most part futile, bombardment with letters and telegrams, I little suspected the diversity of his interests and occupations which afterwards made me think myself and my readers lucky to have got so much excellent work from him in the long run. Ultimately his personality presented itself to me as essentially that of a scholar and man of science, complicated by being an athlete and an Irishman.

Count Russell on the other hand was neither a scientific observer nor a scholar, but essentially a mountain poet who happened also to be an athlete and half a Frenchman. Very full accounts of him will be found in the Journals of the Alpine Club and the Club Alpin Français, and in many periodicals published at Pau, Biarritz and other places in the south of France where he spent most of his life. The *Pyénées-Océan*, an illustrated monthly of Tarbes, devoted its February number to an account of Russell wherein the editor, M. Paul Mielle, wrote brilliantly of him both in French and English, his subject having been a masterly talker and writer in both languages. His mother was French, but on his father's side he was the representative of an old Irish family from a junior branch of which the late Lord Russell traced his descent. At

the time when, many years ago, I, as a school boy, first met him in the Pyrenees, the period of his more violent activity was near its close. He was not then and probably never had been an ardent rock-climber or a great ice-man. His strong point was not so much in overcoming great difficulties as in getting over a great extent of moderately steep, rough and intricate country with sustained rapidity. His appetite both for food and sleep has been aptly described as "imperious." Though his mighty frame could dispense with soft lying and dainty feeding, unbroken sleep it must have and food, coarse perhaps but unstinted. Given these two conditions he was a splendid, almost an unequalled, walker. On the plains of India, on the Malvern hills, the Scotch and Irish moorlands, the Alps, Andes and Himalayas, and above all among the rugged mountain systems of Northern Spain, he walked thousands and thousands of miles, always gathering up as he went impressions which were to be afterwards placed on record in his admirably written *Souvenirs d'un Montagnard*, *Pyrenaica*, and other works. Though he recognised the dangers of solitary expeditions he had made many himself, and was a great believer in their educational value. "A mountaineer (he says) will never gain the quality most important to him, an almost boundless self-confidence, without having repeatedly found himself alone in fog, snow and storm, right among the precipices and depending next to Providence on himself alone. I have often thought that two companions frighten one another. Courage fails precisely because there is a comrade on whom to lean. In the mountains a man is braver by himself. It is delightful to be two, but a lesson to be alone."

He had on occasion performed some difficult and even desperate climbs, but always frowned on "useless temerities." The charm of his tongue and his pen drew many to the mountains, but his influence was always used for good, and he did nothing and permitted nothing which might lower the pastime that he loved. None knew better than he how to administer a rebuke with a grave courtesy to which resistance was impossible, while, among friends, his powers of description,

alike serious and humorous, his stories of strange experiences illuminated by his quick and playful fancy, rendered him a delightful companion.

Such a combination of qualities as went to make up either Hart or Russell is necessarily very rare, and it is the more necessary that those who have known them should place on record characteristics which perhaps for two or three generations may not find a parallel.



THE MOORS IN MOONLIGHT AND MIST.

By HENRY BISHOP.

IT is perhaps fortunate that rambling by night in the desolate places of the earth is not a popular amusement, otherwise our moorland tracks, and places where there are no tracks, would be in a fair way to becoming High Streets. There are, in fact, those who aver that anyone guilty of these nocturnal wanderings is in a condition fit for nothing short of an asylum. These scoffers are to be excused, though they have probably never tasted the joy of wandering where moon and mist struggle for mastery, in turn revealing and hiding the outline and contour of hill and valley, changing the torrent into silver and into blackness. They know nothing of that deepest silence which in the wilds can almost be felt, and have perchance never fully realised day's foreboding and the gradual retreat of darkness at dawn's onslaught.

It recently fell to my lot to undertake with some friends yet another of these fly-by-night adventures. When, shortly after ten o'clock, we emerged from the inn at Edale, in the Peak District, there was every prospect of a delightful walk. Although passing clouds were responsible for momentary dulness, our friendly moon turned into silver the pretty little waterfall which one sees just before reaching the foot of Jacob's Ladder. The vast cloughs round about desolate Edale Head, being partially in shadow, were even more impressive than by day, whilst a thin curtain of mist lent a softening touch to the view when we halted at the top of the Ladder and looked backwards. The Woolpack and its neighbours—those rock-masses on the fringe of Kinderscout—were little more than profile toned down by mist, and contrasted strongly with the white cascades far below them.

The season par excellence for a visit to Kinderscout (by a strange contradiction in terms referred to on maps as "The Peak") is winter. With everything shrouded in snow and dense mist, to accurately steer from Hayfield *via* the Downfall and Grindsbrook clough to Edale, across a featureless plateau whose base-line is almost as extensive as that of Snowdon, is no mean undertaking, and as a test of proficiency in the use of the compass can scarcely be beaten. The traveller must often move at almost right angles to his proper course in order to circumvent moss-hags and groughs, the latter being huge gashes often ten feet in depth; and he will not infrequently find himself up to the knees in bog or ice-cold water. But that is another story.

As we continued the ascent to Edale Cross, the ground began to feel harder, and we realised that it was freezing slightly. This was much to our satisfaction, for it meant that we would not sink far when on the Scout's boggy plateau.

But there was other business to be attended to before we got so high. Even the incorrigible rambler must eat; and we felt like supper! Descending to Stony ford, we filled our little kettle at the brook and carefully carried it to a barn-like building some distance away. With a vessel holding so little, the post of water-carrier over heather is a responsible one; and the man who undertook the task no doubt heaved a sigh of relief when he reached the shelter-place with his liquor unspilt. We soon had water boiling and cocoa ready, and afterwards retired to rest for a short time, our habitation being thoughtfully provided with a second storey, containing nice, dry bracken.

At two a.m. we were again on the move, the difference of temperature in and out of doors prompting us to go quickly for a time as we ascended the slope of Kinderlow *en route* for the Downfall, where the waters of Kinder make an almost sheer drop of 80 feet. Somewhat misty as was the night, our moon, eliminating detail and accentuating outline, lent to the eminence in front of us an imposing appearance, at the same time showing us where to step without barking our shins on

the large boulders. We kept along the "tops," as near the edge of the ravine as practicable, being unable, on account of the increased mist, to see more than a few feet. Those strange tricks of the mist, so confusing to the inexperienced, were of course to the fore. A gigantic shape would loom suddenly into view, to resolve itself into nothing more formidable than a little rock or an elevation no higher than we. Nearer approach transformed a huge void into a modest wave of the heathery surface. After about half-an-hour's tramp along the "tops" we struck Red Brook Clough, only a few feet from the crossing-place at its head, and continued our course on its farther side. The moon made brave efforts to pierce the gloom; and, some time afterwards, we were able to faintly distinguish the other side of the Kinder's great ravine, whilst the mist gradually dispersed until only sufficient remained in the valley to produce the effect of each knoll floating in a sea. The Mermaid's Pool shimmered coldly beyond, and the whole formed a most impressive picture.

Concerning this Mermaid's Pool, I have it on authority that he who is courageous enough to approach it on a certain midnight may view the mermaid disporting herself. Lest this information cause a stampede to the spot, I will not particularise the season further than by stating that it is somewhere near Easter.

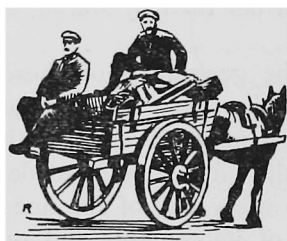
By the way, the geography of these parts, in "David Grieve," is far-fetched, to say the least of it.

The Downfall, so majestic when clothed in ice, was not tempting in the half-light; so, without descending to view it more closely, or to essay any of the fine rock-climbs in the vicinity, we drank of its contents and proceeded along the Kinder river for some time, thence steering across the moss-hags for the top of Fairbrook Clough, the moon's presence rendering the compass unnecessary, except to get the bearings for a start. Our subsequent descent of the Fairbrook was remarkable only for the splendid mist effects at our rear, hill and edge merging imperceptibly into cloud. We might have been amongst mountains of untold height instead of having

left an elevation of 2000 feet. When inclined in town to growl about the mist, we shall remember these pictures, and bear more patiently with it as we call to mind its scenic uses.

We crossed the Ashop and reached the Snake. It was too early to think of knocking up the people at the house to make breakfast for us, so we walked Ashopton-wards as far as Alport bridge, and, under the hedge, made tea—tea that, like the smoke from our little fire, was terrifically strong.

As we ascended the Roman way, the moon was almost at the end of her task, and, shortly, faint streaks in the east marked the rising of the sun. We topped the hill and reached Hope Cross (situated some miles from the village of that name) just as day was fairly victor, and the services of our, on the whole, well-behaved moon were no longer required.



DERBYSHIRE PENNINE CLUB NOTES.

AUGUST, 1909.

A COMBINED Meet of the Yorkshire Speleological Association and the Derbyshire Pennine Club should have been held at Gaping Ghyll for Whitsuntide, but unfortunately this had to be postponed as the Ghyll was not accessible for that occasion.

Several members of the Derbyshire Club desired something "sporting" for the holiday, so arrangements were hurriedly made for investigating a couple of shafts at Snitterton, near Matlock.

Tents were sent up from Sheffield, and a camp pitched in Mr. Mountney's orchard, about half a mile from the scene of operations. Eleven members and friends attended.

The first mine inspected was found, on plumbing, to be 270 feet deep, and ladders of that length were lowered from a strong beam across the top of the shaft. These were reinforced at 100 feet from the top, and again at about 80 feet from the bottom. A life-line of $\frac{3}{4}$ " Manilla was used, and passed through a pulley lashed to the beam at the side of the ladder. The men at the surface were thus able to give more than "moral" assistance if required.

It was an act of "poetic justice" that the man who was responsible for plumbing the shaft should be the first down on the Saturday night. A light string with a heavy stone at the bottom stretches considerably, and if this is not taken into account, the resulting dimension is apt to be short. It was in this case, and the offender reached the bottom of the ladder without becoming acquainted with the bottom of the shaft. The idea of return was out of the question, so he finished the remaining twenty feet on the line. Those who have "come on the rope" suddenly at any time will sympathize.

A great deal of water was coming down the shaft, and it was impossible to keep a candle alight. A hurricane lamp was therefore lowered, and a flare hung from the timber at the top. Another man then descended, and a short examination of the mine was made. The workings were too large for any proper exploration that night, and they returned to the foot of the shaft. Correspondence by means of letters in a tin box tied to a string then ensued, and work was struck for the night. The workings were afterwards examined by a strong party, and proved interesting, although not so extensive as at first supposed.

The main passage (partly flooded) was arched with rough limestone, and ran in the same line as the Jughole workings. A date (1760) was scratched on the wall in one of the levels.

A further depth of twenty feet was reached by means of sumps. The lower workings had, however, run in, and could not be followed. Another shaft was examined below the Jughole with the intention of getting into the workings of the latter mine. No connection was established, but some fine natural passages were bared at a depth of 100 feet.

A sump going down another 60 feet was discovered, but time would not allow of its investigation. The lower workings were therefore left for a later visit.

A Meet was held at Alport on June 26th and 27th under the leadership of Bishop, for climbing at Cratcliffe, and Robin Hood's Stride.

On July 10th W. Smithard led a party over Doctor's Gate from Bamford to Melandra Castle near Glossop.

On August 21st an old lead mine at Castleton was examined on the possibility of tapping the Speedwell Level. The shaft (168 feet deep) was laddered, and an artificial cavern about 30 feet in diameter was reached. The floor sloped down a further 20 feet. A great portion of the lining of the shaft had collapsed, and it was evident that the present floor is not the original one, and that any passages there may have been are completely buried. Six men, including Mr. Eyre, Junior, of the Speedwell Mine, descended, but the

condition of the roof and sides at the bottom was not of a nature to warrant a longer stay than necessary.

A FIRST EXPERIENCE OF CAVEING.

“Good-bye, old chap! Mind the step!

These and other similar remarks assail the ear of the wondering novice as for the first time he swings out upon a rope ladder, and proceeds to descend into “pastures new” in the shape of an ancient lead mine, which has been sealed up for the greater part of a century.

Who can describe accurately his thoughts upon embarking on an undertaking so entirely novel? Three hundred feet! One hundred yards! Why we thought nothing of it as a quick sprint in the school sports years ago; but, to judge the distance properly, one should attempt it for the first time on a rope ladder.

Such was my recent experience in the company of certain members of the Derbyshire Pennine Club near Matlock, at Whitsuntide.

Down I went, step by step, with a life line round my middle, which makes an excellent preventative against possible accidents, but which cannot be regarded as representing the acme of comfort. Down and down, step by step into the bosom of Mother Earth, with no sound but the creaking of your ladder and comments dimly heard from above, which are hurled down on your unsuspecting head.

It has struck me since that the members of the “D.P.C.” show great consideration to the greenhorn in only hurling comments at him. Stones or other more substantial missiles would be out of place.

I have often wondered what are the exact sensations of a man, who, having worked hard for years for a meagre pittance, suddenly discovers that he has succeeded to a baronetcy and several thousands a year. I came near to experiencing the same indescribable feeling of relief as I eventually stepped off the last rung of the ladder on to a heap of loose stones. Then I spent ten minutes sitting in a pool of muddy water and regaining my breath. It was delightful.

Like Dante, on his entrance into the Cavern which proved to be the gateway to the lower regions, I gazed round in awe and wonder. Two or three of the boys had gone down before me, and I was hailed with cheers. One of them, sitting calmly on the far side of a dark

pool, his grim visage lit up by the fitful glare of a tallow candle, reminded me very forcibly of the mythical Pilot of the river Styx, Pluto. I will refrain from mentioning this gentleman's name, as I understand the boys of the "D.P.C." have highly original and barbarous methods of revenge whilst on a "job." As I hope to accompany them again at some future date, the wisdom of this reticence will be apparent. "Come along," said the next man down, "we'll go off together," so I followed him with the trustful obedience of a child to its nurse.

Leaving the bottom of the shaft, we proceeded along a passage cut by the old lead miners in their search for ore. Here the light of our candles shows where the lead has been cut from the surrounding stone. Huge pockets and hollows in the rock on either side testify to the finished workmanship of the ancient miner. The walls are wet, and one sees a few of the many beautiful formations which are caused by this constant trickle of water. Here is a piece of spa, transparent as glass; there a calcite formation which exceeds in beauty the most artistic work of an engraver.

Now, we climb to a higher passage, and every step we take shows us new and interesting objects. We splash through sundry pools of water, and our boots sing with the melodious chant of squelching mud. Now, we come to a hole which would barely admit a full sized fox-terrier. We squeeze through, holding our candles in our teeth.

There are people who would turn up their noses at the taste of tallow candle. Personally, I am not averse to a little lunch of this description—underground. Besides, you've no choice. The passage widens out, and my guide, with the speed acquired by years of experience, leads the way, whilst I endeavour to keep up with him. Now and then we unsuspectingly bang our shins on a projecting piece of limestone. This calls forth a mild exclamation of surprise, an expression which would turn a golfer or a brewers' traveller green with envy. Still, like the farmer's boy, we trip along, but we do not whistle. It is unlucky to whistle in a mine. We sing. Now, we descend through a hole in the floor, having first roped up, as it appears to need care.

The process of roping up is sometimes necessary, as the hole you are about to negotiate may be only two feet deep; on the other hand, it may be two hundred. In the latter event the rope proves useful if you happen to slip. This hole is about six feet deep, and

there is no other outlet. We cast about in order to assure ourselves that we have struck a dead end, and then retrace our steps to the bottom of the shaft.

Here, we learn that on the other side are natural passages, which further on bear no trace whatever of man's handiwork. We take a fresh supply of the inevitable candles, and wend our way towards the natural passages.

The ancient workings we have just explored are interesting, but these passages, which are formed solely by the action of water through hundreds of years, are beautiful with the incomparably artistic beauty which Nature alone can bestow. We pause to compare, and the ancient mine, the work of man, suffers considerably by the comparison.

Here, we are surrounded by the most exquisite crystallization, miniature cascades and waterfalls, which, photographed and enlarged, would outshine the most imposing pictures we see of Niagara. The glamour of the underworld is upon us. No thoughts of politics or German invasions enter here.

For a short space, we have left poor, nerve-racked England and have entered a country of our own. Standing in an extensive, rock-bound chamber, one's mind involuntarily runs back thousands of years, and peoples this Cavern with prehistoric monsters. One can almost see the huge, snake-like head of an Ichthyosaurus emerge from one of the dark openings on either side. Then prudence conquers imagination, and one feels glad the beast is absent.

How frequently has this same Cavern been used as a refuge by our ancestors, those great anthropoid apes, against their enemies? We are justly proud of our descent from these amiable antecedents, who enforced their arguments, not by a law suit, but by a sharp bite at the back of the neck. And who can say which method is the most effective?

I was recalled from these pleasant reflections by the voice of my companion. "Ye gods!" quoth he, glancing at his watch, "it's an hour after dinner time." Then I became conscious of the fact that I was ravenously hungry. We turned our faces once more towards the shaft, loth to leave our new kingdom so soon.

One man at a time ascended the ladder (not quite as quickly as it takes to describe) and soon we were all once more on "terra cotta," to use the words of the dear old lady who didn't like the sea. We

proceeded forthwith to dine, feeling that we had done a good morning's work.

Possibly there are those who would find fault with this description of our subterranean explorations as being inadequate. I agree, but would point out that this effusion gives voice to the sensations experienced by a beginner, and is not intended as a standard lecture on the subject.

Which Hydro. did we stay at? Bless you, nothing so common. We camped. Camped in canvas tents and took our gentle repose beneath the swishing boughs of apple trees, and slept to the accompaniment of Nature's music.

One awoke at 3 o'clock in the morning to hear the joyous bark of the hedgehog, saluting the rising sun. What greater joy is there than to return to your open tent after a few hours' absence, and to discover that a kindly disposed Buff Orpington has planked down a milk white egg in the centre of your neatly folded nightshirt. Our tents were about 18 feet apart, and we established an excellent system of wireless telegraphy between them.

Marconi's method may be splendid for long distances, but to my mind, a boot, thrown by a steady hand, is a sure way of intimating gently to you that your friends in the neighbouring tents are arising, fresh for the day's work. In fact, I enjoyed the whole trip thoroughly, and the members of the "D.P.C." are to be congratulated on the excellent and business-like manner in which the "job" was carried out.

"THE FERRET."

A detachment of "D.P.C." men again co-operated with the Yorkshire Speleological Association in the further exploration of Gaping Ghyll Hole last Bank Holiday. The linking up of the lofty chambers of Rift Pot with the sinuous passage of Long Kin East the previous year was a fine achievement, the recent discovery, however, of a brand new route into Gaping Ghyll undoubtedly takes precedence in importance and general interest.

During an examination in 1908, and again in 1909, of what is known as the "200 ft. pot," situate in the S.E. passage, several indications of close proximity to the outer world were observed in the shape of red worms, flies, etc. Acting upon

these discoveries, an accurate survey of this particular passage was completed, and utilised at the first opportunity in marking out its entire length on the surface.

It was now seen that the route followed a line of shake-holes trending toward Trow Ghyll, and after a diligent search, an opening was found in an insignificant looking hollow, near Bar Pot. The small hole was choked with loose earth and rock (glacial debris), but this was sufficiently cleared to permit of a descent by Charles Burrow, who early communicated the good news to his waiting friends that "a passage continued downward, and appeared promising."

The energetic members of the "Y.S.A." on several later occasions pursued their investigations, until, having demonstrated the possibility of a through-route, it was decided that two separate parties should test it in a practical fashion, one section to negotiate the new pot and return *via* Gaping Ghyll Hole, whilst the other descended Gaping Ghyll in the orthodox way, returning *via* the new pot.

There was quite a stir in the camp when Tuesday came round, the day fixed for the auspicious event. Neither party were overburdened with tackle on the outward journey, a rare luxury in cave-work, in fact, an event so unusual that the writer imagined that "things, indeed, were not what they seemed." It appeared, however, that several rope ladders, etc., were already in position. The party of four delegated for the new pot included R. F. Cook (leader) and the writer, who had only a passing acquaintance with this latest "find." It was a grand summer's morning, totally different from the cold and wet conditions of the previous days, and as we glided through the narrow aperture into the darkness below, we, metaphorically, shook hands with ourselves upon the favourable turn in the weather. After scrambling down a short distance we entered a narrow fissure, which reminded one of the start of the Broad Stand climb, Scafell, and as we pressed into it, and down to the open passage beneath, one wondered if the *return* journey would really be possible for an "eleven-stoner"! The fissure, however, became wider and

loftier, but after careful treading for a few yards we found it extended downward also, first, in a vertical drop of 15 feet, and then, much narrower and at an angle, to a depth of 40 feet, or so. Here rope ladders had already been fixed, so, unrolling our two spare ladders we lowered them, hand over hand, to the bottom level, it being impossible to get them through otherwise. We each followed circumspectly, gripping with one hand the edge of the tilted ladder, and allowing gravitation to do the rest, this, between featureless walls only a few inches wide. (The writer recommends a knotted rope here, instead of ladder.) Having re-coiled the ladders, we crawled through the "portcullis" and along a zigzag watery passage, where were bones of a ruminant which had evidently drifted down at flood-time. After a brief rest we pressed forward, and soon were descending a small pot, about 15 feet deep. This would probably "go" on an ordinary climb, but the stream which fed the circular pool below was decidedly inconvenient to free action en route. By way of easement, however, we emptied a small reservoir near the overflow, prior to climbing the fixed rope. Truly penitential in attitude, we now crawled on our stomachs along a horizontal bedding plane; later, however, we arrived at the edge of what is known as the "forty foot pot." As last man down, the writer left a lighted candle above the opening, before stepping on to the swinging ladder, then, picking up his share of the tackle, followed his friends along a fairly lofty passage. This eventually led through another bedding plane to the rim of a large pot-hole, about 25 feet in diameter, the "Ultima Thule" of a previous visit, when its depth was plumbed, and its connection with Gaping Ghyll first ascertained. Just as we were uncoiling our ropes and ladders, we heard cheery sounds of welcome from below, followed by a command to "hurry up"! Our "G.G." friends had evidently been waiting our arrival some little time, for when we peered over the sloping cornice, and downward, we caught sight of a number of lighted candles, prettily set, like stars, round the edge of the "200 foot pot." After making suitable reply, we straightway commenced to lash up our

ladders to the desired length of 140 feet, connecting same to a sound belay, along with the new life-line, a very important part of the proceedings. It was now a question of "all hands on deck" as the heavy ladder was carefully lowered "over-board" to the requisite depth. In a few moments the signal-whistle sounded, informing those below that our leader was about to descend. Cheers greeted the announcement; after, however, a spell of silence, the cheers were renewed more vigorously, indicating R. F. Cook's arrival in their midst, and also proving beyond doubt the existence of another route into the chambers of Gaping Ghyll. As soon as the noise had somewhat abated, the signal was received from below that one of their number was about to commence the upward journey, and before long we were able to congratulate him on his having been the first to re-appear from the depths of Gaping Ghyll other than by the Main Hole. After the two parties had, in part, exchanged positions, the tackle was collected, and lowered for the bottom party to convey to the foot of the old entrance, whence it was speedily raised to the surface by the winch and wire-rope. Upon the arrival of the party in the Main Chamber, the telephone was used to send the tidings of success to the surface-men.

A few hours later, a merry band could be seen in the Dining Tent, despatching the mysterious, albeit savoury concoctions of a kindly hearted chef, and with equal avidity, exchanging notes and thoughts on the first round trip of Gaping Ghyll.

The writer thinks that this circular tour will compare favourably, for general interest, and difficulty, with anything in Britain, not even excepting the famous Eastwater Cavern in Somerset, and it certainly merits the attention of all speleological experts, except those, of course, approaching Falstaffian proportions.

NEW CLIMBS.

LLIWEDD, EAST PEAK.

PARADISE AND BLACK ARETE ROUTE.

ON September 23rd, after some twelve days of excellent weather, H. O. Jones and R. F. Backwell set out from Pen-y-Pass with the intention of climbing on Lliwedd, and, though the project had not attained definite form, of perhaps trying to make a new route on the East Peak: the Central Chimney Route was the alternative proposal. As the party approached Lliwedd the possibility of adding yet another to the many routes on the East Peak became more and more attractive, and it was finally decided "to go and have a look at it."

The suggestion was to ascend from the Heather Shelf to the foot of the Black Arête following a line between the Central and the Horned Crag Routes (the only part of the face on which, judging from the diagrams in "The Climbs on Lliwedd," there appears to be room for a new route). Inspection of this part of the face had led one to expect the task not to be an easy one, and in this respect the East Peak of Lliwedd did not belie its well-known reputation; at almost every point of the route the climbing was more difficult than it was expected to be.

Near the east end of the Heather Shelf a number of ribs and cracks mount at a very steep angle to a distinct grass ledge, about seventy feet above, near the east end of which there are two small mountain ash trees, one above the other: this grass ledge was the first objective. One of the ribs was first ascended for a few feet, then with the aid of a good hold for the hands on another rib to the left a bold stride was made over this intervening rib into a waterworn groove or crack. This crack and a chimney above were ascended to a sound grass stance only a few feet below the aforementioned grass ledge. The

ascent was effected chiefly by means of small rounded (water-worn) holds, which naturally all sloped the wrong way; the climbing was difficult, and the strain severe until one's body was raised on to the grass stance from which the grass ledge was easily reached. At the east end of this ledge there is standing room for one and there are two belays. One of these, about six feet above the ledge, can be used to give security to the second man while the leader can utilise the rope jammed in a crack and placed over the other belay. When the second had ascended to this point a few steps were taken along the ledge to the west, round an awkward corner, and the ascent continued by means of a quartz vein which proved to be more difficult than expected; this soon landed the party on a second grass ledge. This ledge sloped downwards and to the east to an extent that rendered it unsuitable for a prolonged rest. The only inducement to remain on it was the fact that it offered an excellent view of the first chimney of the Central Route in which the party, together with K. J. P. Orton, had enjoyed themselves a few days previously. However, even the joys of recollection were not strong enough inducement for a long delay, and a move was soon made. A steep slab on the left, facing north west, looked attractive, the holds were small but square cut and sloped the right way, and about forty feet of excellent climbing led to a stance from which a small grass shelf, dominated by a deeply cut sloping recess with an overhanging roof, could be seen on the right. This grass shelf was soon reached by ascending easy rocks and traversing a few feet to the right, and it proved to be a welcome haven. It was approximately flat, and would seat three comfortably, so a much needed rest was taken there, and proved so delightful to the weary climbers that it was decided forthwith to call this luxurious resting place "Paradise," and to give the same name to the route when completed. Later on a thick streak of quartz on the right was diligently quarried, and "Paradise" was adorned with a cairn of noble dimensions, which notably diminishes the seating accommodation.

"Paradise" is visible from the Stack Shelf on the Horned

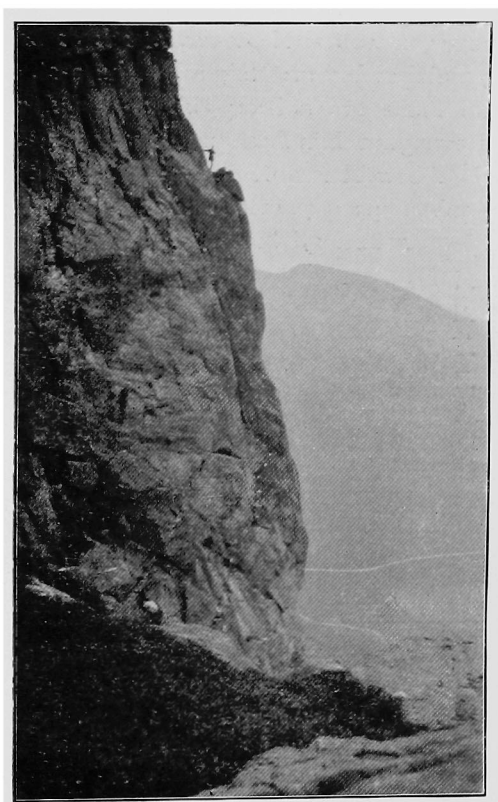
Crag Route and is a few feet lower; from it, it seemed possible to traverse upwards to the west along a quartz-streaked vein and to reach the Gorphwysfa on the Central Route. The allurements of this possibly easy means of exit were firmly resisted, and the party continued along the line originally planned.

Traversing a few feet downwards to the left the foot of a steep chimney was reached; this was ascended for about forty feet with some difficulty, by means of small rounded holds, to a stance. From this a short stiff pitch of about ten feet led to a second stance, and a similar pitch was then ascended to a small recess with an overhanging roof; in this recess the leader could wedge, and later on the second man also wedged in it while the leader climbed out over the roof. This recess was surmounted by the aid of good holds, somewhat inconveniently placed, first on the left wall and then on the right wall; a belay high up on the right wall enabled the leader to obtain security while making the awkward upward movement over the overhanging roof. The party had now reached J. M. A. Thomson's cairn at the foot of the Black Arête, by which the climb was continued.

Heavy rain (the first that had fallen in the day time for nearly a fortnight!) fell before the summit was reached, but though wet the party was in high spirits at the completion of such a climb, and tea at Pen-y-Pass enabled one of them to survive a bicycle ride to Bangor that evening.

The new portion of this route (from the Heather Shelf to the foot of the Black Arête) affords continuously excellent climbing, of a difficult nature, on sound rock for the whole distance; and the excellent climbing, though much easier, can be continued to the summit by following the Black Arête, thus making an entirely distinct route.

The climb should only be attempted by a strong party in good training and when the rocks are dry. The climbing at the start and in the two chimneys depends largely on small rounded holds for the fingers and on friction, and the strain is long continued and severe. The leader cannot be assisted at the more difficult points. Eighty feet of rope are enough for a party of two.



The Nose of the North Buttress, Tryfaen.

NORTH BUTTRESS, TRYFAEN.

A ROUTE was taken here finer in some ways than the usual route, and including in its upper part the rock face under the nose. We learn that this part was ascended at Easter, 1899, by Messrs. O. G. Jones, G. D. Abraham and J. W. Puttrel, but no account of it has hitherto been published.

The climb starts in a clean cut 60 ft. V chimney of moderate difficulty to the left of the usual route, and immediately to the right of the North Gully. A jammed stone half way up this chimney can be used for a thread. The climb is continued for about 200 ft. straight up the arête which rises between the chimney we have ascended and the North Gully. The lower part of this is difficult, but higher up it breaks up into heather slopes, and we traverse slightly to the right and join the usual route, which we follow as far as the base of the steep slabs under the nose.

The next portion of the climb utilizes the chimney which forms part of the usual traverse to Bellevue Terrace. This is clearly seen to extend downwards for 30 feet at about 60° and then steepens to a nearly vertical wall, at the bottom of which is a smooth platform. Our first aim is to reach this platform. Starting with some easy slabs below and to the left of the platform we reach a point where there are several small parallel ledges sloping upwards to the right. With the hands on one ledge and some small footholds we work upwards to a small grass platform with a loose block on it. Some easy slabs then lead to the platform. The second man should now ascend to this point, and follow a ledge which extends to the left from the platform until he can ascend to a higher and narrower quartz ledge, on which he traverses to the right to a point above and about 6 feet to the left of when he started. Here is a good belay and the leader can proceed. Ascending the corner of the chimney until he stands on a pinnacle he steps to the right round the angle of the chimney on to an obvious foothold, and after feeling about discovers

a handhold which enables him to pull round the corner. He now ascends upwards and to the right on to the arête, and then working slightly to the left proceeds up a slab by means of small finger holds to a spike on the edge of the chimney, which could be used as a belay. The chimney is then ascended to the traverse. It is now necessary for the second man to descend to the platform before joining the leader.

The holds on this portion are small but reliable. The climb is very much exposed, and compares in difficulty with parts of the Avalanche Route, Lliwedd. It should not be attempted except by a strong party under good conditions. 100-120 ft. of rope required by leader.

F. C. ALDOUS.

B. HORSLEY.

T. WYLDBORE.

F. MASON.

A. C. ADAMS.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE Editor will be glad to receive articles or notes on climbs for the next number.

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REVIEWS of various Mountaineering Periodicals and the following books are unavoidably held over to the next number : British Mountaineering, by C. E. Benson. British Mountain Climbs, by G. D. Abraham. Notes from a Knapsack, by G. Wherry. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy ; the Mitchelstown Caves, Co. Tipperary.

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PROFESSOR J. B. Farmer sends a note on the dangerous condition of the East Gully of Lliwedd. It seems that a large block has fallen, entirely altering the character of the top pitch, where the real climbing ends, and that another block above is in a dangerous position, and may fall at any time. It is very desirable that the climb should not be attempted till an examination has been made from above.

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COPIES of the stereoscopic pictures appearing in this number can be obtained from the Editor.

COMMITTEE NOTES.

ATTENTION is called to the publication by the Club of the first volume of their proposed series of Climbers' Guides. Is is a Guide to Lliwedd, by Messrs. J. M. A. Thomson and A. W. Andrews, published by Mr. Edward Arnold at the price of 5/- nett, and, in addition to the ordinary sources, copies may be obtained at Pen-y-Gwryd, Pen-y-Pass, and Ogwen Cottage. Members of the Club may obtain copies at a special net price of 3/6 (postage extra) by applying to the Honorary Secretary.

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THE second volume of the Climbers' Guides is now under consideration, and it is hoped that an announcement with respect thereto will be made shortly.

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THE Honorary Librarians are engaged in the preparation of the new catalogue of the Club Library, and it is hoped that it will be ready for publication in an early number of the *Journal*.

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THE Annual Dinner has been held in the past, sometimes on a Friday and sometimes on a Saturday. The Honorary Secretary would welcome expressions of opinion from members as to which day is most convenient to them for the purpose.

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THE last list of members of the Club is now out of print, and early in 1910 a new list of members will be published.

The Honorary Secretary would be much obliged if members would notify him as soon as possible of any changes of address, and of any errors there may have been in the last list of members.

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MEMBERS are requested to note that the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. C. B. Moss, has changed his address to c/o Wm. Finke and Co., 27 Clements Lane, E.C.

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MR. MOSS will be glad to receive a note of the present address of Mr. A. Gibson Cheney, Mr. H. S. Thomson, and Mr. Mark Pole, in order to forward copies of the *Journal*.