

THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

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 Edited by ARNOLD H. M. LUNN.

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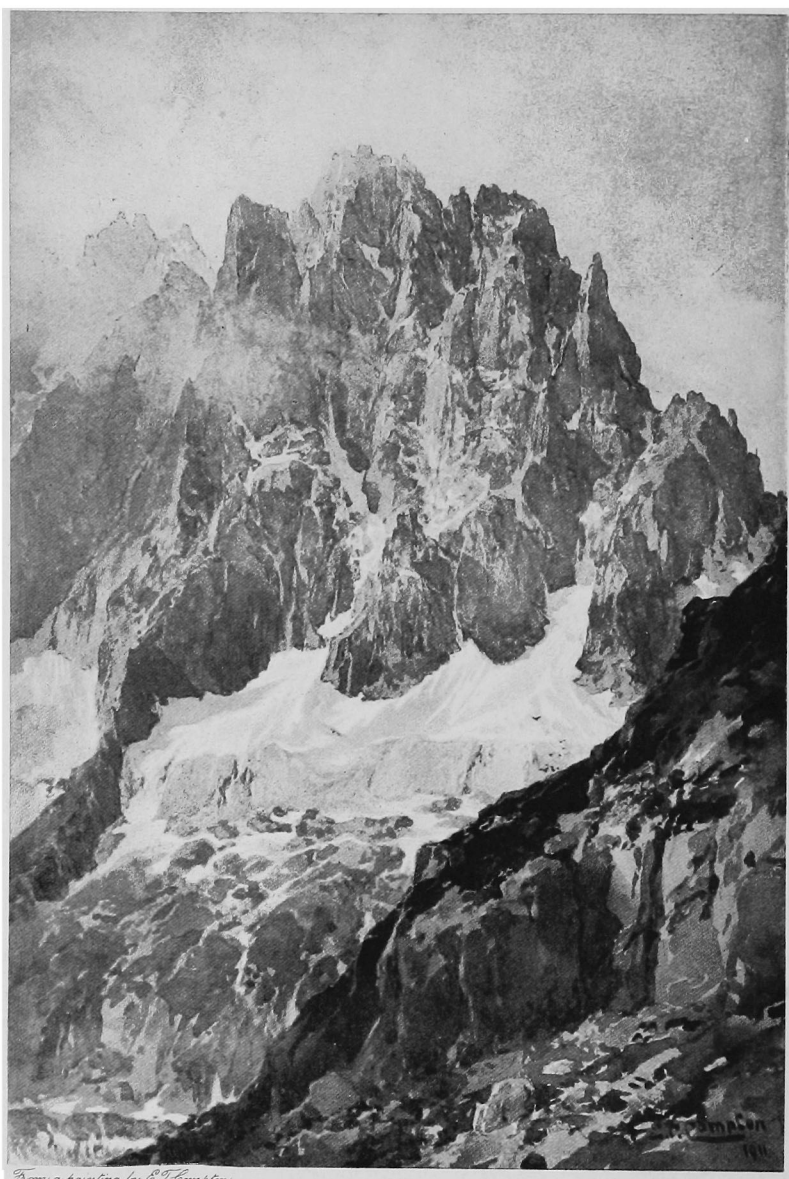
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 PUBLISHED BY HORACE MARSHALL & SONS,
125, FLEET STREET, E.C.

Copies can also be obtained from

GEORGE PHILIP & SON, 32, FLEET STREET, LONDON.

W. HEFFER & SONS,
CAMBRIDGE.FRANK MURRAY, MORAY HOUSE,
DERBY.HENRY YOUNG & SONS,
SOUTH CASTLE STREET, LIVERPOOL.



From a painting by E. J. Compton.

Le Grepon.

THE
CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

No. 1.

FEBRUARY, 1912.

NEW SERIES.

**THE ASCENT OF THE GRÉPON BY
THE MER DE GLACE FACE.**

BY R. TODHUNTER.

PHOTOGRAPHY and the geographical situation of Chamonix have combined to impress a single aspect of the Grépon on the memory. It is, therefore, with a certain sense of surprise that one looks across from the Moine at the great rock wall that rises from the Trélaporte glacier. To the eye that recalls the fragile fabric of the Grépon as seen from Chamonix the Mer de Glace face reveals unsuspected solidity and complexity of structure. From the climbing point of view the face certainly looks sufficiently formidable. It raises hopes only to destroy them. Alluring possibilities are suggested by its buttresses and arêtes, but they fade into improbabilities as the eye rises to the apparently vertical slabs that stretch across its upper section. And appearances—seldom more deceptive than in distant views of rock-faces—are in this instance borne out by the evidence of experience. Mummery, whose first attempts on the peak were made from this side, came to the conclusion that it would afford at the best a doubtful means of access to the Charmoz-Grépon col—more easily attainable from the Nantillons glacier—and in more recent times several strong parties have gone, seen—and come back, or at most forced a difficult passage to the arête above the famous crack.

The prospects of an attack on a face that had resisted so many determined assaults could not, perhaps, be reasonably

regarded as bright. Nevertheless, a party of five, consisting of G. Winthrop Young, H. O. Jones, the writer, Josef Knubel, and Henri Brocherel, which set out from Chamonix on August 18th last, with the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon as its objective, was not without some hopes of success. Perhaps the extraordinary character of the late lamented season—a season in which almost anything seemed possible except bergschrunds—and the memorable achievements of certain members of the party on the Brouillard ridge of Mont Blanc and the East and West ridges of the Jorasses were mainly accountable for this. But there were more legitimate grounds for confidence in the facts that Young, on visits to the face in previous seasons, had planned out a hitherto untried route which seemed to offer a promising line of attack, and that he had with him on the present occasion, in the person of Josef Knubel, a leader whose skill and courage could be relied upon not to rest content with deserving success if it were in any way possible to command it. Moreover, hostages had been given to fortune and good comradeship, at the cost of the augmentation of the party to a number which may be regarded as excessive for so long and arduous an expedition, by the inclusion of the writer, whom his companions kindly but firmly declined to leave to such consolations as might be found in the raspberry tarts of the Café de Mont Blanc. In any case, whatever else might be in store, there was at least the promise of ideal conditions for a bivouac in the open and for the modest programme of “going to have a look at it.” The weather, indeed, was a little too good for walking up mule paths, and the afternoon heat in the valley induced a feeling of gratitude for the existence of the Montanvers railway. That feeling was, perhaps, somewhat modified by the atmospheric condition of the tunnels, from one of which the party emerged in a state of semi-asphyxiation that recalled happy memories of the “old Underground.” It was something of a shock also to one member of the party, who had not been to the Montanvers since the advent of the railway, to find the foreground occupied by an imposing terminus, and the inn fulfilling the duties of a railway tavern, where the minor interests of mountaineering seemed to have little place—until at least the last train of the day had gone down and the few

faithful alone remained. Trains and tourists were, however, soon left behind, the cool air of the glacier speedily dispelled from the lungs the lingering fumes of carbon-monoxide, and Young led the way to his former camping-ground—a delectable spot a hundred yards or so above the glacier on the Montanvers side of the Trélaporte, with the rock wall of the Charmoz rising in the background, and with the magnificent group of peaks that encircle the Charpoua glacier spread out before the eye. From the material, no less than from the æsthetic point of view, it was an admirable bivouac, well supplied with firewood, and with the usual stone furniture of the mountain flat. Its one defect—the absence of water, owing to the abnormally dry conditions of 1911—was discovered before the guides had left the glacier. They had stayed behind at the Montanvers to lure a reluctant porter from some less arduous and more congenial occupation at the terminus, and in due course they staggered up the slope, with a hundred-weight or so of ice added to their heavy baggage. A second deficiency could not be reasonably put down to the discredit of the bivouac. It was the absence of soup—a calamity which came as an inopportune reminder that provisions, no less than references, require verification. There were, however, ample materials for a good deal of the “fine confused feeding” that serves as an Alpine meal, and it was without any undue regrets for the forgotten soup that the several members of the party eventually retired to their tents and sleeping bags, and to the absorbing problem of adjusting their respective anatomies to their environment.

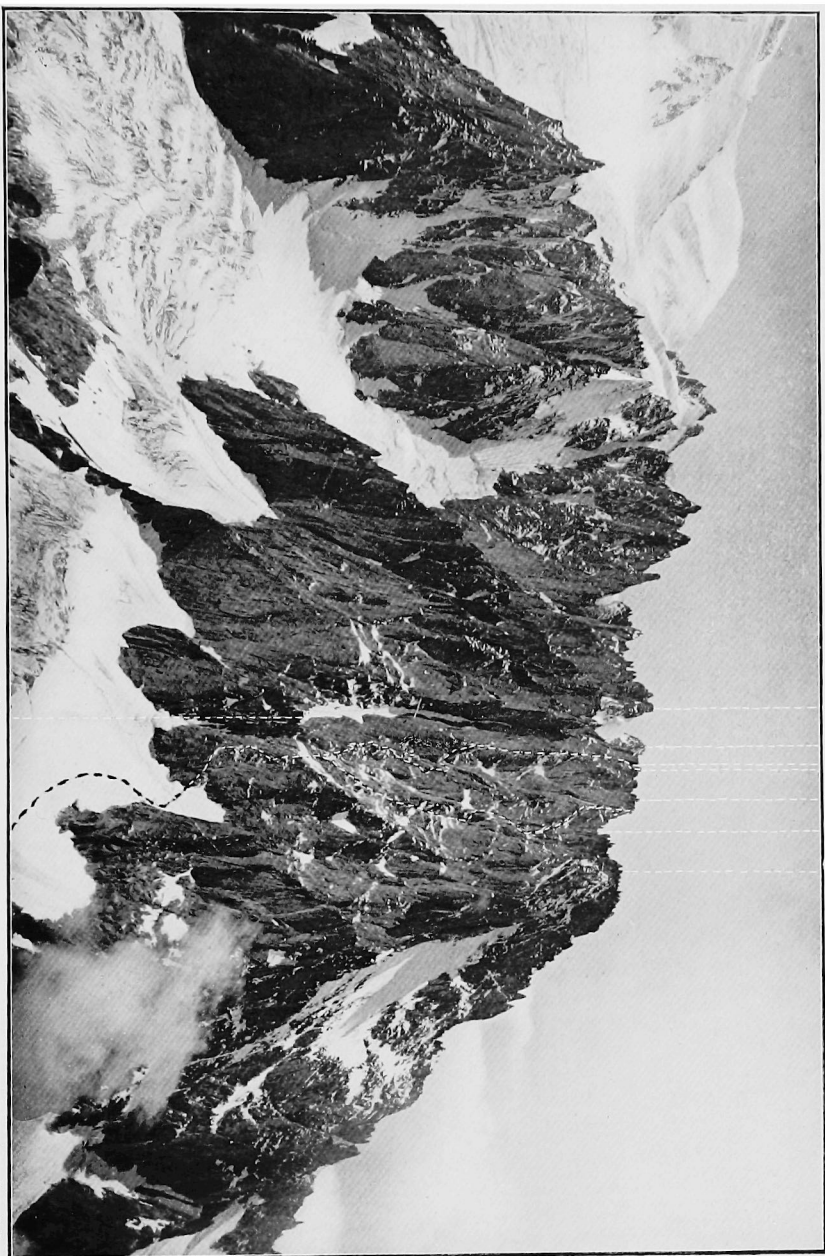
Striking camp in the dark, and hunting by the inadequate light of a lantern for things that have been too carefully deposited in a safe place, are not among the most agreeable of Alpine experiences. To the unfortunate owner of a missing hat or boot, his companions on such occasions are apt to seem a trifle self-centred. Sympathy may be invited, but it is not seriously expected, and it is rarely received. Fortunately, on the particular occasion with which this narrative is concerned, nothing went far astray, and a start was duly effected at the appointed hour.

It was necessary in the first instance to turn the shoulder

of the Trélaporte, and for this purpose it is apparently best to keep at a low level. The route actually taken went somewhat too high, and as a result a good deal of miscellaneous scrambling—exhilarating or exasperating, according to the temperament of the early morning climber—ensued before a halt was called on the left bank of the little Trélaporte glacier. Here, it must be confessed, something of the reaction not infrequently associated with early starts manifested itself. Four sacks, which had apparently accompanied their owners in the confident expectation of being carried over the Grépon, lay despondently on the ground, and an exposition of sleep came upon one or two members of the party who had been waked too soon. However, the disinclination to move was at length overcome, and the glacier crossed to a point just below the bergschrund, on the nearer side of the central bay, where the rope was put on, and the serious business of the day began. The bergschrund was this year impassable, and it was only eventually turned up very difficult rocks at its northern end. A traverse was then made across the hanging ice, with some labour of steps, to the rocks on the south side of the bay.

The general plan of operations was to make for the base of a rib of more broken rock that appeared to continue nearly to the summit of the peak on the further side of the great central precipice, and with this object Knobel led diagonally upwards across the lower buttress. This was, to some of the party, familiar ground, and for some considerable time progress was rapid. An occasional difficult pitch gave momentary pause, but for the most part all the members of the party were able to move together, and the impression left by the early part of the climb was one of surprise at the extent of comparatively easy ground on so steep a face. The "red tower," which had been a conspicuous feature of previous exploration, was soon left far behind, and nearly two-thirds of the wall appeared to have been climbed. Yet, curiously enough, notwithstanding the unexpected ease with which this had been accomplished, few, if any, members of the party entertained at this time much hope of ultimate success. The early morning reaction still lingered, and from time to time the leader showed hesitation as to the best line of advance, or looked

Aiguilles de
Blaitière
Pic Balfour
Highest Peak
Lower Peak
Charmoz-Grépe
Col.
Charmoz.



The late W. F. Donkin photo.]

"Great Red Tower," Mummery.

[Swan Electric Engraving Co., Ltd.

Aiguilles des Charmoz, Grépon, etc., from Aig. du Moine. Route followed by Messrs. Young, Jones, and Todhunter on left.

Route followed by Mr. Ryan on right.

This photograph is reproduced by the kind permission of the editor of the ALPINE JOURNAL.

doubtfully at the great slabs above. The feeling of an impending crisis was in the air, and the critical moment was not long in coming. A point had been reached on a rib which was still some distance to the right of the line which seemed to offer the only chance of completing the ascent. Progress by this rib appeared possible—in fact, Knubel, followed by Brocherel, had ascended 100 feet or so with some difficulty; but it meant ultimate failure, for the rib led away to the right, and at a higher level the party would clearly be cut off from the main peak by slabs which it would be hopeless to attempt to traverse. To the left of the rib was a deeply cut gully, and a little further on an open slabby couloir, both difficult certainly of access; but beyond was a magnificent traverse, leading steeply upwards in the direction of the desired rib. Could that traverse be reached? Judgment had almost gone by default, when Young, prospecting across the first gully, and “still nursing the unconquerable hope,” discovered a belay which would safeguard the descent to the second couloir, and a well-placed platform on its farther side that could, if necessary, secure a retreat. The day was won, for the determination of the amateur not to be beaten came as an inspiration to the professional. Difficulties far greater than any that had yet been encountered lay ahead; but they were immaterial, for from that moment doubt and diffidence vanished, and it seemed that nothing could stop the leader. This happy change of mood speedily proved infectious, and on a ledge beyond the traverse lunch was discussed by as light-hearted a picnic-party as was perhaps ever assembled on a hitherto unclimbed 3,000-foot rock wall.

Above, rising from a charming platform, which was unanimously felt to deserve a name, and was there and then christened the *Niche des Amis*, was one of the prettiest problems of the day—a 45-foot vertical right-angled corner. It was climbed by a crack for the hand and a convenient leaf for the foot. Higher the climb followed the line of least resistance up a succession of slabs, flakes, and cracks, where the ordinary hold was an underpull for the hands and friction for the feet. A short rest was taken on a little projecting shoulder immediately below the formidable slabs of the final

section, while a caravan that had arrived on the summit by the ordinary route looked down on the party with apparent and clamorous curiosity as to how they had got there. A sequence of difficult chimneys landed the party on a ledge where further progress looked hopeless. But a level traverse over a blind corner on the left led finally to the foot of a 200-foot crack, in part overhanging, but offering the only prospect of further advance. The party were soon strung out in its interior in positions of varying discomfort. A projecting rock in the most constricted portion stopped the leader for some time, and seemed likely to stop Brocherel's bulk and sack for ever. However, they got through eventually, and while the rest of the party struggled successively with the difficulty, and wished their sacks and axes had never been born, it became clear from the general tenor of the conversation up above that the leader was occupied with something really serious. The long chimney gave out under an overhanging wall, and the only escape was off a supporting head up a steep and holdless slab, over a corner to the right, and up a second exposed and equally holdless slab. It was a passage that certainly came very near to the limits of possibility, and in effecting it the leader seems to have relied chiefly upon the support afforded by an axe inserted in an invisible sloping crack. But exactly how the feat was accomplished will always remain a mystery to the writer, who, upon his arrival on the scene, hastened to avail himself of the more reliable support of a spare rope dangling more or less inconveniently in space.

Beyond this exacting passage one more obstacle had to be surmounted—a detached block, which, though admirably suited to a climber 12 or 15 feet high, proved a severe strain upon arm-muscles exhausted by the long drawn out struggle in the chimney. It may be an excellent rule in rock-climbing to keep the arms in reserve for some supreme effort that is never required, but on the final 500 feet of the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon the rule is best honoured in a continuous breach. However, the end was now at hand. Another 50 foot chimney, and the party were looking down on the Nantillons glacier from the well-known gap between the Pic

Balfour and the summit. The great rock wall had been climbed, but the summit of the Grépon had still to be reached. The "Dunod" chimney, by which the usual descent from the summit is effected on a spare rope, might conceivably have been forced, but in any case it was not the Mer de Glace face. Could the climb be completed by that face? With such a leader it was worth trying, and the whole party traversed round and upwards on to the leaf of rock below the peak on the Mer de Glace side. From that position the writer witnessed what was certainly the most sensational achievement in his rock-climbing experience. With one foot thrust against the side wall of the short overhanging chimney, the leader, holding himself in with his axe inserted in the chimney, sought for what seemed an interminable time to gain the few extra inches of height that would enable him to jam some portion of his disengaged hand in the crack above its overhanging portion. Every moment it seemed that the strain on muscle and nerve must become too great. At last, by a supreme effort, the axe was released, and its point inserted a few feet higher up the crack in some invisible cranny. Then, inch by inch, the necessary height was gained, and with a final effort the summit was won. It was a great victory, and the rest of the party hastened up to congratulate the victor. From bivouac to summit the climb had occupied nearly eleven hours.

Of the evening descent in a glorious sunset to Chamonix it is not necessary to write; but by one member of the party, who had had the unexpected good luck to share its fortunes, the memories of those hours of relaxed effort, in which the day's adventures were told and retold, will not soon be forgotten.

CLIMBING DOWN.

BY G. WINTHROP YOUNG.

THIS is the sort of title which would have drawn from Winthrop Praed one of those brief brilliant essays in which every conceivable method of "climbing down" would have been discussed with antithesis and paradox, only one interpretation being omitted, and that the literal meaning. If one may diverge from him in matter of treatment, one may also be forgiven if one differs from him in being thoroughly dull. Von Moltke is apocryphally supposed to have been asked why the German Drill-book contained no instructions for conducting a retreat. With equal improbability he is reported to have replied: "The German army does not retreat." The practice of modern climbers is almost equally absurd. We execute, and describe, ascents and ascents only; we never learn to "climb down."

It is easy enough to see how this has come about. In Britain we have grown accustomed not to think about the descent; we plot the route up, and—we run down the nearest way. And so, when we get out to the Alps, we are disposed, in the words of a recent writer, to choose a peak which will give us plenty of sport on the ascent and an easy snow route down. Now this is all very well so long as we have only got to deal with hill or fell or the ordinary Oberland summit; but when it is a matter of the Mont Blanc *massif* or of what may be termed the "higher walks of mountaineering," the shoes are on quite a different pair of feet—and a very incompetent pair. Descending is here of equal importance with ascending, and the more difficult the climb, of the greater relative importance does the descent become; until, on a new route or on the wall of a Chamonix *aiguille*, it has to be even more considered and more time allowed for it, to permit of a return, than for the ascent itself. Time is the measure of a climb, and time is saved not by effort, or wind, but by technique, which means the habit of right climbing in all positions.

On very hard rocks to descend is technically, though seldom in theory admittedly, a slower and more difficult process than to ascend. But guides, because they can do it, and amateurs, because they rarely know that they can't, seldom allow for this in prearranging a tour ; and thence come loss of temper and benightments and frostbite, and all the other evils which result from the ill adjustment of a climb to a day-length, and which are attributed to every cause but the right one, namely, that the descent was not reckoned with. I do not propose to deal directly here with a question which is of great interest to many climbers at the present moment, as to whether the very high degree of specialisation to which rock climbing has been carried in Britain and in South Austria can be considered the best preparation for the Alps, or the reverse. Very divergent views are expressed on the point, and the discussion of them would go far beyond the limits of a note upon Climbing Down. But the greater includes the less ; and I must ask to be allowed to assume for the moment my own belief that the masterful, serpentine, but necessarily slow method of motion, from singly relying hand to singly relying foot, and from secured foot to gripping hand, which is forced upon us by the sheer difficulty and sparse holds of our home rocks, produces an art of climbing which is unsuited to the greater distances and the long reaches of easier crag work that form the main feature of an Alpine day. The unsuitability of method becomes more conspicuous where the forces of gravity are with us, and not against us. Our rock education bids us hold as fast and move from "grip" to "grip" as securely and slowly on a rock descent as on the ascent. We select, as it were, a series of "British" holds at "British" distances from one another, and descend by them with British thoroughness and eclecticism. Now, watch one of the first-class guides on the same passage. He appears to drift down, letting his weight do the work, without any apparent check at the holding points. His hands and feet seem to adhere almost accidentally underneath him, like the spokes of a revolving rimless wheel. They seem to move across a hold with the gradual change of his balance, rather than to check at each successive step and launch his weight again, as it were from a fixed point. In the Alps, on all but

the steepest rock, the barest slabs, there is a plethora of hold, of a kind that we should not consider adequate for use on a Lake pitch, but which a guide has learned to be sufficient to accommodate and regulate his downward passage for just the length of time he needs it. His eye has selected a whole succession of holds ahead, or rather afoot. He balances down them as a complementary sequence. He does not ask of each grip that it should become the basis for a fresh beginning. "Touch and pass" as contrasted with "grip and hang" perhaps sums up the visible difference between the two methods.

At bottom the real difference lies in the development of the sense of balance. When once training and practice have perfected the communion between toe, finger, and brain, the sense of balance can be trained to determine as certainly what attachment or what length of attachment will be sufficient to sustain or check the weight when in motion, as to decide what will suffice to support it when at rest. Of course, each hold must in itself be adequate to check and direct the passage of the body, otherwise momentum would be acquired, and the method might be defined with justice as only a fine fashion of falling, leading to much the same results as a slip; but, whereas, on what I am venturing to define as the "British" method, each hold is expected to provide a "check" to all motion in every possible direction, each movement ending in a definite "arrest," on the balance method, the "check" is distributed over a series of holds, each of which serves only to check the downward movement just sufficiently to direct it, with no acquired momentum, on to the next. The holds on such a passage complement one another. Each is used transiently, but safely, because the action of the next is anticipated. The definite "arrest" points of course occur, but they are selected by the eye at far longer convenient intervals. It will be apparent that to read rock holds and their "balance" values ahead in this fashion requires a more practised eye and judgment than are needed merely to decide on the reliability of the next "grip" hold. The art to be acquired is something like that of "reading aloud." A child reads stockily word by word aloud as he comes to it. A trained reader has to learn to keep his eye ahead of his tongue, and to give proper expres-

sion to each word as he passes it, while already his eye has travelled ahead to the next stop and his judgment is automatically accommodating his breath and emphases to the length and sense of the intervening passage.

It is just this art of the longer glance, this practise of climbing as a regulated movement rather than as a series of "stances and rests," which we do not learn in our island mountaineering. Our rock climbs, of the accepted modern standard pattern, are too steep and too intrinsically severe to allow us opportunity of practising freer movement. At the same time, we do not even make the occasions for practice that our fathers did, since we have grown up in a generation which has learned to rate rock climbing largely by the mere effort it demands, and for which the enticement of discovery, such as led the early climbers into larger ways, on longer lower ridges, can no longer act as instructor. The demands of the difficult up-climbs take all our energy and daylight, and when we emerge at the top, we had naturally rather run down a slope than practise a new variety of climbing method on the descent of some less interesting rock ridge or wall.

Even when we go to the Alps most of us learn no better. The proximity of huts, the infallibility of guides with their chessboard minds, in which each section of a climb has its allotted portion of the day length, render it possible for us to achieve the great mass of Alpine expeditions without any loss of faith in our "grip to grip" methods, or any suspicion that the greater ease, pace, and grace of the guides is due to anything but their "instinct" or "inheritance." Even when we climb guideless we take it for granted that, for this reason only, we shall take far longer than a guided party, and we have almost reached the point of accepting a regular school of guideless climbing, which hardily maintains "getting benighted" as a creditable and authorised doctrine.

It is not the case that the average good guide owes his ability to accomplish harder and greater expeditions in the space of the day to his physique or his inborn aptitude. He has to learn his method like any amateur, but he is more fortunate in that his surroundings make it impossible for him to "specialise" or waste time, as we do. I have been privileged

to climb behind some of the finest of the younger school of rock specialists in their early seasons in the Alps—men physically equal to any guide, both in ability to climb difficult rocks and in endurance—and it has been extraordinarily instructive to observe and share their gradual realisation that some contradiction of method handicapped them seriously on any expedition that involved more than the quantity or quality of a “standard” day. And it was in descending that their shortcomings became most apparent. The opinion unanimously expressed by three of these exceptionally brilliant British-trained climbers that they felt “something was wrong with their method,” and that they were, consciously, “unlearning rather than acquiring,” led to the seasons of observation and discussion that have found dull vent in the dogmatism of this paper.

Its moral, however, is all that need be read ; and that is, that we have got to learn to “climb down,” not particularly on difficult rocks, such as we inevitably choose now for ascending, but upon easier and more continuous passages, where we can learn how to “balance” and forget how to “cling.” I should like to suggest to any party that intends to qualify for guideless or big climbing in the Alps to make a general rule of descending one ridge for every two ascended. Ridge or “open” rock affords the best practice for free balance holds ; “jam” gulleys are less instructive, and make for a cramped style. The Great Gable ridges are excellent schools, but for fast practice—and pace should be insisted upon so far as is consistent with security—I know nothing equal to a day spent up and down the easier angles of the east face of Tryfan. And this suggestion carries the larger moral, which I have after all failed to avoid introducing, that high specialisation in rock climbing, the graduating upon increasingly difficult rocks, is not, as is too often claimed, the best preparation for the Alps, even for the great rock aiguilles. If it is exclusively practised, it develops a sound but tucked-up method that has to be unlearned with difficulty, or its results defended with explanatory sophistries. When “Night-Errantry” was universal, the weather seems to have been more settled than now.

EXPLORATION OF LLECHOG AND CLOGWEN YR DDYSGL.

BY J. M. ARCHER THOMSON.

To all men whose souls have not been weakened by excess of civilisation, there comes with advent of spring a strong desire to fare forth and renew intimacy with nature.

This would appear to be a primitive instinct implanted by the custom, which hunger forced upon men of the Stone Age, of reopening at this season the big game hunt. In any case, the feeling was real, and recognised in ages remote from our own.

Jam mens praetrepidans avet vagari
Jam laeti studio pedes vigescunt.

—*Catullus*.

To this common impulse the tastes of the mountaineer give definite direction, and determine for him the sphere of activity.

Thus to all, probably, the appeal of the mountains becomes most insistent in spring, and in explorers the desire is then keenest for fresh crags and pastures new. And hence it has come about that in spite of the shortness of the holiday, and the not infrequent inclemency of the weather, a remarkable series of annexations has been made to the climber's domain in Easter vacations.

A glance at Cambrian annals will show that the list includes, in addition to lesser cliffs, the Far East Buttress, the Slanting Buttress, and the East Peak of Lliwedd, the face of Cyn Las, and the face of Foel Goch, Craig Cwrwgl, Craig yr Ysfa, and the Creigiau Gleision. And now, as the result of exploration made last April, two handsome new faces may be added to this comprehensive group.

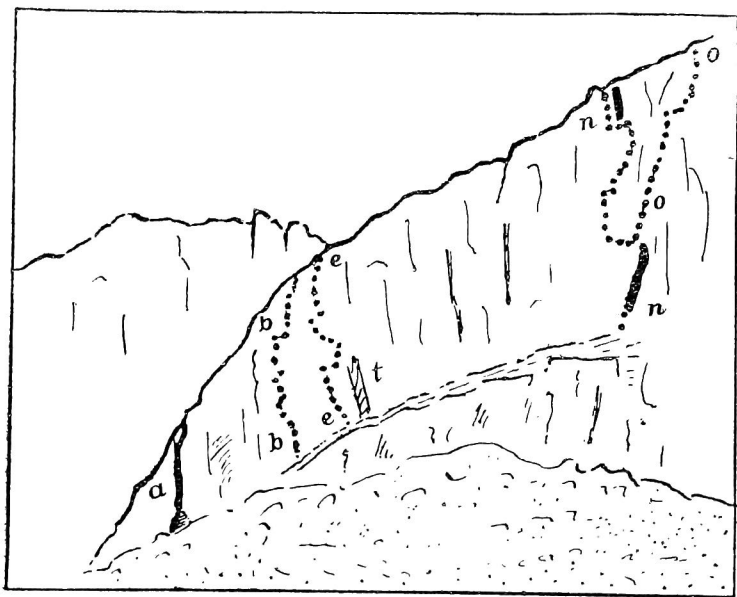
One of them, Llechog, is the main theme of my thesis, but before coming to this topic I must refer to some new climbs on the frequented side of Snowdon, if only to make a show

of fulfilling a promise lightly given to an observant editor in an unguarded moment of paulo-post-prandial complacency.

In September, 1910, H. O. Jones, K. J. P. Orton, and I had several days of excellent climbing from Cwm Glas on the practically untouched face of Clogwen yr Ddysgl.

A reader gifted with a phenomenally retentive memory may recall my account of two climbs here in the last issue of the Club Journal. These begin in a deep rift near the west end of the cliff, and are flanked on the left by an extensive expanse of forbidding crags, which finally lose height, and become more broken below the familiar ridge of Clogwen Person.

At the base of the whole cliff is a broad ascending terrace, and the first sure landmark met by one coming along it from the Parson's Nose is a notable squarish recess about a hundred feet high. It is on the left or east side of this that we found,



CLOGWEN YR DDYSGL.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>a.</i> The Parson's Nose Gully. | <i>t.</i> The Recess. | <i>n.</i> The Organ Route. |
| <i>b.</i> The Gambit Climb. | <i>o.</i> The Water Slide Gully. | <i>e.</i> The Ribbon Route. |

or rather forced, a line of ascent, which I propose to call, from the quartz streak that marks it, the Ribbon Route on Clogwen yr Ddysgl.

THE RIBBON ROUTE.

The climbing began beside a mottled and pitted block, and then a traverse was made to the right for a few yards along a ledge which holds a belaying-bollard ; the next move was up a twelve-foot vertical chimney to a small shelf ; good rocks then led up to a second ledge, overlooked by an impending projection with a band of quartz below it (cairn). Thence we traversed horizontally to the right, and the passage, which needed a considered adjustment of balance, enabled the leader to reach a stance on the upper side of an overhanging canopy.

This traverse is more artificial than natural. If it is passed unobserved, the climber will be forced eastwards, and will miss the prettiest part of the climb. After eighteen feet of difficult upward climbing, a strong position was finally attained directly above this stance. Thirty feet higher we came into a kind of theatre, whose pit, a yellow quartz ledge, afforded just sufficient sitting room for the three of us. We continued therefrom up a spiky arête on the left, and it may be useful to add that, in the act of getting on to it, I narrowly escaped being trepanned by a rock-chisel. Fifty feet of this brought us to a spotlessly white quartz vein (cairn), and near at hand on the left is a curious secluded green-carpeted chamber with high walls, a useful landmark to anyone surveying the route from the Cwm. A rectangular recess was then climbed, above which thirty feet of easy rock led up to the top of the ridge (cairn).

THE GAMBIT CLIMB.

The discovery, by means of this intricate and difficult route, that these crags, so formidable in aspect, were not wholly unassailable, encouraged the hope that a second breach could be made. Our next venture resulted in the Organ Route, at the further end of the face, but we returned here on the day following with appetite for novelty whetted and limbs already disposed by a scramble up the right retaining wall of the Dodo Gully. The difficulty of mentally marking a route was accentuated here, as recently at the foot of Sgurr a'Mhadaidh,

by the frequency of projecting canopies, which extinguished lines of fair promise. Our success on this day was largely due to Orton's survey and selection.

My comrades built an encouraging cairn, while I made a tentative effort a little to the east of the Ribbon Route. There is here no preliminary preamble ; the real climbing begins with the initial step up from the terrace.

A shallow, indefinite furrow was climbed for about sixty feet, when it became apparent that the line was blocked a short way above. On the left, and at a lower level, a vertical crack of eight feet, probably accessible by a sloping rock ledge, came suggestively into view at the right moment.

The strength of my position on an excellent one-foot stance, with a strong little knob beside me, was such that I could check from above either a slip from the slab, or a drop from the crack. Neither occurred ; the second man was Jones ; he accomplished the ingenious manoeuvre, of which the crack part was found exceedingly difficult owing to scarcity of hand-hold. A charming chair was found at the top. This plan, though the outcome of following a false scent, is to be strongly recommended to others on the ground of the protection it gives, but, of course, the second man of three should start first, and thus avoid such complicated rearrangement of the rope as lengthened to half an hour a period of passive perching on one foot upon a breezy stance.

The crack continued in a different plane above the throne ; the ascent was laborious and inconvenient, but safety was ensured by keeping one foot wedged in throughout. We landed on a platform and set up a cairn. We now bore a little to the right, and ascended seventy feet by good ledges, and then a featureless trough. At the top we came upon a green collar bending eastwards, which appeared a soft option likely to connect up with the Clogwen Ridge. On the right the view was curtailed off by a prominent nose ; round this we effected a very sensational traverse by small holds ; and from a ledge on the further side continued up a thirty-foot chimney.

We had now before us the fragment of a gully which ended below a bold, sheer crag of repellent aspect. The place suggested an unyielding cul-de-sac, and to force any way out



Photo, Copyright]

Clogwen yr Ddysgl.

[H. SPEYER.



Photo, Copyright]

Clogwen Person.

[H. SPEYER.

seemed a task of uncommon complexity. By means of some wedged blocks I escaped from the gully to a ledge on the crag. A peep round its sharp left edge was accompanied by one of those intimate thrills which all true explorers have felt on finding a possible solution to a knotty question.

The crag revealed itself a flake-tower; a lateral groove and vertical rift disclosed at once its vulnerability. Jones joined me on the ledge; my absence round the corner was seemingly prolonged beyond expectation. A volley of pertinent questions, which elicited a laconic reply, reached me as I was finishing an exhausting wrestle with the rift. At the top one can sit doubled in the fissure with legs thrown as counter-weights over the wall. The position is more restful than dignified. It is not a pitch where a taut rope permits any freedom of movement, but I feel sure my companions came up with greater ease and economy of effort. Forty feet is a very rough estimate of the distance from the ledge to the top. From a rock platform close above (cairn), we proceeded diagonally to the right in quest of a worthy finish. And such we found on the further side of a deep triangular recess in a short, stiff finger-crack which ran up a curiously mottled wall. A few minutes after finishing this we came out on the summit-ridge within a pace of the large cairn that marks the end of the Clogwen Person Ridge.

It is hardly possible to climb on this face without being struck afresh with the unique variety of rocks the mountains of Arfon include. No greater contrast could be found than in the difference between these sheer, rough, solid slabs, and the giddy arêtes of the Gleision.

As a face climb, the Gambit takes rank with the best on Lliwedd, which is equivalent to saying the finest south of the Tweed. It has the same charming intricacy, and the maze of crags it threads is surpassed in steepness by none on the mountains of Wales.

We had been at first a little reluctant to leave the Mountain of Mystery, but once weaned from Lliwedd by Ddysgl's solid *Dish*, we hardly felt it a wrench, after the climb of the Gambit, to proceed at once over the main ridge of Snowdon and

descend to Cwellyn, whose purlieus for many years past I had wished to visit and explore.

The valley of the Gwyrfaï runs south-east from Waenfawr, a village four miles from Carnarvon, and contains the beautiful lakes of Cwellyn and Gader, at present better known to the angler than to the mountaineer. On the brink of the former the old hostelry, the Snowdon Ranger, has been converted into a comfortable inn. Through the paddock behind it pass at rare intervals the crazy, creaking vans of the Narrow Gauge Line, whose rusty metals run from Dinas to Rhyd Du.

Round this convenient centre are grouped Castell Cidwm, Y Garn, Craig y Bera, Llechog, and Craig yr Cwm Du, and each of these is within an hour's walk.

Craig y Bera throws down into the Nantlle Valley an astounding array of bristling ridges. Most of them are unclimbed, and should remain so. The rock is a species of slate and far too friable to be recommended. The character of the scree below them is sufficiently significant. Nevertheless, a very pleasant and interesting climb was found by our party at the east end, on the longest and most continuous of these romantic ridges.

THE SENTRIES' RIDGE ON CRAIG Y BERA.

For purposes of identification, which is important, this ridge might be called the second from the east, though the first is not continuously prominent. A cairn at the foot now serves to distinguish it. The ridge is notched and carved into fourteen pinnacles or gendarmes. All yield to direct assault. The second involves an exceedingly tricky horizontal traverse of eighteen feet round an overhanging protuberance, with a stiff vertical chimney to follow. Here, however, a crack on the right flank, taken by our third man, gives a less breezy alternative to both. Some doubt was expressed after descent of one of the sentries (either the fifth or the eighth) whether it was securely based, as it appeared undercut on the far side. No vibration was felt and no experiments were made. After the eighth obstacle, a canting watch-tower, we lunched on a bright green saddle, a very charming spot of ground, and, after the tenth, crossed a natural "Roman bridge" over a



Photo]

[J. M. J. Thomson.
The Black Rib on Llechog.



Photo]

[L. Noon.
On Craig yr Cwm Du.

curious aperture utilised by sheep to connect the two subjacent hollows. A rickety staircase beyond should be climbed with proper caution. Space forbids description with full particularity of the numerous obstacles; it will suffice, however, to say that the crest was followed throughout with a forty-foot interval of rope between the first and the second man, who was always firmly placed though frequently out of sight.

The Sentries' Ridge has a moderate average gradient, but some of the sites attained are singular, and, as each gendarme completely screens the next, a certain unexpectedness is a feature of the climb. It promotes hilarity.

Loose splinters have now been cleared off the crest, but it should not be forgotten that, as the process of weathering is continuous, a certain discrimination will be required on each ascent. Easy ground, with heather, is never far off, and a scramble could be substituted for many of the Sentries. They should not, however, be attacked in flank, for some would not yield at all and others would yield too much.

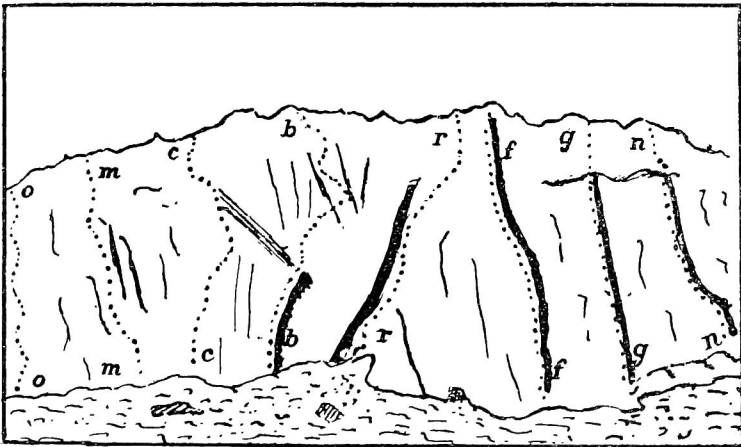
The glimpses of inviting cliffs obtained on this two days' visit in September, 1910, determined me to return at the earliest opportunity, with a view especially to research upon a face of Mynydd Mawr and upon Llechog, which lay wholly beyond the tide-mark of exploration.

The face of the south-west ridge of Snowdon was, of course, well known by name and distant sight, but was seemingly thought either unworthy of ascent or too slabby to admit of it. In fact, the conversion of courteous sceptics is part of my present beneficent purpose. The actual cliff, which has a north-easterly aspect, is about five hundred feet in height, and the climbing upon it is excellent. It is a good and uncommon feature that the high gradient generally continues well up to the top; indeed, on some of the routes the steepest part comes last, and the landing on the summit ridge is little short of dramatic. The quality of the rock, too, is first rate, being in the main the lower Snowdon felstone, with an intrusive diabase in the western part faulted against it.

At Easter, 1911, we were a large party, who revelled in

the pleasures of pioneering here and in Cwm Du ; it included H. M. F. Dodd, Miss B. Jones, H. O. Jones, L. Noon, R. Todhunter, K. J. P. Orton, and Mrs. Orton, while at Whitsun I was joined by the last two, W. A. Brigg, and W. P. Haskett-Smith ; and later a busy June day spent on Llechog with H. O. Jones, Orton, and Mrs. Orton yielded three routes, which brought the total of new climbs on these faces alone to a round score—and further exploration has been done this summer. It is not too much to say, therefore, that a fresh district, with its own proper centre, has been added this year to the great Cambrian Playground.

Our first impression was made upon Llechog on a morning when it was not seen, but through the veil of mist the gates of darkly gaping gullies could be discerned by their hardness of outline. We divided our forces into three sections: Jones with his sister, Orton and Mrs. Orton chose the "Grey Gully"; Todhunter and Noon boldly bid for a grim Gargantuan mouth away on the left; their draw, however, proved almost a blank, for above the initial pitch were débris and broken rocks. Dodd and I selected the "North Gully."



THE MAIN FACE OF LLECHOG.

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| o. o. Easy Route. | c. c. Cloister Climb. | g. g. Grey Gully. |
| m. m. Mermaid Climb. | r. r. Central Ridge. | n. n. North Gully. |
| b. b. Black Rib Route. | f. f. Five Cave Gully. | |

THE NORTH GULLY.

The bed-rock closely resembles that of the lower part of the Central Gully of Lliwedd. Above an easy initial pitch the gully contracts into a sixty-foot chimney, very steep at the top. In fact, the finish could be effected only when earth had been prized out of a little round pocket in the rock, which then offered a hold. The next obstacle is a sixteen-foot chimney, which is likewise difficult. Then an easy section leads up to a rectangular recess. This is short but fairly stiff. The climber lands on a shelf. Rocks still rise above him, but the gully is gone. The ascent is continued in the same line by a charming rib of one hundred and forty feet, both steep and rough. This continues up to the skyline. It will be seen that this is a very pleasing climb, with two short but really stiff passages. On the upper the leader could certainly be aided, but on the lower this would be hardly feasible.

THE GREY GULLY AND WALL.

An easy scramble is succeeded by seventy feet of climbing similar to that in the Bracket Gully of Lliwedd. The holds are rounded and not too plentiful. A grassy shelf is then met with; above this a twenty-foot pitch, with a good belay at the top, gives access to a slabby section. This continues for two hundred feet and is fairly easy. Ultimately it strikes a traverse which undulates away on either side at the foot of a nearly vertical wall. A chimney in this, to the right of the landing-point, might be considered the continuation of the gully; but the party preferred to keep their line and climb the wall to the left of it.

The first thirty feet up to a stance with two belays are distinctly difficult; from here the line taken bears slightly to the right and then back to the left, where a chimney is crossed. A little higher a ledge with a small, sound belay is attained. This part involves a run-out of sixty feet of rope. The whole wall is very steep and the climbing is of a distinctly delicate character; good balance is needed as the holds are not recessed. After this there remains an easy finish of sixty feet to the top.

THE FIVE-CAVE GULLY.

For the first hundred feet the bed of this gully is choked with grass and earth. The rock work begins at a cave which cannot be climbed. A traverse out to the left is made to a green shelf, from which a groove is taken. From a stance a few feet up two minute footholds are used as a means of reaching a high hold for the right hand ; with this as a mainstay, and the knees pressed against a slab, a landing is made on a patch of heather. A second but steeper groove is then tackled, and a mantelshelf five feet higher attained. Both these grooves entail a strenuous struggle, whose severity the second man can mitigate only slightly with a push. The third man meanwhile is wedged in the cave, but his opportunities for anchoring are hardly adequate. Forty feet above the cave the leader finds a good heather-grown platform and the first belay. The bed of the gully is now regained, and the climb continued without notable difficulty to a series of four superimposed caves. These are interesting and admit of treatment in a variety of ways. The last is close under the brow of the summit ridge. The climb should not be attempted by any but strong parties.

While Jones and Todhunter, who led in turn, with Noon as third man, were busy in this gully, I went with Dodd in quest of an open route of real domestic value. We found a very pretty climb, which might almost be appraised as such.

THE CENTRAL RIDGE.

From the foot of the Central Gully the crest of the rib which forms its right wall is attained and followed for two hundred feet, where a break is caused by a ribbon of heather. The rib reappears a few yards to the right (cairn), and its edge is climbed in similar fashion. Then two tributary gullies cut their way through and cause confusion. These are crossed to an impending black wall, whose top is reached by way of its flanking slabs on the right. A shelf is then attained (cairn). There remains a simple finish.

The rock is super-excellent. Parts of the climb are steep, and a few long reaches have to be made to prevent being

forced off to the right ; the quality of the holds is superb, and sound belaying-pins occur wherever they are needed.

From its central position this ridge conveys some general idea of the face ; in fact, the views obtained suggested climbs on the other side of the Central Gully, which came to be tried in the following June. One of these began on the Black Rib.

THE BLACK RIB ROUTE.

The strangest feature on the lower part of the face is a protruding black rib to the left of the Central Gully.

After marking its foot with a cairn, the more modest perhaps, as we expected to be stopped by rotten rock at a high angle, Mrs. Orton, H. O. Jones, Orton, and myself began its ascent. The climbing proved excellent, steep and sound throughout, and most sensational at the finish. The final hook nose was climbed both on the right and the left of its thin bridge ; this passage attains a high order of difficulty. Soon afterwards we reached a carrefour, whence a variety of possible routes branched. Several sharp-edged crags converge on the Central Gully like the ribs of an open fan. On the left side of the third therefrom we entered a short recess, which soon ended in a pitch with strange characteristics. A foothold, for instance, near the start vanished into nothingness after use by the leader ; at a higher level a hold on a leaf on the right has to be seized at a given moment with a stretching reach, otherwise the problem is apt to prove puzzling and to cause ingeniously intricate poses of the body. Above this we were able to get out on to the edge of the rib, which might perhaps be begun at the foot in dry weather. It gave good climbing of moderate difficulty practically up to the summit.

THE CLOISTER CLIMB.

This climb lies to the south of the Black Rib Route. As it was the third ascent of the day, our party (Mrs. Orton, H. O. Jones, and myself) may possibly have slightly overrated its difficulty, but we were certainly impressed with the severity of some of the passages encountered.

A cairn beside a scoop marks its beginning. After climbing a short stretch of initial rocks, we entered and climbed for

a few yards up a conspicuous orange-coloured recess, with grass floor; to avoid precipitous turf, we effected a traverse out to the right. This appeared at first sight a hardy venture, but nothing more than a steady balance was needed. A good stance was reached round a corner. We now proceeded in a fairly straight line along the south edge of an expanse of slabs overlooked at the top by an overhanging wall. There was no easy climbing here; the angle steepened as height was gained, and about fifty feet below the over-arching wall the difficulty became very great. An upward traverse of twenty feet was made to the right to a small stance of turf; a high quartz knob (which I had to dry with a handkerchief before use) gave a good hold for the left hand; two successive lifts, with one boot pressed against a rough slab, had to be made before the left foot could be planted upon it; then the difficulty moderates, and a ledge is reached. Much care is required in making this exceptionally severe passage, especially as the second man has his belay forty to fifty feet below.

We were now close to the "Cloister" beside the impending wall; the floor was pleasantly tilted, but the ascent to its termination was, relatively speaking, more or less of a stroll. There remained a short and simple finish. It may be added that on these last rocks it is well worth the while to diverge a little to the south for a view of the red crag mentioned in the next account.

THE MERMAID CLIMB.

A short distance to the left, both of the Central Gully and of a heavy cornice of rock which throws a dark shadow, lies an expanse of clean, grey slabs. The Mermaid Climb lies up them.

It will be gathered at once from the name that this climb presents to the eye an attractive front, but tails off not far from the middle. From our cairn at the foot the party, W. A. Brigg, W. P. Haskett-Smith, and myself, climbed for a hundred and ten feet in an approximately straight line. The slabs are steep, but being bare with good holds afford excellent climbing. Bearing slightly to the right over easier rocks we came to a fragment of a gully with a block pitch; this we climbed, and a difficult thirty-foot groove above it. We thus

struck the foot of a gaunt red crag, a hundred feet high, with a smooth surface. A brief survey did not disclose to me any line of ascent up the face. We climbed the secondary edge on the left for some distance; then a very delicate traverse to the main edge was made in vain, for this was found to be quite impossible. We had consequently to take a thirty-foot chimney on our left, which gave access to a stretch of broken rocks, by which the top was gained with the greatest facility.

The climb lies throughout upon clean, sound rock.

Not far to the south of the Mermaid Climb the rocks become broken by ledges, and afford pleasant but simple routes either for ascent or descent. The latter, however, is most rapidly accomplished from this part of the mountain by entering, down a northern tributary, an easy stony couloir. This forms the boundary line of the Main Face of Llechog, whereon lie the climbs described above.

Beyond it the cliff continues a long way, with some loss of height, but in the same plane; this further portion may be called, for purposes of discrimination, the South Cliff.

THE SOUTH CLIFF OF LLECHOG—THE TORPEDO ROUTE.

Near the foot of the dividing couloir, a narrow gutter runs continuously nearly up to the top. Slightly to the right of its termination is poised horizontally a long, massive rock, suggestive of a torpedo. This prominent landmark will aid identification of the present route, which passes close to it on the south side. The ascent (cairn at foot) follows a straight line on the left of the gutter; the rocks are sound, and the holds a source of quiet delight. Somewhat more than half-way a small grass terrace is struck.

So far there is no special difficulty, and a continuation of similar character could be made by diverging at this point to the right; our party (Mrs. Orton, H. O. Jones, and myself), after setting up a cairn on the terrace, climbed the "Ribbed Wall" that springs from it. On the first portion holds, small but good, were found on the open slabs. Then several very steep furrows presented themselves; we selected the second from the left edge. A little way up, a very long reach had to be made; though the place seemed stiff to me, my companions

seemed to make little ado about it; the last part, equally steep, but somewhat easier through being deeper, passes beside a protruding wing of rock at the top of the wall. There remains an insignificant finish

As the Ribbed Wall can be avoided altogether, this climb, with divergence to the right, can be recommended to parties of moderate experience.

THE CENTRAL RIB CLIMB.

This is a very interesting climb up the centre of the South Cliff. It is also very difficult.

In scanning the lowest rocks of the face, the eye will rest on a projecting foot profusely adorned with white quartz. On the left of it is a little bay. From here the climb starts (cairn). The rocks are bare and steep, with good holds economically supplied. Of great value, too, are sundry little round cavities into which the digits of a limb can be fitted to a nicety. The route taken by us (Brigg, Haskett-Smith, and myself) veers a little to the left, and avoids all rocks interspersed with grass.

As height is gained the slabs steepen, and the holds become sparsely distributed, but everything is excellently sound. Then for fifty feet the line is defined laterally by a wall that rises on the right, and curtains off the view. A canting pinnacle is passed and a terrace attained. A little to the right of the point of emergence a prominent rib rises steeply. It is a hundred and thirty feet high, and is climbed straight up by a line of small holds near its edge, which is on the left of the climber as he ascends. On this stretch there is a stance a few feet away from the leader's line, to which the second can come and anchor. At the top of the rib is a shelf, with a small but serviceable belay.

The difficulties are now overcome, but the little that remains is steep, and the climber lands quite unexpectedly on the highest point of the main ridge.

It will be gathered that steadiness and precision of movement are necessary throughout the climb. The leader cannot be aided. The rock is of splendid quality, and, to the best of my recollection, not a single fragment was removed. To

strong parties, and to them only, the Central Rib can be recommended without reserve.

SUMMARY.

To place a group of climbs in their right relation to others is not quite easily done, but in expansion of the prophetic summary in an earlier number of the JOURNAL that "*a full day's work will be found there*," it may be said of Llechog that the several gullies are good, that many of the ribs are delightful, but better than all are the magnificent stretches of unsheltered slabs, which provide climbing of the highest order and quality. In a word, with the exception of Lliwedd, I am inclined to think no face in Wales offers to strong parties a wider or more varied field for excellent climbing.

Mountaineers of less mature experience will likewise find routes to their taste among those I have attempted to describe and differentiate. One and all may be approached with the full confidence that can come only from the certain knowledge that they have been made straightforwardly, without preparatory descents and emasculating experiments with the human windlass.

In the opinion of some, articles and books are a mistake ; it is better, so it is said, to start without lore, and thus realise to a certain extent the special charm of first exploration. My sympathy with this view, already expressed in words, can now be shown by inaction.

A detailed account of the newly explored and newly named Craig yr Cwm Du is suppressed for the nonce, and replaced by the general statement that there, too, the climbing is varied and fascinating. Among the dozen routes made, some are moderately and some are exceedingly difficult, while a certain gully-pitch has characteristics that are unique within the combined knowledge of our party.

A week's climbing on virgin rocks in Skye is a truly charming experience, but for aught I know it may not be an uncommon one, for there the mountains are far spread, and some are difficult of access ; but in Wales, with its clustered hills, its roads and its inns, it is the rarest of pleasures to explore for a full week and learn like Solon something new on every

day. To me it brought back memories of the Romantic Age, when from a vantage point on one new buttress a pioneer gazed at the next, and tried to gauge its feasibility and the chances of success on the morrow—memories of a time when the climbs throughout Snowdonia totalled less than those on Llechog to-day, and yet no man lived who could describe them all.

The traditions prevalent in those days are gone, and as mysteriously as they came into existence. They did not create an atmosphere favourable to enterprise, but were certainly beneficial in this, that they caused the mountains to be treated with all the awe and the respect that are their due. In this sense may their influence never cease to be felt!

This year of grace has been an *Annus Mirabilis*. It has witnessed an extent of fresh exploration that gives it a place among the most memorable in the annals of mountaineering. For the Climbers' Club, a club which has risen strong from a Cambrian cradle, it cannot but be a pleasing thought that a rich share of the *spolia opima* won in the distant campaigns should have fallen to members of the Cambrian School. It is an instance, too, of the fitness of things that their own domain, the field of their initiative and the source of their inspiration, should have been enlarged this year, with wider additions than have been made heretofore in the course of any previous Triennium.

THE TWINS' FIRST MOUNTAIN.*

BY HUBERT AND KENNETH TRAYES.

BEING twelve years old, and the happy possessors of a celebrated mountaineer amongst our "uncles," we were delighted to receive an invitation to spend a few days in Snowdonia at Christmas, 1910, to be introduced to real climbers and climbing. Our first climb has dwindled into insignificance, but its memory remains, and we gladly take up our pens to write a description of it.

On December 21 our party started out to climb Lliwedd. We were staying at Pen-y-Pass, and it was our first day there. Every other step we asked how much higher we were than the hotel, and were rather disheartened at the replies. At length, after floundering through innumerable bogs, we arrived at the foot of the mountain. There we had a much-needed lunch. After this the others started on their climbs, and we were left with an Irish "uncle" and a rope. After careful deliberation we came to the conclusion that our best route was up the scree slope on the further side from Snowdon, and as our Irish "uncle," who had gone forward, returned with the pleasing news that as far as the naked eye could see there were no crevasses, we commenced the ascent. Our progress was certainly slow, neither was it particularly sure, and after taking half an hour to scramble up and fall down twenty feet, we deemed it advisable to continue our hazardous undertaking on a rope. So after a great deal of trouble we managed to rope up, and from henceforth our great ambition was to unwind ourselves, even if we only remained so a minute.

Another source of discomfort was a stream, which had its course just where we were climbing. Conversations such as these were taking place every minute:

"I say, how are you standing?"

* This contribution has been printed without any alteration being made in the MS. submitted by "The Twins."

"Not at all."

"What are you doing, then?"

"Sitting in the stream."

"Hello! Where's your brother?"

"Oh, he is all right; he is in the stream!"

After taking two hours to get up two hundred feet, the last man usually leading, and never by any conceivable chance the real first man, we were utterly exhausted, and felt quite incapable of further exertion. So the word was given to descend. But this was no easy matter, as we soon discovered. We came down (or tried to come down) in the well-known half-moon formation, which has been used so effectively in many a hard-fought battle. We zig-zagged from one side of the stream to the other, as when we were on one side of the stream one of us pointed out a much better route on the other. So that we sat in the water and fell over the rope in coming down even more than we did going up. We had made it a point of honour that not more than one of us should move at a time, and as the one who was moving was usually engaged in trying to get clear of the rope, we didn't come down in record time. Eventually we reached the bottom, and after juggling with the rope for twenty minutes, managed to free ourselves at last.

The two of us were unanimous in our opinion that climbing was poor sport, but on return to the hotel, tea and convivial society encouraged us to arrange for future climbs, some of which have been more successful, but none less amusing than our first, and we are looking forward to the time when we can boast of being fully fledged members of the Climbers' Club.



The Gletscherhorn, Gletscherjoch and Ebnefluh, from Lauthor.

A NOTE ON THE GLETSCHERJOCH.

BY O. K. WILLIAMSON.

ON August 8th, 1911, Dr. O. K. Williamson, with the guides, Jean Maître and Heinrich Fux, made the first passage of the Gletscherjoch (? 12,400 feet), between the Gletscherhorn and Ebnefluh, across the main chain of the Bernese Alps. Leaving the Roththal hut at 3.25 a.m., they crossed the glacier and the avalanche débris at the foot of the couloir which descends from the col, then the bergschrund and some steep ice. They soon reached a broad, ill-defined rib of loose but easy rocks on the true right of the couloir, which they ascended. After a time the rib became less well defined, but the rocks steeper and more interesting. After a few hundred feet up these the angle again diminished, and the party now witnessed a terrific avalanche from "seracs" high up the couloir. The rocks now narrowed again to a rib or arête, and at a point where this became nearly level further direct progress was barred by an enormous overhanging ice-wall. In consequence, a long, nearly horizontal traverse on ice had to be made in order to reach a rock rib which descended from the col down the middle of the couloir. The slope was exceedingly steep, and the traverse occupied three and a half hours. The rocks of the rib were now climbed. They were very steep and of extreme difficulty, owing to their looseness and to the fact that the holds were in great part filled up with snow. After climbing up them for about 200 feet, the party reached a point where, on the occasion of a previous exploration from above, they had fixed a spare rope. The angle now became much less steep and the climbing far less difficult, so that at 3 p.m. the party reached the rocks close to the col, after about thirty minutes' total halts. A long halt and a digression by two of the party up the Ebnefluh was made, so that, leaving the pass at 6.27 p.m., the Concordia inn was not reached until 9.35 p.m. The members of the party were agreed that this was the most difficult expedition that any of them had accomplished, and that it would only be justifiable under very rare conditions.

CLAWS AND ICE-CRAFT.*

BY OSCAR ECKENSTEIN.

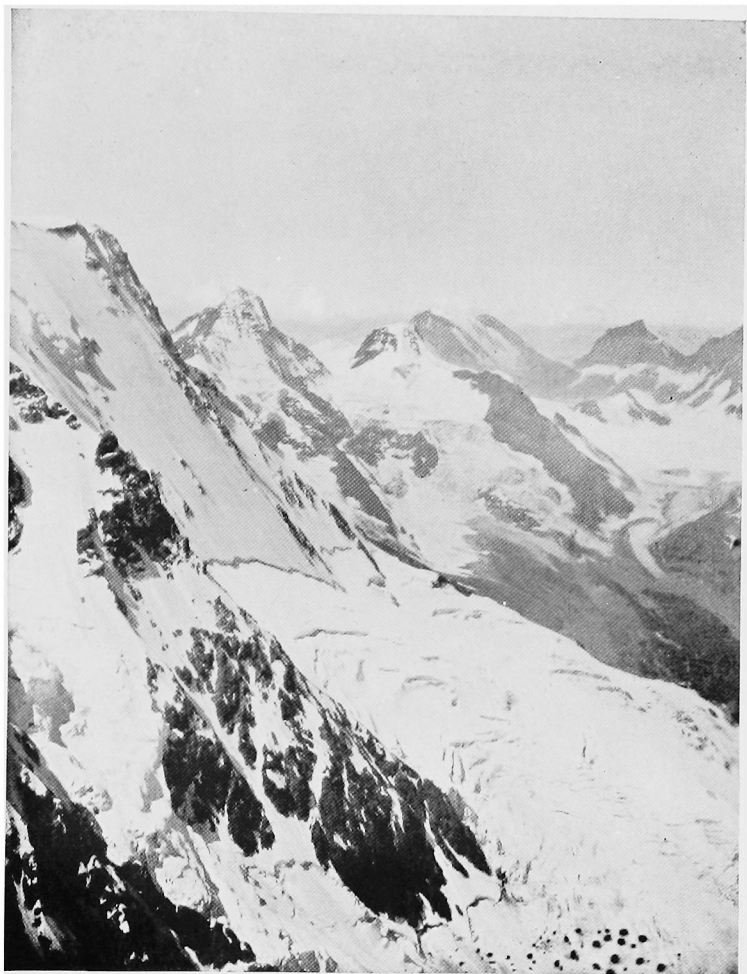
JUST forty years have elapsed since I first went up a mountain. During this period mountaineering has in certain of its branches made great strides, for instance in rock-climbing technique and in knowledge of rocks generally. All the stranger, then, does it appear to me that in some other respects hardly any progress has been made during the last half-century or so; especially is this the case as regards ice-craft and snow-craft. In this paper I propose only to consider one branch of the former.

On perusing accounts both of guideless and of guide-led expeditions, the members of which have considerable reputations as climbers, it will often be found stated that it was necessary to cut steps, a considerable number of steps, although these climbers were using claws.† Now, as far as my experience goes, it is only very rarely necessary to cut an appreciable number of steps on ice. During the last twenty-five years I have not had to cut as many as twenty all told,‡ although I have passed a greater proportion of that time in regions above the snow-line than many mountaineers; and I believe that some of my expeditions may be reckoned difficult even according to present standards. Certainly I have often, when leading, been told, "Here steps are necessary; you must cut steps," to which

* This is substantially a reproduction, with some additions, of two articles I published in the *Oesterreichische Alpenzeitung* (20 June, 1908, No. 764, and 5 June, 1909, No. 787).

† I think that is the best term to use in English; such alternatives as climbing-iron, climbing-spur, climber, crampon, and creeper seem unsatisfactory. The German word is *Steigeisen*. The French word is *crampon*, a rather unfortunate term, as it also means a spike; hence it is sometimes difficult to understand in what sense French authors use the word. For instance, see de Saussure, quoted by Javelle in "Souvenirs d'un Alpiniste" (1886, page 370).

‡ This total excludes one day in 1906, when, by mistake, I took somebody else's claws with me instead of my own, and consequently was comparatively inefficient on the ice.



The Lauterbrunnen Breithorn, Tschingelhorn, etc., from Lauithor.

my usual reply was, "Whoever wants steps can cut them himself."

On making the above statements to mountaineers of reputation* I have generally been answered by an incredulous shrug of the shoulders and such inconsequent arguments as the following:—"Then you can never have seen really difficult ice. I have met ice which was so hard that my claws could make no impression on it, and from which small chips flew like glass when the axe was used." Against this I can fairly assert that any state of ice with which I am unacquainted can only be of excessive rarity; and in support of this I may state that during the last twenty-five years I have had prolonged experience of ice on the mountains of three continents (America, Asia, and Europe), and have made expeditions in winter as well as in summer. If what is termed a "first-rate" mountaineer" is frequently reduced to cutting steps, such a state of ice as this implies would obviously be a common one, and I should have become acquainted with it.† Now, I have as yet *never* come across any ice in which the points of my claws could not obtain a firm hold. In this connexion I may mention that a friend of mine who has made more high ascents (and that guideless) than anyone of whom I have ever heard, and who at one time advanced such arguments as those advanced above, has entirely recanted his objections. During the summer of 1908 he had opportunity to practise with properly-made ice claws, and that under the guidance of two good ice-

* Most of the articles and criticisms about claws, to be found in Alpine literature, bear the hall-mark of ignorance. Thus, one author says (*Alpine Journal*, vol. XII., page 474): "The man who has learnt to use crampons . . . might just as profitably have practised walking on stilts, as far as mountaineering is concerned." Then we find ("Equipment for Mountaineers," page 10): "It is perhaps needless to remark that, for crampons to be of any great use, every member of a party must be provided with them." That statement is unintentionally true, for it certainly is needless to make erroneous remarks.

As a notable exception I may mention the article, "The Use of Crampons in Mountaineering" (CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL, vol. IX., pp. 131 to 142).

† Ice having wonderful properties is sometimes described. Thus, Dr. Dyhrenfurth, in the *Oesterreichische Alpenzeitung* (20 December, 1910, No. 824, page 295), describes ice so hard that a blow with an axe produces a hole four to five centimetres deep, while even the sharpest claws make a hardly visible impression on it, and slip off without holding. I can only remark that the existence of a material having such properties is inconceivable to me. (See *loc. cit.*, 5 September, 1911, No. 841, page 272.)

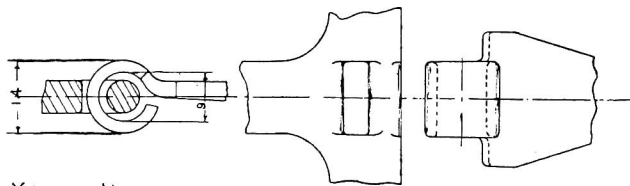
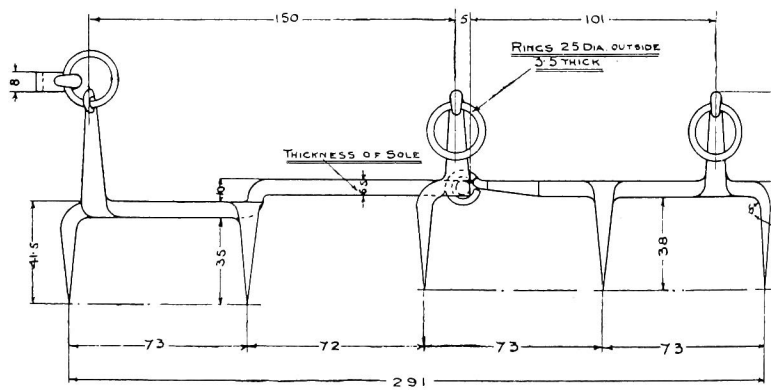
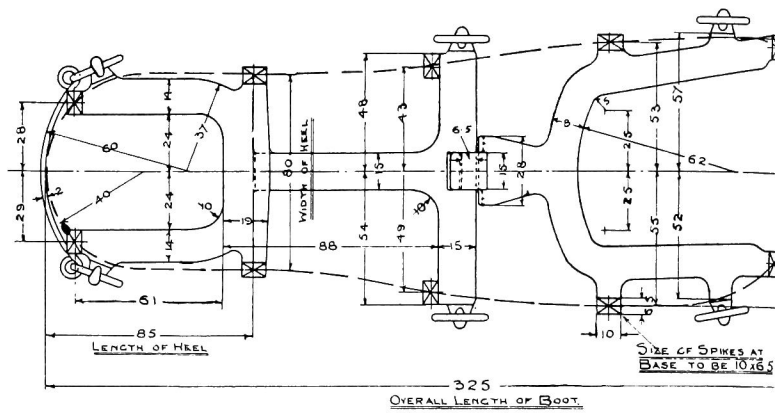
men. In a short time he was able to achieve what he had hitherto deemed humanly impossible, and by now he is able to do nearly everything I am about to describe, and so dispense almost entirely with step-cutting.

With regard to the statements I am about to make as to the powers of a good ice-man, I submitted to my friend the following analogy:—

“Suppose that I could take you as you are, with your present knowledge of rocks and of rock-climbing technique, and duly equipped with rucksack, provisions, etc., and that by means of a miracle I could place you on the Hörnli on a day fifty years ago, in good weather and with the mountains in good condition; and suppose, further, that all knowledge and recollection of the Matterhorn and whatever concerns it had miraculously been blotted out of your brain. What would you do? If I know anything about you, you would do this: you would forthwith, by yourself, climb to the top of the Matterhorn and down again. You would meet no great difficulty, and the last thing to enter your head would be that you had accomplished anything altogether unprecedented or totally ‘impossible.’ Let us suppose still further that no one had witnessed your achievement, and that on reaching Zermatt you had met such mountaineers as Whymper and Croz and their contemporaries, and said to them, ‘I have just been to the top of that peak by myself; there is no particular difficulty, and I know quite a number of climbers who could do that ascent alone.’ How would you be received? One man would perhaps suggest that you had gazed on the wine when it was red; another would remark, ‘Good old Ananias’; and the most kindly criticism would probably be, ‘The poor man must be daft to talk such drivel.’ And certainly not one of them would have believed you.”

I expect similar judgments from some of the readers of this paper.

What are the qualifications of a good ice-man, of a real ice-expert? He must be familiar with the various conditions of ice, and must be able to select the best route over a given stretch of ice, especially when it is much broken up; he must be able to make his way through an ice-fall or on a steep ice-



VIEW OF HINGE
DOUBLE FULL SIZE

VIEW ON UNDERSIDE

VIEW OF BOOT
ATTACHED AT
FASTENING

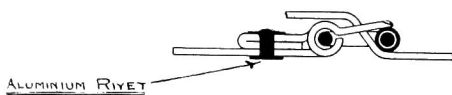
NOT TO

ALL DIMENSIONS ARE GIVEN IN MILLIMETRES
WORK TO FIGURED DIMENSIONS ONLY

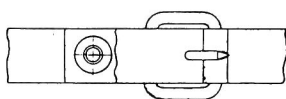
ICE CL

110
OVERALL WIDTH OF BODY

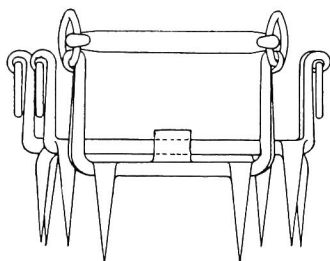
SKETCH OF BUCKLE NOT TO SCALE
NOTE METHOD OF FOLDING STRAP
RIVET TO HAVE HEAD UNDERNEATH



N.B. ALL EDGES EXCEPT THOSE
OF SPIKES TO BE SLIGHTLY
ROUNDED

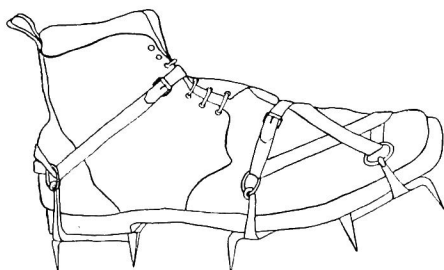


TO LEAVE THE
RADIUS



TO BE MADE OF DOUBLE
SHEAR STEEL NOT
HARDENED

CLAW
OF



SCALE. FULL SIZE.

slope, whether upwards, or downwards, or transversely, with the minimum of labour and the maximum of safety. As this depends only very slightly on the use of such instruments as ice-axes, but largely on the use of claws, it is correct to say, in the narrower sense, that one very important qualification of a good ice-man is to be an expert in the use of claws.

Given a real ice-expert, equipped with claws that are well designed and properly made, what should he be able to achieve without any step-cutting?

If the ice is not too soft or rotten, he ought to be able to go up or down, or traverse or turn, in perfect safety, on slopes with gradients of up to 60° , without making use of hands or axe. I specify not too soft or rotten, for if it should be, the portion of ice penetrated by the spikes will simply break away on steep slopes. Ice so rotten is seldom found in Europe, and probably never attains any considerable depth. About five centimetres is the usual limit, and a vigorous kick (or at most two) generally suffices to expose ice hard enough to afford good foothold. In the tropics, however, I have seen ice which was quite rotten to a depth of more than thirty centimetres, and in this case some light strokes with the adze of the axe, dislodging fragments the size of a man's head, or even larger, were required in order to clear the way to the sound ice beneath. Similarly, in the Alps, it is occasionally necessary to clear away a layer of snow.

On slopes of 70° the claw-expert, standing on only one foot, ought to be able to support the weight of an ordinary man with one hand. This, however, demands ice of fairly good quality, or the spikes will tear through the ice, which will no longer afford the necessary support, but will break away.

Finally (unless too stout!), on really good ice having a slope of 80° , he ought to be able to stand on one foot and balance himself without using hands or axe.

In this connexion I would observe that the angles specified are not estimated, but are the result of careful and repeated clinometer measurements, according to the old standard (right angle = 90°).

The above-mentioned feats are not merely the achievements of some particular mountaineering genius. For many

years have I been advocating the use of claws and preaching (albeit somewhat in the wilderness) the possibilities of real ice-craft. By now I am acquainted with several mountaineers who have tried good claws and practised with them, and who, in my opinion, are fairly good claw-experts; two of them might, indeed, be termed very good. How much the really capable claw-expert of the future will be able to achieve I will not venture to prophesy, but that the limit of possible attainment has already been reached seems to me improbable.

What are the causes of the inferior ice-craft that generally prevails? Undoubtedly a great one is faulty claws. With the exception of pairs that I have either forged myself or that have been forged to my specification, I have never seen any claws that did not possess one or more radical defects; of many I could even say that they consisted mainly, or almost entirely, of radical defects. And with defective claws the best ice-man can achieve but little. I may here state that I have experimented with many different forms, and have myself both forged and made trials of component parts as well as entire claws before arriving at what, in my opinion, is the best pattern. Particulars of it are given in plate I.

The conditions which really good claws should satisfy are as follows:—

1. The metal must show great resistance in bending. If bent cold through a moderate angle, no trace of any crack should appear.
2. The metal must have great tensile strength (this property is related to that specified under 1).
3. The metal must show no sign of brittleness at the lowest temperatures to which it may be exposed when the claws are in use.
4. It is an advantage for the metal to be hard, as wear and tear are then less. Unfortunately, it is as yet impossible to obtain really hard steel which is not brittle, especially at low temperatures. In the future it may perhaps be possible to obtain a material combining all the qualifications stated and, in addition, not liable to rust. But this ideal is as yet unattainable.
5. In the present state of our knowledge the metal must be

a steel containing a fair percentage of carbon. Accordingly, great care is necessary during forging, as such steel is injured ("burnt") by slight overheating. It must not be hardened, as this renders it brittle.

6. As claws have to be carried, it is an advantage for them to be light. Yet they must be so strong that one can rely on a single spike. My new claws weigh, the pair, 1'10 kilograms without the straps. When equipped for a day's expedition, I myself weigh eighty-five kilograms; my climbing boots are 335 millimetres long, and their greatest breadth is 115 millimetres. With the steel now available I do not believe I could appreciably reduce the weight of my claws (except in respect of spikes—see 17) without unduly reducing the factor of safety. Correspondingly smaller and lighter claws would, of course, suffice for a smaller and lighter man; a heavier man should have correspondingly stronger and heavier ones.

7. Each of the two members that make up one claw must be cut and forged out of one piece. Welding,* brazing, soldering, and riveting must be excluded. This statement may seem a platitude, yet, incredible though it may seem to any engineer, I have several times seen claws which had the spikes brazed or soldered or riveted on.†

8. The vertex of each re-entrant angle must be carefully rounded off ("radiused"), for if sharp it necessarily introduces a place of great weakness.

9. The separate spikes must not be near together. The nearer two spikes are together, the greater the danger of their splitting out a piece of ice instead of taking firm hold.

10. It follows from 9 that it is a drawback to have more spikes than necessary. Numerous trials have convinced me that for myself (see above for size of boots and gross weight) the best number is ten; but I think that for a lighter man with smaller feet the best number would be eight.

* Welded claws are very common, as they are cheap to make. A weld, however good, is always a point of weakness; hence, to get equivalent strength, a welded claw would have to be correspondingly heavier.

† The worst claws I ever saw were supplied by a well-known West-End firm. The hard-steel spikes were riveted into a soft-iron frame, and that so badly that I could break out the spikes by hand. The frame was so weak that I could crumple it up by the pressure of my hands.

11. The claws must fit the boots accurately, and, when fastened on, be really firm. Any looseness or play will reduce their efficiency, or, if considerable, may even be a source of danger.

12. It follows from 11 that any claw made of three members is to be condemned. I can not imagine any practicable design in which the middle member would not be loose, although I do not absolutely deny the possibility that one could be devised. Yet, even if such a design actually existed, a claw made of three members would have to be condemned, for a very elementary principle of mechanics is "no unnecessary complications." And a well-made claw of two members gives practically all that could be obtained with a more complex but less variable variety.*

13. The shape of each spike should be that of a sharp, four-sided pyramid. The shape must not be that of a frustrum of a pyramid, or of a frustrum of a pyramid plus a small obtuse-angled pyramid (a very common form in new claws), or of a frustrum of a pyramid with its edges and point rounded (perhaps the commonest variety). THE SPIKES MUST BE SHARP.

14. The vertex of the pyramid, which forms the point of the spike, must be exactly under the edge of the sole of the boot, and the centre line of the pyramid must be at right angles to the sole. Both these requisites are of the greatest importance. As yet I have seen no claws for sale which were not defective in these two respects, especially the former.

15. While complying with the conditions laid down under 14 and 9, the two hindmost spikes should be placed as far back as possible, and the two front ones as far forward as possible.

16. It follows from 15 and 9 that the spikes at each side should be as nearly as possible at equal distances from each other.

17. *Length of the Spikes.*—Relatively short spikes would suffice for really hard ice, but with softer ice longer ones are necessary. Claws with spikes which are longer than necessary have two drawbacks: a trifle is added to their weight, and when they are used the feet must be lifted a little higher.

* The only conceivable advantage of a three-member claw seems to me to be ease of packing.

Against this they have the great advantage that when the spikes have become blunted they can be re-sharpened by filing or grinding, or by drawing them down under the hammer ; the latter involves less loss of material. Moreover, this process can be repeated a number of times before the spikes become too short or too weak. It is hence economical for a new pair of claws to have spikes which are longer than necessary. My latest new spikes are thirty-eight millimetres in length. When this length becomes reduced to less than twenty-five millimetres I no longer use the claws for ice-work of any importance. When the ratio height of pyramid to area of its base becomes too small, that is to say, when the angle at the vertex or point is no longer sufficiently acute, the spikes will no longer satisfactorily penetrate hard ice ; moreover, the area of the base must not be too small, or the spike will be too weak. The base of my latest new spikes measures 6·5 by 10 millimetres.

18. The rings through which the straps pass are best made by being punched out of the solid and then rolled to shape. Such rings are, however, expensive and not commercially procurable, but welded rings of sufficiently good quality can so be obtained. Brazed or soldered rings are to be condemned.* On each claw there are six rings.

I use two straps made of hemp webbing to fasten a claw to the corresponding boot. The method of using them is shown in plate I. The two straps weigh together thirty-five grams ; their lengths are fifty and sixty centimetres respectively. Under favourable conditions (given a comfortable position, no caked ice or snow in the way, straps unfrozen, fingers not too cold, etc.) I can put on the two claws in three-quarters of a minute and take them off in one-quarter of a minute, or less. It has never yet happened to me that during use one of my claws has worked loose ; on the contrary, when the straps become affected by wet, they contract, and must be relaxed somewhat, or else the pressure on the foot becomes unpleasant. Leather straps are not to be recommended, as leather stretches, especially when wet, and the claws would then become loose. The hemp straps offered

* Not only are such rings weaker, but they are more liable to rust through.

for sale generally have the following drawbacks: the buckles are generally fixed wrong side up, and sewn on instead of riveted on. Not only is riveting (for this purpose) more durable and more secure, but it also enables one to see at a glance whether all is in good order. It is true that I have seen some riveted straps for sale, but in each case the rivets were very bad, and the points of the tongues were not sharp enough, so that a considerable amount of force was required to drive them through the straps, which were injured by the process. The tongues should taper to a nice conical point.

Now let us assume that our future ice-expert is equipped with well-made claws. How should he set about obtaining proficiency? Taking with him a clinometer, he should go to a place where ice of a great variety of angles and of very varying quality is to be found, and for this purpose most ice-falls, especially when at a considerable altitude, answer admirably; ice at all angles can be found there. At day-break this ice is hard, especially in winter and early spring; and if the sun should attain any power, any ice exposed to its rays during the day becomes soft and rotten in the evening. If possible, the beginner should have with him a companion, preferably, of course, a master of ice-craft, who could show him what to do and point out his mistakes. I will, however, assume that he is not so fortunate. He should then select a slope of $30-35^{\circ}$, which tails off gradually to a gentler angle, thus ensuring safety in case of a slip or should the ice break away. He should then practise on this slope, go up and down, traverse horizontally and upwards and downwards, and turn and run about, until he feels quite comfortable and safe and perfectly at home on it. If he has a companion he can take a rope and try a tug-of-war. He will soon become convinced that when he stands with claws on such a slope, he is far firmer and less liable to be dislodged than when standing on level ground in his nailed boots.

At first the unfamiliar foot-movements required will cost him some attention and effort. The foot must be raised vertically (i.e., in the direction of the centre lines of the spikes), all the spikes being lifted out of the ice simultaneously, until

they are quite clear of it. Then the foot must be moved in the direction desired to its next position, and again replaced on the ice with a vertical movement; the latter is of especial importance. If the ice is soft, the weight of the body will suffice to drive enough spikes home into the ice; if it is hard, additional force may be necessary for this purpose. And once the foot is in position, any twisting or tilting movement of the foot should, as far as possible, be avoided, likewise any alteration in the distribution of the pressure on the different spikes.*

When he feels fairly at home on slopes of $30-35^{\circ}$, he should proceed to practise similarly on slopes of $35-40^{\circ}$, and so on, becoming gradually accustomed to steeper slopes. Should he have any natural talent (some people, of course, can never learn certain things), he will soon feel absolutely firm and safe on slopes of up to 50° . The unaccustomed movements and the unfamiliar positions of the feet will, it is true, at first trouble and tire him, and after his first day his ankles and the corresponding muscles may ache somewhat; but he who uses his muscles for the first time in a new combination cannot expect anything else.

The best I have yet seen achieved by a beginner the first day he ever had on claws was that during the afternoon he was able to traverse, though somewhat insecurely, a slope of 68° . An ice-expert was on the spot to give him advice during the day; nevertheless I regard this as an exceptional achievement.

Ice-slopes of 60° which it is necessary to negotiate are comparatively rare; slopes of 70° and upwards are very rare. In a very complicated ice-fall there may occasionally be found a small place of this kind, which can not be avoided; also at *Bergschrunds*, especially in couloirs, a very steep but generally short stretch is sometimes encountered. Steep ice-walls of any considerable height are very rare in the Alps. In Mexico, however, I have seen a vertical ice-wall over 100 metres high (upper part of the west side of the ice summit of

* Any such movement or alteration would tend to split the ice. Excellent practice, from this point of view, can be obtained in England on such chalk as is found at Beachy Head and elsewhere, for any slight ill-treatment of the kind will make this material split off. Chalk-work bears a considerable resemblance to ice-work, but I certainly think it is more difficult.

Iztaccihuatl, 5,286 metres. A view of this is shown in THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL, 1902, vol. IV., p. 107).

One point I desire to emphasize is: let no man grudge the trouble, on some ascents, of putting on his claws and taking them off again, perhaps a dozen times in succession, each time ice and rock alternate; otherwise he will be unable to keep the spikes sharp enough to serve their full purpose should he encounter hard ice. It is true that claws have at times to be used under conditions when the points of the spikes are bound to suffer, as, for instance, on ice-glazed rocks and in bad snow-storms; they must then be re-sharpened at the earliest opportunity. It is very important to have the spikes really sharp.

The annexed drawings show how, in my opinion, claws should be constructed. Some critics have expressed the opinion that the heel band, eight millimetres wide, is fixed too high above the heel, and would consequently produce a disagreeable pressure, but so far I have never experienced this. Having the two hindmost ring-supports high enables the back part of the claw to remain in firm and close contact with the boot, without drawing the straps too tight. The nailed boots which I use do not have projecting soles,* but are so made that the sides of the soles, as well as the sides of the uppers, are in contact with the ring-supports. If the boots do not have this shape (which, however, I emphatically recommend), the ring-supports must be bent so as to fit the sides of the boots.

Position of the Feet.—The management of the feet when equipped with claws is a matter requiring consideration. Very awkward complications are here introduced, in consequence of the many acquired bad habits of the "civilized" human being. Four of these are specially prominent:—

1. Most "civilized" persons are accustomed to turn out their toes and straddle their legs when walking, so that they set down their feet as shown in fig. 1. In consequence of

* A rather common but essentially bad English variety. It is wrongly recommended in Badminton (third edition, page 43) and in the All-England "Mountaineering" (page 170).

this the whole muscular system of the legs and the whole articulation of the leg joints become abnormal.

2. The proper development of the foot, especially of its front part, is hindered by the constant wearing of our unsuitable boots and shoes. In consequence of this we almost all have more or less deformed toes.

3. The proper gait is still further prejudiced by the needless and frequently exaggerated (especially in the case of women) height of the heels. The soleus and gastrocnemius are then always too much contracted while walking, and

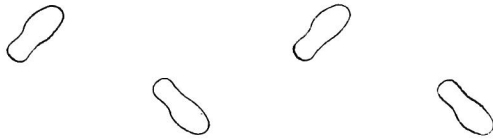


Fig. 1.

naturally suffer in course of time. Moreover, high heels tend to force the front part of the foot into the narrow front portion of the shoe or boot, thus crippling the toes still further.

4. Any articles of clothing that hinder free movement of the body are bound to prejudice the walk, for when walking the whole body comes more or less into play. In this respect the bodices and skirts and, most of all, the corsets of the so-called "civilized" woman are to be condemned; indeed, up to the present I have seen no white woman, and only very few white men, who could walk at all well. What one generally sees is not walking, but waddling.

In course of time, naturally, all these bad habits react upon the body and modify it, with the result that the grown-up white peoples not only have a defective gait, but can not hope to obtain a good one, unless they have not been spoilt during early youth. Let us hope that future generations of parents will show more sense in this respect.

As regards the use of claws, 3 probably has the greatest modifying influence, for the proper development of soleus and gastrocnemius has a direct influence on the angle the foot can make with the leg, and consequently on the position of the feet when ascending ice-slopes.

As regards 1, 3, and 4, I am myself at present fairly normal. As regards 2, I am as defective as the majority of whites. In what follows I specify what suits me best. Everyone else, according to the extent by which he suffers from 1, 2, 3, and 4, and is consequently hampered in inclining or tilting his foot, must find out for himself at what angle it is best for him to pass from one to the other method of progression.

When a normal man walks very slowly on the level ground he sets his feet approximately as shown in fig. 2. The



Fig. 2.

quicker he walks the more nearly the centre lines of his foot-steps approximate to a straight line; in really fast walking they are in line, as shown in fig. 3. In my youth I went in



Fig. 3.

for fast walking as a sport, and learnt how to place my feet properly; thus on level ground my walk is nearly normal.

Direct Ascent.—When directly ascending ice of gentle slope, I place my feet as when walking fairly fast on level ground, but the resulting steps are generally shorter; see fig. 4.* On becoming tired I find it a pleasant change to take, for a time, very long steps, up to nearly one metre in length. But at about 35° this method becomes too troublesome for me, as the sole of my foot can then hardly form a sufficiently acute angle with the leg, and the muscles of the calf become stretched to an uncomfortable extent. On somewhat steeper slopes I alter the position of my feet, and proceed as shown in fig. 5. I turn out my feet, and at the same time incline them outwards

* In the figures the arrow is pointing straight down the slope. The right foot is always represented as being in front; of course, this might just as well be the left foot. Further, I have assumed the surfaces to be smooth, whereas in practice as much advantage as possible should be taken of any existing irregularities.

as much as may be required, so that enough spikes may bear on the ice. If the slope is 10° steeper, I can no longer do this, and am obliged to zigzag, traversing alternately to the right and to the left; see below. Should the ice be very steep, however, I set the feet parallel and progress sideways; see fig. 6. First standing on both feet, as 1, 2, the right foot is moved from 2 to 4, then the left from 1 to 3, and so on.

Should the ice be soft or rotten, it is better to keep the feet further apart. and to place the foot which follows up the

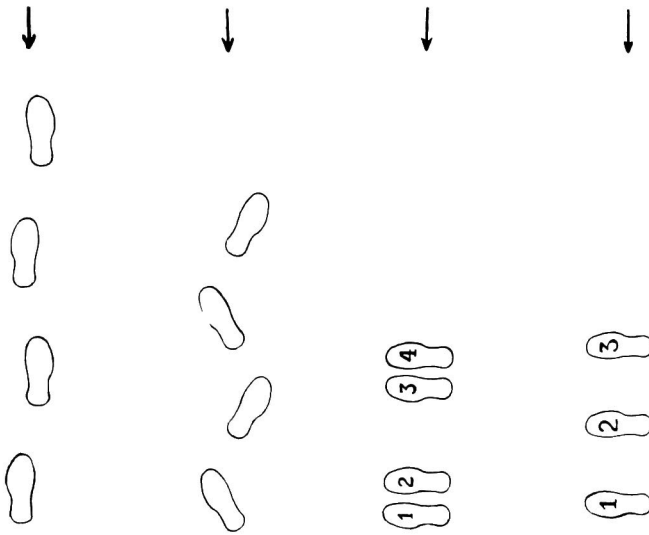


Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 6.

Fig. 7.

other one so as to cover exactly the place just vacated; see fig. 7. First standing on both feet, as 1, 2, the right foot is moved from 2 to 3, and set down firmly; then the left one is moved from 1 to 2, and so on. Not only is it safer to keep the feet farther apart on rotten ice, but the foot which follows on gets a better hold, as part of the rotten ice has already been removed.

Traversing.—When making up, down, or horizontal traverses on gentle slopes my feet remain parallel (fig. 8), but on steeper slopes it is sometimes convenient to turn out the

lower foot a little (fig. 9), especially during a descending traverse.

Descending.—I always find it best to place the feet pointing straight downwards (quick descent, fig. 10; slow descent,



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.



fig. 11), even on very steep slopes, for even if the ankle can not be bent sufficiently, the knee can also be bent so as to enable enough spikes to bear on the ice.



In all these cases, if the ice is soft, it is necessary for all the ten spikes to be driven home in it so that the underside of the frame is in contact with the surface of the ice; otherwise a good foothold will not be obtained. But if the ice is hard, it suffices if only some of them are driven home, the points of some or of all the others merely resting on the surface or penetrating it but slightly. The angle the foot makes with the leg is then reduced, but balance becomes more difficult, and greater skill is required. For instance, in descending a deep slope of really hard ice, I do most of the work with the four rear spikes, and the others are used comparatively little, if at all. The beginner should practise on hard as well as on soft ice; in fact, on ice of all varieties, as proficiency on one kind by no means implies proficiency on another



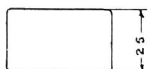
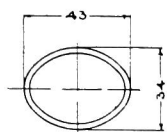
Fig. 10

kind.



Fig. 11

Step-cutting and Ice-axes.—My explanations, I think, make it clear that an ice-expert will very seldom have to cut steps or hand-holds, and should such a case occur he will generally only

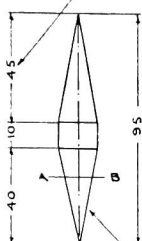


25 THICK

FERRULE FOR BOTTOM
OF STICK

MILD STEEL

THIS PART TO STAND OUT OF STICK



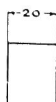
SECTION AT AB

THIS END TO BE
DRIVEN INTO STICK



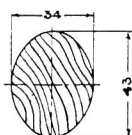
SPIKE

TOOL STEEL
HARDENED AND TEMPERED

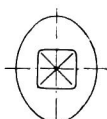


WEDGE FOR AXE HEAD

MILD STEEL

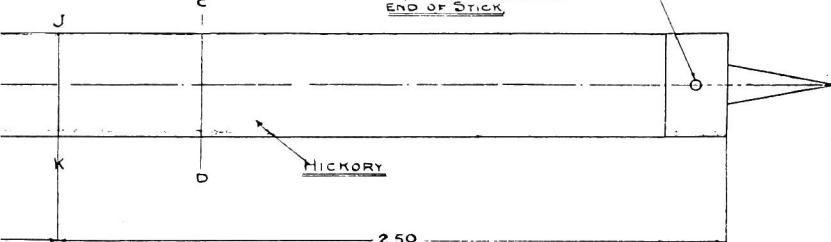


SECTION AT CD



VIEW LOOKING AT SPIKE
END OF STICK

RIVET 4 DIA



A X E.

SCALE, FULL SIZE

have one hand free, the other being used for steadying himself or for holding on. It follows that the usual very long and heavy axe, defective even for its present presumable purposes, will be found very unsuitable. A type will be required that can be wielded conveniently and efficiently with one hand. The axe I use has the dimensions shown in plate II. The shaft has an elliptical cross-section, greatest at the lower end, thus giving a good hold for the hand. Moreover, the lower end is that most subject to wear. Every re-entrant angle of the head has its vertex carefully rounded off. The ferrule at the lower end has an elliptical cross-section, and is cut out of solid steel, being, of course, neither welded nor brazed. The head is secured to the shaft by means of a steel wedge and two wood screws.* In order to enable longer screws to be used, these are not placed opposite each other. Should the head work loose, it can easily be secured again. Both pick and adze are sharp, and are ground to the right cutting angle (for general purposes about 35°). The sides of these angles are formed by planes, not by curved or by irregular surfaces. The plane bisecting the cutting edge of the adze, and the centre line of the pyramid forming the end of the pick, are at right angles to the centre line of the shaft. The whole axe weighs 1·13 kilograms. With such an axe I can do as much with one hand as some guides wielding the usual heavy axe with both hands. The head of my axe is always protected by a leather cover except when the head is in actual use. This entails the following advantages: the adze and the pick remain sharp, and are not damaged by contact with rocks; there is less risk of injury to oneself, and the feel is warmer and more comfortable to the hand.

The shaft should be of hickory (*Carya alba*, *Carya amara*); the alternative is ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), which for Alpine purposes serves equally well. In England good hickory is easier to obtain than good ash; for the latter, either *Fraxinus americana* or *Fraxinus platycarpa*, is often substituted. Of the woods obtainable in England it can in general be said that good hickory is rather tougher than good ash, but the differ-

* For Alpine work the usual attachment by means of rivets and a wooden wedge suffices; but in the tropics axe-heads so fastened soon work loose.

ence is only slight, and I do not know if the statement would hold good for the Continent. However, axes intended to be used in the tropics should certainly have their shafts made of hickory in preference to ash, as hickory is less influenced by great variations in the temperature and dampness of the air, such as occur in the tropics, where we may, for instance, have saturated air at a temperature of 35° C., or even more.

It has been suggested to me that the ferrule should be made wider. This would certainly protect the lower end of the shaft (most liable to wear) better, but would also make that end heavier, and so spoil the balance of the axe.

One rather curious criticism which I have several times encountered is this: the shoulder formed by the bottom of the ferrule and shaft and the spike is alleged to impede sounding for hidden crevasses. Now I chose this form just because it makes sounding much easier and more certain. I cannot quite tell how far the personal equation comes into play here, and I must admit that I use my axe for testing snow-bridges rather than for finding crevasses; for the latter purpose I prefer to use my eyes.

A further objection which has been raised to such a small ice-axe is that it would not serve so well for anchoring as a larger one. Although this is quite true, I am of opinion that it is good enough. When a single tool has to serve several different purposes it can not be constructed to have the best possible form for each of these purposes; the design is bound to be a compromise. It is easy enough to improve an axe for one given specific purpose; but then it suffers as regards some or all of the others. I am far from regarding my axe as in every respect perfect. I only think that, taking into consideration the various purposes for which a really good mountaineer requires an axe, it is, on the whole, a better compromise than the kinds in general use.

OSTERTAGE IN NORTH WALES.

VON DR. KARL BLODIG IN BREGENZ.

SEIT JAHREN lud mich mein verehrter Freund Oscar Eckenstein ein, mit ihm die Berge von North Wales zu besuchen. Ich lehnte lange ab, einesteils weil der Bodensee an dem ich wohne seine guten 1,300 Kilometer von Llyn Llydaw entfernt ist, und anderseits, weil ich dachte, dass ein in seinem höchsten Punkte 1,085 Meter erreichendes Gebirge kaum des Besuches wert sein dürfte. Da erhielt ich 1909 und 1910 von meinem Freunde zwei artige Bücher zugestellt: *The Climbs on Lliwedd*, by J. M. Archer Thomson, M.A., und A. W. Andrews, M.A., und *Climbing in the Ogwen District*, by J. M. Archer Thomson, M.A. Text und Bilderschmuck belehrten mich, dass dort auch für weitgereiste Alpinisten ein interessantes Übungsfeld sei. Die Beschreibung so mancher Route aber brachte bei mir die Überzeugung hervor, dass ein Alleingänger von meinen Fähigkeiten am Lliwedd und einigen anderen Bergen nichts besonderes ausrichten werde. Ich fühlte es stets, dass meine alpine Besonderheit in ganz anderer Richtung, als der Erreichung einer bemerkenswerten Klettertüchtigkeit ausgebildet worden war. Mit dem Ziele vor Augen, alle grossen Gebirgsgruppen der Alpen kennen zu lernen, und deren höchste Gipfel der Reihe nach zu besuchen, blieb mir keine Zeit, mich im Kaisergebirge oder den Dolomiten einzumieten und ein nach modernen Begriffen auch nur irgendwie hervorragender Kletterer zu werden. Ich verliess Bregenz am Bodensee den 6. April Nachmittags und traf am 8. um 5 Uhr in Bettws-y-Coed ein. Man muss es sich zweimal sagen, dass man in

England und nicht in der Schweiz ist! Der Ort liegt allerliebste an der Einmündung des Llugwy in den Conway. Mächtige Eichbäume, schöne Eschen und reichblühender Ginster geben der Gegend den Charakter. Zu beiden Seiten des Tales erheben sich teilweise bewaldete Felskuppen. Während der Fahrt nach Capel Curig hat man Gelegenheit die hübschen Wasserfälle und pittoresken Felsbildungen zu bewundern; dazu die blitzsauberen Häuser mit ihrem Hyacinthen- und Tulpenflor, die überall blühenden Narzissen: Ein entzückendes Gesamtbild! Ein prächtiges Gespann brachte uns—in Llandudno Junction waren Mr. H. O. Jones und Mr. L. Noon zu uns gestossen—nach Pen-y-Pass, welches nun 14 Tage unser Standquartier sein sollte. Da mich mein Freund Eckenstein als Gast eingeführt hatte, wurde ich von den anwesenden Mitgliedern des Climbers' Club in der allerliebsten Weise aufgenommen. Gewöhnlich am Vorabend wurden meine Schicksalslose geschüttelt und ich irgend einer Gesellschaft aufgehalst.

Lliwedd, Primitive Route, West Peak.

Am 9. brach die Gesellschaft bestehend aus Mrs. Orton, Mr. H. O. Jones, Mr. L. Noon und meiner Person um 9h 30m auf. Der gutgehaltene Weg führt um einen Sporn des Crib Goch herum zum Llyn Teyrn und dem prächtig gelegenen Llyn Llydaw. Hier erblickt man den berühmten Lliwedd, den "Dreikämmigen," zuerst aus grösserer Nähe. Da man die Gesteinsart nicht kennt erscheinen die Rippen und Rinnen weniger drohend und leichter zu erzwingen als sie es in Wirklichkeit sind. Um 10h 20m bogen wir vom See nach Osten ab und stiegen zwischen Blöcken zum Fusse der Felswand hinan. Nun wurde das Seil angelegt, da sich weiter oben kein so bequemer Platz für dieses nothwendige Geschäft finden lässt. Es war 11 Uhr, als wir an der eigentlichen Felswand angekommen waren. Der Weg hierher über Felsboden, kleine Wandeln und Bänder mahnte mich zwingend an den Aufstieg zur Cabana Quintino Sella auf dem Rocher du Mont Blanc. Aus Rücksicht auf mich Untrainierten hatten die Herren eine der leichtesten Routen gewählt. Bis zum Pulpit, einem kleinen, aus der Steilwand

heraustretenden Felskämme, auf welchem man zum ersten Male seit Betreten des eigentlichen Berges bequem rasten kann, ist mir neben einer Traverse besonders eine Stelle in Erinnerung geblieben; man spreitzt, auf einer Felsspitze stehend, in die Wand hinüber und schiebt sich nur kleine Griffe benutzend in derselben aufwärts. Kurz gewachsene Leute lassen sich die Schulter bieten oder benutzen die Hilfe des Seiles. Das Pulpit ist der offizielle Breakfast Place. Wir verliessen dasselbe um 1h 20m und da eine direkte Traverse untunlich schien, stiegen wir etwas ab und erreichten über mit Heather bewachsene Parteen den Fuss einer kleinen Felswand. Um mir eine besondere Ehre anzuthun, liess man mir hier den Vortritt. Eine ziemlich glatte Platte gab mir ordentlich zu schaffen. Oben lag auf einem kleinen Vorsprunge ein mächtiger, anscheinend ganz vertrauenerweckender Block. Ich turnte um denselben herum und verklemmte mich, ohne ihn irgend zu berühren, so fest als möglich in den dicht daran aufwärts strebenden Riss, legte das Seil um einem passenden Zacken und liess mein: "*All right*" ertönen. Mr. Noon kam nach, bewältigte die schwere Platte viel schneller als ich, im Augenblicke aber, als er hinter mir auf dem Blocke aufdrückte, und sein Gewicht demselben anvertraute, gab derselbe unter einem dumpfen Tone etwas nach. Ich presste das Seil mit Leibeskräften gegen den Felsen und während ich jeden Augenblick erwartete Mann und Block in die Tiefe sausen zu hören, ertönte von unten ein beruhigendes, mir ganz himmlisch klingendes Gelächter. Mrs. Orton und Mr. Jones sahen nämlich deutlich, dass der Block fest verkeilt war und nur aus dem labilen in das stabile Gleichgewicht übergegangen war. Durch einen schweren Riss stiegen wir dann zur Bird Crag hinauf, den ich um 2h 30m mit Wonne umarmte. Über einen leicht zu begehenden Grat und Heather Büsche ging es dann zum West Peak des Lliwedd hinan, den wir um 2h 55m betraten. Von 3h 15m—4h 30m vollzog sich der Abstieg nach Pen-y-Pass. Zum Überdusse fast wurde mir von allen Bewohnern des Gorphwysta Hotels versichert, dass dies die leichteste Route auf Lliwedd sei. Um so begieriger war ich auf die folgenden "Wege." Mir war schon eine und die andere Stelle

der "Primitive Route" für meine Fähigkeit "entwickelt" und schwierig genug gewesen.

Tryfan, Central Buttress.

Am anderen Tage dem 10. brach die Gesellschaft vom 9. verstärkt durch Mr. Orton um 9h 40m von Pen-y-Pass auf, und erreichte um 11h 25m den Fuss der Ostwand des herrlichen Tryfan. Von allen Höhen von North Wales ist dies, soweit ich dieselben kennen lernte, neben Lliwedd die einzige welche den Namen "Berg" unbedingt verdient. Mag man von Osten oder Westen, von Süden oder Norden des Tryfan ansichtig werden, stets ist er ein Individuum von adligem Aussehen. Die Kletterei war mir viel sympathischer als auf vielen unserer Kalkberge, weil der Fels mit ganz wenigen Ausnahmen fest ist. Auch sagte mir die Art der Hindernisse, welche manch schöne Rückstemme erforderten, sehr zu. Ein Kamin dicht unter dem Gipfel muss als schwierig bezeichnet werden. Die Griffe sind spärlich und nicht mal ganz verlässlich. Wir erreichten den Gipfel um 1h 40m. Der Abstieg wurde um 2h 05m angetreten und wanderten Mrs. und Mr. Orton mit Mr. Noon direkt nach Pen-y-Pass, während Mr. Jones und ich um 3h 15m an der Devil's Kitchen standen. Da die Felsen unten völlig vereist waren, so hatten wir einige Mühe in den hintersten Kessel zu gelangen. Der Wasserfall war in eine solide Eismasse verwandelt. Die tropfnassen Graspolster und Felsbuckel liessen eine Durchkletterung zu gewagt erscheinen. Wir umgingen das Massiv westlich und guckten von oben in den Schlund hinab, nachdem wir durch tiefen Schnee zum Absturze vorgedrungen waren. Die Ostseite der Devil's Kitchen gleicht aufs Haar den mit Gras durchsetzten Felswänden, welche in den nördlichen und südlichen Kalkalpen alljährlich ein oder zwei Dutzend Edelweissuchern das Leben kosten. Als Bergsteigen kann man die Erkletterung solch bauchiger Wände nie und nimmer bezeichnen. Von 4h 15m bis 5h 30m ging's dann nach Pen-y-Pass. Während der Überschreitung des grossen Plateaus am Glydr Fawr übte ich mich fleissig im Distanzschätzen. Während man sich in den Alpen öfters um 1½ oder 2 Stunden zu seinem Schaden irrt, tritt hier der

umgekehrte Fall ein. Felsköpfe, deren Entfernung ich auf $\frac{1}{2}$ bis $\frac{3}{4}$ Stunde schätzte, waren in 8 oder 9 Minuten erreicht. Die feuchte Atmosphäre spielt dem Neulinge da einen Schabernack nach dem anderen, aber in gutem Sinne.

Lliwedd, East Peak, Route II.

Bei ganz sommerlicher Temperatur verliess die Gesellschaft von zehn am 11. April Pen-y-Pass um 10 Uhr und erreichte um 11h 20m mit Freude den Bergschatten des Lliwedd. Ein wolkenloser Himmel breitete sich über uns aus und priesen alle Anwesenden mein besonderes Wetterglück. Da Freund Eckenstein, der uns bis zur Felswand begleitet hatte, eine Stelle des—neuen—Seiles nicht ganz gefiel, schnitt er sie heraus und verknüpfte die beiden Enden. Ich gab mir damals im Geheimen das Versprechen, jedes Seil vor jeder Tour nochmals einer genauen Untersuchung zu unterziehen. Wir begannen die Kletterei um 11h 50m. Ich hatte heute Kletterschuhe mit Hanfsohlen angelegt und befand mich sehr wohl dabei. Um 12h 50m betraten wir den Frühstückspatz, "Recess" genannt. Ich wurde nicht müde die Leichtigkeit zu bewundern mit der meine Begleiter, allen voran Mr. Jones, mit Nagelschuhen gingen. Eine unter dem Quartz Babe gelegene Stelle, ein flacher Kamin mit ganz ungenügenden Griffen, machte mir ziemlich zu schaffen. Um 1h 10m setzten wir die Reise fort und kamen um 2h 25m zur Quartz Nose. Hier verweilten wir bis 2h 50m und erreichten um 3h 30m den East Peak des Lliwedd. Die prächtige Aussicht liess uns bis 4 Uhr verweilen, dann wurde der Abstieg über eine Route genommen, welche mir sehr kompliziert vorkam. Es war eine Kombination verschiedener "Wege." Um 5 Uhr standen wir beim grossen Marmorkreuz über Llyn Llydaw. Der Platz ist für das Fassen guter Vorsätze bezüglich Vorsicht sehr geeignet.

CRAIG YR YSFA.

The North Crag, The Great Gully.

Nach den Begriffen wie sie unter der Gilde des Climbers' Club in North Wales herrschen, müsste ich beginnen: "Kurz nach Mitternacht brachen wir am 12. April von Pen-y-Pass auf." Es war nämlich erst 9 Uhr als sich nach gewaltigen

Vorbereitungen zwei Gespanne in Bewegung setzten; im ersten war die Gesellschaft, unter deren Schutz und Schirm ich am 9., 10. und 11. hatte steigen dürfen untergebracht, das zweite beherbergte Miss Sanders, Mr. H. V. Reade, Mr. G. W. Young und Mr. G. Mallory. Nach Passierung des mir ans Herz gewachsenen Capel Curig folgten wir der grossen Heerstrasse gegen Holyhead und begannen um 10h 05m unsere Fusswanderung. Gewaltig erhob sich Tryfan im Süden, mir nun schon ein guter Bekannter. Mrs. Orton führte uns leichtfüssig wie Diana über Wiesen und Felshänge, so dass ich nach kurzem Steigen darauf verzichtete, ihr auf den Fersen zu bleiben. Um 11h 20m erreichten wir den Bwlch y Tre Marchog genannten Sattel, von dessen Höhe sich nach beiden Seiten hin prächtige Bilder entrollten. Eine Viertelstunde genossen wir oben in Beschaulichkeit, dann ging es bei präzise 12 Uhr längs der Nordflanke des Craig Yr Ysfa zum Beginne des grossen Couloirs hinab. Über mässig steile Hänge stiegen wir dann in die immer enger werdende Schlucht hinauf, welche teilweise mit einem mir neuen Gewächse, *Lusula sylvatica* Montana, bedeckt war. Allerorts standen Binsen und andere Sumpfpflanzen und daneben kletterte man—seltsamere Gegensätze werden sich nicht bald irgendo treffen—um die Wette hinan. Da das Grosse Couloir durch eine in der Mitte aufragende senkrechte, teilweise selbst überhängende Stufe unterbrochen ist, wandten wir uns gegen die orographisch linke Seite. Die frühe Jahreszeit brachte es mit sich, dass der unterste Kamin mit Eis ausgekleidet war. Auch von den Steilwänden der Westseite hingen mächtige Eiszapfen in die Schlucht herein. In kurzen Zwischenräumen flogen kleinere und grössere Eismassen herunter und einmal konnten die Teilnehmer der zweiten Partie nur durch rasche Kopfwendung den Geschossen entgehen. Mr. Jones stieg in den Kamin hinein, liess sich eine vorsündflutlich lange und schwere Eisaxt reichen und begann die Eisbedeckung abzuschlagen. Da wir in einer Fallinie dicht unter ihm standen und ein Ausweichen unthunlich war, so schlugen die Trümmer gegen unsere Schienbeine und Köpfe; da sie nicht besonders gross waren, liess sich die Sache noch ertragen. Ich hatte aber eine andere

Sorge. Wenn Freund Jones dem Hauptblocke, der etwa 85 Zentimeter breit, 40 Zentimeter dick und 150 Zentimeter hoch war, also circa $\frac{1}{2}$ Tonne wog, die Unterstützungspfeiler weghieb und der Block herabsauste, dann nahm er auf seinem Wege mit Totsicherheit Mr. Jones mit und beide fielen dann auf Mrs. Orton und Mr. Noon hinab. Ich hatte mich etwas zeitlich in einen Riss verklemmt, aber einen eventuellen Fall Mr. Jones' konnte ich nicht aufhalten. Ich sprach für Umkehr und Begehung einer anderen Route. Das gefiel nun den Herren der zweiten Partie garnicht. Mr. Mallory stieg hinauf, drehte sich mit dem Rücken gegen den Eisblock, verspreizte sich so gut als möglich im Kamine und liess Mr. Reade nachkommen. Diesen benützte nun Mr. Mallory als lebendigen Steigbaum und arbeitete sich mit grösster Bravour und bewunderungswürdiger Technik über die grifflöse Aussenseite des Kamins hinauf, bis er unseren Blicken entschwand. Ein allgemeines "Hurrah" und "Bravo" lohnte die ausserordentliche Leistung. Rasch stiegen dann die Teilnehmer der jetzt zur ersten gewordenen Partie nach und nun schickte sich Mr. Jones an die Stelle als erster zu forcieren. Auf meine Bitten—der Eisblock unter dessen Masse ein kleiner Bach herabfloss machte mich ganz nervös—liess nun Mr. Young ein Seil herab, mit dessen Hilfe wir so schnell als möglich und ohne den fatalen Block zu berühren nachkamen. Es folgte ein sanft geneigter Hang mit Rasen und Lusula bewachsen und dann standen wir vor dem schwierigsten Stücke der ganzen Route, dem Great Chimney. Übrigens passt der Name Chimney gar nicht; man kann da füglich von einem kleinen unmöblierten Zimmer sprechen. Die absolut senkrechten glatten Wände stehen ja 1,30 bis 1,40 Meter von einander ab! Obgleich eine Dame und drei Herren von der ersten Partie und hinterher Mr. Jones als unser *leader* mir die Leistung vormachten, war ich doch recht froh, wenn mir von oben und unten Ratschläge bezüglich der anzuwendenden Kniffe gegeben wurden. Nur unter Aufbietung aller meiner Kräfte überwand ich die Stelle und mir ist es heute noch ein Rätsel wie der erste, also ohne moralische Hilfe wenigstens des Seiles den Kamin noch dazu in Nagelschuhen überwand. Die nächste Steilstufe birgt ein

Kleinod ganz anderer Art; es muss ein überhängender, ziemlich griffloser Block aus einer Risse heraus überklettert werden. Meine Begleiter meinten, die Stelle sei so schwierig, oder nahezu so schwierig, als der grosse Kamin, aber als geübtem Turner machte es mir gar keine Schwierigkeit mich an den Fingerspitzen aufzuziehen und dann bei frei baumelnden Beinen eine Rückstemme folgen zu lassen. Es hat eben jeder seine besonders ausgebildeten Fähigkeiten. Überdies glückte es mir bei dem bekannten überhängenden Blocke, der weit besseren Kletterern als ich es bin grosse Mühe machte, hinter demselben hoch oben einen Griff zu finden, der meinen Vorgängern entgangen war. Mr. Noon, der ihn dann auch benutzte, meinte nun sei die Stelle ein Kinderspiel. Das muss aber hübsch mit Reserve genommen werden. Mit grösster Spannung wartete ich auf die berühmte Höhle, beziehungsweise den Weg, welcher aus ihr wieder an die Oberwelt führt. Aber die Eigenart und das Piquante der Stelle übertrafen auch meine kühnsten Hoffnungen. Der Fels erlaubte sich hier den besonderen Scherz Mr. Jones die Mütze vom Kopfe zu streifen—daran wäre nichts so besonderes—und eingeklemmt an überhängender Wandstelle zurückzubehalten. Die treffliche Versicherung von beiden Seiten brachte in mir das Gefühl eines auf einem Telegraphendrahte sitzenden Sperlings hervor, als ich von Mrs. Orton und Mr. Jones behütet an der Felswand dahinschlich. Mit diesem Glanzstücke ist die Great Gully durchklettert und nach einigen Minuten—es war 5h 10m—steht man auf den Gipfel. Von 5h 30m—6h 15m gingen wir nach einem kleinen, blinkend sauberen Wirthshause an der Strasse von Capel Curig nach Holyhead hinab. Mrs. Orton machte uns in der lebenswürdigsten Art die Honneurs, unterstützt von Miss Sanders. Eine herrliche Fahrt durch die vom Vollmond beleuchtete Gegend bildete den würdigen Abschluss dieser nach meinen Erfahrungen und für mich schwierigsten Tour in North Wales.

Parson's Nose, Crib y Ddysgl, Snowdon.

Der 13. sah meine Freunde Eckenstein, Jones und mich nach 1½ stündigen Marsche um 11h 35m am See ober Cwm

Glas. Ich möchte diese Stelle als die malerisch bedeutendste des ganzen Gebietes bezeichnen. Wären noch Alpenrosen und Edelweiss am Platze, man könnte sich im Herzen der Hochalpen Österreichs oder der Schweiz glauben. Um 11h 55m setzten wir uns ober einem kleinen noch gefrorenen See zum Frühstücke nieder. Während dem kam eine Gesellschaft über die Hänge von Cwm Glas herauf. Es war gerade gespenstisch anzusehen, wie die Bewegungen der einzelnen sich in der feuchten Atmosphäre ins Ungeheuere vergrösserten. Man glaubte die dahinschreitenden Gestalten mit Siebenmeilenstiefeln versehen, wie sie so mit wenigen Schritten die anscheinend grossen Entfernungen zwischen den einzelnen Felsbuckeln durchmassen. Von 12h 20m—12h 35m stiegen wir dann zur Felswand hinan. Ich möchte die Kletterei am Kamme des Parson's Nose mit der auf das Nadelhorn vom Lenzjoche aus vergleichen. Die festen Felsen, die herrliche Griffe und Tritte, eine 60° erreichende mittlere Neigung machen die Tour zu einer überaus reizvollen. Dazu fehlen die sonst auf fast allen Bergen von North Wales in verschwenderischer Fülle ausgestreuten nassen, schmierigen Stellen. Vergeblich versuchte ich das "Book" ohne Gebrauch der Hände zu bewältigen. Nachdem ich es zur Hälfte "gelesen" hatte, musste ich die vorderen Extremitäten zu Hilfe nehmen. Um 1h 45m standen wir auf dem Nordgipfel des Crib y Ddysgl. Imposant erhob sich Snowdon; die Seen des Horse Shoe, von Llanberis und andere mehr blickten sonnenbeschienen zu uns herauf. Drohend stand Lliwedd als finsterer Wächter des Tales mit seiner gewaltigen Steilwand da. Um 2 Uhr betraten wir den höchsten Punkt des Crib y Ddysgl und um 2h 20m standen wir auf Snowdon. Leider war die Aussicht durch Nebel beeinträchtigt. In 5 Minuten gingen wir zum Sattel hinab, der die Verbindung zwischen den Gebieten des Llyn Cwellin und Llyn Llydaw herstellt. Hier hatte Freund Eckenstein auf uns gewartet. Mit wirklicher Trauer sah ich jetzt Mr. Jones scheiden. Vereinbarungen mit Mr. J. M. A. Thomson riefen ihn hinweg. Zoologische, botanische, historische und technische Untersuchungen brachten es mit sich, dass wir erst um 5h 30m Pen-y-Pass erreichten.

Lliwedd, Slanting Buttress.

Am 14. nahmen mich Miss und Mr. Andrews, sowie Dr. Williamson unter ihre Fittige. Miss Andrews fungirte als *leader* und gerne folgten wir unserer leichtfüssigen Führerin. Wir verliessen Pen-y-Pass um 10 Uhr und verbanden uns um 11h 15m auf dem untersten Plattenschosse durch das Seil. Um 11h 20m standen wir an jenem Platze, von wo die Wand des Lliwedd sich ungebrochen über dem Quartzbande aufschwingt. Da eine zweite Partie nachfolgte, so mussten wir hier leider bis 11h 40m warten, um die Untengehenden nicht durch abgehende Steine zu gefährden. Um 1h 15m betraten wir den West Peak des Lliwedd. Nach den Eindrücken des Great Chimney auf Craig Yr Ysfa kam mir die Kletterei ziemlich unschwierig vor. Weite Kamine sind keine zu überwinden und für andere Dinge bin ich so ziemlich geacht. Damit will ich aber nicht etwa andeuten, dass die Kletterei auf der Slanting Buttress mich nicht fesselte; es giebt da eine Reihe von Platten, einige Traversierstellen und einen glatten Felsfeiler, die mich alle ungemein interessierten. Ausserdem hob sich mein etwas gedrücktes Selbstbewusstsein um einige Grade. Wir verliessen den Gipfel um 2h 30m, aber da der Tatendurst Mr. Andrews' noch nicht gestillt war, so vollzogen wir den Abstieg auf einem Wege, der mir als eine Kombination von Girdle Traverse und Bilberry Terrace Extension Route geziemend vorgestellt wurde. Ich ging diesmal als letzter, was auch auf schwierigen Touren in den Alpen im Abstiege meine Liebhaberei ist. Als sicherer, vorsichtiger Mann fühle ich mich am wohlsten, wenn ich die ganze Gesellschaft vor mir am Bündel habe. Erst um 5h 45m betraten wir die Schutthalden, da wir an geschützten Stellen öfters auf eine unseren Spuren folgende Gesellschaft warten mussten. Trotz aller Vorsicht aber liess es sich nicht vermeiden, dass fallende Steine mehr als einmal Schrecken verbreiteten. Eine Reihe prächtiger Stellen zeichneten unsere Abstiegroute aus. Miss Andrews ging in Gummischuhen, welche ich bei nassen Felsen als unseren Kletterschuhen mit Hanfsohlen weit überlegen bezeichnen muss.

LLIWEDD, ROUTE I, EAST PEAK.**Girdle Traverse.**

Das unverschämte Wetterglück dessen ich mich vom 9. an ununterbrochen erfreute brachte es naturgemäss mit sich dass ich täglich eine grosse Tour unternahm. Dies hatte mir den Ehrennamen "the victim" eingetragen. Am 15. also wurde "the victim" von den Messrs. Reade und Mallory ins Schlepptau genommen und nach dem East Peak des Lliwedd gebracht. Um 11 Uhr standen wir am unteren Rande des Geröllfeldes, und um 11h 25m wurde am Beginn der mächtig aufstrebenden Felswand das Seil angelegt. Mr. Mallory ging voraus, ich schloss den Zug. Soll ich es mir herausnehmen ein Urteil abzugeben, so war die Nonchalance mit welcher Mr. Mallory die schlimmsten Stellen bewältigte, wohl entzückend, dagegen floss mir Mr. Reade vom ersten bis zum letzten Augenblicke die Überzeugung ein: "Der Mann kann nicht fallen, auch wenn er will." Was mir am meisten imponierte war die Art und Weiss, wie Mr. Reade über die geneigten mit Geröll bedeckten Rasenflecke und Felsbänder dahinschritt, während auch ein Mr. Mallory, von mir will ich gar nicht reden, bei jedem Schritte mehr oder weniger tastend versuchte, ob das Zeug auch auf der Unterlage halte. Ich erinnere mich nur den unvergesslichen Purscheller derart über Terrain schlimmster Art haben gehen zu sehen. Mr. Reade zeigte eine so souveraine Beherrschung der Materie, dass ich jenen Tag auf Lliwedd zu den bemerkenswertesten rechne, die ich jemals im Hochgebirge verbrachte. Um 1h 25m stiegen wir durch einen Kamin auf eine grasbewachsene Stelle hinaus, wo zwei *cairns* die Junction von Route I und Central Chimney Route bezeichnen. Der East Peak wurde um 1h 45m betreten; wir stiegen sofort nach Osten ab und durch die Little Gully hinunter. Hier wurde das Seil um 2h 40m wieder angelegt und dann begann wohl eine der interessantesten Klettereien, die ich jemals unternommen habe, die Girdle Traverse durch das ganze Massiv des herrlichen Lliwedd. Wir verdanken selbe dem unermüdlichen hochverdienten Durchforscher der Berge von North Wales Mr. J. M. Archer Thomson. Hätte er nichts

gefunden als diesen Weg, er wäre meiner Ansicht nach für immer der Vergessenheit entrissen. Um 4h 40m standen wir auf dem Pulpit, nachdem ich mit einem aus Wonne und Grauen gemischten Gefühle in alle die Gullies und Chimneys, und über alle die Buttresses und Ridges hinab und hinaufgeblickt hatte, welche mir meine kundigen Führer zu nennen so gütig waren. Aus dem Great Chimney führte uns eine geradezu haarsträubende Kletterei hinaus: Der Körper hängt wohl oder übel über dem Abgrunde während man nur mit einer Hand und einem Fusse notdürftig Halt findet. Drei und viermal setzte ich bei manch schwieriger Stelle an, bis ich den richtigen Trick herausfand; denn mit dem Seile habe ich mir nicht helfen lassen, wenn ich auch täglich oftmals nur seinem Dasein in moralischer Hinsicht wenigstens mein Fortkommen verdankte. Auch hier sage ich den Herren Reade und Mallory meinen besten Dank für die nimmermüde Geduld, die sie mit mir hatten. Entzückend ist die Kletterei am Angle Nook, die mir aber auffallend leicht vorkam. Um 6h 10m stiegen wir auf den Kamm des Lliwedd West Peak hinaus und hochbefriedigt trat ich den Heimweg nach Pen-y-Pass an, welchen trauten Winkel wir um 7h 15m erreichten.

Ich hatte nach der Tour die Überzeugung, dass die grossen Physiker, welche ein stabiles, labiles und indifferentes Equilibrium erdachten, arge Stümper waren. Wenn sie die Girdle Traverse auf Lliwedd gemacht hätten, dann würden sie mindestens noch ein halbes Dutzend Gleichgewichtslagen entdeckt haben in denen sich der Mensch dort befindet, ohne in den Llyn Llydaw hinabzupurzeln!

Black Cleft am Crib Goch.

Endlich am 16. war das Wetter so schlecht, dass man an keine ordentliche Bergtour denken konnte. Ich schlief mal gründlich aus und versuchte alle Luxationen, Subluxationen und Distortionen, welche die Girdle Traverse bei mir hervorgebracht hatte, zu heilen. Am 17. war zwar auch elendes Wetter, aber das "victim" wurde von seinem unerbittlichen Unternehmer Eckenstein mit sanfter Gewalt den beiden Folterknechten Mr. Reade und Mr. Mallory zur

Amtshandlung übergeben und zur Black Cleft geschleppt. Ich bin den genannten Herren sehr dankbar, dass sie sich trotz meiner am 15. deutlich erwiesenen Minderwertigkeit nicht abhalten liessen, mich am 17. noch mitzunehmen. Die —leider nur zwei—Steilstufen an der Black Cleft gefielen mir ausgezeichnet. Schade dass es nicht doppelt so viele sind und dass die Sache so kurz dauert. Mr. Reade nahm oben am Ausstiege leider Abschied, um heimzureisen. Mr. Mallory betätigte sich noch aktiv an einer Rettungsexpedition. Ein Kontinentaler Tourist—ich hatte schon eine wahre Angst, es möchte ein noch engerer Landsmann sein—hatte sich im Abstiege vom Snowdon in die Klippen von Parson's Nose verirrt und sass nun oben und rief um Hilfe. Ziemlich durchnässt kamen wir in Pen-y-Pass an.

Great Chimney, Lliwedd.

Am 18. und 19. verzichtete ich auf Hochtouren in jeder Form. Der Sturm erschütterte das Häuschen in welchem ich bei Freund Eckenstein wohnte derart, dass die Betten tüchtig wackelten. Der Regen schlug so zum geschlossenen Fenster herein, dass wir die Tische weit abrücken mussten, um unsere Schreibereien nicht durchnässt zu haben. Dennoch gab es diverse Misses und Messrs., welche sich hinauswagten. Ich blieb aber lieber beim warmen Chimney, statt mich in den nassen Felsenchimneys durchfrieren zu lassen. Am 20. endlich war der letzte Tag, an welchem ich noch eine Tour unternehmen konnte. Freund Eckenstein brütete über einem Hauptschlage gegen mich und meine Ruhe; und er hatte Erfolg! Der Neuschnee lag zwar an der Südseite der Berge ziemlich weit herunter, aber Lliwedd mit seiner Nordflanke war nach Ansicht der Wetterkundigen frei davon. Nach endlosen Wetterprognosen und Verhandlungen, ob man überhaupt gehen solle entschloss man sich—man höre und staune—nicht etwa zu einem Spaziergange auf Crib Goch oder Glydr fawr, nein zum Great Chimney auf Lliwedd! Um 11h 25m brachen wir auf und begaben uns nach dem mir herzlich lieb und vertraut gewordenen East Peak. Ich fühle mich unfähig, auch nur einigermaßen das Glücksgefühl wiederzugeben, welches mich an jenem Tage

erfüllte! Die Partie bestand—ich bringe die Namen in der Reihenfolge in welcher wir gingen—aus J. M. A. Thomson, A. W. Andrews, Miss Andrews, mir und O. Eckenstein. Kann ein Mensch in ausgewählterer Gesellschaft steigen? Wir begannen die Kletterei um 1h 05m und erreichten den Ausstieg auf Lliwedd um 5h 55m. Um mit Faust zu sprechen: "Die Fülle der Gesichte war so überwältigend," dass ich es gar nicht versuche eine zusammenhängende Schilderung zu geben. Die Leser dieser Blätter kennen ja zum grossen Theile die Tour, auch ist die Beschreibung im Buche J. M. A. Thomson und A. W. Andrews eine unübertreffliche; ich will nur einiges berühren, was sich mir besonders einprägte. Vor allem die Traversierung einer Riesenplatte, bevor man in den Great Chimney gelangt. Ohne irgend eine Kraftleistung zu erfordern, wird die Stelle durch zarte Verlegung des Schwerpunktes genommen. Im Chimney selber und dessen Begränzungswände sind die prächtigsten Stellen dermassen gehäuft, dass man daraus Dutzende typischer Stellen für die daran recht armen Berner oder Walliserberge schneiden könnte. Allerliebste ist an einer, etwas steingefährlichen Stelle ein wahrer Käfig. Ich taufte ihn "Lady's cage," denn er ist so klein, dass z.B. Freund Eckenstein mit seinem stark entwickelten Oberkörper nicht hineinkriechen konnte. Am schlimmsten kam mir der alleroberste Kamin vor, nachdem man den Great Chimney schon lange hinter sich hat. Er ist nur kurz, aber "ganz senkrecht und gar kein Griff," wie s.Z. der Führer Hans Steiner auf der Bischofsmütze sagte. Stöhnend und keuchend wand und schob ich mich wie ein getretener Regenwurm hinauf und wurde hinterher von Freund Eckenstein gehöhnt, der mitten im Kamin sich mit Rücken und Beinen verspreizte, seine Pfeife herauszog und Feuer schlug! Entweder bin ich dazu schlecht gebaut, oder ich muss einer Spezialkur für Kaminschleiferei in Pen-y-Pass nehmen. Von 6-7 Uhr bummelten wir unter anregendem Gespräche nach Pen-y-Pass hinab. Mit Sehnsucht denke ich an Lliwedd, Craig Yr Ysfa und Tryfan zurück, wie ein goldenes Märchen dünkt mich alles was ich dort unter den denkbar günstigsten Verhältnissen erlebte und sah!

Dankbaren Herzens erinnere ich mich in stiller Stunde der liebenswürdigen Damen und Herren in deren Gesellschaft ich zwei selige Wochen verbringen durfte. Möge es mir beschieden sein meine lieben Genossen vom Climbers' Club auch mal in den schönen österreichischen Bergen herumführen zu dürfen!

Excelsior!

A COUNTERBLAST TO THE PERPENDICULAR.

BY HILTON YOUNG.

THE Chinese sage, Lao Tze, offered to prove that a bay horse and a dun cow were three. Taken apart, he said, they are two, and taken together they are one, and two and one make three. I only repeat that saying in self-defence, to show that there can be states of mind more muddled even than my own when I set out to write about plains in a book devoted to mountains. The presence of this article here is an example of the Chinese method of discussion. According to that, not only the very subject itself must be discussed, but every other subject which it brings to mind, by force of comparison or of contrast. The Chinese professor's book dealt with space as a sub-heading of matter. It is in the same spirit that climbers include pot-holes as a species of pinnacle, so there should be nothing strange to them in finding plains included as a variety of mountain.

Besides being Chinese, the method is scientific too, and it should therefore recommend itself to a class which is wont to apologise for its habits, most unconvincingly, on the grounds that they serve a scientific purpose. In my own short mountaineering experience I served a scientific purpose on one occasion only. I cleared up that fascinating problem about the state of equilibrium between adhesion and precipitation in a rarified medium. The experiment ended in my being found at the bottom of the receptacle as what text-books of chemistry call a slimy precipitate. A failure as a mountaineer, in fact, I am now following the beaten path of failure, and becoming a critic of the art which I was incompetent to practise.

Every newspaper-reader knows that the best recipe for good merchantable criticism is to blame the object of attack for not resembling something which it neither wants to resemble nor could resemble if it wanted to. A charge from the rear throws the enemy into confusion. The recipe can easily be applied to my present purpose, and this is the way in which we make it up. Mountains resemble plains less than anything else, and so, to confound the mountaineer, we take plains as the standard of good, and abuse mountains for not being like them. The hill-climbers are left defenceless. It is vain for them to say, "we know that plains are fine things, but they are not mountains." The critic need only urge more bitterly that mountains are not plains, and complain that his point has not been met.

Hills, then, are all very well, but they are not plains, which are in many ways much safer, more useful, and more beautiful places. They have all the merits of a perfect wife and help-mate, and a sober citizen should be faithful to his lawful, wedded land, and not run after a Midianitish mountain as a mistress. It is clear to every man of sound sense that he has only two legs, but there are some who have become so fanatical in the cult of the perpendicular that they have quite forgotten that, having two only, man was made to live upon the horizontal. They seek to do what, to a biped, is against the laws of gravity. Much more might be said about this aspect of the superiority of plains—as that man does ill to liken himself to a bluebottle, which, armed with prehensile toes, will climb, without a trace of vertigo, even the most overhanging cliffs. Why should I make myself lower than the beasts, provoking them, surely, to irreverent laughter? It is to fly in the face of evolution. When a chamois goes to luncheon on a rope, I will condescend to wear one too. When a snail needs an ice-axe on the rocks, I, too, will carry one. In the meantime my dignity as lord of creation forbids me to be outdone either by quadruped or by mollusc.

But this line of argument is too lofty for one who is ill at ease in giddy places. Let us take the case for plains into an atmosphere less rare than that of natural philosophy. A book came out of late written by a mountaineer to describe a voyage

in Egypt. He stopped at Cairo, went up the Nile, made an excursion into the desert, and so on. M. Loti found the desert so full of personal character that he made it the hero of one of his novels; and Mr. Hichens has had feelings of the same sort about it, of which we can read in his books. Our traveller was not a victim to these hallucinations. He found "the desert very monotonous—the rocky bluffs very rotten stuff." The pyramids alone aroused a mild enthusiasm; and of the great Sphinx he says: "an interesting ascent can be made from either paw. A slight depression in the corner of the mouth affords an excellent hand-hold, and a way can be forced thence on to the right ear, and so to the summit (ten minutes)." At least he does not say it, but I am sure that he thought it.

His alleged thoughts throw light upon a conspicuous evil of the mountain habit, the hopeless irrelevance which it produces in the minds of its victims. It is not relevant to the Sphinxiness of the Sphinx, or, in other words—my method is as much Teutonic as Chinese—Its *Wesen und Begriff*, that it can be mounted by means of its smile. That is not what the sculptor made the smile for. Neither did the sculptor of the rocks and snows make them for the ice-axe and the boot. They were not made to be useful. Geologists say, I know, that the ridges and valleys serve a useful purpose as water-sheds and water-courses. No doubt they are right, but in that aspect hills are no more interesting, and far less efficient, than the slates and gutters of my roof. What they were really made for was to look nice as a frame and setting for the plains. Nothing can be more attractive than a range of mountains on the horizon. The kindest thing which I can think of to say about the Alps is that the distant view of them adds greatly to the charm of Venice and other pleasant places. The far-off hint of fatiguing perpendicularity is necessary to the full enjoyment of the restful horizontality of the lagoons. But such beauty and charm as mountains have, like that of the Sphinx, lies wholly in remoteness and mystery. Trample on them with hob-nailed boots, reduce them into possession with ascents, and they vanish as the beauty and mystery of a wild beast in the jungle vanishes when a big-game hunter shoots it

and photographs it with its dead head propped on a bucket. So it seems to a lover of plains, and outraged mountaineers can answer with crushing effect that the beauty of plains is best seen from a height, and that it vanishes when you are plodding about, actually in the middle of them and on the level.

Like a good critic, I refuse to be led into a discussion, and simply repeat my first statement with fresh emphasis. The hopeless irrelevance of mountaineers shows itself in their use of mountains for purposes for which they were not made ; and it shows itself, too, in the habit of praising mountains for qualities of beauty which mountaineers can never see, because they can be seen from a distance only. A lover of nature with his nose in the Grépon crack is like an amateur of pictures with his nose in a Turner. The true lover of mountains should never leave the plains. "And the true lover of plains should never leave the mountains," says the mountaineer, sticking to his guns. I have not thought of an answer yet, so it will be best to change the subject, and to turn, without any more odious comparisons, to some of the positive merits of plains.

They are many, both moral and æsthetic ; and first of the moral. I will say no more of less important aspects of their merits, such as the hygienic aspect. The exercise of walking is good for the health, no doubt, if it is not overdone. Immoderate indulgence in it ends in nights in which the head and the foot of the bed are confused in space, time and eternity get mixed, and the inn clock is a burden, punctuating relentlessly through evil dreams the passing of ages of fatigue. But it is not for the sake of his digestion that a true walker walks. He leaves that to the constitutionalist, a groundling whose walks are mere bridges from a full stomach to an empty one. The real walk has higher functions. It is the ritual of a religion, a bridge from emptiness to fulness of the soul. The religion is mystical, and its ritual has the qualities which are common to the rituals of all mystical religions. There is, for instance, a family likeness between the practices of the sect of walkers and those of certain Dervish sects. There are Dervishes, they say, who obtain close communion with the Infinite by means

of repetitions which induce trance. They howl, or twirl, or gaze at some near and arresting object, and presently there dawns upon them the uncreated light. A walker sets out, and, by repeating familiar movements of his legs, he leads himself by degrees into a state of great peace and content. The earth and he draw closer together, and, whether by night or day, the further he walks the better friends do they become. They become not friends only, but near relations. At starting, earth is at best his crabbed grandmother; by mid-day they are cousins; and when they part at the inn door they part as brothers. Could anyone walk long enough and with movements of the legs regular enough, I believe that he would find the relationship grow closer still. The object of his mystical longing would be attained, and earth and he would become one. Perhaps that may explain mysterious disappearances which have puzzled people from time to time. Someone has walked himself out of his personal identity into the ultimate unity.

Now it is in plains that this walker's trance can best be found. Path-finding on a hill-side holds the attention and breaks the pace. It is the regular heel and toe of roads and fields that brings soonest the *hypnosis* which the walker wants who walks as a ritual exercise. A long day's walk in mountainous country is an affair altogether too exciting. There is seldom a minute in which there is not something happening, finding the way, or stopping to look at the view, or having whisky and sandwiches in a puddle. The mind, too, is for ever busy answering a string of tiny and tiresome questions about the business of walking, such as which lump to step on next, or which way to go round the next rock. A walk in a plain is free from those disturbances. To tramp all day in level country is to drown the mind in a calm, clear sea of stupidity. A day so spent is a continuous, unbroken thing. Under the sleepy influence of gentle, monotonous movements, consciousness stops hopping from point to point of time, striking sparks at each hop. It glides quietly through the head, the shrill chatter which at other times it makes in passing stilled to a low, musical hum; and the day when it is over lives in memory as one of those rare days which are whole days, not a collec-

tion of moments, like a day spent in some exciting occupation, nor a patchwork of morning, afternoon, and evening cemented together by meals, like a working day in Town.

The case for the walk in plains depends wholly, of course, on the walk being a long one. It ought to last from sunrise to sunset, or from sunset to sunrise. At the beginning and at the end the long, unchanging hours of broad day or of the dead of night need to be rounded off with twilight. If anyone must go for a short walk, indeed, he may as well walk up a slope as along the level. It is, in any case, so boring a thing that the route can make no difference to him, and, since the motive for it is probably digestive, going uphill will get it over soonest.

Plains have all the good qualities of quietness and sobriety, and they are best understood by tranquil minds. There are some people who cannot be expected to like them, feverishly active souls who secrete energy so quickly that their lapses into inattention are always followed by an explosion, like those of a motor-car. For safety's sake, they should be encouraged to frequent the hills, to wreak upon them the rage for action which might otherwise become a menace to our land of settled government. The special qualities of mountains, their gorgeousness and brilliance, will suit them best. The qualities of plains are of less use as safety valves for their emotions; but there those qualities are, for those who are lazy enough to be able to see them. They are the qualities converse to those of gorgeousness and brilliance. Plains are the truly solitary places, and it is in their solitude alone that the pleasant quality of perfect silence can be found. A range of mountains is as talkative as an old wives' tea-party; the peaks chatter and shout at each other with the voices of streams and stones and avalanches, and the wind snuffles round them with distressing noises, as of blown noses. But the rustling of moorland grass and the sighing of fenland sedge serves only to remind the listener of the absence of more sociable noises. Besides, mountains never sleep. In the Alps, as in a London drawing-room, the most active social hours do not begin till sunset. Like London hostesses, the mountains are visited all night,

as the poet justly says, by troops of wheeling stars. To see nature at rest, you must see the moon shining in the marshes upon the sleeping armies of the reeds. This restfulness and sleepiness of plains is bound up with another and a kindred quality which is theirs alone, the quality of age. Big mountains, and especially big snow mountains, look so painfully new. The Weisshorn, for instance, with its glittering ice and snow, seems to have come straight from the confectioner. It cries aloud for its base of wedding-cake. Compare with its spick and span neatness the look of a landscape in the fens. There, in every square foot of untidy soil, rough and blotchy with old age, you see how the ferments of earth have been at work since time began. Nature is dying of senile decay, and beginning to rot. The active forces of wind and water have stopped hurrying about, scooping out valleys and tearing down crags. They are worn out and resting, pleasanter companions in that state than when you meet them hard at work, like busy young professional persons, clearing away Mont Blanc.

But I will not say one unkind word about the great levellers, water and wind. Theirs is a fine work. In course of time, when the last rough place shall have been made plain, the world will be a paradise, and it will be to them that we shall owe it. But they must hurry up, because mountains are already a little out of date. The truth must be told, even in this annual, and it is that mountains are a little early-Victorian. They belong to the era of sight-seeing, and we know better now than to think that it is right to see sights. That was all very well when people were just beginning to be romantic again, after the eighteenth century. Very gorgeous and brilliant sights were needed then to penetrate the fog of convention that had surrounded the minds of men. But now the sights have done their work and had their day. The Romantics have blown away the fog, and we can see many new things that were dim before, and dim even to them. They learned to admire the more obvious sorts of natural beauty in wonderful and unusual places. Why should we call a dull halt? We can go on, and learn to understand the beauty, more remote, although nearer home, which lies in common,

everyday places. The romantic formulæ still hedge us in. It still seems odd to find that the Cromwell Road and the Natural History Museum can be as good to look at as the Campanile and Place of St. Mark, or that there is as much for the seeing eye to see on Salisbury Plain as on an Alp. But things are getting better.

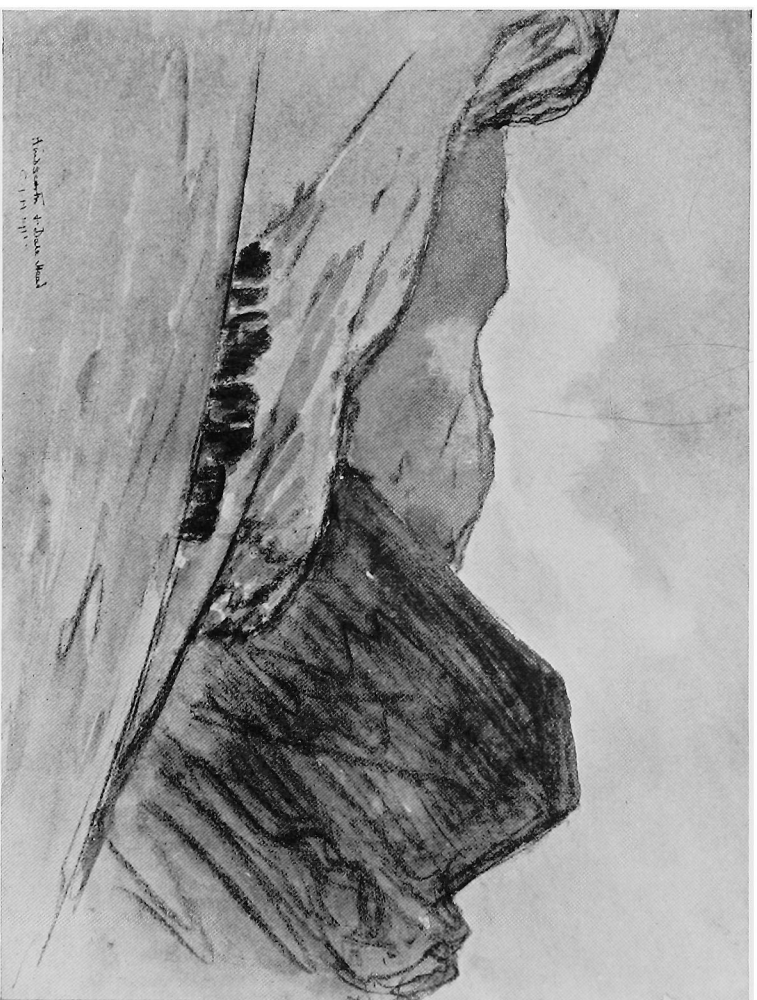
The future lies with walkers on the horizontal, but it is not likely that they will ever be so organised and influential a body as those who walk on slopes. They are by nature a more quiet and less active band. But from time to time their voices will be heard in a counterblast to the perpendicular, protesting that beauty cannot for ever be measured by angles, or by feet above sea level.

AN ARTIST OF MOUNTAINS—C. J. HOLMES.

BY MICHAEL T. H. SADLER.

MOUNTAINS, more than any other of the features of nature, are fundamental, synthetic. They present, untrammelled and without elaboration, the great basic principles on which they are built ; their structure has absolute unity, their monumental architecture is simple. Their moods are the moods of primitive humanity, their spirit like their form is unmodified, above and below civilisation. Every climber must, at one time or another, have shuddered before the hatred of an Alpine peak, the hatred of all that is primeval in nature for all that is artificially progressive in man. I remember one evening sitting above the Col de Vosa, and watching the glow of the sunset on Mont Blanc. The entire range of peaks from the Dôme du Goûter to the Aiguille Verte blazed with colour down to a point a little above where the ragged fringe of the moraines slide into the grassy upland. There a hard line of shadow reflected the contour of the hill on which I sat. As the sun sank, this line of shadow crept up the mountain-side with almost visible speed, till only the topmost pinnacles kept their colour, like a row of beacon-lights flaming above the darkened valley. Gradually they in their turn paled and died.

But it is now, when most onlookers turn away, that the mountains begin to live. When the fire has left the snow, when the rock ridges leap out cold and black, when the fissures of the ice cliffs yawn pitilessly once again, the real character of the place is shown. The mountains are cruel and angry. Traffic with them is not friendship, but war. All the mountaineer's thrill of conquest is the thrill of victory over



Hindscarth and Dale Head. By C. J. Holmes.

an enemy, an enemy who hates as men hate, as the ancient hates the upstart or the lonely giant the puny multitude, but whose resources are endless, and whose ally is the storm.

Snow-mountains are seldom friendly. Sometimes they seem to smile, but their welcome, for all its glitter, is treacherous and cruel. With lower hills the case is rather different. The rock precipices and windy fells of Cumberland, the spaces of the Yorkshire moors, have an individuality as complete as Mont Blanc, but less overwhelming. Their anger is sullen, their moods more passive. At times they are almost gracious. But the difference is one of degree only. The quality of their emotion sees no variant in glacier and heather.

It would seem that any normal sensibility could in some measure appreciate these mountain moods, and, where the observer is an artist, reproduce them in line and colour. And yet it is only in our own day that a painter has appeared with a proper understanding of their true existence. In art the coming of landscape was slow, but the mountain, as a mountain, has come more slowly still. Why this neglect? Why, until long after the landscape-picture had become a commonplace, was the mountain not disentangled from the myriad aspects of nature, and made the object of artistic interpretation?

Several reasons may be suggested. In the first place, for true appreciation more than a mere acquaintance is necessary. Mountains are reserved. They extend no real welcome, even when they do not actively resent familiarity. Only patient perseverance can gauge their real significance. The men of old hated them. Perhaps as they watched from afar the towering army of the Alps, there came to them on the breeze some breath of mountain anger, and they trembled, hardly knowing why. To them the hills were just so many hideous obstacles to war or commerce. To make a way through them was a task to be dreaded. It needs a rare vision to see beauty beyond danger, to recognise the sublime in the menace of death.

But apart from this, it is doubtful whether the mediæval mind could have grasped the essentials of mountain-

scenery, had it striven to do so—and this is the second reason for delay. The synthetic vision, the subordination of part to whole, is not really primitive. The savage sees individual objects in strong unhampered outline, but he cannot relate them. His decorative sense lacks cohesion. This very lack is the weakness of Egyptian wall-painting, where harmony of line and movement reaches a point seldom achieved since those early days, but where the feeling of a procession is rarely lost owing to the failure to relate the figures and objects to each other. It needs a new hyper-civilised primitivism—to use what appears a contradiction in terms—extraordinarily subtle, backed by a store of imagination and detailed knowledge, which can by its very wisdom select and discard, keeping the chain of essentials, disregarding the rest. And no one has greater need of this than the mountain artist. It is equally useless for him to reproduce, however skilfully, every glacier, every gully on the mountain-side, and to daub vague, unrelated lumps of paint one beside another. The important artistic fact in a mountain scene is the intricate rhythm of line and slope, the true relation of curve to curve, and this is obscured and lost in photographic realism, as it is never realised in the scribbles of a child. The mountain artist must grasp every detail, but distinguish what he requires, and discard all else. That is why, in the early days of landscape painting, the excitement of new beauties inevitably caused overcrowded pictures. There was no attempt at selection, because the selective point of view had, as yet, no appeal. The last thirty years have brought it to the front.

The third reason for the tardy recognition of mountains is expressed by the man with whom this discussion is really concerned, by Prof. C. J. Holmes in his monograph on Constable.* “Mountains have returned with the desire for design.” The most significant feature of recent painting is the renaissance of decoration. The easel picture, as Corot knew it, has been eclipsed by the art of the fresco. Design has replaced light as the central study, just as light replaced

* “Constable.” By C. J. Holmes. (Unicorn Press, London. 1901.)

the twilit realism of the first "plein-airistes." The primitive Italians knew no landscape painting in our modern sense. The value of mountains in design could not, therefore, appeal to them; and so it is left to the present day to employ for the first time the mountains with their rhythm and their feeling.

But such generalisation, unsupported by fact, can have little weight, and confirmation of these statements must be found in an outlined indication of the growth of the landscape tradition, and, springing from it, the treatment of mountains.

When European art began to elaborate the religious conceptions with which it was in early times mainly concerned, landscapes were introduced as part of the Bible stories. But they were purely subordinate. Duccio and Giotto use conventionalised trees and strange bare rocks, which, while evidence of wonderful vision, show no sense of the value of landscape for itself. The delicate distances of the Flemish primitives, the backgrounds of Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes, the settings of Cinquecento Madonnas are merely so much design to fill a space, so many accessories to the figures in the foreground. One would like to except Patinir's "Flight into Egypt,"* where the thicket behind the Virgin has more than a mere decorative significance, and shows a loving study of trees and rocks, were not the vistas to left and right pure design. There are also rare landscape studies of Dürer—one particularly, an unfinished study of hills in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford—which are strikingly ahead of their time in their sole preoccupation with nature as distinct from humanity.

But it is really with Dutch and Flemish seventeenth-century art that landscape for landscape's sake makes its appearance, with Rubens, Rembrandt, Koninck, van Goyen. However, for them mountains are as accessory as was nature generally for their predecessors. To give composition, to round off a landscape, to frame a vista, Rubens and the great Dutchmen used hills and crags. There are probably many exceptions to this generalisation. To mention one only, there is a picture by the Flemish Millet [1642-1679] at Munich, in

* Having no concern here with disputed attributions, I have used the name of Patinir for convenience' sake alone. The connoisseur may substitute any alternative he prefers.

which a mountain occupies the centre of the canvas. This mountain, though tree-covered, forms the main element in the painting, and, despite the presence of allegorical figures in the foreground, is proof of a curiously modern interest in hill-formation. In the main, however, the contention is true that the mountain in art does not appear in the seventeenth century.

The landscape tradition passed to Claude, and then forked. One branch, the English, produced Wilson, Crome, Constable, Turner, and the water-colourists. To the other belongs Poussin, and, through him, the Barbizon school in France. (It should here be noticed, at the risk of anticipating, that this last-named group derived from Bonington a large share of Constable's influence, and owe perhaps the greater part of their inspiration to English sources.)

Traces now begin to appear of a love of mountains for themselves. Crome's "Slate Quarries," some of Wilson's Welsh pictures, many of Turner's sketches, show rocks and hills painted for their own grandeur and beauty. Similarly, in much of Corot's early work—before 1830—bare mountain sides and wastes of rock stand unadorned by trees or other counter-interests.

Of Constable we are told that "the grandeur of hills weighed on him. He wanted meadows";* but Plate III., in the book from which this quotation is taken, shows that he possessed a very real understanding of mountains.

The recognition proved only momentary, and was soon lost in conventional trickery. In England the water-colourists began once more to use mountains merely to break the level of a landscape, to give a pleasing variety. The idea of depicting them solely for themselves became actually abhorrent. An extract from William Gilpin's "Essays on Landscape Painting" will show the attitude which became general to the early English school:—

"In landscape painting smooth objects would produce no composition at all. In a mountain-scene what composition could arise from one smooth knoll coming forward on one side, intersected by a smooth knoll on the other, with a smooth plain perhaps in the middle,

* "Constable." By C. J. Holmes.

and a smooth mountain in the distance? The very idea is disgusting."*

To prove the awful result, he reproduces a drawing in his book done on these very lines, a drawing so superior to all the other illustrations in the volume as to show how utterly tastes have changed and advanced since his time.

Again:—

"The beauty of a distant mountain depends on the line it traces along the sky. . . . Such forms as suggest the idea of lumpish heaviness are disgusting—round, swelling forms without any break to disencumber them of their weight."†

"Mountains in composition are considered as single objects, and follow the same rules;—if they join heavily together in lumpish shapes, if they fall into each other at right angles, or if their lines run parallel—in all these cases the combination will be more or less disgusting."†

Barbizon painting underwent a change somewhat similar to that just described in England. Corot altered his manner, and evolved the graceful greenery and scenes of trees and water for which he is admired to-day. It is, perhaps, to be regretted that he exchanged his strong renderings of mountain and rock for twilight fantasies, which, for all their lyrical charm, slide frequently into sentimentality and prettiness. His fellow landscape-painters, Rousseau, Daubigny, Dupré, and the veteran Harpignies, used mountains, either not at all, or merely as incidents in a panorama. Courbet alone, the greatest of them all, continued to the last his rugged studies of cliff and slope, blending the romantic tradition with the realist, supplying, as the first real painter of rocks, a noble and fearless link between the ideal and the selective. In true modern landscape the influence of Courbet appears again and again, strengthening and vigorous.

With the coming of Impressionist painting, no marked advance is noticeable. Monet and his followers are concerned with light and colour, not with form. Dutch Impressionism—the Hague school, with its curious mixture of seventeenth-century genre tradition and modern French landscape

* "Five Essays on Picturesque Subjects." By William Gilpin. (London. 1808.) p. 19.

† "A Tour to the Lakes." By William Gilpin. (London. 1808.) Vol. I., p. 89.

methods—keeps to trees and sky. It would be unreasonable indeed to look for the birth of the mountain in art to take place in Holland!

Before passing on to the latest phase of European painting, some attention must be given to the art of the Far East. China, Japan, India, loom large in the history of the landscape tradition, and especially in its newest development, where their influence, as will be seen, has been very great.

In the art of the Far East, whether theoretical or practical, there are traces from the earliest times of a conception of landscape and of its bearing on art somewhat similar to that of Wordsworth. The early Chinese, in their aphorisms and paintings, loved to express the majesty of mountains.

"Rhythmic vitality, anatomical structure, conformity with nature, suitability of colouring, artistic composition and finish are the six canons of art,"

wrote Hsieh-Ho in the sixth century A.D., and no subject could be more suitable than a mountain for the application of those canons. Through the later periods of Chinese art, and during the history of the painting of Japan, recurring cases appear of the same inclination.

But there are differences of opinion among the Eastern theorists. Here is Kuo Hsi, who seems to be an early Chinese incarnation of William Gilpin:—

"Hills without clouds look bare; without water they are wanting in fascination; without paths they are wanting in life; without trees they are dead; without depth-distance they are shallow; without level-distance they are near; and without height-distance they are low."

Indian art provides such a striking parallel to the ideas of modern European painting that it will be useful to return to it when discussing the new movement. It is sufficient here to say that an examination of Indian landscape drawings will reveal an interest in mountains similar to and no less vivid than that of the Japanese.

The interest in Eastern art began to spread over Europe during the last half of the nineteenth century. The de Goncourt brothers and Whistler, by adopting some of the Japanese methods, familiarised their countrymen with the ideas and practices of a hitherto little-known art. The researches and writings of Edmond de Goncourt, the flat, roomy arrange-

ments of Whistler, struck a note so new that a wild outcry greeted their efforts. But the strangeness has worn off. Whistler is accepted as a master; Japanese prints are everywhere; and, like the Spanish influence introduced by Manet in the face of general execration, the Eastern ideas have gone to produce a new art.*

It was near the end of last century that first appeared what has so misleadingly been called Post-Impressionism, an art with a new synthetic vision which saw beyond realism, which repudiated illusion, which tried to get deep down to where life and beauty touch, and so externalise that indefinite something which makes things what they always seem to us to be. This art, which has recreated decoration, which is going to revolutionise stage-craft, house-furniture, and even building, while it deals unhesitatingly with any subject, is perhaps chiefly significant in its bearing on landscape.

In this department appears that extraordinary parallel with Indian ideas which has already been mentioned. No Indian artist ever aimed at a mere representation of nature. He drew from his store of imagination and memory a revisualised landscape, which suggests the Idea behind nature, and not her seeming reality. To him natural forms were merely incarnations of ideas, and the effort to complete the expression necessitated a repudiation of illusion. It follows that the representative science displayed appears inept, if judged by ordinary outward standards. But when one considers that accuracy is purely relative, and that the synthetic vision naturally subordinates certain features in its preoccupation with others, to condemn Indian drawing as bad, or Byzantine either, for the case is analogous, shows a faulty standard of judgment.†

* Since this was written, Mr. Binyon's book, "The Flight of the Dragon" (Wisdom of the East Series, John Murray), has appeared, in which he deals more fully and with far more skill and knowledge than I possess with the question of landscape in Eastern art. As I unfortunately read the book too late to incorporate any of its suggestions in the present article, I merely refer those readers who are interested to this masterly essay, which expounds exhaustively the ideas at which I have hinted, without, I am glad to say, making it necessary for me to alter my conclusions.

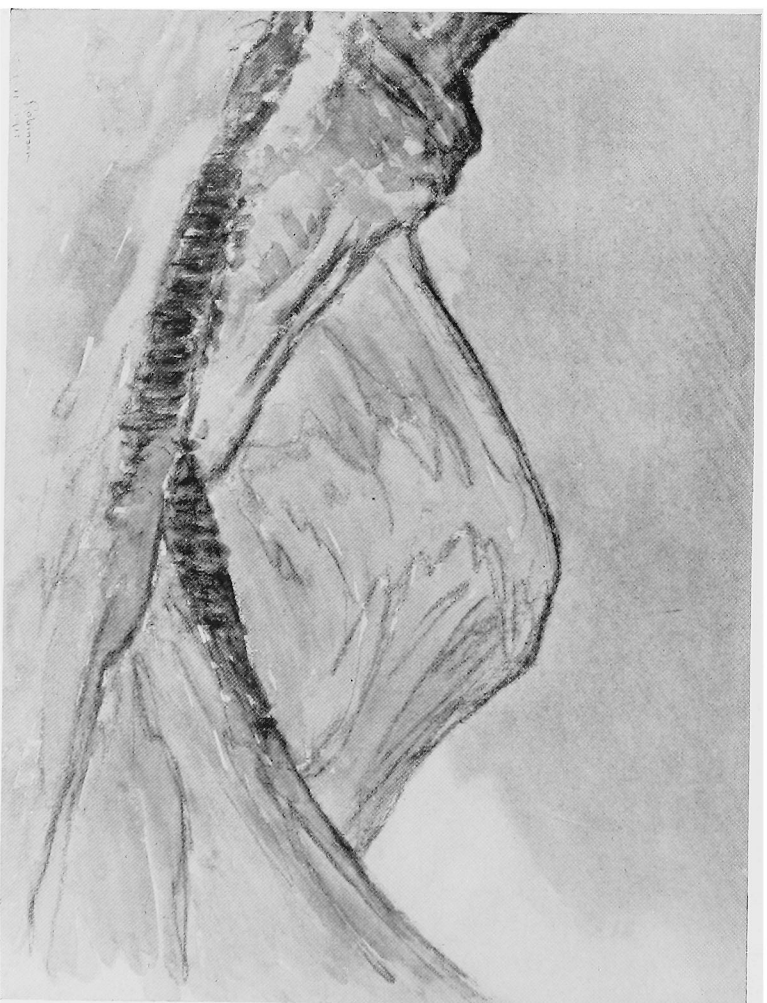
† For these observations on Indian art I am indebted to a highly suggestive essay on "The Aims and Methods of Indian Art," by Dr. Coomaraswamy, contained in his "Essays in National Idealism." (London: Probsthain and Co. 3s. 6d.)

As in Indian, so in modern European art, an understanding of the peculiar ideas which have inspired, is necessary for appreciation. Keeping, therefore, this fact in view, that the aim is not for illusion, but for the subtler and truer realism which lies in all natural phenomena, we can pass to the consideration of an artist who stands at the head of "Post-Impressionist"—or, as I prefer to call it, "Fauvist"—landscape tradition, and who really marks the beginning of the new appreciation of mountains.

Paul Cézanne has waited longer than any of his contemporaries for sympathy and fame, but now that his time has come he bids fair easily to outstrip Monet and the Impressionists in importance. As is often the case, the same reason accounts for his being neglected and for his later popularity, and that reason is the complete newness of his outlook. His vision was a much stranger and newer one than had been that of the Impressionists, and yet but for a fortunate failing of his own it might never have been expressed at all. Cézanne was a very great artist and a very bad painter. One may go further and say that had he not been such a bad painter he might never have shown himself to be a great artist. His whole being was clumsy and blundering, and his attempts to emulate the brilliant Monet in his light-effects were constantly baulked by this very clumsiness. In despair he gave up the task, and lumped down what he saw, and, being a great artist, he saw something quite new.* He saw line and decorative grouping where Impressionism saw only a shimmer of sunlight. His tactless, outspoken nature is reproduced in his paintings, be they still-life, figure-pieces, portraits, or landscapes. Mr. Sickert, comparing his work with the "gentle painter-like art of Pissarro," describes his pictures as "ninety per cent. monstrous, tragic failures," and from this standpoint the statement seems just enough.† But "brilliant and sane efficiency "

* The charge that Cézanne's work displays a "personal clumsiness of touch" was made by Mr. Holmes in his notes on the Grafton Exhibition in 1910, and though denied by some critics, is completely borne out by the judgment of those who knew the artist personally. M. Alexandre speaks of his "éloquente impuissance."

† Introduction to an Exhibition of Pictures, by Camille Pissarro, at the Stafford Gallery, London, 1911.



Robinson. By C. J. Holmes.

is not the highest attribute in an artist, and Cézanne, by his genius, redeems and almost glorifies his clumsiness. To landscape he gave structure and rhythm. In his pictures of Ste. Victoire, of steep fields and hillsides, the strong architecture of the landscape is the framework of the whole.

This originality of Cézanne has been developed and perfected by an artist working in England to-day, whose work is more in sympathy with the moods and structure of mountains than even that of his great predecessor, and the artist is Professor C. J. Holmes, whom I have already quoted (see above).

Mr. Holmes is very modern, and he is an Englishman; that is to say, he is part of a movement which has a deep feeling for synthesis and the subtlety of rhythm—and this is important with a view to what has been said about the synthetic nature of mountains—and also he is a member of the race which has always shown more understanding for nature than any other in Europe, or, perhaps, in the world.

France, the leader in matters artistic, has never had any real grasp of nature since the days of Ronsard. The French are too intelligent, too pitilessly logical to accept the moods of nature without reasoning.

From such a generalisation one should, perhaps, except Rousseau. Although, in much of his teaching, it is difficult to escape the idea that the nature he preached has been touched up by civilisation, in comparison with many of his disciples he had a genuine desire to escape the works of men. In his political theory, in his morality, in his conception of the beautiful, he turned always to nature for his ideal. From his home in Geneva he learnt to love the mountains, to love the great calm and dignity of them, their aloofness from man and his pettiness:—

“En effet, c’est une impression générale qu’éprouvent tous les hommes . . . que sur les hautes montagnes . . . les plaisirs sont moins ardents, les passions plus modérées. Il semble qu’en s’élevant au-dessus du séjour des hommes on y laisse tous les sentiments bas et terrestres.”*

But even here one suspects that Rousseau is rather con-

* “La Nouvelle Héloïse.” Part I. Letter 23.

trasting the worries of a race cursed with powers of emotion, with the sublime peace of unfeeling nature, than admitting the passion of the hills, which differs only from that of men in its loftiness and nobility. And this last belief is not only held by the England of to-day, but was a prominent conviction of William Wordsworth, and he lies behind the English fondness for nature throughout the nineteenth century.

Of the group of great poets who make up the English Romantic Revival, who voiced during the first half of the nineteenth century the ferment of new ideas, the greatest is Wordsworth. Stirred, as were the rest, by the teaching of Rousseau—and it is here perhaps that Rousseau's chief importance lies—he expressed in his poetry the aspirations which in France found vent in an orgy of political philosophy and the eager, endless search for liberty. His poetry and his sister's journals foretell that art which was to supersede maudlin subjectivism, and, in its turn, Parnassian coldness. Coleridge may have more mystery, Shelley more fire, Keats more music, but it was Wordsworth who really felt the common soul in nature, the fusion of the human and the natural into one scale of moods and longings. He realised that mountains can hate, that they can resent intrusion, as can human beings.

I dipped my oars into the silent lake,
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizons bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct
Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me.*

—Which shows how mountains can be understood even by a man who was no climber, who, indeed, made a point of always walking round rather than over any hill on his way. His belief is the same with every aspect of nature. She has her moods,

* "The Prelude." P. 15.

and they are the same as ours. We can realise them because of—

A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

Wordsworth's power of expression, and even more his power of selection, lag far behind his power of feeling. But what may detract from the pleasure of actual perusal cannot lessen ultimate historical importance. Modern art must find in Wordsworth its greatest forerunner in the department of nature. From him, as has been hinted, springs the tendency which permeated French literature at the end of last century. The pantheist art of Symbolism which came to influence England in the nineties is, at bottom, a half-English movement.

A love of nature, therefore, is in Mr. Holmes' blood, and with this great tradition behind him he is working to give mountains the artistic interpretation which has so long been denied them. In his pictures and drawings of the English lakeland he has externalised an aspect of mountain scenery which is quite new. Someone has well expressed it by saying that he paints mountains not so much as they actually look, but as one remembers them to be; and this is the same as saying that repudiation of illusion or naturalism enables him to suggest the "mountainness" of the mountain, the vague, essential something which tells one it is a mountain.

In his heritage from Cézanne, Mr. Holmes has at any rate acquired no clumsiness, but greater skill has not tempted him to too much detail. He has carried to still greater lengths synthesis and simplification. In economy of line he can hold his own with any of the new school of painters. With a few bold strokes he gives the massive strength of hills and rocks. It is now possible to realise how simple is the structure of mountains, but at the same time how clear must be the discrimination between the essential and the superfluous. By adopting the black border with which many of the Fauves surround the objects in their pictures, Mr. Holmes is able to dispense with chiaroscuro—almost with perspective. He paints in flat washes of colour, admirably toned, and separates

one plane from another by a band of black. The distance springs into being and perspective is achieved without elaboration, without destruction of essential outline.

Besides this "realism of effect" as opposed to "realism of fact," Mr. Holmes has another definite aim, which attaches his art still more closely to Fauvism. He has a keen sense of the decorative importance of a picture. He has said himself: "The first function of a picture is architectural—it has to be a beautiful part of the wall surface."* This aim is certainly fulfilled in his work. The lines of the hills run in subtle rhythms, and the whole lies gracefully on the wall and becomes a part of it. As ever, Mr. Holmes is his own best critic. He has summed up this double ideal—synthesis and decorative value—as follows:—

"At the very birth of art we find the necessity of selection and omission, with a view to emphatic statement, recognised more generally perhaps than it has ever been recognised since. And with this necessity we may note another characteristic of primitive art—the love of rhythm and pattern."†

It has been seen that, with the exception of Cézanne, Mr. Holmes has no direct ancestor in European art. But, nevertheless, he is the ready pupil of centuries. His art is not merely, as in the case of several other prominent Fauves, a slavish return to the primitive. It is founded on a thorough knowledge of the past. A further extract from his book† will show that he gives a modern expression to centuries of ideals:—

"Painting succeeds in virtue of the things it omits, almost as much as by the assistance of the things it expresses. . . . In Egyptian art the figures might have been less stiffly uniform; in Crete they sometimes verge on caricature; in Byzantine work they assume too much the rigid character of architecture; with the Italians of the Trecento too much of the Byzantine temper may survive; in China forms may be contorted through the connection of painting with calligraphy. Yet with all their defects, these various phases of painting serve their destined purpose, and serve it much better than the painting of more sophisticated ages has succeeded in doing. . . . Contours may be as nobly drawn as human skill can draw them, but they must be firm and definite throughout. The colour may be as brilliant

* "The Dome." 1899. Vol. I., p. 147. (London: Unicorn Press.)

† "Notes on the Science of Picture Making." By C. J. Holmes. (Chatto and Windus. 1910.)

or as quiet as circumstances demand, but it must be applied in masses that are flat or nearly flat. Details, forcible suggestion of relief, and strong shadows must be avoided. In our own day these limitations have been observed and respected only by a single painter—Puvis de Chavannes, but in virtue of that restraint he has taken his place among the great masters.”

And so the art of Mr. Holmes is a direct practice of his preaching. To the tradition of simplified vision he has brought a conception of his own—the conception of mountains, of their formation and their rhythm.* Not Puvis de Chavannes, whom he has mentioned, nor Daumier, whom perhaps he should have mentioned, felt the character of landscape as deeply as Mr. Holmes has done. In his elimination he is not arbitrary, but natural and very just. His mountains remain synthetic, un-civilised, individual, as they are in nature.

But besides his debt to the centuries of European art, he is greatly helped by his knowledge and love of the art of China and Japan. Like so many modern Europeans, he has been profoundly moved by the marvellous achievements of Eastern painting, but, beyond an admission of general influence, no very clear artistic lineage can be made out.

Mr. Binyon has traced the influence of Hokusai in Mr. Holmes' work,† and the suggestion seems justified. Mr. Holmes has an avowed admiration for the work of the Japanese artist, and apart from this the folding lines of the hills and the flat, green washes of his water-colours show a distinct affinity.

“In Japanese painting, form and colour are represented without any attempt at relief, but in European methods relief and illusion are sought for.”

This is Hokusai himself, and Mr. Holmes has profited by the comparison to fuse both systems into one.

And so, while in the matter of Eastern as well as of

* Of the claim of Segantini to be considered the true mountain artist, I speak with some diffidence, as my acquaintance with him is small. But from what I have seen, I should say that he found himself unable to get away from the contrast between human figures and landscape which hampered the early English water-colourists, with the result that the spirit of the mountains does not dominate his pictures. In any case, his outlook is purely that of the naturalist, and if he is right, then Mr. Holmes is wrong, a conclusion to which I cannot subscribe.

† *Saturday Review*. March 4, 1911.

Western art, his great store of knowledge of the painting of the past is the foundation of his genius, the genius itself—the message and its expression—remains his own.

Before closing it would be well to mention one criticism which has been levelled at Mr. Holmes, and which, if it is true, constitutes a serious charge. He has been accused of being scientific to the point of having a formula on which he works. Perhaps the title of his book is partly responsible for the accusation, and it might certainly have been better chosen. But beyond this no trace of justification is visible. Order and inspiration are not necessarily incompatible. The extravagant lengths reached by the æsthetic movement proved the result of art ignoring science. Eccentricity had become a fetish, and Mr. Holmes is working with his fellow Fauves to restore reason and sanity. There is too much variety in his work to allow of a suspicion of any formula. A series of mountain studies naturally have some affinity, and this affinity has been exaggerated into a definite method. Such a charge cannot be further disproved than by assertion of its falsity. If that is insufficient, let the unsatisfied critic carefully study all Mr. Holmes' work, and draw a new conclusion. Continued belief in the formula must stay uncombated; but even should the charge be generally accepted as true, the admiration of one at least for Mr. Holmes and his work will remain unshaken.

A SCRAMBLE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

BY W. A. M. MOORE.

IN the following account I must apologise for lack of detail, but as I have no written records of the expedition and can find no maps of the district with the heights marked, perhaps I may be forgiven for not remembering these particulars nearly nine years after.

Louws Creek, about ten miles south of the main Delagoa Bay—Pretoria line, consists of a railway platform, a small store, and two white inhabitants. At least it did early in 1903; since then, I believe, it has grown to the extent of several stores and a gold mine. We had six miles to go across a sunbaked plain, and were, therefore, very glad to find donkeys waiting for us and three sturdy Swazis to carry the luggage. The range of hills we were making for runs along the Swazi-Transvaal border, and in this district three peaks close together stand out distinct from the undulating ridge. They are called the Three Sisters, and must be about 5,000 feet above the plain and 8,000 feet above sea level. On a spur of the southernmost lay our destination, a typical colonial bungalow surrounded by tangerine orange trees. Our host, who could talk fourteen native dialects, had found a small seam of gold-bearing quartz on his land, and my companion had come up to report on it. While they were busy sluicing and separating samples of ore I had many pleasant rambles over the neighbouring hills with our host's younger brother. The fact that two pairs of "ammunition" boots were cut to pieces in something under a fortnight will give some idea of the roughness of the country. The hillsides were covered with big boulders, between which was a dense undergrowth of thorns and creepers, almost impossible to walk through.

The only mode of progression was to jump from boulder to boulder or keep to the smoother arêtes. We started out on one of these days to climb the three peaks and, if possible, to bring back a klippspringer for the pot, as we had no fresh meat, accompanied by two Swazi hunters armed with assegais. I carried an old combination gun, one barrel for Martini ammunition, the other 12 bore, which became very heavy as we got higher and almost a danger when descending the boulders.

The day was a regular hot South African autumn day, but the ascent was over easy ground, with very grand and ever-changing scenery. We saw no game till we reached the top of the centre peak, when a small herd of bushbuck appeared about 300 yards away. They saw us at once, and as a small galloping buck at that distance is not an easy mark, no bushbuck went into the bag. We had, however, a magnificent view of the surrounding country. To the south and east the Swazi mountains, and on the other side the plains stretching away to the north, with the Crocodile River winding its way towards Lorenzo Marques. On the third peak we paused for rest and food, and I took the opportunity of examining the home-made (?) assegais of the Swazis. They were stamped with the name of a manufacturer well known in Birmingham!

On the descent our troubles began, or rather my troubles, as the others had lived all their lives in this sort of country and were accustomed to it, while I, with clumsy limbs, fresh from school, tired with the heat of the climb and hampered by the heavy gun, slipped, staggered, fell, and plunged down the hillside. After about an hour of this an extra painfully barked shin must have jerked out a loud and suitable exclamation, and a fine klippspringer, startled out of its mid-day sleep by such profanity, leaped upon a rock about ten yards off. That old Martini could kick like a mule, and no doubt, being balanced on the sharp top of a rock, the gun was not pressed close enough. When they had finished laughing the others pulled me out of my thorn bush, and we examined the spot where the klippspringer had stood. Not a trace was to be found. Confident in my inability to miss at so close a range, I could only bring in one verdict—"Blown to pieces,"

but one of the Swazis, an untruthful man, swore he had caught a glimpse of the vanishing buck some way off and going strong.

Shortly after this episode we got off the rocks and crossed a deep gorge filled with the densest of undergrowth. A small stream ran down it, its banks covered with light blue and scarlet creepers. Ropes of creepers hung down from the trees to meet the thorns and tangled undergrowth, so we were glad at last to get clear of it all and up the hillside on to smooth and open country. As we turned to look back at the rocks and crags we had left we perceived an old baboon sitting on a rock. By way of being kind to dumb animals I put a bullet near him to see him jump. The result was as extraordinary as unexpected. The whole hillside seemed to move, and in less time than it takes to write, baboons appeared from every hole and cranny as if by magic, and sat on the rocks jabbering curses as only monkeys can. There must have been between two and three hundred, and they seemed very indignant at being disturbed.

We reached home about 5 o'clock, hot, dusty, and tired, having been out since daybreak. Ten minutes later I was sitting under a spout of cool hill-water, with a branch of juicy, green tangerine oranges to slake my thirst. At that moment I would not have swapped my position for all the gold in the hillside.

IRISH MOUNTAINEERING.

BY CONOR O'BRIEN AND PAGE L. DICKINSON.

IT has often been suggested that climbing centres must exist in Ireland equal to those of Scotland, Wastdale, and Snowdon. The possibility of this may now, we think, be rejected finally ; since recent exploration of the most out-of-the-way parts has shown plenty of good walking country, but rock suitable for serious climbing is almost entirely lacking. There is an abundance of interesting cliff scrambling of every degree of difficulty to be had from various centres, but apparently nothing to repay a definite climbing visit. The reasons for this are mainly climatic, for though a large portion of Ireland is uninteresting geologically, yet in the southern and western groups a structure is found which, in a less favoured climate, would afford plenty of good climbing. Numerous faces occur which, seen from a distance, show bright promise of clean, steep buttresses and impressive gulleys. These, however, we have found to be either too disintegrated or too covered with vegetation to tempt one to stay long on them. In fact, only the hardest granite and quartzite are able to repel vegetable growths, and these rocks, though forming considerable mountains, have become denuded to such an extent that they afford few faces of sufficient inclinations to attract climbers. It may be best to consider the main groups, taking them from north to south in their natural order.

The Donegal mountains form the most important of these, and are perhaps the best, from a walking point of view. Errigal, although it is only some 2,400 and odd feet, looks a great deal more, as it rises from a plain but little above sea level, and is the best mountain of the sugar-loaf type in

Ireland. Its steepest northerly ridge is narrow for its last two hundred feet and gives one a feeling of height; its difficulty may be compared to the easy part of Crib Goch. There are several fine scree shoots for the descent. Under bad conditions of wind and snow (which are rare here) it calls for some skill, and offers more than the walk that brings one to the top of its neighbours, Muckish and Duish, in any weather. The individuals stand rather away from each other, and, in a ridge walk of any length, a lot of ground has to be lost in ascent and descent.

The Slieve League group, in the south-west of the county, appears more promising. The mountains in this district break away into the sea in cliffs 1,000 feet or more high, and, both in the neighbourhood of Glen Head and under Slieve League, are composed of quartzite and are devoid of vegetation. The hotels at Glencolumbkille and Carrick are centres from which interesting climbs might be worked out.

The Tyrone group, which joins that of Donegal, has no peaks of any great height, and although imposing enough from the plains, does not make a good walking country. This is separated again on the east from the Antrim mountains by the wide agricultural valley of the Bann river. The Antrim mountains are more pleasant and interesting in their lower wooded glens than on their rather bare summits of the moor type. The views of the North Channel and Scotland are generally as good from the lower slopes as they are on the tops, and when walking in Antrim it is best, on the whole, not to keep too high. Exception perhaps may be made for Slievenanee, which is rather steeper than its neighbours, and from the top of which there is a wonderful view of sea and plain. The Giant's Causeway and the other basalt cliffs give no climbing whatever. It does not seem possible that they can have any interest beyond a geological one.

The Mourne mountains are probably the duller of the large groups, and are nearly all rounded and covered with short heather and grass; they have no definite ridges, and none of them, except Slieve Gullion, have much character. The going is good enough, and but little bog is met.

The small disconnected ranges of hills lying in Fermanagh

and Leitrim have here and there small crag faces, which would no doubt give climbing of a sort ; but, for the most part, the bogs below are so wet that it would not be worth the trouble of getting to them. Slieve Anierin (1,900 feet), some ten miles west of Lough Allen, has a long line of crag on its southern face about 200 feet high in the middle and half that at the ends. We have never been within less than about half a mile of this, but from that distance it looks fairly clean. The rock is millstone grit. There is nowhere one could stay to explore it less than about twelve miles away, but possibly we may have something to tell of it later, if opportunity offers.

Going westward still, one meets the Sligo mountains, which are really part of the Leitrim range, but differing from the latter in character as they near the coast. There is less bog on the lower slopes and more outcrop of rock. The west of Truskmore has a big face of crag several hundred feet high. One of the writers and a friend spent two days roped on these crags, which are covered with the steepest grass imaginable. This party was glad to leave the climbs alone after several sketchy retreats from their grassy faces, where the rock all sloped the wrong way, and belays did not exist. An axe would have been a help, as several times steps hacked with a sharp stone were the only stand for an agitated second. There are some interesting caves in these faces, and the lower slopes, where one expects scree, are suitable for grass glissades.

Westward again lie the Mayo mountains, which are divided into two groups by Clew Bay. These peaks, the most important of which rise towards 2,700 feet, overlook one of the most wonderful bits of wild coast scenery in Europe. Bay after bay, island beyond island, stretch north and south, and out west is the rolling Atlantic. It is little wonder that the people here, with the open passage to America in front and the dark mountains behind, regard the United States as the centre of the world and civilisation. England is vague and remote.

On the north side of Clew Bay the great cliffs of Croaghnaun (Achill Island) rise some two thousand feet sheer out of the sea. We spent two days on these with a borrowed clothes-line (it was when on a fishing holiday and climbing had not

been thought of), and found these cliffs to be similar to the most broken-up part of the west peak of Llewidd, but even more grassy. Moreover, the grass and heather is none too secure, as the soil is thin and the ledges sloping. The angle is probably about the same as Llewidd.

South of Clew Bay the Murrish and Partry Ranges run in two parallel ridges of Silurian grits and standstones in a south-westerly direction, culminating in the Muilrea group, 2,688 feet in height. This forms a semi-circle, the inner or eastern side of which falls for nearly 1,000 feet from the summit in very steep cliffs of well-bedded sandstones and conglomerates. Unfortunately the rock is far from sound, and grass grows thickly on the steepest parts, so that it is unlikely that any climbs will be made on this face. The group, however, affords a ridge walk second to none in the country for beauty, and the going, over short grass, is very easy. The Mayo mountains are separated only by a narrow but deep valley from the great group of bare quartzite peaks which form the Beanna Beola, or Twelve Pins of the English geographer, and the Maum Turc mountains, in Galway. Ben Baun (2,400 feet) stands practically in the centre of this tumbled mass, and is pleasant going from any side, the western ridge from Letterfrack giving possibly the best views over a country where all is good. One has the feeling of being on an island from any of these mountains, which form an even pentagon, four sides of which are water.

The whole central plain of Ireland contains only a few unimportant ranges. The Slieve Blooms are probably the best, but low and entirely covered in grass and bog as they are, there is little to interest an energetic walker and nothing for a climber. They are an outcrop of old red sandstone in the carboniferous limestones of the plain, and run south-west to join the Tipperary and Limerick range, which has no collective name. Keeper Hill is the highest of this lot, but in spite of its considerable elevation of 2,278 feet, it has no features, and, like the surrounding country, provides dull and boggy walking.

The other two ranges, which we include in those of the central plains, are the Galtees and Knockmealdowns. These

have both rather well-defined ridges and give about four good days' walking from the little village of Ballyporeen, which lies between the two. The lower slopes are boggy, but the tops, in summer at any rate, can be taken fast, and the outlook, over wide-spreading grass and woodland, with glimpses of the Atlantic southward, is pleasant enough.

Returning to the west coast, there is but little high ground between Mayo and Kerry, except the low Burrin hills of Clare. From the bogs of Tubber and Gort in the edge of Galway and Clare one can look across to where the northern lines of Clare hills rise, and some high crags facing east are plainly visible. We have not examined these, nor do we know anyone who could give an account of them that would be of any value to a climber, but as they are of millstone grit, like the famous cliffs of Moher on the opposite side of the same ridge, it is possible that clean, short climbs would be found here. We suggest that this might be kept in mind by anyone going to that neighbourhood.

A long road across the flat bogs of North Kerry brings one to the Dingle peninsula, with Mount Brandon keeping guard over it. Brandon is a long winding ridge, precipitous on its eastern face, under which lie small tarns in deep hollows, enclosed by narrow, jagged buttresses, and from a little distance appears a very climbers' paradise. Here again, however, the red sandstone of which it is composed affords such a fertile lodgment for vegetation that climbing would be unsatisfactory and dangerous. The gullies are all filled with grass, at an inclination of about 70° , but the rock generally is sound, and some of the buttresses might prove negotiable, though a continuous climb of 2,000 feet is not to be expected. The ridge walk is magnificent, and is only one of several that can be easily done from the inn at Cloghane.

The centre of the Kerry mountains, which are divided into several minor groups, with local names to each, is the great horse-shoe ridge, formed by Carrantual and the two Reeks. This is perhaps the finest ridge walk in Ireland. In parts it is quite narrow, and the angle at each side steep enough to cause the formation of a cornice in a severe winter. Snow is, however, rare in Kerry, but if one hit off a hard frost there,

the sandstone cliffs on the inner sides of the horse-shoe would undoubtedly give very fine climbing. Again we must make comparison with the west peak of Llewidd, but here it is much wetter and the grass ledges more sloping. From scree to ridge is about 1,500 feet at the highest point, and the length of the face is probably a third of a mile. The climbing is of the chimney type, with pitches up to 60 feet or so, at a severe angle. Definite routes would be hard to follow. There are no obvious gulleys, and, from the inspections we have made, nearly everything could be turned. We do not recommend the Reeks for summer climbing, but the main ridge walk is dry and goes fast.

There are some very impressive crags above Lough Clooin, at the head of Glencar, and also above Sneem, but we have not heard of any attempts on them other than those of a traveller who was caught in a fog, and found those on the Sneem side very difficult to negotiate, largely on account of their wetness and the slimy bog mould running down them.

Another district in which climbs may be found lies between Derreen and Berehaven, in Co. Cork. The mountains, which attain an elevation of 2,000 feet, are composed of sharply tilted slates and grits, and, though intersected by grassy terraces, might afford some strenuous slab work. These also, we believe, have never been explored.

The sea-cliffs in this district are generally, except where of low elevation, too grassy for satisfactory climbing, but we suggest that some very interesting routes might be worked out on the great cliff west of Portmagee, near Valentia, which is some 500 feet high, and appears to be sound and clean.

The Wicklow mountains are the last which we shall mention, and we include with them their spurs running into Dublin, Carlow, and Wexford. These are, of course, the best known of the Irish mountains to those who live on the east of the Irish Sea. We have already described in this journal such climbing as we have worked out, but this year have done some exploration on Howth (north of Dublin) and Ireland's Eye. The last has made an important addition to our good short climbs, and the final 60 feet of the smaller pinnacle from the sea side tested to the utmost the strength of the rope

on which the writers were hauled up by a skilful and athletic novice. This pinnacle had never been ascended before from the sea side, and should only be led by a first-class rock-climber under good conditions. The second cannot assist the leader at the two worst parts, where the latter needs a full 60 feet of rope. The total height is about 250 feet, the angle about that of W. R. Reid's route on the Crib Goch Buttress. The top 60 feet is not quite above reproach as to its soundness.

We have yet to investigate at close quarters two sets of crags—the North and South Prisons on Lugnaquilla, which have a lamb-killing reputation among local shepherds. A telescopic examination does not suggest that it is justified.

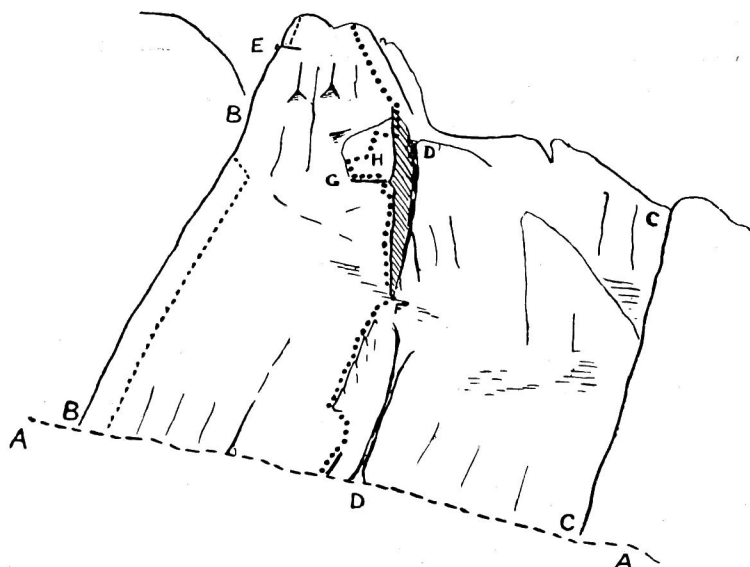
THE GROOVED ARÊTE ROUTE—NORTH BUTTRESS OF TRYFAN.

BY E. W. STEEPLE.

THE abnormally steep rocks of the upper part of the North Buttress of Tryfan, below the "View Terrace," are continued northwards for some distance, terminating at a gully which contains a good deal of grass, and might conveniently be called the "Green Gully." It commences on the Heather Terrace, some sixty paces to the south of the Nor' Nor' Gully. The middle section is rather indefinite; higher up, the right wall is very much cut away, and the edge of its prominent left wall presents, from some points of view, the appearance of a steep arête, marked by a long groove running down its centre. This arête was climbed at Easter, 1911, by a party of five—Messrs. A. G. Woodhead, A. H. Doughty, H. E. Bowron, G. Barlow and myself. An interesting and fairly direct route was made to the foot of the arête by starting from the Terrace a few feet to the left of the Green Gully.

A right-angled corner was climbed for 15 feet. The ascent was then continued up steep slabs by means of cracks and grooves to a commodious platform. A short scramble up heather then led to a large spike of rock, leaning inwards. A sharply defined rib commences just to the left of the spike, and this was followed for 60 feet to a narrow ledge. Above this the rib was smooth and holdless, and a step was made into a groove or trench on the left, which was ascended to a heather patch. A 12-foot wall, which makes a very neat pitch, and a scramble up heather and broken rock, led to a sloping terrace. The foot of the "Grooved Arête" was now seen a few yards to the north of the point reached.

A breezy ascent for some 75 feet on splendidly sound rock led to an overhang, where a divergence from the strict arête was found necessary. A step was therefore taken to the left into the long central groove previously mentioned. This was ascended with some difficulty for 10 feet to a ledge about



THE NORTH BUTTRESS OF TRYFAN

(From Cwm Tryfan).

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| A. A. The Heather Terrace. | E. The View Terrace. |
| B. B. The North Gully. | F. Foot of the Grooved Arête. |
| C. C. The Nor' Nor' Gully. | G. The Haven. |
| D. D. The Green Gully. | H. The Slab. |

Ordinary Route - - - - -

Grooved Arête Route

(The summit of the North Peak is hidden behind the "Low Man" in the diagram.)

1½ inches wide, on the right wall. The second man now climbed into the groove, and belayed his rope by means of a deep cleft behind the little ledge. The groove is closed in above by a continuation of the overhang, and a difficult stride

was made round a corner on the left, marked by a diminutive ash-tree. A cautious pull up a thin edge of rock then brought the leader to a heather shelf (the Haven), furnished with a good belay-pin. The whole party assembled here.

This point had been reached by Dr. Barlow and myself in 1910, but we were then unable to make any impression on the upper part of the groove, which, owing to a curious contortion of the strata, overhangs the lower part. On this second occasion Barlow gave me a shoulder, but I was stopped a few feet higher by a bulge of rock in the groove. Woodhead then made an attempt, but with no better success, and we finally decided that the pitch was unjustifiable. Moreover, the large slab on the left of the groove gives a much finer route. (Barlow had suggested this possibility on our first visit, but I then thought the place looked rather hopeless.)

Near the south end of the Haven a few feet of moderately easy rock and a short grassy cleft gave access to the commencement of this slab. I did not like the look of the place any better on a second inspection, and the credit of the successful issue is due to Woodhead, who came up with a little pick, and with infinite patience cleared out a line of small holds up the slab. These run at first to the right, then straight up to a small rock recess, about 50 feet above the Haven. A boss of loose rock on the left should be avoided.

From the recess a traverse was made to the right across a bulging mass at the top of the slab to a little platform in the groove, above the troublesome part. An exit from this delightful nook was made on to the edge of the true arête on the right, which was followed until a narrow ledge was seen sloping upwards along the vertical wall of the Green Gully. This ledge is rather sensational, but good hand-holds were found where they were most needed, and from the farther end a large grass platform was easily reached. An alternative route to this platform can be made by stepping back into the groove above the steep wall behind the "nook," and climbing two little pitches. The variation is not so interesting, however, as the traverse of the ledge.

The remaining 100 feet of rock are remarkably steep, but furnished with excellent holds, and we arrived at the shoulder,

or "Low Man" of the Buttreſs, a few yards to the north of the cairn marking the ordinary route.

A diſtinctive finiſh was given to the climb by the aſcent of a ſeries of cracks and two ſharp-pointed pinnacles immediately in front of us on the North Peak. This route commences ſome diſtance to the north of the "wing of rock" generally uſed, and at a lower level.

The climb here deſcribed is longer than the other buttreſs climbs on the Eaſt Face, and, with the exception of the neighbouring Terrace Wall Variant, more difficult, and ſhould only be attempted by an experienced party. It is, however, a climb of conſiderable variety and much intereſt. A party of three would probably be the beſt number, and 60 feet of rope will be found ſufficient between each man.

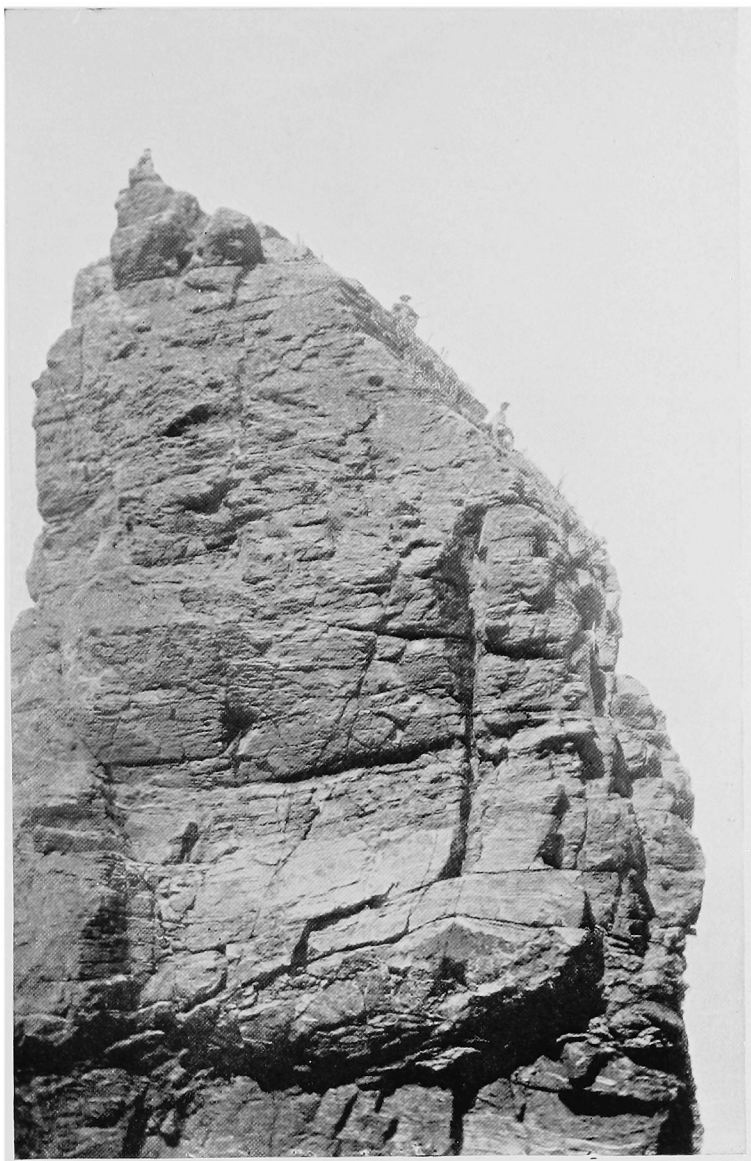
SEA CLIFFS AND OTHERS.

BY L. SHADBOLT.

THE enormous mass of climbing literature dealing with North Wales and the English lakes almost makes one forget that there are any other climbing centres in the British Islands. The population in both districts is at times excessive, and many of the more popular routes, if not soon taken in hand by the Society for the Preservation of Historic Footholds, will be lost to posterity. The moral effect of leading the next generation up a climb, and being unable to complete the ascent on account of a worn-out foothold, is too horrible to contemplate. It behoves us, therefore, before it is too late, to indicate fresh hunting-grounds, and, lest the tale of these be insufficient, to eke out their scantiness with the stories of some of the less well-known haunts.

Sea-cliff climbing has its limitations, but under the best conditions can afford really fine sport. I never understood the lack of enthusiasm for it until I tried it in Cornwall not long ago at one of the few parts of the coast which seem to be at all well known to climbers. It is true that there are some good climbs there, but there is a fearful lack of continuity about them, and one never has time to get really steeped in the spirit of the thing before it is over. Coast traversing cannot be indulged in to any great extent owing to the number of deep indentations and the frequent presence of broken ground at the foot of the cliffs. The range of available coastline is a very important consideration to the sea-cliff enthusiast, and one is naturally led to the conclusion that the centre of a small island affords his ideal habitation. Such an island is Sark, which possesses between twenty and thirty miles of coast-

line within a radius of two miles. Practically the whole of this coastline can be traversed fairly low down, roughly speaking, between low-water mark and fifty feet above high-water mark. Nearly all the rock is sound at these levels, but, like most sea cliffs, the upper portions are generally very rotten. The greatest caution is necessary on an ascent involving anything in the nature of serious climbing, especially as the eye is lured by the easier angle after the extreme steepness of the sound rocks below. The rise and fall of the tide is so great (over forty feet at spring tides) that the character of the coast is quite altered, and some places which at high tide afford splendid climbing, at low water are nothing but rocky foreshore. Low water, however, has to be utilised to overcome obstacles which are impassable at other states of the tide, and the general idea is to climb each section at the highest tide possible. The rope is not of much use for this kind of work, and generally on the steepest walls there is an unobstructed drop to the water—to fall in is, however, considered a breach of good taste. It is not, of course, always possible to start climbing on a falling tide, and as there are very long stretches of coast where there is no possible way of getting to the top of the cliffs, the risk of having one's retreat cut off should be borne in mind. A hot day, with a calm sea, might well be chosen for such an expedition. This horrid thought suggests the necessity for wearing clothes which are comfortable to swim in—to wit, shorts and a shirt with sleeves ending above the elbow. Rubber gym. shoes instead of boots are advisable. Owing to the variations caused by the tide it is hardly possible to give a detailed account of any section of the coast from a climber's point of view, but the following observations may be of use. There are, to the best of my belief, only three very short stretches which cannot be passed within fifty feet of high-water mark at some state of the tide, one being the mouth of Victor Hugo's cave. The best scrambles will be found on Little Sark, and the whole of this part of the coast can be traversed with neap tides. As regards the indigenous fauna of the island, the adhesive limpet takes a prominent place. The more robust specimens may be used as footholds if due warning is given of the coming strain. Lest anyone



The Needle, Sark.

should be tempted to take out a patent in pocket footholds, let him be warned that it has already been tried. In more youthful and optimistic days I carried out an exhaustive series of experiments with quantities of the largest size in limpets, but, in spite of careful nourishment, they refused to stick to unknown rock faces at the word of command, basely dropping into the sea the moment they were released. After all, it is hardly playing the game to use such adventitious aids, and the true mountaineer should scorn to stoop so low. In addition to the coast traversing, there are several fine rock pinnacles, the most noteworthy being *Les Autelets*, which can be reached from the shore at half-tide. There are four of them from 60 to over 100 feet high, and only five known routes between them. There are doubtless other possible routes, but I think they will mostly be of the order that is explored with a rope from above. The way up the three smaller ones will be fairly obvious, but the big one is rather deceptive. There is a cave running through it, and the first route was to get up near the centre of this cave and work out towards the north entrance along a series of sloping footholds on the true right wall. This traverse is generally very slippery, and goes much better with the hands across on the opposite wall of the cave. When the entrance to the cave is reached an upright position must be cautiously attained; a few feet higher a ledge with an iron peg driven into it suggests bringing up the second man.

Another route is straight up a vertical crack which starts at the left-hand top corner of the cave, and which can be well inspected from the ledge just mentioned. It is somewhat awkward to get into, as the small holds on the wall below are badly placed, and the wall itself very steep. The crack is exhilarating, but not difficult. The rope is worn as an ornament by the leader, eighty feet being the most fashionable length; as he must ascend the whole height of the crag before finding a suitable sidence. There are many other fine pinnacles of varying height and difficulty all round the coast.

The Western Highlands of Scotland are not so far from London as people sometimes imagine. In any case, they

should certainly be better known. A night in the train passes like the shadow of a dream, with the prospect of breakfasting at Arrochar on the following morning.

To be away on the hills by nine o'clock is quite an early start. Cross the head of Loch Long and work up the hillside past the shepherd's cottage into Corrie Suchgach. At the upper end of the Corrie there is a high curtain of crags on which there is fine climbing. Out of several routes perhaps the best is the gully almost in the centre of the crags, well marked by a huge chockstone held in its jaws about half-way up. The first pitch is about eighty feet high, and is taken on the left (looking up). The first thirty feet are fairly easy, and the second man can join the leader in a grass-floored cave. The roof of the cave overhangs considerably, but can be utilised for support until it is possible to escape through a small tunnel into the bed of the gully above. Two short pitches and a scramble bring one level with and behind the great chockstone, and a traverse can be made on to it. The wall above is then climbed to the top of the pitch. A somewhat grassy thirty feet follow. From here the summit rocks of Ben Nairnan are easily reached, and a traverse of the peak made by two short climbs—up the Arrowhead Arête and down the Nairnan Chimney. Both these climbs will be easily recognised. The traverse of the three peaks of the Cobbler next suggests itself as a fitting termination to the day's work, and so down to Arrochar and on to Crianlarich by the evening train. On the occasion of which I am writing the real objective of the expedition was Glencoe, and, after the somewhat strenuous first day described above, the run up to Ballachulish in the train was very welcome to my London-softened sinews. Hopes of a real off day were, however, dispelled when my companion, A. C. McLaren, insisted on carrying me off for a climb immediately after lunch at Clahaig. The utmost concession allowed to my enfeebled state was that the afternoon should be limited to the ascent into Ossian's Cave. The cave is high up on the face of Aonach Dubh, and although there is nothing very thrilling in the feat of getting into it, that afternoon always lives in my memory as pure delight. The quest of the tin box occupied

us for some time, and incidentally enlarged the cave to a considerable extent. When this matter had been brought to a successful issue we descended, and were soon stretched on the rocks below the cave, looking up in awe and wonder at the great crags immediately around. Various nightmare routes were speculated upon, when suddenly a splendid chimney stood revealed only a few yards to the east of the cave itself, running straight up to the top of the crag. As our holiday was only a long Scotch week-end, this discovery necessitated a change in the programme, and we decided to give it our last day and stay on at Clahaig instead of going on to Kingshouse, as originally planned. The following day was devoted to a fine new climb on Slob Coire nan Beith, but as it finished up at exactly the same spot as somebody else's climb, and they had built a large cairn, I fear some confusion might arise if I gave a detailed description of it. By way of consolation we went off to the Church Door Buttress, and found the top chimney peculiarly impressive in the wind and rain. That is, indeed, a fine place—one of those spots where it is borne in upon one most forcibly that the leader must not come off. There is no special temptation for him to do so, except perhaps the effect of the vertical view on his highly strung nerves. A sense of duty sent us to traverse the ridge of Aonach Eagach next day, but the day was thick, the ridge was long, and the wind cold, and my particular grievance was that it started too high up—3,000 feet of steep grass and bad scree before starting the climb was too much. We were rewarded on the way down by a sudden view of our chimney on Aonach Dubh across the valley through a break in the clouds, and hope of the morrow took the place of the doubtful joys of the present. The chimney is very deeply cut at its base, which is on a level with the bottom of the pitch leading up to Ossian's Cave, but after 150 feet its character alters, and its shallow continuation runs up to the top of the buttress. The deeply cut portion offers fine climbing with back and knee. At the top of this we were forced to make a short traverse out on to the buttress, and worked up close to the chimney for about twenty feet, until a large grassy ledge was reached. From here the leader stepped to the left into the chimney again, and took out eighty feet of

rope before calling on me to follow. This pitch is very steep, but the holds are just sufficient. The next difficulty is a chimney about thirty feet high, overhanging at the top, and this took some time to negotiate. Eventually we tied our rope to a large spike of rock in the bed of the chimney, and I climbed up to a niche just below the overhang in order to steady the leader over the next few feet. He needed no help, however, and, once clear of the overhang, made rapid progress. Above this the climbing gradually became easier until we reached the top of the buttress. Another quarter of an hour took us to the top of Aonach Dubh.

The twilight was deepening into night when we reached the valley, but a plunge into the Cona was not to be resisted, so we plunged.

WASTDALE TO-DAY.

BY H. R. POPE.

WASTDALE can never regain the position that it held in the great days when it was the happy hunting-ground of English explorers, and O. G. Jones recorded half a dozen brilliant first ascents in as many lines of the climbing-book at the inn. Nowadays the book is largely given over to verbose variations of familiar themes, and the would-be explorer has to go farther afield. Here and there depressing signs of middle-age are visible. One or two climbs which began life as the last word in rock-climbing are gradually degenerating into its A B C. But though the effects of prolonged popularity are unmistakable, they can easily be exaggerated. There is still a distinctive quality about the cream of Cumberland climbing which the Wastdale enthusiast can never find in Wales or Scotland. He may appreciate the larger scale of other mountains, and yet feel no disappointment on returning to his first love. The best Cumberland climbs achieve their effect with a remarkable economy of material. They are composed for the most part of good clean rock set at a steep angle, and—in contrast with certain Welsh and Scottish mountains, which the climber is expected to ascend by embracing a series of luxuriant heather tufts, varied by an occasional bush of blaeberreries—there is very little vegetation or scree. What they lack in length they make up to some extent in concentration. Walker's Gully, for instance, though only half the height of the Great Gully, Craig Yr Ysfa, would probably produce on most people an almost equally strong impression. Such comparisons are always barren, still it is perhaps true that there is more diver-

gence at Wastdale than elsewhere between the human estimate of height and the unemotional statements of the aneroid.

But the newcomer at Wastdale is affected by a change in more than the condition of the climbs. A good head has long been considered desirable in a climber, but the growth of guide-books has suggested an interpretation of the phrase which has hitherto been commoner in offices, and places where they work, than on the hills. Imagine an up-to-date party approaching the foot of their climb. Rucksacks are opened, and masses of literature are produced. The leader studies them all attentively, and at last feels sufficiently well-primed to attempt the first pitch. Half way up he is observed to falter. Can it be that his nerve has failed him, or is it a sudden attack of mountain-sickness? No, it is his memory which is at fault; the ill-fated man has entirely forgotten whether he ought to put his right or left hand upon that obvious hold above his head.

Granted that this picture, like most other climbing illustrations, is an improvement on real life, the fact remains that books tend to figure largely in the modern climber's outfit, and greatly affect his estimate of climbs. In the old days everyone was his own explorer, and had to find out for himself by crude experience what the modern climber can read by his fireside. The latter hardly ever comes to a climb without knowing more or less accurately what he has to expect, and desirable as this result may be in many ways, it cannot be denied that it gives him an unfair advantage. On the other hand, corporate bodies have a wonderful power of assimilating new recruits, and reducing their views to uniformity with tradition. Readers of this paper may observe a semi-digested air about it, which suggests that in my case the process of assimilation is incomplete. However, the publication of even the most perverse opinions sometimes serves a useful end by confirming other people in the possession of their own.

To my mind, one of the most disappointing climbs at Wastdale, in view of its historical associations (it seems rank heresy to say so), is Moss Ghyll by the slabs. In fine weather the popular route to the foot of Tennis Court Wall is more like

a promenade than a famous climb, and no one ever enters the lower pitches proper at all, except to get a drink. It is equally unsatisfactory to climb a difficult piece, when there is an easy way by the side of it, and to take the easy way and feel that one is shirking difficulties. Happily, this dilemma ends at the foot of the Wall, whence the climbing is delightful till the Collie Step has been traversed "with the demurest of foot-falls." But this piece of real climbing can hardly be much more than 100 feet in height, and if one follows dutifully in the steps of the Ghyll's first conquerors, one is left with the uneasy feeling that a notable victory has been rather cheaply won. Moreover, the sight of the Direct Finish, which looks very impressive from the slabs, suggests, what is quite true, that victory is really nothing but retreat. With Collier's Chimney, or Botterill's Exit, Moss Ghyll is still a very fine climb, but otherwise it is a place in which the climber follows too slavishly the familiar advice as to the treatment of difficulties—look them in the face, and pass on.

The North Face of the Pillar has suffered similarly, though to a lesser degree. The holds on most of its pitches are almost embarrassingly plentiful, but signs are not wanting that many of the multitudes which climb it are superior persons, who disdain the obvious. The most remote and hopeless faces, apparently far out of reach of any possible hold, shine with that brilliant polish which is the hall-mark of genuine popularity. As a result it is a little difficult to imagine what the climb was like in the days when it was untrodden save by the occasional boot of Mr. Haskett Smith. Probably very little remains the same, except the wonderful views of the Rock and Ennerdale, which still make it one of the pleasantest of climbs. The sensational element, for such as want it, is provided by the hand-traverse, which would seem to show that the art, or (as some may prefer to call it) the vice of rock-gymnastics, has undergone remarkably little development in the last ten years.

Of the other especially popular climbs, the Napes Ridges may once have been more difficult, but they can never have been more delightful than they are to-day. Like a tactful guide, they flatter the beginner by continually presenting him with difficulties, which he is very proud of surmounting, and

bringing him into situations which (with or without a trifling inclination of the camera) can be made to look most horribly alarming. At the same time there is ample provision in a small space for all the various categories of climbers. It would be difficult to find a more satisfying arête than the Arrowhead Direct, or a more exhilarating 80 feet of face-work than the lower part of the Abbey Ridge. On a windy day the latter can be really formidable. The climbing is all done by balance on small but excellent foot-holds, and it is wonderful how a sudden gust accentuates the steepness and bareness of the face. Under such conditions it is pleasanter to repair to the Ling Chimney, where ingenuity is delightfully rewarded by an effortless ascent. It is unnecessary to say anything about that national institution, the Needle. Every passenger by the L. and N. W. R., who takes an interest in posters, must be familiar by this time with its remarkable shape, and even more remarkable colouring.

On many of the Wastdale climbs one's enjoyment of the present is tinged perhaps with a suspicion of regret for the past. But there are two climbs at least—the Shamrock and West Jordan Gullies—in which I find that speculation as to what has been is entirely crowded out by the contemplation of what is. The Shamrock Gully's single pitch is guarded by some hundreds of feet of the most abominable scree, but those who avoid it for that reason miss what appears to me to be one of the very finest gully pitches in Cumberland, or anywhere else. If there is a place in which it is possible to spend more energy with less result than I did there on the last of ten days' climbing in September, I hope (for my companions' sake as well as my own) that I shall never find it. The left-hand crack starts invitingly, but one is soon undeceived by a feeling of hopeless constriction. Indeed, my head became at last so firmly wedged that I felt that even if all other means of support failed, I should still dangle, painfully but securely, like Absalom in his oak-tree. A distant foot-hold on the left wall suggests an avenue of escape, but that too is a delusion, and apparently the only way to regain the crack from it is to hurl oneself violently into it, and take a deep breath. In my case these tactics must have taken the best part of twenty

minutes, and I was still as far from the top as ever, and my companion was still waiting patiently below. Other people may see at once that the proper method is to utilise two nicks in the left wall for the right heel, and then emerge gingerly on to the convex surface of the boulder, trusting more to the natural affinity of mass for mass than to any more positive aids. Such, at least, was my impression of the place; but a great authority has written that "a recent rock-fall has facilitated the ascent"! It is a peculiar fact that rock-falls on standard courses almost invariably facilitate the ascent, even when to those who did not know the climbs before they appear to have removed all traces of hand and foot-hold.

The West Jordan Gully seems to have been much neglected since its first ascent in '98, which is rather remarkable, in view of what Bingley might have called its "horribly rude" appearance. It is short, but full of interest, especially in the traverse out from the upper cave, and it has an impressive air of gloom, which gives difficulties their full value. My acquaintance with it is limited to a single day two years ago, on which two assaults were made upon it. In the first there was a discussion in the party half-way up, and the "Noes" had it. In the second, a reconstituted party succeeded in transporting half of itself to the top, but the other half preferred to return from the final pitch, alleging that the first foot-hold on the traverse was an impossible distance from the floor.

A climb which is still very difficult, in spite of some damage to its self-respect caused by innumerable ascents (mostly perhaps not unassisted by the rope), is Kern Knotts Crack. When I first saw it Jones's phrase, "exceptionally severe," had for me a vague suggestion of desperate and unintelligible difficulty, like the term "Binomial Theorem," and three trials with a rope were needed before this salutary illusion began to go. Not that there is any illusion about the difficulty of the crack, which is indeed rather of too obvious a kind. In its present condition it seems to me to require severe gymnastics, rather than any particular aptitude of the eye or fertility of invention. Still it must always be attractive, because it is so exactly one's ideal of what a crack should be—a chiselled cleft splitting a sheer smooth wall. Even more laborious is the Smuggler's

Chimney on the Ennerdale Face, which is very nearly as painful as the Monolith Crack, and much longer. A place to dream of, not to tell.

In the old days, when English climbers were still primarily mountaineers, and as such looked for the easiest way up places instead of the most difficult, Pier's Ghyll was a very popular resort. It was just the place to appeal to them, since obviously the natural way to ascend a ghyll is the way which Nature has contrived for coming down it. This may explain why pages and pages in the earlier part of the climbing-book are devoted to descriptions of it, till finally Dr. Collier climbed it throughout in '93. After that it stood as something of a reproach to modern climbers, who appeared to take no further interest in it till last year, when a large party took advantage of a fortnight's fine weather to repeat the ascent. They found it exceedingly diverting, but their enthusiasm met with no response. Apparently climbing up a stream-bed is an acquired taste no longer much in fashion; and certainly from the purely æsthetic standpoint it may be doubted whether the beauty of a waterfall can be best appreciated from inside. Comparative estimates are difficult in a place so liable to alteration. However, I can safely say that there is still one really good and difficult pitch in the ghyll, which requires nothing but sound climbing. The rock is reliable, and there is no more water on it in a dry month than is frequently present in many standard gullies after a few hours' rain. In fact, in dry weather it may be recommended to climbers who enjoy magnificent scenery, and are not so degenerate as to consider it disagreeable and dangerous to get their clothes wet. When Brown Tongue palls, they might do worse than consider the claims of Pier's Ghyll as an alternative route to Scawfell Pike. And if they go on, as some of us did, to Jones's Route, up the Pinnacle from Deep Ghyll, just as the evening sun is on it, they will appreciate the luxury of climbing warm dry rocks all the more by contrast with Pier's Ghyll's recesses.

There is a wonderful fascination about the arête on Jones's Route, due partly perhaps to its splendid situation, partly to the excellence of its climbing. From the ledge at its foot,

reached by a traverse, the wall plunges vertically into Deep Ghyll, and on the left the great slabs of the face go curving down towards the screes. Though many scratches have robbed it of something of what schoolboys call "the religion of the place," it is still remarkably difficult. I should think that only "a man of iron, cold and hard," could pull himself on to the first sloping shelf above the ledge without a distinct sense of satisfaction and an added interest in the view. On the eastern skyline Woodhead's Route offers what is in many ways the most enjoyable piece of face-climbing in the district. The lower slab remains, for me at any rate, as good a place to enjoy the sober melancholy which comes from the contemplation of the nothingness of things in general and of hand and foot hold in particular, as it seems to have been when Jones himself detected "an absent sort of look" about the holds. Unfortunately, its pleasures are too quickly over. Pisgah Ridge is longer, and very delightful, especially in the crack leading to the Fives Court. On my first visit to it I was handicapped by a curious theory of my own invention that arm-pulls were vulgar and to be discouraged, and the crack is hardly the place to choose for its illustration. Half-way up I began to realise that my position, both in practice and in theory, was rapidly becoming untenable, and the necessary readjustment was made none too soon. Subsequent visits have shown me that the crack goes easily enough, once one admits the necessity of those three arm-pulls. The whole climb is probably in much the same condition as when it was first ascended. Indeed, in the summer of 1910 both Pisgah Ridge and Woodhead's Route showed very few traces of human passage, though one cannot say as much of either of them to-day.

But perhaps of all the climbs which have any claim to popularity, the one which had the greatest reputation to maintain, and has maintained it best, is Walker's Gully. A successful visit to it last year inspired me with an admiration which subsequent events have done nothing to diminish. Like the spot most dear to Odysseus, the great adventurer of an earlier day, "it lies low towards the dark, while the other [climbs] face the morning and the sun. It is rugged, but a

good nurse of heroes; nor can I set eyes on a more pleasant place." All the same, not a few parties at one time or another have wished themselves out of it, though like a true gully it only permits of movement in two directions, up and down. I believe there is more climbing in it for every foot of its height than there is in any other gully in Britain. My impressions of the two-storied third pitch are particularly vivid. By the time the climber reaches the tip of the big tilted chockstone, and realises that there is not a single hold in all its slippery length of six or seven feet, he will probably feel that a slip would be something more than inconvenient, though—especially if a good-sized stream is impinging on his face—something less than impossible. Indeed, under bad conditions the gully should be the ultimate ideal of the stoical school of climbers, whose motto is that of the "Modern Traveller":

"I find that torture pays me best,
It simply teems with interest."

But for those who dislike discomfort in its acutest form, it is then most emphatically a place to avoid. There is not a single pitch in it which could under any conditions be described as dull, and the climax is perhaps the most impressive thing at Wastdale. At present the gully possesses an additional point of interest in the shape of an extraordinary assortment of fixed ropes. In the top pitch there are two small loops, one of which tradition ascribes, rightly or wrongly, to the pioneers of the first ascent. Lower down is a looped 60, left in 1910, while on the big two-storied pitch a dangling length of no less than 160 feet remains to excite the curiosity of parties on their way to the foot of the North Face. The history of this last and most recent relic is somewhat obscure. Seen on a fine dry day, it seems to flaunt itself in derision of the party which preferred to trust Italian hemp instead of the holds provided by Nature. But it is worth remembering Leslie Stephen's observation, that nothing is less like a mountain at one time than the same mountain at another. This is especially true of gullies, which are capable on occasion of undergoing transformations which would do credit to Drury Lane.

It is possible that these fragmentary impressions may acquire an archaic interest by about the middle of the century. The young climbers of that day may note with amused astonishment that there was actually a time when Walker's Gully was thought difficult, and the nose of the Pinnacle unjustifiable. But let us hope that Nature will abstain from pushing a process, at present only here and there perceptible, to its logical conclusion. On the whole, the pessimist has a poor case. There is probably as much good climbing to be had at Wastdale now as there ever has been, even though the pioneering days are over

CLIMBS IN NORTHUMBERLAND.

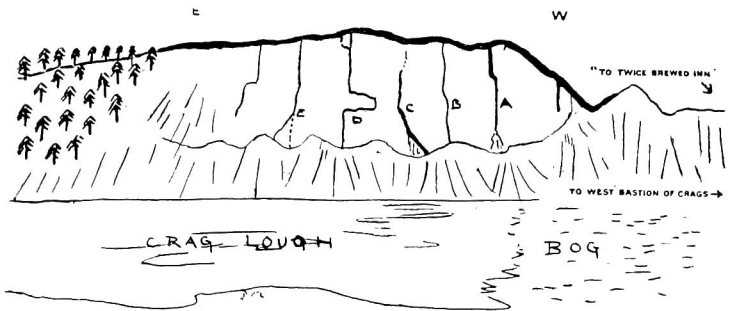
BY MARCUS BERESFORD HEYWOOD.

IN THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL the attention of Northumbrian climbers was drawn to the admirable scrambling to be found on the lonely Wanney Crag, as also, to a smaller extent, on Simonside. It is a pleasure to be able to add a note upon a very sporting face, more accessible, at least for Novocastrians, and with a peculiarly romantic and historical charm. Anyone who, like myself, had been plunged into a coal mine for seven months, and extracted and deposited as remains in Newcastle on Tyne—which I pictured as a sulphuretted form of concentrated coal mine—would have been as pleasantly surprised as I was to hear that a man (apparently lunatic) had been seen climbing on the crags below the Roman Wall near Hexham. On investigation, I succeeded in finding this delightful practice ground, once patronised by the Romans, but of whose earlier conquest little record survives.

A three-mile walk from Bardon Mill in a north-westerly direction brought us, on the first occasion, to a welcome refuge (it was pouring with rain and thick with fog) at the Twice-Brewed Inn, appropriately kept by Mr. and Mrs. Potts. In spite of their prayers and entreaties not to "gan near thim Kregs," the whole of a wet Saturday afternoon and of many subsequent half days was spent in exploring their opportunities. They lie on the north side of the Military Road, about ten minutes' walk from the inn, and are crowned by the famous Roman Wall. At its highest the vertical part of the crags measures 90 ft., and it is subtended by a steep slope of old scree and bracken. The rock is exceedingly steep, chiefly composed of basaltic whin silt, clothed in tufts of grass and green

slime all the winter, while dusty lichen takes the place of slime in the summer. This natural bastion falls into two halves. The westerly is too much broken up to offer many definite climbs, but at its western corner three routes were made. Two are on rotten rock, which is held in place by foxgloves and ash trees and decorated with a hawk's nest, and one is a clean climb up a very stiff slab, which necessitates exceptional contortions. The easterly section of the crags overhangs the "Craig Lough" itself, and provides climbs at short intervals throughout its whole length. The majority are difficult, some exceptionally so.

Route A, the first attempted, has a peculiar interest



on account of its historical climbing associations. Up to 1907 it had only been descended, and that abruptly, by Hadrian's superfluous prisoners. Doubtless this association suggested the name, which was recovered, not inappropriately in view of its sanguinary climbing character, by the later explorers of the Bloody Crack. It is a severe open and vertical chimney, with an unattractive green crack as an upper exit. A traverse, alternative to the green crack, on tufts of grass is not to be recommended, since the jackdaws have removed the most important tuft for nest-building.

Route B presents no particular technical difficulty, but is very exposed, and the rock in places is not too secure.

Route C is the nicest problem on these crags. It consists of a very narrow sloping crack (just large enough for the hands) about 18 ft. high, in the angle of a corner where a

block has slipped off the main mass. The angle is, roughly, 120° , and the key to the situation is a small horizontal crack, which will only hold one nail, and so encourages the climber to a higher hold of more reasonable proportions. The route then leads up a short chimney with broken blocks, which is followed by another rather stiffer chimney. This climb, though short, affords an astonishing amount of exercise.

Route D is an amusing climb. It contains two traverses on loose rock, one quite delicate, and ends in the usual open chimney at the top. An easier exit can be obtained by traversing to the left.

Route E is an open gutter. It starts with a hard and overhanging short chimney, and ends with a gymnastic effort over a small chockstone. The climber stands on the tip of his left toe on a small ledge and raises his right foot about level with his hip. It should then be opposite a cavity between the chockstone and the main crag which affords good foothold.

There are also a few small and exceedingly severe climbs on the Sewinshields Crag, about twenty minutes' walk north-east of Craig Lough, past the Hot Bank farm.

The climbing on all the clean rock is difficult, and some of the routes would not blush if they were rated above the Monolith or Kern Knotts cracks. Their verticality is accentuated by the turf which is not yet cleared from the small cracks, and pushes the climber out until he has to tear it down. It then blinds him with dust. Motor goggles are, in fact, very useful on these crags in summer. Every hold has still to be tested, as huge blocks have been known to break away from an unseen cleavage. The scrambling is, taken in all, of a high class, but delightful in its variety, and the wildness and beauty of the north moorland as seen from "thim kregs" more than repay the climber who is stranded in Newcastle for bruised shins and spoilt clothes.

ON CLIMBING BOOKS. WITH FOUR MODERN INSTANCES.

BY C. MYLES MATHEWS.

*“How camest thou by thy burden at first?”
‘By reading this book in my hand.’”*

AN eminent conductor, exasperated to candour, possibly by some more than usually typical work proposed for performance at a provincial festival, is reported to have said, “Why will people compose when it is so much easier not to compose?” Like all great truths, it bears a general no less than a particular application, and can as readily be asked of the writers of climbing books as of the compilers of cantatas or oratorios. Conceivably a climbing book may be written for the personal satisfaction of its author. Such a reason may thoroughly enough justify its composition; it can, however, in no degree excuse its publication. The motive of gain can hardly be sufficiently compelling, since experience must in innumerable cases have proved its baselessness; and the first fine careless rapture we experience in finding our names in the British Museum catalogue, glowing and gratifying though it be, may often be bought at too dear a price.

It is fast becoming a distinction of the few not to have written a volume of mountain chit-chat, miscalled adventure. The possible topics of such a work have long since been exhausted. The Bergschrund no longer affords material for a paragraph. The opening of the inevitable bottle on the inevitable summit leaves us unmoved. The qualities, or the defects, of the common guide have been sufficiently exploited. Our purple patches are worn threadbare. Anything but silence broods amidst the eternal snows. I wonder that you will still be writing, Signor Climber: nobody marks you.

Indeed, you have a weightier matter to answer for. You have queered the pitch. "Every mountaineer . . . must feel a sense of rage against the pioneers. Their ruthless waste of new ascents, which, properly husbanded, might have provided material for the energy of generations; their reckless exploitation of all the jokes, which, properly preserved, might have kept the club warm far off in winters which we shall not see, remind me of the desolating track of an invading army. I should not have asked them to leave us the Matterhorn still untrampled, or the flea unridden, but they might have kept their feet from, say, the Mettelhorn, or have spared the porter from their mirth." Thus Mr. Schuster, from whom I have also stolen the quotation that heads this paper. I would take this opportunity of asking his forgiveness, and of pointing those who have not yet read it to one of the most distinguished, fascinating, and compelling books that it has been my good fortune to read, by confessing at once that if in this article there be anywhere found a happy phrase, a delicate turn of words, a notable paragraph, or a subtle suggestion, it is probably taken from the same source.

Climbing books have three excuses for being. They can, as guides, afford information; they can, as accounts of exploration, describe the unknown; they can, as literature, justifiably exist. In the modern instances with which I have to deal are examples of all three categories. If my instances be four, whilst my categories be but three, one of the four works would logically seem to lack excuse, and they who think nobly of the craft will in no way shrink from the conclusion.

Climbing books possess strange properties. There has come to be a conventional climbing humour to which they almost all strive only too successfully to attain—a humour as far as possible removed from the Comic Spirit. No sword of Common Sense, but rather a cumbrous two-handed engine, heavily belabouring, but leaving our withers unwrung. It may take one of two forms. In the one case, an elephantine lumbering after the ridiculous, that can call nothing by its right name, so that a cow becomes a bovine quadruped, or the Parson's Nose an ecclesiastical nasal organ. In the other case, a forced spriteliness, a laboured nimbleness, a devastating

gaiety that creates a corruscation, and calls it wit. "At this point," to quote the classical if apocryphal instance, "Smith exhibited a sudden desire to execute some fancy steps in the air, and was only recalled to a proper sense of his position by a vigorous tug from Andermatter ; but he remained apparently resentful of this cavalier treatment of his terpsichorean efforts until we reached the Col, when he revenged himself by annexing more than his proper share of the luscious comestibles with which he had been careful to overload the sack which it would not be his lot to carry."

Another characteristic of such books is their extraordinary employment of inverted commas. Their pages positively dazzle. The proper use of quotation marks would seem a mystery too deep for the ordinary mind to solve. It was once my privilege to be shown a letter of thanks for some small kindness which contained this memorable phrase: "For all that you have done, I hope 'God' will bless you." So far as any principle may be said to direct a use so arbitrary, it would appear that no self-respecting page can be considered complete without at least one pair. Phrases such as this, "and many a disappointed and 'pumped out' craigslist has been forced to give it 'best,'" leave one wondering what sign the printer can have left at his disposal to indicate when an actual quotation is intended to be made.

If this be the nature of climbing books, what can be more unaccountable than the desire to possess them? Some men collect stamps, some railway tickets, some postmarks. The object collected seems of little importance. The craving is supplied by the act of collection. And so there be individuals who collect an Alpine library. It is a disease, like measles or any other, to which the flesh would seem inevitably to be heir ; and, like measles, it is commonly of no considerable duration. It is, as a rule, suffered young ; it leaves, in general, no lasting ill-effects. I have had it, as have my fellows. I was ambitious to possess an Alpine collection. I began my library with *The Playground of Europe*, and tried each succeeding volume by its standard. My library remained a collection of one volume. It is so no longer. Mr. Schuster's book has joined it on the shelf.

SWISS MOUNTAIN CLIMBS. By George D. Abraham. (London : Mills and Boon. 1911.) 7s. 6d. net.

"The need," says Mr. Abraham, "of a conveniently small and concise guide to the best expeditions that are available in the various districts has been frequently expressed." The book contains descriptions of the more usual climbs from the more frequented centres, and is arranged in sections: Climbs around Grindelwald, Climbs from the Eggischhorn, Ascents round Kandersteg, Climbing about Zinal, and the like. The author attempts to deal with the whole of the Swiss mountains, with the inevitable result that the book is bulky and incomplete. It contains 431 pages, and is too large and too thick for convenient carriage in the pocket; moreover, a climber on, say, the Schreckhorn does not want to carry with him a description of the Grand Combin. It would have been at once simpler and more useful to have split up the book into its constituent sections, and to have bound each section separately. The cover is so arranged as to form as complete a casing as possible to the contents. This is a difficult matter satisfactorily to achieve. The Club's experiment in the Climbs on Lliwedd was not particularly successful. Probably the only efficient way of covering a book intended for use on the mountain is to carry it in an oilskin bag. The top and bottom of the Climbs on Lliwedd were left uncovered; in Swiss Mountain Climbs they have a two-fold flap, which affords considerable protection, but greatly hampers any easy turning of the pages.

A work of this sort must inevitably be one of two things: either a guide in the popular sense, appealing to the casual tourist, or a guide in the climbing sense, restricted to mere detail of route, time, and direction. The one is bought at the railway bookstall, and read, or perhaps left unread, in the hotel garden; the other is carried in the pocket, and referred to at doubtful points on an unknown climb. Mr. Abraham tries to combine the two, and will probably satisfy neither class of purchaser. In information such as this the tourist is neither interested nor concerned: "A course is laid up the moraine to the right-hand side of the Schönbühl glacier, until the névé above the ice-fall affords a passage to the foot of a deep snow

and rock couloir." Whilst of what conceivable moment to the climber can the following rhapsody be imagined by Mr. Abraham to be? "The Oberland! What climber has not felt the magic of those words as the train sweeps forth from the black depths of the Olten tunnel to glide down Bernewards amidst the glories of the upper Aar Valley?"

What the climber wants is sheer unadulterated information reduced to its barest limits, as he gets it in Conway and Coolidge, with a reference to the original authorities, where the account of the first ascent may be consulted if desired. Mr. Abraham is at once too eclectic and too diffuse. He gives, for instance, but two routes for the Lyskamm, where Conway has five. Some centres receive much more detailed consideration than others. This is notably so of Arolla, doubtless owing to Mr. Abraham's personal familiarity with the valley. Some districts, for example, the Tödi and the Bifertenstock, are hardly mentioned at all, while such of the peaks of the Mt. Blanc Group as happen to be in Switzerland (admittedly a small number) are wholly omitted.

At most of the centres, descriptions of smaller ascents to serve the purpose of training climbs are given. This is a useful feature of the book. Another is the presence of outline drawings of many of the peaks, on which some of the various routes have been approximately marked. The lettering on these drawings is unfortunate; a bolder type would have been preferable. As it is, it is at times a matter of considerable difficulty to follow them, so little are they differentiated from the detail of the drawings themselves. There is a slip on Diagram 5, since the indicated way up the Jungfrau from the Little Scheidegg side appears to end on the slopes of the Klein Silberhorn.

Mr. Abraham appears to condemn the use of crampons—a view not universally shared, as a paper in another part of this Journal shows. He also holds British climbing the best preparation for Swiss. "The finished 'home product,'" he says, "will probably find himself a better rock-climber than any of the guides, excepting a few of the first-class leaders." If by better rock climber he means better rock climber so far as Switzerland is concerned, the statement is open to serious

question (see the interesting and suggestive article on Climbing Down in this number of the Journal).

A list of the guides' tariffs for each district is given as an indication of the respective difficulty of the several climbs. As a rough approximation of its difficulty, the tariff of a climb may serve well enough when it is remembered that the difficulty is only one of the two components of the tariff, the other being the popularity of a climb.

The book contains several photographs by Messrs. Abraham, of Keswick, and excellent many of them are. It is written in a style to be described only as Dr. Johnson described the pastoral. The splitting of infinitives is doubtless an arbitrary matter of taste, but the split is an unusually wide one in "to first of all attack." Its humour may be judged by the two following passages:—

"The name of these, the 'Schnaps Fluh,' is no excuse for 'tippling,' otherwise there may be 'toppling' on the narrow ridges above."

"And now as the climber passes up the valley, holding his breath, perchance, as the roar of distant avalanches reveals the possibility of a coming flood, he holds his nose also as he passes along through the dirty, evil-smelling villages, of which Lourtier is the highest in more senses than one."

There is the inevitable misquotation from Lycidas. Sentences such as these, while perhaps they point a moral, in no sense adorn the tale:—

"The following is a good example of this, and for a good party there is scarcely another in all the Alps to equal it, or the variations thereof, in variety and wide topographical interest."

"Few Englishmen, aye, and even women, if they be sound of wind and limb, but what could tackle an average Alpine ascent."

And there is a passage on page 389, the execrable taste of which nothing can possibly excuse.

MY CLIMBING ADVENTURES IN FOUR CONTINENTS. By Samuel Turner, F.R.G.S. (London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1911.)

Mr. Turner would probably be the first to admit that his climbing adventures have been practically confined to three continents. His week-end journey from Buenos Aires towards Aconcagua and back neither yielded, nor can have been expected to yield, material climbing or particular adventure. It is, then, with climbing in Europe, Siberia, and New Zealand

that Mr. Turner is in this book mainly concerned. "I am a commercial man, not a literary man," he says, "and I write a plain, uncoloured narrative, feeling that I leave myself at the mercy of all literary critics." This he most emphatically does. His book, he tells us, was written under trying circumstances on board ship. From internal evidence one would have assumed that it had been dictated. It is hastily put together. It is full of vain repetitions. It is eked out with extracts from the *Daily Mail*, the *Wellington Press*, and *Truth* (New Zealand). Its grammar is by no means unexceptionable. Its style is graceless and uncouth.

"The Matterhorn is one of the most impressive mountains in the world, on account of its apparent obelisk; and the summit is as exposed as any summit. The mountains around seem very fierce, and the precipices most vertical. The position is similar to being up in a balloon, just like standing up in the air, and next to Mont Blanc it is as good a mountain from which to see the mountain-system of the Alps as one can imagine."

The book is pervaded by an exaggerated egotism. Mr. Turner appears to think that any fact about himself is necessarily of interest to his readers. He skips some six thousand times in forty minutes on board ship in the Red Sea, and prints a certificate to this effect signed by the purser and the mate. He balances a parasol on his chin in Ceylon, and publishes a photograph of himself executing the feat. His companion falls into a crevasse; the "author photographed him before pulling him out," and the photograph is printed to record so memorable an achievement. The author "climbs easy slopes" of some quarry; he explores a crevasse; having done so, he not unnaturally climbs out again; he lends a jersey to a roadman; he leads a party up Mount Cook Buttress; he bivouacs; he starts on mule-back from his hotel; he climbs a "pinnacle with round top, making use of only foothole." In each of these wholly uninteresting situations he is accompanied by a photographer, and reproduces the resulting exposure. Nor is his ardour quenched by the absence of companions; he rises superior to every difficulty, and gives you a "Photograph of the Author, taken by himself on the top of some steep rocks," and again a photograph of himself "taken by a long tube." The spirit of competition gets hold

upon him, and he out-climbs, out-balances, and out-lectures a drunken quarryman in Wales; he achieves a record time on the Matterhorn; he makes a terrific ascent in Dovedale, in the awed presence of an admiring Bank-Holiday throng.

The extraordinary thing about the book is that with all this against it, it yet persists in being interesting. Indeed, it could hardly be otherwise. Mr. Turner has in him the restless spirit of adventure. He is, he tells us, a very busy commercial man. His business takes him to far corners of the earth. There he snatches such holidays as he may, and in them accomplishes much. He was of the party that made the first traverse of Mount Cook, a tremendous expedition. He has done exploration and climbing in Siberia in all the bitterness of a Siberian winter, when to reach even the foothills of the Altai range was an undertaking that might well have given any man pause. In Siberia Mr. Turner accomplished, and, to all intents and purposes, accomplished alone, work of outstanding merit, under the circumstances of the most excessive difficulty. He explored part of a region practically unknown. He made the first ascent of Willer's Peak (about 17,800 feet). He made, alone, an attack on Belukha, under the most adverse of conditions. In New Zealand he made the first winter ascent of Mt. Ngauruhoe, and, with Messrs. Fyfe and Ross, climbed the Priest's Cap, and was beaten on Mt. Sealey and Mt. Elie de Beaumont in bad weather twice. His most ambitious and arduous expedition was the first traverse of Mt. Cook, which he accomplished with Messrs. Fyfe, Ross, and P. Graham. The curious in such matters may be intrigued in comparing his account of the climb with that written by Mr. Ross (*Alpine Journal*, No. 172).

The book is profusely illustrated with photographs of and by the author. None of them are of particular merit. Some are exceedingly bad. Had they been fewer and fitter, they had the more adorned the text.

SCRAMBLES IN STORM AND SUNSHINE AMONG THE SWISS AND ENGLISH ALPS. By E. Elliot Stock. (London: John Ousley, Ltd. 1911.)

This book, illustrated by poor photographs and indifferent drawings, would seem to have been written by a magazine

reader for magazine readers, and in it may be found most of the journalistic clichés, that, by hard service, one would have hoped had long since earned the rest of oblivion.

Does the author unpack his sack, he is *on breakfast bent*. Does he start on an expedition, he must needs *break bounds*. Rope, sack, or clothing is never put on, it is invariably *donned*. A halt is not made, it is *called*. The sun is *Old Sol*. Day-light *usurps the place of darkness* upon the hills on which the author's feet are *planted*. Does he move fast, he *travels at express speed*. Meals are not eaten, but always *despatched*. Does he stop for breath, he *calls a halt*, and, should such stoppages be frequent, the *halts* are *legion*. The Mönch cannot be referred to by anything so ordinary as its own name, it is either the *Old Ecclesiastic*, or *His Holiness*.

Of the author's style, the following passages will give a sufficient indication:

"Each foot and hand hold had to be carefully cleared with the ice-axe before they could be trusted, and even then it required the closest watch upon one's movements."

"The pastoral beauties of the English lakes draw tourists by the thousand, and of every nationality, to themselves each year; but the home-coming question, 'What do you think of Wastwater?' would probably find fifty per cent. of them agape and asking its whereabouts."

"In point of fact, the Dale is quite a pocket edition of Zermatt, excepting that it lacks its odours and possesses a lake. Similar, too, in that its best peaks are shut from view by the foothills, the exception being Great Gable, as in like manner is the Matterhorn to Zermatt."

There the matter might be left, were it not that this work raises a serious and important question. The book contains an account of the author's first climb, the Breithorn, a description of an ascent of the Wetterhorn, and what is called a scramble on the Wellenkuppe. These climbs are pleasant, if familiar, and even when taken with a guide, as on the Wellenkuppe, who is not well, hardly afford material for any particularly engrossing narrative. They form, however, only a small part of the book. The rest deals with such things as The Matterhorn in Sullen Mood, A Close Call on the Schreckhorn, On the Mönch in a Blizzard, Foul Weather on the Rimpfischhorn, and, most pointed of all, A Night on Great Gable Crags. They treat in a sensational manner of Alpine

battle, murder, and sudden death, as though these were the be-all and the end-all of mountaineering. From them the unlearned might justifiably assume that if a mountaineer did not for choice climb in bad weather, such conditions were commonly as often met with as not, and that the climber, as opposed to any other of mankind, stands in jeopardy every hour.

No sane man goes into a dangerous place just because it is a dangerous place, or would be in a dangerous place if there were any reasonable alternative route. Climbers, like other people, have had accidents, or have narrowly escaped them; have been in situations and under circumstances which they would have given a good deal to avoid. Such experiences they are not anxious to repeat, and they owe it, not only to themselves, but to their sport, to hide them with a decent reticence. That one should deliberately publish descriptions of such matters is inconceivable. The effect on the reader's mind can only be likened to that produced by the Neapolitan beggar, who discloses his sores to excite your pity and exhibits his deformities to extract your alms. The matter is summed up by Mr. Schuster in a passage, notable even amongst his many notable passages, a passage that I should like to see made a prominent preface to every journal of every climbing club:—"It is much easier to bring an expedition to an unsuccessful than to a successful end. And the most obvious sign of an unsuccessful party is that it should never return at all. This is, like all tests, fallible; but it is at least final. Put aside all the hideous circumstances of an Alpine disaster, all the sentiment, all the discomfort to neighbours and the grief to friends, this essential fact remains in the great majority of cases, that there has been, at least, some miscalculation of means to ends, some heedless Balaclava business, carrying some condemnation even in our tears."

PEAKS AND PLEASANT PASTURES. By Claud Schuster. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press. 1911.) 7s. 6d. net.

Mr. Schuster has lifted seeing eyes unto the hills; to them he has gone in the way of understanding; that which his heart hath spoken he has set down. With a temerity that is little short of amazing, he has prefaced his book with a long and

singularly apposite quotation from Bunyan. I can give him no higher praise than to say his work is worthy of its setter forth. He takes you, as all who write a climbing book needs must, over common ground: the morning start, the purgatorial moraine, the glacier grind, *névé*, snow slope, ridge, and peak. But with him in so familiar a wilderness, waters break out, and the parched ground becomes a pool. As his title would imply, the valley delights him no less than the summit, the kindly peasant of the Alp, the glen in the foothills, the afternoon meadows with their cattle and promise of deep draughts of milk, the torrent in the gorge, the lake beyond the woods, the path over the grass col, make, and not in vain, their several appeal. Having achieved his peak, he does not leave you there gasping and impaled, as do some, or bring you down breathless to the inevitable and wholly irrelevant *table d'hôte*, as do others; he descends delicately "from out His secret altar touch'd with hallow'd fire." He rests you in a green pasture, and leads you forth beside cool waters of comfort.

The book, with its notably happy Epistle Dedicatory to Miss Walker, is light to handle, comely to look upon, and a delight to read. The Clarendon Press have given it a type simple and sufficient, a spacing restful and refreshing, and a page pleasant and unglazed. The very chapter headings—The Temples in the Wilderness, The Path of Autolycus, The Scented Land, In Couttet's Garden—invite.

Mr. Schuster writes with a rhythm that is as rare as it is compelling.

"There we found a herd—a boy who, I think, was Pan himself; he understood no human language, and he appeared to herd no cows. But he played upon a pipe, and he led us gravely down, as befitted brother gods from the hills, to where we found the Alp itself and the operation of milking, and two natives, with whom he left us."

He expresses feelings of which we have all been sharers.

"That grim and yet pleasurable mounting of the heart as a horse gathers himself between our knees and rises, as the gust suddenly freshens and the sheet grinds before it and the boat heels, what are they to the climber's sense, half joy of battle, half fear of defeat, when the rope goes slowly away into nothingness, as only the grunts of the leader and the scratching of his boots tell him that he is not alone with immensity?"

And again:—

“To put your hands on the top of a wall and lightly to attain is excellent in itself. If you do it thirteen thousand feet above the sea and find yourself on the wall of the world, it is more excellent still. There is a physical joy in the long, swinging descent, feet and hands obeying with precision the half-expressed commands of your brain. It is the more excellent that you swing down into the unknown. Thus romance comes to aid a series of purely physical sensations. The longing for the delights of bodily exertion is coupled with the longing for glamour and mystery.”

He has found a variant for Melchior's “Es geht, aber ich gehe nicht”:—

“‘With a little more youth and a little more courage,’ I said, ‘we might attempt it.’ ‘Yes,’ said Joseph, ‘or a little more ignorance. Moi—père de famille; vous—père de famille; lui (with a jerk of his finger to his newly married companion) futur. Descendons’: and we descended.”

In all the flush of his youth, for whatever the impertinence of the tale of his years, I flatly decline, after reading this book, to associate Mr. Schuster with any other period of life, he has expressed delightfully and finally the compensations that await the mountaineer's middle age.

“He gains the joy of carelessness. No longer does he find it shameful to spend half a day in halts. His interest in records is gone. If his digestion will allow him, he can have four breakfasts in the morning on the ascent, and lie half an afternoon, if the little stones do not stick too uncomfortably into his back, watching the peak he has descended or looking down into the shimmering heat of the valley. He cares no more painfully to collate the annals of mountaineering until he has discovered a new route, and, having accomplished it, to argue with acrimony all the winter for its authentic novelty. If he were ever so foolish as to make a new route, he wouldn't record it, and so it wouldn't count.”

The papers composing the book are, Mr. Schuster says, republished almost in the form in which they first appeared. A more thorough revision would probably have removed the very few slips the work contains. Mr. Schuster is now and again betrayed into blank verse. He uses a notable and outstanding phrase descriptive of a ridge early in the book, which loses a little of its power by being repeated towards the end. The reference to a certain book as lying in a neighbouring room, though apt to the occasion on which the paper was first read, is meaningless as it now appears. William Mathews and

C. E. Mathews were brothers. Having rightly spelled the elder's name, why give to the younger a reduplicated *t*?

Mr. Schuster seeks the artful aid of no photographer wherewith to trick out his pages. He would have us—and this is not the least of the merits of his work—sympathise with and shudder at his narrative with our hearts alone. He gives, indeed, five archaistic maps, drawn by Mr. E. H. New. They have a pleasant, if artificial, flavour of antiquity, but do not materially assist one in following Mr. Schuster's wanderings; wanderings, I would repeat, that make glad the solitary place of the climber's library, and the desert of his shelves to blossom as the rose.

THE PYRENEES.

BY C. A. ELLIOTT.

IT is, I feel, only fitting to begin this article with an apology. I have no tale to tell of pitiless ice slopes, of rock-raked couloirs, of breaking ropes, of praying hands. He who desires to have his hair raised and his blood curdled need read no further; he will find not a single hairbreadth escape in the following pages. He will merely find the story of the mild climbs and mild adventures of five novices, who wanted to feel what it was like to climb mountains where there were no hotels, no huts, no fixed chains, and no people. It was, in fact, disgust with our fellow-men that drove us to the Higher Pyrenees, where fellow-men are at a minimum.

So at the end of August, having digested such literature on the subject as we could lay hands on, we bought all the maps of the Pyrenees we could find, a large quantity of provisions, and thick sleeping bags, and set out for Bagnères de Luchon. Our plan was to spend a few days getting into training in the neighbourhood, and then to send our luggage by train westwards to Gavarnie, and ourselves to make our way there, keeping as close to the main range as possible, and climbing such peaks on the way as looked attractive. The main range between Luchon and Gavarnie consists mostly of a serrated rock ridge, rarely sinking below 8,500 feet, with small steep glaciers, and rising here and there to rocky peaks, usually 10,000 or 10,500 feet high. Immediately south of the main range lie two great massifs, the Maladetta and the Posets, rising to the two highest peaks in the Pyrenees, and separated from the main range by high valleys, and from each other by a deep valley.

At Luchon we bought gourds made of goat-skin (which imparted a peculiarly loathsome flavour to any liquid carried in them), and rope-soled canvas shoes, which were useful for

rough sheep tracks, but no good for climbing. We then despatched to Gavarnie all the luggage that we did not intend to carry on our backs, and set out for the Auberges du Lys, which lie at the head of the Vallée du Lys, some two hours from Luchon. During that tramp with about 40 lb. on our backs we began to grow less and less enthusiastic about traversing certain peaks, carrying all our paraphernalia, as we had meant to do. We found two auberges, one of which was pretentious and expensive, while the other, the Café des Délices, was clean, comfortable, and cheap.

Next morning we started slowly up towards the main range, intending to sleep at about 8,000 feet, and then climb the Pic de Crabioules (10,560 feet). We found an excellent place for a bivouac, a flat patch of grass by the side of a torrent, and having supped on maggi, cold chicken, and bread and jam, we got into our bags at about dusk. But the sky had been clouding over, and at that moment a tremendous thunderstorm burst upon us. All went well for some twenty minutes—we lay inside our sleeping bags listening to the downpour on the waterproof, and wondering when they would begin to leak. Suddenly, however, I felt a trickle of water underneath me, and putting my head out, I realised that the stream had overflowed, and that some of the party were in imminent danger of being washed down with it. We scrambled out of our bags as quickly as possible, hauled our rucksacks and our boots out of the water, and unheroically made for the inn. We arrived at about 11 o'clock (luckily we had managed to keep some matches dry to light the lanterns). Never shall I forget the gratitude which I felt when the landlady volunteered to cook us a hot supper. Unfortunately, while we were waiting for it, we drank red wine and beer—a fatal mistake. . . .

This was a bad start. But next morning was beautifully fine, and we again set out for the mountains, this time taking several days' provisions, with the intent to climb the Pic de Boum (10,039 feet), a little to the east of the Pic de Crabioules, and then make our way into Spain by the Port Vieil. (We none of us felt equal to traversing the Pic de Boum with all our luggage on our backs.) We camped at about 7,500 feet—

this time near a hut, and some 20 feet above a stream, in case of more storms, and started at about five next morning for our peak. The Pic de Boum is one of the rocky teeth on the main range, with a glacier, crevassed in parts, descending to the north. We found the glacier quite steep, and in the lower part steps had to be cut now and then, while in the upper part we found quite a lot of hard ice. It was here that we had the only continuous step-cutting during our tour. The rocks, however, were perfectly easy, and we got to the top at about 9 o'clock. Here, however, we were seized by a doubt. For we were overshadowed on the west by another tooth rising from the main range, and might not that be the Pic de Boum, and might we not merely have ascended a gendarme on its arête? In any case, as it was early, we thought we might as well climb the next peak. So we descended into the glacier, as the rocks between us and the arête of the next peak looked impracticable. (We subsequently discovered that it was the Pic de Boum that we had climbed, and that the next peak was the Pic de Maupas.) We traversed across the top of the glacier, cutting steps a good deal of the time, and looking for a place where we could cross the bergschrund, and climb the steep wall to the ridge of the arête. At last we came to a rickety bridge leading to steep slab with small holds. So, remembering Mummery's maxim that, contrary to expectation, such bridges usually hold, we stepped gingerly across, and worked up the slab to the top, only to find that we were utterly cut off from our peak by a gendarme, with clean-cut sides, which it was impossible to climb, or to turn on the south, as we had hoped to do when we looked at it from below. It is true that we might, with luck, have lassooed the top, but I saw a place further along the arête, where it seemed that we might climb on to it from the glacier; so we retreated down over the schrund. We then moved along to the place I had marked from above, and this time we climbed on to the arête by quite an entertaining shallow chimney. We were now about 500 feet from the top, and the way looked difficult, rising in short steep pitches, but probably practicable. Our lack of training, however, began to assert itself, and at this point my stomach revolted, and as

it was getting late, 10 o'clock, we turned sorrowfully homewards, or rather camp-wards. The day's adventures well illustrate the joys of climbing in the Pyrenees; the maps are wholly inadequate; there are no other parties of whom the way may be asked; and unclimbed faces and arêtes abound. (We heard later that the arête of the Maupas, which we had been trying to climb, was still virgin.)

That evening we camped on an ideal spot, on the shores of the Lac Bleu, which justifies its name; on the further side rose a great precipice, with a cataract thundering down it; above was moraine and glacier débris; above that again, the glacier and our peaks. It was a typical Pyrenees scene; here you find few valleys leading evenly up to the mountains; the valleys rise in steps, and at the head of each is a great horse-shoe cirque of cliffs, easy enough to ascend, but quite difficult to descend by a convenient and easy route, unless it has previously been explored from below.

We started early next morning to cross over into Spain by the Port Vieil (8,785 feet). We had only the vaguest notion of where it was, for the maps here bore little resemblance to the conformation of the country. We set off by an obvious valley leading towards the frontier from the easterly end of the Lac Bleu. We circumvented on the right the usual cirque of cliffs in which it ended, and scrambling round a shoulder of rock we came on a little lake, with a snow field flowing into its further side, and, above the snow, jagged peaks, climbable, but not for us that day. We guessed that we were too far to the east, so we crossed a small col to the west of the lake, and found easy scree and snow slopes leading up to a sharp nick in the ridge, which was obviously our port. I think we had chanced on the right way to it, for if we had tried to reach the port straight up from the Lac Bleu we should have become involved in some vertical rocks, and in the crevasses of a glacier, which flowed down past us from the main ridge. From the Port we had our first view of the great massif of the Maladetta, stretched before us on the further side of a high valley, in which lies the Hospice de Venasque, where we meant to spend the night. The way down was easy enough—first an easy rock and scree gully, then a short glissade, and finally

long grass slopes. The usual cirque of cliffs had to be dealt with, and some of us scrambled straight down, while the rest turned it on the right. Then a bathe, a meal, and a sleep, and then the inn.

It must be confessed it was not much of an inn ; but still it was a place where we could get a large hot meal, and that was all we cared for. It was used mainly by douaniers and by smugglers carrying their wares over the Port de Venasque into France ; so cleanliness was not its forte. However, they gave us an excellent dinner, our pleasure in which was only slightly marred by catching a glimpse of their method of polishing the spoons. The inn contains too bedrooms, and, one of these being occupied by three Spaniards, we five had to crowd into the other, which contained three beds. Some of us slept soundly, while the others made futile attempts to slay the local beasts of prey with their axes ; beyond irreparably damaging two beds, they did not achieve much, and next morning we found that we had all suffered about equally.

On the following afternoon we made our way slowly up the flanks of the Maladetta, and found an excellent camping ground some way above the hut, called the Rencluse, which is situated in a small valley, into which the Maladetta glacier discharges its waters. It is kept by a Frenchman and his wife, who informed us with much glee that there was a bear in the valley, which had carried off five sheep in the past few days. We suspected that this was merely a transparent trick, to induce us to sleep in the hut, and pay 5 pesetas apiece for the privilege. Besides, one can afford to laugh at any Pyrenean bear in broad daylight. However, that evening as we were settling down in our bivouac no one mentioned the bear, but there was more competition than the coldness of the night quite justified to lie between two other persons rather than on the outside. All went well for a time, and I think we had all dropped off to sleep, when I was awoken by a crash and a scream. I have already warned the reader that he will find nothing heroic in these pages ; so he will not be surprised when he hears that I put my head under my sleeping bag and lay stiller than I have ever lain before ; and I believe the rest of the party did the same. Everything was quiet as death, save for a scuffling

among some junipers close by, which ceased almost at once. After an interminable time I ventured to put my head out, and found the others doing so too. We counted ourselves, and found we were all there. Then we gathered together our wits, still numb with terror, and discovered that what had happened was that the bear had evidently come to investigate us (he would not have attacked us without provocation), and he had knocked over an axe, on which was hanging a lantern ready for the morning, on to one of our party, who, starting up and seeing a bear looming above him in the starlight, had very sensibly screamed, and dived into his bag. The bear, terrified in his turn by the scream, had fled through the junipers, where we saw his tracks next day.

Next morning, finding ourselves still alive, we started at about 4.30 for the Pic de Néthou (11,168 feet), the highest point of the Maladetta group. The Glacier de Maladetta was above us, and we had to ascend the side of a long rock rib, called the Portillon, which divides this glacier from the Néthou Glacier. We had prospected the way the day before, and moving slowly up the steepish rocks and débris, and over snow patches here and there, we reach the top of the ridge in about 1½ hours. We then moved up this for a little way, and descended on to the lateral moraine of the big Néthou glacier. Thence we struck across the glacier, which we found to contain some quite large crevasses, which forced us to advance very circuitously. Beyond the crevasses we climbed a steep snow slope, where a few steps had to be cut, to the final summit rocks (10 o'clock). To reach the actual summit a rock arête about 50 yards long, called the Port de Mahomet, has to be traversed; this arête has quite a reputation in the Pyrenees, and Mr. Packe remarks, "As you bestride this narrow ledge, crossing it on hands and feet, with the clouds floating around you, you feel verily suspended in mid-air." As a matter of fact, the arête is easier even than the ordinary run of *mauvais pas*; indeed, when we had arrived at the top, we had quite a lengthy dispute as to whether we had actually crossed it, or avoided it by some original route; we discovered later that we had in sooth braved its perils and come off scatheless.

We sunned ourselves for over an hour on the summit,

enjoying a view which was fine beyond description. To the north rose the shark's tooth line of the frontier, a succession of jagged peaks, their blackness accentuated by the glaciers of their flanks; to the west, the massif of the Posets, rounded and solid, blocked the view; while to the south stretched line upon line of gently sloping ranges, green and restful, swathed in the mists of the plain.

Our way back to our bivouac was uneventful; we had to go warily on the glacier, for some of the bridges, firm in the morning, were now none too safe; but all went well, and we reached the Rencluse at about 1 o'clock. Here they gave us an excellent hot meal, and we learnt that the shepherd had that morning shot the bear. We would like to have viewed and exulted over the corpse; but it was some way up the valley, and a natural disinclination to move uphill had fallen upon us.

Now, I suppose that on every climbing holiday one may reckon to do one supremely foolish act of one sort or another; and for us the time was ripe. Sitting at the Rencluse at 2.30, we all came to the conclusion that we could not endure another night at the Hospice de Venasque, that a large meal was a necessity, and, after glancing hastily at the map, that we could reach the small town of Venasque by seven o'clock at latest. I shall not dwell upon the horrors of our journey thither; suffice it to say that the path was one of the roughest I have known, that the distance was at least twice as great as we had imagined, that darkness came on when we were still far from home, that we had run out of provisions, that at one point the path ran straight into a wilderness of stones beside a broad and roaring river, that we spent an hour in finding the ford, that the judging of the depth of swirling water by the light of an Excelsior lantern is a matter for experts only (which we were not), and that we got to Venasque at 11 o'clock. Here, however, we found our reward—a clean inn, excellent wine, chickens stuffed with cherries, omelettes, fruit, and a soft and innocuous bed. It was the best inn we came across in the Pyrenees, and we spent all next day there eating and sleeping.

The morning after our rest we started early in order to get up into the mountains before the heat of the day. The land-

lord of the inn, out of the kindness of his heart, offered us a couple of mules free, to carry our rucksacks as far as the mule track went, and came with us himself to show us the way. We walked slowly westwards up a valley running parallel to the main range, and between it and the Pic des Posets (11,047 feet), which we meant to attack next day. The landlord and the mules left us about three hours from Venasque, at a shepherd's hut, called the Cabane de Turmes; the Posets can be attacked from here, but the most interesting way up is from the Cabane de Paoules, some two hours further up the valley. We slept for a space in the sun, and then we started to remove our loads; and we undid a flour sack, which the landlord had packed with provisions and left with us. Joseph's brethren themselves were not more alarmed than we were—the landlord had only given us less than half the provisions we had ordered. (I ought to add that he had not cheated us, for he had only charged for what he had actually provided.) The question now was whether we ought to return for more; but no one felt inclined to trudge down to Venasque again, and we determined to run the chance of not finding food at some cottages which we knew to exist on the further side of the Col de Gistain, the lowest point on the ridge joining the Posets to the main range. It must be confessed, however, that we proceeded rather dolefully towards the Cabane de Paoules, and when the sky clouded over, and thunder began to mutter among the hills, and we discovered that the Cabane de Paoules was in ruins, our gloom became intense. But we revived a little when we discovered a most excellent boulder, one side of which overhung some 10 feet, and here we ate a frugal supper, and sought solace from our hunger in sleep.

Next day we left our bivouac at about 4.30, and scrambled up the steep south side of the valley, following the course of a torrent that comes down from the glaciers of the Posets. Passing between the buttresses of the flanking mountains to east and west, we found ourselves in a snow-covered hollow, with a glacier on the right and a shoulder of the Posets straight ahead; this shoulder we had to turn on the left, and we advanced easily up crisp snow slopes to a little col to which the shoulder descends. Crossing the col we came upon a

small glacier, at the head of which was the rock wall leading to the top, and throwing down the shoulder which we had just turned. We roped here, and advanced straight up the glacier to one of several obvious couloirs leading to the top of the wall. (An alternative route would be to climb the buttress leading to the col.) The glacier got steep towards the top, and there was quite a large bergshrund between it and the rocks; but we found a convenient bridge, and climbing the steep but easy gully, which reminded us of an easy Cumberland gully, we soon reached the top of the wall. The situation here was delightful—we were on an arête, about a yard wide, bounded by steep walls on each side, and leading easily to the top, which we reached at about eleven. The view was much like that from the Maladetta, but, if anything, finer, for now we could see Mont Perdu and the Vignemale to the north-west. The sky, however, was clouding over, and we hurried down the rocks and the glacier, and glissaded quickly down the snow slopes below the little col. But now the storm burst upon us, and for the next two hours we lay huddled under various overhanging rocks, wondering whether our sleeping bags were getting wet. The storm passed slowly eastwards, leaving the rocks we had just descended plastered with snow, and we hurried to our bivouac. That evening we ate the greater part of our provisions, and I felt quite contented as I lay in my sleeping bag under the great rock that night, smoking a last pipe, and watching the storm clouds circling round the Maladetta, while the lightning flickered and the thunder crashed across the valleys.

The morning broke fine and calm; and after a negligible breakfast we set off for the Col de Gistain, with hunger in our bellies, and a prayer for food in our hearts. We soon reached the top of the col, but we had to be careful about our way down, for two valleys descend from the col, and the maps are vague in the extreme. However, we hit off the right valley, and made our way down the usual cirque of rocks at its head; we then indulged in a long drink at a stream, which invigorated us extremely, presumably because, as we discovered afterwards, there was a dead sheep in it some 10 yards further up. I suppose that the water passing by the

sheep was transformed into a sort of clear soup. At about 4 o'clock we arrived empty and tired at the little house at the foot of the valley, called the Hôpital de Gistain. But we knew that it was not a hostel but a private house used by a mining prospector; so it was with the greatest relief that we learnt that she could give us half an izard, and as much sugar as we wanted, though she could let us have no bread. An izard is a small variety of chamois, quite common on the higher mountains. The meal that followed was merely disgusting.

We slept that night in a hayloft, and started next morning at 6 o'clock to cross the Col de la Cruz to the west. The way led up easy grass slopes, and in some three hours we were at the top of the col; an easy valley led down from the top, but turned to the south, whereas we wanted to hit a valley turning rather to the north. So we had to descend a thousand feet, and then ascend again, and cross a small col into the valley we wanted. The map gives just a faint indication of this; but we were not prepared to drop and remount a thousand feet, which is a serious thing when one is hungry (and we were still hungry, for they had not been able to give us any provisions to take with us at the Hôpital de Gistain). From the second col we descended over rough ground, skirted a gorge, discovered a path through some woods, rounded a shoulder, and found ourselves directly above the little town of Bielsa, which we reached at about one. The inn here was not as good as that of Venasque; but still it was clean, and it provided all our needs.

Next morning we started up the Val de Pinède with a mule, intending to bivouac high on the flanks of Mount Perdu if the weather was promising, and if it were not, to cross the Col de Pinède (8,858 feet) into France, and get as near to Gavarnie as possible. The Val de Pinède runs straight and flat for several miles towards the frontier, with a curious wall of rock on the west, culminating in Mount Perdu; straight ahead was the jagged outline of the main range, our col being a mere nick rather deeper than the others. The weather had been bad the evening before, and now it was getting worse, so we determined at least to get over into France that night. We left the mule when the valley steepened, and we mounted slowly over easy

grass; we had just arrived at a chaos of boulders below the cirque of rock which closes in the valley, when a rainstorm made us take shelter, for we did not want to have to sleep in wet clothes. Having thus lost much valuable time, we pressed on when the rain had stopped, desirous only of reaching some sheltered spot in France before the storm came on again. At first the going was interesting enough up gently sloping limestone slabs, with plenty of hand and foot hold; but at the top of the slabs we came to a scree funnel leading uncompromisingly up to the col itself; there was no avoiding it; we were shut in on either side by sheer rock walls; the scree was very small, and in a peculiarly unpleasant state of undecided equilibrium; and a gentle drizzle now began to fall. The struggle up that 1,500 feet of scree is one of the most evil memories I possess. When we reached the top it was about 5 o'clock, and it was obvious that we could not get to Gavarnie that night, for Gavarnie was in a valley parallel to the one which leads down from the col, and to reach it we would have to drop some 1,200 feet, and ascend 1,000 to another col, and then drop down on to Gavarnie. Our chief desire now was to find shelter for the night; the rain had stopped, but the weather looked very bad, and a great storm was raging in the Gavarnie valley. We made our way down from our col looking out for likely boulders or caves, and darkness was just coming on when we rounded a rocky corner, and came upon a beautiful circular hollow cut from the side of a limestone cliff. It was a little small, but otherwise it was an ideal sleeping place, and there was a little stream of water 100 feet below. Here we ate a luxurious supper—for we had been careful to bring enough provisions this time—and we went to sleep to the accompaniment of the thunder and wind on the peaks above us.

We were anxious to get over into Gavarnie valley before the clouds came down and obscured the way; so we started at daybreak, and, finding a rough track, we soon crossed the second col, called, I believe, the Brèche d'Allanz, and found Gavarnie at our feet. We hurried down some long grass slopes, where we missed the track, and after a little trouble in descending the rocks immediately above the town we found

ourselves in Gavarnie at about 11 o'clock. We went at once to the Hôtel des Voyageurs, where our torn clothes and fortnight's beards were eyed askance by the tourists, but we were received without comment by the landlady; and thus ended our Odyssey. For we waited a couple of days for the weather to clear enough to allow us to climb the Perdu and the Vignemale, but as it remained bad, we regretfully took our way homewards.

Finally, as I began this paper with an apology, I feel that I ought to conclude it with an apologia. So many people have expressed surprise at the fact that anyone in their senses should go and climb in the Pyrenees, that a defence of the practice is certainly necessary. Now, I do not hold with Count Henry Russel and Mr. Packe, that the Pyrenees are superior to the Alps as a playground and as a spectacle, but I do maintain that in the Pyrenees the climber will find something that he cannot find in Switzerland. He will, in fact, find almost complete solitude. He will not find a hut crowded with a polyglot population at the foot of every feasible route up every mountain; he will not find parties above him on his mountain rolling stones on to his devoted head; from the top he will not be able to hear the band playing at some "popular resort" in the valley; if he goes guideless—and in the Pyrenees this is the only way to go—he will be thrown entirely on his own resources, and will have the added excitement of knowing that it will probably be a month before a search party starts to look for him. Now, most of these advantages are shared with the Pyrenees by the Caucasus, the Himalayas, and the other new playgrounds; but I am speaking rather from the point of view of a party which has had two or three seasons behind guides in the Alps, and which has neither the experience, the time, nor the money to travel further afield than Western Europe. For such a party a holiday in the Pyrenees forms an ideal training in mountaineering proper. On the ordinary routes no difficult climbing is found; only on the Pic de Boum did we have to do any continuous step cutting, and the only difficult rocks we encountered were on the unclimbed arête of the Pic de Maupas. (I believe that the only icefall worthy of the name is on Mount Perdu.) But there will be continuous diffi-

culty about finding the way, both in climbing the peaks and in crossing the lower cols. The directions given by Packe for the various ascents are quite vague, and a guideless party has to find for itself the best way up a glacier, and the easiest route up rocks; it is only by practice such as the Pyrenees affords that a party will fit itself to go guideless on the higher Alps. It may, however, be said that a party will find practice of this sort in the Western Oberland or the Tyrol, for instance, which much resemble the Pyrenees. But I should answer that there is a great difference between climbing in a district where the valleys are seamed with paths (probably blazed with red or blue paint to show their destination), and where you may be sure of meeting another party which will direct you, or cut steps for you, or extricate you from a bad place, and climbing in a district where no extraneous help whatsoever is to be looked for. Again, in Switzerland, the maps are thoroughly to be relied on, and with an aneroid and a prismatic compass there is no real excuse for a party not to know its whereabouts fairly exactly, except in bad weather. In the Pyrenees the maps are bad; the French government map of the northern side is quite good, though not nearly so good as the Swiss Sigfried map; but on the south side the French map is extremely vague, and the Schrader map, issued by the French Alpine Club, has to be used exclusively; Schrader is quite good in parts, but in certain places it is curiously wrong in detail; for instance, in its delineation of the Col de Gistain, and of course neither the Schrader nor the French government map makes any pretence at depicting accurately the actual configuration of the peaks themselves. But our chief difficulties lay, not in finding the way up the peaks, but in finding the way along the high valleys, and especially down the cirques, which nearly invariably enclosed the head of a valley; and it is practice in this branch of mountaineering, for it certainly is a branch of mountaineering, that the Pyrenees provide in such abundance.

Again, there is an idea abroad that because the highest peak in the Pyrenees is more than 4,000 feet lower than the highest peak of the Alps, the scenery of the Pyrenees cannot therefore be compared to the scenery of the Alps. It would be almost as sensible to say that because a hippopotamus is

bigger than an antelope, it is therefore more beautiful than an antelope. Of course, in the Pyrenees one can find nothing to compare with the majestic sweep of the Aletch glacier or the rolling snows of the Plaine Morte; but one can see there glaciers and snowfields as beautiful and peaks as graceful as any in the Alps. The Alps can overawe the spectator with their sheer size, and can produce an impression of majestic strength; but in beauty, apart from majesty, there is, to my mind, little to choose between them and the Pyrenees.

Finally, let me repeat that the pre-eminent charm of the Pyrenees is their utter solitude. On the climber weary with the chatter in the hotels, the snoring in the huts, the jödels of the guides, the Pyrenees exercise a peculiarly soothing influence. Here he may wander and climb for weeks on end without seeing a human being, except possibly a shepherd or an izard-hunter. He may have to descend from the mountains for provisions, but even in that case it is only to a quiet Spanish village that he will come; in the higher valleys he will find no restaurants, no hotels, no trace of human habitation; so desolate is it that even the fallen trees are left to rot where they fall. Here he will find the true peace of the mountains, which the early pioneers found in the Alps, and which has long since been driven thence by the vulgarity of the peak-bagger and the babel of the conducted tour. Of course, I do not claim that the climbing in the Pyrenees is as fine as the climbing in the Alps, or that we should forsake the Alps for the Pyrenees. But I hold strongly that the novice will find that one season of guideless climbing in the Pyrenees will teach him more of mountains and of the craft of the mountains than several seasons in the Alps, and that when he returns to the Alps he will be tenfold fitter to climb the harder peaks and routes. He will have had experience of route finding, both in the valleys and on rock and glacier; of step-cutting; of using aneroid and compass; and, with much tribulation, he may learn to ascend high places as a responsible mountaineer, and not as a parcel tied to an Alpine rope. It is this, and a glimpse of high mountains as God fashioned them, and not as they have been made fashionable by man, that the Pyrenees will give him.

DERBYSHIRE PENNINE CLUB NOTES.

OXLOW CAVERNS.

THE Oxlow Caverns are situated about half a mile beyond the top of the Winnats, on the Buxton Road, and about 200 yards past a small farm on the left approaching from Castleton.

Very little was known of this place when the D. P. C. started to explore it, the men who went down in 1876 being all dead. In that year a horse, which belonged to a farmer living near the mine, disappeared whilst pasturing, and the owner had two miners up from Castleton to explore the shaft, which is very narrow in places. They found the horse dead at the bottom, and were told to re-timber the place throughout. The farmer's idea was to get everything into a safe condition, and then open it as a show place, as the two miners brought out such beautiful specimens, and gave accounts of such magnificent natural caverns, that he thought it would be a profitable venture. However, it was never opened for tourists, and after timbering the mine where necessary, it was lost sight of.

In November, 1909, F. A. Winder, J. W. Puttrell, C. Barnes, J. W. Percival, and W. M. Sissons went up to explore, previous to holding a Club "meet" there. Taking only 70 feet of rope ladder and a rope or two, they did not get very far into the workings below.

In December, 1909, the Club had a meet there, and some very fine sights were seen. The first shaft, which is only 60 feet deep, is very narrow, and wet at the bottom. This shaft leads to a 70-foot slope, which requires care in descending. Although not at a steep angle, it is slippery and loose in

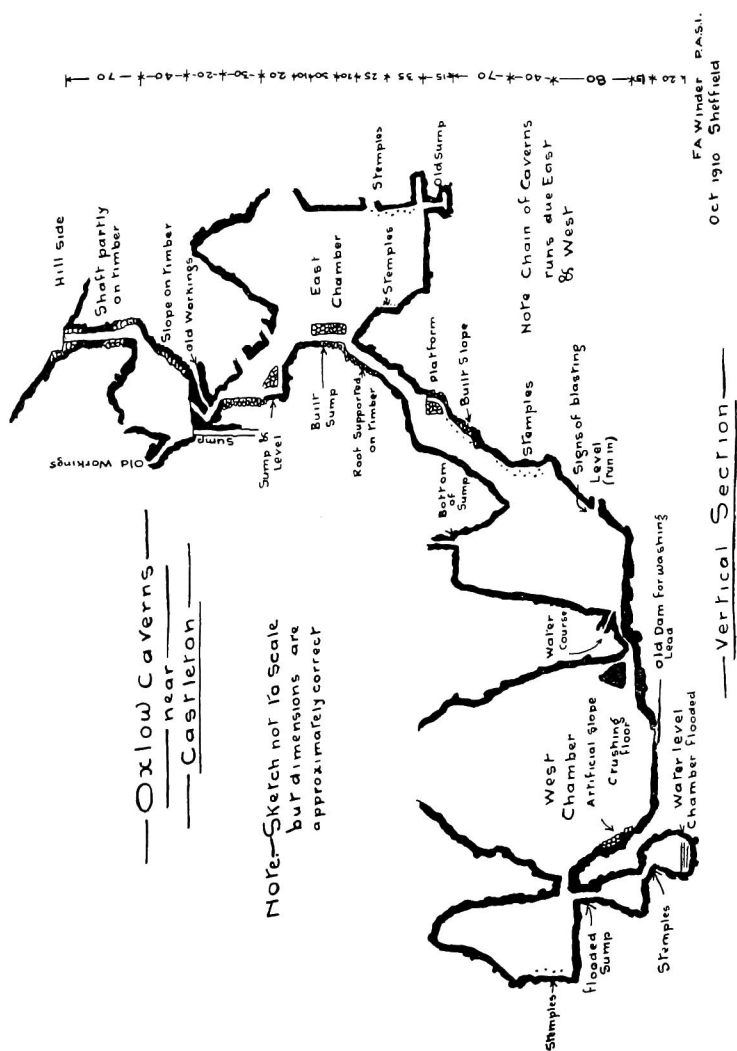
places. Down this slope, ladders, ropes, pegs, beams, cameras, etc., etc., were taken. At the bottom a chamber was reached which is approximately circular, and has a sandy floor. In one corner a raised stone bench was found, and a riddle (very much decayed), which shows that lead ore had been crushed and dressed there, before being brought to the surface. There is a small sump in one corner, but this was not descended by the Club, as it had partially run in.

A sandy slope was descended, and a narrow passage about 3 feet high and 2 wide entered. This led to the top of a gulf 40 feet deep, with stemples all the way down. Water could be heard roaring. This place was descended on a rope ladder. At the bottom was found a beautiful cascade of limestone deposit. In wet weather (as on the occasion of the exploration) there is a torrent running down it. This wet slope was descended, and the side of a huge and beautiful chamber, 240 feet high and 40 feet wide, down into which the water pours, was reached.

A small crack gave access to a ledge about 4 feet wide and 6 feet long. In one corner of this ledge was a 30-foot sump about 2 feet wide. This was descended on a fixed rope, and brought the party about half-way down the great chamber. An easy slope about 80 feet ended in another drop. This was descended by the aid of stemples, which were found to be in perfect condition. Another slope led to the bottom of the large chamber.

The floor was all rock and flat. In one corner were a great number of cave pearls. From the roof on the left dropped a stream of water, which ran away down a crack on the right-hand side of the cavern.

Moving forward, a narrow passage was reached about 30 feet long, with a vein of lead in it 2 inches thick. This passage came to a blank, and on returning, a 28-foot sump was found, terminating in a small circular chamber. There was a hole about a foot wide and 3 feet deep in one corner, leading to a small chamber, but further progress downward was barred by blocks of stone fastened securely together by the limestone deposit. Magnesium showed the water dashing into spray, and all the walls glistening with moisture.



A return was made to the bottom of the sump with the waterfall coming down it. Passing under it, and continuing forward, another passage, fairly wide and high, was found, leading to the top of another large cavern. On one of the walls was chiselled "J. J. /76," the initials of one of the miners who timbered the place. The roof in places down the slope was rather treacherous.

A slide down a sump about 15 feet deep, in the shape of a corkscrew, brought the party on to a loose, sandy slope. The loose floor was soon passed over, and a good hard rock channel, which had stemples in all the way down, reached. In 30 or 40 feet this ended in a lip, which required a rope ladder.

About 30 feet above the top of the lip two chases were cut in the side of the rock near the floor, so as firmly to wedge a 5-inch by 4-inch timber across the rocky channel. A 100-foot rope ladder was slung over the lip. At the bottom of the cavern a small watercourse, down which a little stream trickled, was found. Two of the party pushed up this, through thick mud which lined the sides. The first man noticed in the mud some prints of corduroy trousers, which looked as if they had been made a few minutes before. At least thirty-four years must have elapsed since anyone had been up, and yet the prints in the mud were quite fresh and clear. This watercourse was forced for nearly 100 yards, when it became too narrow, and so barred further progress.

On getting out of the watercourse another rather low passage was descended. This passage brought the party into a huge cavern, 220 feet long and 50 feet wide. The top of this place could not be seen, although six of the party held lighted magnesium, whilst two others were vainly trying to catch sight of the roof. Going forward, a floor was reached where the old miners used to crush and dress their ore, and so take it to the surface ready for the smelting furnace. Some old riddles, all rusted through, which collapsed as soon as they were touched, were lying about. A big slope of large boulders, up the left side of which were some very rough steps, led to the entrance of a tunnel 20 feet long, cut out of the solid rock.

The far end of the tunnel terminated in another chamber

with a waterfall coming from the roof. The place was about 100 feet high, and the walls were covered with lovely formation. At what appeared to be the end of the place a sump was noticed in the floor. This was found to be about 40 feet deep, with an avalanche of water dropping down. It was forced with timber and rope ladder. At the bottom a small yet beautiful cavern was found.

Down a passage the water rushed and disappeared into the darkness. The stream was followed for some distance, and it was found to tumble into a lake. The sides of this underground lake were examined, but no sign of any exit for the water could be seen. The party concluded they had reached a siphon, and also the lowest cavern.

The return proved a somewhat arduous undertaking.

ÆTNA.

BY ARNOLD H. M. LUNN.

THE mountaineer may be catholic in his tastes, and yet find something peculiarly unlovable about a volcano. That the mountains in some manner symbolise the eternal, which changes not though man pass away like a shadow, is a sentiment that loses none of its force when we realise that even the ancient hills grow old and yield to inevitable decay. The volcano blatantly advertises this truism, and there is something vulgar in its boisterous activity. Its moods are unpleasantly sinister. Even the purple smoke, which on a quiet summer afternoon climbs indolently from a sleeping crater, is possibly an earnest of destruction. The message of the volcano is patent to all. Other mountains are less obtrusively destructive. The layman ignores the white, innocent puff on the distant snows, which the mountaineer translates into a crashing whirlwind of falling ice. For though the mountains can be terrible enough in all conscience, their effects are subtle. They do not descend to melodrama, whereas the volcano unashamedly plays to and empties the gallery.

And yet some volcanoes have a powerful appeal. I shall not readily forget my first sight of Ætna. As I wandered on deck one April morning, Ætna seemed to rise out of the sea and smite me in the face. The snows that cloaked the crater glowed in the dawn like a flood of molten lava. Ætna suffers more from foreshortening than most mountains, and from Catania you do not readily realise that it rises as high above the town as the Matterhorn above Zermatt. But that morning I felt the full force of the massive receding lines that defined "the solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep." And even Ætna has its moods of fragile grace. We were drifting down towards Sicily with the spring, on one of those days when the Mediterranean, "blue with that blue," seems to

borrow from the stir of April breezes a mosaic of blended tones. Stromboli, that absurdly trim volcano, had thrust itself out of the sea, and the purple Lipari Isles had begun to whisper of Sicily, when a white cloud, pillowed on the horizon of wave, climbed slowly into the sky. As we neared, the cloud resolved itself into the snows of Ætna, whose broad purple base gradually showed above the turquoise sea. At such moments one can understand how Ætna casts a spell over those who dread her most, so that Pindar could write of her with fear, and yet hail her as "Ætna, mother mine."

No mountain offers such violent contrasts. You leave Catania by a road that leads through a land of radiant beauty. From crack and hollow in congealed lava spring crimson fennel and spurge, their brilliance set off and heightened by their sombre setting. So, too, the cheerful silver of smiling hamlets strikes a note that we are to lose as we draw near the kingdom of fire. Here, meanwhile, the old Homeric cycle, seedtime and harvest, goes forward with the sun untroubled, save at long intervals by the distant lord of the flames.

We drove up to Nicolosi, and here we entered the outer courts of Ætna. The houses are built from the very lava which at one time menaced the village, for the outbreak of 1886 hurled a flood of lava which drew back within a quarter of a mile of Nicolosi, daunted possibly by the veil of St. Agatha, which the priest ingeniously displayed.

In a little inn overlooking vineyards and the sea we washed down our macaroni with Sicilian wine. It was early in the season, and the village seemed anxious to find in stray visitors a permanent insurance against unemployment. Small boys, with dusky Sicilian beauty, prayed for the honour of blacking our boots, and a band of musicians, led by a blind fiddler, struck up "Santa Lucia." I am sometimes grateful for the lack of sensitiveness which enables me to enjoy such "vulgar and tavern musick," heedless of occasional discord.

We had engaged a gentleman, whom we firmly credited with the ability, to guide us up Ætna. We were, therefore, startled by the introduction of a swarthy individual, who announced himself as our guide. We then discovered that the first of these worthies was merely an interpreter, designed



Photo]

Ætna from Catania.

[Fradelle and Young,

to make arrangements for us, and grow fat at our expense. As an interpreter we had only one complaint to make, and this a trifling one. We could find no medium in which to make our wishes intelligible, no tongue in which we could possibly understand him. He was an unlovely, graceless fellow; he cost four times as much as the guide, and was utterly useless.

When we finished lunch we found our caravan swelled by a muleteer, a nephew of the same, and an aged inhabitant, with Dundreary whiskers, which are the very latest thing in Nicolosi—*très snob*, to quote a Parisian description of English boots. Three mules to carry the interpreter, guide, and muleteer completed our royal progress. A few stray boys brought up the rear.

By dint of some suasion, Mr. Compton, in Italian, conveyed to the interpreter, who seemed distantly acquainted with that tongue, our desire to reduce our followers to guide, muleteer, and interpreter. He of the Dundreary whiskers muttered something about the proverbial recklessness of Englishmen, and withdrew in a huff.

The path wound round the slopes of Monti Rossi, a subordinate volcano of comparatively recent origin. Here we were fairly in the inner courts of the sanctuary of fire. We could trace the ebb and flow of that great river of molten lava that so nearly destroyed Nicolosi. The black, sooty stream creeps like an evil shadow through laughing lands rich in tilth. Even the very paths that divide the vineyards are jet-black. We caught sudden glimpses of contrast, characteristic of Ætna, a cone of dead lava against a background of wave; wicked, scowling ebony against a background of sea, that rejoiced in the sapphire stolen from a stainless sky.

Gradually, we left the growth of stunted ash, and climbed upwards towards moraines of lava, touched by the grey gloom of smut-stained snow. Higher up the white garment hid the darkness, but here the ashes showed between occasional drifts of unlovely snow. About four hours from Nicolosi we reached the hut erected by the Italian Alpine Club, some six thousand feet above the sea. It is poorly equipped, and does not even contain a stove. The guide, on a fire of evil-smelling charcoal,

prepared our supper, and we invited him to join us. The interpreter, who belongs to the landed gentry of Nicolosi, protested, and pointed out with quiet dignity that a member of the county does not dine with a peasant.

After supper, I stepped outside to smoke a quiet pipe. Somewhere behind us the unseen sun was slowly sinking, and Ætna cast a purple pyramid of shadow on the western wave. The distant hills of Casta Girone changed in outline as the twilight shadows confused the issue of the bounding slopes. Through the deepening shadows of the plain the silver thread of Simeto crept outwards to the sea. Beyond the clean-cut circle of the horizon the evening star climbed slowly into the fading eastern sky. A great peace brooded over Sicily. Even Ætna seemed innocent of evil.

There are instants of sudden surprise when we feel with a sense of startling vividness the living continuity of history. It is not often so. The associative faculty is erratic, and will seldom react to the stimulant of conventional "sights." The vital spirit of history bloweth where it listeth. When we least expect it, some unsought spell, some chance setting of hill and sea discloses the past, not as a barren succession of academic facts, but as a living present reality. We yield an emotional where we gave an intellectual assent, and for a moment we feel, as we never felt before, that we are in sober truth treading that same common earth on which the memorable dead strove, conquered, and died.

So Goethe first understood Homer when he landed in Sicily, for Sicily still retains the colour of that Greek mythology, which arose in a land still Greek in all but name. And somehow, as the night from the "tideless, dolorous midland sea" crept up the broad slopes of Ætna, old, half-remembered fragments, a stray passage from Virgil, a chorus-ending from Euripides, fragments which the tedious routine of uninspired pedantry could not wholly kill, lent to the purple hills and misty levels a sense of tears for things mortal and yet undying, for heroes long dead yet somehow lingering on in those haunted Sicilian hills, where

"The wind is astir in the arches with the sound of swords unseen,
And the cries of kings departed and the battles that have been."



Photo]

On the Descent.

[Arnold Lunn



Photo]

At Nicolosi.

[Arnold Lunn.

Our interpreter roused us from our slumbers a full hour too soon, and we left the hut at 11 o'clock, a ridiculously early hour. We stepped out on to the snowline. A cruel breeze made us regret the warmth within.

Few mountaineers have altogether escaped those experiences, which have a touch of the uncanny grotesque. We all remember bizarre hours among the tortured hills, when exhaustion or great hunger induced curious fancies, when we seemed to be living through some odd tense dream. As I look back on the whole climb from the hut to the summit, it passes in review as a curiously realistic vision of the night. There was the matter-of-fact atmosphere of dreamland, that attitude in which one takes the miraculous for granted, in which a mild peevishness is the strongest sensation that one can recall. We were very sleepy, and we were very inadequately clothed. We had borrowed blankets from the hut, but blanket walking is an art over which we have yet to acquire full mastery. The blanket either curls itself lovingly round your feet and obstructs your progress, or it flaps blustering into your face and hides the foreground. It will always reveal some unprotected spot to the wind, and, if the wind is against you, it begins to pose as a sail. I remember wondering vaguely whether it was any use trying to tack. I ploughed upwards, dimly conscious of two men enveloped in unruly wrappings, that intruded between me and the long slope lit by the moon.

About four hours of this brought us to the observatory, which is some nine thousand six hundred feet above the sea. We tried to force an entry, and, failing, searched for some sheltered spot. The crass folly of the interpreter had dragged us up an hour too soon. He seemed to have forgotten that the sun rises somewhat late in early spring.

Our guide pointed out a patch of earth from which steam was issuing, and suggested that we might use it as a temporary bivouac. The dream became a mild nightmare. We accepted his suggestion with the melancholy resignation proper to denizens in dreamland. We sullenly lay down on this steaming oasis in the desert of snow. One side of one's body was slowly fried, whilst the other rapidly froze. After

uneasily shifting from side to side one became comparatively acclimatised to a Turkish bath below, if not to the Arctic breeze above. Our surroundings were at least impressive. The Titanic crater clothed in ghostly snows loomed up above us, and gave forth a lazy cloud of smoke, whilst above the cold, cheerless procession of the stars moved slowly across the roof of heaven. I was dimly aware of my neighbours as shadowy muttering shapes, clad in a film of oozing steam, and as the problem of keeping one half of one's body warm and the other half cool seemed somehow connected with the task of reducing *Ætna* to a differential equation, I conclude that I soon dropped off to sleep.

I awoke gradually, and wondered vaguely why the mattress was so abominably damp. I tried to pull the bed-clothes over my feet, and was mildly puzzled by the roof of stars. Then my surroundings slowly sorted themselves out, and I rose wearily to my feet.

The interpreter groaned and simulated the throes of final agony. Gladly would we have believed these genuine. He became a stubborn Eleatic, and gave a convincing demonstration that motion was impossible.

The crater is some ten thousand six hundred feet above the sea. We started with misgiving to attack the last thousand feet. The wind cut through out steam-sodden clothes. Our teeth chattered with cold. We were miserably, hopelessly chilled. Near the top our guide stopped, and pointed with contempt at the recumbent figure of the misinterpreter far below. He produced a trumpet, through which he conveyed his sentiments in derisive blasts of discord.

The summit was thickly clouded. We reached it as the light filtered slowly through a bank of mist. A great gust of sulphurous smoke beat upon us as we struggled up the final stretch. We dragged ourselves forward to the edge of the crater, and gazed down into hell.

The crater is some three miles in diameter, but the smoke and fire gave it a suggestion of limitless extent. The bounding wall was broken up into fantastic parapets, grotesque pinnacles, and sheltered gullies, every combination and every contrast that the wit of the Devil could devise for a fitting



Photo]

The Club Hut.

[Arnold Lunn.



Photo]

The Snow Line.

[Arnold Lunn.

habitation. The inside of the crater was lined with ice, a dramatic proof of the intense cold that could resist the heat from below. Ceaseless volumes of cloud poured upwards in convulsive throbs, revealing malicious glimpses of evil crests and scowling depths. Childish visions of the bottomless pit and the intolerable horror of one's earliest nightmares came back unbidden. Down in the security of the valleys you may dismiss Hell as the grotesque fancy of a cruel faith, but even Dean Farrar would have been daunted by a visit to this crater. All the worst and most lurid visions of Jonathan Edwards seemed merely calm statements of unpleasant truths. Jeremy Taylor, who opined that the bodies of the damned are "more loathsome and unsavoury than a million of dead dogs," and Bonaventure, who pleasantly remarked on the "pestilential flavour" of the devils, would have been highly delighted by the thorough fashion in which the intolerable stench of *Ætna's* sulphur clouds bears out their elegant investigations.

This sulphur must have had a mildly intoxicating effect. Witness the following incident. I sat with my back to the crater, shivering in my blanket, while Mr. Compton patiently lay on the ground and peered into its depths, ready to photograph the first uninterrupted view of the crater. Meanwhile, I had observed some fascinating crystals. After a long mental debate as to whether I could raise sufficient energy to extract my hand from my pocket, I drowsily conveyed these crystals to my coat. The process of filling the pocket seemed oddly prolonged. The crystals had an irritating trick of vanishing.

Nothing daunted, I continued to shovel them in, till at last my fuddled intelligence grasped the explanation of a very damp pool of water dripping slowly from my pocket.

At length the heroic patience of Mr. Compton was rewarded, and we prepared to descend. It seemed as if light and colour were the dreams of some dim prenatal life. The sulphur had entered into our souls, and with a great hunger in our hearts for the gracious calm of vineyards and the smiling sea, we hurried down, rejoicing to escape from the savage throes of a restless, tormented kingdom.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

DEAR SIR,—In the belief that Welsh place-names interest other Cambrian climbers, I venture to make demand upon your now limited space.

In "Climbing in the Ogwen District" I expressed my conviction that Glyder Fach is not the correct name of the mountain. My reasons were :—

- (1) That Glyder is not a Welsh word.
- (2) That, if it were, the plural would not be Glyders.
- (3) That the names Greater and Lesser Glyder could not date from early times, because no one without instruments could have discovered the very slight difference between them in height; appearances would lead to the opposite conclusion, and, in fact, they did so mislead Charles Kingsley.

At its foot is Cwm Bochlwyd (Bwchlwyd, the Grey Goat, is a capricious alteration by Pennant), and my suggestion that Bochlwyd was the original name was based on the fact that a Cwm frequently takes its name from its enclosing walls, as Cwm Clogwen and Cwm Coch, and, further, that the name "Grey Cheek or Face" (boch=Latin, buccam) is both appropriate and strikingly analogous in character to other native names of mountains in Wales.

Recently, at the British Museum, I chanced upon a rare book, of whose existence I had never heard before, entitled "Observations on Snowdon Mountains," by William Williams, and found in it the following most interesting passage :—

"Bochlwyd means hoary cheek, the ancient name possibly of the hill on the upper part of which this hollow and lake lie. It is very

common to meet with rocks named from parts of body—Braich, Esgair, Cefn, etc. This hill has much resemblance to a cheek, as it has a swelling appearance covered with grey moss and stones."

The conjecture, therefore, I somewhat boldly advanced, without authority and in defiance of all Ordnance maps, is thus confirmed by the posthumous testimony of this man of Bethesda, who lived as far back as 1750 A.D., and who possessed an intimate knowledge of his native valley.

Not less extensive than this face are several others for which the Ordnance mapsters have not even invented a name.

The names Dinas Mot, Pen Helig Du, Cwm Cneifion, and the correct position of Craig Yr Ysfa were all learnt from Welsh shepherds. Should other Cambrian climbers come upon information about place-names, I shall be greatly obliged if they will kindly communicate it to me.—I am, yours truly,

J. M. ARCHER THOMSON.

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