

THE  
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JOURNAL

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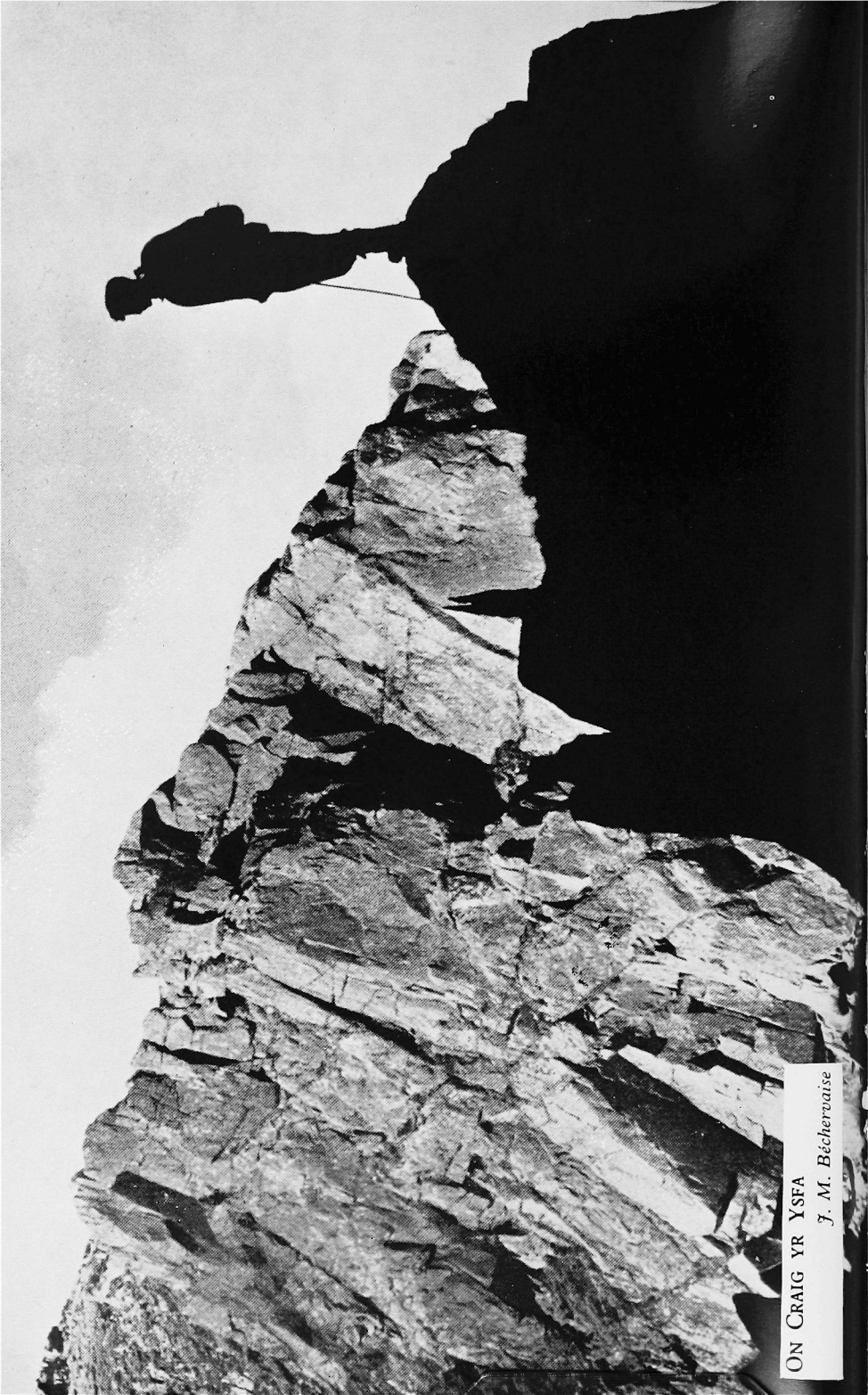
1943

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ON CRAIG YR YSFA  
*J. M. Béchervaise*

# THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

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# SWITZERLAND IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

ARNOLD LUNN

ENGLISHMEN were interested in the Swiss people long before they began to discover beauty in the Swiss mountains. All Europe was amazed when mountain peasants routed the chivalry of Austria in the pass of Morgarten, the first battle in which peasants on foot had defeated knights on horseback. In his attempt to avenge the disaster of Morgarten (1315), Duke Leopold of Austria led a great army against Lucerne only to meet with crushing defeat in the course of which he lost his life. Austria suffered a third defeat at the battle of Näfels in 1388. The heroism with which the free men of the Swiss mountains hurled back the Imperial hosts captured the imagination of Europe. "These surprising victories" wrote Archdeacon Coxe in 1776, "gained by a handful of men against an enemy so superior in number render the wonderful combats of Marathon and Plataea, when the Greeks repulsed the numerous hosts of the whole Persian empire, perfectly credible. The same love of independence, the same dread of slavery, and the same attachment to their country, animated the respective nations to the same deeds of heroism ; . . . the Swiss, as well as the Greeks, owe the rise and preservation of their liberties to that magnanimous and determined valour, which prefers death to living under the servile domination of an arbitrary despot . . . I saw near the village of Näfels several stones, with no other inscription than 1388 : an inscription which no more requires explanation, to an inhabitant of the canton, than the glorious era of 1688 to an Englishman."

"There is one subject," wrote Gibbon at the age of twenty-five, "which I should prefer to all others, *The History of the Liberty of the Swiss*, of that independence which a brave people

rescued from the House of Austria, defended against a Dauphin of France, and finally sealed with the blood of Charles of Burgundy . . . But the materials of this history are inaccessible to me, fast locked in the obscurity of an old barbarous German dialect, of which I am totally ignorant, and which I cannot resolve to learn for this sole and peculiar purpose."

It is curious to reflect that had Gibbon known German, he might have become so absorbed in Swiss history with all its fascinating European ramifications that he might never have embarked on *The decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Had not Burgundy been defeated near the waters of Neuchatel, there might today be a Central European kingdom between Germany and France. From the Habisburg, a little castle in northern Switzerland, there rode forth a man who claimed the Imperial Crown and whose descendants once ruled over Spain, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. Had Calvin of Geneva or Zwingli of Zürich failed, the Counter Reformation might have recaptured the territories lost to the ancient church. Had Rousseau, who was born in Geneva, died in infancy the whole course of the French Revolution might have been very different. It was on the shores of Lake Geneva that the French Revolution was first conceived and the grand strategy of the Russian Revolution determined.

What Frederic Harrison describes as the "superstition that the glaciers and snow-peaks are the only things worth coming to see" is of comparatively recent growth. Harrison was an ardent mountaineer and an original member of the Alpine Club, but in his criticism of the English in Switzerland he echoes Ruskin. "Switzerland might be made one of the most instructive schools of history, one of the most exquisite schools of every sense of beauty, one of the most pathetic schools of spiritual wonder—and they make it a mere playground." (*My Alpine Jubilee*.)

It is interesting to contrast Bishop Burnet's record of his travels through Switzerland in the early years of King James I's reign with modern Alpine literature. There is hardly a mention of mountains in Burnet beyond a bleak and inaccurate remark about Mont Maudit, as Mont Blanc was then called, but Burnet was intensely interested in the Swiss. Archdeacon Coxe, whom I have already quoted, is midway between Burnet and those

modern victims of the superstition that Switzerland is only of interest because of the Alps. He was one of the first English travellers to give expression to a genuine love of mountain scenery and he was also as interested as Bishop Burnet in the political and ecclesiastical politics of the Swiss.

The Archdeacon was a very competent historian. He had access, so Professor Namier assures me, to more original documents of the period than any historian until comparatively recent times. His memoirs of the great Duke of Marlborough, of Robert and of Horace Walpole are still of immense value to modern historians. His Churchmanship was of the period, a latitudinarian like Tillotson, a typical member of that eighteenth century Church of England which was so successful in steering a middle course between "the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome and the squalid sluttiness of fanatic conventicles." Coxe, of course, makes all the correct remarks about Romish superstition but he found little to his taste among the varieties of Swiss protestantism which he encountered, perhaps because he could find nothing in the least like the Church of England. The Grison Pietists, for instance, had nothing in common with those dignified Anglican clerics in big wigs and billowing black gowns without whose sermons, bound in finely tooled full calf, no gentleman's library was complete. On the contrary "these Pietists appear similar to our Methodists . . . they affect to be uncommonly rigid and pious . . . and employ so much time in prayer as to neglect their ordinary business."

The Archdeacon was an uncompromising Whig and, as such, he detested despotism and democracy. We are so bemused by the jargon of ideological warfare that we are inclined to think of the Magna Carta as a concession wrested from a Fascist Dictator by a Popular Front, and to forget that the one thing on which Whigs and Tories were agreed was that democracy was pernicious. As late as 1866, Mr. Gladstone defended himself with great eloquence against the charge that he was promoting democracy by his efforts to extend the franchise. "You will exclaim," he said, "that 'this is democracy.' I reply that it is no such thing."

Coxe believed in representative government and a franchise restricted to men of property. He grudgingly conceded that



some at least of the democratic cantons were well governed. "These little states, notwithstanding the natural defects of a democratical constitution may justly claim a large share of our approbation." But he hastens to add, "it is only in these small republics, and in such a state of society that this kind of general democracy can have place." "Those theorists," he elsewhere remarks, "who are so anxious to reform the English House of Commons by transferring to *the people at large* the election of their representatives in parliament, might, on examining with attention the features of the Grison diet, fondly imagine that an *annual* assembly, in the choice of whose members. *every male* of the state should have a vote, and in which all material occurrences should be liable *to be directed by its constituents*, must *necessarily* be the purest factuary of general freedom." He hastens to explain that the mischievous results of pure democracy are in the Grison counteracted by corruption and aristocratical influence and adds, "If therefore corruption and aristocratical influence alone diminish factions and prevent anarchy in so poor a country as that of the Grisons, and in a republic scarcely known among the nations of Europe ; to what a dreadful excess must the same evils prevail, if the *same* mode of electing and giving instructions to, members of parliament, subsisted in a kingdom like England, where riches and luxury are continually advancing with such rapid strides."

Perhaps the purest of all forms of democracy, government of the people by the people (rather than by the representatives of the people) is the Landsgemeinde which existed in some of the smaller Catholic cantons as late as the first world war. The Officers were elected and laws were submitted to all adult burghers who met for this purpose, usually on the last Sunday in April. But democracy declined in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "Even the Reformation itself " writes Mrs. Lina Hug, a Swiss Protestant, "led the way to this decline by lodging all power—political, fiscal, moral and educational—in the hands of governments." Again, the Catholic states which surrounded Switzerland were anything but democratic and their influence was too strong for the primitive democracy of Switzerland. The Switzerland of Coxe's day was a variegated mosaic of despotism, oligarchy and democracy. Cantons such as Vaud which were ruled despotically by Berne, hailed the

French Revolution with delight. The accidental death of two French soldiers was exploited by the French as an act of violence by Bernese tyrants directed against a great nation, and before long the French Jacobites entered Switzerland on a mission of "liberation." Vaud was presented with a bill for £28,000 for assistance against Berne. Berne, the stronghold of aristocracy was captured and looted and France proclaimed the "one and undivided Helvetic Republic." Ten cantons accepted the French domination, but the Catholic cantons around the shores of Lake Lucerne fought to the last. Reding gained brilliant victories with his diminutive army, but the campaign ended with the terrible massacre at Stanz on September 9th, 1798.

The invasion of Switzerland had a decisive effect on English sympathies. Most of the young intellectuals had hailed the French Revolution with the same uncritical enthusiasm that their successors were to show for the Russian revolution. Every revolution as the great Basle historian Burckhardt remarks, "opens with the brilliant farce of hope" and the French was no exception to this rule. Vanity prevents people from admitting that they have backed the wrong horse, and both Wordsworth and Coleridge had no difficulty in defending the Terror, and felt no need to apologise for the execution of the King and Queen, but Switzerland, to them as to others, was the symbol of liberty, the land on whose soil free men had struck the first effective blow against feudalism, and the invasion of Switzerland finally alienated their sympathies. Wordsworth's sonnet is too well known to need quoting. Less well known is the verse in Coleridge's Ode to France, which opens :

"Forgive me Freedom ! O forgive those dreams

I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament.

From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent . . ."

and then addressing France, Coleridge continues :

"Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind ?

To mix with kings in the low lust of sway."

The invasion of Switzerland produced much the same effect on contemporary intellectuals as the invasion of Finland in 1939. And no doubt had France subsequently become not our enemy but our ally, Coleridge would have had no difficulty in persuading himself that Switzerland had invaded France.

# LAMA ANDEN

A. J. M. SMYTH

WHEN I first arrived in Bengal a few months ago I was very keen on doing a little climbing. So I got in touch with the Calcutta branch of the Himalayan Club who told me that Lama Anden had not yet been climbed. They said it was an easily accessible mountain of 19,250 feet and might be done in a fortnight. I managed to persuade Wing Commander Ford to come with me, and although we were both inexperienced in high climbing, we set about organising a small expedition.

The arrangements were made much easier by the kind co-operation of the Club who lent us tents, rope and much other equipment. Even so we had to get boots, climbing clothes and windproof suits which made up a very substantial proportion of the total cost. We arranged for four high climbing porters to meet us at Gangtok together with six coolies for the journey. We bought everything except porters' food in Calcutta and divided it up into ten loads of about 55 lb. each. With this formidable collection of luggage we boarded the Darjeeling train and arrived at Siliguri at 7-15 a.m. on September 16th, the first day of our leave.

We were on the road by 7-30 and had great hopes of doing the first stage of the trek from Gangtok to Diktu that day. This would have put our whole programme forward and given us another day for climbing. But our car journey was full of incidents including punctures, stops to allow the engine to cool down and halts while the road was being made. When we did at last reach Gangtok at one o'clock the porters and coolies all solemnly refused to start that day saying that we would never reach Diktu before dark. Not knowing any better, we gave in to them, and set up our headquarters in the New Dak Bungalow, leaving at 10 a.m. the next morning.

At first we tried to keep the party together in the best expedition style as seen in films, but every member seemed to have his own best pace and so were strung out over a mile or so of track. We found it best to halt every five miles at wayside huts for a cup of tea or local beer, to allow the more heavily laden porters to catch up ; or often, to allow us to catch them up. We relied on the honesty of our party for the protection of our property—actually we only lost three tent pegs during the whole trip.

We reached Diktu at four o'clock in the afternoon and were very glad that there was not time to go on to the next bungalow, as we were feeling very much out of training. Diktu lies in the hot Tista valley only 1,700 feet above the sea, and after the coolness of Gangtok at 6,000 feet, feels very steamy. Angkarma, the cook, went to the village to arrange porters for the following day. In harvest time it is very difficult to get coolies to come further than the next village. The next stage to Singhik was only thirteen miles, but it was the worst of the lot as the track ran through the clammy valley climbing to 4,200 feet only at the end.

Singhik is one of the best known of Himalayan Rest Houses as it looks out directly at the snows of Kanchenjunga up a fine valley, and we sat there on the lawn while peak after peak came out of the clouds and disappeared again. The day after, we went on with a new lot of porters to Chuntang and on again to Lachen at a height of over 8,000 feet—the last village we saw and we took on five sturdy locals to carry our kit to the last camp. From here onward it was necessary to carry all the food for the porters and coolies as well as our own.

When we got away again we had to leave the main track that leads onward to Tibet, and branch up the Zemu Chu towards the Zemu Glacier. The path had been well worn by the German expeditions to Kanchenjunga, but was now somewhat overgrown and very boggy. The weather broke, and we were troubled by enormous numbers of leeches. We were very glad to reach Yaktang although this offered us no welcome. Where we had expected a village, we found a dilapidated shelter below an enormous rock. We crouched round the fire while our porters pitched the tent and cooked us a meal with lots of tea. Our coolies, two of whom were strong girls of about eighteen, caused us much amusement, but it was obvious that they were

also amused at us. They were delighted when we gave them some newspaper to make cigarettes, using local tobacco. In any case we had plenty to give them as we had brought cigarettes to give to the lamas of the monastery at Lachen. But we found that cigarettes are to lamas what wives are to monks.

From the 12,000 feet of Yaktang we started up the very small track to the Keshong La where we intended to establish Camp 2. On the way up we met a party coming back from an attempt on the same mountain, and heard that the weather had not permitted them to make even one attempt. They had spent four days on the Keshong La without even getting a proper sight of Lama Anden itself. This made us determined to place our camp as high as possible so that we should be able to reach the summit quickly should a small clearing take place, a decision which involved us in a furious argument with the porters who wished to camp by the last bushes where they could get firewood. But this time we won and we drove them up another 1,000 feet to a suitable site at 16,000 feet.

Even as we were pitching the tents, the mists cleared and we saw enough of the mountain to enable us to choose our route and take compass bearings so that we could start the following day even if it should be misty. The night was very wet and the tent leaked badly until the temperature fell and the roof became solid with ice. We hardly slept at all and got up just before dawn to find the sky nearly clear. We started at seven, taking two porters Angkarma and Dowa Tendup with us, together with enough food and a tent should bad weather force us to make another camp. By eight-thirty we had reached the north-west ridge at about 17,000 feet, having done 1,000 feet in one and a half hours. We got a brief view of the Lonak peaks and Tibet, and also of our own mountain. Then the clouds formed and we did not see blue sky again. We were now in the first snow which was still hard as the sun was not yet on it. We continued up the broken rocks of the north-west ridge for several hundred feet until it looked as though we should be slowed down by serious rock climbing. We therefore traversed across the west face until we reached a wide gulley, and kicked steps up this for at least an hour. The conditions were ideal as the snow was only two foot deep and showed no sign of avalanching. Only in one place did we use the rope where the slope was about forty-five degrees.

At eleven o'clock we came out on the south-west ridge at a height we judged to be 18,500 feet. The sun had previously been shining through a thin veil of mist, but now the mist thickened and it began to snow. We were feeling the effects of height and paused to rest every few minutes. However, the route could not possibly have been easier and we climbed up a hogs back of ever-decreasing gradient till at mid-day we came suddenly within sight of what we at first thought was the summit. A wall of rock not more than thirty feet high stood in front of us. We roped up and I led the first pitch. Once on the top of this the visibility improved and we saw a whole row of pinnacles. It was still snowing but the sun was now shining a little way above our heads.

After climbing several of these pinnacles, each of which seemed higher than their neighbours, but lower when we were on top of them we came to one which really did seem to be the summit. We hoisted Angkarma on top of a stone about a foot square at twelve-thirty and shook hands all round.

Until we were off the snow, the way down was far more dangerous than the way up, as we frequently went in up to our waists, or slipped on sudden hard patches. We lost our way down and feared we should have to spend the night out.

Luckily we came out of cloud 500 feet above the camp where a large fire and a meal awaited us. It snowed hard all night and the tent did not get wet. The next day we packed up and decided to make a double march to Lachen. We often had cause to regret this decision but we reached the Dak bungalow at dusk in the last stages of exhaustion, even though the map distance was only sixteen miles. On the way we bought a sheep and this kept the party fed all the way to Gangtok, which we reached in four slow stages, getting back to Calcutta within our fortnight's leave.

We were cheated of the view from the summit by bad weather, but we could not grumble. Only on two days could we have made the final bid, yet the snow conditions were perfect and the weather moderate on the first of these. How lucky we were can be judged by the fact that at least five recorded attempts have failed, while the only possible success—that of Doctor Kellas—is almost certainly mythical in view of recent research. Personally I have known Snowdon to be more difficult.

# GRADUS AD PARNASSUS

F. H. KEENLYSIDE

THESE notes attempt to describe how mountains conscripted a follower.

Most people only read the biographies of great men, but I have often found the lives of lesser folk more entertaining. The homely anxieties of Parson Woodford please me better than the wider worries of Gladstone. This idiosyncrasy is my only excuse for venturing diffidently to record by what stages climbing caught me. How Mummery or Mallory took to the game are subjects for history and proper to a learned journal, whereas my experience is fit only for a psychologist's case book, though possibly some of my fellow "back-benchers" may find parallels in their own past.

I have never lived among hills, never had the good fortune to meet climbers in my youth and at Oxford I never came in contact with the O.U.M.C. This disaster wasted nearly a decade.

In my childhood a few hills, such as Mount Caburn near Lewis, succeeded in fascinating me, but I did not see a bigger mountain until 1928, when I went to Switzerland with a family party. The fact that we were bound to the valley floors by the blood pressure of one of my elders limited my ascents to the Rigi, Niesen and Schynige Platte, all of which heights the rest of the party reached by mechanical transport.

The sight of the high snows, in particular the view of the Jungfrau from the Lauterbrunnen valley, excited me much and I brought back with me a resolve to visit those remote and mysterious regions that seemed more a part of the sky than of the earth. But in spite of this good resolution my attitude to mountains was not yet in advance of early nineteenth-century romanticism ("and to me, high mountains are a feeling, but the hum of human cities torture"), that is, a melange of the pathetic fallacy and callow misanthropy wrapped up in facile versification.

Three years later I went to Mallorca in the spring and there adopted hill-walking as a standard holiday occupation. Near the summit of the highest mountain on the island, Puig Major, we found a white primrose, a rarity a botanical fellow-guest at Fornalux had told us to look out for. Nevertheless, it is a less notable incident that remains foremost in my mind, for it succeeded in frightening me more than any subsequent mountain experience ; on the way down we came out on an alp where bulls were being brought on for the Barcelona bull-ring. We found another way down.

The same year I prefaced an unsuccessful attempt to learn German by a successful walk through, or perhaps up and down, the Black Forest from Baden-Baden to Freiburg-in-Breisgau. Next year I wandered hither and thither along the Austro-German border in the Bavarian Alps for a fortnight which was supposed to culminate in an ascent of the Zugspitze. Unfortunately a shower of snow destroyed visibility, and our complete ignorance of the principles of the game, coupled with the necessity of catching a train in Munich the next day, defeated our lamentably amateur effort.

Shortage of holidays and of liquid resources imposed a gap of three years, for in my holy innocence I did not then realise what manner of country was to be found in North Wales or the Lakes. Then there was another family party in Switzerland which forms the biggest blot on my career, for no sin is so heinous or irrevocable as a missed opportunity. True I could not afford to pay a guide and nobody would come with me, but the black fact remains that I did no more than walk up to huts and then walk down again. In spite of this I did acquire a general idea of Swiss geography, a delight in Alpine scenery and a sense of guilt at my failure to climb.

The next year I came by chance on a copy of Patrick Monkhouse's "On Foot in Wales" and therein saw pictures of Welsh mountains. Almost at once I set out to walk from Dolgelley (after ascending Cader Idris) to Conway. After crossing the Rhinogs to Harlech, I got as far as Beddgelert where I stuck as a "centrist" for a few days, finishing by going over Snowdon to catch a bus at Pen-y-pass. This was really the critical week without which I might have escaped. North Wales had got me and it was only a matter of time before I fell



down the rest of the stairs and got a life-sentence of climbing. Thereafter I spent every holiday I could get at Beddgelert and walked up and down and round the neighbouring hills. I read a great many books about mountains and climbing, and before long I bought a rope. Although I kept it bashfully<sup>1</sup> concealed, I always hoped to find a loose climber who would take me up something.

I didn't have much luck. One evening Will McNaught (I knew the literature well enough to know his name) drove up to "The Firs" at Beddgelert and asked if there was anyone there who would come climbing with him on the morrow. I spent a night only to be compared with the night of Christmas Eve in early childhood. The next morning it was raining hard and in due course McNaught drove up and explained that, in view of the weather, he was driving straight back to London. I lost my climb but I learned my first lesson about climbers; they were sybarites at heart, they found wet clothes and cold winds uncomfortable just as lesser mortals did. So that in spite of my disappointment I was encouraged. (I might interpolate here that I did climb with Will McNaught five or six years later. By common consent we huddled in Helyg until after tea when, the rain abating somewhat, we struggled as far as Galt-yr-Ogof and did an undistinguished climb on vertical mud.)

I began to despair of finding a helping hand or rope, nevertheless towards solitary ventures I preserved an attitude of great caution, mostly natural but partly bred of an excessive study of text-books. I got no nearer to climbing than North Ridge of Tryfan, the Bristly Ridge or Crib Goch.

At last in the autumn of 1937 I succeeded in getting a real climb—a "real" climb being a route listed as such in a guide book. Robert Shackleton was staying at "The Firs" very busy on geological studies, but I had my eye on him from the start. One day it rained so hard that he stayed in; I stayed in too, watching for the moment when he began to find his inactivity irksome. By the middle of the afternoon he was obviously bored and I began to exercise my guile. He had no rope; but I produced one. He wasn't going to walk to any rock in this rain; but I would drive him to the Milestone. And so I scrambled up the Milestone behind him.

<sup>1</sup> I suppose "bashfully" because I was ashamed to have grown so old and never to have climbed a rock.

I was so elated at achieving my ambition that I remember very little of this first climb except that it was all much easier than I had expected. From the top of the Milestone we traversed round to the Ivy Chimney and I do distinctly remember my sensation when I put my head through the eye of the needle at the top and saw the empty air I had to swing across ; however, even that proved easy enough when assailed. It was very wet driving back but I was warmed by the thought that my rope was no longer new.

I had now done one climb but I was still thrown back on my own resources for further progress. Next spring I dragged two walking companions to Burnthwaite in Wasdale. I hoped, in spite of their protestations to the contrary to induce them to climb something easy with me. They were adamant. I have a vivid recollection of getting them to the foot of Broad Stand ; I went up and down the first few moves (I rather suspect that in fact these few moves are all there are, but I have never been back to see) in the belief that this demonstration would convince them of the ease of the undertaking. Unfortunately the display had the opposite effect, seeming to sap the little morale the party had ever had. It was only with great reluctance that they followed me up Lord's Rake, which admittedly had a lot of ice in it. A savage attack by wind and snow at the top further incensed the party against their inoffensive leader.

After this any further attempt to make the party climb was out of the question. By the evening of the last day of our week I was getting desperate ; I seemed farther than ever from my goal.

The only available guide in the farm was Abraham's " British Mountain Climbs " (possibly an early edition) and this told me that Needle Gully was an easy climb. So when the rest of the party trekked homewards down Gavel Neese, I went nervously up to tackle Needle Gully. My nervousness was much increased when I got there by finding a party ascending Needle Ridge. I had no wish at all that my childish stumblings should be observed by a party of experts (I did not then know that this particular ridge was unlikely to be occupied by broadly-striped tigers). However, I was not now to be balked by shyness, and blushing deeply I set to the ascent.

As Needle Ridge is far preferable to Needle Gully as an easy way up or down, I doubt if any other member of the club, except perhaps stalwart survivors of the gully epoch, has ever climbed the gully and I ought, perhaps, to describe it. Unfortunately I can only remember that it was not so easy as I expected and that I climbed it in a furious rush owing to my embarrassment at being observed. I expected to arrive on a grass slope at the top and was surprised to find myself looking over into Hell Gate, into which I duly descended.

This little scramble was an important turning point for I now knew that I could do easy climbs by myself without waiting for a real climber to induct my steps. On my return to London I bought most of the C.C. and F.R.C.C. guides and resolved to go solemnly through the climbs marked "Easy" and so graduate to the "Moderate" and perhaps, ambitious whisper, even higher.

That summer and autumn I began my course, and rapidly learned a few fundamentals ; that the guide book "Easy" really was easy and that one could begin with "Moderates" ; that the bottom pitches of climbs were not easily distinguishable from each other ; that grass was more to be feared than rock even if its angle was much easier, and so on. There is much to be said for this method of beginning ; I got used to finding my own way, whereas by more usual methods I should only have got used to following a rope ; I was not tempted into the habit of "bouncing" a move and relying on the rope, and I had all the fun of leading with none of its responsibilities, and, on such easy rocks, with no risk whatever. In addition, I never got cold waiting for the rest of the rope to move on, I went at my own pace and stopped when I liked.

Now that I write it down it sounds very idyllic, but I was always dissatisfied. Wandering about on easy rock without even a rope to dignify the expeditions was clearly not climbing, and a climber I would be. My next step was to pounce on my old companion of Mallorca days when he came home from India on leave. I whisked him up to Wales before he knew where he was, tied a rope round his middle and made him follow. This at least looked better, we had a rope and an outsider could not detect us for the imposters we were. We began on the ridge of Little Tryfan, and were quite elated with our success until

we read, " Rope : 90 feet is useful if used at all " ; obviously it was hardly sporting to have used a rope here and we were still outcasts. I can only remember one other of our ventures on this trip ; we intended one of the easy routes on the back of the Milestone but somehow or other missed our way and spent the afternoon scrambling from one heathery terrace to another trying to find our route. It wasn't that we couldn't proceed up or down but that we wanted to do a " climb " like gentlemen and we couldn't find it. We were still being outsiders.

This was nearing the end of the chapter. The following Whitsun (1938) I managed, through the good offices of a remote relative, to attach myself to a party of six strangers, including David Lewers and Dick Carpendale. One more day's delay was still interposed, spent vainly seeking Crib Goch Buttress in thick mist ; we eventually reached hot tea in the summit hotel but we got there by walking. The next morning was fine ; we found the buttress and climbed it, ran down the other side to plunge, mother-naked, into Llydaw, and then up Lliwedd by Horned Crag. The memorable day was concluded by, and celebrated in, the draught cyder at Pen-y-Pass.

After ten years I was out of the Kindergarten.

# WET BLANKETS

J. N. MILLS

THE summer of 1942 was wet, the blindest optimist could not deny it ; but in September came a few sunny days, and we began to pine for the mountains. There are some who woo the mountains in a half-hearted fashion, content to spend their days among them while the sun caresses, but losing their ardour when leaden skies frown and vent their displeasure in torrents of rain and hail, who woo by day but retreat nightly to the fleshpots and solid walls in the valley. We planned to trust ourselves wholly to the mountains, to take a tent and all that we needed and spend a week among them, hoping that thereby they would open to us more of their secrets. Also, the break with the ritual comforts of town would be the sharper.

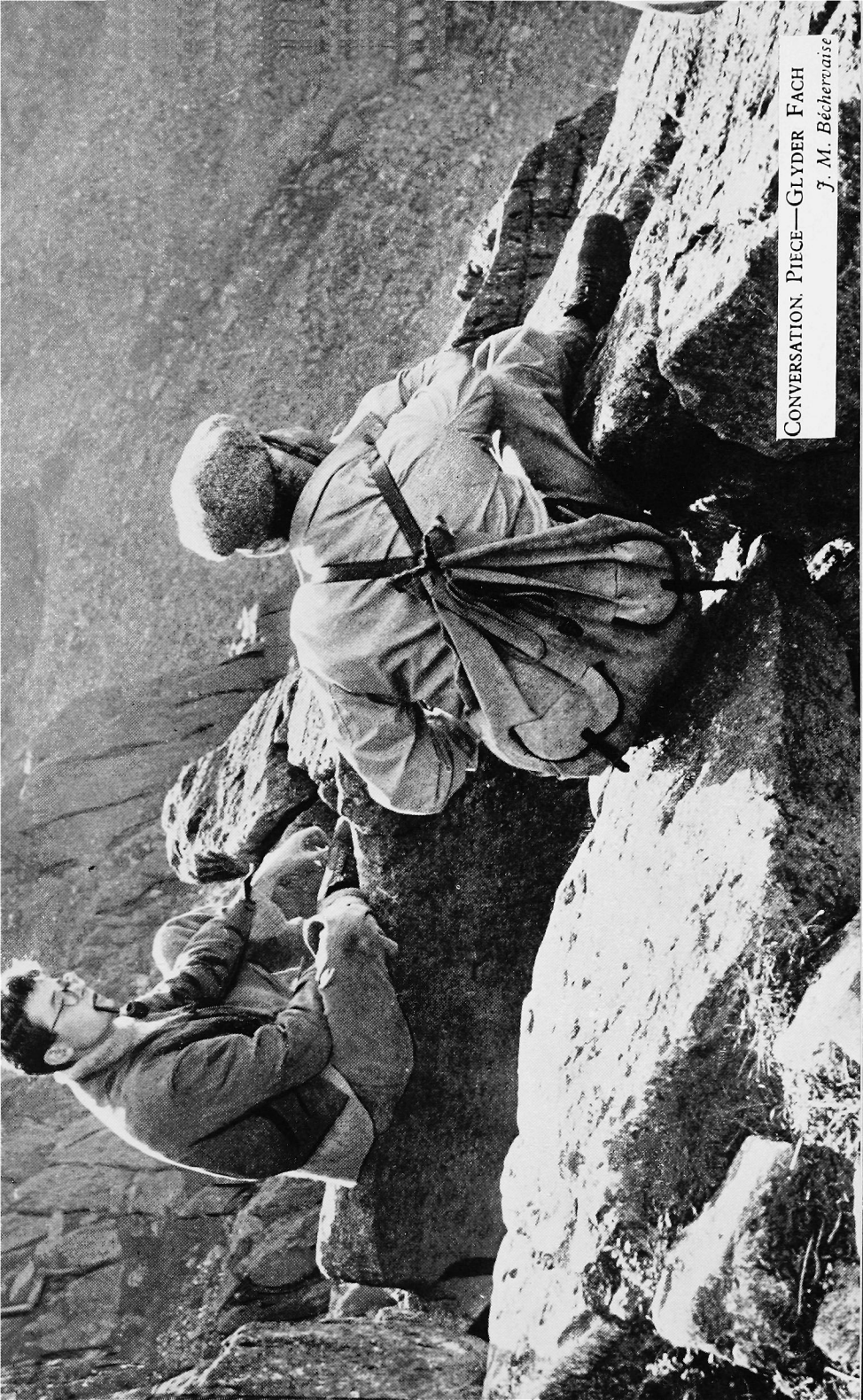
There followed a period of busy contriving, engrossment in Bradshaw, calculation of just how much butter, bread, jam, meat and vegetables two people could eat in a week, how many blankets and sweaters were needed, and how much weight two untrained bodies could carry. This last led to the rejection of many civilised amenities, razor, books, and even guides, for we were determined that whatever else we lacked, food and warmth we should have in plenty. During the final rush of packing we had no time to weigh our loads ; a large frame rucksack stuffed full, a haversack of food, a rope and a tent, seemed weight enough, and we were spared the disconsolation of a gravimetric comparison with the loads carried by Himalayan porters or Alaskan climbers.

Definite plans were few, but fancy strayed around a day or two in Cwm Dyli with climbs on Lliwedd, then portorage up the zig-zags and down to Llyn Du'r Arddu, with perhaps a day or two in Cwm Llechog to finish. In detail, we were to take a night train to Bettws, cycle to Pen-y-Pass, and walk up to Llyn Llydaw and settle there ; beyond that no plans were fixed.

The first misfortune occurred at Crewe, when our bicycles proceeded towards Glasgow, so we continued by train to Roman Bridge and walked over Bwlch Ehediad into Nant Gwynant. This is a good approach to Snowdon, beginning in a lonely valley with rounded moorland peaks and working gently up to a flat bwlch with the twin cones of Yr Aran and Lliwedd showing beyond. Then suddenly comes the steep fall to Nant Gwynant, where the whole of Snowdon, or its cloud covering, appears. We got so far with only a few sharp showers, and when we reached Cwm Dyli fine intervals were still sufficient for us to erect our small 3-foot tent on a soft sheltered patch of grass. Once we were inside with our goods and chattels the rain set in remorselessly, but we laughed at the fleshpots of Pen-y-Pass as we tediously brewed cocoa over a minute spirit stove.

The presumption of that laugh must have angered the mountain. Our stout canvas thwarted his efforts to damp us from above, so he attacked from below, and we soon found that our soft turf bed had become a sponge, and pools of water were soaking up through groundsheet, blanket and clothes. It was only then that our resolution faltered, we collected what we needed for the night, and set out to look for a barn ; Pen-y-Pass would have none of us and sent us on down the valley ; farm after farm took one look at us and sent us farther into the night, and we felt and looked like the traditional drowned rats when at last a quarryman offered us a bed in his cottage. He and his wife amply atoned for our previous ill-fortune, for we found next morning, that while we lay warm in bed, he and his wife had been sitting up drying our clothes by the fire.

Next morning curtains of rain drifted steadily across the long arm of Snowdon which bears the railway, but by mid-day it slightly abated, so we set out again, meaning at worst to retrieve the tent and depart. The weather was fickle in its indecision, every now and again Crib Goch appeared for a time, to be blotted out soon by eddying trails of mist. By the time we reached Cwm Dyli the lower part of Lliwedd's cliff could be seen, threatening and inhospitable, but the wind had gone, so we decided to take another chance. The only piece of ground which could not possibly hold water was a patch of sharp angular shingle beside the lake, and here we pitched the tent, anchoring it with the largest boulders we could move, and



CONVERSATION. PIECE—GLYDER FACH  
*J. M. Béchervaise*





padding the ground with a thick layer of wet grass. The lake was an even sheet, disturbed only by innumerable concentric rings as the rain soaked gently down, and all night the rain poured on the tent with the monotonous insistence which comes only with such unaccustomed stillness.

When dawn broke the sky lightened, but not the rain, but in the afternoon a wind sprang up and diversified the scene, whipping up spray on the lake and giving occasional glimpses of the peaks around the cwm, but throughout the day we never left the tent for more than half-an-hour. That night there was no monotony, the rain beat down so hard that separate drops could not be distinguished, the wind took hold of the tent now from one side, now from the other, and attempted to tear it from the ground, but it did no more than balloon in the sides in turn on top of us, so that water seeped through on to the blankets.

By next day any lingering hopes of the weather were gone, although there was indeed a lull in the rain, and we persuaded ourselves that if we were ever to get up on to the mountain we had better do so now. As we feared, the lull was brief, and as we worked our way round to the east end of the lake and up to the Pig Track the rain came on as before, so that before long we were so wet that the weather hardly mattered any more. We scrambled up the side of Crib Goch to the Pinnacles but here the icy blast so numbed our hands, and the mist swelled every small steepness to such alarming proportions, that we turned round and rushed wildly down, and only when we reached the shore of Glaslyn did we begin to thaw. Round the south shore of the lake we plodded contentedly as so often at the end of a wet mountain day ; we had our one bit of climbing where a steep bluff enters the lake ; the water was only a few inches deep, but the problem was to traverse round without putting a foot below the surface and, satisfied with this trifling effort, we returned to the tent to exchange soaking clothes for blankets which were happily no more than damp.

The tent had not however been quite waterproof, our matches were too wet to strike, the bread was sodden and the potatoes sprouting moulds, so after another wild night, on a wild grey morning we acknowledged defeat and were off. Putting on damp clothes in the warmth of Helyg can be a humorous

pastime, and the chill soon goes with exercise ; putting on sodden clothes on a cold September morning in a stormy cwm, and then packing up tent and belongings in a piercing wind, and tidying up refuse did not provoke the same jocularity.

Helyg was clearly the only place where so many wet things could be dried, so thither we went, burdened with much superfluous water and more food bought in Capel. A long hot bath, a blazing fire in the grate, a vast meal cooked in comfort, and deep sleep under a firm roof, drew the rosy veil of memory over our troubles.

We awoke to patches of sun, which we had not seen for a week, went up the North Buttress of Tryfan, were caught in some hailstorms which froze the rocks, and raced down shivering and wondering at the shafts of light on the storm-clouds. Next day, in warm sunny weather we went home.

## FALL AND DECLINE

My leader said the second time  
He left his holds on Longland's climb :  
“ I wish that I were one of those  
Whose clinging hands, prehensile toes  
Enable them to stand at ease  
On any ruddy cliff they please.  
Alas, my lower limbs are such  
They slide from any rock they touch,  
Whereas my hands have not the grip  
A climber needs to stop a slip.  
Indeed so low a worm am I  
I much prefer the rock be dry ;  
Left to myself I always choose  
To make my climb in rubber shoes.  
I belong to those who hope  
They get the bottom of the rope,  
Who sideways crawl like timid crabs  
Cragbound on the Idwal Slabs,  
Who, on the Glyder's Upper Cliff,  
Would tremble were they not scared stiff.  
So I'll retire and join the crocks  
At play on lower, gentler, rocks.  
I'll talk in bars of all the climbs  
I did in distant youthful times  
Until the young may come to think  
I used to climb as well as drink.”

F.H.K.

# POPOCATEPETL

O. F. PRICE

MANY essentially Mexican things, whether it be tomatoes or turkeys, pineapples or chocolate, should earn the world's gratitude, but greatest of all things Mexico has to offer is undoubtedly her perfect volcanoes, and most of all—"Popo." This the perfect beginner's snow-mountain, it has great height, an international start in the Geography Text-books, and—well, let the record speak.

After two sticky years spent by the writer at seven feet above sea-level on the Gulf of Mexico, the long-awaited leave was granted in mid-September, 1941, and towards the end of the month we were aboard the plane for Mexico City. Our plan was briefly to acclimatise in the city for about two weeks (even seven thousand feet makes you unexpectedly breathless at first) and then go on to the Volcanoes for the last week. However, two belated hurricanes had to be reckoned with, and the final week opened unpropitiously: the first two days were deluged with rain, the mountains hid themselves, my boots lost themselves in the Customs, either 'el Altitud' or the Mexican food upset my internal workings, and, worst of all, the Mexican with whom I had corresponded did not materialise.

Looking at maps and guide books I had originally planned to explore Ajusco (13,075 feet) first. The central plain of Mexico is not far off 10,000 feet in elevation and the timber line reaches to the top of this mountain which is really no more than a good walk. Then, I had thought we might try Xinantecatl (in Aztec this seems to indicate 'very respectable but naked old Sir'): this is about 5,000 feet higher; and finally we would top off the week with 'Popo' (17,794 feet). In point of fact, we had done no more than motor to the foot of the first in a thick misty rain, the respectability of Xinantecatl, or more prosaically, 'Nevada de Toluca,' had been taken for granted, and we were into

Thursday of the last week with nothing achieved but long walks and one stiff dash up the Independence Monument in the Paseo Reforma.

By and large I was thinking of returning to the States in a fit of despondence and the next plane. Then it was that I met the President of La Legion Alpina Mexicana.

Luiz Palafox Robleda, for that was his name, insisted that no man, whether sane or mountaineer, ever left Mexico content unless he had made an attempt on Popo: he was sure the weather was on the mend, it was the dry season in fact, he had his party already in mind, he would supply the necessary equipment, we would start on Saturday at noon, he would act as Guide, there would be no expense beyond that of a car shared between four, he was greatly looking forward to it . . . all this came spontaneously from a man who once spent five <sup>1</sup>days on the mountain and three in the Crater for the fun of the thing. There could be no argument in the face of such enthusiasm. Naturally the next day dawned brightly clear, my boots appeared, the collie-wobbles went, and so did I for a long walk. Faute de mieux in belated preparation.

Again on Saturday the weather was even as he had prophesied. The Volcanoes fairly glistened. We gathered at the headquarters of the Legion. Our hired car never showed up, neither did one of the party, an Austrian refugee, but belatedly we were off at last, and never once did 'Pala's' high spirits wane.

We drove south-east some forty miles to Amecameca. Here the mountain road begins, and we stopped for food at the house of an old Indian. Then on up a steadily worsening mountain track. Luckily, it being dark, the hireling driver could not really see what he was competing with, but by 11 p.m. we were on the saddle between the two Volcanoes, Ixtaccihuatl and Popo: here at Tlamacaz the car could go no farther, and we shouldered our packs. Not far away on the timber line at about twelve thousand feet we saw a light and this turned out to be from the doorway of a cowherd's hut, where we found three other climbers already established around their fire, whose light we had seen, blazing in the middle of the floor. It was distinctly chilly, but I chose to plant my sleeping-bag outside rather than test the joys of what I suspected to be the abode of cows rather

<sup>1</sup> See *Illustrated London News*, 28th August, 1927.

than their herds, and only thinly disguised by the thick wood-smoke.

It rained hard during the night and I was only too willing when we got going about 4-30 a.m. There already was sufficient light to make flashlights unnecessary as we made a stumbling traverse to the north-east side of the mountain through bushy lupins whose dry seed-pods rattled queerly as we brushed through them.

After about an hour we struck upwards and soon leaving all vegetation behind we launched out on to the "sand-fields": in reality these are the lower slopes of a vast accumulation of dark volcanic ash, on which bright yellow patches of some mossy growth are the only relief. The surface was loose and shifting and the going hard. This lasted for about an hour and a half, but by 7 a.m. we had reached the snow-line and it was brilliantly sunny with the mists beginning to come up from the Central Plain. After a short rest we started on to the snow—very troublesome at first on the soft sand. However, the surface soon became firmer, but crampons were unnecessary. The gradient is almost constant and fairly severe, but we set a direct course upwards. The mountain is a perfect dome; this is a distinct disadvantage as, after passing the rocks at Las Cruces on the snowline, there are no landmarks and you never know how, or even if, you are progressing as the skyline is always just where you left it last time and the climb becomes laborious to a degree. The height soon got me panting; but the snow becomes harder; steps can easily be kicked and need not be cut. The Mexicans scorn ropes and there are no crevasses—at the worst a careless step will relegate you an hour or so, nothing more; an ice-axe however proves useful and occasionally comforting.

It is just a question of endurance; luckily I had my camera with me and frequently out came this excuse for a halt to cover my lack of condition. One constantly gets fine views of the sister volcano—'Ixta' the sleeping maiden with her toes toward you, pinkly pretty in the early sun. After about two and a half hours of slow slogging, and during one of my steadily lengthening pauses for breath, I noticed that the snow had an extremely bitter taste. An hour later we came on to the rim of the Crater.

From the immaculate smoothness of the outer slopes you are suddenly confronted with the jagged rotten-tooth aspect of the Crater—a great chasm some two thousand feet across and some three hundred feet deep from the lowest rim. Clouds of steam rise up to the accompaniment of the most satisfying steam boiler noises. As you traverse the rim you can catch glimpses of the boiling mud at the bottom of the crater ; now and then large bubbles rumble to the surface and burst into clouds of steam. Other dryer fissures content themselves with gushing monotonous.

It is most impressive, and I watched for a long time, fascinated.

It is another thousand feet as you traverse to the Pico Mayor. Finally you crawl up the last few feet to the summit and, as always, the reward is there. Apart from "Ixta" there are many fine peaks in sight—all of them impressive in height to a European . . . Malinche (named after Cortez' Indian mistress) is a fine sight, and some seventy-five miles away to the west-south-west that other perfect volcano—Citlalpetl (or Pico de Orizaba), the greatest of them all with its 18,700 feet.

The descent completes the reason why this is the writer's "perfect beginner's peak." Reverse your piolet and sit it out. You will enjoy a continuous glissade for three thousand feet at a sitting without any danger to yourself or anyone else. What more can you ask ?

\* \* \*

### EPILOGUE

Not even the tedious trudge returning over the "sand-fields," not even the car which never turned up to fetch us back to Mexico City, not even the prospect of a five-hour walk to Amecameca after this gruelling first day (had not a miracle-lorry appearing from some unexplained source, picked us up) not *even* the thought of returning to the sticky Gulf port on the morrow could dim the sheer glory of this solitary day in the mountains after two years of mountainless war-enforced routine. The clattering drive down through the pine woods late that night sealed the experience with its memory of intermittent glimpses (when we weren't dodging the slashing branches overhead as the lorry swayed downwards) of the great snow-capped mountain with its immaculate crown bathed in the limpid light of the early moon.

We had climbed Popo, we had seen Mexico.

# MOUNTAIN MOTIVES AND VALUES

R. A. HODGKIN

THE motives for mountaineering are mixed. There appears to be a central motive with which this essay is chiefly concerned, but there are others which are superimposed on it and may sometimes exceed it in importance. Desire for the esteem of others is one of these, but I do not believe it to be very important. To realise this one only has to imagine oneself bound by an oath of secrecy, never to reveal one's achievements. Most people would agree that such a pledge would only slightly reduce the desire to climb. Another much stronger motive is the love of the beauty of mountains. The Pennine peaks seen from the Oberland while the dawn slowly lights the grey valleys is indeed a precious sight and one which we treasure for years. The beauty of mountains is a thing which draws us back to them with increasing strength and may even become the main motive in later years. But what is the driving urge which sends climbers painfully struggling up the great heights of the Himalaya? It is not the beauty of the view, for this can produce little real joy at great heights, and the climber can do little more than mentally photograph them for later contemplation.

Mountaineering, arctic exploration, some forms of sailing and other sports where danger and hardship are often present, all seem to draw on a deep-seated impulse. I believe that this is the desire in men to live competently on the limits of possibility. It is the thought expressed in "In this short span . . . I hold the life of man" and "You went to the verge you say, and came back safely?" In this poem "Prelude XIV" Conrad Aiken seems to express this feeling very fully. St. Exupery talks of pioneer flying and similar activities as "liberating the



prince in man," which means that when someone voluntarily succeeds in living on the borderline between life and death he is doing something intensely satisfying to himself. A climber on an exposed face of rock, moving with delicacy and poise has life and death under his control. He knows that of all human beings, he is one of the very few who can occupy that position on the limits of human possibility with perfect competence. Many people call this impulse "the spirit of adventure" which is a convenient tabloid term but does not explain or justify either the urge or the activity.

This "spirit of adventure" is used to explain many actions needing courage and determination which are not caused by the more obvious fundamental motives of self-preservation and self-propagation. Many psychologists would say that if it is analysed it can be shown to consist of elements of the other two fundamentals. The words "sense of power" would also probably be called in to help the explanation but this term is less useful because it lacks the biological force implied by the preservation and propagation motives. Nevertheless, the impulse which the words "spirit of adventure" attempt to describe has a very strong reality throughout history, and in the experience of most individuals. It expressed itself in the great Age of Discovery; only the cynical can read of the achievements of such men as Magellan, and believe that they were motivated only by desire for commercial gain or imperial expansion. The practical completion of major geographical exploration by the end of the eighteenth century and the expansion of a prosperous but vigorous middle class in the nineteenth century encouraged men to search for new outlets for their adventure urge which normally only becomes active when men are not entirely preoccupied with the yet more important impulses to survive and to breed. One of these new outlets was mountaineering and with it came a sudden change in the attitude of men towards mountains.

I believe that this adventure urge can be shown to have a biological significance analagous to the other two basic motives of preservation and reproduction and though it is of less biological importance than them, it should be regarded as one of the trinity of basic urges. If one considers the history of life on the earth, it is seen to consist of three dominant processes :

living, reproducing and evolving. The first would cease if it were not for the survival urge ; the second would cease if it were not for the propagation urge ; and the third would cease if it were not for the adventure urge. The first two statements are generally accepted ; the last is what the next part of this essay tries to substantiate.

The vast number of steps which have gone to make up the ladder of evolution are in essentials similar to each other. Every species has lived and bred, has competed with its organic and its inorganic environment. Every species has had occur in it periodically a large number of accidental mutations (sudden modifications in structure which are hereditary) of these, the vast majority have been of no use to their possessors who have gained from them no increased ability to survive, with the result that the species as a whole has thus been able to discard useless innovations. Periodically however a useful mutation arrives which by increasing the ability of its possessors to survive, becomes permanent. Sometimes the new acquisitions which natural selection conferred, enabled one species to dominate its rivals and establish itself more firmly in the territory held by its predecessors, but very often it enabled the new species to increase its field of activity altogether or even to move to new fields where its life could be more free and fertile. If one imagines a " lion mutation " with a longer tooth or a " giraffe mutation " with a longer neck, it is clear that these things in themselves will not automatically establish their owners as superior. The lion must also have a measure of vitality and aggressiveness if he is to become dominant in his own sphere and the giraffe must have some measure of vitality and aggressiveness, not against his fellows but against his environment, if his neck is going to appear at its true worth. This aggressiveness against the environment must have been present to some degree in almost every stage in which species extended their fields of activity. This is the biological origin of the adventure urge in men.

At this point certain objections may be raised. It may be pointed out that luck would often be enough to bring the wandering giraffe into regions of tall trees where his long neck would be of most advantage. It is true that luck must obviously have played a part in the process, but one might equally well apply this argument to the reproductive urge and say that repro-

duction is often a matter of luck and not of urges. This is probably increasingly true the lower one goes down the animal scale, but it does not prevent us from recognising in the higher animals, sexual or adventurous urges which can be regarded as analogous to our own.

It may also be objected that it is unnecessary to introduce this new adventure urge and that a desire to survive is enough. It will be said that the desire to survive, operating in a crowded environment forces species to die or seek new fields. Granting, however, the supreme importance of the survival urge, it is nevertheless obvious that all animals of a species do not show exactly equal measures of conservatism in relation to their environment ; that some will be more inclined to try living on its limits than others. Given this degree of variety it is clear that there will be a steady, if slight tendency for the more marginal types to be selected. Natural selection therefore as well as picking the fitter mutations has shown a steady preference for the more aggressive and adventurous species. This preference has gradually produced types which display these characteristics in fairly large measure. We acknowledge these characteristics in ourselves by giving them names such as the urge to power and the adventure urge. We also recognise these things in the higher animals, though in the lower ranks of the biological scale, such subjective terms as the word "urge" fail to apply. We should not however expect so blunt a tool as language to be able to draw a fine line between animals with and without these characteristics. The urges are there and have arisen gradually ; let us see where they are now leading.

#### VALUE IN ADVENTURE.

All round the wide perimeter of human endeavour the adventure urge is being constantly expressed. The field of what is now possible to man's mind and body is the realm of every day living. But almost every individual has something of the urge to get to the limits of his field at some point on its perimeter, and there to pit his faculties, nurtured in the realm of the possible, against the unknown dangers and difficulties which lie beyond the margin. Sometimes the urge is smothered, as when the survival and reproduction urges demand an undue amount of energy. But in one way or another the third urge is con-

stantly being expressed: the mathematician groping on the misty margin of the knowledge of numbers, the climber struggling up the last 1,000 feet of Everest, a combatant in war struggling with the last ounce of skill and courage against his human and material environment, are all in higher or lower ways the expressions of the same primeval urge.

It is sometimes believed that if an action satisfies a biological urge in us, it is therefore in some way justified. Biological urges certainly should not be left unsatisfied but there are almost always various alternative ways in which the individual can satisfy them, and it is in the exercise of this choice that a moral question arises. Is mountaineering intrinsically better than fighting? Is scientific research of more real value than mountaineering? And how are we to assess these values?

This aggressive adventure urge often receives its satisfaction well within the fields of human possibility as for instance in human combat. To what extent is such combat between individuals of value? The generally accepted ethic seems to give the answer here. If combat results in killing or maiming then in itself it is wrong; it if results in strengthening it is right. This is based on the assumption that, at least within his nation, man is a social animal. Most people will admit in theory that men should act as social animals within the bounds of the world which leads us to the rather obvious conclusion that society should discourage any strife which weakens man, and should recognise that the only "enemy" is his inanimate environment and that his fitness to survive should be judged not against the yardstick of power over his fellow men but against his competence to deal with his non-human environment. "... the purpose of gaining mastery over the universe (sic) can not be most efficiently performed by beings ideally adapted to gaining power over each other." (Cattel, "Psychology and the Religious Quest.") There are, however, a great number of human activities of the "playful" type, races, non-marginal rock climbs, and innumerable games, which though taking place well within the realms of possibility, serve the double purpose of keeping the urge satisfied on a limited margin, and keeping the faculties of pioneering exercised. The value of such pseudo-marginal activities can thus be assessed according to the degree in which they prepare men for the real marginal activities and according

to the extent to which they satisfy surplus adventure urge which cannot find expression on the real margin.

It might be suggested that there is no value in pseudo-marginal activities because they are a diversion which absorb energies which should be expended on the margin. This is quite wrong. There are only a small proportion of people capable of carrying out true marginal activity. The others are nevertheless of extreme importance. In their ordinary work of keeping society running and of breeding and educating, they are creating the material and conditions out of which can rise the small minority who will have work to do on the margin. One of the great problems of the world however is this: that these ordinary people also have a strong adventure urge which must be canalised in useful or at any rate harmless ways; otherwise it will be expressed in the warped and unconstructive fanaticism which leads to war. "That surplus energy of youth, male and female, must be used up . . . It must be doing things, making or re-making with an effect of conquest and general participation." (Wells: "Outlook for Homo Sapiens.") This is vital, and it is here that mountaineering, tough sailing, and kindred activities play so great a part. The surface of the world has been so well explored, that there are few major conquests to be made; the great conquests now lie mainly in the realm of the mind and spirit. But the world is still an extraordinarily rich playground and training ground and this is an aspect of its wealth which has not yet been sufficiently understood and in which every man has a right to share.

We do not depreciate the value of mountaineering by calling it a "playful" activity because play of this advanced type serves a particularly noble purpose. I believe that the superiority of mountaineering over, say, golf lies in three things: it demands a greater variety of physical qualities and mental adjustments and is therefore of greater use as an evolutionary exercise; it has in it less individual rivalry and a much larger measure of combat with Nature than any other playful activity and therefore helps men to realise that their true "opponents" are not man but matter; lastly it has an enormously strong aesthetic appeal which is difficult to analyse.

The value of true marginal activity is much more difficult to assess and is in fact to a large extent unknowable. It must be

judged by its results and these can only be evaluated when the adventure itself has been made. "By their fruits ye shall know them" is not a motto for the cautious but it is only the unknown fruits of a marginal effort which show its worth. But there is also a *known* aspect to be considered. Take the case of a scientist, for instance, carrying out original research. He must be motivated by a desire to probe the unknown, and can not therefore evaluate his destination ; but he can say "paths like mine have in the past been fruitful and therefore it is quite possible that this will be fruitful too," His contemporaries will judge his activity to be good because he is allowing his adventure urge to lead him along what seems likely to be a profitable path. Only posterity can pass the final judgment, and say that his well-intentioned efforts were of great or less ultimate value. It is therefore right for a scientist to say he is interested in "truth for its own sake" not for the immediate practical results he hopes to see ; and it is right for an explorer to follow his adventure urge and to love discovering new mountains without bothering about the possibility of finding a gold mine in them.

The value of a marginal effort can not be judged according to its effect on the world *now*, because the act itself is looking towards, and helping to create the future. It must be judged against the whole pattern so far of progress of which we can only know the beginnings. This pattern appears to be a gradual extension of organic life over the world with accompanying evolutionary development. In its human phase this extension finds itself driven forwards by an urge to effort and adventure which has grown with, and out of, that development. In the great organic complexity which we call the mind there has developed a consciousness of individual *being*, a consciousness of progress and also a consciousness that there are huge regions of reality as yet untouched by any human consciousness. This is rather like the Trinity . . . the spark of God in every individual is like the Holy Ghost, the ideal of progress is symbolised by Jesus who plumbed far greater depths than anyone else, and what Cattell calls the "Ultimate reality" is the vast mystery which we worship and aspire towards and call God. The man whose marginal activity brings *most* from the unknown into the known is the one whose value is greatest. This can be expressed in religious terms by saying that he who does most to bring men towards God is the greatest of men.

# ALPINE INTERLUDE

BRYAN DONKIN

MOUNTAINEERS will mostly agree that ease of access to mountains is eminently desirable, but few would wish to be effortlessly carried to the roping-up point of their intended climb. The ideal approach to the mountain, and ultimately to its summit, would perhaps be one in which the speed and comfort of an express train or aircraft gave way gradually to the inviting stimulus of progressively increasing mental and muscular exertions which would not be relaxed until the summit is attained.

But perhaps it is as well that ideals are mostly unattainable. If every climb even approached the ideal their very perfection would become a monotonous repetition. The spice of variety is more tasty than the monotony of perfection. These and other thoughts oozed disjointedly through my mind as I slept fitfully on the hard seat of a railway compartment, richly scented with stale tobacco and unwashed feet ; however, the prospect brightened, both literally and metaphorically when seated in an empty compartment of the Bettws train, we had consumed a first breakfast of bread and cheese and beer at about 5 a.m.

Arrived at Pen-y-Pass in the still rather grey dawn, the good Mrs. Roberts provided a second breakfast of tea and bread and butter which we gratefully ate in the heavy silence of a still slumbering hotel. After a third breakfast with the A.C. party we were sufficiently restored to order sandwiches and make a start for Lliwedd, but we had not even reached the lake when a storm of wind and slashing rain beset us. Someone stopped to tie a bootlace or fasten more securely a so'wester hat, when a mention of Lockwood's chimney put the greater part of the party into an almost gadarene descent towards the valley. After much searching, a promising start was found and negotiated and it was not until we returned to Pen-y-pass that it was plain that we should have persevered.

However, the weather gradually improved and after a few days of training climbs on Tryfan, Lliwedd and Clogwyn y Ddysgyl, we were pleasantly surprised, on a fine sunny Saturday morning, to see a number of the C.C. on bicycles storming the hill to Pen-y-pass. "Who'll lead us up 'Cloggy'," was the shout that greeted them, and lead us they did, three parties full, on the following Monday. A day memorable not only for the magnificent climb on Longland's Route, but also for the sunshine and cloudless skies which gave their kindly encouragement to both our activities and our inactivities throughout the week.

Later on, three A.C. members came over to spend the night at Helyg after doing a climb on Glyder Fach and the next day went over to Craig yr Ysfa. It was a compliment much appreciated by the A.C. meet that the C.C. arranged their meet concurrently and a very pleasant surprise that they were able to muster so many young and active members. It added very considerably to the success of the Pen-y-pass party.

These A.C. meets which were started in 1941, were initiated as a war-time measure and have undoubtedly proved their worth. One is tempted to ask why should they not be continued after the war and be held each time in a different part of the British Isles in conjunction with the local club. An Easter or Whitsun meet in this country, followed by an expedition overseas to snow and glacier covered mountains in the summer is acknowledged to be a most satisfying arrangement.

After the war there will be many who will be keen to get to the mountains and amongst these will be a large number who will be going for the first time and with little or no appreciation of the risks to which they are submitting both themselves and their companions, and no sure knowledge of how to overcome difficulties or to avoid danger.

If the good name of British Mountaineering is to continue we must see to it that these potential mountaineers have every facility for safe conduct in the hills. This may be done both by persuading these people to join clubs and club meets and also by seeing that sound information and advice is readily available in every hotel and hostel in hill districts. This information and advice might well take the form of a pamphlet setting out the first principles of the Responsibility of Leadership, Food,



Clothing and Equipment, Route Finding and what to do in case of an accident. On the last item much excellent work has been done by the First Aid Committee which is sponsored by the British Clubs, including the Alpine Club.

A start is now being made to form a group of mountaineers, representative of British mountaineering, to deal with these and with the many other matters which are the common concern of all mountaineers and mountaineering clubs in these islands. A committee on these lines would be able firstly to speak authoritatively on matters of policy such as National Parks and protection of scenery and amenities and secondly would be able to give advice based on collective experience, on matters affecting the safety, housing, rescue, etc., of those using the hill districts. There is much to be done and it is not too soon to make a start.

# CRAIG YR YSFA

A. D. M. COX AND H. E. KRETSCHMER

## GUIDES IN GENERAL

MANY opinions are held about rock-climbing guidebooks and the way they should be written. Perhaps the most often heard is that it would be best if they were not written at all, the freshness of discovery being thus preserved for all comers, white trails of scratches notwithstanding. The heartiest converts to this opinion are probably to be found among the writers themselves, to whom it commends itself very strongly after a very few days on the job. But the sales of guidebooks show that in practice this is a minority view, however strong the academic support for it. Most people like to be told where the climbs are and how difficult other people have found them, mainly because they are not looking for an uncharted adventure every day, so much as a straightforward climb which they know will more or less fit their inclination and available time. The compiler of a guide book, who has to take the thing so seriously himself, must console himself with the hope that its users will not take it seriously too ; for if they attach as much importance to it as he has had to he will have wasted his time.

Granted that guide books are really wanted, there are many ways in which they have been written, and we are still a long way from being agreed on which of these is the best ; except perhaps in the mere matter of size. No one would quarrel with the process which has evolved the present day Climbers' Club volumes out of their massive ancestor, the Abrahams' *Rock-Climbing in North Wales* ; not that, apart from the difficulties of transport, there was anything wrong with this work, which has always been one of the great quarries of anecdote and quotation. But the Climber's Club has never agreed on any standard way of making the best use of the limited space available





in a guide book of pocket size. Twenty years ago the F. & R.C.C. seemed to have discovered the answer in the first *Pillar* guide, which became the model of all the subsequent guides of the Fell and Rock. Kelly's object was to describe the climbs with the greatest possible clarity in the fewest possible words. He assumed that the climber was not interested in literary style or any other encumbrance which might obscure the facts about his climb ; what he wanted was a system which would be consistent, easy of reference, and giving no rope at all to the fallible imagination of the compiler. He accepted the fact that the System must be based on purely artificial conventions, and left the particular qualities of a route and its wider perspective to discover themselves to parties as they climbed.

In all this he was perfectly logical and, in its execution, very successful. For about a dozen years the System reigned supreme ; one has only to look at the pages of the Helyg Book to see that it was not only in the F. & R. C. C. that it was accepted. Take the pitch-by-pitch method of describing a climb, which is the peg on which the whole thing hangs. What could be more unnatural than to divide a line of climbing into a precise number of lengths measured between successive spikes of rock ? It is, of course, a device of convenience ; yet one got so into the way of regarding belays as numbered milestones that it never occurred to one to think that they were originally intended just as pleasant surprises. And, accepting the pitch-by-pitch convention, one tended also to accept the language of formula which went with it. Broadly speaking, the normal method of recording a climb in the Helyg Book has been the Fell and Rock method, a little less cut and dried, perhaps, and a little more talkative.

This slightly humanised adaptation of the *Pillar* system was the style used by Kirkus for the *Glyder Fach* guide which appeared in 1937. This was a straightforward and very clear piece of work, economical of words without being dry, and essentially easy to use. Had it not been that Edwards' first guide had come out the year before, and that the two other volumes of the series have been done by Edwards and Noyce, *Glyder Fach* would probably have become the standard for the Welsh guides, and we should have known where we were.

It so happened (Elliott Viney was editing the *Journal* at the time) that the new *Scafell* guide was given to Edwards to review (C.C.J., 1937), and the result was a very pretty and not unfair résumé of the case against the System. Edwards attacked it not only because it was dull ("You can read it, the dry print, but only with headache"), which everybody knew, but also because it failed to achieve its prime object, clarity, for which so much else had been sacrificed. "The description is a tiny, narrow spotlight moving in a single line . . . the rocks might be any rocks, and the conformation of the cliff and climb might be any conformation, might be in mid-air, for the spotlight sheds no rays aside . . ." Edwards' own basic principle is summed up in a single sentence from the Introduction to *Cwm Idwal*: "it is hoped that the climber may get a good idea of things before ever seeing the cliff." This apparently simple and commonsense intention in fact means a sharp break with the System, because it at once reintroduces into guide-writing the highly suspect factor of the guide-writer himself. Mechanical perfection within the rules becomes impossible. He must trust his own judgment and his own reactions. He must have an eye for both detail and mass, in order to be able to put the cliff in perspective against the mountain and the climb against the cliff. And he must be able to describe what he sees, not merely what he does, which means, among other things, Style. Much is borrowed from the form of the *Pillar* guides, but the principles, curiously enough, are older still, those of Archer Thomson and Andrews. The recent *Lliwedd* guide, surely the best guide book yet written, has shown how brilliantly successful this combination can be.

Obviously there can be no standardisation along these lines, since no two compilers will react or express themselves in the same way; and one shudders at the thought of anyone attempting mere imitation. The answer to the problem must lie with the guide-writers themselves. Anyone who is capable of writing a guide as good as *Lliwedd* by his own application of the same principles will be wasted if he blinkers himself with the System. But it is so much the harder task that most people will prefer to attempt the simple, self-effacing method of *Glyder Fach*, which in its own way, is a model too. Or it is open to someone to produce something again completely different.

## THIS GUIDE

It may be wondered what all this has to do with this particular guide, which will be found to be as bold and unimaginative as a guide could be. The notes we had collected before the war were intended to take shape as a guide to the Carneddls as a whole, and the Craig yr Ysfa ones had not assumed anything like final form, being merely the most complete, comparatively. We worked on the principle of getting the facts on to paper first and deciding on guiding principles afterwards, an instance of the cart before the horse which might have worked if we had not been interrupted just as we were getting to the second stage of this programme. But after the four years' interval, with hardly any opportunity of revisiting the cliff, it has been difficult to make much of an intimidating assortment of "awkward moves, somewhat rounded holds, good belays and poor stances, fine old-fashioned chimneys and an occasional Purist." This arid information did little to assist fading memories to bring some life into the stuff and put things in their due proportion. So we have hardly tried to do more than piece the material together into a temporary and tolerably accurate account of Crag yr Ysfa, which has long been due for something of the sort and is now unlucky that it should not have been better done.

Our sincere thanks are due to Mr. W. A. Poucher for allowing us to reprint his fine telephoto of the cliff.

We should like to acknowledge our debt to the late R. L. Beaumont, who helped us with a great deal of the work.

## STANDARDS :

The vexed question of systems of classification is discussed more fully elsewhere in this Journal. To conform with the Clogwyn du'r Arddu Guide the numerical system has again been adopted in this instance, even though our adherence to that system is only lukewarm at present. We took the word standards by which we had classified the climbs in our original draft and we translated them into numbers according to the following scheme :

|                      |    |    |    |    |     |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Moderate (and easy)  | .. | .. | .. | .. | IA  |
| Moderately difficult | .. | .. | .. | .. | IB  |
| Difficult, easy      | .. | .. | .. | .. | IIA |

|                      |    |    |    |    |      |
|----------------------|----|----|----|----|------|
| Difficult, hard      | .. | .. | .. | .. | IIB  |
| Very difficult, easy | .. | .. | .. | .. | IIIA |
| medium               | .. | .. | .. | .. | IIIB |
| hard                 | .. | .. | .. | .. | IVA  |
| Severe, easy         | .. | .. | .. | .. | IVB  |
| medium               | .. | .. | .. | .. | VA   |
| hard                 | .. | .. | .. | .. | VB   |
| Very severe          | .. | .. | .. | .. | VI   |

In a few instances we have indicated the standards by a plain number only. Such cases are mostly climbs which have been done by only one party where the standard could not be assessed with sufficient accuracy to warrant the use of a sub-division.

Our standards were originally based on those of the Glyder Fach Guide. We have largely retained these standards, because we considered that it would not be possible to adopt the level of standards of the recent Edwards' Guides without climbing all the routes again.

An exception to this lies perhaps in the upper end of the scale, particularly in the use of the VI standard. This we employed only in two cases where we had routes which—though short, were undoubtedly steep and non-artificial, requiring a harder technique than any of the other Craig yr Ysfa Climbs. If there is any other unevenness in our evaluation of standards it is due to the conditions under which this guide has been produced.

## CRAIG YR YSFA

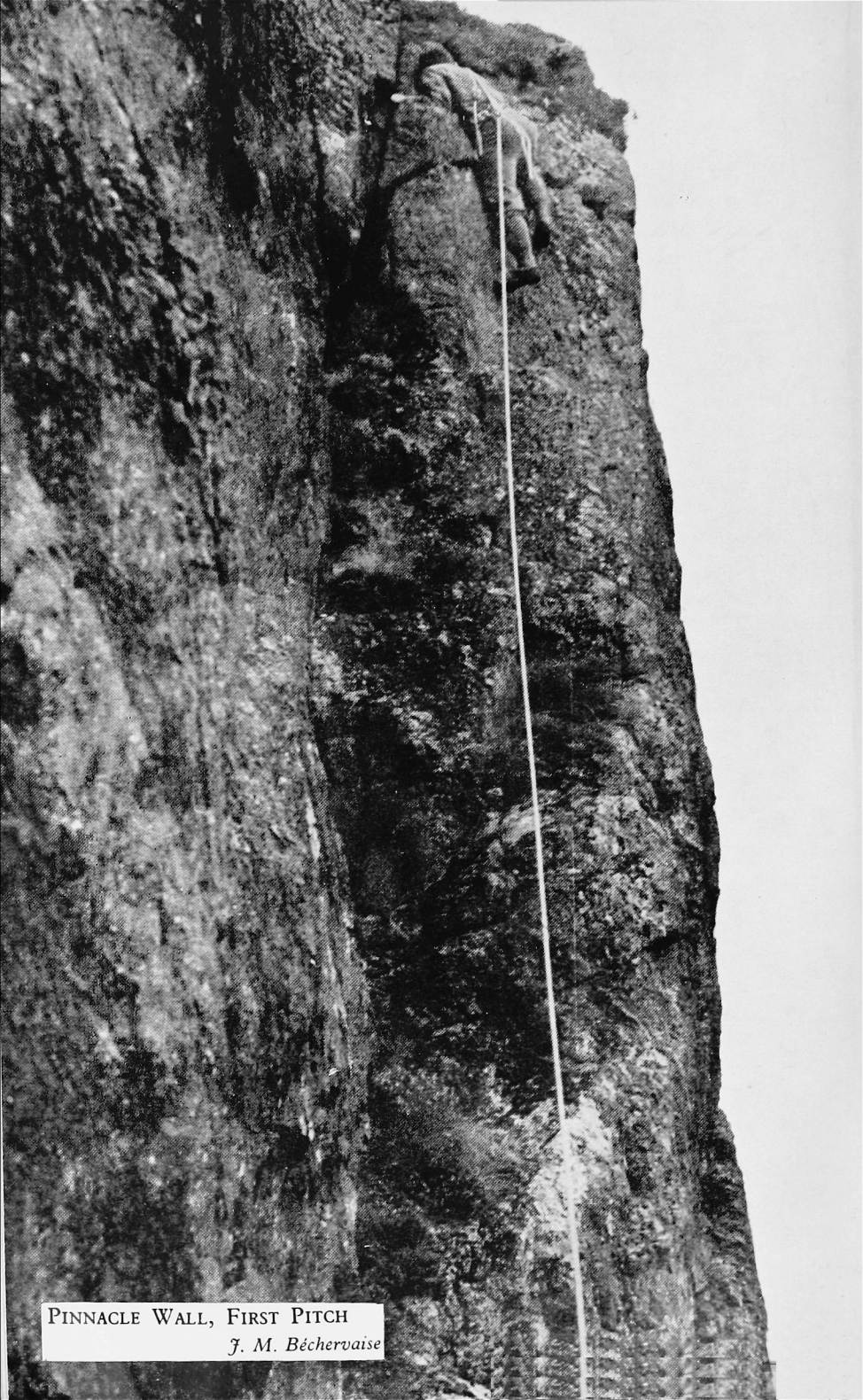
### POSITION.

Carnedd Llewellyn, the hub of the Carnedd Group, throws down a long south-east ridge terminating at Pen Llithrig-y-wrach above Llyn Cowlyd. The first summit on this ridge, about five-eighths of a mile from the top of Carnedd Llewellyn, is a little bump called Pen y Waen-wen, on whose north-east side is a big cliff, Craig yr Ysfa. The cliff itself faces due east, looking down into the head of Cwm Eigiau. The normal approach is from the south, by the col between Pen y Waen-wen and Pen yr Helgi-du. This col bears no name on the one-inch map. Archer Thomson calls it Bwlch y Tre Marchog, the name which the map gives to the next col to the east between Pen yr Helgi-du and Pen Llithrig y wrach. (Erroneously according to Steeple; *Mountains of Snowdonia*, by Carr and Lister, p. 30.) To avoid confusion it is here referred to as the Saddle.

The best way to reach the Saddle is to leave the main road at a gate three or four hundred yards west of Helyg and get on to an old cart







PINNACLE WALL, FIRST PITCH  
*J. M. Béchervaise*

track which starts there, a little indistinctly for the first fifty yards. It runs almost in a dead straight line up to a ruined building near Ffynnon Llugwy, and there bends round to the left towards the lake. One should leave it a few hundred yards after the ruined building, just before an old sheep pen is reached. At this point a thinly marked footpath carries on to the right to the foot of the Saddle, up which one has to pick one's own line. Alternatively one can walk up from the road by the long whale-back ridge to the top of Pen yr Helgi-du and down on to the Saddle from there.

#### CHARACTER.

The line of continuous cliff covers a frontage of about a thousand yards, and the height from the lowest rocks to the highest is probably some 850 feet. Thus in actual extent Craig yr Ysfa is one of the biggest cliffs in North Wales, comparable only with Lliwedd and Clogwyn du'r Arddu ; but it cannot claim anything approaching the same grandeur or individuality. There is mass and balance in the two main crags flanking the great central hollow of the Amphitheatre, but one misses the symmetry of Lliwedd or the balanced asymmetry of du'r Arddu. Nevertheless the broad structure of the crag is satisfying, and would be impressive if the average angle of the rock were ten or fifteen degrees higher than it is. This is the factor which makes Craig yr Ysfa a disappointing crag and cuts out the possibility of finding first class face climbing proportionate to the actual height of rock. Usually the angle of the lower third of the cliff is steeper than that of the top two-thirds, but the general frontal slope is rarely steep enough to prevent free growth of vegetation, and the few true face climbs tend to fade out into scrambles midway.

One thinks of it primarily as a cliff of gullies and buttresses. Great Gully and Amphitheatre Buttress are the classic Welsh examples of these types, and there are other old style routes, similar but less good. Some of the gullies are useless, except to set limits to the buttresses ; some of the buttresses, though defined by gullies, lack all the boldness of buttress form. But there is another aspect of the gullies which probably offers most hope for future discovery and does a lot to make good the lack of steep rock on the open faces ; for where, as they often are, the gullies are deeply cut, their steep side walls are themselves big areas of rock, worth climbing for their own sake. The Amphitheatre itself, whose tremendous Right Wall is the most impressive feature of the whole cliff, is the most obvious example of this ; another is the Cirque of Arch Gully ; or again, something might be made of the big slabs of the Amphitheatre Left Wall, perhaps a rising girdle traverse on the model of Idwal East Wall. And apart from the gully walls, there are bits of steep rock cropping up in various places on the buttresses ; to the right of Arch Wall, on the left of Avalanche Gully, above the Dancing Floor and in other unexplored patches which one does not immediately notice because of the scale.

The actual rock is typically Welsh, and most of it quite good. Except on the Amphitheatre Right Wall, where it is superb, there is nothing special about its texture.

#### HISTORY.

Nothing is more remarkable in the history of Craig yr Ysfa than its legendary discovery through a telescope from Scafell. The extent of a cliff which hit the eye at such a distance seemed to indicate a big climbing ground, whose features were duly explored in the proper order, gullies first, then the buttresses, then some of the odd facets and corners. Discovery came late enough for the first attack of all to be on the hardest of the gullies, Great Gully, which was climbed by Archer Thomson in April 1900. This outstanding event turned the limelight on the crag ; a number of the other gullies were climbed in rapid succession, and in 1905 the Abrahams made the second great popular find, Amphitheatre Buttress. With these two attractions the place probably received more than its share of attention and reputation. Winthrop Young and Mallory were there before the last war, trying to make something of the faces and leaving two routes which quickly became almost untraceable in the heather. After that there was a reaction ; disappointment and a feeling that the crag was worked out. Its name, rested securely enough, on its two classics, Great Gully and Amphitheatre Buttress ; these, with Arch Gully and occasionally Vanishing Gully, were for twenty years almost the only climbs done. In 1931 and 1932 Kirkus' ascent of the Pinnacle Wall and its Direct Start left the mark of that period's climbing wave on Craig yr Ysfa ; a climb which gave the cliff its third truly distinctive route. After that there was no sudden tide of advance. But more frequent visits, and later the necessity of fairly detailed examination, discovered here and there some good places and left many more for future exploration.

#### THE CLIMBS.

It must not be thought that because the cliff as a whole is rather disappointing it has no good stuff on it. Its size alone made it from early days one of the great climbing grounds of Wales, a reputation in which Amphitheatre Buttress and Great Gully sustained it almost unsupported. The other gullies, except for the upper Arch, are nearly all dull or disappointing. The older frontal climbs on Great Buttress and Bending Gully Reach suffer from vegetation, lack of definition and failure to finish, or do more than begin. But Kirkus' two climbs revived the possibilities of the place : Amphitheatre Rib, an obvious and attractive little buttress which ought to have been climbed long before, and Pinnacle Wall. This is a climb literally in a quite different plane from any of the earlier ones, the first " modern " route on the cliff, sensational and technically hard. The other later climbs are mostly harder too, and vary widely in type ; boot climbs on the face (Arch Wall and the Dancing Floor), a slight, pleasant rib (Truant Rib), two clean, short rubber routes on the wall of the Cirque, and another steep

one on the Amphitheatre Right Wall (The Grimmett). Craig yr Ysfa is not like Clogwyn du'r Arddu or Lliwedd in giving climbs of a particular flavour. There is a mixture of type and quality, a thin cross-section of Welsh climbing, on which one may fit one's choice to weather and mood.

The cliffs face east. They are divided by the great hollow of the Amphitheatre into two main blocks, to which Archer Thomson gives the names North Crag and South Crag. The South Crag is the nearer to the col above Ffynnon Llugwy, the Saddle.

## NORTH CRAG

The geography, in mass, is fairly simple. The Great Gully, cutting back into the cliff with a leftward tilt, divides the Crag into two halves. That on the right is a large, rather shapeless buttress with many turf ledges and few well-marked features, except for the big sloping recess of the Dancing Floor. On that side, the north, North Crag is bounded by Moss Gully. Left of Great Gully is the other half of the Crag, Great Buttress, its upper portion easily inclined and broken, but much steeper and slabbier towards the bottom. Vanishing Gully cuts into the nose of the lower part of Great Buttress.

## THE AMPHITHEATRE

The line of cliff between North and South Crags is continuous, but an enormous scree-filled hollow cuts deeply back into it, so that at the back the height of actual rock for a considerable distance is only about 300 feet. This hollow is the Amphitheatre. Its Right Wall, the upper flank of Great Buttress, is nearly vertical for some hundreds of feet. On the left it is bounded by the side wall of Amphitheatre Buttress.

## SOUTH CRAG

This is a good deal more complicated than the North Crag. On the right is Amphitheatre Buttress, much more of a true buttress than any other on the cliff, for it stands by itself, Avalanche Gully, the wide gully on its left almost separating it from the rest of the Crag. Left again of Avalanche Gully is a broad stretch of rock, slabby in its lower part, stretching to the next major break, Arch Gully, whose upper portion makes a very deep rift in the cliff. The wholeness of this stretch is not really destroyed by the shallow, twisting groove of Bending Gully, which gives out well below the top. For want of any existing name or any more definite feature, the whole area between Avalanche Gully and Arch Gully is referred to as Bending Gully Reach.

Bending Gully, however, sends up a well-marked tributary gully to join Arch Gully. The tributary only diverges very gradually—not seriously, in fact, until the bend in Bending Gully. The Y made by their junction bounds a minor buttress of steeper rock, broken midway by a wide bilberry terrace. This subsidiary buttress, itself a part of Bending Gully Reach, is referred to as the Y Buttress. Actually the true right boundary of the Y Buttress is not Bending Gully itself, but

a groove which continues up the cliff in the same line as the portion of Bending Gully.

The dividing spur between Arch and Bending Gullies below the Bend is made into an island by the tributary fork of Bending Gully. At the point where the tributary and Arch Gully converge, Arch Gully splays out into an impressive minor amphitheatre, named the Cirque.

Between Arch Gully and the next gully to the left, Pinnacle Gully, is a narrow, very broken buttress, the steeper upper part of which is called the Staircase. Left of Pinnacle Gully again is a fairly wide area of grassy ribs and slabs, where the height of rock is diminishing rapidly, to dwindle away at the north end of the Saddle.

Craig yr Ysfa is usually approached over the Saddle, and the climbs are therefore described in the order in which they are reached from that direction. Seen from the Saddle, the North and South Crag appear as very distinct masses, although the Amphitheatre which divides them is itself not properly visible. The two crags appear very similar in general configuration, each has a rounded lumpy top, each appears to slope at an average angle of 45 or 50 degrees and to run down into Cwm Eigiau with a long promontory of rock.

The South Crag is the nearer. The most prominent feature on it is the dark gash of the upper Arch Gully, where the Cirque lies, though this is not well seen from this side. On the near side of the gash, the first rather miscellaneous stretch of cliff obscures the Pinnacle Gully, the buttress between it and the lower Arch Gully, and the lower Arch Gully itself. At the level of the Saddle the upper part of Bending Gully is seen full face; between it and the upper Arch Gully the steep rocks of the Y Buttress (Arch Wall) are well seen, picked out with a streak of quartz.

The main bit of Bending Gully Reach is beyond, continuously slabby in its lower portion. Beyond it again, Amphitheatre Buttress is visible, but not easily distinguishable, since the cleft of Avalanche Gully does not show up from here.

A long, white scree runs up behind the Amphitheatre Buttress into the Amphitheatre.

On the North Crag few features are visible, except the Great Buttress itself, seen in profile. The fine, clean-cut, vertical rock facing the Saddle is the upper part of the Pinnacle Wall, which forms the right wall of the Amphitheatre. Great Gully is round the corner and out of sight, though the projecting rocks of the upper part of the West Buttress indicate roughly where it must lie.

Beyond the North Crag, a line of small, broken crags continues northward at a much lower level. Two stream-beds descend from them; the second emerges from the gully in which stands the Obeisk.

## I.—SOUTH CRAG

### TRUANT RIB

285 feet. The nearest buttress to the Saddle is heathery and without climbing in its lower part; but for the last 250 or 300 feet the rock

emerges in a definite rib, seen in profile from the col. On the left side of the buttress crest the rock is slabby ; on the right it breaks away more sharply.

The route starts at the base of the rib, and follows its crest to the top. The line is a definite one, but the climb is artificial, in that it often deliberately avoids easier ground on the right hand or the left. It is rather a slight climb, though quite delicate and attractive in detail ; unlike other of the Craig yr Ysfa buttress routes it is near the top, not the bottom of the crag.

Rope : 70 feet.

Standard : IIIB.

Start : Follow down the edge of the rocks from the Saddle, to the well-scratched traverse leading across the buttress towards the Arch Gully. Start at a bilberry pulpit on the crest of the rib, on the traverse itself.

(1) 55 feet. Easy heather on either hand is hard to avoid ; but the true rib gives a nice slab pitch on small holds. Loose bollard ; belay on the left.

(2) 40 feet. Continue up the slab to a big bilberry platform.

(3) 50 feet. Avoiding the avenue on the left, keep up the broken riblet to its finish in a bollard.

(4) 30 feet. A slab, delicate if the grassy groove to the left is avoided.

(5) 65 feet. The rib on the left-hand side is gained by a 15 feet wall. At this point the angle steepens considerably, and options are lacking. Continue up. A delicate finish leads on to another heather terrace.

(6) 45 feet. Continue up the edge of the ridge to a difficult scoop, which finishes the climbing.

#### PINNACLE GULLY

600 feet.

Standard : IA.

This very straight gully is the first considerable gully reached from the south. It contains some easy climbing if the true gully bed is adhered to, but there is no pitch longer than 20 feet and any difficulty may always be turned. In spite of loose stones, it gives a not unattractive easy way up the cliff ; but there is no reason to visit it for its own sake.

The Pinnacle itself is a remarkable thin flake of rotting rock, tilted slightly to the left. It is situated about three-quarters of the way up the gully. The short side may be climbed by a single step up on small footholds.

*Identification :* The path from the Saddle passes 30 yards below the foot of the gully, and crosses a narrow chute of stones lying on bilberries. From directly below, the Pinnacle is conspicuous against the skyline. A detached rib of rock on the left of the gully bed and a projecting ash tree on the right wall identify the foot.

### THE STAIRCASE

The narrow heathery buttress between Pinnacle Gully and Arch Gully gives no climbing until just below the level of the Cirque. Here rock replaces heather in a series of steep steps, which form a more definite buttress, between the Cirque itself and the Pinnacle of Pinnacle Gully.

210 feet.

Rather a broken climb which, after an artificial start, follows a better line. Pitch 4 an interesting slab.

Rope : 70 feet.

Standard : IIIB.

Start up a wide groove 20 feet, left of the jammed block which marks the top of the lower (scrambling) section of Arch Gully and the entrance to the Cirque.

(1) 35 feet. The groove has considerable difficulty for 20 feet, when easy ground on the left leads up to belays.

(2) 40 feet. 10 feet of climbing on the edge of the buttress is followed by scrambling, until, level with the Pinnacle, the buttress re-emerges. Spike belay at foot of groove. (This point can be reached by a scramble up from the end of the left wall of the Cirque.)

(3) 50 feet. Up the groove ; and reach a ledge with a gnarled ash tree.

(4) 65 feet. A steep slab, climbed on the left with inconvenient holds. (Pitch 3 of Gomorrah lies up the arête on the right.) Over a corner on the left to a slab at a lesser angle. Above, easy ground is reached ; belay 15 feet higher.

(5) 20 feet. Keep just left of the nose above ; a gentle slab steepening to a groove with a bilberry finish.

Scramble easily to the top.

### THE CIRQUE

The final section of Arch Gully rises out of a miniature amphitheatre, floored with sloping grass, and surrounded on three sides with impressive walls. It is called the Cirque. The three walls are referred to as Right Wall (true left), Back Wall, Left Wall.

The Right Wall is vertical and there are no climbs on it, although Arch Wall (pitches 7 and 8) is on its boundary edge.

The Back Wall overhangs at the top. It is divided from the Right Wall by the cleft of the upper Arch Gully, which thus rises in the right hand corner of the Cirque.

The Left Wall lies back from the vertical. A young ash tree stands on a grassy ledge in the centre, two-thirds of the way up. A steep arête bounds it on the left (round this corner is the Staircase) ; on the right an open groove or gully, which forks half way up, marks the junction of the Left Wall with the Back Wall.



*Approaches :*

(a) If the Cirque is approached from below, the lower section of Arch Gully contains no interest, and a preferable route is to start up Bending Gully and take the left hand fork.

(b) A useful approach is to come directly across from the Saddle. If the first edge of rocks of the Eastern Reach is followed down for about 200 feet, a line of scratches will be reached traversing across the rocks on an easy ledge. These are followed ; the track is fairly definite. At first it descends slightly, to cross Pinnacle Gully 150 feet below the Pinnacle ; from this point it goes up and across the heathery buttress into the top of Section 1 of Arch Gully, and so to the entrance boulder of the Cirque. Except on a misty day, this is obvious.

To avoid losing height a higher and slightly more complicated line across the Eastern Reach may be picked out 50 feet below the Pinnacle.

(c) From the Saddle ascend to the top of Pinnacle Gully (easily recognised by the Pinnacle) ; descend it, and traverse left a little below the Pinnacle itself.

The climbing in the Cirque is at present confined to the Left Wall. The left edge of the Wall is a curving arête, plunging from 30 degrees at the top to nearly vertical at the bottom. For the bottom 30 feet it breaks away in broken rocks on the left, but it is divided from them by a grassy groove. Five-eighths of the way up are two jutting noses, the second of which is the first stance on Gomorrah. An open groove or gully with a good deal of grass in it bounds the Wall on the right ; this is Angle Groove, which has not yet been climbed. The base of the Wall slopes up at the angle of the grassy floor of the Cirque. The inner climbs (so far there are only two altogether) therefore start higher.

The main feature on the Wall is the grass terrace, connecting with Angle Groove three-quarters of the way up the face. An ash tree grows at its left end, in the centre of the Wall. There is no other real break in the Wall, except for small turf ledges near the left edge in one section, and a rather bigger turf ledge some distance below there ; this is the Nest.

The Wall, though short, is very steep, and the rock excellent. Small sharp-cut holds give very clean and delicate climbing of a character rather similar to that of Idwal East Wall, though not suitable for boots. Apart from Ash Tree Terrace there is a notable absence of stances on the face. Two climbs have so far been made.

**GOMORRAH**

160 feet. Small turf ledges starting some 40 feet up the Wall, a few feet from the left edge, mark a line of weakness. The climb goes up to these from directly below. The turf, when reached, does not seriously interfere with the character of the climbing, which is steep and open on rough rock of fine quality. The climb is, however, often rather greasy in the middle section of the first pitch, which is the hardest. Rubbers or socks.

Rope : 100 feet.

Standard : VA.

Start : A few feet to the right of the bottom of the left edge of the Wall, exactly on a level with the end of the big quartz-marked tongue which slopes down the floor of the Cirque from the Back Wall.

(1) 85 feet. A long steep pitch of delicate climbing on good small holds. The difficulty is continuous, though in no section outstanding. The line of the pitch goes practically straight up, bearing slightly right to touch at the Nest and then slightly left again, until at 70 feet it is possible to move left along a turf ledge to a prominent notch under the second overhang on the arête. Excellent stance and belays.

(2) 15 feet. Back on to the wall, and up a sharp edged crack to the left, to rejoin the arête without great difficulty. Belay. (Ledge of start of pitch 4 of the Staircase climb.)

(3) 60 feet. Up the crest of the arête, which is delicate but not seriously difficult, until at 35 feet the angle eases and difficulty ceases. 60 feet to the top.

#### SPIRAL ROUTE

120 feet. This route, seeking to reach the ash tree by a line up the middle of the Wall, is forced to take a rather twisting course. A steep and delicate face climb on excellent rock, almost free of turf. Similar in character to Gomorrah, but distinctly harder. Rubbers or socks.

Rope : 70 feet.

Standard : VB.

Start : From the bottom of the open chimney at the back left-hand corner of the Cirque (Angle Groove), a narrow tongue of white rock runs down for 15 feet. Start 3 or 4 feet above the base of this.

(1) 65 feet to the Terrace. Start up a shallow groove on the Wall ; it curves to the right and leads in 15 feet to a little ledge beside the Angle Groove and attainable from it.

From here a thinly marked crack running up to the left indicates the line. Just below the top of the crack, step across to a turf ledge, from which a traverse can be made on to Gomorrah. Instead, the slight bulge above is passed by a steep and difficult move up on the right. Then, by a long horizontal step to the left, land on the line of turf running out from the first stance on Gomorrah, just to the right of the crack of Gomorrah's second pitch.

The ash tree is now 15 feet away, and a narrow yellowish slab leads up to it. Lodgment is made on it by a hard step up from a narrow sharp-edged foothold, and for a few feet the holds are not satisfactory, though the slab becomes rather easier at the finish.

There is at present no belay on the terrace, the ash tree itself being too frail. Alternatives are to do the whole climb in one pitch ; to shorten Pitch 1 by using the belay of Gomorrah's first stance ; or possibly to move 15 feet to the right along grass ledges and use what seems to be a big belay in the Angle Groove.

(2) 55 feet. Continue more easily straight up behind the ash tree ; then bear rather left, to strike the arête exactly where it becomes easy. Along it for 25 feet to the top.

#### ARCH GULLY

About 680 feet.

A deeply-cut whitish scree-chute stretches down from approximately the centre of the South Crag to a considerable distance below its base. This conspicuous scree is the common outlet of Arch Gully and Bending Gully, which diverge exactly where the scree-chute meets the base of the rocks. The start of both gullies is marked by an easily-sloping tongue of grey rock which divides them at the foot.

Seen from below, Arch Gully is a shallow grassy groove of V-section ; right at the bottom it is only a foot or two deep. It curves slightly out to the left and bends back about 200 feet up. Bending Gully is deeper cut and more irregular, but also set at an easy angle. 250 feet up it bends sharply to the right. Some distance below this point, a subsidiary branch forks gradually off to the left, cutting behind the narrow spur dividing the two gullies and joining Arch Gully just below the Cirque. In the descent this branch of Bending Gully is easily mistaken for Arch Gully, since the lower Arch Gully itself enters the Cirque rather from the left.

If the Cirque and the interesting upper section of Arch Gully is approached from below, the best way is not by the lower section of Arch Gully, but by Bending Gully and its left hand fork.

Arch Gully falls very definitely into two sections. The lower two-thirds are easy and without any redeeming feature. The upper section is entirely different ; in fact, after the Great Gully, it is probably the most impressive of the Craig yr Ysfa gullies. Its merit does not lie in its technical difficulty, so much as in its magnificent rock scenery. Most people will want to avoid the tedium of an ascent from the bottom of the cliff by traversing into the Cirque direct from the Saddle.

Rope : 50 feet in the upper section.

Standard : IIA.

Section 1 : 400 feet. In the lower 200 feet climb in a smooth, slimy groove, not always easy ; but any pitch may be turned on the right by slabby scrambling. There is no climbing in the upper 200 feet until the Cirque is reached, at a point where there is a wedged block (climbed on the right), with another one a few feet above it.

Section 2 : 280 feet. The walls of the gully are very steep and impressive, and from the Cirque the enormous jammed block which gives the gully its name can be seen spanning it. For 120 feet one walks up the gully. From here :

(1) 45 feet. A fine old-fashioned chimney. There are excellent holds on the left wall.

(2) 10 feet. A capstone can be passed on either side.

(3) 40 feet. Easy rock work in the bed of the gully leads to some jammed blocks which are passed on the left.

(4) 20 feet. The final obstacle, passed by a groove on the left.

Easy ground leads in 60 feet to the top of the gully.

*Note.*—From just above Pitch 2 the jammed block which makes the Arch itself can be reached by a traverse and ascent of considerable delicacy on the left wall. 20 feet.

### ARCH WALL

About 380 feet.

In the upper part of the cliff, to the right of Arch Gully, is a steep buttress of rock, the Y Buttress, so called because its foot is defined by the Y fork of the two branches of Bending Gully. Where the main Bending Gully bends away to the right, a groove goes on up more or less in the line Bending Gully would have taken if it had remained straight, and this is the right boundary of the Y Buttress in that part ; farther up still there is no definite boundary on that side.

A prominent green terrace, extending to the right from the Arch Gully Cirque, breaks across the Y Buttress horizontally. The Arch Wall climb reaches this easy ground by following the bounding groove out of Bending Gully, and continues above it on the steep rocks immediately right of upper Arch Gully. The climb thus consists of two dissimilar halves, with a definite break in the middle. The lower half is wet, being a line of drainage ; the upper half is clean and open, with small holds. Both portions are good, and the technical interest is such that the climb is not much marred by the bad break midway. A boot climb.

Rope : 100 feet.

Standard : V.

Start : Follow Bending Gully to a point where a groove goes straight up above the gully, level with a prominent nose on the right of Bending Gully. This nose is on the buttress separating Bending Gully and Avalanche Gully.

(1) 30 feet. Up the slimy groove to a small stance. Belay on the left.

(2) 70 feet. Continue up the groove on small holds, to a semi-detached block above and on the left of the groove.

(3) Above, the groove overhangs, so break out to the left. Up over bilberry ledges to an easily-inclined slab.

(4) 25 feet. The slab is climbed with moderate difficulty. It can be avoided by easy ledges on the right.

(5) 70 feet. Scramble straight up over vegetation to a platform at the top of the highest semi-detached flake. On the left is a small ash tree.

(6) 25 feet. The crux of the climb. A mantelshelf and a slab. The mantelshelf has to be climbed as such ; the slab can be climbed on the right or in a groove on the left. In either case the landing is unsatisfactory.

(7) 35 feet. Continue over broken blocks to the left from the big bollard above the Arch Gully. Stance, with belay, 10 feet above.

(8) 50 feet. Over a slight overhang on improving holds, on to a bilberry terrace overlooking the Arch Gully, to a very large perched block.

(9) 15 feet. From the top of the perched block to a large bilberry shelf, where the climb ends.

### BENDING GULLY

About 600 feet.

A disappointing climb. The left branch gives a moderately interesting approach to the Cirque. Bending Gully proper fades away in its upper reaches and never acquires a character. (For other particulars see general description of Arch Gully.)

Rope : 50 feet.

Standard : IB.

Start : At the foot of the gully.

Section 1 : to the bend. 300 feet. A diagonally jammed monolith is easily passed on the right. Some 180 feet from the foot of the gully two parallel chimneys mark the divergence of the *left-hand fork*, which however remains in close proximity to the main gully until the bend. The initial crack of this fork is difficult ; above, for some 200 feet, the bed is narrow and definite ; smooth water-worn rock set at an easy angle, steepening slightly at the top. The final stretch up to the Cirque is easy scrambling.

In the main gully there are one or two short pitches of no particular difficulty before the bend is reached.

Section 2 : The gully above is in the form of a fairly deeply cut V-groove, set at an easy angle with a shallow trough running down the centre. There are three pitches of a kind ; the last is of moderate difficulty.

(1) 10 feet. Some jammed splinters are easily passed on the right.

(2) 25 feet. An easy slab on the right wall, passing a jammed stone.

(3) 40 feet. The groove is rather smooth at first ; climb mainly on the slab on the right. Angle approximately 45 degrees.

The gully now splays out, at the level of the Saddle. It does not finally disappear for another 200 feet, but it becomes so indefinite that no particular route can be specified.

Between Bending and Avalanche Gullies there is a great reach of broken up slabs which form the main part of Bending Gully Reach. They are covered with much heather in the lower regions. These steepen into a wall running across the buttress. Above this wall the angle eases and climbing becomes indefinite. On this reach lie the Slab Climb and the Birch Tree Chimney. Because of the nature of this region both climbs end in scrambling at half the height of the cliff. Both of them are in danger of being overgrown and forgotten.

**THE SLAB CLIMB**

340 feet.

The climb goes roughly up the middle of the heather slabs and involves a certain amount of route finding. After an indefinite start it becomes progressively more difficult and interesting. It is quite exposed at the top. Heather spoils what would otherwise be a good route.

Belays have to be looked for and more than 50 feet of rope may be convenient.

Standard : IIIB.

Start : About 150 feet right of a prominent shoulder which leans against the left hand end of the lower part of the slabs.

(1) 150 feet. Follow broad heather ledges tending always left, up to a small rock nose which is some 40 feet to the right of and some 40 feet above the top of the shoulder.

(2) 45 feet. Traverse obliquely to the right across a quartz-marked slab to attain the entrance of series of shallow chimneys.

(3) 60 feet. The chimneys need not be taken in one pitch. The first is short and square cut, the second irregular and awkward. They lead to a recess with a small cluster of young trees.

(4) 50 feet. Continue for a few feet easily in the same line ; then some 30 feet below the overhanging rocks move out to the right and zig-zag up a steep slab to another tree ; an attractive pitch.

(5) 20 feet. The wall behind the tree is much less innocent than it looks ; hand-holds at first are sketchy till the angle eases in a few feet.

(6) 15 feet. The final wall is easier ; and it is possible to avoid it altogether on the right.

**BIRCH TREE CHIMNEY**

175 feet.

Rope : 60 feet.

Standard : IIB.

40 feet left of Avalanche Gully, at a level slightly below the difficult cave pitch of the latter, grows a mountain ash in the heathery bed of a vague chimney or gully. The ground above looks so broken and overgrown that it requires the eye of faith to descry the line of a climb. The objective is a small chimney, slanting to the left, on the skyline, directly above the ash tree ; a shallow gully is followed all the way.

At present it is an unsatisfactory climb, spoilt by vegetation. However it has the merit of following a definite line, and although never likely to become a popular route it might improve with use, at any rate in the steep upper part.

Start : In the shallow gully bed by the tree.

(1) 50 feet. Scramble up heather to a bollard on the left, below a short chimney blocked by a chockstone 10 feet up.

(2) 40 feet. Vegetation makes the chimney awkward, but it is short (15 or 20 feet). Above it, scrambling leads to a good stance. (Belays might be unearthed.)

(3) 25 feet. Rather awkward scrambling up the shallow gully bed. Stance at a leaning bollard on the left.

(4) 25 feet. The gully narrows to a steep chimney, obstructed by grass and containing some loose stones. Belay in a small cave.

(5) 10 feet. The exit from the cave is difficult, but there is a good hand-hold over the top of the chockstone. No apparent belay.

(6) 25 feet. The steep final chimney contains good holds, but care is required with loose rock. Finish on the right, at the level of the difficult pitch on the Amphitheatre Buttress.

The line of least resistance up the buttress from this point leads diagonally up to the edge of the Bending Gully.

#### AVALANCHE GULLY

750 feet.

The big gully dividing Bending Gully Reach from Amphitheatre Buttress. A climb of no real interest, with pitches only in the lower section. It was once notorious for the danger of falling rock.

Rope : 30 feet.

Standard : IB, or IIA if no pitches are turned.

Start : The wide rift of the gully, to the left of the Amphitheatre Buttress, is easily distinguished, but a broad fan of slabby, heathery rock at the base rather conceals the narrow cleft which is its proper start. It begins on a level with the bottom of Amphitheatre Buttress and some 70 yards to the left of it.

Section 1 : 250 feet. Contains four short cave pitches, all of which may be turned on the right. The first is considerably below the others.

(1) 15 feet. A short pitch near the bottom, with rather smooth walls.

(2) 20 feet. A difficult, wet cave, with an awkward exit on the right over a rounded capstone.

(3) 10 feet. A short, arduous cave pitch, climbed by bridging.

(4) 20 feet. A wide mossy chimney with two chockstones. The first is passed by a through route, the second by bridging.

Section 2 : 250 feet. The gully is here dominated by the impressive wall on the left. No climbing.

Section 3 : 250 feet. Level with the big gendarme on the arête of the Amphitheatre Buttress, Avalanche Gully becomes shallow and plays out into several easy alternatives.

#### AMPHITHEATRE BUTTRESS

Approximately 900 feet, but much of this is scrambling.

The large independent buttress, bounded by Avalanche Gully on the left and the Amphitheatre on the right. The right hand feature of the South Crag.

In popularity, Amphitheatre Buttress is second only to the Great Gully among the Craig yr Ysfa climbs. It is well described by Archer Thomson as "a very entertaining but not seriously difficult climb." The buttress, standing out well from the main mountain, possesses a fine individuality, and although, except at two points, it is possible to vary the route almost indefinitely in detail, the climb as a whole is not artificial. Its average angle is not steep, but it contrives to give a sense of some exposure by its continuity and by the steepness of the drop into the Amphitheatre on the right.

Rope : 50 feet.

Standard : IIB.

Start : The lowest rocks of the left containing wall of the Amphitheatre.

(1) 90 feet. Mainly slab-work, with plenty of holds. One rather awkward groove half-way up.

(2) 100 feet. Easy climbing and scrambling on the ridge up to a small cave on the right.

(3) 140 feet. A longer stretch of slabs, often split by clean cracks, which give good holds, though nail-worn. Alternatively (the old route) move left on to heather after 30 feet ; and up beside the slab—a walk at first, then a groove, then a short chimney. Rejoin the other route at the top.

(4) 50 feet. Rocky scrambling leads to a large bilberry terrace, backed by a steep rock wall.

(5) 65 feet. Two steep pitches, the hardest part of the climb. For the first wall, the much scratched corner on the right is climbed. In 30 feet a ledge with a big detached block is reached, over on the Amphitheatre side. The next pitch (35 feet) is rather easier, though the final holds are rounded.

(6) 200 ft. Easy scrambling over heather and bilberries.

(7) 110 feet. The ridge narrows to a thin horizontal arête, sensational in appearance but not seriously difficult. At first a gap, then two gendarmes (the second may be turned), then a real knife-edge, connecting with the main mountain.

(8) 180 feet. The heathery rib on the right of the narrow gully straight ahead is followed, part scrambling, part climbing, to the top.

#### *Alternative Start :*

The difficult pitch may be reached quickly, by an inferior alternative start on the right flank of the Buttress, i.e., from half-way up the floor of the Amphitheatre itself. Just beyond a fierce-looking vertical crack, a steep, grassy gangway leads up to the left to the ridge. An outward pointing rock finger, 3 feet long and 6 feet out from the base of the wall, marks the start.

Standard : IIA.

(1) 25 feet. Climb on to the grassy terrace, and in a few feet go up a short crack on the right side of a big jammed flake.

(2) 60 feet. Up the grassy staircase, which eventually steepens into a short chimney ; the block at the top is best passed on the



left. The scratches are joined 10 feet below the big ledge under the difficult pitch of Amphitheatre Buttress.

#### BEAUMONT'S CHIMNEY CONTINUATION

On the left hand side of Avalanche Gully, at the level of and exactly opposite the big gendarme on the final arête of the Amphitheatre Buttress, is a large flat-topped bollard, above which rises a wide irregular chimney. This gives access to another chimney, which is a good problem. It is perhaps most conveniently taken as a finish to Amphitheatre Buttress, with which of course it has no natural connection.

Rope : 60 feet.

Standard : IVB ; strenuous.

(1) 60 feet. The first chimney is climbed without serious difficulty, and a terrace of broken blocks reached. It is followed round to the left to an ash tree.

(2) 35 feet. From here rises the second chimney, steep and very arduous in the first 20 feet. Above a deep cave, scrambling over boulders leads to the crest of the mountain.

## II—THE AMPHITHEATRE

The wide and very marked hollow which separates the North and South Crags is well named the Amphitheatre. A long, light-coloured scree slope runs steeply up into it and forms its floor. Its right (true left) containing wall is formed by the flanking wall of the Great Buttress, its left by the corresponding side wall of the Amphitheatre Buttress. Each is unimpressive lower down ; higher up there is a fine area of steep slabs on the left, and on the right a tremendous vertical wall of rough black-coloured rock. The latter is crossed at half or two-thirds of its height by a wide, horizontal bilberry terrace.

The back of the Amphitheatre is formed of an alternating series of gullies and rather broken ribs set at a much easier angle. Its features are described from left to right :—

Close up against the side of the Amphitheatre Buttress is an indefinite un-named gully of V-section slanting to the left. Right of this is a wedge of broken rocks, wide at the top, narrowing to a point at the base where the un-named gully converges upon A Gully. This is the narrow, definite cleft pointing straight down the line of the side wall of Amphitheatre Buttress.

In the centre of the Amphitheatre, the scree runs up to the foot of a rather broad and broken, but quite definite, sloping ridge : the Nameless Rib. This actually is the lowest promontory of rock protruding down into the floor of the Amphitheatre ; quartz rocks at its base identify it further.

To its right is B Gully, the most prominent of the gullies, wide and slightly indefinite at first.

Next, near the right hand side of the Amphitheatre, comes the steep, short buttress of the Amphitheatre Rib, the cleanest of these

ribs. To the right of it is C Gully, running inconspicuously straight back from the base of the Amphitheatre's right wall. The shallow D Gully, which joins it at an angle on the right 60 feet up, is not seen from below.

#### A GULLY

About 300 feet.

The easiest way out of the Amphitheatre, or down into it. Identifiable from above as being the first definite opening to the west (25 yards) of the cairned rib which marks the top of Amphitheatre Buttress. It is seen to have a 6-foot pitch at the top, and continues down with steep grass.

Rope : 20 feet if used.

Standard : IA.

*Identification* : On the left side of the Amphitheatre a grass slope hugs the base of the flanking wall of Amphitheatre Buttress. This leads straight up into A Gully, which begins when the lowest point of the Nameless Rib supplies the other bounding wall. 60 feet higher, a grass terrace at a higher level joins A Gully on the left above the first wet 6-foot pitch, and from this terrace goes up a subsidiary fork (almost a separate gully : to be disregarded).

The gully does not require detailed description. The bed is grassy and well-defined, set at an easy angle without any real drops. There are four or five very short bits of climbing, none longer than 15 feet. The gully opens out towards the top.

#### THE NAMELESS RIB

330 feet.

The left-hand of the two main ribs at the back of the Amphitheatre ; it has the character of a miniature Amphitheatre Buttress. It is a definite little buttress, though the actual route on it may be varied indefinitely. Perhaps deserves to be done more often.

Rope : 40 feet.

Standard : IIA.

Start : The base of the rib is the lowest projection of rock running down into the Amphitheatre, towards the left-hand side (looking up). There is scree on the right, and the grassy foot of A Gully on the left. From below the rib looks, as it is, rather broken up and set at an easy angle. The climb starts with a little wall, 60 feet above the end of the rib.

The line described is the one which the scratches have picked out as the most natural. There are many belays, and the pitches could be divided differently.

(1) 30 feet. The little wall is best surmounted from the left. Up the broken crest to a triangular grass platform.

(2) 25 feet. Up over piled boulders to the top of a big block. A chimney comes in on the left.

30 feet grass.

(3) 20 feet. A slab on the left of a grassy groove.

(4) 25 feet. Continue in the same line, to a sharp-cut detached block on the right.

(5) 25 feet. A bilberry-grown groove on the right of the block. Leave it in 6 feet for a short delicate slab on the left, and so to a bilberry arête. Walk up this, to big belays on the right, level with the Amphitheatre Buttress gendarme.

(6) 40 feet. An attractive pitch up the arête. In 20 feet there is an awkward slanting crack on a slab. Bilberry stance, at a pile of broken blocks.

A few feet higher the ridge becomes easy for 100 feet.

(7) 35 feet. Just below the top the ridge steepens into nose of rock, which gives a worthy finish to the climb. It may be avoided on the right, but should be climbed. Start, with some difficulty, on the left, and move back to finish up the arête itself, and out on to the crest of the mountain.

#### THE AMPHITHEATRE

##### B GULLY

About 300 feet.

Contains one notable pitch, which, though short, is harder than any other gully pitch on the cliff, Great Gully excepted. Otherwise undistinguished.

Rope : 20 feet.

Standard : IIIB.

Start : The wide opening roughly in the centre of the back of the Amphitheatre. It is bounded on the right by Amphitheatre Rib, and on the left by the Nameless Rib. The first stretch is seen to be easy and grassy.

200 feet easy scrambling.

(1) 15 feet. The difficult pitch looks innocent enough ; three jammed stones in a crack which slopes rather to the left. The start is undercut and very awkward ; there follows a difficult pull-up on to the first chockstone ; and the exit over the top chock-stone is also clumsy. The principal difficulty on the pitch is caused by the shortage of good footholds and the outward slope of the walls, which makes bridging precarious.

This pitch, which is generally wet, may be turned on the right by a slab followed by a small chimney (25 feet).

The gully now opens out, and there is an escape on the right if desired. Otherwise there are three more short pitches.

(2) 8 feet. A very short fern-crowned chimney.

(3) 10 feet. Another mossy chimney.

(4) 10 feet. Another narrow chimney leads up to the crest of the mountain.

##### AMPHITHEATRE RIB

250 feet. The buttress between B and C Gullies is very little broken, and gives a clean, neat climb. Except on the first pitch, parts of which could be avoided, there is no break in the climbing, or easy way off.

The line described is that taken on the first ascent, but a wide amount of variation is possible.

Rope : 100 feet.

Standard : IIIA.

Start : At the lowest point of the right hand buttress at the back of the Amphitheatre.

(1) 90 feet. Up some black mossy slabs at the bottom of the rib, and at the top bear left up a difficult corner ; then traverse right and climb on the edge of C Gully to a large block belay and poor stance.

(2) 30 feet. Move left and diagonally up a fairly easy slab on delightful holds.

(3) 25 feet. Traverse left and then easily up to a large bollard at the left end of a grassy ledge. The bollard vibrates slightly ; there is another spike 15 feet higher on the right.

(4) 90 feet. From the top of the bollard move left along some flakes. Climb the groove above (some difficulty at the top) ; after that a horizontal traverse to the right leads to a ledge overlooking C Gully. Up a rather tricky little crack on the left. A 20-foot scramble leads to a little gendarme.

(5) 20 feet. An easy slab.

Scrambling to the summit of the cliff.

## C GULLY

About 120 feet of climbing ; a good deal more including the easy ground.

The farthest right of the three main Amphitheatre Gullies. Not entirely lacking in character, but on the whole not recommended. It is rather loose, and, having its head near the path along the top, is liable to have stones dislodged down it.

Rope : 35 feet.

Standard : IIA.

Start : Close in under the right wall of the Amphitheatre, just beside the fierce-looking slanting crack of Pinnacle Wall Direct Start. Amphitheatre Rib forms its left wall. The first pitch rises immediately, without preliminary scrambling.

(1) 30 feet. A wet, two-storied cave pitch. Neither storey is simple. The pitch may be turned by an excursion on the slabs on the left.

(2) 10 feet. Past a block.

A few feet above this point a second block is reached ; D Gully diverges here on the right.

(3) 10 feet. A chockstone, easily passed on the left. The gully bed is stony above.

(4) 20 feet. A difficult and rather rotten chimney, covered in vegetation.

(5) 15 feet. Three jammed stones ; an awkward exit.





AMPHITHEATRE WALL

*J. M. Béchervaise*

- (6) 35 feet. A pinnacle divides the gully ; on the right a narrow chimney, on the left a grassy gully. Either may be taken ; the chimney is more interesting.  
50 feet to the crest of the mountain.

#### D GULLY

About 170 feet. Hugs the right (north) wall of the Amphitheatre. Unlike A, B and C Gullies, it does not face straight down the Amphitheatre, but joining C Gully at an angle faces towards the flank of Amphitheatre Buttress. A useful way down into the Amphitheatre.

Rope : 40 feet.

Standard : IB—not a serious climb.

Start : Out of C Gully, exactly at the level of the bilberry terrace of the Pinnacle Wall. A big fallen block in C Gully marks the point of divergence.

(1) 35 feet. An open groove or chimney.

(2) 140 feet, to where the Gully disappears. Above the chimney either pick a line at random over broken ground to the left, or follow the Gully proper which keeps to the right ; an easy, shallow groove.

### III—NORTH CRAG

#### THE AMPHITHEATRE RIGHT WALL

The south flanking wall of the upper part of the Great Buttress forms the Right Wall of the Amphitheatre. This wall drops sheer for several hundred feet, and compares in steepness and in the quality of its rock with the East Buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu ; and the climbing on it, at present limited, is of a flavour a little similar.

A wide bilberry terrace runs conspicuously across the Right Wall. This terrace can be reached easily from the inner end. Only two climbs have been made, both of which lie substantially on the part of the cliff above the bilberry terrace ; the cliff below is untouched, except for a single crack at its inner end, where it is lowest.

#### THE GRIMMETT

160 feet. 25 feet above the inner end of the bilberry terrace is a second bilberry terrace, shorter but very definite. At the right-hand end of this is a steep corner, rising nearly vertically for about 80 feet with two overhangs, one half-way up, the other at the top, and more rock above. This is the line of the climb.

A clean, direct route ; the climbing is short but uncompromising and very exposed.

Rope : 90 feet.

Standard : VI because of the position of the hard move on the second pitch. Stockings.

Start : The second terrace is reached from the chimney pitch of D Gully. Walk to its far end.

(1) 30 feet. Start on the right and climb the corner to the cave formed by the first overhang.

(2) 75 feet. Emerge from the cave, with a long reach or a shoulder. Climb the groove, with bridging after a few feet, until a good hold, which gives a resting place, is reached on the left wall. The main groove is blocked at the top by an overhang ; 10 feet below this, balance across with the aid of very sketchy holds into a secondary groove on the left. This is the hardest move on the climb, and very exposed ; then more easily up the second groove, and make a landing over the overhang on the left. 25 feet farther is a block, level with the top of the Pinnacle.

(3) 40 feet. The nose of rough rock directly ahead is taken on the left. A wall with superb holds leads into a crack slanting back to the right. Big belays.

(4) 10 feet. Two mantel-shelves lead up on to the top.

#### PINNACLE WALL

265 feet. This route finds the weaknesses in the wall above the main bilberry terrace. It gains the terrace from the left, leaves it at the far end, comes back downward along a surprising quartz ledge for some 70 feet, and so gains the open corner or groove which is the fairly obvious key to the wall.

An unusual and varied route of great charm. Though circuitous, it is anything but ill-defined ; the rock is magnificent, the difficulty sufficient but not excessive, the exposure and situations outstanding.

Rope : 100 feet.

Standard : V. Technically much less hard than the Grimmer. Rubbers or stockings.

Start : In C Gully, just above the initial cave pitch, where a clear grassy line of weakness runs up on the right to the bilberry terrace.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the grassy corner ; the second rise is a little tricky.

Walk along the terrace to the right for about 90 feet to an obvious line of approach in the wall above, near the end.

(2) 45 feet. A rock staircase with a grassy landing.

(3) 90 feet. A 10-foot wall on the left gives entry to the quartz ledge. This slopes downwards and outwards, and gives a surprisingly airy pathway for about 70 feet, breaking off short of a grass ledge. Step across to this. A thread can be put round a rather distant stone jammed low down to the right and with a little ingenuity and a small stone another thread belay can be manufactured in a suitable crack on the wall above the stance.

(4) 70 feet. The next 25 feet up the groove ahead are the hardest part. There are small holds on the right wall, and a thin crack in the corner for the left hand. Difficulty eases at the start of a diagonal crack which runs out to the right, eventually to the Pinnacle. The crack is rough-edged and considerably easier than



the groove, though very exposed. Magnificently placed stance just below the Pinnacle, which provides the belay.

(5) 30 feet. Step on to the exposed but not difficult wall, which leads to the top with delightful climbing.

#### DIRECT START TO THE PINNACLE WALL

85 feet. The Bilberry Terrace may be reached from directly below by climbing the first proper crack in the main wall of the Amphitheatre. The crack is extremely tiring and liable to be greasy. It is rather a tour de force.

Standard : VI. Much harder than anything on the Pinnacle Wall itself. Rubbers or stockings.

Start : At the foot of C Gully, exactly opposite the lowest rocks of the Amphitheatre Rib, a straight crack slants up the wall of the Amphitheatre.

(1) 50 feet. The crack is started from the left with great difficulty. It continues extremely awkward for 30 feet on account of its tilt. The crack is smooth inside ; on its edges there are occasional small holds. After 30 feet two good hand-holds are reached, and the remaining section up to the grass ledge is easier. Poor belay.

(2) 35 feet. A groove or narrow slab continues in the same line as the crack. Continue up it, until at 20 feet, hand-holds on the slightly overhanging left wall make it possible to traverse left by some very trying moves until easy ground is reached.

#### GREAT BUTTRESS

In its lower 250 feet the Great Buttress, heathery and broken above, steepens and runs down in a long tongue of slabs, reaching farther down into Cwm Eigiau than any other part of the cliff ; Vanishing Gully runs up the centre of the tongue. Two climbs have been made to the left of it. Both have obvious drawbacks of position and lack of finish. Heather and lichen are features of both.

#### LOW CLIMB

130 feet. A line of climbing near the edge of the Buttress.

Rope : 50 feet.

Standard : IIIA.

Start : From the path a prominent feature of the Great Buttress is a crooked chimney formed between a detached block and the mountain, about 100 feet above the extreme lowest point of the crag. When the path begins to go down steeply over the scree to round the crag, there is a mossy glacis on the left. Cairn (about 60 feet above the lowest point).

(1) 45 feet. A corner followed by an insignificant slab with a crack in it. Above, heather leads to a corner under the chimney.

(2) 15 feet. Up the chimney.

(3) 35 feet. Climb on easily inclined slabs with small holds for 20 feet. 15 feet higher is a bollard. Junipers on the left are a feature of this pitch.

(4) 35 feet. Go straight up towards an overhang and turn it on the right, moving on small holds. 20 feet up is a rotten grass landing in a corner. A good ledge 15 feet higher.

The climb peters out well below the level of Great Gully.

#### NETHER CLIMB

335 feet. A better and longer line of climbing, to the right of Low Climb. Starts at the lowest point to the left of the Vanishing Gully opening, runs at first up the arête bounding that side of the gully, and then finds its own way up on to easier ground. The climb has the snags of its situation, but the pitches are quite good and little spoilt by vegetation.

Rope : 90 feet.

Standard : IVA.

Start : A few feet to the right of the rocky spur projecting lowest on the left hand side of Vanishing Gully.

(1) 45 feet. Climb a low wall to gain the arête ; follow this on slanting holds, to belays.

(2) 55 feet. Continue up the arête.

(3) 65 feet. A nice pitch. From the foot of a V-groove, step round left on to a mossy slab, up a hard scoop, and out left on to the arête. Up to easy ground, and belay below a prominent prow of rock.

(Here one can walk left to the top of Pitch 2 of Low Climb, or break away and traverse right to Vanishing Gully.)

(4) 20 feet. Scramble up right to a nest of boulders beside the top of the prow.

(5) 55 feet. Walk left behind the prow. A mossy slab, then a wall with a diagonal crack lead back on to the arête.

(6) 15 feet. Continue up the arête.

(7) 80 feet. Turn the rock ahead on the left and emerge on to easy slabs. Probably there is a much better finish to the right of the rock ; not yet done.

#### VANISHING GULLY

150 feet of climbing, but a good deal longer in actual distance. The gully starts well, near the centre of the lowest point of the crag, and holds out until a third of the way up Great Buttress. With the clamoring above, it gives a climb which may be regarded as disappointing, or as a good mountaineering route, according to mood.

Rope : 70 feet.

Standard : IIB. The third and fourth pitches are good solid ones.

Start : Just left of the extreme lowest tongue of the Great Buttress. A wide opening ; slabs on the left, the gully itself on the right. No

climbing for 80 feet. The dark cave of the second pitch is easily seen. In mist, the opening is liable to be mistaken for Great Gully.

(1) 10 feet. A grass-crowned jammed block, passed on the right. A stretch of ferns and grass runs up to a comfortable cave.

(2) 45 feet. Formerly there were two large chockstones, which were insecure and had to be pushed down. There is no need to use the remaining stones for the short move up from the cave. Steep grassy slopes then lead to a very good stance in a hole.

180 feet of walking brings one to the best section of the gully. 35 feet below Pitch 3, however, one can leave the gully with some difficulty by a steep climb of 25 feet up the right wall, thus avoiding the best of the climbing.

(3) 60 feet. A good chimney pitch. The angle, easy at first, soon steepens. Climb facing right to a ledge on the left, then back into the chimney and over the chockstones (40 feet). Stance 20 feet higher.

(4) 60 feet. The gully contracts, and soon steepens into a narrow crack. At this point either :

(a) Go into the back of the recess, and work upwards facing left, to emerge behind the uppermost chockstone, or

(b) Keep outside the crack, and chimney facing right. Holds are adequate, and there is a good handhold for the final move across. Finish over the chockstone.

The gully now finishes, at the level of the Door Jamb in the Great Gully ; a good view into this may be had by scrambling round to the right.

The remainder of the buttress compels no definite climbing ; the line of least resistance leads at first up the right hand side, and then trends back to the centre. About 450 feet to the top.

(En route, the pinnacle which stands on the edge of the Great Gully at the level of the sixth pitch may be visited and climbed.)

#### GREAT GULLY

About 800 feet. Well round the corner of the lowest tongue of Great Buttress is a deep, dead straight gully running with a leftward trend for practically the full height of the cliff. This is Great Gully, probably the best, certainly the best-known, gully in Wales.

It is a very long climb, of sustained but never excessive difficulty ; an expedition in the old sense. It has atmosphere. The climb is deeply enclosed, with a splendid outward view all the way up. In wet weather the climb naturally becomes harder, but on most pitches there are fairly easy alternatives.

Rope : 70 feet.

Standard : IVB under normally damp conditions. Technically it is perhaps hardly of this standard, but it is strenuous and more of an undertaking than many short severes. IVA if Pitch 6 is avoided.

Start : Approaching from the east, descend past the bottom of Vanishing Gully to the cliff's lowest point. From here ascend 200 feet

along the base of the cliff to reach the bottom of Great Gully, passing en route a minor opening which can be mistaken for it.

150 feet of scrambling up the bed lead to a jammed stone making a small cave.

(1) 10 feet. Pass the jammed stone by climbing on the left. 80 feet of scrambling.

(2) 15 feet. Another large chockstone ; pass it on the left (rounded holds), or by a through route.

80 feet of easy ground lead to the Door Jamb.

(3) 50 feet. The right wall overhangs ; the left is covered with brilliant green moss. It is not normal to climb it direct ; this has only been done by a human pyramid or in deep snow. Climb a steep groove on the right wall, 20 feet below the cave. Belays at 40 feet. From here scramble up 15 feet and walk back above the bed of the gully.

(4) 15 feet. The gully (mossy left wall) can be climbed direct by bridging to a platform and belay on the right.

*Avoiding Variations :* Reach the same point easily by a scramble on the right.

(5) (a) 20 feet. Above the cave is a steep pitch, usually wet, in the bed of the gully.

Or (b) 40 feet. Climb the deeply-cut wet chimney on the right, nearly to the top, and step back to the left into the gully.

(6) An impressive cave pitch, severe if climbed direct.

45 feet. Climb the gully direct, back and foot, facing right. A crack in the right wall helps the feet. The walls are at maximum distance for bridging ; therefore the pitch is harder for a short man, and some people prefer to climb the crack itself, which is stiff. At the top balance across to a platform on the right. Belays 12 feet higher. (Alternatively climb directly over the chockstone at the top of the chimney.)

*Avoiding Variation :*

(a) 40 feet. 50 feet down from the back of the cave, climb on to the right wall by a big detached flake. A grassy ascent, first right and then left. Belay.

(b) 25 feet. Continue the traverse to reach the platform at the top of the direct pitch.

(7) 30 feet. From the belay, up the groove on the right. 80 feet of walking on stones.

(8) 25 feet. A rock rib divides the gully.

(a) On the right, a sloping chimney.

Or (b) On the left, two mossy chockstones ; perhaps harder. 60 feet of scrambling, leading over a big jammed stone.

(9) 15 feet. Another jammed stone blocks the gully and makes short chimneys on left and right. This is perhaps technically the most difficult pitch on the climb.

(a) Climb the narrow right hand chimney, facing left. Being undercut, it is very hard to start.

Or (b) Avoid the chimney by a variant which starts some feet lower on the right wall and leads back into the top of the chimney. Delicate work, rather out of balance at one point.

Or (c) The left hand chimney can be climbed.

(10) 30 feet. The great cave pitch. Ascend its sloping floor to the back. A vast chockstone is jammed low above one's head, and another spans the gully 20 feet out. The gully is wholly roofed in, except for a gap above the outer stone.

Climb on to the inner chockstone either from the back, reaching for a high handhold on the left also on the chockstone, or from the outside of the right wall ; in either case the movement is not easy. From the top of the chockstone traverse horizontally along the left (true right) wall to the outer chockstone.

#### *Variations :*

(a) The start of the horizontal traverse may be reached by climbing the left wall on small holds beside the inner chockstone.

(b) 15 feet down from the back of the cave a horizontal ledge on the left wall leads out for 8 feet. From here climb straight up to the inner edge of the outer chockstone.

The gully is now virtually finished.

#### *Variation Exits :*

Pitches 9 and 10 (which some parties may find harder than Pitch 6) may be avoided by either of two variant finishes.

(1) Left Wall Exit. 55 feet. A short distance above Pitch 8, a prominent slanting chimney, strenuous but not hard, leads out of the gully on to easy rocks.

(2) Right Wall Exit. Exactly opposite this chimney the right wall gives a characterless escape by an incipient chimney which leads in a few feet to steep turf scrambling on the right.

#### INVISIBLE CHIMNEY

130 feet. The easy alternative on Pitch 6 of Great Gully goes up to the right past a big detached flake, and, shortly, back to the left. But by continuing along to the right to a clump of ferns, one reaches a deep mossy chimney, rising for about 50 feet, then bending to the right. The chimney is deep and well hidden, nearly a gully. It runs up to the right, at an angle to the line of Great Gully.

A modest, old-fashioned climb, interesting mainly because set so deep into the mountain.

Rope : 40 feet.

Standard : IIA.

Start : At the foot of the chimney, exactly level with the base of the 20-foot summit block of the pinnacle on the left wall of the gully.

(1) 30 feet. Up the bed of the chimney, passing behind a jammed stone, to a mossy cave.

(2) 25 feet. A deep twisting chimney leads behind another block in the bowels of the mountain, and emerges at a pile of blocks.

(3) 30 feet. Go through a small hole on the right, then straight up the wet chimney to where it steepens and verdure ceases.

(4) 20 feet. Back up steeply past tiers of jammed blocks, to land above them in a deep recess.

(5) 25 feet. A steep, enclosed wet chimney. Under the overhanging roof move out on to two jammed stones, and so to a grassy ledge on the right.

Broken ground leads to the top of the buttress.

## THE DANCING FLOOR

The very large buttress which forms the northern half of the North Crag is mostly rather broken and unsatisfactory. A route was made up it by the Abrahams, but it contained so much scrambling that they did not record where it went. High up and to the right of Great Gully, however, there is a great wall of partly overhanging rock flanked on each side by terraced buttresses. A smooth reach of steep slabs sweeps up to the floor of the cirque of rock thus formed. This is the Dancing Floor. It ends abruptly in an overhang of massive proportions some 300 feet up the cliff. So far one climb has been made here.

### SHEAN TREUSE

440 feet.

The route endeavours to take in as much continuous climbing as can reasonably be justified, by first ascending the nose of the buttress below the big overhang. It crosses the actual Dancing Floor diagonally and eventually escapes by the steep left hand wall above the Floor.

A varied climb on ribs, slabs, and then steep wall.

Rope : 100 feet.

Standard : V.

Start : the start lies up the nose of the buttress some 150 feet below the overhang, about 200 feet above and 50 feet to the right of the foot of Great Gully. There are three sections to the climb.

I (1) 95 feet. Either up nose or up glacis round the corner, followed by a traverse to a green ledge (thread belays).

(2) 55 feet. Traverse a few feet to the right, and then carry straight on to a point just right of the overhanging nose. Carry on past a pinnacle on its left by means of a groove which soon leads to a final 10-foot layback and a bilberry terrace, which is an offshoot of the Dancing Floor. No belays.

II (1) 140 feet. Traverse diagonally across the slabs of the Dancing Floor, either by obvious verdure weakness or by more difficult routes, aiming for the green crack slanting upwards to the left in the direction of Great Gully.

(2) 65 feet. The crack is climbed as a layback for the first 15 feet, the right wall being slightly overhanging. A further 10 feet leads to a ledge, whence grass ledges run straight up to a rowan tree ledge.

### III The Final Wall. 85 feet.

A crack runs up the right edge of the wall above the rowan tree ledge. The crack can be climbed straight up on quite good holds to where it becomes overhanging. This point is some seven feet below the grass bed of a small cave in the crack which is an obvious landmark, and which can also be reached by an easy traverse from the left.

The route reaches it by avoiding the overhang in a delicate and tricky traverse on the steep face to the right. The deviation should not exceed two or three feet, as the return to the groove and to the cave then becomes very difficult. The grass bed of the cave is gained, and provides a good resting place. After the steep but straightforward crack above the cave the climbing becomes easy.

### MOSS GULLY

600 feet.

The easy grass gully 200 feet or 300 feet to the right of Great Gully. Is generally regarded as the gully which bounds Craig yr Ysfa on the north. Possesses no merit as a climb, but is useful as an approach to anyone coming over to the cliff from the Carnedd Llewelyn side.

Rope : Not necessary.

Standard : IB, if all the pitches are taken.

Start : The obvious opening some 300 feet right of Great Gully.

First Section : c. 300 feet. The gully is gently inclined, the walls becoming more definite, until it is blocked by a grassy buttress.

Second Section : 120 feet. Vague, unpleasant, intermittent climbing up mossy grooves on the left. All the pitches may be avoided.

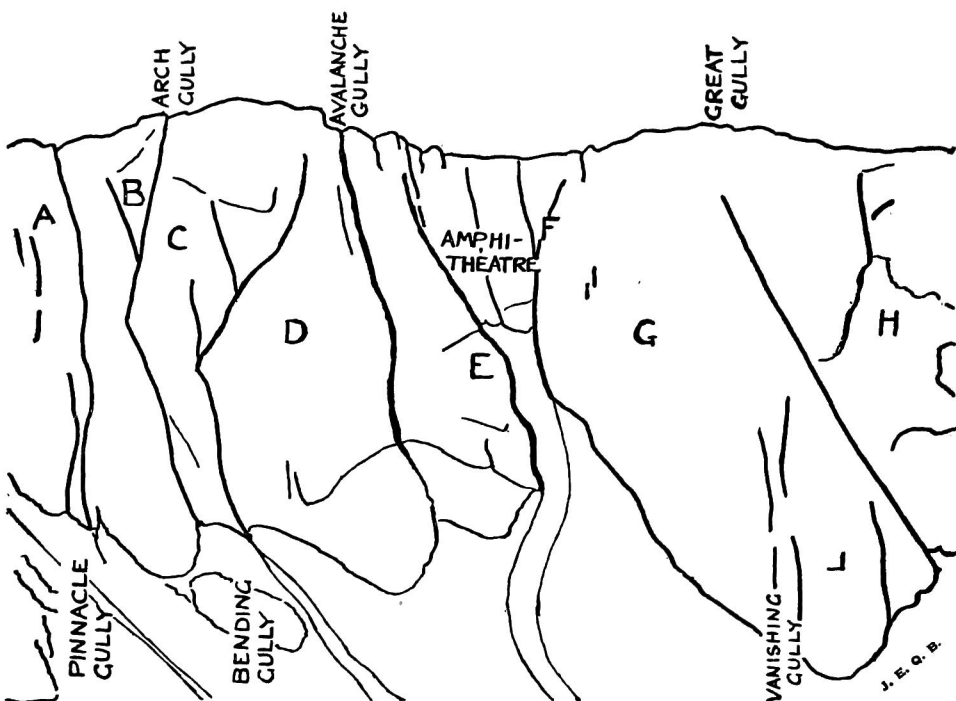
Third Section. c. 200 feet. The gully reaches a wide couloir. Continue, either by screes, or by a scramble up the shallow continuation on the left.

### THE OBELISK

The main crag of Craig yr Ysfa ends with the broad unsatisfactory buttress north of the Great Gully.

A much smaller and more broken line of crags continues to the north. It contains no definite climbing, but some 300 yards north of the foot of the Great Gully there is a short and very wide gully, from the bed of which rises the Obelisk. This is about 25 feet on the short side and perhaps 50 feet on the long side. There are two main routes on it ; each has variations : (1) 25 feet. Up the short southern edge ; (2) 40 feet. Up the east side. Both are steep, with lots of holds. Other possibilities for rubbers.

(N.B.—The various pinnacles of Craig yr Ysfa are rather confusing. There are three recognised ones, viz. :—(i) the big flake which gives its name to Pinnacle Gully ; (ii) The well-known square topped one, on the left wall of Great Gully, half way up ; (iii) The Obelisk, also called Craig yr Ysfa Pinnacle, once a favourite subject for photography.)



## SOUTH CRAG

- A = The Staircase (page 18).  
 B = The Cirque (p. 20).  
 C = Arch Wall (p. 29).  
 D = The Heather Slabs (p. 34).

## NORTH CRAG

- E = Amphitheatre Buttress (p. 40).  
 F = Amphitheatre Wall (p. 54).  
 G = Great Buttress (p. 59).  
 H = Dancing Floor (p. 70).

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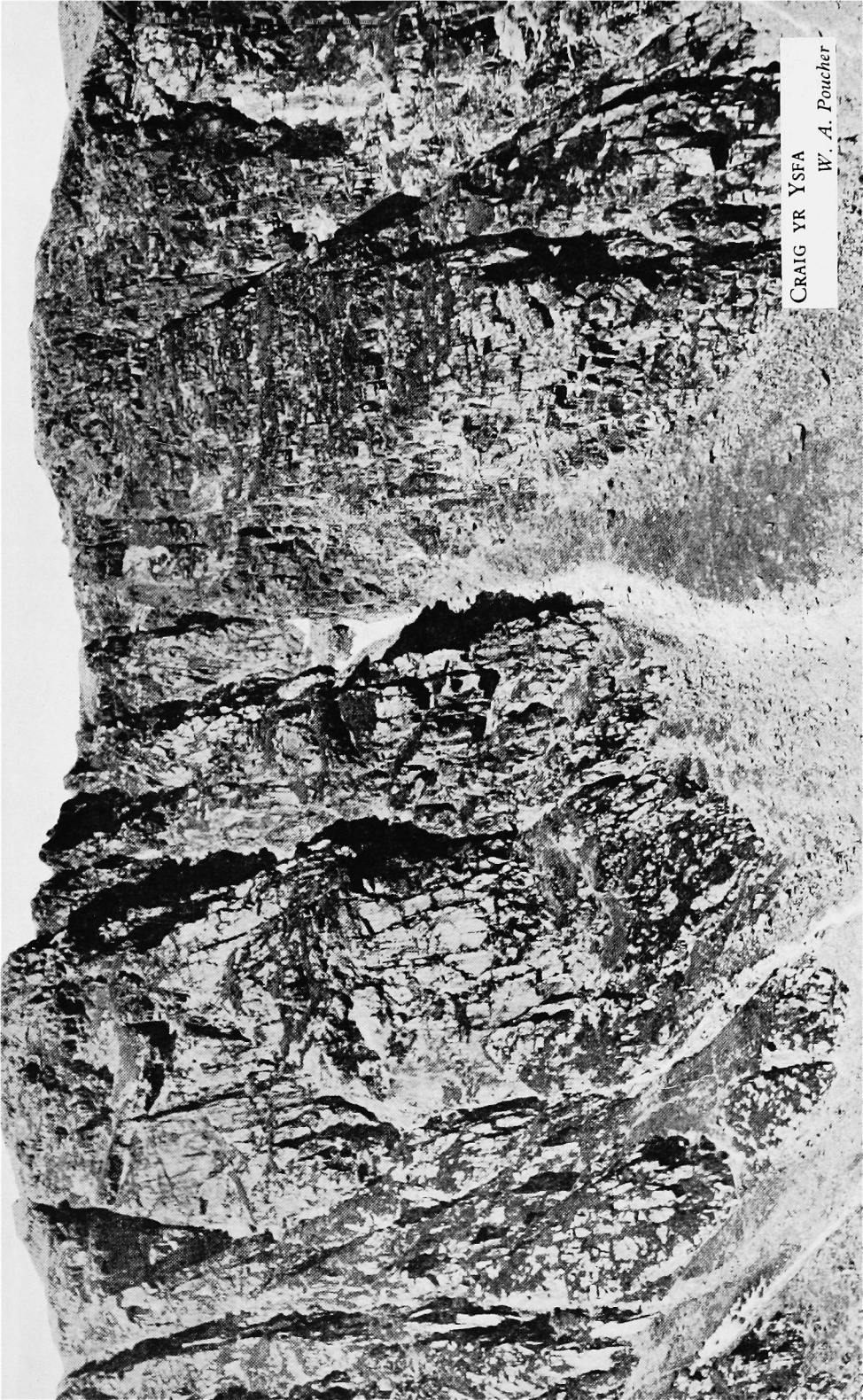
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CRAIG YR YSFA

W. A. Poucher



## LIST OF FIRST ASCENTS

April, 1900 .. .. GREAT GULLY.—J. M. A. Thomson, R. I. Simey, W. G. Clay.

"The cave is spanned by two huge boulders, forming bridges. The further is the easiest of access. By utilising a small foothold on the right wall the climber effects a lodgment on it, and then reaches its sharp upper edge by a struggle, in which he comes near to defying all the laws of anatomy. A novel expedient is to lay the palm of the right hand on the block, and using the arm as a pivot, perform a pirouette to the south; the climber thus lands in a sitting posture, with one leg thrust upwards to the roof to maintain equilibrium. To describe a movement of the body many words are required; but this device, seemingly complicated, is in execution simple and innocent. Any Gallio, however, will complacently demand a shoulder . . ." (Climbing in the Ogwen District. J. M. A. Thomson, p. 108.)

June, 1900 .. .. BENDING GULLY.—J. M. A. Thomson, H. Hughes.

1901 .. .. LEFT WALL EXIT.—J. M. A. Thomson, H. Hughes, R. Williams.

April, 1901 .. .. ARCH GULLY.—J. M. A. Thomson, R. Williams, R. F. Blackwell.

November, 1904 .. .. VANISHING GULLY.—G. Abraham, A. Abraham, C. W. Nettleton.

May, 1905 .. .. AVALANCHE GULLY.—J. W. Puttrell, D. Leighton.

May, 1905 .. .. AMPHITHEATRE BUTTRESS.—G. Abraham, A. Abraham, D. Leighton, J. W. Puttrell.

April, 1909 .. .. DOOR JAMB PITCH DIRECT.—O. Thorneycroft, G. Pinsent, F. W. Hubback.

April, 1909 .. .. SLAB CLIMB.—G. W. Young, G. H. L. Mallory.

April, 1909 .. .. BIRCH TREE CHIMNEY.—G. W. Young, G. H. L. Mallory.

June, 1931 .. .. AMPHITHEATRE RIB.—C. F. Kirkus.

June, 1931 .. .. PINNACLE WALL.—C. F. Kirkus.

1932 .. .. PINNACLE WALL, DIRECT START.—C. F. Kirkus, A. B. Hargreaves.

October, 1937 .. .. ARCH WALL.—H. E. Kretschmer, A. D. M. Cox, J. R. Jenkins.

April, 1938 .. .. THE STAIRCASE.—R. L. Beaumont.

May, 1938 .. .. BEAUMONT'S CHIMNEY.—R. L. Beaumont.

July, 1938 .. .. GOMORRAH.—A. D. M. Cox.

July, 1938 .. .. THE SPIRAL ROUTE.—A. D. M. Cox.

July, 1938 .. .. THE INVISIBLE CHIMNEY.—A. D. M. Cox.

July, 1938 .. .. THE GRIMMETT.—A. D. M. Cox, R. L. Beaumont.

(The climb was named after a legendary animal.)

August, 1938 .. .. NETHER CLIMB.—J. Martin, N. J. M. Barry.

August, 1938 .. .. NETHER CLIMB, PITCHES 4, 5, 6 and 7.—H. E. Kretschmer, F. J. Dodd.

December, 1938 .. .. TRUANT RIB.—C. W. Noyce, D. M. Craib.

September, 1941 .. .. SHEAN TREUSE.—H. E. Kretschmer, F. A. Pullinger.

(Shean Treuse—a traditional dance, described as a rollicking procession across the dancing floor.)

The first ascent of A Gully, B Gully, C Gully, D Gully and the Nameless Rib, are presumed to have been made by the Abraham party round 1905—1908.

Low Climb was ascended by G. H. L. Mallory, probably round about 1910.

Parentage and age of Easy Pinnacle Gully, Moss Gully, and of the Obelisk are unknown.

# THE NUMERICAL SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION

H. E. KRETSCHMER

SEVERAL people have now expressed views, mostly in letters to the Secretary, on the numerical system suggested by Edwards and Barford in last year's *Journal*. Summaries and extracts are given below.

G. F. PEAKER :—

“ . . . It seems to me that the words of the Prime Minister say all that need be said—‘ Sir, we must beware of needless innovations, particularly when inspired by logic.’

“ The existing system is readily intelligible, has acquired a considerable crust of tradition, and answers the purpose as well as any system can conceivably do.

“ It is true that before he can learn much from the system a climber must calibrate himself against it, and it is equally true that there is some variation in the categories between one guide book and another, so that more than one calibration is needed. There is something to be said for this variety as a good thing in itself, but even if it be assumed that uniformity between the standards of different guide books is a good thing, there is no reason to suppose that it will be more easily attained by altering the names of the classes or the boundaries between them.

“ A very moderate experience of the system should enable any climber to make a fair guess as to whether a climb belongs to the class which he can tackle alone, lead with a weak party, lead with a strong party, or not lead at all, after one, two, three . . . weeks training and in fine, fair, cold, wet, or snowy weather. If he is wise, he will rely rather upon where the climb is placed with respect to other climbs which he knows (to judge its absolute standard) and upon the description (to judge the probable effect

of the weather), than upon the particular adjective or number attached to it. That is to say the main object of the classification should be to arrange the climbs in an ascending order of difficulty. If this is done with good judgment it does not matter where the lines are drawn, or what names or numbers are attached to the sections which the lines divide, and there is nothing to be gained, and something of history and continuity to be lost, by altering the existing names . . . ”

A. T. HARGREAVES :—

“ . . . . Actually I think I cordially support your motion for changing your method of classification.

“ I think the numerical system is very sound and once people have translated the standards in their minds to the new figures, I think it will be very popular.

“ I don't much care for the long list of subdivisions you use though. I should favour something, shorter and simpler, even if a little less accurate. After all when you have classified the climb it only represents what it means precisely to you as the other author.

“ I'd prefer something like this :—

|  |    |    |    |    |   |      |
|--|----|----|----|----|---|------|
| Moderate   | .. | .. | .. | .. | } | I    |
| Moderately Difficult                                       |    |    | .. | .. |   |      |
| (Either include the easies in I or simply call them easy.) |    |    |    |    |   |      |
| Difficult  | .. | .. | .. | .. | } | II   |
| Very difficult   |    | .. | .. | .. |   | III  |
|  |    |    |    |    | } | IIIA |
| Severe   | .. | .. | .. | .. |   | IV   |
|  |    |    |    |    | } | IVA  |
| Very severe  | .. | .. | .. | .. |   | V    |
|  |    |    |    |    | } | VA   |

“ I think it would be long enough and I imagine it would convey enough information to the ordinary climber. After all you leave (rightly in my view) everything to the climber in the way of technique when describing the climbs. By this I mean you simply say where the climb goes and avoid telling him how to do the pitch, and I think something should also be left to his judgment as regards choice of climb. I rather fancy putting this to the F. & R. Committee for adoption in future descriptions of climbs. . . . ”

E. F. BOZMAN :—

“ . . . The Numerical System of classifying is inept in my opinion. It does not allow for the factors of temperament and weather. Moreover the qualities of a mountain face are much too mysterious and complex to be indicated by simple numbers.

“ I realise that grading of standard climbs may be desirable, especially for beginners, but I submit that three grades are enough—moderate, difficult and severe. Everybody knows after a little experience what these words mean. I am leaving out “ easy ” from the lower end of the list because a rope is hardly necessary on these courses, and at the other end of the scale I see no point whatever in getting involved in “ very severes ” etc., which can only lead to breakneck rivalries, and do no good to anyone.”

A. D. M. COX :—

“ . . . I have a prejudice which I think you will find fairly general, in favour of the old system. In spite of the illogicality of it, everyone knows what one means by it, even ‘ mild very difficult,’ ‘ hard very difficult,’ etc. All the same, prejudice is not a good reason for clinging to something which is out of date, and I think it is probable that the new system is bound to come sooner or later ; in which case it might as well come now particularly as a start was made in the last *Journal*.

“ What I think is important is that the new system should not be introduced without taking the opportunity of raising the whole question of correlating British standards.

“ The whole question needs going into by representatives of all the clubs. The A.C. may be attempting to get together some form of representative committee or council of British mountaineering, which would be just the body to consider it, if it came into being soon enough.

“ I do not agree with the criticism that there are too many subdivisions in the numerical system. Half the point of the system is to get rid of stupid classification like ‘ easy very severe ’ ; but this is only stupid because of the wording—there definitely are easy and hard very severes, and one of the main advantages of the new system is that it gives a more sensible way of saying so, by means of ‘ a’s ’ and ‘ b’s.’ If you merely have the six main classes you will immediately get ‘ just V ’ or ‘ hard V ’ coming in which will put us back where we were before.

“ Another point is that in a grading of six standards it seems tough on a good difficult to be as low down as IIB, Route I or Avalanche for example. Naturally there is a finer grading in the top classes, so there have to be more of them, but it is rather a pity that the easier climbs get pushed down in consequence. It would make a simpler switch-over if the six numerical classes were made equivalent to the old six classes, roughly as follows :—

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Easy .. .. .          | I         |
| Moderate .. .. .      | II        |
| Difficult—            |           |
| just .. .. .          | IIIA      |
| straight .. .. .      | IIIB      |
| good .. .. .          | IIIC      |
| Very Difficult—       |           |
| just .. .. .          | IVA       |
| straight .. .. .      | IVB       |
| hard .. .. .          | IVC       |
| Severe—               |           |
| just .. .. .          | VA        |
| straight .. .. .      | VB        |
| hard .. .. .          | VC        |
| Very Severe—          |           |
| just .. .. .          | VIA       |
| straight .. .. .      | VIB       |
| exceptionally .. .. . | VIC ... ” |

F. H. KEENLYSIDE :—

“ . . . The first objection to numerical classification is that numbers imply an accuracy of measurement that is quite inapplicable. When the description of a subject passes from words to numbers it is because measuring instruments and the technique of their use have made it possible to introduce quantitative standards.

“ Numerical precision cannot be attained in assessing the difficulty of a climb ; no suitable instruments have been calibrated, we have no guide other than fallible subjective judgment. For this reason alone it would be misleading to use a numerical scale, but the objection extends farther and deeper. It is not only that there is no means of measuring climbs against each other, but that climbs are of their nature incommensurable.

The difficulty of a climb will vary from climber to climber, from day to day and from season to season. It is affected by the weather, by the fitness of the climber, by his footgear, by his stature, by his shape, by his style. One man may romp up chimneys but falter on slabs, another delight in pulling up over overhangs but slither on delicate passages. A chimney may comfortably fit one climber's figure but leave another either precariously loose or permanently jammed. This being so, we should not accept numbers, with their associations of objective accuracy, as proper descriptions of climbs.

" Even the actual difficulty of the necessary moves on a climb is a very complex factor. It may be due to holds, though large, being wide apart or to holds, though frequent, being small. It may be a matter of balance, or strength, or reach, or suppleness. But even this very complex factor is only one of many ; account must be taken of exposure, of length of the whole climb, of length of the separate pitches, of the nature of stances, the reliability of belays, the coefficient of friction of the rock, etc. When all these, as well as the subjective factors mentioned above, have to be taken into account, any simple classification is bound to be unstable and misleading but numbers are worse than words because they are bound to suggest a higher degree of precision.

" The obvious reply to the foregoing is that where all assessment is subjective, where items to be compared are incommensurable, no classification, verbal or numerical, can be attempted. This would be to go too far. A verbal comparison is often useful. Like symphonies or sonnets climbs can be compared but not measured.

" My last objection is based on the respectable principle of economy. Any guide adopting a numerical system must either explain what its numbers mean, or leave them unexplained. If unexplained the user of the book may not find out which is the easy end of the scale until the knowledge has become of academic and fleeting interest. I assume, therefore (and the Secretary tells me that my assumption is correct) that there would be a table at the beginning or end similar to that set out on page 40 of the last *Journal*. Such a table assumes at once that the new numbers are translations of the old words. If, then, the numbers are equivalent to the words, why introduce a new element which is confessedly superfluous ? There can be no point in writing



the guide in a new language. Not only is it less readily intelligible but a grammar and vocabulary have to be provided before it is intelligible at all . . . ”

H. C. J. HUNT :—

“ . . . I am wholly in favour of the proposed adoption of the continental standards for classifying climbs. I can, however, see the main difficulty of deciding on what basis to make your top standard, e.g., is it to be that of Edwards, or Kirkus ? There is a great difference in the relative standards adopted by these two. Also correlation with F. & R. C., etc. . . . ”

R. M. HAMER :—

“ . . . You may change the classification of climbs to your scientific and horrid figures—(I will still like to think of some day achieving again a ‘ mild severe ’—**not** a IVB)—but as long as the literary conventions of climbing guides remain unchanged, I will still look forward to a return to England, Home and Helyg . . . ”

J. E. Q. BARFORD :—

“ . . . One of the chief objections which has been raised to the numerical system of classification is to the large number of subdivisions—twelve—which have been proposed. This gives a false appearance of precision in classification. The system is more flexible than this objection allows. Whether the ‘ a ’ and ‘ b ’ subdivisions of each class are used is left to the discretion of the individual writer of guide books or accounts of new climbs ; in fact the use of these subdivisions might advisably be restricted to the more experienced writers whose judgment has attained a fair accuracy.

“ A second objection is to the number of classes. The sixth class has been introduced to cover the really very severe climbs which were lumped in the old system with traditionally very severes. In these higher classes further factors than technical difficulties should be taken into account. No one pitch climb, no artificial climb, no unexposed climb, no climb with uniformly short and well protected pitches, no climb on ‘ perfect ’ rock qualifies for this grade.

"In order to give a clearer idea of equivalents the table given in last year's *Journal* might be extended as given below, it being borne in mind that the equivalents are necessarily approximate. There are some climbs on Glyder Fach and in the Lakes that would certainly qualify for the last grade, but not very many anywhere.

| Num-<br>bers | Standard of<br>F.R.C.C. or Glyder<br>Fach Guide | Standards of Tryfan<br>Idwal and Lliwedd<br>Guides | Num-<br>bers |
|--------------|---|--|--------------|
| I            | Easy and Moderate                               | Easy .. .. .                                       | IA           |
|              |   | Moderate .. .. .                                   | IB           |
| II           | Difficult .. .. .                               | Just Difficult .. .. .                             | IIA          |
|              |   | Hard Difficult .. .. .                             | IIB          |
| III          | Very Difficult ..                               | Easy Very Difficult ..                             | IIIA         |
|              |   | Medium Very Difficult                              | IIIB         |
| IV           | Severe .. .. .                                  | Hard Very Difficult ..                             | IVA          |
|              |   | Mild Severe .. .. .                                | IVB          |
| V            | Very Severe .. ..                               | Medium Severe ..                                   | VA           |
|              |   | Hard Severe .. .. .                                | VB           |
| VI           |   | Very Severe ..                                     | VI..."       |

Edwards writes : "As regards Barford's tables of equivalents, I do not think that this degree of difference between the guides exists. . . "

The advocates of the numerical system—girded about with the unfair weapon of logic are a persistent and well organised body of men. Unless they are opposed by a majority both strong and united they will have their way.

At present I fear that the case against the numerical system is not quite strong enough to resist the change. I think Peaker's quotation of the Prime Minister's words was both apt and splendid ; but I thought he rather weakened his case by advocacy of arranging all climbs in an ascending order of difficulty—or have I misread him ? To say of a climb that it is comparable in its difficulty with the difficulty of another climb of similar character seems legitimate and useful. To arrange all climbs in a sort of knock-out league competition, as has tentatively been done in the Lake District, exceeds in absurdity the

weak points of the numerical system, of which it is a travesty (with the number of divisions equal to the total number of climbs.)

The point about the pretentiousness of describing difficulty with an exactitude greater than that with which it can be gauged was well put, but it has at least been partly met by Barford. The Keenlyside redundancy argument also seemed to score a point, but most of the other criticisms seemed to apply equally well to the old word system.

I am attracted and half persuaded by the wisdom of Bozman's three-class system, but I fear it is not likely to commend itself to the Great Guide Book Using Public. His arguments might be carried a stage farther to the abolition of guide books, for which indeed there is much to be said ; but I think the "average man on the rocks" does want a guide book and I think he wants it to grade climbs for him into more than three classes. I do think it of importance, though, to have a system that does not encourage competitive climbing too readily.

Much depends on why we climb. If our objective is creative, that is if we climb in order to create new standards of daring, skill and endurance (or as some would have it, of suicidal folly), if, as is suggested by Robin Hodgkin in this *Journal*, the purpose of climbing is evolutionary, then the system by which we measure these creative efforts becomes of supreme importance. "Valuing is creating," thus spake the Sage. "Hear it, ye creating ones ! Valuation itself is the treasure and the jewel of the valued things. Through valuation only is there value ; and without valuation the nut of existence would be hollow."

The Numerical System should serve the creative purpose well. One can imagine our distant descendants returning from a day of Grade 39 stuff, pausing smilingly on the way to watch their tiny tots playing on some VIb nursery climbs. Think of the continuity it will give to the evolutionary record !

If you climb not to advance the standard, nor in order to climb something harder than Jones Minor, nor to show the boys at home how clever you are, or yourself that you are not frightened, not even to look at the view or to get to the top ; if you climb simply because it is something which quite often gives you enjoyment, then the system of classification becomes of rather minor importance.

I myself do not desire the advancing of the standard. If anything I should prefer to retard it, and I must confess to a sneaking liking for the old dramatic nomenclature. I should like to make it even more dramatic—something after the style of the “pericoloso” to “funeralissime” scale, but alas I fear this must not be. The stream flows in the other direction.

The position at the moment is that we are trying the numerical system out on the temporary war-time guides. This will give people a chance to get used to the system or alternatively to band themselves together in a protesting anti-numerical multitude.

The number system will not be used in a proper guide book until after the war, in order to make it possible to take joint action with other clubs (which is one of the chief reasons for changing to a new system) and to reach agreement on the precise and final form of the system (which depends on agreement with other clubs as well as on agreement among ourselves).

The Glyder Fach guide will be reprinted substantially in its old form. Under the circumstances it was felt that it would be best and least misleading to retain the word classification in its original form and to give an approximate comparison with the later Edwards' standards and the new number system only in the foreword.

Since writing these lines the Edwards Lliwedd Guide has gone out of print. There is quite a strong case, in this instance, in favour of changing the system of classification in the next edition ; but it is still felt that it would be a pity to prejudice the chance of agreement with other clubs by committing ourselves prematurely to the final form of the system. As the author of the guide is in agreement with this view, it is proposed to reprint the book without alteration.

# NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES

## CADER IDRIS : CYFRWY

### STERIC SLAB.

First Ascent June 21st, 1942.

Party : E. L. Furness, J. S. H. Gillham.

120 feet. At the foot of the Table there lies a curious high and narrow rock screen. Standing at the left end of this screen and almost at the lowest point of the crag one can see about forty feet above and slightly left a fine steep edge, of which the right side is formed by a smooth and very steep slab. This is the Steric Slab. Although it cannot be seen from this position the left side of the arête is formed by a groove and shallow chimney.

*Standard* : IV.

Start : Scramble up forty feet to foot of the arête.

(1) 15 feet. Climb on good holds diagonally to the right to a large pointed flake.

(2) 30 feet. Traverse upwards to the left delicately until the edge of the arête is reached. Proceed up on good holds to a small stance. The prominent flake on the left is loose, but a belay can be made on the platform above.

(3) 45 feet. Climb on to platform above. Traverse six feet into and up the chimney on the left awkwardly. From a slanting foothold in the chimney a return can be made to a two foot wide ledge on the slab. Proceed up and slightly to the right to a ledge one foot wide lying between a good ledge on the left at chest height and a V scoop on the right. Climb on to the ledge on the left, and from there on good holds to a terrace.

(4) 30 feet. Climb the almost vertical wall above to a wide rocky recess.

## STONE CHUTE PINNACLE.

First Ascent June 8th, 1942.

Party : E. L. Furness, J. S. H. Gillham.

300 feet. The climb lies on the buttress to the right of Scree Gully.

*Standard* : II. Harder if led direct throughout.

Start : 150 feet up Scree Gully at a grass recess twenty feet above the floor of the gully on the right wall. This recess can be seen just after turning a corner of the gully. There is a vertical shallow chimney immediately above the recess and the edge of the arête on the right. The climb is commenced on the arête.

(1) 70 feet. Easy rocks to a grass terrace sloping down to the right below a steep wall.

(2) 80 feet. Traverse left for fifteen feet then back and up on the arête to a large grass terrace.

(3) 40 feet. From the right end of the terrace to a stance below a steep sloping chimney.

(4) 20 feet. Climb the chimney to a small ledge below the final vertical wall.

(5) 90 feet. Traverse left for twenty feet, the last part a strenuous hand traverse to a steep shallow gully which badly needs gardening. Climb the gully to the summit.

(The descriptions of these climbs are based on notes by E. L. Furness. The nomenclature has been modified to line up with that given in G. D. Abraham's "British Mountain Climbs" which appears still to be the only source of information on these cliffs.)

### CWM IDWAL : THE EAST WALL

#### GROOVED WALL . DIRECT START.

First Ascent May 13th, 1942.

Party : D. F. H. Biggane.

*Standard* : IV.B.

Start : About ten feet left of the dirty groove of Route V.

(1) 70 feet. Go up to the platform. A crack goes up from the right hand side of this platform. It contains one fairly strenuous mantel shelf. From the top of the crack bear left to a rib and then up a pleasant slab to the large heather patch.

### CWM IDWAL. THE SLABS

#### THE SUB-WALL CLIMB.

This climb appears to be unpopular and if the Helyg log is any guide has only been led properly twice since the beginning of the war. The trouble occurs in the third section. The belay here is a doubtful spike some four feet below an exiguous but fairly comfortable rock stance. A very narrow crescent slab leads up besides a curving vertical wall on the right, and above another vertical step on the left. The difficulty appears to be the start of this slab, and possibly its continuation. Alternatively, one can swing down from the rock stance to a small grass ledge below and on the left and climb straight up a slab and a black and greasy V chimney to the grass ledge above. This is less awkward and still of some technical interest. Otherwise one can do a wider detour to the left and avoid the difficulty entirely.

### TRYFAN

#### YEW BUTTRESS. VARIANT TO THIRD PITCH.

First Ascent August 29th, 1942.

Party : D. F. Attenborough, G. F. Peaker.

(3a) The left wing slab was taken, not easy, though no doubt less difficult than the groove.

## TRINITY CORNER.

First Ascent August 29th, 1942.

Party : D. F. Attenborough, G. F. Peaker.

*Standard* : IV. B.

The North Peak of Tryfan presents a steep open corner towards the Central Peak above the North Gully and on its right. In the angle of this corner are three adjacent and fairly vertical grooves reached by scrambling up easy rocks and then giving a fifty foot pitch to the summit of the North Peak.

(1) 50 feet. The climb starts up the central groove and moves into the left hand one after a stiff mantelshelf, up the left hand grooves to a small cave and back right handed to the top.

This is comparable to Javelin Buttress above the thread, with somewhat bigger holds but steeper. Excellent clean rock.

## GENERAL.

After a twelve months time lag differences of opinion are being heard on the subject of the numerical system of classification. The Guide-book Editor and the writer of these notes would be very pleased to hear from people holding strong views on the subject.

There has been less climbing this last year than for some time past and few of the major climbs have been done. The Munich Climb appears to be developing popularity and has been climbed solo at least once. The Balcony Cracks have been done once, and a party has attempted the Dancing Floor only to be defeated by the crux. The same party paid visits to Craig Fawr and Craig Dulyn, in November, and have reviewed the climbing possibilities there in the Log Book.

The most remarkable entry however reads :—

“ May 7th, 1942. TRYFAN.

Up Grooved Arête lower part to Terrace Wall. Sunny.

Up Old Long Chimney down Terrace Wall Variant.

Up New Long Chimney down Old Long Chimney.

Up Belle Vue Bastion.

Down Terrace Wall Variant, over Bristly Ridge and Glyders. Down Devil's Kitchen. Up Hanging Garden Gully.

## IDWAL SLABS.

Up Central Rib and up Cinderella. Down Holly Tree Wall and up Cinderella's Twin and down Lazarus. Down Tennis Shoe.

## EAST WALL.

Girdle Traverse and down Grooved Wall.

Up Ash Tree Wall, down by Tennis Shoe.

Heather Weakness, etc.

Up Rake End Chimney.

Up Heather Wall but defeated on last pitch so down Heather Weakness. C.W.F.N.”

J. E. Q. BARFORD.

## THE MITRE RIDGE, BEINN A' BHUIRD

(For description of the 1933 climbs and photographs, see Appendix to S.M.C. *Cairngorms* guide.)

In June 1943, the remote Garbh Coire of Beinn a' Bhuid became a scene of busy military activity, which among other things gave opportunities for several visits to the Mitre Ridge. Judged by the absence of scratches, though this may have been due to the quick weathering of the granite, the half-dozen ascents which various parties made in three weeks may well have equalled the total traffic of the previous ten years. The Mitre Ridge is a very fine buttress to look at, 600 feet high, standing out from the main mountain in a way which rather reminds one of Pillar Rock. The east side is mostly slabs and thin cracks with rounded edges (there are no climbs there yet), and the west side sheer walls broken by two or three very long chimneys or gullies. The crest of the ridge itself is slabby at first, but in its upper two-thirds steepens into three impressive vertical towers connected by level saw-tooth aretes.

The Mitre Ridge was not climbed till 1933, when two routes were made on the same day by C.U.M.C. parties; these routes are the Direct and the Cumming-Crofton. The Direct, which keeps as near as possible to the crest of the ridge, begins with an extremely smooth slab of over 100 feet, which looks very severe and was not climbed by any of our parties this year. It is a good deal easier to join the Direct by a variant start (also made in 1933) some way round to the right. The parties who climbed the Direct, which I did not do myself, thought it a very good climb, with fine situations and a lot of route-finding still. Parts of it are straightforward, and on the hard bits there is sometimes a choice of ways, so that there is probably no necessity for anything harder than good V.D. or mild severe. Above the first tower there is no serious difficulty, though the crest is shattered and rotten. A remarkable ascent of this route was done by Sergeant-Major Langlands of No. 4 Commando by himself, under the impression that it had not been done before. Smythe and John Hunt also climbed it.

The other route, the Cumming-Crofton, is round on the west side. A curious pyramid-shaped buttress, about 350 feet high, stands out from the main wall and makes two gullies or corners which run all the way up to meet behind the top of the pyramid, which rests against the ridge just beyond the first tower. The Cumming-Crofton route follows the line of the left-hand corner. It is a most attractive and continuous climb, steep and mostly sound. Two or three pitches border on severe, and there is no easy way off.

On the same side of the Mitre Ridge Langlands and I made another route, presumed new, which is not such a good climb as either of the old ones, though worth doing if only for the first pitch. The right-hand corner where the pyramid joins the main wall is an obvious line for a climb; so also is the big 250-foot gully which forks up to the right from half-way up it and leads up to the main ridge at the foot of the short final tower. (They show very clearly in the Cairngorm guide



photograph.) The only serious difficulty was to get started on the corner, which does not really begin till 70 feet up. We got into it at the lowest possible point by a surprisingly exposed traverse from a minor gully on the right. This one move was severe and the next few feet up the corner fairly hard. We followed the corner-gully the whole way up to where it joins the ridge, about 300 feet, but the last 100 feet was practically a walk ; so we came down this bit again and went up the big right-hand fork, which was a good deal better. This right-hand finish makes the whole climb about 450 feet.

The two gullies on either side of the Ridge, which may not have been done before, were both climbed, the eastern one by John Hunt and A. Y. Greenhalgh and the western one by Langlands and myself (descending). Ours was a good deal shorter ; otherwise they were rather similar—fairly easy and not very serious, except that there were few ledges or belays. The Cairngorm granite is curious stuff to climb on ; magnificent for boots and usually sound, but with an inclination to flake away suddenly or drop off in blocks. “ Hard as granite ” and “ firm as a rock ” should be regarded strictly as figures of speech in this district.

A. D. M. Cox.

# IN MEMORIAM

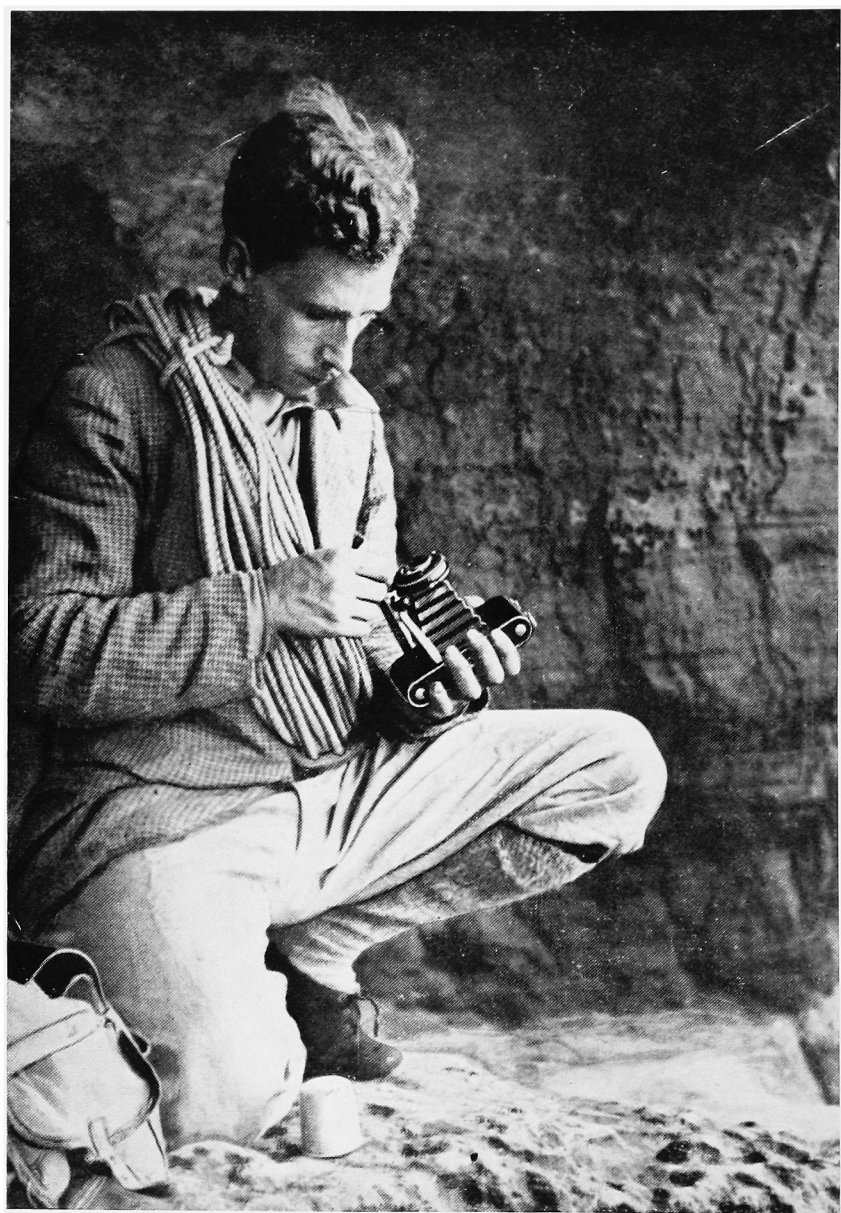
COLIN FLETCHER KIRKUS

Club Member 1928—1942

Pilot-Officer C. F. Kirkus, who was a navigator and bomb aimer, was reported missing after a raid on Bremen in September, 1942, and is now "presumed killed." This was about his twenty-fifth "Op," which included the first 1,000 machine raid on Cologne. He was proud of the fact that he had never failed to find the target or to cox his machine back to base, despite on one occasion "a few splinters in the face." As one of the first Pathfinders I think he must have been very efficient, and he certainly was very interested. He also had to avenge his elder brother who was lost in the first important British Air attack of the war, on Kiel in September 1939.

I first met C.F.K. at Helyg in September 1928 when he would be about 18 and I, 24. I had been climbing a little over a year and had begun to lead a bit but he already had considerable experience of rock climbing, mostly solo, and even had new routes to his credit on Moelwyn and Craig Cwm Ffynnon Lloer. The Climbers' Club people seemed to think that he was a bit mad and our introduction was on that basis—possibly they thought I was too—anyway we were promptly dubbed "The Suicide Club" because our first climb together was the Holly Tree Wall in nails on a nice wet day. I certainly think we would have been "disapproved of" by Charles Marshall who, for some time, had been kindly but dominating mentor to the young climbers who were beginning to use Helyg, and whose fine career had come so tragically to an end a few months before. However, not only did we survive this rash expedition but founded thereon a partnership which was to flourish.





C. F. KIRKUS

All through the winter of 1928-29 we tore our fingers to pieces at Helsby or in Wales or the Lake District, whenever we had the time and money available—which meant that it was mostly Helsby—so that by Easter 1929, we understood each other very well. We then did, in addition to a number of climbs of Holly Tree Wall standard, an ascent of the Direct Route on Glyder Fach, by Gibson's Chimney, which, as far as we could find out, had not been done for very many years. That was quite an event, and not only from our own point of view, because it might be said to have confirmed the revival of Welsh climbing which had been set going (at a very much higher level, of course) by Pigott and Longland on Clogwyn du'r Arddu in 1927-28.

A few weeks later we had a fortnight together in the Lake District during which we did quite a number of "very severes," including what was probably the third ascent of Esk Buttress and such things as Eliminate B, the North West on Pillar, the Pinnacle Face climbs, and Botterill's Slab. I think Colin really found himself as a climber during this holiday, and although impressed with what was then the much higher standard of climbing in the Lake District as compared with Wales, he obviously began to feel that in due course he would be able to tackle anything. It will be appreciated that at that time very few people indeed were leading "very severes"—round about half a dozen.

The next stage of Colin's development was a spell of about three weeks at Helyg during which he was lucky to fall in with F. E. Hicks who, as a member of the C.U.M.C., had had quite a lot of experience. When he arrived there Colin had been climbing alone for some time, and Hicks, who was by no means unenterprising, was rather staggered by what this rather queer looking lad had done—up and down the Tryfan buttresses for instance and over most of Lliwedd. I believe that Hicks' party was a bit chary about taking him along with them on their first day, and they might well have been because Colin lured them on to the Glyder Fach and there pointed out Lot's Groove as something he thought he would like to try. They obliged with a rope from above and in due course, to their astonishment he led it, only Hicks being able to follow. The next day he led the shorter but even more difficult Central Route on the Terrace Wall of Tryfan, up which no one was able even to follow.

Of course these were more or less stunt climbs and were not evidence of judgment, but on the 29th of June 1929, Colin led the second ascent of Longland's climb on the West Buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu which most certainly required judgment. This took about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours and we had to shift tons of turf, soil and loose rock. Colin was maturing quickly. Later that year with Hicks and myself he did the eighth ascent of Scafell Central Buttress and the fifth ascent of the Gimmer Crack.

Next year (that was 1930) there was no stopping him, although it began badly with an accident on the Great Central Route, Easter Gully, Dow Crag when, because of over confidence and poor condition, he came off whilst leading, getting away fortunately with very little damage to himself. On the 15th June, with Macphee, he made his classic Great Slab Route up the centre of the West Buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu and this, I think, is the climb on which his fame will mainly rest. To take out 130 feet of line on to this entirely virgin face up a steep, loose and grassy wall, tremendously exposed, with no knowledge of what difficulties lay in the 600 odd feet above, was surely mountaineering courage of the highest order. And it must have required the utmost skill and route-finding ability, as well as courage, to finish that climb. Despite the many more-difficult shorter routes that have been done "unseen" I think this expedition will stand out in the history of British rock-climbing as a most important event.

Later he made the fourth ascent of Pigott's Climb on the East Buttress of Clogwyn du'r Arddu and completed his Direct route up the nose of Dinas Mot, an almost perfect climb and one of the most beautiful.

The following year we fell in with Linnell and Bridge, and under the stimulus of each other's climbing, Kirkus and Linnell during 1931-33 reached an incredible level of performance only equalled, perhaps, by Menlove Edwards. This was truly a "golden age" in rock climbing and during it Clogwyn du'r Arddu and the East Buttress of Scafell were practically worked out; the first by Kirkus with the Chimney, and the Terrace, Pedestal, Curving and Birthday Cracks, and by Linnell with his Narrow Slab, the other by Linnell and A. T. Hargreaves;

but it was Colin who had made the first breach in the East Buttress by doing Mickledore Grooves, which was a veritable "tour de force" involving a final run out of 140 feet of rope during a period of over one hour. It should be noted that, like most of his other major first ascents, this superb climb was led by him without previous exploration on a rope from above. He also opened up Craig Ogof in Cwm Silin and the great Pinnacle Wall of Craig-yr-Ysfa. This was a wonderful period and during it I think it was generally recognised that he was the leading climber of the day—first among very few equals.

In the summer of 1933 he went on an expedition with Pallis, Hicks, Warren and others, to the Gangotri district of the Himalayas, and there proved, I believe, that he was not merely a "rock gymnast" but a first-rate mountaineer. Many people whose judgment is entitled to respect thought that he would have been a success on Everest, and there is no doubt that Colin himself was disappointed that he was not chosen, though he never showed it unduly. I must, however, leave it to others to appraise his qualities on the bigger mountains. All I can say is that on British hills he was practically as good (if not better) on snow and ice as he was on rock.

At Easter, 1934, there was the terrible accident on Ben Nevis when Linnell was killed and Kirkus was seriously injured, barely escaping with his life and showing incredible powers of endurance in doing so. After that he was never quite the same and the nature of his interest in climbing seemed to change. For quite a long time he did not climb at all but gradually he came back to it, preferring, however, to do ordinary courses, only occasionally going for the difficult things. He frequently took novices and oldish people up standard climbs, laying himself out to make things safe and enjoyable for them. He was care, skill and confidence embodied and there must be many who owe to him a sound introduction to climbing. During this period he undertook the production of the Club's guide to Glyder Fach; in the course of the work pioneering a considerable number of new routes. Incidentally, this concise guide is generally considered to be a masterpiece of clarity, well conceived for use by the ordinary climber.

So much for the historical record of Kirkus' rock climbing career, during which he made something like 40 first ascents, including some of the most formidable climbs that have ever been done in this country, as well as many second and other early ascents of important routes. There is probably no British rock climb that could not have been done safely by him, and, in fact, he must have ascended most of the Welsh and Lake District climbs as well as many of the Scottish routes, including the Chasm of Buchaille Etive.

It remains to attempt an assessment and appreciation of his climbing. He was practically always first class as a leader, being confident, solid and safe whatever the conditions. He was not merely a "gymnast" although, as his record shows, he was a brilliant technician. There was nothing showy about his climbing, in fact he liked to take things slowly, and was occasionally awkward and ungainly in his movements. He was not temperamental and never got rattled under even the most difficult circumstances. His principal physical characteristic was his extraordinary endurance and insensibility when having to sustain himself on small awkwardly shaped holds for a long time and for a long distance. One never saw him flapping about, kicking with his feet, or hauling himself up by main force. Everything seemed to go according to plan, up or down. He was always very careful and ingenious in the handling of the rope and the arrangement of belays, but so far as I know he never descended to the use of pitons except by way of a joke. It did not seem to matter to him what he had on his feet or whether he had anything on them at all. Cold and wet did not seem to affect him as much as other people. He was a wonderful route finder on rocks and some of his climbs bear the hallmark of genius in that respect, notably Mickledore Grooves, Dinas Mot Direct, Lot's Wife and the Great Slab Route. Unlike many expert leaders he was also a very good second ; that is he was content to follow someone less good without showing impatience or tactlessly making little of pitches which his leader had found difficult. He always tried hard to make things easy for his followers according to their ability and many and ingenious were his methods of getting weak climbers up difficult places. His confidence in himself was such that except on the hardest climbs



it did not seem to matter much to him whom he had got following ; anybody would do to hold the rope if they would follow his instructions ; he even put up with grumbling and defeatism.

As a man he was a delightful companion on the hills, full of fun and interest in the things about him. He was kindness itself and also most unassuming about his climbing, yet never carrying his modesty so far as to appear to be fishing for adulation. To those who did not know him well he may have appeared dull, but this was not so—he was a simple soul, not much interested in the complicated ways of modern life, finding his escape and true expression in his mountaineering. In a better ordered world he would have been able to become an explorer or something of that sort, where his rare talents could have been used to the full, but in fact he was a clerk in the office of an Insurance Co., where, though he worked hard and with some success, he was rather out of his element. In the R.A.F. he seemed to have found himself properly and if he had survived I think he would have become a man famous in other ways.

He died doing his duty for his country and he leaves a great name in the fine sport of mountaineering, with very many friends to mourn his passing.

A. B. HARGREAVES.

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There is not much that I am competent to add to A. B. Hargreaves' appreciation of Colin Kirkus. Distance and bad luck gave me fewer opportunities to climb behind him than I should have liked, particularly during that extraordinary period when he was setting entirely new standards for British climbing. But I want to do what I can to emphasise just what it is that the Club, and circles stretching far beyond the Club owe to him, and how admirable and fitting it is that the contribution which he made to the climbing craft should have come from the particular kind of person that Colin was.

Progress in climbing technique, and in the attitude towards mountain difficulties which makes it possible for improvements in technique to be applied, is not a steady curve of advance. It is

marked by abrupt leaps forward, which are made possible by the example of some great leader, who is also in a real sense an inventor. Although climbers may differ about individual names, most of us would agree that the development of British climbing is simply the record of the discoveries of such men as Haskett-Smith, Owen Glyn Jones, Archer Thompson, Herford, and in our own day, Colin Kirkus and Menlove Edwards. After the example of each of these has been absorbed, there is a comparatively sudden advance along the whole line, and the frontier of possibility is pushed forward not only for expert teams but, at their appropriate level, for climbers of almost every other stage of ability as well. It is not that the first ascents made yesterday by the heroes always become the standard courses of tomorrow. Some of Colin Kirkus' climbs will remain considerable undertakings for any party for a few years at least, as did Central Buttress on Scafell for a long time after Herford's first ascent. The contribution made by the great climber is not easy to describe or to explain. What happens is that something of his attitude, something of his methods, and even some share of his courage are inherited by or diffused among hundreds of climbers whom he never knew and to whom he is only one of the great names. And then the mountain historian takes stock, and records that a general advance in the standard of climbing has taken place. But he sometimes forgets to record that this new and rather alarmingly good climbing generation took off from the shoulders of a single man, and that but for him there would either have been no advance at all, or at least an advance with a different twist or direction, not bearing the stamp of the particular inventor who had made it possible. So that the first thing we should recognise is that the present generation of climbers is as good as it is, and is doing the things it is doing, quite simply because of what Colin Kirkus was, and what he did.

We are still a little too close to Colin to see his achievements in proper proportion, and judgment is clouded by the sense of personal loss. His greatest contribution to climbing technique was, I think, the demonstration that a leader near the end of a long run-out can be as safe and unflurried, and can continue to work out the next delicate moves just as coolly and methodically, as if he only had a few feet of exposed climbing behind him. Conspicuous examples of climbs which could only have been

discovered by a leader with this particular gift are the Nose of Dinas Mot, Mickledore Grooves and the Great Slab on Du'r Arddu, and more especially the one very long pitch on each of these routes. There were climbs with a long and difficult pitch in them before Colin's time, but they were usually regarded as being exceptionally hard because of that pitch, and occasionally it was even thought that these climbs were spoilt by the intrusion of a patch of climbing that demanded so much more courage and ability than the rest. Many of these routes were only led after being worked out on a rope from above, others were the result of a *tour de force* by a climber who rose well above his normal standard on that occasion, and a few no doubt were conquered by rushing them in a mixed mood of teeth-setting determination and fear of what might happen if the leader stopped or tried to turn back. Colin Kirkus made the steady overcoming of long-continuing stretches of difficult rock seem normal and not exceptional, by a combination of strength, apparent insensibility to exposure and discomfort (as A. B. Hargreaves so well notes), and a habit of "going on going on" without any suggestion of insecurity or desperation. This method of his made him seem slow when leading a new climb. I remember being lucky enough once to be climbing parallel with him, only a few feet away, over quite a distance, on Dinas Mot—Colin, of course, working out a new route while I was trying to get up one that had already been done. Not knowing his ways so well then, I was very worried about the time he was taking: the rope behind him got longer and longer, and I did not see how he could possibly maintain stamina and courage enough to finish off a pitch which showed no easing off of standard towards the top. It took me some time to realise that he was safe precisely because he was slow; that a stretch of rock presenting such a continuous succession of intricate riddles of balance and adjustment and forethought, only could be led for the first time by a man possessing the endurance, technique, coolness, and sober judgment of possibilities which characterised Colin's climbing. Since then, many more climbers have caught the habit of refusing to be overawed by routes, whether new or old, involving a series of delicate and exposed moves continuing without the comforting interruptions of ledges and belays. In other words, a change in attitude has made it possible for

general improvement in technique to be applied in climbs of a different character of difficulty from those which were climbed before.

This is not of course to say that there would have been no improvement in the level of achievement if there had never been a Colin Kirkus. The point is that improvement would undoubtedly have been slower, and that it might have taken a different form : not only most of his own new ascents, but other new climbs too made through his example, bear the Kirkus hall-mark. Many of us must have scratched about at the foot of the Great Slab Buttress on Du'r Arddu or on the approach rocks below the Nose of Dinas Mot. It was Colin's attitude towards difficulty as much as his superior technique that made those two climbs possible, and it is the diffusion of that attitude among other climbers that makes such climbs a normal achievement today. The great climber is the catalyst which precipitates the changed attitude and the new standards of performance.

But in the making of a great climber physical qualities and technique must go hand in hand with a new attitude of mind. Many who met Colin Kirkus were deceived by the apparent slightness of his physique and his general unobtrusiveness. He possessed in fact exceptional qualities of endurance. He would sometimes walk from Liverpool to Helyg and do a full day's climbing without a rest in between. He once cycled from Liverpool to Helsby in 85 minutes, did 42 climbs there (1,500 feet of hard climbing), cycled back in 88 minutes, and completed his day in just over 7 hours of absence from home. He was not in the least self-consciously tough, but he was always preparing and strengthening his body for the big calls which he made on it in his new climbs. I think that even his very endearing habit of being prepared to eat enormous quantities of food at any time, and in any order or combination of courses, was a symptom of his high output of energy and of the physical level at which he was living when climbing.

One does not naturally think of Colin as a model of technique, and other climbers have been prettier to watch. But technique is a means to an end, and if the end is the safe achievement of a long series of climbs of great difficulty, then there can have been nothing very much wrong with his technique. It was built, leaving natural aptitude out of the picture, on a very wide ex-

perience of difficult climbing of all types and in many different places. A great deal of it was learnt in the hardest school, which is that of climbing alone. And the other good foundation, that of continuous practice, was ensured by that urge to be in the mountains, that took him climbing in every available spare minute of his time. By the time that he had fairly begun his great succession of new climbs, he had reached a stage of experience and skill in which there was practically no variety of difficult rock which he could not safely tackle. Naturally, Colin attracted good companions for his climbs, among them A. B. Hargreaves, Ivan Waller, Ted Hicks, Maurice Linnell, G. Graham Macphee, Menlove Edwards and A. W. Bridge. Among them Alan Hargreaves deserves a special mention. He had the task of coaching and steering the brilliant novice that Colin was, and his is very largely the credit for ensuring that he emerged safely as a great climber from that dangerous stage in which experience and technique do not match ambition. Colin probably owed his life to Hargreaves' skilful rope management and holding power, at the time of the fall from Great Central Route on Dow Crag, but more important is the fact that Colin Kirkus emerged from that first partnership as a safe and steady leader with admirable rope technique, and thus ready for the great discoveries that he made in the next few years.

One word more about his technique. I have tried to emphasise that his stamina and strength allowed him to develop a special method of slow piece-by-piece conquest of continuous difficulties. And though writing that there have been neater climbers, I want to make it clear that Colin at work was always splendidly worth watching. If there is one characteristic trick which probably others besides myself have vividly in their memories, it was his habit, on a cold day, of standing nonchalantly on ridiculously small holds, probably in an almost unnailed pair of boots or in socks from which most of his toes protruded, and flapping his hands to keep them warm—and doing this in a situation in which the rest of us would have been shouting for a third hand to keep us firmly attached to the rocks.

Colin had more to his credit than great climbs in this country. Thanks to Marco Pallis's generous interest, he climbed a number of long and difficult Alpine peaks. And if any had doubts of his ability among bigger mountains, these doubts did not survive

after his very fine first ascent of the Central Satopanth Peak in the Gangotri Himalaya. There has probably been very little climbing of such difficult rock at a comparable altitude, and I doubt whether any other British climber would have succeeded. I share Hargreaves' view that it was a misfortune that Colin never had a chance of trying himself out on Everest, and I believe he would have been an admirable man to have set above Camp VI to tackle the steep rock band at 28,000 feet. But I think it is true that circumstances made it impossible for almost any climber, however good, to be simultaneously in the top flight in home climbing, and in the Alps and the wider ranges beyond. Given other chances and a different training, and Colin might well have been another Eric Shipton. As it was, his main line was bound to be a different one, and I believe that, disappointed as he was to miss Everest, he realised this himself. An "Alpine" or a "Himalayan" Colin would not have been the same Colin, and it seems better to try to record the unique achievements of the Colin we knew, than to speculate about what he might have done with a different start and a different course. Clogwyn du'r Arddu is a big enough memorial for any man, and without any sort of doubt or threat of rival claims du'r Arddu is Colin's cliff.

It has been easier to summarise what Colin did, and what present-day climbers owe to him, than to try to write down what kind of person he was. As was said more epigrammatically of Sir Christopher Wren, his works are his chief memorial, and I have tried to show that to a quite remarkable extent, Colin's climbs *are* Colin. But it is not enough to say that, and the best statement of both sides of the story comes in a letter about him from David Cox to A. W. Bridge :—

"Just look at his performance—has anybody ever had such a list of really first-class new routes? Possibly, I suppose, Archer Thompson and one or two of that generation, but certainly no one since the last war. I think everyone will agree that he was the finest of the three or four top-notch climbers of his own generation . . . But this isn't so remarkable, really, as the fact that in spite of all this he never lost the simplicity of his original outlook on mountains ; and that this outlook could have been kept by a man of his performance

and reputation was in a way more of a contribution to climbing than the actual climbs he did . . . ”

People who had put Colin down as a quiet and perhaps not very interesting person, or as only interesting because of what he did, were always getting shocks. For instance, after they had got him neatly docketed as a man who found his only escape from an unexciting job in the mountains, they discovered that he was really doing very well in his job after all. Or if they thought that he could not easily express what he felt about hills and climbing, they suddenly came up against his logical and clearly descriptive writing in the Glyder Fach Guide, or heard him give an admirable lecture to a mountaineering club. But the best proof of his being a fine person, and not just a fine performer, is seen in the years following his bad accident on Ben Nevis in 1934. We have grown used to shrugging our shoulders over brilliant rock-climbing leaders who do a wonderful season or two and then lose heart or interest, after which the pull of the mountains as mountains is not enough to hold them, once the competitive spur of doing new climbs is gone. And this happens very often to the leaders who have had a smash or a near escape. With Colin, there was never any doubt that his genuine devotion to mountains would survive the bitter memories and the physical handicaps resulting from that accident. In this he gave a valuable lesson to many of us, that being among the hills is in the long run more important than continuing to lead new climbs, although it is perfectly clear that, in order to give full expression to his feeling for the hills, Colin had had to make himself first into a great rock-climber. To the end of his life, he never wavered in his simple delight in mountains, and he showed this not only by continuing to visit them in all weathers, but by his quick and unaffected interest in the doings of other climbers, in the details of a new route, or in hearing or reading of explorations in ranges beyond this country. As Alan Hargreaves notes, he was always modest about his own doings, without that habit of deliberately under-rating them that some climbers adopt so as to extract the greater applause—and this modesty was quite genuine, because in his own eyes the hills, and being among hills were more important things than the climber's own performances. This is shown clearly in his book, “ Let's Go Climbing,” which once again must

have surprised many who did not know how well Colin could write. It is one thing to have a deep and simple affection for the hills, but quite another thing to have the power of expression and conviction that will transmit such an affection to ordinary readers. That was the great merit of the book. It made the specialised attraction of mountains seem real and important and of general application, and so the book will take its place with that very small collection of volumes which have actually turned non-climbers into climbers, and brought walkers in the flat lands and even those who before had not walked at all into a world of new experience. This power of making the craft real and attractive to the reader who has not climbed before is shown best of all in the chapter describing an imaginary rock climb, which is an admirable collection of typical delights as the ascent of the "Beispielspitz" in the Badminton book on Mountaineering. It is safe to prophesy that it will bring many new recruits to climbing, and that, with the rest of the book, it will go a long way to ensure that they come with a sound grounding in attitude and technique.

And this brings me to the last tribute I want to pay. From inclination, as well as perhaps partly from circumstance, Colin turned more and more in the last few years of his life to the task of introducing other people to the pleasures which he had found in mountain climbing. Weekend after weekend he was to be found patiently and carefully coaching novices up Welsh climbs, and thereby adding immeasurably to the happiness of those who had found their way to the threshold of adventure, which but for him they would never have tasted. And here again, without need for moralising, he had something of a lesson for the rest of us. Perhaps the biggest problem facing climbers today is to find means, without giving ourselves airs, of sharing what we have ourselves been taught of good and safe mountain-craft, among the thousands who are coming into the hills and who want to make themselves into climbers. Neither individually, nor in the somewhat self-satisfied communities which are our climbing clubs, have we done much to tackle this big new demand. Colin Kirkus, simple and quietly as was his habit, set about the practical job of communicating his love of the mountains and something of his own superb mountain method to people who, without his help, would never



have learnt at all, or who would have learnt wrong things in the wrong way. It is not only a fine thing in itself, but also another of Colin's contributions to the future that so great a climber should have wished to spend so many of his hard-earned mountain hours in this way. And it was typical of Colin that he was prepared to act on the belief that the future of the craft was more important than his own great reputation as craftsman.

J. L. LONGLAND.

### JACQUES DE LÉPINEY

"Jacques de Lépinéy has been killed in Morocco whilst holding the rope for a beginner on the practice rocks of a 'climbing school.' He was 45 years old."

Such is the brief communication which was received in London regarding an accident which deprives French mountaineering of one of its most celebrated representatives.

He became an honorary member of The Climbers' Club in 1927.

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The difficulty of consulting records makes it impossible to devote a detailed notice to our friend. It is possible, however, to give a true appreciation of Jacques de Lépinéy's work for mountaineering. As a climber he was in a class apart. In his writing he knew both how to describe routes and how, with the same happy knack of expression, to bring out and make clear what is meant by the call of the mountains. Finally he gave an extraordinary impetus to French mountaineering by the founding of the G.H.M.

Jacques de Lépinéy was only a small boy of twelve when, on July 22nd 1908, he climbed the Dent du Géant with his father and a guide. The previous evening from the Torino hut he had been able to contemplate, wide-eyed with admiration, the Italian ridges of Mont Blanc. It was in front of the "Great Side" that he first felt the call of high mountains and experienced that emotional shock, the effects of which are as decisive on the course of a human life as the effects of a religious or artistic revelation.

To describe this indefinable state of mind he found a phrase which all true mountaineers will approve. Speaking of those

colossal structures of ice and rock—the Péteret and Brenva ridges—he says “ I idealised them long before I had any thought of being able to visit them.”<sup>1</sup> A stretch of glacier glimpsed from afar ; a mere patch of snow on a rock face ; a spike of rose-coloured granite outlined against the dark blue of the sky ; these things bring a lump to the throat, a quickening of the pulses, a thrill which exalts the whole being and leaves upon it an ineffaceable mark. In the young soul of a child who discovers the world of high peaks the revelation makes its way slowly until the day comes when enriched by time and experience, a personality is born which in all its characteristics is expressed by the mountains, in the same way as the key to other personalities is the sea. The desire to understand more fully the joys which are the privilege of the mountain climber bears witness to the nature of a true mountaineer, that is to say a man for whom the mountains provide a field of action, food for thought, and a meaning for life. The message of the mountains to the child made of Jacques de Lépiney a few years later the daring, but by no means reckless young man of whom J. P. Farrar wrote : that he was “ the foremost exponent of French Mountaineering.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1913, under the guidance of Jacques Wehrlin, André Jacquemart and Pierre le Bec he was initiated into the art of leading climbs. During the following seasons he acquired a vast experience of guideless climbing on classic ascents and became equally expert on ice and rock. His true Alpine career seems to have begun in 1918 with the second ascent of the Aiguille du Peigne (August 22nd) in company with Paul Chevalier and Maurice Villanueva. The next year he was attracted by the chain of saw-toothed peaks which forms the south-east ridge of Mt. Blanc du Tacul and on September 13th, with Alice and Maurice Damesme, he achieved the conquest of the Trident (3,639 m.). The same party also reached the Evêque by the hard and tiring north-east route.

The next seven years were the most fruitful of Jacques de Lépiney's Alpine career.

It is out of the question to give a complete list of his climbs here ; it is only possible to choose some of the most remarkable from amongst them.

<sup>1</sup> “ Climbs on Mont Blanc,” translated by Sydney Spencer. Page 22.

<sup>2</sup> A.J., 38. Page 270.

1920. On August 9th with his brother Tom, the companion of his big trips, the Col de Blaitière by the Glacier d'Envers de Blaitière and first ascent of Pointe (3,429 m.), which later was very rightly given the name of its conqueror.

Three attempts were made before victory was won. The last involved 27 hours of actual climbing and a bivouac during a night of storm. A few days later saw him once more attacking the same col, this time from the north with Paul Chevalier.

1921. In September, after the skilful first ascent of the Petit Clocher de Planereuse from the south (September 6th), the first attempt on the north face of the Aiguille du Peigne was made—an attempt which was pushed very high but which was frustrated by bad weather.

1922. Success, however, came next year (August 11th) when, with his brother Tom, and Pierre Dalloz, he mastered in superb style the 700-metre wall known as the Chamonix face of the Aiguille du Peigne (west-north-west face and west ridge). Ten days later he did the Col de la Brenva with his brother and A. Migot.

1923. A year rich in successes : Pointe Carmen of the Aiguille du Diable with Paul Chevalier and H. Bregeault then in succession Aiguille Blanche de Péteret with Jacques Lagarde ; August 20th-22nd with Tom, Chevalier, Lagarde, Bregeault and Migot, the magnificent ascent of the Punta Baretto (3,966 m.) by the east face and south ridge, followed by the descent of the Col Émile Rey to the Italian Miage glacier in bad weather and amidst great difficulties ; August 30th, with Tom, Mt. Rouge de Péteret by the east ridge and descent by the north ridge.

1924. After scaling the Grand Chamois (August 7th) from the Mer de Glace (Thorold route with variations) on the 8th he made the first ascent of the Pointe Lagarde (3,572 m.) ; then on August 10th-11th came the conquest of the north face of the Aiguille du Plan (3,673 m.). Jacques de Lépiney prepared this expedition with great care. He studied the attempt made by Baumann which reached a height of about 3,500 m. on the east ridge but at a great distance from the summit. He studied also the well known article by Ellis Carr "Two Days on an Ice Slope" and drew his conclusions as to the improvements on the route taken by Mummery's party that would be necessary. He examined the lie of the land and made partial reconnaissances. It

was with perfect certainty as to direction that he led his party (J. Lagarde and H. de Ségogne) to the attack. The traverse of the ice slope beneath the Crocodile, made at night and in bad weather in conditions of precarious security is an example of what can be accomplished by a party of this calibre. Describing the climbing, J. de Lépiney says simply that it was "a great expedition in every sense of the word." J. P. Farrar noted the combination of intelligent preparation with peerless execution—"A masterpiece of planning and execution."<sup>3</sup> The majority of Jacques de Lépiney's successful climbs, so often made in bad weather, bear this double stamp.

1925. In Morocco, where Jacques de Lépiney spent part of his climbing career, he made the first ascent (July 12th-14th) of Djebel Angour (3,617 m.) in the Atlas Range.

1926. August of this year was a month of exceptional successes. To begin with, classic climbs on the Aiguille du Plan and the Réquin were made with Micheline Morin, de Prandiére and Jacquemart. On the 6th with Lagarde came the ascent of the Aiguille Verte from the Argentiére side followed by the descent of the Whymper couloir during a storm, and the crossing of the berschrund under dangerous conditions. Again from the Argentiére side an attempt was made on Les Droites, but this severe Alpine problem was not to be solved until some years later by Lagarde. On August 13th with G. S. Bower and Jean Morin the Pointe Balfour on the Grépon was climbed. The next day Jacques de Lépiney scaled the principal summit of the Grépon by the Knubel crack, whilst Bower climbed the Lochmatter chimney. Finally on the 17th-18th with A. Migot and H. Bregeault, he made a tremendous expedition to Mt. Blanc de Courmayeur descending by the Brenva ridge traversing the Pic Luigi Amedeo and bivouacking on Mt. Blanc in a storm. Jacques de Lépiney was struck by lightning and thrown down an ice couloir where the rope checked his fall in time. The next day the ordinary route from the summit to the Vallot hut by Les Bosses was followed in a still fiercer storm and great efforts of determination and endurance were required of the party.

During the years that followed Jacques de Lépiney's Alpine career seems to have been less brilliant than before. No doubt a close scrutiny of Alpine periodicals, and of G.H.M. journals

<sup>3</sup> A.J. 36. Page 394.

in particular, would make it possible to fill a gap which perhaps after all does not exist. It must also be borne in mind that many climbs, for the most part unrecorded, were made in Morocco where he was called upon to live for professional reasons.

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Alpine literature forms a vast library and a large volume could be filled with conflicting opinions regarding this kind of writing, but Jacques de Lépiney's own particular contribution to Alpine literature is certainly of a nature to evoke the favourable judgment of all. His main contribution consists in the book entitled, "Climbs on Mont Blanc" which he wrote in conjunction with his brother Tom. It is devoted to the principal expeditions summarised above and may be described as a collection of accounts of climbs, but accounts which are free from those faults too often observed in this type of narrative.

Neither the lyrical tone of Guido Rey, nor the gloomy philosophy of Lammer, nor yet the humour of Mummery are to be found in his writings. Nor do we find in them that journalistic touch which so often characterises the description of Whymper. "Climbs on Mont Blanc," translated by Sydney Spencer, is perhaps most akin to Smythe's "Mountaineering Holiday" which deals in part with the same theatre of operations. Jacques de Lépiney never writes of himself, though at the same time he makes no affectation of detachment, but tells plainly and simply of what he has seen and done. The sincerity of his impressions corresponds with the exactness of his climbing technique. The practised mountaineer will recognise in his pages familiar sensations, whilst the uninitiated will discover the mountains in their reality and not under the aspect of a conventional stage setting. It is a book of great sincerity in every way.

The same can be said of all the articles published by him in Alpine periodicals, one of the best of which is a description of an attempt of the Grépon.<sup>4</sup>

Jacques de Lépiney excelled in writing technical notes as well as literary descriptions. Apart from individual notes, of which he wrote a very considerable number, his great experience qualified him to become indispensable in the compilation of the Vallot guides "Description de la Chaîne du Mont Blanc." Three of this excellent series "Les Aiguilles Rouges." "Les Aiguilles de

<sup>4</sup> "La Montagne," 1915. Pages 113-119.

Chamonix " and " L'Aiguille Verte " are in great part his work. The description of routes, the estimation of difficulties and objective dangers, the general physiognomy of each climb, are presented with such precision and conciseness as to render these volumes a model of their kind. It is at the beginning of one of these guide books that Jacques de Lépiney wrote some general considerations regarding mountaineering. He expresses in perfect terms all there is to be said in trying to explain to non-climbers what draws us so irresistibly towards the mountains. Those who will have it that we are nothing more than dangerous lunatics filled with vainglory, may learn from its pages the noble philosophy of life that is bound up with the art of mountaineering. They will see also to what lofty heights the development of the human personality of the true mountaineer can attain when, eager for that savour of the infinite which is enjoyed on high peaks, he has reached his goal by the harmonious combination of passionate effort, realisation of danger, and technical knowledge.

Jacques de Lépiney contributed also to the technical sections of the " Manuel d'Alpinisme " published in 1930 by the C.A.F. and partly compiled by a group of members of the G.H.M. who remained anonymous. It is also to Jacques de Lépiney in collaboration with others, that we owe the first mountain guide book to the Atlas Range in Morocco.

\* \* \*

After the war in 1914-1918 mountaineering in the belligerent countries experienced an extraordinary recrudescence of popularity. The causes of this popularity were many. It is not possible to particularise them all here, but one cannot refrain from noting those of a psychological order which, in the two principal continental antagonists—France and Germany—explain in part certain aspects of post-war mountaineering.

In Germany the young generation regarded mountaineering as a field for desperate manifestations of " living dangerously " ; above all it was necessary for them to prove to the world that the conquered race was still capable of excelling in enterprises of extreme difficulty. To the courage of despair was added the spirit of revenge. A Nietzschean philosophy is at the bottom of that extraordinary book " Fontaine de Jouvence." But conquests such as the north faces of the Matterhorn or of the Eiger,

struggles often as bloody as battles that were made by the Germans on Kangchenjunga and Nanga Parbat, heralded the dawn of a revival the extent and meaning of which we have learned to our cost.

In France, a country then in the full flush of victory, the generation who had fought hard, acquired a taste for dangerous living. The younger generation, those who had not reached military age by the conclusion of hostilities, felt themselves oppressed by an excess reserve of daring and energy that had not been called upon. The conquests of peaks became for them a way of exposing themselves to risks which they had not had the opportunity of confronting on the battlefield. One of this younger generation, Pierre Dalloz, has expressed this state of mind in the admirable text which introduces his collection of photographs entitled "Haute Montagne." Seen from this angle, French mountaineering was destined to undergo a complete and rapid transformation both in its conception and its technique. The history of this evolution which is moreover to be found in all countries, is too well known for there to be any need to insist further. Equally notorious are the reactions amongst the "conservative" circle personified by the Alpine Clubs to these new ways of approaching the mountains. Even now echoes of this conflict are still to be heard from time to time in special reviews.<sup>5</sup>

This is not the place to make a new contribution to the discussion. It was, however, in some measure necessary to bring to mind the state of post-war mountaineering in order to be able to understand the reasons for the founding, in 1920 of a "Groupe de Haute Montagne" within the Club Alpin Français. It is to Jacques de Lépiney that the first idea of this creation is due. It was he who presided until the end of 1923 over the destinies of this young "academic" club which very soon acquired an unparalleled reputation. The G.H.M. later on reorganised as an independent association, did in fact give an immense impulse to mountaineering. In the space of a few years, parties of young guideless climbers, as daring as they were experienced, successfully carried out many first ascents. French mountaineering took its place in the front rank. A spirit of emulation soon awoke amongst young men of other nations so that at the present time

<sup>5</sup> See for example the remarkable article by Geoffrey Winthrop Young, "Should the mountain be brought to Mahomet?" in A.J. 52. Page 172.

with the help of a superlative technique the extreme limit of difficulty seems to have been attained. To be convinced of this it is only necessary to turn the pages of one or other of the journals of the various academic climbing clubs. Even the young generation of guides has been influenced by this development. The careers of a Charlet or a Rodier have undoubtedly taken, owing to the existence of the G.H.M., a different direction from that which they would have done in other days. It is, therefore, correct to conclude that as far as French mountaineering is concerned the initiative of Jacques de Lépiney has had incalculable consequences. In comparison with these results the criticisms that one may be tempted to make of certain excesses resulting from the "G.H.M. mentality"—excesses which Jacques de Lépiney was the first to disapprove—are of secondary importance.

\* \* \*

Those who have had the privilege of climbing with Jacques de Lépiney have not failed to be struck by the strength of his personality. But he was also a man in whom sensitiveness, delicacy, and charm, were allied to energy and daring. It would be the grossest possible misconception of our passion for the mountains to depict its devotees as being solely concerned with muscular superiority and record ascents. Like sailors, mountaineers are nearly all musicians or poets and in any case imaginative and dreamers. Jacques de Lépiney was all this. He was a born mountaineer and his technical experience, which was very considerable, enabled him to taste the "super-terrestrial" joys of the mountains with exceptional receptivity. Nevertheless the mountains which were destined to be the medium of his death gave him a few years ago (1932) a severe lesson. On returning from a climb he and his companion were engulfed in a hidden crevasse on the Glacier du Géant quite close to the Réquin hut. Happily it was possible to come to their aid immediately but they had both received severe injuries. The last picture of him that I have kept in my mind—I never saw him again—is that of a bruised body and a disfigured face, a sad anticipation of his fatal fall amongst the Moroccan rocks. It looks as though this perfect theorist of mountaineering<sup>6</sup> must through carelessness have

<sup>6</sup> If my recollection is correct it was Jacques de Lépiney who dealt specially with accidents in the technical portion of the "Manuel d'Alpinisme," which we compiled in collaboration with other members of the G.H.M.



disregarded an elementary rule—that of never unroping on a covered glacier even when within the memory of man no crevasse has been seen on the spot: even, or rather above all, when one is within a few yards of the moraine or the rocks and every precaution seems needless.

But Jacques de Lépiney could no more be turned away from the mountains by which he had been hurt than a sailor can shun the seas in which he has narrowly escaped death. He knew too well how much he owed to the mountains in the untold treasures of physical and spiritual joy which they had heaped upon him and would continue to heap upon him to the last. He met his end whilst teaching a beginner as he had taught so many beginners the technique of which he possessed all the secrets. Thanks to his devotion many others will be given the opportunity of learning how to acquire some of the same riches that he himself had amassed. There is little doubt that he had no illusions as to the fate that would one day be his; he must certainly have known of the remark written to me by Lagarde, which I must apologise for not being able to quote textually: "One can only expect that sooner or later the mountains will claim the price of all that they have so lavishly given."

JEAN ESCARRA.

#### F./LT. R. D. CROFTON

Although I met Denis Crofton several times at Helyg, I only climbed with him for a few days at Easter 1939—days of mixed climbing on Craig Cwm Silin, Clogwyn y Geifr, Ysgolion Duon, Clogwyn du'r Arddu and Idwal. He was a small determined man—a good second and strong-minded as a leader. He had a large and powerful Bentley of tried vintage which he seemed to control almost entirely by will power which took the party to Wales and back—fast and rather dangerous. Also alone among the members of this Club as far as I am aware he had climbed in Japan, during the course of the five years he spent in China as an Engineer with the Shanghai Power Company. Shortly before the war he returned to this country and worked for Edmundsons until he joined the R.A.F. in 1940.

J. E. Q. BARFORD.

## G. R. SPEAKER

In the death of G. R. Speaker on the Eagles' Nest Ridge, Great Gable, the climbing world has lost a great figure. He was probably known personally to more British climbers than anyone, and was beloved by all. In Britain he had, of late, climbed mostly in the Lake District but had also done much in Wales and Skye. In his younger days he had climbed high mountains—then for a time he turned to the Dolomites, where he made many notable guideless ascents, among which were many new ones.

I joined him there in 1925 and on our way home we climbed in the Engelhorner—after that he spent some time there each year.

In 1930, Speaker again felt the call of the higher mountains, and took to big ascents with first class guides. Among them were—the Grépon from the Mer de Glace ; Ryan's route on the Plan ; and a new direct finish to the south face of the Gabelhorn. He always came back later in the year to Rosenlaui, Stein and the Göschernalp, where we climbed without guides. Many other districts we visited too. It was however as a rock climber that he excelled—he celebrated his sixty-second birthday by leading up the Flake Crack on the Central Buttress of Scafell. He seemed only to become fitter as the years went on and there was probably no one of his age who was his equal.

He had never had a serious accident—his only fall was the last and that must certainly have occurred through temporary loss of his powers.

The famous ridge to the right of where he fell was still one of the climbs he loved to lead.

Speaker was a man of great personality though he would never have admitted it. Help and advice to all who asked it was always readily given and he will indeed be missed by all who knew him.

M. G. BRADLEY.

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We also learn with regret of the deaths of J. F. Ashton, J. V. Bindon, C. Crichton-Miller, W. E. Evans, and J. M. Wallworth.

Ashton was manager of a gasworks and was killed in an accident at the works. Bindon, who was killed in a climbing accident in Wales had only recently joined this club after leaving the Imperial College of Science. Wallworth was killed whilst serving in the R.A.F.

Crichton-Miller was serving as a meteorologist in the R.A.F. Though still in his twenties, he was a mountaineer of considerable experience and mature judgment. Among the leaders of the O.U.M.C. in one of its most active periods, Campbell could always be relied on in a crisis, or as a steadying influence when plans became over-ambitious.

Evans was killed in a climbing accident whilst acting as instructor in the Mountain Warfare School in Syria. He had done a lot of climbing in this country in recent years, and had a genuine love of mountains. It was this that led him to beg for transfer from a successful and far more comfortable staff post in Cairo. Extremely musical and well read he was by profession a chemical engineer ; his death cut short a career of brilliant promise.

## BOOKS

Among the mountaineering books published since our last Journal are the following :—

MOUNTAIN JUBILEE. By Arnold Lunn. (Eyre & Spottiswoode. 15/-.)

LAKELAND HOLIDAY. By W. A. Poucher. (Chapman & Hall. 18/-.)

SNOWDON HOLIDAY. By W. A. Poucher. (Chapman & Hall. 18/-.)

ALPINE WAYS. By F. S. Smythe. (Adam & Charles Black. 15/-.)

SECRET MISSION. By F. S. Smythe. (Hodder & Stoughton, 8/6.)

The club gratefully acknowledges receipt of the following books ; some of these were sent for review and it is regretted that space and time has not allowed the inclusion of reviews :—

Mountain Jubilee, by Arnold Lunn.

Mountain Days near Home, by E. C. W. Rudge.

Selected Poems 1940 to 1942, by A. W. Andrews.

The Journals of The New Zealand Alpine Club ; The Ladies' Alpine Club ; The Fell and Rock Climbing Club.

If any member has any of the following books which he is prepared to sell please communicate with :—

W. E. Nelson, 21 The Mount, Shrewsbury.

Climbing in the Ogwen District, by J. M. Archer Thomson, with appendix by H. E. L. Porter.

Climbing in the Karakoram and Other Ranges, by J. Norman Collie.

Climbs and Ski Runs, by F. S. Smythe.

Snow on the Equator, by H. W. Tilman.

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Following the precedent of last year, we have included in this journal a guide to Craig-yr-Ysfa which is also being separately bound. It is perhaps worth emphasising that the precedent is scarcely a good one for normal times, but it does introduce a freshness of active progress at a time when forcible exclusion even from some of our own hills so easily resolves itself into futile and exasperating sighs for the past.

Unlike some of the climbs the cover of the Clogwyn du'r Arddu guide has been found to be readily soluble in rain, but it is to be hoped that our printers will be able to improve on this for Craig yr Ysfa.

H. E. Kretschmer has taken over as Guidebook Editor and hopes to publish a reprint of the Glyder Fach guide shortly. No attempt will be made to revise the guide at present, nor will the classification be

altered in any way. The numerical system has been retained in *Craig yr Ysfa* with slight modification, but not being in its final form this need not be considered as compromising the situation. The guidebook editor's running commentary on the battle of the standards appears elsewhere in this Journal.

\* \* \*

The past year has seen the deaths of three of our most distinguished members: Colin Kirkus, who was killed on a bombing raid over Germany; Jacques de Lépiney, an honorary member; and G. R. Speaker. Kirkus and de Lépiney were each the outstanding leaders of an evolutionary period of mountaineering; de Lépiney of the great revival of French climbing after the last war expressed in the activities of the *Groupe de Haute Montagne* of which he was the founder; Kirkus of the great advance of British rock climbing in the 1930's, particularly in Wales. Both were men whose climbs bear indelibly the stamp of their personalities, and of genius.

Speaker's contribution was of a different kind. A polished climber, with outstanding achievements for his age—he was 67 when he died—perhaps his greatest gift was his encouragement of young climbers and his work on the committees of the British climbing clubs. It was his perseverance and energy as guidebook editor that finally brought to fruition the present series of Welsh guides.

\* \* \*

Helyg and Bosigran have continued to be used at regular intervals. The university clubs have held meets there and Helyg has also been used by the army. Indeed you are not likely to suffer long from peaceful illusions there for your morning sleep is frequently broken by the irritating spatter of machine guns and attendant alarms and excursions.

The club had a very successful meet at Helyg at the end of June while the Alpine Club were at Pen y Pas. This presented a welcome opportunity for liaison which we hope will be repeated. As if sensible of the honour, the mountains of Wales were on their best behaviour, and many first class climbs were done under perfect conditions. It is hoped to repeat the meet next year from June 24th to July 1st.

A club meet was also held in the Lakes at the beginning of September amid cloudburst, thunder and flood, notwithstanding which some climbing was done.

\* \* \*

The arrangements by which our huts at Helyg and Bosigran are available to members of the Fell and Rock and vice versa has been extended to the Wayfarers' Club, as a result of which we in turn shall be allowed to use their excellent Robertson Lamb Hut in Langdale. Details will be found on another page.

\* \* \*

The annual general meeting and dinner were held at Brown's Hotel in London on February 12th, and a pleasantly informal evening was spent by the twenty members and guests who were present.

Dr. J. A. Martinez is now our representative on the First Aid Committee and any correspondence concerning equipment or experience in its use should be sent to him at :—Whiston County Hospital, Prescott, Lancs.

The sending of a report to the First Aid Committee after an accident is of great importance, as it is only by first hand experience in the use of the equipment that progress can be made in its improvement, and also it will help the local supervisor to keep the outfit up to date and intact. In addition there is inevitably much discussion and criticism after the event, so that a first hand official account is always of great value.

\* \* \*

References—not wholly accurate—have been made in two books to the tragic accident by Fynnon Llugwy on November 20th, 1927, in which two young climbers lost their lives. It seems desirable to put on record the action of the Climbers Club on that occasion, which has hitherto been held by the committee as confidential.

The Climbers Club Committee appointed a sub-committee to investigate all the circumstances. The sub-committee consisted of C. Myles Mathews, president ; G. Winthrop Young, ex-president ; Roderick Williams, ex-president ; and Claude A. Elliott, member.

The sub-committee in a weighty report established the full facts for the first time, and drew certain conclusions. Acting upon these the Committee accepted the resignation of a member involved.

After this lapse of years the following paragraph of the report still retains its general value :—

“ It cannot in our opinion be too strongly emphasised, more especially in view of the number of inexperienced parties who now undertake mountaineering expeditions which involve risk, that the bond uniting the members of a climbing party involves a mutual responsibility which is only terminated in death, by the safe outcome of the expedition, or by a voluntary and equal agreement to separate where no risk is in question. This is an obligation which rests on every member of the expedition, leader and led alike. In moments of dilemma or crisis the leader—or whichever of the party may have been selected by circumstances to succeed to his responsibilities—may be called upon to exercise a difficult discrimination, and, in the event of accident or mischance, to decide upon the *order* in which he shall fulfil his obligation to the several members of his party. He may, for instance, climbing with A and B, be forced to decide whether he will remain with B who is injured, or help first to get A out of danger. But his duty to A and B alike remains the same.

“ Directly his duty to A is discharged—so far as may be essential for A's safety at the moment, and therefore, for a reasonable probability that A will dispatch ultimate succour—he is bound to make B his only thought ; and, at any risk to his own safety or chance of survival, it is his duty, and the duty of any other member of the party still able to act, to return to B, and to share his situation until either life be extinct, or until the home-coming of every member of his original party, injured or capable, is ensured.”

## THE ROBERTSON LAMB HUT GREAT LANGDALE.

Arrangements have been made to enable members visiting Langdale to stay at the Robertson Lamb Hut of the Wayfarers' Club. The details are as follows :—

- Postal Address.* Raw Head, Gt. Langdale, via Ambleside, Westmorland.
- Situation.* About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles above Chapel Stile and half a mile short of the New Hotel, on the left-hand side of the new road and exactly opposite Raw Head Farm.
- Applications for Use.* The Hon. Hut Secretary, H. P. SPILSBURY, 647 Liverpool Road, Ainsdale, Southport.  
Phone : Ainsdale 7630 and Warrington 293.
- Key.* Mrs. Park, Raw Head Farm (opposite the Hut).
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- Hut Fees.* 2/- per night.

Members may use this hut at any time.

*Application must be made in every case before use.* If no reply is received within four days it may be assumed that there is no objection. The hut fees payable are those charged to members of the owner club.

*It is important that members should strictly observe the Rules which will be found posted up in the hut.*

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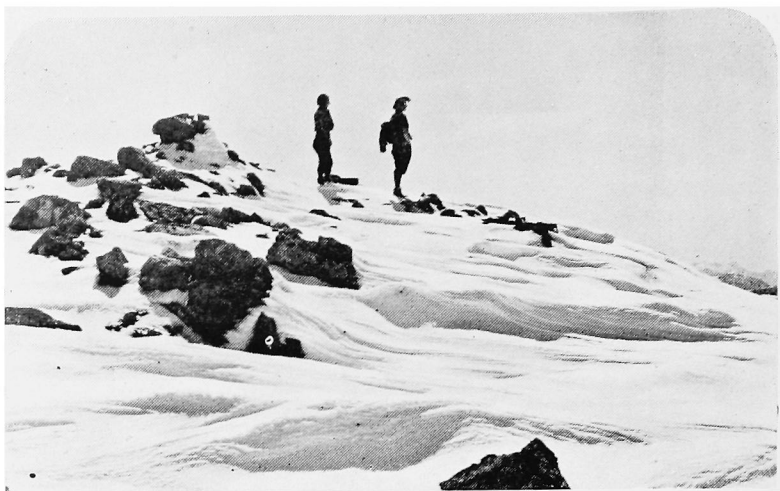


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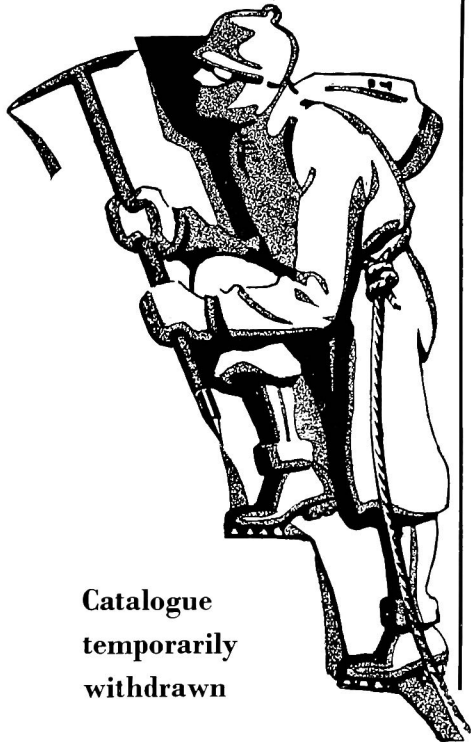
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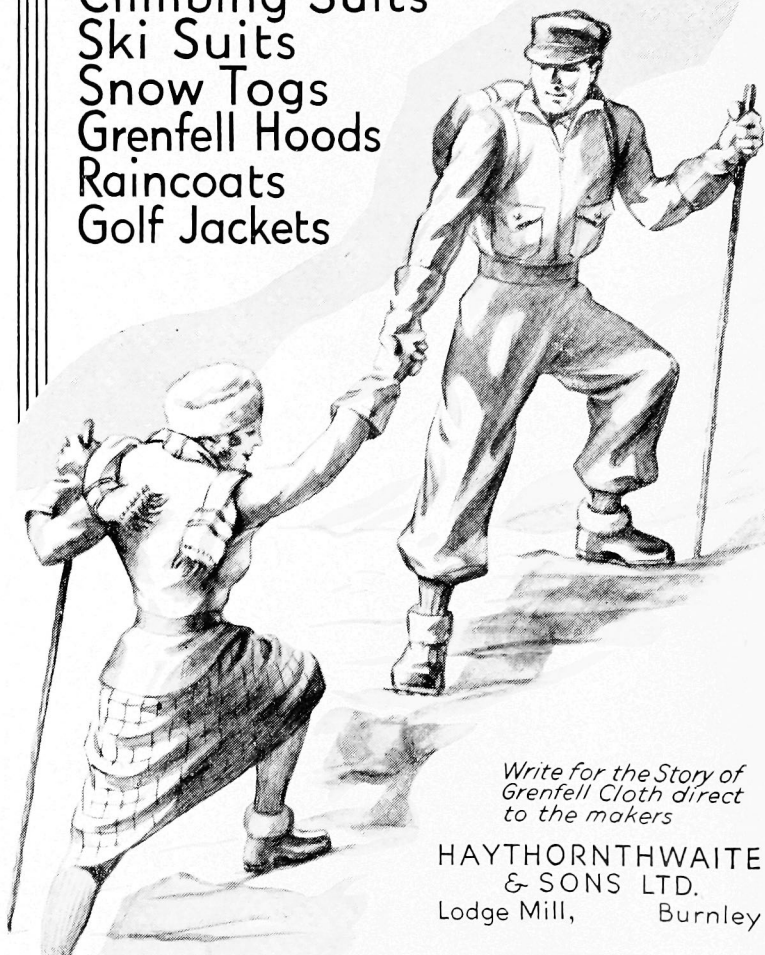


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