

THE
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1949

EDITED BY
A. D. M. COX

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ALPINE MEET, 1948 :
GLACIER DU MONT COLLON
(MONT COLLON AND L'ÉVÊQUE)
R. D. Woolhouse

ALPINE MEET, 1948

JOHN NEILL

LOOKING through accounts in the *Journal* of past summer Meets to give me some guidance in writing this account of the Club's 1948 Alpine Meet, I saw that with a little alteration of names, any one account would serve for almost any of the Meets. So I hunted for ways in which this Meet differed from other recent ones, and at first met with little success. First, the Meet was at Arolla, and secondly, it was organised by H. R. C. Carr ; to older Club members this combination will doubtless seem familiar, and a reading of the *Journals* of the 'twenties will show that Carr was responsible for several of the early Alpine Meets of the Club. To elaborate this point, after researches in *Journals* and *Bulletins*, correspondence with officers of the Club and a surreptitious examination of old logbooks, I produced a list of Meets and organisers up to the recent appointment of an Honorary Meets' Secretary. It is reproduced here in order to fill a gap in the historical data given in last year's *Rules and List of Members*. The list is probably incomplete ; perhaps others can correct and supplement it ?

1925	Chamonix	H. R. C. Carr.
1926	Fionnay	H. R. C. Carr.
1927	Arolla	H. R. C. Carr (apparently assisted by G. A. Lister, H. C. Lowen and E. N. Bowman).
1928	Chamonix	J. Poole
1929	Belalp	W. McNaught.
1930	Stein	W. McNaught.
1931	Randa	W. McNaught.
1932	No official meet	
1933	La Bérarde	W. McNaught.
1934	?	
1935	Argentière	E. N. Bowman. (Joint Meet with O.U.M.C.)
1936-1939	?	
1940-1945	No meets	
1946	Turtagrö	R. M. P. Hartog.
1947	Arolla	R. M. P. Hartog.
1948	Arolla	H. R. C. Carr.

To continue with the comparisons with other Meets, there was a fair proportion of members' wives and a very high proportion of novices to the Alps—in fact, Carr was the only one present with much Alpine experience. But the Meet differed from others in that we had no guide (so that a heavy burden fell on Carr, to whom the rest of the party is greatly indebted for the way in which he organised and led it), and that the numbers were made up by the addition to the party of three schoolboys, whose first introduction to climbing this was.

The weather, I suppose, was no worse than on many other Meets, though it seemed so to us. We arrived at Sion on August 15th, to see the sun shining on newly fallen snow down to a very low level ; and there met Carr, who greeted us with tales of much ploughing through deep, soft snow on Oberland slopes with his schoolboys, and doubted whether any serious expeditions would be possible. At Arolla we heard that the trees round the Mont Collon Hotel, where we stayed, had been covered with snow, as if in winter, on the day before our arrival. However, the next day the whole party moved over to the Dix Hut, and the following morning struggled up onto the Pigne d'Arolla via the Cols de la Serpentine and de Breney. The approach to the Col de la Serpentine up slopes deep in soft snow was pure treadmill ; on the plateau of the Serpentine a blizzard started which made route-finding difficult, and the mist and wind persisted until we had traversed the Pigne and were well down towards the Vignettes Hut. The weather had its last fling by drenching us with heavy rain at the foot of the Pièce Glacier.

The weather continued bad, but two days later the whole party traversed the Petite Dent de Veisivi. Most of the party did the traverse from east to west, but to ease the traffic Pearce, Greenwood, Fry and I, with Hindle (one of the schoolboys) carried it out in the opposite direction, crossing the others near the Grand Gendarme. This expedition was somewhat reminiscent of an average Skye day (or one on the Norwegian Meet in 1946), as we were accompanied most of the way by mist, wind, rain, hail and sleet.

After this the weather improved, and most of the party went up to the Vignettes Hut, from which two groups did the Petit Mont Collon, involving much tramping through soft snow under

a blazing sun, on successive days ; the first group later visited the Col de l'Evêque. Pearce, Greenwood, Fry and I had been attracted by the west ridge of the Dent de Tsalion, 3,000 feet of steep, clean rock immediately above Arolla (*une superbe varappe*, according to the guidebook), so after an initial reconnaissance to the moraine of the Tsa Glacier, from which we stared at the snow-plastered rocks through field-glasses and made some incorrect observations which were later to mislead us, we rather light-heartedly set off for it at 4-15 a.m. on 21st August. We reached the moraine at six o'clock, but decided to wait until the sun was on the rocks before starting climbing, so that some of the snow might be stripped off. There followed a long, cold halt ; finally we felt that matters could be delayed no longer, though the rocks were still in shadow, and set foot on the lowest rocks of the buttress at 9-30.

After some initial scrambling over unpleasantly iced rocks, we put on the ropes when the angle of the rocks steepened, and climbed several pitches which were distinctly difficult because of ice and powdery snow filling all the cracks and ledges—indeed we found it inadvisable to move together on any of this section.* Above, we reached the sunlight, and the climbing became easier for several hundred feet, ending in an almost horizontal ridge which we concluded was the spot which had appeared from our reconnaissance to be the end of all the difficulties, above a vast slab prominent in the view from near Arolla. We were so convinced of this that we unroped, and had a long rest basking in the sun. Retribution came later.

Scrambling along the ridge for some way we came to a point at which the rocks became steeper, and we had to rope up to ascend snow-filled cracks to the right of the crest. These led to steep rocks which proved as hard as anything we had yet done (about V.D. standard) and continued for some distance. The top of this section was a short, horizontal knife-edge with a most sensational drop on either side ; at this point we were suddenly confronted, to our surprise, with what was evidently the vast slab, two-thirds of the way up the ridge, so that after all,

* It appears that our route differed from that of Irving and Tyndale (*A. J.* 1923, p. 80) ; we did not use their ledge going up to the right, but went straight up to the crest. At their next deviation from the ridge to the right we also followed a direct route.

we still had the *mauvais pas* to do—and the time was after three o'clock. The position, indeed, was rather desperate, since the direct route up the crest at the left hand edge of the slab looked most difficult and time-consuming, a route to the right up the slab itself was quite impossible, and the rocks to the left of the crest were well plastered with ice and snow which obliterated all holds. Fortunately the crest, being in the sun, was free from these materials, so having no alternative we tackled it. After an attempt in nails, the most smooth and holdless part was led in rubbers, the rest of the party (in nails) being brought up on the rope almost in the same fashion as their sacks, except for the deplorable use of a piton. Above, the standard remained at V.D. for several hundred feet, with the snow causing some difficulty ; then the ridge relented somewhat and we were able to move together occasionally. But the ridge seemed as if it would never end, and as the sun set it appeared as though a bivouac would be inevitable. Fortunately the weather remained fine, for the moment. Then, rather suddenly, we reached the summit rocks, which went much more quickly than appeared likely in the dusk, and at 9 p.m. we reached the final pinnacle, just at dark.

Here we ate, and rested for an hour until the moon rose, then made for the Bertol Hut ; we had been advised not to descend by the North Col de Bertol. The snow was soft, the going terribly laborious and the party tired, so the hut was reached at 2 a.m., just as a snowstorm started. The hut was closed for rebuilding, but we spent a miserable, cold night on palliasses under the roof, with no floor and the ends of the building covered only by loose tarpaulins which flapped in the wind. At 5 a.m. we could stand it no longer, so returned to Arolla in time for breakfast. There we found that we had caused quite a sensation ; our progress during the day had been anxiously watched through the hotel telescope, a great deal of imagination being employed in this, and late in the day we had been distinctly seen bivouacking halfway up ! Maurice Beytrison, the local guide (from St. Martin), on being consulted said : " There is no need for a rescue party. They will have a very unpleasant night, but they will not die ! " We found some difficulty in retrieving the honour of the Club by convincing people (even Grosvenor and his daughter, who were

justifiably critical of the whole expedition) that we had really spent the night in a hut. Maurice was somewhat scathing about our performance, until we discovered that he had never done the climb himself ; later he did it with the local priest in rather fast time, in rubbers after all the snow and ice had gone, but admitted it was quite hard. We were consoled also on returning to England to discover that the route has quite a distinctive history, but that, nevertheless, no English party who have written of their climb seem to have done the crest of the great slab direct, all avoiding it by the rocks to the left, which were impracticable at our visit.

On 23rd August, another party set out for the Aiguilles Rouges, but were very unlucky with the weather, having to shelter from a storm for many hours, and had some excitement with stonefalls, so were able only to reach the North Peak. Next day most of the party went to the Plan de Bertol, where the party split, one section doing the Tsa by the short side and the others more or less of the Bertol Arête (the S.W. arête of the Pointe de la Crête du Plan). On this there is a two-step descent to the gap before the *seul grand ressaut* of the guidebook, at the lower step of which one is expected to rope down from a poor sort of piton. Not liking the look of the piton, we turned this step on the left, to the great indignation of Maurice, who had come up behind with a French girl, Gherlain Gueldry ; the mountain scene was made hideous by his jeers and requests to us to go back and do it properly, despite our pointing out that our route was much more elegant and appreciably more difficult. The *grand ressaut* is an interesting though not difficult pitch—indeed this remark applies to the whole ridge, which consists of a long succession of spikey pinnacles and knife-edges—which can give considerable amusement when there is much traffic on the ridge. I scrambled up one pinnacle and put my head over the top at the precise moment at which Gherlain did the same, unexpectedly, from the other side ; so we bowed (or attempted to) and greeted each other solemnly—" Bon jour, Madame." " Bon jour, Monsieur."

On the following day the party again split. Half went to the Dix Hut to do Mont Blanc de Cheilon. Six of us had persuaded Maurice to take us (in three ropes) up the Dent Blanche, so we set off at 4-15 a.m. for the Rossier Hut, and by a cracking pace

set up by Maurice, got there at 10-30, despite an hour's halt at the Col de Bertol. The rest of the day was spent in eating, sleeping, photography and conversation with an Italian party who inquired anxiously whether we knew the results of a bicycle race which appeared to be dividing all Europe at the time. On the following morning we set off at 4-20 for the summit. Conditions seem to have been very different from those on last year's Meet, as there was much snow, and also ice, especially at the Grand Gendarme, which made its passage rather tricky. The upper part of the ridge, beyond the gendarmes, was almost entirely a snow arête. Above the Grand Gendarme Maurice sent Greenwood and me ahead, so I was able to lead onto the summit of my first 4,000-metre peak, which gave me a certain satisfaction. The whole ascent took $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, which seemed to please Maurice even more under the existing conditions, as he boasted about it to the Italian party. After a chilly halt in mist on the summit, we blotted our copy-books by taking longer to descend than to ascend, the turning of the Grand Gendarme causing especial delay and being accompanied by Maurice's curses and shouts of "Allez ! Vite !"

After returning to the Rossier Hut it was decided that the snow would be too soft in the afternoon to allow of a return by the Col de Bertol, so a laborious and hot descent to Ferpècle and les Haudères had to be made, followed by a walk back to Arolla in time for dinner. I lowered the time for the walk les Haudères—Arolla to one hour fifteen minutes, but cannot pretend that it was very pleasant. Maurice tried to share a mule with a young peasant woman, but apart from a few pleasantries did not appear to achieve very much.

As was the case last year, the Dent Blanche was the last climb done, and after an off day the Meet broke up. After our experiences of the first few days, the weather in the last week had been remarkably fine, in fact probably the best weather of the whole season, and the Meet was on this account much more successful than could have been anticipated at the beginning. We owe a good deal of credit for its success to Carr, and must recognise also the contribution of Maurice who, though we gave him little employment, was liberal with his advice. As Carr himself says, however, it would have been advisable to

employ guides for the party for a large part of the time ; this would have lessened Carr's load considerably.

The party consisted of H. R. C. Carr, S. Fry, L. Greenwood, F. M. Merrett, J. Neill, M. Pearce, P. M. H. Rack, D. G. Sheffield, S. L. S. Thomas and R. D. Woolhouse (members) ; J. Hindle, J. Hooper and P. Suffern, Dr. D. D. and Mrs. Payne, Mrs. Carr and Mrs. Woolhouse (guests).

THE MOUNTAINS OF SINAI

JOHN HUNT

IN April, 1948, I was able to fulfil a long-cherished ambition to travel in Sinai, to visit the Greek Monastery of Saint Catherine, and to climb the Holy Mountain itself. The tradition and history attached to this region are a sufficient attraction in themselves, and to me there was the added interest of comparing Mount Sinai with another Holy Mountain—Mount Athos, which I had climbed during a visit to the Athos Peninsular in 1945.

The monastery is situated in the main mountain mass which fills the apex of the peninsular, between latitudes 28 and 29, and at a distance by road of some 300 kilometres from Suez. It is on one of these peaks—there is some difference of opinion as to the exact summit—that Moses is believed to have spoken with God during the Exodus, and the route appears not unlikely to have been that taken by the Israelites after their escape from Egypt. Today it can be traversed with some difficulty by car, much of the going being through virtually untracked wadi beds, filled with loose sand and boulders. Despite the comparatively short distance, therefore, it is advisable to break the journey, and this is usually done at the small frontier control station and mining village of Abu Zenima, on the East shore of the Gulf of Suez.

A party of eight of us, stationed in the Suez Canal zone, set out from Fayid on 28th April, 1948, in two four-seater Ford cars hired from the local garage, and with a truck to carry the baggage and provisions for a six-day visit. Our purpose was to stay at the Monastery over the period of the Greek Easter, and we carried with us a letter of introduction from the Archbishop of Sinai, who normally resides in Cairo.

Crossing the Suez Canal at Koubri, five miles North of Suez, where we had to submit to a rigid examination of our baggage, we followed the rough track which leads down the East side of the Gulf. The route passes an oasis with several large wells,

known as Moses' Wells, and believed to have been the first staging place of the Israelites after crossing the Red Sea. After a long and monotonous stretch of featureless sand, we entered a Wadi in which much camel thorn, tamerisk scrub and palm trees were growing. This is the Wadi Gharandal, and it is said to be the Elim of the Old Testament. Towards evening, after a tedious series of halts to cool our engines, which had boiled over at short intervals throughout the day due to the following wind, we debouched from a twisting valley onto the coast, and saw before us a few desolate buildings by the sea ; it was the mining port of Abu Zenima, where valuable manganese ore is brought down from the mountains by a railway and ropeway.

Next morning we dumped all spare kit, food and petrol at the house of Mr. Lowther, the British Manager of the mine, and started on our way along the coast at 6-15 a.m. The first part of the journey is southwards along the coast, and crosses the wilderness of Sin, where the Bible tells us that the Israelites murmured against Moses. We had been informed that our track led away towards the hills at a lone tree, and in this bleak landscape such a mark was not hard to pick up. A few miles farther along the level plain, and we entered a break in the sandhills, known as the Wadi Sudri.

From this point onwards, the scenery began to absorb our interest. The crumbling escarpments near the coast gradually gave place to sounder rock, and soon we were moving up a narrow gorge, hemmed in on either hand by towering cliffs, whose waterscoured bases gave clear evidence of the winter torrents. Suddenly the wadi opened out at the junction with a larger valley—the Wadi Mukattab—where there is an oasis and a few hutments, including a Moslem burial ground. Behind the ridge bounding this new wadi on the East, rose a splendid rock ridge of a deep red sandstone, dwarfing the surrounding hills. It is the Gebel Banat (1,516 metres). We stopped here to look around and admire this fine mountain, whose clear-cut ridges and spires presented a wonderful harmony of form and colour against the deep blue of the sky. Later we had another view of Banat from the South-East, where an unbroken cliff falls away from the summit ridge for some 1,500 feet.

The Wadi Mukattab led us down, after some trouble with the route, into the Wadi Feiran, one of the main valleys of Sinai.

From here onwards the route was not in doubt. The valley bed is not entirely bare of trees, and frequent trunks of palms left stranded after the spate indicated an oasis higher up. At 3 p.m. we reached the village of Pharan, in the middle of a dense forest of date palms, beneath which the barley was ripening. By contrast with the stark grandeur of its surroundings, Pharan is a truly beautiful spot, and reminded me of the villages along the Indus and Shyok rivers in Baltistan. It would make an excellent camping site, and a centre for exploring the fine peaks of Gebel Banat and Gebel Serbal, on which there should be some good rock climbing.

We stopped here to enter a walled garden, formerly the property of the monks of St. Catherine. A vine-trellised walk within the walls is flanked by the remnants of sandstone pillars, removed from a very early (third century) Byzantine church, whose ruins are still to be seen close at hand. In the cliffs on both sides of the wadi are a large number of caves, once inhabited by early Christian hermits. Pharan was formerly held to be the site of the worshipping of the Golden Calf, and it was only when the anchorites had been massacred at the hands of the Arabs that the place was deserted in favour of the present Monastery, where the Emperor Justinian built a fortress to shelter the Christians.

Leaving this delectable spot, we finally emerged from the Wadi Feiran into a wide area of indefinite plateau at about 3,500 feet, and crossing it in an easterly direction, turned South to approach a line of abrupt granite peaks which apparently barred any progress towards our destination. The Watia Pass, through which the track leads, completely cleaves this range of hills, but cannot be seen until one is very close at hand. It was immediately to the North of the pass, on the open plain of Rephadim, that the battle against the Amalekites is said to have been fought, and it may well be imagined that it was on the ridge which dominates it that Moses stood, and by raising his arms, which as he wearied were supported by his companions Aaron and Hur, caused the Israelites to prevail. As we brewed tea beneath the cliffs we admired the evening light touching the red rocks above us, and noticed with surprise that the gullies were filled with shrubs.

It was growing late, and with over 20 kilometres to go, we

hastened on, entering the Wadi El Sheikh as the sun disappeared behind the hills on our right hand. The bed of this wadi is filled with granite sand, and it was hard in the failing light to choose the best route. As a result, each vehicle stuck in turn, and we all had to get out and push on more than one occasion. This last obstacle was finally passed, and in the last of the light the first car turned sharply to the left into the little Wadi Safsafa, where we saw one kilometre ahead of us the mass of the ancient Monastery partly hidden behind the trees of its garden. Arrived beneath its towering walls, we sounded our horn, and this brought out several monks. We were soon surrounded by friendly Fathers and a number of Bedouin. Among them was one who spoke excellent English, who introduced himself as "Father Nile." Having established our credentials he at once took charge, and leaving our baggage to be carried in by the Monastery servants, led the way through a low doorway in the North wall. We crossed the starlit courtyard, and mounted some steps in what was obviously a new part of the building. This was the guest wing, where we were entertained to coffee in the reception room before being shown our sleeping quarters. We had expected to have food provided by the monks, but were assured that this was not possible. There had been a drought for the past four years and the crops in the Monastery gardens had completely failed. Moreover, much of their food was obtained from Cairo, involving a month's journey by desert, sea or camel. We were, however, given free run of the Monastery kitchen, and thanks to the good work of the girls in the party, it was not long before we were sitting down to a hot meal and listening to the interesting conversation of Father Nile.

Next day, April 30th, my wife and I set out with the intention of climbing the two highest peaks in the massif. These are the Gebel Musa, Moses' Peak (2,285 metres), which rises immediately to the South of the Monastery, but masked from it by an intervening ridge, and the Gebel Katherina (2,641 metres), which lies still farther South, separated by another valley, the Wadi El Lega. The Gebel Musa is held by some to be the Holy Mountain on which Moses spoke with God. The monks, however, pointed to a lower peak at the head of the Wadi in which the Monastery lies, as the true site. Anxious to avoid the demand of the monks that visitors wishing to ascend these



peaks must be accompanied by a monk and a camel-man, we reconnoitred the track leading towards the Gebel Musa before breakfast, and slipped away unobtrusively at about 9 a.m. The track consists largely of a long series of rock steps (I believe there are about 3,500 of them), built with skill and infinite patience by former generations of monks. They led us up a steep gully in the rock wall which encloses the monastery on the West. At the head of the gully is a small chapel, which was used as a refuge many centuries ago when the monks were driven from the Monastery by a plague of fleas. It is dedicated to St. Catherine, who is said to have appeared to the monks in a vision, and persuaded them to return. A little higher, the steps lead out into a hollow between the rock ridge which dominates the Monastery, and the Gebel itself, which rises another 800 feet above. In this hollow is a small chapel, built over a cave, where Elijah took refuge from Jezebel. A strange sight here was a tall and flourishing cypress tree, obviously of great age, and looking somewhat out of place in its stark environment of bare granite.

The steps continued upwards, and we reached the summit at 10-30 a.m., after an ascent of 3,000 feet from the Monastery. The first impressions of this peak are somewhat marred by the presence on its summit of a new and ugly chapel, needlessly surrounded by an even more unsightly iron railing. But this could not detract from the view, which is magnificent. To the South we saw for the first time the highest peak in Sinai, Gebel Katherina, which consists of the twin summits of Katherina and Zebir. Its proportions are noble, and it is distinguished from the surrounding mountains by the fact that its rock structure is not granite, but is a darker and more friable rock. Ranges of fine red granite peaks rise in every other direction, separated by wide flat wadis, in which an occasional patch of green showed the presence of water and a Bedouin garden. Away to the East we could see faintly a line of higher mountains, which we could not reconcile with our maps at the time, and it was not until we had the advantage of the additional height on Gebel Katherina that we realised that this range is beyond the Gulf of Aqaba, and therefore in Saudi Arabia.

Descending from Musa to a point a little above the Elijah Chapel, we struck another well-made track which contours

round the south flank of the peak below impressive cliffs, and leads down into the Wadi El Lega, at the junction of two wild gorges, where a fertile and well-kept garden is situated. This garden belongs to the Monastery, and in it there is a large chapel surrounded by various fruit trees. It is a remarkable spot, with towering crags on all sides ; from the patch a few hundred feet above, the summit of Katherina can be distinguished by the white-washed chapel on top, about 4,500 feet above.

An excellent path leads up the right-hand gorge towards the peak, which we reached in three hours of leisurely climbing—perhaps toilsome would be more appropriate to my own feelings at the time. In April the slopes of Katherina, and of other peaks in this range, are well covered with a variety of green bushes which had only recently been in flower, and the terrain can by no means be described as arid. Nor is there a lack of bird life. During our stay we saw crows, rock pigeons, hawks, a grey partridge, bee-eaters, martins, swallows, and several smaller birds which we were unable to name.

The most striking features in the panorama which opened before us were the Gulfs of Aqaba and Suez, the former a long streak of blue, the latter a sheet of silver in the declining sun. Beyond each, we could clearly see the mountains of Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Southwards we were much attracted by a bold silhouette of the Gebel El Thebt (2,439 metres), which from our viewpoint appeared to be even higher than ourselves.

We were unable to enter the small chapel. It is built over the spot where the body of St. Catherine is said to have been found, several centuries after this Christian girl of Alexandria had been martyred for her Faith in the Delta. Her remains, which are alleged to have been found in perfect preservation, were carried down from the mountains, and are preserved in the Monastery Church. We were told that in the Chapel on the summit is a granite block shaped like a human body, which marks the place where she lay.

On our way downwards, we made a detour to visit a large pool of water which we had noticed in the wadi. Above the open pool we found a cistern cut into the rock at the base of an impending crag, and filled with clear ice cold water. Such discoveries, when the throat is parched and the prospects of water appear to be small, delight the mind as well as the body.

In these surroundings, it was easy to appreciate the references to water in the Old Testament.

Wishing to sample the quality of the Sinai rock, my wife and I started out on May 1st, with the object of climbing on the buttresses which rise directly above the Monastery on the East side of the wadi. We chose the buttress on the extreme left (North), on which an iron cross—one of many which some agile monk has placed on the neighbouring peaks—can be seen from the monastery itself. After a false start on some difficult smooth slabs near the foot of the buttress, we climbed for some distance by a stony gully on the left of the buttress, until it was again possible to get out onto the face. From this point we were able to keep to the main line of the buttress throughout, picking our way by a series of complicated traverses and short steep pitches. The issue was by no means clear until the top was reached, and some of the moves were hard enough to make us wish that we had brought a rope. The rock was sound, and the average angle not unduly high, but the typical rounded formation of the granite, and the lack of definite holds made for difficulties despite the comparative lack of exposure. It reminded me very much of the Cairngorms climbs, and in particular of a buttress on Craig an Dubh Loch, between Loch Callatter and Loch Muick, on which I had spent a day in 1943 with David Cox. The climb ended abruptly at the iron cross, where an easy scramble of a further 50 feet led to the actual summit of the North peak. The height of the buttress must be about 1,500—2,000 feet.

We then traversed in turn five of the summits, moving southwards. The descent of the North peak and ascent of its neighbour provided interesting climbing, with one difficult and exposed movement, but thereafter we had no more than scrambling for the rest of the day. The rock structure on the summits of this group is curious. It consists of considerable areas of almost unbroken sheets of granite. The peaks fall vertically away in smooth walls on their East faces, while on the West the angle is generally easier, and the surface broken and pocked. Between each peak we found little gullies filled with bushes, which must have been a beautiful sight a few weeks earlier.

Descending at last towards the valley in the early afternoon, we passed a small chapel hidden in an amphitheatre in the crags,

from which a good path led downwards. After tea we joined a party which had recently arrived from Cairo, in a visit to the charnel house. This building, which stands in the Monastery garden, contains the remains of all monks of the Sinai Order. The bones are neatly stacked to a height of about six feet, with the skulls placed in a separate heap, all quite indiscriminately. A few are complete skeletons, and these are at the bottom of the piles ; the bones of important dignitaries are kept apart in little boxes. One gruesome figure seated in a chair was pointed out to us as the remains of Saint Stephen, a fourth century inmate of the Monastery. His skeleton is clothed in his original garments, and his face is still covered with skin.

On our last morning we wandered down the valley before breakfast, and sat for some moments on a mound to admire the Monastery in its setting of towering crags for the last time. While we were there a shepherd girl came down the path with her herd of goats. We had met her before, and she came up with a friendly "Sa-idah," and proceeded to play a plaintive little tune on a brass flute—a tune strangely appropriate to the musician and her wild surroundings.

Afterwards we made a tour of the Monastery under the guidance of "Father Nile." The church dates from the 5th century, and like the walls of the enclosing fortress, was built by the Emperor Justinian. Much of it is spoilt by modern additions, such as the tin roof and within, the plaster which covers the walls and pillars and masks the solid granite of the original structure. It contains many priceless objets d'art as church ornaments, including one particularly beautiful 17th century chalice with exquisite enamel medallions. Another noteworthy object is the coffin of Saint Catherine (one of three in the church) which was sent by Catherine the Great of Russia, with the intention that the body should be enclosed and sent to Russia. On its lid is a most beautiful enamelled portrait in relief of the dead saint, heavily ornamented with jewels.

Adjoining the church is an even older building, the small chapel built by Queen Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, over the roots of the Burning Bush. The Bush itself, if indeed it is the original, grows through the walls of the chapel, and we were each presented with one of its curious trefoil leaves as a memento. Beside the Bush grows a sturdy acacia tree,

which we were assured was the original Rod which Aaron had struck into the ground at that spot.

We were shown the dining hall, its walls deeply inscribed with the names, texts and escutcheons of the Crusaders. The refectory table, made by the Crusaders, is a magnificent piece of furniture, but appears to be suffering from neglect. Other remarkable examples of ancient woodwork are the double doors of the church, the one pair the original 5th century doors of the building, the other pair made by the crusaders.

Our last visit was to the library, now located in the new wing of the Monastery close to the guest quarters, and thus lacking the atmosphere of age. We were not able to do justice to the priceless collection of books, but were fortunate to be shown the Codex Syriaticus, a fourth-century copy of the New Testament, and a copy of the Codex Siniaticus, the original of which is now in the British Museum. We also saw a beautifully illuminated copy of the Bible made in the 11th century, and an interesting document signed by Bonaparte while in Egypt in 1799, exempting the Fathers from all taxes.

The journey back to Abu Zenima was made in great heat. We stopped for lunch at the garden in the Wadi Feiran, and instead of turning up into the Wadis Mukattab and Sidri, by which we had come up, we continued down the Wadi Feiran throughout its length to the sea. This makes the journey some 10 miles farther than our outward route. Although the track along the coast provides faster motoring, such is the roughness of the going in the wadi that we thought it to be a longer journey in time, and it is certainly less interesting.

We reached Abu Zenima at 6 p.m. and next day (May 3rd), after an early bathe and breakfast, set out for the remainder of the journey to Suez.

Our arrival there that evening brought to an end a memorable journey, to the merits of which, we felt, the chronicles of those travellers of an earlier age had done scant justice. At any rate, our own emotions, on leaving the flat and featureless land of Egypt and moving for a time among those rugged peaks, were the reverse of those experienced by the Israelites.

A GREAT CLIMBER, VALENTINE J. E. RYAN

G. WINTHROP YOUNG

THERE has been no great climber about whom so little is known as Ryan. At the beginning of the century he climbed with an almost feverish energy and daring for a few seasons ; and for the rest of his life he not only showed no interest in mountains or climbing, but he even seemed to those mountaineers who met him to bear a grudge against anyone who did, or who had known him in his climbing youth. He disliked writing ; his notes were inadequate and often incomplete, and he neither remembered nor cared about how a thing had been done once a climb was over. Consequently, since he climbed with no one except Josef Lochmatter, who died of an accident soon after their last season together, with Franz who had no interest in records, a few times with Gabriel, long an invalid, and a few times in my company, nothing would remain now to show what he had been but for the entries in the guides' books and my recollection. In fact, in the ordinary way of history, his name would already have faded out of all but the climbing journals of his time, as have the names of many mountaineers of finer quality and longer achievement who left no record, had not the coruscation of new ascents made by his team among the Chamonix Aiguilles and the Pennines come since then to be accepted as marking the beginning of a new era in difficult mountaineering. So that his name has not only been kept very much alive by the new generation, but it has even come to be invested with a certain aura of mystery and celebrity.

Although he and I met only once again, and by chance, after the first war, and then found little to say, I feel that I owe it to the memory of a really fine and enterprising climber, a loyal colleague in mountain dangers and a pioneer for a short time as deeply inoculated as ever was the young Whymper with the climbing fever, to put on record what little has been recoverable

of his mountain writing, and of my recollections of our joint climbs.

I did not hear of his death, in 1947 ; and we owe it to the kindness of Dr. G. N. Carrell of the Alpine Club, and to a chance meeting of his with Group-Captain Richard S. Ryan, R.A.F., who is V. J. E. Ryan's younger cousin and heir, that Group-Captain Ryan has authorised me to include in this article the only stories of ascents which Ryan ever wrote, and which he must in the years of his first enthusiasm have intended to form part of a book. Group-Captain Ryan, who had known nothing of his cousin's earlier mountain fame, has helped me further by research and information. Ryan's cousin by marriage, Miss Gully, has most kindly lent us the only two photographs of Ryan known to exist—I remember his loathing of being taken—and one of them, by great good fortune, happens to be a snapshot she took of the whole famous team at the Montanvers on the last occasion they climbed together, in 1914. I am grateful also to Mr. Blakeney, Assistant Secretary of the A.C., for his careful copying and collating of the two Lochmatter guides' Books, now in possession of the Alpine Club.

Why did Ryan not go on with his book ? We must judge for ourselves. He found writing and even spelling a labour. He never had more than a limited and evanescent interest in mountaineering, other than in the physical pleasure of climbing and the personal adventure at the time. He inherited a large property and married in the same year, and the new interests may well have expelled what little there was left of the old. In any case, he at once gave up his Himalayan expedition planned for that year, and soon ceased in effect even to climb.

In himself, Ryan was an unusual but not unknown type of Irishman, reserved, proud, excitable, dissatisfied ; without any share of the more sociable Celtic qualities, the wit, the humour or the ready human sympathy. The gods who showered on him all worldly gifts, withheld the power of ever appearing to be happy or even in harmony with his surroundings. He was born in 1883, of a military and landed family, the son of Major-General Valentine Ryan. He lived much abroad as a child, and was educated at Stonyhurst and at Woolwich. He passed out into the R.G. Artillery, and served in Malta and Ceylon. Gazetted full lieutenant in 1902, he resigned his Commission in

1905 when a cousin left him Thomastown Park, an estate in Co. Cavan. In 1906 he married Miss Louisa Gully, and lived on and off at Thomastown until 1914, when he rejoined for the war, and was wounded. In 1919 he returned to Thomastown ; only to leave again in 1921 because of "The Troubles." He never went back to Ireland. Because he "hated England" and his wife "hated Ireland," he built another beautiful house in Jersey, a land which (he wrote) they "both hated." During the second war he was active in London as an Air Raid Warden ; and he was planning to revisit Ireland once again when he died, at the age of sixty-four. He had amassed a collection of early English and gold coins of very great value, and he was a fanatical chess player.

I do not know what started him climbing. But I think his mother took him to the Alps. His younger brother Lionel, who was in the Army and died early in India, was also a brilliant climber. In 1898, Ryan did three small peaks in the St. Gothard. In 1900, the Aiguille de la Za, Pic d'Artzinol, Nadelhorn (nearly), Ulrichshorn. In 1901, the Dom. In 1902, Aiguille de l'M and Petit Charmoz, attempted Charmoz (in January), Aiguille du Moine, and attempted Aiguille du Plæn. Then, as a young officer in Malta of barely twenty, Ryan wrote to his mother in April, 1903 : "I am getting rather fed up with Malta but I always said I would serve for ten months in Hell if I could climb for the other two, and Malta is not nearly that. . . . This afternoon I am going rock climbing with Jackson." He encloses (he says) a snap of "a Malta rock climb, Jackson is leading." As early as May, 1903, we find his first entries in the *Fuhrerbücher* of Josef and Franz Lochmatter. My impression is that Sir Edward Davidson once told me that he had made this introduction for him. They remained his guides for all his climbing career, the younger brother Gabriel sometimes taking Franz's place when Franz was engaged together with Josef Pollinger in maintaining Davidson's annual August state at the Riffelalp. Ryan climbed always by preference with two guides ; occasionally with the one for a time, and notably in the Dolomites and Eastern Alps. But as he hardly ever, when he had the two, entered his lists of climbs the same in both their Books, it is not always easy, even by collating them, to be sure of his exact team on an ascent.

So in 1903, in "May and the beginning of June," he was on leave. Josef was his guide, and they did the Aig. du Midi, the Grépon, the Charmoz traverse, the Requin, and the Riffelhorn by Matterhorn couloir. Franz was his guide "for a fortnight in June." Bad weather limited them to the Aig. d'Argentière and the Aig. du Plan.

In 1904 he began really to get going, and must have spent his whole leave in the Alps. He had Josef and Franz for the whole two months of June and July. They did (the order is Ryan's)*—Rimpfischorn; Charmoz traverse; Aiguille Verte; Grépon and Blaitière in one day; Tacul. Then the two Drus (trav. from the Little to the Big); Dent du Géant; tried Grandes Jorasses from Col des Grandes Jorasses; Aiguille sans Nom; Gabelhorn and Wellenkuppe in one day; Rothorn traverse; Täschorf by Teufelsgrat; Mominghorn traverse; Trifhorn traverse; Weisshorn, descending by N. ridge; Dent Blanche by Viereselgrat; Dent d'Hérens; Lyskamm traverse; Matterhorn traverse; Col du Géant; Charmoz from Mer de Glace. He adds, of Franz, "I consider him one of the best guides in the Alps. He is a magnificent rock climber and a wonderfully rapid step-cutter. He is always cheerful and good-natured under all circumstances." We must remember that Ryan when he wrote this was twenty-one and only in his second season, and that Franz was still only a "porter" without a "Book." But even Ryan fell for Franz and his climbing—as we all did! I note further: the ascents in this list were most of them the "great" and outstanding climbs of that era, astonishing for first Alpine seasons, especially at that date. The traverse from Little to Great Dru, of which he makes nothing here and only refers to later as an "unimportant variant," was an extremely fine first ascent, a subtle mantelshelf traverse across up the southerly face, on the opposite side of the peak to the usual route. The attempt from Col des Grandes Jorasses he alludes to himself later, and I reserve comment until then.

In 1905, he resigned his Commission, in order, he once said to me, "to have more time to climb." But he had also just succeeded to the Thomastown estate and had returned from Ceylon to take possession in June. Free then to do as he liked,

* NOTE.—These lists and comments are taken from the Guides' Books as Ryan wrote them.

within a week he was once more in the Alps ; where he climbed with Josef and Franz together and alternately, for all the time between June 25th and October 1st, with an interval of Gabriel.

He was alone with Josef at Pontresina and in the Dolomites. "The weather was generally bad," and "in an unknown district Lochmatter showed great skill in finding the way." Their ascents were : Meije ; Pic Bourcet and Tête de Charrière ; Grépon from Mer de Glace ; Nonne from Charpoua glacier and Moine from Nonne ; Aiguille du Plan by Mr. Mummery's route ; Charmoz by Montenvers face and Little Charmoz ridge (this he describes in Franz's Book as "Charmoz by ridges from Montanvert and Little Charmoz by Montanvert face") ; Blaitière from Mer de Glace ; Chardonnet traverse ; Dom from Saas (and) Täschhorn descending by Mischabeljoch ; Sudlenzspitze and Nadelhorn ; Matterhorn from Furggenjoch (Mr. Mummery's route) ; Weisshorn by S.E. face ; Bietschorn up by W., down by N. ridge ; Schienhorn direct by W. face ; Aletschorn ; Faulhorn direct from Concordia ; Finsteraarhorn by S.W. ridge and S.W. face ; Kamm traverse of two peaks from Faulhorn Col ; Scerscen and Bernina ; Pomagognon, S. face ; Croda da Lago, W. face ; Tofana I, S. face.

To this must be added from Franz's Book (whom he notes he only could have "for 5 weeks this year, from June 26th to July 31st")—Col des Hirondelles and attempt on Grandes Jorasses from there ; Dent du Géant, N. ridge ; Col du Géant ; Aiguille Verte from Charpoua Glacier.

These lists call for some notes. The Grépon, Mer de Glace : of this I append later the only full story of an ascent which Ryan ever wrote. Nonne from Charpoua was, I think, a new ascent ; Aiguille du Plan by "Mummery's route," this was in fact a route designed by Slingsby and Collie. Ryan, as he told me on the Matterhorn the same year, started with a fixed intention of repeating all Mummery's climbs. It is a pleasant characteristic of young mountain enthusiasts to set out to follow their heroes, and I remember Siegfried Herford similarly telling me, when we first met on Tryfan, that his ambition was to repeat all Hugh Pope's ascents. Charmoz from Montenvers was a very important first ascent. Blaitière from Mer de Glace was new. Matterhorn from Furggen I shall comment upon later ; it was on this we met. Weisshorn by S.E. face, on this, too, I shall comment

later. Schienhorn direct, I believe this also was new. Col des Hirondelles and Jorasses attempt, here, too, he was following Mummery and Davidson. Franz tried the overhanging chimney and gave the verdict which we all accepted from him, that it was impossible by fair means—as it is. Aiguille Verte from Charpoua was a bold reopening of Burgener and Mummery's fine route after a long interval of neglect. Once again, it is an astonishing list.

During the winter of 1905-6 I saw something of him in London, and introduced him to Norman Collie and other mountaineers. He was urged to make use of his ample leisure, means and splendid guiding team upon Himalayan exploration, then only in its beginnings. Had he done so he would have made history, for Franz's phenomenal powers would have had full scope. As it was, Franz never did find his limit of height or endurance, nor was he ever tested to the limit of his energy or skill. In January, 1906, as will be seen from his letters to me, Ryan was planning a full dress expedition to the Himalaya and inviting me to accompany him. But his engagement and marriage intervened; and instead he spent the whole summer of 1906 once more in the Alps. Josef and Franz were with him "from June to September." He did not write up the guides' Books until November, 1907, for Franz, and May, 1909, for Josef, and the lists are probably more than usually incomplete. He omits, for instance, to note the "failure" in the Aiguille du Plan couloir, of which his story, and Frank Smythe's comments on it, will be found later. His lists record: Dent du Requin; Grépon; Aiguille du Plan from Mer de Glace (in Franz's Book he improves on this description: "Aig. du Plan from Glacier d'envers de Blaitière: the hardest climb I have ever done, except the Täschhorn when a snow storm exaggerated the difficulty"); Aiguille de Blaitière by the Chamonix ridge (in Franz's Book: "We kept the ridge the whole way"); Mt. Blanc from the Brenva; Pic Sans Nom; Aiguilles Rouges at Arolla (trav. of 3 peaks); Dent Perroc (trav. of both peaks): (in Franz: "and Grande Dent de Veisivi"); Dent Blanche by Ferpèclegrat; Dent d'Hérens from Col Tournanche; Matterhorn (Zmuttgrat); Jägerhorn (in Franz: "and Cima di Jazzi"); Monte Rosa from Jägerjoch (in Franz: "(Nord End and Dufour)"); Täschhorn, straight up the centre of the face

from the glacier above the Täsch Alp (in Franz: he omits Täschorh altogether (! !)—apart from the note cited under Aiguille du Plan) ; Nesthorn by the E. Ridge ; Schreckhorn traverse (in Franz's Book : Sattelhorn and Mönchjoch are added). He remarks of Franz this season : " In 1906 he was better than I have ever known him. On the Täschorh we got into great difficulties, and only Franz's courage and skill saved the entire party. In my opinion he is one of the best, if not the best, guides in the Alps. I hope to climb with him again."

I note, of the Aiguille du Plan ascent, that Franz and Ryan and also Smythe severally agree that it was their finest climb* in the Aiguilles. The Blaitière ascent from Chamonix, of which he began to write an account attached later, was an improvement on Fontaine's line, and in essentials new. The Dent d'Hérens from Col Tournanche was a great new ascent, which we had discussed together on the Matterhorn the year before. Monte Rosa from Jägerjoch is now one of the great classic climbs ; it was a first and formidable ascent.

It had indeed been a great season for him, more especially upon his honeymoon, and it finished with the fearsome day on Täschorh. So, after a few climbs in Oberland, he did not follow his usual " Alps from End to End " course to a finish in the Dolomites.

At the close of this season he must have said something to the Lochmatters about an engagement for 1907. But he did not come out. The resultant confusion and gossip will be found referred to in his correspondence with me in 1907. The matter was put right. The Books—or at least Franz's Book—were sent to him, and filled in, in November, 1907. In that year, and 1908, he did not climb. But he came out again, rather half-heartedly I think, in 1909. The weather was bad. He poisoned a cut hand and lost three weeks. He hung about with the Lochmatters in Chamonix and the Oberland, found the weather still abominable, decided that nothing could or would be done, and went off to Vevey and homeward. He notes having climbed the Petit Mouveran with Franz in May, doubtless one of the " two small climbs " which he mentions later as all that he did this season.

With that he disappeared from the Alps, and we ceased to see

* See also André Roch's estimate in his recent *Mon Carnet de Cours*.

him. The greatest of all seasons, that of 1911, came and went. And then, unexpectedly, in 1914, while in the Oberland, I heard that Ryan was again at the Montenvers with the Lochmatters, and that he was assailing the Aiguilles with a new fury. From the Books we see that Josef was with him from June 20th to August 1st, Franz apparently only to July 17th. On August 1st, in conclusion, Ryan notes : " Our climbing was cut short by the Swiss mobilisation . . . I expected to find Josef showing signs of age. On the contrary, he was even better than in 1906." Of Franz he writes : " The weather has been vile . . . I found Franz the same as ever." His final list runs : Wellenkuppe (April 30th)—[which looks like an earlier run-out before June ? —G.W.Y.] ; Aiguille du Moine by one of the W. ridges ; Charmoz traverse ; Aiguille de l'M. by the face ; Grépon by Nantillons face (I believe first ascent) ; Aiguille de l'M. and Petit Charmoz ; an unsuccessful attempt on Charmoz from Trélaporte ; Requin from the Mer de Glace, starting at lowest rocks, up to Col between Capucin and Requin, then to top by E.N.E. ridge ; Requin from Glacier d'envers de Blaitière by couloir to above mentioned col, and up by E.N.E. ridge, and down by S.E. ridge ; Blaitière from Mer de Glace by a route (new, I believe) quite different from my 1905 way, and on to the Aiguille du Fou ; Grépon from Mer de Glace by Mr. Young's route, and down by my Nantillons route ; Grépon (in vile condition) by Dr. Rolleston's route from Col Dunod ; Grand Cornier traverse ; Diablons traverse.

A great record for a bad season, with which to finish. It included a new route up the Grépon on the Nantillons face, now called the Lochmatter Chimney ; a new Blaitière route ; two new lines on the Requin ; a new essay upon the Charmoz face ; and the Grépon from the Mer de Glace, the second ascent and the occasion when Franz opened up his better alternative to Knubel's axe-climb up the great slab, the route now always taken. They descended that same day by their new Nantillons route, " very difficult with ice."

And in this year, I believe, he forgot to mention their audacious attempt upon the terrifying North face of the Little Dru, in which verglas defeated them above the initial chimneys. Franz, in talk, only referred to this with quiet amusement.

Those whom these routes interest will find a little further

contemporary detail in *A.ŷ.* XXVIII, p. 77, where Franz gives the 1905 route up the Blaitière from Chamonix ; in *A.ŷ.*, XXIX, p. 200, for July, 1914, Ryan writes of Grépon by the Nantillons face, and Franz marks the exact route on a photo ; the new Blaitière route, from Mer de Glace, is described as being " Directly up on right of Broome's line," and the " last 600 feet difficult." Finally Franz, whom we had by then convinced that others were interested in their routes, and who never forgot where he had gone or doubted where he should go, marks the two new routes on the Requin, one from the Mer de Glace and one from the Glacier d'envers Blaitière. Also in *A.ŷ.*, XXXI, p. 9, are some remarks upon Ryan and Franz's climbs.

It must be emphasised that, during this period, practically no new big climbing was being done in the Alps. Fontaine, with his Chamoniards, was doing a very few explorations on the Aiguilles in succession to the Morse, Wicks, Wills and Pasteur climbs, and Purtscheller and the Zsigmondys were doing some daring climbing in the Eastern Alps. In the Western Alps, however, the English pioneer effort had died down to a steady and centrist repetition of " classic " routes. Slingsby, Collie and Conway were occupied upon distant exploration, and Mummery was dead. This must be remembered, to understand the startling effect of a young climber suddenly ranging up and down the whole length of the Alps for several months each year, making only the most difficult ascents, many of them new and some of them postulating a standard of rock technique altogether unprecedented. Nowadays climbers everywhere would be pleasantly agitated by such news. Then, our new rock-climbing group at home knew little of the Alps, and the placid annual mountaineering backwater in the Alps was ruffled rather than pleased by the novelty ; such prodigies could only upset comfortable traditions. I have written elsewhere that I myself, in those years, when I did a new ascent, never expected for a moment that anyone would ever repeat it. I should not have thought it worth while recording at all but for Percy Farrar's genial pressure, and I knew that any mention of it among seniors had to be tactful. Ryan's manner was far from tactful, or conciliatory ; and his novel and outstanding feats did not gain him admittance to the Alpine Club. They were none the less epoch-making.



V. J. E. RYAN
IN THE 1914-1918 WAR



RYAN AND THE THREE LOCHMATTERS
AT THE MONTENVERS : 1914 (?)
L. to R. . Gabriel, Franz, Ryan, Josef

He and his guides were a remarkable team to meet. Josef was tall, shapely, and moved his big limbs with grace and speed. He was very handsome, with keen brown eyes, thick dark curls and a flashing smile ready to break through his responsible dignified manner. Franz was still little more than a gipsy youth, gay, equable, vital and tanned, brown-eyed, brown-curled, angular and long-legged, and dawdling easily along with an immense suggestion of reserve power. Gabriel was still really a boy, with grey eyes and a Raphaelesque profile. He became a first-class guide, but he was never of the exceptional calibre of his elder brothers or such an aristocrat in manner. And Ryan himself, obviously a soldier, tall, lean, hawklike, disdainful swinging past with an Indian gait. His aquiline face with a small black moustache, was bronzed, taut and impassive, and his eyes sloping and arrogant ; they seemed to be observing everything—and with dislike. He smiled seldom and his laugh sounded surprisingly from the dark immobile features. But his tenor speaking-voice was high bred and pleasing. He was a lovely foot-climber, and I have seen no amateur with such an ankle-flex and poise on steep slabs. He moved up rocks in the smooth, balanced curve well represented on the wrapper of Murray's *Mountaineering in Scotland*, an admirable picture of good climbing movement. He never carried a sack—his guides were there for that ; and I never saw him carry an ice-axe—the guides, he said, were there for that too, and it bored him. It was another idiosyncrasy that he never cared to lead on rocks himself, or to cut the steps. But he could walk up or down steps in ice or snow at any angle in balance. He had daring, initiative, endurance, and a bold eye for a new line. Defeat, delay or inaction exasperated him to irritable sarcasms. In climbing technique, he ranked with the new climbing order in the Alps ; while in his relations with his guides and the general conduct of his mountaineering he belonged to an older fashion and a past generation.

I had heard of the long flights of this solitary rival up and down the Alps with much interest, and some little envy for his obvious leisure and opportunities. In the end of August, 1905, having just myself found in Josef Knubel the companion and young guide of great potentialities for whom I had been looking for some years, we swept through Zermatt, for provisions, and

up to an already empty Schwartzsee Hotel. The weather had set fair, and we were going to try out our new partnership in an attempt on the Furggen Ridge of the Matterhorn, with the alternative intention of repeating the Burgener-Mummery line across to the East shoulder, if the Furggen corner stayed as hopeless as it looked. Round the Schwartzsee Hotel that evening Ryan strode to meet me. Rumour had told him of my coming, and his guides were already my friends. Josef Lochmatter had shared a glorious week with me in the Oberland, when we had made some new ascents. "You're going for the Furggen Ridge, I suppose?" Ryan remarked at once conversationally—"so am I." There was satisfaction for both of us, in coming across someone else who was playing the rigour of the game, in that slackwater period. For my part, in those happy years I took it for granted that every keen mountaineer must be my friend. I liked Ryan's distinction and his directness at once, and probably that confidence took me through his customary defences. I felt the abrupt rather haughty manner to be shyness, as it not improbably was, because although he looked to me twenty-eight or thirty, he can only have been about twenty-two. Probably it was unfortunate for him that his life was made too easy, and that he was never forced to overcome this mistrustful diffidence. It is a mistrust which in this type of Celt can harshen into misanthropy. With every material reason to be content with the world, Ryan never seemed able to allow himself to like it, or for that matter to allow others to like him. In those few mountaineering seasons I certainly felt that a genuine and even a friendly personality could be dug out from behind the mannerisms whenever we were in action together, and his letters to me, I think, suggest that he, too, found some pleasure in our partnership on great ascents.

We agreed to explore in company, but to keep to our own parties, joining up if things grew fierce. I was already finding the duet with Knubel very much closer, more instinctive and safe, to say nothing of much faster, than any combination in which I had yet climbed. I have told the story of the Furggen Ridge elsewhere; the race up the edge of the face, unroped for most of it, and our fantastic debate seated astride of the famous white saddle, with the red-brown cliffs storming into the clouds above and the continuous hoot and stutter of stones falling down

the precipices to right and left of us. Mountains cannot always be under stone-fall, their decay must be periodic, but that year the hoot and crash were continuous. The relationship between Ryan and his guides at once became plain, as I listened to Josef's responsible and anxious explanations of the dangers, in laboured English, to a Herr whose vexation he seemed more anxious to deprecate than to appeal to his mountaineering knowledge. Ryan's impatience with our hesitation to start up those bombarded shelflets over Italy had a rasp in it. He was very much the young officer ordering the charge. But in the end he accepted without resentment our unanimous opinion against the attempt.

I had watched during the morning his agile and swift climbing up the Furggen cliffs with delight, and it was now with unqualified admiration that I saw him walk off the corner in balance, across the high-angled slabs, with a superlatively flexed foot on light nail-holds. The whole traverse was exposed to stone-fall and dangerous under snow. When we reached the summit, we agreed that the ordinary descent of the East ridge is of all descents the most wearisome. So we unroped high up above the Shoulder, left the guides to follow at their ease, and raced each other down to the Schwartzsee. We were both in the riotous 'twenties, and in absolute training, and I do not believe that Hermann Schaller and his young American can have since much improved upon our time. It was delightful, as one waterfall'd under control down the crags, to find someone else who could really go the pace, and safely. We were very much in sympathy as we drifted on and down into the valley in company. I think I had remarked to Ryan as we looked out from the summit, "I suppose you have thought of the South face of the Weisshorn, too?" It was a silver glory at which I had been looking for a year or two with longing. So we now moved down to attack it. Davidson had given me the detail of all previous attempts on this face, when I met him at Randa that year on my way up the valley. So I knew how to start out for the ascent, across the foot of the "Mathews" couloir. Then the weather, which was "alternating" that season, worsened, and we were stuck in the high Weisshorn hut. I advised not coming down, so as to "get the alternates right." The guides went down for provisions. Ryan was a luxurious campaigner of the old school,

with a taste for plenty of cold fowl and eggs, beside which our small tins of jam from Lausanne looked sparse. We talked of climbing inexhaustibly, and probably of our homes in Ireland a little, too. But his complete reserve, as to his own life or tastes outside climbing, never showed a chink. We played chess the whole snowy day, and I felt I had moved even higher in his estimation when I won one game of the three that filled the twelve hours.

On both these great climbs, by the by, Gabriel was Ryan's second guide to Josef, Franz having already rejoined Davidson. When the weather cleared, our only difficulty was to find a route up the ice-glazed dividing wall or bastion, between the two Schalli glaciers under the face. After this we unroped, and had a heavenly canter up and across the ribs of the face, slanting steadily upwards for the summit of the silver shield. We had to rope up again for some distance under the summit, where the precipices curved up steeply under the break of the crest. An icy gale met us on the top, Ryan had a headache and was monosyllabic. But on the way down the east ridge, again in unroped and sociable independence, he and I examined and discussed the two great south faces of the Täschorn and the Dom opposite, and we resolved we would try them together the next year, when they might be more free from snow. How ample then was the choice, when whole faces looked at us unclimbed, and we knew that even if we waited for years, there was no risk of any competitor entering the lists before us.

That winter of 1905 Ryan dined on his way through London at the "It" Dining Club, which I had founded and, as I said above, was introduced to a number of climbers and explorers, among others to Norman Collie. As a result he proposed to me tentatively that we should combine on a Himalayan expedition. In the following January, 1906, I had this letter among others from him :—

" Hotel d'Angleterre, Vevey.

" Jan. 28, 1906.

" DEAR YOUNG,

" I start in May and hope to be back in October. I am going to the Nubra district that Collie told me about. My party is Myself, Joseph and Franz Lochmatter. *I do wish you could join me* ; if you can manage to get away, come, only your personal expenses would fall upon you. I hope to get a

letter of introduction to the Viceroy. I sent my notes to Yeld a long time ago, but never had any acknowledgment of them.

"I saw Franz three weeks ago, he did not say anything about getting married.

"Yours sincerely,

"V.J.E.R."

This was my second invitation to the Himalaya. O. G. Jones had written asking me to "join him for Everest" just before his death on the Dent Blanche; and I had now to refuse again, being tied up in the Civil Service. The notes he refers to cover a tragedy. I had urged him strongly to send in some account of his climbs to the *Alpine Journal*. At last he did so, in the more sociable state of mind in which he also apparently started to write a few chapters of a book of his climbs, and to which I like to think our successful association in 1905 may have contributed. But the notes were brief. Yeld hoped to get more out of him in those leisured days, and held them over. Then, in the end, Yeld found he had mislaid them! Except what he sent me in 1912, reproduced I think in the *Alpine Journal*, Ryan could never be induced to write anything again.

He did not go to the Himalaya. Early in 1906 he became engaged, married, and then returned to climb in the Alps for all the summer.

I met them in Zermatt later in the season, and it was resolved we should carry out our attack on the South face of Täschorh. He had been climbing all June with Josef and Franz. Franz was now at the height of his powers, and they had just completed the splendid first ascent of Monte Rosa from the Jägerjoch. We drove down in the comfortable chaise and pair to Randa, and lost another wet day at the Täschorh alp, eating raspberry jam and waiting for the "alternates" to get right. The story of the Täschorh is now known. Never can an experienced party have been more deceived by the look of a precipice from its foot. Ryan climbed throughout the long day with his usual intrepid precision and nerve. Apart from a few expressions of the ever-present and impatient urge which seemed to be driving him always upwards and on, and through him his guides, he took no part in the few deliberations which took place as to our desperate line. In our worst dilemma, when Franz was starting to hazard his extraordinary ascent up the overhang, Ryan asked me what I thought were our chances of coming out of it

alive. When I estimated the odds pessimistically, I remember that he remarked, in his ordinary staccato voice and manner, that the year before he would not have cared a damn which way it went, live or die, but that this year he had married, and he left it at that. The cold and the strain undoubtedly tried him hard. After we left the summit Knubel and I were well ahead on the way down to Randa. But on our late arrival there, Ryan was again entirely unperturbed, and urged that we should return to Zermatt at once that night. So he and I left the guides to sleep, and started to walk up in the darkness, with the prospect of meeting the chaise for which we had wired somewhere on the way. On foot for most of the way, and then in the crawling chaise, we reached the Monte Rosa in the early morning hours.

Risk affected Ryan not at all, fatigue very little. He took danger or crisis as impassively as the Indian he resembled. He showed more emotion by far if some one of his many prejudices was aroused in ordinary conversation, when he would exclaim acidly, or freeze up, or the sarcastic note would sharpen his voice. I do not think the Täschorn shook his nerve in the least, but he certainly had had all but enough of climbing for the time. I must have written to him after I came home of my further doings, for he replied :

" Bon(n). 17.XI. 6.

" I was very glad to get your letter. Which way did you get up the Dom ? Let me know all about your attempt on the Grandes Jorasses. I did not go on to the Dolomites but stopped climbing at the end of August. I did not do much in the Oberland.

" We have been here for the last two months. I suppose you could not get away in the Winter for a week and come and see us. I am afraid you would be very bored, as all the pheasants have been shot already, and you could not very well hunt as I shoot foxes.

" Yours sincerely."

To restore confidence after the Täschorn, I had made the first ascent of the South face of the Dom, with Knubel, while Robin Mayor brought Gabriel Lochmatter. This is the twin face to the Täschorn terror, and Ryan and I had planned together on the Weisshorn to climb it also. In every respect it was the reverse of the Täschorn, sunny, straightforward and wholly pleasurable climbing. Afterwards, I had gone on to Chamonix with Knubel and Gabriel ; we had been poisoned at

the Montenvers and had consequently made a wholly futile attempt on the Jorasses North face, that ended in slackness and Périades pinnacle-swarmling.

I did not accept the invitation to Thomastown ; there was no time in those crowded years. Ryan's assertion about shooting foxes—in Ireland a habit not likely to make a new owner popular—was entirely in his vein. I must have told him I had been fond of hunting in Ireland ; so, with his nervous fling-back from any "liking," either of hunting or of himself, he was "trailing his coat" for my benefit.

In 1907 and 1908, as we have seen, he did not climb. In August, 1907, Sir Edward Davidson wrote to me asking me, as the mountaineer who knew Ryan best, to put right the muddle that had arisen over the engagement of Josef and Franz for that season. A misunderstanding was likely to happen between a man as egotistical as Ryan, and men as polite, sensitive and unsophisticated as the Lochmatters.

Ryan replied :

"Imperial Hotel, Malvern." Aug. 19th (?).

"I certainly never engaged the Lochmatters for any time this season. . . ."
[I omit the misunderstanding.—G.W.Y.] "They had not their books with them, and said they would send them to Thomastown in the winter. This they did not do, but if they like to send them now I will write an account of our climbs last year in them. . . . When you get back from the Alps would you like to come to Thomastown and try to get a few partridges. We shall be quite alone as my wife is going to stay on here till October. Reply to this address. Many thanks for your letter : there are always plenty of inferior climbers hanging about Zermatt willing to invent and spread scandal. I will be very much obliged if you will state the facts to any one you think fit.

"Yours sincerely."

I was able to put the matter right, as the Lochmatters had never any difficulty in finding engagements. I could not accept the invitation, and as he did not climb in 1908 we did not meet. But in 1909, when I could not get out until September, I heard that he was in the Alps again, and wrote to ask if, or when, Franz would be free. He replied :

"Hotel Montanvert. July 11th, 1909.

"I only had Franz to the 11th, he left me yesterday. He is engaged till the end of July and is then going with Davidson, but seems uncertain whether on August 1st or 10th. I have done nothing—we have had snow and rain since June 2nd. The mountains are in awful conditions, and it is snowing hard

here at the present moment. I do not think anything difficult will be done this year, there is such a mass of snow on the rocks. I have been laid up for the last three weeks with blood poisoning in my left hand. I had to get a surgeon up from Sallanches. I am almost all right now, but the cut is still open, so I could not climb even if the weather were good. We are going to Vevey on the 13th, so I shall not see you here, unless we met in London as I expect to be there about the 20th on my way back to Ireland.

"We had lively times there a year ago, but so far I have held my own, and the Fenians leave me pretty well alone now.

"Yours sincerely."

I think he dined again with "It" on the way back. When I went out in September, in spite of the prophecies, Knubel, Perry Smith and I managed to get the first direct ascent of the N.E. face of the Weisshorn.

Ryan did not climb again until 1914. But we exchanged occasional letters about the Alps; and in 1911, after the wonderful season when we at last made the direct ascent of the Grépon from the Mer de Glace, one of Ryan's earlier ambitions, I once again pressed him to put on record further information as to his series of ascents in the Aiguilles. He must have forgotten about the notes for a book which he had already written; and he sent me the following:—

"Thomastown Park,
Birr.

April 29th, 1912.

"I really forget most of the details of my climbs at Montanvert. As far as I remember:

"Grépon. July 3rd, 1905.

"Start up Thorold's couloir as for Charmoz from the Mer de Glace, then work up to left and eventually come out on ridge above crack by the hole through the ridge.

"Charmoz from Montanvert.

"Go straight up the main ridge which runs from main Charmoz—Petit Charmoz ridge towards Montanvert. Follow this till it strikes main ridge to Petit Charmoz; follow main ridge to the great cut or gendarme (I forget which it is), then traverse out on Montanvert face, finally go up by a succession of very steep cracks direct to summit well to right of ice-slope; time about 8 hours.

"Blaitière.

"We got into one of the couloirs that run from Glacier d'envers Blaitière to the col between Blaitière and Fou. The only difficulty was getting into the couloir. From the col we went almost straight (bearing slightly to right) up from the rocks to the summit. Of course it would have been easier to go from the col to the ordinary Blaitière route.

"The Plan, from Mer de Glace. June 20th, 1906.

"Start from the Glacier d'envers de Blaitière and go straight up the rocks to right of great couloir. Time about 12½ hours from Montanvert, this is the hardest of the above climbs.

"I believe I also made variations of routes on Dru and Blaitière de Chamounix, but these are unimportant. I do not know if the above very sketchy details will be of any use to you.

"I saw in one of the daily papers last summer that you had got up the Grandes Jorasses from col of same name. I heartily congratulate you, and if you have time write me something about it. When your friends pass Home Rule and I am sent into exile, I may perhaps go back to Montanvert, but I fear my climbing days are over.

"Yours sincerely,

"P.S.—If you make any use of my notes please correct the spelling."

I did so for the *A. J.* The notes are in character. They omit much, and the Dru and Blaitière "variations" were by no means "unimportant." Nowhere does he make any comment on the remarkable climbing feats of the brothers, especially on the Plan. Failure could irritate him to comment, or even to some record: success satiated, and passed from his mind.

I must have sent him the Jorasses story; and then the correspondence dropped. But, unexpectedly, when I got out in 1914 for what was to prove my own last season of great climbing, I heard that Ryan was again at the Montenvers, with Josef and Franz, that he was going "all out" again, and had climbed among others what is now known as the Lochmatter Chimney on the Nantillons face of Grépon. After the Gspaltenhorn, I crossed to the Montenvers with Herford, in steadily bad weather. But we missed Ryan, and only heard of his new climbs from report and from a sight of Franz. They were great climbing feats, especially after his years of inaction, a flaring up once again of the once consuming fire.

There followed the first war, in which he suffered a severe hand wound which would have interfered with his climbing in any case. But I think the desire had now finally gone. I met him once again, in 1929 in Grindelwald, when I was trying some small glacier walking on one leg. He was surprised into showing interest, especially in our picturesque small boy, and for a short time was his best self, as he had been on a hard climb. He had, I am sure, an affection for children. Then the curtain fell finally.

I can only write of him as I knew him climbing, and in the Alps, because apart from the Malta letter I never heard of his climbing elsewhere. It will be seen that his short, scintillating Alpine career was made up of five seasons, the four years from 1903 to 1906, with an aftermath in 1914 ; 1905-6 was his high point. During that winter he was making contact with mountaineers, maturing a Himalayan plan, showing signs of becoming a real mountaineer, and growing, it seemed to me, more human and sociable in the process. It was during this genial period and his stay at Bonn, that he must have written the few fragments of a book of climbs which have been found since his death. I am quoting these accounts in full here ; doing as he asked about the spelling, but leaving the Irishman's " will " and " would " and his own punctuation.

[Ryan MS.]

[Grépon from Mer de Glace. July 3rd, 1905.]

I had long wanted to try to get up the Grépon from the Mer de Glace, Joseph had always looked upon it as an impossible undertaking ; but when we were on the Mer de Glace face of the Charmoz, in 1904, he professed himself ready to attempt it. I arrived at Chamounix on July 2nd with Joseph and Franz, having been driven out of the Dauphiné by the vileness of the weather. To our surprise we found fine weather at Chamounix and the rocks in good condition. We at once decided to go for the Grépon the next day. After lunch at Couttet's, we accordingly strolled up to the Montanvert. But six months' sojourn in an unhealthy tropical station had so told on me that I found two halts necessary before the Montanvert was reached, in fact, I felt so unwell that I was very doubtful if I would be able to start on the morrow, however we arranged to be called at 12-30.

All symptoms of disorder had, however, disappeared when the concierge called me the next morning. We accordingly started at 1-25 in a perfect night, making for the Gap of the Trélaporte instead of rounding the promontory, as we had done when going for the Charmoz. By this manoeuvre we reached the bergschrund an hour sooner than on the former occasion. Here the first serious difficulty presented itself. The part of the glacier below the schrund had moved forward since our last visit, leaving bare the rock below. A vertical wall of ice about 30 feet high topped by an overhanging snow cornice barred the way. When on the Charmoz we had crossed this bergschrund, we had found the rocks on either side unclimbable. It indeed looked as if we should not even get on to our mountain. However, Joseph noticed that the frozen snow of the cornice projected over the rocks to the right, and seemed firmly attached to them. Having given me his rucksack, he advanced to the assault, backed up by Franz. By imbedding the pick of his axe in the frozen snow he finally succeeded in getting a foothold on the riband of snow that stretched across the slab. Just as he announced himself " ganz fest " the snow on which he was standing gave way ; but he succeeded in throwing himself on to the

firmer snow on his left. A few steps were necessary in the slope above the schrund ; then Franz went up with part of (the) luggage and pulled up the remainder " animated and inanimated " after him. I believe if we had been three days later, the snow riband would have melted and we should have been unable to cross the schrund. Of course, in other years this bergschrund may present no difficulty whatever.

We struck the rocks at the same point as on the Charmoz (ascent ?) and proceeded quickly up them. The first chimney required care, but the others presented no great difficulty, tho' they could not exactly be called easy. Our halting place for the Charmoz was soon passed ; and at 6-15 we halted some 300 feet higher up, for breakfast. A discussion at once ensued as to our chances of success. The day was perfect, which was one thing in our favour. But after our adventures on the Grandes Jorasses the year before, neither of the Lochmatters liked committing themselves to any statement. Joseph thought that we should content ourselves with trying to reach the Mummery Crack, and continuing by the ordinary way from there, I, however, wished to try first to climb straight up to the highest peak. Indeed I felt that going up the Crack would be rather shirking the climb. Joseph, of course, was quite unable to appreciate such niceties, and thought that if we started from the Mer de Glace and eventually reached the summit, we could fairly consider that victory was ours.

However, sterner principles carried the day ; and after half-an-hour's halt we crossed over to the Grépon side of the couloir, and started working our way diagonally up the face, always getting further to the left, i.e., more towards the highest point. Joseph was still leading, and I had taken his rucksack in order to leave him free. The rocks at first were not very difficult, and we got up at a good pace. My hopes began to rise as we grew ever more to the level of the Charmoz. The guides, however, did not share my belief, even the optimistic Franz being doubtful.

After a direct traverse to the left, our real difficulties began. I cannot now remember the exact details of how every bit of rock was got up, but taken all round the rocks were the hardest I had ever been on. They were for the most part large slabs, the handholds were none too plentiful, and very small, generally only large enough for the tips of the fingers. Now and then a very difficult chimney varied the climbing. We were, of course, only moving one at a time ; Joseph being generally [We may doubt the " generally."—G.W.Y.] propelled upwards by Franz's axe. As soon as he was in a position of tolerable security he assisted Franz up, who in his turn pulled me after him.

Whilst the guides were getting up I had plenty of time to look about me and examine our route up the Charmoz the previous year. I for the first time, noticed that the couloir by which we had ascended forked. Owing to the mist we had not observed this when on that mountain, and had taken the right branch, which had brought us on to the ridge which runs down towards the Aig. de la République.* I also saw a big stone fall down this couloir. This

* Note by V.J.R. :—

Thus slightly varying Mr. Thorold's route, which being up the left branch, was more direct than ours.

was the only stone I saw fall on either of the two days we spent on this face of the Charmoz-Grépon, though I should imagine that on some days it might be bad from falling stones.

At last Joseph got up a slab with considerable difficulty, and found himself on a small platform, above which he said it was impossible to get. He wanted me to come up, too, and see for myself, but I was quite satisfied to take his word for it.

The point he reached I estimated to be about 400 feet below the summit. Joseph thought more [and rightly?—G.W.Y.] but when I looked at it from the top some four hours later, I thought it if anything rather less. We now descended a little and Joseph and I traversed a little to the left in order that I might see what had stopped him. Great slabs lay between us and the summit, up which it certainly seemed impossible to get. We then went down a little further, until we found a place where we could safely sit down, and eat, and discuss what was to be done next. It was now 9-30 a.m. It was a broiling hot day and the long time we had spent on rocks where the hand-holds were very small was beginning to tell on my fingers. Joseph wished to lighten the rucksack by drinking the Bouvier ; but the other members of the party felt that it should celebrate victory only.

At 10 a.m. we again moved off, traversing to the right to get back to the Charmoz couloir. We had to go considerably down. We, however, got into another narrow rock couloir, which seemed to lead up to the col between the Charmoz and the Grépon. At first it was easy, but soon became more difficult, and turned off more to the left ; until it suddenly came to a full stop at a little col between a crag and the main wall of the Grépon. We were now not a hundred feet from the foot of Mummery's Crack, and a little to the left of it. The rocks were quite sheer for twenty feet or so, and above that we could see we were sure of reaching the Crack. All attempts to push Franz up with an axe having failed, we abandoned the craft of rock climbing for the science of engineering. About 20 feet down [Up?—G.W.Y.] our couloir, though the wall of the Grépon was quite smooth for about 35 feet, we noticed two projecting knobs of rock, above which a convenient crack would lead to the easy rocks above. Franz, after one or two unsuccessful attempts, managed to throw our spare 120 feet rope over one of these knobs.

Very carefully we drew in the ends of the rope, and found to our delight that it still rested on the knob. A firm tug failed to dislodge it, though Joseph imagined that the knob had moved a little and was not safe. Accordingly half-an-hour was spent in fruitless attempts to throw our other rope (we had unroped) over the other knob. Joseph then started going up, but as he would only put one hand on the rope whilst with the other he groped for imaginary hand-holds, he became exhausted half way up and had to retreat. After some further discussion and some more tugs on the rope Franz went up trusting entirely to the rope. I quickly followed, and a rope was thrown to Joseph who was now unroped. Franz and I went up to the foot of Mummery's Crack, and had a look at it. We then traversed back on the Mer de Glace face over a large flake that had split away from the mountain. To get on to the flake required a long step, which I found rather difficult. Joseph came up more directly and joined us and roped on again.

We were now at the foot of some large slabs [The Almer Slab.—G.W.Y.] up which ran a small crack for some way. Into this crack a wooden piton had been wedged by some former party—I believe Jean Maître of Evolena, who had traversed round from the Charmoz-Grépon col. Franz got up, assisted by a shoulder from Joseph, who himself followed by standing on the head of his axe, which he wedged in the crack. I was left to bring up the axe and rucksack, and very much more than the moral support of the rope was required. Above the crack the hand-holds were very small for some way ; then were much better.

At 12-40 we struck the summit ridge at the top of the arch of the Kanones Loch, and there joined the ordinary route. From this point I noticed that a couloir ran right into the Kanones Loch on the Mer de Glace side, which seemed to connect with another couloir, which commenced on the glacier de Trélaporte between the Grépon and the big gendarme close to the C.P. rocks. If this route should prove possible it would be more direct, and certainly an improvement on our own. We at once resolved to try it on some future occasion.

We reached the summit at five minutes past two, after 12 hours' and 40 minutes' climbing, and spent 40 minutes contemplating our climb over a bottle of Bouvier. Far below us on the Nantillons glacier we could see another party led by Camille Ravel, who had traversed the Grépon by the usual route. When we were low down on the Mer de Glace face we had heard this party, then on the ridge above us ; but not having seen anything of them, had thought ourselves mistaken.

The Montanvert was regained at 6-30 p.m., where the Lochmatters were welcomed by their cousins Alois Pollinger and his son Heinrich, who had arrived with Mr. Baker. Looking back at the climb after a lapse of nearly a year, I still consider it the most difficult climb I have ever done, though if we had succeeded in finding the way at first, it might not have proved more difficult and tiring than the ascent of the Charmoz, described in the next chapter. This route up the Grépon, however, is always exposed to two drawbacks, the uncertainty of being able to cross the bergschrund, and that, unless luck is with you, you will not be able to hitch the rope over the knob, which alone made the ascent possible for us.

A few days before finishing this article, I was again on the Glacier d'envers Blaitière, and noticed that the bergschrund which gave us so much difficulty the year before on the Grépon was shrunk to very small proportions. But I still think it might be possible to make a more direct route up the Grépon from this glacier.

THE AIGUILLE DU PLAN. [June 6th, 1906]

When on the Verte or the Dru I had frequently been struck by the great snow couloir that runs up the Aiguille du Plan from the Glacier d'envers de Blaitière. This couloir comes out to the Requin side of the Plan, whence easy snow slopes lead to the summit. Early in the year this couloir appeared to be filled with snow ; whilst late in the season rock and ice was visible in it. I had often drawn Joseph's attention to it ; neither of us thought it likely to present much difficulty.

On July 12th, 1905, we repeated Mr. Mummery's route up the Plan from the Glacier des Pêlerins, and had looked at this couloir from the summit, and had thought of going down it. We were, however, deterred on that occasion by the sight of an avalanche going down it. We, however, all agreed that there would be very little danger in going up it in the early morning. Again on July 20th, on the occasion of our ascent of the Blaitière described in a previous chapter [never written?—G.W.Y.] we had examined this couloir, and come to the conclusion that though the bergschrund might give a little trouble, the remainder of the climb could not prove sufficiently interesting to repay the fatigue of walking down the snow slopes on the descent by the ordinary way; the idea that we might fail to get up never then occurred to any of us.

On the 5th of June the following year (1906) I strolled up to the Montanvert in company with Joseph and Gabriel Lochmatter, with some hazy idea of doing the Dent du Requin the next day. That evening after dinner, my thoughts again returned to the Plan, and I mentioned the matter to Joseph, who thought it as good a way as any of starting the season. He also thought that the rock ridge to the right of the couloir would be more interesting and at the same time safer. [By this they later made their great ascent.—G.W.Y.] We also entertained the ambitious design of descending straight to Chamounix by M. Fontaine's route.

Accordingly at five minutes to two on the following morning (June 6th) we left the Montanvert and trudged along les Ponts and up the Mer de Glace. About 2-30 day began to break, and I was sorry we were not an hour earlier. We followed the same route as we had taken for the Blaitière as far as the top of the Rognon, where we again had breakfast. The snow on the Mer de Glace was very good, and we had much quicker progress than under summer conditions is usual. During breakfast we noticed that there was a good deal of snow on the rocks to the right of the couloir, and Joseph decided to go a little way up the couloir, and then get on to the great ridge of rock which ran up to what we took to be the top, though we were not quite certain of this. After 20 minutes' halt we again advanced, Joseph leading. The steep snow slopes below the bergschrund were very hard and required much step cutting. We had another short halt at the bergschrund, and then crossed it at its right flank, where it offered no difficulty. We all now felt confident that the next four hours or so would see us on the summit. After crossing the schrund we bore away a little to the left, and then cut up the steep snow slope in front of us, and then turned to the rocks on our right and tried to get up them. They were, however, so glazed that we failed to effect a lodgment on them, and after having wasted twenty minutes in the attempt, we again turned to the couloir, intending to cut steadily up it.

Soon we came to some rocks which split the couloir up the centre. [F.S. Smythe: "These rocks end in the summit of the Pain de Sucre."] They are not difficult, but glazed, and we went up partly by them and partly by the snow, the couloir always getting steeper. We rose to the height of the Charmoz or perhaps a little more, when we found ourselves confronted (by) a steep ice slope. For about 200 feet the ice was steep, though not alarmingly so, where it formed a sort of shoulder, after which a more gentle slope led to the top of the couloir. We now had another meal on some rocks to the right. Joseph

now began to get despondent as he looked at the ice slope in front, and said it would take at least an hour-and-a-half to cut up it. He was rather in favour of retracing our steps a little way, and crossing the couloir, and trying to get up the rocks to the left. [F. S. Smythe: "Joseph was probably right. It's not really much of a deviation, and climbable rocks are to be preferred to that couloir. Ryan was being 'cussed,' to refuse."] As this would have brought us to the snow field above, some way further from the Plan than the couloir, thus making the ascent very indirect, we eventually decided to attack the ice slope, and Gabriel was sent forward. He made very slow progress, but after a time he managed to get on to the rocks to the right, and disappeared round the corner. Joseph followed, and I went up some way to the beginnings of the steps, and shrank against the rocks, trying to avoid the pieces of ice that continually came down. Both guides had now disappeared round the shoulder of rock, and an animated conversation of patois was kept up between them, Joseph disregarding all my inquiries as to the state of affairs.

After some time, growing impatient, I went up myself as far as the shoulder, and found that both guides had got some way up the rocks, and had then stuck. I wanted to cut up the ice, but Joseph maintained that the rocks would be quicker in the end. In fact, both guides were rather out of condition, and shrank from the toil of cutting up the slope. We sadly missed the services of Franz at this moment. Nearly another hour was wasted in fruitless endeavours to get up the rocks, without advancing one foot. Joseph then tried to reach the ice on his left: but the distance was too far, and he was unable to make a good step.

At 11-30 a.m. it was evident that victory was *not* to be ours that day. Some time was spent in extricating Joseph from his precarious position on the rocks. The beginning of the descent of the couloir was rather bad, and a long 140 ft. spare rope was freely used. After a little time it was easy enough; fortunately no stones fell. Once across the bergschrund we had another meal, and drank the Bouvier we had taken with us to celebrate our first climb of the year. Even this cheerful beverage failed to cheer our drooping spirits, and we sadly tramped back to Montanvert and down to Chamounix, which was reached at 6 p.m."

Frank S. Smythe has commented on this account at my request: and I am glad to be able to include his notes, since it is not a little remarkable that his strong party, after an interval of over twenty years, and quite independently, was first attracted by the gully, as the Lochmatter-Ryan rope had been, failed there as they did, and on a second attempt, turning likewise to the great rock ridge, made the second ascent of their route up the East ridge of the Plan.

F. S. Smythe: "In June, 1927, T. S. Blakeney and I made an attempt to climb the couloir leading to the Col du Pain de Sucre (Ryan's couloir). The bergschrund was fairly easy as it was choked with avalanche snow. Above the bergschrund the slope was covered in hard crusted snow—good snow, needing

only one kick to make a step. We climbed quickly, at the rate of well over 1,000 feet in the hour. We were getting near the point where the couloir steepens and divides into two branches, one (Ryan's route) running up between the Pain de Sucre and the Plan, and the other running up on the Requin side of the Pain de Sucre. I remember noticing in these branches, where the slope was much steeper, that the snow had slipped away, exposing ice. It was evident that we were going to have several hours of cutting. It then began to snow, the morning became dark, and the snow increased, until visibility had become almost nil. A snowfall of this strength would very soon generate snow-slides. So we retired, descending as fast as we could.

J. H. Bell and I returned in July, 1927, with the idea of trying the June route again. But many stones were falling down it and the bergschrund was very bad. So we tried the East Ridge instead, not knowing anything about it, except a vague idea that it had been climbed. While on this ridge, when the last part appeared impossible, Bell and I had a look into Ryan's couloir. But I do not believe the descent would have been feasible, as it would have needed a large quantity of rope. No one has repeated our route via the Crocodile-Plan couloir. And I hope no one will take this line; for it involved hours of cutting in ice so steep that hand-holds had to be cut for most of it. I regard the Plan ascent by this route as the most difficult climb I've ever done, and the finest. We could not get on to the ridge, because of verglas on the rocks. If ever I tried the climb again, I would abandon it rather than try to turn the lower part by either couloir. Both of them are dangerous.

Franz Lochmatter told me after our ascent that it was the finest rock climb he had ever done: and he was extremely kind to us about it. I tried to get some account of it from Ryan, but he didn't seem to be able to remember anything.

[Ryan MS.]

THE BLAITIÈRE. [June 13th ? 1906]

After our failure on the Plan we did the Dent du Requin, to make sure of one peak, and then spent a few days' bad weather down in Chamounix. On June 12th the weather looked much more promising. However, none of us liked the idea of gîting out for the Droites, which was the climb we wished to attempt, unless we were certain of a fine day. We accordingly determined to attempt the Blaitière, by the ridge that runs down from the Blaitière de Chamounix towards that flourishing city.

M. Fontaine and Ravel had already climbed the Blaitière from that direction. Joseph and I set off to interview the latter who had frequently given us valuable information about the Chamounix peaks. On our way to his house we met him, and got all the information we required.

It appeared that M. Fontaine had made several traverses on the Pélérins face of the Blaitière, and we hoped to slightly vary his route by keeping more to the ridge. We decided to spend the night in the cowshed of Blaitière, but dark clouds in the afternoon made us postpone our departure. After dinner, however, it cleared up, and there was every promise of a fine day. . . .

[The fragment ends. We know that they made the ascent, "by the Chamounix ridge"; later also they made the great first ascent of the Aiguille du Plan from the Glacier d'envers Blaitière.—G.W.Y.]

I remarked earlier that it was characteristic of Ryan to have started his writing with what he must have considered "failures" ; equally so, to have got bored at the very beginning of the story of one of his many successes, that on the Blaitière. That we should have no account at all of that great climb on the Plan, which included as only one incident Josef (as he told me) shuffling out along a ledge with Franz balanced on his shoulders, so as to be in position to assault an overhang at the vital point, is lamentable. But it is only one among many great stories now lost.

For me, also, to read now his account of the Mer de Glace Grépon, which has lain hid for forty years, is of curious interest. It was a long unconscious competition. I had been up there first, exploring above the Red Tower. Ryan and the Lochmatters in 1905 attacked, and were diverted to the right. In 1911, we made the direct line. In 1914 Franz led Ryan up his improvement on our line, now the usual route. Their experience, also in 1905, closely resembled ours in 1911 when we made the first direct ascent. We, as they did, found the bergschrund impassable, and got round it by what I call in *On High Hills* the extension of its grin onto the rocks at the side. Ryan takes no notice of the Red Tower, the point reached by Burgener and Mummery before him in their previous exploration ; but I expect it is where he breakfasted on his ascent from here of the Charmoz in 1904. Above this point he describes Josef leading on and up, to arrive at exactly the same hopeless impasse as pounded Knubel in 1911. But Ryan had not the longer experience, nor had he the relationship with his leader, which would allow him to refuse agreement with his pessimistic view, or to mutiny at the tail of the rope, and make the cast to the left which, on our ascent, solved the climb. His footnote to the effect that his line above this was an alternative couloir to Thorold's is of interest and the line ought also to be compared with the Mallory-Porter account. Higher again, the alternative to the Mummery Crack taken by the Lochmatters was no doubt the Slab route on the left of the Crack first taken by Ulrich Almer and reopened later by Joseph Ravanel. I have been told it is now impracticable without pitons, owing to a slab fall. In his general conclusion Ryan was right, a more direct route was feasible. It is an example of his flair for a bold strategic line,

which, unluckily, he never developed by practice to the point of being able to co-operate tactically in a route with his great team.

The allusion, in the Grépon story, to their Grandes Jorasses attempt is practically all we know of their failure to ascend the West Arête of the Jorasses. The Lochmatters apparently had been over-confident of succeeding, once they had reached the summit of the point now called "Young," and when they failed, Ryan was not the man to allow them to forget it. I admit that it did puzzle us, in 1911, when we found the crack down off this peak, how it was that Franz or Josef had failed to find it before us ; and how the Duc d'Abruzzi's guides had also missed it. The same question arises with regard to their failure to find the direct line up the Mer de Glace Grépon in 1905 ; although in 1914, Franz was even able to improve still further upon our 1911 bettering of their "failure." Several reasons suggest themselves why this was so. In 1904 Franz was still a "porter," and much under the authority of his magnificent elder brother, Josef; whereas in 1907, and still more in 1914, nothing could have turned him back on the Grépon, or Jorasses. Again Josef, grand guide as he was, belonged to a stage of transition in mountaineering. He was an advance upon the classic guide, of the Anderegg and Almer type ; but he never quite belonged to the modern and technically advanced school which came into being with his brother Franz, with Josef Knubel, and their followers. Josef Lochmatter, when he was leading Ryan, had dash and gallantry, and was quite ready to attack a new order of difficulty ; but his engrained sense of responsibility for his party had been learned by earlier standards and was adjusted to an older tradition of guiding. A second reason suggests itself, in Ryan's picture of his own reactions while climbing. In the guides' Books he does full justice to Josef's qualities, and year after year he re-engaged him as his leading guide. But, in the stories, we remark his constant criticism of his leader, at every point of hesitation or pause for decision, still more his resentment in retreat, even if that course was the unanimous decision of the party. If I had not had personal evidence of it on the Furggrat, I should have concluded from the stories a frequent fret, and too little sympathy with the leading guide's often anxious decisions. Josef, a high-strung magnanimous fellow,

must have been continually aware of this restless attitude behind him, all the more enervating because Ryan's forceful inexperience enabled him so little to estimate risks and results obvious by instinct to a mountain native. The Lochmatters all three had a real respect for Ryan's dominating qualities, and admired his climbing and bold initiative. But they were also, I am sure, nervous of his autocratic temper and criticism. With consequences that, in the cases of Josef and Gabriel, I believe at times retarded rather than encouraged their resolution in attack. If one is afraid constantly of being driven over the line, human nature is apt to stop in precaution a little short of it. Ryan was a dynamic driver but a bad manager of men. His neglect to take an equal part with his guides as colleagues, in their arts of leading, of step-cutting, of carrying, in a word, to make himself as good a mountaineer as he was a climber, cost him not improbably success upon some of his most daring undertakings.

Ryan's name will be remembered in any mountaineering history for two good reasons, for his own fearless and original climbing, and for his team of Lochmatters as great mountaineering innovators. In his story I find something that inevitably recalls the Alpine career and the mentality of Edward Whymper, different as were their dates and circumstances. They both caught the climbing fever in their 'teens. They climbed mountains devouringly for about the same span of seasons. They climbed equally egotistically, and with a like disregard for previous tradition or contemporary prejudices. They both understood just about as much, and just about as little, of the nature and of the language of their guides: if Whymper had only good to say of Croz, Ryan had only the like to write of Franz. They both exhausted the mountain passion while still young, and at the first check; Whymper inhibited by the Matterhorn accident, Ryan perhaps thrown out of step by the Täschorn. Both made partial come-backs, Whymper on Chimborazo, Ryan in 1914; and both, after they had ceased to climb at all, continued into age to haunt the Alps, Whymper compiling guide books, Ryan playing chess. Men of totally different outcome and abilities, in the mountains their climbing showed much the same individualistic and domineering temper, with little display of interest in their human kind. But they were both for a few years in youth fired into something like

heroism, inspired to pursue adventurous and almost romantic achievement, by the fascination of Alpine heights and by the physical satisfaction to be found in climbing.

Because of those years of enthusiasm in his youth, because of his exceptional prowess, and of the independent courage with which he attacked new spheres of difficulty and danger, Ryan's name lives on among the Alps. It will continue to be remembered even more certainly because it was in his employment that the Lochmatter brothers first found their opportunity, that Franz more especially became engaged upon expeditions in which he could develop his extraordinary powers and so become the leader of the era of modern climbing in the Alps. We at least can realise, even if Ryan himself in later years did not, what a novel mountaineering movement was launched during those few seasons at the start of the century, and what a leading rôle he himself played in the launching.

Postscript.

Frank Smythe pencilled his notes upon the back of Ryan's MSS., after a sunny walk we had last winter over Kinder Scout. They must be among the last things he wrote ; and it is interesting that they should recall his own greatest climbing feat, the ridge of the Aiguille du Plan. Against all hindrances, Frank made himself a very great mountaineer, and famous, by an unconquerable fighting spirit. He lived for mountains, and for interpreting their beauty to others. He was as happy with us on a Welsh cliff as in climbing Kamet or touring the Alps on ski alone from end to end. Mountaineering has lost all too early an outstanding personality, dignified, boyish, daring and most lovable.

BADILE, NORTH-EAST FACE : CASSIN ROUTE

SECOND ASCENT, 27th—29th AUGUST, 1948

BERNARD PIERRE

FRIDAY, 27th August, 9 a.m.—the first rope lengths. Whilst we were moving together, in silence, along an easy rock ledge, I was reminded in a flash of all that had preceded our attempt, just as if I were looking back upon past times in an old family album. That evening when Gaston Rebuffat suggested the great feat ; the winter traverse of the Aiguilles du Diable at Easter ; the bivouac at Whitsuntide, when we clung to the big face of the Aiguille de la Brenva ; the summer holiday climbs in the vertiginous Dolomites—Sass Pordoi, Spigolo Giallo, Sella Towers ; at the Clocher and the Clochetons of Plan Praz where, so as to train for artificial climbing, we opened a number of new routes.

Then our departure from Chamonix under a blazing sun that we had almost despaired of seeing again ; our long journey towards the Engadine and our incessant watch of the sky ; our discovery of the green lakes in the Grisons and our arrival in the Val Bregaglia : Promontogno basking in an almost Italian light with its houses overhung by romantic looking balconies, and in the distance, behind a screen of pine trees, the Badile, a majestic background.

Nearer still, the last minutes before the climb : the Sciora inn we had had to leave at the dead of night as the hut had been burnt down the year before ; the endless silent march of approach, and lastly, the attack of the wall.

The sun hidden behind the Piz Cengallo had not yet touched our peak with its rays.

* * *

Gaston suddenly intruded upon my thoughts. " Now I think we are in for it ! " he said. Indeed, the gentle, docile expression the Badile had assumed suddenly vanished.

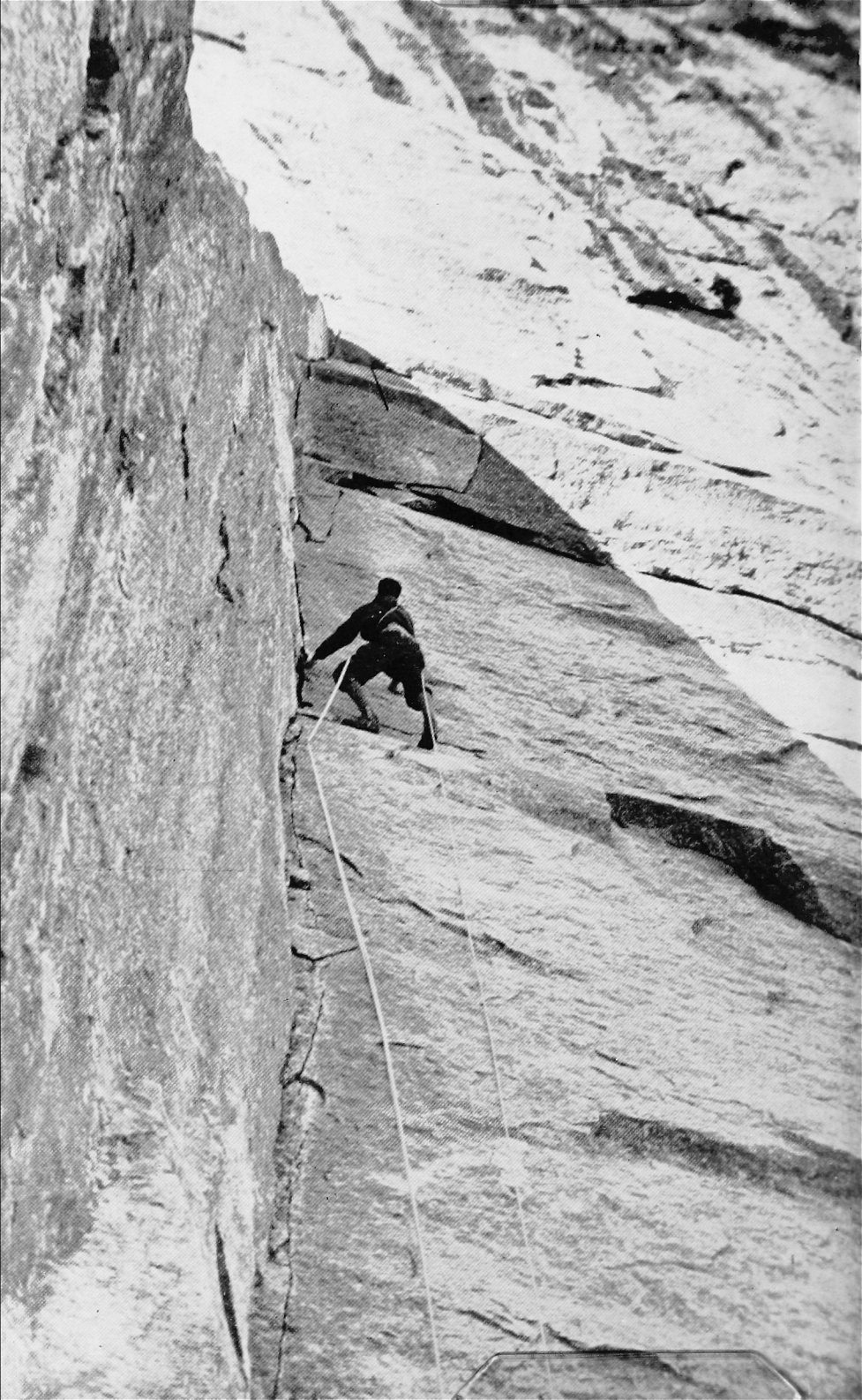
We were facing the first difficulty : a *dièdre** of some ninety feet. Gaston tackled it slowly, diffidently, like a boxer who in the first stage of a fight tries to ascertain the qualities of his adversary. He got through it skilfully and reached a place where we could rest ; from here, a number of slanting cracks branched off, and by following the most obvious of them we attained a comfortable ledge.

First meeting with Cassin. His piton driven into the rock has become part of the Badile. How touching it was to find that bit of iron after eleven years. . . . It beckons to a traverse which leads up to a slanting *dièdre*, holdless and overhung by a kind of roof. We must already be resigned to artificial help. One by one, the pitons are driven in with discordant metallic sounds. The song of the hammer on the steel accompanied by the deep, straining tones of the striker is enchanting. And whilst I pull first one rope and then the other, Gaston goes up dancing on the stirrups and reaches another ledge, ninety feet higher, where I join him, having gone through the usual acrobatics required from the man who has to recover the pitons. I am confidently dangling at the end of my nylon rope, a British-made nylon one, taken out for the first time in North Wales in 1947 by John Barford and Michael Ward who, two years ago, had climbed the North ridge of the Badile itself. I even succeed in pulling out the toughest pitons, I open the snaplinks, climb a few feet by pulling myself up with my arms, recover the stirrups and offer my valuable spoils with a smile. I am happy to be on this long-wished-for Badile with my friend Gaston, who is a kind of mountaineering elder brother to me.

Another *dièdre*, a little less severe than the last. It widens farther up, and after two rope lengths leads us up to a pleasant ledge. This is the place where Cassin and his companions, overtaken by the two climbers from Como, spent their first night, the only tolerable one. It is only two o'clock ; we are before time.

We mused, rested and ate, a very natural series of doings for climbers who had been scrambling over rocks for hours. In fact, we only stopped for a short while and soon resumed our rapid ascension, either climbing freely which was pure delight, or using artificial help, which is the only way of overcoming

* *Dièdre* : an open corner or groove.



certain difficulties impassable without it, but a means which to us should never be accepted as an end in itself. During the next hour we threaded our way through a succession of smooth slabs, narrow cracks, menacing overhangs and exposed traverses. Sometimes we were compelled to use the third rope to pull our rucksacks up, gingerly. At last, the Cassin route took us up to a small *névé*, at the foot of which we found a friendly looking platform. Why not bivouac here? The afternoon was now almost over, the sun was disappearing behind the summit and all round us the peaks were iridescent in the evening light.

Now we look up the technical description of the climb; we find the great difficulties are still ahead of us, hidden in this wall which seems even more perpendicular than before. It is useless to go higher; we shall spend our first night here. I drive two pitons into the rock and hook up the rucksacks. We decide to use the last streak of light to reconnoitre our next playground. I climb down first to a ledge where Gaston joins me, and I stay there to belay him during a traverse which leads him to the big middle couloir. He gazes intently at this obvious route, very much to the left of the one used by Cassin, and definitely easier. We had thought of tackling it, but it looks too dangerous. The Badile in a technical sense resembles a large funnel with the middle couloir acting as the drain pipe which collects the water and stones that pour down its slopes. We are bound to keep to "Safety First" and follow the Italians' route, scaling a huge *dièdre* topped by an enormous overhang. With the first night's shadows hovering over it, the *dièdre* looks hideously cold and hostile. Gaston says: "It is disgusting." He enters into it but he has hardly gone up a few feet when he is compelled to hammer in a first piton and then another one, to which he hooks up a karabiner after having hitched up his stirrup to the first one. I then pull the rope with all my might to enable him to keep to the wall which seems to throw him off backwards. He reaches a niche where he jams himself in to take his breath. His right hand goes out above feeling inch by inch to discover the hold which will mean salvation. Here it is. He hauls himself up, hammers in a piton at top speed and clips a karabiner to it. He has mastered the difficulty. A kind of pulley is ready to work, and a few moments later Gaston is back beside me.

It was almost dark when we reached our bivouac. We got into our special clothing and tied ourselves to our pitons. Soon the primus stove was alight whilst our lamp threw its pale flame over two ghostly climbers. Far below was the tiny flickering light of the Sciora hut, our last link with the valley. While nibbling at our food we discussed our plans. Of course, the hardest part lay ahead of us. But, in spite of our very late attack, we had already conquered half the face. To-morrow we should reach the top. This thought lulled us to sleep as we lay between heaven and earth, watched over by the stars, while the peaks whispered to one another in the pure, silent night.

When bivouacking, the hours before dawn seem unending. We keep looking at our watches, listening intently to their ticking to make sure if they have not stopped ; no, there is nothing wrong with them, but the minutes seem to drag. At last a small yellow spot peeps over the top of the Badile. Behind the ramparts of the Piz Cengallo golden rays escape ; the sun has risen. Its appearance is greeted with frantic joy. I still remember Gaston's yell after a night we had spent shivering on the Eastern face of the Aiguille de la Brenva which refused to be conquered : " The sun, the sun ! " Then the life embedded in our bodies surges up and our eyes open to the light which caresses them. All vitality, arrested by the cold and shade of night, is restored. The mountain which was asleep a few moments ago is again a realm of motion and light.

We were at the foot of the *dièdre* we had explored the evening before. The contraption which we had arranged proved a great help to our numbed limbs. When we reached the end of the rope length we proceeded to the right, creeping under a big projecting roof to attain a narrow resting place at the beginning of a crack, barred by small overhangs. It opened into a chimney which abutted onto another roof, even more impressive than the first one. On the right and on the left were huge slabs. The only possible route was on the left, over a smooth *dièdre*. Once more we had to use artificial aid to overcome it. Gaston now selected his pitons ; first, an extremely flat one which was difficult to drive into the rock, then a curved one. The crystal clear song of steel knocking against steel echoed in the lovely morning air and destroyed the heavenly silence. Slowly he progressed upwards.

A climb is a continuous creation and the climber is an artist. The first mountaineers were great creators who conceived routes and faces ; and treading in the pioneers' footsteps, those that come after them re-fashion the eternal masterpiece.

A few feet higher and we get to a ledge. We stay there, both of us hanging on to a piton, one foot on a small slanting slab, the other feeling over the smooth level rock, both of us grasping the rope and intently looking for a way up.

"At this point all possibility of progress seems prohibited," Cassin wrote. Indeed, there are only completely smooth *dalles* of a terrifying beauty, which seem to embrace the Badile. Below us the *névé* is no longer visible owing to the overhanging wall. Had we not been taught by our climbs in the Dolomites that the mountaineer must be at home on perpendicular rocks and must inure his body and soul to giddiness, we would have been terrified, for the impression here is overwhelming in the true sense of the word. Cassin has confessed as much. His tale which we had read and read over again comes back to us ; here we are facing the "extreme difficulty" he mentioned. His technical note confirms our impression. The fact that the Italian, facing these difficulties "almost beyond the limit of human powers" whilst two companions out of four were completely exhausted, succeeded in forcing his way up such a pitch, fills us with admiration. Indeed, salvation springs forth a few feet higher, from a tiny horizontal crack which is hardly perceptible at first. The first few feet have to be climbed in an extremely exposed position over a few asperities with bad holds. But we are soon compelled to drive in pitons. Two old ones help us a little. After some tense minutes Gaston is on the edge of the middle couloir, about sixty feet to the left, and belays me, shouting : "Just come along." It is likely to prove a very tricky traverse, as my rucksack keeps jumping about on my back and constantly threatens my balance. I am already half way up and collect the pitons on the way. I wrench out one of the rusty ones as a souvenir, an exercise which calls for far too much exertion, pull out our pitons which are crooked and finally succeed in reaching Gaston's perch. Another rope length leads us up at last to a ledge. The great overhang has been conquered.

Since we had left our bivouac, we had progressed in a wide curve which had called for no less than seven hours of extreme tension. Each stance had to be made on pitons at such narrow places that sitting down was out of the question. We compared notes. Gaston confessed he had never in his whole Alpine career found such a continuous succession of difficulties.

In order to relax and to take some nourishment, we waited for a moment on the stone where Cassin and his party spent a night in a blizzard. We were terribly thirsty, and I remember the long silent draught we took like horses in summer, at the end of a scorching harvest day. Yet this respite was but short. We must reach the top before nightfall ; shall we be able to ? Big black clouds are racing in the sky. An ominous west wind foretells a storm. Will the Badile ever yield without testing its conquerors to the full ?

Hurriedly we resume our climb. We follow a crack which gradually opens into a huge chimney up which we creep carefully, as the rock is slippery. Our fingers reach up, hook themselves onto the rock, straining to claw a hold on the stone ; our legs bend and stretch out quivering with the effort. Foot after foot is eaten up. But all of a sudden rain is upon us. Are we going to be glued to this chimney where the water will roll down in cascades ? It must not be thought of. Gaston gives me his rucksack and, freer, worms his way up at top speed. He climbs with might and main, gathering himself together and then relaxing as if propelled by a spring ; a real wrestling match with the mountain. The chimney becomes more sheer so that we have to drive in pitons to ensure our safety. Now I climb in feverish haste, pulling hard on the rope, so as to win this terrible race against time. It is already soaking and the water running down my sleeves, between my shoulders, and freezing my chest. The intoxicating climb in the shining light is over. Ended are all smiles after a severe rope length. We must, absolutely must, reach the ledge on the left. When we get to it, after a wild race, pursued by the stealthy mist which creeps behind us, a roll of echoing thunder heralds a storm which is about to break in all its fury.

While I disentangle our ropes, Gaston hammers in a piton to which to anchor our frail party. In haste we take our equipment out of our sacks ; down-lined coats, hoods, gloves. . . . We

even fix the primus stove and fish out some food. But the storm does not leave us time to complete our preparations. The wind is blowing furiously, and the rain is so ruthless that it puts out our matches one after the other. For the moment, we have to forego all hope of anything warm to eat and to submit to the blizzard, curled up and trying to preserve as much of our animal warmth as possible ; the reaction of the beast in man.

Then a sight of Dantesque beauty is enacted before us. An army of greenish clouds heavy with rain, snow and hail soars up in serried ranks, charging the wall. Blinding flashes of lightning fly out in every direction. A thunderbolt crashes down in the half light of the milky-white mist. Frozen pellets of snow patter down, and on the Badile slabs the hailstones are driven here and there, pursued madly by the wind. They beat like a drum on our hoods. The harsh, rattling sound is then followed almost at once by the soft music of snow. Everything is white. We beheld a theatrical change of scenery. I was afraid, very afraid. I heard the mountain whispering into my ear : " I embrace you both with my heavy snowflakes, so that I may smother you the better." I told Gaston of my anxiety, and he replied : " Better snow than lightning. Lightning kills without any chance of struggle." Then my fear vanished. The remembrance of the two men from Como dying of exhaustion in the storm left me, and peace returned to my heart.

Crouching one against the other with closed eyes, our heads bent on our breasts as if in prayer, we endured the shock of the storm. For a climber, this is a terrible chastisement. A halt is but a sequence, a pause between the moment that has passed and the beginning of a new attempt. To be brought onto the defensive is to be almost defeated.

A huge flash of lightning lights up the sky, followed by a deafening roar. We strain our nerves to bear it. Another storm-wave rolls across the heavens, then softer ones farther away. Is this to be the end of our ordeal ? The storm moves quickly towards the bottom of the valley straight before us. In the distance, it lights up the lake of Silvaplana, a mirror reflecting its violence. Our hopes revive. We sweep the hailstones and snow from our ledge and move frantically in order to relieve ourselves of cramp. We now try hard again to light our primus. If only we could make some tea ! We are shivering. Alas ! all

our matches are wet through and one after the other goes out, pitifully, after a feeble attempt at a flare. Like fools, we watch the last one with dazed eyes ; we have not even thought of lighting a cigarette.

Night is now with us ; how long it will be ! Time and again the storm comes back, then departs shaking our nerves and bringing us alternately fear and hope. At midnight a heavenly calm supersedes hellish fury. I cannot remember what happened until dawn ; I only know that we suffered deeply in our flesh to pay the price of victory.

* * *

Shining light of morning, a blue sky jagged by the summit of our Badile, rebirth of life !

On that Sunday, at about eight a.m., we summoned up all our will power to liven up our muscles out of their torpor and call back our dazed minds to action. We resumed our climb with the sun as a companion. We forced our way with difficulty across a long, exposed traverse, got back to the central couloir and scrambled with sheer joy over virgin slabs to reach the summit by twelve, after fifty-one hours' struggle. We had had to come through those hours to live that last minute to the full.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Bernard Pierre, who is, of course, a member of the Club, is to be congratulated on this great climb, which, though shorter, is considered technically harder than the Epèron Walker route on the North Face of the Grandes Jorasses. Lack of space has made it impossible to print a technical note, supplied by Pierre, of the details of the route, but it is available to any member who would like to see it. The climb was done in vibrams, with a 180-foot nylon rope, 25 pitons and 10 karabiners. Of the 51 hours spent on the face 25 were spent in actual climbing.

The first ascent of this route was made on 14th—16th July, 1937, by three climbers from Lecco (R. Cassin, G. Esposito and V. Ratti) and two climbers from Como (M. Molteni and G. Valsecchi). The two parties were originally quite independent, but joined into a single rope from the second day. Molteni and Valsecchi died of exhaustion on the descent. The ascent took 54 hours, 34 of them spent in actual climbing.

Pierre wishes to stress the point made in his article, that artificial climbing is not in his view an attraction in itself. He writes : " I know that the use of pitons is not well considered by British climbers. It is almost my own opinion, but the difference remains that artificial climbing is sometimes a necessity. Notwithstanding our borrowing from the Italian and Austrian technique of pitonage, Rebuffat and myself agree completely with you in Great Britain that free climbing gives the purest delight and remains the only true one. Artificial climbing is merely a means and nothing more."

A MINOR MISCHABEL MEMORY

F. H. KEENLYSIDE

OUR time was running out and our plans were unfulfilled. We had spent the past ten days dodging across the Swiss-Italian frontier in search of better weather. We had endured a good deal of snow and hail but had had two very fine days in which we had snatched at the nearest mountains which happened to be Punta Grober and the Rimpfischhorn. We had now gathered in Zermatt and collected Remy Theytaz. He had been engaged partly to give us assistance on what was intended to be the climax of our tour and partly to run him in for a trip with Emlyn after we had gone.

The next item on the list was the traverse of the Matterhorn from the Schönbühl to Breuil, but in the prevailing conditions Remy vetoed this at once. We talked round and about all evening and eventually settled to climb the Teufelsgrat on Saturday, descend to the Langefluh hut, coming back over the Alphubel the next day to the Täsch hut, from which point Emlyn and Remy thought they might have a shot at the South face of the Täschhorn, the rest of us leaving Switzerland that day.

Between us we found that we could remember practically the whole of Mrs. Mummery's account of the first ascent ; the bull, the party at Täschalp, the collapse of Andermatten, the rotten rock, the thunderstorm, the bivouac and the 5-30 a.m. return to Randa. This jigsaw of divided memories brought us a feeling of good-humoured familiarity with a mountain we had not yet touched ; and when we reached the ridge we were able to place landmarks in their context in the Mummery story. I looked up the climb in Conway's Guide to the Eastern Pennines of 1891 and found this, the longest climb in the neighbourhood, tersely described as follows :—

“ By the S.W. arête.

Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Mummery ; 15th July, 1887 ; A.J. XIII. 414.

"A couloir is ascended from the Kien gl.* to a point on the ridge, somewhat E. of the Strahlbett. The arête is followed thence to the top."

The curious should compare this with Kurz's entry. Conway may not be modern, but he is certainly portable.

It was a very hot afternoon. We had planned to take the train to Täsch, but it turned out that the train did not stop there so we walked straight to the Täsch hut which we found to be brand new, very clean and comfortable. Our only anxiety when we went to bed was due to the state of our food supplies. Owing to Remy's inability to read Emlyn's writing, we had only got about a quarter of the food we intended. Supper was, therefore, rather harshly rationed. We were up at one o'clock; the night was magnificently fine, the lower masses of the Mischabel black against the moon.

At 1-45 we set out in single file; at first we were on a path but this vanished or was lost in crossing a moraine ridge of large blocks. We traversed across moraines, glacier arms and subsidiary ridges. The moon was behind the hills and was not of great help in picking a way through boulders, but daylight grew over us as we approached the Kienlücke across the Weingarten glacier. At 4-45 we were at the foot of the couloir descending from the gap. We zig-zagged up the couloir on ice and frozen blocks for some distance before taking to the rocks on our right (true left of the couloir). Here we roped up; Roy tied to Remy, John to me and David to Emlyn. The next section was up a gully of very loose rock before we moved on to steeper ground. Here Remy was soon out of sight and no two ropes followed quite the same course. Although the general angle was steep no serious difficulty was met except by Emlyn and David who tackled a badly iced chimney. At seven o'clock we came together on a shelf just below the ridge, and sat down to a second breakfast; after which we scrambled through a small snow cornice onto the ridge at 7-45. We had taken longer than the time given from Täschalp and it may be better to start from there rather than from the hut.

It is difficult to remember any particular step or incident for the next five hours or so. We could not at any stage see our

* From the Täsch hut, of course, the ridge is reached from the other (Weingarten gl.) side.

route very far ahead ; each major rise in the ridge hid from us what lay beyond. The ridge was always narrow, at no point was there any broadening into a platform where we could have sat down to lunch without tying ourselves and our sacks in position. On our left was generally a steep snow slope broken perhaps halfway to the glacier by abrupt cliffs ; on our right the cliff appeared vertical and at times it certainly overhung the gulf below. The rocks were quite untrustworthy. Frequently I pushed loose stones off the ridge ; if they fell to the left they bounded down the snow and disappeared over the lip of the lower cliff, if to the right, they slipped quietly from view and no sound returned from the depths into which they fell. Ahead and to the right was the beautifully repellent South face of the Täschorn and the ridge leading down to the Mischabeljoch. Ahead and to the left large parties could be seen descending the upper snows of the Dom. Across wide spaces of the sky sinister torpedo clouds were assembling round Mont Blanc and above the Oberland ; they seemed too far away to threaten us.

We made steady progress throughout the morning and were feeling confident that we should complete the ridge within the ten hours mentioned by Kurz. The grand gendarme went well ; "*une commode vire rocheuse mène à droite à une partie surplombante formée de blocs sans liaison*," and the crumbling face "*de cette méchant tour*," was climbed with great prudence to regain the ridge. Soon after noon we went through several slight snow showers but I do not remember noticing signs of any serious early deterioration of the weather in our neighbourhood, probably because I was too preoccupied with continuous movement over rock which needed constant care.

At about two o'clock the intermittent snow showers became continuous and thick, visibility got steadily worse and a bitter wind blew the snow horizontally past us. Climbing became harder, both from the state of the rocks and from the state of the climbers, whose chilled hands grew clumsier as the temperature fell. In these sharply deteriorating conditions we reached the "*ressaut infranchissable*" of the S.A.C. Guide. At this stage all three ropes were joined together, the order of advance being, as before, Remy, Roy, self, John, Emlyn, David. This was a mistake as the rope was now too long and vulnerable on loose

rock, but argument through wind and weather would in any case have been impossible. Remy traversed off to the left ; the "*vires inclinées en dehors et très exposées*" were covered with snow and ice which perhaps made them easier. Steps were cut across this for 60 yards or so to the foot of an open oblique fault slanting up the cliff from left to right. This was presumably the chimney "*toujours difficile, souvent verglacé,*" but it was too shallow a depression to deserve the title of chimney. It was awkward to enter, the rocks were covered with ice and there was a little snow on top of that. Being an upward traverse, the rope could not come to the climber from above, and owing to the length of the belayless passage it was impossible to move one at a time ; Remy, Roy and I were all in the "chimney" at once, while John and Emlyn were standing in ice-steps below ; David had reasonable foothold at the point where the rock step sprang up from the ridge.

Cries came up to me from John demanding "more slack." There was no slack, Roy was struggling up to a secure position and I had to follow to enable him to reach it. The rope from me to John, I noticed, was caught round a knob of rock projecting from the ice. I sought sufficient security to be able to spare a hand to flick the rope, but while I sought John succeeded in jerking the rope off the obstacle without dislodging it. A moment later a cry from Emlyn indicated stonefall, and a further cry that John had been hit and was "out." It must have been nearly 3-0 p.m.

Emlyn later told me that several stones just missed John's head, that then came another and hit him a glancing blow on the shoulder. It seems that John was not completely "out" ; he had sagged forwards in his steps but did not faint. I climbed quickly up past Roy onto a soup-plate of rock projecting on the far (S.) side of the ridge. Although I had no belay I could at least take John's weight and get a good pull on his rope when needed. Remy sat on the rock a few feet above me staring gloomily into the blizzard. Roy was a few feet to my left tied to a rock on the ridge. There followed some shouting between Emlyn below and Remy above in which Remy declined to take any action and stated that it was impossible to send another rope down.

Seeing that no help was forthcoming from above, Emlyn reorganised below. John, who was obviously in great pain and took a gloomy view, was tied closely to David's waistloop. They were left standing in ice-steps supported by the rope from me whilst Emlyn led the oblique chimney, a fine lead under the prevailing conditions. It was bitterly cold waiting ; we were shivering inside clothes stiff with frost. Festoons of ice and rime hung from our forelocks, eyebrows and unshaven jaws. If John was badly hurt it seemed impossible to get him up the chimney and out of the question to try to descend the interminable ridge. Below my feet was a gulf of darkness, all around the white horizontal lines of driving snow stood out against the black backcloth of the storm. Presently David's hat swept across the ridge and swirled into obscure space. Emlyn's hat had gone the same way ten minutes earlier.

It seemed much later when Emlyn appeared on the ridge, but he had probably only taken ten minutes from the time he started to climb. We now had two ropes to the party below. David and John began to climb, more or less as one man, we giving them all the assistance we could with the ropes. It was good to have something to do even if it was only pulling on a rope attached to two invisible men, but it did nothing to warm our fingers. Eventually they reached the corner where Roy stood, almost unrecognisable under their white sheets of snow and ice. It was a great achievement on both their parts and we were very glad to see them. I took John's rucksack and bent a frozen rope round and round me over the two rucksacks. This turned out to be an error ; not because of the weight of two sacks and two pairs of crampons but because this effectively sealed my own rucksack. It would have taken so long to unwind the rope, remove the sacks and refix them that it could not be contemplated for the next eight hours or so. My axe, my spare sweaters, my food, were out of reach.

The party re-sorted itself ; Remy tied John to himself on a short rope and set off up the ridge ; they were soon engulfed in the gloom. The rest of us all tied together, Emlyn leading and I last. We went up and down the remaining rock pitches quickly but not quickly enough to generate any warmth. These last pitches "*offrent encore de serieuses difficultés*" and were very hard in places under new snow which concealed whatever

rugosities there may have been. I remember particularly one slab at an easy angle up which most of the party floundered with a swimming motion.

We reached the final snow shoulder and made on upwards. It was about a quarter-past five when we left the rock ridge. Before long we came upon Remy and John waiting, suddenly looming through the murky air. We all tied together again, Remy in the van, I in the rear. Emlyn and I favoured descent to the Langefluh hut via the Mischabeljoch but Remy said the Dom hut would be easier to reach, so we contoured off to the left.

We wandered hither and thither over vast snow slopes, always being brought up on the upper lip of an ice cliff and having to climb up again to make another cast. I do not know how long we roamed shivering in the white darkness ; every now and again a huge schrund yawned suddenly at us and we wondered whether it was the same or a different one. We gloomily contemplated digging ourselves in for the night, anything to get out of the icy wind.

Mercifully, a momentary rift in the clouds beneath us allowed us to glimpse the glacier below and with this Remy came into his own. He led us down, weaving his way through huge crevasses with great skill. The blanket had closed round us again, but Remy must have used the fleeting rift to photograph the lie of the glacier on his mind for we hardly paused.

On reaching the more level stretches of the glacier below we cheered ourselves with thoughts of hot coffee and dry blankets in the Dom hut. At 9-0 p.m. Remy led us off the glacier onto some rocks, and warmth and shelter seemed very near. It had stopped snowing but was very dark. Scrambling over the snowy rocks was not easy ; there was no sign of a path but we hoped it was a short cut known to Remy.

Eventually John was heard protesting that he couldn't climb vertical rocks with one arm in the dark. We gathered at the foot of the pitch, confirmed John's view and brought a very disgruntled Remy down, a process of some difficulty. Remy said the hut was quite near, if we went back to the glacier he would certainly lead us to it, by another route. We were beginning to wonder about Remy's local knowledge, and voices were raised in favour of a direct descent to Randa. (That,

after all, was in the Mummery tradition.) Remy said this was impossible, the glacier was too crevassed. We struggled back to the glacier, secretly abandoning hopes of early warmth.

We moved uphill along the edge of the rocks for a bit ; Remy ascended a broad couloir for a hundred yards or so. John followed him until he cut off across rocks again "to find a path" ; we stayed some fifty yards behind. Remy repeated that he was sure he knew the way, but we had lost all faith. We decided to continue the direct descent of the glacier, but we had first to collect Remy and John. Shouts were exchanged but it was long before Remy would admit defeat and return. At first he said it was impossible to get down the glacier, then that he would follow but not lead ; eventually he was brought to reason since obviously any other of us would have wasted much more time finding a route down. Once he had taken the lead he conducted us down the glacier with excellent judgment. We started the further descent at midnight, having wasted three hours in this search for a hut that was in fact on the far side of the next glacier.

I was still embarrassed by the absence of an axe, having failed to take advantage of the argumentative pause to unwind my impedimenta. I did succeed in abstracting my flask from a pocket of the rucksack and sought to drink, but the mixture of tea and lemon was frozen solid and I could get nothing. It was a weary procession that moved down the glacier ; one member dropped a glove, but was unwilling to hold up progress while he picked it up ; another's puttee slowly unwound trailing in the snow, became detached and was abandoned. From time to time somebody would slip, fall, skid and be held, except once. Roy slid past, upset David and collided with poor John who promptly disappeared head first into a crevasse. At this point the human avalanche was held but it took some time to get John out and it was obviously very painful to him. The steepest places, fortunately, were crossed without mishap, which was remarkable because it was impossible to see the steps chipped by Remy. It snowed half-heartedly from time to time, but by 2 a.m. it was clear and the moon gave us some light reflected from the glacier.

At 3-0 a.m. we got off the glacier onto moraine. For hours we stumbled and slid on loose stones and earth ; the surface

of the Kiental is the vilest I have ever met. We scattered to find a path but found none. Remy disappeared for the next three hours, apparently seeking the Kien hut which was somewhere high up on the ridge on our right. The valley was a narrow trench excluding the moon. We began to see non-existent objects ; chalets with lighted windows, cowsheds, glacier lanterns. The going must have been excruciating for John, jolting his arm at every step.

The dawn broke fine ; the Visp valley ahead was full of low cloud but above it shone the peerless pyramid of the Weisshorn.*

John and I picked up Remy again about half-past six and traversed right over wooded hillsides. We reached the Hotel de la Gare at Randa at 7-48, having been out for thirty hours and three minutes. We had had nothing to eat for 24 hours except what we had in our pockets, in my case, a handful of boiled sweets, but I do not remember feeling hungry. The others had arrived by separate routes a few minutes earlier. Before getting down to a substantial breakfast of omelette, coffee and honey, John and I each drank a bottle of Fendant. Returned to Zermatt we took John to a doctor. Two bones in his shoulder were broken ; he was strapped up and sent home that night under Roy's escort.

On the morrow David went home, Emlyn to the Oberland, and I to exchange insults with Mr. Vishinski at Belgrade.

The last word on the Teufelsgrat was said by Alexander Burgener sixty years ago : " If you not more careful are, you will kill your man."

* Almost exactly the picture shown as frontispiece to " My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus " in the original (1895) edition.



ON A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE TÖDI

WILLIAM BELL

No, never tell me that this peak is proud
of his eternal snows, nor that his tears
gully his cheeks in pity for the cloud
which plumes his head, and drops, and disappears ;

for he remembers that he must at length
be conquered by a more drawn-out disease,
remembers that his ancient height and strength
have fallen about his feet in trickling screes,

remembers, too, that through the boundless air
and through the unnumbered summers of the future
there float the long processions of the weather,

that cloud among them, looking sadly where
his splendid crest and our aspiring nature
should find their immortality together.

ANTARCTIC MEET, GRAHAMLAND, 1948

E. W. K. WALTON

I DO not pretend that there was anything official about this combined Meet of the Harvard Mountaineering Club and the Climbers' Club. The term is only justified by the fact that all of us were members of the one club or the other.

The Meet took place in the area of Neny Fjord, Marguerite Bay, close to the Southern base of the Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey and of an American Expedition under Commander Ronne. East from the base the mainland rises to a 6,000-foot plateau, 30 miles wide, unbroken for its 600 miles' length. Between this plateau and the sea lie most of the mountains of real interest to climbers.

The Climbers' Club were represented by Frank K. Elliott, A. R. C. Butson and myself, all members of the Survey. The Harvard Mountaineering Club representatives were W. R. Latady, who had led a successful air-supported ascent of Mount St. Elias in Alaska in 1946, and Robert Dodson, its President and Secretary respectively.

Elliott had been in Marguerite Bay for a week, having sledged in from 550 miles farther north. This 70-day trip would have afforded anyone with a reasonable excuse for hibernating in a sleeping bag, but he preferred to climb. Four of us from the Southern base had crossed the 6,000-foot plateau in December to meet him and his party and guide them back to Marguerite Bay. Butson and I had spent most of the summer running a dog haulage service from place to place, and in so doing had managed to see a good deal of the more interesting mountains of the area without actually being able to come in close contact with them. Latady had spent much of his time down south on aerial survey, and, like us, had seen much but touched little. Dodson had spent the greater part of the summer geologising on the W. Coast with his team and had just returned from 90 days in the field.

The official excuse for the holiday was to collect mosses and lichen with the rider that these were only required from places of abnormal exposure above the 1,000-foot level. With this in mind Elliott, Butson and myself drove across the sea ice to camp 10 miles from base at the foot of a magnificent group of mountains on the S. side of Nyen Fjord, a group which showed more climbing promise than anywhere else in the area. Dodson was already in camp, ostensibly for geology, and Latady flew in from the nearby Penguin rookery, bringing with him a load of cameras of all types and sizes. Travelling on sea ice at this time of year is most entertaining : thaw pools of various depths form all over the surface ; if deep the dogs swim and the whole operation becomes rather amphibious ; remarkably good fun, and in actual fact much safer than it sounds.

The mountain group under which we were camped is topped by a very fine 5,000-foot peak which we called the Nyen Matterhorn. The peak itself divides northwards into two ridges running N.E. and N.W., each serrated by imposing towers, problems in themselves ; and the N.W. ridge finishes off as it falls away to the sea with a magnificent 1,000-foot pinnacle. This pinnacle we subsequently named Sanctuary Pinnacle, and the tower next along the ridge became the Thumb. In the warm sun, with the sound of running water as a background, it was hard to believe that this was the Antarctic ; only the dogs lying on the rocks, the icebergs and the small black dots that were seals, made one realise that civilisation with all its complications was pleasantly far away.

The next day we climbed the scree to the bottom of Sanctuary Pinnacle, from where, as a rock climb, it looked impossibly steep and insecure, especially the topmost flake. The climb was divided naturally into three parts, the lower 300 feet neither steep nor secure, the next part a 200-foot band of grey rock which was steep, and to judge from the *débris*, also rotten, and the last 200 feet stable by necessity, for it was so isolated.

The first 300 feet was very easy with short pitches and bucket-like stances, each, I must admit, filled with *débris* : a gully, a chockstone and a mantelshelf—all the classical positions, even a bandstand from which to view the grey band, which was to be the crux of the climb. There were three possibilities, a steep crack to the left, a twin chimney in the centre or a V-shaped

chimney on the right. All were investigated and the next day I borrowed Elliott's rubbers and struggled up the central route, while Butson belayed me from 30 feet lower down. It was a nasty sort of place, with large lumps of rocks balanced on end, only stable if one pushed one's way up gently, and avoided the tempting thank-God hand-holds with which the route was amply provided.

The thin needle-like spires which formed the top when viewed from the sea ice were now found to be two thin flakes lying side by side separated by a deep but narrow crack. We were seated on the outer skyline of the taller flake as seen from below, with the rock rising at about 80 degrees above us and steepening for the last 80 feet. The other side of the flake was vertical, and the crack in between the flakes gave no reasonable route. Belays were excellent and pitches never more than 40 feet—the only consolation, as it was an airy spot and for the first time that I can recall I really noticed the exposure. Latady awed me with the remark that it was definitely “sneaker” ground. Needless to say, Elliott led. He climbed up in three pitches, and straddled the top which he pronounced rather sharp and not very roomy. There was only room for three of us *à cheval* or rather *à demi-cheval*, for the side that we had climbed was about 85 degrees and the other side was certainly vertical. Butson was able to drop on to the top of the other flake where he remained balanced on one foot for three-quarters of an hour ; the top of this second flake was some 2" square and dropped away steeply on all sides.

From where I sat, the camp lay framed between the two final flakes ; it was surely the airiest spot on earth that I ever knew. Resting with the knife edge on one's forehead, it was possible to see the sledges below with either eye, looking as it were along either side of a piece of paper. We climbed off, and rapelled down the grey band, leaving a piton to mark our route for future generations, who may by then have worked out the rocks of the civilised world. Frank Elliott remarked that it was a very severe climb due entirely to its exposure. I think he was right.

Next along the ridge towards the Matterhorn summit is the first of the towers, the Thumb, and this was to be our next objective. The following day, however, was essentially a lie-up day ; not because the weather was worse than one expects

in the Alps or at home, but because in the course of two years down here we had all become a bit cautious ; and unsettled weather conditions in the Antarctic can quickly change into conditions of wind and cold, which easily reach fatal proportions. I took my team out across the ice with Latady in the afternoon to have a distant look at the route up the Thumb. The route, needless to say, always seemed to be round at the back, so that as a "recce" not much was achieved. However, dogs enjoy rough ice and crossing a rough glacier snout is for them a form of game, with low scores for turning a sledge over, and jackpot if both driver and sledge can be submerged in an open lead.

The approach to the Thumb, when we started the next morning was by way of a south-facing snowslope, which steepened and slid away into the depth of a small combe. Traces of wet snow avalanches crossed the route, but out of the sun the snow was well frozen. The rock on the Thumb is volcanic and, as a result, is very patchy ; with its wide deep gullies separated by steep buttresses each leaning up into its own peak, it was strangely reminiscent of Lliwedd. Climbing from the snow on to the rock was rather tricky, but was safeguarded by an excellent stance in the lip of a narrow bergschrund. Once on the rock, climbing was easy for 300 feet by keeping to the ridge, but here it narrowed, steepened and finally became rotten ; so we stopped. Elliott put on rubbers and traversed out, and then up a steep crack, which he pronounced possible. I must admit that as used by Elliott the word "possible" has a very wide range, from plain easy to plain impossible, so we retreated on the maxim that climbing and rubbers do not mix in the Antarctic. As we climbed off, a good route appeared across the gully to the left of our ridge and we decided to use this if we could manage a second visit. Rock climbing in the far south is a sport most essentially to be carried out in the sun ; we were already cold from being in shadow, so decided to return to base.

On January 10th, after two more days lie-up, a good fall of snow cleared the clouds away. Elliott and Butson went to investigate a crack that might give a second route to the Sanctuary Pinnacle, but returned to camp when the weather looked like becoming good enough for a higher climb. We left at midnight for the Neny Matterhorn. Climbing here has the

distinct advantage of continuous daylight. As we climbed on ski, the sun half set and rose again, yet never really left us : daylight stayed, but the low sun lacked power and we climbed fast to keep warm. At 1,500 feet we left our ski and picked our way up a deep, winding glacier which led to a wide col, from which a long snow ridge seemed to offer a route to the top.

The ridge turned into a long crampon climb which steepened to 50 degrees as the snow covering became thin, and exposed the glare ice beneath. The sun was touching the ridge a few yards to the right but we were cold in the shadow, and when we reached the bergschrund which separated the ridge from the summit, 100 feet above, it was evident that we were stopped. The upper wall of the bergschrund was some 60 feet high, festooned with huge icicles glistening in the sun. It could have been climbed direct or by-passed to the left with a long traverse, but both routes would require ice pitons to safeguard the leader. The temperature was well below zero Fahrenheit, and we felt that to proceed would have been foolhardy. The views were astonishing : 50 miles south lay the Terra Firma Islands, representing seven days' travel in the previous spring, now looking astonishingly close in the clear polar air. Northwards across the deep shadow of the Grahamland Plateau, could be seen the base, with the American ship frozen fast in the ice close beside it. Westwards the little explored coast of Alexander Land lay pink and clean in the morning sun, even though a hundred miles away. We climbed down 2,000 feet with care and stopped in the sun to eat, on the edge of a huge bridged crevasse, blue and bottomless, in contrast to the sunlit snow.

Two thousand feet of glissading and walking, three miles of ski-ing, and we were back at camp 12 hours after we had left. As a climb it had been disappointing for we had so nearly reached the top ; on the other hand, we had learnt the limitations of climbing out of the sun in this cold country.

The next day I moved down the Fjord to help the American geologist on a glacier reconnaissance, and left Butson and Elliott in the Pinnacle Camp. The ten miles across the bay ice was enlivened by the numbers of seals sunning themselves on the ice. These are always a magnetic source of attraction to a fractious team, and we covered the distance with but nine sealy encounters in just under 90 minutes.

The weather stayed excellent, so Latady, Dodson and I decided to give the glacier a miss and to climb straight up to the plateau by a snow and ice climb, starting from the north side of Neny Fjord. As a route it seemed very much of a back entrance to the plateau proper, for our usual sledging route was to the north up a steep, crevassed glacier.

We left camp at six in the morning and climbed on ski up a narrow, twisting glacier to 2,500 feet, changed into crampons and worked our way up to the plateau cornice at 5,000 feet. At one point the cornice had fallen away and a steep snowdrift formed a safe route to the top. At one moment we climbed on steep, sunless snow, and the next, almost as suddenly as climbing onto a table, we were over the top in the sun with miles of rolling snow in front of us. Five miles away below us, the three-day old tracks of a returning sledge party could be seen winding away towards base. To the north was Adelaide Island, an unexplored and challenging place miraged up to great heights. Looking down, one had the impression of being in an aircraft without that impersonal lack of connection which flying provides. Neny Glacier looked less forbidding with its heavy crevassing dwarfed by distance. We climbed down the first 800 feet and glissaded down the steep safe snow back to the ski and then ski-ed back to camp.

At the Pinnacle Camp Elliott and Butson had spent eight hours traversing a long hog backed ridge in the area below the pinnacle. They announced that they had found "a nice little chimney for me," (apparently they had a strange idea that I was partial to narrow chimneys full of rotten rock). It was part of a route to the topmost pinnacle on Pinnacle ridge and turned out to be exactly as described, cold and cheerless. From the top of the chimney the pinnacle was vertical and lacked holds, so we traversed downwards along the ridge, where the Old Man of the Mountain in the form of a young snow petrel spat semi-digested prawns at us, and we retired hurriedly by our route up, using a long rappel.

We decided to make the next day the last of the holiday, as there were impending signs of the arrival of the relief ship. There seemed to be a chance of a route to the top of the Thumb on the northern side. If this went it would at least be warm and pleasant climbing in the sun. We started up the rock face

leading from the gully of the previous day's climb ; 600 feet up a long slanting crack led to an open series of buttresses, all looking the same, and we climbed fast to 2,000 feet, leaving our route off well-marked with cairns. Climbing was always easy, though hard enough for the Antarctic, but we were stopped abruptly 1,000 feet from the top of the Thumb. The rock steepened—not impossibly, but we could not afford to be caught by the evening cold on such a steep face. Luckily we found a back route off down a snow gully and slid off back to camp.

I suppose in retrospect that this was one of the best periods of my time in the south. Sledging field work in the Antarctic is so bound up with, and yet apart from, mountaineering. Many of the precautions used in mountaineering are used in sledge travel and technique, and many more could be, yet so much of one's time is spent in looking at and, to the best of one's ability, avoiding all forms of mountains. Journeys have to be planned for a specific purpose. There is no time on a survey sledging journey for anything except survey, and this applies to all the 'ologies of Polar field work. Climbing must be essentially sought after and as such enjoyed all the more. For these reasons, although the prospects of good climbing in the area are legion I cannot recommend a mountaineer to visit these parts if climbing be his only aim. But as a place of rugged mountainous beauty, where time is at a discount, and modern equipment is available to counteract the out-dated vision of Antarctica as a place of continuous discomfort, it has much in its favour.

As a Meet we achieved but little in the way of spectacular routes on virgin peaks, but for what it is worth I have recorded the first, and probably the last, Climbers' Club Antarctic Meet.

THE BEACON

C. W. F. NOYCE

“Only a hill, earth set a little higher ”

—*Geoffrey Winthrop Young.*

MANY foreigners would deny the title of “ mountain ” even to our Lakeland hills. They would indeed be startled at having to include a bump of no more than 1,395 feet in the catalogue. Yet here it is, the Worcestershire Beacon rearing itself in my imagination 900 feet above Malvern town, and try as I will I cannot get out of my head that it is a mountain. I must perforce introduce it, even if the company includes the Himalaya themselves, and having introduced it I must look around, to see whether it can justify its status.

On my first acquaintance with the Beacon my leg had been broken and I endured for three long weeks seeing its grassy mass above me, before I was strong enough to win to the top. Each day, however, I would contrive to get just a little higher up its flank ; sometimes by the grass and bracken gully to the south, sometimes by the rocky edge that seems to hang over Malvern College, sometimes by the Happy Valley mounting directly from Church Street to the col between the Beacon and North Hill, its brother and more sequestered sentinel. At last I was up, on a raw day of October, in a mist that almost blinded me—Heaven be praised—to a summit tea-shed of which poor Snowdon itself might have been ashamed. I made the ascent from Happy Valley again, and on many subsequent days, and came to realise that even a tea-shed might have its own peculiar uses. On one day of specially drenching mist I met a party of small boys as I was coming down. “ Are they doing teas on the top ? ” one of them shouted. “ No.” “ Then we’re going down,” and with one accord they abandoned the remaining hundred feet and plunged for the fleshpots, loath as Piers Plowman himself to remain “ meatless and moneyless on Malvern Hills.”

There is then a duty performed by the tea-shed, as by the Snowdon hotel: that of decoy to the generality of summit-seekers. However much a mountain it may look from Worcester, it must be confessed that a very easy half-hour from Malvern Priory will take you to this highest summit of the Beacon. In fact you may race up it, if you are as active as the College's Headmaster, in fourteen minutes odd from College Road. Therefore upon a fine summer's afternoon you will meet upon its slopes hikers booted and spurred and heavily laden; girls wearing straw hats set at attractive angles; immaculate College prefects whose tail coats and silver topped sticks seem to stare with respectful pity at your jacket and old flannels; bank managers with their stalwart progeny of three and four years, all gazing over the woods and fields and silvery Severn towards the distant Cotswolds. The world and his wife are out on the Beacon. But you can wander a few yards off, on to North Hill, and be alone with the martins and kestrels. Or you can tramp the whole crest of the ridge, as far as Chase End Hill, some eight miles south, and meet not a soul except upon the battlemented summit of British Camp. This peak, the Herefordshire Beacon (1,114 feet), being only ten minutes from a main road and a place interesting archaeologically, is fairly certain on a fine day to be as populous as Piccadilly. Crowds swarm over the ancient British earthworks that ring the hill, or slide with shrieks of delight, those of them that are active enough to do so, down the ramparts into the fosses. We found one afternoon a complete charabanc party dancing the Hokey Cokey to a gramophone on the summit citadel. But when you have by-passed these you will be alone again upon Midsummer Hill. It is a stately figure, a bald crown surrounded by trees and girt still with the old encampment walls. Upon its second crest the Long Barrow stands out. You will pass on through oak woods that are the special charm of this southern end of the range, over Ragged Stone Hill. You will drop down to the Valley of the White-Leaved Oak and finish up Chase End Hill. There the ridge flattens out, and you may wander off to the right to visit Bromsberrow Church, or return by Little Malvern Priory under the eastern brow of the hills.

But if you want the Beacon itself to yourself you have only to choose the time and season. Moonlight is good, or the stars.

I have climbed it when the lights seemed to twinkle out of an inky blackness at me, from Worcester and Tewkesbury and Cheltenham. Or I have been alone on one of the summits when the early sun beamed its greeting as I topped the last green rise. Sometimes the air has been so still that I could believe with Macaulay that "Twelve fair counties saw the blaze from Malvern's lonely height," and Gloucester Cathedral has stood out distinct above the haze of the awakening city. Or on other days I have climbed in mist so thick that it needed some skill to get down the right side without a compass, and I could scarce believe that my fellow men were even now lying at ease drinking tea in the County Hotel, only a few vertical feet below me. For on the climb I had been as slow and small as Joseph Cottle felt, around 1800, when he wrote about the Malvern Hills lines which he entitles "Ratiocinative":

"Still I toil,
How long and steep and cheerless the ascent !
It needs the evidence of close deduction
To know that I shall ever reach the height."

Then in the snowy season there is the pleasure of treading virgin ground all over the Beacon's many miles. Once, during the heavy snowfall of 1947, we had great difficulty in reaching the top at all. The only way my robust companion could get me up in rubber-soled shoes was by producing from his pocket a large bootlace, to which I attached myself while he kicked the steps and did the pulling. On some of those evenings British Camp was an awesome place enough. The story of a Roman attack is now, alas, legend ; but in the half light you could almost see the Britons making some last chilly stand against the advancing cohorts.

The mountain, however, was not generally a lonely place during that winter. Every afternoon it became the tobogganing and rolling ground for scores of warm-blooded young from the schools. And the skiers had found their practice slope on North Hill, their Parsenn Run down the Happy Valley. The chief problem, when the track became hard beaten, lay in pulling up before the town. It would have been spectacular but embarrassing to finish with an elegant stop Christiania at the bottom of Church Street.

This is then a friendly hill, too, not a place only of solitude and exertion. I have climbed over it with many friends and guests, following, for instance, the mediaeval ramp which extends right from the Worcestershire to the Herefordshire top. It is hard to believe now that relics were discovered on this Worcestershire summit as late as the nineteenth century. On other days we have lain like Piers Plowman "on a Maye morning on Malvern Hilles . . . in a sleeping," or watching the clouds race across the sky until dusk enticed us down to a princely tea at the Poplars under Midsummer Hill. Even the comradeship of rock climbing, in a small way, these hills allow. I discovered only in 1948 that the rocks at the north tip of North Hill, in and out of the quarries, give good solid climbing and demand a rope. One slab of igneous rock in particular, nearly 200 feet high, attracted the attention of myself and Boy Scout companions from the College. The standard of most of the routes—Heather Corner, the Edge, Slab Route—is just about moderate according to Welsh classification, but with a greater appearance of peril because of loose stones which upon some routes sprinkle every ledge. Much ribald mirth and no little concern have been caused by the second showering Number Three with enough blocks to build a house. (This whole proceeding was watched with kindly interest by the workmen working the quarry.) Or on the valley side opposite there is a much shorter cliff, absolutely firm, offering two harder and very pretty pitches, and an abseil down a twenty-foot overhang.

But I was not satisfied that I really had found a mountain, before a visit during the heavy fog of November, 1948. Malvern lay buried in cotton wool, and one of the Scouts had come with me to complete his Climber's Badge by finding the way to the top of Pinnacle Hill in mist. We arrived with some ado, and the afternoon being yet young, we determined also to find the Beacon. A quarter of a mile up the path from Wyche Cutting the gloom lightened. A few yards farther—we were in brilliant sunshine. The cloud billows plunged away right and left, spun gold on their crests, purple where they swept down towards the darkened plains. We walked on along the grassy ridge, to the summit. Over to the east and beyond the Severn the tip of Bredon Hill beckoned to us above a vaporous sea ; between it and ourselves lay the shadow of the Beacon against cloud, and

upon that shadow our own shadow, a "Brocken Spectre," surrounded by a very faint halo. Such a light effect I had only seen before in the Alps. I waved, and my shadow waved. My companion waved, and his Spectre waved back to him, but I could not see it. Then I went on alone to North Hill, which was fighting a losing battle against the engulfing ocean. Away to the west I could pick out clearly the tops of the Black Mountains in Wales, standing out majestic as the Himalaya. I strained my eyes in vain for a glimpse of Plynlimmon, too, but it had been enough. My Beacon had justified itself as a mountain. In the town below someone said to me : " A rotten foggy day, isn't it ? " But I did not answer.

A sense of great height is peculiar to this tiny range, and I have felt it on no other hills so lowly. Perhaps it is because they rise so suddenly from the plain. I am no geologist, and cannot explain their unique structure ; I know only the odd sensation, as that fog descended, of watching towers and churches in the town slowly emerge, like reefs from a sea, while Worcester, seven miles away, remained buried. I know, too, the astonishing sight of the peaks seen end on, from Alfrick to the North on a frosty morning, when the whole range hung in a haze above sparkling fields, like Japanese lacquer work. Perhaps then height is relative ; the Beacon for me is both higher and lovelier than the 20,000 foot Tibetan lump which stared disdainfully down at us hour after painful hour on the slopes of Pauhunri. And I would take off my hat (if I ever wore one) in respect, not mockery, to the kitchen maid from London who asked her new employer at Malvern : " Has anybody ever been up there ? "

SOME DOLOMITE CLIMBS AROUND CANAZEI

MICHAEL WARD

PETER NOCK and I had already spent ten days climbing, in very uncertain weather. After a few days at Chamonix we had migrated east to find the sun in the Dolomites. Our activities in the Brenta group were frightening and underlined our lack of training. A further few days on the Vaolet Towers and Torri de Principe had increased our respect for the verticality of the Dolomite, and had also raised our morale a little.

Thus it was that we came to Canazei, from which we went up to the Passo di Sella in torrential rain, thunder and forked lightning. We spent the night at a small hotel hidden in a hollow a quarter of a mile from the main road. Next morning the sun was shining and we looked out onto a green rolling downland out of which great square-topped obelisks of red-brown and grey rock thrust themselves into the sky. On the far side of the Passo di Sella we could see the Fünffingerspitze outlined between the Langkofel and the Grohmannspitze—and by a stretch of the imagination one could make out the Schmittkamin running up between the Index and Middle fingers.

Behind us were the four Torri di Sella and this morning we had decided to do a route of the fourth grade on the second tower. One should definitely be wary of “4’s,” as they seem to range from V.D. to hard V.S.

We started on the North Face. It was a chilly, grim, and sunless spot. The first lead went smoothly. The next pitch involved a vertical crack with a piton; this was followed by a fairly difficult traverse to the right to a ledge with two pitons in it. Above this ledge an eave of rock barred the way—I could go neither to the right nor to the left, and so roped down. A further excursion of about 80 feet to the left took us to another steep crack. This had as its

left wall a very steep slab. Up this crack we went for 100 feet ; then Peter, who was leading, belayed only 30 feet above me. This was an ominous sign ; but he had a good belay. I traversed left onto the edge of the slab, which had now become a wall ; a loose crack, complete with loose piton, followed, and I landed on a delightful balcony eighteen inches wide and sloping very steeply. Above, and 15 feet to the right, was the next line of weakness : in between, a hiatus of overhanging and holdless rock. The view between my toes was of scree 250 feet or more below. After a great deal of dithering around and causing Peter some agony, I made the difficult series of moves and landed eventually at a good stance-belay and piton. This reminded me of the crux on the Narrow Slab, and the place was, if anything, as hard and a little steeper. Peter, having followed and had a quick look at the next section, declared that he wouldn't mind seconding, but he would not lead again on this climb.

Above us a perfectly filthy overhang leered black, greasy and most unpromising. The first 20 feet to the overhang were vertical—only one piton could I see—the next 30 feet were most repellent—three chocks of wood were stuck into the crack, and there were three pitons. What happened beyond I did not know. My sinking morale hit rock-bottom, and after a hectic exploration to the right we descended, by abseil, to the foot of the Tower.

Here we restored our broken morale and quaking nerves with food and cigarettes. An hour later we set off to climb the third tower by a relatively easy, and "bellissima" route, before the afternoon hate began. This route was well described—there was one lovely exposed traverse, and all the climbing was on rock which, though of the usual verticality, had a good quantity of holds. We alighted thankfully on the top, cursed the weather, and came rapidly down. On our way we had a profile view of the North Face of the second tower. If we had not been climbing there we would have said it was all overhanging.

Next day we set out in a revengeful mood for the Schmittkamin on the Fünffingerspitze. At 8-30 a.m. we removed our boots and put on kletterschuhe. We then climbed together very rapidly indeed to the foot of the actual chimney. Once again I registered a vow never again to climb a Dolomite chimney before mid-August. A steady stream of water was coming

down—the walls were running in black ooze. In fact, if it had not looked so unpleasant I might have been homesick.

The second pitch involved an excursion from the depths of a wet cave to a delightfully airy position overlooking the foot of the crack. The next 80 feet in a crack were a horrible struggle with the forces of gravity, aided by grease, and the adhesive quality of those portions of the rock which were dry. This episode also took place on an overhang. However, 100 feet above, the sun was shining, and Peter led up vertically out onto the left wall and into its brilliant rays. The sudden change from struggle to delicacy was unnerving, as our fingers were very cold.

After enjoying the sun for a brief spell, we once again returned to the dark and gloomy gully by an abseil. The last 150-200 feet were a great battle in sodden kletterschuhe, but at last we emerged through a hole to land between the Index and the Middle finger. In a few moments we were on the summit. The climb had taken three hours exactly—the guide book time was five hours, and so we felt a little mollified for our disgraceful performance the day before.

Our way down was obstructed by a party of ten Swiss all on one rope. At the bottom we waited for what seemed hours whilst two slow parties negotiated a tricky bit. Our wait was enlivened by a cataract of hail, to the accompaniment of thunder, lightning, and other strange noises. On arriving at a shelter, the hail obligingly stopped. However, by now we were beyond the stage of anger and so collected our boots peacefully and scuttled home.

We walked down to Canazei through some beautiful woods, and the following morning went up to the Rifugio Contrin in intermittent rain. A day of very bad weather followed—however, that night the wind swung a little North of West and the stars came out, one by one. Our day, however, had not been wasted ; we learnt that two Frenchmen had taken twelve hours on the South face of the Marmolada—our proposed climb. Further inquiries by the proprietor of the Rifugio into the amount of rope we had, and discrete questioning as to the possibility of our bivouacing failed to daunt us—much.

At 3-30 we set out. This is an unheard of hour for the Dolomite climbing brethren to be about ; but our disinclination

to get caught in the now habitual afternoon storm and the general madness of the English no doubt helped to explain this indecent hour of departure.

The night was cold, and for the first time this holiday we walked uphill behind a flickering candle. Slowly the stars were extinguished. After an hour or more the sun began to rise, firing all the far summits, and giving the flat leaden clouds on the Western horizon a fleeting satanic glow. As we reached the Col Ombretta we could see to the east a high black layer of cloud bisecting the sky. Below, there was a golden blaze, with the far mountains silhouetted a deep black against this bronze background ; and above, by some strange alchemy of colour, the sky was purple-blue. The rocks and mountains had that curious brittle, metallic colouring that comes before dawn and softens as the day wears on.

On our left was the South face of the Marmolada—2,900 feet of seemingly vertical, or near-vertical, rock. We had looked at many photographs of the route and so had its placing by heart. Indeed it was the only way ; but shown the reality we began to wonder of our ability to climb it.

The South face is cut horizontally by two terraces. To the first terrace was one of the largest pieces of vertical boiler plating that I have ever seen—a smooth, unfissured, grey enamelling of rock. At its right-hand side two cracks ran. The left one was a continuous but tenuous line up this cliff. The right was a broken reed which petered out and began again. The left crack was our route, and the first 600 feet to the first terrace were the hardest part of the climb. We allowed four hours as a maximum time for this section. The way between the first and second terrace looked more broken, and from the second terrace to the top looked possible. In parenthesis I might say that this route was done in 1901.

Such a face is not good to contemplate at the chilly hour of dawn, so we quickly changed into kletterschuhe, ate some chocolate and went to the start. Our way there was enlivened by my involuntary glissade down frozen snow. This I managed to check with my fingers—one nail being nearly torn off.

The route was obvious, but we dithered a bit before launching ourselves into the left-hand crack. Soon, beneath an overhang, Peter had to do a tricky piece of balance climbing. This, as he

remarked, is not good for the still sleeping "inner man." He ran out the usual 100 feet, for we led alternately and climbed always on a 120 feet rope. I found him ensconced comfortably, and well belayed. The portion above looked, as ever, steep. I set off, quite gaily, up this. About 45 feet out, I noticed that everything became overhanging—in fact, there was a really nice juicy overhang, all black and slimy in front of my nose. Suddenly I heard a noise as if an express train were approaching—this ended in a little thud and a spot of snow on the scree far below. It was followed by another similar noise. Obviously stones were falling from higher up. Luckily this performance was not repeated. My attention returned to the overhang. On the right was a piton ; I carabinered it. To the left and 10 feet higher, there was another ; by a great stretch I was able to clip my rope onto this one. Being then safely tacked to the cliff I returned to a less overhanging spot. The place was pleasantly exposed, and the time, I felt, was nearly ripe to contemplate the infinite. However, as the clouds were swarming in from the south-west again I did not delay.

By standing on one piton and clinging to the other with my left hand, my right hand was able to search in a hurried fashion for a good hold. The only good right hand-hold rocked ominously, so I threw it away. The remaining holds were small but seemingly adequate, for after a brief struggle I landed on a good ledge.

The crack continued in varying stages of excellence and decrepitude—dryness and slime. One struggle over an exposed chockstone caused us a little delay—then in two hours, we were on the first terrace. The standard of this section was about severe.

We ate for 30 minutes only, as the sky was rapidly clouding over. On our right the stupendous S.W. wall fell vertically to the scree. An incredible nose was here delineated against a background of scurrying cloud. In front, across the scree, a ridge with towers of strange shapes was gradually sinking beneath us, and in the distance sombre, grey cotton wool cumuli were perching like so many vultures on the surrounding summits. Stray shafts of sunlight were filtered through to strike the rocks around us and lend them a golden-red glow.

The main feature of the next portion was an immense pinnacle. After an abrupt climb we skirted its base, and there followed a steep broken section for 200-300 feet. On the upper part of this, rock was abominably loose—or, as the Italians delightfully call it, “pericoloso.” It adhered to the mountain by some force in direct contradiction to gravity. We reached the second terrace four hours from the start, and here breathed a sigh of relief. The remainder we hoped would take an hour only.

Such was our mood that we discussed the possibility of doing the variation finish—however, down this a stream was tumbling, so we decided to keep dry. At our feet through rents in the cloud, we could see Lilliputians toiling up the scree. We ate a bar of chocolate and then started climbing again on the far side of a crazy pinnacle. Soon we arrived in the swirling mist on the summit ridge, and here the voice of man smote our ears once again—an unpleasant sound it was, too.

The way down to the Bocchetta Marmolada is a glorified ladder—today we rejoiced, but it does spoil the mountain. Soon we were running down to the Contrin where we collected our few belongings and set off down the hill. As we went the clouds came lower and a light rain began. Once again we were leaving the Alps when just in good training.

PRELUDE

A. W. BRIDGE

TO all the Manchester gritstoners of my generation the words "9-15 a.m. to Chinley from Central" or "7-50 a.m. to Marsden from Exchange" were a clarion call to Derbyshire days, and to me they bring nostalgic memories. Actually on most occasions it was "6-40 a.m. from London Road," and that to most of us meant a walk into Manchester from the suburbs, to the music of our nailed boots beating a happy tune on the hard pavements. The four or five miles we had to walk slipped along as we planned our gritstone day ; now and then we would suddenly be brought back from the rocks to our immediate surroundings of dirty pavements and grimy warehouses by a cheerful greeting from a policeman or the newspaper men returning home from their night duties.

These early climbing days become more golden to me as time passes along, and I look back with sympathy and understanding on these gallant efforts to become a mountaineer ; so much precious time seems to have been lost in finding one's way around, and yet the help was really very near at hand. But in those early mountain days of mine a man had to achieve a certain level and prove himself a hill lover before his guardian spirit came from his stance on cumulus clouds and took him by the hand as an accepted apprentice to the craft. How very different it is now when there is too much talk of training the youngsters in the principles of our craft and too little done, beyond a somewhat dehydrated system of impersonal, and often immature, training schemes en bloc. I am not, of course, speaking of such training schemes as those promoted by the F.R.C.C. for their younger members, for which I have admiration.

My first tutor on gritstone climbing was Bobbie Burns of the Rucksack Club, and I believe my first lesson under my maestro was at the Roaches. From the moment I first roped up I had the urge to lead, and it was with a great thrill that I led my first

gritstone climb the Via Doloroso. In my eyes the climb was grossly libelled in its name, for to me, that day, it was a route of perfection.

It was about this time (1926) that I first met Eddie Holliday—a staunch and loyal companion if ever there was one. One Sunday morning on the 9-15 I looked with longing at the obviously experienced climbers wearing the then popular corduroy plus fours. One of the climbers was in a “flat spin” because his companion had not arrived. Now was my opportunity to go climbing; I begged him to take me along, and well remember how crushed I felt when he turned me down “because I had never climbed on Stanage.” (At a later date I was to have the pleasure of rescuing him on the Idwal Slabs.) But it was that same day that I met Eddie who suffered my enthusiasm when he could most justifiably have refused. Nothing ever dismayed him; and he and C. J. Ward were with me when I led two new gritstone routes we named Fairbrook Buttress and Pavlova, both climbs being on the Fairbrook Edge of Kinder Scout—the shaping of things to come.

How useful is gritstone climbing in the development of one's mountaineering values? It is of little usefulness *unless* one adds to the week-end's work a strong dose and large quantities of bog-trotting. Gritstone climbing, even less than rock climbing, will not develop stamina, and Eddie and I arranged a fine series of climbing-cum-bivvy-cum-bog-trotting week-ends with that brilliant fell-walking Club, the Bog-trotters. In 1927 I was made President of this Club, an honour I shall always regard in the highest sense. Our heroes were Eustace Thomas, Fred Heardman and Harry Gilliat. We used them as our yard-stick—and what a mighty yard-stick!

These were halcyon days of great personalities in the climbing and fell-walking world, and the Bog-trotters as a Club looked towards these great names; we did our best to follow the example of getting every inch and minute out of our mountain days. There is no doubt that the Bog-trotters were fell-walkers of the very highest grade; and of the members Ben Bennet was—and is—really brilliant. It was he who asked me to walk (!) the full length, north to south (Penistone—Ashbourne) of the 1" Ordnance Peak District Map, and we covered this distance in the remarkable time of 10 hrs., 20 mins. The

Marsden—Edale walk I used to do in well under 4 hours, and *not* via Wessenden Valley in lieu of Black and White Moss. Many were the fell-walking feats of this Manchester Club ; I think I can justly claim to have walked the fells with the best men in the country, but never have I met the equal of the Bog-trotters as a fell-walking Club.

These early days were invaluable training, together with our gritstone climbing on Stanage, Cratcliffe, Laddow, Castle Naze and Black Rocks.

It was in 1928 that I listened in awe to the accounts of gritstone climbs done by the "3 H's," namely, H. K. Hartley, Roy Horsman and A. T. Hargreaves. These climbers did brilliant work in the development of gritstone climbing ; I doubt if this fact is fully realised. To see Herbert Hartley at work on Laddow was, indeed, an exposition, in a superb class, of the technique of balance ; and it was equally good to see Roy Horsman and "A.T." working out their brilliant new routes on Stanage Edge. And I also heard whispers of one, Maurice Linnell, who was in Hartley's year at Manchester University ; but at this time it was only a name and I could not foresee how much the name Maurice Linnell would mean to me in later days.

I carried on my climbing under the guidance of Bobbie Burns and with Eddie Holliday as my very trusty second. How often Bobbie used to say to me, "I know you can do Tower Face (Laddow) in boots, and maybe Priscilla also, but it is just *not* done. Leave the rocks tidy ; and how can you do that if you score the grit with your nails ?—remember that 20 years from now climbers will want to come to these rocks." Sound advice, but we need not have worried. Today we find our gritstone edges scored and bleeding—on them, mock heroics, and, at their foot, gaping tins and bruised rocks.

It was at Cratcliffe that I first met Maurice Linnell, in 1929, as I was making a solo descent of Giant's Staircase at the close of a summer's day. We introduced ourselves and our climbing partnership was given birth on gritstone. Little did we know of the adventures which were before us ; the Girdle Traverse of Pillar, Clogwyn du'r Arddu and a magnificent day on Ben Nevis in Easter of 1932, when, under really great Alpine conditions, we did the Douglas Boulder and Tower Ridge in the day.

I remember that as we arrived at the Tower it was to find a group of our leading climbers on the point of retreat with the information that they could not follow Jack Longland and Paul Sinker who had forced the route ; and the great thrill which was mine as I also forced the *mauvais pas* and led the route to the finish, to be greeted by Ivan Waller who came dashing along from the top of the Ben with his congratulations. The Tower Ridge is a tough proposition when tackled under truly Alpine conditions such as we had in 1932, but to include the Douglas Boulder as well, in the same day, is a day's climbing to be long remembered.

But I have wandered from Derbyshire and gritstone. It was at Castle Naze that I first met Ivan Waller, and we soon roped up together—or did we climb solo? we probably did. I remember that Ivan bundled me into the Alvis and off we went to Black Rocks, Cromford, where Ivan reigned as Chief Inquisitor. Black Rocks is to the Climbers' Club as Laddow is to the Rucksack Club, and Ivan was truly *the* expert of his day on Black Rocks. Jack Longland, in 1928, made a typical J.L.L. route named Birch Tree Wall which finished with a very delightful traverse—pure balance work—to the pine tree just above Chancery Slab. A later visit by Jack, Ivan and myself led to an escapade which resulted in a very severe and exposed climb which Ivan had forced me to lead and which even to this day is looked upon with respect by Peter Harding—a worthy successor to Ivan as the present day Chief Inquisitor of Black Rocks.

The Cratcliffe week-ends arranged by Eustace Thomas were in a class by themselves and to me most enjoyable, for I knew that prior to the climbing I was assured of a top-notch fell walk with Eustace—and no mercy shown. It was on one of these Meets that I managed to force a greasy ascent of the groove at the left of Hermitage Crack on Cratcliffe, and I seem to remember Eustace taking a pictorial record of that ascent and also the Giant's Staircase.

It was about this time that Eddie and I arranged to go to Chinley one Saturday afternoon ; we planned to walk to Stanage (climb), Cratcliffe (climb), Robin Hood's Stride (climb) and Castle Naze (climb), returning, of course, from Chinley on the Sunday late afternoon. It was a grand show

and a good trial for me, for I was only just recovering from a very badly sprained ankle and I did this round in gym-shoes and a very heavily bandaged ankle. At a later date, I made a jolly little round of Greenfield to Chinley, including climbs on Laddow, Stanage (High Neb and Robin Hood's Ends), Robin Hood's Stride, Cratcliffe and Castle Naze—with no less than two Very Severs to be done on each gritstone edge. We left Greenfield on the Saturday afternoon, straight from work, and in point of fact we did four V.S.'s on Laddow, with two, as planned, on each of the other edges.

But the prelude was drawing to a close. I had met Maurice and much time was being spent in Wales and the Lakes. Bobbie Burns and Eddie had taught the fundamentals to me and I was well prepared for greater adventures.

The Cuillin Ridge in Skye was completed, and the Welsh "Three Thousands"—but for this latter round we started from Llandudno Junction and finished at Beddgelert. Records never entered into our minds, yet I make bold to say that we could have more than held our own with the so-called record times of later parties.

Before breakfast I would do the Great Gully on Craig yr Ysfa (particulars in the Rucksack Club Log Book) and then, after some breakfast, on to Idwal Slabs—Holly Tree Wall—Central Arête—Glyders—Bristly Ridge—Tryfan—down Grooved Arête and back to Helyg. Every precious moment was squeezed out of our week-ends—youth, vigour, ambition and the joy of living in our mountains meant so much to us.

Gritstone climbing in itself could not possibly have prepared us in the stamina required for sterner adventures, in the Alps and at home ; but Derbyshire days well spent, can be of enormous value in preparing the body and the mind for the greater demands made upon it by higher places. Let those of us who live near the Peak be thankful for our opportunities ; and I suggest to the real gritstone climber (I have no fear that the acrobats will take note) that to know Bleaklow and Kinder on a black, stormy winter's night is to experience a worthy test of courage, stamina and the exercise of good, sound mountaineering principles.

My Prelude is completed and the stage is set for mountain days with Colin Kirkus, Maurice Linnell, Jack Longland, A. B. Hargreaves and other well-known names of my generation. The Epilogue belongs to a more worthy pen than mine.

A WELSH THREE-THOUSAND

PETER HARDING

THIS is the result of one of those very persuasive letters which one receives occasionally from a journal editor.

An article please, but what shall I write about? What can I write about? Wales or the Lake District? How long shall the article be? Something like 3,000 words; it sounds simple enough. And yet I have had no hair-raising escapes, no incredible falls. It is going to be difficult. Some climbers seem gifted to write whole chapters on "My Most Difficult Climb" or "A Day on the Milestone." When I set off, pen in hand, on such an expedition I invariably wake up a few hours later having had a wonderful time; but with the paper in front of me still blank. But let's get started. Only a number of words to fit together into some sort of sense or nonsense. Let's start with my first real visit to Helyg.

It was before Whitsuntide, 1946, when I met Richard at the Black Rocks, near Matlock. That was my favourite week-end spot when I wasn't in Wales or the Lakes. A few hours' climbing kindled a strong flame of friendship and we were planning a holiday together. What about going to Wales at Whitsuntide?

Normally, guests were not allowed at Helyg during Bank Holidays, but this one promised to be slack: it might be arranged. All went well and I had high hopes as I set off with Tony on my motorcycle. The weather was perfect. Tony was staying at Tyn-y-Weirglodd, the Manchester University hut near Llyn Quellyn. It was late that afternoon when I wished him "good climbing" at the gate of T-y-W and turned towards Helyg. I met Richard a few hundred yards from the hut, pushing his overladen cycle along the road. In a few moments Helyg was unshuttered and a mighty meal was being prepared with the aid of the North Wales Power Co. The remainder of that evening sped by with photographs and climbing talk. We were the sole occupants until John's party

arrived in the early hours. Another brew of tea and with thoughts of Cloggy we turned in.

The morning fulfilled the promise of the evening ; weather perfect. A large breakfast was quickly put away and we were crammed in Peter's car, bound for Llanberis. It was my first visit to du'r Arddu and I had a queer feeling in the pit of my stomach. I still experience that same feeling before tackling the crux on a hard " V.S." As we ambled up the long track by the side of the Snowdon railway I listened to the experts talking. I chanced to overhear John's question to Richard. " What's the new chap like ? " Richard's answer was embarrassing : I should have to give good account of myself.

Eager eyes waited for the crag to appear and when it did finally rise into view above the gentle slope of Cwm Brwynog, the impressions made upon me by the guide book were deepened. Here was Cloggy, in the rock, more vivid, more impressive than ever a camera-captured image could be.

We rested by the tiny Llyn and ate our sandwiches and chocolate, gazing across at the awe-inspiring slabs of the West, the sheerness of the East. I could hardly wait for the pundits to announce the name of our route. It was to be the Great Slab, with a look at the recent Central Rib.

At the top of the scree, below the crag, we all changed into rubbers and Michael led off for the first party. The smooth way in which he flowed across the " qualifying step " gave no hint of its latent difficulty and the others followed quickly and with no fuss. Richard tied on the business end of our rope, and with a grin and a long stride was out of sight. Then my turn came. I found the step across more awkward than it had been made to look, but the rope above made things friendly.

Once one is off the ground on Cloggy, the angle seems to relent ; the cliff appears to yield after the initial advances and give one time to pluck up courage for the next moves. The view down past the Llyn into the peaceful Cwm is relaxing and the comical little engine with its queer carriages and faintly discernible heads, relieves the seriousness of the position. I have grown to like that engine from the Cloggy viewpoint.

I was invited to lead the next pitch, up by the edge of the Bow-Shaped Slab. It was easy work. Richard came through and across the traverse to the pastures. That looked more

difficult, I thought, and it was perhaps due to my thinking that I didn't find it so.

The advance party was already up the difficult corner and I discovered that it was again my turn to lead. One look at the wet and greasy corner and I decided rubbers were best attached to the waist loop. The pitch wasn't made any easier by the audience of experts on the ledge above and their gasps intimated that I was not paying enough respect to the crux. It went without too much bother.

The whole party gathered on the ledge while John tried the fierce looking crack leading onto the Central Rib. After one or two playful attempts he retired through lack of "zip" as he put it. Peter took over from the rear and quickly disappeared from view. From time to time tufts of grass floated down; the only indications of his progress. Suddenly the rope ran out more quickly and a faint shout heralded victory. The others followed leaving Richard and myself. It was an impressive place. By some odd mishandling of the rope I was still attached to the business end. Richard belayed meaningly and I went into a clinch with the crack. It proved to be much easier than it looked but the greasy groove above had a disconcerting tendency to push one back onto the Great Slab. The lead was a fairly long one, ninety feet; with the usual amount of vegetation. How grand it was to emerge onto the rib and see clean grey rock stretching towards the summit. Richard joined me and, after a scathing remark about my belay, which he lifted from its grassy perch with one hand, we set off towards the sun. The rest was sheer delight.

I was thrilled with my first acquaintance with the cliff. My appetite was whetted, so we gathered in coils and followed the others down by the Eastern Terrace. We all scrambled round to the foot of the Curving Crack. This was a climb which I had longed to see and I was just a little disappointed. From the pictures I had seen of the notorious crack, I expected it to be halfway up the cliff, exposed, with scree beneath, hundreds of feet away. And it was the first pitch—with a soft grassy landing. We all sat down to watch Michael perform. A very smart line in laybacks saw it go in a matter of seconds; Peter followed and John descended into the sun for an "armchair ascent." Richard and I tossed a coin to see who should lead.

I won, but after a very rigid mathematical proof that I was really on the leading end of the rope, I gave in and jammed up the crack marvelling at the wonders of applied mathematics. First pitch or not, it is a fine crack and the whole climb made a perfect finish to a grand day. I shall always enjoy, as I have done many times since, those gloomy middle pitches followed by that exhilarating arête at the top and the exit onto the sunny slopes of the terrace. It was a happy and somewhat tired climber who sat in P.Y.G. that night, drinking and listening to the technical conversation of "les chefs de cordée."

The next day accentuated the fineness of the previous one. It was perhaps more typical of Wales. The good weather had broken. This time it was to be the Llanberis cliffs ; Richard and I took the motorcycle round to Pont-y-Gromlech while the others came by car. Dinas Mot was the first objective—another new acquaintance for me. The weather dictated boots, John dictated Western Slabs (in rubbers!) and after hearing a vague, verbal description we were left alone to decide. They were going to do The Cracks. Not knowing any better, Richard and I ascended directly from the left-hand side of the wall. We found afterwards that we had added the Direct Start, but it was no more difficult than the rest of the climb. It was indeed a very attractive route and I came across my first piton in a crack above the first ledge. I made a resolution to return and extract it. Near the bridge of the Nose we met the other party coming round on the Girdle. They descended Western Gully and disappeared in the direction of the "three cliffs" while we put on the top pitch of our climb. By that time it was raining heavily and we rapidly descended to spend an hour talking and shivering beneath one of the large boulders. Then, resigned to a soaking, we walked across to the "Grochan," to watch John and Co. at work on the Bluebell Traverse. There was no sign of them when we reached the foot of the cliff so we ascended by a route called Nea. It turned out to be an ideal climb for that day ; harder than Western Slabs we thought, under the conditions. Its many trees completed the job of soaking us.

Before returning home the next day, amusing hours were spent in Helyg watching the rope tricks which are so wittily described by Eric Shipton in last year's *Journal*.

It was a memorable holiday, for it was the beginning of many things ; climbs and friendships. The rest of the year was full of both these things.

Two months later I was again at Helyg, this time for a longer stay. Craig yr Ysfa was visited and the Amphitheatre Wall remembered for its Pinnacle and the effect of the rough rock on bare legs. With Tony I scrambled all over the Nose of Dinas Mot, removing my piton and climbing everything except Diagonal Route. Cloggy was in perfect condition after a dry spell and Longland's was ascended when a rescue alarm was found to be a damp firework. The Narrow Slab, on a day when we considered Pigott's too serious an undertaking for a party of two. A remarkable day ! It was then that I first learned to appreciate that funny little engine. We were alone on the cliff save for an unseen party on Longland's. Tony was patiently sitting at the foot of the Narrow Slab proper, secured to the Dinas Mot piton and little else. I was on the slab with nearly fifty feet of rope out ; on the difficult part. And I *was* finding it difficult. I sensed the seriousness of the position, the exposure, the minuteness of the holds. My finger tips started to perspire. Then I looked across the Cwm. Without warning, the little engine chugged noisily and painfully into sight, and I started to laugh. That comical contraption had relieved the stress ; lightly I stepped across to the corner and up, further to the very edge then onto a stance. I mused what a brilliant lead it must have been when Maurice Linnell first did it, and I looked at my engine and laughed again.

The days flashed by, crowded with climbs hard and easy. The last few were a fine climax.

All my friends had returned and it was during a solo day in Cwm Idwal that I met Nic. It was not our first meeting, but we had never climbed together. A day on Glyder Fawr was planned. The weather was rather grim, cold and squally, as Nic led the way towards Bochlwyd. I guessed that he had mistaken my clumsy pronunciation of Fawr and followed without comment. On Glyder Fach we started up the Chasm route, with occasional hail. I was very much impressed by the steep groove on the left, and tried to study it as we ascended. So this was the notorious Lot's Groove. Even the weather couldn't damp my enthusiasm for attempting it and I tried to

persuade my companion that it would go easily. He was not convinced, but tied on at the foot of the Chimney. The next few moments went by quickly. I was so absorbed with the delightful technicalities of the climb that I didn't notice the wind and the rain. Running belays on the spikes below the overhang, curious spiral bridging movements above, then I was at the top. It started to rain again, the wind howled and hail stung my face and hands. I yelled for Nic to follow. He answered that it was no climb for a man nearing fifty, in boots, in bad weather. But he was of stern stuff and really wouldn't have missed it. At thirty feet he stopped for some time then started to descend slowly. I think he must have started on the wrong foot. It was so cold that I could hardly hold the line, I daren't open my eyes for the hail beating at my face. I said an inward prayer and hoped he wouldn't fall off. He didn't. He rested in the Chasm then announced that he was coming again. This time he meant it and I could hardly take the rope in fast enough. His face appearing above the overhang was a sight which matched the roughness of the day. I shall always remember Nic coming over the top, his shirt tails flying and one leg of his tattered plus-fours completely torn off, flapping round his ankle. A satisfying climb : the last I was to do with him.

Back in Helyg I met Charles. He, too, had stayed on after his companions and the next day we climbed the Hanging Garden Gully together : a lazy ascent, talking, smoking, admiring the scenery and getting damp. Later we descended into the Devil's Kitchen to have a look at Advocates' Wall. It was a proper climber's look and landed us at the top of the first pitch ! The route ascends the right wall of the Kitchen directly from the Waterfall pitch, in magnificent position. The outlook is superb and this, coupled with the seeming doubtfulness of the rock adds up to perhaps the finest climb on these cliffs or in Cwm Idwal. There wasn't much of a belay on the first stance, but Charles encouragingly tied a loop in the rope and sat on it. I must confess that I didn't like the look of the next few feet which consisted of a steep traverse beneath a large block. I speculated on the stability of the structure. That pitch was led morally by Charles and only physically by me. Once across I felt happier and the short ascent to a good stance and belay was much easier than I had anticipated. The whole

thing does not demand a very advanced technique but is quite intimidating to those not familiar with Clogwyn y Geifr. Charles followed and led through to the foot of a short, overhanging chimney. This looked hard, but the thought of things below melted any difficulty and I was soon scrambling up a groove which must be a botanist's paradise. It was dark when we descended by the Llyn to the road and dear old Helyg.

Shortly after midnight the peace of the hut and its two occupants was disturbed by the arrival of a large car containing Ivan and Mac. They were there on business and it was unanimously agreed that the ideal place to test back-axles was a little track up to Hafotty Newydd—*en route* for Cloggy. That settled it ; the occupants were to be tested on Pigott's. The drive round to Llanberis in the morning decided me that climbing, even on du'r Arddu is not thrilling at all. I wondered what Dr. Johnson would have said, if while riding in his carriage below the horrifying slopes of Skiddaw he could have seen a monstrous car approaching along the narrow road, with Ivan at the wheel ? Perhaps it would at least have been more printable than the expression of the Llanberis bus driver as he came widely round a corner of the pass to be confronted, for an instant, with such a spectacle. A white face, a frantic, belated effort to pull in, a whirr of stones and we were past with more than an eyelash to spare on either side. Child's play to Ivan !

We were very fortunate again with the Cloggy weather. The delightful stroll up Cwm Brwynog and across the Maen d'ur Arddu put us in good trim. We donned our rubbers at the grassy foot of the East Buttress.

Pigott's is a grand climb for a large party. The green bays between pitches enable the rest of the party to watch the antics of the leader in mental and physical comfort. Those final pitches stamp the route as the classic of the East. It makes a fitting finish to the route and the day to take the continuation to the summit of the East Pinnacle. And a glorious finish to one's holiday to stand there with Llyn du'r Arddu a tiny pool far below.

The walk down to the farm, and further in the car to Llanberis was very different from the walk up. The leader's condition was then of no concern ; he carried the rucksacks, he opened the gates.

But how are the words going ? I must return from dreamy wanderings in Arfon. The object is achieved : the editor's whim is satisfied, I hope.

We have exactly the right number ; three thousand words.

IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM BELL

During the war many men died unheard and unknown. It is particularly tragic that William Bell should have survived those years only to die on the Matterhorn at a time when the realisation of his life as a poet and mountaineer was only beginning. But Bell, unlike many of those with whom he served, left his mark. His poetry will survive, and so will his memory among his friends and those who climbed with him.

Few people knew him really well. He was modest, rarely speaking of himself, never seeking to display his powers. But the flowing energy of the man impressed his personality on others. He was always doing something, climbing quietly over College roofs, leading some mad midnight expedition on the Cherwell, or putting forward a new idea on any subject from Knight's Move on Grooved Arête to the theory of relativity. All who were with him at such times quickly came to prize his friendship. It taught them something and he became part of their lives.

He was never a gymnast on rock, but by taking thought he added inches to his stature. He was always steady and cautious ; even on practice boulders he would climb down rather than jump off, and he had a peculiar quality of perseverance which usually brought him to the top of any route he attempted. Climbs which demanded this quality he always liked and remembered best. He had little use for severe routes which did nothing and led nowhere.

On the higher mountains, however, things were different. He had immense stamina which usually brought him to the hut long before the rest of the party in spite of his sack always being the heaviest. He was in his third season in the Alps when he died, and behind this lay considerable experience of winter mountaineering in Wales and Scotland. On snow and ice he was fast becoming an expert. He loved to launch out onto a difficult slope, cutting with one hand and using his axe as

precisely and easily as if it weighed no more than a walking stick. His caution remained but his energies seemed to increase. Few could have bettered his lead of the north peak of the Aiguilles du Tour when inches of fresh snow lay on the rocks, or the artistry he showed in carving a way up a heavily iced chimney on the east ridge of the Aiguilles Dorées.

Looking back, it is impossible to think of him as anything but a great mountaineer. He could not display the list of first ascents and new routes which creates the prestige of the modern expert. His only conquest of this kind was of a small warty pinnacle at the head of the Trient glacier which was ascended in a blizzard and promptly dubbed Pic Bell. But his approach to the hills was that of the great mountaineer. He came to them with the right ideas and left them with the right results. There was no hard competitive spirit or feeling of conflict between man and mountain, simply a deep appreciation of their beauty and a robust enjoyment of the pleasure they gave him when he climbed on them. This remains in the memory above all other things. To have his rotund frame and healthy spirit in a climbing party was always an inspiration. Unwittingly, he gave others something of his appreciation of the hills. Men who climbed with him felt their senses sharpened and he transmitted to them his cheerfulness and confidence. He climbed as a poet should, not for glory or a sense of achievement, but for the sake of climbing, with humility, yet with determination.

J. C. HOLT.

ARTHUR W. WAKEFIELD

The announcement of Dr. Wakefield's death, at the age of 72, on 23rd February, 1949, caused not only sorrow but surprise. One thought of him as being as impervious as his native rock to the major ills, and as being likely to continue for an indefinite period with an activity maintained by his powerful will against the increasing stiffness of his joints. From Sedbergh School, where he was Captain of Football in 1893, he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he rowed Head of the River in the Lent Races of 1897, in which year he obtained a Half Blue for cycling. This possibly explains his lifelong devotion to that arduous means of progression. In 1898 he boxed as a middle-weight for Cambridge against Oxford. Continuing his training

at the London Hospital after serving as a trooper in the South African War, he was Captain of Rugby Football in 1903 and, next year, won the United Hospitals boxing championship as a heavy-weight, whilst in 1906, he was Captain of the United Hospitals Swimming Club.

In 1904, he made the first of his well-known record fell walks, setting up figures which were unbeaten (except by himself in 1905) until 1920, when he helped to pace Eustace Thomas during his successful attempt on the record. In his 1905 walk Wakefield covered about 60 miles, and made 23,500 feet of ascents in 22 hours, 7 minutes.

His degrees and qualifications (M.A., M.D., M.R.C.S., and L.R.C.P.) show that all this time he was equally active and successful in academic and professional work.

In 1908, after a first visit to the Rocky Mountains of Canada, during which he made a determined attempt, alone, on Mount Field, in very bad weather, his ideals of service and adventure led him to the job of Medical Officer to the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen in Labrador, until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. He served in this in the Newfoundland Regiment, and as a Captain in the C.A.M.C. and the R.A.M.C., being mentioned in despatches in 1917.

I think it must have been at a Fell and Rock C.C. Meet, early in 1919, that I first met Wakefield.

One heard little of his previous adventures except through an occasional story. Thus a pre-war tour of Germany on a "proper-bike" (he refused to call these instruments "push-bikes"), was the occasion of the running over of the dachshund with the bark sequence: bark, bark, gasp, bark, gasp, bark bark . . . ; Africa was represented by the account of the decapitation of a crocodile which had attempted to interfere with his bathing ; of Labrador he said little beyond recalling the deplorable tea-stewing custom of the inhabitants and their methods of keeping warm. Of the Great War he scarcely ever spoke, but he accurately assessed the Germans, and, on the other hand, was full of admiration for the French, as a great, intelligent and highly civilised people.

We began a climbing partnership in the Lake District in which he was an ideal companion for the new ascents on Doe

Crags, Gimmer and Esk Buttress, and the many repetitions of older climbs on which we and other friends then embarked.

Good tempered, never worried, always showing pleasure at being out climbing whether the circumstances were favourable or adverse, encouraging the upward move by his perfect confidence, but never questioning a retreat even indirectly, and always remembering and chuckling over past climbs, those days with Wakefield were a joy from the time he arrived in his slack-jointed open car until the evening. Then, after a typical Lakeland tea, in Langdale or at Cockley Beck (with his : " Yes, I *will* have a second cup "—for the sixth time or so), or after one of Mrs. Harris's famous spreads at Coniston, and after he had lit his old pipe with the perforated metal bowl cover, and we and our familiars had talked climbing, past, present and future, we returned to our respective bases, he in his car, tolerated only because of its usefulness, and I on my not unloved motor cycle.

He climbed neatly and safely, and although a man of such deep convictions, he was quite open-minded about equipment, and quite unmoved by such club-cleaving controversies as boots versus rubbers, rope versus line, or belt versus braces. The question of pitons naturally never arose, but if it had, I think he would have sided with the angels rather than with the black-smiths.

In 1921 he was Surgeon to the Canadian Pacific Railway, and went to the Canadian Alpine Club Camp. Although some of the expeditions were second ascents, the climb which seems to have given him perhaps the greatest pleasure during the Camp was an unsuccessful but strenuous attempt on the virgin peak Mt. Eon. He traversed Mt. Assiniboine, climbed Mt. Magog, traversed Nainet Peak and Mts. Terrapin and Magog, traversed Mt. Sturdee, and, later on, from Banff, ascended Mt. Rundell.

A member of the second Mount Everest Expedition in 1922, he, in the words of Captain Farrar, " rendered yeoman service and reached the North Col "—at the age of 45.

He was an honorary member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, and President, 1923-5. In 1924, joined by Chorley, we had our only joint holiday in the Alps, at the Montenvers. The weather was, on the whole, bad, and Wakefield had a carbuncle on the back of his neck all the time which would have

prevented any ordinary person from even thinking about climbing. But Wakefield's only reaction was to buy a suction cup in London which I operated each evening whilst, during each day in that exacting district, he climbed without a grumble and with his customary perfect reliability. Nothing in Wakefield's remarkable career has impressed me more than his fortitude during that fortnight, when we climbed the Aiguilles du Peigne and Ravel, the latter glazed in places after a night of storm.

Attempts on the Blaitière and the Aiguille sans Nom were stopped by hopeless weather, but never did any suggestion of its hopelessness come from Wakefield.

In 1926-9 he was with Bentley Beetham in several Alpine districts, in many cases big peaks being climbed on consecutive days, and the list included *inter alia* :—

Monte Rosa, Nord End, Dufourspitze, Lyskamm, Wellenkuppe—Ober Gabelhorn, Castor, Pollux, Rothorn, Rothorn traverse, Mont Collon, Pigne d'Arolla, La Serpentine, Mt. Pleureur, La Salle, Mt. Blanc de Seillon, L'Evêque, Mître de l'Evêque, Aig. de la Za, Têtes Blanche and Valpelline, Mt. Durand, Grandes Jorasses, Piz Morteratsch, Bellavista, Zupô, Argento, P. d'Arlas, Carale, Cambrena, Bernina, Crestaguzza, Roseg—also climbs in Dauphiné. He climbed in Norway, Scotland and Wales.

In 1926 he was a member of a happy party which climbed the Central Buttress of Scafell, and, in 1937, we climbed Eagle Crag, Buttermere, by the Western Route.

In the 1939-45 War he was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Home Guard. During his last years he was increasingly troubled by arthritis, and eventually was unable to walk on the hills.

He continued to attend to his patients with the devotion which characterised all his doings and, by some miracle, was able to ride his "proper bike" to the end. He is survived by his widow, two sons and a daughter.

GEORGE S. BOWER.

Arthur Wakefield was a contemporary at Trinity, Cambridge. A short broad-shouldered, curly-haired, good-looking Northerner, with an attractive smile and an equable temper, he was

well-liked by everybody. Without being outstanding in any particular field, he was known for his energy and welcome for his youthful and smiling forthrightness. At that time he did not climb, but I knew of his reputation even then as a walker, and he talked to me often with enthusiasm of the fells.

A little later I heard of him, and met him, when friends had led him to join in the early explorations of the northern cliffs. And then came the tremendous feat of The Walk, which made him at once notable. His long absence in Labrador broke the personal contacts. But we kept in correspondence, and I had his prodigious energy and physique always in mind, so that when it was proving difficult to find suitable men for the Everest attempts, I strongly urged his claims upon Percy Farrar, and secured his invitation to join. It is evidence, I think, of the deep impression which his endurance, vitality and agreeable equanimity had made upon us at Trinity and in the hills, that I made nothing of the twenty years or so that had passed, or of the effects that the isolation and hardship of the Labrador life might, and undoubtedly did, exercise upon vigour and temperament.

We met again at many happy meetings and dinners, in the early and intimate days of the Fell and Rock Club. And unforgettably for all but the last time, when we were both speaking on the summit of Great Gable at the dedication of the War Memorial, during his Presidency. The sun broke through the clouds as he made his address under the highest rocks, and in the rather silvery gleam, with its faint halo of mist, I saw him for a few moments again as he had been in his very vital and sunnily serene youth.

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG.

We also regret to report the deaths of E. Heptonstall, who joined the Club in 1941 ; of A. F. Sherrard, who joined in 1948 and of whom there is an obituary notice in *Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1948 ; and of H. C. Lowen, who had been a member since 1901 and was Vice-President 1927-30. It is hoped to publish a notice of H. C. Lowen in next year's *Journal*.

With the *Journal* already in the press, news has been announced of the death of R. A. Hull in an accident on the

Italian face of Mont Blanc, on 22nd August, 1949. Hull had been an active member of the Club since 1937, and had had several notable seasons of Alpine climbing since the war. A notice of him will appear in the next number.

NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES

TRYFAN : MILESTONE BUTTRESS

HANGMAN'S WALL.

The climb starts up the square corner just right of Hangman's Gut, and then continues either (a) up the wall above the large break or (b) up the crack.

First Ascent : (a) 1st September, 1948.

(b) 10th September, 1948.

Party : (a) J. R. Bradley, K. Ingold.

(b) K. Ingold, E. L. Hardy.

Standard : Very Severe.

Start : At the top of the block at the foot of the corner.

(1) 50 feet. Greasily and grassily up the groove to a large ledge with a good belay.

(2a) 60 feet. Up the twin cracks above the belay for 20 feet. A small belay then protects a traverse left to a steep grass ledge. Climb this for 10 feet, and traverse left again under a steep corner. Climb up for 15 feet to a stance and belay where the Sylvan Traverse crosses Hangman's Gut. (This would probably become much easier with gardening.)

(2b) From the ledge throw a rope over a large belay at the top of the cracks, and climb them with varying assistance from the rope. With some gardening, the cracks can probably be climbed direct.

(3) Finish up a pitch of the Sylvan Traverse.

GLYDER FACH

LOT'S CHILD.

First Ascent 10th April, 1948.

Party : P. R. J. Harding, C. Bramfitt.

Standard : Hard Severe.

Start : On the right wall of Main Gully, at the same level as the top of the parent climbs, is an obvious groove. There are three possible starts, all about the same standard.

(1a) 20 feet. Climb the groove direct by a layback to a ledge.

(1b) 20 feet. Up a crack on the left wall until it is possible to mantelshelf onto the ledge.

(1c) 20 feet. Climb a crack farther left and traverse in to the ledge.

There is now no belay between pitches (1) and (2), but if a variety of chockstones is taken up, one could probably be arranged.

(2) 18 feet. Continue up the crack in the corner to a stance and good belay.

(3) 20 feet. This last section of the climb is the steepest. It can be climbed by jamming, though some people may prefer to layback it.

DRWS NEODDOD

ANALYST'S FLUE.

First Ascent : 26th September, 1948.

Party : A. G. N. Flew, R. H. O. Parker.

Standard : Difficult.

On the left wing of the cliff, 20 yards left of the great overhang, there lies a rib which is the natural approach to the chimney that splits the upper part of the cliff. There is a crack on each side of the rib.

Start : Up the left of the two cracks.

(1) 55 feet. Follow an obvious line up, making an awkward step left at 20 feet. Belay. The crack is eventually regained. Climb up to the grass ledge above ; belay at foot of chimney.

(2) 45 feet. Straight up the chimney. A thread belay can be used at 15 feet.

GALLT YR OGOF

SCOTCH GROOVE.

First Ascent : 12th June, 1948.

Party : K. A. W. Herbert, P. R. J. Harding.

Standard : Difficult (probably because of poor grass).

The route goes up the grassy groove to the right of Hop Wall.

(1) 30 feet. Up to a grassy stance.

(2) 60 feet. Up the groove above, to a tree and beyond.

CARREG WASTAD

OVERLAPPING WALL.

First Ascent : October, 1948.

Party : M. G. Hughes (second did not follow the crux).

Standard : Exceptionally Severe.

Start : On the left of Crackstone Rib are three obvious chimneys. The climb reaches the middle one by a vegetated gangway immediately below Crackstone Rib.

(1) 70 feet. Climb up very steep rock to the gangway. Follow this to trees, and up by large flakes to the corner below the chimney.

(2) 70 feet. Up the corner with difficulty until it is possible to step to the left edge ; then up and round to the left onto a slab below an overlap (running belay). Ascend the overlap a few feet left of the belay ; traverse left for 12 feet, and then follow a very shallow scoop back to the right. Climb the scoop to the holly trees above the chimney.

(3) 50 feet. Up the groove above, keeping to the right.

THE UNICORN

First Ascent : 17th April, 1949.

Party : P. R. J. Harding, P. R. Hodgkinson, M. G. Hughes.

Standard : Hard Very Severe.

Start : Immediately below the left-hand of the three chimneys to the left of Crackstone Rib.

(1) 60 feet. Straight up the wall to cracked blocks. A difficult move leads to the holly tree ledge above.

(2) 50 feet. Climb the difficult corner. Pitons were used on the first ascent, but it is probably possible to climb it direct with a prodigious reach. A good hold gives access to the chimney proper. Climb past two holly trees to the overhang.

(3) 100 feet. Take the groove on the right for a few feet, then go right and with a long step move to the far edge. Ascend it to a stance ; no belay. Continue in the same line to a broken ledge by a holly tree. Finish over loose rock, earth and grass.

GIRDLE TRAVERSE OF CARREG WASTAD

First Ascent : 6th June, 1948.

Party : P. R. J. Harding, P. R. Hodgkinson.

Standard : Extremely Severe. The route is some 800 feet long, very varied, and never dropping in interest or difficulty.

Start : On the extreme left edge of the cliff, where it tapers off to a rotten wet wall ; some 80 feet to the left of, and below, an oak tree.

(1) 80 feet. Up, with difficulty, and grass, across a diagonal line, to a series of good belays. Round the corner to the oak.

(2) 20 feet. Take the crack in the corner for a few feet to a grassy ledge. Follow this to a superb belay.

(3) 60 feet. Work across to the far edge, and go up an arête on splendid holds. Belay at the top.

(4) 10 feet. Descend to the lower of two hollies in a groove on the right.

(5) 35 feet. An abseil to a good ledge with more hollies.

(6) 40 feet. Descend 10 feet by a holly tree and traverse through woods and pastures to a stance and belay in a corner.

(7) 50 feet. Continue across a smooth slab, below a fierce looking chimney, to a bollard at the corner. Follow a rising line past another bollard ; then a steep, short wall to a holly tree at the top of pitch (1) of Crackstone Rib.

(8) 30 feet. Step across a shallow groove to a rib, and up this to a large detached flake.

(9) 20 feet. From the top of the flake step onto the wall and after a short pull-up traverse across to a large holly tree. (Top of pitch (2) of Shadow Wall.)

(10) 60 feet. The crux. From the tree step over to a shattered ledge. Climb the overhanging crack with some difficulty to an uncomfortable niche. Running belay. The next few moves are extremely hard. Work over the overhang, until a large stride onto a small ledge on the right can be made. The fingerholds for the pull across are very small, and balance is off. From the small ledge move up to a larger one, and traverse along to join the third pitch

of the Trilon. Belay for thin nylon above the small ledge. Descend the overhang, protected by a running belay on a piton in the crack above, to a small stance and belay.

(11) 40 feet. Ascend slightly to the right, then descend on a good line of flakes to a large block in a corner. Down steeply to a large yew forest.

(12) 30 feet. Follow an obvious line downwards to a large block.

(13) 60 feet. Straddle the groove on the right of the block and step round the corner onto a very steep wall. A small holly is soon reached, but there is no stance and the rock is poor. Beyond the tree is a vegetated groove; climb this on heather to a fine stance behind two large hollies.

(14) 50 feet. Climb the right-hand tree and then step onto a rib above. The line to the right looks unpromising, so cross the scoop to the left, and thence climb to the oak tree of Green Park via a large flake.

(15) 110 feet. Scramble up grass to a greasy groove. It is difficult for a few feet, but a solid ash tree is soon reached. Continue up to a block. Step round to the right, then follow a hard and exposed traverse beneath a line of overhangs on increasingly small holds; this part was safeguarded by a piton belay. Easier then to a large grass ledge. (Pitches (3) and (4) of Dead Entrance would be an easier way across here, but the route described is more direct.)

(16) 15 feet. Easily down to a lower ledge with belays.

(17) 40 feet. Ascend the right wall and traverse to a mossy ledge. Descend then on good holds to a small nook with belay. The rock here is poor.

(18) 35 feet. Continue on difficult gorse, then up sharply to a small holly tree and beyond. Ledges and belays.

An easy line now leads naturally to a grassy sweep.

CRAIG DDU

Craig Ddu is the wet, black cliff on the Nant Peris side of Clogwyn y Grochan.

PEDESTAL ROUTE

The black main part of the cliff is separated from the cleaner section by a grassy gully. The main feature of the cleaner right-hand section is a massive slab-topped pedestal rising in two tiers. To the right of the pedestal is a steep wall with overhangs. The route taken ascends the pedestal by a spiral traverse from the right, then descends slightly and escapes the overhanging wall by the slab top of the pedestal.

First Ascent: 12th June, 1948.

Party: P. R. J. Harding, K. A. W. Herbert.

Standard: Very Difficult.

Start: On the right of the pedestal, at a grassy amphitheatre.

(1) 30 feet. Scramble up to the amphitheatre.

(2) 60 feet. From the amphitheatre traverse left, and round into a rocky bay ; then up by the far corner to the slab top of the pedestal. Climb this to the top.

(3) Descend the slab by the corner to a small sapling where it is possible to traverse out on the edge. Climb the slab on sloping holds to the top.

DINAS MOT

BLUEBELL CRACKS.

First Ascent : Easter, 1948.

Party : H. A. Carsten, P. R. Hodgkinson.

Standard : Hard Difficult.

The route lies up the lower part of the western wing of Dinas Mot, between Dolerite Dump and Boulder Buttress. It is the most obvious line hereabouts, and gives better climbing than its neighbours.

Start : About 30 feet to the left of a large monolith, the right hand corner of which contains the Corner Gully start to Dolerite Dump.

(1) 50 feet. Up broken rocks and quartz to a large overhanging bay, complete with holly tree.

(2) 20 feet. Continue up to the right to another ledge with a holly tree.

(3) 35 feet. Traverse right along a narrow grass ledge, and continue delightfully with an upward trend to a grassy niche at the foot of a vegetated corner.

(4) 30 feet. Climb the corner to a grass ledge.

(5) 15 feet. Climb a tall flake leaning against the corner on the left.

(6) 25 feet. Ascend the crack straight ahead, or, better, the slab on its left.

CYRN LAS

MAIN WALL.

This route was first climbed in 1935 by P. L. Roberts and J. K. Cooke (see *R.C.J.*, 1936, *p.* 189). Until recently it has not attracted the attention it deserves from the Climbers' Club.

Standard : Very Severe, but only on account of the serious nature of the route. The technical difficulty is a good deal lower. In situation and position the climb ranks with the best of the du'r Arddu climbs.

Start : On the right of the Main Gully is a conspicuous triangular-shaped cave with a large grass field above. Scramble up the bed of the gully to a heathery band to the left of the cave.

(1) 30 feet. Climb a short, broad slab ; then swing across round a corner to the right and climb up to a pulpit at the extreme left of the field.

(2) 80 feet. On the right are gangways leading up to a chimney. Take the lower one for 45 feet to the chimney. Traverse left to a grass ledge on the corner.

(3) 45 feet. Climb the corner, and follow another gangway to the right, to the large triangular grass ledge above the chimney. Belay.

(4) 90 feet. Descend slightly on the left, and climb a broken pinnacle. Enter a niche round the corner and continue to a steep arête on the left. Climb this until a step back to the right across a chimney leads to a short slab. Stance and belay at the top.

(5) 80 feet. Climb up to the overhang, then left across a groove onto a long, clean slab. Traverse along the foot of the slab to the steep arête on the far edge. Climb this on splendid holds to a stance at the top.

(6) and (7) 100 feet. Up left to a rock ledge, then easily up slabs to a large grassy bay at 60 feet. Broken rocks lead to the summit.

THE GREEN CATERPILLAR

First Ascent : 22nd April, 1949.

Party : P. R. J. Harding, G. Dyke.

Standard : Very Severe.

On the left of the obvious cleft of Schoolmaster's Gully and on the right of the conspicuous triangle-shaped cave at the base of the cliff, a line of grass runs up the cliff ending in a vertical corner, with a mossy slab on the right. The route takes this grass to the corner, then swings onto the slab and up that, to finish near the top of Schoolmaster's Gully.

Start : Below the triangle-shaped cave.

(1) 60 feet. Climb a short chimney on the right of the cave to reach the field above. Continue in the same line, up a grassy crack to a stance. Thread belay on the right.

(2) 60 feet. Above and to the left another grassy crack leads to a gangway. Climb the crack and follow the gangway ; then ascend a grass overhang and up to a nook. Belay.

(3) 60 feet. Climb diagonally to the right into a grass chimney and up that to the wall above. Traverse right for 10 feet to a large flake below a cracked corner.

(4) 35 feet. Climb the overhanging corner to a stance at the top. Strenuous. Descend by a crack on the other side and then right to a fine stance.

(5) 90 feet. The crux. Ascend the corner for a few feet to the overhang. Step right onto a sloping ledge and make a difficult overhung traverse to a mossy slab. Traverse the slab on very small holds to a grass ledge, then straight up to a stance by the corner.

(6) 90 feet. Straightforward now. A mantelshelf above the stance leads to more grass at an easier angle. Follow this until it is possible to step across the top of Schoolmaster's Gully.

THE GREEN NECKLACE

First Ascent : 22nd April, 1949.

Party : P. R. J. Harding, G. Dyke.

Standard : Very Severe.

A Girdle Traverse of Cynr Las. The climb includes the major difficulties of the Main Wall and the Green Caterpillar. It is a fine expedition.

Start : Above the main pitch of the Upper Chasm, a heather band runs across the cliff. Start from a stance overlooking the Great Gully.

(1) 120 feet. Traverse down into the gully via a large detached block. Climb above the cave to a large grass ledge on the opposite side.

(2) 150 feet. Follow a quartz line to the far edge. Descend for a few feet, then swing round into a niche. Descend again to a pinnacle and continue down to the right until the triangle grass ledge of Main Wall Climb is reached. This is most of the crux of Main Wall in reverse.

(3) From here *either* make a 45-foot abseil to a crevasse below, *or* descend pitch (3) of Main Wall (45 feet), and then traverse into the chimney, across, and up to the crevasse. Continue to a large pinnacle on the right (70 feet).

(4) 40 feet. Descend the curving chimney formed by the pinnacle, and down a rake to a grassy nook.

(5) 60 feet. Pitch (3) of the Green Caterpillar.

(6), (7) and (8) 200 feet. The remaining pitches of the Green Caterpillar are now taken up, to finish above Schoolmaster's Gully.

Y GARN (RHYD DDU)

REUNION CRACKS.

First Ascent :

Party : P. R. Hodgkinson, J. Ginelli.

Standard : Severe.

Start : At the lowest point of the buttress, slightly right of the wall.

(1) 70 feet. Up the crack, steeply at first, then opening out to a ledge above. Belay.

(2) 40 feet. The left-hand crack is climbed until it is possible to step out onto the wall on the left. A finger crack is used until it is possible to reach holds above the overhang. The rock here needs care.

(3) 70 feet. Climb the steep rib on the right, with little difficulty.

CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU : WEST BUTTRESS

GIRDLE TRAVERSE.

First Ascent : 24th May, 1949.

Party : P. R. J. Harding, G. Dyke.

Standard : Exceptionally Severe.

The Girdle of the West Buttress has for some time been one of the outstanding unsolved Welsh problems. The climb contains 18 pitches, is very long and arduous, and links together nearly all the cruxes of the West Buttress routes.

The party started at the foot of Longland's Climb, and traversed from there, via Linnell's Jump on the Narrow Slab, to the Sheaf Climb. This was ascended until after the last difficult move (beginning of last pitch), where the climb joins the easy upper part of Narrow Slab. Narrow Slab was descended for about 60 feet, when by a long stride entry was made onto Bow-Shaped Slab, slightly higher than the crux. This was taken in reverse (an exceedingly hard move) and connection thus made with Great Slab, which was crossed to the second field. Ascending the crux of this and the Central Rib, the traverse was continued in a line crossing just above the unclimbed Red, or Bloody, Slab.

Altogether the climb contains about 1,000 feet of very difficult work. The first ascent took eight hours.

CRAIG CWM SILIN

AMPHITHEATRE BUTTRESS, WEST WALL: JERICO.

First Ascent : 4th June, 1949.

Party : R. G. Folkard, P. Wilkinson.

Standard : Very Difficult ; rock rather unreliable.

Start : About 300 feet below the top of the Great Stone Shoot. There is a short chimney below a large scar of a recent rockfall.

(1) 30 feet. Up chimney, and traverse left to belay.

(2) 100 feet. Slant up right to belay on top of pyramid of blocks.

(3) 60 feet. Move left, then ascend thin crack to ledge. Traverse slightly right, and up consecutive cracks to the top.

TRWYN Y CRAIG : GARDENER'S GULLY

First Ascent : 5th June, 1949.

Party : R. G. Folkard, T. Hyde.

Standard : Very Difficult.

Start : From the Heather Belt, just left of the Recess Route.

(1) 100 feet. Straight up the gully, easily at first and then two difficult chimneys to belay.

(2) 30 feet. Traverse right to rush-covered platform at foot of 12-foot crack. Thread belay.

(3) 20 feet. An ascent of the crack leads to the top of the Closet (Recess Route) and a stance at the right-hand end. Alternatively, the Closet may be entered by a side entrance from the rush platform, and an exit from the top leads to the same stance.

(4) 50 feet. A short crack with wedged blocks ; then trend right, and finish up slanting chimney. Scrambling to the top.

GENERAL

During the year P. R. J. Harding's work on the forthcoming Llanberis guidebook has resulted in an imposing number of new routes, only a few of which are described here. Anyone staying in the area and wanting more particulars should refer to the Log at Beudy Mawr, the Rucksack Club Hut. The list of climbs not here described is as follows :—

CRAIG DDU (Llanberis Pass)

- The Crown of Thorns. Severe. 22nd January, 1949.
P. R. J. Harding, C. W. F. Noyce
- Short Tree Chimney. Difficult. 11th April, 1949.
P. R. J. Harding.
- Garlic Groove. Mild Severe. 23rd April, 1949.
J. L. Disley, P. R. Hodgkinson.

CLOGWYN Y GROCHAN

- Delphos. Severe. 13th April, 1949.
P. R. Hodgkinson, P. R. J. Harding.
- Hazel Groove (Direct Start). Severe. 12th April, 1949.
P. R. J. Harding, P. R. Hodgkinson.
- Spectre (Independent Finish). Very Severe. 12th March, 1949.
P. R. J. Harding, K. A. W. Herbert.
- Brant (Direct Start). Extremely Severe. 24th April, 1949.
P. R. J. Harding and large party.

CARREG WASTAD

- Halan. Severe. 26th April, 1949.
P. R. J. Harding, G. Dyke.

DINAS CROMLECH

- René. Very Severe. 14th October, 1948.
R. Thomas, A. J. J. Moulam.
- The Thumb (Direct). Moderately Difficult. 14th October, 1948.
Marjorie Kennedy Frazer,
P. R. J. Harding, N. L. Horsfield.

INTERMEDIATE SLABS (CWM GLAS)

- Tradition. Severe. 6th March, 1949.
J. I. Disley, P. R. Hodgkinson.
- Spring Chimney. Severe. 6th March, 1949.
J. I. Disley, P. R. Hodgkinson.
- Intermediate Chimney. Very Difficult. 18th April, 1949.
P. R. Hodgkinson, P. R. J. Harding.

CLOGWYN Y PERSON

- The Eastern Edge. Severe. 12th March, 1949.
P. R. J. Harding, J. B. Nicholson.
- Square Gully. Severe. 18th April, 1949.
P. R. J. Harding, P. R. Hodgkinson.

STANDARDS

Many of the recent routes in the Llanberis area are of a very high order of difficulty, and if there is to be any uniformity in the standards as described in various guides it is necessary either to use more flowery adjectives in front of "Very Severe" or to agree on an alternative description. Suitable descriptions seem to be "Extremely Severe" and "Exceptionally Severe." The introduction of these standards would leave Lot's Groove at "Very Severe," and puts Slope up to "Extremely Severe," while such climbs as Ivy Sepulchre would be described as "Exceptionally Severe."

M. G. HUGHES.

THE MALVERN HILLS

The North Hill of the Worcestershire Beacon (1,305 feet) is dented on its north front by a small valley. This is flanked on each side by quarries, in part disused, hollowed out of the slopes. At the foot of this valley, just above the North Malvern shops, springs a small grassy buttress giving access to the upper reaches.

On this lower buttress are a number of small rock faces, mostly 20 or 30 feet high. These are in the main of solid, igneous rock. They yield a number of pretty pitches of perhaps Difficult or Very Difficult standard (rubbers). The two main quarries on either side of the valley have been christened, *honoris causa*, the East and West Butresses. The accessible portion of the "East Buttress" (the western section is still being worked) has as chief feature a large slab, perhaps 180 feet and at about the angle of the Idwal Slabs. A number of lines have been taken on it, and on the wall of its right flank, none of more than Moderate standard. The rock is easy, but overlaid with debris which gives an appearance of greater difficulty and peril.

The "West Buttress" is a more formidable affair. It is a disused quarry set higher into the hillside, and the rock has more sandstone to it. It needs very careful handling and is complicated by vegetation. In the centre rises a formidable looking nose. Two routes were made here, one just to the left and one to the right of the nose, on 11th and 17th February, 1949, by C. W. F. Noyce and P. F. Holmes. The second zig-zags and is well over 200 feet. The standard is probably about Difficult, with a flavour of mountaineering given by the general uncertainty of the material.

There are also two small and solid outcrops of special interest on North Hill. Ivy Scar Rock, facing north-west, immediately overlooks the path leading round the hillside above the town. It is 40-50 feet high and one route, the Hangover with its variations, has been worked out on it, by H. Sutcliffe. The original Hangover was led after a gay night in 1943 and is standard Very Difficult in rubbers. It joins the line of cleavage running up under the central nose, and involves a delicate step into the crack. A variation is to take the crack direct throughout.

The other outcrop of special merit overhangs the green, smooth top of a water reservoir, only a few minutes up the valley from the North

Malvern clock tower. The cliff is 50-60 feet and the climb, Reservoir Cracks, runs just to the left of the obvious corner gully. The difficult move is in the last few feet, where it traverses delicately out onto the grassy hillside, over the only rock of doubtful aspect. Standard: Mild Severe, rubbers. First complete ascent, C. W. F. Noyce and P. F. Holmes, 30th March, 1949.

C.W.F.N.

IRELAND

Until recently Irish mountains have been neglected by rock climbers. This is a pity. There are many fine cliffs worth visiting, though there is no centre comparable with Wales. The newly formed Irish Mountaineering Club has brought this inactivity to an end, and hopes to assist rock climbers by publishing guidebooks.

Since the war I have seen two cliffs which would be thought well of in Wales. The first is on the North side of Bencorr, which is one of the Twelve Bens in Connamara. It is a grand, steep face of quartzite with an imposing buttress in the middle. The easiest route was chosen, which gave a long and enjoyable climb up an arête on the left of the face. The main cliff is still unclimbed and should provide many difficult routes. The second cliff overlooks Luggala Lake in the Wicklow hills. The rock, which is granite, is sound but slopes the wrong way, and there are many overhangs. The steep angle and paucity of handholds make it difficult to maintain equilibrium. A few climbs have been made, not without incident. Those with strong fingers and a liking for exposure will enjoy themselves here.

The Secretary of the Irish Mountaineering Club (Mr. W. R. Perrott, Carstel, Mount Merrion Avenue, Blackrock, Dublin) will be delighted to give information to rock climbers visiting the Emerald Isle.

A. C. CRICHTON.

MISCELLANEOUS

Owing to pressure on space, it has not been possible to give details of several climbs made in 1946 by J. Neill, S. Fry and L. Greenwood, with A. M. Henson (Rucksack Club), in Glencoe. Four routes were made on Aonach Dubh E. Face, and two more on another crag, higher up the valley, under the col between Stob Coire nam Beith and Aonach Dubh proper. The standards varied between Easy and Very Difficult.

In Cornwall two severe routes were made in October, 1948, by J. Cortlandt-Simpson and W. J. Hutchinson, and J. Cortlandt-Simpson and E. Stones (leading through). They were the Ziz-Zag Route (at Bosigran), and the Chair Ladder by the South Face Direct. Details will appear in the forthcoming guidebook.

REVIEWS

MONTAGNES DU MONDE. Vol. II, 1947.

This is the second volume of the official publication of the *Fondation Suisse pour l'exploration Alpine* and, as could be expected of a Swiss publication on mountaineering, the book is profusely illustrated with outstandingly beautiful photographs of mountains.

Volume II is introduced with a preface by the late Col. E. L. Strutt in which tribute is paid to the position of leadership which Swiss mountaineering now holds and which the two Himalayan expeditions have confirmed.

The first half of the book consists of a series of articles contributed by the various members of the Löhner-Sutter expedition to the Garhwal Himalaya in 1947. This forms a more or less chronological record of the journeys, climbs and adventures of the party. But the narrative is somewhat disjointed as a result of this method of presentation, particularly when chapters on certain aspects of the expedition are duplicated by different authors. While this allows the reader to share the reactions of various members of the party to certain incidents on the expedition, yet it does perhaps spoil a smooth narrative and destroy dramatic effect.

The main objective of this expedition was to climb some of the major peaks in the Gangotri massif, and in this it was successful since ascents of Kedarnath and Satopanth were accomplished. An attempt on the former of these had already been made in 1933 by Marco Pallis' party, but had been foiled through bad weather and inexperience in the siege tactics which are sometimes necessary for the conquest of major Himalayan peaks. The Löhner-Sutter expedition reached the summit of Kedarnath at the third attempt. The first was abortive because the leader, André Roch, was taken ill at Camp II. During the second an accident occurred when the climbing parties were within reach of the summit and almost assured of success. All three parties were traversing the final ridge to the summit when Wangdi Norbu slipped from his steps on the slope and fell, dragging Sutter, the leader of his party, after him. The pair slid down a steep ice slope for some two to three hundred metres until, luckily, their fall was arrested by soft snow lying at a gentler angle. The leading parties had to abandon the climb in order to descend the steep glaciers, which cover the north-west face of the mountain, to rescue their companions. They found that Sutter's injuries were negligible ; Wangdi, however, had a broken arm, scalp wounds and a penetrating wound in his right knee caused by crampons. His rescuers began to move him down the slopes, but were overtaken by darkness before they had gone far. After an uncomfortable bivouac and further attempts to get him down, they

became so exhausted that they decided to make him as comfortable as possible where he was and to descend for help. Two Sherpas attempted to reach Wangdi the following day, but failed to do so because of soft snow. Finally a rescue party did get to him. They found that, the unfortunate man had attempted to cut his throat because he thought he had been abandoned. The outcome of the adventure was that Wangdi reached hospital in Dehra Dun, where he recovered from his injuries. André Roch's description of these two attacks on Kedarnath is undoubtedly the most exciting article in this volume. The third, and successful, attack on this mountain is well described by Sutter in another chapter.

After Kedarnath, the expedition turned its attention to the approaches of Chaukhamba, the loftiest peak of the Gangotri region. A previous attempt on this mountain in 1939 had ended in disaster and loss of life when an avalanche overwhelmed the party in their camp on the mountainside. Once again Chaukhamba proved to be so inaccessible that attempts to reach its upper ridges had to be abandoned.

Failure on Chaukhamba, however, was followed by an almost unexpected success on the difficult Satopanth. On this climb the steep snow slope leading to the terminal ridge seemed to be in a dangerous state. But with only 150 metres to go to the summit desperate measures seemed called for, so André Roch unroped to climb the slope alone in case the slope should avalanche with the weight of the party. His daring saved the day, because the snow proved firm and the party was able to follow him to the crest of the terminal ridge and thence to the summit.

This volume of *Montagnes du Monde* only contains a brief note on the Anglo-Swiss expedition to the Karakoram of 1947 ; a full account is to appear in a later volume.

Marcel Kurz contributes a curious paper which could best be described as an historical survey of record altitudes attained by man in the mountains. It takes the form of a series of short essays dealing with each well-known mountain in turn. Kurz also reviews, in another paper, all the expeditions at work in the Himalayas from 1939 to 1946.

The final section of this book is devoted to what might be called "Alpine Notes," as in the *Alpine Journal*. There are brief accounts of new or important climbs made in the Alps, notes on recent snow and climatic conditions and items of news concerning important foreign clubs.

Montagnes du Monde is beautifully printed and illustrated, and it is a pleasure to read and to look at. It is, however, a curious publication ; it seems to fall neither into the class of a book on mountaineering nor of a mountaineering journal. In general plan it might be compared with the *Alpine Journal*, though its whole atmosphere is quite different

and much less domestic. One might perhaps be forgiven for questioning whether these volumes of *Montagnes du Monde* can really serve any purpose which could not equally well be covered by *Die Alpen*.

C. B. M. WARREN.

THE UNKNOWN MOUNTAIN. By Don Munday. (Hodder & Stoughton, 1948.)

This account of the Mundays' exploration of the highest part of the Coast Range of British Columbia leaves one with a certain feeling of disappointment that more has not been made of a chance to write a book which might have been remarkable. The Mundays' work, in thirteen expeditions between 1925 and 1936, constitutes one of the most sparkling mountain stories of the last twenty-five years, and one which, it is not too much to suggest, might have produced a trans-Atlantic classic as good as King's *Mountaineering in the Sierra Nevada*. There is a real element of the dramatic in the Mundays' struggle for Waddington itself—the peak which they had literally put on the map, explored from all sides and five times attempted, only to reach the lower summit from which the ice-sheathed highest tower, a few hundred feet away, seemed quite inaccessible. That eventually the peak fell to the determined first assault of a distinguished American party did not detract from the drama, since for two years past the Mundays had abandoned their own efforts on it and were wisely employing their less modern technique in another part of the range. Mr. Munday could indeed fairly argue that they regarded, or came to regard, the ascent of Waddington as an objective of secondary importance to the exploration of the district, and that to write the book around the story of Waddington would have been to give a false picture of what they were trying to do. Yet one feels that the book could have had design, and lacks it; that it is baldly, as well as simply, written. Important and trivial things jumble each other without much differentiation, paragraphs are short and the writing is rough in many small ways. Incidentally, the references to the only English party are a little ungenerous, and our member, E. B. Bauman, himself not altogether unknown as a mountaineer, might have some grievance that he is referred to, in text and index, as "Bauman."

It goes without saying, however, that, as the connected account of a series of remarkable and important adventures which must be of great interest to all mountaineers, the book is eminently worth reading. One must recognise also that it is modesty quite as much as faulty writing which makes less of the Mundays' story than should have been made of it. What must have been almost incredible feats of load-carrying especially on Mrs. Munday's part, and hair-raising risks either in overloaded boats or in not infrequent unarmed encounters with grizzlies, are treated as all in the day's work; and if anyone should be inclined to think of the Mundays as explorers rather than first-rate mountaineers, the night descent, in storm, of the N.W. ridge of

Waddington after an attempt deliberately pushed till after 6 p.m., is only one of a number of episodes which dispel any such illusion.

The book is illustrated with excellent photographs, and with two very clear sketch-maps drawn by the author.

A.D.M.C.

KINGDOM OF ADVENTURE, EVEREST. By J. R. Ullman. (Collins, 1948. 21s.)

It would be ungracious to be too critical of this serious attempt by an American to "project" to Americans the story of the British efforts on Everest. Mr. Ullman has in the main done his job well and his book, about two-thirds of which consists of well chosen and cleverly dovetailed extracts from existing writings about Everest, will have a real, and even absorbing, interest for English readers not already familiar with the original accounts. To most climbers, however, the only episode not already likely to be well known is the solo flight by an American fighter pilot over the top of Everest in 1942. The book suffers from two defects. One is a slightly sickening, but perhaps inevitable, purple glow which suffuses Mr. Ullman's connecting commentary. There is no question but that Everesters (so called throughout) are cast in a heroic mould as "aspiring, consecrated men"; a few of them are even rather invidiously selected for mention in dispatches at the end of the book, and specially good marks are given to every breaker of a world's record. The other weakness is a marked absence of care on points of detail, a trait particularly noticeable from a quick glance at the otherwise full and useful index. Among various errors of a similar nature, two Presidents of the Alpine Club of London (*sic*) boast initials not their own, and a Vice-President appears in the double role of Green, Raymond and Greene, C.E. The book is well produced, with four clear maps or diagrams and a generous selection of very fine photographs.

A.D.M.C.

SWISS WINTER. By F. S. Smythe. (A. & C. Black, 1948. 30/-.)

THE SPLENDID HILLS: the Life and Photographs of Vittorio Sella.

By Ronald Clark. (Phoenix House Ltd., 1948. 35/-.)

These two albums of photographs form an interesting contrast between the old and the new in mountain photography. When Sella began to take photographs, the art required considerable strength (to carry the equipment), great technical knowledge and infinite patience. His first major panorama, taken from the summit of the Mont de Mars in 1879, was a fifteen-day operation, and it is an indication of how much of a mystery photography still was in the first decade of the twentieth century that the Duke of the Abruzzi's expeditions carried Sella purely in the capacity of official photographer. His results were remarkable for their day, and the photographs still have a peculiar, though dated, clarity and simplicity which makes them as good records of a scene as are ever likely to be made. Few of them seem to the technically inexpert eye to be of first-rate quality judged by modern standards. The

photograph of the Italian side of the Matterhorn (No. 27), which Sella is said to have considered the best he ever took, would not be regarded as remarkable today, and the ones in which he perhaps comes nearest to what the modern photographer tries to do are No. 47 (Ushba from Ezeri) and No. 79 (the Mustagh Tower). Mr. Clark's brief life of Sella is competently done, and he has wisely given only the minimum of annotation to the individual pictures.

Mr. Smythe's labours were infinitely less physically arduous than those of Sella, but his results in many instances are superlatively good in comparison. His few coloured photographs seem to me the least successful, but the majority of his monochromes are undoubtedly as good as any pictures he has ever taken. The text is in places unconcealedly thin, but for the most part serves its purpose very smoothly.

A.D.M.C.

THE MOUNTAINS OF SNOWDONIA (2nd edition, 1948). By H. R. C. Carr and G. A. Lister. (Crosby, Lockwood & Son Ltd., 1948. 15/-)

Carr and Lister's book, which first appeared in 1925, was very much a Climbers' Club affair. It dealt with the district which has become our particular preserve. It was edited and largely written by members of the Club at the time when Herbert Carr had himself just triumphantly carried us through the post-war twilight, and the contributions on P.Y.G. and P.Y.P. gave it an intimate link with the history and personalities of the Club. But it was not at all parochial in character; it was a comprehensive book on a British mountain district, which still unfortunately remains unique.

That was nearly a quarter of a century ago, and for many years the book has been out of print and second-hand copies practically unobtainable. Under the circumstances a reprint would have been welcome; but how much more so this excellent revised, enlarged and rewritten second edition.

The original form of the book and much of the original writing has been retained, but chapters where they had become out of date have been rewritten and a few new ones added. G.W.Y.'s classic essay on Pen-y-Pass has now taken its place in the historical section. So, too, has C. F. Holland's stimulating survey of *Climbing in the Ogwen District*, 1910-1924. Some of his remarks such as his description of the Milestone Buttress as "the brightest jewel in Ogwen's crown" already have a quaint period flavour. The chapter on *Industrial Activities* has been completely rewritten by D. Dylan Pritchard. It is historical and does not deal with the present threat of widespread industrial activities in the heart of Snowdonia, unlike the new chapter on *Afforestation* by William Ling Taylor, the Director General of H.M. Forestry Commission, which puts a case for the "reafforestation" of the district, and is clear and well reasoned but protests a little too much. It is fervently to be hoped that the 3rd edition will not require a section on the Hydro-Electrification of Snowdonia. The brightest new jewel in the crown is Nully Kretschmer's delightful chapter on *Rock Climbing between the Wars*.

The happy chance that the book reappeared during the Club's Jubilee Year has one disadvantage. What with historical introductions to Guide Books, the Jubilee *Journal* and now this book there seems to have been a little too much literature about recent rock climbing history. We all love reading about our friends and about achievements which form part of our own store of memories, and much of this literature has been highly readable ; but there does seem a danger that the whole concern may get a little out of proportion.

This is not, however, intended to be any criticism of the wholly admirable way in which this particular old friend has been brought up to date.

P. BICKNELL.

HIGHLAND DAYS. By Thomas Weir. (Cassell, 1948. 12/6.)

MOUNTAIN TRAIL. By John Wood. (Allen and Unwin, 1947. 16/-.)

FELL DAYS. By Graham Sutton. (Museum Press, 1948. 12/6.)

ON HILLS OF THE NORTH. By J. Hubert Walker. (Oliver and Boyd, 1948. 15/-.)

Publishers will tell you nowadays that there is " money " in mountaineering books ; they are unlikely to say any such thing to the authors, but no one could call them an optimistic race. This can be the only explanation for the spate of such books which still continues and which the four books under review exemplify. They are all four written rather drably, reasonably well illustrated, highly priced and, with one possible exception, patently *book-making*. A Scottish peak is climbed, a friend with an obscure nickname makes the obvious remarks about the view, the weather is always brilliant or appalling, the Youth Hostel is overcrowded, but a good time is had by all, with the possible exception of the reader. More peaks are climbed at other week-ends, the local paper prints a little article and enough little articles can eventually make a book. Not everyone can produce a guinea book after one Welsh Week-end, but we can all try.

Mr. Weir has enjoyed his Highland Days, but he has very little to tell us that has not been said many times before. His photographs are excellent ; his style very matey. And his thanks are due to the Editor of *Scotland's Magazine*, who first printed some of his chapters. Another Editor, this time of *Country Life*, gets Mr. Walker's thanks for *his* articles. Mr. Walker is a geologist whose walks covered four groups of hills in the Highlands and the inevitable visit to Skye ; he, too, has nothing new to say that is not already in the standard guide books, but it is all put down in impeccably dull style although once again redeemed by very fine photographs. In Mr. Sutton's books there is no pretence of continuity ; essays, short stories, rock climbs—all are there with the thin connecting thread of the Lakeland setting. Twelve Editors and the B.B.C. share responsibility and the author's acknowledgments. Some of the stories are excellent, e.g., " The Man Who Broke the Needle," but others are the most ephemeral journalism—or

should have been had not the urge for book-making broken in. In this case the illustrations are very poor ; the reproduction of " Wasdale Head " has to be seen to be believed.

Mr. Wood is a pleasant change from the others ; here is a hearty trampler who has something to say, who says it in a self-consciously blunt Yorkshire way, who is partial to a degree and is proud of it. His theme is the Pennine Way from the Peak to the Cheviots which he describes well, if with overmuch trivial detail ; he has the whale of a time buffeting gamekeepers and making rude noises at landowners, and although he has a good many bees in his balaclava, some of which simplify his history rather crudely, his vitality more than makes amends. He alone makes one wish to visit the district he describes—though not necessarily in his company.

ELLIOTT VINEY.

A CLIMBER IN WALES. By Showell Styles. (Cornish Brothers Ltd. 15/-.)

A PROSPECT OF WALES. By Kenneth Rowntree and Gwyn Jones. (Penguin Books, 1948. 2/6.)

A Climber in Wales is a slight volume of twenty-four brief but pleasant essays on rock climbing and walking in the mountains of North Wales. Five short poems are interspersed among them. The author has caught well the feel of his subject, and writes genuinely and with considerable skill. The essays originally appeared as articles in the *Birmingham Post*. The only misprint I have noticed is a reiterated error in the position of the apostrophe in the name of our own Club. There is a variety of quite appropriate, but not particularly good, photographs. Incidentally, is it correct to use the title " Munro " of 3,000 foot summits south of the Tweed ?

The King Penguin *A Prospect of Wales*, an exceedingly slim book, is, nevertheless, very well worth its modest price. It consists of a series of water-colours by Kenneth Rowntree which catch the country in its various moods, beautiful, sombre and plain ugly ; and an essay by Gwyn Jones which is a sensitive and wholly delightful piece of writing.

A.D.M.C.

A WALKER'S GUIDE TO SNOWDON AND THE BEDDGELEERT DISTRICTS. By H. R. C. Carr, G. A. Lister and P. Orkney Work. (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1949.)

This pocket guidebook, to which reference was made in last year's *Editor's Notes*, has now appeared. It is based on the walking section of Carr's guide to *Snowdon and the Beddgelert District*, which was published as a Climbers' Club guidebook in 1926. The times have dictated that our guides should become severe and technical manuals ; all the more reason to welcome the preservation of this reminder of the other side of mountaineering. The book is clear, precise, practical and interesting. Its main appeal, perhaps, will be to walkers less

familiar with the Snowdon district than most members of the Club ought to be ; nevertheless, it is a safe assumption that very few members will know as many as half the routes which it describes. Pride may forbid carrying it in the pocket ; enjoyment suggests that it would at least be a good thing to peruse it secretly.

A.D.M.C.

(Copies of this guide may be obtained either locally, or from H. R. C. Carr direct—9 Wheatlands Grove, Harrogate, Yorks. The price is 3/9, post free, and the edition is not a large one.)

CAMBRIDGE MOUNTAINEERING, 1948.

CANADIAN ALPINE JOURNAL, 1948.

JOURNAL OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA, 1948.

RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL, 1948.

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN, March, 1948.

SOUTH AND EAST AFRICAN YEARBOOK AND GUIDE, 1949.

WAYFARERS' JOURNAL, 1948.

YEARBOOK OF THE LADIES' ALPINE CLUB, 1948.

This mixed bag varies from the happy soufflé of the Ladies' Alpine Club to the solid historical steak of the *Canadian Alpine Journal*. The *C.A.J.* is perhaps the most important, if not the most light-hearted, being full of new explorations and ascents. There is a first crossing of the high Cariboo Range, first ascents of Mt. Oppy and the S. peak of Hozomeen, and two new ascents by our indefatigable R. C. Hind. F. S. Smythe describes his visit to the Lloyd George Mountains, particulars of which have appeared elsewhere. Later, some of the party did some climbs near Jasper which are nicely described by Odell, who also contributes a brief mountain autobiography. Mr. Brewster made two trips into the Battle Range and climbed Mount Butters and other peaks ; I felt safer with his party than with many because he took, and had to use, a rifle ; most Rocky Mountaineers seem to prefer to defeat grizzlies with loud noises or paddles. Don Munday, needless to say, has been back in his Coast Range ; both he and Elizabeth Parker write of early explorers. The Harvard expedition to the Mt. Waddington area is recorded. Helicopters are now standard climbing equipment in these parts. The rather serious tone at first infected Dorothy Pilley, who set out to give advice on a first season in the Alps, but soon happily relapsed into a description of her latest season there.

The *Sierra Club Bulletin*, as usual, overlaps the *C.A.J.* to some extent. This Club also had a party near Mt. Waddington, which area must, during the season, be quite populous, and even dangerous with showers of food and equipment falling from the skies. The Lost Arrow crops up again (see review of *S.C.B.* in the last *Journal*) ; this astonishing rock pinnacle has now been climbed without aid from above, but with a formidable armoury of other aids of which full details are given ; the climbers took five days and nights. The first ascent of Mount Confederation is described ; the writer tells us that

on an earlier attempt "outmoded pressure tactics were employed," and presumably victory followed some more fashionable technique. The *Sierra Bulletin* gets first prize for photography.

The Mountain Club of South Africa's *Journal* is mainly of local interest, as perhaps the journal of a club devoted to a particular region should be. It gives bountiful evidence of the mass of new stuff waiting to be done ; much of this will no doubt be mopped up as a result of the Club's hut-building plans. Climbing in S. Africa is mid-way between the Rockies and Wales. There is much travel to be done, and a host of remote hills, but there are also pure rock climbs for a day within easy access. No city has so fine a mountain on its doorstep as Capetown. Table Mountain has fine rock and excellent routes, yet the city worker can get there as easily as the Bloomsbury dweller to the Albert Hall. The South and East African *Yearbook* now includes an excellent summary on mountaineering in East Africa from the pen of R. M. Bere.

The *Wayfarers' Journal* starts with an editorial commenting sensibly on controversies such as limitation of membership and the Mountaineering Association. Tilman's dry humour plays around defeat on Muztagh Ata and brings me up against an old suspicion that those who quote profound dicta of Chinese sages are really too shy to admit their own children ; it is said that Richard Hughes gained his Oriel scholarship on a profuse display of old Serbian proverbs which first saw the light of day in his examination papers. There is balm for the weary heart in E. W. Hodges' " Dream Park " which expands the quotation :

" Up the scheduled mountain,
Down the earmarked glen."

The Editor, C. D. Milner, describes an ascent of the South Wall of the Marmolata and brings back, as he should, two good photographs. F. H. F. Simpson sallies into that part of Lakeland which stretches between Dorothy Pilley and Beatrix Potter.

In the *Rucksack Club Journal* two of John Jenkins' last climbs, the E. face of the Grands Charmoz and the Moine Ridge of the Verte are well described by other members of the party. The Presidents of the Rucksack Club and the B.M.C. get themselves involved in a hailstorm on the spire of the Ago di Sciora. (Why does nearly everybody do this climb from the Albigna Hut ? The route from the Sciora Hut on the other side is much to be preferred.) Peter Harding writes on technique and enters into controversy with Tarbuck on rope methods. The chronicle of the Club's proceedings is most impressive, and I am left with the feeling that the C.C. are very ungregarious, and that the Secretary is very slack. It is true that we are a more scattered community, but if any members can sing duets or do conjuring tricks will they let me know and we might try and fix a Bier Abend somewhere.

Cambridge Mountaineering appears every other year and reflects great credit on a University Club. Odell recounts the visit to the Lloyd George Mountains (see also *C.A.J.*), but, properly enough, youth is at the helm. Berill retreats on the Weisshorn, Sherrard

(whose death, alas, has later to be recorded) has a fine day on or in the Waterpipe Gully, others a jolly night "clashing" along the ridge of Aonach Eagach; others climb Kilimanjaro, go ski-ing at Easter, return to the C.C. Norway Meet, traverse l'Arête Vierge de Tête à Pierre Grept, while Cook provides a guide to White Ghyll.

In the *L.A.C. Yearbook*, Lady David Douglas-Hamilton enjoys a wandering season and rightly draws attention to the pleasure of fatigue. Mevrouw Deelen-Jurgen has two long-awaited post-war seasons in the Valais, while Mrs. Richards (heretofore inconsistently referred to as Dorothy Pilley) learns snowshoe technique in the Appalachians. A letter from Mrs. Munday describes a trip in her own Coast Range, while Mrs. Morin contributes an understanding memorial to John Barford.

F.H.K.

S.M.C. GUIDE TO THE ISLAND OF SKYE. With a revised Appendix on New Climbs by William M. Mackenzie and J. K. W. Dunn. (Scottish Mountaineering Club, 2nd edition, revised, 1948. 12/6.)

S.M.C. GUIDE: ROCK CLIMBS—GLENCOE AND ARDGOUR. By W. H. Murray. (Scottish Mountaineering Club, 1949. 7/6.)

In his article in *C.C. J.*, 1948, A. B. Hargreaves made the remark, "As these districts [Wales and the Lake District] become more nearly worked out, the centre of gravity of climbing seems to be shifting to Scotland." This led W. H. Murray to comment to the present reviewer: "Such a negative reason gives only one aspect of the truth. The positive reasons are that since the 1930's there have been two outstanding developments in Scottish climbing. The first is a flow of new summer rock climbs, which in the last three years has become a flood, unparalleled in the history of climbing in Britain. The second is the advanced winter climbing, which I think is the distinctively Scottish contribution to climbing in Britain. In particular the ice climbs made since the 1930's are unique, in the strict sense. (On the other hand, it is only a handful of leaders who seem to be able to deal with them, and the vast majority knows little about such climbing.) Consequently, the greatest service the S.M.C. can now give to British climbers is to lift the Iron Curtain—by publishing the new guides."

The new edition of the Skye guide does not claim to be more than a stop-gap until the desirable day arrives when it can be replaced by two new guides—one a volume in approximately the present form, and the other a specifically rock climbing guide. The 1948 edition includes an appendix revised to include all the climbs done since 1923; they are given in the form in which they have already appeared in various journals. Some admirable new photographs have been added, and the numerical system of classification in four grades, which was a feature of the original edition, has been abandoned in favour of the more usual method.

Murray's *Glencoe and Ardgour*, on the other hand, is the first sample of what the new guides will be like, and has set them off to a very high standard. In size and shape it is very like the Climbers' Club guides. It uses also the English methods of grading. Time has not allowed a reviewer to be found who could speak with much recent knowledge about Glencoe, but this matters the less since its authorship may be taken as a guarantee of the book's accuracy. The good features of the old S.M.C. guidebook tradition have been preserved, the bad ones dropped. There is nothing vague or rambling in the text, but Murray has been careful to avoid the opposite danger of over-precision. Only where absolutely necessary are the climbs described pitch by pitch, and always with a minimum of technical detail ; the object has been to indicate the route without destroying the joy of route-finding. Descriptions are brief, but extremely clear, and clarity is also a feature both of the whole arrangement of the guide and of the 22 maps and diagrams with which (to the exclusion of photographs) it is illustrated. Although it is called a rock climbing guide, this is presumably only in order to differentiate it from the more general guide of the older type, as it contains details of the climbs in winter as well as in summer conditions.

Apart from a full list of First Ascents, no historical section has been included. But to those who only knew the Glencoe of the old guide, this list is a powerful revelation of what the last few years have brought forth. The S.M.C. is to be congratulated on all counts, except that on the present showing there will be material for a new and revised edition within a matter of months.

A.D.M.C.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

The Club gratefully acknowledges receipt of the following publications of which it has not been possible to include reviews : *British Mountain Climbs* (6th edition), by G. D. Abraham ; *Le Cervin*, by Charles Gos ; *Climbs on Gritstone—Laddow Area*, edited by H. C. Parker ; *Walks and Climbs in Malta*, by Showell Styles ; *National Trust Report*, 1947-8 ; *Friends of the Lake District Report and News Letter*, July, 1948 ; *American Alpine Journal*, 1949 ; *Bulletin of the Mountain Club of East Africa* (various numbers) ; *Cairngorm Club Journal*, 1948-9 ; *Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1948 ; *Canadian Alpine Journal*, 1949 ; *Die Alpen* (various numbers) ; *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*, 1948 ; *The Iowa Climber* (various numbers) ; *Mountaineering*, Nos. 4-7 ; *Rucksack Club Journal*, 1949 ; *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, 1948 and 1949 ; *Sierra Club Bulletin* (various numbers) ; *Wierchy* : *Rocznik jubileuszowy*, 1873-1948.

EDITOR'S NOTES

A most menacing shadow has been cast this year over the area with which the Club has its strongest associations, by the announcement of the North Wales Hydroelectric projects. Members are again urged to reinforce the efforts of the Committees of the various Clubs and the B.M.C. to rouse public opinion to realisation of what this scheme involves. The Secretary's circular to the Club in April of this year, a melancholy but valuable document, is worth reprinting here. It says :—

The scheme falls into seven parts, of which one for extending the catchment area of the Dolgarrog Power Station is believed to be already in hand, but this is of minor importance to mountaineers. While objection may be taken to others, the heart of the matter for us is the Snowdon and Nant Ffrancon schemes.

These schemes would involve :

- (a) The erection of a power station in Cwm Llan fed through a tunnel under Lliwedd. This would involve raising the level of Llydaw and probably of Glaslyn.
- (b) A reservoir on the Nant Gwynan slope of Yr Aran.
- (c) A leat on the slopes of Snowdon above Rhyd-ddu delivering water through a tunnel to a power station at the head of Llyn Dinas.
- (d) Llyn Dinas would be dammed and water taken through a tunnel to a power station near Pont Aberglaslyn. (This would reduce the flow of water in the Afon Glaslyn down the Pass of Aberglaslyn to a trickle.)
- (e) Water from the southern slopes of Moel Siabod would be caught and led to a new power station by Llyn Gwynant, which would also be fed by a leat on the Glyders from near Dyffryn-Mymbyr to Llyn Cwm-y-ffynnon.
- (f) A dam would be thrown across the Nant Ffrancon near the Penryn Quarry spoil heaps, and the whole valley flooded back to the foot of the Ogwen Falls.
- (g) A power station, to be fed from Llyn Ogwen and Llyn Idwal, would be built at the Ogwen Falls. This would mean raising the level of Llyn Ogwen and, probably, of Llyn Idwal.
- (h) Water would be collected from the southern slopes of Elidir, Foel Goch and Y Garn and fed into Idwal by a tunnel under Clogwyn-y-Geifr.
- (i) Apart from dams, power-stations, leats and tunnels, there would be substantial roadways (probably), considerable lengths of surface piping, transmission lines on pylons from Aberglaslyn to

Pen-y-Gwryd, from Ogwen to Bethesda, and from Pen-y-Gwryd either down the Llanberis Pass or to Capel and along the Ogwen valley.

No information is available as to plans for disposal of the rock spoil from the tunnels, etc. The cost of carting it away would be prohibitive.

The other parts of the scheme are less important to us, but it should be noted that the River Conway would be diverted into a tunnel above the falls, and there would be a power station at the confluence of the Conway and the Afon Machno—the "Fairy Glen."

The Committee have given careful attention to these schemes and have studied engineering and economic claims. The Committee are satisfied that the schemes could not produce economic benefits in any way proportionate to the immediate loss. Above all, the Committee are satisfied that these schemes are wholly inconsistent with the concept of a National Park for Snowdonia. . . .

* * *

The year 1949 has been an active year on the guidebook front, and 1950 should see the main guidebook programme approaching completion.

Two new volumes have been completed and are now in the printers' hands ; these are *Cornwall*, by A. W. Andrews and E. C. Pyatt, and *Llanberis*, by P. R. J. Harding. The latter comprises the Three Cliffs, Cwm Glas, Clogwyn du'r Arddu and Dinas Mot (the latter section by H. A. Carsten)—in effect the Llanberis valley and all Snowdon apart from Lliwedd and Llechog. Work is already well advanced on the two remaining Welsh volumes, *The Carnedd*s, by A. J. J. Moulam and P. R. J. Harding, and *Cwm Silin* (including various other outlying areas), by E. C. Pyatt. It is hoped that both these will be ready for the printers by next summer.

The Club has also undertaken publication of a guide to the Cratcliffe and Black Rocks area, compiled by P. R. J. Harding and A. J. J. Moulam. Gritstone is a new departure for the Club, but we have special associations with the early history of these outcrops ; and the plan is to produce only a limited edition of this guide until such time as the Gritstone Guidebook Committee can take it over. The Club owes a debt both to the authors and to the Stonnis Club for the work which has produced this guide. It should be out by the end of this year.

* * *

Probably no member has so varied a record of activity in the Club as our latest Honorary Member, A. W. Andrews. The mere statistics of it are impressive, and make one wonder to what new activities Honorary Membership may not be a prelude. Andrews produced 25 *Journals* ; collaborated in the authorship of two guidebooks, at intervals of 40 years ; served some 16 years on the Committee, 10 of them as

Vice-President or President ; and in 1922 on his retirement from the Presidency only withdrew to Cornwall to re-emerge with a whole new climbing ground, complete with a hut of which he has himself been Custodian for eleven years and which, as an institution in the Club, occupies a place only second to that of Helyg.

* * *

The Annual General Meeting and Annual Dinner were held on Saturday, February 26th, 1949, at the Charing Cross Hotel. The speakers were H. W. Tilman, the President, J. M. Thomas, and Dr. T. G. Longstaff.

An Alpine Meet is projected this year, at Promontogno in the Bregaglia, during the last fortnight in July. It has been organised by K. E. Berrill.

Cwm Glas Mawr has now been in use for over a year. The R. W. Lloyd Hut may be said to be on the road to completion now that the bridge is made ; and things are moving sufficiently in earnest for there to be talk on the Committee of arrangements for the opening ceremony—not impossibly in 1949. The Llanberis valley has, in fact, in the last year become the main centre of gravity of the Club's activity in more ways than one, for the work of writing the guidebook has stimulated a wave of new climbs there comparable to the great periods of the 1930's on the Ogwen side. Not that the usefulness or popularity of Helyg is in any way likely to be threatened ; two huts are now clearly needed where one was adequate before.

* * *

The 1948 *Journal* went to Press just before a decision was taken on the question of limitation of membership, and this, though now past history, should be recorded. The Committee decided that the maximum number of members should be fixed at 650, and that the approach to this figure should be made, for the time being anyhow, by annual increases of not more than 5 per cent. of existing numbers. Since this to some extent limits the number of candidates who can be elected, it becomes important that any members having personal knowledge of candidates who have been put up for election should let the Hon. Secretary have their views.

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