

THE
CLIMBERS' CLUB
JOURNAL

1951

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1951

EDITED BY
F. H. KEENLYSIDE

THE CLIMBERS' CLUB, LONDON

This is the seventy-sixth issue of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL (Vol. IX, No. 3, New Series), edited by F. H. Keenlyside, from whom copies are obtainable, price EIGHT SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE, at Under Green, Burwood Park, Walton-on-Thames. Published by the Club in 1951, printed and bound by The CLOISTER PRESS LTD., HEATON MERSEY.



THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL

Vol. IX. No. 3

No. 76

1951

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R. W. LLOYD HUT, YNYS ETTWS
M. S. Eggleshaw

SPIGOLI

P. W. W. NOCK

“**S**PIGOLO,” sounding much the same as an opera star singing “Figaro,” is the typically Italian word for one of the commonest Dolomite formations. It means a vertical ridge (literally the corner of a house), as opposed to the more normal type of Alpine ridge. Since in English we have no such precise word I have kept to the Italian. Generally speaking these Spigolos provide the best climbs, for they are more often sounder than the open faces or black gullies and always give wonderful situations. As for exposure, that can only be described by superlatives ; a common guide-book phrase is “massima esposta.”

It was towards the end of August that Michael Ward and I first saw the Cima della Madonna and the Spigolo di Velo (Schleier Kante) from the bus en route to San Martino. A finer first view of the group would be hard to find, with the great buttress sweeping down for 1,500 feet before it is lost in the lower broken rocks. Our second view from San Martino, though more distant, was almost equally impressive, as here the Spigolo is seen end on and appears quite vertical. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, we at once decided to attempt this magnificent edge. So, after two days spent recovering our Dolomite nerves on the Denti di Cimona and the Gran Pilastro of the Pale di San Martino, we set out.

Unfortunately no hut is available for this climb, and without the dubious pleasure of a night in the open the approach involves a four-hour walk. Taking this latter course we arrived at the foot of the rocks at 11 o'clock, and whilst roping up were able to watch two Austrians performing on the most exposed part of the route 1,000 feet above—a closer analogy to flies on a wall would be hard to imagine. Half-an-hour later, and speaking for myself a little apprehensive at being introduced to the Dolomite fifth grade, we started up the easy rocks. For 700-800 feet the climbing is simple, first up the exposed edge of the spigolo and later up some walls and slabs a little on its right. Then quite suddenly we were confronted with the first of the

serious difficulties, in the form of a chimney leading back on to the edge above a tower. For the first 40 feet the chimney is slightly overhanging, but with some good holds at the beginning it was easy enough to make a start. The hardest move is mounting over a small chock-stone, where one is almost pushed out of the chimney, into a deep narrow cave ; this move, however, was well protected by a piton. The sacks were duly hauled up and stowed in the cave, after which Michael came up to join me and led on through as usual. Here the route leaves the chimney for an extremely steep, and in part overhanging, wall on the right, which is the crux of the climb. When Michael was up this, the question of sacks arose and we made the unpleasant discovery that it would be impossible to pull them up on the rope. This was due to the facts that (*a*) the rope between us passed through two pitons, and (*b*) the obvious alternative of untying, pulling in, and lowering a loose end was out of the question because of the overhangs above. Had we attempted this I doubt whether the party would ever have been united again. The only solution therefore was for me to climb with both sacks, and this proved a very exhausting procedure. The greatest difficulty was in actually getting out of the chimney on to the wall, as every time I tried to make the swing the sacks jammed firmly in the cave behind me. Eventually, however, the move was made and it then only remained to fight the rather unequal battle of two hands pulling in against two sacks pulling out. Great was my relief, both physical and mental, on joining Michael in the gap.

The next 300 feet give what must be one of the finest stretches of delicate, not extreme, rock climbing to be had anywhere. The spigolo, which like most Dolomite edges is rather rounded, rises in one unbroken vertical line to the top of the second tower, while the route, which is never in doubt, winds steadily up the rough sound wall with little or no variation in difficulty or angle. Belays in the normal sense are nil, but pitons abound. For the most part they appear on an average at intervals of 40 feet and where two good footholds give opportunity of a stance there are generally two pitons together. The situation is magnificent and the exposure probably greater than on the S.W. spigolo of the Torre Delago—a route that I had previously considered as the criterion of exposure. Just below the top of the tower a delicate 30 feet traverse to the left provides the hardest and most exposed

step of this section. Finally at the end of the traverse a 15 foot chimney leads up to some easier slabs forming the top of the tower. On these we took our first halt since roping up, and whilst eating, studied the guide-book. Most of the difficulties seemed to be over, and little advice was given.

The final 300 feet from the second gap continued straight up the edge, the only difficulty specifically mentioned being a short overhanging wall. According to *our* translation this was at the top of the tower, but evidently our knowledge of Italian was even less than we realised, since it was in point of fact at the beginning. This rather rude awakening was soon upon us, as on reaching the top of the little tower we beheld with considerable awe the smooth wall springing up from the gap in an initial overhang of 20 feet. At first sight it appeared quite impossible, and on anything except a Dolomite it probably would have been. However, after a careful preliminary examination Michael made short work of the overhanging section and reached a piton on which to rest before continuing up a shallow vertical crack. His climbing of the initial overhang had been quite ingenious, as for the first few feet he seemed to ascend by bridging—if one can give such a description to climbing on an open wall. From here onwards it was plain sailing, though always exposed, and from the top of the spigolo a short walk led us to the summit.

The normal descent by the Winkler Kamin was made in four abseils, and on arrival at the col between this peak and the Sass Maor we joined forces with the two Austrians we had seen earlier in the day. Henceforth we continued the descent in a body for mutual self-preservation, and after a small error in the route finding and a final abseil down the couloir we all rushed towards San Martino at full speed in the one and a half hours of daylight that remained. Nevertheless, we ended our walk through the pines by moonlight.

Our next interesting climb was the S.W. spigolo of the Cima Wilma. It is a route of no more than 1,000 feet but during that short span it gives considerable variety and the middle section is one of almost continuous difficulty. Starting from the Pradidali hut, an hour's walk, first past the little half-dried-up lake of the same name, and then up some scree slopes led us to the foot of the rocks. The start just right of the actual edge was easy enough to locate, while the initial overhang, though straight-



forward, gave good indication of what was in store for us. Easier rocks then followed for two or three pitches until we got to the steep smooth slab where the climb really begins. This slab is about as steep as a slab can be without becoming a wall, and by Dolomite standards was rather impoverished of holds. Next came a groove leading up to the lowest of the large spectacular overhangs which are so characteristic of this edge. The place looked unpleasant, but with the moral support of a piton at the point of exit on to the right wall it wasn't too bad. From here the route continued vertically up a yellowish wall which is the crux of the climb. The first 30 feet went up to the right to a piton at a small niche which gave an uncomfortable off-balance resting place. Then 30 feet up and to the left to a second piton and an equally non-restful haven. Finally straight up the wall until progress was barred by the second huge overhang. At this point Michael, on a foothold, which couldn't by any stretch of imagination be called a stance, placed a piton and summoned me to join him. On arriving at a foothold 6 feet below him he greeted me with the not very encouraging news that his position was most uncomfortable and the piton probably none too safe ; so without delay I placed a second sounder one. Then, feeling more secure, though still uncomfortable, we had a short conference and consultation with the guide-book. On the left was a yellow V-shaped rotten-looking chimney which overhung considerably for at least 30 feet—to the right a smooth slab running out beneath the overhang which apparently led nowhere. It wasn't a very bright outlook and no encouragement was gained from the book which said: "Up the chimney," (*molto difficile*!). Although the place looked utterly impossible we decided to stick to the book and have a go. Once again, however, fortune favoured us, as I wasn't able even to get into the base of the chimney. This convinced me that we had misinterpreted the guide and the only alternative was to attempt the slab on the right. About 10 feet away was a piton, but one less designed to inspire confidence would be hard to imagine, as only a fraction of its length was sunk in the rock. To the piton was easy enough and having clipped on, merely as a matter of routine, I proceeded. The next move was a very delicate mantel-shelf and from this a thin traverse led over to the edge 20 feet away. Then, as is so often the case, the un-

expected appeared. Round the corner on the right was a line of jug handles leading up an absolutely vertical wall. A swing movement round the edge landed me on the first of these vast holds, and then it was only a case of climbing the next 60-80 feet fairly quickly before the arms tired. The first part of this pitch, though probably technically as hard or harder than the previous one, was well protected and the difficulty not so sustained.

The next run-out was fairly easy, almost as if the climb felt it wouldn't be fair to impose a third such pitch immediately. Then we came to the last serious pitch, and although it wore a ferocious look by overhanging in the middle, it yielded without any great struggle. After this we had only to continue in the same line, and with a gradual decrease in angle and difficulty, we were soon on the summit. We didn't linger long there, chiefly because of rather unsettled weather, and were soon on our way down the normal route on the W. face. The descent was uneventful, except for finding a karabiner, but I do remember thinking at the time what a delightful route this must be, as the rock is almost perfect and the climbing fairly continuous. It is difficult, however, to give judgment on a climb when one has abseiled down much of it.

In the afternoon we walked round to the Rifugio Treviso in Canale—a really excellent hut and one surrounded by bilberries and wild strawberries. Our plans here were on a rather grander scale, as we intended on the following day to start up the 700 metres W. spigolo of the Pale di Refugio and then continue the natural line over the Sasso d'Ortega. Unfortunately the weather had other ideas, as half way up the Pale the rain started and gradually increased as we rose in height. On the ridge between the two peaks we took shelter in a cave for some hours, but as there was no improvement nothing remained but to descend and return again next day.

The approach to the foot of W. spigolo of the Sasso d'Ortega is not a very inspired one. It consists first of a damp gully and then some loose and grassy slabs. But perhaps it would be expecting too much to have anything better as an introduction to this great spigolo.

I think the best summary of the climb is given in the words of the guide-book, which says: "From the gap the spigolo rises vertically for 220 metres." The climb does in point of fact start



with a small overhang and then advances with remarkable ease for the next 200 feet. After this the rounded edge is broken by a number of minor overhangs, but with judicious traversing it is possible to reach a sound ledge without any great difficulty. Above the ledge is a large overhang which has to be turned by a delicate traverse to the right. After this traverse the climb proceeds up ever improving holds to the next ledge. This ledge, like the last, is also roofed, but the exit, via a slightly overhanging crack at its left end, is not very hard. The holds then improve, and the remainder of the climbing to the anti-cima is straightforward.

Here, I feel one might almost be forgiven for considering the climb as good as finished, but once again the final *small* surprise shows the error of such a premature assumption. Ahead is the crux of the climb. The gap between the anti-cima and the true summit is bridged by a tremendous jammed block, above which is an overhanging and apparently holdless wall. Prospects were grim, but after a fleeting consideration of the even grimmer one of retreating, we descended on to the bridge for a closer examination. The first sign of hope was a piton about 30 feet up the wall, just above the overhanging section, showing that at least the place was possible. A final nose-to-the-rock inspection revealed a line of small sound incut holds leading up to the piton. When the inspection was completed Michael retired to the far bank for a belay. Unfortunately the line up to the piton was a traversing one, so that the holds, which were excellent for one hand, seemed greatly diminished in size when it came to changing hands on them. Once above the overhang I felt much happier, and, after clipping on a karabiner, took what I considered a well-earned rest. A thin vertical crack now continued up the wall to a second piton 30 feet higher, after which the angle relented, and easy climbing led to a belay. Two further easy pitches led us to the top, and as if to give the maximum contrast to the ascent, we wandered down over easy rocks interspersed with great patches of edelweiss.

A better climb than this would be hard to find, though it should of course be combined with the W. spigolo of the Pale di Rifugio. Taken in this form there are 1,000 metres of first-class climbing, broken by a short stretch of scrambling, which, though it separates the two routes, in no way breaks the continuity.

BY PLANE IN CENTRAL BAFFIN ISLAND

W. H. WARD

LAST year I saw five winters and three weeks of wet warmth that passed for an arctic summer. It was my privilege to spend three months with an expedition to Central Baffin Island, sponsored by the Arctic Institute of North America. There were 20 of us from many countries and we had Pat Baird as our leader. Amongst us were three Swiss, Hannes Mülli, Hans Röthlisberger and Franz Elmiger, and a Texan, Monty Ritchie, who spent their time amidst a beautiful mountain-fjord region and climbed 17 peaks.

Throughout our stay transport and success depended on our "Norseman" aircraft piloted and serviced by Maury King, a bush pilot from Alaska. The emblem on the plane; a snow goose equipped with rope and ice axe portrays the character of its usual passengers. Svenn Orvig, meteorologist, George Riley, geologist, and Maury left Montreal for Baffin Island in the plane on 9th May, followed a few days later by the other 17 of us and our lighter equipment in a R.C.A.F. airlift. Our route was down the St. Lawrence, across frozen Labrador and Hudson Strait to Frobisher Bay and Clyde on Baffin Island.

Reliance on aircraft for the transport of arctic expeditions in the field is relatively new. It becomes possible to place several independent parties to work in remote areas and to accomplish far more in a limited time. The difficulties and adventures with this way of travelling are no less than with the traditional forms of arctic transport: they are merely different. We had four groups separated by distances of about 50 miles and my experiences are those of the party that occupied the southern end of the inland ice cap.

Adventures started early. We had no news of the Norseman for several days during its journey North and when I met Svenn for the first time at Frobisher he had quite a story to tell me.

The Norseman had left Fort Chimo in Ungava Bay and was over Hudson Strait. The day was as young as the Spring and the warming rays of the sun gently seeped into the whiteness of the ice floes below. All aboard were scanning the horizon for the first glimpse of Baffin Island. The engine's roar made conversation difficult, but the party was content, Svenn dreaming of blissful nights on the ice cap in the luxury of a bed he had acquired at Chimo that morning.

Then the weather started to close in and the prospect of crossing the mountains to Frobisher dwindled. The air within the plane suddenly became hot and went cold again, as Svenn, who had been secretly keeping his eye on the fuel gauge, said suddenly: "We can't turn back to Chimo, look at the gas! Where's the map?" Maury swung the plane over to the East towards Resolution Island, hoping to fly around the mountains and up Frobisher Bay under low cloud. The mist at the entrance to the bay was not at all inviting. Maury, always master of the situation, banked steeply and turned back westwards along the South coast of Baffin Island. Eyes and thoughts moved rapidly from the fuel gauge to the indistinct boundary between the snow-covered hills and the sea ice, and back again to the map. Suddenly Svenn exclaimed: "Look, what's that down there?" All eyes were glued to the windows. "A red roof!" shouted Maury. "Must be Lake Harbour. They may have some gas," yelled George who was studying the map.

Geordy Anderson, the Hudson Bay manager, turned down the volume of his radio, as he heard the unusually close drone of an aircraft. Outside he saw a Norseman circling low over the sea ice, preparing to land. Hastily, he collected together a few Eskimos, dogs and a sled and was soon speeding across the snow-covered ice on the bay towards three black figures, who had just jumped down from the plane. He hailed them with a cheery: "Good to see you all, come over and have some food." "Wait," said Maury, "any gas here?" "Sure," said Geordy, "a couple of drums, been here for several years." Geordy had to entertain the Norseman party for several days before the cloud lifted for a flight across the hills to Frobisher where the rest of us awaited them. In the meantime we were able to check by radio the state of the ice for our next landing at Clyde.

It was a fine sunny morning when my "Dakota" slipped rapidly across a narrow fjord and touched gently down on the snow covering the bay outside the post at Clyde. We were the first in and I hurried aft to jump out. Several teams of huskies hastened towards us across the bay and, remembering the golden rule of arctic visitors, we held the mailbag foremost to greet the inhabitants.

Planes loaded with people and equipment seemed to be arriving all day long and while I was coping with arrangements for food and sleeping quarters for the rapidly growing population, I noticed little groups of Eskimos talking excitedly together near the shore. Something even more unusual was happening. A small plane came in, but instead of staying away at a safe distance like its larger brothers it turned and taxied noisily to the shore right alongside the Eskimos. This time only a solitary man—Maury—appeared from within. Apparently the Eskimo history of aircraft omitted the era of the one-man crew, so Maury got a new name—the bird man. As we all knew, sooner or later, our pilot justified his early reputation.

Preparations for our departure to the ice-cap about 100 miles inland were rapidly completed. The discovery, that the two female members of our party filled their hot water bottle from the ice melted for drinking, was quietly shared amongst my ice-cap companions and hastened our departure. The canyon-like walls of the long fjord up which we flew, reverberated on either side to the roar of the plane. During one short cut we took across a bend in the fjord, I felt so close to an arête that I gained the rock climber's sense of attachment. We passed beyond the head of the fjord and, following up a river that was just breaking out, climbed with some difficulty into higher valleys. The fluffy base of the cloud, the rising valley below and the untrodden mountain walls on either side, slowly restricted our visibility and freedom. I was not alone, I subsequently discovered, in wondering how much farther Maury would fly into the thinning wedge. Suddenly the expected happened, a close vertical view of the valley floor, a rapidly approaching rock face ahead, we were free, and everyone relaxed.

Not being able to reach the ice-cap that day, our next problem was to land on a raised beach at the fjord head, which we had earmarked on the way up. Like a hawk inspecting its prey, we



circled around between the repulsive fjord walls trying to assess the size of some curious grooves that ran across the deserted beach. Maury chose his strip. We held on, the first groove came with an awful thud ; we held on tighter, but the rest were trivial. To use our shovels and fill in the grooves with *terra firma* was a satisfying task.

The next fine day found Maury, Svenn and I circling down around the centre of the southern lobe of the ice-cap. The establishment of Camp A1, Svenn's home for the next 92 days, marked the first major step of our campaign. Svenn and I were alone for several days after arrival and we had to decide, provisionally at least, how we were going to depart at the end of August when the plane would be fitted with floats in place of ski-wheels. On the way in, a possible place for departure and for a subsidiary camp (A2) had been noted. It was a frozen lake partly fringed by a glistening blue ice-cliff. Could it be approached with loaded sledges ? Would the ice clear sufficiently for a landing ?

Apart from a few friendly snow buntings, we had seen nothing to attract the eye but virgin whiteness meeting the sky at the horizon. Then, one bright morning, while digging a snow pit, I glanced up to see two small dark moving objects close together on the horizon in the direction of the lake. " Looks like a reindeer hauling the festive sleigh," I called to Svenn. For the moment even he believed me, but the telescope disappointed us. The first rock on the land beyond the lake was clearing of snow and dancing in a mirage.

One clear cold night, we had been travelling for perhaps two hours and the ski tracks were rapidly lengthening behind us across the snow from our tent, which could be just distinguished as a small black dot on the horizon below the sun, towards the deep blue sky and the ever-growing rock beyond the lake. Neither of us wished for any greater pleasure. A silent dark object suddenly appeared in the sky before us. " There's that wretched plane ! " said Svenn. I wanted to hide under the snow, because if Maury saw us, he would surely disturb our travelling pleasures. Fortunately, despite our conspicuousness, the Norseman passed over on its way to camp and we proceeded undisturbed. It was not long, however, before the plane came up behind us, made two broad tracks alongside and

Pat yelled from the window : " Want a lift ? " It really saved a lot of time, in a few minutes we were over the lake and soaring back across ice-cliff. We landed rather bumpily on some wind-blown snow ripples, beyond where the crevasses might be hidden, and staked a site for the subsidiary camp A2. The lift we had back to bed at Camp A1 was welcomed at that early hour in the morning.

Plane travel is as fickle as the weather. The Norseman had been at A1 for a couple of days waiting for the mist to lift before making a general survey flight around the 200-mile boundary of the ice-cap. In a few days the plane had an inland rendezvous with Ken Eade and George Riley, roving geologists, who had been landed near the mouth of Gibbs fjord. Time was pressing and fresh snow had already obliterated the bloody mess left by a seal butchered the previous day. I remember well the overcast Sunday afternoon, early in June, when Maury took off with Pat and Charlie Littlewood, the gravity man with a large appetite, expecting to return in a few hours. In fact, owing to poor weather, the journey lasted two and a half days. The mist enveloped the camp soon after their departure. By now, Svenn and I had had a fair experience of ice-cap weather and we knew that many snowflakes might fall before we saw the Norseman again. Neither John Waller, mechanical engineer, nor Monty Ritchie, our camera man, both recent tenants, knew such a fine blizzard would be staged. We made contact with the plane during the regular inter-camp radio schedule. It had put in a cache at the North end of the ice-cap and was now sitting in the midst of a large frozen lake about 50 miles North, unable to take off from the sticky snow. Svenn and I turned into the warmth of our sleeping bags that night while a blizzard raged outside. We hoped our companions cooped up in the plane would find comfort, for they had only the emergency equipment and food kept aboard. When the alarm for the radio schedule was heard on Monday morning above the incessant flapping of the nylon tent, we looked out and saw the usual thick mist. The Norseman had to remain waiting on the lake. A lull came by evening and when Svenn spoke to the plane at half-past seven the sky was clear above us. If Maury could get away immediately he might land at camp before the mist came down again. We felt helpless. The plane flew over

us hidden in thick snow at half-past eight and the next time we spoke to them at nine o'clock they had landed on the southern edge of the ice-cap somewhere near the future site of camp A2. When the alarm was set for Tuesday morning the wind was blowing at perhaps 45 m.p.h. It had slackened by the time we spoke to the Norseman in the morning, but there was bad flying weather everywhere. Where the Norseman was, the weather improved during the evening, and every half-hour between 7-30 and 10-00 hours the ice-cap re-echoed with the call "Norseman 61352 calling A for Able, over" and the reply: "A for UNable calling . . ." Pat kept encouraging us with remarks about good visibility, but we persisted with replies of little visibility, and, at his request, we closed down and turned into our bags for the third night. The boys in the Norseman could not have gone to sleep and would not be defeated any longer. At half-past midnight I was suddenly awakened by the noise of the plane very close overhead. The frozen zipper on the tent door hindered our exit. I expected to see the Norseman, but was amazed to find the perpetual mist. To us it seemed that the situation in the plane must have become desperate. The droning slowly faded away in the distance to the West. For some time, we tried in vain to call them, but were lucky enough at this early hour to contact the invaluable radio station at Clyde. Clyde could not raise the Norseman either. The situation seemed even more uncertain, so Clyde turned on a gramophone concert. We returned to sleep, after more fruitless calling. I had not been asleep long before the plane was again heard buzzing like a bee before its hive. Again we rushed outside, saw nothing, though the mist was less dense. The buzzing came closer and closer, and while I was having visions of being mown down, Svenn suddenly yelled: "There she is!" Away to the West, where the mist lifted slightly, was the thin outline of the plane, not in the air, but defining the snow surface and taxi-ing towards us. Maury had landed, by excellent judgment, through a hole in the mist only a mile from camp. At this crucial stage, when we could have talked them in, their transmitter had broken down, although they had heard our calls and enjoyed the concert. The journey had lasted 58 hours.

Next morning it was late when we rose; a fine warm day with unlimited visibility. We shovelled away the snow drifts and I

prepared to leave with Monty and John to establish my future quarters at camp A2. The snow was very sticky. First we tried to take off with the freight, then Maury tried with the freight alone, but the suction on the Norseman's skis was too great. In the evening after we had reached A2 on our own skis, Maury brought in the freight and left again for Clyde. Camp A2 was my home for the remainder of our inland sojourn.

The three feet of snow overlying the ice beneath us gradually turned to slush ; blue pools gave colour to the snowscape and watered our boots. A few hundred feet from the tent a large slush river broke out with a roar that awoke us late one afternoon, and we knew we were safe from a deluge at camp. During this warmer weather, Dick Goldthwait, geomorphologist, joined us and much travelling was necessary. Dick worked in the day, John and I shifted loads at night. All sense of solar time was lost in the perpetual sunlight. It was both good morning and good night, breakfast and supper time according to one's habits. By day we ploughed calf-deep on skis : by night the crust broke.

We had to shift our camp for many reasons, in particular we had to be more accessible to the Norseman when it returned on floats after break-up from Southern Baffin Island. Several days of slushy sledging, and a day of ferrying on a rickety raft made of three 10-gallon gas drums back and forth across a mounting torrent, brought us to a pleasant site on a slight mound of dry sand. All our visitors enjoyed this camp with its view of distant hills across the lake covered with broken ice, the fringing ice cliff, and the large flights of King Eider ducks that, every fine night, passed low over the torrent from West to East across the Baffin Island watershed.

In the end the large lake bordering the ice cliff never cleared of ice sufficiently for a landing near to camp and we had to resort to a very inferior landing on a narrow lake at the head of the torrent. Maury rapidly developed a strong dislike to this landing. It was only just long enough, the water was very shallow in places and rocks, seemingly designed to score the floats, abounded everywhere. My ear still jars with the tin-opener sound of a prominent rock ripping across one of the floats and with the string of vehement expletives Maury let forth.

During August, Autumn passed and winter came. There was low cloud, rain, snow and strong winds. The barometer worked its range every day. Many 12-mile journeys had been made between Camps A1 and A2. Tracks only lasted a few days and, in their absence, going uphill from A2 to A1 one had to use a compass, even in fine weather. This task was always made more difficult by the 8 degree daily variation in the compass, and sometimes by valleys filled with many feet of slush. A sleeping bag was always carried lest mist should enforce a bivouac.

The last journey that eventually led to the evacuation of Camp A1 was long delayed by bad weather and the lack of radio at Camp A2. I had been alone for 10 days and when John returned on 12th August in the Norseman, it was a pleasant change to talk to someone other than a friendly fox. He gave me a message from Pat at A1 to meet him half-way the first fine morning. In addition, Pat and I reckoned to depart about the 19th for a fortnight in the mountains nearer the coast. Foul weather ensued and the cloud-base remained below the level of the upper camp. We had plenty of work in hand and saw no point at this stage in forcing a journey in bad weather. The 19th came and if Pat thought a journey was possible, I considered he might come through. On the 21st the Norseman landed in rough weather with another message—radio reception was unfortunately bad. In view of the continued bad weather I was to help evacuate A1 as soon as possible. I therefore decided to force a journey in bad weather, if necessary. Unfortunately I was bilious the next day and not fit to face a long journey. The cloud was low, but it was calm on the 23rd and we saw signs of the cloud lifting during the morning. John and I set off about midday to stake out an accurate compass course as far as possible, leaving time for either John or both of us to retreat before dark and for me to continue alone to A1 if there was a reasonable chance of success.

As we crept slowly up on skis, the mist gradually receded with us, although occasionally I lost sight of John. We built snowmen by rolling snowballs into large Swiss rolls and stacking three or four of them end on. Alongside we placed an upright piece of lumber. Experience had shown that both markers were necessary ; the snowmen show up against the blue sky or dark backgrounds, where the lumber does not, whilst against a

snow background the snowman is invisible, and the lumber is conspicuous. After about eight hours, we reckoned to be within about four miles and a few hundred feet in altitude of A1, the light was fading and the mist lifted no farther. I searched through binoculars for other tracks or markers ahead, but saw nothing. Reluctantly I decided to return with John. Soon darkness came, but I found that it was still possible to follow the spike holes left by our ski sticks and we were in bed at A2 by midnight. No further attempt was made the next day, as there was a strong wind and probably drifting snow higher on the ice-cap.

August 25th promised the best day of the month and I set off for A1 alone. It was my easiest uphill ice-cap journey. The route was laid out and when I reached the large snowman left at our previous turning point, the sun was shining. Here I stopped to take a bearing and was about to raise the binoculars, when I caught sight of a tiny figure away to the left of my course. It was my long-sought companion, Pat, about a mile away. It was a hearty meeting, but his uneasiness about our welfare at A2 was unexpected.

The next few days, fortunately, brought glorious weather. By late afternoon on the 29th we had evacuated both inland camps and were ready to leave with the remainder of our equipment for two days at the mountain camp M2, occupied by the Swiss at the head of Eglinton fjord.

The Norseman climbed above the ice-cliff out across the lake and soon followed down a river that led us into a deep land-locked fjord. Many glacier tongues protruded into the water from breaches in the fjord walls. Cloud at about 1,500 feet abruptly terminated our view of the upper wild walls of the fjord. Eglinton fjord lies parallel to and some 10 miles North of this fjord ; between the two fjords there are many mountains rising to 5,000 feet and three lateral valleys that form possible flight routes. The situation was as if we were flying in a tunnel and wished to take any one of three possible left-hand turns into narrower tunnels that were largely blocked with mist. Just below the mist we snooped into the mouth of each lateral valley in turn, banking steeply and circling closely, but without success. For a moment we were engulfed in mist, it seemed as if we had trespassed in too far and could not retreat. We retraced our

flight back up the fjord to see if conditions had improved. The light was already fading and I kept half an eye on possible places to spend the night. The fjord looked most uninviting with white horses on the water and steep rocky shores all around. Suddenly, Maury spotted a blue hole in the mist, flew into it and drifted along until it came opposite one of the lateral valleys. We shot in, flew low over one small lake and then another, saw Eglinton fjord beyond and were relieved of further anxiety.

The Swiss mountaineers, Hannes, Franz and Hans, who had been expecting to see us for many days, gave us a warm welcome on their green lawn alongside the fjord—colours strange to our eyes predominated. Sheer walls of gneiss disappearing uninterruptedly into the mist limited our view. Long into the night, the silence was broken by the soft voices of old friends drowsing in reminiscences of adventure.

I crawled out of the dimness of the tent into a bright clear morning. The turf was rock-hard with frost and away to the left, beyond a cluster of huge boulders jutting out above the placid water, the red-tailed Norseman lay at anchor. Seven of us with one accord yelled: "Maury!" for he was still fast asleep in his plane. It was dwarfed like an artificial fly by the lofty, indeed overhanging, towers of the fjord that re-echoed with his name. I could hardly credit Hannes's story that the noise of such a small fly had sufficient energy on one occasion to peel off a large vertical slab of rock from one of these gigantic walls, when it flew close. The Swiss had thoughtfully saved an untrodden mountain for us. It dominated the camp and the vision portrayed by its name, Damocles, was no exaggeration. The more comfortable way to study its suspended smooth spur, was to lie on the grass. An ascent so late in the season was quite out of the question. The only route was across a small hanging glacier apparently stuck by frost to a steep broken face. The upper approaches were thickly powdered with fresh snow that was falling off in thin waving veils—a curtain of northern lights—on to the lower Damocles glacier. I was content with a reconnaissance and spent most of the day, often on crampons, climbing the lower glacier to a high col at its head. No other possible routes were seen.

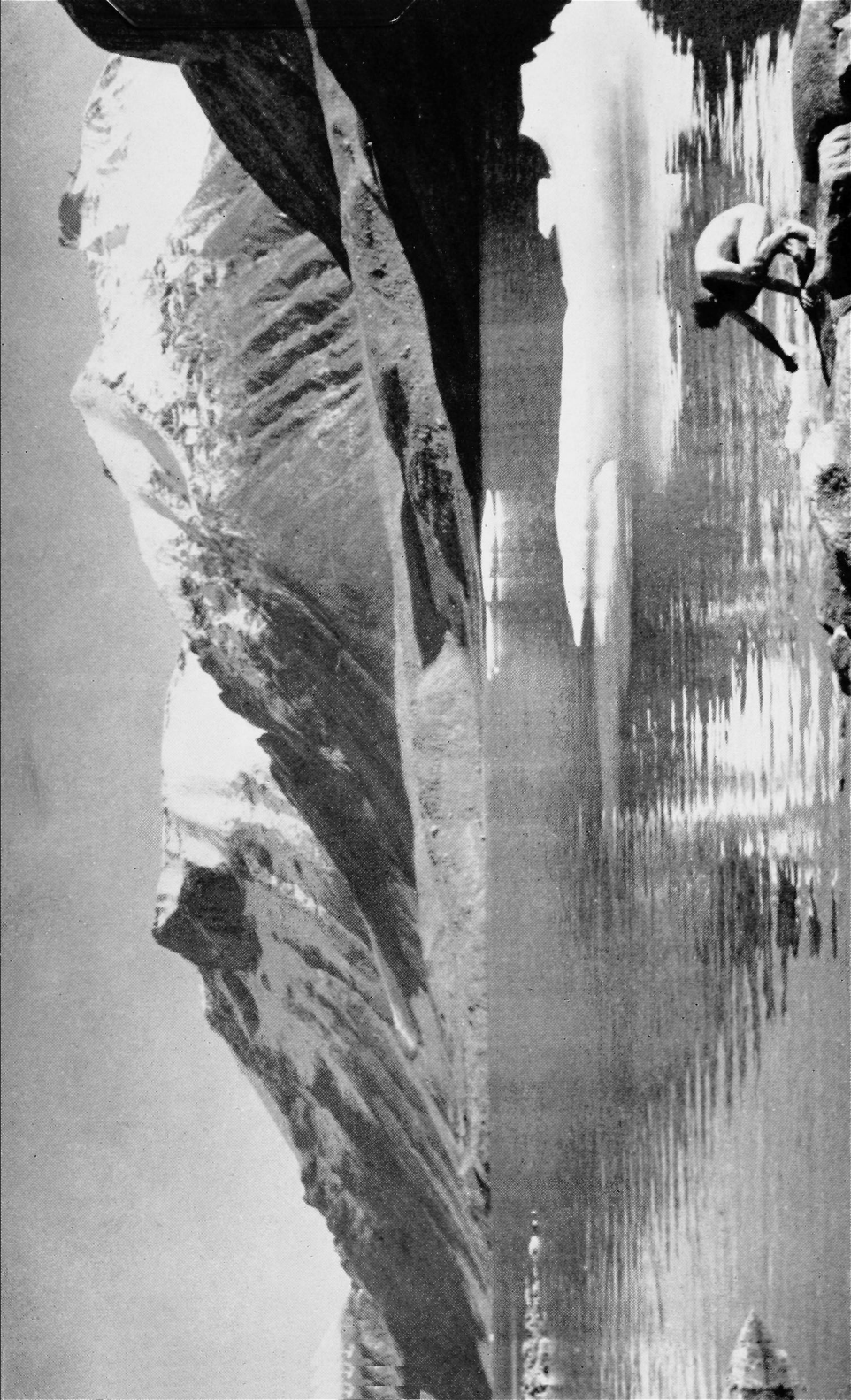
All the peaks in this part of Baffin Island appear as magnificent shafts of rock from at least one aspect. On some peaks, the

disappointing ones, the only route is a relatively straightforward walk—a glacier followed by a plateau spur approach. On others, the rarer ones separated from the plateau, the upper walls are almost impregnable. The nearby Eglinton Tower, climbed by Tom Longstaff and John Hanham in 1934 and ascended for the second time last summer is of the former type. The spectacular Cockscomb across the fjord, ascended by the Swiss, and Damocles are two of the more difficult types.

On our last day, under a cloudless sky, Hannes and I set off leaping across a scree of huge boulders around the fjord. Presently, on coming to a fine beach, we bathed amongst the seals alongside a small iceberg. We followed a deep valley westwards until we became bogged in muskeg. Peaks interspersed with glaciers were arrayed on either side as far as the eye could see. To leave this beautiful country without an ascent was most regrettable, but there was no time. Returning in the evening around the shores of the fjord, we realised why it had felt so warm to dry in the sun after our bathe. Ice was forming on the water.

The Norseman proved a useful ice-breaker in the morning. We had to taxi slowly for a mile down the fjord, forcing the floats through half-an-inch of unbroken ice, before reaching water kept open by the wind from another valley for a take-off. At Clyde, a few days later, we joined the *C. D. Howe*, a luxury ice-forcer on her maiden voyage, and continued north to Devon Island before completing our voyage at Quebec towards the end of September. The Norseman left Clyde the same day as the ship and reached Montreal in five days without a hitch. Much to the surprise of Pat Baird's family, it landed on the water outside his home.

EGLINTON BEACH
W. H. Ward



AIGUILLE DU PLAN, RYAN-LOCHMATTER RIDGE

R. M. VINEY

ALL climbers have their favourite routes. Not only among those they have climbed, but also among those they want to climb. Whether the attraction comes from publicity or mystery, from the sight of a photograph or the enthusiasm of some chance conversation, we are all capable of falling in love with some route which we may never even have seen. Sometimes it is only a casual whim, a mere passing flirtation as with the route near Saas-Fee which I once wanted to climb regardless of its quality merely because there were six Supersaxos on the first ascent. At other times the affection is more lasting but in the nature of things somewhat distant. My affair, for instance, with the Eperon Walker route on the Grandes Jorasses is likely to remain platonic. Occasionally, however, all factors seem to combine in giving one route every power of fascination. So it was with the East Ridge of the Plan. I read Smythe's accounts of his ascent in bad conditions with Dr. Bell, which left me rather frightened and much intrigued. Then I saw a picture of a superb crack in André Roch's book of photographs, which showed something of the route's high quality. The Vallot guide was an added inducement; its straightforward description seemed to bring the ascent of the ridge from Smythe's realms of desperate adventure, to the more matter-of-fact zone of possible climbs. But perhaps the route's chief attraction was not its obviously high quality, or that it appeared to be at about the upper limit of my capacities, but the fact that it was the Ryan-Lochmatter ridge. Anything first climbed by that great rope always holds my imagination, and the route which both Franz Lochmatter and V. J. E. Ryan considered their finest rock climb must indeed be something special.

So from the start of our 1950 holiday it was my main objective. This was just as well as I hardly got up anything else. Our party consisted of Tom Bourdillon and Hamish Nicol, who had already

had a few days in the Argentière district, together with John Saxby and myself. After four days of mixed weather and achievement we decided in the Réquin hut that the time for our assault on the Plan had come. So we spent an easy, sunny day moving to the new D'Envers des Aiguilles hut. This is situated above the Mer de Glace on a tongue of rock where the East ridge of the Blaitière splits the Envers Blaitière glacier. At this time it was but partially built ; only the stone shell and roof having been completed. The bulk of the party went to reconnoitre the bergschrund at the foot of the climb, which in some years can be exceedingly difficult or even impassable. While they were doing this I lazed happily across the glacier to the hut, having excused my sloth in advance by saying that I would get things ready there. This I signally failed to do. A few blankets and a couple of mattresses had been left there for climbers ; but there was a notable shortage of other fittings. So I sat in the sun until the return of the others from a very successful reconnaissance galvanised me into some action. In front of the hut we cooked a rather dubious meal in an old cement lined saucepan over an open fire made from the builders' wood chips. It was a beautiful evening, and we spent a very happy time around the fire, which gave us more of the pleasures of a bivouac than of a hut.

We awoke at one o'clock. There was some distant lightning and a lot of cloud, but nothing sufficiently serious to prevent us starting. We moved off in two ropes, Bourdillon and myself on one, Nicol and Saxby on the other. They had rope or boot trouble of some sort in the hut, and we waited 20 minutes for them on the glacier. This made us both rather irritable. Indeed we were so full of righteous indignation that we plodded angrily up the wrong tongue of glacier until Nicol shouted out our mistake. Bourdillon has since informed me that the last part of the glacier was very enjoyable ; but it was all very early and I have no memory of it. However, at dawn, I recall, we reached the bergschrund, which was easy to cross, and went up the initial rocks to the first of the two terraces which are the chief feature of the start of the ridge. The East ridge of the Plan has not been climbed direct in its lower more buttress-like section. There are two alternative routes leading to the shoulder where one rejoins the crest of the ridge. The first leads across the second

terrace to the Plan-Crocodile Couloir, and goes up its right bank for several hundred feet. The second, which we used, leads leftwards from the first terrace and uses a small snow-filled subsidiary of the Couloir du Col du Pain du Sucre. Unlike the main couloir this is free from falling stones. We rested for a short time at the terrace, and then launched off round the corner, and kicked steps in excellent snow up the 200-odd feet of the little couloir. This terminated in a 40-foot wall of loose rock. However, it was neither difficult, nor so loose as to be dangerous. From a spacious gap behind a minor gendarme we now surveyed the smooth but gently angled slab above. There were reputed to be some difficulties here so Boudillon left me his sack and axe and led off unencumbered. The difficulty lay not in the slab itself, but in escaping from it to the right over a bulge of rocks. A convenient piton already in the rock enabled him to use a running belay for this move, and I followed up awkwardly and out of balance. Bourdillon, who sometimes takes a rather pawky view about the obvious route, now led out towards the left up a most unpromising route. Nicol and I protested, first to each other and then to him. So he returned to the main line and commenced to attack the correct route, which lay up a very steep chimney of bad rock immediately above us. He took several minutes to climb this as great care was necessary in the view of those below him. Leaving the rucksacks I followed up the chimney which, though unstable, was not difficult. Following through the general line of weakness I found a stance about 20 feet above him, and waited while he pulled up the various rucksacks. Amid the usual mixture of shouts and counter instructions that goes on at such times, I was suddenly aroused by a cry of alarm. Leaning forward I saw an ice axe gracefully jumping down the rocks below. It was Bourdillon's and had been attached to his new French rucksack by the straps provided for the purpose. While trying to pull the sack over some minor overhang he had inadvertently exerted himself and the axe had been wrenched off. The situation was aggravated by the fact that it was a hired axe, Bourdillon's own having been broken during another of his bouts of uncontrolled strength the week before. However, no one had been hurt, and from my greater height I could see that it had not fallen down the little snow couloir two or three hundred feet below us. After some

discussion Nicol and Saxby went back down to get it, while Bourdillon and I went on up. We were both climbing slowly, and Bourdillon who was not feeling well was by his normal standards climbing badly. In any case we soon lost the route through carelessness. We went on up the line of weakness above us instead of going to the right almost at once. The climbing got harder, and it was only after some time that we worked our way back on to the right route where it reaches the crest of the ridge at the Epaule. We were joined almost at once by the other two, who had fetched the ice axe with great speed. Nicol, who has an almost infinite capacity for guide-book memorisation, had made no mistake about the route.

It is at this point that the true Ryan-Lochmatter begins. From the shoulder to the summit the route goes up the ridge itself for about 1,100 feet. The rock is clean, the angle high and the climbing superb. We prepared for the main business of the day by sitting in the sun and eating. The weather had been steadily improving, and it now seemed likely to hold for the whole day, so Bourdillon and I decided to take it easily up the remainder of the ridge. Nicol and Saxby who were going very well and wanted if possible to get to the Montanvers that night decided to push on at speed. They left, and we lazily watched Nicol indulging in some peculiar acrobatics a couple of hundred feet above us. I am still disappointed that at the same point we had no occasion to perform anything similar. After finishing our meal of sugar, raisins and snow, we set off after them. For a while the ridge was pleasantly moderate, and we moved together. It then steepened, and after some difficulties that have escaped my memory we found ourselves below the crack that had attracted us in Roch's photograph. It was some 40 feet, steepening in a long simple curve—a beautiful pitch to find unavoidable half way up an Alpine ridge. It turned out to be hard, but not so hard as it looked, and, since it is ascended by jamming with the right arm and climbing on the roughnesses of the granite, it must have been much easier for climbers like ourselves who were wearing vibram soles than for those wearing nails. The climbing now became more strenuous and we continued to take frequent rests.

As is often the case when the climbing is continuous and not too hard, I cannot remember much about the next few hundred

feet. Indeed the next pitch that stands out in my memory was quite near the final steep tower. The ridge narrowed and descended into a brief knife-edge that seemed to run straight into a new cliff. The way led up a shallow line of weakness to the left with poor holds. There were, however, two pitons in the rock, and we had no compunction in using them for both hand and footholds. In Bourdillon's view the pitch "would have been hard without the pitons." In mine it was in any case the hardest of the climb. Perhaps this was because it required delicacy and I was already tired. We moved leftwards, and up a strenuous chimney. Soon we were on the final 300-foot tower, and had become aware that Nicol and Saxby were again within earshot. More strenuositities followed, and we began a shouted argument about the route which the upper rope had been having difficulty in tracing. The guide-book, which Nicol was now carrying, is not as clear at this point as the 1948 Addendum to it, which we happened to have. The difficulty was soon clarified and before we had joined him Nicol was once more away. After a chimney or so Bourdillon and I became involved in a delicate traverse, which seemed quite hard, but which was I think a short cut of our own. We could now see the "fissure en Y" which concludes the final tower, and which is both hard to reach and in my opinion to identify. This sign that we were nearing the top of the ridge was very welcome, as we were all now very tired. As is the custom with the last man on these occasions I began to feel very neglected. Whenever I struggled to the top of one of the endless chimneys or cracks all I saw was the back view of Bourdillon as he disappeared rapidly round a corner to the next one. My capacity for enjoying the climb declined rapidly. One crack I remember which was not particularly hard, was about 4 inches wide and went several feet into the rock. While looking hopefully into it for some non-existent holds, I was intrigued to see an ice axe at the foot and back of it. I have since wondered whether this was the one lost by Dr. Bell on the second ascent. So engrossed was I by this find that I was quite surprised to find myself at the foot of the long postponed "fissure en Y." The more so as it looked much more like an overhanging cave than any letter of the alphabet. The left-hand branch was the one to be climbed, and I found it very hard indeed until I realised that I had my back to all the holds. I

turned about and struggled gasping to the top. All that remained was the odd hundred foot of scrambling that constitutes the final peak of the Plan. Even this we all found exhausting.

We had taken 13 hours from the hut, and there remained only the easy descent by the ordinary route. Our time was slow, as each rope had lost the way once, and while one had deliberately lazed its way on the middle bit the other had had to retrace its steps for the ice axe. When I consider that we had every climbing advantage that good conditions, modern equipment and an accurate guide-book can give, I am more than ever awed that the first ascent was achieved in 1906 in 13 hours from the Montenvers. Despite its strenuous nature I enjoyed the route as much in action as I did in anticipation ; and I would have enjoyed it as much even if I had not succumbed to its charms in advance. As it is the fascination still holds ; it remains one of my favourite climbs, for now I have a new and even better reason for liking the route. I have climbed it.

MOUNT VANCOUVER

N. E. ODELL

THE successful ascent of Mt. Vancouver in July, 1949, was not due to its being the primary objective of the expedition responsible for it. It was a secondary item in a considerable programme of field research on the part of the Arctic Institute of North America. That programme, entitled somewhat fancifully: "Project Snow Cornice," had its first instalment of work in 1948, and this took place for the most part on the high Seward Icefield within the St. Elais Range. From a coastal base at Yakutat an advanced base camp had been established mainly by means of air-transportation not far from the foot of Mt. Vancouver. During a temporary check in the operations, due to an accident to the expeditionary aeroplane, a party of four made an attempt to climb the mountain by the long western ridge. They failed to do so, but did well in reaching an altitude of nearly 13,000 feet.

The 1949 expedition, the second instalment of "Project Snow Cornice," was again led by Walter Wood, who is the director of the New York branch of the Institute. He is an old friend of mine, with whom I have explored in N.E. Greenland, and he was then President of the American Alpine Club. To a mountaineer, mountains are necessarily a challenge, however preoccupied he may be with the scientific work of the expedition he is engaged in. And so it was with Walter Wood and myself. With an advanced base situated right at the foot of such a superb unclimbed peak as Mt. Vancouver, we and three other mountaineers in the party considered that something ought to be done about it. Moreover, Mt. Vancouver was the highest individual unclimbed summit in North America; although not actually the highest unascended peak: that is King Peak which is a satellite of Mt. Logan.

With a big programme before us of topographical surveying, apart from geological and glaciological researches, we thought it desirable to dispose of the challenge of Mt. Vancouver as early in the season as possible. Moreover, to aid us in the venture, and shorten the time factor involved, we decided to use our

aeroplane, the "Norseman," to parachute supplies and equipment for us at convenient points on our route of ascent. This necessitated the "Norseman" flying to something beyond its altitude ceiling. Loads of food, stoves and tents were duly dropped by parachute in the vicinity of our anticipated Camp 1, at about 8,500 feet and also for Camp 3 at approximately 12,500 feet. This was no easy operation and our excellent pilot Maurice King, showed great skill and judgment in carrying out these drops on to a restricted mountain ridge.

Five of us started off on the 28th of June from the base camp at 6,000 feet on the Seward Icefield ; and, very heavily loaded, we travelled on skis up the glacier for some four miles to its head. There we parked our skis and had to climb a rocky wall with stretches of steep snow, which brought us to the high glacier basin chosen for the site of Camp 1. In spite of thick mist and light snow we duly found the parachuted box of equipment which was well picked out by its marker-signal with red pennant. Camp was soon established and that night it snowed pretty hard. Next day was not good, so that little could be done in route-finding on the mountain-wall above us. So Wood and Hainsworth went down to base for further supplies and to make a radio signal. The following day three of us tackled the main western ridge of Mt. Vancouver which ran steeply up above our camp. It was heavily corniced in places, and we had to be extremely careful about not climbing too far out on these treacherous overhanging snow masses. Then, there was a high rise of ice in the ridge, virtually a great step of 450 feet which needed all our skill to surmount. It was about the greatest technical difficulty of the whole climb, requiring step-cutting with the axe in ice lower down, and step-kicking with crampons in snow set at a high angle in the upper portion. On this steep pitch we fixed a 500-foot rope to facilitate our descent.

One of our party, Peter Wood, had unfortunately earlier damaged his hand. Consequently, it was considered inadvisable for him to continue and at Camp 1 our party was re-arranged. On the first of July four of us started up on two ropes : Walter Wood and Wm. Hainsworth and Bob McCarter and myself. We had not climbed far when Wood complained of nausea and sickness, due to the fumes from the leakage of a gasoline can which had saturated his parka and pack the previous day. It

was indeed a tragedy that he, our leader and the planner of the enterprise, had in the end to give it up and return to the camp—so losing the opportunity of making a fine first ascent. His place was taken by Bruce Robertson, of Toronto, the medical officer of the expedition and a member of the Alpine Club of Canada. With him I had made a new climb near Jasper in the Canadian Rockies in 1947.

So we were now an Anglo-Canadian-American party of four, and all our efforts and experience were going to be called upon if we were to reach the top of Mt. Vancouver. We found a good spot on a broadening of the ridge at about 10,300 feet for our Camp 2, and we had to contend with a bitterly cold wind sweeping across the ridge during relay operations to stock and equip the camp. It was very cold at night and a violent wind drumming on the tent prevented any sleep. The morning of the 3rd July broke clear and the wind lessened, so we continued the climb mostly over steep ice and snow, with shorter stretches only of snow-covered rock. The higher we climbed the better the weather. By 6-45 p.m. that day we had reached the steep icy flanks of "Institute Peak" really a high satellite summit on our ridge. It was here we expected to find the highest parachuted box, with another tent and stores. None too soon we spotted it below us, half snow-covered on a steep slope of 37 degrees and not far above a deep crevasse, into which it fortunately had not fallen. We were soon cutting out a platform for the tent, and so cold was it before we had finished the job that one at least of the party was threatened with frost-bite. However, a good hot dinner on our Colman stove put us in fine fettle and we returned to our sleeping bags to sleep the somewhat fickle sleep of high altitudes, in this case not more than 12,500 feet.

Next day we were enveloped in clouds and during the morning nothing could be done. During a clearing in the afternoon, however, we were able to climb to the summit of Institute Peak above us: actually a pioneer ascent of about 13,000 feet. No sooner had we returned to camp than our "Norseman" plane flew over us and signalled. Later we heard they had considered the weather good enough for us to have climbed Mt. Vancouver that day, a verdict with which we heartily disagreed.

On the 5th July we woke to sunshine and scattered clouds, though the peak of Vancouver itself was obscured. We left

Camp 3 at about 7 a.m. and, tied together on two ropes, traversed along the snowy northern flank of the main ridge until we reached a high saddle, or col, at about 13,300 feet. Here I was surprised to find a bank of apparent moraine, thousands of feet above any others in the district.

We pushed on up the final 2,000 and more feet, catching just one glimpse of the peak, through blown clouds, as we commenced to cut steps up a steep ice wall, which we hoped would lead without further trouble to the top. That *was* our last glimpse ; for eventually in driving chilly mist we made our way up the final 800 feet of snow ridge to the culminating point, and success at about 3 p.m. We were indeed gratified to be standing on the highest peak of Mt. Vancouver. But naturally we had hoped for a good view from so commanding a position. We wanted, moreover, to look along the summit ridge and compare our N.W. peak with the S.E. point, which had been triangulated 50 years ago by the International Boundary Survey at 15,700 feet. From the results of our own photogrammetric survey, and from actual aerial views, we have become convinced that our N.W. peak is the higher peak by 100 feet or more, whether the Boundary Commission will agree or not. The thick mist and clouds unfortunately prevented our actually levelling along the summit crest to make more certain of this point.

We did not linger longer than half an hour on the summit, but as geologist I had a duty to perform in securing a specimen from the highest available outcrop. To do this it was necessary to lower me on the rope some 120 feet down the steep northern flank of the summit cone. There in bitter wind and driven mist I managed to chip off a few flakes from an extremely tough block of rock. This rock turns out to be partly of diorite gneiss*, very similar to what is found to compose many of the peaks of the Coast Range from B.C. to Alaska.

It was a rather tired, though happy, party that reached Camp 3 that night after 14 hours' hard going ; and as in the course of the next two days, we slowly descended this difficult yet superb mountain, we felt gratified that by international co-operation success had been achieved.

* In microscopic section, this proved to be a mixed metamorphic rock, mainly arkose, or a greywacke.

ARGENTINE WEEK-END

M. P. WARD

THE Couvercle hut was filled with steaming people. Outside the lightning darted around the sky illuminating the dull clouds, and the rain beat in waves against the window panes. We thought longingly of sunshine and sun-baked rocks, and decided in a split second to go to the Argentine—a mountain about which we knew nothing at all.

At Bex and at Gryons we could find little information and no guide-book. However, early on Saturday we set off up the valley to Solalex. It was a lovely sunny morning as we walked up the dusty road winding in between fields alive with colour and sound. Near the head of the valley, underneath the Argentine, we found a fine alp with three or four chalets. This was Solalex; here we stopped to inquire of the now fabulous guide-book. One chalet had it—and as there was also a spacious hay-loft where we could sleep, we decided our luck had changed.

The Argentine is a narrow ridge about two miles long, with several summits—the Cheval Blanc and Tete du Lion being amongst them. Only the north side of the mountain seems worth climbing on and consists of a rock wall at least 2,000 feet high. The main feature of the face is the Grand Miroir—a gigantic triangular slab, now seamed with sparkling streams of water. To its right the face steepened and here went two routes—the Paroi Brune and North face of the Cheval Blanc. Farther right still was the Petit Miroir—a smaller but steeper slab, and on its right the Voie Muller.

We started about mid-day on the classic climb—the Grand Miroir, in order to get the feel of the mountain. The first 200 feet until we got on to the main slab were steep and quite hard. As we climbed up the slab, clouds began to form around us emphasising its immensity and smoothness. Higher up we overcame two overhangs and landed still in cloud on the summit ridge. This climb drove home some important points: first of all there were no rock belays—pitons had to be used, and secondly if there was any rain the rocks would become as slippery as ice.

Next day we decided to do the North face of the Cheval Blanc, a climb on the steeper rocks to the right of the Grand Miroir, for it sounded most intriguing.

The upper buttress, forming the Cheval Blanc, a jagged overhanging rock, stood out boldly from the Grand Miroir. Our route went up this buttress, having first of all made its way up a steep smooth wall beneath and then overcome the overlapping edge of the Grand Miroir by a tunnel. When we started at the foot of the climb I remember seeing the protruding nose of the buttress nearly vertically above us and hoping that somehow we had read the guide-book wrong.

The key to the first portion of the climb was a thin crack splitting a smooth wall about 500 feet high. The problem was to get to the foot of the crack and this entailed some difficult pitches on rotten rock, which made us rather nervous. However, once in the crack all was solid again. The exposure was continuous and pleasantly stimulating, and when the crack petered out once or twice the climbing became interestingly difficult. The last 100 feet were the hardest and the final landing on to a steep greasy gangway proved quite exciting. Peter led this in fine style after I had had one or two shots and failed.

We now traversed left around a corner of rock and up into a pleasant niche—all of whose walls overhung. There we were underneath the lower edge of the Grand Miroir—which stretched downwards and to our left for several hundred feet. We sat on some unstable hummocks of grass, ate a frugal meal and admired the Diablerets across the valley. Also we amused ourselves by dropping stones on to the foot of the climb—an extraordinarily easy thing to do.

After admiring the view and when we could think of no more excuses for delaying, we went to have a look at the tunnel, whose mouth opened some feet above us. The guide-book said that if there had been much heavy rain this part may prove impossible. After a short look we could well believe it.

The tunnel had a semi-circular course—its exit being 80 feet above us and hidden by the overhanging rock. Its cross section was that of an oval pushed on its left side—there being only a floor and roof. The floor was tilted at about 50 degrees and sloped steeply upwards into the mountain. It was slimy with a thick coating of grease and we could see no holds on it at all, for

it was rather gloomy inside. A forlorn piton stuck out from an impossible spot, and numerous choughs cawed raucously at us in derision. We retired to think.

The main problem was to get to a chockstone about 30 feet into the mountain and somewhat above us. We could not bridge between the floor and roof, so we had to climb the left wall. Here by dint of feel we found a thin crack running up to the roof. In it we could just insert pitons—but it was too narrow for fingers. Peter started, and after some time he had put in three or four pitons which enabled him to climb to the roof. The few rock holds were useless on account of grease. He then came down and I went up in stocking feet for they were the only wear that might possibly be of use. I had to traverse right from the top piton to the top of a narrow crack running down 20 feet to the chockstone. This required much rope haulage and more pitons, as I could get little help from the rock—my feet, even in stockings, skidding off any vestige of a hold. At last I managed to get to the top of the thin crack, insert a piton and slide down to the chockstone. Peter, following, had a most difficult job, as he had to remove all the pitons we had put in.

From the chockstone we could see the exit of the cave above and to the left, but we still had the accursed slimy slab to climb on. However, by feeling around in the dark we found a piton-worthy crack and with the help of this and some hard bird droppings, which made surprisingly good holds, we emerged rather damp and very dirty into the sunlight again. The choughs flapped noisily around us, for we had nearly trodden on one; then settled back into their disturbed places, and all was peace again.

We stopped a few minutes in a grassy niche, put on our foot-gear and mentally congratulated the discoverers of such an imaginative and unique piece of climbing.

For the next hundred feet, to the base of the final buttress, we climbed up on to the Grand Miroir. Here we stopped a few moments to look at the route. It went most unpleasantly up an overhanging crack, almost straight above us. The rock was yellow and looked rotten, but after some jibbing I was inveigled into starting.

The holds were there and the rock not too rotten—but after about 50 feet I was exceedingly glad to come to a niche where I

belayed on all available spikes and waited for Peter. He came up and disappeared along an unsavoury stomach traverse to the right. The upper part of his body was wedged insecurely in a horizontal slit whilst the rest dangled negligently over space. However, a foothold soon appeared and we landed on a ledge 3 feet wide and 50 feet long. Unfortunately the middle portion of this was beginning to break away and so we had to make a difficult traverse on the wall above—to alight on the right end of the ledge. From this end we had a superb view of the Paroi Brune—a most formidable wall.

Above us now was a groove, and up this we went, traversing left over a rib as the groove began to overhang. A further upward and leftward traverse brought us to the forehead of the buttress and the angle lessened. Soon we were on the ridge once again.

We went quickly back along the ridge and down the mountain, for the sun was setting. As usual we had started much too late. Descending we had the unforgettable view of the Grand Miroir, a burning pink sheet of rock gradually darkening to violet and then black. In the deepening shadows of the pine trees we thought of the remarkable climb we had just done, for we must be two of the few who have climbed on pitons and bird-droppings, in the dark—on a summer's day.

SOME CLIMBS IN SOUTH AFRICA

E. H. MARRIOTT

ALTHOUGH my first climbing in South Africa was in the Drakensberg it is perhaps appropriate to deal with Table Mountain first. Most people arrive in South Africa for the first time by sea, at Cape Town, and the view of Cape Town with Table Mountain in the early morning is unforgettable. It has a real beauty of its own and there is also something formidable about the 3,000-foot flat topped wall rising above and behind the town. The angle to the top from the end of Adderley Street, the main street in Cape Town, is some 15 degrees and the last few hundred feet seem to be vertical. In fact the final cliff on this side is steep.

The rock is Table Mountain Sandstone, hard and well weathered into vertical faces with horizontal ledges and vertical cracks, and there are three main beds of this hard sandstone which form the buttresses on which the climbs lie. Nearly all the climbs lie on the face overlooking the town and on the Twelve Apostles, the buttresses overlooking the Atlantic, of which the most popular are Barrier, Valken and Postern, each with several different routes and all near to the Club hut on the Back Table.

I did few climbs but they were most enjoyable. To me the most noticeable features of Table Mountain climbing were the steepness and therefore the exposure, and the length of pitches between stances and belays. Perhaps to make up for this, I found the holds good in size, which is as well, as small holds in sandstone are always to be treated with caution. In fact, only one ever broke under me, but I can think of several small but very necessary holds which I would treat with extreme caution, holds as important and small as that foothold just below the mantel-shelf on Napes Needle.

Climbs are classified by the letters of the alphabet, D, E and F being approximately equivalent to our very difficult, severe and very severe, but are graded with reference to rubbers, not to nailed boots.

The longest and one of the most enjoyable climbs I did was Arrow Face, with about 1,200 feet of climbing in a rise of 2,000 feet which finishes immediately below the Upper Cable Station. (There is an aerial rope-way to the summit of Table Mountain.) The climb lies on three different buttresses at different levels, with walking and a little scrambling in between. Below the lowest buttress on a low band of rock I found what looked to be a good chimney, and persuaded my companion to let me lead this, and as it was good, Graham allowed me to lead throughout. On the lowest buttress one pitch is hard ; not unlike the difficult move on Zig Zag, but harder and more exposed. But the best pitch was the last, or rather the start of the last wall or slab under the Cable Station. The start is tricky and at the end of an 80-foot run out, I was too far to the left and had an awkward move back, both hands on a hold built for one and a long stride to the right after changing feet on what was fortunately one of the usual large holds. We were long on this last wall and while there we were watched by no less than five car-loads of tourists on the "teleferique," sent down by the authorities on account of the "south-easter" blowing up, the wind that brings clouds covering Table Mountain and pouring down the face towards Cape Town, a wind on that occasion so cold as to persuade me that shorts were not suitable dress for Table Mountain.

We were two and a half hours on that final slab and whatever climbers may think of restaurants, the cup of tea at the top was most welcome. In any case, Table Mountain is an exceptional mountain.

Almost in the centre of the face overlooking Cape Town is a narrow and steep rib with about 400 feet of climbing. Left Centre Face is a climb of E standard and well sustained at that standard, too. As on most climbs the holds were good. Two moves were memorable, the first a step from a square block outwards and upwards to achieve a ledge on a steep slab, and the second an arm pull to obtain foothold on a flake jambed in the bottom of a steep chimney and overhanging the ledge below. The arm pull was not hard, but one had to be a contortionist with a peculiar sense of balance to get the correct hand onto the all-important handhold. Above the chimney was a traverse, short, delicate and extremely exposed and until we used a belay that the leader somehow missed, very dangerous, too.

To the right of Arrow Face, high up on the final cliff facing the Atlantic rather than Cape Town lie two good climbs. Both are exposed as nearly all Table Mountain climbs are, short and severe. Cobblestone's difficulty is a step from the top of a pinnacle on to a vertical wall followed immediately by a traverse of a few feet, then steeply upwards to the bottom of a crack into which it is hard to get a foot. After a successful ascent of this, I often suggested a descent as a short cut from the top of the Mountain. Perhaps fortunately, my companions always had good reasons for not conforming.

Staircase Climb, divided into three sections, is even more exposed. An initial chimney is not really hard. It slants upwards to the right in a series of steps which gives the climb its name. The next section is sensational, a traverse along a broken ledge under an overhang and above a really sheer drop. The holds are good but the traverse is long ; it is, though, worse to contemplate than to conquer. The third section, a steep chimney is tiring on the arms and awkward to leave.

Overlooking Camps Bay and the Atlantic, Blinkwater Pinnacle is a ridge climb worthy of the Alps with few difficult pitches, but with one severe descent into the gap behind a veritable "gendarme," and a severe crack in the final tower. I liked the descent but it was harder than I expected, and I failed the final crack, excusing myself for reasons of cold, tiredness and lack of time. It was late and I was certainly cold, but I doubt that I would have retired so prudently had I known it was my last chance.

Farther south I enjoyed the face climb on Valken Buttress. Douglas Graham led the lower buttress with three hard pitches and I led the upper section whose chief features are a hard traverse low down and an easy but very sensational "bulging hand traverse" high up.

On Postern Buttress, David Vosper led up Fraser's route. On the lower section, at the bottom of a chimney is a flake, or rather finger of rock jutting out horizontally. Perched on this is a square block, large but loose. There are different ways of getting on to the finger without disturbing the block, my preference being for sitting sideways on it and edging along, but it means letting go of everything to do so.

The upper section of this climb lies well to the left and is reached by walking or crawling along a "dassie" traverse for about 300 feet. A dassie or rock rabbit is an animal not unlike a marmot in size and habits, but prefers to build his house on a rock rather than in earth. As a climber he comes between a baboon and a goat but is lazier than either. His traverses are the larger horizontal ledges into which the buttresses are split. From the traverse a heavy arm pull gets one a footing in a chimney—a not unusual move in Table Mountain climbing. Then easier work leads to a cave in which is a "climber's friend," a tree with magnificent roots and therefore a safe belay, whose real name I forget. Out from the cave to an exposed corner, the route leads up a crack to the crux of the climb, a very severe move out of the crack, now overhanging, into a parallel crack, the extension of the chimney above the cave. Except for one move on a new climb on the Witteberg which Peter Campbell and I opened up, this was, I think, the hardest pitch I did in South Africa.

Drakensberg climbing is very different from that on Table Mountain. Most of the climbs necessitate spending the night in a tent or a cave or at the hut for climbs around Mont-aux-Sources, and dealing with the attendant chores of carrying food and bedding and collecting firewood. In winter or bad weather true mountaineering knowledge may be essential. Maps are few and of very doubtful quality.

Properly to understand Drakensberg climbing it is necessary to study the diagram. The escarpment varies in height from a few feet to about 500, and although generally unclimbable, is broken by many gullies, the easier ones being the passes between Natal and Basutoland, and the more difficult ones providing good climbs. From the escarpment foot numerous ridges extend to the north and east and these support the various towers and pinnacles of the B, C and D types. B type is typified by such peaks as the Devil's Tooth (recently climbed by a party of which Peter Campbell was a member), Mweni pinnacles and the Column, and many smaller ones that once provoked me to remark to the tune of a popular song: "Little piles of rubbish are stacked up on high." And so they are. Most of the rock looks loose and a great deal of it is; so much so that a Drakensberg climber faced with the choice of a route up grass or up rock,

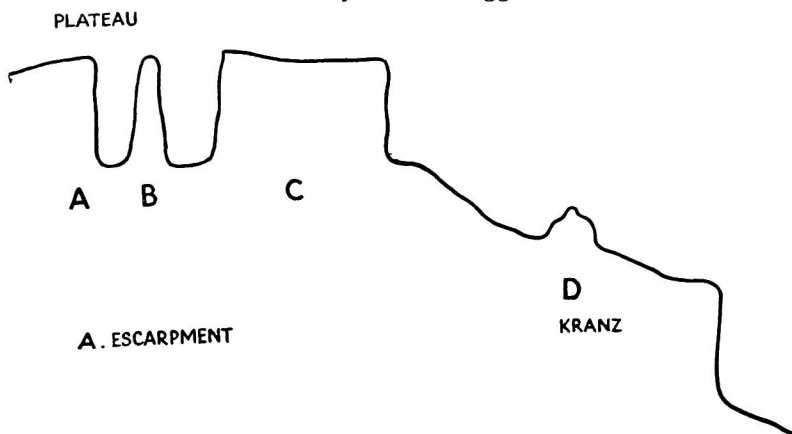
will usually choose the grass. C type peaks are such as Cathkin and Sentinel, the former looking almost exactly like the example in the diagram. These peaks are all basaltic, but below the basalt are beds of sandstone which when exposed and weathered, produce pinnacles and cliffs or kranzs on which lie many minor climbs.

South and west of the escarpment lies the so-called plateau of Basutoland, which is in reality a country deeply cut into numerous gorges by the head waters of the Orange river and its tributaries. Because of the difficulty of travel in the valleys below the escarpment, the latter forms the high road between climbs and provides the best caves and camping grounds, so that one usually descends to the foot of one's climb first.

I found the sandstone to be nearly as good as that on Table Mountain, but the basalt is not generally good and must be treated with caution and respect.

Diagram to Illustrate Drakensberg Climbing.

The verticality is not exaggerated.



My first real climb was the Sentinel, whose only difficulty lay in the initial chimney, perhaps just severe. Otherwise the ordinary route is a walk with a little scrambling. At the top on this occasion I found myself just level with the top of the cloud bank with only Mont-aux-Sources showing above. Later I climbed it again with a beginner and in "tackies" (Anglicé rubbers).

Mont-aux-Sources itself, officially the highest peak in South Africa, is only a walk, but nearby at the top of the escarpment is the hut which forms a good base for such climbs as the Sentinel, Amphitheatre Wall and Inner Tower. Amphitheatre Wall climb lies up the lower slopes and escarpment and is the only known route there between Sentinel and Inner Tower. As a climb it consists of boulder hopping in the Tugela gorge. (If the river is in flood, a swim will be added), bush whacking up the lower slopes and a strenuous chimney up the actual escarpment. There is also a delightful traverse for about 50 yards across a smooth slab to which cling, rather surprisingly, some tufts of grass. The great idea is to step lightly from tuft to tuft, the lighter the better ; but I could not help thinking that had the traverse been farther down, or had the alternative been a comfortable descent, I would cheerfully have forgone the strenuous chimney ; and I strongly advise anyone who wants to do this climb, to start from the top, doing the chimney both ways and foregoing the traverse.

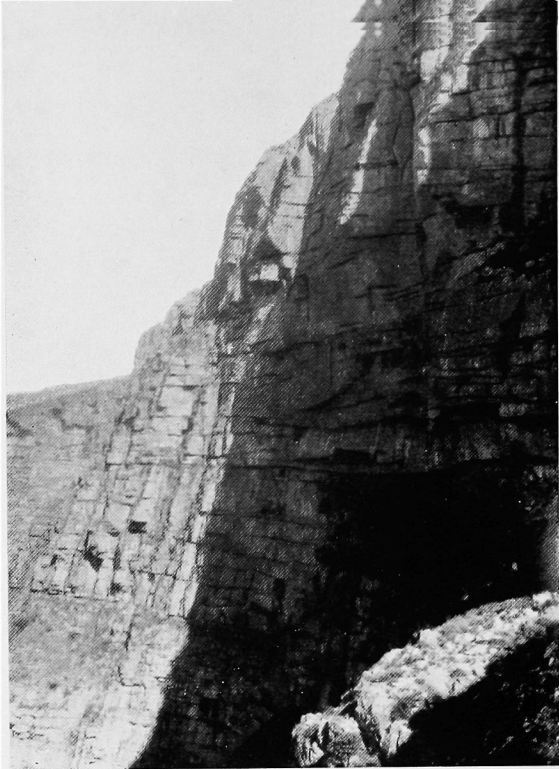
With Stolper who had introduced me to the previous climb, I attempted Hans Wong's route on Inner Tower. It was now Stolper's turn to regard any efforts dubiously, and we were in a better position for retreat, to which we had agreed before I found what I believed to be a good route up the crux of the climb. On the way down Inner Tower gully a few waterfall pitches gave some interest to our return home. These climbs were all done from the Royal Natal National Park hostel, with a night spent at Mont-aux-Sources.

Besides the major climbs many short climbs can be found on the standstone kranzs at lower levels. One such climb, a 100-foot chimney, was found by three members of a large picnic party. The ground at the foot was well stamped down and the chimney apparently well used, so the three started up. The leader had actually reached the top when the call to lunch was heard and a rapid descent was made. After lunch only the previous leader had the energy to do the climb, after which he found that all previous ascents had been made by baboons, not humans, the chimney being, in fact, a well-known baboon run; well known to the baboons, of course.

Another sandstone climb on a peak with the attractive name of Plowman's Kop, meant a walk with a chimney climb and

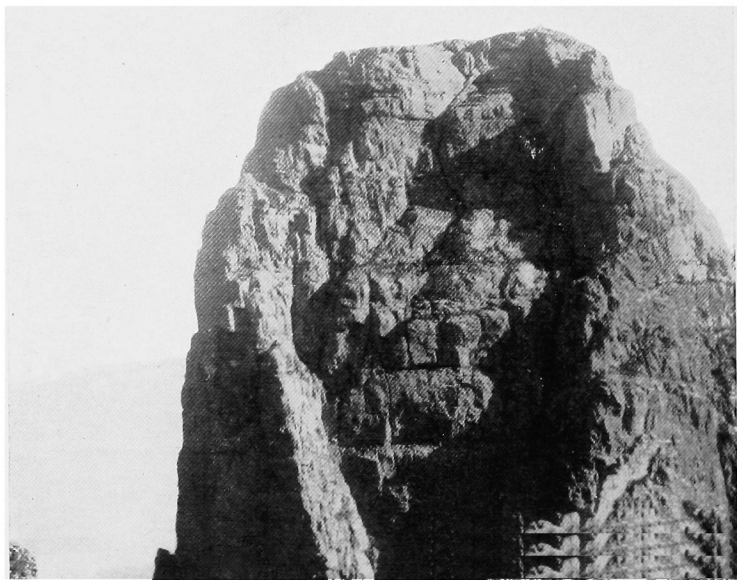
TABLE MOUNTAIN
AFRICA FACE.

E. H. Marriott.



N'PONJWAM.

E. H. Marriott.



another walk all inside the mountain, a distance in all of about 60 yards, followed by a further disappearance into the mountain, emerging through a hole onto a delicate traverse. I did the traverse into a gully beyond and climbed the gully for some distance before giving up, but I did not see any great difficulty and believe the climb to be possible and as yet unclimbed.

A long week-end due to Dingaan's Day, a national holiday falling on a Friday enabled a party of about 12 to gather at Champagne Castle hostel for an attempt on Cathkin. As I was at Cathedral Peak, I had a 12-hour walk with a heavy pack to reach the rendezvous, but it was a delightful walk up Eagle gorge. Not only is this a valley of lovely scenery but its river has an almost unlimited number of bathing pools and I took my time. After a night's rest at Champagne Castle, we started for a high camp below Cathkin which we eventually reached with some little difficulty due to cloud. Next day a long "slog" up the river valley that leads to the foot of Monk's Cowl, then up a side valley brought us to the foot of the only gully on Cathkin so far climbed. In the Drakensberg it is important to know the routes through the kranzs; otherwise arriving at the top of a cliff without knowing the way down, has several times led to an involuntary night out. On this occasion a waterfall pitch through a kranz gave a possible line up which I started. The rock was not good and a few feet from the top I wanted a sling belay. Watkins, the second, struggled up to give me the sling, but while he was climbing my foothold gave way, and although I managed to jamb myself, I could not prevent the rocks from falling. Miraculously, Watkins was not hit, but he had had enough of that route and eventually found another. By this time I had had enough of mine too, and was only too glad of a rope from above as the last few feet were certainly severe.

In the final gully, 200 feet below the top, we roped, just as the rain began. The party was now reduced to six and we climbed on two ropes of three and on two different routes and again I took a too difficult line. Even the other route was hard and after giving Watkins support over the most difficult bit, I joined both ropes and we climbed together. It was cold on top and I personally was only too glad to descend quickly and even welcomed the doubled rope. It was getting late and in spite of

hurrying we only reached camp after dark, the camp "staff" having lit a fire in the river bed to mark the exit point.

A few days later I joined Watkins again for a fortnight's trek across the escarpment for an attempt on Nponjwan and perhaps the Njasuti triplets. We never reached the latter; we were unlucky with the weather and trekking with heavy rucksacks, our days were full. Base for Nponjwan was a cave from which the photo was taken. Our first start was abortive. It started to rain and we spent the day in our sleeping bags. Next day Watkins, Rawstone and I left the cave at about eight o'clock and rapidly descended a gully to the next joining peak to escarpment, then another gully to the point from which the only known route starts. Here we roped, but the rock was barely more than moderately difficult. I had been introduced to a rubber boot called a "miner's" boot, Canadian, and excellent for dry and wet rock, probably as good on rock as vibram is on ice and snow. In spite of this though, we avoided wet rock if we could, and because of this we had one difficult groove in the first 200 feet to the large amphitheatre which is about level with the bottom of the large shadow in the picture. Above the amphitheatre the rock is decidedly steeper, but is split by a narrow gully which was our obvious route. This gully narrows to a chimney which can be seen as a darker line in the deep shadow on the right side of the face.

After a short scramble we reached the foot of the first serious obstacle with a choice of two routes, a deep chimney or a groove to the right. Watkins chose the groove, but when I followed the all-important foothold gave way and I was forced to take the chimney route which was found to be easier, and now that the foothold has gone, probably the only way.

We were now at the crux of the climb, a deep cut chimney, steep and with an overhanging chockstone. The latter looked unsurmountable and for three-quarters of an hour Watkins and Rawstone tackled in turn the wall to the left, whilst I belayed them from a stance high in the chimney. When at the end of this period they both took a rest, I tried to tackle the chockstone. Five minutes later I wriggled through a hole at the back and an easy but exposed move took me over the upper slab; but that pitch cost us an hour. The next chimney pitch had to be turned to the right and we should have continued the traverse to the

the little pinnacle on the extreme right of the photo and on to the Natal face where the climbing is easy. Instead we came back to the top of the chimney where we were misled by some previous climber's abseil sling, and after a further difficult slab, reached a ledge below a 20-foot wall, a hundred feet from the top. While Watkins and I made one attempt after another to find a route up this wall, Rawstone stood for over an hour on the ledge. Finally time and the weather were against us and although an untried crack which I thought might go easily and which I subsequently heard was believed to be possible, might have solved the problem, we gave up. Our descent was uneventful as every difficulty was descended on a doubled rope, but we were tired by the time we had done the thousand feet up back to the cave.

Our mistake at the chimney had cost us considerable time but I think it was excusable ; the hole at the back was so awkward that all three of us did it differently, and when I first saw the upper slab I considered it to be far more formidable than it actually was.

A word about the Mountain Club of South Africa itself would not be amiss. There are four or five sections of the Club almost independent of each other, that of Cape Town being the leading section in every way, producing the annual journal for all sections with contributions from all sections and from the Natal Mountain Club. This latter Club is at present separate but I have heard talk of amalgamation. Climbing on Table Mountain and in the Drakensberg is so different that the members of the two clubs think differently and I can foresee some wonderful discussions on the relative merits and difficulties of the two different types of climbing.

I was never quite certain to what extent reciprocation with the Climber's Club was intended. Quite emphatically, it was intended that I should use the hut facilities on the same footing as a member, but the use of the Club room in Cape Town was different and there I always felt I was a guest, albeit a welcome one, such is the hospitality of South Africans. This hospitality is shown by both the Mountain Clubs who, in spite of differences of opinion on the relative technical difficulties of Table Mountain and the Drakensberg, agree on one other point—on the absolute necessity of a mid-morning halt, regardless of the hour of starting, for a brew up and a cup of tea.

AN ASCENT OF JABET PEAK, ANTARCTICA

F. R. BROOKE

WHILST cruising round the Falkland Islands Dependencies in S.V. *John Biscoe*, during the Antarctic summer seasons of 1948-49 and 1949-50, various opportunities came my way for ski-ing and climbing. All of it was on a very small scale, for apart from frequent lack of companions, I was rarely able to get ashore for more than three or four hours at a time. Variety was perhaps the keynote ; the ascent of two small rock peaks in vile weather at South Georgia ; ski-ing at Deception on windpacked slopes over 1,000 feet high, a night walk up one of the tops on the island rim, and an afternoon scrambling along the fantastic pinnacles on Fildes Point overlooking the entrance to Neptune's Bellows ; various scrambles at Admiralty Bay, one of which was a fine rock climb up some of the loosest rock imaginable, and another up a gully with an ice pitch worthy of the Scottish Highlands ; an evening ski-ing over the glacier plateau on Signy Island when occasional rents in the mist gave glimpses of the peaks and glaciers of Coronation Island ; and practise rock climbs on a delightful little cliff at the Argentine Islands where not least of the joys was sitting at the top on a deep bed of brilliant green moss, taking in the rope, with one of the finest panoramas in the area before one.

But undoubtedly my most enjoyable climb was the ascent of Jabet Peak 1,790 feet, near Port Lockroy, Wiencke Island, on the west coast of Grahamland. Seen from Port Lockroy it appears as an isolated snow peak with an obviously practicable S.W. snow ridge running right to the summit ; unfortunately its foot is too distant for easy access by boat. Actually the peak is a last defiant tower in a long castellated ridge lying N.E.-S.W. and its ascent has been made by a snow couloir which leads to the col between it and the remainder of the ridge. Although, from its height, it would hardly class as a mountain, even in England, it must be remembered that here one is above the permanent snow



line on stepping ashore, and without having seen the spring-time Alps I imagine the ascent to approximate to that of a small alpine peak from a high hut in spring.

Late in March, 1950, over a year after I first saw the peak, the opportunity came to attempt its ascent. The ship anchored in Port Lockroy one forenoon and, since there was no work to do, K. Pawson and I had an early lunch and, promising to be back by 1900, pulled ashore in the pram dinghy.

We landed at the Penguin rookery, a fascinating yet somewhat odorous place, and after walking up the broken rocks to the snow put on our skis. The only route onto the glacier lies along the so called Knife Edge Arête. Like most of them, this one is rather blunt and normally one can shuffle cautiously along on skis, but now it was icy, so taking off our skis we walked across for a slip was not to be thought of. To the left it would only mean an unpleasant slide but to the right, and one has to traverse over to the right at the far end, one would do a high dive off the edge of the ice cliff into the Peltier Channel. Safely over, we put on our skis and poled up the gently inclined glacier. There was no need to rope for Pawson, who had been based at Port Lockroy for a year 14 months ago, told me that there were no crevasses.

Forty minutes' steady going brought us to the foot of the climb where we took off our skis and roped up. Our route lay up a steep couloir in the angle between a buttress of our peak and the remainder of the ridge. Pawson who had ascended the peak twice before, the first occasion probably being the first ascent of the peak, had found good snow in the couloir, but now, after crossing the bergschrund by a good bridge, conditions were different. A few inches of loose powdery snow lay over hard icy snow. Nearly every step of the way had to be cut. We progressed slowly rope length by rope length, leading through and belaying in turn. The middle section was steep and time passed like magic, but there could be no skimping the step cutting. The loose surface snow had to be cleared away and good safe steps made in the hard snow below—and not too far apart for we would have to descend the same way. As it was the steps were being filled up after our passage by the loose snow we sent pouring down and I began to think descending would be a long job.

Higher up the angle eased, but near the top steps had to be cut in bare ice, with no anchorage for the second, before a final

slope of frozen scree was reached. This scree slope was the most unpleasant part of the whole climb for the top surface was loose and rolled underneath one's foot. But another rope length took us to the col. We looked at our watches and found it was 15.50. We had taken nearly two and a half hours to climb about 600 feet. Considering that all our steps had been obliterated it seemed unwise to allow less time than this for the descent. This being so, we had none to spare, but having got so far we were determined to get to the top even if it did mean being late for the boat. Provided we could reach our skis before dark we could always find our way down the glacier by torchlight.

The ridge from here to the top is impracticable but there was an easy way of traversing the West face, by means of a large windscoop, to snow slopes leading to the upper part of the S.W. ridge. This gave a grand scramble up a delightfully narrow snow arête interspersed with rock steps to the top. The view was hidden by swirling mists, so we turned to descend and balancing down the arête, hurried back to the top of the couloir. The top section of scree and ice was negotiated cautiously and we were thankful to reach firm snow. The descent went with a swing and proved easier than expected ; rope length by rope length we progressed steadily down, only occasionally having to turn face inwards to kick steps or cut them anew with the axe. We crossed the bergschrund and unroped ; a swift glissade took us down to our skis only an hour after leaving the summit.

We now had plenty of time in hand, so after a bite of chocolate we ski'd over the plateau at the head of the glacier and down the far side until we could look down on the Neumayer Channel up which the ship had sailed that morning. We turned in our tracks and started back. With the wind behind us it was easy going and soon we were running downhill, not a desperate breaking slide, but a gentle run straight down the glacier such as the inexperienced can enjoy to the full. The snow was sufficiently uniform for one not to have to concentrate every nerve and muscle in maintaining balance ; one could allow the eye to roam—to the peak we had climbed, the distant view of Cape Renard and the Lemaire Channel away to the South, and to the sun setting behind the ice dome of Mount William on Anvers Island. After a last downward swoop we swung to a halt above the Knife Edge Arête.

Life was very good.

TONQUANI

WITH a sigh of relief I escaped from Committee No. 3 into the sunlight, picked up a pair of rubbers and a handkerchief and drove out to Pretoria to lunch with H.E. A sleeping bag and a rucksack were borrowed, we were joined by Tobie Louw and drove off 50 miles due West, into the Magaliesberg.

The climate, they tell you, is reliable, and the climber need not provide against wet conditions. We were unprovided. Black clouds laced with lightning piled up on the horizon, then on the nearer hills, then emptied themselves on us. We watched the scanty red African soil washed off the hillsides in streams of tomato soup. We sat in the car under the trees in Visser's farmyard while the ducks enjoyed themselves.

When the storm was spent we marched up to the Nek and down on the far side to the camp site above the Tonquani Gorge. Four or five members of the Mountain Club emerged from a convenient but unsavoury cave. A large fire was already burning. We fetched water, paused to watch white ants drive the males and females from their citadels, got wet in a sharp shower, gathered round the fire to cook and eat and dry our clothes. While the storm rolled farther westwards and a few pioneer stars emerged, I heard of the first ascent of the Devil's Needle in the Drakensberg, of the spread of piton and tension technique, of rival schools of thought on rope and belays. The rocks among which we sat enclosed us as the walls of Helyg kitchen. One by one the party drifted off to their several gîtes. Tobie took me round with a torch pointing out suitable pieces of ground relatively flat and upholstered with leaves. I chose one and slept.

After breakfast we dropped down into the gorge with intimidating views of the precipitous farther wall. The lower two-thirds appeared vertical while the upper third overhung alarmingly. A pale grey Clogwyn-dur-Arddu splashed with red gashes, bone dry but bearing aloes and some tortured trees. I was assured that it was easier than it looked.

Tobie led us up Feng's Folly. Early one morning, Fenger, a Dane, had assaulted this solo and was found by his friends in the evening wedged in the top chimney. His climb starts up an angle in the wall, wanders up reasonably between excellent stances until it lands you at the foot of an overhanging chimney, perhaps 60 feet high. This is the way through the overhangs and the crux of the climb, not difficult if one happens to be the right size for the chimney and provided one keeps far enough out, the last move out of the chimney into a groove at an easy angle being the hardest.

A gulley provides a walk-off into the bed of the gorge in which the stream forms a series of rocky pools. A huge rock divides two such pools, the upper being easy of access and the Ladies' Pool, the lower and larger requires a dive or a climb to get into it. Chimneying down between waterworn rocks was reasonable but chimneying up with back, feet and hands wet proved much more formidable and abrasive. H.E. unwisely selected an approach by a descending traverse ; this petered out and deposited him in the water rather earlier and with more of a splash than he had intended. Meanwhile two helpful and charming lady members had built a fire and made tea on some flat rocks farther up the gorge. Here we lunched, the party growing as the other two ropes came in with a jangle of pitons and a remarkable collection of hats. South African climbers do not lunch shivering in a cranny off a sandwich and a bar of chocolate ; they spread themselves in the sun and cook a three-course meal. This is agreeable but takes longer than our less comfortable Welsh practice. It must have been nearly four when my rope set off to climb Reunion, a climb invented by a trio of tigers after long separation. Feng's Folly had been "E," corresponding to our Very Difficult ; a bit harder, say, than Avalanche. Reunion was "F," our Severe.

We were now a very international rope; Francisco, an Italian ; Eddie, a Swiss ; me and Tobie, a South African. Francisco believed in long run-outs. The first pitch goes up a crack on the right of a slab, then traverses delicately downwards across the slab to its left edge, then up the corner with considerable ado, then a long traverse across the top of the slab. One hundred and twenty feet of rope just sufficed owing to the crookedness of the pitch ; there was much more than 120 feet of climbing.

I felt I'd been a journey when I reached the stance. The traverse continued, airily but without difficulty, across the face for 30 feet or so, landing one on top of a flake leaning a little out from the cliff. Below one could see all too much ; above was about 20 feet of vertical wall with good holds, but the farther uplook was obstructed by a jutting gable end. Up the wall I went with as stout a heart and as tight a rope as I could decently contrive. The impending roof was avoided with relative ease on the right, but hopes of an easier angle above were disappointed. Holds were solid but distant, enforcing a technique which I dislike, particularly as one's weight had to be held into, as well as hauled up, the cliff. Soon even these inadequate aids appeared to cease. On my left a large block or young tower leaned out ; straight up the rock was red, vertical and repellent ; on the right a line of feasible holds seemed to offer hope. The rope led resolutely upwards with a slight leftward trend ; I was forbidden the right-hand escape. The action required was to place the left foot on an exiguous, steeply sloping, " hold " on the outward face of the tower, reach round with the left hand till the fingers found a vertical crack. On these holds, which offered but very indirect resistance to gravity, the body was to be forced up till the right hand could clutch the top of the block. My arm was not long enough ; I returned with difficulty to my previous holds. Research indicated that the vertical crack broke out again, though more tenuously, higher up. I got my fingers into it and pulled, grasped the top with a desperate right hand and the main difficulty, though not the main exertion, was over. The rock above was magnificent in position and gratifying in the presence of reasonable means of upward progress.

On the summit, while contentedly sucking an orange in the sunset, I complained at the prohibition of the hopeful holds leading to the right from the crux, the hopeful indications being clearly confirmed by a view from above. I was told that this right deviation was in fact the recognised climb, but my leader, obviously trained in the *direttissimo* tradition, preferred straight lines. The course followed was in fact a private variation of his own and a very fine lead.

We descended a gully into the now gloomy gorge. While doing so I grasped as a brake a substantial-looking tree only to discover painfully that it was a much overgrown nettle about

10 feet high. Mounting to our camping place we collected our scattered possessions and set off to the cars. Just below the Nek we found others brewing tea and coffee which we helped to consume. Singing broke out spontaneously, mostly British and German folk songs ; Francisco sang : " The Foggy, Foggy Dew " solo to great effect as a finale before we went down the hillside in the dark and sleepily back to Pretoria. There I scandalised the staff of High Commission House by my lack of luggage and by appearing at breakfast in the clothes in which I had climbed, cooked and slept throughout the week-end.

THE FONTAINEBLEAU ROCKS

JOHN HUNT

MY wife and I have been fortunate, by virtue of my present station, in having ready access to the remarkable groups of rocks which abound in the Forest of Fontainebleau. We were introduced to these rocks by some eminent members of the Groupe de Haute Montagne, among them Bernard Pierre. It may be of interest to other members of the Club to give some details regarding them.

The Fontainebleau Rocks are something of a geological phenomenon in the virtually flat terrain between the Seine and the Marne. They lie among the shallow valleys and along their containing ridges, both within and on the edges of the forest. The rocks consist of grey sandstone boulders, the great majority of which are too small to provide climbing problems. Among these masses of rock, however, are a certain number of huge blocks, some of these standing isolated amid a host of minor fry, others being grouped together as colonies of monsters. These bigger boulders have been carefully reconnoitred and recorded by the Paris Section of the Club Alpin Français, and those which can be dignified by the title of "rochers d'escalade" have been described in a guide-book and marked on the 1/25000 scale map of the forest.

The sandstone is remarkably hard and sound ; the formation of the rocks tends to be rounded and smooth, sometimes assuming grotesque shapes. There are many boulders, however, with straight, clean-cut lines typical of loftier rocks. The pitches, which may vary in height from 12 to about 60 feet, include almost every type of rock problem likely to be met elsewhere, and up to the VIth degree of difficulty ; the area as a whole thus provides admirable practise in rubber-shoe technique. It has long been the training ground for most Parisian climbers and some of the most accomplished French mountaineers have passed their novitiate there. Each week-end considerable numbers of keen young cragsmen are to be seen along Route Nationale 7, most of them hitch-hiking or cycling, on their way out to camp beneath the boulders.

Apart from isolated blocks, there are four main groups of rocks. These are :—

1.—The “Cuvier” Group. This is the best-known area, being located so close to the main Paris-Fontainebleau road. Here are countless large boulders spread over a distance of more than a kilometre. The greater part of these are grouped together so closely that it is possible to make connected climbs, or “circuits,” sufficiently long and difficult to keep even fit and proficient cragsmen fully occupied for some one and a half to two hours, not including halts. Although one is seldom more than 20 feet above ground level, some of the problems are technically very hard indeed, and it may be advisable for a party to carry a short rope for occasional use.

2.—The “Dame Jeanne” Group. In this area are the largest and steepest rocks in the forest ; the Dame Jeanne itself is a fine clean block, nearly 60 feet high on its longest face. These rocks afford numerous individual pitches, many of them vertical or overhanging, and sufficiently high to make the use of a rope highly advisable.

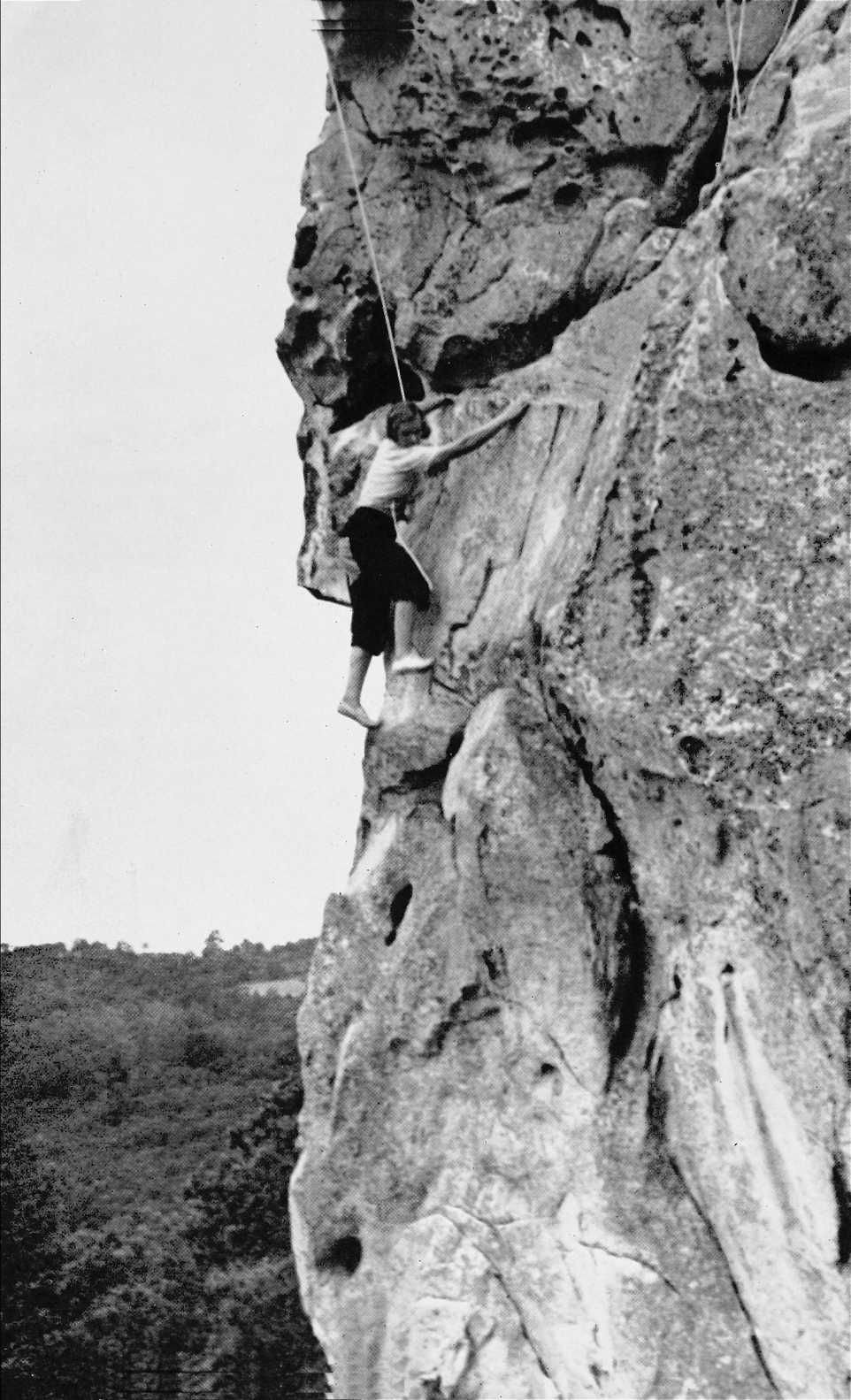
In this area also is a small escarpment which gives a few short climbs of the “ledge and overhang” variety.

3.—The “Elephant” Group. Which is located near the Dame Jeanne, and is in interesting contrast with this latter. These rocks are, in general, less steep, but more smooth and with smaller holds ; they give excellent practise in balance and footwork. The rock which gives its name to the Group bears an astonishing resemblance to the head and shoulders of an outsize elephant.

4.—The “Puisselet” Group. This is a first-rate area of well-formed rocks, so positioned that they make it possible to connect the problems into a sequence. It lies rather beyond the southern fringe of the forest, in surroundings ideal for camping.

5.—Other groups. In addition to the four main areas there are a number of smaller groups of rocks which are well worth a visit. These are in the vicinity of Vaudoué, near the town of Nemours, and the “Rochers Franchard,” where a good “circuit” exists. These groups are less frequented by cragsmen, and are therefore the more desirable at week-ends, when the Cuvier and other main groups are made to resemble the Mappin Terraces.

ON THE DAME JEANNE, THE ARCTE
John Hunt



In concluding this note on the Fontainebleau Rocks, I would add that it would be a great pleasure to my wife and myself to welcome any members of the Club who may be visiting Paris or its neighbourhood, and to introduce them to these forest climbs.

CLIMBING IN RADNORSHIRE

E. H. LANE and E. C. PYATT

NOW that the crags of Snowdonia are covered with tigers and the valleys and mountain tops are swarming with those developing an officially sponsored interest in mountains, climbers for whom loneliness is an essential feature of mountain experience must seek it elsewhere. To them the Welsh border county of Radnorshire has much to offer—wild, lonely country—an abundance of hill and moorland walking and some fine, though short, rock climbs on widely spaced crags.

The only group of high hills entirely within the county is the Radnor Forest. Approached from New Radnor in the south-east via the Harley Dingle, the view of the group is reminiscent of the Lairig Ghru in the Cairngorms. The highest ridges are arranged in a semi-circle round the head of Harley Dingle with Great Rhos (2,166 feet) on the west and Llether Ddu (2,000 feet), Black Mixen (2,135 feet), Great Creigiau (2,100 feet) and Bach Hill (2,002 feet) on the east. A round of these peaks gives a fine walk of eight miles with extensive views over Central Wales. Alternatively a crossing of the range can be made from south-east to north by one of the high ridges, descending by the Shepherd's Well Pass and Bwlch Bryn-golan to Cwm y Cerwyn and Bleddfa.

Many of the lower hill groups of the county also give pleasant walks. Typical of these is the ridge which stretches for 10 miles from Llandegley on the New Radnor-Rhayader road almost to Builth Wells. The average height is 1,100-1,500 feet.

A wide arc of moorland stretches from north-west to south-west from the western borders of the county into Brecon and Cardigan. Here the valleys of Claerwen and Elan have been dammed to produce a chain of reservoirs—the Elan Valley Lakes, which supply water to Birmingham. These are the scenic showpiece of the county. Most visitors, however, keep to the road; the surrounding hills, culminating in Gorllwyn (2,009 feet) and Drygarn Fawr (2,115 feet) provide more solitary walks with spacious views. Starting from Llanwrthwl on the Builth Wells—Rhayader road, Gamrhiw (1,968 feet) is climbed,

then Gorllwyn. The ridge is followed to the Bwlch y Ddaufaen (about 1,700 feet) and on over peat hag and heather to Drygarn Fawr. The descent from the summit can be made to the north down Drum-yr-Eira (1,968 feet) to Llyn Carw following the Nant-y-Carw to the Elan Valley reservoirs, or by the Afon Gwesyn in the south-east—a long valley walk to Abergwesyn. To the west and south-west is some of the wildest country south of the Scottish Highlands.

All the present rock climbing exploration has been carried out by one of the authors, who lives in the county. So far the possibilities have only been lightly touched and the work continues. It would not serve any useful purpose nor would it be desirable to work out isolated crags, such as these, in detail or to produce guide-books to them on the lines suffered by the crags of Snowdonia. For this reason only the whereabouts of crags are given with sometimes a vague note of possible climbing, sometimes a more detailed description of a route of real merit. The rest is left to the reader, who, it is hoped, will in his turn approach these rocks in the same spirit, sending us afterwards notes of new crags but seldom of new climbs. In these over-guide-booked days it should be permitted to us to retain a few places where every newcomer can be also a pioneer.

The rocks of Radnorshire are mainly Silurian limestone and shale, but here and there are outcrops of volcanic rock and even granite in one or two places. The latter rocks provide the climbs.

LLANDEGLEY ROCKS.

Situation (133616). At the northern end of the range of hills stretching from Llandegley on the New Radnor-Rhayader road to Builth Wells.

Approaches. The rocks can be seen quite clearly from the hamlet of Llandegley and can be reached in half-an-hour. The path goes through Llandegley churchyard, across two fields and up the hillside to a gate, with two stone-built cottages on its right. Through the gate a track on the left leads to the lower face of rocks.

Description and Climbs. There are two tiers of rocks, the top face being just below the summit cairn. Separated from this by a shallow depression or col is the lower tier.

Several routes of 25 to 40 feet have been made on both these tiers.

The next rocks of interest are found by walking south under the broken rocks to the wire fence, just beyond which can be seen a slightly higher buttress with a large fallen block at its foot. Just behind this the steepest part can be climbed direct. Other routes also.

There are other rock faces farther along the ridge towards Builth Wells.

All these outcrops are of volcanic rock and substantially sound.

CRAIG Y FOEL.

Situation (925647). On the slopes of Careg Bica, above the first dam in the Elan Valley, three and a half miles south-west of Rhayader.

Approaches. Easily from the Elan Valley road.

Description. Craig y Foel is not a single compact crag but is made up of many cliffs and short buttresses scattered along the hillside. About 200 yards short of the first dam is a wide shallow gully running straight up the hill. For half the height there are no cliffs on the left of the gully, on the right the rocks run down to road level as a rib with a steep left flanking wall. Near the top the gully narrows and goes between two high cliffs, which are, however, loose and slaty.

About half-way up, running across the gully and ending on the right wall is a wire fence with two stone walls below. This fence marks the upper limit of sound rock in the crags on the right of the gully. Directly below the fence on that side are two steep buttresses separated by a terrace of turf and boulders the total height being 100 feet. Both these stand astride the rib presenting, as it were, a face to the rib, their left sides forming the right flanking wall of the gully.

Just above the wire fence on the left of the gully is a buttress of 100 feet—the first crag met with on that side. This is Canopy Buttress and provides a good route. At its extreme right edge close to the gully is a smaller buttress, which has also been climbed (Zig-zag Route). The rock is reminiscent of Tryfan.

ZIG-ZAG ROUTE. 50 feet (D. to V.D. in rubbers).

Start at the foot of a steep wall with a groove containing a narrow crack in the right corner.

(1) Up the groove, or by a crack a few steps left, to ledge and belay.

(2) Move up the lateral rock ledge and round the corner to the left to a recess.

(3) Climb the steep crack at the back of the recess.

CANOPY ROUTE (Canopy Buttress) 100 feet (V.D. in rubbers).

Left of the small buttress of Zig-zag Route is a small bay with a tree. The lower part of this is a rock wall, the upper part is grass with a short rock wall above that again. Left of this the wall of Canopy Buttress closes in. From here the Canopy can be clearly seen—a wide square-cut cleft with an overhanging roof.

(1) Start at the foot of a steep wall on the left edge of the grass bay. Climb a chimney or ledges on the left wall easily to a grass tongue leading to a recess below a flake crack.

(2) Climb the flake crack straight ahead to a rock ledge below the Canopy or reach the same point by a similar crack farther left.

(3) Climb the square-cut cleft until stopped by the overhanging roof of the Canopy. Traverse to the left and then pull up to a rock ledge below the short final wall. A hard, exposed move.

(4) Up the short wall to the top.

(First Ascent—May, 1950. D. Binns and E. H. Lane.)

Rocks on the right of the Wide Gully offer a number of pleasant problems.

CERIG GWALCH.

Situation (935705). On the north-east slopes of a hill—Pen Rhiwwen, three miles north-west of Rhayader.

Approaches. From Marteg Bridge or Nannerth Halt Station by Nant y Sarn.

Description and Climbs. The cliff resembles the Gallt yr Ogof but is more vegetated. From the right centre falls a ridge some 700 feet high. This stands out from the main cliff and in the lower part becomes a grassy ridge with a 50-foot outcrop at its foot. This outcrop is within a few paces of the last farmhouse on the side of the Nant y Sarn stream. Above the outcrop is a narrow path leading direct from Nant y Sarn waterfalls. The main ridge is started at an outcrop above the path. It gives a mixture of scrambling and short pitches.

There are other short problems on other parts of the crag.
GWASTEDYN HILL CRAGS (Carn Wen 1,566 feet).

Situation. Just beyond the confluence of the Afon Elan and the River Wye, two and a quarter miles south of Rhayader on the Builth Wells road, is a quarry on the left of the road. The rocks are just south of this and visible from the road.

Approaches. Easily from the road.

Description and Climbs. The rock is grey granite. Several routes up to 80 feet have been made.

The other possibilities at present known in the county are listed below for the benefit of would-be explorers. This list is by no means exhaustive :—

Cerig Cochion (937723) and Lletty Hywel (960731) near Cerig Gwalch.

Craig Cwm Clyd (890624), Craig y Bwch (900621) and a crag above Pen y Careg Reservoir on the flank of Pen Cwm yr Hafod (903678) around the Elan Valley Lakes.

The crags above Careg-ddu Reservoir (Craig Dol Faenog and the crags on the western slopes of Y Foel) have been examined and found unsuitable for climbing.

Stanner Rocks, mentioned by Haskett-Smith, are volcanic but of poor quality. A recent survey by climbers pronounced them "either very rotten or impossible."

Aberedw Rocks, also mentioned by Haskett-Smith, are of Silurian limestone. Fine scenery, but the rock too rotten to climb upon.

ACCIDENTS IN WALES JANUARY—APRIL, 1951

C. B. B.

THE snow came early this year and by 1st January was many feet thick on the summit with huge cornices built up by the strong winds. The first accident occurred on New Year's Day, in the main gully of Y Garn in the Nant-francon, when two parties consisting of two and three people respectively began tunnelling from below through the cornice, which was estimated to be about 15 feet thick. The two people were roped together and the other three were unroped. One tunnel was successfully completed through the cornice by the party of two and the three started a second tunnel about 30 yards away, purely for the sake of practice, penetrating to a depth of about 6 feet. A third tunnel was commenced by the roped pair, whereupon the whole of the cornice lying between the two extreme tunnels collapsed and swept all five down the gully through a bottle neck of protruding rocks. One of the two people who were roped received fatal head injuries and was buried under about 5 feet of snow. The other people escaped with minor injuries. The party of three admitted that this was their first experience of tunnelling through a cornice.

After alternate days of snow, rain and frost the conditions on Snowdon became more and more Alpine, with snow completely filling the Llanberis railway cutting and forming an ice field from above Clogwyn d'ur Arddu practically to the summit. With the P.Y.G. track a solid sheet of frozen snow from Glaslyn to the ridge, the easiest route up became via Crib Goch. These conditions brought about several accidents, fortunately of a minor nature, all to inexperienced people, without ice axes, several parties having to be roped down from the summit.

On 10th February occurred the very regrettable accident to Tony Woodroffe. A man and a girl roped together and both with ice axes started the descent of the P.Y.G. track from the ridge. The girl went first, the man controlling the rope, but her speed became such that he was pulled off, not having a belay.

They slid together about 500 feet, the girl receiving head injuries from which she died later, the man being only slightly injured. Dr. Woodroffe, with his companion Turner and another party of three, witnessed this from the ridge—one man immediately setting off for Pen-y-Gwryd for assistance via Crib Goch and the other four making down towards the two injured people. Woodroffe and Turner taking the direct route towards them, cutting steps. The other two taking a less direct but safer route. After an hour of step cutting, Woodroffe realised he would not reach the girl before darkness fell and as he knew she was in immediate need of medical attention, decided to glissade the remaining 300 feet or so. They did three successful glissades, using ice axe belays, when upon the fourth slide, Woodroffe gathered such speed that Turner was unable to hold him and they both hurtled down, landing a few feet from the injured pair. Woodroffe received fatal head injuries and Turner a cracked pelvis and abrasions.

Each succeeding week-end brought its quota of minor accidents and inexperienced people trying to defy the law of gravity that what goes up must come down—preferably the same day, and I had ample opportunity of enjoying the view from the summit of Snowdon. Conditions had not improved by the time Easter came and on Easter Saturday, at 1 p.m., we got the expected call for assistance. This time it was the ice patch above Clogwyn, where we had already had several minor accidents, as contrary to the usual state of affairs, the railway track was now proving to be one of the most difficult of the routes on Snowdon and impossible to negotiate without an ice axe. A man and a girl attempting to come down this route had slipped and fallen into Cwm d'ur Arddu, the man receiving fatal head injuries and the girl head injuries from which she fortunately recovered. These two, although properly shod were without an ice axe. On our way back to P.Y.G. from this accident, I was met at Pen-y-Pass with the news that Gilbert Peaker, Peter Koch and R. Clegg had fallen out of Trinity gully. Apparently Peaker, who was leading, was blown from his foothold by a sudden gust of wind as he was emerging from the gully. His two companions, who had only been able to get their ice axes into the frozen snow to a depth of 4 inches were pulled off, Peter Koch receiving fatal head injuries, and the others

minor abrasions. On arriving back at P.Y.G., we learnt of a third fatal accident, again on the railway track near Clogwyn, where a man on his own and without an ice axe, had come to grief on the same patch of ice. That night more than 20 people spent the night in the Summit Hotel—one man having a badly damaged leg, through a fall on the above notorious ice patch. At least two other people were injured through falls on the Watkin Path because they were without ice axes. All through that night the phone at Pen-y-Gwryd rang continuously informing us of people missing from various hostels and inquiries poured in from Manchester, Liverpool and London as to the whereabouts of "Our Willie." We were not over perturbed about "Our Willie" but got rather anxious as the night drew on and Jack Longland, Alan Hargreaves and party, who were climbing the next gully to Peaker, did not return. Jack had walked through a cornice in the dark and had been ignominiously hauled back protesting that he was just about to try out some new cornice technique. We were, therefore, very glad to meet him, early next morning leading some of the marooned down the railway track—the stretcher case being brought down later by the same route.

Despite all the publicity, good and bad, given to these accidents, a visitor left Capel Curig on Monday, 9th April, in his car and when he did not return by the following morning, the police made inquiries and found his car parked at Pen-y-Pass at about 5 p.m. We had just time before dark to get as far as the ice patch near Clogwyn d'ur Arddu, but his body was found about that time by two people coming down the P.Y.G. track. He was wearing boots with steel toe and heel plates, studded with flat-headed hobs and was very lightly clad and without an ice axe. He appeared to have walked through a cornice at the top of the P.Y.G. track, probably whilst looking for a way down. He had a fractured skull. By this time the "Regulars" on the stretcher parties had all gone home and I was more than pleased to be able to rope in Bill Osborne, who as well as doing a lion's share of the work regaled the party with suitable refreshments at frequent intervals.

It would appear from these accidents that if the head can be protected during an uncontrolled glissade fatal injuries do not occur.

In the case of the accident on Y Garn, the sun had melted the snow where the cornice joined the main mass and this was evident by a 4 or 5 inch difference in the level, quite distinct from the top side, but not evident from below. The cutting of the second tunnel sliced a huge section of the cornice down on top of all five. The roped pair, perhaps because of the rope, did not appear to ride the avalanche as well as the others.

Other conclusions we can draw from these accidents are that an ice axe belay, even though it is well in, will only stop a man sliding down a steep hard snow slope, if the weight comes slowly to bear on it. All the other accidents were caused through a combination of inexperience, lack of equipment and unpredictable snow conditions.

A rescue party, in my opinion, should consist of eight or ten experienced climbers and for preference should include some or all of the following :—

Bill Osborne, Roy Beard, John Disley, Tony Moulam, Peter Harding, Dave Thomas, Ralph Jones, Alan Manger, Ian Macdonald, Peter Hodgkinson, S. Fry and J. Neill, all of whom have done a splendid job of work on recent rescue parties.

I would like to mention that I have already had occasion to write to the local press in answer to an anonymous critic, pointing out that on all the rescue parties which have gone out from Pen-y-Gwryd, in the last $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, only once did a local person take part and I think it speaks highly for the Club members in general that there have always been plenty of volunteers for this work.

EDITORIAL NOTES

Nine years ago my predecessor "having unearthed and recorded many of the errors of past editors," was horrified to find that he had slipped himself and failed to number the three numbers of Vol. VI consecutively. "An elementary mistake" as the secretary (J.E.Q.B.) did not fail to point out, "and not even an original one at that." Nine years later the mistake is even less original. In indexing Vol. IX the same expedient will be adopted as when this editorial lapse last occurred ; the page number will be followed by (49), (50) or (51), indicating whether the reference is to the first, second or third page of the same number in the volume.

* * *

Unsigned contributions to this Journal are the work of the editor. All other contributions will bear the name of the author unless he expresses a preference for the use of his initials or a pseudonym. Anonymous articles will be so ascribed.

* * *

The first year of the R. W. Lloyd Hut has shown satisfactory receipts, but there is still a heavy deficit on capital account. The Hon. Treasurer would be glad to receive further gifts, however small, towards the capital cost of the hut.

* * *

The Mountain Club of Uganda has now completed the chain of huts on Ruwenzori. This entirely revolutionises access to the Mountains of the Moon ; several of the peaks can now be climbed without spending a night under canvas or in a cave.

* * *

The Editor hopes members will keep him posted with particulars of any activities of general interest in which they are engaged, or any expeditions they may undertake outside the routine run. His file for the past year is very thin. He has noted that Antony Flew has had published by Blackwell a symposium entitled "Logic and Language" ; he also had an article on "Locke and the Problem of Personal Identity." We have decided, regretfully, not to review these works here. Reviews of publications by other members more directly related to the objects of the Club will be found on subsequent pages. An article by Kenneth Berrill on the ascent of Abi Gamin will appear in our next number ; we are also promised for next year an account of the proceedings of Tilman's 1950 party in Nepal.

We borrow from the A.J. the following paragraph about C. W. Nettleton, for six years our Librarian and one of our past Vice-Presidents: "Mr. C. W. Nettleton, who in addition to his long devotion to mountaineering, has been distinguished in athletics and was a very early racing motorist, has this year (1950) received well-earned recognition of the notable part he has played in the development of Archery. He was one of the founders of the International Archery Association and has attended most (and shot in some) of the World Championship Meetings held in different parts of Europe. In August, 1950, at Copenhagen, he received the medal of the Legion of Honour of the Belgian Archery Federation."

* * *

A part of the "New Climbs and Notes" this year is published in French. Since members of the Club often find themselves dependent on the advice of a volume of "Berner Alpen" or "Guide des Alpes Valaisannes," we see no point in translating Bernard Pierre's succinct notes. We are also prepared to accept contributions in German or Italian, with the warning that the standard of proof-reading in foreign tongues may be low.

* * *

A. W. Andrews asks us to correct a slip in his article on "The Coast of Pembrokeshire" which appeared in our last number. On page 19, line eleven should read "to Mynedd Prescelly in the north and Lundy Island and Devon coast in the south."

* * *

Reviews of "A History of Mountaineering in the Alps" by Claire Engel and of "Regards vers L'Annapurna" by Maurice Herzog and Marcel Ichac are unavoidably held over till our next number. We must, however, take this opportunity of congratulating the French Alpine Club and the members of Herzog's party on their fine ascent of the formidable Annapurna.

* * *

Our thanks are due to Elliott Viney for preparing the index to Volume IX.

IN MEMORIAM

G. T. H. CRAWFORD

It is difficult to give any clear picture of Geoff Crawford. As a mountaineer, as well as in his other activities, he was still in the early stages. But, already he was a good rock climber, his small size and good balance leading him to prefer delicate to strenuous problems.

His one season in the Alps appears only as an indication of what he would eventually do. In this year of exceptionally fine weather, he climbed at least one major Alpine peak, and I know that he planned to return again.

It was the same with his career. He did a Research job at the Cavendish Laboratory, and had just moved to London, where he was working at "a small joint near here, called the Woolwich Arsenal."

He was clearly affected by his illness some time before his death, and this threw a cloud over his last months, only explained by his death.

His was a lively personality. He had a characteristic laugh and a shrewd sense of humour to match it. He was always prominent at C.U.M.C. meets, and was President of the Club during a year in which the Club was starting on a post-war revival of activities.

It is most melancholy that his welcome and the pleasure of his company have been taken so untimely from us.

M. J. BALL.

PHILIP SIDNEY HARVEY, 1930-1950

On 13th August Philip Harvey fell and was killed when climbing the "Tennis Shoe" climb alone. He was a boy at Epsom College from 1943-48 and after completing his period of military service was about to begin his training as a doctor, the profession of his father.

He was a good mountaineer, well read in the great classics and deeply interested in the skills and technique of mountain craft. When climbing he found his greatest happiness on a

rock face which fully extended his powers. He had a deep and sincere love of mountains, of their solitude and beauty, and great affection for the companionship and the sense of common interest he found at Helyg. He was himself a splendid companion on the hills, with his long, tireless, stride, and youthful confidence and cheerful readiness to accept others' views. For him climbing was not the conquest of a mountain. One felt about him a sense of urgent purpose and high endeavour and his climbing seemed to be, unconsciously, a means of self discipline and self conquest.

He was a man whom those who knew him well, both loved and admired. He was gentle and courageous and entirely unselfish. He had no enemies and, though he did not appear to seek society, was everywhere liked and respected. To his friends he showed great charm and tolerant understanding. He set himself very high personal standards but remained untroubled when he met men whose standards differed from his own. There are many who are better men because in his short life he came their way.

W. E. RADCLIFFE.

DR. A. J. W. WOODROFFE

Tony Woodroffe lost his life on Snowdon, in the late afternoon of 10th February, 1951. With another man, he was traversing the Horse shoe under icy conditions, when he saw two climbers fall down the slopes of Crib y Ddisgl. Tony and his companion set off directly down the slopes towards the line of the fall, cutting steps for some two hours and moving with great care. As dusk approached, they heard shouts for help from below, and so they began to glissade in order to reach the other climbers before darkness. Some distance above a slip occurred, and Tony and companion fell too, landing ironically enough within a few yards of the first party. Tony was killed outright, his partner only slightly hurt ; one of the other climbers, a woman, died a few hours later, while her friend, too, escaped relatively lightly.

Tony was essentially a safe climber, with a very sound judgment. But he was also a doctor, with a keen sense of his vocation ; hence his urgent desire to help the victims of the first accident led him unhesitatingly to accept a risk which under other circumstances he would not have regarded as justifiable.

In his childhood he acquired his love of the hills in the Clwydian and other outlying ranges of North Wales. Like so many, his climbing career developed with the C.U.M.C., and in 1939 he was elected to the Climbers' Club. During the war, he served in the Medical Branch of the Royal Navy, and saw action off Normandy and in the Aegean. He then joined his father in practice in Chester, and acquired a very considerable reputation and popularity.

I was fortunate in renewing an acquaintance with Tony in 1947, and from that time we developed a very happy climbing partnership. His mountain philosophy was a simple one—to climb with and for enjoyment. Although, with his long reach, he was an extremely competent rock climber, he did not measure the success of a day by the number of “severes” ticked off. He much preferred to visit a lonely corrie, particularly if it contained some little-known crag, or to do a long ridge-walk with one or two rock climbs en route. This perhaps explains his fondness for the Scottish mountains. Our last holiday together was in the Western Highlands and the Isle of Skye; it was his first and only visit to Skye and he revelled in it, particularly in such an expedition as our visit to Coruisk and the return over the Dubhs ridge.

His was a most charming personality. Widely read, well-informed, he was a good talker, and with his many interests a good listener. He preferred not to advertise the fact that he was a doctor; on one occasion I injudiciously revealed this at a youth hostel and a queue of minor complaints quickly formed. But if someone really had a bad ankle or was obviously unwell, Tony unostentatiously ministered to him, and his last climb showed his devotion to his profession.

Tony was only 32, but he had lived a full and very satisfying life. We in the Climbers' Club, and especially those of us who climbed with him, will long miss him. But our deepest sympathy must be for his wife and two small children, and for his parents, who had seen him qualify, join the family practice, and gradually take an increasing share of it. Their loss is irreparable.

F. J. MONKHOUSE.

We also regret to report the deaths of Peter Koch and Jeffery Greenwood. It is hoped to publish notices in the next number.

HOLIDAY NOTES

1. FJELLS AND TROLLS

J. C. RYLE

We had put in a hard summer's work on the whole, what with studying Norsk by linguaphone and reading the Sagas and Slingsby and Forbes. So when a small fjord boat completed the 50-mile run from Aalesund and deposited us at Öye in the Söndmøre, we were quite ready to relax and get down to a cheap novel in the hotel lounge while the rain should fall endlessly from a sky of Ibsenesque grey. However, in the perverse way of mountain weather, we woke from our first night ashore to a morning of quite improbable beauty. A cool blue haze filled the dale and sunny peaks soared joyously to heaven. So we got up at 6-30, breakfasted off stewed blaberries and cream and coffee and beetroot and cheese and other unlikely oddments, and set about climbing Slogen. The Norangdal is a deep glacial trough and the first thousand feet of its near vertical walls are clothed in scrub birch. Faery paths traverse this aimlessly, never leading you anywhere, and unless you call forth the drive of a Theseus you bid fair to languish for ever in the labyrinth. (We did not actually hear of a northern minotaur, but circumstantial evidence of the existence of malignant trolls was only too ample). However once past this zone there was nothing left but four or five thousand feet of steady grind, something like three or four Crib Gochs on top of each other. We accomplished this in due course, and like most other toilsome ascents it was in the end worth it a hundred times over. On another day, forewarned but alas not forearmed against the activities of the trolls, we climbed Smörskredtind. This is a different matter as it has no walking route. I remember a couloir or two, a long slabby traverse, a hanging patch of snow, and steepish final rocks to a very satisfactory summit ; and on the way down a delightful dip in a burn.

The best expedition of our holiday, and probably of the district, was the Brekktind. This lies back and cannot be seen from the valley : its height is not marked on the maps but it appears to be one of the highest of the group. It boasts three braes or glaciers, and cannot be attained without crossing ice and climbing steep rock. Once again in brilliant weather we challenged the trolls of the birch scrub, and after rather too much moraine roped up on the brae at about 10 o'clock. Following this there was a small bergschrund to leap, a steep snow couloir to the summit ridge, and final rocks strongly reminiscent of a Chamonix aiguille. We stayed in great peace on top for a couple of hours. After this, in the perverse way of mountain weather, it began to rain, we being by then properly in training, and continued for a week. We ascended the Middagshorn and Jakta in rain and cloud, the only

difficulty being the crossing of a torrent just above a rather awe-inspiring waterfall. We snatched a brief fine spell on Saksa. And we walked rather wetly about the dales. A final effort on the part of the weather allowed us a cheerful day on Risenaasi to finish with ; this has a miniature ice-cap on top and is easily but pleasantly ascended. From its snowy dome we had a far-flung prospect of shapely and distinctive peaks impending steeply over dark and sinuous fjords ; they reached beyond the bounds of Söndmöre, in the South to the long white bar of the Jostedalsbrae, in the West to the sea and the skjaergaard floating distantly upon it ; but northwards they stretched endlessly beyond the curve of the earth to the Arctic Ocean.

(The Hotel Union at Öye, owned by Herr Dahl, can be strongly recommended to climbing parties : it is simple but comfortable and about the price of farm accommodation in this country.)

2. A FIRST AIGUILLE

ALAN F. AIREY

By seven we were out in the crisp morning air and treading the footpath high above the Mer de Glace, our feet brushing flowers and grasses heavy with dew. The golden light of sunrise was touching the higher peaks and as it gradually crept over the glacier head the grape blue light of early day faded before it and snow slope and crag face stood out nobly.

Our route was up and across the glacier for two miles to the foot of rocks at the bottom of the icefall of a subsidiary glacier—the Talêfre by name. Well-nailed boots supported us finely on the slippery ice as crevasse after crevasse was jumped and soon we hit the moraine heaps of countless glacial boulders and stumbling over these came to the foot of steep rock. There, we met steps chiselled in rock and an iron handrail ; so with ice axes in rucksacks we climbed this stair and then on to an upland fell of grass, scree and little streams. The way lay along an undulating path until in a mile the Couvercle hut hove into sight. Near here we stopped for "second breakfast" about 10, and out came jam, bread, prunes and chocolate and there we lay and ate in warm sunshine with the tumbling icefall of the Talêfre glacier below, the Grandes Jorasses rising impregnable at the head of their glacier, Mont Blanc with its snows above all and all around a great circle of shimmering snow-wreathed aiguilles rising into a perfect postcard blue sky.

Directly above us lay the snowline, with bouldery ground for some 500 feet, then a steep snow slope rising 1,000 feet to the foot of the Aiguille du Moine rocks. This we climbed in single file, the leader kicking steps in the soft snow. Steadily climbing, with many exhilarating glimpses to the glacier straight below and a great sea of noble peaks all around, we arrived at the foot of the rocks and roped in three parties of three. Leaving ice axes in a small cave we started up the first pitch—a dark 40-foot chimney, followed by a shorter chimney,

then an easy traverse to a short steep pitch where one's knees proved useful. An inclined 50-foot crack now appeared which would probably be classed as very difficult in Lake District climbing ; and so on up more interesting ledges and short pitches " . . . you and you and you moving in turn and I rich by my comrades," until after 2,000 feet of rock climbing we came out on the summit of the Aiguille du Moine 11,214 feet high at two in the afternoon, and there we lay very contented, with great rolling country far into France to gaze upon and the whole cirque of Chamonix aiguilles around us.

NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES

P. R. J. HARDING

As might have been expected after a wave of exploration comparable with that of the early 'thirties, there has been something of a lull in activities in the main climbing districts of North Wales. However, P. Orkney Work's quiet exploration of the lesser known crags around Beddgelert has resulted in a few high quality climbs. Some of these routes and cliffs are briefly described here, others were described in last year's journal. For further details, the Climbers' Club Log Book at Sygun Fawr, Beddgelert may be consulted. It is understood that P. Orkney Work is producing a small guide to the climbs in the Beddgelert District which should prove useful to climbers preferring the quieter spots of North Wales.

I am happy to be able to include notes by E. C. Pyatt and Bernard Pierre.

N. WALES

MOEL DYNEIWDYD

On the South and East sides of this pleasant little mountain some small rock buttresses give quite interesting climbing. The rocks are most easily reached from Beddgelert by leaving the Gwynant Road by the Mill Bridge and winding high above Sygun Back Farm to Bwlch Sygum, thence up a little hollow to the old boundary fence which runs along the ridge. Follow the fence for about threequarters of a mile ; leave it near some conspicuous quartz splashings at the foot of the final rise to the summit of Moel Dyneiwyd. Contour round to the right until a short steep buttress appears on the hillside. At the foot of the scree, a sheep pen makes a useful landmark. The main buttress is defined by gullies on left and right. This is called Christmas Buttress.

GASH WALL. 140 feet. Very severe, extremely so on one move.

First Ascent : 26th May, 1950. A. J. J. Moulam, P. R. J. Harding, G. Dyke.

Start : To the left of Christmas Climb.

(1) 70 feet. Straight up the steep left-hand edge of the buttress to the overhang. Pull up and across to a ledge and groove on the right, then an extreme move up and out of the groove to a mantelshelf. Straight up again for a few feet to the second stance of Christmas Climb.

(2) 20 feet. Pitch 2 of Christmas Climb in reverse to a stance on the right-hand edge of the buttress.

(3) 50 feet. Up the steep rose above and diagonally across the rather rotten wall to a short crack.

Keep to the crack line for a few feet, then across to the left to finish. This pitch is about severe.

CRAIG LLYN DINAS

Above the Gwynant Road, by the head of Llyn Dinas, the 1,000-foot hill known as Pannellau or Gallt-y-Llynn displays a steep crag above the wooded skirts. This is Craig Llyn (Dinas).

LOWER GANGWAY. 90 feet. Moderate and vegetated.

First Ascent: 24th March, 1948. P. O. Work, B. Davies.

Start: At the first obvious break as one proceeds to examine the lower rocks of the crag. Higher up is a huge cleft laced with hollies and other vegetation. This cleft is the main feature of the cliff.

(1) 40 feet. Follow the gangway from right to left, passing behind a pointed flake. Scramble to a tree belay below a chimney.

(2) 50 feet. Climb the chimney until it gives onto easy slabs. Stance etc., on the right.

The line continues as a scramble for a good way, keeping near the break of the cirque, which is now down on the right.

NORTH ESCAPE ROUTE. Almost 300 feet. Very difficult.

First Ascent: 18th August, 1949. P. O. Work, C. Parry, C. Myler.

Start: Scramble up towards the main cleft until the way is barred by a rocky step running across the cirque.

(1) 60 feet. Up the extreme left-hand side of the step for 20 feet or more, then move to the right to the foot of a slab in the centre of the cirque.

(2) 40 feet. Take the slab direct for exercise. Stance and tree belay on the right wall of the cirque.

(3) 100 feet. Down and round the corner on the right, thus escaping from the cleft. Straight up the rib, veering slightly rightwards higher up to a heathery crack. Climb the crack to a ledge 10 feet higher, follow a narrow traversing ledge to a large stone arrowhead leaning against the wall.

(4) 80 feet. Walk farther to the right and manoeuvre round a corner to a reddish crack. Follow this to some loose blocks, then finish up the ivy wall to a recess.

Alternatively, take the wall direct above arrowhead. This is about severe.

LLECHOG (SOUTH BUTTRESS)

This buttress is called Craig Trennell.

RESIDENTS' WALL. 110 feet. Very severe.

First Ascent: 24th February, 1949. P. O. Work, G. W. Staunton.

Start: A steep wall runs up to the buttress, abutting the centre of the face. Start 10 feet right of the wall.

(1) 30 feet. A grassy groove to a stance and belay below an overhang.

(2) 30 feet. Escape to the left and up a few feet to a grass ledge where a crack gives access to a wider terrace. Climb the crack and walk to the right. Belay in a recess.

(3) 20 feet. Climb the strenuous crack above the recess. It is difficult to reach the crack and difficult to climb it. The boss at the top tempts a lasso but beware, it has a flat top and is not so good as it appears from below. Good stance above.

(4) 30 feet. The crack is now more reasonable and its termination some 15 feet higher reveals its right side as an enormous flake resting against the cliff. Step from the top of this flake onto a small slab and climb this to easy ground.

MOEL HEOG

From Beddgelert, the crags visible high on Hebog are divided by the ridge and shoulder which is the normal tourist route up the mountain. To the left of the ridge are the summit cliffs stretching along to a short but impassive looking gully. This gully is Glendower's Ladder.

So far there is apparently only one recorded climb on this Summit Cliff, though there is scope for many more short climbs.

OPUS ONE. 85 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent: Whitsuntide, 1949. P. O. Work, M. P. Grubb, R. Putnam.

Start: At the foot of the buttress but one to the left of Glendower's Ladder.

(1) 25 feet. Steeply to a platform.

(2) 20 feet. Continue up and over a gendarme.

(3) 40 feet. Walk across and take the final wall by an oblique block.

On the right of the Tourist Ridge of Moel Hebog, facing the Caernarvon Road, is the face of Dyffws.

The average height of the cliff is about 400 feet or more. It is divided into upper and lower sections by a diagonal break known as The Companionway. If the cliff is approached by way of the Cwm on the right of the ridge this break is not obvious.

The upper part of the cliff is reddish coloured and concave with few definite features.

The lower cliff, below the Companionway is convex and overhanging in its lower part. A conspicuous band of tuffs runs along the foot of the cliff.

A number of routes have been explored on Dyffwys during the recent years. They are listed below. Details may be found in the Log Book at Sygun Fawr.

UPPER CLIFF.

Working from left to right.

OMEGA. 350 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent: 22nd June, 1950. P. O. Work, G. W. Staunton

BENDING GROOVE. 400 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent: A M.A.M. party, 1938.

CATERPILLAR. 350 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent: June, 1950. P. O. Work, B. E. Nicholson.

LODESTONE. 300 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent: 16th June, 1950. B. E. Nicholson, G. W. Staunton.

LOWER CLIFF.

TENSION CRACK. 250 feet. Very Severe.

This route is an obvious one, some 20 yards to the right of the Companionway.

First Ascent : 3rd August, 1950. F. Ashton, F. Gough, G. W. Staunton, P. O. Work.

THE CHINAMAN. 440 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 9th June, 1950. P. O. Work, B. E. Nicholson.

MAIDAN VARIANT. 450 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 15th June, 1950. P. O. Work, T. Jepson.

NOTE.—The Maidan, which is the landmark for this climb and the Chinaman, is the conspicuous half-acre of pasture towards the right-hand end of the Lower Cliff.

EXPLORER'S TRAVERSE. 550 feet. Difficult.

First explored : 3rd July, 1950. P. O. Work, T. W. Hughes.

PINK SLAB. 400 feet. Severe.

First Ascent : 13th July, 1950. P. O. Work, Miss M. Rowland and G. W. Staunton.

TWO CHIMNEY ROUTE. 300 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 6th January, 1950. P. O. Work, D. E. Pullin.

GRIBIN FACET (IDWAL)

BRIDGE OF SIGHS. 70 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : 5th August, 1947. R. J. Ballard, C. H. P. Verrinder.

(Is any earlier ascent known ?)

Start : 6 yards west of the Wooded Gully right-hand wall.

(1) 15 feet. Climb a split block to a large platform.

(2) 20 feet. Ascend the corner crack, behind the sloping, wedged spillikin, the Bridge itself, to a true belay.

(3) 10 feet. Move left to squirm up an awkward little chimney.

(4) 25 feet. Climb the vertical, cracked wall.

During the year, which has been bad for weather, many ascents of harder climbs in the Llanberis Valley have been made. The Ivy Sepulchre has been repeated and two ascents of The Spectre have been made, one a direct ascent which is slightly more strenuous than the original route. The Brant has been ascended in the dark.

Most of the climbs on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu, including the Bow Shaped Slab and Sheaf Climb have been ascended by members.

The crack on the left of Curving Crack has been ascended for some 120 feet to join the second stance of the latter climb. However the party were unable, at the time, to complete a separate route and escaped by the usual Curving Crack route, thus leaving a variation. The technical standard is very high*.

THE LAKE DISTRICT

FALCON CRAG—BORROWDALE

This crag lies just off the road on the left, about threequarters of a mile from the Watendleth Road.

The following route may coincide in part with the route mentioned in the Borrowdale Guide Book. It is a very interesting exercise in really rotten rock.

* This route was completed by J. Brown on 23rd June, 1951.

FALCON FRONT. 250 feet. Severe.

First Ascent: 19th August, 1950. P. R. J. Harding, E. S. Williams.

The main feature of the cliff is an overhanging rose of reddish-coloured rock, defined on the left by a crack.

Start: (1) 30 feet. Work up a rib on the left. At 15 feet a break comes in from the left. Continue up the rib then swing into a groove on the right. Belay on detached block above.

(2) 40 feet. Climb up into a groove above on the left. Work across to the right, round a large detached block and over to a break. Belay by a small tree.

(3) 70 feet. The rock above looks uncompromisingly steep, mossy and rotten. Follow the obvious traverse to an ash tree and continue to a steep and rickety wall with an ancient yew and oak tree above. Climb up to the trees and through them. On the left is a thin crack. Climb it to a small ledge and pull up to the right to a small sapling.

Continue slightly left to a small stance and belay on the left of a vegetable groove.

(4) 30 feet. Traverse into the groove. Cross it via two rather fierce thorn bushes to a doubtful block.

From the block, step to the right, across to the far edge of the groove to reach a tree. Pull up to yet another tree. Stance on the right.

(5) 40 feet. To a large oak tree ledge. Then a steep flake of firm rock brings another tree within grasp. Continue to stance and tree belay on the right.

(6) 40 feet. Easy rock and heather in a diagonal line leads back to finish at a platform near the summit of the crag. P. R. J. HARDING

OUTLYING DISTRICTS

CORNWALL

No very notable additions have been made since the guide-book went to press, though some filling in of detail has taken place. It is proposed to continue the policy of the guide-book itself and not give pitch by pitch details of new routes. This information is sometimes available in Bosigran Log Book, if required; most climbers will prefer to go and find out for themselves.

PEDN KEI.

A 120-foot route has been described here by A. J. Imrie—probably not entirely new.

BOSIGRAN FACE.

Two minor variations were made on Bosigran Face—one immediately right of Black Slab, called Schorl Slant, 160 feet V.D. (J. F. Adams and P. Smart), the other left of Black Slab, also V.D. (K. M. Lawder and party).

PEDN-MÊN-DU.

M. J. Ridges and G. F. Lilley discovered a number of new routes here, some of them already known to the Commando Cliff Assault Wing. In Irish Lady Cove, Irish Lady Chimney Right-Hand Branch (V.D.) and Grumbling Slab (V.D.) near the head of the Cove were both

climbed. Double Overhang (S) is 20 feet right of the Staircase. A small rock bay north of the section shown in the guide-book sketch is reported to contain three or four routes, one of which was done.

PORDENACK POINT

Helmet Ridge (M.D.) gives a fine mountaineering route with good situations, starting near the zawn on the extreme right of the crag. (First ascent by E. C. Pyatt.)

Three routes were made up the steep lower part of Fingered Ridge by M. J. Ridges and G. F. Lilley but the upper part was not climbed. Two more routes were made up the steep lower part of Helmet Ridge on the seaward face and two more up the Amphitheatre face of Longships Ridge by the same party.

CARN BARRA.

A number of climbs have been made here by A. J. Imrie and party—mostly 100 feet or less and D. to V.D.

FOLLY COVE AND FOX PROMONTORY.

The floor of Folly Cove has been reached (M.). The cove on the south of Fox Promontory gave some more moderates. A fine route awaits on the seaward face of Fox on this side (all this by E. C. Pyatt and party).

CHAIR LADDER.

Runnel Stone Buttress (D.) was climbed by E. C. Pyatt and party. The lower part below the broad traversing ledge gives another easy way down for the main buttresses.

(Since the publication of the guide-book some new information about these crags has been sent to me by L. S. Powell. He also has covered the cliff with a network of named routes. We intend to co-ordinate our respective work in due course and hope to publish the results in a future Journal. It is possible at any rate that our list of first ascents may need to be modified.)

PEDNY-VOUNDER.

This lies between Porthcurno and Treryn Dinas and is well worth a visit. E. C. Pyatt and party repeated some of the routes made here by L. S. Powell before the war. It is the only place so far known in Cornwall where good climbing rocks rise straight from the sand of a good bathing beach.

TRERYN DINAS.

L. S. Powell has climbed and named many routes on the peninsula. There is plenty of good stuff but little scope remains for first ascents. It is, moreover, a very popular place for summer visitors.

PEMBROKESHIRE

I spent a holiday in Pembrokeshire last summer making a thorough examination of the climbing possibilities of the cliffs and I was very interested therefore to read A. W. Andrews' article on the subject in last year's Journal. I should like to endorse most of his remarks concerning the county and its climbing possibilities, though there are a few differences in matters of detail. The bus services are now much



improved, for instance there is one from Milford Haven to Marloes, one from St. David's to Fishguard, etc. The remnants of war-time military occupation still limit access to the cliffs in some parts, e.g., the fine Castle Head at Manorbier is completely cut off for something like a mile of coastline, while the public is barred from an even larger area near Castlemartin.

The orthodox climbing possibilities do not compare with those of West Penwith ; I saw no crag comparable with Chair Ladder. For the unorthodox approach, however, there is much to be done. There are pinnacles and off-shore islands almost without number, the problems of access to which in many cases greatly exceed the climbing problems they present. A greater proportion are probably virgin summits—a commodity which vanished many years ago in our mountains—and ascents of them could in some ways be regarded as a legitimate side-line of mountaineering. They are reasonably sound, too, because the sea removes almost all loose material.

Many of the mainland cliffs, e.g., north of St. David's, look climbable but plunge steeply down into deep water, so that some consideration might be given to the possibility of starting climbs from a boat, if much is to be made of them. Except for St. Kilda, this technique has not been employed elsewhere else in Britain as far as I am aware.

In some places areas of unsuitable vegetation-covered rocks bar access to more climbable areas or to the seashore with its stacks and pinnacles. The cliff climber, as distinct from the mountain rock climber (who can always reach the foot of his rocks), might be justified in the use of rope-ladders to pass such places in order to reach rocks offering orthodox sport.

Of the rock types, limestone outcropping at wall angle is fine to look on, but hopeless to climb ; limestone at slab angle can give pleasant short routes (e.g., at Lydstep). The sandstone seems tolerably sound and usable where it is washed by the sea. We climbed small walls and pinnacles of this rock near Manorbier and at Marloes. The volcanic rocks of the Deer Park are variable in quality, sometimes sound, sometimes woefully rotten. Volcanic rocks occur again all along the north coast. Immediately north of St. David's they are most impressive but there is difficulty of access to the foot. Farther east the cliffs are everywhere steep, but are mostly very vegetated and have few continuous lines suitable for climbing. The highest part at Pen Bwch Du on Strumble Head is fine to look on but of little use.

The inland rocks though of rhyolite are nowhere extensive.

The whole western coastline of the county is, however, very attractive. The peninsula beyond Marloes and the Strumble Head peninsula in particular are very remote indeed, while elsewhere, except perhaps at Tenby, one sees very few tourists. The climber who finds Cornwall a little over-populated at some seasons would do well to visit Pembroke. The walking, scrambling and bathing are first-class, while a new sport of cliff climbing may one day find extensive scope here based on some of the climbing unorthodoxies suggested above.

DENBIGH-FLINT BORDER

In the *Mountaineering Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1, some climbs are described on low crags at Pothole, near Llanferres, by E. A. Stewardson. These are on Mynydd Bryn yr Orsedd and are visible from the Mold-Ruthin road. The lower bluffs are poor rock but higher up is a long stretch of crag 20-30 feet high with some climbs. It is on the 1,200-foot contour and looks across the Alyn Valley to the Clwydian Hills.

He also mentions that climbs of 40-50 feet can be had at World's End, near Llangollen.

THE BLACK MOUNTAINS

Cwmmyoy is a hamlet about six miles north of Abergavenny. Near the village are some cliffs about 250 feet high where at least two good routes have been made. The cliff is steep, in many places overhanging, and the rock is generally bad. The two routes described make their way up less steep parts of the cliff, and are on fairly sound rock, but it is hardly a suitable place for novices.

From the telephone box in the village in 30 yards (towards Llanthony) take a right-hand path leading to the old church. Pass through the churchyard and turn left for 25 yards along the lane and then right up a rough track. Follow this up, through a gate and bear left past a wooden shack. When the track dips sharply down (quarter of a mile from church) bear off right across a stream and follow faint tracks around the hillside, keeping a stone wall on the left. This leads to a hollow littered with boulders, and the cliffs are visible ahead and to the right. Soon an outcrop of rocks appears on the left (several good pitches 20-30 feet). Ahead now and to the right an enormous grassy bay is seen going up into the cliffs. Cross this diagonally upwards to gain on its farther side a prominent horizontal terrace, 5 to 8 feet wide leading along the foot of the crags. Looking ahead from this a portion of the cliff is seen clearly in profile and 50 feet round this corner is a cairn marking the start of the Zig-Zag Route. A second cairn, 50 feet farther on and slightly higher, marks the start of Rowan Tree Crack. ZIG-ZAG ROUTE. Very Difficult.

From the cairn go straight up for 50 feet (belay). Traverse left, round a corner and up a square-cut 15-foot chimney leading to a large grassy terrace with a tree (belay). The Zig-Zag Slab follows. Up 6 feet behind the tree is an excellent flake belay. From this traverse right 25 feet across the Slab. An 8-foot climb diagonally left leads awkwardly to the upper fault, which is followed back to a small grassy platform below an overhang (stance but no belay). Traverse right for 6 feet and up a short open chimney (exposed) to the top. 70-foot rope.

First ascent of Zig-Zag Slab pitch: E. B. Mendus, 1938.

First complete route: S. Griffiths and J. S. Whyte leading through, July, 1950.

ROWAN TREE CRACK. Difficult.

First pitch severe in boots. The crack is in the corner immediately behind the cairn. It is vertical and climbed straight up for 20 feet.

A small bush causes some difficulty half way up. The route now follows obvious lines of weakness, bearing right at first and then left again higher up. There are several possibilities, and a crack which may be taken at the top is hard. 80-foot rope.

First ascent : E. B. Mendus, 1937.

GLAMORGAN

There is some splendid climbing on the limestone cliffs in the Gower Peninsula. Three Cliffs Bay (535878) gives excellent camping and bathing in addition to the climbing. The three cliffs from which the bay derives its name are formed by three summits of a small peninsula. Their traverse from the seaward end is an obvious route and presents no particular difficulties. On the seaward face of the Three Cliffs are two steep chimneys a little more difficult (G. C. Lewis and J. S. Whyte, September, 1949) and left of the cave is a very steep slab which may be hard or not according to the route taken (S. Griffiths and J. S. Whyte, June, 1950).

On the opposite side of the bay is the prominent tower known as Tor Point. A succession of chimneys leads up this, about 150 feet, difficult. Keeping a few feet left of the chimneys puts up the standard as well as the interest. Several girdle traverses can be made round the point at various heights on the seaward side, this being a pleasant way to get from Three Cliffs Bay to Oxwich Bay.

Nearly all the climbs are most readily approached at low tide over the sands, but this is not absolutely necessary.

(The above notes on Cwmyoy and the Gower Peninsula were supplied by J. S. Whyte of Cardiff.)

BRECON

LLANGATTOCK MOUNTAIN.

Both J. S. Whyte and R. G. Sandeman have described a number of single pitch climbs in this area. The rock is limestone. It hardly seems worthwhile to give details of such short routes, but there is obviously plenty of climbing to be enjoyed hereabouts. There are caves also.

THE BRECON BEACONS AND CRAIG CERRIG GLESION.

I now have more details of the routes on these crags but do not think it advisable to add anything to the remarks in *C.C.J.*, 1950, pp. 75-76. I can send further details to anyone who is specially interested.

E. C. PYATT.

HOGGAR, 1950-1951. (Sahara)

DAOUDA OU ADAOUDA, pic Jacquet (d'après Ign 200.000ème). Altitude approximative 2.100. Hauteur de la face 250 m. environ.

Seconde ascension : Probablement première par la face W. 27/12/50, par Madame Y. Syda, Messieurs Maurice Martin, Bernard Pierre et Jean Syda. Belle escalade D limite sup. avec 2 passages d'A 1. Rocher peu sûr dans l'ensemble.

La première ascension a été faite par un solitaire (A. Jacquet qui devait se tuer le lendemain au cours d'une tentative à l'Iharen) en 1938 sans doute par une vire et un couloir de la face S., l'itinéraire de la face W. paraissant difficile à suivre par un solitaire. La Daouda a été tentée ensuite à deux reprises par A. de Chatellus et R. de Bournet et une cordée autrichienne.

ASSEKRAR—à environ 4 km. N.-N.E. de l'Iharen. Altitude approximative 1.900 non porté sur Ign.

Première ascension par l'arête sud, 29/12/1950, par Mme. Y. Syda, Messieurs Maurice Martin, Bernard Pierre et Jean Syda.

Très belle escalade T.D. limite inférieure avec un passage d'A 1. Rocher assez bon. Hauteur de la voie 300 m. environ.

A été gravi pour la première fois par le Dr. Wyss Dunant (1937) par la face Est (P.D.).

TIGMAL—à 20 km. N.-N.W. de Tammanrasset. Altitude 1.761 m. d'après Ign 200.000 ème.

Seconde ascension par face Sud, 1/1/1951, par Mme. Y. Syda, Messieurs Maurice Martin, Bernard Pierre et Jean Syda.

Hauteur de la face 250 m. environ.

Escalade A.D., peu soutenue. Elle comprend 3 parties distinctes :

- (a) Un mur de 50 à 60 m., en rocher très mauvais et cassant ; de ce fait, passage difficile,
- (b) une centaine de mètres assez redressés, mais parcourus par des cheminées,
- (c) de longues terrasses d'éboulis, menant au sommet.

La première ascension a été effectuée en 1937 par le Dr Wyss Dunant.

AOUKENET—(que nous avons baptisé pic Blanguernon) à 9 km. au S.-S.W. de l'Assekrem, altitude approximative 2.500 m. non porté sur Ign.

Première ascension (arête Nord) 4 janvier, 1951, par Mme. Y. Syda, Messieurs Maurice Martin, Bernard Pierre et Jean Syda.

Hauteur de l'itinéraire environ 250 m.

Escalade D, limite inférieure. Aérienne et exposée. Bon rocher. Très beau sommet.

TARIDALT—(que nous avons baptisé " Les Aiguilles du Diable de l'Assekrem ") non porté sur Ign. Altitude approximative 2.500 m., à 1 km. au Sud de l'Oul.

Première traversée d'Est en Ouest, 6/1/1951, par Mme. Y. Syda, Messieurs Maurice Martin, Bernard Pierre et Jean Syda.

Très belle escalade D, limite supérieure sur du bon rocher. Constituant une très intéressante et longue traversée d'aiguilles (ascension de 4 pointes) avec des dénivellées de 100 à 200 m.

TEHOULAG—(a) Pointe Nord (que nous avons baptisé " Pointe Mou-sah Ag Amastane ") non porté sur Ign, altitude approximative 2.900 m. à 4 km. à l'Est-S.E. de l'Assekrem.

Première ascension (face N.W.), le 8 janvier, 1951, par Mme. Y. Syda, Messieurs Maurice Martin, Bernard Pierre et Jean Syda.

Hauteur de la face 350 m. environ.

Très belle escalade T.D. limite inférieure sur du bon rocher.

Magnifique sommet (le plus beau du massif après l'Illamane).

TEHOULAG—(b) Pointes Sud (Wyss Dunant 1937) et Centrale (Gighlione 1950).

Traversée le 8 janvier 1951 par Messieurs Maurice Martin et Bernard Pierre. Escalade P.D.

IHAREN—Altitude approximative 1.900 mètres d'après Ign 200.000 ème.

4 ème ascension par face Sud le 12 janvier 1951 par Mme. Y. Syda, Messieurs Maurice Martin, Bernard Pierre et Jean Syda.

3 ème ascension par la voie Frison Roche.

Belle escalade D, limite supérieure avec un passage de V inférieur.

Rocher requérant de la prudence.

AIGUILLE DE BLAITIERE—POINTE DE CHAMONIX.

FACE OUEST DIRECTE.

Première Ascension le 28/7/1950 par Gaston Rébuffat et B. Pierre.

Remonter le Glacier de Blaitière. Attaquer à l'aplomb du sommet de la Pointe de Chamonix de Blaitière. Gravier les rochers puis quand ils deviennent infranchissables traverser sur la droite par une vire pour rejoindre le Glacier Suspendu. En graver les 2/3 de sa falaise ; juste avant de déboucher sur le plateau du glacier traverser sur la gauche d'une trentaine de mètres pour rejoindre les rochers.

Du sommet de la Pointe de Chamonix de Blaitière descend un éperon bien marqué limité au Sud par le couloir Reynier et au Nord par une profonde gorge. En-dessous des vires Reynier cet éperon se dédouble en deux arêtes entre lesquelles se forme un creux peu profond.

La ligne générale d'ascension est constituée par l'arête gauche, située entre ce creux et la profonde gorge. Elle ne présente pas de grandes difficultés 3° avec 2 passages de 4° et procure une très belle vue. Quand elle se présente sous forme de dalles raides et inescaladables, traverser d'une vingtaine de mètres sur la droite pour rejoindre une dépression qui ramène en demi-cercle sur la gauche par une sorte de couloir, regagner ainsi la ligne d'ascension, pour rejoindre les vires Reynier. Les suivre sur la droite pendant une trentaine de mètres pour s'élever sur le côté droit de l'éperon à l'endroit où il fait un gros bombement. On franchit un surplomb (5°). Au dessus on revient sur l'éperon et on termine l'ascension par dièdre qui conduit droit au sommet (dièdre emprunté par l'itin. de l'arête N.W.)

Horaire : Plan de l'Aiguille 5h. Attaque 6h 1/2. Raccord glacier arête de gauche 8h 1/2. Sommet 11h1/2.

D'une dénivellation de 600/700 m. cette course de rocher directe et peu difficile offre l'avantage d'allier un parcours glaciaire très intéressant. Pendant toute la course la vue est très belle.

CHAINE DU MONT BLANC

AIGUILLE DES DEUX AIGLES.

Première ascension par l'éperon N : Gaston Rebuffat et B. Pierre 13 août 1940.

Suivre l'itinéraire 52 (du guide Vallot) de la face N. de l'Aiguille du Plan, jusqu'au sommet de l'éperon rocheux.

Gravir le premier ressaut du glacier suspendu puis se diriger vers la base de l'éperon N. Celui-ci se présente en arête assez effilée dans sa moitié supérieure et en large bastion mixte, roche et glace dans sa moitié inférieure.

A gauche, ce bastion présente des dalles raides et lisses, usées par le glacier. Passer la rimaye sur la droite pour attaquer une pente de rochers enneigés, faciles et peu solides. Cette pente qui conduit sur la droite pour aboutir sur l'arête qui descend de l'Aiguille des Deux Aigles sur l'Aiguille des Pèlerins est la rive gauche d'un couloir de glace assez raide. Après avoir gravi la pente sur 200 mètres environ traverser le couloir pour rejoindre l'éperon peu marqué rive droite de ce couloir et le remonter sur une centaine de mètres. Entre le fil de l'arête nord et cet éperon peu marqué, il y a encore un couloir de glace assez étroit mais très raide. Traverser le couloir jusqu'à un îlot rocheux mince mais haut. Poursuivre la traversée à l'aide d'un pendule grâce à un piton planté assez haut dans cet îlot rocheux.

Deux mètres avant le fil de l'arête N. s'élever par un système de cheminées très ouvertes (IV) qui plus haut se rétrécit en fissure, genre râteau de chèvre de la face N. des Drus, mais en plus étroit (V avec un passage court de V sup. au moment où le râteau de chèvre est un peu surplombant). Au-dessus, la fissure s'élargit. Poursuivre l'escalade toujours sur le côté droit, près du fil de l'arête (IV) jusqu'à un replat. Passer alors sur le côté gauche où l'on s'élève par un système de dièdres-cheminées (IV), 10 à 15 mètres du fil de l'arête. Arriver à un replat, au pied d'un petit mur (V) coiffé d'un surplomb ; éviter le surplomb par la gauche (V sup.), continuer en traversant presque horizontalement la dalle qui suit grâce à une fissure peu ascendante.

Au-dessus, gravir un deuxième mur très court, creusé d'un petit dièdre au fond duquel se trouve une vieille broche (IV sup.). On aboutit ainsi à la brèche située immédiatement au pied de la Pointe N., où l'on rejoint l'itinéraire 119 (guide Vallot).

Horaire : Station des Glaciers, 4 h. ; attaque, 9 h. ; Brèche de la Pointe N., 16 h. 30-17 h. 30 ; descente par le couloir des Deux Aigles, rimaye, 21 h.

AIGUILLE DE LA BRENVA.

Première ascension directe par la face E. : Jean Deudon, B. Pierre et Gaston Rebuffat, les 18 et 19 mai 1948.

Suivre la voie Boccalatte dans la partie inférieure de la face ; mais sitôt atteinte la grande zone de terrasses et de vires, au lieu de les suivre, traverser obliquement à droite une plaque (IV) pour rejoindre une fissure-dièdre, bien marquée, qui descend de la crête terminale et

qui constitue, au début, la ligne générale d'ascension. S'élever dans la fissure-dièdre (III et IV), gravir, après une enjambée à gauche, un surplomb (V sup., 2 pitons en place) ; plus haut, la fissure s'élargit en cheminée (IV sup.).

Les premiers ascensionnistes continuèrent par la cheminée pendant 3 longueurs de corde, jusqu'au moment où elle devient impraticable, 1 piton en place, et où l'on doit traverser à peu près horizontalement à droite (IV sup. et V) vers un éperon de la paroi, couronné d'une terrasse encombrée de neige. Il est certainement préférable de gagner directement cette terrasse, en empruntant un système de cheminées et de vires ascendantes.

Monter directement sur une quinzaine de mètres (IV sup.), traverser à droite, puis revenir très progressivement vers la gauche (IV), avec passages courts de V. Faire une traversée facile vers la droite, pour escalader un système de dièdres qui ramènent à gauche (IV, avec passages courts de V).

Au-dessus la paroi est peu ouvragée et l'escalade semble impossible ; traverser alors, en s'aidant au départ de la corde passée dans un piton plus haut, en place, poursuivre la traversée très aérienne (V sup.) jusqu'à une petite niche encombrée de blocs, au fond d'un dièdre-cheminée, descendant de la crête sommitale. Gravir le dièdre-cheminée sur 2 longueurs de corde (IV sup. et V), jusqu'à une deuxième niche encombrée de gros blocs (bivouac). Sortir par la droite en suivant un feuillet légèrement décollé.

De là, s'élever par un dièdre déversant (VI, pitons en place, très difficiles à planter), franchir un surplomb (VI), pour entrer dans une fissure-cheminée (V), jusqu'à des blocs coincés (si l'on veut assurer autour des blocs coincés, il faut 45 mètres d'encordement). Poursuivre par la cheminée qui sort sur la crête sommitale, au N. du sommet.

Horaire : Attaque 9 h. 30, bivouac 20 h.-7 h., sommet 9 h. 20, descente par la crête et l'arête N., Mont Fréty 15 h.

En attaquant de meilleure heure, et connaissant la voie, il est très possible de faire la course dans la journée, avec un matériel léger.

AIGUILLES ROUGES DE CHAMONIX

CLOCHETON S.W. DE PLANPRA.

Première ascension par la face N. : James Couttet, Bernard Pierre et Gaston Rebuffat 24 août 1948.

S'élever par un dièdre régulièrement surplombant (A 2), puis à son sommet, traverser de 4 mètres à gauche (A 3), pour rejoindre un deuxième dièdre (A 2), qui permet de gagner une plateforme de niveau avec la brèche entre le Clocheton S.W. et le Clocheton central.

De là, s'élever toujours par la face N. grâce à quelques cannelures (V et A 2), passer dans un tunnel pour sortir au sommet.

Horaire : 6 heures de l'attaque au sommet, 35 m. environ.

PETIT CLOCHER DE PLANPRA.

Première ascension par la face N.W. : Gaston Rebuffat et Bernard Pierre, 20 août 1948.

S'élever à l'aplomb du sommet par un système de fissures-cheminées (IV), formé par de gros blocs légèrement décollés de la paroi. A leur sommet, gravir la paroi proprement dite en attaquant un dièdre, très ouvert, à peine marqué, légèrement à droite (V sup., 2 pitons). S'élever ensuite selon un plan incliné, en tirant légèrement à droite sur une quinzaine de mètres.

Revenir à gauche, en faisant une grande enjambée en même temps qu'un rétablissement exposé, jusqu'au fond du grand dièdre qui descend du sommet. Escalader ce dièdre, obstrué par une grosse lame formant surplomb jusqu'au sommet (A 2, V, puis IV sup.).

Horaire : 3 heures de l'attaque au sommet, 80 m. environ.

CLOCHER DE PLANPRA.

Première ascension par la face N.E. : Gaston Rebuffat et Bernard Pierre 21 août 1948.

Attaquer légèrement à gauche de l'aplomb du sommet, par deux gradins très courts (IV sup.), pour s'élever en escalade artificielle (A 2), en tirant sur la gauche, sous la paroi en surplomb. Se rétablir sur une bonne plateforme.

Escalader le grand dièdre en surplomb (A 3, coins en bois) sur une dizaine de mètres, en sortir par la droite, se rétablir (V), derrière un feuillet.

Gravir une fissure verticale (VI), se rétablir sur une plateforme, au pied d'un dièdre surplombant que l'on escalade (A 1), pour sortir 3 m. au-dessous du sommet.

Horaire : 6 heures de l'attaque au sommet, 70 m. environ.

B. PIERRE.

REVIEWS

THIS MY VOYAGE. By Tom Longstaff. 324 pages. Illustrated. (John Murray, London, 1950. 21/-.)

Every climber understands the appeal of the untrodden ways, whether it be the exploration of unknown country, the attempt on an unclimbed mountain, or the mere working out of a new variation on a rock face a few feet away from a well-known route. In the world of today with its political barriers and short holidays, where all the more accessible regions are fully explored and their mountains climbed, one is apt to think more in terms of the last of these three exercises in mountain adventure. It is the more refreshing therefore to be reminded from time to time of the joys of greater mountaineering, and no more delightful way could be found than the reading of Dr. Longstaff's enthralling chronicle and travelling with him on his many expeditions to most of the unknown mountain regions of the world. This is certainly a book for every climber's bookshelf—a book which he will read and re-read with lasting pleasure.

In an early chapter on the Alps many of the great classic routes are described, together with new routes on the Mitre de l'Évêque, Mont Vêlan and the Klein Eiger, but even here we see the author's preference for the more remote districts, and the Graians, the Tarentaise, the Italian valleys of Monte Rosa, and particularly the Julians, exercise an irresistible attraction for him. It is this quality which imparts a peculiar charm to the chapter describing his expedition to the Caucasus in 1903. In less than a month seven major peaks were climbed, including first ascents of Tiktingen, the West peak of Shkara and three other summits, and the delightful descriptions of this wild country are perhaps made the more attractive, because we know that today it is more inaccessible than ever.

But it is in the Himalayas and the great mountain ranges of Southern Asia that we feel Tom Longstaff to be really at home. And who today is more highly qualified than he to talk of this region? The first man to look down into the inner sanctuary of Nanda Devi, one of the party making the first ascent of Trisul in 1907, at that time almost certainly the highest mountain climbed by man, he also discovered the Siachen glacier, the largest glacier in the world outside the Polar regions, and the peaks of Teram Kangri.

There are chapters on the 1922 Everest Expedition, of which the author was a member, an expedition to the Mansarowar Lakes in Tibet, and the upper reaches of the Satlej in the region which gives birth to the waters of the Indus, the Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) and the Ganges, and smaller expeditions in the Hindu Kush when the author was attached to the Gilgit Scouts.

Finally we accompany him on his explorations in the Rockies and the Selkirks of North America, Spitsbergen and Greenland. The last chapter on British hills, contains surprisingly enough an account of the first ascent of the Innominate Crack on Kern Knotts by the author, on a rope, in 1903—because of his inability to get out of the sentry box !

The writing throughout is delightful and in the style which I would expect from a man who has always reminded me of a mixture of G.B.S. and Mr. Punch ; witty, with an eye for the amusing situation and a strong tendency towards the outrageous. From many climbers one book of mountain autobiography is enough, or perhaps one too many ; but if one were to fault *This My Voyage* it would be merely to say that there are many occasions on which the reader wishes for more rather than less. Still, the conception is monolithic, and it is difficult to see how a second volume could have been made.

The arrangement is geographical rather than historical in that each mountain range is dealt with at one time and as the reader goes through the book he flits back and forth through the years. The volume is well illustrated and contains a delightful series of maps drawn by Mrs. Longstaff, which are a valuable asset to the text. Some readers may find it a disadvantage to have the footnotes collected at the end of the book, but as some of them run into 10 lines and more, this is probably the more convenient method. In his foreword the author says that he has eschewed foreign words. He does not apparently include Hindustani in this category, and in his short glossary only three of the many words in this language are included. At the same time many will be surprised to find corrie, crevasse, divide and moraine translated into English.

J. H. EMLYN JONES.

BERGE DER WELT. V. 1950. Schweizerischen Stiftung für Alpine Forschungen.

The fifth volume of *Berge der Welt* is as difficult to review as its predecessors ; the mind boggles at the problems of describing an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* appearing annually volume by volume. It can be done, of course. One can use the pedantic method, go through the volume page by page, quote all the contents, call gleeful attention to the misprints and comment gracefully on the illustrations. Alternatively the reviewer can select for comment the articles of most interest to him personally, with the sure knowledge that his readers would probably choose otherwise.

I can only say that the very high standard and amazing conciseness of previous years is maintained. The whole mountain world is covered and there is certainly something for everyone. In some ways outstanding are the summaries of many years of activity in a particular group, elsewhere only accessible in many scattered volumes not available to most of us ; thus, *The Southern Alps of New Zealand* 1930-48, by Porter, and the second part of *The Himalayas* 1939-46, by Kurz are

invaluable. News of Russian ascents hitherto buried in Soviet publications is also interesting, if a little untrustworthy.

Any mountaineer yearns to be on the "free list" for such a publication. I do not know if there is a French edition ; it would probably reach a wider public in England than the German. For club library purposes a bound instead of a paper back volume, like the one submitted for review, is preferable.

D. L. BUSK.

HAUTES MONTAGNES D'AFRIQUE. By Dr. René Jeannel. (Publication du Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.)

This book fills, and fills well, a notable gap in our mountain bookshelves and those of us, who have direct personal interest in the mountains of East Africa, with which it deals, will be particularly grateful to Dr. Jeannel, Director of the Paris Natural History Museum, for having written it. Appropriately sub-titled : "Vers les neiges éternelles sous l'équator," it deals with Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya, the Ruwenzori, the Virunga Volcanoes, Mount Elgon, Mount Meru and the Aberdares, all of which are either partly or entirely in British East African territory and a very great deal of valuable information has been brought together for the first time. In addition there is an excellent chapter on the little known mountains of the Abyssinian highlands, which reach 15,000 feet, making one wish that this country was not so inaccessible.

Essentially this book has a two-fold purpose, firstly to describe the history and exploration of these mountains and secondly to call attention to their outstanding scientific interest ; "faire connaître une nature tropicale prodigieuse, comme il ne s'entrouve nulle part au monde." It makes no pretence to be a complete geographical treatise, nor to describe the facilities now available to tourists but it does aim to show, and very well it does so, what conditions were like in the days of the old foot safaris and, of course, whilst means of access have improved immensely since Dr. Jeannel and his friend Mons. Alluaud, the well-known naturalist, first visited East Africa 40 years ago, the mountains themselves are the same.

Hautes Montagnes D'Afrique is divided into two distinct parts, the first and longer section dealing with the discovery and exploration of these mountains, each group having a chapter or chapters to itself, whilst the second is concerned with their natural history. This, therefore, is not a climbing book for neither Dr. Jeannel nor Mons. Alluaud claim to be alpinists, although in the chapters dealing with the exploration of these high hills the early mountaineering exploits are given full prominence and the author frequently shows, as for example when writing of the Abyssinian highlands, a very proper capacity to see mountains with a climber's eye. Again, this is not a scientific treatise : it is an eminently readable account, so far as the East African Mountains are concerned, of those aspects of mountain lore that many climbers are over prone to ignore.

I have read practically everything that has yet been published on the Ruwenzori and Dr. Jeannel's description of the highly complicated topography of the range, and its relation to the surrounding country, is far better done than anything I have yet seen. There is, however, in this chapter one small mistake of fact : it is not the Bujuku massif but the Marembo hills that protrude into Lake Edward. There is an admirable account of the geology and glaciology of all this group of mountains, as well as chapters on their flora and fauna, although the latter is perhaps the weakest and least complete section of the natural history part of the book. All this makes good easy reading for the layman.

My only real criticism of this excellent work is that there is some slight lack of balance in the accounts of the exploration of the high peaks. For example, whilst there is an admirable summary of the climbing results of the 1932 Belgian expedition to the Ruwenzori, the fine climbs made on Mount Kenya during the past seven years by Hicks, Firmin and Howard (all of which have been written up in the *Alpine Journal*) have not been mentioned. We get the impression, too, that Mikenno, the only real mountaineering problem in the Virunga volcanoes, is still unclimbed whereas its summit was first reached in 1927 and at least one member of the Climbers' Club has found his way up it. There are as well, a few errors of fact and it will not be out of place to instance some of them. Sir Samuel Baker (1864) saw the Ruwenzori from the southern end of Lake Albert without realising that he was looking at the "Mountains of the Moon" of the ancient world, he therefore merely wrote of the hills he had seen as "the Blue Mountains." The natives of this region, who in any case have no word for blue, did not give him this name. The Swiss geologist, Dr. J. J. David (1904), approached the Ruwenzori from the west and not by way of the Mobuku Valley. The first ascent of the Edward Peak, the highest of the several peaks of Mount Baker in the Ruwenzori, was not made by Dr. A. F. R. Wollaston (1906) but by the Duke of the Abruzzi. H. W. Tilman did not climb the Nelion Peak of Mount Kenya with Shipton in 1929, although he did so later and I think that I am correct in saying that Tilman first visited Mount Kenya in 1932, when he and Shipton made the first traverse of the twin peaks, reaching the top of Batian by the very difficult West Ridge. This fine climb has, incidentally, recently been repeated for the first time by A. H. Firmin and J. W. Howard. There are but a few such mistakes and they do little to detract from the intrinsic merit of an admirable work.

The book is illustrated by photographs, many of which were taken by the author or by Mons. Alluaud, line drawings and ample diagrams and sketch maps. The photographs illustrating botanical subjects are particularly good and there is a beautiful and unusual view of the Kibo glacier on Kilimanjaro, but the two pictures of Mount Kenya fail to do justice to the majesty of this beautiful mountain. The line drawings, though to the point, are by no means all well executed : this is particularly true of the gorilla shown on Page 224, for surely no

gorilla has looked so like this grotesque caricature of an old English sheepdog, or had the forelegs of a rhinoceros.

In conclusion I would repeat that this is a valuable contribution to mountain literature and I trust that many others will get as much enjoyment and information as I have done from the reading of it.

R. M. BERE.

POSTSCRIPT TO ADVENTURE. By Lord Schuster, G.C.B. (Eyre and Spottiswoode. 15/-.)

Most of us, I think, discover climbing first as a personal activity ; it is only later that we come to read of a group of men with whiskers, long trousers, and gigantic axes, often engagingly controversial and irascible, but never dull, "whose skill and vision," as Lord Schuster says, "gave us the mountains as a playground." It comes as a startling, though delightful discovery that there is a relation between our own scrapings and scratchings, high hopes and torn knees and the deeds of these doughty Victorians. In short, we make the discovery of the Tradition and of our Ancestors. We explore this tradition through membership of clubs and through reading the literature, a pastime in itself and an enrichment of climbing. We learn the "pietas" due to the Fathers (the Pioneers), the True Church (the A.C.) and the Elders (ex-presidents of the A.C. and other pundits). To scoffers who have no use for that tradition we point out that it is both ridiculous and vulgar to bite off the bough you are sitting on.

With the wisdom of 80 years, and as an ex-President of the Alpine Club and of the Ski Club of Great Britain, Lord Schuster is a distinguished and venerable Elder of the Tradition ; and it is a pleasure to sit at his feet by reading his latest book. The greater part of it consists of papers delivered to various climbing clubs between 1930 and 1940, many of them to young climbers.

Lord Schuster was "born early enough to have some glimpses of the pioneers while some of them were still active in the Alps." He can recall for us "the benevolent presence and courtly manners of Alfred Wills," and "the lean and careworn aspect of Leslie Stephen—'a Phoebus Apollo turned fasting friar,'" and Whympers "silent as he was in his old age, deeply under-hung, and carrying to the last an amazing air of determination" and other giants. His knowledge of the early history is detailed. And the most substantial section of this book is an interesting account of John Tyndall as a mountaineer. It gives new sidelights on Bennen and Jean Antoine Carrel and explains fully Tyndall's part in the attempts on the Matterhorn.

Lord Schuster is spirited in defence of the Pioneers when they are maligned (e.g. by Smythe in his suggestion that they employed guides because they thought it ungentlemanly to carry rucksacks or cut steps). He glories in their Victorian qualities as members of a "robust, a generous and an optimistic" generation. But he is no hagiologist. He documents with the skill of a mind trained in handling evidence some of the famous quarrels ; Whympers v. Tyndall (over the Matter-

horn); Tyndall v. Stephen (over some witticisms, by Stephen on science in mountaineering); Whymper v. Coolidge (over Almer's Leap on the Ecrins). So we can enjoy the spectacle of the Victorian giants taking gargantuan umbrage.

As an Elder Lord Schuster takes seriously the responsibility of "maintaining a sound body of doctrine," of preserving what he calls "the measured view of the place of mountaineering in life which has in the main marked this club (the A.C.) from its inception." In the many passages where he discusses true and false values in mountaineering, he seems to at least one younger climber very wise. Lord Schuster has himself "the high serenity of mind" which he commends.

But lest my figure of the Elder is taken to imply pomposity and dull preaching, I should add that he wears the Elder's robes with a civilized lightness. His style is graceful and easy. Where he preaches it is done with a sort of mellow humility and tact, the urbane good manners of another age and time. He nearly always exhibits that courtesy peculiar to, but unhappily rare in those of venerable age, of being able to praise the old without belittling the new. And he is mainly concerned in these agreeably discursive essays to share with us the pleasures of climbing, and the pleasures of philosophizing about climbing.

Lord Schuster is a writer and personality to be grateful for, so our thanks are due to Mr. Arnold Lunn for commanding several of these papers and their reprinting. But I would not agree with Mr. Lunn's implied suggestion in the Editor's preface that this is a book on the same level as *Peaks and Pleasant Pastures* (1911), Lord Schuster's first climbing book.* Compared with the earlier book, which is a climbing classic of the first order, this is not a book at all. It is a collection of miscellaneous pieces of uneven and varying value. They are reprinted with no attempt to edit out the purely conversational pleasantries and introductions which were appropriate to their original occasions of delivery. It is not *one* postscript to adventure. It is more like the end of a letter with P.S., P.P.S., P.P.P.S., *ad infinitum*. There is an unfortunate deal of repetition of the same material with the same sentiments, the same references and even the same quotations recurring in different contexts. This absence of the arrangement and design of a book conceived as a unity means that the excellent writing makes less impact. It loses effectiveness and moves us less because of the scrappiness of the context. To say this, however, is only to judge the writer by his own high standard, and to cavil at his book for not being what it never set out to be. So let the last word be thanks for the many good things in it.

Now to be as discursive as my author—I cannot forbear to quote the story attributed to the guide Bennen, "well-worn . . ." according to Lord Schuster but new to me. It is "a story which has," he writes, "flourished a motto to many a mountaineer in desperate straits. There was once a Tyrolese who was addicted to the company of the opposite sex. The parish priest endeavoured to reform him. 'Mein Sohn,'

* Reviewed in C.C.J., N.S., Vol I, No. 1, 1912, by C. Myles Matthews.

sagte der Pfarrer, 'Frauen zu lieben und in Himmel zu Kommen, das geht nicht.' 'Herr Pfarrer,' sagte der Tiroler, 'Es muss gehen'."

DAVID BRYSON.

SCHOLAR MOUNTAINEERS. By Wilfrid Noyce. (Dobson.)

"A perfect judge will read each work of wit
With the same spirit that its author writ ;
Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find
When nature moves, and rapture warms, the mind."

So we are instructed by eminent authority, and let us begin therefore by considering Mr. Noyce's work in his own terms. In his opening words he tells us : "This collection of mountain essays is not representative of mountaineering history. Nor does it add anything to the world's knowledge of the strange assembly of persons selected.* For I have chosen from the records only what throws light on a single facet of their personality. I have considered them simply in relation to mountains. Most of them are figures about whom we usually think in very different connections, and they would be highly surprised at finding themselves set here together. They would all, except for Leslie Stephen, be still more astonished at being styled in any way founders of the modern mountaineering movement. Yet each has made his own peculiar contribution to a certain feeling in us, a feeling which would not be quite the same had these men not lived. Without their example, our appreciation, and our reactions among the hills, would be the weaker".

"There is another link that binds them. Men of all ages have looked at mountains and have interpreted them in the light of their own social and religious needs. . . . They have provided buttresses for theism, consolation to the atheist, weighty arguments to the cynic or satisfying examples to the pantheist. Philosophers . . . have pronounced upon them. But behind the pronouncements the mountains stand still smiling and inscrutable."

The theme thus adumbrated is clearly very difficult, if not indeed Very Severe, and it may be felt that the task too much resembles that set to Mr. Pott's critic when his editor charged him with the duty of producing an article on Chinese Metaphysics for the *Eatanswill Gazette*. Before dealing with this abstruse subject, it will be recalled that the young man read it up ("crammed for it, sir, to use a technical but expressive term") in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and although Mr. Pickwick "was unaware that that valuable work contained any information respecting Chinese Metaphysics" the resources of civilisation were not defeated. "He read, sir, he read for Metaphysics under the letter 'M,' and for China under the letter 'C,' and *combined his information*."

Now Mr. Noyce is quite obviously too well acquainted with both halves of his subject to need the cramming process designed by Mr. Pott, but none the less he is confronted with the difficulty of the final

* Namely, Dante, Petrarch, Rousseau, De Saussure, Goethe, the Wordsworths, Keats, Ruskin, Leslie Stephen, Nietzsche, Pius XI, and Captain Scott.

synthesis. We may surmise that it was this very difficulty that attracted him, since readers of this Journal will be well aware of his singular capacity for undertaking successfully the most striking feats of skill and endurance, both in the mountains and at the desk. Few can be better equipped for making the synthesis, and we must admire the skill and ingenuity which have gone to its performance. Yet throughout the perusal of this interesting work one reader at least was never free from Captain MacHeath's uneasy sentiment :

“ How happy could I be with either
Were t'other dear charmer away
But as long as they plague me together
To neither a word can I say.”

The snag is the “single facet of the personality” to which Mr. Noyce is limited by his own terms of reference. No sooner does one become interested in his views on Dante than one is violently translated to Petrarch. The material for illustrating this facet of Petrarch being soon exhausted, there ensues an equally abrupt transition to Rousseau (on whom, by the way, Mr. Noyce seems a little too hard). When Rousseau has been written off in eight pages it is the turn of De Saussure, who gets ten, and a warmer reception. On each of them, one feels, Mr. Noyce might have had more, and more interesting, things to say had he not tied his own hands.

But these are carping criticisms to direct at an erudite and entertaining work, and no doubt the answer to them may be given in the words of another great man :

“ ‘That’s a rather sudden pull up, ain’t it Sammy?’ inquired Mr. Weller. ‘Not a bit on it,’ said Sam, ‘she’ll vish there vos more, and that’s the great art o’ letter writing.’ ”

G. F. PEAKER.

CLIMBS IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES. By Frank S. Smythe. (Hodder and Stoughton. 20/-)

Frank Smythe never claimed (as some would have us believe) to write Alpine classics and therein lay the reason for the way in which he endeared himself to the many ; for his writings and photographs amounted to a confession of faith, and a message that the spirit of the hills is no prerogative of the superman nor of the members of the Alpine Club. And this, my friend's last book, is a delightful story of mountain exploration and friendship which spans the years 1943-1946.

It was in July, 1943, that Frank Smythe left England with the Military Mission to the U.S.A. and Canada. The chapter on the training of the Lovat Scouts in high-mountain warfare clearly brings back the memories of days shared with him at the Commando Mountain Warfare School in this country and of which he was Commandant. To some of us it is known that he was sent from Canada to Italy as adviser to General Alexander on mountain warfare and he served with

the 4th Indian Division during the attack on the Gothic Line. Perhaps the greatest of all his mountain work was not on Everest after all.

The war years came to an end and found Frank far from physically well but his enthusiasm was unbounded for a return to Canada and in this book we share his journeys and adventures in the Rockies and also in the expedition to the unmapped and unexplored Lloyd George mountains of north-east British Columbia. A superb book, magnificently illustrated. A last memento of one of the most eminent of mountaineers and the most gracious and gallant of friends.

A. W. BRIDGE.

MOUNTAINS BENEATH THE HORIZON. William Bell. (Faber and Faber. 8/6.)

"I enjoy, often, the company of the fathers of my friends." So wrote Bell in a letter quoted in his editor's rather patronising introduction to this volume. This intimidating kindness daunts me in attempting to review his book. Bell was only 24 when he and his companions fell in the Alps, so it is perhaps natural to describe his work as "fragmentary and unequal" and to stress the "promise of development"; natural, but not necessarily right. Keats had only a year longer, and many poets have been past their best when little older.

It is more important, perhaps, to consider the period spanned by his years rather than their fewness. He was 14 when the dishonour of Munich fell upon us, 15 at the rape of Poland which began the war, 20 at the Siege of Warsaw—"a fallen eagle dies between two filthy crows." His three last years saw the ruined victors staggering under the burden of their own mistakes, forgetting their unfulfilled war aims. Two years in war-time Oxford, two years in the Fleet Air Arm and back to Oxford. His life lodged in this unhappy span of history, it is not so surprising that over half this book by a very young man consists of Elegies.

The reader is first struck by Bell's technical skill and his obviously keen interest in the formal side of his art. This sometimes seems to cause his argument to swerve to fit the form prescribed rather than to follow its internal logic; the rime at times is master not servant. The metaphors sometimes come so fast and furious, tripping over each other's heels, that thread and direction are lost. Here, Bell sins in good company and not half so grossly as Shelley. In his best poems, the form fits the thought and the feeling the image. In his less successful works, his models obtrude or his technical exercise fails.

Obscurity occurs, wilfully one fears at times, but just as irritation mounts it is appeased and paid for by a flash of true lyrical eloquence, simple and just. The mountains are an ever-present influence, but except in a few poems of explicitly climbing reference, they remain beneath the horizon. Bell takes the pagans cheerfully into his Christian orthodoxy, and Echo innocently calls to Narcissus in terms of rigid monotheism.

The poem which appears here under the caption "The Rock's Pity for the Cloud," had previously appeared in this journal, though Bell's editor seems unaware of this. It was then entitled: "On a Photograph of the Todi."* It is to be hoped that in a second edition the editor will restore the earlier published text which differs in two places, one important:

"his ancient height and strength

have fallen about his feet *in* trickling screees."

This edition has "and" for "in" which misses part of the sense.

William Bell was a poet not, as some have implied, a young man who might have become a poet. He was furthermore an artist who knew that his art was also a craft. In his own phrase, he "believed in the Muse"; he gave her devoted and distinguished service and we should be grateful. It is several months since I first read these poems and my admiration has been enhanced with each reading. This is the acid test, and Bell has passed triumphantly.

MOUNTAINEERING HANDBOOK. Swiss Alpine Club and A.B.M.S.A.C. (Paternoster Press, London. 8/6.)

"The contents of this Mountaineering Handbook cover all the knowledge which an Alpine climber ought to possess" (from the original, Swiss preface). Obviously, the A.B.M.S.A.C. must be congratulated on translating this compendium.

This, then, is a ponderous piece of work. "A complete and practical guide for Beginner or Expert" has been attempted, in 140 small pages. As for the Beginner, he will find an overwhelming number of monosyllabic recommendations and exhortations. Most of them are very good, but unfortunately, lack of space forbids the inclusion of explanations. Now, different circumstances may call for contrasting courses of action. This has been fully recognised by the S.A.C., and in such cases both advice and counter-advice are given, for the proper satisfaction of the graduate, and bewilderment of the undergraduate.

As for the Expert, he will be greatly interested to see what the Swiss Alpine Club present as their considered and authoritative judgment. Most of it is non-controversial, but not all. Indeed, the A.B.M.S.A.C. find themselves impelled to add their own opinion in a number of Translator's Notes. Such daring provokes considerable expectations in the reader, but they are not always fully borne out. In fact, there is a Translator's Note on the descent of snow slopes, which the present reviewer considers positively dangerous.

The going through 140 pages of concentrated technical advice is occasionally relieved by a touch of humour, as when the climber is told to keep himself as clean "as circumstances permit" and "to avoid flatulence." Older readers will be thrilled by the amount of diplomacy that has gone into the making of the one-page section on the use of pitons. Unfortunately, many intended readers must be too young to have known the publicity at one time lavished on these little things by

* C.C.J. Vol. IX, No. 1, p.65.

their adversaries. These readers may not appreciate the brilliance of this section and may argue that any present-day manual of Alpinism ought to contain a section going at least into the practical dangers and practical problems of "pitonage."

But is the *Mountaineering Handbook* a present-day manual? The section on Equipment raises doubts. The date of the original Swiss Introduction is 1943, and when all the sections are carefully considered one feels inclined to think that, even then, the intentions were conservative rather than radical. It is a historical work: The Standard Alpine Technique of the Early 'Thirties.

Tarback's Appendix on Belaying, on the other hand, is stop-press. Moreover, it is well put. Well enough to evoke dreams of what a mountaineering handbook could be like.

R. E. MEYER.

UNDISCOVERED SCOTLAND. By W. H. Murray. (Dent. 18/-.)

Undiscovered Scotland is a worthy follower of W. H. Murray's earlier book, *Mountaineering in Scotland*. Discovery is the central theme which gives continuity to a series of individual chapters, many of which describe first ascents. It is, of course, as a pioneer of winter mountaineering in Scotland that Murray has made his name, and he succeeds in conveying to the reader his pleasure and enthusiasm in overcoming the challenge of a difficult climb on snow and ice. However, the book is not devoted exclusively to winter mountaineering by any means. There are descriptions of rock climbing in Rum, Skye and Arran, and many other chapters to delight the mountaineer. Nor does Murray forget that full enjoyment comes by way of contrast, so he describes also the joys of exploring the flatter places such as Rannoch Moor, familiar to most climbers only as seen from the road, or from the slopes of Buchaille Etive Moor.

There is a second theme which runs through the book—the relation of a man to the mountains and to other climbers on them. The final chapter is devoted to expounding Murray's philosophy on this subject.

The book is unusually well written and admirably illustrated. A number of diagrams and maps enhance its interest.

Murray has hitherto confined his writings to describing his activities in Scotland. I hope that he will feel the urge to include some account of his experiences in other parts of the world in his next book.

R. M. P. HARTOG.

A PROGRESS IN MOUNTAINEERING. By J. H. B. Bell. (Oliver and Boyd. 25/-.)

The fellow pilgrim who can read of Dr. Bell's progress with reminiscent and retrospective eye from the vantage point of his own mature achievement, will find much to enjoy and much to commend. Yet it would be hard to think of a book that could be more welcome, more pleasurable, and more valuable to the neophyte. For Dr. Bell is a wise and friendly mentor with an engaging ability to communicate the

lessons of experience whilst writing infectiously of the deep and lasting joys of his own graduation to, and practice in, the mastership of his craft. This is indeed an aptly named book.

The foundations of the progress, like the theme of the book itself, rest on the precept that "to climb our own British hills in all seasons and weathers, and by all manner of routes" is a sound method of acquiring the basic technique and self reliance for guideless climbing with reasonable confidence on the greater mountains of the world. It must, however, be interjected here that, as one would expect from so loyal a Scot, the connotation when writing of British hills leans heavily to the North of the Border. Winter climbing on the Scottish Bens occupies indeed much of the book, and in that lies not the least of its attractions and its merits.

The early chapters provide by way of introduction to the technical and topographical sections that follow a happily chosen illustration of varied climbing problems in the form of brief accounts of three expeditions. First a winter ascent of Ben Cruachan; next a rock climb on the Central Buttress of Buchaille Etive, and last the traverse of an Alpine "viertausender"—the Aletschhorn.

In writing on technique—whether for British or Alpine problems—Dr. Bell is sound and lucid. For that the newer pilgrims among his readers will have cause for gratitude. They will equally be indebted to him for an excellent concluding section on Alpine Expeditions which assembles conveniently and readably much helpful topographical information—including a number of useful sketch maps—on districts well suited to first seasons in the Alps.

Of Scottish climbing, it need scarcely be said, Dr. Bell writes with easy authority and inspiring enthusiasm. His survey of the Glencoe, Nevis, Cairngorm and North Western districts in particular brings together much of interest, entertainment and instruction for the would-be climber in those parts. One can only regret that, to complete this otherwise admirable section, Dr. Bell apparently overlooked the desirability of providing for the Sassenach a glossary of the Gaelic place names and their pronunciation.

W. D. BROWN.

SUBTERRANEAN CLIMBERS. By Pierre Chevalier. (Faber and Faber. 16/-)

This book is a record of 12 years' exploration in the Dent de Crolles, carried out by Pierre Chevalier between 1934 and 1946. It is a record of hard work, patience, endurance and final success.

The Dent de Crolles, a limestone peak in South-East France, is a honeycomb of tunnels with two main entrances, the Trou de Glaz and the Guiers Mort. Each was separately investigated and after many disheartening failures they were finally connected giving a system of tunnels, traverses and shafts of every description completely through the mountain.

After this success many would have been satisfied but the insatiable Chevalier pressed on with his investigations in an attempt to climb from the Trou de Glaz, at the foot of the mountain, to a pothole, known as

P40, on the summital plateau. This involved a climb of some 1,000 feet of passages and vertical shafts. The problem of tackling a vertical shaft is not without interest and rarely attempted or necessary in this country. The method employed was to push a rope ladder up the shaft on a 50-foot sectional pole, jam the pole, and climb the ladder. Simple in theory, dangerous in practice. Again after much perseverance in harrowing conditions success attended this exploit, disclosing a continuous system of over 2,100 feet in depth, now the deepest known in the world.

To the experienced spelaeologist this book contains many new and intriguing techniques for major descents with a limited amount of equipment including abseiling down shafts and climbing up single ropes. To the layman it is a vivid account of original exploration in an unusual terrain.

Although the reproduction of the photographs is not beyond criticism they give a good idea of the type of hardships overcome and the complex and diverse meanderings can be followed, with patience, on the numerous sketch maps provided.

I. G. McNAUGHT-DAVIES.

MOUNTAIN RESCUE. By Douglas Hewitt. (Eyre and Spottiswoode. 9/6.)

Martin Russell, a distinguished physician, is staying with friends at a cottage in North Wales. He believes that life is essentially lonely, and that a person who realises this will be better able to overcome trouble. In order to increase his own sense of loneliness, he climbs, for he finds the hills entirely indifferent to his existence. Wordsworth is rejected outright.

Prisoners-of-war escape from a nearby camp, and after supervising the rescue party for one who has fallen and injured himself, Russell stumbles on another sheltering behind a wall. In an impulse of distaste for the inefficient pursuing soldiery, he decides to take the escaping prisoner to a perfect hiding place in the hills, and the remainder of the novel describes the effect of this impulse on the character of Russell and his relations with others.

Mr. Hewitt is a member of our Club, so it will be understood that the Welsh setting is described with accuracy, although no real place-names are given, while personal experience speaks in revealing the mountain prospect and relating the hampering effects of wind and rain. The prose is taut and direct, like the rope from a second to his leader, and the climax is attained with a masterly economy in words. All events are seen through Russell's eyes, even his facial appearance being given by reflection in a window, and thus his continual analysis of the situation unifies and enriches the book. This is not specifically a climbing novel, like "First on the rope," for example, but something considerably better and more rewarding.

R. L. PLACKETT.

ONE GREEN BOTTLE. By Elizabeth Coxhead. (Faber and Faber. 10/6.)

Mountains, a publisher told me, sell well. This is a pity, because bad writers attempt to discount their disqualifications by choosing a mountain scene. Elizabeth Coxhead, fortunately, is not a bad writer and her mountain scene is genuine. The places are identifiable through their camouflaged names and the topography correct except that the Vertical Vice seems to have got on to the wrong Glyder, nor is the pitch quite as described. The attitudes of the various climbers to their art are also perfectly genuine. The authoress must have done some climbing but not, I think as much as her leading characters or she would in places have been more specific.

The story, the rather brutal story, is about a dead-end kid from Birkenhead who found herself in consequence of a chance visit to the Ogwen Youth Hostel. The mountains and the regular week-enders at the Hostel, a well drawn and likeable group, gave her all the education she ever had, her only glimpses beyond her dead-end background. She finally abandons climbing, all her friends and all the widening horizons which her brief climbing career had opened for her, to devote herself to a nit wit about to be released from Borstal. I was not altogether convinced by this ending.

Helyg appears anonymously, at first under a cloud, suspect of superciliousness. An accident fortunately finds some climbers in residence at Helyg and good relations are thus established between the Youth Hostel and our own members.

The novelist set herself a difficult task but has carried it out successfully.

CLIMBER'S TESTAMENT. By W. Kenneth Richmond. (Alvin Redman Ltd. 12/6.)

For a book whose author has covered a wide variety of topics in 14 previous works, *Climber's Testament* is much less obviously a pot-boiler than might have been supposed. This, however, becomes progressively less true as the book goes on; and of the rapid run round the hill districts of Britain which constitutes the last 60 pages, it is hardly true at all. The author has a real love of the hills and a fair knowledge of some aspects of them, but these qualifications do not offset the disadvantages of an appalling style and an avowedly minimal knowledge of actual climbing. The book is an attempt at formulating a mountain philosophy, a rash endeavour at all times, but peculiarly so in these circumstances. How bad the result can be is indicated by the first chapter, "A Word in your Ear, Reader," which must be one of the worst in all mountain literature; it is fair to say that this standard is not maintained. Many of the illustrations are admirable, but the rather fierce action picture on the back of the dust-wrapper may give a false impression of what the book is about.

A. D. M. Cox.

LAKELAND POEMS. By A. F. Airey. (Lakeland Printers Ltd., Ambleside. 1/-.)

Mr. Airey takes pleasure in the scenery of the Lakes at all seasons and he has recorded his pleasure simply in verse. He is not concerned with technical problems, nor the clash of schools. He contents himself with recording what he has enjoyed, hoping thus to share his experiences. He would be more effective if he would submit to the discipline of a strict form; freedom of poetic expression can seldom be obtained unless liberty accepts some formal limitation. Since the return of the seasons brings round similar events, Mr. Airey's themes are likewise in nature recurrent; but he should be more careful not to repeat the same lines as the year revolves again.

A reprint was called for within two months of publication and we trust that many more reprints will be demanded by the public who will in any case not be put off by the warning: "Not for highbrows."

CLIMBS ON GRITSTONE, Vol. 2, THE SHEFFIELD AREA. (Willmer Brothers. 9/-.)

This guide is the second in the series of gritstone guides, and is a worthy successor to the Laddow one. In fact it is a much better production and, for only twice the price, contains a far greater amount of material than its forerunner. It describes 764 climbs and has 16 excellent photographs, the latter being fairly divided between subjects of historical and technical interest. Of the large number of line drawings my personal preference is for the less mechanical ones by Eric Byne. The superb draughtsmanship of Pretty gives too abstract an effect, although his treatment of the Chatsworth buttresses seems rather more human.

As is inevitable in a guide compiled by a miscellany of authors there are differences in standards, and indeed occasional glaring errors. Presentation varies with each section, naturally, but this adds a great deal to the attractiveness and readability of the guide. Generally the descriptions are good, some of course entirely inadequate—but who can grumble at "Ulex, very difficult (prickly)" in the Rivelin section?

In all this is a remarkably good effort. It was out of date before published, but that is a common failing of our guide-books these days, and is really only a reflection on the ever-increasing ability of the modern climber, and no slur on the many hard worked authors. All concerned are to be congratulated, but particularly Eric Byne on his tenacity of purpose. He has eventually seen the fulfilment of a plan conceived well before the last war. A sketch map of the whole area, a short list of major first ascents and, most important, an index would have made this fine little book as near perfect as possible.

A. J. J. MOULAM.

SOME ROCK CLIMBS NEAR PLYMOUTH.

This is a home-produced pamphlet guide compiled by Captain J. D. Derry, of "Wynfield," Old Woking Road, West Byfleet, Surrey,

to whom anyone interested should write (price 2/6). Little climbing seems to have been done in the Dartmoor area before 1948, judging by the very few nail scratches to be seen then, and the only reports that could be found, were in *Climbers' Club Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 2, and *British Mountaineering*, by C. E. Benson (Routledge and Sons, 1909), Pages 10 and 124. Most of the climbs described are on the Dewerstone, which is near the junction of the rivers Plym and Meavy at Shaugh Bridge, about eight miles from Plymouth. This crag has an almost vertical face about 170 feet high with two or three severe routes up it, and numerous routes on side buttresses of varying standards and lengths, the shortest being a severe of only 10 feet with a soft earth landing for those who come off. Down behind the overhang on this route there is a narrow tunnel in which the reviewer stuck fast, but eventually managed to escape from upwards at the cost of leaving his trousers behind. The rock is all good firm granite but is still a bit earthy in places despite very extensive gardening by the pioneers ; interest is added in Spring by the numerous jackdaws which nest on the crag. Probably further gardening would disclose more routes. The climbs on the other tors are mostly of the problem nature and about 30 or 40 feet in height. All the tors are reasonably accessible and worth a visit, considering how little climbing is to be found in S.W. England other than Cheddar Gorge (not very inviting) and the Cornish sea cliffs. There are other climbs farther from Plymouth (e.g., on Hey Tor, Hound Tor and Grea Tor in the S.E. corner of Dartmoor and Sharp Tor on the River Teign) which are not covered by the guide. In fact nearly every tor with rock on the top provides one or more problems. The guide also contains a brief reference to the caves near Buckfastleigh and climbing down instead of up is an interesting, though often muddy, change.

K. M. LAWDER.

GARHWAL HIMALAYA OST. Map by Ernst Huber. Published by the Schweizerische Stiftung für Alpine Forschungen. Scale, 1 : 150,000.

It may be said at once that this map, published at Berne by the Swiss Society for Mountain Exploration, is a pleasure to look at.

The area covered has as its central point Dunagiri, with the peaks of the Nanda Devi basin to the South and East. All the important mountains of East Garhwal and beyond are represented : from Kamet and Mana Peak in the North to the little explored Panchchuli (Five Treasures) group away in the East. To the South the map just takes in Gwaldam, first stage for the traveller from Ranikhet or Almora. Near the western boundary is the village of Nandaprayag.

The method employed is that giving "plastic" or raised surface effect. By means of sepia shading the mountain masses and ridges are made to stand out to the eye, quite apart from the contour lines ; so that, if one looks with the eyes half closed, the whole appears a raised model. This, in the case of areas of which I have had experience myself, is extraordinarily interesting and evocative, as if one were again

on the ground. The only criticism which a non map-expert might make, is that the glacier areas are not clearly enough defined to pick out the snows. But it might be argued that, in the case for instance of the filthy glacier under Trisul's western face, this would be a thankless task.

The map is on broader, simpler lines than the corresponding Survey of India map (Sheet 53) upon which it is based. It emphasises masses and structure rather than intricacy. Even so, the detail obtained in the Panchchuli region appears remarkable; and it is pleasant to have distinguished routes, like that of the 1936 Nanda Devi expedition, marked in.

This is something of a work of art, in a line with the beautiful, almost luxurious quality of Swiss publication in general.

WILFRID NOYCE.

PINNACLE CLUB JOURNAL, 1950.

YEAR BOOK OF THE LADIES' ALPINE CLUB, 1950.

CAMBRIDGE MOUNTAINEERING, 1949.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL, 1950.

FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB JOURNAL, 1950.

ALPINE JOURNAL, May, 1950 and November, 1950.

NATIONAL TRUST REPORT, 1949-50.

Serious minded reviewers—especially *Alpine Journal* ones—usually start by enunciating a general principle. Let us try a Pregnant Question: By what standards is one to judge club journals? Arnold Lunn says in the *Alpine Journal*: "The man whose supreme ambition is to write does not measure himself, if a climber, against other climbers but against other writers." I once saw a rather podgy young woman in the Louvre posing for a photograph with one hand on the pedestal of the Venus de Milo. No doubt she could trust the young man with the camera to dissociate his feelings for her from his feelings about the goddess. It is equally clear that the contributors to these journals are not competing with Henry James or W. B. Yeats. Lunn's assumption that most writers about mountains take writing seriously is surely wrong. Their aim is to convey useful information, to evoke common memories and to record exploits of great interest to us but of none to anyone else. We judge them by how far they succeed in these aims and not by strictly literary standards.

But the essence of any writing is that it should convey meaning and too many of these contributors assume that the words which conjure up a clear recollection for them will be equally kind to the reader. Words are more intractable than this. In the *L.A.C. Year Book* we read: "... we were to go to Oaxaca by narrow-gauge railway to see Indian ruins and back to Mexico by way of Tehuacán, Orizaba, Córdoba, El Fortín, and Puebla. Later perhaps we would go to Morelia, Patzcurao, and even to Uruapan. . . ." Powerful images for the writer; only pronunciation problems for the reader. In *Cambridge Mountaineering* we read: "Having had a brief glimpse of what ap-

peared to be the ridge, the cornice was broken down and the leader waded down the soft snow underneath. After adjusting the rope so that he could reach the rock while still belayed from above, it was discovered that our guess was wrong and the rock was merely a rib of the face." The reader lacks even a brief glimpse of where the ridge is. The power to visualise from a description is a great deal weaker than most writers realise.

Serious minded reviewers also note misprints, but only a boor or a pedant would carp at the healthy crop in these journals. The *Pinnacle Club Journal* describes a meal of "*flocons d'avion*," a Cambridge party gives a mountain a "short shift" (anthropologists should note this survival of a propitiation rite, though it would have come more gracefully from the ladies), and Mrs. Morin in the *L.A.C. Year Book* is credited with having climbed the Great Cully (readers of the *Gull's Horn Book* will assume that she found the chimney rather a Long Stretch).

The first *Pinnacle Club Journal* since 1938 is well produced and solid. The members travel far—Himalayas, Rockies, Cornwall, Scotland, Alps, Arran, Wales, Derbyshire, Pyrenees. Most of the articles are short and workmanlike and there is a good and evocative account of the Laliderer Spitze by E. Longstaff and a more-than-competent first impression of Chamonix by Gwen Moffatt which includes a flesh-creeping account of what happened to a rappel rope.

The *L.A.C. Year Book*, by contrast, hardly does the club justice. The members seem to climb very little, though they walk a great deal in interesting parts of the world. The list of Climbs and Expeditions for 1949 goes some way towards removing this mistake. Unlabelled illustrations give one a lot of innocent fun deciding whether the glaciers have shrunk since the book was made, whether artistic licence has been at work or whether one is in the wrong massif oneself.

Cambridge, of course, climbs industriously and records the fact in straightforward articles which give the reviewer little to say. We cannot be grateful to C. M. G. Smith for dragging into the light of day the practice of Climbsmanship, for we had hoped to use it for a year or two more without detection. G. A. Horridge, to judge from his parade of quotations and allusions, is an ornament of the English Faculty. It is odd that he missed Blake's best—the man "upon the Rock of Ages, Deadly pale, outstretch'd, and snowy cold, storm-cover'd." There is also a reference to the Bumstead Traverse which shows that this fine climb is being misunderstood in the club of its origin. Bumstead, appealed to, confirms that if the traverse is climbed it is *ipso facto* led; no half measures are possible.

The *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal*, which contains two or three remarkably good photographs, resembles the *Alpine Journal* in being aware that it has a past to cultivate—that it even has a genealogical tree. But the present has its claims, too; horrid gullies fall in straightforward articles to Campbell Steven and Hamish Nicol and every hill visible from the C.I.C. hut is labelled with its bearing by R. M. G.

Inglis and W. A. Ewen. I was particularly pleased to see that the fashionable dishonesty of reasoning : " I must not say that this climb is hard lest I seem to boast of doing hard climbs ; I will say it is interesting " is avoided. There is no fear of a modest and just sensationalism ; a clear and readable account of the Black Spout Pinnacle, Lochnagar, by W. D. Brooker, has its " great jutting overhang," its " sheer drop " and its " pitiless slab " and is none the worse for them. A sinister note is struck in the usual list of accidents with the victims classified as Scottish, English and Novice—*some of them have no code letters* ; are the Welsh so far forgetting themselves as to climb north of the Border ?

I hate to criticize the *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*. Accounts of club doings always make it clear that the contributors are dearly loved by their fellow members and it has often struck me that the club must contain a high proportion of people who resemble nothing so much as pre-war Radio Luxembourg's " Happy Philosopher." To be harsh would make me feel as though I had been caught changing my socks in Wasdale Head Church. Luckily there is enough to praise : the photographs, as always, and especially one of that hardest subject of all—a mountain stream—by C. D. Milner, an informative account with utility photographs of the Galloway Hills, by Harry Preston, and an interim report on *The Climbing Rope in Practice* (the last two words being the operative ones), by R. P. Mears. The year's prize for finickiness goes to Bentley Beetham for demanding of a good climb that it should be on sound, clean rock throughout, that belays should be present when required and that it should have a S.E. to S.W. aspect. I think I know the climb he has in mind but repetition does grow monotonous and if there is another I should like to know it. The prize for understatement is awarded to E. M. Turner for commenting on the " sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused " passage in Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* : " This passage, it is true, is capable of a pantheistic interpretation." It can also be claimed that the *Summa* is susceptible of a Christian interpretation.

The *Alpine Journals* fall into their normal two halves—research and climbing. The latter is dealt with informatively and readably—not a common combination—in articles by Eric Shipton on Bogdo Ola (I *think* I should want to read this even if I weren't a climber, and that is the highest praise possible), Colonel Norton on Everest, H. W. Tilman on Nepal, N. E. Odell on Mt. Vancouver and R. C. Evans and C. W. F. Noyce on the Alps. Research is represented by E. Coddington's *A Hydrographic Approach to the Alps*, in which the game of definitions is carried to lengths rarely known outside conferences of semasiologists, and by numerous other pieces of scholarship, chiefly in the field of Alpine history. There is a long-standing academic tradition that though one may attack an individual scholar's researches one may not attack the higher quarrying as such because that would strike at the root of the academic way of life. We might occasionally remember Henry Adams' remark that : " Nothing in education is so astonishing as the amount of ignorance it accumulates in the form of inert facts." While

some of these articles are interesting, entertaining or useful, it is hard not to feel that there is a certain inertness about the facts of others. Facts are sacred, no doubt, but they are not their own justification.

Finally—to move right out to the cover of the November *Alpine Journal*—ought not the editor to scrutinize the advertisements? One shudders at the abandon with which the user of Elliman's Universal Embrocation seems to be inciting an unseen companion to suicide.

DOUGLAS HEWITT.

AMERICAN ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. VII, No. 4 (Issue 24), 1950.

NEW ZEALAND ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. XIII (No. 37), June, 1950.

CANADIAN ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. XXXIII, 1950.

JOURNAL OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA, No. 52, 1949.

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN, Vol. 35, No. 6, June, 1950.

BULLETIN OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF KENYA, Nos. 13-17, Dec. 1949-Dec. 1950.

In reviewing these Journals for the second year running I was inevitably struck by their similarity to the year before. It should be necessary, therefore, only to draw attention to one or two articles of special interest rather than try to analyse once again their particular qualities or atmosphere.

Complementary accounts of the first ascent of Mount Vancouver open both the American and Canadian Journals and both should be read as A. Bruce-Robertson's account in the latter corrects some undue modesty from William Hainsworth in the first. The mountain is 15,850 feet high, the fifteenth highest in North America (although only one higher remains unclimbed) and lies in the St. Elias mountains on the Alaska-Yukon border. "Project Snow Cornice," organised jointly by the American club and the Arctic Institute of North America is a long-term piece of glaciological research which had a semi-permanent camp on the Seward icefield during the summers of 1948 and 1949. The camp was entirely maintained by plane and acted as base-camp for the climbing party. The plane operated from an Alaskan coastal fishing village 25 miles away, and this cut out an otherwise almost impossible approach journey; special ski-wheels enabled it to take off from the concrete strip by the sea as well as the glacier at 6,000 feet. Not content with this the plane parachuted tents and supplies to the climbing party at two of their camps; so accurate were these "drops" that when the climbing party reached 12,500 feet they found their tents, food and fuel waiting for them despite having been dropped on a 37° snow slope. An account of this notable first ascent by N. E. Odell, appears in this issue of *C.C.J.*; he also contributes two articles to the *Canadian Journal*.

America also offers "Sixth-class Climbing in the Sawtooth Range," which takes one into the new world of contraction bolts and drills.

"... above this, the crack being absolutely smooth and rather useless for a way, Fred drilled a hole and drove in a solid-sounding bolt. This had a decidedly reassuring effect on his jangled nerves, since the drop was still 500 feet and the quality of the pitons

below him was such that any kind of fall would have made them all pop out like buttons from a shirt. . . ."

Why this article should be preceded by a learned discourse on "The Theory of Belaying" is really rather puzzling.

After complaining last year of the monotony of the *New Zealand Journal* I was gently reprimanded by a distinguished New Zealand mountaineer for misunderstanding its purpose: "where so much exploration, let alone new climbs, remain to be done," he said, "inevitably contributions tend to be strictly factual." Well, that may be so though I have not noticed that the early *Alpine Journals*, when conditions were comparable, lacked either variety of treatment or literary charm despite their content being largely exploratory. So I remain unrepentant and the *New Zealand Journal* remains unaffected.

The *South African Journal* is varied but somewhat ill-arranged. It has one or two good touches of local colour—"Some Snake Stories" for instance—and a long contribution on Travels in South-West Africa which is interesting but contains no mountaineering. The impression gained from reading the Kenya bulletins is that the material is as yet too slight to justify such frequent publication and that an annual would be preferable to some of these rather scrappy pamphlets; which, during the year under review at any rate, lean rather heavily on material by Tarbuck and Mears reprinted from English journals. Nevertheless the Kenya club, though comparatively small in numbers, does get across the impression of a happy, uninhibited membership who climb for their own enjoyment. Which is what several of the other journals fail to do.

ELLIOTT VINEY.

JOURNAL OF THE IRISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB. Vol. 2, No. 1. March, 1951.

This Journal arrived too late for inclusion in Douglas Hewitt's review above. It is lively and vigorous and clearly reflects the spirit of the Club, which was founded in 1948 with objects very similar to our own. The contributors combine a cheerful heterodoxy with a wide reading of proper books. As an example of the former let me quote this most unreliable advice:

So use your pitons freely,
Be safe for evermore
From premature arrival
At the other shore.

As an example of the latter, a little anthology including Yeats'

"Because I am mad about women
I am mad about the hills,"
Said the wild old wicked man.

CORRESPONDENCE

GUIDE-BOOKS

To the Editor, "Climbers' Club Journal."

DEAR SIR,

I read with horror the proposal that all the rocks of Wales should be explored *and described* in the same detail as the climbs round Helyg. Unless climbers are degenerating into gymnasts, plenty must agree with me that the most worth-while climbing is to lead an unfamiliar route ; and the less one is told of technique, the more interest in finding out for oneself. The pioneers of new routes must presumably enjoy the process. Why, then, spoil the fun for others by publishing descriptions ?

Guide-books of course have their place, in indicating where to look for climbs ; but beyond this, the less said the better. Imagine, if you can, Idwal Slabs unscored by scratches, and described in these terms : "An easy line follows an obvious groove. Harder ways can be found to either side." What wonderful scope one would have, and without any danger, since the climbing is so uniform in standard.

Such virgin fields can still be found in Scotland. The great slab at the foot of C Buttress on Sgoran Dubh must be nearly comparable in size and slope with Idwal, though it is much smoother. We went up it with no more directions than "Climb the slab," and a magnificent series of pitches of uniform severity we found. If it were described in the same detail as Idwal, we should probably learn that we started up the Plumblin, but moved across onto the Setsquare to take a belay. Traversing back onto the Hacksaw, we were defeated at the hard pitch (the Handle), and descended obliquely by the Mitre-board to join the easy way up the Gimlet. From this we deviated to take the Awl variant, regaining the ordinary route before working across to the Mallet Buttress. Would it have been as much fun ?

It is said that guide-books are needed by the inexpert for safety. It is true that they enable a man to lead safely at a higher standard, and that is their insidious lure : not that they make for safety, but that they permit a harder climb. Most of us fall at times for this tinsel lure of difficulty, which fact answers the obvious retort that the publication of a guide-book obliges no one to use it. The other answer is that once a route is described in detail, scratches soon mark it out as clearly as would a line of paint, and it is no longer possible without self-conscious heterodoxy to choose one's own route. The only hope then is the climax achieved, for instance, on Gimmer, where every intersecting line is so thoroughly scratched that it is again possible to pick one's own way.

There is perhaps a case for brief descriptions of long natural routes from which there is no escape, such as some on the West Buttress of Clogwyn d'ur Arddu. Moderate parties might then be warned of the difficulties before they get stuck. Even so, the less description the better, and a few forced descents would improve the technique of many.

For the rest, all we need to know is where to find the rock, and what are its possibilities. This, and more, Pyatt's preliminary guide supplies. Why not leave it at that ?

J. N. MILLS.

THE VIEW OF SNOWDON FROM HELSBY HILL

To the Editor, "Climbers' Club Journal."

DEAR SIR,

In talking about mountain matters, arguments occasionally break out on the subject of whether a certain peak is visible to a distant observer separated by intervening high ground. A friend of mine declared the other day that Snowdon could be seen from Helsby Hill. I doubted this assertion, largely for the lame reason that I had never spotted the mountain from Helsby, despite frequent attempts to do so. I maintained that the Clwyd hills lying between would conceal it. I later tried to demonstrate the impossibility of seeing Snowdon from Helsby by an algebraic argument, which I summarise below, in the hope that the more mathematical members of the Climbers' Club may be able to confirm, disprove or amend it.

The basic formula that gives the "dip" in the horizon can be written :

$$h = 0.66d^2$$

Here, h is the minimum height in feet of a visible object at a distance d miles from the observer at sea level. Thus if d is 10 miles, h must be 66 feet. If d is 30 miles, h must be 594 feet.

The simple sea-level equation rarely applies in mountainous country. The formula I arrived at to answer the argument about Helsby and Snowdon is unfortunately much more complicated. The data are as follows :—

Height of Helsby Hill	$(h_0) = 400$ ft.
Height of intervening Clwyd mountain	$(h_1) = 1,250$ ft.
Distance, Helsby to Clwyd	$(d_1) = 22.0$ miles
Distance, Helsby to Snowdon	$(d_2) = 56.5$ miles

If Snowdon is to be visible to an observer on Helsby, its height according to the formula should be at least h_2 feet, where :

$$h_2 = h_1 \frac{d_2}{d_1} - h_0 \left(\frac{d_2}{d_1} - 1 \right) + 0.66 d_2 (d_2 - d_1)$$

When I put in the appropriate figures for d_2 , d_1 , h_1 and h_0 . I find that h_2 would have to be at least 3,870 feet. The top of Snowdon is only 3,560 feet, so nothing of the mountain should be seen from Helsby.

It may be that the line of sight does not always behave in the proper rectilinear manner postulated by the above relation. The mirages of the Sahara would no doubt shimmer with laughter at such a naïve assumption. But my mathematics cannot pretend to cope with any further variables, and I thankfully leave a loop-hole for any tall stories that provide exceptions to the complicated expression given above.

J. V. S. GLASS.

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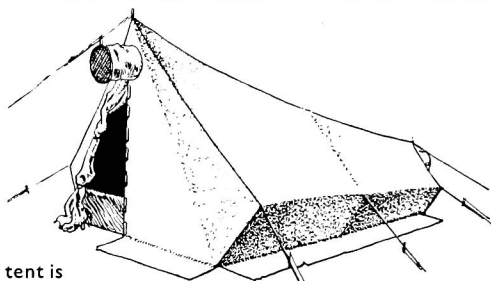


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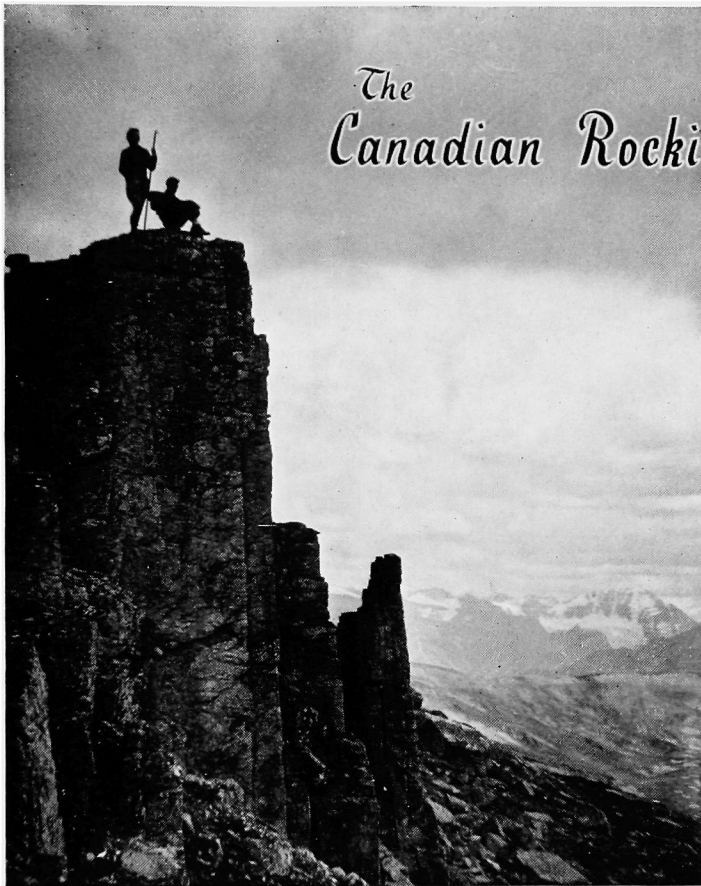
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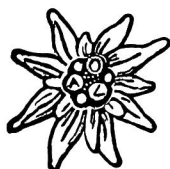
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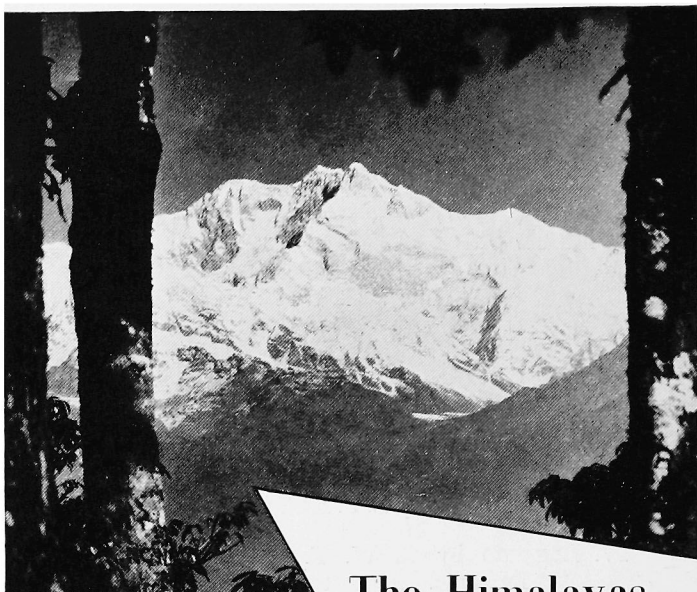
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*The Cloister Press Ltd
Heaton Mersey
Stockport.*