

THE
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EDITED BY
F. H. KEENLYSIDE

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ABI GAMIN

KENNETH BERRILL

I WONDER if mountaineering trips to India normally have casual beginnings. Ours started with a conversation between Alfred Tissières and myself in the summer of 1948 ; we agreed, light-heartedly, to go to the Himalaya sometime, "just a holiday, a reconnaissance to see the country." Somehow the project gathered momentum as the months went past, but no one was more surprised than we to be arriving in Delhi on the Frontier Mail, on 23rd July, 1950. By then the two of us formed half of the "Anglo-Swiss Himalaya Expedition, 1950"; a rather formal title but we had found it essential to call ourselves *something* when applying for the many permits. Waiting for us on the station platform was the other half of the expedition, two more Swiss ; Gabriel Chevalley, a doctor working with refugees in East Pakistan for the International Red Cross, and the well-known Alpinist René Dittert who had flown out from Geneva. All of us were complete novices to Indian climbing, except René who had already been out twice since the war. In the luggage van of the train was the half-ton of food and equipment Alfred and I had shepherded by boat and train from Europe, and awaiting us at the hotel was another half-ton assembled by René in a two days' whirlwind round the Delhi bazaars. Also waiting on the platform to carry our bags for us were two Sherpas, the first Alfred and I had ever seen, both just back from the French expedition to Annapurna. The elder had such a list of major peaks in his Himalayan Club book that my respect for him amounted almost to awe. Two more Sherpas met us at the Hotel Cecil, where the local Himalayan Club Secretary made us exceedingly comfortable.

However, our enjoyments of the pleasures of the hotel, with its unlimited meat and luxurious swimming pool, lasted only 36 hours ; 4-30 a.m. one morning saw the eight of us, four Europeans and four Sherpas, in another train heading north for the foothills. Behind us was a day and a half of packing, last-minute purchases, and long interviews about internal

customs ; ending in a dinner given for us by the Swiss Legation which had lasted to a late hour and had led to my finishing packing my personal kit in something of an alcoholic haze. On the train at dawn the whole expedition did its best to sleep things off, I with the strong feeling that my sleeping bag had been left under the bed in the hotel.

At this stage it seems appropriate to say something about our plans. They had undergone many changes. At one time we had intended to climb from Pakistan, in Chitral, but news of the Norwegian expedition to Tyrich Mir made us decide not to climb in the same area and perhaps cramp their style. So we had turned to India. Two of us were bound by the University long vacation, so we had to choose a climbing area where the approach march was short, and at the same time we wanted to avoid as much of the monsoon as possible. We decided on Gharwal and the Badrinath range as offering the best compromise. Badrinath is a most holy town to Hindus, who visit it as the main source of the Ganges. The communications, therefore, seemed, by Himalayan standards, good ; one day's rail from Delhi to Kotdwara, a new motor road 150 miles to Chamoli, a pony route another 50 miles to Badrinath and only a few days' trek from there to the peaks. So much for our choice of area and our route into the mountains. Our plans for an "unambitious reconnaissance" had also altered. We now had ideas about a much larger mountain than we had originally intended. The highest peaks in Gharwal are Nanda Devi 25,600 and Kamet, some 25,400 feet. The next highest peak was the unclimbed Abi Gamin, over 24,000 feet, Kamet's neighbour, a mile away to the north-east. Many parties had looked at Abi Gamin from the south, usually from Meade's Col which divides it from Kamet, and opinions differed as to how easy it would be to climb Abi Gamin from there, but only one party had ever reported approaching it from the north, and that was nearly a century ago. In August, 1855, two famous Austrian travellers, the brothers Adolphe and Robert Schlagintweit, journeying west from Lhasa, claimed in a letter to their Emperor to have worked their way to the base of the mountain, to have climbed to over 22,000 feet and to have been robbed of the summit only by lack of food. This was a most remarkable height record for the time and indicated that

the mountain should be easy from the north, provided first that we could rely on the report and second that glacial changes had not altered the whole aspect of the cirque in the last 90 years. Anyhow, on the basis of this ancient report, and encouraged by Marcel Kurtz and Professor Dyrenfurth, we determined to take half our food from Badrinath and have a look. This plan had, in theory, the advantage of taking us farther north while the full force of the monsoon was operating, leaving us to come back and move west to the Badrinath range when the rain and snow might be expected to abate. That, then, was the vague and rather ambitious plan which we talked about in the train on the day's run from Delhi to Kotdwara, that is when we were not busy changing trains with our ton of packets or looking out at the wide floods then covering part of the plains of North India.

The 200-mile trip from the railhead at Kotdwara to Badrinath, which looked so easy on paper, proved rather different in practice but all who have been to the Himalaya will know that the weeks spent in the foothills are among the pleasantest parts of the expedition. The gradual change in vegetation as one gets higher, from tropical forest at 1,000 feet to the bareness of a Welsh hillside at 10,000 ; the constant problems of transport, the improvisations over loads and food ; above all the dozens of different types and castes one meets if travelling along a pilgrim route, some reserved, most friendly, all highly colourful and fascinating to a newcomer to India. On our approach route we found that we had over-estimated the motor road and under-estimated the monsoon, for not even unceasing efforts by police, engineers and relays of traffic managers could get us along the 150 miles to Chamoli in less than three days. The road is a dirt and rock track wide enough for one lorry or bus. It winds up and over a couple of 6,000-foot passes and then follows the Alaknanda valley, usually many hundreds of feet up on the side of a gorge. During the monsoon months the rains are always washing rocks, stones and trees over it, and coolies with shovels and engineers with dynamite wage a ceaseless war to try to keep the road open. But they cannot repair washed-away bridges quickly, nor shift all the falls as soon as they occur, so progress becomes a series of short rides interspersed with the man-hauling of loads past landslips to a new set of buses on the other side. Often though, it is quite a relief to get out of a vehicle

which churns through the dust or slithers through the mud in low gear. Everybody gets over-conscious of the heat, the noise, and the realisation that if the bus does slip over the edge one is much too tightly wedged to jump. Some of the pilgrims seemed even more sensitive to the last than we were, women bandaged their eyes to keep out the awesome sight or chanted religious slogans whenever the bus was on the move.

After three days it was a relief to leave mechanised transport but the trouble was to find a substitute. We had underestimated the inflation as well as the road and the monsoon. The pilgrim season was at its height and coolies were charging up to one rupee per mile for some of the short hauls when the road was blocked. René tore his hair, quoted the experience of previous years and made dark hints to local officials about the effect on international relations, but the price level remained fairly stable. In the end we abandoned the idea of coolies and took to ponies as a slightly less extortionate means of transport. It was still costing us 12 shillings a day per pony and we needed 13 of them.

Expensive though it was, we enjoyed our five days' march to Badrinath. We wandered along, doing the bare 10 miles a day which is the statutory stage for a laden pony. We were climbing up out of the heat of 4,000 feet at Chamoli towards the 10,000 feet of Badrinath. After three days we got to Joshimath, where our pilgrim route, the new "quick" motor road route to Badrinath, joins the age-old pony track from the south, so we were now on the route taken by many famous parties and the book in the bungalow includes the names of Meade, Pierre Blanc, Slingsby, de Crespigny, Smythe, Shipton and Tilman. Joshimath is a lovely village sitting on a shoulder of the hillside, with the track to Badrinath winding down 1,000 feet to the bridge over the Alaknanda. The local wooden chalets are very reminiscent of those in parts of Switzerland. There are a couple of temples and a school for holymen where we had a long talk with the tutors. They were urbane, hospitable, widely travelled and very tolerant in their beliefs.

After Joshimath we walked for two days up the narrow defile of the Alaknanda gorge to Badrinath. We passed the end of Smythe's "Valley of Flowers" but it was early August and much too late in the year to be seen at its best. Badrinath was a

severe disappointment, a huddled shanty town of mean houses and muddy streets. However, we sorted out our stores into two portions, stored half in the Temple to await our return and were impatient to be off north to look for Abi Gamin. But it was not so easy to get away—again the problem was porters.

We had been telling ourselves that once in Badrinath our carrying troubles would be over. Three miles or so up the valley is Mana, the last inhabited village, and the porters of Mana have an honourable place in the climbing records of the district. But again we had under-estimated the inflation. The yearly trek of pilgrims had doubled in recent years to around 10,000 a month in the season and in Badrinath we were lodging in a boom town ; rough dormitories and shops were springing up everywhere. Mana men could earn five rupees a day digging ditches three miles from their homes and were not at all keen to come off into the cold and wet with us. Two days of bargaining got us nowhere, so we had once again to abandon our plans for coolies and take ponies at an exorbitant rate. This time at nearly a pound a day each. We were doubtful whether ponies could carry loads over our first objective, the 18,500 feet Mana Pass, which was several thousand feet higher than most of us had climbed in Europe, but the local ponymen assured us that they could and we had no option but to believe them.

On Saturday, 5th August, we left Badrinath and, after some contretemps over loads, formed a caravan of four Europeans, four sherpas, eight ponies and eight Mana men (one for each pony), trekking north towards the Mana Pass four days away and 8,000 feet higher up. As we got farther up the valley it became narrower and rather grim, but the colours were lovely. The grey, brown and white of the rocks on the valley floor, sharp snow peaks and a little blue sky in the mornings. Flowers were few, mainly grape hyacinths of every shade of red from pink to deep rust. Grazing was scarce, too, and we had to arrange the day's travelling between two reasonable patches of grass for our ponies. Each day consisted of a longish march in the morning, trying to ford the streams from the side glaciers in the forenoon while the water was not too deep for the ponies, then pitching camp in the early afternoon to give the animals time to find their food. Early next morning it was the task of some unfortunate pony man to round up the eight beasts, and, since they usually

had to graze a long way to get a square meal, this might entail a search a mile or two along the valley and hundreds of feet up the hillside. During these four days everyone went fairly well, except me. For some time my stomach had been in a bad way and since leaving Badrinath I lived mainly on pills and tablets. I did not know it at the time, but this trouble was to last to the end of the trip and cost me a couple of stones in weight.

On the fourth day we crossed the Mana Pass. It was difficult for the Europeans and hard even for some of the porters. This was under 19,000 feet and we wondered at our temerity in thinking of 24,000. No one was acclimatised and everyone had headaches, including the Mana men—which was good for our self-respect. René went best, I was put on a pony to conserve strength and Alfred and Gabriel brought up the rear. They fell a long way behind the main party, Alfred was so tired that twice he sat down to rest on a stone and fell asleep. Weeks later when we came back over the same pass our acclimatisation was complete and we marched slowly up and over it in a tight Indian file without any real distress.

On the north side of the Mana Pass the country presented quite a contrast. The valley was wide and open, running away for about 10 miles. Beyond that could be seen the Tibetan plateau, eaten away by the rivers into deep gullies and cliffs. Far away in the distance were the sharp snow-capped peaks of a range about 100 miles north. Near us, on either side of the valley, the mountains were rounded and gentle, quite unlike the *aiguilles* of three days previously. With their purple and brown sides and a dusting of snow on top, they looked rather like a row of large Christmas puddings. I say large, because they varied from 19,000 to 21,000 feet, though the daily fall of snow rarely came down below 18,000. All around us in the valley there was wild life. Herds of yak and sheep were feeding wherever there was good grass ; wild ponies (*kiang*), feeding down by the river, trotted away as we approached ; dozens of hares started quite close to the track ; eagles glided slowly on air currents, and, once or twice merging with the stones of the hillside in the distance, we saw the local wild deer (*bhural*). For good or ill we had nothing more offensive than a camera, and our pitiful attempts to snare hares with boot-laces were treated with the contempt they deserved. The only hare we captured was by the

unusual method (for humans) of chasing it. Four men running hard over a hillside at 17,000 feet use up quite a lot of energy, and when, breathless, they finally cornered one, no one had the heart to kill something so young and it was sent off to find mamma.

According to our maps, once over the Mana Pass the next part of the journey was simple. Go down the valley the other side for a day or two, cross the ridge on the right to the next river valley (the Mungnung Pani), turn back south and go up the Mungnung valley till it became a glacier and at the head of the glacier was Abi Gamin and the Kamet massif. The maps up to that point had been excellent and we were not expecting very much trouble—this turned out to be our biggest underestimation. Our Mana men claimed to know the Mungnung Pani so we followed them. A day and a half down the valley, across the ridge on the right by a stone pass, a drop down to a stream on the other side. So far all according to plan. We went up the stream for a few hours till the first good camp site and there set up our "Base-Camp." Monsoon clouds had prevented our seeing anything of the peak we hoped to climb but we had no doubts that we should find it a mile or two to the south of us and that the next day or so would see us starting our attempt. Quite content, we paid off our pony men (with the usual conventional arguments) and they set off for home, with instructions to come and fetch us in a fortnight.

The next four or five days were very frustrating. Only slowly did we realise that the maps were hopelessly wrong and that we were several valleys to the east of the true Mungnung Pani. It would have been much easier if the mist had only lifted for a day, but the weather usually allowed us only a few breaks in the cloud in the course of the morning and sometimes not even that. Little by little we worked east eliminating each set of peaks in the range to the south by the laborious process of getting near enough to each to be sure that they were all three or four thousand feet too small. In the course of four days we worked across a pass, across a glacier, up a very steep 600-foot moraine and on to a large snowfield. At the head of this snowfield was another mountain group and, again, we were sure that these must be the ones we were looking for. If they were, it would explain how the Schlagintweits got so high, for the

snowfield sloped gently upwards and then gave way to an easy ridge to the summit of the main peak. Again we were disappointed. Alfred and René did a long reconnaissance across the snow and found, once again, that this group was only about 21,000 feet. But when, at about 20,000 feet on the snowfield, the mist to the east cleared for a few moments, they found themselves looking down on a broad, flat, "Y"-shaped glacier, and at the head of the eastern arm of the "Y" was a group of mountains so large and so impressive that they had no doubt at all as to their identity.

We had a long trek to transport all our stores across the snowfield, down to this large glacier and along to the base of the mountain group. It took, in fact, another two days, and it was just a week after the "Base Camp" was first established and the porters sent home that the party was finally settled in Camp II at the head of the glacier and ready to attempt the mountain. With half the fortnight's food gone before the attack started, chances of success did not seem high.

However, the view from Camp II at the head of the glacier (called locally Gantug Sumgya Danchu) compensated for a great deal. We were surrounded by an impressive cirque of peaks. The end of the valley was shut off by Abi Gamin, a flat-topped mountain with a sharp right-hand and a gentle left-hand ridge. This left-hand ridge, after a short, steep, rock passage near the summit, swung gently away in a long curve which formed the basin rim. After a couple of miles it swung up again in a steepish rock ridge to another peak quite a bit lower than Abi Gamin. To the right of Abi Gamin was a great square mountain, now called Mukut Parbat though formerly known as Eastern Abi Gamin, which outshone its twin in every way, although some 200 feet lower. This peak would be a worthy target for any expedition and was certainly much too tough for us from this side. We were very glad not to be after it.* Framed in the gap between Abi Gamin and Mukut Parbat, and about a mile behind both, was Kamet, clearly much taller than either. Between these three peaks were two famous cols, Meade's Col between Kamet and Abi Gamin and Slingsby's Col between Abi Gamin and Mukut Parbat.

* This peak was in fact climbed from the other side (the south) by a New Zealand party in the following year, 1951.

A little study with binoculars from Camp II showed that the long left-hand ridge was the only likely clue to Abi Gamin, with the query as to whether the last rock section just before the summit plateau would prove very difficult. The main problem was to get on to this ridge. One could either try to gain it direct, by finding a route up the ice fall and on to the basin rim, or climb to Slingsby's Col to the right of the summit, then traverse under the head of the mountain to gain that left-hand ridge. In 1911 Slingsby thought that the route from his col to the summit would not be very difficult. In 1950 we did not like the prospect at all. The idea of travelling under the summit across a slope which seemed just made for avalanches did not appeal. We abandoned this suggestion straight away and concentrated on the first alternative, getting onto the basin rim and straight up the left-hand ridge. Here the main technical problem was route finding. Was there a way up the large ice fall which stretched across the middle of the 2,000-foot face separating the bergschrund and the lowest point on the basin rim? To get to the bottom of the ice fall was technically easy if physically tiring. It involved a long, slow climb in crampons up a natural ramp, the fierce glare from sun and snow having almost as much effect as the altitude. Then, at about 21,000 feet, the ramp petered out in crevasses. Above was an ice wall which was quite sheer and the most likely prospect seemed to be to search for a way of turning it on the right. This meant working slowly across the face, finding a route through the crevasses and large detached blocks of ice, trying to find a place where the ice fall relented sufficiently. The search for a way through this ice-face took nearly two days. Once René led up an ice chimney to the top of a block only to find that he was on a piece of snowfield about the size of two tennis courts which was separated from the rest of the mountain by crevasses on all sides. The weak link in the ice fall, when he did find it, was a very ephemeral one. The snowfield above, poised at a high angle, sometimes avalanched, and one of these slips, pouring over the edge of the ice wall, had built up a tongue of snow on a ledge below. Well belayed from below, René cut steps up that tongue, looked over the top and saw that the snowfield above led clear of crevasses to the ridge. As a bridge across the ice fall, this snow tongue was firm enough in the morning but got very soft by the afternoon. There was,



too, always the possibility that it would decide to go over the edge. But still it was a good enough route, while it lasted.

Having found a route through the ice fall, food and equipment was brought up to Camp III just below it, ready for an early start in the morning. Only three Sherpas were taken beyond Camp III, the fourth was less fit than the others and had no crampons. On Sunday, 20th August, in glaring sun at 6 a.m. we started to thread our way up and down through the complications of the ice fall to the weak point in the wall. Then, very slowly, with careful belays above and below, the porters were manoeuvred with their loads up the snow tongue and on to the snowfield above. When we stopped to take photographs (and to get our breath) the view was wonderful. On our right the rock-and-snow east ridge of Mukut Parbat rose sharp above us. Behind us was the long northward-curving sweep of the glacier and the network of unnamed peaks round the valleys on either side of it. But it was desirable to get to the ridge quickly as avalanches were possible on this face. There were traces of old ones all round. Usually the snow had peeled off to the depth of a yard or so, and a couple of acres had slid into the blue. Ahead we could see thin cracks in the snow across our path and there was a strong temptation to hurry on and put them behind us. But at 22,000 feet progress must be slow and steady if it is to last any time at all and we just had to push on in the glare, with the cracks ahead never seeming to get much closer, until one was right under the crampon and the next moment behind and forgotten.

We set up Camp IV on the ridge at a little over 22,000 feet. The three small tents sat on a flat platform hacked out of the snow at the base of the first of two quite distinct shoulders on the mile and a half of ridge between us and the summit. For the first time we could look over the other side, down on to the Raikane glacier. The drop was precipitous and the valley quite different from that out of which we had climbed; it looked fierce, cold and unattractive. The four of us crowded into one small tent to hold a council of war. Should we send out a light party in the morning to make a dash for the top (foreshortening made it difficult to calculate distances and gradients along the ridge), or should we establish a Camp V below the summit and risk the weather deteriorating? We decided on the latter course, although we had already had a longer period of fine weather than

we had a right to expect during the monsoon. Every day clouds had collected in the afternoon and snow had usually fallen at night, but the mornings had been fine and climbable and there had been no prolonged blizzards.

Next day we started along the ridge to establish Camp V. By midday we had reached one likely site at the bottom of the second shoulder, but there was still quite a bit of ridge left before the final rock passage. The clouds were late but gathering rapidly in the valley below. If there was a camp-site just below those rocks it would make the final day very much shorter. So Alfred and René pushed on to see. They seemed to take ages. The mist was beginning to swirl across the ridge and obscure them when finally they reached the rocks. They stayed put, so the rest of us started up that last long climb to the bottom of the rocks where we set up Camp V (23,500 feet). That climb was, to me, much longer, steeper and more tiring than it looked from below. We finished it in gathering cloud with everyone feeling the strain, the smallest porter being continuously sick and I feeling absolutely sure that I would go no farther on the morrow. Two light tents were set up for four Europeans and one Sherpa. The other two Sherpas were sent back, down our tracks, to the bigger tent at Camp IV, where we had left most of the food.

The following morning at 7-30 a.m. we prepared for the attempt at the top. Probably I should have stayed in the tent as I felt very weak from lack of food and sleep, but I was keen to go as far as possible. The rock ridge which separated us from the summit plateau was short but steep, with loose snow at a very high angle into which one sank nearly up to the waist. René and Alfred led up it, and eventually we all emerged on to a gentle snowfield running up some 200 feet to the summit plateau. At that point I became very sick indeed and no longer had any feeling in my feet. René, Alfred and Dava Thondup set off for the top while Gabriel worked for 20 minutes to bring my feet round. Shouts told us that the rest had reached the summit and Gabriel set off to join them.

After a while, being cold and annoyed with myself, I grew tired of sitting there in the snow so I packed up and started to trudge up the slope in their deep footsteps. As soon as I started I realised that my weakness was greater than I had thought. Putting one foot in front of another up that gentle

200 feet seemed an endless task. At last, on the plateau, I stood looking at their tracks leading up across the wide expanse of snow to the highest point. Then I realised that they were all around me on the way down. Storm clouds were gathering, the mountain had been well and truly made and there was no question of waiting for me to complete the climb. With considerable physical relief I turned to the problems of getting down again. So, even with very patient help, the "Anglo" part of the expedition had not quite succeeded in climbing Abi Gamin.

But all was not yet over. We had the immediate problem of getting down the rocky section with the snow much softer and more dangerous than when we came up. When that was over, Camp V was quickly dismantled and we pushed on down the ridge to Camp IV, where the other two Sherpas soon had hot cocoa and soup ready for us. Just after we got in, the snow-storm started in earnest. It lasted all through the night and was still going well at 7 a.m. next morning. We had to decide whether to sit where we were and ride it out, or try to move down and get off the mountain. Food was too short to stay long on that ridge in comfort and heavy snow would greatly increase the dangers of avalanches on the slopes below. So we decided to try to get off, if it was at all possible.

By the time we were ready to leave, the wind and snow had died down quite a bit, although mist still limited visibility to a few yards. Our tracks, of course, had gone, and finding a route down to the gap through the ice wall brought out the full range of René's mountain craft. He found probably the safest possible route and came out to within a few yards of our snow tongue, although he was working "blind" for most of the way. By 11 a.m. our difficulties were over so the weather decided to clear up. It was in the fine sunlight of the afternoon that we strode down the glacier, within a couple of hours we were sitting in Camp II on the moraine basking in the evening sunlight like contented seals.

That really is the end of anything eventful on the Abi Gamin section of our trip. It seemed a shame to have to head back to our Base Camp and Badrinath at once for there were dozens of things we would have liked to have done from that glacier (including finding a direct pass back to Mana). But our food

was nearly exhausted. It mainly consisted of a few tins of pemmican and for that our appetite had faded.

It took us two days to get back to our original " Base Camp " where the pony men were waiting. Tethered by the tents was a live sheep which they had purchased for us from the nearest flocks. In a few moments that live sheep was very dead mutton and everybody settled in to a huge meal of curry and rice.

After that we raced back to the luxuries of the bungalow at Badrinath ; to the post-office and news of home ; to the first bath in many weeks. We were keen to get the news. The world was a little unsettled at the time, and the pony men had not been much use as bearers of information. Stalin they had heard of, but Korea was a new word to them.

It had been a wonderful start to a Himalayan holiday, and we hoped to do more when we had picked up our food supplies at the Temple. But six days' solid rain at Badrinath were to rule out high climbing on the second part of our tour. Still, everyone had enjoyed it and the whole expedition returned to Delhi fit and well, except the Anglo part, and I did not begrudge my lost two stones a bit. They were well worth it.

MOUNTAINS OF LYNGEN

P. R. FALKNER

LYNGEN is a narrow peninsula, some 50 miles long, on the coast of Arctic Norway. Along the east side, where the Arctic Highway runs, the scenery is very reminiscent of the Western Highlands—a picturesque, indented coastline, dotted with farms and small villages, and backed by craggy hills mostly about 4,000 feet high. Elsewhere, notably around Jekkevarre (*ca* 6,300 feet) in the southern part and the Jegervasstinder (*ca* 5,500 feet) in the north, there are considerable glaciers and snowfields, and the peaks have a more Alpine aspect.

The only map of Lyngen (scale, 1 : 100,000) was produced in 1885. Although the surveyors ascended a few of the peaks, the map is reasonably accurate only along the coast. For the rest, it is at best sketchy and at worst grossly misleading. Many peaks are not shown, river valleys are not distinguished from glaciers, and in one place the main watershed is shown three miles too far east. Thus finding one's way about often provides quite interesting problems.

The history of serious mountaineering in Lyngen dates from the years 1897-9, when there was a sudden wave of exploration by British mountaineers, notably Slingsby, Hastings and Elizabeth Main, who climbed many of the major summits. Since then the area has been largely neglected by British climbers. Even Scandinavian climbers only visit it sporadically, although there is any amount of scope for new routes of all types.

I arrived in Lyngen with Dick Brown on 8th July to join six friends of the Oread Mountaineering Club, who had already been there for three weeks. Our base was a hut, which was an annexe of a school near Lyngseidet village. The others were all away from base, and to get in training whilst awaiting their return, we decided to traverse a horseshoe ridge behind the village. The ridge is six miles long and has four summits, all over 4,000 feet. With 24 hours' daylight one is free from that Alpine bugbear, the early start. In fact we actually set off at 4 p.m. A blanket of low cloud hid all the

tops as we plodded up the first thousand feet. These, as is usual in Lyngen, consisted of gentle slopes covered with birch and willow scrub. Ploughing one's way through this was a change from the familiar boggy approaches to British hills, but soon became just as wearisome. An hour later we were walking up a bare, snow-streaked hillside in thick mist, wondering why we had come 1,500 miles to do what one can do just as well any Easter in Scotland. Then quite suddenly we had a brief glimpse of a soaring snow peak through a window in the mist. A few minutes later, we emerged into glorious sunshine, with an indescribably beautiful panorama of snow and rock peaks showing above a level sea of white clouds. With renewed energy we raced on to the first summit, Goalsevarre, where we paused to eat and took numerous photographs.

We soon set off again along the ridge, which was a walk at first, but gradually became narrow, jagged and Cuillin-like. Passing over a nameless peak, we next came to a fine, pointed one, Rornestind. At each col we dropped into the mist and on each summit re-emerged to the sun, with our faithful Brocken spectres following us around. We reached the last peak, Jertind, exactly at midnight, still in bright sunshine. Two hours later we were back in the hut, below thick clouds again.

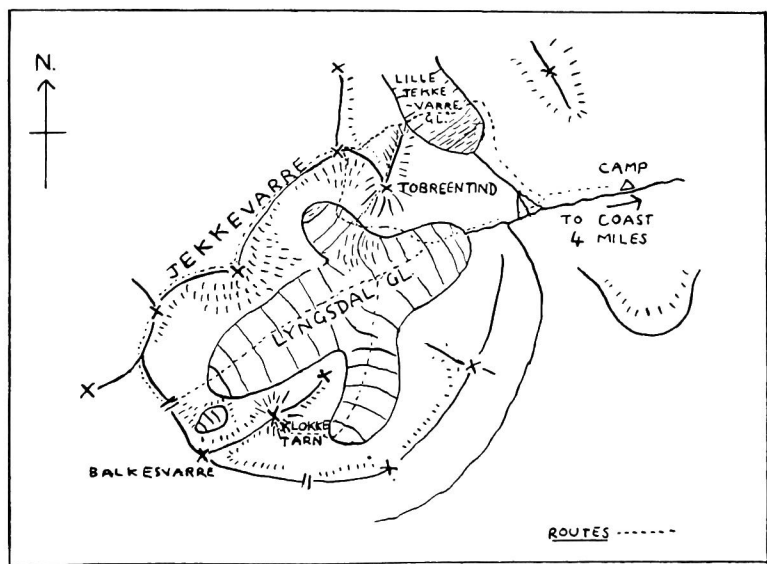
Whilst on Rornestind we had noticed that its west face consisted of a fine sweep of slabs, which plunged down for hundreds of feet before vanishing in the cloud layer. Two days later we set out to climb this face. On arrival at its foot, we were disappointed to find that the clouds, which had given us such an unforgettable view, had also deceived us. The 2,000-foot face before us consisted of scree and boulders for three-quarters of its height, and only the top 500 feet were of climbable rock. However, having come to make the ascent, we sweated up the scree, and the slabs, when reached, did give a delightful climb. We completed the traverse of Rornestind by descending its east face, which was a straightforward scramble.

The main party was back in the hut when we returned. From now on the scheme was to divide up into two or three groups. Each group took food and gear for several days and departed to a different part of the peninsula, recording its activities on its return. In this way, in the course of two months, almost every part of Lyngen was visited by at least one party. To attempt to

describe all these excursions would result in little more than a catalogue of peaks, and I feel that it will make more palatable reading if I select one area and describe it in some detail. For this purpose I have selected Lyngsdal.

Lyngsdal is a fine glacier valley, bounded on the north by Jekkevarre, the highest mountain in Arctic Norway, and on the south by the Balkisvarre group. We camped on a delightful site about a mile below the glacier snout. The only drawback was the presence of three playful bulls, which displayed great interest in our tents, despite frequent assaults with ice axes.

Jekkevarre has been called the Mont Blanc of the North, and the description is not inappropriate. The summit is a great snow dome and the S.E. face overlooking Lyngsdal, if lacking the sheer height of the Brenva face of Mont Blanc, yields nothing to it in fierceness of aspect. It rises from the Lyngsdal glacier in formidable cliffs several thousand feet high, and for most of its length it is swept by ice avalanches from the summit ice cap. The summit is joined by broad snow ridges to only slightly lower peaks to the north-east and the south-west, which are



SKETCH MAP OF LYNGSDAL. SCALE APPROX 1 INCH = 1 MILE

obviously more easy of access. It seemed reasonable to attempt to ascend one or other of these peaks first, and then to traverse to the central and highest one.

On 16th July Pat Parkes and I climbed the S.W. peak by an easy but pleasant ridge running up from the col at the head of the Lyngsdal glacier. Unfortunately the top was in thick cloud and we did not continue to the central peak, as we particularly wanted clear weather on the crevassed snowfields of the summit plateaux. Two days later we climbed the N.E. peak by its N.E. face, which rises from the Lille Jekkevarre glacier. We set off at 2 p.m., and avoiding the ice fall of the glacier by easy rocks on the right, we reached its level upper portion in two and a half hours. We crossed over to the face, which gave 2,500 feet of easy rock climbing. At 8 p.m. we emerged high on the S.E. ridge. This was narrow and interesting, but not seriously difficult. A fine snow arête led to the final dome and the summit was reached at 9 p.m. Again we were in cloud and decided to return. We descended by a rapid glissade down a snow gully. This was wide and innocent looking at the top, but lower down it was narrow and scored by avalanche debris. We did not stay in it any longer than necessary and were glad to reach the level glacier and a safe route back to camp.

For a complete traverse of Jekkevarre I had to wait until a second visit to Lyngsdal, with a different party, a week later.

In perfect weather we climbed the S.W. peak first, by the same route that Pat and I had taken, and traversed to the central peak. A curious point arises here. The map indicates the N.E. top as the highest, and one gains the same impression from reading early accounts of the ascent of Jekkevarre. We found that the central peak was visibly the highest, and the aneroid confirmed this, showing a difference of 200 feet.

Continuing the traverse, a descent of 1,500 feet and a tiring reascent brought us to the N.E. summit at 11.30 p.m. The sun was now almost setting at midnight, and the result was a magnificent display of lighting effects. From 10 p.m. onwards we had all the glorious colours of an Alpine sunset, but prolonged for nearly two hours. Gradually the lights faded until only a few high snow peaks glowed red above a grey and lifeless world. Then slowly the rose-red flush began to spread again and brighten, as sunset imperceptibly merged into dawn. As a

new day began we commenced the descent. Not favouring the route which Pat and I had previously taken, we descended a couloir filled with steep but safe and firm snow to the northern tributary of the Lyngsdal glacier, and so back to camp at 4.30 a.m.

The weather remained perfect and we were keen to take advantage of it. The same evening at 6.30 p.m. Stan Moore and I set off again, this time bound for a subsidiary rock peak S.E. of Jekkevarre and not shown on the map. On the Lyngsdal side it presents a fairly steep but well broken face. A week earlier, two members of our party, George Sutton and Ken Clarke had climbed this face to make the first ascent of the peak, and had christened it Tobreentind (Two glacier peak).

On the other side, Tobreentind presents a quite different aspect. A narrow ridge running north drops steeply to a high col, and then rises to the N.E. top of Jekkevarre, whilst to the north-east, an impressive rock ridge descends to the Lille Jekkevarre glacier. This ridge was our objective. We reached its foot at 9.30 p.m. The first 200 feet were very steep and we avoided them by ascending a snow slope on the right, and then traversed on to the ridge. At first the crest was steep and exposed and gave several good pitches. Then the angle gradually relented and we were able to move together. After 1,000 feet we were able to unrope and another 1,000 feet of energetic scrambling took us to the top. Here we saw the midnight sun for the last time. We descended the Lyngsdal face without difficulty to the glacier, where we met three of our colleagues just setting off to commence a plane-table survey of the glacier. We were back in camp at 2.30 a.m.

At midday we were on the move again, with designs on an imposing rock tower on the south side of the main glacier. It is not shown on the map, which in fact is so distorted hereabouts that there is no room for it to be shown. From the glacier, the most reasonable route appeared to be to reach an obviously accessible col between the tower and a lower peak on its left. The north-east ridge of the tower, rising fairly steeply from this col, looked as if it might be climbable, although later experiences did not confirm this.

At the moment, however, we were feeling ambitious and decided to attempt the north-west face direct. We started the

climb at 4.0 p.m. All went well for 400 feet and then we came up against a very steep 300 foot wall. A gully slanting up to the left, between the wall and a detached pillar, gave an obvious route for 100 feet. We then had to take to the open face. Following what I optimistically pretended was a line of weakness leading up to the right, I eventually found myself at the end of a long run-out, making a severe mantelshelf move on none too sound rock. With considerable relief, I reached a ledge with a good belay and brought Stan up to me. Then I proceeded cautiously up an awkward slabby gangway for another 50 feet, until brought to a standstill in a precarious position beneath an overhang. Here I inserted a peg, attached myself to it and reviewed the situation. The overhang looked as if it might perhaps be climbable with the aid of another peg, but what I could see of the wall beyond was most unattractive, and I reluctantly decided in favour of retreat. I abseiled from the peg down to Stan and we both abseiled into the gully, somewhat crestfallen.

We now decided to abandon our grandiose plans of the N.W. face direct, and seek a more reasonable way up our peak. At the foot of the gully was a convenient ledge of comfortable width and surprising length, along which we traversed a long way left into an easy snow gully, and up this to the aforementioned col. Half an hour of fairly easy climbing up the N.E. ridge followed, and we began to feel confident of success. Then about 10.0 p.m. we emerged suddenly on to a little rock platform and saw the final tower. We both realised at once that we were again defeated. Across a little gap, the tower commenced with a sharp overhang, and then rose excessively steeply for a full 150 feet, without a visible line of weakness anywhere. We decided to call it a day there and then and were in the camp again by 2.0 a.m.

After an off day, we returned to the attack on 27th July. The N.W. face and the N.E. ridge had both defeated us. The S.W. ridge looked long, difficult and not easy of access, and so the only remaining possibility was the south side, which we had not yet seen. Setting off at 2.0 p.m., we ascended the southern tributary of the Lyngsdal glacier, and in due course arrived beneath the south face of our peak. From here we saw that the most promising line was to gain access to the upper part of the



S.W. ridge, either by a snow couloir or by a buttress on its right, hoping that the ridge itself would not prove too difficult. We therefore climbed the lower half of the couloir, and when it steepened somewhat, we traversed on to the buttress. This led without much difficulty to the ridge. The rest was something of an anti-climax. We emerged high on the ridge, above all its difficulties, and 15 minutes of robust scrambling took us to the summit at 7.0 p.m. I think that we were both a little disappointed that in the end our fearsome peak had yielded so easily. The height was about 4,800 feet. There was no sign of any previous ascent. We built a cairn, leaving a record of our names and the date. We called the peak Klokke Tarn (Clock-Tower).

This was our last climb in Lyngsdal. For the rest of the holiday a very brief description must suffice. Four of us spent a week in the northern part of Lyngen, where the main event was a traverse of two of the peaks of the Jegervasstinder. The last climb that Stan and I made together was a traverse of the four main peaks of the Lakselvtinder, a jagged, spiky range of rock peaks, which would not look out of place at Chamonix. This was a strenuous affair which occupied nearly 24 hours.

We all left Lyngen on 17th August. Most of the party had to return straight to England. Dick and I had a little more time. We spent a week gradually drifting south, visiting Svolvær, where we climbed the Goat, and Tyssfjord to climb Stettind. There was something very pleasant about our gradual farewell to the peaks. Not until we left Bergen on 31st August did we see the last of the hills receding across the North Sea.

I hope that I have given some idea of the kind of climbing which we enjoyed, but no words can really convey the charm of this delightful country. I can only recommend anyone who likes to climb in remote places, unconcerned with guide books, classified routes, precise standards of difficulty and so forth, and who does not despise a mountain because it is only 4,000 feet and not 4,000 metres, to visit it for himself.

THE MANANG EXPEDITION, 1950

CHARLES EVANS

ANNAPURNA, a mountain mass more than 30 miles long, and running roughly east and west, is part of the backbone of the Great Himalayan range. It is in central Nepal, about 15 miles south of the Tibetan border. Manangbhot is the district lying between Annapurna and the border, and its chief village, near which we made our headquarters last year, is Manang.

East of Annapurna is the mountain group of Manaslu and Himal Chuli, and the rampart of the mountains is cleft by two great gorges, that of the Marsyandi and that of the Buri Gandaki. Both rivers rise in the hills of the Tibetan frontier, and flow out into lower Nepal, the Marsyandi between Manaslu and Annapurna, the Buri Gandaki east of the Manaslu-Himal Chuli group. The Manaslu has a tributary, the Dudh Khola—the Milk River—which rises from the north-western slopes of Manaslu.

Travelling west from Kathmandu, we crossed the Buri Gandaki at Arughat Bazaar, reached the Marsyandi at Tarughat, and followed its gorge to Thonje, at its junction with the Dudh Khola. From Thonje we made a reconnaissance of Manaslu, going up the Dudh Khola for three days, but this proved unproductive, and we resumed our journey up the Marsyandi, and put our permanent camp near Manang, on the north bank of the river, at about 12,000 feet. From this camp we attempted one of the peaks of Annapurna, and a smaller peak to the north.

Three of our party of six were old hands at Himalayan travel ; Tilman, Lowndes, who came as botanist, and Jimmy Roberts, from the 2nd Gurkhas. Three were new to it ; Bill Packard, who came to study land utilisation as well as to climb, Emlyn Jones, and I, who went to look after the sick and wounded. Fortunately they left me almost unemployed.

The country, once out of the Kathmandu valley (we left the capital on 10th May) is mountainous, wooded, and intensively

cultivated. We soon fell into the routine of the day's march. Our camps were on the outskirts of villages, in old paddy fields, hardbaked at this time of the year, the only flat places to be found. We would be up in the mornings about six, dip in a stream if one was handy, pack up, breakfast on tea, bread, and eggs, and be away by seven.

As a rule we finished the day's march before lunch, which was therefore often delayed until mid-afternoon, but on the way we would scrounge, when we could, bananas and papayas, bowls of curds, and rice beer, to keep us going.

The track wound interminably up and down the hill-sides, the earth was parched, and we heard all day the monotonous notes of the barbets and cuckoos against a background of forest and heat. Sometimes we halted in hamlets, and sat on straw mats on house verandahs, drinking sweet, milky tea, while we waited for the coolies (there were 50 of them) to catch up.

Sometimes our halts were in the open, in the shade of pipal trees, which one member of the party would have had all cut down, on the grounds that they tempted the coolies to lay down their loads to play cards in the shade.

The country was not an easy one to live off. My impression was of a people who had little of the staple foods to spare, and to whom tea, sugar, and even fruit, were luxuries.

In the evenings we usually had time to look round and, after the first few days, began to have glimpses of the big mountains to the north. We passed judgment optimistically on such of their higher ridges as we could see, forgetting that we had first to get footing on the mountain. Our evening meal, of lentils and rice, was early, and we were in bed soon after dark. When we could we slept out, but on many nights rainstorms drove us into the tents. We did not bother to use mosquito nets, pinning our faith to Paludrine, and no one got malaria.

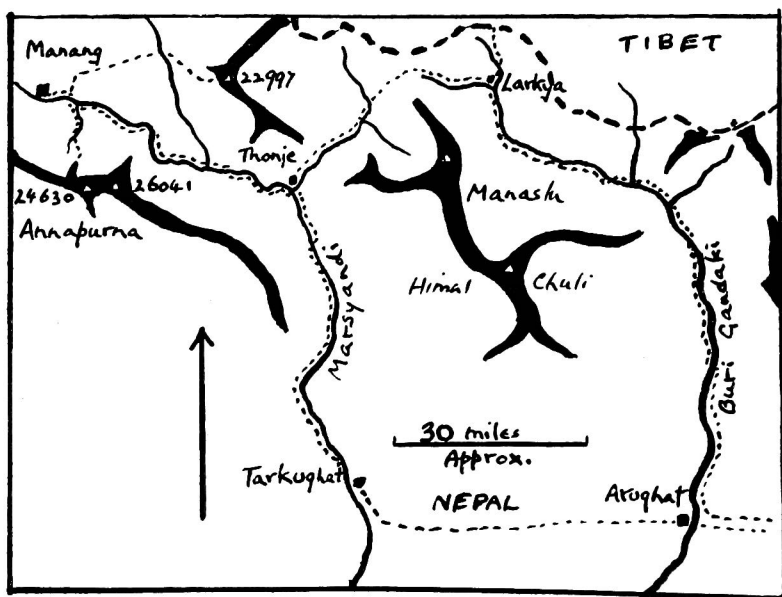
We reached the Marsyandi on 18th May. Tarkughat is less than 2,000 feet above the sea, and from there, through the gorge, we climbed steadily.

Much of the track up the gorge was by way of galleries cleverly built along the cliff sides ; stone stairways, and wooden planks supported by stakes driven into the rock. On the last day up the gorge we crossed the river three times by rather rickety cantilever bridges.

At the north end of the gorge the main party halted while we made our reconnaissance of Manaslu, which offers no route on its north-west side. Here a cheese from England was broached, we started a tin of butter, and one of our escorting Nepalese shot a wild sheep. After the vegetarian diet of the past weeks, Packard's roast mutton was a landmark.

We now moved up the Marsyandi again, getting some views of Annapurna en route. On the way in, we had been unduly hopeful about our chances on such peaks as we saw ; those of us, that is, who were new to the Himalaya. Gradually, from Manaslu and Annapurna, we learned, first, that these great ridges may be unexpectedly difficult to reach, and, further, that, when on them, progress rarely comes up to expectations, not so much because the distance to go is great, as because the party's speed, at over 20,000 feet, is absurdly slow.

In the end, Tilman picked a route to Annapurna II, 26,041 feet, which is at the east end of the massif. The route lay up a rock buttress to a snow and ice ridge by which we could reach a snow dome on the crest of the main ridge. The dome is just over 20,000 feet and Annapurna II is about four miles away from





it, to the east. Half-way along the intervening ridge, on a little spur to the south, is a 24,600-foot point which we called, first, the "pimple." Later, when Annapurna II began to show its quality, we raised the pimple to the dignity of "Annapurna IV," the consolation prize.

On the ridge to the dome we put two camps ; Camp I at 17,500 feet and Camp II at 19,000 feet. There was only one difficult spot on the ridge, an ice step formed by a little hanging glacier, and passable only by the ridge's very crest. It was both steep and exposed, perhaps 60 feet of ice giving onto steep snow above, and needing a 100-foot run-out. Bill Packard did most of the step-cutting here, and made a very fine job of it. The rest of us came up on the rope and arranged fixed ropes for the Sherpas. From Camp II, above the step, it took two days' carrying to get our kit onto the dome, where we first slept on the night of June 13th. We had been eight days in getting up the ridge.

Next day Tilman, Roberts, Packard and I went up the ridge towards our next camp. Emlyn Jones had unfortunately to go down from below Camp II, through sickness. This left four of us, and four Sherpas.

The ridge above the dome was narrow in places. Tilman found good, hard snow on its south side, the weather, in the morning, was fine, we were getting fitter, and I think we all had, that day, enjoyment of the kind that is given by the Alps. We enjoyed the action of climbing. Coming back to the dome camp we ran into cloud, and had to struggle against wind, cold, and snow. We were glad of the willow wands we had carried up to mark our tracks on the dome. On 15th June we moved up to Camp IV, our highest, at about 23,000 feet. Roberts, Packard, and I stayed there, to go on next day, but it was blowing a blizzard, and we lay low, though Tilman and the Sherpas were able to get up from Camp III with more gear.

We three had a pleasant morning, snug in our bags, while the wind blew and the snow fell outside, talking of climbs and men, the substance of our talk now forgotten ; we were all rather blue, and panted at a little exertion.

We knew that there was no chance of pushing camps another two miles, all of it at over 24,000 feet, along the ridge to Annapurna II, and we decided to try for the pimple. We tried it three

days running. First Packard and I went up a few hundred feet before turning back in snow and mist, a storm that lasted the rest of that day. Next day we all turned out early, too early, because we seized up with cold, three of the Sherpas first, whom Roberts, whose feet were slightly frostbitten, took down to Camp III. The fourth Sherpa, Da Namgyal, with Tilman, Packard, and I, went a little farther, but then turned back in face of a strong north-easterly wind. On the third day Packard and I got as far as the spur on which the pimple stands. From here Annapurna II looks extremely formidable. The ridge to our own peak rose steeply to the south, rather sharp, and consisting, as we found out very shortly, of snow lying on snow-ice.

By this time, although I could still put one foot in front of the other, I was certainly not in the sort of sober condition that I like to see in my companions on an ice slope. After going a little way up the ridge we talked it over and decided to come down. That short consultation is, for Packard's uncomplaining acceptance of the disappointment I must have caused him, one of my happiest memories of the expedition. My own capacity for disappointment at turning back had, I may say, evaporated earlier in the day.

We had hardly started down when the usual afternoon storm came on. Our tracks were quickly obliterated and we had difficulty in following the ridge to Camp IV. Just above the camp was a dip in the ridge. We had come down fairly well, but that last little pull up into camp brought me the realisation of how tired I was.

Next day we got down as far as Camp II, and on 21st June we roped down over the ice step, and floundered through deep, soft snow to our base camp at the foot of the ridge.

It was raining, we were tired, our tents and our kit were wet ; but in the evening the clouds rolled away, the sun came out, we hung up our clothes to dry, and revelled in what seemed to us the luxuriant vegetation of a rather barren little moraine. We had been 16 days on the mountain.

We now returned to our camp at Manang. Emlyn Jones, in our absence, had visited Muktinath. Lowndes had been having trouble with the men of Manang, who wanted us to go away, as our presence was held to be the reason for bad weather and a poor harvest. These men did not for a moment suppose that we came

to their country in search of either knowledge, adventure, or notoriety ; and later, when we left Manang for good, they dug up our camp site in case we had buried there any of the mineral wealth which they thought we had been seeking in their hills.

It was a week before any of us felt like facing another mountain. We went through a sheep, and a lot of the local brand of spirit, and made some gentle sallies up the valley on horseback.

Riding a Tibetan horse is presumably an art. The beginner gets back to camp, at the end of the day, speechless from the constant repetition of "Chu-Chu-Chu," a remark which is supposed to stimulate the animal to a trot, and scarified from contact with a saddle which is covered, quite unnecessarily, with a kind of extra rough sharkskin.

After this interlude Tilman, Emlyn Jones, Packard and I made a fortnight's trip to a mountain of 22,997 feet, north of Manang. Its name, according to the inhabitants of Naur, a village at the foot of it, is Kang Garu. As this means "White Snow" we were never certain if it was a name or a description.

We put a camp on this at about 20,000 feet and from this camp Emlyn Jones and Packard had a try for the top. They found that the slope above their camp consisted of ice overlaid with a thin layer of snow, and after a long bout of step-cutting they had to give up.

We returned once more to Manang, and on 20th July Emlyn Jones, Packard, and I started for home by a route different from that of our outward journey. At Thonje we turned north, up the Dudh Khola, and after two days' walking through fir and pine forests, reached Bimtakothi, a trading post at 14,000 feet. As far as this we had with us a Nepalese escort, but here he fell ill and turned back, leaving us to fend for ourselves, if anyone can be said to do that when he has two Sherpas with him.

We had hoped to explore a twenty-one thousander which is shown on the map between Bimtakothi and Larkya, another trading post at the head of the Buri Gandaki. Continual rain and cloud prevented us, however, from ever seeing this mountain, and we had to be content with crossing a grassy pass of 17,000 feet to the south of it.

We took a day at Larkya to dry out, and visited the Gya La, an 18,000-foot pass about six miles to the north.

At this season there was no snow on the pass and its turf

slopes were scored with the tracks of yaks, which bring down salt from Tibet to be exchanged for rice.

Larkya was the only place where we saw marmots. One big old fellow was always on guard outside a burrow near our camp. Other wild life was scarce and we saw only a few ravens, choughs, now and then a lammergeier or a griffon vulture, and, by the streams, the lovely white-capped redstart.

Our route from Larkya now followed the Buri Gandaki down through its gorge. The first stage was to Sama, 12,000 feet, the last large Tibetan style village we were to see. Here I visited the headman, an old lama, a very sick man, who was friendly and courteous, unlike the Manang folk, and promised us the six coolies we required. They would come with us as far as Ngyak, a village at about 8,000 feet, four days' march down the gorge. Below this they would not go. The reason they gave was that they would die in the heat of the lower valleys, but we thought that one thing which helped them to decide was a natural wish to return home. At any other time, when there is less work to be done in the fields, it is probably easier to get coolies. As it was, we had the greatest difficulty each time that a change had to be made, and were rarely able to get men, or women, who would come with us for more than two or three days. These frequent changes caused us irritating delays, and some anxiety, because two of us had a boat to catch.

Below Sama the gorge is broad and shallow for about six miles, and then begins to get narrow and deep. Above Ngyak the gorge sides rise for several thousand feet, and are covered with thick jungle, through which the track, wide enough for one pair of feet, winds. Bamboo is plentiful, and encroaches on the path ; it is best here to walk at the back of your convoy, letting those in front take the worst of the water, and the most active of the leeches, from the undergrowth as they pass through it.

Our camp sites here were cramped. We made use of whatever flat space we could find. Sometimes the tents were scattered in a bamboo thicket, sometimes we pitched them among the stalks of a maize crop, and once or twice we camped right in the middle of a village.

In some places the usual track had been washed away during the monsoon, and we made long detours into side valleys, finding ourselves in the evening disappointingly near to the village from



which we had started that morning. Ten miles was very good going for a day, and some days saw us not more than four miles farther down the gorge, as measured on the map.

Most of the villages could give us just enough food to do us for a couple of days or so. But once or twice, as we neared the lower end of the gorge, we almost ran out, and were glad of some fungi that the Sherpas found and cooked for us. Our great standby was maize, either picked young and eaten raw, or cooked in the orthodox way on the cob. Occasionally we got some corn ground. The flour, mixed with water or tea, made a rather sweet paste, which was joyfully greeted by Packard as "corn meal mush."

On 5th August the Gandaki gorge widened out before us, and we could see the plains in the distance, with Arughat Bazaar close at hand. Next day, when we got there, it seemed a metropolis. You could buy tea there, and coconuts, cigarettes, and shirts. But for all these delights, there was a shade of regret about reaching the end of the gorge. As far as we know, we are the only Europeans to have seen the real splendour of the Buri Gandaki, and the great river which had been our noisy companion night and day since leaving Larkya had become a friend.

MOONLIGHT ON BRENVA

M. E. B. BANKS

“SEE,” said the guide Pierre to the American girl, “I could reach out my hand and touch the Mont Blanc.” I was standing beside them at the Torino Hut and indeed so brightly was the moon shining full on the Brenva face that one could almost believe him. Never could Professor Graham Brown’s great triptych have looked finer. There they stood the giants, gleaming side by side in the moon’s cold beauty: Sentinelle, Major, Pear—aristocrats all. And as my gaze lingered for the hundredth time on that majestic mountain wall my mind whirled in a turmoil of excitement and anticipation. In that instant, perhaps unconsciously, the germ of an idea was born.

For Richard Brooke and I the skirmishing was over and we were experiencing that “before action” feeling that so often precedes a great climb. We had spent the Summer together with Commander Simpson’s naval expedition in N.E. Greenland, and besides getting as fit as fleas we had passed many a happy hour making Alpine plans for a leave that was then far from certain. In our little tent in the evening the talk would go round in circles but it would usually culminate in Route Major. Could we, with our scant experience of big routes, manage it? What were the chances of finding it in condition so late as mid-September? Full of pemmican and armchair courage we said that we would go and rub our noses on it anyhow.

The Gods (in the guise of our respective C.O.s) smiled and we got our leave and hurried to Chamonix. Within four days we had rushed the Aiguilles Ravel, Mummery, Verte and Rochefort. So intent were we on treating these mountains as prologue, always with one eye over our shoulder on the Brenva face, that we failed to pay these fine peaks their full due. But in their age and wisdom they understood and were kind to us when they could so easily have been angry.

And so that evening at the Torino Hut, despite the sound advice of good friends to tackle Moore’s route first, we felt that

it was now or never. Richard and I arrived mutually and thankfully at this same conclusion without a spoken word. Our decision was as much by instinct as by reason, for the weather had been most reluctant to show its hand either in the form of storm or settled weather. The early hours of the 16th September saw us on our way to the Col de la Fourche. After a snack in that airy refuge we pushed on to Col Moore to spy out the route that we would have to traverse in the dark the following morning. An hour of steadily worsening snow took us to the col where the complete Brenva face is revealed. We could pick out from here all the landmarks on Route Major. First the ascending traverse across successive couloir and rock to the Sentinelle rock ; then the crossing of the potentially dangerous Great Couloir which lands the climber at the base of the ridge which is Route Major proper. The route itself consists of a lower buttress then a snow arête followed by the middle buttress above which the upper snow arêtes sweep gracefully to the final and steepest buttress. W. H. Murray describes as a thoroughbred that climb that produces its greatest obstacles at its summit. Route Major must fall into this category, for though the final buttress is technically the hardest section of the climb it is capped by the terminal ice cliffs which are always something of a surprise packet. Suspense can be guaranteed.

I seem to remember that our conversation had lapsed into a contented silence which suddenly I shattered by blurting out : " Let's climb it by moonlight." And so the idea became reality. We took hold of the stupid notion and stretched in every conceivable direction to find its breaking point. Rather to our surprise it held. Richard wisely summed up by saying that though it was feasible, the sensible thing to do was to forget the moonshine and keep to our original plan. He was obviously very relieved when I countered, as he knew I would, by saying that the prize was great and we were only likely to get stopped under the final buttress where we might have to wait a few hours in the intense cold until dawn. Fortified by the experience of many night climbing exercises as a Commando instructor, I volunteered to lead the final buttress with the aid of an electric headlamp. We returned to the hut and noted that André Roch had climbed the Pear with Charleston, Tilly and Caldwell. We could find no reference to Route Major. From one o'clock until

four we pretended to sleep but neither of us were very good actors.

At 5-20 p.m. we left the refuge hoping that because the sun had been off the glacier for an hour or so we would not get our boots wet. We were wrong and paid for it later. We trudged back to Col Moore the silence only being broken by the Aiguille Blanche de Peuteret, which as usual was angrily discharging tons of debris in all directions. An hour took us to the col with the sky darkening fast but still cloudless. By seven o'clock the sun had gone down and we were well on our way across the mixed snow and rock that leads up to the Sentinelle. As we stopped to put on crampons the moon came up, waxen and quite unutterably beautiful, touching the whole mountainside with a mellow faery light. Beautiful but not useful. A few moments saw her clear in the sky, the light becoming brighter and more brittle. For the many hours to follow we climbed under her spell, the moonlight creating a scene of such ethereal loveliness that never before have I climbed for so long with so sustained a sense of beauty and unreality. Richard felt it equally ; neither of us were wholly in this world.

We arrived at the Sentinelle at eight o'clock and crossed the Great Couloir quickly in crampons not finding it necessary to cut steps. On the far side we received a foretaste of what was to follow. The normal exit onto the rocks was badly iced so we tried a little farther up. I began cutting up steep ice but when it got so steep that I had to begin cutting handholds it was obvious that I had chosen a bad spot. Richard then found a more reasonable exit and cut his way up onto the ridge. Here and on many subsequent occasions we found the ice exceptionally tough and glue-like, but being a good snow year much of the troublesome stuff was covered up. We had now gained the lower ridge of Route Major proper and here we took off our crampons. As I led the lower rocks I was relieved to find that the moon, which was now standing well up in the sky, was giving ample light to discern foot and hand holds. With a clear sky and sufficient light we climbed the lower rocks and the first snow arête quickly and cheerfully.

The time must have been flying for it was 11 o'clock before we arrived at our first real obstacle, the middle buttress. I remember remarking that the slabs, which made me remove my



gloves were not easy and might be of a "difficult" standard. But it should be borne in mind that climbing at night, however bright the moon, can never be so easy as climbing in the warmth of the day. This might well have caused us to over-estimate the technical difficulties throughout. While I was on these slabs a small avalanche hissed down the Great Couloir, unexpected at that time of night and large enough to have made it most unpleasant for anyone crossing the couloir. The route now went off to the left across steep iced rocks. After a spell of cutting I asked Richard to pass through, which he did, cutting up the steeper ice of an open chimney until he was stopped by a small rock wall capped by an iced mantelshelf. Richard found a stance while I avoided the obstacle by climbing a flake on its right using a layback. Easier ground led to convenient rocks at the bottom of the long snow arêtes where we could have a rest and some food after some six hours of movement. This was a happy choice of resting place for here the view broadens and the upper reaches of the climb are revealed ; the snow arêtes leading the eye in a graceful silver sweep to be lost in the dark foreboding of those final cliffs which hung there, black and steep. Truly our Dark Tower, and we with ashen shaft in the place of that earlier adventurer's mysterious slug-horn. Yet the tower was worth the winning for there above it, crowning its frowning brow lay a diamond tiara of ice cliffs, lovely as the Snow Maiden but equally dangerous.

The snow arêtes which look deceptively short when the whole Brenva face is seen from a distance in fact extend for some 800 feet. Having replaced our crampons we were agreeably surprised to find them so well covered with good snow that cutting was seldom necessary, a couple of kicks being sufficient to make a reasonable step. Even though the occasional patches of ice could be avoided the work was exacting enough to make us pause in our steps every few moments panting furiously. We gained height steadily and were still in brilliant moonlight when we arrived at the penultimate rocks, called the Pedestal. Here it was necessary to move from rocks into a shallow snow chimney where, being unable to make the delicate traverse in crampons, we had to stop and take them off. Once in the chimney I found it to be more ice than snow and disagreeably steep. Ice shimmered ahead so I tried to break out to the left up a snow and rock

rib which I climbed on small holds, partly snow-covered. After a few feet the snow turned to ice and barred my progress. Richard now came to the rescue and climbing to a position below me in the gully examined the rocks on the opposite side and pronounced them climbable. I gave him a sort of psychological belay and he climbed them. I had now to descend before I could follow him but unfortunately I could not locate a vital foothold that I had used on the way up. Richard was still on steep ground and a fall was not to be thought of. Things were a little tense when I happened upon one of those tiny nobbles of rock that always seem to materialise at moments like this if you wish for them hard enough. Putting a loop of rope behind it I lowered myself to my arms' length and got onto good holds again and soon joined Richard.

Good snow led over a slope in the top corner of which is found the "unclimbable" corner, which had repulsed Graham Brown and Smythe in 1928 but had gone without undue difficulty when Graven led it in 1933. We made as good an ice-axe belay as we could and donning my headlamp (we were to remain in semi-gloom until dawn) I squared up to the corner. The snow was powdery and unstable and I could not get anywhere near the obvious line of holds on the ledge above me; even so an ominous glitter of ice warned that even were I to get the vital handholds my troubles might only be starting. Without trying to force it we retreated and traversed round the tongue of rock on good snow following the 1928 route to the base of the final buttress. The climb so far had gone encouragingly well, any avoidable setbacks being for the most part attributable to my small route-finding errors on the ice pitches. But the bastion above us took on a very different aspect, its steepness being the more accentuated by our passing from the moonlit snow into the darkness of the overhanging rocks. The face we were to climb was north-facing, the rocks being well plastered with snow that seldom or never saw the sun. We were in fact faced with the ascent of a "very difficult" in Scottish winter conditions, at night, at a height of over 14,000 feet and after at least nine hours of movement.

Here also our "success story" ends rather abruptly. Steep snow-covered rocks led without undue difficulty to the feature that Graham Brown describes as a chimney but to me appeared

more as a short overhang. After lassoing a bollard to give me a running belay I first tried it complete with axe and sack but by the time I had hung from one hand brushing away snow and locating holds I was too arm-weary to pull myself up. I climbed down, rested, removed all unnecessary impedimenta and tried again. Just at the crucial moment as I heaved over the top what I thought to be a good hold turned out to be a loose stone sunk in the snow which came away. I grabbed at something or other and in a series of contortions wriggled over the top. We then tied the two rucksacks to Prussik loops and hung them over a convenient rock. I climbed a little higher past an exposed step-across and up a short snow slope to a rock wall where I found a minute spike of rock behind which the rope would just run if I pulled it with one hand and held it in with the other. I did not need my axe so I thrust it into the snow. I should explain here that neither of us were wearing pullovers because the climbing had mostly been both continuous and warming. Our wet boots had been frozen as hard as iron and our tight crampons straps had the usual chilling effect. Furthermore all my monkeying around at the "unclimbable" corner and later under the overhang had taken time which, though it passed quickly enough from my point of view, must have been a cold purgatory for Richard. At his first attempt on the overhang he was so stiff with cold that despite my heaving on the rope he could not surmount it. As I paid out the rope for Richard to climb down, the unforgivable occurred. Somehow or other my axe became dislodged ; it struck a brilliant spark as if to bid me farewell, whirled out in a graceful arc and was lost in the darkness. My spirits plunged with it. Dark thoughts of the sombre consequences were coursing through my mind when Richard, his voice full of relief, shouted to me that he thought he could see it. Sure enough there it was a hundred or so feet below, by some miracle embedded in the snow. My carelessness had not reaped the punishment it deserved. But I know now.

It was quickly and thankfully recovered but valuable time had been wasted and we were getting colder. During those hours just before the dawn, man's morale is at its lowest; this perhaps accounts for many of our difficulties at this stage. Tying a loop in my rope to use in lieu of a foothold and with a good heave from

me in my new stance Richard came up. I continued up a snow-filled chimney and not being sure of the route continued on up the chimney, perhaps a hundred feet in all until I came to a stop under an overhanging chockstone which I could not pass. We descended to prospect the correct route but because we were so cold we called a brief halt and ate some cold pemmican, a taste we had acquired in Greenland. This meat and fat concentrate, if you can stomach it, is a wonderful tonic in such circumstances. Feeling a little better we explored two possible exits but they were too heavily iced to afford us passage. Our minds having been made up for us we returned to the long chimney with a resolve born in the knowledge that there was no alternative. Combined tactics overcame both the difficult chockstone and another somewhat similar obstacle a little higher. The chimney was steep but the snow where it existed was good. With great relief we landed on the final snow slope below the ice cliffs where we performed the duty, long overdue, of piling on all our pullovers. By daylight and without a rucksack I think the chimney would go easily enough without resorting to combined tactics.

The eastern sky was now full of the hope of dawn and we were deeply relieved that this great obstacle was behind us. For four hours, hungry and tired, we had struggled in the intense cold of that sombre place and there was no happiness in it. We approached the ultimate barrier of ice cliffs just as a troubled dawn broke with clouds boiling up from the Italian valleys and swirling up the Brenva face towards us. Had we started at the conventional time the evil portent of those clouds would have turned us back.

The ice cliffs before us, flushed with the dawn, seemed to present a continuous unclimbable wall of ice, but round an unlikely looking corner we found an easy run out to the summit snows of Mt. Blanc beyond. We felt a Himalayan weariness on that final drag against which I found both brandy and more pemmican equally ineffective. A thin layer of crusty snow was slipping off the consolidated snow beneath making each slithering step such an effort that we could only manage five minutes at a time in the lead. It could not go on for ever and soon after eight o'clock, some 15 hours after leaving the Col de la Fourche, we stood on the summit. It was my first ascent of Mt. Blanc and



I felt it appropriate that I had come to know the Monarch by a route worthy of his stature ; a royal route.

Here the Fairy Tale, and to me the climb up to this point remains a fairy tale, must end. That slum which is the Vallot Hut would shatter the illusions of the most romantic among us. It is enough to say that, spent and frostbitten, we went down through driving cloud to the inevitable disillusion of the valley. But that is not quite all. True to form our fairy tale had a fairy godmother. He was Professor Graham Brown. His book *Brenva*, which is such a happy combination of accurate detail and inspired writing evoked in us the inspiration to attempt Route Major. We thank him for the best climb we have ever done.

ROLWALINGHIMAL

M. P. WARD

WE left the Khumbu glacier and after three or four days in Namche Bezar decided to make for Katmandu by various routes. Ed Hilary and Earle Riddiford were going to go over the Tesi La—the rest of us would look for a way into an area marked “unsurveyed” around Gaurisankar which lay to the west of the valley leading north to the Nangpa La—and north of the Rolwaling valley.

We left Ed and Earle at Thami, a small cluster of houses which marked the beginning of the route to the Tesi La. It was a cold morning with a definite wintry bite in the air as we walked up the valley to the Nangpa La. All around us the mountains, which the day before lay hidden in mist, glittered as new in the early morning sun. I was walking alone for most of the day, and passed many Tibetans some driving yaks and some carrying loads—they were a cheerful smiling people. There were many prayer flags fluttering from poles, also the usual plethora of mani stones which I passed automatically on the right. The valley got more barren and less inhabited as I went north and late in the afternoon I stopped at a group of deserted houses—called Chhule, and there waited for the others, who turned up as evening was drawing on. We quickly divided what food we had—giving Tom Bourdillon and Bill Murray enough for three or four days in order to explore the Nangpa La region. Eric Shipton and I were going to go up the Pangbuk valley, which here enters the Dudh Kosi valley, and to try to make a pass at its head. Darkness fell soon after we had crossed a stream which seemed even colder than usual.

We slept the night in some stone huts on the far side and at dawn set off. It soon became obvious that the Pangbuk glacier drained a large number of peaks, most of them over 21,000 feet. The main glacier came from the north, though it was joined by tributaries from the south and west. We thought we could see a pass over a ridge at the head of the west glacier. After two and a half or three hours' going we found a lovely camp site

by a stream under the lateral moraine of the main glacier. Here we pitched our two tents and had a meal, basking in the sun. We decided that we should have a look at the northerly part of the basin and thought there would be a good view from a chain of small peaks between us and the Nangpa La valley. We went up one of these and from the top saw two more possible passes. The view in every direction from this hump was magnificent. To the east, for the first time, I saw all the big peaks of the Everest group in true proportion; Everest itself, with Lhotse, Nuptse and Changtse as outriders, dominated. It was a huge, rather squat, lump of rock, inelegant but not without a certain massive beauty. The Cho Oyu and Gyachang Kang group showed us their south and west faces. Makalu, yellowed by distance, alone remained elegant. These mountains stood out boldly from the other peaks we had been among, Amadablam and Taweche with hundreds of others unnamed. To the north the brown plains of Tibet stretched into "vast eternity."

We decided next day to go and have a look, with Angtarkay, at our original pass, while the rest of the Sherpas made a dump of food at its foot. We started early and made quick progress up the lateral moraine and struck out onto the glacier—passing on the way a pile of dead locusts. There was, higher up, a small ice fall which we avoided on the right and then soon we were at the foot of the pass. We climbed steadily up the lower rocky and rather loose portion and then up to a more firm rock rib. This petered out below the top and we decided to traverse over some fairly steep snow to the lowest part of the col. I cut steps for the last 200-300 feet and it was very exciting as I rose steadily to discover what we were going to come up against. Would it be a steep ice fall or rock face—down which we should have to abseil? or would it be a gentle snow slope? above all would we see the bare plains of Tibet or another glacier basin? or even the inside of a cloud?

I came onto a large snow plateau, which was quite unexpected, and immediately saw a very fine solitary peak due west of me. We walked over the plateau, an exhausting business because of the snow, and climbed a small bump at its farthest end. Below us a glacier ran southwards, its origin this snow plateau and another lower snowfield farther west. This was odd as any glacier here we expected to run north into Tibet. In

addition there was no obvious break in the mountains curving south and west from our col. We came down and decided to cross out into the unknown basin tomorrow.

Once again we started early and taking all the Sherpas made a dump on the col. This would be collected by Tom and Bill who were following us. Eric and I continued with Sen Tensing (nicknamed the Foreign Sportsman by previous Everest Expeditions). We were carrying between 40 and 50 lb. and Sen Tensing about 70 lb.; in all, a week's food and the relevant equipment. We made our way down a fairly easy ice fall and then followed the glacier, whose scale we soon found we had under-estimated. It took us a long time before we got to a lateral moraine which turned out to be pure purgatory. Just before we joined the moraine we came across the tracks about which there was so much comment in the newspapers. My own feelings in the matter were that it was a jolly good excuse to sit down frequently and secondly I rather hoped they might belong to an Abominable Snow-woman.

We camped the night on a mixture of ice and sharp stones and the next day set out to elucidate the mystery of the southward flowing glacier which was now beginning to curve west. There were two big peaks, Gaurisankar and our pointed peak, christened Menlungtse, both over 23,000 feet and within seven miles of each other. There was every indication that our glacier would flow between them and therefore we could expect a gorge to intervene. On this assumption we made a further dump and taking only three days' food, set out to explore further.

We solved the problem within an hour. There was no gorge; the glacier terminal gave out onto gravel flats with a quiet stream meandering through them. We camped by the edge of this river and the following day went round to the west and slightly north of Menlungtse. We confirmed that our glacier joined another large one to the north of this mountain and together they formed the main waters of the Menlung, which itself flowed into the Rongsha. We thus linked up with the 1921 Reconnaissance which explored the Rongsha from Tibet. We also came to the conclusion that Gaurisankar must be the rather undefined peak forming part of the southern rim of our basin.

There were still several problems to solve, most important of

which was whether we could cross the main Himalayan chain again and enter the Rolwaling valley to the south ?

We, next day, climbed to a pass on the rim, this involved a certain amount of snow drudgery. It seems to be a peculiarity of autumn snow in the Himalayas that anything facing south can be consolidated by kicking, whilst north facing snow remains powdery. This was marked on the snow plateau and was even more marked on our climb today. There were two traverses, especially, that seemed dangerous ; however, they did not avalanche. After rather less toil than we imagined, we stood overlooking the Rolwaling valley. It lay 7,000 feet below us—a green trough between mountains. Both sides were very steep—a long line of cliffs 500-1,000 feet high ran along the north side and though we could get down from the pass through an ice fall, there was no guarantee we could descend these cliffs.

We returned to camp passing on our way a small lake with a fine tracing of ice on its still surface. Throughout the day Menlungtse stood out boldly and we admired its south face, a wall of palest granite surmounting incredibly steep ice slopes. From all angles it is a lovely peak. At our camp we found Tom and Bill with the rest of the Sherpas, and we decided, much to my regret, to continue down the Menlung. This we did, passing through some beautiful and awe-inspiring gorges before we got to the gentle foothills and finally to Katmandu.

SOME CLIMBS IN THE ROCKIES

N. E. ODELL

IT is amazing how a well-sited highway can open up formerly inaccessible mountains. Before the Lake Louise-Jasper Road was completed in the early years of the second war, it was only by means of pack-train that one could reach the grand mountains in the neighbourhood of the Columbia icefield, and that was much too expensive for most people. Now, from Banff to Jasper one can cover 180 miles of splendid highway, with a panorama throughout of some of Canada's finest mountains. It is certainly one of the most beautiful mountain roads I have seen anywhere in any country.

In 1947, on our return from the exploration of the Lloyd George mountains, some of us made full use of this road for some new ascents, and for attempts on other peaks. For instance, Frank Smythe and I were anxious to make the second ascent of Mount Alberta (11,874 feet), which is situated about 10 miles north of the Columbia icefield. Only one ascent had ever been made of this notorious mountain, and that was as long ago as 1925 by a Japanese party of six climbers led by three Swiss guides. They had spent as much as 32 hours on the mountain, and had all sorts of difficulties apart from a long pack-train journey from Jasper. We motored comfortably to Diadem Creek on the Sunwapta River, established our base-camp in a beautiful spot above timberline, below Mt. Woolley, and crossed a small pass to the foot of the towering south wall of Mt. Alberta. However, we were out of luck, for the weather was bad and the snow-covered rocks in dangerous condition. We had to give it up. But we did make one or two interesting first ascents of other peaks above our base-camp. One, which shows up well from the highway in the Sunwapta valley, I called "Mt. Mushroom," on account of the curious shape of its summit. Incidentally, the second ascent of Mt. Alberta was successfully carried out by two American climbers in the summer of 1948; they had a pretty hard time on it and found the famous iceaxe on the summit left there by the Japanese. A legend had grown

up that it was of gold given by the Emperor of Japan. Actually it is just an ordinary good Swiss axe.

On another occasion in 1947 we motored one morning from Jasper down the highway to a point beyond the twenty-seventh mile-post. From there a party of five of us struck eastwards up through the bush, and emerged on the steep broken face of a summit lying south-east of Mt. Kerkeslin, which you can find on the Jasper Park map (three miles to the inch). Kerkeslin had been climbed, but our objective had not. The first part was easy enough, but the upper rocks involved the negotiation of a 100-foot "chimney" of rotten rock, and then a grand stretch of rough and tough limestone which landed us on the virgin summit at about 9,200 feet. We felt justified in regarding it as virgin, since there was no cairn, or other record of previous visitors; nor had the mountain a name. A cold, unpleasant wind got up before we left the summit, which suggested we might name it "Windy Castle." This will have to be approved of course, by the Canadian Board on Geographical Names at Ottawa. Our descent was uneventful, and we got back to Jasper, happy to have pioneered one more of Canada's grand mountains.

Two of the very best purely rock peaks I know are Mt. Louis, near Banff, and Mt. Colin, in the vicinity of Jasper. I have made two ascents of Mt. Louis which is 8,800 feet, and at one time had the reputation of being the hardest climb in Canada. The first ascent of it I made in 1930 with Lady Rosemary Baring and Colin Crawford. Owing to thick fog in the early morning it was impossible to identify the base of the actual peak, which rises up abruptly in immense ribbed precipices, like giant organ pipes since the rock strata have been pushed up on end. Few had previously made the climb and we didn't know what their route was. So we started up the precipices when the fog cleared, and soon found ourselves tackling a series of extremely steep cliffs and ribs and cracks, which called for all our best style as learnt on British rock-climbs. The rock was mostly sound on this variant (as it transpired) of the earlier ascents, and the situations impressive in the extreme. Eventually we reached the great cleft, or chimney, which cuts the actual summit. This is practically vertical and 450 feet high, and we could only climb it by wedging the body in and wriggling up by means of arms and knees. It is pretty hard work, and one is apt to lose skin and

sometimes clothing. Our rest on the summit was so enjoyable and the views all round so grand that we delayed starting down. The result was that we were caught by darkness before we were off the steep cliffs, and we had to find a ledge large enough to sit on all night. It was a chilly proceeding as we huddled together all night trying to stave off the cold ; but by way of entertainment, or distraction, Nature provided us with a magnificent display of the Northern Lights.

In the morning, rather stiff, we started down, and by the time we were off the lowest rocks we had so warmed up as to be fairly sweltering down through the woods. Later, we met a horseman complete with lasso, who had been sent up by our anxious friends at Banff to search for us and, presumably, rescue us if necessary by lasso.

My second adventure on Mt. Louis was in September, 1947, with Frank Smythe when again owing to various contingencies we arrived late at the foot of the peak. It was a wild stormy morning, and I have a dramatic photographic record of the great tower of rock with shafts of light striking through the torn shreds of clouds on to the gaunt upper precipices. We started up the rocks on the sheltered S.E. side and for a time all went well until stretches of loose rotten rock, and difficult corners, slowed us down. On reaching the final upper chimney, so great was the wind that harmonics and disharmonics of sound were given off by the rocks, and loose pebbles were being showered down the chimney on to our heads. We waited a bit and then made a dash for it, hoping our hats would give sufficient protection for our heads. Arrived on the airy summit, we sat down in the shelter of a rock, and noticed that a storm of hail was approaching. Smythe then remarked that the silver paper on his chocolate was frizzling. On standing up I felt a shock and my hair at once stood on end. An electric storm was brewing, and we were already charged up. It was no place to linger. So down the chimney we slid at a considerably faster pace than we had climbed up it ; and then it started to pour with hail and sleet. This was more than trying, since we had left our nailed boots at the foot of the mountain and were climbing in rubber shoes, excellent footwear for steep smooth rock, so long as it is dry. We had to be most careful, with the rocks now wet and icy. Yet it was a race with the oncoming dusk, for neither of us



relished one little bit the idea of sitting out all night under these conditions. Eventually, in the gathering gloom, and thoroughly wet, we had to find a way down the lower cliffs. We tried fixing our rope and sliding down it to hasten matters, but there were few places available to fix it. However, at last we were down just as the light failed, at close on 9 p.m. Our trek in darkness, with an all-but-spent torch, through the sopping bush and forest, to the Bow valley and Banff, was the last phase of an 18 hours' day : somewhat exacting, perhaps, but full of interest and adventure, and therefore well worth while.

NO. 6 GULLY ON AONACH DUBH OF GLENCOE (West Face)

D. H. MONRO

THE morning of the 30th day of March, 1951, found Peter Drummond Smith and myself ambling aimlessly past the Lochan near the Clachaig Inn. It was damp but fresh beneath the birch trees, and above the sun was sometimes visible through a thin veil of cloud, as if the weather was unable to make up its mind to be either definitely bad or emphatically good.

We had some notion that we might visit Stob Corrie nan Beith, but having no particular plans in mind we took our time about things. We wound our way slowly up the stone strewn path and halted at the point where it rounded a bluff to give us a view into the corrie. Silent meditation seemed the keynote of the moment ; I was, therefore, surprised suddenly to be offered a piece of chocolate, and the subtlety of this opening escaped me for a while.

“ I’ve been thinking,” said Peter.

“ That’s fatal.”

“ According to the guide-book nearly all the gullies on that face of Aonach Dubh are unclimbed.”

The thought that he might suggest that we should now remedy this defect filled me with horror.

“ In summer,” he proceeded, “ the rocks may present some difficulty, but in winter they’ll be iced up so we can cut steps up ’em.”

While his logic seemed unexceptionable, I remained to be convinced of the practicability of his suggestions. We turned our spyglass on No. 6 Gully, which, according to the guide-book, begins with two long waterslide pitches, apparently holdless. Peter’s proposals I found, were not quite so preposterous as at first they seemed, indeed we soon dismissed the first three pitches as climbable. The fourth and last, however, appeared to be steeper and higher, and the top section looked rather forbidding. The eye of faith, however, detected a whitish streak

in the corner near the top, which, the eye of faith insisted, was probably snow lying on the ice, thereby proving it to be not as steep as it looked, so we decided forthwith to make a closer acquaintance of the gully.

The two initial pitches were in fact iced and both were divided from the snow cones which abutted against their lower portions by deep bergshrunds. I crossed the first of these and set about the ice slope. I was rather alarmed at first by the fact that everywhere the ice seemed to be separated from the rocks by a cushion of water squirming with black bubbles ; but as the ice was quite thick and seemed solid I took heart and hewed lustily for half an hour which brought me to the top. We gathered in the rope and made our way up to the next 'schrund. This was both deeper and steeper, indeed the rocks opposite the lip were overhanging and covered only with the thinnest veneer of ice. The rock beneath this appeared perfectly smooth, and unless a crack or some other weakness exists in the corner of the gully, I doubt whether a summer ascent of this pitch is possible. Smith entrusted himself to a tongue of snow that curled up past the overhangs enabling him to gain some rotten but not very steep ice above. The snow above this pitch was steeper than that lower down and the recollections of the last 'schrund encouraged us to ascend it with more care than we had used previously. The third ice pitch was neither steep nor long but a glimpse of the fourth above it decided us to turn it, since this was clearly possible. The puritanical Smith was a little reluctant to relinquish the idea of my cutting steps up it, nevertheless with only mild protest, committed himself to the frozen moss on the left. This was a little more difficult than we thought it would be, owing to the remarkable ease with which frozen moss disintegrates when stood upon.

One glance at the final pitch towering above us convinced us that lunch was now the order of the day. We noticed that, in the event of the pitch proving impassable, it might be possible to force an escape below it, either to the right or to the left ; though whither these "escapes" led was known only to the Divine Providence.

During lunch a very few, very small, snowflakes fell and the sky darkened, the air was still and oppressive, the view uninspiring, and the gully, I thought, both difficult and unpleasant.

Indeed a recent writer* has written : “ . . . there is little of the comfortable or inspiring between the damp walls of an English gully.” I thought at the time he might well have extended his sentence to include the foreign parts farther to the north.

After lunch we turned our attention to the final wall, now seen to be 150 feet high. Half an hour brought us to a ledge 60 feet up on the left wall of the gully. As there was no belay here the use of a piton was deemed not only necessary, but also in the best mountaineering tradition.

To our right the ice walls rose in vertical tiers to the skyline and to the left the overhanging wall of the gully closed in on us ; in the corner between and, as it were, leaning against it was a square cut and flat topped column, the lower part of which was somewhat broken up. I chipped some of the ice off this and climbed up a few feet. In front of me and to the right a rib dropped away from the top of the column. The flank facing me was very steep and only sheathed in half an inch of ice. I tried to ascend the corner between the tower and the left-hand gully wall, but soon found myself crowded out by the overhanging wall. I spied a thicker piece of ice on the edge of the rib lower down, and, stretching across, was able to cut a platform on it. It was a long way away and did not look especially sound when I had finished it, so I returned to the overhangs but these proved hopeless. So, putting my heart in my mouth and my trust in Smith's ropecraft, I transferred my weight across the wide gap onto the doubtful step. This somewhat tricky move performed, I cut steps partly on the main ice wall and partly on the column's flank. The ice was inclined to be thin and my axe frequently went through onto the rocks, in consequence some of the steps were narrow and awkwardly placed. I reached the top of the tower in safety, however, and Smith photographed me on this perch. From here the ice wall rose with relentless verticality before me. The “ snow lying on the ice ” which had encouraged us from below, proved to be merely some rotten and peculiarly offensive looking ice stuck in the corner of the gully. From my spacious platform I cut steps up the wall as far as I could reach, then ascended the wall cutting steps with one hand only and pouring blessings on the head of him who first advised me to

* C. D. Milner in “ Rocks for Climbing.”

shorten my ice axe to its present ridiculous proportions. (It measures but two feet from spike to blade.)

The thinness of the ice and the excessive steepness of the last 10 feet of the wall forced me into the corner filled with rotten ice, which was here less steep and seemed broken up beneath the crumbling crust of ice. The removal of some of this crust, quite near the top of the pitch, proved to be a very difficult operation. The corner consists of a rent about six inches wide and a foot deep, and in the back of it was a hold protected by an icicle. In order to cut through this I could, if I choose, hold the axe in my left hand and cling with my right to a very small hold cut in the thin ice above me, in this attitude I could not look to see what I was doing without losing my balance. Alternatively, I could obtain purchase on the thinly glazed left-hand gully wall by allowing the glove on my left hand to freeze to it, and, leaning across in my steps, scratch at the icicle with my axe held in my right hand. Finally by alternating these procedures I cut through it, but my arms were by then aching with the strain. From here, by the mercy of the patron saint of mountaineers, the difficulty abated and a few more easily hewn steps enabled me to reach an almost level ice platform at the top of the pitch. I went a few yards further and drove my axe in firm snow for a belay.

Smith gleefully extracted the piton with his ice axe, whereafter I took the rope in steadily for a while. When the rope stopped coming in, a few mumblings, of doubtful character, indicated that he had reached the long step. Some scraping noises and further human noises followed, and once again I took in the rope. He climbed the last section with such remarkable alacrity that I was somewhat disappointed when a balaclava appeared without the customary peaceful pipe projecting from its side.

The succeeding snow slope led to a miniature amphitheatre from which several escapes were possible, including a 25-foot ice pitch straight ahead of us, in case we had not had our fill of ice climbing. We dismissed the snow slope on our left as too easy and left the basin by an intriguing cleft on the extreme right. This turned out to be interesting, though very easy, for some 60 feet whereafter it turned into a singularly vile slope of frozen grass and moss, powdered with loose snow. This had a bad influence on me, and when I rejoined Smith for some light

refreshment I was quite as depressed as I had been during lunch.

From this spacious grass ledge the Clachaig Inn could be seen, and it was unanimously decided that the distance between it and us should be drastically reduced, and that right early.

Before we could traverse to slopes suitable for glissading we had to climb a further 300-odd feet on firm snow. For this we shortened the rope and moved together, Smith leading and cutting steps with one slash of his axe. I, being somewhat tired and depressed, consoled myself by remembering that it was at such times, when traversing easy ground after the fatigues of a hard climb, that climbing accidents are most likely to happen. Indeed, several times, when we changed direction in order to make a zig-zag, I asked Smith to stop while I carefully re-arranged the rope and transferred my axe from one hand to the other, a lamentable performance which would have elicited both anger and scorn from a less tolerant alpinist. However, we survived the various perils and, after some more or less elegant glissading (rather less than more in my case) sped down the path toward the ultimate goal of all right thinking visitors to Glencoe, the public bar of the Clachaig Inn.

DINAS MOT

H. A. CARSTEN

NOW that a comprehensive guide-book to the climbs around the Pass of Llanberis has appeared, it is perhaps opportune to reflect upon the history of Dinas Mot which, together with Dinas Cromlech, so prominently guards the approach to Pen-y-pass.

“Who Mot was and why he chose this cliff for his fortress, no one knows. Even if he was not the conqueror of some of the watery courses on the crag, the credit of their conquest may as well be given to him for they have long been known to climbers and their early history is somewhat obscure.” So wrote H. R. C. Carr in his *Climbers' Guide to Snowdon*.

There can be no doubt, however, that J. M. Archer Thomson played a leading part in early explorations on Dinas Mot. Its finest gully, the Black Cleft, did not escape his attention and was duly conquered as early as 1897: one of Thomson's first major discoveries and probably harder than any other Welsh route known at that time with the exception of East Gully on Glyder Fach.

A strong Climbers' Club party gathered at Easter, 1901, for a frontal attack on Dinas Mot. They climbed both Eastern and Western gullies, only to discover that others had preceded. A cairn already marked the top of the Nose. Two of them pushed on and succeeded in gaining the gently sloping north ridge of Crib Goch.

However, this modest success on an open face was not followed up. The Gully Epoch had attained its height, and the buttresses of Dinas Mot with their overhangs and steep herbage were of little interest compared with the savage chasms that were being explored elsewhere in Snowdonia. For two decades developments remained at a standstill. When Carr's guide appeared in 1926, merely the five gullies were known apart from the finish above the Nose and an excursion to the left of Jammed Boulder Gully. “The Nose of Dinas Mot consists of 200 feet of clean and depressingly steep rock. There is no

record of a direct ascent." G. D. Abraham "ventures to suggest that it is no place on which to attempt to make history. Dinas Mot hides its more ambitious climbs on its westerly front."

In 1930, the general wave of advance in rock climbing technique suddenly swept across the Nose of Dinas Mot. First, the Bathursts edged their way up the Cracks on the left with the aid of three pegs and a top rope. Almost simultaneously, Colin Kirkus attacked boldly, right in the centre. At two-thirds of the height he broke away, but returned to the scene three months later to complete his famous Nose Direct, which has held its reputation as one of the finest routes in Wales despite modern advances on du'r Arddu and elsewhere. Western Slabs and West Rib fell in quick succession to Menlove Edwards and Kirkus respectively. Edwards proceeded to clean up parts of the Nose as well as the main cliff and thereby found the exhilarating traverse of Slow Ledge. The sheer and smooth features of the Nose ceased to be regarded as obstacles and became the specialist's paradise. In 1938, Birtwistle added his Diagonal Route. Yet this and earlier climbs remained relatively unknown and the rest of Dinas Mot was considered no match to more impressive crags on the other side of the valley.

Thus, apart from a slight touch by John Barford's spirit of exploration, Dinas Mot received little attention for almost a decade until the inevitable and somewhat regrettable scrutiny of modern guide-book survey brought to light a few hitherto overlooked weaknesses of relatively minor importance.

And now that the rocks have been explored and all weaknesses duly recorded, that perfection of technique leaves nothing inaccessible, why the guide? The accomplished climber may well leave his little book behind and roam the crags at liberty.

CHALK—A MINIATURE ANTHOLOGY

E. C. PYATT

I HAVE collected within the next few pages a series of extracts from climbing literature which illustrate the development and decline of chalk climbing in this country. The story is a curious one. In the earliest days of the sport chalk was used for practice for alpine mountaineering. It is soft enough to enable steps to be cut in places, and steep enough to require them, yet its main disadvantages from our present point of view—the friable rock and the lack of belays—are the special requirements of the rock climber and were not of such importance to the early alpinist. This use of our chalk cliffs, therefore, was a parallel development to that of our high mountains for the same purpose. Many well-known mountaineers were also chalk climbers and they were not afraid to describe their adventures on it. Though they sometimes left their ice axes behind they were still thinking in terms of the Alps. By the 1890's actual routes were being recorded on the cliffs near Eastbourne.

It was only with the continued and rapid development of mountain rock climbing that the requirements of safeguarding moving climbers and of soundness of rock became established and these chalk could never fulfil. In consequence, this branch of the sport seemed to die out and little more has been heard of it since. At any rate nothing has got as far as print, for all subsequent accounts merely refer back to the heyday of the 1890's.

It seems clear enough why this lack of interest should have lasted for so many years, as there was plenty to do everywhere else on far sounder rock in the new sport of rock climbing. It is only now, much later, that we can once again see chalk in the distance. The pre-occupation with sound rock, apart from scattered episodes on mountain limestone, lasted till the 1930's, when the "new Welsh school" arose. The ultimate end of their professed and practised aims, if pursued far enough, could lead

back to chalk once again, now the logical final stage of a development of mountain rock climbing instead of the side-line development of alpine mountaineering that it used to be. However, this unhappy conclusion is still far off and may never be reached ; indeed the very latest tendency seems to be towards even higher standards on the more reliable rocks.

Considered as rock climbing, chalk will undoubtedly be very dangerous and will require highly developed safeguarding tactics and particularly thoughtful distributions of limbs and of holds. It will no longer be possible to separate danger from difficulty, at present one of the most established traditions of British climbing. It will need to be done, particularly near Beachy Head, not at the best time of day and season of the year, but when there are no crowds at the top to complicate the problems. It will be as finely situated as climbing anywhere.

The above generalities deal with the sea-cliff aspect. The climber who has a quarry close to his home will certainly try it at least once whatever the rock. Much miscellaneous climbing of chalk must have taken place under these circumstances, without any record being left of the doing.

Almost Prehistory, 1858. "The Hampshire chalk-pits gave fine opportunities for breaking one's neck, and the chalk cliffs of Swanage, Scratchells Bay, and Beachy Head provided me with quite sensational risks. There are bits on all these places as dangerous as anything in the Alps. To glissade down a steep, hard, chalk-slope is not easy, and steps cut in the treacherous, crumbly material are not too reliable. I didn't kill myself, but I had some very close escapes." (J. Stogdon—*A.J.*, May, 1916.)

Off to the Alps, 1860. "As we steamed out into the Channel, Beachy Head came into view, and recalled a scramble of many years ago. With the impudence of ignorance, my brother and I, schoolboys both, had tried to scale that great chalk cliff. Not the head itself—where sea-birds circle, and where the flints are arranged in orderly parallel lines—but at a place more to the east, where a pinnacle called the Devil's Chimney had fallen down. Since then we have been often in dangers of different kinds, but never have we more nearly broken our necks than upon that occasion." (Edward Whymper—*Scrambles in the Alps*.)

A Sticky Paste. "... the white cliffs of Old England have

proved themselves too much for many of her sons. Chalk is a very troublesome material to climb ; it is loose, breaks away, and if wet, either with rain or the draining of the land above, forms a sticky paste, which, lodging between the boot nails, renders them of little use. Doubtless many of those who get into difficulties are only shod for a walk on the promenade or pier, but chalk cliffs must not be treated carelessly even by the well equipped. " (Charles Pilkington—*Mountaineering*, Badminton Library.)

Traverses. " Though chalk can hardly be regarded as a good rock for climbing, much excellent practice can be obtained on it. As a general rule, it is only sufficiently solid for real climbing for the first 20 feet above high-water mark, though here and there 40 feet of fairly trustworthy rock may be found. These sections of hard chalk are invariably those which at their base are washed by the sea at high tide ; all others are soft and crumbly.

Whilst any considerable ascent, other than up the extremely steep slopes of grass, which sometimes clothe the gullies and faces, is out of the question, traverses of great interest and no slight difficulty are frequently possible for considerable distances. A good *objectif* may be found in the endeavour to work out a route to the various small beaches that are cut off from the outer world by the high tide and cliffs. The best instances of this sort of work are to be found along the coast to the eastward of Dover. Between the ledges by which these traverses are effected and the beach below are some of the hardest *mauvais pas* with which I am acquainted." (A. F. Mummery—*Rock Climbing in the British Isles—England*.)

Etheldreda's Pinnacle. " Directly I saw this magnificent pyramid I determined to climb it at once. Two chimneys, side by side, and since named Castor and Pollux, presented the most obvious route to the ridge joining the pinnacle with the mass of the cliff. The north one (Castor) looked easy, though it was almost entirely filled with chalk dust of the consistency of fine flour, caked on the top, and having blocks of various sizes in the middle. All this, at the touch, came down, and the whole weight jammed on my legs, which were well into the chimney. A convulsive series of amoeboid movements enabled me to get out over the debris, when it immediately thundered down, leaving

me in a very comfortable gap. I was soon over the jammed stone and on to the ridge. My friend refused to follow, but as he was roped I put on sudden pressure, and he—well—changed his mind. When he reached the ridge I went on for the north face. This has several natural steps, but the first two yards required a few gentle touches with the magic wand, the chalk being very hard. Thence the route lay westwards to the north-west corner and then back again to the shoulder, only one step being at all awkward. The summit consists of a big square block, which rocked and swayed under me as I sat down upon it." (E. A. Crowley—*S.M.C. Journal*, May, 1895.)

Very Careful Climbers. "Chalk is extremely rotten and treacherous, very considerable masses coming away occasionally with a comparatively slight pull. In any place where a slip is not desirable, it is unwise to depend exclusively on a single hold, as even the hardest and firmest knobs, that have stood the test of years, give way suddenly without any apparent reason. The flints embedded in the chalk are similarly untrustworthy; in fact, if they project more than an inch or so, they are, as a rule, insecure. The surface of the chalk is smooth and slimy if wet, dusty if dry, and does not afford the excellent hold obtained on granite. As a whole it may be regarded as a treacherous and difficult medium, and one which is likely to lead those practising on it to be very careful climbers." (A. F. Mummery, *ibid.*)

Cuillin Crack. "This chimney is nearly 200 feet high, and affords the finest and most difficult piece of climbing that I have yet found in the whole neighbourhood. It is broken at two places, one near the bottom, and the other about 100 feet higher up. The first break presents terrible difficulty, but after incredible exertion it yielded, and then I got a leg and an arm jammed, and managed to wriggle up about 60 feet higher. At this point the rope and my strength were alike exhausted, some four hours, without any sort of rest, having already passed. Foothold and handhold there were none that could be relied upon to support Grant's additional weight, if any pressure were to be put on the rope. There was nothing for it but to let down a rope from above, or to descend with ignominy and much toil. So Grant sped away to invoke the assistance of the coastguard, and meanwhile I sat wedged in a most uncomfortable position, at the bottom of the second break, up to which I had struggled

while waiting Grant's return. And so presently a rope was let down from above. . . ." (E. A. Crowley, *ibid.*)

The Devil's Chimney—4th July, 1894. "We walked along the top of the cliffs till we reached the descent to Pisgah, on which my friend fixed himself, while I descended the rotten ridge that leads to Jordan. Above and beyond rises Few Chimney, perhaps 20 feet high, affording what seemed the only possible access to the Tooth. By dint of much squirming and the judicious use of such pressure holds as were available, I succeeded in reaching the top, to find myself on the top of the block forming the eastern wall of the chimney, while the summit of the Tooth still towered above me in all its rottenness. Both the N. and the E. faces were coated with loose layers of chalk, which came away with a single touch, but the E. had the advantage of being less vertical. After much belabouring of it with my axe I succeeded in reducing it to a condition of comparative stability, and by dint of a few steps and hitching the rope over the top managed to struggle to the summit. The laborious nature of the climbing is evidenced by the fact that two hours and more were required to overcome a vertical height of only 30 feet. After carefully reconnoitring the Needle, which lay beyond, and pronouncing it impossible, I rejoined my friend on Pisgah." (E. A. Crowley, *ibid.*)

The Devil's Chimney—11th July, 1894. "After lunch at the Beachy Head Hotel, we followed the usual high-level route to Pisgah, and then proceeded to do the Tooth as before, of course in much less time than on the first ascent. On this Grant 'fixed himself'—a humorous term we sometimes employ—and I went down the ridge into the Gash, 'fixed myself,' and began my steps. The chalk is much firmer than on the Tooth, but the N. face is, if not undercut, at least vertical, the W. overhangs, and the E. is about 70° if not more. On the N.E. corner, therefore, three steps were cut, going as high as possible to save subsequent work. Five times I tried to cross the Gash, but with no decent handhold it is hardly to be expected that one can pull one's self up to a vertical wall. One chance, however remained. I scooped a hole out in the E. face, inserted my chin and hauled. I had not shaved for a day or two, so was practically enjoying the advantages of Mummery spikes. The extra steadiness proved sufficient, and I came up into a position of the most ticklish balance conceivable, but the next step was easier, and

from it I managed to hitch the rope well over. Soon I was able to get my hands on the ridge ; my right leg followed, then the rest of my body, and the Needle was conquered. However, as it is not ' built for two,' Grant, much to his disappointment, had to stay on the Tooth, and console himself by hoisting the Union Jack, which we left to wave triumphantly over the scene of our victory." (E. A. Crowley, *ibid.*)

Coastguard Duties. " Beachy Head is a very fine bold chalk cliff, the first ascent of which is made about once in every two years, if we may believe what we see in the papers. The truth is that there is a treacherous incline of some 600 feet, formed of chalk and grass, both very steep and often dangerously slippery ; and during the Eastbourne season the coastguards at the top find their principal occupation in supplying mechanical assistance to exhausted clamberers ; but for difficulty these cliffs will not for a moment compare with those of half the height which carry on the line westwards to Birling Gap. The tops of these in many places literally overhang the sea, and there are few points where a climber could make the slightest impression upon them." (W. P. Haskett-Smith. *Climbing in the British Isles—England.*)

Our Playground of the South. " It may be that Mr. Haskett-Smith did not mean his note to be taken too seriously. Beachy Head can be ascended by a gentle slope from the sea to the summit in season and out of season by a child. The true climbing section of the cliff is a quarter of a mile beyond the summit and the coastguard station ; and here the height is nearer 500 than 600 feet. Even here, however, the joke as to first ascents is superfluous, for the scramble from the shore by the easiest route is done constantly ; and this winter an idiotic cyclist carried up his machine on his back. A second route, suitable for ladies with fairly steady heads, joins Etheldreda's Walk, and reaches the top of the cliff by an easy gully, well sheltered by a fine buttress. Beside these main highways there are at least four more or less trying variations, needing the rope in three of them. Comparisons are always odious, but that which Mr. Haskett-Smith draws between Beachy Head and Birling Gap is a slight on our playground of the south. There is no point between these places at which anyone not equipped with a balloon could ascend the cliff." (H. Somerset Bullock—*C.C.ŷ.*, August, 1898.)

Fashion Note. " The worshipper, who seeks to penetrate the

shrine of this spotless deity, must face the infidel fashion of Eastbourne and be scorned for a miller or a baker." (E. A. Crowley, *ibid.*)

An Easy Day for a Lady. "If Fox Chimney, which has a superabundance of loose chalk boulders, be deemed too treacherous, the Split Block may be climbed by a narrow crack on the western side, or at the back from the passage between the main cliff and the pinnacle; this latter gives an excellent piece of practice for ladies. In Fox Chimney care should be taken to climb by back and boot work only, the holds being insecure. For the narrow crack the only warning necessary is to avoid, if possible, leaving parts of your garments on its jagged wall." (H. Somerset Bullock, *ibid.*)

Rambles and Scrambles. "I confess I tremble every publishing season lest some handbook appear to the climbs on the chalk cliffs, and some profaning pen enumerate and detail all my own pet rambles and scrambles on Beachy Head, where the foxes used to lie or run sure-footedly. . . ." (F. W. Bourdillon—*A.J.*, February, 1917.)

Authority. "Chalk, and the methods of dealing with it, form a study by themselves. Chalk climbing provides the missing link between rock and ice technique. Those who frequent its cliffs use big claws and ice methods, and pronounce it to be an unrivalled training for ice work. Its occasional hard surface and its abundant projecting flints, whose security is in inverse ratio to their graspability, have to be treated with the measures of precaution proper to unsound rock." (G. Winthrop Young—*Mountain Craft.*)

Sunset. ". . . the face of this dizzy cliff, dazzling in the sunshine, and even more dangerous in mist or snow, is not for the novice, but it offers rich reward for the practised climber, shod with mountain boots and armed with a stout stick, if not with an ice axe. Once round the base of the first pinnacle, the most magnificent and stupendous of these chalk towers bursts upon his view. To see it to perfection, give me the dying day, when the smouldering glow of sunset fires is behind the tower, silhouetted against the thousand tints of the tapestry of the sky and sea." (A Member of the Alpine Club—*Sussex County Magazine*, November, 1935.)

More Authority. "Chalk should be classed as an earth rather

than a rock, as only the bases constantly washed by the sea are really hard, the upper portions being dangerous when dry and even worse when wet. Beachy Head is the only place where much of this kind of scrambling is practised, and the rescue of exhausted and incompetent climbers is one of the chief duties of the coastguards." (W. P. Haskett-Smith—*Mountaineering*—Lonsdale Library.)

Action by the Alpine Club. "The finest climb is the ascent of the Devil's Chimney from its base to the gap between it and the top of the cliff, and thence from the first tooth to the second. This has never been done in one piece. Messrs. Crowley and Grant climbed it from the gap ; two other parties, including three members of the Alpine Club climbed from the base to the gap and thence to the summit of the cliff. Strangely enough, both the latter parties refused to attempt the final arête, because it was believed that the Pinnacle was likely to collapse into the sea without warning. Yet it is still standing." (A Member of the Alpine Club., *ibid.*)

Quarries in a Rock-less Land. "... within two miles of Cambridge are chalk pits which give a specialized sort of climbing and a very pleasant Sunday afternoon's sport as well. It is climbing in miniature, but within their modest height the climbs contain a surprising variety of problems, and they give on a small scale practice in many departments of mountaineering. It is not mere freak climbing, bouldering on peculiar rock ; indeed, it can teach a good deal in the way of balance technique. Rush and grab methods simply will not work on a rock of extremely variable quality ; for even at its best each hold needs testing, and the climber will do well to maintain as many points of attachment as possible." (E. J. C. Kendall—*Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1934.)

Suspension Slab. "The principal climb is known as Suspension Slab, so called after the predicament of an early explorer on attempting to gain the small slab near the top of the face. The route starts from a cairn, with suitably inscribed plinth, and goes straight up over steep sound chalk for 12 feet ; a rising traverse is now made to the right in the direction of the slab itself. A shallow scoop is gained directly above the slab and for the last 10 feet the angle, which lower down approaches the vertical, eases off to compensate for the growing rottenness of the rock." (E. J. C. Kendall, *ibid.*)

An Exposure Tail-piece. “ Anyone who can gaze unmoved upon the sea from the edge of Beachy Head need have no qualms as to his reactions on the most sensational of Alpine precipices.” (F. S. Smythe—*Mountaineering Holiday*.)

THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF UGANDA

R. M. BERE

MANY members of the Climbers' Club must have been surprised when, a few years ago, a notice appeared in the *Journal* announcing that the Club had entered into reciprocal relations with the Uganda Section of the Mountain Club of East Africa and some indeed may even have felt a wish to know more of this distant and very junior relative.

The Mountain Club of East Africa came into being in 1929 when, thanks chiefly to the energies of N. R. Rice, the Kilimanjaro section was founded in Tanganyika and took over the management of the huts which the Germans had built on the slopes of Africa's highest mountain before 1914. The Kenya section, with headquarters in Nairobi, was added three years later and soon became, as it has remained, the larger and more progressive organisation : it is of more than passing interest to note that the names of P. Wyn Harris, Eric Shipton and H. W. Tilman occur in the list of its original members. It was 14 years, however, before we in Uganda could muster enough enthusiasts to produce the third section, which was formally constituted on the 6th of May, 1946 ; we could then only raise 25 members, but the roll had grown to 40 by the end of that year and to 100 during 1950. But all this is taking us too far from the beginnings of our section and to explain these, I must stray awhile to the Ruwenzori, the mountains in which our greatest interest and opportunities lie.

In May and June of 1945, P. H. Hicks, who had made the first ascent of the difficult north face of Mount Kenya during the previous year, R. G. Ladkin and I spent rather more than three weeks in the range, a considerable proportion of our time, as of almost everyone else before us, being occupied in sheltering from the rain and mist in the cold damp recesses of the "Cooking-Pot" cave, above Lake Bujuku, at an altitude of about 13,000 feet. After establishing our base in this cave we spent a few

days making, from a high bivouac, an unsuccessful attempt at the unclimbed north-east ridge of the Margherita peak (16,794 feet) of Mount Stanley, the highest point in the range and then we climbed Speke (16,080 feet), directly from "Cooking-Pot," using a new route up the main glacier. Having the rare good fortune of a day of almost continuous sunshine, we felt sufficiently encouraged to make another attempt at Margherita itself and accordingly, as we had decided to abandon the north-east ridge route, we moved up to the bivouac site near the Elena glacier. The next day was typical of what so many people have had to put up with in these mountains ; the morning never really cleared properly and thick fog descended early so that we failed even to find the correct way to the Stanley Plateau, the great ice plain from which the peaks arise, admitting defeat only after several hours had been spent clambering about in a confused system of rock ridges and crevassed glacier, covered with snow ready to avalanche. That evening there was a heavy fall of snow and a fierce thunder storm that continued throughout the night, making us thoroughly uncomfortable and hastening our decision to move to another part of the range, where we wanted to do some mapping and in which we had planned to attempt the first ascent of the highest of the Portal peaks (14,640 feet). We climbed our peak and Hicks did some valuable survey work, the major portion of which he was able to complete in a later expedition ; after this we returned to "Cooking-Pot" and moved up to our bivouac for a final try at Margherita : this time we were successful. We made a 4 a.m. start and as a result reached the Stanley Plateau before the great banks of cumulus clouds that we had been anxiously watching as, even at this early hour, they rolled up from the lower Bujuku valley. But we did get there first and in the grey light of dawn saw the twin peaks clearly so that the most promising route could be picked out without overmuch difficulty. We hurried across the plateau and after a short rest cut steps down into the deep gully between Alexandra and Margherita, climbing out of this into the tangle of crevasses at the base of the higher peak. After negotiating these we kicked and cut our way up snow at a high angle and scrambled over the cornice onto the final ridge, expecting that we should be able to walk easily to the top. But this was not to be, for the summit was guarded by an immense cornice that would not yield to a

frontal attack, forcing us to traverse across a dangerous slope of wet wind-blown snow overlying steep ice towards a rock rib that gave access to the top from the reverse direction. We were in thick fog by this time and it was, in fact, not without difficulty that we found our small tents in the evening after descending by the same route. This was the first ascent since Robin Hodgkin climbed Margherita in 1941 and it has been climbed once since, by Ashley Greenwood and R. Menzies in 1950.

But we have digressed overmuch from "Cooking-Pot" cave to which in the course of our meanderings we had frequently to return and where we had to try as best we could to dry wet clothes and generally regather our forces for fresh efforts higher up. It is under such circumstances that conversation turns most readily to the pleasures of hut life and after our second rebuff on Mount Stanley we almost decided to give up climbing altogether and see if we could put Hicks' skill as an engineer to the practical test of producing a hut from the entirely improbable local material. We did not do this but we did realise that the best starting point from which our objective could be achieved would be to form a Club, collect some money and get to work ; this we determined to do as soon as possible after our return to civilisation. So, in reality, was the Uganda section born, for we began at once to circularise those of our friends we knew to have an interest in mountains and to write letters to the local papers bringing the idea to the notice of as many likely people as possible. The response was sufficient to get the section started.

Ashley Greenwood came out to Uganda a few weeks after the section had been formed, joined us the day after his arrival and was at once co-opted onto our Committee. Either he or Ladkin has been Secretary ever since and as I, having been the convenor of the original meeting, was the President from the date of formation until 1951, when Ladkin took over, there has been a steady Climbers' Club influence in the management of affairs. Indeed, when it came to drafting rules and later to preparing regulations for our huts, the Club's little blue book was found to be an invaluable source both of information and inspiration and we kept it constantly by our sides. In this way did the Mountain Club of Uganda, as it has subsequently become, come into being and early it showed itself to be a thoroughly healthy infant, bringing together a group of people interested in the hills

from a wide variety of aspects, from climbers to botanists and even those interested in encouraging the business of tourism in East Africa. The President was even consulted by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer when that Company was planning the film, "King Solomon's Mines," and thought that the Ruwenzori might be a suitable venue for some of its scenes. Early we began to organise meets and to introduce to the high hills people who, in a country such as Uganda, could not possibly have found them for themselves ; this is certainly one of the more important functions that any mountain club can undertake.

To organise a club meet in East Africa is by no means as straightforward as doing the same thing in North Wales or Arolla for so much more help has to be given to the members. For example, at the Easter week-end 1948, Greenwood and I took a mixed party of 18 to the Bufumbiro volcanoes on the Belgian Congo border, with the principal objective of climbing Sabinio, a Tryfaen-like mountain of some 12,000 feet with some pleasant but not difficult scrambling on its serrated summit ridge. Three hundred miles of road transport had to be arranged followed by sufficient porters to move the party up to the camping ground about four hours' walk from the place where the cars had to be left : tents had to be provided (and this involved borrowing every known light-weight tent in the country) as well as sleeping bags and even clothing for several of the party and, of course, we had to arrange all the food and make all the feeding arrangements. However, we were sufficiently rewarded, for 12 of us reached the top and the whole party got to the lower eastern peak, whilst on the following day several of us had some excellent scrambling in the main gully of our mountain. Such meets are a little easier now for the Club has bought a good stock of camping and other mountain equipment which can be used on such occasions or, more normally, hired out to members who may wish to organise expeditions of their own. We have found this to be an excellent way of using club funds, providing an invaluable service in a country where such things as ice axes, sleeping bags and tricouni nails are otherwise unobtainable.

All this is taking us a long way from the idea of replacing the horrors of "Cooking-Pot" cave on the Ruwenzori with the comforts of a hut, the idea which perhaps above all others gave us the initial urge to form a club. At the beginning this seemed

to be a very distant goal for we could neither anticipate a large membership nor put the entrance fee and subscription too high if we were not to discourage those people for whom we were most anxious to cater and it seemed that years must elapse before our hut could become anything more than a distant, if delightful, dream. However, planning played a big part in the Colonies immediately after the war and one can plan to develop a mountain just as one can plan to develop almost anything else and we put forward to Government a scheme for the building of huts and the improvement of access generally in the Ruwenzori and our other mountain areas. We suggested that this might ultimately form the basis from which these areas could be converted into National Parks, playing their part in encouraging visitors to Uganda ; we offered to do the work if we were given the funds to do it with. Our optimism was rewarded and thanks to the good sense of our highest authorities, we have for the past three years received £1,000 each year from Government with which we have been able to build and equip a chain of three huts on the Ruwenzori and one on Mount Elgon : we have also the material ready for a " bivouac fixé " at the Elena glacier camping site on Mount Stanley, so that the highest peaks of the fabled Mountains of the Moon can now be reached without camping. Few will regret the passing of the old days on these mountains, where the weather conditions can at times be almost incredibly unpleasant, or think it necessary for anyone who wants to spend a fortnight's mountain holiday in this part of Africa to have to undergo the rigorous conditions of the early explorers. The system of huts, of course, by no means covers the whole range.

We decided to start operations with a hut at Lake Bujuku near the " Cooking-Pot " cave and, as using local materials was out of the question, we were forced to design a structure that could be prefabricated in Kampala, broken down into porters' headloads, transported 250 miles by lorry and carried for five days through some of the least suitable country imaginable for such an undertaking. The hut, as we designed it, consists of a single room 16 feet by 10, with six bunks, a Dover stove with a frame for drying clothes, a fitted bench, folding table, a sufficiency of shelves, and a glass window with wooden shutters at each end. The framework is of wood, with a corrugated aluminium external shell and an interior lining of beaver boarding ; the floor is of

wood and the whole breaks down into about a hundred head-loads, some of them unfortunately awkward to handle. The hut is not beautiful but it is serviceable and carries out most satisfactorily the function for which it is intended, as several people who have used the huts can testify. I, for one, have enjoyed a warm and dry fortnight on the Ruwenzori and an almost luxurious week-end with Greenwood on Mount Elgon, which can now be climbed without porters: the same design has been used for three of our four huts. There is no space in this article to describe the building of this hut or the operation of carrying it up the Bujuku valley but this was a formidable undertaking in which, as a start, upwards of a hundred porters had to be kept on the move and fed for over three weeks. Several members helped, but chief credit goes to Philip Jenkins our Treasurer and to George Oliver, who was one of Dr. Humphreys' companions on the second ascent of the twin peaks in 1926.

These are the most important part of the Club's activities but, in addition, an occasional meeting is held in Kampala or Entebbe, when talks are given and slides shown and we have once shown a rock climbing film, loaned to us for the purpose, by the Kenya Club. We hope, eventually, to find rocks suitable for climbing instruction and practice within reasonable motoring distance of Kampala, where most of our members live, but none of the cliffs so far examined have proved suitable. We do not produce a Journal but take in the Kenya Club's bulletin for our members and some of us manage, at times, to co-operate with an article: this bulletin aims to cover the whole of East Africa. The three sections of the Mountain Club of East Africa had always been, in effect, separate entities and, during 1950, the logical course of liquidating the central organisation, which in fact had never existed, was adopted and the three sections reconstituted themselves as individual clubs with rules allowing for a high degree of reciprocity with each other; we thus became, as we now are, the Mountain Club of Uganda.



INIQUITY ON HIGH

H. COURTNEY BRYSON

“SUZETTE,” I said, sitting on the balcony while the sails of the barges on the Tagus, shimmered like satin in the moonlight and the waves were flecked with the glimmer of pearls, “Full many a time I have been half in love with easeful death and called him by soft names to take into the air my quiet breath ; and although tonight is the hour of poesy, when quotation like peace comes dropping slow, tomorrow we will away to the mountains.”

Suzette snuggled closer. “Climbing,” I continued, “is like love : all reason is against it and all healthy instinct for it ; because the label dangerous is the most alluring advertisement

ever devised. But heed ! love is not love that alters when it alteration finds : so take action in your heart, be careful whom you love, for a lover who dies no matter how forgotten, will take somewhat of you to the grave, but the love of a mountain perisheth never. When a man has once loved a woman he will do anything for her except continue to love her, but when a man has once loved a mountain, he is always in love because the affection is one-sided. It is the only romance that does not leave him unromantic. That is the reason a climber should never marry."

While the rosy finger of dawn in the bowl of night stirred the wet, white river-vapours that lapped Lisbon like cotton-wool, we crept out of the city while the countryside hung out its mists to dry in the morning air : so that presently, under the hot yellow sun, we sped along in the daylight, a column of smoke which slowly settled back again on the sandy road.

At hidden, secret villages by the roadside, with names like Swinburnian sonnets, where we stopped for wine and bread with beans and cheese and then plucked oranges from the trees, Suzette, creamy, exotic and of the orient, excited a comment, occasioned alike by the rarity of strangers and the manner of her comportment.

Emboldened by the whispers of his companions and spurred on by his own curiosity, one urchin, less timid than the rest, put out his hand as if to test the reality of her substance, but I perceiving his intention, for Suzette's interest was directed to the women who were filling their great terra-cotta jars at the fountain, bearing them away on their heads, stepping with regal gait, I, to prevent such *lesè majesté*, quietly put my wrist on the Klaxon button and as his outstretched fingers, bright and brown and clean, tipped her shoulder, a shattering trumpet-blare such as shook the walls of Jericho, made a violent assault on the soft silence of the tiny village street, that the crowd started back in dismay and the impious urchin took screaming to his heels.

Northwards we ran, through Van Gogh tableaux, whorl and hollow and curve, an undulating universe with every symmetrical hummock holding a windmill, while an ambivalent perspective presided, that near seeming far and the distant near, so that reality merged into the evening isles fantastical that

appear suddenly to the bewildered Parisian visitor who bursts on to a boulevard where the shop window is decked for *étrennes*, a miniscule landscape in which everything is perfect and in its perfection unreal.

Even the grass and herbage, not shimmering sweet to the touch, was as if made from dyed shavings with coarse inorganic bushes lined with Rembrandt-sienna, subdued however, by the quality of the living air, which expanded and contracted, endowing the olive trees with a grimacing movement and corybantic gestures, like a Greek frieze that caught sight of from the corner of the eye, at once becomes animated.

And on this fluid background, which was giving out rather than receiving light, where the soft, dark colours ran together, separated and overflowed in the silence, little villages with houses such as children draw, were attached as it were parasitically to the brown flesh of the earth and the sleeping breasts of the hills.

Swerving, dipping, soaring and hiding curve in curve, meandered the pale yellow road, lighter than all artists paint. The road, symbol most potent of civilisation, is ubiquitous—a country's worth may be better measured by the use to which it puts its roads than by any other criterion.

Seemingly mounting with the road, an excitement at first latent, commenced to build up, to spread, to tingle, so that I became keener, more alert, more aware; perception became magnified, little things took on important significance, I perceived the beating of my heart, the coursing of the blood and a sensuous longing that was almost an ache, urged me forward at greater speed: and I was sick too with apprehension that something might yet come to stop the exquisite passion so that I should not slake the more exquisite craving nor feel that most sensuous of pleasures, the touch of rough rock beneath the fingers. I saw with a leaping of the heart the shapely, purple form, limned on high with snow, of the Serra de Estrêla.

With a tensioning in the stomach such as one suffers when an acrobat leaves the virtuosity of his safety for a mad unravelling whirl into possible death, I looked up at the first buttress, which, after an hour of uphill walking over steep ground, now barred any further progress. All my ebullient excitement was gone or

rather replaced by another emotion for there was a little tremble in all my members, and there was a dull thudding in my ears from my heart beats. Wrenched with the self-argument that has wreaked a terrible scouring from all who harbour such a Hamlet-complex in their hearts, whether individuals or nations, I, with that fatal weakness of half-decision, determined to ascend twenty feet only, to a shelf that invited like an eyrie a wider survey, and having, with greater difficulty than my route estimating eye had appraised, found that its comfort was as meagre as its slope was inclement, and, moreover noting that a weakness ran up the line of rocks ahead beckoning like a girl who repents of initial coldness, while those tiny finger-and-toe holds by which I had so recently ascended, now appeared from above more minute than if seen through a reversed telescope, I, with a coward's fashion of taking the more immediately easy path, once more put my still-reluctant feet on the grey rocks, finding comfort in the firmness of the holds and the obviousness of the route, though still shaken with panting and arguing against my schizophrenic self on the wantonness of climbing alone doubled with the folly of being out of practice.

One delight of climbing is that it occupies the mind so utterly that there is small room for any lower emotion or fear: one's whole life is concentrated into the exquisite instant, one's whole ambition, pure and unalloyed, consists of the ascent of the next six feet. The silence laps back over the click of the boot-nail and the rough male kiss of rocks is more passionate than any of the catalogued niceties distilled by Rupert Brooke's poesy.

Soon there was a gentle thrilling in my being and I noticed once more how kindly shone the golden sun and how the little white clouds were playing leap-frog and how brightly sparkled the snow; the while I meditated that were I writing a guide I should classify the route as Difficult and adorn it with an adjective to describe its soaring elegance and aerial (though protected) situations.

I had noted them with my eye. Only now it was acknowledged by my brain, that the depressions in the snow on the right below, bore a quality which seemed outside the function of the forces of wind and sun to provide and in the pauses of my upward progress, I speculated at first vaguely and then with greater urgency on what could have caused these semi-spherical

hollows, for so they appeared from my perched position, spaced in pairs not quite side by side and running round the base of the rocks and some feet away. Their beginning I could not see—but their ending was plain. Like a schoolboy's essay they stopped before they had achieved anything.

To demonstrate to Suzette that I wasn't going to be bothered about such incomprehensible things when there was a high peak ahead specially set up in the heavens for our unique enjoyment, I sent a rapturous stone soaring in a parabola to fall at last almost into the penultimate depression, and then, its fall scarcely checked by the angle of the snow, to hiss with a soft, sibilant whisper which I could divine, though the sound waves were too feeble to disturb my immediate air, and disappear leaving the furrow of its fury in the crystalline snow, like the wrinkle of wonder on the forehead of a babe.

Presently, overtaken with hunger after the descent of a graceful gendarme, and while yet some distance from the highest point which had become hidden by an intervening outlier, as indeed had the beginning of the snowfield on the right, I sought a level place where I could at once repose, survey the view with advantage and allow Suzette, who, wearying of her idleness, protested the burden and the heat of the long day, to play in agreeable surroundings where she would be in no great peril. This combination of conditions took some little time to secure, but at last I came upon a large soup-plate of a rock, set about with few but with how splendid alpine flowers, reflecting the beauty of sun and sky in their being ; and here, in this hollow shadowed at the back by a tombstone rock, I spread out cheese and bread and wine and dried figs, with sardines for Suzette, and as I ate, contented with a peace that passes the understanding of men of the plains, I was aware that, now far below, I could see the whole of the little snowfield which I had noticed at first and the markings, which had departed from my mind, came back quickly like a guest who has returned for a forgotten article, so that I searched and could discern them faintly ; and, by dint of further looking, even perceived that little line of stone-furrow-shadow running up to the middle of them. With that perception, the silence intensified, I holding my breathing, straining to catch I know not what sound, for it leapt to my memory at once that my

little projectile had all but dropped into the last mark but one and therefore the track, during the period I had been climbing, had lengthened.

Spread-eagled, head overhanging, peering downwards, to draw the field upwards, set, intense, I summoned memory and orientation to fashion a further furrow at the end of the line of maculations which I could dimly discern, or to transpose the solitary existing furrow of my creation ; but in vain : for there was but one, and that now ran to the middle, and not to the end, of the track.

While rigid, straining and concentrated on that one little line in the snow to the exclusion of every other object animate or inanimate, tensed to appreciate any tiny movement there below, of a sudden there rang out a cry behind me, strident, harsh, inhuman, that I started violently and was nigh precipitated into the gulf beneath. But even as my heart leapt to my throat I, withdrawing simultaneously from the edge, knew that it was the voice of Suzette, in her Siamese fashion, demanding water.

Strokingly I picked her up and was glad to have a living thing by me to talk to and to laugh with, for she had chased and eaten a hairy-legged spider the tartness of which was doubtless one reason of her thirst. A dozen paces away I gathered two handfuls of snow and melting it gave her drink, then, as an afterthought, pressed together a ball and flung it outwards and downwards, that I might observe if there were yet other furrows with a trace invisible at the distance at which I was situated. My snowball fell true and left its faint near-white mark against the dazzle of the field. Even as I watched its path there was evidence, recorded by sight but doubted yet by brain, that the trail, which had been so occupying my attention, had lengthened yet again during the few minutes of my absence, giving me a chill of apprehension, of that unease which comes to disquiet the mind when brought into contact with the causeless.

For a full further fifteen minutes I continued with unremitting attention focused on that faint line, now imbued with a sinister significance out of proportion to its size, distance or nature. But it did not lengthen again nor could I perceive any living thing in all the world about me, nor any sound save the faint rustle of feline paws as Suzette danced her habitual post-prandial waltz.

Welling into my consciousness like coloured bubbles bursting in boiling water, came all that I had read and heard by word of mouth of the abominable snow-men, those huge, barbaric, unclothed, blonde creatures, belonging to some hideous off-shoot of the human race, that inhabit the rarified upper parts of the Himalayas ; creatures never directly seen by any European (though sometimes half-observed flitting from the corner of the eye by at least one member of an expedition), but leaving tracks like bear's feet across snowfields set at impossible angles. The females, with breasts pendant to the knees, are more to be dreaded than the men, being capable of nameless deeds towards human beings who come to disturb their tranquillity.

"Suzette," I said, glad to break the oppressive silence, "only those who have been no farther than the railway station to catch the 8.20, the bowler-hatted, who commute, dispute, change hands and still confute, deny with the passion of unreason, the existence of that shadowy world which assorts ill with suburban bungalows, the pictures twice a week and the Croydon Empire on Saturday night. Your true traveller, who has poked into the more remote corners of the globe, never scorns what is not immediately perceptible to the senses with their Horation philosophy. But I refuse to believe in esoteric snow-men in the Serra da Estrêla, remote though it be. I am like the old lady who cried, 'I refuse to believe it,' when she saw the giraffe in the zoo." With these light words I essayed to dispel the enchantment, to break the spell that was being cast about me by the loneliness, the silence and above all by that unknown line below.

But the concrete fact of the traverse ahead was more potent than the nebulous stirrings, whatever they were, below, and I had no desire to be benighted. Indeed the sudden picture of having to spend a night on the mountain, with all its occult forces abroad (for to that pitch of imagination had I come), was a thought not to be borne, a thought to be thrust away lest its mere suggestion should bring about its own becoming.

The summit was now no more than a few hundred feet away beyond one of those little level spaces that are occasionally encountered high up on mountains ; a level lawn of snow, possessing something of the artificial in its smoothness and symmetry, that tipped over and sloped away steeply to the

right. Set towards one corner of this pleasant field, in front of a smooth wall which protected both it and the field, was a pile of rocks, which in its fortuitous fashion, as so frequently happens in rocky regions, had assumed the shape of a castle—a castle of the winds—and, Stonehenge-like, at the right side were the portals, forming a pseudo-entry that gave the whole a highly stylised and fabricated aspect. The suggestion of having been constructed of set intention rather than by the odd play of chance circumstance, was accentuated by the presence of a large perched block as if a sacrificial stone had been set before the castle or temple for the performing of those rites meet for the propitiation of the elemental forces that hold sway remote from the habitations of men.

On my turning a little down to the right to inspect more closely this erection, Suzette gave a brief cry, the significance of which I understood and setting her down in the snow, to dig a little hole, I continued to walk slowly towards the castle of the winds and then suddenly glancing to the slope on the right, I saw, with a sickening that was at once mental and physical, a tightening of all the muscles like that which occurs when some awful disaster impends that cannot be averted, as though tension could stay tragedy, a series of paired depressions each set a little before the other, as if a small football had been pushed to its circumference into the snow.

Even as I gazed and shook a little it came to my mind that there was no reason why some odd deformation of the snow should give rise to such violent emotion as now vibrated through blood and heart and lungs stifling the breath ; why a conformation of water-crystals should provoke a horror that could be likened to that of primitive man before his juju. For these depressions came up from below and across the steep slope to end in the middle of the pleasant, flat field of snow—but now no longer pleasant.

Projected a great way off, I suddenly found myself looking down from a height, dispassionate and emotionless, at myself standing there tiny and dark against the white background of snow, standing in the muffled quietness with my hand half-uplifted as though to ward off an attack, saw too the track going over the edge till it made one with the original, and in the other direction running up and over and stopping twenty yards



from the entrance to the temple of the winds, in front of the perched block, where the last two depressions were deeper than the rest. I even saw, what had passed from the mind of that little figure standing there frightened and helpless, surrounded by dangers he knew not of what magnitude nor how to combat, Suzette raking the snow level again with her little monkey-like claw. And all this happened in a flash and simultaneously with the perception, I knew that this projection was a device practised by the mind when the body or soul is in great danger, a means adopted for self-protection, a means for the ego to save itself, to say, this is the real me, that other one down there, the etheric double, the ka, is unimportant and even should he perish, I am safe. It is this splitting of personality which causes a little band of explorers lost with hopelessness in their hearts and hunger in their entrails, to suppose that there is an additional person in their number, sensed as of extra-terrestrial origin ; but nothing more than each man unconsciously counting both himself and his projection.

I believe he came from behind the far side of the temple of the winds, though I am uncertain as to what slight shock to the senses (if indeed there were any) that caused me to swing round and find him standing there in the bright sunlight, a short way off, looking at me, one hand on hip, with the slanting eyes of a ballet dancer in "*L'après-midi d'un faune*," tall beyond most, packed tightly into his skin, with dark-gold furry hair on legs and wrists, a head sunning over with curls as a Greek statue, tiny delicate hands like so many Portuguese, a mouth small yet full, and long eye-lashes that cast a lattice of shadow on his cheek.

He was looking at Suzette and when he smiled a little triangular splay of wrinkles appeared at each eye ; Suzette emitted a squeak and leapt forward quickly towards him with the curiosity of a Siamese that overcomes all, to sniff and appraise the stranger. But when she reached the line of snow-prints, she stopped with one little paw in mid-air like a pointer, her ears went back, the teeth bared, her eyes narrowed, and she spat and hissed like a mediaeval witch, the while slowly retreating backwards till turning suddenly she fled and leapt into the shelter of my arms, her creamy body trembling with

hate or fear, spasmodically shooting out and retracting her claws, and would not be quieted.

He took one step downwards with the grace and elegance of one long accustomed to traversing difficult broken terrain, and his long legs resembled the Narcissus with their roundness and embedded muscles.

When two human beings meet, however odd or even dramatic the circumstances, there is always the preliminary animal-sniffings and reconnoitring to be gone through which we term conventional greetings, because all the most fundamental things of life are starched, ironed, glossed and patterned out by our upbringing. He now advanced slowly towards me and in the Portuguese fashion stretched out his hand (I noticed how long and polished were his nails and wondered how he managed to preserve them while climbing) and shook my hand with a muscular grip unlike the usual limp proffering.

When there are a number of things which it is desired to say at once, when a dozen questions dance round the tongue and when the subject is amorphous and without precision or even form, constraint, self-imposed, inhibits utterance, till the manner of expression shall become crystallised into comprehending phraseology. While thus, like a self-conscious schoolboy I stood, still confused by what I had seen and disturbed beyond measure by the malignancy of the unseen—for the unknown is always malignant—groping for explanations, for the liaison, if there were indeed any liaison, between the gravely-smiling man who stood before me and that long, winding trail, overcoming impossible snow-slopes, which sat on me like an incubus—over-riding all consciousness, there slid underneath this super-imposing thought, with irrelevant ridiculousness, the realisation that there is no word in any Latin tongue for self-conscious, therefore no Latin can understand the sentiment. But the stranger evidently did realise something of my malaise for he said quickly, before I could formulate thought or phrase :

“Why did you bring your little cat into the mountains ?” phrasing the sentence so delicately that I was more charmed by the beauty of his diction than annoyed by the directness of his impertinence. “Because she goes with me everywhere,” I said. “She is obedient, there is no danger. Why do you ask ?”

"It was unwise : cats are a focus."

"Where do you come from ?" I asked.

"From Covilhã," he said. "It takes about five hours. Are you going to the top ? We could go together."

Had I had doubts, they were lifted by the graciousness of his manner, the courtesy of his speech, his air of good breeding and perhaps, with that stupidity of the English which exalts the animal to a position only slightly less inferior to the mistress of the house, by the ready way in which Suzette accepted him and even gave a delicate lick and a little love-bite to his ear-caressing finger.

He spoke with a loving profundity of the mountains of the Serra de Estrêla, telling me how they were quite unknown save to two persons during the last 50 years or more, of how the secret joy of a child was theirs in possessing a territory which none others invaded, of how, besides the dangers natural to all high hills, there was the additional one of wolves which still ranged the slopes and in cruel weather would attack travellers and also, and here his voice dropped a little, of friends of the wolves, and then he passed quickly to other things describing how only six years ago the first ski club was formed and now its ten members for some months of the year ranged the hills to the exhilaration of the senses, the delight of the minds, and the benefit of their bodies. He spoke too of the building of the rest houses at Penacova, new come to the hills, and with perhaps a little note of regret, of the construction of the large hotel at Covilhã only half an hour away by car from the mountains.

Of the quality of his speech I can convey little, for it was gay and light with paradox—there is no truth save in paradox—and in a dozen little ways his warm humanity and passionate devotion to the hills shone out.

He climbed with the balanced grace of the expert dancing up steep walls almost devoid of holds while I perforce went by easier, clumsier routes.

He knew every rock, every hold : "Feel round the corner to the left," he said, as I fumbled awkwardly, "There is an angel's hand." There was.

Guided by my delightful companion we made little deviations, excursions to climb a needle of eccentric conformation or sallies to a shelf that gave at once a splendid view and an

exhilarating traverse, finding as in all good routes the holds set in the right places and at the right distance apart, till finally the summit was achieved and then stretched out on the rocks I waited for him to finish an incident he was relating ere reverting to the strange marks in the snow. But the heat of the sun numbed my senses with a drowsiness that I slipped out of the consciousness of this world and did not awaken till some unknown period of time had elapsed. My first thought was Suzette. She, who never strays, was nowhere to be seen and neither was Carlos. Casting about for traces of one or both, after some minutes, I espied Carlos crouching low and bending over, close to a small, ill-nourished shrub, which, such is the ubiquity of life, had managed to find a starved footing at that altitude. Approaching quite silently, for I had changed my nailed boots to rubbers, I observed that Carlos was rubbing Suzette's ears and feet with leaves picked from the shrub, an operation which Suzette would not have submitted to from me, but which, with feminine unpredictableness, she now presented every symptom of enjoying. Carlos stood up at my approach and laughed while Suzette lightly ran up his clothes and, perching on his shoulder, rubbed herself against his cheek (which is her wont when she wishes to say thank you) and then sprang across to settle on the back of my neck while a faint, wild perfume as from the web of some Eastern merchant emanated from her coat.

"Now," he said, indicating the west, "My way lies yonder. You will descend this arête and when it broadens and splays out, keep always towards the left and you will come to the track that leads to the road. You should be on the road before dark sets in. Two counsels I have to give you. Avoid crossing snow: keep always to the rocks if you can; and should any untoward happening occur such as you might have reason to suspect would involve you in danger, cast away your little cat, for by this means you will gain. I wish you God speed and a safe return."

I was loathe to part with my new-found friend for the warmth of his company was accentuated by the pleasure of companionship and the dread of being alone once more: but I knew not how to formulate the request that he should remain with me a little longer, without revealing the weakness that possessed me

with shame, so I blurted out, " But Carlos, when shall I see you again ? "

He laughed. " I am buried," he said, " in the cemetery at Covilhã and should you come there, put some flowers on my grave, for always have I loved their bright colours. Good-bye."

He smiled serenely, the crows' feet puckering his eyes creating a half-mocking shadow, then turned and with his elastic step was soon beyond recall a hundred yards away, though I stood watching him with incredulous eyes, till he was a speck that disappeared beyond a curve.

My most prudent course was now to get off the mountain with speed. I surveyed the route from above, decided it was not of undue difficulty, saw Suzette was comfortable in her sconce (indeed she gave a little mew of contentment when I spoke to her), noticed that the sun though sinking was still high above the horizon and, without delay, set off on the descent with good heart, in the knowledge that at least all my thoughts would be occupied with the choice of holds and similar matters related to avoiding the too-sudden effects of gravity on my body, leaving no space of time for disturbing speculations or unhealthy memories.

Descending a sloping crack, where there was some paucity of finger holds, a slipping chockstone jammed my left foot sideways and in my violent efforts to withdraw it, I ripped the nailed sole from the upper part of the boot and, at the same time, sharply sliced the flesh of my ankle so that the blood spurted. At a little stance lower down, I secured the sole with string and bandaged the wound, but the combined awkwardness with the additional care involved by the uncertainty of placing my left foot securely, diminished my speed to less than one half. The way now being easier, my situation was brought to mind with a stab of anxious resentment.

Already the burning heat of the day was giving way to the chill of evening and all colour and shadows had faded, leaving nothing but the breathless, waiting stillness and the circle of jagged, black silhouettes of peaks with untidy grey areas of snow, lacking both perspective and kindliness. The pent-up grimness was but accentuated by a quarter moon, not strong enough to give light or shadow, that hung between two shapeless mountain crests, looming even more gigantic in their

indifference to my insignificance and seemingly increasing, by their size and remoteness, the tally of distance yet to go.

As the last glimmer of golden sunlight, the only friendly thing left in all that hostile hollow, was extinguished like a torch of hope quenched in cold water, there arose an ululating sound, at first faint and remote so that I supposed it was some noise of wax in my ears, but slowly and by imperceptible gradations rising in volume and intensity till all the air was filled with its screaming and beating as it resounded against the rocks and reverberated to a resonance. There was no centre of origin ; the sound was not localised but ubiquitous, the whole sky above vibrating with its drumming as it were a bell, and I inside with no escape.

I felt Suzette retreat into the bottom of the rucksack and heard her give out an answering low wail of mingled terror and defiance.

Suddenly with an effect nigh as shattering as the sound itself, the wailing ceased though the silence throbbed for a short while with its reverberation.

With a weakness of the knees, I sat down on a rock by the edge of a large patch of snow which lay in my path. Thus sitting, though acutely aware of the urgency of haste, I perceived that it would take ten minutes longer to walk round the snow than it would to cross it diagonally, for its two arms stretched sideways for a considerable distance. With my broken boot and injured ankle the going too would be easier on the snow, for in the gloaming it was not easy to walk delicately on the dark rocks.

Rising, and glancing back over my shoulder with the sense that every rock, every cranny, held a latent watcher, I set out as speedily as I might across the snow. As I put my left foot on it, the wound in the ankle, still bleeding, pricked as if jabbed by a wire brush or painfully stimulated by an electric shock. Underfoot the powdered snow made a dry crying, like the wings of a locust late come to the shedding.

With the intention of doing the contrary to that which Carlos advised, without slackening speed, I slipped one strap from my shoulder and swinging the rucksack to the front, put my hand inside and withdrew Suzette. She was now transformed, every hair at right angles to her body, tail bushed and rigid, her blue

eyes staring and phosphorescent with internal fire. She resisted my intention of thrusting her inside the bosom of my zipper by springing on my shoulder and standing there, claws out, back arched, ears and lips drawn back, red mouth open, hissing in little hurried spurts.

Immediately the whistling broke out anew: but this time shriller, even more oppressive, bearing down on me with its rising and falling like the beating of the grey wings so that reason was chased away. I was possessed of an urgency, dominating all other emotions, to run, to escape from the awful banshee-screaming; but some pride or prudence counselled me to proceed at the previous pace.

The night was almost fully come now, but there lingered yet the vestigial traces of not-utter darkness, enabling sight to extend a few yards round about. Looking ahead only to keep my course as direct as may be, with Suzette gripping my shoulder, my rapid walk was arrested and I came to a sudden stop in the middle of the snow. Just ahead I saw without warning the snow collapse in two semi-spherical hollows, one a little in front of the other—whether they were the last two marks of a trail or whether the only two, I never discovered; for Suzette, she who had always run to me when danger threatened, now, thinking perhaps that it was I who was menaced, performed the bravest deed of her short life. With a scream of fury, louder than the wailing, she launched herself forward into the air to attack. Her spring took her full six feet away, almost to the two hollows and when she landed claws out, she leapt—or was flung—high into the air. All her highly-strung nervousness was now concentrated in a wild spiral of movement, snapping, tearing, springing and twisting with such rapidity that she appeared to be duplicated or triplicated, her black mask, black paws and black tail showing like streaks in a mad whirl of agile fury against the duller grey of the snow. Her shrieks of rage I could not hear because the siren-screams had risen to a crescendo that pressed on the ear-drums with pain.

Such a tempestuous lashing agony of flexibility, with the snow flung up and scattered every time she sprang up or landed, could not endure, and I had just begun to notice her separate actions, when she gave a super-feline leap, somersaulted in mid-air, arched backwards, forming a circle with feet outwards

and then snapped. Her whole body and neck now elongated till her head twisted off and was flung far out into the darkness, while her poor, little, broken body dropped back to earth and the gouts of blood from the long tendrils hanging from the neck, ran into the nearer of the two semi-spherical hollows where it soaked away not fast enough to prevent the depression from slowly filling.

Simultaneously the wicked triumph of the wailing dropped to a gloating and suddenly ceased, so that the silence washed loudly back again.

I looked up at the black circle of peaks ringing me round, at the white mists beginning to writhe and pulsate slowly in the hollows, sending plasmic, purposeful claws serpentine downwards to blot out the obsequies of the night, and I felt as the great Montrose on the eve of his execution, compassed about by his enemies : for in that hour I knew that death came on me from the mountains . . .



IS A CRUX CRUCIAL ?

D. D. YEOMAN

FOR some time I had been perturbed about the use of the word "Crux" by some climbers. Nowadays no description of a first ascent is complete unless the co-ordinates of "the crux" are recorded to several decimal places. Since most new climbs are much too hard for there to be any possibility of my attempting them, this hasn't worried me unduly, although it is another step towards destroying in climbing the adventure of not quite knowing what is coming next. What did worry me was people finding more than one crux on a route. Water-pipe Gully, for instance, now has at least "... four recognised cruces ..." according to the appendix to the 1948 edition of the *Skye Guide*.

This, I said to myself, is surely nonsense. A "crux" is (is it not?) a crucial point. The Oxford English Dictionary defines "Crucial" thus: "2. That finally decides between two rival hypotheses, proving the one and disproving the other; more loosely relating to or adapted to lead to such decision; decisive, critical. (This sense is taken from Bacon's phrase *instantia crucis* explained by him as a metaphor from a *crux* or finger post at a *bivium* or bifurcation of a road. Boyle and Newton use the phrase *experimentum crucis* . . .)"

If we accept all this, it seems quite reasonable to refer to the crucial point or crux of a climb, i.e., the point at which you find out whether or not you can get up. If this difficulty is overcome all else can be surmounted; if it is not, you must go down. Thus the crux is the point which tests which of the two alternative hypotheses—"I can do this climb" and "I cannot do this climb"—is correct. It is in this sense that it is commonly used in the writings of climbers, e.g., *Glyder Fach Guide*, page 47: "(5) 50 feet. From the left-hand end of the rock ledge rises Gibson's Chimney, the crux of the climb" and on page 49 concerning the same climb: "(10) 30 feet. This constitutes the crux of the climb for Rectangular Excursionists" (who have avoided Gibson's Chimney).

Therefore, I thought, to speak of more than one "crux" on any route is clearly nonsense, and people who do so are hawering.

How wrong I was.

In search of ammunition for the barrage I was intending to fire at such people I delved further into the Oxford English Dictionary. To my astonishment it declares that a "crux" is simply—I quote—"3. A difficulty which it torments or troubles one greatly to interpret or explain, a thing that puzzles the ingenuity." Obviously this is a word which may very properly be popular with climbers. Equally obviously, there may be any number of cruxes on one climb. Indeed a climb such as Ivy Sepulchre might well be described as a continuous succession of cruxes from bottom to top. (I judge this solely from its appearance and description in the 1948 Journal. I am unable to speak with—and quite incapable of acquiring—first hand experience.)

However, I thought, on this particular word my Oxford English Dictionary may be out of date. It was published in 1888 and relies on quotations ranging from Sheridan and Swift in 1718 to Dowden in 1888 ("The consideration of a textual crux in itself sharpens the wits"). The 1933 supplement does not mention it. I therefore consulted in turn *The Century Dictionary* (1899), *Webster's New International Dictionary* (1932), *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language* (1936), *Chamber's 20th Century Dictionary* (1947), and the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1950). Opinion is unanimous. Crux, it appears, means no more than an extremely ticklish problem. (I looked in Fowler's *Modern English Usage* but could find no mention of the word.)

Now it pains me to have to do so, but I must at this point cross swords with that worthy warrior in the war of words, Sir Alan Herbert. I have long been a humble and unknown private in Sir Alan's army for the defence of the proper use of English words, but I have never been able to accept his dictum that—again I quote—"A little knowledge of Latin and Greek, Bobby, would be useful to every citizen. . . . I affirm boldly that the elements of these ancient tongues should be taught more widely not less, than they are today ; . . ."*

* What a Word : A. P. Herbert, page 163.

I submit that these words "crucial" and "crux" show what nonsense it is. Both are derived from the Latin word CRUX : a cross—indeed one of them *IS* the Latin word. Not only do neither of them have more than the haziest connection with the idea of a cross, but they do not even have meanings which are in any way allied to one another. In both cases knowledge of the Latin derivation, far from being a guide towards the accepted meanings, is grossly misleading. I'm sorry, Generalissimo Herbert, but on this point I must "include myself out" of your army.

Well, there we are. Apparently we may have as many "cruxes" as we like on a climb provided we only have one "crucial crux." Let me, however, utter one word of warning to guide-book writers and tigers who record accounts of first ascents in log books : make sure a crux is truly a crux before you label it as such. Last year I met a man at Lagangarbh who said of Agag's Groove : "The only real difficulty is at the top (or was it the bottom?—I forget) of the second pitch. If you can manage that you'll romp up the crux." Gosh ! What a word !

EDITORIAL NOTES

This is almost a Himalayan number. Indeed from our pages it might be assumed that more of our members climbed in the far Himalaya than in Wales. Three of our members were on last year's expedition to the Western Cwm ; four this year are going to look at Cho-Oyu ; our energetic secretary is again off to the Himalaya this summer and Bryson is also paying a visit. Others are off to the less hospitable parts of Greenland with Jim Simpson. No doubt many other interesting expeditions are projected, but only if we are kept informed can we display the encyclopaedic knowledge of the club's activities which is desirable. Please do not let modesty prevent members from telling us their plans and achievements.

* * *

Michael Banks does not mention in his article that his climb with Richard Brooke was the first ascent by a guideless British party. Other climbs by members in 1951, all guideless, include the first British ascent of the S.W. face of the Mummery, the first British guideless ascents of the S.W. ridge of the Fou and the N.W. ridge of the Blaitière, the E. ridge of the Plan, the Mer de Glace face of the Grepon, the N. face of the Argentière, and the Roc-Grepon traverse. Reference to some of Cym Smith's climbing is made, alas, in the In Memoriam note. No doubt many other fine climbs were achieved by members.

* * *

Two new guide-books have appeared, to Llanberis and the Carneddys. These worthily uphold the standards established by their predecessors. Our gratitude to Peter Harding and Tony Moulam should be recorded.

* * *

Our grateful thanks are due to Anthony Rawlinson who has taken over many of the more tiresome editorial duties, including advertisements and circulation.

* * *

Orders have continued to be made multiplying National Parks, but the responsible Minister has as yet shown no sign of desiring to make the Parks a reality. Parks on paper only are worse than none for their

existence in print conceals their absence in fact. Our contemporary *Country Life* deserves praise for its sensible, informed and clear-sighted leading articles on this subject. An outburst on the subject of the North Wales Hydro-Electric Schemes will be found, inappropriately enough, at the end of our book-reviews. While these Schemes illumine most glaringly the paper character of our National Parks, it must not be overlooked that the Local Authorities have in effect been allowed to buy up the Parks by offering to pay the school fees in return for the right to strangle the infants. The new Minister has a great opportunity ; we trust he may yet rise to it. If, as we suppose, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government is now the appropriate authority, we have a member of the Club as Parliamentary Secretary. From a man who had the confidence, courage and good taste to be benighted on Clogwyn du'r Arddu in the midst of the electoral struggle for a doubtful seat, we expect great things.

NEW CLIMBS AND NOTES

EDWARD C. PYATT

Henceforward the aim of this section of the Journal will be to record all routes done in those areas for which the Club is recognised as having guide-writing responsibility—namely the whole of Wales and Cornwall. Full accounts will be printed of new climbs done by members of the Club or by members of other Clubs or individuals having no alternative means of recording. Routes done by members of Clubs having Club Journals in which suitable records will subsequently appear will be covered by a brief note only—reference being made to the appropriate Journal or Club Hut Log Book for the full account. Other Clubs interested in Welsh and Cornish climbing—the Rucksack Club, the Midland Association of Mountaineers, the U.C. of N. Wales Mountaineering Club and the Valkyrie Club—have promised to co-operate and I am pleased to incorporate information supplied by them in the notes below. The result of this policy should be that successive issues of New Climbs and Notes will keep up to date the series of Club guide-books.

The section will continue as before to detail routes made by members of the Club in other mountain groups.

A delicate controversial point still arises regarding the classification of the hardest climbs. The Llanberis Guide-book has proposed the introduction of two further categories beyond very severe—extremely severe and exceptionally severe. This method is adopted here and it will be interesting to hear comments on it. The main snags would seem to be the possibility of mixing up the two qualifying adverbs, i.e., not remembering which is which, and the difficulty of adding even harder categories in the future. It might be simpler to use the terms : very severe 1, very severe 2, very severe 3, to cover the existing classes thus leaving no doubt which is which and leaving room to add further numbers when required. This proposal to reintroduce a portion of the numerical system of classification cannot arouse the opposition of the very large numbers of moderate climbers, who opposed numbers on the grounds that they interfered with their long cherished adjectival descriptions. The present suggestion concerns only those who climb, or have to describe, routes in the present very severe category.

The following notes are divided into sections corresponding to the various guide-books.

NORTH WALES

CWM IDWAL GROUP

While the centre of gravity of Welsh climbing has now shifted to the

Llanberis valley, the huts in the Nant Ffrancon continue to attract numerous climbers to the established standard climbs. There is little that is new to report, simply because there is little obvious scope.

The U.C. of N. Wales Mountaineering Club reports a new variation to Route V, details of which will be published in their Journal.

M.A.M. Journal (1949) describes a route ("Pilgrim's Progress") on the left wall of the Devil's Kitchen starting directly opposite Advocate's Wall. This climb, which is 170 feet and hard severe, does not appear to have been recorded so far in these pages.

TRYFAN GROUP

HANGMAN'S WALL (*C.C. Journal*, 1949) has been rediscovered and claimed as a first ascent.

It is interesting to take note of a series of straightforward climbs of moderate standard on this mountain, which have been worked out by members of the M.A.M. and described in their Journal in the last few years. The Introduction to the Tryfan Guide-book emphasises the go-as-you-please nature of the East Face as a whole—"The routes described are chosen by experience as containing the best pitches in the best line." The popularity of these guide-book routes and the obvious scope for the addition of others justifies these new descriptions.

CENTRAL BYEPASS. 340 feet. Very Difficult. Is on the South Gully Wall of the First Pinnacle Rib. (*M.A.M. Journal*, 1947.)

NORTH RIB. 245 feet. Difficult. Is on the Far South Buttress to the right of Index Clim. (*M.A.M. Journal*, 1949.)

ANNIVERSARY ROUTE. 400 feet. Difficult. Lies on the apparently broken mass of rock half-way between the top of the far eastern wing of the Milestone Buttress and the actual North Ridge. (*M.A.M. Journal*, 1949.)

NORTHERN RIB. 500 feet. Very Difficult. Lies on the Central Buttress between North Gully and Crevassed Rib. (*M.A.M. Journal*, 1949.)

ANNIVERSARY APPROACH. 335 feet. Difficult. Is on the rock left of the Milestone Buttress. (*M.A.M. Journal*, 1951.)

GLYDER FACH GROUP

Routes entitled Sidewalk, Backdoor and Omega on Glyder Fach, Away and Far West on Gribin Facet are reported by the U.C. of N. Wales Mountaineering Club and will be described in their Journal.

M.A.M. Journal (1949) describes "Pinnacle Crack" (125 feet, severe) on Gribin Facet, starting 12 feet left of Angular Chimney and *M.A.M. Journal* (1951) "Pillar Face" (75 feet, V.D.) on Clogwyn Du.

LLANBERIS PASS

There are a large number of routes to report, probably the result of furious activity to put the guide-book out of date. The utility of some of the climbs in this area is questionable—an extremely hard climb which crosses others of much lower standard cannot be regarded as a reasonable mountaineering route. The traditions of the sport demand that a climbing route shall pass more or less from bottom to top of the

crag up a line of weakness having on either side rock which is either unclimbable or demands climbing of a higher standard than the natural route. A route which shies away from the easier lines and goes up the harder pieces in between is merely a gymnastic exercise and not mountaineering. This is not to say that routes of this type do not demand the utmost of mountaineering skill—they undoubtedly do. It is important, however, not to lose sight of the fact that rock climbing is a sideline development of mountaineering—a sport of much wider scope—and at present rock climbing leans heavily on the firmly established traditions of the parent. This attitude towards difficult rock arises partly from the extremely high standards which climbing has now attained, for there are very few (or no) crags which as a whole, demand the new advanced standards. The huts, too, tend to concentrate on a few really accessible crags all those climbers, who might otherwise go farther afield to, say, the Nose of Craig yr Ogof (Cwm Silin), the Western Cliffs of Cwm Silin, or even farther.

This introduction cannot close without some reference to the very fine climbing which has been done during the past year by J. Brown and his fellow members of the Valkyrie Club. Their climbing standards are exceptionally high and their new routes, particularly on Clogwyn Du'r Arddu, are outstanding achievements.

DINAS CROMLECH

COBWEB CRACK. 110 feet. Very Severe.

First Ascent : 2nd September, 1951. J. Brown, M. T. Sorrel.

Start : On the right wall of Parchment Passage.

(1) 40 feet. The wall is climbed via a crack on good holds to the tree. Traverse left to a stance and belay below a steep crack.

(2) 70 feet. The crack is undercut at the start and is awkward at 20 feet, then it deepens and gives good jamming to a black overhang. Traverse left for 10 feet, then up a crack to the top on good holds.

PHAROAH'S PASSAGE (VARIANT). 80 feet.

First Ascent : 2nd September, 1951. J. Brown, M. T. Sorrel.

Avoid the chimney and take the crack 10 feet to the right—a fine climb on good holds providing a much better finish.

NOAH'S WARNING. 220 feet. Very Severe.

First Ascent : 3rd September, 1951. J. Brown, M. T. Sorrel.

65 feet to the right of Pharoah's Wall there is a steep obvious crack, this is the route.

(1) Behind the tree, and up the crack on good holds and jams till the pot-hole on Pharoah's Wall is reached. Belay.

(2) 65 feet. Climb the wall above past several bulges to the overhang. This is turned on the left leading to a fine ledge and belay.

(3) 90 feet. The steep wall above is split by a chimney, climb this until forced to step right ; there is a good traverse line which leads round the arête and on to the last moves of Holly Buttress.

(Pitch (1) is a variation on Pitch (1) of Pharoah's Wall, while Pitch (2)

must finish very close to the easy ground at the top of Pharoah's Wall. E.C.P.)

CEMETERY GATE. 200 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

First Ascent : J. Brown, D. Whillans. Alternate leads.

The route takes the crack on the edge of the right wall of Cenotaph Corner.

Start : Scramble up the corner and traverse rightwards to a flake below and to the left of the crack-stance and belay.

(1) 90 feet (of climbing). Descend the chimney and traverse right past a tree, the wall above is climbed to the overhang at the foot of the crack. The overhang is climbed with difficulty and the crack above is climbed on doubtful holds to a belay and very poor stance 12 feet above the holly tree.

(2) 50 feet. Continue up the crack which gets progressively harder until another poor stance and belay (flake) are gained.

(3) 60 feet. Traverse right to the crack on the edge, which is undercut at its start. Continue up the crack for 30 feet until a step right is made with difficulty, the climb then finishes on good holds.

(The best party is two leading through, due to the difficulty of changing places on small, poor stances.)

CROMLECH GROOVES. 100 feet. Severe.

First Ascent : 29th September, 1951. G. W. S. Pigott, R. M. Viney, G. Hample.

On the rocks below Dinas Cromlech. (See Beudy Mawr Log Book.)

CARREG WASTAD

UNICORN DIRECT. 205 feet. Extremely Severe.

First Ascent : 26th May, 1951. J. Brown, M. T. Sorrel, P. Hampson, R. Greenall.

(1) As for Unicorn.

(2) 65 feet. From the left end of the ledge climb the overhanging crack and continue up the groove as for the Ordinary Route.

(3) 80 feet. Straight up the groove, awkward at 30 feet, and on to the final overhang which is split by a chimney.

RIBSTONE CRACK. 180 feet. Extremely Severe.

First Ascent : 22nd March, 1951. J. I. Disley, A. J. J. Moulam (leading through).

(1) Pitch 1 of Crackstone Rib.

(2) 20 feet. Up the wall on the right of the vegetated crack. Step left into a small cave.

(3) 70 feet. Squirm up the chimney until a step can be made on to the left wall (10 feet). Into and up the crack. At 50 feet two pitons have been left (extreme difficulty). Another awkward 10 feet leads to the holly bush below the last stance of Crackstone Rib.

(4) and (5) As for Lion.

(This climb is a natural line on the cliff, though a very hard one. E.C.P.)

BOLE WAY. 380 feet. Very Severe.

First Ascent : 12th May, 1951. A. J. J. Moulam, D. W. S. Pigott, A. Hyde.

Starts 30 feet left of the Main Scoop Route and takes a direct line up the cliff. (See Beudy Mawr Log Book.)

CLOGWYN Y GROCHAN

HANGOVER. 350 feet. Extremely Severe.

First Ascent : 18th May, 1951. J. Brown, R. Greenall, M. T. Sorrel, F. Ashton.

(1) 20 feet. As for Slape.

(2) 50 feet. Up the groove on good holds to running belay (25 feet). Up the corner crack until an awkward step can be made on to the slab. Holly tree belay.

(3) 80 feet. Traverse rightwards from the belay and so to the wall which forms the crux of the climb. Traverse to the right to a shallow wall corner. Up the corner on awkwardly placed holds to a ledge at 30 feet. A traverse left leads back to the groove. This is climbed by bridging methods and finishes at a holly tree belay.

(4) 30 feet. The wall is climbed up its left edge. Belay round blocks.

(5) 40 feet. Traverse left for 20 feet, then upwards on good holds to a large ledge and yew trees. This is Ledge Way.

(6) and (7) As for Ledge Way.

CENTRAL GULLY—LEFT-HAND VARIATION. 290 feet. Very Severe (harder than the Gully).

First Ascent : 14th October, 1951. J. M. Edwards, M. R. Loewy.

Start : From the big ledge above Kaisergebirge Wall—at its right-hand end near the gully. A steep crack leads up the wall with a slight overhang initially, quite near the gully edge.

(1) 30 feet. After a shoulder at first, up into the deeper part of the crack, where it is then well provided with holds for a traverse across into the gully (25 feet). Up the gully for a few feet to a stance.

(2) 80 feet. Up the gully for a short way, then cross steeply into the left-hand crack. Up this. It soon comes back to the gully. Gully stance.

(3) 50 feet. Up the left-hand wall easily to a big yew tree. Belays above.

(4) 100 feet. Now there is a wall above, the left wall of the gully, with a pock-marked section half-way up. Up a 12-foot shallow pillar (right of the yew tree) in the middle of the wall. Then right a few feet and up the wall steeply again on good holds. Continue among some loose blocks by a holly tree and a long open crack.

(5) 30 feet. Short wall direct to the top.

CLOGWYN DU'R ARDDU

DIGLYPH. 260 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

First Ascent : 24th June, 1951. J. Brown, M. T. Sorrel.

Start : 12 feet to the right of the Chimney.

(1) 60 feet. Up the broken groove till a step left can be made on to Chimney Route, stance and belay.

(2) 90 feet. Traverse right and up the thin crack on overhanging jamming to a small ledge below a bulge. (A piton was used to safeguard the passage of the bulge.) Follow the crack to a ledge with a flake belay at the far end.

(3) 110 feet. Climb the groove above to a large flake at 80 feet. Traverse right and up the steep wall above on excellent holds to the Green Gallery.

LONGLAND'S WEST DIRECT FINISH. 80 feet. Very Severe.

First Ascent : 15th July, 1951. J. Allen, D. Cowan, Miss E. Gregory.

From pitch 5 of Longland's Route and to the left a steep slab can be seen with a thin crack running up the edge.

Move out left from the top of the Overhang on Longland's, on to the slab. Traverse out a few feet then straight up the slab and crack till easier ground is reached in the form of a gully which is climbed to the top.

(This may coincide in part with the route described in *C.C. Journal*, 1950, not in the guide-book. E.C.P.)

VENBER. 310 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

First Ascent : 13th October, 1951. J. Brown, D. Whillans.

Start. 15 feet to the left of Curving Crack Direct Start.

(1) 130 feet. Climb the obvious crack to the grass rake at 90 feet. (Running belay at 70 feet.) Continue up the grass to a good stance and belay on the left of Curving Crack.

(2) 35 feet. Now take the crack just left behind the belay to an awkward stance and thread belays.

(3) 55 feet. Climb the shallow chimney above with difficulty to a small stance and thread belay. (Two pitons were used to protect this pitch.)

(4) 90 feet. Continue up the corner above to the grass ledge on the left (The Lawn) and then take the easier wall on the right to the top to a good belay, etc.

THE BOULDER. 315 feet. Exceptionally Severe.

First Ascent : 28th October, 1951. J. Brown (climbed all the pitches after the first on two ropes 150 feet and 120 feet after the rest of the party could not follow pitch 2). Several running belays were used en route.

The route takes a diagonal course from left to right up the steep solid bastion left of Longland's Route.

Start : At the left edge of the buttress, where it falls back towards West Wall Climb.

(1) 45 feet. Up on large holds for 15 feet until a step right can be taken on to the face proper, climb direct to a stance and belay.

(2) 140 feet. From the stance a long traverse line leads away to the right. This is gained by means of a small flake with difficulty. At 80 feet the traverse peters out and another difficult move is necessary to gain the traverse several feet higher, continue delicately for 10 feet then

up on large holds to a grass ledge, stance and belay.

(3) 70 feet. Step right into the "Black Cleft" and up easily to the overhang, move left to a crack in the centre of the overhang and up on good jams. (The crack is awkward to start.) Move left along the grass ledges to a stance and belay.

(4) 60 feet. Climb the easy slab above into the gully. Easy scrambling leads to the top.

(The "Black Cleft" is the prominent groove between the Boulder and Longland's Route.)

BOW-SHAPED SLAB. An ascent of the entry traverse (Pitch 2) without lassoing is reported in the Beudy Mawr Log Book by P. Greenwood and F. Williams—14th May, 1951.

CRAIG NANT PEN-Y-PASS

Two routes (120 feet, Severe and 190 feet, Very Difficult) on this crag by G. W. S. Pigott, A. J. J. Moulam and R. Jones are described in Beudy Mawr Log Book. The crag is in the Llanberis Pass one mile below Pen-y-Pass.

GLAS FACET

A route here—"The Band of Hope" (250 feet, Hard Difficult) is described in Cwm Glas Mawr Log Book, where details can be consulted. In accordance with the policy of the guide-book it is not described here in full.

CARNEDD GROUP

The U.C. of N. Wales Mountaineering Club reports a route in Cwm Llafar called "Ganges." *M.A.M. Journal* (1951) describes a route—"Gaheris" (240 feet, Hard Very Difficult) on Craig y Tre Marchog. It starts at the right of the lowest point of the cliff and crosses Gawain.

The crags on Braich Du (Pen yr Oleu Wen) appear to have been re-discovered. (See *Climbers' Club Bulletin*, January, 1925, p. 18, *Helyg Log Book*, 10th December, 1927, or *Oxford and Cambridge Mountaineering*, 1928-29, p. 93.)

Wayfarers' Journal, 1950, p. 66, draws attention to some untouched crags in Cwm Crafnant.

OUTLYING CRAGS OF WALES

The sections follow the pattern laid down in the "Outlying Crags of Wales," in the *C.C. Journal*, 1950, except for the first three which were not covered in that work.

CWM SILIN GROUP

CRAIG CWM DULYN (498490). A party which inspected this crag made a favourable report on the prospects. It is untouched so far.

WESTERN SNOWDON

CLOGWYN DU (CWM TREGALAN)

SHADOW RIDGE. 500 feet. Hard Difficult.

First Ascent: 9th September, 1951. P. O. Work, Miss S. Morgan.

Directly above the most easterly of the three miniature reservoirs in the cwm is an initial edge with a gully pitch leading onto a broad scree band. Above this is a big gully seaming the main crag—Shadow Gully—a useful snow climb. The ridge on the left of this gully gives an interesting route maintaining rock problems successively for 500 feet to the crest. The steepest and finest pitch is at about one-third height where the ridge becomes vertical and short diversions first left, then right and up the fine left wall of the gully to regain the edge are excusable. Belays frequent and no loose rock.

MOEL HEBOG GROUP

The policy of last year's *Journal* with respect to this crag is continued here. It is hoped that all this work will soon be made available in a guide-book ; in the meantime details are in the Log Book at Sygun Fawr.

The new climbs include :

Maidan Buttress, Maidan Gully and North Side Route.

LLEYN PENINSULA

The crags on the Rivals beyond Trevor have been examined by one or two parties, but no worthwhile climbs have resulted so far, perhaps because of the counter attractions of the bathing.

The line of crags on the hillside above Tremadoc (Allt Wen) has attracted the attention of several parties during the year. A number of routes (Shadrach 180 feet—Very Severe ; Belshazzar, 180 feet—Very Severe ; Valerie's Rib ; Creag Dhu Wall, etc.) have been described in various log books. The time is ripe for some co-ordination as parties led by Showell Styles have also done climbs here—particularly on Tremadoc Pinnacle—a rock tower overlooking Tan yr Allt.

A detailed guide-book to the crags on Moel y Gest (see *C.C. Journal*, 1950, p. 54) by Showell Styles appears in the *M.A.M. Journal*, 1951.

MOEL Y DYNIEWYD GROUP

CRAIG LLAN

CANYON RIB. 235 feet. Hard Difficult.

First Ascent : 3rd September, 1951. P. O. Work, T. Blackburn. (Through leads.)

Start. 200 yards upstream from Pont Aberglaslyn and 100 feet above Fisherman's Path. The foot of the rib is near a small oak providing an initial belay.

(1) 35 feet. The rib is clean and sharp. Stance below a large block.

(2) 15 feet. Pull up on to the block. Walk back to base of a fine wall with an edge on the right.

(3) 35 feet. Up the wall to a stance on the right edge.

(4) 45 feet. Cross to right and gain the edge of the next rib via two shelves. Steeply up the sharp edge to a small stance.

(5) 30 feet. Easy rocks lead to a stance (detached flake belay) below the final wall.

(6) 50 feet. The wall is vertical and forms the left side of the rib. Begin on the left and work back and up towards the right following a depression and line of holds to a pulpit stance and flake belay.

(7) 25 feet. Pleasant broken rock leads easily to the crest.

TUNNEL RIB. 120 feet. Very Difficult and rather dangerous at present.

First Ascent : 24th September, 1951. P. O. Work, I. A. Dear.

Start. From a high rocky bay exceedingly steep heather descends on to the Beddgelert end of the long disused railway tunnel. The climb starts at the foot of a rib low to the right side of this bay.

(1) 30 feet. Up this rib with difficulty from a tree belay to a break. (This pitch can be omitted.)

(2) 15 feet. Up to a second stance.

(3) 15 feet. And to a third where the rib abuts a vertical rotten wall.

(4) 20 feet. Step down across to the right on grass and continue now rising to a stance and good belay above an overhanging wall.

(5) 40 feet. Shortly up this wall above to easier ground leading abruptly on to the crest of the Pass Wall.

MOELWYN-CNICHT GROUP

The crags on the East Face of Moelwyn Bach and on Moel yr Hydd (*C.C. Journal*, 1950, p. 58) have been explored by Showell Styles. A number of routes up to 250 feet and of difficult standard have been done. There are other attractive possibilities and anyone contemplating a visit should contact him at Borth y Gest, Portmadoc, Caernarvonshire for details of the routes, both existing and prospective.

THE MIGNEINT, etc.

Wayfarers' Journal, 1950, draws attention to a fine looking buttress at the entrance to Cwm Penamnen in the Lledr valley.

THE ARENIG FAWR—RHOBELL FAWR GROUP

Attention is drawn in one of the log books to the following crags on Arenig Fawr :

(1) The crag above Llyn Arenig Fawr.

(2) A crag facing north away to the left as one faces the main crag above the llyn.

(3) On the "second step" of the mountain above the village of Arenig.

THE RHINOGS

CRAIG Y CAE

Exploration by P. O. Work and party—late September, 1951.

The crag was approached from Tyn y Groes Hotel. One practice climb was done on good rock to the right of the southerly gully. It consisted of two 20-foot chimneys (Difficult). Then a close examination was made of the central buttress which presents a vertical front. A difficult route might be possible direct. The steep gully on the left of this front, resembling the Hanging Garden Gully, also deserves closer inspection.

CADER IDRIS GROUP

CYFRWY

TABLE DIRECT. 210 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 19th June, 1951. R. E. Davies, H. E. Chatburn.

Start. At the cairn at the top of the grass cleft to the right of the lowest point of the buttress.

(1) 30 feet. Climb between the large leaning flake and the wall of the buttress. Belay on jammed stone at the top.

(2) 65 feet. Move up the scoop to the right for 30 feet. Then steeply leftwards on good clean holds to a large ledge with cairn and bollard belay.

(3) 55 feet. Ascend immediately above the bollard up the obvious crack. Clean climbing in an airy situation to a good stance and belay.

(4) 35 feet. From the right edge of the stance overlooking the gully climb leftwards up the wall.

(5) 25 feet. Climb directly up the cracked pointed slab. Strenuous. Finish up the broken ridge to the Table top.

(This route lies on the right of Steric Slab. *C.C.J.*, 1950, p. 65. E.C.P.)

CARDIGAN

The cliffs of the coastline have been examined at odd places, without anything of any great value being discovered. Exploration was not exhaustive.

RADNOR

During the year there has been healthy progress in the development of climbing in this county and I am once again indebted to E. H. Lane for providing the details.

CERIG GWALCH (See *C.C. Journal*, 1951, p. 57)

BIRCH TREE RIDGE OR LONG CLIMB. 165 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : 22nd April, 1951. E. H. Lane.

This route starts on the left facing side of the main ridge at a little over a 100 feet above the Nant-y-Sarn waterfall path. Just to the left from a large leaning buttress containing a shallow cave are two mossy slabs. Start here.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the left-hand mossy slab to a grass bay containing a steep deep chimney. A birch tree grows in front of the chimney.

(2) 25 feet. Step left on to the edge of the arête and then go up the arête to a stance on the edge of the ridge.

(3) 20 feet. Climb straight ahead to a comfortable platform with a roof shaped slab on the left.

(4) 20 feet. Traverse from right to left across the wall rising from the back of the roof-shaped slab and pull on to a grass platform.

(5) Walk up grass and broken rock to below a tower-like mass of rock.

(6) 50 feet. Climb the above by its right edge or by the rib on the

left then walk and scramble to a platform below an ash tree growing from a rock tower. (This is now on the main ridge.)

(7) 20 feet. Climb a short crack to a shallow rock crevasse at the back of the ash tree. Muscle up the thin crack to the top of the tower.

Climbing interest now ceases but one can continue up the ridge on grass, bilberry and occasional rocks to Pen Rhiwwen. Just before coming on to Pen Rhiwwen a surprise view may be had of the Aran mountains.

BIRCH TREE CHIMNEY. 55 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent: 22nd April, 1951. E. H. Lane.

(1) 30 feet. Start as for Birch Tree Ridge. Climb the left-hand mossy slab to the grass bay.

(2) 25 feet. Climb the steep deep chimney (strenuous) straight ahead to the piled boulders on the main ridge.

The climb can be continued by crossing the narrow gully to the stance below pitch (3) on Birch Tree Ridge then going up the rest of that route.

CERIG GWYNION

For situation, approaches, etc., see *C.C. Journal*, 1951, p. 58, where the rocks are referred to as Gwastedyn Hill Crags. Cerig Gwynion consists of two crags—an obvious main crag and a slightly smaller crag on its left. The rock is granite. The routes are shown on the accompanying sketch.

WALL CLIMB—ROUTE 1. 100 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent: 14th October, 1951. E. H. Lane.

Start: At the left facing end of the cliff at the edge of the last large overhang is a clean wall of rock leading to a diagonal rock and grass terrace.

(1) 25 feet. Climb the short slab until stopped by the overhang. Step left on to the rib and go straight up the wall on rounded holds to stance and belay on the terrace.

(2) 45 feet. Walk 10 feet left, then climb the buttress ahead up the centre on small holds to a grass terrace.

(3) 15 feet. A few feet right climb a rock step to a terrace.

(4) 15 feet. The short wall ahead to the top of the crag.

WALL CLIMB—ROUTE 2. 110 feet. Very Difficult.

Start: As for Route 1.

(1) 35 feet. Go up the short slab to the overhang and then up the wall to the last line of rounded footholds below the terrace. Step right on to the top of the lower overhang and continue on small footholds until it is possible to go straight up to stance and belay on the terrace.

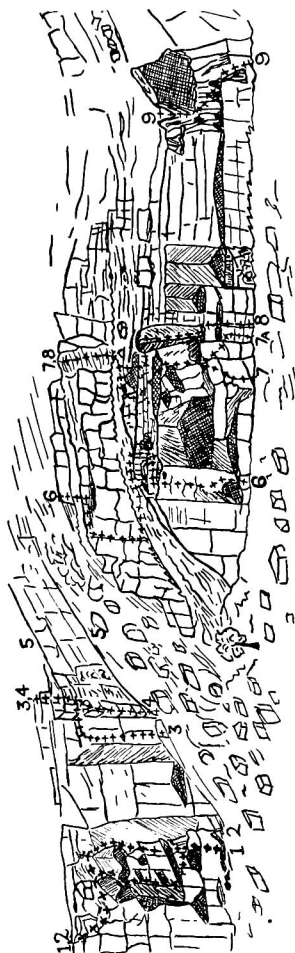
(2), (3) and (4) as for Route 1.

BRAMBLE BUTTRESS. 100 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent: 14th October, 1951. E. H. Lane.

Start: To the right of the Wall Climb and just beyond the large square-cut overhangs is a rib formed by blocks. To the right of the blocks is another large overhang with a bramble covered bay below.

CERIG GWYNION



- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. ARROW BUTTRESS. | 6. WALL CLIMB—ROUTE 1. |
| 2. ARROW CHIMNEY. | 6A. WALL CLIMB—ROUTE 2. |
| 3. SLAB AND CORNER. | 7 & 7A. BRAMBLE BUTTRESS. |
| 4. WHIN CHIMNEY. | 8. BRAMBLE BUTTRESS CRACK. |
| 5. BUZZARD WALL. | 9. TOWER CHIMNEY. |

At the foot of the first overhang on the left side of the block rib is a rough wall of rock—start here.

(1) Climb the wall until stopped in a crouching position by the overhang. Swing right over a wedged block and step up on to the rib. Stance and belay in Bramble Bay.

(2) Climb a cracked block and then up a groove containing a narrow crack. Over the wedged block ahead and up the wall above to stance and belay on the terrace beside a large perched block.

(3) Move right and climb a rough slab to the top of the crag.

An alternative start takes the short slab on the right of Bramble Bay. When stopped by the overhang traverse left to the stance in the Bay.

BRAMBLE BUTTRESS CRACK. 100 feet. Severe (not yet led).

The steep crack on the right wall of Bramble Bay.

(1) Climb the short slab on the right edge of Bramble Bay and then go up the undercut slab ahead to the foot of the crack, or

(1A) To the right of the original start is another steep short slab. Climb this to a rock ledge, then traverse across the undercut slab on the left to the foot of the crack.

(2) Climb the steep crack ahead with some trouble until stopped by an overhang. Traverse left and up to the perched block on the terrace.

(3) As for Bramble Buttress.

TOWER CHIMNEY. 40 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 15th October, 1950. E. H. Lane.

Start : Below a tower at the right-hand end of the crag.

(1) Climb the last V-shaped groove on the right, then cross another V-shaped groove on the left to a patch of ivy.

(2) Up the prominent V-shaped chimney to the top of the tower.

The smaller crag is separated from the larger by a corridor of boulders. The following routes are on this :

ARROW BUTTRESS. 55 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : 9th September, 1951. E. H. Lane, D. McGimpsey.

(1) 10 feet. Climb the short wall of rock in the centre just below the chimney.

(2) 20 feet. Step left and climb on to a sharp flake at the foot of a crack on the left side of the buttress. Move right under the overhang, then straight up to ledge and belay at the top of the chimney.

(3) 25 feet. Up the cracked blocks to the left and a short wall to the finish.

ARROW CHIMNEY. 55 feet. Moderate.

SLAB AND CORNER. 55 feet. Moderately Difficult.

WHIN CHIMNEY. 50 feet. Moderate.

BUZZARD WALL. 25 feet. Severe.

CORNWALL

The feature of the year's climbing in Cornwall has been a very fine

series of routes by M. J. Ridges and G. F. Lilly (Manchester University Mountaineering Club)—all done during Easter. A number of long and fairly difficult climbs on the Chair Ladder Group of cliffs are particularly noteworthy.

PEDN-MEN-DU

GIRDLE TRAVERSE. 255 feet. Mild Severe.

First Ascent : 24th March, 1951. M. J. Ridges, G. F. Lilly (leading through).

Start : At the foot of Sheer Corner.

- (1) 30 feet. Up Sheer Corner to the belay.
- (2) 20 feet. Up and round the corner on the right.
- (3) 50 feet. Along an easy ledge to Grip Tight Gully. Step across the Gully to the platform of the Main Face Climb.
- (4) 25 feet. The way is now blocked by a rib.

Either (a) step down round the rib and up awkwardly on to a large outward sloping platform from which the traverse continues to a belay in 20 feet.

Or (b) ascend 20 feet until a step can be made right on to the Banana Flake Climb, descending behind the prominent flake to the belay.

- (5) 12 feet. Easily across a corner.
- (6) 18 feet. Climb a steep wall on to Staircase Climb. Belays.
- (7) 35 feet. Descend Staircase to within 15 feet of the bottom and step right to a belay.
- (8) 20 feet. Traverse delicately to the belay at the top of the first pitch of Double Overhang.
- (9) 15 feet. Semi hand-traverse on to easy ground.
- (10) 30 feet. The climb was finished up grooves (Moderate) a few yards left of Church Window to the amphitheatre at the top of that climb, whence there is a wide choice of routes to the summit.

FOX PROMONTORY

This can be descended by a route of moderate standard by traversing the ridge to about 10 yards from the end and descending a line of cracks diagonally on the south side towards the seaward end.

FOLLY CORNER. 80 feet. Hard very Difficult.

First Ascent : 27th March, 1951. M. J. Ridges, G. F. Lilly (leading through).

Start : From the seaward end ledges, go up an awkward crack to get on to the north side ledges, easily accessible at half-tide. Go along the ledges until they fade out. Above is a corner.

- (1) 25 feet. Go up the slabby left wall avoiding the first large overhang.
- (2) 25 feet. Avoid the second smaller overhang by stepping round the nose on the left (the crux) and up to easier ground above the overhang.
- (3) 30 feet. Continue easily in the crack-chimney above, to the ridge.

ZAWN FACE ROUTE. 80 feet. Hard Difficult.

First Ascent : 27th March, 1951. M. J. Ridges, G. F. Lilly.

(1) Instead of taking the crack round to the north face, take either (a) some cracks on the right of it to a platform or (b) the arête on the left of the cracks to the platform (slightly harder).

(2) Either (a) Go up the delightful slab on the left avoiding the final overhanging nose by a step right and short 10-foot cracks to the summit.

Or (b) Bearing right from the platform go up to a steep brown pock-marked wall and climb it near a crack in the middle (slightly harder).

CHAIR LADDER

BULGING WALL—GREAT SLAB ROUTE. 180 feet. Difficult.

First Ascent : Around 1931. Professor J. E. Littlewood.

Start : At the foot of the Wall on the left is a 50-foot slab nearly 30 feet wide.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the slab almost anywhere bearing right to a belay at the foot of a groove in the right-hand side of the slab.

(2) 25 feet. Up the groove until the slab steepens to a wall and step right on to a ledge.

(3) 25 feet. Up steep short walls bearing slightly right to a large platform.

(4) 100 feet. Scrambling up a groove bearing left, leads to easy rocks and the top.

(The above description is by M. J. Ridges, whose party repeated the climb thinking it was new. It is not in the guide-book. E.C.P.)

BISHOP BUTTRESS. 200 feet. Easy Very Severe.

First Ascent : 25th March, 1951. M. J. Ridges, G. F. Lilly (leading through).

(1) 15 feet. From the sea level ledges in the middle of the buttress get on to the first broad platform.

(2) 55 feet. From its right-hand end go up a short slab into the chimney and up to the top until the way is blocked by a large overhang.

(3) 35 feet. The crux. A delicate traverse is made to the left 10 feet below the overhang. A piton (which was removed) was used as a running belay here. After 15 feet easy rocks are reached and 20 feet higher an excellent stance and belay.

This point can also be reached by climbing the right-hand chimney (as one faces the cliff) of the gully between Bishop and Wolf Butresses until it is possible to get on to the left edge of Bishop Buttress and so up to the belay. This makes a fine climb up the Buttress of Very Difficult standard.

(4) 105 feet. Numerous routes and belays now present themselves the best climbing being obtained by getting back right on to the middle of the buttress and so up. The situation is magnificent in this upper half.

CUT-OFF (Wolf Buttress). 200 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 25th March, 1951. M. J. Ridges, G. F. Lilly (leading through).

The left-hand branch of the gully between Wolf and Bishop Butresses steepens in its lowest section to a 20-foot overhanging crack cut off at high tide.

(1) 45 feet. Climb the crack with difficulty until an exit on to the right wall can be made. Carry on up the easier chimney above to belays.

(2) 15 feet. Now go up left and round blocks to a block belay on Wolf Butress.

(3) 20 feet. Up a nose above, a short stomach traverse left, then diagonally up left to a belay on the left edge of this right-hand section of Wolf Butress.

(4) 120 feet. Easier rocks now lead to the summit, bearing slightly right, with an interesting 10-foot crack in the middle of the final wall. Belays at intervals.

WOLF BUTRESS CHIMNEY. 100 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 29th October, 1950. A. J. Imrie and party.

Start : At the extreme right-hand end of the ledge which starts 40 feet above the sea on the right wall of Ash Can Gully. The ledge stops short on the sheer face of Wolf Butress. Above the ledge is a triangular-shaped piece of rock which is split by two chimneys.

(1) 30 feet. Climb the left-hand vertical chimney to a small ledge.

(2) 30 feet. From the right-hand side of the ledge climb another chimney to a broad platform.

(3) 40 feet. Straight up from the platform to the top of the buttress.

(This climb was also repeated by M. J. Ridges and G. F. Lilly.)

The rock between Porthgwarra Butress and Hella Point has also provided a climb :

SWELL BUTRESS. 80 feet. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 27th March, 1951. M. J. Ridges, G. F. Lilly (leading through).

Start : The lowest 20 feet of this buttress were not climbed. A traverse was made on to the buttress from the Hella Point side at the level of the top of pitch 1), and this was descended and re-ascended.

(1) 35 feet. From the lower lip of some slabs, go up them to the top and up a 12-foot chimney in the corner. Step round left on to the front face.

(2) 15 feet. Up the front face by layback moves to a good belay, poor stance.

(3) 10 feet. The grooves above lead to the top.

CORRECTIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO THE GUIDE-BOOK

WOLF BUTRESS CLIMB. The climb described as Wolf Butress Climb (p. 131) was placed on this buttress by a wrong identification on a photograph. The whole account is now known to refer to an ascent of Terrier's Tooth from sea level.

FIRST ASCENTS IN THE CHAIR LADDER GROUP

The guide-book account of the Chair Ladder Group was written without any knowledge that a parallel exploration had been in progress

for a number of years by an entirely separate group of climbers, founded and inspired by Professor J. E. Littlewood. L. S. Powell (once of the Climber's Club) has painstakingly sorted out the correlation between their routes and ours with the results set out below.

The present nomenclature was mainly established by J. Cortlandt Simpson from his explorations of 1939 and 1948-49. As these names and routes have already been published in our guide-book there seems little prospect of changing them, even though they had been climbed in different combinations years before our believed first ascents. Many parties who had left records of climbs on Chair Ladder in the Bosigran Log Book were by no means certain where they had been—nor from their accounts was it easy to deduce—and the guide-book historical section was therefore merely a summary of these notes and made no attempt at precise identification. Almost the whole of this section now goes overboard. Below our routes are dealt with one by one with the true first ascents and suggested amendments added.

BULGING WALL—BRIDGE AND GULLY TRAVERSE ROUTES. These were notes of routes in Bosigran Log Book. It is suggested that both should be scrapped in favour of L.S.P.'s Great Slab Route (First Ascent by J. E. Littlewood around 1931), which takes the face direct from sea level. (For description—see above.)

WESTERN CHIMNEYS. L.S.P. has two routes on this section of the crag. The first ascent was probably by A. W. Andrews, though J. E. Littlewood certainly climbed it also before the 1914-18 War.

SOUTH WEST BUTTRESS. This is L.S.P.'s Suicide Buttress—not led by them. The first ascent was therefore by the Commando Cliff Assault Wing. To this should be added Suicide Crack (first ascent by L.S.P., 1936), details of which are given below.

CENTRAL BUTTRESS CHIMNEYS. The section below the Cleft formed part of L.S.P.'s Girdle Traverse (1932) (see below). Above the Cleft is new.

CLEFT ROUTE. Both parts climbed by Prof. J. E. Littlewood in the early 1930's.

PENDULUM CHIMNEY. Climbed by Prof. J. E. Littlewood in the early 1930's. (Part of their Odtaa Route.)

SOUTH FACE DIRECT. New.

EAST CHIMNEY. Also climbed by Prof. J. E. Littlewood. Known to them as Chair Ladder Crack.

SOUTH EAST BUTTRESS—MERMAIDS' AND ORIGINAL ROUTES. These again were notes of routes in the Bosigran Log Book which probably coincide in part. It is suggested that both be scrapped in favour of L.S.P.'s Dexter Crack (first ascent 1937) and Girdle Traverse (first ascent 1932). The former is a fine natural route—a prominent crack which runs from bottom to top of the buttress, the latter is a long climb of some merit (see below).

More detailed descriptions of the proposed new routes are now given :

DEXTER CRACK. About 100 feet. Standard unknown.

First Ascent : 26th August, 1937. L. S. Powell.

A prominent crack in the South East Buttress, which starts in the black recess at the extreme right-hand side of guide-book figure 8 and goes straight up towards the letter "J" above.

GIRDLE TRAVERSE. 200 feet or more. Very Difficult.

First Ascent : 1932. J. E. Littlewood, L. S. Powell.

Start at the top of the steep lower part of Ash Can Gully by stepping awkwardly across a steep groove on to the wall of South East Buttress (i.e., probably as for Mermaids' Route and the Original Route). Climb the wall and over a corner to a ledge. Traverse left round an exposed corner with good holds, whence two long strides lead to a stance. (Mermaids' Route and the Original Route go straight up from this traverse.) Cross into East Chimney and descend to a rock bound recess. Now take the Cleft Route to the Cleft. The original climb descended the lower part of Central Buttress Chimneys to finish at the foot of the cliff but it would be possible to continue on as far as Western Chimneys and so down or up.

SUICIDE CRACK. Severe.

First Ascent : 21st August, 1936. L. S. Powell.

The crack on the right of the South West Buttress where it joins the main cliff, immediately left of the lower part of Central Buttress Chimneys. Strenuous.

The climbs at Treryn Dinas and Pedny Vounder mentioned in the *C.C. Journal*, 1951, p. 76, were all pioneered by Prof. J. E. Littlewood, L. S. Powell and their friends and this group must be congratulated for having made a substantial contribution to the history of climbing on the southern coast of West Penwith.

OTHER CLIMBING

SCOTLAND

MEALL DEARG, LIATHACH

PANTAGRUEL GULLY. 400 feet. Severe under snow and ice conditions.

First Ascent : P. R. Falkner, D. C. Cullum (through leads).

This gully lies on the N. Face of Meall Dearg and is the second major gully to the right (west) of the main central ridge.

"The gully commenced with 100 feet of steep firm snow leading to a 20-foot ice pitch. The ice here was rotten and was avoided by a steep groove in the right wall. A delicate move across a smooth slab led back to the gully bed. A further 100 feet of steep snow then led to the main obstacle—a 70-foot ice pitch at a high angle. It was found possible to break this pitch half way. At two points it was necessary to carve incut handholds. Above this pitch the gully consisted of straightforward snow slopes and gradually merged into the upper part of the mountain."

THE WEST FACE OF AONACH DUBH, GLENCOE

NO. 6 GULLY. 300 feet. (See in this number of the *Journal* an article giving a full description.)

IN MEMORIAM

ASHLEY P. ABRAHAM

The Climbers' Club have lost a sincere friend and a pioneer of rock climbing in Ashley Abraham who died during an operation at Edinburgh, on the 9th October, 1951, at the age of 75.

I first knew Ashley in the '90s when we both joined the Club as original members with our respective brothers ; his knowledge and technique of rock-craft were unique, and he and his elder brother, George, had first-hand knowledge of every climb in the Lake District which proved of immense help to many young climbers.

It was Owen Glynne Jones who originated the title of the " Keswick Brothers," and it is impossible to refer to the climbing abilities of one without the other as George was invariably the leader and magnificently backed up by Ashley as second on the rope, who always seemed to know exactly what was wanted and able to give it with complete confidence, which makes just all the difference to the leader on a difficult pitch.

I well remember watching them on our first ascent of the New West on the Pillar Rock in May, 1901—now more than 50 years ago—and the way they worked out this delightful climb, particularly the difficult final traverse across the face near the top of the climb, which was a perfect example of first-class rock-craft.

In those early days pitons and plimsolls were unheard of in connection with rock climbing, though it must be admitted we occasionally had recourse to removing our climbing boots on difficult slabs, such as the traverse in Savage Gully below the Split Blocks, but the use of proper belays was never omitted and many a serious accident has been prevented by their rigid use.

George and Ashley started to explore the climbs in North Wales in 1897 with O. G. Jones when the two brothers made the first ascent of the Slanting Gully on Lliwedd and many other famous climbs, and O. G. Jones joined them in many of these, notably the second ascent of the Devil's Kitchen.



In 1897 and 1898 they went to Switzerland when George led a guideless ascent of the Matterhorn ; Mont Blanc and its Aiguilles were climbed in 1900, and Grindelwald was their centre in 1903 where many ascents were made ; then the Arolla Valley in 1904, and in 1911 and 1912 the Dolomites, which was Ashley's last trip abroad.

As is well known all over the climbing world, they took magnificent photographs of the mountains wherever they went, and they are known far and wide as real experts of mountain photography.

George and Ashley published a second edition of O. G. Jones' well-known book, *Rock-climbing in the English Lake District*, in 1900 and wrote and published *Rock-climbing in North Wales*, in 1906, while Ashley wrote *Rock-climbing in Skye*, in 1908, and their first ascent of the Crowberry Ridge on Buchaille Etive was probably the finest of many pioneer climbs which they undertook.

As a lecturer, Ashley was in great demand at many of the large public schools where his lectures with magnificent slides were much appreciated ; I happened to be visiting Haileybury College in the middle '20s when he gave one of these and delighted the boys by his witty remarks about " the father of one of you boys whom I see amongst my audience ! "

On my retirement from managing landed estates in Yorkshire in 1950 Ashley found me my delightful little home at Keswick amongst the hills on the lower slopes of Latrigg under Skiddaw, and we frequently met and discussed climbing, ancient and modern. We both considered that the modern climber seems to be more ambitious than we were to tackle difficult and even severe climbs before he has graduated long enough on easy and moderate courses, and I know he would like me to impress upon all climbers the vital need of proper belays which should never be neglected.

A loyal friend and a first-class rock climber will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

CLAUDE BARTON.

I have not seen Ashley Abraham for many years ; so I can picture him still as we knew him and climbed with him, in his dynamic youth. A figure as agile and quick as he was tall, broad

and powerful, with great Cumbrian legs and a southern high colour, fire, and enterprise. We never thought of the brothers apart. They complemented each other perfectly ; George the more often leading, graceful, supple and balanced ; Ashley, a moving column of strength and aggressive energy, in support. In all team-play brothers, from a kindred sympathy, collaborate the more closely ; and the Abrahams were a pleasure to watch in their combination upon Scafell precipices—or to listen to in their light-hearted exchanges up and down a new climb. They were, I think our first entirely local rock climbers, who tackled new routes on their own. They sped over mountains with enterprise and enthusiasm ; and they had the intelligence to see the untrodden ground which opened before them as professional photographers and protagonist lecturers and writers of guide-books. If there was some criticism of this aspect of their climbing 50 years ago, the mountaineering world has long since followed in their tracks. Ashley, and his brother with him, had the true love of climbing. When climbers were few and techniques unheard of, they showed a fresh initiative, and a cheerful courage in facing the unknown and a novel type of danger and difficulty. He was a pioneer of Lake and rock exploration ; and he has earned a long memory among the cliffs and fells of his home country.

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG.

LIEUTENANT J. L. GREENWOOD, Royal Navy

To write of Jeffrey Greenwood is to think of a fair-haired young giant labouring under an enormous rucksack, with his eyes on the distant snows and an expression of happy determination. Or again, I picture his breathless face rising scarlet but triumphant from the water, having just learned how to “ roll ” a kayak. When the Mountaineering Section of the R.N.S.M.C. was started he was one of the first to join and thereafter was one of its most loyal supporters. That was the beginning, for me, of a delightful friendship which lasted all too short a time. Then a Sub-Lieutenant stationed at Portsmouth, he could but rarely get leave to spend a week-end in Wales, but that did not curb his enthusiasm. He would readily go anywhere and climb anything, however unorthodox, that had the least resemblance

to a crag. I see him now in the semi-darkness of an October night, poised on the crumbling parapet of forbidden Titchfield Abbey. Then, after the climb, gleefully frying sausages in the moonlight outside the "Fisherman's Rest" while the custodian's snores within testified to the efficacy of the well-laced toddy which was the price paid for freedom from interruption.

It was with this same sense of fun that he became part owner of a disreputable old car of uncertain vintage. That was in the days of rationing and petrol was scarce, but he conducted a little fuel research of his own. That car never appeared to be short of fuel but it showed a marked antipathy to policemen. Perhaps because the odd smells which came from the exhaust bore little resemblance to those of more respectable engines.

On week-ends when neither leave nor pocket would stretch as far as the high hills, he would make his way to Cheddar, and spend the night under the hay in Farmer Young's barn, in an atmosphere sweet with the scent of cows and clover. Backed up by Angus Erskine, who was his particular friend, he pioneered several new routes of a high order on those sensational and uncertain crags. On one occasion he narrowly missed a serious accident. He was leading a new climb when a rotten flake broke off and he fell about 30 feet into a clump of brambles which saved him from a further and bigger drop below. It was characteristic of him that he went back and led the climb through. Afterwards he told me about the accident rather shamefacedly, and asked me not to tell his parents.

Jeffrey was a born climber and, given the opportunity, would undoubtedly have become a first-class mountaineer. His steadfast, sunny temperament, never flustered in a difficult moment, and never short-tempered when weary, was just right for the job. It was bad luck that an early essay in the Alps was clouded by tragedy. He went with his father to the ill-fated A.C. meet at Zermatt and arrived just in time for the rescue party. He was the most steady and reassuring of companions on the hills and I know no one to whom I would sooner be roped when in a tight corner.

His sweet temper and immense reserves of "guts" sprang from a real goodness of heart and affection for his fellows. These happy qualities fitted him pre-eminently for a major expedition so that, when our eyes first turned to the Arctic it

was inevitable that he should be chosen as one of the party. I can hardly claim to have selected him for this. His own fine qualities made the choice inevitable, and, last summer in Greenland, his absence was keenly felt by all his old companions. Had he lived, he would certainly have been a member of the British North Greenland Expedition on which his heart was set, and for which he trained so enthusiastically.

It was perhaps inevitable that such a character should feel drawn to the Submarine Service, possibly the finest and most arduous branch of the Royal Navy. There, amongst the cream of the Service, his fine qualities had the scope they deserved. He was serving in H.M.S. *Affray* when she made her last fatal voyage. Mercifully, in this case, there is reason to think that the catastrophe overwhelmed the crew with a suddenness and completeness that can have left little time for anguish of body or mind. But as one who knew him and who treasured his friendship, I have no doubt that in those last terrible minutes the men who were with Jeffrey turned to him instinctively for support, and that they did not do so in vain.

C. J. W. SIMPSON.

I have a very clear memory of looking down when half-way up one of the routes on Harrison Rocks and seeing Jeffrey, then aged six or seven years, starting to climb up behind me, unroped, and, of course, unnoticed by his mother resting below. I think that even at that age he had made up his mind that he liked climbing, just as a couple of years later he decided that he was going into the Navy. But before he had achieved this ambition he had taken to the hills. At the age of 10 he joined the family rope at Chamonix, and climbed the Aiguille du Tour, and several routes on the Aiguilles Rouges.

From being Head Boy at the Dragon School at Oxford he passed into Dartmouth, where he was his House Cadet Captain. There was little opportunity of climbing during the years of war, but there were visits to Wales and happy days on Lliwedd and Tryfan. For several years we could not climb together; Jeffrey was on duty in various parts of the world, and I was stationed in Germany, but on his return to a home station he was able to join the A.C. training meet at Scheidegg in 1947.



JEFFREY GREENWOOD

In the course of this happy meet he climbed the Mönch, Jungfrau, Fieschergabelhorn, and Finsteraarhorn, but we had to abandon the Schreckhorn in bad weather. We were climbing with Graham Brown who had the two Higgins brothers—both naval officers—on his rope, so one felt very much a naval party.

Jeffrey had by now volunteered for the Submarine Service, and in this work and in the good companionship of the Sub-Mariners he found much happiness.

Next year he was late joining the A.C. meet at Zermatt, arriving just in time at the Bétemps Hut to join the guides' rescue party, which we had called to the fatal accident on the Pollux. My party had descended to the Bétemps Hut for help ; missing the guides, who had taken a different route, we went back to meet them at the glacier about midnight. They had arrived too late to help the sole survivor. Jeffrey lost his lantern on the descent, and told me afterwards that this return in the dark on the heels of the hurrying guides was one of the most trying experiences he had had. His happy temperament and good companionship were a great help to me during that tragic period ; later he climbed the Dom, Barrhorn, and other peaks, but the heart had gone out of us for the while. The knowledge of how suddenly a happy party could become a tragedy left Jeffrey with a new and heightened respect for the mountains. He was quick to realise that the ways of mountains are only learnt by experience, and he set himself to acquire this experience as thoroughly and quickly as possible. With the possibility of Arctic expeditions in the future he took up ski-ing in Austria and Norway.

Only a few days before his last voyage on the *Affray* we spent a week-end at the R. W. Lloyd Hut. We found Snowdon under real Alpine conditions, and enjoyed really difficult climbing in high wind and snow. On our last day, however, the clouds cleared, the sun came through, and Jeffrey lingered on the slopes above Cwm Glas, enthralled by the marvellous views of the Snowdon ridges in their Alpine mantle. As we walked down to Llanberis he turned many times to look back. Perhaps he knew somehow that this was for him, indeed a last look, and that his other love, the sea, was soon to claim him.

H.D.G.

PETER KOCH

H. P. Koch was killed in an accident in the Central Trinity Gully of Snowdon on Easter Saturday, 1951.

Peter Koch came from a family with a climbing tradition. I remember our first common climb, in the Bavarian Alps, when we were quite small boys and I got so tired, on the way home, that I just sat down and cried.

We both lived far from any hills, so opportunities were rare until we grew up, and then the first ones came on skis. Peter took them with both hands. He mastered the technique in no time, with his usual brilliance in all things mental and physical, and then he discovered the High Alps in Spring. By the outbreak of the war, he had carried his skis up many valleys, laid his tracks on high peaks in the Oetztal and the Pennines, and indeed, accumulated a record in this sphere of mountaineering activity, which can have few rivals in the Club.

The war brought, of necessity, a long interruption of such pursuits. Peter completed his studies in Chemistry and became a boffin. Brilliant research in industry led him to a Senior Lectureship in the University of Manchester, only a month before his death. Even so, his interests were at no time confined to science ; he was widely read and took a keen interest in poetry and music. I treasure a letter from the South of France, where he spent a holiday following the trails of Van Gogh.

After the war, he started to climb afresh, trying to take up the threads where he had left them as a boy, in the Dolomites. He joined the Club in 1945, and took part in an A.C. Meet. I met him on crags in the Lakes and in Wales, and we shared a Christmas search party on Snowdon—"Five men for Cwm Glas, not to speak of the dog."

But the come-back gathered momentum and purpose only when he met G. F. Peaker, at Helyg. Climbs in Wales were followed by an Alpine campaign culminating in the great West—East Traverse of Mont Blanc, and a friendship developed that meant a great deal to Peter, not only in mountaineering terms. Among those who philosophise on climbing it has long been a bone of contention whether climbing is more a means of escaping oneself or of finding oneself. It may be that the two

are inseparable. In the Club, we could only note the development in his mountaineering, the upsurge of technique and assurance. His friends, however, watched a man who had already exceeded so many promises, embark on a new and fuller stage of his life.

Peter often made the impression of a boy born on a Sunday. Fair-haired and attractive, with that faculty for making everything succeed without a sign of effort, full of wisdom, and of boyish mischief. And yet I knew that he had long rejected easy success in favour of patient work. I knew that his life had not been smooth and pleasant, but had brought him more than the usual share of bitter blows and sorrows. Yet he never failed to accept them, and to transcend them, and so to overcome them that to his friends he brought the affirmation that life is indeed a Sunday. We are the poorer now, but our greatest sympathy must go to his father.

R. E. MEYER.

C. M. G. SMITH, 1927-1952

Cym Smith, who joined our Club in 1949 was killed on 15th January, 1952, in a road accident while motor-cycling home from his work in Edinburgh during a snowstorm.

After three years National Service as a coal miner he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1948, and it was through the C.U.M.C.—of which he subsequently became President—that I came to know him and serve under him as Secretary. As a freshman he was already a first-class rock climber with new routes to his credit. His robust physique coupled with a pride in his own physical co-ordination and skill made him peculiarly suited to mountaineering. The rare combination of intelligence, demonstrated by his first in the May examinations, with such a reserve of strength made it easy for him to develop that mental attitude borne of self reliance and determination towards tackling new or hard climbs ; a necessary attitude, but one which comes near to being condemned as recklessness by lesser mortals incapable of judgment on equal terms.

Every vacation he enjoyed to the full. Easter, 1949, he spent in Glencoe applying rock climbing skill to snow and ice. There he made the first winter ascent of Crowberry Gully by the left

fork which involved, so he told me, one of the hardest pitches he ever did. His account of this and subsequent climbs in Cambridge Journals showed his promise both as a climber and writer. That summer he climbed continuously leading the great routes of the Lake District, recording new routes in Skye and, at the peak of fitness, taking the exceptionally severe routes of Llanberis, such as the Spectre, in his stride. In Goats Gully he succeeded where others before him had failed. He was a beginner in the Alps yet on his first climb, the Chardonnet, with "experienced Alpinists" he ended up in the lead.

In the Alps next summer and thereafter Nancy Heron, his future wife, was his sole climbing companion. Although storms and fresh snow during August frustrated their plans they climbed the Roc, the Meije, the Requin by the E. face direct, traversed the Triolet, and were the first British guideless party to traverse the Aiguilles du Diable. It was characteristic of him that he always traversed a peak whenever possible because it meant getting two climbs into one day.

In 1951 after graduating with second-class honours in Physics and before he began an electronics job in Edinburgh they went to the Alps in July. Everything was covered with winter snow and the huts full of skiers so they went to the Bregaglia. The Punta Torrelli, Piz Cingalo, W. ridge of the Innominata and the N. ridge of the Piz Badile occupied a week before better weather tempted them back to his favourite climbing centre, Courmayeur, only to be greeted by more storms and fresh snow. Reluctantly giving up all hope for great climbs that frightful July they went to the Dolomiti di Brenta. There they climbed the Bimbo di Fontana Freddie, Campanile Basso, Cima Ceda by the N.E. face direct and the Bimbo di Monaco, a Grade 5 route. All their climbs that summer were first ascents of the season mostly done against the cautionary advice of the hut custodians. What Cym might have climbed had the weather been kinder one can only speculate. He was always a little frustrated never having tested his powers to the full. On the climbs that he did the combined strength of the party made little difference to his leadership.

He was invited to join the 1951 Everest reconnaissance but the letter came when they were away climbing, getting fit for the Alps. He didn't receive it until after the party was already

arranged and so missed the chance for which he often said his Alpine climbing was but practising.

Communist in his politics and outlook, he cared little for the ordinary securities and conventions of life. In Cambridge, solitary and unspectacular, he was not one to seek for positions of responsibility. As President of the C.U.M.C. he conducted meetings with an amusingly unconventional informality that would have undermined the confidence of more nervous lecturers. In his third year he married and settled at Newmarket and I am indebted to his wife for providing me with the details of their Alpine ascents. His death on the roads shocked us all and we express our sincerest sympathy to his relatives and especially to his wife.

I rarely had the privilege of climbing with Cym. At Easter on Ben Nevis, with no map or guide-book, his apparent unpreparedness was typical. He seemed to enjoy these voluntary handicaps. Often this lack of local knowledge would itself provide the impetus for attacking unlikely routes generally with success. My last three days with him in Wasdale were characterised by dripping rock and driving rain. Nevertheless, severe climbing still went on. Always he moved with a rhythmic speed and agility. Impassive and rarely confiding his thoughts ; the harder things became the happier he grew and the more confidence he inspired—a wonderful climbing companion. The third day we spent an hour or two combining tactics on the Great Flake of Central Buttress delayed and dismayed by a hold breaking off. I was exhausted but he, still radiating energy, squirmed up clearly and easily without my aid, his rubbers squelching on the dripping rock. And that is how I shall always remember him.

GEORGE C. BAND.

REVIEWS

CHINA TO CHITRAL. By H. W. Tilman. Pp. xii 124. Cambridge University Press, 1951. 25/-.)

"My theme is mountains," says Mr. Tilman in the preface to this his latest book, but there is less of actual mountaineering here described than in most of his earlier books. He writes certainly of two visits to Bogdo Ola, and of an attempt on Chakar Aghil, but these accounts take their place within the framework of a much wider subject, a journey across Asia in 1949 from China through Sinkiang to the Hindu Kush and Chitral. But they are none the worse for this. The very place names spell romance—Urumchi, Ili, Kashgar, Khan Tengri, Tashkurghan—and out of the desert wastes of Central Asia the author conjures up delightful images of the striking contrasts of this little known region and its colourful peoples, Kirghiz, Kazaks, Tartars, Taghliks, Wakhis and Pathans. "I am not averse to hard travel, in fact in retrospect I like it" and the reader captures much of the delight, albeit retrospective, from the pages of the book.

The style needs no introduction or recommendation to readers of this *Journal*. There is much fine writing—"What more could a mountaineer want than to climb easily along the bright crest of this high, untrodden ridge, where glittering slopes fell away on either hand to smooth snow bays; and to the wrinkled glaciers from which flowed rivers that must presently perish in the hot sands of Asia." We also find a liberal sprinkling of the author's dry wit—"We ourselves had a very curious dish of Vienna sausages which were sizzling hot at one end and frozen hard at the other—a striking example of the non-conductivity of sausages in high altitudes."

The author starts his journey from Shanghai and travels by airplane, bus and lorry to Urumchi where he meets Shipton. Together they made an attempt on Bogdo Ola (c. 18,000) but after a detailed reconnaissance gained only a snow col on the long east ridge, from which they were turned back by a violent wind storm which threatened to blow them and their small tent off the mountain. Returning to Urumchi they were smitten by remorse and changed their plans to return to Bogdo Ola to take a second look at the north-east ridge which Tilman considers climbable. Unfortunately, the weather broke and a further attempt on the mountain was ruled out.

The party then turned southwards to Kashgar where Shipton was Consul-General. From here an attempt was made on Chakar Aghil (22,070). At a height of about 17,000 feet the "cadaverous Kirghiz" who was acting as porter to the party, became violently ill and as they were reduced by this time to one tent, they had no alternative but to descend with the sick man. In any case the weather broke that evening,

and heavy snow which fell during the night would probably have turned the party back in any case.

The final chapters of the book are devoted to Tilman's own journey along the valley of the Tashkurghan River over the Mintaka Pass to Misgar and Chitral.

This is all very much the Tilman we know. Discerning readers, however, may detect two new facets of the author's character. First Tilman the scientist—the reader is provided with a technical note on Merzbacher's heights dealing with aspiration-psychrometers, control barometers, invar tapes, and other despised instruments, together with an erudite quotation on aeolian erosion and tamarisk mounds. Secondly and more surprisingly Tilman the gourmet (or even gourmand ?)—the book is liberally illuminated with shafts of gastronomic wisdom which perhaps reveal the author in his true light as a secret eater. "I had carefully written down phonetically five or six essential words—words, I mean, for food." "I, at any rate, seldom make the vulgar mistake of not taking enough." "Every time the sheep bleats it loses a mouthful." And our mouths are made to water by frequent references to delicacies like yoghourt, kumis, bamboo shoots stewed in syrup, Hangchow tea with chrysanthemum petals floating in it—"the flavour was so delicate as to be imperceptible," and one meal which consisted of hors d'oeuvres, fish, meat, game, bacon and eggs, pancakes, soup, hard-boiled eggs and an ice—in that order.

The book is generously illustrated with over 70 of the author's own photographs—"Nowadays so few people can be bothered to read," though many of them suffer from what he describes as "the rude mechanic process of block-making." There are also four maps showing the author's route.

J. H. EMLYN JONES.

MOUNTAINS WITH A DIFFERENCE. By Geoffrey Winthrop Young. (Eyre and Spottiswoode. 18/-)

Arnold Lunn no doubt learned the art of persuading contributors when he was Editor of this Journal. As Editor of the New Alpine Library he has so far commanded himself, H. E. G. Tyndale and Lord Schuster, and now presents G. W. Young, and all mountaineers and many others will haste to read.

Like its predecessor in the New Alpine Library, *Mountains with a Difference* is partly a collection of occasional pieces. These essays on old happy far-off things, North Wales in the beginning, a Western Irish Hill, Scotland, Mount Ida, lead up to Italian Alps in war where the author lost his leg and from this point the mountains take on their difference. How the author learned to climb again is a wonderful story of ingenuity and dauntless determination. It has astonished non-mountaineers that any man could take so great trouble and conquer so great difficulties merely to lift himself by his own efforts a few thousand feet above the surrounding country. With funiculars and rope railways and aircraft available, why these all-night struggles, these flounderings

in snow, the day-long night-long jolts and jars to stand just a little higher? If those outside the craft can ever understand, it will be this book that enlightens them.

The full effect is perhaps only felt by those who have read *On High Hills*, or know their alpine history. The early partnership with Josef Knubel is a necessary background to the final vindication on the last climb; there is a Greek fulfilment in the close which cannot be grasped from the last act only.

I suppose it was his didactic classic, *Mountaineering*, which caused Geoffrey Young to be known to an irreverent later generation as "The Prophet," but the mantle fits in this book as elsewhere. Splendid climber as he was, the mountains were never to him a gymnasium but always an Old Testament high place. A founder of the Climbers' Club, for long its President and never far from its councils, President also of the Alpine Club, he has occupied the highest offices in the Established Church of mountaineering but always with a sense that he might take his scrip and staff back to the desert; a strain of the dervish differentiated him from hierarchies as a prophet is different from a high priest.

That he is an artist the routes he pioneered or linked show sufficiently, and his pen of course confirms. No more than Sir Thomas Browne or Walter Pater does he shrink from a purple passage. His craftsmanship, as conscious and deliberate as theirs, enables him to be as accurate as Bradshaw in the midst of brilliant evocation of scenes and sensations. He can bring the hills, and the smell of heather or warm rock back to the reader's fireside.

A reviewer must not allow admiration to blunt his criticism. There is, I think, a minor flaw in that the author seems uncertain at times whether he is writing for a private circle or a wider public. While this is engaging to the reader it may confuse the historian.

The author cannot again write the story of his one-legged climbing, which to the world may well be the finest of his works, but he must have many more chapters to give us of the quality of "Mount Brandon in Ireland." We await them confidently and eagerly; some, perhaps, we may even secure for this Journal.

Some of the pictures are fine, but those we value most are those of historical and personal interest, such as the snap of Herford and Mallory at Pen-y-pass in 1912. Only 40 years ago, but an ocean of history lies between. Much of this history for us, is in G. W. Young and this, his latest book.

A HISTORY OF MOUNTAINEERING IN THE ALPS. By Claire Eliane Engel. (Allen and Unwin. 21/-.)

The most serious fault of this book is that, to a degree not pardonable in a serious history, it suffers from avoidable inaccuracies of fact. Many of these, it is true, are trivial and would certainly have escaped the present reviewer had they not already been listed (to the tune of

several pages) by a more meticulous critic ;* but there is, nevertheless, a considerable basic residue which will obtrude itself on any reasonably well-informed reader. Mlle. Engel has been unfair to herself in permitting such a crop of errors, since they inevitably go far to conceal the amount of scholarly work which she has devoted to her subject. The impression one has is that much care has been given to the collection of material but very little to the revision of the manuscript, which appears to have been written without easy access to many of the sources ; and the effect is, naturally, to reduce the value of the book as an authoritative history.

The importance of this defect should not be exaggerated. The history of mountaineering is not an examination subject, and Alpine scholars are relatively few. It is more significant that Mlle. Engel has written a book which all mountaineers can read with profit and enjoyment. The larger matters of Alpine history are treated with both feeling and knowledge, and at many points the author is evidently embodying the results of original research. The narrative is restrained but in no way dull, and the proportions of the different parts of the story are admirably balanced. The book gains in interest for Englishmen by being written by a Frenchwoman, who, without belittling the English contribution, is not concerned with the achievements of any one nationality.

The last three chapters form something of an anti-climax. That entitled "Mountains in War-time" relates a few episodes of great interest, but one feels that their place should have been in an appendix. It is, incidentally, a minor failing of the book that, in contexts unrelated to the war, Mlle. Engel sometimes fails to write objectively about Germans. The chapter, "Mountains and Literature," is primarily concerned with the shortcomings of mountaineering fiction and suggestions for its improvement ; it should surely have been omitted. The concluding chapter is rather perfunctory. The illustrations are well chosen and admirably reproduced.

A. D. M. Cox.

BERGE DER WELT. Sixth Volume, 1951. Published by the Schweizerische Stiftung für Alpinische Forschungen. Edited by Marcel Kurz.

The Swiss have produced one more beautifully illustrated, detailed and comprehensive book. Marcel Kurz complains, in his preface, of the difficulty of getting mountaineers to show the same enthusiasm in recording as in climbing their mountains. All the more praise then to the Editor and his assistants, who have not only collate but to fill in some of the gaps (for instance in the Abi Gamin account) themselves.

The book is again in two parts. The first contains articles on Abi Gamin, by Dr. Chevalley ; Annapurna, by Louis Lachenal ; and

* A. J., No.282 May, 1951.

Tirich Mir, by Per Kvernberg. There are two masterly essays by André Roch : one, illustrated, on the measurement of glacier movement ; one on the purgatorial second ascent of Mount Logan. Piero Ghiglione writes of a winter expedition in Peru, and there is a long account of the 1950 Baffin Land Expedition. This part ends, rather curiously, with an account of Greek mountaineering by Jacques Santorineos.

To most of us the "Rundschau," or review of world mountaineering in 1950, will be the most interesting part of the book. The exploration described vies in thoroughness with the industry of collation, which is up to the standard expected of a Swiss production. The mountains range from North America to New Zealand ; from the Caucasus to the Patagonian Cordillera. And the adventures pass correspondingly from the grim loss of J. W. Thornley and W. H. Crace on Nanga Parbat, to the cat on the top of the Matterhorn which "admired the view, and had chosen the best day of the summer for its expedition." For mountain oddities make their appearance too, whether the Italian project of a funicular up the Furggrat, or the astounding, vision-inspired journey of the theosophist Miss Bevan over the Dongkya La into Tibet.

There is no space here to give details of the scientific information, the maps and the excellent photographs which luxuriate through the book. It is a well-bound volume, pleasant to handle and not too large. As a work of reference it can certainly be called, like its predecessors, a gold mine for those who have access to it.

WILFRID NOYCE.

REGARDS VERS L'ANNAPURNA. By Maurice Herzog and Marcel Ichac.
(B. Arthaud, Paris.)

This is a volume of some 80 photographs taken during the course of the 1950 French Expedition which climbed Annapurna. The photographs are mostly by Marcel Ichac, though some are by Gaston Rebuffat and other hands. There is an introductory essay by Maurice Herzog.

The photographs are superb. We would ourselves have preferred the omission of the last few pictures, but they do tell part of the story. For the story in full we must await Herzog's forthcoming book, in the meantime the reader is referred to his article in the November, 1951, issue of the *A.J.*, itself the substance of a talk given to the A.C. the previous month.

The photographs and the accompanying notes do not of course give an account of the expedition but they do give a background and understanding. They fulfil admirably the two desiderata of photography, record and beauty. The record is that of a brilliant success followed by a macabre retreat, the beauty is that of the high Himalaya.

THE SCOTTISH HIMALAYAN EXPEDITION. By W. H. Murray. (Dent. 30/-.)

When, as too often occurs, a book on a Himalayan expedition opens with a long and dreary account of depressing approach marches, I skip through the opening chapters, take a passing technical interest in the description of the actual climbing and only accompany the writer as far down as Base Camp on his return journey. Happily this does not apply to Murray's account of the 1950 Scottish Himalayan Expedition. The Garwhal Himalaya having been chosen, the writing does ample justice to what is acknowledged to be the most beautiful region of the whole great chain. In the valleys we are spared long-winded rhapsodies brimming over with milk and honey ; rather do revelations of beauty appear as naturally in the book as they did to the author, in brief, unexpected and often trivial instances. An example is his fleeting vision of a cloud-girt Nanda Devi which in turn is revealed to us briefly, but with great force. Obviously written by a man who takes an intense interest in human nature we are treated to many a shrewd and penetrating character study. The over-zealous Swami (Hindu priest) was quite delicious ; the porters were old friends by the end of the book.

The expedition itself, considering that it was their first Himalayan venture, manifested extraordinary balance and maturity in eschewing the obvious temptation to attempt one of the mammoth peaks. Recognising the fact, not easily palatable to the British or Alpine school, that the Himalayas involve much travelling and little climbing, they enjoyed four months of mountain exploration, during which time, nevertheless, nine peaks were attempted and five attained. The strength of the party is well known so that on each occasion when they were stopped on a route by pure mountaineering difficulties it is sufficient evidence that the climb really would not go.

Of his Dotial porters Murray's praise is unstinted. Goodwill is two-way traffic and that the men gave such cheerful and devoted service is testimony not only of the inherent goodness of the hillfolk but also a very clear indication that the Sahibs' conduct and genuineness evoked this selfless service. I envy and admire the enterprise of these four Scots, none of whom are blessed with extensive private means, who decided to leave their jobs for the expedition. "We had to make a choice of values. Mountains or money. We chose mountains."

Listening to lectures by Murray and Wier had made me thoroughly familiar with the events, yet I still enjoyed the book immensely for the very good reason that it is so well written. Murray writes with more assurance and lightness than in his earlier works and although deeply interested in Hindu philosophy he wisely (but I suspect only just) refrains from indulging in a chapter on Man and the Universe. It is pleasing to read that Murray is now fully occupied in the profession of writing. Good Climbing, good writing ; what more can we ask ?

M. E. B. BANKS.

THE DOLOMITES. By C. Douglas Milner. (Robert Hale. 25/-.)

To review a book on one's own pet subject is indeed a pleasure especially so when the author's views are almost identical with one's own. As Mr. Milner says in the opening paragraph of one chapter "A great deal of nonsense has been talked about the Dolomites . . ." This is certainly very true, and Milner's Dolomites should go a long way to break down many of the old prejudices and cast a little light on a darker region of the Alps.

Briefly, the book may be divided into three sections—the Dolomite country, its rock climbing or, dare I say, mountaineering aspects, and lastly the photographs. The photographs I mention last to stress that the book is so much more than a photographic album although these are on the whole a magnificent selection. Through all the sections one is struck by the author's liberal outlook. He sees no virtue in austerity for its own sake and appreciates the great advantages, on the whole, that modern roads have given to this vast area. Again in the mountaineering section he pours no scorn on pitons and modern methods, even though he probably does not have any great sympathy with them himself. This last point is one which Mr. Milner has rightly stressed to counter the strange ideas held by some who believe the rocks to bristle with pitons, and mountaineers to be more like engineers.

There are only one or two points with which I wish to quibble, the main one being in the classification and comparison of routes. Mr. Milner gives the impression that sixth grades automatically involve the double rope technique. This is not so, and to give one example only I would quote Gervasutti on the E. face of the Sass Maor. "On this route rope tactics are neither possible nor necessary."

This is not an isolated case. An omission which I regret is that Mr. Milner gives no comparative lengths of the routes, stating only that they are short compared with the Western Alps. True, most certainly, in the majority of cases, but a little misleading to ignore such faces as the Spiz d'Agner Nord—a mere 1,700 metres and considerably higher than the Brenva face of Mont Blanc.

Of the 150 photographs little need be said, except to praise 140 of them and wish that the author hadn't tried to make up the round number with one or two rather inferior ones. The wider views are first rate, whilst the two portraits of guides, the young and the old, convey at a glance the great change that has taken place in one generation.

For all who already know the Dolomites no further introduction is required, but to those who are not so fortunate I thoroughly recommend this book.

P. W. W. Nock.

WALKING IN THE ALPS. By T. Hubert Walker. 9 in. × 6 in. 274 pages. 33 photographs and 12 sketch maps. (Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh and London, 1951. 25/-.)

This is a practical selective guide-book of less service to the spoon-fed

travellers, who engage in the fashionable land cruises, than even its title may suggest. It is written for the prospective Alpinist.

The book arose out of the author's experiences in meeting Alpine aspirants while he was lecturing at camp sites during the war, and it succeeds in its object of telling these enthusiasts where to walk and climb in a selected number of Alpine areas. Anyone, especially those with little time and money to spare for a refreshing holiday, who wishes to visit the Alps for walking and climbing will find here all the information and encouragement he needs. There is a notable lack of recent English guides to the less popular Alpine groups and this book should prove a standard reference for many years to the Pennine, Lepontine, Ticino, Bregaglia, Bernina, Adamello-Presanella, Ortler, Otztal, and Stubai groups.

For each group is given a general description of its structure, the means of access, a walker's circuit through the valleys and passes, and a high level route for climbers. The route descriptions are written as personal experiences of continuous day to day jaunts, for Mr. Walker is a wanderer, not a "centrist." He states his preferences, but does not avoid mentioning alternatives. The uninitiated venturer would have appreciated a key map of the Alps as an index to the excellent series of simple maps on a scale of between some two and four miles to the inch that cover each mountain group.

The reading will appeal to the naturalist, for there is much about the earth and its sculpture ; in contrast to most guide-books there is very little history.

The photographs are well chosen to show the structure, character and beauty of each region. The lists of huts and inns should prove useful on tour, indeed it might have been preferable to have produced the book in a form that was more suitable for the rucksack.

W. H. WARD.

KINDER, ROCHES AND NORTHERN AREAS. (Willmer Bros., Birkenhead. 9/-.)

This latest, and probably last, gritstone guide covers all the outcrops not included in the previous two. The crags in question are well spread out over a good portion of Northern England, and again the authors have done the work well, achieving a remarkable uniformity of standard. They have in many cases done fine exploratory work on cliffs both new and old, and also in many club Journals, etc. The very complete bibliography testifies to the latter, and research there provides evidence of the former.

The sketches, diagrams and photographs are so excellent that the text even seems a little superfluous in one or two places, but the style, in the Roches and Almscliff areas particularly, justifies its presence.

In the Almscliff section it seems odd that both Bird's Nest and Frankland's Traditional are graded severe. Bird's Nest is possible in motor-cycling kit. But possibly the disparity is merely due to the author's

ability—he just did not notice them. Here also the climbs are numbered in a way calculated to confuse. Had they been consecutive in both text and diagram it would be less wearing than to read, for instance : 40, 49, 37, 34, 36, 32, 33, 32A.

The Kinder area benefits from a good sketch map (although it could well have been continued farther to the south) but has a serious omission—the Crowder Gates jump. This is surely a better feat than any Carlins Leap, although it is scarcely a rock climb. And again no index.

A. J. J. MOULAM.

ALPINE JOURNAL, May, 1951.

CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL, 1950-51.

CAMBRIDGE MOUNTAINEERING, 1951.

FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB JOURNAL, 1951.

LADIES' SCOTTISH CLIMBING CLUB ANNUAL RECORD, 1950-51.

MOUNTAINEERING, September, 1951.

RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL, 1951.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL, 1951.

WAYFARERS' JOURNAL, 1950.

There are upwards of 90 articles in this batch of Journals, without counting Alpine Notes, The Year with the Club, and so forth. The greater number, as usual, are straightforward accounts of climbs, telling us how pitches were forced, steps cut, sandwiches eaten and jokes cracked, and persuading us that everybody had a good time and what a pity it is that we weren't there. Good examples are G. S. Bower's *Ascents and Attempts*, in the *Rucksack Club Journal*, and J. D. Goldsworthy's *Some Grindelwald Climbs*, in the *Wayfarers' Journal*. For the nostalgic reader, seated within sight of St. Pancras Station, in early January, these are probably the most enjoyable kind of contributions. But that reader, in his capacity as reviewer, hopes that he can commend them and make his task more manageable by concentrating on the less standard articles.

Even so, there are too many. Will a generalising and impressionistic approach dispose of them quickly enough?

One's impression of the Cairngorm Club is of men, robust and dripping wet (W. D. Brooker and party), excavating bivouac caves (M. Smith) and carrying immense loads for the repair of Corrour Bothy (G. A. Taylor). The Fell and Rock's contributors, on the other hand, though they live in igloos on Esk Hause (D. Atkinson), also reflect on local history (Katharine Chorley) and paint (W. Heaton Cooper).

But this is hardly a review. It doesn't make clear, for instance, that all the articles mentioned are rather good ones. Nor does it do justice to the variety of the *Fell and Rock Climbing Club Journal*, which also contains its usual excellent photographs, some entertaining tailpieces by Joan Tebbutt and a lively account by W. Greenhalgh of getting a party of schoolboys from Saas Grund to the summit of Mont Blanc. And

one could hardly leave this Journal without mentioning Fergus Graham's *Once Upon a Time*—a reminiscent account of his earlier climbing, in which he makes the unprecedented admission that his particular Golden Age was perhaps less golden than some others. He implies that he never felt able to lead more than trifling climbs on insignificant crags ; novices should be warned not to take this too literally and treat Javelin Buttress as a boulder problem to be lightly jumped off. The most remarkable feature of the article, however, is the conclusion that climbing is "after all the finest earthly activity man has yet discovered." It is inspiring—if not altogether convincing—to see Plato, Newton, Bach, Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Buddha and the 12 apostles thus firmly put in their places.

The editor of the *Wayfarers' Journal* suggests that northern clubs should consider producing a joint Journal. Certainly he could combine with the editor of the *Rucksack Club* without much change of flavour in their publications. These two clubs seem to live by taking in one another's members. But, judging by a few tart comments on the Fell and Rock Club in the *Rucksack Club Journal*, at least one hatchet will have to be buried.

H. W. Tilman writes for the *Wayfarers* of his trip to Sinkiang—about which Shipton wrote in the *Alpine Journal* last year—and is typically readable, E. W. Hodge gives an account of the climbing to be found in Ireland, and A. St. G. Walsh tells us how we may systematically capture all the 2,000-footers of England and Wales. P. Hodgkinson begins defiantly : "Alpine literature often treats the town of Chamonix with contumely . . . yet to Chamonix we went ; and I am very glad we did, for we looked for the first time upon mountains which had been stripped of romanticism and shorn of sentimentality." Yet his description of the straw in the Biolay refuge as "clean" can only be the effect of the grossest sentimentality—*nostalgie de la boue*, in fact. But he does convince us that even the best known peaks (yes, the Grépon and Mont Blanc and the Requin) need not be seen as hackneyed.

The *Rucksack Club Journal* is notable for the reprint of a lecture by Patrick Monkhouse on *The Future of Preservation*, a considered piece of work which really makes one think about the nature of British hill scenery. In passing he strikes a shrewd blow at the sheep worshippers ; if he has his way we shall soon have a Shorthorn Chimney to balance Herdwick Buttress. F. M. Little on *Mountains and Music* starts promisingly : "I will limit my enquiry to considering how far an art, and in particular music, is akin to natural adventure, in particular mountaineering," but unfortunately disappoints us. The investigation of the emotional appeal of two kinds of experience could be suggestive and his dismissal of simple equations of rhythm and of programme music, if elementary, is useful as clearing the ground. But, alas, the expected analysis does not materialise and we are left with : "The storms and calms of every Pennine edge and clough are to be found in the *Appassionata* and the *Moonlight* sonatas." That may be, but we

had hoped for something more than private associations. E. M. Forster has told us that he finds the *piu allegro* of the *Appassionata* "sexual" and so, unless we are prepared to accept an equation between all vigorous and enjoyable activities as a valuable conclusion, we shall want something more precise and limiting than we are offered.

It is difficult to decide whether the brevity of articles in *Cambridge Mountaineering* is deliberate. It is certainly striking. C. M. G. Smith (after an encyclopaedic title which presumably contains a private C.U.M.C. joke) is up and down the Meije before we know we've crossed the schrund, K. Snelson is curtly practical about the Himalayas, A. Tissières gets to Abi Gamin (but not, in this journal, up it) in three and a half pages and R. L. Oliver disposes of the Venezuelan Andes in the same space. The effect is of sudden, dashing assaults, headlong—but controlled—descents, wild scampers in the Alps, Himalayas, Pyrenees, Highlands, Andes and Lofoten Islands.

Except for G. A. Horridge. Here the reviewer becomes linguistically subdued to what he works in. Stark ruth it was that this wayfaring man, hight Horridge, *per rupes tremendas*, a cold coming had of it, just on the longest day of the year, too, and what a day, *nessun maggior dolore*, grasping *le bloc résistant*. Hold this article light may who ne'er reviewed it. But he should either have arranged for better proof reading or refrained from quoting in the *langue d'oc*. Surely artful allusions to Hopkins, Lancelot Andrewes (or Eliot?), Blake, Dante (or Eliot?) and echoes of Doughty, T. E. Lawrence and J. M. Synge are enough without Arnaut Daniel (i.e. Dante, or Eliot?). No; it doesn't work; and it's a pity, because when he disentangles himself from the encumbrances he can write so as to make us see the hills. There is something debasing, too, in this patchwork of quotation. Mountains may be personally important for many of us, otherwise we should hardly spend our time writing or reading reviews of Journals; but to suggest that our feeling for them is of the same order of seriousness as the issues of the *Purgatorio* is frivolity. The "cliffs of fall" of Hopkins, which Horridge assimilates to Coire na Creiche, are deeper than anything that Skye has to offer, considerably deeper.

The compensatory chauvinism of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* is as pronounced as ever. It tempts an Englishman to refer to W. H. Murray's admirably clear account of his party's exploits as the North British Himalayan Expedition Story. This same expedition, by the way, appears in the more scholarly pages of the *Alpine Journal* as a Garhwal and Kumaon Expedition. Elsewhere in the *Scottish Journal* there are accounts of climbing in Scotland, Antarctica, Greenland and Central Africa; in the two last there are said to be mountains resembling the Zinal Rothorn—perhaps that fine peak is going to replace the overworked Matterhorn as a standard comparison. Two practical contributions are those by Frank Cunningham on the rock climbs done in the Northern Highlands since the publication of the 1936 guide, and by Alexander Harrison on *The First Season in the Alps*. The latter spends rather a lot of time emphasising that, for the Scottish trained climber,

"the most important difference is the existence of large areas of snow and ice at high altitudes," which even the most parochially-minded mountaineer may be expected to know already, and consequently he cannot be as detailed as one would like in the second half of his survey, which deals with foreign alpine clubs, the kinds of arrangements which can be made with hotels, reduced railway fares and so forth. In particular he might have added a warning that many hut guardians forbid the use of petrol stoves and make their owners squat in the cold dark outside. His information about reciprocal arrangements between continental clubs is happily out of date and they are now considerably wider.

Mountaineering, affected like several of these Journals by the disasters of last Easter, devotes a good deal of its space to a discussion of accidents and their prevention. This number is, indeed, a warning one and deals with the threat of the hydro-electric scheme in Wales, the cable railway on the Matterhorn, the defection of Scottish clubs from the B.M.C., and mildew in old rope. There is a lot of meat crammed into 32 pages.

One is struck by the absence in the *Alpine Journal* of any articles about climbing in the Alps, except for an historical note by G. R. de Beer on Albrecht von Haller and J. Monroe Thorington's commemoration of the centenary of Albert Smith's ascent of Mont Blanc. Arne Naess writes of the successful Norwegian attempt on Tirich Mir, W. H. Murray of his expedition to Garhwal and Kumaon, and H. W. Tilman of the Annapurna Himal and the South side of Everest. These need no recommendation and the last is particularly interesting in the light of the experience of Shipton's more recent reconnaissance. E. Coddington continues his exhaustive *Hydrographic Approach to the Alps*, and R. P. Mears and the late P. J. H. Unna discuss the breaking of ropes.

Now, duty done and 39 contributions mentioned, we can return for amusement to those odd sidelights which may reveal the characters of clubs more than their formal contributions. Such is the photograph in an advertisement in *Cambridge Mountaineering* of five empty charabancs on the great lawn of Kings and such is the variation in the Grenfell cloth advertisements. In the *Alpine Journal* it is recommended as "practically part of the scenery"; in *Cambridge Mountaineering* nothing is said of this but it is announced "in a range of appropriate shades." Is the implication that it is hopeless to try to camouflage members of the C.U.M.C. and so one had best try to decorate them? But what *are* the appropriate shades?

DOUGLAS HEWITT.

AMERICAN ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Issue 25), 1951.

APPALACHIA, June 1951.

CANADIAN ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. 34, 1951.

HIMALAYAN JOURNAL, Vol. 16, 1950-51.

NEW ZEALAND ALPINE JOURNAL, Vol. 14 (No. 38), 1951.

SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN, Vol. 36, No. 5, 1951.

JOURNAL OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA, No. 53, 1950.

As a foreword it is important, perhaps, to take note of the status of these various journals. The American, Canadian, New Zealand, and South African Journals are produced by the leading Club in each of these countries and presumably, therefore, represent their leading mountaineering opinions. We obtain a picture of the state of the development of the sport and an interesting series of comparisons and contrasts between these widely separated mountaineering worlds. The *Himalayan Journal* differs from the others in that it is published in England, yet it remains the official journal of Himalayan mountaineering. The *Sierra Bulletin* and *Appalachia* are produced by more local organisations in America and are primarily devoted to these two large natural areas. Their members do, however, climb elsewhere on the North American continent.

The *American Alpine Journal* has a much wider coverage than any of the others with articles on Everest, the Andes (Yerupaja) and Bavaria as well as many different places in North America. In this respect it approaches the *Alpine Journal* as a general work on mountaineering. The North American expeditions include snow and ice on Mounts Waddington, Erasmus and Adamant and extremely difficult rock on Thor Peak and the Grand Teton. The notes on new rock climbs indicate a sensational advance in standards and the use of novel methods—rock drills, expansion bolts, tension climbing, etc., which have not yet put in an appearance in this country. There is also an article on belaying and some notes on clothing which deserve our earnest attention. In view of all these developments both in technique and in rope work, it seems most important that some sort of survey of them should be made in order that British climbers can make the best use of any real advances which do take place. The Club might perhaps appoint a small committee for this purpose. British climbing technique, while it continues to advance in its own particular way, might well benefit from the introduction of outside ideas.

Appalachia has a definitely local flavour and is unlikely to make much appeal to British climbers unless they know something of the country concerned. There is, however, an exceedingly interesting account of a lone attempt on Everest in 1946 by Earl Denman. With two Sherpa porters he penetrated Tibet without permission and reached the foot of the North Col before turning back. The following incident, described briefly in the notes, surely calls for a full article in a future number. An Air Force pilot landed a small plane fitted with skis on the summit of Mount Rainier (14,363 feet) in mid-winter. He hoped to take-off again from here and so establish a record, but found he was unable to because of the altitude. He therefore "pushed his plane over the edge of the crater and glided down the mountain. He gave the plane a push, hopped in and just as it went over the edge of a bad

drop became airborne." The affair was very unpopular with all the authorities concerned.

The *Canadian Alpine Journal* deals entirely with North American climbing, some of its articles as usual give accounts of expeditions also described in the *American Alpine Journal*. We can only envy them the superb opportunities for mountaineering—including the ascent of virgin summits—which Canada still has to offer, particularly now the aeroplane can be used to dump party and stores near the foot of the peak, thus eliminating the days of foot slogging formerly needed. In this number the Badshot Range, the Adamant Range, Neptune and the Windy Range, Unnamed Peak—Silver Creek, Fire Lake, etc., all provide their new climbs and their narratives.

The *Himalayan Journal* describes the French, Swiss, Norwegian and Scottish expeditions to the Himalayas during 1949 and 1950. These make the greatest range of mountains in the world sound like an international sporting arena and conjure up visions of the "World Cup." Annapurna, conquered by the French, is the first of the 8,000-metre peaks to be climbed.

Apart from one article on Switzerland, the *New Zealand Alpine Journal* is devoted entirely to home climbing. Once again the great possibilities for exploration in the more remote parts of the Islands leave us envying their opportunities. The weather, as is well known, is unusually bad even by Welsh standards. The Club has an active hut policy and is providing small bivouac shelters in remote places at a very modest cost. An account of the erection of one of these (cost £261) is given. It was prefabricated and dropped close to the site by aeroplane. The completed hut is 10 feet \times 7 feet and holds eight climbers. Unfortunately there are no parts of Britain sufficiently far from civilisation to be able to do the same sort of thing here. In some of our mountain areas the fate of sundry existing huts, even when locked, bolted and shuttered, gives an idea of what would happen.

The most impressive part of the *Sierra Club Bulletin* is that dealing with the rock climbing of California. A party of two took four and a half days to climb the upper 1,500 feet of the Sentinel Rock in the Yosemite valley, with 25 leads, 156 pitons and nine contraction bolts. Fortunately for this sort of thing the weather can be relied on to stay fine—in fact, it was too hot and the party suffered somewhat from lack of water. The 500-foot Castle Rock Spire in Sequoia National Park was conquered by such pitches as "a 60-foot chimney requiring a ladder of pitons, a 100-foot crack which took six hours and eight pitons, etc." There are interesting articles, too, on snow and ice mountaineering. Once again we have the aeroplane—"Anyone who has ever depended heavily on air support knows the feeling of both feast and famine. One minute you are running for your life to avoid being killed by showers of fresh fruit and gunny sacks full of fresh rolls and juicy meat. The next you are almost out of food and fuel and five men are huddled together in a three-man tent, trying to keep warm because the pilots dropped your stuff by mistake at a camp 10 miles away." Also

there is the snow jeep which can sometimes do 20 miles per hour and at other times is stopped by a small chasm that a man in snowshoes can cross easily by jumping. Other topics in this number include information on building log cabins and some acrimonious correspondence on the subject of landing aeroplanes in National Parks.

The *Journal of the Mountain Club of South Africa* is another which confines itself entirely to home climbing. There, too, the standards are high and the rock work exacting, though perhaps with not quite as much mechanics as in America. There is another important article on belaying and safeguarding which emphasises again the importance of ensuring that we keep abreast of developments of this sort taking place all over the world. The South Africans use a sort of "numerical" system of classification of climbing difficulty, using actually the letters A to F to cover the present standards. As the numerical system is also used in America and in most Continental countries, it will be interesting to see how much longer the British adjectives (just hard very severe, etc. etc.) will survive now that everyone else is out of step.

These various journals give us an insight into a mountaineering world that is different from our own, yet each of them would be pleasant to join and readers of this Journal who had for any reason to visit these other countries would not be disappointed in the sport to be found there. It is significant that none of these journals reviews our own, even though several of them admit to receiving it. This gives us some idea of the interest that the various clubs feel in British climbing as typified in our pages. If the interest of our readers in these journals only attains a comparable level, which would not be surprising, it may well be that this review is a waste of time and space which could better be employed on matters of more general interest.

E. C. PYATT.

We would also draw attention to two books somewhat outside our usual scope: *Headlong down the Years*, by Amabel and Clough Williams-Ellis, and *Venture into the Interior*, by Laurens van der Post.

The latter admirably recounts, *inter alia*, the exploration of two mountainous areas in Nyasaland; it is a fascinating and illuminating book.

Headlong down the Years brings Peacock (Meredith's father-in-law, not our member, who has a final "e") to the rescue of Snowdonia. It is the most amusing and therefore probably the most effective attack on the Hydro-Electric Schemes. Mr. Richard Hughes (alias Hurricane ap Owen) winds up with a cogent Admiralty minute which provides in brief all the ammunition needed to blow the beastly Schemes out of the water. "Twenty million pounds, every penny of it spent on conspicuous disfigurement, can be made to go a long way."

But, alas, what boots it with uncessant care to disprove once more, to demonstrate the fallacies and falsities, to use with skill both meaningful language and emotive noises to convince that the Schemes are both

wicked and wasteful. No man, no nor woman neither, wishes the destruction of North Wales. No statesman backs the Schemes, no party favours them, no writer praises, no section of the press supports, informed opinion unanimously condemns, yet are we in great danger. This is a measure of our de-humanised collectivist plight. The Schemes have behind them the black weight of official mediocrity and this monstrous power of darkness can achieve almost any objective on which it is blindly directed. Their eyeless, headless, mindless anonymity is their strength. The mindless cannot be informed, the blind cannot be enlightened. The armour of self-righteousness ("we have no interest but the public interest") is very potent proof. All efforts must therefore be bent to convince the few, the Ministers, the Editors, the Members of both Houses, who have some power to stop (if not to direct) the mindless machine, the bulldozer of bureaucracy.

A specific Act of Parliament has been passed with the approval of all parties to set up National Parks and to prevent just this horror which is upon us. The irresponsible statutory Authority rides over such obstacles as a tank obliterates a chicken run.

This is a test case, this case of B.E.A. v. The Queen's Subjects ; the issue is whether organised interest or public interest is to prevail. It is our money, your money, they are spending on these plans to destroy our country, your country. Have we nothing to lose but our chains ? We have, by the skin of our teeth, Snowdonia. If we all raise our arms and clank our chains together, we may yet frighten the monster, for fear can penetrate where reason cannot.

If we lose this battle we have set up the Pigs as our Masters as surely as did the poor beasts of Mr. Orwell's "Animal Farm."

It would be a pity if sabotage were to become the last refuge of a gentleman.

The Editor also acknowledges with thanks :

Irish Mountaining Club, 40 South Hill, Milltown, Dublin. Climbers Guides—I Bray Head, IV Ben Corr. Cyclostyled booklets describing routes ; similar in general scheme to C.C. Climbers' Guides. Planinski Vestnik (4 Nos.).

Mountain Club of Uganda : Rules and Information for intending climbers of the Ruwenzori and Mt. Elgon.

BULLETIN OF MOUNTAIN CLUB OF KENYA : December, 1951.

MOUNTAINCRAFT, January, 1952 ; The Mountaineering Association.

APPALACHIA, December, 1951.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor, "Climbers' Club Journal."

DEAR SIR,

I have read with interest the letter of J. N. Mills in the 1951 *Journal*, and feel that perhaps it behoves me, as Editor of the Club's Guide-Books, to say something in reply.

The evergreen controversy of guide-book versus non-guide-book has flourished ever since the days when Geoffrey Winthrop Young inspired the first guides, with the feeling, as he says, that they had become a regrettable necessity. Most writers and editors of guide-books probably agree that in an ideal world their existence would be doubtful. They are, however, the best arrangement in a bad world; since there is a demand for them which should be satisfied in a sensible rather than misleading way, and since they provide information which can show newcomers and others where they may most safely and profitably go.

There is one point which is often lost from view in this controversy. Nobody is *compelled* to use the new guide-books. Either, if you like to have a description like "An easy line follows an obvious groove . . ." you may enjoy very pleasant and instructive climbing with the 1910 series of guide-books, which in their own way are masterpieces. Or you can throw guide-books to the winds, and climb over the cliffs of Cader Idris or Moel yr Hydd with all the *elan* of the early pioneers in Snowdonia. Guide-books are written for those who want them, not for those who don't.

The phrase which seems especially to have filled Mr. Mills with foreboding is that in the author's Preface to "Outlying Crags of Wales" (1950 *Journal*): "Complete and exhaustive works in the latter style (of the present series) can follow in later years." They *can* follow, but by no means need. It depends entirely on the policy of the Club at a future time. So far as the present goes, my own feeling and that of some others was that a guide to the outlying areas would be useful, not because it led to a complete working out of all cliffs, but in the hope that it might draw away just some of those nail-scratching crowds from Idwal, which Mr. Mills appears to dislike. In furthering this hope E. C. Pyatt has done an excellent and useful work. For up to date it has always surprised me, how many frequenters of the C.C. huts seemed to be unaware that there was climbing at all south of Siabod or west of Beddgelert.

The climbers of the next generation, if they are drawn by the guide to visit outlying districts, will be in a position to choose whether or not any further guide to these districts is needed. And I for one feel very happy to leave the choice to them.

Yours, etc.,

WILFRID NOYCE.

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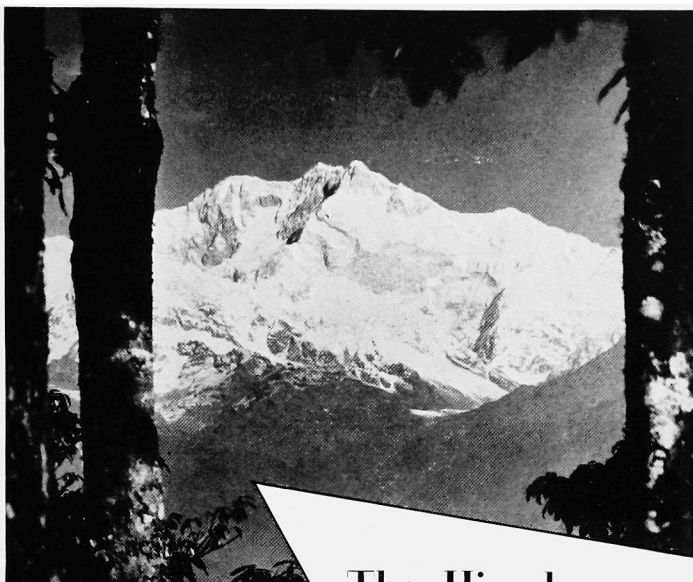
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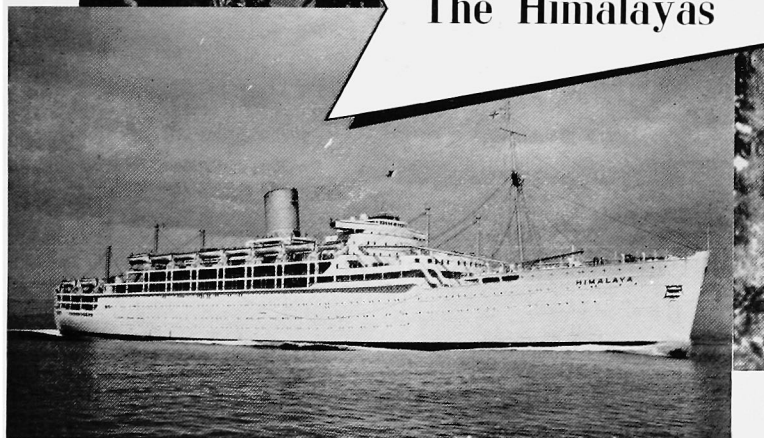
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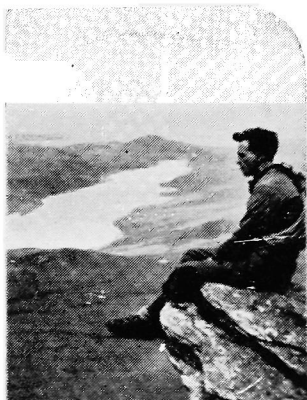
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