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*Gerald Lacey*

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# STORMLIGHT AMONG THE FELLS

*W. T. Palmer*

On a rough, boisterous and rainy day the stormlights playing among the high Lakeland fells are wonderful indeed. They compensate for an occasional wetting, for a struggle with wind and rattle of drops. The gleam among the ridges finds a window through the clouds here, hangs a curtain across the hills there, drops out of view, a living thread, is merged and swamped in reflections from passing clouds. Always beyond the storm the sun is shining.

The stormlight is for ever shifting, altering tone, changing colour, attracting fresh characters, and attaining new power while you are still startled at the last passing phase. There is no repetition, no procession, no head, no tail, no cohesion, no development, no system, yet there is no chaos. Apparently the display would go on for ever if the dusk did not gather up the last arrows of light, and place them ready in the quiver for to-morrow's dawn.

William Wordsworth happily suggests the manifold mysteries of stormlights on the fells in his lines :—

> Stealthy withdrawing?, interminglings wild
> Of light and shade, in beauty reconciled.

In the poet's own Vale of Rydal we watch to-day constant flowings of light and shade, as the squalls gather beyond the ranges, darken the sky, then play tricks with the horizon. Now they come sweeping along, now blotting out an entire quarter with grey rain, now touching the fells with lights of blue and green, of purple and grey, now silvering the wet rocks and screes, now hanging jewels among moss and fern, now touching oak and birch, larch and pine, sycamore and ash and hawthorn, with rare beauty which also flows, a river of dull silver, along the buttresses where the wet bracken fronds are climbing.

Stormlights revel in the unexpected ; they may be termed erratic ; they come and go without scheme or science or reason, yet remain beautiful. The distant ridge turns blue,

black, or grey under the cloud shadow, the mist-vapour touches and sweeps around the slopes, and through the passes ; the peak may cut sharply against the sky, or be fused into a medley of floating, vanishing aerial foam.

> Slant, watery lights, from parting clouds, apace
> Travel along the precipice's base.

In one quarter of the sky the stormlight may glow as through a deep, illuminated window ; in another it may lower, threaten, turn red, and even seem to smoke as the gleam touches and passes through the whirling masses. Or it may fall entirely into the abyss hidden between the distant and the near object, and appear to be lost and forgotten.

On high peaks the stormlight has a fiercer splendour than from below. You are more in the heart of Nature ; you stand in the shop of the alchemist while the broth of storm is compounded, and see the mysteries almost at first hand. The unrestricted range of vision over mountain and vale gives fresh aspects, though perhaps the scene may be robbed of surprise and lose character on that account. You feel the brewing ot storm at a great distance ; you watch the currents break and form sops, avoiding this dale, roofing the next ; now a peak is in the stormlight, now it glitters in the pass between two ' cops,' and you see the plumes of white which are rain showers driving here and there, while the rest of the mountain tops is at peace. No ! for stormlights it is better to remain in the valley, and watch the passage over crags and ridges without being involved in the bitter air, the stronger blasts, and the sterner stress of the heights.

Of course, I love those more sweeping beams which proclaim the breaking-up of the storm, but they are steady and regular, never unruly manifestations, and the light hardens while the shadow slides and softens as it passed beyond, and the end of the day is Peace.

> objects, by the searching beams betrayed,
> Come forth, and here retire in purple shade ;
> Even the white stems of birc, the cottage white,
> Soften their glare before the mellow light.

# UNITY

All the jewelled islands ride
firm on this moon-haunted tide,
blue Atlantic Hebrides,
bright Aegean Cyclades.

The cloud that on Olympus rests
will clothe the Cordillera crests,
and snow on Monte Rosa turn
to Lakeland beck and Scottish burn.

The flowers of the Antipodes,
the sighing lichen-powdered trees
crowd in familiar regiments
in all our compassed continents.

And we shall turn from war's disgust,
and this dark prison of mistrust,
find life again on Lochnagar,
on Scafell and on Finsteraar.

Not slaves to time's dictatorship,
but free and kind relationship,
with mountain chains to span
the brotherhood of man.

*Marjorie Scott Johnston*

# THE LAST OF THE CLASSICS OR X=Y

*S. B. Beck*

It is not, I suppose, strange that in retrospect gullies should provide the most memorable rock-climbing expeditions, since what we experience when coldest, wettest, and most tired remains naturally enough most clearly in our memories. Thus it is that Walker's on Pillar and the ' C ' on the Screes as steady watercourses, various Great Gullies on different crags, but all ' demm'd moist and unpleasant,' Shamrock Gully and Birkness Chimney when their severe pitches were coated with ice, all stand out most vividly, together with occasional unsuccessful attempts—on that called Spiral in loose snow and that called Inaccessible before such name proved a misnomer. And thus it was, I suppose, that during days of sunshine and warm dry rocks on new ' face ' routes in Birkness Combe last summer, I found myself thinking more and more often of that long, impressive cleft not far away on the Haystacks, to the left of Warn and Stack Ghylls, the only remaining ' unknown quantity ' of such species, not on account of its unknownness designated X, but from its shape called Y—the last ' big ' unclimbed gully in Lakeland.

But I was far from optimistic. When my leader, William Peascod, had planned his attacks on the virgin face of Eagle Crag, his confidence and zest in their launching had not been lessened by any knowledge of the previous parties whose schemes had there been found to ' gang agley.' But **this** route must certainly have been assailed at some time in the hey-day of the gully epoch I felt sure. The new guide-book said simply that ' it has never been climbed,' but reference to the old, revealed that ' its ascent was attempted long ago, but abandoned owing to bad rock.' And as I studied the great names of those who had pioneered its neighbours, and who might therefore conceivably have attempted and abandoned this—the names of Oppenheimer, Sheldon, Botteril,

and even of 0. G. Jones—our chances of success seemed small.

Yet our judgments as we stood on the scree at its foot one fine May Sunday were as mixed as our feelings. The left arm of the Y offered little encouragement as it came to a premature end by merging into a smooth face, and the right and continuous arm was therefore our main concern. Its lower portion consisted mostly of a wide, shallow trough, of mingled rock and turf, and set at an apparently easy angle, its lower lip ending fifty feet above us, and its upper end topped by a rock wall not more than twenty feet in height. Above the latter a short indefinite section led to the foot of the upper portion, and there our gazes quailed as they traced it upwards. One clear-cut, deep, magnificent gash, black and forbidding, it seemed to curve forwards as it rose in a most intimidating manner. If the rock *there* was bad, no wonder its ascent was abandoned long ago ! ' Stevenson says " To travel hopefully is better than to arrive," ' I told Bill as we roped up. ' Pollitt says " these crags should be left severely alone," ' he replied.

The first few feet ' went' easily, and soon the Y had become a V. (Here a small chockstone suitable for a belay, was immediately perceptible, but the disadvantages of the stance, under a steady spray of cold water, I apprehended at my leisure.) One glance at the left arm sufficed, for it began with a long vertical chimney in which lumps of rock were insecurely embedded. Above us was a smooth wall. But on the right a thirty-foot slab set at right-angles to the face and with good holds, led us to a corner, and beyond that we entered the wide, shallow trough.

This was much more trying than it had appeared from below. The cleanest rock was in the channel on the left, where the waters had cut most deeply but scoured most smoothly ; on the right the trough merged into steep insecure turf ; and in the middle, on mingled rock and turf, the greatest care was necessary, for the angle was much steeper than

it looked. But after a belay had been ' gardened ' halfway up the trough, Bill worked his way cautiously up for fifty feet above me, and reached the short wall at its top, and came to a halt. There was no possibility of a belay below it, nor any good standing-ground, but only a smooth, shelving ledge, and it was even wetter, slimier, and more rotten and hopeless looking at close quarters than it appeared to me. And, after a brief inspection, he gloomily announced it to be slightly overhanging.

This was a considerable blow. We had hoped to attain the upper portion without serious difficulty, but now, as Bill found no weakness at its left, its middle, or its right-hand end, I began to wonder if our enterprise was ending before it had well begun, and even the reflection that probably other parties had turned back from the same barrier offered little consolation.

One hope yet remained to me. From a safe distance and the security of a belay, I gave it as my opinion that the short buttress on the right looked more feasible than this ' wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss.' On examination, Bill seemed to regard the buttress with equal distaste, and declared the rock to be especially bad—of which statement he proceeded to give instant demonstration by plucking forth sundry lumps of it and hurling them from him. They were aimed for the channel on my left, but several ricocheted uncomfortably near, and after a smallish one had zipped into the turf six inches from my nose, I was about to protest, but refrained on realising that the more he ' quarried,' the more determined he appeared to become.

And in truth, I had little breath to spare when, slowly and carefully, he began to feel his way up the buttress, pausing occasionally to study the line of ascent, or to cast down more loose rock. Nor had I any reply when, on approaching the vegetation above the buttress with only one final step to make, he called down, ' The handhold is loose, but all I need is confidence.' After all, what encouragement can a second

offer to a leader seventy feet above him, on doubtful and virgin rock, hesitating between advance and retreat ?

The endless minutes slowly passed, and at last the step was made, a fine pinnacle belay obtained thirty feet higher up steep grass, and it was my turn to climb. I had ample leisure to appreciate just what this pitch had involved for the leader. The wall itself offered no scope, even with a rope held from above, and after an extremely thin and airy movement to the right, I found the buttress to be much steeper than it had looked from below, the rocks to have an awkward tilt, the exposure to be troublesome and the technical difficulty considerable. After a balance movement upwards on sloping holds, it was necessary to hang on two spikes (fortunately sound), swing the feet across to the left, pull up, ease delicately upwards until the feet could be placed on the spikes, step up —and make that landing on vegetation. A pretty pitch, my masters, a very pretty pitch !

Fifty feet of grassy traverse to the left, and we were at the foot of the final cleft. For another fifty feet the angle of this was easy, but the rock was very bad and my belay extremely poor, so that I was glad when Bill reached a comfortable position underneath a chockstone. This was loose, but there was a good spike behind it, and at least it was welcome as a shelter from any falling stones. There were many, too, as Bill conducted further ' quarrying' operations above, but I could see them hurtle past me and hear them rebound in the trough, and then crash on the scree without discomfort —or rather, to be exact, without physical discomfort!

I could see nothing of what was happening above, however, and could judge of Bill's fortunes only by the rope either running out or coming slack, but I was not entirely surprised, after a considerable interval, to learn that he feared the final chimney would not ' go ' on this occasion. Anyway, would I come up and see ?

I would, and emerged from underneath, and passed above the chockstone on large sound soul-satisfying holds. (This

and the thirty-foot slab were the only sections of the 400 feet of Y Gully where they were found !) I joined Bill at an extremely uncomfortable position where everything sloped the wrong way, nothing was secure, and there was neither definite belay nor strong stance. Immediately above was an awkward bulge, and higher still the cleft became much more deeply-cut and narrow between smooth sheer walls. And the back of this chimney bore out our worst fears by curving *forwards,* so that it was necessary to bridge and work upwards and *outzvards.* And, to crown all, the rock was still bad. I do not think I have ever been in a more hopeless-looking place.

Before finally turning back, Bill tried a possible ' alternative finish.' An opening in the right wall led, by very delicate climbing, on insecure and outward-sloping knife edges, to a platform fifteen feet higher, but the crack that sprang from it looked equally hopeless, and there was nothing for it but retreat.

Only as far as the grassy traverse, however. Neither of us was eager to descend the short buttress, and we managed to escape on the right. And not even the ascent and crossing of a crazy ridge of badly-balanced flakes, a long sensational traverse above the depths of Warn Ghyll and the ascent of the face of disintegrating rock and vertical vegetation beyond it gave us any regrets as to our choice of route.

* * *

Was that chimney climbable ? Obviously the matter could not rest as it was. But to explore again from below entailed the leader doing so either from a discouragingly distant or from a practically non-existent belay. Neither prospect was alluring. But it might be possible to descend to the top of that chimney and explore it from above !

Our first visit ended in a complete set-back. We began by shirking the obvious and roundabout route to the top of the Havstacks and taking a short cut, which landed us in difficul-

ties, clinging to tufts of heather above steep drops with the evil reputation of this crag very prominently in mind. The rather earthy section which completes the gully was not difficult, but it had some dangerously-placed loose blocks in it, and though there was a comfortable standing position at the top of the chimney, with a big chockstone providing a thread ten feet above, and a small sound point of rock at one's elbow, they were two rather timid faces that peered nervously over the edge into the ' vast vacuity of air ' below. We had absolutely no stomach for continuing the descent, and retreated in some disorder.

* * *

But still the thing nagged at our minds. Only forty feet remained unclimbed. Otherwise the prize was within our grasp. We could not settle to other climbs, however attractive, without one further visit. But a final visit, we agreed. Overmuch work on doubtful rock in such trying situations is not good for morale. If the pitch would go, then it should go on this occasion. If not, we would leave the place alone.

In the meantime, a course of strengthening morale was carried through on carefully selected ' very severes.' The Pillar Girdle, we solemnly assured each other, had tested and improved our powers of endurance ; successful attacks on the East Buttress of Scafell and the Central Face of the Castle Rock of Triermain had accustomed us to overhanging rock above and vacancy below ; and certainly the Grooved Wall on Pillar in boots and continuous rain had called for strenuous effort. The appropriate rites had been performed, the time of trial was nigh.

Were our spirits thus really purified or was it a purely fortuitous combination of circumstances ? Whatever the cause, in the event the profundity seemed less profound, the walls of the temple less smooth and unyielding, its roof protruding less inhospitably above our heads. And, when the back was kept unwaveringly on the left wall, the feet of

the faithful found support on the right—and those supports were occasionally secure ! Slowly I watched my leader rise upwards and outwards in the prescribed manner, until he disappeared from my sight and signified in the usual way that I must follow. And thus it was that the devotees found their reward.

Relief mingled with gratification. We are glad to have done it ; we have at present no desire to do it again. Would it grow safer with repeated visits ? That is hard to say, but it cannot be recommended to further visitors. And, pleasing as is the thought that it is the last of its kind, and with however much affection I may regard my foster-child, for myself I cannot but share somewhat Paul Dombey's feelings towards his foster-parent when he learned that she, too, was unique—that ' there's nobody like me.' ' Ain't there really though ? ' asked Paul, leaning forward in his chair, and looking at her very hard. ' No,' said the old lady. ' I am glad of that,' observed Paul, rubbing his hands thoughtfully. ' That's a very good thing.'

# LOOKING BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS

*Bentley Beetham*

' To get the best view of the game one should have a place in the middle.' This sentence caught my eye while I was idly contemplating the past achievements and future possibilities of rock climbing in Cumberland. The appropriateness of the remark to the subject in mind immediately became apparent. In its context, ' middle ' here referred, of course, to place, to the centre of the touch line, but it is just as true if applied to time, to age. Of the long line of mountaineers at the one end there are those still with us who can remember the golden days of exploration in the Alps and the beginnings of rock climbing in the Lake District: enviable men who gloried in such sterling conquests as the North on Pillar, the Eagle's Nest, and Moss Ghyll. They can look backwards indeed, and glow again in the memory of the team work and close comradeship of those strenuous days of combined tactics. To them, developed amid such different ideals, much modern climbing may well seem individualistic, hazardous and unsociable, and sadly lacking in that wonderful team spirit which cemented so many life-long friendships in the past.

At the other end are the highly accomplished young men of the modern school ; enthusiasts who were weaned on ' difficults,' nurtured on ' severes,' and who now take pleasant exercise on ' eliminate ' routes, seeking diversion and entertainment in wet, loose and vegetation-covered rock, and on holdless slabs. They move rapidly on small holds up exposed faces, where belays are few or non-existent, taking run-outs of a 100 feet or more as a matter of course. Many are beautiful climbers with sound technique and perfect balance. Working often in pairs they climb quickly, perhaps covering as much as a thousand feet of rock in an afternoon. They are delightfully keen, abhorring any:hing

in the nature of a good stance or a jug-handle, and, so revelling in delicate movements on open faces, that chimneys and other light places are so repugnant to them they almost suffer from a species of climbing claustrophobia. How difficult it must be for them to appreciate the true joys of the gully epoch, when three men climbed on an eighty-foot rope, and movement was exceedingly slow—but safe !

In the middle stand men of the fifty mark, who, though their own experience stretches back far enough to put them in sympathetic touch with the pioneers, yet have many years of climbing in front of them, and are still young enough to look ahead and even to feel the eager urge of the immediate present with its love for speed, excitement, and quick achievement. These ' middle men ' can remember the coming of the rubber shoe and the heated, not to say acrimonious discussions which its advent produced in the smoke-rooms of the climbing hostelries. There were die-hards in those days who regarded a rubber as a thing so foul and sinister that it ought never to be allowed to desecrate our Lakeland rocks. To-day rubbers are standard equipment, and during the summer months probably more people climb in them than in any other foot-gear. About the same time crampons were stealing upon the feet of some, while others railed at them as the invention—and useless invention at that—of the devil himself ; to-day they are standard equipment for all ice expeditions.

These middle men were just in time to appreciate the influence that the Wasdale Head of old exerted on British climbing in its early days. As tyros they were probably lucky enough to be present at some of those impromptu reunions of the great which used to take place at Christmas or at Easter in the smoke-room of the inn. From their seat on the draughty floor, probably in a corner remote from the meagre fire, they would listen to men who had made not only new climbs, but the very sport of rock-climbing itself. What thrilling accounts were often told ; accounts of real explora-

tion and hard-won conquest, when the standard courses of to-day were new discoveries and topics of excited discussion.

Those were wonderful and strenuous days—and nights, too, for after dinner, when the visibility in the smoke-room was becoming poor and asphyxiation was imminent, a move would be made for fresh air and exercise to the Billiard Room.

Perhaps climbing of the most difficult and exhausting order—the circuit of the middle leg of the table—would be decided upon, or if something easier was demanded, a corner leg might be chosen, or perhaps the traverse round the room with hands on the table and feet on the walls, the window recesses and the corners of the room for hazards, or if Mr Whiting was not in his office a journey from the smoke-room to the billiard room without touching the floor might be added. But best and most strenuous of all was Wasdale Fives. What Homeric struggles have been staged round that ancient table ! Many legends exist about that strange game, and for the benefit of those who knew it not, it may be added that it was played with a billiard ball and the naked hand as striker. It was for two or four players. The server slung the ball against the top crshion so that on its return it touched the top left one. The man served to stood near the bottom left pocket, and he had to prevent the ball reaching the bottom cushion, otherwise a point was scored by the server. If the service was returned, as it usually was, the ball was in play and could be struck by anyone on either side alternately, a point being won if you put the ball into the top left pocket, made it rebound from the top cushion to the bottom one, or if the ball after being struck by your side, ceased to roll before an opponent reached it. It was also a point to you if an opponent put the ball into the right-hand top pocket, off the table or served twice without hitting the two required cushions. There were two codes under which the game might be played ; the one allowed barging, the other prohibited it. In the former you tried to obstruct

the opponents from reaching the ball by interposing your body against their rush while clinging on to the cushions with your hands. This was by far the more strenuous of the two, but the non-barging code was probably the more skilful and nimble. Those who had played most British games and a few exotics besides, generally agreed that none demanded more energy, activity and initiative or provided better sport and excitement than Wasdale Fives. Occasionally tourist visitors to the inn might be attracted by the noise, and innocently look in to see what was going on. The door was near the top end of the table, the danger zone, and before they knew what was happening, an ivory billiard ball might come hurtling through the air towards them to crash into the boarding at their side. They seldom stayed long at that end of the room. I remember a remarkable incident which even at the time seemed impossible, yet it happened. In the height of a very fierce game when wild hitting was the order of the day, a player slung the ball to the top cushion with all his might. Instead of returning along the table, it reared up, as it often did, and leapt backwards through the air. Everyone ducked, taking cover beneath the rim of the table, but when they reappeared the ball had vanished. At first each suspected another of playing some trick, till at length the melancholy fact disclosed itself that the ball was really lost, and the game was therefore at an end. Yet four men standing round the table had seen it leap ceilingwards in the bare room. No ; the windows were, of course, boarded up ; the fire was raked out, the door had been shut all the time ; it had lodged in nobody's clothes. We retired disconsolate ; had a well-earned pint, and then with one accord trooped back again to find the thing. Of course, it was there ; it had to be, but—not a sign of it could be found.

Next evening, still bereft, we were standing smoking in the Billiard Room when someone noticed a small hole in the plaster just above the mantel-board. Exploration up the chimney proved that the ball had made and passed through

that hole, and had lodged on a shelf in the back of the chimney a foot or more above the fireplace ; no wonder we had failed to find it.

This strange game of Wasdale Fives grew naturally ; it was evolved by the peculiar environment not invented, and when the environment changed it was doomed and, like many fine wild animals, became extinct. None grieved its going more than I, or fought harder to save it—receiving many a heated scolding from Mr Whiting in consequence. It has been suggested that the old table might be reinstated in its old home cleared of modern drawing-room encumbrances, but even if the management was willing to do so, it could never recapture the old atmosphere. The game grew and flourished in the days of forty years ago ; it would now seem to be an exotic or would savour of a faked antique. No, it is dead and gone, but lest it be forgotten, I have mentioned it in restrospect.

But to return to climbing. There were, of course, no detailed guide books to the climbs in those days, and one learnt of them only at first-hand from those who had actually done them, with all the added wealth of detail, incident and personality that only first-hand narrative can supply.

Then came the first series of the Fell and Rock Club's climbing guides, and to many, finality, so far as Cumberland was concerned, seemed to have been reached. I remember venturing the remark that these guides would soon be out of date. The idea was hotly scouted as almost disrespectful, and I was plainly informed that what few climbs had been left undone before the war, had all now been cleaned up, and that there were no others of any importance left to do. Much the same views, somewhat tempered, were held when the latest guides appeared, but I still maintain that there are any amount of good new climbs to be done, and even new climbing grounds to be found.

And what of the future ?

To-day almost everyone is agreed that our English rocks must never be mutilated and defiled by Continental ironmongery ; pitons are unthinkable ; absolutely taboo, and yet. . . . Peep round the corner of our most famous crag, look on what I have heard referred to as the gentleman's side of Scafell, and you will see not one piton, but three within almost as many yards of each other, and this at the very commencement of one of the newer climbs. It is, therefore, not a question of whether we should or should not allow these things to be hammered into our rocks ; the piton has already arrived and is firmly driven in. But what is our attitude towards it to be !

Perhaps it is partly because of my middle position that the mere mention of a piton in Lakeland does not make me see red, and it may be partly because I have on occasion been devoutly thankful to see and to use a little ring of iron, and so have a friendly if shy feeling towards it. Once in the Kaisergebirge, climbing guideless, and without book, we reached an insurmountable overhang. Thrice I went up to it, but failed to find any possibility of advance, yet on each descent a careful scrutiny of the way we had already come and of the rocks to right and left convinced us that the way must lie straight ahead. Then at a fourth attempt, I saw a tiny ring-piton driven in to its head and quite invisible from below. It was above a wall on which there was neither hand nor foothold. To reach it was difficult enough ; to thread my rope through it (we had no Karabiner) was the limit, but once threaded the overhang could be turned and the climb continued with reasonable security. Without its aid the movement was impossible ; we should have had to give up the climb : so much is certain, but that proves nothing at all, either for or against pitons. It has been said that pitons should only be used when further ascent without them is impossible. Yes, but impossible for whom ? This, it seems to me, is the crux of the whole matter. Impossible here is a relative, not an absolute term. I have seen a man find THE

slab on " C " Buttress at Dow Crag absolutely insurmountable —a piton would have made all the difference; would, in fact, have turned failure into success. To another climber Botteril's slab just needs a piton to make it justifiable ; to yet others, and these the crack climbers of to-day, the new routes on the east face of Scafell are in the same category, and it is they alone who do use these evil beneficient aids.

So we find the paradoxical position that only the most competent, the most expert and adventurous climbers use these artificial devices, while their less capable and inexperienced brothers are by common consent debarred from such assistance. I doubt if such an anomaly can persist ; either the piton will be prohibited altogether or it will be accepted and used where, when and by whom it is wanted—which latter God forbid !

It is not a question of whether pitons in themselves are good or bad, right or wrong, but of whether and where we should or should not use them. It is really just a matter of making a code and sticking to it. We have a good analogy in football. It is wrong to handle the ball in ' soccer,' an offence to pass it forward in ' rugger,' yet each of these acts is the very essence of the other game. Neither act is in any way bad or wrong in itself, and both games are equally admirable ; it is just a matter of choice under which code to play, but having once chosen, we must abide by the rules. It may be that we have now reached the stage in rock-climbing when different codes will emerge.

Thirty or forty years ago climbing was for the few ; to-day it is for many, and the excellence of the sport will make its growth of snowball nature so that tomorrow it will be for many, many more. But while the number of climbers thus increases enormously, the climbing ground is relatively inelastic. The rocks can only accommodate a certain number of parties ; the saturation point is already in sight ; indeed, it is reached and exceeded on State holidays on all the more popular crags—many turn away. Some means of relieving the congestion must be found or the sport seems to be in danger of being stiffled by its own success. New climbs, and even new climbing grounds will undoubtedly be found,

but probably not in sufficient quantity to accommodate the ever-increasing number of climbers ; a further outlet for some of the fierce climbing energy of youth is needed.

On the Continent, in countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland, where mountaineering had become much more of a national pastime than climbing has yet done here, artificial aids were common on even the easier peaks, and there they did not seem to detract from but rather to add to, the measure of enjoyment the mountains afforded. There such aids were not used to overcome the vertical and the overhang so much as to safeguard the awkward stretch ; they were not to enable the expert to achieve the otherwise impossible, but rather to help the guideless and the inexperienced to enjoy the mountains. And so one saw numerous family parties, sometimes of three generations, making ascents up fine though easy rock routes, the more dangerous portions of which had been rendered safe by artificial aids. Now I have almost a recluse's dislike of crowds, especially on the mountains to which I so often go alone, but, nevertheless, I felt that here was something rather fine, something that must have been good ?like for the body and for the mind of the people. The very fact that these numerous family parties should choose to ascend by a mountaineering rather than by a pedestrian route was surely indicative of a healthy, vigorous outlook.

In Cumberland there is no need thus to foster mountaineering, but it might help to solve simultaneously the three separate problems of the use of pitons, of congestion, and of providing meat for the young tigers, if some competent and interested body would shoulder the responsibility of saying that in their opinion certain specified rock faces are of no practical interest to the pure rock-climber, and that, therefore, those who so wished might practice there the Alpine arts of roping-down and the use of pitons, without hurting susceptibilities or interfering with the pleasure of others.

What heresy ! . . . but why not ?

# PITONS—A MIDDLE VIEW

*C. F. Holland*

Though I have never taken pitons on a climbing expedition, I have on occasion been supremely grateful to them, in the Dolomites, for use in roping down otherwise impassable sections of rock. So far as our home climbing grounds are concerned, I can see no necessity for their use except in positions where no other belay can by any method be devised and where a piton will make the second's stance secure, and probably save the life of the leader should he come off. The general use of pitons as a necessary adjunct to climbing expeditions would seem to me as ridiculous as it would be dangerous, for their use by any other than experts in fixing them would make climbing a most hazardous performance. The danger from inexpert application would be considerably greater than that from improper use of the rope, and adoption of them by parties relying on them for successful ascent of ordinary routes would inevitably result in a greatly increased number of fatalities. In the case of the expert who knows exactly how to insert and secure them, and can be trusted to make use of them only when absolutely essential to safeguard further progress or retreat, I can see no possible objection by any reasonable person.

With those who argue that no extraneous aids should be used in climbing I have no sympathy. Crampons and rubber shoes have been strenuously objected to in the past, and both have proved their value, to use no stronger word, when used in the right way. No one, so far as I know, has ever objected to the use of the rope, the greatest artificial aid of them all. One point, however, I would stress, and that is that pitons should not be used as handholds to enable parties to climb places otherwise impossible.

One thing seems certain ; pitons have come to stay, so let us accept the fact, and see to it that they are kept to their limited and proper sphere, a boon and a blessing to climbers, with the crampon, the rubber shoe, and the rope.

# MECHANISED MOUNTAINEERING

*Frank S. Smythe*

As a nation we have always jealously preserved the spirit of good sportsmanship, and of late we have watched with growing uneasiness certain Continental practices tending to debase mountaineering.

But before examining these it is interesting to trace briefly the growth of mountaineering. Mont Blanc was climbed as long ago as 1786, and the pioneers of that age safeguarded their progress over glaciers by clinging to long poles whilst a short-handled ' meat-chopper' did duty as an ice axe. Britons were responsible for mountaineering for its own sake, as apart from a field science or a fashionable adventure like the ascent of Mont Blanc, and it is generally held that Mr Justice Wills' ascent of the Wetterhorn in 1854 heralded, or at least hastened its development. The Golden Age of Mountaineering lasted from 1854 to 1865, when the Matterhorn was climbed, but the disaster attending that most dramatic of Alpine exploits put mountaineering back, in the words of the late Captain Farrar, ' half a generation of man.'

During the Golden Age implements were quickly improved and developed. The former clumsy ice axe evolved into an efficient instrument which now ' handles ' like a cricket bat or a fishing rod made by a master craftsman ; special nailing was introduced for boots, and ropes strengthened and lightened. Apart, of course, from the appropriate clothing and sundry items such as a map and compass, those three are all the implements needed to-day in Alpine climbing.

Thus far British and Continental mountaineering had progressed in perfect accord. It was the introduction of crampons (ice-claws) that started a cleavage which steadily widened into what is now a formidable rift between the British and German schools of thought. Some form of crampon was probably worn by Alpine peasantry many

generations ago, but the twin spikes clamped to the instep to help a man up an icy track are very different from the ten or twelve-point crampon of to-day. A. F. Mummery was one of the first to develop the crampon idea, but his screw-in spikes never proved really satisfactory, and it was left to Eckenstein and others to develop the modern crampon.

We invariably regard with suspicion any innovation in a game, and we are wont to make sure that it is an advantage before we will accept it. Even to-day a search through the back numbers of the *Alpine Journal* reveals an innate dislike for the crampon, and that is because crampons are abused by Continental mountaineers, many of whom learn to climb in them before accustoming themselves to nailed boots. The result is an increase in accidents, for of all the implements in mountaineering the crampon is the one that lends itself most readily to abuse. It is not, as some suppose, an alternative to step-cutting in steep ice, and it becomes positively deadly in conditions of soft **wet** snow, particularly when such snow rests on ice. With a boot it is possible to feel and gauge the state of the snow or the nature of the ice, but with a crampon between the boot and the ice, this is often difficult or impossible. A crampon is valuable on frozen snow, on dry glaciers, and ice of moderate steepness ; and it can be useful also on steep ice when used in conjunction with ice-pitons, but on soft snow and rocks it is more dangerous than useful. Had it never been invented it is certain that hundreds now in their graves would be alive to-day.

The use of the rope has progressed on more or less logical lines. There is no rope so good as the best British rope. Our seafaring experience is doubtless responsible for this. A good new rope is the physical safeguard of the climber, and its moral value is immense. Without it a party is simply a collection of individuals—with it an added strength, cohesion and security is gained. The mountaineer learns to use his rope for all manner of purposes. If the rope has been abused, apart from the ignorance and carelessness of the inexperi-

enced, it is because nowadays it is too frequently used for freak descents of otherwise unclimbable precipices though, of course, it is perfectly justifiable to use it on difficult or impassable ground as a means of descent on a route. Enthusiastic and inventive persons often design special and sometimes complicated belays and other rope ' gadgets,' **but** all that is really necessary on the hardest Alpine climbs is a spare rope for double-roping purposes, together with one or two slings through which the rope can be passed so as to obviate any tendency of it to jam when the time comes to release it from below.

If the crampon began a cleavage between British and German methods and ideals, piton technique went far to widen it. A piton is simply an iron spike intended to be driven into a crack in rocks, or in the case of ice-pitons, into ice. It may have a ring through the head which can be linked with an additional clip-ring for the rope known as a karabiner, or it may be simply a spike intended as a handhold or a foothold. If climbing be regarded as a pursuit in which personal skill is the prime factor and simplicity, not expediency the motive, then the piton is permissible only as a safeguard on climbable faces, and is undesirable as a means of climbing otherwise unclimbable rock. This at all events, is the British view. The German technicians think otherwise. To them Nature only exists to be bludgeoned into submission, and if a precipice is reputed to be unscaleable then it must be climbed, if not by fair means then by foul. One may admire the courage of the performers, while deprecating the spirit in which the performance in undertaken ; it is the same spirit as that which dynamites a trout pool or massacres tame pigeons. It is neither mountaineering, nor is it sport. Worse than this, the German technique in the years before the present war became tainted with nationalism. Desperate ascents **in** which pitons were driven **into** otherwise unclimbable rock were undertaken for the honour and glory of Germany, to prove that Germans were not only good sports-

men, but the best sportsmen, ' proofs ' which signally failed to convince others.

British climbers may justly consider themselves free from these taints of mechanisation and nationalism. For the most part they have always looked upon mountain climbing as a sport in the purest sense of the word, a test of strength and skill in surmounting natural obstacles undertaken in accordance with traditional rules, and governed by a love of the thing for its own sake. At the same time, they cannot be wholly absolved from a charge of expediency. There exists, or has existed, a school of thought that Everest must be climbed, if not by traditional methods legitimately augmented by the best that manufacturers can supply in the way of food, specially suitable clothing, and the usual mountaineering equipment, then by the employment of oxygen breathing apparatus. It is true that the diminished oxygen content in the air near the highest summit of the world suggests the use of such an apparatus ; there is little enjoyment to be had out of climbing without it at the highest altitudes of the Himalayas ; at the same time, there would to my mind, be singularly little satisfaction in reaching the summit of Mount Everest with oxygen apparatus, and any satisfaction in so doing would be offset by the thought that perhaps it might be possible to get there without it. It is certain that were Everest to be climbed with oxygen apparatus, mountaineering tradition—were it worth anything—would very soon demand a non-apparatus ascent. This cult of expediency, as exemplified by the scientific experts, is to my mind one of the evils of the present age. Let us keep mountaineering clean and undebased even on the highest peaks of the Himalayas. Let us win through to the top of Everest for the love of the thing, not because it is expedient to get there. Expediency and good sportsmanship simply do not go together.

If any charge can be preferred against mountaineers as a whole it is that they have taken their achievements too seriously. I have been as guilty as any in that respect. I now

realise that it is the joy, the good comradeship, the climbing that matter in mountaineering, not the attainment of the objective. Mummery was the great apostle of the joy of mountaineering, and it is impossible to associate such a character, bubbling over with irrepressible gaiety, conscious always that it was the game that mattered and not its prizes, with the dour exponent of the expedient in mountaineering to-day, with his pitons and his oxygen apparatus and, not least, a nationally-minded Press to spur him on to some fresh ' conquest' for the fancied honour and glory of his Fatherland. It is essential to the well-being of mountaineering not to overburden it with mechanical aids but to keep it as simple as possible.

There is one implement of mountaineering not so far touched upon, the ski. Ski-ing, yachting and gliding have something in common, but ski-ing is the simplest and, to the skier at any rate, the finest and most thrilling form of locomotion known to man. It is also, despite its inherent simplicity, one of the most difficult arts to learn ; perfection indeed is unattainable. Crampons and pitons are mere accessories to mountain climbing, but the advent of the ski opened up an entirely new field to the mountaineer. The origin of ski is lost in antiquity ; they were long used for cross-country journeys in Scandinavia and elsewhere, but as an adjunct to mountaineering they date from the beginning of the present century. Ski have not only opened up the Alps in winter, but they have done useful service in increasing the mountaineer's knowledge of snow conditions, knowledge which has proved invaluable in other ranges, such as the Himalayas, where conditions approximating to winter Alpine conditions are often encountered. The North Col of Mount Everest is a good example where a knowledge of Alpine winter conditions, and in particular the deadly form of avalanche known as wind-slab, is essential if disaster is to be avoided.

Certain conservative British mountaineers long regarded ski and ski-runners dubiously. They criticised the ex-

ponents of the ' downhill-only ' technique as though such ski-ing represented the be-all and end-all of the sport. It would be as logical for the footballer to criticise the cricketer. Mountaineering owes a great debt to men like Arnold Lunn and Gerald Seligman for their researches into snow conditions, and to all those other pioneers who have opened up a splendid new field for mountaineers on the winter Alps.

Finally, it may be of interest to particularise on some of the foregoing points. As already indicated, the greatest gulf between the British and German techniques is to be found in rock climbing. The most British climbers have done is to concede the justifiability of ' Kletterschuhe ' (felt—or rubber-soled shoes) when used in preference to nailed boots. Statements in the past as to climbing having reached the limit of possibility have so often proved fallacious that I hesitate to believe that rock climbing in this country has reached that limit. At the same time, there would appear in the Lake District at any rate, little else than either minor variations of routes or very severe new routes left for the inventive genius of the modern school of climbers unless the German technique be copied. I hope this last will never come to pass. I have only once seen a piton on a British climb and that was on a route known as the Piton Climb above the Idwal Slabs on Glyder Fawr. Here the piton was used solely as a safeguard for the leader in the absence of a natural belay for the rope on a steep and exposed rock face. It has now been removed.

The German, on the other hand, has done much to ruin rock climbing in the Eastern Alps, for he has turned pleasant climbs into boring gymnastics, and I know of nothing so unsatisfactory in mountaineering as pulling up on wire cables or stepping from one iron spike to another. The Italians who, it would appear, are ever imitative of the worst practices in others, have vied with the German technicians in scaling otherwise impossible rock faces by means of enormous numbers of pitons. The north face of the Grosse Zinne in the Dolomites is an outstanding example of such

' engineering.' This 3,000-foot precipice was finally ' conquered ' after immense labours extending over months, the ' conquest' being acclaimed by the Italian Press as another great achievement of Fascism. Comment would seem superfluous : it was neither mountaineering nor was it magnificent. Many similar climbs have been performed by the do-or-die Nazis in the Eastern Alps, in the Kaisergebirge, Karvvendel and elsewhere. It was inevitable that the greatest of the Alpine faces should be similarly attacked. The north face of the Matterhorn was the first to fall, then came the north face of the Grandes Jorasses, and finally, the notorious Eigerwand. It is impossible not to admire the skill and courage of the contestants. The brothers Schmidt, who climbed the north face of the Matterhorn, were first and foremost mountaineers ; they were also modest young fellows, and the ascent though, of course, received in Germany as another indication of nordic toughness and superiority, was certainly not undertaken by the Schmidts for motives of national aggrandisement. Nor was their achievement in the same category as the feats of the Italians on the Grosse Zinne ; it was an ascent in which the odds between life and death were roughly equal. The same cannot be said of the Grandes Jorasses and the Eigerwand. Here again, skill and courage may be admired, but the artificial nature of the climbing as exemplified by the use of large numbers of pitons, the lives lost, and the national feeling behind the ascent, served to condemn these feats in the eyes of British mountaineers. We believe that in mountaineering as in other things, it is necessary to draw the line somewhere. Exactly where that line is to be drawn depends on temperament as much as on tradition. Irresponsible gambles with death, and risks undertaken from motives of national glorification are not in our climbing philosophy. Let us above all things oust the expedient from mountaineering, and keep this grand pursuit as simple and enjoyable as possible.

## DERWENTWATER

The morning bloom delightfully
lay on the lake, as slowly
we walked its length, now wholly,
now partly, lost in thought or speech.
And veiled in shimmering distances
hung mountains incorporeal
like the world's ghost ; a boreal
foam-sparkle edged both mind and beach.

Then we looked near, and suddenly
the lake was gone, and darker
the mountains loomed, and starker
loomed the world's problems big and blind.
But vainly : we, who seemingly
had seen with no precision
that heaven-dropt, sheeted vision,
still travelled with it in the mind.

*Geoffrey Johnson*

# BUTTERMERE—AND BOAT HOWE

*C. W. F. Noyce*

The war has brought home to us, it is said, the simple pleasures. In particular it has set a holiday among the British hills on the pinnacle once crowned by Alpine ambitions. Simply to revisit Cumberland or Wales is the longing of the primitively-minded recruit sweating and stamping on the square ; the dream of many an A.R.P. warden or fire-watcher. And, to descend to the more particular still, two flying visits to Buttermere and its cliffs were to me the lodestar of my this year's military peregrinations. Scarcely ever have I appreciated so much in so short a time and so small a locality.

Buttermere, if you look for them, has most of the climbing amenities ; and less walking than other centres. Perhaps this is why the valley was neglected by our more energetically-minded ancestors. Take Grey Crags on High Stile, for they are airiest and most inviting of all, sun-splashed and restful. Here I found, are fine possibilities of gym-shoe wandering on firm new stuff, with only the avoidance of popular routes to trouble the novelty-hunter. Chockstone Buttress in the warmth is a paradise. I pondered, from the top of the Mitre, and selected the buttress's right-hand bounding edge. It gives luxurious slab-climbing, foot above foot of balance, tense and continuous to the solitary climber, and becoming that day for me a sort of dreamy motion, that laughed at War effort and only seemed to beckon to a summit because it was impossible to rest with rock above. Other gymnastics followed. You can find new walls, variants all over the place—as between the Mitre routes, on the slab side of the Oxford and Cambridge rib, or the cut edge of Chockstone Ridge. Short, joyful, of the pleasant if escapist type. To restore realities I had to plunge over into Bleaberry Combe, and plough up and down its greasy, broad-ledged buttresses.

Too much of Grey Crags after army diet is like champagne on indigestion.

The next item, as one circumvents the valley head, is Eagle Crag, sharp, defiant, of different and unfriendly texture. Holds slope wrong, ledges that seem from below an abiding place for a whole covey of eagles slant into nothingness when you attain them. I had had previous acquaintance with the bold-fronted edge ; it seemed now that a traverse of the whole cliff ought to be won—say on the obvious level below the fiercest section ol Central Chimneys. A day's sun and freedom on Grey Crags bore me, with an effort, up the foul, pendant moss of the lower chimneys. Thence an investigation to the right, in socks now, and the few feet that appeared tricky from below were vanquished. Thence by deceptively easy ledges to the right again, across Birkness Front. And here the fighting started. How to get across the overhanging West Wall of Pigott's route to the screes that run up alongside, tantalisingly near. I had not come for battle, but for the easy life ; yet the worst, as always happens, was about to occur. In my efforts I was soon slung cocoon-like from a huge but apparently firm bollard, incapable of movement. Annoying. To brave the Army, only to lose in this infernal net :—

> A neck God made for other use
> Than strangling in a string.

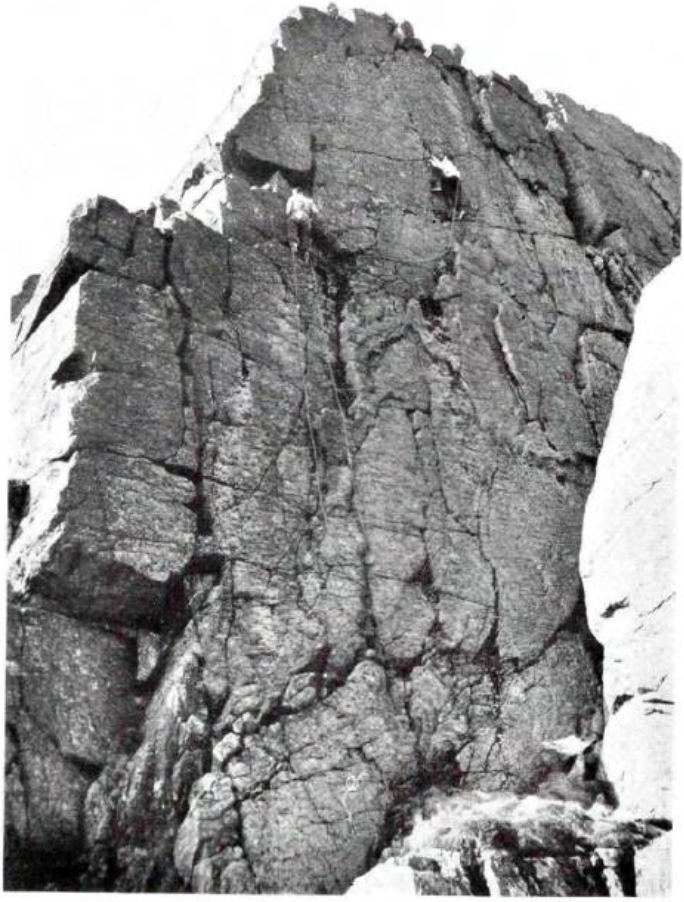
I dangled a bit, pensively. But the exasperation of such bathos gave strength to climb the rope, and I crawled out with that ' never again ' feeling, to creep down a sounder and actually more obvious passage higher up, split and sheer, but with the amenity of ledges, and belays instead of gibbets. I was on the screes. Only the further effort was needed of racing round to the point where I left Central Chimneys, to finish the traverse the other way ; relatively, a heathery and disappointing business.

Beyond Eagle Crag round Birkness Combe, there are some fine-looking blocks and buttresses, but all heathery and

wet and too serious—of the kind you plod up as a conscience-salve on a bad day, to race back over the tops for tea. The worthiest of them I christened Blind Man's Bluff, a thing of squared corners and misty surprises, but too brief for a man with two eyes and too dark and damp for a warrior. This is the lowest of the cliffs in the upper Combe.

The Haystacks I have left severely alone. They fit the mood of no moment ; if I wanted an energetic and rickety death I should prefer to perish heroically in Savage Gully rather than Warn Gill. But scenically, Stack Rake provides vistas of Twll Du splendour, above and below. At last the rocks break ; Fleetwith leans back more gently on that side, boasting a comical disappearing gully, and a heathery buttress, a good and virtuous variant of the ' Fleetwith Course.' But my last climb round Buttermere is another bluff. Dalehead flings an apparently diminutive buttress down towards Honister Road, almost unnoticed of old, and still for most a case of ' Fresh cliffs and pastures new '—for Peregrine Buttress again was well supplied with bleaberries, as well as some steep rock facets. Climbing alone induces a strangely varied nervous tension. Should one go on, faced by this or that wall, or should one slink round the corner ? Answers vary, from days on Grey Crag, when all the world seems possible, to the hopeless days, when another step forward is morally certain to end in sudden death. I started Peregrine Buttress with the enthusiasm of abandon, facing all the steep bits. I ended, as Leslie Stephen hints that the solitary traveller is tempted to end, in conscience-stricken lassitude among the Green Pastures.

Boat Howe is a far cry. But we explored it during the same visits, and in the same mood—on one day especially. My brother and I had been foiled by the green slime of Engineer's Chimney on Gable ; the dry roughness of Larboard Arete after that was delicious to handle—and the unclimbed face of the Boat, under such conditions, looked accessible enough. I explored downwards on a rope ; piano-



*S. B. Beck*

Dixnit WALL

BIRKNESS L'OMBI:

playing, delicate as Scafell Pinnacle is delicate, steep and firm. The start was the problem ; and depressing to our hopes of new things by reason of a large cairn planted at the bottom of the obvious groove up the face. But it was the last sign of humanity, and we hoped for the best. The groove itself ended in disgruntled overhang. Excursions to the left landed perilously near the scratches of Larboard Arete, but we withdraw, quickly, and struck out on to the Face proper. There was one terrifying ten feet of traverse, and we were soon on already tested ground. It would take more than a length of explored slab to stop men who had squirmed ignominiously out of Engineer's Chimney.

So to the summit, with its attendant joy and regret. But the regret was more—for me—that of parting rather than having won to the top. These hours of physical effort had made it appear that one was still capable of something :—

> Then the world seemed none so bad
> And I myself a likely lad.—

Now we must return to the plains, put all into the testing-pot, see whether, after all, the days at Buttermere have reinforced heart and head—have prepared one for the precarious fumbling and the uncertainty of military civilisation. Gird up the loins :—

> For nothing now remains to do
> But begin the game anew.

And yet, what luck to have such half-time intervals !

# BUTTERMERE YEAR

*W. Peascod*

The war brought many things—not least among them petrol rationing. We can't grumble, for though we were restricted to Ennerdale and Buttermere, we had in the latter a district the potentialities of which were not fully appreciated.

Early in the year—March 16th—a beautiful day brought the conditions S. B. Beck and I had been waiting for, and with Miss M. J. Harkness, Grey Crags in Birkness Combe was our centre of gravitation. To the foot of the Oxford and Cambridge Buttress is a long grind—climbing the Harrow Buttress on the way made it much more pleasant—and this was the face upon which we intended making a new, though short, climb : *Dexter Wall.* The little climb runs up the steep right-hand wall of the buttress, and is very difficult in its upper portions. The route begins with a crack and a traverse, followed by a traverse and a corner to a poor stance in a very airy situation. On this stance Btck ftood for over an hour whilst I attempted the final crack. It is very severe and when the ascent was accomplished we expressed our opinion of it forcibly and at some length.

After many wanderings on Pillar and elsewhere we returned to the Combe to resume our acquaintance with a wall which had aroused our interest for we knew that, as yet, it was unclimbed. We called it *Grey Wall.* It lies between the Chockstone Ridge and Bishop's Arete. We made two climbs on Grey Wall—one, a pleasant route, goes up to the Balcony, then traverses and ascends a delightful slab. The other starts in the centre of the face, and above the Balcony continues direct to an overhang ; this is climbed by using a good hold high up, which makes it possible to effect a landing on a narrow mantelshelf—this being left by an awkward movement in an exposed position. We called the climbs

*Suaviter* and *Fortiter* (let this be a warning against climbing with a savant). These were my last climbs with Beck : a fortnight later he was reporting for duty in the Royal Artillery. . . .

August came, and with it new climbing friends—Austin Barton and E. B. Mendus. The new party's opening gambit was the South-West on whose airy slabs the lady of the party, Miss Margaret Harkness, had the satisfaction of climbing her first ' Very Severe.'

On September 7th, Barton, Mendus and I trudged up to High Crag to ' potter about'—for it was to be an off-day. The result of our ' pottering' was another new climb. Barton knew of a crack he had seen, the ascent of which would entail complications with two very pronounced overhangs, and he thought if it could be climbed it would open up a good route. We climbed up the eastern corner of High Crag by an eighty-foot wall, and reached the first part of our objective. It certainly was an impressive cleft, so after threading a particularly stubborn belay, I ' addressed ' myself to the climb. The first overhang went quite well once a good hold was reached, and the crack was followed steeply and the second overhang neared. This was turned by a delightful traverse out on a vertical wall on the right and a return made over the difficulty to a nook with small belays. Then followed the crux. A traverse of the wall to the foot of an impending crack ; the footholds were poor and sloping, and we were in boots—it was only climbed after exploration on a rope from above. A pleasant slab followed to the top of the buttress, and *Resurrection* was made !

The afternoon of September 20th saw Margaret Harkness, Mendus and me again on High Crag. We climbed Epaulette Ridge and noticed on the ascent a parallel rib which began as a buttress. We all scurried down a grassy scoop, and after consultation decided to start up the buttress though the hour was late, Margaret deciding to stand out. The ascent

of the first pitch proved awkward, and many fruitless attempts were made to gain the rib above direct and, finally, we had to reach it by a traverse from the left and a short lay-back. A steep slab finished this 140-foot climb—darkness descended and we to the valley. We named the climb *Rowan Route.*

The accommodation at Gatesgarth proved inadequate for the needs of our party that night, so Mendus and I retired to a barn, from whence in the stilly gloom, we made a strategical withdrawal in the face of superior forces of rats, and spent the rest of the night emulating the forced bivouac of Jacob under the lee of a stone wall. The following morning a relief expedition arrived in the form of Barton, and all four of us pulled up the steep grassy slopes of High Crag to ' look ' at a climb on the eastern corner, which is scratched all the way up to the summit, but of which we can find no record. We prospected the route and built a cairn—who made the first ascent ?

I did not climb again for a few weeks—a troublesome knee-joint confined me to home quarters. This, however, was not allowed to hinder the attempt on the now familiar crag. Barton and Mendus attained the summit rocks by a central rib between Gatesgarth Chimney and Wall End Arete. After 150 feet of climbing, a pinnacle against a wall gave food for thought and its conquest preceded 250 feet of easier though pleasant climbing on to the top of the crag. The climb is ' Very Difficult' to ' Severe,' and has been named *Pinnacle Rib.*

Familiar summits looked strangely aloof under the first snows of winter when, on November 2nd, our steps turned towards Yew Crag Gully in Honister. It was a very cold day, and we thought a climb easy to reach and easy to do would be ideal. That was our aim until we saw the Yew Crag lower buttresses. They are very steep for the first hundred feet, and we ascended the left-hand wall direct by the chimney formed by a large detached flake, and with numbed fingers

forced our way up an oblique crack which curved upwards from the top of the cleft. Then followed a series of steep walls bearing left until the heathery summit of the buttress was reached. *Flake and Crack* was the name we chose. It offers just over 200 feet of climbing on good steep rock, and is of the ' Severe ' order of difficulty.

That exhausts our ' Buttermere Year.' If others find these climbs worth repeating I can only hope they will experience the same pleasure in climbing them as we did in making them.

# ALPINE ADVENTURE IN LAKELAND

*John Bechervaise*

Several years in the Australian Alps gave me a love of mountains which time and travel have only served to strengthen. I learnt there, and in Tasmania, to feel at home in their solitude, to live amongst them both in summer and winter, to meet the challenges of their rugged contour, of weather and remoteness with some measure of the strategy experience allows. The winter blizzard is an unrelenting but inspiring master whose lessons, throughout much journeying and under many conditions, I have never forgotten. With delight I have tramped the springy heather on the high fells of the English Lake District, but it was stronger than ever in its appeal during my recent mid-winter sojourn under canvas.

On the last day of 1939, I stood by the gabled barns of Seathwaite, that typical terminal Lakeland village of about three houses, and gazed up the valley beyond which rise the lower slopes of Great Gable. Behind, its rugged walls softened by snow, lay Borrowdale : in front the broken track led to Styhead Pass and on to lonely Wasdale. One of the barns was a ' base-camp ' for my project—a tent at the head of the pass, by the frozen tarn.

Having mustered a considerable quantity of equipment, including vast supplies of food, clothing, and fuel to combat all possible weather conditions, I was faced with the difficulties of transport, foreseeing at least four heavily-burdened ascents. The ready co-operation, however, of two well-known men of Seatoller, by name of Bland and Pepper, was offered in the shape of a pack-horse, to travel as far as conditions might permit. I made an exploratory ascent, therefore, to erect the tent, and if possible discover a comparatively ice-free route for Darkie, who, on the morrow, was to be the first loaded pack-horse seen in those parts for many years.

The real work commenced at Stockley Bridge, that graceful yet sturdy arch spanning Grain Gill, rising above the turbulent stream with all the appearance, dressed as it is with years, of a natural formation like the high black crags towering above it. As I expected, the usual paths were covered with gleaming ice, translucent like tallow, but without much trouble I avoided these and found a firm footing across the frozen swampy ground above the usual tracks. Beyond Taylor Gill Force the stream showed little activity beneath its thickening mail ; at length Styhead Tarn—surely enough now a splendid sheet of smooth ice reflecting the surrounding hills—was reached. As I had made a late start there was little time to linger, but I found a suitable site for the tent on the western edge of the tarn, and erected it over a few inches of crisp snow. Peg-driving in frozen ground is not easy, but must be efficiently carried out to withstand winds of gale strength. A further precaution was the raising of a low stockade of stones, the bottom ones actually pinning the tent more firmly to the ground. In the dusk I descended for a final night in the valley, a New Year's Eve at the hospitable Scafell Inn, where, over tankards of good English ale, everyone wished me well.

On the first day of this year the worthy Pepper assisted me with Darkie, who carried, slung across an improvised pack-saddle, about eighty pounds of provisions and other goods. She was not happy about the ice, but gallantly picked her way over the rough fell side. At length we reached the camp, where the mare was unloaded, and I was left alone in the silence of the mountains. I spent the rest of the day in arranging my stores and bedding, and strengthening the tent against the fierce wind that swept coldly over the pass, reputedly the wettest place in England.

Under such conditions, shelter is of paramount importance. Food and exercise can produce an exhilarating glow, but in the long starlit nights, when the thermometer may show a minus temperature, it is vital for health and comfort that this

warmth should be conserved. At the outset, I must confess that I very seldom washed, shaved, or undressed, except partially at night when wind-proof jackets were exchanged for woollen pullovers. My sleeping arrangements consisted of a light, steel-braced canvas stretcher and three sleeping bags, first of thin, silk, which acts as a sheet, secondly of eiderdown, and thirdly, an external bag of proofed ' Egyptian ' cotton. These made sound sleep possible, but I never felt uncomfortably warm. In the evenings, when I sat reading or writing, a cooking stove was often necessary to raise the air temperature inside the well-laced tent, but in spite of this, practically all my food froze hard, including the eggs which burst open in the process of frying. Their shells could only be removed after immersion in boiling water. Bacon and beef sausage, my principal meat rations, were well preserved by the weather. Water was obtained by breaking the ice of the stream.

It was interesting to note that each successive fracture I made was through a fresh platform of ice lower than the last, the terraces being caused by a constant lessening of flow due to freezing higher up on the mountain. On one exceptionally cold night, when nineteen degrees of frost were recorded inside the tent, my fountain pen, held in a doubly gloved hand, kept freezing and had to be thawed over a candle. It was during that night that the weird growls and whoops which constantly emanated from the ice as it thickened and adjusted itself to changing pressure, reached a climax of loudness, making one jump by their suddenness.

A strange habitation, a tent—a house of thin cloth—yet what a grand protection from the elements ! Just before snuggling down into one's sleeping bag, whilst partaking of a last steaming mug of cocoa, comes the feeling : take away the white, billowing tent, the steady candles—and you have just the wind-swept icy fell—so fragile is the barrier, yet so complete and comforting.

Morning invariably brought a routine of boot-thawing

whilst the tea boiled and I skated, the tarn being only fifteen feet from my tent. A few swift circuits of the ice sent the blood coursing warmly, raised a keen appetite and cleansed the mind and body of drowsiness, like a bathe in a cold pool. Occasionally I skated all day, walking steel-shod through the snow to my tent for meals. Always I skated part of the day, and generally for an hour or more after dark. The surface was excellent for pract'cally the whole period of my stay, but a strong wind would increase its perfection, like a dry, polished mirror reflecting the fells until a film of powder snow or some skate-marks marred the image. Of course, I was particularly fortunate in the weather, which continued frosty, with practically no snow. Several feet would not have been exceptional in that locality, but under such conditions a camp, though picturesque, would permit far less activity.

The tarn had three distinct appeals, although at times they possibly merged into a general exhilaration. It was a skater's paradise, that great natural rink, with room for any move and any speed. Only the ring of steel on the hard ice broke the peace of the fells. Self-criticism of style was easy with every edge-mark clearly visible over one's entire course. Yet there was another delight—the ever-varying lights in the mountains, the changing glory of the sky. Every hour, from that when the first pale rose flushed behind Scafell to those of blazing stars, had its splendour. In the morning there was always that magical moment when the sun cleared the high skyline, when one's shadow first shot across the gleaming ice. Too soon it fell again, but the late afternoon then lay on the fells like golden-powder, deepened, rested on distant Skiddaw visible directly down the tarn beyond Borrowdale like a benedictory fire, then slowly mounted the sky whilst the first stars twinkled. Later, when Orion rose above Esk Hause and every bright star of the galaxy was followed by its dimmer reflection in the ice below, one felt the glory of the night as a tangible thing, a compelling incentive to skate once more round the

tarn—when that decision had been already reached many times.

From these macrocosmic pleasures it was possible to find an extreme, none the less attractive. The ice itself provided endless interest. One half had frozen before the snow fell and although now perfectly smooth, the surface was white with countless millions of minute pearl-like bubbles held in suspension throughout its great thickness. At intervals there were small transparent patches with radial avenues also of clear ice. These were the vents which had remained open whilst the ice settled. Through these the depths of the tarn were alone visible, as though they were windows through which the lurking trout might glimpse the world above. The remainder of the tarn had frozen since the snow fell, and was glass-like. Its perfect transparency made its safety and thickness difficult to comprehend. As one progressed towards the centre over this part the sight of submerged rocks and pale vegetation gradually gave way to a seemingly unfathomable green translucency until suddenly the white ice was encountered. At its zenith, the low sun occasionally allowed a little water to flow from the inanimate stream. This instantly crystallised on the surface in a delta of intricate pattern which I seldom tired of observing.

After several days in my lonely realm I had a curious demonstration of the proximity of the marginal world. A passing stranger undertook to transmit a telegram to a colleague in London. On its receipt, my friend immediately entrained for the north, and only twenty-four hours later climbed the pass to my tent. He brought additional equipment necessary for his stay. I had not been lonely but I welcomed his company for its own sake and for the new possibilities of climbing and fell-walking it allowed.

There are rock-faces and aretes on Gable which a lone climber would be foolish to attempt. These were now open to us. Rock-climbing acquaintances from the valleys sometimes joined us for the day. Most of the western spurs

overlooking Wasdale were comparatively free from snow and ice, for at this time of the year the sun passes in a slow arc across the Wasdale valley, flooding the Gable bastions with warmth and pale amber light. The Needle climbs were made under almost spring-like conditions, it being even possible to linger for a contemplative pipe at the summit of the Napes ridges. It was on one such occasion, when I was alone and idly watching the play of light far below on the patchwork of stone-walls by Wastwater and its silver on the distant sea, that the peace of the mountains was broken by sounds of gunfire far out towards the Irish coast. A strange contrast.

Space will permit only brief mention of the cragsman's art, even concerning a locality where it has gained world-wide fame. There is no feeling quite so thrilling as that experienced when one climbs between earth and sky, seeking sure holds for hand and foot, one's body on the rim of a vast rocky bowl. Each climber depends on his fellow : the rope is a symbol no less than a practical bond. Man is a unique spirit in his unceasing striving to overcome the natural obstacles to his fullest enjoyment of all the earth, sea and sky hold for him ; yet of all of them none gives to my mind more god-like sensations than climbing the crags once known to birds alone.

Often when the sun shone brightly on the summits, the valleys were great turbulent seas of cloud surrounding the jagged cliffs of islands. The illusion, save in its slow motion, was at times complete with waves and spray washing across lower saddles in the hills. Great Gable, Kirkfell, the Scafell massif, the Pillar—all the high peaks rose aloof and could only be reached by a gloomy, sub-nebulous journey. To drop from the bright sunlight of Kirkfell was like stepping over the edge of the world. The northern crags above the Blacksail Pass are ordinarily a pleasantly rapid descent ; in the thick mist they seem a fearsome and depthless precipice. Under such conditions, often requiring a compass for their safe negotiation, the dales rest beneath a false and depressing

dusk which, however, falls back like a cloak as a summit is gained. Many a climb has been postponed—doubtless often wisely—because of fog, but when it overtakes one in the mountains it often provides wonderful effects ; with its clearing the rocks are feathered with hoar. Great End presented a fascinating spectacle I remember, under such conditions, every inch of rock displaying long wind-blown fronds of scintillating frost in the bright sunlight.

The wind seemed a definite bar to pleasurable skating, especially on high Sprinkling Tarn, until we mastered the art of ice-sailing. Using our light stretchers as sails, we learnt to fly before, tack close into the wind, and eventually experienced the thrill of moving without effort for an hour or more at a time. The process provides a rapid but at times uncomfortable apprenticeship.

I shall not soon forget our last sunset, crimson and black-barred, seen from the summit of Great Gable, nor the grand scuttling run to our camp down the screes of Great Hell Gate. As we crossed the ice for the last time on our downward journey, regrets were strong indeed.

In these days the relegation of the great Continental alpine resorts to a past of happy memory—or the expectation of a future of undiminished optimism—may have two effects ; either we shelve the stout climbing boots and the keen ice-axe, allow the good hempen rope to deteriorate, and call these months or years a gap in our exhilarating ventures in high mountains—or we seek a counterpart at home. In doing so lies a course bewildering in its possibilities, superb in its own type of natural beauty, though differing in detail, yet excelled in its richness and variety by few places the world over. If this were more generally appreciated, those of slender means might enjoy their first winter-sport, and others now shut out from their well-loved mountains, would find enchantment.

The summer popularity of the Lake District will never wane ; its magnificence is universally known. How different

is the bias in winter. Comparatively few climbers ascend the passes ; for the most part the roving shepherd alone sees the glory of the high fells. He returns at dusk to the quiet farmhouse, a place in summer probably known to hundreds of holiday-makers, but now a lonely Cumbrian stronghold. These grey stone houses at the ends of roads, or often far beyond them, offer a warm welcome to the traveller venturing over the ice-clad pass—a practical outstretched hand beckoning to the great fire-lit kitchens where lurks a fragment of Merrie England.

I ask little more than that my path continue in such directions.

## MORNING IN MICKLEDEN

The morning shadows clothe the fells,
Blue-blessed, hard-edged in morning light ;
Hard-edged, self-formed and form revealing ;
Folds from night's soft-folded shroud
Held to the heart of hills.

In you your wind-raced cloud-cast cousins
Merge and melt—emerge again
Would I could, wind-borne, race to you
And in you lie and melt and merge—
Emerge again and know that I
Had known the heart of hills.

*David W. Jackson*

*September,* 1941

# A JUNE NIGHT

*Charles F. Rolland*

Some of us were staying in Langdale in June, and the long spell of fine weather combined with the short nights, caused some late returns. These led to the idea of spending a night out, and our obvious choice was the top of Scafell Pike, not only because it was most likely to be above the thick clouds that filled the valley each morning, but because we wanted to see the early sun light up the great face of Scafell. Several times we returned weary from Gable or Gimmer and thought: ' What a lovely night for the Pike ! ' Always someone said : ' It's sure to rain to-morrow.' It never did, but it seemed an awful long way back into the hills after a hard day, and the R.L.H. bunks seemed very attractive after the post-prandial pipe, so they always won.

One day, when there were only three of us left, we had a lazy morning. It was very fine and very warm, so I brought up the old project again. We had been climbing energetically for the last ten days, and felt we were due for a little change, so the others agreed to make the expedition that night. Hugh objected that the next day was his last, and he wanted to go to Dow, but Gordon said he would take him there on the way back. So we packed what food we could find into the sack and collected some extra clothes, our two sleeping bags and my little primus stove.

About mid-day we set off up Mickleden and over the Stake to visit Borrowdale, just for old time's sake. It was very hot in the valley and we decided that the Stake is much higher than it looks. However, we were soon up in the rather cooler breezes, across the plateau and on the way down into Langstrath. We could not pass by the pool near the Gash Rock, always known to us as Blackman's Pot, though why it should have this odd name I have never discovered. Its waters were most inviting, deep, clear and cool, and we spent a long time swimming and lying in the sun. The whole day

was warm and lazy, but life seemed everywhere. Grasshoppers and dragonflies were all around, a lizard slid through the grass and basked on a rock, birds were overhead, fish moved in the pool, and the valley was full of the sounds of sheep and dogs as they brought down a flock for the shearing.

At last we rose and moved off down to Rosthwaite. Borrowdale was beautiful. It always is, in all weathers and at all seasons. I wished we were staying there, so that I could revisit all the old haunts, but we were just passing through. We wandered slowly along the road to Seathwaite. This really was summer ; even the hills looked sleepy in the heat, and down in the valley flowers were everywhere, roses wandered unruly through the hedges, children bathed in the beck and the dogs lay panting. In Seathwaite we left our sacks and ropes, came to an agreement with Mrs Edmondson about some food, and then strolled up to Stockley Bridge for another bathe. We returned an hour later to find that our hostess had not lost her understanding of the needs of the youthful stomach, and we did full justice to the meal she had prepared for us. We looked in next door to meet some friends, and spent a pleasant hour recounting tales of the hills, and in long technical discussions about Gimmer Crack, the Flake Crack, and such-like places. In fact, cracks were much to the fore that evening. Possibly because two people seldom agree as to the best way of climbing any crack and there is a natural tendency to think one's own way is the only sensible method. Then there is such an infinite variety of cracks that they form a most intriguing subject for discussion. About nine o'clock we bade our friends farewell and set off again towards Stockley Bridge.

One or two folk returning late from the fells, looked at us in an inquiring manner, and we were amused as we wondered what they thought. We wandered very slowly up the pass, stopping frequently to look at the evening sunlight on the tops. The sun had set by the time we reached the tarn. Hugh wanted to bathe again, but was persuaded that he had

had enough for one day. On the way up to Sprinkling Tarn we saw the Needle silhouetted against the brilliant colours of the western sky, and the stars were coming out above us. It was very still ; only the running water broke the silence of the night as we stood and looked back to Gable. Soon we were past Esk Hause, and arrived at the little beck that runs from Great End into Eskdale. Here we took a long drink and filled the billy-can. The colours were gradually fading and in the twilight everything seemed grey and a little unnatural as we picked our way up and down over the boulders to the Pike. Gordon took a great pride in carrying the water, and resisted all our rather half-hearted attempts to help him. That water was precious. The Pike is not one of those obliging mountains with a spring near its top.

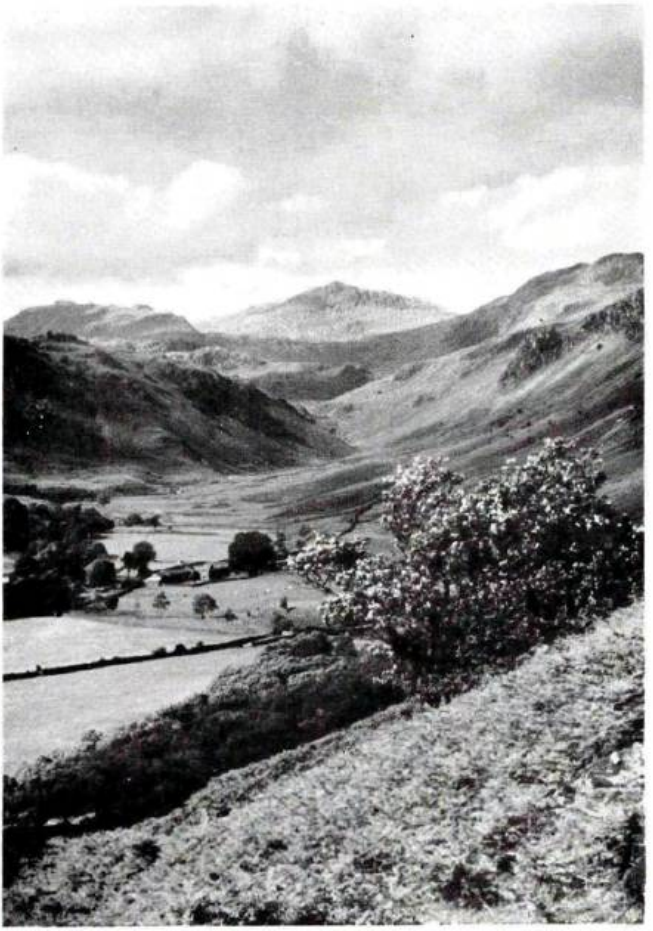
It was about midnight when we reached the shelter, and after a visit to the cairn, we settled down for the hours of darkness. The stones formed a hard bed, but the ropes helped to allow for the contours of the human body, and we were reasonably comfortable. Gordon took care to see that neither of us got a chance to pilfer any of his precious water, and we all settled down to sleep till the sun rose. Someone said something about waking him at the right time so that he would not miss anything, but he sounded rather optimistic, and was not taken seriously.

I suppose it must have been about two hours later, when I gradually awoke feeling rather cold from the knees down. The stars had disappeared, there was quite a strong west wind and a dull grey mist swirled over the shelter. The other two were snoring gently in their eiderdown bags on either side of me. The next three hours were not very comfortable ; draughty and a little damp from the mist, and sleep came and went away again in a most capricious manner. Each time I woke there was the mist, and I began to fear that there would be no sunrise, but just as hope was deserting me the mist above turned a little blue, and soon the sky was clear. I got up slowly and rather stiffly, and looking over the top of our

little fold, found that we were on an island in a sea of mist. Bowfell and Great End were the nearest landmarks.

The other two soon arose and we went up to the cairn. The wind was still strong, and we could see the whole ocean of cloud driven along below us, up from the sea, over Wastwater, covering the Screes, on to Scafell then tumbling down the crag into Hollow Stones. There it seemed to gather again, and join with that blowing up to Lingmell. Lingmell pushed it up into the air again, and again it fell to surge up to Styhead around the base of Gable, and lying in little pockets along the Corridor route. Styhead Tarn was suddenly clear, surrounded on all sides by the billowing mass, which then closed over it again, rushed on down into Borrowdale, and was lost to our sight beneath the tops of Skiddaw and Saddleback. To see all this the better we were wandering about the top, from the cairn to Pike's Crag and back again.

The sun was not yet up, though it lit the eastern sky a golden orange colour, contrasting beautifully with the thin streaks of dark grey cloud that ran across that part of the sky. In a short while it had reached us, and was tinging the surface of the sea of cloud with pinks and reds that seemed to add life to the white-grey of the clouds. Scafell was clear now, except for occasional, errant clouds that would suddenly appear above the crag and stream down the face. We watched and waited, hoping to get a photograph of the sunlit face. The line of shadow gradually fell, and the deep cleft of Moss Ghyll looked very dark in contrast to the warm colour of the upper rocks. Now the sun had reached the Bayonet-shaped crack, now the V-ledge. I waited, longing to see the Great Flake outlined against the face, with its wonderful crack a black line along its side. But this was not to be ; a white bank of cloud flowed over the crag, and three ghostly Brocken Spectres appeared across Hollow Stones. We waved, and our ethereal shadows responded. One always waves at a Brocken, just to show there is no ill-feeling, but it would be most disturbing if he did not reply.



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Soon the clouds enveloped us, and we had to give up all hope of getting the photograph. We returned to the shelter dug out the food and the little primus, and soon had Gordon's water turned into a fine Pemmican soup. Eating that breakfast of hard biscuit and Pemmican soup, we seemed to be more isolated from the rest of the world than ever. Perhaps it was the exploring atmosphere lent by the food, or perhaps it was the feeling that for the last hour we really had been in another world ; a fairy world, where everything looked different and indescribably beautiful, but yet obeyed the physical laws of our world. It was good that we had been suddenly returned to the damp, cold world we know so well, because the sudden descent of the cloud made the sunrise world seem more remote from our own than it would have seemed if we had returned gradually into a sunny day. We were all rather speechless over that breakfast ; perhaps we were busy collecting and arranging the wealth of impressions that we had received during the last hour.

Breakfast finished, we packed up and returned to the problems of our own world in the form of a search for the way to Mickledore. Arrived there we parted company, Gordon and Hugh striking down to Eskdale, and I towards the Corridor Route. Hollow Stones looked wilder than ever, and Pike's Crag was like a forest of gigantic aiguilles as I gazed up at it through the mist. Apart from nearly walking into Styhead Tarn, the walk down was uneventful till I met our friends of the previous night on their way up to Gable. I was tired when I got back to Langdale, and was glad I did not go to Coniston. When Gordon and Hugh did arrive, they were a bit footsore, and despite a large tea at Seathwaite, they made short work of the meal I had prepared. We all slept well that night, and took an easy day on the morrow, and now all we want is another holiday and another fine night, and then we can go back and get that photograph of Scafell.

# THE CAIRN

*Peter Lloyd*

' A small cairn marks the foot of the climb.'

How familiar is the guidebook sentence, and how welcome the relief that comes to the climber, seeking his landmarks in bad weather or on an unknown crag, when the promised little pile of stones looms up out of the mist, setting all doubts at rest. It is a useful institution, that cairn, and one that only a triple-distilled purist could protest against. It must have, for all climbers, a wealth of associations, and much could be said about it, but the cairn I want to write about now is of another kind, and though those who climb on the Napes may not readily agree, it is the more important of the two, the summit cairn. Not long ago, **I must admit, I** used to take it for granted, seeing it as little more than a primitive notice-board bearing the message ' This is the summit,' and glad of it sometimes as a convenient back-rest.

All that has changed for me since the day I built my own cairn. It was not, alas, as a signal of achievement on a newly-conquered summit but here in England, on the modest brow of High Raise. It all happened on a September day three years ago, at the time of that unequal duel at Godesberg, but I had escaped the thought of these things by leaving Patterdale before the London papers had come, with sandwiches enough to last out the day, and the promise of fine walking weather to urge me on. I was alone, and but for this the cairn might never have been built. I had turned my back on the main road, and made my way by the lane to just below Brothers' Water before striking up the side valley to Haves Water and so up to High Street. From there I had meant to drop down Riggindale to Haweswater, and then come back by Loadpit Hill to Howtown, and back along the lake to Patterdale. But when I reached the ridge at High Street, Mardale looked dark and uninviting below, and it seemed a folly to

lose the height I should have to make again so soon. Besides, the wind blew so keenly, and the fells beckoned so invitingly, that it was impossible to resist the long ridge running by Rampsgill Head, High Raise, Raven Howe and Weather Hill towards Penrith. What men those Romans must have been to build their road up here and scorn the obvious way by Kirkstone Pass and Ullswater. But Roman road or no, High Street seemed a real mountain that day, and I was as glad to be on top of it as if it had been ten times the height. There was no great view into the distance, **but** the wind brought the clouds tearing across from the north-west and their shadows played hide and seek over the fells. It was as if the landscape itself were in movement.

It may have been on Kidsty Pike that I first noticed the cairns, for they seemed suddenly unworthy of their mountains. I thought of the Lakeland cairns I knew best, Robinson's cairn on the high level route to Pillar rock, the cairn on Looking Stead, where so many climbers must have stopped to rest after the quick climb from Mosedale, and the cairn on Great Gable itself. Compared with those, the cairns here were mere heaps of stones that might have been dumped out of the back of a motor lorry ; they cried aloud for hands to re-fashion them.

But it was clear that this task was not one to be lightly undertaken. It was no question of simply re-sorting the pile so as to increase the vertical and decrease the horizontal components, for even in my ignorance I had noticed that cairns have their styles, and that the style must depend on the stone and on the mountains. The last cairns I had seen were those Gothic fantasies that the Himalayan peoples build, and in particular, I recalled the delight of watching, three years before, with what consummate skill the Bhotias in Garhwal could create cairns that had the quality of statuary. Some of these had had a startling beauty, but it needed no long thought to realise that something more solid and sober was needed on these old hills, cairns of a Norman

or even Saxon stamp. A cemented cairn with a visitors' book in a zinc case might seem inevitable on a Bavarian summit, but that again would never do in Lakeland, and though a cast aluminium effigy of the Virgin Mary seemed out of place on any summit, it was less fantastic on the Grepon than it would have been here.

I thought of cones and pyramids and tetrahedra, but when I came to High Raise and bent myself to my task, I soon found that the rounded and weathered stones seemed of themselves to condition the form that the cairn was to take, and to leave one with but little freedom of choice. Slowly it took shape as I learned to select with increasing confidence the stone that was needed for every gap. And when at last it was done I was so well pleased with my handiwork that I could not refrain from giving it, rather shamefacedly, a jaunty and incongruous top-knot. I felt for a moment like a small boy putting a bowler hat on a statue, and tried to justify myself by arguing that the top-knot would soon blow down. Afterwards, as I went on towards Red Crag, I wondered if I had really committed a heinous offence, and if a ruined cairn had the right to be left untouched in its picturesque squalor. The doubt was soon swept away, but a problem remained none the less. How should the existing cairns be treated? The precept I had learned from my grandfather, always to add a stone to the summit cairn clearly had much to be said for it, and it is widely accepted in the Himalaya, but the cairn which is built in that way, by the forced contribution of each passing traveller, is likely to end up as a formidable heap of stones and nothing more. Besides, a cairn may sometimes be thought of as a climber's signature on his mountain ; Marco Pallis speaks so of the cairn he found on Siniolchu in 1936, which he recognised as having been built by the German party which had recently been on the mountain. When a cairn had this quality, or was obviously complete in itself, no one, surely, would want to add his stone or to tamper with it ?

But as I crossed Raven Howe and began to go down over the fells above Howtown, it all seemed suddenly a lot of solemn nonsense, and casting aside my former hesitations, I resolved before the day was out to build a cairn in the Himalayan style, as frivolous and fanciful an affair as I could contrive to balance. It was on a shoulder of Steel Knotts that I found the site, and the stone I wanted, and I laboured long before I was satisfied. It was a slender little thing that stood there at last, a mere shadow of the solid affair on the ridge, but so elegant, so young and so impudent that I laughed to myself, and was glad the other Lakeland cairns could never see it. I wonder if any fell walker passed that place before the wind and rain had done their work ; it is for him that this confession is written.

# ESCAPE

*A. P. Rossiter*

The track led off at a humpy bridge, where there was a sheep-trod down to the water. It stepped up the slope, the little hoof-pricks marking it till you came level with a round pen, down in a hollow, looking like a lost fort. Then up, and you saw the crag over the moss.

It faced north, with a sort of scowl of shadow on it, so that you felt the cold under there. Long pillars of gloominess ran up, some straight, some aslant ; and you could feel yourself wondering if you could bridge that, or back up there, or whether it was just a wet sunken wall with the chockstones like roofs above you, and moss under your fingers, and fear walking like a fly along your spine. There wouldn't be much to tie up to, and the overhangs hit you twenty minutes off. Paul made a face, and I made one back : he didn't much like it, no more did I. It looked severe and harsh, scowling away into the moors, and turning its long heathery back to the thin sunshine. And with your feet plashing through soggy ground between the grass-tumps, and the nails lifting all a-glitter with the wet, you guessed that whatever else those black gullies might be, they weren't dry.

' It isn't 500 feet high,' Marston had said in his lean ironical way, ' nor as wide as Pavey Ark. But it'll make you think. You wouldn't call it a mountain, but in these days even you mountaineers come down to mere crags. It'll make you think, I reckon.'

I was slightly afraid of Peter Marston, and a touch of that unreasonable awe transferred itself to the crag as soon as I saw it. Both were spare and dark and unexpected, and perhaps the crag shared his taste for difficulty and his provocative derision of mountaineers (a term he held to be ridiculous ; there being no mountains in England). I knew this

association was nonsense, but as we waded heather on the last rise, I noticed a face on one of the out-jutting undercut buttresses : a long dry Egyptian-Pharaoh's profile, with a hard inhuman eye. It wasn't a bit like Marston ; but it gave the same uncomfortable little inkling of being superior to your difficulties, and perhaps with a restrained amusement.

' Looks as if Marston was right,' said Paul over his shoulder.

I pointed out the Pharaoh to him, and he fell for it. ' You can traverse right round him,' he said. ' Look, up the crack by his right—no, left—ear, across to the bridge of his nose, and up the flute on his what-you-call-it head-dress. Bit exposed on the cheek. . . .'

We scrambled boulders and fell into subtly camouflaged holes till we were up the ramp and under the nose. By the time I was roped, Paul was on the cheek, where the traverse started. There was no belay, for Pharaoh's ear had come off a few million years back, and now lay well below his chin, stuck in the ramp, upright. I used it to reach Paul's stance, and after changing hands about a dozen times on neat little waist-high holds, he vanished round the corner with a grin. We clinked nails all over Pharaoh, and I even found I was kicking him in the eye-socket, but he showed no resentment. His brow-chimney had no bottom and few holds, but we finished it feeling loosened and confident, and with a good word or two for Marston's ' superior grit.' It was very compressed stuff, and went into sharp-cut edges, like real rock. When we had got down, and done a long chimney and a tricky slab beside it, we felt like looking for something more troublesome. We found it all right.

Marston had recommended The Raven's Nest, and since it needed a long reach I led. At a glance, the climb was a zig-zag, into a blind overhung chimney high up, and out of it again on a traverse under the eaves, to reach a bracket stuck out gargoylishly on a broken-off arete, with nothing below ; then up or round the edge, outflanking the overhangs. ' I

wonder why we do this,' I said, stepping across from the apex of one steep triangular slab to a bracket, and from that to the base of another triangle. The second was steeper, and green with dusty microscopic life.

' There's something to your left,' said Paul. ' Edge of the slab. Higher.' ' I wonder,' I said (hooking my fingers on the side AB) . . . why . . . " (lifting my right foot with circumspect suspicion) ' . . . . one . . . does these things.' Having felt for a crack on the side AC and found it wasn't there, I returned to the base BC, and did some more wondering. After two more lift-lower exercises I decided against boots ; and by when I had rubbers on, Paul had repeated my experiments and reached the same conclusion.

' It beats me,' I observed to the apex of ABC when I reached it, ' . . . why people—ah, I've got it ! ' (and I stepped up on to A, and bumped my head on the roof of the nest)—' why people do such things.'

' What's traverse like ? ' Paul shouted.

' Flat shelf for hands, sloping ledge for half a toe. Basin on the end.' When you get there, I thought. But a grand **hold.**

' Any belay ? '

There were traces of a nest, and perhaps of ravens ; nothing else.

' Stance for birds,' I shouted, and moved warily across **to** the parallel cracks of the traverse on my left. The sloping perch under the roof kept you feeling just-about-to-slip-off ; and even in the respectable obscurity of the Latin language I had a distaste for the Future Infinitive.

I pawed along the shelf, and three times I put my left along the toe-ledge and took it back again. You had to keep both hands flat on the shelf and trust to faith and friction. There ought to have been a decent little incut somewhere ; but there wasn't. You know that feeling : a sort of gradual irritation with Something or Somebody (unspecified) **for not** providing, or finding-and-marking The Indispensable.

It wasn't there. So long as my foot was back-pressing against the rock under the nest I could stretch out my left leg with security ; but if I put my right to the ledge both feet were on a slope, and the hands wouldn't stay. It was like traversing a super-grand piano without using the top or the pedals ; and before I could play the bottom of the bass my right hand must get to middle C. The slab fell straight to the bottom, the overhang was in my hair, there were these two cracks and nothing else. I fiddled, I fingered everything, and came back beaten : except that I knew that Marston's ' long reach ' was no greater than mine.

' You've got to stretch to that bracket-affair,' said Paul from below, ' and then stand up on it to step round the edge.'

Something clicked at the word *stretch.* If back-pressure keeps you on *at first,* so it will *at last*: the bracket I wanted to grip must be a toe-hold ; the long reach was legs, not arms. First a toe, then a hand, and after that swing out and round under the edge But when I'd sidled along till six horrid inches beyond the point where I felt sure the treble hand must skid, till an obedient toe had indeed hooked the lovely bracket, and till I felt almost able to take a deep breath without blowing myself away—I had forgotten about the corner. I only knew the problem was solved. And then, standing on the bracket, I remembered. Rather, I saw it wasn't, and then remembered.

' You slip under the edge,' said Marston's voice, ' and though you'll not like it, it's best to kneel. The other side's not so bad—ledges. But if you want entertainment, go straight up on the side you came—the direct: usually done on a rope, just as a diversion.'

Down below, I could see the gargoyle where my foot ought to be : barred off from me by the edge ; and below it a plan of Paul, with the face of a man who wonders what the leader is up to. I tried to move back. When I saw it was next to impossible, up came those tingles of nervous

tension that register the physiological conviction that your place is a tight one. If things look just (if only just) solvable the sensation is not unpleasant. You take your fear as a tonic: like strychnine. With two or three irreversible moves behind you, mere physiology takes more talking down, however well you know it must not take charge.

Sizing up the prospects, I had to keep pushing it out of mind that the laugh was on me. It might have been Marston's, or the rocky-faced Pharaoh's, or something in the whole scheme of Nature—that terrifying thing which (as most climbers discover) the poets great and small, the health-walkers and water-colourists have tried to prettify out of existence. Anyway, the laugh was on me, though I wasn't well placed for enjoying it.

' Wha-wa stuck ? ' said Paul's voice, rather blown about by the wind. ' No . . . ! ' said Pride. ' . . . not quite,' added Candour. I shouted for both.

High to my right, a flake : room for fingers, in a back-hand side-hold. Reached, firm and reassuring. Move up leaning back on it, then left foot up. Accomplished. What's the opposite of a ' lay-back ' ? Lay-out ? Thrust against flake now (but what for left hand ?), thrust now, raise right foot ; thrust, back-pressing steadily now, now, now ; and left hand will reach thin edge of arete. A hold like an ear, wind-hollowed by hallooing wind. A proper Thank-God hold, could swing on it. Swing low, sweet chariot. Now ! No. Can do this once, twice, more ; no more, no.

I made my last move, and got the ear. Too quickly. It was the right sow, but the wrong lug. I suppose I stopped back-pressing for the fraction while my left dropped over the ear. It let my body come away a bit. The lug of my weight came shearingly on the thin windworn edge, and not straight down. The whole arete pulled itself back sharply from my face like a girl that won't be kissed, leaning back from the waist, reluctant. I was pirouetting backwards on

my heel, left foot in the air and the stone ear was loose in my hand, snapped.

Looking down to see how I was going to land I found I wasn't falling. I was sticking out at right-angles to the face, turning like a door on the hinge of my hooked fingers. I shut the door without haste, and then—so far away from myself that it seems now as if I'd watched someone else doing it—I repeated every move but the snatch, and there was the mutilated stump of the ear under my palm, harsh and friendly, with a green stain of wet across it. The rest went with the impersonal precision of a three-mover chess problem when you've seen through it. I only knew two things—I *must not* hurry ; but I must lose no time in getting somewhere to feel frightened in. I managed both, feeling, oh, why, why, why, can't I always climb like this ? You know the feeling.

On the grass it was all different. Quite myself again. You get that sometimes when you've put it across a fast car and yourself ; after you stop and get out. It's finished, and you're not that self any more, but just the fellow that goes about under your name, and works somewhere, and isn't much credit to you.

* * *

When Paul joined me some minutes later, he handed over a thick grey chunk of stone with a flat side to it, new-broken, and stained green with wet. ' It beats me,' he said, ' why people do such things. Why do they ? ' Why indeed ! I lit a pipe and watched the wind come and go on the bracken, and cloud-shadows on the moorland to the north, and sheep moving up with the mechanical-toy insistence of pale wood **lice.** The film of the episode ran itself through twice, three times, wore itself out ; and general answers to the general question began to shape themselves and drift, dissolve, and recombine like mid-day clouds in autumn. These are shadows of them.

They say you climb for ' excitement' : for the freedom and adventure that civilisation denies : for those deeper sensations ' felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,' which transcend thrill and seem to point towards a revelation—a direct experience of a Nature which is walled off by towns, and by-passed by mechanical 'Progress.' If so, climbing is an Escape : either into such a phantasy-world as the polite Eighteenth Century found in the Gothic—in armour and ballads and Castles of Otranto ; or else into an alleged Reality where (following Wordsworth) you deny that civilised society is real.

It is hard to credit either explanation in wartime. A fantastic world of violence opens with every paper, every siren : yet men snatch days from front-line cities to climb through needless danger. The well-to-do *embiisques* in Lakeland hotels stay put. If Reality is not to be found in places where you carry your life under your hat, continually reminded how you are as the grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the Blitz, it is unlikely to be hidden in a National Park. Reality must be common to Coventry and Kern Knotts.

The cloud dissolved, blown up in phosphorus-bomb mushrooms, and another swelled upon its place.

Climbing offers a satisfaction over and beyond that of co-ordinated muscular activity and risk successfully carried, when the mind's self-management is echoed in the movement and poise of limbs. It *includes* a sensual delight akin to dancing: but different, in that misjudgment of skill is attended by something more than a jar to social self-esteem. Conceit cannot cover a false step ; nor is good taste uncertain when you know by direct physical sensation the grace of ease, and its opposite :—

> The unfinished man and his pain,
> Brought face to face with his own clumsiness

Mastery, mere success, bare competence, and complete failure are distinguished by the readiest of summary justices ;

for even getting to the top carries no unqualified laurels. Too much ease, or too little, bears a reproach ; why try ? You measure yourself against something as incorruptible as a pair of scales ; the answer is one you cannot question, and which only a fool receives with ill-humour. It therefore presents an escape from and compensation for all the innumerable situations in which the measure is uncertain, arbitrary, and difficult to accept with equanimity.

All this lies beyond the direct sensual joy of muscular movement and that queer personal liking for the textures and forms of those fragments of Earth's structure that you meet, recognise, judge, handle, and toe. Yet such appreciations lead direct to sharper awareness ; the sensory is in closest contact with the intellectual and moral. The Intellect comes back to the tips of the fingers, and even finds an outpost in toe-nails of tempered steel: the Will submits to the inevitable discipline imposed by physical fact—a ten-inch flake, a rib, a mossy slab. Each is itself, and to each you must submit. Thus the abstraction of the over-civilised life is escaped, and a much-needed contact established with the undeniable and unarguable. The workshop, the office, the government, and the bomb are *real* enough ; but none is as undeniable and immutable as the consequences of gravitation and loss of grip. Even the scrubbed and sterilised Utopias of Mr Wells offer no escape from Weight, however hard they try to rub the Devil out of dangerous Nature.

The civilised sheep had done following the local Gauleiter up the hill, and now spread out like grubby little clouds in a green sky, reasserting hungry individualities within the wool and mutton.

You often hear ' Escapism ' damned to-day. But there are good and bad escapes. The essence of a good Escape or Compensation is that it should confront you, in disguise, with problems similar to those you need relief from ; so that your mastery in little can be carried back to places where

confidence and courage were ready to fail. Good play, of whatever sort, is exercise ; not pastime.

All play needs a hidden discipline : best, when the rules are implicit in the conditions of the game, and can neither be questioned, modified by vote or fiat, nor outwitted. Therefore, the best games must be strenuous, painful, or dangerous —for it is a hard knock to self-esteem that lasts as long as a broken limb, or causes more immediate distress than being half-drowned or kicked in the fork. Fear must be in the initial situation, or mere technique (however enjoyable) ends in itself. A technical mastery that holds fear in check and responds to danger with sharpened skill and the confidence of **knowing** (at rare moments) what vast resources shock can call forth from shrinking flesh and nerve—*that* is self-mastery, based on awareness and self-management ; awareness of the dangerous sense-delightful world about you, self-management in the face and teeth of it. Towards that we climb our daily dangers ; mostly without thinking about it. There's no need to think, not with fear.

Did it take a war to tell you this—that living is dangerous, and Nature no soft goddess, but a rocky-faced Pharaoh ? No. But we have suffered too long a culture which said (like God), ' I am that I am ' ; and then added, ' . . . and therefore, I can't'—a most ungodly conclusion ! *Men* (we find) *?nust endure,* and therefore, their best Escapes are those that lead them back, new-measured by tough fact, but assured. Man is (by now) a measuring animal. Among other things, he climbs to measure himself ; to make that (so often melancholy) ' journey homeward to habitual self ' with more awareness than he started, and (perhaps) with a better humility, not for show, but wear. And always (since he climbs to finish) for pride ; in himself as Man ; and pride to endure. For ultimately there is no Escape. ' Thou must be patient ; we came crying hither. . . . '

But suppose you do not, or cannot, wish to meet your wider dangers in masks and on a small stage ; what then ?

Then, I suppose, you need rest, and not escape ; and the best pastimes are those which most successfully blanket that fact that you are doing nothing. It is hard for any of the popular forms of so-called escapism—cinemas, novels, popular science, revues and farces, radio, roadhouses, etc.—to compete with sunbathing, drifting down rivers, and sleep.

' Well,' said Paul, ' if you've done figuring out why you do it at all, we might as well go and *do* something. Or were you counting sheep ? '

' No. I've decided that Climbing is a form of Escape—back into Life.'

' If you go shooting round corners without looking, what you'll need is a/^re-escape—back into life ! '

[1] Give me Pharaoh's ear,' I said.' I'll keep it to remind me.'

# LAKELAND RAINFALL

*F. J. Monkhouse*

Weather is one of the vital physical factors which a mountaineer has to consider, because upon the physiographical environment, which in terms of personal ability is an assessable constant, a most capricious variable is imposed. An adverse change of weather on the world's greater ranges may mean the abandonment of ambitious plans, but it may also mean the difference between life and death. On our British hills it is rarely that bad weather is more than annoying or delaying to a properly equipped party, but, nevertheless, most climbers remember times when map and compass had to be used in thick mist on familiar ground, or other occasions when the first raindrops produced a greasiness on the rocks which made rubbers definitely uncomfortable. One of my hardest mountain efforts was a five hours' crossing of Styhead in lashing rain and the unrelieved blackness of a stormy January night.

The keynote of mountain weather is variability, but behind the apparently wanton vagaries there is a certain semblance of reason. This short article is intended to examine that most uncertain of the elements, rainfall. But before considering details of the Lakeland rainfall records and endeavouring to account for them, it is necessary to examine in outline the underlying physical process.

Evaporation takes place from water surfaces by sun and wind until a certain vapour pressure (or vapour tension) is reached in the local atmosphere. Should this body of air then become cooled, its relative humidity (that is, the percentage of the total possible amount of the water vapour that is present) will rise, as cool air is not able to hold as much moisture as warm air. For example, if the relative humidity of air at 80°F. were 27, at 60° F. it would be 50, and at 40° F. it would be 100, or in other words the air would be sat-

urated ; beyond this crucial temperature (dew-point) the air is unable to hold more moisture, which will then be condensed. Condensation takes place around nuclei which may consist of minute dust particles ; these tiny droplets coalesce and aggregates of them form clouds.

Not only does mountain scenery owe a great deal to clouds, but it is possible to deduce from them much about the probable sequence of weather. The International Cloud Atlas lists some ten cloud types, together with a large number of possible combinations of these. They may be divided into two main groups, according to their dimensional development ; first, those which form horizontal layers at more or less uniform altitudes and second, those which have an immense vertical extent. The first group includes three altitudinal categories. The highest clouds above 20,000 feet are composed of minute ice-crystals ; several distinct types may be distinguished. The first of these is *cirrus,* the wispy fibrous shreds which are not thick enough to cast a shadow. Another is *cirro-cumulus,* which is usually arranged in white furrows, ripples or ' sheep-backs,' through which the sun shines with a halo ; this is the ' mackerel sky ' of the sailor and is frequently the harbinger of bad weather. A third type is *cirro-stratus,* a thin milky veil which is an almost certain sign of a depression and bad weather. The clouds between about 6,000 and 20,000 feet are composed of water droplets and are therefore thicker and greyer than the first group. They include notably *alto-cumulus,* a heavier type of ' mackerel sky,' and *alto-stratus,* the depressingly gloomy cloud-pall which follows *cirro-stratus* when the weather breaks. The low clouds below 6,000 feet arc the chief bringers of rain and may also be divided into three main types. *Strato-cumulus* is a grey cloud-sheet, with masses still individually distinguishable, *stratus* is the uniform thick grey sheet so common in the mountains, and *nimbo-stratus* is a heavy cloud sheet across which hurry angry-looking masses of black ' scud.'

The clouds with a great vertical development form billowy white masses swelling up in the late afternoon of a warm summer day. This ordinary *cumulus* may continue to grow into the *cumulo-nimbus* or thunder-cloud, which from below looks black but may appear dazzling silver from the side, and a thunder storm will often follow. Sometimes the great cloud may be ominously tinged with copper, purple, or even green, in which case the storm will be violent.

These clouds are formed by the cooling of a body of air which contains a certain amount of water-vapour ; they may continue to rise vertically or be drifted horizontally by the winds until a further decrease of temperature causes a state of super-cooling, which produces agglomeration of droplets and when these are large enough they fall as rain. This cooling takes place most rapidly when the air rises. An ascent of about 17,000 feet from sea-level reduces atmospheric pressure by about half and the volume of the body of air is therefore doubled ; this expansion uses energy at the expense of the air temperature, which falls, and the air is thus cooled. Air is forced to rise in three main ways, first when a wind meets a mountain range, second in a low pressure system, and third in vortical convection currents due to local heating ; these processes cause relief or orographic rain, cyclonic rain and convection or thunder rain respectively.

The first of these is due to a permanent control ; where the predominant wind-stream, warmed and saturated after its passage over the large Atlantic water-surface, meets mountain ranges on the windward coast, precipitation will be heavy. The winds, having deposited a large part of their moisture, cross the range and become warmer and drier because the air is heated by compression, and therefore its relative humidity decreases. Consequently the leeward slopes of the mountains receive less rainfall and form what is known as ' a rain-shadow.'

The weather of the British Isles is determined by a succes-

sion of relatively small low pressure systems alternating with high pressure systems, each with their attendant winds and weather. These conditions are interrupted occasionally in winter by the frosts and ' north-easters ' which occur when continental conditions of more stable high pressure extend westwards over our islands, and more rarely in summer by settled fine weather due to a northward spreading of the permanent high pressure normally situated in the latitude of the Azores. The smaller lows, depressions, or disturbances appear to form in the North Atlantic when a stream of cool polar air flowing south meets moist warm tropical air which has moved northwards ; they do not mix as they are separated by a line of discontinuity, but they form an anti-clockwise vortex round a centre of low pressure towards which the winds blow. Each system moves in a general north-easterly direction, and our islands lie slightly to the south of the main track. The northern part of the depression is the cool sector and has northerly winds ; we tend on the whole to experience the conditions of the warm sector. In the latter the warm moist air over-rides and rises above the cool air, and rain falls heavily along this warm front. In addition, the cool air may undercut the rear of the warm sector, force it to rise and more rain is deposited along this cold front. Should the cold front overtake the warm front and thereby lift the warm air off the surface, the depression is occluded, and tends to fill up and disappear. Since the great development of forecasting, based on a multiplicity of observing stations and synoptic charts upon which isobars are plotted, a number of varieties of lows have been distinguished, including, besides the main depressions, the shorter lived but more intense secondaries, and the black rolls of cloud and line-squalls of the V-shaped and straight isobar disturbances.

The passage of a typical depression at Brackenclose would appear more or less as follows. Following fine weather, with unusually clear visibility (a sharply defined view of the

Isle of Man from Scafell is one of the most ominous signs), the wind, formerly light and blowing from Esk Hause, veers in a clockwise direction and blows up the lake while the barometric pressure falls steadily. From the Solway a light milky sheet of *cirro-stratus* spreads over the sky, so that the sun shines dully, sometimes with a halo. The air feels heavy and muggy. The cloud-sheet thickens to a watery-looking grey pall of *alto-stratus,* across which chase ragged masses of *nimho-stratns,* and the drizzle which has commenced almost unnoticed increases to a steady downpour which may continue for several days if the depression is slow-moving. The wind gets stronger and at the passage of the cold front may go round sharply to north-west and blow in great gusts, driving a black roll of cloud across the sky. The barometer starts to rise suddenly, and the first sign of improving weather is shown by a long streak of blue low down in the west. Gradually the clouds break, the steady rain changes to clearing showers, a cooler wind blows from a northerly direction, and lofty white *cumulus* sail across a hard blue sky. The wind drops and a spell of fine weather may set in. A rapidly rising barometer, however, manifests a ridge of high pressure bringing short-lived fine weather (the ' borrowed day ' which is ' too good to last '), followed by another depression.

The anti-cyclone or high, rarely brings rain ; its calm stable conditions, with descending air currents, may mean a long spell of fine weather in summer and either a clear frosty spell or the monotonous anticyclonic gloom of a dense stratus pall with thick fogs in winter.

The third type of rainfall, convection or thunder rain, is due to the setting up of vortical convection currents by local heating. Great *cumulus* and *cumulo-nimbus* swell up to immense heights, and violent thunder storms, with short-lived but heavy downpours, may occur. This is much less frequent in temperate latitudes than the first two rainfall types, but it does occur sporadically in the late afternoons in

early summer. If it should happen that the air resting on the earth's surface is very warm after days of heat, while at the same time an approaching disturbance brings in warm moist air, the rainfall may be widespread and heavy.

After this analysis of the general causes of rainfall we may describe and endeavour to account for Lakeland rainfall. The mountainous areas of Britain are in general situated in the west of the island, and whenever the distribution of pressure, either generally or locally, favours a westerly sea-wind, orographic rainfall occurs. Western Britain has an average annual precipitation of from 50 to 150 inches, compared with an average over the whole country of about 40 inches. Eastern England is for the most part in the rain-shadow and much of East Anglia has little more than twenty inches per annum. Incidentally, the driest recorded place is Great Wakering on the Essex coast of the Thames Estuary, which has only 18-1 inches.

The wettest recorded places in Great Britain, that is, those which average over 150 inches per annum, are at the head of Glen Garry (south of Fort Augustus), the Ben Nevis district, the Snowdon area, Lakeland, and near Ben Alder in Inverness-shire. The distribution of annual average rainfall totals in Lakeland is shown on Fig. 1, although, of course, the paucity of records in the less accessible places necessitates generalisation. The Lakeland valleys radiate on the western side of the massif towards the coast and so form lines of least resistance to the movement of the moisture-laden westerlies. The mean annual rainfall at stations near Workington (180 feet above sea level), Camerton (200 feet), Bassenthwaite (500 feet) and Keswick (300 feet approximately) is respectively 36-9, 36-2, 44-9 and 65-7 inches. (These figures and all others used are taken from the annual publication *British Rainfall,* the patient work of some thousands of observers.) The winds, blowing along the relatively broad Derwent valley, do not rise until they reach the steep transverse valley-head, where the rainfall rapidly increases.

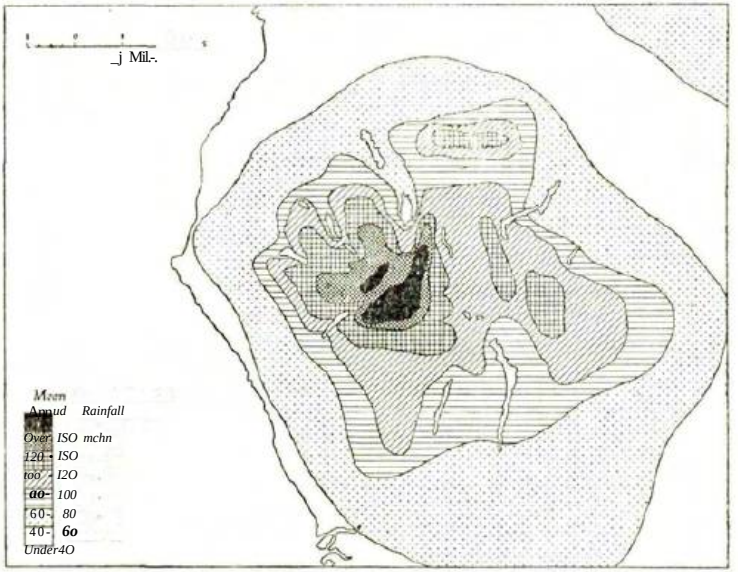



FIG. 1. The mean annual rainfall of Lakeland. The isohyets (lines joining places with the same mean annual rainfall) were interpolated after the position of each recording station had been plotted For above scale of miles : 1-0-1-2, read : 5-U-5-10.

Examples of this are at Hassness in Buttermere (350 feet above sea level, 105-9 inches of rainfall), Gillerthwaite in Ennerdale (445 feet, 88-3 inches), Wasdale Head (280 feet, 106-7 inches) and Coniston (180 feet, 80-3 inches). Borrowdale has a much heavier rainfall, as it is at right-angles to the winds which have already risen to cross the Dale Head-Brandreth-Gray Knotts range, and as a result three stations, the Moraine (330 feet), Seathwaite (423 feet) and Stockley Bridge (585 feet) have figures of 97-5, 122-0, and 146-9 inches respectively.

It is not clear how heavy the rainfall is on the higher ground. Totals, of course, vary tremendously from year to year, as will be shown, and in many cases records have not been taken for a sufficiently long period to provide the thirty-five year figures which are the minimum for a reliable

average. Short-term averages are given here occasionally in lieu of anything better, as they are at least indicative. Records were taken on Scafell Pike and Broad Crag between 1849 and 1895, but these gave mean annual averages of only 94 and 114 inches respectively. These unexpectedly low figures are probably due to loss of snow, as the gauges were only visited monthly and might often have filled with snow and frozen up early in the month. The figures for Fort William and the summit of Ben Nevis, with an altitudinal difference of 4,235 feet, are respectively 80-4 and 171-3 inches, which gives a mean increase of 2-14 inches per hundred feet of ascent. It is rash to assume that the same increase will take place in the case of the Lakeland hills, as the two districts are physiographically very different, and the Nevis group is more exposed to Atlantic influences. However, the vertical difference between Wasdale Head and Scafell is 2,930 feet, and on the calculated basis the summit will have a mean annual rainfall of 106-7 plus 62-7 inches, that is, 169-4 inches, which probably approximates quite closely to the actual figure. At any rate, it is clear that the centre of the dissected Lakeland dome, comprising the double barrier of Brandreth-Green-Gable-Great Gable and Seathwaite Fells-Glaramara-Allen Crags-Bow Fell-Great End forms an area with a mean annual precipitation of about 150 inches. Short term averages over the six years from 1934 to 1939 give the following results:—Sty head Tarn 154-3, Styhead 153-4 and Sprinkling Tarn 162-6 inches. The high rainfall of the Styhead region, which is only just over 1,000 feet above sea-level, is due to the fact that the air-currents ascending over the summit of Great Gable have sufficient impetus to continue to rise for some further distance. Hence the heaviest rainfall takes place in the calm leeward air between Glaramara and Gable.

Beyond the central ranges rainfall does not decrease as much as might be expected in the Dunmail through-valley and its laterals, as the relatively narrow uplands have by no

means caused the air to release all its moisture. At New Dungeon Ghyll the mean annual rainfall is 110-2 inches, while at Rydal, Wythburn and Thirlmere the figures are 96-8, 83-3 and 86-7 inches respectively. The winds are now drier and rainfall does not increase greatly over the Helvellyn-Fairfield range (Kirkstone Pass 98-3 and Fairfield 95-5 inches). East of this barrier the rain-shadow effect becomes increasingly marked, and the amount decreases steadily to the Eden Valley (Patterdale Hall 86-4, Sharrow Bay, Ullswater 45-8 and Newton Rigg, near Penrith, 3-64 inches). Farther east, after a rise over the Pennine escarpment, there follows a constant decrease to the east coast (Newcastle 26-4 inches).

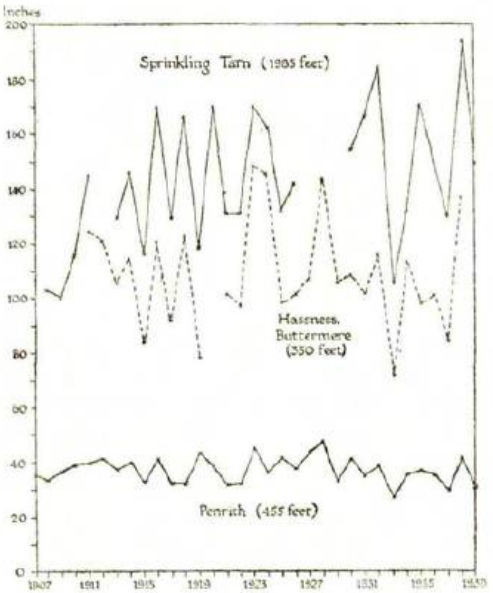



FIG. 2. The annual rainfall of Sprinkling Tarn, Hassness and Penrith, from 1907 to 1937. Breaks in the graphs are due to absence of records for those years.

It is emphasised that the above figures are averages and are for the most part taken over a period of thirty-five years. But rainfall actually shows great and capricious fluctuations over short-term periods. Fig. 2 graphs the totals for three contrasting stations over a period of years, and the recent exceptionally wet years (1932, 1935 and 1938) and dry years (1933 and 1937) are clearly revealed. More than 240 inches, or about as much as London receives in ten years, fell at Styhead in 1872, 1923 and 1928 ; in the last year a British record of 250-0 inches was set up, a record which it is hoped will never be beaten.

The same variability occurs in the monthly figures, as shown in Fig. 3. December and January have usually but by no means exclusively the heaviest precipitation. There have been only

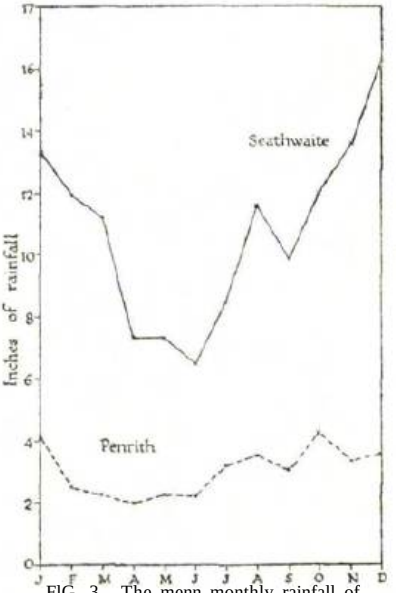



FIG. 3- The menn monthly rainfall of Seathwaitc and Penrith.

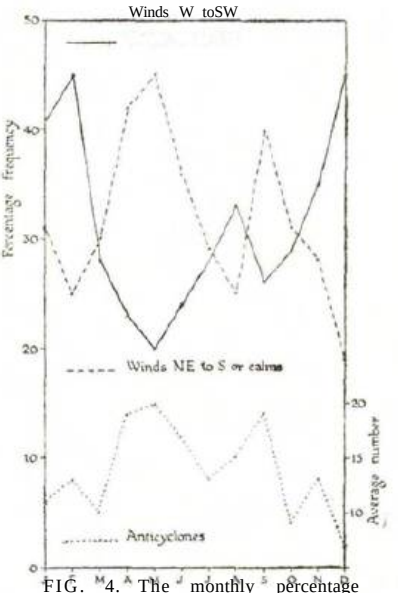



FIG. 4. The monthly percentage frequency of (a) winds between W. and S.-W. and (b) between N.E. and S. or calms ; the average number of anticyclones per month.

four cases in which monthly figures exceeded 50 inches in the British Isles since recording began ; two of these were at Styhead, namely 50-1 and 50-0 inches during the Januaries of 1872 and 1928. More recent very wet months were October, 1938, which recorded 35-0 inches at Sprinkling Tarn, and October, 1935, which recorded 34-0 inches at the same station. The early summer months are often the driest part of the year and Whitsun is generally a safe time of year for a Lakeland holiday. September, too, stands out as a drier month. The reason is that at these times anti-cyclonic weather is most common ; the rain-bearing westerlies are least frequent and calms and light winds from between north-east and south are more likely (Fig. 4). The fact that the statistics represented on this graph are only averages is illustrated by the wet summer of 1924, when the rainfall at Styhead Tarn from April to September was 101-8 inches.

The variability from day to day is most striking and long-period forecasting in the mountains is virtually impossible. Frequently very wet days with two or three inches occur, but more striking are the rarer falls of six inches or over. The following table gives these eventful downpours in order (only the maximum station is given for each date) :—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nov. 12th, 1897 | 8-03 inches | Seathwaite |
| July 29th, 1938 | 7-14 | Hassness, Buttermere |
| Oct. 29th, 1911 | 7-00 | Seathwaite |
| Jan. 8th, 1921 | 6-81 | Old Dungeon Ghyll |
| Sept. 30th, 1890 | 6-79 | Seathwaite |
| May 8th, 1884 | 6-79 | |
| Nov. 13th, 1869 | 6-70 | |
| Dec. 4th, 1864 | 6-47 | |
| May 30th, 1865 | 6-41 | |
| Nov. 16th, 1866 | 6-38 | |
| Feb. 15th, 1935 | 6-16 | Old Dungeon Ghyll |
| Jan. 28th, 1906 | 6-15 | Seathwaite |
| Aug. 24th, 1891 | 6-14 | |
| Dec. 26th, 1924 | 6-05 | |

It is interesting to note that the British record for a day's (twenty-four hours) rainfall is 9-56 inches at Bruton in Somerset on June 28th, 1917, due to exceptional convection causes. The strikingly heavy rains of the August Bank Holiday week-end of 1938 joined Derwentwater and Bassenthwaite, imperilled for a time the foundations of Brackenclose besides cutting off its water supply and stranded the car of a prominent member of the Club on the wrong side of the ruined bridge on the track from Wasdale Head Hall to the road. The area of rainfall was very local and confined almost entirely to Lakeland and South Scotland, as shown by Fig. 5.

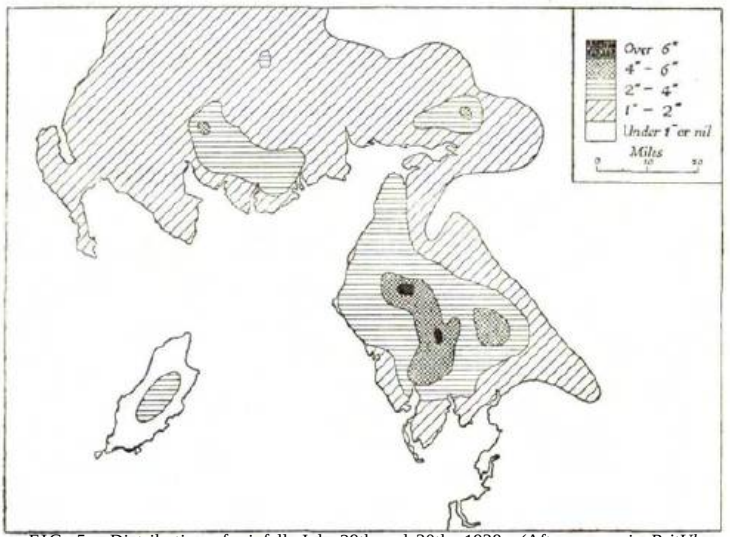



FIG. 5. Distribution of rainfall, July 29th and 30th, 1938. (After a map in *BritUh Haiti/all,* 1039).

The period of rain lasted some thirty-six hours on July 29th and 30th. During that time 9-20 inches fell at Buttermere, 8-1 inches in Borrowdale and 7- 4 inches at Watendlath, while falls of 5 inches were common throughout the district. It was due to a pronounced south-west current of exceptionally

humid air in the warm sector of a depression which was forced to rise sharply under the double influence of the relief and an adjacent undercutting cold front. Other short but notably sustained downpours were during the days August 24th to 25th, 1891 (Seathwaite 10-2 inches), December 16th to 17th, 1832 (the Moraine, Borrowdale, 9'2 inches) and October 25th to 27th, 1888 (Wythburn 10-9 inches). A much shorter but very intense period of rain occurred on Sunday afternoon, June 14th, 1931. In about two hours 2-5 to 3-0 inches fell in the Scafell area, causing widespread floods.

Most climbers know the disappointments of whole holidays spoilt by constant rain and cloud, but what may appear to be the deliberate malicious workings of Fate is merely due to the fact, unfortunate but true, that mountainous areas in temperate latitudes are naturally rainy areas. The average number of ' rain-days ' (i.e., a period of twenty-four hours with more than 0-01 inches of rain) during the years 1934 to 1939 for High Hill (Keswick), Hassness (Buttermere), Loweswater and New Dungeon Ghyll were 197, 228, 222 and 223 inches respectively. When we grumble at three or four successive days of rain at Brackenclose, let us remember that rain fell at Styhead on every one of the forty-eight days from February 19th to April 7th, 1903 (although even this is not as bad as Eallbus on the Isle of Islay, which had a continuous run of eighty-nine rain-days in 1923). Dry spells, of course, are quite likely to occur in early summer and autumn ; during the last few years there have been several ' absolute droughts,' including that lovely spell of sixteen rainless days from September 27th to October 12th, 1936 and two long spells in 1941. February, 1932, was an exceptional month, as no measurable rain fell in Lakeland and the month was the direst since statistics were first recorded.

So rain is just one of the things we have to accept as an integral part of our mountain heritage. Naturally no one, not even the most philosophical, likes long spells of wet

weather and there are few of us who have never stood gazing moodily and restlessly through the big windows at Brackenclose as the vertical sheets sweep across Yewbarrow, when the greyness of Wastwater and the cloud-pall seem to merge, when Wasdale resolves itself into two-dimensional space.

Yet bad weather often lends much to the Lakeland landscape. The hills look better under a rain-washed sky of hard blue across which race billowy clouds than when the dusty heat-shimmer hangs heavily. Those sudden fleeting breath-taking moments of indescribable glory usually come when the weather is not at its best. I was once coming down Gavel Neese, with a visibility—which had persisted all day—of a few yards, when a rift opened for a few seconds in the dense clogging mist and Wastwater lay like a pool of blood in the rays of the setting sun, while the mist itself diffused an uncanny crimson glow. The Brockenspectre from Grisedale Pike and the view from the summit of Great End with a silvery sea of clouds below are two other unforgettable mountain memories.

## CLIMBS, OLD AND NEW

The greater part of exploration has, this year, centred round Buttermere, all the new climbs, with barely an exception, being either severe or very severe in character.

Particular interest attached to the successful ascent of the last of the three Haystacks gullies, a climb of an extremely severe character, and to the introduction of a long and continuous climb, offering both the scale and the variety of an alpine expedition.

### BUTTERMERE

DALEHEAD YEW CRAG — 500 feet. Very difficult. (This crag is seen up on left on the flank of Dalchead as one walks up toHonister.)

PEREGRINE BUTTRESS — The start is at the lowest left-hand corner of the crag. 1st ascent, 25th July, 1941. C.W.F.N.

(1) 100 feet. A wall, steep but avoidable, with excursions to the left when necessary. Exposed.

(2) 250 feet. Straight up the buttress ahead, on splintery rock, with a variety of line choice.

(3) 150 feet. The buttress splits, the left-hand division forming a steep nose, which awaits conquest. The climb makes for the crack junction of the divide and continues up it to the heather of the top.

DALE HEAD YEW CRAG HOLLY TREE GROOVES — The steep front of lower Yew Crag Buttress is divided by a high-angled grassy rake. On the left of the latter, Flake and Crack Climb lies, to the right of the rake, Holly Tree Grooves runs up two grooves and a steep, exposed wall, 200 feet. Severe. Leader needs 100 feet of rope. Start at a small cairn on a terrace about a hundred feet up from the bottom of the Gully and to the right of an obvious grassy rake. 1st ascent, 30th November, 1941. W.P., E.B.M., A.B.

(1) 30 feet. Climb a small buttress and traverse left to a groove above a holly tree. Belay.

(2) 30 feet. The groove is climbed passing a large pillar until it is possible to traverse right. Good belays at the foot of the second groove.

(3) 20 feet. The second groove is deeply cut and the usual mode of progress will be ' back and foot.' The climber will probably find himself facing out at the top of the groove and the holly-tree near at hand makes the turn effective. Small stance by the holly, using it as a belay, or a smaller stance on the wall above with a large, but doubtful, block-belay.

4) 25 feet. From the holly-tree work up the wall on the left to the foot of a curving crack. The crack is ascended, using holds on the right wall. Exposed. Good ledge and belays.
(5) 85 feet. A short wall followed by an easy ridge abuts against a bulging wall. A large block lies in the gap between the end of the ridge and the bulging wall.
(6) 10 feet. The Strid. Step from the block and pull up on to a large grassy terrace.

YEW CRAG MIDRIB — Forty feet to the right of Yew Crag Gully is a short rib bounded on the right by a slab and a narrow scree-shoot. The rib gives a moderately difficult climb of interest and some quality. Belays can be found at intervals and the climb—150 feet in length—may be found suitable for an evening. 1st ascent, 23rd November, 1941. E.B.M., A.B.

FLAKE AND CRACK — 200 feet. Severe. The crag is about 15 minutes from the Honister road. There is a steep mass of rock between Charter Chimney and Yevv Crag Gully. It is split by a grassy fault. The climb ascends the buttress to the left of the fault. Cairn at the foot of a short wall. First ascent, 2nd November, 1941, W.P., E.B.M., R. Stokoe, A.B.

(1) 20 feet. The wall. Thread belay below a chimney formed by a large detached flake.
(2) 40 feet. The chimney is reached by a difficult pull up and climbed to a stance at the top.
(3) 30 feet. An oblique crack is the only means of advance on the steep wall above. Exposed. Small belay.
(4) 35 feet. Easier rock to steep wall. Belay on the left.
(5) 30 feet. The wall.
(6) 50 feet. Easier rock and a shallow groove to the summit of the buttress ; a large embedded block serves as a belay.

A way down from the top can be made down a grassy groove on the left.

BIRKNESS COMBE BLIND MAN'S BLUFF — Left of Birkness Gully are two big gullies, then a broad buttress. At the base of this is a well-defined nose of rock, similar in structure to Eagle Crag. This lasts some 200 feet, merging into heather in the upper buttress. The climb starts directly at the foot of the nose, it advances across an obvious slab towards the left, but makes back right to keep the true line of the nose —its only merit—as far as possible. Above good scrambling. Moderately difficult. 20th September, 1941. C.W.F.N.

GREY CRAGS
GREY WALL
SUAVITER

Grey Wall is the steep wall between the Chockstone Ridge, and Bishop's ArSte. The wall faces east, towards High Crag, and the rock is of fine quality. Some 30 feet up the wall is an overhung rock ledge : the Balcony. **150** feet. Severe. Leader needs 60 feet of rope. The climb starts at a cairn beside a large bollard in corner below the Balcony. 1st ascent, 12th July, 1941. W.P., S.B.B.

(1) 30 feet. From the bollard step into the corner, ascend a few feet, traverse right and then up to the Balcony. Good belay.
(2) 50 feet. Traverse across the face on the left to a thin crack. Ascend on good holds, passing a spike to a good stance and a fine belay on the edge of the wall.
(3) 45 feet. Follow easier rocks to a triangular grass ledge with a chimney, surmounted by a capstone in the corner. Belay.
(4) 20 feet. The Chimney. Belay.

GREY WALL
FoRTITER

150 feet. Very severe, exposed. Leader needs 80 feet of rope. Starts some 15 feet to the right of Suaviter. Cairn. First ascent 12th July, 1941. W.P., S.B.B.

(1) 20 feet. To the Balcony. Belay.
(2) 70 feet. Ascend a few feet to a ledge on the right. Step into an obvious, vertical crack and continue up to and over a prominent overhang, using a high hold. A mantelshelf is gained on the right, and is left by an awkward movement to a crack, which climbed on good holds to a narrow ledge. Belay above.
(3) 30 feet. The crack continued. Belay.
(4) 25 feet. The arete. Belay and cairn.

DEXTER WALL

125 feet. Very severe. Leader needs 80 feet of rope. 1st ascent, 16th March, 1941. W.P., S.B.B. The climb lies on the very steep wall to the right of the Oxford and Cambridge Direct Route.

(1) 25 feet. A start is made at a cairn 15 feet from the corner of the buttress. Climb a steep crack for 20 feet then step right to a stance. Belay.
(2) 50 feet. The overhang above is passed on the right, and the crack followed for 5 feet. A ledge is reached and traversed to the right (10 feet), a difficult corner follows. A niche with a block in it is reached, a three-inch ledge below serves as a stance.
(3) 50 feet. From the stance traverse right 20 feet, to a thin vertical crack. The ascent of the crack is very hard, holds for the fingers

are poor, and footholds almost non-existent. Bear left at the top of the crack and up to the top of the crack, and up to the top of the Wall. Cairn. Belay.

CHOCKSTONE EDGE Just severe in rubbers. It keeps rigorously to the right-hand edge of Chockstone Buttress (Slabs Climb). Start about 40 feet lower down in the couloir. The climbing is artificial, with short leads, and at times has great difficulty in keeping clear of the ordinary route. But it is firm and exhilarating, and often with a greater sense of exposure than it deserves. 1st ascent, 19th September, 1941. C.W.F.N.

HAYSTACKS THE Y-GULLY The last of the Haystacks trio to be climbed, it is excessively rotten in its lower portions, where the ascent of very steep grass and rotten rock constitute the major part of the climbing, but the rock improves as height is gained until the texture becomes sufficiently adhesive to allow the final cleft to overhang.

400 feet. Very severe. Leader needs 120 feet of rope. The climb starts from a chockstone at the foot of the Gully. 1st ascent, 11th May, 1941—completed 22nd June, 1941, W. P., S. B. B.

(1) 100 feet. A slab on the right of the chockstone is climbed. Continue up 75 feet of steep and rotten rock and grass to a rickety belay on the right.
(2) 100 feet. Continue up the looseness until an overhanging wall bars progress. The wall is traversed from right to left and further steep grass leads to a sound belay on the right.
(3) 45 feet. From the belay traverse left to the foot of the final section. Small belay.
(4) 30 feet. Climb up better rock to a small stance below a loose chockstone. Belay behind it.
(5) 80 feet. A unique back and foot ascent up the inverted funnel. The walls are very narrow at the top and the entire ascent is very exposed. Small and thread round a chockstone.
(6) 50 feet. Up the last few feet of looseness to tree-covered top of the Gully.

HIGH CRAG RESURRECTION ROUTE 245 feet. Very severe. Leader needs 80 feet of rope. The route runs up the east wall of the prominent High Crag Buttress. A sloping rock table on a ledge above and to the left is a landmark : start in a corner. First ascent, 7th September, 1941, W.P., E.B.M., A.B.

(1) 15 feet. Climb up a short corner to a large block on the left.
(2) 50 feet. From the block step right on to the rib. Ascend to a sloping rock ledge. Thread-belay on the left.
(3) 10 feet. Up to a good grass ledge, at the foot of a crack with two prominent overhangs. Thread-belay low down.
(4) 50 feet. The overhanging crack. The first overhang is climbed direct and the second is turned by a traverse out and back, above the difficulty, on the vertical right wall. Nook and small belay.
(5) 70 feet. The crux. From the nook traverse right along the narrowing ledge. By an ascent of a few feet and a delicate balancing movement a steep, indefinite crack can be gained. Climb the crack, its shorter continuation above, and some easier rocks to a large block-belay on the right, at the foot of a slab.
(6) 50 feet. The slab. Belay round its top.

PINNACLE RIB 350 feet. Severe. The climb runs up the central of three ribs coming down between Gatesgarth Chimney and Wall End Argte. First ascent, 5th October 1941, A.B., E.B.M.

The rib is followed to a wall with a pinnacle against it. The wall is ascended from the top of the pinnacle to a ledge. Pleasant climbing continues to the top of the crag. No measurements were taken.

ROWAN ROUTE 140 feet. Severe. Leader needs 70 feet of rope. To the immediate left of Epaulette Ridge is a parallel rib which begins as a buttress ; start in the centre of the buttress, to the left of a pillar of rock. 1st ascent, 20th September 1941, W.P., E.B.M.

(1) 60 feet. Ascend the buttress to a ' sentry box'. Trend left and after a long stride, up to a large ledge. Belay round rowan-tree.
(2) 30 feet. Up grass to the left a short distance, then traverse right and lay-back up a crack to a pinnacle. Poor stance.
(3) 50 feet. From the stance traverse right for 20 feet and climb up the centre of a steep slab. Belay.

NAMELESS CLIMB TO the left (eastern) end of the main mass of High Crag will be noticed a steep wall to the left of a sloping rock-table on a ledge about 25 feet up the wall. The climb faces east and starts at the corner of the crag. The climb was scratched throughout and is of good quality. 1st ascent and date unknown.

(1) 25 feet. Start at a cairn and ascend to a belay below an overhang.
(2) 60 feet. Climb the wall above starting to the left of the belay. Rock glacis and poor belay.
(3) 30 feet. Ascend a corner and cross a gentle slab. Belay at its top.
(4) 25 feet. A vertical crack loaded with loose blocks leads to a grassy corner. Small belay.
(5) 40 feet. From the corner traverse left along an exposed wall to an overhung scoop. Ascend the scoop on the left. Belay.
(6) 25 feet. Stepping from the belay block a slab is climbed to the top of the wall.

## LANGDALE

GIMMER ' F ' ROUTE — This route follows the overhanging crack which goes up the face on the left of ' D ' route and starts within a few feet to the left of it. **110** feet. Very severe. Rubbers. Leader needs 100 feet of rope. 1st ascent, 4th May, **1941. R. J.** Birkett, V.V.

(1) 25 feet. Scramble up easy rocks to a small grass ledge in the middle of Hyphen Traverse. Belay on right.
(2) 30 feet. Step delicately to the left and climb on to the slab above with the aid of a good flake hold for the right hand ; climb straight up the slab to a grass ledge immediately below the big overhang, then step round to the right and into the crack proper. Thread belay and small stance (very) a few feet up.
(3) 55 feet. Continue straight up the crack (lay-back), continue using edge of crack and small footholds on the right wall to the top of the crag. At the start and at the last four feet of the crack a lay-back will be found useful in overcoming the last few feet of the crack. A running-thread belay may be taken about 15 feet up the crack. Easier climbing leads to the finish.

BACHELOR CRACK — Starts from corner just above and to the right of Chimney Buttress. First ascent, 3rd August, 1941, R. E. Birkett, V. V., J. Craven.

(1) Climb up the corner, using a combination of holds in the crack and on the left wall, until it is possible to step out on to a grass ledge on the left at the junction with Chimney Buttress. Small spike belay suitable for line on the wall above, a little to the left.
(2) Climb the wall straight up above the stance for 8 feet, then traverse right on to a rib overlooking Easy Gully ; climb straight up to a grass ledge. Flake belay on the right.
(3) Straight up the rib to a huge bleaberry-covered ledge. Belay on the wall above.

(4) Continue up right-hand edge to another bleaberry-covered ledge (no belay) and then climb up corner overlooking Easy Gully, working slightly to the left near the top.

RAVEN CRAG MIDDLEFELL BILBERRY BUTTRESS — 240 feet. Severe. Climbed in rubbers. The climb starts at a cairn at the lowest point of the right-hand side of the crag, below a clean crack. 1st ascent, 27th June, 1941, C. F. R., J. F. Renwick

(1) 65 feet. Climb easy rocks to the foot of the crack. Ascend the crack, which is rather awkward. Then take a step to the left and continue straight up to a ledge with a flake belay.

(2) 70 feet. To the right of the belay is an open crack up the short steep wall. This is climbed with some difficulty to a bulge at the top of the wall. The bulge is overcome with the aid of some small, but excellent handholds which lead to a magnificent hold for the final pull. The left edge of the buttress is now followed to a stance and belay below the left end of a large and fertile bilberry ledge.

(3) 50 feet. Walk along the ledge to the right, to a crack which runs up the wall to the right of a large poised block. Climb the crack and traverse under the block to attain its top via its left side. From here climb to a grassy ledge beneath an oak-tree which forms a fine belay. There is a tortuous way off alonp this ledge. This pitch has some vegetation and rather doubtful rock.

(4) 55 feet. Descend to block again. Traverse diagonally down and to the left, crossing the wall below the overhang. Continue the traverse into a groove, after a step up the groove, leave it on the left and ascend to the top. A stance and belay will be found above the middle of the traverse. This pitch is airy and has good handholds.

It would probably be an improvement to combine the last two pitches and avoid visiting the oak-tree.

## WASDALE

LINGMELL PILGRIMS' PROGRESS. — 2,360 feet. Very difficult. Leader needs 80 feet of rope. The route follows Piers Ghyll to a point just above the great Bridge Rock, where Straight Ghyll joins it on the right. This latter is then followed for more than 800 feet, until a branch on the right is taken, climbed for 170 feet, and then left for the buttress on the left, which is followed to its summit. 1st ascent, 22nd April, 1940. B. B.

(1) 20 feet. Easy rock staircase ; then follow the bed of the ghyll for 100 feet.
(2) 50 feet. Traverse on the left wall ; continue up the ghyll for 120 feet.
(3) 90 feet. Mounting for 60 feet chiefly on the left wall, followed by 30 feet of scrambling.
(4) 60 feet. Ascending traverse in two steps on left wall.
(5) 100 feet. Break out straight up the left wall to avoid waterfall. Absence of good belay calls for care here.
(6) 80 feet. Descending traverse back to bed of ghyll above fall.
(7) 110 feet. Mainly on left wall.
(8) 60 feet. Break out up left wall and regain ghyll above second waterfall.
(9) 300 feet. Clean rock scrambling to dried up lake basin.
(10) 100 feet. Up line of least resistance on the right wall.
(11) 70 feet. Traverse left passing rope behind belay.
(12) 100 feet. Scrambling up steep vegetation.
(13) 160 feet. Easy traverse down to Bridge Rock. Ride down scree to Ghyll and then mount.
(14) 70 feet. Bridge Rock pitch on Right Wall.
(15) 400 feet. Scrambling up Straight Ghyll, the rocks at the foot of which are rotten.
(16) 40 feet. A green chimney.
(17) 40 feet. A wall. Then 90 feet up the bed of the ghyll to
(18) 65 feet. A cave and wall. In the next 200 feet the angle of the ghyll eases off and the bed is charged with loose debris from a rock fall above.
(19) 70 feet. Up the Right branch, where ghyll forks : good but small holds on the right wall.
(20) 100 feet. On up the scoop.
(21) 40 feet. Up the wall on left to the crest of the argte.
*(•22)* 200 feet. Follow the arete to the summit.
(23) 35 feet. Over the top and down to saddle.

GABLE 220 feet. Very severe, Perfect rock. Start at
BOAT HOWE cairn at the foot of the Groove, towards the left of
THE FACE OF THE BOAT the Face, about 60 feet right of the foot of Larboard ArSte climb. 1st ascent, 24th September, 1941. C.W.F.N. and J. R. Noyce.

This is believed to be a first ascent, though in view of one or two signs of exploration near the bottom and top we put this account tentatively. The climb was in its first part near the Larboard ArSte, on the left of the face, but breaks out on to open rock to finish directly to the summit cairn. It attempts to follow the line of the grooves cutting the left-hand side of the Face : but is forced into artificial relations with Larboard Arete.

(1) 50 feet. Up the groove 30 feet or so, till it steepens suddenly. Delicate traverse left, then straight up as soon as possible taking care to avoid the scratches of Larboard Arete. At last they must be forsaken anyhow, by moving right up a small undercut mantel-shelf, on to the Face of the Boat proper. Small belays.

(2) 00 feet. It is possible now, after ascending 10 feet, to traverse back right into the continuation of the grooving, 40 feet away and out on the Face. The first part is easy. The last 10 feet into the corner are extremely delicate, but can be safeguarded by lassoing a huge belay in the crack itself.

(3) 60 feet. Rather delicate at first, up slabs jus: out of the corner. This leads to good belays and a general easing of tension. 50 feet more —easy—lands at the top.

## BORROWDALE

RAVEN CRAG BUTTRESS 350 feet. Very difficult. Leader needs 70 feet of rope. The start lies well to the left of Raven Crag Guliy, and is so obvious that it may be seen from the Borrowdale road. First ascent, 6th September, 1939. B.B. and members of Goldsborough Club.

(1) 70 feet. Up a shallow chimney to a fine belay and stance on left.

(2) 30 feet. Straight up to a large thread-belay on a fern ledge.

(3) 50 feet. Bearing slightly left, continue up the nose of the buttress to a fine corner and belay.

(4) 30 feet. Move up past a projecting flake ; belay on Rowan just off the route on the right.

(5) 60 feet. Keep to the left on the edge of the great overhanging wall; line belay over a flake.

(6) 40 feet. Always on the extreme left edge past a fine projecting corner, over a block and up an awkward six-foot wall to a broad bilberry-covered terrace.

(7) 70 feet. Easy climbing till the wall is in sight.

### KEY TO INITIALS

| | |
|---|---|
| Austin Barton | C. W. F. Noyce |
| S. B. Beck | William Peascod |
| Bentley Beetham | C. F. Rolland |
| E. Banner Mendus | V. Veevers |

# THE SKIER'S LAKE DISTRICT

*E. W. Hodge*

In writing under this heading for last year's Journal, I quite expected I should ultimately find much to modify. A run which may happen to be delightful at a first visit, may be worse than disappointing at the next. It is not worth while to record places where one has enjoyed a good run at a time when there was three feet of snow everywhere. Conversely, spotting good runs in summer is extremely deceptive. The sheep track one had relied on as guide, is invisible in snow; the angles of the bridle path are apt to prove not nearly roomy enough for one's turns ; the open shoulder is a sheet of greyish ice, with stones sticking through ; the distances seem quite different, and the very valley into which one descends is quite often as not unrecognisable in snow, though one may know it as well as one's back garden under summer conditions. In a thick summer mist tiny signs often enable one to keep one's direction amazingly well, but in a snow fog, on snowy ground, one may go round in circles every couple of hundred yards. Heathery ground is often, however, a good deal more effectually covered with snow than it looks from a distance, and as it is frequently peaty, is on the whole more skiable than bracken ground, which is often dangerously stony.

When in doubt, as, for example, in such misty conditions as above-mentioned, prefer the descent on the west side of a ridge to that on the east, as it is almost always the gentler in gradient and more free from crag.

Without more preface, here are a few addenda and some corrections to last year's Guide :—

## EASTERN HILLS

HIGH STREET. Excellent run from Kidsty Pike by The Knott and by the valve-house, nearly to Hartsop village. The flank of High Street

adjacent to Hayes Water would be too steep and rough to descend. Possibly a steep descent might be made down the northern nose of Grey Crag, to Hartsop. The High Street and 111 Bell ranges enjoy a colder climate than the hills in the west of the district, and are often conspicuous by their whiteness. Grassy hills, however, such as these, may often from a distance look better covered by snow than they really are. I am apt to be a little suspicious when I see a hill evenly white all over, as a couple of inches of snow, which happens to have frozen on the night it fell, before drifting or consolidating, is of little use.

## KIRKSTONE AND TROUTBECK

I I I BELL RANGE. A car can be taken to about 1000 feet on Garburn, or to Troutbeck Park, 450 feet. Though this range has smooth outlines and good continuods elevation, it will not be so easy to approach if snow or even old uncleared drifts block the unimportant roads mentioned ; whilst if the snow lies high there may be a couple of miles carry along the ridge to Yoke, 2163.

WANSFELL. Northwards towards Kirkstone Inn, smooth and open but for two or three walls.

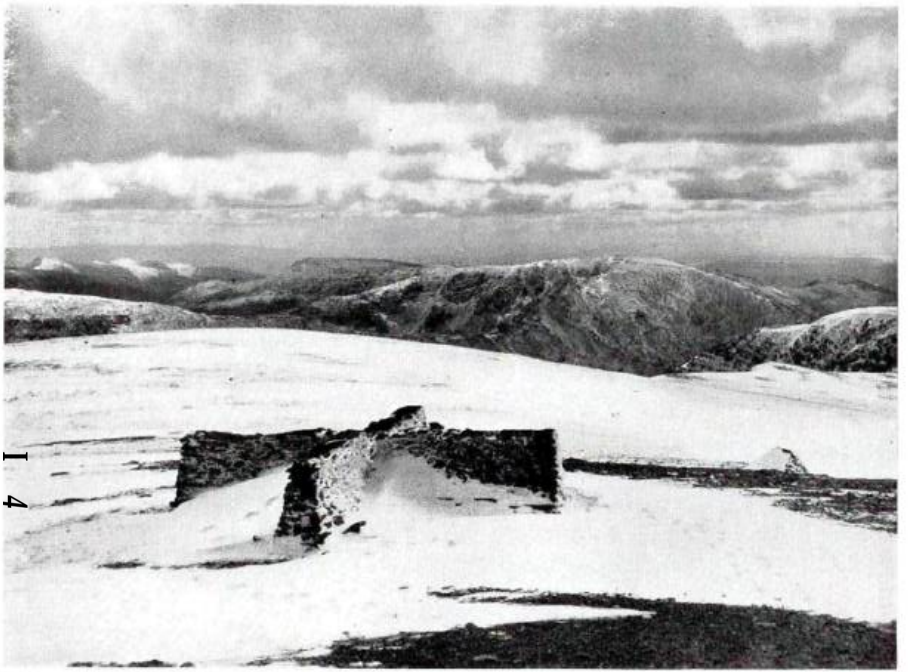
KIRKSTONE. The higher parts of the Kirkstone roads are little use as approaches to mountain ski-ing. The ground east of the Kirkstone Inn is broken, and the best access is to take the road for half-a-mile towards Ullswater then ascend. But this route leads no farther than to Stony Cove Pike, for the way to High Street from Kirkstone is long and steep. On the west side of the road there is no access with skis to the ridge between Snarker Pike and Middle Dodd, and even descent on foot is forbidding in winter.

## ROTHAY, EAST

SNARKER PIKE. This ridge itself is smooth and excellent throughout-IVIany of the walls are ruinous. A grassy droveway leaves the road at a small gate at 700, or three-quarters of a mile from Ambleside, and is equally good for access or descent. Continue past the summit, Kilnshaw Chimney, keeping rather on the west face, and over Little Hart Crag to Scandale Fell or Fairfield, if desired, but the best descent is as mentioned.

RYDALE FELL. For previous reference substitute : Descend just east of top of Rydale Nab (not Heron Crag) eastwards into Rydale. The Nab is precipitous to westward.

TONGUE GHYLL. A really good and useful run is to start climbing from the top of the Raise (782) ; the way up Dunmail Ghyll having a more even gradient than the rather steep corner up to Willie Wife Moor, with its long flat top. Crossing Grisedale Hause (1900) there is a fine schuss into the upper basin of Tongue Ghyll. From here, one may avoid most of the



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HELVELLYN
THE
SHELTER

*J. P. Taylor*

bad ground by passing between the 1600 and 1800 feet contours on Seat Sandal. Beyond, the way is clear on to the S.-S.-W. ridge of the latter or down the valley. The S.-E. side of Tongue Ghyll was rather too favourably mentioned in last year's Guide, as in its lower reaches one tends to be confined to the path. If one wishes to take this side one should keep eastwards at the level of the upper basin right round above the awkward little terraces and ravines under its lip.

Contouring round from the lower part of Tongue Ghyll towards Dunmail **Raise** (if perhaps one's car has been left there) is not altogether easy, but there is a fair enough route about the 700-foot level.

## HELVELLYN

North of the Castle Rock of Triermain, which lies a mile north of Thirlspot, the west side of the range is quite precipitous. From the northernmost top, however, Clough Head (2381) descent may be made north-westwards, or, of course, east of this.

In its eastern combes, Helvellyn preserves a good deal of old snow, and towards the end of a snowy period, after the Kirkstone Road has been cleared, these deposits may be useful. This, of course, does not offer a direct route on to Helvellyn top itself, but the east side of Sticks Pass, from Glcncairn has easy gradients.

## ROTHAY, WEST

DUNMAIL RAISE TO GRASMERE. The main road will seldom be skiable. The narrow strip of ground between the stream and the road is inconvenient. But an excellent route, or practice ground, lies on the west side of the **Rothay,** as all the ground between the stream and the steep ilank of Steel Fell is smooth and open. Descending, at the belt of trees one-and-a-quarter miles below the Raise, either turn sharp to E, and cross the stream on to the main road, or else keep right and traverse to Helmside, whence the lanes may be ski-able to Lancrigg.

SILVERHOW. The way down is *not* by Wray Gill, but by the next one to the north—the junipers rather obstructive at first. For Kelbarrow, bear right on reaching the little neck of open ground behind the 650-foot knoll overlooking Allan Bank, but it is better to bear left of this and go by Scorecrag and down Allan Bank drive.

LANGDALE. Frankly, the descent from Stickle Tarn is only for very deep snow, but it is a useful way up. (3rd line of SILVERHOW paragraph, page 51.)

FAR EASDALE. For ' side ' read ' slopes ' in 3rd line of this paragraph on page 50.

## BORROWDALE

GLARAMARA. A possible way down although there are some steep places, is :—First, W. to clear the summit rocks, then down the spine of Thornythwaite Fell. The highest intake wall (one on the Seathwaite side) is encountered at about 1320 feet, but not crossed. Soon after this, descend towards Comb Gill, and thereafter keep on a traverse parallel to but two or three hundred feet below the ridge, till near its foot, when cross to west. There is no descent at all to the upper part of Comb Gill. It might be possible also, though steep, to descend from Glaramara by one strip of hillside N.-N.-W. almost direct to Seathwaite. This paragraph is in substitution for that on page 53. All this is scarcely recommended, but the only other descent into Borrowdale from the South are by Grains or Greenup Ghylls.

N.B.—Throughout the Guide the word ' access ' is used for the grind, mostly uphill, from where one leaves the car to the beginning of the real ski-ing.

# THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

*F. H. F. Simpson*

The convulsions of 1941 prompt a keeper of records to forsake any attempt to produce a catalogue of events, and to be content with something a trifle less concise. The line of least resistance and naturally, therefore, the most comfortable, amounts to little more than the creation of a fireside atmosphere ; tobacco and warmth ; slow conversation of the kind which matches such a setting. As I write I smoke ; I am very warm and at ease, and in the position of being able to talk to you without having to listen.

I am one of the fortunate few who have been able, by reason of proximity to the fells, to steal away for an odd day now and again between meets. This then becomes the tale of what I saw and something of what I heard—for there are some pleasant sounds left in the world—and what you poor exile, if such you be, missed ; the year with the Club, and with the brooding dales and empty fell tops when the Club was away. If I dwell upon recollections of past years, I hope you will lean back in your chair and do the same ; it is my purpose that you should.

It is unnecessary to dilate upon the familiar enmity between road and rail services. There can be few of us who have not endured defeat at their clumsy hands. The obedient bicycle is yours to command, and once one becomes resigned to its proclivity for slowing down when one ceases to pedal, affection for it waxes strongly. By rising at 4 a.m. it is possible to effect safe delivery of one's self and machine on Windermere station shortly after nine o'clock when the morning breeze is piling up the waves on the shingle below the deserted boat landings. All does not always go well. August dawn in Kentmere can be a private delight, but it is a slow-footed chilly phenomenon when observed from the down platform at Oxenholme and the only wakened creature

beside one's self is a limpid-eyed calf swaddled in a sack, proclaiming in manly key the disadvantages of adolescence. Time among other matters forbids more than tentative nibbles at the fringe of Lakeland on expeditions so contrived, but the far fells glance kindly in efflorescent blue upon the enterprise. I was there and you were not ; and so to January.

The New Year came as the Old Year went, amid the threads of hesitant snow showers. Throughout New Year's Day silver-tipped cloud banks rolled endlessly across the head of Warnscale. Beneath them new snow gleamed whitely, lying at lake level, dark-patterned in the ploughed fields, unblemished in the pastures, and though softening later, it was frozen early and crunched beneath the feet of High Stile pilgrims. We climbed through the wood under a slate-hued sky. Tall tree trunks swung softly. The wind took possession of the open fell, hunting roughly into Bleaberry and Birkness. Glancing back beneath the casement of cloud we saw the ruffled lake, dark corners below Goat Crag, Grasmoor in cloud down to his sturdy knees ; the tracery of trees round the village. From Red Pike we saw nothing but our own cherry cheeks. On High Stile we saw a little farther and detected corrective navigation on the part of those from whom better results had been anticipated. Snow began to fall thickly. If you remember those funny little dolls with lead weights in their vitals to induce them to somersault down an inclined surface you will know the manner of our descent of Gamlin End screes to a very cold lunch above Scarth Gap. Tardy home coming was the key to rich reward. Waiting until the majority waggled their toes before a fire the wind shifted and rose. The sky cleared to ice green and snow spouted off Big Stack ; Whiteless, Robinson, yes, even shy Robinson, and Hindscarth unfurled a plume. Agitated pennants flew from High Crag pouring white dust into wild wind eddies which roared across the lake in furious disorder. Twilight came to a valley filled with air like chilled wine. If you happened that evening to

descend from Wandope, the voice of Sail Beck called up to you as you came, rising and falling in waves of restless complaint.

Next morning, suitcases in the hall, neatly coiled line behind the door. Do you remember that door very well ? It has a music which echoes all the year round. There must perforce be a prelude of bootnails on the slate paving to the click and clatter of opening. The shouting tones of Sourmilk Ghyll rush into the hall hopefully, to be cut off by the clatter and click of closing. Water falling whispers round the windows undaunted, calling quietly in the corridor, never quite to be denied. Its opportunity comes when the door opens and while there is a door there it will not fail to escort the climber to the settle under which his slippers lie.

January gave place to February. Snow called out the skiers, though not to such Alpine prodigality as in the previous year. Mercury had winged heels I believe, and where workable snow lay his fledglings pursued his swift shadow at week-ends until the close of the month brought rain and a thaw wind. Some days Windermere shone like glass below the soft shades of winter landscape. These were silent, motionless days save perhaps for the slow creeping of water into a fresh boot print, taking twice as long to fill the intaglio of a clinker as that of a tricouni. This you could find where the sun had his way with the frost, though ice-armoured crags stirred to the crash of icicles and the tick-tick of the echoes betrayed the working axe. High in Easedale is a group of rowans and the cold north-easters lift the spray from a nearby waterfall and fling it back among them, loading even their thinnest twigs with ice. Ice weighs down the grass and the trees jangle grimly as they bend in the wind.

At the Langdale meet in March the wind sat firmly in the North-East dispensing dull skies. Old hard-frozen snow muffled the fells. Over Blisco through a grey windy world,

a solitary member made his way on Saturday afternoon descending with the turbulent becks to Wrynose. Sunday morning showed it to be snowing on the Crinkles. Thin rain with a trace of sleet, ran down the windows. A very few followed the ridge round the County boundary, fine hail pattering on their windproofs. Some crossed the Stake into Langstrath. Gathering strength at Thornythwaite, they returned over Esk Hause through crusted exasperating snow, floundering among buried boulders in Rossett Ghyll to the kinder turf of Mickleden.

News of Easter should be a chronicle of achievement. This year it is not, for the fickle western climate exacted the full oceanic tax upon the Club in respect of its fund of warm dry Easters. High fells and low remained aloof in a deep sea of rain cloud, coming out the day we all went home, dispassionately to observe our departure. Of course, we went out, looking for sheltered moderates, scurrying, too, over a summit. The fields were green and the waters roared ; Brackenclose, home of the hardy, was full of wet clothes. There was a view of Scafell from Miterdale on Sunday, a day which met us halfway in the matter of rain showers. Basterfield sang and recited evergreen compositions, tales were told. At sundown a thrush in the trees behind Row Head searched unsuccessfully for a new cadence, and was charmed instead by the winging into cloudy space of his reedy notes. We harkened to the treble chirpings of crickets behind the smoke-room coal box. From the ' office ' came the muted measure of the nine o'clock news, prelude to bed. Easter Monday was earmarked for travel ; alas, hasty shadows by Kern Knotts, sliding up Seathwaite fell ; Pillar's sunny flanks beckoning and a great clean blustering gale.

We did not meet during May's slow unfolding, but came to Thornythwaite on the 30th, a Friday. The birches swayed their bud-sprinkled tops in the warm evening breeze, lambs frisked at Rosthwaite unheeding of the dignitaries at the Scafell.

Our well-beloved headquarters enfolded us in peace. There was a tent here and there, but no boom town as of yore. They were good fun those canvas communities. I remember some years ago a Mayor was elected, and a Town Clerk appointed. A primus stove came near to burning down the Town Hall. Happy days, to the memory of which we cling until they can be renewed.

What did we do ? By proportional representation we bathed before breakfast ; we toiled to Pike's Crag, loitered in Johnny's Wood, climbed Glaramara and Rosthwaite Cam ; trod far Pillar. Someone went everywhere, and good weather went, too. The names in the log book went all down one side of a page and part way down the other. The moon was there also, youthful and much troubled by cloud ; its ashen radiance lit up the wall of the old barn which thought, perhaps, of the meets of yesteryear.

June is a capricious month in Lakeland. In 1933 you will recall, the sun grilled our thinly-clad bodies daily. Thunder rolled in Eskdale after dark. The Derwent shrank to stagnant pools and hot shingle beds. After the thunderstorm acres of unfolding bracken fronds on High Doat were brightly jewelled in the morning light. I remember the evening of that day on Kirkfell. In its lonely hollow Kirkfell tarn reflected the closest secrets of the sky. From the sea swept columns of swift cloud. Their skirts caught at the cairns on Scafell and Gable ; close overhead phantom fingers passed. The silver shape of Wastwater hung suspended below the edge of the shadow-patched sea. This chill June wind rumbled on the rocky forehead of Gable Crag in hoarse conflict with the thin-toned music of the bending grasses.

No greater beauty comes to the hills than when June fights to close an Arctic spring and the white turmoil of snow storms drifts from the Pennines in strong sunlight. June opened thus in 1936. By the necklace of quiet blue pools in Gillercombe the wind waited with strong wings. On Brandreth it wailed among the stones. A great blizzard closed in,

its white searching hands thrust through Windy Gap and Beck Head. Creamy, sun-touched cloud fronds poured across the ridge with sudden chill. Pale tresses of snow wove a falling curtain, the hem of which whispered as crisp flakes rustled against rock. By Seatoller the sun still shone brightly ; tender green woods peered from beneath a gloomy frown of cloud. As the storm withdrew snow sheets broke on the broad shoulders of the hills, and the seeking sun found England's old crags throwing off reluctant skeins of mist, murmuring with the slither and drip of a quick thaw, reared proudly in the track of the rude wind, careless alike of the passing of seasons or the welfare of generations.

The steady beat of rain on foliage marks July in the dales as often as not. Idle mist at lake level will cling to Grasmere, meeting the water in so dense a layer that boats approaching the shore seem to glide detached from earth. The Club missed the calendar month, coming at the end of June to Buttermere and in early August to Wasdale. There is little choice in the weeks of high summer. A great puddle of warm moist air straddles the land from the Gulf Stream, but one may walk out of it into great coolness above 2,000 feet, and on occasion into great discomfort, for South-West winds blow cold above their sea-warmed foundations. August can be the arid despair of farmers one year, and the next discolour the whole of Wastwater with a great burden of dirt-charged flood water, marooning as it does so holders of high office at Brackenclose. Welcome to their choice are those who desire the oven breath of August. I would have its mists slide round me, dew-laden fingers timidly touching my open eyes with cold. It is pre-eminently the month for hut dwellers. It is well that an ever-increasing circle of Club folk learns to look out from above Ritson Force for the rising smoke from the living-room fire across the marshy lands below Down-in-the-Dale. It is further than it looks and home when you get there.

Brackenclose is a good kingdom, and the laws of the

Custodian which adorn its walls at eye level—and that is no accident—are good laws.

Talking of September brings Eskdale to mind. The Committee, taking time by the forelock, a precaution frequently associated **with** prolonged delay, appointed August 30th for deliberation. There were no empty beds. Kelly walked over from Little Langdale, and walked back after the meeting, doing so because he likes it, not because the beds were full. From a base in Keswick Mrs Wakefield executed a praiseworthy pincers movement in an assortment of vehicles. The others came somehow, with good weather on their heels. Sunday is play time, and the Rakes Progress, Deep Ghyll and the West Wall Traverse, and presumably the top of Scafell were negotiated by the President and his party.

September this year was remarkable for the absence of that mellow fruitfulness belonging properly to autumn, but upon which the month often draws, as if ashamed of the sombre greens disowned by August. Unable to call to its aid anything very striking in the way of climatic extreme genial September dallies with the ever-eager wind, and a sun still strong, and together they weave great clouds, tall slow moving, dignified. The wind presses them across the Irish Sea on their dark square bases and the sun flatters their anvil heads with a primrose blush ; and growing jealous of its own reflection, presently dissolves them into rain and a dash of ice. In late afternoon the sun leans low ; their thin crests flame brightly, writhe and whirl in odd distress under the warm glance which finds them fat and prosperous at the end of a day-long march and growth. Nightfall catches a few stepping at leisure across the lowlands. They falter in the falling temperature, and the deluge of their tears refreshes the earth. What better duty could September undertake than this, unless it be the responsibility of seeing the Annual General Meeting safely over ?

Since the *Journal* last went to press, nations, faiths and

individuals have learned that it profits them nought to play Canute to the rising tide of devilry, and the great Club function has shrunk to an incident which reflects in its modesty the great changes that assail the peaceful way of life.

Do you remember the last days of other Septembers, when leafy ruin sprang in golden confusion behind your agile car as it dived down the wooded roads under Brant Fell ? Remember the hidden bathrooms of the Hydro ? Up a stair, second left, first right, down four stairs. Roofs reminiscent of engine-room skylights, partitions and duckboards, cathedrals for scratch choirs. We shouted and sang and the water rushed hotly forth, a cheerful tumult. Back we came from Kentmere, Long Sleddale, Giant's Crawl, Pallid Slabs, labours of love. And now ? St. John's Rooms the rendezvous, cups of tea at reasonable prices the loadstone. The Annual General Meeting, savouring of that nebulous body the Ladies' Sewing Circle, was an unqualified success. Over fifty of us came for over fifty cups of tea and as many pieces of unexpected cake. This conclave of austere simplicity lost none of its import. You can imagine how the President conducted the Club's business, proclaiming anew the charter of liberty first entrusted to us in 1006. Truly, King John was no less great at Runnymede, but he was quite a different sort of person. Even if he was able to conduct a meeting he could not, unlike the President, ride a bicycle from Kendal and still retain the fealty of his subjects. At the secondary meet which developed in Langdale the numbers were as large as those at Windermere, and on Sunday even larger. September has much of which to be proud in 1941.

Have emperors died once with such glory as the bracken draws unto itself in October ? They have not, and it is not to be wondered at, for the same providence which now and again makes and destroys an ambitious prince, never fails to put the snowdrops in Rosthwaite churchyard in the Spring.

I saw Keswick in October. Haze-dusted hills peeped over its roofs. It was a town of long-legged school-girls, canary-coloured jerseys, walking sticks and Baddeleys. I saw a very clean sweep carrying the tools of his trade, and in the Post Office a severe female in red clogs. In the meadows by Bassenthwaite there was the heron's slow flapping shape of grey and the quaint geometry of cows all grazing, half-halted, on the way to water. Over Brandlehow the sun wrestled irresolutely with the cloud wrack built upon Hindscarth, drifting down Newlands in a thinning quilt. Bracken-burdened spaces between bright birch limbs lit up expectantly as did the trees themselves. The sky over unseen Skiddaw wore blue behind luminous mist. Autumn tarried here, and a leaf fell gently, performing some but not all of the leisurely aerobatics attributed to falling leaves in the Silly Symphonies of Walt Disney. Disney should go to Brandlehow and meet the resplendent spotted woodpecker which tapped out a cypher on a mossy trunk that day.

The first snow came in November, lingered awhile and left the hills to the warm winds again. We met in Langdale again in November mustering forty strong. The Committee planned ahead after its fashion. On Sunday Bowfell and his buttress heard voices ; loose material exploded on Pavey Ark.

Like you, I keep my Annual Report. How pleasant it is. We have twenty graduating members, we borrowed one hundred and twenty books from the library ; our typewriter is worth fourteen shillings less. I read it again and again. Many more will come and there will be much to do, experiments to make. We neglect Patterdale, eschew scouts and outposts, delight of our forefathers, and all-night walks. This is, I think, to our discredit. We are getting old.

The year 1941 draws to a close. Christmas is the time when we buy each other climbing books and fix up our journey to Buttermere. Christmas subdued is in the shops of the little Lakeland towns. Perhaps one box of crackers,

provoking mirage, sits among the practical commodities ; no Turkish delight and little brass forks, no silver-papered pungency of tangerines. The shrill voices of children in the fields towards Clappersgate mingle with the burlesque whistling of starlings. Fire flicker dances in many windows. On Boxing Day we can open up the cupboard and examine our boots ; remove the packet of prunes from the bottom of our rucksack and count our woollens. To one of these will cling a fragment of dried moss transported to the stern company of moth balls from under a bright sky on Wetherlam. We will kneel in meditation by the cupboard until cramp obliges us to move. It will not be long before we are on the hills again, you and I and the others.

# IN MEMORIAM

## RICHARD ARTHUR FANSHAWE 1906-1941

Fanshawe was killed by a bomb in London on May 10th, 1941, while helping to put out a fire. His Chief Warden wrote as follows to his sister : ' . . . Your brother was one of the bravest men I have ever met, and nothing seemed to cause him any sort of fear. Indeed, he met his death while performing duties he need not have done, and it was only his keenness and fearlessness which led to his death . . . which has been a very great loss to the Wardens' Service. . . . '

All his friends will miss him, and especially that smaller circle who broke through his natural reserve and came to know him intimately. He started climbing in this country and the Alps about 1926 whilst an undergraduate at Oxford, and early acquired a high degree of skill on rock and ice. Love of steep places came first with him ; he was tall, strong, determined ; he generally took the harder alternative.

He climbed widely in the Lakes, Wales and Skye, joining the Club in 1934, and the Alpine Club in 1929. In the Alps his twelve seasons were spent chiefly in the Pennines, the Oberland, and the Mont Blanc group. He made at least one new route—on the Tete Biselx in 1928, climbing with A. E. Berber. Marcel Ichac's headnote to it in the Guide Vallot aptly summarises the qualities which Dick Fanshawe sought in a climb : ' Itineraire plus direct ct plus elegant que le precedent. Difficile. Suivi tres rarement.'

GEOFFREY BARRATT

## JOHN PARK TAYLOR

John Taylor, whose sudden death at an early age was announced in September, was of a retiring disposition. He dreaded every kind of publicity, and was happiest when allowed to serve his fellows in obscurity.

Heredity bestowed on him a peaceful, kindly and generous spirit and a discerning eye that could see and appreciate beauty in the broad as well as the detailed features of Nature. Much of the wealth of the latter gift he passed on through the medium of photography. He was an artist of merit and international repute, as is proved by his photographs being hung in seventeen different countries, and in most towns—both large and small—of this country, which won for him numerous awards of Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals. (He won the Gold Medal for Great Britain in Belgium in 1936.)

Physically, he was not of the type that makes rock-climbers, but he loved the hills and always spent his holidays in them, either in Lakeland or the Highlands of Scotland. Photography and trout-fishing were his only relaxation from the strain of his profession. The many pictorial records he has left of Nature in her many, varied phases and aspects are literally countless : Mountains, Dales, Crags, Lakes and Streams as well as panoramic scenes in all seasons—all received his specialist attention, to be broadcast with a lavish hand to the delight of his intimate friends ; they all are the poorer by his passing, while the Club mourns the loss of a valued member, ever ready generously to put his ability at its service.

And how shall we who knew,
Warmed by his genial grace,
Speak of our debt that grew,
Mounting apace,
Debt that the years could not erase.

GEORGE BASTERFIELD

FLYING OFFICER RALPH HOPE, R.A.F.

*Killed in action in the Battle of Britain, October \Uh,* 1940

Ralph Hope joined the Fell and Rock Club in 1936, and was also a member of the O.U.M.C. and the Climbers' Club ;

he took part in two meets in Switzerland, but the climbing he liked most was at Helyg where he spent many week-ends. Both in rock-climbing or in Alpine mountaineering it was the vast empty spaces above the world that attracted him—the ever-changing atmospheric effects, sunrise and sunset, and the exhilaration of the high altitudes. In the Lakes he enjoyed a climbing holiday with P. L. Carter in 1937.

He was a rowing man of distinction—Captain of the Lower Boats at Eton, later Captain of New College Boat Club and President of the O.U.B.C., and after leaving Oxford, he won the Wingfield Sculls. He then went to America for six months, where he learnt to fly and gained his Pilot's certificate. On returning to England he joined the R.A.A.F. in May, 1938. His graphic description of his first parachute descent was published in the Press, and has been widely read.

BERTHA HOPE.

## LIEUTENANT DUNCAN ADAM, R.E.

*Killed in action November 6th,* 1940

Though only a member since 1938, Duncan Adam was keenly interested in the Club's activities, climbing mostly in the company of his Penrith friends ; with them took part in the Montenvers expeditions described by R. M. Lupton in the 1938 Journal. He began climbing in 1933 and soon took part in guideless traverses of the Obergabelhorn, the Weisshorn, and, in 1939, made a long traverse of the Aletschhorn and Eggishorn and back to the Jungfrau hut. With G. Macphee he made the traverse of the Schreckhorn and the long ridge to the Lauteraarhorn.

HAROLD ADAM

## PORTRAIT OF A MOUNTAINEER

LAWRENCE PILKINGTON 1855-1941

It is nearly sixty years ago since my father and uncles carried Lawrence Pilkington down to Wasdale Head from Piers Ghyll on a farm-gate. His thigh had been crushed by a fall of stones. While one young man clattered down Wasdale on a borrowed horse to search for the doctor, the others did what little they could to make the injury comfortable. So began a friendship between the two climbing families, the Pilkingtons and the Hopkinsons, which lasted through their life-times. I was born into that friendship. Sometimes it happens that the associations bequeathed from one generation to its successor grow outworn and tedious. But in this case the friendship deepened and expanded so that it came to mean something special and important in my own ripening life. We were very close neighbours and I was much in Lawrence Pilkington's home in the first years after the last war. He would sit in one of the great armchairs whilst I occupied another and listened with affectionate pleasure to his many tales —of pioneering adventure in the Alps, of fishing off the West Coast of Ireland, of the men and women, mostly colliers and their wives, who made up the pattern of his Lancashire working life as a young man. He told his stories with a whimsical humour and a boyish delight in pretending to be slightly shocking. But sometimes he would speak more seriously and then one realised, though perhaps not very consciously at the time, that youth has no greater privilege than admittance to the goodness and wisdom of a finely-strung mind. Of music, for instance, he would speak sometimes with a quiet rapture. I believe he could have been a distinguished musician had he wanted to dedicate his powers. But he found delight in life at too many points. It is significant that many of the great pioneers of mountain-climbing have been men of rich talents and interests. Lawrence Pilkington was one of them. He was a sensitive amateur painter. I have possessed for years a water-colour of his of the Cairngorm Mountains ; it never stales, but is always satisfying because it exhibits so deep an understanding and so sensitive a love of wild mountain scenery. A mountain meant far more to him than a simple agglomeration of rock and earth cast in a fine or fantastic form. Indeed, I think the beauty that he found in all Nature was for him a reflection of the mystery behind the visible universe. He wrote poetry, too, and had he set himself earlier to learn the discipline of the poet's art, I am certain that his sensitivity of emotion and impression would have carried him to an honourable place among poets. I doubt if he had any formal religion. I think he was one of those brave and adventurous souls whose innate self-respect will not permit them to give up the core of their being into the keeping of a Church or a Creed. Yet I have never met

another human being who made me feel so certainly that man does not live by bread alone.

Only when the talk drifted on to politics did I find it difficult to admire him wholly. He had all the aggressive individualism of the Nineteenth-Century employer, the automatic acceptance of his own position and that of his class, but this was coupled with kindliness and a feudal feeling of responsibility and consideration for the welfare of his subordinates. He would go to any length of trouble for Tom, Dick and Harry among his workpeople, but if Tom, Dick and Harry tried to alter the balance of industry, then his resentment was aroused. And I was a young iconoclast who believed in those easy hopeful times that men would find energy and determination and ability enough to pull down the old order and rebuild another in its stead whose fruits all people might justly share. I did not realise then what a perfect example he was of the flower of our Nineteenth-Century' Bourgeois civilisation, and with the narrow outlook of youth, I would never have admitted how fine a manifestation of the human spirit that civilisation at its best could be. But the restless, disillusioning years in which my generation has grown to maturity have been wise teachers in spite of their bitterness. Now, as one by one those fine bourgeois homes break up never to renew themselves, I understand better and can salute the values they stood for ; honest dealing, generous public spirit, hard work and play, fair and plentiful living, culture, and a certain innate reverence towards the conduct of life.

I can see him now, sitting in the big armchair with his head resting on its back, and his hands on the two arms with the fingers drumming a little as he talked. I think he had the most beautiful head and hands of any man I have ever known. His skin was rosy and his eyes a clear grey-blue. The short beard and moustache, white when I knew him, did not hide his lips which were strong and delicate. He had a smile of much grace and sweetness. His nose jutted a little and the nostrils were finely cut. The forehead was high and broad with a little sinking at each side on the temples. As for his hands, there was power in them as well as delicacy and the fingers were very long with the musician's broadish tips. I have often thought that I should like to have seen those fingers taut on some handhold of rock or curved about the shaft of an ice-axe, and that chiselled profile set against an Alpine snow slope with the clear eyes scanning for a route.

I never saw him climb. The Alpine history that he helped to make belongs to the great age of Mummery and Slingsby and their peers. He and his elder brother Charles, with Fred Gardiner, were among the first to brave the strictures of the then Old Guard of the Alpine Club by undertaking major expeditions in the High Alps without guides. In 1879, at the end of a season of poor weather, the three of them made the first guideless ascent of the Meije. The mountain, with ice-plastered rocks, was in no

good condition to climb, but it was Charles' last chance on that holiday. They took the chance and won. After Charles left, Lawrence and Gardiner continued *a deux,* and made several new passes in the Dauphine Alps. In 1881, the trio ascended the Jungfrau from Wengern Alp, making a route directly up the Guggi glacier. This was the plum of a holiday filled with good expeditions. The following year, Gardiner could not join the brothers and E. Hulton took his place. They went to the Bernina district, and made the first ascent of the Disgrazia by the North face. The summer of 1880, when they did not visit the Alps, was, nevertheless, made memorable by a Skye conquest—the first ascent of the ' Inaccessible ' on the Coolin ridge. A splendid record of pioneering mountain adventure to pack into a few short summers—for Lawrence was only 29 when his serious climbing days were brought to a close by the accident in Piers Ghyll.

His recovery was very slow, and though eventually so complete that he could probably have won back to something like his old form, yet I think he always felt a certain mistrust of his damaged leg, and feared that it might let him down and endanger his party if he committed himself again to big expeditions. He married, too, and turned to other holiday pursuits. This was typical of him. His heart perhaps was always near the mountains, yet he did not care to plan holidays which his wife and young children could not share. Later, I know how much his daughters wished that *he* had taught them mountain craft. But his interest and delight as an old man in hearing about the doings of his daughter Dorothy during Alpine holidays must have made up to some extent.

His name is not associated with any Lakeland crag, but he certainly holds place among the pioneers ; and in the 1923 number of the Journal, he wrote a charming article recalling his early Lakeland experiences. These included his convalescence at Wasdale under the watchful eyes of Mrs. Tyson and Will Ritson. The latter, who was quite certain that his ribs were crushed in, exhorted him to fill himself up with porridge in order to force out the damaged bones to their natural position.

In 1921, it was discovered that he held the patriarchate of the Pillar,and he was invited to be the guest of honour at our Annual Dinner. It happened to be my first Annual Dinner, and those were the golden days of Annual Dinners. The ' Sun ' at Coniston could still hold the company, members attended the Annual Meeting in their climbing gear, hurrying down from Dow to be in time, and Sunday evening saw us all gathered in the smoking-room for a tremendous sing-song. That year of 1921, Danvin Leighton was in the Chair, and he was flanked at the High Table by brilliant personalities of the mountaineering world. There was Cecil Slingsby and Norman Collie and Godfrey Solly and Geoffrey Young. Lawrence Pilkington made a characteristic speech, gracious with his love for the eternal hills, and merrily sparkling with his puckish humour. Next evening we had the

sing-song with Philip Minor conducting ' Ilkla' Moor ' with the fire-irons—and how he made us all sing—and Geoffrey Young, distinguished and decorative, slewed half-round on the piano stool towards his audience while he gave ' The Wild Man of Borneo,' and then produced a grand topical version of ' The Three Jolly Huntsmen.' Herbert Cain was there, ever ready to make things go with a will, and Darwin Leighton—in fine voice those days—did his special pieces, and Mrs. Pilkington sang ' Cockles and Mussels.' Lawrence sat back in his chair and surveyed us all with a benign pleasure.

With that evening, just twenty years ago, I must bring to an end this attempt to sketch his portrait. *Avc atque vale*—-so I can finish with a sincere and happy heart.

KATHARINE C. CHORLEY

# GUARDING THE SANCTUARY

The damage to Ullswater and its shores by the slimy silt brought down from the Greenside lead mines has been little less of a difficulty than in 1940. Owing to the Defence Regulations straightforward legal action has so far not been taken, though this course may be chosen still : further dealings are being held with the directors of the Syndicate. Observations have been taken throughout the year of the condition of Glenridding beck, and analysis has been made from time to time of the tonnage of silt going down to the lake. Of the sum of £500 promised to the National Trust by the Friends of the Lake District, for carrying necessary action through, £200 has so far been paid—in respect, up to date, of technical fees. The Friends of the Lake District are acting with a sub-committee of the National Trust, and are themselves sparing no time or pains in the matter. There has been no local case which better shows the defencelessness under English law of natural beauty.

In January a small deputation is to see Lord Reith for a discussion on ' National Parks.' If at the end of the war the Government will not set up a central National Park Commission to select and administer and finance certain national park areas—of which the Lake District is the most obvious and the best unified—there is no hope of warding off that haphazard ' development ' and exploitation which is bound to come, when peace breaks out. If the larger cities are decentralised without a plan—without a considered policy of the best uses of the nation's land as a whole—then what should be national park areas will be saddled with sporadic industries, and the outward spread of residential and holiday building. This can only be avoided if our ' planning ' law is differently polarised. At present, under town and country planning, ' development ' means in law everything *except* the better development and use and preservation of the nation's land ; and of English land an important part is the country of the hill grazings. It is these—as in the Lake District, and North Wales—which must be, in the current jargon, ' redeveloped,' or (more simply) put to their best and ultimately most productice use. And the last thing we want for the Lake District is that its traditional farming and rural life, and all its characteristic human types and colour, should be extinguished under polite suburbs and minor industry. The Lake District is an organic whole, and it is that which must be the national park. Some mummified survival, a mere core of depopulated and desolate but still beautiful fell country, will be nothing. We stand for something better than a woe-begone compromise between Grasmere and Welwyn Garden City.

The war has made its main threat to the Lake District on the west side, for here there are new Government constructions—call them ' installations ' ; one may not catalogue them—from just south of St Bees all the

way to Haverigg, and the impact on the western dales of these new centres of employment and industry is a proper cause of uneasiness. Great changes will come—have come, in part—on the Lake District's immediate fringe, and the control of their effects depends on a long distance policy. Any man can contribute to national welfare who will grasp the problem—it is not private to the Lake District—and will effectively support those in the country who are striving that it shall be handled responsibly.

Reference was made in the last *Journal* to the factory on a lake shore. This is now completed, in full bulk. It has been agreed that at the end of the war, as soon as conditions make it safe to remove the factory, it will be removed. But the department of State, which made this promise, promised also to ' delete from its scheme ' a housing estate, close by the factory, which it had also proposed to build ; in 1941, without notice or a word of apology, this department built the housing estate which it had promised not to build. Full opposition and argument were addressed to the deaf. The site is a fortunate one, well screened ; but the broken promise leaves a bad taste. The constructional work is light, and there is a new promise, subject to a stated condition, to remove the housing estate at the end of the war.

The water in Mardale is now within 30 feet of the top of the dam. This has a simple, straightforward coping, as arranged in discussion with the Corporation of Manchester ; it is a pleasant contrast to the castcllations at Thirlmere. Also successful is the paint camouflage on the new concrete posts of the fencing on the lake side ; the Corporation have here been as good as their word and have done careful and useful work. But they have been a good deal less good than their word over some of the buildings from Haweswater ; they gave a public promise to remove all the Burnbanks buildings from the Lake District, as soon as the work in Mardale was finished, but now the ' recreation hall', a large gaunt building, and two pairs of ready-made cottages, are being transferred, as permanencies, to the Vale of St John's at Legburthwaite. Protests were unavailing, but a good many external modifications, which have been agreed, will mitigate the hang and cut of this strange suit of clothes, as Legburthwaite will be wearing it.

> Oh, who would bear the whips and scorn of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The insolence of office ? '

In 1938 the Forestry Commission, in return for £1,480 subscribed by the public, promised to give to the National Trust restrictive covenants over the farm land and fells of Brotherelkeld in Eskdale ; these were to protect the land from afforestation, from building, and from any closure of rights of way and from any loss of access. These covenants have still nor been agreed. During 1942 it may be hoped that the National Trust, to

whom they are due, and who, for this turn, is cast for the part of Achilles, may at any rate catch sight of the tortoise rounding some distant bend. Up to 1939 it is known that the covenants promised contained no problems; it is difficult to see, in view of the conditions on which subscriptions were invited, why two and a half years have produced no result. After allowing generously for ' the law's delays, and the spurns that patient merit of the unworthy takes,' even the least impetuous may feel that the patience is beginning to exceed the merit.

Lake District Farm Estates and the Friends of the Lake District have arranged the purchase of two more farms in the central part of the Duddon Valley and their permanent protection from being in any way exploited. It is hoped in the next few years to extend this protective ' cover ' in the same district. In Ennerdale Lake District Farm Estates have bought Mireside, a farm with an important lake frontage and a fell ownership on Herdus Sea ; this purchase blocks any westward extension by the Forestry Commission, on this shore, of its Ennerdale plantations. Any who will take up shares in Lake District Farm Estates (shares are in units of £5, up to £200, and particulars may be had from the undersigned) will help to increase the valuable work which this Company is doing. It needs more capital to extend its purchases.

H. H. SYMONDS

December 1941

# THE LONDON SECTION

In common with all other recreational activities, club walks have tended to become more restricted in their scope and in the numbers of those able to secure a few hours respite from the many claims upon their time and energy. The Section however persevered very successfully with its Sunday walks by making fuller use of earlier trains to more distant purlieus and for an earlier return before dark whenever possible. The half-yearly ' List of Walks ' was dispensed with and the few members likely to be able to come advised of any walks planned for the ensuing two or three weeks ; the smaller parties incidentally disposed of the growing difficulty of arranging teas for large parties. So eager were the remaining few to walk, that at the end of the year no less than twenty-five walks stood to the credit of the ' Walks Committee,' as against the usual annual total of fourteen. Such a good result could never have been achieved without T. M. Hardwick's almost infectious enthusiasm, nor without his exceptional knowledge of the country. He could always be depended upon to lead an interesting walk in any direction of the compass ; and thereby he met the needs of all members in turn, in whichever part of London they might be living. The eighteen walks he led—all of them through charming country—gave a great deal of pleasure and much-needed refreshment to all. In more than one sense was this intensified, on one occasion when Prof, and Mrs Garrod rounded off our day with a much appreciated tea on the lawns of ' Bank-croft,' and later in the year, on another walk when Mr and Mrs Osborne Walker made members free of ' Whitehill Cottage,' its lovely grounds and orchid houses, winding up with tea—even their Buff Orpingtons vying with them in their lavish hospitality to Fell and Rock visitors !

On December Oth a Luncheon at Brown's Hotel in Albemarle Street once again took the place of the London Dinner. It lacked nothing of its usual happy ' Fell and Rock ' atmosphere. Darwin Leighton—genial and kind as ever—worthily embodied the Lakeland end of the Club to the London ' exiles.' No formal speeches were allowed to detract from the intimate character of the occasion : Dr C. F. Hadfield, who presided at this twenty-second annual function, welcomed friends and regretted the absence through indisposition, of the Section's guest of honour, W. P. Haskett-Smith, and then got the London Section Committee of last year re-elected *in toto.* The proceedings closed with the Secretary moving a vote of thanks to T. M. Hardwick and to the Chairman for all they had done for the Section during the year.

A Club Walk on Sunday, December 7th was led by Miss Stella Joy ; she took members from Egham through the spacious woods and stately avenues of centuries-old trees of Windsor Great Park to Windsor for tea, after which most of the party attempted—and succeeded—in catching an early train back to town.

# CORRESPONDENCE

*To the Editor of the ' Fell and Rock Journal.'*

## CAIRNS

DEAR EDITOR,

Every member knows that stone walling is a skilled trade, and that it is certainly not easy to build a solid well shaped cairn. Also that some of the old Lake District cairns are fine specimens—notably the slender pillar on the top of Pike o' Blisco. Whether most of these summit cairns are survey marks or of older standing, I do not know. In any case, they date well back into the last century, as do certain other marks, said to have been set up by shepherds. And there are a few more already fairly old, such as the Westmorland cairn, and two tiny ones on Gavel Neese, telling one where to turn off right towards the Napes, and the line of cairns from Esk Hause to Scafell Pike. All are more or less historic, and should be carefully preserved.

It is the reverse with the untidy piles of stones which have recently sprung up all over the more frequented parts of the Lake District. The intention may have been to help people to find the way, but the proper method to do so is to teach them to find their way unaided, even if it means letting them lose it first. This should be encouraged as a matter of public policy, and as a justifiable exception to the miserable principles of Safety First. And is it not useful to be able to find the way in war time, almost as useful in the army as at sea or in the air ? Moreover, these strings of cairns, or rather rubbish heaps, tend to make hikers concentrate on tracks, with the result that almost all the fells are now disfigured with trodden paths, where forty years ago they were still unscarred. Again in some parts, Bowfell for example, these so-called cairns have become so promiscuous that they fail to show the way at all, but merely form obstructions that trip one in the dark. There is in existence a club, the Gadurene Club, formed for the sole purpose of destroying unwanted cairns. I am an honorary member in so far as that is consistent in a club without subscription. To justify my membership I have, during the last eighteen months, managed to level out from three to four hundred of these ugly piles on but half a dozen Lakeland hills, and I appeal to fellow members to complete the work.

On the same principle, some years ago the S.M.C. asked the National Trust for Scotland to discourage directional marks of any kind on its Highland property, and since then the Forestry Commissioners have decided on a similar policy for their National Forest parks in the Forest of Dean and the Snowdon district. Perhaps the Fell and Rock might ask the National Trust to do the same in the Lake District.

Yours, etc.,

10th December, 1941 P. J. H. UNNA

*To the Editor of the ' Fell and Rock Club Journal '*

DEAR MR SPEAKER

Thank you for your kindly wishes on my 73rd birthday, but as old Joe used to say : 'I'm novvt near as fit as I were fifty year ago.' On fine afternoons Bonzo, the Spaniel, takes me out for a walk in ' Crabdale,' towards Lingmell bridge and hunts the woods and whinbushes after rabbits ; he put one off today and had a good chase ; he never catches any, but the run does him good.

I look up at Gable and Pillar and think of the good climbs I had with Gaspard—the Dauphiny guide—nearly forty years ago, when wind and limbs were good.

I don't remember Lawrence Pilkington—he climbed before 1902, which was the year I came up here : some of the climbers who were here that Easter were A. E. Field, A. D. Godley, Ashley and George Abraham, W. Zimmermann, Percy Salter, H. C. Lowen, C. S. Worthington, J. Gemmel, Harold Spender, Halford, Henry Harland, and many others.

Mr Field took me up the East Pillar, by the Slab, but not the Notch, also his sister and Mr Hopkins : my first climb ! My next was with Gaspard—who came with Halford and Spender and stayed on here, in early June, when he hid a rope in the meadow and we went for a *walk* after tea, 4-30 p.m. We retrieved the rope and made for Scafell and did Steep Ghyll, Slingsby's Chimney, the Pinnacle on to Scafell and down by Greenhow and we were back by 9 p.m. In April 1903, we had Dr Claude Wilson, L. W. Rolleston, W. G. Longstaff, W. G. Clay, Harold A. Beeching, and R. Cagrati Crivelli—an Italian—all in one party, and all very fine fellows.

Later in the year we had Gerard Cobb—who put the Climbers' Song to music—and Edward Stern, who, I believe, was a fine violinist, and Fred Botterill, who led the climb named after him on Scafell.

In 1904, 5 and 6, W. C. Slingsby, L. Oppenheimer, Robertson l.amb, George Seatree and J. W. Robinson were frequent visitors. In 1907, G. Winthrop Young and F. D. Acland stayed here. In 1908 came A. W. Andrews, A. G. Woodhead, who then made the climb on Scafell out of Deep Ghyll that bears his name, and G. S. Sansom, G. L. Keynes, and G. H. L. Mallory, who then made the second ascent of Scafell Pinnacle from Deep Ghyll ; Mallory with Basil Goodfellow also made new variations on the Abbey Ridge and West Pillar (N.W. by W) ' Mallory's Climb ' in 1913. In 1909 Dr A. W. Wakefield came here—just back from Labrador—and C. W. Rubenson and C. F. Meade. In 1910 H. R. Pope with A. C. Madan made a variation route from Tennis Court ledge to Fives Court ledge on Scafell, and Pope with others probably led the second direct ascent of Pier's Ghyll. In April 1914, S. W. Herford, G. S. Sansom and C. F. Holland made the first ascent of Central Buttress, Scafell, which marked the peak of Wasdale climbing.

During the years of the Great War, 1915 to 1918, came W. N. Ling, H. C. Bowen, George Sang, Colin Philip, Harold Raeburn, J. P. Farrar, president of the Alpine Club and E. M. Broome, vice-president, and many others who could not visit the Alps and found relaxation from business worries on our crags.

I could go on for ever giving details of these climbers of bygone days, but—alas—time goes and I must dry up. I was sorry to hear of the death of J. P. Taylor ; he was really one of the best—ready to do a good turn for anyone and we had some pleasant holidays together about Loch Awe, fishing with J. Wray and G. Basterfield, who did not fish, but enjoyed himself.

I should enjoy a London Section Dinner, but not when the war is on ; but perhaps it will be over before my 80th birthday, when I might attend in a bath chair !

Miss E. Long and Mrs Lewis send their kind regards and best wishes, which I do also.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN RITSON WHITING

Wastwater Hotel,
18th November, 1941

# THE FELL & ROCK CLIMBING CLUB
## OF THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT

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Yours sincerely,

JOHN RITSON WHITING

Wastwater Hotel,
18th November, 1941

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Mrs G. C. L. Pirkis | R. Sawers | V. Veevers |
| E. T. Place | H. S. Thompson | Miss C. Walker |
| G. S. Prentice | Rev. E. M. Turner | P. Warrington |
| H. C. Rowbottom | W. G. Tustin | Mrs W. A. Woods |

The following Graduating Members were elected to full membership :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Miss E. Bull | A. Jessup | D. N. Speyer |
| B. Greenfield | Miss K. Sconce | |

The following new Graduating Members were elected :

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| P. Alexander | E. H. Merrill | D. G. Turnbull |
| W. Greenhalgh | Gibson Pattison | E. Wormell |
| R. G. Ladkin | R. H. Thomlinson | Miss J. M. Wright |

The total membership of the Club, allowing for the loss of 37 members during 1941 (from various causes) now stands at 777.

This considerable increase of members during the last two years, running as it does into three figures, gives rise to an interesting speculation as to which of the diverse motives for seeking membership was common to most or possibly all of those whom we welcome, and that very heartily—to the fellowship of the Club. But to those who have always felt irresistibly drawn to the Hills, the tense and soul-stirring events of these years have only made the loved prospect of Lakeland hills and dales seem more desirable than ever. Many of the new members appear to have considerable Alpine mountaineering experience behind them, and to them a closer acquaintance with British Hills will be a joy that brings with it a greater fitness for resuming their Alpine mountaineering when the time comes.

A club meeting was held by the Alpine Club at Dungeon Ghyll Hotel from the 26th September to the 2nd October. It was attended by the President of the Alpine Club, Geoffrey Winthrop Young and numerous members, several of whom are also members of this Club, and a good deal of climbing was done. The weather was not uniformly good, but it

appeared in no way to interfere with the success of their first official meeting in the Lake District. This important innovation was warmly welcomed by the President of the Fell and Rock Club and its members, who hope that this contact with the Alpine Club, made under such happy auspices, may be renewed annually and so stimulate interest in the higher spheres of exploration with which it is identified.

The activities of the Club are being maintained with even greater keenness than before though the numbers of members able to come to meets and to carry on with climbing are of necessity greatly reduced. The Committee's decision to transfer its meetings to the more readily accessible headquarters of the Club was welcomed by many, judging by the good attendances at Langdale especially, where through Mr and Mrs Bulman's acquisition of the New Hotel, excellent additional accommodation has now been made available.

Too much could hardly be said in praise of the many thoughtful members who, frequently at some inconvenience to themselves, drive others back to their railway or coach station. Not only members, but evacuees and refugees as well, have expressed their warm appreciation of such kindness which often enough extended to novices being taken on climbs or walks over the fells.

A glance at the new climbs described in these pages will suffice to show that exploration still continues on a very high level. Of particular interest is the first complete ascent of Y-Gully, which, because of the disintegrating character of the vegetation-covered rock, impending in its upper part, daunted most of the hardiest climbers ever since L. Oppenheimer and his friends first looked at it, and passed it by. As a tour-de-force it is likely to remain unchallenged for a long time ; S. B. Beck's vivid description of the climb gives proof of the great demands it made upon a leader of not only outstanding courage, but of a degree of all-round fitness such as only constant practice can produce.

The ordinary climber will turn with eager interest to another type of climb of the Very Difficult order—Bentley Beetham's Lingmell Climb. Also a fair-weather climb, it offers throughout its amazing length of over 2,300 feet, all the variety and interest associated with a moderate Alpine expedition, taking a party of three six hours to traverse. Having both scope and freshness of outlook, it will attract all those in search of good mountaineering.

The rapid pace at which exploration has progressed since the New Club Guides were issued in 1939 has decided the Committee to proceed with the collection of all new climbs and variations made since then and to publish them as a supplement to the series in due course.

Brackenclose continues to attract many climbers—well over 1,000 members and friends used the Club house during 1941—and in addition to paying for its upkeep, it provided a substartial sum which has been used for the repayment of some of the small loans.

Congratulations to the following Club members whose marriages are announced : J. W. Haggas, Captain T. H. P. Cain, Miss S. Partington, Miss E. M. Wakefield. The Club also heartily congratulates :

Lieut, and Mrs D. N. Boothroyd on the birth of a daughter, Capt. and Mrs W. S. Cain on the birth of a daughter, Mr and Mrs G. O. G. Leonard on the birth of a daughter, and Mr and Mrs E. W. Flawn on the birth ot twin sons.

E. W. Hodge has for some time past been engaged on war work in London and has found it increasingly difficult to continue as Assistant Editor. His post has now been taken over by the Editor and the Librarian. All enquiries regarding back numbers of Journals No. 1 to 37

should be sent to the Librarian, while all matters relating to advertisements in the Journal should be addressed to the Editor. The two addresses are printed in the List of Officers, facing these Notes.

Members and officers greatly appreciated E. W. Hodge's services to the Club, and all will join in offering thanks to him for having so freely given of his time, energy and enthusiasm to make the Journal more widely known to readers, booksellers and advertisers alike ; the Editor owes a personal debt to him for his valuable assistance in introducing the Lakeland Number in particular to many successful distributors, which helped substantially to lessen the considerable cost to the Club of producing this elaborate double number.

To the many members residing abroad it will be of interest to learn that the following addition to Rule 8 was passed at the Annual General Meeting on September 27th, 1941 :

> The Committee shall also have power on application to remit one-half of the annual subscription of any member who, during the whole of the year, covered thereby shall have been out of the United Kingdom.

The Club tenders its thanks to Robert Burns for the Stretcher and First Aid Equipment presented by him for use at Brackenclose, where the new outfit has already been made available. Having the means of rescue brought nearer to the Scafell climbing centre will greatly shorten the time taken in getting casualties down to the valley—still at least three miles distant from the nearest telephone—and so reduce avoidable suffering.

Corrections to No. 35 :

P.14, line 17. For ' the first ascent' read ' his first ascent.'
P.70, line 3. For ' Mitredale ' read ' Miterdale.'
P.77, line 10. For ' Townsend ' read ' Woodsend.'
P.93, line 18. For ' the first ascent' read ' his first ascent.'