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## THE LITTLE MELODY

F. H. F. Simpson

“ . . . and the only tune that I could play,  
was ‘ Over the Hills and far away ’.”

*Nursery Rhyme.*

### PREAMBLE

At the moment of this writing, War, a joyless shadow, has been sitting at the elbow of the ordinary man for almost three years ; dark and terrible years, but not so dark that there cannot be glimpsed beyond them and their dubious successors, the faint features of a brave new world, not a little distorted by the tears promised us by the Prime Minister. Brave and new it can be safely called. New it will be and brave it need be. Clear in retrospect is the fading ruin of the nineteen-thirties, years when we lied cheerfully to ourselves and dismantled our armour amid the tattered festoons of catch-phrases about examining proposals and exploring avenues. The leaders of men copied the alleged action of the ostrich when confronted with an emergency. Over them a real darkness fell. Gently were the shackles hung upon our liberty, now where it hurt little, presently where the results were, to say the least, highly inconvenient.

Each of us in the meantime dreams hopefully of his particular brave new world, a personal fervency colouring the inmost longing. State sponsored austerity is with us now, and promises to condition our affairs more thoroughly in future. Pardonable poverty shall be our lot, and we who in the days of pseudo-sanity picked up the token of mountain travel, placing it next to our hearts, will find our way back to the fells in a novel frame of mind with the coming of peace. As a Club grows so its character changes. Recent years have shown that the Fell and Rock is no exception. The critical minds of a new generation already weigh well tried standards, nurtured in infancy by the men and women who saw the birth of the Club movement in England. The new generation has known little but war and the preparation for war, and for that reason may undervalue the family aspect of Club life, miss its enduring friendships, and remain insensitive to the opportunities offered for perfecting the less obvious branches of mountain craft. This possibility is real. Already at the age of moderate reasoning power is a generation that knows nothing of the banana and the Sunday morning undertone of church bells.

A number of Club members, flicking over a page or two, may say to themselves, ‘—this is a climbing Club Journal, and here comes the pointing of more morals and, no doubt, the public examination of the more favourable aspects of a conscience.’ And again,

'someone should tell the Editor.' Someone will. The Editor has been told much from time to time, and he listens carefully, lamplight gleaming on his spectacles.<sup>1</sup> We have a healthy administration, conducted by impeccable officers and, if the Editor has fostered the illusion that any other than he may direct the contents of the Journal, no one has yet suggested that contributors on the adolescent side of forty should be discouraged from indulging in a fanciful sermon. Which brings me to my point: the problem of the passing on by the old hands of the cult of the spiritual aspect of mountain adventure to the young and lusty graduate whose career is so inclined to be muscular, superficial and transitory. Questions of finance, external relations, and the like have given to our business that air of meticulousness belonging to the company limited by shares. This is both necessary and praiseworthy, but there is a chance that the corporate body may supplant the flexible aggregation of kindred souls devised by the founders of the Club. Graduating membership points the way to the newcomer and leaves him to it. A list of twenty mountains is like a list of twenty French verbs. To know a language well you must talk to the natives. To get the full measure of the metaphysical influence of the mountain scene the graduate, unless he be gifted with the necessary degree of sensitiveness, must learn by comparative analysis with his colleagues what it is that prompts them to study it, and what qualities most affect them.

The eavesdropper, loitering of an evening at the open doors of Club quarters, will know what I mean. Few if any voices speak of the deeds their owners did, or of the things they saw or felt among the hills yesterday, last week, or once upon a time. The lights are on, the curtains are drawn; the hills are in darkness until morning. We interview them between 10-30 a.m. and 4-30 p.m., by the rigid clockwork of the plains, an uneasy mechanism, lubricated by hot baths: not for us the honeyed air of dawn, nor the swinging lantern's uncertain radiance. Either diversion may in this country be pursued for its own sake, in circumstances unconditioned by distance, weather or stone-fall. We are victims of the fixed mealtime, and the dull routine of daylight. I too am so bound, and mutinous accordingly. Each time I pass into the fell country I experience the impact of a tremendous sense of strength and tranquility, flooding my heart, cutting the bonds of toil, capsizing my conceptions of time, place and discipline. I wish to sing and shout, and pointing, cry 'See, up there!' Naturally, I have attempted to share this experience with my companions at the time or relate it on my return to the valley. Most often I have relapsed into silence before a barrier of reserve. In the case

<sup>1</sup>Written in July, 1942.

of the old hill dog this is no matter. He sees what I see, perhaps more clearly. I talk too much; such is his gentle judgment. With the young and eager it is different. I am misunderstood because I am obscure, or worse, I am wrongly assessed because I am sentimental.

Perhaps the message of the wind and sky is not intelligible to all of us. Perhaps, on the other hand, it strikes in our sub-conscious minds a note so clear and bell-like that we fear lest it be overheard. So I plead for a frank admission of the emotions. It is idle to hide comic dismay in the dentist's waiting room, or the chill horror begotten of the whistle of the high explosive bomb. The pleasant sensation aroused by the sight of a warm wedge of jam tart is an open secret. It is easy to love a man who discloses his dread of a certain top pitch or leftward movement upon sloping holds. His legs are of such and such a length and no more, like his neighbours. Possibly, like his neighbour, he mismanages them. The modest expert and the patent fumbler are not readily confused. Each will talk to the other on the subject of applied technique, and each will learn. So, too, will the fearless discussion of the abstract side of the climb, the fell-walk, or other undertaking lead to a fertile exploration of the mental impressions. Analogous appreciations and opposing points of view will come at once to the surface, evoking mutual understanding. The howl of the infant and the imprecation of the adult are alike international signals of dissatisfaction. There are a thousand other signals of every import, each indicating a window through which one man may watch the working of another's mind.

In the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king. He is a poor monarch if he sees without heeding; worse still if he is solicitous but tells not of what he finds. If words of mine start a conversation among the inarticulate I shall be well pleased, though condemned for inciting discord. Out of discord skill may conjure melody and on the subject of a rather singular melody, who heard it, and what it was about, I know a fable which no one may believe. First of all.

#### WHO HEARD IT

A man heard it. He was stepping along the grass verge in the warm September dusk, ostensibly to preserve his boot nails, but in fact the better to hear the owls conversing below Scout Crag. A rhythmic creak came from the harness of his load. His shirt was tied round his waist by the sleeves, the knot in front, giving him in the failing light a slightly oriental appearance. His hair was fair and self-willed. Last brushed in the morning it hung like an untidy thatch.

For a number of hours just elapsed he had been seated immediately over the back axle of the last bus from the South, enjoying a newly discovered way of meeting the tedium of the journey. With closed eyes he had translated into progress along the road, well known to him, each lift, dive and swing, by each hill and bend, checking his deductions from time to time by brief inspection. His errors had been few. Now he was dependent for locomotion on his rather thin legs, which was what he had for some weeks earnestly desired. Once again, he reflected, he had escaped to the hills. This thought explored the fallow recesses of his mind. Upon occasion it darted out to hasten back with a companion idea. Should he go over Glaramara? Would not Grains Ghyll be less troublesome? A third idea counselled that this was obviously so. Next a diversion: some one had fallen into Grains Ghyll a few summers ago; a woman. She died. Had she a husband? Had he remarried? The darting thought fled with all these chance acquaintances, to return suddenly with the quite frivolous notion that the conventional floral tributes upon the lady's grave had perhaps by now given place to one of those handsome glass domes sheltering the corpses of some tulips, and an emaciated card bearing a faded message of regret.

The walker's eyes twinkled. He was English, and the English were reputed to be odd. He toyed with the idea of being odd, remembering that he had recently sustained the immeasurable disaster of the loss of his wife. Instantly upon the first realisation of this fact he had stepped unwillingly outside himself, and had ever since surveyed from afar and sadly, his own blind searching for mental equilibrium. For eight months he had wrestled with the cold conviction that he had lost himself. Unbidden thoughts, dreadful shapes, crowded his brain. Accustomed duty became a feverish novelty. He ran away, and here he was, self-appointed critic, two paces behind his own troubled soul, wagging a finger in reproof or comfort, watchful lest an unexpected stile defeat the lame dog. The vision of his wife, a tragic score for the German bomber, crumpled and dark with dust, clung to his consciousness. So he sought a cure for his affliction, shed the ties of responsibility, turned hopefully, but doubting, to the hills.

The brisk purr of tyres eclipsed the voice of the stream in Mill Ghyll, and the car swept down on him from behind, giving none of the usual audible indications of an effort to stop. It was American, sleek and confident, ornamented with frills, bulges and beading, in no way connected with efficient mechanical performance. The window dropped, and rare perfume assailed the walker's nostrils.

'Excuse me, what place is this?' asked the voice of a man.

'Langdale,' replied the walker.

'Where?'

'Langdale,' interrupted a female voice from the cushioned gloom in the back of the vehicle. 'The place Veronica told you about. I knew I was right.' The voice seemed to echo brassily up the fell, as a hotel dinner-gong calls harshly upstairs.

'We have come from the south,' added the man. 'The hotels are all full.' He drummed on the steering wheel with a ringed finger.

The walker indicated the position of available accommodation in the valley.

'Is there a way out that side?' asked the driver, pointing to the darkening hollow of Oxendale.

The walker described at length the nature of the way by Blea Tarn and advised a return by the route of approach.

'You must not go that way,' declared the woman's voice, adding by way of explanation, 'my husband cracked his sump in Portugal doing that sort of thing a few years ago.'

The wisdom of this advice expended itself on a frosty silence. It occurred to the walker that the same voice had evoked many a similar silence. The driver expressed his thanks and engaged a forward gear with the temerity of one whose greatest joy lay in that quality of motoring which constantly exposed sumps to Portuguese perils.

The car lurched to the road junction by the New Hotel, reversed with hot cheeked impetuosity, flounced in feminine fashion past the walker into the dusk. The walker went on his way. He considered the probable appearance and condition of Veronica. Only a person appreciative of the driver's smouldering desire for the intoxication of rutted hump-backed highways would have suggested to him a hazardous exit from Langdale. Sister or daughter? impossible to say; more likely daughter, infected with the same juvenile recklessness. It had been a mistake to be so candid about the qualities of the Blea Tarn road.

The walls of Mickleden closed in upon the walker as he paced steadily upon the soft turf towards the unseen complexities of Rossett. The sky filled with stars. From Stickle Breast came the cry of lambs. The little darting thought renewed its activities in the walker's idling brain, disguised now as a solemn notion, very serious, inducing sober considerations. In the first place, unlike the motorist, he owned the earth, its soft scents and laughing waters. In the second place there lay before him a long planned experience; a night crossing of Esk Hause. The many daytime crossings of the past had been reconsidered through a magnifying

glass, held before an Abraham's post card, and all the maps, great and small, had had their share of attention. Passing the sheep-fold he settled down to a pace most suited to his load. His torch flashed at first infrequently, presently to probe the dark fellside for longer periods, measuring the hazards of the nearer ground. The broken mountain track dropped slowly beneath him. New stars climbed into the sky to watch his passage, and the chorus of water rose and fell in the young night. Swift flying time hesitated, harkening to a puny punctuation of the enduring semi-silence, a tardy boot tread and a solitary figure. Jubilant, the walker located correctly the ill-marked southward digression, climbed from terrace to terrace and solved with ease the problem of the inclination north. Here the blaze of nail marks grew again to lead him by recognisable rock corridors to the grass saddle, windswept and empty. He stood on its gently curving lip in the chill night breeze facing west, breathing deeply. His legs called on him to rest, but he ignored their entreaty. It was no trouble now to find the way. He marvelled that the track worn by eager holiday makers grew no wider. Fifteen years ago it had been the shyest trod, the width of a pair of boots, blossoming to maturity only in the bogs. Angle Tarn lurked in a darker darkness, its draining beck head chattered, glittering in the wan torch ray, resenting the disclosure of its dim seclusion. Passing onward and upward to the wide silence of Esk Hause the walker, in his preoccupation with the ground underfoot, failed to observe the slow fading of certain of the stars and was on that account mildly surprised to meet a cloud. Into the range of his torch ventured its timid fringe, a mute challenge. The little darting thought, until then hinting the most ambitious undertakings, now turned a blind eye on Glaramara and began to question the whereabouts of the walker's tin of tobacco. As he searched his pockets the mist, impelled by a light breeze, slid coldly round the walker and embraced him impersonally, calling to mind the single demonstration of affection a certain bony aunt of his ever permitted herself. Decisively he probed for the shelter, and finding it at length inclined for the stony shrug of Allen Craggs. Most certainly he would go over Glaramara. The general bearing from Allen Craggs was, he reminded himself, 26 degrees true. He reached the top with hair and eyebrows mist-dewed. A multiplicity of cold draughts scampered round the cairn, assailing his thinly clad body. He acknowledged their onslaught in the resumption of his shirt, over which he drew a decayed windproof. In sitting down he luxuriated in the careful disposition of his protesting legs. At leisure he consumed part of his store of food. The crunch and rumble of his working jaws seemed to echo across the world. A



pity, he reflected, that man, in living and moving, rendered true silence inaccessible to himself. Even the coursing blood busied the ear when there was no other noise abroad. Hunger satisfied, he filled a pipe. The spluttering match pinked the palms of his hands: darkness leaping back showed grey rock, moss marked, in rebirth of its day brilliance. He got up to commence the rough descent, briefly inspecting his compass. While he negotiated the confusion of small outcrops content captured him; deeper than he had known for some time. With him walked the flippant wind, whispering doubtfully in the grass, halting, hurrying, and again halting. One random breath, romping over a coping of crag, blundered in astonishment into the walker's disordered hair. With it came a tiny sound. The tinkle of dripping water.

Now to a seasoned hill man this was no novelty. Water, whether falling, flowing or ensnared in his clothing was part of his daily pleasure. This gentle sound had an arresting quality which first halted the walker and next turned his steps in its direction. He came presently on a moss crowned hollow, quite small, and below it a pool, turf-ringed. A brow of sod with naked roots frowned over the pool and down the roots the water ran, playing as it fell into the pool below, a little melody, sweet and delicate beyond telling. The walker, a good listener always, knew little of the elements of music, but these impish harmonies enchanted him. He pointed his torch and dropped to his knees to watch. From thick roots and thin, and drops large and small, came the notes, base and treble, loud and soft. Tympani from a gnarled and twisted fibre, a patted rhythm upon sodden earth. From drops of different size and varied pace, the fast overtaking and outstripping the slow, some striking deep and others shallow water, came the tone of celeste and flute and spinet, light laughing keys. Greatest drops wove a shifting base pattern. In their brief fall from slender threads the small swift-flowing drops built the shrill skein of plucked strings. From time to time a gust of wind pressed into the hollow and the treble faltered, base ringing true and undisturbed. Each casual air impressed on the melody the qualities of hope, fear, passion, as it faltered in its brilliant *arpeggio*, at once resumed in the surge of renewed rhythm.

The execution of this lonely orchestra, its scope, its very loveliness held the walker enthralled. The fact that it owed its existence to so small an incident in so great an area impressed him, heightened his sense of solitude; he became acutely aware of the limitless depth of space behind him. He glanced around into the darkness, as would a man who had seen on the ground a great jewel and feared lest another detect it also. Ideas stumbled upon him. He examined them as they came. The earth was indeed his. Now

was this added to him, this music, surely the singing voice of the inanimate. Next a doubt. Inanimate? Speech and volition were attributes of his particular form of matter, a few elements and a lot of water. Was a thing dead because it neither spoke nor moved? Grass and moss grew and decayed. So too did cloud and rock, the former so swiftly as to outwit him, the latter so slowly that he, suffering his headlong decomposition, crammed into seventy odd years at best, regarded it as dead. Sound, to be heard, must be made; colour to be seen must be displayed. He half grasped at a titanic scheme in part revealed, of light and colour, warmth and movement, an ordered universe, beautiful without exception. He remembered staring into a microscope at a section of someone's liver, stained for the purpose of inspection. He saw a splendid rich mosaic patching a drab background. The mosaic was lethal, a disease destroying yet beautiful. Conviction came to him that all things round him lived, the very mountain aged with him as it would live with him. Frost and erosion were bad for mountains just as pastry was bad for him. Rock saw sunlight and shone grey. Water saw rock and sky in sun and shadow, and gleamed in turn gay blue and grave blue. He gave colour when the sun picked him out from the half tones of the earth's crust. Pink; and anaemic pink at that, with a legacy of ridiculous freckles the following day, a tattered countenance within a week. It appeared that of all the experiments of an ingenious Providence he contributed the least remarkable phenomena. Among the enduring facets of stone he was transitory and absurd. This form of life around him went on quietly in the darkness, without food or rest. The moss ceased not to be green because no one looked at it, and the little melody played on without a human audience praising the glory of yesterday and heralding the pageant of tomorrow.

The hurt to his knees of the hard ground fetched the walker at length to his feet. He wandered slowly away. The dark hill raised him in its strong hands. How quaint, he thought, of God to tolerate the liberation of the filthy dogs of war upon millions, and yet contrive, for his delight, this revealing experience in the shape of a tiny waterfall in an untrodden way—and the frequenters of pulpits would have it believed that *homo sapiens*, the squalid self-opinionated ape, had first claim upon the attention of his Creator.

The walker set about a classification of his jostling impressions. A great gift was his; its possession, which was open to all men, seemed to him to mark an essential distinction between mankind and all other forms of matter. He, and they, had been privileged to observe and absorb the collective grace and beauty of earth's treasures, and empowered to harness its strength. Both power

and privilege carried a duty ; to cultivate the same grace ; to reflect the same beauty. Yet was the power abused, the privilege neglected. In their place two acknowledged usurpers ruled. The gun and the cheque book. A bad business.

The walker tripped over a stone. He fell headlong and heavily, his face pressed into the damp grass. His rucksack rose and smote him smartly behind the ears. His camera was in it, a heavy instrument possessed of sharp external fittings. He laughed at his own misfortune. He, the five sensed human, knew that the qualities of earth's old ribs were more than grey to the eye and hard to the touch, for beneath them he already felt anew the pulse of life. He stood up convinced that he had found in the hills that which he had come to seek—but he could not name it. He wandered on, so preoccupied that he lost his way, becoming unparadonably entangled in a Langstrath scree chute ; which was to lead to other adventures into which it is unnecessary to enquire.

#### WHAT IT WAS ABOUT

The verdict upon these pages may be that in attempting to call attention to the obscure blooms in the climber's garden I have caused only a premature and uninteresting explosion among my own emotions. It calls for great powers of self-expression to remain coherent after exclaiming, 'See, up there!' An essay pretending to disclose personal reasons for a passion for the hills is a dangerous undertaking. The convinced need no convincing, and the unconvinced will surely misunderstand. Last year Beetham looked searchingly backwards and forwards with mature judgment, and in looking forwards also I am prompted by a keen desire to publish fully the wide range of cultural and spiritual assets which Club membership has to yield. That I am able to comprehend these benefits is due to the solicitude of those who sponsored me for membership. I was handled with a rugged tenderness by men whose mountain novitiate commenced in the early 1920's, when stalwarts were shaping the traditions of the Club to the standards accepted by Gordon, Craig, Thompson, Seatree and their contemporaries. These names are fast becoming legendary. I recall with pleasure the incidents of my tutelage.

'We think you should join the Club one day!'

One day. I was not asked if I wanted to join. Reasoning was left to me. Since 1926 I had been wandering uncertainly from the sparkling rapids and the tail eddies of dark pools where the trout lay, up to the bald pates of the Pennines, impelled always by the desire to see what lay beyond. I knew even then that though I wandered until I was old, the final truth might elude me. Here

was the chance to wander with other questing souls, and two pairs of eyes were better than one. Came the next stage.

'When we started as you are doing, we were given a standard of proficiency at which to aim. On and amid crags a sense of proportion, on snow and ice a discerning eye; above all, the ability to look after ourselves on the fells, day and night, winter and summer, fair or foul. We expect you to do the same! . . .' and from my mentor, a parting kindness.

'Write to me as often as you like, and tell me what you do.'

These things I did for four unforgettable years, journeying most often alone, learning the hill character, watching the mountain quality, crawling on the seldom visited flanks and spurs of the great fells, perching on top of the little fells to watch the great ones from afar; going again and again the other way up, the other way down, the other way round. I learned how to be happy though lost near Yeastyrigg, and to be self-possessed when sharing a moonlit field, though so briefly, with Burnthwaite's bull. I found the magic of the dusk start and the dawn finish, picked chicken bones by the flicker of lightning, watched the opal flush of an April day-break rising most gloriously beyond the toes of my still boots. I went unwashed and unfed, and with a mind more receptive and senses more acute than before. Life became an elementary state, a slender physique rejoicing in the processes first of fatigue and next of recuperation, in the quiet of a farmhouse bedroom with its honest furniture and dated wall paper—clustered blossoms, and every now and then two blue feathered singing birds, one large, one small. More I did not want for my brain was clear of the lumber of politics, religion and profit. Upon its clean parchment began to fall the first impressions of the immense diurnal processes which occurred around me. The swinging concentric curve of earth and firmament by day and the pearly hoop of the Milky Way by night enlivened my eager hands and feet with the movement of the spinning world. At will, I moved with it or loitered, braced against its headlong speed. Weather and season assumed a new significance, advising days active in the valley, passive aloft, both or neither. I experienced vexation when in the wrong place at the right time, delight when breasting a snow slope at the moment when the falling sun was leaving it to the shadows. There was so much to see. To stay in one place and wait, or to go forth seeking was a hard choice, resolved often by compromise. The challenging power of a full gale snatching at the bleak lip of Silver Cove filled the air with an organ note so rich and deep that after I had scurried crabwise against it from Scoat Fell, I lay in shelter half a day, listening, until, with nightfall, it fell to an apotheotic murmur. On still and

vapourous days in Buttermere, when the half-seen fells were cartooned to Alpine stature, I would dawdle in Godferhead Wood, leaning on a straight larch limb, scanning the great brow of Grasmoor, amid a calm unspoilt by the ceaseless talk of the Cocker and distant Herdwick bleat.

Well remembered also are the associations of the smoke room at Buttermere headquarters, a place of cloistered quiet or boisterous comedy, presided over by a grandfather clock respected more for its reposeful tick than for any time it might tell for time stands idly by. In the corner books lie. Scree, crag and grass, framed in the wide window, observe the climbers' leisure from afar, flooding the room with warm soft light, or emphasising the rain-laden gloom of the off day. Once there was a carbide plant, now gone for ever before the final stride of electricity. In those days the gas burner sighed unaccountably in modest competition with the rustle of the fire, so gently that one fell asleep under their joint influence.

From the silent walls of this room there echoes down the years an accumulation of culture, wisdom and comradeship unexcelled. Laughter there has been over beer; respectful silence or affectionate riposte has greeted the opinion of the much travelled, the fleet of foot, the long of reach. Many of the men and women who have used this room are no longer here, and we at length will follow them. The birth of the Fell and Rock is by general consent attributed to the inspiration of Scantlebury. If his handiwork is to survive there must be assured a steady accretion of the like of those who have so far nourished it by their own excellence. To know them and learn from them it is necessary to move among them, absorbing from each the values set by them upon their association with mountains and mountaineers. Thus will the tyro develop that which is latent in him, filling in the blanks and replacing the unworthy. The life of the mountaineer is a reflection in small part of his own experience and in greater part of that of his fellows. The walker paused to listen to the little melody because he had learned in his youth from the example of men and women whose lives were enriched by their association, to watch and listen for the small voice of the infinite. Round this accomplishment revolved their whole character and attitude to God, men and affairs.

Do not doubt that the Club will endure. There will be no dissolution under rule 21; no jumble sale of its property by sorrowing trustees. What is to be feared is atrophy of our purpose. We older people have our own little melodies to sustain us and free and fearless disclosure of our mountain experience, practical and sentimental, to the young will open their eyes and ears to things not apparent at first glance, wedding them to the hills in their old

age. They will be slow to condemn the elders for encouraging them to blow upon their own trumpets ; rather will they welcome the invitation first to brandish the instruments so that they glitter in the sunshine of a newer understanding, thriving beneath the wing of the Club.

One spring night, cold and aglow with stars, when the horrid voice of war spoke in the dry rattle of cannon ten thousand feet above, my mind was oddly urged to stumble imperfectly through that superb utterance of a long forgotten pagan sage :

' He who thinks of Himachal though he should not behold him, is greater than he who performs all worship in Benares. And he who thinks on Himachal shall have pardon for all sins, and all things that die on Himachal, and all things that in dying think of his snows, are freed from sin. In a thousand ages of the Gods I could not tell you of the glories of Himachal where Siva lived, and where the Ganges falls from the foot of Vishu like the slender thread of a lotus flower.'

You see ? My story is not new, and I have added nothing to this message, for Liverpool and London, Bristol and Benares are so identified in the eye of Providence that these pages may be deemed a superfluity.

I write these last lines in a lap of heather above the Trough of Bowland. The greater hills rise across the sea. Over them rides a single sun-flushed storm ; rain, wind-slanted, creeps from it. The tree-clustered Fylde lies under a sky of dusty gold. Yesterday, I picked up a paper and learned of the passing of Speaker, well-beloved friend and counsellor. His gaunt figure and capable expressive hands are inseparable from any recollections of happiest experience. The Club's obligation to him falls equally upon us all. He joins the shades that people the quiet smoke room, and who gave us what we have. His death is our opportunity.

Here on the swelling Pennine moor hardly any wind stirs the heather. In the hush of an autumn evening there comes to me again all the sweetness of my first climbing day. That it was mine at all I owe to those, Speaker among them, who taught me where to go and when, what to cherish and why. In the morning it will be sunny and we will go out together again, our footsteps making dark tracks in the dewy grass.

## BIRKNESS DAY

E. Banner Mendus

It all started with an argument as to the merits of girdling as compared with "straight up and down" climbing. Bill Peascod was for Buttermere and a new girdle which had been hatching in his mind, while I countered with attractive pictures of Ennerdale and an unclimbed buttress. The weather was running (quite literally) true to the 1943 form and made our debate seem purely academic, though I hinted at the possibility of forcing the buttress in boots, and Bill still dreaming of his girdle murmured that with faith 'it might even go in stockinged feet'! Bill was tenacious and finally the visions he evoked of a very severe climb of at least 500 feet 'continuously exposed' and 'on fine rock,' were irresistible; and so, a few days later, there arrived a day of unexpectedly perfect weather which subtly interwove the delights of sunshine, steep dry rock and delicate rubber-shod movement—in short the kind of day one often longs for, but which rarely arrives!

Walking up into Birkness Coombe was warm work and it was pleasant to rest by the stream at the head of the Coombe and study Grey Crag at leisure. *Grey Wall* looked startlingly vertical and flat except for the assortment of square-cut overhangs half-way up. I was politely incredulous when Bill said we would have to descend the overhangs. Surely he and I must be looking at different things! But no, apparently not; up the overhangs went *Fortiter* and down *Fortiter* we must come; hence down the overhangs—a matter of elementary logic. The extra 120 foot rope with which we had encumbered ourselves in case of abseils no longer seemed superfluous and a trial to the flesh. But looking at *Grey Wall* from a distance was no help; so, after watching another party depart for Eagle Crag, we deposited our rucksacks and made off up the scree to Grey Crag to test Bill's flights of fancy.

Between *Grey Wall* and *Bishop's Arête* lies a fairly wide stretch of very steep rock faulted vertically into a number of cracks and chimneys. It was evidently climbable in one or two places, but whether it was traversable was not so clear, for it was steep with blank looking sections.

We started a few yards to the right of the ordinary route up *Bishop's Arête*, up a steepish wall. The climbing was of good quality, but the rock was rough and, revelling in the freedom of rubbers and the comfort of sunshine, we alternated up three pleasant pitches until we reached a platform on the arête and could study the first section of the *Cracked Wall* to where a buttress protruded

and hid the rest. An easy traverse led to a corner where we effected a lodgment on the wall and after looking around a good belay was discovered overhead and fixed with difficulty. The wall was in shadow and it was unpleasant to find that the grass of the little ledge we were standing on and the moss on the wall were damp.

Some twenty-five feet away, across a very steep wall was a clean cut chimney. The wall seemed pretty holdless but eventually the eye of faith (Bill's) saw a possible line of holds starting some ten feet above our heads, though it was still uncertain whether it would be possible to get into the chimney after crossing the wall. Bill started up the wall on small holds and then struck out to the left and contrived an amazingly dainty traverse across the wall. Evidently he was in good form, and it was a bit of a shock to see him pause on the edge of the chimney and make several tentative movements before he finally swung round and gained its recesses.

A thread belay but no stance worth mentioning was announced and I was commanded to come on and warned that the last movement was very hard. I started up the wall, feeling a bit dubious at first, but the traverse was so pleasantly airy that it aided the warming-up process and soon I joined Bill in the chimney in an uncomfortable back and knee position.

Getting out on to the vertical left wall presented a pretty problem. Bill went down the chimney while I murmured encouraging remarks. Then he decided to try above and came back and clambered over me ; like a dutiful second I stifled my groans and kept up the encouragement. He had a struggle getting up the chimney in stocking feet by way of a greasy bulge and it was deemed advisable to fix a thread for safeguard. Soon he returned, heralded by a shower of moss, and I suffered the clambering process in reverse. There was no line for a traverse above, so he tried again about fifteen feet below the stance. Balance on the edge of the chimney had to be maintained with a very inadequate finger hold for the right hand. He adjusted his position slowly and carefully then called up to me to watch the rope and gently edged round the corner out of sight. The slowness with which the rope went out testified to extreme difficulties but I could only conjecture what was going on round the corner on the face. Then the slack rope was taken in and after much shouting to make each other heard I gathered that it was my turn, so I quitted my perch, descended the chimney, and met the next pitch face to face.

The movements on to the left wall of the chimney and then round on to the face were extremely delicate ; they needed to be worked out with the impersonal precision of a chess problem. Once round the corner I wondered where next ? The rope ran



diagonally upwards across a vertical wall and then through a notch under an overhang. But bit by bit it pieced itself together ; first a couple of delicate movements across the wall on holds only noticeable after close inspection, then a corner on the face and more small holds leading upwards to the overhang until the fingers thankfully reached the sharp edge of a flake under the bulge ; a pull up on to a small sloping ledge under the overhang and a convulsive wriggle along the narrowing ledge to the mysterious notch at which I arrived head first and found Bill looking up at me from an uncomfortable stance in a corner and grinning broadly at my sudden appearance. After more contortions I got astride the notch on the edge of the buttress and admired the wonderful exposure of the position and enjoyed a splendid view of our acquaintances of the morning who were climbing *Western Buttress* on Eagle Crag. Bill's stance did not permit of a changeover so I continued across the *Cracked Wall* without special difficulty to a nest where there was a good belay.

*Grey Wall* was now in sight, jutting out and forming a splendid bastion to the crags. An interesting fifty-foot pitch led us across *Cracked Wall*, down a couple of cracks in the corner and then, by way of a long stride, out on to *Grey Wall*. There, for the first time since leaving *Bishop's Arête*, we had a comfortable ledge to sit on and we were back in the sun. It seemed a good place for stocktaking, so, while we basked in the sun and smoked, some notes of lengths of pitches were made with the only writing materials we could muster—a stub of pencil and a cigarette packet.

From our stance a crack in a corner led down for twenty feet to a narrow exposed ledge. Bill went down the crack and wandered around prospecting. The ledge led across the face to the left and round the corner, seeming to offer a reasonable way to *Chockstone Ridge* ; but my leader was made of sterner stuff and had set his heart on the descent of the *Fortiter* overhangs. While Bill tied himself to a big flake we discussed the descent of the wall and it was agreed that if I could get down without assistance from the rope Bill would attempt to descend it clean ; otherwise an abscil was to be used. Conscious that the crux was at hand I climbed down the crack and joined Bill on his narrow ledge. Below, the face was so steep that there was little rock to be seen before the eye met the scree. Drawing on his experience of the first ascent of *Fortiter*, Bill outlined the features of the forty-foot pitch below ; then with my head full of good counsel I started down a crack which gave finger and toe holds. The first impression of the pitch was of extreme steepness, very small holds rather far apart and wonderful rock. The crack was rudimentary, but, supple-

menting it with occasional holds on the right wall, I eventually reached a position a few feet above a very narrow ledge where Bill had promised that a rest could be taken. The step down to the ledge was a very long one and making it threw me badly off balance, but with difficulty it was made. Here I fixed a thread round a jammed stone which would at least give Bill an illusion of security for the climb down the crack.

The position was splendidly exposed for I stood immediately above the overhang. 'Where next?' I queried. 'Down the overhang' replied Bill with irritating calm. It seemed absurd; but presumably he knew what he was talking about, so I carefully adopted a kneeling position on the ledge and groped about beneath, encountering only large quantities of fresh air. 'More to the left' suggested Bill. Below the left end of the ledge was an overhang corner and I felt about beneath the square-cut overhang for a handhold, but there was none. Eventually by using a tiny incut left handhold on the wall above and a small rounded knob at knee level for the right hand I succeeded in swinging round and down and found myself standing on a couple of roughnesses on a steep and otherwise smooth slab, still thrust outwards by the overhang; a position which I could not maintain for long. 'Where now?' I inquired with some urgency. 'Traverse to the right' shouted Bill. 'Impossible' I replied after a look round. 'Well go down farther and then traverse' suggested Bill. Somewhat disturbed by what I saw I called back, 'There's another overhang directly below me.' 'Oh yes, I'd forgotten the second overhang. You go straight down it' my leader replied with a deplorable lack of concern. Roundly I denounced absent-minded first ascenders; but the relief of invective could not be long maintained in my position and for variety I swung into a layback position with fingers in a thin crack and feet against the wall of the corner. The sideways view of the landscape was quite a pleasant change. The layback proved the solution of the problem, and on reaching the edge of the overhang I was able to stretch a foot down to a good hold; then, enjoying the freedom of reasonable holds once more, across the face to the left to a small sloping stance and a belay round a great flake which had no visible means of support but nevertheless seemed sound.

Although the whole pitch had been extremely thin and continuously exacting it had gone quite well and after discussion it was decided that Bill should attempt to descend it clean. He was in excellent form and climbed slowly and steadily down the crack until he reached the bad step down to the little ledge. Here he paused, adhering with apparent comfort to tiny holds; but, with

his shorter reach, unable to make the long step down. His position above the overhangs was spectacular and I found that I was developing a crick in the neck with looking up. He climbed up a few feet to rest on slightly better holds and we discussed the problem ; then he returned to the attack, but could not reach the ledge. He found a minute intermediate foothold, and tentatively ventured the tip of his rubber down to it. Immediately his foot slipped off, the hold was damp. ' Nothing for it ' said Bill, with the air of one against whom all things do conspire ' I must have my rubber off,' and proceeded to accomplish this, on the nearly vertical wall, by prising it off with his knee and then pressing it against the rock until he could reach a hand down and transfer it to the inside of his jacket. It seems advisable to draw a veil over his comments when he found he had removed the wrong rubber, and merely to state that somehow or other he succeeded in getting the other rubber off and transferring it to his mouth, which effectively stifled the lurid comments ; then delicately and slowly he managed the bad step in his stockinged feet and gained the little ledge above the overhangs. Here he removed his gag and put it inside his jacket with the other rubber and, after removing the loop and karabiner, he addressed himself to the overhangs. The first went well ; but the second gave him pause. ' How did you do this one ? ' he asked. ' Layback ' I replied enjoying his perplexity. ' Surely not ' said Bill. ' Yes really ' said I. But still he was not convinced and tried divers impossible ways until the layback position came irresistibly. ' Ah, that's better ' he murmured with much contentment and shuffled down horizontally until he reached the traverse. Although I was hardly the ranks of Tuscany I could scarce forbear to cheer the completion of his descent.

Quickly Bill crossed to me, then descended a few feet and seemed to bound across the face to a stance on the far edge of the buttress where I soon joined him and wallowed in the delight of a perfect stance, a rock chair cushioned with whinberry plants. The harder half of the girdle was done. For the last couple of hours there had been no letting up and life seemed very good now, sitting in the sunshine, smoking, and lazily watching a couple of climbers ascending the *Barn Door*. But the little devil who chases Bill up and down rocks would not let him alone and my reverie was interrupted by a command to lead the next pitch across to *Chockstone Ridge*. In full sunshine, and feeling very contented, I crept away across a rough slab, down a corner, and then round some bulging rocks well supplied with holds until I could stride across a crevasse to *Chockstone Ridge* some twenty feet above the gendarme.

From the ridge we descended in one pitch without difficulty into the gully and then up the steep side of the *Slabs* on small holds which had a tendency to slope the wrong way. We crossed the *Slabs* on a horizontal line until we reached the foot of the nose on *Slabs West Climb*. (Photograph opp. p. 293, J. No. 37, 1943.) It looked formidable but friendly; a great bulging mass of rough rock, very different from the lean and hungry overhangs of *Fortiter*.

The nose was an airy affair of rhythmic progress on tiny but perfect holds for sixty feet; a pitch reminiscent of some of the best parts of Pillar Rock *South West Climb*. The rope went out steadily as Bill mounted out of sight above the bulge, and soon, *The Chain* all but finished, it was my turn to climb the last pitch. It was the perfect finish to a fine climb, all delicacy and no effort; a pitch which had an almost dreamlike quality; a pitch to be lingered over, savouring the delight of each smooth movement.

A rest in the heather while we recalled the details of a long and varied climb, and then in a burst of exuberance Bill suggested doing *Oxford and Cambridge Direct*, which was close at hand, as a yardstick for assessing the standard of the *Chain*. So up the *Oxford and Cambridge* we chased. It is a fine little climb of real quality, but the ease with which it went confirmed our impressions of the severity of *The Chain*.

We were getting tired by this time, but Bill's little devil was still troubling and nothing would satisfy him but that we must make the first ascent of the *Cracked Wall*. After *The Chain* he was in a magnanimous mood and I was invited to lead. The chance of seeing Bill in the unfamiliar role of second man was too good to miss, and up the *Cracked Wall* we went, looking out the line of least resistance and following a series of cracks most of the way. The result was *Raven Crack*; a steep little climb of 115 feet, pleasant without being particularly hard, but after *The Chain* the sheerest anti-climax.

Then away down the Coombe in the evening, watching the sunset colours in the sky over Crummock Water, our Birkness day ended . . . .

*Raven Crack* was an afterthought and it is as an afterthought that we remember it when we recall that day of sunshine and superb rock, for it is completely overshadowed in our minds by *The Chain*.

Comparison is a danger that climbers often fall victims to, but a very natural one . . . and so with *The Chain*. The most obvious comparison is with *Kern Knotts Chain*, which it somewhat resembles. The two climbs are of similar severity though the *Grey Crag Chain* is considerably the longer of the two. It keeps high and during the whole of the climb the ground is quite a long way off

and in the section from *Bishop's Arête* to the far side of *Grey Wall* exposure is continuous and there is very little relief. The second half of the climb is easier on the whole but always interesting, and the finish could hardly be finer.

But comparisons, like severe pitches, may be pushed too far, and one is apt to come unstuck. After all, to possess quality a climb must be able to exist in its own right ; it must have a character which is all its own, and to us *Grey Crags Chain* seemed such a climb.



## MORNING MIST ON SCAFELL PIKE

*C. P. Lapage*

We<sup>1</sup> had planned to pitch our tent so that, in the morning, we should be able to see the sun rise from the comfortable warmth of our sleeping bags. However, when we reached the summit at sunset we found the views over Wasdale and the coast so lovely that we were held entranced and were only brought back to the need for action by the chill of nightfall. We fastened the tent down securely but, in our efforts to find a reasonably flat surface on the large stones, we must have been diverted from pitching it so that it faced exactly in the right direction for our morning vigil. We slept well, so well that it was fortunate something wakened us just before dawn, because one glance from the tent door was enough to make us realise that if we were to see the sunrise at all we should have to find another viewpoint quickly. Hastily, we pulled on woollies and windproofs and scrambled to the top of the cairn, where we lay down to avoid the full blast of the chill morning wind.

There, all around us were old friends; peak after peak, just visible in the dim light. We could pick out Pillar, Gable, Skiddaw, Blencathra, Esk Pike and Bowfell, and to the south, Scafell, Coniston Old Man, and Harter. They stood grey, silent, as if awaiting the dawn. And we saw that their patience would soon be rewarded, for daybreak was now heralded by the faint salmon tints in the sky above the tops facing us. Next, and so quickly that we were again almost caught napping, came the first gleam of red, then a segment, then a half, and the sun was up.

*'Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,  
The glorious sun uprist.'*

The quotation is perhaps not quite fitting because the Ancient Mariner was at sea level and for him the sunrise was glorious because it was unaccompanied by mist. At an altitude of 3,000 feet however, the new-risen sun drew the mist, and in doing so gave us the delight of watching a wonderfully beautiful awakening of hill and valley. Once more we lost all sense of time and place and quite forgot our original idea of returning to our tent immediately after sunrise.

First, we noticed on some of the lower slopes near Harter Fell and Coniston what looked like a skim of freshly fallen snow, but it was something different, for now from every valley rose soft white fleecy clouds of mist which tumbled and poured in lovely billows over all the ridges. Slowly, as we watched, more and more grassy tops were submerged till even Robinson and Dale Head were lost

<sup>1</sup> June, 1941, with Cyril Moore.

to view and we were isolated on an island peak. Around us were the other high ones, but only those over 2,500 feet.

Turning, we saw faint rosy pinks in the summit crags of Scafell like those seen in the early morning sun on snow-clad hills in Switzerland. Again we made the round: Skiddaw, Blencathra, The Dodds, Helvellyn, Fairfield, and even distant High Street. Nearer again, Harter Fell, Scafell, Gable and Kirk Fell, and farther across Grassmoor and Crag Hill. Would they be submerged too? No, they just kept their heads above that white rolling sea and sunned their faces in that glorious light.

Suddenly we realised it was cold, and made haste to return to the shelter of the tent and the warmth of our sleeping-bags. We brewed some tea and, stimulated by what we had seen, talked of many things. An hour later, we rambled over the viewpoints round Scafell Pike, feasting our eyes on the glorious views. Then we dropped down from Great End to a mountain stream for a drink and to look for a place for breakfast, rejoicing in the fact that we were starting a perfect day on the tops with our uphill work already done. When we went down the path vapourings of mist met us as they rose up from the valleys, stinging our nostrils with their faint acrid smell as they passed. We looked back and up, and were surprised to find that they had collected in sufficient volume to shroud the summit. But the valleys were now clear and we went leisurely on our way to the pool of Langstrath, recalling as we walked the memories of that wonderful billowing white sea.

(1) CAFÉ COMPLET

(2) THAT LADDER

*T. R. Burnett*

(1) CAFÉ COMPLET

We were a pretty strong party, both individually and numerically, firmly established in the Bétemps Hut, well known to most who visit the Zermatt district. It is situated on an 'island' amongst the tributaries of ice which descend from the slopes of the Twins and Monte Rosa on the south to feed the vast Gorner Glacier. Not the least of its attractions is the fact that if you are not too proud to use the Gorner Grat railway (and we were *not*—especially as S.A.C. members travel at half fare!) a considerable part of the approach to it is downhill.

The weather had not been kind, and we had spent several laborious days in snow stamping with only limited compensation in the way of tops. So one evening I invited applications to join my party on the morrow in an easy and luxurious day. The programme was to walk up the Gorner Glacier to its summit, ascend the Stockhorn and follow the ridge westwards to the great climax of Café Complet on the terrace of the Gorner Grat Hotel! The tigers of the party scorned my effeminate suggestions, and set off in the small hours on some expedition more worthy of their steel, but I had two adherents and we had the lazyman's delight of turning over in our bunks and enjoying several more hours of sleep after the others had gone. The day was brilliantly fine, the slight descent to the main glacier quickly accomplished and its ascent commenced in good heart. The ice was for the most part bare, but there were patches of snow none of which looked as if they were covering anything vicious, and for a while we proceeded upwards individually. Then, more as a matter of routine than in consequence of any apparent necessity, we put on the rope and proceeded nonchalantly as before. I was leading, and as neither appearances nor experience had indicated any need for special caution, we were all taking things rather casually. We were crossing a patch of snow which displayed no suspicious symptoms, and which looked exactly like many others which we had already passed, when I put my foot on a spot which offered about as much resistance as a sheet of paper with nothing below it. There was no chance to draw back, and there was too much slack to enable the second to snatch me from the pit, so through I crashed with the icicles cutting my face and giving out



their music as they broke themselves into fragments on the walls of the abyss.

Now I think we learnt at school an interesting formula,  $S = \frac{1}{2}gt^2$ , which tells you that a falling body drops 16 feet in the first second of its descent from rest. Later reflections convinced me that the distance through which I dropped was more like 12 feet than 16, so the fall must have occupied less than a second; yet, in that brief time, two quite definite questions crossed my mind, and neither afforded any great degree of comfort. They were (1) 'Why does not the rope come tight?' and (2) 'Will it hold?' There was a feeling of surprise but, curiously enough none of terror. I have every sympathy with the Irishman who, on relating his sensations after falling out of a window, said the dropping was as nothing compared with the sudden stop when he got to the bottom. The rope *did* come tight and it *did* hold, and as it stretched and contracted like a piece of elastic, I oscillated helplessly between the walls of ice. The shock and pain in my ribs were intense, and I felt that I could not endure them for long and survive. However, I was sufficiently in possession of my senses to have a look round and survey the position. Above me was a neat hole in the roof fringed by a threatening ring of icicles of various diameters and lengths, and through which the daylight shone brilliantly; below the abyss continued vertically as far as the light penetrated and to unknown depths beyond. The walls of my prison were of smooth, deep-blue ice, but to my great relief one of them carried a bulge or bracket at about knee level, and with a struggle I was able to get my toes on to this, and, with my back against the opposite wall which was about two feet away, I was able to take the weight off the rope and save myself from crucifixion. So now I was in a position to collect my thoughts and to talk to my companions above who appeared to be no less scared than I was. Having given them a dissertation on the recognised technique, they duly sent down the stirrup rope, and the elevating process commenced. To my great distress I found that although I lifted my knee as high as possible I could gain only about three inches by each step, and the stretch of the rope did not seem to me sufficient to account for this. Later, I found that the man in charge of the other end was using neither the ice axe nor the shoulder belay; he was endeavouring to hold the rope fast in his hands, so it naturally yielded each time the load came on to it. It took about 20 minutes to get me out, and it was a battle-worn warrior who stretched himself on the glacier.

Wounds in hands and face were washed and patched up and the non-combatants kindly suggested returning to the hut. The

original programme was however carried out, culminating as arranged in Café Complet at the Gorner Grat Hotel!

The M.O. of our party seemed to think that the natural sequel was a rest cure, but in spite of the pain in my side I could not bring myself to agree. Consequently within the next few days I managed a number of ascents which included Monte Rosa and the Zinal Rothorn, and it was only after getting home that the X-rays revealed the fact that the rope had actually broken a rib. Never mind—we got our Café Complet!

## (2) THAT LADDER

Some of us were fortunate enough to go to Switzerland in 1939, and also to get home again before the crash came. We had decided to spend a part of our time in the Engelberg district which has much to commend it. In planning a tour, I try to arrange to be in a good hotel in the valley on the National Day, August 1st for the feast and native celebrations which are always most interesting, and those at Engelberg surpassed any I have experienced elsewhere. But for actual climbing it is preferable to have one's quarters at a higher level, and one can sometimes forego the doubtful luxuries of a crowded hut for the very real one of an elevated and comfortable hotel. Such a base is to be found at the Trübsee which is some 2,300 feet above the town and connected with it by a funicular and aerial railway. I have no shame over using these aids to mountaineering. The Trübsee Hotel is excellent in every way; suitable for either winter or summer, and there is a wealth of good excursions which can be done in a day of reasonable length without spending a night away.

After doing a few rock climbs, some bold soul suggested that we should climb the Titlis. This mountain enjoys (?) a great reputation for it is alleged to be the easiest snow mountain in Switzerland and, in a normal season, it is ascended by multitudes. Any able-bodied person who can keep going for a few hours can get to the top without difficulty, and I strongly recommend him to do so, if only for the sake of the view which is one of the finest in the Alps.

We did not want to spend one of our few days of good weather on anything so modest, so one wet morning we set out at 11, just to give it a chance. In rain and mist we slogged up the track, and in a couple of hours stopped for a first lunch. There was no obvious shelter, so we just stood against a rock in the pouring rain and munched our sodden food. After this miserable meal, the leader was for continuing the ascent but, of the remaining three, one did



LANGDALE PIKES

*From an engraving by G. Jardine*

not vote and the others being in favour of returning the 'noes' had it.

We had descended only a few yards when we came on a large cave, the open front of which had escaped our notice on the ascent, and of course we all entered it regretting that we had just missed so desirable a luncheon place. But these feelings soon gave place to those of surprise when we observed that the cave harboured material of human origin. Placed along the back wall was a *ladder* about 12 feet long and two large rucksacks.

When in the wilds it is usually interesting to find little things which link one with one's fellows. I can remember on two previous occasions deriving assurance as to the correctness of my route by finding a match and a hairpin. But a ladder! Who could have put it there and with what object in view? After a lengthy discussion, we thought that the likeliest explanation was that this was a rescue outfit—possibly for getting a tourist out of a crevasse—or even for enabling him to cross one.

As we swung down to the hotel, speculation continued, but without any more satisfying conclusion being reached.

A few days later, the weather was again unsettled and we decided to have another shot at the Titlis. There was no rain, but there was mist which drifted about, revealing few tops at once but most of them in turn. We set out at 8 a.m. and in a couple of hours had reached the big snowfield which continues with undulations but without interruption to the summit. Ahead of us, a momentary clearance in the mist occurred and through it, far above and in line with the top, we discerned three figures. This was surprise number one for we knew that no tourists had passed that morning. The mist closed, and we continued on our way wondering. Shortly afterwards the blanket of cloud thinned out again, we gazed up, and through the semi-transparency we all formed the same impression, viz., that two of the mysterious figures were connected at shoulder level by some substantial bond. We strained our eyes to penetrate the veil and finally exclaimed as one man, '*It's that ladder.*'

If I were a writer of serial thrillers I suppose I ought to stop now, and leave the sequel over till the next issue; or I might even offer a handsome prize for the solution. I feel sure that I could adopt this latter course without the slightest danger of having to pay up. But if the Editor still has space and the reader patience, perhaps it is best to complete the tale.

Mist, light, falling snow and convex slopes made the upper part of the mountain invisible until we were quite close to the summit, so interest was fully maintained and unproductive speculation continued.

On the top of the Titlis is the trigonometric station marked 3,239 metres on the Siegfried map and, unlike so many in the Alps, this point is marked by no mere wooden cross arms such as one may see on most heights in Switzerland and at road junctions at home. Instead, there is a massive iron tripod, the apex of which is perhaps 15 feet above ground level and the upper portion of which is enclosed in sheet metal. The erection is thus a dignified triangular pyramid of which only the top few feet are bounded by planes.

When we were within a stone's throw of the summit, this contraption burst into view. In its extremely exposed position it naturally requires repainting periodically and the time for this was evidently due. Near the tip of the pyramid was a workman, busily applying the new coat of paint, and he was standing on the upper rungs of *that ladder*!

It is with a full appreciation of the disadvantages of an anti-climax that I make the following addenda.

The workmen were at first inclined to be a bit stand-offish, but gifts of sweets and cigarettes soon broke down their reserve, and when they saw that we were taking an intelligent interest they told us all about their job.

This trigonometrical station on the Titlis is no ordinary one, but is part of a network which links up with neighbouring countries, and there are only 48 such posts. In case it should ever be disturbed, e.g., by lightning, the men were marking with great exactness, in rock and concrete, three points from which the spot lying vertically below the apex of the pyramid could be accurately redetermined. For mixing the concrete, water was carried up from far below in preference to melting snow with a primus stove.

These stout fellows carried enormous loads of tools and materials to the mountain top on each reasonably fine day during a period of several weeks.

How different from our own is the urge which some folk have for mountain climbing.

## DUSK BELOW HELVELLYN

Graham Sutton

On Dunmail Raise, I left the car by the huge tumbled cairn and began to plod up the fellside.

There is awe in great hills, because the centuries have not changed them. And I thought, glancing down: A thousand years back, in the dusk when Dunmail died, the Saxon victors must have wiped the sweat out of their eyes somewhere hereabouts, and leaned on their hacked swords, and stared into this same valley . . . and the fellside seemed thronged with hurrying ghosts of those who snatched a crown from that massacre, and fled up here with it to hurl it into the tarn.

I pressed on. The sun was westering, Helvellyn's flanks turning violet. I gained a saddle between two peaks, and saw the tarn just below.

It lay in a shallow crater of grass and rock, jet-black under the mountain. Skirting it, I came presently on what I took to be a ruined fold. A V-shaped gash ran deep into the solid rock of the fell; across its mouth, some twenty feet from where the two sides converged, lay a rough barrier of fallen stones as though a wall had once closed it. I paused by these; then a gruff voice spoke behind me: 'Ya've a lang step doon t' pass, if ye're gangan on inta Patterd'le?'

I sprang up, startled. The light was still good enough; I could have sworn the cleft was empty when I glanced in—yet he might have been where I saw him now: at its far end, between two ten-foot walls, with a sheephook across his ankles. He stood up and beckoned me: 'Set here, lad—oot of t' wind!'

He was of that Norse type which lingers unmistakably in the fell-country: gaunt, big-boned, yellow-haired, with eyes of a queer hard blue. "I—wasn't expecting you!" said I. And he nodded. 'Nay. It's lonely, this nebbberhood—.'

He leaned against the rock-wall: and with a kind of truculent courtesy (I don't know how else to describe it), motioned me towards his seat. Still taken aback, I proffered my sandwiches. He declined: 'Ah doan't trouble fud, much—.'

The blue eyes stared at me. I felt uneasy: not on account of anything he had said (there is a blunt directness about Cumbrian speech which sounds like rudeness, to strangers), but because I remembered I had forty pounds in my breast pocket, and because my gold watch-chain seemed to be the focus point of that fixed, meditant stare. Had there been even some slight emphasis in his remark: 'I don't trouble *food* much'? And then I realised quite

suddenly, that our exchange of places had cut off my retreat. I said, as casually as I could manage: 'But I'm not crossing to Patterdale; I'm with friends, on the road.'

'On t' Raise?' He nodded quietly. 'That's a fair step an' all—.'

His eyes had shifted, and were staring straight into mine—a little mockingly, as though he guessed my disquiet.

'None so far, if you're active,' I said firmly. He made no comment, and I continued: 'I came up to look at the tarn.'

'What for?' The eyes searched me.

'Well, since you're interested—.' I began to resent his scrutiny: harmless, no doubt—the thought of footpads in a place like this was ridiculous—but what the devil did it matter to *him* why I'd come? 'I've heard a tale about this spot: how a king's crown was chucked into the tarn after some old battle; and how his chaps' ghosts are supposed to fish it out, once a year.' I thought: 'That settles you! You've asked, and you're answered; make what you can of it, and be damned . . . He remarked, after a short silence:

'Aye, that's reet. They still do.'

'Do what?'

'Fish t' croon up. Ah've seed 'em at it, mony's the time.'

'You've *seen* them? But that's only a tale—.'

'Ya doan't hod wi 't?'

'Of course not.'

'Well then, what the hell fetched ya oop?' He shrugged, crossed leisurely towards the tumbled wall, and sat down on it; but he still kept between me and the open fellside, I saw. His tone, though bantering, seemed more friendly; there was a gleam of humour in the frosty stare of those disquieting eyes. 'Ye're fra Lunnon, likely? That's funder ner Ah've been, ner want to. Ah've heerd tell Lunnon folks has dug theirsels whoals, so's they can scuttle to and fra like rattens from yan end of t' toon till t' other?'

'Yes, that's true. The Underground—.'

'Ah'll believe tha—though mind, it teks a dom' sight mair belief ner ony ghoast-tale hooivver. Ah'll believe't, if thoo tells it me; thoo and me's nea call to swap lees.' He leaned forward. 'Noo, Ah'm tellin' *thee*: Ah've watched them heathen sojers fetch ther croon oot o' theer—.' And he jerked his head towards the tarn.

I sat dumb. Till now, it had not crossed my mind that I'd a madman to deal with; but—need this chap be mad? Ghost-tales are current in most corners of England. Besides, there was a sort of crazy logic in his argument that defeated me; to an unbiassed

mind, the District Railway might be as phenomenal as any ghost that ever howled. I asked, presently: 'Tell me just what you have seen?'

'Eh, now't much to tell. There's a roon dozen on 'em trails theirsels up here ivvery year—slow, verra slow, like they was tire't oot; an' when they've gitten t' croon, they're away off doon t' fell agen—but ya ken't' story? They rap on t' Carn wi' it; and t' oald boy tells 'em: "Not yit! Tek time, lads! Not yit—" In an hoor they're all back. Ya'll sec t' croon flash, on a clear neet, when it's pitched intil t' watter. Plosh, it goes. This spot's grand fer watchin' 'em. But they're shy, soom way—aye, they give t' hoose a wide berth!'

I stared at him. The place was utterly desolate. 'The house! Whose house?'

'Mine!'

His voice changed. He stood up, towering gauntly between me and escape: 'Mine it was, and mine it bides—aye, till t' Day of Judgment!' I met his eyes again—and grew suddenly most afraid.

'There's no house here—'

'Ye're setting' on 't . . . shaff, ye're welcome; let be! Nea fault o' yourn if . . . him whease fault it was, he's in Hell!' His voice rang harsh and menacing, as he stood there across the ruined wall that had once been a cottage, with the wild shoulder of Helvellyn beyond him and the setting sun in his eyes. 'Oald tales, ye're efter? Nay, Ah' can give ya summat bitterer ner heathen battles an' sec-like!' His eyes blazed at me. 'Ye've heard tell o' John Grierson?'

I shook my head.

'When this hoose stood, it was his'n. There was a power o' smugglin' in the mountains, them days. They'd run ther boat-loads into Ca'der River, wheer there'd be lads to lead 'em up Wasd'le—thirteen mile through the dark; then, next neet, lads from Borrerd'le 'ud fetch 'em ower the gap, and across the fell to Waten'lath; and the third neet be Dunmail Carn and past here into Patterd'le. It's a lang step, though, fra Waten'lath to Patterd'le on a mucky midwinter neet; so if t'wedder turn't rough . . .' He broke off, and looked at me knowingly. 'Ah'll say nea mair ner this: on rough neets, Grierson slept heavy! There'd be a trampin' in his dreams, mebbe, and the smell of a lantern; and in t' marnin', piled agen yon wall wheer his bed wasn't, two-three dozen packs wi' rope slings. T' packs 'ud bide theer all day, while Grierson went about his affairs—he'd got his sheep on the fell—and left his door locked ahint him. Next neet he'd dream of trampin' feet agen; and coom dawn, t' packs 'ud be gone . . . But he took dom' good



care he nivver waked from sec a dream, didn't Grierson : ner saw nea faces : ner he didn't reckernise ony voice. And when he did wake, it 'ud be broad day, and not a Christian in sight, and a gowd piece left on t' table.'

'But smuggling's dead—' I exclaimed. The fierce pale eyes stared at me.

'There's a gey lock o' things that's reckon't deid, still goes on hooivver.'

'This must have been a long time back?'

'Lang eneuf. What's time hereabouts? T'mountains doan't change . . . John Grierson did nin too bad. Mony's the hunnerdwet o' stuff that's bin stack't oop wheer you're set, mester. Salt, they'd fetch ower : brandy from t' Isle o' Man : Scotch whisky fra Galloway. He'd a clay pot of gowden guineas beneath this floor, had Grierson. Aye ! Thoo med say he was miserly ; or thoo med put it he foreseed the day he'd be ower oald to graze sheep. But for a' them gowd guineas he'd pang't oop, he nivver liv't to enjoy them—.' The eyes burned at me, menacing ; a nameless fear held me still.

'Yan neet, John Grierson dreamt the last of his dreams ; and the next time t' lads coom by, t'sheep had gitten a new mester. Eh, nea questions axed ! It was a' t' same to them, they left ther guineas hooivver ; but it wasn't Grierson collectit 'em.'

I asked unsteadily : 'What happened to Grierson, then?'

And for a moment he stood glowering down at me, with contempt and mockery in his eyes. He jeered : 'Hoo, min, thoo's nin so bright ! Ah'll tell thee what happen't Grierson—a lamb-stick through his windpipe ! Aye, a stick like this yan, it was—.'

He raised it suddenly, so that I saw the wicked-looking spike at the end ; if he had plunged it into my own neck that instant, I believe I could not have stirred.

'Grierson had nobbut stepped oot till t' tarn wi' his bit kettle—roond sunset, near eneuf the time o' neet it is noo—when this wild feller slipped doon intil t' hoose from a moss-whoal wheer he'd bin hid. Black-dark, inside t' door . . . So when Grierson showed clear agen the leet, he got the stick in his gullet. And then heid-doon intil a moss-whoal : and some rocks an' sods on the top. That's what happen't *him* !'

I recoiled, sick. 'But if this wasn't found out—.'

'Fun-oot?' he echoed sombrely. 'What way'd it ivver be fun-oot, in the like o' this place—thoo fool?'

'But *you* knew, you —.'

'Ah'd good reason.'

'Then you —.' Fear left me, or some sharper agony drove it out. I leapt up with a cry. I had my stick—less stout than his,

but I was far past thinking of that. I sprang towards him. He gave ground. Next moment, yelling incoherently, I was in hot pursuit as he fled from me up the naked slope of the fell. But his long, shambling shepherd-trot out-distanced me easily. I pulled up. He glanced round: stopped likewise, and returned towards me, three or four steps.

I called out: 'You keep your distance! I'm going back. This time tomorrow you'll be laid by the heels!' I feared him no more; his headlong flight had snapped the spell which those uncanny eyes seemed to lay on me, and I felt nothing but rage. Yet I was near enough to see their glance bent on me angrily, as he answered:

'Tek time! Whee t' hell d'ya think ye're talkin' till?'

'I know who I'm talking to! You've told me yourself. You're Grierson's murderer—that's who!'

He stood there motionless, looking down at me—ten yards off, on the bare open fellside with no cover at all. His eyes still blazed; yet, when he spoke at last, his voice was no longer truculent, but thin and fading like a distant cry from high hills. He said: 'Ye're wrang, lad. Ah'm Grierson . . .'

And vanished before I could speak.



## A SOLDIER REMEMBERS

S. B. Beck

'And in the darkest hours of urban depression,' wrote Sidgwick, 'I will take down my tattered maps, and perchance a few withered blades of grass will fall from them to remind me that I was once a free man on the hills.' Nowadays, in the still darker hours of a fifth year of war, such reminders come but rarely, and perhaps there may be someone—not among those to whom war has brought change, excitement and adventure, but among those who have known only deadly tedium and grinding monotony, cut off and far removed from their well-loved hills, among scenes that are 'weary, stale, *flat* and unprofitable'—for whom these scattered recollections may serve as such blades of grass, withered and scanty perhaps, but sufficient to remind him in the reading, as they have me in the writing, that he 'was once a free man on the hills.'

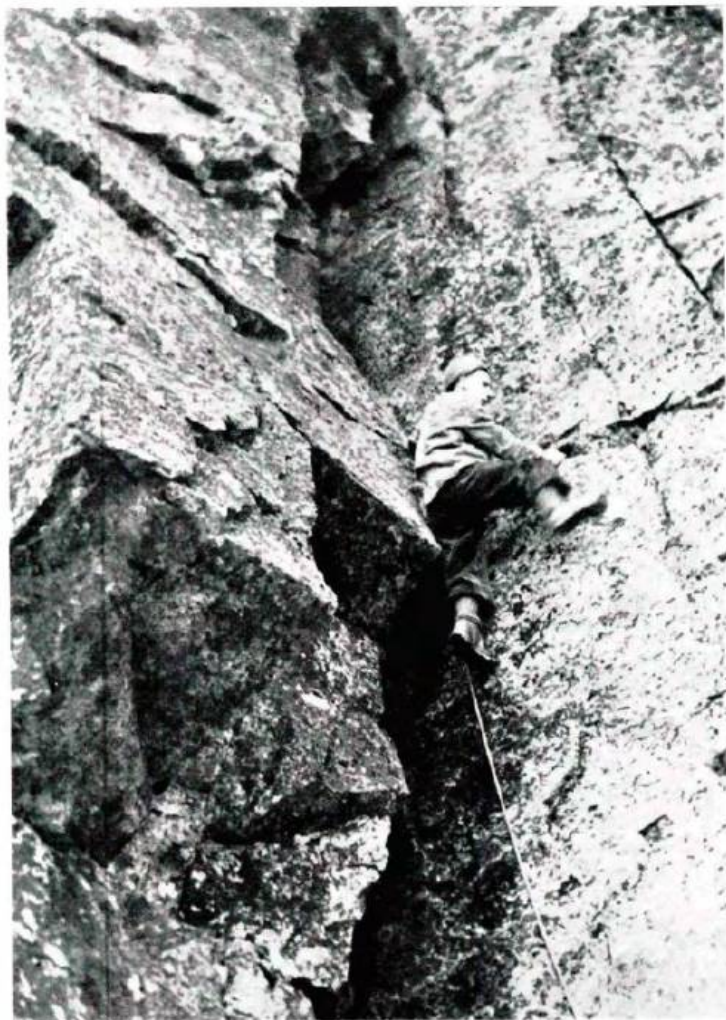
What climbs are they which stay most vividly in the memory of him who is 'for the duration' an exile? Days on warm dry slabs, in rubbers and summer sunshine, may have faded, while still live on the grim and lonely struggles in wet or icy gullies. Such a one was our ascent of Birkness Chimney one wintry day at Buttermere. We had come to it (a fact regrettable to mention), unprovided with ice-axes, and a solid mass of ice in Birkness Gully turned our attention to the harder Chimney, in the hope that it would prove freer from ice and snow. That hope proved vain, but its disproof came not until we had ascended so far that we vowed angrily the climb should be completed anyway.

Careful work was needed on the snow and ice-covered rocks and vegetation to reach the foot of the climb, and there my efforts nearly ceased, for I only just managed to dodge a sizeable lump of rock that came hurtling down straight for my head. Nor did I fare much better on the first pitch, for I gradually worked myself into a most awkward posture in the ice-filled chimney, with my knees up to my chin and my head jammed under the left wall where it curved over in a roof, and extricated myself from it only with some difficulty. Big lumps of snow and one large slab descended on me after I belayed on a wide snow-terrace, but my leader was going full steam ahead, and soon reached the foot of the severe pitch. The situation looked precarious when I joined him—a snow-slope at the foot of a murderous-looking ice-sheathed chimney, and no sign of belay or holds. The first was an essential if further progress was to be made, and, armed with a stone, we took turns in attacking the ice behind what promised to be a chockstone. But soon only fingers could be used in the growing cavity, and I cursed and panted and



*S. B. Beck*

EASTER BUTTRESS—EAGLE CRAG  
BUTTERMERE



*Austin Bayton*

OVERHANGING CRACK—RESURRECTION ROUTE  
HIGH CRAG—BUTTERMERE

scrabbled, with my face jammed against a wall of ice, beating one hand to restore circulation and tearing frenziedly at frozen gravel and earth with the other. My nails were broken and finger tips bleeding before a small 'through' hole developed, and when I tried to push an end of line through it I could feel neither hole nor line nor whether one was coming through the other or not. Eventually however I was tied on, and ready to allow my leader to continue.

With my feet on a good foothold on the left wall and my back against the right, I gave him what small assistance I could. At first he treadled on my shoulders and collar bone, but the wind had redoubled its force, and he had to descend and sit doubled with agony whilst circulation slowly returned. Retreat? That was almost as difficult as advance, and infinitely less desirable. So next time he stood on my head, and some small hope appeared. Between the ice-coated overhanging chockstone and the smooth ice-coated wall was a narrow crack, and Bill fought to establish himself in that. Foothold there was none (except me), and finger-holds were small and poor, but once established in the crack, he was able to jam, struggle, and jam again, and at last fight his way to the top. I wasted little time debating whether it was 'assistance only moral I was getting from the rope' before joining him!

'A chimney with good holds' should have followed, but the latter were covered with a cascade of ice, and the leader's work was as trying as before, if less spectacular. And the full fury of the wind could be appreciated when one saw pieces of ice, detached by the leader, *blown back* up the chimney. 'An easy grassy chimney' followed, neither grassy nor easy now, and then we stood together at the top of the crag, battered but exhilarated. Now that the fight was over we could rejoice, and we tore exultingly down the scree and snow to Gatesgarth in exactly a sixth of the time it had taken us to ascend the last 200 feet.

Not every grim struggle occurs in winter, however. One June day on Pillar Rock yielded a well-remembered specimen. We had come with minds set on ascending the *Grooved Wall*, and were reluctant to change them even when rain set in. The first three pitches offered only moderate resistance, but the fourth brought the crux of the climb. This began with an overhang, and 'even a doubtful spike is thankfully used to overcome it and effect a lodgment in the groove' above. (Bill began by trying to avoid its use and ended by using it as 'thankfully' as every one else!) Twice he tentatively attempted the problem, and then was ready to go for its solution. A short fierce struggle, and his head was out of sight, closely followed by his shoulders and then more slowly by the rest

of his body, his legs, his boots. When my turn came, I was able to understand that slowness, for once the lip of the groove was pushing in my chest, every atom of strength seemed needed to haul and force myself inch by inch over the lip and into the groove and wet clothes and heavy sodden boots all but turned the scale against me.

Two further grooves followed, both replicas of the first. A smooth vertical wall on the right, a crack in which one jammed the right boot and occasionally found holds, and on the left three or four feet of slab with indefinite corrugations—and then the steep plunge into Walker's Gully. Nowhere did the difficulty or the steady rain relent, and the continual struggle brought about cramp in my fingers halfway up the top pitch—once or twice I had suffered from this before, probably from overmuch hanging and pulling on poor fingerholds, but this time it came in both hands at once. A few hectic moments followed, but once it passed, the struggle was soon over too.

Fortunately there are the lighter reminiscences also. The moods of peacefulness and joy may have grown dim, and the moments of exultation and exhilaration distant, but a few of the inconsequentialities and trivialities linger from days that have otherwise gone. I recall the friend who was grappling with the second pitch of Kerns Knotts *West Buttress* before a critical gallery, and while attempting the swing to the left from the top of the groove slipped, swung away from the rock, and hung suspended in mid-air, slowly rotating in helpless dignity—and the indignant cry of an alarmed wife. 'John! John! Come down there at once!' Never have I seen the most undisciplined husband more reluctant to obey wifely command!

Perhaps only those who, in an all-too-brief visit, have laboured from Alpine hut to peak, from peak to hut, from hut to peak again, without rest or solace, will wryly savour with me the occasion when after a week of such prolonged toil my friend and I descended to the comforts of Chamonix, and as we sank luxuriously into the plush seats of a cinema I commented on the complete change of employment and environment. 'Oh well,' replied my fellow holiday-maker in all seriousness, 'we've earned a bit of pleasure . . .'

And yet memories, whether grim or gay, are but thin nutriment for the mind, and it is a poor thing to live entirely in the past. Especially is this true, it seems to me, of mountains and mountaineering. We talk glibly of our 'love of the hills,' but a long absence from them, even though it make the heart grow fonder, brings home also a realisation that they do not love us, that at the best there is no return for the time and effort and affection that we lavish on them, and at the worst, they care not who may take our

place nor when or whether we may return. For seven years I faced the 'bitter winter blast' on Helvellyn or Great End, or 'larded the lean earth with my bones' in hot June days on Brown Tongue or Gavel Neese, but at the end of them there is only the realisation

'That nature, heartless, witless nature  
Will neither care nor know  
What stranger's feet may cross the mountain  
And trespass there, and go ;  
Nor ask, amid the dews of morning  
If they be mine or no.'

Well, one can look forward to the future. A year ago one would not have dared, but now when, as I write, the end of the war is in sight, the mind leaps eagerly forward to that happy day when not the least of our returning blessings will be freedom to revisit favourite crags, to re-encounter old friends and to discover what changes in oneself and them time and the hand of war have wrought. That eager mind can trace the steps of climbs which one shall do, as well as of those that have been done ; it can speculate as of old on climbing men and matters, on what recruits our sport may gather from those whose military training has included work on mountains and even rock-climbs, or on what recent products of human ingenuity may be of value to us, such as dehydrated foods. Perhaps some of us will visualise routes not known before on buttresses known so well, or feel reassured that virgin faces which have escaped the attention of others for so many decades will have continued to escape it during the last few years. Perhaps too, each one of us will decide to bear the old discomforts more cheerfully, to complain less of cold and wet and heat, and to appreciate less imperfectly the long rough grind to Pillar or the sodden sandwiches below the streaming Napes, because he has learned in distant parts

'How salt his food who fares  
Upon another's bread ; how steep his path  
Who treadeth up and down another's stairs.'

Until that happy day, then, one can only reminisce of the past and speculate of the future, as I do now and as I hope, reader, these few 'withered blades of grass' shall help you to do. Until then, we can recall those wider and more spacious days in 'the thunder and the sunshine,' from which even a wet or icy struggle in a dark and gloomy cleft has become 'a thing of beauty and a joy for ever,' and dream of those still braver days-to-be, when even the least of us shall ascend the steepest of mountain-sides and the most 'super' of severes with hearts and limbs as light as our rucksacks, because we are once more 'free men on the hills.' Until then, in short, only memories and dreams.



## THE DISCOVERY OF MOUNTAIN BEAUTY

Arnold Lunn

Christianity was responsible for a slow, silent but decisive revolution in Western man's attitude to Nature. What Homer was to the Greeks, the Bible was to the Christians, and gradually the Hebraic attitude to Nature replaced the Hellenic.

Man's attitude to creation was insensibly modified by the Christian doctrine of a Creator, who invited and who reciprocated man's love. Classical man feared the gods, but did not love them. Religion was a science, the science of placating deities of uncertain temper and unpredictable mood. *Cede deo*. Yield to the god. If a god is hostile do not resist. Such was the doctrine which Æneas learned by hard experience. Juno had schemed his destruction, but instead of rebelling, he studied to propitiate her. Æneas indeed might be adopted as the patron saint of appeasers, for he, at least, was successful. Juno was mollified, and the Roman Empire was founded.

The Greek preferred domesticated nature to woods and hills, for the wood concealed dryads and oreads haunted the hills. The Hebrew conception of a Creator who revealed himself in the majesty and the beauty of his creation was wholly foreign to the Greek mind. Creation was the habitat not only of man, but of dangerous Elementals, and the Greek did not like the wood any the better because it was inhabited by dryads. The twilight of the gods coincided with the dawn of hope, for Christianity proclaimed the good news of a Friend behind phenomena, an all-powerful Friend, to whom the whole hierarchy of evil spirits was subject. The beauty of creation gradually assumed a new significance for those who remembered that Christ had found in the beauty of the lilies an assurance of the protective love of the Creator.

Christianity freed man from the limitations of an earth-bound humanism. The Gothic spire soaring upwards from the earth is the symbol of a new world outlook, a philosophy which helped to reconcile man to the thought of infinite time and infinite space. The Greek with his hatred of the *apeiron*, that which has no limits, would have hated the prospect of the far horizons seen from a mountain top, and was certainly repelled by the thought of the remote past. He left Troy buried beneath the sediment of the centuries, for Schliemann to excavate.

It is significant that this new feeling for far horizons, both in time and in space, should have manifested itself in the poetry of Petrarch, first of the sentimental mountaineers. 'Petrarch,'

writes Spengler, 'the fine collector of antiquities, coins and manuscripts, the very type of the historically sensitive man, viewing the distant past and scanning the distant prospect. Was he not the first to attempt an Alpine peak?' Petrarch climbed Mont Ventoux in Provence on April 26th, 1335, and he described the ascent in an enthusiastic letter to his father. He enjoyed all the little incidents of a laborious climb, and revelled in the glorious panorama from the summit.

If our evidence be confined to the written word it would be difficult to prove that mediæval man saw the beauty which we see in Monte Rosa 'hanging there' beyond the Piedmont plain, in Mont Blanc from the shores of Lake Geneva or in the Oberland from the terrace at Berne, but the evidence of art qualifies the conclusions which seem to be imposed on us by mediæval literature.

The growing interest in mountain form is very evident in the work of Albrecht Dürer. In our own National Gallery, the snowy hills seen through the open window in Lotto's portrait of the Protonotary Giuliano, the mountain background to one of the Bellini Madonnas, and the mountains of storm in Titian's Madonna with St Catherine all bear witness to a genuine feeling for the beauty of mountain form and colour, a feeling which reached its climax in the sixteenth century and then began sharply to decline.

As was indeed inevitable, for in so far as the Renaissance was a return to the standards of Greek humanism, it necessarily involved a revival of the Greek attitude to Nature.

My belief that mountain painting began to decline with the Renaissance was arrived at after studying mountain paintings in most of the great Galleries of Europe, and I am pleased to discover that I can cite in support of this conclusion the great authority of the late Lord Conway of Allington, better known to mountaineers as Sir Martin Conway. 'It is often forgotten,' wrote Sir Martin Conway in *The Alps*, 'that mountains and even snowy mountains found their way into pictures at a very early date . . . Well-drawn mountains are of frequent occurrence in sixteenth century wood-cuts and drawings by the prolific masters of sixteenth century south German and Venetian schools. The fact is one of many proofs of that first outburst of mountain enthusiasm which gradually faded as the sixteenth century advanced.'

The dawn of the Romantic Movement coincided with the development of the school of Swiss coloured prints, a school of which, perhaps, the great masters were the Lorys, father and son.

By the end of the eighteenth century the reaction against Gothic architecture was complete. The very word Gothic came into existence as an expression of contempt for an architectural style

which the eighteenth century associated with Gothic barbarians. The eighteenth century architects would have agreed with Ruskin in recognising a 'mountain brotherhood between the cathedral and the Alp,' but would have drawn very different conclusions from Ruskin's premise. Mountains like Gothic cathedrals refused to conform to defined standards of taste. Gothic was an architecture of undisciplined genius; Renaissance predominantly an architecture of taste. The eighteenth century admired restraint and conformity to classic standards, the heroic couplets of Pope, the drama of Racine, the classical landscape as expressed in formal gardens, and in architecture, the accepted 'recipes for beauty and sublimity' as formulated by writers who invoked Vitruvius to determine the exact proportions of the 'five orders.' Mountains were beyond the pale, for as Thomas Burnet pointed out in 1759, 'they have neither Form nor Beauty nor Shape, nor Order . . . they do not consist of any Proportion of Parts that is referable to any Design, or that hath the least footsteps of Art or Council.'

Meanwhile theologians, pre-occupied with the problem of evil, did their best to discover any of the few trivial benefits which may justly be attributed to mountains. Samuel Johnson, for instance, implies that even the ugliness of the mountains has one negative advantage for the philosopher. They do not tempt him to distractions. 'Before me and on either side,' he writes of Glen Moriston, 'were high hills, which by hindering the eye from ranging forced the mind to find entertainment in itself.' 'An eye accustomed,' he continued, 'to flowering pastures and waving harvests is astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility. The appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by nature from her care, and disinherited of her favours, left in its original state, or quickened only with the sullen power of useless vegetation.'

By the middle of the eighteenth century the creative energy of the Renaissance was exhausted and the reaction had already begun. Thomas Gray, the poet, in September, 1739, visited the Grand Chartreuse and wrote an enthusiastic description of the mountain scenery in the surroundings of the Convent ' . . . one of the most solemn, the most romantic scenes I ever beheld,' but the eighteenth century re-emerges in his dislike of Mont Cenis which 'carries the permission mountains have of being frightful rather too far.' Thirty years later Gray visited the English lakes, and the letter-journal which he wrote in October, 1769, helped to create a fashion.

This belated discovery of our British mountains, two centuries after Gesner and Marti had drawn attention to the beauty of the Alps, was the symptom of a revolution in taste and of an incipient revolt against classical standards not only in landscape but also in architecture. And just as the dislike of Gothic architecture was invariably associated with a dislike of mountain scenery, so the Gothic Revival coincided with a revival of that mountain enthusiasm which, as Martin Conway said, 'gradually faded out as the sixteenth century advanced.' And where this newly discovered taste for Gothic was a mere pose, the admiration for mountains was equally affected. No one, of course, would expect a profound appreciation of Gothic from a man who could describe Gothic architecture as 'magnificent and genteel,' and it is to the coinor of this phrase, Horace Walpole, that we owe the enchanting absurdities of the pseudo-Gothic mansion which he erected at Strawberry Hill. Walpole who regarded Gothic as an amusing exotic and who amused the modish world by his whimsical defence of the indefensible was, no doubt as self-consciously eccentric in his praise of the Grand Chartreuse. ' . . . all shagged with hanging woods, obscured with pines and lost in clouds . . . Sheets of cascade forcing their silver speed, and hasting into the roughened river at the bottom ! . . . This sounds too bombast and romantic for one that has not seen it, too cold for one that has. If I could send you my letter post between two lovely tempests that echoed each other's wrath, you might have some idea of this noble roaring scene.'

The gulf that separates Walpole's dilettante patronage from Ruskin's profound passion for Gothic is no greater than the contrast between their respective attitudes to the mountains, but it is significant that the taste for Gothic should inevitably be allied with a taste for mountain scenery even in cases when neither admiration was rooted in sincerity. William Beckford for instance who instructed his architect Wyatt to design 'an ornamental building which should have the appearance of a convent, be partly in ruins and yet contain some weatherproof compartments' also affected great love for mountains. 'Were I not,' he wrote, 'to see a genius or two sometimes, to go to Voltaire's sometimes, and to the mountains very often I should die.'

In politics as in architecture the romantic revolt against classical convention was associated with the new mountain cult. 'If Rousseau were tried,' wrote Leslie Stephen, 'for the crime of setting up mountains as objects of human worship, he would be convicted by an impartial jury,' but the Judge in passing sentence would give due consideration to the fact that Rousseau himself

was never converted to the Faith which he preached with such success. Rousseau's mountain worship was an ideological deduction from his political philosophy.

The first chapter of Rousseau's *Social Contract* opens with the famous sentence 'Man is born free and is everywhere in chains.' In his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Rousseau contrasts the happiness and virtue of man in a primitive state of nature with man as degraded by civilisation.

The idealisation of man in a state of nature led by a natural transition to the idealisation of the Alpine peasant, and thence to the idealisation of the peasant's Alpine environment. Rousseau's encounters with Alpine peasants were as infrequent as those of Housman with Shropshire lads, and he took no risks of exposing his sympathy with the mountains to any coarse contacts with reality. His real sentiments about mountains emerge in the contrast which his hero St Preux implies between the charming and luxuriant Pay de Laud shores of Lake Lemman and the barren heights which rise from the Savoy shore. Rousseau's love of rocks, writes Leslie Stephen, 'may be a particular case of his love of paradox. He admires them, we may fancy, precisely because they are hideous; the mountains, like the noble savage, are a standing protest against the sophisticated modern taste; they are bare and wild and repulsive, but at any rate they have not taken to wearing wigs and stays and submitted to the conventional taste of the century. To love them is a proof of a singular independence of character, which is admirable because it is eccentric.'

Rousseau was only interested in the mountains of ideology. He was born in Geneva, but never once in all his writings does he mention the Salève or the distant view of Mont Blanc from the southern shores of Lake Geneva. He spent a great deal of time at Vevey, but never refers to the Dent du Midi. He knew Maggiore but never alludes to Monte Rosa which is visible from the southern reaches of the lake. Rousseau, as Dr Engel remarks, 'neither knew nor loved the Alps.'

The publication of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* in 1760 made innumerable converts to the mountain cult, but the arch-prophet of this new Faith neither embraced nor practised the religion which he preached with such conspicuous success.

In religion, as in art and politics, the revolt against classicism was associated with the discovery of mountain beauty.

Eighteenth century Anglicanism was severely classical in its characteristics. It steered a judicious middle course between Popery and Dissent, and avoided—in the words of a seventeenth century divine—'the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of

Rome and the squalid sluttery of fanatic conventicles.' In his distrust of undisciplined emotionalism the eighteenth century Anglican was more influenced than he suspected by classical ideals of restraint and order. 'The pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost,' said the great Bishop Butler, 'is a horrid thing—a very horrid thing.'

Methodism, a quasi-Gothic revolt against the formalism of the State Church, was one of the forces which prepared the ground for the Romantic movement. Dr Leger, a brilliant French critic of John Wesley, comments on 'la filiation spirituelle du Mouvement Oxford avec John Wesley' and Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith attributes the Anglo Catholic movement to the joint effect of the Evangelical Revival and the Romantic movement.

Though John Wesley anticipated that aspect of the Romantic movement with which we are specially concerned, no historian of mountains and their influence on man has ever drawn attention to Wesley's appreciative allusions to our own British mountains in his famous journal. Thus after a reference to the 'gently rising mountains of Monmouthshire,' he continues, 'Carmarthenshire, into which we came soon afterwards, has at least as fruitful a soil but it is not so pleasant because it has fewer mountains.' And elsewhere he insists that the Creator is 'a God both of the hills and valleys and nowhere more present than in the mountains of Cumberland.'

Institutional religion was fighting a rearguard action in the eighteenth century. It was 'an agreed point,' wrote Bishop Butler, 'that Christianity should be set up as the principal subject of mirth and ridicule,' but man cannot rest content for long with negations. The inevitable reaction against the sober Anglicanism of the century took the form of Methodism and, later, of the Oxford movement. The no less inevitable reaction against the scepticism of the century found expression in the pantheistic, or rather pantheistic nature-worship of which Wordsworth was the most distinguished exponent. These varied reactions were all connected with the new attitude to mountains. The Gothic revival, the discovery of mountain beauty and the Oxford movement were indeed different aspects of the same Romantic movement.

## THREE POEMS

### SCAFELL 1943

The cloud's ten-tenths in Hollow Stones, the track  
Is written off, on stumbling scree the snow  
Has laid a drifted camouflage, so now  
Is time for mind to turn its searchlight back  
Pin pointing Pinnacle, Deep Ghyll, Lord's Rake  
In sharp mosaic. But memory can show  
Only time's random highlight and shadow,  
Men's voices, leader's movement, weather's break.  
There Gino, dreaming Arctic journeys, made  
His winter camp, there I first felt the kiss  
Of rubbered rocks, saw Jack lay bare the scar  
Of Collie's ice-bound step. Here Alun played  
His hop scotch, and, where past meets present, this  
Hunched on the wind, is corniced Mickledore.

PETER LLOYD.

## STYHEAD PASS

This is an old, gay path  
 Whose story was told  
 When the last of the smuggling men  
 Passed in the cold,  
 Some will say—  
 Though the holiday-makers will smile,  
 For who knows their story but they ?  
 Of the pressure of spring in their hands  
 And the magical mile  
 With a kiss by the way ?

Others remember a night  
 Of sorrow and rain  
 When they silently carried him down,  
 Finished with pain,  
 Who was free  
 On the solitary crevice and crack—  
 For who loved them better than he ?  
 The ledges, the niches and holds ?  
 They carried him back  
 Down the shattering scree.

And often strange whispers are told  
 By the curious air  
 Of a woman who strained through the snow,  
 Ice in her hair,  
 To his side  
 By the lonely tarn ice in the night ;  
 And who will the telling deride,  
 Of the hurt in her heart and the flame  
 Of its terrible light  
 Ere the dawn that love died ?

Not on the sun-smothered pass,  
 When climbers clank by,  
 Rope over shoulders and glad  
 Under amethyst sky,  
 But at night,  
 When the wind-song is ghostly and wild,  
 When the stars on Wasdale are bright  
 You will watch the long travelling years  
 In labour with child,  
 Bearing fear and delight.

JOHN BÉCHERVAISE.



## THE RUINED FOLD

The treeless tarn, a cold and lashless eye  
 set in the stony mountain's brow, beholds  
 but it records not, the majestic line  
 of lonely shepherds coming, going, gone  
 like ghostly kings, whose cries are perished words  
 in a dead tongue forgotten of the wind.  
 They are no more than tatters of the spume,  
 the whirling wastes of heaven, the shrieking clouds'  
 inverted cauldron, which the gale has made  
 a flying-limbed Inferno torched with stars.

Unmoved the tarn remains, although the dark  
 bulk of the grim and dim-distinguished fold  
 rattles its giant teeth, and ever-falling  
 Goliath-like with blackly bearded plunge  
 in the fancy, rallies, totters, and recovers,  
 to roar and rattle menaces once more  
 of falling on it, blotting it for ever . . .

The wind's like a maniac flinging showers of flints,  
 the rain's like an idiot scattering hosts of razors ;  
 both heart and body ache with the long day  
 with thought of labour's vain ephemeral scratch  
 on granite-hearted Nature, ache with snows  
 unfallen, ache with tears that burn to fall  
 for Europe's homeless on bomb-riven hills  
 running unshepherded they know not where.

And yet it's on such a night as this  
 the shepherd's footstep sounds, a heavenly music  
 recovering for a moment to its rhythm  
 the jangled wits of a disordered world.  
 Golden as Charity's, a beam begins  
 to smile and grope among the formless rocks,  
 picks out the stunted thorn ; a lantern walks  
 following its phantom image on the tarn.  
 The kindly shadow lengthens, widens, towers  
 above the roar and rage of elements.  
 A voice is added to the shriek of wind  
 and fold, a voice like Pity's in a world  
 of blindest cruelties : a lamb is born.

GEOFFREY JOHNSON.

## CLIMBS, OLD AND NEW

*Wm. Peascod*

### ENNERDALE

**GREAT DOUP** 110 feet. Very difficult with severe finish.  
**WESTERN BUTTRESS** Leader needs 80 feet of rope. The climb starts

at the toe of a small buttress on the west side of Great Doup. First explored on a rope by H. K. Gregory, June 10th, 1943. 1st ascent, July 23rd, 1943, F.L.J.

- (1) 45 feet. Up the corner and into a groove to a thread belay.
- (2) 65 feet. Continue 15 feet up the groove over a patch of grass, to the foot of a crack, in the slab on the left. (Belay can be arranged by jamming a small stone in the crack.) Climb the crack to the top of the slab—about 20 feet—and make a severe and exposed move to the left, to escape into a grassy groove which leads to the summit rocks.

### WASDALE

**PIKE'S CRAG** 400 feet. Severe. Leader needs 100 feet of rope. 1st ascent, April 4th, 1943, W.P., L.K.

**WRIGGLING ROUTE** This route runs up the more or less continuous rib which begins close to the foot of the Grooved Arête, and curves upwards to end at the large, square, skyline block visible from Hollowstones. The rib, well seen from Brackenclose, is to the immediate right of Grooved Arête. Start from a cairn on the path almost at the same point as G.A.

- (1) 20 feet. Up rock and grass to the foot of a long crack or shallow chimney containing some jammed blocks. Spike belay.
- (2) 60 feet. The crack, interesting. Block belay on the small ledge on the right.
- (3) 80 feet. Ascend a short, rather smooth slab for 10 feet, then from its right edge step down to a grassy stance. Traverse right from here across a mossy slab for 30 feet to easy ground, then ascend a strip of grass to the top of a large flake of rock on the left. Belay blocks in the crack behind the flake.
- (4) 20 feet. A steep slab above the flake leads with good holds to a small stance and a block belay jammed in a crack, made by a pinnacle abutting against the wall above.
- (5) 45 feet. From the stance work out to the front of the pinnacle, then climb to its top. From here a crack curves up the steep wall above, ascend this first left, then up, then right passing a large poised block, to good ledge and belay. This pitch is interesting and exposed.
- (6) 25 feet. The wall above is climbed first on its right edge then across and up the front. Ledge and belay.
- (7) 30 feet. The steep wall above the belay gives delightful climbing with a mantelshelf midway. Belay blocks.
- (8) 60 feet. From the belay blocks it is possible to traverse very delicately left then up a shallow corner (this is very severe). An easier and truer way is to traverse lower than the belay blocks then up a grassy corner—in either case the sharp rib above the belay blocks is gained from the left. Follow the rib up easier rocks to the large skyline block.
- (9) 50 feet. The overhanging wall on the left of the block is climbed—it is strenuous. A large handhold on the left enables a pull up to be

made on to a ledge. Traverse the ledge to the right and climb to a corner. The next section is made easier when a good hold over the top edge can be reached. A few feet more leads to the top of the crag.

#### GREAT CABLE THE NAPES

The following climb was done on the Napes, not having found any previous record it may be new. The climb is not of special interest or merit. 1st ascent, June 25th, 1942. T.A.H.M., Miss Medlycott. 120 feet. Hard; very difficult, rock not always reliable. The climb lies on the right of Tophet Ridge facing Hell Gate Pillar. Start about 25 paces up the scree, from the foot of Tophet Ridge, where the wall is grooved.

- (1) 30 feet. The broken wall to a ledge. Belay at the foot of a steep groove.
- (2) 35 feet. Traverse right on to the face, and up the steep wall by an awkward traverse right followed by an upward traverse left.
- (3) 15 feet. Traverse left, and up the short crack with ease.
- (4) 40 feet. Pitch 3, Tophet Ridge. (Traverse a few feet right then up a broken rib to a stance and belay.) Scrambling remains.

#### BUTTERMERE

BIRKNESS COMBE 545 feet. Very severe. Exposed. Leader needs  
GREY CRAGS CHAIN 80 feet of rope. This route traverses the continuous stretch of rock comprising Bishop's

Arête, a steep wall christened Cracked Wall (formerly unclimbed), Grey Wall, Chockstone Ridge and the Slabs. The climb is of a high standard of difficulty; exposure is high and uniform, situations are delightful. The rock is Grey Craggs at its best. 1st traverse, September 12th, 1943. W.P., E.B.M. Start from the front of Bishop's Arête at the foot of a steep, rough wall. Small cairn.

- (1) 20 feet. The wall. Belay.
- (2) 25 feet. A short crack followed by a wall. Belay on left.
- (3) 40 feet. Still steep though easier climbing to the foot of the final section of Bishop's Arête. Block belay.
- (4) 30 feet. Walk to the corner on the left, then traverse out on to Cracked Wall, over a small ledge, to a stance and belay (high up) to the left of the ledge.
- (5) 35 feet. Delicate traversing leads upwards and left until a high hold, on the edge of the wall, enables a swing round to be made into a steep, deeply-cut chimney. Thread belay.
- (6) 45 feet. Descend 15 feet then move with difficulty out on to the steep wall on the left. A few trying moves lead into a steep corner. Ascend the corner until a good hold under the large overhang above can be grasped and a pull up made on to a sloping ledge beneath the overhang. Wriggle along the ledge and swing round the end into a nook. Cross the nook and continue the traverse left to a belay block in a crack. This pitch is most interesting and exposed.
- (7) 50 feet. Descend the crack, below the block, for 7 feet. Cross the narrow ledge on the left, and descend another crack until it is possible to stride across the well defined corner on the left, passing two pointed spikes (first one loose), and so on to Grey Wall. Belay on the second spike. A good rest may be taken on the ledge here.
- (8) 20 feet. Descend the crack below, on the left, to a narrow ledge with a good belay on the wall above. This is the 3rd pitch Fortiter.

- (9) 40 feet. The awkward crack and overhangs of Fortiter are next descended (this is the most difficult pitch on the Chain) as follows:—The crack immediately below the stance is descended, and a small ledge reached by an awkward balancing movement. The first overhang yields by a take-off from the knees and using a handhold jammed in a crack on the left. The second overhang can be descended by a layback when this position can be attained. Below the second overhang a steep slab leads left across Grey Wall to a large block.
- (10) 15 feet. Easier traversing leads to the left edge overlooking Chockstone Ridge. Comfortable stance and belays.
- (11) 40 feet. Traverse left down a short slab then across on to Chockstone Ridge to the pitch above the gendarme.
- (12) 70 feet. Descend easily for 25 feet, into the grassy gully, then climb out again up the fine slabby wall opposite, for 45 feet, to a block on the Slabs.
- (13) 55 feet. Cross the slabs to the pile of blocks below the steep pitch of Slabs West Route (below an undercut of rock).
- (14) 60 feet. 2nd Pitch Slabs West Route. Up and left to a niche. Cross the nose on the right, up a few feet then back left to better holds which lead to the top of the climb. Belays.
- A few feet away to the left is the start of the Oxford and Cambridge Direct. This gives a further 130 feet of excellent climbing if desired (this was the original finish).

**CRACKED WALL** 115 feet. Very difficult. Leader needs 50 feet of rope. This wall lies between Grey Wall and RAVEN CRACK Bishop's Arête and can be identified by the number of steep cracks and a chimney that cleave it. There is a deep corner on the left of the wall, with a rib bounding it on the right. Start at the foot of the rib. Cairn. 1st ascent, September 12th, 1943. E.B.M., W.P.

- (1) 20 feet. The rib. Stance and belay.
- (2) 30 feet. The crack tending right, passing some blocks, then back left, overlooking the corner.
- (3) 40 feet. The wall above, using parallel cracks, is rather difficult. Continue up to a block and raven's nest on the right. Block belay.
- (4) 25 feet. The crack continues to the top of the wall. Belay.

## LANGDALE

**GIMMER CRAG** 75 feet. Hard severe in rubbers. 1st ascent, July 22nd, 1934. J.R.F., J. E. B. Wright.  
**DIPHTHONG DIRECT**  
**FINISH** 2nd ascent, September 18th, 1943, J.R.F., M.L.F.

- (1) 75 feet. Diphthong is climbed to Lyons Crawl where the pitch begins on quite large holds, leading to the right of "C" overhang and towards the upper part of Green Chimney (i.e. above the usual traverse to the Crow's Nest on "B.") A patch of light-coloured rock is followed on holds which become smaller. The lichen-covered rock of Green Chimney is avoided except for the use of one hand hold and one foot hold. The route bears a little to the left following the steep but not very pronounced arête. The finish is about the same level as "C" and a yard to the right.

- PAVEY ARK** 230 feet. Just severe. The climb follows the first three pitches of Bracken Route, then branches to the left. Excellent belays and lovely rough rock. The climb starts half-way between Gwynne's Chimney and Rake End Chimney. 1st ascent, March 14th, 1943. J. Cook, G.B.E.
- COOK'S TOUR**
- (1) 15 feet. Open groove. Stance and belay.
  - (2) 35 feet. Climb almost to top of steep slab, then traverse to right on to top of a large detached block.
  - (3) 40 feet. Heather covered ledges to corner, effecting an exit by a 15 foot wall to right. Continue up steep bracken to belay at the foot of face above.
  - (4) 30 feet. Rising traverse left, via a flake, to a large grass ledge. Walk along to belay at foot of a steep grassy gully.
  - (5) 25 feet. The gully. Exit to the right, via a ledge, to a pinnacle belay.
  - (6) 15 feet. Rising traverse right on outside of pinnacle, then a flake to platform—Ash tree belay.
  - (7) 25 feet. The crack behind tree. Step on top of flake then up face to corner.
  - (8) 15 feet. The face to large ledge.
  - (9) 30 feet. Rising traverse right for 15 feet, then up. Cairn. Another 100 feet of scrambling if desired.

**GWYNNE'S CHIMNEY** 75 feet. Difficult. 1st ascent, September, 1942. G.B.E., T. Nicholson.

- EXTENSION**
- (1) 20 feet. From the top of the chimney, traverse across the face to right to block belay.
  - (2) 10 feet. Pull up on to face and into the corner above.  
(This is the end of Pitch 7 on Cook's Tour.)
  - (3) 15 feet. Up the face. (Pitch 8, Cook's Tour.)
  - (4) 30 feet. Rising traverse right then up. (Pitch 9, Cook's Tour.)

#### KEY TO INITIALS

G. B. Elliott	Lyna Kellett
J. R. Files	T. A. H. Medlycott
(Mrs.) M. L. Files	E. Banner Mendus
F. L. Jenkins	Wm. Peascod

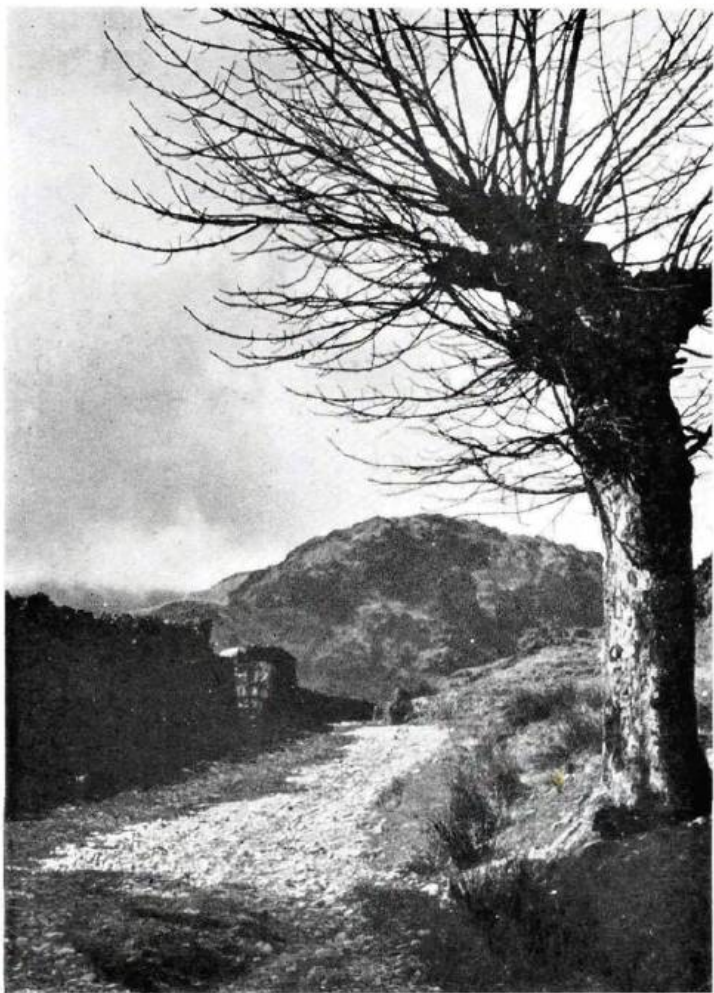
(Non-members' names are given in full in text.)

#### NOTES.

Black Crag Buttress, Borrowdale. On this fine climb the rib and groove on the right will be found to be considerably easier than the rib and groove on the left (fourth pitch) and seem more in keeping with the standard of difficulty of the rest of the route. As the belay at the top of either of these pitches is poor it is probably advisable to take sufficient rope (120 feet is the best length) and turn the fourth and fifth pitches into one run-out. The fifth pitch is quite easy but the length of run-out as described adds rather more zest to the pitch. A last note: those who have not done this climb are missing something.

A good belay now exists at the top of the sixth pitch White Slab, Overhanging Wall, on the East Buttress of Scafell.

The 2nd ascent of the Green Pastures route, on Pillar Shamrock (details of the climb will be found in the 1940 Journal), was done some time ago. To those who revel in the airy slab, small stance, and all rock route this climb will hardly appeal but as a mountaineering route and the picking out of a reasonable way up the front of Shamrock Buttress the climb does



*Arthur Robinson*

WRYNOSE—LOOKING TOWARDS ROUGH CRAGS

possess merit. Shamrock Tower which also lies up the front of the main mass is, from its description, a route worthy of the attention of the greatest lover of Pillar west face.

An ascent of the Flake and Crack Climb on Yew Crag, Dale Head, is reported by C. G. Wickham. This may be the second ascent, though Wickham states the climb was well scratched. His party's opinion of the route was that the climb was good in its lower portion, but the upper pitches were disappointing. This is quite true. The Holly Tree Grooves climb on the same crag is probably the better of the two.

Wriggling Route, Pike's Crag. This route was done under unfavourable conditions early in the year, consequently it was found necessary to "wriggle" off the rib more than was first imagined. I have no doubt, though, that the rib could be climbed direct from the top of the second pitch (the long crack) to the pinnacle on the start of the fifth pitch, thus straightening out the main "wriggle" in the route.

Little need be said here about Grey Crags Chain except that, as in all girdles, a knowledge of the routes crossed is essential. Until recently Grey Wall and Cracked Wall were unvisited, therefore, as this is the most trying section of the Chain those who contemplate the expedition would do well to make the ascent of Fortiter beforehand. Details of the route and other newer climbs will be found in 1942 and 1943 Journals.

It is hoped that climbers will co-operate more in the compiling of these "Notes." Until this is done the writer must draw on his own knowledge and gleanings, which entails a too oft recurrence of the personal pronoun. As this is distasteful both to the writer and the reader it is hoped the plea will be borne in mind for future "Notes."

## THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

Mary Leighton

The chronicles of this year's activities must necessarily be brief, firstly because of paper control and secondly because of shortage of 'meety information.' The following is a collection of diary notes, and information kindly supplied by various members.

*1st January, 1943.* The New Year meet was as usual a happy family gathering, and those members who were lucky enough to get away and brave enough to tackle a complicated journey had their reward. A showery afternoon followed a soaking wet morning on New Year's Day and minor expeditions to Floutern Tarn and a mist-enveloped Red Pike were enjoyed in a soggy sort of way. Two Australian giants were initiated into the art of route finding in the 'hize.'

A show of lantern slides provided the evening's entertainment.

*2nd January,* A fine, cold morning. Quite a large party went over Fleetwith and Haystacks. There was snow on the tops and thin ice on Blackbeck Tarn. The reflections in the lake were very clear. One party went to Birkness and Bentley Beetham found his climbing feet again.

About 40 members and friends spent a hilarious (full of hill air) evening of songs, tricks and stories, finishing up with a mock Brains Trust most ably conducted by T. R. Burnett. Dr. Lapage, poker baton in hand, nobly attempted to control the vociferous crowd, and the President with his customary energy conducted 'Ilkla Moor.'

A starlight frosty night.

*3rd January.* A perfect rosy dawn. Fleetwith Gully lured a few. The dazzling snow-slope of Whiteless Pike was festooned with a long string of plodding mortals; layers of pullovers (and one shirt!) were peeled off in the glare of the winter sun. By midday clouds were gathering and the icy wind on the ridge soon made us bundle all woollies on again. We found a tiny snow-covered ledge out of the wind and ate our sandwiches before going on to Sail and Eel Crags. Some returned to Buttermere by Sail Beck; the rest went over Causey Pike and via Swinside to Keswick.

*4th January.* The last few left the valley.

*6th March, Langdale.* Twenty-five members met at Dungeon Ghyll Hotel. There was a committee meeting after tea followed by a merry dinner-party and a great pow-wow round a log fire. The night was pouring wet.

*7th March.* Still raining. Fair later. One party nothing daunted set out for Scafell Pike and got into sunshine above the murk. Less



fortunate ones walked to Ambleside via the slopes of Silver How and Loughrigg.

*22nd April (Easter). Wasdale.* People arrived by various routes in the usual Easter weather.

*23rd April.* A gathering of part of the clan on Styhead—furtive crawl along to the Napes—chattering teeth nibbling food held in numbed fingers—more furtive crawling—loving glances cast at stark, cold rocks—did someone mention the word 'climb'?—Two hours later: the teapot in great demand down the valley. Later, G.B.'s Cumberland yarns round the smoke-room fire, and memories of G.R.S. A merry crowd at Brackenclose stoking up after a happy climbing day. New climbs were appearing in the Log Book.

*24th April.* One or two were able to do their chosen climbs; others beat a reluctant retreat from this well-loved valley.

*22nd May. Brackenclose.* A favoured few came 'home' for the weekend and found it refreshing as usual.

*12th June (Whitsuntide). Borrowdale.* A goodly company came to Thorneythwaite. There was a small colony of campers at Seathwaite. A committee meeting took place in one room while the rest of the party amused themselves in another by juggling with names and initials such as B.B., C. E. F. Dec and G. G. Macphee. Some queer rhymes resulted.

*13th June.* Fine but cold. Some stormed the bastions of Scafell Gable and Fleetwith satisfied less enterprising folk. Three members introduced an Australian, a Canadian and a New Zealander to their first English summit cairn.

*14th June.* Dull and showery. Final trips to Gable, Brandreth and Glaramara, then a general exodus from the valley.

*26th June. Eskdale.* The silence of the valley was unbroken.

*1st August. Wasdale.* As usual, the perfect summer finished in Wasdale on July 31st, and the perfect autumn began on August 5th! In spite of the rain which fell over the week-end some energetic people went to the Napes, and found they were the only two parties there. Could it be August Saturday?

*2nd August.* One party found some previously undiscovered thirst-quenching routes on Pillar, and vowed it wasn't too bad after the first three hours as one was by then not conscious of the rain and barely conscious of one's body while one's fingers had ceased to exist.

*3rd August.* Six people were seen trying to stop the leaks on Scafell Crags.

*29th August.* The Committee held a select tea party in Ambleside.

*25th September. Windermere.* The Annual General Meeting was attended by 45 members, who consumed cups of tea and buns with much chattering previous to the meeting, which was as usual agreeably conducted by the President.

*26th September.* Bicycles came into use again and carried their energetic owners to the foothills, whence a party of stalwarts trudged to Scafell Crag. They were treated to sunlit rocks under the blue heaven, and voted it 'One of Those Days.' A leisurely few ambled over Loughrigg and Silver How and had tea at Skelwith Bridge Hotel. One party from Windermere went to the Kentmere hills.

*16th October. Brackenclose.* Fifteen members and friends came to Brackenclose in October, an increase 650 per cent. over the same month in 1942. Thanks to the persistent rain and wind leisurely breakfasts were enjoyed and the Hut was given a good tidy-up. One party found Arrowhead still holding some snow from a recent fall, which made the climb pretty severe.

*11th December. Langdale.* This meet, arranged to coincide with a full moon for the benefit of midnight cyclists, was a great success. Twenty-five strong, we made the rafters ring with our laughter and toasted ourselves in front of the blazing pine logs.

*12th December.* An R.A.F. navigator on leave got up to 3210 feet under his own steam, and was rewarded along with his two companions with a superb view of sunlit hills.

The warm slopes of Loft Crag and the Pikes were favoured by a few, where by midday it was warm enough to sun oneself, lizardlike, on a rock.

A third party went off with ropes over shoulders and determined looks on faces in the direction of Bowfell Buttress. It was reported that nymphs were seen on Pavey Ark. One member was spending her last leave in Lakeland before leaving for Southern Europe to do relief work with the Red Cross. She and her companions go with our sincere hopes that 1944 will see the strong beginning of a great and peaceful reconstruction which has for its foundation the real, lasting qualities which mankind may find and learn among the mountains and in the quiet places of the earth.

## IN MEMORIAM

DARWIN LEIGHTON 1907 — 1943

No man in his seventies was ever less tired of life than Darwin Leighton : whatever the general opinion of elderly people may be regarding the desire, or the lack of it, to live their lives over again, it is certain Darwin would have seized with both hands the opportunity to hold out his plate for a second helping.

Says the Common Prayer Book—" Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live and is full of misery."

Counting time as it should be counted, the first part of that dictum cannot be gainsaid but as to the latter part being applicable to all men, Darwin's life was a complete refutation.

Good health and a sound constitution and, above all, domestic tranquility and serenity (all of which Darwin enjoyed in fullest measure) are pre-requisites of a truly happy life but not all so blessed are able to maintain, day in and out, an even level of cheerfulness of outlook and gaiety of spirit, and it is perhaps the most remarkable thing noted by one who consorted intimately with Darwin during the last three years of his life that one had never at any time observed his temperamental barometer to stand at anything but ' fair.'

Born in 1869, he entered his father's business at the age of 13 and thenceforward, for sixty years, his life would appear to have been one long joyous adventure both at work and play. When a youth and well into manhood years, his duties brought him much into contact with folk of the countryside and it was during that period that he acquired his extensive knowledge of Westmorland dialect, such no doubt helping him greatly to win his way to the hearts, not only of farmers and their families, but of a multitude of simple, humble folk who spend their lives in field, fell and farmhouse kitchen, and thus was engendered in him an intense feeling for folk of that kind as also a love of everything pertaining to the country.

Little wonder, therefore, that on the day upon which were completed the financial formalities for the sale of his business a year or so ago, he should cross the street with, as it were, his money in his pocket to attend a farm auction and come out—his family thought a trifle impulsively—the proud owner of a couple of farms in the Longsleddale valley ; impulsively, or not, Darwin had at last possessed himself of a piece of the good earth of Westmorland and was happy.

From the same source came his amazing fund of local folk-lore knowledge, and stories at first hand of things heard and overheard

in the course of his peregrinations around the countryside in the telling of which, as of the singing of dialect songs of his own composition, he has delighted many an audience and listener-in besides attenders at club meets and dinners.

His climbing days began long before the Club was founded and he was one of little more than a score of O.Ms. now left. He played his part in the formation of the Club : was Hon. Secretary for the record period 1912—1920 and President in 1922—23 during which latter period it was that the Great Gable War Memorial scheme was conceived and launched. With the brothers George and Ashley Abraham and the late J. W. Putrell he made the first ascent of the *Amphitheatre Buttress* on Craig yr Ysfa, in North Wales, and was of the party who made the first ascent of 'A' route on Gimmer in Langdale. His Alpine experience was confined to a single ascent during his 60's in the course of a holiday in the Arolla district. One above referred to and highly competent to judge, describes his excellence on rock as being equalled only by the keenness and zest he brought to everything he did. But the special niche which he occupied within the Club was his, not so much by reason of his climbing record nor even of his long period of service to the Club as of the lovable, mirth promoting qualities of the man himself.

To the world at large and, very specially, to members of the Club, his home was open house where he and his family delighted to dispense hospitality to callers passing to and from Lakeland climbing and holiday centres.

An ardent student of botany and ornithology, his love of the flora and fauna of the fields, fells and woods was such as could only be fully communicated to others of like tastes. Every morning, in fair weather and foul he was wont to sally forth as if in the exercise of a solemn rite to an adjoining wood with his bag of peanuts, meal-worms, etc., to suit the varying taste of his furred and feathered friends : one likes to think they missed him when a morning came and he was seen no more.

He was perhaps seen at his best in the company of children whom he delighted, and himself took delight, in treating to farmyard imitations and, being deft as a pen and ink draughtsman, in drawing animals for them on sheets of paper : a pleasing picture of him as a young man is presented by the story of the village school-mistress accosting him one morning and begging him not to draw animals on the backs of the childrens' hands as it led to their coming to school next morning with them unwashed.

If he had his little foibles, they were of such an innocuous kind as to excite nothing but ripples of merriment within the family

circle. And, if it is not a closely guarded family secret, it can be added that, by no stretch of the imagination could he be described as a handy man about the house: poets and artists, it is said, seldom are and in all the essentials of his make-up Darwin was really something of both.

He had his convictions, and firmly held ones at that, but if to fuddle the brain with abstractions concerning the mysteries of life and the universe is to have what is called a serious side, Darwin had none such: it was said of Charles Lamb, whose gentle nature Darwin's somewhat resembled, that he never entered into verbal wranglings and disputations with his contemporaries upon such or any other matters and was less interested in the question—"what is truth" than in the more immediate one—"what are trumps."

That was Darwin to the last button, but, be it said, without Lamb's weaknesses. He had such a way with him as to be taken to the bosom of complete strangers upon a first meeting: to arrive with him at a hotel and follow him into a lounge full of complete strangers and observe how he carried all before him ere anyone had time to put up their defences was a thing to fill one with delighted astonishment.

Such was the man who worked and played, rhymed and sang through a life of seven decades in which there were no gradations from spring to winter, but only perpetual springtime, leaving behind him with those who were privileged to know him nothing but a fragrant memory.

#### A. R. THOMSON 1908-1942

With the passing of Arthur Thomson the Club has lost one of its oldest and most remarkable members.

Handicapped physically as he was by a congenital disability, his performances in various forms of athletic activity were nothing short of astounding, and could only have been made possible by a combination of courage and will power of unusually high degree. Everything he did was tackled with an enthusiasm which conquered all difficulties and carried all before it.

He learnt to swim and, though naturally slow, could do his mile and more. He learnt to cycle and his performances at this pastime were outstanding. He had on more than one occasion ridden more than 250 miles in 24 hours, and he exceeded 10,000 miles a year for ten successive years.

On his racing bicycle he kept up a speed that left the average cyclist with two good legs well behind. Personally, on the few rides we had together, I found the greatest difficulty in keeping up with him.

One of his idiosyncracies was to ride up all the stiffest hills he could find, and it speaks volumes for his tenacity that never once was he beaten by any hill he had made up his mind to conquer, though some called for many attempts before they succumbed. One in particular, on the Coniston side of Windermere, defeated him again and again, but he returned to the assault repeatedly and in the end succeeded.

His story of this was one of the most amusing reminiscences of his personal experience of which he liked to tell. Near the top and almost exhausted he shot his dentures out on to the road but carried on to a triumphal conclusion, only to see to his horror a car coming up the hill. Only the wildest of rushes enabled him to reach his property before the car did so.

As a climber it was, of course, quite impossible for him to attain the technical excellence he achieved as a cyclist, especially as he was very highly strung, and had to contend with a temperament by no means ideal for the purpose. As a companion he was a joy for ever and there was never a dull moment, and his stream of comments on his own and other people's efforts were a source of frequent merriment. One delicious moment was to be expected after any particularly hectic struggle on his part. Safely up he would gaze reflectively down the pitch, a broad grin would spread over his face, and he would say, 'I think I climbed that very well.' I often knew him to climb hard pitches extremely well without remark, but the grin was there all the same. It was a grin one used to observe at all times as it would often be accompanied by the richest of chuckles and followed by some quite devastating remark, occasionally embarrassing to a degree, for Thomson's pronounced sense of humour, always puckish, could be at times positively quipish. The extent of his experiences as a climber was very wide. He had many seasons in the Alps and made an astonishing number of ascents in practically every well known centre. While he knew the Welsh climbs well, he knew the Lakeland ones still better, and his knowledge of the Keswick and Buttermere district was unrivalled. Often in the winter he would bring over some well-known Swiss or Dolomite guide to his home at Portinscale, and he knew every cliff and outcrop within a very wide radius.

His love for the fells was very deep, and after his retirement from business he was out on them as often as not alone, day after day in all weathers, looking for new climbs and sometimes, most unwisely it must be owned, tackling pitches on his own. He fell more than once when doing this and it seems miraculous that he never hurt himself seriously. My chief recollection of an occasion when this occurred is of one wet afternoon when we went to Fleet-

with Pike. The rest of the party were in the gully, but Thomson had disappeared. Looking out I was suddenly horrified to see him in the distance half-way up another gully, climbing a pitch up the side of a considerable waterfall. As I looked he rolled over sideways into the main fall and went down with it. A few moments later a very wet object emerged from the pool into which he had been swept, but even at that distance I thought I could see that characteristic grin.

On one occasion his passion for exploring resulted in the saving of a man's life. He had gone with his chauffeur, Walters, to Wasdale Head, with the object of exploring the recesses of Piers Ghyll from above. Some way down the ghyll they were amazed to see below them a man lying at the top of one of the big pitches. This turned out to be a tourist named Crump, who had been missing eighteen days. Walters coped magnificently with a difficult situation; the injured and delirious man was lowered down the pitch, and they succeeded eventually in getting out of the ghyll and onto the open fell side. Help was then obtained from Wasdale, and the end of the story was a happy one.

In his early climbing days, Thomson was fortunate in coming under the wing of S. W. Herford and G. S. Sansom, who gave him many a climb and many of his happiest memories. In later years he frequently was in the party of H. M. Kelly, to whom he was equally grateful. Thomson will be long remembered in the Keswick district for the part he took in various forms of public business, and especially for his sympathy and practical help for those in distress. The most generous of men he was always ready to come to the rescue in cases of need, and he was loved no less than he was respected, while among those who knew him well his passing has left a gap that cannot be filled.

C. F. HOLLAND.

F. W. E. DIXON, SUB-LIEUT. (A), R.N.V.R. 1941-1943

On August 3rd, 1943, Francis Dixon was piloting a plane, which made a successful attack on a heavily escorted merchant ship in the Channel. Damage to his engine necessitated a forced landing in the sea, and he sank almost immediately with the aircraft. His observer attributes his own escape mainly to the coolness and gallantry of the pilot, who made a perfect landing.

To anyone who has known Francis on the rocks there is nothing at all surprising in this. It is exactly what one would have expected. He had only recently become a member of the Club, but throughout his short life he had been a great lover of the fells. On the rocks he showed great promise. Thoroughness in mastering the

technique, steadiness and coolness in any emergency were always characteristic of his climbing. His mountain-craft and route-finding in mist were really surprising for his age. He delighted to work out his own routes on little known crags in a manner which put to shame the slave of the guide-book and the nail-scratch. Lakeland, of which he had an intimate knowledge, was especially dear to him.

Above all he was the ideal companion on the mountains. His cheerfulness and enthusiasm and his idealism combined with a natural modesty and level-headed sanity, made any expedition in his company a delight. We who have climbed with him will always be the richer for his companionship. R.I.P.

J. P. W.

THE REV. W. ILIFFE 1924-1943

MRS. S. J. COX 1919-1943

F./O. R. HOPE 1936-1941

MRS. A. SEATREE 1929-1943

G. E. JANNINGS 1935-1943



## EDITOR'S NOTES

The outstanding news of the year is that the Committee have arranged to take a lease of Raw Head farmhouse in Langdale with a view to establishing a second Club Hut. During the war, adaptation and equipment must necessarily be limited, but it is hoped that it may be ready for use by the late summer and that there will be accommodation for about two dozen members in two tier beds.

The Committee have felt for some time that another hut would fulfil a real need, particularly in Langdale which is the easiest of access of the climbing valleys, and it is a piece of special good luck that this chance should have come our way.

I have been asked by the Committee of the London Section to say that the memorial which they are proposing to establish in memory of Speaker has been under discussion during this last year. So far as can be forecast at present, it will take the form of a bridge of the old packhorse type. There are several becks crossing the tracks to one or other climbers' crag which need re-bridging in a durable way at crossings which flood badly in stormy weather. A memorial of this kind would seem specially appropriate to Speaker. Owing to labour and transport difficulties, no start can be made until after the war, but the subscription list will be kept open and the money banked. Any member whether belonging to the London Section or not will be welcomed as a contributor and donations should be sent to the Hon. Secretary of the London Section.

Our thanks are due to Mr Delmar Banner for leave to reproduce his painting 'Carrs from Blake Rigg' as a frontispiece. The reproduction has lost something of the glow of orange and amethyst light in the original, but this is a kind of richness and delicacy of colour which no reproduction can quite achieve. We must also thank Mr G. Jardine, late of the Royal College of Art, for leave to use his print of 'The Langdales'; and this year again we thank Joan Tebbutt for further tailpieces.

We are grateful to Mr Arnold Lunn for giving this Journal the chance to publish extracts from a chapter of a forthcoming book of his. It is pleasant to be allowed to serve this very interesting *hors d'oeuvre*.

I cannot close these notes without a reference to the tragic accident on Easter Saturday when Miss Winch was killed whilst leading the *West Wall Climb* out of Deep Ghyll. It is not known how the accident happened. Miss Winch should have had a long while of active life before her, but if Death were due to come in the

prime of years, I feel sure that she would have been glad that he should come on the great crag which holds so much of English rock-climbing history and on a day when all the senses were stung into praise of being by wind and sun and the sight of Wasdale breaking into spring.—R.I.P.

KATHARINE C. CHORLEY

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## CLUB NOTES

The Club now numbers (December 1943) 841 members, of which 34 are Graduating. In 1943, 45 new members were elected, 7 have resigned or have been written off and 8 deaths have been recorded.

Congratulations to the following Club members whose marriages are announced :

R. L. Plackett and Miss C. Curtis.  
 G. A. Sutherland and Miss M. Lakeman.  
 Lieut. E. L. Furness.  
 Joyce Chapman and Ernest Lancaster-Jones.  
 K. S. Himsworth.

The following births have been announced :

Capt. and Mrs T. H. P. Cain, a daughter.  
 Mr and Mrs S. H. Cross, a son.  
 Dr and Mrs G. G. Macphee, a son.  
 P./O. and Mrs J. W. Haggas, a daughter.  
 Mr and Mrs W. Peascod, a son.  
 Major and Mrs Stafford-Gaffney, a son.

More members have joined His Majesty's Forces this year, and the following are added to the list of serving members which now numbers 127 :

Capt. A. M. Ashman	Miss M. Partington (W.A.A.F.)
A. Barton	Capt. G. Pattinson
Lieut. G. K. Booth	A. G. Preston
F. C. Crerar	W. E. Richardson
W. Eckersall	Sub-Lieut. D. G. Turnbull (R.N.V.R.)
Capt. H. B. Lyon	P./O. T. H. Tilly
(Indian Pioneer Corps.)	Capt. W. G. Tustin
D. F. A. Milnes	R. A. Tyssen-Gee (R.A.F.)
S./L. A. L. Murray	

The Secretary will be glad of any information which will help to bring the list up to date.

Congratulations to S./L. E. D. L. Lee, on receiving the D.F.C. and to Major C. J. B. Pollitt who has been awarded the M.C.

Lieut. E. J. Woodsend has been moved from an Italian Prison Camp to Oflag Va in Germany. Dr B. Lennox is reported Prisoner of War in Japanese hands.

The Coniston First Aid outfit is now at the Institute in Coniston village. Application for its use should be made to the caretaker, Mr. S. Hall.

F. & R.C.C. members wishing to use the S.M.C. hut on Ben Nevis should apply through the secretary, Miss M. Leighton, Bleak House, Kendal.

## BRACKENCLOSE

The past year has seen the use of Brackenclose practically restricted to members and it is surprising how, without any outside club meets, the hut managed to be comfortably full from Easter to November. One was almost sure to find a kindred spirit however unexpected the visit.

With the curtailment of accommodation at Wasdale Head, members would have been very hard put to it to get a few days' climbing without the amenities of Brackenclose. It has proved a great boon even though on occasion, operative stoves have been reduced to one, and lamps to none.

Taken over the year the weather has been uniformly worse than usual, there being almost no winter and consequently none of the usual snowy ascents of Moss Ghyll and Deep Ghyll. In spring and early summer there were spells of really excellent conditions and some ambitious climbs were done from the hut. All too soon, however, the weather got so bad that it passed out entirely and with it our hopes of good climbing.

A noticeable feature of entries in the log book, confirmed by my own observation and experience, has been the readiness with which normally broadly striped tigers have been persuaded to contemplate the moist beauties of the long curtains of rain sweeping up the valley—from the sitting room window instead of the Tennis Court or Split Blocks.

It does seem that members are getting sufficient 'marginal' experience of life at home and in their jobs without having to search for it on the crags of lakeland.

A.T.H.

## THE LONDON SECTION

During the summer our Chairman, Dr C. F. Hadfield called a few members together to discuss the Section's activities.

It was strongly felt by members of the London Section that there should be some form of memorial to G. R. Speaker. The main Committee has decided that for reasons of expediency it is undesirable for the Club to initiate one but has at the same time expressed the opinion that for the London Section to do so would be most fitting. Speaker's position with regard to the London Section was unique. He largely sustained it for many years, and the success of its activities was due in the main to his efforts and to his devotion to the Club. As a lover of mountains and as a personality in the climbing world he held a position that was all his own as is shown by the great numbers of those who admired him and are grateful for having enjoyed his friendship.

The Committee of the London Section has therefore decided to open a Speaker Memorial Fund to which members of the section are invited to contribute together with associated friends who, although not members of the Section, have joined it at walks, lectures or dinners, or who for other reasons would desire to take some part in the proposal.

Donations or promises should be sent to Mrs M. Garrod, 19 Douglas Road, Harpenden, Herts., who is acting as Hon Treasurer.

The London Section under the guidance of T. M. Hardwick and Joyce Chapman have managed to keep up a regular number of Sunday walks and our thanks go to them for their help and enthusiasm. Any members who find themselves in London would be welcomed at these informal walks.

On December 4th we held our Annual Luncheon at Brown's Hotel, 54 members and guests were present, unfortunately "the flu" caused several last minute absentees. Dr C. F. Hadfield was in the chair, there were no formal speeches. The chairman announced the business of the Section's Annual Meeting and the new Committee were duly elected. Chairman, Dr C. F. Hadfield; Hon. Sec. and Treasurer, Marjorie Garrod; Walks Sec., Joyce Chapman; Committee: G. Anderson, Mary Glynné, J. M. Hardwick, R. H. Hewson, H. N. Fairfield, Mrs Milsom, Sir Leonard Pearse and R. Walker.

The chairman then gave in some detail the progress of the G. R. Speaker Memorial Fund saying we had already collected about £200 and had had a variety of suggestions for the most suitable form of memorial. Some discussion followed when several members expressed their views and the final decision was left to the Committee. The most popular suggestion was a stone pack horse Bridge to replace a wooden one often washed away in Lakeland. The next in popularity was the purchase of the Harrison Rocks, near Tunbridge Wells—so that London members might have a climbing practice ground within their reach.

We hope to have another lunch next year on the first Saturday in December—when we shall hope to have an even bigger gathering of members and friends, and when we can look forward to a world once more at peace.

Our congratulations go to Joyce Chapman on her marriage to Ernest Lancaster-Jones. But we regret that owing to her removal to a new home and new work she will be unable to carry on with the organisation of walks. We shall miss her help in this respect seriously and we thank her for all she has done for the London Section in past years.

MARJORIE GARROD, *Hon. Secretary.*

*Chairman :*

DR CHARLES F. HADFIELD

*Committee :*

George Anderson

Miss J. Chapman

Miss M. Glynné

H. N. Fairfield

R. H. Hewson

Mrs Milsom

Sir L. Pearse

Ronald Walker

*Hon. Sec. and Treasurer :* Mrs M. Garrod.

The London Section of the Club was formed in 1919 to enable members resident in and near London to meet together.

Intending members must be members of the Club and are liable to an additional subscription of 2/6 per annum. Informal walks will be held on Sundays during the coming year. C. E. Arnison, 7 Lowndes Street, S.W.1, has kindly agreed to be responsible for them. Regular walks have had to be suspended during the war. It is hoped to continue the Annual Lunch or Dinner on the first Saturday in December.

Any member of the Club visiting London will be welcomed on walks or to the Section functions and should communicate with the Hon. Sec.