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CONTENTS PAGE

RUPERT REPEATS

C. F. Holland

As I sat at my desk, pondering, a strange noise that could perhaps be described as an eructation, echoed in my ears. Surely, I said to myself, that must be the voice of Rupert, and added pensively, he must have heard I was in a tight corner. I was not conscious of having spoken out loud, but a voice answered : ' Sir, you say you feel tight, I envy you ! ' and looking up I saw, in his old position on the top of the desk, as Yogi-like as ever, Rupert himself.

Not even Doctor Watson was more surprised at the reappearance of Sherlock Holmes from the gloomy depths of the Reichenbach Fall, nor, I may add, more pleased.

' I say,' I said, ' you come butting in very much in the manner of our old friend the Colonel.'

' Certainly, Sir,' said Rupert, ' in my part of the universe I am now known as the Colonel. The various unflattering statements and insinuations you have made about me in the past have driven me to drink, Sir.'

Clearly oil was needed on the troubled waters, and assuming my most disarming manner, I tried to soothe my visitor, who was in one of his most formidable moods.

' My dear sir, I am sorry indeed if anything I have said about you in the past has caused you grief—but I cannot recollect anything to your discredit ; if there were it was purely coincidental and to be taken in a Pickwickian sense.'

' Sir,' said Rupert, ' you have at various times accused me of reprehensible conduct in some disreputable hinterland, of theft, the theft of mushrooms from trolls, in consequence of which I, to use the good old Anglo-Saxon word, belched at you more than once ; and finally you referred to me as a touchy imp.'

' Well, Colonel,' I answered, ' I can only tender you my humble apologies, promise not to offend you sgain and, now that you are here, assure you of the very great pleasure the sight of you affords me, and ask you once again to come to my assistance in composing an article for the *Fell and Rock Journal.* You have been asked for, you know, and although you say I have maligned you, you are held in some affection.'

' I accept your apology,' said Rupert, after some cogitation, ' and I suppose that unless I give you a helping hand there will be no article for the *Journal.* I think that perhaps you might give some attention to one of your earlier literary efforts, in the *Rucksack Club Journal,* nearly twenty years ago. Some remarks you made

in it may give you a lead or two, and I see no reason why you should not reproduce the Vision I then vouchsafed you. You were in the usual difficulties, and I started you off with an admirable sentence in which you referred to yourself as an erstwhile climber comoelled to make literary bricks without the straw of recent climbing experiences ; you then interpolated some nonsense of your own invention, about how difficult it was to winnow the flotsam, to say nothing of the jetsam, and separate the chaff of personal idiosyncrasy from the grain of sound climbing lore. Now you have not that excuse. Did you not spend nearly two years as a climbing instructor in a Commando ? Surely in that time you must have had some noteworthy experiences. In any case you had better give me some account of what happened. Then we can return to one or two points arising out of the article already referred to, and if you then top up with the Vision you will, I hope, have produced a literary cocktail not unworthy of my reputation.'

' As ever, Rupert, your ideas are most helpful. With regard to the Commando ; I was at first rather alarmed at the prospect of taking over the responsibility of piloting wild youths up cliffs, especially as I doubted my ability to lead after so long a period away from the rocks.

' I found, however, that I need not have worried. The wild youths of my imagination were conspicuous by their absence ; the average age of the men was probably twenty-five or so, and though undoubtedly high-spirited, they were much easier to get on with, and infinitely more sober, than the old sweats of the battalion I had originally joined. What struck me most forcibly was their great modesty, the refusal to regard themselves as anything out of the ordinary, or as superior in any way to other units. The inspired articles that appeared about them from time to time aroused their derision, and indeed anger, and the publicity given them was deplored by officers and men alike.

' From an aloof position of extreme age, and with the experience of the 1914 affair, I could size them up as a magnificent lot of men, incomparably more formidable as a fighting force than any battalion I had ever known. There were quite a number of other instructors, mostly commando soldiers who after training had shown an aptitude for climbing. I was the only one who might be called a professional climber, but when we reached the rocks I soon found that their capacity transcended mine, until at last I managed to get into form, when I found I could hold my own with most of them.

' The main trouble with me may perhaps be explained by the fact that I was generally referred to as " Pop " or " Dad " and treated like an old gentleman, and as a rule exempt from parades,

at any rate from those that involved lengthy or arduous excursions.

' This meant that in the ordinary course of events I was restricted to office work, and found it extremely difficult to maintain the state of fitness essential for climbing. I indulged in a system of complicated physical jerks, but they were a poor substitute for the real thing.

' Our visits to the mountains were always undertaken at the shortest possible notice. At various times we went to North Wales, the Lakes, and Tenby. The latter probably the most suitable locality for training in the sort of work likely to be useful in the alarms and excursions of modern war.

' Some of their earlier training had been unusual, and indeed drastic, and I was amazed to hear that there had been no accident of any kind. On one occasion, so I was told, the troop were spaced out in parties of four under the buttresses of Lliwedd and told to make their way to the top. Only one party failed to report at the specified time at the foot of the crags, and the missing party turned up not long after, having, apparently, got into trouble in the neighbourhood of Paradise.

' Another even wilder performance was staged when the troop was paraded at the foot of the Milestone on a really dark night, with orders to climb the buttress and reassemble within three hours.

' How many of the parties actually reached the top of the buttress is a matter of conjecture, probably not many ; but it is a fact that all of them met at the bottom of the crags at the right time, and that no one had sustained any injury. The only approach to an accident of which I had any personal knowledge occurred above the Idwal Slabs. I had been lent to Major Hunt for a few days. He was at the Climbers' Club Hut, conducting a school for training and hardening men in the Tank Corps. One of his parties was traversing on the Holly-Tree-Wall. I could see that one of his men was in difficulties and within a few seconds he came off and fell about twenty feet before the rope swung him across the face of the cliff. He was quite unhurt and equally unperturbed. Strangely enough, the best man I had to instruct in this unit was a man who regarded rock climbing as a quite childish occupation, and was bored stiff, but he, nevertheless, climbed every pitch with the utmost ease and celerity. The least pleasant of our trips was one to the Lakes. We were billeted at Skelwith Bridge, where we were extremely comfortable.

' Our first expedition was to Gimmer and was a failure, wind and weather being unfavourable. Next day a visit to Doe Crags convinced me of the folly of trying to climb when out of condition. Gordon and Craig seemed to me desperately difficult, and then I was so foolish as to entertain the idea that Intermediate was a

suitable course to finish up with. Luckily my troop-sergeant, Langlands, was a magnificent climber. He had little difficulty himself, but he had much hard work in getting me up.

' Of the many competent climbers in the troop Sergeant Langlands was the best. A brilliant cragsman, he had a genuine love for climbing, and if he is given the opportunity to go on climbing, I have no doubt that he will become a tiger of the first water.

' Personally, I got the greatest satisfaction from a visit to Tenby. On this occasion I had the luck to be sent, in an advance party of one, to billet for the troop and the signallers. Tenby was at that time a hush-hush locality, and the numerous boarding-houses were empty. As a result I had all the billeting arrangements fixed up the first morning and had a clear fortnight in which to explore the climbing possibilities.

' During this fortnight I think I made an unseen entrance into the purlieus of every hotel that was situated at the top of the cliffs of this most attractive seaside resort. The cliffs extend for miles on either side of the town, averaging in height some three hundred feet and are uniformly steep. They are limestone and reasonably sound, especially for the first hundred feet or so above sea level from which the sea has removed all loose rock.

' Unfortunately it was necessary for us to start our expeditions from the top of the cliffs and, for some unexplained reason, we were not allowed to use the rope. One morning in particular lingers in my memory. The weather conditions were hardly favourable. A high wind was bringing in a heavy swell, while driving rain and sleet wet one to the skin and chilled one to the bone. I led my party to the brink and said : " Well, boys, we go down here ; take your own line, and for the Lord's sake hang on." Three hundred feet below the sea was breaking thunderously in clouds of spray, and the average angle of the cliffs was about seventy degrees.

' So we started down, and I fully expected the worst to happen at any moment. I soon found, however, that my lads, two of whom had never climbed before, were enjoying themselves immensely. One of them, a large policeman from Nottingham, shouted across to me on an adjacent rib, " Isn't this blue-pencil glorious ? " I did not really agree with him, but to keep up morale gave him to understand that in my opinion everything in the garden was lovely. Shortly afterwards I observed that my policeman seemed to be getting rather dangerously close to the heavy surf and shouted a warning to him. He announced that he had found a cave and intended to explore it. The tide was rising and a hundred yards out to sea I could see a great roller approaching.

' I again shouted to warn him, but he had disappeared, presumably

into his cave. The great wave swept in. A minute later a drenched figure emerged from the mouth of the cave and clambered up to me. The wave had swept right over his head but he had managed to hang on to his holds. Had he been dragged off them I doubt whether any swimmer could have saved himself in such a sea. An hour later we were consuming sandwiches and beer at the local pub. I saw my policeman was shivering violently and told him that what he needed was a double whiskey. He answered that he had never tasted whiskey, and would rather not. From the exalted position of unpaid lance-corporal I announced that it was an order, failure to obey which would bring about an almighty row. To my great relief he laughed, swallowed his medicine, and said he liked it. I am glad to say that not only did he suffer no ill effects from his ducking, but later went through all the vicissitudes of D Day and eventually a commando raid on Holland without injury. There were many other splendid fellows, but not all of them were so lucky ! '

' Well,' said Rupert, ' I suppose you did as well as could be expected in the circumstances. And now to return to the original article. You said that you doubted if our climbers had attained 90 per cent, of possible excellence. What do you feel about this statement now ?'

' In making this statement, Rupert, I had undoubtedly over-estimated our achievements and in view of recent performances would substitute 75 for 90. I still find myself in sympathy with my contention that trees and buildings are an excellent substitute for rocks, offering greater exposure and much greater perpendicularity

' I now quote from the original article :—

' " I may be the voice of a pelican crying in the wilderness, and even be so unfortunate as to resemble a sparrow on the house-top, but perchance there are one or two whose eyes may be opened to the existence of a hinterland of peculiar and romantic attraction " '

At this moment Rupert has intervened in his usual abrupt and disconcerting fashion, and a Vision has floated before my eyes.

It has been very real, and conversations have been quite audible ; the actors are well known to most of us, and though the Vision may contain libellous matter, one cannot say for certain, I can accept no responsibility, but must leave that to be shared by the Editor and Rupert.

THE VISION

It is night, and the moon is playing hide and seek with scudding clouds, producing strange effects among the gargoyles, bastions,

flying buttresses, and other fauna that haunt the cliffs and pinnacles of Westminster Abbey.

All is quiet and peaceful, when an unusual sound is heard, like that of nailed boots scraping on stone.

Peering cautiously over the edge, for we are on the roof of the Abbey, dim forms are seen below, moving one by one up the great wall ; all the customary climbing etiquette is being observed ; loose rock is carefully disposed of by the third man ; and the language is regulated by the restraint observed by all the best climbing parties.

At last the leader grasps the edge of the parapet and heaves his panting form up on to it ; as he sits astride it a wandering moonbeam ricochets off the edge of a bastion and falls on his face. It is the face of Chorley. In a flash I understand ; he is editing the *Fell and Rock Guide* to Westminster Abbey and environs. Not long after he is joined by Speaker, and the third member of the party proves to be no less a person than Haskett Smith, upon which I understood the true inwardness of an incessant rumbling which had been puzzling me. The worthy third had been cheering up the party with anecdotes.

Haskett Smith was attired in clerical garments, including gaiters and a shovel hat, and when he had removed the dust of centuries gathered on the ascent, which was specially noticeable on his black garments, looked eminently respectable. The sight of Pritchard in his tall hat on the Pillar was a noble one, but this of the conqueror of the Needle in the sombre dignity of decanal vesture was at least its equal in sublimity.

A halt was called for rest and refreshment, and I gathered that the expedition was to continue with the traverse of the Western Towers, and finish with a descent by the flying buttresses of the southern face.

I was puzzled by something that seemed to be troubling Haskett Smith, something to do with closing time, but Speaker referred to a flask of some sort, which comforted him considerably. This was produced and was being handed round to the accompaniment of congratulations and expressions of mutual goodwill, when the sound of a door being opened somewhere close at hand administered an unpleasant shock to our three friends, who hurriedly endeavoured to efface themselves behind a projection. Figures were approaching, but all might yet have been well, had not Haskett unfortunately dropped his shovel hat, and his well-meant but unsuccessful attempt to retrieve it without being seen led to the discovery of the party.

The new arrivals outnumbered the climbing party by two to

one, and consisted of a gentleman attired in correct clerical costume, and a posse of vergers, appropriately garbed in imposing gowns.

The situation was tense with impending drama, but from the sequel it was evident that the climbers had a carefully prepared plan of action for such emergencies as that with which they were now actually confronted.

With considerable grace, and the most admirable aplomb, Haskett advanced, and with a strikingly courtly gesture and sweep of the shovel hat, said ' it is a beautiful evening, my good sirs, might I ask whether you find yourselves in good health ? I trust in any case that you are enjoying the salubrious air of this noble altitude. I shall be glad to point to you the identity of the various eminences in the vicinity ; I do not know whether I have ever told you. . . . ' Doubtless more would have followed, but the clerical gentleman cut short the flowing periods, and handing Haskett a bundle of documents, exclaimed : ' Sir, I must request you immediately and at once to subscribe on these forms, in block letters and in triplicate, the names, Christian and otherwise, of yourself and your companions ; also to state verbally, succinctly, accurately, and without undue verbiage, the reason for your presence on this spot.'

' Sir,' uttered the so far unperturbed spokesman of our friends, ' it is hardly necessary that I should give you this information ; I am, in fact, the Dean of Westminster Abbey, and am, with my lawyer and my architect, inspecting the condition of the battlements which, incidentally, I find sadly in need of repair. Talking of battlements, have you ever heard ?

' Sir,' came the reply abruptly cutting short the threatened anecdote, ' you are an impostor. I myself personally am the Dean.'

My blood ran cold ; this was awful. I could see my companions being haled ignominiously to Bow Street and incarcerated for the night.

To my intense admiration, however, Haskett was totally unmoved by these words and said with almost incredible benignancy and extreme unction : ' Sir, the mistake is mine, I should have said that I am the Archbishop of Canterbury.' Nor did he blush when he uttered these words. A faint cheer apprised me of the fact that Rupert was also watching the poignant drama unfold, and that he appreciated the magnificent attempt to save the situation.

' Sir,' came the riposte, ' I must inform you that his Grace the Archbishop is clean shaven.'

But even after that Haskett showed no signs of mental disturbance but, discarding the shovel hat by an act of legerdemain, and substituting a cap of a loud check and notably sporting shape, produced the giddy parergon of a remarkable series of efforts.

' Sir, a temporary mental aberration. I am, of course, not the Archbishop ; I am Mr Harry Tate, the well-known comedian.'

The effect of these words was magical.

The countenance of the offended dignitary, which had become more and more alarmingly vertical as the duologue proceeded, and was by this time almost A.P. resumed in a flash its normal horizontal aspect as the usual friendly smile suffused it. He advanced with outstretched arms.

' My very dear sir, how often I have wished to meet you. I fear I am sadly ignorant, but I have not the faintest conception of how you manage to waggle your moustache in that inimitable fashion. Will you not, as a personal favour, tell me how you manage this feat ? '

Then it was that our friend rose to the greatest heights and achieved the sublime.

' I am sorry, Dean, but I regret to say that my moustache is suffering from muscular rheumatism, and that only the application, internal of course, of at least two strong whiskies, will enable it to carry out its wonted function and waggle. A third dose of the same medicine and it will waggle freely ; but I fear that it must be past closing time.'

The Dean uttered a joyful cry, and the vergers smiled audibly.

' If you and your companions will accompany me to the Deanery, doubtless all will be well."

The scenes of fraternisation that followed are more easily imagined than described, while the two protagonists led the way, the others singing and dancing and exchanging hats with innocent mirth.

The last I saw of this touching scene was a glimpse of Speaker playfully robing himself in the head verger's gown to the accompaniment of loud cheering and much laughter from the assistant vergers.

The sounds of revelry died gradually away, and once more :

' The moonbeams sleep among the ancient pews,
And solitude her wonted sway renews.'

ON CLIMBING ALONE

A. P. Rossiter

' There is one *alone;* and *there* is not a second.' *(Ecclesiastes* IV, 8.)

I very much doubt whether these notes, or confessions on so improper a subject should be regarded as ' printable.' If I am to judge by the orthodox attitude, they should be suppressed in the public interest ; and, though nothing technically or legally ' unprintable ' will appear in them, they may very well be described in the terms applied by another Victorian poet to Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* : ' Poeta nascitur : non fit for publication.' Nor have I the valuable excuse that what I write is at least *supposed* to be Poetry.

There seems no escape from some kind of rhetorical flourish, so in approaching this rather indecent subject, let me borrow one from Byron.

> ' I know this is unpopular, I know
> 'Tis blasphemous ; I know one may be damned . . .
> . . . I know my catechism ; I know we're crammed
> With the best doctrine till we quite o'erflow. . . . ' *

But despite all the other established attitudes towards the solitary pursuit of outrageous sensation (whether in boots or bottles) it is a noticeable fact that the modest little word *solo* tends to appear here and there in ' Climbs Old and New,' often above eminently established initials; and another fact, too, that a little inquiry will soon convince any researcher into the perversions of sportsmen that at some time or another no small proportion of climbers have sampled this condemned diversion.

I assume that on a Mass Observation poll or Club-plebiscite, the vote would go heavily against ' climbing alone.' I assume that the true orthodox attitude is not misrepresented by my introductory assertions, and that this attitude is compounded of feelings which compromise between those a decent Englishman traditionally has about Suicide, and those he has about Solitary Drinking. My abominable zeugma about boots and bottles depends upon this hypothesis ; so that if I am quite mistaken, I owe one apology to the reader and perhaps two to the preposition ' in,' since I have misjudged the one and misused the other.

Till corrected, I presume that ' the best doctrine ' holds that one should not climb alone, and that this is an article of faith in the unwritten catechism which also includes (in italics) ' *The Leader never falls ' :* a generalisation so universally true that it only needs to be translated into German to become a dangerous paradox.

*From *Beppo.*

However, I assume that this item is at least true in faith ; if only because it serves my improper turn to argue that if this is indeed so, what is the difference between leading and climbing alone ?

It will be agreed even by confirmed Solitary Sealers that there is a difference. But what it is, is not so easy to define. During the war years, many a climber must have found himself driven to choose between not climbing at all and climbing by himself, merely from the misfortune of having got a day or so free when there was no one else to make up a party. In such circumstances a wise man does not (says the catechism) pick up anything with two legs, two arms, and the usual conjunctions and attach a rope to its middle, merely because what it is pleased to call its mind has an inclination to ascend something, provided that someone else does it first. Anonymous seconds may be excellent ; but the completely chance-met and utterly untried ad-interim second can land one in the very worst kind of solitary climbing. The kind in which a human rucksack must be hauled up behind you, like a load of black care attached to your rope, and with the additional burden of the reflection that you will have much more than the weight of the heaviest responsibility for material objects (such as a good camera) on your conscience, if it is banged about severely or dropped. One, therefore, assumes that the lone wise man climbs by himself ; and that this is one of the beginnings of the different processes which result in the word *solo* (or a name or signature by itself, which is modester, I take it) or, alternatively, in the deprecating comments which go to the tune of ' took to climbing by himself, and he's no good now,' or ' he'll be picked up all by himself at the bottom of something one of these days.'

For worse or better, many people do climb alone. And since thinking precisely on the event, though apparently dangerous to Hamlets, produced the whole knotty apparatus of rope and belay technique, it should follow that there can be no particular harm in *thinking* about this game, and even perhaps some advantage in the deducing of morals from it.

So long as all is going well on an established, well-scratched climb, there neither is nor can be, any essential difference between solo climbing and leading. The rope to the second does not in any sense ' support' the leader, and he ought, in these circumstances, to be immune from falling off. (We assume that loose rock is ruled out, together with falling sheep, stones, attacks of faintness, etc. etc. Which is what every leader *does* tacitly assume.) If this is not so, it is quite unjustifiable to take a novice a-climbing at all, and novices must learn either on ' fixed ' ropes from the top (preferably with winches attached) or by climbing alone. *Quod est absurdum.*

In fact, no difficulty arises until something looks like going wrong ; and since this is what every soundly orthodox thinker has in mind when he condemns the soloist, it is what we can sit back and think about. All but a very small number of climbers know very well what the anonymous author of that very unexciting old play *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* meant when he wrote his lines about Prince Arthur, when he tried to roof-climb out of the castle in which John has imprisoned him :—

> ' Fear 'gins dissuade the strength of my resolve,
> My hold will fail, and then, alas, I fall ;
> And if I fall, no question, death is next.'

It may be doubted whether any climber puts the thesis to himself with such prosaic logicality, but the emotional equivalent of that delightfully flat ' no question ' is part of most climbers' experience. Yet it comes home to the solitary climber with peculiar force. It is mechanically true that no rope can possibly ' support' the leader in the sense of pushing him upwards or pulling him against the face. Indeed, on a run-out of a mere fifty feet, it can be felt doing just the opposite. But a mysterious current of moral pressure does run like electricity up ropes, and the very presence of another—possibly indomitable—will behind does measurably mitigate the difficulties of ascent. With no second, this is lacking. The thing becomes much harder, once it has begun to look like Arthur's architectural surroundings. And it is not so convincing to misapply Byron once more (who is really talking about the Swiss) and say :—

> ' But with the breath that fills
> Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
> With the fierce native daring which instills
> The stirring memory of a thousand years." **

One's native daring can be felt leaking ; and if there is no stance on which to perch, and fill one's ' mountain pipe ' and light it, the mainly impressive thing about ' the breath' is an embarrassing state of breathlessness, on which the most stirring memories of historic determination have but little influence. Caesar's ' Alea jacta est' at Rubicon and Nelson's ' A peerage or Westminster Abbey ' fail to steady shaky knees or confirm the warm-water-filled sinews. A whispering demon of despondency mutters that it isn't *dice* that are going to be thrown, its YOU ; and that while Nelson ended with both, the majority achieve neither. . . (And there are similar answers to all the cantraps and conjurations that I at least can think of.) If the orthodox are right in their views of solo-ism, this state of mind (which may very well prove penultimate) is richly deserved ; and its dangers provide all the necessary grounds

** *Childe Harold* ni. 26.

for condemning the solitary as a potential suicide—and one, moreover, who rather falls into it than chooses it.

In a similar difficulty, a leader draws ' confidence ' from the existence of a second below him, who holds the rope and will, in theory at any rate, interpose ' the spring of the body ' between the falling body and a direct take-up of rope on rock. In practice, the second's mere presence may be a more important factor than his estimated springiness or tensile strength, so that the leader might almost be said not to fall off only because it would be so shaming if he failed to climb the pitch. This is quite irrational, but if you climb much alone, you will find there is truth in it. With a party behind you, there is a compulsion to go on, a moral incentive—fear of public opinion, no doubt—for trying your hardest ; whereas when by yourself, the voice of moderation is always strong on the side of a judicious retreat. A retreat which would appear to yourself as craven cowardice if you beat it while leading a party in the same place and the self-same conditions.

From a few accidental experiences, however, I have come to doubt whether this moral urge or stimulation to ' confidence ' need make as much difference as this argument has suggested. The rational side I shall return to later. On the irrational I learnt a great deal some years ago by light-heartedly embarking on the Flake Climb on Kern Knotts without any very clear idea of where it went or why I was doing it. By the time I was discovering why it is labelled ' strenuous,' I had an earnest desire for a rope from the top, coupled with a sincere conviction that retreat was quite beyond me. For all the help I could possibly receive I was worse off than Thomas Gray's favourite cat ; though it was caryatids or winged horses that I required as 'speedy aid,' not Nereids or dolphins. Confidence could not have been lower. But the reflection that there was nothing for it but a really concentrated effort of will turned impossibility into possibility ; and it was only on the last bit (beneath which one can rest a little) that the obvious fact occurred to me that even if I had been unalone *and* climbing *second,* the rope would not have been of the smallest use to me on the more difficult central part. For this reason. The climb runs diagonally, and the best a falling second can hope for is a large pendulum-swing, in which he leaves his knuckles, nose, ear or ears, kneecaps and any other projecting portions distributed in smears along the rougher portions of his flight ; i.e., unless he kicks off in falling, and chances broken bones on arrival at the other end of the swing. In short, the conditions of climbing the Flake alone are, for myself, indistinguishable from those of leading it ; except only in so far as it is the moral pressure of the party which compels me to start as leader. On

the psychological or moral side, then, it would seem that the supposed differences I mentioned before are mainly illusory ; and therefore to be overcome by exactly the same effort of concentration which every leader must make at times. For there must always be places and conditions where Shakespeare's lines in *Cymbeline* seem so apposite as to make one wonder what the man found to climb in Warwickshire, when he writes of ' the art o' the court,

> As hard to leave as keep ; whose top to climb
> Is certain falling, or *so slippery that*
> *The fear's as bad as falling.*' (iii.3.46 ff.)

Now to the technical or rational side. It can be assumed that the Solitary carries a rope, and that unless he is following something well scratched and within his powers, he will attach it to his middle in the usual way, just for companionship or to show that he isn't standoffish or a misanthrope. In an emergency, he will try to hitch it in such a way as to hold him, should he come off. Aha ! cry the Orthodox ' Direct belay ! ' True enough. But is this so very different from the common practice of the leader's arranging a Running-belay ? I know that in theory, the length of rope which must absorb the energy of a leader's fall on to a running-belay is the total length from his body to his second. But in practice what is likely to happen is that the friction over the belay-loop checks motion so considerably that the main strain falls on the very short length used in the running-belay. The rule ' the shorter the length the sooner the break ' has been mathematically demonstrated.*** It must follow that the loop is extremely likely to break, even supposing it is rope and not line, and good *new* rope, not just ' rope.' The Solitary has the advantage with his direct belay ; for he can, if he does not mind the clumsiness of it, proceed against his awkward pitch on a *double* rope instead of a single one. All he has to find is the sort of spike or bollard which will hold a rope firmly against a pull from below, but off w'hich it will easily lift from above. Chockstones are of no use to him as a rule, but even they can be utilised if he passes his rope behind, and then fixes it to his waist-line, allowing a long enough loop to get him past the anticipated awkwardness. (The loop can be let out by degrees if necessary ; and in theory, a good unworn rope should stand the strain of an average man's falling its length, if it is doubled like this.)

There is no need to go into the question of deciding how far you want to fall, and where to stop. But the roped Solitary must clearly think ahead in such matters. There is little to be said for hanging in mid-air under an overhang, in comparatively robust

***See Prof. Goodsell in *Climbers' Club Journal* 1949, " On the requisite strength of a rock-climber's rope."

health but with no idea of how to get anywhere else until the next party happens to come within earshot—at the end of next week, perhaps. Plainly the ideal place to stop (if start you must) is somewhere in the vicinity of a stance large enough to recover your equanimity on. It is advisable to stop just *above* it, since ropes and waists are more elastic than any but the most nicely grassed ledges, and bouncing *on* a rope is much less alarming than bouncing *off* ledges. Admittedly it is hard not to be convinced that a rope is just going to break when it ' takes up ' and you feel the stretch of it coming out at you. (The curious can sample this sensation by abseiling on a new rope. Let yourself run rather too fast, then brake hard ; you will be quite near a passing conviction that it is about to break or that something has come unmoored aloft.) But landing only to rebound into space again is quite enough :

' A patriot race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear ;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer.' ****

I am not entirely sure what these lines mean, as applied to the French invasion of Switzerland ; but they come near enough to suggesting the unpardonable wrong of introducing into the psyche a cowed and pawky spirit irreconcilable with mountain liberty—and one which ends by scaring a man off the crags for good. Safety-technique, properly understood, must attempt to minimise damage to the mind as well as to the limbs.

This can only be approached by thinking on the event very precisely indeed. I maintain that the Solitary necessarily finds himself doing this, the average group or chain-climber] does not ; and therefore, climbing alone is a moral practice. Those who condemn it out of hand are consciously motivated by a reasonable recognition of its risks, neatly formulated by the Preacher : ' Two are better than one. . . . For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow ; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth ; for he hath not another to help him up.' *(Ecdesiastes* IV. 9 and 10.) But they are, too, I think, unconsciously motivated by the recognition that the risks are not so entirely different when a leader falls ; and this is a contemplation so disturbing that an inhibition steps in to protect them from it.

Thinking about what happens when a leader ' comes off' tends to go only just-so-far. The ' catechism ' tells the Second to anticipate where and how the strain will come, warning him that it is far greater than he is likely to be able to imagine. (The value of this warning would repay analysis ?) But it is assumed that whether he

****Coleridge : *France, An Ode.*

checks the run of the rope much or little, ' the spring of the body ' comes between the momentous mass of the falling leader and the dead-stop of the rock-belay ; and that this will prevent a break. It is *not* assumed that—as often happens—the Second finds himself inverted in the twinkling of an eye, *either* because the stance is not level or large *or* because the pull of the rope on his hand sets up a torque which is greater than the friction of his boots can resist. In either case he rotates about the point of attachment of his waist-line to the belay, till he hangs more or less head-downwards, and when the rope comes taut, no ' spring of the body ' will be ' interposed.' A very determined man or one of slow reactions may retain his grip on the running rope to the last. It may do him great credit ; but it cannot make much difference to the fate of his leader. If he hits his face in spinning round he will, I imagine, automatically let go the rope, by mere reflex-action. The greater the speed of the accident and the less it (or anything like it) has been imaginatively met in advance (by ' thinking too precisely '), the more certain it is that blind self-preservation will determine what a man does. Granted this hypothesis, it follows that our twentieth century safety-technique should be careful not to pin its faith to too old-fashioned a psychology. It seems to me that the classical writers on mountain-craft assume a paramount autonomy of the Will, and that we need to think out whether we believe in that or not. If we find it an exaggerated claim, it is excessive to expect every Second to be a Casabianca. It is also irrelevant—if humanly natural enough—to praise the scorched and rope-wealed second who hangs on like grim death and ' saves his leader.' Irrelevant, that is, if what counts is mechanics, not guts.

I do not presume to decide the issue. I recognise that in many cases both are involved ; especially when things go ' according to Hoyle ' and the second's feet remain on his stance, the rope runs properly over his shoulder or round his waist, and the percussion thrusts down directly on to his legs. But if his feet slip at the bang, still more if he is off them already, then the difference between the engineered ' indirect belay ' and the condemned ' direct' one is **nil.** The risks are exactly those of the Solitary who has rigged himself a ' save-me-somehow ' hitch below; and the two determining factors are (1) How direct is the fall—how much of a slide rather than a drop ? and (2) How much will that rope endure ? For if the ' spring of the body ' is for any reason *not* interposed, then the risk is that the rope breaks behind the second, and it is no longer a question of ' better two men hurt than one killed.' A recent smash in Wales, in which the second apparently held his leader, only for the belay-loop to break behind him, illustrated this perfectly.

(The coroner had the loop sent to a ropemaker for inspection, but I have not seen any account of the verdict on it.)

I fear I have presented Solo-climbing as a ' demn'd horrid grind,' as Mr Mantalini found Life ; or, worse, as a dreadful Moral Gymnasium. But I should not attempt so immoral a theme at all were it not for these much wider considerations. Not long ago, I put some of my problems to an old leader of mine, one who has got as high as Everest—which seems to me more than high enough. His tentative answer was succinctness itself : ' Nylon and direct belays.' But we both agreed that, having handled nylon, we gravely doubted whether we could hold it. So we invented a patent friction-glove. If the *Kletterschuh*, why not the *Kletter-handschuh* ? Both are meant to keep a grip on things otherwise rather ungrippable. Why not ?

This however, like the other matter of the shock-absorbing spring Karabiner, which I have long toyed with as an armchair inventor, raise issues too wide for my present purpose. This is no more than to suggest that the things which have crossed your mind when climbing alone—and I feel sure that you *have* done it, now and then, even if you only retired with the reflection that 'It'll go all right when I've got Somebody behind me '—are worth picking up and examining.

But woeful as the Lone Faller is, the Solitary has his occasional compensations. There is never any need to be bothered at your own extreme slowness. With a new climb you can remain picking and scratching about for a good hour in the same place, without any sense of the need to send apologies below to the poor fellow who can't see what you're at, likes it less and less, and gets no share of the fun. And, last and worst of all, you need have next to no conscience about what you throw down for the benefit of a hypothetical posterity or in the interests of public safety. The loose lumps which you are usually forced to leave alone, greatly as you hate them, can all go thumping down on to the scree. The delectable gunpowder smell of rock-ruination can be enjoyed without apology. And instead of covering some patient being with dirt, grass-tufts, heather, bilberry-bushes and even gorse-prickles, bombarding him with bits of juniper, moss and bluebells—all of which, not being stone, technically require no apology—you can lead him up to a clean new climb a week later, with the modest introduction, ' There's a little thing here—I did it solo the other day—I think it's reasonably clean and decent.'

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

W. A. Poucher

It is necessary, first of all, to decide just precisely what we mean by ' landscape photography.' In this branch of our hobby we are engaged in a search for beauty when we try to capture the changing moods of the countryside. We may want to do this for several reasons. It may be merely to amuse ourselves, when our prints will remind us and our friends of the occasion. It may be that we shall attempt to record some special manifestation of Nature for exhibition purposes, or we may even wish to please the general public by showing them an unusual view of a place they know which will recall their own association with it. I myself specialise in mountain photography, mainly for the latter, which includes climbers, tourists, and other photographers who love the hills.

Three things are essential for success in any of these spheres. One must have a good camera and be so familiar with its use that one does not have to think of anything else but the subject when taking a photograph. Secondly, the photographer must appreciate the fundamentals of design and apply them unconsciously, and, thirdly, he must have an intimate knowledge of lighting in relation to the country he is going to photograph.

THE CAMERA

The serious worker will ask himself the question, ' Has the miniature camera any advantages, or is the larger negative better ? ' I settled this point quite decisively some years ago, when I happened to be on the shores of Llyn Llydaw, on a Christmas Day. It was about eleven o'clock on a sunny morning, with a placid lake and a good mantle of snow on the hills ; the light was at an angle of forty-five degrees, and over my left shoulder. I photographed precisely the same scene with a Leica and an Etui, I used the same make of panchromatic film, gave the same exposure and used the same stop, afterwards processing both negatives identically. I then made a fifteen by twelve print of each, and everyone who saw them chose the Leica shot without knowing its identity. When questioned about their choice, they all said there was no appreciable difference in the sharpness of rendering, but that the print they preferred had better modelling and gave a more stereoscopic effect to the scene. I have never been able to explain this difference, unless it is that the miniature lens was responsible for it.

There are doubtless many people who acquire a miniature camera because it is the most expensive instrument and has the most gadgets, but I personally find the interchangeable lenses indispen-

sable in mountain photography, where restricted viewpoints are common. This is especially noticeable on narrow ridges such as those of the Coolins, where it is only possible to get in an effective foreground by the use of a wide-angle lens. Other examples which come to mind are the Sphinx Rock on Great Gable, and the spectacular ridges of Aonach Eagach, Beinn Eighe, Liathach and An Teallach. I take with me on my expeditions three lenses only, and on analysing my shots afterwards I usually find that seventy per cent, have been taken with a 5 cm. lens, two per cent, with a long-focus lens, and the rest with a 3"5 cm. wide-angle lens, although, when taking rock faces, the latter is used most often. After a trip to Skye, I found that forty-eight per cent, of my shots had been taken with a wide-angle lens, forty-eight per cent, with a 5 cm. lens and the rest with the long-focus ; the landscape on this island, however, is exceptional, but photographers who wish to exploit it must be experienced mountaineers if they do not wish to find themselves in such positions that they will have to be rescued.

Another great advantage in the miniature lenses is their depth of focus, which, even at infinity, render the foregrounds dead sharp. From my own experience I can say that it is seldom necessary to use the focusing device unless one wishes to give the illusion of distance by having it slightly blurred. Another point in favour of the miniature camera is having thirty-six frames on a film. Imagine the advantages of this on a long snow climb, such as the traverse of the Cam Mor Dearg Arete and Ben Nevis, when the wild grandeur of the scene changes with every few steps and it is possible to take sixty or seventy shots of the whole circuit. I have often used this number of frames on some of the long traverses in the British hills and can well understand what it would have meant if I had been using a larger frame with a smaller number on each film, especially in a high wind and with the temperature well below freezing point. Moreover, the greater number of frames gives one greater latitude in taking a variety of foregrounds for the same scene, and it is only on examining the prints afterwards that one realises the striking differences they make in showing off the main item of interest in the picture. Of course, with the high cost, one cannot do this sort of thing with colour film ; a decision has to be made on the spot with the hope that the viewpoint is the best in the circumstances.

The universal viewfinder is a most valuable gadget, whose use does not end merely **with** its variable field of view. I find it indispensable for precise design and, in consequence, my prints seldom need trimming ; you never accidentally cut off the top of a mountain or find the foreground omitted from the print!

The ease of manipulation is a great asset with the miniature

camera in mountaineering. On one occasion I waited a whole afternoon on Sgurr Dearg, in Skye, and, finally, had just ten minutes of good lighting in which to take all the photographs I wanted. I had, of course, selected the eighteen viewpoints beforehand, and, during the brief period of sunshine, had to run along the two hundred yards of this narrow rock ridge to secure all the shots ; an impossible feat with more cumbersome equipment, especially as a change of film would have been necessary.

A wide selection of filters is available for the miniaturist, and I have tried them all. In the Alps a 2 X yellow is generally useful, while above six thousand feet an ultra-violet gives a good rendering of both snow and sky. In this country, however, I have achieved most success with a 5 X orange filter, because it imparts greater contrast to the landscape and, at the same time, correctly interprets the sky, which is vital in this branch of photography. Orange filters differ widely in colour owing to the variable amount of red blended with the yellow pigment they contain. I personally favour a 4 x yellow with a trace of red only, because this combination does not eliminate atmospheric perspective. Most of them are too red and, when they are used, the resulting prints give an almost infra-red effect.

Finally, I never take a photograph without a lens-hood which imparts an added brilliance to the prints by cutting out all adventitious light. I almost invariably use panchromatic film of 27 Scheiner speed, although, for the perfect rendering of rock faces, I have found nothing better than orthochromatic material. I have tried all the fine-grain developers, but since the advent of DK20 I have used nothing else. I started with a time of eighteen minutes at 65° F., then reduced it to fifteen minutes, and finally cut it down to twelve minutes. This treatment yields brilliant contrasty negatives with a standard exposure of 1/60 second at an aperture of 6·3, using an orange filter in good lighting, between the months of May and October.

DESIGN

Design, or composition, if you prefer it, is often referred to as having ' an eye for a picture.' I believe this flair is a gift, although those with artistic tastes should have no difficulty in developing it. When taking a photograph of good design, three considerations should be borne in mind : first, the subject selected must be attractive ; second, it must be photographed from a good viewpoint ; third, there must be a strong and effective foreground. A successful combination of these three indispensable factors cannot be obtained casually ; if you do not know the country, the best thing to do is to explore it on the dull days and note the viewpoints, if

necessary building a small cairn to save time when you go there again. Of course, a little planning beforehand with the aid of a map will save much time and disappointment. Take, for instance, the majestic aspect of the Central Lakeland Fells when seen from Grasmoor. This hill stands on the north-west corner of the district and slopes down steeply to the Buttermere valley, with the ridges beyond rising gradually to culminate in the highest mountain group dominated by Scafell Pike. This provides an attractive subject. Grasmoor is a superb viewpoint, and a strong foreground of rock can be easily found on its crest. Here, then, are the constituents of a first-class mountain picture, but if you wish to take advantage of them you must be at the viewpoint in the evening, when the sun is in the west, otherwise the subject will appear in silhouette and reveal none of its grand rugged structure.

Mountain subjects vary tremendously with the angle from which they are seen, and change their aspect also with the height of the viewpoint. Take the case of Snowdon, which is clearly visible from such distant viewpoints as Cader Idris. I think the group is best seen at sunrise in the winter from the Capel Lakes, but the peak itself presents its most majestic aspect from the shore of Llyn Llydaw. It also looks well from the following high viewpoints : The Glyders to the north ; Crib Goch to the east ; Yr Aran to the south ; and Y Garn II to the west, which all goes to prove that the photographer who knows the country has the best chances of success with landscape work. I would like to add, however, that in my opinion mountain subjects make the best pictures when photographed from about half their height. The position they occupy in the frame is also important, and, when the viewpoint allows it, I prefer to place them on the third, but with a small object to give balance to the whole. This is not always possible, and the best illustration I can give is that of Buachaille Etive Mor, which is the most shapely mountain in the country when seen from Rannoch Moor, in the vicinity of Kingshouse. To place it on the third requires the use of a wide-angle lens, but aside from Kingshouse itself there is no object in this vast stretch of barren moorland that can be used to give balance. In this problem I had to compromise by using a 5 cm. lens when the mountain occupied the whole frame, but I placed Kingshouse on the third ***inside*** the mountain outline, and so obtained balance.

Strong foregrounds are vital and, in fact, often steal the picture. They are very difficult to discover in barren hill country such as Skye, Snowdonia and much of the Highlands, when the only solution to the problem is to use bold rocks or a figure if you happen to have an amenable companion. Trees and water make the most

interesting foregrounds and they excel in such places as English Lakeland, the Cairngorms, the Pennines and parts of the Highlands. It should be remembered, however, that *contre-jour* lighting imparts sparkle to water which may otherwise appear dull and lifeless. Reflections of the landscape in lakes require careful treatment, because people will turn the photograph upside down and comment upon the faithful duplication of the subject. It is best to place the waterline on the lower third and employ a strong foreground when the lake surface is unruffled. If, however, gentle waves break up the reflection, the best effects are then obtained by placing the water-line on the upper third. Strangely enough, one of my most successful pictures is very bad compositionally, because the water-line is in the centre of the scene and could not be avoided if any foreground was to be included. Luckily the subject is not in this case perfectly mirrored.

The last point I wish to mention in connection with design is that of the lead-in. If a tree is used for this purpose, should it be on the left or the right ? This is largely a matter of opinion, and while my personal preference is for the left, my decision as to placing is governed by the angle of the light. If it comes from the left and gives texture to the bark of the tree and luminosity to its leaves, I place the tree on the right so that its illuminated surface faces the *inside* of the picture, and *vice versa*. While this arrangement is not always possible, nevertheless, I try to apply the principle to all items of foreground interest, such as rocks, cottages, etc.

LIGHTING

What sort of conditions are best for landscape photography ? I like purple skies with fine cumulus clouds and a great clarity of atmosphere, while others have a preference for soft misty effects, slight drizzle, or haze to add mystery to the scene. I think the general taste is for sunshine, because this induces happiness, but no photographer revels in a cloudless sky with hard unrelieved shadows. In one of my books, ' Snowdon Holiday,' I decided to test the tastes of the public by including a set of haze photographs. They met with a mixed reception in the national Press, for while the southern newspapers frowned on the experiment, some of the northern dailies applauded it because they said the average tourist usually saw the hills under these conditions.

If one is to use light advantageously it is essential to plan every tour and expedition so that the subjects to be photographed are well illuminated as each viewpoint is attained. As an example, I will take the Snowdon Horseshoe, one of the finest mountain ' walks ' in the country. The great ridge is semi-circular in shape,

with Crib Goch at its north-eastern extremity, Snowdon in the centre, and Lliwedd at its south-eastern end. If you climb Crib Goch first, this ridge and its pinnacles are well illuminated from the left-hand side and the light is across the precipices of Snowdon ; the former provides an excellent foreground and the latter a superb subject. When you attain the summit of Snowdon the sun will be overhead, but as you continue with the traverse over Lliwedd, the light will be over your right shoulder and it will illuminate the precipices of this magnificent crag and afford a wonderful mountain subject, with plenty of rocks to give foreground interest. If you take this walk in the opposite direction you will have flat lighting between Lliwedd and Snowdon, and if you traverse the rest of the ridge in the late afternoon the same conditions will appertain. Moreover, the view of Snowdon from Crib Goch will be in silhouette and you will return home with a disappointing bag of pictures of this famous ridge. Most of the great ridges of Arran, Glencoe, Torridon and Ben Nevis demand a study of the lighting in just the same way if success is to be attained, and with luck each of them can be photographed in a day. The Main Ridge of the Coolins is, however, much more difficult from the climber's point of view, although the photographs of it are rewarding and sensational. Owing to the vagaries of the weather, it took me five weeks to solve this fascinating photographic problem.

Even the most careful planning and calculations about lighting are often defeated by conditions of rapid atmospheric change. I had to visit Cwm Eigiau four times to capture successfully a satisfactory mood of Craig-yr-Ysfa, and the viewpoint was no less than eight miles from my habitation. The great crag faces north-east and the light goes off it about eleven o'clock in the morning, so that on each occasion I had to be about very early ! Patience and persistence are the only advice I can give those who wish to succeed. In general, I would say that May and June afford the largest number of opportunities for success, because the lighting is then most brilliant in this country and the high sun enables deep-sided valleys or corries to be photographed. Good examples are Cwm-y-Cau before eleven a.m. ; the north face of Cader Idris after five p.m. ; Cairn Lochain in the Cairngorms after six p.m., and it is miles and miles from the nearest hotel. September and October are excellent for soft lighting with long contrasty shadows, but these months are seldom useful for valleys, with the possible exceptions of Langdale and Eskdale, both of which are at a favourable angle.

Texture is an important feature in any good photograph and is secured by cross lighting when the sunlight is at an angle of between forty-five and ninety degrees on either left or right of the viewpoint.

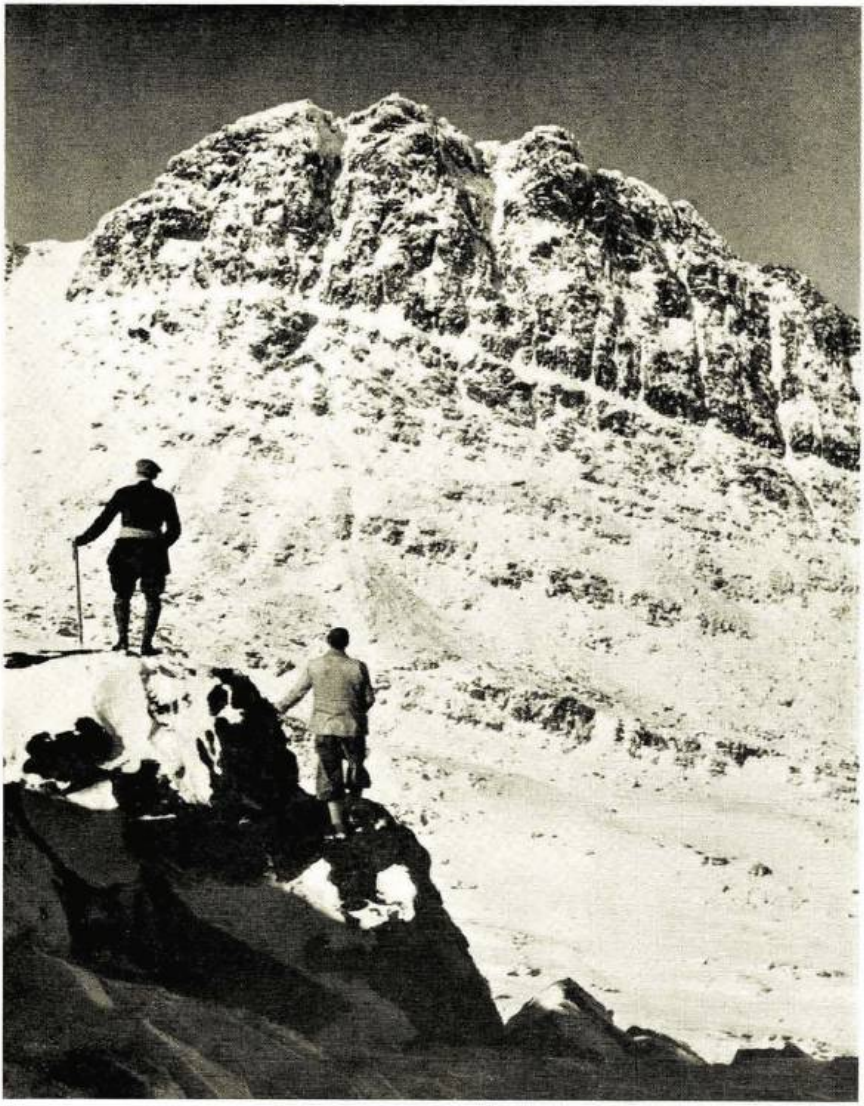
It imparts modelling and delineates detail, as, for instance, in the bark of trees or the facade of a great mountain. I will give you two examples : Aonach Dubh, in Glencoe, is a magnificent crag, seamed with gullies and resplendent with innumerable buttresses ; it faces west. According to my calculations with a compass it would look its best at four-thirty p.m., when the light would be right across it, but I had to wait for five long days before these conditions prevailed. Malham Cove, in the Pennines, is the most spectacular feature in this long line of hills, and it faces just west of south. It is 365 feet high, consists of limestone, and is striated vertically with thousands of fissures. I had seen many photographs of it, but all of them were mere chalk and soot effects. I again made my calculations with a compass, because I wanted *contre-jour* lighting which would cast minute shadows in every one of its innumerable cracks, and came to the conclusion that two p.m. would give me the result I wanted. I had to wait four days for success, and the pictures I secured surprised many sceptical photographers !

In our early days many of us were told to take photographs with the sun at our backs, but nowadays we all know that flat lighting is to be avoided whenever possible. It is most useful for colour work, however, but I would like to point out the differences between the months of May and June. In the former there are plenty of reds and browns in the landscape, due to the vast quantities of dead bracken which cloak the hills ; in the latter, the freshly-grown bracken hides these colours and the result is one great mass of green.

The photography of snow has its problems, and the first difficulty to be overcome in Britain is to find it. The chances of success are greater away from the west coast, where it usually disappears all too quickly ; the Cairngorms generally maintain their white mantle for longer periods, as also some of the higher hills in the Pennines. A few years ago I was anxious to photograph Tryfan and the Glyders under snow, but I had to make three visits before I was successful. With the exception of 1947 I think our winters have been much milder than they used to be, and anyone who is fortunate enough to secure a good set of snow scenes should congratulate himself.

A vast snow landscape is very attractive to the eye, but exceedingly difficult to capture with a camera, even when the sun shines in all its glory ; without it the scene resembles a dull white blanket and photographs taken under these conditions are both uninteresting and disappointing. It should be borne in mind that snow shadows are blue and that they alone impart texture. In consequence, restricted

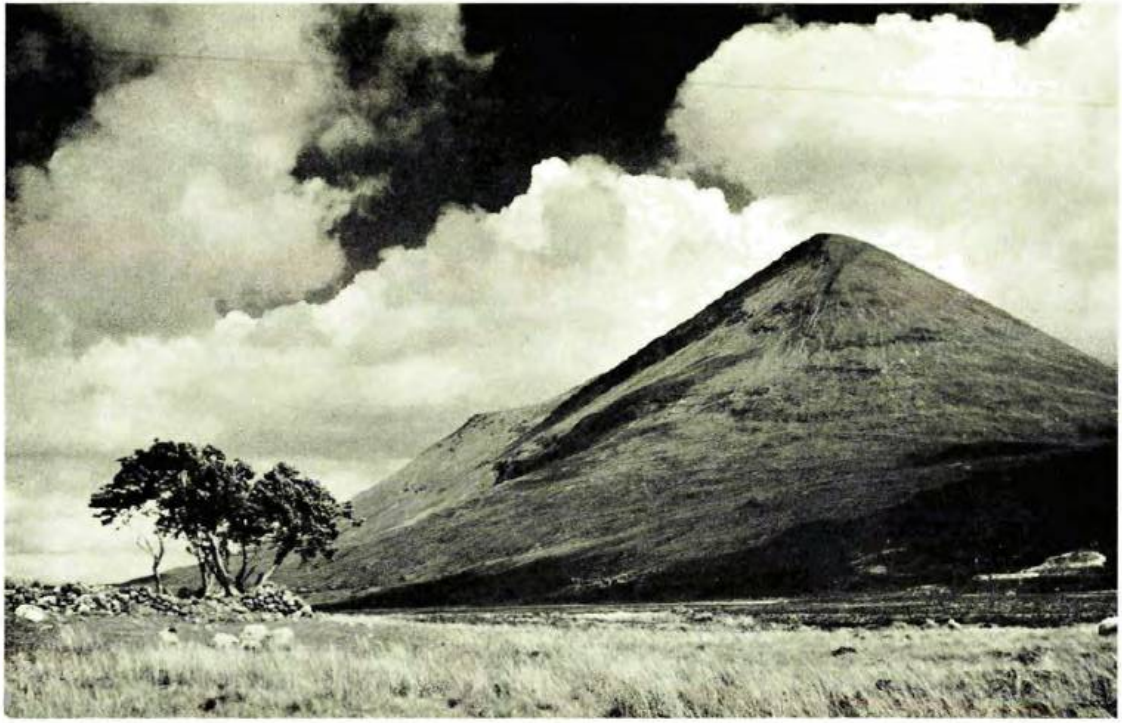
areas close to the camera yield the most pleasing pictures, but the photographs must be taken with either *contre-jour* lighting or with the sunlight across the canvas. The secret of success with extensive snow scenes is to feature a striking foreground, such as frosted reeds on the edge of a lake or a cottage with heavy snow on the roof. In these cases the choice of filter is governed by the intensity of blue in the sky : for a pale sky, an orange filter ; for a deep sapphire sky, a yellow filter.



W. A. Poucher

THE BUTTRESSES OF TRYFAN

Illustrates the importance of choosing a strong FOREGROUND to support the immense sweep of snow, crowned by the three buttresses. Sunlight at an angle of about 50 degrees left emphasises detail. 11 a.m., February.



W. A. Poucher

GLAMAIG — ISLE OF SKYE
Illustrates the simplicity of DESIGN

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LAKELAND

A. R. Dolphin

Far be it from me to renew old controversies, and if the Wales versus Lakeland debate were entirely a thing of the past I would not dream of mentioning it. Unfortunately, however, invidious comparisons are still all too common on both sides, usually from people not in a position to judge. Particularly irritating are certain members of the ' Numerical' School who ascend traditional Lakeland very severes in rubbers and perfect conditions and then obtain morbid satisfaction from classifying them according to their own system as IVA or IVB. To do them justice, they also apply the same downgrading process to their own territory (to a lesser extent) and appear to regard a ' VI' as a climb awaiting a second ascent, when it **will** be automatically reduced to VA or VB. A system of classification thus abused tends to lose the useful function for which it was originally intended and could, indeed, prove dangerously misleading. Some clarification certainly seems necessary. The range of difficulty embraced by the term ' Very Severe ' is now much too wide, probably greater than any other two standards combined. There is little in common between, say, ' *E' Route* on Gimmer or the *North-West* on Pillar and *Overhanging Bastion* on Castle Rock or *Tophet Grooves* on the Napes. I believe the solution lies, however, not in the relegation of the ' easy ' very severes to severe (with possible exceptions) but in either sub-division of the class or the creation of a new one ; preferably the former. Alternatively, the Numerical System, if properly used, would be satisfactory, but is probably an unnecessary complication.

To return to my original theme, the Welsh climber who speaks with contempt of the standard of Lakeland climbing when his knowledge of it goes no farther than *Hiatus* or *Botterill's Slab* is almost as much at fault as his Northern counterpart who judges a Wales on his acquaintance with Tryfan or Glyder Fach without ever having visited Clogwyn du'r Arddu or the Llanberis Cliffs. I say ' almost' advisedly, for the Welsh climber can plead ignorance. Whereas the ' Pamphlet Guides ' bring the story of Cambrian achievement comparatively up to date the existing Lakeland Guides can no longer claim to be truly representative of the standard or scope of climbing which the District has to offer. The progress which has been made during the last ten years is a remarkable tribute to the limited band of enthusiasts chiefly responsible. In Langdale, alone (the region with which I am best acquainted) the number of climbs in the top class has been more than trebled, while Peascod's exploits in Buttermere and Beetham's in Borrowdale

have completely transformed their respective districts. Though steady progress has been maintained in the Central Massif (Scafell, Gable and Pillar) it has become more and more difficult as one ' Last Great Problem ' after another has succumbed to the climber's art, and the centre of gravity has, of necessity, shifted to more remote and lesser known crags where even a new ' difficult ' of quality may still be found.

Probably the greatest single achievement on the major crags has been the girdling of that Mecca of the Climbing World, Scafell East Buttress, a magnificent conclusion to the chapter begun by Kirkus with his epic ascent of *Mickledore Grooves*. The first traverse by R. J. Birkett in 1938 was followed about a year later by the Cross-Hargreaves ascent along a slightly different line. No further attempt had been recorded when, in August, 1947, Des and I donned our rubbers at the foot of Mickledore Chimney. Joe had forgotten his and elected to ' spectate.' Though unfortunate for Joe this was perhaps as well, since we had left Brackenclose unusually late (even for us) and the afternoon was by now far advanced. Taking the lead Des made short work of a steep corner in the sweep of slabs forming the left wall of the *Chimney* and soon reached the level of the small grass ledge at the start of the breath-taking final pitch of *Mickledore Grooves*. To attain this ledge it was necessary to make a simple traverse about thirty feet to the left along an obvious line of holds, or so it appeared from the ground. That nothing could be farther from the truth I realised in full measure when my turn came to follow. The ' obvious line of holds ' dwindled as I approached as though viewed through reversed binoculars. This was balance work, indeed ! I thought of boots—and shivered ! After this curtain (and hair) raiser the holds on *Mickledore Grooves* felt comparatively reassuring and we made rapid progress up the long pitch to a small ledge and belay about twenty feet below the top. The traverse then worked its way leftwards across much easier terrain not far below the top of the Crag, and after what had gone before savoured very much of anti-climax. (Des discovered, on a subsequent visit, that Cross's route, at a considerably lower level in this section, maintained a much more consistent standard.) The deterioration was only temporary, however, and our spirits rose as we approached the upper reaches of *Overhanging Wall*. Shortly afterwards we reached a small stance and tiny spike belay overlooking the *White Slab*, but separated from it by an undercut slab, slimy and evil-looking. Des, whose turn it was to descend first, put socks over his rubbers and made light of the pitch. This simple solution was denied me, my only spare socks having succumbed the previous day to the disintegrating forces of

Scafell porphyry. I had then witnessed a gallant attempt on the *Flake Crack* in bare feet by a girl—a Welsh climber—who apparently made a habit of climbing unshod. She spoke quite casually of ascents of *South-West* and other notables. I decided to follow her example. It was my first pitch in bare feet, and it will probably be my last!

The perfect rock of *Great Eastern Route* was soon reached and descended as far as its junction with the *Yellow Slab Variation.* It was getting late ; about half-an-hour of daylight left. Joe had departed some time before for Brackenclose, leaving us in sole possession. But the *Yellow Slab* was not the grim, menacing spectacle I had always imagined, but seemed warm and friendly. The much-feared crux responded eagerly to gritstone tactics. The Girdle was completed.

The East Buttress, with its dark, forbidding aspect, overhanging and perpetually wet, is popularly regarded as unique in Lakeland. But (to my mind) it is equalled in appearance, if not excelled, by two other crags. The first of these lies but a stone's throw from the Gable Traverse guarding the left flank of Great Hell Gate like a frowning sentinel. As a climbing ground its scope is strictly limited. In the centre a sweep of overhangs rises unrelenting from the screes to a height of a hundred and fifty feet, just failing in its attempt to join the great rock cornices which form an impregnable barrier to any direct assault of the upper crag. The first ascent of the face followed a line just to the right of the Central Pillar until further upward progress was barred, when the route was completed by a long and exhilarating traverse to the right. *Tophet Wall,* one of the best severes of its length in the country, now gives its name to the Crag as a whole, other routes having been extracted.

The Central Pillar is bounded on its left by a series of grooves culminating in a mossy gully with no obvious exit. These are the main features of the superb climb, *Tophet Grooves,* first recorded by Birkett in 1940. We had heard of no second ascent when, on a wet and misty afternoon in June, 1947, the tyrannies of *Guide* writing demanded an inspection. The rocks looked singularly uninviting as Des and I roped up below the overhanging nose up which the climb commenced. A shallow, grassy groove about twelve feet above our heads was obviously the first objective, but the method of attaining it was less obvious, holds being conspicuous by their absence. ' Shoulder useful' was the laconic comment of our notes. Des, being lighter, made the first attempt, but soon had to retire, boots, overhanging rock, and slimy fingerholds proving too powerful a combination. With the double advantage of socks over rubbers, and a longer reach I managed to force an entry into the groove,.

after a balance move of agonising delicacy, and ascended a few easier feet to a welcome belay. A short ascent to a square-topped pinnacle, followed by a thirty-foot traverse to a juniper ledge, brought us to the next major obstacle. A recess in the wall above had to be reached, the way being barred by a massive block, apparently completely detached and relying on the doubtful support of a few jammed stones and the friction of a forty-five degree slope. To my relief (I was directly beneath) Des studiously avoided its use and reached a tiny stance and two small belays at the top of the recess. When my turn came I found the rock had a deceptive bulge, making the sharp edge of the doubtful block temptingly inviting. I compromised with a judicious handjam behind it, just sufficient to preserve my balance for the awkward step.

A glance at the pitch ahead was not encouraging, and an enforced retreat seemed more than likely. Round to the right could be seen the steep wall of the open gully which is so noticeable a feature from Great Hell Gate. But whether it could be reached, and if so climbed, it was impossible to tell, for any holds which might be present were quite obscured by a thick, slimy carpet of moss. Des thoughtfully added another belay, and thus fortified, I made a stride which would have strained a ballet dancer round into the gully. I tried to climb straight up, and reached a small grass ledge in a right-angled corner. The wall above was obviously hopeless—not a vestige of a hold—but by leaning out to the right from the end of the ledge I could just reach a small flake with one hand. An irreversible swing would bring other holds within reach from which it might be possible to attain a grass ledge about twenty feet higher; but if not, then the situation would be serious, indeed. The route was unjustifiable, and I returned to my point of entry to try an alternative line. A mossy traverse to the outside edge proved easier **than** it looked, but the vertical ascent which followed was, to me, the most trying section of the entire climb, and I reached the roomy ledge above with a relief not unmixed with surprise. Des attempted the direct ascent, and had just come to the same conclusion as myself when his left foot slipped from the grass ledge and he swung across to the right on his solitary handhold. Luckily, footholds came to light and he was able to continue along the line originally considered, though the climbing was very arduous throughout.

From the end of the ledge the rock fell away in one gigantic overhang split by a six-inch wide crack. The continuation of this crack in the wall above led to familiar ground—a junction with the *Tophet Girdle* about fifty feet above our heads. Undercut at its base, the crack was wet and grassy and must have been a very trying

lead ; a magnificent thread belay behind a massive block was the just reward, and I received the word to follow. A shattered pinnacle seemed a useful take-off point for the awkward move into the crack. I was stepping up, pleased at having found an easy solution to the problem, when, with a rumbling noise, the whole world seemed to fall apart and before I knew what had happened I was dangling on the rope. A loud crash signalled the arrival of the pinnacle on the screes. Somewhat shaken, but otherwise undamaged, I started off again. This time I tested every hold. The grass, in particular, felt most unsatisfying !

The final pitch, still by way of the crack, proved surprisingly resistant (perhaps a psychological reaction) and as it was now beginning to get dark I took an alternative route by way of *Demon Wall.* With the top rope Des then climbed the crack ; it formed a fitting climax to a really first-class route.

Perhaps the most impressive cliff of all is the East Face of Dove Crag situated somewhat remotely at the head of Dovedale beyond the Helvellyn Range. I first gazed up at it on a day of strong wind and pouring rain, when even the grass-scrambling to the foot of the Crag seemed barely justifiable, and it was easy to appreciate why the East Face had for long withstood the intensive exploration of the Pre-War period without even an assault being made. It was not until the Spring of 1939 that its possibilities were explored—and exhausted. It seems fairly safe to say that Haggas's route, perhaps with minor variations, follows the only possible line of ascent and must rank as one of the purest climbs in the country. It held a position of high priority in my Guide programme for 1947 and its ascent was, for me, one of the highlights of the year.

After a month of perfect weather there was still no sign of a break, and it was quite a relief to enter the shade of the Crag after the sweltering heat of Dovedale. It was my companion's first climbing week-end in the Lake District, his previous experience having been confined to gritstone, and his initiation was, to say the least, unconventional. His first climb, about four hours earlier, had been *White Ghyll Wall,* one of the most recent additions in Langdale. *Hangover* (as the route had been aptly named) was now to provide the second.

The first hundred feet of pleasant slabs contained no major difficulties and we quickly reached the ' friction stance ' below the crux. The belay, a few feet higher, was a piton firmly fixed in a horizontal crack by means of a wooden wedge—a somewhat unusual piece of climbing equipment! After some manoeuvring I managed to install my protesting second securely in position and read the complicated description of the next pitch. It proved impossible to

go wrong, however—there was no alternative. A long swing to the left on a rather doubtful handhold gave me some misgivings. A violent arm-pull was then followed by a delicate traverse on small, mossy holds to a very strenuous overhanging corner giving access to a chimney. This was easy, but very loose, particularly near the top where some massive blocks seemed to lean longingly towards their comrades down in Dovedale. I was careful to give them no encouragement.

A short exposed traverse and an overhanging crack were the main features of the next pitch, which was not particularly difficult. I could find no reasonable belay and decided to carry on. The original line looked so severe that I was tempted into trying a direct route by way of an overhanging groove about thirty feet in length which finished at almost the same point. It was an unwise choice, and proved considerably harder than the two pitches I was trying to avoid (I afterwards descended and re-ascended them to complete my knowledge of the climb). Halfway up I arranged a purely ' psychological' running thread belay round a rickety flake to lend moral support for the final overhang. There was the usual choice of handholds—loose rock or grass. I chose the grass. It would, at least, give way with less abruptness.

The three climbs described above are typical examples of the modern Lakeland route, and many others, equally fine, could have been chosen. Such routes as *Overhanging Bastion* and *Zig-zag* on the Castle Rock of Triermain ; *Gordian Knot* and the *Girdle Traverse* on White Ghyll Crag (which almost vies with the Milestone Buttress for accessibility) ; *' F' Route* on Gimmer ; *Shamrock Tower* on Pillar, one of the best of all, and still awaiting a third ascent, as far as I am aware*; *Great Central Climb* and others on Esk Buttress ; *' Y ' Gully* on Haystacks—a veritable ' Central Gully,' from all accounts ; and many more, too numerous to mention. All these compare favourably with the best routes in Wales, with the exception of the West Buttress of Clogwyn d'ur Arddu which, though easier, has greater length. And there is still much to be done.

* This was made by J. Wilkinson's party at Easter, 1948.

THE FINEST CLIMBING COUNTRY OF ALL

T. Howard Somervell

There is a country to which you will never go, though I have been there many times with some of you. There are mountains which you have never climbed, though I have had the grandest days—or shall we say nights—on their slabs and ledges with my friends of the Fells and Rocks.

But as you have never climbed them except with me, and if you ever get there yourselves you will find them all different, and quite changed, I had better describe them to you, as well as a halting pen can do it, before the vision fades.

For you have already guessed where this glorious country is. The long, long trail that leads to the land of my dreams is in its way as fascinating as the land itself. And it is always consistent. Every time we go climbing there together, it is by the same route, and by the same methods, that we get to our mountains. I have to start by myself, with two black, intangible, semi-mystical creatures, like one sees in a Blake picture, as my companions on the preliminary stages of the journey. A good long walk—only we don't walk, we float smoothly along a few feet above the ground—leads over ordinary English down-lands to a hole in the earth, in which there is a long staircase, hewn out of the living rock. Down, down, hundreds of feet into the interior of the brown rock which in the country of the night has replaced the white cliffs of Dover or the shores of the Sussex coast. At last we emerge from the bowels of the earth into a charming little port, hewn out of the cliff, with a whitewashed landing stage, and a square dock with water lapping its sides, as green and clear as the sea off Tintagel on a cloudless day. Waiting in the dock is a little steamer, about the size of the Bowness ferry boat ; all is ready, we hurry across the gangway, and the two black spirits fly away towards the open sea, never to appear again. The whistle blows, and off goes our small craft at incredible speed over miles and miles of sea, all dead calm, as a rule ; for the little tug is not too seaworthy, and if ever a storm arises, the boat grows longer and longer, and, like Alice, curiouser and curiouser, until it becomes an immensely long floating passage, pitching on the tempestuous sea to an incredible extent, pitching more and more until she is nearly vertical, when with a sickening lurch she is up-ended by a colossal wave, and plunges with a great gurgle into the depths of the ocean. Can I breathe ? I try. I gulp, and shiver all over—and here I am in bed, having missed what was going to be such a wonderful climbing holiday.

But more often the sea is calm, and we sight a desolate, sandy

shore, like the coast of North Africa. The little ship makes no bones about that ; she continues to sail, with a rapid and surprisingly frictionless glide, over the land, until we reach some trees, when the boat suddenly stops and we crawl down the sides of our vessel, by now a full-sized liner, and at once begin our journey to the climbing country.

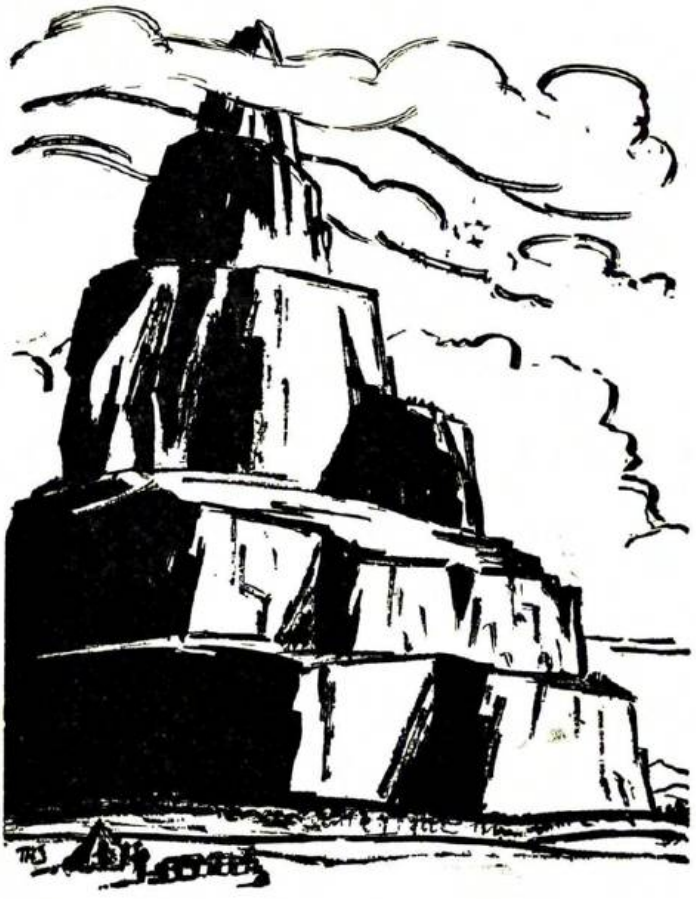
Miles of desert travel follow, and here a great sense of loneliness seems to hang over my spirit, a desire for the companionship that I know will soon be mine, as I walk alone up the steep and sandy slopes which lead laboriously up to the little white town on the crest of the mountain a few miles away. The sand gets ever steeper and steeper, until it can lie no longer ; I take to the rock—good sandstone, like the Sutherland mountains—and an hour or so of scrambling leads to the town. Here we are in a typical Provencal town, like Aries or Aix-en-Provence, with houses as yellow as van Gogh's, and others greyish-white like a picture by Utrillo. And here, praise be, is Bentley Beetham, or Theo Chorley (without coronet), or George Bower, or my brother L.W.S. Sometimes one, usually two, but never more. Our first thought—truth will out, even in dreams—is of a patisserie, and in the simple village street, opposite a typical Belgian church with a green copper dome on a tall tower, we find a shop which would make Herr Rumpelmeyer, if he saw it, sack his cook and get a better, or be prepared to lose his trade. Ice axes and rope are miraculously provided for us, and we go on refreshed through avenues of poplar to the far edge of the mountain on which is perched our little town. Soon we see in front of us a steep cliff, several thousand feet high, down which we must go. Here lies the way to Austria and the East. There is an excellent path, in places steep, in places leading along to the left (East) in long contours ; at last it debouches into an extensive plain, with rivers and avenues, pylons and old castles, not unlike the Rhone Valley a hundred miles wide. We reach a large road, and here once more we adopt the floating mode of progression with which we started out on our journey. It's a grand method of travel, very fast, very smooth ; no jerking about to give you a stitch, and you land up on your mountains in first-rate condition. What mountains they are ! Miles and miles of grand rocks like the Totenkirchl or the Vajolet Towers. Never is there much snow or ice—in fact, if my memory serves me, none at all. We conscientiously carry our axes, but we never have to use them. The colour of the rocks is extremely beautiful—a deep orange such as you see in the more vertical parts of the Dolomites. In a few places the rock is rough like gabbro, and grey like the upper rocks of Pavey Ark. Sometimes it is red granite like Chamonix, sometimes

bluish-white like that other Chamonix near the Borrowdale Hotel. But it is usually the lovely orange of the Tofana. We climb sometimes in orthodox fashion, with a leader and roped-up followers ; but at other times, I regret to say, we go independently, each choosing our own route. Occasionally a loose block crashes down as it becomes detached, and hurtles splintering on the rocks below. But we enjoy the immunity of a timeless existence ; we are never hit or hurt ; and if, as often happens, one of us falls off . . . can I reach it ? Such a good handhold of yellow rock just out of reach of my left hand. I can't hold on much longer with my right . . . there are no footholds, for the rock my feet are on is brown, and brown rock never does have footholds . . . one more try for that yellow hold . . . missed it. I'm coming off. Slowly I rock backwards out into the blue . . . I'm falling . . . falling . . . falling.

Time to get up and cook the sausages.

No, we never return. I have only once been *up* the steep cliff that leads to our Provencal town, and I have never landed at the charming little dock hewn out of the cliffs of Albion. It is a port of departure, but never of arrival.

But we do sometimes go much farther afield. The journey usually begins in the same way, with the voyage from the same port, and the same weird landing of the ship on the desert coast, over which it slides. But instead of going up the hill to Arlesiette, we cross a fairly flat country which gets greener as we get nearer to the equator, until we reach a long spit of rocks going out into the sea. At the end of this there is a small town with rather large and lofty buildings—a little bit of Paris on an island, with Thos. Cook's offices and the Gare du Lyon set in a jumble of shops. Here again, after a solitary journey, I find companions, and off we go along another causeway to where a vast ship lies at anchor. Wading along to it in two feet of water, we easily clamber on board, and take a voyage due west for several days, living in cabins and eating in a saloon until just when you expect (on the map) to have reached British Guiana, you find it is Africa, and on goes the ship over the land, ploughing up the Sahara until it lands once again on the ocean the other side. (Do ships ever *land* on the water after sailing overland ?) Anyway, ours does, invariably. A short voyage of a few miles up a gulf brings us to a village like Shap, near a great square of mountains about 3,000 feet high. The square of hills encloses a large basin of land several thousands of feet deep without an outlet, but there must be no rainfall, for the basin has no lake or river in it. Sometimes we climb these hills, but they only provide rather dull fell walking amongst groves of giant gooseberry bushes, so



they are not worth visiting. The bushes, alas, have no gooseberries on them. The lust for exploration leads us farther on. Everest is waiting for us, and we must get the train at Bombay, a charming little village set on the side of a steep, brown slope with rounded box-trees growing all over the place. Once in the train, a long journey eastwards leads over hill and dale, across bridges, and through ravines, to a station near the end of a tunnel like Goppenstein. Here we collect a number of Sherpa and Tibetan coolies, who are all waiting for us, with donkeys ready loaded. There is an incredible number of these donkeys, and each carries a large load. But I have no idea what the loads *are.* There are packages and boxes and rolls, but we have never yet unpacked one of them. For we have a grim and continuous business on hand. There are several competing parties, and we have a kind of White Tower feeling about it. We can just see Everest—yellow and brown, all rocky and with no snow on, but colossally high, like a great stepped pyramid reaching the sky.

It takes several days to reach the foot of the peak, which is behind a high wall. The country on the way there is reasonably like Tibet, and the people all wear dark red, as do the lamas there. As soon as we reach the foot of Everest, we choose a side of the peak that is not already being attempted by a party of our competitors. Waiting for us on a ledge is a Stalin-like man, in a long cloak, rather like a character in a Russian Opera, but without the beard. We soon get going, climbing very slowly up a series of long, vertical chimneys, obviously suggested by the Schmitt-kamin on the Funffingerspitze. Everest is, in fact, an enlarged Dolomite, built in stages with a wide platform with room for a camp at each stage. Not far from the summit is a smaller resting-place, like the Tennis Court of Moss Ghyll. It is very difficult to see the top, if top there be ; it is veiled in something not quite a cloud. The colour of the rocks is very lovely—who said one doesn't see colour in dreams ? Some photographer, perhaps—and there is no snow about. There are usually five or six other parties on the mountain somewhere, and a few camps on the ledges. Now and again a climber will jump off a ledge, diving backwards in a graceful curve. But nobody cares, for there is no death nor suffering in this pleasant land. Up and up we climb, Stalin alongside us with some word of encouragement. We always manage to climb faster than the other parties, who look on with envy as we struggle on up the chimneys and grooves with increasing energy and speed towards the summit. Soon we reach the cloud-like thing. The climb has taken several days—or was it several seconds ? Time, if it exists at all, matters not in this country of ours. But it has been a good long climb, and there has been

plenty of time for conversation. This I will not attempt to reproduce, for among the few lines of it that I remember is the following poetic thought, typical of most of our talking, and full of meaning, no doubt, if one could translate it . . . ' Action is brown-cross, deeds are fortune-pie ' with such bright thoughts do we exercise our intellects as we struggle upwards. By now we have reached the clouds . . . among them we lose our way . . . our sense of direction, our desire to climb higher . . . ourselves . . . our. . . .

Dissolving, in the cloud, in and out of the cloud . . . in . . . in . . . in . . . BED.

* * *

No, we never reach the top. Who are we to succeed where so many have failed ?

I wonder whether other Fell-and-Rockers have consistent geographical dreams like this, visiting the same places, traversing the same countries, many times over, yet often doing climbs of great diversity, although they are all in the same groups of mountains, each true to its other appearances as to topographical detail. This dream-earth of mine is a perfectly definite and consistent country. I could draw maps and pictures of it, and here are a few impressions of some of the more familiar places. But what I wonder most of all is this—When I am climbing, say, with Bentley Beetham—is he also climbing with me ?

THE BRENVA ROUTE OF MONT BLANC (IN 1927)

Willo Welzenbach

(translated by G. Graham Macphee)

(From ' Willo Welzenbach's Bergfahrten,' published by Akademischen Alpenverein Miinchen)

In the hut at the Col du Geant we sat and waited, waited. The stormy wind howled over the ridge and drove flopping wet snow against the window-panes of the hut. From time to time the milky grey of the clouds tore past and an arresting glimpse opened down to the green meadows of the Val Ferret—for a short moment only—then smoky clouds veiled us over again.

Once already, about a year ago, I had sat up here under similar conditions and then after a few days of fruitless waiting raced raging down to the valley. And as I wakened on the following morning, then the sun streamed from cloudless skies—malicious fate ! This time I did not want to let myself be fooled ; I therefore exercised patience. For all that, two others of our party had got disgusted with waiting and gone back. And they might not yet have got halfway to Courmayeur when the weather cleared and a magnificent evening closed the gloomy day. Dusky blue lay in the valleys ; only the heights gleamed and flamed, and over the summit of Mont Blanc the last wisps of cloud disappeared in the splendour of the evening sunshine like a rearguard to the preceding stormy days.

Now it was a case of making plans between the four of us who had still stuck it out. Our thoughts and hopes were directed in the first place to the Brenva face. After a short consideration we agreed, however, that the wall did not come into the question so soon after the new fall of snow on account of the danger of avalanches connected with it. On the next night but one we wanted, nevertheless, to attempt it. As two of us—Dr Borchers and Karl Wien—offered to explore on the next morning the Col du Trident, which is the means of crossing out of the highest plateau of the Geant Glacier to that of the Brenva Glacier and thus to the foot of the wall, so the question of reconnaissance also appeared to be solved in the best way.

A radiant day dawned as we climbed up to the base of the Dent du Geant on the following morning. And as we climbed a little later up and down over the snowy pinnacles of the Rochefort Arête, then we saw two tiny points move up over the glittering snowfield of the Geant Glacier and then the steep ice-wall of the

Col du Trident. It was our friends who were ' preparing ' the Col. As at half-past twelve the following night we came out before the hut, then we knew that in the course of the coming day, perhaps even in a few hours, a sudden change in the weather was bound to take place. The moon appeared pale through a thin layer of clouds and over Mont Blanc there floated long drawn-out fish-shaped clouds. In spite of this we wanted at least to try the climb ; we could always still decide to return.

After I had fortified my ' dislocated ' stomach further with a glass of vermouth, we set out. Karl Wien and I* as one party, Dr Borchers and E. Schneider as the second. We crossed over the saddle cutting between the Grand and the Petit Flambeau and then endeavoured to reach the angle of the Géant Glacier lying between Mont Blanc du Tacul and the Tour Ronde.

Up till now we had still been travelling in the light of the sinking moon, but here the deep shadow of the Tour Ronde enveloped us. Only the Gothic forms and the teeth soaring up to heaven of the Mont Blanc du Tacul were still flooded with pale silvery light.

On the flat glacier plateau we put on our ' ten-pointers,' then we made for the ice-wall which drops down steeply from the Col du Trident towards the glacier. In the direct line of the Col a huge hump bulges out on the wall which leaves open only on the left a narrow strip of regularly sloping ice. Here we climbed up. And I must acknowledge, our friends had done good work beforehand to make our nocturnal route as easy as possible. They had decorated the whole slope with a succession of soup-plates [lit. bath-tubs] in which anyone could have bivouacked.

Quickly and without difficulty we thus came on to the flat summit of the Col from which suddenly the view opened out on to the mighty barrier of the Brenva basin. In uncertain lines the giant shape of Mont Blanc showed itself ; the white snow-cap of the Aiguille Blanche glimmered faintly, and eerily the Aiguille Noire loomed ghostly in the darkness of the night.

Over steep rocks it went for about 150 mètres down to the highest flat snow-basin of the Brenva glacier. And now we had to admit, to our annoyance, that we were there at least an hour too early. The moon had now entirely disappeared and before the first gleam of day showed itself we could not climb up the wall. There remained for us, therefore, no choice but to wait. We lay down flat on the snow, gazed up at the stars and dreamt ' sorrowfully' of the beds in the Torino hut. And when it became too cold for

* The lead of ray party lay in the hands of friend Wein for I, on account of an injured and therefore useless arm, was not fully capable of good work.

us we began to brew tea, and when even that no longer helped we started to perform Indian dances.

In the meanwhile it began to get light. Slowly Nature began to take form and shape. Ridges and crests stood out, grooves and gullies resolved themselves in the light of the coming day. Now we could study the wall ; about 100 metres above the Col de la Brenva under the ridge leading to the summit, a rib begins which—at first faintly marked but away lower down becoming a serrated ridge—cuts through the whole sweep of the wall. Its lowest point sticks out far into the Brenva basin. On this rib or close beside it the climb must go up.

Whilst the party on the first ascent, A. W. Moore, F. and H. Walker and G. S. Mathews climbed the rib from its lower end, Dr P. Giissfeld used a [hanging glacier lying on the east side of the rib for his ascent and so reached its crest about one-third of the height of the wall and indeed at that place where it is crowned by a sharp ice-ridge.

When one comes from the Col du Trident one thus reaches the snow-basin of the Brenva Glacier a good bit above the lowest point of the rib. One is, therefore, as a matter of course directed to the Giissfeld route, and we also decided to choose this.

From our resting-place we strode through the desolate patch of debris from a huge ice-avalanche which had travelled down from the Col de la Brenva through the concavity of the wall lying to the east of the rib. Arrived at the foot of the hanging glacier, we took a look round. Here there might indeed be several possibilities of breaking through. We chose for our ascent a steep system of ice couloirs which is cut into the above-mentioned hanging glacier on the right-hand side. A little bergschrund was surmounted without difficulty, then we climbed up under overhanging crevasses through a hollow funnel in which loose wind-blown powder-snow on ice made itself really unpleasantly noticeable. After a few rope-lengths, an ice-couloir led to the right into a not very clearly distinguishable depression in the wall which bounded the hanging glacier. With hurried step-cutting it went up here about 150 metres, after which the slope eased off a little. A few turnings followed, then we stood on the summit of the rib, where we lay down for a short rest.

The continuation of the climb now lay clear before us and appeared moreover to offer no more extraordinary difficulties. This filled us with cheerful confidence. What, however, pleased us less was the weather. As we had expected, it now got worse before our very eyes. Over the top of Mont Blanc a cap of swirling clouds was spreading itself ; everywhere cloud-streamers were

appearing which quickly increased in size and slowly crept over the faces and ridges of the mountain.

We now thought no more of turning back. We hoped still rather just to complete the ascent before the bad weather broke out. Long and monotonously it went up over smooth steep snow fields always to the left of the now not very well marked rib. This latter ended in a rock tower about the level of the Col de la Brenva then disappeared under ice bulges. We aimed for this tower. And as we stood at its base, we saw almost within our grasp the Col de la Brenva over which cloud streamers were blowing, yet with no possibility of crossing over to it. A deeply-cut ice couloir separated us from the moderately steep snow slopes which led upwards to the summit whilst steep séracs appeared to block the direct approach to the continuation of the rib.*

Then I remembered an ice-couloir which I had already noticed during the ascent. On the left of the hanging crevasses it led up and must in that place make a through route possible. Here we decided to try our luck. We climbed down again 60 or 80 mètres, went round the ice-bulge to the left on its lower edge and so reached the funnel which—at first wide then becoming narrower and steep —led through the obstructing belt. Hastily, and avoiding any unnecessary step-cutting, we went up. Fine powder snow which was being blown by the stormy wind from the side poured towards us. A short steep climb out followed, then we stood at the start of a system of snow-ribbons which led without difficulty in a short time on to the moderately steep snow slopes above the Mur de la Cote.

At the end of the snow-ribbons we sat down to rest in a snow-hole sheltered from the storm. Then we looked at the time. We had required little more than four hours for the face ; once one of the greatest climbs in the Alps, now a comfortable half-day outing ; a strange change which is to be observed more or less in all classic climbs. Often already have I pondered over the reasons. Are they conditioned by the progressive development of the technique of mountaineering and of artificial aids, are they conditioned by a change in the spiritual attitude of the climber to the mountain ? An essential importance has to be paid to the first argument, but certainly the decisive one to the second. The generation of today approaches Alpine problems with more self-confidence and an absolute feeling of superiority and this psychological attitude lends wings to physical efficiency and it is the primary condition for

* As I subsequently learned, the parties Amstutz-Schumacher and Allwein—Gabler had succeeded in the climb from the gap above the tower through the overlying séracs about two weeks before us. In this misty weather we, however, could not recognise this possibility.

success. Should one acclaim this development or regret it ? From the point of view of progress it is surely to be welcomed ; it is, however, to be regretted that all the classical routes of the Alpine pioneers are lowered in their value and deprived of their halo. Perhaps a generation will come after us—we who consider ourselves so superior—who will smile at routes which appear to us today as supreme achievements.

As the howling storm of wind made the enjoyment of our rest appear very questionable, we presently set about the continuation of our climb. Thick clouds denied us any view. Now, however, we no longer worried about it. Carelessly we plodded on in the blinding grey mist acting on the assumption that by steady progress we could finally land nowhere else than on the summit. Gradually the angle became less and less steep and at last it no longer went up at all. We must be at our goal. It was no friendly welcome which met us here. The stormy wind raged and blustered round the top of the ' White Mountain.' In the mist we found a track half-covered with snow ; we followed it. Soon it became more distinct and we recognised that we were on the right route down to the Vallot Hut. With huge leaps we ran like mad down the snow slopes. It was not then so very long before we stood in front of the primitive building in which numerous aspirants to Mont Blanc had sought shelter.

Dr Borchers and Schneider decided to remain here. As we—Karl Wien and I—did not want to increase still farther the ' painful terrible narrowness ' by our presence, as moreover, we both knew more than enough of the ' enjoyments ' of a stay here, so we decided on the farther descent to the Dom Hut. And as we ran down towards evening in the rain from the Combalsee to the Cantine de la Visaille, this slight inconvenience seemed to us negligible because of the joy of our success.

MUNROS IN FEBRUARY

H. Keith Gregory

' Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives'

The secretary said I would be going on indefinite leave until another appointment turned up, gave me my ration cards, and asked what station to show on the warrant. I hesitated for a moment. Should I say Lairg or Kyle of Lochalsh ? Both seemed very remote from Dorset, but looking at a point just above his head, I said Lairg—and spelt it out. Followed much letter writing and visiting, when the delights of the Northern Highlands in February were dwelt upon, but though most of my friends would have liked to go, none was able at such an odd time. The Editor was not to be seduced from his soliciting, but even so in him lay my salvation, for he mentioned that Fred Jenkins might have some leave before going overseas. More letters followed and a telephone call clinched the arrangements to meet at an inexact spot on Carlisle station.

I was there well before time and idled around. My axe seemed out of place, little snow having fallen in Scotland up to that time, the second week of February, 1946. No one looking even remotely like a climber was seen, and when the train pulled in I still drew blank as I quickly walked its length. Eventually an unusual Jenkins, immaculate in army uniform, was discovered leaning from a window talking to the Editor and his wife. There was barely time to step into the coach and hear Mendus say a Latin grace before we were under weigh. Soon maps and guide were out and Lairg was discarded in favour of Garve. After a change at Perth we slept comfortably, in sleeping bags, until we were awakened at Inverness by someone asking if we'd like a couple of seats in a plane for the Shetlands. On to Dingwall, arriving about three hours before the Kyle train was due to leave. A good breakfast was had at the first hotel on the right from the station—I've forgotten its name—then a noticeable metamorphosis occurred, to wit, one army type became a climber, recognisable as such by axe, boots, socks, pipe, karabiner, sling, rucksack, keen glint in both eyes and so on.

A goods train pulled in and after some negotiation the expedition embarked, drawing out of Dingwall in its rear observation car. Sitting by the small smoky stove, the guard told us there had been no snow in the valleys and only a little on the hills. We left the train at Garve and set off to walk and look for a lift to Dundonnell. After a couple of miles a Citroen appeared and climbing in, it flowed—as Citroens seem to—at great speed, along the Dirrie More to Braemore Lodge, where we found Donald Maclean doing

a repair to the decrepit mail car from Dundonnell. Now this car was already fairly full with bags and things, plus tools and tyres—the road being as it is. Furthermore, Donald said he was expecting a fine load of beer to come up on the bus, so asking him to look out for us we set off to walk. It became very warm and our rucksacks weighed heavily before the car overtook us near Fain, about two hours later. We did get in somehow and as the whole near side of the big Vauxhall was shaky, with the doors tied together with rope, we found an exposed stance and poor belay somewhere below the roof. However, progress was now at least thrice as rapid, and we were in tantalising proximity to the crates of beer.

Many have written and talked of the change from the open upland around Fain, into the beginnings of a glen as the road drops gently down past the high crags of Cam a' Bhiorain, then through the low woods on the steeper fall to the valley floor, where the spurs of An Teallach stare down through openings in the trees. Fraser Darling, who once lived hereabouts, describes it exceptionally well.

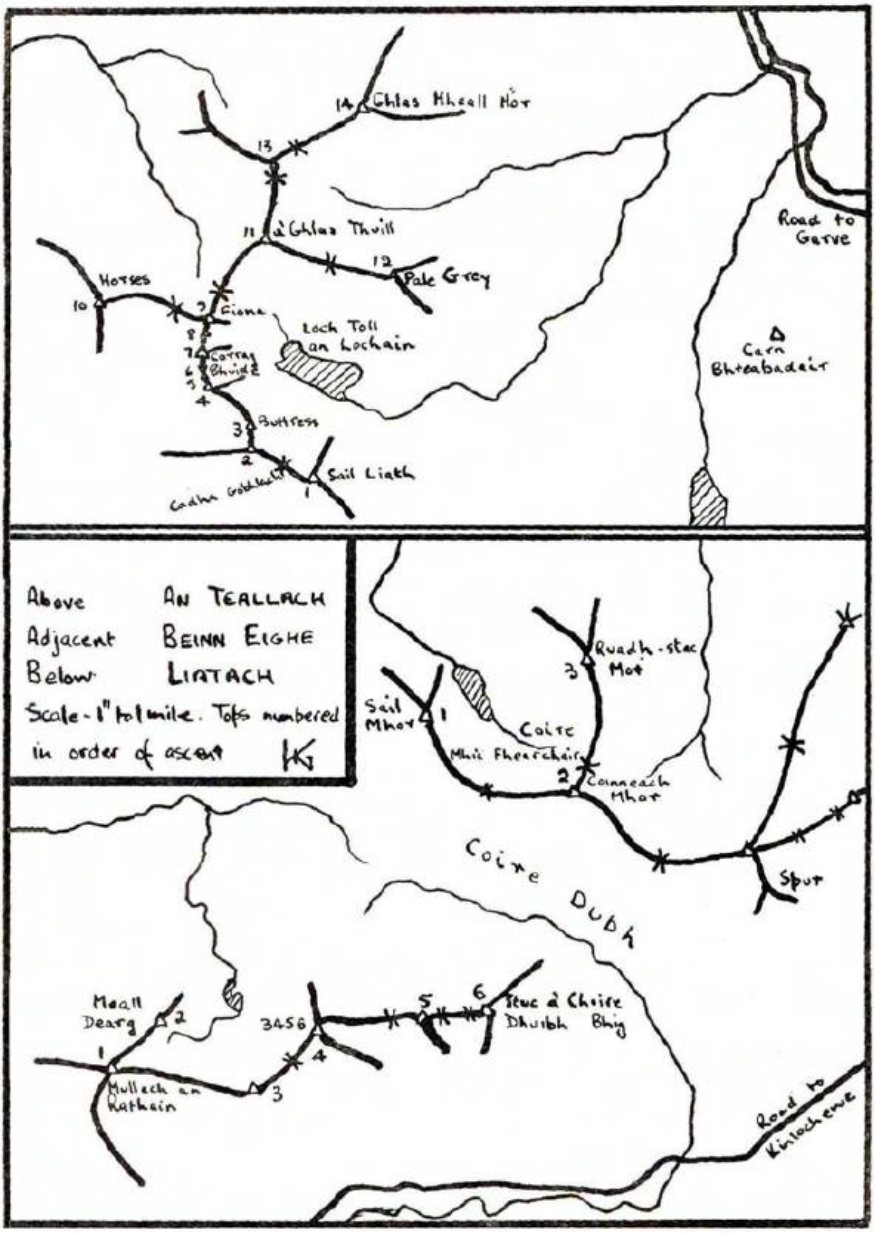
It was lucky that no one was staying at the hotel as we had not booked. After dinner we learnt from the elder Maclean that our expected gully or buttress climbs would not be possible, as what snow there was on the tops was in poor condition ; there had been neither a good fall nor yet a prolonged freeze up.

Next day we left for An Teallach, getting a lift to the flank of the small outlying hill of Cam Bhreabadair. This we ascended to take a general iook at the mountain and photographs. The only camera we had was a vest pocket affair hastily modified to take 35 mm. film. This it did inefficiently, with much groaning during winding operations, which winding was in any case pure guesswork, now wasting bars of film between each shot, now overcrowding five shots in the space proper to three. Although one or two good photographs resulted, unluckily the best ones—and I'm not a fisherman—got away. The weather was fair and windy, with the tops of Corrag Bhuidhe just in cloud. On the faces there was little snow. As we left our viewpoint the interesting but inaccessible corrie of Beinn Dearg Mhor fell away below the shoulder of Sail Liath. Dropping down we crossed a series of overlapping scarps to climb this eastern shoulder. Below the summit the snow was steep and soft, sticky and infuriating. We reached the top in just over two hours from the road, at noon, and as the view was now restricted by clouds, carried straight on down the main ridge towards the other thirteen tops.

On the 1 inch O.S., An Teallach looks almost an easy day for a tortoise. Only four tops are named, and of the remaining ten it is perhaps not at first noticed that two of them lie well away on either

W. A. Poucher

MULLACH AN RATHAIN FROM THE SUMMIT OF LIATHACH


14 Ghlas Mheall Mor
13
11 a'Ghlas Thuill
12 Pale Grey
Horses
10
9 Fiona
8
7 Corrag Bhuidhe
6
5
4
3 Buttress
2
1 Sail Liath
Coire Gobhlach
Loch Toll an Lochain
Road to Gerve
Carn Bhreabadair
Above AN TEALLACH
Adjacent BEINN EIGHE
Below LIATACH
Scale - 1" to 1 mile. Tops numbered in order of ascent HKG
3 Ruadh-stac Mor
Sail Mhor 1
Coire Mhic Fhearchair
2 Conneach Mhor
Spur
Coire Dubh
Meall Dearg 2
1
3456
4
5
6 Stuc a' Choire Dhuibh Bhig
Mullach an Rathain
3
Road to Kinlochewe

side of the main ridge. Somehow I thought of this mountain as I might of, say, the Scafells, but its longer access and greater height apart, as soon as we began the traverse and looked over Loch Toll an Lochain to the huge sweep of buttresses, gullies and faces, I then realised that it was much bigger.

We left Sail Liath at a very good pace, the wind and cloud not conducive to dawdling. First down and over the Cadha Gobhlach and its top, to the col below the cone-shaped Corrag Bhuidhe buttress. Another descent, then the long pull up into the mist to the serrated summit ridge of Corrag Bhuidhe itself. There was one place where we roped up for a traverse out above the east face, into an ice-filled scoop which led us back to the ridge—nothing difficult but there could have been a long slide after any unchecked slip. Looking down on to the floor of the corrie the vertical rock was hidden, only the steep alternating snow covered terraces being seen. It was a very fine situation. To reach the Peak of the Horses and return to Sgurr Fiona took nearly an hour, then on to Bidein a' Ghlas Thuill, 3,483, the highest point. From here a subsidiary ridge runs east to an outlying top, the Pale Grey Hill. At the time we thought we had reached this, over several minor gendarmes and knolls, but we may not have gone far enough to the east as it didn't seem so very long before we were back on 3483. Heading north, then north-east over less interesting ground, the last top, Glas Mheall Mor, was reached at 1540 hours. In this account times are given as a rough indication of what a reasonably active party may expect ; we did not delay because of short hours of daylight and the usual latish starts. The first good snow was met as we plunged down the hollow north-east shoulder of the last top and reached a stalking path which took us back to the hotel.

It had been a satisfying day, and although An Teallach had always looked good on paper, it proved so very much better in fact. As a mountain I know of none finer on our mainland. Lord Berkeley's Seat from the north has a terrific looking A.P. east side, falling for, it seemed in the thin mist, hundreds of feet. Hayfork Gully was filled with softish snow, its pinnacles looking well enough from above and probably much more impressive from below. Of the four main corries we saw only Toll an Lochain, but that was the finest, so says the guide, and it is quite unique.

Not having expected to cover the whole of An Teallach at one go, we had been prepared to stay longer at Dundonnell, but decided to leave the next day for Kinlochewe. After much reckoning about rucksacks we went off with Donald as far as the track to Loch a ' Bhraoin. Our rucksacks he carried on to give to the bus driver at Braemore, who would give them to the railway clerk at

Garve, who would send them by train to Achnasheen, then on by bus once more to Kinlochewe. The last sentence must surely convince any reader of the usefulness of maps in dealing with this account.

It was 0930 hours as we walked down past the unoccupied house at the end of the loch, on a track which was often good, and then vanished, to the low col between the main Fannich group and its western outliers, reached in two hours. We struck straight up the ridge to the west, and were on the top of Sgurr Breac an hour later. The wind was strong but the view, when the clouds periodically drove clear, was extensive, except where the eastern Fannichs were mostly hidden by the near bulk of Sgurr nan Clach Geala. The ridge to A' Chailleach took an hour, and included a distinct top in its middle section which is surely much higher than the 2,750 contour which marks it. There are two fine corries on the north, especially that in which lies a second Loch Toll an Lochain. We dropped down directly to the west from A' Chailleach, quickly losing height and the wind, over to the Bealach na h-Imrich. Skirting to the south of Groban we took our first long halt in upper Gleann Tanagaidh. Now the sun was warm, the clouds almost gone, leaving a clear pale sky and in its full light the situation was at once strangely remote and of amazing vastness. We were held by the sight of the curving lift of hills to the north, from Tarsuinn to Groban, and seemed to be on the floor of an immense corrie. At extreme range, a large herd of deer gave the true scale of this secret glen.

The path westward into the next valley, clearly marked on the O.S., was difficult to find, but as we reached the summit of the long flat-topped dividing spur it improved, and we swung down with good views of Slioch, towards the Heights of Kinlochewe. An eagle wheeled over Sron Dubh. The light was failing as we walked down the cart track to Kinlochewe, thinking that the way we had come was probably more interesting than the usual Loch an Nid route. If a car is taken from Dundonnell to the 24th milestone near Loch a' Bhraoin, it is not so far in distance, but in traversing the western Fannichs there is more climbing. In any case we thought the Fannichs much more remarkable than the guide would lead one to imagine. We reached the Post Office at 1750 hours. Our rucksacks lay in a corner. As the local hotel was still requisitioned for lumberjacks, we arranged for some beer to come up from Achnasheen. After chartering a car for the morrow we relaxed, and later slept very soundly after our Iongish day.

The next morning was fine and clear as we drove down Glen Torridon to get our first sight of Liathach, with its monstrous east

buttress overlapping the end of Beinn Eighe. We passed on, leaving the car to strike up the true right bank of the Allt an Tuill Bhain. The going was exceptionally steep without having much actual rock on the surface, but we could not completely endorse the guide book's description, ' magnificent mural precipices,' even when we got some scrambling near the top. In two hours from the road, at 1130, we reached the summit of Mullach an Rathain. The mist was just hitting the highest tops and added difficulties to the descent of the pinnacle ridge out to Meall Dearg. Climbing back was easier, then we turned east towards Spidean a' Choire Leith, 3,456, Liathach's highest point. At first the way was easy, and we passed several ptarmigan. The ridge then narrowed and was for quite a long stretch like parts of the Aonach Eagach. After leaving 3,456 we continued east over a lower top to the last peak, Stuc a' Choire Dhuibh Bhig, reached at 1415 hours. Returning along the ridge to the last col, we dropped down over very steep ground below the high cliffs running up to 3,456. Although resigned to walking the six or seven miles back to Kinlochewe, an attempt to obtain a lift was made when about a thousand feet above the road. A car was seen coming up the glen at a fairly slow pace. Thinking I might reach the road ahead of it I charged down at an absolute maximum speed, over heather and grass, dodging odd rocks. Success seemed in sight until I landed on a very steep piece of bog, and with legs shooting away finally came to rest in a pool. I sat in water, Fred laughed well above. The car crawled out of sight. We walked the road back to find consolation in the beer which had arrived at the Post Office. It was put up in six whiskey bottles, all but two having different labels of the most enchanting Scotch variety, which drew many odd looks before it was all put in place by the following evening.

This next day was Sunday. Due to the strict Sabbatarianism of our hostess, the driver had thought it best not to call for us, and we walked down to the village to get the car. The weather looked so very fine as we were leaving, that I foolishly left off my top wind-proof, but when the car dropped us at the bridge over the Allt a' Choire Dhuibh Mhoir it was drizzling heavily. The time was 0945 as we set off up the path to the entrance of the low Coire Dubh. Within minutes I was soaked. Walking up the Corrie for nearly two miles, we then took a steep rising traverse with odd pitches, to reach a point on the ridge a few hundred yards south-east of the summit of Sail Mhor, 3,217 feet. At 2,000 feet the drizzle had changed to sleet and conditions were very poor. On the ridge they were much worse, and we hurried back from Sail Mhor, being surprised when a sudden pitch loomed out of the mist. The guide

doesn't mention it and we climbed over ice glazed rocks in two pitches of about 50 feet each. When the top was reached we thought ourselves near the summit of Coinneach Mhòr, and because of the now appalling conditions decided not to leave the main ridge to ascend the highest point of Beinn Eighe, Ruadh-stac Mòr. Our idea was to continue east to the spur which the guide noted as giving an easy descent to the road. The compass behaved rather queerly, but not wishing to stop a second longer than necessary in the blinding hail, we commenced the descent. Soon the ridge which had widened considerably, began to rise.The steep fall into Coire Mhic Fhearchair seemed no longer near us on our left, but annoyingly the ground continued to rise, any likeness to a ridge now being lost. In the restricted visibility we appeared to be on a sort of flat, gravelly grass plateau, the wind having driven off the snow. We struggled on into a gale, always slightly rising, until after what seemed a long time we reached a large cairn. When the compass was read it took barely a moment to realise that we were on the summit of the hoped to be avoided Ruadh-stac Mòr. It was some compensation in the conditions to know that by accident we had reached our Munro, and turning to retrace our steps we were carried down by the wind to the col, before climbing back to Coinneach Mhòr. A slight left turn at the summit took us down the main ridge once more, and at the first col we risked the steep drop over unknown ground down the broken up southern slopes. In our fairly exhausted state we had somehow optimistically hoped to arrive above the road, but on coming below cloud level we found ourselves back in Coire Dubh, quite near to where we had begun our rising traverse less than three hours before. We trotted down to the road, ate a sodden sandwich or two, then repeated the previous day's walk back to Kinlochewe. After dinner when the lost feeling of comfort returned, Fred was sufficiently refreshed to accompany the daughters of the house to the kirk.

Hopes of more Munros were dashed by the weather on the next day, and although we went to Achnasheen by bus—quite like the one in the film ' I Know Where I'm Going '—and on to Strathcarron, we left there after one night's stay with it still raining and blowing. As the train slowly climbed to Dalwhinnie a few hours later there was no wind ; the snow fell thickly straight down, the first real fall of the winter, on February the nineteenth.

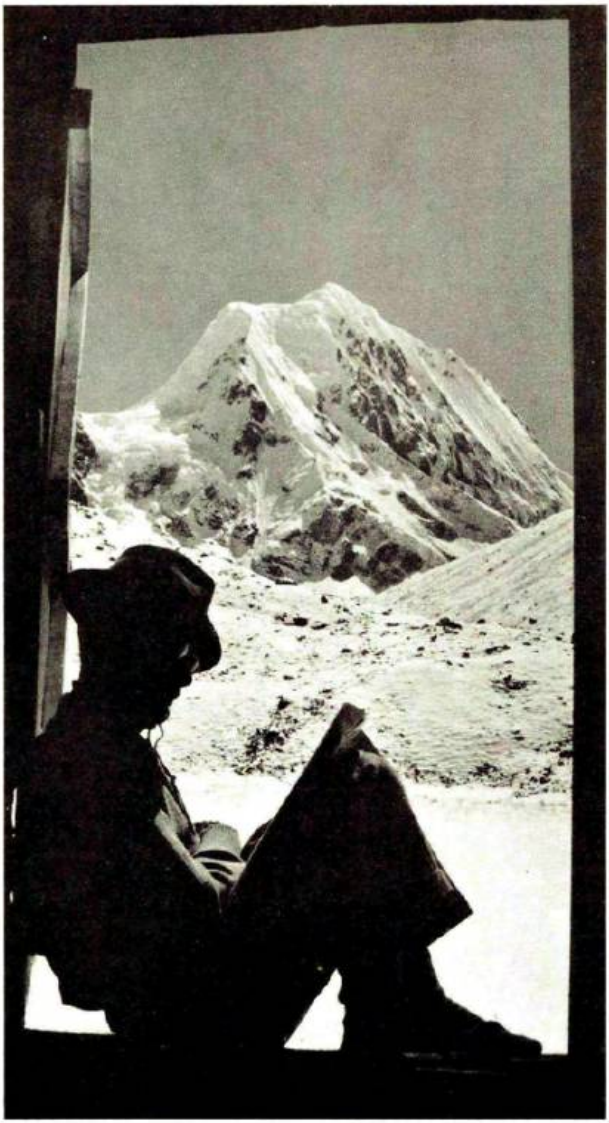
HIMALAYAN HUTS AND HOVELS

J. H. Fleming

As the traveller treks north through Sikkim beside the Tista River, from rest-house to rest-house, he finds that the valley divides at Chungthang, the main stream coming down from Lachen and the eastern tributary from Lachung. Above Lachung is the last bungalow in that valley, Yumthang, and above Yumthang is the Himalayan Club's hut at Mome Samdong, beneath the 18,000 foot Donkya La which leads north towards Tibet, and the Sebu La which leads westwards into the upper Lachen valley. Across the Sebu La lies the juniper-clad valley of Jha Chu, with the Himalayan Club hut of the same name, and some seven miles down he reaches the Tista at Thangu, where stands the northernmost rest-house in Sikkim at 13,000 feet. The path runs south from Thangu to Lachen and Chungthang, and north to Tibet. Ten miles to the north lies the ' good pull up for yak-drivers ' at Donkung, where the journeying Tibetan may sleep before crossing the Kongra La into Tibet.

Trevor, Walter and I trekked up the Tista valley from Gangtok and dumped our stores at Thangu. Thangu rest-house is mainly noted for its 1902 pin-up girls, both of the stage and society, which were cut from the Edward VII Coronation Number of the ' Sketch ' and now adorn the walls of the common room. There is also a cheery old Tibetan chowkidar in charge, whose son is the scruffiest little boy I have ever seen.

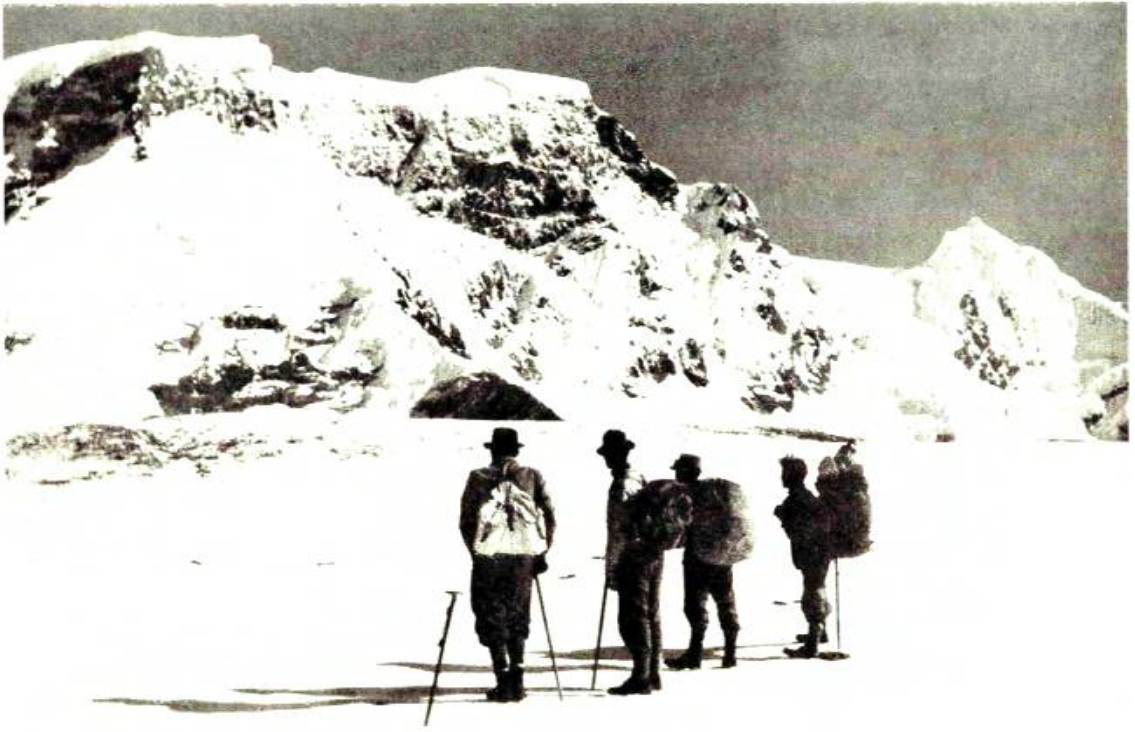
After an abortive attempt on the 19,850 foot east peak of Chhumakhang we retreated to Thangu and decided that the pleasure of sleeping three in a very small tent was not sufficient to warrant any more of it than was absolutely necessary ; and that the utmost use should be made of huts, hovels and such other shelter as might come our way. So after three days, when it had stopped snowing, we made for the Jha Chu hut. This seven mile walk proved a tougher proposition than we had foreseen. The valley above Thangu was full of deep, soft snow that had fallen during the last three days, and Walter and I pushed on ahead, flogging out some sort of a track for the four Sherpas who were carrying heavy loads with a week's supplies. Trevor discovered that he had left the hut key at Thangu and had to turn back for it. We were carrying our own kit and bedding, about 30 lb., and after crossing the stream at Dambochi we were glad to rest on the moraine opposite and wait for the porters. Up the valley, Chombu's long ice ridge could be seen, and to the right of it the graceful pyramid of Chhungukhang, his north face guarded by formidable ice cliffs. These mountains showed up



John H. Fleming

CHOMBU

From the door of the Jha Chu Hut



BELOW THE SOUTH-WEST PRECIPICES OF KANGCHENJAU
(En route from Jha Chu to **Donking)**

Jolm H. Fleming

a brilliant white in the sun, while behind us the lesser peaks of eastern Lhonak were silhouetted against the sky like a row of jagged, uneven teeth. The porters turned up at 3-30, and declared that they could go no further, and when Trevor arrived at 4-30 he decided to spend the night there in a tent while Walter and I pushed on with Sarkay. Three and a half hours of blundering in the gloom through snow and boulders, the tireless Sarkay waiting politely while we rested every few minutes to puff and pant, brought us at last to the welcome sight of the hut, and having this time remembered the key, we piled in and immediately set to to brew up some Bovril and tsamba and some cocoa. Sarkay found some wood and lit the stove, and we hung our socks up to dry, retreating happily to our sleeping bags at nearly midnight.

Next morning the sun was shining and the sky was clear. In front of the hut the snow-covered ground fell away gently to the stream, and beyond, behind a low spur, the towering mass of Chombu filled the doorway. To the left the precipices of Kang-chenjau (22,603 feet) appeared above the brae, and to the right a tangle of snow peaks showed across the Tista valley, backed by mighty Kangchenjunga. The hut itself had three rooms, the kitchen, the main room, with a table and canvas chairs, and with bunks around three walls, and a loft above for the porters to sleep in. After we had had breakfast Sarkay went down to meet the other porters while Walter and I sat out in the sun on the doorstep and read the ' New Yorker ' and ' Saturday Evening Post,' which a previous party had kindly left behind. At about one o'clock I walked up to a little mound surmounted by prayer flags and saw Trevor coming up the valley. We collected some juniper and brewed up some tea, by which time the porters had arrived. Walter and I climbed about 1,000 feet up a'spur just across the valley to have a look at the Chombu glacier prior to a possible attempt on that mountain, and returned for tea at four o'clock.

The next day any ambitions we had were considerably damped by the failure of an attempt to climb an 18,000 foot peak near the Sebu La while the porters were having a rest day. The very soft snow that we encountered decided us in favour of leaving the Jha Chu valley and striking north towards Tibet, where we could reasonably expect to find less new soft snow. So we packed up our stores next morning and climbed out of the valley on to the 16,000 foot plateau or shelf which lies between the western precipices of Kangchenjau and the Tista valley, Kangchenjau has 5,000 foot precipices on the west and south, and these looked immense as we passed within a couple of miles of them. The sun had got to work, and the snow on the ground was now much thinner than it had been

two days before. We reached the Tista at two o'clock, crossed it and continued up the valley, passing between the spurs buttressing Kangchenjau and Chhumakhang. Here we came into a different land, politically Sikkim but geographically Tibet. Great bare hills rose on our left, concealing Chomiomo, while to the right a bare undulating plain, streaked with snow, led up to the brown hills which formed the political frontier. The contrast with the narrow, forested valleys at Thangu, only ten miles to the south, was very striking.

Donkung consists of a group of two or three buildings and yards built of drystone ; that which we were to occupy being a row of hovels each some twelve feet square, with a stone slab roof supported on beams. The roof was covered with snow and dripped continuously until the evening when it froze. The three of us went into one of these rooms and the porters into another, from which an amazing number of Tibetan women and children were first evicted by the chowkidar and compensated by us with the magnificent sum of one rupee. The chowkidar, a young but forceful Tibetan, took a great interest in our affairs, and this was apparently shared by the community, as wide-eyed children with very solemn faces stared intently at us through the doorway. Karma, the cook, served up a tsamba hoosh, and Walter and I topped it with about a quart of chang apiece. This is a pleasant though rather weak drink, vaguely reminiscent of somewhat sourish cider. Tsamba was our great standby on this trip ; it is a kind of roasted flour which can be taken hot or cold with more or less water and may be flavoured with Bovril or cheese or eaten as porridge.

Our aim now was the small north peak of Chomiomo, 20,300 feet, which we had noticed in the Thangu bungalow book to have been climbed in 1945 by C. W. F. Noyce after his ascent of Pauhunri. So the next morning we continued up the Kongra La path for about three miles and then branched left up the Lungma valley. On the way we met a convoy of yaks, and the yakherds told us that the small north peak, which had been tentatively named ' Neve Peak ' by Noyce, was known as Chomo Yapche Yupchung, a name whose grandeur was out of all proportion to the mild appearance of the thing when we saw it. As we turned up the Lungma valley we passed a yakherd's tent on the left, constructed of pieces of woollen cloth sewn together and supported by poles over a shallow pit that had been dug in the ground. Two or three Tibetans with three or four children emerged from the darkness within ; their yaks were grazing on the opposite hill slope and the usual fierce Tibetan mastiff was keeping watch. The children were wearing a woollen robe each and precious little else ; each one had his spoon tied round his

neck on a piece of string. They must be pretty tough to live under these conditions at a height of 16,500 feet. There were large areas of ground in this valley covered with snow, and the yakherds said they would move over into Tibet when the grass was completely covered. They spend the summer in Sikkim, where the grazing is richer than in Tibet. Chomo Yapche Yupchung now appeared—a long snow-covered hill ending in a crag on the left. I believe that from the valley to the south from which Noyce climbed it this crag gives the mountain a far more impressive appearance.

Three miles up the valley we left the Sherpas to make camp at about 17,000 feet and continued with Pasang in an attempt on the peak. Pasang, our sirdar, is one of the Himalayan Club's ' Tigers.' He began his career by accompanying Spencer Chapman to the top of Chomo Lhari, and in 1939 he reached 27,500 feet with Wiessner on K2.

We reached 19,000 feet by simply walking uphill, or at the most kicking steps, when Trevor's feet began to lose feeling, and after we had rubbed them back to life he went down with Pasang. Walter and I carried on, but as the sun began to go down it got very cold and my socks began to freeze, so we retreated to the camp after reaching 19,500 feet. The wind was strong, and snow was being lashed about in our faces, so that even our little tent, strongly reminiscent of the cabin scene in ' A Night at the Opera,' was a welcome place.

The next day was really our last. Trevor and Pasang returned to Thangu, Karma and Sona took most of the kit back to Donkung, while Walter, Sarkey and I had a final crack at Chomo Yapche Yupchung. This time we took a different route, above a series of rock buttresses which overlooked our camp. From these we had a clear view of Pauhunri, Kangchenjau and Chombu in bright sunlight above the cloud. Chomiomo loomed up only three miles away, with chunks of cloud being blown across in front of it. To the north the great hills on the Tibetan frontier, 19,500 feet high, were almost completely devoid of snow, though in Sikkim the snow line was at about 16,000 feet. Beyond these hills were the golden plains of Tibet. At about 1-30 we reached the summit plateau, which rose gently to its highest point about a quarter of a mile away, but instead of Noyce's ' Neve ' we found two to three feet of very soft snow, with a breaking crust, in which we sank up to the thighs. Our feet were now very cold—my three-year-old climbing boots had been letting in water like colanders, and after ploughing up to about 20,100 feet we abandoned the attempt, picked up the rest of the kit at Lungma and arrived at Donkung at 5-15 that evening. Here Karma was ready with cocoa and an excellent stew, and we spent the

evening with the Sherpas and the chowkidar round a yak-dung brazier before moving to our own ' apartment' to sleep. So we left the high hills, and after six days' marching were back in Gangtok. A rest day there, a visit to the Gompa ; and a return to Calcutta and communal strife.

A projected visit in 1947 to the Morae Samdong hut, and an attempt on Chombu, was foiled by a G.H.Q. posting sending me 1,500 miles away. Chombu, 20,872 fert, is still unclimbed (March, 1947). It was first attempted by Kellas when he climbed Chomiomo and Pauhunri, but he was driven off by bad weather, and a similar fate overtook a party attempting the mountain in 1945. There are a dozen 19-20,000 foot virgin peaks in the same district, the bungalows are very comfortable, and a pint or two of Marwa at the end of a day's march is as good as a Pale Ale at the Old Dungeon Ghyll. I leave the reader to find out about Marwa for himself.

IT'S TOUGH BUT IT'S GRAND!

H. Westmorland

A skier accustomed to the well packed *piste* runs of the Alps with their consequent easy downhill stem or parallel Christianias preceded by the luxury of a ski lift to the top is not going to be too happy about his first ski expedition on the Lake District fells. He will probably and quite rightly, describe it as ' rough-neck ski-ing,' and so it is.

Gone is the warm Alpine sun to give place to a northern imitation. Gone is the *teleférique* mountain railway or ski lift to be substituted by two or three thousand feet of climbing with skins on, or worse, the same climb carrying the woodpile which manborne skis and sticks seem to make. Gone, too, is the three or four feet of snow, levelling out the rocks and hollows and in its place are bracken, heather, boulders, bare patches, ice flowers and some good snow, too, if you are fortunate. I make no mention of breaking crust because that is common to all countries and is only defeated by the gregarious type of run.

Cold weather on our fells is usually accompanied by a very strong east wind and the answer is wind-proof clothing, warm cap and mits and in the rucksack a hot drink, be it thermos flask or self-heating tin of soup.

There are many rounded smooth sloped fells which provide excellent running. E. W. Hodge listed most of them in his article in the *F. & R.C.C. Journal*, 1942, and Mary Rose FitzGibbon has written about the delights of a stormy day on John Bell's Banner.

The ridge of High Raise, Kidsty Pike and High Street must be very good, but is rather far away from the homes of most of us. Esk Hause with Great End above and Ruddy Ghyll below is a terrain of plenty of variety and if the snow line is high, a devil of a stiff carry up from Seathwaite by Grain Ghyll as I found in April, 1946.

Skiddaw and Blencathra, so near to Keswick, need only good snow to give steep, fast, continuous, long runs. Langdale is a bit rough in its hillside texture, yet the first Lake District Ski Club Slalom was held there, either near the track to Blea Tarn or on the steeper slopes of Pike o'Blisco, I do not know which.

But best of all is the grand chain of Great Dodd, Watson's Dodd, Sty Barrow Dodd, Raise, Whiteside, The Low Man, and Helvellyn, Nethermost Pike, Dolly W; ggon Pike, past Grisedale Tarn and if the snow lies low enough down, Tongue Ghyll to Grasmere. For only part of a day Sticks Pass and Whiteside Ghyll with Miss

Easton's Thirlspot hospitality awaiting you below, cannot be surpassed.

The high wind of wintery weather, unfortunately, carves the snow on the grass tufts and hummocks of the tops into solid ice ferns in hummocks which are very difficult and tiring to ski over. It definitely is rough-neck ski-ing. It is best to cease worrying about the varnished surface of your favourite skis, keep your ankles firm and crash on under what measure of control you can retain, heaven help you if you lose it! In these conditions on Saddleback I witnessed the heartbreaking sight of an experienced Alpine skier carrying skis *down* for 500 hardly gained feet.

This strong wind has its good side though, it blows the loose snow from the open slopes into the ghylls and, if there is enough of it, leaves them full enough to provide most enjoyable controlled running, long after a thaw has laid bare the shoulders and sides of the fell, provided the temperature remains reasonably cool above 1,500 ft. Last year we were ski-ing in the gullies in April and one party forced the season into May.

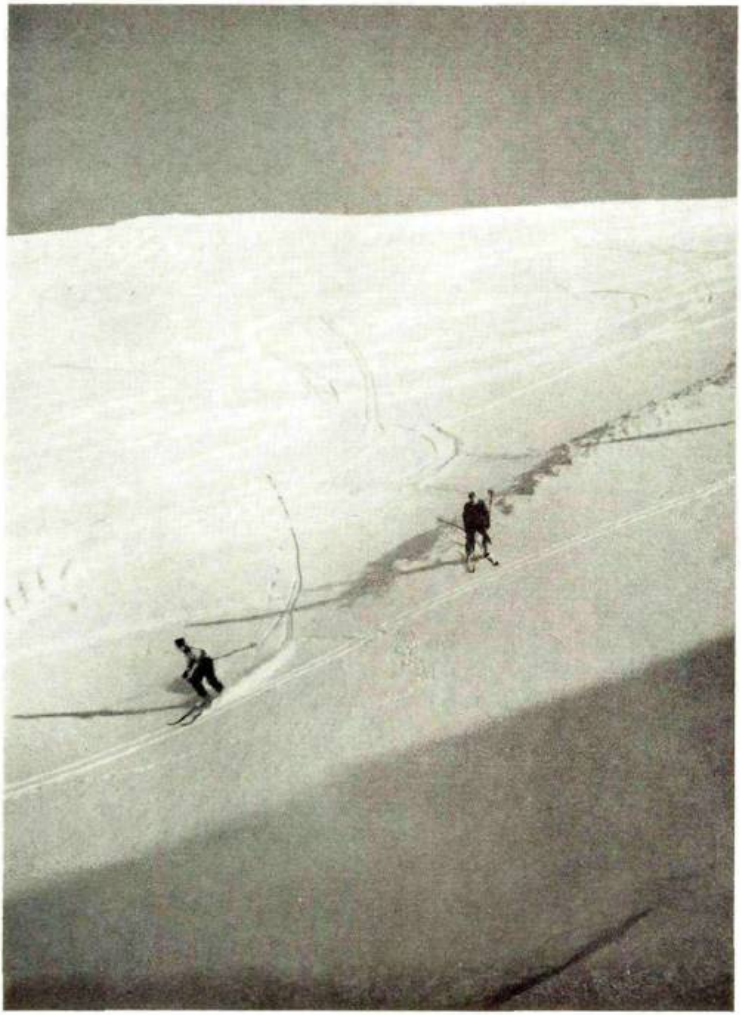
It is the same combination of wind and snow which provided the best nursery slopes for Bill Bracken's Ski School near Dalwhinnie in the Grampians week after week during the unusually mild recent winter.

Generally speaking, the snow which provides the best sport in the Lake District is old snow, i.e., crystallised or spring snow, although it may not be Spring when we are enjoying it but the result of a thaw followed by frost.

These conditions generally exact their price in an hour's carry up the green and bracken brown lower slopes to the snow. They give ample reward not only in a solid though maybe icy, running surface but also in the glorious and moving contrast of the blue sky and the highlight of sun on sparkling snow with the deep loveliness of the velvety pastel colours of the snow-free valley.

Nowhere in any mountain range in which I have climbed or skied, have I seen anything similar to equal this winter beauty peculiar to our own valleys when viewed from the snow slopes above. It is something in the soft colours of the grass and dead bracken, rock and atmosphere. It is very, very lovely.

I have been fortunate enough to enjoy a fairly wide variety of ski-ing. Some, it is true, required mental and physical resistance to extreme cold or unfavourable snow. The climber and the skier—at any rate the mountain types, fortunately develop an unrebellious acceptance of discomfort, difficulty, and even hardship which enable them to take the fun and sport out of the day and to



G, Marian Rigg

WHITESIDE GHYLI,
(Near Sticks Pass, March 1947)

G. Morton Rigg

DRIFT WITH CHKVASSR **ON RAISE**
(STICKS PASS)
29—2—48

meet the cold or the unfavourable conditions as the unquestioned price they must pay to enjoy their chosen recreation.

The Swiss say that there is no bad snow only bad skiers ; it is small comfort to the indifferent skier. In the Rocky Mountains we used to remark that the snow was upside down. It was ; instead of an unbreakable crust with a few inches of powder on the top, too often it was breakable crust with an almost bottomless depth of extremely light powder underneath.

This unhappy condition was due to the very low temperature—• the powder settles very slowly and meantime the sun or wind forms a thin crust.

This extreme cold—say 30° to 35^ below zero freezes the crystals so hard that even on hard snow it is as slow as sandpaper.

I can recall many varied days on ski. Jumping in a championship with the thermometer registering—29°, sixty-one degrees of frost. Ski-ing quietly wkh only my terrier for company from Quebec across Mont de Neige to Valcartier. Twenty no fall miles of Gatineau Hill trails on perfect snow with the Ottawa Ski Club. Hard good snow from the Lavezgrat and deep powder from Haane-moos at Adelboden. The wonderful thrilling thousand foot start of the Olympic run down the Canalone of Tofana at Cortina d'Ampezzo. The lovely run from the Plains of the Six Glaciers down the Victoria Glacier to Lake Louise in Canada's Rockies and, in the Laurentians, the Kandahar Run down Mt Tremblant: of easier lazier days, the happy memories of the snow covered fields of Notre Dame de Laurentide near Quebec, Pocol and Col Druscie in Cortina, and near Jasper, the Angel Glacier below Mt Edith Cavell and, with my wife, the high slopes of Watchtower Valley where a year later Frank Smythe took Lovat's Scouts to do a part of their ski training.

Why am I recalling these Canadian, Swiss and Italian ski-ing days in attempting to describe ski-ing in the Lake District ?

Well ! It is on the basis of the poet's lines ' What knoweth he of England who only England knows ?' It is more clearly to delineate the joyous thrill I experienced on my first ski run in my native hills from Helvellyn to Grisedale Tarn. In a quarter of a century I had been in England only twice, excepting during a war and no doubt my enjoyment was made deeper by the nostalgia of years, but however you look at it, it was grand fun and fully equal in its gift of a sense of happiness and achievement to any of the days I have enumerated. Although my leave in England was only for five weeks I brought my ski and this was my reward——.

The skis did not look quite appropriate as I carried them down the one street of a Sussex village in a soft drizzle of rain. However,

after ten days in the south I was able to go north and telegraphing my old friend A. W. Wakefield regarding conditions in Cumberland, I received the heartening reply : ' By all means bring your skis.'

Unfortunately when I arrived a thaw had set in and although the fells were clothed in white, down to approximately the 1,500-foot contour, the snow was melting fast. Three days later the weather turned cold. By a coincidence in the town of Penrith where I was staying, the only pair of skis other than my own, were in the house next door, and I was able to persuade their owner and designer—for he had made them himself—Morton Rigg, to give up a day for an expedition to the summit of Helvellyn.

We motored to the summit of Dunmail Raise and shouldering our skis made our way up the steep gully of Raise Beck, south of Willie Wife Moor, over rock and turf and patches of very hard, icy snow for a thousand feet to the level of Grisedale Tarn. Here we found a snow filled water course which provided a ski-way across a quarter of a mile of otherwise snow-less fell to the snow line.

To express myself in an Irishism the ' snow ' was ' ice,' pood going in climbing boots, but bad going on skis, or in unnailed ski boots. However, during the night, a flurry had laid down a sprinkling of snow giving a surface over the glaze of the ice which enabled us to climb on skis, and in my case to use sealskins, a welcome change from the shoulder-load of skis, ski-sticks and rucksack. This useful but thin covering was rapidly being blown off by the strong ' Helm ' wind prevailing. I skied over to the top of Dollywaegon Pike and peered over the snow cornice into the depths below Tarn Crag chockstone gully, a scene of old adventures.

Above the 2,000-foot level the east wind was blowing at gale force, as it did all through the cold spell. Being in our faces it made the climbing hard work and the summit a coldish place in which to lunch. We sought the stone summit shelter and in its snow-filled lee we lunched. The views were splendid ; alternately we were enveloped in cloud and in sunshine. The Cumbrian hills looked really Alpine, Scafell Pike, Great End and Great Gable were magnificent with their icy coats gleaming in the occasional sunshine, and, in fact, there was plenty of w'ork for the ice-axe as three of us found and enjoyed a week later on Great Gable. I enjoyed the run down to Grisedale Tarn immensely—it was essentially ski-ing ' under control' There was no snow left on the ice by this time, but I had metal edges which made it possible to retain some control of Christiania skid. For a time I ran near the cornice, the surface was better there and it was most exhilarating to run with the cliffs a few yards on the left and the icy glistening surface sloping far down out of sight, because of its convex curve, on the right. On the

steeper slopes it did not do to fall, because once down there was little chance of checking a slide.

There was a good deal of rock out-cropping and some of the slopes were nearly thirty degrees. The icy conditions did not permit running with the skis flat on the surface ; it was a Christianias linked by traverses technique, which was required.

Rarely have I enjoyed a ski run more. So many factors of enjoyment came into it : the Cumbrian fells after a long absence, a good companion, glorious views, cloud and sun, the delight of being on a ridge, the contrasts between ice-girt crags, snow-capped summits and soft green snowless valleys. The rhythm of turn swing and check of Christianias amongst ihe projecting rocks, followed by the peaceful jog down the green slopes of Willie Wife Moor with the skis on our shoulders, to the waiting car and creature comforts below.

The climb was only 2,335 feet to a summit only 3,118 feet—the vertical interval of the ski run some 1,400 feet—no great Alpine peak fell to our efforts, but it was a grand day on the winter fells of my native English Lakeland.

Ski running in these fells is hard work, ski-ing control is necessary and an eye for country. Surprisingly cold winds will have to be faced and beaten by windproof clothing. It is easier to climb with skis if the snow is reasonable ; if very **icy** it is often easier to carry the skis. Take a hot sweet drink with you. It is tough and more than a bit rough-neck, but it is grand.

OLD CLIMBING ROPES

R. P. Mears

It is very difficult to say when a rope is worn out and should not be used for climbing purposes.

Ropes should not be used when :—

(a) they show obvious signs of weakening by abrasion or cutting of fibres,

(b) they have been weakened by incorrect storage,

(c) they have in the past been severely overstrained.

(a) Weakening by Abrasion or Cutting of Fibres.

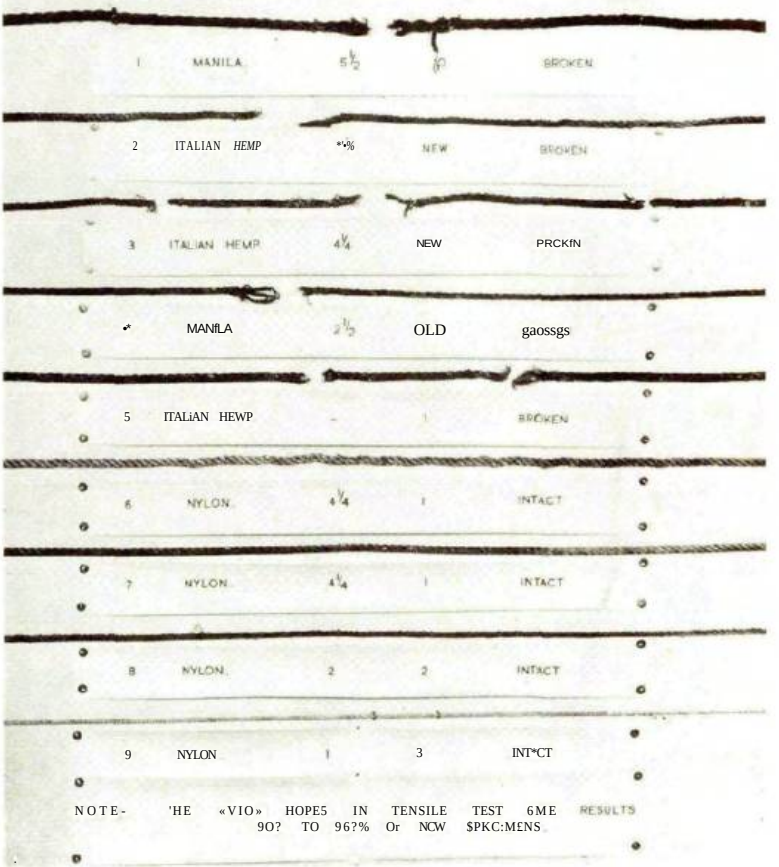
This can generally be seen, but some judgment is necessary. Some fluffing of the surface is not unusual in a natural fibre rope and generally very conspicuous in the case of a new nylon rope that has only been used a few times. With nylon rope it improves the grip and will always occur. Since the filaments making up a nylon rope are very fine and since such a rope contains several thousands of them, the actual loss on test is generally insignificant. This will be noticed in the cases in Table I reference Nos. 7, 8, 9 and 10. Where used much for abseiling the condition of nylon ' quarter,' which is only one-fifth inch diameter, should be carefully watched, bit its condition on visual inspection has got to be really bad before it need be discarded. The author used one with a very ill-looking place on it caused by a lot of wear. On test the strength at thi? spot was found to be 500 lbs.

There is no rule by which it can be stated when a rope on appearance looks as if it should not be further used. When in doubt either discard it or else have it tested. If old ropes were only more frequently tested we should know much more about them. Actually in Table I manila ropes reference numbers 11, 12 and 16 had the appearance of hardly being fit for further use and in fact, were found to be not up to strength. No. 13 was obviously past serious use but the Italian hemp sample No. 17, which it was recommended on the result of the test as not being quite up to standard, had every appearance of being perfectly good. In this case it should be pointed out that whereas the strength of this line at 0'51 ton is 25% greater than that of a nylon ' quarter,' yet their relative shock absorbing powers would be :—

$$\frac{\text{nylon quarter}}{\text{' line ' reference 17}} = \frac{11600 \times 1'14}{1290 \times 3} = \text{nearly } 3\S \text{ to } 1.$$

EXPOSURE TESTS OF SAMPLES OF CLIMBING ROPES

RESULTS Of PLACING NINE ROPE SAMPLES *M* A GARDEN COMPOST HEAP P0R 9 WEEKS FROM 31 5 47 TO 2 & 4?



NO	DESCRIPTION	P[« s'Jif i	-:''-".	CEvV65T HEAP
1	MANILA	5½	⅛	BROKEN
2	ITALIAN *HEMP*	*·%	NEW	BROKEN
3	ITALIAN HEMP	4¼	NEW	PRCKfN
·*	MANfLA	2½	OLD	gaossgs
5	ITALiAN HEWP	-	1	BRCKEN
6	NYLON	4¼	1	INTACT
7	NYLON	4¼	1	INTACT
8	NYLON	2	2	INTACT
9	NYLON	1	3	INT*CT

NOTE- 'HE «VIO» HOPE5 IN TENSILE TEST 6ME RESULTS 9O? TO 96?% Or NCW $PKC:MENS

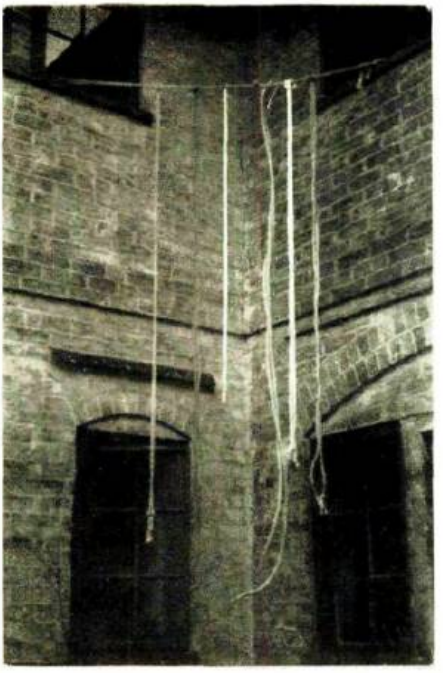


FIG. 2

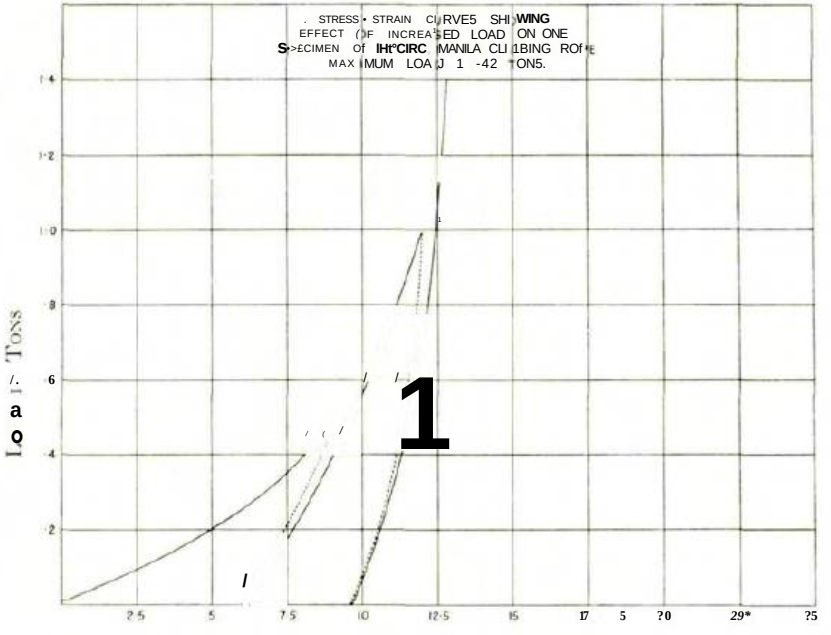

STRESS • STRAIN CURVES SHOWING
EFFECT OF INCREASED LOAD ON ONE
SPECIMEN OF 1½" CIRC MANILA CLIMBING ROPE
MAXIMUM LOAD 1 -42 TONS.
Load in Tons
1·4
1·2
1·0
·8
·6
·4
·2
2·5
5
7·5
10
12·5
15
17 5
?0
29*
?5
1
EXTENSION PER CENT.

FIG. 3

(b) Weakening by Incorrect Storage.

It is stated in an American Alpine Club Handbook that:—•

> ' Tests have shown that a new rope kept over a winter in the average house and not used will lose as much as one-half its strength.'

It is to be realised that American winters are cold and American houses are warm. Ropes should not be stored in heated places nor must they be exposed to mildew or damp nor again, to abnormal dryness cr to intense light.

Stored in cool, reasonably dry, and reasonably airy but not draughty places, they will last more or less indefinitely. They must also be kept well away from injurious chemicals such as acids and storage batteries and well away from the attacks of vermin, insects and bacteria.

It is interesting to watch the effects of transgressing such rules. The ropes shown in figure 1 were stored for ten weeks in summer under a garden compost heap with the result that the natural fibre rope samples came out in pieces while the nylon samples were, apart from being discoloured, unaffected. There is evidently nothing in nylon for worms and bacteria to feed on. A similar experiment was carried out over a similar period during the wet summer of 1946. In that case the condition of the natural fibre ropes was far worse than that shown in the photograph while the nylon samples were similarly unaffected.

Obviously also ropes should not be hung up outside the house exposed to all weathers as shown in Fig. 2. These have been exposed now for fourteen months and will shortly be taken down and tested. They consist of different kinds of natural fibre and nylon ropes, some new and unused and some are old specimens. The results of their tests will be watched with interest and it will be particularly interesting to find out whether the supporting loop portions of each rope has deteriorated due to weather more than the hanging portions and how the relative conditions of the natural fibre and nylon specimens will compare.

(c) Ropes previously Overstrained.

In a paper published in America in 1940 entitled ' The Creep Phenomenon in Ropes and Cords,' the authors, Lutts and Himmelfarb, established that all ropes break when a limiting stretch has been attained, a fact which is now well known and accepted.

There is not a great deal of extensibility in the material of which natural fibre ropes are composed and even the elasticity of nylon fibres accounts only for nearly half of the stretch attainable in a

nylon rope. Consequently the greater part of a large stretch in a rope comes out of its construction and is not wholly recoverable when the load is released. It is naturally very important in a climbing rope that there should be as high a degree as is possible of recovery to its original length after any appreciable loading.

Great attention was given to these points when drafting the B.M.C. Specifications for Natural Fibre Ropes to which reference is made in Tables I and II. Clause 7 reads :—

' Elastic Recovery.

' Ropes load-tested to 125 1b. per pound weight of rope (per 100 lin. feet) must extend an amount of not less than 6J% of the length tested, and immediately on release of the load the residual extension must not exceed 4|%.'

While nylon ropes easily comply with this clause it is a very stiff one for natural fibre ropes to pass. It is also very important because a rope that just pulls out under load without recovering more or less completely to its original length :—

(a) has lost at least a proportion of its ability to absorb shock.

(b) in absorbing shock, i.e., in arresting a fall of a definite weight falling a definite distance, will develop a greater tension than it would have done before being strained.

This means that a previously strained (i.e., extended) rope will, in arresting a fall, transmit a greater force to the holding second than an unstrained rope and that, while its ultimate tension strength is probably not affected, it will, nevertheless, be more likely to break than an unstrained rope because of the greater tension developed, and further this greater tension spells more shock to the anatomy of the falling climber held on a rope that has been previously permanently lengthened.

Table II shows a list of ropes tested to about one-quarter of their ultimate breaking strengths for the purpose of drafting clause 7 of the Specification. It will be noted from this table how greatly superior nylon is in this respect relative to natural fibre ropes. At the same time it is to be realised that two years ago, when these tests were made, manila was probably far inferior to its pre-war quality.

Fig. 3 shows a typical load-extension diagram cf a rope having little elastic recovery loaded first to one-third and then to two-thirds of its ultimate breaking strength. On first loading to breaking strength the extension would be about 13%, but after being loaded to 2/3 of its breaking strength and released, the rope is lengthened with the result that there is only about 3% capacity for extension left. Consequently such a strained rope is approaching the condition of a wire rope in which there is very little capacity for extension

and, therefore, the force developed in arresting the fall of a given weight is terrific.

There is no visual means known to the author of ascertaining whether a rope has been overstrained. If a rope is subjected to a severe load such as that of arresting a falling man it should be either discarded or a piece of the strained portion sent for testing. In that case both its breaking load and its extension under load must be obtained because the breaking load alone provides no information as to its lengthened or strained condition.

Conclusion.

The subject of ' Old Ropes ' is a difficult one and remains so largely because so few old and strained ropes have been scientifically tested for both load and extension. Further, in many shops where climbing ropes are sold it is the breaking load alone that is mentioned. This is generally something in tons which seems meaningless to a man weighing about 1| cwt. Attention is drawn to the fact that the extension is quite as important as the breaking load and most important of all is Column 2 in Table I.

The author acknowledged his indebtedness to British Ropes Ltd., who have carried out for him most of the tests cited in this article.

TABLE I.

CLIMBING ROPES COMPARED ON THE BASIS OF PERFORMANCE PER POUND WEIGHT OF MATERIAL PER 100 LIN. FT. AS MEASURED UNDER ORDINARY SLOW TESTING IN THE NORMAL DRY CONDITION.

Ref. No.	Description	1 per pound per 100 lin. feet: Ultimate strength pounds	2 per pound per 100 lin. feet: Strain energy ft. lb. per 100 lin. feet	3 Extension per cent.	4 Weight per 100 lin. ft. pounds	5 Actual load carried tons	Remarks
			NEW ROPES				
1	Natural Fibre Rope—British Mountaineering Council Specification No. 1 —June, 1947.	500	(2080)	12½	(5)	(1·12)	Figures in brackets thus : (5) are not specified. Specification states weight not to exceed 5½ lb. per 100 lin. ft.= 5 lb. taken here for comparison.
2	Natural Fibre Rope. Result from best samples tested.	600	3600	18	5	1·33	These figures are 'ideal' and might well be obtained by testing good samples in a wet condition.
3	Nylon Rope made in Britain	750	9375	35/40	4¼	1·42	Weights of nylon ropes "full' 4·25, 'medium' 2·56, 'quarter' 1·14 lb. per 100 lin. ft.
			FIGURES FOR NEW ROPES QUOTED FROM AMERICAN SOURCES.				
4	American Mountain Nylon.	736	13500	55	5·3	1·74	These figures are taken from Table I on p. 78 of 'Sierra Club Bulletin,' Dec., 1946. Article by Leonard and Wexler.
5	Manila Abaca.	500	2000	12	5	1·12	The weight 5 lb., is taken for comparison.
6	Sisal.	364	1460	12	5	0·81	" " " "
			FIGURES FOR RECENT TESTS OF OLD ROPES.				
7	Nylon 'full,' one year old—much used.	760	10100	40	4¼	1·44	New rope strength 3200 lb.= 1·43 tons.
	Do. : tested wet	660	8600	39		1·25	
8	Do. : 2 years old wet	740	11300	46		1·41	
	Do. : 2 years old dry	660	9700	44		1·25	
9	Nylon 'medium,' one year old—used.	762	10900	43	2·56	0.87	New rope strength 2000 lb = 0·89 tons.
10	Nylon 'quarter,' 2½ years old—unused.	830	11600	42	1·14	0·42	New rope strength 1000 lb = 0·44 tons.
11	Manila, 2½ years old, much used.	360	1860	15½	5·3	0·85	Measured weight.
12	Manila, 10 years old.	380	1400	11	5·3	0·90	Assumed weight.
13	Manila, 24 years old—much used.	180	660	11	5·3	0·42	Assumed weight.
14	Manila, 1½ years old—unused.	420	1260	9	6·8	1·28	
15	Manila 'line,' 7 years old, little used.	200 (approx.)	400 ?	some	3	0·27	Assumed weight, broke at 600 lb., a very short specimen. See note.
16	Manila, 10 years old — used	305	1270	12½	5·11	0·70	Measured weight.
	Do. : Tested wet.	348	1850	16		0·80	
17	Italian hemp, 9 years old, little used.	380	1290	11	3	0·51	
18	Italian hemp, ½ year old—unused.	510	1700	10	2·22	0·50	

NOTES : The Strain—energy in ft.lb. per 100 lin. feet is approximated to by multiplying the figure in column 1 (pounds) by the figure in column 3, taken as feet and dividing by 3, to allow for the hollow shape of the area under a load-extension curve. Tests on single samples must always be taken as approximate ; for instance, in assessing the strengths of rope in the case of the American Research Paper R.P. 1679, dated Nov., 1945, entitled " Impact Strengths of Nylon and of Sisal Rope," by Newman and Wheeler, variations in recorded strengths of similar specimens amounted to + 7 % in the case of Sisal rope and + 3% in the case of Nylon rope.
Reference No. 15—The failure of the 'line' from which this specimen was taken caused a serious accident.
In comparing rope strengths it is the figure in column 2 which is the best criterion of their relative power to stop falling weights.

ELASTIC RECOVERY OF ROPE BOTH NATURAL FIBRE AND NYLON.

Ref. No.	Type of Rope	Breaking strength in pounds per pound weight of 100 lin. ft.	Ultimate Extension	Extension at 125 lb. per pound weight of 100 lin. ft.	Extension immediately on release of load	Extension after two days from release of load	Extension after seven days from release of load	Remarks
55	Italian Hemp.	560		8·5	6·5			
55	Nylon.	750		15·5	2·5			
55	Manila.	358		10	7			Under present conditions samples of manila rope are inferior to pre-war standards.
55	Sisal.	280		10	6·5			
60	Italian Hemp.	503		8·5	4·5			Average : of 2 samples.
68	Manila.	387		11	6·5			
78	Manila.	360		11	6·5	5		
78	Italian Hemp.	562		9	6	3·5		Average : of 2 samples.
88	Nylon	760		21	3	1·5	0	Average : of 2 samples.
16	Nylon (old)	760	40	At 210 lb. per lb. weight 20	7	2	2	Tested dry
		660	39	24	10	8	5·5	24 Hrs. saturation. } 1 year old and much used.
							4	on drying. }
								Note : When wet. Nat. fibre ropes shorten. Nylon ropes lengthen.
13	Manila (old).	380	16·5	at 25% 6·5 10	6·5		3·5	Ten-year-old rope. Two samples.
13	Hemp.	560	17	9·25	4·75	3·8		

NOTES.—

Elasticity in Natural Fibres .. 1½ to 2%
Elasticity in Nylon Fibres 14 to 18%

The specification for Natural Fibre Ropes requires at 125 lb. per pound weight per 100 lin. ft. ; an extension of not less than 6½ per cent., and, immediately on release of load, the residual extension not to exceed 4½ per cent.

TO ATALANTA

Do you know now what it meant
When we said ' Scafell' in an altered tone,
Or when you found us looking up
From the kitchen window to the dark skyline
While the pan boiled unnoticed,
Or when we played the E fiat minor fugue
And left you by the fire outside ?

An echo,
A shadow, impossibly far above
In the shifting cloud, a raven's croak,
The whole height of the face revealed
Pale on the smooth tarnished ground of sky.

You've climbed the dripping corner of Broad Stand.
You've walked along the Progress, seen the scale
Of the crag increase dizzily, marked
The scratched ledges where ways were found
Long ago. You've grown cold waiting
In the Crevasse, balanced
On the slippery foothold, heaved yourself up
Into Slingsby's Chimney, looked suddenly
Over the gulf of Deep Gill, passed
Lightly with confident steps
Across the clean rough summit rocks,
Turned to the dear remembered distances
(Gable, Pillar, High Stile, Grassmoor, the clustering
Tops of Skiddaw). You've sat below the cairn
In the security of friendship, while your eyes,
Half-opened, travelled in a slow spiral
From Eskdale like a dream to the yellow
Duddon sands, to Man, to the far wild
Hills of Galloway. You've returned
Thoughtfully to the breath-taking verge.

And you'll come again—
Oh, come again surely, following
The frozen cornices from Slight Side—
Show us (proud sponsors) how easily
You reach the Tennis Court, move
Gingerly on the slabs where Jones and Walker
Crawled in stockings through the April twilight.
You'll do what we don't even dream of—
Swarm up the Flake, sun-bathe on Jeffcoat's Ledge,
Tell diffident beginners
How easy Morning Wall grows nowadays.
And afterwards you'll lie
In Hollow Stones (just as tonight),
Stretch out happily, share mood and chocolate,
And watch the sun sinking,
Flushing Botterill's Slab with pale colour,
Until it's time to start along the trod
Towards the Corridor and Janey's kitchen.
On the grass shoulder you'll pause, look
Back to the great converging buttresses
(Their outlines softened by the grey evening)
And think, ' *That's* where we went!'

Atalanta—do you know now what it meant ?

A. M. Dobson.

RETURN JOURNEY

Peier Lloyd

Down in the Val Veni there had been a sharp shower of rain, and now as we climbed up the fixed ropes to the Gamba hut the clouds were still low and heavy, with an obvious threat of more weather to come. But this was the summer of 1948. We had taken its measure in the Oberland, had found that afternoon rain was the normal thing, that a good day up to the hut might well mean a bad day on the mountain. We had learnt, in short, the lesson of opportunism ; to make a start even when weather was doubtful, to move or rest when it was downright bad, to take every chance that offered. And so we took no great heed of the evening cloud, for whenever the fine morning came, and we knew it would, we meant to use it.

We were three, and of three generations, Graham Brown, Niel Hanson and I ; and to each of us, I think, this visit to Mont Blanc meant a good deal. To G.B. it was a return after fifteen years to the well loved scene of past triumphs, to mountains he could see with closed eyes, could travel without a map. To Niel it was the climax of a first Alpine season in which he had already led among the big mountains. And to me it was the long deferred fulfilment of years' old plans to come at last to this, the great side of Mont Blanc. Whatever the weather we felt sure our chance would come, that somehow we would see and know the mountain.

Arrival at the hut brought encouragement, for here was one Gazzana who with Guidobono, another Italian climber, had made a September ascent of Route Major in 1937. In the intervals of Brenva reminiscences he told us of this year's doings. He had been some time at the Gamba and was soberly encouraging about conditions on the mountains. He told us, too, that tracks were made across the Fresnay glacier, a help to us if we went as we intended to the bivouac hut on the Breche Nord des Dames Anglaises. It had needed an act of faith to come, in this year of storms, to the big mountain, but as we went to our bunks in the crowded hut we were hopeful. With luck we might achieve more than a mere reconnaissance.

And so we set off next morning on our **first** day's climbing. Our objective was the fixed bivouac and it was a puzzle to me that this short journey across a glacier and up a couloir should need a whole day and an early start. I had much to learn. From the bivouac there were climbs on the Dames Anglaises, good in themselves, that should also show us the big routes, Brenva to the East, Innominata to the West. But our thoughts and hopes were for the Aiguille Blanche de Peteret.

It was a moonless night as G.B. led us across the moraine to Col Croux, an uneventful traverse punctuated only by the repeated failures of our decrepit lantern. And at first light, as we jumped down from the Col to the edge of the Fresnay glacier, there came a first realisation of the quality of the mountains we were climbing. For here indeed was an icefall, more broken than any I had been through. I could see now how some of our time was to be spent, and from Col Croux to our lunch place above the bergschrund we were at it for 8J hours, winding in and out and cutting our steps among the crevassēs and seracs. We never doubted that we should get through, but never knew how long the job might be. I rtmember in particular the last big obstacle we met, a great wall of ice, some 25 feet high, standing across our path and with no evident detour. There was one fault in it, a half-detached flake slanting steeply from left to right and leading on the upper half of the wall to a shallow chimney. Up this fault we climbed it, as perfect an ice pitch as I have seen. All the time that we were in the ice fall the shadow of the Aiguille Noire de Peteret was over us, but on the Innominata face the sun was shining, and such stops as we made were to pick out the lines of the big climbs.

This ice work had alieady made it a memorable day, but the interest was not yet over. Having crossed and ascended the glacier we had now to climb the flank of the long Peteret ridge to the deep notch of the Brėche des Dames Anglaises. We went on not by the couloir that led direct to the Breche but by a higher route, free from the couloir's thieat of stone fall, a route of G.B.'s making on an earlier **visit.** It led by a slanting gully of good rock to a snow band following the line of the same fault and running out on the eouth ridge of the Aiguille Blanche. It was somewhere on the snow band that we realised our uncertainty about the exact position of the bivouac, for our guides were the memoiised map in G.B.'s mind and the 1924 Kurz-Barbey which I carried ; neither marked the 1934 hut. The question was whether the hut was oi ths Breche itself or on the ridge some way above it, and in our guesses we disagreed. Seeking ths answer we climbed the steep rocks on our right to get the view across the face and into the Breche. As we did so a hold gave way under G.B.'s hand and he dropped 8 feet before I held him, a reminder of how suddenly the rock could change. The fall was a triviality, but it was a foolish and humiliating thing to be hunting around in broad daylight for a hut that must be so close. We decided at last to traverse the steep rock wall to the Breche, an illogical decision perhaps for the nearer we got to it the less sign of a hut was to be discerned. Not till Niel stepped into the notch itself did the hut appear, half a rope's length away on **the**

Brenva flank of the Aiguille Blanche ; a grand place, with the Isolée right above us throwing back the echo of our talk, the Brem a and Fresnay glaciers steeply below, and Courmayeur in the distance. The hut itself was like a toy Nissen, trimly built, long enough to let a man stretch out but no more. As we were relieved to find, it was well supplied with blankets. It had not been used since 1947. Our evening passed in a glow of tired contentment for the hut was a happy place, with the friendly feeling of a tent and the comfort of a house in a storm, besides we were well enough pleased with our day's work and confident of the morrow. Our last night at the Gamba had been short and the night before a restless on« in the woods above Entreves so we hastened supper and slept through to dawn.

Our first day had given us interesting climbing ; the second was to give excitement, too. We awoke to find the weather changing, with four inches of snow on the ground and signs of more to come. There was no question now of peaks, even of the Dames Anglaises, we spoke instead of our best line of retreat. The snow that had fallen was already enough to make slow work of any rock route and I argued for the direct descent by the couloir, there would bs no stone fall under these conditions and we should be down before the powder snow became a menace. G.B. inclined to the rock traverse and he may well have been right, for the couloir, which in the end we chose, gave a hard passage.

We breakfasted sparsely, for it was clear that the food might have to last an extra day, and got away at 9. The top of the couloir was steep with the old snow uncomfortably hard under the powder, so for the first hundred feet we climbed on rock, moving singly. It was slow going. After that the rock walls steepened, forcing us to take the gully, whatever its state. As we did so the snow began again ^ and it fell, intermittently, for forty-eight hours and more.

The gully curved and steepened through a narrows before joining, perhaps four hundred feet below, its twin that fell from the Brêche centrale, and at the junction the slope seemed to ease. The snow band was grooved by a shallow stone shoot and drainage channel not iced, but lined with a harder snow, and evf ry crossing meant the cutting of steps. The eariest line was generally near the rocks, on either side of the stone shoot, and for much of the way I could just make a step facing inwards, with four or five hard toe kicks. And so part kicking and part cutting, we made our careful way down from one snow belay to the next. Our descent of the rocks had been slow enough but here we seemed to be making no more than a hundred feet in the hour. Confident of the party's strength and steadiness I felt little doubt of our ability to see the

show through but there was, for me, one sudden moment of despair and impotence. I was cutting through the narrows, in the steepest part of the gully, going almost straight down the slope. As I did so a brief burst of wind blew up the slope blinding me, quite literally, with the snow that stung my eyes into closing, and making me for the time powerless to go on. I looked up to the others, who facing away, were unconscious of my difficulty, but a current of reassurance flowed down to me from them. A moment later the wind dropped. All the while the powder snow was piling up on the steep rocks on either hand, and at intervals the cascades of powder would pour down off the rocks, and flow with a quiet hiss down the stone shoot. It was not yet dangerous but the threat was unmistakable.

Below the junction the gully steepened up again but the snow was better and our pace, still slow, improved. And as we went down the stone shoot grew wider and deeper, and the river of snow powder that it carried became almost continuous. We crossed and recrossed it to find our best line of descent. But at last came the happy moment when the angle eased and the underlying snow softened and we could stamp our way quickly down to the berg-schrund. It was 5 o'clock when we reached the glacier ; we had been 8 hours in the gully, without a stop. We had been climbing, of necessity, with absolute concentration.

In the intervals between snowfalls we had marked the route across the glacier to the Col d'Innominata, a route tracked by Gazzana and Guidobono two days before and obviously preferable to our line of ascent from Col Croux. Now, though the tracks were long since snowed up we felt sure of getting over with little trouble. Half-way across I lost some time by overlooking what Jater seemed an evident way out of an impasse and involved the party in a fruitless diversion, but even so we were on the far side by 7.

It was late, but the difficulties were all behind us, and we still hoped to make the hut that night. The hope was short-lived. For as we entered what we took for the gully below the Col the easy rock scramble was conspicuously absent. Instead we found a crack which would be unclimbable on Gimmer and an improbable traverse over snow-covered slabs. If anything were needed to make us decide on a bivouac we found it in the shape of an almost ideal gite, an overhanging rock wall with a 4-foot trench between it and the snow. And here we settled down for what was evidently to be a safe but uncomfortable night.

And now we began to feel in real earnest the effects of our im-providence, for our food was blatantly inadequate. We had lunched

at 5 off one slice of bread and cheese with one-third slab of chocolate, and were now ready for a proper meal. But there was little left in our larder and no fuel for the Meta stove. The medicos argued with nicety the relative importance of eating at once for warmth or eating at breakfast for energy. They settled it in the end on the basis of bread (1 slice), cheese and a handful of sugar for dinner, with bread,]| sardine and sugar for breakfast. There was to have been a lemon, too, but pressed into service as a pillow it reached the table in flattened and desiccated form. Of drink we had none. After the brief ritual of our dinner we set a candle in a niche in the snow to spin out the evening light. The fine snow dust that almost floated in the air sparkled in its beams as we talked of other mountain days and other bivouacs. And so for a time we summoned up the past to hold the present at bay. But soon it caught us and our thought was filled with its compelling problems ; the wetness of our clothes, the hardness of the rock, the choice of sitting half-under the 6-foot Niel and getting cramp or moving away and getting colder. I remembered the dry socks in my sack but was too tired to put them on. Sleep was counted in minutes.

After the long night dawn broke with customary slowness. First came Venus springing suddenly from behind the Aiguille Noire, then the first lightening of the sky marking the splendid line of the Péteret ridge and at last, when we had almost despaired of it, the sunlight on Mont Blanc. We realised now how lucky we had been in our bivouac, for under its protection we had been oblivious of further snowfall in the night. On the steep slopes below us the signs of avalanche were unmistakable. And below yesterday's couloir the bergschrund was blocked and bridged in three places where before it had been open.

And so began our third day. The evening before we had spotted a possible line of ascent up the right of our crack. The rocks were steep, and with the snow they carried they must give slow and difficult climbing, but we thought them possible and the snow below us discouraged further exploration. So with Niel in the lead we tried our luck. Progress was slow, slower even than in the descent of the gully, for the depth of snow was now substantial and clearing new holds meant covering up the line of ascent. The climbing was punctuated by the falls, which gave no warning, of heavy icicles from the rocks above, harmless but unpleasant. Finally, after climbing a slab of some difficulty Niel came to a corner with but one escape, a vertical wall with good holds above an overhanging start. I came up to belay him and he tackled it with confidence. At the very first pull up a hand-hold broke, and with no warning he was off, falling sheer, as the rope ran through my hand, to a

ledge some 15 feet below. Niel was unhurt and unmoved by this episode, but we needed another route and took the obvious line of escape by roping down the line of his fall to the snow. We had wasted four hours and snow was again falling ; even so, our admission of failure came as a relief. It had long been clear to us that a better route must exist.

Traversing into the next gully, one we had passed by the night before, we found at once a properly broken line of ascent on moderate rocks. This was the real route, we had mistaken another notch in the ridge for the Col. But the moderate rocks were by now carrying 3 feet of snow, and getting up was less a matter of climbing than of uphill swimming. The snow was still powder dry and gave no support. This mode of progress brought us at last to a snow-covered shelf above which rose the final pitch, a steep and rather rotten chimney with ample holds. I tried it first but found myself too tired, when half-way up to go on with safety. Niel, tying on in the lead, got further than I but stuck at the escape from the chimney on to a snow-covered slab, and he in his turn came down. We were all feeling and showing the effects of fatigue and lack of food. Having failed in the climbing we sought, and thought, we had found alternatives, another chimney away to the left, a slab on the right. But in the end we faced the facts : the chimney was the obvious and the easiest route, to get back to the Gamba we had got to force it. I suggested to Niel that as the difficulty was high up, a belay in the chimney would make a difference and he agreed. And so gamely, he led again to the step that had checked him before, while I followed to an indifferent belay just below him. He moved up slowly, so slowly that I felt sure cold or fatigue would stop him before he could find and clear holds, but then, at last, he began to take rope. He was up. A first-class lead.

So now we were on the Col at last. It had taken us 8 hours to climb 200 feet, but we still had 5 hours left for the easy descent. The comforts of the Gamba hut seemed almost within our grasp.

The far couloir was at an easier angle and we slid carelessly down it, pushing the powder snow in front of us. We were soon down on the open snow field. But here was a hitch, for at the foot of the snow slops was a drop over a little rock wall enclosing the head of the Chatelet glacier. The rock looked steep and we knew that we needed an easy passage. But the snow we were on was deep and steep enough to feel dangerous. G.B. led us off to the left, seeking the protection of an upper rock face, and using a line of descent he had been on before. But the rocks to which this brought us were steep slabby stuff, no place for the present winter

conditions. And so we were checked again. But the thought of a second night out was not to be tolerated, it was ludicrous to be held up here, on what must normally be the easiest of going. After discussion we turned back to another line of descent taking the little cliff at its lowest point on the far side of the snow field. The disadvantages of the traverse across the snow field were obvious enough but the risk had to be taken. Two small avalanches did indeed come down on us. The first came as we were traversing, and passed between Niel who was in the lead and me ; it flowed with a stealthy silence and G.B. in the rear, was not even aware of it. The second came as we turned to descend the rock chimney and again it was soundless. This time it was right on the line of our descent and G.B. was carried down a few feet before he could stop himself. But once we got the corner we had singled out, the rest was easy and a single abseil took us down. We were at glacier level and an hour's walk from the hut. The spell was broken. It was seven o'clock.

Shall I try to write of our return to the Gamba hut ? Of the welcome we had from the guardian and his wife ? Of the kindness of the Italian climbers ? Of the meal we ate, the drinks we drank, and the sleep we slept that night ? Seek as I may I have no words that are worthy of these things.

Next morning a motley crowd gathered outside the hut for the descent : the guardian with his wife and little girl, Gazzana and Guidobono, another Italian party, and we. And all together, on thiee ropes, we made our way down the steep wall of the Gamba track. The snow lay down to the floor of the Val Veni. The season was over.

SHEPHERD'S CRAG DECLARES A DIVIDEND

Bentley Beetham

Since the Interim Report from the parent Company, Borrowdale, was published in 1946, the wholly owned subsidiary, Shepherd's Crag, has been highly productive, and now feels that it can declare a dividend, although there is still much to be done.

The Crag is a peculiar, perhaps a unique one. It lies only 100 yards from the main road, and thus affords the most easily accessible climbing in the country (and, says the sybarite, there are good hotels situated at each end of it) ; yet it is so screened by a belt of intervening trees that grow from its moss-covered lower screes and from crevices in its vertical walls that the climbing legions going up and down the dale have passed it by for seventy years unheeded.

In this connection it is interesting to recall that one wet day as long ago as 1921, when walking back from Wasdale to get the train at Keswick, we happened to catch a glimpse through the foliage of a rib of rock that looked sufficiently attractive to cause us to halt to investigate it. We were mildly surprised at its quality ; climbed it ; and thought no more about it. This rib is what we now call *Brown Slabs Arête,* and the significant point about the incident is, that although this particular rib caught our eye and attracted us, we never saw the far finer expanse of rocks that lies screened by trees a little to the south ; and it was not until a quarter of a century later that I returned to investigate the place further, and there found what today we know as Shepherd's Crag. It is these rocks at the southern end that give the Crag its distinctive character ; they are so shapely and clean cut, so aiguille-like and spectacular, that they immediately suggested the name ' *Chamonix'* for one of the first and best routes I made there.

At the base of the cliff lies a steep scree slope whose bottom fringe is moss-covered and tree-clad and is formed of some of the largest blocks I know on any scree in the country, hence providing innumerable shelter caves and overhangs. It may well be these retreats that have caused the place to be given the name of ' Hollow Stones,' which local authority and the 6 inch Ordnance Map give as the correct name for that part of the Crag on which most of the climbs are situated.

The cliff faces west, and as the top is only some 700 feet above sea level, is remarkably free from cloud and wet mists in doubtful weather. There is a maximum of only 300 feet of climbing height, and seldom does this occur in one direct course, but the face is split into so many bays, corners and faces that we have already

made over five thousand feet of climbing on it, in more than twenty different courses, affording all degrees of difficulty.

There is a large, flat, horizontal and grassy platform or bracket more than half-way up the Crag and immediately above the steepest, in fact, ovei hanging rocks at the southern end. It is eaeily reached by pedettrianism from High Lodore Farm, and is a feature worth noting as it affords a delightful belvedere and a rendezvous for tea or lunch. There is also a big ledge, Jackdaw Terrace, running across the face of the Crag at a lower level, but this can only be reached by climbing, and it forms a useful resting place on several of the routes.

Climbing in Borrowdale has its own peculiar charm, that of the beauty and variety of the scenery, and nowheie is this more apparent than on Shepheid's Crag, with Derwentwatei and Skiddaw as a background. I have known hard-bitten cragsmen, brought up on the grim, though grand sterility of Pillar or Scafell, and whose eyes and senses have been attuned only to ways and means, suddenly to stop in the middle of a pitch on one of these climbs, struck by the remarkable beauty of the scene.

Although the Crag is small, identification of the various routes on it is not easy, since the trees prevent one getting a view of the whole and so appreciating the relative position of its parts. It runs roughly north and south and there is at each end a wall going up from the road to the foot of the Crag—useful land marks. There are two scree fans that run up into bays and so divide the Crag into three rather indefinite parts—north, middle and south sections.

Most of the climbs on the southern section lead up to the Belvedere before mentioned, and finish theie ; the part above being uninteresting. Many of the other routes farther north go to the very top of the Crag—a truly lovely view point and one well worth visiting. The northern section, the one that caught my eye so long ago, we have christened Brown Slabs on account of its general waim colour.

In making the?e climbs my object has not been to record difficult routes accomplished, but rather to make useful courses for climbers of all degrees of proficiency ; and it will be found in several cases that in addition to the standard route there is also given a harder alternative for the benefit of those who wou'd desire to use it.

Working northwards and starting from the right hand end of the cliff and using the southern boundary wall as a definite point to measure from, the first climb to be met in 30 feet will be :—

JACKDAW RIDGE Easy Way. 235 feet. Moderate.

(1) 65 feet. 30 feet up the easy rib is a spike belay on the left. Now traverse right for 10 feet to oak, then up scoop and on to ridge on left, good belay, 25 feet above oak.
(2) 50 feet. Straight up to a heather ledge and belay.
(3) 40 feet. Slightly left up a spikey corner to Jackdaw Ledge.
(4) 40 feet. Easy rocks up the crest of Jackdaw Ridge.
(5) 40 feet. Up the easy wall to the Belvedere.

A rather harder start may be made by ascending the next rib 10 feet north, and a longer and much harder one by starting from a cairn 15 feet still farther north. All three routes converge near a small yew about 50 feet up on the Easy Way.

ANT HIGHWAY 280 feet. Difficult. Starts 10 feet north of Jackdaw Ridge very difficult start.

(1) 25 feet. Easy staircase to top of rocks by Ash Tree.
(2) 50 feet. Climb the wall into groove above and immediately traverse slab on right to the corner of rib, which mount up its edge on good holds to belay where rib runs into cliff.
(3) 35 feet. Broken though vertical mass of rock straight up to stance and belay.
(4) 25 feet. Easy rock staircase to arboreal terrace where move left to foot of sharp ridges.
(5) 50 feet. Up the left hand one. Above is a chaos of large broken blocks on the south end of Jackdaw Terrace.
(6) 40 feet. Go left along a ledge leading to the great wall and so into a scoop leading right which ascend.
(7) 25 feet. Easy rocks to belay on oak on ledge to left.
(8) 35 feet. Go along ledges to left and there up final wall on generous holds to finish on Belvedere.

DONKEY'S EARS 240 feet. Very difficult. 40 feet north of Ant Highway, starting at a small flake of rock by an Ash. If sterner stuff is desired the crack met 20 feet earlier and leading to the same place may be taken ; it is severe, and gives another pitch to the climb.

(1) 55 feet. The easy wall furnished with innumerable little ledges to a spike belay at foot of a short vertical chimney.
(2) 20 feet. The chimney, which is spanned near the top by a gnarled yew stem. Belay 5 feet above. Now walk 20 feet left to a little cave beneath a cannon stone—the left ear of Donkey.
(3) 25 feet. Crawl through into cave and then mount an outward pointing spike. There is now a pleasing little hand traverse going left to the very corner, which mount. You are now between the two ears, and above lies a remarkable chaotic pile of great blocks—the south end of Jackdaw Terrace.
(4) 45 feet. Over the blocks, working right and up until a ledge leads across to a scoop in the corner.
(5) 25 feet. Along the ledge into the bottom of the scoop and on to a little ledge at a stump sticking out from the left wall.
(6) 30 feet. Highways seem to end here, but a rather delicate traverse left is made across the face to another stump, whence a crack is climbed, leading to a ledge and belay on oak.
(7) 30 feet. Left for 20 feet, and slightly down on to an airy bracket at the end, then straight up the wall to the Belvedere.

MONOLITH CRACK 160 feet. Very Severe. Starts at the first little promontory 60 feet up the scree fan from Donkey's Ears.

(1) 55 feet. Easy rock staircase. When 30 feet up an inviting vertical corner **will** be seen on the right, climb it on fine spikes to Jackdaw Terrace. Walk 30 feet up the boulder shoot to the right.

(2) 40 feet. The imposing wall on the left is now climbed. First into a small niche 15 feet up, then on to a little ledge 3 feet above, and finally up the crack by press footholds out on the left face, and so to an oak on a ledge ; 10 feet above is a good belay.

(3) 30 feet. Straight ahead though hardly visible, is a retiring monolith, which is climbed by a smooth vertical crack on its right ; good finishing holds but a conspicuous shortage of same below.

(4) 35 feet. Up the final wall by the projecting corner on the left to the Belvedere—a good route ; much of interest on a short climb.

Passing *Monolith Chimney,* Severe, *The Devil's Wedge,* Very Severe, *Shepherd's Chimney,* Severe, and *Shepherd's Gully,* Very-Severe, we come in 35 yards to :—

LITTLE CHAMONIX 200 feet. Very Difficult.

(1) 25 feet. A little crack on the left of the pedestal blocks.

(2) 65 feet. First up and then right on to a spikey corner, then left keeping to clean outer edge of shelf and out to a fine corner overhanging the start. Up the corner to a grassy ledge with belay on wall at back.

(3) 40 feet. Slightly right, up a continuous V shaped ledge running parallel to and a little below Chamonix Ridge. Belay on yew stump.

(4) 30 feet. Continue up the ledge to an overhang, here traverse across the slab on right on small holds to the corner where is a tiny Rowan ; ascend the edge up excellent holds. A nice pitch. Good belay.

(5) 40 feet. Cross the Chamonix Route and pass up behind the pinnacle and continue up the little gully to the top.

CRESCENDO 250 feet. Severe. Starts 10 feet north of Little Chamonix.

(1) 20 feet. Easy Chimney in which an oak grows and on to a platform.

(2) 30 feet. Up the wall on right to a sloping ledge. Belay on the left.

(3) 35 feet. Traverse left, to the protruding corner which ascend at first on fine holds to good stance and belays at top.

(4) 55 feet. Straight up easy rocks to better things above.

(5) 25 feet. Up fine ledges to a small oak where are excellent belays.

(6) 15 feet. A triangular block will be seen on the left with a lesser triangular flake protruding from the wall. The lesser enables one to reach the greater, which is a point on the North Ridge—a nice movement.

(7) 35 feet. Ascend the ridge to a belay on stump at top.

(8) 35 feet. Traverse right and slightly down along a ledge and climb the finishing wall by a shallow and awkward scoop to **the** Belvedere.

CHAMONIX 300 feet. Severe. Starts at a cairn at the base of a great wall at the lowest point between the two scree fans, 50 feet north of Crescendo.

(1) 55 feet. Up the wall working right using two parallel flakes first for hands and then for feet. Cross a depression and on to a bracket on right and up to a higher one, then round the corner and up behind a great pinnacle flake.

(2) 30 feet. The scoop in the corner behind the pinnacle may be climbed direct but is more easily started from the right wall. Good belay at top.

(3) 35 feet. Do not go up to the oak above but move right to corner and up on fine holds to a good situation.

(4) 40 feet. Now descend a corner of block for about 15 feet then traverse right for 10 feet and then up, move right a few feet, then—

(5) 60 feet—straight up to the top of the rib which if climbed on its crest give a nice but easy route.

(6) 40 feet. 20 feet up the slab on the right on diminishing, but delightful holds, on to the table block, over it and round the corner to the right and up a similar slab to the one just climbed to a comfortable saddle with excellent belays.

(7) 40 feet. First up the fault on left, but do not go behind the pinnacle, instead traverse to its base on the right and then up to the top of it. From here, or slightly lower, a variety of pleasing movements may be made, all of which go left up the face and mount on to the Belvedere at the corner. The more to the left, the more difficult they are.

NORTH RIDGE 200 feet. Moderate. Starts behind a twin-stemmed ash round the corner and 65 feet up the scree north of Chamonix. An easy but pleasant route.

(1) 45 feet. Up the wall working right to belay on oak at top.

(2) 30 feet. Up easy ridge to foot of protruding corner.

(3) 55 feet. Straight up the corner and then right on to edge of final ridge.

(4) 70 feet. Up the ridge keeping out on right edge which overhangs an ample void.

A harder and longer first pitch (at least Very Difficult) may be made by starting about 10 yards down the scree and climbing straight up the fault which joins the ordinary route at its top.

HOLLOW STONES 400 feet. Difficult. Starts 10 feet north of North Ridge.

(1) 40 feet. First up the wall and then left across to the pinnacle.

(2) 65 feet. Up the ridge, past a belay at 45 feet to a cairn above oak.

(3) 25 feet. Leave ridge and traverse slightly down to right into an unseen recess round the corner : climb out of the hollow by a narrow vertical chimney—an entertaining little pitch. Then walk 30 feet left to the foot of some good rocks.

(4) 45 feet. Climb these first on north face, then working right on to edge of flake which ascend to the top and on to a huge perched block spanning a cavity, on to and over the block to belay just beyond it.

(5) 75 feet. Easy ridge iies ahead.

(6) 80 feet. Ridge is broken at first giving nice route before degenerating. Now walk 20 yards half left up birch grown terrace to where an oak grows from a crack.
(7) 70 feet. 35 feet up broken promontory, then left to finish the route up pleasing cracks and ledges to cairn on summit.

ATTIC STAIRS 265 feet. Moderate. Starts at the top of the big scree-fan nearly 50 yards up from Hollow Stones and leads to the summit of the Crag.
(1) 30 feet. The broken scoop below a large yew, which is best passed on left.

A much harder and longer first pitch, severe in standard, may be had by climbing the pinnacle just to the left of the ordinary start.
(2) 40 feet. Straight up to a second yew.
(3) 30 feet. Easy staircase rocks to a cave system. The rocks on this and next pitch are very unstable—caution advised.
(4) 65 feet. Into the cavern on right and then up and out working left on to slabs at the corner and then up to the belay. Now walk left and slightly down to an oak, above which is a series of ribs.
(5) 100 feet. Affording nice climbing to the very top of the Crag.

BLUEBELL WALL 200 feet. Difficult. Starts at the top of scree 50 feet north of Attic Stairs.
(1) 50 feet, to big earth ledge.
(2) 40 feet. Straight up the ledged wall to the upper of two oaks—comfortable seat and belay.
(3) 50 feet. Go along ledge to right for a few feet and then up the wall reaching its top near a twisted oak. The wall now ends, but 15 feet higher across a heather ledge
(4) 60 feet, nice rock occurs and gives some pleasant climbing straight ahead till the top of the Crag is reached.

SHEPHERD'S DELIGHT 290 feet. Difficult. Starts up some protruding rocks 80 feet north of Bluebell Wall.
(1) 50 feet. 20 feet up on to pedestal base. The straight up, later bearing right to an oak.
(2) 65 feet. A little overhang lies ahead, turn it on nice rock round corner to right in 25 feet. A second overhang now appears, climbed on clean interesting rocks up its right edge.
(3) 50 feet. There is now a second overhanging wall with an oak growing from its upper part ; climb it up clean interesting rocks on its right edge. Belay at foot of next wall.
(4) 25 feet. Up the ledges to the bottom of an aspen shelf sloping up left.
(5) 40 feet. Quit the shelf almost as soon as attained by a movemert out on the wall to right and up a spikey corner to belay on oak just above.
(0) 60 feet. Then scramble up 20 feet half right to a blunt rib which gives nice climbing to the terrace just below the summit.

SHEPHERD'S WARNING 315 feet. Difficult. Starts up overhanging rock, 20 feet north of Shepherd's Delight.
(1) 45 feet. Up the centre of the rocks to a belay on oak on the left.
(2) 50 feet. Easy but loose rocks to wall having an oak growing from its upper part.

(3) 50 feet. Climb the wall which overhangs a little passing just to the right of oak and up the nose above to belay 20 feet ahead.
(4) 25 feet. Up two little ledged walls.
(5) 50 feet. Move right along ledge and then up, but do not get into aspen shoot, instead traverse horizontally left along edge of the wall to the corner which climb straight up to belay on oak.
(6) 45 feet. Nice climbing up the crests of ridges ahead. Belay at top. The climb now appears to be finished but by walking a dozen yards upward to left to a spike of rock another 50 feet—•
(") 50 feet—of nice rock may be enjoyed. This leads to the summit of the crag when a beautiful view is obtained in all directions.

Coming down the scree we pass *Turning the North,* 320 feet, Very Difficult and the *North Buttress,* 150 feet, Severe and in about 50 yards arrive at:—

AUDAS 135 feet. Severe.
(1) 60 feet. Climb awkward sloping rocks to a block belay on the right.
(2) 15 feet. The climb now becomes steeper. From the block climb up to the right of the groove to a stance and small belays.
(3) 25 feet. Traverse back to the groove and up to block belay under overhangs.
(4) 35 feet. Traverse left and across a steep slab for 25 feet, then up a vertical wall, using small slanting crack. Belay tree on summit.

SYLVAN WAY 235 feet. Moderate. Starts 70 feet north of Ardus.
(1) 60 feet. 20 feet up easy pedicel and then straight up to a big platform and belay.
(2) 50 feet. First along the base of the wall, then left along a shelf and up the wall.
(3) 45 feet. Traverse slightly down and round the corner to the right to a Rowan, ascend the rocks directly above to a good belay.
(4) 35 feet. Up the rather difficult corner on right on good holds to belay. Walk left 20 feet passing under pendant blocks.
(5) 45 feet. Start up the left and lower of two steeply sloping shelves and quit it on reaching a gnarled stump for the higher shelf which ascend to its top and then straight up to the cairn—delightful rock and climbing.

35 feet North is :—

100 FEET SLAB 170 feet. Moderate. Easily identified by the massive root boss on the ridge 20 feet up.
(1) 30 feet. Up to and over the boss.
(2) 40 feet. Easy rocks to foot of slab.
(3) 40 feet. Keep to the face of the slab and Dot up its right edge, where, however, in 40 feet a belay on Rowan may be found.
(4) 60 feet. On up the slab to the top of the climb.

70 feet up and to North lies :—

BROWN SLABS INTRODUCTORY 180 feet. Moderate. It starts in the corner and goes up the open gully that higher up becomes a difficult crack.

(1) 35 feet. Up the gully to a tree growing from the slab on left. If the gully is kept to and climbed direct to the junction with the traverse it gives a second pitch of very difficult or severe standard.
(2) 55 feet. Climb the broken recess on the right for about 30 feet then traverse left until the gully is regained.
(3) 40 feet. Continue up to the top of the gully.
(4) 50 feet. Keep to the right edge up the easy slabs to the cairn.

50 feet downwards, is reached, the start of :—•

BROWN SLABS ARETE 150 feet. Difficult.
(1) 55 feet. An ascending traverse left across the steep wall to a notch on the arête.
(2) 35 feet. Up the crest of the ridge to a good belay.
(3) 60 feet. Continue up the ridge keeping always to the right where the holds are good if small and where the situation is excellent.

BROWN SLABS DIRECT 130 feet. Very Difficult. Starts a few feet away and goes straight up to the top of the ridge.

30 feet down just behind an oak tree, is the start of:—

BROWN SLABS WALL 145 feet. Moderate to Difficult.
(1) 40 feet. At first straight up, then slightly right to a spike belay.
(2) 50 feet. To good anchorage on the blocks at the head of a scoop.
(3) 55 feet. First up the wall, then traverse right along a ledge and finish up the vertical rock on the right on beautiful holds to an oak.

'SKYE, 1947'

F. Lawson Cook

It used to be a traditional requisite for a mountaineering holiday that it should have a scientific object or excuse. If such a tradition is to be preserved it would seem to be appropriate that in these modern days one of the more modern sciences should be the one involved, and this seems to lead to the choice of a psychological approach. As regards ' Skye, 1947,' such an approach is easy, for the dominant note of the earlier days was the obvious conflict in the minds of most of us between the divergent principles enshrined in the phrases ' The customer is always right' and ' The customer is always wrong.' Some of the party apparently started out with the idea that in the wilds of the misty isle, even if the War had ever meant anything, the customer's right to expect to have everything his own way had been fully re-established and they were rudely shocked to find that there were ' powers and authorities' who thought differently.

This conflict was not confined to such matters as the allocation of beds, the form and quantity of sandwiches, or the appropriate time to expect to be welcomed back cheerfully with the promise of an immediate meal, but extended also to the mutual relations of the Club members themselves. The ' troops ' sometimes mutinied under the harsh commands of their self-appointed Guide, the ' Slave-driver,' even when he was using his best ' running commentary ' manner, and the only times he could command implicit obedience were when the mists were shrouding the ridges and he alone could claim with any degree of truth that he could guarantee a safe way home.

Enough, however, of these hazy and perhaps ill-considered lucubrations, and let us resort to a few records of our expeditions. Saturday, the 10th May, afforded a good introduction for those who were visiting the Coolins for the first time. The Slave-driver was more or less in charge of a large party (in fact, all but the ' Tigers ' who were disporting themselves on Sron na Ciche) which set out for Coire Laggan. There was a partial mutiny over the stopping place for ' first lunch,' the vigorous ones refusing to descend when the slackers, under pressure from T.R.B., halted half-way up the screes leading to the Bealach. On reaching the ridge G.H.W. and T.R.B. climbed An Stac direct. The others traversed on the west side and reached the summit from the col between it and the Inaccessible Pinnacle. The next move was to traverse under the Pinnacle to Sgurr Dearg and then continue on the ridge to Sgurr Banachdich and down by Coire nan Eich.

Sunday started cloudily, but steadily improved as a full party proceeded up Coire Ghreadaidh. After lunch high up the Coire, various routes were taken, but the main party reached the ridge at the gap between Mhaidaidh and Ghreadaidh, and after visiting the former, followed the ridge south over Ghreadaidh and Thormaid to Banachdich and so back as on the previous day. In the evening a sewing party had to be organised by Maude and Ruth so as to make sure cf a reasonably respectable appearance for one of the party, who shall be nameless, whose fifth point of contact had found Ghreadaidh rather too jagged.

Monday : Mist being right down almost to sea level, it was an act of faith to follow the ' Guide,' but three venturesome ones did so and visited Coire Ghrunnda. The boiler plates were finally circumvented by an amusing crawl for about 100 yards along a horizontal cleft in them giving some 3 feet 6 inches clearance. From the Lochan a way was made up rocks and scree to the left, and without much difficulty the top of Sgumain was found. The traverse of the ridge to Alasdair was attempted, but abandoned about halfway because of difficulties with the wet rock on the gendarmts without a rope, and a retieat was made \ia Bealach Coire Ghrunnda and the Sgumain stone shoot for tea. The smallness of the party was mainly attributable to disaffection, if not mutin}, on the part of certair slackers who preferred to £,et more or less lost on the lower levels stretching to Dunain Point. While it would be an impertinence to include T.R.B. in the same category, he, too, made a quiet escape in order to indulge his private passion for bonfires and tea. There is considerable myt-tery about the proceedings of the Tig.rs, but rumour has it that they were expending their energies in mote ring to Sligachan in pursuit of the fleshpots that Glenbrittle House could not afford to their satisfaction.

Tuesday : An organised visit to Bruach na Frithe, using cars almost to the junction of the road and the Sligachan path. At the summit the party separated, some visiting Sgurr a Fionn Coire and admiring the Basteir Tooth, where great courage was needed to resist the blandishments of P,ter Alexander in his vain efforts to obtain a victim to second him up *Naismith's.* He had counted upon G.H.W. the ' Dentist,' but the latter produced a perfectly legitimate excuse that he refused to indulge in a busman's holiday. Others traversed the ridge south as far as Bidein Druim na Ramh, and were duly ticked off by the authorities for being late for dinner. The more orthodox returned by Fionn Coire and reaped the reward of their good conduct by having a car ride along the road and a pat on the back for being in early.

Wednesday saw the great overseas invasion of Scavaig and Coruisk. Lunch was taken on landing. A small party preferred the joys of visiting the Shark factory and other savoury spots on Soay, and were duly punished by being landed on the south side of Dunain Point and having a wet walk home over the moor. Another party crossed the ridge via Garbh Coire, intending to traverse under Dubh na Da Bhein and Thearlaich to the Sgumain stone shoot, but the advent of wind and driving rain at the Bealach caused an abandonment of their plan and a return was made down Coire Ghrunnda, not without some trouble in supervening mist with the boiler plates. The Tigeis ticked off the Dubhs.

Thursday, with the ridge only momentarily clear, was taken as a quiet day and most of the party visited Dunain Point, some exploring the iron-smelting cave, and two cf the party the ancient burying place and dwelling, close to the point itself. The day was fine and sunny on these lower slopes and T.R.B.'s two tea-making bonfires—out and home—were mucli appreciated. It was after this antiquarian expedition that T.R.B. was formally decorated with the Grand Brass Medal of the Glenbrittle Archaeological Society. It has to be recorded, not without a measure of shame, that Dunvegan, Portree and, again, the fleshpots of Sligachan proved an irresistible lure to certain members of the party.

Friday was for six of us the really great day. A car was hired to Sligachan and the party climbed the Pinnacle Ridge in reasonably good time, only using the rope for part of the descent from the third Pinnacle. The west ridge was then followed, after which the party divided, the ' aged and infirm ' traversing under the Basteir to the top of Fionn Coire and thence to Glenbrittle House via the Mhaim in two hours the others keeping to the ridge as far as the Tooth, and then, losing their courage at the sight of ***Naismith's,*** escaping down the terrace into Lota Coire and up to the ridge again by the screes. They came in an hour later. Meanwhile the ' not-so-toughs ' were beguiled by T.R.B., complete with stick to reinforce a recalcitrant knee, into a walk round the coast to Loch Eynort, in the intervals between bonfires. The excursion included a most dangerous, if **not** unjustifiable, crossing of the River Brittle by a had-been suspension bridge.

Saturday : The main party started off in two groups for Sron na Ciche, but never joined up. The leading party, after lunch at the foot of Eastern Gully, proceeded up the stone shoot and on to Sgumain. From there, in thick mist, a way was found below the ridge on the south side, by a process of trial and error, until the moderately easy chimney leading to Alasdair was encountered and recognised by the Guide. The summit was then duly ticked off,

and a quick but noisy descent made by the Great Stone Shoot, somewhat to the alarm of two cowering mortals toiling up. Escape from the mist was not effected until the level of the Lochan was reached. That morning our two Tigers had left Glenbrittle in the early hours to traverse the whole ridge. In the evening the rest of the party had the vicarious joy of hearing they had been successful, although in their modesty they themselves did not claim to have followed the orthodox route with absolute strictness, nor to have accomplished the expedition in any miraculously short time. The feat was nevertheless remarkable because they encountered heavy mist practically all the way, with visibility down to a few yards. Furthermore, neither of them was familiar with certain portions of the ridge and in such circumstances the route-finding alone was a considerable achievement. They had some amusing pace-making from a white hare which they picked up near Caisteal a Gharbh-coire.

Sunday, being wet in the morning, afforded a welcome excuse for a rest until after lunch. A large party then followed the River Brittle up as far as the Fairy Pools in Coire na Creiche. They were rewarded with good water conditions and the gradual emergence of the sun, to say nothing of the refreshment provided by three rival tea-making outfits. By evening all the ridge was clear again.

Monday saw all dispersing, in perfect weather conditions which not even the hardship of early rising could prevent from raising our spirits. The motoring force (in two cars) had a magnificent trip by Cluaine Bridge, Tomdoun, Fort William, Kinlochleven and Glencoe to Crianlarich, not really impaired by twice having to act as a mobile repair gang to cope with two separate punctures. At Crianlarich the cars parted company and each ' crew ' no doubt felt that ' Skye, 1947 ' had now to become a cherished memory, and such it will certainly be to most—if not all—of us for many years to come. Weather, of course, being on the whole favourable, contributed much to the success of the meet, but there was a good spirit of comradeship, which developed as the days passed. Old friendships were strengthened and new ones were made, we hope, of the same lasting and enriching character.

THE ALPINE MEET

AROLLA, 15th TO 31st AUGUST, 1947

Forty members and friends joined the Alpine Meet at Arolla. The party left London on Friday morning, loth August, and arrived at Mt. Collon Hotel for dinner on Saturday. They left Arolla for home on Sunday, 31st August. Good weather was experienced almost the whole time.

The arrangements for the Meet had been well and carefully made by the Meet's Secretary, Miss Lyna Kellett, and everyone was grateful for her great work.

The following attended : guests' names in parenthesis :—

Miss K. N. Barnard ; J. E. Blackshaw ; Miss H. Boothroyd ; J. Cordingley ; Miss J. Cox ; G. C. Curtis ; C. E. F. Dee ; J. H. Fleming ; D. C. H. Garrod (M. Garrod) ; E. M. Hazelton ; Miss S. Joy ; Miss M. Kellett ; Miss M. Lisle ; Miss C. J. McGregor (Miss B. [McGregor) ; A. W. Mayhew (J. E. Bowman) ; T. A. H. Medlycott ; Mrs P. Parton (J. E. Parton) ; Mrs R. M. Pickersgill (Miss D. B. Kidd) ; Miss E. Ramsay ; Miss P. Raven ; Miss F. I. Rylatt (Miss D. Gray) ; J. C. Shepherdson ; L. W. Somervell ; A. D. B. Side ; Mrs A. D. B. Side (John Side) ; D. J. Simm (Mrs. I. Simm) ; Miss D. H. Smith ; G. C. Waters ; L. A. Wigglesworth (H. A. Gebbie, A. P. MacLaren) ; F. R. Young.

Dr and Mrs L. P. Garrod were also staying at the hotel for part of the time, and joined the party.

We were fortunate to have with us our President, Leslie W. Somervell. In addition to his good company we benefited from his valuable assistance and also from his decisions on questions of policy.

Mayhew and Bowman acted as shepherds to the party out and home, and members were saved much trouble by their endeavours.

Five guides were engaged on arrival : Maurice Anzevui, Lucien Gaudin, Jean Rumph, Pierre Mauris, Jean Georges.

Considering the size of the party and its many alpine novices and the responsibility devolving on the guides, it is considered they carried out their duties satisfactorily. Only two members indicated on their Application Forms that they possessed more than ' slight' alpine experience.

With such a large party it is essential to have several experienced amateurs to assist in leading on the mountains ; this year we lacked such help. Special thanks are, therefore, due to Frank Dee and E. M. Hazelton for their considerable and unstinted assistance in daily routine work—allocating climbs and huts, supervising supplies of food and equipment and acting as Hut Leaders. The Meet would have been much poorer without them.

Wigglesworth, Gebbie and MacLaren volunteered for what must have been the biggest and most awkward job of all.—Finance ! Midst Scots philosophy, ethics and mathematical formulae, ' The Trio ' evolved a system which worked and was, we believe, satisfactory to all. Basic contributions for guides, various rates of hut fees and charges for special climbs are a few of the things which had to be considered and recorded daily. Finance should always be regarded as the biggest and most difficult job of a Meet of this type.

Some members have not acceded to a request to report the climbs they did, but the list sent to the Meets Secretary in the full report shows that all the principal and many of the minor peaks in the district were climbed by one or more parties and by various routes. Probably the most outstanding expedition was the following :—

27TH AUGUST, WEDNESDAY

Twenty-four left for Bertol Hut, Tete Blanche and Rossier Hut

28TH AUGUST, THURSDAY

Dent Blanche ; South Arête

Nineteen members with five guides, made the ascent from the Rossier Hut and returned to Arolla via the Glacier des Manzettes; Bricolla ; Ferpècle ; Les Haudères.

Bowman ; Curtis ; D. Garrod ; M. Garrod ; Gebbie ; Hazelton ; Kidd ; Kellett ; Lisle ; MacLaren ; Mayhew ; P. Parton ; Ramsay ; Raven ; Rylatt ; A. D. Side ; Waters ; Wigglesworth ; Young.

Unfortunately during the Meet, Miss Dorothy Gray, a guest, was killed while descending the track just below the finish of the traverse of the Petite Dent de Veisivi. This was not a climbing accident, but a charming personality was taken from us and her death was a great blow to her many friends. She was buried in the Churchyard at Evolène. The Service was conducted by the English chaplain, and was attended by the President of the Club, Misses Boothroyd, Joy, J. and B. McGregor, Mrs Side, Mrs Pickersgill, John Side, F. Dee, and other members and many village sympathisers.

One of our lady members was allowed to inspect, involuntarily, the depths of a crevasse, fortunately without any obvious effects. Other members made shorter excursions below ground and the loss of one ice-axe was reported.

John Fleming tried another method to gain fame by falling about eighty feet direct while leading on the Douves Blanches. Fortunately, he had chosen carefully his second, Jim Cordingley.who,though injured by the rope, held his leader and was mainly responsible for getting the injured man up the remainder of the climb and to the Bertol Hut. This feat required great courage and physical strength and commanded the admiration of the few, including the rescue party guides, who knew some of the circumstances.

It remains for the Leader to record his grateful thanks to those who so generously assisted with the arrangements for such a large party, and to Michael Garrod for subsequently co-ordinating the photographic record of the Meet.

A. D. B. SIDE.

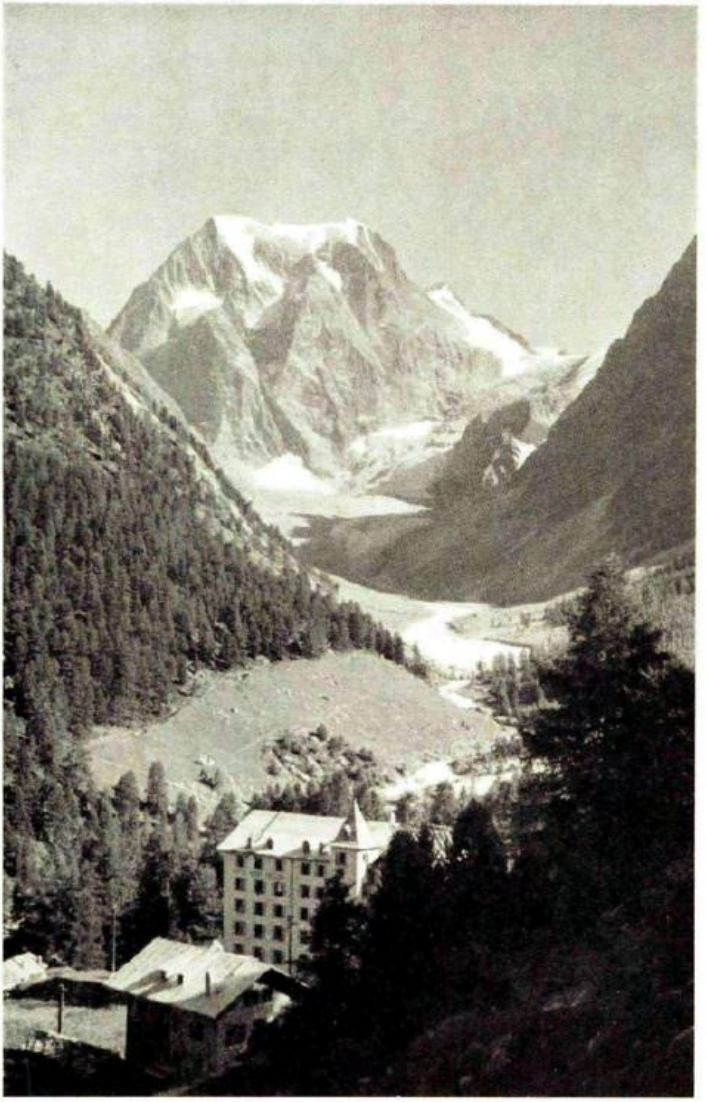
Douglas Side has, of course, omitted all mention of the Leader's part, in the performance of which he was responsible not only for constant tactful advice on the constitution of parties and their expeditions, but for the amazingly smooth running of every activity.

He and his family joined the Meet in the first place as ordinary members, intending to renew their enjoyment of the Alps and to introduce John to the delights of the high mountains. Experience in organising training for mountain warfare prompted the immediate approach of Side by Miss Lyna Kellett.

With characteristic thoroughness he studied the reports of previous Alpine Meets, obtained translations of climbing guides to Arolla, accurately assessed the ability of individual members, and throughout the whole fortnight was never at a loss to suggest a satisfactory alternative when weather or events upset the programme. In all this, Mrs Side's smiling equanimity, coupled with her exceptional knowledge of Arolla, must have stood Douglas in good stead.

The able leadership of such a large and mixed party would have taxed the most competent, but, in 1947, the tigers and the marmots (if that is a fair synonym for those who sit and listen to cow bells !) all had a chance to fulfil their ambitions, and also shared with the Sides a lovely family holiday.

L. W. SOMERVELL.



MONT COLLON

E. Banner Mendus

CLIMBS OLD AND NEW

J. Cars-well

The year 1947 provided a very large crop of new climbs from many parts of the district, and as usual, many of them are of a high standard of difficulty. Exploration of Esk Buttress and Castle Rock of Triermain, those two very formidable crags, has continued and East Buttress no longer has a monopoly of the super-severe climbs. Of interest to more ordinary mortals are climbs on some of the low-lying crags. Outlying crags have also received their share of attention and those who would flee the popularity of the Napes will find good climbing and solitude on some of these lesser known crags.

WASDALE

SCAFELL

ESK BUTTRESS

MEDUSA WALL 450 feet. Very severe. Exposed. First ascent, 9th August, 1947. A.R.D., L.J.G. Lies on the main face starting at an obvious deeply-cut chimney and going straight up to a small ledge, noticeable because of white rock immediately below.

(1) 100 **feet.** Rocks and steep vegetation to the foot of an obvious square-cut chimney. Great Central Climb lies some 20 feet to the right.

(2) 85 feet. Some 16 feet of broken rocks into the bed of the chimney. The chimney is followed for about 20 feet until an obvious flat foothold on the right wall can be attained. The crack just to the right is climbed for 10 feet to a small platform. Traverse left into corner and climb the crack to good ledge and belays, the left wall proving useful.

(3) 25 feet. The steep groove above to a small stance and fine spike belay.

(4) 20 feet. The steep wall on right of belay is climbed on good holds to a good ledge (the White Ledge) and huge belays.

(5) 25 feet. Exposed traverse on good holds to left. Stance and belay.

(6) 20 feet. The mossy groove ahead to small ledge and good belay in the gully.

(7) 35 feet. Up gully until it is possible to step right on to rock ledge on final tower. Belay on left.

(8) 45 feet. Climb groove above belay to top of pinnacle. Round right and up to good stance and fine belay on edge of tower.

(9) 30 feet. Straight up the groove containing the belay for about 15 feet, then move right on to the rib and up to large bilberry and juniper ledge. Belays.

(10) 65 feet. Easy climbing diagonally right. Scrambling only remains.

GARGOYLE GROOVE 185 feet. Very severe, First ascent, 9th August, 1947. A.R.D., L.J.G. Lies on the left-hand of crag, up the easy looking groove leading up to the Gargoyle from the left. Starts at the toe of a small buttress immediately below the groove.

(1) 65 feet. Climb the buttress to large sloping bilberry ledge. Ash tree belay.

(2) 60 feet. Strenuous. Climb up groove over doubtful blocks until forced left on to vertical section by the overhanging nose. The nose is attained with difficulty and easier climbing leads to massive pinnacle belay on left.
(3) 60 feet. Up the groove ; the standard of difficulty being maintained throughout. The finish is immediately to the left of the Gargoyle.

SQUARE CHIMNEY ROUTE — 410 feet. Very severe. First ascent, 17th August, 1947. R. T. Birkett, L.M. Starts up the arête, that runs down from the right-hand side of Frustration's chimney.
(1) 60 feet. Up the arête to a stance and belay.
(2) 40 feet. Continue to another stance and belay.
(3) 30 feet. Straight up to a bilberry[1] ledge on which grows a rowan tree.
(4) 70 feet. Traverse right until directly below the square-cut chimney, then climb up to a stance and belay at its foot.
(5) 40 feet. Climb the chimney until a small stance at the top left-hand side is reached, there is a small spike here ; a much better one is round a flake 8 feet higher (very hard to reach).
(6) 80 feet. Traverse horizontally left to a crack in the corner which is climbed to a stance and belay.
(7) 30 feet. From the top of the belay, step on to the arête on the left and climb this to a stance and belay at the end of the traverse on Bridge's Route.
(8) 60 feet. Return to the chimney and climb it until a step left takes one out to the top of the crag.

NOTE.—This climb and Medusa Wall which was done a few days earlier appear to have the square-cut chimney and the crack in common.

PIKES CRAG

PIKES CRAG RIDGE — 495 feet. Severe. First ascent, 21st August, 1941. B.B., J.B.M. Starts up the rocks to the right at the foot of ' D ' Gully.
(1) 20 feet to a good stance and belay.
(2) 30 feet to a good stance and belay, then traverse past foot of dirty shallow chimney and up to an obvious rock corner on the left.
(3) 35 feet. Ascend the wall on the right for 15 feet or so, and then move over the edge to the right ; cross the steep and rather holdless slab making for a bracket on the corner of the next ridge to the right ; from the bracket move round into the chimney where there is a good belay.
(4) 35 feet. Up the rather difficult chimney to a fine stance and belay on the left of a square pillar.
(5) 25 feet. Move across the top of the chimney into a remarkable rock crevasse and climb out of this on to a ledge with fine block belay.
(6) 35 feet. An awkward looking little crack in a corner to the left is now climbed on good handholds to a big block belay.
(7) 55 feet. Up a 25 foot crack on the left followed by easy going to a rock ledge giving a fine view of the chimney vertically below.
(8) 65 feet. Pleasant easy ridge-climbing to a gap in the ridge.
(9) 35 feet. Down into the gap and then up the first gendarme and over a strid to a good stance. 20 feet of walking along the ridge brings one to the second gap.

(10) 25 feet. Very difficult descent down vertical wall into the gap. This pitch which is severe, may be abseiled.
(11) 45 feet. Up the easy opposite side of this gap keeping left.
(12) 55 feet. Easy ridge climbing to a fine spike belay at the foot of cracks.
(13) 20 feet. Up the cracks to a large block belay.
(14) 20 feet. Up the final wall to the summit.

LINGMELL

LINGMELL BUTTRESS 525 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 10th August, 1940. B.B. (solo). The climb starts about 150 feet above where the pedestrian route to Wasdale comes out on the North flank of Steep Gill. Cairn at foot.

(1) 55 feet. From the cairn, or alternately, up a nice little chimney, to the ridge. Follow ridge on fine rock and belays.
(2) 75 feet. Move a couple of yards left on to adjacent ridge which mount keeping to the crest all the way up. Easy but delightful rock with belays at frequent intervals. The angle now lessens. Walk up the next 50 feet until, after passing a stone shoot going down to the gully on the left, one may take to the—
(3) 50 feet—spikey rocks of the ridge again and so reach a steeper part going up on the left.
(4) 140 feet. A length of thin serrated crest now follows, often so thin as to be only one block thick. The rock is lovely to climb on, but being much fretted and weather worn requires testing. This part may be broken into numerous pitches to taste, but none requires more than 50 feet of rope. In about 140 feet, in three or four movements, you come to a fine finger of rock sticking up on the ridge.
(5) 30 feet. Climb this needle and from its upper part cross the chasm and engage on the wall opposite ; an interesting movement.
(6) 45 feet up on the ridge brings you to a severe overhanging bulge. Climb this direct where the—
(7) 65 feet—handholds will be found good. This pitch is harder than the standard of the climb, and if the conditions suggest, it may be turned by the wall round the corner to the left, and so the boulder capped crest reached. Go along this and down into a narrow gap before the final obstacle. This is a wall—
(8) 65 feet—and rather difficult slab, but the holds are adequate and in about 40 feet the top is reached. Go along the crest and down to the finish.

NORTH RIDGE 520 feet. Easy difficult. First ascent, 5th August, 1945. B.B. (solo). This climb goes up just north of the North Gully, starting on rib north of the bounding rocks as the latter peter out.

(1) 100 feet. Up very easy ridge, improving in quality as you mount. In about 100 feet, with halting places and belays at intervals, move a few feet to the right and continue—
(2) 100 feet—another 100 feet to the turreted top and over it down into the Col beyond.
(3) 120 feet. A sheer wall now faces one, but it can be climbed easily starting a little to the left of the crest of the col and working right, and so reaching in about 40 feet a fine outstanding corner, only a flake wide. From here traverse left on to the fine rib rising from

below, which follow for 80 feet until at its summit it is crossed by a grass and bilberry terrace. The crag hereabouts is stepped and broken and our ridge presents itself as a line of turrets and gendarmes.

(4) 200 feet. If the next 200 feet of the crest is kept to, it provides some pleasant climbing on delightful rock and is altogether better than it promised to be when first seen on arrival at the bilberry terrace.

BUCKBARROW

OVERBECK JOINT EFFORT — 210 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 19th June, 1947. P.M., P.H., H.K.G. The main west buttress has a prominent overhanging crack towards its left edge. The route begins in a corner 00 feet lower and to the right, and ascends a rib in short pitches to a sweep of mossy slabs. The slabs are climbed first towards the left then a rising traverse to the right skyline.

(1) 30 feet. Start in a corner and climb the rib on the right.
(2) 30 feet. A short wall up the left edge of the rib.
(3) 30 feet. Step left and up the ridge.
(0 20 feet. Easy rock to the foot of the slabs.
(5) 50 feet. The slabs are climbed in the corner to the right of the ridge. Block belay on left skyline.
(6) 50 feet. Step down to the right from the belay, then climb a few feet up to the Catwalk which is followed to the right. Finish at the right skyline. Cairn.

GREAT GABLE

THE NAPES

LITTLE JOHN — 85 feet. Mild severe. First ascent, 27th September, 1947. J. Ball, J.W.C. Follows the left wall of Eagle's Nest West Chimney. Starts at the top of a large rock pedestal about 30 feet up the chimney on its right-hand wall.

(1) 35 feet. The left-hand edge of the slab is ascended for 25 feet, when the rock begins to steepen, follow a grassy crack slanting up to the right which issues on to a ledge below the overhang. Flake belay high up on left.
(2) 50 feet. Climb the overhang direct into the steep crack immediately above, and follow this to its conclusion.

GABLE CRAG

AARON'S ROUTE — 325 feet. Difficult. First ascent, 12th April, 1942. B.B. (solo). Starts at the foot of the buttress some 300 yards West of Aaron's Slack, after crossing and descending the stone talus from the first ghyll on the left.

(1) 85 feet. Up fairly easy rocks until a belay is reached.
(2) 55 feet. On up to next belay.
(3) 30 feet—to crest of buttress, then 50 feet of easy scrambling followed by 250 feet of walking along the top of the ridge to where it joins the cliffs. Here bear right to a slab with a flake-crack in it leading up to right.
(4) 45 feet. Climb this crack (mainly as a lay-back, or hand-traverse) or, more easily go up a groove on the left of the slab ; both routes leading to a belay at 45 feet.
(5) 65 feet to thread belay, then—

(6) 45 feet—round a nose to a block belay 10 feet below the top of the ridge.

HEINZ ROUTE (Full of variety.) 530 feet. Severe. First ascent, 18th April, 1947. B.B., J.B.M. Starts at the foot of Central Gully and goes up the face of the north containing buttress for about 200 feet before bearing away to the left.

(1) 30 feet. Up the steep wall at the foot to a ledge and good belay.
(2) 40 feet. On up, bearing slightly right to the top, ten feet beyond which is a belay.
(3) 80 feet. This pitch starts gently but its upper portion is severe whether the left or right crack is followed, and lands one on the broad top of a great pinnacle. There is a belay 30 feet after starting.
(4) 30 feet. Climb down on to west of two huge blocks spanning the chasm, cross over the block and climb the opposite wall to a broad ledge.
(5) 60 feet. Follow the ledge sloping up to the left for 60 feet to the foot of a chimney and belay.
(6) 70 feet. Up the open chimney to a good chock belay.
(7) 60 feet. Just where the angle of the chimney lessens is a ledge leading across the vertica 1 wall on the left. Go along this ledge and round the corner on to a little bracket on the Ennerdale Face, a fine situation. Mount the corner straight above. The holds at first are good if small, but later where the angle lessens they almost disappear. Good belays. A traverse now leads back to the easy upper part of the chimney quitted below.
(8) 50 feet. The route now makes for a conspicuous rectangular notch in the ridge ahead. Pass through this gap and down a chimney into the bed of the gully.
(!)) 50 feet. A good vertical chimney will be found a few feet up the gully to the left.
(10) 60 feet. After 25 feet of easy going bear right for 15 feet into a cleft behind a pinnacle. Climb the wall opposite the pinnacle and reach the cairn at the top in about 25 feet.

BOAT HOWE

BREAKWATER SLABS BY Moss SLAB 80 feet. Severe. First ascent, 17th June, 1939. A.G., F. Grundy. Starts at the left-hand corner of Breakwater Slabs.

(1) 20 feet. Climb to a spike belay.
(2) 60 feet. Continue up the slab to the left until it steepens into a wall. Make a rather awkward traverse to the left, then up and back to the right. Finish direct by keeping to the left of the mossy slab.

LANGDALE

GIMMER CRAG

WHITS END 95 feet. Very severe. First ascent, 27th May, 1947. A.R.D., M. Dwyer. Starts at about the same point as ' F ' route, a short distance to the left of ' D.'

(1) 50 feet. This crack slanting up to the left on the steep wall above is ascended, largely by a lay-back. The traverse on Hyphen is reached at a good spike (running thread). The final half of the second pitch of ' F ' route is followed up to the left to a belay and poor stance.

(2) 45 feet. The third pitch of ' F ' route is ascended for 10 feet until a thin horizontal crack on the right wall is attained. (Good spike for running thread.) Using the crack for foothold a delicate traverse is made across the steep slab. Small ledges are reached and the traverse is continued to the far edge of the slab. A delicate move is made round the rib and ' D ' route is soon reached about half-way up the forked lightning crack. Belay. Finish up ' D.'

PAVEY ARK

HOBSON'S CHOICE 205 feet. Hard severe. First ascent, 31st August, 1947. J.W.C., A.R.D. (alternating). On right-hand wall of Pavey Ark, overlooking the gully and following what appears to be the only route. Starts half-way up the gully opposite two conspicuous white streaks on the steep wall. Starts from a bilberry covered pedestal.

(1) 35 feet. A diagonal upward traverse over steep slabs to a grassy recess below an ash tree. Up to the ash tree ledge. Belay.

(2) 40 feet. A slightly overhanging groove just to the left of the tree is ascended (very awkward start) to a shelving grass ledge. Belay in corner above at top of a short mossy slab.

(3) 50 feet. Grassy traverse left to open crack which is climbed to a juniper ledge. Belay about 20 feet along ledge.

(4) 60 feet. Continue the traverse along juniper ledge to a mossy chimney which is ascended with some difficulty. Scrambling remains.

WHITE GHYLL

HEATHER GROOVES 90 feet. Severe. First ascent, 10th August, 1947. R. J. Birkett, L.M., J. Craven. Situated high on the right-hand side of the ghyll, Heather Groove is the right-hand one of a series that form the right-hand wall of the ghyll between Slip-Knot and Junction Arete. Cairn on top of the block at foot of groove marks the start.

(1) 40 feet. Climb the overhanging corner to a small ledge at the foot of a slab, the slab is then climbed to a stance and belay on the left-hand side.

(2) 50 feet. Return to the right-hand side of the slab and then climb straight up to the top of the crag.

SLIP KNOT 180 feet. Very severe. First ascent, 2Gth July» 1947. R. J. Birkett, L.M. Starts opposite a sycamore tree that grows in the bed of the ghyll and follows a clean V groove to a large overhang, the biggest of many around here.

(1) 80 feet. Climb the right-hand wall of the groove to a platform and belay beneath the overhang.

(2) 80 feet. Return down the wall for 5 feet, then traverse to the arete on the left, then up and surmount the overhang, after which bear slightly left, then up to a large heather ledge.

(3) 40 feet. Scrambling to the top.

JUNCTION ARETE 150 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 20th June, 1947. L.M., R. J. Birkett. Situated on the first steep rocks on the right going up the ghyll. The route lies up the arete to the left of two oak trees.

(1) 60 feet. Start up the arête, easy for 25 feet, and overhang is then surmounted with great difficulty, then straight up to stance and belay opposite the first oak tree.
(2) 25 feet. Start right up the arête to a stance and belay opposite the second oak tree.
(3) 25 feet. Straight up to platform and belay.
(4) 40 feet. Continue to the top of the crag.

PORKER'S PARADE 145 feet. Severe. First ascent, 10th August, 1947. R. J. Birkett, L.M. On Swine Knott to the left of White Ghyll. Starts at the lowest point of the crag on the White Ghyll side.

(1) 25 feet. Straight up the arête to a stance and belay on a ledge to the right of a yew tree.
(2) 120 feet. Straight up from the middle of the ledge for 12 feet, then traverse left round an overhanging corner to an arête which is followed to the top of the crag.

RAVEN CRAG BUTTRESS

The following two routes lie on the steep left-hand wall of this crag, to the left of the ordinary route.

OAK TREE WALL 185 feet. Severe. First ascent, 12th June, 1947. A.G., J. Woods, J. W. T. Renwick. Starts to the left and 40 feet higher than the ordinary route, just below prominent oak free. Cairn.

(1) 45 feet. Climb up the crack to the roots of the oak tree where it is possible to step on to the wall on the right and traverse upwards to a small ledge. Continue up the slabs to a large ledge which is the traverse which leads to the large belay at the foot of the third pitch of the ordinary route.
(2) 30 feet. Traverse left to the large belay.
(3) 60 feet. Climb straight up the rib immediately behind the belay to a point where the wall overhangs. Traverse right along a short gangway under the overhang to a small stance. Very small spike belay high above for line only-
(4) 50 feet. Continue upwards bearing slightly right, leaving the ordinary route on the left to a small ledge below a bulge. Climb the bulge, bearing slightly to the left to a small scoop.

EVENING WALL 155 feet. Severe. First ascent, 6th September, 1947. A.G., J.T., J. Woods. Starts in the gully 50 feet to the left of the oak tree. (Start of Oak Tree Wall.) Cairn.

(1) 35 feet. Ascend above the cairn for 15 feet until the wall steepens, when a traverse right is made to a heather corner. Step right on to a rib and climb 10 feet to a belay and small stance.
(2) 30 feet. Step a further 10 feet to a ledge, traverse left, and then continue upwards to a small ledge. Small spike belay.
(3) 20 feet. Step up above the belay and traverse left by an awkward corner to an oak tree. Belay above tree.
(4) 70 feet. Move right by an awkward move to the corner of the arete. Climb up the arete on good holds to the finish.

SCOUT CRAG

THE GIRDLE About 350 feet. Very difficult. First traverse, 4th September, 1947. J.L., E. Kelly, A.C.C.

(1) First pitch of Zero Route.
(2) Climb steep wall to the left of Zero 2nd pitch, to belay at top of arête on ordinary route.
(3) Make a descending traverse on to belay in groove of other route on left.
(4) Traverse horizontally left crossing a block in a heathery groove over the arête to a stance with belay round tree.
(5) Cross the juniper ledge into a corner level with the top of an obvious horizontal crack. A swing down is made on good handholds and a short descent made. A difficult rising traverse left is made on overhanging rocks, crossing the horizontal crack. Good block-belay. Indefinite scrambling to left edge of slab.
(6) Traverse the well scratched slab into gully.
(7) Finish up the slab above.

RAVEN CRAG, WALTHWAITE

PROTUS 90 feet. Very severe. First ascent, 23rd June, 1947. D.C.B., A.R.D. Starts at a holly tree about 30 feet to the right of lowest point of crag. An oak tree is on the left and an elm tree on the right above.

(1) 30 feet. From holly tree work upwards to right surmounting an awkward bulge. Belay round tree.
(2) 60 feet. Descend a few feet and traverse delicately left and up a few feet, crossing a rib into a groove by an awkward move. Step round to left and pull out of groove on to exposed position on wall on left, passing triangular overhang. Climb wall to nettle bed and doubtful spike in a recess. Move right and up wall to top.

DEUTERUS 120 feet. Very severe. First ascent, 23rd June, 1947. D.C.B., A.R.D. Starts at a wall about 20 feet to right of ordinary route.

(1) 30 feet. Ascend wall direct to holly tree at top of first pitch of ordinary route. This pitch was belayed from here.
(2) 90 feet. Ascend overhanging scoop on right, the first few feet being the hardest. Move left and up to grassy recess on ordinary route. Spike on right for thread. Traverse to right round corner and across wall (steep, exposed and somewhat loose) to junction with Protus at nettle bed and doubtful spike belay. Finish up Protus.

DOVEDALE

DOVEDALE BUTTRESS This crag, which for want of better name, might be called Dovedale Buttress, lies fairly high up Dovedale to the right on the way up to Dove Crags on the ridge which runs from Dovedale Slabs to the col between Dove Crag and Hart Crag.

IMPROMPTU 190 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 8th October, 1947. A.G., L. Roberts, J.W.T., J. Ward. Starts to the left of the lowest point of the buttress at the left-hand end of the crag below a rowan tree. Cairn.

(1) 60 feet. A steep pull up to the rowan tree leads to a rib on the left. This is followed to a grass ledge. Continue up the grass to a belay to the right of a small rowan tree, below the prominent arête.
(2) 40 feet. Climb up the arête until a traverse right leads to a corner. Small belay for line.
(3) 50 feet. With a rather awkward start from the crack above the belay gain the slab on the right and climb to a grass ledge.
(4) 40 feet. Climb the wall ahead taking it rather to the left.

BILBERRY RIB. 140 feet. Difficult. First ascent, 18th October, 1947. A.G., L. Roberts. Starts 30 feet to the left of Impromptu. Cairn.
(1) 40 feet. Climb up the rib to a belay just below a prominent rowan tree.
(2) 30 feet. Continue upwards to the right of the tree and gain the arête to the right, which is followed to a ledge and belay.
(3) 70 feet. Continue up the steep arete on good holds, finishing up a delightful slab.

HANGING CHIMNEY 170 feet. Severe. First ascent, 18th October, 1947. A.G., J.W.T., J. Ward. Starts between Impromptu and Bilberry Rib.
(1) 30 feet. Climb up the subsidiary rib situated just to the right of Bilberry Rib.
(2) 40 feet. Up steep grass to a belay in the corner below the chimney.
(3) 40 feet. Climb the steep crack on good, if awkwardly placed holds, until a lodgment can be made on the small ledge below the steep chimney. Belay round a small tree.
(4) 20 feet. The steep and rather overhanging chimney leads to a good ledge. This pitch is very hard and strenuous, combined tactics being used on the first ascent.
(5) 40 feet. Step across and down to the left on to a small ledge above the left wall of the 20 feet chimney. Climb straight to the finish by the steep crack which leaves the ledge on the right.

CASTOR 270 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 25th October, 1947. J.W.T., A.G., Miss A. Jones. Starts at extreme right-hand end of the crag.
(1) 30 feet. Starts up the water-worn crags to the foot of a shallow chimney. Belay.
(2) 30 feet. Climb up the chimney until a traverse at the top, by a tree, leads to a grass ledge and belay.
(3) 80 feet. Traverse left across the chimney 15 feet, and climb the steep slabs to a corner with a rock ledge on left.
(4) 50 feet. Climb the shallow gully above and to the right until slabs lead to a rock ledge below a steep right-angled corner.
(5) 80 feet. The corner above is awkward until lodgment can be made on a small ledge. Shortly above climbing becomes easier and steep slabs with good holds lead to the summit.

GOWTHER CRAG, DOG CRAG AND STEEP CRAG, SWINDALE

Swindale is the next valley East of Hawes Water. The approach to it is either by Shap and the village of Rosgill or by the Hawes Water Road from

Penrith as far as Bampton from where signposts indicate the road to Swindale. The crags are situated on the opposite side of the valley from the Y.H. marked on Barts map and some 20 minutes from it. The eras; on the left with the obvious arete is Gowther Crag, the centre one is Dog Crag and the one on the right is Steep Crag (the latter named thus for lack of a local name).

GOWTHER CRAG

WINDY RIDGE 235 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 27th October, 1946. J.S.W., C.R.W., T. Nicholson, F.H., R.A.E., G.T. Commences at a cairn built some five feet to the left of a wall abutting the foot of the crag. On the **first** exploration it was noticed that nail marks led up the first 30 feet of the arete to where two footholds had been scratched in the rock on either side of a difficult crack, then they ceased. The climb may have been completed in rubbers, but in the absence of any other write-up it was thought this may have been the first ascent.

(1) 60 feet. An ascending traverse right to arete which is followed to a crack in 30 feet. The crack which is tricky, is climbed to arete and platform with hook belay.
(2) 25 feet. Follow arete to platform with hook belay some 5 feet up slab behind.
(3) 30 feet. Ascend slab for 10 feet then up wall on left-hand side of scoop. Belay.
(4) 100 feet. Scrambling to belay at foot of steep wall.
(5) 20 feet. The wall which is climbed on small holds.

DOG CRAG

THE FANG 150 feet. Hard Severe. Probably very severe. Rubbers. First ascent, 27th October, 1946. J.S.W., C.R.W., T. Nicholson, R.A.E. Commences at the right foot of the main face at the foot of a grassy gully. Cairn.

(1) 50 feet. Ascend pedestal below holly tree, then make ascending left traverse beneath overhang to ledge. Line belay. (Running belays on holly tree and on flake about halfway across traverse.)
(2) 30 feet. From ledge climb right, to foot of steep crack which is climbed to platform with large block belay.
(3) 25 feet. From right-hand edge of ledge climb the wall on the right of a crack.
(4) 15 feet. Easy rocks to belay at platform at foot of twin cracks.
(5) 30 feet. Twin cracks to belay on summit.

FORE LEG WALL 125 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 27th October, **194ft.** T. Nicholson, G.T., F H. Situated some 15 yards up grassy gully from the foot of The Fang climb. Cairn.

(1) 50 feet. From cairn make ascending traverse left for 20 feet up crack, then up straight to grassy ledge and belay at the foot and right of scoop.
(2) 25 feet. Step left into scoop which is climbed to platform and belay.
(3) 20 feet. Step right and up wall to belay at bottom of scoop.
(4) 30 feet. Ascend scoop to summit and belay.

KENNEL WALL 105 feet. Very difficult. First ascent, 20th October, 1946. J.S.W., C.R.W., T. Nicholson, R.A.E., G.E.T. Commences at Cairn 10 feet to right of Fore Leg wall.

(1) 30 feet. Ascend incipient crack to ledge.

(2) 45 feet. Ascend wall to scoop which is climbed to platform. Belay some 7 feet back on floor.

(3) 30 feet. From top of scoop traverse right for 5 feet to continuation of crack which is now well defined. Ascend to top of crag.

HINDLEG CRACK 110 feet. Severe. First ascent 20th October, 1946. J.S.W., C.R.W., T. Nicholson, R.A.E., G.T. The obvious crack, which almost assumes proportions of a chimney, some 30 feet to right of Kennel Wall Climb. Cairn.

(1) 50 feet. Ascend rock on right of grass ledge which is crossed to left end. Climb vegetated crack by semi-layback then traverse right to flake, on top of which is stance and belays.

(2) 60 feet. Ascend to 1st chock. (Thread belay possible), then traverse out left under overhang which is climbed via chockstones and left wall of crack to the top. Small belay immediately at top or large thread belay some 10 feet back on floor.

STEEP CRAG

The only climb on this crag at present is ' Finale,' though no doubt a few shorter, steeper routes could be made.

FINALE 100 feet. Difficult. First ascent, 3rd November, 1946. G.T., D. Hetterick. The climb starts under a holly tree near centre of crag.

(1) 20 feet. A chimney which is climbed by bridging or the edge of its right wall. Walk up the grass for 20 feet to the continuation of the chimney (belay by tree on right).

(2) 30 feet. Climb straight up the groove opposite the tree for 10 feet, then ascend a crack to the left. Block belay beside small tree.

(3) 30 feet. The corner behind the block is climbed direct on difficult but adequate holds.

DOW CRAG

LEVITATION 130 feet. Severe. First ascent, 12th August, 1947. J. Thompson, E. Kelly, O.A.G. Starts in Easter Gully between South Chimney and Broadricks Crack. Cairn.

(1) 30 feet. Climb steep and rounded rocks to junction with the scoop. Belay round block.

(2) 70 feet. Step on to block and traverse' upwards to right across the wall into a groove which is climbed by means of parallel cracks. The groove widens and is climbed to a stance and belay.

(3) 30 feet. Climb the groove until the top of Murray's Crack is reached.

B. BUTTRESS The following variation was made by. R.J. Birkett and L.M. on 22nd June, 1947, starting 10 feet to the left of Abraham's Route.

(1) 50 feet. Climb the overhang on to a rib which is climbed to a grass ledge. Belay.

(2) 40 feet. Straight up to a stance on Abraham's Route.

(3) 50 feet. The steep rib above leads to the junction of Woodhouse's and Abraham's. One can choose one's own way from here, the Black looking Hollow Variation, Woodhouse's being recommended.

CASTLE ROCK OF TRIERMAIN

THE CASTLE WALL 115 feet. Very severe. First ascent, 25th May, 1947. L.M., T.H., R. J. Birkett. The climb is up on the left wall of the easy gully at the north of the North Crag. A cairn half-way up the gully marks the start.

(1) 15 feet. Surmount the overhang to a stance and holly tree which is used as a belay.
(2) 100 feet. From the holly tree, follow a gangway to the left for 20 feet, from here the route goes straight up via a series of grooves and overhangs, finishing at a larch tree.

FLYING BUTTRESS. 135 feet. Very severe. First ascent, 26th October, 1947. R. J. Birkett, L.M.

(1) 20 feet. As for Castle Wall.
(2) 15 feet. Mount the ledge above. Spike belay on right.
(3) 100 feet. Using the crack in the corner for a few feet, climb on to the arête on the left, then make a move under the bulge on the left after which step over the bulge and climb straight up to the top of the crag.

CHAPEL CRACKS 145 feet. Severe. First ascent, 26th October, 1947. R. J. Birkett, L.M. Starts at the foot of a grey wall capped by an overhang 25 feet left of the ' Scoop and Crack.' Cairn beside thorn tree.

(1) 40 feet. Climb straight up from the cairn to the foot of a conspicuous right angle groove, then traverse upwards to the right on to small stance with flake belay.
(2) 35 feet. Upwards to the hand traverse which is followed into a corner, then up the crack to a yew tree belay. Junction with ' Scoop and Crack.'
(3) 40 feet. Traverse the wall behind the tree from left to right, then up to a huge heather ledge.
(4) 30 feet. Scrambling to the top of the crag.

THE GOSSARD 465 feet. Very severe. First traverse, 25th May, 1947. R. J. Birkett, L.M., T. H. A traverse of the North Crag starts up a steep wall below an obvious groove containing an ivy tree. An ash tree just to the left of a stone wall will help to identify the place. (Northern end of North Crag.)

(1) 100 feet. Straight up the wall and then the groove which is quitted as soon as it is possible to traverse left on to the slab, climb slab until a line of holds lead back right to a tree at the top of the wall.
(2) 45 feet. A corner just to the right is climbed to a rock ledge. Belay round the pinnacle on Overhanging Bastion.
(3) 60 feet. Descend pitch 3 of Overhanging Bastion.
(4) 30 feet. Ascent of pitch 5 of Zig-Zag route.
(5) 35 feet. Ascent of pitch 6 of Zig-Zag route.
(0) 20 feet. From the top of the crack mount a grass ledge to the right, then make a delicate traverse round the nose into a corner. Belay.
(7) 40 feet. Climb down 6 feet from the belay and traverse right round the exposed nose, a horizontal traverse is then followed until one can belay near a yew tree a little higher.

(8) 40 feet. Down 6 feet and continue traversing to a nose with stance and belay.
(9) 30 feet. Continue the traverse to a grassy corner with belay.
(10) 20 feet. Round the corner to ash tree ledge, then climb the overhang to a holly tree ledge.
(11) 15 feet. Up the broken nose bearing slightly left to a yew tree belay.
(12) 30 feet. Straight up the groove to the summit of the crag.

KEY TO INITIALS

Bentley Beetham	T. Hill
D. C. Birch	P. Hogg
J. W. Cook	F. Holmes
A. R. Dolphin	J. B. Meldrum
R. A. Ewin	P. Moffat
O. A. Geere	L. Muscroft
A. Gregory	J. W. Tucker
L. J. Griffin	J. S. Williams
H. K. Gregory	C. R. Wilson

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

THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

C. E. Arnison

A detailed report on each of the Club Meets would require more space than the Editor can allow, so that my comments must only touch on incidents and matters of general interest.

The Meets were, without exception, well attended ; even that at Kirkstone Pass Inn in December, 1946, saw over 30 stalwarts turning out on the Sunday in thick snow and frosty conditions, and those who survived the route-finding in mist to Thornthwaite Beacon were rewarded in the late afternoon with fine views and a gorgeous sunset seen from High Street ; whilst in August the attendance at Raw Head was so large that the overflow slept in the bracken in the barn—and discussed its future—or camped out on the steep fellside.

It was at the Novices' Meets particularly, that one saw and admired the patience and energy of the Leaders. For example, on Scafell Pike in February, the devout prayer to the Diety for help by a certain member was answered by one of the Hosts of Burnmoor Inn, who had been giving instructions in step cutting to a party who had gathered at Brackenclose. There is no record of any prayers being offered or answered by the party of eight who were pressed into the recess of *Smuggler's Chimney,* on Whit Saturday ; this may have been due to lack of breath or perhaps to complete faith in T. Hall who was in charge. Again, those Leaders who more often than not received climbing instruction and guidance from the ' Novices.' As one says in his report on the August Novices' Meet at Raw Head :—

> ' The title of this Meet is rather misleading. The Meet Leaders were badly shaken to discover that most of the novices had already done a considerable amount of climbing while others admitted that they would be happy to lead a rope, adding with becoming modesty " nothing more than a very difficult." However, the Leaders metaphorically girded their loins, called up reinforcements and organised a training Meet with climbing graduated according to the " novice's " ability and experience. Genuine novices were treated to elementary instruction on *Middle Fell Buttress* (being told with great tact that perhaps the first pitch could be omitted on a first climb !) and Pavey Ark. Others climbed on Dow Crag, Pikes Crag and Scafell, *{Grooved Arete* on Pike's Crag before lunch with *Moss Ghyll Grooves* after lunch seemed a very creditable day for a couple of novices, no less than for their Leader).'

or, to quote from the account of a Meet at Langdale :—

> ' On Monday morning we were somewhat surprised when at breakfast an expensive car drew up and a German Jewish Refugee brought in his son and requested us to take him climbing as they had been advised that we were the nearest approach to professional guides. Our sense of politeness overcame other feelings and we agreed. We went up to Gimmer and took our novice up *Main Wall* and *Bracket and Slab.* It was a very pleasant day indeed.'

Incidentally at the Whit Meet an all-time record for length of Committee Meeting was established, in Bentley Beetham's Hut, where the midnight oil was literally burnt, and St. Christobel liqueur consumed.

During that remarkable spell of hard weather in February and March, our healthy relative the Lake District Ski Club flourished. Many of our members enjoyed the almost Alpine-like snow conditions, and J. W. Haines won the Slalom held on the slopes of Raise and Whiteside above Thirlspot, in convincing and polished style.

Of the away fixtures, that in April in Pen-y-Pass attracted a party of 14 who remained enthusiastic though damp ; whilst approximately the same number at Glenbrittle House in May, under Graham Wilson's leadership made the best of imperfect climbing weather. An account of the Alpine Meet at Arolla is given separately.

My report would not be complete without commenting on the bathing during the unusually fine summer months in such tarns as Goats Water, Styhead or Stickle, to say nothing of the caravan of 13 climbers who indulged in the warm water in the *Great Gully* of the Screes—would it be the same tigers who afterwards finished the Meet at a dance in Gosforth Village on their way home ?

IN MEMORIAM

HENRY HARLAND

The hurrying years bring inevitable partings from old friends, and the F. & R. C. Club regrtts that in February, 1948, one of their original members, Mr Henry Harland, of Hull, passed on at the age of 78. There must still be many members who remember their genial, kindly fellow-climber, although his later years were clouded by a long illness and his former haunts knew him not.

Henry Harland was a keen lover of the mountains and a rock-climber of outstanding ability. He had ' led ' most of our Lakeland climbs and some of us recall his calm, careful, deliberate movements on many of the exceptionally severe courses. His advent to rock-climbing was somewhat unusual, for his first climb was a lone ascent of Kern Knotts Crack, in the long ago days when rubber shoes were unknown to the sport and the Crack had seldom been climbed. This youthful escapade was, of course, frowned upon at the time, but it was atoned for by a long record of safe and careful ascents in Switzerland, the Dolomites, Skye, etc., during which he never had an accident of any kind, nor, I believe I can say with truth, was he ever concerned in one.

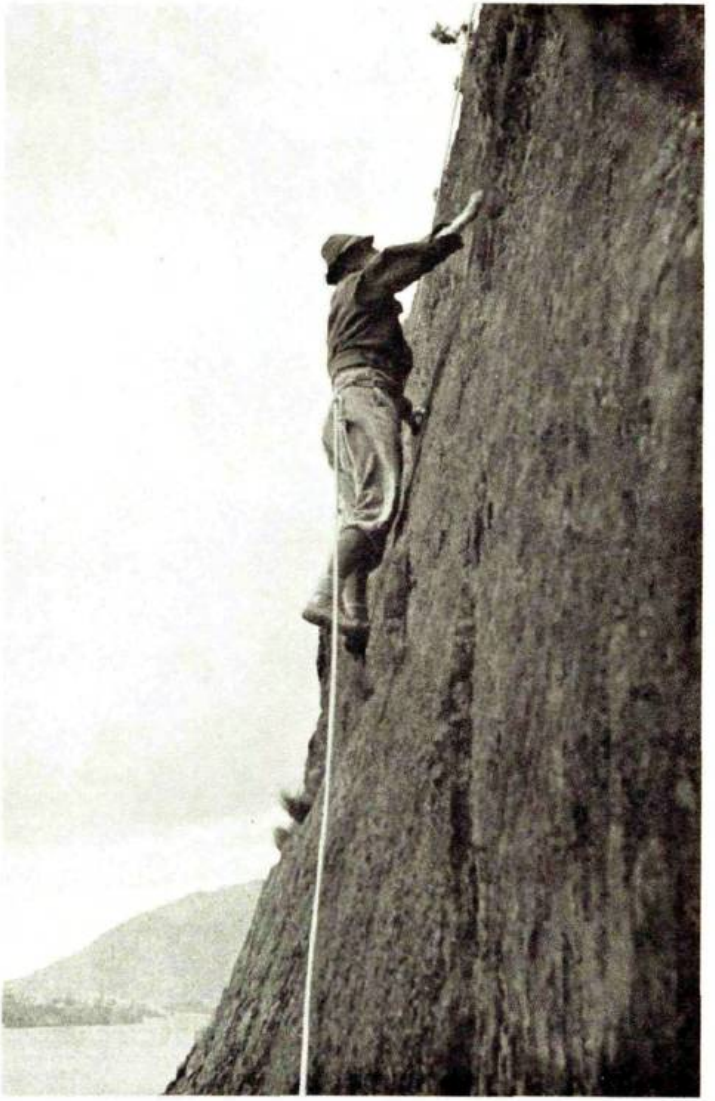
Although he made several severe first ascents, notably in Skye, the direct route up the face of the Cioch, the Slanting Gully of Sgui r a' Mhadaidh, the South-West Crack of the ' Inaccessible ' Pinnacle and the direct climb of the Third Pinnacle of Sguir nan Gillean from Bhasteir Corrie, as one of his companions, with oui fellow-member, Mr Alfred Binns, we never had a moment's un-easiness as he moved safely and deliberately over their difficulties.

For many years he was Managing Director of M. Harland & Son Ltd., of Hull, and his first wife was the daughter of the Mayor of that City, Miss Owbridge, by whom he had three children—John, Evelyn and Marie, the two former being keen and most useful members of the Club, and excellent rock-climbers. Our much esteemed ex-secretary for many years and now President, Mr J. C. Appleyard, married Evelyn who, with their children, are known to a wide circle of mountain loving friends—most welcome and familiar figures at most of our Club Meets.

To them, and to his second wife, formerly Mrs Thompson, the Club extends its sympathy.

Harry Harland holds a firm place in the affections of many of our older members who treasure happy memories of strenuous days under his leadership, of kindly and helpful actions, and of unfailing good nature and warm friendship, ' Joy goes over, but Love endures, and the Hills—unto the end.'

ASHLEY P. ABRAHAM.



V. Vecvers

ARDUS—SHEPHERD'S

CRAG

STANDEN LEONARD PEARCE, 1927-1947

Sir Standen Leonard Pearce, C.B.E., D.Sc, M.Inst.C.E., etc., died on October 20th, 1947, after a few days' illness. He was the son of the late Rev. Standen Pearce and was born at Crewkerne, Somerset, in 1873. In 1901 at the age of 28, he entered the service of the Manchester Corporation as deputy chief electrical engineer and became the head of that department three years later, remaining in that capacity for a period of twenty-one years.

He left Manchester upon being appointed one of the Electricity Commissioners and soon thereafter was appointed Engineer-in-Chief to the London Power Company. In this latter capacity his ability as a designer of large scale electricity power stations received full play, the celebrated Battersea Power Station standing today as a monument to his genius in that direction. In 1935 he received the honour of knighthood, an honour which he received with quiet piide but characteristic modesty. Within his profession other recognitions in plenty came his way ; he was a past president of the Institute of Civil Engineers (Manchester Section) as also of the Incorporated Municipal Electrical Association. Two awards which he greatly prized were the Faraday Medal from the Institution of Electrical Engineers and election to honorary membership of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Where his heart lay may be judged by the fact that on the walls of his office in Horseferry Road could be seen—not pictures of gigantic power stations designed by him but—a number of out-sized framed photographs of Alpine scenes. He was the complete mountaineer in that he was both a climber and a skier and travelled out to Switzerland with great regularity twice annually, his favourite centre being Grindelwald.

His mountaineering interests began in the early years of the century when he went to Manchester. Joining the Rucksack Club, he became a frequent visitor to the Lake District, his boon companions of those days being Harry Scott and Philip Minor. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1922, and served for a period on the Committee, and was also a member of the Alpine Ski Club of which he was President for a time.

The number of his Alpine ascents—frequently accompanied by his daughter, Enid (Mrs Forrester)—must have totalled many scores. In 1935 he made the ascent of the Jungfrau with Sir William Ellis when the latter was 75 years of age and he was into his 60's. Pearce and I were of the same age and I recall how, when sitting on the summit of the Bietschhorn with him in August, 1938, we entered into a solemn pact to emulate Ellis's feat when we could

count 150 years between us, but, alas, ' the best laid schemes o' mice and men, etc. etc'

Of the various guides he employed latterly, I think his favourite was Alexander Lagger of St Nicklaus. Many guides, if given the opportunity, are apt to be martinets but Peaice had a quiet, masterful way of dealing with his guides which was very effective. It was in a way merciful that the call came to him before his physical powers deserted him to the extent of having to give up active mountaineering. Like the late G. R. Speaker he, I feel suie, had a secret dread of becoming incapacitated, physically, especially during his last few years when hi; health was somewhat indiffeient. Only Leonard Pearce's friends know what a quiet, modest, gentle spirit has passed hence. G. ANDERSON.

JOHN DOWER, 1938-1948

John Dower was born in 1900 and put the woik and experience of a long life into his brief forty-seven years. He became the pioneer in official places of National Parks, though he has not lived to see reality and form given to them. But the campaign for them will always carry in England a close memory of his name, his skill and enthusiasm.

By profession an architect, he became by inclination and the course of events a guardian and planner of the countryside. He was an omnivorous walker—he had very long legs indeed—and had a catholic taste in landscape, and it is this which made his White Paper of 1945 on National Parks such good propaganda ; for he wrote out of affection, and not as the scribe of a Government Department. When the Hobhouse Committee reported two years later—and he was himself a member of this Committee—they did, it is true, give a closer picture of the administrative machine required (though it is still not yet likely to be created) ; but the general ' aims and objects,' the statement of the problem to be met, the essential core of the whole matter, came straight from Dower's own White Paper, which for the first time had put National Parks on the departmental map. Before 1945 much patient work and thought had been done by many, himself included, for ten years : Dower had the great opportunity of giving to all this an official substance, and he used it finely and assiduously.

Between 1942 and 1945, when his White Paper was printed, he was in full time service of the new Ministry of Town and Country Planning ; and afterwards, till his death in 1947, he continued as an unofficial adviser on country problems. He had been invalided out of the Army in 1940. Two years later it was hoped that the tuberculosis which he had developed, and which killed him, had mended, and he was then appointed by the Ministry.

Of the finest parts of England the Lake District was, in Dower's judgment, the best. Before the war he came from London each month to the committee meetings of the Friends of the Lake District, full of good technical loie and Demosthenic harangues and useful pugnacity ; he was invaluable to our early days. And, as in so many of his pursuits, he would kill two birds on one railway journey ; in the year when his Youth Hostel was building in Eskdale he would sleep the night at Grasmere, walk over to Boot next morning, spend the afternoon supervising his builders, walk down to the coast, and take the night train back to London. The hostel at Kirby Malham is also his, and has a tablet lately placed there in his memory.

He was a committee member of the C.P.R.E. and of the Commons Society and did some nimble fighting there against the half-hearted, and served many good causes—notably in the stubborn campaign against the commercial afforestation of grand landscape. He drew unofficial maps for the Forestry Commission and with skilful persistence obstructed their aggrandisements. He and I did the main part of the fighting to save Eskdale. All the vigorously unselfish work which he gave to so many of the ' open air ' societies, and the knowledge and experience which this gave him of a score of difficult problems, were his apprenticeship for his life's work—the official proclamation of National Parks. He could truly say : ' What I gave, I had.'

A year before he died he was elected president of the Ramblers' Association, an honour which he did not live adequately to use, but which no one had better deserved. For the treatment of the need for access to our open spaces, his reasoned case against the barricades, is one of the most forthright, honourable and effective things in his White Paper. It is not easy to write the truth to Government offices—and to have it printed. Mr Bowdler he found one of the worst enemies to be subdued.

He was always campaigning. In his last period of invalidity and weakness he was as ' lish ' as before in the mind, and ardent to prevent such things as the damming of Ennerdale or industrial development of the south-west coast of Cumberland. For he was one of the few who give really constructive thought and enthusiasm to preventing injuries to our best landscape ; most either regard these as an accidental by-product of our general enlightenment or, after the event, weakly lament them. That he was so far otherwise, and in the fields of his work had built himself effective influence, is the measure of our untimely loss, ' in these dark days and drear.'

H. H. SYMONDS.

H. H. GLAZEBROOK, 1941-1947

Dr Harold Glazebrook was one of the gayest and most stimulating of climbing companions. Ready always to take part in any mountain expedition, whatever the weather, he was a great asset to any party in getting things moving on a doubtful morning. Not content to let a climb once accomplished rest in peace, he was a great organiser of reunions, when the exploits of bygone days would be revived with fitting celebrations.

He was besides a man of serious pursuits, a great reader and well versed in mountain lore, his interest in music being equalled only by that in mountains. He was, I believe, well known in musical circles in Liverpool.

His interest in snow mountains was awakened only after he had been climbing at home for many years and he was much influenced by a winter season spent in Austria in 1946/47 where his work in Vienna allowed him ample opportunity for ski-ing expeditions at week-ends.

His death occurred on the Evêque on August 8th, 1947, and he is buried in the English corner of the cemetery at Evoline in the Val d'Herens, deeply missed by his many friends. F. K. SUGDEN.

c. A. LAWRENCE, 1942-1947

Chris Lawrence was well known to many members of the Club and a frequent visitor to the Lake District though he did not, I think, take part in the Club Meets. His introduction to Lakeland climbing came through a chance meeting with Ralph Mayson in the early 1930's—a meeting which led to a lasting friendship and to many happy days on British Hills and in the Alps.

Much as he enjoyed a difficult rock-climb, his great delight was in long arduous days on the Skye ridges or in the Alps, and it was a great source of pleasure to him that he accomplished the Cuillin Traverse a few days before war broke out.

In the early days of the war he joined the R.A.F., in whose service he rose to the rank of Squadron Leader, and during this time his mountaineering was limited to brief visits to Keswick. I was with him when he returned to the Alps in 1946 for his first post-war holiday, and have vivid recollections of the ardour with which he set himself to make up for lost time. The rock ridges in the Arolla neighbourhood gave him full scope for his mountaineering qualities, and he regarded his traverse of the Bouquetins as the ' red letter day ' of his climbing career.

He was tragically killed on the Evêque, in company with his two companions Harold Glazebrook and Ronald Ellery, on August 8th, 1947.

He was always ready to give a helping hand to less experienced climbers, and it frequently fell to him to make the detailed arrangements which are the necessary prelude to any mountain holiday. This task was always performed with a painstaking care which was typical of all his undertakings, and it will be remembered with gratitude by the many friends who miss him deeply.

F. K. SUGDEN.

C. L. DOBSON, 1934-1947

J. C. HEATON, 1944-1947

H. LIVINGSTONE, 1907-1947

C. MACFARLANE, 1912-1947

DR S. PRIOR, 1923-1947

MISS A. A. ROBERTS, 1923-1948

CANON A. E. RUBIE, 1924-1948

W. S. TETLEY, 1919-1947

O. W. F. THOMAS, 1924-1946

EDITOR'S NOTES

I started these notes last year with a reference to Rawhead which had been then acquired, and I make no apology for bringing up the subject again as it has occupied a prominent place in the deliberations of the Committee during the past year. The plans for the conversion of the barn have been approved and it is hoped that the work can go forward soon, thus greatly increasing the accommodation available at Rawhead and, we hope, reducing the overcrowding which has become quite a serious problem for the Hut Warden. The Rawhead Fund is still open, and the Treasurer is anxious to receive further contributions. The cost of converting and equipping the barn will be considerable and the money raised by the Rawhead Appeal Fund is still a long way short of the sum needed. It is important that this gap should be bridged and I repeat the appeals that have already been made for further donations to be sent to the Treasurer or included in the hut-fee envelopes.

There are now two Mountain Rescue Teams operating in the Lake District—The Coniston Fells Rescue Party, and The Borrowdale Mountain Rescue Team—the President having been mainly instrumental in the formation of the Coniston team and Colonel Westmorland in forming the Borrowdale team. Both parties have undergone training and had a good deal of experience of actual rescues and are well qualified to deal with any ordinary climbing accident.

The Coniston Party dealt with an accident on Dow Crag on Christmas Day and have had several fell searches during the year. They have maintained close co-operation and very cordial relations with the Lancashire County Constabulary and this has greatly assisted in ensuring prompt action.

The Borrowdale team have only had one climbing accident to deal with—the results of a dislodged stone, which unfortunately proved fatal—but individually or collectively, members of the team have assisted in the recovery of eight injured or lost persons during the past season.

The experience of these rescue parties indicates that more fell walkers get into trouble than rock climbers, but against this must be set the fact that there are more of them and they are often less experienced and less well equipped.

The article in this *Journal* by R. P. Mears on Old Ropes beside indicating the danger of using such ropes, gives an idea of the scope and importance of the researches being undertaken on the subject

of ropes at the instigation of the British Mountaineering Council. In their own interests climbers should assist this work by reporting all climbing accidents due to rope to their Club or to the B.M.C. and sending the rope to Mears (Lytchett, The Clears, Rcigate, Surrey) for testing. Mears would also like more climbers to send him their old ropes for testing. The knowledge gained from such tests will help to reduce accidents ; its importance cannot be over-stressed. Unfortunately, very great difficulty is experienced in securing even a portion of the rope for testing when a broken rope has resulted in death. Steps should be taken to invite Coroners to help in having broken ropes tested and, in cases where the broken rope is relevant to their inquiry, they should, in exercising their powers, allow expert evidence to be called. The facilities are now available ; they should be used.

Our member, Mr W. Gaze of 60 Athlone Avenue, Sandringham, Johannesburg, South Africa, who is also a member of the Mountain Club of South Africa, states that if any member of The Fell and Rock Club should find himself in the Transvaal he would be very pleased to arrange some climbing.

The 1948 season has been a bad one for climbing, both at home and in the Alps, in marked contrast to the magnificent weather of 1947. In spite of this at least one new Alpine route has been recorded by a member of the Club—a new route up the East Face of Mont Maudit by G. Graham Macphee.

Members will be interested and surprised to learn that a Buttermere hotel, advertising in the Official Guide to Cockermouth, lists amongst the attractions of Buttermere :—' Red Pike Ridge (three high mountains protected by a safety fence) ' ! Whether this is to be regarded as the fence above the tree level keeping these dangerous mountains away from the public or as a new fence along the ridge keeping the public away from the dangerous precipices is not clear ! I am happy to report that investigation has revealed no change in the existing sheep fences.

E. BANNER MENDUS.

93 CADOGAN LANE,
LONDON, S.W.I.
April 8, 1948.

DEAR EDITOR,

Having read Dr Burnett's entertaining account of the 1946 Arran Meet with much pleasure, it would be ungrateful of me to quarrel with a mere half-sentence. However, I think that his

remark about granite ('as is also well-known, it is not good for the pure rock-climber') needs qualifying. In my opinion, its outcrops cover the whole gamut of quality from atrocious to excellent at its best (for example, on the south face of Cir Mhor and, rumourh as it the Chamonix Aiguilles) granite gives first rate climbing on irreproachable rock.

The parts of the Meet-Book quoted, however, call for comment. In what follows, all references are to Vol. 23 of the *Scottish Mountaineering Club Journal* unless otherwise stated.

Ceum na Caillich. The climb described is almost identical with Broomstick Ridge (1945, p. 243), C.E.W. Johnson subsequently claimed the first descent, but not, apparently, the christening rights (1946, p. 352).

Fourth Wall (1947, p. 410). Though the top pitch can certainly be avoided, one might add that the escape starts lower down, and is circuitous and not very pleasant.

Southern Slabs. Despite differing estimates of difficulty, this, unfortunately, appears to be a duplicate account of Souwester Slabs (1945, p. 242).

Rocks Flanking Right-Hand Side of Rosa Pinnacle. The ' Lower rocks' may be identified with Prospero's Prelude, though the cairns seem to have been a transient phenomenon, and the ' upper buttress' with Prospero's Peril (1944, p. 186). The latter has a milder variant (1945, p. 243).

Keyhole Crack. An interesting discovery.

In general, the regrettable fact that no one at the Meet knew of the finest climb in Arran prompts further bibliography. South Ridge is described in Vol. 22, p. 231 (April, 1941) ; sketch and further notes in Vol. 23 (1945, p. 242). The issues from 1944 to 1947 contain descriptions of many other climbs, and Easter Route (Vol. 22, p. 71, April, 1939) deserves honourable mention.

Finally, two climbs done in 1947 may be recorded here ; each is thought to be ' very difficult' and rather over 200 ft. long. The first is on the steep tower immediately north of the Nuis-Tarsuinn col. Its foot is reached by a rake which slants down to the right from the col into Coire Bhradain. A deep chimney is climbed to chockstones 70 feet up. One gains a further 40 feet by a shallower crack on the left before regaining the original line. The second (led by G. H. Townsend) is on Torr Ncad an Eoin, above Lochranza. Its eastern buttress, which is of hard schist, is climbed to a conspicuous grass ledge. A slanting easement of the wall above gives access to slabs.

Yours sincerely,

G. C. CURTIS.

CLUB NOTES

The Club now numbers 038 members, of which 28 are Graduating.

Congratulations are offered to Miss J. MacGregor on her marriage to another member, Mr W. B. Kendrick, and also to Miss M. M. Russell on her marriage.

There is little of note to report during the past year. Meets have been well attended despite the rigours of the summer of 194S which consisted of a perfect week for Whitsuntide and a few hot fine days at the end of July, the rest has been rain and wind practically without intermission. The winter of 1047/48 was equally unkind, even living as I do on the fells, I never put on either skates or skis the whole winter.

Two of our members, Messrs W. R. B. Battle, the Leader, and J. W. Haines, have been members of the Leeds University expedition to study glaciology in Eastern Greenland and have just returned to this country.

Our relations with Kindred Clubs continue to be most cordial, exchanges of Huts have been arranged during the year with the K. Fellfarers and the Midland Association of Mountaineers. Those who stayed at Glad Dena no doubt appreciated the comforts of that Hut as compared with the austerity of Raw Head. Raw Head and The Robertson Lamb Hut continue as before to take any overflow from each other when necessary ; despite their close proximity, I gather that the respective Wardens still maintain friendly, not to say cordial, relations.

I referred in these notes last year to the difficulty experienced in arranging meets at hotels in the Lake District during the summer ; owing to the bad season they have had and the heavy staff costs all but very few are now closing during the winter months, thus increasing the difficulties of the Meets Secretary.

J. C. APPLEYARD.

LONDON SECTION

Chairman :
DR CHARLES F. HADFIELD
Committee :

Lady Chorley	E. W. Hamilton
M. N. Clarke	G. R. Hervey
H. N. Fairfield	J. E. Jackson
Mrs M. Garrod	Mrs J. Lancaster-Jones
Miss M. Glynne	Mrs R. Pickersgill

Hon. Sec. and Treasurer : R. A. Tyssen-Gee, Fairways, Colley Manor, Reigate Heath, Surrey.

Hon. Walks Secretary : E. W. Hamilton, 20 Balmoral Road, Worcester Park, Surrey. *Telephone :* Derwent 1659. Business hours, Central 2801.

The London Section has been making steady progress and its activities have generally been well supported. We have been very pleased to welcome members of kindred clubs on our walks and at our informal dinners. We have also to thank these clubs for their reciprocal invitations, and it is apparent that gradually a sort of pool of events is being established from which members of mountaineering clubs who live in the London area can take their pick ! Programmes are being exchanged and quite a varied selection of walks, mee's and lectures is available.

The monthly informal dinners at the Strand Brass rie have been continued and proved highly successful. No special programmes are arranged so that members are free to yarn and exchange reminiscences and photographs. Often the tables are strewn with pictures and become a veritable exhibition of mountain photography.

Perhaps the most appreciated fixtures have been the regular meets at Harrison Rocks. We have again to thank R. P. Mears for his enthusiastic leadership ar.d quite a number of no\ices have been introduced to the rocks. There have been demonstrations of abseiling, rope management and the effects of sudden falls (we hasten to add this must not be taken literally as Mears provided a weighted sack for demonstration purposes and the efforts of members to catch it as it fell provided much sport and amusement). Mr and Mrs Pepper have also nobly assisted, especially throughout the bleak winter period when they undertook to lead parties on each first Sunday of the month.

The monthly walks have been generally well supported and we thank the leaders for their excellent routes. Planning a walk (and arranging tea !) is apt to prove more troublesome than is "pparent, as only those who have undertaken it realise. Perhaps that is why there are not more leaders ; and anyone willing to assist would be warmly welcomed by the Walks Secretary who sometimes thinks the regular leaders are rather overworked.

In the summer we were delighted to visit Dr and Mrs Hadfield in their new home at Esher. Our grateful thanks to them and Mr and Mrs Stenning for their kind hospitality.

We have had one lecture jointly with the London School of Economics Mountaineering Club, when E. W. Hodge showed us his magnificent colour slides of the Lakes and Scotland, which were very greatly appreciated.

The Annual Meeting and Lunch were held in December at the Connaught Rooms and we were again delighted to have the President (L. W. Somervell) with us. It was decided that next year (1948) we would revert to the pre-war arrangement and make it an evening function. Also in view of the greatly ncreased costs of circulating notices, etc., it was agreed to increase the London Section subscription to 5s. annually. The programme of trrangements is circulated periodically and will be sent to any member interested.

R. A. TYSSEN-GEE, *Hon. Secretary.*
E. W. HAMILTON, *Walks Secretary.*