

# THE YORKSHIRE RAMBLERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

EDITED BY ERNEST E. ROBERTS.

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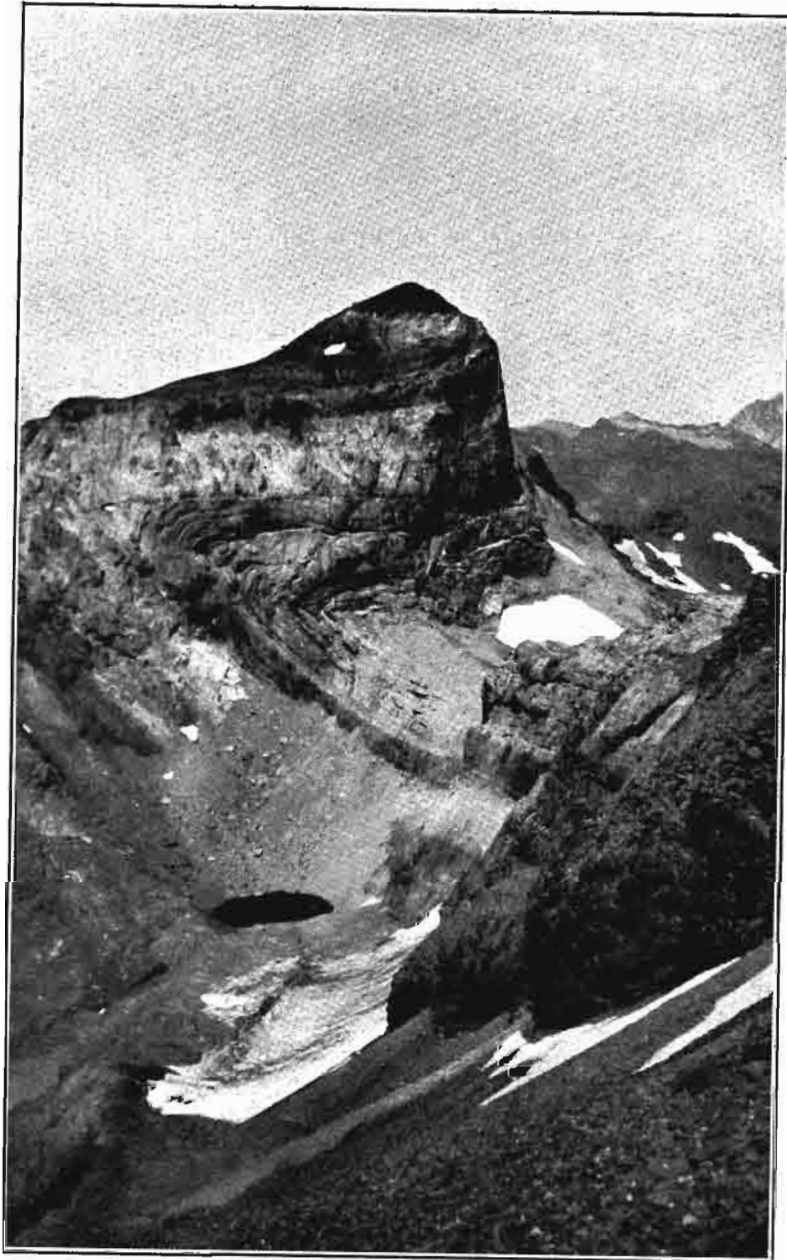
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LE CYLINDRE, FROM MT. PERDU.

*Photo by G. R. Smith.*

THE  
**Yorkshire Ramblers' Club Journal**

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1927.

No. 17.

PEAKS AND PORTERAGE IN THE PYRENEES.

By G. R. SMITH.

Aug. 8th, 1923.—I cannot bear to write of that terrible night spent in a third class railway carriage between Paris and Bordeaux! . . . . Another veil must be drawn over the journey from Bayonne to Pau. The carriages were so hot that one had to pad one's seat all round to avoid being scorched. At every station the engine was abandoned by its staff, who went and paddled in the neighbouring river. At Pau, in a grocer's shop full of electric fans, we bought supplies of bacon, tea, coffee, sugar, cheese, bread, candles and tinned food. Wafted out on a bacon-scented breeze, we headed gently through the scorching streets for the station. Here we caught a train for Laruns, the railhead; that night we bivouacked outside the village.

Aug. 9th.—We started on an uphill tramp through pine-forests and over long stretches of open road which flung back a blistering heat in our faces . . . . We tried in vain to quench a most terrible thirst. Each was carrying an enormous weight. In addition to a necessary change of clothes, shorts and espadrilles, cardigans, sweaters and mufflers for warmth at night, we had a tent (which just held three), ground-sheets and army blankets; two saucepans, a frying-pan, knives, forks, spoons, plates and mugs; lanterns, cameras, mackintoshes; and food, a very heavy item, since it consisted chiefly of tinned meat and tinned fruit. Villages out there are few and far between, and we had to get in sufficient food at a time to last us for at least five days.

We passed through Eaux Chaudes and Gabas, and at length pitched our tent beside a waterfall above Gabas. After a bath and dinner we went through the ritual of turning in, covered the food with mackintosh squares and placed

with it some dry wood for the morrow's fire, donned a vast amount of extra clothing, and crept one by one into the tent.

Aug. 10th.—We breakfasted by lantern light, intending to climb the Pic du Midi d'Ossau (9,600 ft.). Our French guide-book had labelled this ascent impossible without a guide, but we were anxious to discover whether this statement was true.

We started in the half-light up a very stiff path through the woods. The track soon disappeared and for the best part of an hour we had to scramble through thick undergrowth and fallen trees. At last we reached level ground, and the trees fell away on either side. In front of us stretched undulating grassland, reminiscent of English downs, which climbed to the rocky foot of a pass. The line of the pass and the Pic du Midi ahead of us were free from cloud, and had that clear-cut look which the early morning atmosphere always lends to hills.

We followed an ill-defined track, skirting a low forest of stunted bushes, and finally reached a broad belt of loose boulders and broken rock. The sun was well up by the time we had reached grass again and we were on the sunny side of the pass. Although the hour was only 9.30 the heat was overwhelming, and we were completely exhausted when we arrived. From here the Pic stood out in all its grandeur. On the south-east side it rose in precipitous cliffs from its very base, and towered above us, its buttresses and pinnacles glowing red against a deep blue sky in which some eagles were slowly wheeling.

We clambered to the foot and tried to find the route recommended by the guide-book; but failing in this we struck up on our own over some rough rock, rather like the rock on Crib Goch (Snowdon). This deteriorated into scree which, combined with the intense heat of the sun blazing on our backs, reduced us to a terrible state of weakness.

Near the top we ran into some snow and filling our hats with it we staggered to the cairn at the summit and collapsed. After a meal we extended ourselves along the rocky ledges on the shady side, overlooking France, and slept. Fortunately none of the clouds, which filled all the valleys below, rose during our siesta and we awoke to find the summit still clear.

The descent was very easy, since we discovered the correct route, which consisted of three chimneys fitted with crampons (Pyrenean for spikes or pitons). The idea of taking a guide up such a climb seemed ludicrous; the rope was not once needed, and we had left our axes with the rucksacks below. We had the same experience in all our subsequent climbs, until the ever-recurring phrase, "guide indispensable," became a byword.

11th.—We struck camp and returned to Gabas, where we collected provisions for the next five days. These consisted of two enormous loaves of bread, like millstones in size and shape and not unlike them in substance, and numerous tins of sardines. Thus fortified we followed the road up the Val d'Ossau which we left towards evening, striking off up the Val d'Arrius, a trackless, wooded pass. That night we camped above the woods at a height of 6,000 ft.

12th.—After a terribly hot climb up the Col d'Arrius, we pitched the tent just above the Lac d'Artouste, in whose waters we bathed and vainly fished. Heavy rain drove us back to the tent which we found surrounded by standing water and looking like Noah's Ark. So we decided to try and find the Refuge of Arrémoulit. This was not marked on the map, and the clouds were down, but as anything seemed preferable to sleeping in a lake, we packed up and attacked the Col d'Arrémoulit. From the top of the Col, and a little above us we saw some stone walls without a roof which we reluctantly decided must be the refuge. The clouds had lifted and were piled in yellow masses on the peaks: it was a wild world of grey stone into which we had entered, not the broken jagged rock so much as the smooth worn stone of antiquity, pierced by narrow lanes of grass which radiated in all directions. Deep glassy lakes, linked by waterfalls, reflected the cloud light; blocks of stone lay about like ruined temple pillars. It was a land without life; only water, rock and bleached grass.

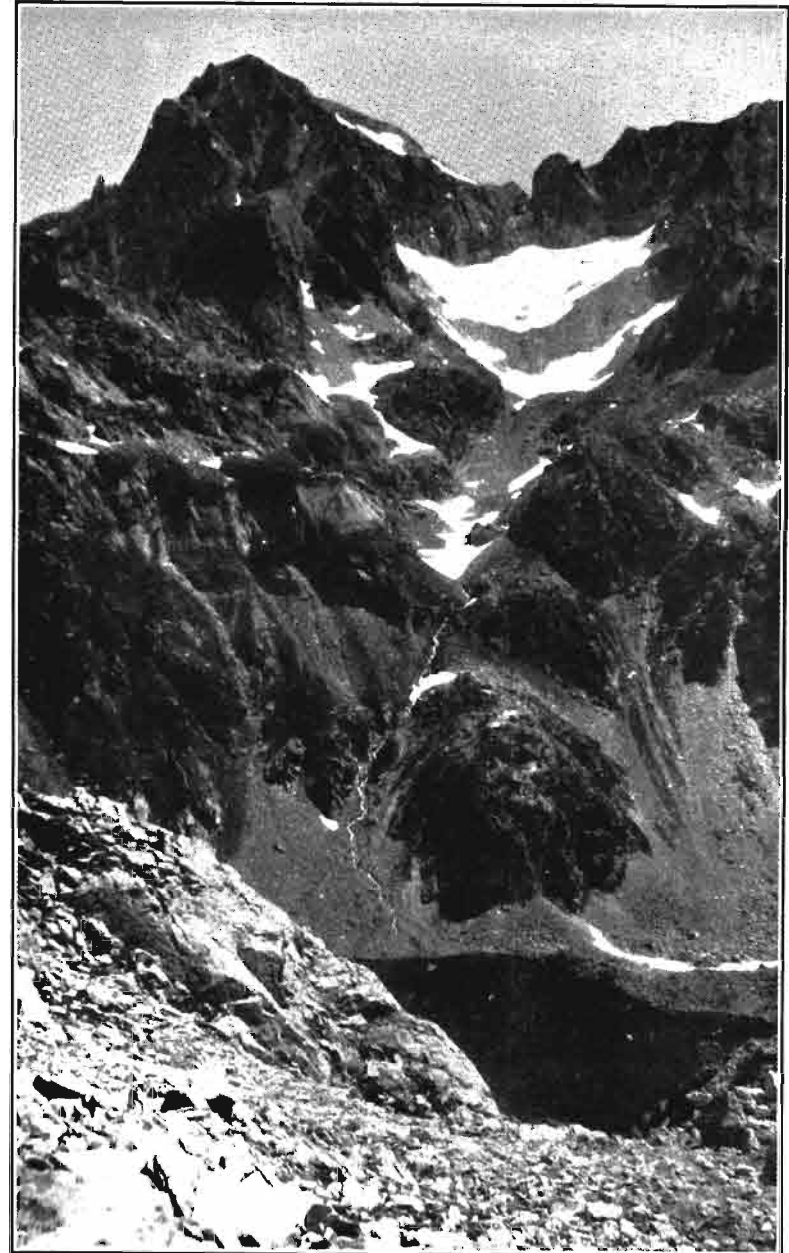
We reached the refuge, which stood on a narrow strip of rock separating two lakes, the one about twenty feet higher than the other. After clearing the floor of what was left of the roof, we spread our ground sheets and blankets, and prepared ourselves for a very cold night.

13th.—We packed up early and continued over the Col d'Arrémoulit. At the top, the frontier between France and Spain, we lunched, one foot in either country, then scrambled down an almost perpendicular slope, viciously studded with unsteady boulders till we arrived at the edge of a deep-blue lake bounded by straight, yellow cliffs. Here we pitched camp.

14th.—Laden only with the essentials for a climb, we attacked the scree slopes at the foot of Mont Balaitous. It was still twilight, but after an hour's climbing we noticed the peaks behind us blazing with vivid ochre light. Away to the South the hills of Spain bloomed like pale roses in a bed of lavender.

Meanwhile we had reached the snow-covered lake which we crossed, jumping the deep-green crevasses. Continuing over more snow on the farther side, we reached a couloir, up which we had to cut steps. This brought us to the foot of a loose boulder climb up the side of an arête. Here was every variety of flower, stonecrop and heather nestling in clefts of rock, gentian, pink, forget-me-not and violet, crowding together with white and yellow daisies, dwarf thistles and thyme.

At the head of the arête we rested, and watched the mists in the valleys dissolving before the sun's rays, grateful to be on the shady side of the mountain ourselves. Then came the "Grande Diagonale," whose merits were so enthusiastically extolled in the guide-book, though in the words of M. Soutiron, "il est indispensable de garder tout son sangfroid." It proved to be an unpleasant scree-path traversing the steep northern face of the mountain. The showers of stones we dislodged clattered down below out of sight. During a pause for breath, we heard a renewed fall of stones below us, and peering over the edge, saw an izard bounding over the scree. We plugged away at the track for another hour and then decided to abandon it and take to the rock on our right. This proved to be thoroughly sound, and within half-an-hour, without having to rope up, we were at the summit. It was like an English summer's day on top, the sun shining with pleasant warmth. We were 10,300 feet up, higher than most of the neighbouring mountains



MONT BALAITOUS.  
(From the Franco-Spanish Frontier).

*Photo by G. R. Smith.*

which were thinly veiled in early morning mist. Westwards we saw the bold outline of the Pic du Midi dominating the surrounding hills.

After a long rest and a meal we started down the southern side. Loose scree merged into snow and rocky terraces. The climb down to the jammed boulder at the head of the Brèche Latour was distinctly difficult. We had to rope up and go cautiously down an arête which ended in a precipitous drop to the valley on the other side. Below us, half right, lay the black gulf which was our objective, while facing us were overhanging, unassailable cliffs of rough, red rock, deep in shadow. A traverse from the arête brought us to a point above the boulder, whence we were able to climb straight down, on rather insufficient hand-holds. The boulder lay at the apex of two steep couloirs, and we expected to find glaciers reaching up to this point on either side, but not a sign of one could we see. The exceptional heat had caused the ice to melt, leaving behind an extremely narrow and very steep gully full of loose stones. I went first to explore, and got as far as a wedged boulder: flattening myself against the side to avoid the shower of stones which hurtled past, I awaited the others. Peering over the boulder we saw the glacier, but it was forty feet below us at the foot of smooth cliffs down which descent was impossible. The only thing to do was to go down on the rope: I was the first to be lowered, then my brother, then the rucksacks and axes, and lastly A., who came down on a double rope. Roping up again, we cut steps down the steep couloir, until, on reaching the easier gradient of a large snow-field, we were able to glissade. The remainder of the descent was uneventful: we again crossed the lake, and halted for food and rest at a point whence we could overlook the Lakes d'Arriel, beside one of which was our tent, a white speck on the green grass. We got home at 4.30, bathed, shaved (for we hoped to enter civilization on the morrow) and had tea.

That night we re-read with enjoyment the directions for the climb in the guide book. Therein Mt. Balaïtous was immortalised, in fulsome language, as "le plus attirant, le plus grandiose et le plus loyal des sommets pyrénéens." We turned in with the comfortable feeling that we must be

“pyrénéistes exercés non sujets au vertige,” by whom alone the peak was assailable.

15th.—We struck camp and set out for the Spanish village of Sallent. After four hours' scrambling over rocks and slithering down deadly scree, deprived of all sense of balance by the devilish loads we carried, we reached the river Agua Limpia. Here we finished off all that remained of our provisions; the banquet consisted of half a very stale loaf of bread, one small piece of cheese, in size and substance suited only for a mouse-trap, and one lemon.

Our next obstacle was the passage of the Paso del Oso (Step of the Bear). The guide book was singularly vague in its directions. For three hours we toiled through thick grass and hemlock waist high, while the stream raced through narrow walls of rock 300 feet below us. The farther we went, the narrower and more thickly wooded did the gorge become. Just as we were thinking we should have to camp there and subsist on berries, we found an opening which did not end in a precipice, and following this soon came to open grass land. Somehow or other we covered the remaining six miles to Sallent, and collapsed in the square, flagged hall of the inn owned by Enrique Bergeur.

16th.—We got up joyfully conscious of the fact that for once we had not got to prepare our own breakfast. Lighting a fire with damp wood, lying flat and blowing it till one's lungs are full of smoke, and then gloomily watching some case-hardened bread being fried in sardine oil to be rendered edible, are some of the under-emphasized joys of camping-out. . . . Our bill being made out in Spanish money, we had to convert it into its French equivalent. All the chocolate-sipping patrons began to work the sum out: competition ran high, as in all paper games. All the answers being different from one another, we chose that of a corpulent, white-clad gentleman who looked like a banker.

We took the road for Panticosa and bivouacked that night just beyond the village.

17th.—On entering Bains di Panticosa, a modern watering place, we were immediately adopted by a ruffianly ancient, toothless, blear-eyed and loquacious. He wore a felt hat, green with age (though undoubtedly belonging to the civilized

family of black hats, it was a cross between a bowler and a shovel hat), a sort of braided Eton jacket, a red cummerbund, shorts with coloured laces at the knee, stockings and sandals. . . . That night we camped on a high grassy plateau overlooking the town.

18th.—We spent this day and the next day in camp, gastronomically indisposed. The goat is omnipresent: you meet him in the hills, and you taste him in all your food—milk, bread, cheese and even wine, for a gourd is made of goat-skin, with the result, as Belloc sagely remarks, you are never tempted to vinous excess. Our only visitor was a bearded, bespectacled professor, carrying his coat and trousers over his arm!

We took three days over the trip from Bains di Panticosa to Gavarnie, by way of Bujaruelo. At Gavarnie we pitched our tent on the top of an open bluff, encircled by low bushes which gave it privacy without in any way obscuring the view. Behind us were high woods which climbed steeply, in front a distant view up the Port de Bujaruelo, on our left the majestic Cirque surmounted by a line of famous landmarks, on our right Gavarnie, and below at our feet the ever-crowded road connecting the town with the Cirque.

Smoking our after-breakfast pipes we lazily watched the crowd of trippers streaming up the road. From our Olympus we could command the whole  $4\frac{1}{2}$  kilometre route from Gavarnie to the Cirque: every day, from ten o'clock in the morning till five o'clock at night the road was a crawling mass of black, relieved here and there by the bright colours of parasols and dresses.

23rd.—After making ourselves as presentable as possible we dropped down and walked into Gavarnie, in the opposite direction to that in which the solid stream of humanity was progressing so laboriously. It was a quaint crowd which we met, composed chiefly of typical trippers attired in their uncomfortable best clothes: all carried newly-purchased walking-sticks, labelled in florid lettering with the name Gavarnie. A few of the wealthier carried long, spiked alpenstocks, branded as souvenirs even more obviously. The real plutocrats rode on mules or ponies: fat women, held in position by muleteers and pony-girls, jogged along;



jolly, corpulent priests, with cassocks tucked up to their waists, bestrode minute donkeys, giving a Chaucerian effect to the procession. Everyone seemed to be in a frantic hurry, which was strange considering the appalling heat, the roughness of the road and the immobility of the Cirque.

24th.—We left the camp for four days to climb as many peaks as we could in the time. The plan was to spend two nights in the Refuge of Tucquerouye, ascend the neighbouring mountains and then returning by the Val d'Arzas, famed for its beauty, to stop a night at the "casa" there, re-entering France by the Brèche de Roland, and thence into the Cirque.

With much difficulty, owing to low clouds, we reached the Hourquette d'Allans. After a few hundred yards it became impossible to advance further as we could not see more than a yard or two ahead. At one time it looked as if we should have to spend the night out under a rock. The cold was intense and we had very few extra clothes: without a view of the Borne de Tucquerouye we were absolutely at sea. Suddenly the grey bank of clouds melted and flew into the upper air like spray off a gigantic wave. With a shout we dashed from our chilly retreat, and scrambled up an almost unclimbable scree slope at an amazing pace: there before us was the Borne de Tucquerouye like a colossal Cleopatra's Needle, and round the corner to the left we hoped to view the Refuge. Alas for our hopes! Before we had floundered to the top of the bank, which moved bodily with us each time we stepped forward, the clouds came down again. Determined not to be outdone, we bore to the left round a face of rock and cut steps up a glacier; this led into a couloir, which necessitated further step-cutting. We realised we were getting somewhere near the top, for a howling gale, such as one only meets close to a summit, was driving clouds past us at a furious pace, screaming up the gully and tearing at the rucksacks. Using hands and feet we went straight up steep rock and ice, not bothering to traverse; at last we discovered, with thankfulness, that we were climbing the right gully, about which we had been uncomfortably doubtful hitherto, for a glittering trail of sardine tins told its tale. After an interminable grind the supreme moment arrived when a square lump loomed up through the clouds, which

was undeniably the refuge: with a final burst we reached the top and tumbled into the black interior.

What a banquet we might have had, had we been those pompous, pot-bellied people imagined by Rabelais, who "live on nothing but wind, eat nothing but wind, and drink nothing but wind." As it was, half-gassed by the smoke which belched forth from the fire, we choked down some toasted cheese and semolina.

25th.—We had intended to walk round the four-peak ridge, climbing the two Astazous, the Marboré and the Cylindre, but at six o'clock the clouds were still racing over the lake whence we had to draw our drinking water, 300 feet below us. The Refuge is built in a narrow gap in a long wall of rock. The steep couloir on the north side reaches up to the back wall and the ground, within a few yards of the front, drops precipitously to the lake. High columns of rock tower up on either side.

We got away by 10.30, having decided to climb only the Marboré and the Cylindre. Dropping down to the lake, we bore to the right, scrambling over big slabs of rock: here we found several roots of edelweiss. We continued climbing towards the head of the valley up a snow-slope, passing the Pics d'Astazou on our right. Then, having gained sufficient height, we crossed to the far side over a ghastly mile of scree. Here there was a glacier, leading to the foot of the Marboré, up which we did a series of zigzag traverses and arrived at what looked like an easy gully. All went well at first, though we very soon had to rope up. The first few pitches were not difficult, though the rock, which seemed to be shale, was very insecure, and came away in handfuls. We arrived at an almost unclimbable, overhanging wall up which we had to push the leader and then lever him up with our axes. We ourselves were none too secure, balanced on a sloping ledge of extremely loose scree. We did our best to anchor ourselves in case A. should fall, but as there was no rock to which we could belay ourselves, we had to dig our fingers and heels into the scree. After about half an hour, during which time showers of stones whistled past us from above, A. shouted to the middle man, to unrope himself. A seemingly interminable age followed, while we sat and watched the rope,

now slowly disappearing, now remaining motionless for five minutes at a time. A.'s grunts got fainter and fainter till, having reached the end of the 100 feet rope, he told us to join him. I unroped, my brother attached himself, and went up, pulling pretty heavily. Last man in a climb is nearly always unpleasant, and I soon began to feel very sorry for myself, left behind with all the kit and no rope in a place where the slightest movement started the scree moving underneath me. It was disgustingly cold. The only sounds were the moaning of the wind and the occasional sharp rattle of falling stones: I knew by heart every detail of the valley below. I shifted my position once or twice to avoid the route most favoured by dislodged pieces of rock, but as each new position felt less secure than the previous one, I stopped searching for a quiet corner, and flattened myself as far as possible against the back wall. The stones, I thought, seemed to have a very long way to fall after they had hummed past my head and disappeared over the edge. After another eternity, a shout from above warned me that the rope was coming down: it ran over me and, catching it in one hand, I very gingerly attached the three rucksacks and the axes. Up they went, swinging well away from the cliff, returning to it just in time to foul an overhanging lump. For some time they stuck, and it looked as though either they would part company with the rope, or else the rock itself would descend on to me. Fortunately those up aloft decided to lower the impedimenta, and start again—this time with complete success. Now at last came my turn. The rope had several shots at finding me: it needed an accurate throw to reach me, hidden as I was and unable to move in any direction (except downwards). In the end I caught it, and with great difficulty, owing to numb fingers, tied on. To save time, I was instructed by directions, mainly inaudible, to come straight up. Thrice did I attempt to comply with these instructions: the first time I removed large chunks of rock with both hands and slid gently back to my starting point: the second time, I had almost succeeded when something gave and I dropped four or five feet and swung out on the rope, which mercifully held: the third time, feeling like a fly on a ceiling, gripping everything and anything with finger and toe, I managed to

surmount that horrible, overhanging lump, and lay gasping like a fish out of water on the top (with feelings about as mixed as these metaphors). The rest of the hundred feet up to my companions was quite unpleasant enough, with a lot of exposed slab, and I was filled with unspeakable admiration at the achievement of the leader, who had done this without the aid of a rope. Our reunion, after several hours' separation, was most hearty, and we all agreed there was a greater sanguinary element in that climb than in any other we had ever done.

An easy scramble ensued, which brought us to the summit in about half an hour, by the arête which we ought to have joined much earlier. Needless to say, we had missed the route described in the guide-book, and had come perforce by one which only a potential murderer would recommend. It was five o'clock when we reached the top (10,650 feet)—we must have taken about five and a half hours over our few hundred feet.

We sunned ourselves by the cairn and ate a belated lunch, looking out over a most marvellous view. Immediately below us yawned the gigantic chasm of the Cirque de Gavarnie. The horseshoe ridge all round it dropped almost sheer down into the cirque, with steep snow and scree slopes clinging to its terraced side. Beyond that and away to the south we seemed to see all Spain. We could certainly see as far as the central plateau, which lay like a blue wall, rising to a lofty mountain in the east. Thin bars of cloud split the distance up into layers of blue and white.

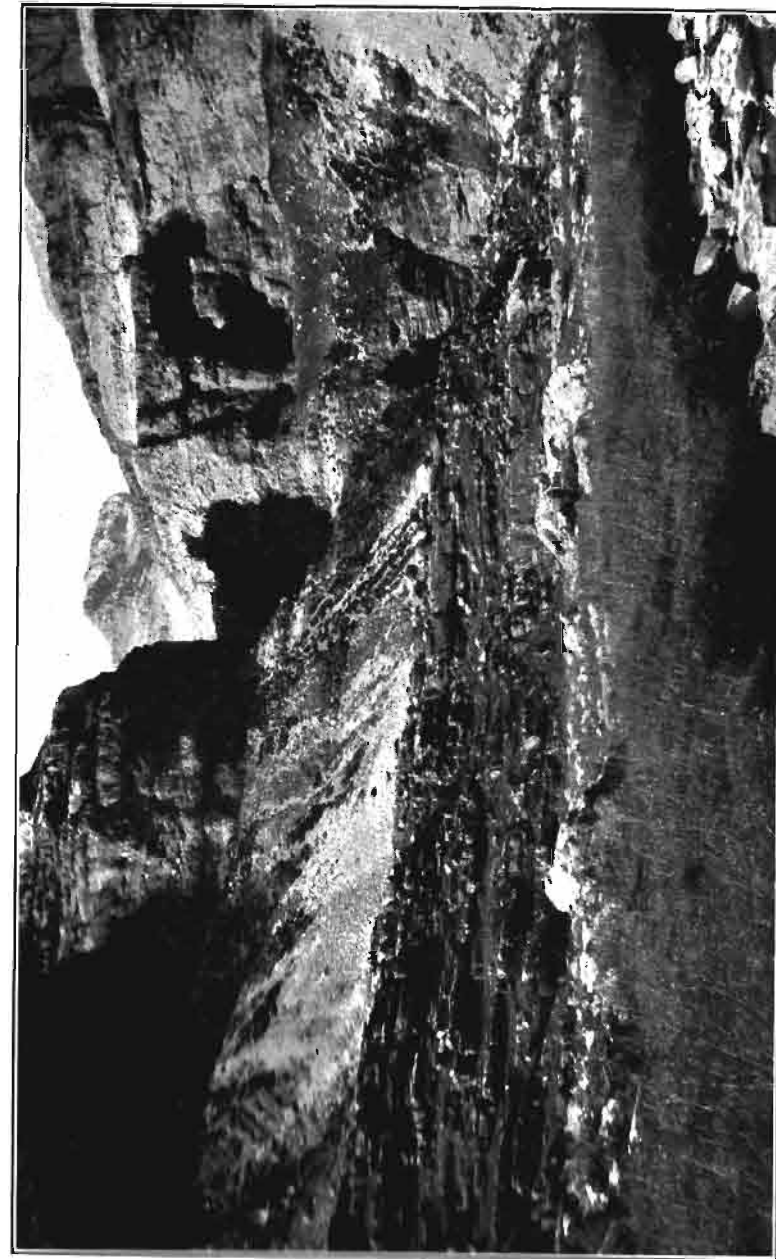
We could not afford to spend more than half an hour over lunch, and soon were slithering down towards the Cylindre on rust-red scree. Traversing the south side of this mountain, we reached a glacier, more icy than most we had hitherto met. We halted to decide whether we had sufficient time to climb the Cylindre. A. was lost in thought, conning the map, when the question was decided for him in an uncomfortably sudden manner: he lost his footing, sat down heavily and, clutching the map in one hand and his axe in the other, left us at a colossal speed. We watched his alarming descent, which consisted of a series of sharp cannons from one stone to another, interspersed by a few straight runs which

accelerated his pace. His axe was useless as a brake and merely stirred up the snow in clouds behind him, like the slip-stream of an aeroplane taking off on a snowy day. We were tremendously relieved to see him get slowly to his feet on arrival at the bottom, for he had dropped about 300 feet in height, which represented a considerable distance on the surface of the glacier. We hastened to rejoin him, glissading cautiously, and arrived at the bottom without mishap, where we found that the only damages sustained were bruises and the permanent disfigurement of a pair of beautiful breeches of which he was very proud.

Fate having decided that we should not ascend the Cylindre, we skirted its base and climbed laboriously up a long scree valley, which ended in the Col de Mont Perdu (10,009 feet), whence we obtained an excellent view across the valley of the refuge, a black dot against the distant mountains, poised midway between an olive-green lake and the jagged crest of the ridge. To the south lay the Spanish hills, suffused with the flaming red and gold of sunset: the valleys were filled with deep blue shadow. Low on the misty horizon hung the great primrose disc of a full moon.

We descended across two broad fields of névé and then down the precipitous glaciers, sometimes on the ice itself, sometimes on rock. We were very fortunate in finding the correct way down: any other route is impossible on account of the sheer face of rock and ice. By the time we had negotiated this descent and the bergschrund at the bottom the light was failing. Though the brilliant colours had faded, a pale, misty rose still clung to the peaks and the moon glittered high in the heavens. The glaciers we had left reflected the light in all the colours of the rainbow, and their columned steeps seemed to be encrusted with gems.

We crossed the valley again and skirting the lake arrived at the foot of the climb to the refuge in broad moonlight. Moon and stars and glaciers lay reflected in the black water. The refuge at the top was in deep shadow, except for the head of the Virgin, carved in the rock, which captured a stray moonbeam. The wonderful peace and quiet were in tremendous contrast to the stormy turbulence of the previous night.



*Photo by G. R. Smith.*

SAUT DE GAULIS (VAL D'ARAZAS).

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26th.—We said good-bye to the Refuge, after having labelled and corked up what was left of the drinking water, and made our way over the Col de Mont Perdu. Dropping 1,000 feet to a lake, where we left our rucksacks, we began the ascent of Mont Perdu. The climb, which was up loose scree, took less than an hour. The view from the top was magnificent, Mont Perdu's 11,000 feet overlooking all the neighbouring peaks. All northern Spain lay spread out before us, a dim blue line on the horizon marking the central plateau some 200 miles away. To the west rose the Cylindre, with its V-shaped belt of strata, and beyond it the glistening Marboré. The ridge bore right-handed in the form of a horseshoe and joined the two Astazous, thence running into the peaked wall which held the Refuge of Tuequerouye. The limestone Val d'Arazas which we were to enter, lay at our feet in a snake-like coil. . . . . After 3½ hours' hard going we reached the Saut de Gaulis, a sort of cirque at the head of the valley. Descending by iron spikes, we found ourselves in green fields. We followed the stream down, past caves with overhanging arches like cloisters, through a silver birch forest dappled with white light and dancing shadows and then into the twilight of pine woods. Out of these we emerged into flowery meadows—long avenues of silver birches—cows, pigs and human beings, the whole scene lit up by the rays of the setting sun. We secured beds at the low white inn known as the Casa di Ordesa.

28th.—Our route back to Gavarnie lay up the northern cliffs of the Val d'Arazas, through the Val di Salarus, thence up to and through the Brèche de Roland, down into the Cirque de Gavarnie, and so home. A stiff climb through thick pine trees, then up open slopes covered with every kind of wild flower, brought us to the foot of the cliffs. The climb was fitted with iron crampons, so we were soon in the Val di Salarus. At the end of this we came in sight of the peaks above the Cirque: on the west the Taillon, then further east the "fausse brèche," then the Brèche de Roland, then the flattened Casque; the ridge bearing right-handed led on to the glittering Marboré, the Cylindre and Mt. Perdu . . . . A high bank of scree, cut in two by a horizontal band of snow, rose steeply to the foot of a long black wall of rock. A

rectangular opening, said to have been made by Roland's famous sword Durandal, formed the *brèche*, and we made for this point up a precipice of balanced boulders. A howling gale was tearing through the gap when we arrived. The narrow walls towered up on each side to the racing clouds, the western one looking like a tall ship heeling over to the wind with bright snow piled up around its black bows.

We passed through the Brèche (9,165 feet), and glissaded down the glaciers into the cirque. Rapidly losing height, we had magnificent views of the vast, perpendicular walls, which descended in terraces connected by steep bands of snow and scree: large black fissures appeared here and there like doorways to the underworld. This titanic masonry merged on the eastern side into the fantastically striated slopes of the Marboré, whence dashed the famous cascade, which falls 1,300 feet in three gigantic leaps. After falling some way the water is blown away in clouds like smoke, and on this particular evening the setting sun encircled it with a perfect rainbow.

That night a terrific thunderstorm burst; the crashes of thunder went on reverberating in the deep valleys till drowned by the next peal. Rain poured through the tent. So continuous were the lightning flashes that we could have read books had we not been employed in holding the tent to the ground with hands and feet and trying at the same time to keep as much under the blankets as possible.

In the morning we emptied our boots of water, wrung out our clothes, squeezed the bread, and ate.

In the evening we left the mountains in cloud and rain.



## ACROSS TO ANDORRA.

By J. W. WRIGHT.

It is surprising how few Englishmen ever go to Andorra. Yet it is one of the most interesting little republics in Europe and as the following description will show, can be reached in four days' journey from London. F. H. Slingsby and I started from London on Saturday, June 13th, 1925. We travelled via Paris and Toulouse to Ax-les-Thermes, arriving at about midday on the Sunday. Here we unpacked, sorted and repacked our kit. We also bought sufficient food to last us for two or three days. We left Ax early on Monday morning, and travelled down to Les Cabanes by train. We started from Les Cabanes at about nine o'clock. In addition to food we were each carrying cooking kit, some spare clothes, a sleeping bag and a light tent (a total weight of about thirty pounds).

We had studied Belloc's book "The Pyrenees" before leaving London, and had decided to cross over to Andorra by the eastern Aston Valley route. The track which follows the Aston on its (true) left bank is well marked, and leads up a deep valley, the lower reaches of which are thickly wooded. Higher the mountains are bare and rocky. We crossed over the second bridge, and then kept the stream on our right. From the point where the two Astons meet we followed the eastern stream. Near here we stopped for a bathe and a meal. By five o'clock we were near the limit of the tree zone and decided to camp there, rather than push on and run the risk of not being able to find enough wood for our fire. The site we chose was on the highest part of a small "jasse" with rocks on one side and the stream a few yards away on the other. During the evening there was a good deal of thunder and lightning, though we did not get any rain.

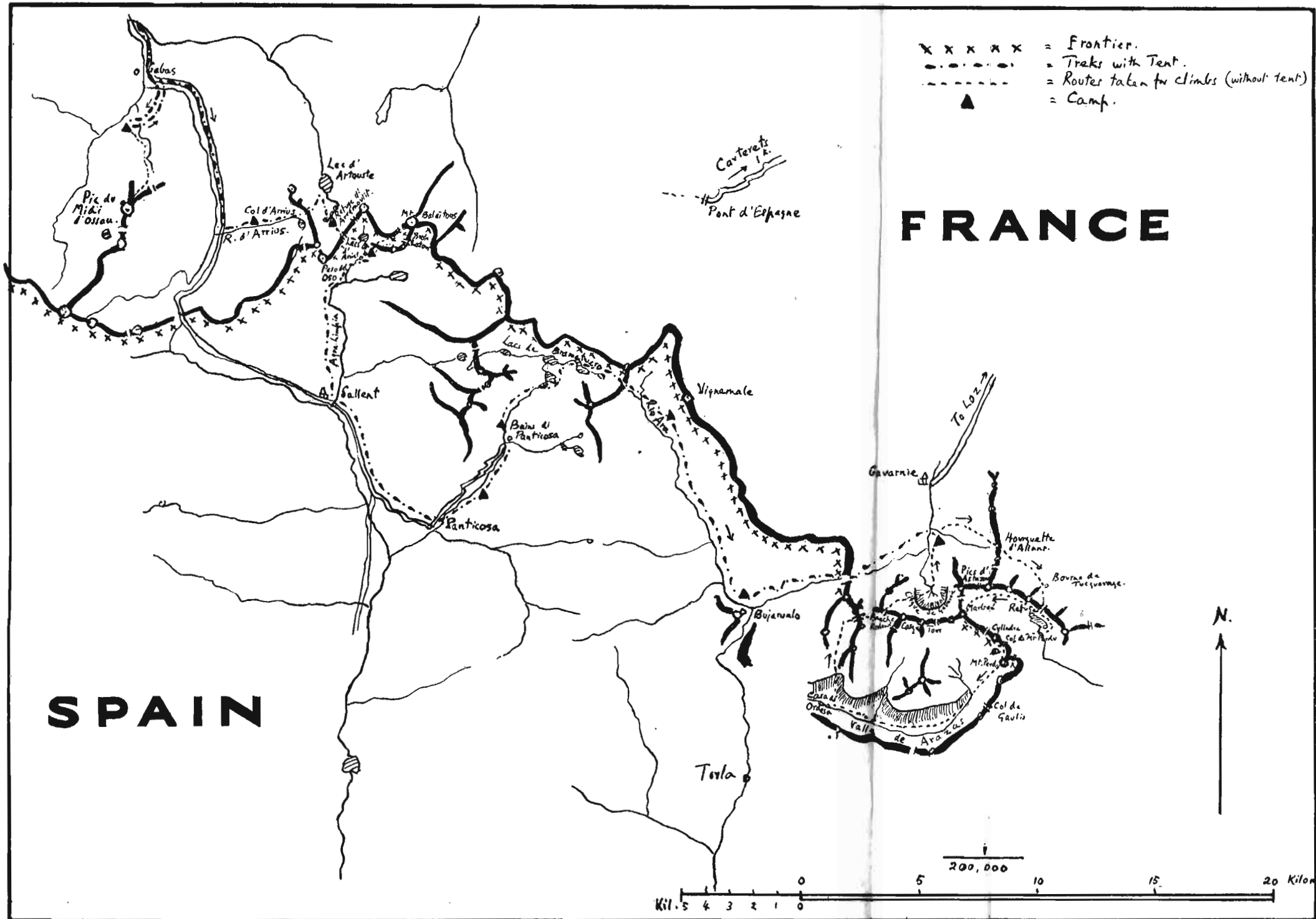
On the next morning we continued up the Aston valley keeping the stream on our right until after the junction described by Belloc: here the main stream comes in from the direction of the Pic Passade. (Belloc got lost somewhere near the source of this stream.) We followed the other stream to the left, finally fording it and continuing until another stream junction appeared. One torrent flowed down from

a waterfall on our right, the other coming from the crags to our front. We followed the track past the waterfall and came to a bleak looking tarn called the Fontagente. We then made for a pass a little higher up, and so crossed the frontier between France and the Republic of The Valleys of Andorra. We followed a mule track down a small valley, and crossing a steep shoulder reached the small hamlet of Soldeu, the most northern village in the Republic. We stayed the night in a small inn at Soldeu. The accommodation and food were simple, though quite good and the inn was very clean.

The route over from France was not as difficult to find as we had expected. The actual travelling time (exclusive of halts) was twelve hours. Therefore by leaving Les Cabanes at 4 a.m. and carrying light rucksacks (a little food but no camping kit) one ought to be able to cross the range in a day quite easily. It may be stated here as evidence of the industry of the Andorrans—produced by a life of hard struggle for existence—that we did not see any ground which was sufficiently large and level to allow of a tent being pitched on it, which was not under some form of cultivation.

On the next day we continued down the valley, following a mule track down a fine open gorge to the village of Encamps where we had lunch. In some of the smaller villages we noticed that the houses had no glass windows. We passed several flocks of sheep and goats being driven up to the high pasturage above the woods and cultivated ground. We reached the village of Escaldas in the early afternoon, and stayed for the night at the Hotel Pla. This is kept by an English-speaking family and is exceedingly comfortable. The motor road from Spain ends in this village, which is about one mile north of the capital village—Andorra Viella. The hotel at Escaldas is probably better than the one at Andorra Viella. We were the only two Englishmen in the country at the time.

On the next day we got an Andorran to take us over the Council House. Andorra is governed by a President, Vice-President and twenty-four councillors, four from each village. We were very much interested in a large oak chest in which the State papers are kept. This box has six locks and by each key-hole is the name of one of the villages. Andorra is a quasi-independent republic, but it acknowledges a



SKETCH MAP OF TOUR IN THE PYRENEES.

suzerainty both to France and Spain. It has its own flag, which incorporates the arms of the Bishop of Urgel and the Count of Foix.

We left Andorra Viella on Thursday afternoon in a motor bus for Seo d'Urgel (Spain). The journey took an hour or so and was uninteresting. We left Seo d'Urgel on Friday morning, walking in a N.W. direction. Soon we reached Castel Cuidad. For the next few miles we had some difficulty in finding the way over a broken table-land of bare shaly rock, where the only vegetation was a few scrub trees, and there was no water. For this there were two reasons:—firstly, the only map of this district which we were able to buy in London was on too small a scale to show the country in sufficient detail, and secondly, there were no definite tracks. By using a compass, and keeping as closely as we could to a magnetic bearing of 320 degrees, we reached our objective, Castellbo, in a low wooded valley. From here we still kept to the same bearing, which led us through two woods and several farms. We asked the way from one farmer. He gave us a lengthy direction, the only word of which I caught was "Arbores." However F.H.S. managed to understand him, and learnt the fact that we followed up a path till we came to a place where we should see "some trees that had lost their bark," then we turned to the right along a broad grass ride through the wood. Eventually we reached a new road—still unmetalled, leading from Paralles to Sort. This brought us to the Hospice of St. Juan, overlooking the Magdalena valley. The hospice is not mentioned in Belloc's book nor is it marked on the map. This was not a happy day to look back upon; it was very hot and we had very little food.

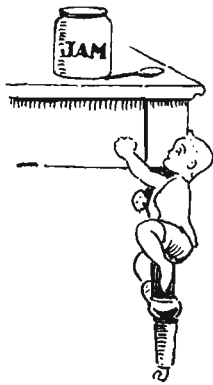
We spent a comfortable night here, and leaving early the next morning made our way down the Magdalena valley by a motor road to its junction with the Rio Noguerra. Our route lay up this valley, and stopping for lunch at Escalo, we reached Esterri in the early evening. The hotel has been brought up to date and is quite comfortable though rather noisy.

We left Esterri on Sunday morning, having first sent our camping kit on in a corn sack by a motor-bus, and crossed the Porte de Bonago just before midday, an easy walk



took us down to Viella where we spent the night. On arrival at Viella we found that the corn sack had not arrived, and we had to walk back to Salardu the next day to look for it. It had been thrown off the bus there by mistake. We discovered that the hotel at Salardu (between Bonaigo and Viella) is better than any in Viella.

The next day we went on to Luchon. As is usually the case we had very unsettled weather on the French side of the mountains. From Luchon we walked up to the Hospice de France (kept by Haurillons, the best guide in the district), where we had a lot of rain; but eventually we managed with Haurillons to get up the highest peak in the range—the Nethou (11,200 ft.). From the hospice we crossed over the Porte de Benasque to the Refuge Rencluse (originally a hermitage). We got up at three the next morning but the weather was too bad to start till 6 o'clock. It is a short climb and we reached the summit before midday. The glacier is not extensive and the snow conditions were excellent. On our way back to the Hospice de France we had a look at the Trou de Toro, a very big pot-hole swallowing the stream of the valley. We left next day for Luchon, whence it took us twenty-three hours to reach London.



## FOOD AND THE MOUNTAINEER.

By E. CREIGHTON.

May I say at the outset that I have two reasons for perpetrating this article. The first is that I am strongly in favour of an annual *Journal* and secondly because, though we may be loth to admit it, food, or the lack of it, is very often the preponderating thought on many of our longer climbs.

I say longer, because on our British climbs the question is largely met by the sandwiches supplied by the hotel. Not entirely though. There is one blot on Lakeland climbing, and that is the mutton sandwich. I cannot claim to have done a tithe of the climbs in the Lakes that some of our members have done, and yet the climbing part of the Lake District is studded with little cairns which, if carefully dissected, will be found to contain at the heart a packet of my mutton sandwiches. There is a firmly established convention against the use of mustard with mutton, and without mustard a sandwich is a mockery. (I wrote all this before the trade invented the Mustard Club).

I do appeal for united action on the part of British climbers to secure the suppression of mutton sandwiches. Therefore see that your sandwiches are of ham, beef, or tongue, liberally buttered and mustarded, and it only remains to remember the stirring words of one of our climbing poets, whose name for the moment escapes me, and,

“Put them in the rucksack  
And eat them while it's early,  
For when they're fresh they're nice and flat  
But when they're stale they're curly.”

When climbing guideless in the Alps provisioning is a very serious question if you are in a district of non-provided huts.

The whole question of Alpine provisions is an enormous one and only the fringe of the subject can be touched on in an article like this.

The long and bitter controversy which shook the climbing world to its foundations in Mr. Whympers' day, as to whether the meat served in climbing huts is, or is not, mule, is one I should be sorry to reopen. I can only say that where the first course is soup made of macaroni and water flavoured

with grated cheese, the second, macaroni, and the last one, cheese, I personally would welcome a steak from an alligator.

Wasn't it Napoleon who said an army marched on its stomach? Before anyone else says it let me put it forth as my considered opinion that a climber climbs on his. I am not alluding to the various stomach traverses, where I need only say a concavity rather than a convexity is more conducive to a graceful style. The question arises when an Alpine party reaches its base, though I have known useful work put in earlier.

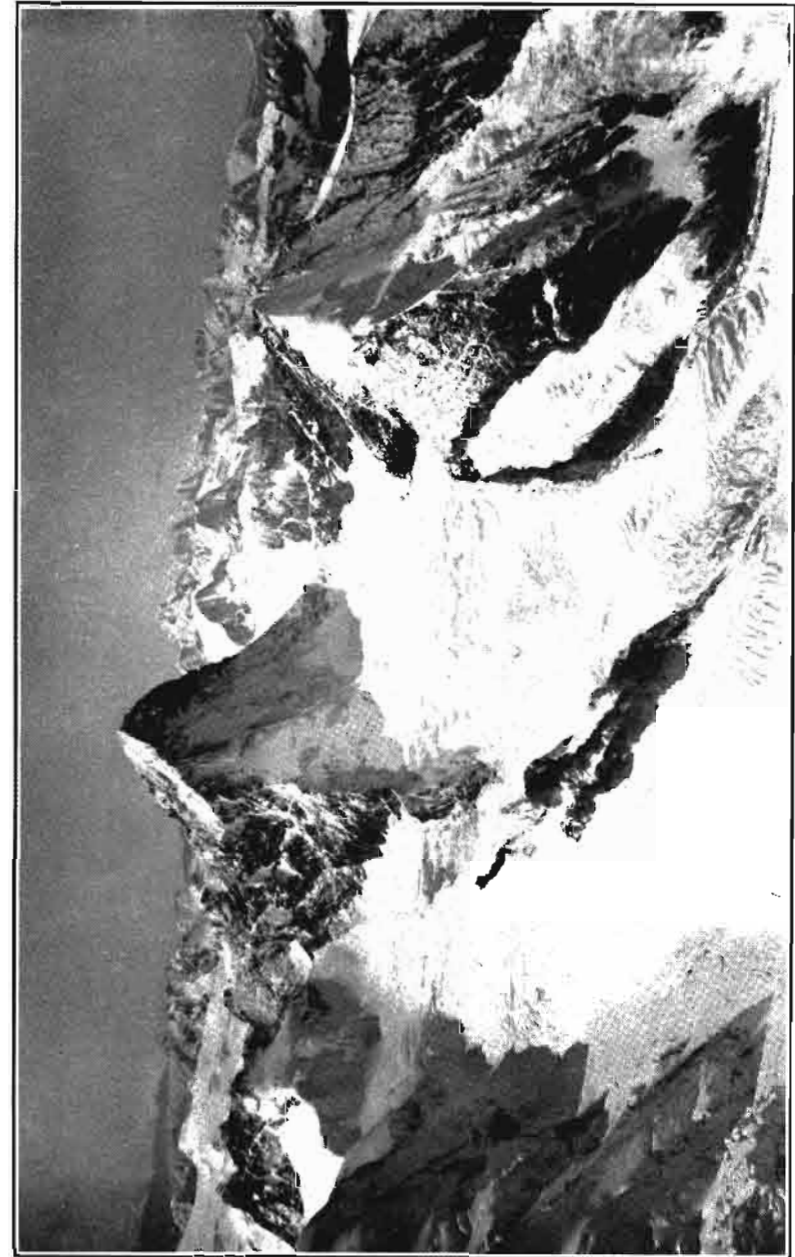
One member of a party of five having travelled via Brussels was to meet the rest of us in Paris at the Gare de Lyon restaurant. As he spoke French with a strong Yorkshire Ramblers' accent his taxi-man took him to the Gare d'Orleans. There he ordered and ate his dinner, discovered his mistake, joined us, and ate a second one. That man was one dinner up on us all the trip and we never drew level.

We generally get to our jumping-off place in time for lunch, and after a hot greasy hotel meal we go out to buy provisions for the next three days. The greatest possible mistake. Provisions for the next trip should always be bought fasting.

I usually climb with two splendid fellows, but stern ascetic souls, who, if they get a lump of bread and an odd sardine think the world is being too good to them. They come shopping with me and frown sternly at each added ounce of weight. They tell me out of their accumulated store of experience that I shall feel an ungovernable craving at high altitudes for sugar, and insist on my loading up with numerous tins of jam and packets of mint cake. So far I have always been able to hold this craving in check. The one thing I long for on the mountains is a steak and a bottle of Bass.

But jam comes in very handily in the manufacture of jam snows. You empty half a jam tin into your mug, add snow, whip it up with your knife, and it amalgamates into a highly delectable ice. That is if the snow is of the right consistency. I have had many disappointments lately. Snow doesn't seem to be what it was when I was a young man.

Mint cake can easily be got rid of. Give one piece to one village child and the word is passed round. I could, on



*Photo by A. M. Woodward.*

SEPTEMBER SNOW ON THE DENT BLANCHE.

occasions, have deported the entire juvenile population of Alpine villages like another Pied Piper.

Bread is of course the most important thing to take, if you can get it. In the towns you get the most delightful crescent rolls with your *petit déjeuner*, but in the villages there is only one pattern.

It is a cigar-shaped loaf half a yard long with a straw tempered nickel steel crust. Inside the crust it consists largely of holes. Boiled in soup it is eatable. Otherwise—did we not lose two days last season while our leader went down to Aosta to get his teeth straightened? True, one member of the party said he bent them gnashing them in his disappointment at having to turn back for weather half an hour from the top of the Dent d'Hérens. But I don't believe it. It was the bread.

Sardines can always be bought in the smallest villages, but there is very little to be said about sardines. The residual oil is most useful for greasing climbing boots, but as a rule I spill most of it over my breeches. The advice I would give to any aspiring alpinist is to get really to like sardines, for the alternative is sausage.

It is quite impossible to do more than indicate a few of the pitfalls which beset the purchaser. The whole subject is a dark mystery and pending the issue of an authoritative pamphlet by some Alpine Club, the beginner would be well advised to stick to sardines.

Some *saucissons* are cooked, others are not, and there is a particularly offensive variety called *Landjäger* which should be avoided. It is issued to the anti-smuggling troops who patrol the frontier, as an emergency ration.

One was issued to me as such in my first season. Whenever I felt particularly hungry I sniffed at it and my appetite disappeared. I preserved it intact, years have passed, and I now use it as an office paperweight. Ham might be a useful standby but it again as often as not is issued raw. And I do feel very strongly that this continental habit of eating raw meat is a reversion to barbarism,—except in the case of the raw smoked salmon you get in Norway with preserved cherries. In fact I should like to exempt Norway entirely from all gastronomical complaints. Norway is

essentially the country for the climber who considers his physical welfare, particularly if he stays (as of course he will do) with Ole Berge at Turtegrö.

Eggs are always useful, but in the valley villages and in huts they are not always too fresh and the people are far too truthful about them. They will tell you frankly they are not fresh enough to boil but they might be all right fried. I remember interviewing the lady of a tiny inn in an Italian valley. (They chased the hens out of our combined bed-dining room).

"Could we have soup?" "Yes." "An Omelette?" She didn't think the eggs were fresh enough, but if we were prepared to risk it, she was. Nobly I didn't tell my companions. They enjoyed the omelette, I didn't. It is a fatal thing to cast a doubt on the freshness of an egg.

One year we had a doctor in the party. Everything I wanted to take was deficient in vitamins or too full of carbo-hydrates. I fought him and carried my point over two large onions and two tomatoes whilst buying provisions at Cogne. He said they contained 90% water and were not worth their weight in the sack. We carried them up to the Garde Chasse's hut at the foot of the Herbetet.

It was twice the size of a railway compartment and included a bunk for two. There were five of us, two slept in the bunk and three on the bunk mattress short way on with our legs on the floor. We had to leave the door open for ventilation and waked up each night at midnight frozen, but as we had to start at 1.30, it didn't much matter.

But to return to our vegetables. With these, a handful of macaroni and a tin of bully beef, Jack Wright made a stew that would have attracted notice anywhere. The wood smoke went everywhere but up the chimney and I can see him now like the Walrus in Alice, "holding his pocket handkerchief before his streaming eyes." There was a big boulder outside the hut and copying Wordsworth's little maid,—“As the night was fair, I took my little porringer And ate my supper there.” I shall never forget that supper, the weirdly contorted icefall of the Tribulation glacier, and above all the grand mass of the Paradis lit by the summer moon.

Another culinary memory. Four of us, trudging down to Val d'Isère from the Grande Motte, the village in sight far beneath us, came to a rocky gorge. Two of us maintained the path and followed one side, two the other. As it didn't much matter we parted. Soon after, my companion and I came on a lovely Alpine meadow starred with mushrooms. We had two cookers and all the butter of the party. We cooked and ate mushrooms as long as the butter lasted, then we fried them with sardines. Never again shall I taste mushrooms to compare with them. "There grow no such Almu trees nor have been seen unto this day."

But all memories are not so happy. One year we left the Grimsel to traverse the Finsteraarhorn by a rather difficult route, and had cut down weight as much as possible. The first night at the Oberaar hut disaster fell. I had banked heavily on soup, half a dozen packets, Pea, Julienne, Mulligatawny, etc., though I was not sanguine about the flavours. No matter what is printed on the packet the prevailing flavour is cardboard. I stewed the mixture carefully, stiffened it up with Oxo cubes, and handed a basinful proudly to our second man. He simply shouted "mothballs." And it was so. The shopkeeper had stored the soup packets on the same shelf with some naphthaline.

The next day the difficult route on the Finsteraarhorn proved too icy for us and we went up the ordinary way, descended to the Finsteraar hut and decided it was too late to push on to the Concordia as arranged, so we agreed to stay there and tackle the Fiescherhorn the next day. We had no food to speak of but our leader produced his emergency ration, a packet of rice. We boiled it and reboiled it and tre-boiled it and then it began to swell up. We flavoured it with mint cake, dusty raisins and prunes from pocket corners. Finally we ate it and retired to our bunks, distended but still hungry. Providentially the Fiescherhorn day dawned doubtfully and we fled up to the Jungfrauoch and down to the fleshpots of Wengen.

So far I have said nothing about drink. Tea is a great stand-by but boiling it wastes a lot of time. Don't forget lemons; they are a substitute for milk and help to mask the methylated spirit flavour. And tea is the only thing you

can drink on a climb without being sorry for it. Wine and water is not bad, but alcohol as a rule is best kept as a reward at the end of the day.

Asti is a gorgeous drink for a tired and thirsty man, but it leaves a rather sweet and sticky taste and is apt to be as dust and ashes in the mouth at 1.30 next morning when you are starting for a climb.

Beer—English beer—would be ideal, but it is unfortunately unprocurable. The Swiss Dunkel beer is not too bad, the Birra Aosta might be worse, but outside England there is nothing to touch the Norwegian beer. There are two sorts, Bayersk and Pilsener. The Pilsener is not real Pilsener and is merely a waste of time, but the Bayersk is good. It is pronounced By-yarr as near as I can fit it phonetically, but the easiest way to get it is to soak a label off a bottle and present it with your money.

The commonest event in a climbing holiday is to see three or four hungry men sitting round a tin containing one sardine, each protesting that he has already had far too much and couldn't possibly eat it or drink the last mug of tea in the billy. One imagines the shade of Sir Philip Sidney peering furtively from behind a rock, jealous that his pre-eminence is going to be snatched from him.

As Kipling says :

"Smells are better than sights or sounds  
To made your heartstrings crack."

Apparently he never experienced the powerful tug of the combination of smell and taste. Sometimes when dining out in towns I come across my old friend Salami, if that is how it is spelled, the most pungent of the sausage tribe, in the shape of a thin shaving in the *hors d'œuvres*. Then the lights of the restaurant fade, the strains of the band fail, and I am sheltering from the wind behind a rock, breakfasting with two or three trusty, unwashed and unshaved comrades at the foot of an Alpine ridge at dawn.

"Magic casements opening on perilous foam  
In Faery lands forlorn."

## CONCERNING CLASSIFICATION.

By C. E. BENSON.

The man who proposes to destroy; demolish, overturn,—or any of the twenty-one alternatives to be found in *The Thesaurus*—old, well-established, honourable or respectable customs in the insensate hope that out of the resultant chaos may emerge something better, if not a new Elysium at any rate something infinitely happier, healthier, etc., etc., than the condition precedent is known commonly as a Bolshevik, a word which presumably means something or other in some language. Certainly it is not Russian.

To shield myself in advance against the charge of being a Bolshevik, I may as well say out of hand that I have neither intention nor desire to inflict anyone of the twenty-one activities indicated on the matter in hand. In fact, even were it my desire, I could not do so, inasmuch as the matter is neither old nor well established. Neither do I anticipate that new and harmonious relations will be the issue of the chaos into which I propose to plunge it. On the contrary I look forward, with considerable glee, to ructions. After which Pagliacci prologue, when I ring up the curtain everyone in the stalls ought to know what they will see staged.

The factors which have misled me into this histrionic and modern-historic attitude are O. G. Jones, G. D. and A. P. Abraham, E. A. Baker, A. W. Andrews, J. M. A. Thomson, E. W. Steeple, G. Barlow, H. MacRobert, H. E. L. Porter, G. B. Bower, H. M. Kelly, and the Chemist. Naturally the works of this galaxy are bright with

".....jewels five (or even more) words long,  
"That on the stretched forefinger of all time  
"Sparkle for ever."

The brightest of these gems comes from the casket of the Keswick Brothers. Here it is: "Now we do not for a moment imagine that anyone will agree with us in our classification. This is hardly to be expected when we cannot agree between ourselves." This is modest, and good sound sense withal. It is not, however the classification of any given climb I am tilting at. It is the principle or want of principle.

O. G. Jones, the Abrahams, and Baker may be placed in one class. Jones started the system and the others followed,

Baker with some misgivings. The system is known to every climber, a scale of courses working up, or rather down, through Easy to Moderate, through Moderate to Difficult, and so on. There may have been, or appeared to be, desirability of transposition here and there; there may have been overlapping, but in the opinion of most climbers the estimates were recognised as being in general remarkably sound.

After a while, however, Authority began to look askance at these graduated lists. They encouraged, so it was averred, a certain class of climbers to concentrate on the most difficult climbs to the danger of their lives and detriment of the sport. Then came the Andrews-Thomson experiment on Lliwedd which naturally could not avoid partaking of the character of that intricate mountain and leaving the unsupereducated in a "dunno where 'e are" frame of mind. Then came fruition in the Ogwen Book by J. M. A. Thomson.

Of this I have just read in "The Mountains of Snowdonia" that "he agreed to adopt a form of description and graduation which has become the model of all subsequent Climbers' Guides to our hills." (The writer has by some unaccountable oversight omitted to add "Worse luck!"). Then he goes on:—"It may be added that his individual style in these books set an example of elasticity in climbing terminology almost as beneficial as his effect upon our climbing methods," which is as may be. Personally I can affirm that the vision of titubantic Gallios biting ropes round stooks of bollards has had no beneficial effect on me whatever. I have in fact heard an Expert compare the classification and attendant prose in this volume to Doctor Samuel Johnson's leg of mutton, "as bad as bad could be, ill killed, ill cooked, etc., etc." I think he was overstating, but I confess that the classification appeals to me as little as the jargon—language I mean. Anyone of intelligence can appreciate the meaning of the late A. D. Godley's happy phrase "delectable places" but no one of intelligence can approve of the application of the adjective to that foul smallpox-looking finish to the Arête Climb on the South Buttress, Tryfan. The correct word begins with "d" and ends with "able" all right but the answer is not "delectable."\*

\* I note that the latest Guide, *Snowdon*, by H. R. C. Carr, is happily free from this blemish.

If this new graduation was intended to alleviate, if not remedy, the distemper of scalp-hunting, it was foredoomed to failure. The scalp-hunter is unscrupulous when he is out for a scalp and a considerable liar in the interval; in the interval his scalp-hunting is the spirit "that made England great, that dared all, not counting the cost."

It is nothing of the sort. The spirit that made England great counted the cost, dared all for England's sake, and was heroic. The spirit of the scalp-hunter is not heroic. His adventure is generally undertaken for his own satisfaction and nobody else's. If the venture comes off, the verdict is generally "More fool he!" If he comes off, the verdict is similar, only emphasised.

As a matter of fact, if a climber, fool-man or sane, wants to look up a climb he thinks may give him pleasure, or enable him to swank with a due veneer of modesty, etc., etc., he will not be deterred from finding it by the trouble of turning over a few pages, even if he be debarred from access to a condemned category of EASY, MODERATE, and so forth. By way of experiment I picked up the Ogwen Guide and less than three minutes' research brought three exacting climbs under my eye. Wherefore it would appear that the distinction between the morality of distributing such climbs promiscuously over various pages and the immorality of collating them at the tail end of a graduated list is not very marked.

The gravamen, however, of the charge against this type of volume is the failure to recognise that there must, insistently must, be one common standard, that no climber, however accomplished, can be justified in setting up a standard of his own. Fortunately there is only one possible standard, that of O. G. Jones, which has been followed nearly by the brothers Abraham. By one possible standard I mean one possible general standard. There is no possibility, alas! of the gifted compiler revising it—assuming he might wish to do so. There is, I think, one serious inaccuracy, but an item does not affect the assessment as a whole. Classification, however presented, is for the information of those who do not know, not of those who know. Thus a party which has passed its novitiate in the Lake District under the above auspices might, on coming to Wales, find itself reliant on a

scheme of classification differing here and there somewhat seriously from that which they regarded, and with reason, as established. If then, misled by these unfamiliar adjustments, they essayed a climb beyond their powers and anything happened, blame would be laid by many, and those, too, climbers of experience, on the altered classification, and the charge would be extremely difficult of refutation. Moreover, and this is a grave fault, there is no graduation in the various groups. MODERATE throughout is precisely the same on its face value. It may be urged that the letterpress supplies the necessary corrective. I question if this is so, even if the letterpress were in plain English.

The Appendix by H. E. L. Porter is a great improvement on the original but unfortunately he is shackled by its disabilities.

In the S.M.C. Guide to Skye, E. W. Steeple, G. Barlow, and H. MacRobert have done the best possible with the scheme innovated at Pen-y-Pass, yet it cannot be said that their method is conspicuous for any advantage over that designed by O. G. Jones. It suffers from the disabilities indicated in the last paragraph but one, and the VERY DIFFICULTS are found even more easily than in the Welsh Guides. You have only to run your eye down the list at the end of the volume to spot the "Plus Fours" on sight.

Lastly among the authorized versions come the F. & R.C.C. Guides. The compilers have adopted a modification of both systems with gratifying results. H. M. Kelly's Guide to the Pillar would be hard to better. Moreover his style is as workmanlike as his system. He has realized what some others have not, that a Guide issued by a Club is an Official Publication, and that in such, facetiousness and phraseological eccentricities are out of place.

As an "authorized rider" comes the Chemist. I call him the Chemist because he deals in chemical formulæ as applied to climbing. There is a good deal to be said for his scheme if it be workable, which is doubtful. He complains, and with justice, of the unsatisfactory nature of the letterpress. A situation is described as—breezy. Quite! but the Eagle's Nest Ridge is breezy, and so is the Needle Ridge, but the situations are markedly dissimilar. Wherefore he devises an

ingenious formula, a kind of  $H_2SO_4$ , though there is nothing sulphuric nor acid about his contention.

Here is the formula:—A. Obstacles requiring the exertion of muscular strength.—B. Places where delicate balance is needed.—C. Exposure.—D. Rotten rock, loose grass, etc. Maximum number of points assessable per heading, 10. I worked this out on his formula for the Eagle's Nest Ridge and then applied it to the Eagle's Nest West Chimney. The amazing result was that the Chimney presented no difficulty of any kind whatsoever.

Then ".....medio de fonte leporum,  
"Surgit amari aliquid."

Into the midst of this "wilderness of harmony" stalks the cloven hoof with rubbers on. The legend is that they were first imported from the Channel Islands by Mr. Shadbolt, senior. He certainly wore them, because I saw them on his feet. I did not see them in action, however. I think it was Adam Fox's party who held out the right hand of fellowship to him. They also noted that he went very well. If that were the first introduction, rubbers did not come to stop. It was long after that date that Herford made his series of dazzling assaults on Scafell Pinnacle and I think I am right in stating that those climbs were made in stocking feet. Dim rumours came from Cornwall of A. W. Andrews in unusual footgear slaying unsuspecting guests on granite cliffs and pinnacles. Later some hint of the innovation found place in print. On Lliwedd when the work became too delicate for boots we find that he and the present Sir John Farmer changed into tennis shoes. The conditions under which such change was thought desirable is worthy of note. It no longer exists. Folk now start off shamelessly in rubbers from the hotel door.

Rubbers have recently found a very "doughty" champion in a climber who has written a paper on the relative merits of clinkers, which are mineral, and rubbers, which are vegetable, entitling the said paper, "Nothing Like Leather," which is animal, so that he seems all out for an old nursery game on a Walpurgis night on the Brocken. I have no intention of mixing it with this gentleman. He has since been faithfully dealt with by a future ornament of the Bench.

Besides which, I reckon I have got myself into quite sufficient hot water with this article to keep me warm for the remainder of my limited existence. "Alas, it is not till time with reckless hand has torn out half the leaves of the Book of Human Life to light the fires of passion with, from day to day, that man begins to see that the leaves which remain are few in number," and it seems not improbable that these few will be employed to boil the cooking pot with myself as the principal ingredient. One remark, however, I will rashly venture, with a few others to follow.

I. If a climber can lead an ordinary climb of rather more than moderate difficulty, such as may be found handily on, say, the Milestone Buttress, under good conditions in boots, it is very certain he will be able to lead it in rubbers. The converse is by no means certain.

II. It is high time for a reversion to the Gully Epoch. I know of plenty of rubber-gritstone young gentlemen who can make modified mincemeat of Ribs and Slabs but would be utterly floored by the Oblique Chimney on Gable, aye, and easier 'enclosed' climbs, and would be in deadly peril if they essayed that mysteriously classified course, the West Jordan Gully, which has stood and still stands in one standard list as a Difficult and not much more than half way down the list at that.

II. (a) "Forty years on, growing older and older,  
"Shorter of wind as of memory long,  
"Feeble of foot and rheumatic of shoulder,"

I am evincing a distinct preference for face climbing. Why? Because it is less strenuous and much drier. I have noticed that seniority has induced a similar propensity in others. It would be a pity if our youngsters grow old before their time. It would be a greater pity if they shirked labour, discomfort, and dirt. Let them not imagine that, because they have taken in Moss Ghyll, ordinary route, they have one of the best gully climbs in their pocket. On the ordinary route there are only two gully pitches and those of no great severity.

III. The exposition of the classification is all at the wrong end. Classification is mainly intended for the benefit of beginners and undergraduates. The Graduate who can

take a party safely up, say, the North Pillar or one of the more difficult Tryfan routes ought to be able to judge of his own capacities and also of what he is up against. It is the Undergraduate who wants educating. Compare the number of words given to a MODERATE and a VERY SEVERE in almost any climbing book. It is scandalous. "Difficult climbs and how I did them" may be of interest, especially to the writer, but educationally they are of very little value.

IV. I think that in the classification of the useful, instructive climbs, steady, experienced climbers who are not stars should be consulted. It is quite impossible for genius to appreciate a difficulty it cannot experience.





## SOME SEVERES.

By MISS M. BARKER.

The Central Buttress of Scawfell was first climbed in 1914 by S. W. Herford, G. S. Sansom, H. B. Gibson, and C. F. Holland, again in 1921 by C. D. Frankland and B. Beetham, in 1923 by A. S. Piggott, M. Wood and J. B. Meldrum, and on August 18th, 1925, C. D. Frankland and I made its fourth ascent. Frankland is thus the only man who has been up it twice, which, of course made it possible for us to climb it as we did, straight through, with a minimum expenditure of time and energy and a maximum of enjoyment.

We had talked of attempting it in 1924, but no opportunity offered. On August 17th we got back from Skye, splendidly fit, and as the following day was fine we, with the rest of the camp, took the corridor route to Scawfell in leisurely fashion, trying to look and feel as though we had no special project in mind. But after lunch in Hollow Stones we went right on to the climb. Our late start was partly a strategic move to give the rocks time to dry, for the morning had been misty. We found them dry, and of course wore rubbers, but C.D.F. says much lichen has grown on the climb since his former ascent, and that consequently it was not quite in perfect condition.

For the first part of the climb I felt nervous, and said so. As a matter of fact I would certainly have climbed better had we done something rather more modest by way of prelude, for most of us probably get "warmed up" after the first hour. But it was partly due to respect for the climb. The Flake Crack! One could not approach it without some awe and reverence, some sort of mental prayer and fasting.

I am a bad hand at writing up a climb, for I simply cannot remember the detail. When people ask me, "How did you like so-and-so?" mentioning some tit-bit, I am usually driven to reply vaguely, "Oh, it went all right," because I simply don't know what they are talking about; and am thereafter left with a horrible suspicion that I must have taken some alternative and altogether inferior route, and have never done the real thing at all. If a description of the climb is available I read it up afterwards to see what we are supposed

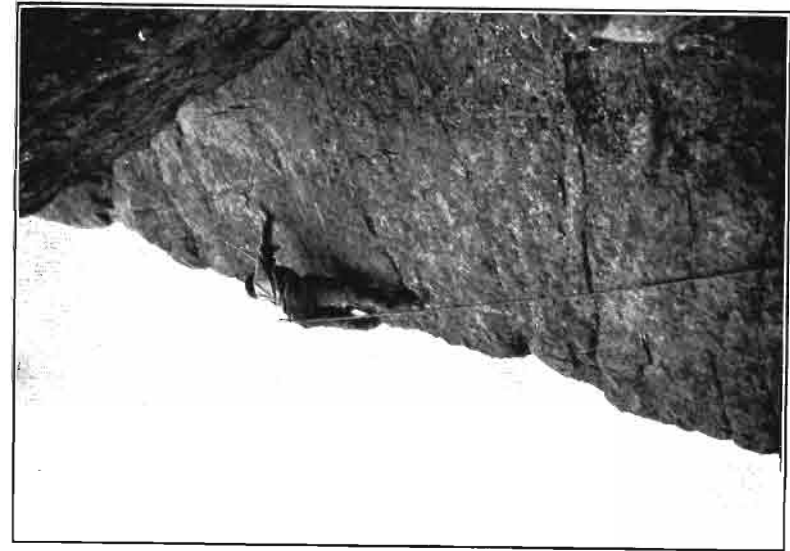


Photo by E. Wood-Johnson.

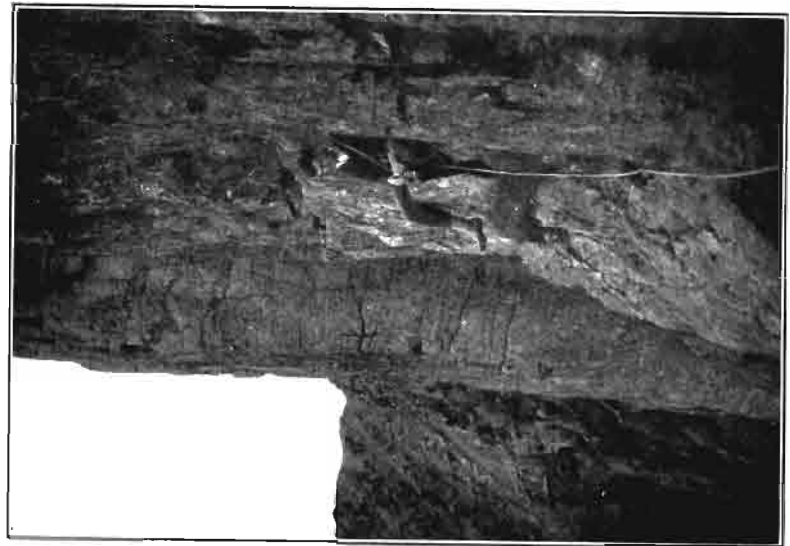


Photo by E. Wood-Johnson.

BOTTERILL'S SLAB, SCAWFELL.

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to have done, often coming to the melancholy conclusion that the suspicion is justified! But one cannot get "off the climb" on the Flake Crack, nor can one forget it as a great experience.

The first part, up the rib and on to the Oval, was just good stiff face climbing, with small but sufficient holds. Near the foot of the Flake C.D.F. paused in thought. We were using an 80 foot rope (which proved ample), and there was the question of that wretched thread belay. We both knew it would not be wanted, but of course it had to go on. He got up a few feet, and I came to the foot of the Flake. There is a good ledge to stand on, narrow but comfortable enough, and a jam for the left hand and arm in the crack, but nothing for the right hand: a position where the second can wait, safely and comfortably so far as he is concerned, for any length of time in reason, but where there is no justifiable safeguard for either if the leader comes off during the difficult business of getting the rope over the chock-stone higher up. We therefore spent about twenty minutes, at a guess, of precious time and nervous energy, he trying to induce a loop of rope to pass behind a small chock-stone high up in the crack, while I tried to see it, and then to catch it with the left hand. It was very refractory, but came through at last, and I put my left arm through the loop. Meanwhile, however, there was time to examine the crack at my level, and I think that in it there is a small chock-stone, pretty far in, which might serve for a belay if it can be reached and if a rope will pass round it. I had no chance to try, but it is worth remembering, for if so it would be a great simplification and help at this part of the climb.

The loop belay settled, C.D.F. led up the Crack, and passed three loops over the chock-stone and under himself (see "Novel Tactics on the Central Buttress," *Y.R.C.J.*, Vol. V., p. 16). I pulled on the loose end to his direction, but not quite to his satisfaction, for the rope sagged a bit, so that he said the loops were lower than on his former ascent. We then took off my belay, and I followed up the crack as quickly as possible, and on to and over my partner. After the long wait these few critical moments of tense excitement and rapid action passed quickly, and I do not really know what

happened, except that I got off my partner's head as soon as might be. I did not need my foot held, but do not know where it went. Probably being slimmer than former climbers, I got farther into the Crack and chimneyed it. I think I faced out, found a small hold for the right hand on the inside wall, and very quickly felt the top of the Flake. I said "I've got it!" and thrilled with the realisation that the thing was virtually done. There probably was not a happier woman in the world at that moment!

Astride the Flake, one found a good belay a few feet along it, pulled in the slack as the loops were taken off the chock-stone, and C.D.F. followed up very quickly. We both walked along the edge of the Flake, very cautiously, and balancing with both hands in the wall. Neither of us coiled any rope meanwhile! Another upright piece of Flake follows ("dead easy"), and a much broader traverse, still going to the left and leading into the corner of broken rocks easily visible from below. Here C.D.F. took the lead again, and soon after we heard voices, and came into sight of two men on Keswick Brothers Climb, who asked with some interest what we were on. "Central Buttress—just got up the Flake," said C.D.F., with careful indifference, as his second appeared.

The traverses to the right again are certainly very thin indeed, especially the second one. The poor handholds and sloping footholds make it just about the limit, and demand most careful negotiation. There is nothing at all to put weight on, and the only method is a slow and cautious change of balance. Nor must the climber take any risk of a slip, for though the stances are good for the other man, I do not remember much belay here.

After that it was comparatively easy. There was a nice slab, and the climb finishes among several small slabs, sort of baby Botterills, of which we selected different ones. We forgot to note the time, but our supporting party at the lunch place said that in about 2½ hours we showed on the skyline, and we joined them again in 3 hours exactly, having come down Moss Ghyll (without help from Professor Collie, by the way!).

Unavoidably, no doubt, there has been a certain amount of criticism and talk of risk taken on this climb, so I am glad

of this chance to say that *no risk whatever* was taken by either climber, but all rules of the game were most carefully and conscientiously observed. Had there been any risk, at any moment, I surely ought to know about it. Moreover, I can honestly say that at no point did I find that the climbing as such gave serious trouble. With fullest recognition of the fact that at every point C.D.F. was the real leader (whatever he may say about it), finding the route, coaching his second, and carrying through the really difficult engineering of the loops over the chock-stone; what remained for me was a perfectly splendid climb throughout, compelling respect for it, and nowhere giving any excuse for carelessness or relaxed attention, yet nowhere either was my small reserve of muscular strength greatly taxed, nor had I ever that feeling of "all out, and the pitch unjustifiable."

I have had much more trouble on humbler climbs. There's that top pitch of Walker's Gully for example! We did it some days later, and all went merrily, with the consequent lack of any detailed memory. At the top pitch we belayed carefully, both in the cave and on the wall, where a loop was duly threaded, but not used, for both climbed it by the backing-up method. This is recommended for tall climbers if I remember rightly, but being 5 feet 4 inches I found myself "stretched" rather literally! The rope, or a knob of rock or both stuck into my back and hurt: it demanded real hard work, such as I hate, and in short, I was glad to get out of it! Then there is the new climb we did on Sgumain (Big Wall Gully we propose to call it), on the second day out after seven months off the rocks, and at the end of a rather weary time. The direct attack on the Gully looked wet and uninviting, so we climbed a pinnacle alongside, and traversed back into it. On the way we encountered a mantelshelf. C.D.F. led up it: I tried to follow. H. V. Hughes, who was third, could only see my boots from his stance. He says he went to sleep, woke up again, and they were still there. However, they are not there now, nor is he, so we all got up somehow in the end, but it was not a star performance, except for the leader. Higher on the same climb there is a pitch leading by a thin but delightful traverse out of a cave, and then back at a higher level over a very narrow ledge, rather

like the "Cat Walk" on Kern Knotts, only going to the right instead of left. I needed just rather more than moral support from the rope there: yet I am sure the climb would go, either by that or the alternate route taken by C.D.F., or perhaps straight from the cave. It is certainly a splendid climb, easily the best we did in Skye, where for the greater part of the time we ridge-walked ecstatically, unencumbered by rope.

For most severes dry rock and rubbers seem almost essential for one to get the whole joy out of it, to raise a good face-climb (which I love more than any gully or chimney) to the full ecstasy given by speedy movement with a good margin of safety. Therefore we proposed to spend a fine Sunday on the Pinnacle slabs. There was a distant rumble, but we judged that the threat had passed, donned rubbers, and started up the slabs from Deep Ghyll to Hopkinson's Cairn. But it had rained the day before: the slabs were not perfectly dry, and one's steps had to be chosen daintily, and with an avoidance of vegetation. Either I could not see the leader, or did not pay attention, and had not read the book of words, for I am told that I did not negotiate the Gangway according to rule, but walked along it upright, with extreme slowness and caution, and thinking it a pretty thin traverse. We had barely finished Herford's Slab when, without warning, a deluge of rain descended. Soaked in a few moments, we retreated hastily round the corner by the bit of Girdle Traverse leading into Steep Ghyll. The rope belayed itself maddeningly round every point of rock. I stuck on the corner ledge, wet to the skin, in rubbers, longing for holds which did not exist; while C.D.F. sat in the Crevasse, a waterfall from Slingsby's Chimney pouring down his neck, and told me depressing stories about that corner. Again some of my camping comrades had played audience, and when we joined them, not only had the rain stopped, but *they* had sheltered and were quite dry! The rocks were not, nor were we,—camp as quickly as possible, and no more slabs that day.

It was hopelessly wet the last day of that summer's holiday. But what then? It *was* the last day, and could not be wasted. The Ennerdale face of Gable was near, and is nearly always wet anyway—an hour passed in Smugglers' Chimney

six years ago has impressed my mind. Engineers' and the Oblique Chimney took some finding in thick mist, but when found we did them thoroughly, in boots, of course. We were not quite wet through in the Engineers', and I enjoyed it; but by the time we got to the Oblique the rain had become heavier and the wind was cold. Soaked through, we went up it and down the Bottle-shaped Pinnacle with a sort of "Well, *that's* ticked off" feeling, and were caught by the rest of the camp an hour later having tea at the farm (the only time that summer—honest!). Yet it was surely "a good day of its kind" as a Scotswoman said to us years ago, a party of youngsters setting off to cross from Glen Lyon to Killin in drenching rain. It is good to have done them under bad conditions, good to know oneself not only a fair-weather climber and friend of the fells. You cannot be that if you elect to camp at Seathwaite most Augusts!

"Blow, winds of Borrowdale and rains downfall:—  
I would go to Borrowdale the last time of all."



## CAMP AT LOCH CORUIISK.

By MISS M. BARKER.

In the late summer of 1924, after an August spent with dogged enjoyment in camp at Seathwaite, a too trustful comrade came with me on a rapid reconnaissance of the west coast of Scotland, in the course of which we managed to get a week-end in Skye. Armed with a Bartholomew half-inch map which we thought could be trusted, and with a compass which we thought, from Coolin tradition, could not, we went straight to Sligachan and over the pass to Glen Brittle,—and the following day, unable to see the Coolins, but fiercely determined to see Coruisk, we went right round the coast by the longest possible route, and made Loch Coruisk about 5.30 p.m. We tried to follow a track along the loch and over the Coolins. The track was not there, the mist was, so were the Coolins, for we felt them. I am not going to detail that adventure; sufficient to say that we spent the six hours of utter dark somewhere on the south side between Bidein and Mhadaidh, carried on in the very grey dawn, and by the aid of our most trusty and commendable compass got down, with the proverbial luck of lunatics, into Coire na Creiche by Tairnlear, reached the farm, ate an enormous meal, and walked back to Portree that same day. Anyhow the point is that we saw Coruisk, and for a year dreams and schemes for a camp there ran through our minds, coloured our correspondence, affected all our intercourse with our fellow campers, and gradually took shape.

The weekly steamer was discussed and rejected as too uncertain. We knew no friendly motor boat nor steam yacht; a fishing boat at Glen Brittle there was not, and one from Soay would need catching. We determined to depend upon ourselves only, and to make a sporting shot at a light-weight camp for just so long as the food we could take with us would hold out.

We founded the enterprise upon the fact that, in the most attractive camping site we had ever seen, where the Scavaig river rushes into the sea, there was a hut, not beautiful, being made of corrugated iron and concrete, nor yet comfortable,

having neither door nor window to shut, and no fireplace; yet a shelter from wind and rain, and one that cut out the need to carry tents. Our hope was that we should find it this year as last; neither too "sore decayed," nor repaired and locked by some owner who had awakened to its value.

Our base camp we made at Glen Brittle with Mrs. McRae, ever kindly and thoughtful, and an empty cottage as an ultimate refuge in time of storm. And well so for us! The storms were not unbearable, though we had two or three pretty tough gales to weather, but the large crate of provisions ordered from Glasgow was three days late, owing to a misunderstanding (and then only retrieved by a heroine who motored over those appalling roads to seek it when she might have been in Coire Lagan), and for those three days we were fed by Mrs. McRae. However it arrived, we fed wisely and *very* well, and planned the Coruisk expedition.

The first move towards it was a reconnaissance in force, by the coast, but not by our laborious and long route of the year before. By keeping well up near the openings into Coire Lagan and Coire Ghrundda, and high also on Garsbheinn, we got a view of Loch Coruisk in about four hours. There some of the party waited, while the four strongest, carrying rucksacks full of food, went down to the loch, found the hut as we had left it, observed good store of drift wood, cached the food, bathed in river or sea according to choice (water f. and s. at our Scavaig Inn!), and got back to the others (and tea) in about two hours.

So far well. A few days later we set out again, six humans and a dog, carrying more food, bedding, and a minimum of camp tackle. That was a glorious day, one of those precious days revealing a beauty indescribable and unforgettable, jewels set in that golden August of 1925. We went up the shoulder of Sgurr Dearg, and had a sample of ridge-walking, arduous enough when all carried heavy packs. We had no rope either, for we had preferred to take out its weight in food, and the plucky little "low geared" Sealyham asked and got a friendly lift now and then. By the summit cairn some of the party rested for an hour after lunch while the more active or less tired got up the Inaccessible Pinnacle most ways (Long and Short routes, up and down: South

Crack: Pigott's Climb, and some uncharted scrambling). Then we made the Banachdich Gap, and plunged down the screes on the Coruisk side. It was a fairly long descent, though cheered by finds of much white heather; and it seemed a long two miles down the side of Loch Coruisk for all its loveliness; and we were glad to make the hut, and to find our cache safe. Near it are the fragments of another structure of which practically nothing is left but a concrete floor and a chimney. There we made a fire and welcome supper, Gertrude and Margaret promptly taking charge of that department with crushing efficiency. The other four tackled the uninviting floor of the hut, which was simply a jumble of concrete blocks and timbers, with a low wall dividing it into two, lengthways. We moved a few blocks, and packed it with bracken and heather, and when the groundsheets and sleeping bags were in place, a small fire lit inside to drive out the midges, and our possessions were arranged all over the place, it began to look like home. Some of the family tried sleeping out: the others reflected that we were in Skye—and turned in. They were awakened later to the tune of rain on the corrugated iron roof, while the imprudent ones made a perilous traverse round the prudent to the inferior sleeping places kindly reserved for them.

So the morning was wet, and the long excursion planned for our one full day at Scavaig was impossible. To ensure another day with comfort more food was necessary,—*not* bully beef (of which we had cached a 7-lb. tin), nor raisins and chocolate, our staple for walking on, but bread or meal. Also by some strange error we had forgotten the tea. What is camp without tea? A relief expedition was arranged, not going all the five hours back to Glen Brittle but to Camasunary, where we understood there was a keeper's cottage. Now strictly speaking we could hardly ask the keeper to help us to camp at Coruisk; moreover it was the Sabbath. However it was a case of try that or give up our extra day, so all the discretion, tact and information discoverable in the party was canvassed. Now there is a certain song about a certain party that once "Came to Camasunary," so we simply collected—and used all the information given in the said song. (H. has an amazing memory for doggerel!).

We set out from the hut six strong, not to mention the dog, but the rain had fallen and the Scavaig River risen. The foraging party of three found the stepping-stones by feeling for them, and found the crossing quite sufficiently exciting. Margaret and Gertrude decided to get supper ready, aided by Patch (who, in point of fact, very promptly produced a rat as her contribution to the food question: now whence a rat in such a place?). Frankland found a patent crossing of his own lower down, fell in with great thoroughness, damaged his ankles, and came near to the supreme tragedy of losing his boots, which he had taken off! He clung to them at the risk of his life, struggled to the farther shore, and after a short interval presented himself to the provision-seekers clad in a wet minimum. However they said that dignity, tact and discretion were needed on this job, and sent him back (and he must have spent the day in bed, or continuing to bathe).

Two hours' easy going brought us to Camasunary, and nobody could have been kinder to the most deserving than Mr. and Mrs. Anderson were to us. We returned by another route, crossing the Sligachan track to Coruisk and giving us a view to the east of the Druim nan Raav; and so returned to the shanty and the rest of the family, well pleased with the day's work, and with time for a bathe before an early supper.

The others had also done some exploring, up the valley and on the lower slopes. All had collected impressions of marvellous views and colour effects, for the day was not so bad after all, and *any* day is worth while there, and worth all the effort and forethought necessary to secure it.

But next day the weather was considerably worse! Yet, since it was the only chance now, some of us determined to try the long walk we had hoped for. No rain was falling at sea level, nor indeed on the ridge to which three of us, C.D.F., H.V.H. and M.M.B. struggled up, but there was a very thick mist which never lifted, and strangely enough, there was a pretty strong wind blowing as well. Even when it rained heavily later in the day the mist never broke. We followed the main ridge for a long way with never a glimpse of a view, and with every bit of rock work as difficult as it well could be

in summer. Hughes (who is a great hand with aneroid and compass) kept our direction most admirably until we got to Sgurr Dearg. We did the Inaccessible One again, finding it very different in boots and wet (that was when it chose to rain its hardest) from the rock we had scrambled on so joyously in sun and rubbers two days before. And then, on the one bit of ridge we had all seen previously, we could not find the Banachdich Gap. We had hoped till then to make the Druim nan Raav and follow it back to the Scavaig River; but the Lordly Ones of the Coolins sat on the Sgurr Dearg cairn and played with us. The compass spun round derisively, justifying all that has ever been said about its unreliability in these parts. We found our own tracks of two days before, and could not follow them into that Gap: we followed a false ridge; we got through or over the main ridge on to the Coruisk side in various places, severally and together, and could not be sure of it, and when sure of it could not make a safe route down in the mist unroped. And in proportion as the case seemed more hopeless, so did C.D.F. become increasingly energetic and determined and rapid of movement! Seven times at least we came back to that summit cairn to try again; and at last—refusing to go down to Glen Brittle as the gods or demons of the Coolin evidently desired, for their amusement to be complete—we went back over Sgurr Dearg and An Stac, and took the Coire Lagan gap into Coire Ruada; and so down the screes again and back to the hut and our waiting family, and the good meal and better welcome they had for us. We were as wet and tired as well could be, but “It’s the best day I’ve ever had,” said one. Well, it was a sporting and happy failure. Meanwhile the others again had a good day of more restricted walking and plenty of bathing. Never was there such a place for bathing. Anyone who can swim at all can do it happily in the warm salt water of Loch Scavaig when the tide is full. You can get into the rush of the Scavaig River and go down its water-chute, and play in the yellow sea-tangle like a seal.

Tuesday morning was glorious again. Coruisk and the Coolins showed us their grand beauty bathed in sunlight, and the salt lochs and little islands were all smiling and sparkling.

Perhaps the Lordly Ones had tried our mettle, and found us not unworthy to walk their hills, and will allow us to go again.

Anyway all our wet things dried nicely, and we evacuated the hut and ate up everything in a grand last meal. Regretfully, and hopefully, we left Loch Scavaig, and returned by the shortest coast route: that is, across the Mad Burn, down on the sea-shore, if the tide is out, and if not, as low as may be: make height quickly on the shoulder of Garsbheinn, and then keep most of it to avoid boggy ground, till it is possible to go straight down to the track from Glen Brittle House to the cottages, where we got a kindly greeting in passing. It is undoubtedly the easiest route when carrying packs.

Camping at Coruisk is a wonderful and arduous experience, the toil it entails rewarded by extreme beauty and a satisfying feeling of achievement; but it is not a place to take novices camping, and should not be tried unless every member of the party is prepared to pull his weight in the team, and to face the certainty of hard going, and the threat of real hardship. It is camping worthy of the name.



## ESK BUTTRESS, SCAWFELL PIKE.

By C. D. FRANKLAND.

Norman Neruda's synopsis of the history of a severe climb applies all the world over, even in our own little playground. At first the Central Buttress of Scawfell was regarded as impossible. This was in Jones's day. Then four brilliant cragsmen showed that its ascent was just possible, but hardly justifiable even for them. Two more ascents maintained its reputation for difficulty indeed, but showed it to be safe. This year Dr. M. M. Barker, a member of the Fell and Rock Club, a most efficient and successful school for young climbers, took only two hours to show that the once redoubtable Central Buttress has become a pleasant summer afternoon's excursion for a lady.

The same fate probably awaits that unrepeatable *tour de force* of Bower, Esk Buttress. Its vague reputation of unjustifiability, which made it a climb of interest for many years, has already been dissipated. During our Easter meet in Eskdale, 1924, a party of us had been looking at the wonderful Flake. (It is an easy trip for a roped party of experience, and worth while when climbing Keswick Brothers'. From the top of Botterill's Slab the Cannon Rock juts out in sight. The way lies by this mark, and a visit is recommended. The rock scenery is very impressive.) As we were passing along Rake's Progress we met Holland and Speaker running over the Scawfell routes in preparation for the recently published guide. Their devotion was inspiring, and when they asked us to undertake the survey of Esk Buttress, we literally jumped at the idea, not through audacity, but through ignorance. Late as it was, with lunch still in the wrong place, we set out forthwith to supply the missing paragraph. Had we known what we were undertaking we might not have started, as we did, at 6 o'clock in the evening.

Esk Buttress is on Dow Crag, and those who have seen this shoulder of Scawfell Pike on the Eskdale side will hardly wonder at the description quoted in Haskett Smith's little book: "polished as marble and 160 perpendicular yards in height." We approached from the direction of Mickledore, passed Broad Crag Tarn and caught sight of the profile as

we rattled down the scree. The tall stem of a giant liner came to my mind. It seemed, silhouetted against drifting white cloud, to be surging headlong forward. It is an exhilarating sight, unless one has lightly offered "to go and do it now."

However, we hurried to the foot, changed into rubbers, and began an exciting struggle with typical Eskdale overhangs, and for two and a half hours we lived, like Pascal, with an abyss on the left.

The two preliminary pitches were soon passed, then a pink and grey wall, flinty and textureless, had to be crossed in order to avoid the first overhang. The holds were too much like the business end of teaspoons turned on edge to be comfortable. They were camouflaged by weather stains so as to be almost invisible, they were lubricated with desiccated mossy matter, but they just served. A long, slanting, upward traverse led to an extensive, but very steep, heather slope. A big stone served for an anchorage, and here Hilton joined me. This ledge can be reached without difficulty from the right, but we were not aware of this at the time.

The next pitch resembles the arrow-marked buttress on the Gillercombe climb both in style and length of run.

A sturdy bush of juniper disputes the start of the fifth pitch, where a quasi-hand traverse is taken on the left. A slightly wider upright crack of Gimmer type, thirty feet long, can be climbed to a return traverse. The landing is small but good. For fifty more feet the difficulty eased, but it was climbing against the clock.

A vertical wall rose up before us with a rock shelter, admirably adapted for a benighted party. We looked coldly past the suggested implication at a twisted crack which offered a strenuous means of scaling the wall. Overboard went all thoughts of style. Some twelve feet up was a Sanger Davies recess. It must be reached somehow. Elbow poking helped when the hands struck work. Then the leg strokes! Had the cliff been submerged we should soon have reached the surface. Brown far below gazed at us fascinated, or convulsed. Breathless, at last I thrust one arm and my head into the recess. Ill-ventilated as it was and unsuited for repose, I hung there as if I loved it, until I had fully



realized the pangs of the pillory. Then I prepared to move on, fighting for breath and a knee-hold near my nose to the amusement of Hilton. It was exasperating, and had Jack indulged in any leg pulling I should have been down on him like a ton of bricks. He tactfully enjoyed the ridiculous spectacle in enraptured silence, while I was privately stimulated by the thought that he also must in his turn claw and kick, swear and sweat up this elongated Whisky Climb. So gasping and heaving like a played fish I clung ventrally to the edge of my O. Pip, rested a while, and, when I could, assured the dubious heavy-weight of the simplicity of the task before him. As I watched his vigorous enjoyment, and heard the emphatic words of praise flow from his lips in ecstatic phrases, I glowed with a post-purgatorial unctuousness. We had earned a short breather.

In recalling the features of the fifty-odd first-class climbs of the English Lake District one is impressed by the wonderful variety of the problems presented by their pitches. On the Napes Ridges the keen interest aroused by the difficulties of the lower part is amply maintained by the height attained in the upper. In Walker's Gully and a few others altitude and severity increase together. These are superlative in quality. They demand a gradual summoning of every strong sinew to its full power, and then a last final tremendous effort of force and control to overcome the almost superhuman difficulties and paralysing exposure of the culminating pitch. Such swift conclusions may be too abrupt for perfect design, of which Scawfell Central Buttress is a model. There the dramatic moment, prepared effectively in the earlier stages, is reached at the Chock Stone, maintained beyond the Traverses at great height, and gradually resolved in the upper reaches. At the summit the intense concentration has entirely relaxed and with a sigh of satisfaction, mingled with regret, your scrambler looks abroad with a fresh outlook. But when darkness threatens it is very thrilling for the climax immediately to precede the curtain, as it does on Esk Buttress, where we sat perplexed and insecure just over a drop of three hundred feet sheer.

There was no way out, except by descending, that we could see. The gangway on the right that offered such promise

when viewed from below appeared inverted at this level into an overhang. The sloping ledge where we sat ran corbel-like around the recess and the square tower beyond, some twenty feet from the summit. The tantalising crack in the corner fully provided with chocks faded just out of reach into a shallow groove, obviously unclimbable, and there was no stance for giving a leg-up.

Although there was no belay Hilton rove a kind of loop around a downward spike, urged himself still farther under and pleasantly prevaricated on the point of security. So I said that I would go along the ledge and see if any hope lay on the open face of the tower, and, as I almost persuaded myself that such was my intention, I realized the misery of plank-walking. Obviously I did not reach even the jumping-off point. At the corner containing the groove I shrank from the edge into another hollow, the hidden solution of the difficulty.

They were shallow hollows and slimy, yet it would be the very limit if one of us could not shin up far enough to reach the first chock, and then, if this were as firm as my faith in it, success was assured. But as I prepared to bridge across the corner I appreciated the globe-trotter's boast that he had done the National Gallery in two hours, and could have beaten that record in nailed boots. Eventually the jammed stone prevented one of the upward squirms from resulting in the usual downward slide. The feet only slipped this time, a lop-sided movement which resulted in an exciting swing and a final struggle worthy of the top pitch of a really good climb.

Even Hilton, strong climber as he is, hardly walked up that pitch, but up he did come in spite of rubbers and slimy rocks. It was hardly nine o'clock as we crept carefully down the scree to our boots and Brown. The absence of a good belay at the foot of the last pitch is the only demerit of the climb, which after all cannot be more than very difficult. All the pitches "went" the first time to a party hardly fresh after a full day. Beginners, I think had better not try it, but hardened sinners, escaping from the Capuan pleasures of the charming and hospitable valley, will be able to extract two or three hours of exhilarating exercise from this fine Buttress,

and return with added eagerness to the particular bathing pool selected on the way up earlier in the day.

We were not so enlightened, for, in spite of the moon doing her best, we stumbled downwards in darkness. The fairy pools had changed to witches' cauldrons. Grotesque shapes flew across the bright disc of the moon, and uneasy shadows swept over the moorland. The chill wind made unfamiliar rustlings, difficult to place without the shock of a stumble. Tired, pleasantly miserable, one wondered if the dale really had a pretty dress for morning.

NOTE.—The Scawfell Guide is out now and the discrepancies between the official description of the Esk Buttress climb and the above account of our struggle up it will be only too obvious. In the *F. & R.C.C. Journal*, Vol. V., p. 202, will be found notes on the first ascent under the heading "Climbs Old and New." As far as the "waiting room near the Vertebral Slabs on the left," the two routes are identical, but at this point our enthusiasm apparently took us up the thin overhanging crack on the left. From this point of divergence neither Hilton nor I can recognise any feature in the notes, which have been followed by the Editor of the Guide, except the cairn to which ours was certainly the shortest and most direct way. Whether it is less severe can only be ascertained by another visit, and we are longing for an opportunity to compare the original line of ascent with our exciting variation. Meanwhile our sympathies are with Holland.



## JUNIPER GULF.

By G. E. GRIFFITHS.

[Reprinted from *The Gristone Club Journal*, by kind permission.]

The writer had intended to launch this article in the grand manner with a discourse on the psychology of pot-holing. Much vain scribbling brought him no philosophy, and our justification before the multitude must be left to abler pens. To the derision of the sedentary, pavement-haunting crowd we are indifferent; the scorn of the lordly alpinist we bear with due humility. Our efforts win us no tinpots, nor silver rose-bowls, nor couches among the rushes of Valhalla, yet, when we climbed up from the uttermost depths of Juniper out into the misty dawn, we felt we had not lived in vain.

It was some time in the bitter summer of 1922 that Wood, Porter and I carried our first ladder up Clapdale, and threading the Allotment morasses came finally to Juniper Gulf, "90 feet." Using the stream passage we made a moist descent to the pool and mounting the scree bank gazed into our first deep, dark limestone fissure, luring us, like a veritable Aladdin's cave, into the unknown. We scrambled down and soon found that converging walls stopped progress in the fissure bed, but at a higher level convenient ledges led us inwards for about 40 yards to a widening of the fissure. Having neither rope nor ladder we did not attempt to descend, our honour as novices being satisfied by the discovery of new possibilities in an old pot-hole.

More ladders were acquired, but the elders in their wisdom decreed that experience must first be gained in charted caverns before venturing into the unexplored, a cautious policy that led us down the rolling scree of Rift. Of these we soon had more than enough and shaking the Allotment ooze from our feet, another week-end saw us running up and down the pleasant little pots of Newby Moss, cheered by blue skies and white walls gleaming in the tardy sunshine.

In the following year fate led us into Ribblesdale and thence to G.G., where our operations were unhappily curtailed.

1924, we swore, should see the fall of Juniper, and when the summer came, wetter than ever, Platt and Wood saw to

the transport of five ladders and appropriate ropes to the scene of operations. This in June, and the bottom was not reached till August 16th!

The first descent was by a very weak party on a day so wet that even the second pitch was left alone. The following Sunday saw a ladder actually taken into the fissure and the second pitch descended.

This proved to be a steep and very narrow chimney of 40 feet in the lower portion of which the ladder helped us but little. There, surface water has scooped out twin shafts where for a few yards the pot-holer can resume the dignified upright position of the man and bathe his feet in the limpid pools on the spacious limestone floor.

But the fissure carried on straight—and strait—and soon cuts down into a lower bed. The party took a horizontal line with Hollingshead struggling gamely ahead. (Should he become seized in a tight spot the catastrophe does not involve the entombment of the whole party.) This lower stage proved much stiffer than the upper storey. Plain crawling soon gave way to back and knee, then to hip and thigh, neck and neck, finally breaking down into weird contortions that can only be described as rump and elbow.

At length we came to a wider portion of the fissure which was passed by descending for a few yards and climbing back to our original level. Below us we could now hear the roar of falling water and after a crawl of fifteen yards we found ourselves gazing from a charmed casement out on to perilous depths forlorn.

(This was the point reached by a Y.R.C. party in 1923.)

"Ladders" was now the cry, but answer came there none. Alas, the two ladders we needed had somehow been forgotten in the ardour of descent and were still nestling snugly in a surface sink. We harked back a little way and chimneyed down to the water in the vain hope that a gradual line of descent might be found, but the stream took an uncompromising plunge into a shaft both deep and wide and nothing remained but to squirm back by the way we had come.

The following Saturday two men conveyed three ladders to the head of this third pitch, taking three hours—much time being lost at the second pitch.

On Sunday the third pitch was duly descended, proving to be 80 feet to the landing. We now found ourselves in less confined circumstances. The fissure was here about two yards wide, with sheer walls vanishing into the gloom above, behind, and before. About 15 feet below our landing the stream was gurgling along in a narrow cleft roofed over by jammed boulders and silt. The whole place gave no impression of finality. Traversing upstream we came, in about 20 yards, to the floor of the waterfall shaft, a roughly circular chamber several yards in diameter, whence we followed the stream down a narrow winding passage under the bridge and came in about 40 yards to the head of the fourth pitch, the stream diving into the wide shaft through a hole in the right wall of our rock trench two or three yards short of the end. We had no plumb-line but our mathematicians estimated the fall of stones to be not more than 80 feet.

The next offensive was planned for August Bank Holiday and, as before, a Saturday fatigue party deposited two more ladders at the head of pitch three. On Sunday a huge and rashly confident party swarmed down and the new ladders were quickly piloted to the front line trench.

They were let down the third pitch to the 80 foot landing and thence clear of the bridge on the downstream side to a point only a few yards short of the head of the fourth pitch. A spike of rock on the true right, about eight feet up and a few yards from the brink, formed a good belay and the ladders were soon ready, the dry fork of the passage being used. The writer was then lowered over.

After twenty feet the stream rejoined me, dousing my glim, and leaving me dependent on an aged and feeble electric torch. Down and down I went between gleaming black walls, feeling like a fly in a beer bottle. My torch would reveal no landing of any kind in the pit below, even from the bottom of the ladders. In desperation I let fall a precious candle and counting the seconds, came to the conclusion that we had underestimated the depth by 60 or 70 feet. Blowing two vigorous and heartfelt blasts, I quickly rejoined the main body, and after Falkingham had confirmed my report the ladders were hauled up and a discomfited party crept away.

That night a council of war was held. Interest seemed to be on the wane, and doubt was felt as to the possibility of raising effective parties in the coming weeks. Further, there was obviously no time to procure more ladders and complete the descent on Monday. Five men only were staying on and despite our Rift Pot experiences we decided to make an attempt by using the ladders from the third pitch.

On Monday therefore, Wood, Robinson, Moulson and I descended, leaving Elliott to mount guard on the surface. Wood and Robinson stayed at the head of the third pitch and lowered the ladders to Moulson and me. We soon had the four ladders hanging down the unknown. So far good, but when the descent was undertaken trouble met us halfway. The joining between the first and second ladders which had been hanging on the third pitch for some weeks, was found to be decidedly groggy. Nevertheless progress was continued past the second joint till stopped by a tangle in the life-line. Eventually the man on the ladders had to return and it was decided that the defective joint must be made good before further descents were dreamed of.

The writer thought he had had some experience of tough propositions in the way of ladder lifting but he was quickly disillusioned. Every rung had to be fought for, the ladders jamming obstinately after each heave. The knowledge that the alternative to the ladders coming up was our stopping down, kept us at it and after much gasping and groaning and pausing for breath the first ladder was recovered. The idea of mending the defect, lowering the ladders again, descending, climbing back, and then *hauling them up* again, seemed to have lost its charm. The question of a trip down the three still available was vetoed also, and we carried on hauling in.

Soon it was the turn of Wood and Robinson for a little hard labour. Eventually our communications were restored, and it was in a spirit of thankful humility that we allowed Elliott to haul us to the surface.

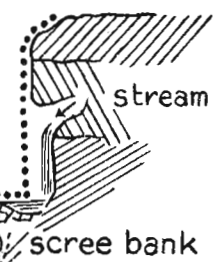
That night *la défailisme* was rampant and with one accord we swore we had had enough of squirming and heaving in the darkness.

S.S.E.

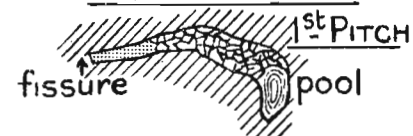
MOOR SURFACE

N.N.W.

SECTIONAL ELEVATION



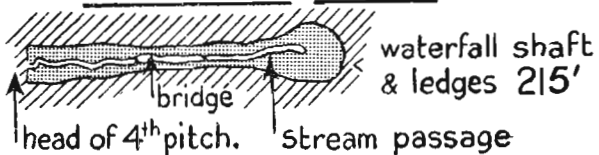
PLAN SECTION



PLAN SECTION 2<sup>nd</sup> PITCH



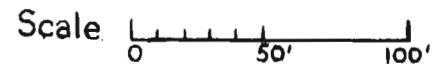
PLAN SECTION 3<sup>rd</sup> PITCH



# JUNIPER GULF

THE GRITSTONE CLUB

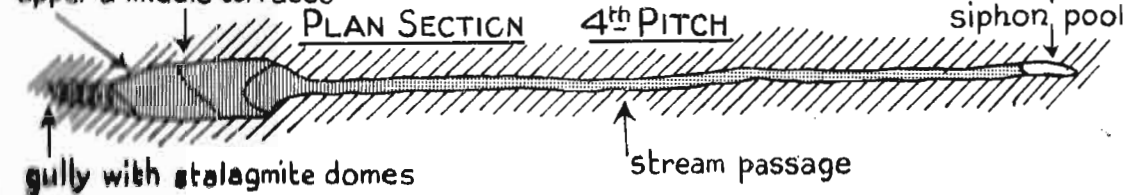
Route shewn by black dots.



G.E.G. Sept. 1924.

upper & middle terraces

PLAN SECTION 4<sup>th</sup> PITCH



420'

405'

←135'

←90'

bridge 210'

stream entrance

But during the following week, to each one there seemed to come a still small voice telling of the hard work done and of the folly of retreat which would render it all of no avail. Going forth to rekindle flagging spirits, each found his fellows of like mind, and Juniper's fate was sealed.

On Sunday, a party of three carried two ladders from Clapham Station to the head of the third pitch, the previous time for the underground work being halved.

For the benefit of future parties our experience in Juniper Gulf was that ladders should be rolled as tightly as possible and secured with extra cord beyond possibility of shaking loose. [The Gritstone men were using the very heavy 50 feet Government Surplus ladders, not the light Botterill ladders.—ED.]. At the second pitch it is possible to traverse forward from the top, till a ladder can be lowered, clear of obstruction, to the man half way who can in turn traverse forward till a clear drop is obtained. The ladders for the fourth can be conveniently lowered into the waterfall shaft from a point a few yards short of the casement.

Once more the fiery cross went round and the night of August 16th saw the final onslaught. In this Wood, Taylor, Hollingshead, Falkingham and I took part, going down at 10 p.m. Stewart and Elliott waited above. To the latter no small share in the credit of our ultimate success is due. Debarred by recent illness from actual descent, he answered every call to fill the tedious but essential role of watch dog, his presence making the working party one effective stronger every time.

The party made rapid progress to the head of the fourth pitch, Taylor, well wrapped up and supplied with light literature, being left at the third. All was soon in order for descent, special attention being given to the ladder joints. At a point about 130 feet down, a narrow ledge was encountered upon which the lower ladders had caught. Dislodging the ladders a landing was reached at 155 feet. This was a narrow sloping ledge bounding a farther pit of twelve feet. Stepping away from the water, we were able to light candles and admire the scenery. We found ourselves in an impressive shaft chamber of the usual elliptical shape, reminiscent of the chamber of Hunt Pot. Accurate measurements were not

taken, but we estimated the chamber proper to be about 30 yards long and seven yards at its widest point.

The floor of solid rock slopes steeply in three terraces, our landing being made on the lower corner of the middle terrace. Another and larger stream enters by a mighty fall striking the upper and middle terraces. The fissure at the upper end is fairly dry and was climbed to a height of 60 or 70 feet above the bottom of the chamber by an easy chimney followed by a series of stalagmite domes. Compass bearings taken on previous expeditions had shown that the fissure from the surface to the head of the fourth pitch lies in one plane bearing  $145^{\circ}$  true. Our compass on the final trip had been forgotten, but by observation on a light at the stalagmite domes taken from the top of the ladders we judged that there was no deviation from the original plane.

From the big chamber, however, the stream runs away in the reverse of its original direction. We followed down past a series of pools and curious bridges of solid rock to a final deep and stagnant pool covered with froth, which we take to be the finish of the pot-hole. High overhead the walls were gleaming with patches of foam indicating a definite obstruction to the watercourse at this point, about 100 yards from the chamber.

The only stalactites noticed anywhere were some brown but ornate formations in the final stream passage, though white pillar-like markings on the walls of the great chamber enhance its appearance.

The second stream which enters the main chamber is undoubtedly one which comes from Simon Fell, and disappears a few score yards south-west of Juniper Gulf. It can be heard travelling underground for some distance, and during the salvage work an entrance to the stream passage was forced, but it was reported that it would not "go."

At 5.30 a.m. a tired but contented party climbed out to the wan daylight. A blue grey mist lay over the fells, but in a few moments Penyghent came looming through the cloud, huge against a red dawn.

## GINGLING POT, FOUNTAINS FELL.

By J. HILTON.

In the summer of 1923, on July 21st, to be precise, our ever active President, E. E. Roberts, enlisted the services of W. V. Brown and myself for a pot-holing expedition near Horton-in-Ribblesdale. The inducement of something new to be explored was not lightly to be passed by, now that the supply of novelty among the big pots would appear to be exhausted, and the possibilities of Gingling Pot seemed very attractive as we journeyed northward together.

Gingling Pot is situated on the lower western slopes of Fountains Fell in a little dip about 200 yards east of a shooters' hut. We went round by car from Horton with five light ladders plus ropes, which seemed all too heavy before we had completed their transport across the moor from the road, a distance of about a mile. The entrance to the Pot is insignificant, a little hollow on the bank of the gill, with ferns growing thickly on one side. The water no longer enters here, the stream disappearing round a bend higher up under a bedding plane where it cannot be followed.

After a very strenuous time carrying tackle, bathing in the canal-like passage and accounting for three pitches we had to abandon further effort, the party not being strong enough, and although we were assured of good work ahead I know that, privately, Brown and I hoped to put off further visits as long as possible. Like all good pot-holing enthusiasts we do not like to abandon, so early as is entailed by the deep water of the canal passage, our cherished hopes of keeping dry. We gladly dumped our tackle by the wall on the roadside and hurried directly across the moor back to Horton, reaching the Golden Lion about 10 p.m., very very tired, wet and hungry,—to do thorough justice to a hot supper.

It is appropriate at this point to insert the first of two warnings which I feel bound to offer. It is unwise to drop the President's only electric lamp on the hard road at the outset of the journey. But if you should be so careless as to do so, discreetly move off a few steps, as the delinquent next time may not be so readily forgiven as when I did it. . . . .

A year passed before we paid a second visit to Gingling Pot, and the miseries of the Canal had been almost forgotten whilst the bubbling and gurgling of the water through the tortuous passages lingered in the memory as the sound of human voices speaking. Thus on Saturday, June 28th, 1924, the spirit of adventure overcame the dislike of that early plunge. Besides, we pictured with a joyous and unholy glee the feelings of the reinforcements lured thereinto by the silver tongue of our President, with such phrases as "A delightful pot" and "Great possibilities." R. F. Stobart, H. P. Devenish and J. W. Wright joined us at the Golden Lion in what we had come to regard as the inevitable pot-holing weather, pouring rain. Under such conditions the good dinner which received our undivided attention was a sound proposition before our all-night expedition.

Meanwhile the rain ceased, and we left at about 7 p.m. by road as before. Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Devenish accompanied the party in the motors, but they returned to Horton over the wet and misty moor, leaving us to make for the pot-hole.

At 8 p.m. we dropped a ladder down the first open pitch of 24 feet. Boulders near by furnished the belay. Brown and I went down and received the tackle from above. We were quickly followed by the rest of the party and the loads were sorted out. From the foot of the ladder there is a climb of 8 feet to a sloping floor leading down W.N.W. for 25 feet to a "manhole." The drop here is 8 feet to the floor of a passage, which at first glance appears to be blocked by boulders, but after a crawl over these a long passage can be entered where the water appears for the first time. This is the Canal. The water is almost waist deep for thirty yards. It is dammed by débris, which Roberts (water-works dept.) attacked on our first visit and so succeeded in lowering the water-level by several inches. The joy of this section is that twenty yards of wading brings one to a stout rock curtain descending to within 12 inches of the surface of the water.

As each member of the party negotiated this obstacle by first passing his light through the narrow space, he delayed as little as he could, and when through with it, prepared in cold delight to watch the shrinking hesitation and unavoidable immersion of the next victim. The subtlest contortions failed

to obviate the clammy coldness which crept up the chest as the head scraped the fringe of the screen. It seemed to be the thing to counterfeit the calm indifference of an early saint, which deceived nobody.

A turn to the right took us out of the Canal. We followed a small stream to a belfry chamber. Drift material still clung to the roof, a sign which made one consider the weather outside. The water escaped through a narrow rift window and fell 12 feet into another similar chamber, where it formed a pool two feet deep. We found a good ladder belay up on the left of the chamber and descended. Fortunately by skirting the pool we were able to crawl below thick stalactites along a bedding plane.

Thence we followed a twisting passage so narrow that we were forced to move sideways with our several burdens carried chiefly on the head as the easiest way. Above the head level a recess runs along one side two feet high and about a yard deep. The whole of the roof here is adorned by marvellous designs of precipitated calcareous deposit bearing fringes of pipe stems. In the reflected light so many burdened figures traversing the picturesque passage in the bowels of the earth called up visions of smugglers and other romantic figures, or the Forty Thieves entering their cave.

After a hundred yards of the crab-like progression a small chamber opens out. It is festooned with heavy fin-shaped curtains of stalactite shading from pink to black, a most interesting formation. Here we called a halt for refreshments and a brief rest, the time being 9.30 p.m. Next a double right angled turn to right and to left is encountered. Movement is still further complicated by a deepening of the bed between the very smooth walls; the descent is really awkward and movement painfully constricted. Climbing out again is even worse, but there is no easing off when another rift window opens on a twenty-four foot pitch. The narrow, twisted top of the pitch overhangs a smooth, water-worn chimney which widens into a bell-shaped rift.

On the previous visit I was lowered into this on a rope and laboriously hauled out again by Roberts and Brown, and then we had to retreat. This time we used one ladder on the pitch from a belay five feet up, and Roberts prospected. He



succeeded in lowering the level of the pool below two feet by releasing a jam. Stobart and I followed. Then comes the most difficult movement in the cave. The rift continues and for twenty feet one worms out, and down a similar distance, head first. The leaders were so very tightly wedged during the passing of this place that it was deemed unwise for the more burly of the party to attempt to follow, and Brown, Wright and Devenish agreed to stay and bring us out on our return. In fact so narrow was the chimney at the top of the ladder that Brown and Wright were unable to descend, while both Roberts and Stobart found the greatest difficulty in returning.

Roberts led on. A ladder was tailed through. We were then rewarded for our persistence by discovering beyond the climb (where we lost the water) a most delightful fairy-like grotto, richly hung with white and coloured stalactites. Even the floor of the grotto, formed by the walls of the rift almost meeting, was covered by brown stalagmite. But, best of all, the rift at the further end opened out above a large chamber and there was room for appreciation of what was proving to be a most exciting and enchanting exploration.

Using a massive stalagmite as belay for a full thirty-six feet of ladder we descended into the chamber, which proved to be about fifty feet high and long by thirty wide, like Aladdin in triplicate, wondering what further discoveries might be before us. The far end of the chamber to the north-west was filled almost to the roof with a peculiar looking steep slope of mud and boulders, reminding one of a scree slope. This did not promise much, nor look too safe, so we turned to the south-east, and climbing over a huge boulder found ourselves in a sloping, wet, and muddy tunnel about 7 feet high and twenty feet long. It finished dead as if it had been mined. In the tunnel we saw a daddy-long-legs alive. This place looked like the end and we clambered back into the chamber. Wishing for a less disappointing finish we crossed to the mud slope again and decided as a forlorn hope to attack it.

Stobart led the way. He kicked steps in the mud and reached the top, where he hailed us to come up and admire a magnificent giant stalactite. It was quite six feet long, light brown and tapering from seven or eight inches thick

to a point. Roberts and I hastened with caution to the flat top of the mound. The last man disturbed some boulders at the side, which crashed down, to the alarm of the supporting party. We reassured them by answering shouts, but almost immediately there was a terrific roaring sound which reverberated just as if the stream had broken through into the passages and was rushing over the pitch behind. We all three looked questioningly at one another and set up a loud shout. The noise of the rushing water ceased as if by magic. This was one better than Canute. We learned afterwards that the other three had been beating a tattoo upon their chests in an endeavour to warm themselves whilst waiting at their chilly post.

In front of us was a straight wall of rock pierced by a large "gateway." The wall and the roof were panelled out in squares by lines two or three inches wide, of dazzling white stalactite crystal, giving quite an oriental effect. On the wall also, particularly round the gateway were the most strangely formed pure white stalactites that we had ever seen, several inches long, standing out from the wall but twisted and turned in all directions. Some turned upwards at the end in a right angle, with the effect of a hawthorn, and seemed to indicate strong and varying air currents which may have caused effects so weird and grotesque.

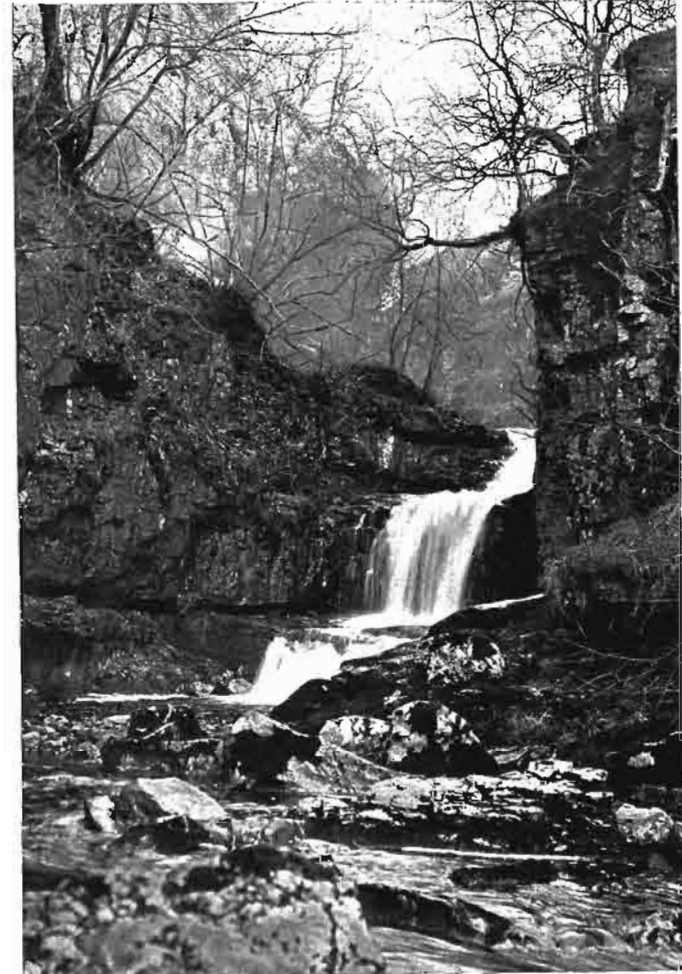
Passing through the gap we found ourselves in a square chamber, ten feet each way. The walls and roof here were also panelled, and the floor was covered by stalagmitic carpet, softly brown in hue. On the left was a sink-like trough, closed by deposit as if frozen solid. One pipe-stem stalactite was three feet long and thickened about a foot from where it joined the floor. There were also many disjointed specimens. Near the centre was a little dark coloured mound surmounted by a heavy mass of white stalagmite, which in the dim light took the form of an image, and gave this small, final chamber the appearance of a shrine.

We returned, full of high spirits at so successful a termination of our exploration, to the top of the thirty-seven foot pitch, where Devenish joined us. He went down and paid a visit to the shrine, then we collected the tackle and prepared to leave the cavern.

The difficult passage at the fourth pitch had been traversed on the return journey after a desperate headlong struggle, when it was discovered that a new rope had been left behind. In retrieving this I managed to jam my boot and had to be rescued by Stobart, who at the risk of jamming himself descended head first with difficulty until my foot was within his reach. Whereupon he drew a most murderous looking dirk and severed, as a surgeon with his knife, to which he was asked not to resort except it proved to be the only remedy, my bootlace.

Wright and Brown were very cold when Roberts joined them at 12.30 a.m., and Wright went on with Roberts. It was 1.30 a.m. when Stobart and I reached Brown with the last of the tackle. We hurried along to the Black Stalactite Chamber to finish off our provisions in company with Devenish. We were glad that we had followed the sound advice of our President acquired in Gaping Ghyll during a forty hours imprisonment and passed on to us, that there are two essentials for pot-holing equipment, ample food and plenty of warm clothing. They came in very useful in Gingling Pot.

We continued on our way, and everything went well until we were making the passage of the Canal. Brown had already repeatedly complained of the strong smell of acetylene. I reassured him by blaming an old lamp which had been left inside the entrance of the pot-hole, but while I was passing with a rucksack and a candle in one hand under the ducking-grill already described, there was a loud explosion, so terrible as to be heard by Roberts far away at the first pitch. All the lamps and candles were extinguished by the rush of air. By extreme good fortune I escaped with the loss of a few eyelashes and ventured to look round. There was the sack floating on the water and shooting out flames from its mouth. A dash was made and the sack was trodden under water. Explanations followed. It appeared that a member of the party had thoughtfully brought a large tin of carbide into the pot, and as thoughtfully maintaining army tradition had handed it over to be carried in another's rucksack. The lid had come off and the water did the rest. Of the two useful lessons learned in Gingling Pot, this is the second:— Only a little extra carbide should be imported.



*Photo by P. Robinson.*

LING GILL.

There was a dense cloud of fire damp, through which two members of the party, including the thoughtful one, I believe, had to pass. No matches could be struck but an electric lamp saved the situation at the awkward curtain. When all were through we hurried quickly away to the manhole. The conquered cave here gave us a sort of dying kick, for as we struggled through the narrow opening a stream of cold water hit each in turn at the back of the neck, careered merrily down the back and escaped but slowly at the boots. Steady rain and not the hoped for sunshine, greeted us at 4 a.m. on Sunday morning as we emerged. There had been heavy rain during the night and everything was shrouded in a blanket of cold, wet mist.

It was a cold job hiking the tackle along to the wall to dump it into the cars, but we were soon speeding, very tired and clammy, past the flooded Ribble towards the Golden Lion and bed. Sleep was needed by all, but it was rather premature for the driver of one of the cars to take forty winks on the way down. However a friendly wall sounded a harsh, but kindly reveille on his mud-guards, and all survived to revel in hot baths, and so to bed.

Sunday morning was spent watching the rain fall from the comfortable shelter of the hotel. Heavy showers accompanied us on our afternoon stroll, but we finally left for home in glorious sunshine. A derisively blue sky indicated a delightful might-have-been. Truly ours is a wonderful climate to which one becomes resigned or inured.

Two ropes left at the foot of the first pitch were recovered by Roberts and Wright the following week-end, after the most definite evidence had been tendered that they must have reached the surface.

If some future party can effectively open up the dam and drain the canal, this interesting, big and delightful pot-hole will become a more comfortable expedition.

[The entrance was found by Barstow in 1910, and the first reconnoitring visit was made the following March.—Ed.]

## CLEARING UP IN GAPING GHYLL.

The preparations for the Gaping Ghyll Meet of 1924 commenced on 25th May, when three men drove out to Clapham, and sorted the tackle which had remained undisturbed at Clapdale for two years, lighting that glorious bonfire of rubbish which is remembered with so much joy.

A party slept at Buckley's caravan the following Friday, intending to camp next night at G.G. Going up in the rain on Saturday, they worked all day under depressing conditions, setting up tent, gantry, and windlass, which were sledged up by Mr. Lund, the new tenant of Clapdale.

Mr. Lund was good enough to give us the key of the empty house, and as the rain grew worse the news came up that Buckley and Robinson were at work there on the dinner. The writer has seldom felt more acute sense of real comfort than when the door closed on the storm, and he stepped in before a roaring fire, ate a magnificent dinner, and later lay down to sleep on bare boards with a solid roof overhead.

The storm of June 1st was even worse up till three o'clock. Fell Beck was in stupendous flood, and the prospect for Whitsuntide not encouraging. Burrow and his men were well satisfied to get the engine into the tent, set it up and test its running. It was a sign of changed times that all the party of eight returned by motor to Leeds (where there had been nearly two inches of rain).

No less than seventeen men had settled down in camp by dark on Friday, 6th June. The first group came up from Clapdale in the early afternoon through heavy rain, but on the whole the day was not bad, nor was Fell Beck in flood.

Saturday morning opened misty and showery. The delayed task of putting the engine and the tackle in position was completed and the dam built. It was decided that the outlook was not promising enough to justify putting down more than an exploring party and a few others. The orders were to be prepared for a long detention below.

At 1.15 p.m. the President (E. E. Roberts) walked the ledge to the gantry to commence the task of clearing up the doubtful points in the exploration of Gaping Ghyll.

With a parting message, "See you on Monday, perhaps," and starting without a swing, he went down without touching the rock.

Lowden was down early, and was set to mining in the Lower Letterbox on the West Slope, with the tools he had prepared. Here the hard limestone proved very soon tantalizingly intractable.

At half-past three the miners were withdrawn, and the President, Frankland, Lowden, Brown, and Hilton proceeded to the Great Hall in the South Passage, to examine Devenish's discovery of 1922. An alcove was noticed high up on the west wall, and Frankland, unable to reach it, kept right, got into a bedding plane near the roof, and came down into the alcove (Devenish's route) whence he managed to get down with assistance. Meanwhile two men kept left of the alcove, entered the bedding plane at another point, came straight ahead to a rift, climbed down 15 feet to the floor, and walked off left, followed by the others. Footprints in the mud showed this was an old route, which is in fact shown on the full survey and has been used as an alternative to climbing the mud bank in the Great Hall.

Reaching the ordinary route of later years, the two light ladders and other burdens were brought along from the Great Hall, the Mud Pot was passed, and the steep slope into the Stream Chamber descended to the stream, which disappears under a gigantic boulder. Horn once crawled along the stream to a hole behind. The hole was found but the connection was not made again.

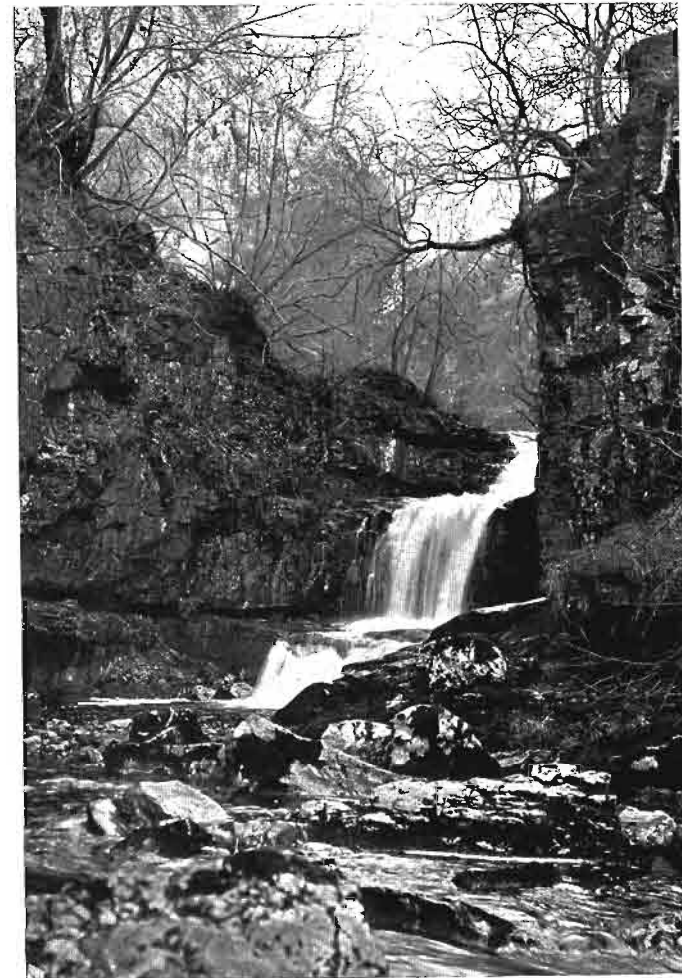
At the lowest point of the Stream Chamber, opposite the cliff which limits the steep slope of entrance, there was known to be a hole apparently unexplored. Parsons was once lowered into a hole somewhere near, but found no way out. There is also a mysterious sentence on p. 208, *Vol. II.*, *Y.R.C.J.*,—"another way was found leading back into the Stream Chamber by way of the mud pot"—on which no light could be thrown.

The hole referred to was descended by ladder into a large chamber and the party went down thirty or forty feet to its lowest point alongside a wall under which the stream,

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LING GILL.

*Photo by P. Robinson.*

covered with boulders, could be heard. The water could not be reached at the bottom, but was reached through the boulders at two other points. There is no passage.

The President had hitherto imagined that the hole through which they had come was at the bottom of the Mud Pot, but he was soon convinced by Brown's appearing at the top that what had been done was simply to explore the Mud Pot, which is separated from the Stream Chamber.

Certain other hopeful places having been drawn blank, return was begun. Following the old route into the rift, two men crawled from the end of it into the alcove (which appears to be a new bit) and roped down into the Great Hall.

The Main Chamber was reached at 8 p.m., with the intention of getting back to the surface as soon as possible, or of putting in more mining at the Lower Letterbox until the hour appointed, 10 p.m., at which the campers were to expect us. The main chamber was decidedly dark and very noisy, there was no reply on the telephone, for we were not expected, and in a very short time the clouds of spray and the appalling roar told us that the heavens had opened above and that we might be in for another Gaping Ghyll Flood. By 9 p.m. there was quite a good second edition of what went on in the magnificent chamber during the adventure of 1909, and we gave up hope of getting out for many hours. The only one who did not seem to like the prospect was the man who had been down in 1909. He had apparently persuaded his friends that it was rather an enjoyable experience and they seemed to be looking forward to it. Anyhow, we were much better fitted out for the night than were people fourteen years before.

No mining was done; we hung about watching and listening and marvelling from various standpoints till the spray filled the chamber; then we retreated into the South Passage. At 10 p.m. came a ring on the telephone, and though at first nothing could be heard, Hilton presently got in touch, and learnt that the rain had stopped. Very soon came the message that the water was falling and that they would get us up that night. Down below the improvement was not noticeable, and this was received with incredulity, but a supply of food with much joy.

Repeated assurances next came down that the ascent should be possible, but the President refused to allow the attempt on account of the darkness until there was a perceptible slackening of the waterfall.

At 10.30 p.m. Frankland risked it, with one of the two electric lights which saved the situation, and was slowly hauled away into the blackness. It was a great relief when the 'phone announced that he had had a good journey. So excellent is the present lead down the open shaft that only at one stage had he received any weight of water. The guy line was slacked out some feet as directed, and Lowden, of whom these hours are one of our most happy memories, went up next. The awe-inspiring note of the fall changed little, but by the time Brown was starting, the spray and the currents of air had altered sufficiently for the spare man to stand right out in the chamber in sight of the men at the chair without getting very wet. The fourth man reached the top at 12.15 a.m., and Hilton, the last, twenty minutes later. The change in the fortunes of the party as they recalled waiting in the bo'sun's chair at the bottom, and saw the raging beck held up by the dam, seemed magical.

Sunday opened with rain and flood. The ground got so soft it was necessary to pave the entrance to the catering tent and its neighbourhood with flat stones. The afternoon was better and the dam was repaired when the flood sank. At seven o'clock the camp was wrapped in mist, and dinner was eaten in the tents. For the patience with which Robinson and his assistants faced the discomforts of preparing that breakfast and dinner the Ramblers have the greatest admiration and gratitude.

Monday fortunately allowed of a fair day's work, though hampered by haste under the uncertain conditions of weather. At 10 a.m. began the descent of a survey party, Horn, Mallinson, Barran junior, and C. E. Burrow. Burrow had run the engine all Saturday, and was replaced by Lowden, who sat by it all Monday and ran it with such brilliant success that in well over 30 runs it only faltered once.

They were followed by Fred Booth, Devenish, Hollis, Richardson, Seaman and Gaunt. The exploring party now turned miners. The eleventh man was down at 12.50, and

at three the Lower Letterbox was broken into. A narrow vertical fissure ran magnetic N. for fifty feet and then became excessively narrow. Frankland and Hilton descended fifty feet in the fissure but chock-stones prevented them reaching water.

Meanwhile Devenish and Richardson had been directed to enter the West Chamber and thoroughly investigate the Fireplace Chimney at the far end, as it was the only possible place where the lost passage reported by the Y.S.A. could be. With this information they found the Lost Passage obvious high up and traversed from the Chimney into it. It runs a short distance to the head of a deep canal, 20 feet down, A ledge eight feet above the water can be reached, and the canal is undoubtedly that ending in the Canal Chamber.

While the ascents of the large number below were going forward, the miners moved off to a dangerous looking hole at the foot of the East Slope, a few yards from where the water of the fall disappears into the floor. From the end of a short passage a ladder climb of 35 feet led into the W. end of a chamber 90 feet by 8 feet. There was a steep ascent at the east end, and a choked passage at the west. It was just possible to reach a stream in the latter.

This was a disappointment, but believing this cavern below the level of the Main Chamber to be a new discovery, the mining party, after removing their tackle, stood in a group and gave three cheers. An avalanche of stones from the East Slope immediately fell on to the place where the man holding the life line had sat, and almost covered up the hole.

This was at six p.m., and by nine everything had been sent up and the winding completed. The last man, W. V. Brown, unknotted the guy line and wrapped it round the rail so that it could be released by a pull from above. The engine was bringing him up famously when there was a sharp blast, "Stop," from below. A pause, and then "Lower." It was feared that the guy line might have come loose and given him a nasty swing against the wall. Back he went, all the way, and was brought up again slowly by the hand windlass. He had noticed the wire rope and guy line diverging, and found the wire rope had caught over a projection. The only way to release it was to go back and shake it from the bottom.

The Gaping Ghyll expedition of 1924 came in the trying two years when every pot-hole expedition was carried out in the teeth of, or seriously hampered by, heavy rain. Though only a day and a half were available, its success was extraordinarily complete, clearing up all the doubtful points, and leaving a clean sheet for the next explorers. Hastings reports that the East Slope Chamber has been several times descended, although the fact has generally escaped attention or been forgotten.

Most of the men had a wet time, packing up, on Tuesday morning and the four who remained spent a wet afternoon in the tents. Not until they left Clapdale Hall on Wednesday did the weather come out gloriously fine.



## IN MEMORIAM.

## JAMES ANSON FARRER.

By the death of Mr. James Anson Farrer the Club has lost one, who if not actively associated with us in our outdoor activities was so much in sympathy with us as to fully deserve the distinction of Honorary Membership.

The home at Clapham ("Ingleborough") to which Mr. Farrer had the good fortune to succeed has charms of no common kind. A house of great dignity, full of the family treasures of several generations, stands in a garden famous through all the country, just where the limestone slopes begin to rear themselves into the mountain mass of Ingleborough.

Ingleborough (or Clapham) Cave, the chief treasure of Mr. Farrer's domain, was first explored by his predecessors while Gaping Ghyll, which also lies in the estate, was first descended by M. Martel in 1895, Mr. Farrer affording him every possible assistance, as indeed he has done on every occasion when the Ghyll has been descended by our members.

His tastes were literary and he was an author of some standing. While outwardly the most diffident of men, he had in matters of belief and opinion great strength of character and he was never afraid to defend by tongue and pen an unpopular cause.

J.J.B.

## ARTHUR SHERIDAN LOWDEN.

I approach the task of writing something in memory of "Ted" Lowden with considerable diffidence. A sportsman who undertook his expeditions for the sheer joy of achievement, he gave the impression he did not like his doings recorded in print. Then, too, although more than a year has gone since his death I still feel his absence very keenly, as all his more intimate friends in the Club still do.

No doubt our first meeting was at Almescliff, where he was a regular visitor, and was soon a very skilful climber. He made a complete descent of Alum Pot in 1922 with us under



ARTHUR SHERIDAN LOWDEN.



none too good conditions, and joined the Club in 1923 when he was taking an engineering course at Leeds University. My first real holiday with him was two or three weeks climbing at Turtegrö in that year, his first experience of the greater peaks. He was a most delightful and interesting companion ; apart from the fact that he confessed to nerves once or twice one would never have thought that any situation disturbed him, and one instinctively felt that he could be relied on to do the right thing in an emergency. A fearless climber and skilful, he was able to gauge his own capabilities accurately.

We made the first ascent for the season of Skagastölstind by Heftye's Rende, and later he and Anderson covered a big distance on tramp, frequently making a fire at night and sleeping in the open—just the life he loved.

In 1924 he made many pot-holing expeditions in the Ingleborough district, and at the Whitsuntide descent of Gaping Ghyll he was with the first party, and had an exceedingly rough ascent owing to the heavy flood.

His work on the engine will be remembered by all his comrades, and this performance and his general keenness led to his choice as Junior Secretary for 1924-5.

The climb of the Amphitheatre Buttress from Ogwen next Easter, and others we had together are full of happy memories, of a night motor run to Wasdale and three splendid days on Pillar, Gable, and Scawfell, of nights under canvas by Wastwater. Some men will remember him best as a youthful and hardened veteran of pot-holing. With Lowden the pleasure of the expedition was always there.

We saw him last in the flush of his strength at a Committee meeting in October, 1925, oddly enough attended by every available member, and the same night he met with a fatal motor cycle accident.

Lowden lingered almost till Christmas and through his death the Club lost one of its youngest and most enthusiastic members who had done much for it, and who had made many staunch friends. We miss him at our meets, but we are the richer by memories of joyous struggle which would not have been ours had he not been a Yorkshire Rambler.

C.E.B.

## JOSEPH WILLIAM SWITHINBANK.

1863-1926.

By the death of J. W. Swithinbank in March, 1926, the Club loses one of its oldest members and one of the stalwarts in everything that affected its interests. Swithinbank was born in Leeds in 1863, and after a public school education joined the Leeds branch of the National Telephone Company in 1881. During 42 years of excellent service with the old company and with the Post Office he worked for varying periods as responsible official for Huddersfield, Leeds, Durham, Hull and Sheffield, and on his retirement from the Postal Telephone Service in 1923 remarkable tributes of appreciation of his work were paid by the Sheffield Press in general.

But it was as a member of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club that we, who for nearly 30 years were associated with him in its objects, would wish to remember him. Thirty years ago no pot-holing expedition was complete without him, evidenced by the fact that he was associated with the first descent of Rowten Pot, Jingling Pot and Bull Pot on Gragreth, Lost John's, Marble Steps, Rift Pot, Death's Head, and Rumbling Hole. In addition to these there was scarcely an expedition of any importance in which he was not a member of the party, and even up to a very short time before his death, when he had had more than one serious operation, he was keen and enthusiastic enough to make his second descent of Death's Head Pot.

Swithinbank was one of those enthusiastically good-natured individuals from whose presence appear to ooze cheeriness, good humour and optimism. In fact, the more depressing the conditions and the more uncomfortable the surroundings, the more his spirits rose and his cheeriness prevailed. A brave but a safe man, he was an ideal member of an expedition. In addition to his personal qualities and climbing skill, his knowledge of telephony and his general handiness made him one of the most useful men on a pot-holing expedition. He it was who converted telephony as we practise it from an ideal into a reality. But after all it was the spirit of the man which was his greatest asset. To be in any party with Swithinbank was a delight ; to have lost him is a sincere grief.

W.P.



JOSEPH WILLIAM SWITHINBANK.

## JOHN ARTHUR GREEN.

The sad news of the death of Jack Green, one of the founders and first secretary of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, came as a shock to the members and especially to those who were his intimate associates in the days of our formation. He died 17th August, 1926, at the comparatively early age of 56 years. For some time he had shown signs of failing health which in one so strong and hardy puzzled his friends. Towards the end the symptoms were very noticeable and aroused grave misgivings in their minds.

I first met him in the late eighties when he joined the Leeds Harriers. He was a sturdy and tireless runner and from the first we were mutually attached to each other, and in company with Herbert Slater he and I enjoyed many rambles together. A tour on the Roman Wall from Brough on Solway to Newcastle-on-Tyne cemented a long friendship among the three of us. Another outing at Easter, 1888, with Wm. Arthur Howgate at Robin Hood's Bay proved equally interesting. He was then in the service of the N.E.R. Co., which he left to enter Beckett's Bank on my father's recommendation. In 1899 he was appointed head cashier of the Yorkshire Penny Bank, Leeds, and in 1908 he became manager of the Leeds Branch. In 1913 he left the bank to go to the Wood Powell Process Syndicate Ltd., London. He rejoined the Yorkshire Penny Bank staff at the end of 1920, and immediately became manager of the new Mansfield Branch. From Mansfield he was appointed manager of the Harrogate Branch in 1924. Here his failing health began to be very marked and the end came rather suddenly. He lies in the Harlow Hill Cemetery, Harrogate, where he was buried on the 19th August, 1926. Our club was represented by Messrs. T. S. Booth, Lewis Moore, F. Leach and J. H. Buckley.

A very tangible proof of his deep affection for the Ramblers is a legacy of twenty pounds to the Club.

Green was many years officially connected with the Y.R.C. as the following list will show:—Secretary, 1892-1893; Committee, 1893-1895, and 1896-98; Vice-President, 1904-1906; Committee, 1906-1909; Joint Secretary, 1910-1912; Committee, 1912-1913. He also did good work for the

*Journal*, to which he contributed several articles. In 1922 he was proposed as President; but the matter was not proceeded with on account of his being resident in the Midlands which would have prevented him from an active participation in the affairs of the Club.

He did some climbing in Switzerland and in Norway, 1900 and 1904, among the Horungtinder. He was one of the frequenters of Almescliff and as his interest grew he became a very good rock climber. He was with Alfred Holmes and the Rev. A. D. Tupper-Carey at Wasdale Head, Easter 1895, when I was there with Booth, Leach, Moore and others, where we met J. W. Robinson, Owen Glynne Jones and many other men of climbing fame. Green was one of the six Ramblers who made the second descent of Gaping Ghyll, the year after M. Martel's descent in 1895. He was also in the party to make the first descent of Pillar Pot and Rift Pot.

As Green lay on his death-bed his thoughts were often with the past and with the Yorkshire Ramblers. He left them a message, that the best thing he ever did or wrote was "The Joys of the Open Fell." They will find the article in the second volume of the *Journal*.

We older men will miss him keenly and regret his loss; but we recall our past with pleasure, and look forward to the reunion of kindred spirits when our own time shall end and we cross the bar into the unknown. G.T.L.



JOHN ARTHUR GREEN.

## CHIPPIINGS.

ALPINE CLUB.—Three Ramblers have been elected members, W. A. Wright, A. B. Roberts, and F. S. Smythe. The November number of the *Alpine Journal* (1926) will be the last edited by our Honorary Member, Mr. George Yeld, who has been editor since 1896.

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GROTTA DELLA MARGNA (ISTRIA).—The Italians have accomplished the descent of the deepest abyss known and explored. In November, 1924, they reached a depth of 381 metres, but on 24th August, 1925, they were not stopped until they had reached 450 metres (1,476 ft.).

The cavern is situated on the plateau of Istria, at Raspo, 33 kilometres S.E. of Trieste, and 9 kilometres N.E. of Pinguente. A new name has been given to it by the explorers, that of Bertarelli, the president of the Italian Touring Club, who was one of the leaders.

An outer hole of 200 ft. is followed by six vertical shafts, the second being 425 ft. deep. During the last expedition a storm caused a frightful torrent to pour into the gulf for three hours. Two assistants were carried away and killed, and the bottom party of eight were hauled out only after two days. (From a communication by M. Martel to *La Montagne*, April, 1926).

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LITERARY.—C. E. Benson has written a vigorous novel, *Miles Ritson*, full of stirring action. He has avoided the hackneyed events of Revolution times and preferred an exciting Cumberland incident of the last days of James's reign. It would be a sporting thing to follow the tracks of Benson's hero over the Lake Hills in the dark.

Articles by two Y.R.C. men appear in a sumptuous Swiss picture book, *Bernese Oberland*, by Dr. Charles Urech, now being published.

Miss Bessie Gray, daughter of our first Editor, had two articles in the *North Eastern and Scottish Magazine* (N.E.R.), January and September, 1925, on climbing in Lakeland. The second describes the fix in which the party found

themselves on reaching Eskdale from Scawfell Pike in really bad weather, cut off by Cam Spout Beck and compelled to wade the Esk and the flooded flats beyond.

THREE PEAK WALK AND OTHERS.—In January, 1926, nine Ramblers and a Rucksacker made the Three Peak round from Horton by night. The full moon concealed itself behind clouds and mist, but there was just enough light to show the walls and make path-finding less difficult than people suppose. That the Hull Pot waterfall should have been seen running, a sight new to nearly all, was a remarkable piece of good luck.

Brown and Beetham in September, 1925, starting from Grains o' th' Beck, Lunedale, went over Mickle Fell and down to Maize Beck, up Meldon Hall and by Teesdale to Cross Fell, returning over the Dun Fells, Knock Fell and other tops to Little Fell and Grains o' th' Beck.

The main ridge of the Coolins was traversed in July, 1924, by Smythe and J. H. B. Bell (S.M.C.) in about 16½ hours, from Glen Brittle to Sligachan, as others had done.

Frankland and Miss M. Barker in 1926 did the same big round from Scavaig and back in about twenty hours finishing about two in the morning by lantern light, but they included Sgurr na h-Uamha, as Somervell did.

TRAINS AND BUSES.—Some Ramblers have had so much practice driving the municipal buses during the general strike that gear changing has grown an entirely automatic habit. Another Rambler writes that the public really had a touching confidence in amateur engine-drivers. He nearly crashed into crossing gates, was derailed by catch-points, and lost half a goods train. Some of us are reminded that, in another strike, a Rambler's engine was overpowered by its load at the top of a Durham gradient and the train ran back all the way down again.

THE MOTOR AGE.—Three years have sufficed to cover the whole country with a network of bus services, and to make the Club one of owners of cars and cycles. The degeneracy prophesied does not seem to have set in. In fact on free days

men get up earlier in the summer and go further. All night expeditions have become infinitely easier to arrange. And do we not nowadays "live dangerously"?

SIGNALS OF DISTRESS.—It has been suggested that men are not as well acquainted as they should be with the signals for use in case of accident, as agreed on by foreign Alpine Clubs.

By night, show a light six times in a minute, wait one minute, repeat six times in a minute and so on. The reply would be to show a light three times in a minute, pause a minute, then repeat. By day, some article of clothing of suitable colour can be swung through a half circle six times in the minute and so on. Sound signals by whistles or even shouts can be used.

WELSH NAMES.—We read Messrs. Carr and Lister's *Mountains of Snowdonia* with much interest, noting that the derivation and correct form of place-names in Wales seems to offer even more difficulty than in England, perhaps because of the influence on writers of the Arthurian legend. We went on to the end with pleasure until we came to the lists of Peaks and Passes, etc.

To each Welsh name is attached an "English significance." The first set, of peaks, seemed curiously unsatisfactory. One expected here a labour of love by someone to whom the ordinary names of English hill features were music and to whose lips they sprang as he called up the vision of the Welsh hillsides, but one was thrown back to the commonplace of London life, to company again with those to whom a beck or a brook is a streamlet, a gill a ravine, to whom it seems odd the French should call a village Val d'Isère, who can even insult a famous name with Mount Matterhorn. With sadness one turned over and glanced at the next page—"pass of the upper valley," turned again and read, "hollow of the big cow-house." We recall the rendering of "Rock of Ages" as "Very hard ancient stone, split in two for my benefit!"

May we beg of Messrs. Carr and Lister that the worst horrors of their renderings shall be removed in later editions

and less urbanized "English significances" offered, for the sake of the millions born north of Trent and for the sake of the public to whom their book appeals?

A HATE AGAINST POT-HOLERS.—A lecture by the President to the Yorkshire Geological Society, cataloguing recent discoveries, was reported briefly in the press, and somehow annoyed very much the Editor of the *Naturalist*, the organ of the Yorkshire Naturalists' Union. After quoting the report rather oddly, he accused the President of not knowing the meaning of "survey" and "exploration."

Seaman's letter pointing out that these words were correctly used was printed, and followed by an ill-tempered outburst. We learnt that pot-holers measure their success by the number of adjectives with which they describe their fun "in the press." "An actual survey or exploration should have some tangible result, in recent years not a single fact previously unknown seems to have been produced, and certainly errors have been made which prevent progress." Some amazing statements as to the President quarrelling with the Geological Society followed.

As far as we can discover it must be well over twenty years since any pot-holers have written for the daily press. It is astonishing that a Yorkshire geologist should be so ignorant of pot-holes as to be unable to distinguish between the men who make a sport of exploring them and the exploiters of well advertised show caverns.

We are in good company. Even Martel's prodigious results in the field were dismissed by another arm-chair critic as those of "a mere stroller in caverns."

Seaman's reply and challenge, courteous but devastating, needless to say *The Naturalist* did not choose to publish.



Photo by Bentley Beckett.

GRANDES JORASSES AND AIGUILLE DU GÉANT.

## ON THE HILLS.

*Great Gable, Eagle's Nest Ridge, Tricouni Rib.*—This new climb starts from the Dress Circle. The right outer edge is climbed to the platform where a perched block is mounted. The short traverse to the right is very tense, but once the upright rib or rock corner is reached, straightforward climbing for 70 feet brings within reach a waiting room. The second can now be brought up. It is better not to enter the shallow grassy gully on the right, but to stick to the sound rock all the way. A final steep slab, just difficult, concludes the climb at the crest of the Ridge, where the newly fallen block lies across the gap. (Aug., 1925.)—C.D.F.

*Scawfell, Slime Chimney.*—To reach the foot of the climb from Mickledore we scrambled a little way round the base of the overhang towards Cam Spout, climbed two easy terraces and passed a narrow crack in favour of the wider breach in the vertical wall whose top was lost in mist. The climbing started abruptly on slippery, wet, flat ledges, and Beetham took up his position of support under a steady stream of icy water.

In the square vertical corner there is a forty foot crack into which the right arm and, at times, the right knee can be wedged. The left arm and leg slide about on the smooth shiny face going directly away in front. The strain on the right shoulder was unreasonably severe, and for a week afterwards I could not lie on that side. Trying to hurry made the climbing clumsy, and I was dismally slow. The excessive cold nearly put the party out of action, except of course Beetham.

I unroped and climbed two pitches before I could announce a way out at the top. With Wakefield and J. W. Wright we built a cairn and shivered. The name is Wakefield's. (Whitsun., 1925.)—C.D.F.

*Scawfell Pike, Dow Crag, Chockstone Chimney.*—At Easter, 1925, Addyman, H. & F. Booth discovered a splendid wide chimney with two thirty foot pitches at the north-east end of Dow Crag on the Eskdale side of Scawfell Pike not far beyond Esk Buttress and the Esk Chimneys. The climbing



was difficult and the views outwards past the big chockstones very striking.

THE ALPS.—The season of 1924 was very bad, that of 1925 was worse, that of 1926 started badly but settled down after 11th August into one long succession of perfect days.

In 1924 W. V. Brown, J. Hilton, and E. E. Roberts climbed Gross Rinderhorn, Balmhorn and Altels (traverse), Löttschen Lücke, Hinter Fiescherhorn (S. peak) in a storm, Grüneckhorn and Gross Grünhorn, Burstspitze, and Tellispitze (traverse, much new snow).

W. A. Wright was fortunate enough to get in Col de la Galise, Col du Palet, Tsantaleina, Dome de Val d'Isère, Grande Motte, Pte. de la Galise, Pte. Franchet, Monte Viso from the south. Luckier still in 1925 he climbed the Aiguille Pers, Albaron, Charbonnel, Central Levanna, Ciamarella and Albaron, Aig. Rousse, Rochers Bellevarde, Pte. de Sana.

A. Bonner in the same seasons climbed Blümlisalphorn, Mettelhorn, and Dent du Midi.

E. Creighton in 1924 did the Albaron, Ciamarella (traverse), Grivola, and Herbetet.

A. W. Woodward in September climbed the Rimpfischhorn, Zinalrothorn, and Untergabelhorn.

In 1925, W. V. Brown, F. S. Smythe, J. Hilton, E. E. Roberts, and J. V. Hazard met at Zermatt but in nine days accomplished nothing but the Pointe de Zinal, and a solution of the mysteries of the Matterhorn Couloir on the Riffelhorn. Then they fled home to a wintry September.

F. S. Smythe had, however, snatched quite a successful season. With J. H. B. Bell (S.M.C.), Jungfrau from the Guggi, Trugberg, Strahlegghorn, Schreckhorn—Lauteraarhorn traverse (see article by Bell in the *Alpine Journal*, Nov., 1925). Attempt on Schreckhorn ("Thunderstorms in the Alps," *A.J.*, May, 1926). With J. V. Hazard, Klein Fiescherhorn, first ascent by E. face (*A.J.*, Nov., 1926), Grüneckhorn, Bietschhorn (traverse). Finally Pointe de Zinal.

*Jungfrau Traverse.*—Left Guggi hut 3 a.m., nasty descent to glacier by lantern. Up icefall, intricate and very dangerous. Bergschrund below Schneehorn not easy, ice slope above steep. Rocks of face firm and good to Schneehorn. Over

snow hollow to second ice-fall, cut up twenty foot ice wall. Bergschrund below Silberlücke impossible only fifty feet from the col. So traversed Silberhorn, climbing it by N.E. ridge, exceedingly bad snow, two or three feet over ice. Many gendarmes down to Silberlücke, on the way bad thunderstorm and wind and snow. Ridge to Hochfirn not difficult, but much new snow in the worst possible condition all day. Summit 5 p.m. Jungfrau Joch, 8 p.m. Supper, bed, and inadequate breakfast, 75 francs.

*Grüneckhorn.*—By the long ridge from the Grünhornlücke. Having started much too late, 7 a.m., we were unable to take the usual descent to Concordia on account of the state of the snow. Waited till the snow froze after sunset and completed the descent to the Ewig Schneefeld by lantern light following tracks on a complicated route. Bergli, 12 p.m.

*Bietschhorn.*—From the Bietschhorn hut to top did not rope. Descent by E. ridge quite amusing, but not worthy of all that has been said about it. In several places forced off ridge into a stone-swept couloir. Left ridge lower down for a subsidiary rib, traversed an ice slope to bridge over schrund. Baltschieder hut one of the best.—F.S.S.

In 1926, A. B. Roberts climbed Central Levanna, Ciamarella, Albaron, Bessanese, Grande Motte, Aig. de la Glière, Sana, etc.

W. A. Wright crossed the Feejoch, returned over the Adler Pass to the Britannia Hut and back again over the Allalin Pass, next the Lysjoch to Gressoney, the Bella Forca to Fiéry, and the Théodule Pass to the Riffelalp.

W. M. Roberts, J. W. Wright, F. H. Slingsby, with J. H. Bell and Miers, succeeded in spite of bad weather in doing Petite Dent de Veisivi, Cassiorte, L'Evêque, and Col d'Hérens, finishing by climbing the Alphubel from the Täsch Alp and descending to Saas from the Alphubeljoch in dense mist. W.M.R. later climbed Piz Led in the Engadine.

Bentley Beetham led a large party consisting of Wakefield and Meldrum (F. & R.C.C.), Shebbeare, Burnett, Brown and E. E. Roberts in various detachments. He himself climbed Tschingelhorn, Pigne d'Arolla and Serpentine, Castor, Pollux, Obergabelhorn, Rothorn, Nord End over Monte Rosa to Zumsteinspitze and Signalkuppe, Lyskamm (traverse), Aig.

d'Argentiére, Aig. Verte, Mont Blanc de Tacul on to Mont Maudit and Mont Blanc, Lauterbrunnen Breithorn.

Burnett did the first four, Monte Rosa, and Rothorn. Brown and E. E. Roberts were together on the Felikjoch, Untergabelhorn, Matterhorn, and Aig. d'Argentiére, while Brown also got Monte Rosa and Rothorn, and Roberts Aig. Verte and Lauterbrunnen Breithorn.

### CAVE EXPLORATION.

#### I.—NEW DISCOVERIES.

*Ingleborough, Keld Bank Spring Cave.*—18th August, 1924. Stobart and Roberts. A drain pipe crawl, about the limit. The entrance is one of the holes close to P. 82. The wonderfully continuous tunnel runs for 250 yards and joins the main stream at a point where one can walk for a space. The roof suddenly descends and daylight is visible on the right but cannot be reached.

The explorers were too weary of crawling to try up-stream very far.

*Ingleborough, Borrins Moor Cave.*—2nd June, 1925. Hollingshead and Griffiths, Gretstone Club. A remarkable cave to turn up close to Alum Pot, and one with an entrance ten feet high. It is in the water system beyond Upper Long Churn, W. of the wall crossed by the Alum Pot Beck.

The main cave runs in 200 yards to a horrible crawl over mud, but on the right bank fifty yards in, is the more remarkable channel of a tributary. For 400 yards this is almost straight and of even height, six feet or so, then suddenly breaks up into impenetrable rifts. Judging from the surface sinks it runs S.E. towards Simon Fell.

*Allotments, Silva Pot.*—70 ft. deep, dug out by the Gritstone Club, July, 1925. Search twenty yards east of the Allotments Gate, towards Rift Pot.

*Ribblehead, Cuddy Gill Cave.*—29th March, 1924. The upper course of the stream through Rainscar Cave is Cuddy Gill which goes underground into a fine looking cave which has also an odd doorway into the passage a dozen yards



Photo by Bentley Iscliam.

ONT BLANC SEEN ABOVE THE MOINE AND REQUIN.

along. The explorer is three times forced to a wettish crawl over stones not entirely submerged, and after passing small chambers and avens of great interest, as they are formed by infiltrations from the surface close above, emerges in the bottom of a sink hole, 60 yards direct from the entrance.

A few yards away, marked by a stake, is *Cuddy Gill Pot*, 22 ft. deep, but leading to nothing.

*Ribblehead, Gunner Fleet Cave.*—In conspicuous sink holes at the N. end of the Viaduct close to the W. side of the railway embankment are two caves formed by the same stream.

The upstream cave (29th March, 1924, Brown, C. E. Burrow, and Roberts) after many windings and pools, and after forcing a stalactite barrier, was found to close under a boulder choke.

The downstream cave (10th May, 1924, Lowden and Roberts) by a curious series of S bends reaches a long chamber with fine stalactites. There is a dangerous loose wall on the left. A muddy stream passage led to another area with fine stalactites. In the President's opinion there were traces of a visit many years ago, possibly at the time when the railway was built.

*Ribblehead, Holme Hill Cave.*—August, 1924. The Ribble sinks about 300 yards above the footbridge on the old track over Cam Fell, and emerges as a powerful stream from a seldom noticed cave under the high bank on top of which the track leaves the high road to Hawes.

Beyond an old frame for a gate, there proves to be a fine wide and high passage for 150 yards. The upper region is of the winding stream type, but the lower, the present day watercourse, is a straighter channel not more than three feet high.

*Greygareth, Yordas Cave (Kingsdale).*—On August 2nd, 1925, Addyman, C. G. Culross, Sutcliffe and E. E. Roberts descended the waterfall into the "Chapel" off the Great Chamber. The pool at the foot is quite shallow. Ladders were used, but the place could probably be climbed, were it out in the open.

*Greygareth End, Marble Steps Pot (High Douk).*—June 27, 1925 (Brown, Hilton, F. & H. Booth, Roberts, Lowden and

Anderson). This delightful cave now turns out a pot-hole of the first class, and the only dry one.

The first five coming on 31st May from the Alum Pot Camp, used one ladder at pitch I. in the rock channel, passed pitch II. by a new variant in the singular rifted area to its right, climbed out of the first hall by the route discovered in 1915 and down into the second, then followed the perfectly straight passage, 230 ft. long, bearing 322°. After the turn, a short distance in a very narrow passage with a stride over a hole in the floor already explored, led to pitch III. which begins with a sloping floor and finishes with the descent of a 12 ft. wall, by means of a hand line into a chamber 6 ft. wide. On a level with the stalactite used as belay, Brown and Hilton advanced, hardly noticing the chamber below, to a passage with a solid floor (the point reached by Holden and Humphries, 1922), and walked over mud to where a crawl of some interest over stalagmite began.

From the chamber below pitch III., a passage ran down to the left, and immediately a great hole in the floor had to be passed by chimneying. The bottom, 15 ft. down, could be climbed to on the far side, but from it another 20 ft. was descended by ladder into a very straight but very narrow passage.

Across this hole in the floor, the main passage very soon finished at the 4th pitch. In the early hours of June 28th, three ladders were put over, and down a magnificent dry shaft bottom was reached at 90 ft. A 5th pitch of 30 ft. followed immediately and at its foot a chimney climb of 20 ft. into a straight lofty channel with a trickle of water along it. Progress downstream, bearing 295°, was soon checked by a deep pool awkward of access. Some way upstream earth was found and then the very straight passage became painfully narrow, but progress was not actually stopped. A little way back an upward passage with much earth was followed to what seemed to be a choke of stones from the surface. Everywhere down here a slight draught was noticed, and it must be remembered the hillside below the pot-hole slopes steeply.

*Leck Fell, Gavel Pot.*—11th July, 1926. F. Booth, Brown, Hilton and Roberts. The interior pot-hole, into which the

stream coming from Short Drop Cave falls, proved a disappointment. The floor was reached by a wet ladder-climb of 72 feet, but the water disappeared into an impenetrable fissure.

*Barbon Fell, Bull Pot.*—21st March, 1926. Brown, Evans, E. E. Roberts. The stream passage in the main cave was reported by Burnett to be a quarter of a mile long. Where Hastings' and Hudson's survey stopped, the continuation was discovered to be made by climbing high up to a small hole.

Burnett's Great Cavern was also reached again, having been visited by Ellis and Roberts in 1924, but starting from almost the same point near where the water appears, the party found themselves in another cavern of similar size crossed by a stream coming down from a boulder choke. The presence of boots and tins in the choke and cavern was clear evidence that the new chamber is close to the outer pot-hole.

Bull Pot is so unexpectedly intricate that it is highly probable more remains to be discovered.

*Nidderdale, Blayshaw Gill Pot, No. 2.*—Depth 44 ft. 10th May, 1925. Visited by Cuttriss and Hastings, 1906. A "man-hole" covered by a stone must be looked for in the left edge of the stream bed some yards below a walled up bank. It is on record that the original discoverers, Mr. Walker of the adjacent farm and others, crawled through a passage which entered a rift. Of a party led by Barstow to the pot-hole, Lowden, Culross, and E. E. Roberts found a way out of the bottom of the rift and entered a stream passage which also communicated with the waterfall from a swallow-hole higher up the beck. After a most interesting journey of 350 yards they found themselves in a lead-mine.

Later the lead-mine above the bridge was entered but was felt to be unpleasantly dangerous and not explored.

*Nidderdale, Blayshaw Gill Pot, No. 1.*—Depth 22 ft. 21st June, 1925. Lowden, Culross, Sutcliffe, and Roberts. This is the blocked up pot-hole in the grass visited in 1906. There are a number of exhausting crawls which were thoroughly explored, and an exit was found by way of another "man-hole" in the bed of the beck, large enough but by a hair's breadth only.

*Penyghent, Little Hull Hole (Corrections).*—The actual discovery is claimed by Barstow in May, 1910. The editor apologises to those who have sought for Larch Tree Pot, two miles north (Y.R.C.J. Vol. V., p. 134). It is two miles south of Hull Pot.

## II.—OTHER EXPEDITIONS.

*Ingleborough, Juniper Gulf.*—A week after the success of the Gritstone Club, a Y.R.C. party, tempted by the fact that the ladders were still in the cave, tried to do a first class pot-hole in a day from Leeds. Motoring out, six men were underground from 12.45 till 7.30 p.m. All took a trip on the ladders in the big shaft, and the first two reached the 130 ft. ledge only to find one side-rope cut through there. The advanced hour forbade the cutting out of rungs and knotting up.

Congratulations to the drivers who took us home in the dark after their strenuous day.

*Ingleborough, Rift Pot.*—The third descent was made in June, 1925, by the Gritstone Club, via the Long Kin Cave passage and a ladder descent of 180 feet direct into the Lower Chamber. The through route of the Y.S.A. from Long Kin across the bridges and out by the daylight shaft of Rift Pot was repeated.

*Penyghent, Hull Pot.*—Some time previous to August, 1924, a great slab split off from the south side at the west end and tilted forward so that one can pass right round it. The floor of the west end is only accessible now by climbing.

This and the rock fall of 1926 at Malham Cove are of interest as showing the process of enlargement of pot-holes. The easy cataclysmic theory that "the roof fell in" is somewhat out of date.

*Penyghent, High Hull Pot.*—Second descent, 17th August, 1924. Stobart, Lowden, Hilton, Roberts. Much time was spent the day before in clearing the mouth of the pot-hole and in testing the safety of the jammed blocks. The ladders were all tied up outside, and it was only necessary below to take off the two for the third pitch. The life line for the first

two pitches, 140 ft. in all, was held on the surface. Much delay was inevitable in the lighting of candles by the leader owing to the frightful drenchings on the ladders.

The first pair were from noon till two o'clock, but by 3.45 p.m. the second pair had been down and the ladders were up on the moor. The whole of the work was done in steady rain.

*Greycareth, Rowten Pot.*—Third descent, 23rd May, 1926, Brown, Frankland, Hilton, F. Booth, E. E. Roberts. Conditions extremely favourable. 100 feet of ladder was put down from the end of the watercourse, the lower half of which was dry. After that only two short ladders (24 ft.) are needed, as the easy lateral passage should be used. This wonderful pot-hole is quite another problem under wet conditions, but time has clearly developed an easier route by the watercourse, instead of from the Bridge, which was perforce the route of the pioneers of 1897.

*Greycareth, Rowten Cave and Jingling Cave.*—Except at flood times there is no difficulty now in following the Rowten Pot Beck underground to the great pot-hole, or *vice versa*. Two short dry crawls may at times be under water. The journey up Jingling Cave, a tributary on the left bank below the crawls, is most amusing and well worth doing, but the distance to the exit by Jingling Pot is considerable both above and below ground.

*Greycareth, Batty Cave.*—This cave, visited long ago by Cuttriss, is not far above the Kingsdale road in the next stream channel beyond Yordas. It contains an extremely fine and lofty little chamber, into which one must rope down fifteen feet. Be sure you can get back.

## REVIEWS.

ISLAND OF SKYE (SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB GUIDE, VOL III., Section A.)—10s. net, post free 10s. 4d.—Map, 126 pp., over 60 illustrations and diagrams.—This is a splendid piece of work, edited by Messrs. Steeple, Barlow, and MacRobert. That they are enthusiastic lovers of the glorious island group, the Cuillin, is proved by the knowledge that two of the three live so far from it as Birmingham. The authors are to be heartily congratulated, and the S.M.C. is fortunate in having completed so important a section of its Guide.

One bold reviewer has criticized the spelling, another the omission of record times. Our own particular grouse is at the adverse fate which prevents us spending the weeks of this May and June in working through the Skye Guide on the rocks.

HILL PATHS IN SCOTLAND, by W. A. Smith, (Macniven and Wallace), 1924, 104 pp., 2s. 6d.—This wonderful little synopsis is a most useful companion to one's study of those enthralling sheets of the Scottish uplands, when one plans all sorts of climbs and tramps that one will never carry out. The author must have been a real "end-to-ender," and no centrist, to have covered all this ground.

THE MOUNTAINS OF YOUTH, by Arnold Lunn (Oxford University Press), 192 pp., 20 ill.—The author begins his last chapter by telling us that he hopes his book will be read by ski-runners who are not mountaineers, and mountaineers who are not ski-runners, and thereafter, when we expect more painting for the mountaineer of the delights of winter and spring with ski, continues with an eloquent apology for the cragsman. His heart is in the right place for all who seek the unknown in the high places and on the old snow ways.

At twenty-one, Mr. Lunn fell with a mass of rock from the Cyfrwy Table Rock, and through skilful surgery recovered, though with a lame leg shorter than the other. How pluckily he set himself to overcome his handicap, this book tells.

ALPINE JOURNAL (10s. 6d., May and November).—With contributions from every part of the world the Alpine Journal grows steadily larger and maintains its unique position. The dramatic story of the Everest expedition and tragedy is told in the numbers for 1925. Innumerable freshly conquered peaks are recorded in the Rockies, another ascent of Mount Sefton in New Zealand, and a continuous struggle to open out new variations in the Alps.

The Journal of November, 1925, is a very remarkable one and leaves a strong impression on the mind. Miss Bray draws attention to a group

the Kaisergebirge, containing very stiff climbs and almost unknown to the British, but apart from this the striking thing is the number of references to great climbs lately accomplished and the notices of the deaths of actors in them.

BRITISH SKI YEAR BOOK—No. 6, 1925, 5s., 288 pp.—No. 7, 1926, 10s., 366 pp.—These are not ordinary journals, they are thick books, volumes, splendidly illustrated. The frontispiece of the last strikes us at the moment as the most sensational picture we have ever seen.

We learn that a British ski team has for the first time defeated a strong Continental team, in the race British Universities v. Swiss Universities, and rejoice.

The two numbers contain a full History of Ski-ing with a list of Pioneer Winter Ascents and Ski Ascents. There are many mountaineering articles, dozens of them in fact. But by the time the reader has finished the two volumes, he will not only be well up in the results of two winters' racing, and in the theory of racing and the present position of climbing with ski, but he will be well posted in the teaching of ski-ing, and in every controversy connected with bindings, etc.

SCOTTISH MOUNTAINEERING CLUB JOURNAL (2s. 6d., April and November).—Mr. G. B. Green is the present Editor and had the honour of producing the hundredth number at the end of 1925. The Journals are full of interest, with many beautiful illustrations. Personally we have much appreciated the instalments of a diary of a walking tour made by the brothers Gall Inglis in 1856 through the wildest parts of the Highlands. Ordnance Survey maps were not then available, and the brothers were several times unable to reach even the roughest night quarters, and had to bivouac.

In an article on Stob Ghabhar an excellent plan is suggested for the making of records in the field under those conditions of discomfort which lead people to omit them or trust to memory, a plan which must be put into force underground. One man's sole duty is to see the records made, thus—to A., "What's the time?"—to B., "What is the aneroid?"—to C., "There now, put this down."

## ROCK CLIMBING GUIDES.

- I. DOE CRAGS AND CONISTON, by G. S. Bower.
- II. PILLAR ROCK, by H. M. Kelly.
- III. SCAWFELL, by C. F. Holland.
- IV. GREAT GABLE, by H. S. Gross, and BORROWDALE, by A. R. Thomson.

Under the editorial care of Mr. R. S. T. Chorley the Fell and Rock Climbing Club has issued a series of guides to the crags of the Lake

District which appeared originally as parts of the Club Journal. The authors are well-known experts, who have active personal knowledge of the courses, many of which they have originated. No happier choice could have been made. Considerable care and skill have been devoted to locating the scenes of their exploits. The pictures are plentiful and stimulating. Marked photographs, graduated lists, and lists of first ascents complete very compact guides.

JOURNAL OF THE FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB.—Besides the space devoted to the Guides, each number still has 100 pages of articles, some in reminiscent vein, some on climbs old and new, so numerous that there will soon be left no oddest of odd corner in Lakeland of which one cannot say, "There is something about it in number so-and-so."

Mr. Wilson Butler writes a useful paper on the Great Deed of Borrowdale. Polemics, such as Benson has embarked on, are represented by lively thrust and parry between Mr. Chorley and Mr. Doughty, in the "Rubber Boom" reply to "Nothing like Leather."

PINNACLE CLUB JOURNAL, edited by Miss L. E. Bray and Miss D. E. Pilley.—We welcome the latest of mountaineering journals, that issued by the ladies' club. The articles are all interesting. Miss Bray's on the ascent of the Portiengrat is delightful in itself, but it is also an account of an ascent, surely historic in its way, by two ladies alone. Miss Pilley's adventures at Easter in the Pyrenees make thrilling reading.

An article on "Pot-holing" explains the appearance of a cairn and signs of digging on Newby Moss in 1924. It will come as a shock to those of us who maintain the sport to be the final stage in the Climber's Progress, to read that there are feuds between pot-holers and rock climbers, and that we may in time become mountaineers.

RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL.—It is always a pleasure to sit down to read a new number of this Journal. Mr. Wilding gets together a fine series of articles, in his last two numbers not only from Britain and Switzerland, but from Norway, the Pyrenees, Italy, and as far afield as Mexico.

In the 1925 number, under the title of "Early Climbing at Wasdale," appears J. W. Robinson's own account of his fall from the Hand Traverse on the Pillar Rock and providential escape, an event now almost mythical. Details of peak-bagging expeditions in Scotland are given, and of Mr. Eustace Thomas's activities in the Alps. Mr. Thomas had marvellous luck in two bad seasons, and we fully expect, when the new number of the *Rucksack Club Journal* comes to hand, to find that in 1926 he beat the "Flying Dutchman" to a frazzle.

ANNUAL OF THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA.—If any Rambler is about to migrate to South Africa, he should read these Annuals and he will find that he is going to a land where there is any amount of rock climbing, and any number of unexplored mountains. The numbers run to about 130 pages each, and prove the existence of a large group of enthusiasts with plenty of good work and good sport at hand.

CAIRNGORM CLUB JOURNAL.—The Cairngorm Club has succeeded in erecting indicators to the surrounding summits, first on Lochnagar and now on Ben Macdhuì. The task of erection was no easy one, and is related in the last number. Besides excursions in Scotland we read with pleasure the paper on a tramp from the Val d'Isère south through the Alps to the Mediterranean.

CAMBRIDGE MOUNTAINEERING, 1925-6.—As befits people with long vacations, there is a lot of energetic climbing referred to in this number of 56 pages. Mr. Storr gives useful advice about a district, little visited by British climbers, the Zillertal and Oetztal in Austrian Tyrol. Noteworthy are a memoir of the late S.B. Van-Noorden, killed in the Pass of Llanberis, and an account of the successful but lucky ascent of the Brouillard Ridge of Mont Blanc by him and Mr. P. W. Harris.

GRITSTONE CLUB JOURNAL.—The Gritstone Club is not big enough to issue a printed annual, but not to be beaten they issue yearly an account of their doings, type-written,—or is it Roneo'd, or is it something else? No matter, they can spare us copies. From one of them we have "lifted" the struggle with Juniper Gulf which appears in this number of the *Y. R. C. J.* May they have good luck again, beat the water, and make the third descent of Mere Gill!

The death of Gimmer Crag of the Editor, that cheery soul, Mr. David Moulson, was a great loss to the Gritstone Club, and was felt deeply by the friends he had made among the Yorkshire Ramblers.

CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.—The new Editor, Mr. H. R. C. Carr, has included in the number for 1926 interesting reprints, O. G. Jones's not forgotten article "English Climbing from the Alpine Standpoint" and the vigorous reply to it, with two others by the late Mr. A. D. Godley and the late Mr. R. Todhunter. Sir Claud Schuster writes in his old pleasing vein on "The Middle Distance," and in the previous number G. W. Young has a charming word sketch of an Irish mountain.

We acknowledge with thanks the receipt of *La Montagne* and the *Rivista Mensile*.

## CLUB MEETS.

1924.—The first meet of the year at the Hill Inn, February 9-10th, was distinguished by the discovery of a group of small caves near the Ribbleshead Viaduct. Most of these were accounted for by an expedition in March. The Sunday was a perfect day, warm and sunny. Two large parties had splendid tramps to Kingsdale and Ling Gill.

The winter grew colder as it advanced, and heavy going in the snow was the experience of both the brilliant days of the Grassington Meet, March 8-9th.

The men who attended the Eskdale Meet at Easter (April 17th-22nd) at the Woolpack and Taw House were extremely pleased with their visit to this lovely dale. The Taw House party were very active, and very fine climbs on the Eskdale Dow Crags were led on Monday by Frankland and Addyman. The first two days were indifferent but the next three were delightfully warm.

The spring and summer did not fulfil the promise of Easter, and cave exploration was invariably accompanied by heavy rain, in spite of which the results were distinctly pleasing. The bad weather which set in abroad at the end of July was so marked in this country that neither August nor September were months to tempt people from home.

The Whitsuntide camp at Gaping Ghyll was well attended, and though the work involved much haste and some anxiety owing to descents being possible only for one day and a half instead of three days, everything went so well in the end that it is very pleasant to look back on. The engine for winding, over which C. E. Burrow took so much trouble, proved a complete success, in its improved condition being much superior to 1922.

Coniston in September attracted thirteen members, who in spite of broken weather, had some enjoyable days on Dow Crags.

The December visit to Malham was also unlucky, though better than on the last occasion, and Sunday permitted a good tramp over to Arncliffe.

1925.—Seventeen men met at the "Falcon," Arncliffe, on January 31st at the end of a wet week. Devenish and C. E. Burrow starting on Friday night had walked the whole forty odd miles from Leeds. A wild night settled into a glorious morning, though after noon the snow-covered heights were in mist. It was possible to bask in the warm sun for the first time since July.

Seven men ascended the snowy Penygent. Many members drove up to tea, and the general departure by motor emphasized the changes of the last few years.

Winter Sundays seem to be generally fine, and we had another glorious day in February at the Hill Inn, Chapel-le-Dale. The Whernside ridge was covered with snow, and the easiest progress was found to be along the top of the drifted-up wall. Blue sky and fog banks in the valleys were features of a beautiful view.

The meet at Hawaby (March 21st-22nd) was preceded by a week of gloriously warm spring weather, and everyone was anticipating a great show of flowers in the North Riding. Saturday opened incredibly clear and very cold. The first party had not long passed Thirsk when they discovered the Hambletons had received heavy snow. The car was left at Sutton, Gormire and many primroses seen in sloppy snow, and Boltby Bank ascended past quite respectable drifts. On the top of the Hambletons and on the Hawaby side the most astonishing fall had taken place in the night, and there was a good hour of snowstorm again in the afternoon. Needless to say, the spring flowers were not seen at all, and it was two o'clock on Sunday before snow showers ceased and brilliant sun shone on the returning Ramblers.

At Easter, sixteen men assembled at Ogwen, all with one exception motoring there, arriving much more rapidly in most cases than by train. The Ogwen Cottage was plain and comfortable, the food abundant even for hungry climbers, and the first meet in Wales was voted a great success.

The first motor arrived at 6 p.m. Thursday, a bicycle at 10 p.m. and a second motor at 1.30 a.m. Much climbing was done on Tryfaen on Friday, on Lliwedd and Craig yr Ysfa on Saturday and Sunday, both gloriously warm and sunny days. The Amphitheatre Buttress was done by three parties, and Frankland led up the Central Gully, Craig yr Ysfa. Later in the week he led up the Devil's Staircase and he and Beetham climbed Twll Du (Devil's Kitchen).

The drive home of the last party on a beautiful day was turned into an ignominious retreat by train when the President damaged the gears of his car a few miles south of Rhyll.

The Whitsun Meet (May 31st) was aimed at the through route from Diccan Pot to Alum Pot, and fourteen men camped on the spot. The weather was unfavourable, a wet fortnight with heavy thunderstorms flooding the becks. The advance guard were glad to sleep on Friday night in Mr. Wilcox's barn, but thereafter the weather slowly but steadily improved. The motors did the whole work of transport from Leeds, and two Standards took up huge loads to the lime kiln, ploughing great ruts in Mr. Wilcox's home field.

On Sunday five men made a successful raid on Marble Steps Pot beyond Kingsdale, and the rest went into Sunset Hole. Alum Pot was done by all on Monday, and two Gritstone men reporting the



discovery of Borrins Moor Cave, it was visited by the President on Tuesday evening.

The weather now settled down to be glorious throughout June and most of July. The two years during which bad weather viciously pursued the pot-holers having expired, Marble Steps was conquered by a night attack, and a descent made in the same way of Diccan Pot. The water even at its lowest remains a serious trouble in the latter, and if the through route is to be completed, a daytime attack or a second party in Alum Pot is necessary.

A very pleasant climbing meet was held at Coniston, September 6th. The winter set in early, and the frost and snow seemed to frighten people from Clapham (December 5th). The only visitor declares they made a bad mistake. He was very comfortable at the Flying Horseshoe, the days were glorious, and there was a fearful fog in Leeds.

1926.—Until recent years it has been out of the question to hold meets in the delightful dales of the eastern North Riding, but following Hawnby, new ground was broken at The Crown, Rosedale, February 27-28th, which is to be reached by an easy motor run of sixty miles. The nine men who turned up had two splendid walks before making for home on an exquisite evening.

At Easter eight men took quarters at Torver, and seven at Coniston. Much climbing was done on Dow Craggs and on Gimmer Crag.

An attack on Rowten Pot was made the feature of the Whitsuntide Meet, and the sub-committee solved the difficulties of organizing a large camp in Kingsdale by engaging Braida Garth Farm. The coal strike, however, had such an effect on the members that it was unnecessary to put up tents for sleeping, and the party of seven men and two ladies who occupied the farmhouse enjoyed a most luxurious and successful time.

The advance guard had a strenuous time portaging the tackle up from the road in intense heat on Saturday morning, but by the time the main body arrived, had discovered that, what with changes and fine weather, laddering deep down from the end of the watercourse was obviously sound. Further exploration confirmed this as the best course and two hours' work put the ladders on the first and greatest drop.

Starting down at 10.30 a.m., Sunday, the bottom was reached at two o'clock by five men with almost dry clothes, and owing to the strenuous assistance from the surface of Barstow and his Harrogate party the ladders, etc., were all clear at 6.30 p.m. The telephone was of course not needed. It may be noted that the depth of the Bridge was measured as seventy feet (not one hundred).

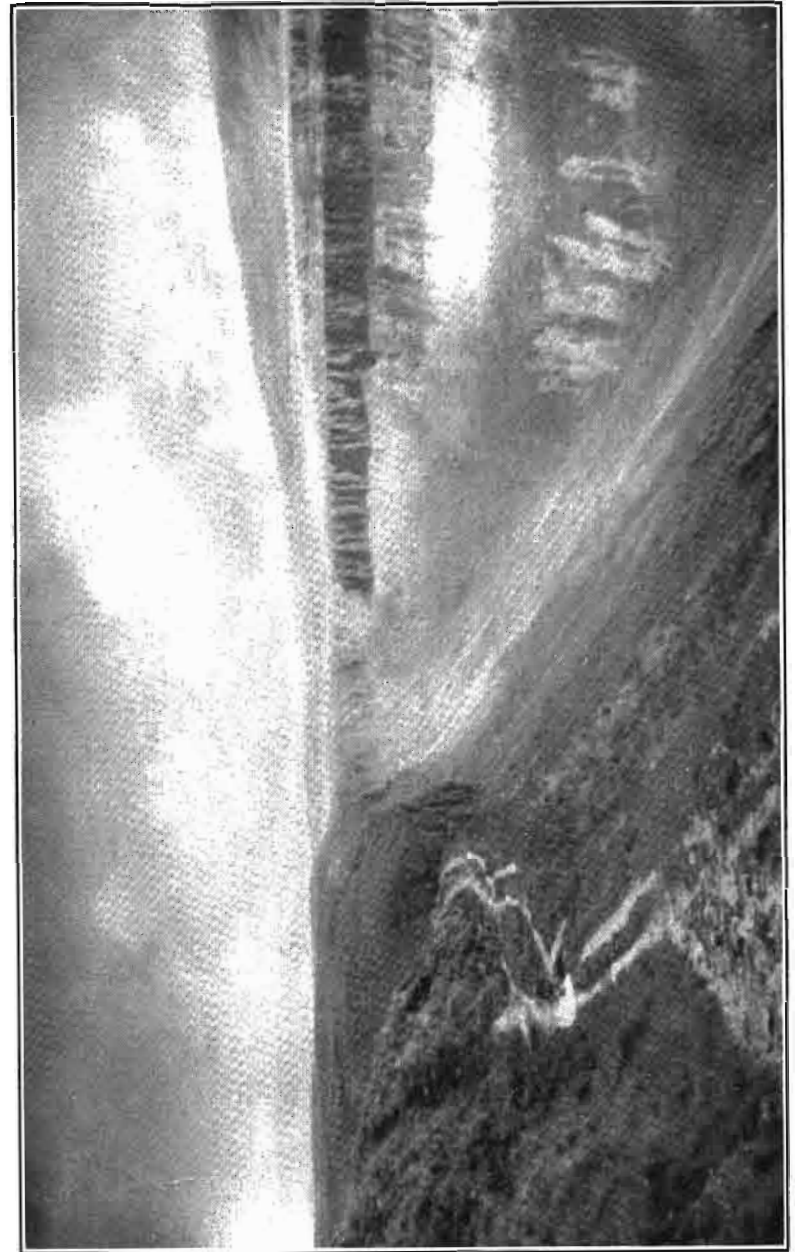


Photo by J. F. Staman.

HIGH CUP NICK.

An ideal morning was spent on Monday in the descent of Jinglyng Pot, which has a clear ladder climb of 146 feet with one small resting place. The Rowten Pot party and Slingsby all made the descent. A move was then made to the little Double Three Pot, and Frankland, Fred Booth, and E. E. Roberts next had a wet and comical time in Swinsto Hole (probably second descent) coming out into the frightful deluge which swept over the country that Bank Holiday afternoon.

Later in the week, Frankland and Roberts visited Dunald Mill Hole, near Carnforth, and descended Boggart's Roaring Hole on Newby Moss. A prolonged storm on Friday night brought down so much water that for two days the normally dry Kingsdale watercourse could not be crossed, and the descent intended with Brown of Bull Pot was too miserable an affair to complete. It was made certain, however, that beyond the third pitch the cavern runs back under the upper fissure.

The July meet at Hawnby was again singularly ill attended, while the more popular Langdale Meet (September 11-12th) though very enjoyable suffered warm and wet weather and little was done. The Monday of return was one of the most marvellously fine days the writer has ever seen in this country. The misfortune of this meet was the more disappointing as otherwise the warm and fine weather of 1926 lasted right up to 13th October, in startling contrast to the dreadful late summers of 1924 and 1925.

#### CLUB PROCEEDINGS.

1924.—The week-end meets held during the year were:—10th February, Chapel-le-Dale; 9th March, Kettlewell; Easter, Eskdale; Whitsuntide, Gaping Ghyll; 14th September, Coniston; 14th December, Malham.

On 1st February a Ladies' Dinner took place at the Hotel Metropole, about fifty members and guests attending.

Dr. T. G. Longstaff lectured in the Philosophical Hall in February on "The Himalayas," then a subject of unusual interest.

Lectures in the Club Rooms were given by E. Creighton on "Norway in 1923," by E. E. Roberts on "Recent Pot-hole Exploration," by C. D. Frankland on "Almescliff," and by M. Botterill on "The Hebrides to the Bay of Biscay in a 10-ton Yawl."

The sixteenth number of the *Club Journal* was published in July. A donation of £25 was voted by the Club to the Funds of the Everest Expedition.

1924-1925.—At the Annual General Meeting on 22nd November, 1924, the following were elected to hold office:—President, E. E. ROBERTS; Vice-Presidents, J. F. SEAMAN and M. BOTTERILL;

Hon. Treasurer, B. A. BATES; Hon. Secretaries, J. BUCKLEY and A. S. LOWDEN; Hon. Librarian, C. D. FRANKLAND; Hon. Editor, E. E. ROBERTS; Committee, F. BOOTH, W. V. BROWN, J. H. BUCKLEY, C. E. BURROW, H. P. DEVENISH, J. HILTON, J. W. WRIGHT.

The eighteenth Annual Dinner was held at the Hotel Metropole, on 22nd November, 1924. The President, Mr. E. E. Roberts, was in the chair, and the guest of the evening was Mr. Philip S. Minor, Alpine Club. Over ninety members and guests were present, and the kindred clubs were represented by Mr. H. Priestman, Scottish Mountaineering Club; Mr. T. H. Seaton, Rucksack Club; Mr. Graham Wilson, Fell and Rock Climbing Club; Mr. W. E. Amies, Derbyshire Pennine Club; Mr. G. E. Griffiths, Gritstone Club; Mr. C. E. Benson, Climbers' Club; and Mr. J. M. Davidson, Wayfarers' Club.

1925.—The week-end meets were:—February 1st, Arncliffe; Feb. 22nd, Chapel-le-Dale; March 22nd, Hawnby; Easter, Ogwen; hits Wuntide, Alum Pot Camp; September 6th, Coniston.

Mr. Bentley Beetham on February 20th in the Philosophical Hall addressed an audience of three hundred on "The Everest Expedition of 1924," of which he was a member. The lecture aroused the utmost interest and enthusiasm.

Other lectures were given, by M. Botterill on "Sea and Land Rambles," and by W. A. Wright on "Alpine Experiences."

The Club Rooms were moved in June to 10, Park Square (second floor). The Library is accessible at most times and is being considerably increased.

Canon A. D. Tupper-Carey, an old member of the Club, was elected an Honorary Member.

We regret to record the death of Mr. J. A. Farrer, Honorary Member since 1912, whose sympathy with our work on Ingleborough smoothed out many difficulties.

1925-1926.—At the Annual General Meeting on November 14th, 1925, the following were elected to hold office during the year:—President, F. LEACH; Vice-Presidents, M. BOTTERILL and LEONARD MOORE; Hon. Treasurer, B. A. BATES; Hon. Secretaries, J. BUCKLEY and A. S. LOWDEN; Hon. Librarian, C. D. FRANKLAND; Hon. Editor, E. E. ROBERTS; Committee, V. BAIN, F. BOOTH, W. V. BROWN, D. BURROW, H. P. DEVENISH, J. HILTON, J. W. WRIGHT.

The nineteenth Annual Dinner was held at the Hotel Metropole, Leeds, on 14th November, 1925. The President, Mr. F. Leach, was in the chair, and the principal guest was Mr. A. L. Mumm, sometime Vice-President of the Alpine Club. The kindred clubs were represented by Mr. J. A. Scott, Scottish Mountaineering Club; Mr. Darwin Leighton,

Fell and Rock Climbing Club; Mr. Eustace Thomas, Rucksack Club; Mr. Myles Mathews, Climbers' Club; Mr. D. Moulson, Gritstone Club; Mr. H. B. S. Gibbs, Derbyshire Pennine Club; Mr. Lewis Graham, Midland Association of Mountaineers; and Mr. J. M. Davidson, Wayfarers' Club.

The Annual Meeting reduced the subscription to fifteen shillings per annum and voted twenty guineas to the Leeds University Fund.

The hopes expressed at the Annual Dinner of the recovery of A. S. Lowden from a serious accident were not realised, and two days before Christmas many of his companions followed the body of their bright young comrade to its final end.

1926.—The week-end meets were:—28th February, Rosedale; Easter, Coniston and Torver; Whitsun, Kingsdale; 12th September, Langdale.

On February 3rd, Canon H. E. Newton, of Helmsley, lectured in the Philosophical Hall on "The West Side of the New Zealand Alps." Some 150 people heard a most interesting description of pioneer climbs. The presence of only 25 members has deterred the Committee from resuming the practice of lectures by members, for the present.

We record with deep regret the deaths of two of our oldest members, stalwarts of the first activities of the Club, J. W. Swithinbank and J. A. Green, and the death of A. H. Higgs.

1926-1927.—At the Annual General Meeting on November 13th, 1926, the following were elected to hold office during the year:—President, F. LEACH; Vice-Presidents, LEONARD MOORE and W. V. BROWN; Hon. Treasurer, B. A. BATES; Hon. Secretaries, J. BUCKLEY and F. S. BOOTH; Hon. Librarian, C. D. FRANKLAND; Hon. Editor, E. E. ROBERTS; Committee, M. BOTTERILL, H. S. BOOTH, C. E. BURROW, D. BURROW, J. H. BUCKLEY, J. HILTON, J. W. WRIGHT.

The twentieth Annual Dinner was held at the Hotel Metropole, Leeds, on 13th November, 1926. The President, F. Leach, was in the chair and the principal guest was Mr. J. A. Parker, President of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. The kindred clubs were represented by Mr. H. Priestman, Alpine Club; Mr. Graham Wilson, Fell and Rock Climbing Club; Mr. G. G. Sumner, Rucksack Club; Mr. R. Lamb, Wayfarers' Club; Mr. A. Ackerley, Climbers' Club; Mr. C. D. Yeomans, Derbyshire Pennine Club; Mr. J. L. Wade, Gritstone Club; and Mr. Wallace May, Midland Association of Mountaineers.

## NEW MEMBERS.

1924.

- MOHUN, HERBERT FORSTER, 3, Ashwood Terrace, Headingley.  
 GAUNT, MAURICE, 19, Eaton Road, Ilkley.  
 WATSON, WILLIAM H., 4, Park Drive, Bradford.  
 SLINGSBY, FRANCIS HUGH, Oakwood House, Ashted, Surrey.  
 RICHARDSON, CLIVE WILLIAM, Linfield, Headingley.  
 HOLLIS, ERNEST DENZIL, 2, Chapel Street, Headingley.  
 MACKIE, PHILIP COLEMAN, 8, Ancaster Road, Far Headingley.

1925.

- DICKSON, JAMES, 73, Birch Avenue, Oldham.  
 LAWSON, FREDERICK HENRY, 9, Cavendish Road, Leeds.  
 SMITH, GEOFFREY RIDSDILL, Red House, Marston Moor, York.  
 ELLIOTT, NORMAN PERCY, 9, Blyth Road, Worksop.  
 BEETHAM, BENTLEY, The School, Barnard Castle.  
 EVANS, EDGAR DEWHIRST, Settlebeck, Sedburgh.

1926.

- ROBERTS, WALTER MEAKIN, 22, Westmount Road, Eltham, S.E.9.  
 LOWE, GEORGE HAROLD, 74, New North Road, Huddersfield.  
 SUTCLIFFE, WILLIAM LESLIE, 13, East Parade, Harrogate.  
 CULROSS, COLIN CAMPBELL, 10, Studley Road, Harrogate.  
 SWALES, SYDNEY JAMES, 5, Ridge Mount, Cliff Road, Leeds.  
 SWALES, HORACE KIDSON, 5, Ridge Mount, Cliff Road, Leeds.

1927.

- STEWART, HUGH, 24, North Parade, West Park, Headingley.  
 RIMMER, ROBERT, Hotel Metropole, Leeds.  
 WILSON, GRAHAM, 171, Park Avenue, Hull.  
 WILKINSON, EDGAR ARTHUR, Braemoor, Westville Road, Ilkley.  
 WOODMAN, EDGAR JOHN, Wheatley Lawn, Ben Rhydding.  
 HARRIS, WILL SMITH, 15, Woodview, Manningham.  
 BRISTOL, CHARLES CLARENCE, Rose Cottage, Eldwick, Bingley.  
 DE LITTLE, ALEC, 11, Southlands Road, York.

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