

The PINNACLE CLUB JOURNAL

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EDITED BY
D. E. Pilley



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THE PINNACLE CLUB.

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LILIAN BRAY
PRESIDENT 1927 - 1929

THE Pinnacle Club Journal

1927 - 1928.

CLUB PROCEEDINGS

BY
THE PRESIDENT.

DURING the last two years, the number of members (fifty-eight) has remained constant. The climbing meets have been well attended, especially those which included a week-end. The Easter Meet, 1927 (April 14 to 19) was at Langdale, 15 members attended. Bowfell Buttress was attacked by most of the party on Saturday and several climbs on Pavey Ark (Great Gully, Little Gully, Crescent and Gwynne's Chimney). On Sunday, in rather uncertain weather, Middlefell Buttress was ascended. Long walks were taken by several members.

The Easter Meet, 1928 (April 5 to 10) at Capel Curig was generally voted as having been the best we have ever had. There were 20 of our members and 10 from the Ladies' Scottish Mountaineering Club. The weather was good, and a great deal of climbing and walking was undertaken. The inevitable Milestone was climbed by 21 of the party on the first day, followed by the Ivy Chimney, after which some went on to the Idwal Slabs, while others walked up the Devil's Kitchen and Glydyr Fawr. On Saturday six parties were formed with three on each rope and proceeded to Tryfan. Two parties ascended the Gashed Crag, two the Central Buttress, and two the Grooved Arête. On Sunday there was rain in the morning, and most of the party walked to Crafnant Lake, a few more energetic ones ascended the Milestone again. On the Monday ten ascended the Parsons Nose on five ropes (because so many wanted to lead), and the rest walked in various directions, Crib Goch and the Carnedds. We thoroughly enjoyed having our Scottish guests.

Many other meets were held, and one which calls for special mention is that held annually in September at the Almscliffe. There were nine members in 1927 and seven in 1928. The conditions of this meet are ideal, the Bungalow so kindly lent us every year by Mr. Halliday is quite perfect; it is on the banks of the River Wharfe, and bathing can be had at any moment; the climb is reached by car in ten minutes. E. and N. Wells made all arrangements and brought food with them, and I may say did most of the cooking also, some of us helped a bit with the washing up; but our chief work in the Bungalow was that of eating and killing wasps. The climbs are typical grit stone of every range of difficulty, and we depended on Biddy for most of the leads; she has been brought up on these climbs and knows every hand and foothold and every trick of balance. In 1928 Mr. and Mrs. Hirst came over for the Sunday and added to our enjoyment. The meets at Whitsun in Skye and last summer in the Graians are dealt with fully in separate articles.

The Annual Dinners were held at the Queen's Hotel, Manchester; both were well attended by members and guests; dinner was followed by dancing. Mrs. Hirst presided in 1927 and Miss Bray in 1928.

MARRIAGES AND BIRTHS.

ON 28th June, 1927, Olive Minor was married to Geoffrey Colton Haines, of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club.

In 1928 Edna Yates was married to Lindley Henshaw of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club.

On 16th October, 1927, at 10 Grange Road, Cambridge, to Hester Adrian—twins, a boy and girl.

On 18th April, 1928, to Olive Haines—a daughter, Anne Elizabeth Coulton.

We wish them good luck and trust that marriage will not interfere with the really important things of life—like climbing!

AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING

BY

B. EDEN SMITH.

ONCE upon a time—for it happened almost long enough ago to belong to the age of fairy tales—three people had set their hearts on making an ascent of Scafell. They were staying in the valley of Eskdale at an inn known and esteemed by many a weary hill traveller, and the season was in the early days of February. Day after day their thoughts turned longingly towards Scafell, and day after day a cold deluge of rain fell and drowned their hopes. Not the gentle, loftier, loosely built Pike was their ambition, but Scafell itself, grim and massive, and guarded by cliffs of an appalling aspect. Only one way to the summit was known to the three aspirants, and this way took its final course close beneath the sentinel crags and up a slit of great steepness in the mountain side. In fair summer weather this course had been ascended by them under the guidance of men who knew the mountains, but now these three, two women and a young boy, greatly longed to accomplish the journey unaided.

A day came at last when the rain ceased to fall, and when, towards evening, the sky cleared to a frosty radiance. "It will be fine to-morrow," they said with courageous faith, and forthwith made their plans and retired to rest before the great adventure.

True to the evening's promise, the day broke clear and sun-filled, and the three set forth joyously on the first stage of their journey, carrying only with them light hearts and simple food for the day's needs. Along the level valley floor they followed at first the well-beaten road, then left it for a rougher path that led them to and through a farmstead, where the shepherd dogs came out to escort them from the precincts. Beyond this point the open hill sides rolled before them. The hoar frost had laid enchanted touch on grass and bush and stone, turning the gorse to clusters of tiny

jewelled needles and riming with silver beauty each broken stem and frond of bracken.

Their way led up through the swelling foothills, now curving round some knotted fragment of rock, now crossing patches of swamp where the track faded from view and the lightly frozen surface yielded treacherously to the pressure of their feet and let them sink into the ooze beneath. Climbing, descending, and climbing again, they came in time to the first true outpost of their mountain, a bold steepness crowned by dark high crags from which, through many years, great pieces of rock had fallen to rest in disarray about the ground through which the path now took its course. Further a little way they reached a high, thin fall of water, where a stream, gathered from many smaller ones of its kind, flung itself eagerly down a narrow rocky cleft to splash and chatter in a shallow pool below. And here the three must turn from following the main valley, and climb the steeper slope down which the stream ran its course. Up and up they went, each step a weariness here by reason of the yielding nature of the ground. Beautiful cushions of moss, there were, dripping a thousand tiny icicles from their margins, and tall stiff grasses frosted to a likeness of white-furred spears. But as time passed, mosses and grass and streams were left below, and the way went over rock and loose stones up an ever steepening slope. At last the ridge, humped and thin edged, which joined their mountain to its twin peak, was reached by the panting climbers, and here they halted to gaze with awe on the great sweep of rock cliffs which rose so grandly before them. Almost legendary to them were the tales they had heard of men who had found means of climbing these stupendous rocks from base to crest; legends or miraculous indeed, did these tales appear when now they measured, with half frightened eyes, the height of those towering crags.

Beyond the base of the icy rocks they could see that the ladder-steep cleft up which they must go was filled with snow, but snow to them meant soft and easy stepping, and no misgiving came to their minds. For of snow in high places they had no knowledge. So it was that they began to climb

the cleft in good heart, and were well content that they had several hours of daylight left to them.

But after they had gone a few yards only up the cleft, the snow became harder, and slower and ever more difficult became their progress. At first they could drive their feet into the slope and gain good footing, but soon it grew so firm and frozen that their boots could make no notches in the surface that would serve to stand upon. Untrained in the arts of steep climbing, they had brought no rope nor other safeguard, so that, at a place where the longer legs of the elders enabled them to stride from the now unyielding snow surface to the crumbling rock walls of the cleft, it became necessary to let down a stoutly woven neck-tie to aid the young boy in moving from where he stood balanced on the last of the snow steps. For a little while now their task became easier, and a short descent on softer snow gave them relief. But on the last and steepest portion of the cleft, at a place where it curved upwards round the last of the high crags, difficulties far greater than those they had overcome awaited them.

Here the snow lay like a knife-edged spine up the centre of the cleft, so that the three climbers were obliged to place themselves astride it, like riders on a rearing horse, and work their way upwards, inch by inch, gaining what help they could by pressing their feet against its icy sides. Their progress became slower, came at last to a standstill at a place where there was rock indeed, but rock enclosed in hard, transparent ice which revealed, while it withheld, the rough surface that would give so welcome a foothold. Daylight was beginning to fade and a sudden darkening caused them to notice that clouds had gathered and were creeping down the cleft towards them. In some dismay they took thought of returning by the way they had come, but feared that the difficulties which had been so great in ascending might prove worse if they should attempt to go down. So they turned again to their upward course and in time found that by means of using each other as human ladders, they were able to surmount the icy barrier which had stopped their way. Very thankful were they to see that beyond this torrent of ice the snow lay at a gentler angle; and through the gathering

dusk and cloud they saw that the cleft was ending at last on the broad breast of the mountain's final slope. Wearied by their struggles, they nevertheless pressed forward, determined that they should at last stand upon the summit now that they had passed in safety over the dangers below. The clouds had thickened and were drawn close around the mountain by the time that the three travellers had found their way to the great mound of stones which marked the summit, but though their limbs were weary, their hearts were full of happiness because they had accomplished that which they had set out to do

And now they knew that they must hurry down so as to gain, before darkness fell, the great heathery moor which lay below the southern slopes. But once more they found a difficulty, for in the thick cloud they could not tell in which direction to begin the descent, and though they knew the way held no such obstacles as those they had encountered in ascending, none of them had ever followed this way before. Help came to them suddenly in the tearing apart for an instant of the curtain of cloud, and far below they saw a silvery tarn which had caught and held a last gleam from the evening sky. This tarn they knew well, having often passed it when crossing the great moor, and no longer in doubt they set out in its direction with all possible speed. Over loosely piled slopes of boulders they made their way carefully in the grey dusk and presently found themselves below the muffling cloud and out on the broad, comfortable slopes of grass. Steep though these were and cut by rocky stream beds, the light yet just held strength to guide them to the path which ran across the moor, falling at its southern end into the valley that they must reach that night. It was now that weariness seized upon them cruelly, for with all difficulty and uncertainty past, their minds were free to feel the results of the day's demands upon their strength. Stumbling often in the star-lit dark, they came at length down the last steep fall of the path which brought them to the very doors of their inn.

And that night the three rested in great content, and laughed to see the cold rain falling on the morrow.

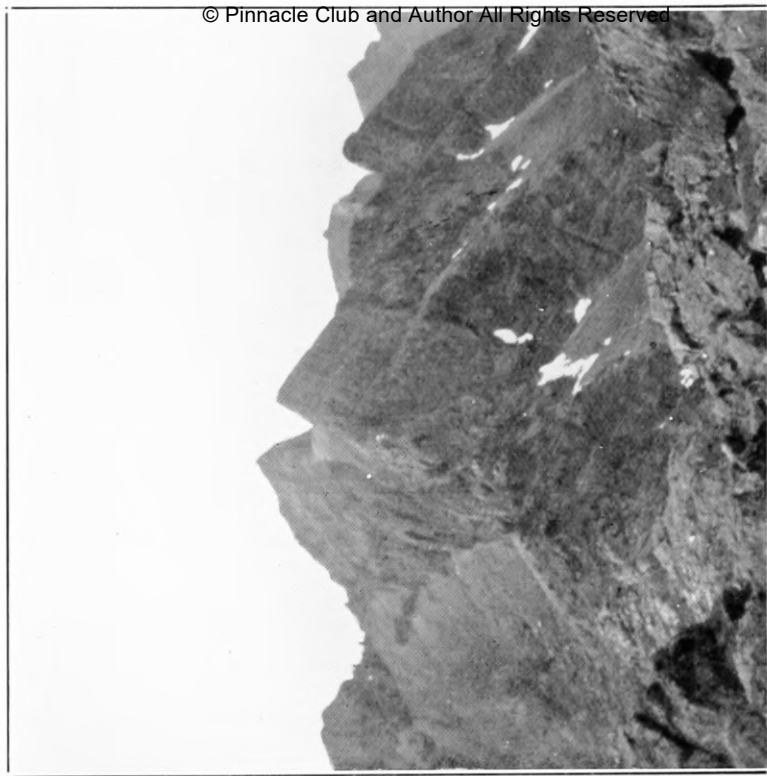


Photo Mabel I. Jeffrey
**SGURR ALASDAIR AND SGURR THEARLAICH
FROM SGURR DUBH NA DA RHEINN**

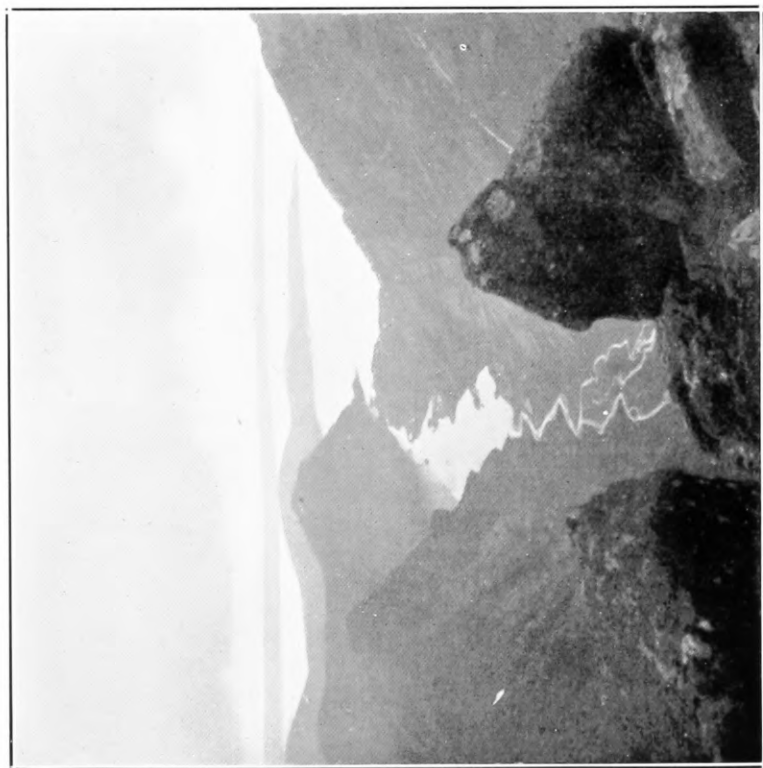


Photo Mabel I. Jeffrey
LOCH CORUIK FROM SGURR A'GHREADAIDH

HEAT AND COLD ON THE CUILLIN RIDGE

BY
LILIAN BRAY.

HAVING always had our Whitsun Meet in the Lakes we decided in 1927 to make a change and to hold it in Skye. Considering its distance, its unapproachability, and the short holiday enjoyed by most of us, we were quite pleased at six members turning up at Mrs. Macrae's, Glen Brittle, on the Saturday before Whitsun.

From the moment we set foot on the Island we were imbued with but one idea—the Cuillin ridge; we must traverse it in its entirety, it had never yet been accomplished alone by women, so our first few days were spent in preparation. Trilby and Biddy had already been to Skye and knew parts of the ridge, and we made long excursions to those peaks with which none of us were acquainted. We traversed the Bideins and the Mhadaidhs, we climbed down and then up the Thearliach side of the Thearlaich Dubh gap, we ascended Mhic Coinnich by Collie's ledge. Further we made two dumps of food, one by the Inaccessible Pinnacle, which we deemed nearly half-way, and another with both food and woollies on the Col between Bidein and Caisteal, where we thought we might possibly spend a few hours of the night.

The preparations completed, it remained to settle the party and hour of departure. The party was settled for Dr. Corbett, Trilby, Biddy and myself; but the zero hour was discussed and rediscussed afresh every day. The problem was: if two first-class men (Messrs. Shadbolt and McLaren) took 17 hours, how long would four women take? After working it out by higher mathematics, and with the help of Einstein's relativity, the correct answer seemed to be twenty-four hours. That being so, it was argued that it did not matter at what hour the start was made, as we had to run round the clock. Unfortunately, though we were agreed as a body that it did not matter, to each one individually it seemed to matter very much. One wanted to rest all day and start at 8 p.m.,

so as to get the night over first; another at 2 a.m., because all good mountaineers started at that hour; a third at 5 a.m., because it would not be light at 2 o'clock; and the last voted for a good night's rest and a normal start at 9 a.m.

Finally 5 a.m. had it, and Mrs. Macrae offered to give us breakfast at that hour. Unfortunately at 5 o'clock on the appointed day it was raining hard, with snow on the ridge, and after waiting a short time we returned to our beds with the joy with which one usually returns to one's bed at such an hour. It cleared up later and looked like being fine next day. It was now argued by one of the party that as Mrs. Macrae had got up so early that day we could not ask her to get up early again, and that we must start at 9 a.m.; and start at 9 a.m. we did, after a proper breakfast. We carried but little food, one bottle of water between us and a thin mac-kintosh each.

The day was cold but fine, and we trudged across the wet moor and toiled up Garsbheinn. We made very fair progress till we reached the Thearliach Dubh Gap. Here, for the only time during the climb, I was somewhat disturbed from my usual equanimity and showed, I fear, some slight annoyance. I had thought we were to *abseil* down the perpendicular side, and had even cut off a piece of my rope for a sling; but when I had placed the rope and made all arrangements my three companions announced their intention of climbing down as they were not used to *abseiling*. Probably I should not have felt any annoyance at all if there had not been a terrific snow and hail storm at the moment; but I confess my patience was tried as I sat on the top exposed to the full blast of the storm, while I let one after the other slowly (very slowly) down the steep face of rock, and ended by *abseiling* down myself. The climb up the other side was led by Biddy, the hail storm still raging, and the rest of us with frozen fingers were glad of the rope above.

The weather continued uncertain for some time, fine, cold intervals, varied by colder showers. We wasted more time at the Inaccessible Pinnacle, for, as we were not going to *abseil* down the steep side, we had to walk up the long easy rib and descend the same way. A very heavy storm

overtook us here, and we huddled under shelter and ate some of our "cached" provisions. It was nearly 9 p.m. when the storm ceased and we quitted the Pinnacle, and though the weather from then onwards was fine, it was bitterly cold. We kept on steadily but slowly till 11 p.m., when one of our party showed signs of weariness, and as daylight was waning we called a halt. We were then on the slope of Ghreadaidh, and had a fairly flat piece of rock to lie on; but alas! we had nothing extra to put on but the thinnest of thin mackintoshes, our *cache* of clothes was still in the far distance. However, we were thankful for what we had, especially as the rocks were wet. We lay down—but not to sleep. For quite half an hour we tried to find a better spot; but alas! every spot was swept by the night breeze, no shelter anywhere, bare wet rock below us, a pitiless starlit sky above us, and all around the wind of heaven. We huddled together in pairs, there was nowhere room for all of us; we took it in turns to lie on one another's legs; at intervals we got up and flapped our arms. I complained bitterly of my bedfellow because she shivered so violently, "it was enough to prevent anyone sleeping." At last at 3 a.m. it was sufficiently light to think of making a start, we ate some food and called it breakfast, we thought to wash it down with a mouthful of water; but Nature decreed otherwise, for though the bottle had been in a rucksack, its contents were frozen, and we deduced from this that it really must have been rather a cold night.

We had hardly been going half an hour when a thick mist came down; the rocks, moreover, were glazed with ice, and going was so slow that we could not keep warm. On the ascent of the South-West Mhadaidh we lost our way in the mist and finally, without one single dissentient voice, we decided to abandon the ridge and make tracks for Glen Brittle. We dropped off easily into Coire na Dorum, and by 6.30 were drinking tea and thinking of bed. Thus ended our first attempt, there was no hope of repeating it that year, as some of our party had to leave the next day.

From that time onwards the thought of the ridge was seldom absent from our minds, whenever Trilby, Biddy and I met we spent our time discussing "Der Tag," the food we

were going to take, the clothes we were going to wear, the hour we were going to start, the time we were going to take over the expedition, the party that was to form it. We never got in the least nearer settling anything, except that the attempt must be repeated the following year. So next Whitsun saw us once more at Mrs. Macrae's. There were four of us and two men, but only Trilby, Biddy and I were to try the ridge.

The day after our arrival (Sunday) there was a thick mist, and we spent it in making two *caches* as before. Monday it rained all day; Tuesday was gloriously fine and hot, and as the weather looked more settled we determined to start on the following day.

This time we prepared our breakfast the night before, making tea in a couple of thermos flasks so that we might get up at what time we liked without disturbing anyone, and we actually were off by 2.30 a.m. It was really hardly daylight, and in consequence we lost some time on the way to Garsbheinn, not taking the best line across the moor.

The day turned out hot, cloudless and absolutely airless, not a breath of wind. We made good progress at first, my companions had learnt to *abseil*, and we wasted no time over the Gap; but as the sun grew higher the heat became intense, and the long trudge up the scree past An Stac was terrible in the midday heat. The Pinnacle took us but little time; we had previously found the *abseil* block, we walked easily up the rib and swung ourselves quickly down the steep side. In spite of the heat we had gained an hour and a half on our previous time, having taken nine and a half hours.

We had intended to have a large meal at the Pinnacle where we had our chief *cache*; but the heat was such that we simply could not eat, we had a few oranges and apples, but no water, and though an orange was delicious while it lasted, five minutes afterwards our thirst was as bad as ever. We left the Pinnacle at 12.30, the heat was really terrific, and the rocks almost too hot to touch, our mouths so dry we could hardly speak. The sun that day seemed to have some exceptional power of stabbing us, there was no possibility of getting away from it; it just glared at us remorselessly from above and, like some malignant being, sucked up every

drop of moisture from our bodies. We had no shady hats, I had started in one but lost it at Garsbheinn, and only wore a handkerchief; our skins were burning. I regret to relate, from now onwards our progress was slow; at the top of every peak we flung ourselves down—only for a moment—but each moment was at least ten minutes; at every gap we paused, gazing at the wall above us, sometimes crouching with our heads in a tiny patch of shade; but still we continued, though the timekeeper refused any more to take the time of arrival at each peak. Of conversation there was practically none, I only remember exchanging a few words as we were toiling up some peak as to where we would take our next climbing holiday; we decided on Holland.

We passed over the Mhadaidhs and the Bideins, we jumped the amusing little gaps between Bidein and Castail, we scrambled off Castail to the Col, and we were slowly toiling up Bruach na Frithe when suddenly at 9 p.m. one of the party announced that she could not go another step. That being so we lay down on our tracks; it was not a very good place as the ridge itself was impossible just there, so we had to make ourselves as comfortable as we could on the slope. Unfortunately the slope was somewhat steep, and we felt that if we turned over in our sleep we should continue to turn over more and more rapidly till we reached the bottom of the ridge. However, on such occasions one does not sleep soundly, and no one turned over in her sleep. Our greatest tragedy occurred here. We had been hoarding one single lemon with which we hoped to moisten our lips before retiring for the night. Alas! that lemon slipped from our grasp, and we had to watch it falling faster and ever faster down the mountain side. It was perhaps fortunate that our tongues were too dry to speak.

It was, indeed, a night *à la belle étoile*. Slowly, very slowly, the sun sank below the horizon, the sky changed from gold to red and finally to purple, and then, almost midnight, one after the other the stars came out to look down upon us. The night breeze swept silently across the ridge; we could feel and see the quiet beauty enveloping us, without one sound to disturb the peacefulness of the night.

3.30 a.m. saw us once more on our way; we had all slept more or less; our thirst was not so acute in the cool morning, and we set off up Bruach na Frithe. At the summit we found kind friends had placed three apples for us, but strange as it sounds, my companions could not touch them, which was fortunate for me. At Bealach nan Lice we considered Naysmith's route up the Tooth. None of us had done it, no one seemed inclined to lead it, so there was nothing for it but to descend into Lota Corrie and scramble up the long and easy way. So far as I remember, we climbed the Tooth in complete silence, and if one of us stopped to rest no one disagreed. For the awkward pitch from the Tooth to Am Bhasteir we used a shoulder for the first one and the other two helped themselves by a stirrup of rope let down. The climb up the Western ridge of Sgurr nan Gillean was a delight after the toilsome scrambling, and we took it easy down the scree of the Tourist route.

It was 9 a.m. when we finished the ridge, we had spent $30\frac{1}{2}$ hours without water through the hottest day it has ever been my fate to climb on in the British Isles. Water seemed now of no use to us, and though we drank unlimited quantities, we never really slaked our thirst till we reached Sligachan at 11 o'clock and drank innumerable cups of tea.

We had hoped to secure a car to drive over to Glen Brittle; but there was none available, so we had once more to take to our feet for the ten miles over the moor. Luckily we had unlimited time, unlimited water and unlimited opportunities of bathing, and with the thought of tea and bed awaiting us the walk proved quite pleasant.

Precisely at 4.30 we thrust our sunburnt faces through the window at Mrs. Macrae's, where our party were sitting round the tea-table. "We've done it!" Two days after I heard Trilby and Biddy murmuring: "Next time we really must do it in the twenty-four hours."

NOTES FOR FUTURE RIDGE WALKERS.

THE Scottish Mountaineering Club Guide is essentially a climbing guide and not of much help to ridge walkers, there is occasionally a very brief description; but generally the Guide seems to think that "the route is always fairly obvious." On our first traverse of the Bideins and Sgurr a'Mhadaidh we found the way anything but obvious, we may have been stupid and inefficient; but we heard of a party of men a few days afterwards who spent over an hour on one of the Mhadaidh peaks. It is certainly advisable for any party attempting the ridge to know most of the peaks or time will be lost finding the best ways down. It is hoped these notes may prove useful, we do not pretend that the routes described are the only ways up or down the various peaks but they are the easiest ways and for that reason probably the quickest.

On our second attempt one or other of us had done every peak.

Footgear.—We all walked across the boggy moor with bare legs and wearing an old pair of rubbers, this was my idea, and I thought it a particularly brilliant one, for it did not matter where one walked, in or out of the water. At the foot of Garsbheinn we discarded our old rubbers and put on dry stockings. Trilby and I wore *kletterschuhe* and we found them quite perfect, being equally good on rock or scree. Biddy wore boots, not because she preferred them, but because the *kletterschuhe* she had did not fit.

Rope.—We carried a half weight, and used it on the steep rock face shortly before the Gap, to *abseil* down the perpendicular side of the Thearlaich Dubh Gap, and also to climb up the other side; to *abseil* down the lower half of the Pinnacle. On the second Bidein the first to descend used it for a moment to lower herself over the awkward corner and finally on the pitch between the Tooth and Am Basteir, the two last used it.

To Garsbheinn.—Nothing special to remark except that the highest point is to the right, we kept rather too much to the left and found ourselves on a point which was not the highest and had to traverse across.

To Bhig.—Easy going along the ridge without much of a dip.

To Eag.—From the gap it appears best to keep just on the left of the ridge, though quite close to it, till a little short of the summit where the ridge turns to the left, here it can be followed to the top of Eag. It has a nearly level summit ridge which gives pleasant walking.

To Dubh na Da Bheinn.—On the descent from Eag the ridge should be kept to more or less, till just short of the gap where a cairn on the left leads to a little awkward pitch. At the end of the gap a large pinnacle is passed by a grassy track on its right (Coruisk) side. From the gap it is a scramble (not a walk) to Dubh na Da Bheinn beginning with a steep ascent on the left of the gap (well scratched).

The next gap is the famous Thearliach Dubh Gap. Just before reaching it there is a steep ascent of about 40 feet. It is very exposed, and though not difficult the rock is not quite sound and we roped for it. The short wall on the Dubh side of the Gap is very perpendicular and the holds small, there is a convenient stone for an *abseil*. No doubt the rope might be arranged around it so that it could be pulled off after the party had descended; but having had experience of ropes that stick and refuse to come off, we had a spare piece with us to make a sling. The climb up the other side is delightful, it begins with a

somewhat strenuous chimney with a good belay round a chockstone; this is followed by an exposed pitch up good rock.

To Alastair.—From the Gap a few minutes walk up a scree shoot.

To Thearliach.—Alastair is descended to the head of the scree shoot, and a few yards down it a little chimney leads on to the ridge by which one arrives at the summit in a few minutes.

To Mhic Coinnich.—It is not quite easy to find the route to the gap, a large pinnacle just before the gap must be turned on the right (Coruisk) side. From the top of Thearliach two small gaps are passed, at a third gap a grassy terrace on the right side of the ridge should be followed till rather more than half-way round the pinnacle, a cairn marks a descent by a crack to a ledge, about 25 yards along this ledge a cairn marks a further descent, and then the gap can be reached. The easiest though not the most direct way up Mhic Coinnich is by Collie's ledge. This begins with a 10 foot ascent well to the right of the gap, then a traverse to the left is made on scree till Collie's ledge is plainly seen. The ledge can be followed the whole way round on the left side till the ridge on the far side of Mhic Coinnich is reached, whence a few minutes walk back to the summit is made.

To the Pinnacle.—As far as the gap the ridge can generally be kept to, going slightly on its left side just before the gap. From the gap a sharp descent and ascent must be made on the left side of An Stac, it is the most toilsome ascent on the whole of the ridge as it is entirely on scree, it is best to keep as close as possible to An Stac. The ascent of the Pinnacle is quite simple and the first part of the descent on the other side is also easy, the last part is steep, but there is a good abseil place just where the lower figure is seen on page 84 of the Guide book.

Deagh to Bannachdich and on to Thormaid is a ridge walk.

Greadaidh.—The ascent should be made directly by steep rocks (no difficulties). There are two tops and after the second (North) top a large stony terrace on the left side leads to a small gap, An Dorus, then an ascent and a drop into the true gap, Eag Dubh, which is passed by a traverse to the right.

South West Mhadaidh.—From the gap there is a short steep pitch, then the easy scree on the left can be followed for some distance till it leads on to the ridge which is then followed to the summit. The descent is made mostly on the ridge, later slabs on the right are descended and the gap is attained by rocks on its right side.

The next peak (third in the Guide).—The steep rocks immediately above the gap should be ascended, then slightly to the right, and finally, a swing round a corner on the right is made on to easy terraces, thence easy to summit. (The first part is well scratched and the way cannot be missed). The descent is a walk off by the ridge.

Next peak (second in the Guide) begins with a short pleasant climb up a pillar of gabbro, good holds. The descent is by stony terraces on the right side.

North East peak, is an easy scramble straight up the ridge, the descent is a long easy scree walk on the left side.

Bidein.

West peak.—The ascent is directly by the ridge to the boulder on the top, the descent is by slabs and terraces on the right side.

Central peak.—Ascent is again made by the ridge, from the summit the very sharp ridge should be followed till near the gap, a cairn is seen on the right side, the slabs on the right should then be descended and a drop is made over the edge into the gap. The landing over the

edge is not quite easy and it is best for the first one to have a rope unless she understands the trick of balance, the following ones can easily be steadied.

North Peak.—Ascent on left side of gap by an easy terrace, then directly upwards to the summit, a short distance. The descent by the ridge is easy.

To Caisteal.—The ridge can be kept to more or less the whole way. A large lump can be turned by a terrace on the right, two amusing gaps are passed which must be jumped (the first one is now bridged by a boulder). Shortly before arriving at the gap the ridge ends abruptly and a brown stone terrace must be followed on the left for a few yards, a shallow chimney or crack on the right leads to slabs which are traversed to the left, finally the descent to the gap begins with a little chimney on the left side of the ridge.

To Bruach na Frithe. From the gap directly upwards, then along an easy grassy track to the left of the ridge and then up to the ridge again by scree. A hump can be turned on the left, a gap is encountered and a terrace on the right followed. The Limpet should be passed on the left and thence almost without a break the ridge can be followed to the summit. The shoulder just before the top can be turned on the left side if preferred.

To the Tooth.—The descent from Bruach na Frithe to the Gap (Bealach nan Lice) needs no description. The shortest way up the Tooth is by Naysmith's route. The easy way is long and tedious. A long descent must first be made into Lota Corrie, keeping close beside the ridge. The starting point of ascent is quite obvious provided one goes far enough down, it is practically at the end of the ridge and begins with a scree walk, there is a little scrambling in parts but absolutely no difficulties of any sort in the ascent.

To Am Bhasteir.—There is a short overhung chimney from the Tooth to Bhasteir, this can be surmounted with the help of a shoulder for the first one.

Sgurr nan Gilleann.—A pleasant walk to the gap and a delightful climb up the Western ridge of Surr nan Gilleann, it is well scratched and consequently the route is not difficult to find. The *Gendarme* is described in the Guide and is sensational rather than difficult. For the Tourist route down, the start is not quite easy to find, the South East ridge is followed for a time and then a descent made on the left side.

THE CROWBERRY RIDGE BY ABRAHAM'S DIRECT ROUTE

BY
ELLA MANN.

FOR long it had been my ambition to climb the Crowberry Ridge. Ever since coming into contact with climbers and climbing clubs one had heard so much of this classic ascent that it had become a goal eagerly longed for. And whenever one thought of it, there appeared before one the memory of a picture post card entitled "On the Crowberry Ridge," a picture in which a climber is about to step off a very narrow ledge, round the corner of a vertical wall, into nothing. That picture must have done much to give the Crowberry its enviable reputation.

Last September I found myself at Kingshouse with a companion who was willing to embark on any adventure. The main objects of our visit were the Crowberry Ridge, and the Church Door Buttress on Bidean-nam-Bian. The weather was glorious; brilliant sunshine, blue skies, air crisp and invigorating, though very cold. Rannoch Moor lay a region of colourful enchantment as one looked out over it to the distant hills, unsubstantial faery things afloat in a faery sea of mauve and rose and delicate green.

Buchaille Etive Mhor, the Great Shepherd of Etive, looked a fine fellow, a monarch of the glen, as the mists of morning unrolled from its rocks and gullies. It stands guard over Glen Etive and Glencoe, and the face looking out to Kingshouse, and over Rannoch Moor is a splendid looking rock wall on which, among other climbs, is the Crowberry Ridge. To anyone approaching it from the Glencoe road, this face seems to give promise of good rock-climbing. On closer inspection, however, it is seen that the rock does not continue unbroken to the summit, but ever and anon gives place to heather slopes, or large vegetation clad ledges. There

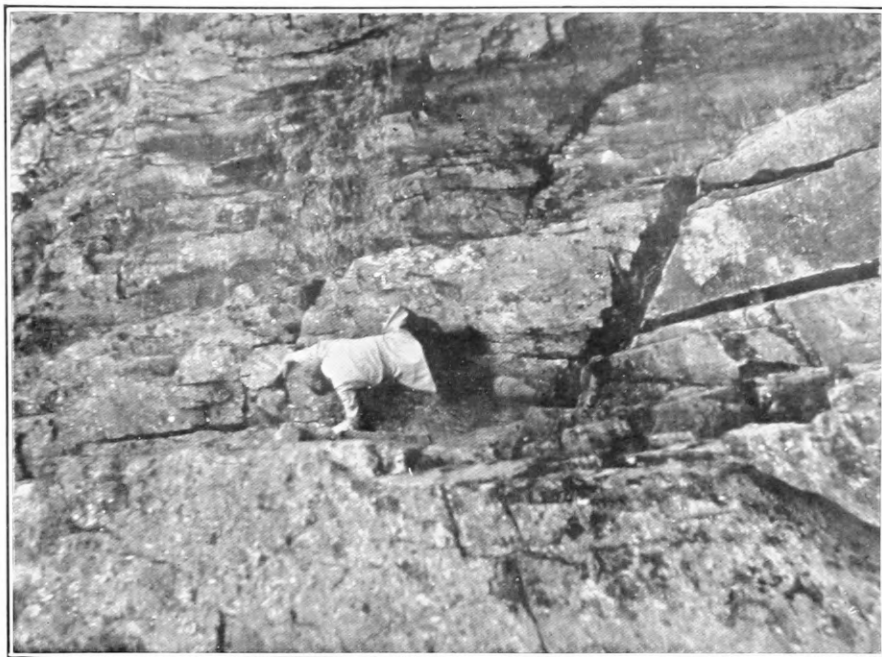


Photo J. de V. Hasard
**CROWBERRY RIDGE, WALL BELOW
ABRAHAM'S LEDGE**



Photo J. de V. Hasard
**CROWBERRY RIDGE, START OF ABRAHAM'S
DIRECT FINISH**

is one ridge which goes on more or less unbroken. It is the Crowberry Ridge.

Leaving the Glencoe road, and wading across the stream, my companion and I made for an obvious gully which lay well to our right of the rocks, and which afforded the easiest route up to the climbs. Neither had any idea of the exact position of the climb we were after, neither being fond of "reading things up in guides," and our line of approach, we later on discovered, took us much too far to the right; but it was an easy and attractive way. At first it went up the gully bank, then out into the gully itself, over pleasant, red-hued water-worn slabs, over which ran the clearest of clear streams, till we reached the level from which we judged climbing must begin. Traversing a considerable distance to the left, we came to a face of fine hard, sound rock, and began to look for signs of a climb; but signs there were none; no cairns, no scratches, no trace of climber here. Rounding a corner one saw in the distance a fine-looking buttress rise aloft, separated from us by another steep gully. This was crossed, none too easily, and soon it became apparent we were on the right track, for below was a cairn, and ahead a broad ledge with more of these friendly cairns. We had reached the ridge though well above the place from which the ascent is usually made. Yes, here it was, a steep, imposing looking wall of sound, fine rock.

It was now 1.30 p.m.; clouds overcast the face of the sun; it grew very cold. How long did this climb take? An hour? Two hours? Three? Neither knew. Had we time to do the climb, and get off the mountain and moor before dusk? But out came the sun again, and doubts scattered before it. Picking up our sacks we started, one on the steps of the other, up that first thirty feet or so of steep, sound wall. At the top we arrived on a ledge. This we now know to be Abraham's Ledge. Then it meant nothing. I made for the wall to the right-hand of the ledge, and up this, many scratches seemed to indicate, the route lay. But the voice of my companion called me back. Blessed, still small voice! for it recalled me to the best part of the climb. There were scratches to the left, where the ledge tapered off and disappeared round a

corner. These I now followed. At the corner they stopped abruptly. So did I, in joy and excitement, for here was the spot of the picture; the place I had dreamed of and dreaded; the start of Abraham's Direct Route, though neither of us knew that. As I have already said, the ledge tapered away till there was just, and no more, sufficient stance for the toes. Below, the wall dropped down sheer, and above, it rose, steep, smooth, and as far as I can remember, holdless for the first few feet. The initial movements would require no effort, but just delicacy of balance. The exposure was utter, for the only belay, away at the other extremity of the ledge, could be of no assistance whatsoever to the leader.

Creeping back with caution to the pleasant "broadness" of the ledge, I put on my rubbers, attached myself to a length of alpine cord, and took off my sack. With nervous and quite unnecessary injunctions about the smooth paying out of the rope, I disappeared round that corner, and up that wall as quickly as I knew, nor "stayed upon the order of my going." About twenty feet up one realized, with some sense of disappointment, that the thing was done, the worst over. Not till after further climbing of fifty feet was it possible to belay with security, and bring up one's second. First I pulled my sack up, and then awaited with delighted anticipation what was coming; for my companion was following with sack on back, and hobnailers on feet. One's own struggles over, there is much satisfaction in watching the struggles of the next man. Looking back on this part of the climb, I think it would be impossible to *descend* by Abraham's Route. Getting from the wall to the ledge again would, I think, be impossible except by *abseiling*.

After this the climb presented no difficulty. We found some wonderful cushions of moss, and heather, and crowberry; ideal resting-places from which to survey the superb scenes around; and up to us there rose the belling of the stags from distant corries. The Crowberry Pinnacle which is detached from the mountain, and which must be descended in order to gain the route to the summit, we found in a very rotten, loose state, and it had to be descended with care. Except for that portion, the rock is beautifully sound throughout,

THE CROWBERRY RIDGE

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and most of the time we climbed together. The summit was reached about 3 p.m., the climb, from the point at which we began it, taking under an hour and a half. It was not so hard as one anticipated. Indeed, but for "Abraham's Direct" it was disappointing in this respect. Yet its ways are ways of pleasantness; the rock is sound and good; its crowberry cushions one can never forget, nor the belling of the stags challenging one another from the distant corries. All who climb it must remember it with pleasure, for all time.

Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy
 The rage and rigour of a polar sky,
 And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose
 On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

O blest within the inclosure of your rocks,
 Not herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks;
 Nor fertilizing streams your fields divide,
 That show, reversed, the villas on their side;
 No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird,
 Or voice of turtle in your land is heard;
 Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell
 Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell;
 But Winter, arm'd with terrors here unknown,
 Sits absolute on his unshaken throne;
 Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste,
 And bids the mountains he has built stand fast;
 Beckons the legions of his storms away
 From happier scenes, to make your land a prey;
 Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won,
 And scorns to share it with the distant sun.

COWPER.

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF SCOTTISH CLIMBING

BY

MABEL I. JEFFREY.

NO place could be better for the all-round training of the mountaineer than the highlands of Scotland.

From January to May snow is usually to be found on the northern slopes of the hills. During March and April it lies at its deepest in the corries; the snow is firm and the sun not too warm, and the days are long enough to allow of undertaking the bigger expeditions. Climbs of all kinds attract the mountaineer, varied according to the skill and endurance of the party; a steep snow gully, possibly corniced at the top, a rocky buttress plastered with snow, or a day on the high ridges, wandering from top to top with enchanting views of distant peaks, snow covered, and peeps of blue water far and near. Or again, fighting one's way against a blizzard, buffeted here and there by the wind, many times unable to stand or see, but with always the determination to win through.

There are many popular centres, some of easy access, and others more remote, from the south of Scotland to the far north of Ross-shire, and there are many peaks over 3,000ft. to choose from. Nowadays the glens are mostly deserted, and few inhabited houses are to be found in the heart of the hills. A long tramp to the base of the peak is more the rule than the exception, and the climber must be prepared for anything up to five miles across heather or rough track before starting the work of the day in earnest.

One of the most southerly and best-known places is ARROCHAR on Loch Long, with the fascinating little rocky peak called the Cobbler looking down upon it. In the adjoining corrie rise the cliffs of Narnain, on which the climber can also get good sport. The Cobbler is not a Munro (the name given by climbers to all peaks over 3,000ft. in Scotland), but one climbs it from sea level to its summit 2,898ft. It takes no more than an hour from Arrochar Hotel to get up the steep

ascent over bracken and bog to the lip of the corrie. From there onwards one is inspired by the view of the jagged rocky peaks in fascinating outline, resembling that of a cobbler at work in the centre and two sentinels on either side, jocularly called Jean and the daughter! When snow fills the corrie and picks out the ledges and gullies it is even more attractive.

On such a day we lately made the traverse of the three peaks. Mist hung over everything, still and quiet, as we tramped the mile and a half from Tarbet Hotel, Loch Lomond, and doubt was in our minds as to what the god of the weather had in store. Was it to be a snow-storm, or mist-covered peaks, or would the sun dispel the clouds? The temperature was many degrees below freezing-point, and the hillside was dry and hard underfoot. A small fall of snow overnight had made the hills a curious greyish colour, and covered the great slabs of black ice which had frozen on the hillsides wherever little streams had been running. This made treacherous going, as we could see no difference between snow patches and ice patches, until we were sprawling on knees or backs! To our joy the sun was to be seen, and gradually the mists vanished as we made our way to the base of the rocks of the South Peak. By the time we were ready for lunch, the sun was shining warmly, and we were above the haze. The mountain world was dazzling with new snow, and ice-crystals on grass and rocks. Far to the west and south we could see heavy banks of cloud below us, and realized that the city-dwellers were toiling amid fog and gloom, while we were enjoying the exhilaration of sun, snow and frost. In summer the south peak is an easy scramble—good for the novice, as there are occasional sensational glimpses sheer to the corrie below. But with this sprinkling of new snow on every tiny hold we found it quite sufficient to occupy all our attention. There was no real difficulty, as no black ice filled the cracks, and we were soon on the summit. Descending to the col on the west side was quite interesting, as we found occasional ice on the ledges, giving insecure footing. The snow was deeper here, and the first one down was sometimes like a snowball, clearing away the snow with clothes, hands and feet.

From the col the central peak is reached in a few minutes, and a nice finger and toe scramble up to the top is pleasant on a warm day. But on this occasion everything was covered with ice-crystals formed by a keen north wind, and we took the ordinary route, crawling through the rocky window, along the ledge, slippery with ice, to the summit block. A fine view of loch and mountain peak stretches all around, and the sun broke through the bank of clouds, giving us a glimpse out to the western sea, blue and shimmering in the distance. We were long in crossing to the North Peak, owing to the hard condition of the snow and the treacherous patches of ice hidden under it. Even amongst the grassy tufts it was frozen solid, and it was often necessary to cut steps. As we came to the North Peak, we looked down the right-angled gully, a steep short climb with one difficult pitch, and a sensational traverse leading to the right on to the vertical wall. Snow plastered the rocks, and the traverse looked extremely unsafe. Luckily we struck some good snow at the back of the North Peak, on which we were able to kick steps for our descent. Spending so much time in traversing the Cobbler seemed ridiculous, but by the time we reached the boulders in the corrie our respect for the peak had risen immeasurably. Under other conditions we could have run round the peak in a few hours, and now the sun was almost setting (4.30 p.m.). The view to the west was glorious, and the rays of the setting sun were reflected in the dark waters of Loch Long with a deep rose and violet hue. To the north-east the peaks were tinged here and there with an alpine glow on their snowy summits, auguring well for another day's fine weather.

From Arrochar the west Highland Railway runs by the side of Loch Lomond through Glen Falloch to CRIANLARICH where rise Ben More, snow-capped in winter, and Stobinian cone-shaped and graceful, and Cruach Ardran, with its jolly snow gully, heads the nearer corrie.

TYNDRUM lies a few miles away, and it is from there that Ben Lui is climbed. The rough track is followed for about five miles, but nearly all the way Lui is to be seen rising steeply, in winter usually white with snow from base to summit. The central gully is frequently ice-filled and may give from

two to four hours step-cutting; while the south and north ribs, rocky buttresses on either side, can be interesting and difficult under icy conditions.

Still further north lies INVERORAN INN, beautifully situated near Loch Tulla, a popular haunt of the climber and a fine centre for peak-bagging and ridge-wandering. Several peaks have northern corries holding snow for many months, where there is good climbing. Inveroran Inn is reached by car from Bridge of Orchy Station, and farther on one comes to KINGSHOUSE INN on the moors at the upper gateway of Glencoe, one of the most fascinating districts of the highlands. The predominating peak is Buchaille Etive, "The Shepherd" guarding the entrance to the glen. Whether seen at dawn, grey-blue rocky buttresses tinged with red against the blue sky, or outlined dark against the sunset, Buchaille always attracts, and many fine rock climbs are to be had on its steep face.

Last May I left London by the evening train, equipped and ready for the hills, and in the morning at 8 a.m. arrived at Bridge of Orchy Station. A friend had devotedly joined the train at Edinburgh in the small hours of the morning, and we got into the waiting car and drove the thirteen miles to Kingshouse Inn. We were cheered by signs of good weather and, indeed, found the bogs entirely dried up as there had been weeks without rain. On arrival at Kingshouse we donned our boots and rucksacks, and set out before 10 a.m. for Buchaille Etive. We made for the Northern Buttress, a steep climb leading well up to the shoulder, from which we had fine views of the surrounding hills. The day was warm and windless, and soon we lay basking in the sunshine on the summit. Incredible that I should have been in London less than twenty hours before! The Crowberry Ridge is the best rock-climb on Buchaille, and rises steeply for over 700ft. nearly to the summit. Fine views of the Crowberry are to be had from the Curved Ridge, which is an interesting and easy climb, and makes a pleasant descent, avoiding the long detour round the back of Buchaille and by Glen Etive. The latter has its compensations in the fine bathing pools to be found in the River Etive!

Around GLENCOE there are many climbs easily reached from Kingshouse with the aid of a motor car. The Aonach Eagach Ridge attracts everyone, summer and winter alike. The only dull part of this expedition is toiling up the steep side of Glencoe, but later the views more than repay the drudgery. Interesting rocky pinnacles follow one another along the ridge. In snow the expedition can become arduous, taking six to eight hours on the ridge alone, and the steep descent into Glencoe at either end is again toilsome.

The rocky faces of Aonach Dubh and Gearr Aonach—popularly called “The Sisters”—attracted us more than once last summer. The rock varies tremendously on the face of Gearr Aonach, as we found when we essayed various routes. To the right we found the rock very steep and solid, but every hold was entirely filled with moss. After trying two pitches of this the leader found it wiser to return, and a considerable detour to the left was made, avoiding the great overhanging cliff. Leaving the overhang on the right a shallow chimney led on to a steep slab with few holds, which was traversed to another chimney with no good belay. The rock above was treacherous, and the leader had difficulty in finding secure holds, as water was trickling down the angle of the gully. When testing the holds a large slab about two feet square slid down on the leader's knee. Warned by shouts the others moved to safety before the stone came to rest at the foot of the chimney ! A mossy ledge half-way up the cliff made a good resting-place for lunch ; and above the rock was better, but always lacking in hitches, which was troublesome with novices in the party. We felt certain that a better climb could be found, and so another day three of us returned. This time we kept as much to the left as possible without turning into the corrie, and found the rock extremely fine and dolomitic in character. The choice of routes was considerable, and excellent rock made us select numerous difficult little pitches, from overhangs to finger and toe traverses, which made a good climb of about 700ft. on the south-east corner of Gearr Aonach.



By kind permission of the Scottish Mountaineering Club

THE NORTH-EAST BUTTRESS AND TOWER RIDGE OF BEN NEVIS

Photo Gilbert Thomson

Behind the rocky bastions of the "Three Sisters" of Glencoe towers Bidean nam Bian, the highest peak in Argyllshire, intersected with deep corries amongst its rocky precipices. Here the Church Door Buttress is to be found, a climb which long tried the powers of the strongest parties before it was finally climbed in 1898.

At the lower end of Glencoe the little inn of CLACHAIG is situated, and one day a party of four of us came down from the summit of Bidean hungry and tired, only to find the inn full and no beds to be had. We were told to try the shepherd's house, two miles back, which we had already passed on our way down the glen. Regretfully we turned back to the cottage. The shepherd rather unwillingly offered us two beds, but explained that he was unable to give us any food, as his wife was away for two days and had the key of the larder! After an earnest plea for breakfast, he agreed to make us some porridge in the morning, and with that arrangement we had to be contented. Back again we trudged to Clachaig Inn, and there got an excellent and badly-needed dinner. When we returned to the cottage the shepherd had prepared spotless beds, and next morning the porridge was first-rate, but we could only get some scraps of oatcake to take on the hills! But it is not often that one fares so badly, and highlanders are well known for their hospitality when once one is admitted over the threshold (not always easy).

FORT WILLIAM lies on Loch Linnhe at the base of Ben Nevis, and the peaks of Mamore and the Easains are within easy reach. Ben Nevis is generally associated with the endless stony track to the summit, more often than not enveloped in mist for the last 2,000ft. of ascent. But the initiated know better, and, leaving the track below the half-way hut, traverse to the left above the Lochan, across the dilapidated deer fence and contour into the valley of the Allt à Mhuilinn. The grandeur of the rock scenery is impressive; on the right tower precipices 2,000ft. high, intersected by snow gullies and corries. From the luncheon stone by the river, the view opens out and the North East Buttress and Tower Ridge come into view. When these cliffs are plastered from head to foot in snow and ice, it is well-nigh

impossible to ascend them, but some of the gullies are possible, unless overhung by enormous cornices. Even on the finest summer day these cliffs look dark and seem unapproachable. Luckily the Ben is not so unfriendly as he appears, for on closer acquaintance many of the apparent difficulties vanish.

My first introduction to Ben Nevis was in company with my father, in the early days when my experience of leading rock climbs was limited to short crag scrambles. We started off for the Castle Ridge and found that two feet of new snow lay on all the ledges. My heart sank, but my father remained inexorable, and I had to take the lead in spite of protests. Progress was slow, as I was quite inexperienced, and when we came to a steep chimney in an exposed position, I took so long in clearing the holds that my father became numb with cold, and could not climb without security from the rope. The shallow chimney above the pitch was full of icy snow, but not deep enough to hold the axe in order to form a belay. However, I managed to jamb myself between the rocks, and give the little assistance that was necessary. By this time the mists were swirling round us, and when we reached the top of the Castles it was like a white pall. It requires knowledge of the mountain to avoid the great gullies which cut far into the summit plateau, more especially when it is almost impossible to detect where the mist and snow meet. Fortunately on that occasion my father was able to avoid the edges of the 30ft. cornices and pilot me safely to the summit cairn.

The cliffs of Nevis are not often free from snow in April, but Easter, 1927, was an outstanding exception. The Castle Ridge went easily, free from snow and ice, and I made up a party of three to climb the Tower Ridge, hoping that we would not find ice in too many unexpected places. The weather was grey, but windless, and not too cold for rock-climbing; as we came in sight of the Ridge it loomed up dark and gloomy into the mist which still hung about the summit of the Ben. One approaches the Tower Ridge by a steep gully filled with loose stones, which runs between the Douglas Boulder and the Tower. Once on the actual ridge the rock is firm, and a series of chimneys of varied difficulty lead one

up to the ledge at the base of the Tower itself. As one rises higher and higher above the glen the grandeur grows. It is not that technical difficulties enthrall, but it is the feeling of space and distance from all human aid that makes one realize one is on the king of British mountains. There is always the thought that a storm might suddenly break and change the whole aspect of the expedition into that of danger.

The Tower itself can be climbed by three different routes : the Recess route, Cracked Slabs route, and by the Eastern Traverse. Snow still lay at this point and black ice filled the cracks, so we decided it was wiser to follow the easiest route. Care had to be taken with our footholds on the sloping ledge, as ice showed below the snow in patches. We traversed to the left until we could almost see into the Tower Gap Chimney, and then a short steep pitch with splendid holds took us quickly to the top of the Tower. Then it is only a step across the Tower Gap to reach the solid ground of the top plateau of Ben Nevis.

It is in the valley of the Allt a'Mhuilinn, near the base of the Tower Ridge, that the first mountain club hut in Scotland has just been erected. My parents have presented it to the Scottish Mountaineering Club in memory of my brother, Charles Inglis Clark. No more suitable or romantic place could have been found for a memorial to a mountaineer—amid the everlasting hills.

Thus every good his native wilds impart,
 Imprints the patriot passion on his heart;
 And e'en those ills, that round his mansion rise,
 Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
 Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
 And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms;
 And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
 Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
 So the loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,
 But bind him to his native mountains more.

GOLDSMITH.

L'ANNÉE DE MISÈRE, 1928

BY
E. WELLS.

SUNNY Italy ! and surely it was never more sunny than in the summer of 1928, when we held our first Pinnacle Meet in the Graians.

We were a small party of four, an excellent number for guideless climbing, the real aim and object of our meet. Bray went out a week before the rest of us ; Dr. Corbett I met in London on Friday, July 27th, and we picked up Dr. Taylor on the boat. Our journey was uneventful except for the intensity of the heat, which became more and more overpowering as we travelled South. On reaching Turin, about two o'clock on Sunday afternoon, instead of doing a little sight-seeing, we were content to sit in a well-shaded café and enjoy iced drinks. On her journey out Bray had sent me a post card to say that Turin was the hottest place on earth—I thought it was even hotter than that !

We left Turin late in the afternoon by train for Aosta—a long, slow journey through most beautiful scenery, which we should have appreciated had we not been so weary. After a night at Aosta we took the Auto to Villeneuve, a village a few miles away. There we were met by a ruddy-faced muleteer who piled our luggage into his little cart, and smilingly invited us to ride. We declined his invitation, and after buying food to carry with us we started out on the five hours' walk up to Eau Rousse. I must also mention that Taylor purchased a wonderful new hat, at a cost of at least a shilling, in the village before starting. We thought it suited her very well, but a peasant woman whom we met, on catching sight of Taylor in a hat and breeches, put down the bundle of hay she was carrying, and turning her face away, began to tell her beads, and never vouchsafed us another glance until we were well past.

We had not gone far when our rosy-cheeked friend driving the mule discovered that he had left the ice-axes behind ; so he had to run back to the hotel for them. We



Photo J. Hirst

GRAN PARADISO WITH CIARFORON AND MONCIAIR

could dispense with guides, but not with ice-axes ! Then on we toiled up the long narrow valley of Valsavaranche, glad indeed when the wayside trees offered us inviting shade. The path was narrow, rough and stony, and the high steep sides of the valley only allowed us very occasional glimpses of snow-capped mountains in the far distance. We often turned back to admire the scene behind us, where Mont Blanc reared his hoary head above a wide expanse of rock and snow peaks. On reaching Valsavaranche we received a very cheering welcome from Bray, and, of course, our first question was—what kind of weather had she had, and what kind did she think we should have ? She told us that owing to the terrible drought of the last two months, the inhabitants of the valley had met that very day to pray for rain. Later we met them, in a religious procession, headed by the priest. As we stood quietly aside to let them pass, I am afraid that our petitions did not mingle with theirs. It was their “ *Année de Misère*,” but we hoped it would not be ours.

After staying the night at Eau Rouse, we packed our rucksacks, left them to be sent up by mule, and started out for the Victor Emmanuel Hut. The walk takes about four hours from Eau Rouse, and for the most part is very pleasant, although the steep zig-zags as we neared the hut were trying in the fierce heat. We stayed there about a week and were very comfortable. The ladies' section has four bunks, so our number was ideal, and although on occasions crowds of people came up to the hut for the night, we always had our room to ourselves. The food was simple but adequate, and one cannot expect hotel fare at 8,000ft. There is also ample washing accommodation in the glacier lake below !

The day after our arrival we did the Gran Paradiso (4,061 metres), guideless, Bray leading. We left the hut about 4.30 a.m. and got to the top about nine o'clock. As it was our first day out we had not got our climbing-legs; we had not been on snow recently and found the ascent very strenuous, especially the last snow-slope before reaching the final rocks. There was no real difficulty as, though the slope above the bergschrund was ice, steps had been cut. Had we done the Gran Paradiso later on in our programme

we should not perhaps have found it so tiring, but we were anxious to get it in before the prayers of the peasants had taken effect! What a thrill we felt when we reached the summit—the first English women to accomplish the climb guideless. Going down, we found that the ice bridge across the bergshrund had come to grief, but taking our courage in our hands, or, rather, our legs, we leapt it and soon were back again at the hut, glad enough to seek welcome shade inside.

That evening we had rather an exciting time. A party of three—members of an English Climbing Club—had gone on from the Gran Paradiso that day, intending to cross the Piccolo Paradiso, but did not return to the hut at night. Search parties went out and returned unsuccessful. We were anxious throughout the next day until a message reached us in the evening to say that the lost ones had arrived at Cogne safely, having spent the night on the Tribolazione glacier, with no spare clothes and less food. Here they had been found by a guide who had put them on the route to Cogne.

Our next expedition—(the Ciarforon, 3,640 metres, and the Monciair, 3,544 metres)—was new to Corbett, Taylor and myself; Bray had done it before and did not wish to lead it, so we took a guide. In variety and interest, these two peaks were by far the most enjoyable of all that we did. We crossed the Moncorvé glacier and ascended the Ciarforon first. Owing to the fine season there were many easy rock pitches, which otherwise would have been covered with snow. The only difficulty was just below the summit, rounding the shoulder, where a steep and icy corner required energetic step-cutting and very delicate traversing. On reaching the summit Dayné, the guide, took us round to one side and we looked down into some of the most glorious crevasses I have ever seen. These were due, he told us, to the fine weather. We descended towards the south-west and then traversed across the ridge to the Monciair. This was quite easy going, but the ascent of the Monciair itself was not very enjoyable—at least not for me. I am not fond of the loose shaly type of rock which breaks off as one touches it, or gives way underneath the feet of the person in front and keeps up a continuous shower from above as one ascends. But descending such rock

is far worse, and having reached the top we were told to descend by the same route. There was no help for it, however cautiously one moved, the whole mountain-side seemed to be clattering down, and I, for one, was thankful to reach the ridge again.

We had been watching our steps so intently that we had not noticed how dark the sky had become, and the clouds were low and threatening. A few heavy drops of rain fell, and I became conscious of curious pricking sensations running up my left temple. Suddenly the guide shouted to us to throw down our ice-axes and to follow him. We scuttled over the side of the ridge like rabbits and managed to find shelter for at least parts of our respective anatomies underneath some perched rocks. We began to compare notes as to our pricking sensations; Taylor insisting that we had been struck by lightning. For a time we enjoyed watching a really beautiful storm from the shelter of our cave; the flashes were so vivid at one time that our guide ran out and threw our ice-axes further away. Soon the clouds moved over and the sun came out again. We descended the ridge, crossed the glacier in front of the Ciarforon (where we had some exciting moments owing to falling stones, dislodged by the storm), and soon reached the hut.

Two days later we climbed the Punta di Ceresole and had a thoroughly enjoyable day (Bray led). We went over the col of the Gran Paradiso, which this year had a wide bergschrund needing care, thence across the glacier of Noaschetta, and up by a rocky spur on the south side of the peak. There was only one short rock pitch of any difficulty where we roped for safety; there was no definite route to follow up the rocks and we made our own route; there was some steep ice near the summit where we had to cut steps, and an awkward little couloir leading to the final ridge. The rocks near the top afforded easy scrambling. Coming down, we had no difficulty in finding our way across the snow, as we could see our ascending steps—it was not so easy to find our route on the rocks, and we kept finding ourselves overlooking uninviting precipices. However, we reached the rock pitch which we had really climbed coming up. Held

from above, Taylor and Corbett descended safely; Bray decided to *abseil* and hitched the rope, asking me in her usual humble and polite manner to *abseil* first so see how it would 'go.' It went very well. I waited on a little platform for her, and when she arrived, tried to unhitch the rope. Now, *abseiling* is Bray's pet method of overcoming a difficult descent; the only drawback is that her rope usually sticks. In this case we pulled and we jerked, we jerked and we pulled—nothing happened. At last, Bray, at the end of her patience, had a brilliant inspiration—"Let's cut it!" "Righto!" said I, "but as it happens to be Taylor's rope, wouldn't it be more polite just to mention it?" "I say, Taylor," yelled down Bray, "isn't this a very old rope of yours?" "No! it is *not*," said Taylor indignantly, "it's quite a new one!" I knew perfectly well that it was long past its prime, but, anyhow, we started tugging and jerking again and finally off it came, and Taylor's rope was saved.

The Tresenta (3,609 metres) was another of our guideless climbs, and we found it comparatively easy. Care was needed in crossing the bergshrund just before leaving the Moncorvé glacier; the ascent of the mountain itself was steep, and the very loose rocks made the rope a nuisance, so that we were glad when the angle eased and we could take it off. The rough rocks to the summit played havoc with our boots and clothes. The climb is short, and we were back at the hut in time for lunch.

The alternate days at the hut we spent as "off-days." We discovered a beautiful waterfall within easy reach, and many refreshing bathes we had there. Owing to our limited supply of clothing, wash-days were a necessity in such hot weather. For myself, I needed to patch my clothes every other day—the most outstanding features of my climbing outfit were two huge patches which I wore out and replaced on alternate days—the patches, of course, growing larger each time! I used to wonder what would happen if I stayed there much longer—would the patches absorb all the garment, or is there a limit to a garment's patching capacity, or rather capacity to be patched? Now Bray had quite a different problem to solve. Owing to our strenuous days and simple

fare she gradually lost weight—in a month she lost a stone. Now, supposing the President of the Pinnacle Club weighs eight stones and loses one stone per month, in how many months should we want a new President? Or, is there also a limit to presidential loss of weight?

Our week at the hut over, we walked down to Eau Rousee and spent a night there. Next morning Taylor left for Aosta, having designs on the Matterhorn. The rest of us had a really lazy day—we walked at least fifty yards and then back for meals. Around Eau Rousee there are many charming walks; we particularly enjoyed one on the following day. We took the path up through the pine-woods at the back of the hotel, to the King's Shooting Lodge, then on over the shoulder and to the lakes above—a pleasant excursion for an easy day. Bathing is possible in the lakes if the cows and their attendants are not in the immediate vicinity.

At the end of a fortnight Corbett had to return home, so Bray and I packed our sacks very lightly, and set off by way of Pont to Nivolet. The path to Pont was quite familiar by this time, but we found the ascent from Pont to the plateau of Nivolet very tiring in the hot morning sun, and were glad to find a cooling stream where we could have a refreshing dip.

On reaching Nivolet we found that the little hotel was packed with soldiers and workmen having lunch, and we learned that work was in progress on a new motor road from Nivolet to Ceresole. In the evening cool we went up towards the Col de Galise, which we had originally intended to cross to visit Val d'Isère, but on being told that we might be shot if we attempted to do so, we thought it better just to view it from afar. Next morning we were early afoot on our way to Ceresole. The first part of our route lay along the lines of the prospective new road; we passed hundreds and hundreds of workmen and soldiers, more or less occupied in making it. We were, of course, the objects of much attention and many remarks. At times we grew embarrassed, and I became more and more conscious of the huge patches which adorned my breeches. We were thankful when at last we passed from the sight of all those interested eyes. Our enjoyment of the

charming walk down the valley was only marred by the fact that to-morrow we should be obliged to come back by the same route, and it would be all uphill !

Tired, hungry, and very hot we eventually reached Ceresole and, entering the Grand Hotel, ordered lunch and beds, without giving a thought to the scantiness of our luggage. Later in the day, when we found the hotel full of the smartest of smart Italians, we heartily wished that we had packed that thin frock and those silk stockings which were lying in our cases at Eau Rousse. Of course, each blamed the other for deciding to cut down our luggage to such an extreme. The great question was : " How should we dare to appear at dinner ? " On my part, I made up my mind that I had but one suit, complete with patches—it was that or nothing—I should simply have to brave things out. But never have I seen Bray in such mental anguish. I had always thought she cared nothing for appearances, anything or anybody ; but she was so genuinely worried, that I knew that at last I had found *her* heel of Achilles ! How we crept out to find shops, and found only a " barrow " in the street, with cardigans and carpet slippers ; how we tried to convert our nightdresses into frocks ; how we eventually had to steal into the dining-room (of course, we were given the table at the farthest end) ; how we tried to dawdle over dinner so that the crowd might leave before us ; how we scuttled up to our rooms like rabbits to their holes ; these things I cannot describe in detail ; their memory is still too painful.

By seven next morning we were on our way back to Nivolet. We felt glad that as it was Sunday we were safe from the inquisitive eyes of the road-makers. But on the other hand the soldiers who were encamped at various points along the road seemed to take a great interest in us. Four times we stopped and asked for our passports ; once we were taken along to the guard at Chiapili, and I am sure it was only Bray's fluent Italian which purchased our freedom. The last officer who stopped us spent a terribly long time over our passports ; I think he was working out our ages, so Bray asked him if there was a war on with England !

The way back to Nivolet did not seem nearly so toilsome as we had anticipated, and after spending the night there we set off for Eau Rousse, but instead of dropping down to Pont we kept up and traversed to the left, crossed the col of the Costa di Cian del Lei, then down to the lake d'Anjouan di Laita; then followed the stream down to the pine-woods, and back by the path to the hotel. As it was impossible to get a bed we went down to Valsavaranche for the night.

Next day we walked on to Villeneuve and picked up our luggage which had come by mule from Eau Rousse. We had intended to go on to Aosta, but hearing that the Couronne Hotel was full, took the Auto over the Little St. Bernard to Bourg St. Maurice for the night. Next day we had a lazy trip by Auto up to Val d'Isère, which we were determined to prospect for a future holiday. While there we met Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong Richards, fresh from their conquest of the North Ridge of the Dent Blanche.

The same evening we left Bourg St. Maurice for England, Home and Duty, and, as usual, spent most of our return journey in making plans for next year's holiday.

TEN DAYS AT LA GRAVE

BY

DOROTHY E. THOMPSON.

THE Dauphiné!—which, of course, included the Meije! It was a revocation of all former plans, which had at one time or another taken in most of Italy and the greater part of Switzerland, and never even mentioned France; but the idea seemed sound. None of us had yet seen the Dauphiné, and of the Meije I had a hazy notion that there was a Wall (spelt always with a capital)—above which, a glacier—the Wall being climbed by dodging, or swallowing, the icicles from the said glacier, the perilous moment arriving as one swayed on the verge between the two: also, that in some seasons the days on which the Meije could be climbed were not abundant. That one such should, nevertheless, fall within our allotted span of ten was the optimists' hope.

After mentioning that I hold no shares in any French Motor Bus Company, I should like to recommend visitors to the Dauphiné to go by road. The Route des Alpes, which can be picked up at Annecy, provides moments of amusement untouched by the train; and the scenery compensates for the amount of extra time. The bus will call for you at your hotel door. My particular portal being a good mile from Annecy, I was rather dubious about this, but punctually at 7.30 a.m. the massive vehicle appeared, and conveyed me (feeling something like Æsop's frog in my endeavour to do full justice to it) into the town. Here I had to get a luggage ticket. Thirty kilos being the absolute maximum, and my luggage weighing forty-five, misgiving seized me. "Vos bagages?—they are under weight?" brusquely demanded the Bureau. I opened my mouth. "Oui, oui," the reply came with the greatest assurance, but not in my voice, and, turning, I found that the driver had entered behind me. There seemed to be the slightest crease in his nearest upper eyelid, and I shut my mouth again. There are times when silence is undoubtedly golden. Outside, as I observed the serried rows of trunks, hat-boxes and other impedimenta, the united property of two Parisian damsels—all of it subsequently swallowed into

the interior of our capacious monster—my conscience smote me less heavily.

We collected passengers rapidly, and at Aix les Bains a large Belgian family filled the entire back row and completed the numbers. Chambéry, St. Laurent and the Grande Chartreuse were each in turn inspected. While going at full speed down the Chartreuse hill we met another car at a hairpin bend. Grr-d-d-dd went the brakes, and the cars stopped, their bonnets practically touching—our back wheel within five inches of the edge. For the next few minutes (in an atmosphere of unseared amiability) one was privileged to listen to the French language spoken at its most fluent. The inside car then moved on, and our driver announced that as he could not take the curve from his present position, he must back the bus. As one man the Belgian family in the back row suggested (with some reason) that it would be “plus prudent” for us all to get out; but our driver, discountenancing such deplorable frailty, backs us violently above the edge and swings us round the curve, while we hold our breath, talk volubly, or shriek in unison, according to our various nationalities and temperaments. Once round the bend each man beams on his neighbour.

Lunch at St. Pierre-de-Chartreuse, a long pull-up to the chilly Col de Porte (1,354 metres), a scheduled ten minutes’ wait to gaze with chattering teeth at the view, and we are once more on our way, speeding down towards Grenoble, and sunshine, and the smiling, broad Grésivaudan valley.

On the outskirts of the town the bus lurches to a sudden halt in the gutter—we have run out of petrol. A passing lorry obliges, but with no result. “It is the cant of the road,” explains the driver. A practical-minded French lady thereupon suggests our getting out and shoving our mammoth into a more hopeful position. With great alacrity, led by a student sitting next me, the entire bus-load leaps out and hurls itself against the resisting mass. Will it yield? It does! Midst breathless shouts, cheers, and wild rushes to regain seats, the monster staggers into the middle of the road and starts once more on its wild career. There proves to be just enough “essence” to land us at our destination.

I had half contemplated spending the next day exploring Grenoble, but the sight of the surrounding mountains acted too powerfully, and at 8 a.m. I was on another bus heading for La Grave. Over this portion of the way I was kept well informed. Two Americans "doing" the whole Route des Alpes from Evian to Nice had amassed sufficient literature from the Touring Club de France to provide the entire bus. After Bourg-D'Oisans I was pointed out the road on our right leading to St. Christophe and La Bérarde, which, I was told, is so narrow that two buses cannot pass each other on it. Our bus kept to the safe, broad highway, and reached La Grave at 11 a.m., where I said good-bye to my kind American friends—still snowed under their papers.

After lunch, Madame, in complete sympathy with my craving for exercise and a view, helpfully suggested the Signal de la Grave, behind the hotel. For those who enjoy fell walking pure and simple this is a pleasant excursion, and there should be an excellent view. I say "should be," because the rain was pouring down by the time I reached the enormous cairn and pole that mark the summit, and all that I could see was the nearest "dodd," but in spite, or perhaps because, of this, I have seldom enjoyed a fell walk more. The greatest advantage of living most of the year in a smoke-drenched city is the rapturous feeling with which one fills one's lungs with any real air; and this particular brand, with the soft sweet taste of mist in it, was delicious. The best way (according to the directions of the oldest inhabitant of Les Terrasses, who took several minutes to get over the fact that I was "toute seule") is to cross to a patch of "schiste" and then follow the ridge to the summit (two hours from Les Terrasses), descending by way of Ventélon.

At dinner, the only other Englishwoman at the hotel, a fellow-passenger of this morning's bus, enquired how I had spent the afternoon. I told her. The effect was splendid. Dropping her knife and fork with a splash, she enquired the height, and on my replying that to the best of my belief it was about 8,000ft., I could almost hear her exclaiming to herself, in perturbed tones, "Quite, quite mad!" It seemed a pity to dispel the illusion of ascending 8,000ft. in one



Photo J. O. Walker

**DISTANT VIEW OF AIGUILLES D'ARVES FROM THE
PIC DE NEIGE CORDIER**



Photo J. O. Walker

ECRINS FROM PIC DE NEIGE CORDIER

afternoon, but conscience made me just mention the height of La Grave, after which I am much afraid I fell an equal height in her imagination.

More serious efforts at getting into training followed the arrival of E. H. next day. We decided on the Pic de Neige Cordier for our first climb, and engaged a local guide. Our greatest difficulty lay in convincing him that it was not the Pic Gaspard that we wanted to climb. For this peak he professed the most profound affection, nor is it perhaps wholly irrelevant to mention that it is the more highly tariffed of the two. The Chalet-Refuge de l'Alpe, which is the hut common to both, stands in idyllic surroundings among the flowers and streams of the Val d'Arsine, at a height of almost 7,000ft., the walk up to it being most attractive. Mr. B——, who happened also to be staying at our hotel, accompanied us thither, possibly—as he maintained—for the delight of our company and the walk, and also possibly for the excellent beer which the chalet affords. At dinner the guardian of the Refuge informed us that we should be called at 1.30 a.m. Naturally, we demurred heartily at such an early start for our very carefully chosen mountain! “But you are climbing the Pic Gaspard!” . . . his astonishment seemed genuine.

My recollections of the Pic de Neige Cordier (for which we set out, notwithstanding the guide) are mainly concerned with Natural History, the first being a cow which I nearly tripped over in the dark. It is doubtful which was the more startled of the two, but she, I think, was the more indignant. As she stumbled away heavily, looming gigantic through the mist, one's thoughts flew to the vast fabled creatures of antiquity. The second was a curious rattle, which greeted us in the shivery dawn just before we came to the fatal couloir (now avoided by the rocks on the true left)—“Go back! Go back! Go back!” the unseen chorus of Fate croaked hoarsely. Les perdrix de neige, as our unimaginative guide called them, obviously resented our disturbing them so early.

At 9.20 a.m. we were enjoying the glorious view from the summit, round which most of the famous peaks of the Dauphiné congregate, the Pelvoux, Ecrins, Roche Méane and

Meije—to name but a few—the rocks of the last-named white with the snows of a recent severe storm.

The attractions of the streams and flowers of the Val d'Arsine were such that we remained there, the hut being far more economical than the hotel, and strolled down the next morning to meet Joseph Georges le Skieur, also on his first visit to the Dauphiné.

Late that same afternoon we migrated to the Evariste-Chancel hut, which, from its position high up on the south side of the valley near the snow-girt, dark blue waters of the Lac de Puy-Vachier, is too often the haunt of the unscrupulous picnicker, whose previous presence is attested to by the crumbs other people have to sweep up. The sun and angle combined made the first part of the way a torture. Passing one of the poorer chalets of the district, the atmosphere of which seems usually to accord well with the filthiness of the surroundings, I remarked that were it not for typhoid I would beg for a glass of milk. “You'd die,” was E. H.'s terse, and probably true, reply.

Our ambition had leapt to the western ridge of the Râteau, but, having been told by someone untruthfully that the ascent was not feasible from the Glacier de la Girose, we had decided on the Pic de La Grave, although rocks rather than ice-slopes were our desire. In the middle of the glacier Joseph came to a sudden halt, with the statement that the twin peaked snow mountain on our right must be the Pic de La Grave. This was uncontested. Then, as it were dismissing it, he remarked, as he fixed his gaze ardently on them, that the rocks of the Râteau on our left looked quite feasible from here. Which would we prefer? There could be no doubt whatever concerning his own preference, and since we were all agreed, we altered our direction and made for the Col de la Girose, from which (or, to be more accurate, from slightly below which) we climbed to the western-most peak of the Râteau by way of corniced snow ridges and rotten rocks in alternation (Joseph classifying one portion of this ascent as “amusant”); although its humour might have been greater had the material been less unsound. Further progress along the ridge of the Râteau was, however, soon barred

by an icy couloir impossible to cross without axes, and these we had left behind at the foot of the humorous rocks. Had the traverse of the ridge been in question we might have accepted Joseph's energetic offer to go back for them. As it was, we basked gratefully in the sun.

On the return we saw with some surprise a solitary figure advancing up the Girose glacier. In the distance it was difficult to be certain, but our supposition that it was "une dame" proved correct. She informed us that she had a guide, but that as he did not wish to go any further, and she was anxious to see what a glacier was like, he had suggested that she should go forward by herself, and had told her that there would be no crevasses. There was no sign of the guide, and we were not able to persuade her to return with us; but she promised not to go any further on to the glacier, or to stay on it much longer. In half an hour's time Joseph assured her, there would be plenty of crevasses! Some minutes later, at the Collet du Lac, we came across the guide, fast asleep, spread over a broad, flat rock in the sun. E. H. and I half expected to collect the flying fur, but Joseph was intensely polite, and merely enquired whether the man thought it entirely safe, with the sun at its present strength, to let his inexperienced client perambulate the glacier utterly by herself. I am afraid we spoilt the guide's siesta, but possibly saved the lady from a chilly time!

There are more shocks to be collected on a glacier than almost anywhere. The fatigued guide had no sooner vanished than I had a horrible conviction the hot sun must be affecting my own brain—until reassured by the remarks of the others. "It's a lunatic," was E. H.'s first contribution. "Mais . . . il va se brûler!" came with a gasp from Joseph. My own fancy leaned rather towards a film actor taking the name part in "Hannibal Crossing the Alps," and spurning sartorial accuracy. The cause of these surmises—now hailing us in German from the Glacier du Lac—was a man, by far the largest portion of whose attire was a pair of field glasses suspended from his neck. I felt it time for the female member to disappear, which she proceeded to do with grace, and E. H., who speaks German with a ready tongue, went off to

hold parley. He returned with the announcement that the man had wanted directions for the Col de la Lauze, and that there was another of the species wandering about the glacier—members of some enthusiastic German Society for Promoting Health by Casting Off all Superfluous Clothing. This other member of a nation justly famed for its thoroughness did not, however, cross our path. In the hut we read out to Joseph with unction a delightful entry on the ascent of the Râteau from the Col, in which the writers declared that having arrived at the rocks, they preferred “*admirer la belle vue que de se casser le cou !*”

After two days of weather-at-its-worst, spent in the valley writing letters and trying to avoid the drips on the terrace, we rose in the middle of the night (actually at 1 a.m.) to go and look at the Aiguille Méridionale d'Arves. The Aiguilles, as everyone knows, lie at some distance from the central chain, and on the north side of the valley—about six hours' walk from La Grave. Leaving not a dog asleep—to judge by their clamour—in any of the various villages in which we got tied up in the dark, we finally emerged, after more than four hours' steady going, on to the upper marshy “*replat*.” Up this we strolled at our leisure. The one brief glimpse of the Aiguilles d'Arves from the lower *replat* had shown them covered with fresh snow.

Discussion over the direction of the Col Lombard revealed the annihilating fact that maps and guide books had all been left behind at the hotel. This, which was due to a misunderstanding, completely altered our day. The Aig. Méridionale having been a sudden decision, not one of us had had time to read the latter portion of the route with any care. The guide book itself was partly responsible. The following : “*La qualité du rocher est excellente, soit à cause du relief de l'oeuf de l'oolithe, soit à cause du creux de son alvéole lorsque l'oeuf est absent,*” had been so intriguing as to cause everything afterwards to seem banal and dull. It had reminded me, for some reason, of the Jabberwock, and in the bizarre upper reaches of the Maurian river, it would not, in fact, have seemed at all surprising to find the mome raths outgribing. Crossing the stream, we made for the col in

front of us, anticipating that if this were not the Col Lombard, at the worst we should make certain of our position; but, instead, found ourselves, unappreciative for the moment of cloud effects, peering into a vast cauldron of boiling mist. On his return from a long voyage of discovery into the upper stratus, Joseph reported that we were almost certainly on the right mountain, and as certainly on the wrong arête, of whose length he had no idea, but that there was interesting climbing on the gendarmes. I feel that I must mention here an exquisitely-coloured forget-me-not (which I am told by botanist friends was probably not a *myosotis*—and therefore, I gather, *not* a forget-me-not!—at all, but *Eritrichium nanum*, a prize of flower lovers), which made every crevice in the reddish rocks of the first part of this arête blue with its tiny clumps—a lovely sight.

At the end of three hours and a half we might—but for the mist—have been seen, still ascending and descending gendarmes, the view always restricted to the back of the person in front and—occasionally—the nearest gendarme, when a slight novelty was introduced by a passing shower of small hard flakes of snow. Just as we were all privately facing the unpleasant possibility of a forced retreat, our goal not merely not attained, but not even uncovered, the sun blazed forth, and with it the Aiguille Méridionale d'Arves. As seen from the south-east arête, on which we now discovered with some interest that we were, it loses nothing of its perpendicular effect, and through the dispersing clouds was a memorably impressive sight. All thoughts of retreat were, of course, banished, and soon after 3 p.m. we were at the Cascade Pétrifiée, the numerous nail scratches showing immediately our junction with the more normal route. Joseph negotiated the Mauvais Pas (usually ascended at the overhang by the leader standing on a shoulder) by traversing outwards and upwards on the slabs on the right, returning almost horizontally. As there was then not sufficient rope for him to climb the next pitch, which he subsequently described as “un passage assez délicat,” I, being next on the rope, had to traverse out across the slabs. It was at the end of this traverse, where, with just sufficient hand and foothold to

retain my own balance, I had perforce to remain, while Joseph made a tentative essay at the "delicate" pitch, that the utter, absolute and complete absence of any belay wherewith to safeguard the leader forced itself most strongly on my notice. With nothing between one and the Glacier de Gros Jean below, one could not but be struck by the fact that a slip on the part of anyone on this portion would be highly undesirable. The pitch once surmounted, easy rocks lead to the summit, which was reached at 3.30 p.m. A few minutes only of vigorous prune munching and gazing into the clouds, and we turned for the descent. E. H. and I, to save time, were let down the delicate passage on the rope; Joseph, who climbed down it, pronounced it more difficult this way than on the ascent.

About 4 p.m. we were back at the narrow col on which emerges the route from the Col Lombard. On this side the rocks were plastered with snow (fortunately, there had been neither snow nor verglas on the slabs), and to such an extent that it was doubtful if the descent were feasible. On the principle, therefore, of ills known being preferable at four in the afternoon to those unknown, we returned full-speed along the long arête, again shrouded in gloom: even the snow shower repeated itself, this time with greater determination. Not until we were right down on the upper replat, at the foot of the col, did we allow ourselves a twenty minutes' rest for food, of which, as one suddenly remembered, we had not had a mouthful—save for two desiccated prunes each on the summit!—for nearly ten hours; Joseph luring us on afterwards by a skilfully drawn picture of how much more wearying to the flesh it would be to stumble beside a lantern than to snatch at what remained of the hours of daylight. As we descended to the lower replat a long growl of thunder came from the ridge we had just left. A hundred green lights daintily illuminated the grass slopes beneath the Maurian waterfalls. Whatever feast day the fairies were celebrating—and by the size and brilliance of the lamps it was an extraordinary occasion—they seemed to be having no better luck with their weather than we mere mortals in similar cases.

At 11 p.m. we staggered into the hotel. Madame and Jean, the waiter, discussing the intricacies of hotel finance, almost embraced us. "We thought you had all perished," they remarked cheerfully, "the guides told us the Aiguilles d'Arves were in the clouds all day." We were able to assure them that in this the guides had spoken nothing but the truth.

The serrated ridge of the Meije terminating in the abrupt dip to the Brèche, as one sees it from La Grave, makes amends for many days of bad weather. Unfortunately, it is too often in the clouds, invisible, and after a certain period of time the Dauphiné then begins to strike one as uncompromisingly barren—its mountains formless. The eye longs for something green, and rebels at interminable scree slopes. When, after two days' such revolt on the part of these organs of sight, E. H. (whose time was up), unluckily, had to return, one viewed with less regret than one otherwise would have done the idea of leaving the Dauphiné and proceeding to friends at Arolla by way of Italy. The rich Swiss pastures were an alluring prospect. The Meije would have to be left for another year, when settled weather might be more likely.

Joseph, on the eve of departure, repudiated the idea whole-heartedly. It was impossible in his view to leave the Dauphiné without climbing the Meije, and he thought the weather might change. "Ayez seulement de la patience," was his final counsel. That night stars came out that had not been seen since we arrived at La Grave, and the next day was brilliant. The Swiss journey was promptly put off and a porter as promptly secured. One could only sympathize with E. H. as he set out to catch his train at Grenoble.

"Tout le monde aime le chemin à la Brèche," is the saying at La Grave, and there is something about the Rochers des Enfethores which would put anyone in good humour. The heat was intense. "Que diable de chaleur," was the main substance of the porter's remarks all day. As one crosses the Brèche the magnificent wall of the Meije appears in all its glory. Below, at some distance, lies the Promontoire hut. Here we met again the other party from our hotel who were hoping for the Meije. This caravan, consisting

of two men and a Swiss guide, had left La Grave at early dawn to catch the bus for La Bérarde, there to pick up a local porter engaged over the telephone. This gave them the advantage of seeing something of the La Bérarde valley.

Joseph led the Meije next day at a speed suggesting a life-long acquaintanceship. No one watching him—like a streak of forked lightning—zigzagging blissfully and lightly up the wall without a check, would have imagined that this was anything but a meeting of old familiar friends. Four hours after leaving the Promontoire hut we were on top of the Grand Pic. The day was a cloudless dream. I have happy memories of climbing the wall in rubbers (unorthodox, but superlatively pleasant!); of the piton on the Dalle des Autrichiens turning round in one's hand; of wriggling eel-fashion along the Zsigmondy chimney, and wondering, when Joseph—preparing to move on—enquired if one were “bien” in it, whether “bien” might be taken to include an upside down position twirled round the rocks like a corkscrew; of consuming singularly unsquashed cherries, considering the nature of the chimney, on the summit of the Pic Central; and finally, of glorious glissades down the Glacier du Tabuchet. The only dull moments of the day were those spent descending the unspeakably hot mixed grass and shale slopes of the Côte-Longue, but even these were compensated for by a spring, of which I left little, and a waterfall, which I did not succeed in visibly diminishing, and also by thoughts of the tea that one would drink on arrival at the hotel. We reached La Grave in good time for it at 4.30 p.m. The next day the mist came rolling up the valley once more, and throughout the long and engrossing drive to Turin by Briançon and the Col du Mont-Genèvre, a mantle of heavy hope-destroying clouds hid the mountains from sight. One had ample time during the drive, reflecting on the amount of snow that was probably falling up above, to consider one's astounding luck.

As I began this tale with a recommendation of the Route des Alpes, I would like to end on a note of warning. Since the buses in summer are often full by the time they arrive at La Grave, it is wiser to book a place beforehand, or one may have to sit mixed up with the brakes. *Experientia docet.*

ON TRYING TO CLIMB IN ICELAND

BY
E. M. HALL.

I HAD all my life intended to go to Iceland as soon as I could afford it, and since in 1928 I realized that I should never be able to afford it, I decided to go at once, and went off from the well-loved docks of Leith. Mountaineering was, I admit, only one of the interests that took me there; islands and oceans and ships and whales and sagas and Vikings were other motives, but on these I cannot touch.

My ambition was, of course, to cross the Vatnajökull, the greatest glacier in Europe, in extent at least (nearly 8,500 square kilometres, most of it unexplored), but for that I had not, nor ever shall have, the time or the money.

It will be useful to give a brief description of Iceland. Incidentally, knowledge is easily available, since in addition to cars just under the Arctic Circle Iceland, since 1927, has a Publicity Bureau for the benefit of tourists. Its literature is neither more nor less accurate than other literature of the kind. It tells you that

- (a) You need not know Icelandic.
- (b) Icelandic is easy to know.

It is not, but if you do not know some, you will often find yourself humiliatingly dependent on your guides, and anyway, you will miss a great deal of fun. True, in Reykjavik almost everyone speaks some English, and you can always get guides who do, but inland you soon come to farms, parsonages, etc., where one puts up for nights, where no English is spoken. It is a pity, besides, to miss knowing how kind everyone is being. For me, I was able to stay as long as I did because the small knowledge of Icelandic which I had painfully acquired, enabled me to live for some time on a farm, economizing, living very roughly but very cheaply.

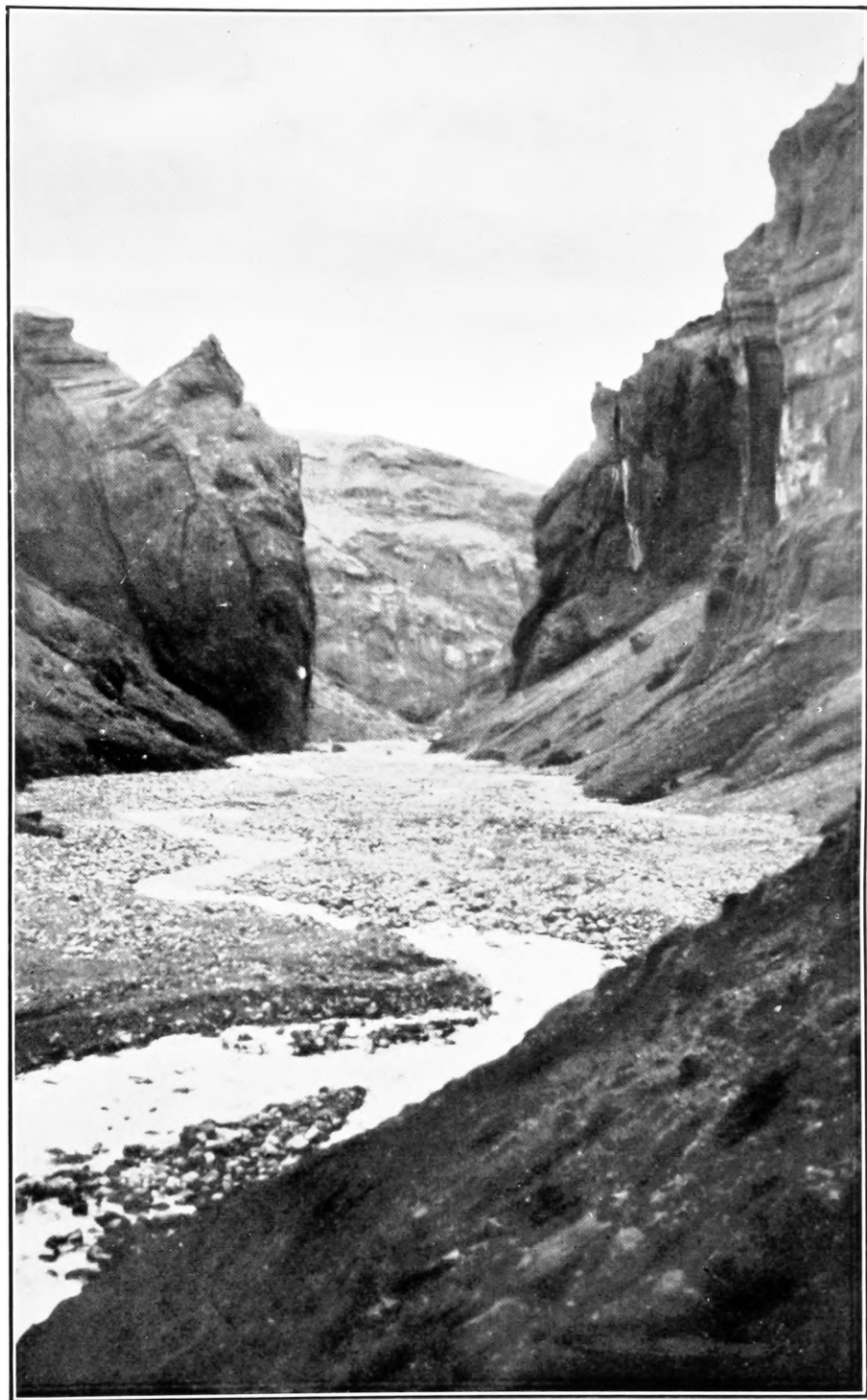
Round the coast are several little fishing towns, at many of which landings must be made in boats, and behind stretches

the wild and trackless waste of moorland, countless rivers and great waterfalls which is most of Iceland.

It is not necessary, of course, to inform the Pinnacle Club that the Icelanders are not Esquimaux (these live a whole day's voyage off, across the Denmark Strait), and that they do not dress in furs and red flannel breeks. When the native costume is not worn they dress modernly and very smartly. Silk stockings are worn in the open, even just under the Arctic Circle (I tried to see once if I could do it, but I gave in). They are about the most intellectual race in Europe; this is clearly seen from the sort of language they seem to have invented for fun, like the Chinese, and from the fact that even the children speak it fluently.

About a fifth of the whole population of 100,000 lives in Reykjavik, an unattractive tin town, interesting mainly for its sunsets and its port and shipping; Charcot and his *Pourquoi Pas* put in while I was there. You can eat to music and there are two cinemas. Further inland is a wide strip of moorland and arable land (arable that is, by Icelandic standards). Round the better land one finds clusters of farms, separated by unbridged rivers, often impassable in winter. People still live there mainly on horseback, and life is little altered from earlier times, save for the extension of the telephone. The great difficulties are absence of building stone and fuel. The older farms, built partly of turf, often look like primitive fortifications, but the turf keeps them warm inside. Among the trials of travellers are the absence of vegetables, fruit, etc. I was fortunate enough to flourish on the national curds and black bread. Fruit can be bought in Reykjavik, but is terribly expensive, as everything there is.

Still further inland, one comes to great stretches of desert, sand and lava (the "hraun") of a desolation impossible to conceive if one has not seen it. In the sun the sand can blaze as if one were in Arabia Deserta, and at night it can be icy cold. Then near the mountains are stretches of glacial plain, cut by innumerable rivers; the horses have to swim the deep ones and they are often rapid. In addition, there are often shifting sands, etc., so a guide needs good local knowledge. I was warned of the "earthquake" at the bottom



STAKKHOLTSGJA, ICELAND

of one which I insisted on crossing to reach my mountain, but we avoided it.

As for the mountain masses, they are mainly worn down into plateaux, and the ice-cap is residual. The glaciers overhang the slopes, but on the top lie flat, with projecting *nunataks*, and are of enormous extent. The rock is almost entirely volcanic, sometimes with masses of glassy obsidian at the surface. Anyone who expects the beauty of Alpine peak and ridge will be disappointed, yet the strange colourings of the rock, the vast snowfields, and the utter solitude have a majesty of their own, and never in the Alps have I seen a glow like that which comes in Iceland in the evening.

The great difficulty is expense. Prices have soared since the War. If one goes beyond the radius that can be covered by car (and that includes country that would be called impossible anywhere else) one must have a cavalcade. For *£2 10s. 0d. a day or so, one can manage—that means only one guide and one pack pony, two riding ponies and a spare one. For a longer expedition, especially in country with bad rivers, etc., two guides and extra horses would be needed. Outside the farm-belt, camping kit is absolutely necessary—tent (which must be waterproof), ground-sheet, sleeping-bag, blankets, cooking apparatus, etc., and an electric torch. All these things are difficult and expensive to get up there. Sound oilskins and high rubber boots are also indispensable, and it will save trouble if one has a small waterproof saddle-bag, as this is not always provided.

Mountaineering is difficult for many reasons :

- (1) Difficulty of finding grazing for horses among mountains, where often stones and moss are all that is to be found. It is not easy to prevent the horses from straying, even when hobbled. Moreover, camping at night is a cold job, and when it rains, it *does* rain.
- (2) Mountaineering is only just beginning to develop in Iceland, and there are no mountain guides

*It's best to inquire widely. I was told at first that my journey would cost me £3 10s. a day.

(that I could find, at least) who would take you *up* mountains, though they would take you to them. Equipment cannot be obtained up there.

This last summer, however, so I was told, the great Langjökull glacier was crossed by two Icelanders, who descended on the Eiríksjökull side. It was a fine achievement, but I could get no details. One usually gets on to the Langjökull glacier from the Hvítarvatn side—about seven or eight days' riding and camping from Reykjavík. I believe that on the plateau progress is not difficult. But mists are bad and frequent and maps unsatisfactory. I'd hoped to get on to the Langjökull glacier from the Hvítarvatn, but my plan broke down at the very last moment, and indeed one must, if one's at all ambitious, be prepared for sorrows. So my only shot (half successful) at that glacier was from the other side, where I was told that it could not be done.

The nearest practicable place to the Langjökull mountains is a farm, which I shall call K for short, one of the oldest in Iceland. I began that journey by going to Borgarnes by sea. I had to land in a boat, with all my tackle, then had great difficulty in finding something to take me out to the ancient and famous parsonage at Reykholt, where I was, I hoped, to meet my guide H who spoke no English and was therefore a little cheaper. Mercifully I had a calm though damp voyage, and carried as well as climbing kit, tent, etc., many other things—pack saddles, packing cases for horses, tent for the guide, etc., together with a most complicated message for him in Icelandic about another bridle, a saddle and tent pegs that had to be picked up on the way. At last at a great price I was driven to Reykholt, but alack, the only way of attaching the luggage to the vehicle was by my climbing-rope. The driver attached it—rope and baggage—to every part; he crawled underneath even and tied it there too. We set off over the rocky ground, and after a mile I knew that that rope could never be relied upon again. I arrived hanging on to everything I could save.

No one knew English so I had to do my best in the language till the guide H and my horses arrived the next day.

By the time we got to K the weather seemed to be breaking after the long fine spell. I knew I had only a few days and I soon found that there would be difficulties. I had been told that at K there was A who would take me up the mountains—if he was not too busy over hay-making. Mercifully he was there and had not gone off to another part of the valley which might easily have happened. He'd been told that I might turn up sometime that summer, but I soon found that what with the busy time and the baddish weather and A's large good-humoured laziness there would have to be persuasion.

Now it is impossible in Iceland to persuade anyone that you can possibly want to do to-day what can possibly be done next week. This is a great virtue in Iceland in general, but it is very difficult as regards mountaineering in particular, especially when you are held up with a cavalcade eating its head off at £2 10s. 0d. a day and nothing done. The first day I found the Eiríksjökull would not be got at, and to keep me quiet and let me do a Lion, I was lent a nice stable-boy, to go to the famous ice-caves with, riding over the mountains and following up some of the tracks of Grettir the Outlaw. The day's excitements included the descent of an iced slope in rubber boots, then skidding about on a floor of clear ice, carrying a candle, falling over stalagmites and banging my skull on stalactites; I also practised riding down screes on a horse.

I was still told that the Langjökull glacier could not be got at from there because it never had been, and that the rivers were always unsafe. I continued my struggles, and at last found we could go to Eiríksjökull next day, if it was fairly fine. It was, and I prepared to go. But soft! Did I think I could start at 5 or even 6 a.m., even if the mountain was four hours' ride away? The horses were being fetched—good, I was ready, but it sometimes takes two or three hours to catch horses, and then we must positively have a meal, so we had the vast Icelandic breakfast and I, being still rather new to Iceland, kicked vain and frantic heels, feeling that time served and we were but decaying. At last we started at an hour I should blush to mention—though of course we had all the night before us—and crossed a great deal of rough country

to our mountain. I found that to ride a hard trotting horse with one's climbing boots in a rucksack beating one's spine to tatters was a remarkable sensation, especially when it went on for about three and a half hours. We left the horses at last and proceeded on foot among and through many streams. I now saw the force of some of A's objections, for this had been a particularly dry summer, so that after a wet one, well!

After all this preparation, I cannot say that the Eiriksjökull is a fine climb, though it's a fine mountain. We did not need the rope. Icelandic screes, however, are objectionable. I cannot say whether I dislike most the rolly sort, or the tight packed steep cindery sort into which it is hard to insert even a toe. As we strolled up the snows towards the top a Depression overtook us, and we got soaked. At the bottom the horses had to be caught again and objected with some spirit.

A was difficult to get started; it was not easy for him, I know, to get away, but H, who liked being at K, took on his work while he was with me. I could see that when he once got going it would be a great affair. I was right. Next day he was still adamant about the Langjökull glacier and Thorisdalur, but I stuck to it, and given some time I blew the man down; his resistance suddenly collapsed, and he ordered the horses to be caught. We were going to Thorisdalur, and he was sure I did not need my boots (which he regarded with suspicion), or the rope (which he despised), but perhaps I'd better take the axe (which he rather liked). I did.*

We had a marvellous ride high up on stony table-lands where the horses could gallop taking them up places where I never thought they could go. A. broke it to me that he had come exploring, and was not sure if the plan in his head would go. So we went on, among the wildest places I've ever seen, climbing up slopes to see if there were any hope of getting horses across and then doing the same further on till we abandoned them among stones.

* One of the chief uses of the ice-axe in Iceland is to shove yourself off with from projecting bits of rock which the ponies do not leave you room to clear. At a gallop, this is quite interesting.

Now I had understood we were riding to Thorisdalur and that there would be no actual climbing that day, but A. pointed up the heights towards snow and ice and I, alas! had only high boots and a pair of the very thinnest bathing shoes, the sort that fit like skin. I decided to see how far my spirit could triumph over my flesh, and I set forth in some pain over sharp scree, reminding myself of all my heroines and heroes. After going up some tight scree, nearly as steep as a house it seemed to me (where I got frightened) we crossed a snowfield and got to some of the glacier, where I found that bathing shoes are not the best wear among crevasses. After much difficulty we found a way, only to be stopped by a vast schrund. At last we found a passable place and I skidded across almost involuntarily, while A tested the ice. With nails it would have been easy to get to the flat stretch at the top, I think, but we turned the other way and I had a bad ten minutes on an ice-slope with the schrund below. I relied on the axe and on bits of odd grit, but A had somehow to pull me up the last few feet, I don't know how. From there we got on fairly easily till we looked down into Thorisdalur from a place from which it had hardly, if ever, been seen before. Anyone who has read the Saga of Grettir will remember the wonderful passage, too long to quote here, about how the great outlaw came into the Thorisdalur from down below. But it seems to be fuller of ice now than it was 1,000 years ago. True, the surrounding mountains are not high—not above 6,000ft., I should say, yet the effect was one of the grandest I have ever seen, with the great glaciers covering the slopes to the valley bottom, which was utter desolation. Beneath us was a great precipice, to the left snowy slopes and the vast plateau, the top of the Langjökull glacier, going further than we could see, with *nunataks* standing up from its surface. To the right, free on that side from snow or ice, was the ridge of Prestahnukur, which we presently ascended—a mountain of obsidian, black, shiny and prickly. Prestahnukur means “Priest's Mountain,” and A. said it was so called because there is a legend that hundreds of years ago two priests somehow got up it to see whether any souls that might need saving dwelt in the giant-haunted Thorisdalur,

but he said it was supposed that no one had ever been since. I do not know whether the story is true; I shall never be able to prove that I got there myself, for my photograph was spoilt. I do not mind, for I felt horribly vulgar as the First Kodak Ever in that wild place.

Needless to say, we sought another way down but did not find one. A somehow kept me from glissading or rolling down the bad place into the chasm, but he admitted very nobly that it was because he'd said I didn't need my boots. Among the crevasses the descent was worse, so I clothed my feet in a pair of A's gigantic woollen mittens which acted finely. In short, at 11 p.m. we rejoined our horses on the plateau, and after sympathizing with them and drinking coffee, we began a wild ride back through the sunset and the darkness (it was dark between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. or so) and arrived at dawn, after a fascinating but unorthodox expedition. It was one of the best days out I've ever had, but I do not for a moment mean that it would have been more than a very moderate climb in itself if I had had my boots. It was finding the way there that was such sport, and the jolly companionship of A. My feet got off miraculously with one slight cut and some bruising.

The Okjökull next day wasn't exciting purely as a climb. Most of it is scree, the top is flattish with a few mild crevasses. As a view point it is magnificent.

With deep grief I said farewell to K and all its fine hospitality and history, and started on the first stage back to Reykjavik, over a high desert plateau in bitter winds with drifts of snow lying everywhere. Miles away from anywhere one of the ponies, which often did dance, threw my guide H and nearly rolled on him. He got up safely however, and we arrived at Brunnar where we had a beautiful but chilly camp in country that reminded me greatly of the parts of Skye that I have seen. Thence we rode to the most famous place in Iceland, Thingvellir, impressive, but now over-run by tourists. A little and very expensive hotel is dumped just where it shouldn't be in that theatre of the tremendous things of the past.

I left Reykjavik as soon as possible after buying stores for the expedition to Hvitarnvatn which collapsed, leaving me with several hundred sardines on my hands. Then I went two days' journey, carrying my ill-fated stores, to my little farm, where I had expected to be picked up. There I passed the time in so leisurely a way that at the end I had lost a day out of my reckoning. Everyone was determined to talk to me and gave me plenty of practice, though the effort of talking and thinking in inflections was rather a strain in a long conversation. There were tarns to visit with wild swans that sang at night, and grey geese and eider ducks and flights of golden plover; and beyond were fells, not very high, but of inconceivable loneliness and grimness, and from their ridges one looks out to glaciers and desert. Sitting one day among the falcons and ravens I watched through my good glasses a sand-storm raging miles away, and one panic-stricken dash I remember before an evil mist that crept behind me unawares. I tried for one mountain, Rauthfjall, but everyone said it could not be done without a horse for the river, etc. By walking miles and wading several icy rivers and streams, smaller this last summer than usual, I reached a bridge, and after many other incidents got, I thought, to the foot of the climb, only to be held back by an impassable belt of stunted birch trees extending for miles. I got stuck in it most uncomfortably. At last I had to give it up and had to go up another top at the side, which was rather fun. I am sure I discovered a tarn up there—at least I had all the excitement of discovery.

Another variation in Iceland is that just when you think you are getting on nicely the ground yawns open in an immense chasm, and you have to go far to find any way to the other side, so distances are very deceptive. The days I didn't go felling I went bogging, continuing my forlorn efforts to become an ornithologist.

Then came my Hirtarnvatn disappointment, and out of it came, though it seemed at first a bad second-best, what turned out to be if not a mountaineering feat a most delightful expedition—across to Hekla and Thjorsádalur, that once

fertile stretch of Iceland laid waste by Hekla about the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

B, whom I knew already, hearing of my difficulty, left his work at great inconvenience and offered to come with me, bringing his own horses—"Horsly horses," as Chaucer said in despair of a more expressive adjective.

Hekla is a rather tame expedition from Reykjavik, now that one can go the first stage by car, but our way across from Haukadal was great fun. It was bitterly cold at night, and dark by about nine (this was almost the last day of August), and Hekla was deep in snow. Since we reached the top in a snow-storm, we did not have the famous view which is hardly ever seen, but we were perfectly happy in the crisp new snow and for the look of it, it was as good as Mont Blanc. Had we been able to start earlier we should have got there in time to see everything, but our start was as leisurely as usual, and since in an Icelandic house one is an honoured guest and treated with a certain stateliness, one cannot hurry matters. The idea of an early start anywhere may, in short, be put aside, but one may all the same be very happy.

B had to get back to his work, so we finished up with two days of heavy riding (about ten hours). The weather then broke completely and ruined my last plans. Through a solid wall of rain and across water-logged land I rode, frozen, the first stage of my way back to Reykjavik, and then through gales and depressions and fog and two glimpses of Northern lights I returned to Leith on the little Danish steamer *Botnia* (in ballast), on what I was told was one of her last journeys that way, for she's now to be given a quieter life in her old age.

No, I cannot say that I really climbed in Iceland, but no one can say that I did not try, and I think that the energy I put into getting in sight of the climb would have carried me up a moderate peak or two in organized country. But Iceland, Heaven be thanked, is not yet thoroughly organized, and for myself I feel inclined to drink to her waste places as the mathematician toasted Pure Mathematics—"Here's to them, and may they never be of any use to anybody."

ON TRYING TO CLIMB IN ICELAND

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NOTE.

(1) It is now very easy to get to Iceland, in the summer. Boats then go every ten days or fortnightly. The Icelandic Steamship Co., Leith, will send lists of sailings and all information. There are a few sailings from Hull also. Fare, single from Leith (1st Class) £7 15s. od. Food 8/- a day, on board. The journey takes 4 or 5 days, but is hardly to be recommended to bad sailors, as the cargoes carried are often unsavoury, and bad weather is often encountered. The companies are beginning to advertise "cruises"—a euphemism. At anyrate the Viking conception of a cruise is still a tolerably hardy one. Some boats are much better than others. (The round trip allows about 3 days in Reykjavik.) Cargoes come first and passengers are incidental, but if you like a boat that can claim to be really a ship that really does business in great waters and if you are interested in cargoes and like the long days at sea and are a fairly good sailor, you will have fun. The boats are always very full in summer, as accommodation is not very extensive and it should be reserved at least a month before-hand. Many English travellers go up regularly for fishing and the boats are usually pretty full of Icelandic and Danish business men. The best months are June and July; then there is practically no night—but it's only lucky people who can go then. August is doubtful, usually, and the days draw in very rapidly. Northern lights begin to be visible in September if the sky is clear.

(2) Maps are a real difficulty. The Danish Ordnance Survey Map (13/6) is useless for walking. It is good for the coast. The other small map that can be got in Reykjavik shows camping-places for ponies, etc., but is no good for walking by. The best one is the military map (Generalstaben) but this, again, is on an inconveniently large scale, and I could never afford to buy even a square foot of it.

(3) Those of us who like myself are walkers rather than great climbers will be interested in an article by Miss Isobel W. Hutchinson, which appeared a year or so back in the American Geographical Magazine. Miss Hutchinson walked from South to North, and I'd hoped for a walking tour, but got so confounded among complications that it didn't happen. Everything would depend on the state of the rivers.

(4) The sentence that will be found most useful by travellers is "Jeg vildi gjarna sjá hinum megin." "I want to see what is on the other side of that." This was one of my most successful efforts. It needs to be said very firmly.

HILLS VERSUS MOUNTAIN PEAKS

BY

SYLVA NORMAN.

TO speak of hills in the same breath with mountains shows deplorable lack of culture and good taste. It is like returning from a Chalyapine concert to pay a tribute to the local milkman's excellent bass voice. For all that I am going to do it. I have neither style nor culture, and refuse to be a snob. Mountains, I know, are haughty, inaccessible and proud. They cannot be removed except by faith, nor climbed except by skill. Our low hills, on the other hand, lie spread out at the mercy of all random feet, besides being liable at any time to skip like lambs. What of it then? Must we despise their puniness and let them lie? Certainly not; but find a puny champion who has never climbed a rock peak, never known the joys of perilous ascent. The qualifications, then, are negative—a fact so strange as seen amongst the brilliant records of achievement, that the resultant discourse may be, in a back-handed and apologetic way, unique.

In spite of the title, configuration is not my concern, except in so far as it influences personal movements and dictates them. The real object is a bold plea, amid peaks and pinnacles, for that scarcely discussed animal which sticks to hills—the walker. By the general world both climber and walker are supplied with niches as eccentrics. It is the degree that varies. The former has the mighty reputation of being at once more glorious and more mad. The climber, in fact, has all the genius, while the walker, like the local milkman, has a pretty talent that is best left undisclosed.

It is all a case of movement and direction—all the fault of peaks as against hills. Place any human being on a spot of ground and she has got to move the way the ground permits. Now, as I ignorantly see it, the only scraps of free-will in the

matter are the climber's arrival at the foot of rock peaks, and the walker's arrival on her moors or downs. After that the contours and our human limitations do the rest. If the peak goes up, you can't walk through it. If the land lies flat, you can't climb up it. But who considers this obvious bit of logic? Who questions the entire free-will of both?

Some day, of course it will be different. One used to admire the Australians for walking so successfully upside down. But for the present, this is how it is. The rock climber, with a progress almost vertical, is performing something obviously impossible—to the layman's eye. What is more, the layman's scepticism can be killed at once. For, when a peak is scaled, the entire expedition admits of record in a single flash. There is a point where climber becomes conqueror; and a photo of that one position on the summit implies a past and future history in strict ratio to the extent of rock displayed. Human beings on a rock peak: they have neither grown nor flown there, so they must inevitably have climbed the whole way up. With equal certainty they afterwards descended, since the photograph is down on level earth. That summit position is ideal; not only is it perfect as epitome of the climb, but the most ignorant can play no tricks with it. The thing is fool-proof and self-righting. (Those half-way photos of the actual climb are useless for this purpose. The uninitiated always turns the picture sideways, and then flatters his own sense of superiority by gazing at a miserable mammal crawling on a stretch of level rock.)

Now look at the poor walker on the moors and downs, and pity her pale glamour. She relies for her effects on mileage; the horizontal stretches covered are her only boast. And how is she to prove it? Photographs will not do the trick. Snap two spots distant from each other by thirty miles. Of course, but between them there may have been a motor bus. Between them there may have been a week. It is all useless—there is no chance of boasting. Further, there is no complete reward of prowess for herself, in the shape of queenly isolation on a summit. After a dawnlit start and twenty tramping miles across the downs, what does she meet, at the spot so arduously attained, but a group of noisy amblers who

have trekked up a lazy mile or so from the village she last skirted on her way. Or again, we start our walk at midnight with the moon to light us into dawn, surprising all those early morning secrets of white river mist, stars, and sleeping beasts. By ten o'clock, instead of being, like the mountaineer, away, above, beyond all common life, we are left confronting, with wan eyes and dew-damped hair, a bright spruce morning population that outsparkles us. Our reward is only in our mind and memories, not in situation.

Here is another point, connected with this glory of the upward, where the climber gains. Tackle! The climber with her ropes and crampons, porters, guides and ice-axe, is a splendid sight—inspiring awe and reverence at the very start. Nobody takes out ropes for paltry pleasure; nor ice-axes as walking-sticks or guides as dogs. The climber, then, means business. But those walking get-ups! People in Switzerland know too much of them. They know the braves at Wengen, Zermatt, Pontresina, who start directly after breakfast with their excellent thick boots, plus-fours and alpenstocks, or smart tweed skirts and sweaters—to be discovered by a midday stroller, lounging by the wayside two odd miles from the hotel. It is a scandal and a laughing stock. And it is more than we can do to live it down.

So much for the glory. Now the madness. Again the climber lords it, and the reason is the same: direction of movement is the entire clue. We walkers have perhaps this one advantage—that we are not for ever being questioned *why we do it*. People, when they meet us, think they know. As humans they have a habit of travelling horizontally themselves, and so assume vaguely that we, too, are trying to get from place to place. Although for the most part they are wrong, we are sheltered comfortably by their assurance and hidden by the intervening hills. The climber's fanaticism is apparent—blatant. For the sane man can watch the whole thing with his glasses: see the dark flies ascend laboriously, alter for a time the profile of his well-known peak, come down, and leave it naked as before. So easy for him, crowing with his sanity, to ask, "What *do* you think you've gained by that performance?"

Still, we walkers, if we touch a road, can boast our tiny share of madness too. As Wenceslas the rich, who blessed the poor, motorists of the humane and generous type are liable to offer us a lift. We refuse—and pity fades into surprised contempt, as for the fool who prefers emptying the bath in thimblefuls to pulling out the plug.

But when all's considered, what use have we for the verdict of the world? Enjoyment is what matters. How about it? Do we feel a lack, an incompleteness in our pleasure, because as adventure it is second-rate? The sensations of the rock climber are of course unique. Let me suggest a few, and so revive sweet memories in all enthusiasts.

To begin with,

Then,

After that,

And finally.

I have written it thus, partly to indicate the up and down effect, but mainly so that each rock climber will feel free to supplement the bare description by her own experiences.

But the walker's delights are thus and thus and thus and thus and thus . . . If there is any up and down it is contained in the smart jumps from tussock to tussock to avoid brown peat bog on a Yorkshire moor. (For to talk, in this company, of *climbing* hills would be absurd.) Our joys are quiet and unflecked by danger—limpid, full of sentiment, and soft. Blue sky smeared with high white cloud wisps over a green sweep of down; a bed of violets in the springtime, heather in the summer, orchises in secret places, gorse for every month.

As for the elemental wild upheavals, those glories of stark Nature that the climber sees—what do we encounter on our little hills? A cyclonic whirl of red and copper leaves blown giddy by a strong autumnal gale. A sudden hail-storm that sweeps over, crosses an intervening dip, to pelt the further range and leave us dripping, as a plant does, in the sun. A hundred joys of cloud and mist and sunlight, of dark shoulders silhouetted against brightness, and thin streaks of orange on a distant sea.

That is all. There are no traveller's tales, no horrors, nothing—despite all my present efforts—to justify an article or a verse. But it suffices. The acme of pleasure is not exclusive to the highest peak. We don't, thank goodness, keep a rein on our enjoyment lest a greater provocation in the future should find us lacking a more keen response. I'll squander—I *do* squander—my whole measure of amazement and enchantment on the warm scent of the haystack and the green turf of the downs.

True, I have not yet climbed a rock peak . . . But stay, I'm on one now—a pinnacle of presumptuous challenge, which none but the really ignorant ascend. Heaven knows how I got here, unless by audacity and foul means. It is exceedingly uncomfortable. There is no room for my hill-bound feet, and where there ought to be a handhold the relentless rock appears quite smooth and terribly sarcastic. My honest intention is to climb down on the instant and attempt no more. In the meantime I am fearfully aware that having reached this trembling foothold the one treatment I deserve is to be quietly and decisively pushed off. No flowers, please, except a violet and an edelweiss to illustrate the justice of my fate.

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HILLS AND HIGHWAYS. BY KATHARINE C. CHORLEY. With Wood Engravings by MARGARET PILKINGTON. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 6s.

Occasionally in life one falls very deeply—for a thing or a person or a book. This time, I own, it is to this most charming work by Mrs. Chorley—a fellow-climber, a real artiste, and, I would like to add, in case I say things I should not, a third cousin!

I opened it first with a certain misgiving—the *title* is rather commonplace!—but starting accidentally on the chapter called “Cities of the Pennines,” I was completely carried away, and I have read and re-read every word in this book with the most intense pleasure.

Mrs. Chorley is a writer who knows how to travel, and a wanderer who can put her experiences into very good English. This I think must be rare. I have so often lately heard her compared with the late C. E. Montague—comparisons, if not always odious, are generally trifling.

Both these writers share something of the same grace, and—dare I say it—tricks. But where in Montague there lies an under-current of whimsical fun, in Mrs. Chorley I can only detect a stream of gravity. In this gravity—for some of us—lies the fascination of her style and it lends to her descriptions a very real charm.

This is the book of an extremely well-read young woman. Her mind is so fully stored with words of great writers that every object she sees becomes tuned to their style and coloured with their fancies. The famous walkers and vagabonds are attended to and quoted and put back—in her pocket. The great painters are drawn into the company to help with their own particular touches a scene that the authoress fears she may not sufficiently well describe.

But, it is when she has for a moment turned aside from her big men that I like her best—when she writes, after quotations from Hazlitt, Dr. Johnson and Murgers (*Vie de Bohème*), of the wandering holiday-makers, “What is this light-hearted wisdom? Is it not the faculty in a man for withdrawing himself from time to time from the bewildering ways of civilisation and settling his whole being to Nature’s versatile tunes? It is to know how to get away for a little from the notice boards of convention, the fences of callous logic, the temples for sham reverences, even from the lumbering gallant effort to clear away the rubbish and think honestly . . . for the earth never grows bored and fretful and cynical, and from the earth men replenish their lordly physical life of touch and smell and taste and sight and sound.”

“Spring in the Cairngorms” is perhaps the best chapter in this most readable book. One gets the idea of the bigness of the hills and the delight it is to climb and walk in them. There is a *rush* about the style here that takes one on and up and leaves too much meditation behind; the wind is blowing round us and real rain wetting our cheeks and the authoress herself is “full out.” If there is a fault in this excellent book it seems to me it is a lack of variety in subject and treatment. It is all too much in one note, even if that be a good one and so we are sometimes led to think that one chapter is another and find we have forgotten a particular story because it resembles so many others. But they all repay re-reading. A chapter for instance like the “Earth at Dawn” grows on one immensely after the third try, and “Antæns” at the end is only fully appreciated by some of us after we have passed from the mere reading to the critical stage.

Mrs. Chorley is much to be congratulated on another point: though she becomes anecdotal she never is merely chatty. I had feared for this in the portion devoted to Inns and Innkeepers and the Lakes of that lake-

hero, Will Ritson ! I can *not* agree with her in her placing of Wasdale Hotel as one of the great inns. Surely here sentimentality has carried her away.

The wood engravings by Miss Margaret Pilkington add rather than detract from the purpose of the authoress. They suggest, too, much study of Nature's forms, an appreciation of romantic solitude and are duly severe.

This is a book I would fearlessly recommend to anyone whom I respected.

E.C.W.Y.

A HISTORY OF SKI-ING. BY ARNOLD LUNN. Oxford University Press, 16s.

I have not *read* this book. Mr. Lunn himself would be the last person to ask that, particularly of a non-skier. It seems, though, having looked it through reverently many times, to be an admirable work. Indeed it is a **HISTORY OF SKI-ING** and would I imagine be as welcome on any representative international bookshelf as on that of any pure devotee of winter sports. The author is never half-hearted in any book ; he can attack no subject from Chess to Roman-Catholicism without plunging deep into everything historical, ethnological, controversial and so forth. Hence this book provides a large number of persons with good reading.

Though fairly wrapt in his favourite sport, Mr. Lunn never becomes so deeply involved in technicalities, however bare, that he loses the romantic touch nor misses seeing the mountains for the ski that are to get him up and down them. He is primarily a mountaineer, inevitably a first-class ski-er, of the utilitarian as well as the exhibiting variety.

He traces the evidences of ski-ing from 526 A.D. (the "Gliding Finns"). After a rest of several centuries ski-ing cropped up again about the 13th century in Sweden and later in the 17th century there, but beginning as a sport in Christina, as late as 1870.

And here I would urge the earnest ski-er to peruse, not as I have done from chapter to chapter in and out, but rather word for word. Let him not be deterred from his purpose by the misprints. Who can blame Mr. Lunn ; he is a Titanic worker and mere mistakes in spelling . . . ?

Hail this monumental work is given up to accounts of races and racers, different styles, stories of famous battles in the ski-world. How important this is if one is to keep so serious a thing as a sport *alive* !

In all we feel a deep respect on the part of the author for ski-ing, a profound faith in the exercise and—this is Mr. Lunn himself—the love of a good joke, even if it be at his own expense.

The illustrations are plentiful. Many are of personal interest—photographs of famous ski-ers—but there are also lovely pictures taken by Messrs. Gaberell and Amstutz, and some exquisite cartoons. In time, should the writer become even an elementary ski-er, it is most certainly a book she would never be without.

E.C.W.Y.

Particularly interesting to the Pinnacle Club will be the chapters on early winter mountaineering and women's ski-ing record.

The extraordinarily gallant pioneering of Mrs. Aubrey Le Blond over a long period of years ought to be known to all women climbers. She is the brightest luminary of a group including Miss Brevoort, Miss Straton, Mrs. Jackson, Mlle. Mary Paillon and Miss K. Richardson, indeed the part played by women in developing the winter ascent before the era of ski is so remarkable that someone will in the future probably write a thesis about it. Mr. Lunn has done justice to the feminine contribution, and later his chapter on lady ski-runners gives a very interesting view of recent developments. We may note that "there are few sports where male superiority is less marked than in ski-ing"—"that ladies are less ready to complain of the minor discomforts of a ski

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tour than men," and that at present the women's jumping record stands at 24 metres, held by Countess Lamberg. The names of the three women who have hitherto passed the 1st Class Ski-ing Test (a very high standard indeed) are Lady Mabel Lunn, Dame Katherine Furze and Miss Olga Major; each has done much to raise the standard and status of women ski-ers.

D.E.P.

THE OPEN-AIR GUIDE. BY J. R. ASHTON AND F. A. STOCKS.
John Heywood, Ltd., 3s. 6d.

This is a most comprehensive little book, a pocket edition of other works read by the authors. It would appear to be a volume which might be useful on innumerable occasions, and it is even sympathetic to the motorist. The bibliographies are impressive and at the end there is a fine map of England and Wales, shewing the many places held by the National Trust up to the year 1927.

We can read in carefully tabulated form—just to mention a few things—information about wayside architecture, camping, first-aid, photography, trees, wild beasts (not yet extinct in our country); where the Roman and mediæval roads are to be found; which districts to visit with a view to scrambling, loafing, motoring or climbing; what to look for in scenery; how to know the direction *without* a compass; how to climb; how to rest; to feed and to *walk*!

Most of this admirable advice has of course been given before but never fitted into so slim a form. This book can be strongly recommended to the wayfaring novice.

E.C.W.Y.

THE ALPINE JOURNAL. MAY 1928. VOL. XL., No. 236.

This is an informative, and on the whole, pleasant journal. A great deal of ground is covered and much Alpine matter is herein discussed. It is enlivened by some letters from that excellent mountaineer, the late Miss Gertrude Bell, and there is a particularly charming article by Mr. Irving, "The Godfathers of Fortunatus." Mr. Athole Murray writes of Icelandic mountains as though it were his intention to draw us there—and I wish we might be drawn! Miss Macdonald's account of the first ascent by any woman of Kilimanjaro owes much of its interest to the controversial finish when it is nearly (but not quite!) proved that hers was not the first feminine ascent! There is a League of Nations touch about the story of the expedition to Mount Olympus and an Imperialistic note about the further wanderings of our Colonial Secretary. Mr. Smythe tells his epic story of the ascent of Mont Blanc from the Brenva Glacier magnificently. There is a dissertation on knots (with illustrations) that recalls certain intricate crochet patterns. Mr. Claude Wilson has spread himself, assisted by the pen of Mr. Willink, about the Aiguilles d'Avres. A lack of stirring photographs is the keynote of this number, though notable exception may be made of Mr. Amstutz's and Mr. Graham Brown's Sérac Wall.

E.C.W.Y.

THE ALPINE JOURNAL. NOVEMBER 1928. VOL. XL., No. 237.

Here is another representative journal, opening with a bright description of the Moroccan mountains by M. de Lépiney. More letters of Miss Bell, and these are always interesting, since she had an eye and was an accomplished mountaineer as well. It is fitting, too, that the adventurous Mrs. Colonel Mark Beaufoy, 1787, should here be immortalized. Her descriptions of glaciers alone, not to mention her table of expenses at the end, are worth having—a true Alpiniste of her day! Dr. Longstaff returns to the Himalayas, "Twenty Years After." Sir

Martin Conway's story of a flight over the Pyrenees would lose much of its charm were he less of a first-class mountaineer himself. Mrs. Copeland tells of ranges in Central Europe of which many of us are surely ignorant. In a short narrative centred in Israel we are reminded by Mr. Elmslie of mountains known to most of us merely through their Old Testament contexts.

The serial on knots is continued and the patterns become even more intricate. They are—fittingly, after such a summer—a long list of first-class ascents, new and old. The illustrations are adequate—no more.

E.C.W.Y.

THE LADIES' ALPINE CLUB YEAR BOOK, 1928.

This number contains Miss Miriam O'Brien's account of l'Aiguille de Roc du Grépon. It is interesting to notice that she thought the final chimney harder than anything except the last few feet on the Mer de Glace face of the Grépon which she did a week later. Dr. Maud Cairney describes her winter ascent of the Obergabelhorn from Mountet. Those who know this climb in summer will not wonder that it has never been ascended in winter before. Some notes on mountains in all parts of the world are contributed by Mrs. Hubert Murray, and there is a very impressive summary of the climbing career of the late Miss K. Richardson, the first woman to climb the Meije and to cross the East arête of the Aiguille de Bionnassay in the dim ages of 1888.

D.E.P.

THE FELL AND ROCK CLUB JOURNAL, 1927. Vol. VII., No. 3.

This journal would appear to be one of the Club's best, and great credit to Mrs. Chorley that it is so. I opened it, for reviewing purposes, in my cabin not long since, between Harwich and Hook, became cheered by its contents, lost interest (but this was due to the motion of the boat alone!), and so dropped it for a while. Resuming my study of it later in Berlin, I found it excellent reading. There are fine stories of good climbs, Mr. Macphee in the Alps, Mr. Howard Somervell in the Himalayas, and Miss Winifred Marples with the G.H.M. in the Alps. There is a typically Doughty article called "Failures," which opens not so well, but continues better and ends finely. There are the usual reminiscent tales for which this journal has become famous and they seem pleasantly portrayed on the whole by Messrs. Tribe, Scantlebury and Seatree. Mr. Chorley devotes two articles to the accident question. There are, for padding again, two of those detached and humorous contributions which seem part and parcel of some of our journals now; but climbers' jokes, like American stories, are, oddly enough, so much better when not written down. The two photographs by Miss Dorothy Pilkington are the best feature of the illustrations.

E.C.W.Y.

THE FELL AND ROCK CLUB JOURNAL, 1928. Vol. VIII., No. 1.

I have only *just* time to glance at this newcomer before sailing for the U.S.A.—so may much be forgiven me by the Editors of this and my own journal. On the face of it, it seems a first-class achievement; on the *up-grade* this Editor most certainly is. [We trust that our ex-President will cause no domestic dissention through the freedom of her comments.—Ed.]. Mr. Knight's "Addenda Montana" is a delight to read, telling of his new ascents *again* with Mr. Kelly. Mr. Macphee's "The Crack" belongs to the same class. Not one of these well collected group of stories seems to deserve a miss. Mr. Allsup writes in a spirited vein of Sikkim; Mr. Coulton of doing the three Pinnacles (Scawfell Pinnacle, the Needle and the Pillar) in one day—a long and sporting round for Miss Murray who was with him; Mr. Hughes treats of

camping in Corsica, and again sets one longing to go there. Mrs. Chorley puzzles and charms me by writing in one short paper of Luxemburg and a band outside the hotel window which develops—as events do in a dream—pretty rapidly into sheep to be rescued on Dow Crag's East Buttress. Mr. Holland gives us pictures of Rosenlaui and a holiday spent on adjacent peaks. Mr. Willink's "Lakeland Memories" are truly enlightening as to the discomforts in the last century of our early climbers, and of *course* he supplies us with two original Willink illustrations which are very welcome. The list of new climbs is certainly up to a standard and the idea of the Piers Ghyll Portfolio is quite charming.

E.C.W.Y.

THE RUCKSACK CLUB JOURNAL, 1928. VOL. VI., No. 2.

Kingdoms rise and fall and so I suppose must climbing journals. This one seems to be temporarily slightly on the down-grade and why it is hard to see. Perhaps the Editor would do well to take to heart some words which appear in the May 1928 number of the Alpine Journal, which are to the effect that *they* are not trying to convert their journal into a magazine of fiction; and I wonder whether the Rucksack Club really are not?

There are, as we might expect, several excellent things about this number, however; notably an article by the younger Burns called "A Siegfried Idyll"; a paper by Mr. Doughty called "Dream Rocks"—substantial enough for all its title; a cheerful chronicle by Mr. J. F. Burton of Dolomite and Swiss climbs; and a charming account of his last Alpine season by Mr. Coates.

There is a great attraction too about Mr. Scott's picture of "Minor," and a real interest, if one is prepared to try, in the "Psychology of Climbing" by Mr. R. A. Thouless. Amongst others, some very lovely photographs by Messrs. Pryor, Thomas and Goodfellow, enliven these pages.

But there is surely too much undergraduate humour in this particular journal. "Freeman, Hardy & Willis" have lived too long; Scott *will* have his jokes, and there is an adaptable Club artist; but there are too many pages of this personal and topical kind for the outside world.

There is also a serious poem with a marked economy of words; and poets should "ware" that "over the hills" trap, they fall into it just too often.

E.C.W.Y.

THE CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL, 1928. VOL. III., No. 2.

This has been referred to, in other pages, as our "highbrow journal"—perhaps a correct label to give to this beautifully printed and rather dignified little volume.

There are several most readable items, for example Mr. Guinness' "Le premier pas"; Mr. Longland's "Two Days"; and M. de Ségoyne's "Pâques, 1927," which no one but that dashing Frenchman could have written of several Easter wet days at Pen-y-Pass.

There are two friendly papers on "How I began to climb" by Mr. Claude Wilson (an ancient), and Mr. Holland (a modern); "Pilgrims Astray" by Mr. C. E. Benson (another ancient), is of the chatty variety, viz.: Americans at Wasdale Head.

There is an Ivan Wallerish account of climbs on the "Terrace Wall," referring the reader at the end to his gramophone, which we understand has been Mr. Waller's obligato accompaniment on more than one ascent. There are only two illustrations, but these I think are excellent photographs of the late Mr. Marshall and the late Mr. Lamb, champions both in their time of the Climbers' Club.

E.C.W.Y.

CLIMBING NOTES.

IT is gratifying to record that the standard of achievement of members of the Club shows no signs of decline. A year which has witnessed such things as Miss Ella Mann's lead of the Crowberry Ridge direct, of the complete traverse of the Cuillin Ridge by the President, Miss Trilby and Miss Biddy Wells, the ascent of the Grooved Arête on Tryfan (led by Miss Bray) at the Easter Meet, Miss Hall's enterprising wanderings in Iceland, and the climbing at the Graian Meet, must always be notable.

Turning to Alpine and general mountaineering the increasing part played by women in new and otherwise remarkable expeditions will be of interest. The first ascent of the North Arête of the Dent Blanché, the last great ridge of the Alps, by the Editor and Mr. I. A. Richards, led by the brilliant guide Joseph Georges; Miss Maud Cairney's variant on the N.E. face of the same mountain, and her first winter ascent of the Obergabelhorn from the Mountet; Miss Miriam O'Brien's first ascent of l'Aiguille de Roc du Grépon, her lead of the Mummery Chimney of the Grépon, and her exploits on the Aiguilles du Diable; Miss Sheila Macdonald's ascent of Mount Kilimanjaro, and Mrs. Don Munday's explorations in the Canadian Coast Ranges (Mystery Mountain), and too many other fine performances to be chronicled here, will show that the spirit which animates the Pinnacle Club is also active outside among feminine mountaineers.

The advance in technical ability, enterprise and scope, to which these things testify would, we are sure, have delighted the generous heart of our Foundress. To us it shows that the inspiration from which the Club takes its being was fully justified.



Photo U. Dolling

DENT BLANCHE FROM ROTHORN

Shewing N. Ridge (right-hand skyline) and N.E. Variant

