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ENGLISH CLIMBING.

CONSIDERED MAINLY FROM AN ALPINE STANDPOINT.

By OWEN GLYNNE JONES.

A GOOD series of Cumberland climbing photographs were lately at the Schwarzsee, and under the shadow of the noble old Matterhorn, a party of German cragsmen were ridiculing the idea that anything good in their line of sport could be found in England. Whereupon a patriot rose and brought them the photographs. "Ach Gott! these men are terrible, they attempt the impossible!" and they, with strenuous verbal effort, decided that Englishmen at home must be madder than when abroad. Nevertheless, the method of our madness interested them not a little, and they were at any rate convinced that we were not without our training-ground for heavier work in the Alps—our *polytechnik*—where correct principles could be learnt and inwardly digested by the aid of suitable practice.

We cannot ignore the fact that our polytechnic is small and incomplete. Ten years ago, our athletes were few, and the Cumberland fells were large enough for all. But with this terribly rapid growth of the "tooth-and-nail" industry, there has arisen the corresponding demand for technical training in that special subject, and we find that additional space is required for the use of fresh students of mountaineering, and new work of an advanced character for those who have graduated in the ordinary courses. So far as the English school is concerned, we must be prepared to admit without much qualification that there is no more room, and that there are not many problems remaining unsolved.

When these zealous students gather together on high days and holidays, the hotels are crowded and the outhouses filled to overflowing. The popular gullies are thronged with visitors. It becomes almost necessary to issue numbered tickets to the waiting throng at

the foot of the Gable Needle. Orders for the ascent of Kern Knotts may be received two days in advance; this is a fact in my own experience. In ascending Deep Ghyll, parties are expected to adhere strictly to the rule of the road for the convenience of the general public. An unexpected jamming in a tight chimney stops the traffic several yards away; and, as in our London streets when a similar suspension of traffic occurs, there is a general discharge of expletives along the impatient line, and a hoarse cry of "igher up, there!"

But spite of all this, the work goes on merrily enough, and I daresay it loses little in efficiency. Apart from the orthodox holiday seasons—such as Easter and Whitsuntide—there are times when single parties can have the fells to themselves. They are available practically the whole year round; they are rarely barred for long by adverse conditions of ice, snow, or general bad weather; and for tyro or expert alike they supply all that is needful for a thorough relaxation of his work-a-day strain, and a complete recuperation of his physical strength.

It would be beside the mark to dwell on the possibilities of the future in the direction of the removal of those disadvantages under which climbers in England may now be said to labour. No doubt accelerated train services to the north may be expected before long to take us in a reasonable time to the unexplored mountain recesses of bonnie Scotland, which, if we accept the utterances of our northern neighbours, offers plenty of magnificent exploratory work for generations to come; though for the present, we in the south feel that the expense of time and money had better be incurred in carrying us to Switzerland instead. Leaving that question altogether, it may be reasonably contended that we have quite as much as is good for us in our own country. Those who can fairly claim to have exhausted English climbing—if there are any such—are not in the least likely to be contented with a whole England full of dolomitic or granite crags, and are bound to take opportunity to try conclusions with the hardest problems abroad. These men are beyond the schools; they have taken their education into their own hands, and we can only look on and admire—or deplore. He who must ever be bent on achieving something new is not to be envied. Mummery used to hold that that which gave the acutest pleasure in a climb was the element of uncertainty; and writing without reference to the particular passage in his noble book, I believe he claims that it was only in fresh exploration that he could get a thoroughly satisfying amount of this uncertainty. This, with all deference, is a little too much. It may for a first-class mountaineer detract something from his pleasure to feel that he is certain to get up because someone else has already managed the ascent before him; but

for most of us there are glorious uncertainties in plenty on routes not altogether new, and even when convinced of our ultimate success, we can get our fill of pleasure from other elements in the day's sport, the variety of which Mummery himself was most emphatic in describing.

It was as good as a day's scrambling to meet our president recently at Chamonix, on his arrival one afternoon from Courmayeur by way of Mont Blanc. He had been up goodness knows how many times—I am ashamed for not knowing the exact number—and his enjoyment was as great as ever. He was none the less a true mountaineer for revelling in the expedition, or for neglecting to think of the hundreds who had been up there before him, and of the grand uncertainties of the game. He obtained his day's exhilarating exercise, his fresh views of familiar old peaks, his recollections of former climbs and probably his anticipations of future ones. Then in the evening he entertained us with talk of past days at Penygwryd, where year after year the same party used to assemble at Christmastide and have a rare good time. They did the same climbs again and again—they and the weather supplied the variety—and for over twenty years the place was big enough for their pleasure. Let us therefore make up our minds that England will do for ours.

The note of warning is even now sounded for us. Since penning the last sentence news comes from the Tyrol of the death of Mr. L. Norman-Neruda, one of the most skilful and daring of the modern school of rock climbers. His was the first ascent of the Fünffingerspitze by the north side, a climb that he characterized as the hardest he had ever attempted. Since that time he has explored that particular peak as no other amateur has done, and many of us may recall with interest his well-written and well-illustrated article that appeared three years ago in the *Zeitschrift*, on the Fünffingerspitze *als Typus eines Modeberges*—as the type of a fashionable rock climb—fashionable because of its extreme difficulty. With a daring that few would care to emulate he climbed his favourite peak entirely alone, by all its routes in the same day. Familiarity did not breed contempt perhaps, but neither did it ensure a certainty of success, for it was on the south route up this same Fünffingerspitze that the accident happened which caused his death. With all our fondness for familiar climbs, let us therefore relax in no wise that caution which their difficulties demand of us. It is by no means paradoxical to assert that the more seriously we take to our work, the more we shall be able to rejoice in it.

On the threshold of a new departure, we first members of the English Climbers' Club have good reason to pause and contemplate our responsibilities. The formation of a club, if it does not mean a

pledge to justify our pursuit to the outer world, at any rate implies a conviction in us that adverse critics could be silenced with fuller knowledge of what we risk and what we gain. The outer world have every right to enquire into the cause of misadventure that happens to us, every right to blame severely those whose folly or negligence has taken bad luck by the hand and courted disaster. We may be too proud or too indifferent to answer their adverse judgments, but it is well-nigh impossible for even an inveterate climber to remain entirely unaffected by the opinions of his friends and relatives. The experience of the Alpine Club is at our disposal; its champions in dialectic are fortunately ours of necessity, and it remains to act up to our convictions and theirs. Accidents to novices will always set the world barking at our heels; accidents to our tried mountaineers, rare though they must assuredly be, turn our best arguments against us.

All this moralising is very well, but it is not exactly what the editor required of me. He has let me take the lead in a new climb, and under the pretence of prospecting, I have run out on an unconscionable length of rope before beginning the actual business of the day. And yet here again is a sign of the times; our climbing literature as well as our districts are becoming exhausted. The usual narration of a modern mountaineering achievement suggests an aimless circling round and round in aerial flight, with an apparent forgetfulness of time and object, and then a sudden pounce on the unfortunate little, half-hidden *motif*. It is kept out of sight in the preliminary pages, and then bolted in a paragraph. The veterans with axe and pen are a little hard on all this. They actually expect us to please them, as much as they please us! They have used up all the little climbing jokes; they bar our reference to the pleasures and penalties of nights out, to damp or otherwise unrestful beds, to the matchless excellences of our leaders, to the glories of Alpine sunrises and sunsets, to every type of incident that used to supply them with so much copy. They were frequently inaccurate in matters of climbing detail, probably deeming accuracy incompatible with artistic treatment of their subject. Yet they laugh at our "times," and profess to despise the details that are now-a-days so fully and generously offered them. No wonder the sensitive scribe is tempted to compact his matter into the smallest possible space, and write on other subjects for the rest of his article. We may well envy the pioneers their opportunities, but at the same time we may console ourselves with the reflection that they did much for us. It would be unbecoming to appear thankless. Any more information on English climbing they perhaps think it is impossible to supply, now that nearly every gully and ridge and pinnacle has been written up *in extenso*. It was a fine sarcasm in a recent paper before

the Alpine Club that permeated the allusion to our luckless literary efforts. The author could not, or would not, remember the details of his own climbing expedition, and amusingly contrasted it with the accounts of ascents in England or Wales, or the Coolins of Skye, where it was deemed necessary to know, on starting out from the hotel, which foot to put foremost, and where detail was so elaborate that a stonefall in a gully might call for a new edition. But this same author, in the rôle of scientific exponent of the principles of mountaineering, also studies the subject with microscopic minuteness. His directions to the would-be climber are innumerable. There may be thirty-seven things for an oarsman to think about in each stroke, but a cragsman has a thousand and one. Nor are these directions supplied with examples. We read in his instructive pages of the various aids to stability: how to place our hands, our feet, and the other portions of our anatomy that can be temporarily used as limbs; but we do not know where we are. We have to imagine the situations, or draw on our past experiences. Only those with a past can appreciate the ingenious analysis; those without must wait.

To write realistically about rock climbing is one of the hardest things in the world; and to understand what the writer is striving to explain, when he is narrating the overcoming or circumvention of difficulties, is often almost impossible even with the work of the most gifted authors. Perhaps one of the most explicit, and at the same time, most enjoyable narratives of the kind ever written, is Mummery's chapter on the Grépon, but until the reader has traversed this peak, he will never realize the description sufficiently well to understand the nature of its general design, and of its chief difficulties. This journal must be persuaded to tolerate it, but incomprehensible to all but Cumberland climbers will be the following account of a famous foreign rock climb, illustrated by references to similar passages in our own district.

It was my great pleasure to be taken across the Dent du Requin last August. Its preliminaries were of the ordinary character—easy glacier for two hours, intermittent steep moraine and ice for an hour, much-crevassed glacier for an hour. Then the rock-work began with an hour of the easy parts of the Ennerdale face of Great Gable, minus all vestiges of grass or other vegetation. All members of the party could move together, even when the scrambling was varied by the passage of the Slab-and-Notch Route. This brought us to a shoulder on the main east ridge of the mountain, and in a situation such as the top of the first part of the West Climb on the Pillar Rock, we sat and lunched, and examined the remaining work before us. The highest point was about a hundred and fifty feet above our heads, separated off by a wide

and very Savage Gully that descended steeply 1,500 feet to the glacier below. The ridge on which we were seated curved up on our left, like the upper portion of the Needle Ridge, and fifty feet above us it wound across directly towards the final tower, like the horizontal ridge finish of the Shamrock Chimney.

The first party to reach the summit of the Requin descended 400 feet of the Savage Gully, and, bearing across to more broken ground on the other side of the peak, they forced a route up the north face. Our own party adopted a course that involved no long descent. Looking across at the final tower, we could see that it was seamed by a vertical chimney starting from the level of the Shamrock ridge on our left, and extending upwards for 100 feet to an elevated notch on the left side of the tower, close to the highest point. This chimney, an erected "Oblique" Chimney, was divided into two equal portions, of which perhaps only the upper half could be climbed without a fixed rope. At any rate, the lower part had been occasionally attempted, but never achieved. Our route followed the ridge up to the great tower, and skirted the foot of the Oblique Chimney by an easy hand traverse. It then descended the Savage Gully by a crack thirty feet long, to a small resting-place for three, such as that below the pinnacle on the Keswick Brothers' Climb. Thence a Pendlebury Traverse led across nearly to the other side of the Savage Gully, and a steep but easy first pitch of the A Pike's Crag Gully brought us to a secondary buttress that marked the limit of our traversing. Then a succession of chimneys and ledges gradually turning the tower, brought us to the elevated notch at the head of the Oblique Chimney. It must suffice to say that the series started with the outside route up the Needle, a rather wide Doctor's Chimney, and the direct finish of the great Ennerdale Gully on Gable Crag. Nothing harder was encountered. From the notch there remained a few feet of easy cleft, and a finish up the Y-boulder of Mosedale. The ascent from our breakfasting-place, and the return by means of a doubled rope twice used in the Oblique Chimney, occupied only two hours exclusive of halts—quite a Cumberland time. We had left the hotel at 2 a.m. (unusual for Wastdale!) and were back again at 3.30 p.m. Another party on the mountain, unaccustomed to these importations of English ascents into French territory, decided somewhat early in the day to give up the Requin, and left it to us.

Though the few guides who have climbed the Requin are asking for it a tariff of 300 francs, it does not demand greater skill or strength in its individual pitches, separately considered, than are needed in the English climbs enumerated in the above description. Some may ask why was it that the first party, all men of the highest attainments in mountaineering, took 20 hours from bivouac to summit and back?

The answer is simple: they were tired after the long journey out from England, they had to design a route up, and they had the experiences of but a few previous explorers on the mountain. Their second ascent would have been accomplished in half the time; its narration would not have been half so thrilling. Dr. Clinton Dent, in reviewing Mummery's book for the *Alpine Journal*, remarked that such climbs as the Dent du Requin and the "crack" on the Grépon are impossible for men who have not been schooled in the ways of guides of the stamp of Alexander Burgener. We can sympathise with his strong partisanship for the guide that led him ultimately to victory in that long-protracted struggle with the almost unconquerable Grand Dru, but we do not altogether agree with his remark. He should be persuaded to join our club, and take part in some of our guideless meets; for the particular *tours de force* that he quotes, he might learn that a training-school nearer home can be found where no Burgeners are wanted.

While thus running counter to the well-known opinion of an expert, let me venture even a step further. Everybody knows of the Aiguille du Géant, and of the fixed ropes all the way up the interesting finish. Also most climbers will remember that Mr. Leslie Stephen, examining it from Mont Mallet in 1871, remarked that nobody would ever climb it by fair means. So far, indeed, he is right, in that various engineering methods were employed by the first party to mount it, and all succeeding visitors have benefited by the ropes and stanchions they left behind. Yet I am convinced that a party of two men could climb the Aiguille without these aids. The lower crack on the Burgener platten, usually reckoned the stiffest piece on the rock, is less difficult than the direct ascent to the Slingsby Chimney on Scawfell Pinnacle, from the first pitch in Deep Ghyll. The slightly overhanging chimney on the main ridge above the platten, taken by two men, is equalled in severity by many a short English pitch. The higher pinnacle of Robin Hood's Stride in Derbyshire is a match for it.

We must bear in mind in making these comparisons that a climber can reach the hard cragwork of our country in a brief time from his starting-point, and without initial fatigue he can start on the severest work of the day; whereas abroad, it is the usual thing to spend a restless night and several hours of tiring, monotonous grind before the real troubles begin. Such a handicap as this would, with the average man, put many English climbs out of the question. The accident to Mr. Alfred Evans on Snowdon, ten years ago, is generally attributed to the fatigue consequent on his climbing for a few hours before starting the ascent of Lliwedd, on which the slip occurred. A weak or untrained individual in Switzerland cannot even reach the crux of a

long expedition. Everything is magnified out there; preliminaries may last half a day or more, and the *mauvais quart d'heure* in which the climber's technical skill is taxed to the utmost may last two or three hours! Hence it is that endurance is frequently of more importance than skill, and the foolishness of comparing the Gable Needle with the *Aiguille du Géant* as a climb is manifest. . . . So we must tolerate the scornful contempt of the first-rate guides for the difficult problems on the Shoehorn boulder at Zermatt—which, maybe, they cannot solve for themselves—in humble consideration of what they can do in the way of practical gymnastics after twelve hours of the severe trials of leadership. Of a truth many of our most prized little climbs in Cumberland are but slightly better than boulder problems. Taken singly, they cannot be reckoned for much Alpine practice, nor can our ability to surmount them justify us in assuming airs of superiority over men of general elementary experience abroad.

Always recognising these limitations, it is precisely because the English work is shorter, but at the same time, pitch for pitch, equally difficult, that we should value our home mountaineering. The grouping of the crags is so excellent that our much-enduring wanderers can always put in more exercise, if a single gully or ridge is found to have absorbed too little of their available energy. It generally suffices for them. The Cambrian or Cumbrian air is magnificent, but there is some further fine quality in the atmosphere of the great Alps, which makes a Swiss climbing day of fourteen hours about as easy to undertake as an eight-hours' day on the fells. The labour involved in a walk down Wastdale, an ascent of one of the Screes gullies, and a return along the ridge and home by Burnmoor, is as much as we are usually willing to incur in a day. The responsibilities of leadership for a man accustomed to professional guidance add a few hours to the effective length of his course, and no amount of experience as leader should diminish the extra effort that his position demands.

Sometimes a series of "events" are run through with great rapidity. One fine afternoon in April, a party of three men, all well acquainted with the rocks, and in perfect form, rattled up the Eagle's Nest Ridge by the ordinary route, down the Arrowhead, up the Needle Ridge, and down the Needle Gully; the whole set taking but an hour and three-quarters. This is very fast going, and more careful parties would prefer to take twice as long. Yet it shows how the crags shrink under practised and daring hands. The same thing, of course, occurs abroad, and induces us occasionally to believe that the great Swiss climbs are a bagatelle. The irreducible minimum of time for the Grépon was almost touched lately by a party threatened with a lightning storm all the while they were on the rocks. They were only 10½

hours out from the Montanvert, and less than half of this time was spent in crag climbing! It is no unusual thing for ten hours to be so spent. To judge the work on the Grépon by the minimum would be to estimate it as a moderately severe Cumberland day; whereas the effort involved in the traverse is quite as much as that in the ascent twice over of all the Napes ridges. Further comparisons, rough though they may be, will perhaps prove interesting. We will take the longer English climbs and the shorter Swiss ones, estimating their relation chiefly by the times taken by the same individual. The Pillar Rock by the North Climb gives about as much rock work as the Portengrat traverse, the Zinal ridge of the Rothhorn, or the Wandfluh ridge of the Dent Blanche. The passage from the Dom to the Täschhorn in the most perfect state of the ridge, when the time spent in step-cutting and in careful negotiation of cornices is almost negligible, is as a descent of Gable by way of the Westmorland Crags and the Needle Ridge, and a subsequent ascent of the Ennerdale face by the traverse and the Bottle-shaped Pinnacle ridge. Some of the Chamopix aiguilles offer little but snow and ice. The Aiguille du Plan gives no more rock on the ordinary route than we find on the Penrith climb of Scawfell, and the Aiguille du Midi rocks are matched in time and quality by those from the Low Man to the summit of the Pillar. The Blaitière, if free from ice, is equal to the West Pillar route, up to the snow *col*; and its last part has an approximate equivalent in the ascent of the Scawfell Pisgah from the Rake's Progress by the new climb from the Tennis Court. The Little Dru—ah, well, it is the finest climb out there; splendid quality of work, and plenty of it. I think rather too well of the rocks of the Little Dru to build it up of bits of England, but half a dozen of our best and longest courses on end would scarcely match it. Many readers with experience of the Alpine peaks will be inclined to take exception to these comparisons. But it must be remembered that no attempt is here made to describe the greater climbs by home analogies; we are only discussing the relative amounts and quality of rock exercise involved in the parallel cases. It is an infliction to be possessed of an acute recollection of their details when making these analogies, for the variety is infinite, and no two pitches are alike in the wide world. Those who have not climbed in the Alps will more readily pardon deficiencies. The comparisons are certainly made chiefly for their interest. They read of great doings abroad, and are at a loss to connect up with their own experiences at home.

The opportunities of fresh exploration in England are nearly exhausted; that fact we were sadly compelled to admit at the outset. But new work of considerable interest is continually being done, and will go on for a few years to come. Routes unexceptionable in both

quality and safety are found for us in the most unexpected quarters. Who would have thought, at the time of the first ascent of Moss Ghyll, that the great cliff between that magnificent gully and the Mickledore, could have offered two such splendid climbs as those named after Dr. Collier and the Keswick brothers? It is true that the former route was tabooed by the careful for some years after the first ascent, as being both difficult and dangerous. But it has lately been shown that its initial thirty feet—the only doubtful portion—can be safely negotiated with a looped rope, or still more safely turned on the right. Nobody can take exception to the second of the above pair, which, with care and moderate skill, is as reliable a route as any to be found on Scawfell. Then again the gully in Borrowdale that yielded to the attack of Mr. W. Cecil Slingsby's party last year, was a surprise to nearly everybody, even to those whose wandering gaze had occasionally rested on the dark vertical line that divides Blea Crag so suggestively. We have in the Alps the Adlerjoch, named in remembrance of the eagle's wing picked up there by the first party; the Col de l'Abeille, from the "vagrant bee perplexed" that tried to cross the pass, and, halting on the snow, became a victim to frost-bite, and all but succumbed to the intense cold; the Col des Hirondelles, from the poor dead swallows that Leslie Stephen came too late to save. But here in Borrowdale Mr. Slingsby strikes a new departure. He has aptly christened his climb "Mouse Ghyll," for he passed a veritable *ridiculus mus* clearing the great pitch at a single leap. Apparently it suffered no harm, but it must have ached next day, and one hopes that it will live long enough to learn of the honour bestowed upon it for making the first recorded descent of the Blea Crag gully. From all accounts the Ghyll must have points of decided merit. Its position is very convenient for sojourners at Rosthwaite or Seatoller, and there is a most attractive outlook from its crest. Moreover, a variation at the finish offers a "crack" climb comparable with those on Kern Knotts. Less interesting as a whole, but well worth a visit from Keswick or Grasmere, is the Black Crag that yielded to the assault of Messrs. Abraham's party. The route is up a steep and forbidding-looking chimney, out of sight from the main road from Keswick to Wythburn. There is some trouble with bad rock, but the great pitch is sufficiently difficult to tempt the most experienced and enterprising.

Passing over to Coniston, we may truly endorse Mr. Haskett Smith's opinion of Doe Crag—that the climbing here is second to none in the district. Not only are there five splendid gullies, all of which have now been proved surmountable, but it is almost a certainty that each of the separating ridges will offer a route to the crest of the great precipice. In a previous article on Doe Crag, I have referred to

five gullies. These, viewed from Goatswater, and taken left to right, were named: The Easy Gully, Great Gully, Central Chimney, Intermediate Gully, and the North Gully. Since writing the article, a visit to the spot has shown the existence of a magnificent cleft between the Intermediate and the North Gullies. As the two ascents already made of this cleft were accomplished on Easter Day (1895 and 1898), we may christen it the Easter Gully. There are thus six gullies in all, but the first is devoid of interest after the others. It was probably the North Gully that Messrs. Robinson and Haskett Smith visited in 1886. The Great Gully was climbed in 1888 by Messrs. Hastings, Haskett Smith, and E. Hopkinson. On Easter Day, 1895, the Intermediate Gully was successfully tackled by Messrs. Campbell, Edward, Albert, and J. H. Hopkinson; the "Easter" Gully by Messrs. Otto Koecher and Charles Hopkinson; a third party took the North Gully again, and above the chief difficulty, they managed to traverse into the upper portion of the Easter Gully. Two years later, in April 1897, Mr. Godfrey Ellis and I made the first ascent of the Central Chimney, under the impression that it was one of the 1895 climbs. Finally, at Easter 1898, Mr. W. J. Williams and I, still puzzled with cases of mistaken identity, resolved to take the whole set, and make notes of their many details. Our plan was fairly well worked out, but in the Easter Gully, we made a new route up the great pitch, instead of taking it in a straightforward manner. This move was forced upon us by reason of the heavy rain.

The Intermediate and the North Gullies went fairly well, though we thought both were severe. I was certainly wrong in calling the latter easy in my published account, and Mr. Robinson lost no time in rising to uphold the honour of his 1886 climb. The former is far more troublesome. It may conceivably be taken direct over every pitch; but it is safer, drier, and more expeditious to turn the two worst constrictions of the long cleft by traversing out to the right, as the first party did. The extreme slenderness of the whole gully for three hundred feet, and its uniform steepness, are sufficient to sustain the interest until the upper screes are reached. Even then the scrambling is not finished, but it becomes possible for the members of the party to advance simultaneously to the highest point of Doe Crags.

The Easter Gully was quite out of the question so far as the direct route was concerned, for water was streaming down the vertical chimney in great quantity. The holds are too small to be safely employed when wet. Messrs. Brett and Garrett made a determined attempt on this chimney a year before, but they were not quite sure whether it was the place to which I had directed their attention, and conditions were unfavourable. We were quite willing at the first

glance to take it for granted that the chimney would go, without risking our limbs to prove the point. But a secondary chimney on the left of the other, reached after the great boulder near the bottom had been passed, was quite dry and feasible. It certainly took us in the wrong direction, but we ventured to start in it on the chance of finding some means of rejoining the main route higher up. Where our cleft became dangerous by reason of the great spikes of rock that formed a *chevaux de frise* to block our passage, we deflected off to the right, and with infinite trouble succeeded in clambering up the wall to a grass platform that dominated the first 80 feet of the direct chimney. Even then we could not manage the remaining 15 feet of waterfall on the main route, but were compelled to stride across to a minute ledge on the other side, traverse a few yards outwards in a horribly exposed situation, and then, by following the ridge, raise ourselves to the level of the top of the chimney. The difficulties of this passage impressed us deeply; though for this, the cold and wet rocks, the intermittent rain, and the swirling mist around us, were largely responsible. Above the chimney the gully divided, each branch giving excellent work till the short scree near the summit-ridge was attained. A cairn now marks the head of the Easter Gully.

The descent of the Great Gully makes a convenient finish of a moderately easy kind, after the severe labour of an ascent by the Central Chimney, the Intermediate, or the Easter Gully. But the loose stones are rather unpleasant, and the route is becoming hackneyed. It is much more interesting to descend by the North Gully. There is a considerable amount of scree at the commencement of the downward course—perhaps 150 feet—and then a ledge or two is passed before we arrive at the level of the highest of the three great stones that together make the chief pitch. Working steadily downwards to the right, there follows some amusing crawling round a corner into a low-roofed cavern, where a suitable spike may be found for a doubled rope to steady the last man down the next twenty feet of wall-climbing. Below this the gully is steep but easy, resembling the lower part of the Pavey Ark Great Gully.

It is to be hoped that before long good account can be rendered of the Doe Crag ridges. For the present let us turn to that favoured spot, the Scawfell face. Some eighteen months ago Messrs. George and Ashley Abraham suggested to me that the ridge between Moss Ghyll and Steep Ghyll should be made to supply a route to Pisgah from the Tennis Court Ledge. We were able during the fine weather of last April to try conclusions with the ridge. Examination of the great buttress in question, from the north side of the Pinnacle, showed a well-broken portion at the level of the head of the Slingsby

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DOW CRAGS.

From a photo, by G. P. Abraham,
Keswick.

Chimney, up to which we were fairly confident of forcing a way from Moss Ghyll. But from that point the ridge was uncompromisingly vertical, and for forty feet the route was questionable. Operations began on the Tennis Court, with an awkward crack at its furthest corner, which called for combined operations on the part of all three. Twelve feet higher a second ledge was reached, scarcely big enough for a Fives' Court. Then a steep chimney led in thirty feet directly to the ridge. Just before reaching it, a tempting byeway to the left drew the leader away from the true course, but the fearful quivering of a huge block that barred his way drove him back. This was exceedingly fortunate, for the chimney ascent with which he would have presently been involved, was of a dangerous character. When the three of us were well placed on the sharp edge of the buttress, a council of war was held. A movement to the right would have exposed us to the critical suggestions of another party on the Low Man, and would have been very hard. The rocks in front were vertical and unreliable. Those on the left were not altogether firm, but were no worse than those we had already encountered. Taking to these, the leader worked cautiously round, and before the others moved onwards, he reached a spot on the ridge where all real difficulty terminated. All arrived there, we unroped, and taking the remaining rocks in a go-as-you-please style, we hurried off in search of our respective cameras, which had been left below by reason of their supposed inexperience.

On the same day another suggestion was carried out that had been made to me long before by Dr. Collier. This was to climb Scawfell Pinnacle from the foot of Professor's Chimney. The first part overhung considerably, and the footholds—such as they were—sloped the wrong way. But the rocks were dry and warm, in the best possible condition, and finger tips could find an abundance of encouraging little roughnesses on the slabs. Scarcely two minutes of uncertainty, and the route was assured. An upward traverse to the left, away from the forbidding buttress that figures so prominently in the best views of the pinnacle, led to a slight chimney that conducted me easily to the Low Man ridge in ten minutes from Deep Ghyll. An equal interval sufficed to allow a traverse of the pinnacle, and a descent by the Professor's Chimney to the starting-point.

Finally, let me mention that apart from the Deep Ghyll routes up Scawfell Pinnacle, there is now a soul-satisfying climb on to the Low Man, from the Lord's Rake, that does not touch Steep Ghyll. It was climbed one evening in May, 1898, by Mr. G. T. Walker and myself. The problem before us was not new—that of reaching Slingsby's Chimney from below by the Deep Ghyll ridge. We struck this at its base by the Deep Ghyll first pitch, and followed it till it began to

overhang. This took us up about 100 feet. Then we bore up to the left, by a movement wonderfully similar to that described in the preceding paragraph. Twice the leader ran out fifty feet before the second could follow in safety. At last, after a good deal of open traverse over steeply-sloping rocks, we reached a flat-floored recess that I recognised. It was roofed by the great block fifty feet high, from the top of which starts the awkward step up to the foot of Slingsby's Chimney. Our cave might possibly be reached from below by a long gully in the face, instead of our ridge and traverse. The latter was certainly difficult. We used stockinged feet as an improvised substitute for *kletterschuhe*, and found the roughness of the outward-sloping slabs charmingly adapted to our needs. From the cave we had to twist ourselves out at the right-hand top corner, and manœuvre on to a narrow ledge. This was just good enough for the toes, and had to be traversed to the right without handhold of any sort. In ten feet we reached the Low Man wall, and entered the cleft that separates off the great block. A few yards of chimney climbing, with our precious boots tied round our necks, and the ordinary "outside" route up the pinnacle was joined. There ended our little exploration, and we were glad to hurry home.

Messrs. Reade and McCulloch have lately climbed the West Jordan gully on the Pillar, and Mr. John Robinson writes to say that there is another fine route now open on Scawfell! In former times, one new, good climb per annum, was all they expected; now we claim much more. This almost monthly record of new expeditions is surely a sign of anything but exhaustion, and we live in hope that it will last.
