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HELVELLYN.

Take thy flight ;—possess ;—inherit
 Alps or Andes—they are thine !
 With the morning's roseate Spirit
 Sweep their length of snowy line ;

Or survey their bright dominions
 In the gorgeous colours drest
 Flung from off the purple pinions,
 Evening spreads throughout the west !

For the power of hills is on thee,
 As was witnessed through thine eye,
 Then when Old Helvellyn won thee
 To confess their majesty !

W. W.

IN the days of old the leisurely wanderers who strayed among "the Lakes" thought a great deal of Helvellyn. Then, to climb Helvellyn was to win renown : to brave the precipices and horrible abysses "which do abound among these mountains" was considered a noteworthy achievement, and we can imagine the tragedy of the recital by the youth of those days, of how "I climbed the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn." And yet we, with our ordnance surveys, and carefully written guide books, should be in no hurry to laugh at the mountaineers of the past. How would Helvellyn appear to us, if its height were a matter of conjecture, and if we knew not that cliffs are only to be found here and here, that such a ridge down to Patterdale, and such another leads away to somewhere else ; imagine ourselves, ignorant of these facts, but conscious only of a many ridged height, its summit wrapped in storm, its sides eaten away into deep hollows, filled with rocks and silence ; should we not then respect it ?

However, times have changed. Leslie Stephen, Whymper, and Mummery, Haskett Smith and Owen Jones, have opened

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our eyes. Scafell and the Gable have been unravelled from the mists of higher Borrowdale—men have left “th’ oppen fell” and taken to gullies, chimneys, and cracks, and nowadays the reader of any monthly magazine may find The Pillar Rock or Gable Needle figuring amongst his sixpennyworth of pictures. All of which, of course, is very desirable, showing, as it does, both enterprise on the part of the publisher, and a certain interest in higher things on the part of the reader. But some of us still find pleasure in a simple slope, and who will not forgive us for a certain sympathy with those easier hills, now scorned by climbers, that seem to have been handed over entirely to the timid, the aged or the ignorant.

Do we ever give a thought to the old poets who named our hills? Not that we would fight over a derivation—let wranglers have their theories—enough for us that we acknowledge the rhythm and swing of these fine old names. If we think of our modern “Jubilee Mounts,” our Mount Browns and Washingtons, our Queen Adelaide’s Hill, and Our Pilkington Pikes, and all the phonetic horrors of the Yosemite Valley, and then go back to Helvellyn and Skiddaw, to Scafell and Glaramara; to names full of meaning, as Wastwater and Wynandermere, perhaps even the most advanced of us may grant that in this respect at least we have made no progress.

There is a charm about the older mountain literature. One likes old West’s remarks in 1779—

“The range of mountains on the right are tremendously great, Helvellyn and Cachidecam are the chief; and according to the Wythburn shepherds, much higher than Skiddaw. It is, however, certain that these mountains retain snow many weeks after Skiddaw. But that may be owing to the steepness of Skiddaw’s northern side and shivery surface that attracts more forcibly the solar rays than the verdant front of Helvellyn, and so sooner loses its winter covering. The road sweeps through a thousand huge rocks, along the naked margin of the lake.” Again, speaking of Ullswater he says, “Behind many wooded hills rises Stone Cross Pike, and over all, steep Helvellyn shews his sovereign head.”

By the way, this forerunner of Murray and Baddeley gives the following statistics of heights, which may interest a few:—

Snowden, in Wales	3456 feet.	By Mr. Waddington, 1770.
Whernside	4050 do.	do.
Ingleborough	3987 do.	do.
Helvellyn	3324 do.	By Mr. Donald.
Skeddaw	3270 do.	do.
Saddleback	3048 do.	do.
Ben Lomond	3240 do.	By Mr. Pennant.
Ben Nevis	4350 do.	do.

It will be seen that the above, with the exception of the Yorkshire fells, are not so very far wrong. It may be presumed that Mr. Waddington hailed from the county of broad acres, and had not that modesty with regard to his native shire which modern Yorkshiremen possess.

From West to Wordsworth is not so very far, and it is pleasant to think what an honoured place in Wordsworth's affections was held by Helvellyn. Close at hand, easily highest amongst his nearer neighbours, to Wordsworth it must have been the king of the fells, and so we find him at all times and seasons wandering there, alone or with his friends; now perhaps with boisterous North, or again, with Scott and Humphrey Davey, or perhaps dragging Coleridge or De Quincey up, to scatter the cobwebs of the brain. Not that Wordsworth did not know the "region of Scafell."

"He had been alone

Amid the heart of many thousand mists

That came to him, and left him on the heights."

Have we not his note of the colours on Scafell top: of the view into the "Den of Wasdale at our feet, a gulf immeasurable"? "Yon precipice, vast building of many crags" he knew full well (if not its long climb intricacies); and Skiddaw "with his double fronted head in higher clouds." Glaramara's "inmost caves" and Fairfields' "mountain tone" were not unloved—and "those twin peaks," with their "harmony of silence";—but what hill can not be named? It is of

Helvellyn that he most often sang, and this is our choice to-day.

Perhaps one of his most widely known poems is "Fidelity." It contains two of his grandest verses.

It was a cove, a huge recess
That keeps, till June, December's snow ;
A lofty precipice in front,
A silent tarn below !
Far in the bosom of Helvellyn,
Remote from public road or dwelling,
Pathway, or cultivated land ;
From trace of human foot or hand.

There sometimes doth a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer ;
The crags repeat the raven's croak,
In symphony austere ;
Thither the rainbow comes—the cloud—
And mists that spread the flying shroud ;
And sunbeams ; and the sounding blast,
That if it could, would hurry past ;
But that enormous barrier binds it fast.

Whether you choose your day, or simply trust to chance, the charm remains. Go up when Grisedale lies in a blue-grey haze—when prospects of "good views" are poor, and across the way, St. Sunday's crag looks colourless and dull, when the flat, untidy heather and the lonely tarn—seem all 'so drear that you sit subdued. "The crags repeat the raven's croak in symphony austere." Then when the summit is gained, and you look back upon those

"Huge skeletons of crags which from the coast
Of old Helvellyn spread their arms abroad
And make a stormy harbour for the winds,"

you feel that, on days like these, Helvellyn is indeed a mighty mountain.

But there are other and different times—"when with heat the valleys faint"—when the woods are green, when the

flowers are out, and all is liveliness, and colour, and bustle of char-a-banc and coach, and tourists are abroad. What an accommodating old hill he is then ; how he spreads his broad back, like the elephant at the Zoo, for us poor human atoms to mount, and carries us along with a kindly, benevolent air. And who shall laugh at the holiday makers ? At mater there, on the pony's back, " Just exactly like Lucerne, my dear, and so much more pleasure to see dear father enjoying his own country " ; and pater, toiling along in front, hot and perspiring, and not a little overjoyed to find himself still equal to a climb ; and then Amy, coming along behind with George's boy—delaying a little at the streams, it's true—but then it's very hot—and she always did love to find forget-me-nots. But why say more—discreet Helvellyn, what a kind old wink you gave.

But memory flits past—to the storm ; when the mountain has called the wind to its aid, and the snows are swirling, and there's tempest, and noise, and struggle.

And past this again, and now it is evening. The day has been spent in glorious wanderings from ridge to ridge, and our hearts are full of thankfulness as we thread the valley, and see around us richer gifts—the green, velvety turf, and the waving wood. The air is gently filled with the murmur of the stream and the ceaseless hum of living things, and we look away to our mountain, far back in the darkening sky. Even now his bare shoulders will be chilled by the early dew ; ere long the midnight cloud will pause, gently covering each topmost rock, and will give moisture, so that still the streams may flow. And in other seasons, when the heavens are a rushing storm, he will catch the seething mists, and battle with the sleet and hail and rain, and when their fury is spent, and his reservoirs are filled with plenty, like a great father he will open his arms, and pour upon the world below, on every hand, its life, and health, and beauty.