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A LOST GULLY.

By C. E. BENSON.

LOST or STRAYED on Clogwyn y Garnedd, a gully with "a terrific pitch, consisting of smooth vertical walls on either side, forming nearly a right angle, with splintered rocks abutting at the top."

It was discovered on June 12th, 1902, from "the path just before the miners' cottages are reached from Pen y Gwryd," from which point it is "the only gully visible," by a party of four, who forthwith entered into possession, and found they had got hold of something resembling that hypothetical donkey which was used as a vehicle of moral instruction, of the S.P.C.A. brand, in our nursery days.

It would not go.
Didn't they beat it? O dear no!

It beat them. The Editor, in honourable and honorary zeal for the Climbers' Club, having heard of this gully, took his pen and wrote quickly to all whom it might concern. The result was a file of letters that would do credit to an inter-departmental correspondence. These letters the Editor handed over to me.

Why to me? Because it is surely clear that anyone who knows the Clogwyn, must, however open-minded, approach the subject with a certain amount of prejudice as to the location and nature of the gully. I know that on reading accounts of climbs, I find myself, in my mind, perfectly familiar with places which subsequent exploration proves I have never even dreamt of. I assured the Editor that to me the Clogwyn was merely a name, that I had never been near the

place in my life. I knew, indeed, that Pen-y-gwryd was Welsh for Paradise, but that was all.

Every climbing holiday I vow I will go to Wales, and every holiday finds me in Cumberland. And why should I be ashamed of it? Did not our first President say at one of the dinners?—

On revient toujours

À ses premiers amours.

Of course all this has very little to do with the Missing Gully.

Three months before the date of the unsuccessful attempt, the Editor received a letter from one who was not then, but is now, a Member of the C.C., enclosing a sketch of a climb on Clogwyn y Garnedd which he had done with the Swiss Guide, Ch. Burgener. Another member was forthwith consulted. He knew the climb. He had often looked at it, but had only climbed the top and bottom. B to A, he notes, is very hard. He believed it had been climbed in its entirety by a man named Long.

Then came the report of the attempt of June 12th. The same authority was again consulted. He was of opinion that the gully was identical with that climbed by the man called Long. He thought that there had been a reference to it in a recent number of the *Journal*.

I can now pass an examination easily in the *C. C. J.* There is no reference.

The next step obviously was to find the man called Long. I did not find the man called Long, but "the weather" being "hot and dry," I did find the man called Short.

There was nothing for it but to go ahead at the correspondence. The next letter was no trouble. The writer could give no information whatever. Neither could the next man, but he wanted to know on what face of Clogwyn y Garnedd the gully was.

Now, it occurred to me that if the Missing Gully was "the only gully visible from the path just before the miners' cottages," there could be only one face visible from the same

point. However, I do not know the Clogwyn. Perhaps, I thought, it shows all sorts of unsuspected faces from unlikely points, like the Topsy-Turvy House at the Earl's Court Exhibition.

The next letter cleared up my doubts. Clogwyn y Garnedd does only show one face, the north-east, from that point. Moreover the writer, one of the party of the attempt, helped to locate the Missing Gully. It is rather to the left of the one B. C. A. in the sketch.

This was useful, but unfortunately people have different ideas of what left and right mean. Some mean left and right as you face the object: others "proper left" and "proper right" in the same way as the terms are applied to the bank of a stream. I think the latter method correct, and I was delighted to learn, from another member of the party, that the last correspondent thought so too.

Now I was in sight of the end, I hoped. I had been to the City in broiling heat to find the man called Long. I had been in pouring wet to find the difference between "right" and "left." The first expedition had been unsuccessful, but failure had been partly compensated by the development of a terrific thirst, that greatest boon of the gods to suffering humanity—when the means of quenching it are handy. The second had attained its object, but its joy had been marred by the ruin of a new hat, owing to His Majesty obstructing the traffic opposite the Mansion House, and the impossibility of getting through the crowd with my umbrella up.

The next letter filled me with the pleasures of hope. It was from the correspondent who had climbed with Burgener. I give it nearly *in extenso*.

"I think the gully must be the same, as the description of the top pitch tallies very closely with what I remember of the climb. The top bit was very bad indeed. We were three. The leader (Burgener) was pushed up to the farthest possible by an ice-axe by the second man, and then somehow 'swam' upwards till he got hold of something more or less solid at the top. The second man was maintained in a rather precarious

position with the assistance of the third, who had just standing room on an extra large sod. The second man had to be lugged up, and the third swung right out on the face as with the ice-axes he could not enter the chimney at all. The chimney was an open right angle formed by an almost vertical smooth wet wall at the back and a similar one on the left, and leads on to quite different sort of rock, quite broken up, and the difficulties are all over at the top as one can simply go straight to the summit. It must be the place where I remember having read in some account of an accident, the slope suddenly changes from 43° to 70° or 80° . We were nearly done for by the giving way of an enormous sod a little below the last pitch, but just got off it in time. To get up at all I believe one has to trust to the turf more or less. I have never been on a place where the whole party was so absolutely insecure for so long."

And the Editorial Note had said "the whole party" (of the Attempt of June 12th) "was very insecure." I was evidently on the High Man at last. I metaphorically wiped my streaming brow. If I had only begun at the wrong end of the correspondence (which is the only intelligent way of finding what you want quickly), I should have come to this letter second, and there would have been no journeys to the City, no seeking of Long's and finding of Short's, no disloyal thoughts of His Majesty stirred up by damp and the points of other peoples' umbrella ribs. No—

Alas! all was vanity and vexation of spirit. I was only on Pisgah after all. The last letter was my Jordan Gap. "His," it said ruthlessly, "is not identical with our gully. There is too much turf and 'garden stuff.'" I went to the City—for the last time, I hope, and consulted one who "had been there": his opinion corroborated that of the last writer. The gully was still lost.

I was not beaten even then. I knew a Yorkshire Rambler, who had done mighty feats at Wastdale at Whitsun, was going to Pen y Gwryd. I wrote to him, describing the gully,

and recommending him to try it—and *I have not heard a word from him since.*

On one thing I am determined. As soon as I have leisure and lucre enough to take another holiday, I will go and seek for this mysterious gully myself—somewhere on Scawfell.

