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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DISASTER ON SCAWFELL.

To the Editor of the CLIMBERS' CLUB JOURNAL.

SIR,

Certain paragraphs and letters which have appeared in the daily press may have caused the erroneous impression that the victims of this lamentable disaster were comparatively inexperienced scramblers endeavouring to emulate the feats of skilful climbers. I see from our list that they were all members of this Club, and I know that at least one of them might justly have considered himself competent to attempt any practicable ascent without more than a very slight element of unavoidable danger which is inseparable from every sport.

We do not yet know the cause of the accident. Indeed, it is scarcely possible that the cause can ever be known. Perhaps it was the momentary neglect of some simple rule that sent the ill-fated climbers to their death, but even if it should some day transpire that by no amount of climbing skill or precaution could the accident have been avoided, we must remember that this is a solitary instance of a disaster occurring on a British mountain to an experienced and properly equipped party. Our hills have claimed many victims, but they have invariably been either single-handed or unroped climbers, or tourists who have fallen over precipices while endeavouring to ascend by those routes which are usually classified as safe and easy.

Even in this Club we are not all rock-gymnasts, and among us many decry the modern tendency towards extreme danger, but surely danger is to a large extent relative. Striding Edge

and the Crib Goch Ridge of Snowdon are regarded with fear and trembling by many who would brave the lesser dangers of the Swirrel Edge with equanimity. It is for each to draw his own danger line, and to keep within it, but if we condemn those whose lines are drawn somewhat higher than ours, we expose ourselves to the criticisms of those whose limitations are lower. Does not this apply to climbing with as much truth as it applies to hunting, to sailing, or, indeed, to any and every other branch of sport? Yet the numerous casualties of the hunting field pass unnoticed, and the occasional overturning of a boat draws no comment, while an accident on the rocks never fails to call forth a torrent of hostile criticism from writers who are often but ill-informed of the facts.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

A MODERATE CLIMBER.



