



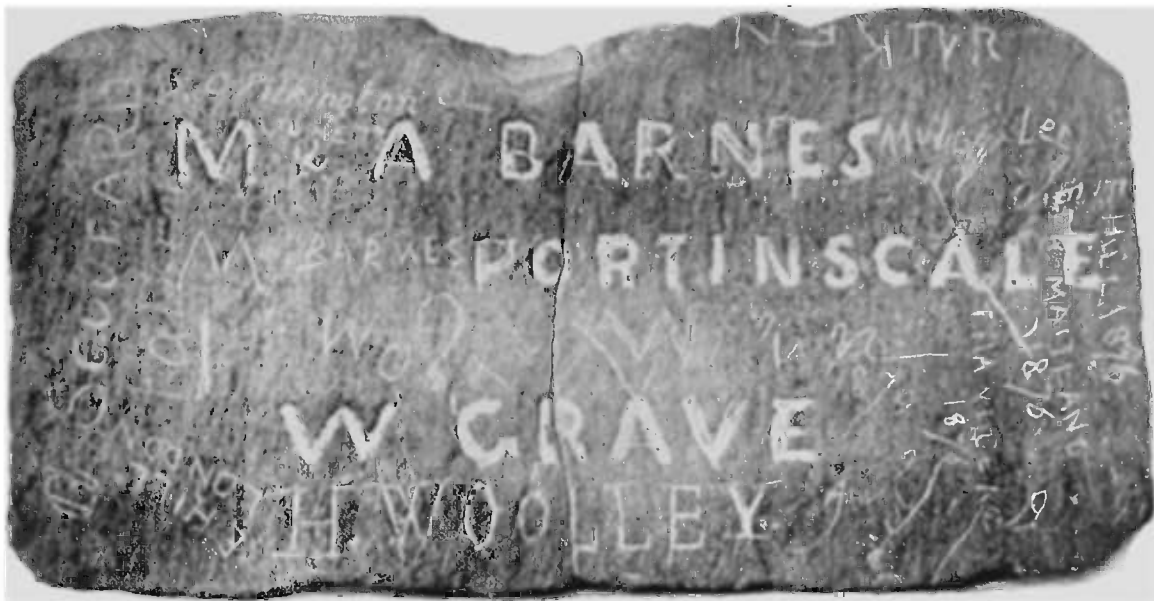
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A STORY OF A SLATE.

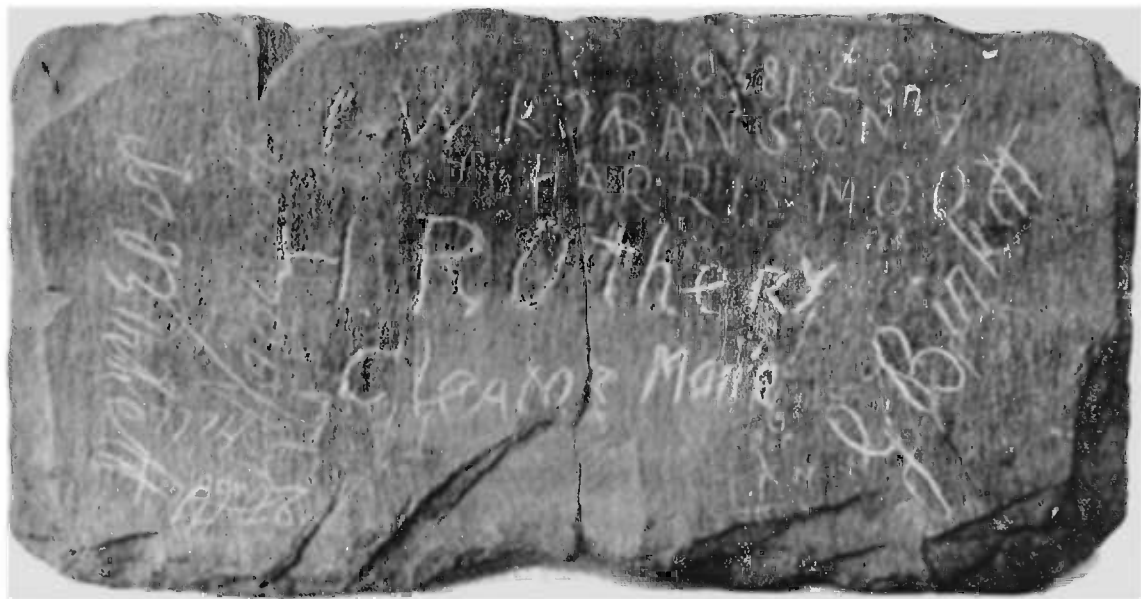
AN extremely interesting relic has just turned up in the shape of a slate, which for many years resided on the top of the Pillar in Ennerdale. The excellent photographs of it which we are able to give, we owe to Mr. Grave, of Manchester, the owner of the slate, and to our member, Mr. F. W. Jackson, who gives me the following information:—Matthew Barnes kept notes of his doings in a book, which his widow preserved. From this book the date of his ascent can be fixed at the 2nd August, 1870. He and Anthony Barnes were engaged in quarrying, and, from time to time, acted as guides. Alderman Grave of Manchester was much at Portinscale about that time, and his son, then a very young man and very athletic, was constantly there. He had heard of the Pillar Stone, but neither he nor the Barnes knew exactly where it was or how to reach it. However, they prepared this slate and started off one morning to find a fitting resting place for it. They began at Catbells and followed the ridge all the way, crossing the gap at Honister and sweeping round the head of Ennerdale by Brandreth, the two Gables, Black Sail Pass, and the top of Pillar Fell. Then they descended to the Rock and looked about among the crags to the west of it. At last they found the Slab on the east side, crawled across it on their stomachs, and, for the moment, saw no way of getting any further. However, the leader noticed some scratches, followed them, and before long they found themselves at the top. They found half an alpenstock built into a cairn, and attached to the stick what looked like a portion of a petticoat. There was also a bottle containing four names (of which one was a lady's), and this they carried away. It was now seven o'clock in the evening and they had come by a very long and fatiguing route, but,



evidently all of one party, the names being all in one handwriting. The last is apparently read by Mr. Jackson as "F. HARRODEN." "E. HILL, London," appears again at the opposite end. This Mr. Maitland was, I believe, son to Mr. John, whose name is honoured among the early explorers of the Wastdale crags. The next date is appended to a famous name, "C. PILKINGTON, June, 1877." This climber, who was probably the first that conceived the idea of attacking the Rock on its northern side, about 20 years later became President of the Alpine Club. The next date is 1879, clearly cut and preceded by what might be "A. WILSON," or, indeed, anything else, for the name is obscured by later letters ("WN?") written over it. Possibly the same date, of which only the last figure is legible, follows "A. W. WARD." Just after the name Barnes are the initials "M.W.G. Lee," though the last word looks like a separate inscription and more recent.

A well-known mountaineer has placed his name just under that of his friend Mr. Grave, "H. WOOLLEY," and, by itself, at the end of the slate, is what Mr. Jackson reads as "G. SCOOEARD," but the final letter hardly looks original, and the "E" seems to have been produced by the humourist before-mentioned. The name is perhaps "G. SCUDDAR" ("SOUTTAR" or "SCOULAR"), "Falkirk." On the very edge, above the name of Barnes, is one which looks as if the first part had been written upside down. Perhaps it began life as "ALKEN."

Turning now to the other side we find all the centre occupied by "H. ROTHERY, Cleator Moor." In the absence of evidence, we should certainly have assumed him to be the next comer after the depositors. Finding one side pretty well occupied by their stately inscription, he would naturally turn over the page and write his own name in a corresponding position at the back, but there happens to be evidence that his ascent was in fact made 4 July, 1875, in company with "I. W. ROBINSON, Harris Moor." The explanation seems to be that this side of the slate must have been left unused so



long as any space remained on the other side, which was smoother and easier to write upon. At opposite ends, but in style very similar are the names " G. BIRKETT " and " JOS. BIRKETT " and, in very faint letters, " G. HILL, CHAS. HILL, J.A.E.," and the word ' Aigburth," with perhaps a "C" before it. There is also something resembling " KNIGHT," and a name which the funny man has reduced to " 27 UBB " and the rest are mere shadows.

A letter, dated 12th Sept., 1874, says of the Pillar top :— " The following names we found W. M. Pendlebury and R. Pendlebury, Ch. Pendlebury (perhaps a mistake for Ch. Pilkington) and Fred. Gardiner, Liverpool ; H. B. Priest of Birkenhead, C. Comyns Tucker, Melville Beachcroft, E. J. Nanson, Trinity College ; F. S. Kennedy, of Leeds ; J. A. Garth Marshall, Coniston, of whose death in a *crevasse* on Mont Blanc we have so lately read with sorrow." This was the accident on the Brouillard Glacier, 1 Sept., 1874. This party does not seem to have noticed the slate, but in a letter written towards the end of the same month mention is made of names found on the Rock, " inscribed on a piece of slate 'G. SCOULAR, of Falkirk, M. and A. BARNES of Portinscale ; W. Grave, H. Wooley, R. Whitwell, W. G. Holland,' " and the following additional names are given —" Hen. Lancaster, of Lamplugh ; T., N., and Pollie Westmoreland ; Will. Gilbanks of Borrowdale ; J. G. Whitehead and H. R. Wyndham, of Cockermouth." This last group of names was of course not on the slate, but it is curious that the names of Whitwell and Holland should have so completely disappeared. There is a chance for someone with a powerful magnifying-glass and a little imagination to make them out.

One point will be particularly noticed by old *habitués* of Wastdale. It was always the tradition that Mat. Barnes discovered the "Old Wall Route" on the occasion of the deposit of the slate. He may have found it on a later visit, but Mr. Grave made it clear that their way was by the Slab which the former route does not touch.