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PEN Y PASS IN 1888.

PAST AND PRESENT.

BY way of frontispiece to this number, there will be found a view of Pen y Gwryd Inn taken nearly twenty years ago.

No inn in the whole country has so much historical interest as this for British climbers, and the masterly article in which the late Mr. Mathews described it and its associations will be fresh in the memory of our readers.* His reminiscences of the house extended over nearly the whole married lifetime of the well-known old couple who gave the place its homelike character, and who earned the affectionate regard of all who knew them. Mrs. Owen's aproned figure in the doorway will be easily recognised.

We add a view of the inn at Gorphwysfa (or Pen y Pass) taken at the same period. Since that date vast improvements have been effected both within and without, and a hotel of quite imposing design has replaced the very primitive accommodation which long carried on an unenterprising competition with its rival Pen y Gwryd, a mile lower down the hill. The number of new climbers in those days was insignificant, and so long as the Owens were flourishing, no house but Pen y Gwryd could have any attractions for the "Old Brigade." But the Gorphwysfa of to-day is in capable hands, and well placed as it undoubtedly is for the hill climber, also lacks nothing of the solid comforts which he so richly deserves.

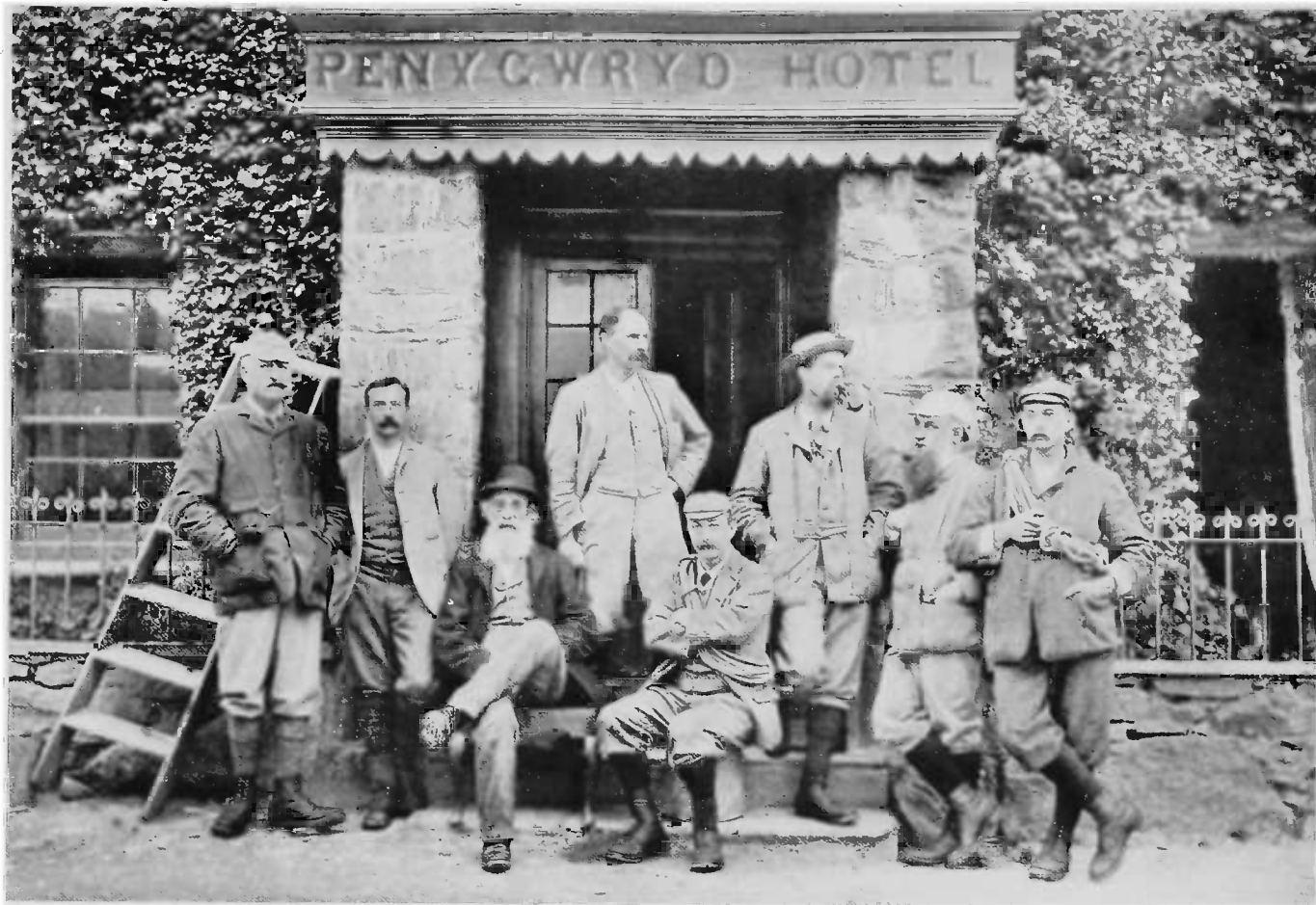
The group of climbers taken at Pen y Gwryd a dozen years ago happens to possess the interest of shewing a large number of the earliest members of our Club, which all of those here seen (except, I think, Mr. Black) afterwards joined. At that time the inn was far from being at its best. To

* See *Climbers' Club Journal*, No. 14, Vol. IV.

newcomers the enthusiasm of old habitués was a little difficult to understand. Dear old Mrs. Owen had grown too feeble to maintain the old style of homely farmhouse comfort, and no modern improvements had taken its place. In fact, the ardour of a lover of the mountains was put to rather discouraging tests. The present writer will never forget a stay at the inn in the winter of that year. Dirt and discomfort reigned supreme. All the food had a strong flavour of rust and mould, and the beds were not merely damp but actually wet. The window of his bedroom would neither open nor shut, and one of the walls was adorned with a mass of solid ice fully five feet long. Even the Aiguille du Midi hut, when the floor was entirely covered with ice, was not so damp, and only the half-underground bedroom at the Hochjoch Hospice in the Oetzthal could beat it ; but, indeed, only a newly emptied canal lock could ever hope to compete successfully with that Hochjoch room. However, Pen y Gwryd at its worst was always delightful. Dirt and discomfort were trifles in comparison with the joy of living, and modern luxuries do not make the modern climber any happier than we were then.

Our fourth illustration shews a much larger group of climbers, assembled upon the same spot a year ago. It is curious that out of all the assiduous frequenters of the place, who figure in one or other of these groups, Mr. M. K. Smith is the only one who appears in both of them, and unlucky that one of the most interesting figures in the group of 1905, that of Mr. C. E. Mathews, should be one of the worst likenesses. Almost everyone else comes out more clearly than he. Indeed, climbers who have been invited to pick out Mr. Mathews in one of these two groups, have been known to point confidently to Mr. Halliday in the first picture. In one respect, at least, the two men did not differ, and that was in their love for the old resort, where (alas!) we shall never see either of them again.

Pen y Gwryd has been well looked after during the last two or three years by Miss Roberts of the Royal at Capel



Thos. Halliday. M. Black. Frank Berrill. Roderick Williams. Rev. J. N. Burrows. M. K. Smith.
F. H. Bowring. C. Stewart King.

J. B. Lancaster. J. E. James. W. A. Bradley. G. W. H. Ellis. G. H. Twigg. G. M. Lloyd. Rev. A. H. Fish. O. K. Williamson.
W. M. James. A. P. Abraham. G. D. Abraham.



M. Nettleton. C. W. Nettleton. C. E. Mathews. G. B. Bryant. M. K. Smith. A. E. Field. R. F. Backwell.
Miss R. S. James. A. H. Bryant. Miss Twigg. A. W. Wakefield.

GROUP AT PEN Y GWRYD IN 1905.

Curig, and has again changed hands this year. The new management seems to be wisely sympathetic with the traditions of the place, and the oldest of its guests may still feel at home there, if he can survive the shock of encountering *a bathroom* in his wanderings upstairs.

He can still stand in the shelter of the stone porch and watch across the road the stubborn resistance of the remaining fir trees to the pitiless south-west wind, which is laying them low one by one. Beyond them (to quote Mr. Mathews' "Reminiscences"), "his eyes can range over the lakes and "woods of Capel Curig to the sweet and sunny distance far away." Or, turning southward towards Beddgelert, he can look down into "the exquisite valley of Gwynant, where the "lakes are flashing in the sunlight, or where, far beyond them, "the stately Hebog, like topmost Gargarus, 'stands up and "takes the morning.'"

Pen y Gwryd has, at any rate, an unrivalled past, as vouched for by its six carefully preserved volumes of Visitors' Books, and the memories of its many friends. It should rightfully look forward to hold its own as the home of the lover of its encircling mountains for many a year to come.

