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KYNDWR CLUB NOTES.

IT was on Saturday eve, in the gorgeous, bright October,
Then when birches are changed, and heather blooms are faded,
And amid russet of heather and fern green trees are bonny.

CLOUGH.

NO season gives a richer glory to the rocks and heather of the High Peak than a fine day in October. From Edale Station we looked right up the furthest reaches of Grindsbrook, deep into the heart of Kinder. The swart cliffs on the summit edges, Nether Tor and Upper Tor, and the crags through which the Grindsbrook breaks down in cascades from the great peat moss, seemed a mere stone's throw away—the air was so pellucid. Behind was a sky as bright as May-time, ravishing depths of pure, luminous blue. The heather was dead or dying, but a delicate purple bloomed over it in the mass, as beautiful as the splendours of August. And, surely, the hoary dead grass was more pleasing to the eye than the toneless green of summer. Gorgeous stretches of smouldering bracken rivalled the intense russet of the beech woods in the dale.

We had doubts as to the exact limits covered by our permit, and accordingly thought it prudent to leave the dale for the fellside unobtrusively. Instead of striking up the Nab from Edale Chapel or following the cart-track into Grindsbrook Clough, we skirted the slopes for half a mile till we came to a minor clough just east of the Nab and its towering gable, Ringing Rocher. Here a deep-cut trench carries a foot-track straight uphill, and we speedily found ourselves mounting beside a brooklet, with rocks and trees enough about us to blur our figures to a distant spectator. At 1,500 ft., we rested in the music of a tiny waterfall, and then took to the turf

ground behind a wall running Kinderwards. It brought us out on the edge beside a rocky knoll overlooking the whole of Edale, with other dales beyond, and far horizons of tossing hill-crests east, west, and south. A smoke column in the south-east looked so near that we took it to be a heath fire on Froggat; but we soon perceived, by studying the lie of the country, that it could not be anything nearer than the coal-mines and furnaces of Chesterfield. The Derwent valley was traceable for miles between the clean-cut edges, and over the interposing hills we peeped into the dales of the Wyc.

Not only was the air marvellously clear, it was strangely and abnormally penetrable to sound. The shouts of men and boys playing football in Edale, a thousand feet beneath us and a mile away, came up with a distinctness that was quite uncanny. They were echoed from the rocks a few yards away, and we looked round to see if there was not someone there engaged in an excited altercation with himself. It may have been an omen. Leaving the knoll, we had not gone a hundred yards before we walked right into the arms of a keeper. It turned out that we had overwalked the bounds vaguely prescribed by our permit, and according to his statements must have scared a hundred birds, though we had seen never a one. He was perfectly civil, however, although he thought it very foolish of us to climb Kinder Scout in order to reach the Snake, when we could have got there so much more easily by the road.

We soon crested the ridge between Edale Edge and Seal Edge; the wild Ashop Valley lay beneath us, with the wilder cloughs beyond that bring the Derwent's tributaries down from the mountains of peat-moss about Bleaklow Head. From our feet great buttresses plunged into the depths of the valley, with shadowy cloughs beside them, at the bottom of which, far, far away, we could see the sparkle of streams and waterfalls. But up here there was absolutely nothing to drink, and if we continued along the Edge it might be an hour ere we should come to anything potable. The smoker lit his pipe, arguing that tobacco was an ample substitute for liquid. Two

miles away, but, as it seemed, right beneath us, the white walls of the Snake Inn showed comfortably against the russet hill-sides. The invitation could not be resisted. We started downhill, bearing toward the nearest water, which happened to be glittering refreshingly in the bottom of Black Dean Clough, right underneath our halting place. A scramble down the rocks in a dry stream-bed was followed by an attempt to run down the brake-covered slopes, resulting in slips and slides and the sudden collapse of two of the party. Up again, we pursued our headlong course down to the shaly cliffs that overhung the water, and there met the Black Dean Brook coming in full strength from the deeper branch of the clough.

Brown and silver birches, rich red mountain ash, and dense thickets of bracken that looked more like coppice than brake hemmed in the beautiful bed of the brook, which ran in silver over mosses as green and lustrous as malachite. To save a circuit we kept away from the bridge over Ashop, and, striking the river higher up, had to struggle across, from stone to stone. The spot was marked by a boundary, and we used the three wires to support us over the longest strides, fearing all the while that the frail threads would drop us into the eddying scours. Evening was upon us as we walked up the last mile to the Snake. The sky was rosy; there was a whole firmament of light overhead; but the vast sombre masses of the Kinder buttresses were like the pillars of a realm of night. The deep brown face of the moor seemed to radiate darkness, itself growing darker and darker, until the whole vast fell, with its rocks and black heather tracts and its profound ravines, was nothing but many gradations in a vortex of gloom.

Our party, in the course of the next hour or two, was augmented by fresh arrivals, until we attained the happy number of a round dozen. We dined and drank each other's health, and finished up by drinking success to the Access to Mountains Bill, which we hoped would one day free the mountains of Derbyshire, as well as those of Scotland, from the iron rule of the gamekeeper, so far at least as concerns

the rambler and the climber. It was after midnight when we went to bed, and by then a perfect moon was shining in a sky of absolute purity. No longer dark and gloomy, the sides of Kinder were transfigured and spiritualised, shining with a pearly lustre, slope beyond slope growing more and more ethereal up to the ghostly sky-line of the Edges. The Ashop and the Fairbrook were twisting the moonbeams into chains of silver; the deep and rugged cloughs brimful of moonlit haze; whilst overhead the great orb, no longer a flat disc, as it appears to us in town, shining with reflected beams like a phantom sun, swung in the blue infinity as a globe of light; and the star that watched its progress really seemed, as it really is, a far more distant point of light in the unfathomable depths beyond.

Next morning, our destination was the Alport valley, which we reached by a short cut across the intervening moorland. From the top, we looked back again towards Kinder's brooding majesty, and the proud rock-crowned headland of Fairbrook Naze, striding forth from the shadows. On this side of Ashop, the beeches, the rowans and dwarf oaks in dale and clough blazed with sunshine, and the illimitable expanses of withered bracken were not less gorgeous in their October colouring. The eye was led on and on by exquisite gradations of tint, blended together in subtle harmonies, to the remote heights of the Glossop moors and the league-long horizon of Bleaklow, the northern culmination of the Peak; and again southwards to the blue hills beyond Bamford and Castleton. An ancient landslip has carried the old hill-crest down some hundreds of feet, leaving a deep wound behind, still bearing witness to the violence of the disaster with its heaps of scattered fragments. But the next half-mile brought into view a grander example of a similar catastrophe, the weird escarpment of Alport Castles on the brow of the next hill. This was the point we were making for. We dropped into the dale of the Alport, forded the river, and breasted the steep slope opposite, which testifies in the confusion of hillocks and ravines that break its surface to the overpowering weight

shaken down from the summit, unsettling the very foundations of the hill.

Six men had gone on an hour ago, and were now visible as moving specks atop of the Tower, the big rock-mass that rises from out the accumulation of wreckage tumbled from the cliff. Seen end on, the huge piece of the hill that has slid away looks gigantic. Its outer slope is grassy, as it was ages ago, before it fell ; but the inner is a precipice, with few places accessible even to a climber. Between this and the main hill-mass yawns a deep hollow, heaped up with broken rocks, of all shapes and sizes. The front of the hill is still tottering. Every winter brings fresh piles of debris down to swell the ruin, amid which ferns and saplings contrive to carry on a precarious existence. Hacked into a range of miniature peaks and clefts, with a crazy rock-turret at one end, the crest of the pyramid offers fair sport to enterprising scramblers. Altogether, eight different ways up it were discovered, and, hard by, a moderately good face-climb, whereon one of our number managed to get into difficulties, and whilst he was being aided by the rope, was nearly crushed by the fall of a heavy slab. A queer chimney also was found, boasting a pair of chockstones, not easy to surmount ; but it was too earthy to be pleasant.

Flanking the pyramid, several lumpy rocks form subsidiary peaks, and the whole ridge is a mountain crest on a small scale ; its traverse from end to end, over all the obstructions, being an entertaining bit of sport. To stand at the end of the long ravine, into which the desolate hollow gradually diminishes, and look down towards Alport Dale, with the Tower blocking the view in the distance, is one of the most fantastic experiences even Derbyshire can afford. We went straight ahead from the top of the gorge, keeping to the summit all the way to Crook Hill. All along that lofty five miles, we commanded views at once of Derwent Dale on the left hand, and of the Ashop Valley on the right, seeing over Win Hill's shoulder into the upper parts of Edale, and catching the sunset glow on Mam Tor, Lose Hill, and the other bare

heights surrounding that great hollow. So huge are the swelling hill-shapes, that from this point one can hardly make out how there is room for Edale. All the major elevations of the Peak are in full sight as we wend our way towards Ashopton, and with the capacious dales opening almost at our feet, give one a sense of space and height that is intensified as the valleys slowly fill right to their rims with the mists and shadows of evening.

