

invite all true lovers of peace and freedom. Eyes sated with ugliness can there refresh themselves with beauty fresh from the hands of the Creator. Ears bursting with the din of cities can there enjoy the rarest of luxuries—stillness. We can breathe freely, relax our tense and haggard features, be ourselves for a while, and reflect wistfully what a good thing life could be if men would only temper their cleverness with wisdom—the wisdom that knows where to stop, that sets bounds to the lust for gain and power—the wisdom of that ancient poet, so strangely sounding to modern ears, who sang of the folly of those who cannot see how much greater is the half than the whole, and what delight there can be in the simplest things of earth:

*nêpioi, oude isasin hosôî pleon hêmisu pantos
oud' hoson en malakhêi te kai asphodelôi meg' oneiar.*

Euclid may laugh at Hesiod's mathematics, but the poet is amply justified in an age when men can split the atom and fly at the speed of sound, but have to ration their bread because they have over-reached themselves in grabbing superfluities. Since we cannot have both kinds of world, an increasing number of us will be found ready to forego the glories promised at Bikini or Magnitogorsk in order to return to the mallow and asphodel.

But peace and freedom, however necessary, are not sufficient when the blood is warm and the limbs strong. Effort and conquest are needed too. The human animal wants an outlet for his prowess, for which there is all too little scope in the life of office or factory. Some seek this outlet in death-dealing sports, or in war, the sport of kings. But others, averse from adding to the world's sum of pain for their own gratification, have found an ample field for conquest in the rock-faces and snow-peaks of the mountains. They find there the exhilaration of difficulty and danger overcome, without the sacrifice of any other creature on the altar of their pleasure. They find the reward of victory

without the corruption of power, the joy of supereminence without the contamination of pride; for who can be proud among forces which admit him to so intimate a communion, yet can at any moment overwhelm him? The mountains are a school of courage and gentleness, highmindedness and humility. How different and less tragic the world's history might have been if budding Napoleons and Hitlers could have been caught early and diverted to the face of Scafell or the Matterhorn! They might have found a better way to glory; at the worst their fall would have been unshared. Or how many cat-burglars might have been saved from a career of crime if their youthful instincts could have found an innocent satisfaction on the Napes Needle!

But we are straying from our terms of reference: the mountains were to be considered as an escape rather than as a safety-valve. Those who have once found in them a refuge and a way out of the blind alleys of progress, and have beheld on their virgin heights the footprints of the Everlasting, will not again be utterly captives to their mechanised prison. Not all the secret police of tyranny, not all the card-indexes of democracy, will be able to hold them down. Leviathan will see in the eyes of his robots the wild light of returning sanity and know that his great experiment has failed.

Basil Wright.

"E" ROUTE (V.S.) GIMMER CRAG

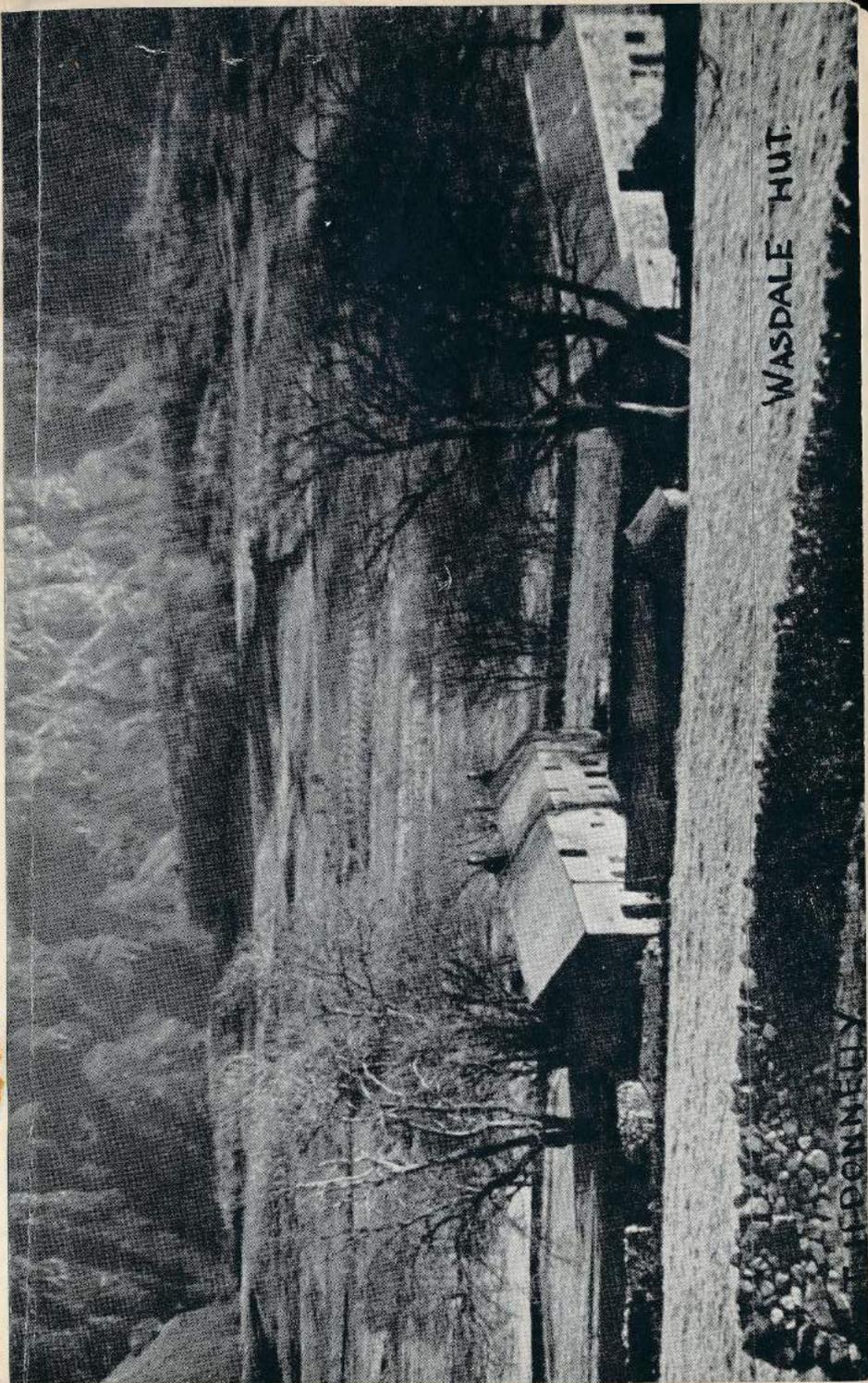
THIS climb is the easiest V.S. on the crag, and it is definitely worth doing. A few months ago I was reluctantly forced to ascend this climb. At the time I was not particularly thrilled by the idea, but my enthusiasm warmed as we progressed. The first pitch, from Ash Tree Lodge, is too easy to bother about, its only purpose is to give you a little height in case you fall.

From the top of the first pitch a traverse is made upwards and to the left. The holds for this pitch are good, and there are plenty of them. This traverse ends on a ledge; a few feet further to the left brings one to a crack with good belay on its right-hand side. Here the climb begins to get interesting. After climbing the crack for a few feet a delicate traverse is made to the right, across a wall. This section is exposed, and the holds are small, the hand-holds are good and, of course, rubbers will grip anything.

I remember this part of the climb very clearly. When I was half way across this traverse climbing operations were temporarily suspended whilst a heated argument took place over the amount of slack rope I required. My friend did his best to pull me off, but the ensuing tug-o-war ended in my favour. This traverse brings one to the belay at the foot of Lichen Chimney, which is part of 'A' route.

The traverse to the right is continued, then over easier rocks, which bring one to the second delicate movement. This movement is to the left over a bulging rock. The holds for this move are certainly not of the "jug-handle" type. There is a reasonable hold for the left foot, and an unreasonable one for the left hand. These two holds facilitate a pull up and easier rocks follow. This movement is easy if it is done quickly, but it is no place to stop and admire the scenery. The groove above brings one to a ledge, which runs from 'C' route to the top of Lichen Chimney.

The last pitch is sixty feet, and is continuously hard. It ought to be done in one run-out, but it can be split up



by using the belay, which is at the left-hand edge of the ledge running along the top of Lichen Chimney. This belay, however, is rather a long way to the left to be really useful. The last forty feet of the climb are the hardest. The climb runs straight up a steep buttress. Apart from being steep it is exposed, and the holds are sparse in places. The start of this buttress is the hardest part. From the foot of this buttress I remember looking down and seeing our boots, which we had left below Ash Tree Ledge. Yes, it's steep—very steep. This last pitch is best done in one run-out, if only to save the second the sight of his leader's horrible struggles on the buttress.

Any climbers who are on severes, and want to do a really grand climb, here is one which they will not regret doing. The ability of the second man doesn't matter much. After all, I got up it.

Frank J. Murphy.

THE LAKES

MOUNTAIN, lake and valley, this is the lovely trinity which makes the Lakeland scene. We can go back to it summer after summer as to a new revelation, always finding fresh glories and relishing better the old. It seems a strange thing that men can separate what God did not, and love one of them and not the rest. There is only one excuse, surely, for the Lowlander who haunts the lakes and valleys and scorns the distant heights, and that is *anno domini*. But alas! there is none whatever for the brawny philistine who has become a peak or rock-climb bagger, who can speak of nothing but pitches and ropes, and rakes and napes and needles. They know nothing of Derwent and Ullswater, of Buttermere, and wild, lonely, glorious Ennerdale.

Yet these fellows . . . But soft! we are observed. Samson had a way of throwing things at Philistines and the house fell in on top of them. Let us be content to sing the praises of the beautiful in pages which doubtless represent a rock-climbing wilderness. But—help me now Parthian—we know at least that there are some of this sort who write jauntily of their first essays, but quite forget to tell you that they were also their last.

It seems to be the unique glory of our lakes—as indeed of our mountains and valleys—that so much is contained in so short a space, a mere twenty-five miles by thirty. There is nothing like it in Britain, and maybe not outside it either. This means more than being able to wander easily from one beauty spot to another, more than finding an almost inexhaustible variety every day. It means that widely differing features are brought close to each other, and the eye finds a new beauty in the scene that would otherwise have been lost. This is particularly true of the Lakes and Dales. What a contrast there is between Wasdale and Borrowdale, between Wastwater and Derwentwater, though there is only the Styhead climb separating them; or Eskdale and

Langdale, with only the Bowfell line to mark the barrier; or Coniston, Windermere and Ullswater, though you can visit all three on foot in one day! You may find, elsewhere, a similarly massed group of beautiful valleys, though not in Britain—I have recollections of walking through possibly a comparable cluster in Switzerland—but nowhere surely will you find, all packed into one lovely enclave, so many beautiful and yet widely different lakes.

Sixteen lakes in all, and the many tarns, usually so savage and bleak, up in the hills, of which some are rather exquisite lakelets in a pastoral setting. Three of the lakes are wild in character, Crummock, Ennerdale and, of course, Wastwater. The rest are more cultivated, sylvan or pastoral. One can well understand the man whose favourite is one of the wild lakes. Some of us think that the widest of them all, our own Wastwater, is also the greatest. We love its savage and forbidding moods, but we are familiar also with its pastoral moments of rare grace, when its light colours and flitting shades move so rapidly. Since the valley looks east, and is blocked by the highest of England's mountains, you have to wait for the westering sun in order to see the rich green of the meadows that form the margin of the lake head and the darker green of the Screes leading up to the different hues of their cracks and gullies. I am not sure that Wastwater has not the best mountain view also. As you stand washing the dishes at Buckbarrow you can see, through the window before you, Lingmell, Scafell Pike and Scafell perfectly cameoed, especially if it be an hour or two before sunset.

Yet if you do love a wild lake, Crummock too has its claims. Dark Melbregg, rising steeply from its waters, lends it many stern moods, but it has a varied picturesqueness which, for many, more than compensates for the bolder outlines of Wastwater. By one of the most delightful contrasts in the whole district, it is only separated by five or six hundred yards of vivid green strath from tiny Buttermere—a spoonful of turquoise stolen from the sky with as beautiful a rim of light green as you could ever hope to see, a

sight comparable even with Grasmere.

Among the smaller lakes, the favourite of most of us lies between Buttermere, Grasmere and Rydal. If you wish to see all they have to offer you must see them from every point of vantage and in all kinds of seasons. You must walk round the margin of all three, take out a boat on them, climb every height that immediately surrounds them; see them in the morning and the afternoon and evening light; by the light of the moon before you go to bed, and in the mist and the rain and the high wind. Nature's facets are numberless, and a beautiful lake can reflect a myriad charms.

I have said little of the bigger and more cultivated lakes. Perhaps we tread on dangerous ground if we attempt comparisons here. Bassenthwaite, four miles long—the lakeland cinderella—might, in less brilliant company, be extolled to the skies. It is an example of the old remark that a lake often owes more to its overlooking mountains than to the meadows and woods and rocks that immediately surround it. When you take out a boat on Windermere on its best part, the mile or so before Ambleside, you can see how true that is by looking up at the Fairfield Horseshoe. But you will also see how much finer the head of Windermere would be if the mountains were nearer, as they are on Ullswater and Derwent. That is why the largest and most frequented of the lakes must give place to these two. Windermere may win in breadth and grandeur, but Derwent and Ullswater have no rivals, but each other, for complete loveliness.

Baddeley, whose classic guide should be a model to all guide makers, reminds us that if the Swiss lakes, or the more famous Scottish lochs, are your ideals of what a lake should be, you will probably prefer Ullswater to the other two great lakes. But as he sails up the reaches of Ullswater the experienced traveller knows he is recollecting something he has seen before, whereas Derwentwater and Windermere are unique, and there is no other lake in Europe which could be mistaken for either of them. Everyone has his own

favourite, but, personally, I have never seen a lovelier lake than Derwentwater. If such there be I pray that God may lead me to it before I die.

The lover of Lakeland may find all these comparisons odious. It is an easier and less invidious task to compare his lakes with those in other lands. Wales can boast of many, and some of her smaller ones are often underestimated. There are a few in the Snowdon district that are remarkable by any standard. On the whole, however, the Welsh valleys are not formed for the reception of lakes, and in any case lack the luxuriance and colour of Lakeland. For her two big lakes, Bala and Vyrnwy, no-one will lay any claim.

The real rivals to the English lakes are the Scottish lochs. It is often claimed, for example, that Loch Lomond is the most beautiful lake in Great Britain—surrounded by great mountains, variegated by many islands, and twenty-one miles in length. Perhaps Wordsworth gives the best criticism of this view. In his "Guide to the Lakes," he says that, with Loch Lomond and most of the Scottish lochs, the proportion of diffused water is too great. It sounds magnificent, and flatters the imagination, to hear of such great expanses of water, but "who ever travelled along the banks of Loch Lomond, variegated as the lower part is by islands, without feeling that a speedier termination of the long vista of blank water would be acceptable; and without wishing for an interposition of green meadows, trees and cottages, and a sparkling stream to run by his side?" He adds that, in Scotland, long tracts of desolate country often intervene between one loch and another, so that it is hard to decide how much of your pleasure is due to the excellence of the landscape itself, and how much to the oppression left on the spirits by the barrenness and desolation through which you have passed.

Wordsworth made the same judgment about the Italian and Swiss lakes. The expanse of their waters is too great. Perhaps I may be permitted to say, with a great love and some experience of those lakes, that his criticism is not

hard to justify. Geneva and Constance are obvious examples. The chief exceptions are Lucerne and Lugano; Lucerne, broken up by so many reaches, and Lugano, which is practically two lakes and only about the length of Windermere.

On the whole our own lakes come out well in comparison with any others in the world. We have them in comparatively large numbers and of all sizes, and they are near enough, in Wordsworth's phrase, to contribute each to the illustration and ornament of the other. Why do we not make more of them? The Achille Ratti Climbing Club now has three huts conveniently spaced out in the southern and central parts of the district. It should be an easy matter to combine roaming the mountains with a visit to all the lakes. You need hardly set foot once on a metalled road. What a pity we know so little of the eastern section, Hawswater and Ullswater, and that exhilarating ridge along the High Street range that the Roman Legions trod! It is well worth a night or two spent away from the huts. One can come back again to the familiar rocks and fells with a feeling of satisfaction at having explored the beauties that lie a little further afield. These beauties will reveal themselves still more if we follow the advice of that king of tramps, Mr. Belloc, and read and listen much before we go. It is an old saying that a man must carry knowledge with him if he would bring home knowledge.

Vale lector, and I wish you happy days by rocks and lakes and valleys and God's high hills.

Joseph Mullin.

KERN KNOTTS CRACK

THE English proverbially take their pleasures sadly, and the acute vision that lies behind our proverbs came over me gradually but forcibly as we approached Kern Knotts. I had promised myself, years before, that I would do it some time, and the chance came when Ronnie Smith asked me if I would have a shot at it with him. He had done it before, and he wanted to see if his hand had lost its old cunning; I had never done it, and I jumped at the chance. Joy reigned unconfined in the Langdale Hut.

Rosset Gill exercised its usual sobering influence, but I was still bounding with joy, and very un-English, as we dropped down from Esk Hause. The sun shone, the water glinted, and the streams positively babbled, the rocks looked soft and inviting. I think it was the sight of the stretcher at Sty Head Pass that restored me to an understanding of my obligations as an English subject. My ardour began to cool. As we did the last bit to Kern Knotts I could have written a sequel to "Urn Burial," or Young's "Night Thoughts." Ronnie was his effervescent self, but, while my legs went with him, my heart was down in the valley below, basking in the sun. I began to think of all the trouble that came from the Tower of Babel and the attempt to scale the heavens. After all, man belongs to the earth—why should he be so keen to get up aloft?

Came the Crack! The prisoner ate a hearty breakfast and smoked a meditative cigarette, wondering why he hadn't got a pipe, which would have taken a good deal longer. Ronnie didn't smoke, and spent his time describing to me the delights of the climb, the tricky bit where faith alone availed and good works were out of the question, the humour of getting stuck in the crack, which I now began to call familiarly the Crack of Doom. On with the rope, a last touch to the rubbers, and he was off.

As he climbed I began to realise that it was not, after all, impossible. He took his time, caressed each handhold and

lingered on each foothold, looked round carefully to make sure he was keeping in the right direction and could make the next step. He was being careful, but he was going up, and up and up. It marched! I began to enjoy it vicariously, helped by the fact that all the time he kept up a running commentary on what was coming next, how to make this move and that, how to slide the hand up to what looked like nothing and find a hold for the fingers, how I would enjoy this bit and that. For one supposed to be afflicted with nerves, he was doing a very nice job, and I began to reflect that, after all, he could haul me up to the top if the worst came to the worst. Then I found that I hadn't time to think of other things, for he had moved out to the right and straight up a few yards, and was standing still to rest a moment.

"You'll enjoy this bit, Father," I heard, and I watched carefully. He was standing with the toes of both feet nicely set, and two fingers of the right hand in a little hole, a goodish grip for the left hand. Up went the right foot to a small hold about two feet higher. I scanned the rock for the next hold for the left foot and hand, failed to find any within reach. The voice of the cheerful climber told me why. "There are no holds for the left here, Father, you've got to balance upwards on the right toe and leg, with the finger grip of the right hand to keep you steady. Your left hand can slide over the rock and will help the balance." I began to realise why this was severe, and as he started to balance upwards I could feel myself going up with him, lending moral support. Up he went, slowly, carefully, and then, to my horror, down he came, slowly and carefully. A little rest, and then up again, and he was there. The left hand found a suspicion of a hold, the left foot came to rest. I breathed again. "That was most enjoyable," seemed about to sum it up.

The brave step followed, whereby the right hand left go of the only really good hold, the left foot slid well out to the left and came to rest on the side of the crack, solidly and

firmly planted. The left hand could then reach easily to the edge of the near side of the crack, and a swing and a pull brought him inside the crack and up to the first stance. The usual rest for a moment, and then I was following, and, as usual, found that it flattened out as you get closer to it, the impossible becomes "that which needs two looks and a bit of care." Holds grew and multiplied; I never actually needed to use my ears to hold on. Even the leg balance became a thrill (but certainly a thrill!) yet a most enjoyable one, granted the comfort of the rope around my middle. I started to become un-English and to take my pleasures joyfully once again. The "brave step" came and went, with only a passing thought for the beauty of the valley below, and the hills that rose from it on the far side. It's wonderful how Chesterton's sayings recur to the mind, and here I thought of his "new eyes" saying, that the old and familiar things become new and strange and fascinating if they are looked at from a new view-point. I had seen the pony track and the valley, I had seen and been over the opposite hills, rising to their peak in Scafell Pike. But from this vantage point they had a strange remoteness and majesty, and all the clearcut beauty that is usually associated with the bird's eye view of a photograph. And that was what it was, a photographic view, a real bird's eye view.

I looked at the side of the crack on which I had to plant my left foot, and then I made the step. To anybody straight behind me it would have looked as if I was stepping straight into the valley, for here the rock curves away a little bit; but for me the side of the crack loomed up as sound and re-assuring as the side of a house, and my foot came to rest on it firmly and quietly. A momentary thrill of achievement, a gentle heave with the now securely-holding left hand and I was into the crack, and the first pitch was over.

While Ronnie wriggled his way up the higher crack of the next pitch by the usual caterpillar method, I had time to relax and continue with my thoughts, which turned to the "Coward's Vault" and kindred subjects. This is a vault over

the parallel bars made by sitting on the outside of one of the bars, putting one hand on the other bar and then vaulting over the two to the outside of the further one, that held with the hand. It looks easy, it is easy—but not for the first time, nor when you are actually looking at it from the top of the bars, and thinking what would happen if you failed to clear the further bar. A silly thought, but it always occurs to the mind at the first attempt. I had felt the same at the sight of Ronnie doing the upward balance, and what I have called "The Brave Step," and the outcome had been the same. If the nettle is grasped firmly it will not sting. I had found the same on a ridge between the Cima di Val Fredda and Monte Nevoso. We had a step to make that was just too long for comfort, so that it had just the trace of a jump in it. The step was from a slightly sloping rock surface to another slightly sloping surface, and it went over an awful lot of fresh air, what looked like some thousands of feet of fresh air and siren-like rocks down below. We all paused for a moment before taking the step, and we all wondered later what it was that made us hesitate. I concluded that the Fear of the Unknown was the solution, and dismissed the thought to keep a closer eye on the progress of Ronnie.

He had stopped wriggling and had gone out to the right of the crack to a position which he cheerfully described as "beautifully exposed." Then up he went, and finally disappeared, and announced he had got to the top. Massaging my neck, which was suffering from that all too common disease, "second man's neck," caused by looking straight up for about ten minutes, I gave a hitch to the rope to make sure it was safe, and then started wriggling up the crack after him. I went rather too quickly at it, and with too little thought for the mathematics of the matter. This contempt for the eternal principles brought its own retribution. I found that, despite modern discoveries, two into one will not go, a thick waist will not fit into a thin crack. In fact I got stuck, and came near to losing my belt in the resultant struggle. A short retreat, however, showed me that I ought

now to emerge from the crack and "expose myself beautifully," to use Ronnie's words. I did so, and found it distinctly more pleasant. Holds grew and multiplied, the previously vertical-seeming wall turned out to be a nice slope, and I was able to weave my way speedily to the top, where Ronnie waited with a pleased smile of satisfaction. We had done it, and a sense of real achievement was mine at least. He had done it before, but I think he was very pleased to have done it again with a novice.

After a sufficient breather, we got back to earth again by way of Kern Knotts Chimney, which improves on acquaintance, and is, I think, easier to come down than to go up. As all good climbs call for a bask in the sun, this one called for a super-bask, and it got it. Perhaps it was in that sun that all the admirable thinkings mentioned above took place. Up on the rock I had only the seed of the thoughts, which germinated and came to flower as we lay there and relaxed, and talked and relaxed.

J. McDonald.

LONDON IN THE LAKE DISTRICT

WE had arranged to catch the night train from Euston to Windermere, and everything worked out according to plan. We all had seats in the same carriage, the bikes all had labels, and we even had a container to get some tea at Crewe and Preston. A Yank, from Sun Valley, was in the carriage with us, and kept us interested until he fell asleep at about 2 a.m. We fancied his military headgear, removed it from his sleeping head and tried it on. It suited us O.K., and was a source of great amusement to an A.T.S. girl in the carriage.

We reached Windermere about 7 a.m., got our bikes from the guard's van, and set off in the crisp morning air along the Lake to Ambleside, where we had to collect the key of the Climbing Hut. As we were in time for Mass we went into the Church at Ambleside, and immediately found ourselves in the midst of friends. Some climbers from Ushaw, whom we had known the previous year, were in the Church, and gave us pints of tea, strong and sweet, at their camp after Mass. They wanted us to stay to breakfast, but we were expected at the Climbing Hut and a meal would be waiting for us. It is a grand thing to get a welcome like this after a long night journey. You can usually count on a good welcome from climbers.

We got on our bikes and cycled along down the Langdale Valley. The Achille Ratti Climbing Hut is on the slopes of the Langdale Pikes, and here another welcome awaited us in the form of bacon and eggs and coffee, and two smiling faces—fellow lovers of the hills from Manchester, who knew we were coming. Before eating, we had a dip in the mountain torrent tumbling past the door of the hut. What pure joy that swim was! We stood on the bank in the warmth of the morning and gazed upon the sunglow on the gay and gracious hills. What a holiday was before us! Unlimited freedom for two weeks to roam and climb, to swim and walk, to lie in the heather and ride down screes, to breathe God's mountain

air. This was the life we had dreamed of in London's stifling streets.

Words are but a poor medium to express the happiness engendered by the hills. Even Mallory, Smythe, Shipton, Young, and others, fail to convey into words the feelings and thoughts that pass through them as they gaze downwards and outwards from the summits they have scaled. So too with us when, on a perfect day in September, we gazed across the Irish Sea from the top of Scafell, or towards Scotland from the top of Helvellyn, or just sat in silence watching the sun set from the top of the Langdale Pikes or Bowfell, something inexpressibly beautiful had been created in us, a beauty unknown before, and beyond the reach of words.

Maybe we had better restore the balance between nature and human nature mentioned by Geoffrey Young, and speak of less ethereal things such as food. Weird and wonderful were the concoctions that went to appease our appetites after we came off the hills. The "goulàs" at Wasdale, eaten by the light of candles stuck in bottles (where do all those bottles come from at Wasdale?); the "innominate omelets" that contained about twelve months' egg ration; the jam and sugar, carefully saved for weeks beforehand, and now wired into with pre-war 'abandon'; the pounds of fresh bread we got through, disproving the old myth that fresh bread was bad for the digestion; and so on *ad infinitum*. These were undoubtedly things of great importance and inner comfort, but the chief thing was the mountains. They were the attraction all the time. Even as you slept, you dreamt of them and felt them round you and knew that they were waiting for you on the morrow, bright against the morning sun and the clear blue sky.

Needless to say, we had our disappointments. The Needle wouldn't "go," although we clung for ages to the "mantleshelf" waiting for the "gale" to subside and give us a reasonably safe chance of getting round that final corner to the top, but it's the good climber who knows when he

must turn back instead of being carried back. We had our purgatory and our paradise on Gimmer in many different ways. The resolution made when halfway up the "piano" and peering down into sickening space, that if you got out of this alive you'd never climb again for all the money in the world. And then—the danger passed, and sitting securely on the top looking at the world far, far below, the resolution that you'd climb, and climb, and climb.

"Clapham."

"SCOUT'S"

"BEGIN at the beginning" seems an unpardonable platitude, but as I pen these lines from a hospital bed, it is borne in upon me that we do not always act according to it. A relevant witness lies at my side in the shape of a first attempt at knitting, an elaborately designed garment. Not even Penelope could have woven such a tangled web as this woolly mess! I am reminded of a keen and competent skier who held that tyros should be taught his art by being taken up to some ghastly 'col' and launched without warning into space, also of those exuberant 'watch-me' enthusiasts who start their climbing careers on the Matterhorn.

Fortunately, our still youthful climbing club has been conspicuous for its cautiousness, and very few of our newcomers require to be urged to begin at the beginning. *Festina lente* might well be engraved on our shield. Providence, moreover, besides blessing us with huts in the most beautiful parts of the Lakes, has planted almost at the doorstep of the Langdale hut just the type of rock needed for the practice and encouragement of a beginner.

I refer, as all Club members know, to "Scout's" short and simple. It has nothing to do with the variety in short pants, but is a tall and narrow outcrop of rock low down on the hillside about ten minutes scramble from the hut. The title by which it is known in the official Crag Guide is that of "Scout's Crag." Thus it has all the dignity with which a rock is invested by being officially recognised, and on top of that its ascent is classified as "difficult." It may come as a surprise to those as yet uninitiated in the arcana of climbing circles that this apparently unambiguous term really means "easy," but the word obviously has a challenge about it. And a challenge is one of the psychological factors necessary for the beginner. In short, Scout's has all that is required of it for a training ground. You can get there without exhausting yourself on scree, it is easy, but technically classified, and

is neither too long nor too short. I should think it must have been climbed more since the A.R.C.C. descended on Langdale than at any time since it emerged from the bosom of nature. If you want an indication of this, you have only to glance at the improvised index at the back of the hut log-book, where the page references will be found spilling over the paper.

Classification of character is always rather an illusory occupation, but perhaps it is true to say that of those who are first persuaded to try rock-climbing one can distinguish three types. There is, first, the open and unashamed "never-again" type. These people generally approach the project more out of the spirit of curiosity than the love of adventure. It may seem incredible to the philistine, but it is a fact that they are a minority. The second class consists of those who have dodged a few grades of evolution from their simian ancestors. Born prehensile, they shin up anything with the same abandon with which they presumably attacked trees as boys. Their general reaction is a kind of "what's all the to-do about?" and is not doubt very irritating to their carefully-trained leader. Fortunately, for the self-esteem of their lesser brethren, these, too, are a minority. In between come the *hoi-polloi*, whose first attempts produce in varying degrees a mixture of trepidation and satisfaction.

Scout's has witnessed on its rocky buttress the sensations of all these debutantes. Fearful stories are told in the Club of how gentlemen of solid structure have had to be hauled by herculean efforts over exposed parts, rather like those big flour bags you see being hoisted up to the top floor of a warehouse. I remember myself seeing one youth, before stepping out on the Nose, in such a dither that you could almost hear his knees knocking from below. Actually he would have "made it," had not the unsuspecting and non-chalant leader made some ill-timed joke about the belay not being fit to hold a chicken. This effectually quenched the divine spark in the breast of the youth, and he had to be negotiated back to the bottom to join the ranks of the "never-agains." Another gentleman, this time a "reverend,"

gave no sign during the ordeal of the terrible emotions sundering his soul, but told me afterwards that he was glad he had done it because it cured him once and for all of any further desire for the rocks. At the other extreme, you have the maddening tyro who leaps from hold to hold like a gazelle, and wants to lead at a second attempt. Of course, you can point out to him with a certain air of superiority that he must work more rhythmically and not indulge in such spectacular handwork. Still, the complete unconcern with which he negotiates the Nose, leaves you with the feeling that before long he will be gambolling on Gimmer while you are yet aspiring to a mere "very difficult."

It is rather for the intermediate type that Scout's plays its most important function. What a mixture of sensations accompanies the raw recruit as he makes his first sally from the hut to the starting point! Hitherto, the sight of a man with a rope coiled round his chest has evoked ideas of some inaccessible mystic brotherhood. Now he feels proudly that he is entering the magic circle, and as he passes strangers he enjoys their interested stare. Arrived at the little arena from which the rocks spring, he feels a quickening of rather fearful excitement, but on the whole the climb does not look so fearsome. Down below it looks child's play, while up above there seems nothing very frightening—that is, if he is fortunate enough not to have to witness a party in occupation (It is a curious freak of Scout's that if anyone is on the final stretch of the buttress, which is certainly not absolutely vertical, one can see, from below, the sky between his arms and legs. On an impressionable spectator the sight can be rather unnerving). At this stage, if he is with a compassionate leader, he will be allowed to put on his rubber shoes. This is more likely than not, as I am afraid that on the whole the practice of the Club is not in line with the textbooks on the matter. It is surprising what a curious feeling of confidence and agility this little operation gives to the beginner.

The great question now, is whether it is to be Route I or Route II. There is, of course, no "getting away with it"

either way. The juicy bit on Route I is the Nose, where you can enjoy the sensation of looking feverishly for apparently non-existent holds on a bump of rock jutting into space. If that sort of thing lacks entertainment value, you can decide on Route II. Here, instead, you are treated to a section of wall at the foot of the buttress, where holds are plentiful, but the sense of exposure more pronounced. As the second man is left to amuse himself while the leader climbs up out of sight to the full length of the rope, he has plenty of time to acclimatise himself to feeling like a statue in the facade of a medieval cathedral.

Needless to say, the novice is not treated to a long preliminary discourse on these factors. More often than not it will be Route I. Whether this is due to the mere mesmerism of numbers I can't say, but Route II does not seem so popular (My own case seems to have been the unusual one. For some inscrutable reason the leader who first took me out decided that Route II would be more in my line. Whether this was meant as a compliment or not, I have never been able to fathom). If it is Route I he will start from the right of the arena; if II, then from the left.

It is not the least merit of Scout's from the novice's point of view that it starts gently, works to its climax and ends gently. There is nothing of that rude greeting extended to you by its neighbour, Middle Fell Buttress, on the very first pitch, the Morning Coffee. The first pitches are easy going. To the seasoned climber they would hardly be classified as rock-climbing at all. Yet, for the beginner, they are not quite the step-and-stair walking that they look. He would be surprised to find a little awkwardness in what might seem simplicity itself. This is all to the good, as it affords a little practice until the Nose or the Wall is reached. It is at this point that the average pupil with normal nerves feels that perhaps he had been better advised to stay at home. A great sense of loneliness descends upon him as he is left belayed to a rock, while the intake of the rope tells him his leader is leaving him far behind out of sight and earshot.

There is no turning back now, and alone he has to start those few paces which will launch him into space and leave him to battle with the inhospitable rock. It is a great and final moment. On it depends whether he begins to acquire that confidence which eventually turns the sting of exposure into a feeling of pleasure, or whether his future steps are to be directed exclusively *in vias planas*.

Once this *mauvais pas* has been negotiated, the slope of the rock eases, and foot and hand holds multiply. Progress is now simple, and the relative ease which the novice now feels gives him time to appreciate his situation. He does not mind looking down now as he pauses, and turning sideways to view the countryside from his unusual vantage point. It is an odd thing, but there is no view of a lovely landscape to equal that seen from the fastnesses of a steep rock. It is far better than an aerial view, because in an aeroplane you have no lines to earth, and that is sufficient to make any landscape dull. On the other hand, it is more impressive than the view from a mountain summit because you have no lines skyward. For some strange reason the sheer drop below, and the vertical rock above, greatly enhance the scene that meets the eye. From the top buttress of Scout's you can have as pretty a view as any in Lakeland, and for the newcomer it will not be spoiled by over familiarity.

The end of Scout's comes suddenly and unexpectedly for the second man, as for lack of a suitable belay the leader has to hide himself behind the final lump of rock in order to hold the rope securely. When it does come, it brings with it, for the novice, a grand sense of achievement. Many a prospective Club member must have discovered a new joy in life as he topped the last few steps. Now, as he sits smoking and surveying the scene of his efforts below him, he may well wonder how to explain its fascination. Henceforward, he will have to endure the scoffs of those who have never tried it, and without a hope of conveying to them what fun it is. What is it about climbing that gets him? He can't really pretend that it is solely the mountain air and scenery,

themselves into the cars and the remaining thirty-seven into the 'bus. With the 'bus leading, out into the night the procession made for the North.

At some of the barriers a red light was waved and L.D.V.'s climbed into the 'bus and blinked with surprise to be met with a sea of glowing, youthful faces, and many comments about keeping the rust off their bayonets. At one barrier the driver leaned out and said that it was St. Cuthbert's Boys' Club going to climb Scafell, and the L.D.V. in charge said, "Pass on and tell Father X not to leave any one on the top this time." He seemed to have heard of C.B.A. before!

By the time the expedition was twisting its tortuous way along the Langdale Valley it was possible to see without the headlights and grey dawn was breaking when they unloaded by the Dungeon Ghyll Old Hotel. It was about 4 a.m. Although the sky was cloudy the tops of the mountains were clear, and in the half light the serrated ridge of Crinkle Crag, and the towering mass of Bowfell and Rosset Pike, loomed ahead ghostly and impassable.

The expedition broke up into three parties, each with one of their number who had qualified in the Club as an experienced mountain guide. Each member carried with him a rucksack or a school-bag full of food and the stronger members of the party carried two tables and a Bergan rucksack containing the altar stone and chalice and everything else for the fitting of the altar. Four posts with cross-pieces to bolt on them had been prepared and heavy curtains to use in case of wind or rain.

The first part of the march was three miles along the flat valley known as Mickleden, flanked on the right by the precipitous Gimmer Crag, where many a climber falls to his death, and the gentler slope of the Band on the left. At the end of the valley is a circular wall or sheep pen and the usual halting place for a ten minutes' rest before tackling Rosset Ghyll. Rosset Ghyll is an hour's hard work—a "sweat and a graunt," as they say in the mountains! It is a rough, never-ending staircase, and the walls of rock close in and shut out

every breath of air. The boys pushed up as though they were storming a height and be it said to their credit, even from those who were heavily laden, there was never a grumble. Many a time on former occasions some of the party have given up the climb at the top of here and turned back. But not on this occasion. They were going to offer the Mass.

Over the top of Rosset a new world burst into sight—Angle Tarn with its sombre waters below; Great End and Glaramara rising in front. Then up and then down and up to the famous Esk Hause, the high Pass 2,490 feet between Borrowdale, Langdale and —Wasdale. At the Esk Hause most boys stretched out for a quarter of an hour before beginning the ascent of Scafell. Shortly after 7 a.m. the whole party was *en route* for the summit. Some on the long pull over the shoulder of Great End; others scaling the boulders of Broad Crag and Ill Crag to dip finally into a Gully with a ridge leading to the final struggle up to the summit of Scafell Pike.

By 8-15 the last climber arrived. Right up to the summit cairn the altar was erected and set out. The candles were burning, protected by little mica shades, without a flicker. The Priest was already vested and the boys grouped themselves on the rocky slopes round the altar. Out of 57 who had set out to hear Mass on the summit of Scafell, 57 knelt there amongst the rocks. Quietly, but firmly, their voices rose, reciting a Hail, Holy Queen to direct their intention to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. And then all together they answered the Latin of the Holy Mass.

For the first time the sun shone out and one could feel the atmosphere of peace and devotion on that mountain peak. Many a boy must have thought of what their chaplain had told them, that at the *Communicantes* the Blessed Virgin, and the choirs of angels, and the Apostles, and Martyrs and Saints would gather with them on the summit to await the coming of their God. The tinkle of the little bell heralded the Elevation and never was sweeter sound echoed amongst those watching peaks than that morning when in those Most Holy Mysteries the Son of God came amongst His boys on

Scafell Pike. Sixteen had succeeded in keeping the fast and received Holy Communion. That meant much, for the thirst created by the night journey and the climb was considerable. At the end of Mass, spirits were let go by a rousing verse of "Faith of our Fathers," and "God Save the King."

Breakfast for those who had not already "eaten up," followed, and by 9-30 the main body had begun the long descent, and by 9-30 the main body had begun the long descent. One group of five dropped down the other side to the Mickledore ridge and enjoyed a rope climb in Scafell Chimney. When they returned over the summit of the Pike two hours later, you could not have recognised the same spot. It was nearly as dark as night; torrential rain and gusty wind swept over the Peak and they realised that no amount of protection could have enabled them to have Mass there in bad weather. Our Lady of Mount Carmel had been good to them and they thanked her for it.

It was a very tired group of boys that reached Blackpool at 9-30 that night. But all were happy and deeply inspired with the unforgettable experience they had been through. From first to last the Mass had been the grand objective, the radiating centre of their activity. In times to come they will remember what great energy they expended in youthful zeal on behalf of the Mass and, in a manner befitting their years, it will be burnt on their vivid and youthful imaginations that the Mass is the beginning and the end of all their activity.

May Our Lady of Mount Carmel reward their youthful spirit and spirituality by blessing the land, this England that they prayed for. May she answer their prayers for the intention of their beloved Bishop who was so generous with his encouragement and understanding sympathy.

LIST OF MEMBERS OF ACHILLE RATTI CLIMBING CLUB, 1946.

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