

LAXTON AT DUNMAIL.

Summer 1948.

SINCE the first number of this JOURNAL everybody knows about the Dunmail Hut. Everybody also knows from the President's article in that number that "the real reason of this Hut was because there are so many who have had charge of Colleges or Clubs who are anxious to introduce boys to the hills, and yet cannot take them to the Climbing Huts, that we felt that something ought to be done to this need." Everybody also knows that the Dunmail Hut was opened at Whitsun of this year 1948, and the many members who have visited this hut since then know that it is far from being a mere hut, but is an extremely well appointed cottage. We hope that they also know how much the well-appointedness owes to the energies of Fr. Atkinson of Ambleside and of the members who laboured there until Whitsun to make the place not only shipshape but extremely pleasant to live in. Perhaps they know how many sheep and cows Fr. Atkinson drove out of the ruins when the club acquired the property, or they may have heard the remarkable story (told me by a pubkeeper in Threlkeld at the foot of Saddleback) of the soldier who a year or two back spent his leave tramping in the hills and, calling one night at an old rendezvous for shelter—the ruined shack on Dunmail Raise—was not a little surprised to see the panic-stricken face of a cow leering at him from an upstairs window—cows can go upstairs but are not very good at coming down. It is believed that the soldier turned his back on this unnerving sight and walked in haste the 10 miles to Threlkeld without ever looking behind him. The Dunmail Hut had indeed become like the great city Ninive in the book of Sophonias, a place where "flocks shall lie down in the midst thereof, all the beasts of the nations and the bittern (or is it a pelican, or a cormorant, or even a chameleon?) and the urchin (or is it a porcupine or a hedgehog?) shall lodge in the threshold thereof: the voice of the singing bird (or is it an owl?) in the window, the raven on the upper post." But all these horrors are now well away in

great places near at hand as the Langdale has, nevertheless it is generally easily accessible, and the bus services passing the door solved the problem of the rainy day with visits to Keswick, Grasmere, Ambleside, or Windermere. And there are also many fine walks to be taken nearby. On the first day we all went up Helvellyn and explored Striding Edge. This was for some of us (including myself) the first experience of the Lakeland Hills, though there were others among the boys who had been on both the earlier visits to the Lakes, who had been (like so many others) captivated by the Hills, and were taking every opportunity to return. There is no doubt whatever that once one is properly introduced to them, their attraction will always last, and the Club is surely doing a great work in making such an introduction possible now to so many.

But oh! those expeditions—he that readeth, if he has ever taken a party of boys over the Hills, let him understand. Counting the flock again and again: small boys now straggling now racing ahead, now averring they can go no longer, now declaring they will scale some formidable crag, now rushing to an illusory summit, now dawdling to watch a beetle in the grass. Alternate cajoling and restraining, encouraging *ad altiora* and warnings *de profundis*. And then the business of "Can we swim, Father?": alternate imploring of a little naked figure quivering on the shore either to go in or else to go and put his clothes on, and restraining the would-be channel swimmer from the perils of the tarn. Swift decisions about the route, about where the next stop will be, when we shall have our sandwiches, about whether we are in danger of sunstroke and must cover our heads, and even about whether it is going to rain—this last being particularly difficult in the Lake District. On these expeditions many virtues are learnt and practised: perseverance and endurance, courage and restraint, enterprise—the opportunities of these things give a special educational value to such a holiday. And the immense fun of it all, for everybody! Climbing perhaps more than any pursuit shows the truth of the old sundial motto *Horas non numero nisi serenas*

the past and there is no danger of finding a pelican or a cormorant fishing in the neat kitchen sink, or a porcupine scurrying under the refectory tables, or a mournful owl hooting above one's comfortable bunk at night time, or even a chameleon taking the colour of the armchair in the members' lounge.

The first school party to come and inhabit the house at Dunmail Raise was a group from Blackfriars School, Laxton, from Friday July 23rd for a whole fortnight until Friday August 6th—a little over two months since the Hut was opened with the accommodation of school parties in view.

In the two previous summers, 1946 and 1947, Fr. Jordan had taken a party of Laxton boys to the Lakes: the first time they were accommodated in the Langdale Hut and the second time in the building near the Co-op at Chapel Stile. This time we had the full amenities of the Dunmail Hut. There were 16 boys in all: 12 of them our boys from Laxton, two younger boys, a cousin and a brother, who were coming to the school on September, and three slightly older French boys who had been staying *au pair* with families of Laxton boys. The two-decker bunks in the dormitory accommodated all of us easily, with Fr. Jordan in one corner keeping a stern eye (even when closed in slumber) upon the excited company and myself with a similar eye in the opposite corner. Fr. Jordan was the chief cook and general manager and the admirable kitchen arrangements enabled him to exercise his skill to the full. He would get up and say Mass in the little upstairs lounge, served by an assistant cook, and meanwhile I would drive the rest from their bunks and say Mass for all of them afterwards. At Laxton we always have a dialogue Mass, so of course we had it at Dunmail too.

The Hut thus provided ample opportunity for the party to pray, eat, sleep and (of an evening) to loaf or read. (We hope to be able to contribute to the Hut library some time.) The daytime was of course usually taken up with expeditions. It has to be admitted that the Dunmail Site has not got as many

(I wish, incidentally, someone could tell me where that comes from). And another thing the boys learn from a Lakeland holiday is to appreciate and enjoy the grandeur of landscape: too many English boys have never had a chance of seeing what the English landscape can rise to, and here they have their opportunity.

Others who take school parties to Dunmail may be interested to know some of the expeditions that are quite practicable. To the east, apart from Helvellyn, there is of course Seat Sandel just behind the Hut and Fairfield beyond ("Can we swim, Father?" at Grisedale Tarn), and the lovely ridge towards Lord's Crag southwards. Patterdale is a longer trip that in fact we did not do this summer. Opposite the Hut there are grand scrambles to be had on Steel Fell and Helm Crag, with more serious work westwards to High Raise and the Langdale Pikes. The two and half miles walk down to Grasmere opens up possibilities of exploration of the Loughrigg area and Langdale itself. All these are quite possible even with a party of small boys. More stout hearted parties of two or three can of course tackle bigger jobs further afield, such as Scafell, Glaramara, or Saddleback, especially if the initial stages are done by bicycle. We found that the best swimming was to be found in Rydal Water on the Loughrigg side, approached either by Red Bank, or (for purposes of an afternoon's swimming) by bus along the main road and over the footbridge. Short afternoon trips to Grisedale Tarn eastwards or to Easedale Tarn westwards were also full of fun and not very arduous.

The climax of our holiday was of course the pilgrimage to the summit of Scafell Pike for the Mass of Our Lady of the Snow, which is certainly being described elsewhere in these pages. It came as a perfect conclusion as it was on the day preceding our departure. But for us there was a special complication as the calendar has decreed that the day before August 5th is August 4th, which is the feast of St. Dominic, which every Dominican community celebrates with due solemnity. So therefore this year did Dunmail. In the morning we had what we believe to

be the first Sung Mass in the Hut. Fr. Jordan was the celebrant and the Dean and I (Dean is our name for the head boy) sang the Proper—we had only brought one *Graduale*—and all the boys joined in for the Ordinary. (Sung Masses are usual at Laxton on Sundays and feast-days, and the Dean was a principal member of the Schola.) By the late afternoon Fr. Jordan had prepared a banquet, at which Fr. Atkinson came to join us ; it had been hoped that some other clergy would be able to come, but they could not. The feast went on for a long time, and then the boys were all put to bed. At a quarter past midnight they were roused and we all had another meal, which had of course to be finished by 1 a.m. Summer Time. At 2 a.m. a Ribble bus which we had chartered together with some Ambleside parishoners arrived and took us to the Old Hotel where we met many other pilgrims and whence started the long trek still in the dark up Mickleden towards Scafell. The Mass at the summit impressed us all enormously, even, I think, including the little boy who went to sleep during it, kneeling against a rock. On the way back from the Old Hotel the busload was in great part asleep. When we got back to Dunmail about midday those who had stayed behind had got ready a meal for us. Here we should make special mention of a Club member who is well known to very many, and who stayed at Dunmail Raise during the entire fortnight we were there : Laurie Greveson. It was he who prepared lunch against the pilgrim's return, and throughout our stay did many kind services to our party. Various other members dropped in at the Hut during our holiday, some for a few hours, some for a few days. As a stranger both to the Club and to the district I would like to record the happy impression which these contacts made upon me : there was a friendly spirit, almost a brotherliness with which we neophytes in the Hills were received. We were but visitors, but we were made at one to feel that we were part of the family at Dunmail.

If the Hut was opened with the express purpose of enabling members to introduce boys in their charge to the Hills, and to give them a happy and a healthy holiday in those ennobling

surroundings, it may be said that at least in the case of the Laxton party the object was fully achieved, and that Laxton, which sets out to provide an integral Catholic education of soul and body, and a guiding of the whole heart, whole mind and whole strength towards the Christian ideal, is glad to be able to share in and make use of the efforts of the Club at Dunmail, which though not expressly educational in theory is surely in fact a most valuable contribution to Christian education.

Sebastian Bullough, O.P.

THE LESSON OF THE HILLS.

A certain amount of experience is common to all of us who pass among the high hills. For some especially those of us from the cities and limited activity, it is enough to enjoy the body functioning in full activity : to stretch the limbs and spend energy from its first profusion to its last reluctance, to soak in clean air and to experience the reality of the body's needs, and to unleash our imagination for a scamper. Others may seek to top the higher inequalities, others may grope for the chance irregularities of the riven rock : but all of us in leaving the level and humanized for the steep and primitive, learn to know ourselves and appreciate humanity.

There is that self-estimation that comes with experience and trust in one's capability. So one faces the trying miles of moor and rock, clutching heather and slow bog, knowing that in the body is stored energy for all this and more. So, too, one marches under the weather, wind-beaten, rain-soaked, stung with sleet or near-blind with snow, confident that in these conditions, and worse, the body will function. On some tedious summer trek, when from the rock face and scree, jarring road and slippery grass slope, emanates heat ; when energy slows and seems to fail, then supervenes the knowledge that rest food and drink will remake the flagging frame. Others may read in books what the marching of armies means in human terms and the crossing of desolate country, how much effort the human frame contains until it needs renewal by rest and food. We read it in the working unit : ourselves. We come to understand how man can endure beyond human endurance in cold rain or wind or blowing snow ; how man may fail, come to desire only rest and die.

But it is not only in the estimation of our powers of marching and endurance that we learn to know ourselves. We experience too the power of imagination.

Who has so experienced the dominion of imagination, the revolt of the senses, as the rock-climber on some pitch when the irrational struggles for the upper hand? The eye loses its judgment, the muscles stiffen, fingers clutch, ears become deaf, fail to pass on advice to the mind ; in this turmoil reason struggles, calling in experience and foresight, and retaining control panic is repressed : the ugly moment passes. Nevertheless the whole man suffers thereby, the little kingdom is shaken by the insurrection.

Or again what experience can equal that sinking of the heart when, on some high moor, across the path writhes the first coil of mist, insidious, ineluctable, blotting out the landscape like a loss of Faith. Then when the mist has prevailed and the eye become used to the dim light, fear again proves a liar, the path becomes distinguishable or the next cairn visible. To trust to private judgement, however, and abandon the path can be dangerous ; to lose the path equally so, for then the falling slope in the gathering darkness may betray. Reason again assumes sway. There follows a trudge, trusting to the experience of others . . . tradition . . . in a kind of dark night of the soul, a trudge monotonous but safe.

We learn too the impact of awe and reverence that the lofty, the vast and the remote can make upon the human soul. Even our pagan forefathers felt the influence of our moors and chose the more inaccessible points as foci of reverence. It is perhaps the religiousness of the uplands which many folk desire, even unaware, and pilgrimage to experience it. They may allege health and the joy of bodily activity, austerity or the tang of danger, or the æsthetic appeal ; but few of them escape some shadow of the awe of the high, inhuman hills. Perhaps, too, in the absence of religion, the native thirst of the spirit is somewhat slaked by the mist of religiosity.

We learn through our own intimate communion with Nature the hunger of man for beauty. On the top of a climb when the hungry lungs seem to need all that boundless air yet

presently are satisfied, the eye too fills with gazing, yet is not filled. In the illimitable view the spirit swims and dives, now rests and, for a time, has space enough: freedom is experienced. Beauty is apprehended: sombre in immense form and dull colour on the fells, brilliant in diversified shape and tints innumerable of the lake-filled dales. Beauty, residing in harmonious order, shining in colour from inanimate and living nature, mirrors itself in that within us which can apprehend beauty because it is of the same creation. Unaware, we hunger for truth and goodness and, hungering, are a little appeased by dim reflections of the True and Good.

J. Underwood.

LIFE AT BUCKBARROW.

GETTING up at 5 a.m. and riding through a yet sleeping London to catch an almost mythical train at Euston is hardly considered the best way to start a holiday; but when it is followed by ten hours in the luxury of a British Railways Express that has never heard of a restaurant car, and is determined to maroon you in the wrong half of the train when you do break your neck in search of tea, then indeed the madness of Lake Fever becomes apparent. You who live in the North don't realise how lucky you are; you can think in terms of a week in Langdale or Whitsun in Wasdale; we must save and plan months ahead to cram a precious fortnight as full of memories as will last us a full year, or even more.

Is it worth it? Even we have our doubts, when the sixth hour has passed and we are still among the architectural glories of Lancashire; but all doubts vanish when we catch our first glimpse of the hills, bathed in the last sunshine we will see for a fortnight. It isn't just the beauty or the grandeur; it's rather their significance, the triumphant vindication of past memories, and the promise of fresh sights. Time and again, in the midst of the noise and crush of London, a word, a sound, a scent will bring a host of these pictures crowding back to refresh us.

It's all rather like the game in which you all sit around, and, as a single word is called out, you reply with your first mental reaction. If anyone mentioned "Wasdale," my picture would be always the same; sitting sideways in the kitchen window seat, looking across at the hills below the screes, and bathing in the "pure serene" of the valley, about the only sort of bathing that the Club traditions allow. "I couldn't care less" should be written above the door of Buckbarrow; when we did go into Gosforth, no one had the interest to buy a paper and the rise and fall of French Cabinets seemed as remote

as the man in the moon. The great world and its creatures has little place in the shadow of the mountains ; the faults of practical communism are quite apparent to one who is not a fast eater.

It would be interesting if some philosopher or metaphysician (do we possess one in the Club?) were to attempt an analysis of the almost uncanny peace of Wasdale. My own impression is that it is a certain magic blend of air, landscape, and strong sweet tea. I should like to see the tea pot in its rightful position in the arms of the Club : "Dexter, an empty sugar basin with a restraining hand ; a tea pot, steaming ; boots and pick all gules." Truly the only improvement that I could suggest in the Lakes would be that the gill should run tea. The rules for brewing the Lakeland variety are simple, and well known to those with Service experience : should the spoon when stood upright in a cup before drinking drop below 75 degrees, throw the lot out and start again.

Perhaps the second strongest memory which Buckbarrow impressed on us was that wood is an unyielding substance, and that 5ft. 6ins. is a good height for a man. We returned to London with bent necks and swollen heads, and passed the weary hours of the journey in discussing how many cases of severe concussion would be required before the Committee did something about the deathtrap on the stairs. And, a propos of bowed heads, surely it is a popular misconception that one fell-walks to see the views. Leaving mist and rain out of it (as if one could!), the usual walking position is with the head reverently inclined to see where to put the foot next and avoid total immersion. In any event, who would not exchange all the views in Christendom for another slice of bread and bully on top of Scafell in the misery of a normal summer's day?

It's rather amusing in the depths of winter to open a drawer and come across that old green pullover that you last wore riding down the road to Seascale ; sometimes even

washing cannot quite destroy the aroma of paraffin in particular and the food in general that clings as closely to it as I did to the chock stone in Kern Knotts. I don't think the Log book will be complete until there is a section for "Dishes Cooked" or, more honestly, "Stews Made." After all, some genius might attempt the seventieth and finally successful way of disguising a tin of bully, or find the method of avoiding lumps in Cremola ; but I suppose the gain to our stomachs would be offset by having nothing to moan about. Possibly someone might be able to write up a convincing theory about edible mice ; one party has indeed given the number of mice they killed, but have delicately refrained from indicating how they disposed of the corpses. However, I must say the mice at Buckbarrow are far better house-trained than their fellows at Langdale ; they do refrain from entering the bedrooms.

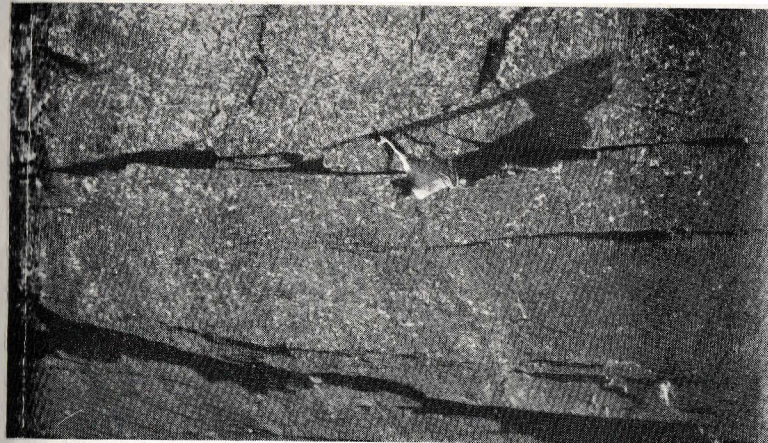
On the serious side, one very vivid impression of Buckbarrow remains ; an impression that is shared by neither of the other huts. Kneeling at Mass in the tiny parlour, it is easy to imagine how Mass was said in the Penal Days ; an ordinary room, a sideboard for an altar, the server without cassock or cotta, and the remoteness of the hut ; all build up this atmosphere which we have read about so often. The Mass seems to gain a new intimacy in that little room ; and the *sameness* of the sacrifice is vividly brought home to us if we remember Wasdale in the midst of some great cathedral.

And the departing memories ! Everything left too late, a frantic ride to Seascale, inevitably arriving too early, and having to wait on the platform. The last views of the hills in the sun (of course, the sun is out again now) as we crawl around the coast ; the dull resignation as we near Carnforth, and we have now to say farewell for another year. But worst of all, those awful hours of boredom, with nothing to look forward to but the dust and smell of London, and the necessity of shaving every day again. However the railways, in their kindness, cure you of this ; they thoughtfully arrange for the train to run hours late, so that you end by welcoming the lights

INTRODUCTION TO THE ALPS

Here at last the long wished-for holiday had arrived, and we were going to spend the whole of it at Zermatt in Switzerland. My hopeful imagination had worked overtime on a glowing picture of what was to come, and yet it proved to be underestimated. On the crowded deck of the channel steamer my vocal urge was sore restrained, for there was much to sing about. This sense of travel always produces in me an urge to sing, much to the discomfort of my companions. I sympathise, of course, but ignore their comments and rude requests to write it down.

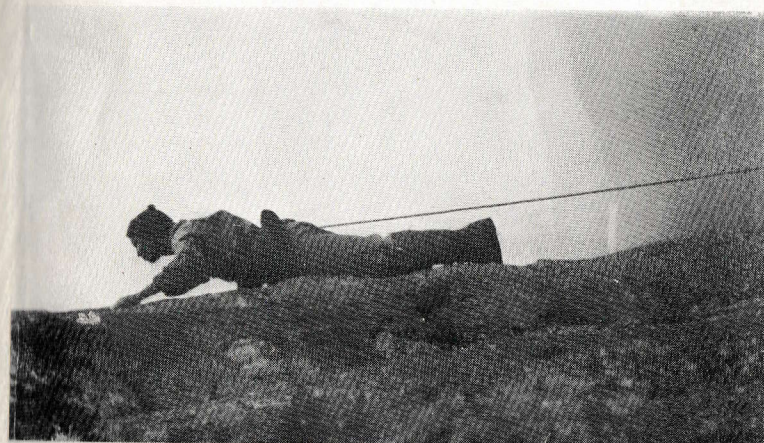
From the first moment of boarding the steamer to the first glimpse of the Alps the journey was for me a memorable one. Paris at night was a wonderful sight. The gay lights and the street cafes almost made me forget the suicidal taxi that rushed us from the Gare Du Nord to the station where in a noisy atmosphere of smoke and steam the Milan train was waiting to continue our journey. The next few hours of darkness gave our eyes a needy rest, though before we knew it the night was passed, the day dawned beautifully, and we dozily took in the flat French scenery that scurried by our windows. Life was restored with breakfast and the visit of musical comedy officials who vied with each other in an excess of gold braid as they stamped our passports, checked our baggage, collected tickets and issued meal coupons. The carriage was occupied by climbers with the exception of an old French lady sitting in the corner seat. I wonder if she was bored by our English chatter. It was difficult to imagine we were the foreigners and not she. Suddenly in the far distance someone saw an immense mountain range and we fell over each other to get to the window. It was so distant that it seemed like a mirage, but it shimmered beautifully in the morning haze and was capped with snow like cloud. We were all thrilled and many varied opinions were given as to its identity.



INNOMINATE CRACK
KERN KNOTT'S
(PARTRIDGE)



NEW ROUTE
WHITE GHYLL
(HEWSON)



OLIVERSON'S VARIATION
GIMMER
(O'MAHONEY)

To our surprise the French lady who had been carefully hiding her toes from danger told us in perfect English that it was Mont Blanc eighty miles away.

At Vallorbe we crossed into Switzerland. How clean everything looked! An electric loco took over to take us to Brigue where we rather welcomed a break in the journey. Brigue is a busy little town collecting all the traffic for the Simplon tunnel. We ambled through it's streets with eyes for everything. Even the shops fascinated us being so different from the austerity we have been accustomed to. Our appetites led us eventually to a cafe where we took a chance with the menu, as we were better able to amuse than inform the the waitress.

In the train once more, we reached a height of 5000 feet and the valley closed in upon us. The great gateway seemed barred, leaving only room enough for the river Visp thundering down it. Suddenly to the music of the river the curtain was lifted. We emerged from a short tunnel and Zermatt was in front of us nestling in a peaceful green valley and surrounded by a breath-taking panorama of mountains. The stupendous Matterhorn towered majestically into the clear blue sky. I was not prepared for such magnificence. There was an ethereal atmosphere about the great ice precipices which glistened in the sun. A wisp of cloud streaming off from its lofty summit was a reminder of the elements to be reckoned with. At that moment my feelings were such that to consider my chances of climbing it would have been disastrous, but it was a glorious culmination of a thrilling journey.

Early next morning the Angelus bells pealed throughout the valley. They did not waken me ; daybreak had accomplished that, and the dreaming mountain was still there. Not daring to foster any more ideas of starting on the Matterhorn, I took a walk by the river to consider my problem of initiation.

Some three hours later, together with my two friends we approached a mountain hut, and a large red sign over the

doorway proclaimed it as the Trift Hotel. Three thousand feet of steep path lay behind us and the sun beat down with pitiless heat. My friend Bert drily commented on having read something about *not* drinking water in the Alps.

A grander view than that from the hotel window could hardly be imagined. The lordly peaks of the Obergabelhorn, Wellenkupe, and Zinal Rothorn are each over 12,000 feet and seemed to be on the very doorstep. We regarded them with hope, not being too eager, content to spend the first day in training and getting acclimatised to the change of air pressure. In the clear atmosphere the Unter-Gabelhorn seemed no distance at all, and was fairly free from snow. Climbing up so late in the day was, we agreed, unthinkable, and yet it was only another 3,000 feet! Blissfully we left the path and walked in its direction, and started on one of those horrible loose moraines. How blessed is the Lake District to be free from such a curse! Its description is better left out. We toiled up it steadily for an hour in the hope that it would do us good, and eventually sat down for a rest. I casually asked the time to give Ted the pleasure of surveying his new Swiss wrist-watch and learnt that it was twenty-six minutes past two. We had reached a considerable height and were tempted to go on, but the ridge we had hoped to attain was guarded by an impossible wall of rock. The only alternative was to take a steep detour on the left until we could find an exit to the ridge. Our progress in the gully was slow and laboured, the altitude causing us to take frequent rests. By three thirty we had climbed about 800 feet of the couloir. Its great rock walls had narrowed considerably and as we looked back gave us a grand framed picture of the Gabelhorn glacier some thousand feet below. Suddenly we were alarmed by an ominous crack and rumble, a dreaded sound. Then came a cannonade of rocks followed by a great boulder of several tons. It crashed down towards us bounding from one side of the gully to the other and scattering debris in every direction. We were transfixed for agonising seconds, not knowing which way to turn and indeed not

having much choice. In the brief space of time of its happening, it is difficult to recall the details. I know I shot to the left. Bert did likewise. Ted must have gone to the right. Luckily enough, the boulder, as large as an elephant, missed him by about four feet. On one side of the couloir was a small buttress which seemed to afford the best shelter from any further downfall, and we lost no time in reaching it. We had a particularly steep scree to cross, and in our haste all but came to grief a second time. We had just learned that a couloir is a natural avenue for loose debris. It is also a drainage channel for melting snow, which in the shade freezes again to become high angle ice. The scree which covered the ice gave us just sufficient warning of the danger, and a desperate jab with the ice axe saved us yet again. After a short time we reached the sheltering buttress very much out of breath, but thankful even for that.

The folly of our predicament was obvious from the outset, and none could realise it more than we. We felt anxious to get out of the gully without further delay, but waited long enough to recompose ourselves. Ted's hand shook a little as he timed the intervals between the bombardments, and we observed with concern that most of the rocks followed the centre of the gully. The sheltered side contained too much hidden ice, so we were obliged to run the gauntlet again. This we did one at a time, the others keeping a watchful eye up above. I need hardly add, our descent did not take long.

On our return to the Trift Hotel the view through the window was just the same, the peaks as near as ever and with obvious ridges to the summits. How much we had learnt! Had we been able to peer into the future we should have seen a panorama of gratifying and exciting climbs. There was not only that fascinating objective the Matterhorn (Hornli Ridge), but the Breithorn, Theodulehorn, Ringsfishhorn, Zinal Rothorn by Rothorngrat and finally the traverse of Obergabelhorn by the Abengrat. It was to be one of the worst seasons in living

memory according to the guides, but in our five weeks at Zermatt and two days at Chamonix we were not idle. Besides reaching our objectives on the above-mentioned mountains, we were turned back by the weather from attempts at the Weisshorn, Monte Rosa (Cresta Rete) and the Rotengrat of Alphubel. All the climbs mentioned were guideless so that we felt very proud of ourselves and almost Alpinists. But at that moment in the Trift Hotel we were humbled and chastened men. We had read of course of the great differences that characterize climbing on British rock and climbing in the Alps, but we had experienced on our first day with rather dramatic suddenness the rude challenge which these regal mountains can throw down to the climber trained in more gentle climes. It was not an auspicious beginning, but our introduction to the Alps had begun. We drank each other's health, and picked up the tariff of guides

Ronnie Smith.

LONDON IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.

ONLY one Claphamite out of our party of fourteen was late for the Windermere train at Euston, and some ten hours later we dumped our rucksacks on the floor of the Langdale Hut, and, to the astonishment of a holy father from Blackpool who could not understand such keenness, went straight out for a swim and a practice rock climb. The priest, who later stealthily crept round Gregg's farm to see from afar what all this climbing was about, found himself swept into the maelstrom of enthusiasm and whisked up Scout's before he really knew what was what. The following day we took it easy, swimming in Stickle Tarn in glorious sunshine, planning huge climbs for the fortnight ahead.

Middlefell Buttress was attacked next day and the whole party climbed it. As there was only one leader, this weary gentleman had to do the climb five times in the one day ; probably a club record. We had with us on this climb a guest from St. Etienne who had come over to try to make arrangements for establishing the A.R.C.C. in France.

Gimmer Crag now beckoned and we tried the party on Ash Tree Slabs, but the exposure was rather shattering, so one volunteer climbed with the leaders (now two in number) and then the whole party went off to climb Great Gully or Pavy Ark, finishing this little effort with the severe variation. A free day was then arranged in preparation for the Herculean efforts that lay ahead. We attended Mass on the Sunday at Chapel Stile and were kindly entertained to breakfast afterwards by Father Jordan Pearson and the boys from Laxton College. Some of our party went to Conistone Old Man, some, now greatly daring, sought out difficult ways up Scout's and, the rest decide to cross over to Buckbarrow and climb Kern Knotts en route—a new arrival kindly offering to lead. They

set off about midday in a heat rarely known in these islands and toiled up Rossett Gill battling against flies, perspiration, gravity, and the weakness of the flesh which tempted them to rest after every step. Kern Knotts was not reached until late evening, but in spite of approaching dusk, the climb was tackled and done by all, the last ones up searching the dark with narrowed, peering eyes for mythical "jughandles." Remained now the trek to Wasdale Head and the Buckbarrow Hut. This latter adopted its usual tactics of receding towards the western ocean and it was not until 3 a.m. that the worn and wearied wanderers reached sanctuary. At 6 a.m. the same morning the rest of the party left Langdale for Buckbarrow. These were the "wise virgins," for their purgatory on Rossett Gill was over before the sun really got going: in fact they were sitting in the Dress Circle by 10 a.m. watching two of the leaders warming up on Abbey Buttress and swinging down Needle Ridge. Clapham then took possession of the Needle. As a result of careful belays and "handing on," eleven were climbing the Needle at one time and for ten thrilling minutes they looked down on the world from the top of this unique climb. One lad, glancing down the frightening precipice on the Sty Head side, closed his eyes quickly and said he would look down the rest of the way later on when he had recovered from the first shock. Needle Ridge, Sphinx, Arrowhead, and Eagles' Nest Ridge Direct were later climbed by selected groups, after which we had a much-needed day's rest before setting off to explore Pillar. Unfortunately the metaphorical fly now appeared in the unguent in the shape of a severe bread shortage. Mrs. Gass, to whom every member of the A.R.C.C. has reason to be grateful, had done her best for us, but on the night before our trek to Pillar there was only one slice of bread each. This was carefully hoarded for the next day's journey, each person having marked his slice in most unmistakable ways. We supped on hundreds of potato cakes (the cook said "thousands"), cream of onion soup, corned beef, butterscotch and chocolate moulds, somebody's tinned date puddings which, with plenty of neat jam, tea and coffee, made a most satisfactory collation.

As we trod the four miles of road to Wasdale Head the following day, the sun seemed more fiery than ever, and by the time we reached the Hotel we needed no coaxing to enter and quench our thirst on "shider shandies." It was then that fate struck us a most foul and bitter blow. We came out into the sunshine to find that a sow had nosed its way into our rucksacks and gobbled up our exiguous bread ration! Hungry but undaunted, we made our way to Pillar through the shimmering heat, maintaining our sense of humour under the blazing sun by the false consolation that things could be worse; one bright wit for example remarking that it wasn't raining! On the way fate struck again. We had enough pastry in one rucksack for a minute portion each. The sow had overlooked this, but not so fate. The person carrying the precious food accidentally dropped it into the stream where it first disintegrated and then embodied itself into the watery element. Lack-a-day! We still carried on, however, to the High Level Route, ensconced the company on top of the Slab and Notch and, while sardines and syrup were being consumed neat, a party of three slipped round Jordan Gully, climbed the New West, picked up the others again. We all hurried off over Pillar Mountain for Mosedale and Wasdale, as it was now getting rather late. The sunset seen from Windy Gap was a memorable sight.

It was decided that, in order to avoid the trek along the road that night, and back again the next morning—we were due to cross over to Langdale the next day—the main party should push straight on for Langdale through the night. Mildly fortified by further shandies at Wasdale Head, the qualifying commando set off for Sty Head soon after 10 p.m. with two tins of corned beef and a pot of jam between themselves and starvation. Fate popped up again at this crucial juncture for, when we stopped to eat what food we had, we found that one of the tins of corned beef was bad. The sound of the tarn waters at Sty Head resembled a sighing sneer of mockery. With leaden limbs we got as far as Esk Hause where we dropped in

our tracks through sheer inability to keep our legs straight. We slept as we had dropped and there was no need to woo Morpheus by counting loaves of bread hopping over mountains. We woke after an hour and pushed on doggedly to Rossett Gill where we slept for another short while, finally reaching the Hut at 7 a.m., too tired to eat in the midst of plenty. The rest of the party left Wasdale that evening at 5 p.m. thus avoiding the heat of the day. They saw a never-to-be-forgotten sunset from the summit of Scafell, stumbled down Rossett Gill in the dark, and arrived in at 11 p.m. Nobody suffered from insomnia that night.

The next couple of days were spent easily on Scout's, Middlefell, and Millbeck. There was much falling off the face of rock situated to the right of Millbeck Chimney. In fact, only two managed to do this climb which has some interesting steps.

Gimmer Crag and Ash Tree Slabs again beckoned and this time everybody climbed it in parties of three. Oliverson's Variation of B Route was then tried, and after the leader (in whose gym shoes I would not like to have been) had lost his way and run out 120 feet of rope on what was obviously becoming a variation of Oliverson's Variation, we somehow finally finished the climb.

Next day we again divided into parties and had another attack on Gimmer, climbing Main Wall, A Route, B Route (at Amen Corner there was much blood shed, some of it appropriately sacerdotal) and finally down Oliverson's and A Route. Asterisk was next on the programme but unfortunately it was too late in the day.

Those of us who stayed on spent the next day giving a hand at Dunmail Raise and in the evening motored to Keswick and Grange. The following day we climbed White Gill Slabs and very nearly set off that night to motor to Wasdale and climb the Needle at dawn. Better sense prevailed, however, and we sat reminiscing over the supper table until 2.30 a.m. And so back to London the next day, or was it the same day?

"Clapham."

A WALKING TOUR IN KASHMIR

THE tour started from Pahlgam, a village 7,000 feet up in the Liddar Valley, where H and I spent our first night in camp. The scenery was Alpine in scale and character. The sides of the valley rose steeply and were covered with pine trees to about 11,000 feet. They seemed taller and greener than those in Switzerland and Scotland but the greenness might have attracted our attention more than usual because we had just spent the dry season in the plains where brown rather than green is the dominant colour in the landscape. Above the trees there were grassy slopes, regular Alps, which held patches of snow even though it was late June. A fine rocky peak with a small glacier on the side, rose up behind the wooded slopes. It looked like the Obergabelhorn above Zermatt and was probably about 16,000 feet above sea level.

The village was built mainly of wood and the houses resembled Swiss chalets only many were delapidated : the whole place and the inhabitants looked poor.

After a night in camp we secured ponies to carry our baggage. In the East, one usually has to bargain over prices in any commercial transaction. So we had decided on the maximum price which we were willing to pay and we were going to start lower down, expecting the ponyman to start at an extortionate price before meeting us somewhere between the two. But even this was too straightforward. All transactions were done through the guide, the only member of the party who could speak both English and Hindu. He advised us to take the ponies without any agreement as to price and at the end pay what we thought suitable. "If you ask them first they will ask too high a price" he said, "I often take these men so they will think it worth while to come even if we do not tell them what we will pay them."

At first we followed the West Liddar river through a narrow valley shut in by steep slopes covered with pine trees.

Looking back we could see a range of snow and rock peaks on the far side of Pahlgam. In the bright sunshine the contrast of colour between the green trees and the white snow was very striking. Gradually our Valley became wilder and the scenery grander. In one part cliffs, often vertical for several hundred feet rose out of the wooded slopes. They resembled those in the Derbyshire Dales only the scale was much bigger. After passing above the tree line we came to a valley in scale like a Lake District Valley ; but there were many wild flowers, white and blue anemones and Edelweiss. The path became very rough and steep like a rocky staircase before reaching the head of a pass 12,800 feet above sea level. The ponies found this part hard. One lay down and the ponyman removed its load to carry it up himself before he could urge it to get up again. On the northern side of the pass we found a fair amount of snow and some gentle slopes on one side were completely covered. We were now near Kolahoi, the highest mountain in the district (17,799 feet) but it was rather elusive and was mostly hidden by outlying points. At the end of the second day we set up camp below one of the glaciers descending from it. Our camping sites were all in splendid situations and this was one of the best.

Our next objective was the Zogi La Pass. On the way we went along a very narrow valley where the map marked "snow beds." These were deep patches of snow often two or three hundred yards long and twenty or thirty feet deep ; presumably they are too thick to melt and are reinforced during the winter by avalanches falling into the valley. The river would run underneath them in tunnels like a tube railway. At one point we found one of these snow beds very useful for crossing a rather wide, swift flowing river with no bridge over it.

After four days of glorious sunny weather with hardly a cloud in the sky we struck poor weather at the Zogi La Pass where we spent two nights in order to try an ascent of one of the

mountains nearby. We were on the route from Kashmir to Tibet and Turkestan, here only a pony track as the road ended twelve miles away. It was fascinating to stand on the pass and realise that wild mountainous country with no roads or railways stretched ahead for hundreds of miles into Russia, Tibet and China. A single telegraph wire supported high above the ground to be clear of the winter snows seemed a very frail link with the outside world.

Our attempt on one of the summits failed owing to the bad weather. After climbing up into the clouds, rain began while we ate our lunch shivering in the lee of some rocks. The next day was wet too, so we descended to Sonamarg where we spent a night at the Government Rest House. Sonamarg is a most attractive spot. It is low enough for trees to cover the bottom of the valley. From the door of the Rest House we looked across the river to a fine rocky peak with a jagged outline rising for more than 6,000 feet above the village. Looking up the valley a high snowy summit showed behind the wood foreground. Before leaving Sonamarg we made a short excursion to the Thajivas glacier valley about a mile away. Steep north facing slopes shut in the head of the valley and there are quite large glaciers with rocky peaks rising above. The peak of Baltai (15,900 feet) looked very grand with its vertical rocky buttresses of black rock rising in tiers above the glacier.

We moved our camp up above Sonemarg to a spot called Ludarwas, where shepherds were camping with flocks of sheep and cows and some ponies, so as to attempt a mountain summit which looked easy to reach according to the contours on our map. During the night there was a thunderstorm which was just clearing in the morning so that H looked out of one side of the tent and said "What a nasty day", while I looked out of the other side and said simultaneously "Nice day isn't it," At ten o'clock the day looked promising, though there were some clouds over the summits, so we started for our mountain

unnamed on the map, but marked 15,630 feet. We followed a little path by a stream for a short distance, then scrambled up steep grassy slopes turning to scree till we reached the crest of the main ridge. Just beyond, the ridge broadened to a rocky buttress with broken rock and scree on one side of it. Here we had some lunch and deposited our rucksack by a large patch of snow. Then we went up steep scree and and broken rock for about a thousand feet ; on this part we went more slowly and puffed more than one usually does at lower levels but otherwise the altitude did not affect us. It was a relief to find a more level section of the ridge leading to what we thought was the summit. However, the true summit was beyond with a dip between. The ridge here became narrow and rocky so we roped up. It was no difficulty, only about slab and notch standard, but H had done no rock climbing before and found that a descent where he had to go first was not the easiest place to start. One perpendicular bit of about ten feet looked awkward from above but we found some good holds which made it easy. After finishing the short descent we unroped and scrambled up the last part feeling very pleased to have at last reached a summit. There were clouds drifting over the tops so we were lucky to have our summit clear. The view was rather restricted by the clouds but we saw the summit of Kolahoi clear for a few minutes.

On the descent we had a good run down the scree of which we had toiled in the morning, scree over which very few people could have passed, so it was not worn thin. We soon got down to Sonamarg and next day finished the tour with a long march down the Sind Valley, which seemed rather an anti-climax as the scenery became tamer as we went.

T. N. Littledale.

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