

noticed that on the S. side for a thousand feet above the main road there was a long rampart of cliff. Taking the first gully which offered I was soon brought to a stand by impossible waterworn slabs. The next three or four which I tried in quick succession proved equally unfriendly, so that it was not until 2 P.M. that I got off the mountain and on to the road. The lorry drivers must have been taking their siesta. I trudged the whole length in the hot afternoon sun, buoyed up by the thought of the cold, blue waters of Tak i Bostan. Hot, tired and thirsty, as I took 'the cool silver shock of the plunge in a pool's living water,' all the essential conditions were fulfilled and one more was added to my already long but select list of memorable bathes.

THE YEARS BETWEEN : DAYS TO REMEMBER

By W. N. LING

IN these times of stress, it is pleasant to relax and to cast the mind and thoughts back to the happy days of peace, and recall the happenings and experiences of those days. The excitement of a first visit to the Alps in the last year of the old century stands out vividly in my memory. My companion was G. T. Glover ; we had done a fair amount of summer and winter climbing in the Lakes and the Highlands and were keen to measure ourselves against the bigger mountains. We had only a fortnight, and trained ourselves to make the best use of it. We travelled out with a member of the Club, who asked us what our plans were. We modestly said we thought of trying the Rothorn. He was discouraging, a first class peak on our first visit ! We said we had done some climbing in the Lakes and Scotland. He thought little of this, so we invited him to come to the Lakes for a week end after our return. In the event, we climbed the Riffelhorn guideless by the Matterhorn couloir, and then, with guides, the Rothorn, Weisshorn from a bivouac, before the days of the hut, and traversed the Matterhorn from the Italian side in a week, and went home very pleased with ourselves. When our friend came to the Lakes we took him to Great Gable and made the first ascent of a new chimney there. Then across to Scafell and up Moss Ghyll, and down Slingsby's Chimney and Steep Ghyll in the dusk, and back to Seathwaite at 10 P.M. after a fourteen-hour day. His comment was, 'If these are the days you do in the Lakes, you are entitled to start for anything.'

The next year Cortina di Ampezzo was our headquarters, and from there we climbed a number of peaks with attractive names, Cinque Torri, Becco di Mezzodi, Piz Popena, Croda da Lago traverse, Tofana di Mezzo, Kleine Zinne traverse and Monte Cristallo. Tobia Menardi and Angelo Zangiacomi were our guides. I remember well the north face

of the Kleine Zinne with its 700 ft. of sheer precipice. In the only place in which there was a tolerable hitch, Menardi was finding some difficulty, and his 'Acht aufs Seil' followed by a heartfelt 'Sacramento' before he found his hold, still rings in my ears. On the descent on the other side, I had been rather dreading the ledge, of which there is such an alarming picture in *Dolomite Strongholds*, and asked when we were to come to it. I learnt that we were already on it and that, like the report of Mark Twain's death, it was greatly exaggerated.

The next year was spent in a cross country journey with H. G. S. Lawson from Zermatt to Chamonix. Our guides were Peter Perren and Josef Biner (Sohn Anton), and we also took Ludwig Perren, Peter's brother, as porter to gain experience for his guide's book. They were pleasant companions. Our road was mostly over cols, but we climbed the Tsa at Arolla. Lawson had to return home from Chamonix and Glover joined me there. A bivouac for the Dru was brought to nought by bad weather. The only success we had was the first ascent for the year of the Blaitière, in bad condition but on a fine day, and the ascents of the Pic du Tacul and the Grands Charmoz.

The next year Chamonix again drew us, and the traverse of the Charmoz, the ascents of the Dent du Géant, the Requin and the Grépon. During the traverse of Mont Blanc from the Aiguilles Grises hut we were caught in a blizzard on the plateau, and the compasses of the amateurs had to be called on to find the Vallot hut for shelter at 8.15 A.M., where we waited, very cold, till 4 P.M. when the weather had improved sufficiently to let us go on to the summit, 5.30 P.M. It was very cold and we did not linger, but made all haste to get down to the Grands Mulets at 7.30 P.M.

And now with a four years' novitiate with guides, the time had come to depend on our own powers. Norway was our objective this season, and after making the first ascent of the Saetretinderne, and the first traverse of the ridge between the Brekkekind and Gjeithorn, we (Harold Raeburn, Howard Priestman and myself) arrived at Oie on the Norangs Fjord. Near this from the margin of the fjord springs the towering form of Slogen, 5060 ft., a most imposing sight. We at once decided to attempt the ascent. Priestman decided not to come, so Raeburn and I left Oie at 7.0 A.M. The first part was very laborious, scrambling up steep grass and brushwood to the actual rocks at 1700 ft.; then by a gully for some distance followed by a pinnacled ridge which took us up to about 4200 ft. Here the outlook was appalling, and we considered the question of attempting to traverse across the face to the western ridge, which Slingsby had climbed, but we were keen to do the direct ascent.

Raeburn put on his *Kletterschuhe* and I added his boots to my loaded sack and took the two axes. We got out on to the face by a ledge, as the corner above us was overhanging, and then made about sixty feet of height by a very steep and shallow crack. There I sat on a small pinnacle, like the pommel of a sidesaddle, with the rope hitched under my leg, while Raeburn tried a holdless chimney, which



SLOCEN.

would not go. We seemed to be pounded, but he traversed along a narrow ledge to the right, and announced that it looked more hopeful. He was out of sight and I heard much loose stone being cleared away. The call came for me to follow. Warning him about my extra load and the two axes, I gingerly followed. The angle was very steep, but the rock was sound. We continued on our way and finally came to the top of a tower forty feet from the summit cairn. The time was 8.30 P.M., thirteen and a half hours from the start, but quite warm and light in the northern night. We finished our provisions and at 9.0 P.M. set off down the usual route, and made such good speed by standing glissades in the excellent snow that at 10.30 we were being greeted by our friends and the cheering villagers. I had to walk very closely behind my leader, whose nether garments had suffered in the fray. Attempts were made on it, but the climb was not repeated for twenty-five years, and then, oddly enough, it was climbed on two successive days by two young Swedes and two Lakeland climbers.

In 1906 Raeburn and I went to Val Ferret. He had heard from Marcel Kurz that there were three points in the Aiguilles Rouges du Dolent which had not been climbed. Kurz wrote, '*Aquila non capit muscas*,' but we thought we would try to swat the fly. From a bivouac in a cave below the Glacier de la Neuvaz we ascended the glacier, and by rocks and steep snow in five and a half hours from the bivouac reached the foot of the final peak. There are three towers, and the one we chose seemed to be the highest. They are excessively steep, but the rock is good. We went first up a long chimney and then up an exposed face to the gap between our choice and the next tower. From this point there was a very sensational traverse where the holds were mostly of the fingertip variety. Raeburn took off his boots to do this. Very steep rocks followed, leading to a narrow perpendicular chimney which gave real hard work, after which easier rocks took us to the very narrow summit ridge, and we were glad to find that our top, the most southerly of the three, was the highest; the aneroid read 11,750 ft. We managed, with difficulty, to make a cairn on the narrow ridge and left our cards in a metal matchbox. We christened the top La Mouche.

Two days later at the Saleinaz hut we were seized with the desire to traverse the Argentière over the Flèche Rousse, which had not been done. We left the hut next morning at 2.50 A.M. by moonlight and went up the glacier. A bridge was found over the bergschrund and we had a lot of cutting up a very steep slope. We found it was going to take a very long time to cut all the way, so we angled across to some rocks where we breakfasted at 8.30. We cut across a couloir and found easier rocks, which took us up to the ridge at 11 o'clock. We followed this to the foot of the first of the south tops. Here we had to choose between cutting up a couloir of hard ice, or climbing iced rocks. We forced the rocks and then came to a point where we thought we were done. The only possible way up the rocks was by an upward sloping ledge upon which stood a pinnacle of rock. The pinnacle had a crack

on the right between it and the living rock, but overhung on the side facing us. In the edge of the ledge was a spike of rock which I found was firm below the pinnacle ; bracing one foot against it, with a good handhold in the crack, I was ready to take the weight of the leader. From my shoulders he reached the top of the pinnacle and pulled over. We gained the Red Arrow S. top (aneroid 12,700 ft.) at 3 P.M., twelve hours from the start. An hour later we were on the highest point, whence we returned to the hut by the ordinary route after seventeen hours' hard work.

This was one of our lucky seasons. After being joined by Eric Greenwood in the Oberland, we traversed the Finsteraarhorn by the S.E. ridge from the Finsteraarhorn hut to the Schwarzegg hut in nineteen hours, and the Schreckhorn by the Anderson ridge with the first descent by the S.W. ridge. After Greenwood left us we went on to Zermatt and made the first British guideless traverse of the Matterhorn by the Zmutt and Italian ridges. The mountain was not in good condition, and from a bivouac we took eleven hours to the top with only one short halt for food. After leaving the top, we had a snowstorm on the Italian ridge which slowed us down and we did not reach the Italian hut until 8 P.M., sixteen strenuous hours. We returned to Zermatt next day over the Furggenjoch.

In the following year the days which stand out were the first British guideless traverse of the Dent Blanche by the Viereselgrat with a night out at the top of the Wandfluh, and the traverse of the Grand and Petit Dru, likewise with a night out in a snowstorm, where we had to stand shivering on a ledge for nine hours : the worst night we ever had, but as we were in good training, no ill effects resulted. A traverse of the Grépon was notable for the sudden appearance of a large yellow balloon above us as we rested on the summit. It was Captain Spelterini trying to cross Mont Blanc. We had not a bottle of Bouvier with us !

The glorious summer of 1911 was memorable. My companion was George Sang, who was qualifying for the Club. He had only three weeks at his disposal, so we had to work hard. Starting at Saas Fee we traversed the Weissmies, Ulrichshorn, Nadelhorn and Südlenspitze, and Portjengrat. Then over the Rimpfischhorn to Zermatt, Matterhorn, Dent Blanche, Mont Blanc de Seilon and the traverse of the Combin, ten peaks in sixteen days, which he considered good value.

Of the Caucasus expedition of 1913 I have already written in the JOURNAL. Great days ! In 1914 after climbing the Grivola and Herbetet with R. A. Brown, George Sang and Harry MacRobert, Sang, MacRobert and I traversed the Grand Paradis and crossed the Col de Ciarforon to Ceresole to find the world at war. We had to escape by ship from Genoa to Liverpool, an amusing journey with many other Alpine Club escapers. The Alps were closed till 1919 but stamina was maintained by climbing in the Lakes, Wales and Scotland.

In 1919 H. C. Bowen and I joined J. J. Withers and his two guides

in a traverse of Mont Blanc, my third ascent, over the Aiguille du Goûter, and some other smaller climbs. The outstanding expedition of the following year was the eventual achievement of an ambition to traverse the Meije. Bad weather and conditions had frustrated attempts by Raeburn and myself on two occasions fifteen and thirteen years previously. He had done the traverse alone the previous year and was now out in the Himalaya, but I was fortunate in having the companionship of H. C. Bowen. We left the Promontoire hut at 4 A.M. on a fine morning with moonlight and starlight, roping in the hut. The couloir was practically clear of ice and we were on the top of the Promontoire at seven, where we had a short halt for food. We were heavily laden with rucksacks and 200 ft. of cord. It was very interesting finding the route up the Grande Muraille. We had a little trouble getting on to the Glacier Carré where we were glad to get water, for our throats were so parched that we could hardly speak and we could hardly swallow any food, in fact we had nothing to eat till the next morning. The Cheval Rouge was safely passed and the summit gained at 1.30 P.M. Bowen had given a fine lead. We waited some time to let another party get clear of the Brèche Zsigmondy and then followed. We found the ring piton and put our 200-ft. line through it. I went down first and got a good stance in the Brèche. Bowen was about to start and was leaning forward to see that the rope was clear, when his axe slipped from the rope round his waist and clattered down the rocks. It was out of my reach and after one or two bounds shot off to the glacier 1000 ft. below. I took in his rope carefully as he descended. The cord came all right half way down and then stuck. We climbed up as far as we could and cut it off. The rest was brought down the next day by a French party and returned to us. We crossed the Brèche to the foot of the first pinnacle. This was difficult and sensational. There was a fixed rope, but we mistrusted it and climbed the pinnacle without touching it. We followed the arête to the top of the second pinnacle and overtook the other party there. They suggested we should pass them, but we did not, which we afterwards regretted, as they were very slow. We were on the Pic Central at 7.35 P.M. When we got to the top of the steep slope it was nearly dark. Luckily the slope was hard snow and not ice. I anchored and Bowen went down very carefully and steadily the length of the rope. I followed, groping for the footholds, and the process was repeated till we got past the schrund and to an easier angle. I was glad to have such a staunch companion. We now lit the lantern and went on to the Rocher de l'Aigle hut, 10.40 P.M., 18½ hours from the start. There was no wood or water, but we melted snow in the cooker, and made tea for the party. Our throats were still too parched to eat, so that was postponed till next morning, after which we went on to Villard d'Arène where we lunched, and took a trap on to La Grave.

Next year the brightest memories are of three busy days in August, in which Sang, Bowen and I traversed the Lyskamm by the Perazzi

arête first day, Vincent Pyramide and Punta Gnifetti second day, Zumsteinspitze, Grenzgipfel and Dufourspitze of Monte Rosa on the third day.

As the years went on, the shorter climbs in Tyrol and the Eastern Alps with their comfortable huts made more appeal, and many happy expeditions were made with P. J. H. Unna, J. W. Brown, Robert Corry and J. M. Davidson. Ortler, Königsspitze, Cevedale, Gross Glockner, Wiesbachhorn, Tödi, Wildspitze, Venediger, each name brings a memory and a picture.

This New Year my septuagenarian legs took me to the summits on three successive days of three snow- and ice-clad Highland hills. From the summits I looked back over the forty-five years between to the first visit to Zermatt and recalled the joyous mountain days I had spent, and the many friends I had made on them; and the ancient tag rose to my mind:

Et ego in Arcadia vixi.

A FEW DAYS ON MOUNT KENYA

By J. W. HOWARD

ON February 13, 1945, I left Nanyuki accompanied by Gabrioli, an Italian guide from the Burguret P.O.W. camp, and Cattaneo, an artist, from the Nanyuki Evacuee camp. Mounting by easy stages with mule transport we reached the head of the Mackinder Valley (14,000 ft.) at the foot of the N. face of Mt. Kenya on the 15th. Here we made a pleasant base camp within easy reach of water and firewood. A naval party from Mombasa was already encamped there and during our stay various other parties came and went. We intended to do two days of preliminary training, arrive at the hut on the third day and attempt the peaks on the day after. Cattaneo had come to sketch only, and he did so with delightful enthusiasm, sometimes producing as many as twenty sketches per day, but Gabrioli was one of a party which claimed to have reached Nelion on January 5. He was from Bormio in the Valtelline.

On the 16th we left comparatively early at 8 A.M., with the intention of traversing Sendeyo and Tereri, two Dolomite-like peaks on the north side of the Mackinder Valley entirely separate from the main Mt. Kenya peaks. Sendeyo is estimated at 15,800 ft. and Tereri at 15,750 ft. Mounting the screes above the Lower Simba Lake we reached Simba Col at 9.15 A.M. and followed the long ridge leading from there to Sendeyo, doing some mild rock climbing on the intervening ridges.

The E. face of Sendeyo looked steep, but on closer inspection a gully was discovered which led to the summit by a series of fairly difficult