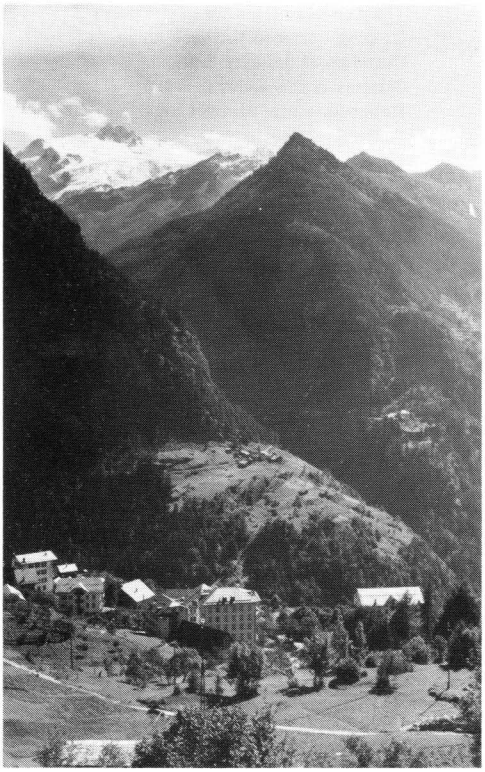
to the end window. The Aiguille du Tour and the Trient Glacier were still there! They are still there now.



Finhaut

An ominous name? Could be:
These gyring rails must mount no higher,
Firmly descend into another country.

Their duty's done. What though
Across the numinous gulf uprear
Sheer spires and sunlit snow;

Along the ravining brink
Our wheels will wind their squeal;
Tunnel to trestle to tunnel blink

On down, past footways to
Known heights now out of reach;
To this pass come, and through:

Who, some seventy years ago,
Happened here first to lift
My young mere eyes to snow.

14 Finhaut (Photo: Swiss National Tourist Office)

Cragwork in Cumberland[1]

W. P. Haskett Smith

Christopher North, of genial memory, had a pet saying that the season of the year to be selected for a visit to the English Lakes extended from the 1st of January to the 31st of December. All seasons have much to recommend them, but the affections of the climber of rocks hover doubtfully between two less extended periods – early summer and mid-winter.

In the first place there is no crowd. It is something to be able to reckon on getting a bed and finding the people of the house not too much overworked to bestow any attention on your comfort. Next, if winter be chosen, the few people whom you find there are bent on the same errand as yourself. They mean business. Half-hearted admirers of the mountains stay at home, and your only companions will be life-long lovers of the mountains, and robust

1 Reprinted from *Black and White,* June, 1892.



15 Pillar Rock (Photo: Abraham—AC Collection)

young fellows whose highest ambition is to gain admission to the Alpine Club; or, having gained it, to wield with some approach to dexterity the formidable ice-axes which are the badge of all their tribe. Then, if winter be chosen, what an exhilarating sensation there is in tramping over the crunching snow, and in gazing up at the black crags shooting up out of the long, smooth slopes of dazzling white which, ere the day is out, will give you the chance of such glorious glissades! And what views you get through the clear, frosty air! How different are the firm outlines of the distant peaks from the half-seen

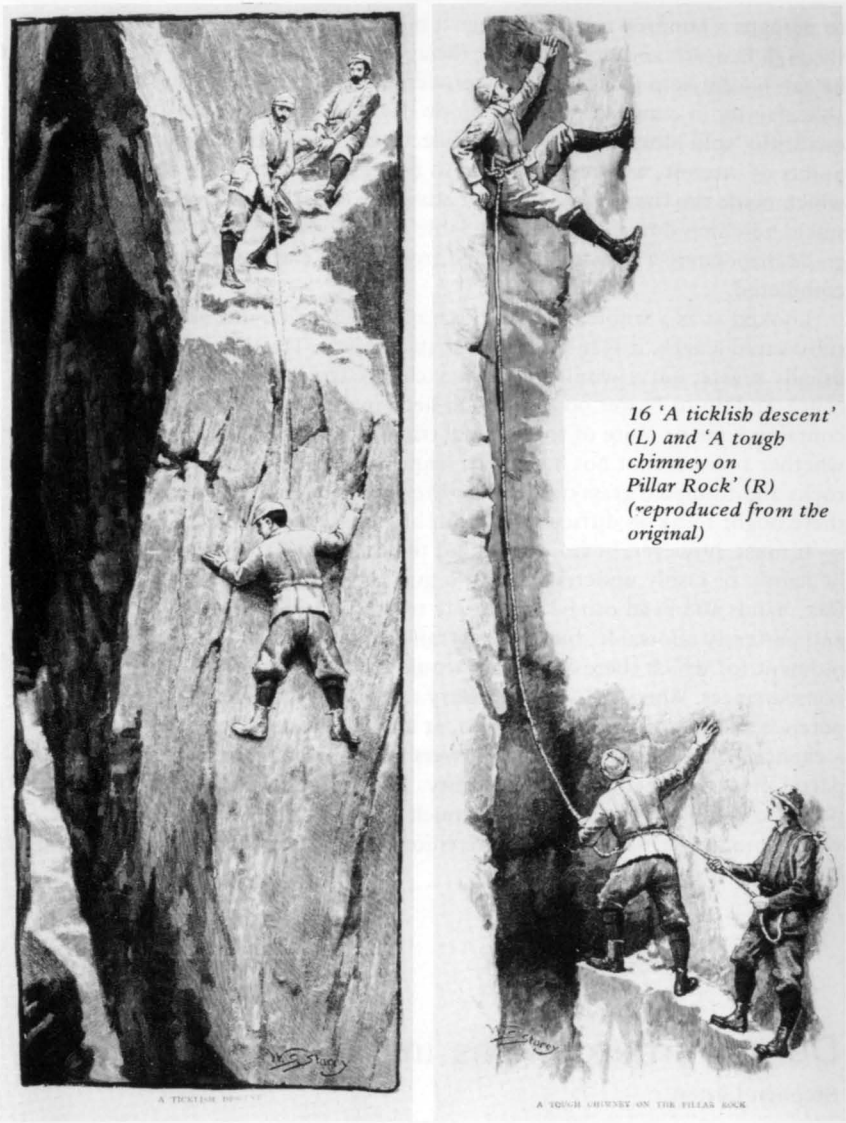
forms, hazed by heat or washed out by rain or mist, which so often fall to the lot of the summer tourist. It is true that the winter days are too short; but what of that? So is youth; so is life; so is every kind of enjoyment; and, after all, the snow-clad fells, despite their Alpine appearance, are not so big but that in 8 or 9 hours of brisk exertion a very satisfactory day's work may be accomplished. In fact, for youth and strength (and who that can still enjoy a winter's day upon the fell tops can be said to have left these behind?), there is hardly a more delightful way of spending a week of fine, frosty weather.

But May or June, though to the ambitious mountaineer their educational value may be less than that of the winter, have charms and advantages which even his sternness will admit. The rocks are warm to the fingers, the weather is usually settled, and the days are at their longest, even if the eye were indifferent to the rich variety of colour in flower and leaf, to the curves of uncrumpling fern, or to the soft spring lights which play upon the distant fells.

In winter, as in summer, Rosthwaite and Wastdale Head are the chosen resorts of the climber. The latter is less accessible but lies nearer to both the great climbing grounds — Scafell and Pillar. The Pillar Rock is at all times a powerful magnet, but is now specially attractive on account of a fine climb on it which has only recently been discovered. To a description of this climb we propose to devote the space remaining at our disposal.

The famous rock stands in Ennerdale, starting up boldly out of the steep slope of the Pillar Fell not far below its summit. Our illustration shows the general appearance of the rock as seen from the north, but a more complete knowledge of the arrangement of its parts may be gathered in the following manner. Imagine it as a vast church with a roof of two gables and from the western and loftier gable at the end nearest the mountain let there rise a stunted tower. Finally let the building be shattered and all but overwhelmed beneath an avalanche of stony debris. What will be the result? The rolling stones will form a talus having a slope of about 45°, which while nearly burying the tower and the upper end of the roof has no effect in reducing the height of the opposite end. The tower is the High Man, the gable from which it rises is the Low Man, and the side gable is the Shamrock, the channel between them being the East Scree, which ends in the vertical plunge of Walker's Gully. All the ordinary routes deal only with the High Man, thus attacking the rock near the point where it has least height, though for many years a few enthusiasts have cast looks of longing at the far higher and more formidable cliffs of the Low Man, and cherished the hope of one day being the first to devise a method of scaling them. Many determined attacks have been made in consequence during the last 20 years, among them one by 2 brothers, crack Alpine climbers of European reputation; later another pair of brothers, though far inferior in skill and resource, came even nearer to victory. This was in 1882, and since then no higher point was reached by any party until the day when the whole climb was actually completed. With increasing knowledge of the intricacies of the rock means have been found of avoiding most of the difficulties by which some of the earlier attempts were delayed or defeated.

The starting point of the climb is the Terrace, a broad, turfy ledge which runs across the face of the Low Man, rising gently from the foot of Walker's Gully to a point a little beyond the centre of the face, and falling rather more steeply to the little waterfall at the foot of the West Scree. From the highest



16 'A ticklish descent' (L) and 'A tough chimney on Pillar Rock' (R) (reproduced from the original)

point of the Terrace rises a huge rib of rock called the Pillar Nose, a feature of aquiline and terrific character. From almost anywhere between this and Walker's Gully the climb may be begun; but briefly, by starting as near as may be to the Gully, and only working to the right when absolutely forced, the climbing will be found finer, more varied and more exciting. One of the peculiarities of this rock face consists in the frequency of mighty blocks of stone severed by a vertical split from the mother cliff, and only maintained in their places by weight or by casual balance. These blocks vary in weight from a few pounds

to perhaps a hundred tons, but when a man, after having seen the light gleam through beneath and beside one of these, has to crawl over it like a fly on sugar, he can hardly help thinking of the proverbial 'last straw', and shows considerable alacrity in crawling off again on the far side. Time fails us to tell of the quadrifid 'split block', of the 'Mantelpiece', or 'Strid', and of many other points of interest; we must hurry on to the crisis of the climb. Here the trio which made the first ascent found it advisable, in order to circumvent an obstacle, to climb down a most formidable wall of vertical rock. By this retrograde manoeuvre a point was reached from which the ascent was successfully completed.

Looked at as a whole, the climb is a reasonably fine one and, though of substantial length, it is full of interest and variety. The difficulties are not unusually severe, but it would be no easy chance for a stranger to pick out the route, and up to Easter no ascent had been made, except by parties which contained one or more of the original trio. As, however, all these attempts, whether successful or not have been made by very large parties, scratched rocks and trampled grass now render the easiest course very conspicuous, and there ought to be no difficulty at all in hitting it off.

It must, however, be borne in mind that climbs of this character are not to be lightly or rashly undertaken. For a man in good climbing condition, whose feet, hands and head can be absolutely trusted, such climbs are perfectly safe and perfectly allowable, but a slip or failure of muscular power at a critical moment (of which there are many) would almost inevitably lead to disastrous consequences. Above all, it is necessary to have companions of well-tried competence and no others. Anyone who, at starting on such an expedition, allows a chance acquaintance, of whose powers he knows little or nothing, to join his party, incurs a very grave responsibility. The amiable party of, say, three competent climbers, armed, if there be much snow, with axes, and, in any case with a good rope, will find no more enjoyable climb anywhere round Wastdale Head than that of Pillar Face.

Dental emergencies in the mountains

Stephen Lisney

Dental and oral ailments are hazards not usually associated with mountain climbing, but during a meeting with Dr Peter Steele, medical officer to the 1971 International Everest expedition, I learnt that several members of the party suffered in this way. Although Dr Steele had no definite information, he gave the impression that this was often the case on major mountaineering expeditions. This prompted me to read some of the accounts of such ventures to see if dental emergencies had occurred, and if so, whether they had any bearing on the conduct of the expedition.

In writing about the attempt to climb Kamet in the Himalayas during 1931, F. S. Smythe recalled how he suffered from toothache for two weeks