OXFORD MOUNTAINEERING ESSAYS

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TO

G. WINTHROP YOUNG

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EDITED BY

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PREFACE

OXFORD, they tell us, is the home of movements; Cambridge the home of men. Certainly the miniature movement that took shape in this little book was inspired by a Cambridge man. It was at an Oxford tea-party, where the talk had been unashamedly of mountains and their metaphysic, that Mr. G. Winthrop Young gave the first impulse to the scheme that ultimately produced this collection of essays. To Mr. Young the editor and contributors have been indebted for constant help and advice. He has heartened the despondent, and has inked cold daylight into more than one 'sunset' passage.

At Oxford there are a number of Alpine clubs. The oldest and most sedate meets once a year in New College Hall. A less dignified association meets at irregular

intervals *on* New College Hall and other hospitable roofs. Lastly, there is a genial little society which owed its beginnings to some twenty undergraduates who agreed they could spare an occasional arduous evening to the revival of their Alpine memories. One confiding member bought a lantern, and has since endeavoured—with indifferent success—to recoup himself out of spasmodic subscriptions. We shall none of us forget the first meeting. In our innocence we had hoped that a scientist might know something of electricity, and Mr. Bourdillon was in consequence entrusted with the lantern. After much hissing on the part of the machine, and of the audience, a faint glow appeared on the sheet, and enveloped in a halo of restless hues we dimly discerned the dome of Mont Blanc. A pathetic voice from behind the lantern sadly inquired whether we would 'prefer Mont Blanc green and spluttering or yellow and steady.' The chairman then proceeded to read a paper illustrated or rather misrepresented by lantern slides,

and at the conclusion proposed a very hearty vote of thanks to himself for his interesting and entertaining lecture. The House then divided, and the motion was lost by an overwhelming majority. The minutes also record that a member moved to inhibit the secretary of the Church Union from issuing a printed prayer for 'faith to remove mountains.' This motion was lost, as Mr. Tyndale ably pointed out the value of a publication that might facilitate the transfer of some superfluous mountains from the Alps to the monotonous surroundings of Oxford.

The members of this learned society furnished the majority of our contributors. 'Conscious as we are of one another's deficiencies,' we view with misgiving the publication of these essays. We have no virgin ascents, no climbs of desperate difficulty, to record. Our justification must rest on other grounds.

In a paper memorable for the circumstances of its delivery, and the dramatic irony of its concluding words, Donald

Robertson pleaded for a simpler treatment of our mountain worship, and claimed that there was 'still room for a man to tell freely and without false shame the simple story of a day among the mountains.' And this is what some of us have attempted.

And further, although there scarce remains a great Alpine ridge untrodden by man, though the magic words—'No information' — are rapidly vanishing from the pages of the *Climber's Guides*, yet as subjects for literary, artistic, and philosophic inquiry, the mountains are far from exhausted. The basic emotions of the hills, at once bold and subtle, remain an almost untouched field, and many a curious by-path in the psychology of mountaineering has yet to be explored.

Those of us who have ventured to approach our theme in such subjective fashion, who have tried to give something more than a plain record of a climb, who may even have attempted to interpret the secrets of the hills, have probably only courted failure and earned

ridicule. But at least we have started on a stirring venture, and we shall consider it successful if only a word here or there serves to recall some forgotten picture, some early romantic impression, to any reader for whom mountains, nature, or wandering have perhaps lost their first halo of romance.

It may be said that greater and more modest mountaineers have waited the experience of years before embodying their reflections in the written word. This reproof leaves us unmoved, for we are only concerned with the message the hills hold for Youth, a message which Youth therefore may be pardoned for attempting to explain. Each age hears different accents in the mountain voices. To the old mountaineer the riven lines of cliff may speak of failing strength or inevitable decay. For the child the white far gates may hide an unknown kingdom of magic. But active Youth need fear no comparison of strength, need draw no moral from decay. For him the gates that childhood could not pass have opened, and

disclosed a wonderland 'more real than childhood's fairy trove,' a country of difficult romance, and of perpetual challenge to the undying instincts of knight errantry and young adventure.

A. H. M. L.

February 1912.

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BY

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(Balliol)

A

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MOUNTAINS, more than any other of the features of nature, are fundamental, synthetic. They present, untrammelled and without elaboration, the great basic principles on which they are built; their structure has absolute unity, their monumental architecture is simple. Their moods are the moods of primitive humanity, their spirit, like their form, is unmodified, above and below civilisation. Every climber must, at one time or another, have shuddered before the hatred of an Alpine peak, the hatred of all that is primeval in nature for all that is artificially progressive in man. I remember one evening sitting above the Col de Vosa and watching the glow of the sunset on Mont Blanc. The

entire range of peaks from the Dôme du Goûter to the Aiguille Verte blazed with colour down to a point a little above where the ragged fringe of the moraines slide into the grassy upland. There a hard line of shadow reflected the contour of the hill on which I sat. As the sun sank, this line of shadow crept up the mountain-side with almost visible speed, till only the topmost pinnacles kept their colour, like a row of beacon-lights flaming above the darkened valley. Gradually they in their turn paled and died.

But it is now, when most onlookers turn away, that the mountains begin to live. When the fire has left the snow, when the rock ridges leap out cold and black, when the fissures of the ice cliffs yawn pitilessly once again, the real character of the place is shown. The mountains are cruel and angry. Traffic with them is not friendship, but war. All the mountaineer's thrill of conquest is the thrill of victory over an enemy, an enemy who hates as men hate, as the ancient hates the upstart

or the lonely giant the puny multitude, but whose resources are endless and whose ally is the storm.

Snow mountains are seldom friendly. Sometimes they seem to smile, but their welcome, for all its glitter, is treacherous and cruel. With lower hills the case is rather different. The rock precipices and windy fells of Cumberland, the spaces of the Yorkshire moors, have an individuality as complete as Mont Blanc, but less overwhelming. Their anger is sullen, their moods more passive. At times they are almost gracious, but the difference is one of degree only. The quality of their emotion sees no variant in glacier and heather.

It would seem that any normal sensibility could in some measure appreciate these mountain moods, and, where the observer is an artist, reproduce them in line and colour. . . . And yet it is only in our own day that a painter has appeared with a proper understanding of their true existence. In art the coming of landscape was slow, but the mountain, as a mountain, has come more slowly

still. Why this neglect? Why, until long after the landscape picture had become a commonplace, was the mountain not disentangled from the myriad aspects of nature and made the object of artistic interpretation?

Several reasons may be suggested. In the first place, for true appreciation more than a mere acquaintance is necessary. Mountains are reserved. They extend no real welcome even when they do not actively resent familiarity. Only patient perseverance can gauge their real significance. The men of old hated them. Perhaps as they watched from afar the towering army of the Alps, there came to them on the breeze some breath of mountain anger, and they trembled, hardly knowing why. To them the hills were just so many hideous obstacles to war or commerce. To make a way through them was a task to be dreaded. It needs a rare vision to see beauty beyond danger, to recognise the sublime in the menace of death.

But, apart from this, it is doubtful whether the mediæval mind could have

grasped the essentials of mountain scenery had it striven to do so—and this is the second reason for delay. The synthetic vision, the subordination of part to a whole, is not really primitive. The savage sees individual objects in strong unhampered outline, but he cannot relate them. His decorative sense lacks cohesion. This very lack is the weakness of Egyptian wall-painting, where harmony of line and movement reaches a point seldom achieved since those early days, but where the feeling of a procession is rarely lost owing to the failure to relate the figures and objects to each other. It needs a new hypercivilised primitivism —to use what appears a contradiction in terms—extraordinarily subtle, backed by a store of imagination and detailed knowledge, which can by its very wisdom select and discard, keeping the chain of essentials, disregarding the rest. And no one has greater need of this than the mountain artist. It is equally useless for him to reproduce, however skilfully, every glacier, every gully on the mountain-side, and to daub vague, unrelated

lumps of paint one beside another. The important artistic fact in a mountain scene is the intricate rhythm of line and slope, the true relation of curve to curve, and this is obscured and lost in photographic realism, as it is never realised in the scribblings of a child. The mountain artist must grasp every detail, but distinguish what he requires and discard all else. That is why in the early days of landscape-painting the excitement of new beauties inevitably caused overcrowded pictures. There was no attempt at selection, because the selective point of view had, as yet, no appeal. The last thirty years have brought it to the front.

The third reason for the tardy recognition of mountains is expressed by the man with whom this discussion is really concerned, by Professor C. J. Holmes in his monograph on Constable.[1] 'Mountains have returned with the desire for design.' The most significant feature of recent painting is the renaissance of decoration. The easel picture as Corot knew it has

[1] *Constable*, by C. J. Holmes. London: Unicorn Press, 1901.

been eclipsed by the art of the fresco. Design has replaced light as the central study, just as light replaced the twilit realism of the first 'plein-airists.' The primitive Italians knew no landscape-painting in our modern sense. The value of mountains in design could not, therefore, appeal to them; and so it is left to the present day to employ for the first time the mountains with their rhythm and their feeling.

But such generalisation, unsuggested by fact, can have little weight, and confirmation of these statements must be found in an outlined indication of the growth of the landscape tradition, and, springing from it, the treatment of mountains.

When European art began to elaborate the religious conceptions with which it was in early times mainly concerned, landscapes were introduced as part of the Bible stories. But they were purely subordinate. Duccio and Giotto use conventionalised trees and strange bare rocks which, while evidence of wonderful vision, show no sense of the value of

landscape for itself. The delicate distances of the Flemish primitives, the backgrounds of Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes, the settings of Cinquecento Madonnas, are merely so much design to fill a space, so many accessories to the figures in the foreground. One would like to except Patinir's 'Flight into Egypt,'[1] where the thicket behind the Virgin has more than a merely decorative significance, and shows a loving study of trees and rocks, were not the vistas to left and right pure design. There are also rare landscape studies of Dürer—one particularly, an unfinished study of hills in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford—which are strikingly ahead of their time in their sole preoccupation with nature as distinct from humanity.

But it is really with Dutch and Flemish seventeenth-century art that landscape for landscape's sake makes its appearance, with Rubens, Rembrandt,

[1] Having no concern here with disputed attributions, I have used the name of Patinir for convenience' sake alone. The connoisseur may substitute any alternative he prefers.

Koninck, van Goyen. However, to them mountains are as accessory as was nature generally for their predecessors. To give composition, to round off a landscape, to frame a vista, Rubens and the great Dutchmen used hills and crags. There are probably many exceptions to this generalisation. To mention one only, there is a picture by the Flemish Millet (1642-1679) at Munich in which a mountain occupies the centre of the canvas. This mountain, though tree-covered, forms the main element in the painting, and despite the presence of allegorical figures in the foreground, is proof of a curiously modern interest in hill-formation. In the main, however, the contention is true that the mountain in art does not appear in the seventeenth century.

The landscape tradition passed to Claude, and then forked. One branch, the English, produced Wilson, Crome, Constable, Turner, and the water-colourists. To the other belongs Poussin, and through him the Barbizon school in France. (It should here be noticed, at

the risk of anticipating, that this last-named group derived from Bonington a large share of Constable's influence, and owe perhaps the greater part of their inspiration to English sources.)

Traces now begin to appear of a love of mountains for themselves. Crome's 'Slate Quarries,' some of Wilson's Welsh pictures, many of Turner's sketches, show rocks and hills painted for their own grandeur and beauty. Similarly, in much of Corot's early work—before 1830—bare mountain-sides and wastes of rock stand unadorned by trees or other counter-interests.

Of Constable we are told that 'the grandeur of hills weighed on him. He wanted meadows,'[1] but Plate III. in the book from which this quotation is taken shows that he possessed a very real understanding of mountains.

The recognition proved only momentary, and was soon lost in conventional trickery. In England the water-colourists began once more to use mountains merely to break the level of a landscape, to give

[1] *Constable*, by C. J. Holmes.

a pleasing variety. The idea of depicting them solely for themselves becomes actually abhorrent. An extract from William Gilpin's *Essays on Landscape-painting* will show the attitude which became general to the early English school :—

> 'In landscape-painting smooth objects would produce no composition at all. In a mountain scene what composition could arise from one smooth knoll coming forward on one side, intersected by a smooth knoll on the other, with a smooth plain perhaps in the middle and a smooth mountain in the distance ? The very idea is disgusting.'[1]

To prove the awful result he reproduces a drawing in his book done on these very lines, a drawing so superior to all the other illustrations in the volume as to show how utterly tastes have changed and advanced since his time.

Again :—

> 'The beauty of a distant moun-

[1] *Five Essays on Picturesque Subjects*, by William Gilpin, p. 19. London, 1808.

tain depends on the line it traces along the sky. . . . Such forms as suggest the idea of lumpish heaviness are disgusting—round, swelling forms without any break to disencumber them of their weight.

'Mountains in composition are considered as single objects and follow the same rules;—if they join heavily together in lumpish shapes, if they fall into each other at right angles, or if their lines run parallel —in all these cases the combination will be more or less disgusting.'[1]

Barbizon painting underwent a change somewhat similar to that just described in England. Corot altered his manner and evolved the graceful greenery and scenes of trees and water for which he is admired to-day. It is perhaps to be regretted that he exchanged his strong renderings of mountain and rock for twilight fantasies which, for all their lyrical charm, slide frequently into sentimentality and prettiness. His fellow-

[1] *A Tour to the Lakes*, by William Gilpin, vol. i. p. 89. London, 1808.

landscape-painters, Rousseau, Daubigny, Dupré, and the veteran Harpignies, used mountains either not at all or merely as incidents in a panorama. Courbet alone, the greatest of them all, continued to the last his rugged studies of cliff and slope, blending the romantic tradition with the realist, supplying, as the first real painter of rocks, a noble and fearless link between the ideal and the selective. In true modern landscape the influence of Courbet appears again and again, strengthening and vigorous.

With the coming of Impressionist painting no marked advance is noticeable. Monet and his followers are concerned with light and colour, not with form. Dutch Impressionism—the Hague school with its curious mixture of seventeenth-century genre tradition and modern French landscape methods — keeps to trees and sky. It would be unreasonable indeed to look for the birth of the mountain in art to take place in Holland !

Before passing on to the latest phase of European painting, some attention must

be given to the art of the Far East. China, Japan, India, loom large in the history of the landscape tradition, and especially in its newest development, where their influence, as will be seen, has been very great.

In the art of the Far East, whether theoretical or practical, there are traces from the earliest times of a conception of landscape and of its bearing on art somewhat similar to that of Wordsworth. The early Chinese in their aphorisms and paintings loved to express the majesty of mountains. 'Rhythmic vitality, anatomical structure, conformity with nature, suitability of colouring, artistic composition and finish are the six canons of art,' wrote Hsieh-Ho in the sixth century A.D., and no subject could be more suitable than a mountain for the application of those canons. Through the later periods of Chinese art, and during the history of the painting of Japan, recurring cases appear of the same inclination.

But there are differences of opinion among the Eastern theorists. Here is Kuo Hsi, who seems to be an early Chinese incarnation of William Gilpin:—

> 'Hills without clouds look bare; without water they are wanting in fascination; without paths they are wanting in life; without trees they are dead; without depth-distance they are shallow; without level-distance they are near; and without height-distance they are low.'

Indian art provides such a striking parallel to the ideas of modern European painting that it will be useful to return to it when discussing the new movement. It is sufficient here to say that an examination of Indian landscape drawings will reveal an interest in mountains similar to and no less vivid than that of the Japanese.

The interest in Eastern art began to spread over Europe during the last half of the nineteenth century. The de Goncourt brothers and Whistler by adopting some of the Japanese methods familiarised their countrymen with the ideas and practices of a hitherto little-known art. The researches and writings of Edmond de Goncourt, the flat, roomy

arrangements of Whistler, struck a note so new that a wild outcry greeted their efforts. But the strangeness has worn off. Whistler is accepted as a master; Japanese prints are everywhere; and, like the Spanish influence introduced by Manet in the face of general execration, the Eastern ideas have gone to produce a new art.[1]

It was near the end of last century that first appeared what has so misleadingly been called Post-Impressionism, an art with a new synthetic vision which saw beyond realism, which repudiated illusion, which tried to get deep down to where life and beauty touch and so externalise that indefinite something which makes things what they always

[1] Since this was written Mr. Binyon's book, *The Flight of the Dragon* (Wisdom of the East Series: John Murray), has appeared, which treats more fully and with far greater skill and knowledge than I possess with the question of landscape in Eastern art. As I unfortunately read the book too late to incorporate any of its suggestions in the present article, I would refer those readers who are interested to this masterly essay, which confirms and develops the ideas at which I have hinted, without, I am glad to say, making it necessary for me to alter my conclusions.

seem to us to be. This art which has recreated decoration, which is going to revolutionise stage-craft, house furniture and even building, while it deals unhesitatingly with any subject, is perhaps chiefly significant in its bearing on landscape.

In this department appears that extraordinary parallel with Indian ideas which has already been mentioned. No Indian artist ever aimed at a mere representation of nature. He drew from his store of imagination and memory a revisualised landscape which suggests the idea behind nature and not her seeming reality. To him natural forms were merely incarnations of ideas, and the effort to complete the expression necessitated a repudiation of illusion. It follows that the representative science displayed appears inept, if judged by ordinary outward standards. But when one considers that accuracy is purely relative, and that the synthetic vision naturally subordinates certain features in its preoccupation with others, to condemn Indian drawing as bad, or Byzantine either, for the case

is analogous, shows a faulty standard of judgment.[1]

As in Indian, so in modern European art, an understanding of the peculiar ideas which have inspired is necessary for appreciation. Keeping, therefore, this fact in view, that the aim is not for illusion but for the subtler and truer realism which lies in all natural phenomena, we can pass to the consideration of an artist who stands at the head of 'Post-Impressionist'—or, as I prefer to call it, 'Fauvist'—landscape tradition, and who really marks the beginning of the new appreciation of mountains.

Paul Cézanne has waited longer than any of his contemporaries for sympathy and fame, but now that his time has come he bids fair easily to outstrip Manet and the Impressionists in importance. As is often the case, the same reason accounts for his being neglected and for his later popularity, and that

[1] For these observations on Indian art I am indebted to a highly suggestive essay on 'The Aims and Methods of Indian Art,' by Dr. Coomaraswamy, contained in his *Essays in National Idealism*. London: Probsthain and Co.

reason is the complete newness of his outlook. His vision was a much stranger and newer one than had been that of the Impressionists, and yet but for a fortunate failing of his own it might never have been expressed at all. Cézanne was a very great artist and a very bad painter. One may go further and say that had he not been such a bad painter he might never have shown himself to be a great artist. His whole being was clumsy and blundering, and his attempts to emulate the brilliant Manet in his light effects were constantly balked by this very clumsiness. In despair, he gave up the task and lumped down what he saw, and, being a great artist, he saw something quite new.[1] He saw line and decorative grouping where Impressionism saw only a shimmer of sunlight. His tactless, outspoken nature is reproduced in his paintings, be they still-life, figure-

[1] The charge that Cézanne's work displays a 'personal clumsiness of touch' was made by Mr. Holmes in his notes on the Grafton Exhibition in 1910, and though denied by some critics is completely borne out by the judgment of those who knew the artist personally. M. Alexandre speaks of his 'éloquente impuissance.'

pieces, portraits, or landscapes. Mr. Sickert, comparing his work with the 'gentle painter-like art of Pissarro,' describes his pictures as 'ninety per cent. monstrous, tragic failures,' and from this standpoint the statement seems just enough.[1] But 'brilliant and sane efficiency' is not the highest attribute in an artist, and Cézanne by his genius redeems and almost glorifies his clumsiness. To landscape he gave structure and rhythm. In his pictures of Ste. Victoire, of steep fields and hillsides, the strong architecture of the landscape is the framework of the whole.

This originality of Cézanne has been developed and perfected by an artist working in England to-day, whose work is more in sympathy with the moods and structure of mountains than even that of his great predecessor, and the artist is Professor C. J. Holmes, whom I have already quoted (see above).

Mr. Holmes is very modern, and he is an Englishman; that is to say, he is

[1] *Introduction to an Exhibition of Pictures*, by Camille Pissarro, at the Stafford Gallery. London, 1911.

part of a movement which has a deep feeling for synthesis and the subtlety of rhythm—and this is important with a view to what has been said about the synthetic nature of mountains—and also he is a member of the race which has always shown more understanding for nature than any other in Europe or, perhaps, in the world.

France, the leader in matters artistic, has never had any real grasp of nature since the days of Ronsard. The French are too intelligent, too pitilessly logical, to accept the moods of nature without reasoning.

From such a generalisation one should, perhaps, except Rousseau. Although in much of his teaching it is difficult to escape the idea that the nature he preached has been touched up by civilisation, in comparison with many of his disciples he had a genuine desire to escape the works of men. In his political theory, in his morality, in his conception of the beautiful, he turned always to nature for his ideal. From his home in Geneva he learnt to love the

mountains, to love the great calm and dignity of them, their aloofness from man and his pettiness :—

> 'En effet, c'est une impression générale qu'éprouvent tous les hommes . . . que sur les hautes montagnes . . . les plaisirs sont moins ardents, les passions plus modérées. Il semble qu'en s'élevant au-dessus du séjour des hommes, on y laisse tous les sentiments bas et terrestres.'[1]

But even here one suspects that Rousseau is rather contrasting the worries of a race cursed with powers of emotion, with the sublime peace of unfeeling nature, than admitting the passion of the hills, which differs only from that of men in its loftiness and nobility. And this last belief is not only held by the England of to-day, but was a prominent conviction of William Wordsworth's, and he lies behind the English fondness for nature throughout the nineteenth century.

Of the group of great poets who make up the English Romantic Revival, who

[1] *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Part I., Letter 23.

voiced during the first half of the nineteenth century the ferment of new ideas, the greatest is Wordsworth. Stirred, as were the rest, by the teaching of Rousseau—and it is here perhaps that Rousseau's chief importance lies—he expressed in his poetry the aspirations which in France found vent in an orgy of political philosophy and the eager, endless search for liberty. His poetry and his sister's journals foretell that art which was to supersede maudlin subjectivism and, in its turn, Parnassian coldness. Coleridge may have more mystery, Shelley more fire, Keats more music, but it was Wordsworth who really felt the common soul in nature, the fusion of the human and the natural into one scale of moods and longings. He realised that mountains can hate, that they can resent intrusion, as can human beings.

'I dipped my oars into the silent lake
And, as I rose upon the stroke, my boat
Went heaving through the water like a swan;
When, from behind that craggy steep till then
The horizons bound, a huge peak, black and huge,
As if with voluntary power instinct

Upreared its head. I struck and struck again,
And growing still in stature the grim shape
Towered up between me and the stars, and still,
For so it seemed, with purpose of its own
And measured motion like a living thing,
Strode after me.'[1]

—which shows how mountains can be understood even by a man who was no climber, who, indeed, made a point of always walking round rather than over any hill on his way. His belief is the same with every aspect of nature. She has her moods, and they are the same as ours. We can realise them because of

'A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.'

Wordsworth's power of expression, and even more his power of selection, lag far behind his power of feeling. But what may detract from the pleasure of actual perusal cannot lessen ultimate historical importance. Modern art must find in Wordsworth its greatest forerunner in the department of nature. From him, as has been hinted, springs

[1] *The Prelude.*

the tendency which permeated French literature at the end of last century. The pantheist art of Symbolism which came to influence England in the nineties is, at bottom, a half-English movement.

A love of nature, therefore, is in Mr. Holmes' blood, and with this great tradition behind him he is working to give mountains the artistic interpretation which has so long been denied them. In his pictures and drawings of the English lakeland he has externalised an aspect of mountain scenery which is quite new. Some one has well expressed it by saying that he paints mountains not so much as they actually look but as one remembers them to be; and this is the same as saying that repudiation of illusion or naturalism enables him to suggest the 'mountainness' of the mountain, the vague, essential something which tells one it is a mountain.

In his heritage from Cézanne, Mr. Holmes has at any rate acquired no clumsiness, but greater skill has not tempted him to too much detail. He

has carried to still greater lengths synthesis and simplification. In economy of line he can hold his own with any of the new school of painters. With a few bold strokes he gives the massive strength of hills and rocks. It is now possible to realise how simple is the structure of mountains, but at the same time how clear must be the discrimination between the essential and the superfluous. By adopting the black border with which many of the Fauves surround the objects in their pictures, Mr. Holmes is able to dispense with chiaroscuro—almost with perspective. He paints in flat washes of colour, admirably toned, and separates one plane from another by a band of black. The distance springs into being, and perspective is achieved without elaboration, without destruction of essential outline.

Besides this 'realism of effect' as opposed to 'realism of fact,' Mr. Holmes has another definite aim, which attaches his art still more closely to Fauvism. He has a keen sense of the decorative importance of a picture. He has said

himself: 'The first function of a picture is architectural—it has to be a beautiful part of the wall surface.'[1] This aim is certainly fulfilled in his work. The lines of the hills run in subtle rhythms, and the whole lies gracefully on the wall and becomes a part of it. As ever, Mr. Holmes is his own best critic. He has summed up this double ideal—synthesis and decorative value—as follows:—

> 'At the very birth of art we find the necessity of selection and omission, with a view to emphatic statement, recognised more generally perhaps than it has ever been recognised since. And with this necessity we may note another characteristic of primitive art—the love of rhythm and pattern.'[2]

It has been seen that, with the exception of Cézanne, Mr. Holmes has no direct ancestor in European art. But, nevertheless, he is the ready pupil of cen-

[1] *The Dome*, vol. i. p. 147. London: Unicorn Press, 1899.

[2] *Notes on the Science of Picture-making*, by C. J. Holmes. Chatto and Windus, 1910.

turies. His art is not merely, as in the case of several other prominent Fauves, a slavish return to the primitive. It is founded on a thorough knowledge of the past. A further extract from his book[1] will show that he gives a modern expression to centuries of ideals :—

> 'Painting succeeds in virtue of the things it omits, almost as much as by the assistance of the things it expresses. . . . In Egyptian art the figures might have been less stiffly uniform, in Crete they sometimes verge on caricature ; in Byzantine work they assume too much the rigid character of architecture ; with the Italians of the Irecento too much of the Byzantine temper may survive ; in China forms may be contorted through the connection of painting with calligraphy. Yet with all their defects, these various phases of painting serve their destined purpose, and serve it much better than the paint-

[1] *Notes on the Science of Picture-making*, by C. J. Holmes. Chatto and Windus, 1910.

> ing of more sophisticated ages has succeeded in doing. . . . Contours may be as nobly drawn as human skill can draw them, but they must be firm and definite throughout. The colour may be as brilliant or as quiet as circumstances demand, but it must be applied in masses that are flat or nearly flat. Details, forcible suggestion of relief and strong shadows must be avoided. In our own day these limitations have been observed and respected only by a single painter—Puvis de Chavannes —but in virtue of that restraint he has taken his place among the great masters.'

And so the art of Mr. Holmes is a direct practice of his preaching. To the tradition of simplified vision he has brought a conception of his own—the conception of mountains, of their formation; and their rhythm.[1] Not Puvis de Chavannes,

[1] Of the claim of Segantini to be considered the true mountain artist I speak with some diffidence, as my acquaintance with him is small. But from what I have seen, I should say that he found himself unable to get away from the contrast between human figures and land-

whom he has mentioned, nor Daumier, whom perhaps he should have mentioned, felt the character of landscape as deeply as Mr. Holmes has done. In his elimination he is not arbitrary, but natural and very just. His mountains remain synthetic, uncivilised, individual, as they are in nature.

But besides his debt to the centuries of European art, he is greatly helped by his knowledge and love of the art of China and Japan. Like so many modern Europeans, he has been profoundly moved by the marvellous achievements of Eastern painting, but, beyond an admission of general influence, no very clear artistic lineage can be made out.

Mr. Binyon has traced the influence of Hokusai in Mr. Holmes' work,[1] and the suggestion seems justified. Mr. Holmes has an avowed admiration for

scape which hampered the early English water-colourists, with the result that the spirit of the mountains does not dominate his pictures. In any case, his outlook is purely that of the naturalist, and if he is right, then Mr. Holmes is wrong—a conclusion to which I cannot subscribe.

[1] *Saturday Review*, March 4, 1911.

the work of the Japanese artist, and apart from this, the folding lines of the hills and the flat, green washes of his water-colours show a distinct affinity.

> 'In Japanese painting form and colour are represented without any attempt at relief, but in European methods relief and illusion are sought for.'

This is Hokusai himself, and Mr. Holmes has profited by the comparison to fuse both systems into one.

And so, while, in the matter of Eastern as well as of Western art, his great store of knowledge of the painting of the past is the foundation of his genius, the genius itself—the message and its expression—remains his own.

Before closing it would be well to mention one criticism which has been levelled at Mr. Holmes, and which, if it is true, constitutes a serious charge. He has been accused of being scientific to the point of having a formula on which he works. Perhaps the title of his book is partly responsible for the accusation, and it might certainly have

been better chosen. But beyond this no trace of justification is visible. Order and inspiration are not necessarily incompatible. The extravagant lengths reached by the æsthetic movement proved the result of art ignoring science. Eccentricity had become a fetish, and Mr. Holmes is working with his fellow Fauves to restore reason and sanity. There is too much variety in his work to allow of a suspicion of any formula. A series of mountain studies naturally have some affinity, and this affinity has been exaggerated into a definite method. Such a charge cannot be further disproved than by assertion of its falsity. If that is insufficient, let the unsatisfied critic carefully study all Mr. Holmes' work, and draw a new conclusion. Continued belief in the formula must stay uncombated; but even should the charge be generally accepted as true, the admiration of one at least for Mr. Holmes and his work will remain unshaken.

OF THE BEHAVIOUR OF A CHAMOIS: AND INCIDENTALLY OF SOME OTHER MATTERS

BY

JULIAN S. HUXLEY

(Balliol)

II. OF THE BEHAVIOUR OF A CHAMOIS: AND INCIDENTALLY OF SOME OTHER MATTERS

THOSE who know Rosenlaui will also know that finely pointed little peak, an outlying spur of the Wetterhorn, that looks straight down into the front windows of the hotel—the Dossenhorn. That was my first climb. I confess that it was nothing very thrilling, though I enjoyed it thoroughly. We had a guide—an aged, aged man, whose downhill, bent-knee walk was if anything slower than his very slow but quite automatic and invariable upward pacing. We had a rope, which appeared to me perfectly unnecessary, and was a great nuisance to the airily independent spirit and body of the novice. Two ice-axes

lent to our party (of five) an air of considerable distinction. Very little of the day's happenings have remained to me. I still remember how very easy the rocks of the last arête were ; how fine the Wetterhorn looked across the snow plateau ; how I wondered why my uncle, a considerable climber in his day, wore trousers instead of knickerbockers ; how I ran down most of the way home after unroping ; and how, in my innocence, I plunged my face, scarlet from its exposure all unvaselined to the snowfields, into a basin of cold water—with what results those know who have tried it. Among all this intolerable deal of bread, however, we had a halfpenny worth of something more intoxicating. There is a long snow slope to be crossed slantingly before the col and the hut are reached. It is not at all steep, sloping up to the lower border of the rock pile that forms the pyramidal top of the mountain ; but the old guide had ordered the rope, and so there we were plodding diagonally upwards in single file.

All of a sudden there was a rattle, and

then a stone leapt off the rocks above to bound down the snow slope some four hundred yards ahead of us. The old guide looked round, and said : ' Chamois.'

This set us all agog—two or three had never seen the chamois on his native heath. However, the brown coat of the chamois is a good piece of cryptic colouring ; he—or they—remained absolutely invisible against the brown rocks. But we had startled him, and he went on moving—for some reason towards us, as we soon discovered when a second stone came down. The third alarmed us a little, for it crossed our path not fifty yards ahead of the leader ; so we resolved to halt and keep our eyes open for the next. This was not long in coming ; it came with a bound off the rocks, and seemed to be heading for the gap between the last two on the rope. It must have been going at a great pace, for it devoured that snow slope in great hungry leaps, clearing eighty or a hundred feet at a bound, though never rising a yard above the snow ; it hummed as it came, with a deep buzzing sound. Alto-

gether it was extremely alarming (I was one of the two hindermost), and it was a considerable relief to see, after it was half-way to us, that it had a slight curl on it, and an outward curl, which caused it to hum past five or six yards behind the tail of our procession. The chamois passed, still invisible, on his way, and we on ours, discussing what would have been the best thing to do supposing his aim had been straighter.

It was that scene that came into my head years later. I had been trying to master some of the rudiments of geology, of which science I was lamentably ignorant, and had at least begun to get into my head the idea of denudation—how the shapes of mountains as we see them are as much due to cutting away as to heaving up—and was grasping the strength of the denuding forces that would go on thus cutting and cutting until nothing was left but one flat plain, did they not thus once more liberate the forces of upheaval. In my text-book there were examples given of the many and various activities working

together this work of destruction—wind and sun, rain and frost, sand, rivers, little plants—'and chamois!' came suddenly into my mind. A little nail will serve to hang a large picture; and so the whole idea of denudation was fixed in my brain by that one Bernese chamois.

It perhaps, more than any other single thing, taught me to see the transience of the hills. For here, as so often elsewhere, the judgments of the natural man must be unlearnt. 'The hills stand about Jerusalem,' says the natural man,—'The Eternal Hills!' They are not eternal; they are as transitory, as much slaves of Time, as anything with life. The title is but one more witness to the arrogance, the unimaginativeness of man, who thinks that everything is of the same order of magnitude as he himself; and if he does not notice the hour hand move while he trips along some fraction of the circumference of the seconds dial—why, then, it must be motionless!

But man possesses also a brain, and therein an intelligence, a logical faculty, by means of which he discovers presently

that things are not always what they seem ; and one of these apparent contradictions is that the mountains must be changing, rising up and wearing down, even though he cannot perceive it directly ; and yet even though he can prove that it must be so, it is still very difficult for him to realise it happening.

Our intelligence, indeed, although it thus transcends the senses' immediate judgments, has to go back to them and ask their aid if it is to attain to fullest knowledge. It is a very imperfect instrument, so built up on the foundations of the five senses that if we cannot feel, bear, taste, smell or, more particularly, see what there is to be dealt with, but only reason about it, we may *know* quite well that reasoning has led to the only right conclusion, but yet do not *feel* fully and unquestioningly the rightness of it. We all believe the moon to be a globe ; but I must confess that on my first sight of her through a telescope, I experienced a veritable shock of surprise and pleasure to realise, as I saw the craters passing from full face in the centre to profile at

the edge, how globular she really was. With the mountains no such ocular demonstration is possible to us. I say to us, for to our descendants it may be. You have but to take a series of photographs of some peak from exactly the same spot at intervals of fifty years or so ; then, putting these together in their order, run them through a cinematograph, and you would see your everlasting citadel crumble, shrinking before your eyes like a pricked balloon. Such a condensation of events has already been practised to render such slow processes as the growth of twigs or the complex unfolding of the egg more patent and striking ; and there is no reason why it should not be applied to matters of centuries instead of days.

To-day we cannot have the change rendered thus visible to us. We have only indirect methods to help us, methods which demand reflection and imagination. Imagination and reflection, however, are processes demanding more mental energy than the average man is willing to expend, for the average man

is mentally of extreme laziness. So the mountains remain eternal, to the average man.

But there is no harm in trying to exercise powers of reflection and of imagination, if I may persuade you to it. Stand on the bridges at Geneva and look at the Rhone slipping down from the lake, clear and blue with a wonderful and almost unreal blue. Then walk down to the junction of the Rhone and the Arve, and see that other river, turbid, greyish-white, a regular glacier stream ; identity and name may be taken from it in the union, but it still has strength to rob the robber of his own especial beauty. That discolouring flood —what is it ? As you walk back again, the top of Mont Blanc comes gradually from behind the Grande Salève into sight. If you reflect, you will know that those white waves were white from carrying away what only yesterday had been a part of those famous mountains ; to-day it is dust, and nameless ; to-morrow it will be laid down upon the ocean floor, there to be hardened, kneaded, and baked

into the bricks that shall build other, as yet unchristened, hills. If you imagine, you will see in the mind's eye those same summits, thus continually attacked, gradually shrinking; preserving their beauty to the last, no doubt, like our lovely lake mountains, which though in respect of their former height they be but as roots when the trunk is fallen, yet in themselves show not a trace of decay, and lift their heads as strong and fresh as ever. Yet they dwindle, and will in the end be mountains no more; they will no more have form and shape, no more be named and almost live, endowed with that strong appearance of vivid and obvious personality; mere undulations, they will no more exercise the mountain power upon the mind of man.

What else will help you to see the transience of the hills? Go and stand by a mountain stream where it runs in quick swishing rapids; as I have done by the Drance de Bagnes, and heard sounds as of groaning and muffled giant hammering—great boulders grinding each other in the press of the current, and

moving always downwards. Go and look at the enormous moraines that wind down into Italy—each would be a range of hills in England. Had not the Alps another aspect before these were heaped up? And yet, say the geologists, great cenotaphs of the ice were raised in but a fraction of the time since the Alps were born. Try to tackle a rock-and-ice gully with strong sun on it, or (preferably) stay on one side and watch the stones come down: down they come like that every sunny day.

Look at the Matterhorn, and be told how like it is to Strasburg Cathedral; but rock spires are not built upwards like ones of stone and mortar; they are monoliths, cut out of the solid rock. The stony layers of the rock, once lying flat and soft upon the sea-bottom, then hardened, then gripped and crumpled by the ageing earth like so many sheets of wet paper, now are cut through, and show their free edges on the steep flanks of the mountain. Fixed long ago in waves and curves, now they are immobile, but they treasure within themselves the

forms which the ice and the sun are to reveal. As if the sculptor were to have but half the shaping of his work, and the block of marble almost of itself disclose its hidden Oenus, or turn a Hercules planned into a Hylas accomplished, so the rock masses contain within themselves no infinite possibility of forms—there is, to start with, a quality of mountain concealed in the rock, so that the aerial sculptors may work as they please, and never find a Dent du Midi in the Mont Blanc range, or fashion a Weisshorn from the Dolomites. But that is another story. Even though the rocks thus decree that the instruments of their destruction shall be as well instruments to reveal their hidden beauties, yet destruction none the less it is. How gigantic a destruction those cut, upcurving layers of rock can testify.

But in the same way as our mind can know and yet not feel the mutability of the mountains, so it may know and yet not grasp their size and its extent. Here again the new lesson is hard to be learnt by brain alone: 'Everest 29,002, Mont

Blanc 15,786, Scawfell Pike 3210'—the figures convey but a part. The hills must take the mind by assault through the breaches of sense.

Those moments come but rarely. I have seen the west face of Skiddaw once, and once Schiehallion from the Struan road, towering as high as any Alpine peak might do; and Donkin's famous photograph of the Weisshorn gives one something of the true feeling. But the most complete revelation came to me at the head of the Swiss Val Ferret.

We had already begun to appreciate the bigness of things, but rather through our own littleness than for any unusual grandeur revealed in them. As you walk up the deep, close valley, you have on your right, in contrast to the monotonous dry ridge of even middle height to the left, a succession of broad bluffs or buttresses that sustain the east end and guard the eastern glacier gateways of that great Cathedral of Three Nations, the massif of Mont Blanc. There is one below and one above the end of the Saleinaz glacier,

and on the side of each a lesser bluff, an inward, forward-projecting pillar that narrows the gateway to a mere postern, with only glimpses of the broad aisle above. Both these doorposts bear the same name — Tita Moutse or Tête Moutze ; a very good name, certainly, but you would think that the dwellers at Proz-de-Fort, just between the two, might find it confusing, even though on Barbier's map one is printed black and upright, the other thin and in italics. It is difficult to render these distinctions in speaking—and perhaps they have not all got Barbier's map. However, that is not our concern at present. Farther up is another big buttress (rejoicing in the name of Treutze Bouc), and another, and then the Glacier de la Neuvaz, with the Châlet Ferret on the other hand, and feather beds for weary travellers.

These buttresses, and especially the Treutze Bouc, are calculated to annoy the walker. There they stand, looking no bigger than a buttress of Snowdon or Saddleback ; there as here the mountain torrents cut away the ground in

the same way, and the same broad-faced bluffs are left. As with bluffs, so with ships: it is almost impossible to grasp the size of a big liner out at sea, her build is the same as that of any other steamship, and there is no standard of comparison. Here in the Val Ferret one learns by bitter experience and blistered feet. The road winds on and on, across torrent-beds, through alder-woods, along hot slopes—and the summit of Treutze Bouc is not yet opposite. After this lengthy demonstration of the disadvantages and unpleasantnesses of size, the mountains at last relent and show the other side of the picture.

I shall never forget the impression of colossal grandeur that showed itself at a turn of the road opposite the gate of the Glacier de la Neuvaz. Nothing was lacking in the chain. In the foreground, below a grassy bank, flowed the Drance de Ferret—only a smallish stream, but big enough and swift enough unbridged to stop such a small animal as man from gaining its other side. Across it lay a fallen pine; and from this, better than

from the standing trees, you realised to what a height the pine-trunks grow. Of these there was a thick wood filling up the level bottom left by the receding glacier; the green sea extended back and back until the tops of the separate trees were not to be made out, and the whole wood tapered away in perspective like a band of clouds towards the setting sun. In the end it turned a corner to the right—a thin green line beyond the grey terminal moraine. This corner filled a little indentation in the hill behind. The eye travelled up naturally from the green line of trees to the green slope, and saw that slope as part of a great rounded hill, rather like a bit of the Downs in general appearance; but had it been hollow you could have gone on pouring your Chanctonburies and Sinoduns and Beachy Heads and Hogs backs into it, and they would have rattled about like small-shot inside. The stream of trees let you see how big it was, as hills on the horizon show the greatness of the setting moon. I think the hill was nameless. Beyond it, in another

plane of distance, rose another peak—this one brown, of bare rock, and rather jagged; the vegetation had ended on the part concealed behind the green hill. Up and up the eye travelled, and was amazed to find that if the green had been but a spur of the brown, so the brown was but a spur of the white. Mont Dolent arose from behind it like the pursuing peak in the *Prelude*. All its rocky middle and its snowline were in their turn hidden by the brown spur before them; only the white slanting chisel edge of the summit soared up to sight. Stream — tree — wood — mountains: one, two, and three . . . each formed a stepping-stone to the one beyond, making it possible for the whole grandeur of the peak to slip down, as it were, and find place within the narrow limits of the brain waiting at the other end.

There it was able to take up its station beside that other thought which entered there, not charioted by Bacchus and his pards, but by the swift chamois and the mountain torrents. The two, holding

mutual colloquy, together tell what Wordsworth learnt in another fashion, that the mountains are

> 'Huge and mighty forms, that do not live
> Like living men.'

But live they do, in their own way—not only in their form and individuality, but in the constant cycle of their changeableness. They approach to being closed systems, independent in some degree of the rest of the world; partial individuals, they have a share in determining their future selves. Once raised to mountains, they contain within themselves the germs of their own destiny; and if not possessing such power as true life possesses of blossoming into a predetermined form, scarcely to be altered by all the efforts of the outside world, yet at least marking down beforehand the limits beyond which the outer influences cannot mould them, preordaining the main succession of their future history, and the essential quality of the forms they are to take. And again, though they have not the true

vital property of reproducing their kind by means of a mere particle of their own substance, that grows, and in its growth takes up the atoms of outer matter and moulds them to its will, they have a kind of reproduction scarcely less strange, where like generates not like, but unlike. In their decay they are laying new foundations. Grain torn from grain of solid rock, boulder from boulder is swept away ; layer after layer of grains or boulder is laid—'well and truly laid' ; rock system piled upon rock system ; till the time comes, and all this is upheaved into a chain of peaks which, though their every particle were taken from the substance of that older chain, will be like it in being a mountain range, but in that alone. So they have their being, in a different and vaster cycle than man's, their life only another fragment of that change which is the single fixed reality.

And what is the moral of all this? You may well ask ; for I do not know that I know myself. Proceed to the fact that our mountains are but crinkles on the rind of a small satellite of one star

among the millions, and we deduce the littleness of man: which has been done before. Point out how, in spite of all their size and their terrors, they fall one by one to the climber, and we with equal facility prove his greatness: which also others have successfully attempted. Insist on their mutability, and it merely takes us back to Heraclitus and his πάντα ῥεῖ. Perhaps one moral is that feeling as well as reasoning, reasoning as well as feeling, is necessary to true knowledge; a conclusion which would appeal to followers of M. Bergson, but hardly falls within the scope of this book.

The chief moral is, I expect, that the mountains can give the climber more than climbing, and will do so if he but keep his eyes open. From them there will come to him flashes of beauty and of grandeur, light in dark places, sudden glimpses of the age, the glory, and the greatness of the earth.

THE MOUNTAINS IN GREEK POETRY

BY

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III. THE MOUNTAINS IN GREEK POETRY

BEFORE we try to discover from their literature the feelings of the Greeks for the mountains, we should first trace clearly the origin of our own attitude towards high places.

Nature-worship is a reaction from the life of crowded communities; contrast and change are the essentials of rest. It is only for those whose life is passed in great cities fully to appreciate the mountains; in their own country the hills have no honour, for where men make their living they cannot appreciate life. But we are so much accustomed to accept as absolute our personal standard of beauty, made up of all those things which seem to us beautiful on account of their contrast to

our ordinary surroundings, that it is hard to realise the fact that all expressions of beauty depend upon individual perception, and are therefore relative. A converse often illuminates the less obvious side of a question, and the converse of our love for the mountains is strikingly shown by Sir Leslie Stephen, who records that a highly intelligent Swiss guide pronounced the dreary expanse of chimney-pots round the South-Western Railway finer than the view from the top of Mont Blanc. It was a contrast to his ordinary life, and therefore, for him, beautiful. For to the guide, *qua* guide, a mountain is not a form of the Idea of Beauty, but a problem in higher mathematics, each possible route an indeterminate equation in terms of glacier, rock, ice, and snow ; and the great guide is he who can solve most truly in theory and in practice the daily variations of these and other unknown quantities. A mountain to him may be like a great book made odious by being set as a holiday task.

But the guide is hardly a fair example,

since he is the product of an artificial demand: let us take, as a less extreme case, the more primitive inhabitants of a mountainous land, whose living comes from the land itself, not indirectly from the great cities through services rendered to their holiday-makers. The peasants of such a country must work the land for their living, not look at it; life comes before æstheticism, and the artistic temperament is an inadequate remedy for an empty stomach. To such men the mountains do not represent beauty and strength and freedom, but an amazing waste of the surface of the earth, useless deserts, from which every acre of lowland and slope must be redeemed for crops and vineyards.

It was in this light that the Greeks saw their mountains. In their eyes they compared very unfavourably with their great natural rival, the sea. It is true that the sea was mildly reproved by the epithet ἀτρυγετός for producing no crops, but it made amends, being the good-natured Mediterranean, by helping to transport the produce of other lands,

while the mountains were a positive obstacle to commerce.

We may note that in Il. i. 156 :—

ἦ μάλα πολλὰ μεταξύ,
οὔρεά τε σκιόεντα θάλασσά τε ἠχήεσσα,[1]

the mountains and the sea are both alike mentioned as barriers between people and people, although it may be questioned whether the idea is more definite than that of distance, to which the epithet σκιόεντα is more appropriate. In this case the mountains are introduced merely to give a concrete horizon to the idea of remoteness conveyed by μάλα πολλά and σκιόεντα.

The sea was commonly regarded by the Greeks as a tie between land and land, the mountains as a barrier. So they damned the mountains with faint praise of their timber, their hunting grounds, and, most unkindest cut, the wider view of the sea from their cliffs.

[1] There lieth between us long space of shadowy mountains and sounding sea. (Lang, Leaf, and Myers.)

There was no one to tell the primitive Greeks that from the hated mountains, by streams and melting snows, came the very meadows in which they delighted, that the richness of their ideal pasture-lands of Thessaly was produced, not in spite of, but actually by the mountains round. So they continued to regard them as heaps of waste, and it was this view which was primarily responsible for the reticence about the mountains with which we meet in Greek literature. In all the Odyssey there are hardly twenty lines descriptive of the mountains. In one of the most beautiful lines of Homer :—

εἴσατο δ'ὡς ὅτε ῥινὸν ἐν ἠεροειδέϊ πόντῳ.[1]
Od. v. 281.

the picture is of the island, not of its mountains ; they are mentioned, but merely because a low-lying island is not visible in 'misty' distance.

The first use of the mountains in

[1] And it showed like a shield in the misty deep. (Butcher and Lang.)

simile is to represent big, ugly people: of the Cyclops,

καὶ γὰρ θαῦμ' ἐτέτυκτο πελώριον, οὐδὲ ἐῴκει
ἀνδρί γε σιτοφάγῳ, ἀλλὰ ῥίῳ ὑλήεντι
ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ὅ τε φαίνεται οἷον ἀπ' ἄλλων.[1]
Od. ix. 190.

and of the queen of the Læstrygones,

τὴν δὲ γυναῖκα
εὗρον ὅσην τ' ὄρεος κορυφήν, κατὰ δ' ἔστυγον αὐτήν.[2]
Od. x. 112.

For the most part, the mountains are treated with contemptuous indifference. It is evident that, as a place of outlook over low-lying scenery or the sea, a height of some sort is necessary, and where such an outlook is mentioned by Homer he does not grudge it an epithet; but in such a passage as the following the hill is nothing, the view from it all-important :—

[1] Yea, for he was a monstrous thing and fashioned marvellously, nor was he like to any man that lives by bread, but like a wooded peak of the towering hills, which stands out apart and alone from others. (Butcher and Lang.)

[2] They found his wife therein: she was huge of bulk as a mountain peak, and was loathly in their sight. (Butcher and Lang.)

εἶδον γὰρ σκοπιὴν ἐς παιπαλόεσσαν ἀνελθὼν
νῆσον, τὴν πέρι πόντος ἀπείριτος ἐστεφάνωται·
αὐτὴ δὲ χθαμαλὴ κεῖται· καπνὸν δ' ἐνὶ μέσσῃ
ἔδρακον ὀφθαλμοῖσι διὰ δρυμὰ πυκνὰ καὶ ὕλην.[1]
Od. x. 194.

There is only one passage in Homer in which one mountain is seen from another. Poseidon is watching the battle before Troy from the highest crest of wooded Samothrace :—

ἔνθεν γὰρ ἐφαίνετο πᾶσα μὲν Ἴδη,
φαίνετο δὲ Πριάμοιο πόλις καὶ νῆες Ἀχαιῶν.[2]
Il. xiii. 13.

If we analyse our own pleasure in the ascent of a mountain, giving due importance to the view of other peaks from it, we shall realise how significant it is that this reference is unique in Homer.

Of rock-climbers Homer had a very poor opinion : he would be a very bold

[1] For I went up a craggy peak, a place of outlook, and saw the isle crowned about with the circle of the endless sea, the isle itself lying low : and in the midst thereof mine eyes beheld the smoke through the thick coppice and the woodland. (Butcher and Lang.)

[2] For thence all Ida was plain to see : and plain to see were the city of Priam, and the ships of the Achæans. (Lang, Leaf, and Myers.)

man now who would say of any rock peak in the world :—

> *οὐδέ κεν ἀμβαίη βροτὸς ἀνὴρ οὐδ' ἐπιβαίη,*
> *οὐδ' εἴ οἱ χεῖρές τε ἐείκοσι καὶ πόδες εἶεν·*
> *πέτρη γὰρ λίς ἐστι, περιξεστῇ εἰκυῖα.*[1]
>
> *Od.* xii. 77.

Baedeker himself could not more vehemently warn off a novice from a dangerous face; but there was little chance that the climb in question would ever become 'an easy day for a lady,' as it led past the cave of Scylla, whose six heads would have required a toll likely to leave an appreciable gap in the largest party.

Once only in the Iliad a rock is chosen as a type of steadfastness :—

> *ἴσχον γὰρ πυργηδὸν ἀρηρότες, ἠΰτε πέτρη*
> *ἠλίβατος, μεγάλη, πολιῆς ἁλὸς ἐγγὺς ἐοῦσα,*
> *ἥ τε μένει λιγέων ἀνέμων λαιψηρὰ κέλευθα*
> *κύματά τε τροφόεντα, τά τε προσερεύγεται αὐτήν·*
> *ὣς Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον οὐδὲ φέβοντο.*[2]
>
> *Il.* xv. 617.

[1] No mortal man may scale it or set foot thereon, not though he had twenty hands and feet. For the rock is smooth and sheer, as it were polished. (Butcher and Lang.)

[2] Nay, they stood firm, and embattled like a steep rock and a great, hard by the hoary sea, a rock that abides the swift paths of the shrill winds, and the

But to the Greeks rocky cliffs appeared as a rule pitiless, inhuman, and heartless, rather than steadfast in a good sense, as above. We may notice the famous passage in which Patroclus rebukes Achilles for his hardness of heart :—

νηλεές, οὐκ ἄρα σοί γε πατὴρ ἦν ἱππότα Πηλεύς,
οὐδὲ Θέτις μήτηρ· γλαυκὴ δέ σε τίκτε θάλασσα
πέτραι τ'ηλίβατοι, ὅτι τοι νόος ἐστὶν ἀπηνής.[1]

Il. xvi. 33.

If Homer is disappointing, Hesiod is far more so. If anywhere in Greek literature we should expect some recognition of the grandeur of the mountains, it is undoubtedly in descriptions of their birth. A poet could hardly hope to find a more Titanic subject than that mighty travailing of the Earth ; but this is all Hesiod finds to say :—

γείνατο δ' Οὔρεα μακρά, θεῶν χαρίεντας ἐναύλους,
Νυμφέων, αἳ ναίουσιν ἀν' οὔρεα βησσήεντα.[2]

Theogony, 129.

swelling waves that roar against it. Even so the Danaans steadfastly abode the Trojans, and fled not away.

[1] Pitiless that thou art, the knight Peleus was not then thy father, nor Thetis thy mother, but the grey sea bare thee, and the sheer cliffs, so untoward is thy spirit.

[2] And Earth bore the long mountains, the graceful habitations of the divine Nymphs, who dwell on the wooded mountains.

'Long' of all mountain epithets! 'Graceful' is insult added to injury! We must suppose that Hesiod would have preferred Amicombe Hill to Great Mis Tor, the curves of the Downs to the towers of the Dolomites.

It is not surprising that the Nymphs should have stuck in the throat of certain commentators, who propose to expunge the second line. Certainly a real mountain is the least suitable habitation for a Nymph, and it is a pity that no artistic member of the Alpine Club could have been present to astonish Hesiod with a lightning sketch of large troups of Nymphs—in the days when Jaeger was unknown, and furs still clothed their natural owners—shivering like angels on the needle-point of the Charmoz or on the more appropriate summit of the Jungfrau. There is one possible explanation, hinted at in the Clouds of Aristophanes, namely, that the Oceanids were identified with clouds; but this is probably a later rationalist theory, which would have astonished the early poets themselves.

There is not one line in Hesiod which shows a real appreciation of the mountains: some few allusions to Olympus are the nearest approach to enthusiasm, but the seat of the gods also proves a broken reed to those who would portray the Greeks as mountain-lovers. It was necessary that the gods should be able to look down on the earth, yet the anthropomorphic tendencies of the age subjected them to the same disadvantage as modern aviators, namely, inability to remain motionless in the air. It therefore became necessary for them to take possession of the highest fixed support, Olympus.

Olympus is a real mountain, but for the benefit of its divine tenants, more especially perhaps of the goddesses, the poets idealised it almost out of recognition. We have Homer's description of the summit:—

[Οὔλυμπος] ὅθι φασὶ θεῶν ἕδος ἀσφαλὲς αἰεὶ
ἔμμεναι· οὔτ' ἀνέμοισι τινάσσεται, οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρῳ
δεύεται, οὔτε χιὼν ἐπιπίλναται, ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἴθρη

πέπταται ἀννέφελος, λευκὴ δ'ἐπιδέδρομεν αἴγλη.[1]
Od. vi. 42.

This process of describing an ideal and then locating it in a definite accessible spot has many parallels, though few in which access and its consequent disillusionment were so easy ; we may compare Atlantis, Avernus, King Arthur's Cave on Lliwedd, and the superstition which was not uncommon a few years ago, that a subtropical Paradise would be found beyond the outer ice of the Arctic Circle.

Another passage, quoted from Lucian in a paper by Mr. Douglas Freshfield, on 'Mountains and Mankind,'[2] as showing that the Greeks loved their mountains, is not altogether convincing : Hermes takes Charon, when he has a day out from Hell, to the twin-crested summit, and shows him the panorama of land and sea, of rivers and famous

[1] Olympus, where, as they say, is the seat of the gods that standeth fast for ever. Not by winds is it shaken, nor ever wet with rain, nor does the snow come nigh thereto, but most clear air is spread about it, and the white light floats over it.

[2] *Alpine Journal*, vol. xxii.

cities. The first impulse is to reject this allusion as proving, not Lucian's love for the mountains, but his excellent taste in contrast, for the holiday of the dweller below the earth should rightly be spent in its high places. This is true as far as it goes, but apart from the personal tastes of Lucian, to which we have no more guide in his works than to those of Shakespeare or any other true dramatist, we must admit that he here gives us the nearest parallel to those conditions from which we escape to the contrast of the mountains. London duties, it is true, compare favourably with those of Charon, but our reward in escaping from them is greater, just in so far as the Alps are greater than Parnassus. The principle and the scale of contrast are the same: this passage would therefore seem to be nearer akin to our modern mountain-worship than might at first appear. But here again it may be claimed that the mountain is not made of much account except as the means of obtaining a wider view of the more fashionable beauties of nature.

Professor Palgrave asserts that the dramatists seldom show appreciation of scenery, but we must add to his exceptions Euripides' description of the sunrise glow on the mountains :—

Παρνησιάδες δ' ἄβατοι κορυφαὶ
καταλαμπόμεναι τὴν ἡμερίαν
ἁψῖδα βροτοῖσι δέχονται.[1] Eur. *Ion.* 87.

An excellent test of the impression made on the Greek mind by any class of natural phenomenon is to observe to what extent representatives of that class have been personified ; if we apply this test to the case of the mountains, we shall be amazed at the Greek disregard for them. When in the case of so abstract a conception as that of time we find personification, not only of the idea as a whole, but also of its subdivisions (Ὧραι), we may naturally expect, not only a great Personal representative of mountains in general, as Poseidon represented the sea, but also particular personifications of great peaks or ranges, which in our eyes have at

[1] The untrodden peaks of Parnassus shine forth and welcome for mortals the rim of the new day.

least as marked an individuality as rivers or winds.

Yet, with the single exception of Atlas, no mountain in Greek literature has been represented as an animate being. It is possible that Tennyson had some precedent for his 'Mother' Ida; *μητέρα θήρων*[1] is the Homeric phrase. Certainly a close connection exists between Taÿgetus and Taÿgete, daughter of Atlas, and there is some suggestion of malevolent personality in the inhospitable behaviour of the 'Wandering Rocks.' But these are ill-defined and isolated instances, which, even if numbered by scores, instead of by scattered units, would not materially affect the argument.

About Atlas we have many different stories. In the earliest account he is one of the older family of gods, father of Calypso, *ὀλοόφρων*,[2] wizard Atlas, knowing the depths of every sea; and to him are entrusted the pillars which keep heaven and earth apart.

[1] Mother of wild beasts.
[2] Of baleful counsel, wizard.

According to Hesiod, he was the son of the Titan Iapetus, and brother of Menœtius, Prometheus, and Epimetheus, all of whom incurred the anger of Zeus—Prometheus and Menœtius for active hostility to him, Epimetheus and Atlas apparently for no more personal reason than that their father was one of the hated Titans: for this offence Atlas was punished by the task of holding up the whole weight of heaven on his shoulders. It does not seem to have occurred to the early writers that the extreme edge of an inverted hemisphere is a most unsymmetrical position for the sole supporter of its weight.

The mountain, Atlas, was evidently the Peak of Teneriffe,[1] of which the Phœnicians may well have brought a description to Greece. It was afterwards supposed to be in North Africa, and in consequence dwindled to a comparatively insignificant range containing no conspicuous peak. The Titanid and the mountain were ingeniously connected in later times by the introduction of Perseus

[1] Rawlinson, *ad Herod.* iv. 184.

with the head of Medusa, which he showed to Atlas at his own request, thus turning him to stone.

A variation of this story marks an intermediate stage towards the rationalisation of the myth: in it Atlas is represented as a king who refuses to show hospitality to Perseus on account of a prophecy of danger to himself from a son of Zeus; he is turned into stone by the same means, but as a punishment for his churlishness.

The completely rationalised version represents him as a king in the far West, skilled in astronomy, and the inventor of the globe. This story may have had its origin in Homer's 'wizard' Atlas, and was probably connected with the far older myths of Atlantis and the Garden of the Hesperides.

It is evident that we have to thank the Phœnicians for bringing one great mountain so prominently before the Greeks that alone of all mountains in their literature it is endued with personality. But it is lamentable to observe how the affairs of Atlas, once released

from Phœnician control, descend into the bourgeois rut of semi-divine nonentity. He proceeded to marry a nymph, who bore him seven other nymphs, of whom Maia, mother of Hermes, is alone conspicuous. These nymphs lived together on Mount Cyllene until forced to fly from Orion, whom they escaped by the conventional stage-device of metamorphosis, becoming first doves (πελείαδες) and then the constellation of the Pleiades.

Mr. Bury [1] traces a connection between the epithet ὀρειᾶν as applied to the Pleiades and the name Ὠαρίων, translating

ἐστι δ' ἐοικὸς
ὀρειᾶν γε Πελειάδων
μὴ τήλοθεν Ὠαρίων' ἀνεῖσθαι.

by 'It is meet that the rising of the Mountain Hunter should not be far from the Mountain Pleiades. This would be unique among Greek references to the mountains if the remotest etymological connection could be traced between

[1] *Ad Pindar*, N. ii. 11.

Ὠαρίων and ὄρος; but this is rather a B in 'Both' derivation, and it may be mentioned for what it is worth that the name Orion is otherwise explained for us by Ovid.[1]

One alone of the Pleiad nymphs is justified, to a follower of Mr. Bury, in her mountain abode. If we accept Ἀλκυόνη as a personification of ἄλκη,[2] we must certainly allow her to enthrone herself on the highest peaks of the ancient world, provided, of course, that she was not so presumptuous as to sit on her father.

It is clear, therefore, that the Greeks owed the introduction of the mountain into the Titan story to the Phœnicians' description of Teneriffe, and that they elaborated the myth with very little regard for geography and none at all for consistency. In spite of Mr. Bury's gallant salvage work, we must confess that the mountain element is lost from the story as soon as it is left in the hands

[1] *Fasti*, v.

[2] 'Might, daughter of Endurance,' is the abstraction with which Mr Bury replaces 'Alcyone, daughter of Atlas.'

of the Greeks, who treat it as a hen treats the duckling she has hatched: an adaptable duckling, for as a metamorphosis story it has made a very good chicken, though in the process it shames its proper parents.

In Theocritus we find an exception to the absence of mountain personification in Menalkas' Αἴτνα, μᾶτερ ἔμα,[1] but it stands alone: the Cyclops, who was quite as much the child of Ætna, seems to regard the mountain merely as an ice-box providing him with cool water :—

ψυχρὸν ὕδωρ, τό μοι ἁ πολυδένδρεος Αἴτνα
λευκᾶς ἐκ χίονος πότον ἀμβρόσιον προίητι.[2]

It would be hard, in speaking of the snows of a mountain, to find a less appropriate epithet than πολυδένδρεος.

There is little else in Theocritus about the mountains except that Daphnis

χιὼν ὥς τις κατετάκετο μακρὸν ὑφ' Αἷμον.
ἢ Ἄθω ἢ Ῥοδόπαν ἢ Καύκασον ἐσχατόωντα.[3]

[1] Ætna, mother mine.

[2] Cool water which well-wooded Ætna pours down for me from her white snow, a draught divine.

[3] Was wasting away like snow beneath the long ridge of Hæmus, or Athos, or Rhodope, or Caucasus at the end of the world.

If we compare Pindar's descriptions of the mountains with those of any other Greek poet, it is not hard to make ourselves believe that he knew something of their secrets. But as soon as we set these passages side by side with the rest of his own work, we see them sink back into insignificance. He wrote four or five great mountain lines, but for each of these he wrote ten for the valleys, fifty for the stars, a hundred for the sea.

Still, we cannot often find a mountain honoured in Greek with such an epithet as *ὑψιμέδων*,[1] usually applied to Zeus alone; and Pindar also makes the first mention of the 'age' of the hills:—

Φλιοῦντος ὑπ' ὠγυγίοις ὄρεσι.[2]

It is not clear why a hill should in general be considered older than a plain: they are said to have emerged from the Deluge within quite a short time of each other. But it would be pedantic to summon scientists and insist on accuracy

[1] High-counselling.
[2] Beneath the age-old mountains of Phlius.

at the cost of such hoary phrases as 'the eternal hills,' which are still the delight of those pessimists who habitually allude to mankind as ἐφημέριδες.

Among Pindar's descriptive phrases we may notice ἔμβολον Ἀσίας, of the headland of Caria. The word, to a Greek, could not but suggest its naval use, the 'prow' of Asia riding unmoved upon the waves.

Actual references to mountaineering are so rare that we are tempted to find an exception in

> καὶ πάγον
> Κρόνου προσεφθέγξατο· πρόσθε γὰρ
> νώνυμνος, ἃς Οἰνόμαος ἄρχε, βρέχετο πολλᾷ
> νιφάδι [1]

by supposing it to be the only surviving record of a first ascent by the Theban Heracles, who claimed in consequence the right to name the summit ascended. Paley would add to the dangers and credit of the expedition by finding in 'βρέχετο πολλᾷ νιφάδι' 'a curious and noteworthy tradition of a glacial or post-glacial period!'

[1] And he called it the Hill of Cronos: for before Oinomaos ruled, it had no name, and it was wet with much snow.

But all other mountain scenes in Pindar, whether adorned with glaciers or not, pale before the description of the eruption of Ætna :—

τᾶς ἐρεύγονται μὲν ἀπλάτου πυρὸς
ἀγνότατοι
ἐκ μυχῶν παγαί· ποταμοὶ δ' ἀμέραισιν
μὲν προχέοντι ῥόον καπνοῦ
αἴθωνα, ἀλλ' ἐν ὄρφναισιν πέτρας
φοίνισσα κυλινδομένα φλὸξ ἐς βαθεῖαν
φέρει πόντου πλάκα σὺν πατάγῳ.
κεῖνο δ' Ἀφαίστοιο κρουνοὺς ἕρπετὸν
δεινοτάτους ἀναπέμπει· τέρας μὲν
θαυμάσιον προσιδέσθαι, θαῦμα δὲ
καὶ παρεόντων ἀκοῦσαι.[1]

Pind. *Pyth.* i. 15.

We need not enjoy this description any the less for feeling that Pindar is not thinking of Ætna the mountain, nor even of Ætna the volcano, but only of the eruption, which is not in his eyes an eruption of Ætna but of the mon-

[1] Ætna, whence purest springs of fire unapproachable burst forth from their caverns; springs which by day pour out a lurid river of smoke, but in the darkness the rocks are borne on eddies of blood-red flame to fall crashing upon the ocean-plain far below. So does that prone monster send forth torrents of fire most dread: a portent wondrous to look upon, a marvel even to hear from those at hand.

strous breath of Typhoeus. The mountain is dismissed with little more than the usual trite epithets—*κίων οὐρανία, νιφοέσσα, πάνετες χιόνος ὀξείας τιθήνα,*[1] of which the last phrase conveys an even more false suggestion than the similar *χιονοτρόφος κιθαίρων.*[2]

Although references to the mountains are even more rare in drama, this particular eruption is 'foretold' by Prometheus :—

> *ἐκραγήσονταί ποτε*
> *ποταμοὶ πυρὸς δάπτοντες ἀγρίαις γνάθοις*
> *τῆς καλλικάρπου Σικελίας λευροὺς γύας·*
> *τοιόνδε Τυφὼς ἐξαναζέσει χόλον*
> *θερμῆς ἀπλήστου βέλεσι πυρπνόου ζάλης*
> *καίπερ κεραυνῷ Ζηνὸς ἠνθρακωμένος.*[3]
>
> Æsch. *P.V.* 367.

Here Ætna has neither part nor lot in the eruption : Typhoeus is made responsible for the whole, in spite of the

[1] Pillar of heaven, snowy, nurse of keen snow through all the year.

[2] Cithæron, nurse of snow.

[3] Streams of fire shall one day break forth, devouring with cruel jaws the level fields of fair-fruited Sicily : such fury shall Typhoeus pour forth, boiling with the missiles of hot, insatiable, fire-breathing spray, for all that the bolt of Zeus has scorched him to ashes.

fact that he has already been reduced to ashes.

The mountains which form the setting of the Prometheus Vinctus are regarded solely as a bleak, inhospitable, and, above all, inhuman, background for the sufferings of the Titan. It is amazing to us that when he is left alone and calls upon the forms of nature around, only the mountains have no place in the circle of silent witnesses to whom he cries :—

> ὦ δῖος αἰθὴρ καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοάι,
> ποταμῶν τε πηγαί, ποντίων τε κυμάτων
> ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, πάμμητόρ τε Γῆ
> καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον Ἡλίου καλῶ.

The rushing of winged winds, the sources of the rivers, the multitudinous laughter of the distant sea, Earth, the Mother of All, and the all-seeing orb of the Sun—all these are to look upon his torments ; but the mountains are degraded by their omission below the very springs which rise upon them.

It may be suggested, as an explanation, that motion formed an essential part of the Greek idea of beauty ; for motion is the outward and visible sign of life.

We may observe that the words δῖος αἰθηρ make the air for a moment the medium of thought, expressed in which 'wind' is the pure and abstract idea of motion.

Prometheus, then, calls for sympathy there alone where motion (or, in the case of Earth, motherhood) gives promise of life and sympathy.

It is interesting, in view of the fact that brightness was also an element in the Greek conception of beauty, to notice that no phase of the sea so combines these two qualities of brightness and motion as its 'multitudinous laughter.' The path of gold of the rising sun may be brighter, a storm more swift in motion, but the perfect combination of the two ideals is here described.

It is natural that brightness or light should be held in such honour, but it is more surprising that beauty should be associated with motion in many cases in which the connection seems to us extremely remote.

The winds are the most conspicuous case of this: the Greeks personified more

winds than they could name points of the compass, and Greek poetry is almost as full of the winds as of the sea.

This is especially marked in the Iliad, where anything which shows the movement of the wind, whether snow, the sea, a cornfield, mist, or clouds, is described again and again, while still air is only mentioned in a few scattered passages.

In one of these snow is described falling through a calm [1] to represent the same showers of stones which had just been compared to snow driven by a tempest ; so it is evident that no importance attaches to the calmness, but both passages convey the sense of motion, though in a slightly different degree.

In another very remarkable passage Homer makes use of stationary clouds round a mountain-top as a type of steadfastness :—

ἀλλ' ἔμενον νεφέλῃσιν ἐοικότες, ἅς τε Κρονίων
νηνεμίης ἔστησεν ἐπ' ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσσιν
ἀτρέμας, ὄφρ' εὔδῃσι μένος Βορέαο καὶ ἄλλων

[1] *Il.* xii. 278.

ζαχρηῶν ἀνέμων, οἵ τε νέφεα σκιόεντα
πνοιῇσιν λιγυρῇσι διασκιδνᾶσιν ἀέντες·
ὣς Δαναοὶ Τρῶας μένον ἔμπεδον οὐδὲ φέβοντο.[1]
Il. v. 522.

But for the most part the mists and the clouds, and even the sea, must be stirred to motion by the wind before they are considered worthy of a Greek poet's attention.

The allusions to the wind-stirred sea are innumerable ; the eddies of war are often compared to a whirlwind ; the misty clouds are broken apart by the wind to reveal, now the dark waves of the sea, now the black peaks of a mountain :—

ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀφ' ὑψηλῆς κορυφῆς ὄρεος μεγάλοιο
κινήσῃ πυκινὴν νεφέλην στεροπηγερέτα Ζεύς,
ἔκ τ' ἔφανεν πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ καὶ πρώονες ἄκροι
καὶ νάπαι, οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερρήγη ἄσπετος
αἰθήρ.[2] *Il.* xvi. 297.

[1] But they stood like mists that Cronos' son setteth in windless air on the mountain-tops, at peace, while the might of the north wind sleepeth and of all the violent winds that blow with keen breath and scatter apart the shadowing clouds. Even so the Danaans withstood the Trojans steadfastly and fled not.

[2] And as when from the high crest of a great hill Zeus, the gatherer of the lightning, hath stirred a dense cloud, and forth shine all the peaks and sharp promontories, and glades, and from heaven the infinite air breaks open.

But here the unmoved rock is merely a background of darkness, in contrast to the light of the clouds, as in the Prometheus it is a background of stillness to the motion of the drama.

We have also, in the theory that motion was essentially connected with the ancient ideal of beauty, some explanation of the fact that rounded heights, clothed with leafy woods where the wind could

> 'fling
> Their placid green to silver of delight.'

seemed more beautiful to the Greeks than scarps of naked rock ; and it is natural that the poets of such an ideal, superficial though it may seem to us, should pass by the silent majesty of Ætna with careless customary epithets until the fires within burst their bounds and poured ostentatiously to the sea in 'eddies of blood-red flame.'

It would seem that the Greeks felt fear and awe alone of the great mountains, as was natural ; for they had no intimate knowledge of them, nor ever sought in the mountains the emotions reserved for

those who match their strength against the great forces of nature. These sensations, in the Greek, were inspired by the sea. But for us the spell of the mountains has grown stronger than that of the waves, for the days are gone in which the sea alone was the home of peril and mystery. We follow the spirit of the Greeks, not the letter of their song ; for though they sang of the sea, it was of her freedom and strength, of her secrets and dangers, and of these much has passed from her. Though we may still cross the seas on which the *Argo* sailed, the greater part of their romance is dead, and the Admiralty charts are its epitaph. Scylla and Charybdis are mapped ; there is, for the vandal to read, a latitude and a longitude of Tyre.

We have still with us the seas of romance, of the Sagas, of the Odyssey, of the Ancient Mariner ; we may still look from

> 'Magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn.'

But these are armchair adventures, fireside voyages : these we must share with

the cripple and the old. We who are young may find in the mountains new worlds of adventure and romance of which the Greeks knew nothing ; but though the beauties, the perils, the rewards are changed, the spirit is the same. No sea hero of the Greeks would be long a stranger among mountaineers : where now but in the mountains should Odysseus wander, πολύτλας, πολύμητις, first in every quest of perilous glory, crowning the hopes of long years of wanderers ?

Our mountain-worship is then no new creed, nor artificial dogma, but a new epiphany of the spirit of Hellas ; and the spirit will be the same, even though the men of later ages find their romance beneath the seas whereon the Greeks sought it, or above the mountains in which our quest is set.

A JOURNEY

BY

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IV. A JOURNEY

EVERY right-minded reader loves a few books in defiance of his own critical canons. One cannot be for ever brooding over the best that is known and thought in the world. Such an uncanonical book to me is Ouida's *Moths*. It was in Dresden, towards the end of May 1908, that I read it for the first time. Summer was in the air, a German summer of blue skies and lazy white clouds drifting to the south. In April, when I arrived, I liked Dresden well enough, was prepared to stop there quietly till October, learning German. But as the cold weather passed, each day left me more restless, cramped by the monotonous, speckless streets, irked by a vision of the summer Alps, a shining mountain wall beyond the southern horizon. The

spirit of romance was upon me, that heedless of realistic truth invests with ideal charm whatever is far off. To such a mood Ouida appealed strongly. For she was perhaps the last of those romantics who created out of the dust and dreariness of eighteenth-century Europe a fairyland of beauty. Germany to her was still the mystic land, dreaming of the Middle Ages; Italy still Mignon's Italy, a place of orange groves and pillared palaces. In the ardour of her revolt against the naturalist school she often, no doubt, became grotesque. Her landscapes are as gloriously unreal as the heroes and heroines who move through them. But what of that? Unreality has its own charm, and even its own truth.

Certainly that May in Dresden I read with uncavilling love all that she had to tell of Ischl, in the Austrian Alps, on whose mountains you may shoot, if you will, the golden eagle and the vulture. And with envy and longing I read how Vere and Correze retreated from the world to an old house, simple yet noble,

with terraces facing the Alps of the Valais. Here on the hills above Sion the air is pure and clear as crystal, strong as wine, the cattle maiden sings on the high grass slopes, and the fresh-water fisherman answers her from his boat on the lake below. In vain I reminded myself that one does not shoot golden eagles, and that the Valaisan peasants, bent by ceaseless labour almost out of human semblance, have neither the leisure nor the wish to carol songs to one another. The divine unreason of romance was too strong for me, quickening and giving colour to a prosaic discontent with a studious life in a too orderly German town.

And so it came about, exactly when and how I forget, that I decided to go to Switzerland : a simple decision, yet thrilling enough to me just free from ten years of school discipline. The German family with which I was staying had fixed on a Bavarian village, Oberkreuzberg by name, for their summer holidays. It seemed to me that this village would be a convenient base from which to make

a hurried dash of two or three days to the Alps. Bavaria, however, was a bigger place than I had thought, and Oberkreuzberg, when I arrived there one evening in the middle of July, seemed desolatingly apart from the world. And though, as the days passed, I grew to love the place, this sense of detachment did not weaken. Oberkreuzberg was set on a spur of the highest mountain in the Bavarian Forest. From the church that crowned the hill the houses fell sharply away to the south on either side of the straggling main street. In all directions, except the north, the outlook was bounded only by the horizon. To the east were the low-lying Bohemian hills, to the south the Danube, and the plain beyond, where Munich lies, and farther still the mountains of Tyrol, visible to the naked eye, so the villagers said, on a clear winter day. And to the south-west, visible to me alone, hung the chain of the Swiss Alps. The wide prospect made the village seem not less but more obscure. To those locked in a narrow valley, however desolate, the

world lies on the other side of the hills. But between Oberkreuzberg and the world lay expanses stretching away to dim horizons.

The villagers took a frank delight and interest in me that further strengthened my feeling of distance from ordinary life. Stray Germans from the north, burghers from Munich, came with each summer, but hitherto no Englishman had visited the village. My arrival was an event. Indeed, Herr Göckeritz, the genial old Saxon with whom I stayed in Dresden, told me that it had been mentioned in a sermon as a token of Oberkreuzberg's spreading fame. I was a reversed Haroun-al-Raschid, important because unknown. The village children followed me about curiously, and when I shut myself in my room clamoured outside till appeased with largesse of pfennig pieces. On the grass in front of my window lay logs ready for building purposes, and the Annas, Marias, and Babettes of the village, small bare-legged girls, used to disport themselves there every afternoon, chasing each other from log to log with reckless

agility. In the fields near by I could see their elders working, bent battered peasants.

Outside the village were scattered some large boulders, and on the flat top of one of these I would spend an hour or two each afternoon, reading and meditating. The blue distances troubled me with the vague longings which had stirred to song many a little German poet in the days before Bismarck. The melodies of their heart's unrest are mere sentimental vapourings to the modern critic. What does it all mean, he asks, this talk of wandering, knapsack on back, into the wide world to seek the blue flower of romance on the blue hills of the horizon? In the same spirit Leslie Stephen, the high-priest of orthodox mountain-worship, found Byron's Swiss poetry cheap and insincere. As a hard-headed agnostic, suspicious of emotion not founded on fact, he resented no doubt such verse as :—

> 'The fish swam by the castle wall,
> And they seemed joyous each and all.
> The eagle rode the rising blast,
> Methought he never flew so fast.'

This eagle, flying past Chillon to the mountains of Ouida's Ischl, rode a purely romantic blast, and was visible only to romantic eyes. The orthodox climber, however, does not care for romance. His love of the mountains is based, like domestic love, on knowledge and understanding. It is reasoned, almost respectable. But the visions of Byron and of the German Romantics have the magic of first love, passionately adoring what is unknown and out of reach. It is profitless to weigh romance against reason. I can only say that I never loved the mountains better than in those long afternoons when they shone before my spirit, hidden from the eyes of my body.

Cynara, when she reads these pages, will dismiss all this talk of yearnings, spiritual unrest, and what not as literary verbiage. And indeed I might never have left Bavaria, had it not been for memories of the previous summer at Champex, where I had rowed and climbed and quarrelled with Cynara, and where Cynara's sister, who cultivated

a conscientious contempt for men in general, and myself in particular, had stung my young soul by insisting that there were in me the makings of a blameless curate. This summer they had gone to Saas Fee, and Cynara wrote to me from there, praising the place ardently, and ending her letter with the careless-cruel hope that I would like Bavaria. Like Bavaria! And the letter had reached me on the damp, dark evening of my arrival at Oberkreuzberg. The need for a personal protest reinforcing my desire towards the Alps settled any lingering hesitation. I had four pounds with me. Before leaving Dresden I wrote, in the hope of increasing this sum, an essay for a competition in the *Saturday Westminster*. The subject was, 'On making a Fool of Oneself,' and I treated the theme with a humour which at the time seemed quite delicious. In retrospect I am astonished that they gave me an honourable mention. Cruder methods of raising money proved more successful, and a generous uncle solved all material difficulties.

Two evenings before I started I went with Herr Göckeritz after supper to one of the village inns. The landlord played the zither, and Herr Göckeritz, after telling a few anecdotes rather broad than long, sang a little wistful ditty of a poor fiddler wandering through the world in sunshine and rain, with no friend but his fiddle :—

'Und wenn einst vor der letzten Tür
Mein letztes Lied verklang,
Und wenn an meiner Geige mir
Die letzte Saite sprang,
Ach, nur ein Plätzchen gönnt mir dann
An stiller Friedhofswand,
Wo von der Wandrung ruhen kann
Der arme Musikant.'

The whole essence of that lovable absurd German romanticism is in these lines. They haunted me on my journey, and long after, and even now have power to quicken the memory of those days. As we walked home beneath a quiet starry sky I told Herr Göckeritz that I was going to Switzerland. His only comment was an offer to lend me some money. Life is like that.

It was shortly before five o'clock

in the morning that I set out on my journey. For economy's sake I had decided to walk to a station fifteen miles away, thus saving, as I later realised, a little more than sixpence. My clothes were in a Gladstone bag which I hung over my shoulders, pulling the straps into position with a handkerchief tied across my chest. And so, a curious figure, I swung down a path that led to the main road through a little wood. Before entering the wood I turned round for a last look at the village. It seemed in the still dawn a living thing, sad, and lonely, and patient, like its inhabitants. For the moment I felt sorry to go. It was unlikely that Saas Fee would welcome me with wonder and delight. It was probable that neither Cynara nor Cynara's sister would regard me with the affectionate awe of Maria, Anna, and Babette. However, I did not return.

The memory of that walk has become like the memory of a dream. When I think of it I understand those words of Sir Thomas Browne: 'My life has been a miracle of thirty years; which to relate

were not a history, but a piece of poetry, and would sound like a fable.' He was thinking, I fancy, not of any events suitable as titles for the chapters in a biography, but of stray incidents unrelated to the main course of his life. Such stray incidents have a magical quality. They might have happened, you feel, to a stranger in some forgotten age, so unattached to ordinary life do they seem. By a lucky chance they happened to you, and you remember them with a love and gratitude incomprehensible to others. In those hours the melody of your own little life sounded in accord with the universal harmony, and the echo of that music never dies away.

I passed on through waking villages. On either side of the road were low-lying hills, where trees half hid ruined castles. Were they really castles? The early morning turned everything to magic, and I seemed to walk in a dream-country of the Middle Ages, my journey a pilgrimage, and my goal a noble one, though the way was over-easy. With

the tenth mile the enchantment vanished, as dawn dissolved into day. I became conscious of my Gladstone bag, and the handkerchief across my chest cramped me like a steel band. And so, when I came over a small rising and saw before me the factory chimneys of Regen, my destination, I welcomed modern ugliness with relief, and pressed forward to the squalor of a train. The journey to Munich lasted for six stifling summer hours. Opposite me in the railway carriage sat an old woman, wrinkled and furrowed, incessantly munching ham sandwiches. I suffered agonies of vicarious thirst, and being a teetotaller found no assuagement in the draughts of beer which she drank at every station. At last the train dawdled into Munich. The weather had changed, and I spent seven hours taking shelter from sudden showers, and brooding on the probability that for the next few days the Swiss mountains would be hidden in clouds. A night's journey brought me to Zurich, dull and dismal in the early morning. By this time I had become an advanced realist, with a super-

shavian hatred of romance in every sense of that word.

This was the lowest ebb, and now romance came flooding back. Lausanne at noon was lovely. There was the white house where Cynara used to live ; old memories quickened at the sight. Martigny shone like a dream against the Champex mountains. And then, as the train rushed up the Rhone valley, I leant from the window, and the trees and the bushes bending before the wind seemed swaying with my ecstasy.

Late in the afternoon I left Stalden for the last stage of my journey, a fifteen-mile ascent to Saas Fee. Beyond the bridge near the village a young climber overtook me as I stopped to readjust my bag. It appeared that he too had come from Munich, that we had a common friend, and that he wished to make the acquaintance of Cynara and her sister. So we walked on together. Behind us the Bietschorn shone a golden peak in the sunset. On each side of the narrow, high valley fell numberless cascades, pouring into the central torrent.

Yes, this was Switzerland at last, far lovelier with its roaring waters and scent of pine-trees than in the dim visions of those stifling Dresden days. I had reached the blue hills of the horizon, and the sinking sun had turned them to gold.

We came to Saas Grund at eve, and the last steep pull to Saas Fee was made in the dark. As we entered the village my companion left me, turning to the left towards his hotel. I stopped a minute to recover my breath. It was the first of August, the day of the national festival. All the hotels were illuminated; men and women crowded the balconies, in fancy dress, and the crowd below ran here and there, laughing and chattering. A fantastic sight; for a moment I was embarrassed by the idea that they were celebrating my arrival. Moving forward diffidently, I entered the Hôtel du Dom by the cellar door, and walked cautiously upstairs. There was no more glory in me, and, except for my anxiety to avoid Cynara, I was not conscious of any particular feeling.

THE MOUNTAINEER AND THE PILGRIM

BY

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V. THE MOUNTAINEER AND THE PILGRIM

I

'THE pilgrim,' says a modern writer, 'is one who has made an appointment with his higher self, to meet at some distant date and place.' He sets aside for a season his present interests and the call of work, intent on satisfying that part of his nature which is in danger of suffering from starvation. Therefore, with staff in hand, he turns his back on the familiar, to take, in strange places, something more than a holiday. For the pilgrim is no mere holiday-maker ; he is rather the ideal traveller, journeying towards a noble end, and happy in this knowledge ; and to attain this end he welcomes the prospect of passing through fire and water.

The circumstances and spirit of this

age do not encourage the pilgrim's existence ; yet enthusiasm and endurance are virtues which do not perish with the pilgrim. Moreover, even if our ideal traveller is found no more, many find an ideal form of travel in mountaineering. There may exist, therefore, some corresponding virtue, some relic of the pilgrim's security of mind, by reason of which we may call our mountaineer a pilgrim.

What manner of man is this new pilgrim who frequents the mountain-side ? Can he indeed be called pilgrim, unless perhaps he is following in the steps of Boniface of Asti, who first ascended a snowy mountain and built a chapel for worshippers ? Do we ever find the counterpart of Chaucer's Knight and Poure Persoun, or even of his Manciple and Miller ?

In truth, the perfect mountain pilgrim is as rare as was the genuine humble-minded visitor of shrines. We must look to the Japanese climbers for the finest example :—

> ' Clad in white, symbolical of the purity to which they aspire, these

ascetic mountaineers make their way, sometimes at the end of several weeks of walking, to the top of their peak. After worship at the shrine of their mountain divinity, they withdraw to some secluded spot.'

Yet even if such a type be exceptional, there may still lie hidden some of the pilgrim's worth in the ordinary climber. With the latter, as with the older pilgrims, we must separate the sheep from the goats. Pilgrimages were made, not only for spiritual benefit, but also for boasting, as an excuse for an exchange of masters, and in certain instances to annoy the king. Nobody climbs, as far as I know, to annoy any king ; but the presence of many men in the Alps and elsewhere is not easily explained without harsh words. For the climber is notoriously an unsatisfactory person, not only to the uninitiated, but to his fellow-enthusiasts.

It is open to all men to become mountain pilgrims. Many, however, in whom the Hill Difficulty arouses no fear, will be content to stop by the wayside and

wrestle daily with some Apollyon of a 'rock problem.' There are some who find all mountains dull which have no wrong way up, who will talk for hours about a billiard-table traverse, and dismiss the ascent of Mont Blanc from Chamonix in a few contemptuous words; and if they succeed in such endeavours, they are for hailing themselves the lords of all the earth. Had Aristotle witnessed their labours he might have remarked: 'Such things even a slave may do'; and if I had the arrangement of Dante's Hell I should put them lower than the man who descended the Breithorn playing on a mouth-organ, although at the time it seemed that he

> 'Tooke out his black trumpe of bras,
> That fouler than the Devil was.'

Let such climbers remember that Apollyon can break out into a grievous rage, and that he is a very subtle thrower of darts, or even stones; and note that among later Alpine disasters a great majority have occurred in places of extreme difficulty, to the detriment of a noble sport.

Yet admitting the existence of pleasure in such unstable equilibrium, we may still criticise its quality. True pleasure, says the pilgrim, cannot exist without peace of mind in some degree ; and few minds can remain unruffled on the wall of the Devil's Kitchen. Indeed, such vain seeking after pleasure is often, like Bunthorne's Mediævalism, 'born of a morbid love of admiration.' Christian's fight with Apollyon was merely an incident of travel, which no doubt ceased to interest him ; his way was beset by difficulties sufficient to occupy his energy. Similarly the mountain pilgrim constantly seeks fresh fields for activity, and will gladly turn his back on the 'specialists' ; for these men climb as it were for gain, nursing within themselves a spirit of competition in their struggle with the force of gravity. Nor can they look with pleasure upon their failures, as can their less ambitious brethren. It is among the latter that we shall find the spirit of the mountain pilgrim which caused Kim's Lama to exclaim :—

'Oh ! the hills and the snow upon the hills !'

The wise man will not wholly judge the mountaineer while he is on the mountain-side. Some enthusiastic climbers maintain that two moments alone afford pleasure in an expedition : when the summit is reached, and when the valley is regained. Now, these words may confound the sharp-witted philosophers of the plain, but the climber knows that they contain a world of truth, and that a great joy lies in retrospection, for which he will endure many hours of tribulation. In this retrospective attitude we shall find the climber at his best ; his attention is relaxed, and he is free to summon back the greater moments of the past day. Meet him in the evening on the terrace at Breuil, when the bowlers have at length ceased their bowling, looking down at the lights in the hollow below : you will find in him much of the true pilgrim spirit. Further, the pilgrim proper would be the first to recognise a fellow-traveller in this mountain wanderer. He sees that on the mountains also another may meet his higher self. The difference between the two lies only

in environment. To both alike the end is denied without the struggle, and the generous pilgrim will not trouble to contrast the excellences of their ways. The two will shake hands in satisfaction that the old self is no longer in dangerous proximity. But our generous pilgrim, judging men by his own standard, is a stern critic, and does not suffer fools gladly.

II

We are apt to picture the mediæval pilgrim as a man travelling in some ease and comfort. The nine and twenty sundry folk that met one April in the Tabard Inn seem a well-living band :—

'And wel we weren esed atte beste.'

But those who went on a longer journey encountered many hardships. The English pilgrim to the shrine of St. James at Compostella usually travelled by sea, in cramped quarters on a small boat ; on which, besides the necessity of crossing the Bay of Biscay, he frequently found an unsympathetic captain :—

'Hale the bowelyne! now, vere the shete!
Cooke, make redy anoon our mete,
Our pylgryms have no lust to ete,
I pray God yeve hem rest!'

And at the worst moment up comes a hearty sailor, shouting: 'Cheer up! in a moment we shall be in a storm.' On the journey from Venice to Jaffa, says a fellow of Eton, a sharp look-out must be kept on the captain, lest he give you bad meat; the pilgrim must take with him hens and chickens; on arrival at Jaffa there will be a hideous scramble for mules, and your mule-man will expect a tip.

The pilgrim who endured these discomforts not only gained much spiritual benefit for himself, he benefited also his fellow-men. On his return he must have been amazingly good company, and brought a fresh interest into his neighbours' lives, who vowed to perform a similar journey, profiting by their forerunner's experience. The lot of those fortunate ones who climbed in the 'sixties was very similar. They set out to explore some little-known district, thinking

more of passing from place to place than of ascending a peak. They possessed the pilgrim spirit in the unity of their object, in their endurance, and especially in their attitude towards adversity and failure. They travelled of set purpose to a comparatively barbarous land, where often there was no safe lodging for the night :—

'What care I for a goose-feather bed,
With a sheet turned down so bravely—O!'

Moreover, they went out amid the jeers of their friends, and it needed more than ordinary faith to confirm them in their search for this mysterious good. They had, through hours of toil and vexation, the doubtful joy of discovering a thousand errors in the map. The modern climber owes a great debt to their exploration ; for although he may find a subject of conversation in his sufferings from tourists and trains, he finds better paths and better inns, and stands far less chance of a night upon the rocks.

The gods of the 'sixties did not exhaust the Alps. Rather, they created a new

form of enthusiasm in the world. Alpine climbing has developed rapidly, and on somewhat similar lines to the public schools. It is no longer necessary to rise at five A.M. and break the ice before washing; therefore a larger number of boys can enjoy the full benefits of school life. Climbing is now no longer reserved for those who have leisure and money; it has become the most democratic of sports, thanks largely to the labours of the early explorers. The fact that the mountains have been, as it were, thrown open to the public has brought a wondrous amount of interest into many colourless lives.

Some day this enthusiasm, which is discernible even in the mad rush of tourists, may die out. At present it flourishes alarmingly, with attendant evils; but the purpose which first drew men to the Alps fifty years ago and more remains unspoiled even by guide-books and tourists:—

'Low as the singer lies in the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring the swains together.'

The air on the mountains, the need

for endurance, the appointment with the higher self, continue and will continue to make their appeal. Further, in spite of railways and huts, discomforts abound ; for the sun still shines as brightly as in 1860, and the labour of wading in soft snow does not decrease with the ages. In this era of enlightenment there is not denied to men the privilege of being dirty ; the chalet which flows with milk for the descending climber still recalls memories of the Augean stables and makes one sigh for Heracles. Straw is the order in most club huts, and the climber must prepare his own food. So long as discomforts exist the pilgrim's endurance is demanded, and there still remain plenty of annoyances to make the traveller 'nasty, brutish and short.'

Again, it is not only by physical trials such as these, but by mental trials also, that the virtues of the pilgrim are called into being. Christian, more fortunate than most guideless wanderers, dropped his burden early, and he becomes a more interesting as well as a finer person when he is busy fighting some subtle tempta-

tion of mind. The mountain pilgrim will have to fight as hard for his peace of mind; he is a prey, as was Christian, to 'the carnal arguments of one Mr. Worldly Wiseman.' The latter finds his way, in body as well as in spirit, to the most secluded corners of the Alps. He is certainly what many would call a 'centrist,' except that he gave up climbing at an early age. He delights in pointing out the futility of risking an otherwise valuable neck in the pursuit of discomfort and vain glory; in his view, the climber has nothing to lose and everything to gain by shirking all difficulties. He is very deft in forcing his convictions on others, and his arguments will recur to the traveller with distressing force at inconvenient moments. He knows that almost every climber has on occasion vowed never to climb again, and it is a constant marvel to him that so many break this vow within a few hours' time. It needs all the climber's resolution, supported by a prospect of sensuous delights as a reward of labour, to repel his promptings; but it is a great

joy to confute him 'ambulando.' He is fighting a losing battle, which has lasted fifty years; but although there is little hope of victory, the battle is never entirely lost so long as the tale of man's slackness is undiminished.

III

The pilgrim of the Middle Ages had many shrines which he might choose to visit. To this shrine ran a good road when once the mountains were crossed; to another there was the drawback of a sea voyage; at a third shrine the good saint was a potent healer, and the distance to be covered would afford a good penance for the pilgrim's ill-deeds; moreover, he would find free entertainment at most places on the way. Thus there was food for absorbing reflection before setting out, and much thought needed for the details of the way. I fancy the Lord of Anglure-sur-Aube must have taken an astonishing interest in organising the long journey for his large troop of pilgrims. Yet the pious pilgrim may

have regarded this interest with suspicion, as enticing the mind from thoughts of the true object of the pilgrimage—too much thought for the morrow.

Likewise the modern mountaineer is free to ponder and make his choice, having before him a district of many thousand square miles from which to select. He enjoys, therefore, all the pilgrim's freedom of choice ; and from this freedom a demon of restlessness arises which the pilgrim would not encourage in himself.

The truth is that the mountaineer does encourage this restless feeling in himself, notwithstanding the pilgrim's protests. He welcomes the arrival of this fatal gad-fly which drives him yearly southward. And whereas the pilgrim, being no faddist, accepts what comes in a spirit of cheerfulness, and looks askance at anything that may vex his peace of mind, the mountaineer knows that only after diligent search can he secure the best which the mountains have to offer. He is indeed a genuine faddist in planning. He chooses his route with as

much care as he chooses a companion. He will sit for hours or even days of his spare time before a heap of maps and guide-books ; for every expedition chosen he will have rejected twenty, forming his imaginary tour by a process of elimination rather than of selection. Only when he is thoroughly familiar with every corner of a district does he consent to choose his peak or pass. Three things are necessary for the ideal expedition : a great variety in the ascent, a fine view (I would instance the Aletschhorn or the Tour St. Pierre), and an easy descent, preferably over snow. This combination is not found on every mountain ; it is therefore all the more fascinating to seek for such by map and guide-book ; and when this ideal expedition is at length discovered the climber will anticipate it with pleasure for months beforehand—thus forestalling the joys of summer, and with far less searching of heart than in the event. In this discontent with his own planning he gains an interest and occupation, without any of the pilgrim's prickings of conscience.

The latter, however, has also certain advantages. He retains his peace of mind far more easily than does the mountaineer. He is free to rest when he may choose, to lie throughout the noon-day heat—'patulae recubans sub tegmine fagi'; nor does he care one rap about 'times.' To the mountaineer, on the contrary, a long halt is not often permitted; for he must always keep some spare time before him, lest some sudden obstacle leave him for the night on the mountain-side. So long as the rope is still round his waist he is not often entirely free from some anxiety, and he remains somewhat restless in spirit until the path leading valleywards is reached. It is therefore not surprising to find the most calm of men turn quick-tempered upon the mountains, a state of mind which agrees ill with their enthusiasm. It is difficult to explain away this fault as superficial; for the serene pilgrim can point to a hundred instances where the climber was in such a bad temper that he would allow no one else their share in the hard work.

But if a slight matter can upset him, his good temper returns also as quickly as it departs; and if you keep out of his way while busy and meet him jogging peacefully down through the thickening pine woods towards evening, you will find him as cheerful a companion as the wanton and merry Friar.

Again, both in the pilgrim and the mountaineer there is a delight in the unexpected; which is a remarkable thing, since the mountaineer, unlike the pilgrim, has chosen what he is to expect in detail. The pilgrim sets out to bear cheerfully such adventures as may lie in Fortune's lap; the mountaineer has been planning for months, and a cherished scheme may fail owing to bad weather or other mischance. However, he takes a certain pleasure in failure, for he has discovered two benefits to be derived from it. That which is unaccomplished one year may be carried out at a later date, until which time the hope of success makes ample amends for the failure; also an unsuccessful attempt often leaves a greater stamp on the

memory, when the mountain is seen in wrathful mood. The climber may praise himself for perseverance or prudence, throwing all blame upon the shoulders of Chance. He goes out, indeed, half prepared to fail; he is extravagantly thankful for small mercies received; he adopts a somewhat pessimistic attitude, since

> 'Luck's a chance, but trouble sure,
> I'd face it as a wise man should,
> And train for ill and not for good.'

Some might see in him the vices of the born grumbler; for with him the weather is rarely perfect, and when perfect it is too often about to break. But it is part of the climber's vanity to be more weather-wise than Nature herself; and to all appearance he mildly resents even a change for the good which does not accord with his prophecy.

Further, the unexpected is not always evil; the climber may stumble upon a new route, and even the most hardened scoffer at such things will admit a secret delight in reading his name in the pages of *Conway and Coolidge*. The unexpected

is always at hand. I went up one day to the hut on the south-west ridge of the Matterhorn, in a wind sufficient to take the horns off the oxen; and that night I lay awake, like Strepsiades,

ἐν πέντε σισύραις ἐγκεκορδυλημένος

listening to the wind howling and the clatter of stones and ice falling from the Great Tower upon the roof. Next morning the wind dropped at sunrise, and a warm, cloudless day followed, of that wonderful clearness which foretells the advent of bad weather. One more instance of the unexpected—and in this I have my justification: that day we were in a sense pilgrims, for we set out to discover a route by which men might pass direct from the Ober Steinberg to the Concordia. We started in light, rolling mist, and towards sunrise looked down upon a cloud-sea hiding the deep-cut valley of Lauterbrunnen. Then crossing a world of stones we climbed a steep, short glacier, and over a heap of avalanche-debris reached the lowest rocks of our mountain, the Mittaghorn. Here we

had expected difficulty with a steep band of rock, but passed rapidly upwards without check to where the angle eased off. Then came trouble, for the rock became of a loose slaty texture, in places covered with ice. Higher up matters improved, until we reached the foot of a great overhanging wall of red rock, which turned us left along a narrow ledge and round jutting corners, to where a steep ice gully cut through the wall. I was left standing in a vast ice step, from which I could see nothing but the leader's foot searching now and then for some cranny in the rock. Below me a great ice slope ran down with alarming steepness and then dipped over, beyond which I saw the green valley and our hotel; in the far distance I could see the ripples sparkling on the Lake of Thun, and above the sunlight was playing on a patch of rocks which had come no nearer after two hours' hard work. On such occasions time passes slowly to those who only stand and wait, and I was right glad when they hoisted me over the rock wall and into the sunlight

once more. To our disgust the summit lay still far off to our left, and to attain it we had to follow a narrow ridge of sloppy snow; on the far side of the peak we found crusted snow, to complete our tribulation. Thus we found both good and evil unexpectedly, and like Christian fell 'from running to going, and from going to clambering upon hands and knees,' until we wished ourselves trippers once more.

It is, above all, when the climber passes from one valley to another that the unexpected is liable to occur. He then experiences all the pilgrim's joy of wandering, the uncertainty of the night's lodging, the pleasure of tracing out the next day's ascent on the far hillside. He will follow the line of path through the pine wood, and train his powers of observation, learning, moreover, to trust his own eyes in preference to the map. Though he may not see cities, he will see many men, and will find hospitality as unselfish as in the days when all travellers and pilgrims were objects of pity. He travels from

place to place with a pilgrim's desire to find the ideal peak or valley. There are not many that find it; and this failure in the search is due partly to the climber's own natural restlessness, partly to his intense desire to see if the Happy Valley may not lie just round the corner. He feeds this discontent with his present circumstances, knowing that in so doing he gets the greatest joy. He is in no hurry to find this Happy Valley; nor, if he never find it, will he consider that he has climbed in vain.

IV

Both pilgrim and mountaineer may claim for themselves the virtue of enthusiasm. But if they be humble-minded men they will not deny the possible existence of other and nobler forms of enthusiasm. If this virtue of theirs be not identical with all excellence, it must be capable of definition or analysis in terms other than itself. The pilgrim's answer is easily given: he goes out to seek recreation, in the fullest sense

of the word, to introduce a new element into his life. 'I go to free myself from the Wheel of Things by a broad and open road.' Less easy to define is the τέλος of the mountaineer; under no moral compulsion, he endures the pilgrim's hardships for a less definite end, yet returns year after year in search of discomfort. A writer endeavouring to analyse this enthusiasm has put it down as a mild madness, a drawback to mountain-climbing. It is in great part an enthusiasm for past and future: put the mountaineer among his hills, and he is no sooner in full training than he begins to anticipate with joy his return to civilisation. Place him once more at home, and he will be eager to return to his old haunts, will busy himself in planning for the next year. He climbs, as it seems, against his will.

Yet he sets out willingly in search of recreation, knowing that he will certainly find it through hours of toil. He finds also a very full pleasure, forgetting readily the early start and all the thousand inconveniences which afford copy for the

scribbler. The moon in the pine woods, the early dawn in the upper snow, the descent of Mont Blanc towards the sunset are not for valley-dwellers; and to attain these rewards the mountaineer welcomes the opportunity of an enforced self-denial:—

'Carnis terat Superbiam
Potus cibique parcitas.'

He shares also the pilgrim's joy of solitude and contemplation in the long hours of silence, and the joy of friendly conversation with all manner of men at the close of day. He regards no day, however trying, as wasted which is spent above snow-line, and next day he can take his ease in the valley with a clear conscience. 'It is pleasant,' says Leslie Stephen, 'to lie on one's back in a bed of rhododendrons, and look up to a mountain-top peering at one from above a bank of cloud; but it is pleasantest when one has qualified oneself for repose by climbing the peak the day before, and becoming familiar with its terrors and its beauties.' Herein lies a point of resem-

blance between pilgrim and mountaineer : to feel the need of qualifying for this repose, which loses half its value when it is not the reward of labour.

Finally, the mountaineer will learn two secrets by experience. He will discover the secret of those philosophers that have dominion over the young, that one may argue (on mountains as elsewhere) from any given premise with equally convincing logic to two contrary conclusions. This is the essence of the mountaineer's freedom of mind ; for wherever he may find himself he can advance many reasons for or against every proposal, as conscience-free as the pilgrim himself, calling in prudence to support equally his bold or his lazy wishes ; which is a dangerous thing for all climbers, as Mr. Worldly Wiseman knows. He will learn also the secret of a true holiday, which the pilgrim possesses : that this lies, not in the abandonment of everything familiar in search of distraction, but in taking up some fresh and absorbing interest, which will continue from one holiday to another.

PASSES

BY

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VI. PASSES

THERE are few people who are not at heart geographers; the passion may be repressed or forgotten, but it is probably ready to reappear, and elderly persons often surprise themselves no less than their youthful companions by the zeal with which they attempt to mould the face of the earth by amateur engineering: it is in early years, however, that the passion inevitably shows itself.

It was the chief delight of a community of cousins, brought together each summer at the sea-side, to spend as much of the day as the day left possible in altering in every conceivable manner, by dams, diversions, or channels, the geography of a wet strip of sand, which the tide in its next advance would restore to its old conformation. Sometimes operations, more ambitious in the

durability of their materials, were begun in a stream inland; pools were made, and the stream diverted into a new, or perhaps a long disused, channel. Sometimes, too, a party of us would explore along a stream to its source, which we rarely reached, since even small streams are apt to extend farther than childish zeal will endure, though fired by the ambition of finding a real spring, entrancing to the dwellers among sluggish south-country rivers.

But it was with our first visit to the Alps that the revelation came. Here were streams without number, small enough to follow, during the course of a long picnicking day, up to real authentic springs, which bubbled clear and cold from the ground at our feet. Geography could be made and altered; our dams made pools where none were before, or caused the paths and water-courses of the neighbourhood to exchange their functions, so that the inhabitants of lonely chalets found their water supply miraculously curtailed, and visited the culprits up above with guttural wrath.

Watersheds, things hard for the lowlander to comprehend—mere imaginary lines drawn across gently swelling sand-ridges or downs—gained new life when seen as the jagged ridge of the Engelhörner, or the great line of green hills north from the Schwartzhorn to the bastion of Tschingli over Haslithal.

With the magic of water was joined the mystery of the other side. If we followed any of the streams up and up, to the Engelhörner or the Schöniwanghörner, whither should we see the torrents going, when the rain that fell on the mountains streamed down the far side? The quest of the geographer was made concrete; and as water has been the chief power in the making of geography, so it is first to start the quest in a child's imagination, and the best guide in the knight-errantry of childhood. But the streams that fell from the precipices of the Engelhörner and Wellhorn pointed out a course beyond our ambitions; not yet could we aspire to be climbers, and they still guard their secret, though ready to yield it, now the time has come, to

an ambition strengthened with strengthened limbs. Even the grass slopes of the Schöniwanghörner were too high to cross; but the great day came when we started at six, with two mules, to cross the Great Scheidegg, so long a barrier at the head of the valley slung between Wetterhorn and Schwartzhorn, with Grindelwald as our object.

It was a water-following on a great scale; we started with the sound of the Reichenbach falls in our ears, and followed along the line of least resistance, made by the stream. Still before breakfast we passed the Schwartzwald, where the stream was already shorn of so much of its strength that it could be harnessed and made to pass through hollowed half tree-trunks to do the work of a saw-mill. Higher up was the region of bogs and grass slopes, each few hundred yards sending its half-buried tinkling trickle to join the head waters of the river itself. And then, without warning, the path took a final zig, and brought us to the top; and for the first time we saw part of the land of the other waters,

with the other glaciers and snow-fields, grass peaks and stony ones, which gave them birth. We saw how the valleys bent round to Thun and Brienz, how the valley of Lauterbrunnen and the peak of the Jungfrau fitted on to a world whose horizon had been suddenly enlarged ; looking for those places above all which had gained special interest and familiarity from the pictured slips in our chocolate packets.

That evening, after a hot trudge up from Grindelwald, and a cool descent along the home stream that somehow rested our tired limbs, we returned to Rosenlaui with a new sense of expansion and a vague feeling of the coherence of things, for the dead lines of the map had become actual and living before our eyes. Yet this feeling soon gave place to the disappointing yet somehow thrilling thought, that by enlarging our horizon we had only left ourselves ringed about by a wider circle of other sides, making it still less likely than before that we should ever solve the abiding questions of our childhood.

For four years the Alps remained a memory and a hope, till in 1907 the long horrors of the Certificate Examination were followed by the thrill of the night journey, enjoyed to the full owing to a constitutional inability to sleep, and a drive from Martigny to the upper part of the Val de Bagnes, a shut-in and self-centred valley presided over by the Combin. It was here that Italy became identified with the other side. Here I was first initiated as a climber, and taken up the Ruinette ; and for two lazy hours on the top I watched the Italian mountains raise themselves up from the ever-thickening screen of mist with which the Lombard plains seemed to be hiding their secret. A few weeks later came twenty minutes' actual walking on Italian soil, between the Great St. Bernard and the Col de Fenêtre. Italy lay at our feet, brought near to us by the road winding down visibly to Aosta, and by the first Italian notices of 'Caccia Riservata,' as well as by the southward-flowing water.

That day saw, too, the registering of a

vow, fulfilled in the next year, to visit the country of the Gran Paradiso and the Grivola. Peaks there and around Mont Blanc fell before our onslaught, and we grew to be hardened climbers; while passes became mere incidents in the journey between one peak and another. But Geography was roused from her hiding-place by a walking tour two years later—part of the regular 'Tour of Mont Blanc' from Chamonix to Champex with variations. The Col du Bonhomme was unsatisfactory because, after much display, it failed to turn a watershed at the first attempt, and, after including the Col des Fours, left us still in the Rhone basin, with the Col de la Seigne between us and Italy. Geography was displeased, but her craving after completeness was satisfied by the long drive from Aosta up the Italian side of the Great St. Bernard. Two known regions were linked up, and of the remembered dips and corners of the road seen from the top, each had had its answer. Also I had a sense of triumph in having cheated the powers of the universe by taking several ounces of

water in my soaked clothes across the watershed to the Swiss side of the Col de Fenêtre.

The passion still retained its childish power, but in a wider sense. By being children we had been nearly in the position of the first primitive inhabitants of such a country of mountain and valley : to them peaks are haunts of terror and danger, the parents of all the powers of destruction—winds, avalanches, and lightnings—which descend upon them ; their situation makes them geographers by profession : at first their eyes are turned down stream, and communication only extends over the main valley and its tributaries, till a more venturesome spirit arises and uses the water as his guide, but now, ascending it, takes the line of least resistance over the passes to the peoples of the neighbouring river-basins ; and ancient legends of hill tribes give a prominent place to watersheds, and great heroes are often made to conquer a monster which has been terrorising the valley, and fling him into some great lake at the head of the waters of the

next basin. Did he not embody the terror of those frowning walls, and was not his conquest a victory indeed?

Thus the passes gained in importance, while the peaks were afar off and terrible: they were already in use when there filtered through to Herodotus across section after section of trade route the tradition, confused in its long journey, of a town of Pyrene and a river Alpis; when a new wave of inhabitants, scarcely pushing communication between valley and valley themselves, used their mountain hardiness to extract toll from the Roman merchants whose enterprise brought them across the St. Bernard and the Mont Cenis to Vienna and Lugdunum; and each traveller added to their importance and fame, while the local paths were linked up into great highways, joining country to country, and shrine to shrine, making a way for invasions, for pilgrims, or for traders. The pass where Xenophon's men cried θάλασσα! θάλασσα! possesses a reality and interest of its own, not shared by the almost laughable description of the mythical

peaks of Krophi and Mophi in Herodotus. But for us, even as children, there was a difference: the prowess and achievements of our elders made impossible the fear which our ancestors felt even for 'Helm Crag, Helvellyn, and Butterlip Howe'—the last-named a small wooded eminence about two hundred feet high—yet we lacked the spiritual and bodily pride which the attainer of summits must possess. What climber has not known the moment when this has failed him suddenly, and he has realised the impudence of his presence among the mountain sanctuaries and of his trial of strength face to face with the mountain's bulk; when he either expiates the crime of his intrusion by a great and tranquillising humility, or struggles, only to find all he sees assume a mask of grinning hatefulness? The attainer of summits follows a way which, even if definite, is none the less new and none the less formidable to each successive user: we children, like them, were pass-goers, enterers of a sanctuary of a different kind, one hallowed by the slow toil of

generations, where the mountains could not resent intrusion, since it was the mark of their community of life with the humble folk whom they supported.

Even then we were no longer geographers by profession, still less now, when the Alps are to us no longer a barrier to be forced, but the playground of Europe, whither we in our sophisticated age make trains convey us; and it seems as if the amateur geography of our childhood were a mere survival, to be put away together with other childish things when we grow up to be 'modern men,' with the climber's devotion to peaks, and the true modern appreciation of mountains. Shall we not come to treat passes as highest minima instead of lowest maxima, and so despise them; and will not our new mystical attitude make the partial survival in us of primitive man a bar to the growth of a right spirit?

For your true mountain lover professes himself a mystic: he is one of those that 'live by places,' and he waits upon the fruition of those moments in which his

senses give him a sudden feeling of fellowship with his surroundings, when

> 'A gentle shock of mild surprise
> Has carried far into his heart the voice
> Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
> Would enter unawares into his mind
> With all its solemn imagery. . . .'

These moments, he will tell you, are an end in themselves, and not pursued for any moral strengthening of our social fibre for fighting the battles of life. Only in isolation from his fellows, from science, and from the interference of intelligence, when he adopts a 'wise passivity' of mere sensation, is this sense of fellowship granted him; and among the peaks, under the spell of his rhythmical bodily movements, he and the silent mountains stand face to face, as pure living sensation and lifeless matter, and each finds in the other a mysterious completion.

This is the creed he professes; but how rarely comes one who can practise it or achieve its enjoyment. Nearly all indeed share in some degree this passion for fellowship; nearly all live their lives as

much by places as by people. The contrast is put by Wordsworth in one of the poems on the Naming of Places, that called 'Joanna's rock':—

'Amid the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth; and there you learned,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living beings by your own fireside
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow towards the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves.'

They are the extremes: Joanna cannot understand the frame of mind at all; Wordsworth is, in this mood, the perfect example of the life lived in the fellowship of inanimate things.

But to few is the fellowship thus whole-heartedly given. For this it is necessary to be a true æsthete (using the word in an unprejudiced sense), so that in the one indivisible act of seeing, the one great moment, a whole message is revealed. But life refuses to divide itself into such moments; we cannot isolate ourselves either from the continuity of the past or the community of the present.

Most men move on a plain of less concentration and greater self-consciousness, where the act of seeing inevitably includes and leads up to reflection and analysis. We still have the animal and the primitive man within us, linking us to the past and the flow of time ; and reason, the common gift of all men, keeps always lurking in the background. Yet we still strive after this immediacy of fellowship, but there come times when the snow-peaks and the rocks have fed our appreciation on too strong a draught, when our senses, relying on themselves alone, are over-sated, and there seems a film before our eyes, so that we are no longer 'alive and drinking up our wonder,' but the draught stagnates without us and turns to bitterness.

Then we must be humble, and resign our pretensions to an 'æsthetic geography' for one on a lower scale ; we shall return to the passes, which will remain to us the emblem of a new 'geography of the spirit' which, instead of trying to gain all in one tremendous moment, will be content to browse upon

the myriad things which intelligence sees displayed. Even as a picture, an arrangement of lines and colours, the pass has much that the higher peaks cannot give us: the deep curve of the summit, slung between its supporting peaks, appeals to us by its grace and weakness; there is a discontinuity of colour and clearness as each bastion of the valley comes out from the curve its forerunner had hidden. But these effects are heightened and brought together by our geography; we imagine the glaciers that separated those bastions from one another; that cup at the end is perhaps the work of some other mighty glacier of the far side, piled up so high that it fell across the watershed and cut its way down; maybe there is a giant moraine, bigger than most of our English mountains, still to bear witness of it.

But it is the stream and the road which hold our imagination; the water tells us of all the powers which we know to be at work, but which our senses are too slow to perceive. Each stream is itself part of the great cycle of water, each is

an agent in the mountain cycle, perpetually hurrying the actual fabric of the mountains down to the sea ; their voice is never silent even on the summits ; they are the lords of the peaks, moulding them slowly to new shapes, and their murmur seems to call the clouds, 'chased by the hounding winds from distant seas,' to come and renew their springs for a new course of the never-ending circle.

But the road takes our geography farther afield and peoples our imaginings. We have softened the immediacy of our 'æsthetic geography' by the aid of intelligence ; the road softens it by bringing in humankind to stand with us facing the gulf between the living and the inanimate. As the water alters our view of the mountains by bringing to light the importance of time, so does the road alter our view of ourselves. As we look up a pass from below, the view of the road appearing and vanishing round the folds of the valley brings to us two pictures of men. Winding away from us up to the skyline goes the pilgrim's progress, the slow toiling advance upwards to gain the

view of things not seen. Many there are, but few together ; some on side-tracks ; some on the old steep road with its rough stones now overgrown, more on the new smooth driving road which turns about so that they can take their eyes from the goal ; some even making a path for themselves, either above on the hillside, steering for some nearer gap on the skyline, which does not cross the main watershed ; others below the road, toiling painfully along the stream-bed. And each in turn we see reach the summit and disappear ; we cannot see what they see, nor even the expression of their faces as they confront the other side.

But the same valley can be the setting for another picture : down from the top there seem to come great processions, gay like Benozzo Gozzoli's 'Procession of the Magi,' many leagues long and all ordered and together, though part is hidden in the green woods, part in the valley's folds. We seem to take our place in the upward journey, and soon it will be our turn to wonder what new thing we shall see beyond the barrier. Per-

haps encompassing mists will give place suddenly at the summit to a sunny prospect of some great cathedral range, to take our place in one of those processions and descend to the richness of an Italian land. Or, if it is on the far side that the mists have gathered, and the gateway of the pass is barred by a deep grey veil of nothingness, at least the mists will lift high enough to show the two gentle arms of our mother earth descending to where we are, strong and lit by a strange internal light, ready to hold us up as we take the last step into the grey, where we shall see no more.

BRITISH HILLS

BY

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VII. BRITISH HILLS

NOT much more than a hundred years ago a tourist remarked that he found the Scottish hills 'most of all disgusting when the heather was in bloom.' There is something very taking about this phrase. It was, of course, a commonplace of the eighteenth century to feel aversion, awe, horror, even hatred for mountains, but the epithet 'disgusting' is a refinement of abuse. The Scottish hills failed to arouse any of the deeper emotions in this gentleman—it would have been a compliment to them to suggest they could. They merely filled him with disgust, and the feeling was aggravated by the sight of a profusion of flowers of an unpleasant purple colour.

We have no reason to suppose that the author of this judgment was deficient in

taste or sensibility according to the standards of his time. We may credit him with a happy turn for expression, but not with any originality of view. The resulting reflections are rather surprising. It seems natural that men should once have looked on the Alps with horror and repulsion. They were the abode of storms and killing cold and avalanches, and stood for all the forces of nature which war most fiercely against man. But the British hills never stood for the negation of life. At the worst they were only waste land, unreclaimed from nature. So there seems to be something perversely utilitarian in the man who could observe their soft colours and graceful outlines with nothing but disgust. But the perversity—if perversity is a fair name for the æsthetic attitude in disagreement with our own—belonged to the age and not to the man. To-day, no doubt, he would have quoted descriptive poetry with the loudest, and mountain literature would have lost an adjective.

A generation or two later came the first real explorers of our hills, and left

behind them a record of their sensations in language which makes very curious reading nowadays. It is difficult to recognise in their precipices the gentle slopes of Skiddaw and Helvellyn. We cannot see things through their eyes. It is easy to laugh at their extravagant expressions, but perhaps after all theirs was the Golden Age of English Mountaineering. They left the valleys where men dwell with the adventurous expectation of voyagers on uncharted seas. As they rose step by step they became conscious, as never before, of towering height and unplumbed depth. And when they went home and told the tale of their adventures, there was no unimpressionable critic to accuse them of exaggerating the height here or the angle of inclination there.

However, this happy period was short-lived. With the exploration of the higher Alps mountaineering terms began to acquire a new meaning. Only quite steep slopes were now called precipices, and words like 'perpendicular' began to have a definite objective meaning. British hills were no longer regarded as too

mountainous to climb. Instead, they were dismissed as not mountainous enough to be worth climbing. But this, too, was only a phase, which passed away in its turn as the feeling for mountains became more general. Men began to look in their home hills for something at least of that which they found in the Alps, and they were not disappointed. Indeed, the mountain feeling became at last so little limited that the mountain lover could find in every hill some realisation of his longings, and he might say, with a perversion of the old tag about humanity: 'I am a man; all that is of the mountains I count akin to myself.'

Is this, too, only a phase? A great mountaineer, writing not so very long ago, gave it as his opinion that the sport of mountaineering in the Alps was already on the decline. He may not have been right—surely he cannot have been right. But if even the high Alps are in danger of vulgarisation, what may not be the fate of our British hills? The great god Pan is very gracious to his worshippers, but not when they come in

crowds. One by one his haunts are discovered and laid bare, his chosen sanctuaries are called by uncouth names, even his beloved fennel is catalogued in the list of mountain flora. The oreads of to-day, if there were any, would be pointed out like chamois, and would probably suffer the common fate of everything which is rare and beautiful.

This is not an unduly pessimistic picture. In fact, it might stand as a description of what has actually happened in one range of hills which suffers from too great popularity—the mountains of Harz. The Germans are genuine lovers of mountains, but there is something prosaically thorough about their Schwärmerei. Like the well-informed and communicative frequenter of picture galleries, they are determined to miss nothing themselves, and to see that the other visitors miss nothing either. And so all well-behaved travellers in the Harz walk along well-kept paths, sit down on rustic benches, are admonished by notice-boards when to admire the view, and are provided at suitable

intervals with the means of drinking beer and coffee. Nothing is wanting —not even the professional jodeler. And yet Nature is greater than German officialdom, and the country refuses to be entirely spoilt. For all the time, though no one enters them, long miles of forest stretch away on either side of the crowded paths; not mere woods, which you can cross in an hour, or an afternoon, but the original forests of all fairy-tales. They have the gloom that belongs to primeval pine-woods. Unchanging and immense, they stand to-day as they stood when they swallowed up the Roman legionaries. Somewhere among them Pan may still be sitting, out of earshot of the clink of coffee-cups, and the voice of Echo working for hire.

Of course, it is unlikely that our hills will ever fall a prey to the particular form of municipal exploitation which goes on in Germany. But the effect of familiarity may be as dangerous to the individual as that of popularity is to the mountains. We see it in the Cumber-

land dalesman who has never taken the trouble to climb the hill behind his farm, and look down into the valley on the other side. Take him up with you, and he will set his eyes for the first time on half a dozen farms whose names are often on his lips, and whose inhabitants he has often met at Keswick Market or the Grasmere Games. All his life long he has taken his native hills for granted, scarcely conscious of what he felt for them. It is only when he exchanges them for the flat fields of the southern counties, or some trans-atlantic plain, that he knows himself for a highlander at heart. With us, it is true, the case is different. We go to the mountains as a refuge from the dull levels of existence. But even for us may come a day when there is no savour in our appreciation of the too familiar outlines, when our eyes are dulled and our senses blunted. For though the contrast between the artificiality of life and the peace and freedom of the hills has never been so marked as it is to-day, the step from the one to the other has never been so short. Some of

our hills have been turned into a sort of suburban playground of our northern towns, and there are times when we seem to detect the staleness of the suburbs even in the windy heights. The very easiness of access becomes a snare. Paradoxically, the contrast is sometimes lessened and not brightened, because men come with the atmosphere of the towns they have left behind still clinging to them. They come perhaps with the same friends, and discussing the same questions, that are part of their life at home. Instead of sloughing the crust of habit as they slough their city clothes, they let it overlay their sensibilities. The man in the street, introduced suddenly into a theatre at an emotional moment, sees nothing but a group of posturing actors watched by a gaping crowd. In the same way it is not all gain that men can step so quickly from the town to the mountain side. It may mean that the mountains dwindle as the distance is diminished.

We must make the most of our mountains then, and come to them in the

right spirit, for they will never crush indifference with the overpowering force of fourteen thousand feet of rock and snow. And herein lies the special charm of rock-climbing. It provides the sharpest possible contrast with everyday life, and jerks the pedant out of his groove. There are only two directions in which the average Englishman of to-day can get back to the bare realities of life as a struggle of man with Nature—the mountains and the sea. Hence the futility of the common taunt against the rock-climber—that he climbs his mountain by a difficult way instead of walking up it by the easiest; the implication, of course, being that the truest philosophy of life is summed up in the categorical imperative of America—'Get there.' As well taunt the genuine yachtsman because he prefers to sail his boat across the Channel, not without danger and discomfort, when he might go over in the latest turbine steamer, and hardly notice that he had ever left the land. Each attempts in his own way to escape from the toils of civilisation. It is not the

impulse which is artificial and perverse, but the conditions of life which close all other avenues of escape.

It is very difficult to say how much of the joy of climbing is physical, how much æsthetic. The two sides react upon each other. Perception is at its keenest during physical exhilaration, and conversely nothing is so conducive to a sense of vital energy and well-being as the appreciation of beauty. And yet the truth of this is often unrealised. Ruskin with his reference to the greasy pole is typical of a large number of people who appear to think that because the climber's pleasure is partly physical, contemplation can have no part in it. They say, too, that we should look at mountains as at a picture which is so hung by a thoughtful Providence that it can only be properly appreciated from the valleys where men are meant to stay. We who go closer get the perspective wrong, like the too inquisitive critic who cannot see the picture for the paint. Was Swinburne then less of a poet because it was his delight to leave

the sheltered shore and swim out into the sea, fighting its waves and matching his strength against theirs? The physical strife brings insight and understanding, instead of negating them. Only the sailor understands the sea, only the climber understands the mountains. Nor, of course, is it true that the beauty of mountains can be best appreciated from below. That is a fiction invented by the plainsman to excuse his want of enterprise. Even in the British Isles, where the secrets of the hills are not so well guarded as in the Alps, there are a hundred Scottish corries and Welsh cwms where none but the climber ever goes. The tourist who travels through Glencoe sees nothing so fine as the upper cliffs of Bidian nan Bian, or the chasms of Buchaille Etive. Spurred on by wholly unworthy motives he may struggle up the laborious southern slopes of Nevis, and buy picture postcards at the top. Under his feet the dull amorphous summit breaks down in splendid precipices to Alt a' Mhuilinn. But he will see nothing of them except

the dipping foreground of flat stones. He may admire the view from the top of Scawfell, but the climber within a few hundred yards of him on the Pinnacle arête is moving in another and a more beautiful world. From across the valley Lliwedd appears as a featureless face, grand only in the sweep of its descent to Cwm Dwli. But to the climber it reveals an infinite variety of rock scenery. There is no flat foreground to detract from the sense of height. The eye looks straight across a mile of emptiness to the opposing bastions of Crib Goch.

This sense of the beauty of his surroundings can never be far from the climber's consciousness, though sometimes, it is true, the physical side is uppermost. There is the sheer gymnastic joy that comes from the ready response of muscle and nerve to sudden need, the sense of perfect bodily fitness which the Greeks prized among the best things of life. Nowhere else does a measure of strength and skill meet with such a splendid reward as in the mountains.

Down in the plains a man may live his whole life through and never know what it is to face danger which only his own efforts can defeat, to strain body and mind to the verge of absolute exhaustion. At home he can take a train if he is tired, put on a coat if he is cold. Rain suggests nothing more to him than muddy streets, or a noise on his window-pane. Wind only emphasises the comfort of his chair. He is a caricature of a man, distorted by the numberless accretions of civilisation which cover him like an unnatural growth. He pities the lion at the Zoo for his lost freedom, and lives himself in a comfortable cage of his own making. But put him down at the foot of a Cumberland gully on a stormy day. The first jet of icy water down his back will wash away the affectations and rouse the primitive man. There is no pleasure here in the feel of the wet rocks, no æsthetic delight in waterfalls or misty depths, nothing but the satisfaction of the fighting instinct which lies dormant in every one of us. The falling water attacks him like a living thing; it

numbs his hands, confuses his senses, tries to take the very heart out of him. For once in his life at least he is face to face with the forces of Nature—cold, wind, and rain. If things go badly with him, this is not a game, in which failure means nothing more than the opportunity of showing the spirit of the sportsman. There is nothing chivalrous about Nature; when she wins she presses her advantage home. The man who challenges her will find the water will fall more heavily, the cold grow more numbing, just when his own powers are on the wane. Before he is back among his sofa-cushions he may gain an insight into some simple things which are usually kept under cover in this artificial age.

But this is only a single side of rock-climbing, and not perhaps the most universally popular. There are fine-day climbers who know nothing of this paradoxical pleasure born of pain. But it is the side which is generally prominent in the winter months. In the presence of ice and snow there is more of conflict, less of communion with the hills. Man

enters as an intruder, and has to make good his footing. For that reason perhaps the actual joy of achievement is more keen.

But for pleasure unalloyed there is nothing to equal a climb up difficult rock on a fine summer day. Who can describe the exhilaration that comes from the use of muscles responsive to the call, from the sense of mastery and ease in the very face of danger, from the splendid situations and wide outlook? Every faculty is at full stretch. The whole being is stimulated to the intensest appreciation of beauty in all its forms—beauty of life itself and beauty of movement, beauty of height and depth and distance. It must surely have been moments such as these that Stevenson had in mind when he prayed to the Celestial Surgeon:

> 'Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
> And stab my spirit broad awake.'

Such moments are necessarily few. It is one of the limitations of mortal man that he cannot live for long upon the heights.

But always and everywhere the climber is most vividly alive. There are continual appeals to so many sides of his nature that he cannot be indifferent to them all. Now one may come home to him, and now another, but at least he never falls a prey to that most deadly of all soul-diseases—apathy.

But though climbing, even in the British Isles, means all that we have said and more, far more, beside, there is just one grain of truth lurking at the bottom of what Ruskin said. To the rock-climber the pure æsthetic pleasure of contemplation comes in flashes, not in a steady glow. There is so much to distract him—the technicalities of his art, the continuous attention to details, half automatic as it may become, which alone makes climbing justifiable—even the voices and proximity of his companions. For though there is nothing discordant in the presence of sympathetic friends, the conscious introduction of the personal element must always widen the gulf between man and Nature. For that reason the climber should sometimes go

alone. He should let his mind be as nearly as possible the empty cupboard of the old metaphysicians, and leave it to the mountains to make it a storehouse of impressions. They will be more true and vivid just because there are no counter influences to weaken them or crowd them out. If he would enter wholly into the spirit of the hills, let him go alone into some remote valley of the Scottish Highlands, till the last footpath vanishes and the highest bothy is left behind. Let him make his bed in the heather undisturbed by any sign of the presence of man or of his handiwork. The cold wind that comes with dawn will waken him as the first thin mists are gathering round the peaks three thousand feet above. As he climbs the steep slopes of heather in the half-light the mists roll down to meet him, till he is the only living, moving thing in a world of whiteness and silence. The heather dwindles, here and there black rock-ridges show for a moment and disappear. As in a dream he takes no count of time or distance, till at last he

steps out upon the summit and the sun meets him, shining level with his eyes. Like an ebbing tide the mists roll back towards the valleys, leaving the mountain-tops of Scotland shining clear in the brilliance of the upper air. He is alone with the hills, and stands like one initiated into a strange and beautiful mystery.

But it is of the nature of mysteries that they cannot be interpreted to those who do not know. To the unbeliever they sound like mockeries—or at the best the unmeaning fancies of 'an idle singer of an empty day.' Let those who are indifferent to mountains protest in the name of sanity and common sense. Perhaps the climber is to be envied his good fortune in being something more than sane.

ROOF-CLIMBING AT OXFORD

VIII. ROOF-CLIMBING AT OXFORD

IN a book such as this, where the University of Oxford provides the one central sun round which, planet-wise, the diverse essays revolve, each all but breaking from all connection with the rest, and only just held back by that gravitating force—in such a book, it would be a pity not to seek to make that force more strong. In what way could this be better done than by some account of Oxford climbing, where the University provides not only the spiritual background, but the very physical basis of the theme ?

Then, too, there is another reason for the attempt. The art of roof-climbing, at Oxford, alas ! no less than elsewhere, is in need of defenders who will speak out for her. Herself still inarticulate,

she needs the good offices of any champion she can find amidst the universal enmity in which she finds herself. Poor struggling wretch, in expectation of foes, she has found them: but has been deceived, too often, in those that should have been friends.

Indigenous authority, not, perhaps, without some show of reason, though here and there one of its Argus eyes may consciously wink at the art's clandestine or unobtrusive practice, will yet trim the vials of punitive wrath for the foolish one who is discovered. That was to be looked for; but there is hardship when brother turns on brother (big bully on baby brother); climbers there are that have the Alps for their pleasure, and are privileged in acquaintance with the princely among mountains, who yet grudge the poor stay-at-home his sincerest flattery, tell him he is to be despised for his ascents, rebuked for his foolhardiness, and chastised for his disobedience.

Poor Cinderella of Climbing! May the Prince soon come, and cast his

favourable glance upon her. Meanwhile let it be for me to play the part of Matrimonial Agency, display and recite her charms and publish them abroad, so that perchance they may thus catch the eye of the destined Sprig of Royalty.

With forethought, knowing the fastidious taste of these gentlemen in their search for a true princess, let us recite her personal charms—the glimpses of beauty and of cold unknown secrets which even her more humble wooer may find—her beauty, which is the reward, given to a mind tense and braced by the hard labour of unwonted muscles on slippery places. Imagine a prickly ridge of the horned and perforated tiles deemed suitable for roof-trees, gained by a climb up the body of a companion, laid flat along the sloping roof. All around are stone and brick ranges, peaks which more than their Alpine counterparts deserve to be called Clocher or Tour, showing in the darkness little of their dilettante symmetry of the artificial: the deep valleys

between filled with their rivers of light, carrying their noisy freight along: cols in the near range vouchsafing their strange glimpses of the more distant: beneath, a wide and gloomy desert, with here and there lamp-posts for oases of our symbol of mountain-water.

Throughout, a jump in nearness to the stars, and a fellow-tingling unwarranted by a bare forty-feet approximation to them. By our own act we are cut off from men: the thickness of a single wall, if but it be the outer house-wall, dispossesses us of our humanity, and gives back our lost kinship with the stars.

Peak and col, valley, river, and pass —all are there: but the real, broad-sustaining Alps do not gape suddenly to a show of the imagined trolls of our story-books at work beneath, and full of unintelligible hatred against ourselves. While here, on our tile-summits and pipe-couloirs, we know the trolls for a reality, their life the very negation of the fount of our new spirit gained in the traverse from plastered side to plain

of a wall ; the rousing of their incomhensible rage leading to pursuit and loss of our world.

Signs of their inhabitance are all around us : vents, traps for the feet, showing signs of the furnaces where they are ever at labour to fuse the dead message of the written page into living matter of a brain for the breathing hole of some typho of a senseless machine, whose groans are chained to the production of sweetest music in College organ-pipes ; sudden lights flashed out by one of the trolls, to the displaying of a pair of legs spider-wise across the entrance to his lair, or the painted globe sphering the radiance shed upon the small-hourly labours of the troll of highest Matterhorn.

And yet the peril of them is greater in imagination than in reality—dazzled by the light in which he loves to bathe himself, he cannot see the wanderer on the heights, who may dance unobserved in the view of public streets. The troll-kind are like some power able to shake the earth, and to overwhelm

life when the time comes, but now only manifesting a greater grandeur to the eyes—volcano, flame, or flood : engrossed in their own subterranean labours, they give scarce a thought to us, and we may even mock at them from without ; discover yourself, however, and he becomes the arch-enemy, like the all-powerful earth-force, ready to annihilate those whom it supports, and yet some evil power they have had upon the Climber —they have lured him to desist from praises of his lady, and to run off in disquisitions upon their ugly selves. Thwart them, Climber, and return to your Princess ! She has granted Beauties—she does not deny Adventures : no —you may meet with strange ones on the tops—unexpected sights that would lose half their strangeness if they had been known and sought.

One befell upon a chapel — that chapel whose top is adorned with the four symbolic figures known to common repute as Faith, Hope, Charity, and Mathematics. To the Climber they are rather Spirits of the Heights, beckoning

him on with enticement of gesture, expression still alluring spite of that strange emaciation, that attrition of feature given to them in their high desolate realm by the unruly Elements. . . .

The chapel — if you will allow a short excursus—is a good climb; it is best taken from the west; the heights once gained, there follows a spread-eagle traverse on a ledge past the clock (to resist setting its hands at sixes and sevens—if that metaphor be allowed—is hard). Thirty feet below are the flagstones of the quad; next time you pass beneath the chapel arch, think of slow midnight figures shuffling along that narrow ledge above, feeling with anxious feet for the unseen, unpleasant wires, ridges, and minor anfractuosities with which it is beset.

From the ledge there is a press-up (without holds) on to the balustrade: what may be called the shoulder is now reached. The final pitch, a very interesting eastward-facing pipe, is left to climb: and then there we are in the

pure air of truth with Mathematics and the rest of them.

Seldom is there space on summits for an encounter with Adventure. Here, however, a flat-topped balustrade runs round the top ; this, on a second visit, we thought should be perambulated, and perambulation was in progress when suddenly the leader stopped short—another step and he would have been plunged in a crevasse. True, it was so narrow that he could not have fallen past his arms ; but then this was none of your smooth cold ice-cracks. It belonged to the volcano rather than the glacier—a square pipe leading down twistingly to red-hot fires below. Lucky for him he had not stepped unwarily, now to be wedged in it, his helpless body fast, suffering a double and simultaneous metamorphosis, into frozen mutton above, smoked ham below.

It was only a chimney really, but you have no idea how curious a chimney looks from above, especially a big square one like this, without vestige of chimney-pot, and edge flush with the balustrade in

the centre of which it had taken it into its head to debauch. And then its position, thus in the very chapel—that was strange. With the poet we asked :

> ' What occupation do you here pursue ?
> This is a lonesome place for one like you ' ;

but we got no answer—the embers did not even give one ' flash of mild surprise,' and we never knew what manner of man was warmed at the blaze we had seen dying.

So much for Adventure ; now let us seek Romance.

Wadham Gardens are beautiful—but usually only to be seen as setting to a flower show, to the accompaniment of a band, and upon payment of a shilling. The Climber sees them free of charge, in their own self-sufficient beauty (not decreased by the moonlight), and solitary. Even the owls are almost silent—birds of the twilight more than of the midnight. The squirrels (for there are still squirrels, even here, far within the brick-and-mortar girdle)—they are long asleep. The Warden is safe in bed. The Climber, who is here partly for the garden's sake,

partly to prospect for a route up the College, swishes through the soaking grass along by the shadow of the pines and cedars. Ha !—' Wer reitet so spät durch Nacht und Wind ? '—What is that dark form that he sees ' cross and recross the strips of moon-blanched green ' ? The Climber, cautiously approaching, greets with joy a hedge-pig (hedgehog, called by the general name—illogical and less euphonious). He is very tame ; even permits a finger to stroke the only strokeable part of him, his soft furry stomach, before rolling up into a pin-cushion. Leaving him thus defensive and spherical, the Climber passes on, only by the next tree to find another ; and the performance is repeated.

No route was found that night ; but as in the Alps not seldom the off-day in the upland valley brings with birds and flowers a new and equal joy with that of the summits, so the moon-lit hedge-pigs of Wadham touched a chord of romance all their own, and vivified that night with as strong a memory as any hard-won roof-tree could have done.

But it is not always through such moon-lit Edens that the Climber passes ; sometimes it is the fierce flames of the Cities of the Plain.

Trinity (to make a necessary digression) has a roof, which, once reached, is mostly walking. It has also a quad with gravel paving, an absence of Bodleian libraries in close propinquity, and the usual complement of chairs. In addition, it sometimes makes six bumps. After one of those occasions it was therefore not unexpected when the Climber, perambulating the Trinity leads, saw beyond the further roof-tree Vesuvius in full eruption—red smoke in a whirling column, full of blazing sparks sailing up and off on the wind. Crawling up the roof-tree and looking over, the Climber saw a sight, not unfamiliar in itself, but strange when viewed from such a view-point, and with such detachment. A bit of hell was here on earth. Devils in deshabille were dancing round a flaming pyre, screaming, with shrieking laughter. Others, issuing from the dark doors round the prison-like yard, brought with them offerings for the fire. The iron gates that

barred the further side of the square from the night beyond were reminders that none might pass out from this pit: 'Lasciate ogni speranza' was doubtless inscribed upon their outer face. It was a relief to find that the servers of the flames brought no writhing Spirits of the Damned, but mere inanimate combustibles.

Well might the Climber lie there gazing till the flames were sinking on to the ember-pile, and the corybantic Zoroastrian bacchanals (for all the three rituals they combined) had begun to slink off to their cells.

To ease stiff limbs, the chapel was taken on the homeward way; and from its top the final flare was seen—a last great blaze, streamers of burning paper floating eastwards away (scaring, no doubt, Eden's nocturnal browsers), showers of sparks, and then all sinking to a mere flicker in the quiet night. And so to bed.

The Climber can thus penetrate into secret places, see strange sights, have familiar ones for him transmogrified.

But this is not all. Profit is combined with pleasure. In an emergency, how useful he can prove.

He may perhaps be allowed to relate a case in point: One Lent Term, after a heavy fall of snow, the inmates of a certain College, which shall be nameless, finding the snow hang heavy on their feet, took it into their heads to take it into their hands, and thence dispatched it as a challenge through the windows of their neighbour College—through the very windows once source of light to the famous Galetti (gone down to posterity, by one of Clio's whims, with name distorted almost out of recognition). After much shouting and the filling of the historic chamber with snow, the challenge was taken up.

I am no Homer to describe the combat, nor were I one, would this be the place to do so. . . .

Long had they struggled, when there arrived on the field a messenger. His message, delivered with more jocularity than he would have exhibited in Greek drama, was to the effect that the Dean

had been peeping through some alley-way, had seen that any direct interference was useless, and had resorted to the method of blockade. All the gates were shut, and the prophets of Baal were to be mercilessly dealt with. 'Que faire'? Hostilities ceased; earth became united in its opposition to Olympus. Racked brains gave birth to hasty plans—all proved abortive, till suddenly one—a full-armoured Minerva—flashed from its parent's engendering lead. 'The Climber, the Climber!' was all the cry. Soon he appeared, triumphantly escorted, and bearing in his arms his rope. One end of this went through the window (that window, serving more often for the passage of insults, not wholly unaccompanied by injuries, now consecrated to pacific use), and was grasped within by six strong men. The other end became a loop, into which the foot of one of the aliens was inserted. No sooner this, than, hey presto! a pull by the six, and, an alien no longer, he was clinging to his own country's boundary—the window-sill. No Customs examination

or landing formalities—other stalwarts gripped him, and he disappeared into the bowels of his fatherland, a pair of legs for an instant waving farewell to his late enemies.

This was repeated more than a score of times, till at length not one remained for the cunning Dean and his unwreaked vengeance. Barred gates, alert porters, grinning scouts, confidently waiting dons: —who was the instrument to bring them all to nought?—the Climber!

This much for its use to others. Rich use to the Climber himself it has too. Not only as a way out of the prosaic world of streets and staircases into another where for a glorious dusky hour he may feel free, alone with himself, the night, and active limbs, but also as a true training for the more grave realities of nobler peaks in other lands. General exercise for arms (lying sadly fallow if only the ordinary run of games be followed), and back and legs—that is something; but more special practice is given in lightness of balancing and in training a dizzy head. Cat-soft feet are needed there where

tell-tale tiles are crossed, where dons abound, and where sharp-hearing porters lurk. Light, even-pulling arms alone can with safety grip frail roof-trees, tiles, or chimney-pots. Then, in reality, it is not common to be above precipices of the true vertical: here in the comfortable city they are never to be avoided. It is physically no doubt as easy to step across above a plumb drop than where the ground is sloping; but however steep the slope, there is some comfort in it for the untrained head, while every crumb of it drops away down the perpendicular.

Soon, however, under necessity's spell, the reluctant cerebellum (where, I am told, our balance-bump is to be found) becomes used to the smooth uncompromising walls, and the Climber can sally qualmless forth to tackle Dolomites or Cumberland climbs.

Beauty, Romance, Adventure; Help to others; Use, both for mind and body, to oneself: I hope the Climber has said enough to show our Cinderella forth for what she really is. And, gentle reader,

you will not grumble if her champion, for reasons not obscure, can display no betraying blazon on his shield. Having championed his fair, and been acclaimed victor in the lists, he rides triumphant forth to kneel before his sovran liege—the British Public. 'What is your name, that I may honour you?' 'Sire, if you will permit me, I will present you with my card.' Which done, he vanishes, leaving not a wrack behind save the white pasteboard with the two words upon it:

ΑΝΩΝΥΜΟΣ ΤΙΣ

THE MOUNTAINS OF YOUTH

BY

ARNOLD H. M. LUNN
(Balliol)

IX. THE MOUNTAINS OF YOUTH

'Fire made them, earth clothed them, man found them,
Our playmates the princes of hills,
Last uttered of time, and love-fashioned,
Of a fullness of knowledge impassioned
For freedom : boy-hearts, royal wills,
Sun nursed them, wind taught them, frost crowned them.

Light o'er them, life with them, peace round them,
They have waited in masterless strength
For the moment of mortal awaking,
When bright on new vision upbreaking
Far beacons of freedom, at length
Art saw them, hope sought them, youth found them.'

GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG.

FEW haunters of the Alps can have altogether escaped the dreary ceremonies in some mountain Tabernacle, manufactured perhaps from a drawing-room whose windows reveal malicious glimpses of the snows that suggest a more acceptable service. Few but would recognise the discourse meandering on

from the inevitable text, that cry of the soul to great hills afar, which constant quotation cannot wholly mar, to the final application which asserts that the sojourn among the mountains is only given that, fortified in soul and body, we may return to the battle of life. To some of us this pious reflection must appear irredeemably vulgar. Those moments on the hills when the pulses of life seem quickened with new fire are given for the sake, and for the sake alone, of the moments themselves. To adapt them to didactic disquisition is to degrade the chief things of the ancient mountains. For the hills are no mere nursing-home to recuperate after the drudgery of the plains. Those that climb to advance science, to surpass records, to improve their digestion miss the real appeal. For we deserve or we do not deserve the mountains according as we regard them as an end in themselves or as a means to an end.

An apology has already been offered in the Introduction for a subjective treatment of mountains. Whether the moun-

tain that we loved is an entity independent of man is a question that may be left to philosophers to discuss. Man may or may not be the measure of all things, but to some extent every man undoubtedly fashions Nature in the mould of his own beliefs. Every mountain lover brings something new to the common worship: for each of us spells out a different syllable in the universal message of the hills. So these pages contain an attempt to analyse one aspect of the mountains, that aspect which is caught in childhood and youth.

The thread that binds the scattered memories of seventeen summers and eleven winters in the Alps is the half-belief that in some sense the mountains are not only so many tons of rock and ice, that they are something more than the ruins of chaos, and possess an individuality elusive but none the less very real. In an uninspired age when a dogmatic Christianity was pitted against an even more dogmatic Rationalism, this belief in a mountain soul found its most poetic expression in an unsuspected

quarter. Leslie Stephen would have smiled grimly at any attempt to read more than a figurative meaning into certain passages of *The Alps in Winter*; but no one can read that lofty confession of an agnostic's faith without feeling that it is this rather than the essay of that name which constitutes the true *Agnostic's Apology*. Naturalism could not resist the mute appeal of 'those mighty monuments of a bygone age . . . to which in spite of all reason it is impossible not to attribute some shadowy personality.' And there is the ring of something more than fantasy in the final words: 'Their voice is mystic and has found discordant interpreters, but to me at least it speaks in tones at once more simple and more awe-inspiring than that of any mortal teacher.'

What the heart feels to-day, philosophy may assume to-morrow. It would be easy to find a further illustration in Fechner's great vision of the Earth Soul; easy but unprofitable, for no faith, least of all a fragile *Aberglaube* such as this, can stand the strain of a philosophic

formula. This sense of a conscious personality in Nature is most powerful in childhood. I do not pretend that our childhood peopled its surroundings with fairies, goblins, and similar stage supers. Nor shall I add to the accumulations of mischievous nonsense that have become fashionable at a time when literature delights, without understanding, to dabble in the curious psychology of childhood. The modern conception of the child seems oddly mistaken. He is pictured as a sexless cherub trailing clouds of moral glory from a prenatal paradise. But the child is non-moral, and only acquires with difficulty and growth the conventional ethics of his elders. The natural child is cruel with the cruelty that comes from an absence of experience of pain. Without experience his imagination has nothing to build on, for, as that genial cynic Hobbes remarks, 'Pity is the imagining unto oneself of a woe.' The modern child and the mediæval man have much in common. The imagination of both is at once vivid and restricted. From this

springs the experimental cruelty as well as that intense joy of life equally characteristic of the age of childhood and of the Middle Ages. The world of the fifteenth century was narrower, but within its restricted boundaries far richer in romantic possibilities than the world as it now exists for the 'grown-ups.' For all but the child the dog-headed men have had their day. So the narrow limits that bounded our wanderings in those early Grindelwald summers contained a world instinct with an intangible romance that the years have never expelled.

My first distinct mountain memory is that of watching at the age of four Grindelwald and our temporary home in flames. An aunt tried to banish the terrifying spectacle by a handkerchief round my eyes, a needless precaution. As a proper child I was fascinated by the prospect of vicarious emotion, and the possibility of some fellow-creature roasting in the flames added interest to the drama. But it was not Grindelwald in flames, it was the ruthless indifference of the Eiger insolently preening its snows in the

blood-red haze of the catastrophe that really gripped me with fear. The mountains bind us by their very superiority to suffering. The unrelenting callousness that hurls the boulders down the gully in which we are pinned appeals to our primitive imaginations. 'The attitude of the creature towards his Creator,' said Newman, 'should be one of abject submission.' 'Not abject,' replied some Anglican divine, 'respectful.' 'Not submission,' says the mountaineer, 'resistance.' Analyse the peculiar appeal of some stern struggle against a mountain stronghold, and it is this sentiment that is most prominent. Conflict without animosity makes the strongest demand on the fighting instinct and the faculty for worship. Like children we like to see how far we can go. We learn to honour the reserve of strength that is not exerted against us and of beauty that we cannot overcome.

'Love thou the Gods and withstand them, lest thy fame should fail at the end—
And thou be but their thrall and their bondman, who wast born for their very friend.'

Five summer months we spent in a little village a few miles from Grindelwald. We came in the early days of May just as the snow began to call a late retreat from the pastures above the chalet. We watched the fields rich in the promise of spring, and caught some afterglow from

'The gleam of the first of summers on the yet untrodden grass.'

The most prosaic child can fashion from a back-garden of weeds a world of magical fancies. So it is not surprising that we found in our summer playground a wealth of intimate suggestion. For it is true of the child, as was said of Fechner, that 'his only extravagances are those of thought, but these are gorgeous ones.'

As the shortening days at the end of September foretold the long winter sleep we sorrowfully departed for the City of Dreadful Night. The sorrows and joys of childhood are singularly final. The wider imagination of youth can realise that the Alps are not irrevocably lost when the train steams sadly out of

the platform at Berne. No such consolations suggested themselves to us as children, and the weary months that had to elapse before the next glimpse of Paradise might as well have been eternity. But life is vital only by contrast, and it may have been that the mountain passion found its strongest ally in a childhood divided between the generous open life of the hills and the sullen gloom of a London Square.

To those days we owe the fascination that even now invests the railway journey to the Alps with a romance that an older school would have us believe vanished with the last stage-coach. Perhaps it did for them. But for those who have been brought up on steam, there can be few things more provocative of wonder than the journey to Switzerland. We used to wait for the vigilant nurse to trumpet forth the evidences of deep slumber, and then gently raised the blinds always relentlessly drawn. For us the rattle and roar of the night express —to some a discordant chaos of sound— seemed 'the music nighest bordering

upon heaven,' a brave accompaniment to the drama that flashed past us into the night, dim white spaces of open road, sleeping hamlets, shadowy trees and waters mirroring the stars. Could any contrast be more intense than the sunlit joy of that first morning in Berne when the 'authentic air of Paradise' seemed to linger round the terrace, and the leaden despair of the return to Charing Cross in a fog? I am still susceptible to the riotous excitement of the nights in the train. Even now I can barely understand how any one can remain unmoved as the train sweeps from the gates of the Jura to reveal beyond the morning mists the host of peaks from the Wetterhorn to the Blumlisalp.

Chalet life is a useful corrective for those who regard the Swiss as a nation of hotelkeepers and guides. We soon picked up the unlovely patois, and gradually worked our way into the life of the village. We made friends with the owner of the chalet, and spent long hours on the Grindelalp watching the

evolution of cheese. We made shameless love to the daughter of the chalet, now a dignified matron. A deserted kine shed was fitted up as a temporary home, and my brother, despite his obvious reluctance, was required to accept the rôle of our offspring. On Sunday we joined the brown-coated congregation in the white-washed Zwinglian church, helped to swell the mournful drone to which Luther's sonorous hymns are intoned, and listened with incurious awe to the torrent of language with which the 'Gletcher Pfarrer' drenched his fold.

Our imagination took its suggestion from those around us. We did not play at soldiers or enginedrivers, for our hero was an old guide. It is significant that we admired him not so much for his sixty odd ascents of the Wetterhorn as for a mythical reputation, which we probably evolved from our sense of the heroic proprieties, that he beat his wife and looked upon the wine when it was red. Inspired by our knight of the rope, we surreptitiously stole an old pick-

axe and some forty feet of clothes-line, and daily made our way to the woods above. The will to believe is the greatest asset of childhood, the age of unconscious pragmatism, and we convinced ourselves that, but for the steps laboriously hewed from the yielding earth, we could never have ascended so grim a slope. One day we received a rude awakening. A little damsel followed us, smiled cynically at the elaborate preparations, and then ran lightly up the perilous incline, disdainfully dodging the steps. The moment held material for tragedy. We affected an air of scornful indifference, but the pick-axe was never disturbed again.

We found a more real scope for our climbing ambition on a boulder that the ice rivers of the dawn of time had left stranded in the woods. Some thirty feet in height, it fell away sheer on all sides and gave scope for some pretty problems. With vague memories of Bunyan we dubbed it 'Hill Difficulty,' and tried to believe that Apollyon lurked in the neighbouring wood. Apollyon was an

actuality for whom we entertained a chastened respect. We thought then that every Alpine peak was formed of perpendicular cliffs scaled by infinitesimal handholds. Experience has shown that many of the climbs on this boulder were harder than any similar short stretch on, say, the Finsteraarhorn. Hill Difficulty, on which we learned our craft at the respective ages of six and four, was really a sound training-ground. More than once we were placed in positions of considerable ignominy, and, for our size, some danger. A twenty-foot fall head first might have had awkward results but for a helpful bush which often proved a friend. On one fateful occasion I remember weeping profusely and shouting for aid to my nurse, a humiliating experience for a mountaineer. She, worthy dame, declined to interfere, and beat me soundly on returning to earth.

When I look back on those long summers, and try to recapture the haunting vagueness of the first moods born of the hills, I am faced by the insufficiency of the written word to express

sensations that seem the less definite in outline the more vividly their colour endures. But certain broad features stand out, and I am convinced by experience that the normal conception of childhood, as embodied, for instance, in *The Child's Garden of Verses*, is radically wrong. Some of Blake's detached verses, and the poetry—written at the age of seven—by Miss Enid Welsford, reflect truer glimpses of that mood of savagery and vague fear that enwraps the world of the imaginative child, a world in which there is little either of the cosy or the snug. Alarming actual incidents such as Grindelwald on fire often excite an abstract curiosity, whilst people and places intrinsically innocent may in a moment become charged with cosmic significance. Of fact and tradition the modern child is often a sceptic. Neither of us believed in fairies, though we accepted with indulgence the well-meant efforts of our elders to amuse. But to this day I cannot explain why there should ever have existed a well-marked boundary in the Grindelwald woods,

beyond which there dwelt an unhealthy influence. I cannot understand what fixed this bourne, nor yet why a certain slope of scree and slag leading up to a cluster of rock and pine should even now seem laden with brooding fear. So, too, though we did not believe in the ice maiden, we yet felt that certain mountains were, so to speak, healthy and others provokingly sinister. The child in touch with Nature finds his own fairy land, and the mountains are the most potent magicians.

The inner secrets of the mountain fear are seldom revealed, for those that know are ashamed of the atavistic emotions that robbed them of self-control. For the possessing terror of the lonely hills is a thing by itself. It is most felt in childhood, and best known to the solitary intruder. I am not thinking of those trying periods whose horror is at least reducible to natural causes, of the slow advance from step to step across an ice-slope raked by falling stones, of the desperate race against darkness as night charged up from the valley, of the grim

struggle when retreat was and advance seemed equally impossible :

νῦν δ' (ἔμπης γὰρ κῆρες ἐφεστᾶσιν θανάτοιο
μύριαι, ἃς οὐκ ἐστι φυγεῖν βροτὸν οὐδ' ὑπαλύξαι)
ἴσμεν.

The strain of such moments is at least healthy, but the uncanny terror that grips the lonely victim is not. Often it is independent of difficulty or danger. As a boy I had wandered up to that barren valley of barren boulders that closes in the head of the Val d'Arpette. There was no suggestion of gloom in the peaceful afternoon light that cast lazy shadows on the Clochers d'Arpette. I was perfectly happy. Suddenly the whole wilderness of forbidding stones seemed fraught with evil intent. There was no tangible reason for this transformation, but it was sufficiently real to produce a headlong flight. I still remember the compelling terror that drove me to bruise shin and elbow as I hurled myself from boulder to boulder in a desperate attempt to escape from a valley tenanted by the shades of dim derisive evil.

The Alps merit a patient novitiate,

and the mountaineer who does his Matterhorn and Mont Blanc in his first season misses the essential charm of the hills. We spent some ten summers and four winters in the mountains before we even crossed the snow-line. But the bitterness of waiting was redeemed by the joy of long deferred fulfilment. We learned during those years the fascination of the lower hills, too often dismissed as tedious grinds fit to serve only as training walks or as exercise for an off-day in bad weather. They are worthy of a more loving study. There is a peculiar joy in working patiently upwards from the smallest of beginnings to the culminating reward of a great peak. The landmarks of our climbing history advanced very slowly. There was the triumph of the Little Scheidegg at the age of six, the proud moment when we passed the eight thousand level on the Brevent, and the tantalising approach to the magic ten thousand on the Schwarzhorn. Finally, at the age of fifteen, I crossed the line of perpetual snow, which for years had haunted our dreams and marked the

heights of earthly ambition. The Aiguille du Tour may seem a slight victory, but the romance of the first night in a club hut, the first dawn seen from the upper snows, the first generous breadth of vision from a real mountain, are among the unforgettable things. Even the long deferred Matterhorn belongs to a less splendid category of memories.

Those years taught us how meaningless is the cry that the Alps are played out. Railways and cheap trippers, it is said, have robbed Switzerland of all charm. Grindelwald is simply Brighton by the mountains, and so on and so forth. For the railways I agree with Mr. Belloc. 'They are the trenches that drain our modern civilisation. Avoid them by so much as a quarter of a mile and you may have as much peace as would fill a nose bag.' Nor need we deny even to the cheap tripper the possible possession of a soul for the beautiful. The heritage of the hills should not be the monopoly of the cultured classes. In the Lötschenthal I once met four men of that

class which has recently begun to desert Margate for the mountains. Their savings were devoted to this one fortnight in the Alps. Because guides are expensive they confined their wanderings to easy snow summits. Because the *Climber's Guides* are expensive they spent long hours in the British Museum copying them out into notebooks. One should rejoice in the increased facilities of communication into lives otherwise lacking in colour of the saving inspiration of the snows.

The complaint that the Alps are overrun argues a barren lack of enterprise. The Wengen Alp is confessedly somewhat dense in the height of the season. This troubles me not at all. Within two hours of the Scheidegg lies one of the most ideal of Alpine summits. To the superficial observer the Tschuggen may seem an unattractive scree and slate peak, yet the actual top is a delightful yielding carpet of springy Alpine turf touched with the blue of late gentians. Who will, may spend untroubled hours here watching the clouds drifting across

Jungfrau, and in the north the dark turquoise waters of Thun gleaming between the intervening hills. Solitary, remote, and secluded, they will scarce remember the proximity of the hidden hotel and its heterogeneous mob.

On the other side of the valley the Faulhorn is doubly starred in Baedeker, but fortunately the course of the double stars is so ordered that it does not light on the fairest of Alpine retreats. The treasures of this chain are hidden in its eastern wings, and you, friends, who find Grindelwald bourgeois, do you know that 'very lovely, silent land' hidden away behind the black pyramid of the Schwarzhorn? The long rampart that links the Grossenegg to the Krinne is perhaps the finest low-level walk in Switzerland; whilst shadowed by a fold in this curtain of rock lies one of the chiefest of Alpine wonders. Within the span of some thousand yards you can trace the life of a baby glacier that has never reached maturity. Meticulously fashioned, with névé, ice-fall, and crevasse on a perfect but diminutive scale, it recalls

the dwarf trees of Japan in its miniature perfection.

So during the ten summers in which we explored this chain in all its moods we found for ourselves the essential romance of the mountains. We acquired a more extensive book knowledge of the topography and history of the greater peaks than most climbers we met. *Scrambles in the Alps* was the first book that I laboriously spelt out for myself. Alpine literature and Alpine photographs, such as Mr. Donkin's, gave us a precocious knowledge of the Alps. I remember surprising a chance acquaintance by the certainty with which I located the views at an Alpine Club Exhibition, and his comment, 'You seem to have been climbing for many seasons,' had a certain bitterness for a boy who had not crossed the snow-line.

We had our foolish moments. A girl of fifteen returning from the Eiger, and seemingly careless of an experience for which we would have bartered our appetites, provoked a desperately absurd attempt on the Wetterhorn. Without

rope or axe we found our way to the Gleckstein Hut. There we realised the impossibility of any serious attempt on the Wetterhorn itself, and turned aside towards one of the great buttresses below the main peak. By a nasty chimney and an arête which would prove trying to most unroped climbers we reached the top of our little peak. From our feet the great curtain of cliff that overshadows Grindelwald fell away in one curve to the pastures of the Scheidegg. A touch of uncertainty as to our chance of recovering the line of ascent added to the majesty of that compelling precipice. There were no traces of a previous visit, so we proudly erected a cairn, and then, more alarmed than we should have cared to confess, we cautiously retraced our steps down the ridge. On this and similar scrambles we may have learned something that is missed in a more orthodox novitiate. Occasionally we managed to borrow an axe, and derived much amusement from the tangled labyrinth of crevasses that can be found among the upper reaches of the Grindel-

wald glaciers. These expeditions were carried out somewhat stealthily, but an unusual and enlightened view of the educational value of the mountains allowed us considerable liberty of action.

The hopeless call of the skyline that we could never cross lent to the historic gap between the Jungfrau and the Mönch the mystery of those corners one can never turn in dreams. When at length we began to climb the greater peaks, fate took us to other ranges. But after years of waiting we at last solved the mystery of the other side, and a six-day journey across the glaciers of the Oberland on ski owed its inmost charm to the discoveries that answered the questions of those early years. Imagination had fashioned a mysterious conception of those fields of unknown snow behind the Jungfrau, and the last steps up the slope leading to the portals of the Lötschenlücke were quickened by the return of the child's desire. And when at last the glory of the Great Aletsch snowfield, white with the softness of a winter moon,

gave substance to the dream—'Behold, the half had not been told.'

As a small boy I had compiled a guide-book, in which I had affirmed that 'the Finsteraarhorn will test the powers of a first-class mountaineer.' And now as we left our ski and passed on to its ascent, there was a touch of sadness in the ease with which we overcame the stronghold that to childhood had seemed almost impregnable. From the summit the little chalet of those earlier summers was just visible, and across the white recesses of the familiar lower ranges, and across the interval of years, our eyes seemed to meet the eager upward looks that had so often searched for the secrets of our present tranquil resting-place.

With such surroundings for our childhood it was almost inevitable that there should be little room for the sentiment with which others look back on school and home life. The snows are a jealous tutor, and resent a divided attention. It might be truer to say that Grindelwald was our real home and school. On the first day of summer and winter holidays

we left for the Alps, to return only as term began. We never talked of 'going,' but always of 'going back' to the Grindelwald, where the chalet was the centre of our most enduring associations. The associations remained with us at school. My kindliest memories of Harrow centre round the Vaughan Library, comfortably remote from the minor annoyances of school life. The monitor's key was a very real privilege, for it gave undisturbed possession of silent spaces whose full beauty was only revealed during a winter 'first school' when the sun shone in awakening glory through the windowed recesses that open on to terrace, fields, and the low-lying hills in the east. One shelf in particular proved a sovereign alchemist, and an intricate book knowledge of the Himalayas and Caucasus was accumulated with its help at the expense of the humaner letters.

The Grindelwald epoch was followed by three summers that gave us some experience of guideless scrambling among third-rate snow mountains. By judiciously choosing the worst of all con-

ceivable routes we managed to discover educative difficulties where none need have existed. And if we are the only people who have found a dangerous route up the Wildstrubel, we may as well have the discredit attaching to that feat. The providence that cares for the young and very foolish preserved us among sundry and manifold perplexities. At least we brought the axe and rope out of the sphere of imaginative usage, and acquired an eye for country that we might not have gained on first-class peaks between guides. Just as the charm of the lower hills is too little understood, so also the fascination of these dependent courtiers of the greater monarchs is woefully ignored. These smaller mountains provide the most natural transition from the hills of mere imagination to the actual mountains of romance.

Let me instance the Glacier de la Plaine Morte, a field of névé on the route to no great peaks, and rarely visited. Its elusive magic is all its own. Just as the quiet spell of Wordsworth

escapes those whose taste in poetry tends towards sound and fury, so the Plaine Morte is a useful touchstone to discriminate between the esoteric and exoteric school of mountain lovers. 'Any goose sees glory' in the ice-fall of the Rhone or the sweep of the Aletsch. But if a man can see nothing in the Plaine Morte but a somewhat featureless field of snow, he is not one of those to whom the precious things of the lasting hills will yield up their treasure. He is no dweller in the innermost.

On the glaciers near Finse there is something of the like fascination. There, as on the Plaine Morte, the appeal consists in no outstanding feature, but in an impression of organic unity in a seemingly neglected world. On the Plaine Morte the effect is heightened by the insignificance of the shapeless bounding wall of low-lying shale slopes that cut off the greater peaks. Here also there is nothing to disturb by an assertion of disproportionate grandeur. There is the same secret and spacious

charm on the Hardanger-Jokul, where the eye travels unarrested over dim white spaces of ice-capped plateaus only suggesting by a suspicion of haze the unseen fjords that sleep among their folds, and falling away like the rhythm of dying music to a far and grey horizon. In such places there is an uneasy feeling as of an unsought intrusion upon the quiet of a world withdrawn to die, a death with a wayward note of incompleteness :

'As though some God in his dreaming had wasted
the work of his hand
And forgotten the work of creation.'

The Plaine Morte is also associated with less seemly memories. Our first guideless venture above the snow-line took us to the Wildstrubel. We left at midnight without sleeping, and were dead tired when we started home. But our older companion should have known better than to give himself and two exhausted boys neat whisky as a pick-me-up. The next distinct memory is that of watching our friend carrying out his suggestion that he should lead.

His movements did not seem governed by any concept of the shortest distance between two points, and after a few aimless curves he sat himself in the snow. There was much competition to avoid leading, as those that followed could doze peacefully, guided and led by the tension of the rope. Our intermittent slumbers provoked abrupt jerks on the rope, which as often as not induced a unanimous collapse, followed by a brief but peaceful repose on the glacier. My brother's mind was divided between two obsessions. He identified me with a certain 'Hetta,' and was firmly convinced that I was leading towards the wrong end of the glacier. A violent death would have then seemed preferable to the mental effort involved in disabusing him of these fancies; and I accepted with resigned disregard his blandishments, at times unpleasantly affectionate, and his repeated attempts to change the line of march. As we dragged on I became acutely conscious of what are, I believe, two fairly common phenomena. Movement, continued in

extreme exhaustion, set itself to the sound of an irritating jingle of words that worked its way into the subconscious mind, governed the swing of one's limbs, and repeated itself monotonously till it seemed to be part and parcel of one's being. Again weariness awoke that strange tendency to see faces in inanimate objects. Familiar countenances formed suddenly, and as suddenly resolved themselves into grinning boulders. Mr. Belloc may have had this in mind:

> 'It darkens. I have lost the ford,
> There is a change on all things made.
> The rocks have evil faces, Lord,
> And I am awfully afraid.'

Insufficient attention is paid to the curious data that mountaineering contributes to the psychology of exhaustion. Experiences of a different character were the outcome of another struggle on the Plaine Morte against overpowering weariness.

With a friend, a sound mountaineer, but a novice on ski, I had set out some years later to cross the hills from

Montana to Villars. I left my friend on the Plaine Morte, and pressed on to reach the Wildstrubel for the sunset. Incidentally of all mountain memories that lonely sundown on the Wildstrubel is the most haunting. Adelboden was hidden, and from bourne to bourne there was no suggestion of life but for the deserted snow-gagged road to the Gemmi. A chaos of crag and snowfield, with no touch of colour to relieve the greyness, reddened for a few moments, and then sank back into the shadow as night crept upwards from the valley to the summit ridges. Darkness had fallen when I again reached the Plaine Morte, and one of those bitter winter breezes blew over the glacier. Mental and physical fatigue followed the inevitable reaction after thirteen strenuous hours. The monotony of surroundings has a hypnotic effect on tired limb and brain. The alternating spaces of shadow and snow, subdued by the glimmering light of the stars, the indefinite bounding wall with a dark curving of great hills beyond, possessed a rhythmic suggestion of sleep

that I found difficult to resist. I tried counting steps, but only accentuated the rhythm. I vowed not to look up till I had reached the thousand, but nothing seemed to break the maddening reiteration of those undulating snows. And then my hands and feet suddenly lost sensation.

A steady sequence of thuds disturbed me; and I realised that my friend was chopping wood outside the hut some three miles away. That Inquisition torture, the slow succession of drops of water falling at intervals of a minute on the victim's head, had, we are told, the effect of inducing a lively loyalty to the Catholic faith. I can well believe it, for I know that the regular fall of the beats carried across the glacier filled me with zealous and unreasoning anger. It added the last artistic touch to the monotony of the Dead Plain, for it followed a different rhythm, and proved almost more than I could stand.

The mountain gloom is often most pronounced below the snow-line.

One of our earlier climbs took us from

the Wildstrubel Hut to the Wildhorn, and thence without incident to the head of the Rawyl gorge. Here the paths divide, the westerly to Sion, the easterly to Montana. At the dividing paths my brother and I started cheerily along that which leads to Montana. One of our two companions was a middle-aged man who considered that the experience gained in some camping expedition in Africa had given him an instinct for locality. He assured us that Montana would be found on the western flanks of the gorge. Analogous reasoning would lead one to look for Murren on the slopes of the Scheidegg. We did not like to break up the party, lest further knowledge won on the veldt should have even more disastrous results. So on we wandered, while the dividing gorge dropped ever further and further below. I do not know what provoked the final outburst. Perhaps they reminded us of our youth, a sore subject. They were the kind of men who 'have no hesitation in contradicting those younger than themselves.' At any rate we parted.

They chanced upon a peasant who guided them home by midnight, a barren victory, for had they followed our advice we should all have been home by tea. Meanwhile we two scrambled down some fifteen hundred feet to the boiling torrent. This we crossed by a fallen tree. A faint track led thence to the lower of the two 'bisses' that run along the great sweep of the mountain-side. These 'bisses' are an ingenious attempt to harness the waters that would otherwise flow to waste, and to convey them at a uniform gradient through a country that is all ups and downs. The stream guided into troughs is carried across the face of the precipices. The troughs and planks, which afford a passage to the engineer and to chance but astute visitors, are supported on poles driven into the face of the cliff. Even in the daytime the lower 'bisse' is not oversafe, for the water escapes at intervals and trickles over the planks. By the time we reached it night—a sullen overclouded night — had fallen. Slowly we began to feel our way through the darkness,

cautiously creeping along the slippery treacherous platform that hung poised above the thunder of the river. Childish nightmares had often centred round mountain cataracts, and to this day there is something uncanny in the turbid fury of an Alpine stream. We were soon filled with useless hatred for the unending tumult from below. Above the gorge a crag loomed out of the night and looked down upon us with malicious contempt. At such moments the mountains seem to develop a treacherous and repellent personality. There is something inhuman in the grim relish with which they seem to watch a desperate struggle.

> 'The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay
> Chin upon hand to see the game at bay.'

The shadowy lines of forbidding precipice crept upwards to dim clusters of twisted pine. Below us flashed the evanescent glimmer on the tumult of the torrent. Its monotonous shouting beat unceasingly about our ears. Something of the nightmare imagery that

inspired Kubla Khan added a note of terror to the voice of the river as it forced its way, through caverns measureless to man, down to a sunless sea.

To the monotony of the torrent was added the monotony of that interminable succession of planks, winding round the dark elbows of the ravine, always promising to disclose a securer path, but leading only to a like treacherous way. At last, in despair, we tried a short cut up through the woods. The trees rose out of a darkness that could be felt, and smote us in the face. We stumbled, fell, condemned 'the nature of things,' and gave up the unequal struggle to sleep till dawn.

Those careless summers seem very far away. I look back on them with some shame and much regret. For even our very follies had a certain educative value. We had—in a very literal sense—to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.' Unfortunately, one began to take such let-offs as a matter of course, and during the long weary hours in which I waited for the search-party

I had much leisure to reflect on that arrogant faith in luck which is the parent of so many disasters.

During the four months I spent on my back I dared not face the prospect that I might never climb again. I refused to permit such a possibility. None the less I looked forward with peculiar dread to the vision of forbidden snows. The first mountain that I saw left me unmoved, though I felt a pang of regret as the snow and fire of Ætna climbed above the horizon of wave, for in happier days I had wandered up its tortured slopes. But the snow-touched hills that swept down through vine and olive to the sapphire belt of Nauplia's bay stirred no longing to penetrate into the recesses of ranges that seemed woven from the fabric of dreams. It was otherwise at Garmisch. There the call proved too strong; on two sticks I hobbled painfully up some three thousand feet, and the delight of watching distant hills once more climbing into a larger sky went to my head like wine.

The worst moment came at Berne.

The thought of 'Yesterday — many years ago' was never so insistent, never so sorrowful, as on the terrace from which I had so often caught the first glad welcome of the snows. I looked at the Oberland glowing in full sunlight beyond the roofs and the morning mists :

'Into my heart an air that kills
From yon far country blows ;
What are those blue remembered hills,
What spires, what forms are those ?

That is the land of lost content ;
I see it shining plain.
The happy highways where I went,
And cannot come again.'

To lose and recapture is to make doubly precious. Some of the glamour that haunted the first crossing of the snow-line clung to the first tentative experiments on ski. And so in the summer past two hard-won climbs have dispelled for ever the shadow of suspense that darkened two years. I was working at Montana, but somehow the long greeting of the white trinity that cast their spell from beyond the shadows of

the Val' d'Anniviers made life a burden of vain regrets. I escaped to Zermatt, and the same evening started for the Dent Blanche. As I crossed the threshold of the Schönbuhl Hut I felt like an exile returning home. My nostrils were gladdened by the old familiar evil atmosphere redolent of Swiss tobacco and the inevitable 'Maggi' soup. And as I watched the magic web of twilight creeping up the terrible northern wall of the Matterhorn, and drank in the silence of the upper world—a silence that is something more than a mere negation of sound—I felt that the lasting rewards of the craft are not the exotic moments of difficulty or danger, but the humbler commonplaces of every climb, the dawn breaking the shadows on the snow, the vision of far horizons melting into the roof of heaven, the peace and radiant grace of sunset on the hills.

An open wound and lack of training brought on a bad dose of mountain sickness and made the last hour a dour struggle, but a week later I had accommodated myself to changed conditions, and

managed to lead over the Combin without undue pain. Only those who have known for months the humiliating dependence of the sick-bed can realise the full gladness of the rope's responsibility.

There are, of course, moments of sadness when the loss of nerve and strength challenges comparison with the past. The colour of things seems changed. Lost is the old confidence on the poor marksmanship of falling stones. Every well-worn precaution has its meaning. The kindly security of the rope is doubly welcome.

And yet in a state of irreproachable virtue there often escapes a great longing for the old unregenerate days, for the irresponsible gaiety of those chequered hours, for all the mirth and laughter that waited us beyond the narrow paths of orthodoxy. There lingers still a chastened regret for the rollicking faith that carried one gaily in and out of perilous places. The hills take on a soberer colouring from the eye that has seen the long deferred reckoning paid in full. But though

'Die unbegreiflich hohen Werke
Sind herrlich wie am ersten Tag,'

though one accepts their punishment as a small price for years of unhampered joy, there are none the less moments of irrational passionate revolt, moments in which one would buy back with a year of the life that is left one solitary hour among the untroubled mountains of youth.

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