

and who will try to realise the state of extreme excitement under which they must necessarily have been, will, I think, be slow to accept this suggestion. If they had really felt such an alarm, they would have gone round by the usual route, instead of taking the short cut downwards. I fully believe that they went to Mr. Chester, and that Kronig's rather singular question may be accounted for in fifty ways, without imputing to them an act of almost inconceivable stupidity or inhumanity. I will venture, then, to suggest that the true story was probably as follows:—Mr. Chester went towards the edge of the cliff to look for his dog, or for some other reason. He slipped, and either fell out of the belt, which had been improperly fastened, or, as seems more likely to me, removed it himself. In either case, especially in the latter, the guides were highly to blame for their carelessness; and probably assumed very thoughtlessly that they were on a safe place. Mr. Chester then fell, and was instantaneously killed. The guides rushed down towards him by the quickest route, dropping the gloves and bottle on the way, and found that he was already dead. They then returned to the Riffel, composing a very improbable story on the way. In all this I see gross carelessness, and think that Messrs. Hall, Rigby, and Parker deserve our gratitude for the clearness with which they explained the circumstances. I cannot, however, agree with Mr. Hall in thinking that there is any serious ground for further suspicion. At all events, I fully agree with him that it is highly desirable that the result of the official investigation should be made public; and this is the point which it is now important to press upon the Swiss authorities. If gentlemen who are not accomplished mountaineers are to venture into the high Alps, the guides should use additional precautions; but as far as we can see at present, Kronig and Taugwald appear to have neglected the precautions which are in all cases most imperative.

THE ENGLISH LAKES IN WINTER. A Paper read before the Alpine Club on March 29th, 1870. By J. STODDON.

DURING a short visit to the English lakes last Easter, it had struck me from a look down Helvellyn towards Red Tarn, over steep snow slopes falling away into dense mist, that the mountaineering capabilities of these hills in winter had hardly been duly recognised. So last winter, having a few days at my disposal, I found myself with a friend whom I will call X, installed in rooms at Elterwater, in Great Langdale, belonging to another friend, Y, in the house of one Tyson, who subsequently turned out to be the cousin of almost everybody in the valley. Elterwater is chiefly remarkable for a large powder-mill, which caused us much profitable speculation on the explosive force of gunpowder raised in our minds by a violent thunderstorm, during which one specially brilliant flash seemed to hang just over the mill. The weather up to the time of our arrival had been clear and frosty, but the day

we came the frost broke up, and the rain fell in a way peculiar to the lakes, that is, it rained for about eight days almost without stopping. Our first expedition was up Wetherlamm, from Green Burn. The crags above the old mine works were wonderfully beautiful, as the water which trickles over them had become changed into ice, coating the crags for some 200 feet with tier above tier of icicles. The climbing among these required care. Carrs was wonderfully fine from this point, its cliffy face seamed with several steep and narrow snow couloirs. We were soon in dense mist enlivened by a sharp wind, so that we had some trouble in finding our way down again. The next few days were spent in getting wet and studying waterfalls. Colwith swollen with flood was grand, and Elterwater Tarn was almost as large as Grasmere. The first day the weather gave us a chance we climbed the highest of the two Langdale Pikes from Dungeon Gill. Even in a scramble straight up there was no difficulty except a little caused by a glaze of ice on the rocks. The view was very wild, the whirling mist was dashed against us from the Bowfell side, and the clouds were lit up with a strange lurid sunset light which did not promise good weather. On the Stickle Tarn side we found a great deal of snow, and a good glissade landed us in a very short time a little way above the water's edge. Next day a stroll under Bowfell in thick mist disclosed, when the mist lifted, the base of a wide couloir, which shot up steeply into the clouds. Darkness and vile weather came upon us before we reached it, but we were determined that this attempt should not be our last. On the next Sunday the wind changed to the north, and before sunset the clouds were all swept away, and a clear evening gave us our first look at Bow glittering in fresh snow. Our couloir sloped steeply down towards Langdale, a little distance on the Rossett Gill side of the summit.

Monday morning was brilliant and a sharp frost; we set off somewhat later than we need have done, intending to climb Bowfell by the great couloir, and if possible cross Scawfell Pikes into Wastdale. We kept well under Green Band till we were just beneath the summit, then turned straight up towards a short but steep grass slope called, I believe, Green Nose, above Grunting Gill; a little way above which, after some steepish rocks, our couloir began. The rocks gave us a little trouble, owing to a thin glaze of ice, but the snow soon relieved us from that, as it was soft and up to our knees. The sky was perfectly clear, and the blue colour in the holes made by our sticks was very marked. A mass of black crag rose from the snow at the base of the couloir, which now rose steeply

straight above us, with the summit of Bow on the left. The snow was at first in capital order, and the angle (by klinometer) 30°. As the angle gradually increased the snow got gradually harder, till on reaching about 45° it became necessary to cut steps. The slope got steeper and steeper, steps were always necessary, and at last after having come up 350 feet or more, we found ourselves within a few feet of the top on a slope of 63°, with an overhanging cornice of ice above us, and the snow nearly up to our waists for a few feet below the top, which I could just reach with my ice axe. The next few minutes must have been pleasant to my friends below me, as the cornice was gradually tumbled upon their ears in a shower of icy fragments. Then I pulled myself up by my hands on to the level snow field above, and a short run up easy slopes soon brought us to the top. The view was perfect; not even in Switzerland do I remember any sight of mountains with more delicately beautiful outline, relieved against the clear winter sky. Blen-Cathra and Skiddaw on one side, with their ridges falling away in the tenderest snow-moulded curves, were a wonderful contrast to the ruggedness of Scawfell on the other side. The Scotch Hills lined the north-east horizon, and the sea on the Lancashire coast gleamed like polished gold. It was voted too late for Scawfell, so we made straight running for the top of Great End; the snow being sometimes so soft that we sank almost to our waists, at other times so hard that if the gradient was at all steep, a step was necessary here and there. As we reached the top the few clouds there were were just reddening with the setting sun, but a glance downwards made us somewhat prematurely sanguine about an easy descent into Wastdale. The mountain side was very steep, covered with snow for some 500 or 600 feet below us, with the rocks cropping out in irregular masses. A long slope was, after a little inspection, selected for a glissade, and we skidded down towards it. I tried it carefully for a few yards down, but it soon became so hard that an hour's stop-cutting could not have taken us down to the bottom; so we skirted along the top in the direction of Scawfell, through snow much above our knees. We soon came to another slope leading very steeply downwards; X was some 20 feet in front of me, got on to the slope, which partook of the couloir character, and sank nearly to his waist in the soft snow. I could see from where I was that it was in good order for some 30 feet down, and X, who could see much further, said that the rocks below were not too steep, so I shouted to him to go, and he began sliding down, meantime floundering to the top of the slope. The moment we appeared there we heard a startled shout from X, saw him flung upon his back, utterly fail to stop his motion,

then gliding swiftly downwards. The slope we saw had changed from snow to hard ice, and the gradient must have been at least 45° . Some big rocks cropping out of the snow came next, down which he fell head over heels, and then head first down another slope towards an ominous break in the continuity of the mountain side, which might mean a precipice of 100 feet. We watched in horror for the time when we should see him disappear. A little before the brink the gradient slackened; he never lost his head for a moment, grasped at a fragment of rock which struck him from his course, then at another which lay most providentially just at the right place, and his motion was brought to a stand. He lay quite still where he was on the snow quite 100 feet below us—I should say more; and I followed carefully down the slope in his tracks. When I reached the point where he had lost his footing, I almost followed him, the snow which was resting on hard ice suddenly thinned off, and before I was aware of it I felt one foot going. Fortunately I had an axe with me, otherwise it would have been impossible to get down to X, and many a weary step it cost me to reach him. In about three-quarters of an hour we came to him terribly shaken and almost frozen, with his clothes very much torn and his right leg almost unable to move. The next three hours were not pleasant; every step had to be cut for a considerable time, and X's feet to be put into them. A great piece of bread somewhat revived him, and we struggled slowly on under fast-increasing darkness. Exercise brought back the use to his leg and the steadiness to his limbs in a way that I could not have believed possible after such a fall. Fortunately the moon came out, and by its help we managed to find our way down to Wastdale, and appeared at the hospitable door of Ritson about 8.15 P.M. We found the family had been spending the day in airing the beds, which, considering the time we arrived, was lucky. We discussed sundry plans about getting to Windermere by rail, but the next day X, with wonderful pluck, declared himself ready to face Rossett Gill. A snow-storm came on before we reached Sty Head Tarn, and between there and Sprinkling Tarn several inches of snow must have fallen in a wonderfully short time. I never saw a storm to compare with it, the wind was so violent that we could hardly keep our feet at all, and sight, except at intervals, was quite out of the question. About a mile beyond Sprinkling Tarn we found our difficulties increasing fast, from our decreasing knowledge of the country and the utter disappearance both of path and landmarks. The result was, that after much scrambling we emerged from the snow in Borrodaile. Just as we reached Rosthwaite a glorious break

in the clouds saved us the misery of the many miles of turn-pike road to Ambleside. We faced about and crossed the Stake Pass in deep snow. This was our last expedition. We had had at any rate one most glorious day, which had fully atoned for all the waiting and the rain, as full of interest and beauty as almost any I remember in the Alps. I am sure that any one who will make the experiment of a winter expedition for himself will find most ample reward. The mountaineering on the higher summits is everything that can be wished, crevasses excepted. The only thing is, it has to be sought to a certain extent. I suppose Bowfell might be ascended by Green Band as easily in winter as in summer, but anyone who is not *blasé* of steep hard couloirs, without the excitement of falling stones, may get them in the lakes in perfection, if he cares to look for them, and have them too, which is a great point, without a single intrusive soul to disturb him.

ASCENT OF SNAEFELL JÖKULL, WESTERN ICELAND.

By TINLEY MASON.

MY original idea in going for a yachting cruise to Iceland was to use the yacht as a base of operations for exploring, with the help of the Rev. H. B. George, the still unknown ice-region of the Vatna Jökull. This, however, was found to be impossible, owing to the whole southern coast being unapproachable by a vessel, and without a single harbour; so the party was given up, and my plans were changed. Still, while in Iceland, I was determined to make an attempt at Snaefell, or, as it is termed throughout the land, 'the Jökull,' being *par excellence* the noblest, though not the highest, of their ice-mountains—for it is at the very extremity of the promontory that divides the noble Breidi and Faxe Fjords, and rises up alone in the splendour of its white mantle direct from the sea. I had heard that all the known attempts had been made from the northern side, so I determined to try it from the south, and accordingly made for the trading place of Budir, where there is fair anchorage except with a SW. wind. Here the merchant told me the ascent was impossible, owing to the crevasses, but kindly offered me ponies to go the 10 miles of rough coast-walking leading to the base. However, there is a fishing village called Stappen close to the foot of the mountain, where also there are the most wonderful basaltic formations in the world; so leaving the yacht in the cutter at 4 P.M., we sailed to this place, and found the caves and cliffs far more curious than we could possibly have imagined, the pillars twisted and contorted in the most marvellous ways, and