

ski waving in the air. Perhaps a gentle slope leads up to some col where the rope can be taken off, and then comes the descent to the valley. Ten feet below the snow lies the summer path. What pity one feels for the summer climber who could at best run down the path on his mere feet !

A traverse keeping just above the tracks of the ascent, a rapid breathless turn which intersects them, places the skier on a counter-traverse which may take him thousands of yards before he need turn again. Then the slope eases off and for a while the straight run can be taken. Feet together, still and upright, he shoots down to the little plain below on which perchance is visible the roof of the highest hut. The little plain floats up to meet him, and with a swing he comes to rest, feeling that life is well worth living.

#### CLIMBING ON LLIWEDD.

By A. W. ANDREWS.

(Read before the Alpine Club April 6, 1909.)

**F**OR many years rock climbers in the British Isles were looked upon with much the same favour as that bestowed by the Church in the Middle Ages on the supposed possessors of heretical knowledge. Fortunately, however, for them, the mildness of modern manners prevented the employment of disciplinary repression.

I find it difficult to shake off the feeling that I am on my trial before a stern tribunal, but I have recently derived great encouragement from the fact that at a recent meeting of this club no less I think than seven members confessed, not merely that they climbed without guides, but that they belonged to climbing combinations which often went two on a rope on snow-covered glaciers.

The excuse offered for this heinous offence, that they could not get a suitable third man, seemed hardly convincing, but no storm of rebuke fell on their devoted heads ; mainly, I expect, because those qualified to criticise had done the like themselves. At any rate, guideless climbers are not now outside the pale, and they certainly require no defence from me.

British rock climbers are merely guideless climbers, absorbed in trying to learn something of that part of the technique of mountaineering which has as its province the climbing of rocks. As such they are obviously harmless and necessary.

Many of us may rightly deplore the increasing habit of younger



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LLEWEDD ACROSS LYN LYDAW

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climbers to neglect ice and snow in consequence of this home specialisation, but we may well console ourselves with the hope that practice in one branch will lead eventually to an interest in and consequently an improvement in the other, and to a distinct advance in the standard of safe mountaineering.

If I can show that climbing on Lliwedd is a training in exploration even more than in rock climbing, it may seem not an unworthy playground to those who regret the modern rarity of those great qualities which marked the pioneers of the Alps.

Just 20 years ago I saw Lliwedd for the first time.

I bicycled across England and Wales to Pen y Gwryd, attracted by the rumour of novel rock climbing.

I knew, to some extent, what to look for, as I had climbed on the Cornish cliffs and in Skye, and had a limited experience of the Alps.

I followed Crib Goch to the summit of Snowdon and descended by the crest of Lliwedd. I remember making several attempts to find a way down the face, but the prospect below seemed so untempting that I had to content myself with the descent of what Welsh climbers familiarly call the Mud Gully on the East.

In the afternoon I traversed the Glyders and Tryfaen *viâ* Pen y Gwryd, knowing no better, and returned to fetch my bicycle to catch the night train at Bangor for Oxford.

I think even by modern standards I may be considered to have spent a strenuous day.

I saw Lliwedd from many aspects, but I certainly never realised the immense size of the cliff or its possibilities.

My next visit was in 1903, and since then I have fallen under its spell.

My earliest mental pictures of a dark formless cliff, threatening Lyn Lydaw like some gigantic storm wave, gave place to more definite conception of ledges of reasonable breadth connected together by possible ridges and chimneys.

I realised, to put it in a more picturesque way, that

Fire had fashioned of yore and time had broken the rocks,  
There were rooting crannies for trees and nesting places for flocks.

This is not poetical exaggeration.

Dwarf birch trees, the sole survivors of life's strenuous competition, and unhappy sheep, rash, guideless climbers both, have been discovered on the most inaccessible ledges. Here I must entirely deprecate the idea that I had at that time any intention of making routes on Lliwedd or writing a

monograph. I became intent on solving a series of puzzles which after all is what the sport of exploration amounts to.

As I often had to scramble about alone I became adept at evading difficulties : in fact I rather resented, as I do to-day, the occasional necessity of climbing steep rocks. Hence my contribution to what a German would call the 'Erschliessung' of Lliwedd is mainly geographical, and the credit of making most of the routes must be given to others, especially J. M. A. Thomson, to whose untiring efforts it is due that there are now more than thirty routes, providing amongst them as fine climbing as exists on any cliff I know in the British Isles or the Alps.

If in the course of this paper I unintentionally give the impression of personal deeds of 'derring do,' you will now be able to discount my story.

Like Diego Valdez,

**The tempest drove me seaward and pinned, and bade me hold,  
The course I might not alter, and men esteemed me bold.**

There is only about 1000 feet of climbing on Lliwedd with a horizontal expansion of some half mile, and no one has, I believe, yet paid the mountain the compliment of a bivouac, though it deserves it as much as the Pillar.

But you may spend five hours on its ascent amid scenery as majestic and impressive as on any rock face in the Alps or Dolomites. The mysterious charm is sustained from the scree to the summit. Even when there is no mist you are shut off in a splendid isolation by massive ribs and curtains of rock on either side, and you can seldom distinguish your route for more than a few feet ahead. You can hear your leader's encouraging voice and estimate his distance by the bond of the rope, but you are alone on Lliwedd till the party foregather in some one of those charming nooks which lie hidden on the vast precipice.

You climb a slab, rib or chimney at an angle of sixty degrees and emerge on a flat platform.

Refreshment, mental and material, follows labour at no excessive interval.

At last you emerge, quite unexpectedly, in the sunshine at the top of the crags, 'where the cliff overhangs like a chin, a gulph of sunless air,' and when you look back at the rocks on the way home you are quite unable to tell where you have been.

Like the barber in 'The Shaving of Shagpat' you have peered through the veil of Rabesqurat, and your speech is confused.



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## THE WEST PEAK OF LLIWEDD

Even on those who have never climbed it Lliwedd exercises its charm.

As long ago as 1860 Ramsay wrote a delightful appreciation of the scenery of Lliwedd.

Approaching Llyn Llydaw, the full grandeur of this wonderful valley bursts on the beholder. A lake rather more than a mile in length and of a green colour, like some of the lakes of Switzerland, obliquely crosses the valley. Around it rise the cliffs of Lliwedd, Crib Goch, and Pen y Wyddfa, seamed with veins of white quartz that gleam like streaks of snow on the tall black rocks circling the vast amphitheatre, the scarred sides and rugged outlines of which, sharply defined against the sky, may well seem, till attempted, hopelessly inaccessible to the unpractised climber.

In every season and phase of weather there is a charm in this valley to a lover of the mountains. In quiet sunshine, when the rocks and perhaps a lazy ferry-boat are reflected on the still water ; or while the wanderer scales the crags amid seething mists ; or when the pitiless rain, or hail, or snow comes driving down the valley, but best of all on a threatening evening, when the gathered clouds, like the roof of a vast cavern, hang heavily from side to side on the edge of the hills, and a streak of light, caught from the setting sun, shows redly behind the dim peak of Snowdon, grimly reflected in the sombre waters of the lake.

I was reading the other day an account of a lecture given by G. W. Young to the Yorkshire Ramblers.

He told an Eton story.

In place of the customary eulogy on the glorious traditions of the school, which all old Carthusians remember in the annual sermon on the text of ' Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us,' an original preacher disturbed the incipient slumbers of his audience by the following :

' You think a lot of yourselves, you Eton boys. But after all, what are you ? Just comfortable little animals ! You eat and you play, and you curl yourselves up to sleep !'

Young suggested, I understand, that a similar point of view might have been taken in addressing a climbing club.

For fear that you may go away with an exaggerated notion of our energy, I will ask you to apply the moral to Welsh climbers. I have already told you that we dream dreams after a day on Lliwedd. I have a photograph ' which cannot lie,' showing the hour, from the shadows about 11 A.M., at which we start for the mountain. Young is curled up, Thomson alone has his eye on the clock, probably because he knows well that unless he gets his party off there will be no tea.

As a student of natural history I have made several interest-

ing observations on the connection of climbing methods with the habits of ordinary life, wicked influences which I will leave you to judge.

Certain well-known climbers on Lliwedd have evolved some very effective devices for dealing with difficult pitches.

No more credit, of course, attaches to them than to the butterfly who enjoys a healthy old age by getting himself up to resemble another species singularly disagreeable to the palate. It is merely a case of survival of the fittest.

Thomson is apparently happiest in places where ordinary climbers are pounded. He makes 'a long arm,' as the phrase goes, and there he is 'enjoying the circumambient air and an unobstructed outlook over Cwm Dyli.'

As he himself describes the move in scientific language, 'Making a stride of abnormal length, and while at full stretch in an exposed position, with one high hand for a mainstay, lift the weight and swing it across to the right foot.'

That this position is really typical of Thomson is clear from the sketch in which he has been immortalised by Elias in the act of climbing the Far East Buttress.

You begin, he says, up a precipitous cliff, and when the gradient becomes formidable, seclusion is sought in the chimney, which steepens and finally narrows down to a vertical fissure.

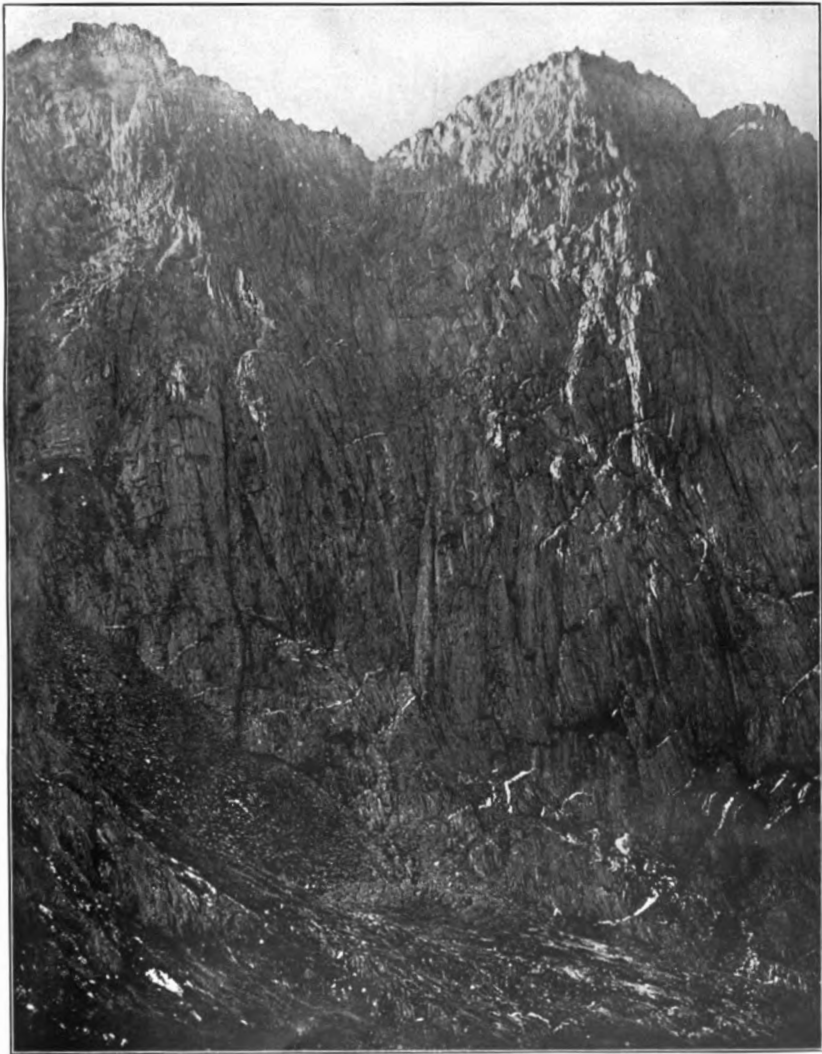
It has been stated that good holds exist, but they are none the less undiscoverable when the hands are benumbed with icy water. Then, at any rate, it becomes necessary to improvise new tactics. The width of the chimney permits the climber to lie sideways at full length, and to wedge in the forearm above the head.

With this as a lever and anchor, it is possible to writhe up one or two feet. Friction, materially increased by inspiration, provides the mainstay, while the arm is moved up.

The process is repeated till the third dimension of man precludes all possibility of further progress.

One hand now grasps a yellow stone in the fissure; the right leg is brought out to the chimney, and thrust up to a sloping step on the face. A strenuous effort is then needed to overcome the combined forces of friction and gravity and escape from the vice.

That Thomson has only attained these powers by specialisation will be evident from the following story. On a climb he maintains a dignified silence, the result of years of practice. It is said that on one occasion he took a long walk with a celebrated Professor who was also renowned for wasting no words. They wandered during a long summer day over most



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## THE EAST PEAK OF LLIWEDD

of the hills of Wales. Neither spoke. On parting in the evening the Professor remarked: 'I have a brother who is even more silent than myself.' Thomson looked at him and said nothing.

Other climbers have acquired different habits. I once persuaded H. V. Reade and G. W. Young to try a new climb on Lliwedd. On the only difficult part I took a photograph of them, which shows them striding out, with, no doubt, thoughts in their minds of many weary hours of similar work.

Young, doubtless, was stimulated by memories of heroic traverses of at least three Chamonix Aiguilles and the need of haste to avoid a bivouac. I feel sure that if I had not been there to persuade them gently back to the path of least resistance, a new climb of an entirely different order would have been recorded. I have a serious accusation to make against them of want of etiquette. On one occasion when they intended to spend what they called an off day they made an entirely new route up a difficult gully. As they described it, they got into a crack and went up it till they reached the summit ridge.

It has always been the custom on Lliwedd to look at a climb well with a glass from the screens, to imagine all kinds of connections between the visible ledges, and perhaps if the weather is quite fine and the rocks in perfect condition, go up as far as the foot of it, but finally, of course, to leave it till another day, with the caution which characterises a boat's crew prospecting a visit to a cannibal island.

If this kind of landfall were permitted, Lliwedd would soon have no secrets. The latest instance of vandalism is the discovery of a new and exceedingly difficult climb by a young Cambridge student, who says that he merely went up by the quickest way to fetch a pipe.

One of the attractions of Lliwedd is the variety of its slab climbs, and of slabs J. B. Farmer is the natural exponent. Length combined with straightness enables him to clear all the bunkers with his drive. Philosophic and imperturbable he is equal to any difficulty. On one occasion he was climbing some slabs on the Glyders, and was maintaining his position by one hand in a somewhat critical position, when he was attacked by a large and powerful bumble bee who took an unfair advantage. With a presence of mind which we may all envy he did not let go. It is impossible to mention all the climbers whose personal habits have been influenced by Lliwedd, but its culminating triumph is that a Vice-President of our Club added several entirely new phrases to the English language on its crags.

I may mention one personal peculiarity of climbing which

can be easily accounted for. As a photographer I have been in the habit of carrying a large camera and stand on Lliwedd, and have consequently got into the way of keeping well outside all chimneys and cracks. Hence a preference for open climbing difficult to eradicate. It is better, however, to carry a camera than to have a sixteen stone novice behind you on the rope. As the proverb says, 'Sand and salt and a mass of iron are easier to bear than a man without understanding.'

What is that charm, nameless and incommunicable, which draws us to the British hills, so that the memories of even glaciers and Alps are but visions from a shadow land where 'all the days and nights of Sramandazi are not worth an hour of yonder sun'?

No words can explain it or metaphors describe.

Lliwedd or Tryfaen, Scawfell or the Pillar, hold the first place in our hearts, for on their crags we have known our first conquest and defeats.

An Australian poet trying to picture the love of the native-born for the 'never, never' desert, those 'great spaces washed with sun,' has left a few lines which may give us a clue to the secret.

'But without she bind you to Her, without you help subdue Her, not yours to love with us our heritage.'

#### THE ALPINE CLUB ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION.

A new departure was made this year in connection with the annual exhibition, a representative collection being put together from among the most interesting pictures of recent years.

As a result the views shown were considerably above the average in merit and included almost every type of mountain scenery. The selection and arrangement must have meant a great deal of work to Mr. Sydney Spencer, who is to be congratulated on the great success of his experiment.

It is obviously impossible to mention all the good photographs shown, as of the 181 sent in almost all possessed merit.

Mr. Spencer sent his well-known views from the *Aiguille Verte*. Few mountaineers have had the good luck to reach that view point at 6 A.M., which we believe was the hour at which these photographs were taken, and fewer still have so successfully caught the lights and shades of sunrise.

These views would have been of note even if the scene had been of less interest to mountaineers, and taken as they were under exceptional circumstances they are unique.

Of Mr. Spencer's other exhibits we liked the *Bush Valley* in the