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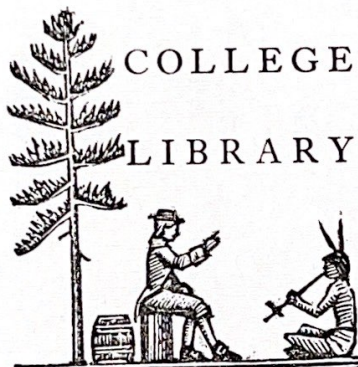
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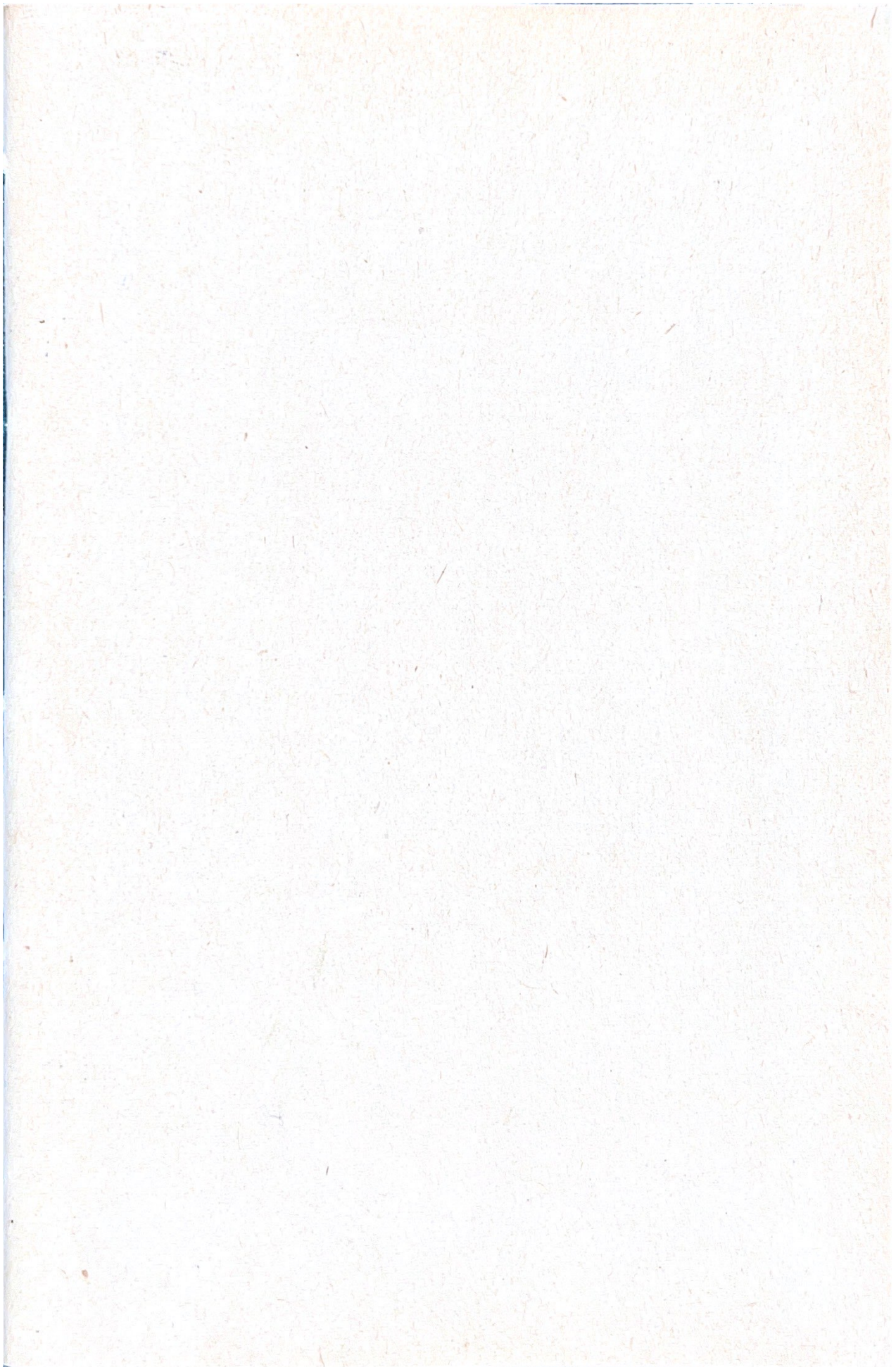
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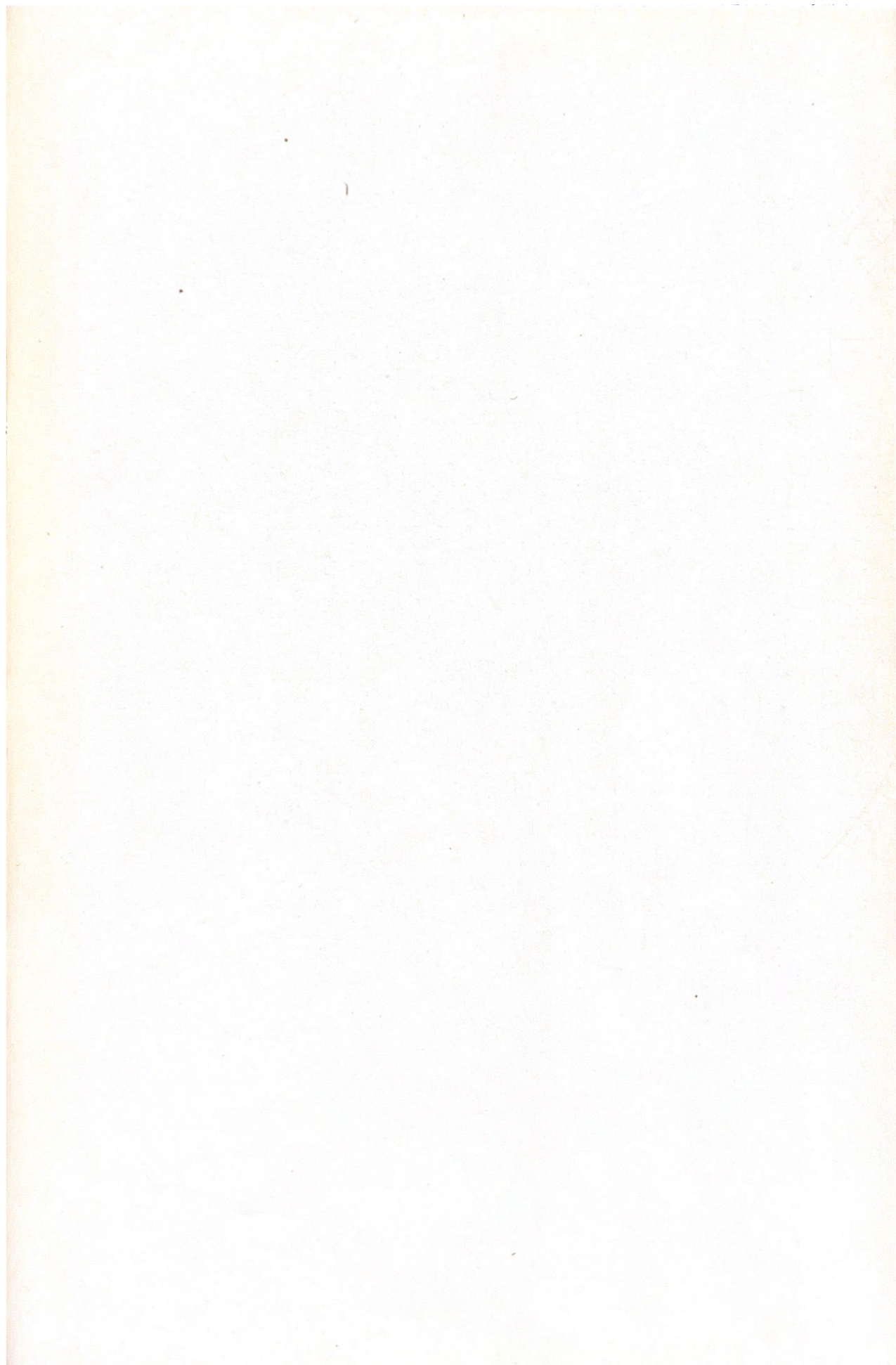
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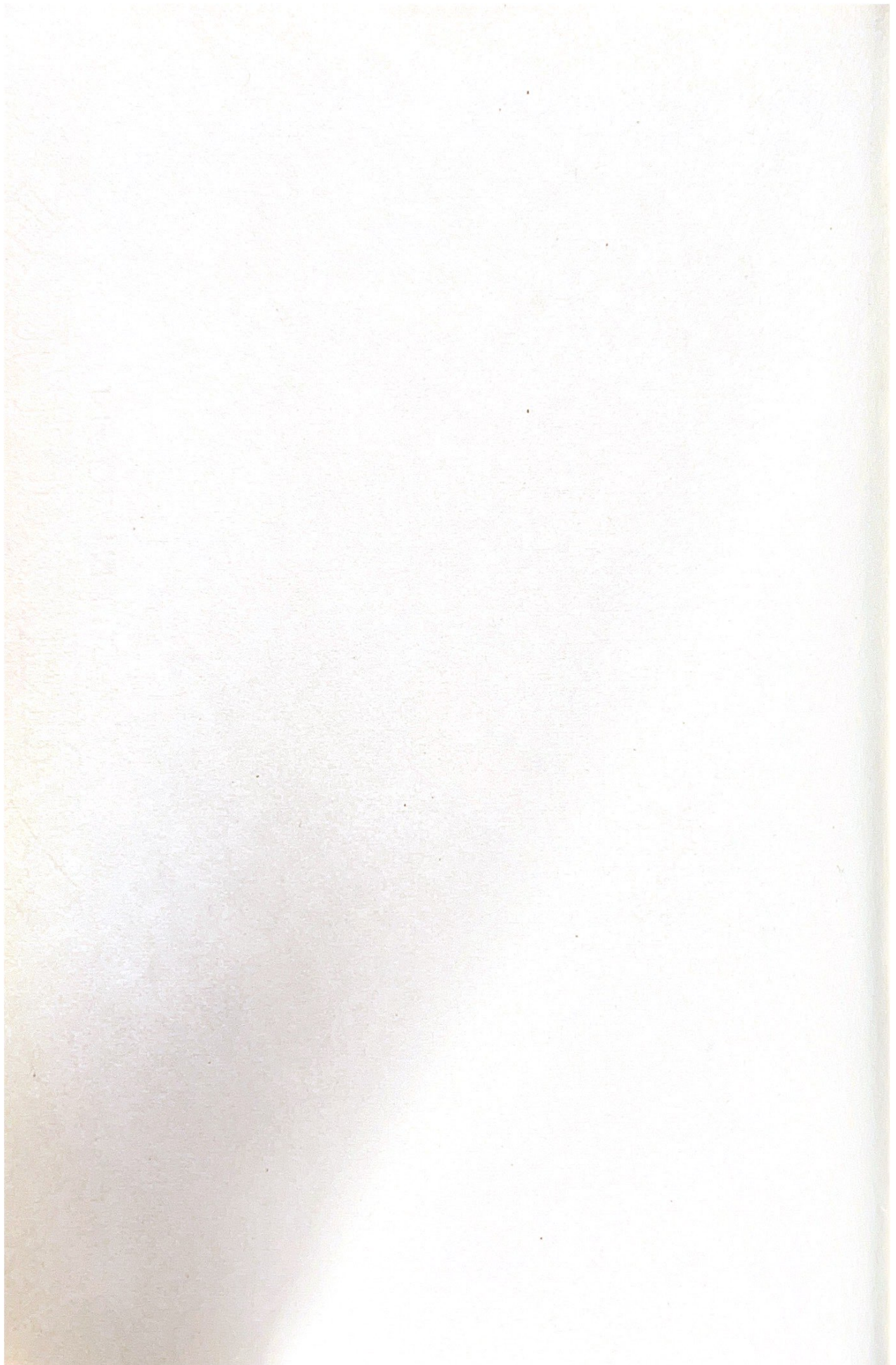


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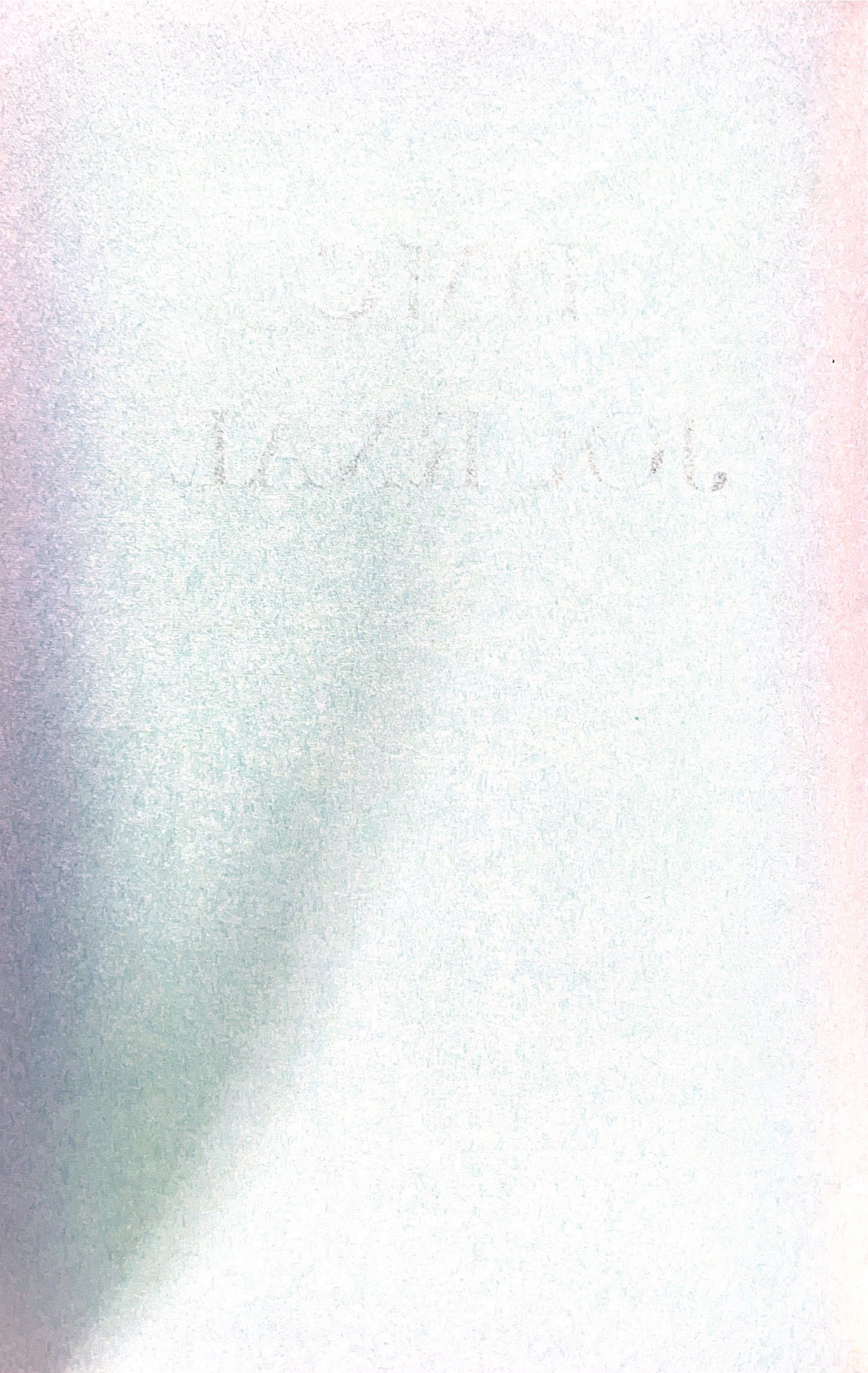


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DMC JOURNAL



1938



Journal of the
Dartmouth Mountaineering Club

HANOVER · NEW HAMPSHIRE

VOLUME I
1938

The Club intended to supply photos to be attached to the blank pages, but never did so, except for a very few copies. This copy lacks them.

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June 19, 1945
Gift

ASCENT OF DEVIL'S TOWER, SEPTEMBER 1938

by HARRY BUTTERWORTH

FRITZ WIESSNER was the first mortal to climb Devil's Tower by legitimate means, and the beautiful tower itself will stand for a long time as a monument to his achievement in pioneering a route. Before the climb had been made it is hard to see how any ordinary climber could believe it possible; Fritz saw it, tried it, and went right up. To put it weakly, one is impressed by the sight of his route.

Early this summer Jack Durrance was given permission to make a second ascent, and through July and August climbed persistently so that by September he was in excellent condition — something of a prerequisite to leading up the Tower. The attempt was made early in September as planned, although at that time neither Dick Durrance nor Chap Cranmer were free to come on the trip for which Jack had secured them permission and the climb had to be done with two instead of the intended four. This permission, incidentally, may be increasingly difficult to obtain in the future; the superintendent of the Monument, Newell Joyner, finds it a trial to his peace of mind to have people exposed to the conceivable risks of the climb, feels a personal responsibility for the safety of everyone who comes to the Tower, and henceforth may not recommend that any further permission may be given. In the meantime it should be said that he is very helpful and cooperative, for he made our stay in the neighborhood pleasant and contributed as much as possible to the success of Jack's climb.

When we first came to the Tower the afternoon was half gone, so the remaining daylight allowed only a short reconnaissance. The next day Jack explored the climbing possibilities of the section of wall a short distance north from the southeast corner of the Tower, roughly covering the lower part of the Wiessner route. The tower is composed of great pentagonal columns about four to six feet thick, weathered

where they are exposed to make cracks large enough in places for the insertion of an elbow or a knee; many of the columns are broken off to leave fine level platforms here and there up the walls, while rarely one will jut out far enough, on the east side, to create a little shade when the sun (which can make a virtual chafing-dish out of the exposed rock) has moved a little to the south. During that first day we learned much about the climbing conditions, went up perhaps half of the two hundred and fifty feet of really vile climbing, grew so parched that our ground party had to pass us up some Coca Cola on a rope, and at four o'clock were chased down by a storm of rain and hail. Mr. Joyner let us camp in the basement of the ranger station that night, and the ropes were allowed to dry.

Later, during what was properly still the night, an alarm clock rang and the sinister clank of pitons and carabiners announced to the darkness that a typical Durrance start was under way. It was four o'clock. Not long after we sallied out into the coming day, and sat on a rock up under the Tower until the light was full. There was nothing of the do-or-die in our leader that morning, partly because his night's rest had been on the uncompromising concrete floor, partly because he hadn't rested very long; this state of mind is not without its good points, be it said, and the climb started with us both in a very placid frame of mind. Beginning at the base of the pilaster that forms the southwest corner of the Tower Jack led up a groove of a fair incline to the pocket formed by a broken column slanting down from the east side to rest at the bottom against the corner projection, using three pitons in the crack up to that point. To get up into the niche at the head of this little slope was in itself "interesting", as climbers say with a smile, because of a small overhang with no obvious grips above worthy of the name. Jack effected it by clutching with his left hand around the corner pillar, a truly mighty reach; I believe that I succeeded by waiting until he pulled hard enough on the rope from above.

In the niche behind the slanting column we broached a can of Pabst that had happened to come along, using the claw of a kletterhammer and squirting a libation over the rock. Refreshed chiefly by the little shower we carried on from there up the slope of the column, bracing between it and the main body of the rock, the technique necessary from there to the top of the hard climbing. No pitons were put into the leaning

piece, in spite of its being some twenty-five feet in length because it seemed to be very slightly supported by the apparent mass and would have been a handicap in case we dislodged it while attached to it. Jack established his belay on the top of that column and began the ascent of the pitch directly above, climbing with both ropes. The pitch was not far from vertical and rose uninterrupted to an awesome height, but was thought possible because a channel a few feet wide running up between two column-edges suggested that it could be climbed. With two pairs of pitons near the bottom Durrance went up, towing two ropes as he went and with no hope of resting place before the top of the pitch. Complications arose in the last third of the channel because the stretch between the two pillars grew almost comically wide, the two sets of pitons put in in that region seemed all slightly suspicious (no good pitch cracks were available), and a chockstone sat in the way to crown it all. Jack had to stuff his knee firmly into the crack formed by the right-hand column, embrace the chockstone from the right and from below, and with a minimum of handholds wriggle up to the little floor just above. This point proved to be the crisis of the trip, because the length of the pitch, some eighty or ninety feet, the increasing burden of the ropes pulling through the parabiners, and the ever-harder climbing itself exhausted the person leading the route more than any other pitch on the climb, all leading him up to the villainous chockstone.

I see no point in describing how I made this pitch; suffice it that we passed on up the next pitch in much the same way but with less strain. It was about equal in length to the last one before it, beginning from a point opposite the halfway spot of the great crack on the Wiessner route and taking one up half its length again above it, being perhaps four columns to the south of that part of Fritz's climb. Pitons were used liberally throughout Jack's ascent to eliminate hazard as much as possible, making the rest of the climb, as no more places of genuine embarrassment were encountered, reasonably possible. At the top of the third pitch the usual flat spot offered from which to belay the climber up the next rise, another crack which was in a line with those of the two pitches before. The dubious part of this came again at the top where a loose angular rock was lightly resting on the mouth of the crack, but with a piton not far below, Jack was able to use the chockstone as a

grip and conclude the last real pitch of the series. This last rise was in the neighborhood of fifty feet, making the total of difficult climbing done well under three hundred; as a matter of fact, by this time we were a trifle higher than necessary in order to get on the broad slope grown with grass and bushes which leads around to the obvious passage to the top, so we did a short ropedown to the north and crept around further to the right and felt honest level earth beneath our feet once more. It would be quite possible for users of the Durrance route to continue it straight up the rock from the top of his last pitch, as the slope of the rock becomes no worse, and the columns are weathered to make what would be quite successful cracks; however, such a continuation would prove little, lead the climber into possibly rotten rock, and give him no means of knowing where the best descent begins from the top. As it was we had comfortable walking around to the north, it may be for a hundred yards or more, and then the short wall above us opened into two easy pitches one behind the other. Shortly afterward we suffered the giddy shock of actually being on top.

The summit of Devil's Tower is a lonely little field set up in the sky, bearing a few cacti and bushes among the grass. Fritz Wiessner's cairn marks the highest point, in the center of the plateau about a hundred feet from each side and two hundred from either end (according to the measurements paced off by Bill House last summer). Where the soil is thin the mosaic pattern of the tops of the columns shows through, and the structure that seen from below has excited the attention of sculptors evinces above the same careful beauty that makes one wonder at the cleverness of nature's devices.

To make the descent we retraced our steps down to the grassy strip and along to the head of the route up, leaving small cairns to mark the way down the first rocky gaps. At the place where we had come onto the meadow section during the ascent we started our first rappel, a piton with rust over it in the same rock showing where the Wiessner party likewise started to rope down. Sixty feet on our first ropedown, veering slightly to the south and left brought us to a little nook at the top of a long smooth strip of rock running down with a column about ninety feet below reaching up to it, and bordered to the north, beginning a short distance below, by the long column used in Fritz's great crack climb. This rappel, our second, is remarkable for

its consistency of pitch, and being uninterrupted for such a distance, gives one quite a glorious feeling at first. It was at the top of this that we rearranged the pack and, by what Jack is not certain was accident, I let the stone from the top of the Tower gathered for the DMC wall of fame slip out and be left behind. From the top of the lower column below we made the third ropedown past the lower part of the Wiessner crack to a comfortable recess, fifty feet or more further, between two columns and atop a third. By this time the roping was in the nature of a physical as well as a spiritual thrill, and the last glorious drop, down to the ledge on a level with our starting point, left me practically in flames. Durrance slithered down coolly, we gathered up the ropes and poured down our throats the last measure of beer that we had brought out that morning, and the job was done.

The Tower will always be an interesting climb, I think, and to those with that sort of mind it must be an alluring challenge. There is in the DMC even now an element that thinks to give it a try, getting permission on the excuse of wishing to determine whether the Tower be a laccolith or a plug, and thus combining business with work. But no matter how you slice it, it's still — tough.



ALPINE ADVENTURE

By EDWARD F. LITTLE

ONE of the most vivid memories is of a bright day last June in Hanover, when I was standing on the corner of Main and Wheelock Streets with Jack Durrance. Fresh from my last meal in Commons, I was receiving directions from Jack about some climb or other that he had lined up for Kenny MacDonald, my brother, and me in the Dolomite Alps for the coming vacation. We were heading for a summer in Europe. I think he had me half way up the Winkler tower in the Rosengarten, hanging by my fingernails, breathless and expectant, as he described the route handhold for handhold. Slowly I was edging myself up something that I imagined to look like the tower of Baker Library.

"Now this place," he went on, "is the only difficult spot. You want to climb facing east!"

"Yes," I added dryly, "Will I need a compass?"

This was how we planned a trip to Europe. When I think of the time I spent practising spread-eagles against his desk, with the aid of a book and some coaching, so that I might be able to negotiate the famous "Schpreizschritt" on the Cima della Madonna without falling into the dreadful abyss pictured in the book — when I think of all these things, I hate to think that we didn't climb a thing we planned and we didn't plan a thing we climbed. We don't recommend that as a general mountaineering precept but it just happens to be the way we travelled.

For example our first grapple with an Alpine giant was the most unpremeditated act I have ever known. One afternoon in late July found us at the Gandegg Hut, four or five hours above Zermatt. In search of adventure we had started early in the morning on a roundabout route that had taken us to Gornergrat. We crossed the Gorner glacier from Rotenboden and then over another of those great ice highways to the hut. We thought we were expert mountaineers, about ready to try the Eiger Nord-

wand. There we were, situated on top of a high rock ridge, landlocked by ice and snow in a perfectly glorious spot, with the Matterhorn on our front step and the impassable, ice-bound, avalanching face of the Monte Rosa Breithorn behind us. Kenny Mac was sleeping upstairs when Bud and I burst in on him and enthusiastically proclaimed,

“We are going to climb the Breithorn!”

He damn near passed out.

We explained that the face we saw out the window was not our intention. There was an easier ascent around back and we could sneak around that way. Good! We went downstairs and put our names in the record: “Dartmouth Mountaineering Club, Hanover, N. H., U. S. A.”

The next morning at three a.m. I remember being rudely awakened by the hut-master and dressing by flickering candle light. Outside bright moonlight flooded the cold night. The Breithorn was covered with fog. We swallowed the routine cup of coffee, munched some bread and chocolate, grabbed plenty of clothes, our rope and ice-axe, and left the hut. It was not yet dawn outside and the line of peaks lay silhouetted like great shadowy ghosts against the flush of light in the north and east. The Matterhorn, the Dent Blanche, the Weisshorn . . . From Zermatt at our feet to the Berner Oberland in the distance the valley lay still in fog.

Gandeggutte is perched on top of a big pile of rock between the two Theodule glaciers. We crossed the moraine and, roping up, set out over the Upper Theodule glacier toward the Theodule pass. There were tracks in the frozen snow. We turned left before the pass, following the snowfields that led in a great wide circle up behind the Breithorn. Fog began to close in on us from behind and dissolve at intervals. Above the mists we could see the Swiss summit of the Matterhorn and the growing light of dawn. The fog went. Suddenly the light of an unseen sun touched the topmost snows of the Matterhorn and then, one by one, the other peaks around. As it rose the receding mists reddened and melted. We noticed in the strengthening light a line of flags whipping in the wind above us. It seemed strange to find them up there, and for a while didn't realize what they were for. The international boundary!

The going was easy, all on snow, with only the last pitch steep enough to necessitate special attention. At seven a.m. we

won the summit, feeling like Columbus when he saw America! Stamping our feet to keep them warm, we took pictures in all directions. My camera shutter had frozen. The view was overpowering and the thrill of the moment made it hard to leave. Before we left the hills, we'd tackle another giant.

We picked something we thought a little more difficult for our next objective. It wounded our pride to read in a Swiss travel folder the description of the ascent of the Breithorn, our very climb, as "something any man with a bad head could do." In Zermatt we called on Otto Furrer and our ego was further deflated when we heard him say,

"O, yes, it is a nice ski from the summit of the Breithorn in winter."

A week later found us casting languishing eyes at the Ortlerpitz, highest eastern Alp, from the Stilfserjoch-Stelvio Pass. In the Trentino we would purposely refer to the old Austrian names and the Italians would get mad as hornets sometimes. The Ortler wasn't our idea at first either. Ken MacDonald had gone to Venice and we thought we'd have to do something pretty big to show him what he'd missed for a ride in a gondola on the Grand Canal. And when it was suggested, the vivid memory of the Breithorn leavened our enthusiasm. Our ascent of the Ortler began with the purchase of plenty of Bel Paese cheese in Trafoi and a four hour climb over steep scree slopes: Trafoi, Alpenrose Hut, Edelweiss Hut, Tabarettakamm, Payer Hut. We spent the afternoon and evening at the latter, which is one of the most beautifully situated mountain huts we saw. It stands about ten thousand feet up on a knife edge ridge which drops away for several thousand on either side. It was nice to lie in the afternoon sun hanging our heads over one side and our feet over the other. The Ortler is classed as an easy climb but it was thrilling enough for us. There was rock climbing to do with nailed boots and handfuls of rope and ice-axe. It was a new sensation to walk out over ice slopes that seemed nearly perpendicular. We were skeptical about doing it but the fascination of the topside took us. I later wrote up the account of the climb in as professional manner as possible, trying to make it sound like a Christmas ascent of the Matterhorn or a new route on the Totenkirchl:

Wed., July 27, 1938: Ascent of the Ortler 3900 m.,
2½ hrs. from Payer Hut (4 allowed). Bud and

I left at five with another party. The route leads out directly across a steep face over loose rock. Following a fairly difficult path it leads around back of the face, over more loose rock and across ice bands to a corner where the ice and snow work begins. This is the only bad spot, quite tricky. It was a bit of a thriller for us, especially on the descent. The route leads thence entirely on snow over the Upper Ortler glacier, past a bivouac shack to the upper snows. This is quite easy climbing as there are usually steps cut Our companions had a mishap on the descent when one step broke. The third man held the others with the rope and they were not hurt.

One of the bigger climaxes of our haphazard tour of Europe was our discovery of the Dolomites. The name means little to the great proportion of people unfamiliar with the Alps. To us come memories and visions of towering rock needles, rock pinnacles of exotically beautiful shapes rising straight out of the ground for several thousand feet, pushing out of the earth like a growing bulb, the purple hue of the rock cliffs at sunset, a rock climber's dream-world — the South Tirol. Even in the old names which the Italians have altered sounds the legendary charm and beauty of the "Dolomiten": Sextental, Grodnertal, Latemar, Drei Zinnen, Karer See, Rosengarten . . . Once in earlier days the Rosengarten was a great rose garden, as its name implies, which an angry king turned to stone, and even today it recaptures its colors of former days at sunrise and sunset. It is a sight never to be forgotten. But our angry friend in his impetuosity could not in any conceivable manner have done a better job for the sake of the rock climber. Better rock I could not imagine. We spent a day trying to squeeze and push and chin our way up a chimney on the Rosengartenspitz only to balk at an overhang which God had put in the wrong place as usual. With much grunting and cursing my brother tried it with what sounded like good technique. I could not see him. Seated comfortably under a rock forty feet below, thoroughly enjoying the view, I was yodelling in my own crude manner at the surrounding rock faces and listening to the echoes grow and die away. Inside the chimney felt like an icebox and the hands became chilled on the rock. The serenity of the

weather outside occupied my attention more than the rock, and in all of us the longing for a good pair of "kletterschuhe" or sneakers exceeded our enthusiasm for nailed boots. We conceded the victory to the overhang as we wanted to form the habit of being willing to give up on places that were doubtful which we didn't know. We retreated to the bottom of the rock where we lay in the warm sun watching several other parties on different parts of the cliff. The rope was dried and coiled for the last time before we left. Our climbing adventures were cut short by the idea of a trip to Istanbul for a first ascent of one of the minarets of St. Sofia which we never did anyway.

You may be aware now that I have tried not to give you a handhold by handhold description of a summer's climbing in Europe. It wouldn't do you any good and you wouldn't care. But I have tried to recapture some of the more memorable experiences of the first visit of three neophytes in the Alps, so that you will know what to expect when it's your turn or recall similar feeling you have already known. . . . I'd like to throw in a few general remarks to anyone who is going to do what we did.

From this side of the water, even with books and advice available, it is difficult to plan in any great detail a mountaineering tour of the Alps. This does not mean that it is not a good idea to do so, but that you will learn and fancy new trips and new ideas the minute you hit the hills. You want to have plenty of freedom of time and of motion. If you are on bicycle, as we were, it won't take many mountain passes to put you in shape, but make sure you are in good physical condition before you land on the top of some mountain. That is not remarkably new advice, but the first thing you'll think of will be some of the "chubbers" who say they can climb Hell's Highway in half an hour. A four hour climb merely to some hut where the real work starts is short in the Alps. When you leave the Hörnli hut, over ten thousand feet up, at three in the morning to climb the Matterhorn, you're lucky to be back by noon.

It's possible for fellows without extensive experience to find climbs as we did that they can do without guides. The Breithorn and the Ortler are good ones. Some of the best views in the Alps are from the lesser peaks where things look bigger. Climbs where steps have been cut present few technical difficulties. It is essential that you know how to handle a rope and ice-axe,

how to walk on snow slopes, and that you are off the snow by nine o'clock in the morning. When the snow softens in the warm Alpine sun, climbing gets difficult and well nigh impossible, and it is for this reason that you have to begin before daylight. As to the advisability of guideless climbing you can usually get your best information from the natives, and they are usually skeptical. Guides are at your disposal for two main reasons among others, and not, as you may expect, to pull you up the mountain. They are local boys. They know the terrain and they know the weather. Those are the two most important factors you want to consider when climbing without guides. Weather and terrain change so fast that you will find yourself easily fooled or lost or fogged. You have to keep one eye on the weather all the time and duck before the storm. Don't be afraid to be conservative. This is one game where you have to know the rules and can't cheat.

Those are elementary do's and don'ts on the big hills, but there is a lot you can do if you know them. You'll find it handy to have a good idea of Alpine geography before you start. It is helpful and a satisfaction to know what someone means when he mentions the Hohern Tauern or the Chamonix Aiguilles, and if you get an invitation for a week's climbing in the Kaisergebirge you'll know you're not going to end up in the High Tatras in nether Czechoslovakia. The more you go out of your way to find new places and discover new things and the more energy for adventure you have, the more will be your fun. You can have a wonderful time in the mountains for next to nothing. Your initial outlay may be an ice-axe, a rope, a pair of good boots with Tricouni nails, gloves, goggles, and warm clothes, a tin of Pigmentan to prevent a sunburn, and a map. But your net result will be the most wonderful time you ever knew. There will be scenes and experiences that you will tell your grandchildren — all other things being equal — because when you're on the topside you cease to see and begin to feel.

THE MATTERHORN — HORNLI RIDGE

By NED JACOBY

THE Hörnli Ridge ascent of the Matterhorn is decidedly not difficult according to rock climbing standards, yet it is extremely tiring — especially on the descent. The worst pitches correspond to the route left of the overhang at Norwich. Nevertheless the Hörnli has killed more climbers than any other route, due probably to inexperience, bad weather, and the fact that it is climbed the most frequently.

However, it is not difficulty which should determine the value of a climb. The Matterhorn has a fascination that perhaps no other mountain in the world possesses. It exceeds description of any kind — verbal or artistic. Not only that but the fact that you find yourself walking where Whymper and Carrel blazed their way years ago, and looking at places that were formerly merely names in some musty volume — Val Tournanche, Zmutt Glacier, the Solvay Hut — adds to the thrill. And last but not least — in my case — was the pleasure of being pulled up by Otto Furrer who is — besides being one of the best guides and skiers in Europe—one of the finest men I have ever known.

We left Zermatt at around three in the afternoon and climbed the long trail past the Schwarzsee and up the huge shoulder projection from the Hörnli to the Belvidere Hotel and Guide's Hut. Only for two days had the mountain been climbed this year and the snow was still three feet deep in the rock clefts. Two other parties were ready to start next morning before us and one group had gone up that day. We could see them through the telescope at six in the evening — tiny scrambling figures against the bulk of the mountain.

At eight we went to bed, as three in the morning is the accustomed hour of departure. This gives one time to ascend and descend before the sun starts loosening the big rocks and starting the afternoon avalanches. However, the other two parties got up first and it was not until four that we began to

stretch and yawn in the icy bunk room. Then tying boots in the cold flickering candlelight, drinking tasteless soup, pulling on sweater and jacket, and out into the wet gray mist.

Above, the black rock towers into the infinite. Snow crust against fingers. Boot heels scraping before your nose. The tug of the rope — a frequent sensation. Axe rings against ice and echoes emptily into eerie space. Finally the Solvay Emergency Hut and a special "Otto mixture" of red wine and cold tea which brought ominous rumbles from the interior of my jacket.

An airy walk along the knife ridge looking down the North Wall. Above, the peak — already pink in the morning sun — leans out over the East Face at a prodigious angle. Rocks moan past and disappear downwards into the void. After creeping around a little ledge where boot heels look into a mile of Swiss air you finally reach the ropes near the top where you pull yourself bodily upwards for a hundred feet. Here Whymper's rope broke letting four of his party slide — clutching and fighting — over the terrible North Face into eternity. The rocks are nasty-looking as they slope outwards and are covered with ice.

The top comes quickly after that and — four hours from the Belvidere Hut — we chopped seats in the precarious summit ridge and sat down to enjoy the view. Climbing gives one little chance to reflect on such things. Not a cloud in the sky! Below, Switzerland and Italy shimmer in the morning mist — their mountains a white inferno of snowy peaks. Monta Rosa, Mount Blanc, Weisshorn, and Jungfrau raise great ridges into the sun.

An hour goes quickly amidst such grandeur and then down again into the other world beneath. The snow slopes now look practically vertical and the snow underfoot feels loose and treacherous. First I creep, crawl, slip, and curse my way down a pitch, next Otto comes striding down saying, "The snow is good today, this is just like a bicycle path." Then, muttering profane remarks about the type of bicycle paths the Swiss must possess, I have to laboriously repeat the process.

Hours later, Otto came striding into the Belvidere Hut, while behind — describing feeble zigzags in the snow — another figure could be seen stumbling. As I noticed the gawking tourists assembled on the veranda, I tried to steady my rubber legs and "strolled" past them attempting to look like a "Bergsteiger" of many seasons, casting a professional eye at the mountain; then going inside the hut where I could collapse in peace.

TEN DAYS IN THE BERNESE OBERLAND

By CHAPPELL CRANMER

THE main reason for selecting the Bernese Oberland for my first climbs in the Alps was the memory of my first view of the high Alps from Grindelwald. New snow covered the cliffs. Only the sharp peak of the Schreckhorn reached above the clouds. The snowy face of the Eiger could be seen rising sheer into a swirling bank of clouds. There was only an occasional glimpse of the cliffs and snow-covered ledges of the Wetterhorn. That was August 20th.

A week later, Adolf Amacher, our Grindelwald guide, my brother and I climbed the Mönch from the Jungfraujoch which proved enough for our first day on a snow mountain. The magnificent views and the altitude quite took our breath away. Clouds began to gather in the afternoon, and all during the night our sleep was interrupted by the guides periodically clomping out for a look at the weather.

At 8 a.m. we set out across the glacier for the Jungfrau in a dense cloud which hid all but the tracks at our feet. Before doing any step cutting, we waited an hour to see what the weather would do. The clouds lifted a little and we continued the ascent though we were still in the clouds most of the time. The route led up a steep slope, across a delicate snow bridge, along the upper edge of the Bergschrund which in the mist seemed to be some thirty feet wide, and up a steep pitch to the saddle. From there through a hole in the clouds we had our first view down to the Rottal glacier far below. A short traverse across an icy slope about the edge of a cliff proved stimulating to one not accustomed to ice — more so after Adolf's remark: "Be careful here, gentlemen; this is where very many parties have fallen." An easy but icy rock ridge, a steep snow slope and we were on top.

The clouds only permitted us brief glimpses of blue sky, snow peaks, precipices and the green of less wild valleys; then they

again closed in around us. After half an hour of the best of rests, the one on the summit, we reluctantly strapped on our crampons and started down. The descent was quickly made, and we were soon back at the joch, quite done in.

The next few days proved disappointing. The clouds gathered and mercilessly remained. Plans were changed repeatedly. Instead of climbing the Finsteraarhorn, we sat in the Concordia Hut. The walks across the glaciers were pleasant and the hours in the huts were enjoyable, but we were not making any summits. Having had only one more fine day of climbing on which my brother and Adolf did the Lötschental Breithorn, we returned to Grindelwald. The following day, my brother had to leave us and Adolf and I set out for the Wetterhorn. It was a perfect day for the leisurely climb up to the Gleckstein Hut across the Grindelwald glacier and up grassy slopes dotted with Edelweiss.

At three the next morning we were winding up across the lower snow fields and scree by the uncertain light of the swinging lantern. We were already well up on the lower cliffs of the mountain when dawn came gray and threatening with a cold wind. Within half an hour it was snowing heavily. Knowing that I had only one more day to spend in Switzerland, it was with heavy hearts that we turned back. After glissading the snow fields, we arrived back at the hut in drenching rain and spent the rest of the day looking gloomily at the weather. Toward evening the skies began to clear and several parties of Swiss came up. We decided to wait and try again the next day. The Swiss made the evening gay with wine and mountain songs but prevented us from sleeping until twelve.

At 2 a.m. we were again on our way under starlit skies. A smooth, ice-sheathed couloir down which a small stream was tumbling proved interesting to cross in the dim light of the lantern. Dawn found us climbing the last slopes of the hard frozen snow below the Wettersattel. After a rest at the saddle, we strapped on our crampons and climbed a steep arete, crossed several slabs of rock, Adolf cut large steps up the final pitch, through the cornice and we were on top! The sky was cloudless; the sun had just risen; and half of Switzerland was laid out below us; but a cold wind prevented staying longer than the time necessary to take several pictures. We rapidly crossed the glacier between the Wettersattel and the Dossensattel in softer

and softer snow. An exhilarating glissade brought us down to the Dossen Hut, lunch and a rest. Nothing remained but a long wearying walk down to Roselauti, up to Scheidegg and down to Grindelwald where we arrived at 7 p.m. to end my first Alpine tour — only enough of a taste of the Alps to make me eager for more.

AN ASCENT OF MT. ROBSON

By CHAPPELL CRANMER

WHEN we got off the train at Mt. Robson station, all but the lower slopes of the mountain were hidden in clouds. The four of us, Fritz Wiessner, Elizabeth Knowlton, Christine Reid and myself looked at the weather with misgivings, for we only had two weeks left in which to climb. We desired to make an ascent by the regular route from the Southeast.

The following day we left our base camp at Kinney Lake with enough equipment for a four day stay at a bivouac camp. We got off to a late start and encountered several other delays so that we did not make the bivouac camp but met with a hail-storm late in the afternoon. Not caring to spend the night out, we dumped our loads and made our way down in the dark to timberline where we enjoyed the comfort of a tent put up by Eric Brooks of Vancouver and his party; fortunately, they had gone on down to Kinney Lake. The next day, since we were at the foot of the mountain, was the most ideal day for climbing of our entire stay. We loafed away the day at Kinney Lake looking longingly up at the snows where we should have been.

An early morning start enabled us to reach the bivouac site at the foot of the lower icefall in time to set up our camp before a late afternoon rain set in. We hastily built up a shelter of stone walls and covered it over with a waterproof sheet. During the night this sheet gathered the rain in a puddle over our heads. Fearing the collapse of the roof, I pushed up the puddle in order to drain the water over the wall; instead, it completely soaked another member of the party. In the morning the rain stopped just long enough for us to move into a drier shelter in which we spent the rest of the day in song, gossip, philosophy and cooking; interrupted only by the thunder of ice avalanches breaking off the ice cliff close by.

The following day was spent mending wall (one wall of our shelter had collapsed) and making remarks about the weather.

The fourth day we went down for more food, a dip in the lake and a sumptuous dinner. The fifth gave us our first view of the mountain, resplendent with new snow and reviving our hopes. We returned to our 9000 ft. camp and prepared for an early start. The weather at 2 a.m. looked even worse than usual so we went back to sleep. Morning came and it turned out to be a beautiful day. We grumbled a bit about the capriciousness of the weather, looked over the route and planned to make a start no matter what the weather, for our vacation was almost over.

So at three a.m. on August 2 we set out in company with the Vancouver party, consisting of Eric Brooks, Mrs. Brooks and Fred Parks, in spite of ominous clouds. The route led up easy rocks near the icefall to the edge of the glacier. There we put on crampons and roped up, Fritz leading followed by Christine, Elizabeth and myself. We kept near the rocks for a short distance, then crossed the glacier as quickly as possible, for it is exposed to the upper icefall. Then up one of those rather steep ice slopes which it is such a delight to walk up on crampons and into a snow couloir. Fritz considered Henry Hall's route inadvisable because of the new snow which covered the rocks. The couloir became gradually steeper and Fritz had to cut steps. There was not enough snow to give secure footing but enough to prevent getting good footing on the ice; furthermore, one member of the party had crampons which were neither sharp nor long enough. Confronted with an excessive amount of step cutting, if we continued up the couloir, Fritz called down to Eric Brooks to traverse into the flat part of the glacier to our left. We followed and after emerging from the couloir, enjoyed a second breakfast and most of the very few minutes of sunlight we were to get during the day.

Half an hour's snow walking brought us to the bergschrund. After some search we found a bridge which proved strong enough to hold feet stepping their lightest. A short couloir led us out on the summit ridge and into a cloud which permitted us but few views. Fritz led on and the Vancouver party followed close behind us. This part of the climb proved much more difficult than we had expected on account of the bad snow conditions which necessitated continual kicking and constant use of the iceaxe. A cold wind blew continually but did not dispel the mist. After coming to the top of one bump on the ridge after another, we finally saw the summit a few minutes'

walk beyond. When we reached the summit at 3:15 p.m., the cloud had blown off revealing range upon range of snowy peaks stretching as far as the eye could reach in all directions, above us a stormy sky and below us the Fraser River winding through its broad valley on one side and Berg Lake and the long Robson Glacier on the other.

Our friends from Vancouver started down immediately but we stopped long enough to eat some chocolate which tasted strongly of gasoline which led us to believe that not all the gasoline went into the primus stove. A bite of that wonderful Canadian bacon without which none of our meals was complete took the taste away and we rerope. Elizabeth led down and I went next followed by Christine and Fritz, of course, as last man. We backed down almost the entire length of the summit ridge, kicking hard and jamming in the ice-axe at every step. An electrical storm gave us some anxious minutes for there is no way off the ridge except down it and our hair stood on end and the axes buzzed and crackled, but it soon passed off. We spent a chilly hour rounding a frost feather corner of ice which required delicate stepping. We left the summit ridge at sunset. The shadow of Mt. Robson cast on the dark clouds to the East by the setting sun was flanked by great snow peaks tinted with the delicate rose shades of alpenglow.

At 8 p.m. we arrived at the edge of the couloir at the place where we had eaten breakfast. Although it was becoming increasingly colder, a part of the party desired to wait at least for the moon before descending the couloir. We took off our crampons for the first time during the climb and had some supper. The moon eventually came up, the temperature dropped and clouds began to approach. By midnight we were in the couloir again. It soon began to snow, filling the steps made by the Vancouver party and making them difficult to find. A great ice tower rose magnificently but threateningly above us at the edge of the dimly lit couloir. Below an ice filled chimney, the only difficult part of the couloir we changed the order on the rope: Fritz led down to find the route followed by Christine, Elizabeth and myself. Dawn found us at the foot of the couloir. We found ourselves in a dense cloud out of which a light snow was falling. We crossed the glacier and spent some minutes discussing which way to the edge of the lower icefall would

require the least energy. We finally took to the rocks and arrived at our bivouac camp at 8 a.m.

We slept most of the day and straggled down the lower slopes in the late afternoon in a steady downpour which lasted until the next day. Continued bad weather eased the pain of leaving as we turned our backs on the highest of the Canadian Rockies and headed for the plains.

FIRST ASCENT OF THE WEST RIDGE OF THE GRAND TETON

By MICHAEL DAVIS

THE Tetons had a very heavy snow season this year, so that climbing, particularly on the higher peaks, was delayed until fairly late in the summer. Jack and I kept our eyes on the West Ridge of the Grand as we saw it from various angles in Cascade Canyon. It looked like a fine climb, and, although very long, it appeared worth the effort. We watched the snow conditions and the weather, planned to leave late Tuesday afternoon of August second, and bivouac just below the rocks about five hours from Jenny Lake. However, we were delayed until early the following Monday morning.

We left Jenny Lake at 2 a.m. August eighth and headed up Cascade Canyon, prepared for a two or three day climb. We reached the forks, seven miles above the lake, shortly after daybreak, continued about a half a mile further up the left fork where we turned off across the stream to the left. A cairn was built between two trees at the edge of the trail. After spending some two hours climbing up talus, grass, and small cliffs, we crossed a long talus slope under the ridge and approached the northwest ridge of the first tower. The rock climbing began a bit under 11,000 feet from a little ledge on this separate ridge.

Here we roped and arranged our packs carefully. Jack changed from his light nailed shoes to sneakers, while I left on the sneakers in which I had started.

Although the first two pitches offered no difficulty, our climbing started off with a bang, for we were soon confronted with an overhang in some black rock. The rock before us had been rough and somewhat loose. The black rock ahead looked fairly solid, as it later proved to be. The overhang was negotiated by climbing directly underneath it, then to the left, up, and over. For several pitches we remained on the ridge, the obvious route, with easy climbing until we went up a short scree slope to the

base of a chimney about 40 feet high. There were some loose rocks at the top of this which had to be handled with the utmost care. Jack climbed this straight up, although it appeared from below that an easier route led out of the chimney to the right. After getting above, it seemed the "route" to the right would not have been feasible. Jack hauled up my pack after him while I climbed the crack. From here, it was two easy pitches to the top of the first tower.

The second tower looked as though it might be quite difficult. Its top was a couple of hundred feet above us, and we had several hundred feet to climb down to the saddle between the two. We cairned the top of the first tower and started right down, finding little difficulty except for the care of loose rocks.

The head-on view of the second tower had been deceptive, and happily too, for the climbing was not nearly as difficult as we had anticipated. It was climbed by a series of chimneys and ledges almost directly on the line of the ridge. We cairned our route up every pitch, sometimes every 20 or 30 feet, as we continued to do throughout the entire climb. Upon reaching the top of the second tower, we studied the third one which, from our present position, looked very difficult and most precipitous. However, we wasted no time, and began the descent, prepared to rappel if necessary. But we found we could climb down with moderate ease by keeping well to the left, down a long chimney, a traverse to the left, back to the right, and from there directly to the second saddle.

We crossed the sharp, knife-like saddle, keeping strictly on the ridge to a small tower of loose rock about 20 feet high. This we climbed over, and then to the left along a meager ledge of dirty scree, which turned right again under some talus. We went straight up this into a gully full of loose rock. The rock was so bad that I traversed underneath, meeting Jack above by a safer route. From this point we made a long traverse to the left along a rather obvious ledge leading out to a corner facing the northeast. We went around the corner and up the other side without much trouble. The top of the third tower was quickly reached after several pitches above the corner were climbed. From the top we both walked together easily along a very sharp but horizontal knife ridge for possibly 200 yards until we reached the first of the five fingers.

The first finger was traversed to the left and climbed from the

South, a pinnacle about 60 feet high and not too difficult. We likewise traversed the next pinnacle to the left, climbing it also from the south. The middle finger looked nearly unclimbable, so we left it alone and continued to the fourth one. This was first traversed underneath to the left, then climbed from the south and west. It was about a 180 foot climb.

During the last hour the weather had looked rather bad. We were short of water and thought it wise to get some while snow was still available. On the east side of the ridge between the fourth finger and the thumb we found two patches of snow. Shortly after collecting some in a hat it began to rain. A west wind was blowing so we looked for a place to rest, and found shelter under a large boulder below the thumb, and just above the snow. We made some delicious tea, ate some lunch (it was about 3:30), and decided to get a little sleep before going on since it was still raining hard.

We both put on our kletterschuhs and started off again about five o'clock (the rain had stopped). The route seemed to traverse under the thumb for some 200 feet on the west side. Eventually, Jack led up a crack diagonally to the right which brought us up on the ridge again. We dropped our packs and went back to the thumb in order to place a cairn. Again we continued traversing under the ridge to the west for several hundred feet, then turned straight up to the left about 200 feet in front of a wall jutting out from the ridge. After climbing to the top of the ridge we continued along its top, past the wall to the one on its left, and then climbed the tower of which this wall was a part. The climbing was easy from here. We traversed to the right under a tower, with a huge triangular block in its face, around to its other side, and stabbed it from the south. There was a small tower of loose rock ahead of us before we were to reach the main saddle or transition point between the lower ridge and upper. The rock was so rotten we decided to traverse underneath it rather than go over it. As it was, the traverse was probably as bad as climbing the tower would have been, but it was a little safer and quicker. The only way around was to the left, down quite a bit, and then up again to the saddle. A strong, chilling west wind was blowing.

In front of us rose two pitches which did not look at all inviting. The first was a tower about 60 feet high made up of some of the most abominable rock any mountaineer would want

to see. It was just a pile of small red blocks perched on top of one another like a red brick fireplace chimney without any mortar between the bricks, each one ready to fall out. There was no other way than to climb it straight up, so that we did. This led up to one of the most difficult pitches of the whole climb. A wall about 30 feet high confronted us with an overhang at its top, a sort of upsidedown ledge sticking straight out about 10 feet. There was no other possible way, either to right or left. Somehow it just had to be climbed. We changed back to sneakers, and Jack led on while I carefully watched his rope. After working for some time, he managed to traverse out to the right about 12 feet, his head a foot or two below the overhang. We had to go around a corner on the block which forms the wall, and then up over where the overhang is only about two feet. We left a piton just around this corner in the crack of the overhang. I managed somehow to follow Jack after tying both packs on our extra rope to be hauled up after us. It was getting late now. Above us was a talus slope perhaps 300 feet long. It would be a good place to spend the night, and we lost no time in finding a spot for a bivouac. There was still a strong wind blowing.

We found an almost ideal spot under a very large boulder. A hollow big enough for both of us to lie down was easily made by clearing some stones out and building a wall on the open side of the cave. We found a very small amount of water in some little pockets on top of our cave boulder. It had a rather bad flavor with the mixture of lichen in it, but at least it quenched our thirsts. Shortly after eating we drew to see who would get the sleeping bag first. I was the lucky one to sleep warm that night. During the night the wind would somehow manage to get into our bivouac tent and belly it out like a vibrating balloon.

In the morning we waited until the sun came over Mount Owen before we started to climb as it was very cold and almost impossible to keep our fingers warm. It was 8:30 when we finally got under way. We left a note in a little bottle in the cave, named our spot "Double D Bivouac". Above us rose a small cliff which was climbed from its right side, working back to the left, and up to the beginning of some 500 feet of smooth slabs leading to the base of the most spectacular part of the ridge. It was not difficult going over the slabs, often times not

needing the hands at all. It took us an hour and a half to reach the top of the slabs. Here we left our packs again, and traversed into the huge gully on our right to get water, had a long drink and filled our canteen. It was the last water until our next bivouac. Returning to the ridge, we studied the cliffs about us. There seemed to be two possible routes, one to the left through large blocks perched here and there; the other on the right, straight up a nearly perpendicular wall. The latter seemed to be the more desirable, even though the lower part looked more difficult.

We began climbing in a little crack on the face. Jack led up for about 70 feet, and traversed to the right for a few feet into a little pocket in the face. I followed with some difficulty, the heavy pack making climbing very tiring on such steep places. We continued up to the left a little, then straight up to the right of a block to an embarrassingly small ledge in black rock. We traversed this for about 180 feet to the right, all the way to the end of the ledge where we turned to another face up another crack, through a rather exhausting chimney and out on a receding bit of rock some 80 feet above. The rock here had all been remarkably good except for an occasional loose one. We climbed a little from here, and then made another long traverse to the left of a fine ledge that led up, then down, then up again for about 200 feet. It took us into some loose, jet black boulders. We got on top of these and turned right around and traversed back and down for about 30 feet to the base of a chimney some 30 feet high. This brought us to a smooth steep face under a little overhang, directly under which we made a finger traverse to the right for about 40 feet, then up and back to the left the same distance. Here we turned up climbing easily to a large pocket in the rocks we named "Fishtail Corner" in honor of a shark-sized, paper-thin slab of rock sticking out at us. Again we traversed to the left, up, down, and up again to a fair sized platform at the base of a protruding buttress. We climbed directly under this and squirmed around to the left on a few hand holds. This brought us to a long pitch (about 160 feet) through an obvious route up a gully-chimney, thence to the left into another welcome pocket. Still working to the left, we climbed up on a big platform looking out suddenly on all of Mount Owen, the North Face of the Grand, and down almost vertically into the magnificent cirque of Owen-Grand-West Ridge. We

went ahead, up an obvious chimney, which led us into a snow filled one. Jack called down to me before I started to put on my klettershoe, for which I later learned the reason. He had had to change a shoe while in a "spread-eagle" in order to go safely on the wet rock above. The top of this pitch brought us out on a ledge below an enormous block some 50 feet high. It looks like a little knobby bump from the valley.

It was now about 6:30, and again we began having thoughts of a bivouac spot. We both knew that just ahead of us was that which might prove to be our Waterloo, a tower about 200 feet high with no useable cracks to be seen. Jack climbed the block above us, which we later named "Dartmouth Symbol". The sky had been overcast most of the day, and now while Jack was on this beautiful natural lightning attractor, we heard thunder. Jack came down as fast as he could, and we went down to the right of the block and around to the left under it. As I led down and around I came upon a huge cave under the block. It was resting on two other blocks. We found snow in a crack on the north side of the "Symbol", made some tea, and ate a little supper. We explored over to the saddle by the next tower and found the prospect most unfavorable. We decided to spend the night here, and looked for a less exposed cave than the one under the big block. We found a small one to the northeast of the "Symbol" and cleared a few stones to make it more comfortable. Late that night the moonlight glittered down and flooded the whole range with a superb glow. In the morning we left another note and finished almost the last of our food. We waited again until the sun came out on our rock before we began to climb. It was quite cold, particularly after we started climbing around on the southwest side of the ridge. A stiff breeze was still blowing. We walked over to the saddle, gave up the idea of trying to climb the tower from any of its visible sides. We climbed down the gully to the right, then up a smooth face (about 50-60 degrees) for 70 or 80 feet. The tower above us literally towered above us and looked just as impossible as its other sides. Our only alternative was to traverse to the right and hope we could find a route. The climbing here was very exposed and the rocks were ice cold. After traversing as far as possible we found a little water-worn crack just big enough to get a toe in. We finally managed to maneuver up this for about 30 feet. We hoped the worst was over. It was.

This insignificant but vital crack is the key to the whole ridge. I doubt if any other route could be made with any degree of safety. We continued above this pitch for some distance in a chimney, then turned left up a talus gully which led us out on top of the tower. It looked even worse from above. We were again on the ridge-proper, and once more turned upwards. The next tower just above us was climbed by the last crack to the right, some 20 or 30 feet over. This crack led up under an overhang which we avoided by working to the right just below it.

From here it was easy going, first up a chimney, then over some loose black rocks to the left, under a wall and to the right until we reached a sort of window in the summit ridge of the Enclosure. There was one last pitch here over an annoying wall about eight feet high. The Enclosure was only a short easy climb of about five minutes.

We reached the Enclosure shortly after 12 and were on top of the Grand by one. We hurried down to the lower saddle where we had a pup-tent, sleeping bag, and an ample supply of food. We feasted heartily and returned to Jenny Lake, arriving about 8 p.m. Wednesday.

A few notes might be of interest. We started with 70 pounds between us, some of which we ate, and while climbing we wore almost all our clothes, both to lighten our packs, and keep us warm. Usually we were warmer than necessary while climbing, but it kept our muscles hot and ready for extreme exertion. We could have carried more fuel for our Primus stove. One filling made four quarts of tea, three of which were from snow. On this particular climb we should have had two canteens, notwithstanding the additional weight. A little more food would have been desirable, but we were never as hungry as we were thirsty. Neither of us believe the climb could be made in less than two days. Two nights on the way would make it much more pleasant. The climb is a strain as it is without rushing it. The climb would be feasible just from the transition point, since the climb up to the transition saddle other than by the lower ridge would be just as long and much more tedious. Once on the upper part of the ridge, there is no way of getting off except by rappelling as one had climbed. More than a two-man party would make the climb too long and cumbersome. Jack and I

had 130 feet of rope between us, and often could have used 20 feet more.

The West Ridge offers one of the most diversified types of rock, and rock climbing that either of us had ever seen in one climb. Most of it was solid, but there were times when the loose rock made the climbing most aggravating. However, we never had rocks come falling down on us from above. It was a comparatively safe climb, but of course one must take the most rigid precautions against accidents. One is a long distance and a long time from any help.

The climb was definitely worth the fatigue, cold nights, and parched throats. From the lower ridge one gets an almost overwhelming sense of smallness from the majestic masses of Mount Owen and the Grand Teton rising Empire State Building upon Empire State Building, sheer walls of rock, echoing our yodels time and time again, round and round they would go to harmonize with themselves for many seconds. Much of the beauty is indescribable. Its exhilarating force is worth any effort to make the ascent.

THE ASCENT OF MT. OWEN BY THE SOUTH RIDGE

By GEORGE SHELDON

YOU probably want to know why we wanted to climb the mountain anyway. Frankly, I asked the same question at three thirty on the morning of September third. What was all this talk of dawn up on the mountains, of puffs of white below you catching the early beams of the morning sun? It was too darn comfortable in my sleeping bag.

Smell of wood smoke mingled with boiling coffee, however, usually has enough power to pull me out of bed and start me tugging at the heels of my stubborn boots. I finally crawled out of the tent at quarter to four. There was Jack stooped over the fire mixing up the morning mush, his red beard gleaming redder in the flickering light. Neither of us said anything; we were both still too sleepy. I finished getting breakfast while Jack went and pulled Perce out of bed. Then the two of them finished packing the small rucksacks we were to take with us for the day.

There was as yet no light in the sky. Brittle stars shone coldly and the distant roar of falling rock off near peaks gave the early morning a peculiar lonesomeness found only in the mountains. The air was still and smoke hung lazily above us with stray wisps reaching out and curling around our small brown tents. It was time for us to be off. We ate our prunes and cereal noisily, washed it down with boiling coffee, and without further ado, started up the trail.

We walked slowly but steadily up over the ridge back of camp and down onto the glacier. It was still dark and the silence was broken by the steady beat of our nailed shoes against rocks. Now and then we would loosen a small boulder and hear it go rolling crazily off down the slope until its sound vanished in the distance. It was funny the way we kept from talking. You would think a party about to try a first ascent would be as noisy and excited as a bunch of children going to a

party. But I noticed all during the time we were in the mountains that it takes the warming rays of the sun to loosen one's tongue.

Dawn reached us well up on the glacier. Its approach had been heralded first by beams of light streaking across the cloud-studded sky and then by the actual sunbeams hitting the mist enveloped crags thousands of feet above our heads. As the rays descended the mountains our spirits rose to meet them, and we quickened our pace to the head of the glacier, at last awake and open to the beauties of the day. We stopped for a moment at the head of this river of ice and tried to pick our route to Owen.

It was obvious that there was no approach to Owen's south ridge going up from the glacier. Our only chance was to get up on the north shoulder of the Grand Teton and traverse to Gunsight Notch, a deep V chiseled out of the col between Owen and the Grand. Here we would be at the base of the ridge upon which we hoped to make our climb.

It was apparent, however, that to reach this notch might well be the most difficult part of the climb. The only possible means of approach we could see lay in a difficult traverse of the base of the north face of the Grand Teton. And here the actual climbing wouldn't be so bad if we weren't subject to the continual bombardment of stones coming off the summit above.

We spent quite some time picking our route, then, quickly changing our shoes, we tried to find our way across the bergschrund from the glacier to the rock. This was difficult owing to the great distance between the ice and rock. We finally found a snow bridge which took Jack within jumping distance of the rock. While Percy and I belayed him, he crossed and climbed up to a place from where he could belay us across. And from here at the bottom of the face, we hoped to be off snow for the rest of the day.

While we worked across the bottom of this face I heard and saw all I wanted of falling stones. Every time we heard the growing hum of a falling rock we could only hug the face and hope they wouldn't hit us. I had one bad scare when a "hummer" flew down and buried itself in the ice not more than two feet away. I was more than glad when we got out from directly under the face and more up on the shoulder.

Up on this shoulder the going was easy. All three of us could move together instead of one at a time on the rope. But while

the climbing here was easy two new factors were starting to show their heads. One was the time; the other the weather. We had taken too long to get up on the shoulder. This was partly because of the poor condition of the rock and partly our own unfamiliarity with the route. Instead of it being early in the morning, it was now dangerously close to noon. And that meant that in the event that we couldn't make it that day, it would be necessary to bivouac somewhere on the mountain.

And it was beginning to look as though a bivouac would be a dangerous undertaking. Clouds were swirling around the higher peaks and a snowstorm might develop since it was already late in the year. A good blizzard might come up just as well as not.

While we worried, however, about the time and the weather we successfully negotiated the grass bands and got up to a point just below the chockstone in Gunsight Notch. This brought us to a position where we had to decide whether or not to go on. We were fairly confident that we could make Owen once we had gone down into the Notch and climbed out the other side. But since the Notch had never been traversed before, we didn't know whether we once got down into it if we could get up the other side. From where we were standing it looked as though we would have to rope down into the Notch. Then, when we pulled our rope down after us, all chance of going back would be gone.

I wasn't too enthusiastic about continuing. Jack was non-committal, and it took a steady urging from Percy to start us onward again. But we were all decided on one thing. We had to hurry. The clouds were coming lower and thunderclaps were reverberating from the peaks around us. And the numbing chill of the wind spoke threateningly of snow and hail.

When we started we roped up again, and, with Jack leading went up on pitch to the top of the Notch. Here there was no way to climb down — nor was there a place to drive a piton for a rope-down. So while Percy and I belayed, Jack traversed out onto the face of the Notch. There to his great surprise and our immense relief, he found a route down into the Notch. And it was such that we could climb back if we couldn't make the other side. Percy and I quickly climbed down and joined him, and for the first time that day we were on virgin rock.

We didn't stand there long, however, as a bitter wind was

whistling through the Notch from off the plains of Idaho. Far off, coming towards us, we could see a dark line of clouds trailing a curtain of hail and snow. From now on we would have to race those clouds to the summit.

And we soon found that our race wasn't going to be easy. With cold hands and chilled bodies we started up the other side of the Notch. This side was in reality the base of a tall tower rising vertically out of the Notch. Jack did a great job of leading us to the top in about ten pitches, of hard climbing. Here I built a cairn to mark the way for future parties while Jack tried to work out our route.

Anxiously keeping our eye on the storm which by now was much closer and at the same time trying to find the most direct way to the summit we worked in a half westerly direction from the top of this first tower to the base of a second. To my eye there seemed no possible way up, but Jack climbed around the tower and started directly up the west face. Half way up he traversed slightly to the north on a small ledge and then went on up to the summit of the tower. This climb was made all in one pitch with practically no assistance in the form of a belay, and it showed Percy and me how good climbing was really done.

With Jack on the top to belay us, it was no trick at all for Percy and me to follow. Just as I reached the top the first snowflakes drove into our faces. To make matters worse it looked as though we were going to have to go over another tower. To do this would be anything but a good idea, for the big banks of cloud, which were almost upon us, were as full of lightning as they were snow. And if we got up on top of the tower we would make the perfect target for any loose bolts.

Fortunately, we found a way around the base of the tower on the east side. This was an easy traverse, and it took us out at a small cave which marked the junction of our new route with the easier East route.

We decided to wait in this cave for a while to see if the storm, which was now swirling at us with full force, would let up sufficiently to let us get to the summit. While we waited we dove into the small rucksack I had been carrying and brought out two cans of sardines, some tomato juice, and cheese. It was the first food we had since early that morning back in camp, and we made it disappear in no time. Percy, for one who claimed not to like sardines, did an exceedingly good job on them.

While we sat in our cave we could hear a loud buzzing up on the summit not far above us. I couldn't begin to explain scientifically what this buzzing was in spite of the number of times I have had it told me. It was some sort of electrical discharge not unlike, I believe, St. Elmo's fire which is sometimes seen in the rigging of vessels in storms at sea.

This buzzing would continue for some minutes, growing louder and louder, to finally culminate in a sharp clap of thunder. There would be quiet for a moment and a new buzz would start. We hoped to make the summit in the lull following one lightning bolt and the next.

After one particularly loud clap which cleared the air momentarily, we started quickly up. But by the time we were within a short stone's throw of our goal the blasted buzzing started up again. Suddenly Jack's hair stood on end — another electrical phenomenon which I wasn't liking one little bit. I had heard of this happening to other climbers and now understood their discomfort completely. I was more than anxious to get away from that buzz.

One more incident with the lightning convinced Jack and Percy of the same thing. As Jack raised his hand to point out the summit to us, a large blue spark leaped off his finger. Jack made some remark about it "getting pretty hot around here", and then decided to forego leaving a record of our climb on the summit. Instead we wrote it on a piece of paper and put it under a rock. We could leave word at the bottom for the next party up to get it and enter it in the record book for us.

We left the top at three o'clock, and hurrying down the easiest route on the mountain, we made the glacier at four-thirty. We were back at camp an hour later. The whole tour had taken just fourteen and a half hours.

POSSIBILITIES IN NEW ZEALAND

By DAVE BRADLEY

A SKIER who writes on mountaineering is not unlike a bachelor who attempts to discuss marriage. In both cases his argument is almost entirely one of pure enthusiasm, based upon imagination rather than true experience, and loosely co-ordinated by high sounding but not dependable ideals. Being certainly a bachelor and presumably a skier, it is no great task to comment upon mountaineering in the Antipodes. In the first place, only the Southern Alps in the South Island of New Zealand are worthy of consideration for mountaineering purposes. The low dome-shaped ridges of Australia, the oldest range in the world perhaps, confront the climber with no difficulties whatsoever. There are, to be sure, plenty of snow-gum trees, but most of them have already been climbed inadvertently by over-enthusiastic skiers.

In the North Island of New Zealand a handful of sharp volcanic cones are scattered around indiscriminately; and owing to their isolation from each other and the nearness of the ocean, in the winter, at least, they are usually covered by an impenetrable sheen of frozen mists. But they are climbed regularly in winter by skiers, and on a fine summer's day (I am told) fashionable women from the metropoli are to be seen beating back and forth like a stately fleet of full-sailed frigates on the rough voyage to the summit.

But for the mountaineer, God has just recently (oh, say a million years ago) built a new and up-to-date playground in the South Island — equipped with all the little natural devices such as fathomless crevasses and prodigious avalanches which give the climber the relief from a monotonous existence for which he has been looking.

The Southern Alps are truly beautiful to the mountaineer and likewise appalling to the skier; we skiers require our thrills to be administered in rather less formidable doses. These

mountains rise to their apex in the great pyramid of Mt. Cook over 13,000 feet. All around, but arranged in narrow file as the chain is not wide, is a great number of equally spectacular peaks, perennially dusted with snow and gouged by methodical glaciers, among the hardest ascent of which is the trim blade of Mt. Tasman.

This region is perhaps more accessible than is desirable to the more eager or fatalistic adventurers, but it is as far from civilization as one can get in this island. On both the eastern and western sides of the range there are a few large hotels with which are associated a chain of cabins which reach up into the heart of the snow country. As a result of the relative accessibility and limited territory there are practically no first ascents left to be made — that is, during the summer months. In winter there has been almost no climbing owing to the deep powder snow, the probability of avalanches, and the fact that the weather runs usually in cycles of one day of rain, the next day of snow, followed by two clear days, and then rain again.

We did all our skiing on the smooth Ball Glacier, a tributary of the great frozen river of the Tasman. Here, in a spacious and well-furnished hut of wood sheathed with corrugated iron, we lived for two weeks, enjoying much fine skiing, companionship — and beer. The disorganized nature of the weather over which the local guides were powerless, made it impossible to try any of the extensive tours which would have made this article appropriately mountaineering. However, perhaps I can inject some of the flavor of our visit there by speaking of the personalities of two guides who taught skiing during the winter. I copy from my diary:

“The Junior Guide, Eric, is a Machiavellian among women — which doesn’t at all imply that he’s an oily gigolo. But he has a high voice and an impelling psychic gleam in his eyes which the girls can’t understand and so are attracted. Eric’s greatest contribution to the welfare of his fellow-men was in silencing an elderly garrulous matron who had prostrated everyone with her chatter. Eric conducted her by the hand to the men’s smoking room and (so he claims) merely called her an ‘angel’. The poor old girl was so flabbergasted that she developed acute laryngitis for two days — much to the satisfaction of all concerned.

“Mic Bowie is the Senior Guide and Hutmaster. His is the

personality everyone remembers who has climbed or skied here, for he is the usual guide on the hard ascents. Exceedingly modest and retiring, he answers most questions or comments with a slow 'yess' or 'Wull, I don't know. It's not so bad I guess.' Once in a while, if asked, he will recount some adventure which sounds like one of Dick's nightmares, as though it were nothing more than a slight momentary exertion.

"One of the favorite yarns told about Mic, is the time he was sitting on the top of Mt. Cook on a kind of cornice, with his feet dangling unconcernedly over an eight thousand foot void. The day was perfect; all the tremendous jutting peaks reposed in the flood of blue air. A thousand tons of ice dropped off a cliff somewhere as inconspicuously as a little sand off the side of a drying sand castle which some child had left by the sea shore. As the day was hot and the climb long, Mic proceeded to doze as though he were at home before his hot water bottle. The next instant he found himself falling forward over his knees into that eight thousand foot vacuum. That he is still alive proves that he awoke and acted in his best interests simultaneously. I mention this because it shows the remarkable coolness of his mind when dealing with natural phenomena that would upset anyone but a mountain guide. Mic could doze off flagpole-sitting on the top of the Chrysler Building."

These men have made most of the difficult ascents — Mic particularly is famous throughout the world as the ablest guide and companion in New Zealand. Last year, although he is not a fine skier, he made an historic tour with an Englishman, Colin Wyatt, during which they made several first winter ascents. Perhaps a section of Wyatt's article, published in the Australian and New Zealand Ski Year Book will serve best to tell of this country of which I know so little:

"For the next two days the storm raged around the hut, but the morning of the third dawned absolutely perfect with a nice covering of new snow, so Mick and I set off jubilantly at 5 a.m. for Elie de Beaumont. We had big ideas today, for we knew that the western peak of the Elie massif, Wilczek Peak (10,022 ft.) had never been climbed, though much sought after, and we hoped to ourselves that we might be able to make it should we be favoured with a windless day. We arrived at the foot of the Lendenfeld Saddle at 6:30 a.m. and never have I seen such a wonderful sunrise. It was still dark when we left, and we had

scrambled down the moraine with a lantern, but as we plodded up the centre of the huge glacier we watched the first touch of crimson dye the ice-cap of Mt. Cook; then, one by one, the other giants sprang to life in a blood-red glow. Slowly the wave spread lower down the ice, gradually brightening into a blaze which, in turn, paled to an exquisite primrose, and finally dissolved into the dazzling whiteness of a perfect day.

“We zig-zagged slowly up to the first big ice-fall, winding our way among huge crevasses until we came to one which spread right across the face. Fortunately there was one good bridge which we crossed, and continued up further beautiful slopes to the broad terrace below the second ice-fall. Here we thanked our stars that the storm had delayed us, for from the Dome we had seen this slope clear, while now it was laid waste for a width of fifty yards by a huge ice avalanche which stretched right across it in a jumble of blue blocks and disappeared into our big crevasse. With great difficulty we picked our way across it on ski, right underneath the overhanging blue wall from which the mass had broken away, the ice being scoured out in places like butter scooped up with a spoon. Beyond this obstacle we climbed up a steep snow slope, and finally found our way blocked for good by a huge almost vertical serac of green ice. No other route was possible, so we were reluctantly forced to abandon ski and don crampons for the serious work that lay beyond. We spent some time cutting steps up this for about thirty feet, the ice being very hard, and then found easier going through the remainder of the ice-fall until we emerged on the long steep snow slope which led over a small bergschrund to the summit of Elie de Beaumont. The summit proved to be a large flat area, so we strolled about admiring the view, my only disappointment being that a dense layer of cloud covered the foothills of the West Coast and the sea, only the main glacier neves and a few isolated peaks appearing.

“We had arrived at the top at 10:15, five and a quarter hours' comfortable going, and were lucky enough to have picked an absolutely wind-still day for this glorious viewpoint. We sat down and ate a very welcome lunch, and studied the knife-edge arete of Wilczek Peak that stretched out away from us to the west. Given the conditions we had and the total lack of wind, it looked a reasonably straightforward proposition apart from one very steep break in the arete with a narrow ridge of

iced rock at the end of it. We left the summit of Elie at 10:45 and walked down some three hundred feet to the commencement of the ridge. The first two hundred yards or so were merely a straightforward piece of tight-rope walking over fifty-foot humps, the new snow giving an excellent grip for one's feet. The steep face, some 25 ft. high, which we had studied from Elie, was quite easy to cut up, but the piece of rock we had seen proved to be badly iced, very narrow, and rather rotten. It stretched away before us for some ten feet, and was by far the most difficult piece of the whole climb, falling sheer away to the south, and having some very steep snow below it to the north, which by that hour had become very wet, slippery and untrustworthy.

"Having negotiated the rock and its subsequent ridge, we had a long strip very sheer on both sides along which we straddled, since the snow, though on a fairly sound foundation, was dry and powdery on the south and wet and slipping on the north. After this came a fairly steep drop in the arete, down which we cut, then another horizontal piece, and then a further thirty-foot drop to a four-foot wide col preceded by a biggish cornice, so that we had to cut down the face a few feet to avoid it. The going now was easier, and we were able to walk along just below the edge, only having to cut in places. After traversing a further hump we came to another little flat col at the foot of the final slope to the summit. I say summit, though I am not at all sure which point on the ridge is actually Wilczek. This point, which we reached at noon, was some twenty feet higher than the last peak of the ridge, though looking back we had the impression that the peak formed by our nasty piece of rock early in the climb was if anything higher. On studying the ridge at right angles, from the summit of the Minarets a week later, I was unable to tell which of the two was the higher, but was inclined to give the end one the benefit of the doubt. From this peak led a steep forty-foot drop in two terraces, very sheer on each side, to a very large flat col, from which a broad and easy snow face, some ten feet wide, led up to the final peak of the ridge, which was flat on top and commanded a superb view on three sides. Below it the ridge dropped away steeply in a series of buttresses of rock and ice to the impassable Callery Gorge.

"We rested only a minute or two and then retraced our steps, arriving at the foot of Elie's peak at one o'clock. With all our

steps made for us, the going had been easier on the return, though we had a bit of bother negotiating our rock, and a large piece broke away under me which disappeared into the abyss. We were very fortunate in the conditions, since the least bit of wind would make the ridge very unpleasant, and a strong wind render it next to impossible.

“Having returned to our rucksacks on the summit of Eile, we rested awhile. The descent was just a walk, except for the short series of steps we had cut in the serac after leaving our ski, and we were glad to put these on for the run home. After some careful going through the debris of the ice avalanche, and over the bridge on the big crevasse in the first ice-fall, we had a glorious fast run down to the Lendenfeld Saddle, which we reached at 2:45. Here the sun was so strong that we stripped to the waist and played about for a while and then ran all the way home with our shirts flapping under our packs, reaching the hut and most welcome cup of tea at 4 p.m. The run down from the saddle was unequalled — vast undulating slopes of beautiful snow where the ski almost turned and swung of their own accord, and here and there long even *schusses* which only stopped when one’s legs became too cramped from “standing still” for so long. Instead of a three-hour tramp in gruelling heat, we had a smooth half hour’s run with the breeze cooling our half-naked bodies, and I thought with pity of the Otago mountaineer who told me that for a climber to use ski was ‘prostituting the mountain’! There can be few places where, in one day, one can get so much pleasure from real climbing pure and simple and real skiing pure and simple, not to mention the central part of the expedition, where they merged into one.”

AROUND SHIPROCK —

By WALTER PRAGER

WITH all the sore spots on a certain part of my back from a long ride, it was my second day on a horse's back, I was glad when we tackled the last two hundred feet of Treasure Mountain on foot. I raced to the top, capturing the entire view with one glance. What a country! Mountains all around me! Rugged peaks with vertical faces, nice smooth slopes just made for skiing, and only to the south, the endless flats and deserts of New Mexico with a few needles sticking through the mist of a hot summer day into the blue sky. What a country!

But where is that Shiprock? Too far away to tell for sure whether it is that famous and still unclimbed ship of the desert or not. All I could think of for the next few weeks was this mountain, and finally I had a chance to go down to New Mexico to the Indian country and the rock.

It was already dark when we left the road to drive in our good old Ford car straight through the desert, sometimes on wagontracks, but mostly on untouched sand with sage brush banging on the fenders over bumps and through washouts until we just had to stop to make camp. With a big pile of these only plants of the desert, we managed to build a fire to boil some coffee and warm up a can of corn.

There we were sitting around the fire. Betty, who knew all about the mountain and the Indians; Eleanor, a girl from Dayton with a half broken shoulder . . . a bucking bronc did that to her . . . ; Net, her brother and a real cowboy with his fourteen years; Dick a story writer, but not known yet; myself scaring the Indians away with the noise of my little squeeze box; and a few miles in back of us, big old Shiprock with its fantastic contours rising above the stars.

A cold wind drove us into our sleeping bags and with the unforgettable howling of the coyotes and a little fear of rattlesnakes, we opened our eyes the next morning just in time to see

the most wonderful sunrise. Up and off we were to take a closer look at this mysterious mountain. After an hour or so we were at the base, leaving the girls at camp to prepare breakfast.

Net and Dick decided to stay away from the cliffs while I climbed up a little to find out whether I could discover a possible route for an attack I had in mind to do some day with a companion. But after a few hours of sneaking around those walls which seemed to be one overhang after another all the way to the top, I began to believe it wouldn't be so easy to scale them. And not only that, the rock is of such bad structure . . . a sand rock as smooth as the walls of the Empire State Building with no hand holds and no cracks to drive in a piton. Having no success on the east side, I went around to the west, where I knew a group of good climbers had already tried this summer. There I found some foot tracks which were leading up into a couloir. I climbed up as far as I could being alone, and to my great surprise found a piton in a little crack with a big overhang above, which stopped my climbing for good.

This couldn't be the right trail. So I went on to the other side of the big tower, but the picture did not change. Untrustable rocks and overhangs wherever I thought I had found a climbable route. Nothing doing was my conclusion, at least not alone, and I went back to the camp to find no breakfast.

Later, I saw an article in *The Rocky Mountain Sportsman*:

"SHIPROCK STILL UNCONQUERED

On June 10, 1938, a strong party equipped to the hilt began an unsuccessful assault which lasted a week. Working from a camp at the base of the rock, they were able to get within approximately 250 feet of the summit before the basalt rib turned them back. All other possible lines of attack were studied carefully and rejected as impractical."

The possibility of climbing Shiprock by legitimate mountaineering methods seems slim indeed, although I'll probably no sooner set these words to paper than some party of super climbers make me out a liar. Of the possibility of climbing the peak by other than pure mountaineering methods, this might be said; any person with more energy and nerve than judgment could drill a row of holes and place a ladder of steel pins to the summit. But that would be ravishing the peak; not climbing it.

SCRAMBLING ON OWL'S HEAD

By ROBERT SKINNER

OWL'S HEAD is the most interesting and enjoyable climb that I have made in this vicinity. It is neither spectacular nor tiresome, and a test of technique rather than one of strength and endurance. There are no pitches on the face where one has to dig in his toe-nails, clamp his teeth onto the nearest lichen, and pray that he might reach the next discoloration. On the other hand, there are a few spots where one's technique may receive quite a test.

The cliff is only an hour's drive from Hanover and about a fifteen minute walk from the highway. I'm sure I won't go into the thickety details of the talus slope, for with a certain amount of determination and with the general spirit of "Well, we've got all day anyway" prevailing, the base of the cliff can be attained. A great many of my fellow climbers will find this a fine spot to have lunch or to sit down and rest.

Assuming that we have started up and have advanced a few belays, we now reach a very interesting traverse. Have you ever tried to walk across Charley's Face with your hands tied behind your back? Well, this is quite similar. The method used here is to merely keep moving sideways as your feet slide down, and if your downward and sideward speeds are properly synchronized you'll find your feet firmly in a solid foot hold. A short way about this pitch there is a small vertical chimney which leaves one on a fairly wide shelf offering a beautiful view and a needed rest. The remaining climb is more difficult and near the top there is a small overhang which might even stop the great "Matterhorn Jake" for a few minutes. However, it is one of those places where you hang onto nothing for a while and then suddenly you come upon a fingertip hold that feels like a rung of a ladder and then you're over it.

In closing, I must express my sincere indebtedness and thanks to Bert Jensen who made the first ascent of Owl's Head, and

who was also good enough to leave his pitons there in order to mark the route and to help others. So whenever you are climbing on this cliff and look up and see a faithful piton above you — remember Bert.

TALUS —

A Presentation

The Dartmouth Mountaineering Club was formed by twelve undergraduates of the Outing Club on October sixth, nineteen hundred thirty-six. In two years that group of twelve has grown to nearly fifty members, both graduate and undergraduate, who comprise one of the most active groups on the campus.

From article three of its constitution; "the purpose of the Dartmouth Mountaineering Club shall be to promote the interest in mountaineering in its various phases within the Dartmouth Outing Club, and to provide instruction and leadership for its members and prospective members." It has stressed safety from the beginning without going to the extreme of artificiality in climbing.

Now, as it starts its third year of existence, it has acquired as a foundation for future growth, a club room and a voice. Its clubroom is substantial; its voice, for inability to express its new found emotions satisfactorily, is still boyishly treble.

Notes from abroad and at home

Howie Wriggins in Norway "for some and a half weeks" where he was disappointed with the climbing but entirely pleased with the fjords and the lazy atmosphere of the mountain huts. He recommends anyone contemplating a visit take all his equipment with him . . . down to the last piton . . . for you can't get anything there. For climbing he reports the Horungtinder in July is the best, especially if you "vant to be alone". And to quote, "the Norwegian goat's cheese is well worth sampling . . . you'll go nuts over that as well as the Norwegian babes." No, no, no, what does he mean?

Bert and Florence Jensen left Paradise last Spring and spent the summer in the Tetons. Bert guided and made some remarkable first ascents on the side. He takes this opportunity of sending a "Berg heil to the boys in Hanover" and hopes to have some letters. The last seen of the Jensens was outside their

tent at Jenny Lake eating breakfast (Florence is a fine cook. I know. ed.) and planning to take a bunch of goofers up the Grand.

Bob Skinner batting about the west during the summer getting in shape for climbing next year . . . Will Brown climbing in the Adirondacks and on Katahdin in the same week . . . Dick and Jack Durrance exploring the Sawtooth Range (Dick also explored Hollywood we hear. What could he like out there? . . .) Joe Dunford making a first ascent on the Olympic Peninsula but keeping very quiet about it; modesty or professional ethics? . . . Walt Prager scalping Indians out west and catching trouts in the east . . . Chap Cranmer at Ireland Corners with a vivacious New York deb . . . Jacoby also in on that . . . a first ascent in New York Yale week-end . . . a picnic last spring which was all wet . . . Hod Mecklem guiding on Mt. Hood when he wasn't working for the canned salmon industry . . . Chief McNair getting engaged . . . dues which make the annual possible . . . *ad infinitum*.

And at Hanover the DMC has had practice climbs at Norwich three times a week teaching technique to prospective members and trying to learn some themselves. An occasional trip on week-ends to Orford and a joint trip with Amherst and Mt. Holyoke completed the fall climbing schedule. A more active program for the winter is planned with a rigorous training schedule in the spring. A small group is going to Katahdin in the Spring vacation for ice climbing and skiing. The cliff at Cannon was finally climbed owing to the first decent weather any trip there has had.

Abroad again, it was noted in the papers that the Nordwand of the Eiger was finally climbed. While the men that climbed it must be admired for the task they accomplished, one hopes an era of climbing with more discretion and wisdom will be inaugurated. Is it good mountaineering to sacrifice so many lives to such a face?

The American Expedition to K-2 did far better than the most optimistic had hoped for. That American mountaineering is approaching a grown-up stature is becoming more and more self-evident. If only we do not become enmeshed in high pressure mountaineering American climbers will soon prove it. For after all, one climbs because he likes the mountains. It is hoped we never reach the stage where discretion is not the better part of valor.



