



RAVEN ROCK GULLY.

THE ROCHES.



THE GREAT SLAB.

*Photos by L. Burtinshaw*

## GRITSTONE ROCKS—1921.

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Gritstone climbing, as most English climbing, has become so specialised that it is in danger of losing its value as a training for mountaineering. For example, Laddow now resembles a badly pointed wall with climbs up the crevices between each brick; no one can lose his way, nor learn route finding, for if he does he is trespassing on the next crevice or climb.

This year an effort has been made to find new climbs which take definite routes, following the line of least resistance on a face or buttress, and are yet interesting climbing of a fairly high standard of difficulty. A few of these are described below.

**THE ROCHES.**—It has been known for some years that good climbs could be found on the upper tier of these rocks. Jeffcoat described Hen Cloud and the Raven Rock in the *Journal* of 1913, and promised further revelations, which unfortunately he never had the opportunity to complete.

Roches Rock is a species of its own, first cousin to Cratcliff, but weathering into curious horizontal pockets and ledges with rough edges, providing the necessary good holds to overcome the characteristic overhangs. The face is about 80 feet high, but as several of the climbs include traverses, some of the routes give over 100 feet of climbing. The most prominent feature is the Great Slab with a big overhang above it; to the right is a detached and irregular buttress; to the left a continuation of the face, split by chimneys, and ending with a peaked buttress forming the right wall of an easy gully. Beyond is a pinnacle, and smaller rocks continue the edge. Taking the climbs from left to right, *i.e.*, north-west to south-east, the first is the peaked buttress called—**BACHELORS' BUTTRESS.**—75 feet. Severe.

Ladies, twins, brothers, and other varieties of the human species now own climbs, hence this name, though it is a misnomer as the climb is severe, unsuited for bachelors, and should be strictly reserved for married men and others used to taking such risks.

From the left end of the face a 30 feet slab at an easy angle leads to the foot of the easy gully and from there the route lies up the right wall. A very awkward movement to the right brings

a small mantel-shelf within reach and as the right end offers the best hold, you pull up keeping the left side in. It is difficult to leave this stance and the holds are exceedingly poor to the corner of the buttress, 15 feet higher, but from there a step round the corner shows a short easy crack to the top.

This is an exposed climb and requires good conditions.

**JEFFCOAT'S CHIMNEY.**—70 feet. Difficult.

The original climb done on the rocks, shown in the photo in the *Journal* of 1913, is an interesting straightforward route.

It commences as an open chimney with holds mainly on the left wall, and passes over two chockstones into a small cave (35 feet). From here a further chockstone is followed by a corner, which is finished on the left to a large platform. The short slab which completes the climb has an awkward start on the left, and the overhang is also avoided by making an exit over the left corner.

**BLACK AND TANS' CLIMB.**—105 feet. Very difficult.

Commences a few feet to the right of Jeffcoat's Chimney with a 15 feet struggle on to a traverse, extending 30 feet to the right to a sloping ledge with a belay at the extreme end. It is better to climb the next pitch (a corner) to a stance on the left. A short and neat traverse is now made to the left to a bilberry ledge (with a thread above if desired) and another short crack leads to a good platform again on the left; 25 feet of easier climbing straight up the face reaches the summit.

**GREAT SLAB.**

All routes start from the centre, the lowest part, pitted with curious slots, which give an awkward climb to a small ledge 15 feet up.

**LEFT ROUTE.**—75 feet. Very difficult.

From a ledge follow a short grass traverse and climb a strenuous crack to the Pedestal. A good traverse leads across the slab, finishing with a swing on the hands into a holly bush (belay above in chimney). This chimney, 35 feet, is climbed past the overhang on good holds and the upper grassy part avoided on the left wall.

**PEDESTAL VARIATION.**—

The Pedestal is a block on the face of the slab which can be conveniently climbed direct from the grass traverse, and the Left Route traverse continued from its summit.

RIGHT ROUTE.—75 feet. Very difficult.

From the ledge traverse diagonally upwards for 35 feet to the chockstone on the right of the big overhang. The route can be varied, but a good ledge in the centre with a doubtful flake above is useful. From the earthy scree near the chockstone a short movement is made to the left above the overhang on two good footholds, with a side pull into a crack leading to the top; a sensational but safe pitch.

Both routes are interesting climbing on an open face with sufficient holds.

CRACK AND CORNER CLIMB.—70 feet climbing. Very severe exit.

The detached buttress on the right, separated from the Great Slab by a wide, earthy and unpleasant gully, is split by a very clearly marked straight crack. This has excellent holds when the undercut base is passed, and is not so difficult as it looks. From the top of the crack move about 20 feet to the left along a bilberry terrace and mount two platforms, the second difficult, to the foot of a steep corner bending to the left. At the top of the corner swing round to the left to a small block ledge which can be used as a belay. The final pitch is a very severe overhanging 10-foot crack with poor holds. The leader took a shoulder from his second who was securely tied on to the block, and it looked impossible without this. The lower crack is a pleasant climb; the top pitch may some day become "an easy day for a lady," but at present it is "no place for a gentleman."

THE CATSTONE, BOSLEY CLOUD.—

At the south-west corner of the Cloud, the point nearest Congleton, is a steep rock tower of over 60 feet, known locally as the Catstone, and mentioned in Laycock's book as unclimbed. It gives two routes, much finer and longer than any others on the Cloud, but both severe, and a trial on the rope is recommended to anyone of any value to the community. The Tower has lost its right hand top corner, thus forming Holly Bush Platform, and the new edge is continued downwards by a crack or chimney which does not reach the foot of the rock.

MUTINY CHIMNEY.—65 feet. Severe.

May be reached? direct from the foot, but is better entered by Rotten Row, a delicate traverse starting 15 feet to the left. The

chockstone exit to Holly Bush Platform is the crux of the climb. The left side is commonly wedged in the crack, while the right foot finds a poor saucer-shaped hold high on the wall, but as with the Laddow Right Twin Chimney, other methods are sometimes preferred. The 25 feet slab taken on the extreme right gives an attractive finish on good holds, the first few feet being the most difficult.

THE CAT CRAWL.—65 feet. Very severe. The left arête of the tower.

Starting at the lowest point, 20 feet of easy rock leads to the commencement of the easy gully on the left of the Tower, where the leader can be held for the second pitch. Restarting rather lower on good handholds, traverse a few feet on to the face and climb into the first black scoop. From here a very awkward 10-foot wall is climbed to the second black scoop, followed by a high step back to the arête on to a good foot hold. Sloping holds make the next few feet very precarious, until one good specimen is reached, after which the remainder of the climb to the left corner is better supplied, unless the climber is tempted too far to the right by the curved ledge. Requires perfect conditions and a confident leader.

Both Bosley and The Roches are finely situated rocks ("the vista" at the latter is especially recommended), but permission *must* be obtained before The Roches are visited.

MORLEY WOOD.

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NOTE.—On page 238 will be found a sketch of the Catstone, drawn by  
"a member of the Club."





*Photo by Wallace May.*

**MONT BLANC, FROM THE COL DU GEANT.**