

CWM EIGIAU.

This valley had greatly struck my fancy on my very first visit to Wales. We were a reading-party at Aber and my companions were sturdy walkers, though they had not much relish for climbing. Gilbert Coleridge had given us a glowing account of the rock scenery at Llyndulyn and we started one day with the intention of finding that lake, following the water down to the river Conway and returning over Bwlchyddeufaen by the reputed Roman road; but our plans grew and grew, so that in the end what we really did was to follow the ridges from the top of Y Foel Fras over Carnedd Llewelyn to Carnedd Dafydd. Returning in mist and tending eastward we struck the top of the rocks now called Craig-yr-Ysfa at the Amphitheatre, then followed the ridge to the right, and from the gap before Pen Helig ran down past the Slate Works and the foot of the Amphitheatre; then raced along Cwm Eigiau by the quarry road, some of which is now submerged, reached the Conway at Tal-y-Cafn, met a sea fog, gave up the Roman road, and eventually went round by the sea-coast and got home, after keeping up $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour for about 8 hours.

In those days there were several Alpine men who knew the Carnedds pretty well; but they would not believe that there were any rocks worthy of the name except on the west or Nant Ffrancon side, and for years I could not persuade anyone to go and look for these splendid cliffs. For myself no opportunity arose of revisiting them until at last I went over from Ogwen and did the Amphitheatre Buttress, and some years later climbed the Great Gully. No one can visit these rocks without wanting to go again, and when the Hut was established my desire doubled in strength, so this summer, with the aid of a first-rate Commissariat Officer and of a sturdy Transport man, I realised the dream of years.

The Transport man and I, kept under very severe discipline, became expert kitchenmaids, and in the brief breaks of the weather

and of domestic drudgery worked in a little climbing, including an exciting traverse across the main face and a descent of the Amphitheatre Buttress.

The weather was by no means perfect ; but, whenever the rain stopped, we got plenty of good warming sun.

We soon learned to keep our weather-eye on the pass of what the Ordnance map calls Tre-marahog, but, as the Welsh sages agree (for once) in saying, should be Tre-Marchog, "the Three Horsemen." There are stories of three knights riding in that improbable spot, most likely made up to account for the name ; but to my mind the three horsemen are merely the three conspicuous lumps of rock which mark the col as seen from the Eigiau side. In Alpine slang a lump so placed would be called a "gendarme" ; but is much less like a policeman than a man seated astride of the ridge, a simile which displays all the aptness of the Celts in local description.

In the Hut itself we found the "Primus" stoves, which have inspired so many pages of humorous comment in the Hut book, capricious perhaps, but not permanently ill-tempered, and, on the whole, an enormous boon.

It may be some help to future parties to know that we could not get any fresh meat, milk, or methylated spirit.

We consumed in the four days 7lbs. of potatoes, 6lbs. of bread, 1½lbs. of butter, 2½lbs. of bacon, 1lb. each of oatmeal, rice, sugar, and plasmon biscuits, ½lb. prunes, ½lb. candles, ¼lb. cheese, ¼lb. tea, ¼lb. salt, 2½ doz. eggs, 2 tins each of milk and sardines, about 6 soup tablets, and a little eating chocolate.

But all this is outside my province. It belongs to the description of our domestic life, which, happily, is in far more experienced hands.

W. P. HASKETT-SMITH.

THE HUT.

BY THE COMMISSARIAT OFFICER.

On a September morning in the year of grace 1917 we bade farewell to the house of ham and jam at Ogwen and started for the Hut. We were the Member, the Other, and I. Our burdens reminded me of de Saussure and Mont Blanc—only the champagne was missing. Happily we had made a visit of inspection a few days

earlier and had carried over a load of which Mr. Harrison took charge. Friends shouldered our sacks and, resisting the temptations of the Milestone Buttress, bore them two miles further along the highway to where we took the farm road by Tal-y-Braich. Whilst we halted to say "Good-bye" the Other sat heavily on the fresh eggs for which I had scoured the valley. We reminded him that the journey should end and not begin at Eigiau. A pile of shells marks the place unto this day.

We passed the farms and their threatening dogs, stimulated by the Other's stockingless calves, and toiled across the trackless moorland with the great peak of Tryfan behind us and ahead the long range which runs north from Capel Curig. It promises interesting scrambles. Presently an ancient tumulus came in sight and we turned northwards to Llyn Cowlyd—a picture for any painter. We reached the beach to find, alas, that no steamer ran that day. Revived by lunch we tramped along the old road beside the lake to the first tiny farm, where we breasted the hill and, after a brief struggle, were rewarded by glimpses of the Hut; soon we descended upon the Château Harrison. Its host had not returned from Tal-y-Bont, or was it Tally ho? but we learnt that he had fortified the Hut with peat and bought some stores for us. Fortunately he had spurned the teaching of Columbus and the Other and tried no experiment with his eggs.

The causey was now dry. When we crossed a day or two before parts were deep in water and I was glad to be carried over. It was lucky we had made the earlier visit for the afternoon was cloudy and we dared not air the blankets. Each to his appointed task, the Member to the potatoes, the Other to the fire, and I to the pots and pans. The Other soon was lost to view, though now and then a voice breaking faintly through dense clouds of smoke assured us that the fire was burning. At last he emerged and declared that he, a true son of Dartmoor, had won, and that we might count upon the fire for the evening. Once mastered it gave little trouble, and, though a full sack of peat is no feather weight, the Member and the Other bravely kept the home fires burning. Once the sack burst when nearing the causey. We never drew upon the reservoir of heavy oil—it was empty—but the tiny store of methylated was right welcome. Primus in the morning and Peat at night were the travellers' delight. Let it be said that both have received scant justice from earlier adventurers.

Denying ourselves the Military Ball at Hafod-y-rhiw given by

the brave guardians of the dam—we went peacefully to bed in the light of the dying fire. But, Oh! those middle trestles! The door was open, but a barrier of chairs was fixed to save the sleepers from the mountain wolves.

On Friday the Member and the Other went to Craig-yr-Ysfa, climbed someway up the Great Gully, and retreated to the north across the face of the cliff. Meanwhile I spring-cleaned the Hut.

On Saturday the Member and I conquered Carnedd Llewelyn and returned to the top of the Shuddering Craig to meet the Other (who had made a late start under pretence of tidying up) and some friends from Ogwen. The weather had been long boisterous upon the heights—now it broke. I retreated, accompanied by two of the visitors who kindly put me on the road home, whilst the third and the rest of our party found and descended the Amphitheatre Buttress in the fog and the rain. I hurried home to dry my only clothes before the climbers came back.

On Sunday early we were hailed by a caravan bound for the Slanting Gully. Evening saw them return wet and cheery men. They and two pilgrims, whom no one saw again, and the shepherd whose silent signal told his dogs their duty, were the only wayfarers. Think of it, Oh, Piccadilly!—five passers-by in four days!

That afternoon our cup was filled—I might say all our cups—for Mr. and Mrs. Harrison and their daughter came to tea.

Monday, our last day, was the best in weather. Beds were stowed, blankets aired and folded, floors swept, crocks cleaned, towels washed, and, with a general regret, we left the little cottage amidst the mountains.

We broke little and wasted less, and, save in spirit (methylated), we left the hut even better endowed than we found it. Two things would be a precious boon, a window that will open and some clogs.

Differing on many things inside and outside the Hut we unite to offer the Rucksackers our three-fold thanks for those restful days amongst the hills, and to the Harrisons for their cordial welcome.

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Sometimes I fly upon the wings of thought from the smoke and din of the town to the Hut nestling in the happy valley—I unbar the door—I enter our September home—the peat glows upon the hearth—I am at rest.

(Mrs.) B.E.S.T.