

## A TRAMPER'S EASTER SOLILOQUY.

---

Why should it be? Why should our peaceful and well-earned rest, after a good tramp and scramble among our beloved hills, be transformed into a hideous nightmare? when sleep refuses oblivion, and the long night-watches are spent in a terrified state of semi-torpor, in which one hangs on to a demi-semi-handhole in a crack which isn't there.

One emerges (with luck) from the dining-room, after the first really satisfactory meal of the day, feeling on splendid terms with oneself, and prospects around for a comfortable spot in which to luxuriate, and finds—what? Nothing left except the draughty corners, and the chairs with incomplete anatomies alone unoccupied.

*They* are the reason, the cause of it all—the “Buccaneers,” the “Ultra Cragmen.” There they sit in various conditions of disorder, keeping the warmth of the fire from everybody else. Fresh as paint they are, too, and no wonder. They have not tramped over miles of rough broken land before commencing their climb; not a bit of it. Motors for them, to the foot of the crags, not to mention open carriages. And they are men who ought to know better than to encourage the defilement of the lovely hill country by these beastly “stink-pots.” The man who constructs a funicular railway up Rossett Ghyll, or a bath-chair service up Brown Tongue, will certainly make his fortune, and, moreover, will be received with acclamation into their select inner circle.

At length one selects the position of least discomfort that remains (probably on the floor) and tries, in company with other disconsolates, to work out a program for the morrow. But alas! it is all to no end. The atmosphere vibrates, an Irish parliament or suffragettes' meeting is as nothing to it; everybody talking and nobody listening! At intervals it is possible to hear tales of thrilling experiences on Buttress A.X.P.L.L., of parabolic curves formed in Pink Gully No. 99, or of nights out at home and abroad (Arabian nights usually). But generally the welkin rings with a confused jumble of words (only understood when one understands the cypher and owns a “book of words”) in which cracks back up buttresses,

belays wrap themselves round the rope, and men come off into a bottomless abyss.

The effect of all this upon a perfectly normal brain is absolutely appalling, and at length the poor trampers slink off to bed, to endure untold agonies in the effort to woo that coy mistress, "sleep."

This terrible sect have put many glorious crags to the indignity of being tabled and scheduled in special handbooks, in which handbooks are complete diagrams of the crags, duly scheduled and indexed, shewing the longest, most dangerous and most difficult way up, and the shortest way down to the slumbering chauffeur and the motor car. Their next step will probably mean the marking out of the actual rocks, *in situ*, with white paint, and in the application of an electric alarm to each hand or foothold.

They will probably ultimately instal an official guide in uniform at the foot of the climbs. One encounters numbers of these men or their counterparts in the Alps, generally looking as if they were not really enjoying life at all, and usually having the appearance of travelling knife-grinders.

One hears them talking of nights spent in huts, at goodness knows what altitude, where they invariably feed on nothing at all, why? no one seems to know.

This frugal hut business is really a lot of humbug, as many of the alleged huts are most luxurious places, where one can order anything from a liqueur to a whisky cocktail. We have heard—but never mind—that's another story.

The Buccaneers have a clever and cunning wheeze of coming in late in the evening (generally at the Easter meet) just when everyone is thinking of retiring, and turning the hotel upside down whilst their fellows find them creature comforts, both solid and fluid. This dodge is apparently practised with a view to increasing the unit of fluid refreshment, without incurring the censure of the remainder of their clan. And yet curiously enough they are very decent well-meaning fellows at the bottom.

Let our purely tramping members try the effect of a little moral suasion on this unruly gang, bring them down to a more normal level, and add thereby to our everlasting comfort.

In the true interests of the Club let us all therefore try to be more "Complete Mountaineers."

H. S. PORTER.