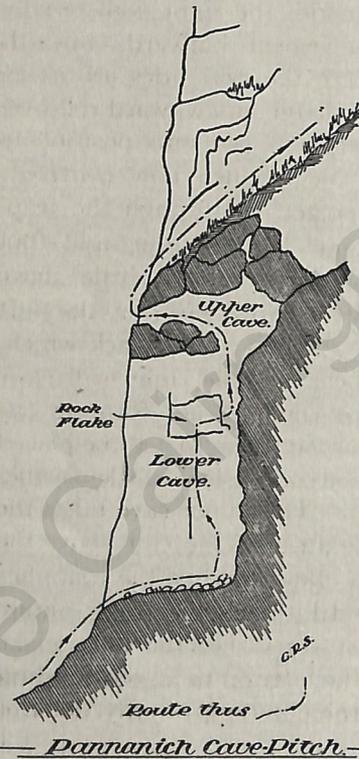


THE PANNANICH CAVE-PITCH.

THIS summer a short but certainly difficult rock climb was discovered by W. Ewen on the hill behind Pannanich Hotel. The crag on which the course is situated can be readily seen from the train before entering Ballater Station.

Anyone sufficiently interested to pay it a visit, should, while still on the railway, make a mental note of its approximate position. A flat, perfectly perpendicular face of rock will be found at the eastern extremity of the line of crags, and our route starts immediately to the right of this slab.

The cave, which appears from the outside as a vertical fissure in the rocks, decorated on each side by



clumps of ferns, is readily entered by a short introductory climb of about eight feet. Inside, smooth, vertical walls rise abruptly on either side for a height of almost twenty feet to a boulder roof in which, at the very back, is a small trap-door-like opening. Through this hole nothing but the gloom of an upper

cave is visible. The crux of the climb lies in getting up to and through this aperture. On the left wall, some eight feet under the opening, is an ample ledge at the foot of a firm flake of rock. Ewen has shown that this ledge may be reached by climbing on small holds up the back of the cave. Personally, I prefer to use the back and leg method as a means of upward progress. By the latter method, with feet on the right wall, the commencement at the back of the cave is easy. After a little progress has been made, the right wall recedes slightly, necessitating a movement outwards towards the mouth of the cave, where the two sides are closer together. At the level of the ledge an awkward roll-over has to be performed in order to get into position to grasp the flake. The problem which now confronts the climber is how he is to get up through the trap-door from the ledge. A good hold for the right foot is to be found at the base of the flake, a little above the level of the shelf. From this position the left foot can be wedged high up in a vertical crack which, from the cave beneath, appears on the right wall close to the roof. A pull on the choke-stone, forming one side of the trap-door, allows the right foot to be placed on top of the flake. This accomplished, little further resistance is to be met with. The upper cave takes the form of a tunnel out to the face of the cliff above the entrance to the cave below. Beyond this, the route lies up a well-defined gully, until the overhanging nature of the rocks near its summit force the climber to make an exposed traverse out to the left, on to an outstanding nose of rock. Above this the climbing rapidly deteriorates.

After a spell of bad weather, unless the climber wishes to get extremely wet, the Cave-Pitch at Pannanich had better be avoided. A person with a free afternoon at Ballater could not do better than take a walk up to this remarkable feature, even although he had no intention of trying the climb.

G. R. S.