



June 12, 1932.

E. W. Smith.

RAEBURN'S GULLY, LOCHNAGAR.

Head of snow-tongue below the 70-foot pitch.

RAEBURN'S GULLY IN SPRING.

BY E. W. SMITH.

THAT Raeburn's Gully of Lochnagar would be climbed in winter conditions in 1932 was our ambition. Twice in winter and once in spring it was tried: twice it failed, but at last with the departure of the frosts it "went."

The first attempt was by Yunnie, Gordon, and Brockie on February 28, when an ice wall barred the way, and because of the short daylight available, it was given up.

The next attempt was made by the same trio on April 30, but the precarious state of the cornices put an ascent out of the question: indeed the cornice came down before the party was clear of the gully. No mishap occurred, and Yunnie joined Smith and Gove in an ascent of the left-hand branch of the Black Spout. A more successful effort was made on June 12, which, although it cannot be claimed as being done in winter conditions, is earlier in the year than any recorded ascent. The party, consisting of Yunnie, E. G. Gordon, Gove, and E. W. Smith, camped overnight on the shores of the Loch, under the West Buttress, a scramble up which, and a walk round the corries to beyond the top of the gully, from where a fine view of the last pitch is to be had, proved of no little worth in confirming the belief of the leader (Yunnie) that this time the gully would "go." The descent of the Black Spout, which was still very full of hard snow, was quite thrilling, as it was getting dark before we started.

We were up and about in a morning of glorious sunshine. Quite a few people had spent the night climbing Lochnagar by the Ladder, judging from the shouts and noise carried over the morning air. The sunshine soon gave way as the corries donned their mantle of cloud, and by the time a start was made we were in a dense fog, which never lifted during the entire climb. The scramble up the boulder fan from the the camp was, to one member of the party at all events, not the least tiresome time of the day.

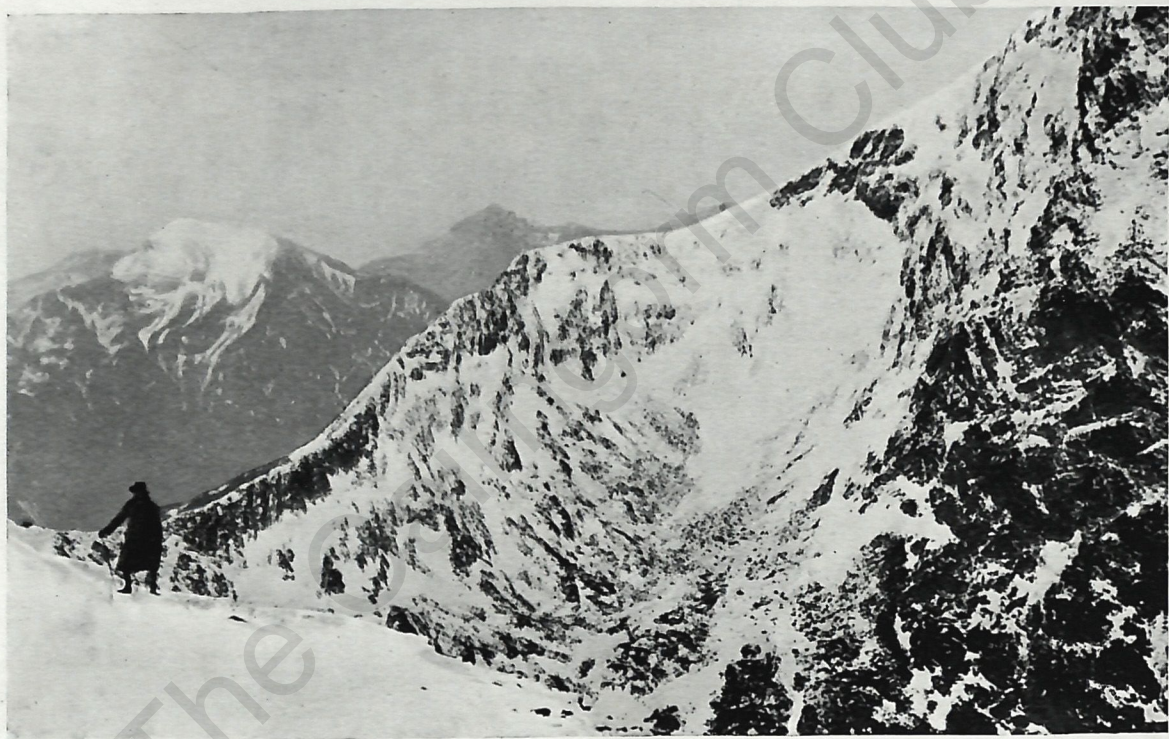
The first part of the actual climb was over a stretch of hard-packed snow. The kicking of steps was difficult, and ice-axes (which were most of the way to prove a great nuisance) were very useful. The rocks beyond the snow-field were wet and very crumbly on the surface: a little difficulty was encountered with a small cave pitch, and again more snow—or rather ice, for on this occasion it was very hard—and we were on the Great Cave Pitch below the Chokestone.

The gully all the way up had been full of loose boulders and very wet. When the vicinity of the Cave was reached it was found that the winter had wrought great changes in this part of the climb. The rock near the Chokestone, which before had presented sheer wall, was now terraced. So great was the change that Yunnie at first thought he was facing a pitch which he had entirely forgotten. After the leader and second got over the cave pitch it was necessary to unrope, to tackle the Chokestone with the threaded rope. The rope by this time was very wet, fingers numb, and unroping a tedious job. The effort of getting over the Chokestone left us puffing, but after we had a breather good progress was made, for we knew we'd win through. The only other snag encountered was in the last pitch (*C.C.J.*, Vol. XIII, p. 21). It looked so simple our leader was to take it in his stride, but neither foothold nor handhold was to be had on the convex wall. An escape was found to the right, with the help of a back up, or rather by very unique "combined tactics," for Yunnie's Alpine boots were resting on Smith's head before he finally got himself drawn up to a decent stance!! Gordon was over in the same manner, and the other two, to save time, were up on the rope, safely belayed from the top of the corries. The small cornice offered no difficulty.

The danger from falling boulders cannot be too well emphasized, and the menace of the stone-throwing "wandering hiker" (*C.C.J.*, Vol. XIII, p. 24) might well be brought to the notice of those hill lovers, who more than ever haunt the top of Lochnagar.

Sgurr à Mhaim

Stob Ban



Easter, 1932.

Carn Mòr Dearg Arête.

James McCoss.