

NEW CLIMBS

DURING the past two years there have been a number of outstanding new climbs in the Cairngorm area, possibly as a result of the interest aroused by the forthcoming S.M.C. rock-climbing guide. Last year we reported the direct ascent of the Black Spout Pinnacle, and the 1956 *S.M.C. Journal* includes accounts of the Lochnagar Girdle Traverse and the Crimson Slabs route on Creagan a' Choire Etchachan.

In the following record of new climbs those already described in *S.M.C. Journal*, No. 147 (1956), are given without details of the route, except in the case of Crimson Slabs, with which two of the new climbs described here are combined.

LOCHNAGAR

Girdle Traverse.—(H.S.). T. W. Patey, A. G. Nicol, and A. Will, 2,000 feet of climbing, May 1955.

Parallel Buttress.—First winter ascent, T. W. Patey, W. D. Brooker, and J. Smith, March 4, 1956.

Tough Brown Ridge.—First winter ascent by Bell-Murray route, T. W. Patey, A. Will, G. McLeod, and A. Thom, March 1955.

Black Spout Pinnacle.—First winter ascent, Route 1, by J. Smith and W. D. Brooker, March 11, 1956.

Transept Route.—(S.). R. H. Sellers, J. White, and D. J. Ritchie, April 1, 1956. This route is on the Cathedral Rocks of Lochnagar and is the first direct ascent of this buttress. The climb commences 60 feet up from the lowest rocks and immediately beneath the groove to the right of the large tower on the left-hand side of the buttress. Traverse hard right into and up the groove till forced to traverse right on to wall. Climb the wall to ledge with piton belay at the foot of a second groove. Go 10 feet up this groove till a bulge forces a traverse for 10 feet across wall on to a rib. This rib forms the crux and is continuously difficult and well exposed for 60 feet to a good pulpit stance. An 8 foot crack is then climbed to a grassy terrace. Go up terrace trending left to the base of a final 50 foot chimney. Climb this easy but enjoyable chimney to the plateau. Although this buttress has a very bad reputation for loose rock it was found to be very sound on this route.

COIRE SPUTAN DEARG

Hackingbush's Horror.—(V.S.). J. Y. L. Hay, A. Will, J. Ross, C. Martin, and G. Adams, April 12, 1956. This is a short but very enjoyable climb on the steep wall to the left of Janus Chimney. Climb 15 feet up the groove at the foot of the ridge to a small platform. Traverse right to the crest of the arête from where a swing left on to a flake leads to the main platform. Climb the shallow depression above to the foot of an obvious vertical crack with overhanging top. Climb the crack by layback to the overhang and traverse right to the crest with the aid of pitons. Follow the ridge above until the final chimney of Janus is reached.

Anchor Route.—First winter ascent, J. Adams and R. Barclay, December 25, 1956. Good conditions. A piton was used as running belay on the final move. (2½ hours.)

Lucifer Route.—(S.). M. Scott, D. Macrae, and R. Ellis, October 21, 1956. This route lies between Pilgrim's Groove and the Hanging Dyke Route. Start immediately to the right of the Pilgrim's Groove Cairn and head straight up a groove to a platform beneath a prominent overhang (170 feet, M.). Move up the vertical right-hand wall (V.D.) and proceed up a groove above the overhang to a large block which is climbed in the right-hand corner to a grassy ledge (120 feet). Climb to the right over a detached block and up the top left-hand edge of a huge slab (D.) to a rock ledge overlooking Pilgrim's Groove (40 feet, piton belay). From here it is a severe movement to attain lodgement in the groove, from where the climb continues to the plateau (120 feet).

CARN ETCHACHAN

Crevasse.—250 feet (M.S.). T. W. Patey, M. Smith, and A. Duguid, July 29, 1955.

The Guillotine.—250 feet (V.D.). T. W. Patey and A. Duguid, August 13, 1955.

Pagan Slit.—(H.S.). R. Barclay and G. Adams, August 7, 1955.

Forefinger Pinnacle Direct.—120 feet (S.). D. Macrae and G. Faulkner, August 5, 1956. Start at the lowest pinnacle rocks in the gully which lead to a platform at the left-hand side of a vertical wall. Move up the edge and traverse right to a shelf (running belay). Twenty feet of hard climbing to the right of a prominent crack leads to the final pitch. This pitch, 25 feet up a shallow gully, overhangs slightly at the bottom and is deficient of good holds. Combined tactics were used and a piton inserted in the wall from which 10 feet of strenuous climbing led to the pinnacle ridge. Nailed boots worn. There are rumours of a previous ascent—possibly not so direct—but no published account is known to the Editor.

CAIRNGORM

The Relay Climb.—600 feet (V.S.). T. W. Patey, August 14, 1955.

The Escalator.—(M.). On Hell's Lum Cliffs, A. G. Nicol, T. W. Patey, and Miss E. M. Davidson, September 30, 1955.

CREAGAN A' CHOIRE ETCHACHAN

The Corridor.—(S.). J. Y. L. Hay, A. Crichton, and W. Christie, July 21, 1955. Second ascent (more direct) (V.S., vibrans). T. W. Patey and A. Duguid, August 13, 1955.

Juniper Buttress.—First winter ascent, T. W. Patey, A. Will, M. Smith, and G. Adams, February 27, 1955.

Quartz Vein Edge.—First winter ascent, J. Y. L. Hay, G. Adams, and A. Thom (all three shared leads), December 29, 1956. Hard snow ice throughout except for the final wall which carried a heavy coating of fresh snow. Difficulties were fairly continuous, the final wall, climbed in the dark, providing the crux. (3¾ hours.)

The Red Chimney.—(H.S., vibrans). J. Gadd and Mrs Gadd, July 1955.

The Crimson Slabs.—400 feet (V.S.). T. W. Patey and J. Y. L. Hay, September 4, 1955. A great sheet of smooth red slabs to the right of the prominent Red Chimney is seamed only by two long and roughly parallel grooves. The one on the right was the selected line and it provided one of the hardest climbs in the Cairngorms, very strenuous and sustained. The groove, or *dièdre*, goes straight up for over 100 feet and culminates in a forbidding overhang. Above this, easier heather grooves lead to the topmost slabs. Three pitons were used on the actual climb, more for safeguard than direct aid, though they served for both, and a repeat ascent may clean things up. A further piton was used on the top slab. Steep scrambling and an awkward traverse from the right lead to the foot of the great *dièdre* 80 feet up. This is an inch-by-inch struggle throughout. For the first 20 feet the corner crack admits a leg. Then for 20 feet the groove is grass-choked and slightly harder. In the next section the crack is clean and admits only fingers and toes (socks used). Here two pitons were used in a crack on the right wall, and this proved the hardest struggle (V.S.). More hard climbing (V.S.) up to a perfect belay but poor stance immediately below the overhang. Surmount the overhang by an awkward move round the bulge and step left (piton, S.). Regain the grass groove above the overhang and continue upwards without further ado, or traverse left at obvious ledge and climb similarly easy groove farther to the left. (It would be possible here to traverse across on to Flanking Ribs route and avoid the Upper Slab.) All routes converge on a good platform below the last slab, where a descending ledge goes down to the right. Climb the slab by a mossy crack slanting right (M.S.) (one piton used—unnecessary if some gardening performed). The last pitch then goes straight up on the left on good holds.

The Crimson Slabs.—(Direct Start) (H.S.). J. Y. L. Hay and G. Adams, September 23, 1956. This pitch provides a much finer start to the climb than the traverse in from the right used on the first ascent. Start at the grassy alcove directly beneath Djibangi beside an obvious right-angle corner. Follow an ascending line rightwards for 30 feet to beyond a shallow groove. Step left into this groove and escape right at the top. Easier climbing leads to the large ledge at the bottom of the main *dièdre*.

Djibangi.—400 feet (V.S.). Lower section, climbed by J. Y. L. Hay, A. Will, and G. Adams, April 10, 1956, completed by J. Y. L. Hay, R. Wiseman, and A. Cowie, July 29, 1956. This route is the counterpart of the original Crimson Slabs route and follows the line of the left-hand *dièdre*. It is comparable in severity and probably offers a finer climb. Start at the grassy alcove directly beneath this *dièdre* and follow a diagonal crack leftwards to the large platform overlooking Red Chimney. Trend right and climb a small corner set in the middle of the slab until a stance in the *dièdre* is gained 90 feet above the platform. Work up the corner to an overhang (piton), then continue up the corner (piton) to a stance on the rib on the right. This pitch gave 120 feet of continuously hard climbing and was the crux. Ascend easy grassy grooves to the final slab which is climbed by the last two pitches of the Crimson Slabs route. Two pitons were used for direct aid, but they may well prove to be unnecessary.

BRAERIACH

Ebony Gully.—(Coire Bhrochain) (V.D.). J. Y. L. Hay, September 7, 1955.

West Buttress.—650 feet (Direct Route) (S.). A. Stevenson and J. Y. L. Hay, July 19, 1955.

Domed Ridge.—Winter ascent, A. G. Mitchell and W. P. L. Thomson, April 9, 1955.

The Culvert.—(Garbh Choire Dhaidh) (S.). R. H. Sellers and G. Annand, July 3, 1955.

Boomerang.—(Garbh Choire Dhaidh) (V.D.). R. H. Sellers and G. Annand, June 1955. Immediately adjoining the gully dividing Helicon Rib from the main face is a small arête. The climb starts in the groove behind this. Climb 70 feet first on an easy angled groove then a steeper crack to stance; then 80 feet over water-worn rocks on good holds to a grassy ledge; next 110 feet, finishing in a 15 foot wall beneath another wall in a recess. This wall can be avoided on the right but should not be missed, as it gives the best pitch on the climb for 80 feet. Then 30 feet broken rock to the top.

BEINN A' BHUIRD

The Carpet.—350 feet (Coire-na-Ciche) (V.S.). F. Malcolm, A. Thom, G. Malcolm, R. Barclay, and G. Adams, August 1955.

Slugain Buttress.—First winter ascent, G. Adams and D. Macrae, February 10, 1957. The normal summer route was followed on *verglas*-covered rocks. Starting at the right-hand side of the buttress a move was made to the left up an icy corner followed by a 15 foot hand traverse to a rib which led to a shelf and belay. The buttress was traversed right and then left to the crest which was climbed to below the apex. Here a 20 foot *verglas*-covered groove proved to be the crux, and a piton had to be inserted for direct aid half-way up. From here 250 feet of continuous step-cutting on steep frozen snow led to the plateau. (4½ hours.)

Tantalus Gully.—First winter ascent, M. Scott and R. Ellis, February 10, 1957. The first pitch was a 45 foot ice wall (2 hours); the rest of the gully was straightforward but required step-cutting all the way. (3¼ hours in all.)

SGORAN DUBH

No. 5 Buttress Gully.—First winter ascent, two parties, T. W. Patey and A. Beanland; L. S. Lovat, J. Y. L. Hay, and Miss E. M. Davidson, January 2, 1956.

STACK POLLY

In the course of a holiday in July 1956 Peter and Pam Howgate made a route on Stack Polly which they believe to be new.

Juniper Ledges.—(D.). Take a direct line up the south face of the West Buttress. Start 150 feet right (east) of and about level with the top of Baird's Pinnacle. There is a cairn on a flat ledge to the right of the start. First ascend walls and ledges, moving slightly left to a juniper-covered ledge beneath a prominent flake which juts out like the bows of a ship. Thread belay at the base of the flake (80 feet), move left on to a block, up the wall above, over the rib to the right into a recess (45 feet). Move a few feet right and up to another juniper-covered ledge (35 feet). Finally, climb the rocks above in two or more pitches and up a chimney with a through route behind a chockstone just to the right of the similar chimney on the ordinary route up the buttress.