

number of pilgrims thronged to see him from all parts; for his writings had, by their charm, their learning, their wit, their satire become celebrated throughout the whole of the Roman-speaking world.

Legend soon became busy with this anchorite of the cave at Bethlehem. Many stories, brought by the pilgrims of the time, and amplified by the imagination of subsequent centuries, were told about this great doctor of the West. Many of the stories are obviously silly, and many of them are false; but the very fact that such stories were circulated even before the death of Jerome himself is sufficient evidence of his fame. But in his letters, far more than in his controversial works, or even his translations, we catch a clear and true sight of the man as he was, alike in his strength and in his weakness. There are many things we cannot either admire or approve in his conduct or in his writings; but, when all is said and done, the verdict of Professor Dill is surely the right one: "He added to the monastic life fresh lustre by his vivid intellectual force and by his contagious enthusiasm for the study of Holy Writ."



Clergymen and Climbing.

BY THE REV. W. A. PURTON, B.A.

IT is not easy to explain the precise nature of the fascination that mountaineering possesses for any of its followers. The ordinary man looks upon it with a kind of amused contempt that finds expression in pitying remarks or patronizing inquiries. But to the extraordinary man who has been "bitten," it is an enthusiasm, an obsession, a paramount source of pure delight. Then, why is there, amongst climbers, such a large proportion of the clergy? Obviously, because they are more prone to the particular magic which mountaineering maintains. Now, my theory is that that magic lies in offering the most complete con-

trast possible to the ordinary routine of an average modern civilized life. I suppose that most physically healthy men feel an occasional yearning for the primitive conditions of a life with Nature, a life without a top-hat, a tramcar, or a telephone. In a milder form this impulse may be gratified by a long walk—alone if possible—and along a road not previously negotiated, as set forth in Stevenson's lines :

“ Wealth I seek not, hope, nor love,
Nor a friend to know me ;
All I seek, the heaven above
And the road below me.”

But the last touch, the completest possible realization of this craving, is found on the snow and ice arête, with the unflecked sky above, the long, long slopes below, the unconcerned guide hacking the steps in front, and Death waiting attentive for the false step or the slip. As Mr. A. E. W. Mason, who is rapidly becoming the novelist of climbing, says in “Running Water” of Sylvia's dream: “She saw the ice-slope on the Aiguille d'Argentière; she could almost hear the chip-chip of the axes as the steps were cut, and the perpetual hiss, as the ice-fragments streamed down the slope.” All other incidents of one's holidays may fade away and be done with, but every detail of a good climb stands out in the recollection as hard and permanent as the berg itself.

Now, the modern clergyman is obliged to live an essentially civilized life. He has to be more “correct” than other men. He must think of the effect of his example. Things in themselves innocent might give rise to misconstruction in his person. It is perhaps right that it should be so. But this is what I claim—that an intermittent legitimate revulsion from this accounts for the hold that Alpine climbing has to such a marked degree on the clergy—and on schoolmasters, too—for my explanation applies to them as well as to the former; and taken together they probably largely outnumber the other professions. Conversely, it is remarkable that very few climbers are to be found amongst naval or military officers, or the ranks of the

country gentry who have plenty of time and money. Why? Because the former have an outlet in their adventurous professions, and the latter in hunting and other sports.

But I must try to prove my contention that we are specially identified with mountaineering. Let us begin with the pioneers. And in this connection it is impossible to help reflecting on the modernity of the sport, and, moreover, on the perfection to which it has now attained. For sport it is, in the opinion of the present writer. People do not climb for the view; nor (in the first instance) for the exploration; nor for scientific observation. These and other aims may be concomitant, but the one thing needful is the love of overcoming difficulties. *Labor ipse voluntas*. This was the view held by one of the greatest of the pioneers, Leslie Stephen, and I cannot refrain from quoting his gentle fun in his account of the first ascent of the Zinal Rothhorn:

“‘What philosophical observations did you make?’ will be the inquiry of one of those fanatics who, by a reasoning process to me utterly inscrutable, have somehow irrevocably associated alpine travelling with science. To them I answer, that the temperature was approximately (I had no thermometer) 212° F. below freezing-point. As for ozone, if any existed in the atmosphere, it was a greater fool than I take it for. As we had, unluckily, no barometer, I am unable to give the usual information as to the extent of our deviation from the correct altitude; but the Federal map fixes the height at 13,855 feet” (“The Playground of Europe”).

Alas! I fear we cannot claim the genial writer, in any other sense than that of being a *curé manqué*.

Modern climbing, as it is now practised, dates from about 1850. Englishmen appear to have been at first slow to take it up; but after that approximate date they figure largely, and the clergy are not inconspicuous among the pioneers. The early ascents of Monte Rosa were made by them—the Ostspitze in 1854 by the Smyth brothers; the highest point or Dufourspitze by a party in which there were four clergy in 1855; and the

dangerous climb from Macugnaga by a party which included the Rev. C. Taylor. Mr. J. F. Hardy led the first ascent of the difficult Lyskamm in 1861, after having, in 1857, formed one of the first group of Englishmen to conquer the Finsteraarhorn. In 1858, Dr. Llewellyn Davies overcame the Dom. In 1856 two of the Smyth brothers, with Mr. Hudson and two other Englishmen without guides, made the first ascent of Mont Blanc from St. Gervais by way of the Dôme du Goûter. In 1862, Messrs. Llewellyn Davies and J. W. Hayward overcame the difficult Täschhorn. The memorable first ascent of the Matterhorn found a victim in Charles Hudson, who, according to Mr. Whymper, "was considered by the mountaineering fraternity to be the best amateur of his time" ("Scrambles amongst the Alps").

In the same year—1865—Mr. H. B. George climbed the Nesthorn, and the Gross Fiescherhorn in 1862; these selections, made almost at random, could be prolonged, but enough has been said to show that the parsons played a good part. The names of the Revs. J. R. King, J. J. Hornby, F. J. A. Hort, Sanger Davies, and C. L. Wingfield are well known amongst the pioneers. Nor can we omit the name of Mr. Arthur Girdlestone, the "father of guideless climbing"; still less that of Mr. W. A. B. Coolidge, who probably knows more about the Alps, and has made more ascents among them, than any other amateur of any period. His last book, "The Alps in Nature and History," is simply replete with information, and is as indispensable to the mountain lover—though in a different sense—as Ball's Alpine Guides, or the "Climbers' Guides" series. Finally, the Alpine Club, the forerunner of all the clubs, and the only one which exacts a climbing qualification from its members, has had a Bishop as its president. Far be it from the present writer to claim for "the cloth" any exaggerated or even accentuated position in the annals of climbing; his intention is simply to show that the gentle sport has appealed to them, too, and not in vain.

But not only to the pioneers or to the giants of the game.

How rapid has been the development of mountaineering! Most of the great sports seem to have attained their highest point by this time. Possibly cricket is not quite so good as it was ten or so years ago. Association football, though of quite recent invention, is probably as skilful as it ever will be. Rugby, perhaps, is capable of developments. But the degree to which mountain-craft has arrived, and the extent to which mountaineering is pursued, are extraordinary. Only forty-three years ago the Matterhorn was commonly regarded as quite inaccessible; now—but every visitor to Zermatt knows all about it. To any reflective person the growth in the skill and extent of climbing in such a short time is a matter of amazement.

To take one instance. We are told now—and rightly—that it is not playing the game for two men to be for any length of time on a dangerous glacier alone. Yet in the classic account of Mr. John Ball's passage of the Schwarzthor—the first—we read how he sallied forth with one ignorant and alarmed peasant, with an enormous quantity of chattels, including a Shakespeare and an umbrella, with an alpenstock and a kind of chopper, went right up the middle of the much crevassed Schwärze glacier—not by the rocks on its right—constantly slipping through snow bridges, the route, of course, entirely unknown, and came through as triumphantly as possible!

It is a little tantalizing to read of guides being engaged at five francs a day, but when they were such "spiritless creatures" as Mr. Ball's Mathias they were no doubt dear at the money.

Contrast the present state of things with that which obtained in the days of "Peaks, Passes, and Glaciers." Guides are examined and licensed by the State, after serving a sort of apprenticeship as porter. Every possible route is described with meticulous care in various Alpine publications. The guides' tariff for such routes is fixed by the canton. Mountain huts dot the whole of the Alps, ranging from what are virtually inns, like the Concordia pavilion, to loathsome sheds, like the Hörnli hut. Clothing, boot-nails, ice-axes, and other all-important details have passed through a short but speedy process of

evolution, till everything seems to have touched perfection. This wonderful improvement has, of course, put more climbing within the compass of the man of average physique and of a comparatively short holiday. A mountaineer is not now an eccentric, nor an unemployed, nor necessarily a millionaire. Moreover, he can suit himself to excursions of varying difficulty. If he does not feel equal to the Mönch, he can at all events accomplish the Mönchjoch; and indeed, in the opinion of many, one penetrates more into the secrets of the world of ice and snow, and enjoys more of its bewilderingly beautiful scenery by means of the great high routes called passes than by scaling isolated peaks. It is strange that the view from a lofty summit is not really satisfactory; the sense of proportion is lost, and the surrounding heights offer none of their beauties.

So there is now mountaineering of all grades of difficulty, and our English parsons are to be found not only at the great centres—Zermatt, Grindelwald, and Chamonix—but at the more exclusively climbing mountain hotels, such as the Bel Alp, the Eggishorn (with the cheery Herr Cathrein in charge), and the Mont Collon at far-away Arolla; or even at more distant spots, scarcely known as yet to the general public, like Pralognan and Trafoi. Up in that beautiful and exhilarating air even the *odium theologicum* is suspended, and the Ritualist climbs high with the Modernist, and the Low Church parson, to adopt an old joke, becomes “altitudinarian.” To every seeker the Alps give their boons: to the physically tired, relief and restoration; to the adventurous, adventures enough and to spare; and to the thoughtful, abundant evidence, not only that God is great and wise, but that He is good.

