

## THE PERILS OF HILL CLIMBING.

The most distinguished members of the Alpine Club, and of those who, satiated with European climbs, have, says the *Feld*, found new fields for conquest in Andes, Himalayas and Abyssinian peaks, owe their success, coupled with safety, to the invariable recognition of two axioms—the one that there is no difficulty so great that it may not be surmounted with due care and caution; the other, that there is no obstacle so small that the operator can afford, when attacking it, to dispense gratuitously with standard and technical precautions. It is not requisite to fall 1,000 feet sheer in order to break one's neck; nor need injuries reach the extent of a broken vertebra in order to prove fatal. A minute fraction of the skull from a 6 feet fall may suffice to end an athletic career. There is a sort of irony in the decrees of Fate that produces so often fatality out of a minor incident, where the subject has previously passed unscathed through far greater perils and ordeals. An old V.C. campaigner, whose comrades used to say of him that he bore a charmed life under fire, drops and dies in a stubble field to a pellet or two in an artery, caused by the let off of a gun kept on full cock in the stepping over a two foot grip. George Stevens surmounts the Aintree course a four-fold victor, to perish through the restive clown in harness. Whyte-Melville hunts for more than a generation unscathed, to come to an end from a fall in a open fallow. It is curious that a like irony of fate has pursued on more than one occasion mountain climbers of previous prestige and experience in far greater altitudes, who have held too cheaply the apparently minor difficulties of the Snowden range; and quite recently we have had a lamentable illustration of the mistake of assuming that a capacity for Alpine climbing qualifies an athletic to treat with contempt every petty elevation of the home country. More than a generation ago a white monumental stone, visible across the valley from the Llanberis ascent of Snowden, used to record the spot where a tourist had lost his life by attempting to scale the mountain unguided and in a mist, from a point not usually selected for approach. The apparent tameness of the Llanberis approach, up which a lady can ride on a pony from base to summit, has disgusted many a proficient climber, and has induced him either to leave the ascent untouched, or to tackle it without the intervention of local guidance. But the risk of sudden mist is recognized even by the most independent of climbers, and perhaps this factor has operated to suggest a newer form of tempting Providence, and of displaying skill and enterprise, by scaling minor but difficult elevations, which do not ordinarily come within the tourist curriculum, because they lead to no pronounced peak, nor produce any special extension of view when scaled. On the Glider side of the Llanberis pass there are many perpendicular faces of rock which—save that they are not iced faced, nor associated with glaciers, nor leading to any ultimate destination of vantage of view or elevation—are, for their limited extent, as difficult to surmount as many of the intermediate obstacles on Alpine peaks that are, or have been, "virgin" to the club climber.

REV. P. C. HEADLEY, 697 Huntington Avenue, Boston, U.S.A., April 2nd, 1894, writes:

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To Coutts & Sons, 72 Victoria St., Toronto.

There is sense as well as humor in the following statement made by the eminent astronomer, M. Camille Flammarion, in a recent paper on the inhabitants of the planet Mars: "Whatever form belongs to the

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human world in Mars, these brethren of ours must assuredly be our superiors in many respects; for instance, it would be difficult to find a race less intelligent than we are; we do not even know how to conduct ourselves properly, for we spend three-fourths of our resources in maintaining soldiers, and Europe alone expends £320,000,000 a year for that purpose!"

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