

Glen Nevis Gullies.

The finest climbing in Glen Nevis is to be found in the gullies on the western aspect of Carn Dearg (S.W.) of Ben Nevis. A path crosses the face at 2,000 feet and provides a useful exit to the gullies, or access to the upper branches of Surgeon's Gully for snow and ice climbing. The buttresses between the gullies are composed of steep slabs and are difficult to descend. The gullies open out above to form funnels. The rock is the reddish Outer Granite and provides good climbing of reasonable security.

1. *Five-funnel Gully*.—About 800 feet. Explored by J. Murray and J. G. Parish, 23rd March 1946. Some pitches had been descended previously in snow by members of the Lochaber J.M.C.S. This is the gully which descends from the corrie between Carn Dearg and Ben Nevis to the right of the Red Burn. After a 20-foot chockstone pitch follow 150 feet of water-polished slabs, the upper section of which was avoided on vegetation to the right. Scrambling to fork and take main branch to the right. Several slab pitches. Waterfall pitch visible from Glen Nevis, not ascended directly, but escaped up severe vegetations wall on the left. The left branch above the fork has been explored by D. G. Duff. There are no pitches.

2. *Clais nan Croicean (Antler Gully)*.—About 600 feet. Very Difficult. D. G. Duff, J. Ness and R. Murphie, May 1947. Five pitches of quite a high standard. The stream is small and practically always easily avoidable on the right or left walls, which are usually quite vertical and give nice slab work in short 15 to 20 foot lengths, while two 60 to 80 foot pitches give in to chimneying or straddling tactics, mostly out of range of the water. (D. G. Duff, personal communication.)

3. *Clais Leighe (Surgeon's Gully)*.—Lower section about 1,300 feet. One of the severest gullies in Scotland. First ascent—D. H. Haworth and G. Ritchie, 15th August 1947. This is the next gully to the right of Antler Gully and cleaves the hillside very deeply. In the upper section, above 2,000 feet, the gully opens out into three branches. The left branch contains no pitches, but has not been climbed. The centre branch, 600 feet, was explored by J. G. Parish and P. Stott, 3rd April 1947, who found some 400 feet of snow, which required step-cutting near the top, and a 150-foot double ice pitch, which was avoided owing to lack of time by escaping up a moderate gully on the right. The right branch descends the hill directly above Polldubh North Gully, then turns suddenly to fall over the right wall of the lower section of Surgeon's Gully. Explored by C. G. M. Slessor, J. S. Berkeley and J. Fairhead, 3rd April 1947, who climbed several short ice pitches.

The lower section was first entered at the lowest line of trees (600 feet) by D. G. Duff and J. G. Parish, 14th July 1946. Slab and wall pitches of 20 to 25 feet. Wall pitch, 30 feet, ascended from the mossy left wall by a ledge, was avoided on this occasion, but ascended by Duff later. Ninety-foot wall with large overhanging chockstone at top has only been ascended with rope from above (Lochaber J.M.C.S.), and Hamish Hamilton and G. Patterson, May 1947, were unable to make a route up the right wall. Above this pitch the gully cuts deeply into the hillside with tree-covered walls of 300 to 400 feet. A very difficult 15-foot chockstone pitch and a long severe 70-foot pitch were ascended by Messrs J. G. Parish, C. G. M. Slessor, J. S. Berkeley, P. Stott and J. Fairhead, 3rd March 1947, after a previous winter attempt had failed. In May, D. H. Haworth and I. McPhail ascended another severe 100-foot pitch and explored the remaining pitches, except for a 120-foot pitch, the upper chockstone of which was only surmounted in very dry weather in August 1947.

4. *Escape Gully*.—300 feet. Easy, grassy. A means

of avoiding difficult slabby buttress on the right of Surgeon's Gully.

5. *Polldubh Gully*.—About 2,250 feet. Explored by J. G. Parish and J. Ness, 10th April 1947. Gully to right of Surgeon's Gully, with two branches north and south. Start at 450 feet after passing through a small wood. First 300 feet are moderate slabs open on to the hillside, and can be easily avoided by grassy slopes on either side. Then the gully closes in with a 25-foot moderate groove, a difficult chockstone pitch and a 110-foot severe wall climbed by a vertical crack to the left of the watercourse. Here the gully bifurcates and the left branch (north), after a 30-foot difficult waterfall, becomes a dry watercourse running towards the top of Escape Gully. The right branch (south) is open on the hillside for 150 feet in the form of two streams with the rock exposed. The gully becomes closed in again with 250 feet of difficult climbing as far as a 30-foot chockstone pitch, which was avoided, as the water was icy, by a severe crack in the left wall. Two pitches of about 100 feet were avoided, the upper apparently very severe with outward sloping holds. Then a 30 to 40 foot chockstone pitch was avoided by a subsidiary gully on the right. Above this pitch the gully was re-entered by the traverse path, but the remainder was an easy snow climb, although rock pitches were covered by deep snow as high as 2,700 feet.

6. *Christmas Gully*.—About 2,000 feet. First ascent—J. G. Parish, H. Bull and H. Nichol, 16th December 1946. The most right-hand gully on the western aspect of Carn Dearg and about thirty minutes' walk from Polldubh. Entered the gully at 400 feet at the foot of a rocky buttress. Thirty-foot waterfall pitch easily avoided; 110-foot groove negotiated by bridging to stance on right at 60 feet, and avoided the rest by a rocky rib on the right. The gully here opens out on to the hillside, but if taken directly several severe pitches would be found. The party rejoined the gully where it closes in to form "The Gorge," which contains about 500 feet of short pitches of Difficult standard, a fine 30-foot chimney and

a cave pitch. The upper pitches on this occasion were covered with deep snow.

7. *Steall Gully*.—About 500 feet. Winter attempt—C. G. M. Slessor, J. G. Parish, E. Place, I. Paul, H. Nichol and Miss Jean Bainton, 17th December 1946. Lies on the south-east side of Ben Nevis, almost in line of the summit as seen from the Steall Hut (J.M.C.S.). It was approached by the burn which descends from the col between Ben Nevis and Meall Cumhan. A 100-foot groove was followed by 200 feet of snow; 15-foot slab with small holds and delicate balance; 100 feet of snow, followed by 50 feet of slabs, the lower iced, but the upper virtually holdless on account of soft snow, so that the leader eventually required a rope from above. The gully contained another ice pitch of smaller dimensions above, from which the party retired, and then steep snow.

Of these climbs Five-funnel Gully, Surgeon's Gully and Polldubh Gully can be made out in the photograph of Ben Nevis from Glen Nevis, "Ben Nevis Guide," opposite p. 1, and Gullies Nos. 3, 5 and 7 are marked as gullies on O.S. Map, 1 inch to 1 mile, sheet 47.

J. G. PARISH.

Notes on Climbs of 1947.

Crack of Escape Gully.—This was the rock between Crack of Escape and Cascade Gully, leading on the wrong side just right of Crack of Escape and forming a short right-hand spur of this side by crossing to a right-angled crack. It is still to be seen, where it follows with better rock to ground. This was the only ascent made in 1947. It was the top of the ridge over the top of the hill. J. G. Parish and I. Paul, 10th December 1947.

Steall Gully.—This was the 100-foot groove on the eastern side of Crack of Escape, to the right of a large slab of black rock, where there is a large fallen block of rock forming a right-angled corner with the main burn. Some of this is at the side of the burn, a thin crack in the wall