

WALL AND ROOF CLIMBING

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GEOFFREY WINTHROP YOUNG

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ROOF CLIMBING**

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BY THE AUTHOR

OF

"THE ROOF-CLIMBER'S GUIDE TO TRINITY."

*They tell me if I climb and stand
Upon those distant ledges,
I shall but see on either hand
Dim fields and dusty hedges,
But yet I know my fairyland
Lies somewhere o'er these edges.*

ALEXANDER.

ETON COLLEGE

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A. C. .

"You must go to Shiny Wall, and to the white Gate that never was opened; and so you will come to Peace-pool."

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

"And as he was troubled thereabouts, he saw two men come tumbling over the wall. . . .

Chr. Why came you not in at the gate which standeth at the beginning of the way?

They said that to go to the gate for entrance was *by all their countrymen* counted too far about, and that therefore their usual way was to make a short cut of it, and to climb over the wall as they had done. . . .

They told him, that custom, *it being of so long a standing as above a thousand years*, could doubtless now be admitted as a thing legal . . . and besides, said they, . . . we are also in the way that came tumbling over the wall."

JOHN BUNYAN.

INTRODUCTION.

"For those
Who would see Virtue in her proper sphere,
Now climbing of a wall."

C. BROOKE.

CONTRIBUTIONS to the serious literature of Climbing are never complete without a foreword. A critical examination of the text has however revealed no statement veracious enough to call for the customary apology. Objection might perhaps be taken to a certain indiscriminate use of the terms "roof climbing" and "wall climbing." Their relative positions should indeed excuse an identification, for the roof forms the almost invariable finish to wall ascents and is itself "technically" unattainable save by their means, but the indefiniteness rests also upon historical grounds. It has been found impossible, owing to the lack of contemporary record and the studied neglect of later historians, to discover in what period the art of wall-climbing merged itself in that of roof-climbing, at what date the aerial junction of distinct wall-homes opened those fair fields for practice beneath which degenerate moderns cower for protection. That a Wall Age existed is all that is known, and Byron epitomises the whole knowledge :

"Pronounce who can! For all that Learning reaped
From her research hath been that there were Walls."

The history of the transition of the art from its exercise on these mural structures to its orophismic reappearance in

“ The golden bowers of Shadruchiam
And the diamond turrets of Amberabad ”

Lalla Rookh

is sufficiently ill-determined to excuse an involuntary vagueness in descriptive terminology.

Attention has been drawn to one important omission, the absence of the ‘caution,’ inevitable in such works, to all whom it may concern not to do the same. The correction shall be as succinct as it is customarily superfluous.

Firstly to those on whom the progress and safety entirely depend, the Builders. Let them strenuously resist the economic enticements of the mutual-supporting street and the architectural giraffe, for

“ Houses are surest, which are not builded high,
Whereas high buildings may no tempest endure,
Without they be founded sure and steadfastly.”*

BARCLAY, *Ship of Fools*.

Recognizing their own direct responsibility for every misfortune, let them see that their work is firm, irregular and in all respects suited to its real object : briefly, let them

“ Build to-day then strong and sure
With a firm and ample base,
And ascending and secure,
Shall to-morrow find its place.
Thus alone can *we* attain
To the turrets.”

LONGFELLOW, *Builders*.

* Cf. Horace :

“ Celsae graviore casu
Decidunt turres.”

Above all, let them keep ever in mind that :

“ no fair colours,
Can fortify a building *faintly* jointed.”

FORD, *Broken Heart*.

Secondly, to those emulous yet nervous aspirants who complain, “ Fain would I climb, but yet I fear to fall,” we commend Queen Elizabeth’s corrected reply, “ If thy heart fail thee, do *not* climb the wall.”

Youthful and confident climbers, who burn to establish their reputation by some sensational ‘ mill-chimney ’ ascent, should mark the advice of the *Faithful Friend* :

“ A desperate man,
That climbs a tower whose top the wind ne’er touched,
Must chary be, lifting his resolute foot,
Or headlong down he comes.”

FLETCHER.

One caution more, to that numerous class of experienced climbers, who, in their anxiety to display their strength and speed, too often bring destruction upon their supports, human and edificial : let them recollect that, however admirable may seem to them the fierce resolution of the Roman senators—

“ We’ll *break* our walls
Rather than they shall ‘ pound ’ us.”

Coriolanus 1. 4—

yet a great poet and a sincere stegophilist has emphatically pronounced those alone “ wiser, greater,” who show themselves

“ *Gentler* than they
Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome
Have *stamped* the sign of power.”

SHELLEY.

Finally, be it remembered that since experiments must necessarily be conducted principally upon the landmarks of our neighbours and the privileges of the fox-hunter have not yet been popularly conceded to the climber, it is well to evince a modest unassertiveness of time, place and motion, and whether our essays be upon the Welsh ruin, the family obelisk, the roadside railway-arch, the rococo bank-façade or the continental market-fountain, Chu Hsi's maxim should constitute our motto :

"When mounting the wall of a city do *not* point with the
finger,

When on the top *do not call out.*"

Learning for the Young.

A list of graded international Problems, which it had been intended to include under the headings of Problematical, Highly Problematical and Absolutely Hypothetical, threatened to assume such vast dimensions and yet remain incomplete, that it has been thought better to leave the classification to local effort and a serial publication.

The indispensable Bibliography, Technical Appendices, etc., will be found at the end, and a Song of the Brotherhood suitable for Club Dinners.

"We have not wings, we cannot soar,
But we have feet to scale and climb
By slow degrees and more and more
The cloudy summits of our time.

"The mighty pyramids of stone
That wedge-like cleave the desert airs,
When nearer seen and better known,
Are but gigantic flights of stairs."

LONGFELLOW.

THE hardly achieved peak is now no longer the summit of the climber's ambition: let him but be on the point of publishing, and the height of his desire is attained. It is a road, though it be that of fame, yet a road alone which his heart yearns to tread. To him the Pyrenees are a stout octavo with illustrations; the Andes flit before him, a glorious quarto vision, thirty-two-shillings-with-maps: Europe is being ransacked for un-Ruskinised aiguilles, and every stone in our own land stamped with a name and perpetuated in a guide-book, yet no disquisition has appeared upon wall or roof climbing.

It is no part of our purpose to dilate upon its fascinations, to dwell on the delights of a stiff brick "back-and-knee" chimney, or the pleasures of a "free-backed" water-pipe. To those who do not know them we can only say,—try! It is the most attractive and most economical branch of the climber's art, a branch within reach of the lowest of us and one which permits the enthusiast to enjoy the fruits of his labour with the least possible preliminary