

BALLADE OF GUIDELESS CLIMBING

“ THE climbers who guidelessly scale
The rocks of the Eiger are rash.
Far wiser the tourists ¹ who fail
On the Breithorn, and horribly gnash
Their teeth as they shell out the cash
To their leaders decidedly drunk ;
They stick to the full calabash
And turn from the wall of the Mönch.

The climber should never be frail,
Should thrive on a morsel of hash.
Not tremble when glaciers crash.
At cliffs he must carelessly knock out the ash
From his pipe while a terrible chunk
Of rock hurtles by like a flash,—
Or turn from the wall of the Mönch.

His courage owes nothing to ale ;
His nerve needs not alcohol's lash ;
He'd sniff if a cachalot whale
Came out of a pool with a splash

And inflicted a terrible gash
On the person behind in a funk²—
A mixture of prudence and dash
Turns not from the wall of the Mönch.

¹ The quotation is from the English Alpine Club.

² Any member of the English Alpine Club

ENVOI

Prince, both of us, axe and hobnail,
Surmounted it, fellows of spunk !
It would be a terrible gale
Turned us from the wall of the Mönch.