

THE TRAVERSE OF THE AIGUILLES ROUGES

(1)

WE slept at the Sign of the Beautiful Star ;
We dined upon Maggi¹ and Cotton ;²
We said of the couloir “ on pourrait en vouloir ” ;
We said of the rocks—they are rotten.

(2)

We said “ Twill be cold, not improbably wet,”
We sneered at the ridge we had passed,
We said of the sun “ His day’s work he has done.”
We said of the sky—“ it is vast.”

(3)

We spoke of the snow—“ it is notably cold ” ;
We supped upon Cotton and Maggi ;
We observed to the moon “ Be a dear and come soon.”
We remarked of the crags—“ they are craggy.”

(4)

Intelligent talk will most surely beguile
The longest night out on the rocks ;
So we made of the guides the remarks that revile ;
Of their Herrs we said “ sheep go in flocks.”

(5)

It was three o’ the morn and the night was outworn ;
We broke fast on Maggi and Cotton,
We said Cecil’s jest was a gibe of the best,
And of Morris’s yarns—“ that’s a hot ’un.”

¹ His soup.

² His tobacco.

(6)

We spoke of the mountains, the weather, the rope,
In a tongue that was doubtfully British ;
We summed up in three words Philosophy's scope ;
Of women we said—" they are skittish."

(7)

We gained the low snows, and each rubbed his cold nose
As we lunched upon Cotton and Maggi ;
We observed, " we are neat from our felts to our feet,"
But remarked of our chins—" they are shaggy."

(8)

Arolla appears. There were no hearty cheers
And no one was anxious about us :
" If horrid young fools will break Alpine Club rules "—
In fact, they could get on without us !

(9)

We sprawled in the sun when the banquet was done
(We had feasted on Bouvier¹ and Mauler²),
You said of my knickers—they are not a vicar's ;
It isn't a hole, it's a howler !

(10)

Superior persons in collars and cuffs
Said we ought to be grateful to Heaven.
" If young fools will scale inaccessible bluffs
They're killed—It's a hundred to seven."

(11)

They said, " Without guides, which the Commune provides
No party for big hills should go."
They said of our pluck " 'twas the devil's own luck,"
And they said of our pace—" it was slow."

¹ His champagne.

² His champagne.

(12)

They spoke but we heard not—We slept like the dead,
Having feasted on Mauler and Bouvier ;
And the wind echoed Cecil's olfactory vessels
That snored " Jolly climb ! Alleluvia ! "