



UP ROPE!

NEWS OF THE WASHINGTON ROCKCLIMBERS

Editors

Helen and Chris Scoredos
1717 R Street, N. W.
Washington 9, D. C.

Vol. 4, No. 17

Founders

Jan and Herb Conn
Published Twice Monthly
Price Five Cents

May 30, 1948

SOME TIPS FOR THE APPRENTICE MOUNTAINEER

by Andrew J. Kauffman

Like numerous other Americans many readers of UP ROPE have made plans to visit North American Alpine regions during the coming summer months. Some of these persons have had no previous mountain experience, although their rock-climbing technique and ability is of unquestioned competence. In North America, unfortunately, guides are often unavailable and other trained climbers are frequently reluctant--often for selfish motives--to act as leaders for a group of beginners.

I have consequently tried to set down a few semi-fool-proof rules, which, if scrupulously followed by the apprentice mountaineer, will probably keep him out of serious difficulty. That these rules should be meticulously observed by any newcomer to the mountains is borne out by the elementary postulate of Alpinism, that no inexperienced persons should travel in high mountain terrain without a qualified companion, unless they have no other alternative. A host of evil forces conspires against the rock-climber, no matter how able, who ventures for the first time into the mountains and fails to seek out a trained companion.

The key problem for the rock-climber who is a newcomer to the mountains is to be found in the fact that he is a tactician and not a strategist. He is competent to overcome certain specific obstacles which will confront him on his way up the mountain: he may even experience less difficulty in overcoming them than many a well-trained guide. But in the course of his ascent he tends to give disproportionate importance to the technical aspects of the climbing problem with which he is faced, and to neglect other considerations which are of equal if not greater significance. He does not realize, like the guide or expert amateur, that what he is trying to do represents more than a rockclimbing problem, and that, unless he exercises care, he is likely to be stopped if not overwhelmed