

## SUCCESS CLEAVER ROUTE TO RAINIER'S SUMMIT

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VIEWED from right or left, or lengthwise, Success Cleaver entices those fond of rock-work in mountain climbing. Untraversed by any glacier it is one of only two all-rock formations connecting timber-line and Rainier's snow cap, the other unsurmountable. Extending downward, southwesterly, from Peak Success, Success Cleaver has been ground by glaciers to a remarkably narrow and sharp ridge. At its right the cirque of South Tahoma Glacier impressively displays the destructiveness of Rainier's glaciers.

This article is based chiefly on observations and experiences of three Mountaineers, R. S. Wainwright, H. McL. Myers, and the writer during an ascent on August 23, 1918, the descent, on the following day, having been via Gibraltar route. Previous ascents via Success Cleaver are reported to have been three in number, by small parties under leadership of guide Joe Stampfer, from the last of which the descent was accomplished via same route.

Five days of heavy rain, during which the three climbers and T. Bisgaard camped in Indian Henry's Hunting Ground, were followed by several remarkably clear days and nights. Camp (6500 feet) at north base of Pyramid Peak was left at 2:15 a. m. and climbing was easy for a few hours, but after passing the 10,000-foot level difficulties were ever present.

At intervals every form and variety of rock entering into the structure of Mount Rainier was repeatedly encountered, ranging from fine sand to enormous upstanding projections at whose base it sometimes was necessary to crawl under outjutting ledges. The route at no place affords breadth of more than about fifty feet in width to pick a course. Sometimes progress was along the very comb of the jagged cleaver, pulling and crawling up onto a huge rock and dropping down beyond. Again upstanding masses were skirted to right or left, though usually to right where the glaciers have not produced a sheer wall as has the South Tahoma.

That which seemingly makes this route impracticable for general use or for any other than experienced mountain climbers is the succession of treacherous chutes of rock, snow and ice, extending sharply downward to the main bodies of Kautz, Success and Pyramid glaciers. These chutes must be traversed at varying angles at their very tips. During the climbing season their surfaces are mostly loose fine rock or sand, affording very insecure footing. On this occasion two inches of soft new snow increased the difficulties. A descent via

Success Cleaver holds vastly greater hazards than an ascent.

This party found, to their surprise, and gladly used, ropes in position for scaling at elevations of about 10,500 feet and 13,000 feet. These appeared so new it was assumed they had been only recently placed. Later it was learned that Joe Stampfer had placed them in 1914 when making his last ascent, and the only descent, via this route.\*

Nearing the top of Cleaver, and under Peak Success, the course swings to right up onto a snow slope leading by easy grade to the saddle between Peak Success and the crater.

Views of surpassing splendor by moonlight and at early dawn in the first stages of the ascent occasioned slow progress. Later, difficulties of the climb made speed impossible. Thus, over fifteen hours were consumed in reaching the saddle. Another hour was required to reach and cross the smaller (west) crater to its north rim, making total time sixteen and one-half hours. Hot lemonade and tea were made over steam jets at crater rim, then sleeping quarters were selected in one of the nearby steam-heated ice caves, and—but that's another story.

Note: \* This party included Margaret Hargrave, Mountaineer, the only woman to climb via this route and one of the only two people, according to report, to have ascended Rainier over three of the four known routes.

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