LONE EAGLE PEAK, formerly called Lindbergh, lies in the head of a valley above Monarch Lake, near Granby, Colo. It is a curiosity among mountains, for though unquestionably one of the most imposing peaks in the state, it is only the end point of a ridge which splits the cirque in two. The ordinary route, pioneered by Carl Blaurock in the '20s, takes the climber down to the peak from behind, and has for its most interesting feature a ridge which narrows to wrist width for several yards.

It is the N. view, from the turn in Cascade Creek, which makes of this ridge a separate peak, shaped like a narrow dome with a magnificent spire on the summit.

I have not been able to ascertain the history of N. face attempts; I only know that everyone who has visited the valley has kept on talking about the N. cliffs long afterward. There are numerous long rock walls surmounted by enticing spires and gendarmes around the walls of the double cirque, but this tower in the foreground is the climb that fairly shouts its challenge at the onlooker.

Roy Murcheson of the Colorado Mountain Club spent the week of July 20th in the Club camp under the peak as director of a "school of mountaineering," for Juniors. He had planned an attempt on the N. face as a finale for the climbing schedule, and had lured Carl Blaurock, Elwin Arps and me into the valley for the purpose of assisting him.

We spent our first afternoon in and near camp with the glasses, reading our way along various ledges and up through this and that crack. We stuck every time about 300 ft. below the summit, where the face narrowed into an overhanging nose. Blaurock pretended to see something of a corner climb possibility at the back of this nose where it joined the W. face, or right hand cheek; but the prospect was far from hopeful. The top 150 ft., above the bridge of the nose, looked as though it would go.

Since there was a day to spare, I went scouting with Rit Burrows, a Junior, so as to iron out as many of the questions of routing as possible. We headed up a timbered ridge into the N. end of the mountain, passed through a little steep rock and scrambled up a scree track to the lower end of a long grass ledge which ran around to the W. on the N. W. flank of the dome. We rose a little on this ledge, and the cliff deepened under it, so that we
soon had the feeling of being on the mountain. The going was easy, but far from dull, since it was both exposed and narrow. In one spot the thicket of dwarf spruce was so dense that we amused ourselves by walking on the tree tops, such as they were.

Since our next move was to climb out to a higher and much wider grass ledge above this one, we selected a slanting crack well around under the W. side of the summit. We had worked hard and forced our way up by means of some rather curious combinations in footing when I discovered that I had been too casual and brought no hammer to go with the pitons. We should have wanted a supplementary anchor or two to go over the top. After an hour or two of backing and filling we gave it up and returned to the ledge.

We were already pretty far around the mountain for a N. face climb, and so backtrack to investigate another crack we had seen. It was a steep trough filled with huckleberry plants. Fortunately it was quite dry, and we worked our way up with little difficulty to the higher shelf or shoulder of the dome.

How to pass the nose was still the question, and we walked around to the N. end to have a look at the E. side. No hope. It was cut off from us by a wide overhanging section under the nose, and looked very thin even above that. Nor could we mount the nose itself. There was only the chance that Blaurock’s corner climb would go, and I believed that would overhang at the top. We scrambled up easy rock on this N. crest, came to the side of the nose, and looked into the corner.

The more we saw, the better it looked. There would be a traverse along the side of the nose, which though steep was promisingly bumpy, and then the corner climb. It had just what was necessary—a crack or two which had not been at all visible from the lake.

We wanted to see into the crack before returning, and so used rock fragments to drive the first piton of the traverse, but the pieces broke in our hands at the first blow. We knew that the final 150 ft. of the climb, the part above the nose bridge, could be circumvented by a ledge on the E. side if necessary, and that a short 100 ft. now separated us from this platform. Whether we could make that, and then stay on the N. edge for the final pitch, were questions for tomorrow.

In our consultation at the lake that night, it seemed that the climb would not prove too severe for a large party, and accordingly
four wistful-looking Juniors were invited to participate in the kill. Thus there were eight of us who assembled the next morning for raisins and chocolate on the upper grass slope.

Roy Murcheson stepped out on the traverse, hammered at my piton a little, then stepped far across to a flake. With his feet far apart, and the rock face almost pushing him in the nose, he sank another piton which went deeper and gave him satisfactory anchorage for the short catwalk. It was necessary for him to duck under a bulging section of the wall before he made the crack. Then he disappeared behind the bulge, moved up the crack and came out again on a flat rock above the traverse. This table was most convenient, as it afforded an excellent anchoring position for the subsequent climbers and also a good ferrying station for the knapsacks, which could not be carried across the traverse. Blaurock crossed second, and while Roy worked the knapsacks and the rest of the party over, he climbed higher in the crack. There was only one place which slowed him: he drove a piton in order to be anchored while he drew himself tenderly up over a chest-high overhang.

By way of variety, Arps and I accepted a rope from above, and instead of using the traverse, started up the crack from its bottom on the grass shelf 40 ft. below. We found that we could use a shinnying technique up the flake edge which formed one lip of the crack, and that while this route is more strenuous than the traverse, it obviates the need for pitons.

On the bridge of the nose we met Dudley Smith, who had come up the ordinary way and down the E. side ledge to see the fun. When we had rested a few minutes on his platform, we took to a shallow chimney series which led off it, this time just E. of the extreme N. edge, and thus stretched the good climbing all the way to the top.

The presence of static hurried us off the summit, and we were just nicely off the rocks before they were wet by a furious cascade of snow pellets.

This climb is reported for Alpine Club members not because of its difficulty, which is nowhere extreme, but because it affords a maximum of pleasure for the climbing enthusiast. There is enough in quantity, in quality, and in variety to make a splendid day, and the climax, as it should be in any thriller, is near the top. Furthermore the climb is exceptionally free of rotten rock and tedious scree. It ranks as tops, along with the Ellingwood arête on Crestone Needle.