

knowledge of the route, we had made excellent time on this first 900 feet. By nightfall we had reached a small series of ledges, 1300 feet above the ground. Dead tired, we fell asleep almost immediately, only to be awakened at midnight by rain. Chouinard looked down at me from his ledge 30 feet higher and said, "It's not happening again! It never rains in the Valley in June." But it did, and by dawn our down jackets and our spirits were waterlogged. Above, all the water of the upper face seemed to be coursing down the flared chimney system which led to Thirsty Spire. (What a misnomer now!) Hesitantly we moved upward. Hours and several pitches later we realized that the climbing we had just done would have been very difficult even in dry weather. Due to the scarcity of piton cracks, we could not use direct aid, although we desperately wished we could. Chouinard led several difficult (5.8) flared chimneys that left me with the feeling "Thank God I didn't have to lead that one." At last, at three P.M., we reached the notch. Although the remaining 500 feet would ordinarily have been class 4, we sometimes used direct aid. As we neared the top, the rain slackened to a drizzle. We were back on the valley floor before dark and quickly changed into dry clothing; our down jackets weighed  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. each! We used three bolts and 190 pitons, although the number could be diminished in dry weather.

STEVEN ROPER, *Sierra Club*

*Sentinel Rock, North Face Direct.* On May 7, late on the third day of climbing, Tom Frost and I completed a new route on the north face of Sentinel Rock. The standard route goes up near the right margin of the face, while our direct route ascends in a nearly straight line just left of the center of the face. Pitons and carabiners were fixed on the first pitch two days prior to the three-day successful effort, but even with this help we climbed only 350 feet on the first day. We were slowed principally by an overhang at the top of a 300-foot recess. The leader spent many hours here; a 25-foot fall and three pulled pitons bear testimony to the stubbornness of the overhang in yielding passage to a climber. We passed the night on a narrow ledge 50 feet higher. The highlight of the climbing next day was Tom's lead of a peculiar line of ceilings 700 feet up. We bivouacked slightly higher. On the third day we climbed a pitch which involved, besides some interesting piton work, the use of three successive direct-aid slings on horns seven feet apart. We reached the summit at 4:30 P.M. The climbing had been almost all nailing, often using rotten cracks. We placed 203 pitons, all removed, and no bolts. This route appears to be in the class of the northwest face of Half Dome.

ROYAL ROBBINS