

exposure coupled with the combination dirt, vegetable and loose rock holds one finds at a 1400-foot elevation, we roped up as the better part of valor. Gary led up the first chimney which was capped with a rotten log; across a slight slope to a deep but narrow chimney and it was my turn to lead; out of here and onto a wide, moss-covered ledge which was to become the pattern for the day. Chimney, ledge, chimney, ledge and always forcing us towards the dry watercourse to the right. Finally, a ledge, at first wide, narrowed to a thin flake out onto a face with the only exit a ten-foot friction pitch leading to another ledge. Olympic rock seldom lends itself for piton placing, and this exposed lead was no exception; I declined my turn. Gary led this pitch nicely with the comment, "You have to commit yourself!" and then brought me and my trepidations up. This latest ledge dead-ended in a 60-foot chimney which in the spring is more beautiful as a waterfall. We were 2500 feet above the beginning of our climb. The top of the narrow chimney opened out on a steep grass-covered slope and with much awareness of safety, I placed a piton before testing the holding powers of the grass roots. One more lead into a cave, under and around a large chockstone, up a short but tricky pitch and we were on top of the cliffs with a long and gentle tree-covered slope stretching to the summit. Feeling no need to continue upward, we traversed to the east in hopes of a simpler descent. After much scrambling and four rappels on a down route that crowded us back to the creek bed, the last hundred feet of water-polished slab brought us after 12 hours to our starting place. We used one piton; NCCS II, F4.

HAROLD L. PINSCH, *The Mountaineers*

California

Boulder Gorge, Yosemite. September 28, 1966 was supposed to be a rest day. I had just returned from a Yosemite beat-out and did not feel up to anything hard. So I decided to give my wife Liz a treat by taking her up an "easy" first ascent. Vic Cowley and another chap, both itinerant Englishmen sojourning in the Valley, joined us. A 1000-foot gash was our objective. Hidden in a corner on the north side of the Valley, it was undistinguished by either elegance or beauty but appeared enjoyable. We thought we would find plenty of grips. I had been intrigued by it when I climbed Pharaoh's Beard, just 200 feet west. After a hearty breakfast and convivial imbibition of many cups of hot, black coffee, we made a typically late start, leaving camp at noon. But it is a short walk and I was soon struggling with the *First Petite Boulder*. In the first 200 feet

there are three large chockstones. By the time I reached the second, I realized I had again underestimated a route. The three boulders were like chess problems with obscure solutions. Each was a pleasure to solve, and each was protected by excellent natural runners—even nuts were unnecessary. The *Second Petite Boulder* was the hardest. It was a knight's move. I easily chimneyed up alongside it, but near the top the gully widened and I was forced to bridge by pushing my feet against one side and wedging my shoulders against the other, while my body slowly oozed onto the boulder in a mortifying bellyroll which left me gasping, abraded and wondering how Chouinard would have done it. "Oh well," I thought, "I'll give Liz a little tension on that one and the rest should be easy." It was not. We had started out not using pitons—because the runners were good and because it was more exciting and interesting risking falls on nuts and runners rather than on pitons. We continued in this style past the *Third Petite Boulder*, past *Giant* and *Mammoth Boulders* to *Colossus*, with always a decent nut or runner for protection. Always? Actually, not quite. There is a section in the gully where it is best to follow a ledge system to the left to avoid unpleasantries in the bottom of the trough. This pitch was about F6 and the nuts were not much. *Colossus*, the last major boulder, demands concentration. Climb the right wall. First follow a crack in a dihedral. A loose flake juts from the crack 25 feet up. Just below it, go right across the face to a corner and then up a layback and a face where you almost wish you had a 1-inch Chouinard angle for protection. You *think* you know the nuts are good and so you finish anyhow, trembling but with a slight smirk in your soul, for you know the worst is over and you have used no pitons. When the four of us were finally atop *Colossus*, the sun was setting and the party degenerating. Liz was tired, I was panicky, and Vic and his friend were frustrated and slightly annoyed at my bad judgment. We bivouacked 300 feet above *Colossus*—in T-shirts and shorts! Luckily Vic was a smoker and had brought matches, and there was firewood, and the night was exceptionally mild. We even slept a bit. At dawn, we groggily scrambled 200 feet higher and walked out onto a buttress where we found a 40-foot pine tree. It made a good rappel anchor; we rappelled from it and made seven more to the ground, whence we scurried to camp eager for ham and eggs and lots of strong, steaming coffee.

ROYAL ROBBINS

Nutcracker, Manure Pile Buttress, Yosemite. Two years ago Yvon Chouinard discovered the remarkable potential of a 600-foot rock sitting