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ADDRESS. By Prof. T. G. BONNEY, President.

(Delivered before the Alpine Club, December 18, 1883.)

IN many respects I am conscious, during my term of office, of having fallen short of the standard established by my predecessor, but I shall endeavour in parting from you to follow the practice which he commenced of delivering a valedictory address.

In all societies it is a useful thing, from time to time, to go through a process of what may be called stock-taking, when a glance is cast backwards on the past and forwards on the future. Three years since your late President, Mr. C. E. Mathews, sketched for you the growth of mountaineering and the earlier history of our Club: to-night, then, I propose to limit my retrospect to the period of my office, and to look forward somewhat to the future.

The customary first duty of a President on these occasions is a melancholy one. It is to enumerate the losses which have befallen the fraternity over which he presides. Ours during my time of office have been exceptionally heavy. Last summer there was blotted from our list a name which, though rarely associated with Alpine expeditions, was one of which we were justly proud. In William Spottiswoode, President of the Royal Society, not only we, but England, lost a man of the highest intellectual gifts, of exceptional practical ability, and of a rare nobility of character. His worth was evidenced, if proof were needed, by the crowds of mourners who followed his body to its resting place in Westminster Abbey. Another loss, which like the last we may almost call premature, befell us in the spring of the preceding year, when a brief illness which seized him in the neighbourhood of the Alps took from us one whose face all knew, whose friendship many deeply valued. In Thomas Woodbine Hinchliff we lost one who, as our first secretary, had tended this Club through its earlier and less vigorous

years, we lost one who had occupied this chair with no less efficiency, and we lost besides a man whose affection for the Alps, as for all whom he loved, grew stronger rather than weaker with advancing years. A monument, simple as became the man, yet strong and lasting as befits our friendship, will record our regret; it will be placed on the slopes of the Riffelberg, among the noblest peaks of the Pennines, amid the scenes where he won his spurs in climbing and in literature.

To these losses others have been added which from their circumstances we may call sadder. We used to make it almost a boast that accidents very rarely befell the members of our Club. Of late we have been unable to claim any such immunity. That muster-roll of death which was contributed to a recent number of our Journal by my predecessor, Mr. C. E. Mathews, under the title The Alpine Obituary, records the earlier of these, and embodies some emphatic cautions which we shall do well to remember. Our Club could ill spare such men as Mr. Penhall; and in Professor F. M. Balfour our loss was shared by a far wider circle. Seldom have so many gifts been united in one man. He possessed great intellectual powers; his character combined most felicitously independence of thought, soundness of judgment, and sweetness of temper; a vigorous constitution, and abundant energy, incited and enabled him to labour, while his private means sufficed to free him from the anxieties and the hindrances which so often beset men of science. Of these many advantages he had already made such use, that at thirty he had attained a position in the world of science which to many earnest workers barely comes with grey hairs. It is hard for one who valued him as I did to speak in measured terms on such a loss. Francis Maitland Balfour was in science another Marcellus: let me pay the last due of friendship in the poet's words:

> manibus date lilia plenis,
> Purpureos spargam flores . . et fungar inani
> Munere!

Though not members of our Club, we cannot forget the loss of such trusty guides as Andreas Maurer, Johann Petrus, and Peter Rubi, or of more than one mountaineer, who, like Mr. Gabbett, has met with a premature death among the peaks and glaciers of the Alps; for if 'one touch of nature makes the whole world kin!' surely this is true of our pursuit, and in the common love of the mountains we recognise a bond of fraternity, and a duty of sympathy, which must never be forgotten.

My retrospect of sorrow is ended—let me turn to events of a brighter kind. One of the earliest incidents of my term of office was the very successful gathering in the lecture theatre of the Royal Institution, when our friend Mr. Whymper detailed before a crowded audience, including his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the results of his explorations of the Equatorial Andes. All must have felt on this occasion that had the Alpine Club needed any justification of its existence, it was supplied by that well-told narrative of perseverance crowned by success. I had hoped that I might have also chronicled the publication of the volume in which the fuller details of these remarkable expeditions will be given, but I am glad to learn that it will appear shortly. None of the events of my term of office can be regarded as quite commensurate with the results of an expedition which included the scaling of Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, of Antisana and Pichincha, and other giants of almost equal size, but mountaineers have been by no means idle; peaks once supposed inaccessible have been trodden by the hob-nailed boot, and the pipe of conquest has been smoked at elevations where, as it was believed, man would have been barely able to draw an unsatisfying breath. In the Alps, the natural home of our Club, the last great summit has fallen, the Dent du Géant has had to bite the dust off the boots of trespassers. It fell a victim to the persevering assaults, I had almost said to the scientific siege, of Signor Alessandro Sella and his relatives, led by the guides Jean Joseph, Battiste, and Daniel Maquignaz; but the first person to stand on the higher of the two rival pinnacles which form the actual summit was an Englishman, Mr. Graham, who, however, is not a member of our Club. Mr. Graham has of late been exploring the peaks and glaciers of the Himalayas. Difficulties of various kinds, among them the familiar one of finding porters who are fit for anything but to gormandise, have at present robbed him of the greater triumphs to which he aspired; but he has scaled more than one mountain whose summit rises full four thousand feet above that of Mont Blanc, and has proved by his own experience that at a height of 22,500 feet men can breathe with ease and comfort. He has confirmed the experience of Mr. Whymper, and of others, that our lungs can, after a little acclimatisation, adapt themselves to respire the thin air at elevations where the atmospheric pressure is not much more than one-third of what it is at the sea-level. It would appear, then, that what many, including myself, had deemed would be the greatest difficulty in the ascent of Kinchinjunga or Mount Everest, a difficulty of

respiration—at any rate when making serious exertion—is one which may disappear after a little time, and that the conquest of the highest Indian peaks may prove to be mainly a question of supplies.

But perhaps the most complete success won by a member of our Club during my period of office is the ascent of Mount Cook in New Zealand by the Rev. W. S. Green. It is needless, as we have had the pleasure of hearing his story in this room and of reading it in our Journal, for me to enlarge upon its details, especially as it has just appeared in a separate form. Suffice it to say that the ascent of Mount Cook by way of the Tasman glacier is evidently no easy task, and the summit was only won by the dogged perseverance and the systematic attack of Mr. Green and his two Swiss guides Emil Boss and Ulrich Kaufmann. It is evident that some of the peaks of this far distant group of Ao Rangi will test both the skill and the courage of the Alpine climber. They are, indeed, surpassed in elevation by the chief districts of the European Alps, but as they rise from plains but little above sea-level the heights of the summits above the valleys are almost greater than in Switzerland. Among some of the latest items of news from the Antipodes we learn that Dr. von Lendenfeld and his wife have succeeded in ascending the Hochstetter Dome, a snowy summit which Mr. Green compares to the Cima di Jazi on a large scale. Evidently it is also more difficult, as a great number of steps had to be cut; and the travellers, who were without professional assistance, were out for twenty-four hours.

The attractions of Norway as a field for mountaineering have been depicted to us by Mr. Cecil Slingsby. My own knowledge of the country, though but slight, enables me to say that in several districts there is no lack of rocky peaks and of extensive glaciers which are still either untouched or but little known. I cannot, however, say that I rate the inland scenery—notwithstanding the much vaunted charms of the fjords—so highly as I do that of the Alps; moreover, the comparative desolation of the upper valleys and of the fjelds will make it necessary for the traveller to carry with him a considerable amount of baggage, and so render the thorough exploration of a Norwegian mountain chain a matter of greater difficulty than the elevation of its peaks would lead us to anticipate.

When we turn to the Alps, where our Club was conceived if not born, we find, as might be expected, that the list of new expeditions is shorter and less striking than was formerly the case. This cannot be a matter of surprise. The number of

first-class summits is limited, and, with the ascent of the Géant—already noticed—the last of them was conquered. Thus the present generation of Alpine climbers is obliged to content itself with the leavings of its predecessors, and be satisfied with the conquest of neglected second-class peaks, or to seek for variety in 'old friends with a new face.' Still, no small number of excursions of very considerable interest have been accomplished in one category or the other. Among the former perhaps those of most general interest are the ascents of the rival pinnacles of the Charmoz by Mr. Mummery and by the Messrs. Balfour; among the latter the new routes up the Pelvoux and the Viso, discovered by Mr. Coolidge; up the Grivola, by Messrs. Baker and Yeld; up the Aiguille Verte, by Mr. Mummery; up the Dent Blanche and Schreckhorn, by Mr. Stafford Anderson; and up the Gross Lauteraarhorn, by Mr. Maund. In connection with this part of my subject we must not forget Mr. Yeld's very thorough investigation of the Graians, or those yet more extensive and systematic explorations of Mr. Coolidge, which have now included every district from the Maritime Alps to the northern borders of the Tarentaise. Explorations of this kind, though less attractive to the ordinary traveller, have a real scientific value, as by them only the orography of the higher peaks can be accurately known and the errors in maps detected. In the ascent, also, of a familiar peak by a new route some of the interest of discovery can be awakened, and even well-known forms present themselves in fresh aspects and in new combinations. But we shall do well to remember here that the untrodden way is not generally the safest way, and that there are cases where the old paths are in every sense better than the new. The events of the last three years, as well as others in our earlier history, have shown the need of close attention to the rules of the game in Alpine climbing. At the risk of being thought overcautious, I would venture to remind some of the more ardent members of our Club that life is a great opportunity not to be thrown away lightly; and that every accident due, or apparently due, to rashness, brings discredit upon our fraternity. It is of course extremely difficult to lay down any hard and fast definition of what constitutes unjustifiable risk in an excursion; the hour of the day, the condition of the snow, the nature of the season, often make all the difference between the safe and the dangerous. But I do not hesitate to say that no sensible man ought to undertake an expedition on which he knows that the party must remain for a considerable time exposed to the fall of avalanches, whether of stone, of ice, or

of snow. For instance, I should say that the ascent of Mont Blanc by the *ancien passage* should only be undertaken in favourable seasons; that of the north side of the Roththal Sattel yet more rarely; and that of Monte Rosa from Macugnaga under no circumstances whatever.

Two other variations in Alpine climbing have been introduced of late, and have become rather conspicuous in the records of the last two years. The one is 'mountaineering without guides.' Among expeditions thus accomplished the most remarkable is the ascent of the Disgrazia by a new route by Messrs. C. and L. Pilkington and Eustace Hulton. Of this practice I would merely say that while I hold it justifiable in the case of a few experienced travellers who have served a long apprenticeship in Alpine climbing, it is not one for general imitation; it is a practice rather for past masters of the craft than for the youthful athlete, and if adopted by those whose acquaintance with the Alps is to be reckoned by weeks rather than by months, will certainly lead to disaster. The other variation, which is now becoming almost a common practice, is that of making winter excursions in the Alps. Our Journal has recorded the experiences of several practised mountaineers. One whom our stern Salic law prevents us from numbering among our members has even written a book on 'Winter in the Alps' and her excursions on peaks and glaciers. It is evident that while at this season there is occasionally a danger from avalanches in spots which in summer time are far safer than the London streets, yet these can generally be avoided by one who is content to bide his time; and that great enjoyment can be obtained, and much novelty found, among familiar scenery. Strange as the fact may seem, it appears to be established that the temperature at considerable elevations is then not nearly so low as might be expected; so that to an ordinary mortal a winter climb is not incompatible with real enjoyment. While speaking on this topic I may call attention to the attractions of our own hill countries in the winter time. These are, indeed, familiar to some of our members, but not so generally known, I think, as they deserve to be. I can truly say that three days spent some years since in the neighbourhood of Keswick, after a heavy snowfall, will long be among my most pleasant remembrances; and that the view then obtained from the top of Skiddaw on a clear mid-winter day was no unworthy rival to several of the more celebrated Alpine panoramas.

But if, under ordinary circumstances, the Alps are well known to us, untrodden peaks and untravelled valleys of course

remain in abundance upon the globe. The 'frosty Caucasus,' notwithstanding the explorations of my successor, Mr. C. Grove, of Mr. Freshfield, Mr. Moore, and others, still offers singular attractions; in the Andes are many summits still little known; New Zealand is far from exhausted; the Himalayas and the Hindu Koosh have been only touched; we have had North America held up to us as a field for mountaineering. But of these more distant regions we may truly say, 'Non cuivis homini contingit adire'—they require an amount of leisure time and an expenditure of money which must always place them beyond the reach of the majority of our members. To myself, for instance, an absence from England for more than six weeks has always been extremely difficult; of late years even that has been out of the question. For such, then, we must admit that there will soon be no more peaks to conquer or passes to make, but on that account is the life of an Alpine climber no longer worth the living? I do not hesitate to reply in the negative. The beauty of the snowfields and glaciers, of the peaks and the precipices, is unchanged, even if hundreds are familiar with them. Perhaps there is a little selfishness in the desire to be the first in contemplating some wonder of nature, or to be alone in our knowledge of some striking scene. I grant, indeed, that I should not care to have the snow littered with sandwich papers, or the peaks strewn with broken bottles. My enjoyment of a view is not enhanced by the presence of the ordinary tourist, nor do I feel his remarks improving either to my mind or my temper. I am not even prepared to accept in its fulness the *dictum* of so great an authority as Mr. Ruskin, that the 'true beauty of the Alps is to be seen only where all may see it: the child, the cripple, the man of grey hairs.' For, as it seems to me, there is no unique type of beauty in nature, and between each that is perfect of its kind comparison is not possible. There is a beauty of the Lake of Orta and of Loch Corruisk, of the Raft-sund and the Kyles of Bute, of the view from the Görner Grat, and of that from the crest of the Apennines over the valley of the Arno—each attains perfection in its kind; each arouses and satisfies emotions of a different nature. Speaking for myself, now that I am compelled to avoid, during my too brief Alpine visits, any excessive fatigue or exposure, and to seek rest for the body as well as for the mind more than formerly, I have not found that the views from even such hackneyed peaks as the Weissmies and the Jungfrau seem less beautiful than they would have appeared a quarter of a century ago, or that I enjoy the less a quiet day on a glacier because

its scenery has become familiar. The charms of the Alps, as in all things that one loves well, increase as we know them better, and their health-giving power to body and to mind will continue long after every possible pass has been crossed, and every peak ascended by every conceivable route. There is, then, no reason why the days of our Club should be numbered, because the Alps are in one sense 'played out.' Its most pleasant aspect—a fraternity of those who love the mountains—will continue, even when its members, except in some rare instances, cease to be explorers. One difficulty only I foresee, that of providing papers for our evening meetings, and of filling our Journal. This may have to be met (though I believe it has not yet arisen) by meeting rather less frequently and by longer intervals of publication. As bearing on this matter, I shall venture, in conclusion, to offer one or two suggestions as to work which still remains to be done in the Alps, and for which our Club affords special opportunities. Although the geography of the Alps is now well known, there is much to be learnt about their history and their relation to almost every branch of science. Now, I know that this last word will cause a shudder in some of my hearers. Let me, then, hasten to explain. I do not ask that scientific papers should be read at our evening meetings—their pleasant social character would be destroyed when subjects not of common interest were introduced—nor do I press for the admission of such papers into our Journal. For the sake of students it is better that elaborate communications of scientific value should be published in periodicals devoted to each special subject. As a student of science, I can speak feelingly of the weariness of flesh induced by hunting through volume after volume on the chance of finding a grain of wheat in a bushel of what is for one's special purpose only chaff. I abstain from recommending it for the sake of the Editor, for I know well from experience in other fields that his soul would be vexed by receiving for one contribution of real value many which had already been 'declined with thanks,' or 'ordered to be printed in short abstract,' by the councils of the scientific societies to which they had been previously submitted. But I think that a separate section in the Journal might with advantage be opened for the brief recording of observations of scientific interest which can without difficulty be made by the ordinary traveller, for stray jottings and scientific memoranda which have been taken on expeditions of no particular interest, or would have broken the continuity of a descriptive narrative, and if inserted therein have produced on many readers the effect of a bit of grit in a slice

of cake. Such, for example, as exceptional meteorological phenomena, or the occurrence of flowering plants at unusually high altitudes, where all that is needed is to read an aneroid, put a specimen in an envelope, and get it named by a good botanist after returning home. Further, there is much yet to be learnt about glaciers, towards which any observant traveller can contribute valuable information; and, as regards the geology of the Alps, we are only beginning to see our way to its right understanding. This last topic induces me to bring again before you a subject which I have already mentioned. I think that a collection of mountain summits should be one of the possessions of our Club. The expense of forming it would be slight if members would do their best to contribute; a plain cabinet would suffice for its housing, and if the idea met with approbation and support I should be happy to undertake the arrangement. Such a collection at the present time would have far more than a mere local interest. The rock masses of the great mountain chains seem likely to throw much light upon some of the most obscure and difficult problems of geology; and in studying them specimens from the higher parts of the central ridges, from the localities least accessible to the ordinary man of science, will have an exceptional value. I venture, therefore, to urge upon the Club the advisability of forming a collection of the summit rocks of high peaks and passes. Large specimens are not needed, so that neither will the traveller be seriously burdened nor the Club room occupied by bulky cabinets.

The history and the ancient literature of the Alps have a more general interest, and a wide field yet remains for investigation, to the results of which our Journal may fitly offer an opportunity of publication. But of this I need say little, as more than one important contribution has already appeared in its pages from the pens of the present and the late editors. Mr. Freshfield, indeed, has but recently shown us that the path of Hannibal through the Alps must not be regarded as a settled question, and the Carthaginian general is not the only one of whom it might have been said, with a slight change of meaning—

> I, demens, et sævas curre per Alpes,
> Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias.

I might glance, did time permit, at the growing fondness for mountains, which is indicated by the increased number of pictures of Alpine scenery on the walls of our exhibitions, and at the progress which artists have made in the right delineation of Alpine form and the appreciative rendering of atmospheric

effects. But on that point the kindness of not a few accomplished artists will enable us to judge for ourselves at Willis's Rooms to-morrow; to these gentlemen we are greatly indebted for heightening the pleasure of our annual gathering, and enabling us to transport ourselves in spirit to the scenes which we love. Photography, too, has greatly progressed of late, and Mr. Donkin's camera reproduces, in all except colour, the grim realities of the wildest mountain peaks. But I have occupied more than enough of your time. It remains only for me to thank you for the patience with which you have listened to this lengthy address, for the honour which you conferred upon me in electing me President, and for the kindly consideration which I have received from friends old and new during my three years of office.

Mountaineering in the Old Style. By C. T. Dent.

(Read before the Alpine Club, June 5, 1883.)

I HAVE sometimes—on very, very sleepless nights—taken down a volume of the 'Alpine Journal' from the shelf, slapped the cover to get rid of a considerable amount of dust, and read over accounts, written long since, of early mountain expeditions. The perusal of my own effusions has sometimes amused, frequently astounded, and nearly always brought me the wished-for slumber. And yet these same accounts were, for the most part, as faithful representations as I could set down on paper of impressions made at the time on my mind. It has often occurred to me to ask what sort of description one would give of a climb made many years before. How would the lapse of time influence the writer? Would he make light of whatever danger there was? Would the picture require a very decided coat of varnish to make it at all recognisable? Would the crudities come out still more strongly, or would the colours all have faded and sunk harmoniously together? To me these were interesting speculations; and when I was asked by our Honorary Secretary to fill once more a gap—like a dentist, whose business it is to fill the vacant space with a little composition of his own—I at once thought of giving practical effect to my idea. Now the expeditions I have to narrate were made in 1870 and 1871—twelve and thirteen years ago. Possibly my readers may think that a description of them, if worth giving at all, had better have been published at the time. Still 'better late than never,' as the doctor observed when he came on a professional visit to