

THE  
ALPINE JOURNAL.

---

FEBRUARY 1908.

---

(No. 179.)

AN ADDRESS TO THE ALPINE CLUB.

BY THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF BRISTOL, PRESIDENT.

(Delivered at the Winter Meeting, December 17, 1907.)

IT is usual, my advisers tell me, and tell me with an air which indicates that it is necessary, for an expiring President—a funereal phrase—to make an address to the Club on the events of the three years of his presidency. My advisers add the soothing information that the address is not discussed. This puts me into all the advantages of the pulpit. You may listen or not, at your own sweet will; but you can't reply. There is, besides, on the present occasion a call to say something of the fifty years of the Club's life. I should not be establishing a burdensome precedent for my immediate successors if I responded in full detail to that call. But I do not propose to attempt to do so. Next February a former President, Mr. Pilkington, is to give to the Club an account of the progress of mountaineering during these fifty years. His complete knowledge and his charming style absolve me from making blundering entrance upon that vital subject. In 'Country Life' for December 7, and in the 'Graphic' for December 14, there are remarkably good and full accounts of the fifty years of our existence, beautifully illustrated, things to keep among our *keimelia*. These are adequate presentments, produced by master hands, completely relieving the President from responsibility. Besides, it only wants about 23 hours to our dinner, and we must not be late for that.

I have thought that it might be of interest to pick up and put together a few facts about famous men and our fathers that begat us; facts apart from their brilliant achievements in the mountains. I do not know that the kind of facts which I have in mind has been dealt with hitherto. My experience as a humble student of the far-off past in history has always

been that chroniclers leave out the personal facts that would have told us much more of the life of the times than battles do. It is truer chronicling to put down in some permanent form the present obvious, that which anyone at the time knows, or can know if he cares to know it.

First, then, under safe cover of the assurance that my address is not to be discussed, I record the fact that the University of Cambridge had the predominant share in the formation of the Club, and in its earliest activities in the world of literature, science, and art, as well as in the world of ice and rocks and snow. As a devoted son of that University, in which 34 years of my life were spent, you will allow me to glory in the fact of this predominance; or, if you will not, I will glory in it unallowed.

I need not inform anyone here that this present President has no share at all in the glory. He had, it is true, taken his degree two years before the event which we are commemorating; but just fifty years ago he had left Cambridge, and he was living in Scotland during the years of the formation and earliest growth of the Club, only joining it on returning to reside on a Fellowship. It is a coincidence, interesting to himself only, that Scotland gave him his first snow mountain fifty years ago this week; one of the spurs of the Grampians, of which Wordsworth, struck by the remarkable resemblance, told us that we might point to it and exclaim with an old friend,

Vides ut alta stet nive candidum  
Soracte.

Not only were Cambridge men predominant in the foundation of the Club, but many of these Cambridge men were men of the highest intellectual calibre. Llewelyn Davies, one of the foundation members, had come out as Fifth Classic in 1848, with mathematical honours besides. His was a year of remarkable men, of whom none has been more remarkable than he. This distinguished veteran, whose titles of Alpine honours are the Dom and the Täschhorn, now within two months of 82, is to be present at our dinner, and has promised to speak. Hort, to whom William Mathews addressed his first proposal of an Alpine Club, was a man of marvellously wide knowledge and power. In 1850 and 1851 he contrived to enter for all the Honours Triposes then in existence—mathematics, classics, moral sciences, natural sciences; came out as Third Classic, and got a First in three out of the four triposes. He hungered for more. A mountaineer whom I need not name, not one of ourselves, remarked

when he had by his own measurements reached the greatest height ever attained by a human being—the modesty of classing himself as a mere human being deserves, I think, a respectful recognition from us—‘had the peak been higher I could have reached a considerably greater elevation.’ We may say of Hort, had there been more Triposes he would have had more Firsts. He had taken all these honours two years and one year before I went up as a freshman, and he was, as it happened, the first man pointed out to the worshipping eyes of my youth, a man whose modesty and retiringness were as marked as was his universal ability. When later in life I was with him in the Engadine I realised as never under the limitations of University life the charm and fervour of his personality, the width and depth of his knowledge. In 1850 H. W. Watson was Second Wrangler and Smith’s Prizeman, and R. B. Hayward was Fourth Wrangler. In 1851 Lightfoot, afterwards Bishop of Durham, was Senior Classic and a Wrangler besides; and Yool, who only died this year and remained a member of the Club to the last, was Third Wrangler, Smith’s Prizeman, and a First in Moral Sciences. He wrote for our ‘Journal’ the obituary notice of Hort. Lightfoot, as we shall see, though never an actual member, took an active part in the formation of the Club. It was he who in the first year of the Club sent Bonney over the Strahlegg, and thus secured for the Club a future President, whose scientific researches and distinctions have added lustre to our annals. Lightfoot climbed well till quite a late period in his life. I remember his finding a waistcoat with 50*l.* in it on the top of Piz Corvatsch, and regretting with all the fervour of a strict theologian that it was a circular note and it didn’t seem right to sign the man’s name. We took it across to Pontresina and stumbled upon the owner at the first hotel we tried. Lightfoot professed thankfulness at the relief from temptation.

Lightfoot climbed with his mind open to other things. I was snowed up with him at Silva Plana one Saturday. He remarked at breakfast, with his grave finality, that this would not do. He advised that I should hunt up the Pfarrer, ask if he had got his sermons ready for the next day, and if he had, would he teach us Romauntsch? I found that the Pfarrer was a learned man, the examiner of candidates for the Zwinglian ministry. His Romauntsch was of the Germanised type, but his wife was a daughter of the famous Colani, and would help. She contributed the purer Romauntsch from the kitchen, when her husband in the study, with the intervening

door open, could not answer Lightfoot's searching questions. We had two hours in the morning and two and a half in the afternoon, and got through the first two chapters of St. John's Gospel. Our teacher then told us that if we would go to his Romauntsch service next day he would preach a sermon, every word of which should come out of those two chapters. He carried out his promise; preached, I fear, only to us two of all his congregation, and preached so simply that we followed him all through. In the next year I put him on as a tutor in Romauntsch for a month, at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  francs for the daily hour, and once when Hort was with me I had the Pfarrer to supper to meet him. I can never forget the polyglot conversation, Hort and the Pfarrer hunting out roots of words and illustrations in more languages that I had suspected either of them of knowing.

In 1852 Robert Burn was Senior Classic, bracketed with that famous scholar and sculler Macnaghten, who, as Lord Macnaghten and Treasurer of Lincoln's Inn, granted us the use of the Hall, which we are to fill to-morrow to its most elastic extent. In 1854 Vaughan Hawkins, who comes to our dinner, was Senior Classic and a Wrangler besides, thus emulating Lightfoot's success; and S. H. Burbury was next to Hawkins at the head of the Classical Tripos, and was a high Wrangler too. In 1855 Montagu Butler, who unfortunately cannot come to us for our dinner to-morrow, was Senior Classic, with mathematical honours. In 1856 Williams Ellis, my oldest friend and opponent on the Cam and on Parker's Piece, was Third Wrangler; and Bonney was Twelfth Wrangler, with honours in the Classical Tripos. He was bracketed with another old friend of mine, G. B. Atkinson, a Fellow of Trinity Hall and cousin of Leslie Stephen, in whose rooms I used to meet that hero in 1863. In those days Stephen was usually eating dried figs, a box of which he used to carry about with him.

It would be a long business to name the members of the Club who took honours at Cambridge but with somewhat less exalted distinction. John Ball was a Christ's man in very early times. He was a Wrangler so long ago as 1839, at the end of the Wranglers opposite to that frequented by Alpine Club men. He did not graduate, members of his communion (Roman Catholic) not being then admissible to a degree at Cambridge. His ability was however very fully recognised in 1888, when he was elected to the great distinction of an Honorary Fellowship. Hardy, specially attached to the Riffel, was a Wrangler in 1848. Without obtruding

his knowledge in any unseemly way, Hardy felt a modest pride in knowing more than any other man then living of the furthest interior recesses of tankards that had contained audit ale. Hinchliff missed his First in Classics in 1849, but had supplementary honours in mathematics. William Mathews was nearly high enough in the list of Wranglers in 1852 to be named in the first flight. So was Isaac Taylor in 1853, Taylor of 'Words and Places,' afterwards my chief ally in the study of runes and ogams. So was in 1854 a man of fame undying, Leslie Stephen; E. L. Ames was only eight places below him. My old schoolfellow Charles Hudson, killed on the Matterhorn, took moderate honours in mathematics in 1851. How well I remember, exactly 60 years ago, in days when there was no such thing as training, and we jumped in our ordinary clothes and boots, seeing Hudson clear a little over 21 ft. in a long jump, and having the proud office of fetching the tape to make sure. In those days three times your height was a quite respectable length.

I have only been able to trace one man among the most marked of the early Cambridge men in the annals of the Club as a man who, knowing that most things have two ends, including a class list, thought one end as good as the other. This was E. S. Kennedy, of Caius, not to be confused with his Caius contemporary of two years older standing, the present Sir Charles Malcolm Kennedy, K.C.M.G., highly distinguished in the Moral Sciences Tripos. I remember E. S. Kennedy well, walking about in the gold lace of the Caius Fellow-Commoner of the day. I remember, too, seeing him at work in the Senate House, when I was being fed on the tea and soft biscuits which were my sole sustenance for those days of pain. Will you have a personal touch of our second President, by a Caius man? 'Edward Shirley Kennedy was in the year above me at Caius. He came up as a fellow-commoner, being of what seemed to us the extreme old age of 35. He was a man of speculative taste. Some of us felt rather in awe of a man who had published a book called "Thoughts on Being."'

It would be easy to carry on to rather later times the list of distinguished Cambridge men who were in the early times with the Club; George Mathews, for example, the youngest of the noble three, Seventh Wrangler in the year following its foundation, and Fellow of Caius. But I stop at 1856.

There are three Oxford men of the highest distinction, too, who were early members of the Club, and still continue to be members. Hornby, the Provost of Eton, got his First

in 1849, but only joined the Club in 1864. We had asked him to speak at this year's dinner; but he has a great family gathering that night in honour of his reaching the healthy age of 81 the next day. Sir James Ramsay, of Banff, now here present, took a double First in 1854, and joined the Club in 1859. He still climbs, and climbs well. His name is honoured in all circles that can appreciate sound history and good literature. Jex-Blake, that most delightful of companions, got his First in 1855, and joined the Club in 1862; you may meet him on the glaciers still, and you may find that you still have something to learn. Here is a nice little personal touch that I am sure you will like to have, linking together these two distinguished climbers and distinguished men, Ramsay and Jex-Blake: 'Ramsay never got the honour due for the first ascent of Mont Blanc from Courmayeur in 1855. Just think, 52 years ago, in the infancy of the art, when Courmayeur guides had no name, and the way had to be found! Ramsay entered Rugby, and left Rugby on the same day that I did: asked me (for I was at Chamonix) to come with him up from Courmayeur, and I agreed so to do, and went to Courmayeur. But the weather was bad, and I could not wait, as I was due to Marlborough as Assistant to the Headmaster, Cotton, my old Tutor, afterwards G. E. L. Calcutta.' Then comes a charming little illustration of the financial dealings of the Scot with the Briton. 'I lent Ramsay 5*l.* and got to London with 4*l.* only in my pocket.' I can add on the best authority that the balance would have been a good deal on the wrong side if Jex-Blake had not persuaded his landlady at the hotel in Paris to charge him only *table d'hôte* price for an excellent private dinner which he had enjoyed.

It is only fair to C. E. Mathews to say that he did not overlook Ramsay's remarkable achievement when recording the primary 'Annals of Mont Blanc.' This is what he says at page 207 of his great work:—'This route was discovered by Mr. J. H. Ramsay in the month of July 1855. Sleeping at the foot of the Aiguille du Midi, and accompanied by several guides from Courmayeur, he crossed the Tacul and the Mont Maudit, descended to the Corridor, and mounted the Mur de la Côte. Here he was unfortunately beaten within an hour of the summit, but the new route was definitely ascertained. Eight years later the complete journey was made.' Need I remind anyone that some of us think that a principal Alpine event of this present year has been the unveiling of the monument at Chamonix to C. E.

Mathews? The President having an engagement with salmon in the Highlands, an engagement which the fish in question failed to keep, the unveiling was performed by one of his daughters, the speech being made by his old schoolfellow Sir Clifford Allbutt, who joined the Club in 1870. A charming speech in French was delivered by M. Loppé, who is with us to-night.

Bryce is comparatively an infant. It was not till 1861 that he began to get Double Firsts and things of that kind. He did not join the Club till 1879. He came to stay with me in 1875, when we were colleagues as examiners for the Lightfoot Scholarships. I had the founder of the scholarships to meet him at dinner, but we did not know he was a climber, and did not name the Alps, so far as I remember.

I must leave further researches into the Oxford lists to the distinguished member of that University whom I hope the Club will have as its President in 1957; unless, indeed, my friend and brother Gore, the Bishop of Birmingham, has persuaded the House of Lords, in my absence underground, that none of the Oxford (and Cambridge) men should be allowed to engage in any athletic exercise, and that no man should be admitted to the privileges of Oxford (and Cambridge) who is not too poor to pay for a porter, let alone a guide.

If I were to enter upon the list of distinguished men whom the University of London has contributed to the Club I should have to begin with a name which for all these fifty years has been—and it still is—the most marked name in our annals, the name of Alfred Wills. He swept the board of the University of London and of University College of prizes and exhibitions and scholarships, alike in classics, mathematics, and law. As becomes a member of a younger university, he does not attain to the age of the champion veterans of Cambridge and Oxford. But he is of quite respectable age, as times go, being seventy-nine last Wednesday, December 11. The Oxford champion is eighty-one this week, December 18. The present President reached the infant age of seventy-four twelve days ago, December 4. The Club reaches the age of fifty next Sunday, December 22. Clearly December is the month in which members who would fain see long days should elect to have been born.

I have had put into my hands by the son of William Mathews the letters in which Mathews suggested to Hort the formation of an Alpine Club. They are dated February 1 and 16, 1857. The letter of February 1 was the first half of a long letter continued on February 8. I think that these

letters should be published. Let me read from them an account of proceedings on Sunday and Monday, August 24 and 25, 1856. The 'we' means William and Charles Edward, who had brought with them from Chamonix Auguste Simond, at eight francs a day.

'We of course found Zermatt full of Englishmen, among them Montagu Butler and his friend Cunningham,\* two Clarks, one † a Trinity freshman, and Dr. Carson, a Fellow of Trinity, Dublin, with a friend.‡ We persuaded all these to join us in an ascent of Mont Rose. We engaged as our guide Johann Tauchwald, and the Clarks Matthias Tauchwald, a better guide than his brother. On Sunday afternoon we walked up the Riffelberg through the fine pine forest at the base. On Monday morning we found our party reinforced by two Londoners and a German, and, after endless delays on the part of the guides, effected a start at 3.25 A.M., twenty-five of us, eleven gentlemen and fourteen guides and porters. We got to the magnificent Gorner Gletscher and crossed it about daybreak, and the sight of the Matterhorn and the glorious mountain range between it and Mont Rose, as peak after peak was coloured by the rising sun, I shall remember as long as I live. We crossed the glacier without the slightest impediment, got to the base of Mont Rose, and commenced the ascent of the Névé. Dr. Carson's friend soon broke down and was obliged to return with a guide. The ascent offered no sort of difficulty until we arrived at the base of the Höchste Spitze itself, just on the west of it; it had not even been necessary to be roped. Every now and then, however, when we stopped to rest for a moment I was surprised to see the porters throw themselves onto the snow, and one by one they dropped down exhausted and drunk, so that when we arrived at the base of the peak the Clarks' porter and our own were the only porters left, the others appearing on the mountain side in continually diminishing perspective. The Clarks immediately took the peak, a few steps having been first cut in the steep iced snow which led to it. Our progress was more slow, for in consequence of the failure of the porters the whole of the rest of the party, except Carson, who was far in the rear, had to be tied on to our hundred-foot rope. Now, when there are five on a rope the continual

---

\* Sir Henry Stewart Cunningham, K.C.I.E.

† A devoted missionary of the C.M.S.

‡ This was Dr. George Longfield, Fellow of Trinity, Dublin. Our member, T. H. Carson, K.C., is a son of Dr. Carson, and has an account of this ascent by his father.

pulling and checking is bad enough, but when there are pretty near a dozen on, it is something frightful. The ascent of the peak was consequently anything but pleasant. When about half-way up the peak one of the Londoners vehemently demanded to be released. He was released accordingly, and went down again. I forgot to mention that our porter refused the peak, and our dinner had to be carried up by Simond. [The remark may here be interpolated that the porter was to have had 20 francs, but Mathews knocked off ten for his conduct at the peak.] Our band reached the actual summit at 12.10, and we luxuriated in the magnificent panorama. The younger Clark soon felt unwell, and he and his brother descended; soon afterwards Dr. Carson made his appearance and was greeted with three deafening cheers. He had a rope firmly tied round his middle, his two guides holding the ends, and in this manner he had made the whole ascent from the Gorner Glacier. He was not many minutes on the top; the rest stayed about half an hour, M. Butler sheltering himself from the blinding sun with a huge green umbrella. The descent of the peak was ten times worse than the ascent, and to make matters pleasanter one or two of the guides were drunk; it was with the greatest difficulty I could refrain from spearing the one before me with my alpenstock. When about three-fourths down I could bear it no longer, but detached myself from the rope, and went head over heels down the slope, narrowly missing a crevasse.'

In regard to the foundation and formation of the Club, Hort was Mathew's correspondent, but Lightfoot and Vaughan Hawkins acted with Hort in his expressions of opinion on definite details. On December 21, 1857, Hort tells E. S. Kennedy that he and Lightfoot thought the cost of journeying to London twice in each year to two dinners was quite heavy enough, and a subscription of one guinea besides was showy rather than needful. In this letter Hort asked Kennedy what idea lurked under the words 'geographical explorers' and 'other guests of celebrity.' 'Surely,' he wrote, 'we do not want speeches from Dr. Livingstone or Sir Roderick Murchison.' The reference to Dr. Livingstone was due to the fact that Hort and Lightfoot and others were at the moment busy in arranging the great meeting of December 1857, in the Senate House of Cambridge, to hear Dr. Livingstone, a meeting which founded the University's mission to Central Africa, whose jubilee was kept in the Senate House some ten days ago. The remark about Sir Roderick Murchison receives a quaint comment in the fact that Sir Roderick was one of

the earliest honorary members of the Club.\* The introduction of such elements, Hort said, seemed to him to impair the genuineness of the whole affair. Later in the same month he wrote, 'On what do you propose to expend guinea subscriptions and guinea entrance fees? Surely there is nothing to be gained by having rooms, curator, and that style of thing?' A dinner, he thought, would be an excellent thing, provided the dinner bill was kept within reasonable dimensions. But, granted that it was desirable to make the Club select, he and those who were acting with him could not see that a money standard was a desirable one. As to a climbing standard, he reports that Hawkins demurred to the mention of 13,000 ft. as a qualifying altitude, because, for example, the ascent of the Cima di Jazzi was no test of Alpine powers. But Hort was of opinion that any standard would be liable to exceptions, and he thought 13,000 ft. fair enough. What would he have said if he could have seen in prophetic vision then our Library of to-day and the minimum qualification for admission to the Club?

To turn now to the present. The Alpine Club may be called the mother of many clubs, the step-mother of none. Thanks to the investigations of Mr. Macintosh, our Assistant Secretary, we now know that 165 children have been born to us in these fifty years, and some of our babes have been marvellous prolific. The French Club has forty-six sections, with over 5,500 members; the Swiss fifty sections, with over 8,400 members; the Italian thirty-five sections, with 6,200 members; the Austrian sixty-five sections, with 14,000 members; the German and Austrian 343 sections, with over 73,000 members. I have spoken of 165 as the number of children born to us, but I should suppose that it is now 166. At 8 P.M. this evening our latest child began to be born, in Piccadilly, a child of unique character and formidable dimensions. We remember the awkward results which ensued when the opportunity was lost of dealing drastically with the infant Hercules in the cradle. I was asked to dine at the Lyceum Club at 8 to-night, to attend the birth of a Women's Alpine Club, and I could not go. The opportunity

\* When I was engaged in the study of temperatures under various geological conditions I consulted Sir Roderick about the possibility of obtaining conclusive evidence of the truth of startling statements regarding changes in the interior of an isolated hill in Russia. Sir Roderick communicated my wish to the Emperor Alexander, who ordered the temperature to be taken three times a day for three months, and the results to be sent to me.

was lost. The Alpine Club, here now in session, wishes every prosperity to the new club, many of whose members have every qualification for our own Club, except that of sex.

Our proceedings during these three years have not failed of interest, adventure, success. The Club has dealt with the greatest peaks of Europe, Asia, Africa, New Zealand, and Japan; probably if I knew all I should add America. Ruwenzori used its deadliest weapon to drive back two of our members,\* whom nothing else could have driven back. Another† of our members caught it napping, and in bright weather conquered every one of its peaks. We had in May, 1905, the magnificent account of Dr. Workman and Mrs. Bullock Workman's record ascents in the Himalaya, the photographic illustrations‡ being not the least marvellous part of the attainment of a height of 23,394 ft. Only the other day, last June to wit, Longstaff, starting from a camp at only 17,450 ft., reached in 10 hrs. the summit of Trisul, in the Garwhal Himalaya, 23,406 ft. G.T.S., 12 ft. higher than the Workmans' observed height on the Pyramid. Dr. Longstaff does not claim this as a record, for he believes that it really was Kabru that W. W. Graham ascended in 1883 to within some 50 ft. of the summit, which would give 23,950 ft. as the record height. It is an interesting fact that late in the present year two Norwegian climbers got within 50 ft. of the top of Kabru, a coincidence of figures which tells in favour of Graham's record. Graham had certainly unrivalled powers of performing great and rapid feats in the high mountains, so that there is no difficulty on that score in his case. Passing to the old climbing ground of the European Alps, we have had abundant evidence that new expeditions are still to be found. As regards modern power and speed combined, here is a typical day, one single day, remember: started from the Montanvers; climbed the Aiguille du Midi; traversed the ridge to the summit of the Aiguille du Plan; took the Dent du Requin on the way home.§ As literature, nothing that has come before the Club has, in my opinion, excelled Godley's paper on 'The Alps,' a modest little title, which, as he pointedly remarked, allowed a minimum of possibility of wandering from the subject. As art, I must give a first place to East's 'Mountains

---

\* Freshfield and Mumm.

† The Duke of the Abruzzi.

‡ *Alpine Journal*, No. 169.

§ See Mr. G. Winthrop Young's climb in *A. J.* vol. xxxiii. pp. 646-7.

from a Painter's Point of View.' Probably the greatest feat we have to record is that achieved and repeated by our admirable editor of the Journal, Mr. Yeld; the Journal has more than once appeared in the month in which it was due.

We have had seven losses by death this year. Each year's losses are recorded at the end of the year, not being reserved for a triennial period. We have lost Yool, an original member; De Fellenberg of Bern—a very prominent man in the early days of climbing, with some good new peaks to his name—he joined in 1863; R. M. Cuthbert, 1864; S. Rostron, 1865; the two Slee brothers, 1877; and an honorary member, Dr. Mojsisovics of Vienna. The death of Sir Henry Neville Dering, who joined in 1864, was not recorded in 1905, in which year he died. There have been no deaths by accident in the mountains among our members in these three years, crowded with fatal accidents as those years have been. If there have been any accidents at all among our members, to the extent of breaking a bone however small, they have not been reported to me.

To pass from grave to gay again, we have added greatly to the attractions of the Club by the institution of a social evening in each month. My official memory is still racked by the tremendous applause with which a simple explanatory statement of mine was received, when announcement of the social evenings was made to the Club. A sympathetic silence, as of regret too serious for words, would, I think, have been decorous, even if it was only a thin veneer. The statement was this, 'There will be no Chair and no President.' It reminded me of a cruel blow that came from Japan—that is, the voice was the voice of Japan, but the hands were presumably the hands of our William Weston, who advised the Japanese. They had asked for a copy of our rules, as a type, and I had confidently, perhaps effusively, sent two copies. They could see the advantages of our rules, but *someone* had warned them of the disadvantage under which the Club has been labouring for these three years. Their rules, based upon ours, were transmitted to us in due course. The first rule worked out in English into this painful form, '*This Club shall not have a President.*'

In conclusion—*how* you have longed for those comforting words—we have had a grave disappointment this year and last. It had been proposed that our fiftieth year should be signalled by a systematic attempt to ascend the Himalayan mountain which it seems safest to describe as 29,002 ft. Persons not yet rendered cautious by advanced age may

call it Gaurisankar, or Chomokankar, or even Everest. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, was favourable; Lord Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief, was favourable; facilities were promised; men and officers were lent; we were to supply the British climbers and the Swiss guides. The climbers and the British share of the expenses were found. The change of Viceroy from Lord Curzon to the Earl of Minto did not injure the situation, for Lord Minto is a well-known member of the Club, and he wrote to me a hearty letter of assurance that he would do what he properly could. All seemed to be straight, too, in the inner world of politics, if the word straight is to be regarded as other than a mere counter in exchange in that world. After preliminaries which seemed rather tortuous, as viewed by ordinary mortals, the attempt on the mountain was forbidden by the responsible official at home. We must in all seriousness recognise that both the India Office and the Foreign Office may have had very solid reasons for forbidding it, specially, I suppose, the Foreign Office. And I feel sure that I may say, on the part of the Club, that when we consider the character of the two Secretaries of State concerned, Mr. Morley and Sir Edward Grey, we are convinced that only solid reasons would ever compel them to put a stop to an enterprise strongly appealing to the personal sympathies of both of those eminent men. We ought to recognise, also, that there had been careering about in those parts, of late years, an individual of such character that the very broadest-minded Secretary of State might very well feel that one at a time was more than enough. The Tibetans had found that a force of 5,000 soldiers was not sufficient to stop this resolute gentleman. He laughed at so small a force as that, and went on. On another occasion, when he was mounting a mighty ice col of 19,600 ft. all alone, with only his usual bamboo cane in his hand, and 'Piccadilly boots and clothes,' he was packed with aneroids, cameras (in the plural), and apparatus for boiling-point observations. He was attacked by four foolhardy soldiers, he whom not 5,000 had sufficed to stay. Among other unconsidered trifles of luggage that he had about him, there happened to be a rifle and cartridges, for he is always prepared for any emergency—it is a settled principle with him. The rifle he unslung as they came at him. The result he gives in a few simple words as follows: 'One of the fellows got something of a dent in his skull with the butt of my rifle; the others, unluckily, ran away.' After savage proceedings of that kind, we cannot be surprised if the rulers of Tibet profess to be a little shy of British mountaineers.

I must before I finally release you thank the Committee of the Club for their kindness and forbearance. It has been a real pleasure to make two traverses of the heights of Swindon month by month to preside at their meetings, only two of which I have missed in these three years. I must specially mention the marked care and ability with which the Honorary Secretary, Mr. Bradby, has fulfilled the very onerous duties of his office; and must publicly express my gratitude to him for personal consideration and kindness, which have made me feel that I have acquired a friend for the few remaining years of my life. And it would be impossible to pass by without a word of recognition the width of interest in mountain exploration which enhances the value of the professional services rendered to the Club by Mr. Macintosh. All of us have been grieved by the prolonged illness of the careful attendant, Mr. Wilson, and all will be glad to know that he is a little better. As to the out-going President, of him I have to report that he has done his best to fulfil the duties indicated by his title of President, to sit, that is, not to climb, at the head of things. He has presided at the monthly meetings of the Club with ever increasing interest and enjoyment in the remarkable series of papers read by members. I remember that about the year 1865, when I was the only inefficient member of the Council of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, we elected as our President Thompson, the Regius Professor of Greek, who succeeded Whewell in the next year as Master of Trinity. He gave us a dinner at the end of his year of office, and in a masterly manner reviewed the proceedings of the year from the chaotic point of view of a man knowing nothing of science. We had ranged from minute entomology to astronomical physics. He told us that he thought he had on the whole derived the greatest pleasure and acquired the most information from the evening when we investigated microscopically the leg of the red spider which causes the peculiar tint of the planet Mars. This President might follow—at a great distance—the example of his illustrious fellow-townsmen and schoolfellow. Considering the vast range of the recent proceedings of this Club, he might dilate with rapture on the great performance of Conway and Scott, in their sleigh journey from Mount Hedgehog in Spitsbergen to the Antarctic Pole; or on Tempest Anderson's marvellous photographs of volcanoes belching forth icebergs. But the very thought is a disloyalty to the keen enjoyment with which he has listened during these three years; an enjoyment completely unspoiled by the ever-present and

almost comical sense of the obvious inadequacy of the presiding official. There have, it is true, been two brilliant exceptions to the display of inadequacy. On May 16, 1905, and on March 5, 1907, the President was physically unable to be in his place.

---

FIFTY YEARS OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

BY CHARLES PILKINGTON.

(Read before the Alpine Club on February 4, 1908.)

THE thought that there have always been mountaineers since the uplands were capable of sustaining mountain game or cattle takes us a long way back into the mists of the past. But good cragsmen and walkers as these men may have been, their horizon was limited, as that of their successors will be to the end of time, and although they have supplied, and will supply, the raw material, they require a touch of influences outside their ken, before they can possibly become the finished article—'the mountaineer proper,' of whose pursuit we are now thinking.

It is not the object of this paper to review the evolution of the prehistoric climber and the work of the first explorers, but only to sketch somewhat hastily the growth of mountaineering during the fifty years that the Alpine Club has existed. I need not dwell on the early work done by the men of the country, men of Switzerland, Italy, France, Austria, and Germany, to whom all honour is due, for it would be untrue and inartistic to talk of modern mountaineering as starting in 1858 with the formation of the Alpine Club. But we must at any rate see what manner of men our immediate predecessors were, and what was their idea of the mountains and how to climb them.

1854 has for a long time been considered the starting-point of modern English mountaineering, when Alfred Wills and his guides made the first ascent of the Wetterhorn\* from Grindelwald; but it was as much the delightful way in which the story of the climb was told as the climb itself that warmed the hearts of Englishmen and drew them towards the snows; for the Wetterhorn\* had been climbed in 1845 by Agassiz, Forbes had been on the Jungfrau in 1841,

---

\* The peak here, as generally, called the Wetterhorn is, strictly speaking, the point of the Wetterhörner known as the Hasle Jungfrau (12,149 ft.); the highest point, called the Mittelhorn (12,166 ft.), was first climbed by Mr. Speer in 1845.