THE
ALPINE JOURNAL
VOL. LIV MAY 1944 NO. 268

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

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Read before the Alpine Club, December 7, 1943

For the first time in our history the term of a presidency has been begun and ended under the shadow of war. It has seen none of those dignified social functions which gleam in our memories as gilded moments rightly framing our stately past, and which are, with less rightness, often assumed to be the principal function of our Presidents. But, a far more serious deprivation, it has suffered a gloomy limitation of those intimate occasions for which the Club properly exists, the meetings of our members sociably and in the intervals of their active climbing, and especially of those important contacts between our mountaineers of all generations for the comparing of notes and memories and the designing of private plans or collective policy. For these years both the climbing and the social life of the Club have been in suspense, and, owing to the remoteness of the fronts and the wider dispersions of this war, it has not been possible for our counsels to be refreshed by the sporadic but frequent returns on leave and flying attendances of our younger members on active service, which, all taken together, in the last war did not a little to maintain a healthy interchange.

In addition, my first act as President, when the neighbouring houses in our own street began to suffer in the bombardment, had to be the immediate dispersal of our library, and of those few amenities and valuables, chairs of comfort or pictures of beauty, which we had ventured until then to retain. The safe-guarding of our unique collection of books was made possible by the generous and prompt response of a few of our members, who volunteered to house sections of them for the war. And among these I am sure we should wish to express our especial gratitude to our senior member, Lord Desborough, whose courteous hospitality signalises now the sixty-eighth year of his membership of our Club. With the disappearance of our

library went the last chance of consoling ourselves for the loss of active mountaineering and for the supposed tedium of office, or of relieving our present anxiety, by reading of the great past and the often lively controversies and campaigns of our predecessors.

We were faced, in fact, by a situation in which it appeared that the longer the war lasted, the longer must be the interruption to our climbing activities, which are the lungs through which this Club breathes ; and the less must become our social amenities and the attractiveness of our meetings, as the restrictions upon food and lighting and heating and the difficulties of travel increased ; and the fewer must grow our numbers, as the normal decrease proceeded and new members were prevented from qualifying or refrained on economic grounds.

From such a period little of the material can be derived which has usually formed the substance of these farewell summaries. I myself still further reduced it, by determining two years ago with your Committee that an Annual Report should be published in our JOURNAL, dealing with the Club's activities, its policy, public relationships, and internal happenings. It must have seemed to many of us for some time past no longer sufficient that our members should have to wait maybe three years, and then for a formal occasion, in order to be brought into touch with our undertakings, or up to date with the formulations or changes of policy which closely concerned them.

With no pregnant records of new exploration to enumerate, I may mention gratefully two books by our members : Eric Shipton's *Upon that Mountain*, in which we have the Odyssey by which he arrived at his weighty conclusions with regard to the form which future exploration should take ; and Arnold Lunn's *Mountain Jubilee*, an exposition of the spirit by which our ski-ing and climbing succeeded in resisting the pre-war Nazi sport-rot. In passing, I must dwell once again upon our deep sense of loss in the death of men as famous and as eminent in this Club as were our sometime President, Norman Collie, most versatile of geniuses, our Vice-President, G. A. Solly, who personified British climbing among us, and our Honorary Members, Dr. Dübi, the grand old man of the Alps, and the great soldier-explorer, Sir Francis Younghusband.

With that, I shall ask of your patience to follow me, while I sketch for you firstly the action we took to meet the situation as we envisaged it ; and then—if you will allow me—the picture of the Club, as it was, and is, and might be, which

gradually took shape in my own mind, as I sat in these solitary rooms surrounded by the spirits of the past, facing the bare skeleton of its present stripped of all pleasurable ornament, and considering how to meet the demands already waiting upon our post-war years. I am deeply concerned to interest you in this picture, more especially those of you now absent from our atmosphere, who may only read this at a great distance. For I believe that upon a right interpretation of our past may rest our greater future.

Exceptionally hard times justify exceptional comments ; and I do not hesitate to begin by acknowledging the gratitude—not as a polite formula, but as a real debt—which we have owed these three years to our officers, under abnormal and often nerve-trying conditions. The Honorary Secretary, Bryan Donkin, who took up his new charge at the beginning of the lean years, and who has been filling simultaneously two other posts of responsibility in the war, has been carrying also for the Club an increasing burden of work. During the last year alone, the amount that has fallen to him of drafting, minuting, formulating, organising, and of copious daily correspondence, must have occupied many hours each night after his laborious days. He has shown the energy that belongs to his place among our leading younger mountaineers, and the philosophic equanimity under stress which may be the product of his few grey hairs. Our Assistant Secretary, Mr. Oughton, has stood by his post with the faithful service we have all learned to expect of him, and has been ready to welcome our visitants even in the blackest months. I think too that we should record our appreciation of the unfailing goodwill, good work and good temper with which our housekeeper, Mitchell, and his wife, have kept the Club well ordered and cheerful for us, during years of risk and often weeks of unbroken and threatening solitude. Our Editor has maintained his appreciative public. He put on most gallantly the heavy war mantle of Captain Farrar, and under difficulties, of absence of material and of Government restriction, which we can all appreciate, he has kept our JOURNAL at a high level of literary quality and—a royal benefit in war-time—of grateful entertainment. Your succeeding Committees have been collaborating dynamically, and during the last year or so, when we have had to make excessive calls upon them for difficult journeys, in order to deal with our increasing business, their loyalty has been tireless, and our deliberations have profited by often crowded and always zealous attendances.

There has also been—and I do feel that anyone looking out from this Chair should acknowledge this—a sturdy core of senior members, who, in spite of calls upon them certainly in many cases not less than those made upon their juniors, and of blackouts and irksome travel, have continued to support our meetings with Roman fidelity ; so that our numbers have never fallen to the point that may depress the lecturer. And they have been rewarded, I know, by a series of papers and lectures provided by the devotion of very busy colleagues, of variety and excellence. I shall also make particular note of a nucleus of our younger members, whose reserved occupations kept them in this country. They could no longer look for those sociable exchanges with contemporaries which make this Club an evening home for our enthusiasts of all ages. But their sense of loyalty to the Club, and of its right maintenance for their colleagues serving far afield, has kept them a conspicuous and welcome element at our meetings. At our last lecture, the attendance and the lively after-discussion, youthful to a point that should have satisfied our youngest reformer, constituted one of our best meetings for many years. I cannot claim that we have actually outrivalled the gaiety or the literary fertility of the Florentine company situated under somewhat similar conditions, who were immortalised in the *Decameron* ; but I have again and again during the years felt in the course of the friendly hours not only the healing rest to be found in pictures and thoughts of mountain beauty, but the vigorous refreshment we draw from a human company united in the unspoken consciousness of a deeply founded mutual sympathy.

I have mentioned some of those who were conspicuous in our fight for the Club's good continuance. What, then, was our procedure in action ? It was obvious in the first place that we ought to have time, before our members were again active upon mountains and producing their records of new adventure, to put right much floating error about our own past, and the past of greater mountaineering, which has been appearing in the rush of modern mountain publication in several lands. My suggestion that we should make ourselves responsible for producing a History of the Alpine Club, in its relationship with the history of the development of mountaineering in general, was given prolonged consideration by your Committee ; and it decided to entrust the responsible task to two of our most scholarly and judgmatic mountaineers, H. E. G. Tyndale and R. L. G. Irving. So much we could do for our past.

For our present, faced by lessening numbers and disappearing activities, I felt that we had no choice but to adopt Nelson's maxim—unaware that it was then being followed upon a fiercer battle area by so great an Admiral as Sir Andrew Cunningham—and I resolved that the smaller our forces, the more imperative the need for us to attack. We increased the number of our meetings and lectures. We fixed them at different hours, adjusted to bombardment or blackout. We accompanied them with informal luncheons, and, when it became again possible to use later hours, we arranged for informal dinners. We experimented with different days of the week for our meetings; with the result that, while the numbers remained constant, we were clearly enabling alternative groups of members to attend. We did all we might, with our limited and reduced amenities, to attract and make welcome Dominion or foreign mountaineers basing upon London, or to arrange for hospitality for them in the provinces. Further, since it must remain impossible for candidates to reach our high standard of qualification during the war, and probably for a number of years after it, we agreed to let it be known that we should consider lists of climbs sympathetically, and each upon its own merit, and that climbs made in our own country, and winter climbing, would be judged upon the same footing as foreign ranges. Since also the Alps and further ranges were likely to remain closed for us (and for another reason which will become clearer as I proceed), I suggested we should reinstitute a practice which found favour with some of our earliest members as a private holiday in the past, and we decided to hold the first official meeting of the Club in the mountains of these islands. We synchronised our meet with the meeting of the local climbing club most closely associated with the region, in order to profit by its company and, if need be, its guidance, and to establish friendly personal contacts with its members. I attached greater importance to the inauguration of these home meets than the numbers of us who were able to attend them, in war, might seem to justify. For I have long held, from my intimacy with both types of mountaineering, Alpine and home, that the solution of what may be termed our geographical problem, the harmonising in our Club of elements to represent different regional divisions and climbing organisations, could be best secured by our association in joint and equal mountaineering action. It was given as the considered opinion of officials and senior members who attended our three meets in the Lakes and in Wales that the

meetings proved wholly a success, and we have been strongly urged to hold, not only the one, but several each year, at different seasons, and in all our climbing regions.

We could be satisfied, after a while, that we were maintaining and even slightly enlarging such social and climbing occasions as war conditions had left to us. But I was growing, all this time, more and more dissatisfied with the responses which we were able to make to the demands or requests which kept reaching me in increasing numbers and from various quarters, official and semi-official. I shall class these under three headings.

Firstly, demands of an emergency character, arising out of the war conditions.

Secondly, demands affecting general mountaineering policy such as have always been reaching us, as the premier mountaineering organisation, but which now seemed to be multiplying.

Thirdly, a new character of demand, arising out of the rapid changes proceeding in the structure of our society, the fresh attitude towards national education which is resulting from these changes, and the part which hills and climbing seem now designed to take in such training.

The first class, of emergency demands upon our experience or information, came from varying departments and individuals, and were concerned with the needs of mountain warfare, and of its schools, with the climbing and reconditioning given in Commandos, and subsequently with such training as given to nearly all military units. They covered questions as to advisers, instructors, personnel, equipment for ski-ing and climbing, text books, maps, rescue work, stretchers, etc. It may surprise few of us, under the conditions, that often the same requests came from several different quarters, functioning apparently unknown to one another. From personal knowledge of those of our members scattered in the Forces whom we could reach, we made such individual recommendations as we might. I could draw also upon a knowledge of members of other climbing clubs, whom I knew might help us. But of course our Club has never attempted to pool, or to digest in available form for reference, the wide knowledge under any one of these headings represented by the individual experience even of its own members ; and a collective or authoritative opinion, the single voice that could express a united mountaineering experience, does not exist. Again and again I had reason to be envious of our kindred Alpine organisations beyond the Atlantic, who from the first were able to undertake powerful advisory positions upon

all such questions, with their own Service departments, and who could secure for their members effective consultative and instructional positions, in which their experience of mountains and snow and exploration could find proper scope.

It was not that we did not possess, in our country, first rate experts, distributed through our various mountain organisations. But we possessed no machinery of centralising their experience in emergency, of even getting at them individually when in Service, much less of recovering them from the less suitable duties they were often performing in the wide flung war machine.

I need not dwell upon this ; for our Club has not for long seen itself as other than a sociable aggregate of individual Alpine climbers. But, during the months of grim stress in our country, it was not a little grievous, when we were applied to confidently for collaboration as the premier mountain club of the world, to be able to give so little collective, authoritative or even formulated guidance, to have to speak from so limited a condensation of individual experience, upon matters directly concerning our craft and its ancillary skills.

My second heading covers requests, or appeals, which reached us upon all those questions of public policy which affect our mountain scenery, its preservation and its free and safe enjoyment. War or no war, and the keener sometimes it would seem for the war cover, the steady economic encroachment upon our all too few and all too small mountain areas goes forward, in road schemes, afforestation schemes, deforestation, water-power schemes, quarrying, building. Our public awareness has grown with the growth of its imminent threat. I can recall the time when the first light railway invaded Snowdon, and I scurried round in vain, seeking to get some collective protest from the then few climbing clubs. We were not yet scenery-conscious ; and it was characteristic of the time, and of Martin Conway, that the only protest I could arouse was a stout letter over his single name. We have now our larger protective projects, such as the great National Parks scheme ; and we have our larger and smaller local and watchful preservation societies. But they have still to fight their battles as they occur locally, and rarely in conjunction, against powerful centralised interests. Nowhere among the voices raised in protest is there a powerful, united mountaineering voice. After the last war, when, as a long term president of the Climbers' Club, I had seen again and again how fervent was our feeling and how feeble was our actual

mountaineering position, as against the then beginnings of the invasion, after innumerable struggles I secured a consultative committee, representative of our clubs of the period, to debate some joint protective action. Divergences, however, between regional interests led to this body committing a fantastic suicide by opposing, as its first act, the Access to Mountains Bill ! For indeed our awareness of our scenic inheritance and, for that matter, our home clubs themselves were at that time still very immature. This is no longer the case, as it concerns our awareness of the danger or our resolve to resist it. But we are as far as we ever were, in the mountaineering world, from speaking with a united voice ; we are as dependent as we ever were upon being able to call upon a few distinguished or happily placed colleagues, to give our opinion authority with central departments or with local bodies or with business interests. And when I say ' our opinion,' we have to remember that our Club, as a club, has never yet formed such an opinion. It has never accepted any principal, or partial, responsibility for our own mountain regions or for our home mountaineering. So that it has certainly never been in a position to use its accepted primacy as a club, in order to focus the mountaineering opinion of our multiplying mountain organisations.

Of my third heading, I have already said that its demands have grown out of the rapidly changing social structure, and consciousness, of our people, and out of our progressive acceptance of a collective responsibility for the preparation for life, and for good citizenship, of our countrymen. If I may compress the experience of some forty-five years of study of what we have learned to allude to apologetically as ' education,' into a sentence, I may say that we have long been discovering with an alarming certainty that we were paying too much attention to the training of the mind alone and far too little to the psycho-physical processes by which qualities, latent in every individual, and which we can summarise as the chivalrous virtues, self-reliance, endurance, alertness, hardihood, daring, mutual service, self-sacrifice, are brought into the dominant position in controlling conduct. This neglect has been responsible for most of the unappeasable unrest in Europe ; and even at home, reformers had got no further before the war than some most interesting experiments, in readjusting educational emphasis.

But the war made the problem suddenly vital. The very able authorities concerned with the training sections of our great Service departments have been passing our younger human

material swiftly under the close scrutiny of modern testing method. Their judgment has been severe, and their recommendations clear and peremptory. Of our young manhood at 18 a fearsome percentage was already found 'spoiled'; a number more had to be down-graded during training, owing to defective early building up. Even at 16, some fifty per cent. were pronounced already injured material. For the urgent purposes of this war, great systems of reconditioning and the like have been introduced, to render serviceable an always improving percentage. But the authorities are looking further ahead: they are awake to the absolute necessity of using the occasion to establish principles which shall lead to the permanent better health, and fitter conditioning of our people. Upon their initiative the whole question of pre-service training, of the healthy remodelling of the life and of the conditioning of our younger generation, in school, industry, corps, or other voluntary organisation, is being brought to the front as a national requisite. Again I must not detain you with detail, as to how this is to be done. It must be enough here to say that, for the learning of right values in living, it is now accepted that boys or young men must spend some part of each year at least under conditions which encourage them to realise themselves physically, and as individuals, in forms of adventure demanding resource, courage and endurance, and to realise themselves socially, by service for and in a community. And these conditions must be those of reality. They must be felt to be real hardship, real endurance, real risk, above all real service. For these conditions the sea has in the past been the school of our race, the first school of our people, which produced in them their historic quality. Sea schools, with practical sailing, have already been started during the war, to take a basic part in the new programme. Mountaineering, however, as many of us have found in our own lives, affords the like conditions for discipline, and for adventure. The mountain and the sea, the uneven surfaces of land and water, irregular, unforeseeable, but with dangers mitigable by experience, stand alone as training schools of manhood. And of the two, mountain climbing is being found to exercise the greater fascination upon young minds.

All this is now appreciated by the wide outlook of our leaders; and the Alpine Club's hegemony in the mountain world being acknowledged even in such circles, I have been approached, from several sides and in several different forms, with questions

as to our willingness (for our preparedness has been assumed) to supply advice and instructors and the essence of our world-wide experience in this new sphere: the sphere of mountain camp and hill training for the young. At one time the question has come from leaders in industry; and now, only within the last few weeks, by a coincidence which shows the parallel lines upon which our policy and that of the country have been moving, the suggestion has come to us from one of the great Service departments that we should allow one of the three principal cadet training corps of the country, which proposes to introduce mountaineering as the 'peak' subject of its physical training and mental incitement, to be affiliated to the Alpine Club for all mountain guidance.

We had then these three headings under which requests and even appeals were being made to us, the answers to which must seriously affect our immediate and still uncertain present during the war, and eventually, the future conditioning and health of our people. They were being put to us as the premier authority of the mountain world; and you will know that we were in a position to do little more in answer than make a list of names for this or that purpose, make a personal recommendation here or there, make a reference to some other club which we happened to know had investigated this problem or that device, hold out hopes of better future co-operation; but, for the rest, explain apologetically that there was no connected machinery and no collective opinion existing in our mountain world, which could be oracularly consulted.

It was natural, I think, that the first effect of this realisation of our position was to lead me to examine what, in fact, our Club does represent; what was intended to be, what was, and what is its function, and how it may look to develop that function if it is to continue to occupy its high position, and to discharge a proportionately dignified responsibility, in our altering society and before an always growing and always more exacting mountain public.

It was such a glorious past to survey: that of a happy elect, apart, royal in its seclusion, responsible to no lesser audience, and entrusted with a golden key to fairyland for annual private use. And those were such bright years for me to look back into, before the last war, when, as between the radiant Alpine seasons and the gay home-climbing holidays, we would drop in upon the hall at Savile Row, and, pacing discreetly past the courtly

but critical ranks of our silvery-headed seniors on the green sofas—grey velvet presences all of them unless brushed the wrong way—plunge at the back into the vortex of infinite hopes, unlimited horizons, among the wits and wanderers and knight errants of those well assured and comfortable years. It was a period, and we were of an age, to believe that every other member must be a good friend since he too must have the hills at heart. In the impatient, working intervals between mountain adventures, this Club came to be to us a haven of happy recall, an air-vent, through which we could surge up from under the chill, opaque ice-cover of ordinary occupation, and breathe again for a while under a wide blue sky of memories such as could inspire only to fresh achievement. Or I might call it a garden of escape from commonplace, for our imagination and purpose, full of coloured personalities and the sunshine of generous sympathy. Out of this atmosphere of grace and promise grew, I think, that feeling we have all acquired, for our Alpine Club. I can find no better name for it than that it is a feeling of affectionate responsibility. The Club, as we know, was never a centre or an association for our common action: our active climbing was performed in our chosen and personal groups or partnerships. The Club was the home, we may say, of our associated sentiment for great mountaineering: for many of us the least mutable sentiment that life has afforded. Sentiment, however, is a conservative, and not a progressive force. It is inevitable that a community of sentiment should stay unaffected by many of the ordinary changes which must take place in any association existing for common action. And the sentiment for mountains upon which our Club was based did not change.

From time to time, however, our members have seemed to grow aware that they were taking part in active mountain developments outside our walls which found no reflection in our traditional atmosphere within. In my own generation, we passed through a mood of this awareness. Uneasily we retired into a reconstructive 'Cave,' with conspiratorial dinners at the Blue Posts. A number of contradictory inferences might be drawn from the fact that our very small bandit company included both my predecessor and my successor in this Chair. In a series of constructive reforms we altered the balance between the elected and the non-elected members of Committee, as a democratic move, stiffened our qualifications as an aristocratic one, reported on the JOURNAL—and incidentally brought back Percy

Farrar from his continental absorption into close communion with the Club, as its assistant editor. Since the regular lectures left our talkative generation too little time to converse, I proposed the Informal Meetings with no papers ; to which later I suggested the addition of the Informal dinner—for long a thriving preliminary. In the hope of further promoting sociability, and of securing a passing recognition for our insignificance from our elders at the Monte Rosa, I put forward the scheme for our present Button and Colour. The spirited controversy which ensued served its purpose by enlivening our proceedings for months ; and when the Club, not a little to our surprise, adopted both suggestions, I was commissioned to choose the colours and Farrar to design the button. For months I was buried under mounds of monstrous and silken iridescence, sent as suggestions, in multicoloured stripes and spots and even rainbow speckles. As the blues and whites of the Alps turned out to be already in use in every possible combination, I fell back, as you know, upon colours taken from our own hills and the lower alpine pastures. Now that the years of action are past, I shall admit that few acknowledgments have seemed kindlier than the award of the button with ' No. 1 ' engraved upon its unseen reverse. It was all what Conan Doyle would term a ' very joyous bickering ' ; and when Douglas Freshfield, a most spirited and sporting opponent, exclaimed sarcastically—' Well, and what next will you propose ? No doubt, the admission of ladies ! ' I remember answering in all sincerity—' No, no. But if the Club gets sleepy again—I'll support you in as lively a movement to reabolish both button and colour ! '—so fixedly was I still looking only inward, at the coming and going of the shadows upon our own Club walls. Yet another stirring of the surface came after the last war ; but too many of our younger leaders had fallen in battle, or in mountain accident, for it to broaden towards any new horizon. Again, when we had had time to grow a new and vigorous younger generation, and it was beginning just before this war to take a strong part in our counsels—if with as yet no very defined purpose—the new storm broke.

As I looked back now, with these memories about me, and considered answers to the appeals made to us, I began to wonder if we had, in these movements, really been only intent to keep the Club up to the mark in its select sociable tradition, for our own pleasure ? Had our stimulating unrest, behind the cover of the Blue Posts, been still oblivious of any idea of taking greater

responsibility for the mountains or for the mountain craft we cultivated ? It had in very truth always seemed correct enough to my Alpine mind, that we should disclaim any responsibility for the Alps or their amenities, other than a scenic protest if asked for by the Swiss themselves ; since we might not seem to be meddling in another country's affairs. On the other hand—puzzlingly enough—it had also seemed equally decorous that we should disclaim all responsibility for the hills or for the climbing in our own country, since we were traditionally, logically and exclusively the Alpine Club. Was this suspension of our Olympian society in a care-free mid-sky—' like gods together, carelessly reclined '—neither trespassing upon the problems of our Alpine heaven, nor entangling our feet in the thorny questions of our own hill regions—was this indeed fulfilling the intention of our founders ? Was it they who determined our tradition that to be an Alpine Club man is enough divinity in itself ? It is a splendid feeling, to feel like a god :. nobody has enjoyed it more than myself. But I have found it more often meeting the unknown upon a mountain, than reclining in a Club chair beside the best of friends. In some doubt, I turned to the first rules of the *Constitution* of our Club.

Rule I. The Club shall be *called* the Alpine Club.

Rule II. The *object* of the Club shall be the promotion of good fellowship among mountaineers, of mountain climbing and mountain exploration throughout the world, and of better knowledge of the mountains through literature, science and art.

I stress the words ' called ' and ' object,' because the wording makes it perfectly clear that, from the very first, the purpose of the Club was intended to be a far wider one than the name given to it might be taken to suggest. ' Fellowship among mountaineers,' ' promotion of mountain climbing and mountain exploration throughout the world,' are phrases of very wide scope, and I believe that our founders used them of intent. What then, I wondered, had happened by the way, so to delimit our active function ? Had we in our history continued too long to see ourselves—as once a derisive public regarded all mountain climbers—as a small élite of adventurers, enjoying in almost mystic aloofness the treasures and the lessons to be found among our chosen Alpine heights ? It would be only in accordance with English tradition, if it were so ; for it has been our English way in each and all of the sports we have invented to set to work at once to create, to perfect, and to applaud a small élite in each sport, in each generation, with a kindly feeling by

the way, that the great majority-remainder of contemporaries can get quite a good time out of the game, by looking on.

I have tried, in the last number of the ALPINE JOURNAL,[1] 'Mountain Prophets,' to analyse something of the attitude of our pioneers and of their followers towards the Alps. The fact that all mountaineering started in the Alps, and that its story was engrossed by our pioneers in purely Alpine chronicles, undoubtedly did serve to identify the word, and the idea, of mountaineering with the Alps, not only in the minds of early climbers but of ourselves their successors. In my own recollection, as I have related, mountaineering meant Alpine climbing. All the other experimentation which we were beginning, on our own cliffs, on Asiatic ranges, on roofs and so on, was variation upon, preparation for, or parody of, Alpine climbing. While we might vary our practice grounds with conscious audacity, we did not question the pure Alpine doctrine.

But, while I was writing of the development out of the earlier school of those I have called the later prophets, it was growing plain to me that the attitude of the climbing generations following upon my own had been altering with equal persistence. Much of our sacred tradition of guided Alpine climbing had gone by the board. Mary no longer bothered even to go to the Alps. Some went on distant exploration of ranges demanding new techniques; others specialised upon snow technique or rock technique alone, and only used the Alps or other upright places as opportunities for its perfecting. Was it possible then—and I am giving you the slow order of my thoughts—that the whole romantic history of mountain climbing was really only the story of the discovery of a new physical skill, of the perfecting of a new technique for the human body, of a new series of co-ordinated movements that could be arranged in agreeable rhythm upon any sequence of arbitrary accidents of angle and surface? Once the sense of the new technique had been awakened, almost by accident, upon the accidents forming the beauty of Alpine peaks, and once the desire of the human animal to repeat the sensation had been aroused, was it not perfectly logical that the climbing technique should be transferred, by the next generation practising it, to the more titillating difficulties of rock surface on our own hills, or to the sterner resistances of ice and snow in the vastness of Himalaya? Was it not inevitable that, after this manner, perfection in technical climbing achievement should have replaced, as an ideal, accomplishment in traditional Alpine

[1] *A.J.* 54. 97 *sqq.*

mountaineering? Every evidence seemed now to point to the conclusion that this was what had been taking place, among ourselves, and still more among continental climbers.

For a time, and reluctantly, I became convinced that it was indeed so. It looked as if the current of climbing enthusiasm had swept on, leaving our Alpine tradition as high as ever, but a little lonely, a monument to a past epoch. The history of the Alpine Club, which we had decided to produce, seemed now as if it might emerge as the story of a single episode, crystallised and threaded upon a chain of technical climbing progress. An image of the Club kept forcing itself upon attention, as the crystallisation of only the first stage in a mountaineering development, an Alpine fixation of the sentiment of the pioneers for the first mountains to be explored.

This rather depressing picture stayed with me for some time—just so long indeed as I continued to examine the history of mountaineering simply as a progressive technique or craft. From the moment, however, when I turned again to consider not the craft but the human climbers, to study the attitude of mind towards their mountaineering of those who were the leading exponents of the successive technical changes, a different and a sharply contrasted picture began to take form. I must try to put it to you shortly. If the story of mountaineering had been in truth, as it seemed to me for a time, only the story of the discovery and progress of a new human skill, then the notable improvements which had been proceeding, identically and at an equal pace, in the technique of our home climbers and of their continental contemporaries, not only upon rocks but upon Himalayan ranges, must, upon every conceivable ground, have produced an identical mountaineering spirit, a like attitude towards their climbing, throughout the whole generation of climbers, of the new, technical order; and this irrespective of nationality. But this was not the case. An essential difference between the spirit in which our younger mountaineers, and in which the majority of their continental contemporaries have been approaching their climbing during this century, has continued to manifest itself. If anything, the distinction grew more marked during the inter-war years, in every sphere of mountain activity, Alpine, Himalayan, rock climbing and ski-ing. I have discussed this difference at some length in a recent talk to the Alpine Club,[2] and I venture to refer you to it. I need only add here that in no field was the contrast brought into bolder relief

[2] *A.J.* 52. 172 *sqq.*

than in that of the ski-ing Olympics, just before this war, when it fell to a member of this Club to define the British attitude with wit and finality.[3]

We have, of course, been apt to take it for granted that our younger climbers should hold firm to the national tradition that the spirit and manner of the doing alone signify, and that a result has only relative importance. But if you are familiar with mountain performance and mountaineering publication of recent years, I do not doubt that you will agree with me, that it is impressive how consistently, against great pressure, our experts have maintained this high tradition, during a period when the knowledge of rival and often competitive achievement was so dinned on our ears, and when the attraction always exercised by superb technical performance upon the ambition of technicians themselves expert, was so insistent. Indeed I know of no more than a sentence or two in our recent climbing literature where a falsified mountaineering value can be detected.

Now these, our mountaineers, have learned their abiding tradition from their climbing companies, their colleagues, clubs and associations. And those, our climbing clubs, have derived their tradition, by word of mouth and by example, from the great mountain pioneers and members of our Alpine Club, who—as I related in the last number of the ALPINE JOURNAL[4]—in the finest missionary spirit passed on the new enthusiasm and first formulated the corporate tradition for the several organisations they inspired and helped to create.

This Alpine Club was, then, the matrix in which the great mountaineering tradition, from which all these descents derive, was established by the first mountaineers, and which they fashioned for the perpetuation of their spirit. The high estimation in which the Club is held outside these walls, the charm it continues to exercise upon all young mountaineers, however impatient they may show themselves of its purely Alpine format, are due to its still embodying this vital tradition, to its still maintaining its watchful insistence upon what it holds to be the only right attitude to climbing.

You will share my pleasure in arriving at this certainty ; just as you may not have shared my period of anxious doubt. But the doubt had still to be accounted for ; and now that we are mutually reassured as to our essential rightness of heart, as a club, I may ask you to review for a moment some possible grounds why the doubt presented itself.

[3] Arnold Lunn, *Mountain Jubilee*, p. 160.
[4] *A.J.* 54. *loc. cit.*

We have preserved the spirit within, as it was breathed first in the Alps in the freshness of the mountaineering dawn. Have we equally observed the spirit, or letter, of our second Rule, which was to guide our mountaineering day—the promotion of good fellowship among all mountaineers and mountain climbing throughout the world? The mountain missionaries as we call them, to this and other countries, have indeed been of our number, and they have spread our doctrine; but they have worked independently of us. The web of climbing organisations, to which they have passed on the spirit of our Alpine tradition, has not come of our initiative, or even with anything but a belated recognition by us. We have held contentedly, as a club, to an agreeable and sociable form and policy, well designed for a period when all mountaineers were still Alpine and still intimate, but which has not altered concordantly with the wider developments of mountaineering: developments provided for by our founders when formulating our constitution.

Questionings, as I have said, have arisen among our younger elements, from time to time in our history. They have been shared by our Presidents. C. E. Mathews, a very notable President, was clearly concerned about our future. Martin Conway's independent initiative and Freshfield's original mind went so far as to propose the broadening of our whole basis of activity, and the undertaking of much of the work by our secretariat which has since fallen to the Royal Geographical Society. Characteristically, however, Conway disappeared into the wilds before the Club discussion took place, and left its conduct to Freshfield; whose genius was apt to advocate the right views with arguments of a distracting provocativeness. There has been a convenient inconsistency, too, in the carrying out of our Alps-only policy. We have always encouraged members individually to make their own further explorations. We have of late years begun to show hospitality to our home climbing clubs. We have even, when the great Everest opportunity broke upon us, found ourselves adequate to undertaking a half share or so in the enterprise. But collectively, as a reiterated policy, we have called ourselves the Alpine Club and we have continued within that calling. We have never, as a club, taken the bold step forward, towards implementing the broader mountaineering purpose of rule number two of our Constitution.

I hope to have made clearer to you some of the reasons why our collective power, our machinery and our representative

authority proved insufficient to respond to the emergency demands made upon us in war. Once I had cleared my own mind of the fear that we might be only a period piece, and had realised that we embodied something tremendously worth while, and which in the onset of time it now appeared might be made use of with real advantage to our people, it remained to plan the practical steps to enable us to respond better to the demands which will be made upon us with the return of peace. I am confident both of your sympathy and your support in the policy which, even in wartime, your Committee felt justified in adopting, in the discharge of its responsibilities. Starting from a memorandum by the President, the Committee during the last eighteen months took into review every aspect of our position, and our prospects, as a club. They have been assisted by reports from sub-committees, dealing with our external relations, our internal affairs, our qualifications, and so on. In the result they accepted the principle that the Alpine Club has a responsibility to mountaineering in general, one given to it by its origin as the first mountain organisation, by its Constitution, and by the historic position with which it has become invested by public opinion : a responsibility for our mountaineers, for their tradition and guidance, and for the home mountains which they frequent, their scenic protection and due control. They decided that it falls properly to us, to take the lead in promoting a common policy and a single and authoritative mountaineering voice, in all matters affecting our own mountain regions and the climbing in them ; and that it no less belongs to our province, to improve our machinery and assemble our experience, the better to give assistance and guidance in all more distant exploration. As a first step, we have invited the leading climbing clubs in our islands to send representatives to meet ours, in February, 1944, to consider, under the chairmanship of our President, how best we may constitute a joint Standing Advisory Committee on mountaineering. We trust that this Committee when constituted will take into its purview all the problems as they arise which concern our mountain areas or the well being of our climbers while in the hills ; and that they will make recommendations to our several clubs such as will enable joint and responsible action to be taken. Secondly, with the valuable co-operation of the Climbers' Club, we are putting in hand an elementary guide to hill walking and scrambling, such as, when once our intercommunication of organisations is in being, can inform and bring some discretion into the influx

of unordered and untutored scramblers at present flooding in rapidly increasing numbers over our crags, with ever attendant danger to themselves and resultant tragic nuisance to the local inhabitants. Thirdly, we are offering our services or those of the Standing Advisory Committee when formed, as the responsible consultative mountaineering body, in the event of the bringing of all our mountain districts under a National Parks scheme. Fourthly, our widening of policy has coincided almost startlingly with an invitation from the Director of the Army Cadet Force, Lord Bridgeman, and the Inspector of Physical Training to the War Office, Colonel Wand-Tetley, to accept the affiliation of the Army Cadet Force in all that affects its adoption of mountain climbing as a 'peak' subject tor its cadets: to appoint our representative at its H.Q., and to nominate instructors to organise the experimental camp and to design the courses.

So far, I think, we have been wise to proceed, even under war limitations and with the reduced authority left to us by the absence of so many of our active members. By associating, in council, the influence which we undoubtedly possess, from our metropolitan position and from the personal contacts of many of our members with the leading departments and interests of the country, with the better local knowledge, nearer observation and earlier opportunity for action of the climbing organisations geographically distributed over our island—organisations which, in their turn, are generally in contact with yet wider circles of provincial rambling, youth, camping and hostel associations—there is no doubt that we shall be in a position to initiate common action, precautionary, corrective or advisory, in many debatable areas, and upon many mountain problems, in which at present our clubs and climbers speak with a divided and weak voice and upon little exact or digested information. We should look upon the establishment of a closer and continuous relationship with our kindred clubs, such as should follow upon this preliminary approach, as a means to the establishing of a community of mountaineering information, a pooling of experience in every branch of mountaineering and its dependent arts and sciences, which can be made available by the right machinery, for our explorers and climbers of all varieties, abroad and at home. Without any sacrifice of the friendly and social atmosphere which has historically distinguished our company, I am convinced that we can take on, by considered steps, this larger advisory responsibility which is expected of us, both in relation to the State and to other mountain authorities.

Among ourselves, I feel sure, we shall attach a major importance to that which we are being asked, and may be able, to do, in the way of introducing the lessons and incitements of mountain exploring and of climbing, as part of the healthier training of our oncoming generations. We ought not to be surprised, we to whom mountain climbing has been both the discipline of life and its delight, and who have proclaimed so long and so often what we gained from it—if perhaps with an amused certainty that no one was really listening to us!—we should not now be surprised, if we find that our sowing has fallen upon a new fertile soil, in the upturning of our social and educational ideals during these last years. In the result, from many quarters, from the services, from industry, from the schools, men who were never in our sense mountaineers but who have learned from us what mountaineering may mean, are asking us to bring the adventure of hills, its discipline and its physical and moral stimulus, into the new and sound training which they are designing for the young in manifold organisations and voluntary camp holidays.

I believe that this is a work which many of our mountaineers and especially those who will be returning from active service with experience of how far hill training can be used as a radical pre-conditioning in youth, will be both qualified and glad to undertake; and we shall be looking forward to the offer of their help as soon as conditions set them free. With or without our participation, I can assure you that this usage of our hills and of mountain climbing is on the way. I take it that we might still after the war, if the Club preferred, retreat within our 'Alpine calling,' and once again 'recline like gods together' upon our golden past. If we do so, I for one cannot foresee our future: nor do I hold that we should deserve much future. Or we may follow further along the path that opens now before us, of making ready to promote 'the fellowship of mountaineers' and the benefits of 'mountain climbing throughout our world.'

As we look backward along our mountaineering course—as I am looking backward now upon nearly sixty years of mountain friendships and of friendship with mountains,—and become interested in the nature of the influence which climbing has exerted upon our lives, we can see that there have always been the two aspects. The one, the general influence upon us of climbing comradeships and of the charm of our personal associa-

tion during our more reflective and reminiscent club intervals. The other, of deeper import, the relationship which each of us, separately and alone, established between himself and the mountains he climbed, between his own personality and that of each new hill. In extending, therefore, the influence of this Club, and in enlarging its area of responsibility, I believe that we shall be harvesting, for other and future mountain companies, some of the rich yield of pleasure and of profit which we ourselves have been receiving, in surplus, through the years, from climbing comradeship and from our sympathetic mountain brotherhood. But we shall be repaying the greater debt, that which each of us has owed to the mountains themselves, that which they have brought to every one of us, in solitude, in storm and in sunlight, of inspiring enterprise and of tranquillising thought, if we can, by any directive or advisory action of ours, in conjunction with our fellow mountaineers, increase the opportunity for our younger countrymen, each to find his own adventure, each to form his own relationship with hills ; or if we can help by our experience to guide that relationship into harmony with the great mountaineering tradition we have inherited.

THE ALA DAĞ

By R. A. HODGKIN

A TRAVELLER in the northbound Taurus express will probably be fortunate enough to get some impressive views of the mountains, for although his timetable says that they are traversed at night, the operation of unknown oriental factors often decides that the train runs many hours late. Thus did I get my first view of the mountains as the train wove its way in and out of the innumerable tunnels which thread the vertical sided gorge of the Çakit Su. The two great engines then struggle up the long incline to Ulukişla where the original German-built line continues over the plateau towards Konya and a more modern line branches first north-eastwards to Kayseri (Caesarea Maxaca) and then north-west to Ankara.

From this line in early June of 1943 it was hard to believe that the mountains bounding the rolling plateau to the south were not a fully glaciated range. To the west lay the Bolkar Dağ range of the Taurus with plenty of snow in the folds of the high ridges and to the east extended the serrated chain of the Ala Dağ. They looked interesting, especially one peak which stood isolated and steep at the northern end. This turned out to be Demirkazik, visited by E. H. Peck in 1942, which we envisaged as our main objective for this year.