

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

BY J. P. FARRAR, PRESIDENT OF THE ALPINE CLUB.

SIX years ago, Sir Edward Davidson told us how these triennial inflictions of an address to the Club arose.

Now two of the three years of my Presidency from a mountaineering point of view have been almost barren, and the third permitted only a scant revival of active mountaineering.

You will thus be prepared for a very prosaic address from me. You cannot well expect from me great literary landmarks like some addresses of my predecessors.

The attendances at our meetings, among other signs, convince me that the Club's interest in our pursuit is as keen as ever, and that the repression of the last six years will be followed by an outburst of great mountaineering energy.

With respect to the internal affairs of the Club, we started the first year of my term (1917) with 658 members. We expect to start next year with 642.

It is a great satisfaction to see that we have still with us two members of 60 years' standing: Professor Bonney and Sir James Ramsay of Bamff, who opened the Midi route nearly 65 years ago; while four—Mr. Edward Buxton, Mr. Blanford, Mr. Hawkshaw, and Father J. K. Stone—have been members for 59 years.

We have actually 80 members of 50 years' standing or more, but Mr. Freshfield's 55 years of membership surely indicate a remarkable degree of precocity.

Our financial position at the end of 1918, the last year for which full figures are available, was very sound, and the estimates for 1919 leave no cause for any anxiety.

This position is due in a great measure to the self-sacrifice of my good friend Charles Wollaston, who has served under three Presidents with masterly tact, or shall I say with tactful mastery?

Unfortunately we have lost by death many members. Losses up to the date of the last meeting have been mentioned from the Chair, and recorded in the obituary notices in the JOURNAL.

First and foremost stands Charles Pilkington, of whom I had the honour to speak at the February meeting. His place among us will always be kept.

In Frederick Gardiner, who speedily followed his comrade, the Club lost a most indefatigable mountaineer, of whom his companion, Lawrence Pilkington, has written a sympathetic notice for the JOURNAL.

Our losses further included pioneers like Liveing and Woodmass and Rivington—men of science like De Candolle and Hopkinson—explorers like W. Spotswood Green—Philpott, the survivor of the famous partnership of Hornby, Philpott, and Almer—Roosevelt, the sometime U.S. President, great-hearted in whatever he did.

The loss of these men must be expected by a veteran Club like ours and borne with resignation.

But there are losses of a different kind. The Club mourns with proud regret its sons fallen in battle in the full strength of manhood. I mention only the losses of the Presidential period: Gerald Arbuthnot, H. O. S. Gibson, Cyril Hartree, Charlie Inglis Clark, R. E. Thompson, T. E. Goodeve, Nevile Done, whose clear and energetic voice I still seem to hear as almost six years ago to-night he thanked the then retiring President. Others, Bertram Hopkinson, Russell Clarke, and Henri Duhamel, veteran of 1870, volunteer of 1914, equally gave their lives for their country even if not actually in battle.

The Journal has paid tribute to their memories. The Club will not forget. But our tale of losses is not yet told.

In John Herbert Wicks, the Club loses a distinguished member. His mountaineering record is so well known to every man here that I need not dwell on it.

I well remember that his election to Committee in 1891 was accepted with peculiar satisfaction by the hard-climbing members of the day. We looked on him as our particular Committee man, and he remained to the end a type of English climber of whom we were proud. He was essentially a strong man, silent, sagacious in council, steadfast in danger, uncomplaining in defeat, of great endurance, sound in knowledge capable in execution—a staunch friend said, if needs be, to be a fearless opponent.

A picturesque figure is lost to us in the Rev. Florence Thomas Wethered, elected in 1878. In his time a very active mountaineer, good enough with old Papa Almer to descend the N. face of the Mönch—he remained to the end the most enthusiastic of my correspondents. Scarce a week passed without bringing me an epistle bubbling over with delightful energy. There has been no truer son of the Club.

We have lost in Mr. John Stogdon a member elected in

1869. His delightful 'Random Memories,' which appeared in the *JOURNAL* a little over two years ago, revealed to us the man, old in years if you like, but full of the splendid fervour of youth, revelling in memories of many a glorious day on the great mountains. It was a privilege to know and to see him in his own family and surroundings, as I did when I went over to Harrow about the paper. I feel that he died game and young in heart as ever—feelings and sympathies always keen. To Mrs. Stogdon, as keen and responsive as he was himself, we offer our respectful sympathy.

Lt.-Col. Sir Henry Trotter, elected in 1875, served originally on the Great Indian Survey, and had travelled in Turkestan and the Near East. He saw service with the Turkish Army in Asia Minor in the 1877 campaign, and was often employed by our own Government on missions of much responsibility.

Mr. F. W. Headley, elected in 1882, was a Haileybury master, and, like many of his profession, an ardent mountaineer. In 1910 many of us can recall his reading a very interesting paper on the 'Birds of the Alps.'

Mr. Larden, elected in 1886, best known by his monograph on the Arolla climbs, was not by any means a centrist. He had visited other parts of the Alps, and, in 1909, the Tupungato district in the Andes. He was likewise the author of a book of his Alpine journeys, and of a monograph on the inscriptions on Swiss chalets.

In Canon Henry Martin, elected in 1896, we lost an ardent lover of the mountains. His life's work was done as Principal of Winchester Diocesan Training College, which post he held for 34 years, but in many other capacities he rendered splendid service to the community.

We have also lost a distinguished Honorary Member, Dr. Moreno, the well-known Argentine traveller and scientist. He was the founder and for many years director of the La Plata Museum, and rendered signal service to his country as High Commissioner in the Boundary delimitation with Chili.

We have lost three great guides, Peter Knubel, Christian Jossi, and Johann Köderbacher, to whom tribute has been paid in the *JOURNAL*.

If we have lost all these old friends, I feel sure the Club may at least claim one potential member. Surely in the vigorous, if youthful, son of Geoffrey and Eleanor Young, grandson of Sir George Young and of William Cecil Slingsby, we may look forward, if breed counts, to an altogether transcendental mountaineer.

The Club learned with regret that Ulrich Almer, worthy son of a valiant father, had, in his old age, fallen on evil days. It is not the habit of this Club to neglect men who have served them well. A fund was immediately got together which ought to suffice to make Almer an allowance sufficient for the rest of his life.

During the period under review, MM. Ferrand, le Chevalier de Cessole, Puiseux, Martel, le Colonel Godefroy, distinguished French mountaineers, and MM. Paul Montandon and Julien Gallet, the well-known Swiss mountaineers, accepted Honorary Membership of this Club, while the French and Italian Clubs have been good enough to enter several of us among their Honorary Members. We value the honour as a proof of solidarity which we will leave nothing undone to foster.

M. le Baron Gabet, President of the C.A.F., whom we have the honour to welcome to-night, has very courteously intimated on behalf of his Club their desire to bring together our two Clubs, and to strengthen the claims of mountaineering in France, by electing to their Club any members of ours. The last act of my office will be to issue a circular inviting you to take advantage of this offer.

Major Morrison-Bell told us from this place of his brilliant Zermatt season; and I come now to the principal ascents of the year 1919.

Mr. R. W. Lloyd, led by Joseph Pollinger, ascended the steep N.N.W. ice slopes of the Col de Bionnassay, thus completing this Col. He also ascended the Cervin by the Galerie, of which he speaks with enthusiasm, and descended by the Zmutt—a new combination.

Messrs. Mallory and H. E. L. Porter made a new ascent of the Aig. du Midi from the N. side by what was mainly an arête route. They were much aided by crampons, and state that the route is absolutely sound, as indeed the marked photograph which will appear in the ALPINE JOURNAL shows it to be. Previous routes on this face have been unsatisfactory, and the new route reflects credit on the climbers' judgment.

The same party ascended the Grands Charmoz from the glacier de Trélaporte—'a very stiff rock climb and quite dramatic in its manner'—so Mallory writes, and those of us who have climbed with, or in my case, I should say *below*, Mallory, will appreciate what he calls 'very stiff.' The ascent was a variation—probably an improvement—on the Thorold-Pollinger ascent of 1899, and of the Fontaine-Ravanel descent

of 1902. Pollinger reported stone fall, whereas Mallory's party kept mainly on a rib on the upper part of the face, and thus avoided any danger from stones.

It is a peculiar satisfaction that climbs of this importance have been carried through by two of our younger men without assistance.

Our Honorary Member, M. Paul Montandon, repeated Mr. Young's route over the Rothe Zähne of the Gspaltenhorn, and writes in most enthusiastic terms of its delights. The words 'I know of no other climb, not even in the Dolomites, resembling this one,' from a man of his wide experience mean much.

He and Knubel traversed the Cervin by the Zmutt, the Gabelhorn-Wellenkuppe and ascended the Täschhorn and the Nordend. He *says* he is over 60, so there is still hope, or possibly despair, for some of us.

Mr. Raeburn, another veteran in years, is going as strong as ever. Unable to find a companion, he traversed the Meije *alone*. I shall not presume to criticise his succumbing to the fascination of an occasional solitary climb. He is a competent judge of his own powers. At the same time, only *Raeburns* had better follow his example.

Captain George Finch, in the absence of his brother Maxwell with his battery in Constantinople, suffered from strange companions, but made a new route to the glacier on the W. face of the Nordend, which peak he traversed to the Silber-sattel. He ascended the Dent d'Hérens by the N.W. arête, not often done, although opened nearly 40 years ago.

The eminent Italian mountaineers, the brothers Gugliermi, have made a new ascent of the S.W. face of Lyskamm. The route lies between the arêtes Perazzi and del Naso, and strikes the summit itself. A route up the S. face of the W. Lyskamm was made by Signor Ravelli and some other Italian climbers.

The most interesting expedition of the year is the ascent of the face of M. Blanc de Courmayeur contained between the Peuteret and Brouillard arêtes, done by Messrs. Courtauld and Oliver—two of the strongest and most capable of our young men—with a strong guide contingent, Henri and Adolphe Rey and young Adolf Aufdenblatten of Zermatt.

H. O. Jones, after his great campaign of 1911, brought home the first detailed photo of the face taken from the Innominata. This appeared in the ALPINE JOURNAL, vol. xxvi. It was quite obvious that there was a route up this face, and from that time it became a subject of confidential discussion in high

mountaineering circles. Interest in it was stimulated further when the possible route was referred to in the unsigned masterly annual review of the mountaineering season, which the *Times* used to publish, and which I hope to see entrusted once more to the same able hands.

Its history dates back to at least 1874, as in that year Mr. T. S. Kennedy and Mr. Garth Marshall, with Johann Fischer and Hans Jaun, two able guides, made an attempt on this face or possibly on the Broglia arête; while a month later Mr. Marshall and Fischer were killed on the Broglia Glacier, as they were returning from a renewed attempt, or reconnaissance, Ulrich Almer alone escaping.

My good friend, Joseph Gugliermina, writes to me that he and his brother Baptiste, the great authorities on the Italian face of Mont Blanc, have for some years had in view a route up this face from the Fresnay arête, and reconnoitred it in 1915 and 1916, reaching in the latter year a height on it well above the level of the Aig. Blanche, when the time of day and threatening weather compelled their retreat. Last summer, with their friend François Ravelli, they again reached the higher end of the Fresnay arête where it abuts against the face, but did not feel justified in going on, owing to stones falling.

Our men in more favourable conditions started from the Col de Fresnay, and saw no stones. The arête up which they started ran out high up in the face, and they were compelled to traverse to another arête, and so eventually gained the great main Brouillard arête which they followed for 40 minutes to the summit of M. Blanc de Courmayeur.

The next climbers might try either to reach the summit direct (which, however, I think is not possible, as even the Peuteret arête reaches it a few yards on the Brouillard arête side), or to gain the latter arête at possibly a higher point.

Other climbs that were made by foreign climbers, and which only nearly a month of perfect weather rendered possible, are:—

From a bivouac on the Mischabeljoch the traverse of the Täschhorn, Dom, Südlenzspitze and Nadelhorn to the Mischabel hut. The porters, before starting back from the Mischabeljoch with the sleeping kit, amused themselves by strolling up the Täschhorn in 3 hours. From the Trift the young guide Perren, with a traveller, made the ascent of the Rothhorn, whence the whole arête over the Trifhorn, Wellenkuppe and Gabelhorn was followed to the Arbenjoch and Zermatt.

The coiffeur at Saas Fee amused himself by ascending Fletschhorn and traversing Laquinhorn and Weissmies to Almigel.

I understand that H.M. the King of the Belgians, whom we are proud to number among our Honorary Members, showed in a short but arduous climbing campaign that the strain of over four years' war has not subdued his mountaineering ardour.

Two years ago we all heard with profound sympathy of the grievous affliction that had befallen on active service one of the most brilliant members of this Club. I mean, of course, Geoffrey Young. But he is quite undefeatable. He has been doing hard climbs in Wales and even harder in Cumberland, N. face of Pillar, 11 hours from Buttermere and back, the A buttress on Gimmer Crag, and other ascents. All he remarks is 'The scree etc. stay rather strenuous.' I understand the French Government have made him recently a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, while the Italian Government have nominated him Cavaliere of the Corona d'Italia—well-earned honours.

The only great climb by an Englishwoman of which I have heard is Miss Pickford's traverse of the Charmoz with Pollinger. She also did the Tacul. We, of course, look upon her as quite one of ourselves.

I do not think I need mention any other climbs. There have been no accidents to any of our people.

One of the best of the Swiss climbers, Herr Karl Steiner, and Herr Michel, were killed by lightning on the Scerscen-Bernina arête; a young Frenchman and two good Chamonix guides, Clément Payot and Jean Ducroz, were killed on the Aig. Verte. They seem to have found in the great couloir a thin layer of bad snow on ice which balled under their crampons. They fell about 1200 feet, and were found in the *rimaie* at the foot of the slope.

Two Swiss climbers slipped on the descent of the W. arête of Bietschhorn when turning by a snow slope one of the towers, and, unable to stop themselves, were picked up on the Bietschthal side, dead.

Herr Gustav Jahn, a well-known artist and one of the ablest of the Austrian climbers, and Herr M. Kofler were killed when attempting the very difficult N.W. arête of the Ödstein in the so-called Gesäuse in Styria, a favourite haunt of the Viennese. A glowing tribute to his memory from Herr Pichl appears in the *Ö.A.Z.* Jahn, with all the experience and strength of his 40 years, was a thoroughly capable leader,

and the accident only serves to remind us that even the very best mountaineer frequently takes his life in his hand.

S^t. Fadana and Gamma, both experienced climbers, were lost when ascending the N. arête of the Grivola. A snow-storm overtook them at night and no trace of them was found until some time later.

As to the JOURNAL I must leave it to others to say whether it has maintained its position in the conditions due to the war.

On behalf of the Club I venture to offer thanks to Professor Bonney and to Sir Martin Conway for delightful reminiscences, as well as to several other willing helpers.

One announcement I make with the most complete satisfaction. Mr. Yeld has now served as Editor for 24 years, covering 15 volumes. He has deserved well of the Club. The Committee, anxious to find some special way of marking the obligation under which his labours have put us, decided to offer him the distinction of Honorary Member. It is not likely to become a precedent, since there is only one Yeld. I hope he will continue to give the Club the benefit of his guidance and experience.

Of Mr. Montagnier's services to the JOURNAL, I cannot say enough. He has got together from all kinds of sources, at great personal labour and through the good offices of Dr. Alexander Seiler and others, the original records of many important ascents, which were in great danger of perishing.

He has also acquired for the Club a series of Führerbücher of old guides, which are again original records of the highest value—the Bibles of our pursuit, as my enthusiastic friend, the late Mr. Wethered, called them. He has repeatedly presented to the Club books and documents of great value.

He has brought over for presentation to the Club the *Gazette de Lausanne* for 1786 to 1787, in which the interesting correspondence between Bourrit and others dealing with the first ascent of Mont Blanc appeared.

Without his splendid help we could not have kept the JOURNAL going. Moreover, his unflagging and enthusiastic diligence spurred me, who am prone to idleness, into fairly continuous work.

Though absent from its councils, he is ever eager in the service of the Club.

M. Paul Montandon has always placed his great Alpine knowledge at the disposal of the JOURNAL. I am indebted to him for photographs and much assistance.

Whereas in 1917 we published a volume of 373 pages, we

were compelled by the enormous increase in cost to issue only two numbers in 1918, and one number in 1919, making a volume of about 420 pages for the two years.

So long as present prices obtain, I think we must be content with one number a year. High prices naturally mean decreased demand. The Editors, with the willing aid available, can find material enough for more, but the old size of JOURNAL would mean an increase in the members' subscription. We are doubling the price to non-members.

An expression of opinion as to the future of the JOURNAL would be a useful indication to the Committee and Editors.

Alpine books have been few.

Canon Durham has written an animated account of his Alpine journeys. Mr. Weston's 'Playground of the Far East' takes us to the Japanese Alps, which he did so much to make into a playground for their own people. Dr. and Mrs. Workman have carried out a survey of the Siachen Glacier and recorded their expedition in a volume which I reviewed at length in the Journal. We are awaiting with keenest interest Mr. Freshfield's 'Life of De Saussure.'

Dr. Dübi is editing an amplified translation of the Pennine volumes of the 'Climbers' Guides.'

The volume from the Théodule to the Simplon has appeared in French and German, and the remaining volume is well advanced. Any helpful criticism of these is very welcome in view of revised editions.

It is interesting to note that many glaciers are in active advance. At Saas Fee hundreds of trees have had to be cut down, while at Grindelwald barns have been upset and pasture ploughed up by the invading ice.

As to the future of mountaineering, we must expect and ought to encourage independent climbing. This Club has tended to insist that enterprise should wait on experience, as I consider, *over long*. Experience is a bad *substitute* for enterprise. We have been unwilling, or have failed, to recognise the school our Welsh and Scotch and English mountains offer to our young men to overcome their *mountain shyness*, and to learn what can be done in rock-climbing and route-finding. A young man well schooled over here will approach any Alpine problem in a very different manner from what we did 40 years ago. Ice-work, which may be said to be the intellectual side of mountaineering, can only be learned in the Alps, but his apprenticeship to rock-work and route-finding will serve him in good stead when he goes to the Alps.

My good comrade Herbert Reade, in an able article in the *Climbers' Club Journal*, has pointed out the pitfalls and differences a young British-trained climber must expect to find on visiting the Alps. He has emphasised that while sureness of foot and a certain degree of technique may be learned at home, the *art* of mountaineering can only be *mastered* by continuous work under high mountain conditions and competent masters. There is no man more qualified to speak on this subject than one who once implied that he was my *sorely tried* comrade!

We cannot ignore the fact that mountaineering as practised with the *full* approval of this Club has remained in leading strings longer than any other hard pursuit followed by active Englishmen. Good feeling towards a particular guide, or the difficulty of finding a companion of like powers, tastes, and better temper, has had much to do with this result. But this Club is getting old. We must study youth. Caution can be overdone. We must search out, encourage, and bring on young men—into the Club, on to the Committee—I have done what I could in the latter respect. I recommend my successor to do more. We have great traditions, a great past—look to it that we also have a great future—and *that* you cannot have if a majority of our candidates are already men of mature age.

Moreover, the great increase in guides' tariffs and travelling expenses will tend more and more to enforce guideless climbing, since our incomes by no means tend to increase proportionately. There must be no disapproving looks on our side.

There is some talk of an expedition to Mt. Everest, in which the R.G.S. are taking a leading part, no doubt in a measure through the suggestions of a most distinguished predecessor of mine whom we lent them for a season. The Club will give such an expedition every support in its power, and I trust there may be some young men among us able to take part.

We are meantime waiting until the Indian Government is rid of its frontier troubles, as, of course, their approval and material support are indispensable. The altitude record stands, I think, at 24,600 feet, and it is a very rash man who, with the facilities of transport of impedimenta and reconnoitring offered by small airships, will deny the possibility of overcoming the remaining 5000 feet.

It is to be hoped that the Swiss authorities will do what they can, and more than they did, to render the visit of English travellers to their country as free from formalities as possible.

The last five years have drawn the Allies very close together. It is not to be expected that we shall be prepared to enter into relations with the German Alpine Clubs, or to meet, except purely formally, German climbers. Tirolese and Austrians are on a somewhat different footing, as Englishmen with memories of many courtesies can hardly help showing.

I hope my eminent immediate predecessor will permit me to express the Club's supreme satisfaction at his appointment as Master of the Rolls. The whole country rates him high, but no higher than we do.

We are all much pleased that the S.M.C. is to have for its next President one of the best of good fellows and mountaineers—my very good friend Ling.

Gentlemen—I put off to-morrow my high estate. I am proud to have been President, by your favour, of this great Club.

You have, by your sympathy, made my position a delightful one. To many members of the Committee I am much indebted for sound advice and gentle application of the brake on what, age notwithstanding, I fear is a somewhat impetuous nature.

To you all I offer my very grateful thanks.

NARRATIVES OF AN ASCENT OF MONT BLANC IN 1819.

BY JEREMIAH VAN RENSSELAER AND WILLIAM HOWARD.

WITH A NOTE BY HENRY F. MONTAGNIER.

THE two papers reprinted here are undoubtedly the rarest of the seventeen narratives of ascents of Mont Blanc printed by English-speaking travellers during the first half of the last century. They are not even to be found in the remarkably rich collection of works on early mountaineering in the Library of the Alpine Club, and at the present time probably not a score of our members have ever seen them. Yet these two little pamphlets hold an almost unique place in the literature of our pastime. For, with the one exception of Beaufoy's paper on his ascent of Mont Blanc (read before the Royal Society in 1787, but not published until 1817), which Mr. Freshfield reprinted in this JOURNAL a few years ago (vol. xxix. pp. 323-333), they are the earliest accounts of the ascent of an Alpine snow-peak originally written in our language;