intense sunlight. It was not until later that we learned that the glaciers of Ruwenzori, being subject only to a daily rather than a seasonal thaw, are exceptionally stable. Half an hour later we rejoined our guides around their fire, and warmed a most welcome meal.

On our descent towards Bujongolo we made a detour on to the crest of Freshfield's Col, whence once more we caught a fleeting glance of Mt. Stanley. As we arrived in camp the mist closed in and rain began to fall. Only then did we realise that we had physically reached the limits of endurance. Too exhausted even to change our clothes and with ferocious headaches, we each swallowed a double dose of aspirin, rolled ourselves in blankets, and soon fell asleep.

Little remains to be said. Our porters were all anxiety to return, and every load had left camp by dawn next morning. Nothing could stop them. All our upward camping-places were passed and our tent was finally pitched in the forest by the Mahoma River. Even then some of the Bakonjo went on to their homes, which were now little more than an hour's walk distant. That evening the weather began to show signs of breaking up, and it is some measure of our good fortune that within a week one of the heaviest rainy seasons on record had definitely set in. Our undertaking had undoubtedly been put through in the nick of time.

Early next morning we were again at Ibanda, and prepared once more to resume the trivial round and common task which occupy so large a proportion of the life of the white man in Central Africa.

Mountains and the Public.

By A. D. GODLEY.

(Read before the Alpine Club, November 4, 1924.)

I DO not propose to begin by apologising for this paper. Any necessary apologies should be offered by your secretary; it is for him to explain why an address unadorned by any of the usual pictorial adjuncts is thus wantonly inflicted on you. When a wild animal, a lion or (let us say) a boar, escapes from its cage and causes inconvenience to the public, you blame not the beast but the keeper who has let it loose. Mr. Spencer has let me loose; blame him. Having now located responsibility where it properly resides, I pass to

the speaker's usual task of showing the necessity, or at least advisability, of my address. The Alpine Club is now within a measurable distance of the three score years and ten allotted by the Psalmist as the vital span for humanity; and while happily there is no reason to suppose that a society is subject to the laws which govern the individual, still the proximate attainment of this important period marks a very proper time for reflecting on ourselves and the world in which we live. Say, if you will, that the critical date is still two years off, and that in common decency the paper might have waited till then. It might; I wish it had. But in that case it could not be delivered now; and your secretary said he wanted it now.

The subject, then, of this paper being mountaineering and the popular attitude towards it, it is convenient for me that the Dean of St. Paul's should have lately written an article on the same theme: a paper which might, indeed, have provided mine with a reason of existence, were any further reason needed.

The Dean has published some strictures on the mental attitude of those who go, like ourselves, to mountains for recreation. Dr. Inge, who is satisfied with so few things in this present world, is sadly dissatisfied with our manner of life in our holidays among mountains; he says so in an article which he calls 'The Return to Barbarism.' Now we need not quarrel with the title, which, indeed, shows the author in a mood of comparative optimism; for if we return to barbarism, we must at some time have temporarily emerged from it, and I think you will acknowledge that that is a striking admission, for the Dean. So we may at least be thankful for the headline; but in the article itself the writer relapses into his usual severity. We do not adopt a proper mental attitude in face of mountain scenery. We take our Wordsworth to the hills (so Dr. Inge says, and I am sincerely glad to hear it), but this laudable practice does us very little good. For a man may have a Wordsworth in his pocket, yet not be a Wordsworthian; he does not meditate as he ought, he spends far too little of his time in pure contemplation; so the vision of Wordsworth is not for him. 'Most of us,' says the Dean, 'have to confess, with great disappointment, that we cannot feel what the poet did.' The Dean is disappointed about a great many things; but I hardly think that most of us have a right to feel surprised and discouraged because we cannot reproduce Wordsworth's feelings in our own minds. Indeed, it seems that the poet himself had serious difficulties

in this matter. You will remember his theory about the proper stuff of poetry being provided by emotion recollected in tranquillity; and his latest critic has given us a picture (which would be sufficiently diverting if it were possible to be entertained by the sufferings of others) of poor Mr. Wordsworth making himself quite ill in the troublesome and not always successful process of trying to recall his own emotions in comparative tranquillity. Can we hope to succeed where the poet himself sometimes failed? Assuredly the vision of Wordsworth is not for most of us; nor was it always even for him: 'the things that I have seen I now can see no more.' Trying to recapture one's own emotions is a difficult business; trying to recapture someone else's rather recalls the stock definition of metaphysics—a blind man in a coal-cellar at midnight looking for a black hat which isn't there.

However this be, we might at least (says the Dean. and it is here that he does not quite see eye to eye with this Club) try to follow a better rule of life in the mountains. We ought to meditate more. 'Most people,' we are told, 'hardly know what meditation means. They would be astonished if a philosopher told them that contemplation is the highest form of activity. Their idea of activity is the activity of a squirrel in a cage. So they approach the mountains in a wrong spirit. A mountain for them is a sort of glorified greased pole to be swarmed up. Perhaps some of them know what is best for them; but the vision of Wordsworth is not for them.'

In this matter of meditation I cannot help thinking that the Dean demands too much of human nature—which, after all, is in its blind groping fashion pursuing the Ultimate Good, but even in the mountains finds itself hampered by mortal weaknesses. It is quite true, of course, that contemplation is the highest form of activity. Any of you could ask the Librarian to produce the Club copy of Aristotle's 'Ethics,' and could at once put his finger on the passages in which that great teacher insists on the doctrine now presented to us by the Dean. Meditation is indeed the highest form of activity: fortunate are they who can practise it! But how few of us, alas, have that command of their mental machinery which should enable them to meditate at will! It is, I fear, a matter of common experience; direct a man's attention to the grandiose and inspiring surroundings which meet his eyes, and command him to exercise his mind in such speculations as ought to be prompted by scenes of surpassing beauty or interest: will he attune his thinking faculties to his

environment? The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. With the best intentions in the world, he will in all probability at once become incapable of any kind of consecutive thinking. He will be smitten by a mental paralysis. If he retains any power of thought at all, he will find himself reflecting not on the great problems of Man, of Nature, and of human life, but rather on such topics as the relative advisability of walking down from the Riffel and going down by train, or the arguments for and against having afternoon tea again when he gets to the village; and it is not, I conceive, such topics as these which are commended to us by Dr. Inge. It is, in short, no good to tell people to meditate. They would if they could; but they can't. Anyhow, it is useless to suggest that they will meditate any better by avoiding the practice of going up mountains. I agree that the practice is impossible, or at least very difficult, at the moment of ascending the Grépon, or Doe Crag. He who in the act of scaling those altitudes should set himself to meditate coherently and consecutively on the Absolute would probably not have the opportunity of doing it again. But it does not follow that he will be the more inclined to meditation by looking at the mountains from below; for either he will go to sleep, or be a merely passive recipient of images of sensuous beauty; and neither state is consistent with truly philosophic contemplation.

Dr. Inge, it will be observed, includes under the same condemnation all who visit the mountains. Yet these are too vast and miscellaneous a multitude to be dealt with in this undiscriminating way. Now, after six years of restored peace and of post-war travel, with all its attendant embarrassments, we are perhaps in a position to consider the habits of those who once more go to the mountains for recreation. We can make some attempt to grapple with the psychology of new Europe, as we do with its geography. Even the Alps have not remained unchanged: it is there, in fact, that some of the characteristic impulses of modern times can be studied in a concentrated form. While the glacier, encouraged, no doubt, by its survey of the territorial readjustments which remodel Europe, descends with increasing boldness and increasing disregard of the convenience of its neighbours into the contiguous valley, the valley is also menaced by the irruptions of human hordes from below; and it is much to the credit of the original inhabitants that they make the best of such space as is still left to them, and derive an increasing advantage from both the glacier and the tourist. It is not my intention to speak at length of the glacier. As for the tourist, his multiplication is in part due to the war—the

war, and the herd-like habit of congregation which is one of the inheritances which we derive from it. Partly from the self-protective herd-instinct, and partly from the difficulty of finding any other places of residence, we congregate in hotels, and we live and move by preference in crowds; and where shall you find more hotels and more crowds than in the Alps? And there have been particular national forces also at work. It was from no discourtesy, but rather from a compelling sense of truth that must be uttered, that a Swiss traveller once enlarged to me on the welcome opportunity which the war had given to his countrymen of regaining possession of their own mountains during the temporary absence of the usual occupants. They had their opportunity; they took it. The Swiss have recovered their mountain resorts, and they keep them. Neutrality has had its rewards; ground as they were for four years between the upper and nether belligerent mill-stones, the two most neutral and most business-like of Continental nations did find some pecuniary compensation: the Swiss can afford their own hotels; while the Dutch also are free to practise (if they can) their alleged national talent for 'giving too little and asking too much' upon rivals not unworthy of their steel. Meantime the beneficent activities of tourist agencies, among which it would be dangerous to select any for special commendation, continue to make trains a very fair imitation of the Black Hole of Calcutta—to inundate the shores of Lovely Lucerne—to devour like locusts all the available provisions of Glorious Grindelwald—and, no doubt, to gladden the hearts of shareholders in the Jungfrau Railway. But amid these miscellaneous multitudes, comparable to the migrant races of antiquity, there is but a small proportion of mountaineers. More and more, climbers become, in most regions, a class separate and distinct. Where there are roads as well as mountains—in the Dolomites, for instance—the general public finds what danger it wants in motoring, and has nothing to do with the lesser perils of the Langkofel pinnacles or the Cimone della Pala. Ask your hotels of the mountaineer; they know him not, nor he them. There are refuges among the hills, where the necessaries of life can be obtained; among these the local climber lives and moves, only descending to the valley—so we are told—when he wants a bath. On such infrequent occasions one has the opportunity of speculating how long this Club could have survived had fashion decreed that the costume of its members, from the President downwards, must consist of a Club badge, an extremely inadequate pair of shorts, and a yellow sweater.

There is then among the crowds who go to the mountains a gulf fixed between those who are mountaineers and those who are not. This is a general truth; and it is of the essence of a general truth that it remains valid in spite of observed facts which may appear to disprove it. There *are* such contradictory phenomena. Thus, it may be said (not without truth) that the world is not so sharply divided. There are people who visit the mountains in a proper spirit, although also in a char-à-banc. They are spiritually mountaineers; yet not in the highest and truest sense of the word, for which you will probably agree with me that a modicum of physical ascent is essential. Nevertheless, it is possible to allege that there may be mountaineers outside clubs. Then again, how are we to classify those persons who go up one mountain and no more? We must first know why they do it; and that is very difficult to ascertain. The commonly received account is, I believe, that they wish to say they have done it. This is very improbable; for by adopting an easy and obvious alternative they might save themselves some physical exertion, besides the tariff for a guide and porter. In the absence of any certain motive, it may be doubted by the judicious whether these occasional conformists should be assigned to the sheep or the goats. Personally, I am inclined to suspect the animus (though, it is true, a subsequent career may do something to rehabilitate them) of people who begin their career by ascending a peak which enjoys a great reputation: I cannot help fearing that their guiding motive may be the same as that which leads so many of you to the Amusements department at Wembley.

Observed facts, therefore, point to the conclusion that climbers are a class apart, aloof from the general public, which is out of sympathy with their aims and ideals. At least, this is my hypothesis; and it is supported by the criticisms of the Dean of St. Paul's. For here we have a writer and preacher of high intelligence and wide knowledge of the world not only setting up impossible standards for mountaineers and even for tourists, but permitting himself to use intemperate language about greased poles and squirrels in cages; standing, in fact, as a type of that opinion which is based on a total misunderstanding of the spirit which animates this Club. For the Dean is not alone. He is giving eloquent expression to the sentiments entertained, I fear, by the majority of his countrymen; who, if they do not express themselves as picturesquely as the Dean, do for the most part regard the Alpine Club and its occupations with regrettable indifference—with a neutrality

which is rather less than benevolent. This, of course, cannot be seriously excused; but it is susceptible of explanation. You will not, I trust, suspect me of any tendency to backsliding if I endeavour to set out the case against us as, no doubt, it presents itself to the public mind.

I will deal, therefore, with the influence exerted by the three great motives of Authority, Environment, and Inclination.

Authority, I fear, is not on the side of Alpinism. Take antiquity first: were I to weary you with a complete list of all the classical writers who have said very little about mountains, and nothing at all about their ascent, the record would include every author from the Trojan war to the fall of the Byzantine empire. You will tell me, no doubt, that Homer compares a warrior to a snowy mountain. He does so; but obviously it is because he wishes to illustrate the inconvenience and danger caused by the hero to those in his immediate proximity. The Romans, again, called mountains horrid. Some of you may argue that the proper meaning of *horridus* is not horrid in our sense, but simply bristling or spiky. I fear I have no time to discuss these points of scholarship, which do not invalidate the general truth that business-like nations like the Greeks and Romans had no particular use for mountain scenery, and certainly none for mountain-climbing. To come to more recent periods: it is commonly held that Rousseau was the chief of those who taught our modern admiration of nature and scenery; but Rousseau's natural world was the world of the valleys and sub-Alpine hills. Our own great nature-poets of the Romantic period were, no doubt, attracted and inspired by mountain scenery; they saw the grandeur of the heights, but they did not see them as points to be attained; they did not countenance actual climbing. Even so lately as some eighty years ago Tennyson did not say 'Come up, O maid, to yonder mountain height'; on the contrary, the lady who is presumably climbing Alpine peaks is definitely advised not to walk with Death and Morning on the silver horns, but to come down into the valley, where life offers a variety of far greater attractions. Among poems of the nineteenth century, while many have celebrated the majesty of mountains, there is only one which is apparently in praise of climbing; and even there the fate of the climber is left problematical. I allude to 'Excelsior.'

The case is not much better when we turn to eminent writers of prose; for Ruskin, who wrote beautifully about the forms of mountains, condemned with no uncertain voice those who

presumed to make a sport of climbing them. It may be said that to set against this we have the great Alpine literature of the nineteenth century. Alas! men do not, I fear, read their Leslie Stephen, their Tyndall, their Forbes, their Moore, their Coolidge, till they are on the right road already; the reading of these authors is more often the concomitant than the cause of conversion. And if literature speaks with no authoritative voice, much less does the example of our rude forefathers 150 years ago, or later. It was they who regarded the Apennines as bad enough, but less disgusting (to a man of taste and sensibility) than the Alps. It was they who, when conducted to the summit of Skiddaw, requested that the physical effects of that dangerous altitude might be corrected by blood-letting, and they themselves conveyed to some place of comparative safety in the adjacent valley. Where, then, are we to look for sanction from authority? The Church itself denies us its consolations. It is true that this Club has been blessed by his Holiness the Pope; but the successor of St. Peter is far away in the Vatican, while no distance mitigates for us the denunciations of the Dean of St. Paul's.

Turn now from the influence exerted on the potential Alpinist by authority, to the insensible promptings of his environment. What does he see around him? What encouragement is he likely to receive from the classes which still possess prestige and the masses which have recently acquired power? Practically none. He observes with dismay that among dukes, captains of industry, and other millionaires, the percentage of mountaineers is practically negligible; and should he inquire of the ranks of trade unionism, the response will be even less encouraging. Title and wealth have other diversions; and the trade unionist's cherished principle of limited hours of work is not really compatible with the practice of this Club—except, perhaps, that of its youngest and swiftest members. Thus he is confronted with the hostility or indifference of the two classes which most affect public opinion. He is driven to the conclusion that mountaineering is confined to the bourgeoisie; and that is a class to which no young man in these days can wish to belong. I pass to another important part of environment. Magazine fiction (that great educator) habitually presents Alpine adventure in a singularly unattractive aspect: the incidents described are seldom such as the man in the train would wish to see reproduced in his own daily life; neither heroes nor villains appear to him to offer models for his imitation. You know the kind of

thing. The hero and the villain—both, I regret to say, described as members of this Club—go out to pluck for the lady who ensnares their rival affections the prize of Alpine adventure—the edelweiss, which, as is well known, blooms only on the least accessible of the snow-clad summits. In pursuit of this coveted vegetable, the hero inevitably slips into a bergschrund; his companion sees the opportunity for disposing of a hated rival, and cuts the rope. But kindly Nature defeats the machinations of villainy; for the glacier, sweeping swiftly and steadily downward, takes charge of the fallen mountaineer, and duly delivers him safe and sound in the valley, just in time to prevent the villain from leading the heroine to the hymeneal altar. Such narratives are seldom founded on actual experience and knowledge; but the public does not know that. When golf or cricket or Mah Jong is the subject of fiction, the reader is accustomed to a high standard of accuracy. He sees these pastimes presented by experts in a correct form; naturally, therefore, he infers that the same is the case with mountaineering. Or, if he does recognise that the writer is moving about in worlds not realised, his natural conclusion is that a game cannot be worth playing which is not worth describing accurately, like the other pastimes which I have mentioned. It is true that we have among us one novelist whose Alpine descriptions shine like a good deed in a naughty world. But what is one novel among so many magazines!

It appears then that we have dangerous enemies in both authority and environment, both of which prove mountaineering to be unreasonable. Yet it is one of the Englishman's sources of pride that he is not, like some Latin nations, a slave to reason; and mere logic might well fail, if counteracted by inborn instinct and natural inclination. Unfortunately, in the present case the natural feelings of the majority of our fellow-countrymen are on the side of tradition, and allied with the promptings of environment. Does Nature, for instance, suggest to them that mountains are beautiful? We in this Club, and perhaps some others, are apt to assume that they are; and with the experience of art as manifested on these walls we are entitled to pose as connoisseurs of beauty. But I ask you, gentlemen, to clear your minds of cant—to examine your conclusions and your premises (I do not mean necessarily the Club premises)—and then to show for the public's satisfaction to what canons of beauty so many yards of snow or ice or rock placed on an inclined plane do really

conform; and why these singular formations should be admired by humanity. If we accept the Ruskinian canon which makes utility a necessary ingredient of beauty, what are we to say of mountains, which are really of no substantial use to anyone except hotel-keepers and guides? According to this rule, a mountain which has no hotel near it (fortunately there are very few such) cannot be said to be beautiful; it becomes beautiful when you build a hotel at the base, and still more so if you build one at the top; and it will always be more beautiful to the hotel-keeper than to anyone else. A friend of mine, not an hotel-keeper, but a man of keen sensibilities and correct judgment, could find little to please him in Alpine scenery. He did not like the mountains, which, he said, obstructed the view, and should be got rid of. Evidently we are on no safe ground here. Further, in order to go up most mountains you must walk; now the British public has a natural disinclination to walk. The feeling is overcome sometimes, but it is there. The late Hugh Sidgwick says somewhere in his delightful 'Walking Essays' that Elizabeth Bennet in 'Pride and Prejudice' was the first real English walker. Perhaps the habit is not of quite so recent origin as that; but it is certain that the general public in this country does not yet care to walk for the sake of exercise or amusement, and regards those who do as slightly abnormal. They are, in a mild way, suspect; it is better, on the whole, to do business with a man who uses a motor, as nature meant that he should. And if walking in general is hardly yet popular, still less so is walking uphill. That, for most of us, is abhorrent to our most deeply ingrained instincts. There was a man (I heard him, for I happened to be passing by) who sat by the side of the path leading up to the Riffel Alp, and when his companions urged him to press on a little farther —perhaps, as far as the first restaurant—replied to them in words which I do not think were meant for poetry, though they had the poignant sincerity of a great poetic fragment— 'No matter where it leads me, the downward path for me.' That might be sung in churches; and if it were, I am sure that most of the congregation at any mountaineering centre would join in with exceptional heartiness. In short, the great majority of average persons have no use at all for going up hills. Listen to them talking to each other, and you will hear them proclaim it, glorying in their shame. When they are in better company (our company) they will sometimes condescend to the tribute of hypocrisy which vice is said to

pay to virtue: they will make excuses; they will protest a bad heart, or more frequently a bad head, which is unequal to the terrific exigencies of mountain-climbing. Nor are they always insincere; for steep hills are replete with imagined perils of the most desperate kind. It is not surprising; the draughtsmen who illustrate such fiction as I have alluded to above invariably portray a mountain-side as perpendicular at best, and frequently overhanging; nor does the Press tend to encouragement. Every now and then its emissaries penetrate into the fastnesses of Snowdonia or the Lakes; and when that happens, the public sups its fill of horrors. I have known the day when climbing parties, whose chief desire and ruling passion was for personal safety, have shuddered to see themselves pilloried before the alarmed eyes of their distant and anxious friends under the taking title of 'The Brotherhood of Peril.' Is it then surprising if householders and ratepayers and breadwinners hesitate before they engage in enterprises so unfashionable, so unauthorised, so repugnant to the primal self-protective instincts of humanity?

No; it is not surprising at all. It is more unaccountable that there are so many devotees; that their number does in some strange and fortunate way increase. The fact is, I suppose, that mountaineering is (as was once shown in a paper read here) a religion; and it is an inevitable attribute of all real religions that it is much easier to assail them from outside than to demonstrate their appeal. Only the faithful comprehend, and to comprehend is not always the same thing as to make your comprehension intelligible to others. It is a religion; it has its sermons (this is one), it has even its hymns; and from time to time there is a collection. It has also its books of devotion, a great many of them. But these devotional works are mostly (as we see to be the case with most religions) for the elect, who are predestined to a state of grace, predestined to the vision which can recognise mountain-climbing as one of the few really stable good things amid the shifting values of modern moral and intellectual currency. Inevitably, that vision is not for all, or most. Nor, indeed, can it be wished that the case were otherwise. Excessive popularity might have its dangers. Let the public *en masse* take to climbing, and we may well imagine that there might be a cry for Brighter Mountaineering; we can conceive an appeal to make the Matterhorn Safe for Democracy. Things are better as they are.