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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

THE Seventh Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, 27th February, 1904, at the Hotel Cecil, London. About 45 members were present.

The business of the meeting commenced with the election of officers for the ensuing year. The chair was taken by the President. The term of office of Mr. W. P. Haskett-Smith having expired, Mr. William Cecil Slingsby was elected as President, and, upon the retirement of Mr. George H. Morse, Professor James A. Ewing, F.R.S., was elected a Vice-President, Mr. Hugo Young, K.C., being re-elected as his colleague. The retiring members of the Committee were Messrs. A. O. Prickard, M. K. Smith and H. R. Boyce, whilst Professor Ewing's acceptance of the Vice-Presidentship created a fourth vacancy. The members of the Committee re-elected were Dr. T. K. Rose, Professors J. B. Farmer and L. R. Wilberforce, Messrs. J. M. A. Thomson and E. A. Baker, and the following new members were elected: Messrs. Christopher Cookson, Charles W. Nettleton, E. Raymond Turner, Arthur W. Andrews, Mr. C. C. B. Moss as Honorary Treasurer, and Mr. George B. Bryant as Honorary Secretary, were re-elected.

Upon the motion of Mr. W. P. Haskett-Smith, the accounts for the year 1903, as audited, were passed by the meeting.

The motion brought forward by Mr. Claude E. Benson, that any member desiring to address any communication to the public press, directly or indirectly affecting the interests of the Club, should first submit such communication to the President or to a member of Committee, was, after some discussion, withdrawn by consent.

The impending retirement of Mr. E. Raymond Turner from the Editorship of the *Journal* was referred to. A cordial

vote of thanks to Mr. Turner for his services rendered to the Club, in connection with the production of the *Journal* since its commencement, was proposed by Mr. C. B. Wheeler, and unanimously endorsed by the meeting.

At the Dinner which immediately followed, the chair was taken, according to custom, by the newly-elected President, Mr. W. Cecil Slingsby.

In proposing the health of the King, the President remarked that the King was a thorough British sportsman—(hear, hear)—and, although he had not himself experienced the joys of Mountaineering, on one occasion his appreciation of the sport had led him to attend a meeting presided over by their friend, Mr. C. E. Mathews, when Mr. Whymper was welcomed back from the Andes by the Alpine Club. (Cheers). He then proceeded to introduce the principal toast in the following words :—

Gentlemen,—This is my privilege, and I am proud of this privilege to give you the toast of the evening, "The Climbers' Club." Elected only a few minutes ago, I hardly know—and opinions seem to differ—whether I am a full-blown President or only an embryo. (Cries of "Full blown.") That is the position I mean to take up.

As we are all aware, the practice of mountain climbing can hardly be termed new. The ascent of Mount Ararat by our common ancestor, Noah, and his mixed *troupe*, shows this, though truth compels me to note the fact that this remarkable ascent was made by water, but the recognition of mountaineering as a great sport is of comparatively recent growth. The Alpine Club, founded by good men and true, one of whom, our friend Mr. C. E. Mathews, I am happy to see before me at this moment—(cheers)—is barely half a century old, and yet, so far as we know, it was the first Club to come into existence, which had for its object the encouragement of the finest sport in the world, and the strengthening of the bonds of friendship formed amidst the solemn solitudes of the great mountains. In passing, I wish to call your attention, gentlemen, to the remarkable fact, which cannot be disputed, that in all countries in this planet where grand mountains have been ascended, the pioneers have been Britons (of course I include Irishmen in this term) or colonists of British blood. For the present we will leave the mountains of the planet Mars alone. (Hear, hear.) The Alpine Club has a numerous offspring in all quarters of the globe where there are high mountains and mountain-lovers to climb them,

and between each and every one of these Clubs there exist, as there ought to do, strong ties of friendship and of mutual appreciation. All of these Clubs are doing good work, and none more so than the "Climbers' Club," and I say without hesitation that if our Club has caused even one solitary individual to go and worship amongst the great mountains who would otherwise have become a loafer on a sea-side promenade, or an onlooker at the football fields, it has justified its existence. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Bryant tells me that the Club numbers about 260 members, and that "we have about 275 in the bank available for future developments." Gentlemen, we look for great things in the future from these 275 imprisoned members. The growth and success of the Climbers' Club have been phenomenal. How could it have been otherwise? Was it not in its tender years nourished by the stimulating eloquence and the evergreen enthusiasm of Mr. Mathews—(hear, hear)—and when it was well on its feet, but not a moment before this, gentlemen, was it not schooled by the exhilarating wit and example of Mr. Haskett-Smith? (Hear, hear.) Have not the zeal and tact of Mr. Bryant (it would be invidious of me to name more), and the excellent work done by members on the mountains, brought the Club to a hardy manhood, which has a great future before it? Yes! but, lest I should encourage you to become unwittingly a "mutual admiration society," let us turn once more to the mountains, where, at any rate, we get a sense of proportion. The rock-climbing potentialities afforded to us by the mountains of Great Britain are now fully recognised. It is natural for many reasons that we should gravitate towards the culminating points of these Islands, not the least important reason being the fact that on or near Ben Nevis, Snowdon, and Scaw Fell Pike such magnificent rock climbing is to be had in summer, and such grand snow and ice work may be met with in winter and spring. Yes, Fort-William, Pen-y-Gwryd, and Wasdale Head are deservedly great magnets, but I cannot help feeling that there is a tendency to centralise too much at these places and to neglect others. To name but one, why do so few men visit Carrantouhill and the Hag's Glen? Surely Ireland may claim yet another grievance for the neglect of this, and many another wild region? The Isle of Man invites us too, so do—Ah, well!

As your President, I cannot let this opportunity pass without sounding a note of warning in a manner in which I have often addressed my friends of the "Yorkshire Ramblers' Club." All who are worthy of being termed mountaineers, in contradistinction to mere rock-climbing acrobats, find that year by year their love of mountains increases, and so, too, in like manner, does their respect and veneration. They feel more and more, as they gain experience, that the sport of mountaineering is to be treated seriously, and that no trifling must be indulged in. They will not deny the fact that, with this sport, as well as with all other noble sports, there is a certain little element of danger, but at the same time, they do assert with equal

truth that, with forethought, prudence, and by putting into practice certain well-established maxims, these risks may be reduced to a minimum. On the other hand, the neglect of these precautions has often led to disaster. A common neglect—I speak seriously—is that of having boots in which are rounded instead of angular nails. This may lead to accidents on either rock or snow, and it is a neglect which never ought to occur. I will name no more. This, however, I do assert most solemnly, that some climbs are made regarding which prudence should dictate the omission of any detailed description in print; also I say that the man who wilfully under-rates the difficulty, and perhaps the danger, of any particular climb, commits a much greater fault than he who exaggerates them. That great hero of the mountains, Sir Leslie Stephen, who was only this week called away to his long rest, speaking of Alpine dangers, says—“My general moral is this, that a man should qualify himself, both in activity and what I may call mountain craft, before he undertakes any difficult expeditions. With men, so qualified, I believe that the danger may be generally reduced to a trifle, especially if the command of the party is entrusted to one of its most experienced and judicious members.” (Hear, hear.)

Gentlemen, though I urge prudence, I do not wish to counsel inaction; I merely beg you to woo the mountains, as they deserve to be wooed, with an intense love and a wholesome respect. Remember, when you are on the mountains, the friends at home. Be bold, but take no unwarrantable risks. Forget not the truth of the maxim, “Discretion is the better part of valour.” Be boldest of all in your determination to turn back when, from your experience, you feel quite sure that to advance would be to court danger. (Hear, hear.)

The high mountains are the natural playground of those who are endowed with health and strength. They are the resting places for the weary. Then away to the mountains! away! away! and glean more health and strength of mind and body, to enable you to combat the difficulties of life, and lay up a store of happy memories, from which you can always draw, yet can never exhaust.

Gentlemen, I give you the toast of “The Climbers' Club,” and will ask our late President, Mr. Haskett-Smith, to respond. (Applause.)

The toast having been enthusiastically received, Mr. W. P. HASKETT-SMITH, said, in reply :—

It is evident that our new President need have no misgiving about his *status*; there is nothing embryonic about him. If he is an infant, he is a very well-developed and vigorous one, and we are told that it is an excellent sign when an infant takes an early opportunity of proving the power of his lungs. (Laughter.) I have to thank you, first of all, for your enthusiasm on behalf of the Club, and secondly for your kind reception of me.

To take the public duty first, it consists, in effect, in rendering to you an account of a stewardship of three years. For by far the greater part of the time we were in the proverbially happy position of having no history, but two terrible events in the last few months have cast over us a gloom which will not readily disperse. It will not be necessary to speak to you at any length on this point, because, fortunately, Mr. Mathews will relieve me of this duty, and his words will carry a weight to which mine could lay no claim. I will merely say that though personally I knew only Mr. Broadrick, I had long followed with interest the career of the party which he joined that day, and regarded them as belonging to our best type, shewing earnestness and efficiency, without a trace of folly or ostentation. You may have noticed that though the two accidents by which we have suffered were as unlike as possible, yet they had one feature in common, namely that there was a comparative stranger present in each party, a circumstance which must always double the need for watchfulness and caution. By all means widen your experience of other climbers, only with a scratch pack don't hunt dangerous game. There is no greater safeguard than when a party forms a practised team, each member of which knows exactly the good and bad points of every other member. (Hear, hear.) There is another thing which, though it may have had no share in either of the late accidents, deserves some mention, because it seems to be a growing practice, and should be discouraged. It is the use (especially by the leader) of inordinate lengths of rope. (Hear, hear.) Do climbers realise how very few feet of clear fall give a man a momentum which is almost impossible to stop? And when that happens, we know only too well what are the rewards of misplaced courage and over-taxed skill.

“ Prizes of accident as oft as merit ;
Which, when they fall, as being slippery standers,
The love that leaned on them as slippery too,
Do one pluck down another, and together
Die in the fall.”

There are, however, brighter aspects of our history, and to them let us now pass on. We are steadily advancing in numbers and dignity. Rickmers in one party, Longstaff and Rolleston in another, were brilliantly successful in the Caucasus. The other day, when a new member of Parliament was wanted, it was to our body that St. Albans looked. Some months ago we saw our name, or part of it, on every hoarding. Why? Because someone wanted to write a play about fashionable life, and could think of no more fashionable name than “The Climbers,” and recently our fame reached the *ville lumiere*, where a more ambiguous compliment was paid to us. For a society is said to have been formed in Paris called the “Jolly Climbers.” The nature of their climbing qualification is not stated : but, as their chief business seems to be robbery and murder, it is so far

orthodox that (in this country at least) the use of the rope would not be neglected, and would in fact play a very important part. (Loud laughter.) And now for my personal part of the matter. Mr. Slingsby has said some very kind things, and you have shewn cordial appreciation of the little I have been able to do for you during my term of office. Far be it from me to say a single word that might lower my successor's standard of duty, but let me tell you, in the strict confidence of a stage "aside," that a President is by no means so important an official as many people think. Even in a Government Department we sometimes find that the titled figure-head would be very helpless without the subordinates who form the propelling machinery. If you really want to appreciate the relative importance of your officials, turn to the map of Dorsetshire. There you will find a group of villages, the names of which hit off the situation with so much aptness and precision that those of you who do not know the county might accuse me of inventing the places. They are as follows. First and foremost,

BRYANT'S PUDDLE; you will readily guess that to be a very ship-shape, practical, and go-ahead place. Then comes

TOLL PUDDLE; where, as the local proverb runs, only a very rolling stone escapes being gathered by Moss.

TURNER'S PUDDLE, a rural Arcadia, steeped in contemplative calm, far from the mad rush of modern life; and, last and not least,

AFF PUDDLE, which is confessedly only half as important as any one of the other three.

In fact a President is like an oilcan—or a doctor—not much good except to keep in working order those who really do the work. Do not, however, imagine that his is an idle life, for neither oilcan nor pill is always permanent in its effects. You may remember Edmund Burke's classical story of the Irish Peer. He had, you know, an ardent love and a slight knowledge of the art of medicine, and freely prescribed for his tenants and retainers and others who were not in a position to refuse his treatment. One day he was talking to one of these when a funeral passed. "Whose is that? Did I know him?" "Oh! Yes, my Lord, that's Terence O'Brien. Your Lordship will not be forgetting him. He's the man your Lordship *cured* three days ago." (Much laughter.)

However, though we may have had our little troubles, there is no legacy of woe for my successor, and the horizon seems absolutely clear, with every prospect of fair weather. You remember how, about three years ago, when the illness of the King had plunged the whole country in gloom, our anxiety was relieved almost as suddenly as it had come. It is said that in one Church the Vicar announced that the much dreaded operation had been completely successful, and that the patient was practically out of danger. He then went on to say, "Let us now all join in

singing Hymn No. 537—in the Appendix—‘Peace, Perfect Peace.’” Happy the man of whose presidency it can be said that it secured perfect peace in the appendix! (Laughter and prolonged applause.)

The next toast was proposed by Mr. FRASER CAMPBELL, who said :—

Mr. Slingsby and gentlemen,—The toast which I have the pleasure to propose is that of “Kindred Societies,” but I trust you will permit me to preface my more relevant remarks by narrating a little piece of domestic history. I may say that I have been away from home for the past week or so, and when I received, in Manchester, a peremptory telegram from my friend Mr. Moss, instructing me that I was to propose this important toast, I found myself without much time for preparation. I wrote to my wife that I had arranged to attend the dinner, but that I was afraid my enjoyment of the evening would be marred by the fact of my having to make a speech. I have her reply this morning, “Do not let the thought of your speech spoil your dinner, rather have a good dinner and let it spoil your speech”; an admirable illustration of moral support. Some years ago I was asked to undertake, at a dinner in Glasgow, the toast of “The Imperial Forces.” It was during the war, when the time-worn sentiment—admirable alike for its brevity as for its truth—that the Sailors and Soldiers of the Queen had always done their duty, and would always do it again, required some amplification. As a matter of fact, I could not attend the dinner, but, meeting the Secretary a few days afterwards, I thanked him for the honour done me in making me responsible for a toast which was—at the time—of so much interest, but his reply somewhat chilled my feeling of self-complacency. He said he did not know much about the honour, but that I was about the only man he could ask, as everyone else in the room would probably be either a Soldier, or at least a Volunteer—in fact I was about the only man who was not, in some way or another, serving his country. (Laughter.) Well, to-night my position is much the same, and I feel that I must have been selected to undertake the toast for a similar reason. I regret to say that I have never seen the Alps, and I have never climbed a hill in England—and I am ashamed to say that it is eight years since I have climbed at all—but this is a state of matters which a regular attendance at such cheery functions as this may do something to remedy. (Hear, hear.)

It has frequently been remarked that nothing can be accomplished in this country without a dinner. Say a man proposes to form a League. Well, he gives a dinner, to which he invites various prominent people, of widely divergent opinions, but with whose less obtrusive eccentricities he is himself supposed to be in sympathy; after dinner they form the League, and perhaps erect a “tabernacle” with a little “lonely furrow”—(laughter)

—running down one side of the garden, and a nice “fence” behind the house to sit upon—and there you are. (Laughter.)

May I tell you a Scotch story? (Hear, hear.) In the grey of an early morning a milkman, going his rounds, found an old man of his acquaintance sitting by the roadside, dressed in his best clothes, but otherwise in a somewhat misty condition. He greeted him with, “Hey, Donald, whaur hae ye been?” to which Donald replied, “Weel, lad, I canna richtly mind whether it was a bridal or a burying—but it was a maist capital affair.” (Laughter.) Now this dinner is in itself “a maist capital affair,” and the institution of such meetings is most desirable, as affording to the widely scattered members of the Club an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with one another, and of extending to members of “Kindred Societies” the right hand of fellowship. I had intended to make allusion to the early connection with the art of climbing of old Father Noah, but in this, as you know, I have been forestalled by our President.

It is not my intention to enter at length into the history of the various clubs with which this toast is associated, and, dwelling as I do in the wilds of Caledonia, I have only to-day become acquainted with the names of some of them, which I know, however, are doing good work. But I believe that a member of any of these clubs, whether it be the “Alpine,” or the “Scottish Mountaineering,” the “Climbers,” the “Rucksack,” or the “Yorkshire Ramblers,” we are all imbued with the same spirit, without which none of us can be true mountaineers, a spirit of profound reverence and love for the majesty and the mystery of the hills. (Cheers.) Of course pride of place in such a toast must be given to the Alpine Club the mother of all such clubs, and one the history and traditions of which must ever be held in esteem by devotees of our noble and ennobling sport. In this connection I may be permitted, I trust, to refer to the great loss which has fallen on the club in the death of Sir Leslie Stephen. (Hear, hear.) Himself a keen and notable climber, he lent to the literature of mountaineering much of that grace and charm which have given him so high a place in the world of letters, and he may be cited as one of the most eminent instances, among many, of men of the highest intellectual culture, who have found their chief recreation in the sport of climbing. (Hear, hear.)

Gentlemen, I will not detain you longer. With this toast I wish to couple the name of one who is well known to you all—Mr. Charles Mathews, one of the founders of the Alpine Club. He has also been its President, and he is equally distinguished as a climber and as an orator. I give you, gentlemen, the toast of “Kindred Societies,” coupled with the name of Mr. Charles Mathews and of Mr. Moore, of the “Yorkshire Ramblers.” (Applause.)

Mr. C. E. MATHEWS, who responded for the Alpine Club, was received with loud cheers. He said :—

It is a rare pleasure to me to be once more face to face with my friends and colleagues of the Climbers' Club, to find myself in the company of comrades, who have always treated their first President with such infinite goodwill—who have always insisted on attributing to him all sorts of good qualities which never had any real existence—("No! no!")—and who have welcomed him to-night, as on all other occasions, with so kindly and generous an appreciation. (Cheers.)

I respond, of course, for the parent society—the Alpine Club. Possibly I have some right to represent that well-known and prosperous institution. (Cheers.) I have now been a practical mountaineer for 48 years. I am one of the only four survivors of the founders of that Club; our names are marked with a star in the annual Alpine Chronicle. Stars, as you are aware, have different illuminating power; but it would not be profitable to enquire by how much "one star exceedeth another star in glory." (Laughter and cheers.) Anyhow, I am the only one of the founders who has kept in harness to the present time—(cheers)—and although I have just reached that period of life which the Psalmist described as "the allotted span," I am just about to make a pilgrimage to Greece, to see for myself how Taygetus and Parnassus, and Cyllene and the other hills of Hellas compare with my old friends of Central Europe. (Cheers.) As for you, it is only right that you should respect the old guard, and that you should lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left. (Hear, hear.) In honouring us you are only keeping the commandment which bids you "Honour thy father and thy mother," which, I may add, was the only commandment with a promise. (Cheers.)

Who first discovered the fascination of climbing steep hills will, I suppose, never be known; the worship of elevated nature is not common to us all. You may remember the Lincolnshire farmer in "Alton Locke," who said, "None of these 'ere darned ups and downs o' hills, to shake a body's victuals out of his innards. (Laughter.) All as vlat as a barn vloor for 40 mile on end; that's the country to live in." (Much laughter.) Well, we don't share his views.

Sixty years ago the mountain tops were left in the undisturbed possession of the gods. Then we created a new sport for Englishmen, and not for Englishmen only, but for adventurous spirits all over the globe. In about a quarter of a century the Alps were practically exhausted—exhausted, did I say? Not so! The tracks of summer are obliterated by the snows of winter, and each new man, each new generation of men, will find in them, as we have found, the same interest and the same charm. (Cheers.) Of course the charm of mere rivalry is gone, but nothing has

been more remarkable than the rapid extension of mountaineering in the last quarter of the last century. (Cheers.)

“ Yet all experience is an arch, wherethrough
 Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
 For ever and for ever when we move.”

Mont Blanc was no longer high enough to gratify a rising ambition, so off man started to the Caucasus ; Kasbek and Elbruz fell victims, Dych Tau and Ushba have followed suit, and now Suanetia is becoming almost as familiar a playground as the Alps. (Cheers.)

But the Caucasian peaks were only some 2000 feet higher than Mont Blanc, so away goes Mr. Whymper to the Andes of Ecuador, and Chimborazo and his brethren were laid by the heels. Then Sir Martin Conway starts for the Himalaya, and Pioneer Peak, 23,000 feet above sea-level, is added to the list of English conquests. (Cheers.)

Then Mr. FitzGerald's well organised* party sets out for the highest Andes of all, and Mr. Stuart Vines and the guide Zurbriggen climb Aconcagua, about the same height as Pioneer Peak, and perhaps the highest point of the earth's surface that has yet been attained. (Cheers.) Banff, in the Canadian Rockies, is becoming a climbing centre, like Zermatt. Only the other day Mr. Freshfield returned from his tour round Kanchinjunga, which is certain to be climbed, and, whatever the result of our mission to Thibet, let us trust that Englishmen may at least get free access to Sikhim, and be able to explore the mighty Gaurisankar, the “ Ultima Thule ” of Alpine exploration. (Cheers.)

Well that is a noble record. Some of us are now extinct, or at least slumbering, volcanoes ; but we were the Pioneers—(cheers)—though we had but little idea to what our pioneering would lead. We sowed the seed, and you younger men will reap the harvest. For you is the undiscovered country. May you also have your share in it, and come back again with joy, bringing your sheaves with you. (Cheers.)

In addition to foreign triumphs, we have made explorations in the British Isles of which our fathers never dreamed. In the old days we climbed Snowdon and Scawfell by the easiest routes. Now a new cult has arisen, and the worship of the couloir and the gully forms a new departure in British mountaineering. One of the results has been that home climbing has had its sombre as well as its bright side. I have read with considerable interest the recent correspondence in a leading journal between Mr. Spender and Mr. Haskett-Smith. The former gentleman seeks to hold this club responsible for the excesses of the new school. Let us never draw hasty conclusions from insufficient premises. (Cheers.) There is a story told of the great Daniel O'Connell, who once made a speech in Birmingham on the usual subject of the wrongs of Ireland. “ I assure you upon my honour,” he is reported to have said, “ that in my

unhappy and distressful country there were 30,000 fewer children born last year than in the year preceding. I solemnly charge the British Government with the wilful murder of those 30,000 innocent and unborn children." (Loud laughter.) That was a hasty conclusion from insufficient premises. (Cheers.) No, our Club is not responsible. (Cheers.) On the other hand it is a fact that six men have been lost during the past few months. Allen was killed on Squerr-na-Gillian, Goodall in Deep Ghyll, and this Club will need no reminder of the tragedy on Scawfell, through which four of the best known of our members are unable any longer to answer their names, when the muster roll is called. Allen's death was the result of the baneful practice of climbing alone; Goodall's, as far as I can understand, from the incredible rashness of endeavouring to glissade down hard snow. And the others? Well, the verdict of the Coroner's Jury was "accidental death," so I will express no adverse opinion.

In all mountaineering some risks must be run. The wise man knows what risks to face and what to avoid. I don't see the evidence I should like to see of a wise judgment in this regard, and so many expeditions which should have been replete with sunny and happy memories, bear a sombre sound for evermore, "like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh." (Cheers.) I see everywhere courage and daring; I do not see as often as I could wish the better qualities of prudence and discretion. Remember that a man's life is not his own. It belongs to a mother, perhaps, or a sister, to a wife or a child, and no man can rashly hazard it without striking a cruel blow at some tender and loving hearts, which have deserved better at his hands. (Loud cheers.) My colleagues of the Alpine Club and of this Club will do me the justice to say that I have preached in season, and out of season, on the necessity of adopting these measures of prudence and precaution, without which our craft, with its endless possibilities for good, must be discredited in all impartial eyes. I repeat, with all the energy of which I am capable, those pathetic words which I have so often used—

"Oh! the little more, and how much it is,
And the little less, and what worlds away!"

(Cheers.) The future of mountaineering rests with the British Amateur. Let it be yours, by precept no less than by example, to be faithful to the best traditions of which you are the inheritors, and to bring neither dishonour nor discredit upon the noble craft to which it is both your privilege and your happiness to belong. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. LEWIS MOORE, Secretary of the Yorkshire Ramblers' Club, followed on the same side. Unhappily, owing to a breakdown of the reporting arrangements, we are able to give

no more than a very brief and imperfect summary of his fluent and entertaining speech :—

He begun by picturing the dismay not untinged with resentment felt by his club on learning that Mr. Slingsby, who had been their President for the brief period of ten years, had taken office in another club ; how, on calmer reflection, they had seen matters in a different light, and recognised the mission of Yorkshire to improve the outer world and bring it nearer to her own standard of perfection. They had therefore parted with Mr. Slingsby almost cheerfully. The speaker went on to indicate certain directions in which Yorkshire influence might be expected to make itself felt, and to explain why the "Yorkshire Ramblers' Journal" was better, more punctual, and, above all, cheaper, than some other journals, observing that Yorkshiremen like and insist upon getting "a good bob's worth." True to this admirable tendency, he went on to propose an exchange of publications between the two societies. (Laughter.)

Mr. H. W. BLUNT, in proposing "The Visitors," said :—

When our secretary chastened the joy with which I had looked forward to this dinner by charging me with the proposal of a toast, I accepted the responsibility as a compliment to that group of Wastdale Head climbers of ten to fifteen years back, for whom I have a right to speak. A good deal of my climbing owes its greatest debt to John Robinson. I sat down, as in duty bound, to compose some impromptus. None came, or I should be coruscating now. Instead, there rang in my head the time-honoured contrast of climber and visitor, of two books, one filled with verse, as weak in its scansion as the climbing of its writers was rudimentary, chiefly about our ex-president. The visitor suggested to me the type of person who opens the smoke-room door in the small hours, when the mysteries of our craft are in full swing, with "Have you climbed them all?" When, however, I looked round on our guests to-night, and marked their benign looks, I saw at once that they had no cloven hoofs, that, if anything was bursting from their boots, it was clinkers. I found that our guests, who honour our lenten fare this evening, were chiefly from the very aristocracy of our sport, comrades of the axe and rope, from what is called, in Parliamentary language, another place. (Laughter.) Leisure, means, and ability have made them the supreme exponents of our craft, or, as the poet puts it—

"Gods upon the hills together, careless of mankind,"

but it is one craft, with a single lodge, roofed by Heaven's azure. It is these "visitors" for whom, and for himself, Dr. Norman Collie, who appears to-night under the disguise of F.R.S., obviously a lower degree than A. C., is to speak. His name speaks for itself. Supporting him I see many members of the Olympus of climbing. I may say I am proud

of escaping from the metaphor which describes us as a nursery, surely of obstreperous infants—members who to-night are to remain silent. To these I wish “to every man a Jungfrau or two, to Dr. Collie a whole range, Himalayas for choice.” To our other guests I would say, “Join our Club,” if the phrase were not ear-marked to the club matrimonial. We don’t want them married until they have climbed a few climbs, and learned the use of the rope. And the qualifications we insist on are small. Look at me, a climber in a past which never was present. Having greeted all classes of visitors, or, as I prefer to say, guests, and having, to my surprise and delight, got Dr. Collie’s name into the bill, I ought, I suppose, in common decency, to stop. But there is an art in stopping. A friend of mine who goes to *at homes*, which I do not, assures me that it is a mark of social aplomb to drop a saucer or something, and stamp upon it, and then to remark to one’s hostess that one has put his foot into it, and had better bolt. (Laughter.) Having put my foot into it, I will simply propose the toast of our guests, coupled with the name of Professor Norman Collie, and subside. (Applause.)

Prof. J. NORMAN COLLIE, F.R.S., in reply, said :—

He doubted not that all his fellow guests had enjoyed the evening immensely, and shared his own gratitude towards Mr. Blunt for introducing them in so amusing a manner. But he himself felt a particular pride in coming there in a sort of official capacity and under the wing of his old friend and comrade Mr. Slingsby, who was now being elevated to such a prominent position. Possibly some of them did not know as much about his host as he (the speaker) did, and he might do worse than say a few words about him. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Slingsby constantly reminded him of a thing which they were doubtless all sick of hearing talked about. The newspapers had just discovered it, though it had long been familiar to men of science, and were making a ridiculous mystery and fuss about “common, ordinary radium.” Mr. Slingsby, like radium, gave small outward promise of his powers, and not only contained an enormous amount of stored-up energy, but also possessed the gift of exciting similar energy in other bodies. Only last summer he had been climbing in the Lofoten Islands with Mr. Slingsby and his son, and found that Slingsby junior bade fair to become as phenomenally radio-active as his father, and there was now every prospect of this Club finding its energies vastly increased by the same influence. He hoped that this would prove to be the case, and thanked the Club for an entertainment which seemed to him “a maist capital affair.” (Applause.)

In proposing the health of the New President, Mr. W. P. HASKETT-SMITH said :—

You will think it grossly unfair to have to listen to a second

speech from me, and indeed, had the task been laid upon me as a duty, I should have resented it myself, but, as a matter of fact, I claimed this toast as my right, the privilege of the old President to usher in the new. But before saying anything of my successor, my first care must be to reassure the representative of the club from which we have borrowed him. No one here denies the greatness of Yorkshire. It is the home of many of our members. No one here is surprised at the excellence of the "Yorkshire Ramblers' Journal." It is edited by one of ourselves. (Laughter.) But then Mr. Moore complains that Mr. Slingsby has been President of the Yorkshire Ramblers for only ten years, and that just as they are beginning to get used to him, we take him away. Well, of course, we took him, but not from them. On this occasion at least Mr. Slingsby was off with the old love before he was on with the new. We found him out of work, and offered him a job, and probably we shall be ready to let him go back to his old situation, after a similar period of ten years. Only let Yorkshire remember that even then she has still to reckon with those gods of whom Mr Blunt, no doubt employing a theatrical metaphor, told us. Mr. Slingsby began life in Yorkshire, and, taking into consideration what we have heard of his underground pursuits, in what we may call the Pit, the pitboy, with a spirit which proves him entirely worthy of this club, has now climbed, as it appears, to the Dress Circle; but we shall not be surprised if, before ten years are out, he is wanted to continue his upward movement, and preside over these same gods who sit on the Alpine heights of the Gallery. As to the claim of an old Premier to toast his successor, there is clear and ample precedent. In the ancient guilds of the City of London a time-honoured custom obtains whereby each retiring official drinks publicly and solemnly to the next occupant of his post, "wishing him health and strength to continue his office." Many a long tramp in Mr. Slingsby's company has taught me that in his case these wishes are quite superfluous, for health and strength are abundantly, nay exuberantly, his. It is all very fine for his companion to be a younger man; but that fact brings, instead of comfort, only an added humiliation; for our third President and our first are precisely of that type which the Australian poet describes so well—

"Older, but men to whom, in the pride of their manhood strong,

The hardest work is never too hard, or the longest day too long."

Strangers are filled with amazement at this peculiarity of his. Some years ago, when we were climbing together in Lapland, we went up a new and lofty peak by means of a fine rocky *arete*. At one point we were forced to climb down off the ridge. On the return journey, as we neared this point, Slingsby, who led us both up and down, marched gravely to the foot of an appalling series of "boiler-plate" slabs, and, on our asking what he was going to do, amazed us by the reply that we had come down at that precise

point in the morning, and had to go up there now. We expressed doubt, mingled with alarm. He replied that he recognised every hold. We retorted that he might do that without recognising many. Finally he yielded; we descended a few hundred yards further, there picked up a compass, which we had left behind in the morning, got on to the *arete*, and reached our camp in safety. Mr. Slingsby showed his good nature by consenting to come with us, and proved his strength of mind by maintaining firmly, from that day to this, that we and the compass were all astray. The incident is worth recalling, because it drew forth from a charming Norwegian gentleman, who was climbing with us that day for the first time, a delicious comment on our leader which you shall have in his own words. "Oh, Slingsby is very pleasing. Never have I seen a man so aged to go so far. But, when he would climb up at the evening where we *should* have climbed down at the morning, ah! *then* he was not pleasing, ah! (with a violent shudder) no-o-o! he was *not* pleasing." (Much laughter.)

The fact is that no one can hope to gauge Mr. Slingsby properly who does not know him as connected with Norway. If any of you go up that way, don't trouble to learn the language. All you have to do is to murmur, at suitable intervals, the magic name of Slingsby, and you will get everything you want, and probably a good deal besides. Only last summer I was at the head of one of the *fjords*, where, on entering the Hotel, you are confronted with a huge brass medallion, claiming to represent King Henry IV. of France. You wonder what he is doing there. We do not read in history of that monarch taking his yacht to the *fjords*, or whale-fishing, or making himself pleasant to the Norsemen. (Laughter.) No, the explanation is quite different. That medallion, like others of which we have heard a good deal lately, is connected with a "hidden treasure," and the treasure lies in an accidental resemblance, not to the Emperor William, but to "President William." (Laughter.) Yes, gentlemen, that remote village in Norway honours Henry IV. because, by a singular coincidence, in the brazen countenance of that rather free-and-easy monarch lurks an astonishing likeness to a gentleman who at this moment occupies the seat of honour in a certain room in a certain London hotel, which will, I am told, for the future be known as the "Hotel William Cecil." (Much laughter.)

It would keep you all night to tell of all Mr. Slingsby's qualifications, so one more shall suffice. You know that there is a Mrs. Slingsby, for Mr. Mathews has sung, and I have inadequately echoed her praises, but when we think of the perils which would have beset a Bachelor President within the next forty-eight hours, that to-morrow we shall be able to say, in or near the words of the late Poet Laureate,

"To-morrow will be the leapiest time of all the glad leap year,"

we must rejoice to be spared the trial of seeing our figure-head hunted

through the land by his countless admirers, and perhaps finding his only safe refuge in a sudden zeal for subterranean exploration. (Much laughter.)

Gentlemen, I give you the toast of "Our New President," and venture to assure him that he may rely on meeting with the same hearty co-operation, the same indulgent kindness, and the same warm friendliness which you have on all occasions extended to me. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

The toast having met with a most hearty reception, Mr. SLINGSBY, in reply, said,—

In his all too flattering speech, my friend Mr. Haskett-Smith has filled my mind with a feeling of uncertainty as to my very existence as a human being, and whether I am an oil-can, or a doctor, or a doctor with an oil-can, I cannot for the life of me say. (Laughter.) Gentlemen, I thank you most warmly for the kind way in which you have received the toast proposed so humourously by my old friend Mr. Haskett-Smith. In accepting the honour which you have been good enough to confer upon me this evening, I should be more than, or perhaps less than, human, if I did not feel extremely proud, but I think you will agree with me when I say that it is a formidable thing for me to step into the shoes of the giants who have preceded me, and had I not for many years been gleaned health, strength, and inspiration from the very hearts of the great mountains, I would not have dared for one moment to occupy so exalted a position as that of President of the Climbers' Club. (Hear, hear.) Whilst I promise to give you the best service which lies in my power, I must crave some indulgence at your hands, as the distance from my home amongst the fells of Craven to London will alone prevent me from attending some meetings at which I should otherwise certainly hope to be present. I take this opportunity of stating that I fully recognise that the post of President of such a sporting club as the Climbers' Club has responsibilities attached to it which are by no means to be ignored. Gentlemen, I accept these responsibilities as readily as I do the honour which you have conferred upon me, and for which I thank you most warmly and sincerely. (Applause.)