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## IN MEMORIAM.

CHARLES EDWARD MATHEWS.

A FEW short months ago, the most notable member of our Club passed peacefully away to his long rest. No more shall we see his familiar face, nor receive a hearty greeting by the voice that is stilled. We have indeed lost our best friend, one whose stimulating eloquence, ready sympathy, encouragement and advice in our early days, gave us the impulse which we needed, and which has led to the success which the Club has attained.

As one of the founders of the Alpine Club, whose jubilee is to be celebrated next year, we younger mountaineers looked upon Mr. Mathews as the link which connected us with the great explorers of the Alps, the men who first recognised mountaineering to be the great sport which now-a-days all admit it to be, and naturally we had a profound and a well-merited veneration for him, especially as he was at all times a most approachable man, who ever had a kindly word for the young climber.

No man was ever imbued with a truer love of the great mountains than our first president. No one worshipped the British hills more devoutly than he. He wooed them as they deserve to be wooed, with a deep love and an ever-increasing respect. This love and respect are revealed in all his writings on mountain subjects. It would be easy to make many quotations to prove this, but I will now refer only to one. In the *A. J.* (Vol. xi., p. 85), he concluded a well-known paper as follows: "Above all, if he loves the mountains for their own sake, for the lessons they can teach and the

happiness they can bring, he will do nothing that can discredit his manly pursuit or bring down the ridicule of the undiscerning upon the noblest pastime in the world."

Mr. Mathews had remarkable foresight. He frequently said that our Club had a great future. Assuredly he was right! At a time when some pessimists were deploring the so-called fact that the Alps were exhausted, and were laying down the dogma that the giant mountains of the world were invincible, owing to the "Thin air," he wrote as follows: "I beg to submit to you the following proposition: If the highest peaks of the Himalayas are never climbed, the rarity of the air will not be the cause of failure; and if there be no other drawback, then they certainly will be climbed."

Never will those who were fortunate enough to hear him forget his impressive reading. Those too who have heard him speak will always retain in their memories some of the weighty words which he uttered.

In the noble tribute paid to the memory of his well-nigh life-long friend, and in speaking of his strength of character and decided views, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain said, "It was a remarkable testimony to his genial, kindly character, to the justice with which he always regarded the proposals of his opponents, even when he did not agree with them, that during the long period of active and strenuous controversy, it might truly be said that he never made an enemy and never lost a friend." Speaking of his private life and character, Mr. Chamberlain said that "Mr. Mathews was a man of many intellectual interests and of great cultivation. His knowledge and love of English literature was very remarkable. He made an incomparable host to those who had the privilege of being invited to meet him. His own cheerfulness was contagious, his keen but kindly wit added to the pleasure of his society, and in every rank of life, in every part of their varied work, now that he had gone, they would miss him, and his place could never be supplied."

The name of Charles Edward Mathews is a household word amongst mountaineers all the world over. It is well

that we have known him, and that we have so rich a treasure of happy memories connected with him. I cannot do better than to end by quoting a few lines from "The Annals of Mont Blanc," a work of great research, but yet a labour of love, which, as time rolls on, will more and more be recognised as a great mountain classic :

"I envy the pioneers of the future. 'Other men are young now, but we no more.' But the old school will never think any mountain so interesting as Mont Blanc. Tourists can never spoil it. Huts can never wholly vulgarise it. 'Age cannot wither, nor custom stale its infinite variety.' The tracks of summer are obliterated by the snows of winter, and each new man, each new generation of men, will find in it, as we have found, the same interest and the same charm."

WM. CECIL SLINGSBY.

