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THE NORTHERN DINNER.

ON the 17th March, 1906, at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, the Annual Northern Dinner of the Club was held. This was the second occasion of the Northern members meeting together at dinner, and the gathering was again a success.

Prior to the dinner a short business meeting was held. The President of the Club (W. C. Slingsby, Esq.) seemed almost to resent the intrusion of serious talk into a festive congregation of climbers, but the proceedings did not last many minutes. Mr. E. A. Baker reported his impending removal to London, and consequent inability to remain on the Northern Committee. Professor Wilberforce retired also, and Messrs. Adam Fox, A.C., and P. Spencer, were elected to the vacant positions.

It is hoped that the Committee will be able to arrange attractive meets for the members of the Club, and that these arrangements will be taken advantage of. The writer has in mind certain contracts for the engagement of rooms at Gorphwysfa at the New Year, and subsequent efforts to appease Mrs. Owen under circumstances which might very well have formed grounds for an action for breach of contract, owing to some of the promised guests not putting in an appearance. It must be said that Mrs. Owen behaved very handsomely in the matter, and those who did pay a visit to Gorphwysfa have nothing but praise for her ministrations to their comfort.

There were some very distinguished guests at the Dinner. There was the great, but modest, Horace Walker; also another mighty peak-hunter, F. Gardiner. G. A. Solly,

T. E. Goodeve (of the Yorkshire Ramblers), W. F. Machray (of the *Liverpool Post*), and Mr. Hechle, were amongst the visitors. The President of the Club presided on this occasion, and all the members of the Northern Committee, and also the Hon. Sec. of the Club, were present, the whole company numbering between 40 and 50.

After the loyal toasts had been drunk, the President proposed "the Club." He said that in the British islands there are only two professional guides. One of these is in Skye, a most appropriate place for those who seek to reach the heavens; the other is a winter visitor from Dauphiné, who endeavours to acquire a knowledge of classical English from the farmers on the Cumbrian Hills. The President gave a little practical hint about the use of the rope, for, he said, its true use was never made on the Continent until it was learned on British mountains. In the belaying of a rope, a climber frequently interposes the hitch between the man to be belayed and himself. There should be a clear rope, as a rule, between these two; the belay being for the purpose of holding the "fixed" man if the strain should come upon him, whilst he himself should act as a kind of buffer between the moving man and the belay, in case of a slip. He thought the Climbers' Club had been the salvation of many young and energetic men who have been unable to continue their school or university sports, and has therefore done excellent service.

Mr. J. Walter Robson responded. He said the Club, though young, was to be congratulated on having its initials still unfilched. The Alpine Club—the well known "A.C."—had been robbed by the Automobile Club, whilst a "Winter Alpine Club" recently promoted, flung down the inference that the mother of mountaineering associations was but a fair-weather Club. Think of these insults to the honourable name and long line of heroes of the Alpine Club! It is filching worse than that of the Broomseller, whose fellow merchant stole the bristles for his brushes, but who himself stole the brushes ready made, and could therefore undersell all competitors. It was to be hoped that notwithstanding the

dramatic farce, "The Mountain Climber," the Climbers' Club would long remain and flourish. The moral strength and the exhilaration of fellowship were only two of a large number of advantages of the Club. The Committee should take into consideration further benefits to members, such as an extra one or even two numbers of the *Journal* per annum, a few Club Huts, and a rebate of say 75 % off all Hotel Bills.

Professor Wilberforce proposed "Kindred Clubs." He emphasized the remarks of the President on hitching a rope. John Robinson, his first tutor in climbing, taught him this, the correct method. Mr. Robson had referred to the optimism of climbers. He (the speaker) thought that, as an optimist was said to be a man who attends to the eyes, and a pessimist one who attends to the feet, a climber ought always to be a pessimist. Climbing down is more difficult than climbing up, and it might be a useful result of the Algeciras Conference that the German Emperor should show us the true art of "climbing down." He was, however, a child in these matters.

Mr. Horace Walker replied on behalf of the Alpine Club. He was glad to be present, as an old climber. He had made the first ascent of Mount Ararat (since the flood), and also that at Mont Blanc, by the Brenva route. The latter ascent was a memorable one, and the painting of the Brenva glacier, which Miss Hechle had kindly lent that evening, was a very true representation, and recalled vividly that famous excursion. He had also led the President to the summit of Mont Blanc, without guides. His sister, Miss Walker, had also done with him a number of climbs. He had had the pleasure of proposing Mr. Slingsby as a member of the Alpine Club, and might assure the Climbers' Club that the A.C., its parent, regarded it with sympathy.

Mr. T. E. Goodeve replied for the "Yorkshire Ramblers." He thought one essential feature of mountaineering was that individual wishes were merged in the common good.

Mr. G. L. Collins, A.C., proposed "The Visitors." "I will not call you 'gentlemen.' I know you too well." As the

first duty of a climber who is not leading is to do what he is told, he consented to propose the toast. He, however, in the prospect of having to make a speech, felt like the bereaved husband at his wife's funeral, who was ordered by the undertaker to ride in the first carriage with his mother-in-law. "Ay," said he, "I'll do it; but tha's spoiled my day!" The visitors were not strangers, but pilgrims—in fact the Club was entertaining angels unawares. He coupled with the toast the names of Messrs. Gardiner, A.C., and Solly, A.C. Dr. Gell, of the Yorkshire Ramblers; Mr. Machray (as representing literature); Mr. Ernest Cottam (who, the President vouched, was an excellent all round sportsman, and deadly with the golf club and the gun); Mr. Hechle (an old friend, and father of Miss Hilda Hechle, the painter of the picture referred to).

Mr. G. A. Solly replied. He said he lived only two miles away, whilst Mr. Collins, who came from Rochdale, had proposed his health as a visitor! However, he would no longer submit to be a visitor, but would join the Climbers' Club. As long as wind and limb allow, climbers and lovers of mountains will go up every mountain they can. In these days of cheap tours, why should not every one see the Alps? If he could speak as a non-climber, he would say, be thankful to the early climbers, who have shown us the possibilities of the mountains, and how to taste the pleasures of life on the high peaks of the Alps. Mr Solly closed his speech with a quotation of some verses—doubtless some lines from Tennyson's "Lotos Eaters"—beginning "As me and my companions!"

Mr. A. F. Machray also replied. He thought it required a good head to be able to climb; speaking for himself, his head had already gone round a good deal, but he was still able to express his pleasure at being present. Mr. Collins had classed his profession amongst those appertaining to literature. Probably, therefore, as a newspaper man, he was invited, with a lively sense of favours to come. Newspaper reports of climbing accidents were, he thought, closely analysed by

the Climbers' Club, and in this they doubtless did a good work. Climbers were incapable of meanness, or ought to be, for they were bound to take lofty views.

Mr. G. B. Bryant proposed "The Northern Sub-Committee." He specially referred to Mr. E. A. Baker, a member of that body, and the convener of this year's dinner. In conferring about the arrangements, Baker had suggested the advantages of having speakers who were "fresh," and he himself desired to be excused. Referring to the composition of the Sub-Committee, Baker was a distinguished member of it, and additionally so on account of his literary contributions in connection with climbing. His book on "Derbyshire Cragg," his admirable "Anthology of the Mountains," and his excellent articles in the *Journal*, entitled him to the gratitude of the Club. The gentlemen of the Northern Sub-Committee had, he hoped, found fresh foothold for the progress of the Club.

Mr. E. A. Baker replied. No one could lay better claim to modesty than he, for he prided himself on an almost morbid modesty. He was, for oratorical purposes, a man of straw, but could at any rate return thanks on behalf of the Northern Sub-Committee. Collectively, they were a fine body of men. It was a deep laid scheme of Bryant's to pay all the compliments to one man, because these were compliments to himself as Hon. Secretary. Bryant was the real Atlas, who accomplishes the great feat of balancing mountaineers on his skull.

The last toast was that of "The President," proposed by Mr. Roderick Williams. He said that the only things he knew about the President were so favourable that they could not be expressed in ordinary terms. He knew nothing against the President. He could only object to his remark that it was a terrible thing to look on the faces of those present. He knew but one thing that was mildly hostile against him. On one occasion he (the speaker) had told a lady — probably swaggering about it also — that he was a member of the Climbers' Club. The lady said, "Then

perhaps you know Slingsby?" He replied, "I have been hearing about nothing else since I came to Norway." Was this Slingsby a myth, or did he own the whole of Norway? He has made the Lakes, the Alps, and especially Norway his own. He has made this Club his own, and they were proud of him. They wished him long life and prosperity.

The President returned thanks, and said he hoped the Club would be welded into one perfect whole. He only wished for its prosperity. There had been a good deal of romancing that evening. Horace Walker had romanced, but the solid facts of his brilliant achievements remained. He (the President) was arriving at that time of life when he would welcome the Jungfrau railway and other artificial means of arriving at mountain summits. He thanked the proposer of the all too flattering toast, and hoped for the opportunity of sitting at many Club dinners, if not as President, as an ordinary member.

The gathering dispersed at about 10:30 p.m.

