

(January 10th.)

Canada's Mountain Heritage.

BY ARTHUR O. WHEELER, F.R.G.S.

ADDRESSING the Canadian Club on the subject: "Canada's Mountain Heritage." Mr. Arthur O. Wheeler, F.R.G.S., said:

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club of Toronto,—I feel very grateful for your kind invitation to address you in the interests of Canada's alpine regions and to bring to your notice the great heritage we possess in them, not only as a huge play-ground for our citizens and the people of other lands, but as a field for science, literature and art, that can compare most favourably with the older and better known mountain tracts of the world.

In connection therewith I desire to bring to your notice the work the Alpine Club of Canada is doing and to show you that it is worthy of approval and encouragement as a national organization; more than that, as an international one.

Mountaineers by the rest of the world are regarded as a species of harmless lunatics with a well developed suicidal mania. The disease is highly infectious. Notwithstanding, I am of the opinion that there is method in the madness of the Alpine Club of Canada.

If a desire to bring home to Canadians a realization of our great mountain heritage be lunacy, we are mad. If the cultivation of a mountain literature, art and science that will redound to Canada's credit be lunacy, we are mad. If the welding of life-long friendships and patriotism through the fellowship of camp fire and the wild beauties of nature be lunacy, again we are mad. If the inculcation of high moral attributes, such as strength of mind, patience, perseverance, strenuous endeavor, intellectual thought and good temper be lunacy, we are indeed mad, and I pray for the power and ability to be the maddest of them all.

Mr. Arthur O. Wheeler has been Topographical Field Officer for the Department of the Interior, having charge of the topographical survey work in the Rockies and Selkirks. He was one of the founders of the Canadian Alpine Club and has been President since its organization in 1906. Mr. Wheeler is considered the leading authority on the subject of Canada's mountain resources.

Of the attribute of good temper, I speak with a certain reservation.

There is a story told of the great mountaineer, author and scientist, Leslie Stephen. On one occasion he started at 2 a.m. to make a climb in the Alps with the present Bishop of Bristol. The Bishop moved up to him in the darkness and said something genial. Stephen turned sharply and snapped out, "If you think I am such a fool as to be good tempered at this hour in the morning you are very greatly mistaken."

The Alpine regions of Canada cover approximately the enormous area of 200,000 square miles, extending from the international boundary to the Arctic Ocean. The area of the Swiss Alps is 16,000 square miles. When the Canadian Alpine Club was organized, that celebrated mountaineer, Edward Whymper, wrote to me, "Go in and win, and do not forget that twenty Switzerlands can be set down in the Canadian Rockies and would sink out of sight."

It is true the European Alps present a greater altitude and rise in steeper, bolder architectural lines, but the peaks are no higher above the basal valleys, and the actual climbs are much the same. Switzerland with its 16,000 square miles of area is reproduced more or less accurately, a dozen times over in the Canadian Rockies. It is bootless, however, to make comparisons; no two mountain chains have the same characteristics, or even two of their sub-ranges. But, for primeval forests of magnificent conifers, for rushing limpid torrents, for shimmering jewel-like lakes, for beauty of glaciers and for labyrinthine organization, the Rockies of Canada cannot be surpassed.

We have unlimited Alpine resources; mountains ever clad with white reaching into the clouds; rocky basins filled with lakes of snow, emptied by rivers of ice, tumbling in the wildest confusion of cascades and falls down to the confines of the virgin forest. Beneath these snow-fields are Alpine meadows decked with flowers, whose glories surpass the splendors of Solomon and strike the beholder dumb with wonder and admiration at the kaleidoscopic collection of their colors. Below are tangled forests of pine and fir, spruce and hemlock, ever changing their characteristics with their altitude; forests filled with obstacles requiring much patience and perseverance to overcome, but withal beautiful in their dim recesses, in their sunlit glades and in the tropical growth filling up their spaces. There in those forests are wonderful things; torrents rushing over boulder beds and cascading hundreds of feet in a swirl of foam, or leaping sheer to depths below; canyons with rock sides carved in curious forms,

spanned by natural bridges, at the bottom of whose gloomy depths the torrent may be heard but not seen; caves extending into the bowels of the earth, where subterranean waterfalls, marble halls, and walls, and ceilings, frescoed in fluorescent creations of snowy whiteness may, by means of a flashlight, be wrested for a moment from the stygian darkness.

There, also, are magic lakes of changing shades of blue and green, whose colors are so unreal that, if seen in a painting, they would be ascribed to the vagaries of some mad artist. Surely truth is stranger than fiction.

As you climb to the highest summits you travel in a land of enchantment. The sound of rushing water is ever in your ears, the aromatic smell of the balsams in your nostrils; you walk upon air and the cry "Excelsior" draws you ever nearer the blue sky until there is no beyond. You pass through the varied stages of dense forest, open timbered slopes, flower-clad alps, morainal debris, glacier ice, the dazzling snow-field, the rock berg, and finally the snow or ice slope leading to the extreme summit. From the summit lie spread before you the wonders of creation. A chaos of crude material reaches to the uttermost horizon. In every direction giant snow-clad peaks mingle with the clouds; here a rounded dome; there a sharp-cut pyramid; beyond the pinnacles and spires of some great cathedral mass; again the castellated turrets and battlements of impregnable fortifications; between are shining snow-fields and glistening glaciers. Waterfalls leap down rock precipices; cascades thunder from the heights; rock-falls cut wide gashes in the virgin forest; in valleys filled with violet haze, glittering sinuous streams wind in serpentine loops; over all the sun shines clear and billows of cloud pass slowly across a dome of blue. In all this wealth of raw material, here, in a very factory of the world, there is a scientific scheme of order, an artistic blending of color that proves the Master mind and a sense of the great Creator of all things forces conviction. The one spot of all others where there is no place for an atheist is on the summit of a mountain peak.

There is a quaint bit of humor found in the minute book at the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's hotel at Glacier in the Selkirks. It reads like this, "Young man or young woman, should you ascend to the summit of Mount Sir Donald and gaze abroad at the wonders of creation that lie spread beneath you, and still think that you are It, and that man and things should move around for you; all I can say is, when you descend, go see a clergyman, for your case is almost hopeless and I know of no other remedy."

And now I want to tell you something about the Alpine Club; what it has done; what it is doing; and why it should receive encouragement from Canadians as a national organizations. Primarily, it is making known to our people and to the rest of the world, one of the grandest mountain ranges on the face of the earth, one of which, we the owners, may feel supurbly proud when we hear it spoken of. These great and lofty snow-clad peaks, majestic in their immovable silence should be among the most revered of our household gods. They should be the Mecca of all good Canadians, and it should be the aim of one and all, not "to see Rome and die," but to see the Rockies and live. Secondly, the influence of the Alpine Club is intensely moral. It makes good citizens and patriots of our sons and daughters; it makes them God-fearing, without which no nation can thrive. Of this influence there can be no doubt whatever. You have only to scan the names of the many reverend gentlemen who are associated with us to be sure of that fact. There is no doubt as to the moral power of the mountains over the mind, and the feeling of the Almighty that is present everywhere in them is well exemplified by the following simple story. "A gentleman and his little girl, a dot of five, stopped at Glacier House on their way from the Orient. He was standing on the station platform talking to one of the Swiss guides and asking the names of the surrounding peaks and other features of interest. The little girl was listening with all her ears. Suddenly she exclaimed: "Daddy, who made Mount Avalanche?" Her father replied: "God, my dear." "And did He make Mount Sir Donald?" "Yes, dear." And then pointing to the Illecillewaet Glacier, falling 3,000 feet from sky-line: "And did He make the great glacier, Daddy," "Yes, my child." She thought for a moment and then replied with the fullest conviction: "Well Daddy, I think God's all right."

The Alpine Club was organized at Winnipeg on the 27th and 28th of March, 1906. Through the long-sightedness and courtesy of Mr. William Whyte, second Vice-President of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the promoters were able to bring delegates from various parts of Canada, from Halifax in the far East and Revelstoke in the far West, to a central meeting ground at Winnipeg. The initial membership, sixty-seven in number, was enrolled, officers elected and a constitution drawn up. The objects of the club are good and worthy objects, and the club has lived up to its tenets to the fullest extent of its means. It is not, however, composed of wealthy members. There is plenty of intellect, plenty of muscle and

grand enthusiasm, but not much money; and the road has chiefly been uphill. I am pleased to say that a most desirable class of membership has been added during the past two years and that prospects are very bright.

Anyone can become a member. There are five grades. It will thus be seen that the club is a school of mountaineering, and through its graduating members is acquiring a steadily increasing roll of actives, who have already made for themselves a place among real mountaineers.

Although the club is not yet four years old, it has since inauguration registered between five hundred and six hundred members upon its books. Starting as a national institution, it has become international. Its membership roll, at the present moment, includes seven of the nine provinces of Canada and draws members from sixty-eight cities and towns within these provinces, extending from Halifax on the Atlantic to Victoria on the Pacific. In Great Britain, twenty-two cities and towns are represented, and in Greater Britain: India, South Africa and Australia. Twenty of the United States of North America furnish members; and in foreign lands: Italy, Holland, Austria and Switzerland. Fifteen members of England's famous Alpine Club, the premier club of the world, are registered as our members. Of these, thirteen are life members. They are not men who lightly join young mountaineering clubs, and it is not likely they would do so now did they not see a great future before the Alpine Club of Canada.

The policy of the club has been to open up the Canadian Rockies as a field for physical recreation, for scientific research and for literary and artistic study. It has done this, not for the wealthy, who can afford to enjoy the mountain splendors, in conjunction with the luxury of civilization in the wilderness, afforded by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's palatial hotels, but for those of our citizens who are not endowed with much wealth or unlimited leisure. To prove my statement the fact may be cited that four successful camps have been held by the Alpine Club, with an attendance limit at each of 200 persons. At the first, 112 were placed under canvas; at the second, 157; at the third, 177; and at the fourth, 190. In all 536. What did we find? That the camps were promptly taken advantage of by professors and teachers in colleges and schools, by clergymen, by students, by artists and photographers, and, in short, by those whose means prevented their visiting the mountains under the heavy cost of existing tourist conditions, which are only for the wealthy. The Alpine Club does not seek to make a profit by its summer camps and fur-

nishes all the facilities for mountain travel and recreation: camps, guides, ponies, etc., at the actual cost to the club.

During the past summer a larger amount of Alpine climbing was done in the Canadian Rockies than ever before in one season; with the exception of two or three climbs, all of importance was done by members of the Canadian Alpine Club.

As an advertising medium for the Canadian Rockies as a world's playground there is no better. For the past few years the newspapers and magazines, not only of Canada, but of many other places have been filled with literature and illustrations of the Canadian Alpine Club. At home I have an album twelve inches by fifteen inches and three inches thick, chuck full of it. Scraps picked up at random. And this is not a hundredth part of all that has been published. Here is a sample from Barnett's Continental Weekly of August 31st, 1907:—

"That latest born of Alpine Clubs is the Alpine Club of Canada. It is strong and vigorous, and has given birth to a book within nine months of its own birth. The book is entitled "The Canadian Alpine Journal" and includes contributions from Papas, and Mamas, from Professors and Misses. It extends to 196 pages, which compares favorably with the little production of one-third of that amount which was the first offspring of the Alpine Club." I may add by way of explanation that the Alpine Club of England is known as "*The Alpine Club*;" also, that the price of the first issue of the Canadian Alpine Journal has already jumped from 75 cents to one dollar and a half. Where it will get to before the issue runs out is hard to say.

Three numbers of the annual have already been published. It has gone far and wide and is highly thought of from a literary, scientific and mountaineering point of view. A fourth number is in course of preparation and, judging by the splendid material at hand from last summer's very full and successful work, it will surpass all previous ones. This is the best kind of advertising, not only of the mountain regions but for the whole of Canada, in that it is absolutely non-commercial and attracts people of the right class, who come and see, at a considerable expenditure, and leave large sums of money behind them invested in Canadian properties.

During the summer of 1909 the club has gone some steps further and has erected at Banff, the capital of the Rocky Mountain Park, a handsome Club House, at a cost of over nine thousand dollars.

This fine building, set high on the slopes of Sulphur Mountain commands from its elevated perch a panorama of snow-capped peaks, winding river and pine forest that cannot be surpassed. Around it, amidst the pines are built a number of pretty, rustic tent-houses, and during the summer months a camp is in full swing.

It was here last August the Alpine Club entertained twenty British Alpine men and women as its guests, taking them from there to the big general camp at Lake O'Hara for a week, and then for another week on a special trip around the Yoho Valley—a valley containing in the minimum of space the maximum of alpine attractions—not by the conventional tourist trails but by way of its very rim, over snow passes, across wide ice-fields, along the Great Divide, the back-bone of Canada. A party of thirty-six in all, carrying great loads on the backs of the clubs' stalwarts, sleeping above timber-line or in the forest, under the trees, under the stars, or in any soft spot, tents being only provided for our guests. Did they like it? I should say so. They revelled in it. Professor Dixon, F.R.S., of Manchester University, interviewed at Winnipeg during the British Association meeting, remarked, "To the Canadian Alpine Club I owe more than I can express." L. S. Amery, sub-editor of the *London Times* and author of the *Times' History of the Boer War*, when asked in Winnipeg, "Did you like the camp?" replied, "Rather. It was immense!" And no wonder; two hundred jolly campers around a huge fire sending sparks up towards the watching stars; the solemn forests all about and above them on every side the towering grey mountains, with their white glaciers. It is a great bivouac, that.

We have in Canada a great national playground, where those who have been tied to the desk and shut between close city walls for the longest part of the year, can escape from their prison environment and go and climb to snow-clad heights, where the breath of life courses free; can tramp or ride through wonderful valleys, where the incense of the pines is ever in their nostrils; and can sleep under canvas or beneath the starlit sky, where the roar of the cascade lulls to sleep.

For the future, there is a wide field in the exploration and mapping of parts that are little known; in the opening of trails to new beauty spots; in planning and making of camps to accommodate the ever increasing number of Canada's citizens who wish to enjoy these wonders of Nature and can only afford to do so through such a medium as the Alpine Club; and, not the least, in the making of sturdy men and

women, in teaching them to be brave, patient and fearless and withal worthy sons and daughters of the greatest nation upon earth. The club had gone steadily ahead; it will go steadily ahead; for it has behind it that which is greater than the fickle favor of man, the silent immovable mountains. It is now in its youth. Each year will add to its dignity, its respect for itself and the respect of others.

The moral of all this is: Come to your own Canadian mountains and climb a bit. If you can't do that, go to the other fellows' European Alps and climb. Climb anyway. The indescribable fascination of travelling on ice and snow above the clouds; the intense charm of Nature at her out posts, as seen in these beautiful wilds will more than repay you for the exertion. Anyone can climb with the assistance of proper guides. I once stepped off the platform at Glacier, and I saw an old guide of mine coming down with two very stout gentlemen in tow, apparently in the last stages of exhaustion. I took him to one side, and asked him, "Where have you been?" "We climbed Mount Sir Donald," he said. "How did you ever get them up?" I asked amazed. "Oh, that's nothing," he answered, "We could take a dead man up there if necessary." You will be dead when you return, dead tired, but you will have achieved the summit of endeavor and will have acquired impressions that will last you a life time.