

mountains. He had his fair share of fine experiences, to be sure; but for him mountains were good primarily for the reactions obtained from them in aesthetic enjoyment and in the development of character. Above all, he found in the society of mountain-lovers the best of good fellowship.

F. P. F.

JOSEPH NISBET LeCONTE

1870 - 1950

The LeContes, father and son, exerted an influence upon the advancement of science and the love of mountains on the Pacific Coast that can hardly be matched. It began in 1869, when Joseph LeConte came from Georgia to the newly established University of California as Professor of Geology and Natural History, bringing associations with Agassiz and Audubon and an enthusiasm that inspired a generation of students. In July 1870 he joined a college group for a summer of "Ramblings through the High Sierra of California," immortalized in his published journal. In the very first paragraph of that journal he writes: "I left my home and dear ones this morning. Surely I must have a heroic and dangerous air about me, for my little baby boy shrinks from my rough flannel shirt and broad-brimmed hat, as did the baby son of Hector from *his* brazen corselet and beamy helm and nodding plume." In this light and happy mood Joseph N. LeConte, "Little Joe," as he was known all his life, is introduced to those who follow the mountain trail.

Little Joe himself, in due time, set out upon that trail and followed it with joy and with amazing vigor throughout a long life. His first memorable trip was in the summer of 1890 when, with three college companions, he explored the Kings and Kern River regions, climbed Mount Whitney, skirted the eastern base of the Sierra, and returned through the Yosemite country. This was a real wilderness trip in those days, and there were few contacts with civilization. There were no reliable maps of the High Sierra region, and Joe set about at once to remedy the lack. In 1893 the Sierra Club published two maps prepared by him from all available data supplemented by his own observations, one of the Kings and one of the Yosemite

region. In 1896 these were amplified and consolidated into a single sheet for the entire High Sierra. Then followed an annual series of blueprint maps embodying the results of new explorations. Joe Le Conte's photographs of the high mountain scene were without and explorers in the Sierra until the United States Geological Survey quadrangles began to appear in 1901.

During the decade of the 1890's, and for some years thereafter, LeConte's photographs of the high mountain scene were without rivals. He was precise and painstaking in his work and would go to incredible lengths to obtain the views he sought. The *Sierra Club Bulletin* was enriched by the results of his efforts, and a quantity of fine negatives remain as a valuable historical record. In 1907 the American Alpine Club published as the first volume of *Alpina Americana* his monograph on "The High Sierra of California," with nine of his finest pictures and a map.

Mountain climbing during the period of Joe LeConte's activities was quite different from what it is today. The mountains were inaccessible, and the chief difficulties of an ascent often lay in getting to the base of the peak. Moreover, few of those who climbed in the Sierra Nevada had ever climbed in Europe, where the art was better developed. Use of the rope was unknown, and reliance was solely on agility, tenacity and nerve. These Joe LeConte possessed in superlative degree, so that, with his equally rare skill in overcoming the obstacles of approach, he succeeded in making the first ascents of a number of the finest peaks in the Sierra, including North Palisade, Abbot, Gardiner, University, Split and Sill, three of them over 14,000 feet. His climbs extended over a period of 40 years, from Dana and Lyell in 1889 to Thompson and a repeat on North Palisade in 1928.

Both Joseph Nisbet LeConte and his father, Joseph LeConte, were founding members of the American Alpine Club, the latter by virtue of an invitation issued only a few weeks before his death, in 1901. Joe LeConte, however, was a member for nearly 50 years, a record surpassed by only two others. He served on the Council from 1905 to 1910, and from 1911 to 1913 was a Vice-President of the Club. His daughter, Helen M. LeConte, has been a member of the club since 1933. Father and son were also charter members of the Sierra Club, of which the latter was President from 1915 to 1917, for many years the Treasurer, and since 1931 the Honorary President.

In his latter years, Joe LeConte resigned himself to less active mountaineering, on account of a growing disability in his legs; but for a long time he camped in the high meadows and among the timberline pines with family and friends, even later in secluded spots where he could drive his car away from the highway. His camps were always cheerful, the food was always good, the sleeping bags were properly laid out with an eye to the morning view, and the campfires illuminated a circle of confident friendship inspired by one of the most lovable of men.

F. P. F.

DEAN LANGMUIR

1886 - 1950

Dean Langmuir, who joined the Club in 1922, died on 8 January 1950. A native New Yorker who spent most of his life in the city, he had shown his love of the outdoors and the sport of mountaineering even before his graduation from Williams, where he won the Clark Prize for scholarship. During a busy lifetime, he had served as deputy controller of the city of Schenectady and expert accountant with the New York Public Service Commission, before entering the financial field, in which he was to spend most of his life. He was successively with the Equitable Trust Co., Scudder & Clark, and Lazard Frères; and he became vice-president of Distributors Group, Inc., before establishing his own business as investment counsel in 1933.

Dean's interest in the mountains was sustained, extending from the time of his first climbs in the Alps in 1904 until his death. Professional duties kept him from taking lengthy vacations, and he did little if any climbing after 1919. His interest in American mountaineering and in the Club was very real, however, and his passing is a loss to us all. Dean Langmuir is survived by his second wife, the former Mrs. Mary Shattuck Fisher, and by two children of his first marriage, Dr. Robert Vose Langmuir and Mrs. Robert A. Harman, as well as by his brother, Dr. Irving Langmuir.