IN MEMORIAM

WILLIAM SARGENT LADD
1887 - 1949

Little more than a year ago, a group of us stood in the Library of the American Alpine Club and heard Dr. Ladd tell us that the new house was ours. It was his gift, the fulfillment of an old dream. His unexpected death, on 17 September 1949, deprives the Club of its most devoted benefactor.

Ladd was born in Portland, Oregon, on 16 August 1887, the son of William Mead and Mary Lyman (Andrews) Ladd. Since his father, a banker, had built Cloud Cap Inn on Mount Hood, it is not strange that he was attracted first to that mountain, which he ascended in 1904, 1905 and 1911.

Having secured his B.S. from Amherst in 1910 and his M.D. from the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in 1915, Dr. Ladd spent two years as interne in the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital at Boston, and a like term on the staff of the Presbyterian Hospital in New York, to which he returned as assistant physician, from 1924 to 1931. Between 1917 and 1931 he taught at Columbia, except for two years (1919-21) when he was at Johns Hopkins. In 1931 he was appointed associate dean of Cornell Medical College, and four years later he was made dean. This post he held until his resignation in 1942. He held the chair of clinical medicine from 1942 until the time of his death.

Dr. Ladd was an attending physician to the New York Hospital, consultant to the Department of Medicine of the Nassau Hospital Association, a trustee of the Memorial Hospital and the New York Academy of Medicine. He was a trustee of Amherst College (1936-41) and of the American University, Beirut (1924-41). In addition to professional societies, his memberships included Alpha Delta Phi, the Century Association, the University Club and the Boone and Crockett Club.

In 1913 he married Mary Richardson Babbott, who, with three sons and a daughter, survives him.

In 1905 Dr. Ladd paid his first visit to the Canadian Rockies. He returned there intermittently for almost 20 years. Before the first War, he went several times to the Alps; and his wedding journey included an extensive walking tour in the Dolomites with his wife. In 1921 he explored the Wind River mountains of Wyoming, making new ascents in the vicinity of Gannett Peak. He joined the Alpine Club of Canada in 1910 and the American Alpine Club in 1914. Our Club he served as Councillor (1923-25), as Vice-President (1926-28) and as President (1929-31). He became a member of the Alpine Club (London) in 1927 and five years later was elected to honorary membership in the Club Alpin Français.

At the Consolation Lake camp of the Alpine Club of Canada in 1910, his guide on Mount Fay was Conrad Kain. The skill and gay comradeship of this leader so impressed him that, after he had attended the 1922 Club dinner in Philadelphia and accepted the writer's proposal to visit the Columbia Icefield during the next summer, it was inevitable that Kain should be sought to keep us out of difficulties. Jim Simpson did the outfitting; and, as this was Ladd's first journey with a Canadian packtrain, the experience was one that he looked back upon with pleasure. The Columbia Icefield was far away in those days; Mount Columbia had been ascended only once, and North Twin and Mount Saskatchewan were untouched prizes. "I have promised my wife that I would do no foolhardy stunts," he wrote. "I think we both hold about the same views on what is legitimate sport and what is foolishness." Later he was able to say, "As I think it over we were quite successful in accomplishing so much of our plan. We got the big boys. It was great."

In 1926 Ladd and Allen Carpé decided to investigate Mount Fairweather. Andy Taylor would go with them. "We have not been able to locate anyone who has been within 15-20 miles of it," he admitted. "Further we are convinced that the International Boundary Survey maps are not to be relied on. So it is a gamble, but it will take us to a new country." This was the beginning of Ladd's unending enthusiasm for Alaskan mountains. "Fairweather is a glorious mountain," he wrote in the autumn, "the most beautiful, the most fascinating, the most difficult mountain problem I have tackled. It was too big. We might have tried for more on our very last grub, but I honestly thought it was fruitless—there was too much in the way beyond."

The season of 1928 gave Ladd his finest days in the Alps and showed him capable of arduous technical climbs. After some days in London, where he met Captain Farrar and Sydney Spencer, he spent three weeks in Chamonix and Zermatt. A traverse of Mont Blanc (descent by Mont Maudit) was followed by climbs on the Aiguilles—Peigne, Nonne, Évêque, Verte (by the Moine ridge), Dent du Requin. He made also various ascents on the Aiguilles Dorées. From Zermatt he traversed the Rothorngrat and the Nadelgrat.

It was not until 1929 that Ladd could renew the attack on Mount Fairweather. He attained an elevation of 15,000 feet. But when the food again ran short, he and Andy Taylor stayed behind in order that Carpé and Moore might succeed. This was a measure of the man.

Ladd was elected President of our Club in January 1929, in the lecture hall of the Explorers' Club, where our rooms were opened for the first time. We had decided to publish a *Journal.* In 1931, when his term was completed, it could truthfully be said: "He brought to the office a deep-seated conviction as to the merits and possibilities of the club and put his shoulders behind the wheels to translate these ideals into accomplishment. The opening of the new headquarters and the complete reorganization of the library were brought to pass under his inspiration." But the Explorers' Club lost its building soon afterward; and their bonds, in which Ladd had made an investment as a gift to our Club, became worthless. The American Alpine Club moved from 110th Street to 140 East 46th Street in 1933. Here, of course, was a challenge—which he eventually solved by buying a house and giving it to us.

When one has lost a great friend, it is not easy to explain how he differed from the run of men. One does not always know one's companion by the mere sharing of adventure. Ladd was as debonair as he was kindly. He laughed at the foibles and petty bickerings which add a certain spice to our sport, and looked beyond to the splendor which makes it endure. There were worthy goals which he had the means of attaining; he did things quietly and well, without ostentation or obtrusiveness. Few knew that he had taken that great old sourdough guide, Andy Taylor, into his own household. Only reluctantly, but with full satisfaction, did he reveal that we were to have for the Club a house that would be our very own.

Ladd was, in the fullest sense, a sportsman—whether he was shooting ducks, flying a plane, fishing for salmon or climbing a mountain. He put everything into the effort selflessly. This, in the case of his profession, took him from us before his time. His was a complete life, with none of the best things left undone. The end came before his pattern was restricted. He had walked so long facing the light that all the shadows were behind him and the future held no fear. Even in the agnosticism which we shared, he saw no harm in believing that

> There may be meadows there and hills,
> Mountains and plains and winds that blow,
> And flowers bending over rills
> Springing from an eternal snow.
>
> Who knows? Who needs to understand
> If there be shadows there, or more,
> To live as tho' a pleasant land
> Lay just beyond an open door?

J. M. T.

In the untimely passing of Dr. William S. Ladd, the American Alpine Club has lost not only its greatest individual benefactor, but as versatile a member as any social group could hope to claim. In fact, Bill was so versatile—and so philanthropic, in the best sense of the term—that it is difficult to know where to begin a eulogy of the man, and even more difficult to confine the eulogy within narrow limits. This particular biographical note will deal primarily with the distinguished career of a gentleman and a scholar.

The *curriculum vitae* of Dr. Ladd, as it appears in the last edition of *Who's Who in America,* summarizes a life of formidable attainments. But useful though this record is, it reveals all too little of the individuality and intimate attributes of a man who touched the lives of countless friends and associates in memorable and constructive ways. Few men have had more to give to their contemporaries; and few have given more freely, of their time, their counsel, the riches of their hearts and minds.

A grandfather of Bill migrated to Oregon a century ago, well before the railroads from the East had reached tidewater on the Pacific Coast. This grandfather was a co-founder of the Ladd and

Tilton Bank in Portland—an institution which had an important part in the development of the Pacific Northwest.

Bill was born almost under the shadow of the Cascade Range, close to the dense forests of Douglas fir and spruce that once covered much of the countryside from timberline to rugged coast. The symmetrical cone of Mount Hood must have fascinated Bill from his earliest days; and he may have made, with his father, likewise a lover of mountains, an ascent even earlier than 1904. Since the primitive areas of Oregon came close at that time to the city limits of Portland itself, Bill's interests broadened rapidly to include the entire field of wild life, conservation and ecological problems in general. All these interests became permanent. For many years he was chairman of the Conservation Committee of the Camp Fire Club of America.

Surrounded as he is by formations of surpassing grandeur and variety, a scholarly adolescent in Oregon is apt to acquire also a life-long interest in geology. Family records show that Bill made early expeditions to study the dry bed of the Columbia, miles upstream from Portland, and the other magnificent terraces which make the Columbia River Highway—and the entire course of the river, for that matter—a succession of sights among the most majestic on this continent. At one time Bill was interested in writing a study of the folklore of the river basin, with particular reference to the origin of the name "The Dalles."

A true Oregonian is perforce a fisherman. To watch the annual runs of the salmon up the Columbia and its tributaries is, for a sportsman, to acquire a lasting desire not merely to admire this aristocrat of both salt and fresh water, but to pursue him in all his haunts. The later years of Bill's life found him in frequent contact with the Atlantic salmon in Nova Scotia and other parts of eastern Canada.

When the time came for higher education, it was only natural for Bill to enter Amherst College, his father's Alma Mater. His loyalties both to Amherst and to Alpha Delta Phi, his college fraternity, were deep and lasting. For a number of years, he was a member of the Amherst Board of Trustees; and there were few, if any, of its graduates upon whom the administration and his fellow alumni placed greater reliance. Until a year or so before his graduation, Bill had thought seriously of becoming a clergyman. Missionary work

was a strong family tradition, and Bill actually did return to Amherst as Resident Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. for the first year after he had finished his undergraduate work. The deciding influence which caused him to turn from a clerical life in the direction of medicine must have developed from his service, during a college vacation, with the Grenfell Mission in Labrador.

In 1911 Bill entered the medical school of Columbia University, and he graduated with the degree of M.D. in 1915. From then on, Bill rose rapidly in his chosen profession. Neither chronology nor acknowledgment of distinction in administration can give an adequate idea of the scope of his interest and creative work in more than one field of medical science. One of his specialties was the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes. In the field of social medicine and health insurance, Ladd was well ahead of the politicians. He differed radically from some of the pundits and reactionaries in his own profession who opposed any form of socialized medicine at any cost. His interest in psychiatric problems was searching and constructive. Psychiatry may still be the quasi-science that the late Clarence Darrow called "that frail sister of medicine." But Ladd took psychiatry seriously up to a certain point. Surely both rationally inclined laymen and professionals could accept Ladd's basic credo as set forth in the immortal lines of Socrates, which he often quoted: "There is no cure for the body apart from the soul."

The catalogue of Bill's avocations and extra-curricular activities is impressive. He had first-hand knowledge of many lands and many peoples. His travels took him well beyond the ordinary *choses vues*. He was a true cosmopolite, the very antithesis of a "city slicker." One of his trips was in response to an invitation to reorganize the medical school of the University of Beirut. Mention should be made also of his interest in Japanese prints and his study of astronomy and ceramics. He was fond of working with his hands, in many fields. In all his avocational interests, he was always the scientist, never the dilettante. In 1934 he became an aviation enthusiast and obtained his private pilot's certificate. For many years thereafter he thrilled to the unexpected and glorious experiences offered only to those who have flown.

In his last years, after withdrawing from most professional activities, Bill turned back to nature and the land. Precluded from further conquests above timberlines and glaciers, he spent more and

more time at his farm at Cold Spring in the Hudson River Valley, observing all the phenomena of his environment and participating in the multifarious works of the farmer.

It would be difficult to find upon the contemporary scene a more complete and well-rounded man. His many qualities insured a sympathetic contact with almost everyone. He was that rare combination of the philosopher and the extrovert. He believed that thoughts, however profound, are of little value unless they are shared with one's companions. His altruism went far beyond the stage of lip service; it was concrete and dynamic and an exemplification of the text that "faith without works is dead."

Bill's family life was of unusual felicity, and he will long be remembered among his cronies at the Century Association and the University Club. To even larger circles, he brought the virtues of the meadows and the valleys as well as the mountains—their integrity, their vitality and their enduring friendliness. His associates in the American Alpine Club can still think of Bill Ladd as an active member, not merely because of the constant reminders of his material generosities, but even more because of his secure place in that group, omnipresent though invisible, whom George Eliot called "those who live again in lives made better by their presence."

H. E. M.

I first knew Bill Ladd about 25 years ago. At that time he was a member of the Council of the American Alpine Club. He was at the beginning of his interest in Mount Fairweather, but his attention was diverted for a year by an active season in the Alps in 1928. I have a postcard from him mentioning sequoias in Coutances, and one from Le Puy in which he says, "I have been surprised at the number of Sequoias I have seen in different parts." He shared my interest in the Big Tree, for he had been in the California Sierra. The trees mentioned were, of course, obtained through nurserymen in the 1850's. It was characteristic of Bill that he should take time out to discuss such things in the midst of a climbing expedition.

When in 1929 he became President of the American Alpine Club and I was fortunate enough to serve with him as a Vice-President, there began a correspondence about Club affairs and moun-

taineering that continued to the day before his death. Soon after taking office he wrote: "It seems to me that the big job which we should look to as a Club is the object so well stated in our by-laws, 'undertake the study of the high mountains of all America, gathering in the facts and phenomena pertaining to them, and . . . publish a series of illustrated monographs of these mountains for the purpose of presenting a complete description of the Alpine mountains of the Western Hemisphere.' " The quotation is from the old By-Laws. While at present the objects of the Club are stated more succinctly, there is nevertheless much to be said for the earlier objective which engaged Bill's attention at the beginning of his administration.

As time went on, his concepts of the American Alpine Club's purposes broadened and matured. More diversified membership, expeditions, books and particularly good fellowship became the themes of his letters. Always present was the thought of a permanent home for the Club, where members might meet and the Club's collections be available for enjoyment. The culmination of this interest, in the purchase and gift of the fire house, satisfied this ever-deepening desire in his heart.

I was not privileged to be with Bill Ladd on a mountaineering expedition, but my visits with him from time to time at his home and mine will always remain happily in my memory. There were the visits at the Riverdale house overlooking the Hudson, with Mrs. Ladd and the children in evidence for a while, and then retirement to the library for a session on mountains and mountaineering, on into the middle of the night, with such rare good company as Howard Palmer, Allen Carpé and Roy Thorington. There were other occasions, later on, at 83rd Street and at Sunk Mine Farm in the great room rimmed with books and pictures of the mountaineering world. Others can testify with many more instances than I can cite how much the cause of American mountaineering was advanced through such gatherings.

Finally, I should like to mention the occasions when Bill met with us in the West. In recent years his visits were almost annual, and he met many of the younger generation of mountaineers, whom he inspired by his fine qualities and encouraged by his attentive interest in their exploits and their projects.

Bill never laid claim to distinction as a prodigious climber of

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