one such as that in the latter part of January last, when the mountain-sides were continually swept by the dangerous 'Staub' avalanches, climbing may be said to be quite impracticable. Such a winter is, however, exceptional, and at Zermatt in ordinary seasons there is very little danger, and a certain amount of climbing could generally, I think, be counted on. The smaller peaks, such as the Mettelhorn, the Ober Rothhorn, and the Hörnli, are fairly easy, though fatiguing, and most of the great peaks on the eastern side of the valley would probably be practicable. Those on the western side, with one or two exceptions, such as the Wellenkuppe, will, I fancy, always be very formidable undertakings. Still, as Mr. Dent once said, 'impossible' is a word which now finds no place in the Alpine dictionary, and it is difficult to fix a limit to the powers of some climbers. Should any one be tempted to try the winter ascent of such peaks as the Obergabelhorn or the Dent Blanche, he will do well to take every possible precaution against frostbite, and to remember, if only for the sake of his toes, that 'discretion is the better part of valour.'

The Ascent of Aconcagua and Tupungata.

THE following telegrams from a member of Mr. FitzGerald's party appeared in the 'Daily Chronicle' of February 17 and April 16, and are here printed with the permission of the Editor:—

'Mendoza: February 15.

'Mr. Vines, accompanied by a porter, has succeeded in emulating Zurbriggen's feat in reaching the summit of Aconcagua. Mr. FitzGerald was again doomed to disappointment, being compelled to turn back after reaching an altitude of 20,000 ft. This was his sixth gallant but unsuccessful attempt to reach the summit, and fell short by 3,000 ft. of what he accomplished a month ago.

'The expedition, before making its final attempt to scale Aconcagua, camped for fourteen days at an altitude of 19,000 ft.

'Mr. Vines reports that the summit of the mountain is porphyritic, and that there is no existent trace of it having a volcanic origin. The barometer at the top fell 12 in., and the thermometer to 7° F. An hour was spent on the summit.

'On reaching the top the weather was fortunately fine, and

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the heliograph was used for the purpose of communicating with those below, but only with very partial success, as the clouds that hung round the mountain continually obscured the sun, while all attempts were finally put a stop to by a gale which arose.

'Mr. Vines and his companion measured the top, which formed a small plateau, and found it 70 yards square. Both, however, suffered intensely from the rarefication of the air, which rendered respiration exceedingly difficult, otherwise a longer stay would have been made.'

'Vacas (Argentina), Thursday.

'On March 25 Mr. Stuart Vines and Zurbriggen, the Swiss guide, with one porter and mules, started from this place up the Tupungata Valley. The way was very bad, and the mules were a source of great trouble. In a three days' journey they covered 40 miles to the S., and on the 28th bivouacked at a height of 15,000 ft.

'On the 29th they attempted to reach the top of the mountain. The weather was again very bad, and when they were 2,000 ft. from the summit a storm forced them to descend, and they returned to Inca.

'On April 3 another start was made with three porters and provisions for a fortnight. A second attempt was made on the 6th. The wind was strong and the cold intense, owing to the lateness of the season. The party had to wait an hour for the wind to blow over. It was still worse 1,000 ft. from the summit, and again Mr. Stuart Vines was compelled to descend.

'On the 8th the party bivouacked at night at a height of 17,000 ft. in a terrific storm of wind, with a temperature of 5° F. All suffered from the cold, and had to descend to the valley.

'A fourth attempt was made on the 11th. The party slept at a height of 17,000 ft., and started for the summit on the 12th at 7 o'clock with no clouds to obscure the view. When they had reached a height of 20,000 ft. all the porters were forced to descend, as they were suffering badly from the altitude. Mr. Stuart Vines and Zurbriggen expected to reach the summit at two, and they actually arrived there at 4 o'clock. The virgin peak is 21,000 ft. high, and volcanic. They had a magnificent view of Aconcagua, standing up absolutely alone in the Cordilleras. An active volcano was observed 20 miles to the W. The temperature was 10° F. A strong wind was blowing.'

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