

was the result of insufficient training and a climb under a sun that even at an elevation of 14,000 ft. was more suggestive of the Soudan than the Arctic circle. How we longed for the wide-brimmed hat that was lying at our last halting place, discarded because at 8 A.M. the sun's power had not made itself felt and the morning air was keen! Why had we been so considerate of the backs of our guides when we cut down overnight the number of bottles to go with us? What evil genius had put it into our hearts to toil up and down a hill the very approach to which had taken six weary hours? But happily such vain regrets soon melt away and are replaced by a dissolving view in which only the glow of pure enjoyment is seen. The thirsty rocks are covered over with lotus, which no loss of appetite, like the doom of Tantalus, withdraws from our grasp; the yawning bergschrund is but the smile of the genius of the mountain; and as from our fire-side,

When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close,

we gaze upon the scenes of our summer scrambles, we begin to build new castles in the air, and the greetings of our trusty comrades stimulate our thoughts of Alps and Dolomites, of Caucasus and Himalaya; and who knows but that in another summer we three may meet again, and find some fresh worlds to conquer before the electric tram or funicular has brought within reach of the Bath-chair invalid the heights once known as '*infames frigoribus Alpes*'?

SIR MARTIN CONWAY'S ASCENTS IN SOUTH AMERICA.

SIR MARTIN CONWAY has returned to England, after completing his South American journey. As already announced in these pages he made the complete ascent of Illimani, and reached a point about 200 ft. below the highest snow crest of Sorata. The final slope would, under ordinary circumstances, present no particular difficulty; but on the day of Sir M. Conway's ascent the snow lying on it was in an exceptionally loose condition, and as a great schrund opened at its foot the risk involved in climbing it was considered unjustifiable. The approach of the rainy season prevented any second attempt. The ascent of Aconcagua was greatly facilitated by Mr. FitzGerald's previous explorations, which had led not only to the discovery of the best route, but also imbued the people of the locality with the idea that the peak was accessible, and even with a desire to

climb it. During the last five hours of the ascent a different route from that taken by Mr. Vines was followed, the summit ridge being, in consequence, struck some half-mile to the S. of the point previously reached, and nearly midway between the two highest eminences. The party proceeded along a narrow snow crest to a summit, hitherto untouched, about fifty feet lower than the point ascended by Mr. Vines and Zurbriggen.

Proceeding afterwards to Tierra del Fuego an expedition was made to Mount Sarmiento, which proved to be a very fine mountain, but of unexpected difficulty. A practicable route was, however, found up it, and followed to a height of about 6,000 ft., the height of the mountain being about 7,000 ft. At this point the climbers were driven down by a violent storm of snow and wind, which rendered further progress impossible and lasted for several days.

The altitudes thus far deduced are based on the readings of a mercurial barometer, but in the Bolivian Andes a careful triangulation was made and materials obtained for as many as eight separate measurements of Sorata and about as many of Illimani.

PACCARD *v.* BALMAT.

A NOTE BY DOUGLAS W. FRESHFIELD.

*Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.*—HORACE, *Ep.* i. 6.

THE documents brought together by Mr. C. E. Mathews in his interesting volume on 'The Annals of Mont Blanc' seem to me to point to a conclusion—at any rate to suggest an hypothesis—with regard to the rival claims of Dr. Paccard and Jacques Balmat which is, I believe, novel, and which I should like to put forward for consideration. No doubt, with the possibility always before us of the discovery in some bound-up volume of last century pamphlets of the missing account by Dr. Paccard of the first ascent of Mont Blanc, it would be imprudent to dogmatise. Still, we have contemporary evidence which indicates clearly what claims Dr. Paccard made immediately after his ascent, and what is likely to be the purport of his more detailed narrative.

The plan I have gone on in framing my explanation of the parts played by the two pioneers has been to rely chiefly on the more or less contemporary documents, the recent reproduction of one of the most important of which we owe to Mr. Mathews.

We are all, I think, greatly indebted to Mr. Mathews for having been the first to reduce to something like its true value the monstrous farrago of nonsense which that illustrious romancer, the elder