

## HIMALAYAN NOTES.

IN reference to my estimation of the height of my final camp on Kamet as about 23,000 ft. by comparing it with the heights of Kamet and Eastern Ibi Gamin, seen both from E. and W. ('A.J.' vol. xxxiii. p. 73, 1920), I should like to add that Mr. Heawood, librarian of the Royal Geographical Society, has very kindly supplied me with all the information available as to the height attributed to Eastern Ibi Gamin by R. Strachey. Mr. Heawood quotes from the paper on the 'Physical Geography of W. Tibet,' by H. Strachey (*R.G.S. Journal*, vol. xxiii. pp. 2-69, 1853), in which Strachey says that his brother ascertained the heights of the points of 'the two chief spurs' of Kamet to be 'about 24,000 feet.' The method used consisted of 'purely geometrical operations, which assure the results within one or two hundred feet.' The two points are the Eastern and Western Ibi Gamin of my article. Longstaff's map ('Five Months in the Himalaya,' by A. L. Mumm) gives 24,170 ft. for Eastern Ibi Gamin.

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August 1920.

MOUNT EVEREST.—On June 23 a deputation representing the R.G.S. and the A.C. waited on the Secretary of State for India with the object of enlisting the sympathy of the Government of India in the proposed expedition to Mount Everest. In the unavoidable absence of Mr. Montagu, the deputation was received by the Right Hon. Lord Sindha, supported by Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B. The case was put very fully by Sir Francis Younghusband, President of the R.G.S., and in reply Lord Sindha assured the deputation that the Indian Government would, on a suitable occasion, readily render such assistance as lay in its power. The A.C. was represented by General Bruce and by Captain Farrar (in the unavoidable absence of the President).

## REVIEWS.

*Mountain Memories: A Pilgrimage of Romance.* By Sir Martin Conway, M.P. (Cassell. 1920.) 12s. 6d.

SIR MARTIN CONWAY is a climber with a strongly-marked personality; all mountain lovers will be grateful for the sudden impulse which prompted him to write a mountaineering autobiography, and to write it in a mood which finds expression in such an appeal as this: 'Reader, if you and I are to be real comrades, we must share the same adventures of fancy and of soul. You must see my whales and elephants in the clouds and must leap to the same god-given

revelation whether in art or nature. My fairies must be thy fairies and my gods thy gods.' Conway has done his share towards making such a partnership possible.

His sub-title is no mere piece of decorative verbiage. Earnestly he proclaims himself a romantic and his theme the pursuit by a climber of the romantic ideal. What romance means to him the reader soon learns. The mountains provide one door into its kingdom, but there are many such doors. 'It can be found, by those whom the gods love, in all careers and in every society.' Most of us would gladly be romantics in Conway's sense. Perhaps many of us inadequately are, but it is only given to a few to translate their romantic longings into action as he has done.

His first effort in this direction, an attempt to start for Australia, ended miserably amid the cruel laughter of the grown-ups, but he was then only five years old. This is an exquisite bit of child-history, beautifully told, and the same may be said of the whole story of his childish strivings after independent adventure and his earliest mountain ascents—the Worcestershire Beacon (aged six) and Snowdon (aged seven). In an equally charming chapter he describes with fine candour and sincerity his first visit to Switzerland in 1872 as a schoolboy of sixteen—the revelation of the Alps from Zimmerwald, the first modest expeditions, and then . . . 'I knew now what I wanted to do—to climb, peak after peak, all the peaks in the Alps, all the mountains in the world. . . . I came down from the Mythen, like Moses from Sinai, bearing the law of my life.' Only the Mythen, and his elders were as unsympathetic as they had been eleven years earlier, but fortune was kinder, and before the holidays were over he had been up the Breithorn and the Dent du Midi.

It was not till 1876 that he had his first regular mountaineering season and came to close quarters with the terrors, as well as the splendours, of the Queen of the Snows. It was a prosperous apprenticeship, rich alike in spiritual experiences and technical lessons. With the following year a new chapter opens. The 'high emotion' of the Engadine has passed; he is the faithful servant of the mountains, but 'no longer stunned by their unapproachable glory.' Naturally he gravitated to Zermatt, which remained for five summers the pivot of his climbing. It was still the Zermatt of Whymper's 'Scrambles'; the Matterhorn (are we really to call it the Cervin in future?) still inspired awe and reverence, and 'if one wanted to know whether a climb had been accomplished, one depended on information obtainable in the Monte Rosa smoking-room. That was the ultimate authority.' And Conway soon discovered that it was 'far from infallible.' He wished to make new expeditions, for new expeditions spelt romance, but to attain that delight it was necessary to find out what had been done already. So, with characteristic energy and directness, he set to work on his own account to extract information from the guides and their

testimonial books and from the visitors' books in the hotels. Was this the first nail in the coffin of romance? Conway will not have it so, but he admits that 'it is difficult in this stage of a mountain lover's development to keep on sounding the romantic note.' Anyhow, it is all excellent Alpine history, and specially interesting as being the germ of the 'Zermatt Pocket-Book,' a fresh interest which soon became an end in itself, almost more engrossing than the new expeditions. Conway lingers with justifiable satisfaction over the genesis of this tiny volume, the parent of scores of Climbers' Guides and Club-führer. It appeared early in 1881, and two more summers were largely devoted to collecting materials for a second edition.

At this point new doors into the Kingdom of Romance were opened to him to the detriment of his climbing, if not of his love for the mountains. However, in 1886 and 1887 he was back in his old haunts, busy with projected Climbers' Guides. Then, after a long spell of travel in Algeria and the Near East, in 1890 he sought another stimulus. The centre of enterprise had shifted to the Montanvers, and thither Conway betook himself, with designs on the Dent du Géant and the Chamonix Aiguilles. But the weather was unpropitious and his patience gave out. 'It was probably good luck. . . . Had the fates otherwise decreed, I might have been shinning up difficult rocks on obscure mountains from that day to this.' Instead, he found several new variations on the high-level route to Zermatt and made a momentous discovery: 'The combination of mountain climbing with perpetual moving on proved to be the form of mountaineering that gave the richest return. . . . I date my passion for exploring remote mountain ranges from this summer holiday.'

In 1891 he went with A. F. Mummery to the Graians. It was a trial trip which proved that their attitudes towards mountains were fundamentally at variance, and a proposed Himalayan partnership was dissolved 'with mutual respect.' Of the trip we hear nothing, but we owe to it a brilliant character-sketch of Mummery. And so we reach the threshold of the great period (1892-1898) of the journeys to the Karakoram Himalaya, Spitsbergen, the Andes, and Tierra del Fuego. These and the interlude of 'the Alps from End to End,' have been dealt with very fully in six well-known books. The sketches of them which occupy the latter half of the present volume are, very naturally, based on the earlier narratives; it need only be said here that they are executed with skill and a fine sense of proportion, and adequately complete the record of an enviable pilgrimage.

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