

CLIMBING CLIMBORAZO.

MR. EDWARD WHYMPER'S ACCOUNT OF HIS ASCENT—20,000 FEET ABOVE THE SEA LEVEL.

From the Pall Mall Gazette, Feb. 2.

Mr. Edward Whymper, in his lecture last night to the members of the Alpine Club on the ascents of Chimborazo and Cotopaxi, stated that he took with him from home two well-known Swiss guides, Jean Antoine Carrel and Louis Carrel, from the Vuco Tournanche. The height of Chimborazo, which he ascended first, was about 20,000 feet, and up to that time no one, so far as he could learn, had ascended higher than from 17,000 to 18,000 feet. He had to provide his own food, about two tons of the most portable condensed provisions being sent out in tins for the expedition. His ascent of the mountain began on the 23d of December, 1879. The first camp being pitched about 15,000 feet above the level of the sea, they afterward ascended to a height of 16,500 feet, where they placed provisions enough for three weeks, and fuel enough for several days, water being obtained by melting snow. At that height he became feeble and feverish, and was unable to satisfy the craving for drink, added to which he had a bad headache and a gasping when he was swallowing liquid. Under these circumstances he used with great benefit chlorate of potash, which he had obtained by the advice of Dr. Marcet before starting. The camp was near a rock of trachyte, which rose to about 18,800 feet, there being on the east of the ridge a conspicuous glacier, entirely fed by the ice which fell from above. When they occupied a new camping place, about 17,400 feet high, his health improved. On the 2d of January, 1880, an attempt was made to reach the summit, but owing to an intensely cold wind they were obliged to fly back to the camp. Afterward, encouraged by fine weather and continuous sunshine, they made another attempt. Having at length reached what seemed to be the top, about 3:45 in the afternoon, they had the mortification of finding that it was lower than another elevation. There was then no help for it but to make for the highest point, and they arrived upon it standing up like men, instead of groveling, as they had been doing for five hours before, like beasts. The wind was blowing at the rate of 50 miles an hour from the north-east, and driving the snow before it, and they were all cold, wet, and hungry. The temperature was there 21° Fahrenheit, which, on being worked out, gave a height at the summit of Chimborazo of 20,545 feet. They descended as hastily as they could to the camp before darkness made descent impossible, and they got back at 9 P. M., having been out 16 hours, and on foot the whole time. Altogether he spent 17 days on Chimborazo, at 15,000 feet of altitude, 16,500 feet, and 17,300 feet, and went up three times as high as 18,500, and when he quitted the mountain all trace of mountain sickness had disappeared. Mr. Whymper also described the ascent of Cotopaxi, and said that it was impossible to conceive a more dramatic spectacle than that vast crater presented, illuminated as it was below with ruddy subterranean fires and above by a brilliant moon. The height of it was 19,550 feet, and the camp was 130 feet below. They remained there 26 consecutive hours. He also described a second ascent which he made at Chimborazo nearly five months later, and the height, as tested in the same manner as before, was in this instance found to be 20,489 feet, being 56 feet less than on the previous occasion, the mean height of the two being 20,517 feet.

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