The Ascent of Mt. Robson.*

By CONRAD KAIN.

ON July 31, 1913, Messrs. W. W. Foster, Deputy Minister for Public Works for B.C., Mr. A. H. MacCarthy of Wilmer, B.C., and I left our bivouac at the foot of the Extinguisher and followed the route to Mt. Resplendent up the glacier almost to Resplendent Col. A ridge of rock comes down from the Dome right to the level glacier, and I think this ridge would be the best means of ascent. But my idea then was that it would be better to go farther up on the glacier and traverse to the right through the crevasses and over some rocks to the Dome.



CONRAD KAIN, OF NASSWALD, RAXALPE, NOW IN THE EMPLOY OF THE ALPINE CLUB OF CANADA.

From the Dome to the bergschrund is just a walk; but the bergschrund itself was more difficult than it looked. The upper lip is almost overhanging. We tried to cross where the rock ridge comes down close to the bergschrund, but without success. If you could reach these rocks, you would save much time. We traversed to the right, and got across the bergschrund by cutting steps up a very steep bridge.

Then I cut 105 steps on a slope of sixty-five degrees up to the little rocks shown in the picture. From there we went

* Cf. Mr. A. O. Wheeler's map, *A.J.* xxvi. 404.

over rocks and ice with some step-cutting and some pieces of rather difficult climbing over glazed rocks, till we reached the Shoulder [S.S.E. arête of Mt. Robson]. The part from the bergschrund to the Shoulder is the most difficult and dangerous on account of avalanches and stonefalls. Notice the avalanche tracks in the picture.*

We found the Shoulder to be not so wide as we expected. For the first couple of hundred yards, we had to cut steps on the S.E. side. We passed a very big cornice that reminds one of those on the Lyskamm. The part from the Shoulder to the summit looks easy, but one finds out, by the time one gets close to it, that it is deceiving. I found it rather hard to pick a way through the blocks of ice, which you can see from Mt. Resplendent or from the Little Forks River. Some of the broken snow walls are from fifteen to twenty feet high.† We traversed to the left and went almost round to the south arête. I saw that it would take too much time to go over this arête, so we went back, and used a very difficult couloir from one ledge to the other. After that we reached the summit without difficulty.

It took 13 hrs. from the Extinguisher to the top. The aneroid showed 13,000 ft.

The summit is nothing but two big cornices of snow meeting at an angle. The view is very fine but, as experienced mountain climbers know, you never can expect the best view from such a height. The temperature must have been below zero.

We retraced our steps to the Shoulder [or S.S.E. arête]. The time was late, and I would not risk the descent from the Shoulder to the bergschrund, it seemed to me too dangerous. So we descended by the glacier on the S.E. face, which brought us down deep in a short time till we got cut off by a hanging glacier shown in the inset picture. There we had a very dangerous couloir of ice, overhung with séracs, which was the only way of reaching the glacier below. I would not advise using this

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* A comparison of the accompanying full-page illustration with that in Mr. Amery's paper, *A.J.* xxv. 302, shows that the route now completed by Conrad Kain is on the same face, but rather more to the S. than the route attempted by Mr. Amery's party in 1909.

† I caught sight of this face from Lake Lazuli (cf. Wheeler's map) in 1911. It was all ice and looked exactly as though the ice had become viscous and had commenced to run like treacle, forming great concentric waves with high crests. These are no doubt Conrad's 'broken snow walls.' They seemed to extend right across the face to the bounding arêtes of either side. J. P. Farrar.

Ridge A.



Byron Harmon, photo.

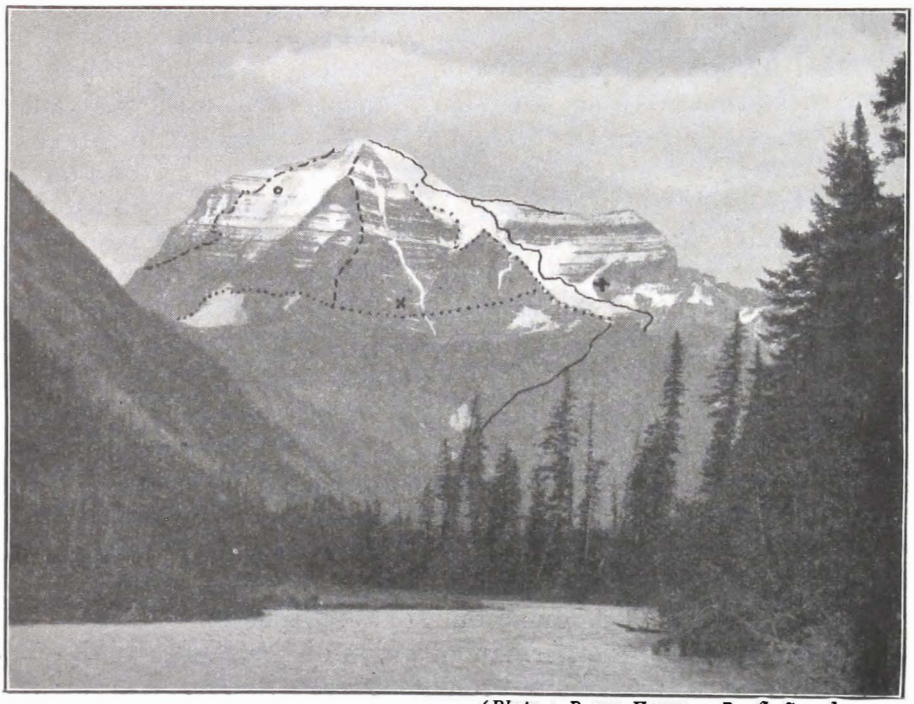
Swan Electric Engraving Co. Ltd.

Mt. Robson, (13,068 ft.) E. Face.

Kain's line of ascent shown by black line.

route, because of the danger from avalanches. After we got down to the break-off of the second glacier, the night overtook us and we stopped and slept out on a rock ledge.

The next morning we had a rather hard rock climb in going around this hanging glacier. After we got below it, we traversed to the south, and came out to the big valley that runs down to Lake Kinney, through which we came down to the bottom without any noticeable difficulties.



(*Photo.: Byron Harmon, Banff, Canada.*

MT. ROBSON FROM THE FRASER VALLEY, SHOWING THE W. FACE ON THE LEFT, THE S. FACE IN THE CENTRE, AND THE S. AND S.S.E. ARÊTES ON THE RIGHT.

Kain's line of ascent (after reaching the S.S.E. arête from the E.) and descent shown ~~~~~. Night spent at +.
Schauffelberger's line of ascent shown – – – – – –
Kain's line of second ascent shown . . . . . First night's bivouac at ×.
Kinney and Phillips' line of ascent shown — . — . — . Kinney left records at o.

A few days later, the Swiss guide Walter Schauffelberger made an attempt on the S.W. ridge with Mr. Basil Darling of Vancouver, and Mr. Prouty of the Mazama Mountaineering Club. They almost got to the top, and had to turn back only through lack of time. Schauffelberger told me about the difficulties, and he said: 'It is a very interesting, sporting climb, and you can compare it with the Zmutt Grat on the

Matterhorn.' This route will be without doubt the most interesting way of ascent.

About a week later, on August 11, after a bivouac on the S.W. face, Mr. Darling and Mr. MacCarthy, with Schauffelberger and myself, traversed over to the head of the Lake Kinney Valley. We did not expect to reach the summit of Mt. Robson because the weather was very bad, but we gave it a try, and found the ridge [marked by the . . . line] very easy except on one dangerous traverse under an overhanging glacier shown in the picture. I believe that this dangerous traverse can be avoided by going around on a big rock ledge. Then we went over rocks that were not very hard, and got up to the plateau that comes over from the Shoulder [S.S.E. arête]. From there we traversed to the right and struck the route we used on our successful climb. We were very sorry that we had to turn back, 500 ft. under the summit, on account of a blizzard. We went down by the way we had come up.

There is no doubt that this ridge will be the future route to ascend to the summit of Mt. Robson. But the climb cannot be done from Lake Kinney in one day. It will be necessary to build a hut at the head of the Lake Kinney Valley. The snow conditions on the highest peaks in the Canadian Rockies can never be compared with those in the Alps, as there are more avalanches in the Rockies on account of the dryness of the atmosphere, which leaves the snow powdery and unpacked. And so I may say that Mt. Robson will always be a risky climb, even on the easiest side, on account of avalanches.

[Conrad Kain is the permanent guide of the Alpine Club of Canada, and has taken a prominent part in Mr. Wheeler's exploratory expeditions. He comes from Nasswald, a village at the foot of the far-famed Raxalpe, and was well known in Switzerland as well as Austria as a guide of very great promise. He is now in his thirty-first year.]

La Sengla.

[Ascent of N. Summit from the Col de la Reuse d'Arolla.]

By A. STUART JENKINS.

WHEN it comes to finishing up a district, the enthusiastic climber generally remembers that his favourite playground is beset with mountains of the Cima di Jazzi and Strahlhorn category—not to speak of climbs on distant border