

SOME FIRST ASCENTS IN THE NORTHERN CANADIAN ROCKIES.

[Mt. Fryatt, Lapensée, Pt. *ca.* 9800 ft., Throne Mountain, Castle Mt. (E. face).]

By J. W. A. HICKSON.

IN accordance with a plan evolved the previous year, Mr. Howard Palmer and the writer met at Jasper, Alberta, on the morning of July 4 last, and were camped the same afternoon 14 miles from that town on the W. bank of the Whirlpool River, an important tributary of the Athabaska. The pack train, consisting of fifteen horses and three men, was supplied by the well-known outfitters Otto Brothers of Jasper, some of whose men had already prospected, under given directions, the route to the main objective of the trip, Mount Fryatt (11,026 ft.), south of, and visible from, the town and the highest unclimbed peak in the Park, glacier-clad on several sides. The Swiss, Hans Fuhrer, who had for the last dozen years been taking parties up Mount Rainier, was the mountain guide.

On the third day the party reached the fording place across the Whirlpool, to find that it was impracticable, owing to unusually high water caused by the warm weather. On several days as late as 8 P.M. the thermo registered 75° F. at 3600 ft. A raft had to be constructed, the horses unloaded, and after arduous exertions men and baggage were got across the enormously swollen river, in the course of which operation the alpine ropes saw their first use. Late in the afternoon of the fourth day the party made camp at approximately 6600 ft. between two lakes at the head of Divergence Creek, an eastern tributary of the Whirlpool and in sight of the W. ridge of Mount Fryatt, and remained for almost a week. It is improbable that any human beings had been here before.

From this camp after some preliminary activities on neighbouring ridges from which a probable route up the peak was reconnoitred, an attempt was made to climb it on the 10th, the weather still being fine. Although the start was made immediately after daylight at 3.45 A.M., yet the approach to the mountain was so circuitous and long, that it was 11.30 A.M. before an altitude of some 9600 ft. was attained, whence the more interesting and difficult part of the climbing began on

the steep S.W. side of the peak, on which no glacier descends. Here there was fresh snow which was rapidly melting, and a sharp lookout had to be kept for falling stones. Higher up and about 600 to 700 ft. below the summit, according to the variation in the depth of the band, there is an encircling vertical belt of yellow rock which caused the party some anxiety. Fortunately a way was found up through it at its place of least height, some 200 ft., by means of a series of quite difficult chimneys and cracks. The ascent of these, requiring an hour and a half, brought one to easy climbing a couple of hundred feet below the summit, which was reached at 4.50 P.M.

Hardly had the party had time to look around from this point of vantage when an electric storm encircled the mountain. Vivid lightning and loud peals of thunder, accompanied by an atmosphere that sizzled intensely, suggested to the climbers, who were unwilling to leave the summit without obtaining further views, making their bodies as 'absent' as possible, which they did by flattening themselves face downwards on the rock. In twenty-five minutes the storm passed with very little rain. Some determinations of altitude having been made and the usual cairn erected, the descent was commenced at the rather late hour of 5.40 P.M. Considerations of safety led to an alteration of the route below the belt of rocks, and this demanding more time, it was beginning to be dark when the party regained the ridge at some 9600 ft., where the rope could be taken off. After a slight halt for food, very little having been partaken of since noon, it was decided to remain here until daybreak rather than attempt a descent by an unknown route in the dark, with the likelihood of falling stones. On the way up it had become apparent that the return to camp could be considerably shortened. Disagreeable as it was, owing to a chilling wind, threatening skies and a lack of sleep, to remain more or less inactive for nearly six hours, none of the party suffered more than temporary discomfort. Next morning camp was reached in fine weather at 8 o'clock.

Two days later the whole outfit was transferred to a neighbouring valley a little to the S.W., and camp established in a lovely Alpine meadow at 7000 ft. The scene was quite Tyrolean. From here a first ascent was made of a pinnacled rock peak Lapensée (10,190 ft.), named from an early victim of the waters of the Athabaska. It was climbed mainly by two steep couloirs at right angles to one another, in which there was still considerable snow and some ice. Looking up from the beginning of the first, the summit is almost vertically above you.

On this peak there were some vertical cliffs to work up, and the danger of falling stones was also constantly present. Fortunately the party was camped near to the mountain, so that the trip was completed in fifteen hours. Three days afterwards, the weather having in the meantime broken, the first ascent of an unnamed peak, *ca.* 9800 ft. over a pass to the S.E. of the Lapensée Meadow Camp, was effected and return made in twelve hours. Its S.W. ridge afforded some pleasant rock work without the rope. A heavy snowstorm overwhelmed the climbers next day. So soon as the weather cleared, the party made haste to descend to the Whirlpool, which could now be crossed easily on horses, and reached Jasper again on the evening of July 22.

On the 25th Palmer and the writer set out again with a lessened train and with Jean Weber of Chur in place of Fuhrer, who was required at the A.C.C. Camp in Tonquin Valley, which they also were heading for. Travelling by way of the Astoria River, a westerly affluent of the Athabaska, they managed *en route* to make the first ascent of Throne Mountain (10,144 ft.), immediately S.W. of Mt. Edith Cavell, which is situated in the south angle between the Astoria and Whirlpool. It was a long tour, and the last 800 ft. were fairly difficult, the climbers having to come down part of the way on the rope. The party had another experience of a night in the open, fortunately where it was possible to make a fire. From the A.C.C. Camp, Palmer and the writer reconnoitred the unclimbed Mt. Redoubt (10,200 ft.), one of the precipitous Rampart Group on which an unsuccessful attempt had been made a few days before, and formed the opinion that, owing to fresh snow, it was not in a favourable condition to climb.

During the latter half of August the writer was at Lake Louise, and thence carried out with Edward Feuz what he had planned to do the previous season: the ascent by the hitherto unclimbed E. face of the S.E. tower of Castle Mountain, not far from the Canadian Pacific Railway track, and situated half-way between Lake Louise and Banff. It proved to be the hardest piece of rock work which he had undertaken in the Canadian Rockies since ascending Mt. Louis in 1921; and bits of it compare favourably as regards technical difficulties with anything presented by Mt. Louis or any other Rocky Mountain peak known to him. The party left Lake Louise Hotel by motor at 7.30 A.M., and after proceeding 19 miles began walking at an altitude of approximately 4700 ft. No time could be lost, since there were some 5000 ft. to climb.

The motor had been ordered to return at 8 P.M. Quick going through the lower woods and a long and rapidly executed traverse around the walls of the peak to the E. led in some three hours to stiffish rock climbing. The final 900 ft. of vertical cliffs and chimneys, with overhanging rocks, required two and a half hours to surmount and still longer to descend, since four ropings-off, for which the rocks had to be tested, were necessitated. Extra ropes, slings and rope-soled shoes were carried and used. The main road was reached again at 9 P.M., and Lake Louise an hour later.

The weather this last season was on the whole favourable for mountaineering, more especially in the earlier part of the summer; but there is usually some drawback. Smoke was prevalent even throughout July, curtailing on many occasions the extent of the view, and rendering photography more than usually difficult.

THE MOUNT LOGAN EXPEDITION.

[The two following articles are reprinted for the information of mountaineers, since the equipment and food reports of the Everest Expedition have not been made available.]

FOOD.

By A. H. MacCARTHY.

(Reprinted by permission from the 'Canadian Alpine Journal,' 1925.)

A SHORT word of only four letters, but a significant word, on which, perhaps more than anything else, depends the success or failure of a difficult undertaking; for it is not in battle alone that men fight on their stomachs; almost every vigorous, gruelling, long-sustained effort by its final victory reflects the efficiency and sufficiency of the food supply.

With a record of scores of ambitious mountaineering campaigns resulting in failure, due to lack of sufficient or proper food supplies, the Mount Logan Committee has put on notice that a failure of the Logan Expedition on account of miscalculation in this essential requirement would stamp across the record of its work the significant word 'Cultus.'¹ Therefore,

¹ Chinook jargon—'No good.'