

strips the forest presented the appearance of the leaves having been scorched by fire, all turned brown or yellow. It was caused by a very serious attack of the caterpillar of a moth, one of the *Tinea*, probably *T. levigatella*, I am informed. These ring the young shoots, and the leaves then die.

ASCENT OF THE DENT D'HÉRENS BY THE W.N.W. FACE.

BY W. C. COMPTON.

OF all the mountains of the Zermatt group the Dent d'Hérens is probably the least often climbed, because it is so awkward of access. Yet it deserves a better fate, unless, in these days of mountain railways, the best fate we can wish for a well-loved peak is that it should be out of reach.

Once attain the ridge that connects the peak with the Tête de Valpelline, and the climb is not devoid of interest, whilst the view on a clear day is well worth the expedition. Two in particular of the great mountains assume forms hardly to be seen from elsewhere. The Dent Blanche presents its S. ridge in the form of a symmetrical pyramid, and the Matterhorn towers above us in immediate proximity, much as in Donkin's well-known view from the Col de Tournanche, but enhanced by the greater height of the view-point.

To reach this ridge of the Dent d'Hérens without negotiating the dangerous rocks of the Tiefenmattenjoch has hitherto involved a long march round to Prarayé, or at least over the Col de Valpelline, and so to the Za de Zan glacier.

It was our intention to attempt the ascent by the Tiefenmattenjoch, but, instead of risking the stones by the usual route up the rocks under the Tête de Valpelline, to cross the bergschrund, and, if possible, to cut our way up the steep ice-wall to the ridge of the Col. Our party was made up on two ropes—on one Mr. J. W. Wyatt and the writer, with Joseph Lochmatter and Léon Truffer (of St. Niklaus); on the other Mr. W. H. Gover, with Peter Perren and Joseph Marie Julien.

We left the Staffel Alp at 2 A.M. on August 27, 1907. The sky was clear, and there was a moon not far from the full, though now behind the Matterhorn, so that we had no need of the lantern as we made our way along the level track towards the Stockje. Suddenly the silence was broken by a roar as of thunder, and we could see a huge avalanche

coming down from the edge of the Matterhorn glacier, that rose above the rocks on our left. To within a few hundred yards of the path the blocks of ice made their way. As we knew of three parties that had started before us for the Matterhorn by the Z'mutt arête, the idea occurred to us all that the avalanche might have been started by one of them; but a call from Lochmatter brought no response, and a moment's reflection reassured us that these parties must all be further up the mountain and that their route would not lie near the edge of the hanging glacier. It was unusual, as 'a bolt out of the blue,' at such an early hour; but subsequent events showed that it was at any rate no omen of evil, whatever the augurs and soothsayers summoned to interpret it might have said at the moment.

The Stockje was left behind us while our appetite was still with us, and we were not destined to part with the latter till we halted at the foot of the Tiefenmattenjoch, a few minutes after the rays of the sun had touched the upper rocks on our right. Between the possible *table d'hôte* breakfast at the Stockje Restaurant (not yet located) and the actual *table de neige* meal of which we partook there lay a piece of work for which we found small cause to be grateful. The icefall above the lower part of the Tiefenmatten glacier, lying roughly between points 3,635 m. and 3,130 m. of the Siegfried map, was then supposed to be only negotiable on its left bank, where the séracs force one on to the face of the rocks that come down from point 3,635 m. These rocks consist of well-worn slabs, exceedingly steep, but with shaly ledges admitting of an uncomfortable footing, from which showers of stones may be sent down on the heads of those below. Part of the face can be climbed vertically with the aid of fairly good hand-holds. At one point the rock allowed of no hold round a corner except what could be had by putting one foot on a narrow bridge formed by the sérac near it, but separated from it by a considerable gap. The difficulties of the icefall were, however, overcome in time, and it was then an easy walk up to the foot of the Col and the W. face of the Dent d'Hérens. The time that had been expended over the awkward rocks had allowed the sun to strike on the upper part of the Tête de Valpelline; and as we prospected the Col in front, only to find the face we hoped to climb a hard wall of glistening ice, the first stone came down the rocks that have to be climbed if the usual route to the Tiefenmattenjoch is followed. This settled the question that had been in Lochmatter's mind, and he came

out very decisively with the words, 'Wir gehen durch die "séracs."' .

The year before, it seems, when descending, he had found a way through the séracs of the icefall on the face of the mountain. A brief inspection satisfied us all that it was fit to be attempted. Lochmatter had been there before—though not in ascending—and Lochmatter was confident of success. So in a few minutes we were scaling the steep slope of snow below the icefall, with the N.W. arête on our left and the wall of the Tiefenmattenjoch on our right. Soon we reached the first ice blocks under the séracs. There was no sign of any recent fall of ice, and, as the glacier is very steep and faces N.N.W., it seemed unlikely that the sun would be on it till the afternoon. Bearing to the left we found no difficulty in making a way through the broken ice, and in a few minutes—it may have been $\frac{1}{4}$ hr.—we were over the icefall and on a snow slope in good order and quite easy. We were soon able to bear away to the S. towards the ridge by which the ascent is usually made, *i.e.* the W. arête. The snow-slope became steadily steeper, much steeper as we neared the arête, but it was in such condition that the axe was not required, and 65 min. after leaving our breakfast-place we were on the ridge just below the last group of gendarmes.* These afford an interesting scramble, after which the ascent is rather a dull one for about an hour, over snow and loose stones on the N. side of the arête, till the last quarter of an hour, when there is a little more climbing to be done over the narrow arête to the top. The ascent of the peak itself, from the breakfast-place to its foot, took only 2 hrs. 20 min. The times given in the 'Climbers' Guide' show 3 hrs. to the summit from the Tiefenmattenjoch, the

* In *Alpine Journal*, vol. xix. (No. 149), p. 988, a view will be found of the Dent d'Hérens from the S. arête of the Dent Blanche. This view shows our route fairly well. Our breakfast-place may be seen in the hollow between the peak and the Wandfluh. The ascent of the glacier lay between its edge, facing N., and the patch of rock under the ridge of the Tiefenmattenjoch, which almost loses itself in the cloud. The upper part of the new route makes for a little black tooth on the sky-line at the W. end of a white cloud. This tooth is all that is shown of the 'last group of gendarmes' referred to. From this point our ascent was the usual one by the W. ridge, which disappears behind the N.W. rib, so conspicuous in the photograph. The E. side of the icefall of the Tiefenmatten glacier may also be seen under our séracs. The rest of it is hidden by the Wandfluh.

ascent of which from the glacier below can hardly take much less than 1 hr., and should only be attempted before the sun has touched the Tête de Valpelline.

Thus it appears that a considerable saving of time is effected by the new route, and the Dent d'Hérens may be recommended as well within reach of Zermatt, or even the Riffel, provided the Staffel Alp is used as a sleeping-place. By this route, under favourable conditions, there should be no danger of any kind. It is possible that, in some seasons, the state of the icefall and the séracs on the face up which we went might be a source of danger and difficulty; at least that was Lochmatter's opinion. Also under certain conditions of the snow the last and steep portion of the snow-slope up to the W. arête would require care and attention, to avoid the risk of the snow slipping away on the face of ice beneath it; our descent of this gave us more trouble than the ascent; for the warmer air, as the day advanced, had softened the snow, and steps had to be cut through the snow into the ice beneath. If a better way can be found of dealing with the icefall of the Tiefenmatten glacier, so as to avoid the left bank, a further saving of time should be effected. To us it appeared that it might not be impossible to turn the icefall near the right bank, or to force a way through the middle of the icefall itself; and any party who would spend a day over the experiment might be rewarded by bringing the Dent d'Hérens within 7 hrs. of the Staffel Alp, or perhaps even a little less.

Our times were as follows: left Staffel Alp, 2 A.M.; arrived at the Stockje, 4 A.M.; and at the breakfast-place at the foot of the Tiefenmattenjoch, 6.10 A.M.; left, 6.30; reached W. arête, 7.35; left, 7.50; arrived at the summit, 9.35; began descent, 10.50; returned to the breakfast-place, 1.15 P.M.; left, 1.55; reached Stockje, 3.15; and Staffel Alp, 5 P.M.

NOTES ON A TOUR IN THE GRAIANS.

By C. F. MEADE.

I HAVE outlined below a tour which I venture to call comprehensive in so far as the Western and Central Graians are concerned, because we climbed one or more fairly representative peaks in almost all the principal groups. The Eastern Graians were only touched upon. My guides were Blanc 'Greffier,' of Bonneval, and his third son, Pierre, of Bonneval-sur-Arc. We started from Lanslebourg, and the