

below the glacier, and made an effort to circumvent the gully by which we had ascended, which failed utterly, so that we were compelled to face it after all. I was let down by the rope, and we were soon far below this our last difficulty, but on looking up at it, Melchior observed with perfect truth, that no one, ignorant of the way, would suppose it possible to get up. Not forgetting to gather a good bundle of Edelweiss we soon reached the wood, and hit off a path very superior to that of the morning, but on getting near the valley, short cuts were the order of the day, so forsaking it, we struck straight down through the trees to the bank of the Randaier Bach, crossed that disgusting torrent to the meadows beyond, and exactly at 5.0 P.M. entered the hotel at Randa, after an absence of $14\frac{1}{2}$ hours. The apathy of the 'Dumpf' on hearing of our success was extreme, indeed she did not seem, in spite of the nomenclature of the inn, to have the slightest notion that there was such a hill as the Dom in existence; with some trouble she managed to produce a very moderate bill, and that settled we took our departure at 5.25 in the midst of a thunderstorm, accompanied by torrents of rain, which soon soaked us through. Naturally, under such circumstances, I was not desirous to loiter on the way, so finding that both Melchior and Almer, though quite unladen, were inclined to lag, I pushed on at my own not very rapid pace, and the rain soon ceasing, reached the Monte Rosa hotel at Zermatt, tolerably dry, at 7.15 P.M. There I found Morshead and Mr. Proctor, both of whom were agreeably disappointed on hearing that I had actually reached the summit, which, from the state of the weather, they had thought most unlikely. George had gone up to the Riffel, intending to ascend Monte Rosa with a party on the morrow, and had left word for Almer to join him there, in case we should reach Zermatt early, but of course it was now too late for him to do so. Mons. Seiler brought all the resources of his cuisine into play to serve me a capital dinner, to the demolition of which I, in my turn, applied all the resources of my naturally vigorous appetite, with a result so gratifying as to excite the admiration of all in the salon. With an idle day before me, I was in no hurry to get to bed, and it was late before Morshead and I finally betook ourselves to our respective chambers.

RUWENZORI

By R. M. BERE

MOUNTS STANLEY AND SPEKE

DURING the course of three weeks spent on Ruwenzori in May and June of 1945, P. H. Hicks, Dr. R. G. Ladkin and I made an attempt on the N.E. ridge of Margherita (Mount Stanley). When worked out, this route will probably give the best and most attractive way to the highest point, less affected by mist, the deadly weapon of the Stanley Plateau, and more direct than the usual route.

Though unsuccessful so far as the actual climb was concerned, the results of our exploration may be of some interest to future parties. Dr. Humphreys examined the northern ridges on his first expedition in 1926¹ and reached the N.W. glacier but did not, I think, climb to a very great altitude.

As soon as possible after reaching Lake Bujuku we walked up to the Stuhlmann Pass to examine the N. face of the mountain and to see if the N.E. ridge could profitably be attempted from its lowest point at the pass. In this we were disappointed, for a great bulge in the ridge, smooth rock coated with treacherous moss, was obviously an undesirable line. The face was not much better, alternating layers of rotten boulders and steep ice-worn slabs, with no reasonable place to put a bivouac; added to this, chest-high *helychrysum* below the rock meant that, whatever the weather, one would be soaked to the skin before starting to climb. Such possibilities as there were seemed most unattractive and we decided to look at the eastern side of the ridge.

We therefore took a bivouac up to a point at the side of the ridge at about 14,400 ft., close to the Irene Lakes, first seen by the three Polish climbers in 1943,² and found a reasonably sheltered spot about twenty minutes below the glacier. We looked at the E. glacier, with its formidable séracs, and gave high praise to Golcz for the icemanship required on his route, but turned our own attention to the ridge immediately above us on our right. We did not attack this directly but followed the glacier until we were up against the main cliffs; we passed a small very steep glacier, obviously subject to avalanche, leading down from a col on the ridge and climbed the well defined buttress beyond it. This buttress was an interesting mixture of rock, snow and ice and eventually took us, about 800 ft. above the glacier, to the main ridge a short way above the col at a height of about 16,000 ft. Immediately above us was a prominent tower and a short vertical step, which we confidently expected to by-pass by means of a traverse on the N. side of the ridge. In a very short distance, however, we were brought up by vertical cliffs, prohibiting further progress. This being so, we retreated and did not make any further attempt, chiefly because at that time Hicks was the only member of the party really in fit condition to do so. For a number of reasons we did not return to make another attempt on this ridge but, from the point reached, together with our later observations from the Stanley Plateau and from Speke, we were able to come to certain conclusions.

The vertical step was probably climbable; the prominent tower above it would have involved about 150 or 200 ft. of hard climbing, but there is little doubt of its practicability. Above that, the main E. ridge of Margherita is reached and this has been followed several times. From the point we reached a descent to the glacier col on the ridge could be made and thence a further short descent to a small triangular glacier to the N. would undoubtedly have been possible. The lower part of this glacier is bare steep ice, best avoided, but higher

¹ *A.J.* 39. 99 *sqq.*; *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 69.

² *A.J.* 54. 275 *sqq.*



Photo, A. J. Haddow.]

N.E. RIDGE OF MARGHERITA AND EAST GLACIER FROM SCOTT-ELLIOTT PASS.

up, where one would reach it, there is a snow cover and the angle is moderate. Above the glacier there would be a choice of route for the last 400 or 500 ft. to the summit. We examined the buttress closely to see if a route could be found further to the left as, if so, this would bring one to the main ridge above the vertical step. This would appear not only to involve extremely difficult climbing but to put one unpleasantly and dangerously close to a formidable and menacing wall of séracs, which would threaten the lower part of the route. This alternative is to be avoided.

This ridge has been described in some detail as we had good enough weather to examine it carefully. It is one of the best potential routes on the mountain and other parties may not be so lucky with the weather as we were.³

Speke (16,080 ft.) is probably the easiest and most accessible peak on Ruwenzori: it is certainly the most frequently climbed. It gave us the rare joy of a day of almost continuous sunshine. Having got to the snout of the Speke Glacier by the usual route we decided to keep the centre of the glacier and avoid the ridge which is the normal, and not particularly interesting way to the highest point, the Vittorio Emmanuele peak. So far as is known our route had not been followed before and, when visibility is good, it is to be recommended. The glacier is not difficult but, in places, is plentifully crevassed and finally rises steeply to a small cornice on the summit ridge.

In addition to the climb on the N.E. ridge described we made two other attempts at Margherita from the S.E., camping near the glacier on approximately the site of the Duke of the Abruzzi's camp IV (c. 14,500 ft.).⁴ The first attempt ended in fiasco, fog driving us off the mountain and a severe snow storm forcing us down from our camp. On re-establishing this camp for a second attempt we were luckier with the weather and, chiefly as a result of making a very early start and getting on to the Stanley Plateau at dawn before the clouds came up from the valley, we successfully reached the top of Margherita (16,794 ft.) and the highest point of Ruwenzori. The most recent complete ascent from the E., namely that made by Robin Hodgkin in 1941, was described in the *ALPINE JOURNAL*,⁵ and there is no point, therefore, in going into details of our climb; there was plentiful interest but the only real difficulties were found in the cornice guarding the true E. ridge and in snow having a tendency to avalanche. All the climbs described were led by Hicks.

THE PORTAL PEAKS

After being turned away from Stanley and before we finally climbed Margherita we visited the Portal range, to obtain an accurate map of

³ It may be said, with regard to the weather, that we are practically without scientific data of any sort. The mountain's evil reputation, in this regard, may have been much exaggerated: it is probably no worse than in our own Welsh hills. Such seasons, as there may be, are evidently not related to the seasons below, so that any form of forecast is extremely difficult.

⁴ *Ruwenzori*, by Filippo de Filippi, 1908 edition, photos on pp. 177 and 232.

⁵ *A.J.* 53. 313 sqq.

which was one of the principal objects of our expedition. Hicks undertook all the survey work and had arranged for synchronised meteorological readings to ensure the accuracy of heights recorded. Though the results of this survey are not yet published, they have proved that the topography of the Portal range is a great deal more complicated than has previously been considered to be the case. From our camp on Stanley we descended to Bigo (Kigo) and thence walked up the Bukurungu valley to the East Bukurungu Lake,⁶ where we camped on a marsh overlooking the pass at the head of the Lamia valley, which runs almost due N. This site had been previously used by Dr. A. J. Haddow earlier in the year, and from it he, with J. C. Bugher, had made the first ascent of the central Portal peak and one or two subsidiary points on the range, as well as doing some preliminary mapping. As had been found when climbing the southern Portal in 1942,⁷ Haddow had succeeded in reaching the top of the central peak without difficulty and had traversed a considerable distance in a southerly direction towards that point, there being perhaps a mile or more of high ridge between the two.

We spent the first day at this camp, measuring out a base line near the lake and fixing triangulation points. On the following day, leaving Hicks at his survey, Ladkin, I and two porters followed Haddow's route to the top of the main Portal ridge. We were able to walk round the northern buttress of the central peak and there had to wait for about two hours for the mist to clear to enable us to locate the northern peak, or Kihuma,⁸ the highest point of the range. The clearing mist showed us to be, surprisingly, at the point where we had

⁶ *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 82, no. 6, p. 486.

⁷ *Climbers' Club Journal*, 1944, p. 230.

⁸ There has been some confusion with regard to the nomenclature of this range, cf. the maps of the Duke of the Abruzzi and Dr. Humphreys. The former shows two points, N. and S., supported by photographic panorama, principally that between pp. 152 and 153 of *Ruwenzori*, *op. cit.* The N. peak of this panorama is undoubtedly Kihuma, the ascent of which is here described. Dr. Humphreys, on the other hand, refers to Kihuma as the central Portal, and in this appears almost certainly incorrect. It has now been proved that the central peak, climbed by Dr. A. J. Haddow in January, 1945, is situated between Kihuma and the southern peak (Rutara), which is somewhat lower than either. The heights now given to these three peaks, fixed definitely by Hicks' survey in relation to the rest of the massif, are: Kihuma, 14,640 ft.; central peak, 14,420 ft.; Rutara, 14,200 ft. 'Hamuguti' is thus not the northern Portal; there does not, in fact, appear to be a clearly identifiable peak at the point given on the map. Haddow has located Hamuguti, or more properly 'Hamugusi,' as a minor peak of Gessi at the head of the Mugusi valley.

Much of this confusion is due to the uncertainty of native names. The Mukonjo porter is now a much easier person to talk to than he was twelve years ago and we questioned our Bakonjo very carefully. They give names to valleys and streams only but never to the peaks, which are of no use to them; attempts, therefore, to give Lukonjo names to the peaks must always be subject to wide error, particularly as the Ruwenzori streams often have many sources.

It is to be hoped that Hicks' map will do something to clear up the confusion: owing to the lack of time at his disposal, however, it will not be complete.

hoped to be, above a deep notch in the ridge, and to this we descended. In the notch were two small lakes, one draining W. to the Lamia and the other E. to the Rutara stream and the Mobuku. We were probably at the highest of the Lamia's many sources and were above a prominent waterfall which descends the E. face.

Haddow had seen these small lakes in January but had not actually visited them. From the notch we had no difficulty in scrambling up easy rocks to Kihuma, the highest point of the Portal range. Again the mist came down, again we waited for a chance of the northward view, but were disappointed ; it seems, however, that the ridge widens considerably in this direction, gradually flattening out. The descent was made without difficulty.

A final word with regard to the Bakonjo porters. By travelling as lightly as possible we were enabled to select a small number of experienced men and get to know them personally. They were willing, cheerful and magnificent carriers, never showing the slightest reluctance to accompany us anywhere below the snow line, whatever the conditions, and genuinely interested in our doings.

THE ALPINE ARCHIVES AT RIED

By C. E. ENGEL

We are much indebted to Mlle Engel for her kindness in sending this interesting summary.—EDITOR.

THE little Nesthorn-Bietschhorn Hotel at Ried is well known to mountaineers who tramp from Goppenstein to Fafleralp. As a village, Ried is not as lovely as Kippel or Kühmatt, but it provides a rather surprising view on the Bietschhorn which, towering above the steep slopes covered first with larches, then with scree and glaciers, assumes from there an abnormally squat shape. The hotel is a small white block, at once inn, post office, *pinte* and grazing ground for postal mules going up to or down from Fafleralp. The place was an important mountaineering centre when the Bietschhorn hut or the hotel at Fafleralp were not yet built. Now, it is too low a starting point for the big climbs on either side of the valley.

The hotel was founded in 1865 by the Schröter-Mooser family, who still own it. The striking thing about the place is that the owners have kept their guest books from 1868 onwards. Here is an almost unique record of Alpine climbing. I do not think it has ever been thoroughly investigated. I spent several hours last summer making notes at Ried ; I got thoroughly drenched when hurrying down to Goppenstein to catch a train back to Kandersteg, but it was worth the soaking.

* * * *

The very first entries, in the 1868 guest book, are all by Englishmen. They record long snow expeditions which were hard climbs for the