

large hut with a resident caretaker and a motor road to the Hermitage and a bridge over the river. There is now a wire bridge over the Hooker, a hut at the foot of the Copland and the Gardiner hut on the Empress Rocks, a three-foot track down the Copland, a wire bridge at Welcome Flat and a hut, and the possibility of telephoning from the Hermitage to Scott to meet a party at Welcome Flat with horses. In 1935 I repeated this trip with Miss Richardson and Jack Cox and, as Baker's Saddle had not been crossed again, took that route back to the coast. The difference was extraordinary.

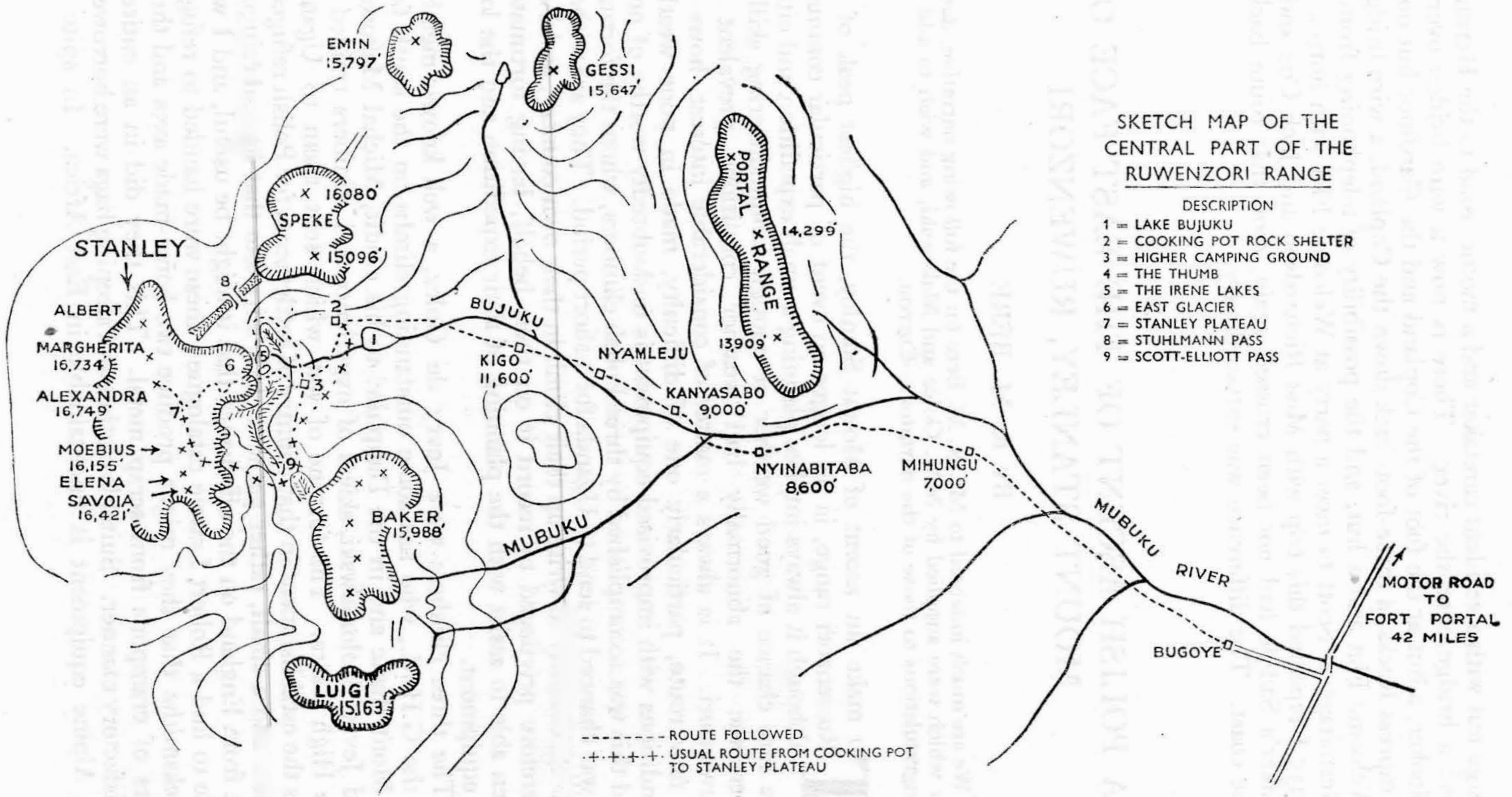
A POLISH ASCENT OF THE EAST FACE OF MOUNT STANLEY, RUWENZORI

BY R. M. BERE

We are much indebted to Mr. R. M. Bere for the following narrative, details for which were supplied by MM. Golcz and Makowski, and wish to add our congratulations to those of the narrator.—EDITOR.

TO make an ascent of Mount Stanley, the highest peak of the Ruwenzori range, is no longer an event of particular comment, although it always implies planning a small expedition and either the rare chance of good weather or enough mountaineering skill to overcome the abnormally bad weather conditions prevalent on Ruwenzori. It is always a matter of considerable interest, however. A new route, particularly one of difficulty, made in poor weather conditions with improvised equipment is undoubtedly worthy of note, and this was accomplished by three Polish climbers, whom the fortunes of war chanced to send to Uganda for a short period. They are without the opportunity to write up their climb in their own country, and I am therefore privileged to record it on their behalf, having fortunately been able to assist with the planning of their expedition and the loan of equipment.

The three climbers were Jevry de Golcz, a well known member of the G.H.M., who has some outstanding climbs on the south face of Mont Blanc and in the Dauphiné to his credit, Michal Makowski and Jevry Skolomowski, skiers of experience and climbers trained in the High Tatra. The fortune of war which sent them to Uganda was the establishment in that country of settlements for Polish refugees. Golcz had a small, rather pathetic, lady's ice-axe that he had brought out from England on the off chance that it might be useful, and I was able to find a Robert Lawrie catalogue; these were handed to refugee blacksmiths that they might produce two home-made axes and three pairs of crampons from scrap metal. This they did in an entirely satisfactory manner. Suitable clothes and sleeping bags were borrowed, for Alpine equipment is unobtainable in East Africa. In spite of



SKETCH MAP OF THE CENTRAL PART OF THE RUWENZORI RANGE

- DESCRIPTION
- 1 = LAKE BUJUKU
 - 2 = COOKING POT ROCK SHELTER
 - 3 = HIGHER CAMPING GROUND
 - 4 = THE THUMB
 - 5 = THE IRENE LAKES
 - 6 = EAST GLACIER
 - 7 = STANLEY PLATEAU
 - 8 = STUHLMANN PASS
 - 9 = SCOTT-ELLIOTT PASS

----- ROUTE FOLLOWED
 +.+.+.+.+ USUAL ROUTE FROM COOKING POT TO STANLEY PLATEAU

everything, however, they were a reasonably equipped party when they reached Fort Portal on June 2, 1943.

As Skolomowski was a day late in reaching Bugoye at the base of the mountain, Golcz went ahead with half the porters and the ubiquitous Bakonjo cutters on June 4, and the party did not unite until nearing Kigo rock shelter at midday on June 8. They did not stop at this shelter but pushed on the additional four hours to the Cooking Pot shelter beyond Lake Bujuku at 12,600 feet. Cooking Pot is the usual climbing base for ascents of Stanley, Margherita (16,794 ft.), Alexandra (16,749 ft.), Speke (16,080 ft.) and Baker (15,988 ft.) and of the less ambitious visits to the snowline, the Stuhlmann and Scott-Elliott Passes. It is not necessary to detail the ascent thus far except to say that the three climbers soon realised that Ruwenzori's reputation for bad weather is not idly gained and that they were amazed at the beauty and strangeness of the vegetation. Being newcomers to the tropics and tropical mountains it was difficult for them to understand the gigantic size of the plant life; Golcz would insist, in fact, on referring to the omukoni trees (*Senecio* or arborescent groundsel) of the alpine zone as palms, and they could hardly credit that the tree heaths were heather.

The evening of June 8, however, saw them established in the cold, damp comfort of the Cooking Pot rock shelter, talking over plans for a possible new route up Stanley, the highest points of which are more or less due east of Bujuku. It may here be said that the normal route to the Stanley Plateau, from the higher (*ca.* 16,000 ft.), more northerly end of which rise the twin peaks of Margherita and Alexandra, is first to cross the Scott-Elliott Pass (14,262 ft.) between Stanley and Baker and approach the peaks from the south. This is an indirect route and, except for the ascents from the west made by the Count de Grunne and his large Belgian expedition of 1932¹, has been followed by every other party making the ascents. Dr. Noel Humphreys failed on the northern ridges in 1926² before finally making the second ascent by the original route, as mentioned above.

The morning of June 9 was clear and sunny and there was an opportunity to study the country through field glasses. The easterly glacier of Stanley was identified though no detail could be seen and it was difficult, at first, to tell whether a prominent thumb-like rock was a separate mass in front of the glacier or a steep cliff which would have to be scaled before the glacier was reached. If so, it seemed that the route to this glacier would in all probability prove out of the question, but if a way behind the Thumb could be found, access to the glacier was at least probable. They decided therefore to approach the rocks and examine possibilities from as close as they could. Leaving the Cooking Pot shelter a little to the north of east, they crossed the valley of the Bujuku, walked up the bed of a small stream and passed through the forest of omukoni trees, which was not, however, so thick that a way had to be cut, and so reached the foot of the rocks. Here they

¹ *A. J.* 45. 275 *sqq.*

² *A. J.* 39. 99 *sqq.*, with map.

MOUNT SPEKE.



AT COOKING POT SHELTER.



realised that the glacier was definitely behind, not above the rocks, and that, should it be possible either to cross or turn the barrier, they should reach the base of the glacier, up which they hoped to find a route. Therefore they divided into two parties, Golcz and one porter going directly up the rocks, whilst Makowski and Skolomowski looked for a way round the north of the Thumb. The two parties planned to meet on the snowline or, alternatively, to return to the point of departure at 3 P.M. They failed to meet, but highly successful explorations were carried out by both parties.

Makowski and Skolomowski took two porters and worked their way northward over an easy scree slope, clearly visible from Cooking Pot, keeping along the base of the Thumb rocks, until they found a gap between these rocks and the main north-east ridge of Stanley; this ridge connects the twin peaks with the Stuhlmann Pass and is still unclimbed. In this gap they turned to the left along a stream bed, passing close below the Thumb, on the topmost ridge of which omukoni trees could be seen growing, and, making towards the lowest point of the glacier, found that they had achieved their objective of rounding the rocks to the snowline and had, in fact, found a way fully practicable to porters. A little way below the glacier, hidden away in the small rock cirque they had reached, they were amazed to find two lakes where none were shown on the maps. The two Bakonjo were equally surprised, being previously quite unaware of the existence of any lakes in this part; it was evident therefore that these lakes were a new discovery. It will be as well to pause a little in the description of the route to consider these lakes and how it came about that they were not previously known.

The two lakes were promptly named the 'Two Irenes,' after the wives of the two discoverers, still in German-occupied Poland; and although it is unlikely that this name will be finally adopted it will serve for the present description. The Bakonjo did not have any name as far as Makowski was able to find out, but a native name for the cirque in which they were situated, or for the stream that drains the lower and larger of the Two Irenes, may be forthcoming, although it has not yet been possible for the necessary inquiries to be made. There were no instruments available for measurements and persistent mist prevented the taking of a photograph. The larger of the Two Irenes is estimated at three hundred yards by one hundred and eighty, about half the size of Lake Bujuku, and the smaller and higher as a tarn, about a hundred yards across. They were set in hollows in the rock, with water clear but of no great depth, and it was evident that their presence was the result of past glacial action. The rock gave clear indication of recent recession of the glaciers, and the hollows which contain the Two Irenes have evidently been created by glacier erosion. The lakes lie in an extremely secluded position at an altitude of approximately 14,400 feet, a very short distance in vertical height below the east glacier. Now, as far as is known, this glacier has never been approached, so it is perhaps not remarkable that these lakes should

never have been seen from the ground. It is, however, more difficult to explain how in his flights over Ruwenzori in 1932³, Dr. Humphreys failed to see them. Makowski considers that it would be necessary to fly almost vertically above the Two Irenes to see them from the air, and it would seem, judging from his published photographs, that in his flights Dr. Humphreys studied most closely the southern and western faces of Stanley. Recession of the glaciers of Ruwenzori is known to be not only recent but still continuing, and so one may perhaps be allowed to ask the question whether in 1932 these lakes were in existence at all. If Dr. Humphreys, whose knowledge of Ruwenzori is so much greater than that of anyone else, chances to read this article he will, I hope, suggest the proper explanation. The lakes, which receive their water from the glacier, have their outflow in a south-westerly direction, the water falling over the rocks of the Thumb and entering Lake Bujuku.

From the Irenes they examined a route to the north-east ridge and went quickly to the snowline, but did not ascend any great distance. They waited awhile for Golcz, but as he did not arrive they returned easily to the point of departure and thence to Cooking Pot, becoming somewhat alarmed at Golcz's continued absence. He returned as it was beginning to get dark, announcing not only that he had found a way to the snow but that he had forced his way alone up the east glacier on to the Stanley Plateau and had looked down the Congo side of the range. Owing to the mist he had been unable to tell his whereabouts on the plateau, but a break in the clouds having vouchsafed him a view down the west side of Ruwenzori, he knew for certain that he had reached it. Golcz had found some difficulty in the rocks of the Thumb and had taken two and a half hours to reach the base of the glacier; he had seen no lakes, but having decided that to find a way to the glacier was useless if he did not also ascertain whether the glacier itself was practicable, he had proceeded to do this, leaving the porter on the rocks below the ice. Golcz's effort in making a solo climb up this difficult and complicated glacier was undoubtedly an astonishing achievement, and though the failure of the two parties to meet caused some loss of time later, actually it alone made the ascent possible. Subsequent discussion led them to the conclusion that, to make success certain, they should follow Golcz's route throughout; although they realised the possibility of the other easier route actually leading to the same place, the continued element of doubt prevented their using it.

On the following day camp was moved to the point where the previous day's explorations had divided. Golcz tried to persuade the porters to follow his route to the glacier but they refused, rightly it seems, as it would have been definitely impossible for them with loads, and there were some difficult sections. They camped here at about 13,500 feet, just below a little bowl of snow which reminded them of a child's saucepan. The 11th was a typical Ruwenzori day,

³ G. J. December, 1933.

snow all the morning, mist in the afternoon turning to snow again later ; they stayed in their tent, repacking, however, for a possible bivouac on the next climbing day.

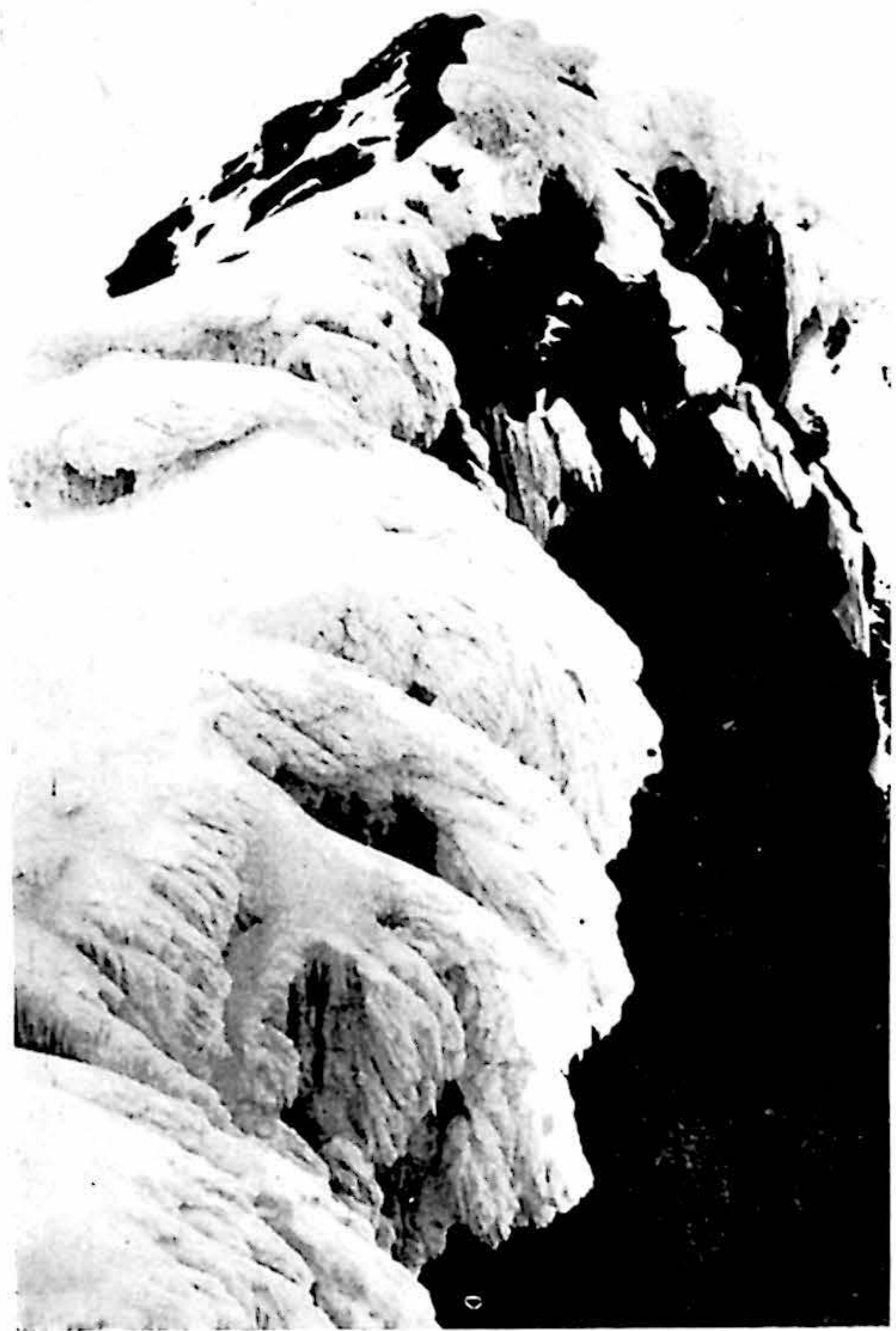
It was very misty on the morning of the 12th and the rocks were plastered with new snow which, as it was quite warm, would probably melt. A start was made at 9 A.M., with heavy rucksacks in anticipation of a possible bivouac, and Golcz's route of two days before was followed. After crossing the bowl of snow they found themselves on a distinctly difficult face, where the difficulties were increased by *verglas* and fresh snow on the rocks. The rock formation showed a series of wide slabs, divided by short chimneys, one of which, overhanging and with the holds masked by ice, proved an awkward problem. Three hours of this work brought them to the base of the glacier and showed, moreover, that they were but a few yards away from the Two Irenes, which had been previously hidden from Golcz by a small rib of rock. That he should have passed so close without seeing them gives some idea, perhaps, of the seclusion of the lakes. Although there is no rock shelter, there could be a good camping place here and it is easily accessible for porters ; so it was with a feeling of three valuable hours wasted that they dumped their loads and packed a light sack with the minimum of necessities. Crampons were put on at once and the glacier attacked forthwith in spite of the thick mist ; Golcz's tracks of the 9th, almost obliterated, were followed with difficulty across the glacier. There is little question but that, had they not been available, the ascent would have been impossible, as there was the usual thick mist.

The lowest part of the glacier was of very hard ice into which crampons could hardly bite, and this was followed by a short easy snow slope, which took them some four hundred feet from the rocks. Here was the first wall of séracs, and these séracs continued uninterrupted for a thousand feet or so, this passage being, of course, the crux of the climb. Golcz describes this part of the route as having striking similarity to the séracs of the upper Brenva Glacier on Mont Blanc, in years when no through route is to be found. The climbers were greatly handicapped by the weather. As direct a route as possible was taken through the séracs and skilful leading seems to have enabled the party to turn most of the more serious obstacles. Where this was impossible, short vertical walls of ice had to be climbed, only one of which, involving cutting hand and foot holds up a twenty-five feet stretch of vertical ice, presented serious difficulty. The glacier was overcome in a little over two and a half hours and the party emerged on to the almost level snowfield of the Stanley Plateau. When one remembers the weather conditions there is no doubt that the passage of these séracs called for mountaineering ability of a high order.

Here for the first time they were kindly treated by the weather. For a few minutes the sun came out and, with a thick bank of cloud some two or three hundred feet below them, they had a splendid view of the peaks of Mount Stanley and away to the north-east the highest



ALEXANDRA RIDGE FROM STANLEY PLATEAU.



SUMMIT OF ALEXANDRA.

points of Speke. When they first reached the plateau they were unable to tell their exact whereabouts, and had it not been for the chance break in the clouds they might have found themselves in the same predicament as did Tilman and Shipton in 1932⁴, for they, having apparently wandered around in circles for some time, mistook their own tracks in the snow for the unlikely presence of another party. They surmised, correctly as it proved, that they were on the higher northerly end of the plateau; the sunshine showed that they had emerged on to the level snow almost immediately at the base of one or other of the twin peaks and that by continuing their line of march direct they could follow a prominent ridge of this peak to its summit. Margherita is snow covered to the top, while rock shows on the topmost ridge of Alexandra; the peak ahead seemed to be snow covered, and taking it to be Margherita they started up the not very difficult ridge immediately ahead, Golcz still leading. The top was reached without event, save the disappointment of finding that they had climbed Alexandra and not Margherita, which they now saw in front of them. The east ridge of Alexandra up which they had come was, however, the most direct and natural finish to their route up the east glacier, a more proper end to their climb than traversing round the base of Alexandra to that of Margherita, as they might have done had they known exactly where they were.

The time was 4 P.M., late enough to be on the top of a high mountain and far too late to think of descending to the col between the twin peaks and of climbing Margherita, as they would have done had the day been younger. Golcz wanted to do so and risk the discomfort of a certain night out on the ice, for which they were quite unprepared, but better and wiser counsel prevailed. They had conquered Alexandra by a new route; that peak and not Margherita was the natural end to their climb and the remaining part would all have been over known ground. The decision to return was correct, and although both Golcz and Makowski were modest enough, on their return to Fort Portal, to send me telegrams of apology for a supposed failure to round off their expedition with the highest point of Ruwenzori, it was beyond doubt an outstanding success.

There was no time for a long delay on the top and it was necessary even now to hurry if an enforced night out on the glacier was to be avoided. In the descent they followed their route of ascent until they were off the ice, and reached the lakes as it was beginning to get dark. After a brief halt for some food they followed the easier route to their camp, which was not reached until 9 P.M. It was of course evident to them that had their explorations connected up on the 9th they would have been able to get a comparatively comfortable camp up to the Irene lakes with a far more satisfactory day on the ice to follow. The actual route followed, however, gave fairly difficult climbing for more than three thousand feet and a very direct line from Bujuku to Alexandra, a first rate expedition, in fact.

⁴ *A.J.* 44. 88 sqq.

The expeditions of the Duke of the Abruzzi⁵ and of Dr. Humphreys are of course in a class of their own, but from a purely mountaineering point of view I think that this Polish climb is about the best thing that has been yet done on Ruwenzori. Difficult routes have hardly yet begun to be made on these mountains, although the ascent of the north face of Baker⁶ by Tilman and Shipton was likewise a fine achievement. The discovery of the two new lakes is also a matter of considerable interest and raises, maybe, a new problem in the glaciology of Ruwenzori. As I have been associated with these three Poles in their work on the refugee camps before the expedition, which was but a small stretch of well earned leave, and have learned something of the misery which the war has brought to their country, the success of their climb gives to me as it will do to all mountaineers a measure of real pleasure. Here will be a great memory for three climbers to take back to Poland and share again perhaps in their beloved Tatra.

THE WORDSWORTHS AND SWITZERLAND

By ARNOLD LUNN

SOMEWHERE between Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen, a young Englishman was writing a letter to his sister. He was twenty years of age, and the date was September 14, 1790. 'My partiality to Switzerland, excited by its natural charms, induced me to hope that the manners of the inhabitants are amiable; but at the same time I cannot help contrasting them with those of the French, and as far as I have had the opportunity to observe, they lose much by the comparison. We not only found the French a much less imposing people, but that politeness diffused through the lowest ranks has an air so engaging that you could scarce attribute it to any other cause but real benevolence. During the time which was near a month that we were in France, we had not once to complain of the slightest deficiency of courtesy in any person, much less of any positive rudeness. We had also perpetual occasion to observe that cheerfulness and sprightliness, for which the French have always been remarkable, but I must remind you that we crossed it at a time when the whole nation was mad with joy in consequence of the revolution.'

Every revolution, as the great Basle historian Burckhardt remarks, 'opens with the brilliant farce of hope,' and the French Revolution was no exception to this rule. Many of those who insisted, contrary to all accepted canons of taste, in discovering beauty in mountain scenery were intimately associated with the beginnings of the French Revolution, a fact which forms part of Chateaubriand's general indictment against the mountain cult. Rousseau, the father of the French Revolution, was also one of the first to set up the mountains (which incidentally he detested) as objects for worship. Madame Roland and

⁵ *A. J.* 23. 386 sqq. ⁶ *A. J.* 44 *loc. cit.*