

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK  
**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom  
**Band:** - (1938)  
**Heft:** 869  
  
**Artikel:** Romance of the Red Cross Movement  
**Autor:** N.E.P.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-692881>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 16.05.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## ROMANCE OF THE RED CROSS MOVEMENT.

More than 60 Governments and national Red Cross societies were represented at the 16th International Red Cross Conference, which opened recently in London.

That over three score countries took part in this great conference is impressive proof of the world-wide ramifications of the Red Cross, the flag of which has been aptly termed the world's "Banner of Mercy."

That flag unites the hearts of all nations in the service of humanity when suffering arises — as it inevitably must — from war. Red Cross societies have a history behind them of less than 100 years, yet in every war that has been waged since their inauguration the banner of mercy has floated amidst the strife, a symbol of healing and service respected — with the exception of a few regrettable instances — by friend and foe alike.

### A Boer War Memory.

The story of how the Red Cross came to be recognised as sacred ranks (says David England) as one of the most wonderful in the history of civilisation, and whole volumes could be written of stirring incidents in the record of the Red Cross in war. One of the finest, which General Ian Hamilton declared should be told to the world, took place during the Boer War.

The British forces under Sir George White were besieged in Ladysmith, ringed around with the commandoes and artillery of General Piet Joubert. The latter's six-inch guns, better known as Long Toms, commanded the beleaguered town, but before they were brought to bear on it, Piet Joubert agreed to let the besieged transfer their sick and wounded, women and children, into a no-man's-land between the forces. This was Intombi Camp, and there for four months the Red Cross lay unharmed between the two armies. Shells innumerable passed over it; yet not a shell, not a bullet, ever touched it. To the end, when Ladysmith was relieved, it remained a sanctuary.

Before such succour existed the most ghastly scenes were witnessed on the battlefields of the world, for the most part the wounded perishing in unutterable agony. It was the sight of the horrors of a conflict which ranks as one of the bloodiest in the history of warfare, that led to the first steps being taken to form companies of volunteers who would be ready to aid the sick and suffering in time of war.

### Its Foundation.

In 1859 Henry Dunant, a Swiss doctor, was travelling in Northern Italy, when he arrived at Solferino, scene of a terrible struggle between the Austrians and France allied to the northern part of Italy. The battle had raged throughout the whole of a stifling summer day, and at the close of it no fewer than 40,000 wounded lay on the field untended, a mere handful having been carried into barns and churches.

Appalled at the sight, Dunant hurried to the neighbouring town of Castiglione, where he was able to recruit a small party of helpers, Swiss, Belgians, and Swedes among them. But what could this handful do to care for tens of thousands of unhappy sufferers?

The tragedy burnt itself indelibly upon the mind of the Swiss doctor. He wrote a pamphlet vividly recounting the scenes he had witnessed at Solferino, and in it he outlined his suggested plan for volunteers training themselves in peace time ready to give their services in war time, and also on the occasion of such disasters as earthquakes, floods, epidemics, industrial accidents, and so on.

### How The Movement Spread.

The idea gained much ground in Dunant's city of Geneva, which is now famous as the home of the League of Nations, but which long before that honour was bestowed upon it, had acquired international celebrity because of its association with the Red Cross. A preliminary meeting was held, and then in 1864 representatives of 16 countries gathered, Britain being among them, to discuss the problem of tending the victims of war, and there the notable Convention of Geneva was agreed to by the countries present.

This tremendous advance in the history of the treatment of international suffering decreed the neutralisation of the medical services and of the sick and wounded in time of war. The Red Cross, a reversal of the arms of Switzerland, was chosen as an international symbol easy to recognise.

The movement quickly spread from country to country, and while at the close of the Great War only 32 countries were linked with it, there are now, as stated, over 60.

N.E.P.

## ALPINE CLIMBING ACCIDENTS.

Eighty-three climbing accidents were recorded in the Swiss, French, Italian, and Austrian Alps last year, as against 53 in 1936. They caused the deaths of 124 persons (there were 66 deaths in 1936), including 11 women and six guides.

Avalanches accounted for 49 deaths; 32 victims fell down rocks, 13 on snow and ice, eight fell in crevasses, seven were struck by falling stones, six were killed while collecting edelweiss, five died from exposure, and four during storms. As in previous years, a great number of accidents occurred during the ski-ing season. Winter climbing was responsible for 23 accidents involving the deaths of 48 persons, compared with 14 accidents and 16 deaths in 1936, and respectively 30 and 63 in 1935.

Since 1927, when winter climbing began to develop, 326 skiers have been killed in the Alps. The continuous increase in ski-ing accidents — or, more correctly, of winter climbing accidents — is due to various causes, among which avalanches are the chief; but many deaths are also due to imprudence, lack of experience of snow conditions, ignorance of snow dangers, and the fact that a great number of skiers, who never make any climb in summer, have no knowledge of the high Alps.

It would be wrong to conclude from the foregoing figures that mountaineering is particularly dangerous. Last year 78,500 tourists and guides visited the huts of the Swiss Alpine Club, and nearly 145,000 visited the huts of the French, Italian, and Austrian Alpine clubs. Another 20,000 odd started for their ascents either from mountain hotels or from Alpine resorts. The total number of climbers was 248,500 and the number of deaths 124, which represents about one in 2,000.

When at HAMPTON COURT  
have Lunch or Tea at the

## MYRTLE COTTAGE

Facing Royal Palace, backing on to Bushy  
Park between Lion Gate and The Green.

P. GODENZI, PROPRIETOR.

If you want a **SUIT to WEAR**

wear a

**PRITCHETT Suit**



Suits, Overcoats & Ladies  
Costumes from 3 Gns. to  
7 Gns. and you get **VALUE**  
for every penny you pay.

Agent for **BURBERRY**  
Weatherproofs.

**W. PRITCHETT**

183 & 184, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, W.1.  
2 mins. from S.M.S. School. Phone: MUSEUM 0428

## APPLE GOLD

PURE SWISS APPLE JUICE

— NON ALCOHOLIC —

OBTAINABLE IN CRATES OF 25 LITER  
BOTTLES 29/2 (deposit 6/3).

Single bottles at 1/6 (+ deposit 3d.) from

BARTHOLDI'S 4, Charlotte Street, W.1.

Tel.: MUSEUM 3762.

"APPLE GOLD,"

72, Kensington Gardens Square, W.2.

Tel.: BAYSWATER. 5101.

Cash with order. Delivery free in London

## MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

WHY NOT BUY a guest house at Victoria, Central position, undoubted bargain, write Box No. 77 c/o Swiss Observer, 23 Leonard Street, E.C.2.

DON'T DELAY buying freehold house bargain. Purley (site 40 x 200). Two rec., four bedrooms, large panelled hall, central heating, room for garage. No road charges, unobstructed view, near shops, buses and two stations. Price £1,075, without agents. Write: P.M. 159, Cheam Road, Cheam (Surrey).

OPPORTUNITY for two travelling to Switzerland by car at a cheap fare about end of July. Write: BM/SSXW, W.C.1.

## SWISS BANK CORPORATION,

(A Company limited by Shares incorporated in Switzerland)

99, GRESHAM STREET, E.C.2.

and 11c, REGENT STREET, S.W.1.

Capital Paid up s.f. 160,000,000

Reserves - - s.f. 32,000,000

Deposits - - s.f. 1,280,000,000

All Descriptions of Banking and  
Foreign Exchange Business Transacted

:: Correspondents in all ::

:: parts of the World. ::

Telephone :  
MUSEUM 2982

Telegrams :  
Foyssuisse London

## FOYER SUISSE

12 UPPER BEDFORD PLACE

RUSSELL SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.C.1

Quiet position in centre of London.  
Central heating and hot & cold water  
throughout.

Continental cooking.

Management :  
SCHWEIZER VERBAND VOLKSDIENST.

## CHALET ALBRIS Celerina-St. Moritz.

Sunny position in lovely surroundings.  
Open summer autumn and Winter. Full  
board, central heating, hot and cold water  
throughout. Moderate Prices.

Proprietor : N. C. SCHMIDHEINI.

## Divine Services.

EGLISE SUISSE (1762).

(Langue française).

79, Endell Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.

(Near New Oxford Street).

Dimanche 10 juillet 1938 :

11h. — Culte M. M. Pradervand.

7h. — Culte M. M. Pradervand.

Pour l'instruction religieuse et les actes  
pastoraux, prière de s'adresser au pasteur,  
M. Marcel Pradervand, 65, Mount View  
Road, N.4 (Téléphone Mountview 5003).  
Heure de réception à l'église le mercredi de  
11 — 12h.30.

## SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2.

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 10. Juli 1938.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst und Sonntag-  
schule.

Die Abendgottesdienste fallen während der  
Monate Juli und August aus, ebenso die  
Sprechstunde am Dienstag, den 12. Juli.

Während der Abwesenheit des Gemeindepfarrers  
in den Ferien wird ihn Herr Pfarrer Rud.  
Kägi aus Rothrist (Aargau) vertreten. An  
ihn sind die Anfragen wegen Amshandlungen  
erbeten c/o "Foyer Suisse," 12, Bedford  
Way, Russell Square, W.C.1.

Den Wochendienst vom 11.-16. Juli übernimmt  
Herr Pfarrer M. Pradervand, an dessen  
Adresse allfällige Anfragen während dieser  
Woche zu richten sind. (Siehe Adresse oben.)

Printed for the Proprietors by THE FREDERICK PRINTING CO.,  
LTD., at 23, Leonard Street, London, E.C.2.