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Odds and Ends

One of the great attractions on Switzerland's fabled "Grand Alpine Tour" covering the Grimsel, Furka and Susten passes is the gorge of the Aare river cut some 650 feet deep into the alpine granite near Meiringen. Summer visitors, moving along on safe footbridges high above the thundering mountain stream, may not be aware of the great number of safety measures which have to be taken each year before the gorge can be opened to the public. Earlier in the season, the Rosenlauri Mountaineering School had mobilized, as in previous years, its crack Bernese Oberland mountain guides for a "house-cleaning" attack against the walls and ravines of the gorge. Armed with ropes, ice-axes and brooms, they swept loose rocks down from ledges and cliffs. At the end of the operation the gorge was not only scrubbed clean and tidy but also made safe for visitors as a lowland garden path. This year a bunch of scared laymen — a TV film team — joined the mountaineers in their breakneck expedition.

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A new Canadian air regulation declares: "No person shall enter or attempt to enter any aircraft in flight."

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In co-operation with the Swiss Touring Club, the Lausanne Tourist office introduced, in 1960, a new service for tourists and travellers in the Lausanne area. On the outskirts of the city, on each of the main roads leading into Lausanne, information booths were set up, marked "City-Information". These booths, which are linked by telephone, are manned by students speaking several languages and specially trained to help the traveller. They resumed operations last month and will remain open until 3rd September.

* * *

"Well, I finally went to a doctor and told him about my lapses of memory," a fellow was telling his friend.

"What did he do?" the friend wanted to know.

"He made me pay in advance."

* * *

Some remarkable births, which were favourably commented on by zoologists all over the world, have been reported in the first half of 1961 by the Zurich Zoological Gardens, which boast an elevation of 2,300 feet above sea-level — the highest zoo in Europe. The noteworthy newcomers include two chimpanzee babies. One was born on 15th March by 15-year-old Mary; it was her second. A few weeks later, her neighbour, Lulu, also bore her second child. In addition to ten chimpanzees of several ages, two stout orang-utans live at the new "Anthropoid-Apes' House" of the Zurich Zoo, not to mention a lively tribe of gibbons — a smaller and more dashing type of ape — who seem determined to steal the show from their sterner cousins.

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A public house recently opened in Stoke Newington, London, has sand-coloured footprints laid into the floor tiles leading to the ladies' and gents' cloakrooms.

Name of the pub: The Robinson Crusoe.

* * *

Albertsen World Travel Organization, with headquarters in Los Angeles and offices in Honolulu, Tokyo and Manila, announces the opening of a new office in Lausanne. Mr. Robert Vien, formerly with Lavanchy Travel Bureau, has been named as General Manager. Lausanne

was selected because of its most convenient location in the heart of Europe, and the Lausanne Office of Albertsen will operate as the European Headquarters of this travel agency.

A dozen other American firms have recently opened branch offices or affiliated companies in the Lausanne area.

* * *

A harassed mother of five was asked by a friend: "Well, what do you want your next child to be?"

"A grandchild", she replied.

* * *

A lovely new lido-beach was recently inaugurated on Switzerland's historical Lake Sempach, on the outskirts of the little town of Sursee. Located on one of the main motor roads between Basle and Lucerne, this gem of a miniature Swiss city full of mediæval charm so far seems to have been ignored by racing tourists. Many would stop here if they knew that Sursee has several fine restaurants and hotels and that the most expensive room with bath costs as little as 11 Swiss francs per night!

* * *

Suddenly in London it has become fashionable to eat Chinese food.

Each week sees the opening of several new Chinese restaurants here.

Recently a young man took his girl friend to dinner at one of them.

Anxious to demonstrate his knowledge of the subject, he reeled off items from the menu to the waiter taking the order.

Then he turned to his girl friend.

"And how," he asked, "would you like your rice?"

She answered, clearly and determinedly:

"Thrown."

* * *

The rules of hunting in Switzerland are set up very broadly by the federal government, which leaves the finer points of control to the cantons.

In some cantons there is open hunting and it is possible to purchase a hunting licence. Tariffs for these licences are higher for Swiss residents from outside cantons, and higher still for foreigners. Open hunting exists in the cantons of Vaud, Lausanne, Geneva, Graubunden and Berne.

There are hunting reserves in some cantons which are rented to those who hunt individually or in groups, for periods of eight or nine years.

When a landowner signs away the hunting rights over his property, he himself cannot hunt over his own land: that is then the exclusive right of the hunter or hunters who have contracted for this privilege. (This rule applies in canton Zurich.)

Where there is a territorial monopoly, hunting is by invitation only. So before you can start hunting, you have to fish for that invitation.

* * *

A friend of ours, recently back from Switzerland:

I asked a young Swiss sitting opposite me on a Swiss train why the conductors carry their satchels so very low down. His laconic reply, without a smile,

"Because the strap is too long"

("der Rieme isch z'läng")

I doubt if he saw the joke!