

Switzerland and the Swiss

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In the Bernese Oberland / Im Berner Oberland



On the Schatzalp near Davos / Auf der Schatzalp bei Davos
Phot. Meerkämper, Davos

SWITZERLAND AND THE SWISS

"The Swiss are more interesting than Switzerland." When I came across this remark in a book I was reading lately, I rubbed my eyes, for I know something of the little country, its lovely lakes and magnificent mountains. Its very name is a synonym for a high type of beauty. Wherever a district is particularly picturesque and imposing, is it not acclaimed locally as "a little Switzerland?" And one knows also something of the people. But can one speak of "the Swiss"? Are there not French Swiss, and German Swiss? A Zurichois differs from a Bernois, and both from a Vaudois. Kindly they are, sturdy, self-reliant, even self-satisfied perhaps, with a special tenderness for children; yet they may strike a foreigner as a bit stolid withal.

But, come to think of it, it is no mean tale, the story of this little federation of peoples, diverse in origin, in speech, in religion. Their one bond of union is a common love of freedom. Their earlier heroes may claim to rank with English Alfred and Scottish Wallace or even with honest George Washington. Stung by the tyranny of Austrian Dukes, three Swiss peasant proprietors, of ancient lineage, met in the secluded meadow of Rütli on the shore of the lake of Lucerne and swore the famous oath which led to the Independence of their homeland. Their names, Stauffacher, Melchthal and Attinghausen, somehow recall the three Hebrew heroes who defied the fiery furnace of that ancient tyrant Nebuchadnesar.

And through the centuries since, Courage, Independence and Progress have been their Country's watchwords. Thorwaldsen's impressive monument of The Dying Lion witnesses the gallant end of the Swiss Guard in Paris after three centuries of loyal service. Nor is it generally known, that numbers of Swiss in spite of their country's neutrality took part in the Great War. Many joined the French Foreign Legion, whose mortality was appalling, and not less than twelve thousand Swiss fell on the Battlefields. Prominent, too, in other spheres, even pioneers in Education, in Democracy, in Deeds of mercy, they cannot in fairness be dismissed as just "a nation of hotel-keepers". Let then, all visitors who

enjoy the hospitality of Switzerland show due respect for their hosts.

Probably the above phrase is meant to express the universal verdict that none can beat the Swiss in the management of a hotel. Nowhere will you find greater comfort, more scrupulous cleanliness or a keener sense of what man and woman wants than in a Swiss hotel. Be it ranked first-class or third-class, or only a modest hostelry in some hill-side village or forest clearing, you may reckon on a friendly welcome, good food and clean beds. And on your way the Swiss trains are clean and comfortable. The sanitary accommodation is up to date. The restaurants are well equipped. The meals served are generally excellent. And do not forget to look at those immense and powerful engines, unrivalled in the world. They have dismissed the smoke and dirt of the old steam engine. Driven by electricity, they travel smoothly and swiftly along the varying gradients of the carefully engineered Swiss railways, climbing far up into the mountain slopes, almost in defiance of nature.

And higher still, the splendid motor roads over the mountain passes testify to the skill, ingenuity and pertinacity of the Swiss engineers. The roads are so carefully graded that any well built car will mount to six or seven thousand feet and not feel the strain. Nor are these roads wholly neglected even in winter. The Swiss Postal Service drives its huge motor snow ploughs or "catapults" into the drifts and whirls away the snow to clear the road. Then by the aid of "catterpillar" traction, it maintains a service of its commodious cars throughout the season from Reichenau to Waldhaus-Flims, from Coire to Lenzerheide and from St. Moritz over the Maloja, and also from Nesslau to Buchs. Thus you may drive today in comfort in winter into the heart of those awe-inspiring solitudes, the approach to which even in summer was for many ages a fearsome feat, calling for exceptional daring.

It is the attractions of the Winter Season that call so enticingly to all who are young and to all who feel young to come to Switzerland at this Season. Look

at the majestic Matterhorn. Is it not like a giant hand upraised to beckon to the world. Come and Welcome! Come and enjoy yourselves on the snowy slopes of the mountains, and on the frozen surfaces of the lakes! Come and inhale deep draughts of pure, invigorating air! Come and bask in the bright rays of the frosty sun! Health is as important an element of recreation as sport, and surely nowhere are the two more pleasantly interwoven than at the Sport-centres of Switzerland. While revelling in the fun, one unconsciously reaps the benefit of pure air and radiant sunshine.

Light is the very thing that dwellers in the foggy districts of London or in the smoky black country of middle England need to set them up when feeling a bit out of sorts. An interesting instance of the necessity of light for the mere existence of life is narrated by Professor Dodds, in a recent number of *The Nineteenth Century*. "By the shores of the Lake of Thun, there is a series of limestone caverns. Since the advent of the tourist the primal darkness of these caverns has been enlightened by electric lamps. Beneath the small area of illumination is to be found the only form of plant life in the caves — a minute lichen — scarcely more than a green stain on the face of the rock. The simple phenomenon is significant; only of recent years have we begun to see the vital relationship between light and life."

The first clinics for sun-bath treatment were established a few years since under the scientific control of Dr. Rollier on the beautiful and elevated southern slopes of Leysin. British officers, gassed in the war, and many another patient of every nationality have experienced the health-restoring quality of sunlight, regulated and administered with extreme care. Also in French Switzerland is Villars. Just the place for an English lad, leaving school, to spend a month before going on to the Varsity. The sport conditions are excellent, there are moderately priced pensions and the opportunity of learning to speak French at the same time. And the French of these parts is good. Scores of English lads and girls avail themselves of the educational facilities, offered at Lausanne and Neuchâtel. There are English Churches in most of these centres.

For altitude and luxury the famous centres of the Engadine and the Grisons may, perhaps, claim pride of place. The mountain lakes, the elevated valleys and the glorious Bernina range which dominates the district in its regal splendour always attract a crowd of wealth and fashion. The second Winter Sports Olympiad was held last year at St. Moritz. The American Teams scored some notable victories, but the British were handicapped through one of their champions, Lord North-

esk, breaking his ribs a week before the Games began. This Spring the authorities at Davos have arranged a big programme of Competitions which is sure to draw an immense crowd. It is a town these days with attractive shops, and is wellknown for its Sanatoria. Its neighbour, Klosters is another eminent centre for ski-tours and boasts of rinks and runs for every kind of sport. Pontresina will never lose its charm, it has good roads and a funicular to raise its sportsmen 2350 feet.

The Bernese Oberland is quicker reached and more cheaply. It offers equal advantages for Sport, while the beauty of its Virgin Queen, the Jungfrau, is sublime. As seen from Berne in the Autumn, shadows cast by the setting sun across its broad expanse of snow form a distinct and striking cross with broad limbs. It thus displays on its ample breast the Swiss National Device, from which again shines through the world the Emblem of the Red cross, telling that Switzerland was its birth-place and its parents Swiss. Adelboden is a popular centre, with its well-known "Nursery for skiers" on the Hahnenmoos. Wengen and Mürren on opposite sides of the Lauterbrunnen valley are favorites with the English. Mürren has the steeper runs, and trains the more adventurous sportsmen. Wengen has ample slopes, and is near the Scheidegg pass and the Männlichen. Some say the run down from the Kleine Scheidegg to Grindelwald is unequalled. Grindelwald is famous for its Skating rinks and trains many a master. It has also a fine Bobsleigh run, and a good take-off for that most thrilling of all winter sports, ski-jumping.

In other directions are Kandersteg, Château-d'Oex, Gstaad and many another famous resort. In all of these excellent sport can be enjoyed under first class conditions, and often on more moderate terms. It is wise to make arrangements early. Price lists can be had of any Tourist Agency. When possible it is well to avoid the Christmas rush. Both weather and snow conditions are as good in February as in January. A preliminary practice with "dry ski-ing" will be found helpful. All sporting visitors are advised to join the local clubs. There is a test for admission, which is a useful training, and the Clubs arrange tours, provide instructors and generally promote the interest of their members. The famous Eagle Club at Maloja is limited to the English. The Kandahar, named after Lord Roberts, at Mürren has done good service, but clubs will be found everywhere.

My last word shall be: Don't forget to bring your cameras! The exquisite illustrations which adorn this Review show what beautiful mementos you may take away with you to recall the scenery and the pleasures of your visit to Switzerland. *A. B. Winter.*

Die SBB Revue ist in allen Bahnhofbuchhandlungen erhältlich und kann zum Preise von Fr. 10 pro Jahr bei der Expedition, Marienstrasse 8, Bern, abonniert werden

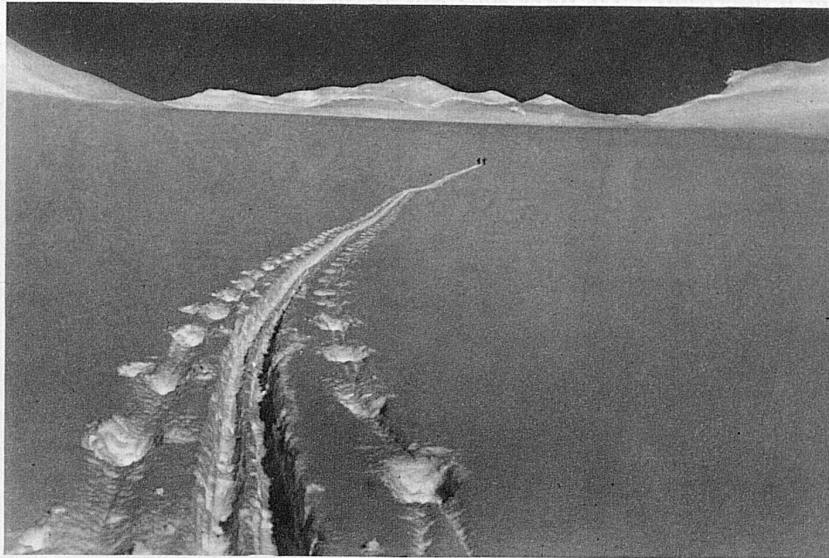
*Silberfiligran im Winterwald / La forêt sous son décor d'argent / The Forest decked in Silver
Suggestiva decorazione invernale*



*Blick von Braunwald auf den Tödi / Une échappée de Braunwald sur le Tödi / View in the Braunwald looking towards Tödi
Sguardo sul Tödi dal Braunwald*

Phot. Gaberell Thalwil.

*Erste Spur auf dem
Ebnefluhfirn beim
Jungfrauoch*



*Traces left by the
first skiers on the
Ebnefluh, near the
Jungfrauoch*

*Premières traces de
skis sur l'Ebnefluh-
firn près du Jung-
frauoch*

*Prime traccie sulla
Ebnefluhfirn presso
il Jungfrauoch
Phot. Cyger, Adelboden*



*Schneeglitzernde
Pracht bei Wengen
Splendeur de la
montagne près de
Wengen sous le scin-
tillement de la neige
Mountains in their
winterglory, op-
posite Wengen
Magnifico luccichio
della neve presso
Wengen
Phot. Cyger, Adelboden*



*Das Eldorado der
Skiläufer bei Mürren
Le paradis du skieur
aux environs de
Mürren
The Skiers' Paradise,
Mürren
L'Eldorado degli
skiatori presso
Mürren
Phot. Cyger, Adelboden*



*An den sonnigen
Hängen von Villars
sur Ollon
Les pentes ensoleil-
lées de Villars sur
Ollon*

*The sunny slopes of
Villars sur Ollon
Sui pendii soleggiate
di Villars sur Ollon
Phot. Butner, Villars*

*Das windgeschützte
Arosa im Kranze
leuchtender Berge*



*Arosa, with its girdle
of glorious mountains*

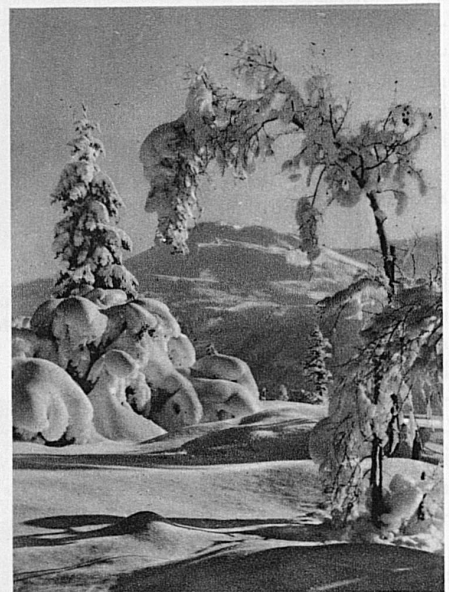
*Arosa au pied des
étincelantes mon-
tagnes qui l'abritent
des vents*

*Arosa, riparata dai
venti, nella magni-
fica cerchia di monti*
Phot. Gaberell, Thalwil



A jolly Slide

Phot.
Gaberell
Thalwil



*Die sagenumwobene
Blümlisalp bei Kan-
dersteg
La légendaire Blüm-
lisalp près de Kan-
dersteg
The Blümlisalp from
Kandersteg
La leggendaria Blüm-
lisalp presso Kander-
steg
Phot. Hari, Kandersteg*



*In den Schneegefil-
den des Appenzeller-
landes
L'Appenzell sous la
neige
Appenzell under
Snow
Nevai appenzellesi
Phot. Schefer, St. Gallen*

*Neuschnee im Ober-
Engadin. Silvaplana
mit Pizzo della
Margna
Neige fraîche dans
la Haute Engadine
Silvaplana et le Pizzo
della Margna*

*Fresh Snow in the
Upper Engadine. Sil-
vaplana and the Pizzo
della Margna
Nevicata nell' Alta
Engadina. Silvapla-
na ed il Pizzo della
Margna
Phot. Gaberell, Thalwil*



*Schnellauf und Hockeysturnier auf dem Davoser Eise / Course de vitesse et match de hockey sur les patinoires de Davos
A Skating Race and a Hockey Match on the Rink at Davos / Pattinaggio e gare di Hockey sul ghiaccio a Davos
Phot. Meerkämper, Davos*

