

The lure of the beautiful Narcissus : Switzerland's glorious spring-time spectacle

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L'automotrice du chemin de fer Glion—Caux—Rochers-de-Naye au départ de Montreux. — Triebwagen der Bergbahn auf die Rochers-de-Naye am Ausgang von Montreux. — On the electrified mountain railway up to Rochers-de-Naye, just leaving Montreux. Photo: Kettel.

It is a real symphony, for the ear as well as for the eye, that cheers us afresh each springtime. The magic in the name "Lake Léman" now reveals its greatest charms. The vast expanse of blue water, young green buds on bare branches, the brilliant white of narcissus fields, slowly dwindling snows on mountain slopes, the rejoicing of feathered songsters, and the industrious activity of women grafting young shoots on grapevines—all reflect the coming of spring. With much more immediacy than words, our pictures tell the story of springtime in the cheerful world between Montreux and Geneva.

Vaudoises en costume dans les champs de narcisses dominant Montreux. — Waadtländer Trachten in den Narzissenfeldern oberhalb von Montreux. — Gay costumes of the Canton of Vaud midst narcissus fields above Montreux.

En bas: A la gare de Lausanne, point de départ de multiples et ravissantes excursions de printemps. — Unten: Im Bahnhof von Lausanne, dem Ausgangspunkt zu mannigfaltigen schönen Frühlingsausflügen. — Below: Inside the railway station at Lausanne, the point where many varied springtime excursions begin. Photo: Pilet.



THE LURE OF THE BEAUTIFUL NARCISSUS

Switzerland's Glorious Spring-Time Spectacle

Mythology records that when Narcissus, son of Cephissus and the nymph Leiripe, gazed one day into a limpid stream, he was so impressed with the reflection of his own beauty that, disdaining all earthly allurements, he pined away and changed into the peerless flower that now perpetuates his name.

The age-old legend still lives. But there is no myth about the glorious narcissus fields which from time immemorial have mantled the verdant alpine slopes in many parts of Switzerland.

From the beginning of May until well into the month of June, the pastures above Montreux-Vevey, at the eastern end of lake Lemman, resemble vast snowfields. People seeing them for the first time are deeply intrigued that snow can be lying at such low altitudes so late in the season. Glion, Caux, Blonay, Les Avants, Sonloup, and the whole countryside from Les Pléiades to picturesque Châtel-St-Denis, are covered in a mass of fragrant bloom.

For miles around the air is heavy with their delicate perfume, like some exotic island in an enchanted world.

In most districts people are free to wander in the fields and gather the flowers at will... but in others, to avoid wholesale depredations, peasants charge a modest fee and invite visitors to pick the flowers to their heart's content.

At week ends, on alpine roads, one sees long processions of happy motorists, cyclists and pedestrians returning to their homes laden with sheaves of the beautiful flower. Motorists come from distant parts of Switzerland, and even from foreign countries to see this unique spec-



tacle, and go back to their homes with their cars decorated as for a floral fête.

Many people in fine weather spend the night in the narcissus fields, eager to pick the choicest blooms at daybreak. During the very short season, palatial villas and modest working-class homes are embellished with this most exquisite of blooms.

They brighten the lives of countless thousands in palace and slum alike. Narcissus travel very well by post to distant countries, and many a one time British tourist has known the pangs of nostalgia for the alps on receiving a dainty little box of blooms from Switzerland.

Packed while they are still in the bud, the flowers arrive fresh in England, and retain all their fragrance for a week or more.

For the last twenty years the Fête des Narcisses has been celebrated at Montreux, where in a grandiose amphitheatre of alpine peaks, some of the most famous of the world's corps de ballet have paid tribute to the peerless flower.

H. Challinor James.