

450th anniversary

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1931)**

Heft 507

PDF erstellt am: **29.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-693785>

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though not perhaps so sure-footed as these mountain-bred creatures, appear to have none of that fear of heights which is so common among men. Perhaps it is part of the price we pay for having acquired the proud habit of walking and standing precariously balanced on two legs instead of going humbly and safely on four. It is significant that in moments of difficulty the mountaineer abandons the perpendicular and proceeds on all fours.

But it makes one catch one's breath even to read of those moments when the intrepid climbers scramble up steep pinnacles or cross dizzy ridges on hands and knees; or when they crawl inch by inch round jutting rocks, thrusting toes and fingers into ice-encrusted cracks and snowy crevices; or when they cling, seemingly by surface tension, to paths just a few inches wide, from which the snow falls away, an icy slope, down to the fatal glacier. One needs to have a head for heights merely to *imagine* such situations without having "that sinking feeling."

The literature of mountaineering shows that even the boldest and most experienced climber may lose his nerve at times. Whymper tells us that after the disaster which marred his conquest of the Matterhorn his three guides were utterly unnerved, and for fully half an hour the four survivors made no move. The paralysis which may temporarily afflict a man when he becomes too acutely conscious of the long drop beneath is sometimes relieved if another member of the party smacks his face! There have been occasions, however, when nothing could restore the climber's courage and he had to be ignominiously helped down, foot by foot and hand by hand, with his eyes covered so that he could not again look into the abyss which had been his undoing.

It is almost fatal to look down, but it is apparently just as disastrous at times to look up. The sight of the stupendous cliffs just below the summit of the Matterhorn has beaten many bold spirits who had overcome greater dangers in arriving so far; for contemplation of a cliff top against the sky, with the clouds moving over it, creates an appalling illusion that the cliff is toppling forward. On one occasion when Mr. Winthrop Young and the late Leigh Mallory were climbing an overhang in the Alps, one of their guides was suddenly overwhelmed by some such sensation and was for a while simply petrified with fear.

But "great things are done when men and mountains meet." And in contrast with these unfortunate incidents in the history of mountaineering there are instances of almost superhuman courage and coolness in moments of danger. During that same climb (a first ascent of one of the Alpine peaks) Leigh Mallory, who was leading, made a jump for a hold above his head, missed it, fell forty feet and swung in space at the end of a rope until he secured other holds. Then, quite unshaken, he continued to lead the party. In Mr. Winthrop Young's account of the climb up the south face of the Täschhorn, he describes among other "thrills" the forced halt made by the party on a narrow shelf below a precipice and their uneasy realisation that here they had reached a point where advance and retreat were equally impossible. And then he tells us of the amazing climb up a hundred feet of sheer rock by which Franz Lechmatter in the end brought his party through. "Man could not do much more," is recorded as Franz's comment when the summit was reached.

For the true mountaineer it is essential for his complete enjoyment of what the mountains can give him that there should be sustained effort, difficulties and hardship. He does not, perhaps, seek danger for danger's sake, but it is necessary that the climber's skill and strength and endurance should be tested to the full, with so much taking of chances as this may entail. That is why the records of mountaineering make such thrilling tales of adventure.

J.O.

Another "thrilling tale of adventure" might be found in the installation of **ELECTRIC POWER** all over Switzerland. Some of us who have been privileged to visit some of the big Power Stations in Switzerland, will know what I mean. However, I find the following in *The Star*, 1st July, entitled

Volts For Women:

and very interesting reading too, I think. I might add, that even in this City of London, it is possible to have one's hair cut by electric clippers, at least mine has been cut electrically for a considerable time past now.—And, as soon as I have saved up enough I am having another hair cut!

The pretty Swiss village where I spent my holiday is a pleasant place, the heart of a valley of scattered farms and hamlets over which the Angelus echoes three times a day, where cowbells tinkle from dawn till dusk, and where life is so peaceful that a policeman visits the village once a week out of courtesy.

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The men of Giswil will point out to you a hillside where, when there are laws to be made, they pass or reject them on a show of hands just as their fathers did 600 years ago.

And if, by chance, you should ask whether their women have votes or not, they will reply, "No, but they have volts."

The village is picturesque and old, but everybody is electrically-minded at the same time. Volts count there and every farmer and villager does his best to use them up as much as possible.

There is a power station at the top of the valley, tapping the strength of water of Lake Lungern as it falls through almost vertical pipes.

Scrambling over the meadows one day I came across an isolated farm-house where a woman at an open window was ironing with an electric iron. The day was hot and her room was kept cool by a revolving electric fan. In an orchard adjoining, the farmer was busily spraying apples and pears, trailing behind him a light field cable attached to a portable motor which worked his spray. The whirr of the fan and the buzz of the spray seemed to reflect the contentment of a countryside made comfortable by electricity.

This farm was not all electric, but it was not far from it. Every building had electric light, and the cowsheds were clean and airy like a modern factory. They were fitted with an array of electrical devices, amongst which one recognised a row of those curious cushion-and-bobbin instruments for milking cows electrically, a small electric butter churn, and what appeared to be a machine for mixing cow-food.

Later my Swiss host explained. "One unit of electricity," he said, "will milk about fifty cows. You can milk three cows by electricity in the time it takes to milk two by hand. One unit will separate between 200 and 300 gallons of milk."

"When you have electric light in your cowshed you can see what you are doing. Think of the time saved in winter by feeding your livestock by strong light instead of by oil lamps and candles! Think of trying to treat a sick animal by candle-light! Everybody uses electricity here because it is common sense."

"And cheap?" I interposed.

"You English always say that," he replied. "You forget it costs an enormous amount of money to harness the water, and the money has to be paid back. It is costly at first, and then is cheap only if everybody uses it. Here we all use it. You can get your hair cut by electricity down the road."

I rang the bell at the barber's shop, and it was so. The barber has not enough custom to sit in his shop all day waiting for it, but electrically he is complete. His electric hair-clippers purr over your head without a twinge while you wonder which of the chromium-plated instruments before you are for scalp-massage, hair-waving, and hair-drying respectively.

Had I stayed longer I have no doubt I should have found an electric dough-puncher in the village bakery and thermostat rods regulating the temperatures of its bee-houses.

What I did not see was an all-mains wireless receiver or a moving coil loud speaker. The village has some unexpected reactions to modernism and one of them is against wireless, not because it is resented but because to them it is needless while they can yodel unaccompanied and play their accordions and guitars. There is an electric gramophone in the parlour of the village hotel, but that is for the pleasure of visitors.

Nor will Switzerland, while electricity is cutting the drudgery out of its life, allow modernism entirely to deprive it of other personal delights. Late one evening my Swiss friend and myself leaned over a fence and watched three young men in formation rhythmically lowering the level of a field of hay with scythes. Pointing to an idle mowing machine in the corner of the field my sentimental companion remarked quaintly: "It is their happiness, just like your English gentlemen enjoys to chop down the tree on his estate."

450th ANNIVERSARY.

Throughout the Canton of Fribourg great festivities took place on Sunday last, when its population celebrated the 450th Anniversary of the entry into the Swiss Confederation.

A service, conducted by Bishop Besson, took place at the St. Nicolas Cathedral in Fribourg, at which high State and Local officials attended; after the service a procession was formed which was headed by Federal Councillors Motta, Minger and Musy, and accompanied by the colours of the five Fribourg Battalions.

A solemn meeting of the Grand Council was held under the Presidency of its Chairman, M. Kaelin, who passed in review some of the most important events in the history of the canton since its entry into the Confederation.

From the balcony of the Town Hall, M. Bovet, head of the cantonal Government, addressed a large Assembly, his patriotic address left a deep impression amongst the hearers and the wellknown song of the "Romands" "Le vieux chalet" by J. Bovet was sung by the population with enthusiasm.

Federal Councillor Motta, who received a great ovation on appearing, conveyed in a great speech, which was often interrupted by applause, greetings from the Swiss Government and co-patriots.

At the dinner, which took place at the Theater Livo to which about 300 official guests were invited, M. Charnillod, President of the State Council brought the greetings and congratulations of the Federal Chambers. Federal Councillor M. Musy, who is a "Fribourgeois" also made a speech which was received with great enthusiasm. As representative of the Army, Colonel R. de Diesbach spoke.

The picturesque town of Fribourg was gaily bedecked with flags and at night a grand display of fireworks took place.

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Cheap Alpine Trips :— The railways and the post combined are issuing tickets at greatly reduced prices for some of the most interesting circular tours in the Alps. The circular trip from Lucerne via Furka and Grimsel, for instance, with very good connections, costs fr.30.—, whilst the circular trip over the Klausen from Zurich costs only fr. 18.50. Prospectuses of such excursions may be obtained from the Swiss Federal Post Office, Berne and the Swiss National Tourist Office, Zurich.

Special Tickets for the Rhone Glacier :— The most important localities on the lakes of Thonne and Brienz are issuing greatly reduced tickets to the Rhone Glacier. This exceedingly remunerative trip can be made in one day by boat and train to Meiringen, and thence by postal car to the glacier and back. Prospectuses and information are obtainable from the Federal Post Office, Berne, and the Swiss National Tourist Office, Zurich.

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