

Notes and gleanings

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great ascent of Mont Blanc by the Peuteret ridge with Güssfeldt and the beginning of his travels with Sir Edward Davidson. He had now achieved success in the fullest measure. He was sought out by the greatest climbers not only as a guide but as a friend, a counsellor and a collaborator in the elucidation of the problems of Alpine geography and history. He was Captain Farrar's close correspondent during Farrar's tenure of the editorship of the *Alpine Journal*. In his own valley and in Sils Maria he held the position of a seer or prophet. He was not free from misfortune. For many years from 1905 onwards he suffered from a disease of the skin of the face which greatly hampered him, and all the more because it was aggravated by exposure to the sun and snow. But he was perhaps not made for happiness. Inclined to introspection, he was conscious of an unfulfilled destiny. He loved nature, and flowers in particular; he had unusual intellectual gifts to match his courage, resolution and skill. He thought clearly and simply and, as many of these pages prove, had a certain grim humour. But, with all the respect, and indeed love, with which he was surrounded, he remained a lonely man. The book remains to some extent incomplete. Klucker found the task of writing it uncongenial and never accomplished his original plan, according to which it would have contained a detailed account of his climbs with Davidson and Farrar. The editor has supplemented it with a short and sympathetic biography. It makes a worthy memorial of a strong and original personality.

Yes, a strong and original personality! Perhaps it is not strange that we often meet with strong and original personalities in our Swiss valleys. Often some obscure village produces one such outstanding personality. It is, as if the seclusion of the village, the daily contact of the man with Nature, the keen and everlasting fight he wages against the Elements, the close understanding he gradually gets of the natural laws which operate all around him and to the fulfilment of which he knows he owes the crops of all sorts on which he lives and prospers, combined, together with the absence of outside distractions which are forced on dwellers in towns, in making him grow strong, independent, fearless and just, until, among men, he stands like an oak towering above the lesser trees. We town dwellers, albeit we flatter ourselves, perhaps, that we live "in the country" get our senses flattened and dulled, not sharpened, by the everlasting, incessant flow of new sensations we are unable to escape, sensations, moreover, not of a natural kind, but mostly artificially produced and of an artificial nature. Alas and alack!

Following such trains of thought, we become slightly morbid, slightly introspective, and that old Ciceronian query of "quousque tandem," as applied to life, begins to loom largely on our horizon and to fill us with uneasy forebodings, especially if we have indulged in Professor James Jean's articles in the *Sunday Express* and have let ourselves be convinced of the insignificance of our existence, nay, the uselessness of it, although that last conclusion is probably wrong. However, we need an antidote, a refresher, something pure and clean to wipe off all these morbid ideas, to sweeten our mind again, to instil fresh courage, fresh "joie de vivre" into our hearts. And, what could be better for such a purpose than to read, slowly and savouringly—if that is the equivalent of "savourement" which is in my mind—the following article about

Midst the Eternal Snow

Red Tape, February, 1931:

We rise early, for this is to be a day of days, and over our breakfast of coffee, rolls and butter we speculate on the trip before us. The picturesque little village of Grindelwald is just waking up as we wend our way down the narrow main street to the tiny railway station. Soon we have taken our seats in the little Mountain Railway train, and everybody carries the "packed lunch" which is such a feature of these mountain trips. Many of the party, one notices, are careful of these parcels—they have had previous experience and know that their eggs are not always boiled as hard as they might be.

The seats are quickly filled up, and with a short, sharp whistle our train starts off. We are quickly out of the village and immediately start to climb out of the alley up the steep mountain track. Perhaps the most striking feature at first is the wealth of wild flowers growing in the fields on either side of the railway line. Many are familiar, perhaps the one best known to us English being the clover, which in Switzerland grows much larger than in England. Our admiration is called forth most, however, by the little blue gentian—similar in type and growth to our violet, but of a most wonderful, vivid blue.



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We rise higher and higher and nearer and nearer to the snow-covered peaks which are our goal. As we look back the fields are rolling away into the valley below—the cows are beginning to look like small black dots on the green, and the charming Swiss chalets like nothing so much as little dolls' houses. At last we arrive at the Scheidegg, where we change from our Mountain Railway train into the train of the Rack and Pinion Railway. Proceeding on our way, we soon pass a mighty field of ice, and then we enter a tunnel which takes us through the centre of the mountains. It took fourteen years to cut, is a wonderful piece of engineering, and was the work of an Englishman. The going is exceedingly steep, and twice during this part of the journey we are allowed to get out of the train, pass through an archway to the left, and view the snow-covered peaks, which now seem very, very close.

After riding for about half-an-hour we reach our destination, leave the train, and pass straight into the Jungfrau Joch Hotel. This is a really Continental affair—long tables and stools filling a room where we sit and eat our lunch and order coffee, tea, etc. What a cosmopolitan assembly it is, and what a variety of tongues! Along the side of this room is a verandah, and, lunch finished, we proceed to make our way out here as a beginning. But we are immediately driven back into our hotel to buy smoked spectacles. The intense whiteness causes such a glare that it is impossible to view the scenery with the naked eye. We are now conducted through the hotel and emerge on to a long snow ridge. We proceed to make our way, with much slipping and sliding on the part of some members of the party, along this snow path until we reach a flagstaff which marks the limit of distance for walking. As we stand and look round a marvellous vista unfolds. Miles and miles—in fact, everywhere—fields, ridges, and peaks of eternal snow. In some places far below us we can see the clouds scudding by, and we realise that we are 11,000ft. above the level of the sea. And yet—the wonderful warmth! The sun pours down and we find that even among the eternal snows it is possible to feel perfectly comfortable and warm. We feast our eyes on the beauty and the grandeur for some time, and then comes the joy and thrill of a short toboggan. Not far from our one franc, but sufficient to make us feel how joyous a thing must be Winter Sports.

Reluctantly we turn again towards the hotel to entrain and begin our homeward journey. At the Scheidegg we hunt for Alpine roses—lovely red flowers resembling English wild roses which grow on the higher slopes of the mountains. On taking train here for the final lap of the journey we note one casualty. A young girl has evidently fallen in the snow and broken her leg. It seems marvellous that with such a dearth of habitation it should be possible to render her the wonderful first aid that has apparently been given. The leg is swathed in cotton wool, and pieces of an old tub form the splints.

As the train winds slowly down the mountain side the cow bells worn by all Swiss cattle make sweet music for our ears, and as we turn our eyes upwards to the snow-covered hills the setting sun is tingeing them with a warm red gold. We detain tired, but with a great love for the heights which hitherto seemed to us so distant, and which we have to-day been privileged to see so closely.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY. EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

In connection with the scholastic programme the following lectures were given by the students during the last two weeks:—

Miss H. DERRER, Winterthur: "Something about a cheque that doesn't arrive in time."

Mr. J. LUETHY, Wohlen (Argovie) "Newspaper advertising."

Miss A. OBERHOLZER, Horgen: "Shopping in London"

Miss H. STRAHM, Wichtrach: "Esperanto."

Mr. L. THOMASIN, St. Gall: "Police Work."

Mr. E. LANDSRATH, Basle: "Technical Inventions."

Mr. F. NEIDHART, Zurich: "The International position of Switzerland."

On Friday, March 13th, 1931, an instructive and interesting lecture was given at Swiss House by Mr. J. H. Humphreys, J.P., on the "Three Party System and Parliamentary Government."

The lecturer asserted that Parliamentary Government must be maintained in spite of the fact, that lately several countries have departed from it in favour of dictatorships. The English system of voting was described as being very unjust, in that the minorities are not adequately represented. By the introduction of the system of Proportional Representation which the lecturer explained in great detail, the present anomalies and chances of General Elections would be mostly avoided. At the end of the lecture leaflets describing more fully this system of Electoral Reform were distributed among the students. A vote of thanks was then proposed by the Chairman and a magnificent response was received. Altogether a most enlightening lecture well given.

Afterwards the usual students' concert took place in which the following distinguished themselves:—the Misses Kaufmann, Christen and Derrer, with Messieurs Kern, Gmuer, Neidhart and Thomasin—the latter at the piano.

The evening came to a close at 10.45 p.m. with the singing of the National Anthem, and we all felt we had enjoyed ourselves.

On Saturday, March 14th, the students visited the Wallace's Collection.

SWISS Y.M.C.A.

A social entertainment will be given by the above Society on Saturday next, March the 21st, at 5 o'clock, at 15, Upper Bedford Place, Russell Square, W.C. Tea will be served, games and music will be played. This gathering is to be meant as a farewell party to the worthy member Mr. Huber, who is leaving for Switzerland. Friends and Gentlemen students are heartily invited to this party which will be carried out in English.

SCHOLARSHIPS IN DALCROZE EURHYTHMICS.

On another page will be seen an advertisement of the London School of Dalcroze Eurhythmics drawing attention to one full Scholarship and two half Scholarships that are being offered in the Training Department. This is an opportunity to obtain free training or training at half fees for girls with musical gifts, who desire an interesting career which gives scope for creative and imaginative ability. Full particulars may be obtained from the Secretary, The Dalcroze School, 23, Store Street, W.C.1.