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QUAINT ENGADINE CUSTOMS.

The closing in of Winter is celebrated in the Engadine with an ancient festival which is as quaint as it is amusing. This is the traditional "bacharia", when the peasants do their own slaughtering at home. According to an old tradition, the youths of the village are entitled to show their preference for the farmer's daughter by appropriating the animal which is to be slaughtered next day - provided, of course, that they can get hold of it, for the farmer takes every precaution! In spite of barricaded doors and windows, however, many an ox is found missing from its stall on the morning fixed for the slaughter. But even the thief is not safe from the raids of other youths, whose own intention he has anticipated, and then - there are also the girls to be reckoned with! If he is unlucky, both he and the farmer - naturally in their separate ways - spend the morning scouring the village for the missing beast, but it is not often they find it. Hours later it is led in solemn procession, headed by the village band, and escorted by riders and a horde of masquerading youths, back into the village. The ox, itself, is decorated with garlands of flowers and a collar of bells, its escorts are dressed as butchers and washerwomen, and carry smokeblackened pots and pans over their shoulders. To a chorus of shouts and cheers and music, the procession passes through the village, the masqueraders threatening the onlookers with their blackened pans. Particular attention is paid to the indirect cause of the ceremony, and many a pretty face bears a sooty souvenir in token of these attentions. The rightful owner of the ox can only redeem his property by inviting its new guardians to a slap-up spread of sausages, washed down by the wine of the country, and even if it has proved impossible to get away with the ox, there are still sausages to be stolen after it has been slaughtered. However, here again, there is a snag, for it is the girls who make the sausages, and only too often do they fill the first batch with sawdust instead of sausage-meat.

INTERNATIONAL GIRL SCOUTS HOME.

High above Adelboden stands a cottage bearing the simple and unassuming name of "Our Châlet". It is a pretty dwelling, probably one of the prettiest in the Bernese Oberland, built in the fine old style of the traditional Oberland farm-house.

This picturesque house is more than just a Swiss Châlet, it is the International Girl Scouts Home, founded two years ago. The building features three stories of wood and one of concrete. It has wide overhanging eaves to shelter it from the winter snows, and across the front runs a motto in Swiss-German dialect, - "Gott behuete dieses Hus und all die gehen in und us."

Every year "Our Châlet" is the abode of happy girl scouts from all over the WORLD, and there they work, play, and live together under the one roof. In "Our Châlet" threads of friendship are spun which stretch over the whole world and bind together those who believe that in universal friendship lies humanity's highest aim.

It is also of interest that Kandersteg, another beautiful alpine resort in the Bernese Oberland, has the distinction of being the seat of the International Home for Boy Scouts.

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Noteworthy mountain ascents continue to be made by the aged! Fräulein Buser of Thun, an energetic miss of 78 years, made a lengthy tour from the Schynige Platte near Interlaken to the Faulhorn, and to prove his masculine superiority, an 84-year-old German guest of Wengen scaled the Jungfrau and Mönch in company with two guides, starting from Jungfraujoch, 11,340 feet a/s.

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