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## THE SWISS SPORTS.

5th June, 1926, at Herne Hill.

(BY THE SUPER-OFFICIAL REPORTER.)

Such an honour falls to the lot of few Englishmen. I owe it to an association with that little part of Switzerland which is bounded on the North by Shaftesbury Avenue, and on the South by Gerrard Street. What this "home from home" lacks in beauty is fully compensated for in its truly Swiss hospitality, and it was due to the influence of this latter that I became the Official English Observer for *The Swiss Observer*.

Having overnight as much atmosphere of a truly Swiss nature as the limits of time and law at Gerrard Place permit—away next afternoon to the sunny, verdant slopes of Herne Hill to enjoy a day—memorable—mystifying—magnificent.

Memorable for the sheer joy of it—stern-visaged, red-trousered athletes from the Rhône Valley—a bewildering day of blue-eyed beauties—happy parents, happier children, music, laughter, cheers—a wealth of memories in it all.



## The Neuchâtel Mystery.

Mystifying only in the sense that an influential member of the Committee was able to produce a vision of old Neuchâtel through the simple means of pouring a yellow fluid into a glass, shutting the eyes and "sniffing." I must have "sniffed" too hard, because the vision was with me during the pillow fight, with the added beauty of the stars,



thanks to a well-aimed blow from my opponent.

And magnificent from the fine sportsmanship of it all. When I was a boy at school I learned that Valais was conquered by the Romans in 57 B.C., and that following a long series of contests, in which the Burgundians, Franks, Kings of Burgundy and Arels, the Bishops of Sion and the Counts of Savoy prominently figured, it became Swiss and has remained so ever since.

## The "Cercle Valaisan."

The "Cercle Valaisan" reminded me in their champions of these, for me, almost forgotten histories, and somehow seemed to explain them. Well trained and splendidly disciplined, the members of the "Cercle Valaisan" impressed as the outstanding feature of a day of good sport.

Bravo, "Cercle Valaisan"! and hearty congratulations to your men of June 5th. Their tug-o-war effort was amazing. A special pitch, I was in-

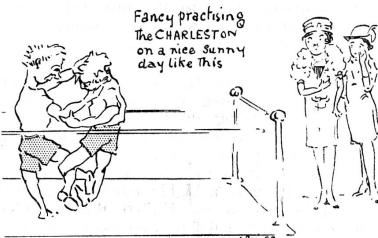


formed, had been brought from the Derby course at Epsom—and it looked like it!

The end man in the opposing team had a most agonised expression. Someone told me afterwards that he was praying for the Derby dog to get mixed up with the legs of the "Swift and Sure" contingent in the red trousers. The "Cercle Valaisan" team took their orders, and as one man took one deep breath, seized the rope, and started to run—backwards! A crowd of fellows hung on to the other end of the rope and seemed to enjoy



their joy ride on the Derby track—so much so that they asked for another one. This the "Cercle Valaisan" team very graciously accorded them—after which they, as one man, bowed—and, again as one man, marched off the ground to the martial strains of "Another little cup won't do us any harm." Single-minded fellows these, men of one idea, rhythmic, ruthless, inevitable—champions!



## The Wrestlers.

The quality of the wrestling bouts deserves the services of a much more able pen than mine, and I was surprised and disappointed that these fine bouts did not attract a bigger audience on the field. I joined a very small party to watch one of the cleanest and most workmanlike bouts I have

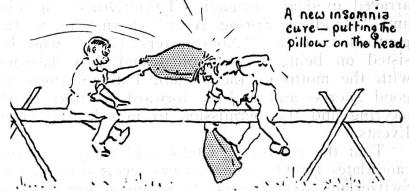


seen for many a day. Two "perfect little dears" who were watching the game with great intent

insisted that the two competitors were practising the—Charleston! To the wrestlers my thanks for a show that in itself would ordinarily provide an interesting afternoon of sport.

## The Pillow Fight.

To those students of psychology who attach importance to facial expression the pillow fight was worth more than a course of Pelmanism and



easily more than any correspondence course. To the very distinguished Honorary President I bow—I bowed several times, as a matter of fact, during the duel with him—*jolly well had to*—but this present one is a serious bow to his jolly good sportsmanship and to his welcome at your meeting. I am having a special pillow made for next year's contest!

## Push Ball.

The push ball event promised great things and provided 'em. After all the fat men on the ground had been exhorted to come forward, the ball was brought to place by a whooping, yelling crowd of young red Indians. The referee abandoned his visions of Neuchâtel, and after a hasty conference with his legal adviser—this I was told afterwards, in case someone should mistake him for the ball in the course of the game—the team were mar-

shalled, a whistle blew, and off they pushed. Great excitement in the first half, because no whistle was blown as the ball crossed the line. A distressed and most beautiful young lady near me exclaimed: "Good Lord, daddy's swallowed the whistle!" This happily proved to be untrue—the lack of ad signal being due to lack of breath through the referee having earlier assisted with the inflation of the ball!

The "Cercle Valaisan" men here showed that they could "push" as well as they could "pull," and in a hotly contested match the victory went to the Union Helvetica, although in my opinion the result was well within the grasp of the City Swiss Club but for an error on the part of one of their team, who mistook one of the more portly members for the ball!

## Handicaps.

The details of the Handicap Events have been dealt with in another place, but I must record the high quality of the contests and the keenness and enthusiasm of entrants and observers all. The Relay Race was splendidly run and provided one of the best thrills of a stirring day.

## One of the most efficient looking members of the Police force



## The Prizes.

A wise Committee, doubtless having in mind the fate which befell a famous racing trophy at Ascot on one occasion, secured the services of one of the most efficient-looking members of the Metropolitan Police Force especially for the purpose of inviting any who so wished to try to escape with all or any of the trophies on which he was keeping an eye—or rather both eyes. Apparently nobody

