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# The Swiss Observer

FOUNDED BY MR. P. F. BOEHRINGER.

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## HOME NEWS

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### FEDERAL.

#### A FORGED ANTI-GERMAN PAMPHLET.

A pamphlet entitled *Die militärische Lage Deutschlands und der Zukunftskrieg*, purporting to be a supplement to the Swiss monthly review for officers, was recently circulated in Germany. It expressed views very unfavourable to Germany, even attacking the rulers of the Reich, and stated that the author's fellow-officers had authorized him to submit his opinion to the public. It caused some sensation in Germany, but in Switzerland it is asserted that it is a complete forgery, and the Federal police are making inquiries.

#### ALPINE ACCIDENTS.

There have been several climbing accidents during the past few days, due mainly to the break in the weather and snowfalls on the Alps above the 9,000ft. level which followed Thursday's thunderstorms. Three Germans, Herren Paul Geipel, Karl Flech, and Bernard Greiss, of Wiesbaden, on Thursday climbed the Matterhorn (14,780ft.) by the Zmutt Ridge. At 10 p.m., while descending along the Hörnli Ridge, one slipped while just above the shoulder (13,925ft.) and dragged down his companions. All three fell about 2,000ft. and were killed. This accident was witnessed by two other Germans, who succeeded in reaching the Solvay Hut, where they remained until some guides arrived to bring them down next day.

Five persons have been missing in the Zermatt region since Tuesday. Three of them are Germans, who left to climb the Weisshorn (14,804ft.) by way of the Schalligrat, and the others are a young Swiss couple, last seen near the top of the Zmutt Ridge of the Matterhorn.

Herr Fritz Grob, of Karlsruhe, fell while gathering edelweiss above Engelberg and was killed.

A skeleton to which still adhered a few remains of clothing was found on Friday in the Zanfleuron glacier below the Diablerets. Some bits of a notebook made it possible to identify the remains as those of M. Schneider, pastor of the Evangelical Church at Lausanne, who fell into a crevasse of the glacier in 1917.

#### IRON ORES IN SWITZERLAND.

The deposits of iron ore in Switzerland suitable for exploitation are estimated to total 52,000,000 tons with a total Fe content of 15,000,000 tons. The majority of the deposits are low grade. The Gonzen ores total 2,000,000 tons; the Simplon magnetites with 55 per cent. Fe about 100,000 tons, and a variety of spars with 14 to 23 per cent. Fe. The Fricktal ores, with 28 per cent. Fe, are said to amount to 50,000,000 tons. Investigations are proceeding on a 3,000-kw. electric furnace for the smelting of Swiss ores, no preliminary sintering being found necessary.

#### TOP OF THE MATTERHORN SOLD FOR FIVE SHILLINGS.

The thousands of Alpinists who for the last 70 years have ascended the Matterhorn (14,780ft.) were under the impression that they had really set their foot on the very top of the mountain conquered by Edward Whymper.

They were wrong. Since 1868 the top of Matterhorn has been in Geneva, where recently a local Alpinist bought it for 5f. 50c. (about 5s.) at a sale.

In 1868 M. F. Thiolay, a Geneva dentist and first president of the Geneva section of the Swiss Alpine Club, made the ascent of the Matterhorn and, as was his custom when reaching the summit of a peak, took off the highest stone slab, about 12in. long and 10in. wide, in the presence of his guides, and obtained from the Commune of Zermatt a certificate that this was the real top of Matterhorn.

He took it home, where it was kept in a collection of Alpine souvenirs.

One of his descendants recently sold these relics, and the "top of Matterhorn," with the certificate, was acquired by a resident of Geneva.

#### OPEN-AIR FESTIVALS IN SWITZERLAND.

Open-air theatrical festivals in Switzerland continue to be very popular. Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* is being performed in the Rugen Park, at Interlaken, every Sunday in August, and on the first two Sundays in September. The actors are all recruited from the population, and it is surprising to see what artistic sense these country-folk possess. The great attraction at Lucerne — apart from the International Music Festival — is the production of an old *Passion Mystery* which is being given almost every week on the parvis of the Hofkirche with the collaboration of native actors and singers. The Passion play dates from the Middle Ages, when it was performed on the Weinplatz and had a European reputation. It has been shortened and slightly modernized, but remains a monument of ancient German literature.

Einsiedeln has this year given up its big theatrical festivals, but has organized in front of the Benedictine Abbey a series of representations of a "Tellspiel," produced according to the tradition of Canton Uri. In Berne, on the Münsterplatz, in front of the old cathedral there, have begun the performances of *Der Ewige Reigen* (*The Eternal Roundabout*), a work of the poet Rilke; it is a new version of the ancient "Totentanz," which is so vividly illustrated by the well-known pictures of the wooden bridge of Lucerne.

Among indoor performances one should mention the First and Second parts of Goethe's *Faust*, in their original version, which are performed at the Goetheanum of Dornach, near Basle, and the celebrated "Tellspiele" of Alt-dorf. The interest of these productions lies in the fact that all the actors and members of the choirs are local people.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT IN SWITZERLAND.

According to official figures just published, there were at the end of July, 49,703 unemployed in Switzerland. (July 1937: 49,244).

#### SWISS MILITARY MISSION TO BELGIAN MANOEUVRES.

Colonel Borel, commander of the 2nd Division, and lieutenant-colonel Corbat, chief-of-section of the General Staff will attend the Belgian manoeuvres in the Ardennes.

#### A PROMINENT "AUSLANDSCHWEIZER."

M. Gerard Kraft-Wegenstein, the famous Swiss "Hotelier" in Florence, has celebrated his 80th birthday anniversary.

As a young man, M. G. Kraft took over the Hotel Italie on the river Arno, later on he added on to it the Grand-Hotel. Having acquired the Hotel de la ville, he pulled same down and erected on the same site the magnificent Hotel Excelsior-Italie.

M. Kraft, who is ably supported by two of his sons, is one of the outstanding personalities in the Hotel profession.

#### JEWS CROSS ALPS TO SWITZERLAND.

The sudden renewed influx of Jewish refugees from Austria is causing grave concern to the Swiss authorities. Many hundreds have arrived during the past few days. A central collective camp has now been established on Swiss territory at Diepoldsau.

As nearly all the refugees arriving by train during recent weeks had been immediately deported back to the Reich by Swiss frontier officials, the refugees now come on foot by remote mountain paths. Recently 79 men who had crossed in this way surrendered to the Swiss police.

Jewish religious and charitable organisations in Zurich have accepted responsibility for the maintenance of the refugees until they can be transferred elsewhere. Most of the newcomers, who are between the ages of 18 and 25, express the desire to emigrate to France or America. They are being housed in hastily installed camps and in homes and pensions.

The German frontier officials who have been aiding and abetting these clandestine "escapes" across the frontier to-day received instructions from Berlin to cease this activity.

Representatives of the Swiss Ministries of Interior and Justice will shortly debate with the responsible cantonal authorities as to the future measures to be taken.

## LOCAL.

### ZURICH.

The late Director Wagner, in Winterthur, has left an amount of 20,000 frs. to the community of Turbenthal, the interest to be used for the sick people.

\* \* \* \*

There are at present 31,000 Foreigners living in the town of Zurich, amongst these are 16,000 Germans and 8,000 Italians.

### BERNE.

A former administrator of the "Sparkasse" in Bassecourt, has been arrested on a charge of embezzlement, the defalcations amount to about 90,000 frs.

\* \* \* \*

M. Peter Bernet-Jossi, a former well-known Alpine guide, has died in Grindelwald at the age of 73.

### LUCERNE.

Ex-King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, and S.M. Moulay Abdellazis, a former Sultan of Morocco, have arrived in Lucerne for a prolonged stay.

## THE HEROIC AGE OF ENGLISH

### ALPINISM.

By MARIE D. HOTTINGER-MACKIE, M.A., ZURICH.

The full history of the English 19th century still remains to be written. While the legend of tedious respectability, of the triumph of middle-class morality has been exploded, and well exploded, not all the vital and unsuspected currents pulsing beneath that misleading exterior have yet been explored. It was G. K. Chesterton who made the illuminating remark that the fascination of the 19th century lay in the contrast between the cheapness and narrowness of its conscious moral formula and the breadth and humanity of its unconscious tradition.

It is in this light that the burst of Alpine mountaineering which occurred full in the middle of the century takes on a peculiar interest. It is the more interesting in that, at a time consciously preaching pure utilitarianism, it represents something inherently useless, something radically inexplicable from any rational standpoint. The splendour of the Elizabethan sea-dogs is not dimmed by the fact that they discovered new lands, later to become English colonies, nor does it abate our awe of Drake's achievement in sailing round the world that he came home laden with stolen god, of which Queen Elizabeth took a generous share. On the contrary, it adds to the age of the great seamen that touch of pure human-humour which reminds us that it was the age of Shakespeare.

But Victoria was not Elizabeth. The Elizabethans were ready not only to accept, but to revel in the full implications of being men. That is what the Victorians could not do, and that is what made R. L. Stevenson say sadly: "Our civilization is a dingy, ungentlemanly business. It drops so much out of a man." Yet dropped is not destroyed, and under the respectable, middle-class appearances of Victorianism, old instincts lived on. The buccaneering spirit of the Elizabethans had gone; men no longer reckoned with a good fight, a good kill and a good haul as part of their programme, but the old exploring spirit was not dead. It lived on in the passion for scientific discovery, in the moral rebelliousness of the great novelists, and most clearly of all in the conquest of the mountains.

In the early part of the century, the mountains themselves were a comparatively recent importation into life and literature. Confronted with the mountains of Scotland in 1773, Dr. Johnson had written: "This uniformity of barrenness can afford very little amusement to the traveller. These journeys are useless labours, which neither impregnate the imagination nor inform the understanding." As for Rousseau, who had changed the scenery of European literature, he accused him of being "carried away by a childish desire for novelty," and went on gravely, "Rousseau, Sir, is a very bad man." Fortunately that robust, magnificent old Englishman was spared the triumphal entry of the mountains into English poetry with Wordsworth, and their spiritual apotheosis in Shelley.

There is one unforgettable moment in the life of the Englishman who travels in Europe — the moment when, for the first time he sees the

mountain tops covered with perpetual snow. Wherever it is — in the Alps or the Pyrenees, he must catch his breath — there they are! It is not a question of mere beauty — that is a matter of fashion. For centuries men saw no beauty in the mountains. It is something far profounder, more primitive, more inexpressible, something which sent Moses to the top of Sinai to speak to God face to face, which set the Greek gods on Olympus, which made the Psalmist cry: "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord," and again "His foundation is in the holy mountains."

This exaltation may be submerged for a time in the shifting forms of civilization, but it is of its nature ineradicable, and modern writers have expressed it in their own way. "I saw between the branches of the trees in front of me," writes Hilaire Belloc in *The Path to Rome*, "a sight that made me stop breathing, just as a great danger at sea, or great surprise in love, or a great deliverance will make a man stop breathing. I saw something I had known in the West as a boy, something I had never seen so grandly discovered as this. In between the branches of the trees was a great promise of unexpected lights beyond ... Here were those magnificent creatures of God, I mean the Alps, which now for the first time I saw from the height of the Jura." That first sight of the snow-mountains is a moment of purely spiritual revelation, something not to be got at by the mind, and something whose full force can only be felt by those whose lives have been passed in the wide horizons of the lowlands.

The Romantic poets had been content to contemplate the mountains. Those who were to conquer them were no poets, though often the most prosaic of their pens is tipped with unconscious poetry as they write. The majority of the Alpine pioneers were ordinary, middle-class Englishmen. It is significant that several of them were clergymen. We must not forget that the 19th century was the age of the struggle between science and religion, when religion, appalled by the attack delivered by its triumphant rival in men's thoughts, made the fatal mistake of deserting its spiritual stronghold and descending into the arid plains of argument.

This is no place to go into the history of Alpinism, nor into the technical detail of the conquest of the High Alps. We may smile for a moment at the early mountaineer who recom-

### SWISS SUMMER.

by

CHARLES GRAVES.

(*Nicholson & Watson Ltd.*, 10/6.)

Through the courtesy of the "Schweizerische Verkehrszentrale" I have received Charles Graves' latest book entitled "Swiss Summer."

Seldom, have I read a travel book with such interest and delight, not only because it deals with a journey to our country, nor because I have made the acquaintance of its author at one of the famous Banquets of the City Swiss Club; but principally for the amusing way in which he describes his trip by motor-car, which he calls Lady Godiva "who was born in Coventry and had nothing to hide."

To all those who have, like the writer, spent motoring holidays in Switzerland, this book will bring back a host of delightful memories; the only regret I can voice is, that Charles Graves, as not written this book earlier, it would have made motoring in Switzerland even more popular than it already is; anyone who desires to make the best of such a trip should carry this book as a companion; but not only those who travel by car will find this book helpful, but any ordinary tourist.

Charles Graves is a very keen observer and he has "summed" up the Swiss not only very accurately but very "mercifully," which is, of course, very flattering. The book contains a large number of very fine photographs which adds greatly to its attractiveness.

The author started the journey through Switzerland from Basle, and of his sojourn in this old town he gives a very good description and history of the world-famed "Drei Koenige Hotel," of the town hall, the minster, the art gallery, etc., etc. Those who have found hitherto the "Baedeker" guide indispensable, will gladly "switch over" to Charles Graves' book, with its witty and very useful information, even night clubs, which to many have been quite unknown are very amusingly mentioned.

After leaving Basle we follow the author to Zurich where he made his headquarters at the "Dolder Grand," he writes, "the view is magnificent, there are the Lake of Zurich, the distant hills and vineyards, the spires of various

mended a light parasol and a bottle of scent for the top of Mont Blanc; at the equipment of another, "some linen, a volume of Shakespeare, slippers, Scotch plaid and umbrella, two thermometers, a clinometer, a compass, a notebook and sketchbook, a bottle of cold tea, a tin box for plants and a geological hammer." We may hear the rustle of crinolines in that souvenir programme of a lecture on the first ascent of Mont Blanc, which advertises the "Mont Blanc Quadrilles, which have produced a perfect *furore* of delight this season." We may smile, too, at the passionate indignation of a "Times" leader writer of the sixties, who accused the climbers of disgusting immorality, since they risked making widows of their wives in pursuit of arrant folly. Yet these things belong to the great, the epic age of Alpinism.

Reading the records of the heroic age, which culminated in the years 1854 to 1865, from the first ascent of the Wetterhorn to the tragedy of the Matterhorn, one cannot fail to be struck by a curious two-sidedness in the whole phenomenon. If we were to take the essence out of all these accounts, making a kind of composite photograph of them, it might read something like this: "We reached the summit at 11.17. We then measured the altitude by boiling water. It was 11,000 feet. We noted the temperature, and the geological formation, taking specimens. We then sat down to enjoy the view. Another peak conquered! There, between heaven and earth, utterly severed from our fellow-men, a strange feeling of awe overcame us. Truly God dwelleth upon the mountain-tops." This odd mingling of the severely practical and purely spiritual has met us before in more vital form, in Drake, pirate, gentleman and unparalleled explorer. It may be a fundamental element of the English mind: it belongs to all great adventure. Certain it is that though the English Alpinists satisfied their Victorian consciences in some mysterious way with their thermometers, their geological hammers and their boiling water, it was not for that that they performed great feats of endurance, and risked their lives on virgin summits. No records of temperature can explain the obsession which drew them year after year to these dangers, an obsession men have felt for the desert or the sea, for the tropical jungle or the desolate Poles.

Many communed with themselves as to what they sought. Some, the more simple-minded, called it frankly God. Others called it the ecstasy of achievement. Dodson analyses it: "In the Alpine world, innate or acquired ideas

churches, the twin towers and the thousands of red-tiled roofs."

He gives a very vivid description of the "Bahnhofstrasse" with its famous Restaurants, such as Huguenot, etc., its palatial Bank buildings; we visit with him the Lindt Chocolate Factory at Kilchberg and learn of the latest invention in the art of making chocolate.

A trip to the "Schloss" Rapperswil, which is actually a part of Poland, makes interesting reading, and so does an excursion to Baden, once the diplomatic capital of Switzerland, with its famous radio — active salt springs containing a high percentage of sulphate of hydrogen.

We next follow him to Coire and Klosters via Wallenstadt and Ragaz. At Ragaz we visit together some of the famous establishments where people from all the corners of the world gather to seek health from the calcium sulphate springs.

On reaching Coire, we are taken around the town, which was in the times of the Romans a place of great importance.

Innumerable passes we cross with "Lady Godiva," such as the Flüela, Bernina, Albula, San Bernardino, Splügen, St. Gotthard, Brünig, Furka, Grimsel, etc., which are vividly described in their unforgettable splendour.

We stay with the author in towns like Locarno, Lugano, Lucerne, Interlaken, Fribourg, Berne, Lausanne, Montreux, Geneva, and where we learn not only a great deal of history, customs of the people but of the fine and ancient buildings which adorn these towns.

Of the Swiss capital, Berne, Charles Graves writes in enthusiastic terms. He says: "Berne is the prettiest capital I have ever visited, and I know most of them."

The trip through Switzerland, which forms the main part of the book, took the author altogether 2,743 miles, and for one, as a Swiss, could not wish for a better or more interesting guide to show me the wonders of this heaven blessed country.

I have read this book with the greatest delight and I heartily recommend it to my readers, and I feel sure, they will enjoy every page of it, it is not only a useful, but also a very welcome addition to every library, as small as same may be.

of space and time are totally revolutionised." But men can conquer and achieve in other, more strictly useful ways. What these men sought was a specific experience — the peculiar spiritual release which comes of setting foot where no man has ever trod, and being stripped, by physical necessity, of all "chaff of custom."

It is easy to understand that it should just be England which should succumb to such a passion, and particularly the England of the middle 19th century, in the full grip of a squalid industrialism. We must not forget for how many centuries England was literally the end of the world, her islands Ultima Thule. Once England had but to look West to feel the thrill of the unknown. Here in the Alps Englishmen found it again, felt again in their blood that longing they will perhaps never lose — that longing to touch again those physical confines of the world on which they once lived. They state it oddly enough at times, for no tall know what they are about. Perhaps Sir Claud Schuster has best grasped the inherent mystery of it all: "It all sounds aimless. I cannot tell what has made of those prosaic happenings an adventure of surpassing value. Browning's musician claimed for his are that:

Here was the finger of God, a flash of the will that can,

But I know not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man,

That out of three sounds he frame, not a fourth sound, but a star.

So it is with us. The glorious heat of noon-day, the majesty of the night, the wide vision, the suggestion of peril, the rhythmic movement of the body, the fellowship, the toil, the attainment — all these together make some new and precious thing which lives in us and with us till thought and feeling die."

Let us make no mistake — the conquest of the Alps was a spiritual far more than a physical adventure, the quest of a vision by men who saw civilization slowly squeezing vision out of life, and it is to the everlasting glory of Switzerland that she never grudged the English Alpinist their achievement, that she rejoiced in it with them, and that she generously lent her very soil for the spiritual quest of another race, a band of strangers who came from their lowlands to seek their vision on the mountains.

### SCHWYZERDUETSCH.

Mit Schwyzerdütsch reist me fryli  
Nit grisli wyt, uf dere Wält,  
Doch isch's es heilige Füerli,  
D'starch Band, das üs zäme hält.  
  
Wuchtig tönts', wie we d'Lawine,  
J. de Bärge rissst und chracht,  
Oder wie es grosses Gwitter  
Ringsum allz'erschüttete macht.  
  
De wieder klingt's so heimelig  
Mit liebvol, tiefem G'fühl,  
E Gab vom bläue Himmel  
Sunnig Matte, Waldesgruen.  
  
Es chunt vo stille Seen  
Tusig Blüemeli Farbetön,  
Es wachst us usem Bode  
So lang mer zäme stöhn.

H.E.

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