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Autor: Lunn, Arnold
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"MOUNTAIN JUBILEE"

By ARNOLD LUNN.

Since reviewing a book may be tantamount to condemning or commending it to the prospective reader, it is not easy to know what to say to our compatriots in the present case. The book is so sincerely written that the reader cannot avoid sharing to the full the author's "Heimweh" and an attack of the blues is inevitable for any Swiss abroad who reads "Mountain Jubilee."

Those who do not mind paying such a price will be well rewarded. Mr. Lunn recreates for us the very air of the hills at home, he makes the rivers, rocks and glaciers talk and come to life and is an able master in interpreting their meaning to all who wish to see and hear.

The book is neither a story nor a guide book, nor a geographical, historical or philosophical treatise. It is all of these and more. It gives us new sidelights on the developments which brought human beings to an appreciation of the Alpine world. Its appeal is documented by nearly two dozen full page photographs which illustrate the book. Most of the pictures are the work of well-known Swiss, and names like Albert Steiner, Pedretti and Schneider are in themselves a guarantee of first-rate work.

A chapter is devoted to an analysis of Edward Whymper and his important epoch in the history of mountaineering, while others give us the history of skiing and downhill-racing. Ski-racing naturally plays a big part in the book; but that august body of star performers who dash across the Alps like demigods are here revealed as human beings who like all others have their joys and sorrows, their fears and triumphs. One is, however, grateful to the author for his inclusion of C. J. Lambert's plea for a return to the true art of enjoying the sport, in which "a good eye for country, a graceful kick turn and a cast-iron derriere" are all the equipment a skier needs.

Those who are so minded will derive much pleasure from the author's ever-present philosophical digressions. They may not agree with such statements as "the secret of happiness in this world is to become engrossed in something which really doesn't matter," but the book is rich in thoughts and reflections which show the author to be a man who values universals. His pen possesses in no small degree the gift to fascinate the reader and to subjugate him to the charm and cadence of its pictures. One enjoys such passages as this:

"All the high company of heavenly peaks were there to welcome the exile returning to his mountain home. Finsteraarhorn and Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc. And there was a softness somewhere behind Paradiso which could only be Italy, and in the north a Germany which had not lost her soul. A blue mist resolved itself into the waters of Lake Lemman and I remembered a corner on the railway near Lausanne, where the gleam of Combin snows suddenly shows beyond the embattled turrets of the Dent du Midi, and I knew that when next I took the train from Vevey to Lausanne I should be waiting at the windows to salute, beyond the liquid distances of golden air, the beloved enemy which holds something of my past life in his possession, for the mountain which one has climbed is a bank in which one deposits the currency of memories which no inflation can diminish nor destroy.

It was one of those perfect days when the vast circumference of earth marches with a sky whose distances are unveiled even by the silver dust of unco-ordinated mist. The ground swell of the Jura melted into trembling margins of translucent and infinite blue. There is a timeless quality in such views which helps me to understand something which otherwise I could never hope to comprehend, the possibility of eternal happiness in a timeless and unchanging state. But the serene loveliness of this foretaste and preparation for the beatific vision would have meant far less to me had it not been for the foil of earlier memories, the passion and tumult of the angry dawn from the Meiten ridge, and the ordeal of the storm-tormented rocks."

Other chapters deal with the international aspect of mountain climbing and winter sport and many will be happy to observe how, in those fields, our country holds a place of respect amongst the council of the great, thanks not only to the geographical configuration of the land, but also to the stamina and fair-mindedness inherent in her people. Arnold Lunn could not have paid a greater tribute to his foster country than by telling us of the stout-heartedness of the Swiss Colony in Chile and in particular of his days spent with Elsa and Otto Pfenniger of Santiago.

There are few of us who, like the author, do not feel within their hearts the longing for the day when they will see once more — "beyond the blue dominion of the lake and beyond the green surge of sentinel hills, uncrested with snow, the power and glory of the immutable and undiminished heights."

E.M.

"Mountain Jubilee" (E. & S. 15/-).

UNIONE TICINESE THÉ DANSANT,
at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1,
on Sunday, October 31st, 1943.

One of the popular slogans at the present moment is, "Let the people sing!", and why not? Even the most optimistic people, at one time or other, need a little cheering up, it does one good to forget, if only for a few fleeting moments, the war which so deeply affects our daily life.

The Unione Ticinese, went one step further, they decided that an equally good slogan is, "Let the people dance!", and I say again, why not?, it is as good a tonic as singing. —

About 350 members and friends attended the "Thé Dansant" at the Dorchester Hotel, and a very jolly affair it was.

It is more than four years ago since I had the pleasure to attend a social function of our Ticinese, and when the Editor of the Swiss Observer, who unfortunately is indisposed at the moment, asked me to take his place, I willingly consented. I did so with the knowledge that I should not only spend a few enjoyable hours, but that I would again meet many old friends, who, during my former editorship of this paper, always extended to me their unstinted help and useful collaboration.

Our compatriots from the sunny South have the happy knack of making one feel at home; they are a united family deeply imbued with a sincere love for their beautiful canton and their country.

Some time ago, they decided to form a Ladies section, under the Presidency of that grand old Lady,