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SWISS SPOTLIGHT.

By PIERRE BÉGUIN.

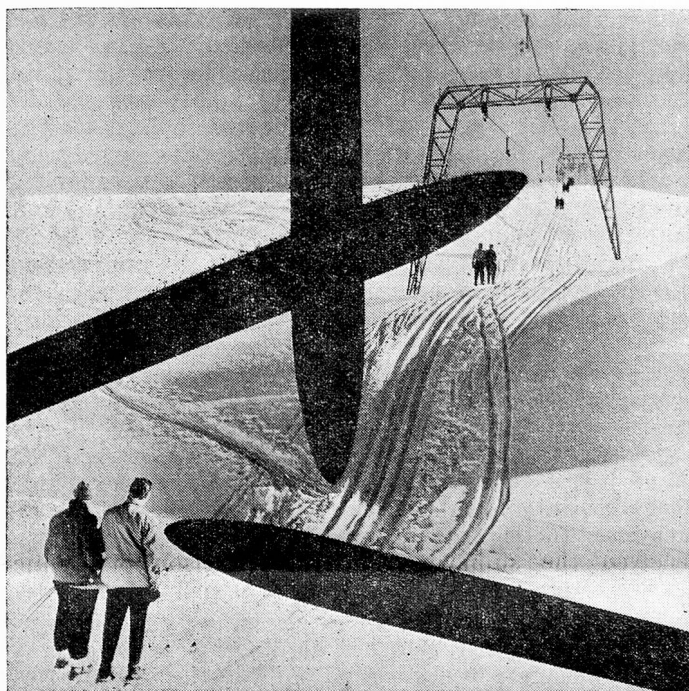
In spite of the fact that Switzerland is a country which is very highly developed technically, she, nevertheless, maintains a very conservative spirit, in many respects. Thus, the Swiss have preserved the ancient visage of their cities, preferring the preservation of their ancient monuments, to the exigencies of modern life and traffic. Moreover, they have often opposed the putting up of technical constructions, such as hydro-electric dams or telfers, which would destroy the harmony of the landscape.

It is a well-known fact that, for some years past, the requirements of our economy demand the exploitation of all our hydraulic resources, for these constitute the sole riches that our country possesses in natural power. Nevertheless, an attempt must be made to conciliate, in so far as is possible this exigency with the preservation of the particular characteristics of certain parts of this country. And, this is something which has been neglected by certain engineers who were nothing else but engineers, and by certain investors who were nothing else but investors. They drew up plans for dams, the construction of which would have meant the immersion of entire valleys and the disappearance of several villages. Upon which, the inhabitants of these valleys and villages revolted and refused the material advantages offered them, not wishing to abandon their native soil, in spite of the fact that their life there was extremely hard. They received the support of a large portion of public opinion. The technicians were obliged to look for other solutions. They were forced to establish their dams at higher altitudes, in regions which were, so to speak, uninhabited. And, what was still better, they were induced to dissimulate their work by rendering it artistic, right in the heart of the mountains. In this way, it has proved possible to conciliate the demands of technique with the necessity for respecting the beauty of our landscape.

Nature, however, is threatened by another danger. This is not provoked by the technicians but, paradoxically, by lovers of nature. A large part of the natural beauties of our country is constituted by our Alpine flora. All those who have wandered through our mountains know the edelweiss, the columbine, the Turk's cap, the gentians and other flowers. The danger exists that these flowers will disappear very soon from the Alpine meadows. Their destroyers are not technicians who sacrifice everything to economic requirements, nor natural parasites, nor vandals, ignorant of beauty. They are people, who love flowers. They gather them, they tear them out, they keep them in their rooms, or they send them to their families, who will not be able to enjoy them for long, as in a few days they will be faded. Gathered or cut in such large quantities, these flowers cannot go on reproducing. That is why they now only grow in a few rare places.

An appeal has just been launched against the massive destruction of these flowers by the Basle writer Stickelberger and the scientist August Piccard, the Man of the stratosphere and of submarine dives. Thus, it will be seen that the fact of being a great physicist does not exclude sensibility in regard to the beauty of flowers. It is true that nowadays, when

there are so many great international and human problems, it may appear to be somewhat disproportionate for men of importance to launch an eloquent appeal in favour of respect being shown to certain rare species of our Alpine flowers. But, all things are connected with each other, and here, we must perceive a form of respect for life, wherever it may be found.



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Switzerland

AN APPEAL.

The Swiss Benevolent Society and the Swiss Churches in London appeal once again to all their compatriots for contributions in kind or in cash in order to provide a little extra cheer at Christmas for our fellow-citizens in need. Articles of clothing, including clean old garments (even if repaired) ready for wear, as well as household goods and furniture will be very much appreciated and gratefully received.

Kindly send parcels, preferably not later than 15th November, to Swiss Benevolent Society, 31 Conway Street, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1, and cash remittances to any one of the following addresses:—

Swiss Benevolent Society, 31 Conway Street, London, W.1; Rev. C. Reverdin, 7 Park View Road, Finchley, London, N.3; Frl. Pfr. D. Voegelin, c/o Swiss Hostel for Girls, 9 Belsize Grove, London, N.W.3; Rev. A. Lanfranchi, St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, London, S.W.1.



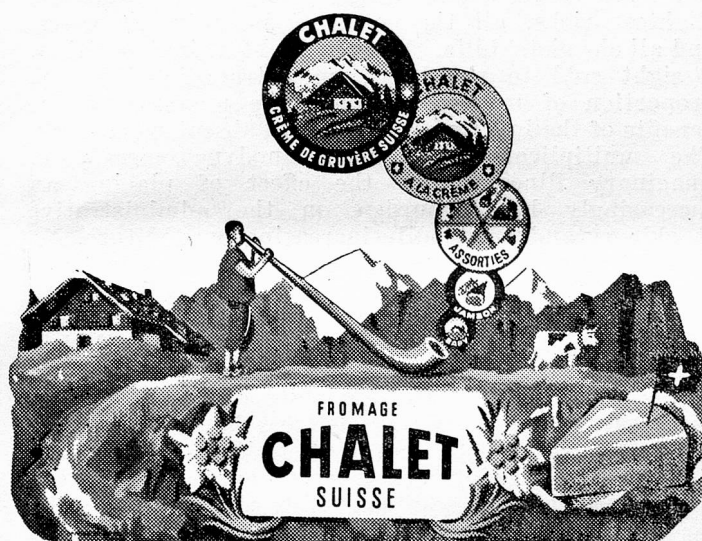
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