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Odds and Ends

Christmas is always a hopeful time for Swiss artists. True, they are inspired by idealism, not commercialism, but since the season is one of giving, there is always the chance of their work being bought as presents! Basle's Christmas arts exhibition goes on until 7th February and provides a good opportunity of buying an acceptable gift, thus making a local artist, as well as the recipient, happy. Eastern Swiss artists' work will be on view in St. Gall until 7th January and that of Thun and Bernese Oberland artists until 14th January in Thun. The extensive exhibition staged by Zurich artists in the local Helmhaus and Stadthaus closes at the end of December. The graphic art stand in the Helmhaus, particularly, is always an un-failing success. Other artistic occasions from among a wide variety are the "19th Century Popular Art" exhibition at the Swiss Folklore Museum, Basle; the documentary exhibition, "Protection and Preservation of Historic Buildings", at St. Gall; "Modern Dutch Graphic Art" in the Graphic Art Collection Department of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich; and "Graphic Art and Books by George Roualt" at Soleure.

* * *

When little Timmie wanted to go to the cinema, he asked his older brother to get permission from their mother. "Ask her yourself," said the brother, "she's your mother just as much as she's mine."

"Yeah," replied Timmie, "but you've known her longer."

* * *

Things are rather quiet in the ski racing sector as the competition season proper does not begin until the New Year. The sunny observation terrace of the Rigi will be the scene on 17th December of a biathlon which consists of a langlauf and four shooting tests, actually Swedish or Finnish in origin. The biathlon is to replace the modern pentathlon at the Innsbruck Winter Olympic Games.

This winter, too, St. Moritz will open the season with international ski-jumping on the famous Olympiaschanze. On the 26th a number of world championship entrants will be going through their paces on the Bakken, scene of so many exciting contests in the past, giving spectators an idea of the keen competition to be expected in the Polish winter sports town of Zakopane.

On the day after the St. Moritz event the intrepid ski-jumpers will be meeting at Davos to show their skill on the Bolgen.

"How do you know you are Napoleon?" the hospital attendant asked.

"God himself told me", the patient answered. Said a voice from the next bed, "I did not."

* * *

A concert by the Société de Chant Sacré on 23rd December will enrich the Christmas period in Geneva. The Berne Minster was a fitting setting for Christmas oratorios, and there will also be Bach concerts in Bienne. Christmas Eve brings a concert in Lausanne Cathedral, and Winterthur's Christmas concert, in the Stadtkirche, comes relatively early, on 17th December. The Beromünster Radio Orchestra, conducted by J. M. Auberson, gave a concert in the Tonhalle, Zurich on 13th December, when the soloist was Gèza Hegyi (piano).

* * *

After 25 year's service, the proofreader had trouble with his eyesight, so he retired and opened a restaurant. "Look here," yelled a customer, "there are needles in my soup."

"Typographical error," said the proprietor, "should have been noodles."

* * *

"I have closed all books, one only remains open for all eyes to see — the Book of Nature." These words were written more than two centuries ago by the man who was a discoverer and ardent admirer of Swiss scenic beauty and rustic life and may therefore be described as a fore-runner of tourist promotion — the poet, educator and philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, of Geneva (1712–1778). His famous appeal to return to the bosom of Nature is to be renewed in a modern version in 1962 on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Rousseau's birth. Cultural and tourist circles in Switzerland intend to add a 20th-century touch to the 18th-century cry, "Back to Nature", by urging the public also to return to "travel culture". "Don't race, relax!" will be the password. The nation-wide programme of the Rousseau Year 1962 provides for special events in all parts of Switzerland, including the revival of 18th-century-style folk-festivals. One of the focal points of folklore and other activities will be, between June and September, St. Peter's Island in the lake of Bienne, which is one of the scenic jewels discovered by Rousseau. Several Swiss cities, including Geneva, Neuchâtel, Montreux, Berne, Lucerne and Zurich, are preparing special exhibitions, festival performances and concert series in the honour of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

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