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"CHALANDA MARZ" IN THE GRISONS

An interesting account of the First of March festivities in the Grisons appeared in the "St. Moritz Post" on 10th March 1888, written by the late Mr. Bavier: "Chalanda Marz" is the children's greatest fête, and in every village, no matter how small, the "Chalanda Marz" is celebrated with as much splendour as possible. For hundreds of years it has been the custom for heads of families to contribute a certain sum which is put at the disposal of the schoolmaster, and with it he procures a supply of cream, cakes, sweets and other things dear to the youthful palate. On 1st March (*Chaland* = beginning), the principal scholars of the village school go about the streets, ringing big cow-bells, cracking whips and singing the "Chalanda" song. During their procession through the village, the youngsters collect chestnuts or any other dainties offered by the listeners to their music, and on the Sunday following, there treasures are placed on a gorgeous sort of *buffet*, and all the village children, even the babies, are invited to help themselves. After supper, a dance helps to further enliven matters and to make the little folk look forward impatiently to next year's "Chalanda Marz".

That was written 80 years ago, but the "Chalanda" is still celebrated . . . *beginning of March, beginning of April, bring forth the cows from their stables, for the grass is growing, and the snow is going . . .*

"Chalanda Marz, Chaland' Avrigl!

Laschè las vachas our d'ovigl!

Las vachas vaun culs vdels,

Las nuorsas culs agnells,

Las chevrass culs uzöls,

E las giallinas faun ils övs.

La naïv smartschescha

E l'erva crescha.

Scha'ns dais qualchosa,

Schi Dieu's benedescha,

E scha nun's dais ünguotta,

Schi'l luf as sbluotta!"

("St. Moritz Courier".)

PICK POCKETING

A cautionary tale

by

T. W. V. HENSHALL

This has been sent to us by our old friend Mr. A. Bleiker who, with his wife, now spends his winters in sunny Spain whence he sends greetings to his friends. He told us that he had his pocket picked at Malaga, in a shop queue a few days before Christmas. About £10 plus an even more valuable crocodile wallet. He said it was very cleverly done, and the experience, talks with the police, etc., was worth quite something. Subsequently, a friend of his in Wiltshire sent him the following verse:

To Malaga, fair City of the South
Came Peter, versed in Spanish word of mouth,
On shopping bent, equipped with Pesetas
Some purchases to make: it was near Christmas. —
Much travelled he, in countries east and west,
Bold Spaniard who would him attempt to best.
But yet, indeed, some thief his pocket tried,
We know not which, hip pocket or inside
Or yet by zip or button was secure.
At all events, proud Peter proved the lure.
This clever thief succeeds by skill and cunning
Crib cracked, and then no doubt went running

The richer by a modest sum
Of Pesetas and cheques — the bum!
And Peter utters in astonishment and rage
Words we cannot use upon this page,
And wonders if, by subtle ways when sleeping
He can reduce poor Ada's housekeeping.
So forlorn to Fuengirola
(Cointreau now is Cocoa Cola)
Reception at Los Hitos? Now we draw the veil
And mercifully end this sorry tale.
From Malaga, fair City of the South
Now dust and ashes in the mouth.

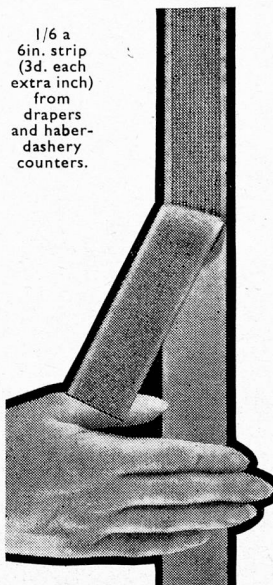
INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF SHEEP IN SWITZERLAND

According to the last annual report of the Swiss Sheep-Breeding Federation, the number of sheep in Switzerland last year topped the quarter of a million mark, a figure that has not been exceeded for over 70 years. In 1886, there were 477,000 sheep in Switzerland, this number falling as low as 184,754 in 1931. Since then the number of sheep has again increased and last year reached 266,754, owned by slightly over 22,000 farmers. This increase is not due however to an improvement in sheep-breeding methods in Switzerland but rather to the growing tendency to put sheep out to graze on mountain pastures that are too steep for mechanised haymaking and would otherwise remain unproductive. Swiss sheep last year produced well over a million lb. of wool.

[O.S.E.C.]



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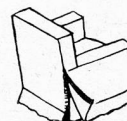
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