

Saint Nicholas

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To all our Readers and Advertisers

A Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

THE ADVISORY COUNCIL AND THE EDITOR

This day to man came pledge of perfect peace,
This day to man came love and unity,
This day man's grief began for the surcease,
This day did man receive a remedy,
For each offence and every deadly sin
With guilty heart that once he wandered in.

*Francis Kinwelmershe, 1550
On Christmas Day.*

Viel Glück zum neuen Jahr! Lassen Sie uns dieses
zubringen, wie wir die vorigen geendet haben, mit wechsel-
seitiger Teilnahme an dem, was wir lieben und treiben.
Wenn sich die Gleichgesinnten nicht erfassen, was soll aus
der Gesellschaft und der Geselligkeit werden?

Goethe an Schiller 1795.

SAINT NICHOLAS

At the beginning of December, the coming of Saint Nicholas was celebrated in various parts of Switzerland where his arrival is ever an occasion for either solemn or phantasmal processions. Weggis and Küsnacht on the Lake of Lucerne set the pace with the "Saint Nicholas Chase" on 4th December. The next day, the patron saint of children was acclaimed in Fribourg and on 6th December which actually is Saint Nicholas day, he was fêted at Estavayer-le-Lac and Ascona, and this also was the date for Frauenfeld's "Nicholas Fair". In Zurich, the boys dressed in long white gowns and wearing high, ornamented hats illuminated from within paraded through less lighted sections of town. — Special mention should be made of the "Star Singers" who on the evening of 6th December filled the quaint streets of Rapperswil with the ancient melodies of familiar carols. — A similar custom is observed every year in Lucerne on 20th December, while Rheinfelden upholds the old custom of "Singing at the fountains" on 24th and 31st December. — A tradition which has retained much of its original, pagan nature, known as "Pangronds" is revived on 26th December at Scuol (Engadine) where subsequently the old year is joyfully dismissed with a sleigh ride on 31st December.

[S.N.T.O.]

1965 — THE YEAR OF THE ALPS

Next year has been declared "The Year of the Alps" for two reasons. It will be just one hundred years since the first English guests spent the winter in Switzerland, and it will also mark the centennial of the first successful climbing of the Matterhorn. It was in 1865 that Johannes Badrutt, a St. Moritz hotelier, made a wager with several summer guests that the winter in St. Moritz was even more brilliantly sunny than the summer season. The Britons spent three months at Badrutt's hotel, free of charge — and thus Switzerland got its start as a winter holiday land. — As to the Matterhorn, the mighty mountain withstood all attempts to conquer it for ten long years, until the Englishman Edward Whymper succeeded in scaling its heights on 13th July 1865. Among other things, the celebrations in 1965 will commemorate important works of literature which have been written about the Swiss Alps by such authors as Albrecht von Haller, Horace Benedict de Saussure, Ruskin and Melville. The early pioneers of mountaineering will be called to mind, as well as the great

mountain-guides of past and present. Stress will also be placed upon the Alpine climate, which is so beneficial to body and spirit alike. Its effectiveness stems in part from the constant alternation between warmth and cold. Unlike that of the southern regions, the Alpine air acts as a tonic which stimulates people to movement, to taking long hikes, and thus leads to healthful fatigue and rejuvenation.

[S.N.T.O.]

SWISS PANORAMA

Hans Kasser and "The Swiss National Tourist Office" have jointly edited a picture book of Switzerland that has been hailed a classic: "Swiss Panorama" (published by Artemis Verlag in Zurich). Past and present of one of the most beautiful highlands of the world are captured within 40 pages of full colour (size $9\frac{1}{2}" \times 12\frac{1}{2}" = 24.5 \times 31.2$ cm.), 128 pages of black and white illustrations with captions in English, French, Italian, German and supported by 80 pages text in the four Swiss national languages. The preface by Werner Kämpfen, manager of the "Swiss National Tourist Office" in Zurich, and two essays "Switzerland — Host to the World" and "How Switzerland is Really Governed" by Gottlieb Heinrich Heer and George Soloveytschik are in English. Lavishly produced, handsomely illustrated and highly informative, "Swiss Panorama" is offered as a special Christmas bargain to readers of the "Swiss Observer" for 5 guineas (instead of £6). Please place your order now with Dr. Erik Wiget,

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NEW HIGHWAY THROUGH A LONELY VALLEY IN THE TESSIN

A part of the narrow, dusty, unpaved road which connects the Verzasca Valley with the town of Gordola near Locarno, will be flooded next year by the waters of a new reservoir. In anticipation, construction was begun back in 1962 on a nearly 20-foot wide asphalt highway somewhat above the old road. Recently, 4.2 miles of the new highway were opened to traffic. Many breathtaking bridges and several tunnels — the longest of which is more than 1,600 feet in length — make of this short stretch of highway an exciting and varied approach to a romantic and still nearly untouched Ticino valley.

S.N.T.O.