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SKI-ING IN SWITZERLAND

No kind of sport has of late years made such strides in popularity or exercised such fascination over its votaries as Winter sports in general and Ski-ing in particular. Certainly the sports of earlier days have not lost their attraction. Skating, sleighing, ice-hockey and other old favorites must have their rinks and their runs provided at winter sports centres. Yet the glory of Ski-ing is its independence; it is not confined to any special place, the skier is free to roam wherever the state of the snow renders it possible. Quitting the trodden path, he will seek the mountain top in midwinter. He will enjoy the winter forests in all their full grandeur. Then again, there are competitions of many kinds open to the skilled skier. There is the long distance course for teams and individuals, the run down and «slalom», and most thrilling of all the ski-jumping.

One great advantage is that the principles of the sport are quickly acquired, and that it appeals to the young and to those of maturer age alike. No wonder it has become a truly national sport in Scandinavia just as much as in Switzerland. Its advantages from a health point of view are, perhaps, too obvious to need comment. Every part of the body is exercised. The exertion of the climb is followed by the steady posture, of the run down. The turns and jumps call for skill. The constant variation of the surface of the snow needs perpetual vigilance. And what a thrill of joy the skier feels as he cuts through the unruffled surface of that vast stretch of snow and notes the tones of white and blue in the lights and of brown deepening into black in the shadows!

Of course a certain technical skill is necessary before going far afield. The frequent fall and struggle up again is very fatiguing. Steady practice is the main thing. Begin on the lesser gradients, and proceed systematically. A determination to master the technique at the beginning is the only way to avoid accidents and disappointment later on. A suitable equipment is most important. Beware of a shoe that may slip! Beware, too, of frost-bites where the temperature varies so much in the sun and the shade. Wear waterproof gloves without fingers.

The centres of winter sport are usually over 3000 feet above the sea, and it must not be forgotten that at such heights all physical exertion is at first more laborious than at the usual level. There is less oxygen

in the air, and it is wise to stick to the practice slope for a few days till the body has adjusted itself, and then the longer excursions will prove less strenuous. In this way the sportsman goes home recuperated and fit, while imprudence may result in a regular break down. Similarly, owing to the power of the sun's rays, undue haste to get the fashionable tan may only end in serious burns. Older men, who have not been used to winter sport, must use special precautions, for their heart may not stand the strain of such unwonted exertion as ski-ing involves.

Besides attending to these precautions, it is absolutely necessary, before attempting any high tour, to obtain locally information as to the danger of avalanches, especially after fresh snow. Then the man sound in wind and limb can ski to his heart's content. It is well on long tours to take a light lunch and have the principal meal when the day's work is done. In these days no one dreams of drinking any alcohol when on a tramp. Something warm, such as weak tea with sugar and a squeeze of lemon, is a marvellous cure for an early stage of fatigue. A pipe or cigarette completes the bliss of that hour on the mountain peak. If you are going to tackle a serious climb, go to bed early the night before with a clear head.

Changes of weather are rapid at these heights. The day that opens in brilliant sunshine may end in a snowstorm! Then the fate of the whole party will hang on the power of endurance of its weakest member. Hence on big tours secure a good guide familiar with the locality; and as far as possible let the party be all of like stamina, and none either too young or too old.

In what I have written I have tried to point out the precautions which must be attended to by all who propose to take up ski-ing. Any misadventure resulting from neglect of the right lines is due entirely to the sportsman himself and not to the sport. Let a man clearly grasp the conditions of his winter sport and act accordingly, and he will tap a source of pure delight, a wellspring of youth which will send him back to his work full of health and capacity. Few sports so satisfy both the body and the mind. So here is a welcome to all who have come to Switzerland this winter to ski.

Prof. Dr. W. Knoll.

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Dal 15 novembre 1930 al 29 marzo 1931 le stazioni della maggior parte delle imprese svizzere di trasporto emettono speciali biglietti a destinazione di 200 stazioni sportive invernali. Il prezzo di questi biglietti, autorizzanti anche al ritorno, è quello della corsa semplice. Rappresenta perciò una riduzione del 37,5 % sul prezzo normale d'andata e ritorno. I biglietti sportivi sono in

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