

Where winter wins

Autor(en): **Thorn, Hilda M.**

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WHERE WINTER WINS

For all Englishers, or rather one should say, all Britishers, which includes the Scotch who are such lovers of travel, Switzerland is the country where Winter Wins; wins over the uncertainties and disappointments of the British climate.

There is perhaps no greater ideal for very many inhabitants of Great Britain than to imagine themselves able to leave their own rainy and often foggy shores for Helvetia's bright and sunny snowy lands, the country where snowfields are turned into play grounds, and where the great Outdoors is from dawn to dusk an invigorating sporting life of fun and freedom.

In the case of Switzerland it is wonderful to know that that ideal may be realised, and can be put into practice; for each year, this country, the Mecca of winter sports, is becoming more and more known as its praises become more loudly sung.

There are many people who must long for the snowy slopes, the dazzling sunshine, the crystal air, when they are confined in towns and cities that are often enveloped in mist and fog; but thankfully there are more than a few who can take Opportunity, and bidding farewell to dismal, dark days, betake themselves straight to Switzerland, to indulge in sports either as amateurs or professionals.

Within Switzerland itself, there is an unrivalled selection of places to visit, for the whole country from end to end above a height of some 2000 feet

is at one's command, waiting to beam sunshine upon us. It is not a question of rushing to any sunny, but restricted area, for in winter, north, south, east and west, the glorious sun shines long and warmly. The welcome, glistening snow has fallen thickly: superb ski fields have prepared themselves only by the aid of Nature for delightful excursions and tours and 'jumps': heavy frosts do the rest and make perfect conditions. Ice rinks are hard and well kept, and everywhere one is certain of splendid sports and to meet a throng of other open-air enthusiasts in the merry-making and healthy pastime of winter sports.

Switzerland, although one of the most famous winter sports countries of the world, and perhaps the most popular, never takes for granted its manifold assets, but every year it shows a new interest in its preparation for the expected sports visitors. It endeavours and succeeds in continuing and extending all branches of its sporting activities, for railways, hoteliers, and committees for indoor and outdoor entertainments, all have the happy welfare of the tourist at heart: all unite in common aim to make an already unsurpassably beautiful country an equally incomparable centre for the many delights and distractions that the name Winter Sports signifies.

From December to March Switzerland's superb slopes and heights lie in the sunny, bracing silent snows: mile upon mile of untrodden white fairyland and many ice rinks are waiting for the adventurous ski-iers, skaters, tobogganers, bob-sleighers, curlers and ice-hockey players. From everyland come the joyous, expectant visitors, and from the valleys to the higher regions come the Swiss themselves, for above all things the natives of this exhilarating country appreciate their own beauties, and patronise their own sports.

How many countries are there in the world, where both summer and winter are perfect holiday-making seasons, as in Switzerland? Here they both are indeed joyous, festive recuperative times, and in many a centre can the weak and ailing become strong and the healthy even stronger.

And when it comes to selecting a place or places in which to enjoy all these various sports that constitute an ideal holiday in the Swiss heights, the choice is not easy, for several districts which embrace a host of truly ideal yet widely different spots are available. So many resorts can be enumerated, well known and little known, some with some special attribute especially advantageous to one kind of sport, some with another. But in all of them Winter Wins, not over summer, but over sunless, clouded skies, rain, darkness and depression, that assail the Britisher and make him or her long for that ideal combination of white snow and blue sky and warm sunshine that Switzerland in winter promises.

Hilda M. Thorn.

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