

King Albert in the Oberland

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an entrance fee of £2,000. The Swiss Government has offered a yearly contribution of £400 for the upkeep of the building, instruments, etc., the Canton of Berne grants exemption from taxes, and the Jungfrau Railway will grant a number of facilities.

The purpose of the institute is research work on conditions in the upper reaches of the atmosphere. One of the chief lines will be meteorology, for which it is admirably situated, being high up in the clouds and yet in immediate touch with all the lowland meteorological stations. The Swiss Alpine Club has offered a special donation for this branch, which will be lodged in a pavilion of its own on the top of the so-called Sphinx Rock. There will be other laboratories for astronomy, which will greatly profit from the clearness of the air prevailing at those altitudes, and for physics, optics, zoology, and botany.

At the banquet after the formal act of foundation, the British Ambassador, Mr. Claude Russell, made a speech in which he emphasised the old and intimate collaboration between England and Switzerland in "alpinism," and to the large amount of pioneering work done by Englishmen.

Alpine Hut Re-opened.

While it is easy travelling up mountains by railway, it is still much better, for those who can do so, to walk and climb up them and for those who go in for mountaineering in earnest the Alpine Huts are, as we all know, a great boon. Every year new ones are being built, old ones re-built, in short, the Alpine Clubs are doing their utmost to ensure safe and comfortable lodgings for those who have to spend their nights in high and lonely altitudes. "The Times" 17th Sept.:

The Betemps Hut, above Zermatt, which has been rebuilt and slightly enlarged, was yesterday officially reopened.

The hut, which holds about 45 persons, stands at a height of 9,190ft., at the foot of Monte Rosa. The old wooden hut has been completely surrounded with a stone wall, and the interior has been improved and fitted with stoves so that the hut may now be used in winter by skiers. Yesterday morning, in the presence of members of the Swiss Alpine Club, Canon Marietan of the St. Bernard Order, said Mass in front of the hut, and the building was then blessed.

It is, perhaps, fitting that the above little bit of information should be accompanied by the following, from the "People's Journal" of 13th inst., called:

The Wonders of the World.

I have just been reading the account of the latest disaster in tropical lands—the hurricane which has devastated Santo Domingo.

I have never been there, but I have heard wonderful accounts of its beauty from those who have visited its glowing, sunlit shores.

But apparently it is not so safe as our own grey little island, against whose climate we are perpetually girding.

Perhaps it is that we get more news, and that it comes to hand now with lightning rapidity, but it does seem to me sometimes that there are a great many strange things happening all over the world—vagaries of climate, thunders and lightnings, floods, earthquakes, and cyclones—the kind of thing which makes a man feel his own helplessness, and against which even the most wonderful devices of ever-advancing science cannot safeguard him.

And even in cold latitudes, where the eternal beauty and silence of the snow lingers and reigns supreme, there is also danger. This was illustrated in a striking manner by the finding of the skeletons of the Andree expedition to the North Pole after a search and oblivion of over thirty years.

In Switzerland and other countries, where there is mountain-climbing of the most testing and difficult kind, danger walks hand in hand with beauty. Yet there never is any lack of people ready and willing to face these dangers, and who seem to feel that the peril of the adventure adds to its charm. Human nature has great courage—I came to that conclusion long ago. So far as physical courage is concerned, it was brought home to me many years ago when I visited Vesuvius just after a great outbreak of its hidden forces which had wrought havoc for miles around its base.

The peasants were coming back quietly and patiently to the ruins of their homes to start all over again, planting their olives and their grapes on the scarred and devastated slopes of the mountain.

I felt a deep admiration for them then, and I often feel it now when I think of them. No doubt the inhabitants of Santo Domingo, as soon as they have been succoured and relieved of the immediate hardship which must follow in the track of this upheaval, will start at once reconstructing their homes. It gives one a strange thrill to read of hundreds of houses just being lifted bodily and carried off on the wings of the storm, so to speak. A fearsome and awesome experience, which once more

brings home to us the superior power of the natural forces, which, out of control, can so disturb and destroy.

Yes, there is a lot of courage in human nature, both in the material and the spiritual world.

When I read the story of Santo Domingo I recalled the bad thunderstorms we had not so long ago, and the amount of talk and grumbling there was about it. Why, in comparison with the things which happen in other parts of the world, and which the newspapers faithfully record to us every day, our little war in the air was just nothing at all.

Of course, there is a good deal in familiarity with danger. It takes the edge away from fear, so to speak. Sometimes we are advised to live dangerously, though I never quite know what that phrase means. Perhaps it means that it is better to face things, and never seek to evade or escape them lest we get too soft and supine.

Those who live very sheltered lives and are safeguarded from most of the hazards of life are not, as a rule, strong characters. They lose grit and go about looking for and expecting shelter. And they get it, too. But the big jobs of the world are not done by people of that kind. It is those who are willing to take risks who are the pioneers, the discoverers, and achievers in this wonderful world of ours.

It is a wonderful world. The older I grow the more I am made aware of it. Very few of us see many of its wonders, about which books are written and sometimes pictures made.

Yet there is room for wonder all around us. Even the simplest, most shut-in life can't escape it. We have lessons to learn from the beast and bird creation if we will only take a little time to study them.

They are so wise they seldom make the stupid mistakes made by man—presumably the more intelligent animal. About danger they are uncannily wise; they know when it is coming and take certain precautions. I was much interested in our swallows the other morning; the ones who came in the spring in a large family circle, requiring three or four homes in our caves, and who have been with us all the summer.

The windows badly needed cleaning, and after some deliberation we decided that, in spite of the swallows, they must be cleaned. It was amusing to watch the consternation. The old ones immediately left the nest and took shelter in a tree nearby, from which they watched the proceedings in the most agitated way.

Sometimes they would emerge, swooping and circling in the air, to see what was actually being done at their homes. They chirped a little also, no doubt criticising and blaming the large monsters equipped with broom and pail to menace their property.

But at last, when the operation was finished, they dashed back into their nests, and there was the greatest amount of noise you could imagine. It sounded as if they were all talking at once, as no doubt they were.

In the life around us, in all the comings and goings of folk, and our friends in the lower scale of creation, there is room for wonder. And when the sense of wonder has gone there is very little left!

THE SWISS SUN CURE.

As the essential part of the sun cure at Leysin is the exposure of the whole body to the rays of the sun, all arrangements are made to facilitate this. All the beds have large wheels, about four inches in diameter, so that they are quite easily pulled in and out of the bedrooms, or moved along the galleries, which all, in this clinic, face due south. Sunning starts in winter about 10 a.m. and in summer as early as 7 a.m. or 7.30 a.m., and lasts not more than three to three and a half hours, during which time the patient lies completely naked except for an exiguous loin-cloth. A longer period is not advised, for not only is the heat too fatiguing, particularly in summer, but also actually harmful reactions may follow too prolonged exposure.

For this reason complete uncovering is not allowed at the beginning—the first time only the feet are exposed for three separate periods of five minutes each, the next time it is carried as far as the knees, while the feet have three ten minute periods, and so on, until the whole body is pigmented and inured to the radiation. Patients whose internal organs are affected, such as have had previous lung trouble, or have tubercular kidneys, for example, take little or no sun on the part concerned; similarly, it is found that in the case of a bad mixed infection, with an abscess which is discharging freely, local exposure causes rise of temperature, and is to be avoided. In such cases the general effect of the sun upon the healthy parts of the body is utilised to increase the resistance to the disease, and so promote a cure.

King Albert in the Oberland

For years Albert I, King of the Belgians, has paid regular visits to our Alps where he is extremely popular amongst the guides and local population. M. René Gonzy has contributed to the *Tribune de Genève* a delightful article about the latest visit of the Belgian Monarch from which we reprint the following:

Albert Ier, le roi des Belges, est un fervent alpiniste, on le sait. Il compte à son actif les escalades les plus difficiles de nos Alpes et du Mont-Blanc; chaque année, pour ainsi dire, voit revenir chez nous, en été ou en hiver — car le roi est aussi un excellent skieur! — cet hôte bienvenu. La montagne, pour lui, est un délassement. Loin des vanités du monde, il s'y sent à l'aise et sa cordiale bonhomie, son allure démocratique ont bientôt fait de lui gagner tous les cœurs.

Ces jours derniers, précisément, le "roi soldat" était venu passer de courtes "vacances" dans nos montagnes. Sans suite aucune, sans appareil, comme le plus modeste des touristes, il a séjourné entre autres à Meiringen, où chacun connaît bien la haute silhouette du souverain et son bon sourire; là, le roi a mis le beau temps à profit pour accomplir toute une série de jolies varappes dans les Engelhörner. Seuls des grimpeurs de classe peuvent se risquer là-haut; le roi des Belges a pour ainsi dire gravi toutes ces pointes.

Albert Ier, donc, débarque, un beau matin, à Meiringen, tout seul. Sa valise à la main, son piolet sous le bras, un grand foulard au cou, il gagna pédestrement l'hôtel où, tout de suite, il fut reconnu. L'on se confondait en excuses. Mais le roi coupa court. Il voulait être là en simple touriste et l'on tint compte de son vœu. Un peu plus tard, Albert Ier se rendait chez Victor Anderegg — un digne rejeton de l'illustre famille qui a fourni des guides aux Tyndall, aux Coolidge et aux Stephen — pour l'engager. Victor, un jeune homme, point encore pourvu du diplôme, a déjà accompagné le roi au cours de plusieurs ascensions et il a su se faire hautement apprécier de son "client." Albert Ier, d'ailleurs, est au mieux avec toute la famille et quand il part, avec Victor, pour une ascension, c'est chez la bonne vieille maman de son guide qu'il laisse de préférence son portefeuille, ses bagues et autres "impedimenta." Et souvent, il a félicité Mme. Anderegg de la façon dont elle avait élevé son fils.

En qualité de porteur occasionnel, "l'équipe" s'était adjoint un jeune commis de banque, grimpeur de première force et qui, comme Anderegg, éprouve pour le roi la plus respectueuse amitié. Lorsqu'il faut passer la nuit dans une cabane, la soirée se passe à causer montagne, dans la fumée des pipes; Anderegg déclare que, tout guide qu'il est, ses entretiens avec le roi lui ont fait apprendre mainte chose.

Sobre et frugal, Albert Ier ne s'embarrasse pas de beaucoup de provisions. Il adore, paraît-il, le café au lait dans lequel il émette son pain. Dans l'Oberland, on appelle ça des "Bröckli." Et l'on conçoit la stupéfaction des deux gars lorsqu'ils virent, pour la première fois, leur client préparer, en connaisseur, ses "Bröckli." Ils ne purent s'empêcher de sourire. Ce que voyant, le roi leur dit: "Chez moi, à Bruxelles, je fais ça tous les matins. Mais cela ne plait pas à ma femme. Elle m'autorise cependant à "bröckeler" quand on est en famille. Une fois que nous étions en visite à Londres, par contre, je m'oubliai, au "breakfast," et me mis en devoir d'émettre mon pain. Mais je m'arrêtai bien vite, sur un regard sévère de la reine... Ici, je fais ce que je veux..." Et, avec un sourire malicieux, le roi, d'un léger gourmand, se mit à déguster ses "Bröckli."

Lorsqu'on redescend, il arrive que l'équipe en corps envahisse une petite "pinte" pour éteindre une soif aiguë par des heures de varappe sur le rocher cuit par le soleil. Albert Ier a un faible pour la limonade. Mais il lui arrive d'être distrait, paraît-il. Ainsi, un beau jour, il quitta la place sans payer. La jeune sommelière, qui l'avait reconnu (car le roi est populaire dans toute la contrée) n'osa pas insister. Mais, courant après la petite troupe, elle happa la manche d'Anderegg, en lui soufflant: "Los, Viktor, der Herr König hat vergesse z'zähle..." (Dis donc, Victor, Monsieur le Roi a oublié de payer!).

Anderegg répara bien vite l'oubli: il ne manqua pas de conter l'histoire à "Monsieur le Roi" qui rit de bon cœur et tapina, à ce propos, la jeune Oberlandaise, lors de son prochain passage.

Albert Ier répond, avec un large sourire, aux "Grüss Gott" respectueux que lui adressent — comme c'est encore l'usage dans ce bon vieux pays! — les indigènes avec lesquels il cause volontiers. Bref, il est adoré partout. "S'il était d'ici, on l'enverrait au Conseil national!", déclarait même, avec le plus grand sérieux, un bon vieux "Schnitzler" ou sculpteur sur bois.

Reste à savoir si le roi, qui n'aime pas les bavards, serait d'accord!