

Rewards of a mountaineer

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might compete with Swiss products. It has been urged to examine the possibility of organizing a voluntary "civil service" for those of the unemployed who are unmarried; "working camps" for the execution of public works by unemployed; and an obligatory "civil" service for out-of-work men of a specified age (similar to the "voluntary civil service" experiments which have given satisfactory results in Germany and — on a very small scale — among students in Switzerland).

Public Utility Schemes.

It is proposed that only such work as will not affect the opportunities offered by the labour market should be considered, and it is suggested that works of public utility in the Alpine districts might be undertaken, the majority of young men unemployed being willing to proceed to distant work camps for voluntary civil service of limited duration. They would receive no salary, but food, lodging, and working clothes would be provided, together with pocket-money, estimated at 1f. per working day. The Association of Swiss Students, who have already experimented in this direction, have offered their collaboration for the organization of this scheme. It is pointed out that with the help of "voluntary civil service" it will prove possible not only to combat the evil effects of unemployment on young men, but at the same time to accomplish necessary public works, which would be hardly realizable under normal conditions, such as the improvement of pasture lands, construction of mountain roads, and protection against avalanches.

Electrical Manufacture.

Meanwhile, energetic efforts are being made to establish new industries in the watch-making centres, such as Bienne, Neuchâtel, Chaux-de-Fonds, and Le Locle, where there are approximately 20,000 unemployed. It is hoped to absorb several thousands within the next 12 months, through the establishment of a radio industry. Within the last three years, Switzerland has imported wireless apparatus to the value of 60,000,000 frs. Stringent import restrictions have now been introduced on this apparatus and a factory has been erected at Chaux-de-Fonds, which will employ some 450 workmen. This factory is a branch of the Dutch firm of Philips. In addition to this firm and the "Autophon" A.G. of Solothurn, which formerly specialized in automatic telephone and light signal installations, but has now turned its attention to the production of radio apparatus, there are several other concerns which have taken up the manufacture of radio receivers. Expert opinion, however, does not consider that there is much scope for the development of the Swiss radio industry, owing to the patent question and the lack of the necessary capital and experience to enable it to evolve new types of receivers not covered by the master patents held by the big concerns.

A former watch-making factory is now busy producing a special metal label-holder. Another has succeeded in carrying out successful experiments in the manufacture of a light metal alloy, intended for doors, show-windows and ornamental purposes. In Val-de-Joux a group of watchmakers have begun to make accumulators under the direction of experienced technicians.

In the Canton of Vaud, the authorities have decided to encourage the making of surgical and dental instruments, of which Switzerland has been an exporter annually to the value of only 500,000f., while importing them to the value of some 2,700,000f. The Cantonal authorities have, therefore, expressed their willingness to support this scheme by subscribing 50,000f. for shares and 125,000f. for debentures. These sums will be drawn from a special fund earmarked for the alleviation of unemployment. As German competition is particularly keen in respect of surgical instruments, it is feared that no profit can be expected for two years at least.

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REWARDS OF A MOUNTAINEER.

By LT.-COLONEL GRAHAM SETON HUTCHISON,
D.S.O., M.C.

Three things are essential to the mountaineering holiday: good comradeship, good health and good climbing. The last is only attainable when the other two are quite secure. Although the declared object is climbing, a holiday and leisure are the first needs of every worker, and so good-fellowship and renewed health may be considerations even more important than achievement in ascent or the technique of mountain craft.

I am writing for the unskilled, and for the novice mountaineering remains the only sport untainted by professionalism; which for me is one of its most subtle attractions. In a worldly sense this pastime offers neither money prizes nor cups, no honours, no championships; yet its rewards are the richest, of the finest quality, offered by a civilized world. The stimulation to the mind and spirit of attaining to heights sublime, through tempest and difficulty, is unmatched. The emotions experienced during a struggle with the elements, with sometimes a thousand feet of sheer space between the physical body and eternity, moving foot by foot up the rocky face of some defiant Colossus, or creeping stealthily across mountains of jagged ice, remain rich in the memory.

These are the feelings which give renewed zest to the weary soul, fresh impetus to ambition, a strengthening of the whole moral fibre. Nor is the reward alone of the spirit; the whole physical being responds to the strident, triumphant appeal to the emotion. The moment of conquest is intoxicating to the whole being. Every muscle, every fibre, every nerve is braced for the effort. Man becomes tempered like wrought steel, supple as a rapier blade.

These are the rewards of the mountaineer; physical, moral and mental tonics elsewhere unobtainable. There can be no relaxation, no turning back or aside, no rest, until the task is completed. Man is matched against grim Nature in all her rugged majesty, buffeted by tempests, tortured by thirst, famished with hunger, subjected to extremes of heat and frost; and not least is he matched against himself—all his weakness and cowardice, his disappointments and failings, during the long hours of silent struggle, are mirrored before the mind, and, as he triumphs, so he realises his power. No pastime offers such rewards: in no other leisure task can the whole being attain such heights, such a renewal of the divine. In no other way can age be thrust into the background, the drooping spirit be raised to a fresh consciousness of its dominant, creative mission.

NoVICES, whether young or elderly, but especially the young, have opportunities equal with the most skilled. Mountaineering is a craft; the unthinking believe that any fool can climb. There are natural climbers, but there is also a technique; even the climber most gifted with courage, strength, speed, capacity for instant decision, of iron nerve, will fail if he neglects the simple rules of the mountains. But the ranks of the mountaineers may be increased a hundredfold; and, indeed, when I witness each summer thousands of English people travelling in Switzerland, enjoying its majestic scenery, matchless motorways, the hospitality of its hotels, I wonder if they realise what they miss. How many have tried even the rugged pathway to the refuge hut? How many have dared to test themselves, and to go higher among the eternal snows, to scale some gaunt rocky peak upon its icy throne?

The novice should not attempt the larger exacting ascents, on which he will have no leisure to observe. He should confine himself to less travelled regions, wherein he can find his own route, and to glaciers and rock peaks, whereon points of technique may be studied in variety and in repetition. Such points are common to small and big ascents alike, and they are essential to the mountaineer's education.

A party of three, four or five persons, in good health, well shod, with a good rope as a precaution, and with trusty ice axes, may penetrate far among the mountains, even without a Swiss guide, may enjoy all the exhilaration of the passage of a high pass, may spend long days above the snow-line, or clambering among lesser peaks with matchless views of the giants, without fear, in perfect safety. Such a party may find itself journeying, high above the world, from one refuge hut to another, to spend the nights at these log and stone cabins in the fellowship of men and women who are enjoying emancipation from the bonds of our ordered modern life. Among the forests and highlands it can seek a life of adventure, and set up in the individual memory lasting monuments of its own prowess, courage and ingenuity.

A guide is often a desirable asset. Among the qualities of Swiss guides are a sense of weather, and a knowledge of rock, snow and ice conditions, which may at least save time and possible exhaustion. The influence of the mind upon the body is sharply defined in mountaineering. "Mountaineering," says Winthrop Young—perhaps the greatest climber of any age, and certainly its finest exponent—"owes to its infinite variety of motion and interest a record of feats of sheer endurance such as no other human pursuit or sport has excelled." The guide will not necessarily be the most efficient leader. Leadership should be vested in that one of the party who best can protect it against influences which irritate the nerves. He must take his precautions against disappointment, fatigue, and even the after-effects of exaltation. The function of the guide is properly, and better, confined to knowledge of ground, technique, and route, though even the latter should be left to the choice of the party itself, unless the guide can urge some potent reason against its selection at a particular season, or on a particular day.

The Swiss maps define all known ways across the Alps and high passes; and, contrary to popular opinion, guides are inexpensive if shared by a party. Indeed, one can balance an account between an hotel life and that spent with a guide in the huts of the Swiss Alpine Club. But whereas the hotels offer convention, life in the mountains gives rare spiritual rewards, and health and efficiency of both the mind and the body.

There are many who at this season begin to make plans for those few days of leisure which modern industry affords to its servants. The drudgery and routine of life does not hold out many great opportunities for those psychological changes which, as all students of such matters are agreed, supply the poignant needs of the spirit and promote the health of the body. But he who has chosen a mountaineering holiday is able to refresh himself during many long months with inspiring reflections of danger and difficulty conquered, with memories of wonderful nights and deep reposeful rest in the quiet of an Alpine cabin, of good comradeship of a quality which in the humdrum of daily life long afterwards will revitalise jaded emotions and the fires of affection and friendship.

The Isis.

PARLONS DE TOUT.

Un lecteur écrit à "l'ami des femmes" pour lui demander de remonter à l'Eve moderne que le flirt fait souffrir pas mal de coeurs d'hommes et que l'infidélité, lorsqu'elle va jusqu'à l'acte et qu'elle est l'effet d'un caprice, cesse d'être un divertissement tolérable.

Je crois avoir déjà écrit du flirt qu'il est le plus souvent, et aussi innocent qu'on le veuille au fond, une forme de coquetterie à laquelle nous marquons trop d'indulgence. Entendons-nous, cependant. Je ne saurais être exagérément sévère à une "flirteuse" lorsqu'elle n'a pas marqué à un homme une préférence telle qu'il puisse se laisser à l'aimer en se croyant payé de retour. Le flirt ne m'apparaît un amusement cruel qu'autant qu'il y a un coeur qui en souffre, et que la "flirteuse" le sait, pour ne point l'avoir déçu—au contraire! Mais vraiment, y a-t-il tant de femmes qui poussent la coquetterie jusqu'à cet apparent oubli de leurs tendres engagements?

Il faut aussi d'ailleurs que les hommes consentent de vivre avec leur temps et de ne pas s'exagérer la portée de certaines camaraderies qui sont devenues si courantes que la sagesse commande de s'y résigner. La jeunesse masculine d'aujourd'hui a généralement assez peu de souci de la galanterie. Elle entend s'affranchir vis-à-vis de la femme de ces attentions et de ces petits soins qui, naguère, faisaient partie de "l'art du tendre." Il y a très peu de tendre, de notre temps. Le flirt féminin est la rançon de ce qu'il faut bien que je nomme une certaine "mufferie" masculine. Les jeunes filles et les jeunes femmes ne flirtaient pas lorsqu'elles avaient ce qu'on appelait des "cavaliers servants," et l'affreux mot anglais "flirter" prenait, dans notre langue, une tout autre signification quand nous disions "conter fleurette," ce qui était aussi joli à la forme qu'aimable dans le fait.

Je veux pourtant conseiller à l'Eve contemporaine de ne pas abuser du flirt; si elle y trouve une juste réplique à la mufferie masculine, je lui demande aussi d'y voir une manière de jouer avec son propre coeur qui n'est pas sans danger pour elle-même, car, très certainement le flirt ne va point sans beaucoup d'abandon de ce qui constitue l'essentiel du charme féminin, la pudeur.

Voilà ma petite homélie. Retiendra-t-elle des femmes sur cette pente, qui est glissante? Je le souhaite sans oser trop l'espérer. Ce qui passe dans les habitudes est, si discutable que ce soit, innocent par l'usage. L'usage ne saurait tout justifier cependant, surtout lorsque la délicatesse en est froissée et la bonté méconnue.

M. X., ami des femmes.