

Letters from homeland

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): **- (1938)**

Heft 842

PDF erstellt am: **26.04.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-686003>

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LETTERS FROM HOMELAND.

Somewhere in the *Engadine*.
December, 1937.

Dear Editor,

I quite realize how sour it must taste to a fog-bound creature like you when you hear me talk of glittering snow beneath a radiant blue sky, a shirt-sleeve-lunch in the open at 80 Degrees F. and the joyous screams of a ski-crazy crowd ringing in your ears from dawn to sunset every day since we had that big snowfall of over four feet in one single night. And although the *Radio* just told me to-day of what havoc the Ice-god played with you over there just at the time when postmen ought to get busy with delivering the Christmas-parcels, I can but show a sarcastic smile at the thought of what London would feel like, when City-men would get under way, plunging through a hip-deep snow to their station at seven o'clock in the morning — the time, when we over here are usually called to our work. I said "We didn't!" Of course, as you know that's all bluff, at least as far as I personally am concerned. For indeed I haven't chosen my abode up here to carry on the weary round of business obligations any longer, after certain little warnings one gets from time to time, that one is no more a youngster. So I packed up my few belongings, broke the chains of lowland-conventionalities with which I've got so utterly fed-up, took my old best girl by the arm and off we went last August to a yet quite unknown goal in search for rest, peace and quietness. Within five-hours journey we had found what we had dreamed of. Up here in this wonderful alpine-valley we spotted a snug little house on the edge of a romantic old Engadine-village, surrounded by a glorious range of ice-capped mountains, bedded right in aromatic fields of "Alpenrosen" and Gentians, and so you may well imagine when I declared: "Well, here we are and 'J'y suis, j'y reste.'" — And so the summer months passed away with reconnoitring-excursions through the neighbouring gorges and over picturesque alpine-paths on to some rocky peak where the Chamois graze, inhaling the fragrant perfumes of alpine-hay and Resin-weeping Pines, and every night when we came back to our little cosy home, we thanked the Almighty for nature's beauty he had shown us and thought what idiots we had been to waste our years so long in the imagination that life was only worth living in an atmosphere of brutal materialism such as so-called civilisation appears to nowadays command. Of course, mind you, this isn't a place for dandies and dolled-up marionettes. It's only the big snobs that crowd the Cocktail-Bars of the big Hotels who spoil this picture of natural cleanliness with their camouflaged attitude of "How much for the world." This life of ours up here is a genuine, pure, unspoilt, natural life, if you're out for getting all that it is worth and that means a lot, I tell you!

When the days became shorter and September and a nipping air at night changed the dark green forests into rusty shades, when Deer and Stag descended from their haunts into the Valley for what grazing-spots might still be found, when you could notice the Chamois even on the slopes opposite your windows, when the atmosphere became so clear that you felt just like to jump up one of those bastions bathed in purple evening glow, then man, then you should have seen this *Engadine* of ours! It beats anything and everything I've ever experienced of God's creation, and, by Jove, I think I've seen the best parts of the world and almost every land under the sun in my sixty long years of a wandering Jew. Then suddenly, one morning, you wake up and all is clothed in white and what white! Feet-deep hangs the snow from the Pine-branches, around the house you notice the trail of friend "Rheinecke" whose nightly visits to our chicken run must always prove to be a washout, since I haven't got any, but yet he's there night after night.

And on and on it snows, day in day out, until the end of the milestones have disappeared, the telephone-poles have shortened their height by a third almost, the tingling of the sleigh-bells sounds through the air, the school children are taking to their skis and toboggans, you watch tiny kids of hardly past 4 already coming down the slopes at a breathtaking pace in rosy cheeks and smiles all over. The foreign winter-guests start filling the nearby Grand Hotels and Palaces, in costumes that are a scream sometimes and only show what imagination of wintersport prevails in the lowland-brains of those, who even ought to know better. Well, my friend, I assure you, we are having a show just now! If you want to get an idea of what you might experience here in reality, just go one night to the Coliseum in London and see the *St. Moritz-Revier*. They say it be quite up to the mark.

Yes, yes, it is a glorious free life up here even in winter-time, as little as I, at my age, have anymore sufficient courage to indulge in all these sporting events. I can't afford to break my bones anymore, besides, if need such be, much rather keep that over for the summer, when real rock-climbing and glacier-mountaineering makes my

blood run quicker again. Then I hope to meet old friends and new ones, to take them round these beauty-spots, to show them the magnitude of our Swiss National Park and Game-reservations where the *Marmottes* play and the Eagles fly their rounds in the ether. And when we then take our night's rest in one of the comfortable Refuge-huts of the Swiss Alpine Club, when the soup boils on the little ironstove whilst we still smoke our pipe on the bench outside in view of an awe-inspiring alpine-glow, when we then gather round a modest, sporty dinner beneath the homely Petrol-lamp, cracking our jokes and telling our yarns, when at dawn a hot-coffee and a bit of cheese forms the basis for a strenuous day with Ice-axe and rope, then my friend, then is the time for you to rejoice, and for me as well over the privilege by which I have been able to make you happy for at least a while whilst you stay here. — But taking it all round, it does not matter when you come up here for your holiday, the Engadine is beautiful all and at every time.

It is quite wrong, nay, it is even worse than that, it is the idiotic result of an idiotic propaganda to imagine, that a lover of nature would only find the value for his journey-money during *July-August* or between *December* to *March*. Just when the big noisy crowd has left again, when you can wander over our remote and picturesque paths again without staggering every few steps over some other vandalised tree or alpenrosen-bush, when your eye gets no more offended by the scattered empty preserve-tins and other disorderly souvenirs of "devil don't care" holidaymakers, then we have our beauty-spots to ourselves and this is then the time when the connoisseur must come to the Engadine.

I'm afraid I have already kept you long enough with my praise of my new abode. I'm sitting in my little home under the lamp with the glaciers looking through the window from a moonlight, star-clear sky that one only sees in these altitudes or in the Tropics; the *Radio* is humming one of my old-favourite English tunes on a wave straight from London-town, whilst the *Swiss Observer* lies before me as the priceless conveyor of ever so many happy memories of days long past. And yet I would not give up this resting place anymore for anything in the world. Why not come and have a peg with me one of these days? So long then and *cheerio*, and all the best wishes for a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. An Revoir.

Sincerely yours,

Pan of the Mountains.

SWISS INDUSTRIES FAIR BALE.

March 26th to April 5th, 1938.

The good name long enjoyed abroad by the Swiss Industries Fair has been increasing in reputation from year to year. The latest proof of this is furnished by the fact that the 1937 Fair showed an increase of 300 (1,700 as against 1,400) in the number of foreign visitors to the Fair, representing 32 states. This fact is not to be ascribed to the devaluation of the Swiss franc alone; it is equally an expression of the constant appreciation of Swiss goods.

To judge by the signs the 2nd Swiss Industries Fair in 1938 is likely to take its place worthily by the side of its predecessors. Preparations are in full swing both on the part of the Management and of exhibitors. Its 21 regular groups form the big nucleus of the industrial market and offer a remarkable survey of the diversity of Swiss work. The numerous permanent special fairs bring important branches of manufacture into the foreground. Particular mention must be made of the 8th Watch Fair which, in view of its excellent display, is the biggest watch and clock market in the world; further, of the 4th Swiss Machine Tool Fair which, in 1938, will be represented, so to speak, by all the factories in this important branch of industry. Special mention must also be made of the big and imposing groups of the electrical trade, textiles, clothing and outfits, and above all of the extensive Fashion Salon of the Swiss Industries Fair. And of course, a number of other groups likewise offer specialities apt to attract other countries.

The international character of the Swiss Industries Fair is further exemplified by the greatly reduced railway fares of 18 European states, in connection with other facilities. The Swiss Industries Fair in Bale is actually a highly important factor in international economic life. Swiss Legations, Consulates, and numerous travel bureaux will be glad to impart any information required.

CITY SWISS CLUB.

Monthly Meeting at Pagan's.

We understand that the Committee has, in view of the festive season, made arrangements for an entertainment after the Meeting, which will take place on Tuesday, January 4th.

1937.

Wieder nach viel Freud und Leid
Het me es Jöhrl z'schloffe gleit,
Und hets gar ärschtig buttelet i
Mit Sang und Klang und Schwyzzerwi.
Doch, wie's so ynikt, noh di noh,
Blybt mänge no, chly bin ihm stoh,
Dänkt über all die viele Sache
Die me gwüss hät solle besser mache,
Und Glägeheite, die i der Hascht
Me het versummet u verpasst;
Ach, s'het ke Sinn, dem noh z'studiere
Viel besser isch's, sich z'reformiere
Grad hüt, rächt afo, besser z'si
Prosit Neujahr! Jez blybts derbi.

H.E.

VERMAHLNIED AN DIE
EIDGENOSSENSCHAFT

16. Jahrhundert.

O usserwelte Eydgenossenschaft
hab Gott vor ougen tag und nacht,
er het üch gän ein fryes land,
In dem ir alli notturfft hand.

Er bscheert üch täglich wun und weid,
hüpsch huffen vech, dz ist ein fröwd,
es gat im chrut bis an den buch,
wol uff den hohen alpen fruch.

Das land ist wol beschlossen yn,
dann Gott ist selbst der murer gsin,
ir seyde ein kreftig fürschenthumb,
hend druf wol acht und dankt Gott drumb.

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