

# The game of Hornuss

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**THE ROYAL FAMILY OF EGYPT IN SWITZERLAND**

On the 7th April, his Majesty King Farouk I., accompanied by their Highnesses the Princesses Royal, and his Suite, which included his Excellency Ahmed Hassanein Pasha, Governor of the Royal Palace, his Excellency the Egyptian Minister in Paris, Fakhry Pasha and his Excellency the Swiss Minister in Cairo, Mr. H. Martin, left Berne by car for Broc, a village in the Gruyère district some 50 kilometres from Montreux, where the delegates of the Capitulations Conference were gathered at the time.

The Gruyère district is one of the most typical of Switzerland, with mountains, rich pastures "flowing with milk and honey," a medieval castle perched on the hill, chalets, and is the home of a rugged and warm-hearted people. It is here that one of Nestlé's famous chocolate factories is situated.

On arrival at the factory, his Majesty and his Suite were received by members of the general management of the Nestlé Company. After a few words of welcome in the big hall, which was beautifully decorated with baskets of Alpine flowers, the royal party entered the factory where for more than an hour they were able to follow, step by step, the various stages in the manufacture of Nestlé, Peter, Cailler, and Kohler chocolates.

His Majesty, being, as is well known, particularly interested in the industrial development of Switzerland, was already familiar with the main principles of chocolate manufacture. Nevertheless, he frequently expressed his pleasure at having the opportunity to inspect at close quarters a factory in which the machinery was so highly perfected down to the smallest detail, and whose products are widely known the whole world over. It was obvious that the King and the charming Princesses were already familiar with many of the specialities displayed, as chocolate, and particularly a good milk chocolate, is very popular in Egypt.

His Majesty fully appreciated the reasons for the unique character of Nestlé's famous milk chocolate, because, turning his gaze from the vast room full of machinery to the green pastures of Gruyère, which are to be seen through the spacious windows, he remarked:—

"Here you have everything you need—the means, the technique, good soil producing a rich creamy milk, and, above all, the Swiss climate, which, as in the case of cigar manufacture in Havana, plays such an important part."

**THE GAME OF HORNUSS.**

It is spring, summer, and autumn which bring some pleasure into the hard life of the peasants in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. They can then practise one of their favourite games, which they call "Hornuss." In English, the word means "hornet," and it is indeed very descriptive.

Outside every village a good, flat ground is chosen. It must be big enough to accommodate two teams—one which strikes the hornuss and the other which has to stop it. The ground is as long as a football field, but double the width. Immediately after the Sunday dinner, groups of men—young and old—leave the house, while the housewife gives the last loving touches to a complicated toilette. Off they go to the playing-field, one man carrying the switches of the group, another the bats or "palettes" of the opposing team. The society which organises the game provides the little stand or trestle, and the disk which serves as the projectile. It is the latter object which is the hornuss. When all the players are assembled, and have carefully folded up their Sunday coats and turned up the bottoms of their heavy trousers, the length of the field is measured once more—a maximum of 90 metres, the distance which the hornuss must on no account exceed.

The batting team takes up position on the field, the most skillful players at 40 to 50 metres from the trestle, which is the starting-point, the others disposed about the ground up to the limit allowed by the game. Each man holds in his hand a kind of flat spade, with which he tries to stop the passage of the hornuss. He may either hold it firmly in his hand and stop the disk at the place where it would naturally pass in its fall to earth, or he may throw it into the air to meet the whizzing object. If in doing so he is skillful enough to touch his objective, the hornuss will fall at the same time as his "palette," and his team has gained a point. The other team remains near the small trestle, which is made either of iron or of wood. The low, curved support enables the thrower the better to calculate his stroke and gives the maximum of precision to the swing of his switch.

The game begins. The hornuss—a kind of small disk, 2½ centimetres in diameter, rounded

The King overlooked nothing and examined the various machines in turn with the eye of an expert. Meanwhile, the Princesses were fascinated by the intricate machinery engaged in producing such delicious products and in seeing every kind of chocolate automatically wrapped in attractively coloured packings—some in Nestlé's red and gold, other in Cailler's delicate mauve, or in the various colours of Kohler's and Peter's brands.

His Majesty was much impressed by the massive grinding mills superimposed one above the other, through which the cocoa beans pass; also in the ingenious hydraulic presses which extract the butter fat, and the "conches" where the chocolate undergoes a prolonged mixing for several days, imparting that velvety smoothness characteristic of the Nestlé, Peter, Cailler and Kohler chocolates. The King then saw the moulding machines, vibrating tables and the conveyors passing through cooling chambers where the chocolate is solidified. In the most cordial terms, His Majesty expressed his pleasure at seeing this extensive model factory, ideally placed in such delightful surroundings, and for the respectful attention shown him during his visit.

So ended an event marking another milestone in the history of this Company, famous for offering to the world the richest products of Switzerland, a country which, though small in the limitations of its hospitable boundaries, is great in the importance of its achievements.

As His Majesty King Farouk I. was entering his car for the return journey to Berne, the general management of the Nestlé Company cordially invited him, when next he may be in Switzerland, to honour them by visiting their establishments at Orbe, where sweetened condensed milk, Nestogen (a powdered milk), Eledon (a powdered butter-milk) and Nestlé's Food are manufactured. The King appreciated the invitation all the more on account of his great interest in the welfare of his beloved country whose most promising future lies in the well-being of the rising generation.

His Majesty graciously gave his consent for a medal to be struck in chocolate to commemorate the occasion of his Coronation in July, as has already been done for the Coronation of their Majesties King George VI. and Queen Elisabeth. A bust of King Farouk I. will appear on the face of the medal with the Mosque Al Azhar in Cairo on the reverse.

*Financial Times.*  
(Egyptian Suppl.)

**WHERE COW-BELLS TINKLE AT SUNSET**

By COUNCILLOR T. ROBERTS.

*Enchantment is everywhere in Switzerland.*

On my present visit, the second this year, I have chosen a place remote from the general tourist centres, for here in the country you find the real heart of this friendly people.

Lucerne, Interlaken, Geneva, Montreux, and Lugano are certainly very delightful places, but at Burgdorf, near the Bernese Oberland, where I have made my centre, is to be found scenery unrivalled in its grandeur, a friendly people and a combination of woodland and mountain air that is a tonic.

Burgdorf is a typical Swiss country town, surrounded by thickly-wooded heights, dominated by a centuries-old castle frowning from a steep rock in the centre of the town, with the snow-capped Jungfrau in the distance, the town is a splendid holiday place.

In addition, there are many fine buildings and shops.

It is, moreover, only about 15 miles from the ancient city of Berne, the capital of Switzerland, with its magnificent Parliament House, its colourful monuments, and buildings of majestic proportions.

Its main industry, as befits such a country town, is cheese making, and much of the cheese sold in stores in England can be seen in the factories here in the course of preparation.

The town is governed by a council of 10 elected by the votes of the townspeople, and the councillor gets the same "kicks."

There are plenty of pleasant resorts near at hand. Affoltern, for instance. This mountain resort, about an hour away from Burgdorf, is reached in summer by a bus or charabanc.

The climb up the 800 or 1,000 feet is noteworthy for the acute road bends, and you are wont to speculate on your probable fate if the steering wheel suddenly disobeyed the driver when cornering with a sheer drop of a few hundred feet.

Then, near at hand, is romantic Thun, with the snow mountains flanking the town, and prosperous Langnau with its pretty chalets.

In fact, there is a host of places off the beaten tourist track well worth visiting—places where the tinkle of the bells on the cows high up in the mountain pastures make delightful music at sunset, and where you can listen to men and maidens singing in isolated farm houses or on the roadsides at evening-tide their tuneful folk songs, and songs peculiar to those who till the land.

*(Fleetwood Chronicle)*

it has been interrupted in its course by one of the players, a point is gained by one or the other team. The judges, whose faces express a watchful gravity, note the results on paper.

Thus it may be said that the game is composed of two distinct phases. The first, which is the stroke, resembles the game of golf to a certain extent—the same gesture, the same objective. The other phase is very much like tennis, the point being to intercept the hornuss abruptly in its passage. It is also one of the rare open-air games where the interests of the teams are dissimilar. Football, Rugby, tennis—all team games—are played in the same way by the opposing groups. The game of hornuss differs from these in that the striker's rôle is quite different from that of the men with the "palettes." There is a certain analogy with cricket, but this elegant, leisurely, and gentlemanly game is poles apart from the rustic game of hornuss.

About thirty years ago, all the sections of German-speaking Switzerland were grouped into a federation, and every Sunday grim battles are fought by rival groups. Certain strikers have achieved an extraordinary dexterity, and give to their hornuss a circuit which recalls somewhat that of the boomerang of Australia.

This game is so popular that even the notables of the village do not disdain to turn back their shirt-cuffs and have a go. The vice-president of the Swiss Confederation, M. Minger, a sort of modern Cincinnatus, himself sometimes appears on the playing-fields, and tries to obtain a respite from the heavy responsibilities of office in the exercise of this game. For the time that he participates in these jousts he is no longer the first magistrate of the country, but a simple peasant, and considered as such by his fellow-players. And if he happens to mess up his stroke, criticism rains upon him as upon any other blunderer. The same rusticity of manners is found in certain valleys where the hornuss is played—in the Engadine, in the Valais, and even in certain high valleys of French-speaking Switzerland. In former times, one of the bitterest enemies of the hornuss was unquestionably the Church and its ministers. In old chronicles one can read the protests that were made by the clergy against this inoffensive game. Not that it presents any menace to morality; but those who are addicted to it are apt to forget in their

at the edges—is placed at the extremity of one of the branches of the trestle. So that it will stay there for a few seconds without falling, the peasant fixes it with a little fresh earth. Then he chooses with care one of the switches, the length of which may vary from 2½ to 3 metres. It is like an extremely flexible rod, one end of which seems to be swollen. The peasant measures his distance—that is to say, 2 to 3 metres. The signal is given to the other team that the hornuss is ready to be struck. The striker grasps his switch firmly in his two hands and turns round and round until the switch has acquired a tremendous force, thanks to his rotation. At the psychological moment he aims at the hornuss, adjusting his stroke with scientific precision. Planted solidly on both legs, muscles taut, the peasant strikes the hornuss with an incredible force. His stroke is carefully calculated so that the disk rises rather high and cannot be arrested in its course; and yet it will fall to earth within the prescribed 90 metres.

While the group of throwers follow the stroke critically, expressing their satisfaction or disapprobation, according to the course of the disk, a shrill and multiple shout goes up from the opposite camp. One of the men has marked the trajectory of the hornuss; he raises his arm, yells with all his might to indicate to his teammates the direction. As the hornuss cuts through the air with great violence one hears the characteristic whizzing sound it makes, rather like the hum of a swarm of bees or the buzz of the hornet—whence its name.

To the accompaniment of much shouting, the players rush towards the buzzing projectile and throw their "palettes" into the air to meet it. The latter rise 15 to 20 metres, describing a magnificent circle in the air. In most cases the hornuss passes just a little to one side, or, to be exact, it is the "palette" which misses its mark, either because it did not reach high enough or because it cut through the air too late. Other players have a shot at it. For greater comfort, some of the peasants remove their great, hobnailed boots, and there they are skipping about in the grass, trying to oppose their skill to the swift flight of the hornuss, the whole to the accompaniment of numerous guttural cries. According to whether the hornuss falls to the ground without having been touched by a "palette," or whether

ardour the divine offices. They prefer the statutes of the horns and its rules to the Scriptures that the minister expounds from his high pulpit. In the seventeenth century, the young men, who were passionately fond of this game, preferred it to Divine Service. In certain regions, therefore, the clergy succeeded in suppressing the hornuss. And the members of the choir who omitted to take their place in the bass or tenor groups were fined every time they preferred the song of the hornuss to that of Bach.

Fortunately to-day the situation has changed completely, and on the contrary the Church—mainly Protestant in this part of Switzerland—looks with favour upon games which are clean and healthy. One may even see "Monsieur le Pasteur" take off his cassock and chance his luck. He understands that the joys of the country are few and far between, and that the hornuss may help, better, perhaps, than his sermon, to soften the hard work in the fields.

Where does the game come from and what are its origins? If the learned historians are to be believed, one must delve far back into the Middle Ages to discover the origins of the hornuss. From the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries fierce feuds were carried on by the inhabitants of the different valleys, separated by a high mountain. To frighten their adversaries, certain clans ventured into the enemy territory and slung bits of burning wood into their camp. Torches of firs or pines, rich in resin, were the most suitable for this purpose. To deduce that this primitive strategy degenerated into a game is but a step. In their leisure hours the soldiers amused themselves by slinging their firebrands against imaginary enemies. The idea was to see who could throw farthest. A few forest fires that resulted may have given food for thought to the adepts of the game, who thereafter preferred to use either stones or wooden disks. It is therefore a military practice which is the real origin of the game of hornuss.

German-speaking Switzerland is the only country where this game is played. Formerly, the shepherds in the highlands also tried to have their game of hornuss, but the ground in mountainous regions is not suitable for the sport. To-day, therefore, they prefer wrestling, a much more violent sport, but one which requires no accessories. But in the plain, many a fine Sunday is devoted to the hornuss, and in the evening, in the cafés which serve as a club, the peasants relive their happy strokes or the magnificent catches of a game that was played, perhaps, several months before.

F. G. GIGON.

(Illustr. London News)

**WARUM**

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**INTERCESSION SERVICE  
for Pasteur René Hoffmann-de Visme at the  
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When a few weeks ago Pasteur René Hoffmann-de Visme informed the writer of his departure for Switzerland on medical advice, he expressed a wish that nothing should be mentioned in this paper; conforming with his desire we have made no mention as to the state of his health.

During the last few days however, alarming news have arrived from Switzerland, which makes it advisable to inform the Colony that Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme is gravely ill.

So serious were the reports that the Consistoire of the Eglise Suisse had hurriedly conveyed an Intercession Service, which took place on Wednesday, September 1st in the evening at Endell Street.

The church was almost full, and had it not been, that it was impossible to advise everybody in time, there would not have been a seat vacant.

The service was taken by Pasteur Emery, who in a short allocution expressed the deep regret with which the news of Pasteur Hoffmann's serious illness, was received amongst his parishioners and his many friends; he hoped that through the infinite grace of the Almighty he might be spared and brought back to health.

M. Brauen, President of the Consistoire, lead the congregation into prayer, his intercession left a deep impression on all those present.

The service, which lasted about an hour, was very simple and in its simplicity most touching. Never before has a congregation at Endell Street prayed more earnestly and sincerely that the life of their beloved Pasteur should be spared, than on Wednesday night.

May their prayers be heard, and may through God's will his health be restored, so that he will be given back to us.

We express to his family and friends our deepest sympathy in their anxiety, we share with them the hope that he will once again mount the pulpit at Endell Street church, which he has adorned for so many years as a faithful servant of his sublime Master.

ST.

**CITY SWISS CLUB.**

Messieurs les membres sont avisés que

**L'ASSEMBLÉE MENSUELLE**

aura lieu Mardi 7 Septembre au Restaurant PAGANI, 42, Great Portland Street, W.1 et sera précédée d'un souper à 7h. 15 précises (prix 5/-).

**ORDRE DU JOUR.**

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Pour faciliter les arrangements, les participants sont priés de bien vouloir s'inscrire au plus tôt auprès de Monsieur P. F. Boehringer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Téléphone: Clerkenwell 9595).

Le Comité.

**MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS**

ENGLISHMAN travelling by car to Switzerland (Zurich) on Saturday, September 11th, would like one or two travelling companions. No charge will be made, apart from ticket across Channel (12/-) and one night's lodging. Apply at once, D. P. c/o Swiss Observer, 23 Leonard Street, E.C. 2.

WANTED for Jewish family, working cook house-keeper or cook general, not over 35, good wages, daily help kept. Write: Mrs. D. Solomon, 31, Coudray Road, Southport.

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS.**

Tuesday, September 7th — City Swiss Club — Monthly Meeting — (preceded by dinner at 7.15 sharp) at Pagan's Restaurant, Great Portland Street, W. (see advert.)

Wednesday, September 8th at 8 p.m. — Monthly Meeting — Swiss Mercantile Society — at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.

Wednesday, October 6th at 8 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — First meeting of the Philatelic section, at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.

Saturday, October 16th — Annual Banquet — Swiss Mercantile Society — at the Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly, W.

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(near General Post Office)

Sonntag, den 5. September 1937.

11 Uhr morgens, Gottesdienst.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

Dienstag, den 7. September, 3 Uhr Nachm.  
Nährverein im "Foyer Suisse."

**TAUFE.**

Am 29. August wurde getauft: DORIS Bertha GREUB; geb. am 4. 6. 1937; Tochter des Hans Alfred Greub von Wyssachen (Bern) und Winterthur und der Bertha geb. Wettstein von Pfyn (Thurgau).

**TRAUUNG.**

Am 28. August wurden getraut: GOTTHOLD HEDIGER von Reinach (Aargau) und GERTRUD Klara BOECKLER von Lamprecht in der Saarpfalz (Deutschland).

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