

A winter holiday is a double holiday

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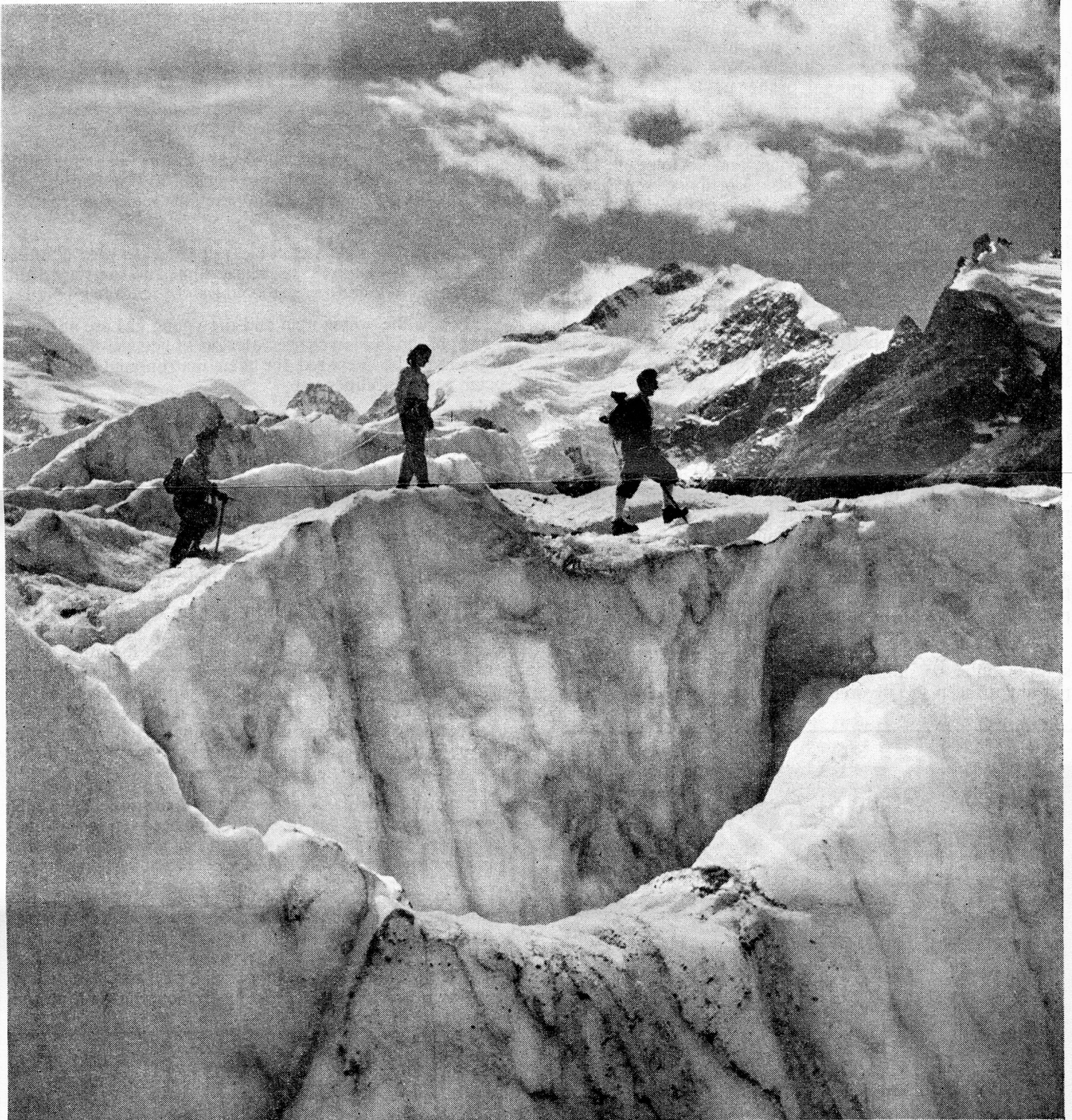
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A WINTER HOLIDAY IS A



(Photo: Swiss National Tourist Office)

DOUBLE HOLIDAY

Well, summer and autumn has gone, and winter is upon us. — So what?

In Switzerland, insofar as the four seasons are concerned, it is a case of goodbye to the old love, all hail to the new. In this, the World's Playground, there is always something to look forward to. Why, in October the shops started, displaying the latest types of skis and the new après ski fashions. Switzerland is lucky, of course, being virtually an all-the-year-round holiday country. The only small gap is between the harvesting of the last grapes and the fall of the first snows.

A winter holiday used to be the privilege of the few. Travelling by air and owning a motor-car were listed in the same social category, viz., the luxury bracket. In winter the ailing and convalescent were generally sent for the sake of their health to the nearest seaside resorts. There they spent most of their time watching the rain pouring down on the deserted promenades.

Physicians prescribe differently nowadays. To the patient who "can't stand this murderous climate" they say bluntly: "Look, man (or Madam), since I can't change it for you, take my advice and get out of it as quickly as you can! I've got bronchitis" — or whatever it is — "even worse than you, and that's what *I'm* doing. It costs me less in the long run."

"But I can't get away from the office now — I took my annual holiday in summer."

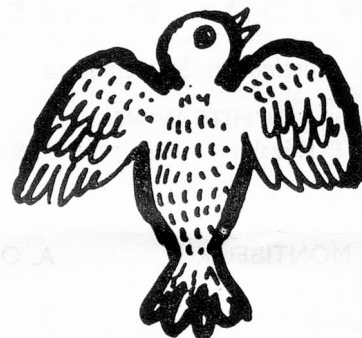
"Where, may I ask?"

"At Sunwell-on-Sea. Never saw the sun. It rained every day except two, and I caught a bad cold and a cough — something terrible — which I simply can't shake off . . ."

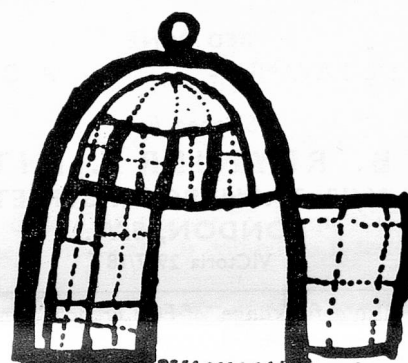
In view of the thousands of similar consultations which take place day by day in the fog-ridden Lowlands, it is astonishing that the Swiss Alpine resorts are not populated in winter chiefly by patients and convalescents, but instead of the robust, sporting types who live for ski-ing, tobogganing, skating, curling and the mundane pleasures subtly collected under the glamorous heading of après ski.

However, whether you look at it from the point of view of health or enjoyment, winter is definitely the most natural and beneficial time for a real holiday. Many people who still take their "long" vacation in summer do so in the traditional but mistaken belief that only then do they stand a chance of a spell of fine weather. Where they go wrong is that they judge by their own local conditions down near sea-level, forgetting that the "ceiling" of fog and rain is only a few thousand feet high, and that above it (at Alpine altitude) is a fairland of azure skies, of warm, clear sunshine, deep, crisp snow and pure, health-giving air. So the right time to "go aloft" is, obviously, when the climate down below is at its worst when body

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and soul are sun-starved after months of damp, joyless cold beneath lowering skies.

Ski-ing is not everything, of course. No need to be a first-class skier to enjoy the thrill of a winter holiday in the Swiss Alps.

There is also skating, curling, tobogganing — to say nothing of lovely drives in horse-drawn sleighs. Then there are romantic walks through snow-laden firwoods, there are dancing, bars, smart shops, tea rooms, cinemas and (believe it or not) sunbathing. — Yes, the Swiss resorts have all it takes for a well-spent, super-healthy holiday. Come along this winter and join the fun!

R. A. LANGFORD.