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Odds and Ends

Reviewing the travel season in 1961, the Paris newspaper "Figaro" recently interviewed some leading personalities and asked for their impressions of hotels in France and abroad. "Do you prefer foreign or French hotels?" was the query. In the replies, Swiss hotels with their long tradition figure prominently. Edwige Feuillère, the celebrated actress, said: "I find that Swiss hotels have the maximum comfort to offer in regard to both accommodation and food, and this is true even of the smallest mountain hotel". Lucky, the president of the Association of Paris Mannequins, said: "I've always had a wonderful welcome in foreign hotels, especially in Switzerland." The French tennis champion, Pierre Darmon, thinks that the French hotel trade is one of the best in Europe, but that pride of place goes indisputably to Switzerland, while comedian Jean Rigaux calls the Swiss hotel trade "an industry that never goes off the lines".

* * *

Quote — from Thornton Wilder: "It's when you are safe at home that you wish you were having an adventure. When you are having an adventure you wish you were safe at home."

* * *

The inhabitants of Scuol, the mineral spa in the Lower Engadine also known as Schuls, are justly proud of the old custom they call "l'hom strom" ("straw man"). This rite is derived from an ancient heathen practice and is found nowhere else in the Grisons.

Early in the morning of the first Sunday in February, all the young people of the village go to collect straw from the farmhouses, take it down to the old wooden bridge below the church mount and make it into a giant effigy symbolizing Winter. The figure is then set up near one of the mineral springs and, after nightfall, solemnly set alight, to the accompaniment of folk songs. Oddly enough, the fiery death of Winter at a height of 4,100 feet coincides with the climax of the winter-sports season, whereas in the much milder climate of Zurich (1,344 feet) execution is postponed for two and a half months to the "Six o'clock chimes", a similar festival with symbolic significance, when Winter finally meets his doom on the faggots.

* * *

Lady driver to mechanic: "Fix my horn. My brakes don't work."

* * *

As February draws to a close in Switzerland the carnival spirit takes over in many districts. Baden's carnival events, for instance, take place on 27th February. In Lucerne 1st to 5th March is the period reserved for this traditional merrymaking with parades and mummers. The inhabitants of Olten are impatiently counting the days to the "Narrentopf" on 28th February and at Soleure the carnival with its "Chesslete" and other fun-bringing activities continues from 1st to 6th March.

* * *

Absent-minded minister: "Let us all stand now, and murder hymn number 147 . . ."

* * *

The "Denmark in Zurich" events give Swiss an opportunity to recall their cultural and other links with this Northern European democracy. It was, for instance,

a Dane, Thorwaldsen, who designed the famous "Lion of Lucerne", the monument commemorating the bravery of the Swiss Guards who defended Louis XVI when the Tuileries were attacked in 1792. Recollections of the philosophical works of Kierkegaard, Hans Andersen's immortal fairy stories, and the artistic beauty of Copenhagen porcelain will be combined with admiration of Denmark's modern achievements in the field of domestic design, represented at the Zurich Museum of Applied Arts by an exhibition of the work of Arne Jacobsen, the architect and designer. The Helmhaus will be showing a collection of silverware and other products of Danish craftsmanship. There are also many other events calling attention to present-day Danish achievements.

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SWISSAIR CONVAIR 990 "CORONADO" JET AIRCRAFT ARRIVES IN SWITZERLAND

The first of Swissair's Convair 990 "Coronado" jets has arrived in Zurich, having covered the distance New York—Zurich in six hours forty-four minutes.

Swissair has ordered seven Coronados, two of which will be operated by Scandinavian Airlines System for a period of four years. The Coronado will be gradually introduced on Swissair's South America, Far East and Middle East routes.

ANNETTE WEISBROD (SWISS)

PIANO RECITAL

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