

Encounter with a master detective in Vaud

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ENCOUNTER WITH A MASTER DETECTIVE IN VAUD

Georges Simenon, the famous creator of detective stories, has lived for some years on the Vaudois shores of Lake Geneva. His main character, the gruff but good-natured Inspector Maigret, has in no way suffered from the fact that his adventures are no longer conceived in a smog-filled city but within view of the shimmering blue lake and the silvery peaks of the Savoyard Alps.

Set between Moudon and Payerne in the Canton of Voud, the castle and village of Lucens dominate the banks of the River Broye and the busy highway leading from Lausanne to Berne. Separated from the walled and towered town of Romont (Canton of Fribourg) only by a gentle wooded ridge, the castle and village nevertheless constitute a world apart, characterised by solid craftsmanship, busy small industry, comfortable inns and a phlegmatic breed of farmer who plant grain, potatoes, sugar beet and tobacco.

Three things have made Lucens known far beyond the Swiss frontiers. Thousands of girls from German-speaking countries have come to a Protestant institution there, to become acquainted with the French language and Latin culture. And to the west of that institute, construction has been in progress since 1962 on an experimental nuclear power station set deep in the heart of a mountain, which is scheduled to produce 7,000-8,000 Kw. of electricity and provide Swiss industry with the technical know-how and experience to enable it to market its own competitive type of reactor.

Finally, the large gothic Lucens Castle, which was carefully restored back in 1921, was given a new lease of life. The Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Foundation (run by the family) has assembled its entire collection there, turned it into an impressive display and opened it to the public. Focus of the exhibition is provided by *memorabilia* of the inventive author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who around the turn of the century raised the type of detective fiction from the realm of vague mystery (where Edgar Allen Poe had left it) and translated it into the light of everyday London, lending it added credibility through the use of sharp observation, incontrovertible logic, and all the aids which modern technology has placed at the disposal of criminology.

The display to commemorate the famous author and the immortal figure of the master detective, includes many sketches, among them a sheet on which Sherlock Holmes took tangible form for the first time. And there is a faithful reproduction of the room at 221-B Baker Street in which Holmes and his aide Dr. Watson closely question both clients and suspects — with whiskey and syphon on the mahogany sideboard, peaked cap, raincoat, top hat, greatcoat and white shawl hung on the door, and on the table a tea set, paraffin lamp, and an old edition of the Police Gazette. In the Knights' Hall at Lucens there is a collection of medieval armour and weapons, valuable ancestral portraits and antique furniture, all the property of the Doyle family of Scotland. And the Bishop's Hall, constructed of hewn stone, features frescoes and fifteenth century torture instruments, including the famous "Iron Maiden of Nuremberg".

It is fitting that this memorial has been erected in Switzerland. As justification there is the fact that, in the course of his desperate pursuit of Professor Moriarty, the great detective once followed the arch villain to the neighbourhood of the Reichenbach Falls in the Bernese Ober-

land. And even more to the point, the author himself often spent holidays in the Swiss Alps; equipped with Norwegian skis, he was one of the first winter guests to brave the snowy slopes around Davos.

[S.N.T.O.]

DOGSLEIGH MEETING IN SWITZERLAND

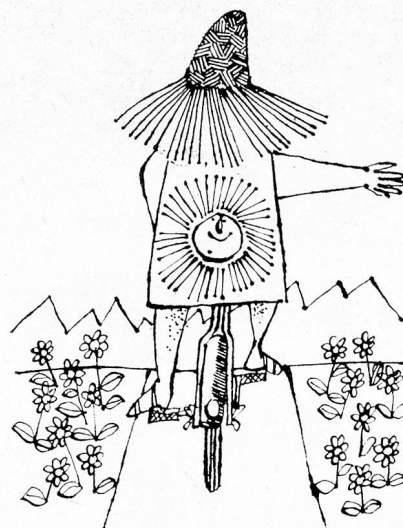
For the third time, the beginning of the year brought a dogsleigh meet held by the Swiss Club for Nordic Dogs. Participants from Holland, Germany, England and Switzerland gathered at Engelberg with their four-footed friends. The meeting is designed to give beginners an introduction to the technique of dogsleigh driving, and more advanced "mushers" an opportunity to enjoy some friendly competition. The first race of this kind in Europe was held in Switzerland last winter, over a course of about 3 miles (which the Americans consider very small indeed). There were three categories, with one-dog, two-dog and three-dog teams, and the absolute best time achieved was about 13 minutes. At present, Switzerland is the only European land where dogsledding on the American style is deliberately cultivated.

[S.N.T.O.]

APOLOGY

We wish to apologise for two errors which slipped into the article on The Bowles Rocks in our last issue: The founder's name is Mr. John G. Walters and the carved Madonna was presented to Bowles Chapel by the people of Zermatt (not St. Moritz).

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