

A word of welcome to the land of winter sports

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mungsloses Ungeheuer schilt. Nein, sie ist harmlos und will nichts als dienen.

Aber das Ungeheuer, das immer wieder den Frieden bricht, aus den Geleisen der Eintracht fährt, explodiert und Tod sät, dieses Ungeheuer, ich darf es fast nicht sagen, das ist ... der Mensch selbst, ach, der gleiche

Mensch, der jetzt mit lächelnder, vielleicht betender Lippe im Wagen sitzt und zum Christbaum fährt, dieser seltsame, kindliche und doch wieder so unheimliche, liebe, arme, sich selbst am meisten plagende Mensch. Wird das nie anders? Auch nach dieser Weihnacht nicht?
Heinrich Federer.

CLOCHES DE NOËL

Vous sonnâtes pour moi, cloches de la Noël,
En Sicile, une fois, sous un des plus beaux ciels
Que l'on puisse admirer au monde;
Palerme sentait bon le myrte et l'oranger;
Je marchais dans les fleurs, d'un pas souple et léger,
Mon être palpitait d'une extase profonde.

Une autre fois ce fut à Rome; en plein hiver
La rose s'accrochait au tronc du laurier vert;
Et dans cette nuit magnifique,
Emu jusqu'aux pleurs par un philtre enivrant,
Je montais, seul, vers la colline de Latran,
Où la lune argentait la noble basilique.

La messe de minuit, à Paris, fréquemment,
M'a vu vous écouter religieusement,
Grandes orgues de Saint-Sulpice,
Puis, dans le brouhaha du gai quartier latin,
C'était le réveillon jusqu'au petit matin,
Le champagne arrosant un menu plein d'épices.

Mais les plus doux Noël, ce sont les Noël blancs
D'autrefois, les Noël de givre étincelants,
Dans la vieille maison natale!
Enfance au front de lys, pourquoi dois-tu finir?
Rien que de rappeler ton pieux souvenir,
Je retrouve soudain une paix idéale!

Et voilà que Noël brille encore une fois,
Jour divin, messager de pardon et de foi!

Et le poète solitaire,
Las d'errer par le monde, enfin a rencontré
L'Etoile de salut et le Cœur désiré
Où dans un sûr amour son cœur se désaltère!

Adolphe Ribaux.

A WORD OF WELCOME TO THE LAND OF WINTER SPORTS

"Welcome" seems the very word which at all seasons of the year the Mountains and Lakes, the Forests and Flowers of Switzerland are signalling to its numerous guests as they arrive, all thirsting for a good time and a deep draught of refreshing air.

It may be you have not been here before. Well, never mind, you are sure to come again. Likely, you have only come because it is quite the thing to do. But next time you will come, because the charm of Switzerland has caught you, and you love it.

Where is winter more attractive to the sportsman than on these hospitable mountain resorts? Perhaps, as you idly turn these pages on your way to Berne or Zurich, you feel a bit disgruntled. The weather is cold and wet and foggy. Patience! You have not got there yet! Wait till you emerge above that vast canopy of mist that shrouds half Europe in the dull winter days.

Then as you gaze around you, at Murren or Pontresina or Villars, you will think with pity of the folk you left behind in the fogs of London. You will smile up at the blue sky, shimmering in the light of the glorious sun which steeps the mountains and forests

about you with such a glow of light that the very snowfields on which you stand catch the tint of heavenly blue. Sportsmen have said they never knew how beautiful the sun could be till they saw it from a Swiss mountain in winter.

You tread almost with awe the still, solitary aisles of the pine forest, lit with a haze of amber light as the sunshine filters through its thick roof of snow. Then you turn to admire the clear expanse where every mote in the sunbeams is a frozen speck, scintillating like a miniature firefly. The thermometer may be below zero, but in that bright, still, dry air you sit at ease in the open and do not feel the cold.

It is all so exhilarating, so refreshing, so thrilling with a natural, healthy thrill. Yes, it really is ripping! But mind, you do not attempt too much. If you were once a little younger than you are now, be content to do a little less. Be content to skate and not to ski.

Any way get your camera out. The delicate lace-work of hoar-frost and snow-flake makes dainty pictures. The morning and evening lights are best. The landscape too, will give a lasting interest to the portraits of your friends returning in their picturesque garb from

some excursion. And what beautiful effects of cloud and light you can record in your study of the peaks!

Not very long ago these mountain heights were inaccessible throughout the winter months. Now thanks to the practical and persevering efforts of the Directors of the Post Office you can drive without risk in one of the luxurious postal cars right up to these snowy reaches. Caterpillar traction works wonders in peace as well as war.

Yes, we are proud to welcome you to this land of snow and sunshine, and to spread out its attractions before you. Nowadays skiing takes pride of place. It was unknown when Col. Napier went to Davos in 1888. How the natives stared when his valet skied down from the chalet to the hotel with a tea-tray on his shoulder! Conan Doyle was an early enthusiast, and helped make the sport popular. It certainly is awfully attractive and not really dangerous if your limbs are supple. The art lies in balance rather than in muscular effort. Keep your skis well together. Let me tell you why. Because the cohesiveness of snow varies immensely, and if, when travelling at high speed, one foot is checked while the other races on, over you must go. Take another hint. Do not wear fleecy garments, they hold the snow and add considerably to your weight.

The slope down the Scheidegg from the Männlichen to Grindelwald affords one of the finest runs in Switzerland. While for novices there is a favorite practice-ground up at Hahnenmoos, where the grandeur of the scene is rendered the gayer by the appropriate and really artistic toilets of the fashionable folk from Adelboden. Still more fascinating are the sport-centres in the Engadine where the Bernina reigns in glory, rivalling the Jungfrau. Over the snow passes one speeds from village and valley to valley and village. Some more ardent spirits will indulge in the most exhilarating of all sports ski-jumping. The race down the track, the flight through the air, the drop on to the snow slope below test the nerve and skill of the athlete. There is a splendid jumping-ground at Klosters and at other favorite sport centres.

For the less adventurous lots of fun may be got out of the toboggan or luge. Down they dash by the score over every slope in Switzerland. The breathless rush down the snowy hill, the smart steer round some awkward bend, the neat escape from a collision with

that idiot in front, all the incidents and the shoutings, the spills and the laughter bring a healthy glow into the cheeks of old and young. Or we take a turn at "tailing", and hitch ourselves on behind a sleigh, and cling in misery and merriment to our luge as the horse gallops along.

The more expert will mount the swifter Bobsleigh, and be regarded with respect and envy as they flash faster than any greyhound down such an ice-course as the sunny track at St-Moritz. The ice too, claims its votaries. Davos has the largest rink anywhere in the world. But rinks abound at every place. Here is a small rink sacred to curling. More fascinating is that larger surface where the band is playing, and older folk sit in the sun content to watch the hockey, figure-skating, dancing, all the life and colour which animate the kaleidoscopic scenes. The gaiety of Venice itself can hardly excel the brilliance of a carnival on the ice.

Then there is Tea! Don't you forget it! The chatter and the clatter of tongues, the talk and the tales of deeds done, of plans for the morrow, of tours and matches, till in a miracle of shimmering pinks and golds and purples the sun sets and the mountains fade away cold and white and ghostlike. We turn in to dine and dance and sleep.

Let me close with a wish for good weather, good sport and a right happy Christmas. And let one word of warning vouch the sincerity of this welcome. Seek and don't ignore advice from those who really know these mountains. They are not a playground for children. Glaciers and avalanches and fogs are awful things. It is contemptible stupidity and crass ignorance to suppose you can go about where you like, when you like and how you like. Three public school boys sat down to smoke a pipe on the snow above. "Bally rot I call it, all this fuss about ropes!" said one of them. He never finished his pipe. The snow cracked under their weight, and he disappeared in the fissure of a glacier. An English youth went gaily out from M., escorting a party of friends. A guide warned him of avalanches. At such times the natives never speak above a whisper. He saw no danger. His cheerful laugh rang out, till it brought down the snow, that buried him eight feet deep.

Is this your welcome? you ask. Yes, for I speak as friend to friend. These things need not be. Add to your courage and high spirits, a grain or two of the common-sense that listens to reason. *A. B. Winter.*

BERGLANDWINTER

Das ist's, was ich am liebsten seh':
Mein Alpenland im tiefen Schnee!
Lichtweisse Flocken auf Baum und Strauch!
Über den Häusern bläulicher Rauch!

An dieses Wort musste ich denken, als ich in diesen Tagen einmal über meine winterliche Berglandflur ging. War das ein wundervolles Wandern! Man kam sich vor, als schritte man durch ein verzaubertes Märchenreich des Prinzen Zuckerland. Und ihr wisst gar nicht, liebe Leserinnen und Leser, wie schön dieses Märchen-

reich ist! Diese Schönheit kann nicht bewiesen werden, sie ist Gnade, Geschenk. «Das Schöne, Grosse, Erhabene ist nur für den da, der die Form dazu in seiner Seele trägt», sagt Goethe. Das Glück, der Schönheit des Winters teilhaftig zu werden, ist nicht bloss ein Sehnen und Nachdenken, es ist ein Sichhingeben an den Schein und Duft der winterlichen Welt. Wer freilich schon im Tiefland den Märchenzauber begreift, wenn der Winter jedem Zaun eine weisswallende Perücke aufsetzt und