

# The St. Moritz Post and Davos News

EDITED BY F. DE BRAUCHAMP STRICKLAND.

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### The St. Moritz Post and Davos News.

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### St. Moritz, December 5th.

First rate skating was obtained on the Campler lake yesterday, and a large number of St. Moritz visitors took advantage of the perfect weather to go over for the day, the warmth of the sun making lanching out on the ice very enjoyable. Hockey was played by about a dozen men, and several matches are contemplated should the fine weather continue.

The large rink at St. Moritz belonging to the Hotel Kulm has been flooded several times this week and is now about two

thirds of its normal size and affords a good surface of ice.

The almost complete absence of snow prevents anything being done towards making the usual toboggan runs at St. Moritz. A few visitors have however taken advantage of the three or four inches of snow which still lie on the "Cresta" course, between the Church wall and "Bastille", to try their toboggans, but the amusement is at present a somewhat bumpy one.

The Dutch National Skiing Association has decided to hold the Championship meeting this season at Peterwelder near Groningen in Friesland.

The date of the fixture depends entirely on the weather. The consequence of this uncertainty is that very frequently only a few days notice of the meeting can be given and so intending competitors have to hold themselves in readiness to start at a moment's notice. This was the case last year when James Smart the English professional was training at St. Moritz. He was summoned by telegram and by starting immediately got to Heerenveen just in time to run for, and win the mile race.

The visitors at the Kulm, St. Moritz give this evening a smoking concert in the hall of that hotel.

A dinner was given at Geneva a few days ago by twenty deaf-mutes in memory of their benefactor who, in 1765, invented the manner of speaking on the hands now in general use amongst the deaf and dumb. Speeches were made, and one of the orators drew attention to the fact that ordinarily gifted mortals often said things they did not mean, while those who had to employ a more laborious manner in conveying their ideas, seldom used any unnecessary words, and spoke the truth in the blindest possible way.

The description of the new and easy way up Mont Blanc from the Italian side, via

the Dôme hut, is clearly given and was wanted. The writer, Dr. Glasfeldt, points out that the route known as "the ascent by the Aiguille Grise" has nothing whatever to do with the Aiguille Grise, but is made by the Rochers du Mont Blanc, the new route really passing over the Aiguille Grise.

The *Alpine Journal* for November (which completes the fifteenth volume of that publication), is different in one important manner to the majority of issues for that month in previous years; The November number often contains a lengthy record of accidents, but this year four deaths, at the most, occurred on mountaineering expeditions, and no Englishman or member of the Alpine Club lost his life while climbing during the past summer.

Mr. A. J. Butler announces a change in the arrangement of the *Journal*, and "in future, reverting to a former practice, one section will be devoted to *Alpine Notes and New Expeditions*" because "it is thought that the time has arrived when the fact that an expedition is 'new' hardly confers sufficient importance on it to make its classification under a separate heading necessary."

An article by Mr. Holzer on Canadian travel, is followed by one by Mr. Walter Larder, who advocates Chamonix and other places as suitable headquarters for those who have to take their summer holidays in June. The difficulty of discovering good "centres" early in the season is less from the instability of the climate and of the state of the peaks than from the fact that hotels open so late (and, we may add, close so early). On looking through the books of some veteran guides this autumn—notably that of Christian Almer—we were struck by the number of entries dated June or the beginning of July, and were forced to the conclusion that people climbed earlier in the season twenty years ago than they do now.

published  
curiosities  
FD  
ST. MONT  
ROAD

Amongst other districts which we commend to Mr. Larden's notice as suitable for early summer, are the Ortler group, the mountains round the Monte della Piagnara (the Baths of Masino being good as headquarters) Engelvogel, and the Maderanerthal. We know of at least one climber who intends visiting both these two latter places in June.

The fortifications on the St. Gothard Pass are approaching completion. A short time ago the cannon in the fort of Bilsberg, which is high up on the mountain side commanding the valley of Urseren, was fired for the first time. The construction of this fort, which is one of the largest and most important on the pass, has taken about two years; it is now quite finished.

The first locomotive ascended the Glion-Naye railway as far as Trembler (half way to Coax) last week. The engine was taken up to Glion by carriage, in pieces, and was put together on reaching its destination. The well known engineer, Monsieur Aht, was passing through Montreux at the time, and it was for him that the trial trip was arranged, as the line is constructed on his cog-wheel system. The promoters of the line claim for it that the motion, both in ascending and descending, will be much smoother, and thus far less fatiguing, than that experienced on other mountain railways.

A hairdresser of St. Cruz was sentenced to ten months imprisonment for slander some time ago. He had only just been placed in the prison of Grandson, when he contrived to lock up his gasler and free himself. The police, however, recaptured him and shut him up in the Castle of Chillon. The day after his arrival, he hid himself and very nearly managed once more to obtain his freedom. Retaker eventually, he was confined in the dungeon. From this he escaped by the *ouvidiote*. As a last resource the authorities asked permission from the government to chain his feet together. But no sooner had this been done than the prisoner, who had contrived to slip away the bottom of the deer with, it is supposed, a watch spring, once more got away and scrambling off through the trees, was seen no more. The next morning the governor of the prison received the chains back by post, and also the clothes which the prisoner had been obliged to wear while in confinement. A letter accompanied the articles, and in it the ex-prisoner explained the manner in which he had escaped, and informed the authorities that as soon as his sentence, which he considered most unjust, was annulled, he would return to his native country.

Arrangements have been made to send James Smart the English professional champion skater to Norway to train for the coming season.

A new and enlarged edition of "Combined Figure Skating" is announced for publication early this month. Title of this new edition is to be "Figure skating Simple and Combined" and it is by Messrs. Maslin-Williams, W. H. Pidgeon and A. Dryden. It will contain twenty-eight diagrams of simple figures and 188 diagrams of combined figures.

We have been asked by Mrs. Holland to publish the following list of those who subscribed to the fund for providing a new organ for the English Church at St. Moritz. The cost with small incidental expenses was frs. 2054 which was covered by the donations.

Lady Masley, Miss Tomes, Mrs. Hague Cook, Mrs. B. Hague Cook, Mrs. Nugent Smyth, Mr. Tomes, Lady Awdry, W. Neville, Messrs. Marins, Mr. Barker, Mrs. Hilliard, Major Edwards, Mrs. Griffith, Mr. Fisher, Miss B. Vickers, Mr. Yapp, Miss Edmunds, Miss Arnold, Mrs. Calvert, Miss Ware, Miss Steinfeldt, Mrs. S. Mitchell, Gen. Law, Mr. Strickland, Mr. Road, Mr. Chanler, Mrs. Main, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Curzon, Hon. Geo. Curzon M. P., Miss Vickers, Miss Roche, Mr. Jelley, Mr. Charles, Mr. W. Cox, Mrs. Fanning, Miss Burton, Mr. Wharton, Mrs. B. Crupland, Mrs. Shillito, Rev. C. Leigh, Miss Milne, Mr. Bear, Mr. Stretwell, Miss Sands, Rev. C. Watson, Mr. Harris, Mr. Robertson-Ross, Mrs. Wills, Rev. C. Hoak, Mr. Darwin, Mrs. Drabblo, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Dubree, Mr. Borvill, Mrs. Baird, Mr. Palmestock, Mr. Caldwell, Mrs. Lawson, B. N., Mrs. Rosina Adams, Mr. Pignin, Miss Ross, Sir W. Style, Mr. Livingston, Mr. Almsworth, Princess Halden, Countess of Gosford, Mr. Barlow, Miss Orichon Stuart, Mrs. Howland, Miss Newman, Miss Dudgeon, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Muliken, Mr. Mc. Andrew, Mr. C. Waters, Mr. E. J. Mackenzie, Mrs. Deiberick, Miss G. Gildowry, Mrs. Hasbury Thomas, Miss G. Parry, Miss Dudgeon, Mr. J. Mackenzie Fowler, Mr. Pochey, Rev. J. Drayton Grizaké, Lady Pryce Jones, Mr. Ralph Pöllitzer.

### Personalities.

We understand that Miss Chestnut, the well known English figure skater proposes visiting St. Moritz this season.

Mr. Cyril Cusard has settled into a "small place" near Waddington for the winter and has for near neighbours Mr. and Mrs. Swire. He and Mr. Swire may come out to St. Moritz in February.

Mr. Fisher has gone to reside this winter at Malvern.

## The St. Moritz Tobogganing Club.

The adjourned annual meeting of this club took place in the Hall of the Hotel Kuhn on Saturday evening last. The chair was taken by Mr. P. de B. Strickland who explained the objects of the Club, and the nature of its operations in past years. The chairman stated that the Club welcomed to the meeting all those interested in tobogganing, and would be glad if they would speak or vote upon any of the questions dealt with at the meeting. The accounts of the past year showing a balance of frs. 200 were then passed by acclamation. Dr. Holland raised the question whether "Club" or "Association" were the better term, and called attention to the fact the latter designation had on one occasion been used, he also asked whether at future meetings of the Club those interested in tobogganing would again be allowed to speak and vote, irrespective of their being members of the Club. Lord Rastafly suggested it would perhaps be better if only those intending to become members of the Club were allowed to vote. Mr. Tennant thought that, in consideration of the generosity shown by the Club in welcoming those present, and according to them the right to speak and vote, the question with Dr. Holland's permission as to the future should not be raised at present, but that the meeting should accept the kindly offer and proceed to the election of the Committee. Mr. Bulgett seconded this. In proposing that the Committee should consist of five members the Revd. Ridley made a very humorous speech, his remarks about soberness and steadiness of mind being among the virtues particularly desirable in members of the Committee, and also his reference to a certain dog, were received with such satisfaction by the meeting.

The names of the only two members of the Committee in St. Moritz viz. Messrs. Bulgett and Cuttley were enthusiastically received and passed unanimously. Messrs. Tennant, Lawrence Townsend, and Kuppe were then elected as the other three members and the business of the meeting terminated.

## Climbing in New Zealand.

Mr. G. E. Mansner's volume, in which he describes a series of excursions amongst the Alps of New Zealand, differs in one respect from every other existing work on ascents. Though climbing with, apparently, both pick and staff, Mr. Mansner did not reach the summit of a single peak the ascent of which he attempted. It is true that one of his chapters is headed "Ascent of the Hochstetter Dome" but of this excursion he writes "the mountain has a double top and we were on the western

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Early application for rooms for the winter is desirable, in order to obtain good accommodation.

Winter terms, including full pension, from F. 10.50 per day.

The Winter Season begins early in October and ends in April.



or slightly lower one". Of the fifth attempt on Aorangi the author (who refers to the result as "victory") says "we reckoned the summit to be 140 feet above us".

We are far from desirous of carrying at climb which were to all practical purposes successes, inasmuch as it was want of time, and not insuperable difficulty which compelled retreat. We merely note the fact as being original.

Mr. Mansering shows a real love for the beauties of mountain scenery, and his unadorned descriptions of the grandeur of the ice and snow world are pleasant reading.

The party climbed without guides, and as none of them were experienced in Alpine travel, their expeditions do them much credit. Mr. Mansering seems to have hoped to qualify himself for the work, by an extensive course of Alpine literature, an aid which many persons are but too inclined to dispense with, for we feel sure that, given a fair amount of opportunity for testing the maxims and theories of skilled climbers, a good deal of knowledge of the craft can be imbibed in the library. We are inclined to disagree with Mr. Mansering's remark that experience is the best master in training the mountaineer. Life is too short and weather too often cuts down the list of peaks to be climbed and passes to be crossed, to allow the average mortal, unaccompanied by skilled companions, to reach the perfection point of an Andorverg or an Almer, who, themselves, so doubt owe much to the generation of guides who preceded them. Let the climber go for a few seasons with the best guide he can get; then let him continue his education under the master, experience, and so will he have a good chance of getting near a high ideal.

But we have digressed from the subject to which our heading refers, and must hark back to the "Rope and Axe" of Mr. Mansering, the former of which (if we may venture to criticise the art aspect of the work) would look much more natural on the cover if couched in the usual style, than in its present elaborate arrangement in ringlets.

The illustrations, from photographs, are numerous and fairly well reproduced, they are of great interest, especially to that large class of persons who are entirely unacquainted with the Alpine scenery of New Zealand. The map at the end of the volume is clear, and helpful to the reader in following the course of the various excursions described.

The distances from headquarters to encampments are considerable, though infinitely less than in, say, the Caucasus. The party did nearly all their own portage, and usually camped out for several consecutive days, their tent being frequently almost washed away by the numerous torrents with which the district abounds. The book, as a whole, gives a good idea of travel in the New Zealand Alps.

\* With Axe and Rope in the New Zealand Alps, by George Edward Mansering. Messrs. Longmans, 1891.

## Curiosities of Correspondents.

Everyone, whose name is at all well known receives innumerable letters from eccentric people. The following extracts from some of the curiosities of my fathers' correspondence may possibly amuse the readers of the Post.

The addresses are sometimes curious: one envelope, of which the contents are unfortunately lost, bears the words

### Important.

Darwin Regre.

Author of Darwin's Theory of the Human Race.

The post-office authorities managed to deliver this letter, adding however this singular remark "Not known by this address in Chelsea". Nor are the signatures wanting in originality: a foreigner (a complete stranger) who asks for a photograph, ends his letter in the following mixed style:—  
"With the greatest respect, I am yours very affectionate."

Another foreign correspondent, this time an autograph-hunter, describes himself, for purposes of personal glorification, as "Son of the Lord Mayor of Harburg".

A similar motive is apparent in the following letter from an Englishman.

"As I am a graduate in honours of Ch. Ch., and nephew of an Arch Bishop, and a friend of one or two Primates, and allied to many of our dorsal families, and heir male of one of the most ancient dorsal families in Great Britain myself, if I am not wrongly informed, I think I am entitled to be believed". He goes on to say that he has the gift of healing occult diseases, and recommends as a sure remedy, 15 grains each of Platinum, Osmium and Indium, "given in small doses in guava jelly". A prescription which reminds one of Lear's Nonsense Cookery.

There is an admirable simplicity about some of the letters, for instance in the following American specimen:

"Sir, I shall be under many obligations to you for a copy of your new work on the Expression in Animals &c., Voyage of a Naturalist &c., with autograph on fly leaves, for my library. If you will inform me of the cost I shall remit the money."

Other communications are a little obscure:—

"I have the honour to announce to the English people and Sir Charles Darwin, that after an exact examination of the several principles, nature-philosophical and philosophical, who are founded by his strong mind in the world, as one of the fruits of his long scientific life, these thoughts and data he has given, for instance in the struggle for life, can be contemplated a very new theory of the origin of senseless and foolish illnesses"—He goes on to say that his views are given "in a popular teach". The "teach" as far as I know never arrived, and the title of it, which he mentions, is not of any interest.

The following remarkable communication is given in the original—lest the author's solemn formality of style should evaporate in the process of translation

"Un soir pour accrocher un tableau, je me suis approché d'un mur, et tout occupé de mon travail j'ai tout-à-coup aperçu le ver appelé *Cinex lectularius*.<sup>2</sup> Ne sachant pas, au premier abord, comment m'en débarrasser, j'ai saisi une bougie et la plaçant sous le ver, j'attendis que ce dernier tombât. Durant le petit espace de temps qu'il duré cot antedafin, je remarquais avec surprise que le ver changeait de forme, en s'élargissant, à devenir presque oblong, — du rend qu'il était auparavant; une fois tombé, je ne l'ai plus observé.

Volla le fait; je m'empresse de vous en faire part, dans la supposition qu'il peut vous être utile à quelque chose.

En vous priant, Monsieur, de vouloir bien me faire connaître votre opinion là-dessus je vous présente mes salutations les plus distinguées".

There are other letters from the flying-machine fanatic, the religious enthusiast, and the begging-letter writer; but though the world is said to be mostly fools it is only a small minority of them that put any honour into their writings, and but few are worth reproducing.

FRANCIS DARWIN.

<sup>1</sup> I have changed the name of the town.  
<sup>2</sup> A fragment from a great American writer will make clear to the unlearned, the vulgar sense of this insect.

... in time to stop a red bug  
From running off with Colonel P.  
'Twas just a common *Cinex lectularius*.

## Rules

for the St. Moritz Skating Rinks.

The Committee of the St. Moritz Skating Rinks trust that visitors will conform to the Rules given below which have been framed in the general interest and are the same as those adopted in former years.

### I.

When either Rink is fit for skating a flag will be hoisted on the telegraph post opposite the main entrance to the Hotel, a red flag for the large Rink and a green flag for the small one. No skating is to take place on either Rink except when the flag corresponding to it is hoisted.

### II.

No dogs, chairs, or toboggans are allowed upon the ice, nor is any tobogganing to take place down the approaches to the Rinks.

### III.

Sticks are not to be used upon the ice, either by skaters, or by persons walking across the Rinks.

### IV.

A part of one of the Rinks is specially

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G. Peter, Proprietor.

(Bernese Oberland) **GRINDELWALD** (Switzerland)

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