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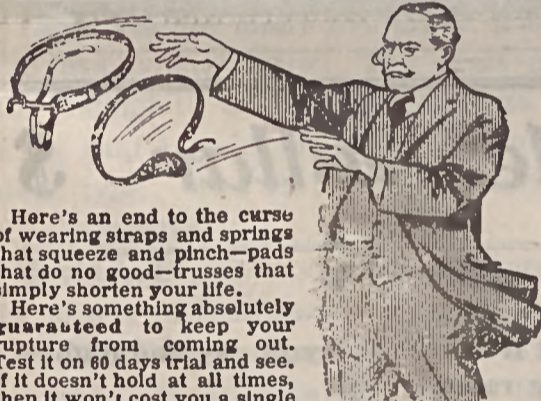
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Studying Agricultural Europe

Henry A. Wallace in Wallace's Farmer.

Switzerland.

Switzerland is not quite one-third the size of Iowa, and there is but one-sixth as much farming land. Strange to say, she has almost exactly the same number of farmers that we have in Iowa. The average size of a Swiss farm is only twenty acres.

It is interesting to ride through Switzerland by daylight. Nearly all the farms are tilted on edge. When we were riding from Basil, on the German border, to Berne, the capital of Switzerland, we noticed how funny the farmers looked, cutting hay by hand, on their slanting, little fields. We feared that some of them might fall off and be killed, unless they were anchored to the hillside. The Swiss women seem to do as much field work as the men. Everywhere on Swiss farms we saw women and children raking and loading hay. Oxen and heifers are used more than horses for hauling in hay from the field.

Some of the farm houses are frame, but most of them are of stone or brick, with red tile roofs. The most noticeable thing about Swiss farm-houses is the overhanging of the roofs. Many of them project for three or four feet at the sides, in front, and behind, beyond the house itself. In England, France and Germany the farm-houses are commonly collected in villages, but in Switzerland they are often as far apart as half a mile.

A peculiar thing about the Swiss farms is that there are almost no fences or pastures. As you ride through the valleys, you will see no cattle except those hitched to wagons. They are all kept in barns, or else are pasturing high up in the mountains.

But although nearly half the Swiss people are farmers, the things which strike you most about Switzerland are mountains, lakes, and hotel-keepers. The Alps are no higher than our own Rockies, but they seem higher and grander because, whereas our Rockies rise from a plain a mile above sea level, the Alps are in the midst of a country scarcely 2,000 feet above sea level.

There is more snow on the Alps than on our Rockies, and somehow they give the appearance of being rougher and more jagged. Jungfrau (Youngfrow, they call it), one of the most noted mountains of northern Switzerland, is 13,670 feet high, or about 600 feet lower than our own Pike's Peak. But to look up at it from the foot, Jungfrau seems far grander than Pike's Peak. The top four or five thousand feet is covered with snow, and along the ravines of its jagged sides are glaciers.

A cog railway takes us within about 2,000 feet of the top. First we climb up at a twenty per cent grade out of a deep canyon. As we look around us, we see waterfalls tumbling for hundreds of feet over the precipices. Then come several miles of green Alpine pastures, and here are the big, yellow Simmenthaler cows, peacefully grazing. They have bells hung on their necks, and it gives you a sort of happy, care-free feeling when you watch those big cows swinging their heads from side to side, pulling off the grass, and all the while the bells go tinkle-tinkle. Most of the cows are as high as they can get, just below the snow line. But I must tell about the cattle of Switzerland another time. Higher up on the mountain is a deep chasm, filled with snow packed into ice. That is what they call a glacier. Glaciers flow down hill even as streams flow down hill, but when streams flow miles,

glaciers flow inches.

From the point where the snow and ice begin, the railroad has been opened only a few days. For a time the journey upwards is very interesting. The track is all the way in a tunnel. If it were not, snow and ice would cover it completely. After ten or fifteen minutes we come to the Eigerwand station, a hole in the tunnel to the side of the mountain where we can look down a chasm to the glacier below. On this particular day there happens to be a misty snow whirling between us and the glacier. It is time for the train to go again, so on we climb. There are one or two more stations cut through the rock of the tunnel side, and at last, after nearly an hour's journey through the tunnel, we are at the end, not quite the top, but nevertheless two miles higher in the air than we were four hours earlier in the day. It is chilly, so we walk about. What a beautiful world of ice and snow! If it were only clear, we could see hundreds of miles across Switzerland, but as it is our vision is shut off by a whirling snow storm and cloud banks. Suddenly a Swiss guide with short trousers, stockings, heavy boots and Alpine hat, appears on the scene. He points to a little peak about half a mile away, which he will take us to for ten francs. Two of us decide to go, so what does our guide do but bring out fifteen or twenty feet of rope and an Alpenstock (a stick with a small pick-axe at one end and a sharp point at the other). Both of us start laughing, for we think the guide is making fools of us with his elaborate preparations. I look down at my low, summer shoes, and then at the guide with his high, hob-nailed boots, and then at the snow—and laugh the more. Then the guide ties the rope around the three of us and up we go, single-file. Ten minutes later, looking over the edge of a snow bank to a glacier a thousand feet below, we were glad of the rope. The little peak to which we climbed the guide called the Sphinx. He declared in very good English that we were the first to ascend it this year. We thought he was "fishing for a tip," but then it might have been true, for the railroad had only been open to the highest station for a week. We had our cameras with us, and after the guide took our pictures, we climbed down, and that evening were again in the valley, only two thousand feet or so above sea level. It was all very interesting, but the total expense of the day's outing was ten or fifteen dollars each.

The Swiss are the best hotel-keepers in the world. They have special schools for teaching the hotel business. Nearly a tenth of the population does nothing but see that the tourists have plenty to eat and good beds to sleep in. Do you wonder that the hotels are good? If Switzerland doesn't make them good she will fall in securing an abundant crop of tourists. And the tourist crop, you must know, is far more important to Switzerland than the wheat or oat crop. Knowing these facts, we were not astonished to find the Swiss hotel-keepers the most courteous imaginable, willing to answer all questions, to weigh our letters, and even to lick the stamps to put on them.

There is a little town on a lake at the foot of Jungfrau, called Interlaken. Here Swiss hotels are in their glory. The only purpose for which anyone goes to Interlaken is scenery, and for this reason you here find row after row of hotels, with shops here and there between. Scenery is probably the greatest product of Switzerland, and after that is silk and cotton



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