

**Zeitschrift:** The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK  
**Herausgeber:** Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom  
**Band:** - (1936)  
**Heft:** 772

**Artikel:** Women climbers of yesterday and to-day  
**Autor:** [s.n.]  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-695140>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. [Siehe Rechtliche Hinweise.](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. [Voir Informations légales.](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. [See Legal notice.](#)

**Download PDF:** 30.03.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

**AN APPEAL FOR OUR COUNTRYMEN IN SPAIN.**

The Political Department in Berne has opened a "Schutzstelle für Schweizer Flüchtlinge aus Spanien," and has appealed through the Swiss Press for funds.

We are happy to support this appeal, and we sincerely hope that the proverbial generosity of the Swiss Colony in the British Isles will once more give proof that our national motto, "Un pour tous, tous pour un," is no mere slogan.

So far about 1,500 of our compatriots residing in Spain have been obliged, through force of circumstances, to leave the country. Most of them have thus been deprived of their livelihood. It is expected that this number will be increased still further. Many of these unfortunate ones have lost everything and are depending on outside help.

It is only fair to mention that the cantons, as well as the respective communities at home are doing their best to render help where it is most needed, but their means are limited, owing to the heavy demands caused through unemployment and the economic crisis.

We therefore ask for voluntary contributions to help our authorities to mitigate the distress. Quick help is double help. Large and small donations are equally welcome. It is our duty to help our own countrymen, who have in the past done their best, to honour the good name of their homeland in this unfortunate country.

When writing this appeal, we have received a letter from one of our readers, sending us a cheque of £2 2s. He writes as follows:—

"During my holiday in Switzerland I heard a lot of the unlucky Swiss who left Spain during the last few weeks, having to leave all their belongings and everything else they possess behind in their adopted Fatherland.

"As the Swiss Colony in London has the privilege of residing in a country where similar conditions to those which reign in Spain at present are absolutely impossible, and therefore we must consider ourselves lucky, I reckon the Swiss Colony ought to help those poor compatriots, of whom many are homeless in Switzerland. I am sure that every one of us would be immensely thankful, if anything similar should ever happen to them, as what happened to the Swiss in Spain, if they could see some help coming forward from unexpected sources. I do not know if you are prepared to open a subscription, but I am enclosing herewith my small contribution towards this, in case you are prepared to do so.

"Hoping that this idea of "Einer für Alle, und Alle für Einen" will find some echo in this and other Swiss Colonies abroad.

"I am, etc."

We are glad to open our subscription list with this splendid gift, and we sincerely hope that many of our compatriots will help our brethren, who have, through no fault of theirs, fallen on evil days.

All subscriptions received will be acknowledged, week by week, in the columns of the *Swiss Observer*.

**THANK YOU!**

	£	s.	d.
S.M.B. ....	2	2	0
S.T. ....		5	0

**WOMEN CLIMBERS OF YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY.**

(Mountaineering eighty years ago was a different matter from to-day, yet the adventurous women of those days did not hesitate, but scaled the lower slopes on mules and the upper reaches heedless of the encumbrance of a skirt.)

It is a far cry from the be-petticoated woman climber of eighty or so years ago to her free-born young grand-daughter striding over the Alps in shorts or plus-fours. But although Great-aunt Emily may have hidden her crinoline behind a rock when scandalised villagers were left far enough below, and finished her climb with her lower limbs draped in red flannel, it is by no means certain that she did not enjoy herself as much as, if not more than, her Georgian descendant. Of her courage there can be no doubt, and opposition must have added a great deal of charm to the accomplishment of her mad schemes!

Climbing, to the great majority of Victorian papas, could hardly have been ladylike. ... The hardships, fatigue and exposure, the rough manners of the guides, to say nothing of the dangers which were brushed aside so determinedly by high spirited daughters, must have caused poor mamma to shed many a tear...

*Sleeping at an Inn.*

Huts were few and far between in those days, and even if they had been as numerous as they are to-day, it would hardly have been possible for a girl to spend the night in one unchaperoned. She had to find a suitable inn and one near enough to her field of operations. All could not have come up to the required standard of cleanliness and respectability, else why did Mr. Hinchcliff, writing in 1856, say of the Hotel Riffel, above

Zermatt: "The house has no pretensions to anything beyond plain comfort, but I have known at least one instance of three ladies living there for a week together ..." Those of us who are acquainted with the luxury of the present Riffelalp Hotel may smile a little wistfully at this description of its hardy parent.

They were pioneers in those days, "new women" ... incredible creatures! ... looked upon indulgently or irritably by members of the newly formed Alpine Club. What high hopes and adventures must have been theirs, as they explored the thyme-scented uplands and the waste spaces of the glaciers, letting the free air blow their ringlets out of curl ... Brave enough to attempt the almost impossible at a time when Alpine lore and equipment were in their infancy, lucky enough to sit down to dinner with Mr. Whympfer in Monte Rosa Hotel, or to listen to Mr. Leslie Stephen telling of his conquest of the Schreckhorn.

*Mules v. Funicular.*

In these casual days, when we set out with a few provisions in a rucksack, and step into a funicular to be carried half-way up our mountain, we can only admire the painstaking attention to comfort and safety which characterised grand-mamma's preparations for an ascent. Do we miss some of the romance which must have been hers, leaving the village on mule-back with her train of guides and porters in the mysterious half light before sunrise? She ambled on all day, climbing steadily through the quivering green shade of larch forests, her eyes on the sweeping white curves of her heart's desire ahead. There is a Grand Hotel at the end of our train journey ... but they bivouacked when evening fell, to spend the night listening to the music of the glacier streams. ...

*The Matterhorn in a Skirt.*

It was all very leisurely and idyllic, but the disadvantages must have outweighed the poetry all the same. What must it have felt like to be the first woman to climb the Matterhorn, in a skirt? Let us make our "knix" to the wife of that great Grindelwald guide, Christian Allmer, who, at the age of seventy-three, celebrated her golden wedding day, with her husband, in 1896, on the summit of Wetterhorn, dressed, as a matter of course, in the heavily embroidered costume of her valley! Little Miss 1860, fighting her way gallantly up chimney and couloir in her voluminous skirts and high boots, encountered difficulties undreamt of by Miss 1936, swinging her unhampered self and her plus-fours, over space on the double rope ...

Those were great days, and we of another generation can only envy the brave women who showed us the way up the vertical walls of the Pierre Cabotz, or the north face of the Collon. It was the peasant wife of Jules Veillon, mighty guide and chamois hunter, whose feet first touched the virgin summit of Cabotz. She still lives to tell of her adventure, but alas! Mrs. Laurie, the heroine of Collon, will never climb again.

They, and others like them, were the Amy Johnsons of the mountains, and they have had their day. They were the friends of the Taugwalders and the Andenmattens whose names are Alpine history.

(Queen).

**THE FORTHCOMING SWISS "COMPTOIR."**

The XVII Swiss Comptoir will be held at Lausanne from 12th to 27th September next, and will again constitute the great Autumn review of Swiss national production.

The Swiss Comptoir, which this year celebrates its 17th annual manifestation, is an enterprise which has marked a continual development since its foundation. To be convinced of this it is only necessary to glance at the undermentioned statistics which recapitulate the principal results of the preceding years, and above all at the figures for 1920, the year when, for the first time, the Fair was held in the town of Lausanne.

	1920	1929	1933	1934	1935
Number of exhibitors	580	1,000	1,588	1,676	1,715
Number of visitors	150,000	250,000	320,000	340,000	350,000
Surface covered in square metres	5,993	19,000	36,000	45,000	48,000
Ground covered by all the installations in square metres	—	48,000	54,000	60,000	60,000

The foregoing statistics do not require any long or detailed comments, they enable it to be seen that the Swiss Comptoir continues to develop according to a very regular upgrade line, thus confirming and consolidating its position.

The increase in the number of exhibitors is more particularly significant from the fact that it has almost tripled in an interval of 16 years. It may be added that the Swiss Comptoir, as proved by detailed statistics of its exhibitors, by regions, penetrates more and more deeply into every part of the country and gains adherents even in the

most remote localities of the country. New exhibitors were particularly numerous in 1935.

An inquiry made by the Swiss Comptoir among its participants, after the last annual manifestation, proved that 66% of the firms consulted were satisfied with the business done last autumn in Lausanne. In addition 3/4 of the 1935 exhibitors announced — and this at the close of the 1935 Fair — their intention of participating in the 1936 manifestation.

Thus the XVII Swiss Comptoir, that of this year, may be already assured of obtaining its usual success. If one can judge from the number of firms which have already booked floor space, a marked advance will again, without doubt, be registered, which is a proof of the effective services rendered by this enterprise to national production, by enabling firms to do business. In time of crisis, when it is so difficult to sell, to bring the buyer to interest himself in a product, especially one that has not yet become known, an institution like the Swiss Comptoir, precisely because its object is to bring into relationship offer and demand, to bring together the buyer and seller, stirs up business in the greatest measure possible, when taking into account the crisis that Switzerland, like many other countries, is passing through.

What shall we see this Autumn at the Swiss Comptoir?

The dominant note will continue to be given by agriculture followed by food-stuffs.

Hall I, the principal Hall, will be reserved for everything dealing with the food-stuff industry and the different branches connected with it. This Hall will include, in an annex, an exhibition of electricity, where the most recent novelties in this domain may be admired, especially those which are connected with the use of electricity in the household.

Hall II will be reserved for "tasting" and is where exhibitors in Hall I will be able to offer samples of their products.

Hall III will be reserved for furniture and every branch of the furnishing trade.

Hall IV will be given up to agriculture and, especially to a vast exhibition of agricultural machines and those used by wine producers. This section, which is every year a part of the Swiss Comptoir, will be of outstanding interest this year, the industrials having decided to make a special effort for 1936.

Let us pass rapidly into the other Halls of smaller dimensions, reserved for fruits, horticulture and vegetables. We would also make special mention of the Arts and Handicrafts Hall where many artisans will be seen at work; a vast object lesson and a very attractive exhibition which, every year, creates a strong public interest.

Finally, the *Sport and Tourism Salon* deserves a special mention as it will constitute a new group at the Swiss Comptoir this year.

The object of this manifestation is to attract the attention of the public to this important domain of national activity and, in addition, to permit the exhibitors in this section to make themselves better known to the public which is interested, in an ever increasing degree — during the past few years — in tourism and especially in sport.

The programme of the Salon, as it has been planned by a special commission, foresees two important divisions: primarily, physical education and sport, also tourism. Several innovations have been arranged in the framework of this Salon, including an artificial skiing track for jumping and descent, the first of this importance to be organised in Switzerland. In addition Professor Piccard's stratospheric balloon will be on exhibition in this section during the whole period of the Swiss Comptoir. A certain number of sporting manifestations and congresses will be held at Lausanne on this occasion.

The foregoing will show that the XVII Swiss Comptoir will not lack behind any of its predecessors, either in regard to its importance or from the point of view of results for its exhibitors, and, finally, in the interest that the public will not fail to take in this living manifestation of Swiss production.

(From the Secretary of the Fair.)

S. I. and T.

**DIE KONFESSIONELLE UND NATIONALE GLIEDERUNG DER BEVOELKERUNG DER SCHWEIZ.**

VON OTTO HEIM, Zürich.

Die Bevölkerung eines Landes, zumal die der Städte, unterliegt nicht bloss einem ständigen Wechsel ihrer Gesamtzahl, sie wandelt sich auch fortwährend in ihrer Struktur. — Neben Geburt und Tod, Eheschliessungen, Wanderbewegungen und Umzügen, kommt auch den Einbürgerungen eine massgebende Bedeutung zu. — In unserer Betrachtung sollen nun die statistisch erfassbaren Zahlen klarlegen, inwieweit Konfessionen und