

THE SPORTIVE LURE OF SWITZERLAND'S ICE AND SNOW DRAWS MANY FUN-LOVING VISITORS FROM NE

SWISS WINTER SPORTS.

Speeding in Various Ways Over the Snow and Ice.

By Robert C. Auld.

The American toboggan and English bobsleigh and the Scandinavian ski have joined the throng of skating, curling and hockey sports, and all foregather and find their paradise in the high court of the Ice King and Snow Queen, who reign now in Switzerland.

This sporting winter season was almost a thing unknown there a short decade ago. True, a few keen sportsmen and health seeking individuals did, even then, choose Switzerland for their winter sojourn, returning with glowing tales of the spectacular scenic beauty and the enjoyable climate in which the blazing Alpine sunshine played its important role, but such stories were as travellers' tales to those who regularly made pilgrimages to the "balmier" south. The fact remains that for those seeking diversion and amusement Switzerland in winter at that time was a closed book. Deserving its title, "The Playground of the World," yet it was only in summer that one's thoughts turned to the land where nature seemed to have been most lavish in her charms, providing a very riot of scenic marvels.

But the health giving qualities of out-of-door life are nowhere better demonstrated than in winter time in these high Alps. All that is conducive to prime bodily enjoyment exists there; everything seems to lend itself to the creation of conditions that make the season a time of jollity by day and innocent revelry by night.

The English early showed a special preference for Switzerland. This is natural, as it is a well known fact that the English, of all European nationalities, are the most addicted to outdoor sports.

Prior to the arrival of the English visitors none of the European residents ever thought of tobogganing, for instance; consequently, it remained for the English colony to introduce the sport. However, tobogganing has become highly specialized in Switzerland, and experts have engaged in the construction of fast machines and the building of improved tracks.

There are two classes of tobogganing, snow running, coasting or "lugeing" on straight or smoothly winding courses, and pure ice running on sharply bending or rounding banked-up courses. The main object of the coaster is speed on a course formed on a natural slope. The coaster form of Canadian type is constructed of thin parallel strips of wood, well curled up in front.

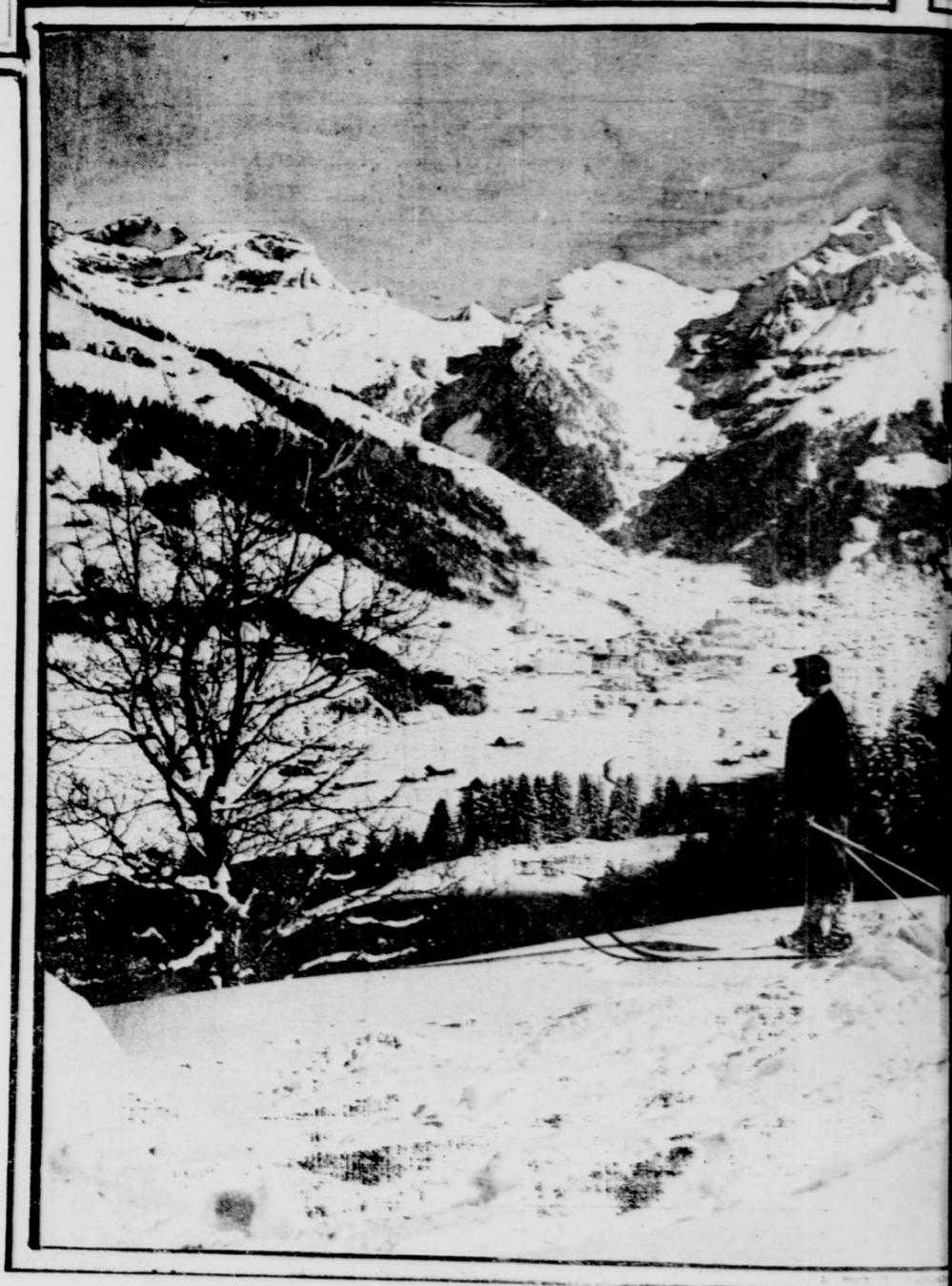
The schiltli, or Swiss luge, is still in general



THE NEW SPORT OF HORSE-SKIING AT DAVOS.

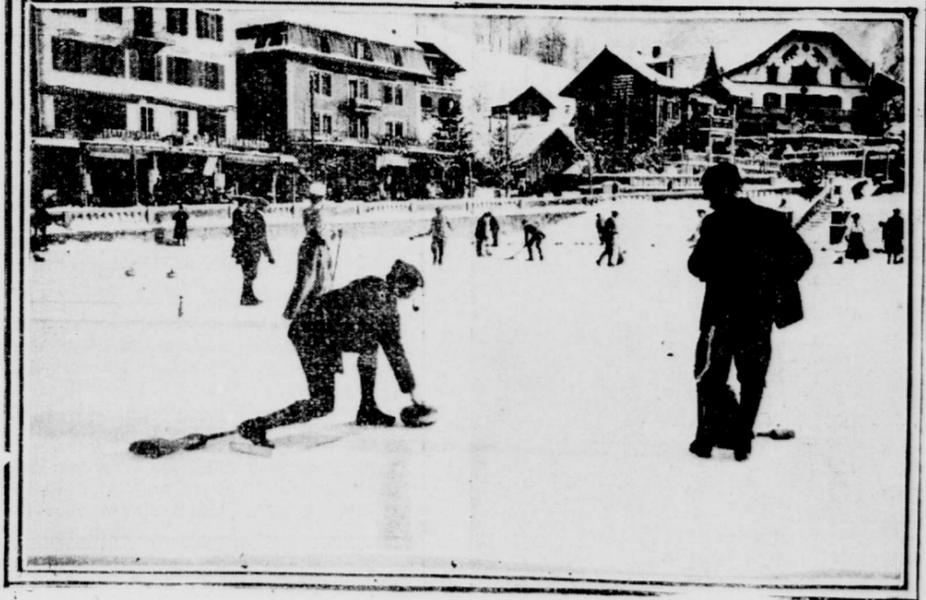
use and consists of an open framework of wood, the runner being either left in wood or shod. The American is known as the "clipper." It consists of a plain wooden platform, and is shod with round steel runners. The highest type of speed toboggan is the steel skeleton, meant for the hard work of the fast ice run. The bows and heels are rounded, the present shape being known as "snub-nosed," which gives a more satisfactory surface to the runners when riding in the head-on position. There is another machine, the great skeleton, designed entirely for road running.

In the toboggan the American found a vehicle which was to him a second nature, and he made tobogganing scientific. Formerly the position was soberly face forward; but that was not giddy enough for the Yankee skipper of the ice sled. It was "Skeets"—short for "Mosquito"—Martin, the well known Yankee jockey, who introduced the hair-raising American boy method of starting on the plunge, head-on, face down, with body stretched at full length over the skeleton sled. And he achieved the record over



A GLORIOUS VIEW FOR THE SKIERS.

HOCKEY MATCH AT ENGELBERG.



CURLING MATCH ON THE GREAT BEAR RINK AT GRINDELWALD.

the most famous ice run on the three-quarter mile course, with its many curves and sharp elbows, varied declines and jumps.

These sledways afford the rarest experience of whizzing flight imaginable, bringing the red blood to the surface, making the cheeks glow and the whole body become instinct with bounding lightness. The winter fervor of high spirits and vast speed is at the bottom of this tobogganing vogue.

Bobbing or bobsleighbing is another form of the same sport, the bob being a sled built on the strongest lines. Many assert that bobsleighbing is the most exhilarating of all winter sports. It is a social sport, the sleigh carrying four to six persons seated one behind another, the foremost directing the course, while the last manages the brake. Those sitting between aid in balancing the sleigh by the rhythmic swaying movement of their bodies, while repeating in sing-song monosyllabic tones: "Bob! Bob! Bob!" from which the machine really gets its name. Bobsleigh racing requires a well trained, nery crew, but it attracts young and old alike.

The differences originally between a bob and a toboggan were considerable, but these distant relatives of each other have been brought into such close fraternity that the bob might

almost be termed a twin of the toboggan. For a bob may be constituted by attaching by means of a platform two toboggans, tandem fashion, the front one being movable on a pivot for steering and the rear one rigid. The board platform forms the seat, there being room for four or six of a crew, each one of which is kept busy—the pilot in front steering, the man in the rear braking and those between aiding in balancing and taking the corners. The members of the crew are costumed to match, in white sweaters and white caps, embroidered with distinctive badges. The record for bobsleighbing is nearly sixty miles an hour, made on the new Schatzalp run, at Davos, which is two and a quarter miles long, in the shape of a Z, and can be made in 4 minutes 2½ seconds.

"Tailing," or hitching an indefinite number of toboggans of all sorts, shapes and sizes together in a string to a horse or wagon, furnishes sport galore. It takes great ingenuity to prevent one's sled, so hitched, from going off the straight course with the increasing jog of the horse. Swaying too far from one side to the other must be prevented by all the skill at the service of the tailers.

Skiing, though the youngest of the sports to become established, is well organized, the various ski clubs having regular courses of instruction.