

The Alpine Post

with which is incorporated
THE DAVOS COURIER
AND

ENGADIN EXPRESS

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Christmas Tide.

Christmas is at hand. Most of us look forward to it; why, perhaps we cannot exactly tell. For certain, our joy will not depend on the seasonable festivities; much less will our pleasure arise from the good cheer abounding. Neither does the time derive its charm from the expectation of little presents, or other tokens of affection. It would be childish were it otherwise. That word "childish" strikes the right note. The associations of childhood's happy days come strongly to us at this season; the recollections of our young pleasures live long after the "bloom is dead."

As children we counted the weeks, nay, even the days and hours, beforehand, and were often heard to say "Christmas Day is this day month,"

or "In ten days time Christmas will be here." As children Christmas week was full of charm to us. The quick succession of juvenile parties kept our small brains in a whirl of excitement. Visions of presents haunted our dreams by night, and of plum-pudding and mince pies by day. Bed-time was postponed in order that we might hear the carols on Christmas Eve. The decorated church lived in our memories for weeks afterwards. The Christmas logs of wood, the Christmas dinner, the gifts and the romps in which the grown-ups used to join—all these combined their forces to make Christmas a red letter day.

As children we formed the habit of looking forward to Christmas, as men and women the habit clings to us, though the pleasures have lost their intense attraction. So it is, reminiscences of the happy past mingle with the present, and together lend that charm which this season has made peculiarly its own.

Frost, Snow, and Ice are traditionally associated with this period. In England severe weather at this time of year is considered seasonable by the well-fed and clothed, and to them are the cause of extra enjoyment of the Festival.

This, however, is always marred by the sufferings of the poor, to thousands of whom a few degrees of frost, a few inches of snow mean an inestimable addition to the misery of their lot; a sharpening of the pangs of hunger, an intensifying of the pains of cold, rendered the more acute by reason of the contrasted happiness and good cheer of their more fortunate brothers and sisters.

Here, in the Engadine, we may indeed enjoy the seasonable qualities of the weather. What more can we want, than Christmas with 25 degrees of frost, three feet or more of snow, and skating for a month before, with the expectation of nearly three months after. In these country districts, we may sleigh for miles, without seeing one face pinched with hunger, or one fellow-creature shivering in the rags of abject poverty. Dives can here make merry without having Lazarus uncomfortably at hand.

Some people at home—poor benighted folk—have been known to regard us here as exiles and express pity for us. Why, it is we who have the advantage over them; we it is who can take compassion on those less fortunate than ourselves in being denied the opportunity of celebrating their Christmas in such a glorious climate and amidst such beautiful surroundings.

Of late years it has been the custom to alter the formula of "A Merry Christmas" to "A Happy Christmas." We, however, resent the innovation on the custom of our fore-fathers and stick to the time-honoured sentiment; so we will wish our friends in general wherever they may be, and especially those good souls, our contributors, who have so generously come forward and helped us in getting together this Number, the same old wish and many of them,

"A MERRY CHRISTMAS!"



<p>MON MÉMORIAL D'HIER —+— contient la note suivante: +—+ Je me suis lavée moi-même J'ai lavé les enfants Mon mari s'est rasé</p> <p>avec Le Savon de Charbon goudroné de Wright.</p> <p>Ce savon rend mon teint parfait, l'air de nos enfants sain et florissant, pour mon mari il tourne l'affaire de se faire la barbe en un plaisir. (signé.) Mère qui professe le progrès.</p>	<p>YESTERDAY'S DIARY</p> <p>Washed myself Washed children Husband shaved</p> <p>with WRIGHT'S COAL TAR SOAP.</p> <p>Makes my complexion perfect, the children healthy and husband's shaving a pleasure. (Signed) UP-TO-DATE MOTHER.</p>	<p>Tagebuch-Notiz von gestern mit Mich selbst gewaschen Die Kinder gewaschen Mein Gemahl hat sich rasiert</p> <p>Wright's Kohlen- Theer- Seife.</p> <p>Diese Seife macht meine Gesichtsfarbe perfekt, das Aussehen unserer Kinder blühend und verwandelt für meinen Mann das Rasieren in ein Vergnügen. (gez.) Mutter, welche dem Fortschritt huldigt.</p>
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BANDY.

So perhaps, in your habits of thinking amiss,
You may make a mistake and think slightly of this.
O. Goldsmith.

It were superfluous to inform readers of the 'Alpine Post' that "Bandy" is synonymous with the game styled "Ice-Hockey" by our less up-to-

The Annual Match against Davos stands in the same relation to St. Moritz bandy that the Boatrace does to University rowing. Very pleasant are these encounters,—would that there were more of them!—not only on account of the enthusiasm they arouse, but also by reason of the friendly rivalry they occasion, a rivalry tempered with good feeling and good sportsmanship.

good forward. The first essential is sureness of foot, or rather "of skate", and speed is a *sine qua non* if you would be a really first class forward; though extra cleverness and control of the ball may make up for lack of pace. But wing forwards must be fast, for a great deal depends on keeping the ball out of "touch", and your wing forward with that extra yard of pace, who can just get to the ball and dash down the line with it, is of inestimable value to his side. When the ball rolls into 'touch', the weary have a momentary breather, a very useful thing, and each man has time to get back to his proper place. But your speedy winger stops all this, and is able to outwit the opposing $\frac{1}{2}$ back who has got a little out of his place, and so puts his side in a strong position for attack. Another essential for a forward—and in fact for a player in any position—is the ability to take and give passes on the right and left with equal accuracy and promptness. And every forward must remember to pass out to the wings as well as into the centre, a fact that is often neglected by greedy "centres", who are apt to starve their wings. Let us suppose, gentle reader, that you and your confrères in the forward line have got the ball; how are you to make the best use of your opportunities, and get within shooting distance of the goal? You are but four in number, and opposed to you are 3 half-backs and a back, plus a goal-keeper, a *triarius* that has to be reckoned with. Well, you must all four keep as far as possible in line in order to ensure your being able to pass and re-pass the ball to one another. The pass should be short and hard, and just sufficiently in front of your man to enable him to take it at full speed. Never pass to a player who is so well 'marked' that one of the opposing side is likely to intercept the pass or at any rate tackle him as soon as he gets the ball. And above all, pass in time, and before you are tackled; and if you are on the wing, never take the ball right up to the goal line before you 'centre' it, for this means that you must 'centre' it back and then the defending back is sure to get it. Let us suppose that your plan of attack has so far succeeded; that your passes have been taken and returned; and that, having passed the half-back line, only the back and goal-keeper stand between you and the goal. How must the finishing touch be put on to crown your efforts? The first thing is to note the position of the back and his movements. His game is to force you who have the ball to the side, if possible, so that you will have less of the goal to shoot at; and he will thus tempt you to shoot at an awkward angle or at too long a range. Then you must show your unselfishness and pass to your partner on the other side of the opposing back, that is, presuming the former to be supporting you and in his right place. He will then have a fair shot at goal, if he takes your pass; and unless the goal-keeper, be a first class one, or the shot a poor one, a goal ought to be your reward.

Now a word as to the proper way to shoot at goal. Always shoot with *two hands*, and as hard as you can, with more of a shove than a hit. It is impossible to shoot accurately with one hand, nor can you get sufficient "powder" into your shot. A very telling shot, especially at close range, may be made by raising the ball with a lofting shot, which a little practice will soon teach you. Always shoot so as just to graze the inside of the post, and towards that side on which the goal-keeper is weakest. A shot right at the middle of the goal is the easiest to save and clear. Now what is the best distance at which to shoot? Or rather, what is the maximum distance at which a shot should be attempted? This depends on your own strength and the strength or weakness of the goal-keeper. You have no chalk line to guide you, as in hockey, and show you where "the 15 yards mark" is; and consequently you have to gauge



BANDY ON THE LAKE.

date contemporaries, who show thereby that their knowledge of the game is limited by the narrow confines of Prince's or Niagara, and that their minds cannot soar 6000 feet above sea level to a spot where the finest Rink in the world—120 metres long by 70 wide—is displayed to view, a rink that enjoys six hours sunshine on the shortest winter day and can be flooded in 10 minutes! This, the Eldorado of bandyites, was opened last winter, and on it St. Moritz won the annual match with Davos by 7 goals to love. In previous years St. Moritz had no bandy-rink, and had to content herself with an area of some 70 yards long and 40 wide, that was cleared on the lake,—a chilly spot for spectators, and none too pleasant for players, seeing that the numerous cracks in the ice were fruitful sources of bad falls, and swelled knees were commoner in consequence than "swelled heads."

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new", and we no longer have to encounter the hardships which our predecessors bore without a murmur, the climax of which was reached two years ago, when owing to the eccentricities of the weather god, no play on the lake was possible till late in January; consequently the St. Moritz team left for the match at Davos having only played four games on the Kurverein Rink. "Of course Davos won", some candid friend will remark. Yes, the "Rose and Gold" went under, but only by the narrow margin of one goal, scored in the last minute of the game. Few who played in or witnessed that game will forget it; the pace was tremendous and was maintained from start to finish; and the play all through was full of incident with hardly a dull moment. Davos scored 3 goals in the first ten minutes; but

"Was there a man dismayed?
Not though each player knew
Someone had blundered."

No, nor when a 4th was notched five minutes after the interval! Then the tide turned, with ten minutes still to go St. Moritz had drawn level. Then did Greek meet Greek; shot after shot was saved at either end in turn, as the tide of battle swayed to and fro, and just when a draw seemed assured—such is the fortune of war and bandy!—an otherwise harmless shot glanced off the skate of the St. Moritz back and trickled into the corner of the net, just out of the goal-keeper's reach. One last dash was made for the Davos goal, only to be repulsed; then "no side" from the referee, "three cheers" for victors and vanquished, and the two teams were soon fighting the battle over again over steam

Bandy, as played now at St. Moritz comprises four different classes of games:—

1. *Picked Games*, in which two sides picked by the selection committee take part. These games are played about three times a week up to the middle of January, when the Davos match generally takes place.
2. *Club Games*, in which any man may play, provided he be a member of the Club and arrive on the ice in time. Should there be too many desiring to play, some are ballotted out.
3. *Mixed Games*, for ladies, men, and boys.
4. *Ladies' Games*, for ladies and boys only.

Further, a certain number of matches are played, such as the time-honoured Kulm v. The Rest etc., or 1st Team forwards and $\frac{1}{2}$ backs, assisted by the 2nd Team back and goal-keeper, versus 2nd Team forwards and $\frac{1}{2}$ backs with 1st Team back and goal-keeper. These matches assist materially in teaching the best players to combine properly, and help to get the St. Moritz Team into some sort of match form.

There has been some talk of a team coming from Prague to play us. Well, "Let 'em all come," the more the merrier. The only way to learn a game thoroughly is to play matches against teams of different styles and methods.

Perhaps it may not be amiss to give a few hints on Bandy to those who are new to the game and desire to take it up; but let my remarks be taken *con amore*, for I do not speak *ex cathedra*, and do not pose as a professor of a game in which I have merely graduated. First of all we must form our team. At St. Moritz all matches are played between two teams consisting of nine players each; and this seems the most satisfactory number, though advocates may be found for seven and eleven aside matches. These nine players are divided into 4 forwards, 3 half-backs, a back, and a goal-keeper; nor can a better distribution be made. Having settled our team, the first lesson we must teach each individual player is to lose his individuality, and regard himself as merely one of many component parts. *Combination* in bandy, in other words, spells success. Individual brilliancy has won and will again win a match, but give me a team that can play together, and my money goes on it. A team that combines well, is less likely to be discouraged when fortune frowns and lasts better and finishes stronger than a team that depends for success on individual efforts.

I will deal with our front rank first and give a brief sketch of the qualities necessary for a

the distance yourself. Speaking from experience, I should say that 15 yards is an absurd distance at which to shoot, except from a corner hit; and no goal-keeper worthy of the name will fear you at that range, unless hampered by the 'back.' Ten yards is quite far enough off; and you need to be a very good shot to score more than once out of four attempts against a good goal-keeper even at this range. But if you succeed in getting within ten yards of the goal, shoot and trust to luck, rather than pass to another of your own side. If you hesitate, you are lost, for the goal-keeper can at once divine where your shot will come, and will easily save it; make up your mind to shoot, and shoot hard and at once.

"I felt it as I hit the ball

with dextrous movement of the wrist,

't is better to have shot and missed than never to have shot at all."

Next we come to the connecting link between the artillery and cavalry, as represented by the forwards, and the "Old Guard" behind, a brigade that must be strong alike in attack and defence, the half-backs. It is not too much to say that on the strength of the half-back, line depends the strength of the team. Most important of all is the half-back who is the "general" of the side. His business is to feed his forwards with passes and to mark and tackle the opposing centre forwards when they bear down on him with the ball; nor should he leave the centre of the ground to tackle a man on the wing, unless necessity demands it; he should leave this to the wing half-back, and himself wait to intercept the pass to the centre. The wing half-backs must support the centre, tackle the forwards opposed to them, and be always ready to intercept a bad pass or to receive the ball from a goal-hit, clearing stroke, or kick by the goal-keeper. Many half-backs are excellent in defence, and think that their duty ends there; but this is not the case. They must back up their forwards, and should not be more than 10 or 12 yards behind them when the former have got the ball, their object being to get the ball before it can be cleared to the opposing forwards, should the opposing half-backs succeed in getting it from the forwards who are already in possession. In this way they will more easily check the advance of the opposing forwards, and will help to maintain a continuous attack on the opposing goal. Half-backs, and backs too, should dribble very little and pass almost as soon as they get the ball, provided they can do so safely, to their own forwards. No half-back should ever get in front of or even in a line with his own forwards for purposes of attack; for he must remember that if his side be dispossessed of the ball, he has weakened his defence and seriously jeopardised his own goal. Undoubtedly the position of half-back entails the hardest work and is the hardest to fill with success; the difficulty being to know just how and when

to tackle your man, especially if he has outwitted your colleagues. But even if an opponent has eluded your grasp, continue to worry and hamper him to make him pass, for there is always the chance of the ball going to one of your own side.

Last, but by no means least, come the back and goal-keeper, whom I will take together; for they must thoroughly understand each other's play and have confidence in each other, otherwise they cannot succeed in keeping their charge intact for long. The first lesson a back has to learn is to cover his goal-keeper without hampering him and obstructing his view of the forward who is about to shoot. Too many backs forget this latter point, and retreat almost into the top of their goal-keepers; with the result that the shot is taken at very close range. Moreover a back should always bear in mind that a goal-keeper is allowed to kick the ball, and so has a far better chance of clearing a shot than he himself has. Therefore a back should never stand less than 12 or 15 yards in front of his goal-keeper, when the opposing forwards are bearing down on him; for if he stand too close, he will

undefended goal. Stand your ground, like Leonidas and wait for the shot; watch him carefully for a twinkle in his eye may enable your X-ray brain to divine where his shot will come. Few in the moment of victory can conceal their intentions. As he shoots, stretch out hand, stick, or foot to meet the advancing ball; but be careful not to move till he has struck the ball, else will he deftly turn his shot against the spot you have just left, and the ball will reach the net. Remember too that, however "lobengulous" you may be, you cannot swell your person sufficiently to cover a goal 12 good English feet wide. Never try to stop the ball with your hand, when it is actually on the ice; it is extremely difficult to do so; and never sit, kneel, or squat down on the ice to stop a shot. You will probably find it easiest, if you are right-footed to kick out all shots on your right side that come along the ice, to hit out all similar shots on your left with your stick held in both hands, while you must use your hand or body to stop shots in the air; but remember that the time in which to clear a shot properly is very short; therefore try, so far as possible to kick or hit the ball clean away without first stopping it; for the ball, being of solid india-rubber, is not easily stopped dead, and the slightest bounce or roll may carry it out of your reach and on to the stick of one of the attacking side, who will return it with interest and probably defeat you.

But—*non ruit. Jam satis lusisti; jam satis scripsi.*

HENRY WALKER.

BOBSLEIGHING.

Since the days when a bobsleigh took the form of two American toboggans clumsily connected by means of a 12 foot plank,—first introduced to St. Moritz in the winter of 1890-1—much has happened of a progressive, and not a little of a retrogressive, character. The bobbist of today would regard

the machine of a decade ago as a sorry makeshift for the carefully constructed machine he has become familiar with. Now he is particular to a degree as to the curve of his runners, their dimensions, weight, and to strain a point, one might even say the material from which they are forged. Then there is the exact setting of the turn-table on which the front runners must move with such ready response to the steersman's pull, the length, breadth and height of the "bob," the special pattern of brake and the question whether one or two, split or entire, is most suitable; all these are points which have to be pondered over and discussed with a regard for detail quite unthought of at the time when in December 1890 Mr. Wilson Smith of Philadelphia and a few kindred spirits won for themselves a verdict of eccentricity bordering on insanity from all St. Moritz for electing to seek enjoyment by slithering down every conceivable slope on their crude structure.



BANDY ON THE NEW RINK.

have less chance of forcing the forward with the ball to take his shot at an awkward angle from the side, and will never tempt him to shoot at too long a range. The more a back can hamper a forward the less accuracy and steam will the latter be able to put into his shot; and the goal-keeper will probably clear it easily.

And last of thee, "O muddied oaf," will I speak, as you stand trembling on your skates, while mountainous forms speed down to work your destruction with swift cannon balls full 4 ounces in weight. Take heart! A good "save" will win you applause from "the many mouthed." But often your best "saves" are unnoticed, for the ball has apparently come right to you, whereas it is really you who have anticipated the direction of the shot and put yourself cleverly in the way. Never, an' thou lovest me, desert your charge to tackle an opponent, who will most assuredly outwit thee, and despatch the 'globe' into your

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