192

TORONTO FIELD NATURALISTS' CLUB NEWSLETTER

JANUARY MEETING

Monday, January 7th, 1963, at 8.15 p.m.
at the
ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

FILM NIGHT:

THE COLOUR OF LIFE - This National Film Board award-winning film explains in detail the structure, inner workings and reasons for the colour of one of Nature's marvels--the green leaf, which in itself is a highly complicated chemical factory.

THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET - deals with the soil and the need for its conservation and wise management. It brings out clearly the manner in which the animals, plants and insects of the soil work together to maintain a harmonious balance which is beneficial to all living things.

MORNING ON THE LIÈVRE - With the reading of well-known Canadian poet Archibald Lampman's poem in the background, this film in beautiful colour takes us on a leisurely canoe trip on the Lièvre River, in the picturesque Mont Laurier district of Quebec.

JANUARY OUTING - Sat., Jan. 12, at 2.00 p.m. - Taylor Creek Metropolitan Park
This is a new area. Drive east on O'Connor Drive to Don Mills Road; go north on Don Mills Road until the white, arched bridge over the Don is sighted. South of this bridge watch for a small road on the right (east) side of the Don Mills Road, and a sign "Don Valley Art Club." Follow this road past a sign which indicates that a Metropolitan Park is being built in this area, and continue east on the unpaved road which leads into the parking area.
Leader: Mr. Kenneth A. Armson - Trees.

Miss Rosemary Gaymer, Chairman, Outings Committee

BOTANY GROUP - Will meet on Thurs., Jan. 17, at 8.00 p.m., in the library of Hodgson Public School, just east of Mt. Pleasant Rd., on Davisville Ave. Dr. R. M. Saunders will speak on: "Spring in the Southwest". Everybody welcome.

Secretary - Miss E. Lewis, HO 5-3422

JUNIOR CLUB - Will meet on Sat., Jan. 5, at 10.00 a.m. in the Museum theatre. The Fish, Reptiles and Amphibians Group will be in charge. Sorry, no more registrations this year, as we have over 300 members! Adult visitors are welcome to attend and see what goes on here.

Director - Mr. R. MacLellan, HU 8-9346

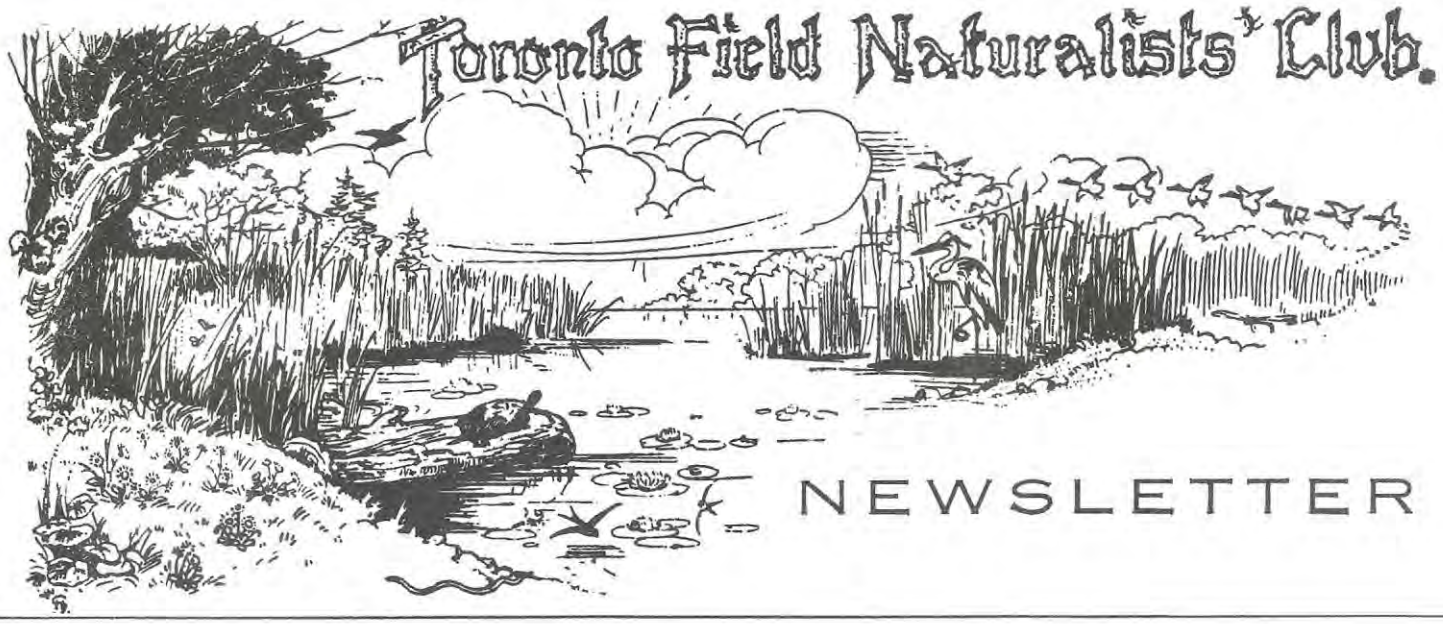
****

If the rest of your Newsletter is missing, it means that according to our records you have not yet paid your fee for 1962-63. Upon receipt of your renewal we will be pleased to send your missing Newsletter! Single membership, $4.00; family (adults), $6.00; corresponding, $2.00 (20 miles or more from the Royal Ontario Museum.) If you think there has been an error, please notify the secretary, as we do make mistakes sometimes!

****

President - Dr. David Hoeniger

Secretary - Mrs. H. Robson,
49 Craighurst Ave.,
Toronto 12.
HU 1-0260



Authorized as second class mail
by the Post Office Department, Ottawa,
and for payment of postage in cash

Number 192 December 1962

A Night Hike

Blue gentians and snowy peaks, whispering white streams deep in spruce green valleys, and a long road climbing and descending between, such was our introduction to the Engadine as we drove over the famed Fluella Pass from Davos to Zernez that August day. Now in the valley we were comfortably established in the village square at a lovely yellow hotel with the intriguing historic name of The Bear and Post.

Here we were in the heart of Romanche Switzerland, that fourth Switzerland which is not German, not French, not Italian but something all its own, and which most outsiders forget even exists. It has its own language, its own distinctive frescoed, painted and stuccoed houses, its own style of tall, white-spired churches. If you go down the valley you soon come to Austria, and if you climb over the next pass to the south you will find yourself quickly in Italy. Up the valley is bustling St. Moritz but here at this south-eastern corner of Switzerland is one of the quietest, one of the most secret parts of the country. It is fitting that here we should find the Swiss National Park.

Founded only forty-eight years ago for the protection and study of wild life, just when the tragedy of 1914 was bursting upon the world, the success of this great naturalist experiment is now written on the slopes of every one of the wild mountains that rear their snow-capped heads within the boundaries of the park.

This is an old, a small and a crowded country but here in the Engadine Dolomites we had only to walk from the village square of Zernez across a few hundred yards of pasture and come to the edge of the national park and immediately we stepped into such masses of wonderful wild bloom as made us gasp in astonished pleasure. We had seen quantities of flowers elsewhere but nothing like this. Great pinks, green-centred,

cream-colored, and fringed like ferns, violet-blue phyteumas, yellow monkshood, medallions of great white thistles sitting snug upon the ground, and more and more and more. Climb up the path a little and find sedums and sempervirens in red and white and yellow splashed all over the rocks of the cliffs beside the trail, find our own twin-flower in delicate profusion, find twenty kinds of orchids within an hour or so of the village. Climb a bit higher still and find the velvety sulphur yellow anemone nodding in the breeze. Gaze down over long green slopes, ancient meadows returning to the wild, where you see indigo streams plunging down amidst the green. Is it a well of ink flowing thus? No, No. When you go to see what this strange phenomenon may be it turns into a living run of deep-blue monkshood. Every turn in the many trails brings a new discovery. No wonder we found more than a hundred kinds of flowers entirely new to our experience, and this in a mere four days.

Birds were there too. Not a day passed that we did not see golden eagles soaring over our heads. Up behind the hotel not many minutes walk was a large cliff, and along the crevices and nooks of this a considerable colony of Alpine choughs found their night's roost. We could see them streaming in as the bells of the tall white church rang for evening prayer, and hear their softened chatter mingled with the music. Up beyond the cliff along the edge of the field rare grey-headed woodpeckers could be found clinging to the walls of old grey ruins, picking out insects or grit from cracks in the crumbling rocks. Green finches flushed from pathside bushes and black redstarts flashed their brilliant colors as they darted out in tiny forays above the bubbling spring. The elusive hoopoe we could not discover led us on to more and more finds. To the naturalist this was a wonderful land.

Of all the hikes and rambles that we took there by far the most rewarding was the one that began at night. Yes, we arose at 2.30 and were ready at 3.00 a.m. At that hour one is a little uncertain as to whether it's all going to be worth the effort. Through the mediation of the friendly hotel proprietor we had arranged with a guide--later, we learned that he is one of the best-known of Swiss guides--to take us deep into the park on a dawn exploration. Our guide was ready when we appeared in the village square, and he and an English naturalist came with us whilst a Swiss family followed in another car.

Perhaps it was fortunate that it was dark for the route we had to follow was the road towards the Il Fuorn pass into Italy. Built in 1872 it was then regarded as one of the most spectacular of Alpine roads. It is now being rebuilt, as we were soon to discover, but a large part of it differed but slightly from the days of the nineteenth century. Winding, twisting, turning, doubling on itself it jerked up the heights. In the dark we could not see the breath-taking drops, the precipitous fall-offs from hair-pin bends, nor could we know as we edged over rough new construction that the old retaining wall had been removed and we were inching across an open slope that led straight as a ski slide to the take-off into thin air and a valley bottom 1500 feet below. We only found out on the way back when the guide calmly pointed out this spot and informed us that here it was that a few years ago a great avalanche had overwhelmed a party on the road and several lives were lost, including his own brother and uncle. He had helped to dig them out. But we didn't know so it was not too long before we reached as close to the part where the guide was taking us as we could get by car. The cars were left by the road and we started out on foot.

Once free of the woods the trail took us across an old meadow and then to the banks of a rushing mountain torrent. All silvery in the moonlight it made almost a lighted path as we followed along beside. The deep black shadows were tricky, however,

and we had to watch our steps. Three times the guide led us across the tumbling water on logs. Up and up we went, resting momentarily, always keeping as quiet as possible. Up now to bare ridges, and on up till we were far above the tree line. It was dark going here for the moon had disappeared behind the western peaks. Another ridge upward and there was snow straight ahead whilst above us, dimly seen in a vaguely lit sky rose the last sheer precipices of this mountain.

Our leader signalled to us to sit down, and to keep absolutely quiet. The Swiss family had a little trouble keeping their two children still but discipline is good in Swiss homes and silence quickly reigned. We found ourselves awaiting the dawn resting in a carpet of edelweiss, red orchids and primulas. As the first rosy light filtered across the eastern peaks it lighted up jagged snowy pinnacles, mysterious turrets and crests in every direction. All along the Italian border to the south it was as if a gigantic battlement was taking fire. A fantastic setting this where almost anything could happen. In a moment it did.

Dimly the light began to penetrate to our ridges and the guide began peering about. "There they are," he whispered, pointing to a farther ridge. Straining our eyes to see we made out a group of large shapes--animals moving slowly down the ridge. Another group and another. But, Hush, here are some right near us on our own ridge. The light strengthens, and there all at once are six tremendous Alpine stags, each one sporting incredible antlers, silhouetted as a group against the sky, not more than one hundred and fifty yards away, statuary in the dawn, with rosy tints emphasizing the highlights of magnificent heads and bodies. Ears lifted, nostrils twitched, watchful eyes peered in our direction. We scarcely dared to breathe. Then the heads turned back, the great animals began to feed. We have been passed; the opinion is "harmless". At once the huge stags were joined by twenty deer, does and young. Before us twenty-six deer, alert but unalarmed, forage for breakfast in their Alpine pasture. Slowly, unhurriedly they worked down the ridge. On the neighboring ridges dozens of others were proceeding down in a similar way. From their nighttime haunts they were proceeding in this manner to their daytime feeding grounds in the woods.

As the sun mounted higher I turned to look up at the knife-edge eastern peak above us. My glance swept up over the snow to the uppermost bare, seemingly perpendicular cliffs rising like a mastodon's teeth into the sky, and each one etched in gold by the rising sun. Suddenly, right at the top of the highest tooth a horned head appeared. Unbelievable, I thought. Yet in another second a chamois leaped into full view, followed at once by a second one. Chamois leaping in the sunlight at the top of the world as naturally as the deer strolling down the ridges. Surely, indeed, anything could happen here. It was happening before our eyes.

Yet, when I pointed these animals out, the guide showed little interest. I was a bit nettled, but the explanation came soon. As the deer disappeared down towards the woods the guide started us into motion again, choosing this time a new route. Across the ridge we went and there we stood on the plunging edge of a vast undreamed-of valley, the Val dal Botsch, the Valley of the Chamois! Carefully were we led along a knife-edge path, feeling like chamois ourselves, though rather less sure-footed as we cautiously negotiated this trail, looking down through Alpine roses into breathless depths below. Now, where little widenings permitted the guide halted us and gazing in a knowing way towards cliffs and long brown talus slopes across the V-shaped valley he spotted chamois climbing, feeding, resting. No wonder he had been cool to my discovery, he knew what was ahead. Yet not once did we see any of these agile creatures leaping like that first pair on the very top of all. At least he spied a really contented

chamois, lying under a bush, not more than a hundred yards from the trail. This animal watched us intensely but showed no fear, and kept on as placidly chewing its cud as any cow in a pasture. With the guide's telescope we could count every knick on the up-swept horns--a wonderful look, but, somehow, I liked my leapers best.

The trail was dropping rapidly now and we were getting close to the wooded slopes again. All at once the guide called us to another halt, and warned us to be very quiet. Doing as he bid we stopped whilst he tiptoed warily towards the entrance to a glen. Having peeked around the corner into the vale he withdrew and signed to us to come on down and to keep to the grassy verge of the trail so as to make no noise. Arriving at the corner we too peered around. Before us sat three large Alpine marmots, each one beside an entrance to a den, like prairie dogs in our own west. For a brief moment the three watched us, then two uttering shrill whistles dived down into their holes but the third remained to be watched in the 'scope until we moved on.

Down the path we went into the woods, so full of what we had seen we could hardly talk. We met other people, just coming up, and we felt a bit sorry for them. It seemed that they did not realize that the stags and deer spend the night on the high bare ridges above the trees and move down into the woods at dawn, and in the woods they are but rarely seen; that the chamois often go to rest like the one we had seen chewing its cud; that the marmots are extremely wary unless one knows just where to look, and how. For us our guide had known all this, and he had shown all he'd promised and more. Without him we would have been as lost as were these unguided people climbing up too late.

So were we back at Zernez in time for breakfast at 9.00, having left our guide setting off for a regular day's work!

If you are a naturalist seeking top-flight adventure try the Swiss National Park.

x x x x x x x x x

Everywhere in the world that you find national or state-administered national parks you will find in the story of their origins and their continuing support the inspiration of naturalists. John Muir and Yosemite National Park in the United States are, for example, forever inseparable. As in America so it was in Switzerland which owed much to the American example. The founding of the Swiss National Park was equally linked to the name of a famous naturalist, Dr. Paul Sarasin. Yet without the backing and influence of other naturalists Sarasin's inspired efforts might have gone for nothing. It was the Swiss Society for the Protection of Nature (Schweizerischer Bund für Naturschutz), founded in 1909, which created the necessary public interest and support that finally resulted in the foundation of the Swiss National Park in 1914 with the essential cooperation of the Federal and Cantonal authorities. The success of this great naturalist endeavor has been so far-reaching that the National Park has become one of the elements of Swiss national life of which its citizens are most proud. In so small a country which has so little land to set aside this is a tribute to great vision and a happy sense of human values.

Mrs. Saunders and I were so favorably impressed with what we saw in this wonderful area that I publish here the information bulletin, published by the Tourist Bureau of the Grisons (Verkehrsverein für Graubünden, Chur), which will give a modicum of information about the park. There is also an illustrated Short Guide to the Swiss National Park, published in English by the same agency. For those who read German there

is the standard work, Der Schweizerische Nationalpark, by Stefan Brunies, published by Bruno Schwabe and Co. Verlag of Basel.

The Swiss National Park

A burden of foreboding weighs down our time: behind us lie two world wars that brought us no peace; before us waits the threat of an even more terrible third conflict, overshadowed by the atomic bomb.

Yet in technical and scientific domains we are passing through an era of large-scale progress. Out of a gigantic research effort emerge technical wonders: radar, establishing our communications with the ether; aviation, conquering the distances of our planet in a matter of hours; hydro-electric schemes, harnessing the water-power of whole geographical regions.

The natural sciences have scaled undreamed-of heights in the short span of the twentieth century. Huge astronomic instruments have revealed galaxies whose size and distance defy the powers of our imagination. Even within Switzerland's narrow confines we are spoilt by astonishing accomplishments. Is it, after all, merely a matter of course that the Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research should be able to announce each day the snow conditions prevailing throughout the land, and to minimize the danger of avalanches by timely warnings; or that the Swiss Meteorological Centre should be able to forecast the daily weather conditions from a mosaic of exact measurements taken from Siberia to Iceland, from the Azores to Asia Minor?

Has not in fact the whole research programme of the natural sciences undergone a radical change? For over a century it was dominated by the exactitude of the Linnaean system, based on genus and species of the various plants and animals, a system which long provided full occupation for industrious research scientists throughout the world. But it was gradually realised that the existence of any individual species could not be regarded as an isolated and independent fact, but that each species must belong to a regional and topographical community known as a biocoenosis, and that only within these groups could harmonious conditions prevail. The indoor scholar, who admittedly had a meritorious achievement to his credit, was replaced on an ever-widening scale by the open-air research worker, whose aim was no longer to establish a meticulously accurate nomenclature for the many varieties of plant and animal life, or to allocate specimens with discerning care to herbaria or insect collections, but instead to study the natural and purposeful union of all the life-forms of a given region in a single biological harmony. Living nature had supplanted the exanimate treasures of natural history museums.

It was the triumph of this new and more natural trend of research which first prompted the idea of nature reserves and led to the creation of a Swiss National Park in the wild Engadine Dolomites. We cannot rate too highly the farsightedness of the pioneers of this park, who, at a time when the new scientific departure was still in its early stages, secured for their purpose a border area between the Eastern and Western Alps which regionally, dimensionally and geographically forms a unique domain for the pursuance of scientific research.

Today, forty years later, we know that it would now be unthinkable to set aside a reserve of equal size and value in a country which is rapidly becoming overpopulated. But though it is not granted to our own generation to create anything of equal grandeur,

we should nevertheless be conscious of our duty to preserve intact and to administer faithfully this heritage of our fathers.

The designation "park" has seemed to some Swiss inappropriate. It is in fact a name borrowed from America, and one that involuntarily evokes a picture of a well-tended product of the landscape gardener's art--exactly the opposite of what our own park seeks to be and fortunately still is. But critics of the name have still to furnish an alternative that is both apter and equally short.

It should be emphasised at this point that the Swiss National Park is not only the large-scale laboratory of a handful of scientists, but an open-air monument dedicated to the whole of the Swiss people and more especially to Swiss youth. To this happy symbiosis of science, love of the Alpine soil and attention to the needs of youth we shall return later.

The history of the National Park has already become the subject of a comprehensive literature, from which the basic work by Dr. S. Brunies still stands out. The fourth edition of his book, "Der Schweizerische Nationalpark", appeared in 1947. The small guide of 1946 may also be mentioned as providing the visitor with a concise and practical introduction to the subject.

We have only to turn back a few pages of history to find ourselves in the era of the founders. Two wanderers* stop to rest on some high vantage-point from which they can survey the land. One of them is the high-minded "Profax" with the flowing beard and the sunny eyes shining over bothersome glasses. The other is the brown, taciturn Grisons forester whose patriarchal age no one would have guessed.

The gaze of the two wanderers runs thoughtfully over the unending expanse of forest from which rise the colourful heights of the Engadine Dolomites, while only in the far distance shimmer snow-covered peaks. Here the hope of a Swiss poet was to be fulfilled: This unique landscape was to remain untouched by the storms of time, an altar to science and at the same time a natural sanctuary of the Swiss nation and its youth. This was the daybreak of the Swiss National Park!

A committee for the protection of natural beauties formed by the Schweizerische Naturforschende Gesellschaft (Swiss Nature Research Association, a body founded by the great naturalist Sarasin) was the first official body to support the National Park. It speaks well for the ethics of the Swiss people, and not less for the sympathy shown by its scientific academy, the S.N.G., towards popular needs, that two widely disparate interests, science and the conservation of wild life, should have joined in cordial collaboration on this question from the very first. The year 1909 saw the founding of the Schweizerischer Bund für Naturschutz (Swiss Union for the Protection of Nature), which, by collecting modest contributions from as broad as possible a sector of the public, was to become a permanent source of funds for meeting the obligations of the National Park. If only because of these financial worries, the National Park had necessarily to be built up step by step. The main contract, which was concluded in November-December 1913 for a period of 99 years, between the Swiss Government and the Commune of Zernez, covered the valleys of Tantermozza and Cluoza, together with the districts of Praspöl, Fuorn and Stabelschod. Later, supplementary contracts were signed

---

*Prof. C. Schröter and Chief Forest Inspector Coaz.

and extensions of the park area negotiated with the Communes of Zernez, S-chanf, Scuol/ Schuls and Valchava. Today the National Park comprises an area of about 62 square miles, adjoined by the 12-1/2 square miles of the Federal game sanctuaries of Selva, Carolina, Varusch and Tavrü.

A resolution passed by the Federal Parliament in 1914 after a high-principled discussion in the two Federal Councils formed the official act of foundation of the Swiss National Park, which was at the same time assured of the moral and financial support of the Confederation.

The Park is superintended and administered by the Eidgenössische Nationalpark-Kommission (Federal National Park Commission) which appoints an Overseer and local keepers. Customs officials and frontier guards give a helping hand in the difficult task of supervising the extensive park area, which is bounded for long distances by the Swiss frontier. Administrative regulations apply to the admission of visitors, the construction of paths and shelters and the punishment of offences.

The resolution of the Federal Parliament also called into existence a Scientific National Park Commission. This body entrusts a team of specialised scientists, comprising geologists, climatologists, botanists, zoologists, soil specialists, hydro-biologists, etc., with various individual investigations.

An extremely welcome aid to the scientific research carried on in the park is the laboratory erected by the Swiss Union for the Protection of Nature in the free area of Il Fuorn.

Beginning at its imposing corner-stone, Piz d'Esan, opposite the village of S-chanf, the boundary of the park passes over the heights bordering the right-hand bank of the River Inn as far as the villages of Tarasp and Scuol/Schuls. In this region the limits of wild life rise to unusual altitudes: the woods climb to 7,500 ft. above sea level, the snow-line is reached only at 10,000 ft. An immense covering of inter-connected forests, the whole larger than the smallest Swiss cantons, is broken only at rare intervals by the clearings that were once pastures, where now the trees once more close in to claim their ancient territory.

No other area of Switzerland would have been more suitable for a large reservation than the Fuorn group, bedded geologically between East and West, between the Bernina Group and the Otztal Alps, between Silvretta and Ortler, a region poor in glaciers and perpetual snows but rich in colourful summits and ridges. And outside the bounds of the park--is not the Engadine itself a precious gem, this high valley of the Lower Inn, with its white villages, so often set on picturesque terraces, its stately Engadine houses that blend so harmoniously with the landscape, broad-based yet full of atmospheric charm, their thick walls adorned with rich graffito work, with vaulted porches and tiny windows that peer inquisitively out on the winding village street and greet the wanderer with a glory of carnations? Only in this remote vale was it granted to the Romanic inhabitants, hemmed in by two great cultures, to cultivate and conserve a third: the heritage of the "quarta lingua", Raeto-Romance, which the Swiss people has magnanimously recognised as a fourth national tongue, but which in recent times has again seemed menaced by more than one cultural development.

The Ofenbergstrasse, the road leading from Zernez to the Münster Valley, with the enclave of the Il Fuorn Park. This unavoidable line of communication passes through wooded regions in which, with the exception of the silver fir, all the coniferous trees of Switzerland are richly represented: larches and cembra pine, spruces and mountain pine, and the peculiar Engadine pine, a striking Alpine species of the Scotch pine.

It is not for us here to linger over the colourful splendour of Alpine flora or the charm of the shy creatures that here live in freedom. The scientist can turn to the park library, which is already generously endowed. All the many aspects of life in the park await the explorer's attention, from the proud monarch of the skies and the wild stag in the thicket to the microcosm of living things in water and earth, which recent research sees as scarcely inferior in importance to the brighter show of plants and flowers.

The only animal to be re-introduced by man into the National Park was the ibex, an animal which appears in the armorial bearings of Alt Fry Rätien (Old Free Raetia) and of the Commune of Zernez and was in earlier days certainly no stranger here. For though the ibex was hunted to extinction in Switzerland in centuries gone by, the discovery of old ibex horns in the park confines reminds us that this was once the highland home of this magnificent creature. Even the roe found its way back into the park--this time without human aid--only in 1885, and the stag did not appear till 1916. The larger European carnivores, wolf, bear, lynx and wildcat, have disappeared from the park for good. While elsewhere in our day nature is continually being driven back in the struggle for arable land, we can observe in the National Park the unique spectacle of arable land--however restricted it was in the park area--being voluntarily returned by man to nature. At these spots the traces of human cultivation will gradually vanish, and the mountain forest will creep back slowly over its old domain. The solemn peace of nature has been restored: the familiar bells of the grazing Alpine herds no longer sound; the report of the hunter's gun no longer echoes from the rocky walls; the monotonous call of the wood-cutter, the regular fall of his axe, have died away. Only the place-names are retained in honour of the lingua ladina, even where nature has now destroyed their justification. No further interference is allowed in the life and survival of plants and animals within the bounds of the park. Both must continue the struggle for existence alone. Whether they flourish and are fruitful, whether they are fated to suffer a tragic end--Nature herself, and not man, has to make the grand and dispassionate choice. It is this delivery from human dominion that constitutes the fundamental difference between the National Park and a hunting preserve. The distinction, so often abused, between the useful and the destructive has here been finally discarded.

Yet the mills of God grind slowly, and the forty years since the first part contracts for the National Park were signed is a short span in the evolution of nature, whose changes are as yet scarcely visible to the investigating scientist from his steady scrutiny of developments.

The meadows that formerly were mowed each year or were grazed by cattle naturally underwent modifications when they were left to themselves, and the same is true of the overmanured ground where the cattle once clustered to pass the night. The forest slowly advances into the open land, while the former flora of the well-tended meadows and pastures is ousted by the thinner vegetation of the higher slopes. But these differences in flora must lead to changes in the rich insect life, and this in its turn cannot fail to influence the movements of insectivorous birds. The prohibition of hunting has fostered the development of the fauna, and particularly the marmot, but an increase in the numbers of predatory animals and birds is ensuring the restoration of equilibrium. Darwin's "struggle for existence" has never been demonstrated more impressively than in this exemplary biological mode.

With the creation of an experimental nature reserve of these dimensions and of this character, Switzerland has taken the lead among the nations. Prof. Schröter, one of the brightest figures among the founders, was to have the opportunity of claiming,

not without joy and pride, that the Swiss National Park is the "greatest biological experiment of all time". The steady progress of research in this single area will disclose facts of general validity, some of them of great economic importance. To offer only one example, the study of certain key problems of biology in the park will yield information permitting new advances to be made in the agriculture, dairy farming and forestry of the whole Alpine zone.

Hand in hand with scientific research in the park goes the ethical idea of the conservation of natural beauties. If we look back into the press of the foundation and development years, or better still if we glance through the shorthand bulletins of the Federal Councils, we find a number of historical and cultural considerations which were of the greatest significance for the future of the new idea of protecting and preserving wild life in its natural environment. Here and there we also find a comic intermezzo, as when one otherwise shrewd councillor expressed his horror at the thought that, if wolves, lynxes and vultures were to be allowed to flourish up in the Grisons highland, he might one day meet with some stray specimen on his Sunday afternoon stroll!

But apart from such refreshing digressions, the negotiations bear witness to an elevated sense of the social good of the cause, which was soon to flow outwards to wide sectors of the populace. Above all, a small body of teachers took up the idea of the National Park with a warm-hearted enthusiasm which they were able to impart to Switzerland's youth.

Anyone who has watched a class of school-children enter the National Park in the care of an understanding teacher is not likely to forget the sight. Deeply impressed, the pupils step shyly into this world of which their teacher has already told them so much. Has he not instructed them that here no flower is to be picked, no animal disturbed as it goes about the business of living?

Not, of course, that the idea of the park is in any way bound up with sentimentality. The single flower, or the beetle the child steps aside to avoid treading on, are not in themselves important. But the impression made on the child's mind is important, the idea that somewhere on earth there is a place where a mankind normally so full of itself has no right to disturb, and where each child can save the life of a flower or a beetle on its path. The thought does not lie fallow in the child's brain: many wanderers in the park will save many small lives. Might one not do the same outside the National Park? And when the child returns to its family circle to tell over excitedly the story of its park journey, might not even fathers and mothers begin to wonder whether the practice, on their country walks, of killing all small creeping and flying things--collectively known as "vermin"--has been just the right thing? Is it not a winning thought that the spirit of the National Park may thus find its advocates in our young folk, that the plea of St. Francis for the protection of God's small creatures may be carried by our children out of the wilderness of the National Park into the wider frontiers of Switzerland and the world? The long miseries of war have hardened many hearts; but it is time for a living stream of human goodness, of brotherly love, to pervade and warm the spirits of the peoples.

May the Swiss National Park remain, long after our own generation has passed on its way, the august symbol of a double trust: a splendid open-air laboratory for the study of the ways of nature, and a sanctuary as venerable as the Rütli meadow, keeping alive the love of nature and of their country in the hearts of our youth and of the whole Swiss people.

x x x x x x x x x

Note: All indications suggest that a movement south of the rare hawk owl and boreal owl is underway this winter. The first is active in the daytime and should be looked for on the tops of trees, telephone poles, or other such places in pasture land, swamps, and near the edges of wooded openings. It suggests a hawk at first sight but the large, rounded head gives it away as an owl. The second is a small owl, larger than but similar to a saw-whet, and should be looked for in evergreen groves and dense thickets, where it likes to spend the day. At least a dozen of the first and three of the second have been reported in southern Ontario. This is an unprecedented number to be seen so far south.

R. M. Saunders,
Editor.

x x x x x x x x x

AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

We are pleased to announce a very successful sale of series tickets for this year's Audubon Wildlife Films. If the remaining three lectures are of as good quality as the first two (and we think they will be) this will be a bumper year for entertainment, educational value, and financial profit.

A few good seats are still available for the next lecture, on Tuesday, January 29th, at Eaton Auditorium at 8.15 p.m.: Charles T. Hotchkiss, "Wilderness Trails"--mountains, glaciers, geysers, mangrove swamps and golden glades, with their sharply contrasting wildlife. Tickets are $1.25, obtainable at Eaton Auditorium box office for ten days prior to the lecture. We urge early application as seats are scarce.

This same film is being shown at Streetsville High School on Wednesday, January 30, by the South Peel Naturalists' Club as part of their Audubon Wildlife Films series. For further information, telephone Mrs. Lucy McDougall, CR 8-2526.

M. Robson, Secretary.