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Welcome to Montreux

This is possibly your first visit to Switzerland and to Montreux and we, the citizens of the town, would have you know how glad we are to extend the hand of welcome to you and to wish you a very pleasant if, for us, all-too-short stay in our midst.

Maybe in the years to come, when the noise of battle has died and is forgotten, when the difficulties attendant on the transition from war to peace have been finally overcome and the world is again peaceful and prosperous, you will remember Montreux and its people and perhaps feel the desire to return for a longer and a more leisureed visit than is possible to-day.

You know, it is said that he who has once seen Montreux always returns. We venture to hope that its attractions will prove irresistible to you also.

It may be of interest to you to know something of the history and the natural characteristics of the town which you are now visiting. Montreux is the general name given to that portion of the northern bank of the Lake of Geneva, or to give it its correct name, the Lake Lemán, which extends for some five miles east to the end of the lake at Villeneuve. It is delightfully situated and is protected by the high ridge of mountains which you will see rising at the back of the town

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and called Les Verraux, the highest point of which is the Rochers de Naye at a height of 6,473 feet above sea level. Owing to the protection afforded by this range of mountains, from cold north and east winds, the climate of Montreux is remarkably mild and agreeable even in Winter, and in Spring and Autumn attracts thousands of visitors. This mild climate is one of the reasons why so many people in search of health, or who are no longer young, visit the town in increasing numbers every year.

Montreux for administrative purposes is composed of three sections or communes namely: the commune of Chatelard on the western side of the town, that of Planches in the centre and of Veytaux at the eastern extremity. The total population of the three communes is about 15,000 people of which perhaps 2000 are of other nationalities than Swiss.

From the slopes above the town, beyond the vineyards, which by the way yield a very pleasant

wine, exquisite views may be enjoyed in abundance; the blue surface of the lake with the green meadows above and the snow-crueted fangs of the Dents du Midi in the distance make a picture of unbelievable loveliness. It is a region praised in song, verse and story over and over again, whilst artists from all over the world come to paint its beauties. How many poets have extolled the loveliness of this terrestrial paradise? Byron found it a beautiful as a dream and Mendelssohn sang its praises in rapturous language. Lord Byron lived in the district for a short period in 1816, and in Clarens at the western end of the town will be found a house in the Rue du Lac, bearing a tablet to this effect.

Throughout the Spring and Summer its valleys are ablaze with flowers growing in wild profusion, in Spring its abundant orchards are aglow with blossom, and in the autumn the beauty of the sunsets on its lake are beyond description.

The origin of the name Montreux is obscure

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and the town boasts of little history. 80 years ago the vineyards which you will see above the town came down as far as the lake's edge and the village of Montreux, or Planches as it was then called was perched on a shelf (as its name implies) on the mountain-side some half a mile above the lake. A walk above the present-day city through the old village of Planches with its narrow streets and old houses, is very interesting and a visit to the old museum in the village is to be recommended. Check by jowl with these old houses of 300 or more years ago are to be seen magnificent modern buildings proof of Montreux's desire to keep abreast of the times.

Montreux however, possesses a historical monument equal in fame to any in the world, and easily the best known, Chillon Castle.

Situated on a rocky islet near Veytaux at the eastern approach, it was the ancient stronghold of

the Counts of Savoy, and to which Lord Byron brought lasting fame by his poem «The Prisoner of Chillon». The castle has known four distinct periods in its history. The first before the XIIIth. century, the second from the beginning of the XIIIth. century to about 1536, called the saveyard period, the third from 1536 to 1798 when the Lords of Berne ruled the land and the fourth period down to our own times. To-day the castle is carefully preserved as a perfect example of a medieval fortress, but aptly enough it was ready to play its part in the defence of the country in the struggle just concluded, had the necessity arisen. The history of Chillon is the history of this part of Switzerland and for a very modest sum you can visit the castle where a qualified guide is waiting to show you round and under his guidance those old walls will speak for you, prisoner's chains will rattle, the torture chamber

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As you look towards the hills rising above Montreux you will see another old castle set upon an eminence, square-build and solid; it is the Castle of Chatelard built in 1647 as a link in the then defensive system of the country. To-day it is the very handsome residence of a local doctor. The castle is described in Ernest Hemingway's book, «A Farewell to arms» and it was here in Montreux that were played out the last scenes of the tragedy told in that story.

To the east of Chillon Castle is to be found the Montreux beach or plage, where swimming and water sports with all the attractions of an up-to-date lido may be enjoyed. The lake at Montreux is about 1000 feet in depth. Fish abound in its waters giving a livelihood to a small number of professional fishermen and sport to a host of amateurs. Rowing and sailing may be enjoyed on the lake but a word of caution may be necessary as regards sailing because of the sudden storms which sometimes make the sport hazardous. The lake steamers are a feature in the spring and summer and a tour of the upper lake comprising Montreux, Lausanne, across to Evian in France along the south shore to St-Gingolph and back to the starting point at Montreux is a very pleasant afternoon relaxation.

Montreux is characterised by its white clean

streets bordered by smart up-to-date shops of all kinds. For a small town the shops and stores of Montreux deserve special mention. Almost all display their wares with professional taste and the goods are of first-class quality and workmanship. Nothing is gained by going to a larger town in the hope of a better selection. The store-keepers of Montreux know their business and they see to it that their selection of goods is just as attractive and just as reasonably priced as that of their bigger neighbours. And you will find that nearly all the sales-people speak your language.

Another characteristic of the town is its little blue street-cars so clean and so smartly turned out, where the disfiguring hand of business in the shape of hideous advertisements is not allowed to defile. Here again, Montreux can lay claim to fame in that the town was the first in Europe, maybe in the world, to adopt electric traction for street-cars. The cars run east to Villeneuve and west to Vevey, a distance of about 5 miles in each direction. For a small sum it is possible to buy a ticket entitling you to ride all day if you wish over the whole tramway system.

The town possesses a very handsome Casino surrounded by an equally handsome garden. Concerts of classical music are given every afternoon whilst periodically in the well-equipped theatre plays are given by first-class artists. Sooner or later all the high-lights of the musical and artistic



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world come to Montreux and the Casino usually receives them. Every evening an excellent dance-band makes it a dancer's paradise, and in its snappy little bar, refreshments and drinks may be obtained at moderate prices. For the dancer, there is also the Hungaria bar a very popular resort both in the afternoon and evening, whilst at the Perroquet in the centre of the town you have possibly the smartest dance-hall and night-club this side of the Atlantic. For those who prefer dancing out-of-doors, their taste is catered for at the Pavillon des Sports opposite the Montreux-Palace Hotel. Here, the artistically decorated floor makes one imagine oneself back on boardship.

There are four cinemas for film-fans, perhaps not the luxury affairs that are found back home, but you will find them very comfortable, and most of the films are either American or British so the language will not be a difficulty, and if you can't smoke in the hall, there is an interval all-way through the show when you will be able to taste a cigarette.

Tea-shops and cafeteras are numerous and it is quite an interesting pastime to sit on the side-walk before one of the big cafés with your drink before you and watch the world go by.

Every kind of sport may be indulged in Montreux, and there is no lack of partners for tennis, golf, bridge or what you will. Montreux as a centre of travel or sight-seeing is unequalled. It is within 24 hours of all the big capitals of Europe, by train, and it is the starting point of innumerable mountain excursions, and it may be of interest to mention a few.

The Rochers de Naye. — The imposing summit which dominates Montreux and which rises to a height of 6 473 feet. Very spacious and very modern electric cars take the traveller from Montreux directly to the top in 50 minutes on the Montreux-Glion-Naye railway. Or one can travel from Terriet to Glion on the cable railway, and then change into the car coming up from Montreux. At the rail-head on the summit is a very comfortable mountain hotel newly modernised and when time permits it is a good plan to spend the night at the hotel in order to see the wonderful spectacles of sun-set and sun-rise over the Alps. The panoramic view obtained from the top is truly magnificent and one sees all the well-known giants of the alpine ranges of Switzerland. For the botanist there is a very well-kept alpine garden run by a Montreux society, whilst for the hiker, the way down to Montreux on foot is neither tedious nor dangerous.

Half way up to the summit, perched on a natural balcony is Gaux, a pretty mountain station which enjoys a deal of popularity in the winter with ski-runners.

Glion, the first stop on the railway from Montreux is a village of hotels and it is a favourite spot with British and American tourists who like good food and good air.

From Montreux central station you will probably travel on the Montreux-Bernese Oberland Railroad, or as it is known locally, the M.O.B. This electric railroad of narrow gauge is provided with splendid cars of the open-access type with large windows allowing a full view of the country through which one passes. It serves the district between Montreux and Zweisimmen in the Bernese Oberland and which is now known to travellers as the Golden pass route. Here again the scenery beggars description.

Another pleasant tour from Montreux and which takes up an afternoon is that from Clarens to Blonay and back. You take the small street-car from the tram-junction in Clarens and travel to Blonay a small village nestling on a spur of the hill above the lake. One can then either follow the road back on foot through the village of Brent and Chailly to Clarens-Montreux, or continue along the road to Vevey and then take the street car back to Montreux.

And a word about your hosts, the people of Montreux. The natives of the town were originally peasants or wine-growers. Many of them still are, but when, thanks to its climate and its natural beauties, Montreux became the Mecca of the Tourist, many forsook the land and came into the rapidly developing town. Later they became Doctors, tradesmen, hotel-keepers, engineers and schoolmasters, but the roots of the people are in the soil. Their customs, songs and stories deal with the soil and with the vines. They have a great love of song and their choirs, both male and female are a joy to listen to. The people of this part of Switzerland are gay and warm-hearted, very appreciative of the beauty of their country and of their mountains and this love is expressed in song and verse.

But we have said enough and it only remains for us to wish you a very pleasant stay within our walls and that you will carry away with you the generous thoughts and feelings of friendship which the people of Montreux offer you in these few words.

W. V. B.



Chillon Castle

Soldiers of the United States Army, during your stay at Montreux, come and visit Chillon which is a remarkable example of a feudal castle and of a small mediaeval fortress. The castle of Chillon is of world-wide fame. Byron, Victor Hugo and other poets have sung its praise.

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