

location and direction peculiar to expert woodsmen. When asked how he distinguished east from west without the sun or on black and stormy nights, he answered: "There is something inside my forehead that keeps me right, and you can't get lost if you have the feel of the wind and the mountains."

There was not a single shelter on his route, but at Cottage Rock, the half-way mark, he had what he called his Tavern where he slept under a shelving ledge of rock, the space no larger than a baker's oven, and sometimes when he awoke in the morning he had to dig himself out through the snow which had fallen during the night. But he remarked, "to him the Tavern was as luxurious as a palace." The faded, old photograph before me, taken in his later life, shows a very tall bearded man of tremendous proportions, and evidently his vitality and strength were unusual. He had many adventures with wolves, blizzards, avalanches, rescues, etc., all of which his biographer tells us he handled with little difficulty. In addition to carrying the mail for twenty years, he packed in supplies to the mining camps, carried out ore samples, etc., and in 1859 brought in to be assayed at Placerville the first

ore samples from a mine destined to be the greatest silver mine in American history—the Comstock Lode. Not once did this wonderful man suffer an injury or was he laid up through illness.

"The mightiest skier of them all," he won great fame as a professional downhill ski racer and ski jumper, popular pastimes in the mining camps in those days, and a certain W. P. Merrill, postmaster at Genoa, claimed that he had once seen "Snowshoe" make a jump of one hundred and eighty feet without a break, and his biographer adds "that Mr. Merrill was known as a reliable man." (Mr. Merrill I fear was a trifle optimistic—Ed.) For details of the sporting deeds of this ski pioneer and his contemporaries, I refer you to Mr. Mills' interesting article "California Pioneers on Skis" following.

"Snowshoe" Thompson died on his ranch in Diamond Valley, Nevada, May 15, 1876, and is buried in the cemetery at Genoa, Nevada. On the stone, crossed skis. His epitaph—"A pioneer of the Sierras who for twenty years carried the mail over the mountains to isolated camps, rescuing the lost, and giving succor to those in need along the way."

California Pioneers on Skis

By David C. Mills, in "The American Ski Annual"

SKI-RACING as an organized competitive sport, conducted by organizations created for that specific purpose, and in particular downhill ski-racing over measured courses, is a thoroughly American institution. It was born of acute social necessity during one of the most spectacular and romantic phases of our national life, the Gold Rush of '49, almost immediately became semi-professional, and under the stimulus of financial and commercial incentive soon reached a stage of technical development not far behind the most advanced technique of the present day.

Those who were born and raised in the Feather River country in northeastern California have always known this. The races were important events in mountain life and the racers were local heroes. We heard the old timers tell of races at La Porte in 1857, and of the exploits of outstanding racers such as Peter Reandro, Jake Gould, R. Rutherford, Pell Tull and A. Hall who raced in the sixties; Charles McDonald, Chris Keenan, Frank Sharett, John Penman, Tommy Todd, the Hillman Brothers, Henry and Lon Sibley, John Conroy and Sam Jones, famous in the seventies; and in the

eighties and until the turn of the century, the McLaughlin Brothers, Buck Peters and a host of others.

Knowing this, and knowing that the ski is, and has been since pioneer days, an important and indeed indispensable factor in the winter life of the High Sierras, the "natives" have been amused and a bit incensed by the scant recognition of these indisputable historical facts by those who have written on the subject of ski history.

Knowing and proving are, however, very different things, and so much of their faith is legendary that they have had to suffer in silence while the present generation of ski runners has been taught that the organized recreational and competitive phases of ski-running are of fairly recent European origin, that the "sport" originated in Christiana, Norway, in 1870, that the first Ski Club was organized in Christiana in 1877, and that the first tournament ever held that was anything more than a local contest was that conducted by the Christiana Ski Club in 1879.

They have been seriously handicapped in their efforts to give their legends authentic

foundation by the deplorable scarcity of contemporaneous newspaper accounts of early days in that region. The editions of local papers were small. Moreover, almost every scrap of newspaper found immediate use in the domestic economy of that time and place. Consequently, the existing files are incomplete, and it is probable that the legendary beginning of ski-racing at La Porte, in 1857, may never be verified. Fortunately enough data are available to prove Californian priority in this field of organized sport over the claims of any other region on earth, even though it may be impossible to fix the exact date of its inception.

Poorman's Creek and Washington Hill never had post offices and saloons of their own. They were merely placer diggings high up in the Sierra in what is now Plumas County. Even fifty years ago there was little at either place to indicate that at an earlier date hundreds of miners worked feverishly with pick and shovel in search of gold and that their search was amply rewarded. A few scars in the landscape, over which brush and scrub oaks were slowly spreading, some half filled tunnels, their timbers rotted and broken, their mouths concealed by chaparral, and here and there a pile of dead branches covering the mouth of some deserted shaft, bore mute witness to the high hopes and valiant efforts of another generation. These bits of evidence have almost completely vanished, and even the nearby village of Onion Valley has become nothing but a name on the local maps, just another Ghost Town.

These places have, however, some interest to those of us who regard sport as one of the ways of life and therefore of historical importance. It is in a letter from a "local correspondent" at Poorman's Creek, published in the *Plumas Argus* at Quincy, some twenty miles away, nearly eighty years ago, that there is the earliest record of the general use of skis anywhere in the United States; and it is in a letter from the Washington Hill correspondent of the *Plumas Standard*, published at Quincy four years later, that the earliest known reference to ski racing in this country occurs.

"Snowshoe" Thompson had introduced the use of skis in the Sierras, for the purpose of carrying the mails, in 1856. Indeed he is widely credited with the introduction of skis for all purposes in California, but this claim was always denied by old timers in the Feather River country, who placed their introduction in the middle fifties and the beginning of ski-racing at La Porte in 1857. Unfortunately, these legends lack documentary verification, while Thompson's claims are amply verified. The first contemporaneous account of the general use of skis in California is the Poorman's Creek letter of March 3, 1859, as follows:

"Having seen nothing of the *Argus* for some time, I think it best to write to you, that Poorman's has not gone in yet, although a stranger

would think it was about to go under this winter, from the quantity of snow which has fallen here. This has been the hardest winter within the knowledge of the 'oldest inhabitant.' It is estimated that about twenty-five or thirty feet of snow has fallen, at different times, this winter. The snow now lies from eight to ten feet deep, but it is not thought much of, for at Onion Valley, two miles from here, it is twelve or fifteen feet deep. It may be a matter of wonder to some of your readers, how people get about where there is so much snow, but it is the easiest thing in the mountains. Nearly all have Norwegian snow shoes, about nine feet long, four and one half inches wide, shaved thin and turned up in front like a sled runner, and by fastening them to the feet about the middle of the shoe and with a pole in the hands for a balance, a person can run over the light and new fallen snow at railroad speed."

Professor William H. Brewer of the Sheffield Scientific School, while engaged in a survey of the Sierra for Professor Whitney of the California Geological Survey, wrote a letter describing these snowshoes, from Placerville, in 1864. Some years ago his letters were collected and published under the title *Up and Down California in 1860 to 1864*. In the letter in question he speaks of the heavy snowfall in the High Sierra, the difficulty of getting about in it, a difficulty amounting to an impossibility without snowshoes, "the Norwegian, not the Canadian snowshoes, strips of light elastic wood, seven to ten feet long and three or four inches wide." He referred also to newspaper accounts of a race in "an upper town last winter when the time made by the winner was half a mile in thirty-seven seconds."

This reference to ski-racing was not the first for the Washington Hill letter of May 2, 1863, says: "Although we have about twelve feet of snow, which most folks would suppose sufficient to keep us indoors, with the assistance of snowshoes we are enabled to go around and enjoy ourselves very well. We have had three parties at the Onion Valley Hotel this winter, at each of which there was a sufficient number of the fair sex to render them exceedingly agreeable. The most exciting sport we have, however, is snowshoe racing, in which the Washington Hill boys generally come out victorious—they claiming to have produced the best 'dope,' also to have exhibited the most 'sand.'"

Not only does this letter show that the Californians had turned the hard labor of ski-running into a competitive sport at least seven years before the Telemarkians gave their famous exhibition at Christiania, and that inter-camp rivalry had developed sixteen years before the first important European tournament was held, but also that ski-wax or "snowshoe dope," as it was known in the Sierras, had been invented at that time.

During the fifties and sixties, tournaments were held all through the Northern Sierra and as far south as Silver Mountain in Alpine County. Tournaments lasting four or five days were held at La Porte, Onion Valley, Gibsonville, St. Louis, and later Jamison City and Johnsville. They were arranged by local committees as a rule but the inter-camp rivalry aroused by the contests became far too intense for the welfare of the sport and in the winter of 1866 and 1867 the "Alturas Snow Shoe Club" was organized at La Porte for the purpose of conducting and promoting these tournaments.

The *Plumas National* of Quincy in its issue of February 2, 1867, reported: "The Citizens of La Porte have formed a snow shoe club and announce three days' racing, purses ranging from \$25 to \$75. A purse is offered for ladies. Races to be held on 11, 12, 13." And another paragraph in the same paper, "We are informed that the snow shoe races resulted on Monday, the first day, in a triumph for Saw Pit Flat, Peter Reandro winning the first prize of \$50 and Robert Oliver winning the second prize."

The town of La Porte, settled in 1850, was the metropolis of that entire region. Catering to the needs of five or six thousand miners in the canyons thereabouts, the town had fourteen saloons, and two churches, a newspaper, a bank, several hotels and general stores, and more snow in winter than anyone really wanted.

That heavy snowfall (twenty or thirty feet is not unusual there during a "regular, old-fashioned winter"), was not good for business. They spent their leisure moments sitting around home playing poker and seven-up and nursing their chapped and chilblained hands while the gamblers, saloon keepers, hotel men, merchants and even the parsons at La Porte, sat around twiddling their thumbs. It wouldn't do at all.

But the woods were full of Scandinavians. Sooner or later some of them made skis and used them and then others followed suit until everybody fell in line. Winter business in La Porte picked up amazingly.

The transition to sport was almost immediate. The pioneers did not wait six thousand years to find that skiing is fun. When the first ski jumping exhibitions were given, we do not know. Snowshoe Thompson's biographer, writing in the *Overland Monthly* of October, 1886, ten years after Thompson's death, tells of his jumps of eighty feet or more at Genoa, Nevada and Silver Mountain, California, but gives no dates. The *Alpine Chronicle* of March 20, 1869, mentions Thompson's exhibitions of ski jumping and, although giving no dates, fixes these exhibitions at least one year earlier than that of the Telemarkians at Christiana.

That the transition from utility to sport was so rapid at La Porte is not remarkable. A winter lasting from November to May calls for

recreational facilities beyond the ordinary. Those who catered to the social needs of the miners found their patrons, or victims, wearied of indoor games at which they had to lose, from the very nature of the business.

Ski-racing was different. It was an outdoor sport for vigorous young men, open and above board, in the full light of day. It was worth while as a spectacle, man going faster than men had ever gone, faster than horses, faster even than the railroad trains "way back in the States." Betting was fast and furious and the relatively small purses offered were far overshadowed by the "side bets" of contestants and the wagers of their friends.

Be it said for the members of the gambling fraternity, that they knew enough to keep hands off—and be content with the drawing power of the races. Judges, starters and time keepers were invariably men of the highest standing, whose integrity was beyond question. Among the legends of those races from 1857 to well into the present century, there is not one reflecting discredit on the racers or the officials. It was semi-professional sport but the emphasis was on "sport."

"Commercial incentive" was at work as usual for the tournament proved to be the way, and the only way, to mobilize the whole population at frequent intervals in winter time. After the day's work was over the hotel men, saloon keepers, gamblers, merchants and let us hope, the parsons, had their innings at the race-course. Each tournament was a social event with much entertaining in private as well as in public. Moreover, with the increasing use of skis throughout the Sierra, from the Yosemite Valley region on the south to Humboldt County on the Oregon border, the events attracted people from a distance, some to attend and some to participate. So, after the first years, the tournaments were far from local affairs. Men took longer journeys, in point of time, to take part in or witness these races than it now takes to go to St. Moritz or Sun Valley.

Under this stimulus, improvement in the means as well as in the method, was sure and swift. The courses were laid with a view to the best possible time between two points, straight away down hill, no turns, on what is called a fall-line nowadays. The snow packed hard on the course so the groove to increase traction and check side slip was devised. A knife was invented to reduce the labour in cutting the groove. "Dope" or ski-wax as it is now called was invented to make the shoes more slippery than sandpaper and elbow grease could do it. Then dope was made for different snow conditions. Racers teamed up in threes, each having a different dope, the one fortunate in having the appropriate dope for conditions at the time of the race dividing the purse, if he won it, with his two partners. Wind resistance was recognized and overcome by squatting, but as squat-

ting at a mile a minute has its disadvantages, not the least of which is entire loss of control, the crouch was evolved.

The La Porte racing shoe was twelve feet long, three and three-quarters inches broad at the toe, tapering somewhat toward the rear. The groove extended from about fourteen inches back of the upturn throughout the length of the shoe. A toe strap and heel block formed the only harness to hold the shoe on the foot.

The general purpose shoe, eight to ten feet long and a trifle broader than the racing shoe, was, and still is, worn without harness other than toe strap and heel block. In climbing, as herringboning and sidestepping are far too laborious in those great mountains and with long shoes, a canvas bag or moccasin was drawn over the rear, or a piece of rope was wound about the shoe at the foot. On straight downhill runs, without turns, as in these races, harness was not regarded as essential. Neither "stemming" nor "snow-plowing" was practical on a hard packed surface, and especially with twelve foot shoes. The pole was the only practical brake to check speed. The rules provided that the winner was the one first to cross the finish line on one or both shoes. In cross-country work rawhide thongs were sometimes attached to the belt and the toe straps, to prevent the loss of a shoe.

In cross-country work, as in carrying the mails, the nature of the terrain and the great length of the shoe, combine to make the use of harness dangerous, in the opinion of the advocates of the California shoe without harness. With a ten or twelve foot shoe the leverage is enough to tear ligaments or break bones, something these men really dreaded, for it would spell slow, painful and certain death.

To lose a shoe was decidedly embarrassing and dangerous, but not necessarily fatal. Perry Maxwell, long since dead, lost a shoe on the rim of the Canyon of the Middle Fork of the Feather River. That is one of the deepest canyons in the United States—second only to the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, I believe—as rugged as it is deep. Down went the shoe into the depths with Perry after it on his remaining shoe. He recaptured it in a clump of brush on the very edge of the river.

Gus Berg, the La Porte-Quincy mail carrier, rode an avalanche down into Dixie Canyon one day. He lost both shoes which were somehow broken off in front of his feet. He said he bounced around on the surface of that snowslide like a chip on a brook. When things quieted down he made his way to a cabin, borrowed another pair of skis and brought the mail into town.

From 1868 onward there are more available copies of local mountain newspapers, and reports of snowshoe or ski races are more numerous. A reference to the La Porte races in 1869

in the *Sacramento Union* of March 6, said that one of the features was a race for Chinese employed in the mines thereabouts. Twenty Chinese entered, the boy from Howland Flat winning the \$60 purse.

It was in that year, according to my recollection of the legends, that Thompson met his Waterloo at La Porte. There are no contemporary accounts of this affair and it is not worth while to repeat the legend, saturated as it is with regional jealousies. Suffice it to say that Thompson's ungrooved shoes were unsuited to La Porte racing conditions, his equipment did not include "dope" and his technique, however well it served his purposes as a rule, was far behind that of the La Porte downhill racers. He started but failed to cross the finish line. According to legend, Frank Stewart, who was famous not only as a racer but also as a dope maker, won the event. On March 20, 1869, through the columns of the *Alpine Chronicle*, Thompson issued a challenge to the La Porte racers, in which there is evidence enough and to spare of a freshly lacerated ego. He said La Porte racing was unworthy of the name of snowshoe racing as it was nothing but "dope" racing. He said he controlled his speed by turning and running uphill, not with his pole, La Porte fashion. He challenged them to race him next winter in Alpine County for a purse of \$1,000. Here was the beginning of a controversy regarding technique that was renewed in Europe nearly a quarter of a century later, on practically identical grounds.

La Porte refused to take him seriously as a racer and did not accept the challenge. Nor did he ever again attempt the La Porte races though he criticized them freely.

While this affair is still a matter of common knowledge in the Feather River country and there are, or were until recently, a few men still living who were present in person on that occasion, I know of but one newspaper reference to it and that a few years later. The *Plumas National* of March 14, 1874, contains the following "news item" with a somewhat pungent editorial comment thereon. "Snow shoes formerly worn by J. A. Thompson, U. S. mail carrier between Genoa and Placerville (Houghton) are now on display at the Ormsby House, Carson City, as interesting relics of the early history of mountaineering in Nevada. Editor: Wonder if these are the same shoes that he brought with him when he came to La Porte to beat the L. P. boys some years ago. If we remember rightly he went home with a large sized bug in his ear and concluded he didn't know the first principles of handling the 'Greased Boards.'"

In the issue of the *Alpine Chronicle* of March 20, 1869, containing his challenge to the La Porte racers, Thompson described his skis as "9 feet long, turned up in front, flat bottomed, 4 inches wide in front, $3\frac{1}{4}$ behind, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches

thick in center." The grooved shoe had not yet found its way from La Porte to Alpine County even after ten or twelve years.

A particular aversion Thompson held for the La Porte technique was the racers' crouching position. He raced standing upright. He said the La Porte position was a "squat." On the other hand, La Porte regarded the upright position as ladylike, effeminate, assumed by the girls as the only position they could use and keep their skirts from blowing over their heads. In the late sixties girls had attained a high degree of skill, and rivalry was intensely keen, not merely for the purses, but for the much more important social stake. A good snowshoe racer had plenty of admirers.

One outstanding girl in the field at La Porte was the daughter of a prosperous hotel man, very good looking and remarkably strong. She had beaux, but quite naturally wanted more. She was a good racer but not good enough to be certain of winning and those long, mid-Victorian skirts and petticoats irked her.

When the race started there was a moment of intense expectancy for she went into a crouch like a man. But the expected did not happen. As she crouched she held her snowshoe pole over her skirts below her knees, far outdistanced her opponents, won the race, and still remained respectable.

The most famous of all races in that region, one with which the boys of Plumas and Sierra Counties of a few years ago were thoroughly familiar, to its most minute details, is apparently doomed to remain entirely legendary. No printed or written contemporaneous account of it has come to light.

There is of course a good reason for this. The winter of 1874 was the worst in the history of that region and the higher mining camps were completely isolated for long periods. Few "local" items from La Porte appeared in the county papers that winter.

Twenty or thirty feet of snow at La Porte is not unusual but that winter the town was completely buried time and again. It was in that winter that Tommy Todd, according to legend confirmed by witnesses still living, ran 1,804 feet in fourteen seconds, or about eighty-eight miles per hour. That I believe is the fastest time ever made anywhere on skis without harness or other special equipment.

Mr. Joseph McLaughlin, a famous La Porte racer of the eighties, told me the other day that he saw that race, that it was competently timed, and that there can be no doubt of the authenticity of the record. He said further that the night before the race there had been a sleet storm and the course was therefore unusually fast. My own recollection of that course is that in its 1,804 feet there was a drop of 1,000 feet. It would be fast with a glaze of ice on it!

In the other races, of which records exist, the time for this course runs from seventeen to

twenty-two or twenty-three seconds. On the Mohawk track, 1,800 feet, and the Jamison track, 1,900 feet, Frank Woodward made records of seventeen seconds that were never broken, the time over each of these courses usually running to twenty or twenty-five seconds. On several occasions seventeen seconds has been made at La Porte. But Todd's fourteen second run stands alone for had a seventeen second man been competing with him that day Todd would have finished over a hundred yards ahead of him.

I have referred somewhat casually to the fact that the groove was a La Porte invention. This is a legend firmly believed in the Feather River country, and as far as America is concerned it has not been disproved. While the groove may have been used abroad a thousand years ago, it was not introduced here by the Scandinavian pioneers. Silver Mountain in Alpine County, settled by Scandinavians in 1853, knew nothing of the groove. Thompson knew nothing of it. It was unquestionably original to La Porte. The original grooving tool is still in the possession of a gentleman residing in Plumas County. Like the snowshoe for horses invented in Plumas County in 1868, and still in common use, it may have been derived from a similar device of olden times, but of this the pioneer inventors were unaware.

In the sixties, dope making had become a recognized business at La Porte and Gibsonville. The names of Madden, Pike, Williams, and Stewart, local makers of racing dope, were known all through that region. The mixtures were very secret and rivalry between different makers intensely keen. The Howland Flat correspondent of the *Sacramento Union* of March 28, 1868, reporting a Howland Flat tournament gave the following description for the benefit of unenlightened Sacramento Valley dwellers, but if he had his tongue in his cheek the record does not show.

"First the bottoms are highly polished and tar is burned on and rubbed to a mahogany finish. Then the dope is put on consisting of Spermacetti, Burgundy Pitch, Canada Pitch, Balsam of Fir, Venice Turpentine, Oil of Cedar, Camphor and Castor Oil."

Long after the mines had petered out and the mining population had dwindled to a few hundred where thousands had been, the ski tournaments continued. Those who were left had grown up on skis. The entire community skied and the interest in racing was as strong as in the old days, though inter-camp rivalry gave way in some degree to personal rivalry. The races were still important events, though in the sixties and seventies the entry lists were longer than in later years. Single races with fifty or sixty entries were common at one time and were run off by squads of eight or nine contestants, the squad winners fighting it out in a final race.

But recreational ski-ing was not limited to racing. Racing was merely incidental. Men, women and children skied because they had to, or stay indoors. Children went to school and parties of young people went picnicing on skis.

It was on such a picnic that a ten-year-old girl threw away her pole, on a dare, at the top of Spanish Peak, and skied down to Meadow Valley at its foot, a feat comparable to a run down the headwall of Tuckerman Ravine. The distance is only four or five miles and unless you follow the road it is free from obstacles for all but the last mile or so. There you run into a fine stand of timber, two hundred foot pines, very substantial. The Peak towers over Meadow Valley some three thousand feet. She lived to become a charming lady and is still living on the slope of her beloved mountain. Her stunt that day over half a century ago is evidence that the technique of that period was not entirely dependent on the use of the pole but also involved the use of various "turns" even though the names "Telemark" and "Christiana" were of much later contrivance, and Jump and Tempo turns were still to be invented. Walter Robinson, a boy who lost his life in an avalanche on Spanish Peak in 1880 while on an errand of mercy, was known for his skill in what would now be known as "slalom," dodging obstacles at high speed.

The pioneers skied for business and pleasure and some of them combined the two. No one in his right mind would have endured the hardships, the fatigue and the ever-present danger, all in the course of a mail carrier's day's work, only for the pay he drew. Snowshoe Thompson did not carry the mails through the Lake Tahoe region from Placerville or from Murphy's Camp to Carson Valley for money alone. Neither did Dave Hayes carry the mails over Sonora Pass, nine thousand six hundred feet above the sea, on the Sonora Bridgeport mail route, for the money incentive entirely. They were sportsmen, professional sportsmen, of a high order, so regarded themselves and were so esteemed. They moved about with a halo of well-earned glory of which they were pleasantly conscious.

Their routes were strictly cross-country with little if any regard for roads. In consequence they developed considerable skill in ski jumping. However, there is no evidence of jumping contests at that time, and Thompson alone appears in the records as an exhibition ski-jumper.

He died at Genoa, Nevada, three years before ski racing and jumping were recognized as organized sport in his native Norway. A pair of crossed skis is carved on his headstone in the village cemetery.

We Build Our Ski Camp

By W.K.B.

FOR SEVERAL years we rented ski camps in the Laurentians, but each year the prices went up and the accommodation for what we could pay was poor. So I decided at last to build my own ski cabin at home in my leisure time, in the cellar, in panels, and when it was completed to move it up by truck to the country and rent a piece of land in a good location from some farmer.

We (my wife and I) spent about a year looking over the country between Shawbridge and St. Agathe. As we wanted to use the camp winter and summer it had to be near water, near the station, near provisions, not too far from a village, in a good ski-ing locality, and yet private and away from the crowd. We investigated along the railway line going back two or three miles in each direction. When we found a spot that looked fine in winter we visited it in summer. Practically no lakes were available, some fine spots had no water, others were inaccessible. Locations on the river or lake front have so many flies that they are

impossible in summer unless all the underbrush is cut for quite some distance around. Usually the lake is small and the river narrow and the site is in a hollow so there is little or no breeze, and in summer the heat is bad. As the camp was really a ski camp we decided to place it high on a hill where it would be more suitable for ski-ing.

The location we finally selected is on the brow of a high hill commanding a lovely view overlooking the nearby village and just off the road. There are several shade trees on our lot with a large sheer-faced mountain directly to the rear of the house from the top of which Montreal can be seen on a clear day. Below us is the North River where we swim in summer. We are a quarter of a mile from the station, a half mile from the village cross country and one mile by the road. The location is windy, so there are no flies except for about ten days each year. The farmer who supplies us with all our food except meat is just down the hill, as is also the drinking water. In the winter it blows a gale