

How does Mount Pilatus affect you?

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How Does Mount Pilatus Affect You ?

Mount Pilatus may be just another mountain to you. But to the Celtic Helvetii it was a sacred mountain and to the superstitious people of the Middle Ages it was haunted. They called it Mount Pilatus in fear, blaming the violent spirit of Pontious Pilate, whose body was sunk in a mire on the heights, for the havoc of storms and floods.

As supernatural gradually found natural explanation, the name of Mount Pilatus grew from infamy to fame. To 18th-century geologists and botanists it became a mecca for scientific exploration, and to a party of distinguished ladies of the Lucerne aristocracy an occasion in 1760 to create a sensation as the first feminine tourists to venture up Mount Pilatus.

To the enterprising of the 19th century Mount Pilatus had become a challenge. To lodge the growing number of visitors, two hotels were built on the peaks, everything laboriously carried by man and mule.

That to a composer of such dramatic power as Richard Wagner the demoniac aura of Pilatus inspired his "Twilight of the Gods" seems fitting. It was also said that to avoid his creditors he would frequently "disappear" up the mountain.

To Queen Victoria, the ascent at the age of 49 on her pony "Flora", together with attendant suite, was so memorable that she commissioned the Swiss painter Zelger to record the event on canvas. But the top "very steep ascent . . . was disagreeable owing to the dreadful loose stones."

To the engineer E. Locher, Mount Pilatus offered the tantalizing opportunity to invent a cogwheel system able to master a gradient of 40% and a steamengine-cum-coach unit to save weight on the climb from Alpnachstad to the top. His plan was accomplished in 400 working days over 3 short alpine summers, the workmen often balancing precariously on improvised scaffolding along sheer rock, and the Pilatus Railway Company began regular passenger service in 1889.

To the multitude of international tourists flocking to Lucerne at the turn of the century, a ride up the mountain in the new Pilatus Railway was a piquant novelty not to be missed.

To the Spanish engineer Leonardo Torres, Mount Pilatus was an incentive to plan an aerial cableway up the precipitous eastern rock face. Scathingly termed by the Lucerne press of 1888 as "an airy project more likely to be a castle and not a cable-car in the air", the idea was shelved over 80 years. Now an aerial cableway makes a spectacular swing to the summit in 10 minutes, and is linked to Lucerne by a 30-minute glide in cable-cabins.

To the people of Lucerne the mountain is their weather prophet. A "sword", a long stratified cloud across the rocks means that it will rain, but if Mount Pilatus has a "hat"—a cloud-cap on the summit—the day will be fine. And it is so.

To today's tourist, Mount Pilatus is a roundabout of modern comfort. Still the steepest cogwheel railway in the world, the sleek red

electric coaches travel smoothly to the summit to converge with the cableway in the lower hall of the new circular Bellevue Hotel.

To the appreciative, Mount Pilatus displays a sensational panorama from the superiority of its geographical position, as it stands 7000 ft. high, proudly detached from the main range of the Alps. Spreadeagled below lies the sparkling Lake of Lucerne. Beyond, lowlands stretch northwest to the Vosges Mountains in France and northwards to the Black Forest in Germany. Across the lake, behind the Burgenstock, the chain of Alps unfolds to the east and further to the south the glistening white cone of Mount Titlis heralds the Jungfrau in the Bernese Alps to the west.

Irene Ritter, in S.A. Gazette.

Josy's Corner

A small thought for the month—

*"The pleasure of life is according to the man that lives it,
and not according to the work or place."*

Emerson.

Many of us have oil paintings in our homes, and the other day I came across this article which I thought may come in handy:

How to Clean Oil Paintings:

Please don't use the following two hints on your Picassos and Rembrandts. Leave them for the experts. These are for ordinary oil paintings which may be cleaned at home.

Wash gently with cotton-wool dipped in mineral oil (available from any chemist); or

Rub the canvas lightly with a freshly cut potato dipped in cold water. Wipe off the potato treatment with a clean damp cloth, then rinse with a fresh cloth wrung out in warm water. Dry the painting with a piece of silk if possible and finally rub lightly with a cloth dipped in linseed oil.

By the way, if you've got one of those stubborn paintings that sneers at you, just when you've congratulated yourself on finally getting it straight, here's what to do. Brush a film of ordinary rubber cement along the lower edge of the picture. This will fix it. Or, alternatively, to protect the wallpaper, or if you are the type of person who likes continuous change, I would suggest you hang a picture straight, and then insert two pins on either side of the picture at the top of the frame. These won't be seen and will not mark the wallpaper.

"Good Luck"