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LE GLACIER DE MORTERATSCH ET LA LEGENDE DES DEUX AMOUREUX.

Le glacier de Morteratsch est la sentinelle avancée du groupe de la Bernina qui constitue le massif principal du canton des Grisons. A sa base il ne paraît pas large, mais se distingue plutôt par la longueur de son courant. Ce fleuve de glace est un argument en faveur du mouvement perpétuel des glaciers, car sa longueur a considérablement augmenté ou diminué à diverses époques. Les habitants de la vallée le redoutent car il s'avance jusque dans la région boisée et l'on peut craindre que les précieuses forêts d'aroles et de sapins ne soient sérieusement endommagées.

Ces faits ainsi que la tradition se sont donnés la main pour mettre en étroite union les phénomènes naturels et la vie de l'homme, de telle sorte que la nature sourie à l'homme ou le punisse selon qu'il l'a ou non mérité.

Idylle et souvenirs

C'est ce que nous voyons dans la légende suivante qui nous donne en même temps une étymologie du nom de Morteratsch.

Non loin de ce glacier se trouve une alpe agréablement située, appelée la "nouvelle alpe". L'ancienne était à l'endroit où se trouve actuellement le glacier. Un jeune et beau vacher de l'Oberland bernois y était autrefois en service. A l'occasion d'une fête de la contrée, il fit la connaissance d'une jeune fille de Pontresina, qui appartenait à l'une des premières familles de l'endroit. Ils furent bientôt unis par une pure affection. Les parents de la jeune fille, qui ne voulaient pas entendre parler de son mariage avec un vacher sans aucune fortune, résolurent de le séparer et manœuvrèrent si bien que le vacher ne fut plus engagé pour la saison suivante. Les amoureux prirent tristement congé l'un de l'autre en automne, et se jurèrent une éternelle fidélité.

Pour se faire agréer des orgueilleux parents de sa fiancée, le jeune homme prit du service à l'étranger et chercha à se distinguer. Il réussit, mais la jeune fille, n'ayant aucune nouvelle de lui, se consumait de chagrin et lorsque vint à nouveau la chute des feuilles avec l'anniversaire du jour où les jeunes gens s'étaient séparés, elle crut que son bien-aimé était mort et elle s'endormit pour toujours.

Le printemps suivant, lorsque les alpes se couvraient d'une nouvelle verdure, l'ancien vacher, devenu capitaine, revint dans sa patrie et courut à Pontresina. On lui montra le tombeau de sa fiancée. Il s'agenouilla sur la tombe et versa des larmes brûlantes qui n'eurent pas le pouvoir de rappeler à la vie celle qu'il pleurait.

Il visita encore l'alpe et les lieux auxquels se rattachaient de doux souvenirs; puis il disparut et l'on n'entendit plus parler de lui. Il s'appelait Aratsch.

Chaque soir, pendant la saison d'été, la jeune fille se montrait de nouveau dans le chalet de l'alpe. Le vacher et les bergers l'entendaient aller et venir dans la laiterie où elle travaillait un moment, puis goûtait la crème avec une cuillère pour s'assurer que tout était bon et propre.

Toutes les fois qu'elle reparaitissait, on l'entendait soupirer: "Mort Aratsch!" Les gens du chalet s'habituèrent à cette apparition; ils la voyaient même avec plaisir revenir, car ils remarquaient que le lait semblait comme bûni et que le revenu de l'alpe avait sensiblement augmenté.

Ultime Apparition.

Lorsqu'un nouveau vacher vint prendre la place du précédent, ce dernier lui fit part du mystère et l'exhorta vivement à ne pas troubler la jeune fille. A l'approche de la première nuit que passait le nouveau vacher dans le chalet, l'apparition s'approcha comme d'ordinaire. Le vacher fut curieux de la suivre dans la laiterie et la laissa d'abord en repos. Mais lorsqu'il la vit prendre une cuillère qu'elle plongeait dans le lait, il lui ordonna d'une voix rude de cesser, ne voulant pas, disait-il, que quelqu'un vînt mettre le nez dans son lait. La jeune fille lui jeta un regard de compassion et disparut au milieu des éclats d'un violent orage qui se déchargea soudain sur la contrée.

A dater de ce moment, les pâturages devinrent toujours plus maigres, l'herbe plus rare, les vaches donnèrent moins de lait. La bénédiction y manquait. Peu de temps après, l'alpe dut être abandonnée, et elle fut convertie par le glacier qui descendit rapidement dans la vallée.

De là le nom de Munt Pers, c'est-à-dire mont perdu, donné à la belle sommité située sur la rive droite du glacier qui fut appelé Morteratsch.

Telle est la légende de la "Signora da Morteratsch."

L. HILTBRAND.

THE PRODUCTION AND THE UTILISATION OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY IN SWITZERLAND.

The Office of Electrical Economy of the Swiss Confederation has published a report — the first of which the figures refer to a complete year — of which we give the following particulars, relating to the period extending from the 1st of October 1930 to the 30th of September 1931.

The total production of energy was 5 milliards 49 millions of kWh. (23 millions only being produced by thermal machines), of which 1375 millions were produced by railway companies and industrial companies consuming themselves the whole or the greater part of the energy they produce, and 3674 millions by public electrical enterprises, that is to say, those producing energy for general consumption. One must add to these figures the production of stations inferior to 500 kW. not included in the statistics. This production only represents 20 million kWh. per year. The public electrical enterprises included in the statistics number 154. 55 of them are vast enterprises, furnishing not less than 10 millions of kWh. per year and totalising the 96% of the production of the group. The 99 other enterprises (undertakings of medium size) only supply 3% of the energy destined for general use, while the enterprises not included in the statistics only cover the 0.5%. One must add that the public enterprises imported, during the period under consideration, 8 millions of kWh., which brings the quantity of energy which Swiss producers had at their disposal up to 5 milliards 57 millions of kWh.

The consumption of this energy is divided as follows: households, agriculture and craftsmen, 1 milliard 98 millions of kWh., of which the chief part was furnished by public enterprises; it is the same for industry in general which consumes 745 millions of kWh., while chemical, metallurgical and thermic applications of electricity to industry employed 993 kWh., about 2/3 of which were supplied by railway and industrial companies. The Federal Railways consumed 413 millions of kWh., of which 40 millions only were bought from public enterprises, while private railway companies only produced 7 of the 165 kWh. which they consumed. The total consumption in Switzerland, then, reach 3 milliards 414 millions of kWh. Export of energy amounted to 1 milliard 12 millions for which the production of the public undertakings alone sufficed. The small difference between the figures for production and consumption which we give are accounted for by the losses of energy not borne by the consumer and the energy employed by certain stations (accumulation pumps). Let us add that the railway companies and the industrial companies sold 105 millions of kWh. to the public enterprises.

S. I. T.

THE EDITOR'S POST-BAG.

The Editor of the Swiss Observer.

Dear Sir,

Permit me to pick up the gauntlet thrown down by you to the readers of your esteemed paper, with:

A VISION.

I dream of a most beautiful rock-garden, laid out by no earthly being. From its highest points, covered with eternal snow, silver ribbons wind in every direction over boulders, through gorges and lovely pastures, meeting at intervals, and forming, as if by magic, many sky blue knots, whence, like streamers, they flow beyond the border. High up, in the purest air, to the great joy of the beholder, grow the most exquisite little flowers and plants. Artistic dwellings, mostly surrounded by rich meadows, adorn the lower regions of this garden, and are inhabited by a sturdy, hard-working and peace-loving little people, whose pride in their inheritance of this small corner of the globe knows no bounds, and whose products, highly favoured, (some highly flavoured), may be acquired in all parts of the world.

A spider's web, with shining twin threads, the conception and construction of which excites the admiration of the world, traverses this enchanted garden in all directions, and termini are to be found on some of the highest peaks. Along these threads, like spiders, glide uncanny-looking monsters with three bright eyes, pulling and pushing loads of merchandise and living beings. Folks from all parts, spurred on by an irresistible desire to see for themselves this combination of wonders, flock to it in ever-increasing numbers, and are welcomed with open arms by the inhabitants, and though these may at times practice the gentle art of "fleeing" them, (an ancient and painless operation practiced in every land, and performed with the most suave and charming manners), the visitors know full well, that, in conjunction with the alpine air, the good food, etc., it will improve their complexion and fill them to the brim with the joy of living.

In these regions, Cupid and Romance reign supreme. Warily must the stranger tread, even

if born within the boundary of the next village, ere venturing to cast a covetous eye upon one of its "belles," be it at a dance or an alpine fête. Here fair maidens, often out-numbered by swains, may select their suitors. Cupid, having fired his first shot, the real courtship begins. Knowing full well the formidable defences that surround his beloved in the shape of would-be lovers, the stranger, to assist himself in his first assault, selects a bodyguard from among his bosom friends.

Under cover of darkness, often after midnight, and guarded by his followers, he crosses the meadows to avoid all possible noise, and approaches the citadel of his love. The bodyguard, having taken up their sentry-duty, armed, as often as not, with staves taken from the enclosing fences, the love-smitten swain raps gently with his knuckles on the low-lying windows of the chamber of his hearts desire. His ears glued to the small panes, he listens to the faintest rustle from within, whereupon, in a subdued voice, he begins to recite poems of Love and Mirth. The rustling in the dark increases, two hearts beat faster, the glimmer of a light appears, and although heavy curtains still conceal the interior of the room, the window opens a fraction, and the Password is given. A side-door gently swings on its hinges, and from within, the object of this nocturnal visit, dressed in festive raiment, with even a rose in her hair, beckons the visitors to enter. Through the kitchen into a large room, illuminated by a cosy oil lamp, all but one sentry enter. Refreshments are served, mouthorgan produced, and, while Cupid holds Court, a jolly dance commences in which all join. The old folks, well aware of the chivalry permeating this gathering, remain tucked away in the feathers of their bed, cooing to themselves of days of long ago; but only a betrothal will leave a suitor's path clear of obstacles.

In the winter-time, the prim son of the manor, proud of leading his well kept cattle to the ever-running and bubbling village drinking fountain, will, on the approach of the damsel of his heart carrying a water vessel of shining copper, take off one of their multicoloured coverings, and spread it, like a cloak, over the miniature glacier that has formed at its base, for her to tread with safety.

In the springtime, when myriads of rare flowers transform the alpine pastures into a beautiful carpet, the conqueror in life's most thrilling and exquisite contest, will drive the herd of stately beasts upwards into those realms of sunshine and peace and proclaim to the world in a lusty yodel that Life is still sweet.

Do I hear a feint murmur from the A.S.T. to say: This is the result of a rich Christmas Dinner!

J.B.

To the Editor of the Swiss Observer.

Dear Sir,

It is with regret that I have to make a complaint in the first issue in 1933 of your esteemed newspaper. This is concerning your extract from the quarterly review by A. G. Leu in Zurich with the title "Der Schweizerfranken."

As far as I know this is a banking firm and they can have their own view about Switzerland sticking to the Gold Standard or not. The view may be a patriotic one or purely created by self-interest, but I do not think that it is fair to depict that those who advocate that Switzerland ought to go off the Gold Standard are the enemies of their country.

Take as an instance South Africa, which country up to the present stuck to the Gold Standard and the Prime Minister and the whole Government took up the same attitude as the leading bankers and politicians in Switzerland, but at last they were forced to give way because the interest of the countries suffered too much. I do not predict nor do I wish that the same shall happen in Switzerland, but I would like you to use a little more discretion in choosing the articles which you copy from Swiss papers and magazines. I suppose your paper is not a gramophone record which has to blare out the tune as it has been recorded. Nüt Für Ungut Old Grumbler.

J.W.

We fail to see that any blame can be attached to us, for bringing to the notice of our readers, an extract of a review published by one of the more important Swiss Banks, on a subject which is at the moment very much in the public eye. As the views expressed therein do not appear to coincide with those held by our correspondent, we should be obliged if he would take it upon himself, to put the case for abandoning the Gold Standard before our readers. We are always pleased to give the pro's and con's of any question concerning the welfare of Switzerland, but our correspondent will agree that to merely offer criticism as to what we ought not to publish leads us nowhere.

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