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L'ASPECT PITTORESQUE ET LE CHARME DE L'ENGADINE, FOYER DE LA CULTURE ROMANCHE.

A plus de 2,000 m. d'altitude, au pied du Lungninn et de la masse rocheuse de Gravasalvas, baignant un névé et des éboulis, dort un petit lac gris... et le torrent qui s'en échappe deviendra l'Inn qui traversera les lacs de la Haute-Engadine et descendra la vallée de la Basse-Engadine avant de s'enfuir en Autriche et de mêler ses eaux froides au bleu Danube.

Cette longue vallée qui attire chaque année des milliers de touristes suisses et étrangers a un charme bien particulier, et ceux qui l'ont une fois aimée ne pourront plus l'oublier. De Sent à Maloja, sous les mélèzes et les aroles, on monte graduellement, passant tantôt dans des villages alourdis de grands hôtels, tantôt dans des hameaux tranquilles. La vallée, plus étroite dans sa partie inférieure, s'élargit vers la région des lacs, la plus captivante peut-être de toutes: Saint-Moritz, Camper, Silvaplana, Sils, Maloja... et de là c'est la descente brusque sur la vallée de Berguel, chaude, méridionale déjà, et protégée par des montagnes hallucinantes aux profils fantastiques, Piz Badile, Piz Disgrazia, etc.

Imposant panorama.

Pour se rendre compte du caractère de la Haute-Engadine il faut la voir à vol d'oiseau, d'un sommet. Les quatre lacs, bleus ou verts, sont séparés par de petites terres basses où se sont élevés les villages blancs rassemblés autour de l'église qui est comme un grand tas de neige, puis les forêts d'aroles et de mélèzes s'élèvent rapidement sur les versants arrondis des montagnes, qui, à bout de souffle, dirait-on, s'arrêtent pour laisser la place aux pentes herbeuses, d'un vert tendre et aux éboulis gris dominés par les glaciers et les arêtes des sommets.

Et, au sud, comme au nord, se creusent de nouvelles vallées latérales et des cols, au nord le Flüela, l'Albul, le Julier, au sud l'Offenpass, la Bernina, le val de Fex... Partout les paysages, sont charmants, dans les villages, au bord des lacs ou dans les forêts toutes en clairs-obscur, tapissées de roses des alpes et de myrtilles. L'altitude de la Haute-Engadine étant déjà de près de 2,000 mètres, la zone des arbres et des cultures est mince et le domaine de l'Alpe est atteint en quelques heures.

Des maisons typiques.

Les plus belles maisons, et les plus beaux villages, sont dans la Basse-Engadine tandis que les paysages les plus attachants se trouvent dans la haute. Hélas, de nombreux incendies ont détruit déjà les villages qui étaient les plus typiques, Sent et Sûs entre autres qui ont été reconstruits avec goût, mais sans pouvoir atteindre naturellement leur beauté primitive. Les maisons sont à peu près du même type, la façade blanche à la chaux, est percée de petites fenêtres enfoncées dans le mur et souvent protégées par de belles grilles forgées. Près de la porte, et sur la rue se trouve "l'ercker" faisant saillie sur la façade et d'où l'on peut voir tout ce qui se passe sur la route pavée... Des oeillets roses pendent de ces fenêtres et éclatent sur le fond blanc comme la neige. Ces "ercker" portent souvent des moulures ou des armoiries d'une grande beauté et des "scraffitti" ornent la façade, l'embrasement des portes et des fenêtres tandis qu'un fronton, variant de forme de village en village, orne la façade de la maison. La grange, exposée au midi, aérée par deux grands panneaux, est contiguë à la maison d'habitation qui possède une entrée unique. Cette entrée permet aussi bien aux voitures, aux chars de foire et aux habitants de pénétrer. Sur ce vestibule s'ouvrent les portes des chambres et de la grange. Les pièces sont peu éclairées, elles sont boisées d'arole brun qui dégage une odeur particulière. De vieux bahuts sculptés, de grands poêles et des lits monumentaux les ornent.

L'amour du sol natal.

La population de l'Engadine est fortement attachée à son sol. Mais, comme la vallée est relativement pauvre, le sol est ingrat, l'hiver long et l'industrie à peu près nulle, des centaines de jeunes gens doivent s'expatrier chaque année. Beaucoup d'entre eux ont occupé ou occupent encore des situations en vue dans le commerce, l'hôtellerie et l'industrie du monde entier, et en Italie particulièrement. Mais pour tout cela ils n'oublient pas leurs montagnes et, dès qu'ils le peuvent, ils viennent passer leurs vacances au pays, dans les vieilles demeures familiales fermées une grande partie de l'année. Leur amour du sol natal se trahit, entre autres, par leur attachement au romanche, cette langue mélodieuse faisant penser à la fois au latin et au vieux français. Le romanche, heureusement, n'est pas en voie de disparaître. Il est vrai qu'en Haute-Engadine particulièrement il subit des attaques et que l'allemand s'implante de plus en plus, ce qui est regrettable. Le romanche, parlé par 40,000 personnes, n'est pas uniforme dans toutes les régions; il y a cinq dialectes présentant certaines différences. Toutefois, grâce aux efforts qui ont été faits, grâce surtout à l'enseignement scolaire, le romanche garde toute sa valeur.

Parmi les défenseurs de cette belle langue — qui n'est pas un patois — il faut citer le grand poète M. Peider Lansel, de Sent, industriel et consul de Suisse à Livourne, qui a de nombreux et amis à Genève, et qui, infatigablement, défend tout ce qui fait le charme de l'Engadine. Auteur de plusieurs livres en romanche, M. Lansel est connu et estimé dans toute la vallée où il aime à revenir avec sa famille chaque année.

Les sommets de l'Engadine sont fort intéressants. Le groupe de la Bernina, avec les pics Palù, Morteratsch, Roseg, etc., les pics Basile et Disgrazia, dans le val Berguel et que l'on fait depuis la cabane de Forno, attirent de nombreux alpinistes. D'autres sommets les pics Julier, Golvatsch, Polachin, la Margna sont plus faciles à gravir mais sont des points de vue qui valent la Bernina. Et si les grands hôtels de l'Engadine attirent une clientèle disparate, brillante ou bruyante, et si les orchestres jouent une partie de la nuit dans de fastueux salons, on peut trouver sur les montagnes une joie infiniment plus grande. *Tribune de Genève.* J.-E. Chable.

TWO ALPINE SEASONS.

Memories of mountains hover round the armchair before many a fireside. It is from these reminiscences as much as from the actual moments of action and ease on the hills that the mountaineer derives his philosophy; not merely an ordered system of climbing procedure, nor only a satisfaction in deeds well accomplished, but "a feeling and a love" which is the very essence of mountain happiness. This ardent pleasure is present, of course, in difficult ascents, but not less present, though in a different form, in lesser achievements.

Towards the end of August 1929 I arrived in Zermatt to climb with Hans Brantschen of St. Niklaus, one of the finest of Alpine guides. Our programme which was to be compressed into ten days was somewhat ambitious, as programmes often are before the weather censors them. On the evening after our arrival we tramped up for an hour and a half to the Trift Hotel in heavy mist, and descended next morning in flickering snow. It was a sad start to our mountain quests and two of our valuable days were lost. One more day was spent in going to the Fluh Alp Inn, a crazy building in a green pasture, again without much hope. Hans, however, had ambitious plans and declared that we would ascend the Rimpfischhorn and descend by the North Ridge. Next morning we started at 3.30 under a heavy cloud, and ascended the rough and ready path to a little col. Here the pillar of cloud changed to a pillar of fire and hearts rose as the dawn informed the billowing vapours with its incomparable colour. A fierce wind drove across our path and sent the new snow scurrying down the slopes, and only during a brief breakfast in the shelter of the rocks did we fully realise the promise of the day. In a few minutes we had left the drifted snow and passed the summit, and stood on the tapering arête. Details of the climb are lost in the gusts of wind and the excitement and freedom of airy positions. But at 9 o'clock we reached an unexpected broad ledge with a ten-foot wall between us and the wind, there to idle away one of the unforgettable alpine half-hours. To our left the grand ridge of the Täschhorn and Dom mounted into the sky; far away in a little valley, as it seemed, there were the dull, green waters of the Lago Maggiore; opposite and above, the snow peaks of Monte Rosa rose into towers. There was magic in those moments and in the cleanness and grandeur of all around us. Here were Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory. We passed on at length, and ended the ridge with a Cumberland chimney preceded by an awkward traverse; and then riotously glissaded down snow slopes for an unbroken twelve minutes to the Allalin Pass. The difficulties were over, and the heart of man was refreshed for further exploits. At 2.45 we arrived down the long valley at the inn on Täsch Alp; a family of marmots at play was our only distraction on the way.

Next morning we set out under a cloudless sky at 1.45 a.m. At an early stage it was obvious that Hans was suffering from sickness, and it was with some anxiety that I contemplated our project for the day, the ascent of the Mischabel-grat of the Täschhorn and the traverse to the Dom. But not for an instant during a very long and arduous climb did he falter, beyond one or two extra halts. No greater tribute can be paid to his immense reserve and complete reliability under trying circumstances. My first memory is that of a plunging icefall which Hans led through by seemingly hopeless approaches without a false step. Great indeed is the gap between the technique of a good guide and all but the very best of amateurs. At 5.30 we breakfasted on a charming little col between the two arms of the glacier, and after a steepening climb over snow and rock we arrived on the main ridge. From here up to the final pyramid the going was heavy, over rocks laced together by narrowed snow ribbons, and a steep plunge through a white froth of snow. At the base we gazed for a few moments

at the terrific South face, only once ascended, and then by a miracle of skill and courage on the part of Franz Lochmatter. It is a head which seems eternally nodding or frowning over the white tresses of glacier below. There is something sinister and forbidding in the bare yellow wall of rock, scarred by two slender couloirs. We crept like silent flies up the final pyramid, by snow steps where snow rested, and by sun-warmed rocks. Below the summit we breakfasted a second time. It was now 9 o'clock; we had been already seven hours on our way, and the traverse yet remained. What had before been heavy work now became difficult as well. The narrow arête was covered by a shaky crust of snow, nearly all of which had to be swept away before holds were visible. The glare became more puzzling, and there was little time to seek relief from the green valleys of Saas and Zermatt far down below. The next step, and then the next, was our only care. At length we reached the Domjoch, after what seemed many hours, but was actually an hour and a half; and here Hans paused for the last time to recover his strength.

The ridge to the Dom from the Domjoch has a kindly appearance, which actual contact sadly belies. From a little distance it appears to be a straightforward rib of mountain sloping at an easy angle, broad and comfortable, in contrast to the narrow crest which runs down from the Täschhorn. But in reality it is a succession of tottering rock towers, crazy beyond belief, joined by diaphanous ribbons of snow which seem anxious to disappear at a touch. The climb began over and under, round and through these groaning ruins. A child's idly-built tower could not be more hideously insecure than these rock pinnacles seemed; only the thought that they had withstood forces far more shattering than the cling of our feet and hands kept me trusting in the ultimate safe arrival on the summit. After four hours of threading out a precarious way we clambered up the final easy yards and at 2.30 looked at last on a new world. For thirteen hours we had been on our way, nine of which had been spent on a difficult ridge with our faces and thoughts fixed to the next few yards and no more. Now we were in a world which stretched out to the fine haze of a far distant horizon; only an easy flight down snow was before us. The contest had been severe, the success hardly yet realised. Yet something of the magnificence of this mountaineering came upon me; certainly the doubts of the uninitiated would have vanished could they have seen and experienced. Little else of impression remains, save floating on a sun-beam down the snows to the Dom-hut, and a green dive through the woods to Randa, and an aching ride by train to Zermatt—a bath, and a bottle of Château Yquem!

Our last climb was before us and on a sweltering day we toiled to the Weisshorn hut, once again from Randa. Twilight at the height of 10,000 feet clothes the mountains in a garment of terror, and formidable is their cold aspect. In four and a half hours next morning we reached the tip of the Weisshorn. On our way the sun had shed its garments from deep rose to orange and gleaming white. Slowly a pyramid of cloud formed from the valley and mounted some thousands of feet above us, to dissipate in the manlier rays of a climbing sun. We sped, crampons on our feet, down the North ridge. So firm was the snow that we passed the Great Gendarm in twenty-five minutes, and stood on the Weisshornjoch in two and a half hours, interrupted only by a pause for Hans to yodel to his brother at the Tracuit Hut through three miles of ice-clear air. In another hour and a half we had alighted on the Biesjoch. The spell of mountain adventure was ended: only memory and exultation at having achieved six summits in seven days accompanied the descent to St. Niklaus. From there we hurried even faster to Visp and the English train. "Schön grat" was Hans' remark as he glanced back at the shining North ridge. It was the only possible comment on all our journeyings.

Just as the details of 1929 are lost in the main stream of achievement and excitement, so the details of 1930 stand out as stones in a shallower stream. The inexpressible zero hour when work ceased and holiday began, the journey out, cream cheeses and red wine in the *wagon restaurant*, the swaying, noisy hours of darkness, all these are remembered. Sunset darkened behind a bank of mountainous cloud, and sunrise at Belfort came up steadily, soon to evaporate in gloomy mists. Half-past four in the morning is perhaps the best time to drink French coffee, delicious from thicklipped cups. A few hours more and I arrived at Goeschenen to a bath, lunch, and the friend I was to meet, whom I will designate as P. Owing to a recent illness, P. was unable to do long expeditions, and we were therefore committed to short and easy climbs; we had no guide with us.

Goeschenalp lies in a green pasture beside the waters of comfort. An off-day was spent in brilliant sunshine in a valley

"Vocal with the angelic rilling of rocky streams," a deep and necessary quiet after the toil of long

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