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me nel caso della cascata di Giessbach. Nel 1816 sorge una modesta locanda sulla vetta del Righi e la sua fama si diffonde in tutto il mondo. Alla montagna vengono dedicate svariate composizioni canore e sulle sue pendici si vedono salire personaggi reali; persino la regina Vittoria si fa portare sulla vetta da sei uomini vigorosi. Alois Dahinden, uno dei portatori, ad ogni fermata canta un paio di strofe allegre, ricevendo in dono ogni volta una moneta d'oro che fa scivolare nel taschino del gilè. Più tardi racconterà di non aver mai visto tanto oro in vita sua e il gilè verrà esposto ben in vista nel salotto della sua casa, finché verrà rovinato dalle tarne. Questa immagine illustra nel modo più idoneo la fine dei viaggi intesi come una possibilità di fare degli incontri. In effetti, a partire dalla metà del secolo gli svizzeri incominciano ad organizzare forme di turismo che non dipendono dall'offerta casuale di qualche moneta d'oro.

L'arma più adeguata per conquistare un posto di prestigio quale primo paese turistico in Europa è la pulizia. Fino al 1850 vengono registrate rimostranze da parte di viaggiatori scontenti di scoprire un po' ovunque villaggi e locande poco puliti. Successivamente però, la pulizia diventa una vera e propria virtù nazionale, forse favorita dall'ammirazione degli ospiti per l'aria pura dei monti e per le fredde nitide acque dei ruscelli di montagna e dei ghiacciai. L'albergatore che sa accomunare alla purezza della natura pavimenti tirati a lucido e biancheria fresca di bucato, ha partita vinta. Geneviève Heller, studiosa di storia, scrive in merito quanto segue: «La Svizzera, offrendo la pulizia, veniva incontro ad un bisogno. L'immagine esisteva già prima; bastava che i luoghi abitati e la popolazione si adeguassero alla purezza naturale.» Agli alberghi perfettamente tirati a lucido, quasi fossero dei sanatori, si accompagna un atteggiamento morale che non ammette concessioni o debolezze. Nelle località di soggiorno svizzere vigono costumi morigerati e le signore possono passeggiare da sole senza alcun timore: addio dunque alla bella batteliera, addio ai sogni di un incontro notturno!

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charms of the full-bosomed brunette. But the engagement was torpedoed by the preceptor's angry mother, who was not prepared to countenance any such misalliance. Even this banal little story was good publicity for the Bernese Oberland. Eugène Scribe, a star writer from Paris, composed a play about the spurned boat-girl, and a heart-rending story appeared in all the papers. This erotic note was unmistakable in the popular conception of Swiss journeys at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Haller's "The Alps" had already inspired certain expectations. He had pointed out that long courtships and engagement rituals were not the rule in the mountains: *He loves her, she loves him, and this completes their bliss... Their bed's a bank of moss beyond the leafy brake.* The outsider also read with some astonishment of the custom known as the *Kiltgang*: nubile girls would let their wooers into their bedrooms on this night without their parents making any move to stop them... He had heard songs about hot-blooded shepherdesses and forward *batelières* and had seen Lory's engravings, in which peasant girls show their naked calves or loosen their bodices. Many a young nobleman was convinced that he was more than equal to the local competition and saw his Swiss journey in his mind's eye as a long succession of love scenes in the mountain hay. Yet the fact is that records of such affairs in those times are extremely few and far between. Even the luckless Elisabeth soon got married to an innkeeper from the neighbourhood, though she was to end up in poverty and misery. About 1815 a second focal point of tourism established itself: the Rigi. While the custom of visiting the famous had been replaced in a surprisingly short space of time by the ideal of spontaneous meetings with the unspoiled inhabitants, the Rigi now offered a quite different experience: that of landscape. In the following years the vista, the landscape panorama, the framed view were discovered. By the middle of the century the best views, such as that of the

Giessbach Falls, were being illuminated with Bengal lights. A modest inn had been erected on the Rigi summit in 1816, and from then on the rise of this mountain to world fame was to prove irresistible. Songs were composed to celebrate it, crowned heads climbed it, even Queen Victoria had herself carried to the top of it by six stalwart men. Alois Dahinden, one of the six, sang a few cheerful bars for the distinguished visitor at every stop, each time receiving a gold piece that he slipped into his waistcoat pocket. He said later that he had never again seen so many "golden birds" together. The waistcoat was given a place of honour in his living-room till moths devoured it. It would be difficult to find a more fitting symbol for the end of the Swiss journeys to human encounters. From the middle of the century onwards the Swiss began to organize tourism as a business undertaking which would no longer depend on a few casually earned sovereigns.

But the country's main trump in the struggle for the prestigious position of Europe's leading holiday land has always been cleanliness. Up to 1850 travellers had repeatedly complained about dirty villages and inns. Then cleanliness was made the national virtue No. 1, in keeping with the pure mountain air, the clean and cold Alpine streams and glaciers that were so much admired by visitors. The hotel-keeper who added well-swept floors and freshly-washed bed linen to this natural hygiene had won the day. "In offering cleanliness," wrote the historian Geneviève Heller, "the Swiss were satisfying a real need. The image was already established, the villages and their inhabitants had only to adapt themselves to the purity of Nature." The shining, sanatorium-like hotel that mirrors the spotlessness of the mountains was seconded by a clean code of morals and behaviour: in this domain, too, nothing improper or impure was to be tolerated. And the Swiss resorts are still well-behaved, ladies can saunter unmolested through the streets alone—the days of the pretty boat-girls and of the nocturnal rendez-vous are now far distant.

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