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people never failed to point out what a splendid lot the Swiss in New Zealand are. They are held up as an example of integrity and sobriety, as well as hard working people. Needless to say, I was always very proud to hear such excellent reports, and I can say to you "I am proud of you".

From time to time new immigrants from Switzerland arrive, and it is with great pleasure that I have noticed the helping hand and the warm welcome you have extended to them. It is not surprising, therefore, that my family and I have felt so much a part of you, and that our hearts are heavy as we are preparing our departure.

I wish you all the best and now bid you a very reluctant "good-bye".

E. THEILER,  
Consul.

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X SWITZERLAND TODAY X  
X ( continued ) X  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
By: E. Merz, Auckland.

As far as mountain-excursions are concerned, our holiday in Switzerland slowly approached its close. It was nearly end September, and due to rather unsettled weather in July/August, we had postponed a trip we could not possibly miss: To Zermatt. This name of course, immediately conjures to your mind Switzerland's most famous peak: The Matterhorn, apart from a dozen other alpine giants surrounding this widely known tourist resort.

Although situated very isolated near the Italian border, Zermatt can be reached quickly by our fast trains from any part of Switzerland; we left Lucerne after nine o'clock and arrived there at 3 in the afternoon. From Berne there are about half a dozen fast Milan-expresses running regularly every day through the Lotschberg, and at Brig the "Zermatt-Express" waits for immediate connection. Magnificent indeed is the last brief trip through the Nicolaital to the threshold of the Matterhorn. Crossing the foaming Visp again and again, the electric train passes villages and hamlets, of whose quaint native life one catches fleeting glances on the way and at railway stations. From the deep valley, we caught an occasional view of the great Mischabel group on the left (with the 15,000 ft. "Dom"), and once or twice just a quick glimpse of the 14,800 ft. weisshorn on the right. After travelling an hour through this long and wild valley, everyone is leaning out of the window, eyes strained and watching excitedly for the first glimpse of the king of this mighty domain. However, our patience is taxed another half hour, as only just two minutes before the train reaches its destination, the Matterhorn reveals himself in its full majestic beauty.

The weather was now perfect, excepting with that filmy, much pictured cloud hovering at the side of the towering Pyramid. This, we were told at the restaurant where we had a cup of tea, serves as a barometer. They explained that behind the peak lies Italy and that the warm south wind is forever waging a battle with the north wind. If the cloud remains behind the Matterhorn, it is a sign that the north wind is master of the situation and that the weather will continue to be fair. This information made us decide to proceed with our journey immediately up the "Gornergrat"; it would be too uncertain to wait and hope the skies would keep clear for long. Like the Jungfrau excursion, it would be a waste of time and money to travel to over 10,000 ft. in uncertain weather. The full return fare Zermatt-Gornergrat, by the way, is Sfr.11.-

The wonderful Gornergrat railway takes 1½ hours to reach the amazing height

of 10,288 ft. The first section, after leaving Zermatt, is thickly covered with forest, partly with larch, but higher up mostly with the splendid specimen of the "Arolla" pine. These trees are considered among the finest and rarest of the alps. They flourish in damp soil much better than the larch and they also stand the cold better. The solidity of their trunks and their long and powerful roots, enable them to withstand the rigor of the elements more successfully than other trees. The Arolla tree grows very slowly and their form is often irregular and contorted. Our train climbed right through the thick of these forests, and leaning out the window we could nearly reach the long needles of these hardy pines. And through its branches we admired the beauty of the towering outlines of the Matterhorn, tantalizingly close in the perfectly clear atmosphere.

Interesting to watch also are the solid overhead constructions of "galleries", erected over the rail against falling stones, avalanches or landslides. Even afforestation on steep slopes, masonry work or stone-dams in water-courses, have been installed to protect the tracks.

The rail-terminus is on a rocky ridge, high above the immense Gorner-Glacier, and directly opposite some of the most impressive of alpine peaks. About a 100 yards above the station is the Gornergrat Hotel, a great stone building, giving shelter and comfort in any condition and weather. The Hotel, as well as the railway, are kept open all year around, as the whole district is one of the greatest Swiss centres for skiers.

It was now past 5 o'clock but still ample time to witness the sunset and the famous "alpine-glow". A few minutes just above the hotel, is the final vantage point for this truly most inspiring and glorious view you can obtain anywhere in Switzerland. Fresh snow (although now melted away by the sun along the path) covered the whole alpine region and only the very steepest rock formations shewed up in black. The Gornergrat is right in the centre of an immense panorama of giant mountains.

Commencing with the Mischabel, directly north and turning around completely in a circle, we counted 20 peaks of from 13,500 to 15,217 ft. And descending from them, there are no less than 15 large and small glaciers. There in the glorious evening sun, gleamed White Rosa, Switzerland's topmost point, then the great Lyskamm, the shapely twins Castor & Pollux; the immense Breithorn; the little Matterhorn (still 12,750 ft. high) - then the huge glacial region of the historic Theodule-Pass and after that, in majestic solitude, the stupendous Rock-Pyramid of the Matterhorn; almost bare rocks in the upper regions, but resplendent with glaciers and snowfield in the lower sections. On the right of this tower appear the great Dent Blanche, Zinal Rothorn and the Weisshorn, all above 14,000 ft. This panorama is indeed a "symphony of mountains" and cannot be matched anywhere in our Alps. The alpine-glow was wonderful to watch but we were more impressed with the sunrise next morning and, the effect being similar, the description will follow. Promptly the sun set behind the mountains, the temperature dropped heavily and within half an hour the ground began to freeze. The hotel however, was heated throughout; each room had central heating during the whole night.

The Matterhorn was directly facing our bedroom and I only had to lift my head to see the splendid peak bathed in full moonlight. And I had plenty of time to observe it for hours; because I hardly slept a wink! The air at this height was already so much rarified that anyone unaccustomed to it as we, had difficulties in breathing. Every once in a while I had to sit up to pump sufficient oxygen into my lungs, and thus the night was long and very restless. But believe me, it was worth the little inconvenience, the reward in the morning was rich.

At 4.45 the porter called "Tagwache" and it took us hardly a minute to dress

in our warmest clothes. Nor did we loiter across the ice-covered rocks, which were frozen over completely several inches thick. All the melted snow of yesterday was now one sheet of slippery ice and the short walk to the observation point above the hotel, was a haphazard venture. The keen alpine air was well below zero, but little did we care, for now we approached one of the supreme experiences in our lives - a phenomena perhaps never to be seen again under such unique atmospheric conditions.

Even before the first glimmer of dawn, the snowmantled, slumbering giants all around us had been somehow touch to life by a faint blue light, showing ever more clearly their form and presence - a light that changed quickly as the day grew before it finally flamed pink, as the sun hit the highest peak. It was now 5.15 and the 30 odd spectators were all intensely excited. And like a flash the first ray of sun touched the uppermost peak of the Dufourspitze, 15,217 feet high. Exclamations of wonder and astonishment could hardly be suppressed by any of us, as one by one the majestic Monarchs of our Alps were "lit up" within a matter of perhaps a minute or two; and there it dawned upon us, that by the rotation of this "lighting up" of each peak, we witnessed nature's wonderful way of indicating the actual height of each summit, for the second light soon reflected on the Mischabel (15,000 ft.); the third on Lyskamm; the fourth on Weisshorn and the fifth on the lonely, vast and awe-inspiring Matterhorn (14,780 ft.)

Indeed, a panorama of wondrous beauty unfolded itself; a supreme spectacle never to be forgotten. Rapidly now, the glorious rays of pink spread all over the vast horizon, dozens of peaks receive "the blessing", but from all the many differentiations of light and reflection, our glance always returned to the king of them all, the majestic Matterhorn: 2,000 ft. perhaps 4,000 ft. downwards (distance is hard to judge in rarified air) the great pyramid was quickly bathed in a wonderful pink hue; the shadow perceptibly crept down the steep walls until nearly half the mountain stood bare and splendid in the morning glory.

Now the sun had risen so high, that it reached our own point of observation, and with that moment the "alpine glow" disappeared! The full daylight and the rise of the sun above our own horizon, blotted out the pink reflections on snow and rock completely, and the unique sight ceased, to give way to the more natural everyday appearance of our surroundings. I am a keen lover of mountains, and I declare frankly, that this hour or two on the Gornergrat, has been the "greatest show on earth" for me. I cannot imagine anything as spectacular and impressive. I can close my eyes now to again see everything vividly before me.

To crown the show, suddenly from nowhere, appeared a formation of 6 Military aeroplanes. Evidently the perfectly clear and still atmosphere had encouraged the fliers to some stunt acrobatics in the highest regions of the Alps. With great speed the birds flew perilously close the Matterhorn and around the peak. Banking down steeply to the glaciers and roaring again high atop the Breithorn-massif, they went straight across the vast Monte Rosa. At any moment, we thought, a crash was inevitable, so close were the machines to the rocks and snow, but the clear air is so deceptive that obviously there was always hundreds of yards of safety. At one time the group flew in perfect formation along the whole length of the enormous Corneglacier and the planes appeared to us the tiniest little birds against the white fields. It was a thrilling spectacle, until they suddenly disappeared over the crest of the mighty Mischabel.

Down in Zermatt we strolled through a cluster of up-to-date Hotels, and a pleasant street bordered by attractive stores and bazaars. The style of architecture of many of the sun-tanned native chalets proved rather a surprise, for instead of featuring the customary one or two stories, they rise to a tall four stories, the reason being that land in the village

