

Railways like goats

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sur divers points de détail. Il a démontré, notamment, comment l'emploi des armes blanches n'était pas possible dans de telles circonstances.

L'emploi des hydrants, qui nécessite une préparation, l'existence de bouches à eau sur place en suffisance et l'emploi de "courses," difficiles à déployer au milieu d'une foule hostile, ne pouvait pas être envisagé de l'avis même des officiers de police.

La troupe a fait tout son devoir, mercredi soir. Assurément, ce devoir était pénible et n'a pas été assumé de gaieté de cœur. Mais sans son intervention, l'émeute n'aurait pas pu être enrayée.

Comme nous l'avons dit plus haut, le major Krafft est chargé de dresser un rapport complet pour le département militaire fédéral. Les personnes qui auraient des renseignements précis à lui fournir sur la manifestation à partir du moment où la troupe intervint, sont invitées à lui en donner connaissance. Ajoutons que c'est à la demande du colonel Lederer lui-même que le major Krafft a été chargé de cette mission.

Dans la salle à manger des officiers, nous avons pu voir armes et casques détériorés ou brisés par des manifestants. Le casque du lieutenant Burnat, entre autres, n'est plus qu'une coquille.

Tels sont les principaux faits sur lesquels le commandant de l'école de recrues a jugé utile de renseigner l'opinion publique.

RAILWAYS LIKE GOATS.

By Graham Seton.

(Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

Of all the memories of Europe that come to my mind when I am in strange continents there is one that stands out for me as the supreme symbol of Man's conquest of Nature. During thousands of centuries Man has tamed one by one the natural forces opposed to him. One stronghold alone Nature retained — her vast mountains, compact of indomitable rock and covered with unsurmountable snows. Here in India the vast ranges of the Himalayas stand unconquered yet, though year by year men are wrestling more of their secrets. But the very inaccessibility of these Titan monsters, five miles high, heightens my wonder at the feats of the men who have not only climbed unscalable heights but actually built machines to run up and down their sides like mountain goats or to burrow through their rocky fastnesses like moles in a garden.

Consider the Jungfrau Railway, with its terminus far beyond the eternal snow line, 11,340 feet above the sea. Inaccessible until 30 years ago since the beginning of time — except to the mountain crows and a mere handful of expert mountaineers! And now men and women live in the comfortable hotel over the railway terminus all the year round, which during the summer hundreds of tourists step out of the hotels every day at Interlaken or Lauterbrunnen or Grindelwald and within an hour or two alight at the top of the world.

It is sixty years since the Swiss built the first mountain railway up the Rigi from Vitznau, and from then onwards Swiss engineers began to construct their rack-and-pinion railways in all the mountainous countries of the world. But the snow heights defied mankind. In 1893 the Wengernalp Railway was opened, linking lovely Lauterbrunnen Valley with Grindelwald. A few weeks later an engineer at Mürren described a puff of smoke from the toy train approaching Little Scheidegg in the far distance, below the mass of the Eiger. A sudden inspiration came to him — here must start a railway that would ascend to the Jungfrau through the Eiger and Mönch. He sketched a rough plan that same night. Nine years later the first train reached Jungfraujoch...

In Solid Rock.

After leaving the station at the foot of the Eiger Glacier the electric train climbs into the Eiger. A mile and a half from the entrance a station with outlook galleries is blasted in the rock. Then the train crawls through a mile of mountain to Eismeer station, 1,000 feet higher. Out of the side of the vast mass of rock that forms the Eiger a little hole has been chipped to form a station and observation post. Peering out, one gets an eagle's-eye view of Nature at her most desolate — a wilderness of precipitous rocks, ice, snow, and crevasses.

Thence to the highest station in Europe on the snowy saddle that joins the Mönch to the Jungfrau and offers the most superb view of mountain heights ever unfolded before the plainsman. Thus the genius of man not only conquered physical obstacles — it brought the vision of a new beauty, the experience of a new exhilaration within the range of the ordinary man.

Now come with me to the other end of Switzerland to see another railway that has taken up Nature's challenge with even more dramatic defiance. If the Jungfrau Railway is the Eighth Wonder of the World, the Rhaetian Railway must surely rank as the Ninth.

*You look at the things that are - and say Why?
I look at the things that never were - and say Why Not? (Bernard Shaw)*

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Six thousand feet above the sea lies the remote region of the Engadine. Since the Romans conquered it, it remained for 19 centuries, by its sheer inaccessibility from the Swiss side, in a state of semi-isolation developing its own queer dialect, Romansch, still the language of its people. Then came the Swiss engineers from the north, driving the Rhaetian Railway dizzily over the gorges and into the bowels of the mountains, to emerge at last amid villages made famous by English winter sportsmen — Cresta and Celerina, Pontresina, St. Moritz, and the rest. I know no stretch of line in the world to compete for awesome beauty and magnificence with the Rhaetian line's progress through the territory of the Albula river.

Imagine some crazy engineer making a vow that nothing would stop him from driving a track for a railway train where Nature had driven a track for a river. And nothing did stop him, though he had to hollow out 40 tunnels and erect a score of viaducts. Above Thusis we enter the Schyn Gorge, a rugged, terrific ravine with the turbulent torrents of the Albula churning its way through broken rocks far, far below us. Tunnel follows viaduct, viaduct follows tunnel. We cross a bridge 130 feet high over a gorge and plunge for half a mile into the opened flank of a mountain.

Two villages beyond, and then another viaduct preludes the crowning achievement of our inspired engineer. He found himself confronted by a gorge, with the river looking like tumbled lace 200 feet below him. Facing him was a wall of rock-mountain... He took the obstacles in his stride, constructing a curving, six-arched viaduct of lovely lines and noble proportions, which on the other side flung itself straight at the mountain and bit out a hole for its further progress...

We come to Bergün, lying 1,365 feet below Preda at a distance of 3½ miles — a glorious bobsleigh run in winter. The train travels 7½ miles to cover this distance by a series of wiggles and loops. First forward, then a loop through a tunnel, forward again, a leap over a torrent by a long-legged viaduct. Then a straight run along the mountain side, another crossing of the Albula into a spiral tunnel by which we climb another 80 feet before again leaping the Albula. A wide, ascending loop, a corkscrew run through two tunnels, one above the other, twice over the river, and finally we reach Preda. After this it seems almost commonplace to record that the railway pierces a granite mountain — Piz Giumels, which is Romansch for Twins Peak — by a four-mile tunnel and emerges in the Upper Engadine valley.

None but a frenzied genius could have conceived such a railway — a fitting approach to the most beautiful inhabited mountain region in the world.

Sheffield Weekly Dispatch....

TEMPORARY IDLE DAYS IN MID-ATLANTIC ON BOARD THE "LIQUITANIA."

October 1932.

Dear Swiss Observer:

This is beginning to be an enjoyable trip. People are waking up and itch to become friendly. Little circles are forming up and soon we shall have a regular clan system. I am, of course, tremendously busy. There is not a minute to spare for trifles such as looking through my papers and working out details for my work in New York. That must wait, damn it! Nor is there time for reading. There is a library and I have brought books along. To blazes with them. Also writing is napoo! It makes me smile to think that I had the effrontery to resolve upon one daily good deed. All washed overboard! I have no time.

I get up say at eight o'clock and clad in vest and shorts I repair to the gym where an instructor puts me with others, through the mill 'till my tummy is just a mass of awful aches, then a dip into the swimming pool rounded off with a fresh water shower. After that strategic retreat to bed for a short rest flavoured by a cup of tea. Now comes the dressing of the doll and imposing descent all dressed up and perfumed down to the restaurant. It takes about an hour to wade through this breakfast with fruit and all sorts of juices and oats and fish and eggs and meats and

whatnots, back to fruits at the end. One eats as much as one can or dares, and spends the rest of the time in a vain endeavour to mitigate the effects and accelerate the turnover. — Perfectly mad!

Now comes the serious business of the morning. There is deck tennis and ping pong. Both very strenuous if played seriously, and we are so serious about them that by noon I drift back to my room, where I have to change completely after, of course, having taken a bath. Then a cup of bovril and one looks for a diversion, be it the ocean, or some play or a slim ankle, or a transparently white throat. — Then comes luncheon. Here the same takes place as at breakfast except that alcohol enters upon the scene.

Stupified from the effects of the luncheon drugs, we lie about till we breathe more freely again and then while we begin to think about tea and sweets, we arrange either bridge parties or go to the official horse races, which are held daily in the garden lounge, and where money seems to be the least of objects. Or perhaps we go to the cinema which opens shortly after the crowds come back from the races. After that gym claims one's attention, the swimming pool gets another visit, the barber must be consulted about the state of one's beard and then the dressing for dinner calls for the day's effort. We emerge finally from all these trials maddened by thirst and tortured by the pangs of hunger. So down we go to the restaurant, square our shoulders, and with eyes down struggle manfully for a successful removal of the last traces of under-nourishment. After the last morsel we grope after truth to decide whether our state of inebriety demands the service of the lift or whether reasons dictated by the laws of self-preservation would indicate the advantage of a climb on foot. Hereafter the geographical question of the black coffee arises. This is a nice point! It is rich in possibilities.

The question of any serious work to be accomplished having been discarded long before breakfast, it remains now merely to finish the day in a fairly vertical position — when standing — so that the difference can be appreciated when a definitely recumbent position has to be adopted later owing to the peculiar construction of beds. We approach that last stage of comparative inactivity with grace and dignity. Talk flows easily and with fair lubrication, also a snack or two assists to renew worn tissues and dance or gambling games hold organised society together till midnight fairly hammers into us that there is a limit even with the most heroic and enduring.

We mumble our good wishes, tear our wet rags from us, sink into the bath and soon into oblivion in our beds. What blessed beds they are! The chap who invented these beds must have been a clever fellow. I wonder whether he does not beat Einstein. After all, if I make a bee-line for his invention I sort of get there and then there I am; but if I followed Einstein I would only relatively get there and I would call that rather unsatisfactory, especially since we feel so exhausted. On the other hand I begin to suspect strongly that we subconsciously rather hanker after jolly old Einstein, since after dinner everyone seems to feel that the shortest line between two points is certainly not the straight one.

Thus we spend our days, thus we carry the light of civilisation and the torch of good example to the farther edge. Pilgrim fathers! It took you 90 days and what did you endure?

We look over the rails and when we see some white 'osses:

Oh, I say, what a bore! I must go down and put a bit more rouge on.

Yours exhausted.
"X."

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