

# Travel - impressions

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## SWISS ARMAMENTS.

On June 5th. the Swiss Parliament passed a resolution, by 159 votes against only 11, to raise immediately an extraordinary loan of 235 millions of Swiss Francs for new defence measures. The very critical position politically in Europe, directly forces our small country to provide adequate military protection, explained the Chief of our Military department, Federal Minister Minger. Nearly half of the proposed credit would be used for air-defences, also a great deal towards heavier artillery and fortifications along the frontier. The protection of the frontier must be built up to such an extent that any surprise attack could be stopped long enough to enable the main forces to march up within the shortest possible time and prevent invasion.

The large loan would be raised on short terms, to be amortised within about 20 years. Approximately 24 million Francs per annum would be necessary for interest and amortisation service; besides a large amount for increased military expenditures, materials, etc. Higher taxations will be imposed on beer and tobacco, also the military tax will be doubled.

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### FAST EXPRESS TRAINS.

The railway authorities of Switzerland recently increased the speed of most train - services, thus creating 1.6 million extra mileage per annum. An outstanding innovation is the new express Zurich-Geneva of 2 trains daily covering the distance of 288 km. in 3 hours 25 minutes. The average speed over the whole distance is 85 km. per hour, and the maximum on straight runs 110 km. This fast train stops only in Bern and Lausanne for 2 minutes and is a delight to many, in this age of speed.

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### TRAVEL - IMPRESSIONS.

The Loetschberg Railway: From Brigg, the fine and powerful electric train takes you swiftly uphill, past a roaring waterfall and over high viaducts. You look down upon the fertile Rhone Valley as from an aeroplane, and then you enter the great Loetschberg tunnel, the third in length among the Alpine railways. At Kandersteg you pause for a cup of coffee or an ice-cold beer, admiring the towering peaks that seem to protect rather than threaten this lovely mountain village. Proceeding down the valley over long and high viaducts and through more tunnels and past beautiful mountains, you arrive in Spiez on the famous lake of Thun. From there you may continue your journey either by rail or take a steam boat to Interlaken, the centre of the Bernese Oberland.

The Gotthard Railway: The Gotthard line, which takes you from Fluelen to Lugano, is a symbol of untamed, and at the same time of controlled, forces. The river Reuss, which you cross at first, is a wild mountain torrent, and the two electrical engines, that pull your train so easily up-hill to romantic Wassen, are a fine example of restrained or controlled power. The might of Zwinguri, the castle-ruin above Amsteg, where the one-time Austrian oppressor lived, was broken, and the torrent has been fettered in iron pipes that feed electric power-stations in the valley below. And even the strength of the mighty Gotthard was pierced by a nine-miles tunnel, which connects Northern and Southern Europe with each other. After an hour's fast journey through the enchanting Ticino you reach --

Lugano: the name that stands for a dreamland of rich, blossoming, Southern vegetation. Neither bold and rocky Mount San Salvatore, nor the Monte Bre can destroy the impression of perfect harmony; it seems rather to confirm the reality of colourful visions of an earthly paradise. You may spend an afternoon's delightful walk

along the foot of Monte Bre to Gandria. This curious old village, cut into the rocks, with no road but only stone steps from house to house, looks as untamed and savage as any smuggler's nest of olden times. It is like a rugged, barren protest against the enchanting gardens of Lugano.

A Modern City: Zurich has a significance and superiority of its own, although its 330,000 inhabitants do not make it count among the large cities of the continent. On leaving the fine railway terminus, you are impressed by the great new Post Office close by, and along the famous "Bahnhof-Strasse" by the great banking and trading palaces. But it is not on such things that Zurich has set its ambition. It is rather the beauty of its architecture and its public places, that may be said to be in keeping with its magnificent setting of lake and mountains. From the quay-bridge you get a fine panorama of the Alps, which appear in all their grandeur. From the Lindenhof, a former Roman fortification, you glance upon the roofs of the oldest parts of Zurich, and you may climb towards the Allmend, where a fine new Zoo has been installed. From there, in the evening, you may look down upon the glittering lights of the very modern city of science and industry, of art and commerce.

Zurich: A stork, returning from the sunny South Africa, decided on the Zurich Zoo as his domicile for the approaching summer. He very soon picked out a young female stork from the inmates of this institution, and without loss of time he began to build his nest on the top of a tall poplar nearby. It kept him very busy for a time, but at last the job was done and he was able to propose to his lady choice. Great was his surprise when he discovered that she was unable to fly, as she, like the rest of her mates, had her wings clipped. The visitor seemed to take his misfortune quite philosophically; he disappeared, but after a few days he returned again in company with another partner. Where he picked up his mate is a mystery, as the storks are pretty rare in Switzerland. He may have gone a long way north.

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Wrestling in Switzerland still seems to be a most popular sport. At the cantonal contest at Buserach, Solothurn, 140 wrestlers took part. In Klingnau, Aargau, there were 166 contestants, while in Hinwil, Zurich, 224 competed.

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On Sunday, the 14th June, the Toggenburg experienced one of the worst hailstorms in memory. The stones, which were nearly the size of hen eggs, levelled everything in field and garden to the ground. Windows were smashed and roofs damaged. Near the railway station at Lutisburg, the fall of hail covered the tracks to such an extent as to cause the derailment of a passenger train; the traffic had to be suspended.

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