

Holiday impressions

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THE TRANS-EUROP-EXPRESS-TRAINS.

A step forward of far-reaching significance in European travel facilities has been taken on June 2nd, 1957, with the introduction of the new so-called "TEE", or "TRANS-EUROP EXPRESSES", intended to offer the quickest, most reliable and most comfortable means of travelling from one Continental city to another.

Europe is becoming constantly more closely united together and the relations between its individual countries increasingly more numerous, with the result that those engaged in commerce especially, but also the scientific man, the person interested in art and the traveller bent simply on enlarging his acquaintance with the world, feel the need of facilities which will enable them to journey between the business and cultural centres of Western Europe with the least expenditure of time. In an endeavour to meet this demand and turning to account the excellent results already obtained with certain inter-city express services on their own systems, the railway authorities of Belgium, West Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland, came to an agreement to introduce a service of some 70 such trains, connecting the principal Continental centres.

From and to Switzerland there are to be direct express connections from Zurich-Bâle to Paris; Zurich-Bâle to Brussels-Amsterdam; Zurich-Bâle to Frankfurt-Hamburg. Streamlined dark red and beige painted diesel-electric trains, elegantly fitted and of attractive appearance, will convey the traveller from the Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich to the commercial centre of Amsterdam, near the stock exchange on the Damrak, in 10 hours and in one hour more he will be able to reach the Limmat from the heart of Hamburg. From Bâle to the Gare de l'Est in Paris he will need but 5 hours, while in every case he will enjoy the maximum of comfort. In as agreeable surroundings as are offered by a well appointed home the passenger will be able to ride at 65 and more miles per hour and, leaning back in the enjoyment of an extremely comfortable arm chair, regard the passing scene or, should he prefer to do so, pass along the corridor and enjoy the amenities of a well equipped restaurant compartment. If necessary, he can spend the time working, writing or reading, in an air conditioned compartment, undisturbed by vibration or noise, and, if he so wishes, can have refreshments brought to him at any time, enabling him to arrive unfatigued at his destination and ready for whatever task or pursuit may await him. The principal advantage characteristic of the new "TEE" trains lies in the fact that they are complete in themselves. Each is a single operating unit, nearly 320 ft. long, made up of a 2,000 h.p. diesel locomotive and three 1st class coaches, with seats for 114 passengers, and a restaurant compartment seating 32. A train will make the entire journey as one formation, which ensures not only a high standard of comfort and complete freedom of movement in the vehicles, but eliminates any time wasting shunting in the course of the run. This in turn reduces the running time between stops and raises the speed, which at times can reach as much as 90 miles per hour.

HOLIDAY IMPRESSIONS.

I found that the rooms I had taken near Montreux, for the month of May, lay on the direct route to the narcissi fields. Traffic in its multiple form made lively the week-end, and during the week the prospect of a good night's sleep was still more or less uncertain.

At the end of some days, I packed my rucksack and set off. On the way up that devious and fascinating hill which marks the district of Chatelard, I stopped at a Hotel-Pension. It stood by itself amidst fields, a large, inviting-looking chalet with a peaceful air. More than a thousand feet below stretched the grey-blue waters of Lake Léman. Cows munched in a meadow nearby. Narcissi were already flowering on the slopes above.

The Maître d'Hotel had come out into the sunshine — a quiet little man with a gentle voice, who brought with him a comfortable sense of no hurry. He took my order and came back shortly afterwards with a tray. No fellow-tourist had appeared. Traffic had been apparently left behind. I sat back and enjoyed the calm and beauty of the scene. That night I fell into sound and satisfying slumber, soothed by the knowledge that the only movement outside was that of running water, and that the starlit sky gave promise of another fine day.

I spent a morning in Jardin Roussel, which lies between the Château de La Tour and Entre Deux Villes, Vevey. The day was brilliant, and the waters of the lake lapped peacefully against the strip of shore. At one point, two swans had built large, blue-green eggs lay picturesquely set against a background of twigs.

The sense of lack of time, which goes with our present-day mode of life, had not touched these birds, who were carrying through their vital programme with elaborate patience. Only the roar of traffic, subdued by the fact that a few hundred yards of garden and pavement lay between, reminded the onlooker of altered human conditions.

On the way back to my Hotel, I noticed a placard set up at a street corner, painted bright red to command attention. On it some words were printed in black. Unlike the familiar challenge for money, and with more serious application, they read:

"SILENCE ! LE BRUIT TUE".

E. F. Irvine.

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