

In praise of the Swiss railway system : David Bisno thanks the SBB

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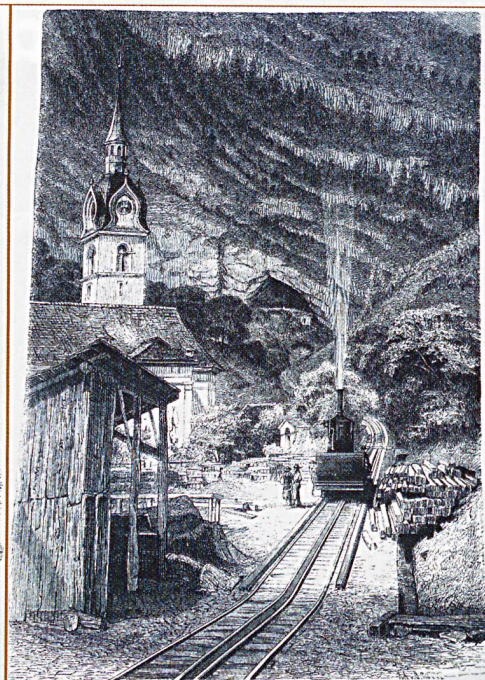
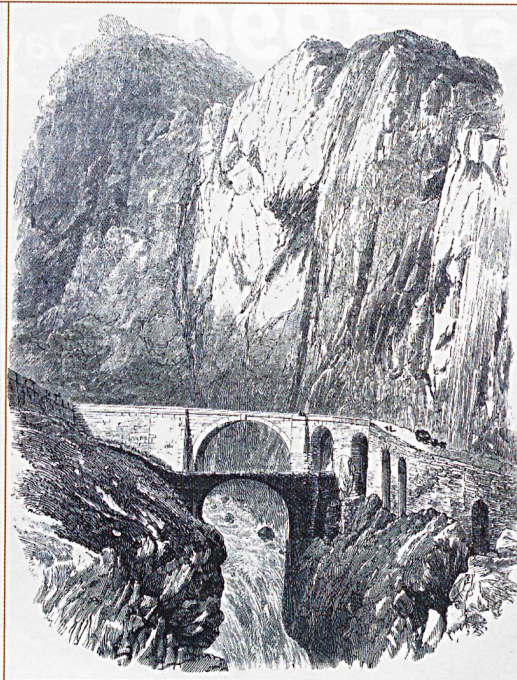
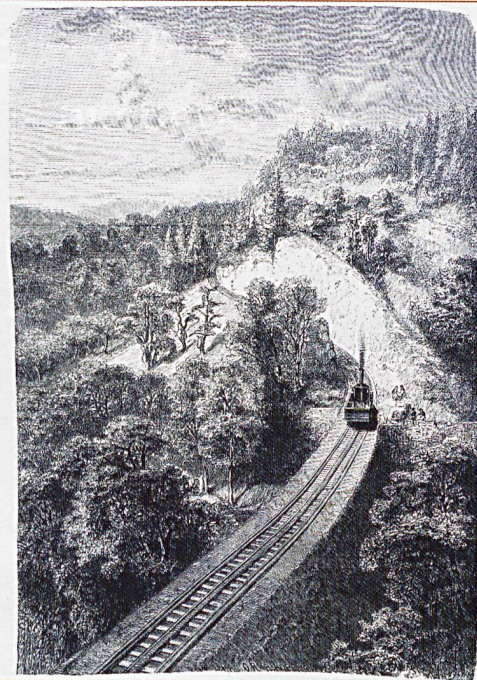
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Railway on the Rigi.

The Devil's Bridge on the St. Gothard Road.

Vitznau Station on the Rigi.

In Praise of the Swiss Railway System

David Bisno thanks the SBB

Last September, after five lovely days in the Cotswolds, at 07.45 my wife and I boarded our first train of the day in Moreton-in-Marsh. At 21.00 the same day we exited our sixth train of the day on the shore of Lake Luzern. All fine and good. Five days later, while waiting on the platform of the Hauptbahnhof in Luzern for the train to Lugano, I treated myself to a bratwurst wrapped in fine, flaky filo dough – yummy! So much did I enjoy that treat, and so distracted by the filo flakes falling on my blue blazer, that I failed to notice my wallet containing our two US passports and two US global entry cards fall to the floor. After the scenic trip over the Gotthard route, 15 minutes before arrival in Lugano I reached for my blue blazer hanging on the hook beside the window. Panic! No wallet. No passports in the usual breast pocket. That is always the site of my sacred documents. With 14 minutes available for a search for the missing wallet – time and Swiss trains wait for no man - my heart beat faster and faster as the minutes ticked away. No passports! I became a “basket case” of embarrassment, frustration, anger and chagrin, all directed at myself.

Upon exit from the train in Lugano, we went to the SBB Internet website and filled out their form for ‘lost articles’. Despondency and depression were now replacing my simple embarrassment and chagrin. Once at the hotel I learned from my laptop that a trip to the US Embassy in Bern would be necessary. Appointments would have to be scheduled. I would need to supply a Swiss Police Report, some form of personal identification and two passport photos of each of us, exactly 5 cm x 5 cm. I would need to purchase two return train tickets from the south of Switzerland to the north and find a room in super busy Bern for an overnight stay. All this was done, taking up the better part of a day in Lugano while we reconciled ourselves to having to cut short our stay on

Lake Como.

Four days later, on a Friday, after accepting the fact that we would never see our passports again and that we must cut short our time in Bellagio and get ourselves to the US Embassy in Bern - miracle of Swiss miracles! My cell phone was ringing with a message: The SBB had located my wallet. If I appeared at the SBB ticket counter in Lugano at exactly 13.00 on Monday, with exactly CHF20, I would be handed my documents that had dropped to the station floor in Luzern. A kind and honest person had handed-in my wallet and because of the SBB’s interconnections between the lost and found departments of every station in Switzerland, I am happy to write that this is exactly what occurred. What a pleasure to be able to cancel our appointments in Bern. All praise to the SBB! ☑

Where’s Heidi?

Have you noticed this scenic reflection whilst standing on a well-known station ? See page 47 for the answer. ☑

