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ON STEALING BICYCLES.

BY LUKE SHARR.



CERTAIN news agency has telegraphed abroad the report that I am in Switzerland, not for the benefit of my health, but for the purpose of stealing bicycles.

The whole trouble arose through Switzerland not having a proper language of its own, that hilly country preferring to express what few thoughts it has in a mixture of French, German and Italian, depending on what particular canton you happen to be in.

October weather is lovely in Switzerland. Most of the visitors have their grog, come down one hill, and the air is sweet and cool, with usually a cloudless sky.

Under these circumstances I thought it would be a nice thing, as the roads were good and the scenery picturesque, to take a bicycle tour right around Lake Thun, beginning at the town which gives the lake its name, and being around to the north side of the lake to Interlaken, and returning by the south shore.

The hotel keeper told me that if I went up the street, turned to the right, went under an arcade until I came to a tunnel, penetrated that and emerged on another street, turned to the left and kept on, I would come to the shop of a man who would let me have a bicycle on hire by the day or the hour.

"Haben sie un bicyclete a louer?" I opened out on him with the above impartial mixture of German and French. It seems he understood me to ask if that was his bicycle, whereupon he replied in four languages:

"Yaw, yaw, oui, yes, see."

Then, throwing in a bit of Italian, I led off with:

"Quanta costa la machine a la hoer, oder per tag?"

Now I submit that to any educated person, or even to a university man, this sentence said as plainly as print:

"How much do you want for this machine by the hour or the day?" I tried afterwards to get the magistrate to see this, but he, not knowing Italian, shied at the very beginning of the phrase.

The owner of the bicycle on oath declares that he thought I asked how much the bicycle had cost him. He says he answered that he paid 500 francs for that brute of a machine, made in France, while I understood him to agree to let me have it for five francs a day, which was cheap. I was in a hurry to be off, and was afraid he might repent his offer, so I said it was all right and I would take it, whereupon, without further parley, I wheeled the bicycle into the middle of the road, sprang on its back, and was off, leaving the astonished man standing by the door, toe thunderstruck, it seems, to make any



"YAW, YAW, OUI, YES, SEE."

outcry until I had passed beyond his sight at the first turning in the road. I pedaled serenely on, little realizing what a commotion I had left behind me, and the one funny thing about this most regrettable episode is that I spent an exceedingly quiet, peaceful and enjoyable day, not knowing I was pursued, making no attempt to elude anybody, and yet eluding them in what appeared afterwards to be by subtle and crafty dodges. The magistrate could not be persuaded that my sitting on the veranda of a restaurant in the main street of Interlaken, with the bicycle in plain view of everybody, was not the brazen act of a hardened criminal, who knew the police would be searching for him in the back streets.

When the man standing against the doorway had recovered partly from his amazement at my sudden flight off his machine he rushed to the police station and told the authorities there a plausible foreigner had engaged him in polite conversation, and, while

his mind was distracted in trying to follow his remarks, had seized the opportunity and also the machine and was at that moment making his way by the north road towards Interlaken.

Now, capture under these circumstances seemed to be deliciously easy. There was no brining off roads. The mountains were on either side and the lake on the other, on either of which was bicycling practicable. Therefore all the two policemen had to do, when they mounted their machines, was to ride faster than I did and so overtake me. As I had no idea that a race was on, I plugged along in a leisurely manner and would undoubtedly have been well taken near Interlaken if it had not been for the fact that some years ago a company built a funicular railway along the margin of the lake, a mile or so up to St. Beatenburg. I had lived in St. Beatenburg once, and I remembered that the road from there to Interlaken was a good one, and I thought I might take it. I had no idea that a race was on, I plugged along in a leisurely manner and would undoubtedly have been well taken near Interlaken if it had not been for the fact that some years ago a company built a funicular railway along the margin of the lake, a mile or so up to St. Beatenburg. I had lived in St. Beatenburg once, and I remembered that the road from there to Interlaken was a good one, and I thought I might take it.

The policeman, it seems, caught sight of me as I was making my spurt, and they at once put on extra steam, but there is a deep bay just before one reaches the funicular and they lost sight of me as I rounded the point. I just managed to catch the car and got on board somewhat short of wind. As we went up I noticed an innocent and unfortunate Englishman standing on the road at the foot of the hill with his bicycle beside him, and he was watching us go up, taking a rest at the same time before mounting the steep hill.



THEY ARRESTED HIM ON THE CHARGE OF STEALING HIS OWN BICYCLE.

that rose between him and his destination. I had little idea at the time that I was making trouble for that unknown stranger, and I hope he will accept my apologies if this recital should chance to meet his eye.

The policeman overtook him near the top of the hill, and, with the craft that distinguishes all continental officials, they said nothing, but followed him until he reached Interlaken, where, in spite of his protestations, they arrested him on the charge of stealing his own bike. The man was justly indignant, and showed them his customs receipt from the French government, and it was not until they knew they had the right man, and they telephoned to Thun for the owner of the machine to come to Interlaken on the next steamer and identify his property. This took a few hours, and when they let the poor man go, he was exceedingly hungry and angry, swearing he was going to bring an action against the Swiss authorities, for that they would do any good.

Meanwhile, I had reached the top of the railway funicular and I bicycled the mile or more along the street, high up above the lake, on one side of which is scattered the village of St. Beatenburg, with its wonderful view of the snow mountains—the Jungfrau, the Eiger, the Monch and the others.

I pedaled the ride down the zig-zag road not such fun as I had expected. I saw the brake was not going to last if I kept on, so I had to walk most of the way down. Coming to a more level ground, I eyed gently into Interlaken, making for the place where they sell Munich beer, and there, over a mug and a sandwich, on the main street, I made a frugal lunch with the bicycle standing against a pillar of the veranda.

After a smoke, I proceeded out of Interlaken, and took the south road that borders the lake. This road is not so good for cycling as the other, being much more hilly, while the roadbed is more stony. I therefore walked a good deal of the way, and in a course of time I was overtaken by a policeman who also was walking with his machine. He asked me if I had met a man on a bicycle coming from Thun, and I told him quite truly that I had not. He seemed discouraged, and told me all about the bicycle theft and the arrest of the wrong man. He then said that he had hidden in the forest until he and his command went past, and then perhaps took the steamer across the lake; or the villain might merely have pretended to take the north road, while in reality he went by the south. Thus the policeman hoped to meet him yet. I promised to keep a lookout, and the officer went on.

When I reached Thun, and came to the place where I got the bicycle, I found the man was in Interlaken, and his wife, who knew all about the robbery, was amazed to see the thief return the machine and place five francs and his thanks on the counter.

I regret to say that the apparent honesty of this action did not commend itself to the authorities. They looked on it as the ruse of a crafty scoundrel who realized that, so vigilant were the police, it was impossible for him to escape, and so endeavored to throw dust in the eyes of the wise men of the place.

Thus the bicycle at five francs a day was not so cheap as I had at first supposed.—Detroit Free Press.

ONE USE FOR APACHES.

Nature seems to have designed that they should become Government Scouts.

The Apache reservation, in the eastern part of Arizona contains the first successful showing of disciplined Indians employed as a body of fighting men by the United States government. The United States has called into requisition the services of about 500 trained Indians, who have within the last five years proved invaluable in subduing uprisings in different Indian reservations. At various times the government has employed special Indian police, and individual Indians have served in the army on important scouting duty, but the utilization of a good many of the tribes trained to modern arms and tactics, is a comparatively modern departure. Aside from the Apaches, the only other instance on record is that of the two companies of Sioux Indians attached to the United States Army post at Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Apaches are one of the most barbarous and warlike Indian tribes in North America, and until recently have not been amenable to the influence of civilization. They are related to the great Shoshone, or Pacific coast Indians, a branch whose treachery and cruelty are traditionally famous among all western Indians. The Apaches have been divided into the White Mountain Apaches and the Mesquiteros. The latter tribe, now headed by the treacherous old San Juan, was formerly a band of desperadoes, led by the well-known Geronimo and the Apache "Kid." The Apaches are naturally a vicious people, and while they are capable of receiving a moderate degree of education, are totally unfit for any other pursuit than wandering over the plains in armed bands. Even under a thorough military education they are unable to fight other than in their own methods of warfare. They learn the manual of arms and field manoeuvres without any difficulty, and are drilled to fire by platoons, but which it comes to actual fighting they can operate to better advantage if left to their own devices and inherent trickery.

Their usual dress is a native woven cotton cloth shirt and turban to match, close-fitting pants and buckskin boots. In fighting trim they discard everything but the turban, boots, and a long knife, a repeating rifle and a cartridge belt, they make a desperate and a dangerous antagonist. The territory of Arizona contains stretches of the most unproductive soil in the country, but the Apaches, muscular of limb and hardy by nature, thrive under its semitropical sun. An Apache's powers of endurance are beyond calculation. He has been known to go two whole days, running, fighting, and retreating, without tasting a mouthful of food or a drop of water. A band of 1,000 Apaches could wear the life out of an ordinary army in a month. They fight in squads of 20 or 30, scattered over the plains and reaching the mountains behind a small stone or clump of sage brush that would scarcely hide a child. They can shoot right or left handed, either in a crouching attitude, rolled up into a ball, or stretched flat in a shallow "arroyo," a ditch washed out of the soil during the rainy season.

From this ambuscade they make for the foothills, where they enclose the chestnuts and gulches and fire on their pursuers with deadly effect. They are as fleet of foot as a bronco, being able to outwind a horse over the parched plains. Apache messengers between government stations frequently cover a distance of 25 miles in less than three hours, and know how to elude the terrific sand storms that sweep the deserts in the vicinity of the Gila mountains. In mountain climbing they are like chamois, jumping from ledge to ledge with the greatest ease and agility and scaling precipitous walls on the most delicate footing. When riding horseback they almost become part of the animal, crawling around its body and firing while they hang on one side in true Indian fashion. The Apache scouts are especially dreaded by the Navajos, Yumas, and the Maricopas, whose outbreaks they are occasionally called on to subdue, and who know them of old from the pilfering expeditions for which the Apaches are famous.

The Apache reservation is about 250 miles from the Mexican boundary line. As they are continually at war with their neighbors or among themselves, it is difficult to estimate their numbers, but it is between 5,000 and 7,000. They speak the Spanish language almost universally, and display all the undesirable qualities of the North American Indian in close admixture with those of the Mexican. —San Francisco Chronicle.

Women as Spellers. Women have the reputation of being better spellers than men, though there have been some notable exceptions. Mrs. Barbold, for instance, though she was a schoolmarm, once deliberated as to the correct way of spelling donkey, and finally concluded it was d-o-n-k-y. And another, Jane Austen, the popularity of whose books has so wonderfully revived within the last decade, invariably wrote niece with the "e" before the "i." She wrote, concerning some proofs: "The printers continue to supply me very well. I am advanced in volume third to my arraroot." To this peculiar style of spelling an article sacred to invalids was devoted, however, a modest query as to propriety in the margin. Elsewhere the demure Jane felicitates herself upon an abundance of "tamatas." Her biographer, who was her grandnephew, confesses that his gifted aunt was always a careless speller, nor was she herself wholly ignorant of her own orthographical insecurity. She laughed at it, and evidently considered it too trifling a matter to deserve serious attention.—Detroit Free Press.

ACTORS LIKE WASHINGTON.

They Are Fond of Spending Leisure in the Capital City.

Every actor or actress, lyric or dramatic, will tell you that they love to come to Washington. It is invariably the pilgrimage of pleasure. There are several reasons for this. One reason in chief is because a great deal of the talent that represents the talent is naturally at hand. It has been a centennial movement of bright men and women. Another reason is that conditions political and otherwise change so often that men and women are not permitted to move in grooves. This brings about a system of society, if it may be so called, which is more free from cliques and cabals than any other city in the United States. The president is the president of the people. The first lady in the land is no bigger than the second or third lady of the land. The few titled people hold title for the people, and if they don't behave themselves, as Andrew Jackson intimated, the people get mad, and titles and dignities vanish at the next election, including the coterie known as the cabinet set. Of course there is the diplomatic corps, but that is not American. The diplomatic corps changes also quite frequently, but the theatrical corps is with us always, and it is perhaps a draw as to whether the people like the "play actors" any better than the "play actors" like the people of Washington. Actors, like everybody else, and they are all mortals except when on the other side of the footlights, are apt to become lonesome if not absolutely lost in the immensity of the great cities through which they go in their wanderings during the "business" season. Nothing can be more solitary than the solitude of a great city in which no one knows anybody and in which it is difficult to get acquainted with anybody. Take any of the big cities like Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco or Philadelphia. Land an actor there for the first time, or the second or the third time, and, barring the paradox, he is sure to feel as soon as he lands. Time hangs heavy on his hands. It is the hotel, the rehearsal, and the performance in the everlasting recurrence. "This is the solemn fact without exaggeration," said an old-time visitor to Washington a day or two ago at the Cochrans. "You are all close together here; your city is compact, and withal there is no telling where it ends. I can find more things to interest me in an hour's walk from this hotel than I can in any city in the world, and I have done come reveling in it in some capacity or other on the stage ever since I was 15 years of age."—Washington Times.

THE ROTTENNESS OF TURKEY.

A Government Carried on by Spies and Based on Bribery.

There is a council of ministers—they are puppets. There is a grand vizier—he is the mouthpiece of his master's whims. Every single matter, down to the most trifling—a squabble in a coffee house, for example—goes before the sultan personally. Every appointment is made and unmade by him. The minister of police is his chief spy and torturer. The minister of marine is his ally in colonial speculation. The minister of the interior is perforce his means of securing as his own property the richest lands of the empire, and thus robbing the state of their returns in taxes. Except himself, nobody has any authority, nobody has any right; nobody can perform any of the duties of his position, nobody's liberty and life are safe for an hour. And the rotten hole is cemented together by one huge and all-embracing system of espionage. Everybody suspects everybody else of being a spy, and Turk hardly ventures to express a thought to Turk. Not one minister can call upon another without the fact being reported at the palace. The best men are in exile. In Constantinople there is but one man who dares beard the sultan. That is Hassan Pasha, minister of marine, and he boasts that the sultan dare not depose him. He receives enormous sums of money for the upkeep of the fleet, and there is, of course, no fleet left. These men find their way into some private pockets. Whether this is the hold he has over the sultan we do not know, but there is another statement made to the effect that he possesses, and has placed in safe keeping outside Turkey, certain papers connected with the death of Abdul Aziz, and in case of his deposition or sudden death these are to be given to the world. In the meantime, has enormous wealth, his great influence and the hatred felt for him by all his subordinates are three indisputable facts. There are just two really influential men in Turkey. The first is Lufti Akha, body servant and adviser to the sultan. With this valet the caliph of Islam takes counsel concerning the domestic affairs of Turkey and its relations with the European powers. The second is Abdul Huda, the sultan's private mollah, the priest who conducts the service in the royal mosques. In comparison with this ignorant fanatic the council of ministers, yes, and the ambassadors themselves, are mere wax-works.—London Chronicle.

An Awful Record.

An old man in England was sent to prison for four months for petty stealing whose record, the judge who sentenced him said, "is one of the most awful pieces of reading that has ever come to my notice." In 1863 he was sent to jail for three years for stealing two tame rabbits; he then got seven years for stealing five shillings and a hawk; then ten years, with seven years' police supervision, for stealing three ducks, and finally consecutive sentences of five years each on three charges of stealing a coat, a pair of reins, and a shovel, with another seven years' police supervision. In all, 35 years of penal servitude for stealing five objects whose value amounted to a few dollars.—Chicago Chronicle.

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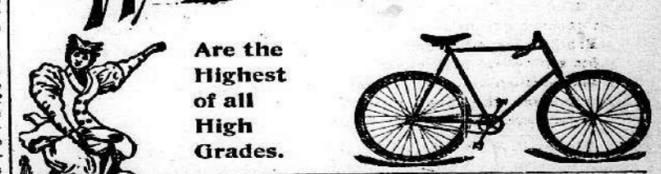
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