

## ROUND ABOUT LIECHTENSTEIN

A Tiny Principality Which the Visitor May Encompass in a Single View Affords Adventurous Climbs Among Steep Pastures and Quaint Villages

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*With Illustrations from Photographs by the Author*

IF YOU are a map traveler, Liechtenstein-bound, follow the castled Rhine, skirt the Black Forest to Basel, swing east past the Falls to the shed at Friedrichshafen, where Uncle Sam's Zeppelin, the *Los Angeles*, was built, and you are on the Lake of Constance, or Bodensee, shared by Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. Turn south for 20 miles up the broad valley between Switzerland and Austria and you reach the northern tip of the Principality of Liechtenstein, which for the next 15 miles looks west across the Rhine.

To reach Liechtenstein in person requires self-discipline. One must leave Paris and Switzerland behind and stop short of Vienna and Budapest. Forego an evening in Paris, be aboard the Budapest sleeper just before 9 and before lunch time you will arrive at Buchs.

In the station the Babel of tongues was being systematized by linguistic hybrids who translated confusion into sense. Yet the queue stopped so long that the express snorted impatiently. Then we moved on. «My word!» ejaculated the man in front of me. «It was a Dutchman trying to talk Esperanto to the booking clerk.»

«You people don't care to learn new languages,» objected another Esperanto delegate, still aggressively enthusiastic after a Zurich convention in favor of a common medium of expression. «But here in Central Europe we do.» \*

We rolled across an imposing canal, passed over the Rhine, and, after two miles, stopped.

«No one gets out here», proclaimed the conductor. He was misinformed. I saw my trunk outside, noticed the name «Schaan-Vaduz» on the station, salvaged my suitcase and camera, and dropped from the moving train into Liechtenstein.

To the right the narrow plain between mile-high mountains and the Rhine stretched away toward Sargans, off the south tip of the Lilliputian land. To the left was the «low country.» The express had tossed me off at the division line between Schellenberg and Vaduz, once separate units, and fiefs of the Roman Empire.

One who thinks of the Principality as a part of the Swiss Customs Union expects this small mountain-side State to be west of the Rhine, leaning against St. Gallen instead of hanging to the shoulder of Vorarlberg. But political changes hurdle a river easier than mile-high mountains do. Until 1919, free Liechtenstein was economically allied to Austria. The «K.K.», denoting Kaiser and King, on the Schaan post office, though partly obliterated, is still visible.

Here the Rhine is no romantic river for deep-water sailors, with a prima donna mermaid parading her tresses before bobbed-haired tourists. It is a shallow, stony torrent bed, now dry in spots, now foaming with the force of Alpine glaciers. Man has taken the river in hand, overcome its meandering habits, and confined it between prosaic, though curving, banks. \*\*

Between the Rhine and the sway-back ridge of Liechtenstein is a narrow plain devoted to hay, corn, and grain, with orchards here and there, stately poplars marking some roads and vineyards on the gentler slopes. At the place where it curls up to cliff and mountain meadow, a road, split into a Y by the Schellenberg, unites the valley towns from Ruggell and Schaanwald to Klein Mels.

Schaan, with 1400 inhabitants, is at the focus of the three branches and the short international road to Buchs. Its chief landmark is a sharp-spired church whose architect borrowed inspiration from the needles of rock above it.