It is unfortunate that no post-mortem examination of the carcases of the dogs
that died was possible in either of these two cases.

It is noticeable that each child first showed signs of illness at the beginning
of the hot weather.

I am indebted to Major R. Storrs, R.A.M.C., for the clinical details of the
above recorded cases.

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Travel.

A SHORT WINTER SPORTS HOLIDAY IN THE AUSTRIAN
TYROL.

By Major R. C. Wilson.
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About the middle of January, I received a communication from the
powers that be that if I wanted three weeks' holiday I could take it in
four days' time and that if I did not take it then the probability of having
leave later was somewhat remote.

Where to go was the problem. England at that time of the year was
impossible. Switzerland, for a family party was also out of the question,
unless you are well endowed with worldly wealth. The only likely country
left was Austria and we decided to go to Innsbruck. An interview with
Thomas Cook & Son proved the impossibility of obtaining "sleepers" on
the train as they are always booked up well in advance.

As we were a party of five we took 2nd class tickets which cost us
400 marks each for the single journey.

We left Cologne at 9.30 a.m. Belonging to the Army of Occupation
we got a compartment reserved for military only, and possession being
nine points of the law, had it all to ourselves until we reached Munich.
There was an excellent restaurant car on the train and we had lunch, tea
and dinner in comfort. All three meals for the five of us, plus drinks,
came to about the equivalent of 15s.

Munich was reached about 11 p.m. and we had just time for a light
supper of tea and cakes for the female party and a long pot of real Munich
beer for the one male representative, before the closing hour of midnight.
We found the rooms we had engaged beforehand ready for us at the Hotel
Roter Hahn.

The next day was spent in exploring this most interesting city. There
is no space for me to describe what we saw, Baedeker can do it much
better. If one knows where to go, living is cheap there. In our hotel we
paid about 47 marks each for our rooms and that was the only item on
the bill. Everything else we had was paid for in cash. Breakfast,
11 marks, lunch or dinner from 40 to 50 marks. In the more pretentious hotels it was different, 300 or 400 marks for a room was quite a common charge, and the other things in the same proportion. Our hotel was equal to a best second class hotel in England and the food much better.

We left next morning at 9.30 by the Rome express and arrived at Innsbruck about 2 p.m. At the frontier at Kuffstein we all had to bundle out bag and baggage, and go through the customs. Before leaving Cologne I tried to find out what was allowed to be brought into this country but was told such a number of conflicting tales that I was as ignorant in the end as at the beginning. One was the question of English money. I heard of one person that declared to having £20 on him and it was promptly sequestered; another said he had none at all, and so was on the point of being deported as an undesirable alien. I had £25 but said nothing about it. I told the Customs officer that I had a credit in the Anglo-Austrian Bank, which was true, as Holt and Co. arranged it for me. My suit-case was the first to be opened. It contained whisky, cigarettes, tobacco, etc., right on top, and only covered by a tennis shirt. On top of this shirt were two old packs of German cards which my wife put there at the last moment. These were seized upon with joy by the Customs officer and declared to be contraband. I saw an opening and took it. The train arrived nearly half-an-hour late and we were supposed to leave on time, and hundreds of people were clamouring to get their baggage franked. I said the cards were old friends and I did not want to part with them and offered to pay any customs duty he wished; we argued over these old cards for about ten minutes and then he said he would fetch the head "Major General." We started the argument all over again until about twenty people behind me announced the fact that the train was due to leave in a quarter-of-an-hour. This finished the matter—he took the cards, told me to close all my bags and marked them all with a beautiful cabalistic sign in pure white chalk. He was pleased and I more so. If he had only left the blessed old cards alone and lifted the tennis shirt he would have had a much more valuable find in the form of whisky, cigarettes, etc.

The train re-started more or less on time. The compartment we had to ourselves before was taken, but we found another. In a few minutes lunch was announced and we rushed to the restaurant car to get good seats, but found it almost empty. We wondered why but afterwards found out. The menu read good and visions of former visits to Italy re-appeared. The minestrone was half-cooked rice in hot water, the macaroni dish very poor, the meat so tough that it almost blunted the seemingly strong knife; a bad apple and a leathery fig ended about the worst meal I had ever eaten in a train. The bill for five people, plus a bad bottle of red wine and tips, came to 10,000 kronen. No wonder the car was half empty, after our experience of the good and ample food of the German trains.

Now it was like a transformation scene in the old-fashioned pantomime. Flat Germany disappeared—high snow-clad mountains appeared on either
side of the railway. The houses became more and more like Swiss chalets. Fat frauleins with the universal thick ankles gave place to more Italian-like types. The men ceased to wear double chins on the back of their necks. At Innsbruck things became more normal from our point of view, and English was more or less spoken and understood by most people. We spent two days at Innsbruck. The Hotel Kreid, where we stayed, was fairly comfortable, but, the town being in a valley surrounded by high mountains, was very cold and damp, you could not stir out without an overcoat and a muffler; also there was nothing to do after dinner except go to bed. Winter sports were a long way off and you had either to take a train or tram to get to the starting point.

We decided to leave and go to Igls, a village about three miles up the mountains. Usually a steam tram runs up there at regular intervals, but on account of the coal shortage it had ceased to function. We hired a sledge with two horses for the baggage and two passengers—the rest walked. This item cost 14,000 kronen, the most expensive item so far—only for a journey of three miles.

The hotel at Innsbruck was very cheap and everything included came to about 2s. 6d. a day each, that is at the rate of exchange we got then, of 40,000 to the pound, afterwards it dropped to 30,000.

The journey to Igls took about an hour as it was an ascent of nearly 1,000 feet, and we arrived in time for lunch. The change was wonderful. Instead of the dull fog of Innsbruck we found a brilliant sunshine, glistening white snow and wonderful snow-clad mountains on every side. The Igls sanatorium looked like an enchanted castle after the dull-looking hotels of Innsbruck. After a slight argument with the sledge-driver with regard to tips we partook of a most excellent lunch and afterwards started to dig ourselves in to our respective rooms. These, we found next day, were on the north side of the building, very cold and no chance of any ray of sunshine. However, next day, after a short interview with the management, we were able to change to the south side, where all day long we were bathed in sunshine. This is a point one often forgets: in winter the north side is impossible and if you don't ask for the south side you won't get it.

Before leaving Cologne I was warned to buy what I wanted in the way of winter sports' gear there but failed to do so as I thought that in the land of thousands of kronen things would be cheaper. It was quite the contrary. Boots, skis, läges, cost about double the price in Germany, but much cheaper than England or Switzerland. Boots and skis about 32,000 kr. each, läges from 8,000 to 10,000 kr. The two latter articles the shop promised to buy back at half price, which it did.

It was the first time that any of our party had been to a winter sports resort, so our first effort at skiing was the event of our lives. Luckily I did not know that wax and a cork polisher was a part of the equipment, so started off with unwaxed skis. It was as simple as falling off a log, went down slopes quite easily, climbed up again as easily as walking up
stairs, and all agreed there was nothing in it. Next morning an enemy initiated me into the mystery of waxing and polishing skis. I wore myself out on the job and the result was awful. The slopes I calmly slid down the day before I flew down at the rate of an express train—that is for the first twenty or thirty yards—then I seem to have collided with a goods train and what happened I don’t know except that I arrived somewhere near the bottom in a tangled heap.

After a super-pelmanic effort I managed to find which was my left and right foot and how to restore them to their normal positions, a thing which seems impossible at first but gradually resolved itself. The next thing was to re-climb the slope, this same slope you walked up easily yesterday, now you fail miserably. After three or four steps you slip back at the rate of the aforesaid express train and apply the brake with your chin and nose.

However, it is an excellent sport and it keeps you nice and warm, at first one part from exercise and four parts from fright, later on in the reverse ratio. In a few days we all got expert enough to fly down ordinary slopes with only an occasional toss, and after a fortnight could undertake an expedition of several hours and enjoy it thoroughly.

To be an expert is quite a different matter; you have to practise hard, doing nothing but stemming and the various turns—telemacks, christiansas, etc. How one got to hate these terms! At all meals you heard nothing else but, “did you see me do that telemack this afternoon,” of course I replied, “yes, it was splendid,” but all the time I thought it was an ordinary fall. But one must be polite.

If you want to go on expeditions these things are absolutely necessary. Our party, I’m afraid, had to resort to the ungraceful way of avoiding “going over the top” of a nasty place by falling down and using all the portions of their anatomy available as a brake. It is very effective, but as I said before, not at all graceful.

There was about fifteen inches of snow during our stay and the ski-ing grounds were excellent, you could get on your skis at the hotel door and go for miles in any direction.

There were several excellent toboggan runs—two over two miles long. The best was from a place called Heiligewasser to Igls and was full of thrills—especially at the hair-pin bend. The experts flew down this run at express speed, but the writer, not being as young as he used to be, confesses to wearing out more of the heels of his nail-studded boots than he ought to have.

Races were held on this run frequently, and the local inhabitants, male and female, turned out in great force to compete for the prizes.

Everyone in this country from the extreme old to the very young has a luge and never seems to stir one yard without one. A luge is as much a part of their equipment as their boots. The sedate hotel manager gets on his outside the hotel door and slides down to Innsbruck to
Order supplies; the maids of the hotel slide away on theirs when their work is over.

No matter what time of day or night you are wending your weary way up from the town you hear the yell "achtung," and someone flies past you. Why more of them don't break their necks going down this dangerous road beats me (only one did during our stay).

A word about our hotel. It was excellent. It is a sanatorium run by two Austrian doctors, Dr. O. Liermberger and Dr. J. Schuster, mainly for patients suffering from digestive troubles and blood diseases. Up to the present it has only been open during the summer months; this year it was opened as a winter sports hotel, and has been quite a success. It accommodates about eighty people, and its equipment is of the most modern type. The most pleasing part of it was the excellent bathing facilities. There was a big battery of bath-rooms at one end of the building, and a constant supply of boiling water day and night. Waiting for a bath never meant more than a few minutes. The most pleasing part of it was that there was no charge for baths, no matter how many you had.

There was also a modern installation of the usual fancy baths, douches, electric bath, etc., one finds in a first-class hydropathic establishment. These, of course, were not in use in the winter months.

The bedrooms were most comfortable, and all well heated, no extra charge. The food was excellent. Breakfast was served, as a rule, in our bedrooms.

Wines and other drinks were cheap, about one-sixth of the price in England. The pension rates are from 7s. to 9s. per day, no extras except room tax, which is 600 kr. per day per room, or about 7d. As a doctor I got special rates, 6s. a day, for each of my party. These prices are, of course, in excess of the other Austrian hotels, but the comfort of living in a well-heated hotel with good food and a comfortable lounge, where you can sit out in comfort after dinner and meet English people, is worth the extra money.

There was always something to do after dinner; dance to a gramophone, play bridge or join in an old-fashioned game of "Up Jenkins," etc. It is extraordinary how one unbends when one is a long way from home.

There is a hotel called Lannsersee about three-quarters of a mile away. This was taken in hand by a Colonel Unwin, who persuaded the manager to open it as a winter sports club for pre-war officers and some honorary members. The entrance fee is £1 1s. for the season, and the terms for pension £3 3s. a week.

There is a small lake alongside where skating can be indulged in when the snow can be persuaded from spoiling it. Here a real band provides music for dancing about three times a week. Another attraction is a bar, the only place in these parts where you can get a real drink, whisky and soda and cocktails, etc. For these luxuries prices are charged in English money. There are two professionals attached to the club, one for skiing and the other for skating. The former is a most charming Austrian.
gentleman who, in pre-war days, made skiing a hobby, and now is clever enough to turn it to good account.

The hotel was almost full during our stay, there being about seventy English people there. Another consideration which appealed to the writer, and made the place more home-like, was the existence of a real bog a few hundred yards from the hotel where they cut real turf—the only one I have seen since I left a certain country.

It is a very pleasant country to live in, and the people, even those in the shops, are most polite. The people are very religious, and you cannot move half a mile in any direction without bumping into a shrine. Instead of the usual German salutation of "guten tag," the universal one is "Gruss Gott." The question of the exchange is utterly appalling, and if such a catastrophe happened in England, one shudders to think what would happen. Imagine having a sum of £2,000 before the war, and now it being only worth £1. That is what the value was when I was there. Still, the ordinary people one meets do not seem to mind, as paper money is turned out in unlimited quantities and wages and prices adjusted accordingly. The lowest unit is now 100 kronen except for the trams, which is sixty kronen. A copy of the Daily Mail costs over £40 at pre-war value.

As this district was an agricultural one, there were no signs of poverty, and the people seemed to be well fed, and all seemed happy and contented. What happens to the unfortunate families who are depending on a pre-war income or pensioners, etc., one dreaded to ask. I once did, but quickly changed the subject.

We left the place with regret and wended our weary way back to Cologne. It was weary, as there had been a strike on the German railways, which only ended two days before we left. The journey to Munich, instead of four hours, took eight, and during that time we travelled in every class of compartment except the guard's van. The usual weary business of getting through the Customs at Kuffstein. A word of warning. Do not rush to be first—there is an excellent restaurant where you can get coffee with real cream on top. Once you pass the barrier you cannot get back to the restaurant, and there is no restaurant on the German side. There is no need to hurry, as the train waits for the registered luggage to be passed, and that is always last. Luckily we brought a supply of food with us, otherwise we would have been in a bad way.

We arrived at Munich at 11.30 p.m., and found our rooms ready for us at the Roter Hahn.

Left next morning at 8 a.m. and arrived at Cologne at 9.30 p.m.

It was a very pleasant holiday, and for a family that cannot afford the expensive luxuries of a Swiss winter resort I can strongly recommend it.

The total expenses for a party of five—one male and four females—was a little over £45, everything included with second-class railway tickets. It is more comfortable to take sleepers and travel by night, and it saves hotel bills at Munich; but we could not give Cooks sufficient warning, and the strike upset things on the return journey.