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Try Bobsledding If You Want Thrills

Les Avants, Switzerland.—If you want a thrill of the sort that starts at the base of your spine in a shiver and ends with your nearly swallowing your heart, as it leaps with a jump into your mouth, try bobsledding on a mountain road at fifty miles an hour.

The bob holds two persons. There is a steering wheel about twice as big as a doughnut for the victim in front to hang on to and two steel brakes that jam into the road on either side of the rear of the sled to make arm holds for the victims in the rear. You sit down, someone shoves you, and the road starts slipping about six inches below where you are sitting. On a steep slope of icy road it takes a bobsled just about as long to get started into high as it does a gun to shoot after you pull the trigger.

You hang on to the wheel, watch the road and a mountain unreels alongside of you like a movie film. The bob is rushing along with a steely lisp from the runners and a rising dive like the galloping horse when you hit the uneven places in the road. It is picking up speed and you make a turn and the road drops down an even steeper shoot of road and the bob roars down over the ice. There is a great snowy valley on the left with huge saw-toothed bulks of mountains on the other side, but you only get rushing glimpses of it out of the corner of your eye as the bob shrieks around a turn.

You feel it is all you can do to hold the sled onto the road when the road swoops into a forest and you roar through it on the iciness of the road that is as hard as the way of the transgressor. Just then you hear a shout of “Garde” behind you and the braker looks around and sees through the trees a big eight-passenger bob just dropping down the slope into the forest stretch of the road. Everyone in the big bob screams at you and you pull over to the right of the road to let them pass. But the road is icier there and you pick up more speed while they are slowed by the newer snow at the left and fall back of you again. You go down the next slope abreast with the bob runners making a whispering rush on the ice and then at a wide turn they pass you with a roar and a slither of ice from the brakes.

The road is not so steep here and you slow to about twenty miles an hour and steer with one hand, wipe the wind tears out of your eyes and look back at the sunset that is turning the white shoulders of the mountain pink. It is just a glimpse, for the road dips into another stretch of timber and you roar down the last steep slope to the railway station. There are a crowd of people in snow clothes and four or five bobs waiting for the train to take them up the mountain and you stamp your feet warm and brush the snow and ice thrown up by the brakes from each other's backs. While you wait for the train, you munch at ham sandwiches that a little boy peddles from a basket to the bobsledders, watch the sun go down over the great sweep of snow-covered country and wonder why people go to Palm Beach or the Riviera in the wintertime.