I have described elsewhere the Japanese railway system. It is Government-owned in most part (5/6) and is all of narrow gauge (3 ft. 6 in.). They have an ambition project for changing the entire system to 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge at a cost of about $50,000,000. Their recent bridge and tunnel work has been done with this in view. Considering the difficult nature of the country and the short hauls, the necessity for this change is not very apparent, especially as nearly all important points are reached by water navigation.

Rail travel is in general quite comfortable. This particular railway is the main trunk line of the Island. It is a fine double track line, stone-ballasted and in good surface, with heavy rail. It is situated in a mountainous country, crossing the wide beds of many torrential streams by long bridges. These rivers are all above the level of the surrounding land and are kept within bounds by dykes. This requires the railway grade to be raised approaching and leaving the bridges and produces the effect of a series of sags and hog-backs in the line. The passenger cars are of the corridor type, made for small people, but quite comfortable and ride well. They are equipped with 4-wheel trucks, vacuum brakes and side buffers with hook and link couplings (English type). The cars have ordinarily side seats. Freight cars are 4-wheelers. Locomotives (passenger) are generally 10-wheelers of English design and very neat looking. Trains run left handed and do not make a very fast schedule, but are generally on time. Dispatching is by the "staff" system, using instruments of a peculiar Jap model. I noticed an admirable minor feature; each station is provided with a large sign board on the platform giving the name of station, its distance from