

# Le percement du tunnel du Gothard

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

By KYBURG.

Some of our readers may have seen a photograph in the British Press showing a *Bomber* aeroplane which has been made in Switzerland for the Bolivian Government. Fancy, Switzerland exporting Bombing aeroplanes! The fact may fill one with a sort of melancholy pride in the prowess of our engineers, but, I think, the following item, dealing with

### Civil Flying in Switzerland:

leaves a much nicer taste:

*Flight, 7th March.*

The statistics of civil flying in Switzerland in 1929 have now been published, and they show a gratifying advance on the figures for 1928. In the flying schools the number of flights rose from 6,442 to 11,860. Pleasure flights, taxi flights, photographic flights, and flights by private aeroplanes rose in number from 4,651 to 7,419, and the number of passengers carried rose from 6,451 to 13,373. On commercial air lines, Swiss and foreign, which fly over Swiss territory, the number of flights in the year was 28,062; the hours flown, 14,810; the kilometres covered, 1,967,080; passengers carried, 42,050; mail matter, 102,950 kilograms; freight, 334,390 kilograms; and luggage paid for, 48,220 kilograms. All these figures show a substantial rise on the 1928 figures.

### Seaport for Switzerland:

*Bath Chronicle and Herald, 11th March:*

Within a few years Switzerland will be open to sea-going ship traffic.

At Basle, where the annual Swiss Industries Fair opens on April 26th, one of the greatest inland navigation dock schemes in the world is approaching completion under the direction of Swiss, French and German official enterprise. When the canalisation of the upper reaches of the Rhine, from Strasbourg to Basle, is completed, deep-water steamers will be able to carry their freights direct to the heart of Europe.

Since the Swiss Industries Fair was inaugurated 14 years ago, Basle has become the terminus of Rhine barge traffic. To-day long strings of barges are towed to Basle from Antwerp, Rotterdam and other North Sea ports. To-morrow vessels of over 1,000 tons will steam direct to the Alps.

And, arriving at Basle, will look round and wonder where the Alps may be!

Basle, however, has another title to fame, for does it not shelter that

### Fair that is 800 Years Old:

*Leicester Mail, 10th March:*

This year's Swiss Industries Fair—one of the most important of the great European trade exhibitions—will be held at Bâle from April 26 until May 6.

In its modern form this is but the 14th anniversary of the Bâle Fair. Actually, however, the fair has an unbroken pedigree of more than 800 years, and a traditional history that extends back to the first dim days of prehistoric inter-tribal bartering.

Bâle, situated on the great commercial waterway of the Rhine, and strategically occupying a key position in regard to the main traffic routes of Europe, was a known trade centre to the Romans. Later, in medieval times, a great annual spring fair came into being, which caught the custom of merchant princes of the 11th and 12th centuries, and also of the numberless pilgrims who had to pass through Switzerland on their way to the religious shrines of Italy and the Holy Land.

Then, the stalls were rickety booths erected in the winding streets of the old city. To-day, the fair is housed in what is one of the finest permanent trade exhibition buildings in the world.

### Broadcasting:

Now that Broadcasting is a more or less important item in everyone's life and daily routine, the report given in last week's issue of the *S.O.* regarding the new arrangements for Regional Broadcasting in Switzerland was much to be welcomed.

I don't know how my readers fare. But, on my set, which is a good one, I find it very difficult to tune in *Berne*, when Kattowitz is going strong. And this new Muenster Station of 60 kilowatts will, therefore, be much appreciated and form a very necessary and delightful link with the homeland.

It is often forgotten that Switzerland had a religious war not quite a hundred years ago and that since that time, *Jesuits* have been barred from Switzerland. In late years this question has been discussed again and again among Swiss and I was interested to read the following:

### Jesuit Ostracism in Switzerland:

*Universer, 7th March:*

The fact that a learned Jesuit, P. Erich Przywara, professor of philosophy at the University of Munich, has recently delivered some successful lectures in various Swiss cities



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and was allowed by the authorities to do so, has provoked a lively discussion in the non-Catholic section of the Press. There even was a short debate in the local Parliament of the Canton of Zurich with regard to the permission given to P. Przywara to lecture, and the "break of the Constitution" it implied. The reason is that the activities of the members of the Society of Jesus in church and school are still forbidden by law, although a certain amount of tolerance has been practised in recent years.

Yet, in presence of the many prejudices still prevailing in influential and leading Protestant centres, to say nothing of the hostile attitude of the Socialists, it would be unwise for Catholics to start a campaign for the abolition of that law, however much they would like a clear fight to that end. A gradually increasing toleration, until freedom has been practically secured, is beyond doubt, the better policy. The way may be long but it is sure. *Anglia docet.* J.G.

### LE PERCEMENT DU TUNNEL DU GÖTHARD.

On approchait du but. On creusait six mètres par jour. Il y avait des années que les hommes s'étaient attaqués au colosse. Tels des chirurgiens, ils avaient ouvert le flanc du Gothard et lui fouillaient les entrailles avec des perforatrices. La montagne souffrait surtout dans son orgueil et se vengeait en faisant mourir les ouvriers en grand nombre, puis, voulant frapper un coup décisif, terrassa l'audacieux conquérant Louis Favre. Mais les hommes ne lâchèrent pas pied devant les derniers soubresauts du géant. Avec une obstination de rongeurs, ils creusèrent leurs galeries toujours plus profondément. Le monde entier suivait passionnément les péripéties de ce drame gigantesque. Le vulgaire s'émerveillait des prouesses des ouvriers qui, au fond des galeries, suants, noirs, tragiques, sublimes, travaillaient par 32 degrés de chaleur, parfois entièrement nus, n'ayant gardé que leurs chausures. On approchait du but, on creusait six mètres par jour. Soudain, un certain soir, on crut entendre un faible bruit. On fait silence, on tend l'oreille, il n'y a pas de doute, les coups sourds viennent de l'autre côté de la paroi. On suppose l'épaisseur du rocher. Il reste trois mètres à creuser. Alors, tremblant d'émotion, le cœur battant d'espoir, on s'apprête au dernier assaut. La perforatrice lance sa sonde comme une épée dans la poitrine d'un mourant: un violent courant d'air cingle le visage, annonçant d'un coup que le Gothard a expiré, que l'œuvre humaine vit, et que le tunnel est percé. Quel triomphe! Mais gloire avant tout au génie créateur: puisque Louis Favre, foudroyé quelques mois plus tôt en plein tunnel par une attaque d'apoplexie, ne peut pas passer le premier étroite brèche ouverte, au moins que ce soit sa photographie! Et c'est elle que l'ingénieur du côté sud transmet à celui du côté nord avec une symbolique poignée de main. C'était le samedi 28 février 1880 à 9 heures du soir. Le lendemain dimanche, à 11 heures 10 du matin, une dernière explosion élargissait la brèche. Comme c'était l'équipe sud qui, la veille au soir, avait donné le coup de sonde vainqueur, elle eut l'honneur de passer la première dans la galerie nord. La rencontre des ouvriers donna lieu à une scène indescriptible. Ils se jetèrent dans les bras les uns des autres, car quoique inconnus, ils étaient frères et se cherchaient depuis si longtemps dans le sein obscur de la terre! Beaucoup pleuraient. La leur fumante des lampes et des torches donnait à cette multitude de visages crispés par l'émotion un aspect fantastique. Les "evviva" italiens résonnaient aux "hourra" suisses. La nouvelle aussitôt roula le long des pentes du Gothard: au Tessin, le canon gronda de fierté, tandis que les

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cloches chantaient dans le reste de la Suisse. Au Palais fédéral, le président Welty télégraphiait à la Compagnie du Gothard d'avertir tous les cantons confédérés. Les télégraphistes surchargés de Lucerne faisaient connaître à leur administration qu'ils étaient exténués et qu'ils avaient soif. Ils reçurent en réponse une dépêche cordiale disant: Nous vous autorisons à vous reconforter à nos frais de bière, de pain et de fromage. On voit par le ton exceptionnel de cette réponse que le dernier coup de dynamite, en faisant tomber le dernier mur du tunnel, avait renversé aussi toutes les barrières dressées par les conventions sociales. Quelques heures plus tard, une locomotive remorquait de Göschenen à Airolo le premier train spécial. Ce fut un moment pathétique que celui où, sur les rails fraîchement posés, le premier convoi franchit la porte sacrée du Gothard. Le trajet fut couvert en trois heures et demie, alors que la diligence postale, se hâtant lentement au sommet du col, parvenait à destination avec une heure de retard sur le train, qui savourait ainsi une première victoire. A la cérémonie d'inauguration qui eut lieu immédiatement après, et qui fut sur la montagne une vraie fête nationale et patriotique, on distribua aux ouvriers 3700 médailles commémoratives. Les éléments italiens—il faut le rappeler ici—par leur entrain, leur inaltérable bonne humeur, leur faculté extraordinaire d'adaptation et leur endurance, firent l'admiration de tous les ingénieurs et eurent la plus grande part au succès de l'entreprise.

La journée du 29 février 1880, au même titre que d'autres jours historiques, mérite de figurer parmi les dates illustres de batailles et de victoires. Car l'homme y vainquit la nature. Le Gothard, qui voulait être un mur et une séparation, devint une route et un lien. C'est bien le même génie humain qui, au cours des siècles, domestiqua les bêtes sauvages, lança les bateaux sur les océans, et les locomotives sur les rails, les automobiles sur les routes et les avions dans les airs. La nature méchante et rebelle a été livrée à l'homme pour que, par son intelligence et sa volonté, il la travaille, la transforme et la rende bonne, belle et féconde, afin que lui-même y puisse vivre plus heureux et plus prospère. Cela est l'œuvre de la civilisation. Or on peut considérer le percement du tunnel du Gothard comme une œuvre éminente de la civilisation.

Les ingénieurs autant que les hommes politiques on les hommes d'affaires eurent lieu de se féliciter du succès de l'ouvrage d'art qu'ils venaient de mener à chef. Leurs calculs se révélèrent si exacts qu'à la rencontre des deux galeries, il n'y avait en hauteur comme en largeur que quelques centimètres d'écart.

Dans le domaine international, le tunnel du Gothard faisait faire aux relations pacifiques et fructueuses entre les pays du nord et ceux du sud un pas de géant. L'avenir doit voir tous les peuples de la terre vivre dans l'harmonie. Tout ce qui favorise la compénétration des races, l'abaissement des frontières naturelles et ethniques, l'échange des idées et des choses, prépare cette ère définitive. A ce titre, le percement du tunnel du Gothard et la journée du 29 février 1880 sont une œuvre et une date à inscrire dans les annales de l'humanité.

Extracts from the "Bulletin des C.F.F."

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**Doings in Our Colony.**

**UNIONE TICINESE.**

Close upon 300 guests, members and friends attended the Annual Banquet and Ball held on the 11th inst, at Monico's Restaurant, Piccadilly Circus. The banquet started at about 8 o'clock, after an informal reception, and proved most enjoyable as usual. In the unavoidable absence of the Swiss Minister, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, the Chair was taken by Signor Clement Rezzonico, Secretary of Legation, who proposed the traditional toasts.

In due course Mr. W. Notari, as President of the Unione Ticinese, rose to propose "the Unione Ticinese—The Ladies and Guests," and was received with the customary enthusiasm. After thanking the audience for the fine way in which he was greeted he expressed the regrets of the society at the absence of our Minister, and cordially welcomed Signor Rezzonico in his stead. He then proceeded to greet the representatives of the various Swiss Societies, as follows:—

*Secours Mutuels*—Mr. Campart (President) and Mme. Campart; *Fonds de Secours*—Mr. Dupraz (President) and Mme. Dupraz; *City Swiss Club*—Mr. Werner (President) and Mr. Zimmermann (Secretary); *Schweizerbund*—Mr. Christen (President) and Mr. Humbel (Secretary); *Union Helvetia*—Mr. Indemaur (President) and Mme. Indemaur; *Swiss Mercantile Society*—Mr. Paschoud (President) and Mme. Paschoud; *Swiss Gymnastic Society*—Mr. Block (President); *Swiss Choral Society*—Mr. Ritzmann (Treasurer); *Swiss Rifle Association*—Mr. Krucker and Mme. Krucker; Dr. Egli, Editor of the *Swiss Observer*, was unavoidably absent.

Mr. Notari mentioned also our friend, Monsieur G. Marchand, who on this occasion also kindly presented a gold wrist watch which was drawn among the ladies in the course of the banquet. He then said:

A matter which has been receiving the serious attention of the Unione Ticinese during recent months and which has been for years a great concern to me personally, has been that of finding a way of materially helping the Swiss Benevolent Society of London in the discharge of the self-appointed task of assisting those Swiss resident in this metropolis who have fallen on evil times, particularly the aged and the infirm.

The Swiss Benevolent Society started in 1926 what is known as the "Georges Dimier Fund" with which it is intended in time to provide the capital required for the establishment of a central home in London to shelter needy aged Swiss residents. The early attainment of this great object is undoubtedly near the heart of every Swiss in London and I consider the time has arrived when a determined and united effort should be made to complete the sum required for an effective start.

After careful consideration and in recognition of the assistance which has been extended by the S.B.S. to unattached distressed Ticinesi, my society has decided to sanction the transfer of £1000 from its own funds as a donation to the "Georges Dimier Fund," on condition that at least an equivalent amount be subscribed among the other Swiss Societies in London, out of their own funds, and that at least another £1,000 be raised by public subscription from the Swiss Colony in general, or other sources, in the course of the next twelve months.

In coming to this decision the Unione Ticinese was prompted by the fact that the other societies would no doubt be eager to contribute handsomely towards the same object. Furthermore I have no doubt that the prosperous Swiss trading community in this country would be only too eager to further contribute substantially towards an early realisation of that 'sacred vision' of the late Georges Dimier.

Mr. Notari considered that this was a case when our national motto "all for one and one for all" should find us all ready to contribute according to our ability. He then paid a few nice compliments to the ladies and sat down amid the heartiest cheers.

Mr. Dupraz, President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, in responding for the guests said:

Mr. Notari has built up for himself a reputation for eloquence which is thoroughly deserved and you will all agree with me that to-night, in his appeal for the poor, he has surpassed himself. When I came here I was absolutely unaware of the decision arrived at by your society and I must ask for your forgiveness if under the shock of this surprise, I do not find the terms I should like, to express to you our sincere gratitude. I do not know how to thank you for your extraordinary generosity, which I can assure you will be for us a source of much encouragement. We were rather disappointed at the remoteness of the realization of the aim of our Fonds Dimier, but this fine gesture of yours will give it a new

impetus and bring considerably nearer the founding of our Home for Old Swiss. I thank you for your gift and I thank you also for your idea of making this gift dependent on the collaboration of other Societies and the colony in general.

Mr. Dupraz then thanked the Unione Ticinese on behalf of the Ladies and of the Guests, for its kind hospitality and spoke in very flattering terms of the beauties of the Ticino and of the youthful looks of the older members of the Society. He asked those present to try and visualise the enormous amount of good work done in 56 years by the Unione Ticinese. He ended by saying:

I am optimistic, thank goodness, but nevertheless there are ominous signs that things are not as well as they could be. Quite likely even some of your members are finding life difficult and as the Unione Ticinese is synonymous with the Ticinese colony, you are no doubt aware that quite a number of your countrymen are going through very anxious times. It is in those days that it becomes necessary for you to hold together and to give the fullest scope to the high ideals which this society has upheld in the past. We therefore sincerely wish that you may carry on this good work into a far distant future and we express our sincere wishes for the happiness and prosperity of the Unione Ticinese.

Mr. Dupraz' speech was received with loud applause and when quiet had returned it was the turn of our Chairman to give his address. Signor Rezzonico remarked that he had had the pleasure to attend the Annual Dinner of the Unione Ticinese seven times in succession. This time, however, he was not present merely as a member of the U. T. but as a substitute for his Chief, the Swiss Minister. He conveyed to the audience the patriotic greetings of our Minister and his regrets at not being present that evening. The speaker explained that the fulfilment of his duty was rather delicate. He was obliged, by tradition, to sing a hymn of praise to the Unione Ticinese—of which he was a member—and to tell the audience what marvellous people the Ticinesi are—and he is a Ticinese. However he did not hesitate in congratulating the U.T. on its achievements and a few words of praise were addressed to those members of the society who, for many years, had been the pillars of the U.T.

Commenting on the decision recently taken by the Unione Ticinese, to subscribe £1,000 to the "Fonds Dimier" Signor Rezzonico pointed out that this action had been dictated by one reason only and that is by a sense of patriotic duty. "Patriotism," he said, "is, as you all know, one of the main characteristics of the Ticino. Someone far more competent than myself has told you that in the most eloquent way quite recently. I am thinking of Signor Giuseppe Motta, the great statesman the Ticino gave Switzerland and whom the Swiss Colony in London had the privilege and pleasure of entertaining on the occasion of his recent visit to London."

The speaker told us of the pride of the Ticinesi to be Swiss, of the advantages the Ticino derived from being a member of the Swiss Confederation and of what the Ticino gives, in return, to Switzerland. After praising the character of the Ticinesi, he said, he thought it was his duty to recognise that such a beautiful medal had its reverse too. But he preferred not to waste too much time on it. He thought, however, that he was not giving away any secret in telling us that a Ticinese is by nature inclined to be very critical and fond of an argument, and even of a little quarrel, but all that merely for argument's sake and once the argument or the quarrel over, you would find the Ticinese as sweet as ever.

Before the gathering dispersed for the dance Mr. Notari read out a letter he had just received from Mr. Henry J. Ahern, an admirer of the U.T. and whose association with the Ticinesi dates back to over 50 years, in which he includes a cheque for £25 to start the subscription list which the Unione Ticinese will be circulating among its members and friends in favour of the Fonds Dimier. He mentioned also he had received a similar amount from our Hon. Vice-President, Mr. A. Meschini, whose unflinching support was a source of great strength to the society.

Yielding to persistent calls for a speech from him Mr. Meschini rose to thank all those who had contributed to make the banquet a success and proposed a toast to the President, Mr. Notari, to whose steadfast leadership and untiring efforts was chiefly due the fine progress made by the society in recent years. He expressed the hope that he may remain at the helm of the society for many years to come. Mr. Meschini's words were received with wholehearted cheers.

As soon as the banquet was over many of those present adjourned to the Renaissance hall for the dance, whereas those who preferred less strenuous exercise accommodated themselves at tables in the International hall to listen to the Cabaret presented by Mr. Murray Ashford. Among the items which specially pleased the Ticinesi were the well rendered songs by Miss Eva Cattaneo of Lugano. 2 a.m. came all too soon for most of