

Zeitschrift: Die Schweiz = Suisse = Svizzera = Switzerland : offizielle Reisezeitschrift der Schweiz. Verkehrszentrale, der Schweizerischen Bundesbahnen, Privatbahnen ... [et al.]

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Verkehrszentrale

Band: 30 (1957)

Heft: 4

Artikel: Le mécanicien

Autor: Piachaud, René-Louis

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-779697>

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LE MÉCANICIEN

*Indifférent aux paysages
Dont Bædeker et tant
d'affiches ont vanté
La majesté sauvage
ou l'attrait romantique,
A la tête du train lancé,
L'homme en bleu,
la main aux manettes,
Sobre de ses gestes précis,
Surveille les cadrans d'email
où les aiguilles
Tremblent mathématiquement.
Et tour à tour il force
ou modère l'élan
Selon l'arc d'une courbe
ou l'angle d'une pente.*

RENÉ-LOUIS PIACHAUD

LE VOYAGE

*J'ai vu luire les rails
au soleil en leur fuite
Étroite et parallèle
à travers le printemps.
Tout dans cette gare déserte
Chante à mes yeux le chant heureux
des bons départs.
Encore un soir, encore un jour,
Et c'est vers d'autres horizons,
Hors la contrainte quotidienne
Et les soucis de tous les jours,
l'évasion!
Vers l'Italie,
et vers un tendre paysage,
Vers des visages d'inconnus
chers à mon cœur:
L'évasion
Parmi le renouveau du monde,
Ivre de parfums secs
au pays du beau temps.
Ah! respirer le jour
sous l'azur plein de cloches,
Et retrouver demain, demain enfin,
Ce radieux petit village du Tessin
Dont le nom toujours sonne
à ma mémoire émue
Comme un air à danser
dans un jardin de fleurs.*

presso Ginevra, al quale fu aggiudicata la costruzione del tunnel, nell'agosto del 1872. Egli morì improvvisamente di paralisi cardiaca, durante un'ispezione in galleria, a soli sei mesi dalla fine dei lavori, la cui esecuzione si rivelò irta di difficoltà imprevedibili.

Il monumento ad Alfred Escher, sul piazzale della stazione di Zurigo, porta, eternata nel bronzo, la parola « Gotthard ». A Luigi Favre si è reso omaggio con una statua a Chêne-Bourg ed una lapide commemorativa a Goeschenen. Oltre questi pionieri, han meritato l'onore del ricordo anche i centodiciassette operai che trovarono la morte sul lavoro, in galleria. Ad essi è dedicato il bassorilievo del Vela « Le vittime del lavoro », posto di fianco alla stazione di Airolo, poco lungi dallo imbocco sud della galleria del Gottardo. Raffigura con suggestivo realismo un gruppo di minatori che, in

mesto corteo, trasportano fuori di galleria il cadavere di un compagno.

Più d'un viaggiatore avrà forse notato anche la pietra commemorativa che si erge, circondata da un tappeto erboso, accanto alla stazione di Flüelen. Essa ricorda il dott. h. c. Emil Huber-Stockar, che si acquistò particolari benemeritenze, collaborando all'elettrificazione della linea del Gottardo. La trasformazione della trazione a vapore in trazione elettrica fu l'opera maggiore curata dalle FFS, dopo il riscatto della linea del Gottardo, avvenuto nel 1909.

L'ingegnere capo Huber-Stockar cooperò in veste di consigliere tecnico a tale trasformazione che, oltre a consentire un notevole accrescimento della capacità di reddito della linea del Gottardo, si rivelò di somma importanza anche per l'intera rete delle Ferrovie federali svizzere.

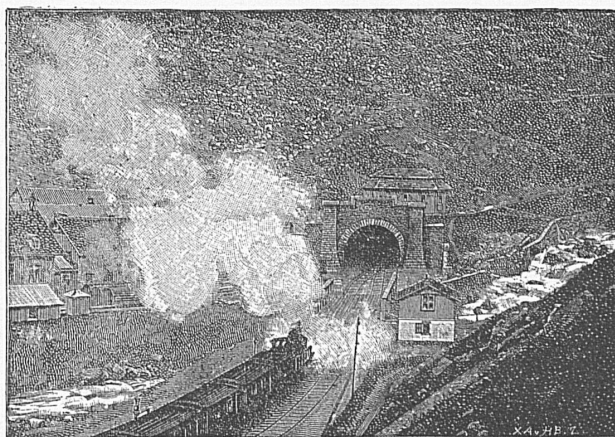
E. A. Briner

THE GOTHARD RAILWAY—75 YEARS OLD

The Gothard is the centre of the Swiss Alps, dividing north from south. At its entrance is the famous Schöllenen Gorge. The peasants to the north, in order to defend their freedom, founded the Swiss Confederation in 1291. For hundreds of years pack mules carried the busy traffic over a trail across the pass. In 1824 a real road was opened and traffic increased. And yet it was the construction of the Gothard Railway that brought the route into its own and confirmed the importance of Switzerland's political neutrality. This courageous task took ten years to fulfill. On 28th February 1879 the drilling work on the 9.3 mile tunnel was finished, and on April 10th, 1882, the opening ceremony of the completed railway took place, heralding in a "new era of world transport". Countless thousands of travellers and millions of tons of freight have, since then, rolled through this mountain. Along this line between Basel and Chiasso, eager travellers have watched the many-sided beauty of Switzerland; the soft-toned Jura and the sweeping heights of Mendrisiotto; the plains of Magadino; the wild beauty of Lucerne's countryside, lovely Lugano and Lake Maggiore, the castles of Bellinzona and the old towers of Lucerne; the rugged, rocky valley of the Reuss; and the gentle southern lake-country in the valley of the Tessin. And each time the train goes round a curve a new vista opens up, with new villages like Wassen, Giornico, and Faido—each a picturesque new aspect of Switzerland. And this journey has become even more enjoyable since 1921 when the railway was electrified. Actually man's struggle to

overcome the forces of nature never really ends. And now it is not only the Gothard that carries this ceaseless transalpine traffic. Last year a celebration was held commemorating the 50th anniversary of the completion of the Simplon Railway. With its tunnel cutting through the Lötschberg Range, the Simplon is second in importance in Switzerland's north-to-south connections. Since 1910 the Rhetian Railway has spanned the Bernina Pass to Veltlin, while all Switzerland's other great passes come alive every summer with motorists travelling on their own through the breath-taking beauty of the Alps.

This year brings the 75th anniversary of the completion of the main line through the Gothard. The ceremony which will take place on 18th June will reach its peak in the Tessin town of Bellinzona that is to be the meeting place for special trains bringing officials, celebrities and other guests of honour from the Swiss capital and northern Switzerland. On their way, the guests will stop long enough in the village of Göschenen to see some old-time railway carriages and locomotives. The climax of the celebration will be reached in a religious service at a statue by Vincenzo Vela, in memory of the pioneers of the great tunnel. Here an appropriate ceremony will commemorate Switzerland's railway leaders of four-score years ago, including the great Genevan engineer Louis Favre, who died, a victim of the work he had undertaken, before it was completed.



*Gotthardtunnel um 1895
Le tunnel du Gothard
vers 1895
La galleria del Gottardo
verso il 1895
El túnel del San Gotardo
hacia el 1895
Gotthard Tunnel about 1895*