

Viso. There is not one of the lofty peaks that does not answer to the call, that does not rise in its characteristic shape, in its proud and striking outline. Here, as everywhere, Mont Blanc seems to reign over the entire world, but he does not eclipse the scarcely less important chain of the Grand Paradis.

The traveller who now enters Italy through the Mont Cenis tunnel, comfortably installed in the saloon carriages of the railway, makes no acquaintance with the beautiful and picturesque road opened under the First Empire, and designed to facilitate communication between France and Italy at a time when the two kingdoms were under the same rule. The diligence road over Mont Cenis was constructed, like that over the Simplon, at the command of Napoleon I. The Hospice, at the summit of the pass, is situated at an altitude of 6,883 feet. The total length of the road, across the mountains from Chambéry to Susa, is ninety-nine English miles. Formerly much frequented, this route is now seldom traversed except by tourists and by Italian labourers on their way to France in search of employment.

In the month of June, 1868, the diligence service was superseded by the railway constructed by the Engineer Fell. This daring little railway is not yet forgotten in Savoy. Thanks to the special mechanism of its engines and rolling-stock, it ascended gradients at 85 in 1,000, described fantastic curves, and skirted precipices at a dizzy height without ever having to record an accident. The train was composed of a locomotive and four long carriages of the American type, running on two narrow-gauge rails, with a raised middle rail which was clasped by two horizontal wheels, with which each of the carriages as well as the engine were provided. The central rail was only laid on slopes and in curves; it rendered the passage of the train extremely safe. At certain points there were tunnels or galleries of galvanized iron to protect the line and passing trains against falling avalanches. The railway was scarcely in use for as much as four years, but during this time many thousands of tourists, sight-seers, and travellers crossed Mont Cenis, attracted by the novel mode of locomotion.

After passing Modane, on the frontier between Savoy and Italy, the road ascends almost imperceptibly through a wild and broken country abounding in torrents and waterfalls, ravines, precipices, and glaciers. On rounding the rock of Esseillon we are struck by the desolation and wildness of the scene. The fort was built in 1818, under the direction of Austro-Sardinian engineers, upon a group of rocks sinking abruptly to the deeply-cut channel of the river, which is seen as a mere thread of water making its