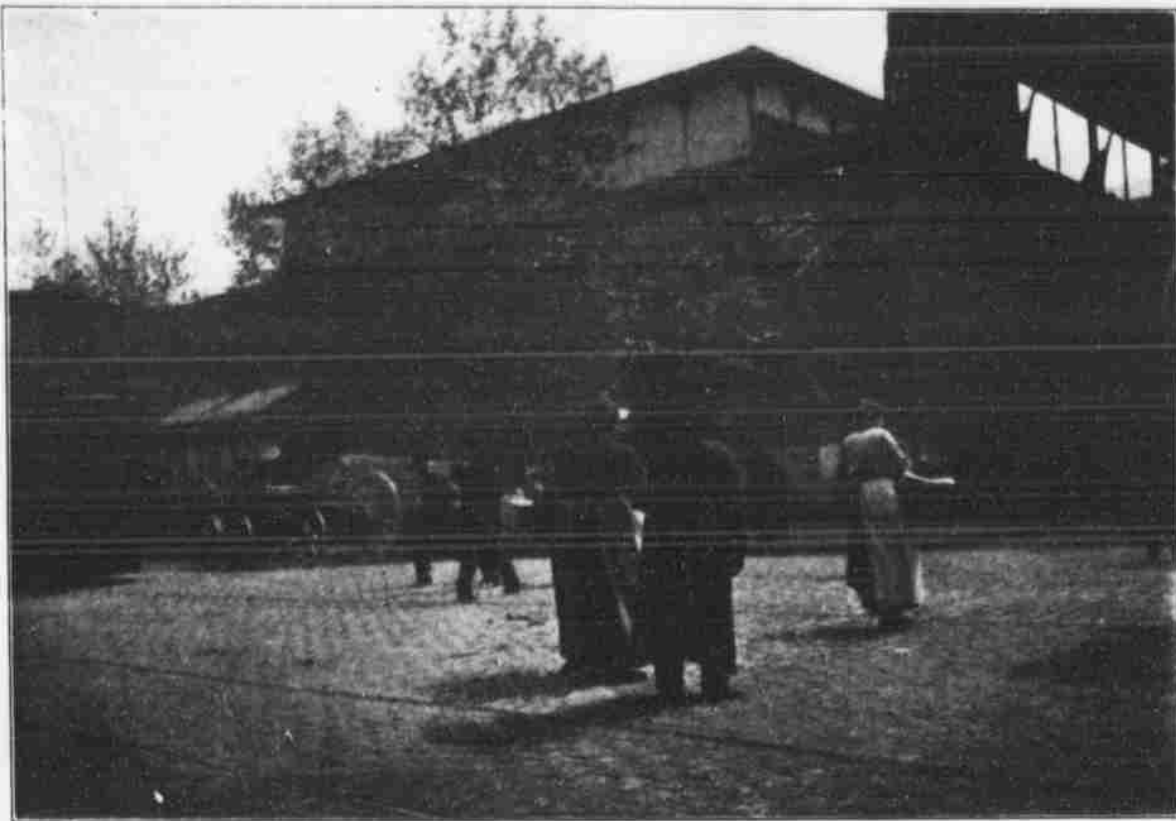


Enormous Food Supply of Markets of Paris



SNAP SHOT OUTSIDE MARKET, HALLES CENTRALES.



PARIS MARKET PORTERS AND THEIR HUGE HATS.

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PARIS, Oct. 12.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I expected to tell you how America feeds Paris, but I find that Paris is feeding herself. She has the greatest and best markets of the world and the most of the goods sold in them are raised in France. The country about Paris is one vast garden, which produces as much to the acre perhaps as any other land in the world. Some of the farms rent as high as \$150 per acre and it is estimated that there are 2,000 acres of this kind about the city, which not only supply Paris with enough vegetables, but furnish a large amount for export to London. The same productiveness exists in the farms. It is only in bad years that France has to import wheat, and its scientists claim that within another decade it will not only be raising all its own food, but will export more than 1,000,000 tons of wheat per annum.

But let me give you some idea of what the French eat! We shall find out by taking a walk through the Halles Centrales. These are the chief markets of Paris and they are by far the biggest markets of the world. Covent Garden, London, does not cover half so much ground and the markets of Berlin, Vienna and New York are small in comparison. And still these are not the only markets of Paris. There are smaller ones scattered here and there over the city each of which has its own trade.

The Halles Centrales are right in the heart of Paris. They are ten minutes' walk from the opera house, not far from the Seine and within a stone's throw of the Louvre. They consist of ten great pavilions made of iron and glass, each large enough for an exposition building. They cover all told more than twenty-two acres and have about 3,000 different stalls. About them during the day 15,000 market wagons are to be seen and at the wholesale auctions more than \$100,000 worth of goods are daily sold. The daily sales of bread, wine and meat at retail and wholesale are more than \$600,000 and the sales per annum are considerably over \$200,000,000. The vegetables and fruits probably cost as much more, so that at least \$1,000,000 a day is taken in on this spot.

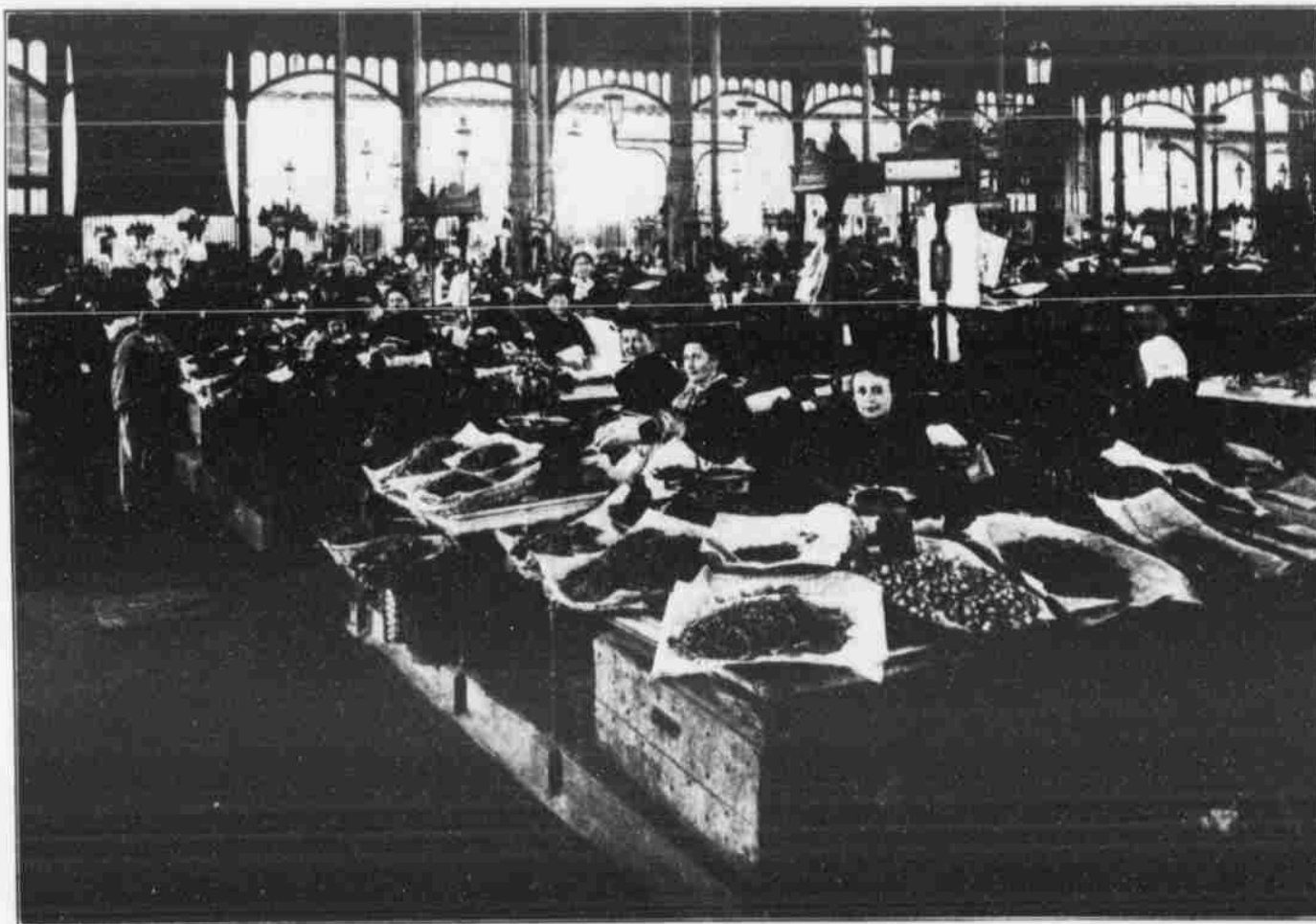
The National Library at Washington, which is one of the finest buildings of the world, cost \$6,000,000; our national capitol cost \$12,000,000, and the state, war and navy department about the same sum. These markets are mere shells, but they are so large that they have cost \$10,000,000 or almost as much as any one of our greatest national buildings. The Halles belong to the Paris municipality and the market people pay rent for their places in them.

I have before me the amount of food which Paris daily consumes. It is enormous, the annual average per head being 325 pounds of bread, 183 quarts of wine, 187 pounds of meat and twenty-eight pounds of fish, or for the whole city \$24,000,000 pounds of bread, 456,000,000 quarts of wine, 538,000,000 pounds of meat and 67,000,000 pounds of fish.

And with all this is there no opening for our American products? Not at present, and not until we have a better reciprocity treaty with France. The truth is this republic puts a tariff on everything that comes into it, and it protects itself quite as well as the United States. France goes on the principle, "you tickle me and I'll tickle you, and if you don't, I won't."

So far Uncle Sam has not tickled the fair French maiden, and as a result she buys only what she cannot raise from other countries, taking from us only when she is in straits and cannot be supplied elsewhere. In 1900 she imported about \$150,000,000 of food stuffs, and of this only \$10,000,000 worth came from the United States.

There is an impression in our country that a vast amount of American wine is shipped to France and then sent back again under French labels. This Mr. Edward Green, the secretary of the American chamber of commerce here, tells me is a mistake. The



PARIS FISH MARKET—WHERE SNAILS ARE SOLD.

French raise enough wine to give every man, woman and child in the country a half bottle of wine twice a day and leave some for export. If American wine came here it would have to pay a fair duty, and the importation would be reported in the customs reports. This is not so, and my conclusion is that no American wine is imported.

But let us begin our walk through the markets. It is early morning and the wholesale auctions are now taking place. There are ten acres of buildings where thousands are buying and selling. The auctions begin at daybreak and last until 8 o'clock, meat, vegetables and fish of all kinds being sold in lots to the highest bidders. We see porters carrying all sorts of things in and out of the doors. Some have hats as big around as a parasol, on their heads and above these crates of fowls, rabbits and suckling pigs. Others are carrying dressed hogs or the sides of beef on their shoulders. Some wear panniers with baskets of vegetables. All are pushing this way and that and we are jostled as we make our way through. Here we are in the fowl auction hall, where chickens, ducks and rabbits are sold by the crate. There are thousands of partidges, pheasants and game of all sorts. About each auctioneer stands a crowd of men dressed like French peasants and of women in white caps, black shawls and short black skirts all bidding vociferously for the various lots. The auctioneers knock down the goods rapidly. It takes a half minute to sell a crate of suckling pigs and less still for selling chickens or ducks.

Butter and eggs are sold in the same market. The eggs are sold by the thousand. They are packed in great boxes which are stacked on the floor. Each box had 1,000 or more and all told, they contain millions upon millions of eggs. I stop at one of the stands and ask what the eggs are worth, and am told they sell wholesale for \$20 per thousand or for 2 cents a piece, and that the seller gets a commission of 3 per cent for his trouble. The French know how to use eggs perhaps better than any other people. They cook them in all sorts of ways and from them

make delicious dishes which are hardly known in America. As a result the egg consumption of Paris is enormous and they come here from all parts of France. They are usually fresh. I have yet to get a bad one at any of the hotels and their reputation is what that of every egg should be, like that of Caesar's wife—above suspicion.

It is the same with butter. It is made without salt and must therefore be very good to keep any length of time. It is sold in the markets in balls weighing about twenty-two pounds each.

But what is that smell that comes to us from over the way! It is of a cheesy nature, although not of the rank Limberger kind. Let us cross over. We do so and enter another great pavilion in which hundreds of men and women are buying and selling. The auctioneers are handling cheeses of every description, from the little rolls of "fromages de Suisse" to the great wagon wheel sections of Gruyere, and the round balls of Edam cheeses from Holland.

Leaving the cheese markets we take a walk among the fishwives. There is one pavilion that is devoted to them. Each fishwoman has marble counters about her on which are displayed almost everything that swims the sea and not a few reptiles that crawl the land. Some of the women have vats of running water in which eels are squirming about. If you want to buy one they will dip out a handful in a net and let you take your choice. They have beautiful salmon, which sell for almost their weight in silver, as well as flounders, skates and dogfish, which go for little or nothing.

But what is that which that old woman is selling? I mean the one who has boxes and baskets piled high on her counters. She seems to be lading out pints of gray marbles, and she has wooden skewers of bits of meat lying beside her. Those skewers are filled with frog legs, which sell for a few cents per dozen, and which I can assure you taste as sweet as spring chicken if properly cooked. Those marbles are snails, which the French esteem especially delicious. They sell for 8 cents a pint. The large white snails in the boxes cost more. They are the best of their

kind and are worth more than terrapin or porterhouse steak.

See, there is a Frenchman buying some now! He picks up a couple and looks them carefully over and then orders a hundred. The woman scoops the crawling, slimy things out in her hand and counts them. She wraps them in paper and her customer takes them and goes away smiling.

Paris eats almost two million pounds of these snails every year, paying \$3 or \$4 a thousand for them. They are found in the southern vine-growing district, and especially about Marseilles. In some places there are small farms or parks where the little things are bred and fed for the market. They are propagated in the months of August, September and October, at which time they are fed with cabbages and clover. It is said that a wagon load of cabbages given after the rains is enough to furnish one meal for 100,000 snails. The cultivated snails are kept in the houses during the winter. They are then fattened and shipped off to Paris for sale in the summer. There is one snail farmer in the department of the Jura who raises one million to two million snails every year.

I am told that more than 200,000 pounds of snails are shipped every year from Paris to the United States. Such snails bring about \$5 per thousand at wholesale. They are usually shipped alive in November and December and must be carefully handled in order to stand the voyage without injury. I understand that some snails come from Switzerland to Paris and that Switzerland is one of the great snail markets of the world. It has its snail exporters and snail farmers, who know just when to gather the snails, how to handle their eggs and how to feed them so that they will have the luscious fatness so greatly desired by the French. So far I have not eaten snails myself, and am, therefore, unable to describe the taste.

Paris has been described as a gigantic mouse trap with three doors labeled, respectively, hotel, cafe, restaurant. The city has about 10,000 hotels; there are restaurants in every block; and you can find cafes at almost every step. At almost any restaurant you are sure of good cooking. You can eat well anywhere and at any

price. There are scores of places where the meals cost as high as in the better restaurants of New York, and hundreds where you can get a very fair dinner for 50 cents, or if you would have wine for 10 cents additional. I have had good dinners with wines for 50 cents, and there is a restaurant where I lunch occasionally at this price which gives me what would cost three times as much in the United States.

There is one stock company which does an enormous business in supplying cheap and good food for Parisians. It was founded by a butcher who has his butcher shops still in different parts of the city. This company has, I venture, 100 or more restaurants where you can always be sure of good service and good food. You pay for what you eat and pay for everything, but the prices are low.

How would you like to lunch at a restaurant where you can put a penny in the slot and pull out anything you want? I have found such a restaurant in the heart of Paris. It is on the Boulevard des Italiens, just above the Credit Lyonnaise and within a stone's throw of the opera house. The room is walled with mirrors, floored with tiles and fitted up like a parlor. Around the walls are slot machines made of different colored marbles, decorated with silver and porcelain figures and finished somewhat like the finest of soda water fountains.

Every slot will furnish you something to tempt your palate, and the different things you can buy is surprising. I had just had dinner before I entered the place last night and began my experiment with a cup of black coffee. There was a sign, "Cafe noir for 10 centimes," over a silver-plated slot, and an after-dinner coffee cup standing under a silver spigot below. I put a 2-cent piece in the slot and within five seconds a stream of rich, steaming black coffee poured forth into the cup. It continued to pour until it just filled the cup and then stopped short. I added some sugar from a pile of white lumps lying on a shelf below, and as I drank I stood in front of one of the mirrors beside a pretty French girl who was finishing a cup of cacao she had taken from the neighboring slot. The next machine supplied hot chocolate at 4 cents a cup, and further on were others which gave out different kinds of liquors, chartreuse, benedictine and cognac, for 3 or 4 cents a penny. I noticed a slot over one spigot which bore the words "American grog," and tested it. The result was a red liquor with a sweetish taste that would, I think, kill at forty rods.

While waiting I watched customers coming in for their various drinks. One young man took a glass from the milk slot, two Germans patronized the beer slot, each getting a glass of beer twice as large as that commonly sold in the United States, and a young dandy and his sweetheart, for two 10 cent pieces dropped into the slot of a bottle-like machine in the middle of the wall, drew out two glasses of sparkling champagne. There were also soda-water slot machines and one which furnished consomme or hot beef tea at 4 cents per drink.

There was an ice-cream slot, the cream being kept in little round dishes under glass. Each dish was on a metal leaf hinged to a wheel. As the money drops into the slot the wheel begins to turn, and a moment later one of the leaves reaches the place where it drops, and slides the dish of ice cream down to you. The ice cream is in plain sight and you can see what you are going to get before you put your money in.

Then there are sandwich-slot machines and cake-slot machines. I counted a dozen of these, which will furnish you sandwiches of caviare, ham, tongue, salmon or of pate de foie gras, as well as cakes of different kinds. These are like the ice-cream machines, the sandwiches being on tin shelves, which drop after the money is put in.