

Americans at the Commercial Center of the Alps



PUBLIC CONCERT HALL AT ZURICH.



SWISS WOMEN MANAGE THE MARKETS.

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ZURICH, Dec. 3.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—This is the busiest city in the great industrial beehive of the Alps and it is the best headquarters for the distribution of American goods. The chief of the American exporters to Switzerland have their agents here and I find many of our goods for sale in the stores. Our typewriters, machine tools and agricultural implements are well represented and one of the finest buildings of the town has large store rooms devoted to the sale of American office furniture and especially Grand Rapids roll-top desks. You can buy Boston shoes at several places along Balmhof Strasse and I find Yankee notions for sale in the arcades in the older parts of the town.

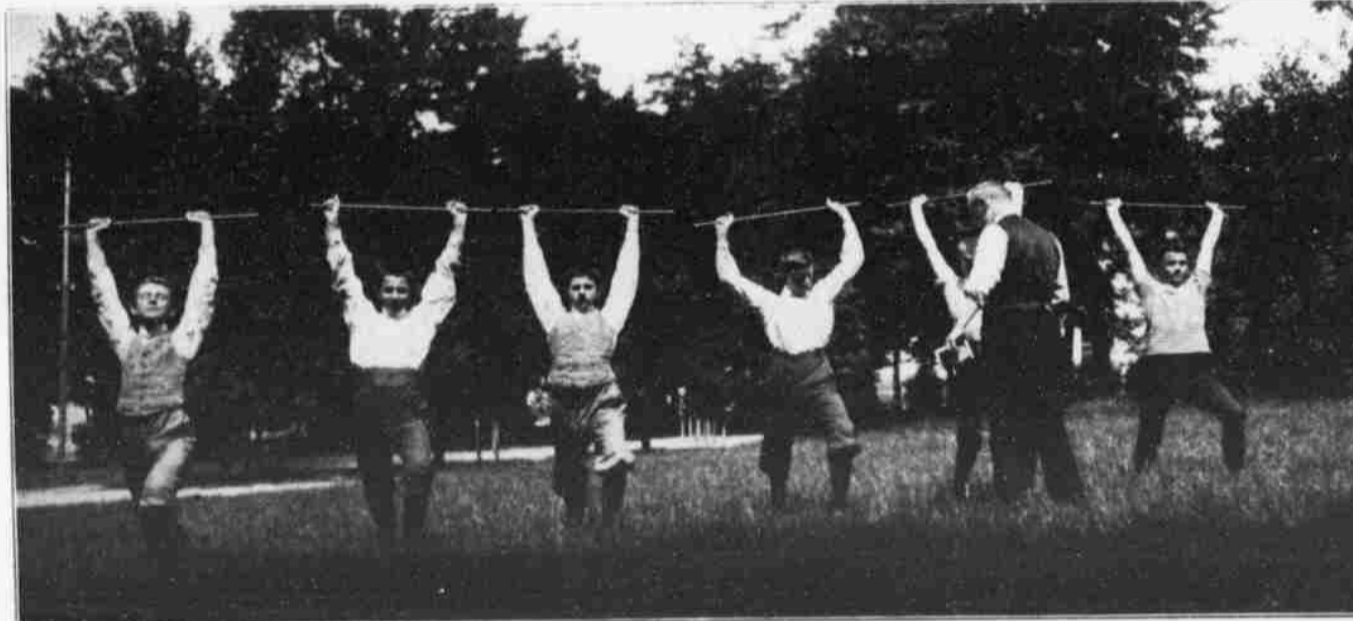
Zurich is the biggest city of Switzerland. It has 170,000 people and among them the richest of the country. It is the center of the silk industry, the site of the chief machine and iron works and the great wholesale supply point.

The city is situated in northern Switzerland, a couple of hours' ride from Basel, the head of the navigation of the Rhine, at a place where the railroads which give access to every part of Switzerland and the Alps meet. It lies on Lake Zurich, which is twenty-five miles long and two and one-half miles wide. The Limmat river, which connects this lake with the Rhine, runs through it, cutting a beautiful valley, spotted with farms and vineyards. The town is in the heart of the Alps and the Rigi and other famous mountains are in plain view in many parts of it.

I rode up Mount Zurich on the cable line this morning for a view of the city. Zurich lies at the north end of the lake, which stretches on almost as far as you can see, winding like a great river in and out among the hills. It extends some distance down on both sides the lake; it climbs the hills and you can see its smokestacks along the banks of the river, marking the sites of the silk, cotton and iron factories for which it is famous.

Zurich proper looks more like a city of residences than a commercial and manufacturing center. You see many churches and school and college buildings rising high above the ordinary houses. The streets are wide and the houses have beautiful gardens about them. In the older sections there are buildings with gabled roofs, out of which quaint dormer windows poke their heads. The Limmat is lined with such structures. They wall its banks and at one place cross the rushing river, being erected on piles so that the water flows on beneath. There is an acre or so of such houses. In other places the buildings have arcades or cloisters on the ground floor, facing the street, with stores behind them, so that you walk in the shade, the roof of the street being the floor above. This is the old Swiss form of building and you find it to an even greater degree in Bern.

I have spent much time in driving about the newer parts of Zurich. The craze for flats or apartments is quite as great here as in the United States, and new apartment houses are going up everywhere. Indeed, the flat system is now common all over Europe. It has been in vogue in France and Germany for more than a generation, but it is now pushing its way into England, Scandinavia and Switzerland. Geneva is a city of flats, although it has some beautiful villas. In Bern there are stores on the ground floors with apartments above, even in the older sections of the city, and Zurich is fast becoming all flats. Many of the new houses are apartment houses pure and simple. Others are apartments and stores combined. There seems to be no fixed rule as to business locations, as in other cities. You find a big wholesale establishment way off at one side surrounded by residences, and you have often to hunt for the stores that you want. The people are very conservative. They stick to the merchants with whom they are accustomed to deal, and for this reason it will pay well



SCHOOL BOYS OF ZURICH AT CALISTHENICS.

to cultivate them as to American trade.

In a ride with Consul Lieberknecht one afternoon we rode by the Zurich Tonhalle and other characteristic buildings. The Tonhalle is one of the features of almost every Swiss city. It is a public amusement building, containing a good restaurant, a theater and a concert room.

It was built with private funds, and is owned by a private company, but the city gives \$4,000 a year to its support. The people feel that they get more than this out of it in having cheap music and a good amusement place for themselves and the traveling public. There are beautiful casinos at Geneva and Lucerne, with reading, concert and ball rooms, restaurant, theaters and gardens. You can go into the gardens free and listen to the concert which is held daily at 4 p. m.

I find that the department stores are slowly but surely making their way into Europe. Paris has had them for many years, but the other cities are just beginning to adopt them, and I find several here in Switzerland. There is one in the heart of the city which looks as though it might have been lifted up out of an American town and dropped down onto the Alps. Its walls are of iron and glass and it is constructed in much the same way as our stores. It has, however, about two clerks to our one, and instead of using the cash carrier system or the cash boy it has little cash desks here and there on every floor and the purchaser has to pay all his bills at these desks, the clerk who has made the sale going with him and carrying the goods to be wrapped up. The clerks are not allowed to handle the money, and the system is altogether most clumsy and inconvenient to the purchaser.

Zurich does a big business in silk. It competes with Lyons as to certain goods, and it has wholesale silk stores which compare favorably with any I saw in France. The silks are made to suit the foreign demand and also to catch the eye of the tourist. I bought, among other things, an American flag woven in Zurich as a souvenir, and was offered no end of Italian blankets made by the Swiss of refuse silk for the tourist trade.

I say Italian blankets, for the Swiss are great imitators. Like the Germans, they copy the goods of other countries, and I am told they do this even to the trade marks. One instance I know of was that of the McCormick reaper. The Swiss saw these machines were selling well with their farmers, and one firm imitated them and put a fac-simile on the market, which it named "the McCormick." Of course the American McCormick company objected, and as the steal was so apparent the Swiss were compelled to change the name to the Helvetia, although they did not alter the make of the machine.

This makes me think of a revolver I saw in South America which was the exact copy of a well known American make. It was manufactured by the Germans and bore upon its side the legend, "Smith & Wesson cartridges must be used with this revolver." The "Smith & Wesson" were in large letters and the remainder in small, so that the South American who could only read Spanish and could make out nothing but those words thought he was buying a genuine American gun, whereas he got a cheap and nasty German imitation.

I came near being arrested today. I was coming from the bank with my mail and had just torn open a letter from the editor of this newspaper and thrown the envelope on the street. A policeman came up to me and eyed me sternly as he pointed to it. I blushed red and at once picked it up, for I had heard that it was against the law to throw waste paper on the street. You can't even throw it into the river or canal without being liable to arrest, and the laws are rigid as to city cleanliness. All the people are expected to keep the streets clean in front of their houses and the police help them. The result is that Zurich looks like a Dutch kitchen and the whole town is spick and span. The streets are well kept and are relaid whenever they show signs of going into ruts.

Some of the Swiss roads are paved with cobbles. I went over such an one this afternoon which the laborers were repairing. There were perhaps a dozen men at work laying the stones, and it seemed to me that they did it in a most leisurely way. Each mason had a milking stool to sit on as he worked, and I photographed one in the act. He was pleased to have his picture taken, and I fell into conversation with him. He told me that his wages were 8 cents an hour and that he usually made 80 cents for his day of ten hours.

In coming back on the street car I asked the conductor what he was paid, and found that he got the same as the mason—80 cents—but that his day was twelve hours instead of ten. Car employees who have been long with the company sometimes receive as much as 90 and 95 cents a day, but there are very few who reach as high as \$1 for a day of twelve hours. The normal Swiss working day is eleven hours, and wages range from 50 cents upward. There are many hands in the silk factories who do not get more than this, and some who get less. The wages are low in the embroidery mills and also in those weaving cotton, although in the latter much of the work is done by piece, and skilled employees make what are here considered fair wages.

And still the workingmen in Switzerland have their organizations. There are workingmen's societies nearly everywhere. The government has passed factory laws, and a few years ago it was found that there

were 5,000 factories under these laws; they employed 200,000 men. Many of the cantons have their own labor regulations. In some there are labor bureaus and technical schools. The workingmen combine together to further their own interests, and they have succeeded in getting legislation by appealing to the Swiss congress. As it is now the railway companies are liable to damages from men seriously hurt while in their employ, and if a man is injured in a factory the owner of the factory can be made to pay as much as six times the amount of his yearly earnings or a maximum of \$1,200.

Some of the saddest scenes here are the women at work. They perform all kinds of labor, and I have seen many a gray-haired dame with the sweat streaming down her wrinkles. You see girls pitching and raking hay and spading and hoeing in the fields. You see them going over the roads with great loads on their backs, and in the Alps you may meet them toiling along with baskets full of manure strapped to them. The manure comes from the barns and is being carried up to be

spread over the pastures on the sides of the hills. I have seen women pushing carts, harnessed up with dogs, and I frequently see them sawing wood in the streets. Another sight of a more modern type is a Swiss girl riding an American mowing machine, pulled by two cows, for, indeed, cows are also worked and for labor there is no distinction of sex either bovine or human. The cows are worked in most parts of Switzerland. They are sometimes harnessed up with oxen, and I frequently see a cow and a horse pulling along side by side.

Returning to the women of Switzerland, they are used very largely as clerks in the stores. Some have government offices and you find them acting as cashiers in the cafes and restaurants. They are as good in a business way as their French sisters, and, like the French women, are among the thriftiest of their sex.

The most of the marketing of Switzerland is done by the women. In Bern the markets are in the streets. The women bring in their vegetables, their butter and cheese and other wares and peddle them out from stands on the sidewalk. In Basel they push the goods into 'own in little wagons like baby carriages and in Bern you frequently see a dog cart going from door to door, the woman hucksters now pulling with the dogs and now stopping to peddle milk or vegetables to the houses. It is with these dogs that they bring their wares in from the country, the dog taking the part of the horse.

The purchasers in the markets are also women. Every Swiss housewife does her own buying. She comes out early and picks out the things for herself. I stopped before one woman who was buying some butter of a white capped female butter seller. The butter was molded into great loaves from which were cut the portions demanded by the purchasers. The cutting is done with a brass wire in the shape of a loop, which the woman fits around the loaf and pulls through, cutting the butter much more smoothly and evenly than could be done with a knife. I asked as to prices and was told that good butter is now worth 14 cents a pound.

I have spent some time in going through the schools of Zurich and other parts of Switzerland. I am surprised at their ex-

(Continued on Seventh Page.)



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