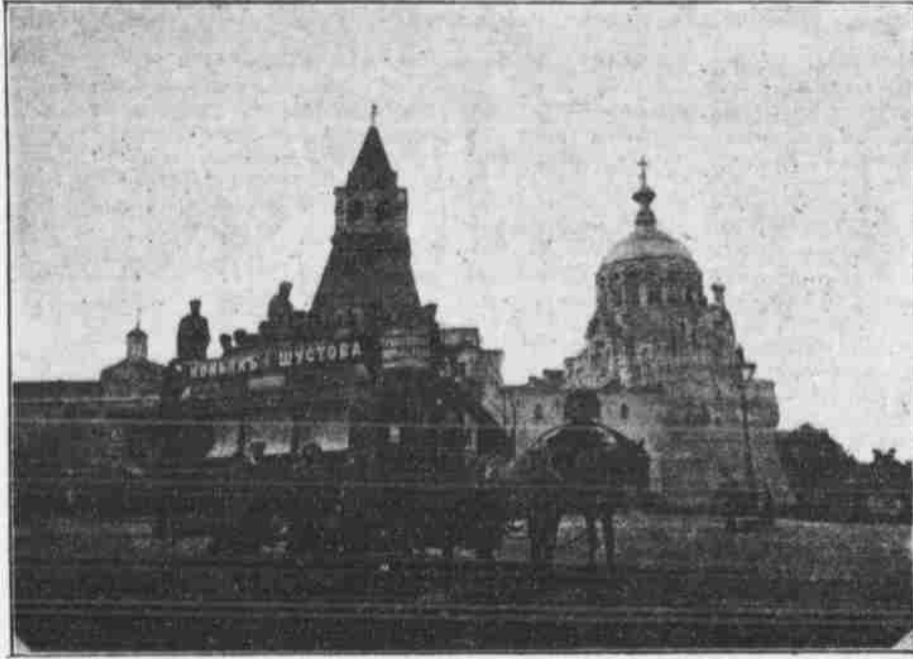
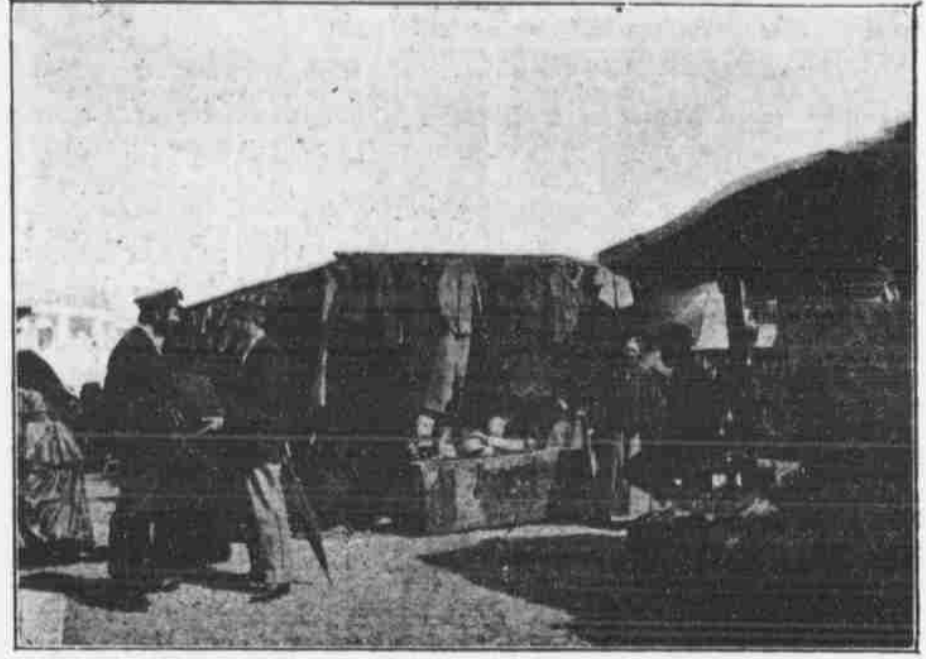


The World's Biggest Store



RAPID TRANSIT IN MOSCOW.



IN THE OPEN AIR MARKET.

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MOSCOW, July 6.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—The biggest store in the world under one roof is in Moscow. It is situated close to the Kremlin, under the shadow of some of the oldest and holiest churches of this holy city. It is a great stone building with roofs of iron and glass, covering at least twenty acres, and embracing 1,000 different business establishments. I have called it a store. It is rather a collection of stores, for each establishment has its individual owner, who rents of the syndicate which constructed the building. It is a gigantic department store, or bazar, under a thousand different heads, selling all kinds of goods and carrying on every kind of business.

I have seen the bazars of Cairo, Calcutta and Constantinople. The most of them are rude sheds, or caves in the walls of narrow streets, roofed with matting. This bazar is in one of the finest buildings of the world. It has been erected within the last few years, and with the ground upon which it stands has cost the enormous sum of \$8,000,000. This is one-third more than our National Library building at Washington, and many times more than any business establishment of the United States.

I have spent days in wandering through this mighty bazar. The twenty acres represent only the ground floor. The building is of three stories. It is divided up into streets, crossing one another at right angles, with mighty arches of glass above them. Along the streets are booths with plate-glass windows, and over them two galleries, representing the second and third stories, each lined with stores. The basement is a vast catacomb of stores, and the whole might be compared to a beehive, each cell filled with the treasures of Europe, Russia and the Far East. The stores are not the little cave-like holes in the wall which form the Oriental bazars. Many of them would be respectable in the great cities of the United States, and were they situated on Broadway or Twenty-third street, New York, they would catch the attention of the passersby for their costly goods and fine window dressing.

I wish I could take you inside this bazar with my interpreter and show you street after street of the great treasure house. You would lose the idea that the Russians are a poor nation and see something of this enormous market for our American goods.

The merchandise offered is worth many, many times the cost of the building. It amounts to tens of millions of dollars, and a vast part of it is made up of goods from Europe. The Germans, the French and the English have contributed to fill it, and it is only now and then that you see anything from America. I should like to show you the prices. They are far above those of our country or the other countries of Christendom, and the goods are of the costliest description.

Indeed, one of the best openings for American capital is in founding department stores in Europe. I understand that John Wanamaker, Siegel, Cooper & Co., and others are thinking of establishing them in London, but they would pay almost equally well in all the European capitals. Paris is the only one that has any to speak of. It has the Bon Marche, the Louvre and Au Printemps, together with some smaller establishments, all of which are making money. I have written of the two Berlin department stores, Wertheim's and Tietz's, both of which are doing an enormous business, but there is room for more.

Russia is peculiarly well fitted for such stores. Its people are rather oriental than occidental. They are used to the great bazars, and a department store is only a bazar under one head. They are also accustomed to do business by bargaining, and they would jump at marked goods and fixed prices. As it is here, you dicker for everything, from a suit of clothes to a liver pill. It is how much will you give? and how much will you take? not only in



MOSCOW'S \$8,000,000 BAZAR.

the great establishments, but also in the petty markets found all over the city.

This bazar was filled with shoppers when I visited it. Crowds of men in caps, overcoats and top boots, of poorly dressed peasant women in gowns and head shawls and of the well-clad, substantial merchant class, moved to and fro. There were many well-dressed men, women and children going from store to store, and also many people resting and chatting on the seats which line the streets of the bazar.

This bazar is only one of a half dozen or more in Moscow. The others are smaller, but some of them would be considered large anywhere. Moscow is the commercial capital of Russia. Its business is scattered, and I have walked myself tired in going from one commercial quarter to another. Many new stores are going up, and in some American elevators and others of our inventions are being introduced.

There is one store here which sells nothing but American goods, and, strange to say, it belongs to an Englishman, who has made a fortune in dealing in our specialties. His name is Block, and he has been doing business in Russia for the last twenty years. He started as an agent of the Fairbanks scales, and pushed them so that the government adopted them and made them the standard scales of Russia. Block then took the agency for other American goods, and continued increasing his business until now he handles American typewriters, furniture from Cincinnati and Grand Rapids, office desks and files, unit book cases, cameras, bicycles, stoves, and, indeed, everything American. He has big establishments in St. Petersburg and in other of the larger Russian cities. His sales amount to tens of millions of dollars a year, and the profits are so great that he has, I am told, become a millionaire. It is a pity he is an Englishman.

Some of the biggest openings here are in the electrical field. St. Petersburg has about 1,500,000 people and it is still run by horse cars. Moscow has 1,200,000 and has gained almost 500,000 within the last ten years. It likewise has horse cars, and poor ones at that. Warsaw and other cities are little better off, so that electric railway concessions would be of enormous value.

There are several American parties who are trying to get such concessions, including the Westinghouse company and Mr. Murray A. Verner of Pittsburg. A story that is going the rounds is that the Pittsburg man has the inside track and that owing to the influence of an ex-sweetheart of the czar. This story is flashy at best and I do not believe it, but it shows the kind of gossip one hears at these European courts. According to it the czar had an actress sweetheart to whom he was de-

voted while he was crown prince, but whom he dismissed when he ascended the throne. She then became the sweetheart of one of the grand dukes, who in time became interested in the electric railway concession and in connection with her procured the czar's favor.

I asked Mr. Verner about this matter. He replied:

"There is nothing in any of the stories about concessions being granted to myself or to any other American through such influence. I have been in Russia for several years devoting my time to this matter and I do not know the name of the man or woman alleged to be interested in this case. Besides the Russians do not do business that way. They know all about street railways and what they are making in other parts of the world. They understand what it costs to build and operate them and what the probable profits will be. If they give a concession it will be on business principles and in a business way. My proposition is that of a plain, business American. It is for the exclusive right to build and operate electric roads in St. Petersburg, the concession to run for 100 years. The czar has ordered a commission of his ministers to pass upon the proposition. I hope that we may get the concession."

Americans who are coming to Russia to engage in business should look into the trade laws and taxes. These are peculiar to the country. Any one can open a store or factory with the exception of a priest or Protestant minister who has a charge, or a foreign Jew. Persons employed in trade or industry have to pay a special professional tax and all commercial undertakings are subject to tax. The different branches of trade are divided into twenty sections, each of which has its own tax or license, ranging from \$500 down. Every trading establishment of the first section pays \$200 and every store about \$15. Industrial enterprises pay more.

There is a tax on capital amounting to 6 per cent of the profits when the profits exceed 10 per cent of the capital. All persons who engage in trade are bound to keep certain kinds of books and that without corrections or erasures. If there are any mistakes the entry must be bracketed and a note made of the corrections. Such books are private, but they can be called for by order of the court.

According to law a Russian clerk cannot carry on any business of his own or that of any other person except his master's. His employment is after special contracts, which must be written, and if he breaks them he is responsible to his master for any loss or injury through competition caused by him. The clerk can be fined to the amount of \$50 and imprisoned for three

months in such an event. Every clerk must within a month after the end of each year give an account of his work to his employer and he is responsible for all damage premeditated or brought about by carelessness during his service. This includes bookkeepers, correspondents, salesmen and workmen.

A vast deal of Russian business is done by peddlers, who carry the goods from village to village in wagons and trade them for grain, eggs, flax, hemp and wool. There are many peddlers with packs on their backs both in the cities and in the country and there are open-air markets in the cities every Sunday where these peddlers congregate, selling all sorts of things. I have attended some in St. Petersburg and I find large ones here in Moscow.

The Sunday market in Moscow begins early and closes about 2 o'clock. It is held in a wide street not far from some of the chief churches and extends along this street for about a mile. The street, with the exception of the car track, is filled with tents and sheds and tables, upon which the wares are spread. Some merchants lay their stock on the ground.

I visited this market the other day. There must have been something like a thousand merchants, each selling his own kind of wares. There were hundreds of boot and shoe stores. The goods were home-made and most of them cheap. They were hung from racks or placed on low tables. The shoe merchants were long-coated, high-booted men with caps. They tried the shoes on their customers out in the broiling sun and then dickered with them as to the price.

The most of the men's furnishing goods were sold by women. I saw them selling men's caps, shirts, coats and even trousers. Women walked about with great loads of trousers on their shoulders and on their arms begging the peasants to buy. The cap peddlers carried their wares in four-bushel baskets. They had brushes and kept brushing the caps to call the attention of the crowd. The purchasers tried on the wares without the aid of a mirror, the only question being that of fit, for the same kind of cap is used all over Russia.

About the only things I did not see in this market were corsets and underwear. Only the ladies of Russia wear corsets, and these markets are patronized chiefly by the peasants, whose women have waists of goodly proportions, unaffected by pressure. As to underwear, the poorer Russians do not use it. Many of them sleep in the same clothes that they wear in the daytime and some keep a suit on until it falls to pieces.

One of the queer features of Russian business is the use of pictures for letters in making signboards. A large percentage of the people cannot read or write, but all can understand pictures. Every store has on its walls facing the street paintings representing the goods sold within. If it is a shoe store, the wall will be covered with painted boots and shoes; if a bakery, there will be loaves of bread, and if a butcher, all sorts of joints of meats, sausages, etc. The usual barber sign has a man shaving a customer, and a dentist a representation of one pulling a tooth. The dairy signs are cows with milkmaids at work, and the tea signs are gaudy Chinamen sipping tea. You can see pictures of graphophones and sewing machines on the walls of some of the stores, and the American bicycle and automobile are shown forth in the same way.

The windows are filled with samples of the merchandise sold within, and some kinds of goods are hung outside during the daytime. There is little business done after dark, but the light lasts so long in the summer that it is full day until long after 9 p. m.

The Russians are babies as stock speculators. They have just begun to monkey with the buzz saw and are afraid of its teeth.

(Continued on Page Sixteen.)