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Swiss Market Days

Swiss customs and people appear to
have reached a simpler democratic de-
velopment than those of most other
countries. However it may have been
brought about, the parliament and
universities of Switzerland seem to
draw close to her people.

At Berne, the federal capital, the
open square in front of her fine parlia-
ment building, is regularly used by
her people as a market place, where
country produce is each week brought
for sale to consumers. Here in Lou-
sanne, the square in front of her uni-
versity is used for the same purpose,
while along in front of her stairways
and sidewalks the farmers place the
overflow of their vehicles and produce.
Looking out over the crowded spaces
is the statue of one of their education-
al leaders, as if blessing the work and
activities of the people. In their varied
service and companionship, their men
and women closely resemble those of
our own Canadian towns and town-
ships.

As nearly as I could count, there
were, on November 1st, some 180 one-
horse vehicles drawn up head to head,
with shafts rising upright into the air
(they being made so that can be done),
in six double rows, with just space be-
tween each double row for customers to
edge their way through.

Fruit and vegetables formed practi-
cally their entire produce for sale,
apples and pears being most in evidence,
with potatoes a close third, while other
vegetables were in lesser supply. The
quality of their apples does not appear
to equal that of our Canadian varieties
for dessert purposes, though many are
of fine cooking quality. Pears, I think,
equal if not perhaps ranking higher
than those of Ontario, though one
year's experience does not allow of de-
cided statements in respect to either
fruit. Potatoes of fair quality are in
good supply, but appear to be rough-
skinned and at times scabby. Other
vegetables are in less generous supply
and quality, except perhaps carrots,
which, though small, are fine eating.
Cauliflower is not to be seen, except a
few at the stores—which may be im-
ported. I have seen many cauliflower
plants in the gardens and fields, but
not one even half respectable head.
Whether that be in part due to an un-
usual season—a dry July and August—
or if it be due to lack of soil qualities,
I have not been able to learn. Pump-
kins and squash are so rare and small
that they are sold by the slice.

About an equal space of the market
square is covered by stands over which
canvas gives a slight weather protec-
tion. On a few are offered brown-col-
ored loaves of bread, a few sweetmeats
and one with many kinds of fine factory
biscuits, while a much larger number
are filled with cheeses of all sizes and
makes, from the small round ten-inch
across by one and a half in thickness,
of the richer and stronger makes, up
to the three-footer across by six to
eight inches thick.

Perhaps the most interesting sight
is to watch the cheese vendors cut sup-
plies for their numerous customers.
Holding their large round fifty to sixty
pound convex shape to their breast,
while with long, thin, sharp knives
they cut slice after slice to meet the
demands of importunate buyers. Much
seems to be in one, two and three-
pound slices, with small one or two-
ounce pieces added to make up required
weights, then quickly wrapped in
paper as soon as weighed on the small
counter scales with which every seller
is provided. Cheese almost seems to
replace the beef of our Canadian mar-
ket places, at least much of the former
is seen while there is very little of the
latter, except in butchers' stores.

Meats are largely represented by
sausages, with fresh pork, of which
the lean and fat are largely separated;
also a little bacon is seen.

Sausages of every conceivable size,
shape and variety compete with cheese
as a tempting article of diet, while
butter is scarcely to be seen, being re-
legated almost entirely to the store
trade, and being, with milk, under very
close government control.

Poultry is represented by a pitiful
little supply of half-fed, under-sized
chickens, due to the scarcity and high
price of grain. A few dressed rabbit
and hares—\$3.20 being asked for a fair-
sized hare—help out the lack of
poultry.

Along one end of the lines of vehicles
are other stands on which almost every
thing that can tempt either town or
country buyer is for sale, from cheap
dry goods, stationery, etc., boots and
shoes with wooden soles, or second-
hand ones; on others, new and second-
hand hardware, books and other goods
are displayed. Under cover at another
part of the grounds are to be found
native nuts of the Spanish chestnut
and English walnut varieties in large
two-bushel wicker baskets.

Beside each is a small scale to weigh
out the many small purchases of two
or three pounds, while on the cement
floor, on old newspapers, are to be seen
varieties such as I have never been

(Continued on page 4.)

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