

# THE YANKEE IN BELGIUM

ALL ABOUT BRUSSELS AS A  
HEADQUARTERS FOR OUR  
TRADE IN NORTH EUROPE.

(Special Correspondence of the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

**BRUSSELS.**—The streets of Brussels are torn up by the American invasion. In front of the stock exchange a crowd of blue-capped, black-capped, blue-capped workmen are digging out the old horse railroad and putting in an American underground trolley. The road is roped off and the brokers have to walk a half square out of their way to enter the bourse. At night lighted lanterns mark the confines of the work, and all day the sound of the pick and the hammer is heard. The work is under the charge of the Americans, although they are not directly on the ground. The machinery is being put in by the General Electric company of New York, which has invaded many parts of Europe, and is doing a big business here. The Westinghouse company is competing with it. It has an office in Brussels and its electrical supplies are found in all parts of the country.

## ELECTRIC TRANSIT IN BELGIUM.

There is a good opening here for electrical machinery. Many of the cities have no tramways and good-sized towns have no electric lights. Belgium is cut up by canals, now operated by horsepower, and at this writing horses are used to haul many of the cars of Brussels itself. The drag the cars not only along the tracks, but on the coasts, pulling cars weighing two tons and, in addition, 20 passengers over the rough stones. Our horses could not do it, but these big Belgian steeds are very elephants in harness and they haul with ease loads that would stall the American Percheron.

Brussels is fast adopting rapid transit. The electric work is being well done, and when completed the roads will be managed on military principles. The street car conductor here is as gorgeous as a German lieutenant. He has a uniform with brass buttons, his cap is covered with gold embroidery, and he keeps himself as bright as though he came out of a handbox.

Every conductor has a whistle or a horn, a bag for his money and receipt slips for fares. He carries a little metal tube with a sponge in it upon which he wets his fingers in tearing off the slips. The car fares are low, ranging from 2 cents upward, according to class and distance. On some cars the first class seats cost three cents and the second class two cents. The seats being exactly the same, except that the second are behind the first. The thrifty Belgians patronize the cheaper seats, so that there is usually plenty of room in the three-cent quarter.

## AMERICAN GOODS IN BRUSSELS.

Brussels is the capital of Belgium, commercially and politically. The merchants from all parts of the country come here to buy, and by a look at the stores it is easy to see that the trade is enormous. All sorts of notions are sold. Our patent medicines are displayed in the drug stores, and our porous plasters are advertised in the walls. Kodaks and American typewriters are well represented, as are all sorts of American farm tools.

Brussels is more than a thousand years old, and in the middle ages it was already doing an enormous business.

One of the oldest parts of the town is the Market Place, containing the city hall, one of the finest buildings of medieval Europe. Right next this old building are stores of American hardware, stacks of lawnmowers from Philadelphia, hay forks from Columbus, O., and grindstones from Berea. Nearly every Brussels business house keeps its accounts with American cash registers made at Dayton, and the most of the tailors use American sewing machines.

## INVADE EUROPE WITH AN AMERICAN TROTTER.

One of the brightest business Americans I have met on the continent is Mr. H. C. de Clerq, who represents the King Spring company of Buffalo and a number of other American institutions. He is one of the largest of the Belgian importers, and is making a big thing in selling American goods. He has three buildings in Brussels devoted to his stores, workshops and supplies, and he trades not only with Belgium, but with Germany, France, Spain and Italy.

Among other things Mr. de Clerq sells American harness, carriages and wagons, and it was in talking of this branch of the business that he told me how he invaded Europe with an American trotter. Said he:

"I first came here as an agent for one of the biggest carriage factories of the United States. My employers thought they could sell their goods here, and, as I speak and write German and French as well as the English, they chose me to introduce them. I laid out the campaign and they gave me the money to carry it out. In the first place I bought a buggy with rubber tires and ball bearings, and in the second a fast American trotter to carry me over the country. I brought these with me to Europe and traveled in my carriage through Holland and Belgium, going from Antwerp to Berlin, visiting the greater part of Germany. No one had ever seen a buggy like mine, and the carriage dealers everywhere gave me small orders. I could drive about 40 miles a day, stopping at a big town almost every night. I had a folding bicycle, and I would now and then rest my horse and get orders for it.

The trip as a whole panned out well, but when I went over the same ground six months later I found that the men who had ordered my carriages were not trying to sell them, as they did not want American competition. The result was that I established agencies myself, and from that time to this I have had a good trade.

"What class of Belgians buy American carriages?" I asked.

"Only the rich. They are too expensive for the poor. The reply, 'but the nobility are glad to get them, and of my earliest customers were the VI. comte de Buisseret and the Baron de Chambres, well known over Europe as the owners of fine racing horses.'

"I sold him. His knees got sprung by rough roads, and I took \$100 for him. The purchaser entered him for the races in different parts of Belgium and made \$150 out of him in one year."

## OUR GAS STOVES AND SWEDISH IMITATIONS.

I walked with Mr. de Clerq through his big store on the Boulevard Ansapach, not far from the Bourse. It has every sort of American notion—American inks, erasers, pens, files, scales, and all sorts of knick-knacks. I was especially

**Street Cars With American Machinery—How a Drummer Invaded Europe on an American Trotter—Our Gas Stoves and the Swedish Imitations—A Chat With the Vice President of the American Chamber of Commerce—How to Succeed in Europe—American Farming Tools for the Czar—American Scales for European Baby Farms and American Novelties Everywhere.**



Photographed for the Deseret News by Frank G. Carpenter.

## AN AMERICAN REAPER IN SIBERIA.

Interested in a gas radiator which Mr. de Clerq tells me he was the first to introduce into Europe. Said he:

"The Belgians live in flats which are seldom heated. They were glad to get the radiators, and at the start I sold thousands of them at \$5 apiece. This gave me a big profit, but the Germans and Belgians are now making cheap imitations, and the Swedes are sending in a copy which will drive the American radiator out of the market, and I will have to make my money out of something else."

"This has been the case with nearly every one of my American importations, and I have come to expect it. I take up an American novelty and work it for five years, knowing that at the end of that time the natives will copy it and undersell me. Then I drop it and take up something else."

"Just now," Mr. de Clerq went on, "I have a knife sharpener, a little wheel affair which I can sell by the

thousands. Here is one now. I have ordered the makers to cable me terms and prices, so that I can order from 10,000 to 50,000, as I want them. I must have the goods here in order to do business. These people won't wait, and they won't buy from catalogues. They must see the goods themselves. If I tell a customer it will take six weeks to supply him he goes somewhere else."

## HOW OUR FURNITURE GOES TO EUROPE.

I am especially interested in the way American furniture is handled on the continent. Mr. de Clerq imports more of our office desks, unit book cases, files and chairs than any other man in northern Europe. We went together over his warehouses. He has two great buildings packed with our wares. Mr. Vaughan Cornish reports that on his visit in February, 1901 when the snow was five feet deep, he saw one stump two feet in diameter with a cap nine feet across and a broken tree four feet through with an opening 12 feet across. It is estimated that these snowcaps must often weigh a ton, they are symmetrically rounded, and they are so solidly frozen as to be not easily broken.

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as recommended by M. Henri de Sarauton—from 0 to 25, with subdivisions into 100 minutes of 100 seconds, each second consisting of two beats. In measurements of the circle, the divisions are 240 degrees, each subdivided into 100 primes containing 100 thirds.

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The expansion of metals on heating is a serious disadvantage for many purposes. The new alloy of iron with 35 per cent of nickel is claimed to expand less than 1-12,000,000, for an increase of one degree C., while the expansion of iron is 1-80,000 for one degree C. The alloy is recommended for clock pendulums, measures, etc.

The idea of Dr. Garrigue, of the Paris Faculty of Medicine, is that tuberculosis, cancer and other germ diseases destroy because the ferment which vivifies the blood, are absorbed. The cells die when formic acid can no longer be produced. To cure he would invert the process, supplying oxygen to the cells, and producing oxygen by formic acid. Other physicians call him a quack.

Acetylene headlights for Russian locomotives have projected a fine light three times as far as the naphtha lamps.

Mr. de Clerq says the Europeans can not compete with us as to office furniture. Labor is low, but is not so cheap as American machinery. As it is now, the desks and chairs come here in rectangular boxes in pieces knocked down. They are not smoothed nor varnished. The finishing is all done by Belgian cabinet makers as good as our best men in the states, who will work for from 30 cents to \$1 a day. The chairs are sent in such a way that a dozen dining chairs come in a box a foot thick and four feet square, while a roll-top desk takes but little more room. In this way the freight is low. The tariff on rough goods is also less than that on the finished articles.

## AN AMERICAN WAREHOUSE.

Mr. de Clerq says that we ought to have an American warehouse in Brussels where our exporters could keep supplies of American goods on hand and sell on call. Said he:

"If a half dozen of our big firms would put in, say, \$10,000 a year each and display their goods in such a warehouse near the Bourse, they could build up an enormous trade. The Bourse, or stock exchange, is the business center of Belgium. Every Wednesday the merchants and manufacturers from all parts of the country meet there to buy and sell and talk over trade, and they could be easily taken into the warehouse."

"Not only that," continued Mr. de Clerq, "but such a warehouse would build up our trade in all parts of northern and central Europe. This is the natural headquarters for the sale of our goods to that territory. It is central, and you can reach the different parts of Europe more quickly from it than from any other great point. The taxes are light and the territory is neutral. The Germans do not like to do business with the French, nor the French with the Germans, but either will trade with a Belgian or a man who lives here. For this reason I prefer Brussels to Paris."

## THE FIRST CONTINENTAL INVADER.

Leaving Mr. de Clerq I called upon Mr. George W. Silcox, the vice president of the Belgian Anglo-American chamber of commerce. Mr. Silcox does an enormous business in importing American goods and selling them to all parts of Europe. He was about the first if not the very first to found an American house on the continent, and he might be called our first continental invader. He came to Europe as secretary of the Vienna exposition of 1873, and in the year following represented American interests at an agricultural exposition in Bremen. Said he:

"At that time manufacturing Germany was in the first throes of its birth. The Franco-Prussian war had closed, and the empire was at its beginning. There were no factories. The German peasants were plowing with wooden plows, shod with iron by custom. Their grain was threshed out and they knew nothing of modern agricultural machinery. The Bremen exposition opened their eyes, and they gave such orders for our farm tools that about 20 American firms were established in Bremen. I represented one of them, and the only one which has lasted to this day. I did business there for some time, but when Germany established its Zollverein, or protective tariff combination, I came to Brussels and opened my place here."

"What kind of a place is Brussels as a headquarters for American goods?" I asked.

"It is the best in Europe to reach the whole country, the cheapest place to land goods and the easiest point for their distribution. I have a big trade with every part of the continent, supplying agricultural machinery and tools to Russia, Hungary, France, Germany, Spain and Norway and Sweden, and the most of my goods pass through Brussels. I can keep a ton of freight a month in the government warehouses at Antwerp for 20 cents. The Belgian government gives low freight rates, and it expedites foreign business in every possible way. Besides, living in Brussels is cheap and the social and educational advantages are of the best."

## HOW TO SUCCEED IN EUROPE.

"Tell me, Mr. Silcox," said I, "how an American importer can establish a successful business in Europe?"

"That is not so easy," was the reply, "but there are certain cardinal principles which must be observed, or fail-

ure is sure. The American who comes here must learn the market and the people, and he must deal with them honestly and according to their customs. It is useless to try to do business here as at home. Take the matter of credits. I begin to ship to my agents in December, and continue shipping until March. My payments do not come in until May, and they continue coming all the rest of the year. For my money, but at the same time my business is cleaned up and that with a loss percentage of loss in the United States. The English, French and Germans give similar terms of credit and the American who does business here on a New York cash basis had better save his transportation, for he will not succeed."

"As for me," continued the American, "I do all my business under my own name. I make my own payments to the American exporters and all payments for goods sold are made to me, although many of my customers think they are dealing with the stories through me. As far as business is concerned my business is large."

"But do you hold your trade?" I asked.

"Yes, better than similar business in the United States. I began twenty-five years ago, and I have a book many of the men with whom I started. In some cases the fathers have passed away, but the sons continue the business and the sons come in all the same. This foreign trade, well worth the consideration of the American manufacturer, it should be noted at the expense of the home market for in hard times the European market may tide over many a shaky factory."

## AMERICAN FARMING TOOLS FOR THE CZAR.

Mr. Silcox does an enormous business with Russia. He has dealt with the Russians for years, and he has now his agents in every large town of European Russia and also in Turkey, Siberia and China. He supplies the czar with agricultural machinery, and deals largely with the communal villages or the simbles. In Russia much of the land is owned by the villages, and the village officials buy machinery for the common use of the people.

A great deal of our agricultural machinery goes to south Russia. I have seen large orders for American reapers for the Cossack country, and I saw in Paris got a picture of a camel hauling a Deering mower over the steppes of Siberia. The cotton regions of Turkestan were started with American cottonseed sent by Mr. Silcox to Russia. It is probable that American cotton machinery could be sold there in thousands of bales of that cotton are now annually shipped to the factories of Moscow.

## NOVELTIES WHICH PAY WELL.

I was interested in the novelties I saw in the warehouse of Mr. Silcox. In addition to all sorts of farm tools there were a number of notions of various kinds. One, for instance, were some grocery scales which had been sold by the thousands to the founding armory for the weighing of babies. A patent knife grinder for sharpening moving machines has been a wonderful seller, and there are hand plows which are sold to the vineyarders of France and Spain to clean out the weeds between the grape vines.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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\$15 and \$18 Alaska Sable Scarfs	\$8.50
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\$13 and \$15 Black Marten Scarfs	\$7.50
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\$12 and \$14 Australian Fox Scarfs	\$6.50
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\$5 and \$6 Australian Fox Scarfs	\$2.75
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\$18 and \$20 American Fox Muffs	\$9.00
for.....	
\$12 and \$14 Alaska Sable Muffs	\$7.00
for.....	
\$10 and \$12 Black Marten Muffs	\$6.00
for.....	
\$6 and \$8 Australian Fox Muffs	\$3.50
for.....	

<b>COATS.</b>	
\$200 Seal Coats	\$135.00
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\$160 and \$180 Persian Lamb Coats	\$80.00
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## SCIENTIFIC MISCELLANY

Treatment by Roentgen rays is proving of importance in cancer of the skin. Reporting four recent cures, Dr. Gilchrist mentioned having seen in Manchester, 34 cases that had been completely cured, while Finzen has reported 45 cured cases. The application usually lasts 15 minutes. The malignant cells seem to be specially sought out by the rays, but burns may occur, and for preventing them a special glass tube—opaque except at the ends—has been devised. The effects vary greatly with the idiosyncrasies of the patients.

In a late interesting account of spider life, Dr. Dillinger described the ruthless destruction by the ichneumon fly and by certain wasps. The young of some wasps can live only on live spiders, and the mother wasp, therefore renders the spiders powerless by her sting—after which they can live a month—and then deposits them in the cocoon where she has placed her egg. On hatching out, the wasp grub feeds on the bodies of the living spiders. Another wasp deposits her egg in the body of the spider, which is then buried alive, and is fed upon by the wasp grub.

A newly patented German process of giving relief to ornaments and veining on wood consists in gluing strips of paper over the parts to be raised, and then dabbing the entire surface vertically with bundles of fine steel wire. The softer parts of the wood come out as dust, while the protected places and the hard annual rings remain unaffected.

The aeroplane is the most promising solution of the flight problem, in the opinion of Maj. Baden Powell. Models have been down, lightweight engines are now available, and a successful machine awaits the liberal use of money.

The production of milk powder has been perfected by Herr Ekenberg by means of an apparatus called a continuous exsiccator. This evaporates the milk to dryness without a vacuum, at a temperature not exceeding 40 degrees C. (104 F.), and odor and taste are so well preserved that it can be sold whether the milk had been pasteurized or boiled. Heating with water at 60 degrees or 70 degrees C. converts the powder into milk that is in every respect like the ordinary product. Special

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treatment has overcome the tendency of the stored powers to pass gradually into an insoluble state, and has improved its keeping qualities, giving it a high degree of resistance to bacteria and mold as well as to dampness and heat. The apparatus can dry 10,000 quarts daily, yielding about 1 pound of powder from 5 quarts of milk.

The curious formations known as "snow mushrooms" reach extraordinary development near the Glacier House, in the mountains of British Columbia. At this place the tree trunks have the most favorable diameter, the stumps are always left several feet high, and the snowfalls are usually deep, occurring at about 32 degrees F. Dr. Vaughan Cornish reports that on his visit in February, 1901 when the snow was five feet deep, he saw one stump two feet in diameter with a cap nine feet across and a broken tree four feet through with an opening 12 feet across. It is estimated that these snowcaps must often weigh a ton, they are symmetrically rounded, and they are so solidly frozen as to be not easily broken.

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## WHAT CAN CHILDREN DO?

A bright boy of California made over \$100 last year working for a newspaper agency. He is only 12 years old, but he succeeded in getting new subscriptions and renewing old ones to earn this sum. He certainly showed great pluck.

Another boy about the same age, who lives in New York state, in the country, made quite a success preparing horseradish for the market. There is so much adulterated horseradish nowadays—and many are grating turnips with the roots and mixing well—that people will pay a very fair price for pure goods. He grated, mixed and bottled it and then sold his products both to storekeepers and consumers direct. It is hard work on both the fingers and the eyes, but many do it, with good profits.

A brother and sister, who are neither very old nor very large, joined forces last summer and spent every Saturday morning sweeping and dusting the little church near by. They also filled and cleaned the lamps, which is quite a task in itself. This gave them 50 cents a week; and, now that cold weather has come, the boy makes an extra quarter by building the fire Sunday morning.

Selling vegetables on commission is work that some boys find profitable. Great care should be taken that only first class goods are handled; in that way customers learn to depend upon the goods and there is no trouble either in making sales or securing good prices.

One of our newspaper syndicates has given considerable employment to a clever young high school graduate in a small town. It is a town of considerable historic interest, and among the old settlers he finds opportunity to secure reminiscences of various sorts that make good reading. He also sends news items from this locality, and finds that such as are available will be accepted and well paid for. The practice for him is also an excellent training for future work. He has learned to condense news so that only the important features are sent, also to secure the most interesting features. Most of the matter is utilized, and he finds that if neatly prepared it is more likely to turn out to his advantage.

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