

The Canton of Zurich

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The Canton of Zurich

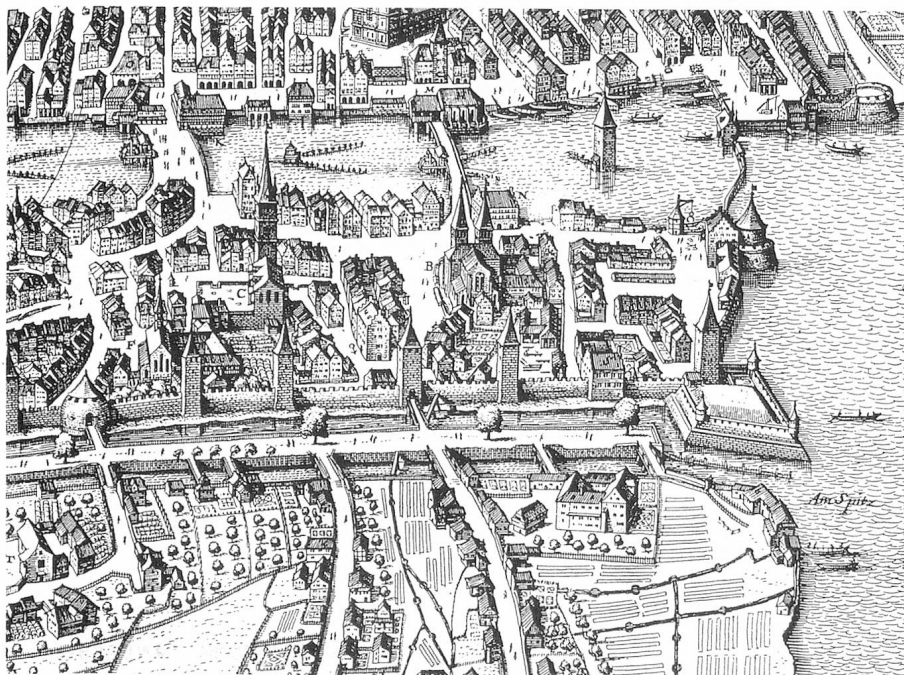
The Author

Fritz Hauswirth was born in Zurich in 1937. He has become known above all through the twelve volumes of his «Strongholds and Castles of Switzerland». In these he describes around 600 strongholds, castles and ruins which he photographed himself, classified in Cantons. Consequently, many tasks accrued to him, such as guided visits to castles, lecturing at adult education centres, and further training of teachers, as well as contributions to papers and periodicals. At the same time, the author is editor of «Zürcher Chronik», a quarterly on ethnology, culture and the arts in the Canton of Zurich.

«Amongst the most beautiful of all towns in Switzerland are those situated on a lake and a river at the same time. Thus they accept the river like a wide gateway at the end of the lake, and let it flow right through the town and far afield into the countryside. Thus Zurich, Lucerne and Geneva, and even Constance which somehow belongs to them, too. One can't imagine anything more pleasant than a trip on one of these lakes, as for instance on that of Zurich. One should board the boat at Rapperswil, the old township in the ante-

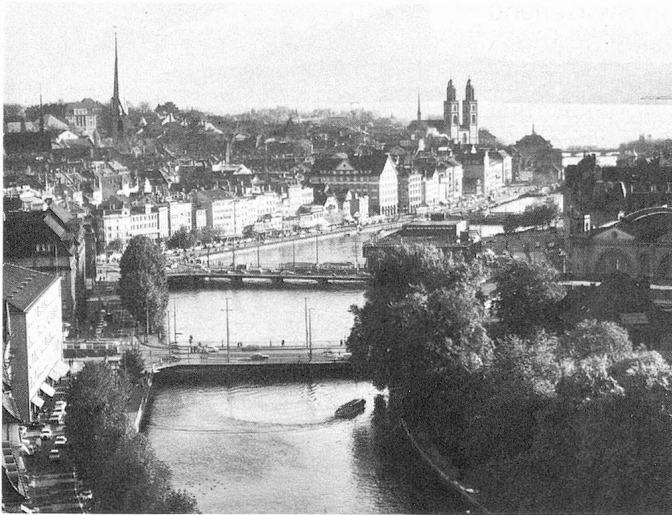
hall as it were of the primitive mountain ranges. Monastery and Castle are reflected in the water as one leaves, gliding past the island on which is Hutten's grave, between the shores of the longish lake, where the outskirts of the resplendent villages interweave and form a continuous wreath. We drift towards Zurich, past the ever increasing country mansions of the Zurich merchants, until at last the town itself rises from the blue waters like a dream, and one finds oneself gliding unexpectedly with increased movement under the bridges of the green Limmat. The whole bustling life of a spiritually important and beautiful town presses against the gracefully floating barge ...» It is with these words that one of the most important authors in the German literature of the 19th century, Gottfried Keller (1819 to 1890) describes part of the Zurich region in the first edition of his educational novel «Der Grüne Heinrich». With this, Keller who worked in the town as

District of Paradeplatz in 1640 (SOGENAL)



On the 30th anniversary of Switzerland's accession to Unesco

Some information about Unesco and the Swiss National Commission for Unesco (p. 9)



The river Limmat with the Grossmünster in background



Rafz, a picturesque little village in the «Wineland» district of Canton Zurich

Clerk of the State from 1861 to 1876, has already stated essential facts about that beautiful landscape. His description of the surroundings of the Lake of Zurich and the town on the Limmat presents both in their finest Sunday best. One might possibly complement them by enumerating the grand mansions on the lake with their list of famous guests from Goethe to C. F. Meyer and on to Winston Churchill who was ceremoniously received at the country mansion «Zur Schipf» at Herrliberg in 1947. Zurich itself enlarges the framework with its centuries-old buildings, above all the proud churches like the Gross- and the Fraumünster where already in the early Middle-Ages monasteries were developed, the Wasserkirche, Predigerkirche, St. Peter, the town-hall, the guild-houses and those of corporations, the most attractive ones reflecting themselves gracefully in the waters of the Limmat, as well as some remarkable individual town-houses in the alleyways of the old town. Those interested in history may like to know that traces of habitation were found going back to the third century; the former Roman citadel Turicum on the Lindenhof must be pointed out. And one must not forget the legend of the town's

Saints Felix and Regula who were beheaded. In the Middle-Ages, Zurich, as Free Imperial City was the spiritual centre of Southern Swabia. In 1336, Rudolf Brun introduced the Guild Constitution, and with it the power of the old patrician class disappeared. The town was given a democratic establishment which directed its development into a strict channel. In 1351, it joined the alliance of the Confederates. Commerce and trade flourished as before, and the town experienced progress and prosperity which could not even be slowed down by the Reformation under Zwingli in the 16th century. As regards arts and sciences, too, Zurich takes a front seat: University, Federal Institute of Technology and the many private educational establishments, the Opera, the *Schauspielhaus* and the small theatres bear witness to this statement. The number of writers and poets who lived in Zurich or stayed there for some time is considerable. Repeatedly, Zurich became a place of asylum: names like Richard Wagner who composed some of his most important works there, Gottfried Semper, Ferdinand Freiligrath and also Lenin, confirm this. The two largest Zurich festivals, the «Sechseläuten» in spring, festival of the guilds, and the «Kna-

benschiesen» in the autumn, which goes back to the second half of the 17th century.

But is Zurich the past only? Has the Limmat town of today with its approximately 380 000 inhabitants no problems? Should one not have mentioned long ago smoking factory chimneys, over-populated agglomerations, noisy districts endangered by poisonous exhaust fumes, roads congested with traffic, water pollution and protection of the environment? Does Zurich still live up to its reputation of a clean town, which it enjoys far and wide?

As nearly everywhere, the authorities in Zurich were caught unawares by the development of the economic boom with all its negative aspects. The increase of traffic was so explosive that one got behind with the creation of the necessary infrastructure. The pollution of the Lake of Zurich took menacing proportions, the town itself was bursting at the seams everywhere. In the meantime, one has been able to get a better grasp on the development, water purification plants were established, the condition of the lake has improved markedly. Thanks to comprehensive planning, wild building development could be stopped, the few pedestrian zones in the inner town

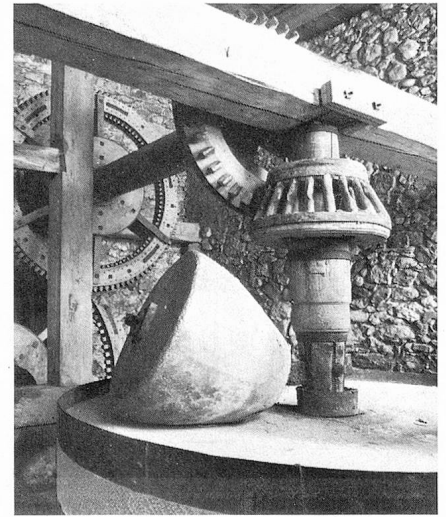


Guildhouse «Zur Meise» built 1752 in Zurich

have been added to, better bus and tram connections have been introduced, and with a system of expressways and national motorways one tries to channel individual traffic and to free the town of tedious through traffic. Will all this be successful? To make a prognosis would be presumptuous, for only the next few decades will tell. The Canton of Zurich, too, has to face similar problems, especially in the conglomeration centres, in the Limmat Valley and the region of Winterthur. For Zurich is an industrial Canton. Nobody wants to deny this, for it also means work for thousands of workers and employees. Today's reputation of the Zurich textile and machine industries rests on long tradition. Although the Canton of Zurich is in

seventh place only in Switzerland as regards area, regarding population (approximately 1.1 m) and industry, however, it takes first place in the Confederation. Amongst the working population the group industry and trade comes first, followed by commerce, agriculture and communications. Thanks to Kloten Airport, the Canton of Zurich is connected with the whole world.

Zurich's commerce, too, shows a centuries-old tradition. Already in the Middle-Ages, the transit of goods, to which came the stream of pilgrims to Einsiedeln, brought work and money into the town, at that time having a few thousand inhabitants. Of these, it was above all the ship owners, the stevedores, porters and cart-pullers, the innkeepers and artisans who profited. As market place, Zurich had enormous importance: it was there that the people from Central Switzerland, from Glarus and the Grisons, bought corn and salt. At the mouth of the Limmat, a lively trade was conducted in lead, copper and pewter, in Nuremberg ironware like scythes, sickles, swords and pans, in Swiss hones and Italian silk. These commercial ties with the town on the banks of the Limmat have remained to the present, and they are reflected in its function as a centre of banking and insurance and an important stock exchange. There are nearly 500 banks in the Canton of Zurich, and practically a



A water-driven hemp crusher near the village of Hettlingen

quarter of all Swiss banks, about 130, have their main offices in the Canton of Zurich. Who would have guessed the stormy development when, in the 18th century, Bank Leu, the oldest monetary institution in Switzerland, was founded in Zurich; when, in 1857, the railway politician and financier Alfred Escher was one of the founders of the Swiss Credit Bank, and when just about 100 years ago, the Cantonal Bank of Zurich was founded? The Canton of Zurich is leading in the construction of steam-, water- and gasturbines, diesel motors, locomotives, railway carriages, textile machines of all kinds, machine tools, instruments and apparatus, calculators and other precision instruments, and its products find markets in all countries of the world, even though conditions are no longer as favourable as a few years ago. The recession has made itself felt, balance sheets are in the red at times, shorter working hours, dismissals and closing down of works belong to the unpleasant manifestations of present times.

Zurich is not the only industrial centre, also the Winterthur region and the Zurich *Oberland*. And this brings us away from the town of Zurich and into the countryside. This is as it should be, for the

A few figures

Surface area:	1728.6 km ²
Population:	1 107 788 inhabitants in 171 communes (387 900 in the Town of Zurich)
Denominations:	659 814 Protestants 406 280 Roman Catholics 41 694 other religions
Language:	German
Agricultural estates:	8681
Tourism:	372 hotels (17 674 beds)
Industrial undertakings:	1434 (115 680 employees)
Limited companies:	13 217
Net of roads:	6349 km
Total of engine-vehicles:	390 343



Stock exchange in Zurich



The picturesque village of Guntalingen with the typical frame and fill work architecture (photos SNT0)

Canton of Zurich is not synonymous with the town on the Limmat. Many villages and towns, even outside the cantonal boundaries, watch carefully the – in their eyes – possible overflow of the *Limmatstadt*. Like in other Cantons, this goes back to the historic development. In the Middle-Ages, Zurich, a free imperial city, was dominating. It is true that some Communes were mentioned quite early (Zell in 853, Fischenthal in 878), and Winterthur, too, developed a certain importance, but there is no doubt that the emphasis lay on Zurich, the town. When Zurich acquired by purchase and mortgage of feudal areas between 1400 and 1550, the settlement became a municipal state which corresponded roughly to the present size of the Canton in the middle of the 16th century. The collapse of the Old Order in 1798 brought an end officially to the state of allegiance of the countryside. But the power still emanated from Zurich right into the 19th century, interrupted only by the short sovereignty of the French (1799–1802). The hate towards the town was often great and bitter – no wonder that there were quite some incensed altercations such as the *Stäferhandel* (1795), the *Bockenkrieg* (1804) and the *Zürichputsch* (1839). Today, the equilibrium between

town and country has been restored. Winterthur, the second industrial metropolis, has made a name for itself with its art museums, a reputation which goes well beyond the cantonal boundaries. Next October, the new Municipal Theatre will be inaugurated in the *Eulachstadt*, a feat which has not yet been achieved in Zurich – the old Zurich Opera House is still waiting for urgent renovation. The theatre brings valuable performances to many Communes in the Canton of Zurich. With regard to recreational areas, the Zurich countryside is greatly favoured: Embedded in the Midlands of North-Eastern Switzerland, bordered by the Cantons of Aargau, Zug, Schwyz, St. Gall, Thurgau and Schaffhausen, as well as by the Federal German Republic, pleasant valleys and charming hills spread out in the Rhine and Thur regions, in the Weinland, the valleys of the Toess and the Glatt, the districts around the Lake of Zurich, the valleys of the Limmat, the Sihl and the Reppisch, and the Knonaueramt. Generally, though, one still connects industry, commerce, communications and large houses with the «Canton of Zurich», yet only recently, one has discovered that 60 out of the 171 Communes dispose of touristic amenities which go well beyond the quiet

bench at the edge of the forest. These surely include the more than 40 well-preserved strongholds and castles, the 50 local museums and – for those interested in sport – the 52 *fitnessparcours*, the 82 open-air baths and the 46 public indoor swimming pools. In the attractive country townships like Buelach, Eglisau, Grueningen, Regensberg, one finds great riches in sacred and secular buildings. Who has not admired the fine *Riegelbauten* in the Stammheim Valley; who has not wandered with friends around the Lake of Pfäeffikon or has not admired the Canton from one of its «Roofs», such as from the Albis and the Pfannenstiel chain, from the Hoerli or the Laegern which, was spur of the Jura, stretches right into the Canton of Zurich. From these heights, one can look on fertile fields, well-tended orchards, luscious meadows, green woods, and one realizes that there is still healthy and well-mechanized agriculture and forestry in the Canton, in connection with which viticulture – though much reduced now – enjoys particular attention. And it is from these heights – to conclude with Gottfried Keller – «that one beholds in the South the wide, snow-white chain of the Alps lying like a wreath of lilies on a green carpet ...»

F. Hauswirth