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OUR FATHERLAND

(Continuation)

BASEL: All of you have heard of the very reserved Basler, of whom it is said that he considers the best thing about his rival city of Zurich, is to take the afternoon train back to Basel! However, the annual industrial fair, established 37 years ago, has proved itself so popular to all Swiss that this isolation has now practically disappeared. Basel is a rich industrial town, very important to our Fatherland through the Rhine's shipping facilities; the great chemical factories which attained international fame (in particular due to the progress made in the aniline dye industry, the many pharmaceutical inventions and foremost the revolutionary D.D.T.); the large banking institutions; and last but not least, as the principal entry for the annual tourist army of nearly two million visitors.

Historically we remember Basel by the battle of St. Jacob in 1444, when a Swiss advance guard of 1500 soldiers fought against a French army of 20,000 under the Dauphin of France, killing more than half of the French, while all the Swiss fell on the battlefield. The French Prince was so impressed by the courage of his adversaries that he refused to advance any further. Instead he offered a treaty of friendship, which lasted until the time of the French Revolution. St. Jacob, you will recall, forms the text of our National Anthem.

After this period our Northern city became the seat of all the most learned scholars and artists of Europe. Celebrities such as the famous humanist Erasmus was one of the leading personalities. The work of such well-known painters as Hans Holbein and Konrad Witz were created at that time. And in 1501, as a protection against the powerful Austrians, Basel joined the Swiss Confederation.

In 1434, the University of Basel was founded by Pope Pius II, and he left posterity a description of the town as an enchanting place, but regretted that an earthquake in 1335 destroyed much of the old city, causing "great consternation throughout the civilised world." He described the churches as being built of red sandstone containing small wooden cubicles, so that the ladies of the aristocracy could attend Mass unseen and undisturbed. Most of the churches and many of the private houses were roofed with tiles of coloured