

church of St. Nicholas dates from 1285. Its organ with sixty-seven stops, and seven thousand eight hundred pipes, some of them thirty-three feet long, is one of the finest in Europe. I attended an organ recital, but liked it far less than that at Hofkirche, at Lucerne. The organ is very powerful, but lacks the sweet flute-like notes of the latter. The deep bass shook the solid walls. The rising rage of the storm-piece was tremendous—like chaos come again. It was at the garish hour of noon, and the market square close by was filled with noisy and homely-looking peasants, in their odd and uncouth costumes. In the church was a singular Chapel of the Sepulchre, a dim grotto with angels, the Maries, and a sleeping soldier of Swiss physiognomy, on which fell strong beams of light through narrow loopholes. It was very realistic and Rembrandt-like. The choir screen was a perfect thicket of iron thorns. There was a dreadfully haggard figure of Christ on the cross, the blood dropping from the thorns on His brow over His body—an object painful to contemplate. A "Last Judgment," over the west portal, was very grotesque. A devil with a pig's head was carrying off souls in a huge basket, weighing them in scales and casting them into a dragon-shaped hell's mouth, while a saint carried the souls of the saved to heaven in her apron.

Around the town were curious towers, very strong on the outer side, toward the enemy; but quite open on the inner side, so as to be untenable if taken. The train crossed the Sarine by a viaduct 260 feet above the water, giving fine views of the winding river.

Berne, the capital of Switzerland, is a quaint old town of 40,000 inhabitants. It is, as its name signifies, the City of the Bear. That animal seems to be the tutelary guardian, as well as the heraldic emblem of the canton. It ramps upon its shield. Two gigantic granite bears are warders of the city gates. A whole troop of mechanical bears go through a performance every hour on the clock tower. On the neighbouring Bears' Fountain appears bruin, equipped in armour. Even in the stalls of the cathedral they are carved, in all manner of grotesque attitudes. In the Bears' Den—a large stone enclosure twenty feet deep—quite a menagerie of black and brown bears are maintained at public expense. When I saw them, a great lazy fellow lay on his back, with his four legs in the air, sleepily catching in his capacious mouth cherries thrown him by his visitors. He seemed half asleep, with his eyes nearly closed, but he watched the cherries closely enough, with a strangely human expression, and caught them every time. In 1861 an English officer fell into the den, and was torn in pieces before he could be rescued.