

Notes from the North.

D^r W. D. C.

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II.

A voyage of three days and three nights on the Gotha canal steamer *Pallas* brought us to Stockholm. This beautiful city has been not inappropriately called the Venice of the North, as like its Adriatic rival it is intersected by many canals. The Italian city with its sluggish waters awakens thoughts only of the past, while the gay and sunny city of the North is bright with the activities of to-day. We were at once struck with the elegance of the street buildings, their substantial character, and the number of large and expensive structures in course of erection. The same cleanliness of the streets and municipal good order and management observable in Gothenburg are all apparent here. The city is built on several islands in the efflux of Lake Malar (called by the Swedes *Malern*) with the Baltic. These islands are connected by several large and elegantly designed bridges of stone and iron. The banks of these channels or canals are lined with granite quays, and the constant flow of these wide streams does much to keep the city sweet and clean. As the Swedish climate is something like that of Canada, warm in summer and cold in winter, these canals, and indeed the whole harbour, are frozen for four or five months in the year. The population numbers about 260,000, and the people to the passing tourist, at least, look cheerful, well clad and contented. Many handsome churches adorn the city, and on Sunday the worshippers are seen wending their way to the different churches in large numbers. The Swedes are church goers although the Sabbath is not observed with the same strictness as with us. The public gardens and places of open-air amusement in the outskirts of the city are largely frequented on Sunday afternoons. During our stay in Stockholm we spent one Lord's Day. We attended divine service in the *Storkyrka*, the royal chapel, where the coronations are held. The King's pew is on one side of the aisle, while that of the Queen is on the other. Both are upholstered in blue velvet. Canopies and what appear to be draperies of cloth of gold adorn each. These are, however, constructed of stucco, richly gilded. The church is of considerable antiquity and contains one bronze seven-branched candle stick said to be, at least 500 years old. Behind the communion table is a reredos composed of silver, ebony, and ivory. It contains eighteen panels on which are carved scenes from the Passion. This is said to have cost 80,000 kronors. Many flags and standards taken in war adorn the building and tell us of the military spirit which animated the people. The service was partly liturgical. The minister in the Geneva gown and bands, first read part of the service from a book as he stood in front of the communion table at the end of the church. He then entered the pulpit and preached extempore and also offered prayers in like manner. Hymns were repeatedly sung and the congregation joined freely in the singing. A fine choir accompanied by a large organ led the service of praise. The religion of the country is Lutheran, and there was nothing to distinguish the service from that ordinarily seen in Presbyterian churches except the reading of a short liturgy. We afterwards visited the *Ruchdersholmkyrka*, but found that service was never held in it except on the occasion of royal funerals. This church is conspicuous all over the city for its lofty perforated iron spire, the effect of which is singular. This church contains the tombs of many kings and heroes, and in side chapels are displayed hundreds of flags and standards, kettle-drums and tambourines taken in the numerous Swedish wars.

Numerous public charitable institutions give evidence of the liberal and enlightened character of the citizens. Among others we visited the *Home for Incurables* where we were much interested in observing the excellent arrangements made for the comfort of the inmates. The rooms were models of comfort and brightness. The Home is managed most economically, the matron was evidently a lady of much administrative ability as well as being attractive in manner. The *Foundling Asylum* is a charity of large proportions, no fewer than 3,500 children being maintained in it. The

same neatness and order which distinguish the various institutions in Stockholm are conspicuous here.

The National Museum is one of the sights of the city. The building is elegant and, indeed, imposing. It is constructed on a plan very admirably adapted for its object. The museum is very rich in Swedish archeology, and contains many specimens of antiquities of the stone and iron age as also remains of the period of the Vikings. Although the Romans never occupied any part of Sweden, the Museum possesses many Roman helmets, shields and spears which have been found in various parts of the country. We noticed also many Roman culinary and domestic vessels in this department identical in appearance with those now seen in the Museum at Naples and which were exhumed at Pompeii. Still more remarkable was it to find many gold coins issued by the Caliphs of Bagdad which had been dug up in different out of the way places. Two gold collars are among the treasures of the Museum. One weighs three pounds and the other about two pounds. They date from the fifth century, and are of simple but good workmanship. The clasp of a modern bracelet is no improvement on the ancient fastening. The larger of these collars was hooked by a fisherman's tackle in Lake Malar. The discovery of so many vestiges of articles of foreign manufacture gives us some idea of the extent of international communication at a very early period. In one section of the Museum are many ecclesiastical antiquities. The richness of many of the sacerdotal dresses is surprising. Many ancient carvings in wood display much grace in design and skill in execution.

The *Ridderhus*, or Hall of Nobles, is one of the interesting sights of the city. Once in three years the nobles meet in the great hall, and in accordance with ancient custom sit like school boys on long benches which have no backs. This conclave is held with closed doors and it is supposed that they discuss matters affecting their own order. This assembly has no legislative authority. The hall is ornamented with the escutcheons of the various peers. Adjoining chambers display on their walls the portraits of Swedish generals and admirals.

Stockholm possesses many places of suburban resort and small steamers are constantly running about conveying the townfolk to these places of recreation. *Hassel Bachen* is perhaps the most popular of these. It stands on high ground and forms a park of considerable area. The woodland of the grounds is intersected with walks but otherwise seems left in a state of nature. Here and there are cages containing birds and various kinds of the smaller wild animals found in the country. The visitor may stumble on a camp of genuine Laplanders with their reindeers, or the log houses of peasants and their furniture brought bodily from *Darjecaria*. We witnessed an open air dance by some young *Darjecarian* men and women who had been brought to Stockholm expressly for the occasion. The dancing or "skansing," as the Swedes called it, was rather graceful and the dancers were strong and hearty, being the very pictures of health. Their demeanor was modest. The costumes of the women were very picturesque and not unlike those worn in country places in Switzerland. The restaurant known as the *Bernes-Soulanges* is one of the most freely patronized resorts in the city. It is in the park called after the illustrious *Vercellius*. As apartment life seems prevalent, the park and restaurant are full of citizens partaking of refreshment or strolling in the grounds as they listen to the excellent music.

The Royal Palace stands opposite the *Grand Hotel* on the south side of the chief canal, which is at that point like a large river. It is imposing from its great size rather than its architectural pretensions. It forms a huge rectangle and was erected in 1760. The apartments are spacious and well, though not very expensively furnished. There is an air of home comfort about the apartments not usually found in royal palaces. There are many portraits of historical personages of much interest. As might be expected the portraits of Napoleon and Josephine occupy prominent positions. The present King *Oscar II.* is the great grandson of *Bernadotte* one of Napoleon's greatest generals who was placed on the throne under the name of *Charles XIV.* on the decease, without heir, of *Augustenborg*.