

Our English Page

Some literary notes from Sweden.

A powerful and significant writer of fiction is Sigfrid Siwertz. His novels as well as his short stories reveal a literary personality of no ordinary caliber. His style is vigorous and rich in pregnant expressions and metaphors. As a psychoanalyst he is extraordinarily profound and clever. But although he sometimes reminds us of a skilful surgeon, showing us the deformities and wounds of men, his heart beats warmly for the handicapped, the disillusioned, and the outcast; and his humor and his witty comments often serve to lighten the too heavy atmosphere of some tragic situation. He has written poetry, plays, short stories, and some novels. He is a best seller, and his books always run to many editions.

Among the best known novels of Siwertz are 'Selambs', published in English under the title 'Down Stream', and 'Det stora varuhuset', which has just come out in English under the title 'Goldman's'. The first is a remarkable novel of a Swedish middle class family, three brothers and two sisters, whose whole life becomes obsessed by one single burning desire, the love of money. The second is the picture of the first big store in Stockholm, when such a phenomenon was new and amazing. A little Polish Jew, landed in Stockholm, was its founder. The story has not the epic grandeur of 'Selambs', but there is more variety in the characters, and its touches of everyday life are more human and familiar. Between the appearance of these two books, Siwertz published a novel called 'Home from Babylon', dealing with a young Swedish engineer who takes part in the Revolution in Russia, but is able to pass the frontier only after having taken over the passport and assumed the appearance of a dead friend.

Last Christmas Sigfrid Siwertz published an interesting collection of short stories from different parts of the world. He is a great tra-

veler and feels at home in any part of the globe. The title of the collection is 'Fellow Travelers' (Reskamrater: Bonnier, 1929) after its most important story, a rather long short story, which is perhaps the most humanly profound thing he has ever written. Two men meet on a steamer bound for Palestine. One is an old Swedish Professor from the University of Uppsala, a famous astronomer. The other is a young Catholic priest from Munich in Bavaria. During a storm on the Mediterranean they remain on deck, shouting to each other above the roar of the hurricane, so intent are they upon their discussion of the problems of science and religion. They are "politely quarrelling" all the time, but in spite of that, a strong friendship grows up between them, and they decide to see the Holy Land together. The story tells of their journey, of their interesting discussions, of the triviality and the gross materialism that meets them even in the holiest places, the priest clinging almost frantically to the ancient traditions, and the professor, a lonely scientist, feeling himself still more "alone with empty space" beside the pious young priest. All this is told in a wonderfully impressive way. The professor has been a free-thinker and a scientist almost all his life, first in perverse opposition to the traditions of his family, in which generation after generation of men, including his father, have been clergymen. The young priest has given himself to the Church after the war, during which his brother was killed and his mother died of starvation. There has been a sort of desperation in his act. The journey which these two tape together works a strange revolution in their innermost selves. They continue their discussions up to the moment of their parting in Munich, but toward the last there has come over them both a shyness and reserve which they cannot explain. After more than a month has passed, the professor writes to his young friend saying that he is ill and knows that he has not very long to live, but he yearns to tell the priest that he has "left forever the shadowy relativities of science. — Finally I have joined the great family of Humanity. I have felt the warmth from its greatest heart — its Holy Divine Heart." And he lets the young priest know that he has been the cause of this revolution. The next day the professor receives a letter from his young friend, telling the old man that he has left the Church. "Politics, capitalism, pious lies, unbearable constraint of the mind! No! I must breathe the fresh air of free research! And it was

you, Professor, who delivered me! Not so much by your arguments. No — it was your scientific mentality itself, your personality with the entire universe as its background." His ardor, which the professor had shyly observed in the churches of Palestine, had been only a final desperate effort to cling to the old dogmas and to find peace in their doctrines. The professor reads the letter over and over. His old housekeeper begins to wonder why he does not come to breakfast. Finally she enters his study and finds the old gentleman sitting dead at his writing desk, a letter in his hand. This ending might strike one as being too perfectly arranged, but the author has told me that the whole story, except for a few details, is taken directly from real life. It frequently happens in real life that the sequence of events is more wonderful and striking than in the most intricate fiction. But it requires a writer like Sigfrid Siwertz to give it a convincing form in words.

To be continued.

Sonnett LXXXVI Lost Days

The lost days of my life until today.
What were they, could I see them on the street
Lie as they fell? Would they be ears of wheat
Sown once for food but trodden into clay
Or golden coins squandered and still to pay?
Or drops of blood dabbling the guilty feet?
Or such spilt water as in dreams must cheat
The undying throats of hell, athirst always?
I do not see them here; but after death
God knows I know the faces I shall see.
Each one a murdered self, with low last breath,
"I am thyself — what hast thou done to me?"
"And I — and I — thyself," (do! each one saith),
"And thou thyself, to all eternity!"
— y Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Quotations.

Tariffs are modern warfare. They are worse than bullets. — KLA; Alfonso.

Everywhere democracies are shirking facts, hoping to pay off perils with platitudes. — Winston S. Churchill.

The wisest thing would be to find out what the Russians know that we do not. — Harington Emerson.

I am firmly opposed to the government entering into any business the major purpose of which is competition with our citizens. — Pres. Hoover.

I am very glad to see signs of an awakening of American mentality. It is a country of half-educated people. — Sir Valentine Critchell.

The origin of civilization is in man's determination to do nothing for himself which he can get done for him. — H.C. Bailey.

At Chequamegon I said the touch of good book binding gave a feeling of pleasure.

"Touch those", said Premier McDonald. I did and found they were dummy books that made a panel. — Charlie Chaplin.

More people have died from drinking tuberculous milk than from drinking whisky, but I do not therefore wish to prohibit cows. — A. McQuisten, M. P.

Laughter

How much lies in laughter, the cipher-key whereby we decipher the white man.

Will-Power.

There is only one way to keep your will-power active, and that is by exercising it. — J. J. Walsh.

Success

Success at first doth many times undo men at last; many may say that they had never been unhappy if they had not been happy. — Venning.

Humor

A sense of humor, keen enough to show a man his own absurdities, as well as those of other people, will keep him from the commission of all sins, or nearly all, save those that are worth committing.

Simple Virtues

The things that many men and women give their very lives to grasp are the things that are first forgotten by their friends. People are not loved sincerely for their wealth, their success, or their learning, but for the simple virtue that anyone may have.

Giving

I have missed what I sought; yet I missed not the whole. The best part of love is in loving.

My soul is enriched by its prodigal gifts. Still to give and ask no return is my lot while I live.

Geraldine.

Ett besök hos filmens uppfinnare.

Loius Lumiere tror inte på talfilmens framtid.

"Framför allt skulle jag vilja framhålla, att man börjat intrigera gentemot mig. Numera finns det knappast någon stat i världen, där inte någon gör anspråk på att ha varit filmens uppfinnare. Hitills har ingen varit förmått att rent av betyvtva min existens, d. v. s. min existens som uppfinnare. Tvärtom det är nog ännu ganska symptomatiskt att just Amerika hedrat mig på ett så utomordentligt sätt i det mått som jag till hederledamot av alla vetenskapliga föreningar. Och det var ju i Amerika min uppfinning nådde sin fulländning och det är också tack vare så utomordentliga pionjärer som Jansen, Marey och Eduard James Muybridge.

Muybridges historia är för övrigt intressant även som kuriositet betraktad och den bevisar att sport- och rekordfeber ibland trots allt kan tjäna vetenskapen. Muybridge var ledare för Stilla havets fototjänst. En dag vände sig två officerare till honom med anhållan om att han måtte avgöra ett vad, som gick ut på att fastställa om det är möjligt att på en fotografisk plåt fasthålla det ögonblick, då en galopperande häst lyfter alla fyra hovarna på en gång från marken eller fältet. Muybridge lyckades och vinnaren av vadet Lelan Stanford, på den tiden guvernör i Californien och ägare till ett av de förnämsta kapplöpningsställen, blev god vän med uppfinnaren och beslöt att finansiera hans försök och uppfinningar, som bl. a. gingo ut på att alltmåra fulländat med kamerans tillhjälp fasthålla de olika momenten i en hästs rörelse. Så kom Muybridge att bli en av kinematografins pionjärer. Men ännu så länge var det inte tal om film. Filmen har jag uppfunnit och ingen människa tvivlade på det förrän en minnestavla uppsattes på ett hus på Boulevard des Capucines, där Grand Café, i vars källare jag gjorde min uppfinning, en gång i tiden funnits. Som sagt först då började man påstå att jag inte hade uppfunnit filmen och fordra-

de att hans namn inristades i tavlan i stället för mitt. Jag teg och lät mina vederbörande hållas. Men då jag slutligen tyckte att det gick för långt föreläste jag helt enkelt ett brev, som Marey skrivit år 1899 till handelsministeren, i franska akademien och i vilket han uttryckligen betonade: "Man måste utan tvivel anse monsieur Louis Lumiere som filmens uppfinnare."

Louis Lumiere har talat i ett sträck och med en häftighet som nästan verkar aggressiv. Denne märklige uppfinnare är i dag en 70-års man. Han bär Hederslegionens kommendörssros till och med på morgonrocken och gör för övrigt intryck av en kraftfull, stridbar och målmedveten samt framför allt öppen och ärlig personlighet. Han är ägare till en vacker villa i Neuilly, några steg från den berömda Bois de Boulogne, och det är tydligt att han njuter av sitt liv i fulla drag trots sin jämförelsevis höga ålder. Han har naturligtvis latit inreda ett förstklassigt laboratorium i villan, där han alltjämt roar sig med en del experiment. Till och med i motagningsrummet finner man en del vetenskapliga apparater och en mängd papper, på vilka den berömda uppfinnaren gjort sina anteckningar.

"Hur, kom det sig att du blev uppfinnare?"

"Det var en ren tillfällighet", svarar den gamle herrn med ett självbelåtet leende. "Ödets vägar äro verkligen märkvärdiga. Min far var fotograf och så kom det sig att jag började syssla med fotografikonsten redan vid mycket unga år. Sedan jag slutat skolan inskrevs jag vid Tekniska högskolan och skulle allt gått sin gilla gång hade jag slutat mina dagar som ingenjör och inte haft en tanke på att göra några uppfinningar. Men ödet ville att jag omedelbart efter inskrivningen råkade insjukna svårt, så att jag var tvungen att tillbringa ett helt år på mitt rum. För att förströ mig en smula roade jag mig med att tillverka plåtar åt min far, som fann dessa utmärkta. Han be-

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