

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

Festival held at Upsala, May, 1907, in
Commemoration of the 200th
Anniversary of the Birth of
Carolus Linnaeus

BY

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REPRINTED FROM

THE ÆSCULAPIAN, DECEMBER, 1908

VOL. 1, No. 1


BROOKLYN - NEW YORK

MCMIX

1909

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FESTIVAL HELD AT UPSALA, MAY, 1907, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF CAROLUS LINNAEUS.*

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S your delegate to the Linnaeus Festival of the University of Upsala and of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, held from May 23 to 26, 1907, in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of his birth, I have the honor to make the following report:

As the ceremonials—particularly that of the conferring of honorary degrees—differ in many respects from those usually seen in America, I have ventured to describe them in some detail. As I have pointed out in an address on the "Graduation Ceremony,"† Upsala has preserved more of the medieval customs than any of the European universities except the University of Coimbra in Portugal, from which there was a delegate present wearing the peculiar robe and cap seen only there.

Moreover the present is the first occasion on which honorary degrees have been conferred by Upsala on any foreign scholars. Even in 1877 when they celebrated the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the University in 1477 no degrees were given to foreigners.

Never have I seen so well organized a fête. Before his arrival everyone had the number of his room, a number for his baggage, for his seat at every function, for his hat, etc. All baggage was taken in charge at the station; carriages were there for everybody. The delegates and their families were the guests of the University for the two days in Upsala, and all charges for rooms and meals were defrayed by the University. Moreover, the Stockholm Academy of Sciences presented each delegate with four volumes in octavo and one in folio of the works of Linnaeus and a medal as delightful mementos of a remarkable festival.

In front of the railroad station and in front of the "University House" were planted a circle of standards with the flags

*Report made to the American Philosophical Society as its Delegate.

†Medical Library and Historical Journal, 1906, iv., pp. 1-14.

of all the nations represented, while the town was profusely decorated with flags and evergreens. As the students number 1,800 in a population of only about 25,000 they practically are the town.

When the special train arrived the students were there in procession to greet their guests. As all of them wear white caps (the one hundred women students wearing the same), as the marshals wore long effective, broad sashes of bright yellow and blue (the Swedish colors), and there were over a dozen banners and corps flags grouped in the centre, the scene was very picturesque. The singing by the students was the best I have ever heard. A brief Latin salutatory speech ended the proceedings at the station.

As soon as we reached our rooms there appeared a young woman to measure our heads and our ring fingers for the hat or wreath and the ring for the following day's promotion.

At noon on the 23d, the proceedings were held in the splendid aula of the University House. This hall resembles in general that at Yale. It is very nearly as large and even handsomer. The king's health prevented him from taking part in any of the functions, but he was well represented by the Crown Prince,* who is also Prince Regent, a very affable man of about fifty. He and the other members of the royal family mingled with their guests most informally and agreeably. After a cantata by a band and a chorus and an address by Rektor Schuck the various countries were called alphabetically and the addresses from various universities and scientific bodies were presented. Only one delegate from each country spoke—an excellent arrangement, as it shortened the time very acceptably.

In the afternoon the students gave a delightful concert and garden party in the Botanical Garden. At 6.30 the Archbishop and the Rektor entertained one hundred and seventy guests at dinner. The three toasts were proposed by Dr. Schuck in French, Swedish, and faultless English, and I was told that he was equally at home in German, Italian, Spanish and Latin. A reception ended a delightful day.

On May 24th the conferring of degrees took place in the cathedral. This is 360 feet long and a fine example of pure Gothic. It was founded in 1250 and contains the tombs of Gustavus Vasa and other famous Swedes. In the north aisle lie

*The present King.

the bones of Linnaeus and in a chapel near by a dignified simple monument records his birth and death. I was told that there were about 6,000 people present and I hardly think it an exaggeration. In the west gallery besides the large organ was a military band and in the choir an orchestra and an excellent chorus. The procession was led by about a dozen marshals in their white caps and Swedish sashes, and when the delegates in academic robes, uniform or evening dress were seated, the marshals and the bearers of the banners and flags lined each side of the middle aisle while the Prince Regent and the royal family entered.

After singing a cantata composed in 1877 for the quarto-centenary, honorary degrees were conferred in Theology, Jurisprudence, Medicine and Philosophy. The Promoter in each Faculty first made a short Latin address. Each graduand then advanced into the choir by three steps of the "Parnassus," as the ascent was called in the program. In Theology, Law and Medicine the Promoter placed a top hat on the candidate's head, a ring on his left ring finger, and handed him three diplomas, one, the official one, sealed and stamped with a 100 Kroner Stamp (\$28; this tax was paid by the government), the two others being duplicates, but unsealed and unstamped. The hat was peculiar. In color it was black, but the vertical portion was plaited vertically in plaits about one inch wide; in the front of the band was a small gold shield.

Each graduand in Philosophy instead of receiving a hat, had pinned on his breast beforehand a laurel wreath. This was unpinned by a marshal on the first step of the Parnassus and was handed to the Promoter, who thereupon crowned the recipient, placed the ring on his finger, gave him his diplomas, and shook hands with him most cordially. The new laureates in descending the Parnassus bowed to the Archbishop, the Rektor and the Crown Prince.

When the first candidate in each Faculty was capped or crowned a battery of artillery on the place in front of the cathedral began firing a salute and continued until the last degree in this Faculty had been conferred, only to break out anew for each succeeding Faculty.

After all the degrees in each Faculty had been conferred the orchestra rendered a musical selection. They were all finely given, but the music chosen amused us. For the Theologs (I presumed they were Lutherans), they gave the "March of the

Priests of Baal"; for the lawyers, "See the Conquering Hero Comes"; the doctors were welcomed by Schubert's "Death and the Maiden"; (I concluded, charitably, that she had appendicitis and was rescued from death by the doctor); while the new Doctors of Philosophy were honored by Mendelssohn's "Wedding March," which I interpreted as either a reminiscence, an exhortation or a prophecy.

The rings differ for each Faculty, that for Philosophy being engraved outside with the laurel wreath and on the inside with the name of the owner, that of the University, the degree conferred, and the date. In Theology and Law, degrees were only conferred upon Scandinavians. In Medicine, Haeckel of Jena was the most notable among the thirteen foreigners. In Philosophy, Professor Hjelt of Helsingfors, who had received his doctorate in 1847, and eighteen Swedes who graduated in 1857, were made "Jubilee" Ph.D.'s. Fourteen foreigners received this honorary degree, among them two Americans, Professor Farlow of Harvard and your delegate.

After the conferring of the degrees followed one of the prettiest and pleasantest features of the day. The newly made doctors all marched in their robes, hats and wreaths to the nearby University House and stood on the ample steps, while the whitecapped students, with songs, banners and flags, marched up and stood in foot of the steps. After some fine singing the leader greeted the new doctors, now their brethren, in an admirable Latin speech, to which a reply was made in Swedish by one of the honorary doctors, and the students, after the usual four Swedish "hurrahs," marched off singing, lifting their hats as they passed the steps.

Another official dinner and a ball, ending in that latitude in broad daylight at 3 A. M., concluded the exercises in Upsala.

On the 25th the Academy of Sciences met in Stockholm at 2 P. M. in the Academy of Music. A cantata was sung, after which Count Morner, the President, delivered an oration and the institutions which had been invited presented addresses, in groups from each country, only the first delegate making a brief presentation speech. A dinner followed in the evening.

On the 26th an excursion was made in the morning to Hammarby, the home of Linnaeus, and from 4 to 5.30 P. M. the Prince Regent entertained the foreign delegates and a few official Swedes at a tea and garden party at the palace quite informally, and most delightfully.

The
Aesculapian

A Quarterly Journal of
Medical History
Literature and Art

EDITED BY
ALBERT TRACY HUNTINGTON



Subscription Price \$2.00 per Year

1313 BEDFORD AVENUE
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

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