

II.

NOTICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF PREHISTORIC
ARCHÆOLOGY HELD AT STOCKHOLM IN AUGUST 1874. By R. W.
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Having had the opportunity this summer, during a short stay in Sweden and Denmark, of being present at the International Congress of Archæologists at Stockholm, in August, possibly the following brief notice of it, written at the time, may be of interest to some of the members of the Society.

The meeting of the last season was the seventh which has been held. The object of the Congress is to bring together archæologists from every part of the world, to discuss subjects of antiquarian interest connected with prehistoric man. Papers are read by the members of the Congress on these subjects, and are generally so arranged that they have reference to the country in which, for the time, the meeting takes place.

By a standing rule all the papers are written, and public discussion

¹ Scotchron. lib. xiii. cap. 42, vol. ii. p. 327.

takés place in French. It has been arranged that the next meeting shall take place at Buda-Pesth.

In many respects the meeting of last year has been the most successful which has been held, and besides nearly a thousand Swedes and Norwegians, about four hundred foreign members were present. The Congress was opened on the 7th of August. The place of meeting was the "Riddarhus," or House of Assembly of the Nobles, a venerable building, of no great architectural pretensions, but full of historical interest. The *séance* was commenced by a few words from Count Henning Hamilton, Grand Chancellor of the Universities of Sweden, and President of the Committee of Organisation. After welcoming the members to Stockholm, he called on the secretary, M. Hans Hildebrand, to give an address, in which he alluded to the history of the building where the Congress was now assembled, and to the stirring events which in bygone times had taken place on this very spot. Here it was that Gustavus Wasa was elected King of Sweden, and the crown declared hereditary in his family; here his grandson, Gustavus Adolphus, addressed to his subjects his famous speech before he started on the career of conquest which only terminated with his life on the fatal field of Lützen; and here, in still later times, Bernadotte, the son of a country solicitor at Pau, and Marshal of France, directed those wise measures which have restored to Sweden peace and prosperity.

The inauguration was closed by the election of the vice-presidents and council. The Congress chose Mons. Hildebrand, sen., well known in this country for his work on the Anglo-Saxon coinage; the venerable Nilsson, now in his eighty-eighth year, yet still as fresh and vigorous in intellect as ever; Mr Franks, of the British Museum; and MM. de Quatrefages, Virchow, Dupont, Leemans, and Bogdanow as vice-presidents; and as the council, fourteen members from the various countries represented at the Congress. Mr Evans, whose recent work on stone implements has gained him a European reputation, was elected to represent Great Britain. At six o'clock the town of Stockholm entertained the foreign members of the Congress to a very grand entertainment at Hasselbacken, a charming spot, beautifully situated in the famous Djurgard. Here preliminary discussions on the dry questions which were to occupy attention during the coming week took a more lively form, and perhaps the only uncomfortable

traces of man's past existence which were noticed, occurred next morning in the crania of some of the members.

The first subject considered on the following day was, "What are the most ancient traces of man's existence in Sweden?" and in the afternoon some theories were propounded regarding the occurrence of amber, and the routes which it is supposed the commerce in it followed.

On Sunday the Congress did not sit, but the various museums in Stockholm were thrown open to the members, and many took advantage of the privilege. The National Museum, which was only completed in 1868, is an extremely fine building, and the collections contained in it are of themselves quite a recompense for the long journey. It was built at the public expense, and occupied eighteen years in its construction. The prehistoric antiquities are of particular interest. In Sweden the age of stone closed about three thousand years ago. From recent explorations in Vestergrötland, it is evident that the domestic animals—such as the ox, horse, sheep, pig, and dog—were known before the close of this period; but it is not certain, though possible and probable, that agriculture was practised before the use of metals. Upwards of 35,000 specimens of stone implements, all found in Sweden, are contained in this department, representing nearly every known type. Many of them are of great beauty, and the method of arrangement is admirable. Of the bronze age (which is supposed to have commenced in Sweden about a thousand years before the Christian era) many fine specimens are also preserved. It is almost certain that the only metals known in the first period of the bronze age were bronze and gold, and that the bronze was imported from other countries. A very fine vase of gold (No. 249 in the catalogue by M. Oscar Montelius) is particularly worthy of attention. In the coin department it is singular to find that the most complete collection of Cufic coins in Europe (with perhaps one exception) is in Stockholm, and that they were all found in Sweden, showing a great intercourse in early times with the East. This collection alone numbers upwards of 7000 specimens, and the Anglo-Saxon cabinet contains above 5000 specimens of this series, many of them of the highest rarity.

A very interesting part of the museum is the gallery of Sovereigns, containing the actual arms, armour, and clothes worn by the kings and queens of Sweden. Amongst them is a magnificent suit of armour of

Charles IX., believed to be the work of Cellini, and one of the finest in existence; the sword of Charles XII., the shield of John III., and many others. In another room are the clothes worn by Charles XII. on the day he was murdered in the trenches at Frederickshald; and it is evident, from the course of the bullet through his hat, that the shot was fired from behind by an assassin, and not by an enemy from the fortress. The blood-stained gauntlet, which he raised to his head as he fell, is also shown. This most curious collection is only surpassed by that in the Castle of Rosenberg at Copenhagen. The gallery of paintings contains Vandyke's picture of Rubens' house, three of Rembrandt's works, and many examples of the Swedish school, of no particular merit; but in the gallery of sculpture the Sleeping Endymion is well worthy of particular study. The library contains the famous Codex Aureus, a Latin MS. of the Gospels written in the seventh century, which originally belonged to Canterbury Cathedral; the "Devil's Bible," an enormous MS. written on 300 asses' skins, and many other curious MSS. The museum of Scandinavian Ethnography gives a good idea of the various costumes still worn by the peasants in various parts of Norway and Sweden.

When on the subject of museums I may point out a curious fact, which is, that Sweden and Denmark, though countries commercially poor, and without any great public resources, are yet able to establish and keep up museums of northern antiquities which are unsurpassed in the world. We have nothing at all approaching either the museum in Stockholm or the collections in Copenhagen. In the latter city, an antiquary might spend a month and yet not see half of what there is to see. Nothing can exceed the kindness and courtesy and patience with which the gentlemen entrusted with the care of these museums show them to those who are interested. I am sure that any member of this Society, who chose to take his summer's run to the north, would not regret it, and would meet with a most cordial welcome.

But to return to the Congress. On Monday the king was present during the forenoon sitting, and heard a discussion on the special characteristics of the polished stone age in Sweden. On the following day the members of the Congress visited the ancient city of Upsala, for the purpose of inspecting the cathedral and university. The tomb of Gustavus Wasa and his two queens is in the cathedral, which is a fine specimen of

Gothic architecture; though disfigured by many tasteless additions. The fine pillars of Swedish marble are covered with thick coats of whitewash, and wooden galleries are here and there stuck up round the inside; but it is to be hoped that something will soon be done to restore the original beauty of one of the finest churches in the north. The university library is a very good one, and contains some rare MSS., and especially the "Codex Argenteus," the oldest known work in the Gothic character.

The "Age of Bronze in Sweden" occupied the attention of the Congress on the forenoon of the 12th. Occasionally the thoughts of some of the members at least, wandered homewards, and wondered how the grouse on certain moors were enjoying the unexpected holiday which prehistoric archæology had given them; but on the morrow the beautiful sail on the lovely Mälars Lake banished all regrets. The Congress on this occasion visited the isle of Björkö, where, in the now deserted city of Birka, the holy Ansgar first preached the doctrines of Christianity. The Castle of Gripsholm was also inspected, with its gallery of historical pictures and many curiosities of interest. The two following days were devoted to papers and discussions on the "Age of Iron in Sweden," and to the anatomical characteristics of prehistoric man in Scandinavia. A full report of all the discussions will very shortly be printed. A grand entertainment, given by the king to the members of the Congress, closed the proceedings, though after the formal business was over many of the members went to explore some of the very interesting prehistoric remains near Stockholm.