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# NEWS OF SCANDINAVIA

Recent Occurrences of Interest in Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

## SWEDISH SINGERS POPULAR

Marked Attention Given by the Press to Mrs. Emma Meissner and Miss Rosa Gruenberg.

### SWEDEN.

Stockholm.

Mrs. Emma Meissner and Miss Rosa Gruenberg, the prima donnas of the Oscar theater of Stockholm who will appear in a series of Swedish saengerfest concerts in this country during the next month, are not the first artists to come here from Stockholm to sing in special vacation engagements, but never has the Swedish press given so much and marked attention to such departures as to the one of Mrs. Meissner and Mille Gruenberg, having had columns of interviews and description upon the trip, plan, repertory and wardrobes of the two popular singers. The halo of extraordinary success of "The Merry Widow," in which Mrs. Meissner created the leading part, still surrounds this charming artist, while Miss Gruenberg is considered the rising star among Swedish coloratura sopranos. The time is considered close at hand when Miss Gruenberg will leave the private lyric theaters for the royal opera. Says a Stockholm daily about a recent appearance of Miss Gruenberg: "Le petit duc" was sung by Miss Gruenberg in excellent style, and she was a duke, the like of which we have never seen. Miss Gruenberg has been charming in a long series of other parts, but as last night she has never scored before. She won a great and decisive victory. What trio in her rendition from first to last! Nothing done by halves, she giving herself fully and entire. Already in the first act she showed the lion's claw; in the second act she made the scenes of the peasant girl splendidly, and at last she was a little colonel both dashing and bewitching. She might as well have sung at herself, the most handsome officer in the world. The critic is disarmed, his sword shattered." The two prima donnas are to appear in concerts in Minneapolis, St. Paul, Chicago and at the great Swedish saengerfest in Moline, Ill., July 21 to 24.

Stockholm is passing through a remarkable boom. Such building of new houses, palatial in their size and beauty, was never known before. In all parts of the city old houses are being torn down, to be replaced by more imposing structures. It is surprising what large and fine looking buildings are being razed to the ground in some places. Even five-story residences of pleasing architecture are being replaced with new ones, so intense is the building craze. One of the consequences of this peculiar boom is a scarcity of houses and rooms to rent, and the rates are so high as to be practically prohibitive.

The Swedish consul general at London writes to the minister of foreign affairs that the Swedish business men are not sufficiently aggressive to enable them to extend their business in England. He writes that the consul at Liverpool reports to him that although the firms of Germany, Norway and other countries send out representatives and quotations of prices, thereby keeping in close touch with the English business houses, the Swedish business men do neither and consequently his efforts at trade expansion for Swedish merchandise has met with failure.

The engagement of Prince Wilhelm, the duke of Sodermanland, and the Russian princess, Maria Pawlowna, has been officially announced. Princess Maria was born April 18, 1891, and is the youngest daughter of the czar's uncle, Prince Paul Alexandrovitch.

The Swedish government has during the past few days been compelled to pay an old war debt, accumulated as early as 1813, to the city of Lupeck. It amounts to 50,000 florins and must be paid in accordance with the treaty of 1852.

The Countess Casa de Miranda (Christine Nilsson) contemplates purchasing the Jenny Lind relics in London in the near future and will, according to reports, present them to the Stockholm Academy of Music.

A telegram from Copenhagen states that young Prince Wilhelm of Sweden prior to his American tour is taking two lessons a day in English at the present time. His teacher is Professor Michia of Copenhagen.

War Minister Tingsten has been appointed commandant of the fortifications at Boden and this means that he will in the near future be requested to resign as minister of war.

"The Merry Widow," which was rendered at the Oscar's theater not less than 130 consecutive times last season, netted Director Rauff 200,000 crowns.

### NORWAY.

Christiana.

Says the London Times: "When King Haakon VII was crowned in the cathedral at Trondhjem, the ancient capital of his new kingdom, the nave of that magnificent building was, as it is now, covered in by rough planks of wood. From the interior it was necessary to clear out an army of architects, modelers, sculptors, stone masons and builders, for the cathedral has for many years past been undergoing such reconstruction as, in regard to some of its portions, amounts to rebuilding. It will probably be such a restoration as will satisfy even those to whom almost all restoration is abominable. The work done so far has been carried out in a spirit of high reverence for the past, under the superintendence of Herr Christie, the most eminent of Norwegian architects, who is devoting his life to what Professor Dietrichson of Christiania university calls 'Norway's noblest monument, the country's sacred treasure, the crown and glory of its architecture.' It was in 1869 that the present restoration was begun. It has been continuously proceeding since that year, and is expected to reach completion by 1914, when Norway will celebrate the hundredth anniversary of its restored independence. The amount of money expended will reach at least 6,000,000 kroner (£333,000). Trondhjem, with its 40,000 inhabitants, not far from the outer rim of the Arctic circle, is a strange place to find one of the most remarkable of the cathedrals of Europe. By the year 1300 the church was complete and was the wonder of Norway. It was 324 feet long, with a great central tower, three other towers of smaller dimensions, and many turrets and pinnacles. There were 316 windows, 3,800 pillars and thirty-five altars, all richly decorated and adorned. On the capitals of the columns weird and exquisite architectural fancies were lavished. The general effect was, perhaps, one of over-decoration. The ornamentation of the capitals is very deeply cut. Quaint heads are mingled with floral designs, and the spirit of the maker of comic gargoyles asserts itself here and there. The present restoration is one of many, for the cathedral has had exceeding bad fortune. It was three times on fire between 1328 and 1531. It was plundered in 1337, the silver shrine of St. Olof being carried off to Copenhagen. When the Swedes captured Trondhjem, in 1524, they stabled their horses in the cathedral and buried Olaf's body in a far-away country church. There were fires again in 1708 and 1719, and the repairing was then done in a slipshod and irreverent fashion, capitals, columns, tracery, being used as ordinary building material, arches being obscured by new stonework, the nave left in ruins, the aisles shut off from the chancel, the walls disfigured by tiers of wooden boxes used as pews. This was the condition of Trondhjem cathedral when the restoration was begun in 1869. The work has now been carried very far. Practically everything is completed, but the nave, which has been carried up to something like two-thirds of what will be its final height. Everything has been exactly restored. Nothing has been changed, so far as can be discovered, or will be. The building is to be in 1914 just as it was in 1300. To this end, not only the best architectural, but the best workmanly skill has been employed. Every fragment of the old building has been used where that was possible, and in the case of what was ruined beyond repair careful casts have been made, and the whole restored from those and from suggestions in the uninjured work. The material employed is a curious blue soapstone found in the locality. When broken in one direction it has a dullish sparkle, like some iron ores, suggesting great hardness, but in reality it is a soft stone, very pliable to the sculptor's hands, and almost capable of being cut by a knife. It has, however, thoroughly proved its enduring qualities. In some of the oldest parts of the church the mason's marks are not far from being as clear and as sharp as when they were placed there eight or nine hundred years ago."

### DENMARK.

Copenhagen.

One of the most horrid suicides ever recorded in the history of the country occurred in the vicinity of Falster the other day, when a man named Christophersen committed suicide by means of burning himself to death. He was crazed by religious fanaticism and wanted to die like Johan Huss, the martyr, so he erected a stake, saturated it with kerosene, then placed himself on top of it, put fire to it and burned himself to a crisp. No one was about the place when the horrid deed was committed, so he had a chance to do as he pleased. When persons arrived on the scene he had already been buried to death.

The Kieler Zeitung, one of the leading newspapers in Germany, recently contained an article which has attracted considerable attention in Denmark. Commenting on a report that a movement was on foot to bring about an alliance between Germany and Denmark, the paper says that the larger nation has no desire for a closer relationship, nor does it wish to antagonize Denmark; Germany's policy will be to let Denmark alone and continue neutral among the nations, as in the past.

The Danish rigsdag has voted \$45,000 for the purchase of reproductions of works by Danish artists to be hung in the waiting rooms of railway stations all over the country. The pictures are to be interchanged at regular intervals. The object is to increase the knowledge of art and Danish artists among all classes of the nation.

The Atlantic steamer Oscar II arrived in Copenhagen the other day with 600 passengers from New York. Nearly all of these passengers were Scandinavians who will spend the summer in the home countries.

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