

**THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE
EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL
MEDICAL CONGRESS: HELD IN
COPENHAGEN, AUGUST, 1884**

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The Social history of the Eighth International Medical Congress: Held in Copenhagen, August, 1884 by D. Bryson Delavan

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D. BRYSON DELAVAN

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AUGUST, 1884.

BY
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"Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I
thank you."

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

Act II, Sc. 2.

YIARBLI ENA!

39
185

INTRODUCTION.

I.

At all gatherings in which work of an intellectual nature is relieved by social entertainment there is, besides the regularly reported proceedings, an inner history which is apt to remain unwritten; and this either because it is hardly worthy of the writing, or else, unfortunately, because it embraces too much which had better be forgotten.

The unqualified success which attended all of the features of the Eighth International Medical Congress, recently held in Copenhagen, and particularly those which relate to the manifold expressions of hospitality, both public and private, extended to the foreign members of the Congress by their genial and generous hosts, renders it a brilliant exception to the rule, and is in itself an ample excuse for the attempt here made to present a short account of the social history of the great meeting.

In preparing this brief sketch, the writer has been impelled by the force of a double obligation :

first, that of sharing the delightful recollections of the occasion with his friends ; and, secondly, the desire to indicate, in some slight degree, his appreciation of the distinguished courtesies which were literally showered upon their guests by the King, the physicians, and the people of Denmark.

In dealing with the subject, it will be hard to avoid the imputation of undue enthusiasm.

Far from exaggerating, however, no description can do justice to the kindness, the liberality, and the enjoyable character of the attentions received, an assertion which will be best proven by the simple relation of them ; attentions which would in themselves have been overwhelming had they not been bestowed with a genuineness, a considerateness, and a delicacy as inimitable as it was charming.

THE GRAND INAUGURAL.

II.

The Congress really began on Saturday evening, August 9th, when an informal reception was held in the large music-pavilion of the Tivoli, or pleasure-garden of Copenhagen, for the purpose of introducing such members as had already arrived in the city to their hosts and to one another. Several hundred were present, conversation was general, and the object sought was very satisfactorily attained.

The grand opening of the Congress, held at one o'clock on the day following, Sunday, in the Hall of the Palace of Industry, was largely attended, nearly all of the delegates having arrived in the city. In every respect it was a great occasion, graced as it was, on the one hand, by the presence of a royal family, distinguished alike for the admirable personal characteristics of its members and for the wide influence which it is now exerting upon the political history of Europe, including as it does their Majesties the King and Queen of Denmark, the Empress

of Russia, the King of Greece, and their Royal Highnesses the Princess of Wales and the Crown Prince of Denmark, and, on the other hand, by an assemblage of brilliant, famous, and useful representatives of a noble science such as has rarely been brought together.

Looking around upon this remarkable audience, and noting the commanding figures, strong countenances, and glittering decorations of those who composed it, the conviction arose that in few other departments of learning could such a company be gathered.

Speeches of welcome were made by Professor Panum, and by the secretary of the Congress, Dr. Lange, and the meeting was also addressed by M. Pasteur, Sir James Paget, and Professor Virchow. The appearance upon the platform of M. Pasteur was the signal for an outburst of applause strong, spontaneous, and long continued, an ovation which would have well repaid any man for years of hard work, and which indicated at once that, in the popular esteem, its subject was the head and front of the occasion. His speech, as was Sir James Paget's, was a model of gracefulness and brevity. In listening to the finished oratory of the latter speaker, and in observing the ease, elegance, and

aptness which distinguish every sentence he utters, one would suppose him to be an accomplished statesman rather than a student of medical science. The address of Professor Virchow also was delivered in the clear, forcible, manly fashion which seems to characterize him, and which indicates at once the source of his influence in the political, as well as in the scientific affairs of Germany.

The selection of these three men to represent the nationalities to which they respectively belonged was singularly judicious, for none will deny that each one of them stands *facile princeps* among the greatest thinkers and the most distinguished philanthropists of his own land.

The exercises of the morning were enlivened by the excellent singing, by a fine male chorus, of several original and remarkably well-written songs of welcome.

On Sunday evening Professor Panum gave a dinner at the Hôtel d'Angleterre to about three hundred distinguished guests. Here, as on other occasions, Pasteur, Paget, Virchow, and Gull were the honored guests. Eloquent speeches were made by all of these gentlemen, Pasteur responding to the toast, "The King of Denmark"; Paget, "To Denmark"; and Virchow, to "The hospitality of the