

Doing Europe Minus a Guide

By E. Todd Wheeler

Editor's Note: WILMETTE LIFE takes pleasure in publishing herewith the first of a series of extremely interesting letters written by E. Todd Wheeler, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Wheeler of 265 Wood court who, with his wife, is engaged upon a tour of the principal European cities. Mr. Wheeler, who is an architect, emphasizes the fact that his travels are without benefit of tourist guide. "What I had in mind," (in these letters) he says, "was to try to show that these cities are not the scenic, architectural and historical museums which tourist bulletins so often make them seem, but are really living cities full of active people whose life is very much like our own. I have not tried to give a complete picture, but merely a few simple comments. . . . In Copenhagen, for example, we stayed at a small hotel where no English was spoken and frequented Danish restaurants in an effort to avoid tourist places." Mr. Wheeler's next letter will tell of his visit to Stockholm, Sweden. It will appear in an early issue of WILMETTE LIFE.

COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen, Denmark.

While Mrs. Wheeler and I have been here in Copenhagen we have seen many things which interested us and I wondered whether your readers would not like to hear about some of them. These comments are not such as we have found in tourist guides, but represent the more detailed and less romantic elements in the life of this city.

In Denmark we got a very polite reception everywhere we went even though we spoke no Danish. Instead we spoke "Basic English." You have probably heard of the Oxford professor who has been working for twelve years to reduce the English speaking vocabulary to some thousand or so words, hoping to create an international language. The language we used was even more basic than that and even though the tradespeople were most polite and helpful we did have to be careful not to get matches when we wanted toothpaste.

Hat Tipping a Rite

This inherent politeness of the Danes shows in the way they tip their hats. Nothing less than two feet off the head is considered good form and a really expressive salute demands a full sweep of the hat at arm's length. We saw an example of the height of politeness in Odense when a street car stopped to pick up a passenger. The motorman who was also conductor doffed his hat in the grand manner and opened the doors into the car. The passenger stopped on the platform, swept a wide arc with his hat and entered the car. The conductor-motorman shut the doors, looked to see that the passenger was seated and then started up. All this service, not to mention the ride, cost only three and a half cents!

Danes Love Color

The Danish people love color and take every opportunity to use it. The postmen wear bright scarlet jackets. Store windows are full of bright fabrics beautifully displayed. It shows in their choice of a warm red brick for most of their buildings. Most peculiar, however, is the expression of this love of color in their display of the flag. Its bright red field and white cross have a wide appeal and wherever there is a house, however small, there you find a flag-pole in the yard. In addition to all the national holidays, many other occasions are marked by flag displays. If a family has a daughter who is being confirmed or a son who is graduating from school, they and all their neighbors fly their flags to celebrate that event. The occasion of a death in the family often calls for a display of their flag at half mast. This love of color expressed everywhere in Copenhagen produces a very bright and attractive city.

No comment on Copenhagen would be complete without mention of the

cyclists. In a city of some 500,000 people, I should say that about 200,000 men and women own bicycles and ride them to work. The poor motorist hasn't a chance. Several times I have seen a big truck waiting patiently to turn a corner until the stream of cyclists could get past. And the pedestrian is in a worse position. Trying to get through a swarm of cyclists is in the same category as dodging rain drops. It is hard to do.

What, No Barber Poles!

In going about I have become very thankful that I am an architect and not a barber for instance. Architect sounds pretty much the same in all languages, but the barber, the florist and the laundryman in Copenhagen become Herre Frisor, Blomster Hænder and Vaskerier. The barber displays no striped pole here but hangs out above his door a shiny brass platter with a bite taken out of the brim. It was not until we visited the royal museum that we discovered that this represented a shaving bowl

and that the cut-out was to let it fit around the victim's neck.

Architects in Copenhagen do enjoy an enviable position since they design all the buildings including the small houses, and are also called in to design the street cars, lamp posts, sign boards, and other municipal fixtures. I am also enjoying an enviable position here by having a very pleasant and interesting time.

"Stags" to Pay Penalty to Join Tri-Ship Dance

The Tri-Ship Boys' club at New Trier High school is planning to hold a dance Wednesday night, January 31, immediately following the close of the first semester. The semester ends January 31, and there will be no classes until the following Monday, February 5. Boys unaccompanied by girls will be charged admission to the dance at the rate of a penny for each pound of their weight. Couples will be admitted at the rate of half a cent for each pound of the girl's weight. The club has decided to call the dance a "pound dance." Gerard Brooks is chairman of the dance committee in charge of arrangements for the event.

Joseph J. White, Jr., 159 Sheridan road, Winnetka, returned to Harvard on New Year's day after spending the Yule holidays with his family.

Mrs. John M. Robert, 328 Warwick road, Kenilworth, was hostess to her luncheon bridge club last Thursday.

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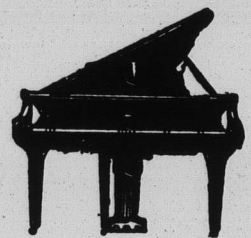
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