

HAVEN FOUND HERE BY NOTED NOVELIST

Scholar Reveals Karl Almqvist,
Unjustly Accused, Was Phila.
Fugitive 75 Years Ago

EARNED BREAD AS TEACHER

Karl Jonas Ludwig Almqvist, the most eminent Swedish author of his day, was an innocent fugitive in Philadelphia seventy-five years ago, earning his bread as a teacher of languages, it was disclosed here yesterday by a distinguished Swedish scholar and traveler.

Almqvist, unjustly accused of forgery and attempt to murder, fled from Stockholm. He was the author of the celebrated series of novels known as "The Book of the Briar Rose," and of works in poetry, philosophy, social science and other fields. His works fill twenty-eight volumes.

And the Swedish scholar who came to Philadelphia yesterday in quest of data for a book on Almqvist is Dr. R. G. Son Berg, professor of literature in the University of Stockholm and member of the Royal Governmental Board of Film Censors of Sweden. Escorted by Dr. Charles Wharton Stork, Philadelphian, who has won high reputation as a translator of Swedish poetry and prose, Dr. Berg was a guest at the annual luncheon of the stockholders of the Athenaeum, at the famous old library, and then took on his investigations. He will be here for some days in his search for light on Almqvist's career in America.

A receipt for 50 cents given by the PUBLIC LEDGER to Almqvist on October 13, 1860, was one of the clues that brought Dr. Berg to Philadelphia. Almqvist's name did not appear on the receipt. But on the back of it were various notes in the novelist's handwriting. The receipt gave as the payer's address "805 Arch street." Consultation of a Philadelphia Directory for that same year showed as living at that address "Prof. Louis Gustawi—the assumed name—under which Almqvist went while a resident of Philadelphia.

Name Appears in Directory

That assumed name appears in the Philadelphia Directory for 1859, 1860 and 1863, while in a Directory for 1855 Dr. Berg found an entry showing that "Prof. Gustawi" at that time lived at the Central House, 257 Market street.

Almqvist's career, destined to end tragically, began under happy auspices. He was born in Stockholm in 1793. His father was professor of theology in the University of Upsala, and there the

future novelist and poet began his studies in 1808 and took his doctor's degree in 1815—the year of the Battle of Waterloo. For a number of years he himself followed the university career. He grew weary of academic life and in 1823 led a company of his friends to found a co-operative colony in Vermeland. But, like Brook Farm, it suffered the usual fate of such aspiring adventures in amateur communism—complete financial failure.

So in 1828 Almqvist went back to Stockholm to become a teacher in a new reformatory school, and a year later he became its rector. His students found him fascinating and inspiring. He published a number of educational works. But he had become an ardent Socialist and was accused of being a freethinker in matters of religion, even though his writings on religion and ethics were of high character. So he was forced out from his rectorship as a dangerous intellectual radical.

Unfortunately, his wife was a spendthrift and he himself was lacking in thrift. He fell into the clutches of a money-lender. There were disputes and recriminations. Finally the usurer accused the poet of having committed a forgery, and Almqvist was convicted—though Dr. Berg maintains he was wholly innocent. And then the money-lender accused the poet of having attempted to murder him. His nerves frayed, at his wits' end, the poet collected three months' pay due from a periodical to which he had been contributing and on June 10, 1851, fled from Stockholm, landing in New York August 22 of that same year.

Wandered Over America

Then, under his assumed name, he began long wanderings about the United States.

His manuscripts and other possessions were stolen from him while he was in Texas. There is some basis for belief that three novels, which never have seen the light of day, were among these lost manuscripts. Dr. Berg plans to visit Texas on his present journey. If by any chance some trace of the lost manuscripts should come to light, this might lead to a literary discovery of great importance.

From Texas Almqvist journeyed on to New Orleans again, then to Pittsburgh, and on Washington's Birthday of 1855 he took up his residence at Mrs. Nugent's boarding house in Philadelphia. This city remained his home until 1865. He left America July 9, 1865. But he never set foot again in his beloved Sweden. He died in Bremen on September 26, 1866.

Dr. Berg confesses that even though his researches absolve Almqvist of the unjust charges of forgery and attempt at murder, he must confess him guilty on another count. In the poet's effects, found in Bremen after his death, were discovered two books—a Homer, bound in red morocco, and a copy of a Swedish grammar Almqvist himself had written. And both of those volumes were the property of the Library Company of Philadelphia! The poet's heirs partially atoned for his horrific crime by returning the Homer to the Library Company, but the grammar, on the plea he himself had written it, they retained.

LYING IN STREET