

A SUMMER
IN
NORTHERN EUROPE,

INCLUDING

SKETCHES IN SWEDEN, NORWAY, FINLAND,
THE ALAND ISLANDS, GOTHLAND, &c.

BY

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&c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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In the North we see her not in that sweet age,

“Standing with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and river meet,
Womanhood and Childhood sweet.”

Spring, or what is called so, is not the season in which to admire this lake; neither is the autumn the time in which—except on a bright day, when its great golden-hued trees are seen to perfection—it is most lovely. It is in the bright warm summer, or the strong cold winter.

Como and Maggiore have their own beauty,—refined, luxurious, rose-tinted loveliness; but there is a wild carelessness of nature here, that, breathing though it does of the spirit of the North, is really more attractive to me than the softer charms of the South. Beautiful Mälär! I have loved you as if you were my own, yet far, very far must we be parted, and not a vestige, not a memory shall you retain of the pleasant, pleasant hours you have given to the stranger!

Beautiful I have found Lake Mälär when, up-bound in iron-hard ice, only its fourteen hundred islets—rocky, bare, fir-covered, or

gemmed with red, blue, pink, yellow wooden houses, all shut up and empty during the winter—rose over the white surface, and a solemn stillness was around, for the Frost King held in the sounds of Nature by his icy touch; and, far and wide, we see the long glassy path which he had trodden and made his own highway: and his own children, the contented subjects of his reign, those mighty tempest-torn firs, rested proudly on a pinnacle of rock, their great roots often exposed and clinging on by the slightest hold, yet standing so high and so erect.

And pleasant is it here when the bright hot sun of summer calls forth all living things to rejoice in its fervid short-lived glow. When its glassy waters, broken only by the quick gliding boats, reflect the banks that rise above them, and the islets that stud them like emeralds in a diamond setting. The banks, contracting and expanding, alternate in views of green pastures and the pleasure grounds of wood-built villas, with abrupt eminences of rock; flowers, and giant oaks, tall graceful birch, and the ever-seen pine and fir.

But most of all is it beautiful here when, returning from an evening sail at sunset, Stockholm, the water-city of the North, is seen to terminate our course just as the glorious sun rays have caught the gilded cross on the steeple of Riddarkyrkan, or the church of knights, and turned it into a cross of blazing gold, sparkling and glittering in the air, like a magic symbol marking the entrance to an enchanted City of Palaces. For Stockholm is then bathed in a golden glory, and nothing but what is grand and great can be seen. The long, white houses, unequally built from low to high sites, have many windows, and these, having double sashes in winter, have the ordinary or outer one level with the walls of the house, so that the effect of the setting sun is much greater, and when its burnished rays are thus thrown back on the spectator who approaches Stockholm by water, the sight is one that I have not seen Venice herself display. The sun-illumined town, rising between the woody lake at one side, and the green-waved Baltic on the other, is sparkling in golden light; all that is poor,

dark, and miserable is hidden, and it seems some magic city placed amid the gorgeous dancing rays of the northern lights.

And now I am going to the Djürgård, that favorite island park of the Stockholmers; some of these loyal people here asked me to go there, for what purpose do you think?—to see the King eat his supper. Not to help to eat the royal meal, but to stand outside the pretty villa palace and look on at the dear royal family eating theirs.

Always ready for a ramble in Djürgården, and never willing to appear disloyal, I readily comply with the proposition.

There is no night here; the sun only withdraws the radiancy that lights up all Stockholm with his strange lustre, and wraps a soft curtain around itself; diffusing what is neither the light of day nor the light of night, nor yet what we term twilight: it is a pale, mystic light; one of poetry and dreaminess, but one that realises the description of 'the better land,'—'there is no night there.'

When we went out to the charming Djürgård, which means literally the Deer-

park, these gorgeous sun rays were not yet extinguished; they were pouring down their fervency on the town we left; and while thus sparkling in a golden shroud, it presented to my mind an idea of singular magnificence, far beyond what its usual aspect would support to the eye that had only seen it thus.

The romantic nature of the rocky and woody scenery gives it a charm which the Bride, or rather the mournful Widow of the Adriatic, lacks. Rapidly-rolling streams of fresh and salt water from the Baltic and Mälar intersect the town, and throw up here and there broken waves, and light, thin clouds of spray, which, catching the prismatic rays of evening, add their rainbow hues to the dazzling effect of the many-windowed and sparkling houses, and give to the whole scene thus lying between the wooded lake on one side, and the deep green sea on the other, an aspect which, to the eye of fancy, is almost magical.

There was a royal supper in Djürgården, and a grand review of the fine troops of

Sweden: the Park was full of military; and all the Stockholmers were, with customary loyalty, flocking out to the Djürgård to see King Oscar eat his supper. Baron C——, being an officer, had been on duty in the morning, but he was now free, and had engaged us to come with him on a visit to his pretty island villa. We were to meet him at the most famous of the many Café-houses of the Djürgård. We went across the lake in one of the pleasant paddle-boats of Stockholm, covered with an awning of green and white, worked by paddles which are turned by hands instead of by steam.

These hands are the stout ones of the Dalecarlian boat-women; the manual exercise being alternately exerted by the two women allotted to each boat gives a pretty dancing appearance over the lake, especially when, as it now was, it is covered by these flitting water equipages of Stockholm. The holiday garb of a Dalkulla, or peasant-woman of Dalecarlia, consists of a jacket, or bodice of red leather, with shoulder straps, but no sleeves, open in front, and laced across at a wide interval with

a silvery cord, having eyelet holes of the same bright metal; underneath is a stomacher adorned with fringes. The under-garment is of coarse, but white, linen, having long and very loose sleeves: a thick petticoat, fully plaited, reaches a little—a very little, below the knee, economising in length what it expends in breadth. A many-bordered apron is curiously worked into this—a still further saving of material, if not of labour. Their awfully stout legs are cased in scarlet woollen stockings, and shoes—as the dainty Amy Robsart would say, ‘of a most exquisite fashion’—made of wood, with the hinder half some inches higher than the forward portion, so that these really high-heeled shoes add not a little to the reputed stature of the Dalecarlian giantesses:—some of whom are short and broad enough.

The head-dress is a sort of skull cap, of scarlet or white cotton, usually knitted, and without a border, but generally adorned with fringes; and this being worn far back on the head has a pretty *bonnet d'enfant* effect when worn by a young girl—if indeed the Dalecarlians are ever young; I never saw but one

who looked so, and she reminded me of the Ogre's young daughter who lived in the time of Jack the Giant-killer.

Some say the Dalkuller are handsome, some say they are hideous. For my part, I believe they have the best hearts and teeth, and the ugliest noses in the world.

The Djürgård is a charming place! the fine old oaks, the undulating grounds, the grand masses of dark rock overlooking such lovely prospects—made me sigh for such a retreat for our toil-doomed citizens of London; and this royal ground, even almost up to the royal windows, is *pro bono publico*; and King Oscar and the Queen, and the good Bernadotte's widow, and the Princes, and the young Princesses sit and eat their supper *pro bono publico*, for there is not even a blind between them and the hundreds of loyal eyes that quietly, and in profound silence, gaze upon them. There, I once saw beneath that balcony where stood King Oscar and the King of Denmark, and where sat the Queen, the granddaughter of Josephine, and the Queen Dowager, and the young Princess; there, a little apart, was crouched a poor woman on the grass, over her basket of cakes, bargaining with a customer who

held one in his hand ; and just behind the screen of a few shrubs a booth was erected for the sale of refreshments for the loyal and loving subjects of his Swedish Majesty. Long may he reign ! as his people—even in the age of turmoil in which I write—seem to wish him to do. The motto which Bernadotte, the soldier of fortune, chose for his coin was this—“The love of my people is my safety.”

We did not want to linger among the crowd, for we had received one bow from King Oscar, who lifted his white-plumed hat far above his head as he swept past us, and a graceful bow from his Queen, which ought to have satisfied us to our heart's content ; so we left the King-gazers to their employment, and turned from Rosendal, or the Vale of Roses, though surprisingly few roses are there, but so Bernadotte, or King Charles John XIV, called this simple and favourite villa he built in the Djürgård,—and we wandered away through pleasant Djürgården, among rocks and trees—such fine old trees, such great dark rocks—and we thought of dark Scandinavia, and its dark legends, and its dark faith, and said—Is this it ?—is this Scandinavia ?—this bright and lovely thing !

But the young Baron came up, and said his boat was waiting, and we got into it, and were paddled away to his island villa.

What a lovely scene was then Lake Mälär, with its fourteen hundred islands. My heart yearns after it now. Up to the landing place of the pretty islet whirled, with a skilful and graceful sweep, our Swedish gondola. A water equipage for summer, and a snow or ice-equipage for winter, are almost as necessary for Stockholm as a horse and a car are to the natives of Ireland—untaxed Ireland—which accounts the acmè of misery and degradation to “lay down” either.

Out sprang our young host; his extended hand, open countenance, and large bright blue eyes adding to the cheerful heartiness of his Swedish welcome. His pleasant villa was the lord of the lonely isle. His summer house—for such it literally was—was a wooden one, delicately painted, and simply furnished.

When the sun had gone down, at least so far down as not to be troublesome, we went out of the fairy-like house, and sat down among the rocks beneath the shadow of a great tree, and there, as we spoke of the strong and merry

boatwomen, the young Baron asked if I had heard of the Beauty of Dalecarlia.

I had done so, for some of my zealous informants had told me how she had even been brought to the Palace, that its inmates might see if it were equal to the praise it met; but I had not heard the story as it was now related to me, but which, when I wrote it down and showed it to an old lady who knew the beautiful Dalecarlian, was recognised by her as a true story of the slandered peasant maiden. I wrote it down then, and record it now.

Ebba lived on the banks of the Dal, that river of Dalecarlia which is so beautiful just where it opens out in Lake Siljan. Her parents lived there; they cultivated their own farm; they were industrious, contented, and happy. But sickness came, and carried them both away, and the farm passed into other hands. Ebba was betrothed to Erik, a young Dalecarlian neighbour, and she thought that he would take back the farm and the pleasant cottage wherein she had been born. But bad times came on, and Erik was forced to leave his home also, and go to work in the mines of Falun. His heart was not so strong

as Ebba's, and it seemed to him that the Dal was left for ever. It almost broke poor Ebba's heart to think she must leave its pleasant banks, and to live in the desert region, and among the black copper smoke of dreary Falun ; but still to think of her Erik, the sole love of her youth, working down there in the drear vault of the earth, hid from the sun light and the pleasant air—oh ! that was worse !

Ebba resolved she would earn money enough to enable Erik to come and live with her, and work with her, in the pleasant cottage on the Dal river, where her parents had loved, and lived, and worked from youth to death—where her sole ambition was to live and work from her marriage to her death—to live and work with Erik. She thought that if she could but earn money enough to keep on the cottage of her birth, her toil would be as the labour of Jacob when he served for Rachel, and seven years be to her as one day. Ebba resolved not to marry Erik, and go and live in the copper smoke of Falun, for then she said to herself, he must still work down there in those terrible vaults, and of that it disturbed her imagination

even to think. So when he urged her, she said,—

“Wait! we are young and strong; better times will come; our Lord is good to all who do right. We have yet many happy years to live, but better a few that are happy and blessed, than many that are dark and drear.”

Yet while Ebba spoke, she felt that she loved Erik more than the cottage on the Dal, and more than the glad sunshine of heaven. But her's was a strong woman's heart, and its love was strong and unselfish. Even in the copper mines of Falun she could have lived with him, but he would be better and happier beside the Dal with her.

So she would not wed the young miner, though he strove hard to prevail with her; but said she would go to work at Stockholm. Sore against his will he saw the maiden depart, but as she was going she said to her betrothed,—

“Be true to me, for trust me I will be true to thee; and one day thou shalt say it was well for thee I was not now made thy wedded wife.”

So Ebba came to Stockholm, and got a boat on the Mälär from the owners. Now the maiden was very fair to look upon, not eighteen years of age; tall, and straight, and strong, with a firm free step, and open brow. Her eyes were blue as the morning sky, and her hair was dusky as its twilight hues; the rose of health was on her cheeks, and love and gladness in the sound of her joyous laugh, and even in the gleam of her shiny teeth. She was beautiful with love and goodness; she was happy at her work, for she worked for love and Erik.

And love gave strength to her active arms, and Hope winged the boat that danced over the Mälär Lake.

Ebba was too fair to pass and repass with her laden boat as the common Dalkuller may do. She could not avoid the assaults of low and common vice; but she threw around her a panoply that freed her from them—she told her story, and the woman who worked for love was safe from aught that dared to usurp its name.

Lovers sought her hand in marriage, but failed to shake her purpose.

“I will wed no one,” she said, “until I have earned enough to enable Erik to wed and live with me.”

Thus the boat of the betrothed became a favourite on Mälarn; it was thronged from morn to night; and, though half its earnings went to the proprietors, many a dollar riksgeld—aye, and dollar banco too—slyly slipped into her hand, instead of a shilling banco, or bank shilling, equal to our half-penny—fully made up the share deducted, and Ebba’s earnings became immense.

At the close of the summer she was already rich. Ah! poor girl! had she been content, had she then returned to Dalecarlia, all might then have gone well with her and Erik. But even into her soul the love of gain had entered: she gained much, she would gain more—she feared if she went back Erik would not let her leave him again, and then he might still have to stay and work in the mines of Falun.

Ebba remained all the winter at Stockholm, and got creditable and lucrative employment. But to stay all winter in the capital of Sweden inspires mistrust or apprehension

in the peasant homes of Dalecarlia. And jealous eyes were on fair Ebba, and evil tongues were at work when the first frost stopped the paddles on Lake Mälär. She had gained more in her first summer than some boat-women had gained in two—even in three—and when these women went back they spread Ebba's evil report—though the report was unjust and untrue. It reached to Erik in the mines, and the news of her great gains made him wonder; but when she did not return with the winter it made him fear—it made him mistrust. He had not her strong human faith: the doubt he felt had never been apprehended by her, so she had not sought to prevent it. She could not suspect him; she never imagined that he might suspect her.

But the summer came gladly forth; and Ebba, fresh from her joyous, industrious, winter life, came forth with it; as good, as strong, as active and happy, as she had been before the ice had stopped her work on Mälarn. And with even greater zeal did she hasten to resume her boat paddles, because hope whispered to her

heart that when the next long, drear, winter came round, she should sit and work for Erik in her own cottage home; where her mother had died; and that he would then work for his bride, and love her and cherish her all the days of his life.

And the bright summer sun had broken forth, and called all things and creatures to be glad and rejoice; the snow and ice had melted off, and seemed to leave the earth ready furnished beneath; where white had just been, there bright green was gleaming; the sky that had hung low in a twilight gloom was blue and sunny;—sledges and skates were laid up, and the boats were again dancing over Mälarn. And Ebba, as she went down to the water, met Erik watching for her.

His face was dark, and no glad greeting was in his eyes. She would have flown to him, and cried, "I have worked for thee!—I have been true to thee!" But those dark frowning eyes terrified her; she gazed into them, and one would have thought it was her own conscience scowled upon her, for Erik was as herself.

Then did his cruel words terrify her still more, for they said that her parting ones were verified,—that it was truly well for him she was not his wedded wife;—he accused her boldly of betraying him, of being faithless to her love.

Ebba, for her sole reply, drew forth her bag of Swedish paper money which never left her, and said—

“Erik, all this—see, all this—I have earned for thee!” and joy shone in her blue, bright eyes.

But the jealous lover struck the bag from her hand, and cried—

“Accursed be thy gains! Thinkest thou I would touch the wages of thy shame?”

Then Ebba stood motionless, and spoke not at all. And Erik believed she was guilty. He went away in his wrath, and left her standing speechless there; his heart was torn with passion and grief, and the false tongues which had brought him poor Ebba’s evil report, sought to soothe him with more base slanders of her he loved, and they triumphed in their work. Urged by her

malicious foes, Erik went away—went back to the mines of Falun, and saw Ebba no more.

And the maiden sat in her boat, but she no longer knitted stockings for Erik while she waited for passengers. She did not now work for love, neither did Hope wing her way over the shiny Mälär. Her head was bowed down like the bulrush; her songs ceased, for her heart was heavy: her eyes shone no more like the blue sky of the laughing summer—and, leaning over her boat, Ebba dropped down into the bosom of the lake the bag of money Erik had struck from her hand.

“It was ill done,” said they to Ebba, “for the money might have been given to the poor.”

But she answered—

“Should I then have offered to the poor of our Lord the wages of my shame?”

For the words of her cruel lover never left her heart, and were calmly spoken by her lips; she appeared to believe that, as Erik thought her, so she was.

Now, after a time, Erik heard in the mines what Ebba had done; how she had buried in the deep lake her hard-earned gains, and how fearlessly she had repeated his words. And his conscience and his heart awoke, for he said to himself it was surely an upright and virtuous, and unjustly wounded spirit, urged her to this. He sent to Ebba to ask her, if she knew herself to be innocent, to forgive him, to be his wife.

But Ebba replied—

“I have no assurance of innocence or of guilt to make. I have never thought of either. Rich, happy, beloved, and respected, I would have gone to him, and have been his wife, whether he must live in the mines of Falun, or the Palace of Stockholm—poor, suspected, and disgraced, he shall see me no more. Tell Erik that Ebba forgave him, and blamed herself. But wine once spilled cannot be gathered up, and confidence once lost is not easily regained. She will stay where the wages of her shame are buried, until she goes to the land where shame is no more; for her dear Lord and Saviour knew shame unjustly, and hid not his face from it. He

will not scorn the creature who has known it also."

Her lover got the answer. He thought it proud; but he thought Ebba would repent, for he knew she loved him. He expected to see her come with the coming winter; but the winter came, and Ebba came not. He said to his comrades, "I can live without her no longer: I will go to Stockholm and bring her here. I will work for her, and she shall work no more."

So Erik set off on his journey just as the ice was melting.

That long winter Ebba had ceased to work; but the maiden had friends who let her know no want. They said that the strong Dalkulla was drooping, and they almost feared she would go no more forth on Mälarn.

But once more the ice-cleared lake was gay, and the people of Stockholm were glad. On the first bright, sunshiny morning, Ebba was seen sitting in her boat; her head lay on her arm upon its side. Her comrade came joyously to prepare for the passengers that were coming. But Ebba did not arise.

Her comrade called her and shook her, but she did not stir, neither did she speak. Ebba was dead. The fair Dalkulla would ply her boat no more on Mälarn Lake; she had passed away as the snow-maiden melts at the touch of the sun.

And her mistrustful lover came to Stockholm only to look on the victim of a false report.

CHAPTER II.

ONCE more farewell! Again we sail from Stockholm; and whither now? Up to the far North.

It must be a rapid journey, for Mid-summer-day is at hand.

We hired a carriage in Stockholm, at the charge of about four pounds a month, to travel in several hundred miles. Sweden possesses no public means of conveyance, except her steam-boats; and now a bit of railway, and a sort of diligence, which makes the tremendously tedious journey between Helsingborg and the capital once a week.

It is curious that the post travels faster in winter than in summer, because, as a Swede said to me, in the former they put it on a sledge.

But having got your carriage the Government provides you with horses, and something by way of a coachman, on condition of your paying for each horse sixpence, or sometimes ninepence per Swedish mile, that is, nearly seven English. And to the postilion I have seen the natives give one penny English, but if you want to get many thanks, and can afford it, you may give threepence.

Now we put our carriage on a steam-boat, and thus, having the pleasure of a double conveyance, and of paying for both, we set off for a tour to the North.

It is next to impossible to escape from nobility and nobles, in Sweden; do not then imagine that it is from any wish to look fine that I speak of setting out for Finland with a Countess, and for Dalecarlia, &c., with a Baroness. I wanted a travelling companion, and though one by any other name would have done as well, I could find

none, so Friherrinan and I set off, and wherever we go, neither her title nor my nationality shall remain unknown so long as the powers of speech can be exercised.

The steam-boats that come to the capital in the month of September are most oppressively crowded, and those which go from it in the beginning of June are nearly as much so.

Our boat is quite full, and Friherrinan, leaving me to my own companionship, has already made herself known to most of the party, and made the names, circumstances, or affairs of almost every one on board known to her.

Every one knows the Baroness when she tells them who she is, and she has a wonderful facility in conveying that intelligence. There, now, is a portly Swede enveloped in a tremendous winter cloak, with whom she has been conversing, as a stranger might, for the last fifteen minutes. Now comes the information—she is Friherrinan M——. On which the Swede rises, pulls off his hat, and makes one bow, and then she rises and makes one curtsy, and then he makes one, two, or three bows, and she makes as many courtesies, and at last begs him to put on his hat, as the air on the water

is dangerous; on which he bows again, and puts on the hat. And these self-presentations go on until it would be a matter of rather abstruse calculation to make out the number of bows and courtesies which my travelling companion has been the means of exhibiting on the deck of our steamer. Every now and then she comes and gives me some particulars of the private histories of our fellow travellers. She knows I like information, and she is anxious to help me in procuring it. And as any fresh passengers join us she starts off on a fresh tour of discovery to find out who they are, where they come from, where they are going to, and all other interesting matters. The flicka, or the stewardess, is her resource when all channels of information fail. "Ack, flicka lilla, var så god—" and then follow some confidential whispers, and presently I see Friherrinan curtseying, and the new comers, men or women, bowing or curtseying also.

Such a travelling companion, if one wanted to write a book of gossip, would be invaluable; but there is no use in gossiping about the persons with whom we glide along Lake Mälär.

Passing away like its waters, perhaps even

the image of Friherrinan shall soon cease to be reflected on this human tide; and truly I, for one, find more pleasure in looking at that great pine standing head downwards in the clear lake, and quivering its boughs as the keel of our packet ripples the smooth water, than I do in witnessing the splendidly graceful curtseying, and three times three bowing, which my notable acquaintance-maker keeps up on our deck. But let Swedes, or Germans either, bow as they please—anything but scrape their throats, as they, alas! do here—even smoke if they must.

We come down near to the Palace of Grips-holm, once the holm, or island, of the terrible Bo Jonson Grip, and the palace built by Gustaf Vasa, and used by one of his sons as a prison for the other. Once a monastic possession, it shares the melancholy fate of many of such possessions in Protestant lands, and whatever may have been objected to in its original history is made light by the darkness of its subsequent one.

Near to this is the Vingåker district, said anciently to have been the land of the Vikings, but one now remarkable for a race of people quite as

distinct in manners, dress, and customs as are those of Dalarne or Dalecarlia. The men wear a long plain coat of home-made cloth; black—I know not what to call them—reaching to the knees, and long blue stockings. The women, a short thickly-wadded petticoat of bright yellow, scarlet stockings, a tight bodice, with an under tunic of coarse linen with loose sleeves, and, I think, a scarlet skull cap. I saw one in a black petticoat with a yellow apron, and I was told this was the dress for mourning.

In the market places and streets of Stockholm these people are often seen, and by strangers confused with the Dalecarlians. There they carry the produce of their home industry, the linen, cotton, and flannels, woven on that indispensable article of thrifty housekeeping, the hand-loom. In Sweden we go back to the old times of Ireland and Scotland, if not of richer England. There we see, in a house not very dissimilar, a spinning-wheel, a loom.

In the Vingåker district I have also seen exposed for sale the bridal crown—one might suppose it must weigh as heavy as a royal one. It is quite regal in appearance, gilt, and frequently costs as much as four pounds sterling—

a large outlay for a Swedish bride, and therefore how think you the matter is managed? The priest of the parish buys a crown, and hires it out to his clients. There are many cases certainly in which a crown is hereditary, and so highly is it valued that I could almost believe that where a bridal crown was thus hereditarily possessed it never would be suffered to lack a wearer.

The most famous cannon manufactory of Sweden is near to Gripsholm also, and its proprietor, Baron Wahrendorff, is one of those to whom Friherrinan curtsseys; and he has the complaisance to offer to sell me a whole island of firs.

I should have accepted the gift of one if it had also a little red wooden house on it to which I might resort whenever I was in displeasure with the world. Could the breath of slander—the poor prattling of busy-bodies—reach one there?

The lake here opens widely; it seems indeed a knot of small lakes, for it is planted with islands, which break its uniformity. At one side a large cross on an eminence upon the banks marks the spot where the gospel was

first preached to the followers of Odin by the Christian missionary of Britain. On the other is a large mansion wherein some Russian prisoners, taken, I believe, on the island of Gottland in the time of Gustavus III, were confined; and when one room of that house was opened, long afterwards, a skeleton was found erect, chained to a post. At either side of the water there are really fine-looking houses, though they are of wood, and splendid woods, and boats come off from the banks to claim, or deliver up, a passenger.

In the former case something very like the *Lady of the Lake* comes rowing up to our unpoetic steamer—one of those appearances which somehow cleave to one's remembrances, although never seen before, and never seen again. The dark hair and eye, the light, erect figure, the simple straw hat with its green ribbon—they only rested beside us just while an old lady was descending the ladder that let her down to the young arms stretched to receive her. Yet it was a picture, and it took its place in a nook of memory.

And now we are at Westerås, the provincial town of Westmanland, and I believe the cir-

cumstances are rare—(a prisoner going to his prison, or a lover to part from his love)—in which, however fair the scenes, the end of a journey or a voyage is not one of their most agreeable parts.

Our carriage is unshipped, and drawn up by men to the hotel, and all the passengers who were curious to see the English travelling equipage are somewhat confounded to find it, when uncovered, a hired Swedish one.

Alas, Friherrinan ! borrowed plumes sooner or later fall off.

CHAPTER III.

THERE is something inexpressibly tiresome in writing down that one has come to a place of which there is very little to say. Here, at Westeraås, there is a cathedral and a castle.

I went to see the first, and saw a brick building, as all the cathedrals, I believe, of Sweden are. Brick is always an annoyance to me; and whatever of internal beauty or interest a brick cathedral might possess, is certainly not increased by Lutheran alterations—I speak materially of course.

Friherrinan told me I should inspect the cathedral, and I set off to do so; saying there was also a castle to be noticed. At which

remark she nodded with an air of indifference. I went to the cathedral, and saw not much that impressed me save a tomb of Eric XIV, with the singular biblical inscription placed upon it by his usurping brother, who put him to death:—"The kingdom is turned about, and become my brother's, for it was his from the Lord."

Such was the use which the son of Gustavus Wasa made of the Scriptures his father caused to be translated.

And when I got back to our inn my Baroness was not there, and they told me she had gone to the castle.

Imagining that her zeal to save me time led her there, I pleased myself with the notion that my companion would see one sight while I was seeing another, and we should give our friends the result of our mutual researches.

However, as I wanted to get a peep at the view it commanded with my own eyes, I forthwith proceeded to the castle.

Beneath an arched entry, wherein was a seat, I saw a little figure like that of my Baroness; but at her further side I saw a grand plume and glittering epaulettes, and a

sword and medal, and other fine things; and when I drew near the Baroness arose, and so did the military equipments, and she presented to me her companion.

“ I should have breakfasted in the castle,” said Friherrinan, as we walked back, “ if you had not come, but as you were a foreigner, that would require some preparation before they could receive you.”

“ That is a pity; I am not difficult in these matters.”

“ Nay, but the case would be just the same on their part.”

Vanity is a sad drawback to Swedish hospitality, especially towards strangers. For it is vanity, and not respect to others, that makes persons wish to entertain handsomely, or not at all.

So my unexpected apparition caused the poor Baroness to lose a breakfast, which I should very gladly have partaken with her, even if it were not so grand as a Landshöfning might be expected to set forth.

We had taken our morning coffee, the carriage was ready when we got to the inn, and we started.

A most uninteresting and dreary day's journey we had; the only sight I saw that made any impression on me was the number of burial mounds at the side of roads that lay through the skirts of a forest. Not a pleasant sight, if we are to suppose that these are the graves of malefactors, who have been executed at the scene of their crime. These mounds are covered over with branches of trees, which the people renew from time to time, and are thus preserved from destruction.

In Roman Catholic lands a cross marks the spot where death has occurred; in Ireland the people throw a stone on it in passing, and thus a heap of stones marks, or at least used to mark, the same spot.

The frightful practice of gibbeting human bodies, and leaving them there as hideous remembrances of the deeds they have done, is now exploded. The present King is opposed to the punishment of death, and I think has written something against it.

The poor Baroness had no one to present herself to, and I had nothing to see but these wayside graves, so we made a dull day's journey.

At last, at Sättra Brun, came a little relief. This is a small watering-place, as its name, "Brun," implies. The Swedes are almost as fond of Brunen as the Germans; this is a retired, quiet spot, and though I had not recourse to its mineral waters, I might have caught a "bubble" from the Brun while enjoying the pleasant rest its little walks and seats afforded me.

We dined here, very pleasantly, not at a table d'hôte, which I regretted; but the hour prescribed for bathers and drinkers was over, and such a repast as could be furnished was served to us in a neat little wooden lodge, or sort of summer-house, in the small grounds that lay around the boarding-house.

What curious fancies these watering-places generally are; people love to congregate to drink water and eat food by rule for a certain space in the year, to the benefit, I suppose, of the resident doctor.

Sättra Brun broke the ennui of our journey, and perhaps in the journey of life such places are chiefly resorted to for that purpose.

At last there is a view — there is water, dale, and hill appearing.

“Are we in Dalecarlia?” I cried to the rough, ragged, and taciturn little Westmanlander who drove us. There was no reply. I tapped him on the shoulder: he turned his face to me, and I repeated the question; he shook his head, and turned the face away again.

“Say Dalarne, not Dalecarlia,” said the Baroness.

“Ja! det är Dalarne,” he replied, pointing the whip before him.

How absurd that custom of changing, in each language, the names of places and countries! I remember being told in Germany of an English family coming to Ratisbon with the intention of remaining there, but when they got to Regensberg they ordered on their horses in search of Ratisbon, not knowing the town under its native name. We did not make this mistake, for our way into Dalarne lay straight before us, and our mode of entrance into that province was a very startling one to me.

Precisely as our skjuts said, “Ja! det är Dalarne,” he dashed down a steep declivity, straight, as I believed, into the river Dal.

Water splashed around us; I saw nothing but the wide river flowing at each side of our vehicle. When most frightened, nature has caused me to be most silent; therefore there was no scream, but I am sure my eyes were wildly open, and my hands tightly closed as if pulling invisible reins.

“Jaså!” said a voice beside me, in the most tranquil tone. “We thought the English were too brave to be frightened at a raft bridge.”

I saw my companion’s face all over a pleasant smile.

“Bridge!” I cried, the infirm sensation beneath the carriage wheels conveying any idea rather than that of driving over a bridge. “I should not have been frightened if I had been told beforehand it was here.” But this was the pretence of a courage that did not exist, for even after I knew we were on a raft bridge I felt fearful. So curious a bridge I never saw.

In the olden time, when the Dal bounded a province that had its own, traditional rights, or claims, as almost a distinct part of the Swedish territory, there was a ferry here, which the Dalesmen allowed no stranger to cross without their permission. When re-

sisting the encroachments of Gustavus Wasa, they kept an armed guard here, and told the King that to cross the ferry of the Dal Elf was what neither king nor lord had ever dared to do without leave from the Dalkarler.

But even Dalarne having changed with some of the changes of the world, the passage of the Dal Elf has become so free and so frequent as to render a bridge for the transit of carriages and travellers more desirable than a ferry. The inequalities of the water, for the river abounds in cataracts, and is liable to sudden swells, prevented the erection of a stone bridge, and certainly that rude species of ingenuity which one has often cause to admire in Sweden is wonderfully displayed in the construction of the bridge that so alarmed me. It is formed of large stems of trees cut square on the surface, strongly secured together and to the bank at each side, and there they float under the water, forming a stage on which is fixed another row of square cut trees, cut into logs of perhaps a dozen feet in length, lying in the direction of the river; and this forms, in ordinary cases, a dry foot bridge, but the weight of a carriage

and horses causes it to sink a good deal, and the splash of the water, and the sensation it causes, as the apparently frail thing swings beneath one, might excuse the fright it occasioned to one who was unprepared for such a mode of transit. One would suppose that such a bridge, over a river subject to swells, must often be submerged, but one of its curiosities is, that it always keeps its level. To effect this object it is brought up each bank to a higher point than the water reaches when low, so that at these times it must dip in the centre like a suspended bridge, but in high water it floats in a straight line.

There is a small wooden parapet, to defend animals of any kind from falling off if seized with fear; but I did not perceive this until I stood up in the carriage to examine this singular contrivance. On these shaking trunks of trees loaded carts pass and re-pass to the mines of Falun. This bridge crosses the old ferry of Brunbäck; and Brunbäck was to be our first post-station in Dalarne. Exceedingly pretty was the scenery, and glad were sun-scorched, weary, and hungry travellers to enter the

Gästgifvaregård, which enormous word we trouble-saving people may express in three letters—Inn. This house was on the bank of Dal Elfen ; the setting sun was darting its hottest rays full on the cool bosom of the beautiful stream as we plunged from glaring light into the indescribable gloom of that most repulsive habitation. How unhappy we were to have made our first acquaintance with renowned Dalecarlia by entering the post-house of Brunbäck !

I was almost faint from sitting in a single open carriage, with the sun basking for many hours on my face and head. I wanted a cup of tea—my English, and only urgent necessity in travel. We had our nice tea-machine, lamp, and wine-spirit, and all the requisite equipage and materials for making it, milk and water excepted ; and whatever else one lacks in Sweden, plenty of rich cream and milk may generally be reckoned upon. Of bread we knew there would be a want, and so, thanks to the counsel of Swedish friends, we had brought a whole sackful of rusks, as being the most enduring form in which

bread could be carried, and which journeyed with us for the space of six hundred miles, until at length, when in danger of growing mouldy, they were distributed to the poor people, who probably considered them a species of foreign diet brought with us from England.

All, therefore, that we wanted was a place to take tea in. I was ushered into a room from which I fled again; but finding no other, I contrived one with the help of the stone window-seat, which I made into a tea-table, carrying two chairs outside. One of these was for the Baroness, but she was not to be found—she was, in fact, employed in seeking out from the inmates of this rude place some of those eatables dear to Swedish lips, but which I always contented myself with seeing such lips devour. When her meal was ended she came to my window-seat and took a cup of tea. The heat of the sun was now over, and I proposed continuing our journey to the next post.

“Jaså!” cried my companion. “You did not tell me that. I have said we should stop here. There are no horses.”

This was the case. The Swedish mode of

posting is well known. It has one recommendation—cheapness ; a pair of post-horses will take you thirty miles in Sweden for about the same money as would be charged in England for three, that heavy additional tax, the postilion, included. This is a Government arrangement, consequently a compulsory one ; it is a land-tax which all farmers are obliged to obey, however profitably their cattle may be employed at the time when their turn comes to send them to the post-station, where they may stand unused all day ; or if an impatient traveller arrives and finds none there, they are sent for, and he must snatch them from the plough, and send them, reeking hot, to trot or gallop to the next station, usually a distance of two or three Swedish miles, each mile counting six and a half English ones, for which mile sixpence, or in some cases ninepence per horse, is the stated charge, and the traveller will receive a bow, and “ thank you most humbly,” if two or three English pence be added for the postilion—who, if the farmer’s men be employed, is any boy, old man, or, when the country carts are also hired, any young girl, that can be picked up. When these gallop up hill and down

hill, dash round sharp turnings, and keep you continually catching a shoulder, or pulling a coat tail, with imploring exclamations against reckless speed, you may be sure the driver is a chance waif caught on the wayside, and perched up on your coach-box for the sake of the few skillings he may get at the end of the stage ; but if a better equipped man drives you very carefully, and a great deal too slowly along, looking perhaps a little sulky all the time, then you may know he is himself the farmer, and the owner of the horses.

The post-houses are called Skjuts-station, the word skjuts being pronounced, as nearly as possible, shoots, and your postilion is the skjuts-bonde, the name postilion, in Swedish, being given to the letter-carrier or postman. A certain number of horses are required, by the levy on each district, to be found at each station daily, and besides these another certain number, or reserve corps, are subject to be called upon in case "the run" on the road uses up the first contingent. The first contingent must wait in readiness, perhaps not quite as of old, in Branksome Hall,

"Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night:"

for indeed the harness that is to be put upon them ought to be carried with the traveller as a measure of precaution. We took our's, but it was considered too elaborate for use, some more simple gear in the way of hempen ropes being usually preferred.

But if this supply of horses be used up, the reserve, which are kept at work for their owners, is to be called upon, and the traveller who has not sent in an express must take patience while the personage who acts as ostler at the first stations is dispatched perhaps three or four English miles, or it may be even eight, to get these horses out. We never made use of this express, or Forbüd, except when some chance acquaintance, going the same road, offered to take it. We had on one or two occasions to wait a couple of hours, but on the whole we got off pretty well; although, as a set-off, it usually happened that, when we had to wait, it was in the most horrible of all horrible places.

Such was the case at pretty Brunbäck. There were no horses, and here we must stay. There are not many times in which we feel

the difference between England and Scandinavia in general more than we do on arriving at a place where nature has done much, and man has done nothing ; done—if the blunder be permitted—worse than nothing—erected a dirty, disagreeable house, where human beings must take refuge, to see outside its walls loveliness, purity, and peace. I can put up with any “accommodation:” I have enjoyed myself on the summit, almost, of the Pyrenees, with only a table for my bed ; but the only thing that arouses my English predisposition to grumbling is to see human nastiness in the midst of nature’s beauty.

Well ! there is no use in exercising that English propensity. I may grumble as much as I please, but it is all spoiling paper ; the Baroness is—I hesitate to write it, but, after holding the pen suspended a full minute, I must do so—the Baroness is sleeping audibly on one of those very beds I have regarded with as much shivering as if Banquo had lain in it, and I were Lady Macbeth.

I thought I must imitate the noble example of my travelling companion. I lay down, and I believe after all I slept, for I was tired

and sleepy, and in such frames one can sleep anywhere as well as on downy beds and in graceful rooms.

Alas! I woke—flew to the window, and failing to open it, rushed out of the room. I had only lain down as I was, and when I ran out of the suffocating room no obstacle opposed my progress.

The night was as clear as the day—the house lay as open as in the day: no bolt, nor bar, nor even closed door, spoke of the thief or midnight marauder. The house door lay open, while all within it were sleeping as sound as the Baroness.

I went straight through it, as if escaping from something left within. And what a sight—what a feeling beyond that house of man's erection! Bright, soft, and beautiful night of the North! how often have I blessed thee, even while others have written down complaints against thee!

O! most beautiful night! beautiful in thy soft summer dreaminess, and beautiful in thy winter glory!

I rushed out on the banks of the Dal; I sat down there—all alone in the north

of Sweden, and enjoyed the scene and hour.

It was not night and it was not day. If by the night we were to be guided, the French expression, *jour tendre*, occurs as the most apt description; a tender day would best describe the summer night of the North—clear, calm, soft—the very light of love when hushed to peace and tenderness. There are those who revile those nights as unfriendly to sleep. To me they have been friendly at all times, therefore I praise them.

Now the Dal Elf flowed smooth and bright at my feet; the hills, or mountains as they are misnamed, of Dalecarlia terminated the soft horizon, and at this hour, with their fir-crowned heads sometimes shadowing it, seemed to enclose a vale of which I was alone the inhabitant. No other living thing appeared to be stirring.

I was mistaken: a low, fairy-like trumpet came sounding on, and in terror I gathered a shawl over my face, swathed up my hands within it, and fled from the night of the North, beset by a tribe of musquitoes. The

sound of the Baroness's slumbers was peaceful compared to that menacing trump.

Another sound broke the silence, it was that of horses' feet. A Dalecarlian was riding one and leading the other: he bade me "god morgen;" and the salutation caused me to look at the sky, where I saw with some surprise the deep crimson of morn spreading over the cool, soft hue of night.

"What are the horses for?" I asked, with some hope that they were for us.

"They are ordered for foreigners who will go on with all speed," was the answer.

So, appropriating the description, I hastened to the black bed-room, and woke up my companion.

Before long we were on the road, and at the end of a short stage stopped at Grådö, where a remarkably nice house, with good, clean, and pleasant rooms, made us doubly lament the uncertainties of Swedish posting, which had consigned us to a miserable station, when a good one might have been easily reached.

Our host, too, was a most agreeable and intelligent one. I made him understand the

panic I had suffered the day before on crossing the bridge, and he comforted me by saying I must cross another of the same kind on leaving his house.

Now Friherrinan had been previously informed of the nature of Brunbäck bridge; but I hoped she might not be prepared for another.

CHAPTER IV.

HERE, in a large, clean apartment, supplied of course with beds for travellers, we enjoyed a very tolerable breakfast and a most delightful view. The Dal lay before the windows, and a sight very rare in Sweden was to be seen on its waters—the remains of two ruined towers. The want of antiquity in any form save that of a time-blackened wooden house is very remarkable here.

A singular practice which I have noticed all through the North was also to be observed at Grådö; it is that of building, wherever a fine view is to be had, an outer house just in the position to obstruct it. In almost all

Swedish country houses there is an outer, or supplementary one, built in the court which invariably surrounds them; attached to the houses of the clergy and private persons, this supplementary one is often used for lodging strangers in; it is also employed for the multifarious purposes of Swedish housekeeping, and in the case of inns is frequently made the dwelling-place of the family. Now the inn here consisted of a nice clean wooden house, with another such house standing opposite to it at the other side of the court. Consequently, to get a view of the beauty that lay just beyond both, one was obliged either to surmount the top of the latter, or to go out on the road behind it.

The heat was becoming excessive: I fell asleep, and when I awoke a wandering Dal-kulla, or Dalecarlian damsel, told me the horses had been waiting nearly an hour. Why, then, did not the Baroness tell me, and where was she?

She was waiting in the carriage as well as the horses. Ashamed of myself, I hurried out and crossed the court. There was the carriage

waiting outside, and if horses do sleep, the pair that were harnessed to it were, I think, asleep. On the bank on the further side of the road sat the driver, his arms folded, and his head bowed over them. He decidedly was asleep. The head of the open carriage was up: I peeped under it, and saw the Baroness in a corner, fast asleep, with her head rolled up in a shawl. I touched the driver with the tip of his own whip, took my place quietly in the corner opposite my sleeping companion, and we drove off without disturbing her.

Before long we were on the brink of the river, full speed down the slope we went, and splash!—we were again on a raft bridge.

You have seen in prints the figure of a witch uttering an invocation or a doom! Very like that did poor Friherrinan look, as with the sudden bound, and the shaky, splashy motion, she awoke from deep repose, and projecting both arms forward, with the hands spread precisely in the posture of a swimmer, struck out right and left; while her head, still enveloped in the shawl, was projected with her half-risen person very considerably in a forward direction.

I had the advantage of her now, and I was satisfied ; but for the national exclamations that issued from her lips I shall leave a blank.

We have been accustomed to exclaim against the French for their common-place use of a sacred name ; but the common exclamations of Sweden exceed anything I ever heard in any land ; and these not on any extraordinary occasion, but in listening to the most trivial, most ordinary occurrences—occurrences far less startling than the sudden splash of water dissipating the slumbers of a reposing Baroness.

Hedemora was our next stage, where the scenery around is charming, but the little town most dull and uninteresting in aspect.

I had formed a very different notion of Hedemora, from reading a story written by a Frenchman, the scene of which was laid in Dalecarlia. At that time I had never seen that country, and the Frenchman's descriptions of Arcadian scenery, life, and manners I implicitly believed to be Dalecarlian. Hedemora was the charming village celebrated in the Frenchman's pastoral, and a place as unlike the description as are the stout, hard-working Dalkuller to the sentimental maiden whom the author made

to dress her hair with blue corn-flowers or wreaths of roses.

This town, however, or its precincts, as it stands high, affords a good point for viewing the surrounding district.

Dalarne is expressively named "The Dales;" it is usually spoken of as a land of mountains: the Dalecarlians, or Dalkarls, are considered to be mountaineers; yet, in fact, there are no mountains here. The province consists of dales formed by rounded hills, which, even with the additional height of their tall crown of fir and pine, could scarcely be so ambitious as to call themselves mountains, except in its northern district, especially in the parishes of Lima and Särna, bordering on Norway, where they rise as high as 3,000 feet, forming part of our old friends, "the Doffrine mountains, between Sweden and Norway." But to those who have traversed real mountains, those even of Norway must appear more picturesque and wild than great.

The dales among these hills are set with numerous lakes, large and small, and the whole province of Dalarne is parted into east and west by its best-known river, the

Dal. It possesses another called by a less easy and pretty name, the Ljusne. The Dal Elf, too shallow for navigation, even if navigation could be profitably employed, is the distinctive feature and charm of the scenery; it rises in two branches, one of which is named the eastern, the other the western Dal Elf. The former flows through the lovely Lake Silja; the latter, making its way by means of sundry sudden bends, through the mountainy ridge that opposes it, meets its brother's embrace at an appropriate spot—a parish church, where the union being effected, the parted streams are made one, and flow on together to their destined end in the Gulf of Bothnia. The course of the Dal Elf is very charming, and travellers are always glad to regain it, whether it is seen spread out in a wide expanse as it flows through one of the many lakes that afford it a free passage, or tearing its way through a narrow channel of rock, foaming in fury round a little fir-covered isle, which it seems ready to devour, or tumbling with a roar over a mass of granite, as if indignant at the obstinacy that has so long resisted its power.

The whole district may be termed mountainous, while there is no mountain of any eminence in it. It is broken into dales, hills, lakes, forests, and streams; wherever you go, at the edge of a fair, sunny prospect, you will see a dark, black cloud stretching on in the distance, and closing up the horizon; that is a fir forest.

In Sweden antiquity seldom, if ever, meets you; you may look for it and find its traces sometimes, but your general impression is that you are in a modern but a very backward age. Everything is, as we say, behind-hand; but there is little or nothing to recal to the traveller any epoch beyond that with which this country has become identified—the era of Gustavus Wasa. There are plenty of old-fashioned things, but these are all things still in common use, un superseded by any new-fashioned ones. The Swedes know little of those appliances to animal labour so long used by us.

When one sees the system of cultivation carried on here, when one looks at the starveling sheep, the poor lean cows, and trembles to think that the beef one eats has

been the remaining flesh of the hapless ox that was unable to drag cart-loads any longer—it is a matter of curious enquiry to consider how it is that such vast quantities of rich milk, delicious cream, and butter, are produced throughout Sweden. To equal these I would venture to defy any English dairy, and to surpass them I think I might defy all the dairies in the world.

Here, in summer, you will not be likely to get anything you can eat but a large bowl of rich sweet cream, and a soup-plate full of the nicest wild strawberries, gathered fresh from the forests. These are a delicious repast; .but without even a bit of bread to eat with them they are certainly better adapted to the heroines of old romances than to the hungry travellers of modern days. For my part, I generally contrived to beg a bit of bread for the purpose from some Prestgård, or priest's house, at which we stopped; although, to my discontent, I found it generally spoiled by being made sweet with caraway seeds.

From Hedemora we proceeded to Säter, a place where, the Baroness assured me, I was

to see a most remarkable sight. On arriving, she showed me a path she told me to pursue on foot, while the horses were being prepared, and said she would follow me. I walked slow and waited long, and at last saw the Baroness advancing, with the chief man of the place, to whom she had presented herself, and who obligingly came forth to show us what she called the "valley."

This was a great landslip, of a rather curious formation; it was like an inverted mountain, supposing mountains to be hollow; it was as if a mountain had tumbled heels over head and turned itself inside out. A vast mountain-shaped hollow, wide at the upper end, and narrowing to the bottom, but lined with trees, that would not have clothed it in its natural state, for we were informed that the various young trees that grew inside it did not grow in this district. From a birch-tree, one of the largest in this curious excavation, a good view is obtained of its singularities. Near to this is a high hill, or mountain, an English mile, they say, in height, which affords a fine prospect of the country.

CHAPTER V.

WE are now on our road to Stora Koppar-
bergen, or the Great Copper Mine, situated
at the provincial town of Falun. Even in
the pagan times of Scandinavia this district
was named Jernbäraland, or the Iron-bearing
Land. The historian Geyer asserts that in
almost all the metallic districts of Sweden
mining labours preceded agricultural; the land
lay waste till the discovery of mines and the
application of labour to their valuable resources
brought population, when cultivation neces-
sarily followed as the labourers within the
earth required to be fed from its outer pro-
duce.

The yield must have been scanty ; even now, a granite foundation slightly covered with soil, tracts of wood, and the rigour of a northern clime, impose no little labour on a frugal and industrious people ; but at a time when “ the twelve-mile wood ” and the “ ten-mile wood,” each mile counting nearly seven English, were to be found here with houses of rest for stray travellers, we may judge what must have been the state of the country when its first settlers began their agricultural labours, where, together with iron and granite, two forests, alone, covered 144 English miles.

Approaching Falun we entered one of the numerous fir forests that abound in the north of Sweden ; the road lay straight as an arrow through it, and was deep in dry sand. Immensely tall straight trees, with their sombre changeless hue, closed it in on each side, but left an opening overhead for the hot beams of a scorching sun. There was scarcely one of those pretty pleasant breaks that often appear in these forests, when a green glade sprinkled with light birches and masses of lichen-covered rock present a spot that fills the mind with pleasant thoughts ; but if novelty be a charm,

we perhaps found comfort in often repeating—
How unlike England!

But when this monotonous road through the forest had been for some time exchanged for an open, but not more interesting one—that is to say, after we had for some time followed the road from Strand, which appropriately named station was our last after issuing from that sandy track through the fir trees—then did we behold a sight which led my Swedish companion to exclaim, “There! that at least is like England!”

I looked forward and saw a dark fummy smoke rising up under the blue sky, and darkening the pure air.

“That like England?” I said.

“At all events like London,” was the response.

I was too intent on watching the scene to reply or contradict.

A greenish, sickly colouring was soon observable, blending with the dark uprising cloud, and, its motion excepted, causing it to resemble London fog much more than London smoke. As we came nearer a strong sulphurous smell

tainted the clear sunny atmosphere ; a pale green, copper, and copperas-covered church appeared in sight, and we were at Falun, at Stora Kopparbergen.

I had formed an idea of Falun as I had of Upsala, Åbo, and other notorious places. My notions respecting the two former had been far more glorious than true ; my notion respecting the latter had been far worse than the reality. I expected to arrive at a smoke-enveloped and poison-tainted place, where, amidst excoriated matter, were the blackened huts of the miners, and where we might perhaps obtain accommodation in the mine-master's house. Instead of this we entered a very decent provincial town, and drove at once to an inn that was quite indicative of the character of the town.

The inn, or hotel, of a country town may generally represent the state of the place. A fashionable locality is at once recognised by the hotel and its attendants ; a large, neglected, and dilapidated inn announces a town from which fashion or business has departed, and the plain, substantial, and, considering where we were, to our minds well-ordered one of Falun, was

indicative of the mining town to which men of business or science were more in the practice of resorting than those of pleasure.

The Baroness set off that very evening in search of a gentleman whose acquaintance she made directly by merely saying who she was, and having spent the evening in this new society, returned to tell me that the next day she, he, and myself were to descend together into Stora Kopparbergen—the horrible Copper Mine.

“I wish to go down,” said Friherrinan, “it is something to tell of; and you, doubtless, as you travel to see what is wonderful, will see it also?”

“But is it safe? It appears to me so terrific to go into those mines.”

“It must be quite safe, and quite easy also,” she answered, “since our King himself, and the Queen, and all the Court went down there and dined in a splendidly illuminated chamber; but if you have not courage, I will give you an account of it when I come up.”

“No, I will go with you; you so courageous, I shall not be afraid.”

“Certainly not, you need only do as you see me do.”

So we set off to the mine, of which we had yet seen no appearance. A short walk brought us to the edge of the town, and then a strange scene lay before us. At first the idea struck me that it looked as if Vesuvius had destroyed itself, and lay smoking in ruins. A vast quantity of exco-riated matter covered the ground to a considerable space around; a thick greenish grey smoke rising up from beds of roasting ore filled the air with sickly sulphurous fumes; not a blade of vegetation was to be seen; copper, sulphur, and vitriol poisoned vegetable life.

A great open chasm 1,000 feet long, and, I think, 400 deep, appears in the midst of the scoriæ, which, imperfectly cleared from the ore, has accumulated from age to age, and with the smoke rising over it certainly looks as if it had been cast up from the burning earth below. This great chasm has not been worked out, but formed by the tumbling in of the mine about two hundred years ago; two great pillars of quartz rise at the bottom. The mine

is shaped like a cone turned up-side down ; it consists of copper and iron pyrites, mixed with the most beautiful crystals, which, when not long exposed to the air, sparkle like diamonds, and have a fine effect when an internal chamber is lighted up. Sulphate of iron and of copper are found, the former covering the wood works of the mine, and the latter impregnating the water, from which it is extracted by an ingenious contrivance. The immense blocks of granite, felspar, hornblende, and chlorite slate which cover the plain around this vast mine really in aspect reminded me of the lava-strewn fields of Vesuvius.

The Mine-Government, or Bergs-Collegium of Sweden, is an estate in the realm. In England a mine may be worked at the discretion of the proprietor, or of the company to which it is made over: in Sweden all mining operations are connected, as most other things are, with the government, but placed under the control of the Mining-Government, called the Bergs-Collegium, which has the absolute control of all matters relating thereto. This is as if a little Honourable East India Company were seated in the

heart of England, exercising therein its rights, powers, and privileges,—the independent army alone excepted. The Bergs-Collegium forms a distinct body in the State, having a distinct representation : it is a state within a state, having its own powers in civil and criminal jurisdiction over property and even life. It has the sole control of all that relates to mines—fossils, woods, waters, furnaces, foundries, workings, and all matters that have relations to mining operations or come within the range of such in the mine districts. It has its own courts ; but its army is exclusively, and as far as my experience goes, pre-eminently, a civil one—consisting in a long array of officials of whom I have only to say that I always found them very civil indeed, although their styles and titles would be quite too grand and lengthy sounding for such pages as these.

All colour works come under their rule ; together with those of cobalt, alum, sulphur, vitriol, &c. No mine-proprietor can work out, or attempt to work out, a plan of his own ; every mode of working and every machine employed must have the sanction of this board,

or accept its established plans and machines. No speculation can take place, no experiment be tried, without this permission.

The thing called "public spirit" by us, is generally quite unknown, or strongly fettered, in Sweden. In this case no individual can work out his own plan or invention; every mode of working or of manufacture, every machine employed, must have the sanction of this board, or use what it prescribes. No speculation can be entered into among private parties without its concurrence.

To each mine-canton a number of parishes, the number being proportioned to the amount of produce—perhaps even a dozen—are thirled, or laid under contribution, for the support of the mines; and all the wood of these parishes—the great article of local traffic, and the redeeming comfort of the poor—can only be made into charcoal for the mining works; and not only are its owners obliged to make and deliver this charcoal, but they are deprived of the pleasant revenge of charging their own price for it: both the charcoal and carriage are paid for by the Mine Directors at their own fixed rate.

The check on individual enterprise and individual talent would thus seem to be sufficiently obvious ; but in all despotic institutes there is usually a bright spot, if not a bright side, to be found in the picture.

The existence of such a state-department as this demands a regularly organised corps of mining engineers, who are required to take a university degree, and to pass an examination, before they can be admitted into it. Foreign speculation is certainly impeded ; perhaps the Swedes are not very fond of inducing English speculators, or English workmen, to come amongst them, and not many Englishmen would like to be thus crippled in their transactions, to submit to direction, be subjected to interference, to have to report their proceedings to a board, and find themselves unable to direct their own business in their own way.

Subject to the laws of the Mine Directors, any proprietor, even of the smallest share, can raise his own ore and carry it to a privileged, or free furnace. A quantity of pig iron is thus manufactured in very small proportions, and the petty proprietor

of a mine-share may be seen constantly travelling through the country, seated on the shaft of his primitive-looking vehicle, with the bars of iron clattering and jumping as he drives furiously along.

Tradition ascribes the working of the great copper mine of Falun to an age far more remote than any written records or annals can reach; even back to the age of the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem, when Solomon brought the copper employed in it from *Stora Kopparbergen* of Sweden! And—as a wise *skjuts-bonde*, or postilion, told me the old church of old Upsala had been there since the time of the Deluge—perhaps the same tradition may make the earlier miners of Falun to be antediluvians.

Its authentic annals reach back to 1347, and there is reason to believe it was worked earlier. It is the oldest in Sweden.

Any writers who have mentioned the mode of descent to this mine have stated it to be particularly easy; yet I have read in some English book the remark that Dr Clarke made it appear far more terrific and picturesque than it really is. The writer probably

confused that famous traveller's account of the mine of Persberg with that of Falun, for Clarke says there are few sights of the kind which better repay the traveller; he will seldom find a mine of equal celebrity which, under all the circumstances of depth and magnitude, is so easy of investigation. Another traveller says—"The descent is by an easy winding flight of stairs all the way, so that you can descend to the bottom with only the fatigue of going down so many steps." I mention such authorities because, relying on them, I set off very briskly to walk down such a staircase for a space of between two and three hundred fathoms under the earth.

The Baroness, and her new acquaintance the Doctor, were looking down the crater from the wooden railing that guards it, when I came from the house she had directed me to go in order to procure a suitable mining equipment. Certainly, at Falun, they do not appear prepared for the descent of ladies into this mine, for all the dress they supply is a heavy pea-coat and a wide-awake hat.

The Baroness looked at me very complacently, but observing that her equipment was

not equally complete, I inquired if she did not intend to prepare for the descent.

She replied that she had been consulting with her friend the Doctor, who advised her to stay where she was and be satisfied with looking down the chasm, or crater, of the mine, from whence many galleries branched off, one of which she would have the pleasure of seeing me enter.

Escorted by the mine-master's son, and a guide going on with a large pine torch, I set forward undismayed, and found, as I had expected, a winding easy descent, formed by bars of wood.

The conductor recommended me to slacken my pace, but finding the downward progress so easy and rapid, I replied by assuring him I thought nothing of the descent.

"Wait a little," was his rejoinder; a common speech enough in Sweden, but now said in a tone, and with a slight motion of the head, that made it expressive.

We soon found ourselves in a large chamber, where the guide, lighting a great pine torch, held it up to the walls, which literally sparkled with crystals, green and white; beautiful sta-

lactites of green vitriol, the sulphate of iron, which hang from the vaulted roofs, and cling to the brick or wooden works where the water used in working the mine has passed. The liquid sulphate of iron either crystallises or forms pendant and transparent stalactites, which appear throughout this vast mine in such sizes as tempt the poor labourers to possess themselves of these mine-treasures. In consequence of this cupidity, a terrible conflagration took place here about fifty years ago. The thieves having been alarmed while stealing the sulphate of iron, decamped without their lights; the timber of the works caught fire, and then the beds of pyrites. It was feared the whole mine would be destroyed; but by building up the fire within double walls, it was cut off and left to burn itself out, which it did after a lengthened space of time—many months, at all events.

Hitherto I had gone on quite comfortably, and very easily, but after passing this chamber there began a mode of descent which, I believe, I ought to leave in the darkness in which it was made. Now I have before alluded to the fact that most persons who have visited

this mine have mentioned Dr Clarke's account of it as being far too terrible, and one English writer in particular quotes an anecdote that traveller records concerning a poor woman who fell down the precipice, and was turned into a "pankaka," or pancake; and at the same time I have remarked that it was Dr Clarke's description of the particularly easy descent of the mine called Stora Kopparbergen that led me to attempt it. The solution of the difficulty, I think, is, that Clarke's account of the iron mine of Persberg, in the province of Wermland, has been confused with that of the Dalecarlian, and better-known, copper mine.

The descent of this latter mine *was* easy when Clarke visited it fifty years ago, and continued to be easy until about two years previous to our visit, when an extensive run took place which destroyed the winding, easy flight of steps, which I had understood led all the way, for two hundred fathoms, down to the bottom. My descent, therefore, was, after all, to be made almost exactly as Dr Clarke describes the terrible descent into the iron mine of Persberg.

This was by means of perpendicular ladders placed on a series of very small platforms, which serve as landing-places; but each platform borders on a precipice, where you hear the sound of water gurgling in darkness; the staves of the ladders are cold, slippery, covered with black mud and soft ice. Imagine an attempt to go down these in thick darkness, with a guide standing on the platform above you, holding a torch, which casts its light over your head only to bewilder; for if you turn that head to look where your steps lead, you only see profound gloom beneath, and, for aught you know, you are to step off that ladder into—what? That inquiry the man seems to think unnecessary—he tells you to go on.

It was in such a position that the extract I had read from Dr Clarke, and which had been mistakingly applied to this mine, unfortunately occurred to me:—"In addition to the danger to be apprehended from the state of the ladders, the staves were covered with ice or mud, and rendered so slippery that we could have no dependence on our hands if our feet failed us. Then, to complete our fears, as we mentioned

this to the miners, they said, 'Have a care; it was just so one of our women fell as she was descending to her work.' 'And what became of her?' 'Became of her?—she became *pankaka!*' "

Here, indeed, another observation of his was also applicable:—"As the labourers are not accustomed to receive strangers they never use precautions, nor offer the assistance usually afforded in more frequented mines." The weight of a great pea-coat was a rather unfortunate equipment to choose for such a descent.

A miner came up the ascending ladder; as the torch-light flashed on his face it appeared to me very like one of those that used to frighten my childhood, when seen in the reflection of blazing spirits and sulphur burned on a pewter dish. He looked at me as we passed, and his look seemed to say, "I am glad to go up, and you are foolish to go down."

At length we came to the chamber where all the Kings of Sweden, from time immemorial up to King Oscar, have eaten a dinner; for by an ancient usage this is one of the many

penalties inflicted on the Swedish Kings. To dance in the town-hall on New-year's night, to drive through the Djurgård in procession on the 1st of May, to descend into Stora Kopparbergen on their accession to the throne—these, and many similar little performances, are entailed on the possession of that crown.

Here the famous Bernadotte (the late King), with the Crown Prince, the present King Oscar, and the now dowager Queen, as well as all the royal suite, were entertained in a subterraneous cavern, which must have looked strange enough when illuminated and adorned for the occasion. I believe King Oscar has not been obliged to repeat his visit upon his accession to the throne.

Not many visitors to this mine go further than this royal chamber. And indeed the vision, to one who does so for only once in a lifetime—the first and only time—may haunt him afterwards. The glare of fitful light, the sulphurous faces of those who seem to have parted for ever from the bright sun and the light of earth—the sound of unseen water—the horrid depths yawning so close that a single step aside would send one down as the

mine-master's son sent a large block of wood for my instruction, teaching me by action what he did not say in words. All this, and more than this, you will see, and hear the sound of the block as it rebounds from ledge to ledge, falling, falling, and the sound coming fainter, fainter, till after the lapse, I should think, of nearly a minute, it is heard no more.

It was the discovery that, on landing on one of the very small platforms, I had stepped back within half a foot of one of these gulfs, that totally freed me from any desire to see more of the copper mine of Falun. After that my courage failed, and I only recollect clinging to an upright ladder, and crying to my stolid guide, "I will go up! I will go up!"

He said afterwards that he feared then the chance of my ever going up was small, for he believed I should be physically deprived of the power of movement, and remain there, encumbering, I suppose, the mine descent for ever.

Such an occurrence would be a parallel to one I once witnessed amid the billows of the Atlantic Ocean. It was there my lot to be tossed mounting to the heavens, and descending to the depths, in a small boat rowed by two

men. An old Scotch lady was the only other woman. There she sat with hands calmly folded, while I was nearly frantic with terror, and her words, which scarcely ever ceased, fell like oil on boiling waves, stilling the terrors I felt:—"The voice of the Lord is on the deep: the Lord is on many waters: the Lord rideth on the wings of the wind. He holdeth the winds in the hollow of His hand." These and other words that quiet old lady kept constantly repeating, while we were given over to despair.

The great steamer that was to save us at last approached. The deep voice of the captain calling through the trumpet was heard, our poor boat was grappled, but the pitching threatened to draw us under the walls we wanted to climb for safety. The ladder was let down; the good old lady mounted a few steps—but there she halted—there she stuck fast, and neither the threats of those above, nor the anxious entreaties of those below, could get her to move either up or down. The courage that had sustained another failed herself when the trial was over: erect along the ladder, with her hands tightly grasping the staves, there

she clung, suspended between the pitching boat, with its anxious crew, and the pitching steamer, with its anxious spectators. They pulled up the ladder at last, and laid it flat on the deck, and then disengaged the clinging hands.

“Now, then,” called out the mate, “there is another woman; when she puts her foot on the ladder draw it up.”

But the other woman walked straight up, and the captain gave his hand and landed her on the deck, and said, “She was a brave woman, and her life was worth saving.” But the captain was quite mistaken. The brave woman lay there prostrate: it was she who had no courage to walk up the ladder when safety was assured, because all her courage had been exhausted while danger only was around.

I thought of that ladder, and of the form that had clung to it, while I was suspended in the mine, and I had a dim perspective of remaining where I was, for I knew this ladder would not be drawn up. It was necessary therefore to “make an effort,” and the effort was made. But not for half the mines of Golconda do I think I would go again

into the copper mine of Falun—at least if it remain in the state it was in when I made my descent.

I found Friherrinan and her friend the Doctor enjoying an easy conversation. She expressed some surprise at seeing me returned so soon; he looked as if he scarcely expected me to return at all.

“It was well,” I said, “for her that she had not come with me.”

“Jaså!” she cried, “I thought you would be of that opinion. The mine is quite another thing now to what it was when the King and Queen went down there. It is astonishing you could venture.”

“But you did not tell me it was dangerous.”

“It was useless to alarm you.”

And then the kind Friherrinan went on to inform me that only a short time previously two strangers had gone down with a guide well accustomed to the place. This man lost his torch, but, presuming on his acquaintance with the mine, told the gentlemen they might confidently rely on him, though in the dark. Stepping back almost at the moment he spoke, he went down the abyss! The strangers, over-

come with horror and fear for themselves, remained on the spot, not daring to move, till some other persons coming down delivered them from such a deplorable state.

There are a great variety of galleries, or passages, radiating from the entrance through the great crater, so that different parties may go up and down without meeting. My time in it was about three hours, but I have heard that to examine it thoroughly and scientifically would require a fortnight's time! I was crippled that evening; unable to walk, from pains and stiffness in the limbs. The Baroness deplored this, as to stay another day in the copper smoke of Falun appeared to her so disagreeable; and she saw no likelihood that I should be able to travel the next day. I assured her a night's rest would restore me, and to make the most of it I would retire early; whereon Friherrinan ordered her own particular supper, which she said was nowhere to be had in such perfection as in Dalarna. This was a great dish of graf-lax, or raw salmon—not smoked or dried, but merely steeped in, I think, salt and water, and served in slices, each enough to frighten one—with

oil, vinegar, and pimento to eat with it. To this dishful of graf-lax the Baroness added another Swedish dainty—an immense basin of thick sour cream. And when she placed herself at the table before these, she said—“Now I only want one thing to make my pleasure perfect.”

From a deep sleep that night I was awoke by loud groans. In the adjoining room I found the poor Baroness seized, as I feared, with cholera. But she seemed to be more aware of the nature of the disorder herself, and persisted that a copious draught of oil and vinegar would remove it. This dose was procured: but for three days the illness continued; and after all Friherrinan found the raw salmon and sour cream of Falun as dangerous to her as its great copper mine had proved to me.

CHAPTER VI.

WE reached Leksand on Midsummer-eve; such had been our object, in order to see the curious spectacle of the Dalecarlians coming over the Lake to the parish church on Midsummer-morn.

The 24th of June was, in Scandinavian mythology, the festival of Balder the Good: the principle of Light overcome by Loke, the power of darkness. In what the Swedes now call "the old religion"—that is, its first form of Christian faith—the 24th of June was the festival of St John the Baptist, as it still is in most Christian lands: but in the younger, or Lutheran age of Sweden,

the 24th of June is Midsummer's-day, and appears to unite or retain the traditions of the Odin mythology with those of "the old religion." It is celebrated very much as the festival of this beautiful Pan of the North might be—the day of the God of Summer, when Light triumphs, or Balder is delivered from the enthrallment of Loke: yet, though saints' days are said to belong to the old time, traditional practices are observed here as they are in many other places, though traditional faith may change its object or be lost altogether.

Thus while Midsummer-day is celebrated very much as May-day used to be in old England, when England was merry as well as old, yet in the country parishes the churches are thronged; there are prayers and preachings as well as rejoicings, and to one unacquainted with modern faith in Sweden, the perpetuation of the old Balder festival, and the celebration of a holyday as such are celebrated in Roman Catholic lands, might appear to blend in the Protestant celebration of what is now simply Midsummer's-day.

Balder, indeed—not to stretch that beau-

tiful myth to its more spiritual signification—is here triumphant. Light has regained the empire; Loke now lies bound—all nature has wept her God from Hela.

Plentiful is nature's weeping ere winter retires and summer comes in:—the trees weep, the earth weeps, everything weeps—for frost and snow dissolve. Nature weeps Balder to life, as Undine wept her knight to death.

And on Balder's festival Light reigns—reigns all day and all night. At midnight the sun stands up in the sky, far off there in the frozen North. And near to this, though we have not reached to that altitude—yet near to this I have noted the hands of my watch on its gold dial plate by daylight, at just 11.30 p.m., when the sky was red as we see it an hour after sunset on a summer's eve in England.

It was, if I recollect aright, at a post station named Hyby—a hamlet on a hill—that we stopped near to midnight on the 22nd of June, the night before Midsummer's-eve, for post-horses which were not in waiting. In these stations a room for travellers is

always open, in which are usually two beds. One or two reasons prevented me from trying their qualities, so while Friherrinan did so I remained sitting in our open carriage : I was in silence and solitude, our skjuts had gone away—the half-awake woman that had arisen from sleep at our call was asleep again : the Baroness was in balmy slumber beneath some slippy sort of things that formed all the coverings of the “post-bed :” but, unless poetically, they had not

“Left the world to darkness and to me.”

Wonderfully beautiful was the midnight hour passed at the door of that dark, dirty, miserable post-station.

Deep in the West lingered the red glow of the sunken sun, but twilight was not around us ; the pale pure light was clear and soft ; not the least movement stirred the air. I sat in the carriage, read a little, just to say I had read at midnight without artificial light—threw the book on the opposite seat, and contemplated the scene.

In that short space of time, while I had read a psalm in our prayer-book, the red clouds seemed to have shifted from one quar-

ter of the heavens to the other. Red clouds came streaking all the sky-broken wavy lines, grey, blue, red, and white; and lo!—the day was dawning ere the day had closed; the sun was rising ere we could say the sun had fully set. It was Balder's festival; Light was triumphant. Not even a mosquito—bitter, biting pest of the North—winded its terrible horn; it was the festival of Balder the Mild, the God of Nature—even mosquitoes abstained from cruelty and bloodshed.

Forth came our skjuts, reckoning two o'clock in the morning as we reckon six in England.

Friherrinan is aroused, and, having slept, requires the morning cup of coffee to waken her: after which she pities me for having lost such a good sleep.

So in broad daylight, but in the cool of two o'clock in the morning, we continue our journey to Leksand.

The little inn of this, perhaps to English travellers, best known parish of Dalarne, is on the borders of the fine Lake Silja, through which the Dal Elf flows on its course. This inn was now so full that my travelling

companion told me the hostess could not provide any room good enough for an English lady, except by giving me the sofa in the little parlour. I was fain to accept this, though the window on the ground floor opened on the road where all the noise and bustle of a Midsummer night was to be.

The Baroness, being, as she pathetically said, only a Swede, took the remoter chamber that was not suitable to an English traveller.

After a restless night, the advantage of having a lower room became at last evident, when at a much earlier hour than we had anticipated our hostess hurriedly announced that the boats were coming in.

Not being able to find the more private chamber of my companion, I ran out alone, and met three Frenchmen who had come there with the same object as ourselves, but their travelling servant and interpreter not being at hand, they could not make out where to go for a view. A small lane was at hand, leading through some hilly ground to the Lake; we all hastened along it, and,

ascending a low hill, beheld the curious sight we had expected.

The water for a considerable space was thickly covered with boats filled with the Dalkarlers and Dalkullers. The long white coats, red waistcoats, blue stockings, and broad-rimmed hats of the men, and the gay, picturesque costume of the women, in red caps and boddices, wide linen sleeves, the bright short petticoats, and scarlet stockings, looked singularly picturesque when thus seen in the warm Midsummer sun, as they came over the sparkling Lake, with music playing, and from twelve to twenty pairs of oars to each boat; while the uncouth sounds of their voices, as they talked, sung, or laughed, added another of the charms of novelty to the scene for the foreigners who beheld it.

There was a grand race to get first to land, and a fine young Dalkarl won it and jumped first on the bank, dragging with him a blooming, laughing Dalkulla; and a shout was set up from some of the other boats.

Whoever gets first over this water on this Midsummer-morn is a lucky man before it

comes round again. If he is, as English advertisers politely express it, "without encumbrance," he is sure to have that encumbrance when he rows over Lake Silja the next Midsummer-morn;—or, in plainer words, if he is unmarried, he is to get that year the greatest of earthly blessings—namely, a wife; and surely, with such a haven of bliss in prospect, it is no wonder that the unencumbered Dalkarls pull so hard for land.

Whether purposely so arranged or not I cannot tell, but the last of the boat cargoes consisted of a bride and bridegroom. Perhaps they were making atonement for their haste last year.

Never did I see a droller figure than that bride. She reminded one of those pictures of what we call savages, decked with chains of shells and beads; but her ornaments were of real value, especially one to which with smiles of pride she drew my notice—it was a sort of collar, which I believe was really of gold. But these ornaments are heirlooms; they serve many daughters of a family for their wedding gear, and descend in regular

succession from generation to generation. Neither dress or customs change here, and fashion is, happily, a word still unknown. It was not a little curious to see this quantity of valuable ornament appearing above a pair of immensely thick, high wooden shoes, legs cased in red stockings to the knees, and a fine coloured short petticoat, with an apron embroidered into it in front.

She had on her head a high and ornamented crown, which they assured me was also of gold ; and pointed out to me her girdle, which has still its ancient significance. In a true Dalecarlian home of the better sort of peasant farmers, or Bonder, the stock of family goods, in wearing apparel, ornaments, drinking cups of silver gilt, and plain silver, appears in the same contrast with their simple costume, and daily hard-working lives.

That fine young man who leaped on shore first kept looking at me with a very intelligent expression while I was thus examining the bride, who stood under a tree, and with a modest, yet kind and smiling face and eyes, submitted to the inspection

and pointed out what she most prized amongst her finery. I fancied he must be the bridegroom; for as the women walk alone, and the men alone, I did not know which was the happy one among the latter.

But the handsome young man, seeing the mistake I was in, or suspecting it, shook his head and pointed to the very least atom of a man I had as yet seen bearing the name of a Dalsman. If the slanderous old saying be true, the wonder was quickly explained by the immediate announcement that followed my glance at the bridegroom—he is a tailor.

A similar race to this over the water on Midsummer's-morn takes place with similar results to the first service on Christmas-day; but in the latter case it is a sledge-race. Whoever gets first home from the church on that great morn of church-going, is either to get a wife, or to get his harvest in first that year. This service, which is called Julotta—the first word being in sound precisely our old Yule—is held at six o'clock, and as the people not only here in Dalarne, but in many of the country parts of Sweden, have

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often twenty or thirty miles to go to it, and even more than that, they frequently start in the evening or at midnight; and on returning there is grand sledge-racing, horns blowing to clear the way, and great danger run to life or limb in order to secure the happy omen.

The young man who had indicated to me the true bridegroom wanted to speak to me, but he was ashamed to speak to an English stranger; the Baroness, however, had come up, and seeing she was a Swede, he begged her to ask the Engelsk Fruntimmer a question for him. What was it?—How long would it take him to walk from Dalecarlia to London? I answered the question as well as I could; whereon he requested leave, through his spokeswoman, to propound another. He thought, I fancy, that as I was a foreigner, I must possess universal knowledge: therefore he begged to ask me—if Russia would make war on Sweden! To which I answered, that I knew a great Russian Lord in Stockholm who was quite friendly with the King and with the Czar also. This caused him to look thoughtful; but after a time he brought out the all-sufficing Swedish ejaculation—*Jaså!* but, for

all that, Russia had taken Finland, and might like to take all Sweden too: but that she could not do.

Why not? I demanded—Russia was more powerful.

Nay! Nay! Sweden would be the strongest, for the Dalkarls would fight.

And so our politics and reasonings ended. The liberal party in Sweden were prone to talk, at that time, of the designs of Russia on their country; and, indeed, a hatred of Russia, or its absence, is generally an index of the court or the anti-court party.

The mass of the Dalecarlians had moved on to the church; but feeling it expedient to breakfast before going there, we re-entered the inn, and when, after that meal, we tried to enter the church we found it very difficult to do so.

The church is large, as almost all the churches here are, for they belong to "the old time," and though deformed by the modern taste for whitewash and galleries, and hermetic pews, still retain some points of interest, and many vestiges of a simpler state. The church of Leksand is now a wilderness of pews, and the pulpit being, not

before the altar—that sight is not seen in Sweden—but at the same end of the church, the altar, from where I sat, could not be seen.

The curiosity of the church was its present occupation, being full as it could possibly hold of the Dalecarlians, in their primitive costume, and evincing all that quiet, rather stolid and determined-seeming piety for which their forefathers were famous, and to which, although its outward form of expression, and even the doctrines of its faith, are changed, they still cling more or less *because* their forefathers, they believe, did so.

Never was there a place where historic lore—I was about to say, historic tradition—is more said to prevail than in Dalecarlia; that is to say, the lore that relates to that all-important and best known period of Swedish history, the time of Gustaf Wasa; and seldom is historic lore more one-sided than it is found here. No English traveller, one may venture to assert, has ever entered this region, at least has ever written about it, without telling of Gustavus Vasa; for which

reason—even in the Falun mine, where he is said to have worked—I did not think it necessary to speak of him: being, moreover, on more than one point, dissentient from the majority concerning the great founder of the now ended Wasa line on the throne of Sweden. But while every English traveller who has put his travels on paper tells the story of Gustaf I, and lauds the zeal of the Dalecarlians, I do not know one who finishes the story by saying that the Dalecarlians—who first rejected, and afterwards joined him—made no less than three insurrections against him when he was, chiefly by their means, installed on the throne. This is the side of history on which this traditional people do not look, any more than the travellers through the hiding haunts of Gustaf Wasa. The Dalecarlians were as zealous for their faith then as now. I believe they would fight for their psalm-bok now, if it were to be taken away from them, just as they fought for their bells when Gustaf I took them from the churches to pay the national debt. There was a war then, a civil war, called in Swedish history “the war of the Bells:” just so there might be a

war called, in future history, "the war of the Psalm-books."

What their forefathers were, they are. As the fathers fought for the old religion, when they began to see the King would take it from them, so the sons would fight for the new.

In this war of the Bells there appeared, says Geijer, at the head of the insurgents men who had heretofore been the most faithful adherents of the King. The peasants of the Dales declared that to come across the Dal at Brunbäck was what no king or lord had ever dared without their leave, and that King Gustaf should not enter their land without a safe conduct, nor with more followers than they should appoint. Having more insurrections on his hands than he could then well manage, the King, when he heard this, remarked that it was the time of the Dalesmen at that moment, but that the King's time was coming: and he directly nominated one of the chief leaders of the insurgents to be the Governor of Dalarne!

And the King's time came when his adversary, the miserable Christian of Denmark, was dethroned and cast into a dark prison; where,

richest miner in the Kopparberg, and of whom it is popularly said, that he shod his horses with silver. In the commencement of the year 1533 Gustavus cited his own retainers, with those of his nobles, to meet at Westerås. No man knew against whom this armament was really directed, although rumour spoke of new complots by the factionaries of King Christian. To his captains the King's injunctions were—"Wheresoever ye see me advance, thither haste ye speedily after." The expedition took its way to the Dale country, whose inhabitants had lately sent representatives to Westerås. These the King detained, and in their stead despatched proclamations to the Dalecarlians, purporting that "he well knew that little of what had happened could be imputed to the common people; he came only to hold an inquisition upon the guilty, whom it was meet they should cast out from among them." He invited them all to come to a conference at the Kopparberg. The King arrived as soon as the letters, and the commonalty assembled, some with goodwill, others by constraint. Troops, as on the previous occasion, encompassed the assembly. First, several lords of the council

spoke to the people, afterwards the King himself. "He questioned the Dalesmen whether they remembered their promise made six years before, when he had pardoned the revolt then commenced? This bout should be the last. He would suffer no province in his kingdom to be hostile; for the future theirs should be either obedient, or so desolated that neither hound nor cock should be heard in it. He asked them where they would have that border which their King should not dare to overleap. To such insolence he, at least, would not submit. After this fashion the King spoke to them, long and sharply, during which time the whole people *were on their knees*. He called on them to deliver up the instigators of the last sedition, which they forthwith did. Five of them were tried, and executed upon the spot; the rest carried prisoners to Stockholm, where, the following year, three were put to death, and among them Anders Person of Rankhytta, in whose barn Gustavus had thrashed corn. Thus ended the third and last rising of the Dalecarlians against Gustavus Wasa."

Such is the account of the Swedish historian.

Anders Person was the man whom Gustaf served as a labourer during his wanderings, and who sent him away in safety when he found out who he was. The barn is shown to strangers, but the final fate of its owner is not, that I am aware of, told. The house of the other Person is also preserved at Ornäs, from which the fugitive escaped by means of the man's wife, while he was occupied in bringing the officers of Christian of Denmark to seize him.

The admixture of our Henry VIII and a more disagreeable character—Oliver Cromwell, blending with one that had no affinity to either, strikes me as making up the character, and in great degree representing the actions and life of Gustavus Wasa. "It belongs," says Geijer, "to truth not to conceal that the two sides of his administration ran into the opposite extremes of despotism and demagoguism; and stood besides, in relation to each other, as fraud and force."

Thus the man who robbed a church of its plate sent instead a copy of the Bible, which asks—"Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me."

With all his kinsmen the King had con-

troversies as to the inheritance of property. He regarded himself moreover as heir-general to all the plate and moveable goods of the churches, convents, and ecclesiastical foundations, not forgetting even copper kettles and tin cups, and took the place of the bishops as co-heir to all clerical estates, and was not content with the smallest share. When vacancies occurred, he applied to his own use in many cases the revenues of the greater benefices, paying the inferior clergy himself. In addition to these matters of gain, he engaged personally in the pursuits of agriculture, mining, and trade in all the productions of the country, more largely than any of his subjects, and by these means amassed great wealth. To his bailiffs he was a terror, and thus like himself, in questions of property, they were by no means scrupulous. At Salberg, where, as usual in the greater mines, there was at this time an asylum for all except atrocious criminals, a weekly payment of twopence (öre) was made to the King, even from "improper characters who herded there for their roguery and dissolute living." On the other hand, the King did not spare his

own property for the service of the State. A war had exhausted all his resources, and to this was to be added the calamity of a conflagration in the castle of Stockholm, "where we," he says, "went out of it so bare, that we had no more than a jerkin and a silver can from which we might drink." In 1537 he began again to lay up money; the *Dacke* feud, he complains, cost him what he had gathered in seven years. Commencing his hoard anew, he was able to leave at his death, notwithstanding the war of his last years, and the extraordinary expenses which marriages in the royal family and Erik's English wooing occasioned, four large vaulted apartments full of silver—called, from one of his chamberlains, Master Eskil's cellars—besides several storehouses filled with valuable wares.

There were also estates which the King took into his own management in order to maintain on them quotas of foot and horse soldiers; on many of these (appropriated) estates tillage and the breeding of cattle were carried on on a great scale. At Gripsholm, where formerly was a monastic estab-

lishment, Queen Margaret had the charge of a dairy which required the services of twenty-two dairymaids, and her kingly husband wrote thus to his bailiff on the subject: "Our dear housewife, Margaret, complains to us that the milch cows which Sigfrid Jonson sent to Gripsholm were not so good as they ought to have been. Wherefore admonish him strictly that we are little satisfied that he does not give more heed to what he is commanded." On the royal farms the peasants were obliged to perform day-service, and the bailiffs are enjoined to deal occasionally with them in this matter. We do not find that the King ever doubted the rectitude of his own conduct, or was much concerned at his violations of individual rights. These seemed to him to be merged in the higher prosperity of the whole community, which he never ceases to extol in contrast with former times, and often in terms which attest a deep feeling for well-ordered domestic happiness.

Yet never did a historic page present a deeper scene of domestic misery, guilt, and grief than that which records the domestic

history of the family of Gustavus Wasa. The wild Erik, the cruel John, the violent Magnus, driven into fierce insanity by being compelled by one brother to sign the death-warrant of another; the lovely, unfortunate Cæcilia—each child at war with the other—and their father, unhappy in his first marriage, had taken for his second wife the destined bride of another.*

The man who became one of the chief causes of the ruin of his unhappy son and successor was first employed by Gustavus Wasa in the work of improving, or appropriating the estates he thus made his own, devising, says Geijer, laws of economic improvement not always practicable, but proving, at least, that he considered the kingdom as his own property. One of his bailiffs requested to know the royal pleasure concerning the property of a rich man who was deceased, "having remembered the King in his will," bequeathing

* It is related that after her marriage with the King, her former betrothed having one day been surprised on his knees before her by the abrupt entrance of Gustavus, the Queen exclaimed, "My Lord, he craves the hand of my sister in marriage!" And the marriage took place.

him a portion, as both the clergy and laity now did, instead of, as in former days, leaving something to the Church. The King, wisely considering that he now represented the Church, replied that the bishops in such cases used formerly to grasp almost all, but the heirs of the deceased might give in a memorial of their sentiments in regard to the evangelical doctrine, and he would then consider the matter further. "He did not," adds the historian, who is at the same time the eulogist of this monarch, "always wait for the demise of the owners of inheritances."

Yet the name of Gustaf Wasa is as a touchstone to Swedish enthusiasm—it is a rather singular contradiction of the saying that "the good which men do dies with them; the evil lives after them."

In England we may find fault with Queen Elizabeth, provided that we at the same time blame Queen Mary; but in Sweden, as the native historian I have quoted wisely says, the history of Gustaf Wasa is "a history written by the people;" and what the people have written the people will not allow to be contradicted.

At the Diet of Westerås, where the religion of Sweden may be said to have been changed, the scene in the hall of the Dominican Convent is thus related: it is quite a national one—still descriptive of national character.

Bishop Brask being called upon to reply to the royal statement, that prelate declared that he knew indeed well in what fealty he was bound to his King, yet that he and his whole class were also obliged to render obedience to the Pope in spiritual things, and could not, without his sanction, consent either to any alteration of doctrine, or to a diminution of the rights and property of the Church. Had worthless priests and monks sought gain by encouraging superstitious usages, which the heads of the Church themselves disapproved, such practices might be abrogated and punished.

The King inquired of the council and the nobility whether they deemed this a fair answer? Thure Jenson declared that he knew of none better. "Then have we no will," exclaimed Gustavus, "longer to be your King. From you we had expected another answer; but now we cannot wonder that the common people should give us all manner of diso-

bedience and misliking, when they have such ringleaders. Get they not rain, the fault is ours; if sunshine fail them, 'tis the same cry; if bad years, hunger, and pest come, so must we bear the blame. All of ye will be our masters; monks, and priests, and creatures of the Pope ye set over our heads, and for all toils for your welfare we have no other reward to expect than that ye would gladly see the axe at our neck, and any of you would grasp its handle. Who would be your King on such terms? Not the worst fiend in hell, much less a man. Therefore, look to it that ye release me fairly from the government, and restore me that which I have disbursed from my own stock for the general weal; then will I depart, and never see again my ungrateful fatherland." The King at these words burst into tears, and hastily quitted the hall.

The penitent Swedes soon sent a deputation after him, who found him in the Castle of Westerås, "taking his pleasure with his captains." To their request that he would continue the government, he returned a severe answer, and only suffered himself to relent when a fresh deputation, on their knees, and

with tears that atoned for those that had been drawn from the royal eyes, implored him to yield to the wishes of the people, who, when he came among them again, were ready to kiss his feet—"although a great number of them soon forgot this transaction, and were no better than before."

Gustavus, whose great object in the religious reformation in Sweden was the absorption of all power, authority, and wealth in his own person, was at once inclined to reconstitute the Church on the Presbyterian model, and "displeased with his Protestant clergy, reproaching his new instructors that by incautious alterations of the old usages of the Church they offended the simple, and showed besides an eager inclination to master his person and government."

At his death he was heard to exclaim that he had busied himself too much with the cares of this world, and when one asked him if he needed aught, he replied—"The kingdom of Heaven, which thou can'st not give me."

Towards the last there was a better hope. The Protestant priest, who had vainly ex-

horted him to confess his sins, was at length listened to ; and afterwards, beckoning for writing materials, the dying man wrote, "Once confessed, so persist, or a hundred times repeated"—but neither the sense nor the continuation of the sentence were known.

The priest continued his exhortations, and bending to the ear of the speechless man, said, "If thou believe in Jesus Christ, and hear my voice, give us some sign thereof."

To the surprise of all, the King answered, with a loud voice, "Yes!" and then died.

But while I am writing all this, there is standing near to the inn at Leksand an object which is really more interesting to myself, and may be so to some of my friends, than the great Gustavus Wasa. That object is a Midsummer pole—a May-pole we should call it in old England ; it is as tall almost as the fir-trees, and wreathed from top to bottom with leaves and flowers. There goes the dance round that pole all the long Midsummer evening ; and in the field wherein it stands the old games of the people still go on.

It is a droll sight to see the great strong women, in their enormous, high-heeled wooden

shoes, and immensely thick short petticoats, with legs of no slight circumference cased in scarlet stockings, capering about in the polska; it always reminds me of the frisking cows one sees dashing about in the meadows on a hot day. The men, in long white coats, leathern girdles, conical broad-rimmed hats, and long lank hair, hanging low at each side of the face, and cut square at the ends, are usually of great weight also—a fine, tall, powerful race—but they do not look so odd waltzing as their partners do, with their flat, square-shaped waists, and vast solidity of form.

CHAPTER VII.

JUST before we started from Leksand for Rättvik—the name of which place, being a familiar one to travellers in Dalarne, we had somehow settled in our minds as that of one where we should spend a Sunday—our host told us that a postilion from Stockholm was also going to Rättvik, and wished to be allowed to drive our carriage.

“ Whose postilion was he ? ” I demanded.

“ The King’s, certainly, ” our host answered, with that tone of grave importance with which the word King is here spoken. It was an unexpected honour to have a royal postilion ;

and when he appeared, all I wondered at was that his hat had a golden band instead of a silver one.

“How droll to have one of the King’s servants for our driver!” I said to Friherrinan.

“One of the King’s servants, certainly; that is what you call a postman in England, one who carries letters.”

“Oh! postilion is Swedish for postman?”

“Yes; this postman is going to Rättvik to see a troll-woman, or conjuror.”

“What! all the way from Stockholm, some hundred miles?”

“Yes; he lost a money-letter, and he believes the wise woman will tell him who stole it. Unless he finds that out he will lose his place.”

Instead of reaching Rättvik church, as we thought to do, in time for service, we did not get even near to it until the afternoon. We had told our royal postilion that we were going to Rättvik, but we did not know that that was the name of the parish, and that the post-station was named Utby. Instead, therefore, of stopping at the hamlet so named, we were driven along a country about four or

five English miles further, and stopped outside the large wooden gates which enclosed the court of the Prestgård, or the priest's house.

I was very tired, and by no means well, and not knowing exactly what to do in such a predicament, we desired our postilion to enter a side-door and enquire the distance to the next station. He managed the matter as he judged most *apropos*, simply saying an English lady was at the gate, who was tired and not well. Presently the large gates opened, and a substantial figure, with a comfortable, happy, easy-going countenance attached to it, appeared at them, attired in a many-hued thick dressing-gown, and with a long, stout pipe in one hand.

The Baroness was now the spokeswoman, and with profuse apologies enquired where we could get lodgings for the night.

“Here,” said the priest, for such he was; and with a low bow and a wave of the pipe, flinging both gates open, added, “that he was much honoured in offering hospitality to the English lady.”

The carriage was put up: the postilion went off to his troll-woman; the Baroness pre-

sented herself with all her styles and titles, and many low curtsies; and I was lodged in a nice, clean, prettily furnished room, in what I think might be termed the stranger's house, always a supplement to country dwellings in Sweden, and in which I have had the fortune to be lodged except when at the houses of the richer nobility.

When I was refreshed I was conducted into the family house, where Friherrinan was already at home with the priest and priestess, and the usual amount of sons and daughters which grace the hospitable homes of these zealous Lutherans. I was installed on the seat of honour—the sofa, which Swedish modesty must hesitate to accept—and the worthy priest came and sat beside me, and his pipe filled up each pause my faltering accents made.

Church duties were over for the day, and in no country of the world does a priest more thoroughly enjoy the afternoon of Sunday ease or recreation than here: the dressing-gown, the pipe, tea, or something else, out in the open air, and a game of cards to sum up all—this we found at many a Prestgård was

a sober manner of spending the Sunday afternoon.

And there is so much hospitality and good-nature, so much innocent wonderment at the Protestant English not playing cards or dancing on Sunday evenings, that our national pugnacity is kept in check.

The Lutheran Decalogue omits the second commandment, and divides the tenth, as the Roman Catholic Church also does; therefore our fourth commandment is the third of the Swedes, and stands thus in their Catechism in briefer words, "Remember to make holy the day of rest." And in answer to the question, "What is that?" the Catechumen says, "We shall fear and love God, so that we despise not preaching and God's word, but consider it holy, hear it willingly, and learn."

There is not much, then, so far as the teaching of their Church goes, to afflict Swedish consciences in what *we* would term their "breach of the fourth commandment." They are generally well satisfied that they keep their third; for they do not "despise preaching," which in their Catechism is set forth as the first explanation of that commandment's significancy.

Rättvik church is to be noted for two reasons—one on account of the always-to-be-heard-of Gustavus Wasa, who here first addressed the men of Dalarne as they came out from service; whose characteristic answer was that they must ascertain the sentiments of their neighbours before they promised him help; and also that the wooden tower of this church was for a long time perforated by arrows that had been afterwards shot at the unfortunate Danes who had taken refuge in it. The second reason is on account of the fine view over Lake Silja and the adjacent country which the top of this tower affords.

It is a curious circumstance, which Rättvik church recalls to mind, that the first man in Dalecarlia who took arms in the cause of Gustaf was a Dane. Having killed one of those officials whose exactions under Christian of Denmark rendered them hateful to the Swedes, his own self-defence tended to serve the cause of the fugitive hero. Subsequently, a large party of Danish soldiers having crossed the ice on Siljan Lake, the church bells aroused the people of Rättvik parish; the Danes were attacked, taken by surprise, and

those who were not killed took refuge in the tower of the church: the arrows that flew after them are said to have remained sticking in the wood for more than a hundred years; but the lives of the soldiers were spared.

Presten—for in Sweden all persons being called by their titles or offices, one must say priest, or the priest, every time a clergyman is addressed—Presten was gratified by our desire to visit his church. Prestinna—that is Mrs Priest, or as my Swedish dictionary more precisely interprets it, Priestess—accompanied us thither with him. Over the altar was an organ, the usual west-end gallery being occupied by a “front box” for the use of Presten’s family.

In general the altar of these churches is the pleasing part, but in this instance the case was different.

The worthy priest of Rättvik quite agreed with us, and said the altar ought to be the most honourable part of a church; to which the priestess objected, that if the organ were not there the family pew would be sacrificed. A severe loss, especially as it was painted, if I recollect right, a light blue colour.

My good old hostess in Stockholm, a clever woman in her way—who thought she knew a deal of England—used often to say triumphantly to me: “It is a fact, Madame, that the character of a people may be known by their love of light. A people of intelligence, of a frank, free, gladsome temper and upright character, love a great deal of light; so we Swedes have always plenty of light about us, whereas you in England must pay a penalty if you only put a little window in your rooms beyond the number the law allows you.”

I never disputed the good lady’s ideas, from which, however, I usually derived more information concerning my own country than I did of her’s. Nevertheless, whenever I enter the churches of the latter, I recollect the national characteristic, for there you see that, instead of aiming at

“A dim religious light,”

light, to be religious, must not be dim. “A right glad and lightsome church,” with plenty of whitewash and plenty of square-paned windows, is really a joy both to the priests and priestesses. There are exceptions, so far

as the whitewash is concerned, for one church in this province is all painted over, pews and galleries and all, with the scenes and figures of scripture history, some of them rather calculated to distract devotional feeling. These paintings were I suppose of a distant, yet of a Protestant date, as in "the old time" neither the pews nor galleries existed.

After our inspection of the church, we had tea in the air, in a little shady spot where it seemed the joy of the good priest's heart to sit and smoke his pipe. Glimpses of the Lake were seen before us, and kindness and hospitality were around us:—and we never had met before, and never, in human probability, as they say, may meet again.

Mysterious thought! There is more than a probability, there is a certainty that is not human, that we shall meet again—meet when "there is no more sea"—when none of the limitations of earth, natural or artificial, shall be known any more—when even jarring creeds shall cease—when all shall know, all shall believe. O! would that then, too, all at last should love!

The next day we took leave of our new

and hospitable friends, bearing with us, together with the memory of their kindness, a less lasting remembrance of Rättvik Prestgård in the form of a home-made loaf of white bread, without caraway seeds—a treasure for me, for the little white bread I could ever see was sweetened into a sort of cake.

Alas! that I should have taken away a memento of another kind!

The grass was rather high about my feet where I sat drinking tea, while the slow puffs from the priest's great pipe,

“In linked sweetness long drawn out,”

came between me and the summer air, causing an involuntary grimace in spite of politeness; but the idea that any woman, or anything “of woman born” could dislike smoke, was one that perhaps never entered the brain of a priest of Dalarne. However, all the time that I was thus sitting with my feet in the grass, I was conscious of a curious sensation, though it did not at the time occur to me that I was being devoured alive by those cruel insects of prey—the mosquitoes.

I had suffered from them before, but it was only from that evening I learned truly to dread them ; and, singularly enough, from this time their pursuit was unremitting ; nor could all my horror, nor all my devices in self-defence, save me from these savage creatures. Smothered in double veils, I have to my consternation beheld the same frightful visage when I next stood before a looking-glass : trying to snatch a moment's sleep, with my whole head closely swathed in thick home-made linen, I have felt, or fancied I felt, their horrid fangs, and, believing that myriads of them had got beneath the covering, it has been frantically torn aside, thus admitting the enemy which the action was meant to expel.

It was, however, on reaching Mora, a charming spot at the northern extremity of the Silja, that my real sufferings began.

The inn here is so prettily situated, and has so much of the air of one prepared for travellers—even English ones—that though we had the intention of proceeding at once to the Prestgård, we stopped short and put up the carriage at this inn. The priest of Rättvik had recommended us to his brother priest of Mora,

which is I believe one of the richest parishes of Dalarne. Having travelled at night, however, in order to avoid the fierce heat of the sun, while still enjoying its light, I proposed to take mine ease at my inn for a short time before going again to strangers. Friherrinan set off forthwith to present herself to Presten and Prestinnan, and I entered a room the window-blinds of which were closed. The refreshment of cold water and change of attire is too well known to all who travel to be descanted upon here; but while enjoying it I became rather suddenly conscious both of a thick oppressive gloom in the chamber and of a low murmuring sound that filled it.

Now in general the mosquitoes, especially the large ones which are the trumpeters that herald the advance of the host, come to the assault in an open, daring manner, winding their loud, distinct, terrific horn, which one might indeed suppose—from the noise it makes being so disproportioned to the long-legged, little-bodied mite of a creature it issues from—was a mere bravado, if one did not soon feel the power of the mouth from which, I conclude, it is sounded. I have not studied natural his-

tory very deeply, but the result of experience leads me to believe that this trumpet is never sounded by a full band, but singly, as the creature, four or five times the size of an English midge, comes on with long pendant legs, ravenous as a lion roaring after its prey, giving you warning that he is out on a roving expedition, and causing you to arm in haste for a skirmish in which you are sure to be beaten, for whatever armour you use you will be made to remember the heel of Achilles.

But here, in this room of the Mora inn, there was no loud blast of a trumpet sounding from its four quarters in my terrified ear; there was a scarcely perceptible murmur which made one listen and look around and feel nervous, somewhat as one might do in a house that was said to be haunted. Then a tingling sensation—here—there—everywhere—over one's flesh, causes a start; the window blinds are thrown open—and the room is dark, actually dark with mosquitoes; the air, the little air that could be in it, was thick. If I had breathed hard I must have inhaled multitudes.

Well! I suppose the good people of Mora inn believed I was mad; but I could not help

it, and those who saw me the next day were not surprised at my conduct.

I know not how it comes to pass that the natives scarcely mind being bitten; Friherrinan would show me a bite like a recent spot of the small-pox—it was seldom she got one, and it was small and soon well, but my bites inflamed into great fiery-red swellings a full inch in size, and then—from some fancy, perhaps, for foreign blood—they would eat me alive while they let her sit beside me unassailed. The patience of Job I had not, but in one of his afflictions I resembled him. A curious circumstance is that the bite of the mosquito does not inflame till it is touched; but unhappily I could not refrain from the touch, and from head to foot I was a mass of red angry boils—a sight the most hideous to behold, and afflicted with torments most irritating to feel.

I rushed from the inn of Mora to the Prestgård, to the infinite amazement of all the inhabitants of the former, who assembled in a body to endeavour to comprehend the cause of my half frantic state; and on discovering it, with an awkward attempt to keep from

laughing, assured me I might return with safety at night, for they would get birch rods and switch the marauders to death.

A slaughter of several millions did take place by means of birch twigs; but alas! a million or two lurked in ambuscade, and, discretion being the best part of my valour, I ran away and took refuge with the parish priest of Mora.

An Englishman in Sweden, who is more of a naturalist than myself, informs us that the mosquito lays its eggs in human nostrils, where they produce the effect of violent headaches. The issue of the brood from such a nest on the first summer day must be a little startling to the unconscious foster-parent; and I should fear to be made the unwilling means of smuggling the race into England if I did not, in spite of the veracity of this gentleman's informant, incline to the belief that the Swedish mosquito is too well acquainted with the habits and customs of its country to risk its progeny in a receptacle wherein snuff-taking and tobacco-smoking, with their consequences, must expose them to inevitable danger, and from which they would most probably be untimely precipitated by

the concussion caused by that violent explosion from the national thorax which is accompanied by a noise sufficient to frighten away even mosquitoes from its vicinity.

Thus, taking these national habits into consideration, I do incline to the opinion that the mosquito of Sweden is too sharp-witted to lay its eggs in native human nostrils.

CHAPTER VIII.

NOTWITHSTANDING the severity of my wounds, we spent three days pleasantly in Mora Socken, or the parish of Mora. We dined with the pastor, and had red soup, made of the wild rose berries—a great delicacy here—which the people pitied me much for not being able to relish; but the good home-made bread was to me a greater treat, being white, and without sugar or carraway seeds: and then there is always such nice confectionery in the well-to-do country houses of Sweden, and here we had fish, whereas on our travels we could not obtain either fish or egg, or any one thing

I could eat ; so that, in the lowest sense of enjoyment, it is a treat to get into a substantial Prestgård, where Swedish house-keeping is seen to perfection.

Besides the great pleasure which eatable food afforded, there were others which, as a general rule, it is more in my way to dilate upon.

I went out one morning, and had a strange sort of walk by myself into the midst of a Finnic village—an old settlement of Finns. What a curious spot it was ! how droll to step from the strong glaring sunlight into the outwardly time-blackened, and inwardly Lapp-like wooden huts, where one's fellow-beings had been at work—had, I suppose, known joys as well as sorrows—where, as they would doubtless say, however the exquisites of this world might wonder—they had lived—from generation to generation the same. There has human industry gone on, and there immortal souls have dwelt, praying, “ Our Father,” even as we do ;—praying “ Give us this day our daily bread,”—while these human beings worked for it, and were content with their portion,—though

it appeared, as I actually beheld it, in the form of a hard, black cake, composed of rye-flour and blood!

Friherrinan was much amused at the notion of my repugnance to the latter ingredient; and when she related it to the worthy parish priest, he looked a little shocked, and, in a low voice, asked if I were a Jewess.

The Swedes—who delight, as indeed all the nations of the world do, in relating the blunders of English travellers—have often told me that some Englishman recorded in his journal the fact that every Dalecarlian peasant was a shoemaker; and that another related that every Dalecarlian peasant was a tailor; another that he was a hatter—in short, that each traveller, according to his own experience, as he had chanced to have seen the people engaged in one work or the other, announced the trade he had seen carried on to be the universal one: whereas the fact is that the Dalkarler is Jack-of-all-trades, and the man who was seen to be a shoemaker by one traveller was the same that was seen to be a tailor by another.

Here, in a dark Finnic hut, I lighted on a watchmaker—an old man, intent on his curious work; we could only converse with our eyes, for he did not speak Swedish intelligible to me, but his eyes were full of intelligence, and made me think—think of the mysteries of life, of human nature.

In his window were some watches which deserved a place in a museum; they were shaped like a double saucer, and about as large as an old-fashioned one.

After this walk I went to see a cellar where the Dalecarlian Lion, Gustaf Wasa, lay concealed. And here a circumstance occurred which I am sure will subject me to the critical charge—always to me unintelligible—of book-making, if I repeat it; I will do so, however, and *literally*.

One warm day, in Stockholm, I had walked on a special mission up the heights of Södör: I was coming down the hill, excessively tired and heated, not being yet quite recovered from the lameness caused by a fall from a sledge on the ice, when the aspect of one of those sheds common in England, as well as Sweden, for the sale of cakes and such

articles, tempted me to ask leave to rest. While I sat there I laughed—and at what?—at the sound of another laugh. It was a laugh at the entrance of that little booth: a young Dalkulla laid down a pair of milk cans, and that laugh came which not the austerest nun or monk in Christendom could abstain from at least silently joining in! It was not what is called a hearty laugh—it was a laugh from the heart—there was innocence in its mirth; it was a pure, good, young laugh—a laugh one joins in without knowing why, while in other laughs one tries to join in vain.

I spoke to the young Dalkulla, in whose great blue eyes the laugh without sound was repeated, and as we spoke, I chanced to say that I intended to go to Dalarne.

“Nay, Madame cannot go,” she responded, rather mournfully, shaking her red-capped head; “*I* cannot go, therefore Madame certainly cannot.”

I recollected that *go*—in Swedish *gå*, and pronounced just like our own little word, meant only to walk; to “go on foot” is a laughable phrase in Sweden, for no other

way of "going" could be thought of; and when I recollected this I explained that I would travel, or journey, thither.

"Shall Frun journey even to Mora?" asked the young girl, earnestly.

I thought only of the Mora Stone, or Mora Stein, in Upland, near Upsala, and intending to go there, I replied that I should probably do so.

"Ack! would Frun see King Gustaf's Well? and would Frun see her father and her mother? Her father kept the well, and showed it to strangers. And would Frun tell her mother that she was alive, and not to fear; she would come home one day. Yes, she was good; she should see them yet one day."

There was a singular earnestness in the girl's look and manner of speaking; and when I assured her that if I went to Mora I would do what she asked, her thankfulness was simple and hearty. There was something touching in her trustfulness; the promise of a stranger—a foreigner whom she had not seen before, and should not see again, was sacred to her. To the pure all things are pure; to the truthful most things are true.

When I went to see the famous Morastein, the ancient crowning stone of Sweden, but

which much disappointed my expectations, I thought of this young Dalecarlian and her father and mother. I asked about King Gustaf's Well, but could hear nothing of it, nor see any traces of them ; and from that time I thought of her no more.

I had quite forgotten the little circumstance I have related, until, at some hundred miles distance from the Mora Stone, it was brought to my recollection in the following manner.

There is, not far from Mora Prestgård, a cellar, in an old peasant house, which has been, as we say, immortalised by the tradition that Gustaf Wasa got into it one day when his foes were at hand, and was saved by the good wife's cleverness in rolling a barrel over the trap-door. This is one of the great lions of Dalecarlia, and Friherrinan looked into the dark hole with unbounded veneration. Perhaps it was in order to account for some deficiency on my part that she explained, to the poor woman who makes a small profit by the great Gustaf's hiding-place, that I was a foreigner.

The old Dalkulla looked at me with pity, and asked if I were not very far from my home ? " England," she said, " was perhaps even further from Dalarne than Stockholm."

“Had she ever been at Stockholm?” I asked, thinking that if she knew the distance to a place that seemed to her the ultima thule, I could better give her a notion of the distance it was to England.

She looked mournful, and shaking her head, said, “No; she and her husband were too old to go so far.” Then, her eyes filling with tears, she seemed to take another thought, and added, “Yes, she must go there; she could not die happy if she did not; if she had even to see the King himself,”—the final resource of this simple people in trouble—“she would find out what had become of her daughter.”

On hearing this I at once recollected the laughing Dalkulla of Stockholm, and reflected that the word I had mistaken to mean “well” really meant cellar. This, then, was King Gustaf’s cellar at Mora, and this was that young girl’s mother.

I put a hand on her arm and said,

“I have seen your daughter, she is living and well in Stockholm.”

She looked at me doubtingly at first—then she cried, in emotion,

“If that be so she is worse to us than if she were dead: for she has spent the winter there, and neither come nor sent since she left us this summer twelve months ago.”

It is considered a bad sign when a young woman chooses to remain the winter at Stockholm, instead of returning home with her summer earnings. I knew this, yet I could not give up a strong instinctive faith in that young girl. I gave the mother the message she had given me, and I said she must forgive her daughter; I was sure she was a good girl.

“That she always had been,” the weeping mother replied; “but why did the noble lady think so?”

“From her laugh,” I answered, and I could hardly forbear laughing at myself as I said so. But such a laugh never, I believed, came from a heart that was not good and innocent.

I need not record the answering exclamations—I often use the common and *painless* one, “Ack!” instead of the string of national, and alas! sacred words that burst so fluently from the lips of the natives of all classes in this country.

“Ack! it was certainly she herself! Yes, that was her own laugh: she was ever a right gladsome flicka.”

And tidings of that laugh comforted the mother's heart. I hope I proved a true interpreter of laughs, but in this case I have not yet heard of the event.

The priest of Mora brought us to see another of those sights which, if the hero of Dalecarlia had never been recalled by the skaters from this place, would not now remain to be shown to strangers. It was a small mound near the church, from which Gustavus Wasa addressed the people as they came out of church; after which, renouncing his hopes, he set out northward, having been desired by them “to take himself off where he could;” but soon afterwards—being frightened by the tidings brought to them that the Eriksgait, or ancient royal progress of King Christian, was at hand, “that gallows and wheel would mark his way, and if their limbs were left to them un mutilated, a stick in the hand would be the only weapon in future allowed to the Dalesmen, and new taxes for the support of foreign troops would

be imposed"—they sent off runners on those curiously long wooden skates, on which men travel with incredible speed, using one foot and the aid of a pole to propel the motion over the frozen snow. They overtook him on the borders of Norway, and brought him back and made him their chief; and thus a pair of wooden skates may be said to have been the means of changing the fate of Sweden.

Perhaps, had Gustavus Wasa been unsuccessful—had the hunted Gustaf Ericson never come to be King Gustaf the First, one would feel more interest in visiting all his Dalecarlian hiding-places. The romantic interest, however, that hangs over "bonnie Prince Charley's" adventures and fate are wanting here, at least to one who has not shared in the national blessings of Sweden's liberation.

We, however, duly visited all these spots of Swedish notoriety. The barn at Rankhytta is preserved as "a state monument" by a royal decree of 1668: an inscription on the floor marks the spot where King Gustaf threshed; but its proprietor—who had paid the labourer daily wages, and on his discovering him did not betray, but sent him away, was

as aforesaid executed in Stockholm for insurrection against him.

Another barn at Isala has been more highly honoured by Gustavus III. There is outside it a fine porphyry column which bears these words: "Here worked as a thresher Gustaf Eriksson; pursued by the foes of the kingdom, but selected by Providence to be the saviour of the country. His descendant in the sixth generation, Gustaf III, raised this memorial." The barn is still in possession of the family who then owned it.

This spot is near the Svärdsjö,* a fine lake we had once to spend a longer time upon than proved agreeable. The church here is curiously adorned—actually crowned—wearing on its roof two great gilt crowns, one presented by Gustaf Wasa, the other by Queen Christina.

At Ornäs we saw the most famous of all these memorials; the old cottage from whence the wonderful fugitive once more

* In English books the word lake is usually repeated as "Svärdsjö lake;" "the lake of Orsasjön"—but *sjö* signifies lake, and the article is comprised in the *n*.

escaped by the sagacity and kind-heartedness of a woman who has rendered the name of Barbara Stigsdotter, ugly as it is, a memorable one in Sweden. The house is still kept up as a curious sort of trophy, stuffed full of droll figures in the Dalecarlian dress of that time, which seems very much what it is now.

Barbara, who had the merit of being a nobly disobedient wife, saved the future King from the base duplicity of her husband by letting him down, it is said, from an upper window; but it is not a window that is preserved and shown there as the channel of his escape, although we must not venture any further on this dangerous ground.

Taking our leave of it, we must also say that we had already taken our leave of the hospitable priest and priestess of Mora parish, and having crossed the lake in a small steamer, proceeded to Orsa, a pretty spot, on our way to Elfdal, famous for its fine porphyry and the works carried on there, specimens of which can be seen at Stock-

holm; a vase of this porphyry, sent to the Great Exhibition in London, was presented to Prince Albert by King Oscar.

The post-station at Orsa is noted in my memory for two reasons; first, because I saw, while walking in its vicinity, the only three beautiful faces I saw in Dalecarlia, a mother and two young daughters — and, secondly, on account of a singular sort of distress in which we found the good people of the Gästgifvaregård, and were just too late to attempt to relieve.

There was an air of excitement about the quiet, out-of-the-world little place, which was evidently not lessened by the report that an English traveller had arrived. The hostess, in particular, seemed to be in distress, and discovering that my companion was a native, she approached her confidentially, and begged her to ask me to tell them the Swedish for *keek*.

I naturally thought of the English word kick, but knew nothing of keek; however, the reason of the enquiry was soon made known. Some hours previously two English gentlemen had arrived there, as usual, for a

change of horses. From the time that their former skjuits departed, they had, the still wonder-stricken hosts declared, continued to move about, crying "keek, keek!" and saying no other word.

In vain they tried to satisfy the unintelligible want: all that the house could afford was presented in turn, and at every renewed offer the word "keek, keek!" was repeated. Whoever they met, whoever came to them, heard only this word. At last a man who had been in Norway, and had heard the word "chicken," shrewdly guessed it was the English for that creature, called *hone* in Swedish. Forthwith, the good-hearted hostess,

"On hospitable thoughts intent,"

rushed out and sacrificed her only hen, cooked it in the mode not most calculated to render its mastication less laborious, and offered it up to the hungry and impatient travellers. Alas! they left it uneaten, and only cried "keek, keek!" more plaintively than ever.

"It certainly *was* a chick they wanted, however," said Friherrinan.

“And when did they cease to cry ‘keek?’”
I asked.

“Never,” said the afflicted host and hostess, looking fixedly in my face with profound gravity —“Never. They were saying it here for three hours while the post-horses were being brought, and when they got into their carriage and were driving off, the last word they said, when skjuitsbonden was getting into his seat, was, ‘keek, keek!’”

I burst into an uncontrollable laugh.

“Well,” said Friherrinan, “your countrymen’s distress amuses you, yet you cannot tell what they meant.”

“O yes, they said quick! quick! They wanted the horses; when they got them at last they wanted to be driven quick! quick! Travellers sometimes seem to think one word must be intelligible, even if a great many are not.”

This matter I relate nearly as it occurred, but not so graphically as others might do. When the good people heard my solution of the enigma, they raised up their hands, shook their heads in grave wonderment, and probably felt as if the mountain had brought forth its mouse.

CHAPTER IX.

“SHOULD you not like,” said Friherrinan, with a slight look of mystery upon her countenance, “to go to a place where no English person has ever set a foot?”

I remained in thought, considering what place between the sky and earth there might be found untrodden by an English foot.

“It would be something for you to have to tell that in England, and would be a great advantage if you should write a book,” she added suggestively, “and if you like to go I can manage it for you.”

“But where must I go?”

“On Svärdsjön.”

“The Lake! Well! it is no wonder an

English foot has not been set there, at least in summer time. The English do not walk on water."

"But you shall have a boat, and we will go to the island of Dådran, a most remarkable spot, and I have a letter from the proprietor to his manager."

Certainly, in an age when it is so difficult to write a book that shall possess the least claim to originality, or novelty, the discovery of untrodden ground was enough to inspire one with the idea of an attempt at the art of book-making, and in the hope that Friherrinan's island might prove to me an isle of gold, we forthwith proceeded on our travels to Boggårdet; passing the night at a station called Lumsheden, where we can recommend travellers who like to see a specimen of a genuine Dalecarlian house of the better class to put up also.

Much pleasure did it give the worthy and active hostess to lead a foreigner to inspect the family possessions.

A large room, in such a house, is set apart solely for a wardrobe; it is traversed by lines as if for drying clothes, and on these are suspended the dresses which generations have

worn, do, and will wear : the long sheepskin coat for winter, the white national one for summer ; the many-coloured petticoats of the women, and all the rest of the attire ; but the most precious—the curious caps, which our excellent housewife prided herself on more than all else, and the old ornaments of gold and silver, the bridal girdle and collar, and sundry other valuables which from age to age are preserved by these people—were not exposed with the rest, but produced to us from a more private depository.

Having left Lumsheden, our skjuits brought us over a lane which lay, I think, through a field, and stopped our carriage on a grassy spot, which had to my eye a very dreary appearance.

The morning had been lowering, and now a thick rain commenced ; it was the first we had seen for about two months, but it came, as rain generally does come, rather *mal-apropos*.

A farm-house was at one side, and before us was the lake ; the house was shut up and the lake was gloomy, the sky was dark and heavy, and the rain came on faster.

“What are we to do?” was my question.

“To go on the lake in that boat,” was Friherrinan’s answer.

“Is it far?”

“Nothing to signify.”

“What shall we do with the carriage? all the luggage is in it.”

“Jaså! that I must see about.”

Presently Friherrinan told me she had made enquiries, and that we could with perfect safety leave the carriage there as it was: the farmer and his household were abroad, but he would without doubt put it into his shed when he returned.

“I,” said Friherrinan, “will require my little portmanteau, which is under the seat, but your large one, which is behind, can remain where it is.”

So the small portmanteau containing all her travelling possessions was put into the boat, and, thoroughly dissatisfied at the prospect of going on the gloomy lake just as rain was commencing, I followed it, and we were rowed away. Well! what a day was that! Travelling recollections ought not, I suppose, to be all rose-coloured; mine of that day on Svärdjö are

quite of another colour. For four hours down fell the rain in one constant stream; all was grey—above, beneath, around.

Friherrinan said an umbrella was of no use, and she wrapped up her head in a shawl, which left no glimpse of her face visible, so that one could not even have the solace of occasionally darting a malignant glance at the author of one's misery.

Finally, we arrived at the wonderful island, and I set an English foot upon it, so heavy with wet and weariness as to be insensible to the triumph over every roving Englishman—over all Englishwomen that ever had travelled. In fact, I soon felt a serious misgiving that that so-much-honoured foot might remain on the soil rather longer than was either pleasant to its owner, or convenient to the respectable lord of the isle who received us into his house. The mosquitoes had brought on a state of fever, which the rain subdued, but left in its stead a very bad cold.

This hitherto English-undiscovered island is an iron-factory, containing, if I recollect aright, one hundred and sixty people, the men being employed in the works: the houses of the

labourers are built in a court, at the head of which is that of the intendant or manager, by whom we were entertained. It is in the parish of Rättvik, and is just sixty English miles from its parish church. Once in a month a clergyman used to perform service here, but I think that is given up; once, too, it had a stationary priest, but the population was thought too small to need one. It is sad to hear that said so often as we do, by persons who glory in Bible freedom—in the right to read God's Holy Word—the blessed Gospel, which tells us how the one sheep in the wilderness was sought, and laid on the shoulder rejoicing.

For the same reason for which there is no spiritual, there is not either any bodily physician. Some of the women become wise ones, and learn to act in the latter capacity. But the laws of Sweden forbid any interference with the religion of the State; and the *Läsare*, or Scripture readers, who teach after their own fashion, as people do in England, become here amenable to prosecution. So that the danger of attempting lay religious teaching is not slight.

Although I had a fair prospect of being

obliged to test the abilities of the female medical staff of Dådran, I was able on the next sunshiny evening to accompany Friherrinan and our hostess and children on an excursion through a little wood, nearly knee-deep in mud and water, to inspect the immense dairy of the priest of Rättvik, who has a dairy farm here, the cows on which might delight Gustaf Wasa and his dear housewife, or hustru, which is simply Swedish for wife. I did not know there was a large fat cow in Sweden till I saw them here. But such a cow-house I saw also as has left a painful memory in my breast! It was very long, narrow, and low; and in it were four-and-twenty cows lying down in a mass of dirt, merely because I suppose, like poor Gilpin, they could not keep upright. The heat was so stifling that I could not endure it many moments.

“Why not let them stay in the grass these lovely nights?” was my question.

“Because the bears would attack them!” was the reply.

Truly those who had eaten beef in Stockholm might envy Master Bjorn’s repast if he got one of those fine milch cows. When

I complained of that singular sort of lean, tough thing, that was there called beef, a friend excused its qualities by saying that most probably the poor animal that had been sacrificed to the public good had been just taken from the loaded cart it was unable to draw.

When we descended the elevated plain on which the farm of the comfortable parish priest was placed, we entered his dairy house in the wood at its foot: a charming spot for a dairy, so shady and cool. I could not help wishing the panting cows were in it.

Friherrinan seemed to be enjoying some internal delight. I heard the all-expressing word *Jaså!* uttered again and again, with many thanks, and there was a symbolic motion of the lips as if they relished an invisible luxury. Soon afterwards I saw her back, as she sat in the dairy with a great pan of thick, sour, cream before her; and then the lip-movement had ceased to be symbolic, and the luxury was no longer invisible. Happy Friherrinan! were not four hours' rain-drenching on the lake well repaid? If I had the glory of first setting

an English foot on the island of Dådran, had not you the happiness of eating its sour cream? Thus is the portion of sublunary bliss more equal than short-sighted mortals suppose.

A bright warm day, and a well-manned boat, made the lake another thing from what it had seemed when we came, and made our passage back a good hour shorter. We saw some beauty in going back, we had seen none in coming; part of the banks were wooded, and we passed under the shade of branches that had only reduplicated on us the rain as we passed them before.

When we got to land there was the carriage, with a little swarm of children playing in and around and upon it. But not a single article had been taken away; parasol, shawl, portmanteau, books, papers, even a bag of biscuits, and part of a bottle of wine, remained precisely as they were. Here in this remote, little-known district, all was safe. Alas! I said to myself, could this have been so if English feet and English hands were more plenty here?

We were soon on our way to Gefle, the

commercial sea-port of the North, which we might naturally pronounce as "Jefel," but which in Swedish is pronounced more like "Yavely," the final e not being quite so long as our termination in y.

Gästrikland, the province through which we are to pass, is said to be so called from its old renown for hospitality—gäst being what we call guest. We are now leaving Dalecarlia.

Farewell now to the good-hearted folk who, as "hewers of wood and drawers of water" to the city of Stockholm, have interested me rather more than they do in their native land, where a slight tinge of Norwegian pride, gravity, and independence may be more observable than it is among the hard-working creatures who come to Stockholm to earn in the summer enough to live on through the long winter.

As the autumn comes on and warns them to begone, they come round with their wonderful hair-work, made so delicately that one cannot believe those immensely thick red fingers could have woven such rings and chains and ornaments, with their pretty, coloured

motatoes. And then, with a child tied up precisely like a young Lapp, in a sheepskin-bag on their backs, they will trudge back again some hundred of miles in their immensely heavy wooden shoes, bearing a few dollars banco with them.

One Dalkulla came to a friend of mine in great glee to bid her farväl, telling her she had got her paper dollars* carefully sewed into the lining of her thick petticoat. Poor thing! she told the news to others also, most likely, for on the road to Upsala she was found in a state of despair, and her dollar lined petticoat was gone. The Swedes are, I believe, on the whole, and in the common acceptation of the word, as honest a people as can be found, but there are robbers among them, and some of these, not Dalecarlians, had carried away the garment which the poor creature had turned into a bank.

The character of these people is a rather composite one. With extreme simplicity, there is a natural profundity of thought which characterises their manners and aspect, and those of the men

* Dollars in paper, of 1s. 2d. and 1s. 8d. in value, are the general currency of Sweden.

more than the women, at all times; seriousness and hilarity so mix in their dispositions that a slight remark will bring the former into notice, as a small excitement will provoke the latter. Religion with them is not so much a feeling or a principle as a part of their traditions. In general, I believe, they think as the descendants of the Covenanters might do, that they cling to the form of faith for which their fathers fought; and I doubt if many of them would be pleased at being told that those fathers fought against the "new doctrine" which their Gustavus Vasa tried to persuade them was not new, just as they themselves would now fight for it. A curious illustration of religion is to be seen in one of their parish churches, that, if my memory does not mislead me, of Tuna. The church is of the old time, and the altar is still of that time. In my note-book, as a sad evidence of an attempt at satirical observations, I find only the words—"interesting pictures," and if it were not that those pictures impressed themselves fully as strongly on my mind as the face of Beatrice Cenci at

Rome, I might have misled myself by such a note.

Over that altar was a large, and not by any means bad painting of the Crucifixion—a most suitable one to its position—but, can it be believed?—at each side of that altar, as if designed for wings to that sacred one, there hung at one side an immense large-as-life picture of Charles XII, galloping on a battle-field, with the fore legs of his charger high over the heads of the soldiers, and his right arm extended; and at the other stood Bernadotte, in his short-waisted regimental dress, with a hand on the hilt of his sword as if endeavouring to draw it, but whether it were to resist the progress of the galloping hero of the Wasa line, my skill will not enable me to tell.

“How strange,” I remarked afterwards to a parish priest, “it is to us to see those pictures in your churches.”

“Jaså! do you not have them? Our people, you see, are rather ignorant, and pictures are books without letters. Now there they see our Lord’s death on the cross; that

reminds them of the means of their salvation.”

“Yes, that is good; to that none, I suppose, can object, save those who object to the faith. But Charles XII and Carl Johan?”

“Ah!” said the priest, “we must teach the people loyalty as well as religion; they are indeed both united, and they must learn both together!”

And thus I conclude it was as the head of the Church that Charles XII was galloping on the field of battle, as depicted in the great picture beside that altar.

They say that in the religion of Dalarne, at the present day, a great deal of that of the old time yet lingers, and that the people still say their old private devotions in the mongrel Latin used by their forefathers. I do not know whether the people in that Catholic time used Latin in their private prayers.

Dalarne—which, as the name implies, is a land of dales—is not one of mountains, but of round-topped wooded hills and lakes, its two great rivers being the Dal and Ljune. Hill, dale, wood, and water, the sum total of land-

scape beauty, constitute the scenery of Dalarne. North of the Silja the oak does not grow; fir, pine, birch, alder, and juniper plentifully flourish. In the great forests the pretty grey squirrel abounds, for the shooting of which with bow and arrow the Dalesmen had such old celebrity that one of their ballads of the era of their great Gustaf speaks with no small delight of shooting the Jutes, or Danes, with equal cleverness.

A man who has not reached to the same world-wide renown, and whose name is not heard of so much in the province of which he was a native, was Engelbrekt Engelbrektson, thus named, after the fashion of a land where surnames are not so much in vogue, simply as his father's son—the son of Engelbrekt.

He was not one who, having nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain from a revolution, adventured its results—he was a rich proprietor in the great Kopparberg. He was a patriot who adventured all for the deliverance of his country, and instead of being, like Gustaf, rewarded with a throne, he was treacherously murdered. All travellers in Dalecarlia tell of

Gustaf Wasa—none, that I know of, tell of Engelbrekt.

It was in the reign of Erik of Pomerania, the base successor of Queen Margaret on the Scandinavian throne of the united kingdom of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway—when the custody of Swedish castles and the government of Swedish provinces were wholly committed to the charge of foreigners, some of whom were the most notorious pirates of the age, and Sweden was altogether exposed to worse evils than those it suffered even under Christian II—that the spirit of Engelbrekt was roused by the cruelties of the Governor of his native province, a Dane from Jutland, named Jösse Erikson, who hung the peasants up in the smoke of their own houses, and yoked women to loaded waggons. The description given of the miner Engelbrekt, who was no other than a peasant of Dalarne, by the historian, is, that he was a man of great spirit but slight frame, having as much skill in the arts of war as if he had passed his youth in the service of great barons, and one who was eloquent as well as brave.

To bear the voice of an aggrieved people to the foot of the throne, Engelbrekt set out for Denmark, where, in King Erik's presence, he demanded justice, and offered himself to remain as a hostage for the truth of his statements until the charges he brought against the Governor were proved. In consequence of his appeal, a royal mandate issued, by which the wretched Governor was *admonished*.

Engelbrekt, who had returned full of hope, was obliged to set off again to Copenhagen, where, face to face with the King, he denounced the misrule of his native land in such terms that the enraged monarch bade him begone, and appear no more before him. Then, like Moses to the Egyptian tyrant of Israel, the peasant answered, "Yet once will I return."

It was this scene which I saw introduced on the stage at the Opera-house on Oscar's day—the day of the King; for all Swedish notables have now a day in the calendar, as the saints of the old time had. Then, as Engelbrekt retired, uttering these words to offended Majesty, his injured wife, the noble-hearted Philippa of England, arises from her

seat on the throne beside him, and disrobing herself of the trappings of regal state, lays off the crown from her head, and renouncing finally the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, retires to Wadstena Kloster.

Engelbrekt did not seek a similar retreat: he was soon at the head of the Dalkarler, who, though they were with constitutional facility twice induced to return home from an attack on the cruel Governor in the Castle of Westerås, yet finally rose in a body on Midsummer's-day 1434, stormed and burned the Castle, the remains of which I saw, as before mentioned, on an islet in the Dal Elf, and speedily obliged Westerås to surrender.

Throughout Sweden the people took arms and joined the popular standard of the mine proprietor, or Bergsman, whose public addresses commenced thus: "I, Engelbrekt Engelbrektson, with all my coadjutors."

The capital joined him; the fortresses, many of which were then built of wood, were destroyed in various parts of the country, and the foreign rulers harmlessly expelled—all save the cruel Jösse Erikson, who, strange to say, found a refuge next door to Queen Philippa,

lying hid in the monastery of Wadstena, where the peasants, two years afterwards, discovered him, violently dragged him forth, and killed him: having, for that violation of a cloister-sanctuary, to pay a heavy fine to the convent.

In so short a time as from Midsummer-day 1434 to the 16th day of the following August, such progress had Engelbrekt made, that at Wadstena—the famous place for Swedish councils and acts—a formal renunciation of allegiance to Erik of Pomerania was drawn up. But Engelbrekt the Bergsman was after this chosen Administrator of the kingdom by the voice of the people; and from that time the nobles of Sweden, not willing that a peasant should rule over them, fell away from him, and returned to their allegiance to King Erik. Finally comes the catastrophe, after changes which the page of history records; I, however, only relate it from the scene on the stage at Stockholm.

Engelbrekt is ill, feeble, and laid up in the town of Örebro. Near to that is a castle called Göksholm, which in English would be Cuckoo Island, and in this castle dwelt a

powerful noble, whose name was Bennet Stenson, but who is better known by the surname of Natt-och-dag, or Night and Day. This man had been the enemy of Engelbrekt, but now sought to make him his friend, and terms of mutual amity were entered into between them. Natt-och-dag was the guest of Engelbrekt, who, being summoned to a council at Stockholm, by the advice of his new friends takes his way across Hjelmer Lake. There is a small isle on that lake now called Engelbrektsholm—so does the memory of the deed there perpetrated cling to it. Here Engelbrekt, ill and fatigued, lands, a fire is kindled, and he leaning on a crutch approaches it, and sits on a fallen tree. Not far off is the Castle of Göksholm, another boat puts off from thence, and Engelbrekt, supposing it is meant to offer him hospitality for the night, points out the best landing place to the man it carries. Magnus, the son of his pretended friend Night-and-Day, springs out of the boat, and furiously asking if there was to be no peace in the land on his account, barbarously kills the poor patriot, who can only defend himself with his crutch. Such is the history of Engelbrekt

Engelbrektson, whose memory was long so sacred to the people, that they believed miracles were wrought at his tomb.

The wretched Erik being deposed from the kingly power he abused, retired to Gottland, and building the palace whose ruins remain to this day, lived there as a pirate. When his royal successor and nephew had this matter represented to him, he coolly replied, "My uncle must live." The nation might have answered, as the great Napoleon did when a petitioner told him "he must live," "I do not see the necessity."

The churches of Dalarne have still an outer building or sort of porch attached to them, which is called "The Weapon House," a memorial of the time when people were obliged to carry arms to the house of the Prince of Peace. I remember seeing soldiers in Ireland after the famous year '48 do the same, but they piled theirs in the aisles beside them.

CHAPTER X.

It was not in the representation of the piece taken from this Dalecarlian history that I saw so much to offend good taste in the introduction of crucifixes, prayers, priests, incense, &c. upon the stage of the Royal Opera, as in another drawn from English history, that of Henry VIII and Catherine Howard. There, indeed, it was truly painful, and when I remarked this to a companion he coolly answered, "Jaså!" in a tone of surprise, adding, "that is not *our* religion." But it was the religion of his Queen, a most pious Roman Catholic lady. The explanation, however, would go far in Sweden: what is not *our* religion, appears to be no religion at all.

There is a very stringent part of the State and Church law here, which acts against those guilty of "contempt of God," an offence that holds a prominent place in the criminal code of Sweden. But it is curious enough to see how this wide expression "contempt of God" appears in general to be restricted to contempt of the religion and Church of Sweden. Mockery of its service, or of its clergy; irreverent or indecent conduct in its churches—nay, even openly expressed dissent from its faith, its practice, its commission, fall under the head of "contempt of God." In Sweden they do not pray only, to be delivered from "false doctrine, heresy, and schism;" the law prohibits and punishes such evils. Mr Laing, whose statements might on many points have been corrected, or at least modified, had his residence in the country been longer, states what I have no means of refuting, yet know not how to accept as a fact, namely, that from the year 1830 to 1836, not less than 242 persons were condemned to labour in chains for the offence of "contempt of God." Their term of punishment, however, he does not state.

"Who will say," adds this statistical writer,

whose Scotch principles leaned, perhaps, more to the side of Calvin than of Luther, "who will say that the Inquisition was abolished by Luther's reformation? It has only been incorporated with the State in Lutheran countries, and exercised by the Church through the ecclesiastical department of government, in the civil courts instead of the church courts. The thing itself remains in rigour. Lord Molesworth was right when he said that the people of Lutheran countries had lost their liberty since they had changed their religion for a better."

One need not object that a people are prevented ever so stringently from abusing or mocking at their own Church, from even arguing against it, holding controversial meetings to settle it more to their individual fancies or opinions, or trying to lead others from its fold into the thousand wild, delusive, or miserable divisions which the abuse of what is termed the spirit of Protestantism unhappily produces. In this respect I do not know that I should wish to see that article of the Swedish law which Mr Laing so strongly reprobates, at all altered. There can be no dissent in Sweden; neither can there be much fear of "papal

aggression :” whoever leaves the Lutheran fold either for the Pope, or Calvin, or any one else, is exiled from the country—banished for life.

What has led me into this disquisition has been the evident tendency of the laws to restrict, in the minds of the people, the sense of the term “contempt of God” to contempt of Martin Luther and of the peculiar Church to which they themselves belong :—what is “not our religion,” seems to be no religion at all.

The representation of our blessed Saviour hanging on the cross, thus introduced, as I have said, upon the stage to give effect to the kneeling figure of the condemned Katharine Howard, ought surely, in a Christian land, to be brought under the article of “contempt of God.” The Opera House, in which I have seen this, as well as processions of priests with incense and other things, thus produced, is his Majesty’s property, having been built by his memorable predecessor Gustaf III, and one cannot help thinking that his pious and excellent Queen must be hurt at such scenes being taken from the religion of which she is a faithful and consistent member.

Another breach of that law—if I were to be

its interpreter—I should find in the unseemly practice so prevalent even among the ladies of the land, the practice of using the most sacred names and terms, even in indifferent discourse, as mere expletives, or to mark attention to what is saying, and on the *slightest* occasion of joy, regret, or surprise.

The most vulgar of these expletives of discourse is ‘bevars.’ If you ask a workwoman if a piece of work can be done by a fixed time, she will answer ‘Ja, bevars!’ One is tired of the word. “Can I go to such a place by this road?”—the answer will be given with ‘bevars’ at its end. You ask what is the meaning of this word, and you find it a contraction of ‘God preserve us:’ ‘Gud bevarva oss.’ The next commonest is ‘Kors!’ This also explains itself:—it has, too, often the addition ‘Kors Jesu!’ and this exclamation on the least occasion, and often amid peals of laughter, makes the ears tingle that are unaccustomed to hear it. ‘Cross of Jesus!’—what a sound to issue from light and laughing lips, or from irritated and angry ones. O how often has it tingled upon mine, bringing to memory a slight portion of what was surely far from the thoughts of those who thus used it.

An old lady of my acquaintance, who prided herself on speaking English, was at much pains when she spoke to me to translate into her discourse sundry terms which I suppose we should call oaths, or swearing—and which being long exploded from polite society in England were now doubly painful to me to hear. But when I ventured to say this, and to request that she would leave such phrases as ‘Herre min Gud!’ ‘Herre Jesu!’ untranslated, the good lady quietly turned round on me and asked if I wished her to use that most dreadful imprecation for which unhappily our nation has a historical celebrity; and as it was vain to assure her it was out of fashion among us now, I was fain to leave to her the use of her own national exclamations.

In writing, as in conversation, one subject leads into another, so that the original one is left far in the background. Thus I wandered from Dalarne to the Opera-house of Stockholm, and so by a circuitous route to the unhappy excrescences of Swedish speech.

But now I am forced to wander from it altogether, not on paper only. Farewell to Dalarne!—some of whose natives Queen Chris-

tina counted among her illustrious men, and styled them her 'Dale-stars.'

Wallin, too, the chief poet of the Swedish 'psalm-bok,' whom I before named as a native, I thought, of Northern Finland, was, I find, a Dalesman.

The change on entering Herjedalen or Gästrikland from Dalarne is very apparent. The latter province is still a little nation apart; in manner, person, and language altogether separate from Sweden at large. The change in dress is naturally what first strikes the traveller, especially if first seen on a Sunday or holiday. Black for a state or best dress we now see taking the place of all sorts of bright colours.

This fashion of making black the "best dress"—even the festive and wedding one—together with the staid and silent demeanour of well-behaved persons out of doors, gives to all Swedish "pleasure-taking" rather the aspect of a great funeral than of parties of pleasure.

On that grand national visiting and entertaining day of Sweden,—the day after Christmas, that is St Stephen's-day,—I have before

noticed this effect in Stockholm,* and here the appearance of the country roads on a Sunday is most curious, being covered with black-dressed women with white kerchiefs tied over their heads, and a white handkerchief with their psalm-book in their hands, exciting mournful sentiments in my mind until I knew that black was by no means a garb of woe in the North.

At Gefle we found an agreeable acquaintance in one of its principal merchants, who took us, as one of the most interesting sights, to inspect a steam cotton mill—the first used in Sweden, where hand labour is not yet displaced by steam machinery.

Some Manchester men had been brought over to set this at work, and really good specimens of Manchester men they were. More honest and good countenances I never saw at Manchester. They got double pay at Gefle, but were all longing to get back, being unable to live out of Manchester smoke: this pure air of the North was, I suppose, too rarefied for them. Not one of them could of course speak a word of any language but that spoken there, and the way

* 'Life in Sweden.'

in which they instructed by signs was curious enough. One of them told me that his chief objection to Sweden was, the manner in which the women were treated in making them do so much work. I thought of the poor English factory girls and women, and wondered if many of these Swedes—who, after all, are generally working on their own little properties—would change places with them.

Another told me he was to go back to Manchester the very next day, and that he had bought an immense salmon from Elfkarleby to bring home as a present. I hope it was not to be eaten raw after its journey.

We had gone much farther North than Gefle before we visited that town, having made a rather backward course in order to reach it. The first sight of the Gulf of Bothnia afforded us also a pleasing view of the town on its coast. The idea which the fancy presents of a northern trading town on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia is a much more bleak, bare, desolate sort of thing than is the reality in this instance. Gefle stands on a verdant plain, on a woody and undulated coast, and at a little distance appears to be surrounded with a forest of fir. It

church—which all through the North of Sweden, though they are, alas! “far between,” are usually of an interesting aspect—is a prominent feature in the landscape; on the waters of the Gulf, now blue and calm beneath the summer sky, we saw merchant vessels with sails catching the sunlight. It was altogether a cheering and attractive prospect that lay before us, as we approached the principal commercial town of the far North. And yet it was not the best.

To enable us to judge, as he said, of the position of this town, our kind host ordered a supper at a fashionable restaurant at some distance from it, and drove us out there to spend an evening. Certainly it is mortifying to feel that there are common-place physical accessories to mental enjoyments which render such luxuries more luxurious. Thus when seated at our tasteful supper-table in an elevated balcony, eating delicious ices and all sorts of good things, I really believe I more fully enjoyed the splendid view we had ostensibly come there solely to see; just as I enjoy instrumental music more when I am allowed to talk during its performance.

It was a rich and fair scene, and might

well be admired in Sweden, where, while all appears so large after our little garden-isle, yet an extended prospect is scarce indeed, for forests on a level surface close up the view, and even from an elevation cause a vast dark stretching line to mark the horizon.

Here wood was not wanting, but it was the waters of the Gulf that bounded our view. The fierce rays of the sun had gone down—the twilight hour would have been passed in England now; but it was not twilight here—there was nothing of what the Scotch expressively term gloaming, there was no shade of grey in the mild clear light: it was “a tender day.”

Gefle communicates with the Gulf of Bothnia by means of its river, whose name it bears. It is a rising town, both in manufactures and commerce; like a miniature Stockholm, it is built on islands, and divided into quarters by the river. The population amounts to nearly 10,000. The Inn will not be found very good quarters for travellers, who should get private apartments if they mean to remain for many days. There

was little to retain us, however, and having merely stopped to rest and see the general aspect and state of the first commercial town of Northern Sweden, and the third commercial town of that kingdom, we forthwith adjourned to a place much more to my taste, and as it proved more to my companion's also, for Elfkarleby is not only famous for its splendid cataracts and grand scenery, but for its graf-lax and sour cream.

The little inn of Elfkarleby is opposite to the cataracts. They are on the Dal Elf which a little below this place empties itself into the Gulf of Bothnia—the receptacle of all the great northern streams—after a varied course of 260 miles.

It was night when we reached Elfkarleby and an unusual circumstance occurred—the sky was dark and lowering; a fall of rain attended with thunder, took place shortly afterwards, and we took refuge gladly in the inn, hearing the tumultuous roar of the cataract mingling with the low deep voice of the still distant thunder, and at first mistaking that roar for the roll of the advancing thunder-clap.

Early the next morning, when the storm had passed and the sun shone bright, I went to my window and beheld with amazement and delight the rush of waters to whose voice I had listened in the silent night. I at once went out and placed myself on a spot from whence I could contemplate this sublime and beautiful sport, for such it seemed, of the whirling stream.

Here one does not feel that sense of awe without which it is, I think, impossible to behold the mighty Trollhattan—the Giant-cataract of Sweden: there is a wild beauty at Elfkarleby—a terrible majesty at Trollhattan. The curious effect produced by a counter-current, or counter-cataract meeting the wildly-rushing flood, is one of the greatest charms of these falls. The most exquisitely-brilliant colours appeared sparkling in the morning sunlight, amid the white boiling surf; and the dark fir-clad islands, and bare black rocks, among which and over which the whole Dal Elf is precipitated, intersperse the watery scene in what we might perhaps venture to call a *prettier* manner than anything which the grander spectacle at Troll-

hattan presents. Round a little fir island the meeting waters roar and boil in impotent rage with each other—both, however, soon to hurry on to the same destined end: the barren rock supports a towering pine, with roots so slenderly embedded one might suppose the very commotion of the flood would shake it down from its resting-place.

There, still, is human industry carrying on its small labours—a saw-mill, whose humming voice is unheard amid the tumult; a little boy is perched on a crag, with eyes and thoughts more intent on the line which he hopes will draw up some poor fish than they are upon the strife of the element around him. So is it ever with the little of this world, while its great ones rage and are troubled, tossed in the vortex of ambitious and busy life.

There is a peculiar character belonging to these northern cataracts, distinct from the loftier falls of the South. There is no lofty precipitous descent of water here, it is quite unlike a waterfall; like its mighty brother Trollhattan, it is the furious effort of the river to force itself through rocks and islets of fir, falling in its progress only from the height of about forty

feet. It is a sweeping, whirling cataract of surpassing beauty.

It was splendid in the morning, when the newly-risen sun, coming forth to do away the effects of the night storm, shone strong on its stream and brought forth the iridescent hues that contrasted so well with the white foam that sprinkled even the tops of the dark firs, standing as they did in solemn state, frowning like the proud magnates of earth on the mad efforts to overcome them; but more strangely beautiful was it in the mysterious light of the northern night—that night of poetry and dreaminess, too soft, it might seem, for a scene so wild, yet lending to it a mystic aspect that brought it into harmony with itself. Travellers have complained of the brightness of the nights, as tending to prevent sleep. I do not recollect that I ever once had occasion to do so; but at all events, if people cannot sleep in the light of a northern night, I think it is hard to escape from dreaming. If I were a Swedish author I should certainly always write at night, although in England I object to the practice as a bad habit. I often wonder that

there is not more of imagination among the people who possess so strong a stimulant to its power.

Elfkarleby is a royal manor, its fisheries also appertain to the crown. At an hour we would term night-fall, Friherrinan called me from the cataracts to see "the take" of salmon in the smooth water. I had never seen salmon taken in such a way before: there were seven or eight immense creatures in the trap, one I think must have been four feet long, and was of an extraordinary roundity. Some years ago this fishery was much more productive, and the men who rent it from the crown told us, with looks of regret to the past, that on one occasion they had taken ninety-two salmon. When I entered the house, after seeing these poor creatures literally "knocked on the head," I found Friherrinan at table, with her frugal fare daintily laid before her—graf-lax cut in tremendous slices, all soft and watery, on a dish, and its subsequent, the large bowl of thick sour cream. It is hard, she says, to tell which is best, the raw salmon or the sour cream; so she takes first one and then

the other, solving the question as the canny Scotch do—"baith is best."

The road from Gefle to Elfkarleby is very pleasant, and the scenery all around is of the same character. Very willingly could I have loitered a few days in that quiet little inn, concerning which Friherrinan wrote this notice in my memorandum book—"Good people: willing to oblige one with what they have." And I believe I may add my experience to her's in this grateful testimony.

Starting from Elfkarleby, which is on the very coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, or in its Swedish title, Botten Hafvet, we were now to continue, or rather, as I felt it to be, to enter upon our real northward journey. I had formed a gloomy idea concerning it, and was arming myself heroically for a combat with hardships and difficulties, while my armour was to prove about as necessary as that of Don Quixote in his memorable combat with the windmills.

The road follows pretty closely the indentations of the Gulf; diverging inwards as the long inlets and Skäregårds, or the occurrence of lakes and rivers, render that divergence

necessary, but still following the coast of Botten Hafvet from one commercial town to the other; that is to say, from Gefle to Sundsvall.

I am here, however, reminded of one of the fatal consequences which in the present day result from a lengthened course of travel—it is that in the attempt to describe it one produces also such a lengthy MS. as a publisher would fear to make into a book in these days of light literature. For this reason I now abandon the narration of our own proceedings, and no longer taking pains duly to record where we changed horses, or where Friherrinan and myself ate, slept, enjoyed, or suffered, I shall fill my narrowing limits with general descriptions of the country we travelled, or those provinces of Northern Sweden which are yet very little known either to English travellers or English readers, and were quite as unknown to myself until my residence at Stockholm led me to visit them.

CHAPTER XI.

THE northern provinces of Sweden may be said to contain its youngest children, younger as they advance to their limits on the borders of Lapland. Southern Sweden was inhabited by the Goths before the time to which history or tradition reaches ; and of its central districts, the earliest accounts are uncertain, partly fabulous, mythical, and historical. But the settlement of the North is even still going on, and the names of most of these provinces preserve the tradition of their original occupation.

Thus, of Jemteland, the history is that Jemte, the son of a Norwegian Jarl, gave it his name,

having fled over the mountains thither, and being joined by many who likewise fled from Trondjhem, when King Osten Illrada had given them his dog named Saur to be their King, but was himself their oppressor. Jemte cleared the woods and cultivated the ground. He had a grandson named Helsing, from whom Helsingland is named, as he with his Norwegian followers pushed onwards towards the Gulf, and commencing there a trade with Sweden, finally became the subjects of that kingdom.

Of Herjedalen, signifying "the dale of Herje," the tradition is more romantic. Herje, or Heriulf, was Bannerman to King Halfdan the Black, father of Harold the Fairhaired; at a royal feast he struck a courtier with a silver drinking-horn, so that he broke the horn and killed the man. Whereupon, being banished from Norway, he went to the Court of Sweden, and was well received by King Erik Edmundson. There he won the love of the fair Ingeborg, the sister of the King. She fled with him to a wild spot, remote from all haunts of men, and the place of their dwelling was named Herjedale, or

the Vale of Herje, and though the whole province bears the name of him who was the means of its settlement, the very scene of the lovers' habitation is still pointed out by the people, and near the river Herje there is a mound, beneath which they say the royal Ingeborg and her lover lie buried, together with a vast treasure. One of their grandsons was one of the first colonists of Iceland.

Thus Norwegians were the first settlers in these districts, although, with respect to Helsingland, the part bordering on the coast was occupied by Swedes. The provincial arms explain the ancient, and in great degree still continuing, pursuits of the inhabitants. The arms of Dalecarlia are two crossed arrows; those of Jemteland an elk, with a wolf at its throat and a falcon on its back. Gästrikland, which is believed to have derived its name from the era when the Upsala Kings first began to visit it to demand hospitality, or tribute, had formerly for its arms an empty drinking-horn turned downwards, but at present has also an elk, which animal once abounded, and is still pretty plentiful in those vast forests, one of which, now forming the

boundary between Gästrikland and Helsingland, was of such a size that, though cleared in parts and occupied by cattle-stalls, safety lodges were erected for wayfarers. In this forest, named Ödmord, the missionary St Stephen was murdered by the heathens.

The smaller province of Medalpad, which its people call Melpa, is supposed to derive its name from its position between the great rivers Niurunda and Indal; and thus it has two streams for its armorial bearings. The next province, Angermanland, whose first inhabitants were called from a combination of Swedish terms signifying men of the creeks, or inlets, has three salmon for its arms; the bay and town of Hernösand being known even in the fourteenth century as a staple for the northern salmon fishery.

In Angermanland is a parish named Silanger, from Sil, herring, and anger, which, I believe, signifies vik, or inlet, where that famous fishery was carried on. But a curious instance of ingenuity in etymology occurs in the ancient antiquaries deriving this name from säll, which is happy; and they concluded that here lay the fabled isles of the blessed;

but the truth of the derivation is found to be a humbler one, since the parish seal bears two herrings for its device.

Wild geese, says the historian Geijer, were undoubtedly the first Helsingers ; and still the flocks of these birds are curiously numerous.

Swedes generally speak of the North, even of Dalarne also, as a region of mountains, of Alpine scenery. This is because there are no real mountains, at least no Alps, in Sweden. Here, even in the far North, hill and dale, wood, water, and rock, constitute the character of the scenery ; but pasture-land abounds, and in all Sweden there is no finer or better cultivated ground than that of Angermanland. The flax of Norrland is considered the most beautiful in the North, and hemp forms one of the chief exports of the Bothnian ports.

The immense forests and the multiplied waters do not form the only source of industry and profit to the people : agriculture, too, goes on, and the breeding of cattle. In all houses the spinning-wheel and loom are heard, and the flax that is grown on the land is seen, on the same farm, to go through

all the stages of its progress until it appears in the strong, fine linen, which is the pride of the good housewife, or an article of trade for her husband.

In the great forests there is silence; yet there too there is life, and not the great ant-hills alone, rising as they do to the height of three or four feet, testify to the toiling industry of earth: there is the woodman, the cattle-feeder, the rein-deer herd, the hunter, the fox and the wolf-trap, all showing signs of the still-existing decree that went forth from the garden of Eden. But, of all these devices to earn the means of living, that of charcoal burning always appears most in unison with the scene.

Years ago it was my chance to be in the wild dark forest that leads to the celebrated Monastery, called La Grande Chartreuse, in Dauphiny, when the ground was covered with snow, not quite so thick nor so hard as what covers these forests in winter time. There I suddenly came on a spot which showed me a large black bed over which smoke was rising, and beside which sat a little boy of about nine or ten years old.

There was no other living thing in sight, none I believe of the human species near at hand. I could not help thinking of the white-robed monks who were shut up within stone walls, and of this little denizen of the wood sitting here in solitude more complete. To which might deep thoughts the more naturally come?

Here, too, is the solitary charcoal burner, but the Swedish nature agrees with solitude better than does the French. "Every Swede," says one of their modern writers, "feels a necessity for being at times alone with himself: he indulges a fervent love for the quiet hidden nature within whose shade he played when a child. Always, even amid the most stirring scenes of life, he hears a voice from his silent forest, calling him back to peace and tranquillity, inviting him to return to all that is most beautiful, true, and holy in his experience."

Mingled with a vast amount of levity and vanity, there is then a cast of deep seriousness, and a ready tendency to pathos; in that national disposition: and a Swede, man or woman, does not feel the misery

which a true French utterance throws into the words—*tout seul*.

Together with this charcoal-making, which the number of mine-works and forges render amazingly extensive, is one that occasions more liveliness in the forests, that is tar-making. In some parts, when this process is to begin, it is the occasion of a rural entertainment; there is a festive meeting round the smouldering pile, and the peasants eat, drink, sing songs, or tell stories.

The process is simple, and may frequently be seen by travellers, the roads often leading for many miles through the fir forests where it is carried on.

The roots of trees are the most productive of this valuable extract, and those that are taken from a marshy soil yield the most tar. The forest manufactory, therefore, is usually near a marshy or boggy spot. A hole is dug in the earth, filled with the roots, stumps, and logs of fir trees, covered with earth, and well stamped down on the top; it is then set on fire, and while smouldering as charcoal beds do, a funnel inserted in the

side of the bank draws off the exuding matter, and conveys it by means of a spout into the barrel placed underneath it, which is then fastened up and replaced by another. When the turpentine is thus extracted the charred wood is used for charcoal. Charred wood, indeed, is abundant in these forests, where the ravages of fire—when not, as they often are, purposely caused by clearers—produce a melancholy influence. Numbers of fir trees also are seen still growing, but quite stripped of their bark; this is done to force the sap inwards, by which means the quantity of turpentine is increased.

Where the clearer comes one sees the first step towards cultivation, and might forget one was in a civilised European land, and not in some far off wild where the foot of man had only just began to appear. In this black patch where the burned wood forms the soil, rye is sown among the still visible stumps of the burned trees: the first crop is little good, but industry reclaims what it perseveres to labour on; and there on the cleared spot the wooden hut is built, not the trim-coloured house of the south, but of wood in its primi-

tive state. There dwell a family, buried in the forest, far from any other dwelling and further still from any church. There they live as in the primitive times, by hunting, fishing, snaring foxes and other denizens of the woods, whose skins are an article of their trade. They have goats and cows, and the same forest trees help to supply them all with food. The inner rind, dried and ground, is both mixed with their own rye bread and in its raw state is made use of for their cattle. It is a curious circumstance, which I may mention here, that in our lengthened journeys the only refreshment we saw given to our horses were these rye cakes. They are made with a large hole through the centre, in order that they may be suspended like a string of beads on a rope across a room: there are two great bakings in the year, and our skjuts would stand at his horses' heads and feed them with these cakes as an English postilion would give his a feed of oats, breaking pieces off and holding them to the creatures turn about.

Perhaps the Swedes are, of all the people of Europe, those least naturally given to change. Even in the famous year 1848 they

were but little affected by the revolutionary mania; and it is probable that this adherence to their old customs and old traditions is the more observable as they are seen more and more in isolated positions. It would, I fear, in most instances be the natural consequence of the separation of an English family from all religious observances, that religion itself would soon be forgotten, but up in the remote North people will be found eighty or a hundred English miles from the church, yet totally unalienated from it. To travel to church is a great event, and duly is the journey undertaken at certain intervals. It is at these times that the children of the forest family catch a little glimpse of the outer world. The journey to church is usually commenced two or three days or more before the important Sunday, for as the church is in the vicinity of a village or small town the journey is also put to account in the way of trade; and from year to year or from six months to six months the journey to church is an event to be talked of, and what Prestinnan wore, and how the Priest's daughter looked,

will probably make as large a part of the female share of the discourse as what Presten said.

In this maintenance of the religious principle, and continued attachment to their church, while deprived of all the parochial visiting and constant instruction so general among ourselves, we may certainly see another instance of the benefit arising from the police-like arrangements of the church government in Sweden. However enormous the extent of the wide and far-spread parishes, the priests are charged with their inspection, and bound to give account to an earthly as well as Heavenly Lord for the duties they are required to perform ; and confirmation, and a first communion, with the necessary instruction beforehand, undoubtedly form the most powerful means of both imparting that general knowledge of religion which almost all Swedes possess to a certain extent, and of implanting in the minds of an isolated, hard-working, and poor people that attachment to their church which keeps them from sinking into the state of worldly apathy, or careless in-

fideliſy, which is ſo often engendered, among our people even, by a want of “church accommodation.”

These good Swedes have in reality changed but little ſince “the old time” and “the old religion” exiſted in their land. It was the policy of Gustavus Waſa to change that religion without their knowing that it was changing. Thus ſo many of their old cuſtoms and old beliefs were allowed gradually to die out, or glide into the new, that even ſtill there is a ſort of traditionary Catholicism exiſting in their habits, feelings, and practices: a veneration for their prieſts, a love for their churches, a readineſs to contribute to build or improve them, and a great pleaſure in their adornment—are, I fear, not exactly Proteſtant peculiarities.

The ſettler is called Nybyggare, or new builder; he verifies his claim to the title, for building is cheap in the foreſt, and a circle of ſmall huts ſpring up, of which wood is the only material, and which ſerve to ſhelter himſelf and his cattle. Logs of trees laid tranſverſely, and with the interſtices well crammed with moſs, form the lodgment for both. But the Nybyg-

gare, whatever he may have, claims it as his own; and there is a great deal really possessed when we feel that what we have is our own.

Near at hand there is generally a lake, where the children angle, and walk many miles to sell their trouts to a richer farmer. The great streams of the North flow down through these forests, often forming splendid falls and cataracts, like those of Njuranda, whose cataracts are a beautiful sight in the dark forest, where their tumultuous voice breaks the solemn silence. But as we advance further north nature becomes more sterile and savage. The poor Lapp retires before the new settler, and shrinks from the march of cultivation and the noise of even English traders. With his timid countenance and usually diminutive person, he goes with his herd of reindeer down to the forests and back again towards the pole: further and further north are that diminishing race now pushed from the outskirts of Sweden.

It is, I think, Sweden's best known authoress, Miss Bremer, who says, at least the words sound like hers, "that the whole of the eastern coast of Northern Sweden leans towards Finland as a mother leans towards her severed

child." The relationship is evident, and the separation is felt on the mother's part most keenly.

Nordmark is mostly inhabited, or was mostly colonised, by Finns: although supposed to have been originally one race with the Lapps, there is certainly now a great distinction between them; the latter like to claim affinity, for they seem to bear about them an innate consciousness of being less than the least of all people. At Finbo, still inhabited by Finns, we saw grass mounds containing the bodies of the first generations who settled there, and the size of these graves would show that that race were not larger than the poor Lapps whom we see now in their long skin coats, showing themselves and their reindeer in the capital, while they sell the fine frozen game and skins of wild beasts which they carry there.

Wolves and bears are here numerous enough, but the former the most so; the various persecutions they undergo would almost lead one to believe that persecution has the same effect on wolves as on other things, and renders more powerful what it is meant to destroy; they are poisoned, ensnared, hunted, shot—yet they

abound; their skins alone, even if their depredations did not, would render their slaughter desirable. I have heard that during the Russian campaign in Finland numbers of wolves fled across the frozen gulf and took refuge in Sweden. The wolf is well known for its cowardice, but still the wake of an invading army might offer attractions enough to such cannibals to counterbalance its terrors and its noise.

The frozen gulf is, however, a favourite resort of these creatures, who are said to be as fond of seal cutlets as the Finlanders are; both here and on the Finland side, and the Åland Isles, the wolf makes that poor gentle creature its prey.

The elk is still found in these forests, and its flesh is eaten as well as that of the reindeer, but the latter was one of the delicacies of my winter life in Sweden. The delicious birds which I have bought, frozen hard as stones after a journey from the borders of Lapland, also abound; they are brought on sledges in vast creels to the capital. The splendid bird called tjeder, which, I think, we used to call the wild turkey, and which indeed is

nearly as large as one, I have bought there for one and sixpence. It is the black cock of Sweden, but is not nearly so delicate as the snö ripa, hjerpe, and orra, which are ptarmigan, hazel hen, and black grouse.

The art of cookery in Sweden, as a national one, is not in a very advanced state, but the manner in which they dress game, though very unlike our own, is, I think, preferable. The flesh is first perforated, and little bits of lard inserted, and the birds are served in a quantity of white sauce, having quite a different appearance to our half-roasted game. All that is implied by roasting is of course done in ovens; and *ren stek*, or roast reindeer, is served in the same manner with sauce. There are indeed three descriptions of cookery clearly observable here—French, German, and purely Swedish. Some of the purely national dishes, as lut-fisk on Christmas-eve, are most extraordinary things, lut-fisk being the stock-fish steeped in solution of potash, until in fact decomposition takes place. On Christmas-eve, the great evening of Sweden, this thing is boiled and eaten with oil sauce; and this together with gröt, which is simply boiled rice, form the Christmas dishes of

Sweden, just as roast beef and plum-pudding do of England. The smell of the lut-fisk is terrific, but a true Swede clings to his national dish on Jul-aften as much as any beef-eating Englishman does to his. The poor often substitute boiled corn for rice; and at all times rye porridge, made in milk, not water, is their common food. The number of meals might seem to make amends for their quality: fish is almost the staple of food; quantities are salted in the autumn; and even in winter fish are taken in a most ingenious manner from under ice. You see holes cut at certain distances, and a man seated on a stool at the furthest on each side. The man you are looking at appears to be sitting idly on the ice, but suddenly he puts his hand into the small opening cut in it, and pulls up a bright-coloured little fish, and then another and another, throwing them on the frozen lake, where they jump about, displaying their colours, poor things, to advantage, and suffering cruelly.

Though a goat is sacrificed on a great occasion, meat, up here, is a rarity; vegetables are almost unknown; gardens are little cultivated

in Sweden, although the passion for flowers is so strong; but though the rooms form good hot-houses and produce flowers at all seasons, the scarcity of vegetables is great; indeed they seem little cared for by any class. The common vegetable served to us was one which I have tried to render as eatable in England, namely pea-pods, boiled soft and served in sauce. I remember having read, I think in Clarke's travels, of the pleasure he felt at finding a crop of turnips growing on the roof of a peasant's house, on which he and his party feasted. The 'grass growing on the house-top, whereof the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom,' is seen here, and from this illustration of the prophet, it must also have been seen in the Holy Land. It is a sight not uncommon in Ireland too; but in Sweden a peasant's garden is not unfrequently only to be seen above his head; there too may be even seen a goat browsing. The lower order of houses, instead of being roofed with planks, are only covered with birch bark or shingle which is held on by great stones, the descent of which on the heads of the inhabitants appears to a stranger by no means unlikely; but when they

are covered with turf, and so form gardens or grass-plots, a good hint might be afforded to people who, like us, dwell in a country where a foot of land is, I suppose, more valuable than an acre in Sweden.

The horses of the North are remarkable for beauty, especially in Norrland, where they are kept in troops as in parts of Bretagne, almost in a wild state. They are quite of a superior class to the Swedish horses in general, which are certainly not remarkable for beauty or good-keeping, though they are swift, and wonderfully sure-footed. How they are managed on the ice I know not, but I have trotted up and down hills which appeared to me only like a glass basin turned upside down, and I never saw the least slip.

At first indeed in Dalarne, even in summer time, it made me feel a little nervous to find the horses break into a rapid race on the very declivity of a great hill and whirl your carriage on at a rate which it seemed must project it over their heads, but I soon found the only safe course was to leave your driver to follow his own way, and believe that he understands his own business better than you do. The only

time we had a regular break down was in Norway, when I persuaded a gentleman-driver to go gently down the side of a mountain. There is something very pleasant in these rapid descents when one gets accustomed to them; it is almost like that of the amusement taken on what are called Russian mounts; though when a rock happens to be at one side of the bottom of your descent, and a torrent at the other, the speculation may occur whether you are to be knocked against the one or plunged into the other, for that the galloping horses will turn safely the defile between them appears unlikely. Yet such is the unexpected issue; and they gallop a little way beyond it, and then go slow, and are ready for another race down hill.

Even in a foot ramble in the forests it is hard for a stranger, especially if the stranger be of the class whose only protection is weakness, not to feel a certain sensation of fear. "Det är tyst i skögen— it is silent in the forests," says a native, and how much more solemn is the silence to one of our little sea-girt isle! There are pleasant glades where the birch boughs quiver over greensward, and bare boulders, and quaint fantastic fungi, and tall dry white mosses; and

where the sunlight strikes in, making light in the shady place,—yet still a sense of fear creeps also in—fear, not of the wolf or the bear—but of the human creature; the sight of the latter would have filled me with inexpressible terror; at the sound of a human foot-fall I should have fled as the leaf before the wind. Yet here, in solitude as complete, more complete perhaps, but not so strange to her as to me, is the young peasant maid of the North, recalling her straying cows by the sound of her lur. This instrument is made of wood, the simplest form of musical instrument perhaps ever invented—a pastoral reed formed by splinters of wood into a round shape, and bound together, in the most primitive manner. The musical lur on which the girls of the North play while watching or calling to their cattle, is about two feet long, but they have also a more formidable one, five or six feet in length, the sound of which is more startling and warning than musical. This is intended to be so, as it is sounded to call in cattle from a distance, to scare wolves, and to summon assistance. I got a sketch of a bare-footed maiden up in the very far North, seated on a rock blowing her lur, which might

indeed convey the idea of a quiet resignation rather than that of a lively, happy nature. Yet the latter is the fact; and if the maid is bare-footed it is because, like her sister of the western isle, she finds herself freer and lighter in what she expressively calls her 'sole leather,' than in the heavy cumbrous wooden shoes which, I think, in summer at least, must be almost insupportable.

In the immense forests the lur is both of great size and powerful sound; the cowardly wolf is frightened by it, and the scattered flock recalled. Thus does man suit his inventions to his wants, and even music itself may have owed its origin to the necessities which have originated and perpetuated this most primitive instrument. The lesser lur is more musical and less powerful, and is used as an amusement by the young herds.

Under the shade of the dark firs, the forest ground appears at a little distance to be covered even in summer time with snow; this snow-white covering is formed by the white moss—the rein-deer moss, which affords food not to them only, but to cattle and horses, for whose use in winter it is stored up. In summer time it is so dry and crisp

that I could not prevent it from crumbling to dust when I gathered it, but in the autumn and spring it is soft, and its nutritious qualities must be great. Its form is most curious, and if it were not so abundant it would perhaps be esteemed more beautiful; for a large space around one sees the sterile ground spread over in the most prolific manner with this white lichen.

Thus wonderfully does the earth bring forth in all places, some herb for the use of man and beast apportioned to their requirements.

But the most beautiful fairy lichen is the coral moss; this little thing was nearly leading me into a traveller's mistake, which it was well I corrected by a personal examination.

The large masses of granite we frequently passed were some most curiously marked with a bright vermilion colour on the upper surface. The red-veined granite being abundant here, I asked our driver if this was the natural colour of the stone, to which—being one to whom I suppose it had been disagreeable to leave his work and give up his horses at the traveller's call—he rather moodily replied,

“Nay, that is not the colour of the stone.” I therefore wisely imagined that, as rocks are whitened to form sea-marks, they were here reddened to form way-marks; but soon observing the delicate tracery, the fanciful designs depicted on these stones, I went to find out what this colouring was, and then saw it was formed by that most beautiful plant, which must have been designed by the fairy race alone. Indeed on these granite blocks it forms a fairy garden, laid out with exquisite nicety and full of intricate labyrinthine alleys, the larger spaces left on the stone representing ornamental water. It is the tips of the tiny seed-vessel that are of this bright red colour, and over these stones is seen a sort of under tracery, formed by the lower portions of this and other lichens, brown, black, and white, visible only on nearer inspection, while the more prominent red is that seen marking the rocks, almost like blood-stains, by the passer-by. One hears less of the fairies here than of the mountain men, the giant, the dwarf, and the troll, or conjuror; but if the good merry fairies do inhabit these northern forests, I should cer-

tainly believe the pleasure garden of their queen was formed by the coral moss on the granite slabs.

The quantity of wild strawberries, currants, and that delightful plant, either in flower or fruit, the arctic raspberry, is almost equal to that of the lichen tribe. They grow on the black-charred soil left by the conflagrations in the woods, and they grow in the small creeks among the rocks and stones of the sea-coast. A delicious repast they make with the rich cream so abundant in the North.

CHAPTER XII.

SUNDSVALL—the chief town of the province of Medelpad—is the second commercial town on this part of the coast of the Bothnian Gulf. It is a thriving, active, little town, but, considering its capital position, the wonder is that it is not much more so. The great northern highways to Trondjhem and to Torneå meet here, and thus give it by land the same advantage which the Gulf gives it by water. The chief commercial houses are, I believe, English or Scotch ones, and the trade is principally in timber, pitch, tar, &c. Like almost all the wooden towns of Sweden,

it has been burned and rebuilt within the present century. Wasa—the commercial town on the opposite coast of Finland—has largely increased under Russian rule, and, defended as it is by its natural bulwark of rocky islets and inlets, has been fortified artificially also: but little Sundsvall appears innocently unconscious of danger and totally devoid of fear; the “severed child” frowns across the way, unnaturally armed against her mother; but the mother—as mothers only will do—smiles at her in return.

Sundsvall stands at the head of a bay, in a most sheltered position, nearly surrounded by lofty hills. Leaf-trees, so charming in the North, grow here, and in the bay is a pretty island to which the Lapps resort with their reindeer in the summer time.

The scenery from Gefle to Sundsvall is full of interest to those who, like ourselves, can find pleasure in the bold and careless aspects of nature. Hudiksvall, with its bay, its church, and its neat flower-decorated churchyard, is one of the many stations where the steam-boats stop. But it is not by travellers who merely post along the main

road, which seldom diverges far from the coast, that the true character of the country can be judged of.

A weary traveller, returning perhaps from Norway, will be apt to complain of monotony. Thus Von Buch may have expressed the sentiments of many a more modern traveller, although he speaks in admiration of the general scenery of the Gulf of Bothnia, when he asks "what variety can be expected along the coast of this country, flat districts and woods, with here and there a pleasant and rapidly disappearing view of the sea; a rushing river from the Lapland mountains; and then woods upon woods without intermission." This is in great degree the case: the scenery may be of the same sort of character, views of water, rocks, hills, plains of fir and pine—these in themselves are beautiful; but we know that, though partridges are good, "toujours perdrix" is rather dissatisfying.

Yet nowhere is cultivation more carried on than in Angermanland. Here you see the farmer's house and yard, as completely arranged as in England itself: all is of wood, but there is a wooden house for every-

thing surrounding the court of which his own habitation is the lord. At each house are seen the insignia of agriculture, the racks for drying both hay and corn. In Sweden there is no hay-making in our English sense of the term, at least no hay-tossing; neither is there sheaf-binding and corn-stacking. A good Swede in Stockholm told me that when, among other curiosities in England, he went with an English friend to see our hay-making, and was marvelling at our English women hay-makers, they beset him in a body, threw him into the hay and covered him up. "Indeed, Madame," said he, "I thought they meant to rob and murder me."

"Oh no!" I replied, "they only wanted to acquaint you fully with our mode of hay-making."

In Sweden that lively scene is never witnessed; the hay and corn are cut in the same way, mowed down, and directly put up in racks to dry: the great heat of the sun and dryness of the atmosphere effects this rapidly, and they are when carried home and the corn threshed out by means of a cart, or racking machine.

I have myself seen corn sown and reaped in little more than six weeks' time.

The principal town of Angermanland is Hernösand; the next of the chief trading towns, after Sundsvall, that line the coast of the Gulf. I believe Hernösand is the largest, but, owing chiefly to British enterprise, Sundsvall in its exports and shipping is the most important.

The cattle of the North present a quite delightful spectacle after most of the wretched creatures called cows and horses in the South. The cows are almost wholly white. The culture of flax, and all the process of linen-making, increases more and more as we ascend higher, until it seems the occupation of every woman in every house; the sound of the wheel and the loom is heard from every door. Would these people be happier or better if a great factory received them, congregated amid the roar of steam machinery? Here it is impossible not to turn back with a yearning our Manchester men would despise, to the times of spinning wheels and weaving looms in the cottage homes of Great Britain.

In the more southern districts of Sweden one hears Norrland spoken of with rapture: that term comprehends all the Northern region; it is a poetic one to the natives; they speak and write with pleasure of Norrland, the Northern land, the summer land of the wild swan.

There—in some of those lakes which in Sweden are called small, round which the light birch trees, so gracefully beautiful in the dark forest, scarcely cast a shade, and which are so thick with islets that beneath the bright sky the spaces of diamond clear water appear like so many sparkling mirrors reflecting the isles, the trees, the rocks, and beautiful snow white living things that sail among them—there is the summer home of the wild swan, there they have their nests and rear their young.

When the autumn comes and the cold rain falls down, changing the face of the lake, and telling the creatures that seem wiser in their generation than most of the children of men that the long summer days, few in number though great in length, are over and gone, that the cold rain is the precursor of

the iron-hard ice that will bind up the waters of their smiling lake, then they know their summer homes must be left, then they assemble in conclave, rise up in a body, and flit away to their winter residence. I have not seen them do so, yet I am pretty sure they address their young ones cheerfully, animating their courage,—if, indeed, the youthful aspirants are not already eager to begin their flight, and to see the world beyond the forest. I think they place them in the centre of the band, and then the emigrants rise up and depart.

When the glad summer is just coming forth, when the ice king has felt the touch of her warm breath and sunk beneath its influence, then the lonely watcher by the northern lake might see a cloud no bigger than a man's hand appear in the distant horizon: it comes nearer and grows larger; and as it sails over the tops of the solemn pines the sunlight shines upon it, and it is a snow-white cloud. On it comes, sailing nearer and nearer; and there is a musical sound—like a soft-toned bugle:—the wild swans are coming back to their summer home, their

only home, for there is their life of joy and love: there their children first come forth to sail with them on the sunny lake. Then there is a sound as of a mighty rushing wind—a wonderfully strong whirr-r-r-r—and lo! there is a vast troop of white-winged birds glittering underneath the lake, and there are the beautiful creatures with wings outspread descending quickly over the tops of the dark firs, their long necks outstretched towards their happy home. Down, down they come; and now they beat the air no more, but silently dropping down, in gladness set up their sail-like wings, and float over the shiny water of their summer home.

The story of the swan singing in suffering and death, a song to which Mrs Hemans has so beautifully given human words, is known here also: the wild swan, however, sings or whistles at other times. When on emigration, which occurs when the ice sets in and when the ice breaks up, their note, loud, but clear and melodious, is heard from high up in the air, or from the water they are leaving: their journey is from north to south and south to north, and at a distance their

prolonged, but scarcely varied notes—being only two—are not unlike the softer tones of the bugle. Indeed, in relating this, I cannot help recollecting that in Norway some of my friends were rather amused at a young Briton, who, having left his home to make a voyage to the North, always spoke of himself in the relation he gave of his travels as a *wandering bugle*, using the Danish words only, but meaning, they said, to call himself a wandering bird—mistaking only the Danish word that signifies one for the Danish word that signifies the other. Annoying as the custom is of bringing foreign words into English writing, which often only exposes the writer's deficiency in the knowledge that is so displayed,—the idea has struck me in this instance no mistake may have been made, but that the beautiful simile of "the wandering bugle" was borrowed from the note of the emigrating swan.

So clear and strong is this note that it is said to be heard at three or four English miles distance, and the voices of the young birds, when they join in the bugle call, add a variety to the sound that is thus heard

afar off and high up in the clear air. I think I have heard that some wild swans stay in Dalarne, on a part of the Eastern Dal Elf, which forms a lake called Insjö, which the rapidity of the river current keeps in great degree open in winter ; but in general their progress is from north to south, and back again.

The Swedes, like all other people, have some curious traditions about birds ; indeed traditions which come from Catholic times have always a greater or less degree of catholicity. Thus the tradition respecting the aspen ever trembling from the time the holy Cross was formed of its wood, belongs to Sweden as well as England. The stork—a sacred bird almost everywhere—has its Swedish name the same as in English, and is said to have derived it from flying round that cross, crying “Stryka! stryka! stryka!” which is “Strengthen! strengthen! strengthen!” The swallow also (svala in Swedish) has its name from the same cause—it cried “Svala! svala! svala!” which means to refresh, soothe, or console. The turtle-dove, too, alighted on the holy Cross, and ever after remained a

melancholy bird, uttering only plaintively loving murmurs.

Is it not wonderful that the bird, though it speaks not with man's mouth, does not reprove the impiety that mentions that holy Cross amid peals of laughter, or in the lightest, most trivial manner? It is curious to see such traditions exist where such a practice is maintained; not from any disrespect to the sacred symbol—not from any antipathy as is so painfully common in England to that sign of our faith—but simply from a habit of levity. In Sweden the cross is not exploded with the faith to which it is elsewhere supposed to belong; it is not given up as something only appertaining to the old time, nor is its appearance in the church, at the altar, or over the grave, supposed to be a proof of heretical tendency. The church-yards frequently show nothing but rows of plain wooden unadorned crosses; some flowers or plants sometimes deck the sod, but the former are generally strewn over the beds of relatives and friends on certain occasions — on days dear to memory.

One tries not to think that the summer home of the wild swan is a less poetic and peaceful one than I like to describe it. Alas! there are unpoetic natures up here in the North who invade these homes and slaughter the beautiful birds; and in their winter resorts they are more persecuted, being shot at night in large numbers. When one of their family falls, the others hover round it with bitter wailings, flying back to the wounded, and often losing their lives in unavailing attempts to save it. The flesh, however, is of little good, and the down is now less valuable than when it formed a fashionable article of attire. Sometimes they are attacked in boats, driven into an enclosure, and mercilessly knocked on the head with sticks. The tame swan, with which we are familiar, is also the mute, or silent one; it does not come up to the North, and is not believed to breed in Sweden.

The swan has long ceased to be a favourite dish in England, nor is it a favourite one here; it is eaten, nevertheless, and I doubt if we could not have made use of one ourselves, for the want of food makes itself felt at last,

and it is mortifying to feel that carnivorous propensity only stimulated by the impossibility of its gratification.

If I could get plain bread—white bread, without aniseed, or other ingredients—I could manage very well ; but bread grows worse and worse, until it disappears altogether, and hard cake, which my teeth cannot masticate, takes its place. Our sackful of rusks grew mouldy, and many a time have I thought that travellers should be cautioned to take little appetite as well as little baggage with them, when they set out on a tour to Northern Europe.

I am reminded here of an incident in the touching adventures of one of my Swedish acquaintances. He told me he met an Italian noble or prince who was going to travel in the North, and the circumstances of their intercourse he thus related.

“ He was a good ” (that is Swedish for rich) “ man, he could not speak or understand a word of our language—and he had a very full purse. He could not, of course, take care of his purse ; and so, as he knew a little Latin, I made him understand I would

take care of it for him, and he should travel with me. He was glad of this, and we set out together; but up in the North there was no food to be got that he could eat, and so, as he could not understand that, he took it into his head that I wanted to starve him to death in order to keep his purse. One day, therefore, when we got to the post-station and there was no dinner for him, he desired to have his purse: that of course I would not give him, as he could not take care of it. So he grew furious, and attacking me with a knife, demanded it back."

"You gave it to him then?" I said.

"No; that I did not."

"What did you do?"

"I beat him," said the Swede, coolly.

"You thought that was better than to give him his purse?"

"Certainly; since he could not take care of it: but I brought him to reason, and he came on quietly with me; and when we got to the end of the journey he thanked me heartily when I gave him up his purse."

"I am sure of it, and I am sure I should have done the same," I replied; but I

thought to myself it was as bad to take a well-filled purse as a good appetite to travel in the North.

One is indeed often tempted to wish that the little lemmings, those wonderfully prolific animals, were not the only ones in Sweden to fall down from the sky. The singular and mysterious habit of this little creature in absenting itself, even for some years, and then appearing in such numbers as made old naturalists give them the formidable qualities of the locusts which devoured the face of the earth and injured mankind—has caused also the common belief that they are generated in the atmosphere, and fall down in times of storm and tempest. Bishop Pontoppidan, whose easiness of belief is charming in these hardened times, suggests, on good authority, that the lemmings, like frogs and other small creatures, may in an embryo state be drawn up into the clouds, and when come to maturity drop down. It is said that about thirty years ago such millions of these little animals visited Hernösand, on this coast, that the dead bodies of the slaughtered were taken away in carts, and at the same

time they were seen along the coast for the space of a couple of hundred miles. It is strange that a creature which is of no use, either for its skin or flesh, should thus, like the quails of old time, fall so abundantly on the earth as the people think they do.

Many old traditions evince here the lingering traces of the Odin mythology, as well as of the *old* Christian religion. The antipathy to the wolf, for instance, has a double cause—the natural and self-evident one, and the superstitious belief that it is possessed by an evil spirit. The wolf-witch is a well-known object of popular superstition; and in the seclusion of the forests are believed to dwell the Troller—that is, magicians or witches, whose familiar spirits are wolves, just as a black cat is that of the English witch.

The origin of this belief is easily found in the article of the ancient mythology which made the wolf Fenris the progeny of the Evil One, Loke, and of his wife. From the giant brood, of which Loke was one, all evil spread on the earth, and the brother and sister of the wolf were Midgard, the

great serpent that wound himself round the whole earth, and Hela, or Death, whose body and visage were half blue and half ghastly pale.

According to the same mythology the last age of misery on earth—almost exactly agreeing with the New Testament description of the same—should be the “Wolf-age.” Then the wolf Fenris shall burst his iron chain, open his jaws and swallow up the sun. It is not therefore marvellous that the wolf, together with his real evil propensities, having this terrible history attached to his origin—for Fenris was the author of the whole species, as the two swans nurtured in the holy spring at the root of the tree Ygdrasil were of those snow-white birds—it is no wonder that, with such a traditional origin, the wolf should be in doubly evil repute in a land where his present conduct is bad enough.

CHAPTER XIII.

MY last chapter was, I dare say, a short one, and that not from any attempt at book-making, for truly I have almost feared book-making days were over with me. I have had the cholera—I am now sure it was the cholera—but I did not know it while I was ill, for I had no doctor—no remedy—nothing but cold water to allay my thirst. That water stood on the table beside my couch, and yet the slight exertion of putting out a hand, of raising the head to take it, brought on the cramps so badly, that the constant raging thirst was often unappeased—the effort unpersisted in.

Well! from each of life's experiences others

should derive a benefit—for perhaps it is for the good of the body at large that a member of the human family suffers—

“As herbs, though scentless when entire,
Spread fragrance when they're bruised”—

so should our sorrow, pains, failures—our isolation or want, be the means of yielding some balm, some solace to another sufferer.

Thus it was that He, who is our example, suffered in order to succour. Can one who has ever known what it is to be a stranger, sick or sorrowful, and lonely, even hear of a fellow-creature so circumstanced, and resist the impulse to relieve in another what has been felt in one's own person?

Thus, though it was very bad to have the cholera up here in the North, some good, doubtless, was to result from it; and, perhaps, had I been at home with doctors, “and all appliances and means to boot,” health might not so quickly have come back to me.

I was on this occasion a tee-totaller, and the event seems to prove the system to be a good one. In a fortnight I was as well as ever, only feeling a better appetite than before—for appetite, like other things, is, alas! stimulated by

difficulty; and just when its demands cannot be supplied, there, like the seven daughters of the horse-leech, does it most clamorously cry "Give! give!" To think of taking deliberate measures at home to get an appetite!

However, I really do believe my illness was caused by a compulsory Lenten diet—fish, to which I have in general an antipathy, being our usual repast; and though recovered, the weakness caused by illness obliges me to do, what indeed weariness had before suggested—namely, to ship ourselves and our carriage on board the steamer that is now descending the Gulf on its homeward passage.

To foreigners, especially Germans and a few Frenchmen, the passage up to Haparanda to see the sun at midnight, on Midsummer night and the three or four following ones, from a hill called Avasaxa, is a favourite exploit; the natives seldom make it—and no wonder.

Up there at Haparanda, when you land from the steamer, you may hire a conveyance—if you can get one—to go to Avasaxa, where, having encamped for the night, you look for the reward of your voyage; a reward it is—the sun above the horizon at

midnight; but this sight is seen only on Midsummer-night and the three or four following; and if (not a usual occurrence in Sweden, but the fogs and dews of nights in the North are heavy) there should chance to be a cloud, a mist, a fog, then there may be a dull red globe—there may be nothing—to be seen. The pleasure of the voyage, however, does not depend on this sight only; therefore I would not deprecate the voyage, I would only show why the natives so rarely undertake it. A voyage, or a journey, undertaken for a specific sight, by stretching expectation, usually disappoints it. A spectacle that comes upon one by surprise, like the unexpected aspect of a dear friend, is a thousandfold more thrillingly delightful. Here, when by chance, either from a journey by night, or from a fashion of looking out of a window by night, I have seen the evening-red and morning-red blend on the sky together—the sight to me has been doubly delightful because unanticipated.

Have you ever seen it so, my friends, in England? I think not. We have there the

sweet gloaming, or glooming; the twilight, —the two lights of night and day; the hour of thought—of self-recollection. That hour is not here. But beautiful it is to watch, as I have done, the crimson cloud lie cradled in the west, and the crimson cloud steal forth from its cradle in the east: and the eastern cloud steal on to meet its still retiring sister in the west, until they meet and kiss each other with rosy tinted cheeks, and melt away in each other's embrace. For then the strong sun, that has but just gone down in the west, comes forth in the east, and the rosy-blushing clouds are scattered by his great majestic power, and lost in the greater effulgence. Here that evening-red and morning-red meet and mingle in the clear cool sky. It is Balder's festival up here in the far North—the festival of Light.

True, the festivals of the sky, like the festivals of the earth, are short-lived, and followed by gloom. The night becomes as long as the day. Balder is again a captive; and, in the long night of winter, our own England, the land of true equality, may rejoice over the revolutionary efforts of the

northern sun. Night there has his triumph too, and Loke subdues Balder.

But even then the Northern Lights come forth—the sky-dancers—more wondrously beautiful than any midnight sun, and more in harmony with the hour and scene. When snow-white is all beneath, and every sound seems frozen up—all nature laid asleep—then come forth the many-coloured dancers in the northern sky, and beautiful it is to see them. Beautiful is the Aurora Borealis when the sky is lighted up and full of life, and the earth lies wrapped in a snow-pall beneath it—asleep in its cold shroud.

Insensibly do I wander back to winter scenes, for I have enjoyed them the most.

Haparanda is the Swedish town on the Torneå, and the town of Torneå is Russian. The whole cession of Finland to Russia seems to have been a mistake on the part of Swedes. Those of them who concluded that business gave up Torneå in mistake, supposing the south side of the river was the north; and so the town that ought to be Swedish is Russian, and only a

way mark forms the barrier of the dominions of the great Autocrat.

Torneå—standing on an island in the river—might have seemed debateable ground, but now forms the frontier town of Russian Finland on the northern side, as the opposite one of Haparanda—founded to supply its loss—does that of Sweden.

At Hernösand, the last bishopric of Sweden, we put our carriage on board the steamer. It is built on an island in the Gulf of Bothnia, and is a very flourishing little place.

I do not think I ever esteemed the steam-boat to be a luxury before now. Its comparative repose was delightful. Once on a time I slept four-and-twenty hours without ever wakening or moving, to the great terror of some lookers-on. Now I think I could do the same thing; but the good people here think my delight in being on water is only a national taste that is gratified, and one of them has related a circumstance to prove that the English will never travel by land when they can do so by water. He says an old English lady (but from the history one might doubt if she were not Irish) wished to go to

Haparanda to see the midnight sun: she thought she could not properly do so without a travelling companion, and engaged a Swedish lady for that purpose. The latter, however, did not like the sea, and the Englishwoman did not like the fatigues and inconveniences and limited supplies of land. It was therefore arranged that one should go by land and the other by water; a travelling carriage was hired for the companion, and she started from Stockholm to travel up the coast, while the steamer carried the lady on the Gulf. The latter made her way with greater speed, and arrived at Haparanda; the lady had still the satisfaction of knowing that she had a travelling companion, though exactly where was not clearly understood. She could not think of landing and going off to Avasaxa without her protection, so she remained quietly in the steam-boat, congratulating herself with making a voyage to the midnight sun; and when the steamer returned she returned with it. Meantime the travelling carriage and the companion made, it is said, the same journey by land, but whether its objects were more fully accomplished, I was not informed: all I was told was, that in due

course of time both returned safely to the capital, where the good lady was much astonished at the amount of money she was called upon to pay for travelling expenses and companionship. Refusing to do this a process was instituted, but the matter was finally settled by arbitration. The Swedes have a tendency to getting up stories, but I believe this is quite authentic. I have been told it by various persons, and all related it the same way, and said the lady never left the steam-boat on reaching the object of her voyage; but this, they hinted, was not caused by the absence of the companion, who should have looked at the sun with her, but by a national habit, which leads English people to like to go everywhere and see nothing.

CHAPTER XIV.

WE had now been from south to north in Sweden; it remained only to go from east to west. This latter was a necessity, not a pleasure. For my part I was so tired, that when we took to our carriage again, I earnestly desired a more magical conveyance.

“ There’s something in a flying horse,
And something in a huge balloon,
But in the air I’ll never float,
Until I have a little boat
In shape like to a crescent moon.”

Oh! that such a boat were mine, to fly over Upland with all its mines, and Upsala with all its old renown, and then to light down just where I want to be. Where is that? Alas! it

is too true what the rhymester says—of a great part of the world at least :

“ Oh ! if I were where I would be,
Then would I be where I am not ;
But where I am there I must be,
And where I would be I cannot : ”

but it is not true of me ; for where I am there I must not be.

“ Still must I on,”

and the sooner I go on the better.

But, indeed, I do want to go to Wermland—the Swedish province that borders Norway—and though we could go there very comfortably by the steam-boat that goes on the water-highway from Stockholm to Göteborg, crossing Lake Wener to Carlstad, the chief town of that province—yet my companion has a mission in Upland, and we must travel many long miles to perform it.

So now we are going through Upland, and to cross right over the country into Wermland, we have stopped at Sigtuna—the old Manhem—the man-home of Odin. Its silver gates are gone ; of its first religion nothing remains, of its second a few ruins, with the

exception of its church, where the third religion is practised.

We put up at a tidy cottage, which I believe was the post station, but it was one of the quietest houses in the world—quite as quiet as Sigtuna itself. There was only an elderly woman visible in it, with the most charmingly bright-eyed and bright-cheeked little lass of ten years old. In my nice little chamber was a narrow-leaved myrtle, with branches extended on cross bits of wood; the child came in with an apology, carrying water for her myrtle; as she was evidently nurturing it carefully, I said so to her.

“Yes,” she replied looking up with great importance, “that it is necessary to do.”

“And what do you intend to do with your myrtle?”

“That is for a bride’s crown one day,” she said with a face of simplicity and a sagacious nod of her little head.

The child rearing her myrtle to make her bridal crown! Grave Experience may look on and see the tomb of such expectation looming in the distant futura; and wise

mothers and fathers in England would, doubtless, shake their heads and look perfectly shocked at the idea of putting such notions into children's heads. They think it better such notions should come there secretly, and not openly; that the gravest, next to death, and the most important as far as this life goes, of earth's events, should only be thought of in a smothered titter or an idle jest:—thought of only as something which papa and mama think it very wrong to think about.

This little girl may never wear her myrtle crown; she may wither before her plant; or she may grow on to see it wither, and her bridal crown uncalled for; old maids are tolerably plentiful in Sweden, more so at least than in France. Yet is she not as well prepared to meet either destiny—that which may call her to a wedding crown, or that which consigns her to a blessedness not so often coveted—as they are to whom the ordained lot of women is made a subject of concealment, of mystery, almost of impropriety? To know that it is the child's natural destiny to be what her mother is—may not that calm,

innocent, inherent belief repress the illusions of youth, and tend to prepare the heart and character for the trials and duties of common life?

Here in this old ruined Sigtuna, where the grass grows in the silent streets of the modern town, Odin formed his Manhem, founding his dynasty on the altars of piety; he was a man of power, whose magic lay in a mind superior to his fellows. To me, whoever may doubt his historic existence or mythical attributes, Odin has ever been a very real person. Did he not leave his eye in pledge for a draught of the waters from the fountain of Wisdom? And when Wisdom is purchased by a sacrifice of "the sight of the eyes," surely a man may easily come to be considered more than one of the sons of earth by his fellow men.

That Odin had not quaffed of the fountain of Wisdom in vain, he proved when, choosing a site near to Lögare, the ancient name of Mälarn, he founded a religion of pomp and power as the foundation of his new dynasty. At Sigtuna, his first building, a splendid temple was erected, and the priests

he had brought in his train offered sacrifices to the gods he professed to serve. In forming Manhem he kept Asgård in the view of the people—the home of men and the home of gods were not dissevered: and the successful warrior who promised immortal happiness to his heroes, whose blessing sent them to victory, and all whose proceedings were solemnised with religious pomp, naturally became a god to those he taught as well as governed.

Strange it is to reflect that in little more than half a century after the time usually assigned to the appearance of Odin, another teacher came into the world, truly sent of God to the home of man, the result of whose mission was so different. His kingdom was not of this world; and He was despised and rejected of men,—but now the faith of Christ survives when the triumphs of the mighty Odin are forgotten: the name of the great deity of old Scandinavia exists, indeed, in the traditions and even in the language of the people, but only as that of a demon.

Travelling merchants from Sigtuna were the first to bring the teachers of Christianity there.

Much did the world in old times owe to men who, with the spirit of commerce, not unfrequently spread the light of Truth. The successor of Charlemagne sent the Monk Anskar, or Anscarius, on the representations of these merchants, to preach the Gospel to the votaries of Odin, in the ninth century. Around Sigtuna and in Upsala dwelt the Pontiffs of Odin, and his worship was celebrated in gorgeous temples covered with silver and gold. Anskar raised the cross of a suffering Lord on the top of a hill by Lake Mälär, where a cross still marks the spot—and he wove nets for his own support. On his voyage the convoy had been attacked by Vikings. Escaping from them, the missionary pursued his way, with only his brother monk, through the vast forests and over the mighty lakes, till he came to the Mälär, and there found other merchants, who told him the accounts that had brought him there were true, for many Christian captives and slaves—British ones also—brought to Scandinavia by the wandering Vikings and terrible Sea-kings, were there sighing for the consolations of religion amid the miseries of life; and from

these slaves, as from the little maid who waited on Naaman's wife, had some of the heathen heard of a purer and milder faith, into which they were ready to be baptised. Nevertheless, though the Christian seed was thus sown by the enterprising and laborious Anskar in the ninth century, it was either quickly rooted up, or lay hidden in secret places, for the space of one hundred and fifty years, until, in the eleventh century, after much opposition, the religion of Odin gave way.

At that time it had become more fierce and cruel than it appears to have been at its formation. Adam of Bremen relates that seventy bodies were found hanging in the sacred grove of the great temple at Upsala, which shone with gold, containing the statues of Odin, Thor, and Friga.

Now in the poor little church of Upsala, the tower of which is very old, and the foundations of which, they say, are the same as those of that temple, there seemed to me to be something like the ruins of three religions. There was a frightful wooden figure, which one might suppose had once been the figure-head of some small vessel, but which is pre-

served as that of Thor, once worshipped there ; and thrown aside with it are various pieces of sculpture, gilt and coloured, which in Christian times adorned its altars, representing sundry Scripture events. These belong to the old times ; but in another corner of the church there lay what belonged to the new—a great heap of torn, mouldy, dust and lime-covered psalm-books, swept up there, I suppose, from divers pews. I had often seen the same in other churches, but thus taken in connexion with the other relics, it made one thoughtful. Of all the atrocities perpetrated at this old Upsala in its heathen age none is equal to that of a king sacrificing his nine-sons to obtain a prolongation of his own life ! In our Christian era a “life pill” advertisement sets forth the same miserable clinging to a worthless existence.

It is singular to observe how neither of what are termed the old times—the heathen and the Christian in its Roman form—are yet extinct in the minds, the fancies, or the affections of the people ; in Upland, they say, less so than elsewhere, and that, perhaps, because Upland is a well-travelled, richly peopled, and

mine-working district. Yet all through Sweden lingers the old belief in various articles of the heathen mythology, and also various practices which have come down from the period of "the old religion."

Thus, the Dwarfs who made *Odin's* famous ship, which they fashioned so skilfully, that as soon as the sails were unfurled it navigated itself to whatever point of the compass it was destined, and which could be rolled up and put into the pocket of its commander on landing—these Dwarfs still live in the hills of Sweden, and still exercise their craft in ingenious works, especially in metallurgy. Offerings, they say, are still made, as they are in Ireland, at "holy wells;" this I have not known, except from hearsay. Everyone knows, however, that *Nekan* still plays his melancholy strains in Swedish waters. I have often thought I heard him myself, and longed to tell him there was Hope.

They tell a tale here to show that a priest of the old, or Catholic faith, was of a harder heart. Passing over a bridge, says the legend, a priest once heard the saddest strains rising from the water, and looking down he saw

Nek playing on his golden harp, and knowing that he was thus playing in the hope of salvation, held out his walking-stick, saying, "Sooner shall this stick in my hand bear green leaves than thou have any hope of salvation." There was a doleful plaint, for Nekan threw aside his harp and wept bitterly.

But, lo! before the proud priest had gone far on his way his walking-stick began to bud and to put forth leaves, and soon it was a green branch in his hand. Whereupon, humbled in himself, he hurried back to the stream, and cried, "There is hope for thee, Nek, and for all, to attain to redemption, for Christ hath died."

And Nek took up his golden harp, and played so joyously, that that music he made may be what is called Nekan's Polska to this day in Sweden; the same which my own ears have heard many a time.

I should like to spend a little time with the Elf race: there are, indeed, two races; one rather of a more worldly and malicious order than the other. The happy Elves who dance on sunbeams, swing on the quivering

leaf, and sit spinning their robes of moonshine beside the rivulet,—these are my childhood's friends, and the same circles on the Swedish grass show here what they used then to show to me in a far-off land—the fairy-ring—the Elf-dans; where, the grass grows greenest.

The evil Elves like to cast spells, to bewitch, torment, and injure: but even from this ill-nature some good arises, since wise men and wise women find employment in delivering the sufferers from their power.

Besides these, there are the Berg folk—pagan spirits, perhaps, who are condemned to dwell till the day of redemption in the Scandinavian hills; there their plaintive music tells that they, like poor Nek, are prisoners of Hope; but if a rash Christian, who, with ear laid to the hill-side, listening to the penitential strains within the Elf-hill were to whisper that the hope of their redemption was passed, instantly the sweet music would cease and sounds of lamentation and woe be heard.

A somewhat similar belief belongs to Bretagne, and no doubt originated in the natural concern which the first Christian converts

felt for their deceased heathen friends, and the notions they received respecting the intermediate state—the spirit-land. These hill-folk are not a heathen, but an early Christian tradition.

Little Tomtegubbe is the house-spirit, the Brownie of the North, and is just as busy, as clever, and as revengeful as his Scotch brother.

The Troll-packor, or society of witches, had their Blåkulla in Sweden as well as their Brocken in Germany: on Midsummer's-eve they assembled there to hold the same orgies. The number of poor creatures who were put to a barbarous death for this imaginary offence is now terrible to think of. The religious zeal of one age becomes cruel fanaticism and blind superstition in another. It is surprising that this persecution of witches and conjurors should appear to have been rather quickened than allayed by the Reformation.

But it is only with the good Elves, the dancing, merry, gladsome fairies, that I should like to spend some time; and that is just what I cannot do—for, alas! time is short, and far graver occupations lie before me.

Even from Sigtuna, as well as from the rambling thoughts to which it has given rise, I must away. I have seen its interesting old church adorned with the old pictures of its deceased "church-shepherds," and their shepherdesses by their sides; I suppose the latter title is correct, for kyrkeherde—which is church-shepherd—is as common a name, except in speaking, as priest, for a parish clergyman; and of course, by Swedish etiquette, the wife must be a church-shepherdess.

And in the enclosure of a ruined religious house I have mused; and where Odin's fortified town had been, I have walked through a quiet, decayed-looking place, where some grass and a greater amount of crockery were to be seen in the streets. The last and final destruction of the town was by the Vikings, or pirates of Finland, who made their nests in the Åland Isles, so long ago as the twelfth century. But when Upsala became the residence of the kings, Sigtuna began to fall.

We had a visit to pay to Skokloster, on the opposite side of the lake. In order to take the cool of the day, we ordered horses at two o'clock in the morning, retiring to

our repose at a proportionately early hour in the evening. At the appointed time I left my room, and found the house in deep repose, every one but myself was sleeping; but the door lay, as usual, wide open. If there are robbers—and there are such—in Sweden, I think there can be no house-breakers: all through the country I have seen doors stand open at night. Crimes are punished here with regard to the amount of the moral guilt on the part of the offender; for instance, a man who struck his father or mother would not be convicted of “a common assault,” but of a much more heinous offence than he who should knock down a man who was not so related to him. Thus, too, in cases of robbery, the first offence is scarcely punished at all; it is hoped that a sudden temptation once yielded to may be again resisted; but a second offence is more severely punished, and the third, without regard to the nature or extent of the theft, incurs the fearful penalty of imprisonment for life—working as a malefactor. I saw a youth of eighteen thus condemned for stealing a dollar—the value of which is one shilling and twopence.

Whether this law works well or ill I cannot say, but I can truly say that I never yet knew a country where travellers need take less precautions against thieves than in this.

Skokloster is a noble mansion, resembling, indeed, a select national museum in its collections of ancient armoury, its portraits of celebrated characters, and various relics connected with the most interesting periods of Swedish history.

The death of its late proprietor, old Grefvinnan Brahe, whose husband had been the chief confidential friend of the late King, placed the court of Stockholm in mourning. Now the house was empty, and the servants were raising from the floors the fine old tapestry which was used as carpets! In this truly princely mansion—a rare one in the country it belongs to—the library is said to contain 18,000 volumes and a large collection of MSS.

The Brahe family, of which the famous Tycho was one, and St Bridget another, is of honourable note in the kingdom. The portrait of Tycho Brahe is here, but I could not discover St Bridget's. Our guide appeared to be a stableman, turned into the office on the

occasion by his superior, who was eating his dinner. Tycho, persecuted as a magician in his age, has the fortune of being understood in our's: such a character as that of his predecessor, St Bridget, was better understood in her own age than in this.

Another of the name, Grefve Peter Brahe, composed a work for young nobles, which gives us an interesting glimpse of what the life of the young noble of his day—that of the sons of Gustaf Wasa—actually was, or was meant to be. Of this work Geijer said—“It is an honour-worthy and well-principled book, full of patriarchal simplicity. We see the noble of that day in the midst of his house-folk, his dependants, his agriculture, his various arrangements, even his daily occupations, from the Monday when he holds inquest and court-leet in his hall, hearing suits and giving orders for the week—to the Sunday, when he hears mass and sermon, reads the Bible, and exhorts his people to order and good morals.

“The author,” says Geijer, “was sister's son to Gustaf Wasa, yet he cannot conceal his longing after the old times, the days of

the union in Sweden. A happiness that vanished before the tyranny of King Christian never afterwards returned."

The nobles of Sweden, indeed, at the present day do not quite realize the picture given us of one previous to the time of the dissolution of the Scandinavian union, or of that epoch usually called in Swedish history the Liberation.

One day we spent at Skokloster, which, as its name imports, was once religious property : a cloister stood here before General Wrangel built the present mansion after the battle of Lutzen, and its traces still exist.

It is strange that the history of places should be perpetuated by the proprietors of what were religious houses ; the name of an abbey, priory, or kloster, I should think, would make one feel like an intruder within it.

Skog is the Swedish of wood or forest, but I do not know if that word may have been shortened into the name given to the convent that went by that which the mansion still bears,—Skokloster.

And now we must lose sight of Mälarn—once called, when Sigtuna was founded,

Lögare. We cross it in a row-boat, in order to proceed on our long journey. It is not very beautiful on the Upsala route, as you advance from Stockholm,—the dark firs render the banks gloomy; they contract also, and the numerous islands, and all the pleasant variety this lake exhibits nearer the capital, are seen no more. It is the best spot in which to bid it farewell.

The Mälars, as well as Lake Wener and Wetter, was the work of a giant, and if such works were performed by giants, I know not why they should have been in evil repute in Scandinavian mythology. The earth was taken up here and thrown over the Kattegat by a troll, who thus made of it the Island of Zealand, raising up for Sweden, certainly, a foe in former years, but giving her a bright beautiful gem to adorn a rather rough and rugged bosom.

We have little to say of Upsala, having said on a former occasion the little we could venture to say of such a seat of learning.* Still, visit this place when you will, it is hard

* See "Life in Sweden."

to refrain from a smile at the drollery of a costume intended to designate the students of a learned University. This costume consists solely of a boy-like cap of white—precisely like what very tiny boys sometimes wear with us; having a band of black and a leather front with a rosette: the rest of their dress being left to discretion.

In England we may complain of a want of taste, or perhaps, rather, that taste is not exercised: we are not fond of embellishment—in churches especially. Here the case is different—the people are fond of embellishment, they like to exercise taste; but one is often surprised at the manner in which it is exercised, because in many respects—such as in the graceful arrangements of their houses—indications of what is called good taste are by no means rare.

What sort of taste was it that led to the singular transformation of the Lady's Chapel in Upsala Cathedral, into, I suppose, the Chapel of Gustavus Wasa? Not in that his tomb, with two of his wives—as he had only three—at his side, is placed therein; that is well enough: but there is

the roof coloured blue and spangled with gold stars, the only bit of colouring in the Cathedral, and there all round the walls are pictures illustrating his adventures, only one of which has anything in it that has the least to do with religious history—and that in a dubious manner, for the Bible he is said to have presented to the churches when he took away their more worldly treasures, is not perhaps very much more in use there now than it was before.

The fresco adornments of our Lady's Chapel appear in seven compartments, each setting forth the famous Gustaf; first appearing before the town council at Lübeck, then disguised as a Dalkarl, then haranguing the peasants, next the battle of the Danes and Dalecarlians, then his triumphal entry into Stockholm, then the presentation of the Bible to him by the reformers, and lastly his final speech to his last parliament.

The exceeding misapplicability of such subjects to church adornment appears not to have entered the thoughts of those who designed, or of those who admire them:—

even the English hand-book speaks of the "skill and good taste" with which this chapel is "decorated."

The identity of English and Swedish words, and yet the different signification given to them, is sometimes droll; for instance, the word "taste" is in the Swedish language "smack;" and there is at once a combination and a collision of notions between "smack" and "taste," that is droll enough, when you hear a thing is not of a good "smack," or are told that such a lady has a good "smack," or asked how you like such or such a "smack." But, now when I say that this style of church decoration does not suit my taste, I say, in English, all that I can say of the present Gustaf Wasa Chapel of Upsala Cathedral.

CHAPTER XV.

UPLAND is pre-eminent in rich proprietors, mine proprietors, who also are the possessors of large estates; and to the kindness and hospitality of several of these proprietors, who are all nobles of the land, we were indebted for much of the pleasantness of our tour, as we generally passed from house to house, meeting with charming society, and received with that open-hearted cordiality which, as it were, unrobes the national manner of the rather oppressive formality that is its outward and most striking characteristic in the capital. Here, as well as in other lands, it is in the

domestic life of the country that the true character of a people is to be learned.

It chanced that one of our first visits to a country mansion was to that of a rich widow (not in Upland), who was quite a specimen of the independent country dame, dwelling among her own people, and ruling with a firm hand, kindly temper, and active mind, over a considerable property and large iron works.

She might have been quite the person to make into a story, or to describe in a book. Whether she saw any incipient tendencies in such a direction in the mind of her guest, I know not, but her very name has passed from my memory, because, perhaps in too scrupulous fidelity, I refrained from even noting it down. The reason of this was, that after a very pleasant day had closed, after she had taken me to inspect her forges, her farm, her household departments, with her looms, and her spinning and weaving maids, after I had wondered how one small head could carry all she knew in the way of housekeeping and estate-managing—she then told me that an English traveller, whom she had received as

she received me, had brought her into his Book!

I never saw the book; I do not know if any one else has done so; but I forthwith resolved that neither this charming lady nor any one else should have to complain of being brought into a book if I could avoid it, and that, without permission, I never would record the name of one of the friendly and hospitable persons whose kindly reception I should, in general, and anonymously, acknowledge.

Many of the country houses are exceedingly handsome, and their arrangements and furniture quite as "comfortable" as those of the higher class in England; but what surprises one, is to see houses whose aspect and dimensions would entitle them to be called mansions in England, or chateaux in France, built of wood. In a country where stone appears a sad superfluity, this is the more observable; but the superabundant granite is excellent for fortifications, while the expense of cutting it renders it unavailable for common building. Wood has also been esteemed a drug, but wise heads begin to prognosticate

that clearings and conflagrations may go on too fast. In Sweden's middle age I believe most of the fortresses, those erected in the predatory times of the Vikings and the German robbers, were of wood; and to the use of this material, as well as to the non-existence of the feudal system in Sweden, is to be ascribed the almost total absence of those ruined towers, and forts and castles which give so much interest to scenery, while everywhere the aspect of the painted wooden houses, or simple log huts, give one the idea of a modern newly settled country.

At Osterby we stopped at the *gästgivaregård*. Before I had been very long in the house its proprietor came to me with a large book, in which he said I was to enter my name, with any remarks I wished to make on the house and the reception given to me. Observing the great anxiety of the good man's face, I hastened to assure him I should say all that was good of both. The face brightened, and nervously turning over some pages he showed me a good long English paragraph. As I read it he kept saying—"It is not good—

No! it is not good," but rather as if asking if it were good or not.

"No; it was not good," I told him after I had read a very abusive tirade about the discomfort of the house—the want of large beds, blankets, &c.

"Yes," said the poor man; "a lady up there who reads a little English told our lady of that, and she was right angry: but what can one do? Here come those Englishmen who think our Lord's earth is made for them alone; they have made England what they like, and then they think they must find every other land like England, or make it so. The gentleman who wrote down that could not tell what he wanted, for he did not speak our language, so he writes down that there should be a better inn at a place where strangers come to see the mines, and our lady hears that, and is displeased."

I found the man had been the domestic of a principal mine proprietor, who put him into this inn as a tenant. All that I could do was to give as good a character of it as possible, in the hope that one English verdict would act as a set-off to another: in addition

to which I wrote underneath the ill-natured paragraph these words—"It appears that the traveller who wrote the above forgot for the moment that neither English ways nor English language were generally understood here."

Thus I tried to heal a wound.

I went out into a wood and was walking by a pretty stream when a thick gloom overspread the sky; with all the speed I could use I did not reach the house until the storm had burst; the crash of thunder, the brightness of the forked lightning, were terrible, but the effects on the sky were most magnificent; it was the rain that fell like water-spouts that made me hurry in, and drenched through I hastened to an inner chamber to change my dress; at the same time the lightning struck a poor cow under my window and killed it. How it came to pass I know not, but I was mistaken for the cow, or the cow for me, and a report spread that the English-travelling-Frontimmer had been killed by lightning. This, however, fortunately for me, only verified once more the truth of the old proverb, that it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. The poor cow was dead, but

two ladies from the house of the neighbouring proprietor came to see if the English Fruntimmer were dead also; and so the result of the poor cow's misfortune was that I was invited to spend the evening at that house, where I enjoyed myself certainly more than I should have done in the little inn I had eulogised. The lady was so good as to afford me a view of the whole length of her house; and indeed to stand at one end of such a lengthy building, and look down through the numerous open doors, to the other, it is difficult to believe it is a construction of wood. All the best rooms, sitting and bed rooms, are on the first floor and all in a line, one opening into the other, with second entrances, of course; but it is the delight of a Swedish hostess of this class to set all the connecting doors open and exhibit the length of the building, which forms certainly a delightful walk when one cannot go out of doors.

Having been liberally entertained, we returned after supper, at which tea was also served, to our inn, and the next morning set off to the mines of Dannemora; the

forges for manufacturing the iron of which mines had been around us at Osterby.

Into this mine I had no inclination to descend. I stood on the elevated platform, and looked down into it, and listened to the explosion beneath; and I saw the miners, and young women too, come unconcernedly up in buckets, which is the mode of descent and ascent here, and they sprung out of them on the edge of the pit before their progress was finished; but I felt no inclination to go down to the iron mine in a bucket; I had had enough of going down to the copper mine on a ladder, and yet I think I would prefer the ladder to the bucket.

The iron of Dannemora is known to be the best in Sweden: better, they say, than any in England, and that most in request for our Sheffield works. The scene here is altogether different from that of Stora Koppar-bergen. There is a neat, rather bare, but civilised aspect around the Dannemora Mines, and nothing of the dreary yet imposing spectacle presented at the great copper mine.

Upland, as we have said, possesses several

great proprietors; in ancient times as well as in the present it has possessed great men. The great Oxenstjerna—the name so well known to history in the reign of Gustavus Adolphus, and that of his strange, little-understood daughter Cristina; the philosopher Celsius, the celebrated Stures, and Gustaf Wasa himself, were Uplanders. The poetess, Anna Maria Lengren—whose lively verses, written I believe amid much suffering, have long had a deserved reputation in her country—was also of Upland. The name of Oxenstjerna still survives here, and is also connected with the memory of some of the pleasantest days we spent in this old province; the seat of the first kingdom of Odin and the Swedes.

But I must not tell of all our pleasant visits there; I only on paper wish to breathe a good wish to those who tried to render the progress of a stranger through their land as agreeable as it could be made.

Crossing from Upland, over a part of Westmanland, we entered Nerike, which I believe is the least, yet one of the best, of the Swedish provinces. My good Friherrinna left me before doing so to go on her mission,

and, accompanied by quite a different person, I went on to fulfil mine. Passing over the Lake Hjelmmer to Örebro, and so to Carlstadt.

There is no part of Sweden more interesting to me than Wermland, or as it may be called *Warmland*, and it has become perhaps doubly so from the fact that my time in it was much shorter than I could have wished it to be.

A native of Wermland—whose name is honourable to it—the historian and poet Geijer, describes his native province as “a Skärgård cast up in the midst of the forest;” and though the description is a poetic, it is also an apt one. It must recur to the mind of the traveller who, after hearing it, observes the singular aspect of a great portion of its scenery.

In some parts, especially towards the boundary of Norway, the soil—if the use of that term be not a blunder—consists in piles of granite, sometimes heaped together, sometimes standing in single blocks, having scarcely any visible earth, yet thickly covered with pine, fir, birch, alder and juniper trees;—then, in addition to this, the whole country is intersected by lakes, small and large, all studded

over with the same rocks—tree-covered or bare rocks forming islands on them, and precisely realizing the poet's idea of "a Skärgård thrown up in the midst of the forest."

The whole of Wermland was a primeval forest. One of the Upsala kings, Olaf Trätelja, obtained the title of the Tree-cutter, because, when driven away by his people, he retired to the interminable forest of Wermland, cleared the ground, and formed a settlement in the uninhabited waste; and was, I think, himself sacrificed to Odin, finally, in order to appease a famine.

The earth repays in internal riches the poverty of her exterior. In the vicinity of Philipstadt are the great iron mines; Carlstadt, the chief town, exports their produce in bar-iron by means of the splendid Lake Wener; the whole district around the former town, and on the way to it, is full of forges. Art goes on with her labours in spite of nature's sterility.

Thus Wermland has its double aspect. Over its lonely lakes, its desolate-looking boulders, its great silent forests, there is an aspect of somewhat poetic melancholy. I know not why

—for the scenery is by no means so grand or so beautiful—but it conveyed to my mind much the same impression I felt when on a visit to the Lakes of Killarney, in Ireland: Was it that, in places remote from the iron mines and the clang of forge hammers, the scenes of nature in solitary, pensive silence, contrasted with the character of the people, which has a reputation for levity, or that the poverty-stricken aspect one often beheld caused the natural connexion of ideas between this northern land and that most problematical part of our own Queen Victoria's dominions.

Wermland, too, is a region of contrasts: there is mine-labour, creating also manufacture and commerce; there is wealth produced by these, and large estates on which the proprietors live hospitably and well. The lakes and rivers are stored with fish—salmon without end: the forests are full of wolves and beasts of prey, but they also abound in game;—the little grey squirrel frolics there, and its skin is valuable. The earth is the only thing that will not pour out food for the use of man; for that bosom is very cold—it is sheathed in granite.

Poverty is often the lot of those who depend upon it for subsistence; and often famine likewise; the forests then must come in aid again, and yield bread also—bark-bread, a poor unsubstantial diet, and wan and weak do the poor who have lived upon it appear.

Yet are the Wermlanders, I believe, the very gayest of all Swedes. They have a reputation for levity in the country to which they belong: they love the polska, and never is that national dance more wild and furious than it is here; their manner is lively, and usually both gracious and graceful. Certainly I have known Wermlanders who were very much the reverse of all this, and who could not dance the polska at all; but such are the general, not the individual characteristics. My little maid is a set-off to these others. She shows all the liveliness, graciousness, and grace of her province, with, I fear, a tinge of its lightness too.

In Wermland, with a little stretch of imagination, I might have fancied myself Queen Elizabeth making a royal progress. One recommendatory letter to the very kind

governor, or, in Swedish Landshöfding, of that province, produced, I suppose, this result. We went from house to house, all of course noble, where we were received with a kindness and liberality which never allowed us to doubt the reality of what we were always told, namely, that we conferred instead of receiving a favour. The inns have a poor reputation, but though fish and game form the staple of dinners and suppers, as well as breakfasts, the tables at which we were guests were excellently, even profusely supplied.

In Wermland we were thus literally på socken—that is, on the parish. This does not exactly imply here what it does with us. Children and aged or infirm persons are simply allowed to be on the parish in a much more primitive manner than those our poor-law system admits of: they are allowed to go from house to house, and are compulsorily supplied with board and lodging as long as they remain within the bounds of their parish; but that boundary once passed, the claim is forfeited, and they are vagrants.

The infirm, or those too old to walk much, go about in little carts, and are drawn on

from house to house and door to door. This is the system general in Sweden; and the son of a parish priest in Wermland told me, that in the years of his boyhood he used to draw on the cart of an old man who was thus in rotation left at the door of the Prestgård, and that he well remembered the stories he used to hear from that old man while he sat in the kitchen of the pastor. It was another version of the never-to-be-forgotten picture of Goldsmith—a picture that may live when the gorgeous ones of Byron are forgotten—for it was drawn in the soft tints of nature, and not in the high colouring of art:

“The well-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast.”

The charitable hospitality there described was not compulsory—at least only compulsory so far as that the law of Christ enjoined it. But the charity which the law of men enforces is a miserable thing; it is ever given grudgingly. Who could bear to be the guest sent by the police to receive a meal or a night's lodging? The system may be a little better than our workhouse one, but that is not saying much for it. I was literally på socken

in Wermland, but I had no need to feel that what was given was "of necessity."

On one visit to the proprietor of a beautiful estate, we found, together with the charm of the picturesque grounds, a handsome house, furnished in a style to which the most exacting notions of English comfort need not take objection. One might wish to see a country life anywhere in a natural state, and here, where it might indeed be supposed still to be less artificial than modern fashions have rendered it among ourselves, the fear that the presence of a stranger overlays it with anything of that artificial covering is almost a source of pain. To look at the looms and spinning-wheels, the dairies, and all the internal machinery of an extensive housekeeping establishment in this land of super-excellent housekeepers, is a greater gratification than the grandest förmak, or drawing-room, and the most stately and well-behaved company can afford me.

I have before alluded to that excellent faculty which enables good-hearted persons here to help forward whatever plan you have in view by means of their acquaintances;

thus, when we had put up at one hospitable mansion, we almost always found that we were to be passed on to another. On one occasion the delightful and truly talented hostess suggested that we ought to see a great take of salmon, which might be seen from the house of Friherre ——*. This house was six and twenty English miles distant, but what was that in Wermland? A man was despatched with a note from our present hostess, to invite us to this house, and we were received there very kindly.

It was night, at least late in the evening, when we walked out to see the salmon take, on a branch of the great Klar, or Clara river. It was a wild and curious scene. The poor salmon had been drawn into a trap, or sort of enclosure from which on this evening the water was to be let off; when it was about knee deep or less, the sight was most extraordinary at the bottom. A crowd of salmon, some hundreds in number, seemed verily to look at us as I never thought fishes could look; then began such plunging, rushing, spurting of the little remaining water, such

* Baron.

floundering of tails and fierce, alas! impotent manifestations of indignation at this unroofing of their domicile and ruthless exposure of their persons. A few wise ones lay quietly entrenched behind the great masses of stone in the bed of the river, and well nigh escaped being seen; but as for the masses, their fate was soon decided. A bare-legged Wermlander walked in with a thick stick in his hand, and, dreadful to relate, knocked them one by one on the head, literally beating out their brains, that is to say if salmon have brains. The little ones with more indignity, if with less suffering, were flung up on the beach to die a natural but premeditated death.

The struggles of the great ones it was terrible to witness, and though travellers should be sight-seers, I only saw the red blood shoot over the eyes of one splendid fellow, and I never looked at another. I did not know before that a fishy eye could be expressive, but truly I see the eye of that enormous salmon now before me with the same indignant appeal, and resistency to terror, which I am sure it expressed as it looked at me in the very moment when it received its death-blow.

It may well haunt me, for our host averred that we supped upon the owner of that expressive eye that same evening.

Only one more visit in Wermland will I record, and this name I may mention, for it is already public, already in print, and that as the name of an author—Fryxell. One of our pleasantest visits was to his charmingly situated, and most rural abode, and there we remained for some days. Lake Fryken is just before it, the scenery is beautiful, meet for the dwelling of a poet, and the family one of the most pleasing.

Fain would I linger here; to tell of this little known lake, and of our boating parties upon it, which, alas! we must leave equally unknown. Lovely scenery, and pleasant domestic evenings—a stranger has carried away your remembrance: and when the name of Fryxell meets the eye in print thoughts that are quite apart from authorship life rise up, and I think of the kind host, and the pleasant simple home, and the beautiful lake, and of our land and water excursions—and the name of Fryxell becomes identified with

thoughts of all that is good and pleasant and to be admired in Wermland.

I have mentioned this name because it is already public property: if I refrain from mentioning others which memory holds in grateful and pleasant remembrance, it is because I would not risk bringing into print names that might never otherwise appear in it.

The love of the Wermlanders to their native province is remarkable. Meet one where you will you must soon discover where lies his, or her birth-place, and all that is good, you will be told, lies in that region of this earth. Here the old customs and traditions of the North are most retained. On Christmas eve, or rather all through Christmas night, a light burns in the windows of the poorest wooden hut: here the people start at midnight, or at two or three o'clock on that morn, to travel to their parish church for morning song—racing back in the hope of securing some good for the coming year by getting first home on Christmas day: here the farmer lays aside the “Yule Sheaf” for the use of the poor birds on that blessed day, and the

cattle are not left without their yule feast, but receive a double portion of their usually scanty food on Christmas eve.

Am I right in the supposition that in proportion as the traditions, customs, and manners of a country are preserved intact, so is the love of a people, even in absence from it, most strong, and so does memory most fondly cling to the home whose earliest remembrances have been thus impressed on the imagination.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARVIKA is a fine and very pretty lake, where the scenery is much to be admired: the province of Wermland, indeed, possesses a degree of beauty which to me appeared to surpass that of the celebrated Dalecarlia; perhaps because the latter was celebrated. But the look of pride, of stolid strength, which is the character of the people, and seems to be imparted to the scenery of the latter, is quite wanting in Wermland; nature has here a poor saddened aspect, and a very wild one: like the face of a lovely, untended cast-away, even her beauty leaves a mournful impression. They say the character of the children of Werm-

land is full of fire, and Tegner, the brightest of Sweden's poetic sons, was one of these children, yet few who looked upon the land would think it likely to nourish that elemental fire.

The costume of the people, too, is so much less lively than that of Dalarne, one is at a loss to understand the fact that the people of Wermland are of a much less grave and serious nature than their country-people of the Dales. Here they dress chiefly in black; black is always the best dress; and in addition to this costume, which indeed we could only wish to see supplanting the tawdry fashions of our own country-people—the women even wear bonnets, instead of the graceful and becoming black silk handkerchief of the southern districts and the capital, the white one of the north, or the quaint-looking embroidered or red-knitted skullcap of the Dalecarlian peasantry.

We embarked in a steamboat on the Arvika, which forms a correspondence with those on Wenern.

To go through Dalsland, and pay a visit at a mansion, which every one says is a truly

splendid one, with green-houses and hot-houses attached to it—had been our object, but—

“Through cities and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble there’s no place like home ;”

and so it came to pass that on arriving at a queer old dull-looking little town or village on the shores of the mighty Wenern I was seized with an impulse that, not having been resisted in time, led me quite in a contrary direction to that fine mansion, and lost me the sight of its green-houses, and hot-houses, and all other charms. I actually sailed down Lake Wenern in the direction of Gottenburg, or as it is called in its proper tongue, Göteborg.

We had only passed through a part of Dalsland, and not that part in which the mansion alluded to is situated. Wermland, Dalsland, and West Gothland surround Lake Wenern. The ancient forest of Tived, nearly united once with that of Kolmorden, bounded the frontier of Svea and Götaland—the land of the Swedes and that of the Goths ; and in the vast extent of that forest a king wandered for a whole week without finding food or

shelter. This forest lay on the side of East Gothland, adjoining Lake Wetteren, and (says the historian) was so notorious for robbers, that in the Christian age all travellers who were obliged to pass through it into the province of Nerike commended their souls to God in an adjacent chapel.

Östro-Götaland is one of the largest and most profitable of the Swedish provinces: the soil is the most fertile; although its dark forests in ancient times were filled with outlaws and robbers, so that still the heaps of earth or of loose branches mark out a spot which may have been the grave of the murdered or the murderer. The safety-house stood in these forests; and even now, if one had to travel through these long and gloomy tracts, where few inhabited places are found, the traveller might not regret the existence of this ancient kindly institution.

Berzelius, the great chemist and natural philosopher, whose name has reached wherever science is known, was an Ostro-Goth; and a man of quite another sort of fame—Swedenborg the Seer, was a Westro-Goth.

West Gothland was the ancient land of

Sagas, and still the old families there pride themselves on their traditions, and retain a great deal of their hereditary manners and customs. Trollhattan, whose wonders we have before described,* is in West Gothland, and Trollhattan signifies the Hat of the Troll: it is a curious hat—a great apparently water-excavated stone or rock, now filled with names of illustrious and non-illustrious visitors to that mighty cataract.

There the Giant, or Troll, Hergrim, was vanquished by Starkhotter, a six-armed warrior, who thus won a lovely maiden to be his bride, but she chose death in preference to such a lover.

Here, too, as you go down to Trollhattan, is Hunneberg, the Hill of the Huns, who are said to have been defeated there; and Halleberg, which some say means Hill of the Hall, that is the hall sacred to Odin; for the tradition that here victims were forcibly, and his faithful followers willingly, devoted to the great warrior and deity of Scandinavia, is verified by the fact, that the people, who are the usual depositories of whatever truth there is

* See "Life in Sweden."

in tradition, still call the upper part of this mountain Vahlehall or Valhall, and at its foot is a now nearly dried-up pool, which is called Onskälla, a contraction of the Fountain of Odin. So we are told from the corroborating traditions of Herodotus, that the Hyperboreans, whom he placed in this latitude, when tired of this life crowned their heads with flowers, and gladly plunged from the tops of the rocks into the depths of the sea. The Hall of Odin could never appear to my mind so charming as the view from the extremity of Lake Wener, just as the steamer, on what is called the Gottenburg Canal, stands at the great chain of locks looking into the Göta Elf.

Wonderful truly is the scene! The Giant of Nature and the Giant of Art have been at work together! There is Trollhattan roaring at one side, lifting up his mighty voice from age to age—rushing on and never coming to an end—rushing furiously as if he would have none but himself to pass that way. And there is the little steam-boat, lifted up upon and through the granite rocks, lifted up till the high woods seem high no more, and

Trollhattan himself is conquered by the art of puny man, and we pass him by in spite of his roaring and rushing.

Then we look down from the deck of our nice little steamer on the woods and plains and quick-flowing river—the river we are to drop down upon—the woods where leaf-trees flourish, the oak and beech, as well as the birch and pine.

Beautiful, indeed, as well as strongly picturesque and wild is the whole scene, and on a bright sunshiny day it is one I can view over and over again with almost the same sensations of mingled wonder and delight.

But from a retrospect of this fine water-highway between what may be termed the Court-capital and the Commerce-capital of Sweden—that is, Stockholm and Göteborg—I must turn aside, even as I now do, from Trollhattan.

CHAPTER XVII.

BOHUSLÄN, to the eye that has dwelt on the quiet rural scenery of our British isles, presents an aspect of the most singular character. The coast of Bohuslän should be seen as it was once my lot to see it—on a stormy day and evening at the close of a Northern autumn. Then we might say truly this was a good home for the Vikings; and truly this is now a good home for their humbler descendants—the smugglers: no other vessels one might think would adventure such a coast.

The granite ribs of Sweden are here very bare: their hue, also, has something more dreary and desolate in its aspect than that

of what are usually called "dark frowning rocks." These rocks are not dark ; they are the colour of parched earth : they do not frown ; they have an immobility of expression that is more hideous, especially when you see every likelihood around you of being dashed up against them. When the rough cross-grained Kattegat is driving you, nolens volens, full speed up to them, its billows going right over your head—then I am sure you might wish these rocks would frown, or do anything else that would break that hideous immobility which somehow will rest on your mind, and shut out the possibility of your believing that Bohuslän actually has within this iron-girdle some few green spots, and one or two so pretty as to rank among the prettiest in its country.

The coast of Bohuslän when seen in a storm is fearful ; there is an outer bulwark of enormous island rocks, and a narrow sea-passage between them and the rocks that gird the coast, and these island rocks on which you now see the fisherman's huts and the coastmen's abode were once the holds of the terrible sea-robbers, the Vikings of Scandinavia.

The name of Viking came from Vik, an inlet or rocky creek; this district was anciently called Viken, and its people naturally became Vikings, and lived by the profits of the sea. They were also called Elf-men, or men of the river: thus in the sagas they are represented as another sort of Elf-men—the Elfvargrimar, the grim Elves, the Evil Ones, and Alfvar, from whom the land was named Alfhem, the home of Bad Men—for piracy was formidable here, and the trading vessel had more to fear from Bohuslän of old than its guardian rocks.

This province has its name from the fortress called Bohus, which all travellers on the Gottenburg Canal see in an island in the Göta Elf, near to the place now called Kongelf, but formerly Konghalle, from having been the hall of conference where the Kings whose petty dominions lay in a knot around it frequently met. This little town was then the abode of the Kings of Norway, to whose dominions it was attached while Gamle Norge boasted her old independence, but after passing to Denmark it became, finally, with Bohuslän, a part of Sweden. Bohus Fästning, or Fort, was built in the beginning of the four-

teenth century, and was one of the strongest castles of the North in its time; its ruins are now a picturesque object, just where the river Göta divides below Trollhattan.

It is not by the scenery as you pass down the quick-flowing Göta Elf, and catch a glance of Bohus Castle, that you can form an idea of the province to which it has given a name. In many parts you may look around you, and fancy that the Trolls of old, in some wild prank, had poured the raised sea billows over the land, and then turned them into rock. I have stood and looked round and round, and seen nothing but masses of granite, some larger, some smaller—a little grass grew up between them, but I think, with the exception of that grass, I was the only living thing. At intervals there are heathy plains, and some pleasant smiling vales, and even here there is forest; and among the rocks and cliffs there is a feeble attempt at cultivation; but the sea is the chief source of labour and of gain to the poor and hardy people—not quite in the way it was to their forefathers—but in the more virtuous pursuit of fishing. Still, however, the tamed-down spirit of the Vikings may smoulder

in some of their descendants, and if I augur right from a few hints given and some temptations set before me, the prohibitory laws of Sweden are not so strictly observed by these her subjects as one might suppose they would be by such a very loyal and king-admiring people. I believe the dangerous coast of Bohuslän has some sort of reputation in the smuggling line.

The policy of Sweden confines the people very much to home manufactures, and those foreign articles which could be substituted for home produce are not only taxed, but absolutely prohibited. Very often have such articles been shown to me in Stockholm, perhaps a little confidentially, with the information that their importation was prohibited, and when I simply asked how then they came there, the salesman, with the same simplicity, assured me he did not know how.

The old town of Uddevalla, towards the Norwegian frontier, is the chief and ancient town of this district; its neighbourhood is said to possess much beauty, but there I have not been. If Uddevalla, however, possesses some historical celebrity, the next principal town, the

little one of Strömstad, has an actual and present reputation which quite eclipses its old renown. Strömstad—which name literally means the town of the stream, or flood—is celebrated for its soft, warm mud. I do not know the Swedish name for the singular sort of stuff, but it is a thin, slimy mud, taken from underneath the water, made hot, and then rubbed smoothly all over the human bodies of those who wish to be made either whole of every disease that flesh is heir to, or rendered as hideous as any being of earthly mould can be made.

Strömstad, as its name may imply, is famous for its waters. Hither the natives, and perhaps a few foreigners also, duly repair to drink, bathe, and be blackened with warm mud. After a ball season in Stockholm this may be essential to repair the constitutions which have undergone the terrible havoc of such severe duty. Here, perhaps, some of the gentler sex, who have danced furiously all night, and been closed up in stove-heated and nearly air-tight rooms all day, may regain vigour for another arduous campaign; but for my part I should never have thought of making such an experi-

ment had I not been told by a great officer of the Turkish army, who was not a Turk, but was a wonderfully great man of I know not how many tails—seven if I do not mistake—that the whole operation was performed by women, and that not one man was employed to perform it, of whatever sex the victim might be. Now, he being on his way either towards Sebastopol or Kars, I naturally supposed he underwent this operation with a view to strengthen his courage, and as I was desirous of screwing up mine for an event to me as formidable as, at all events, the assault on Sebastopol might be to him, I actually went to the baths and got myself all blackened over with the same soft slimy mud, which an old woman applied quite warm and soft, until I was black from head to foot; and then, taking an immense squirt, discharged cold water at me till I was white again.

But after all I know not that my courage was strengthened: the semi-Turk possibly went off to join his "contingent" in a braver spirit, but I, alas! looked over the cross-grained Kattegat with just the same fearful forebodings.

Were, however, the Strömstad mineral waters, and the Strömstad mineral mud, of the best of earthly qualities, this would only prove how well Nature manages to give with one hand what she withholds from the other. Here she would seem a hard step-dame, an unkind mother to her ill-sustained children, yet she causes the water to yield what the land denies. All around Strömstad the scenery is wildly arid and perfectly barren ; in the immediate neighbourhood it is also totally devoid of interest ; in other places there are giants' cauldrons and caverns and other remembrances of a time in which one would not wish to have lived, but of which it is curious to hear.

Perhaps here, to this savage coast, many British and Christian captives have been carried by the sea-rovers of old. It is strange to stand amid the ancient haunts of the Vikings and think of the relative positions of England and of England's former depredators and fierce invaders, for "the Northmen" from whom our Litany in old time prayed for deliverance included bands from all Scandinavia. The Sea-kings were not identical with the Vikings : the former had petty dominions

on the coasts; the latter were pirates whose strongholds were among the rock-defended creeks, so that from "Vik" came the title of Viking.

There was more treasure in Sweden in those times than there is at present; piracy brought gold and silver as well as slaves into the country; buried treasures are still often dug up from where they had been hid for safety, or buried with their owners: and the first Christian missionaries are said to have been unable to find objects for their alms. The first Christian historian of the North describes Sweden, at that epoch, as being "a fruitful land, abounding in honey and flocks of cattle, which were tended by the highest men of the country." The slaves were not always ill-treated; they were the property of their owners, but might rise to stations of trust or honour; sometimes they were allowed to work in the evenings on their own account, and thus earn their ransom-money. It was the cruel incursions of the Northmen in our land, and the fact that Christian slaves were held captive in their power, that stimulated British missionaries to seek their conversion. Then,

as now, the houses and temples were chiefly made of wood, and weaving and spinning were the occupations of the women; but the former art appears to have been a much grander one than the homely thing it is now, although then, too, wadmál was woven. A Queen wove in gold the battle deeds of her husband, and the ever-memorable standard of the terrible Ragnar Ladbroc—with the raven that was to the Northmen what the eagle has been to Frenchmen—was the work of the Sea-king's daughters. The first weapons were made of stone, which were supplanted by those of copper; but in the time of Ragnar and the Vikings, iron was used.

In the hills they drank beer and mead, and the latter I have drunk myself at old Upsala in commemoration of our ancient persecutors. One of their kings fell down from his sleeping-place—put up as the poor people's are at present, like the berth of a ship—into a vat full of this favourite liquor, and was drowned.

The fire burned in the centre of the halls at feasts, and the beer was passed across it, as the guests sat ranged on benches at each

side ; the food and drink was blessed with the sign of Thor's hammer ; the king and queen sat with their faces turned to the sun, while the smoke of the fire rose up through " the wind-eye " left open in the roof. The Vikings dismissed women from their drinking parties, a fashion which appears to have been perpetuated in Great Britain in the custom of opening the door of dining rooms for the exit of ladies.

To the sacrifices the people brought offerings of food and beer, and the walls of the temple, the idols, and worshippers were sprinkled with the blood of the victims sacrificed. Boiled flesh and the broth were then eaten. What was commanded in one part of the True Law, and reprobated by it in another, were thus both observed by the followers of Odin.

In the Temple was also a living victim—perchance a willing one, for there is a pride in such devotion. There was the Skölde-Mö—the Shield Maiden, who was dedicated to Odin ; she was forbidden to love, and her love was a fearful calamity to its object.

She was the Skölde-Mö, the betrothed to the god of battle, who must know no mortal love.

It is strange to think that the fair smiling province of Bleking, considered by the Swedes to be the garden of their land—where, at Carlskrona, the now peaceful fleet is riding at anchor—was once the chief abode of that fierce, wild race, who so long were the terror of the seas. Along the shores where Vikings dwelt there are abundance of those rock-guarded inlets of the Baltic Sea which were their homes, but there they are now adorned with leaf-trees: the oak and beech grow in Bleking, and in fruitful Skåne, or Scania, once a part of Denmark, as this Bohuslän was of Norway. All along the Göta Elf was Norwegian, and in the old town of Kongelf its kings held their conferences, until the Vandals destroyed it in the twelfth century.

Södermanland also, through which Lake Mälaren so splendidly flows, with Stockholm for its crown, “was once,” says Geijer, “little else than a group of islets, the chief seat

of the Sea-kings of Upper Sweden, and a border-land in the occupation of both Swedes and Goths.”

The interesting people inhabiting a district on the shores of this Lake, called Wingåker, whose men are seen with long coats of white wadmál, and the women in yellow petticoats, selling their home-industry of strong linens and their woollens in the markets of Stockholm, are said to be descendants from Vikings, and this district is supposed to have been originally Vikingåker.

The Vikings and their memorials meet one everywhere, except in the North of Sweden.

Alas! while I wrote of the past time—while my brain was full of our Anglo-Saxon king, Ethelred the Unready—of the capture of Chester by the Danes and Northmen; the burning of London, and imposition of the Danegelt, which tribute to the rovers grew out of the bribe offered to them by the Unready King of England—there came a sound borne to me from the Bothnian Gulf at one side and over the Kattegat on the other. The sound of war came from

the first—the rumour of war came over the last.

It was, not that the days of Ethelred the Unready, and the invasion of England by heathen hordes from the North, were returning—it was of England sending forth her chivalry, her bravest and best, to fall on a foreign shore, that the rumour told. It told of the indomitable spirit that suffered in silence—of the brave and noble British blood which, for the first time, was poured forth on Russian soil. It told of the true Skölde-Mö—the Shield Maiden—who dedicated herself, not to the god of battle, but to the God of mercy.

And there was one of the same nation and the same tribe wandering idly in a foreign land, round whose shores boomed the roar of English warfare, like the Roman of old picking up a few shells as the fruits of her wanderings, while her sisters were going forth, like Cross-Maidens of the olden time, not to the succour of those who fought against the Infidel, but to the relief of those who fought with them; more wonderful in the spirit that led them to the work, inasmuch as the stimulant

of that pious, though wild enthusiasm, was wanting.

Might not these poor shells be well cast back on their native bed, and the idle gatherer find employment where "they who died of the pestilence were more than they who died of the sword?"

The thought came to my mind; it was not brought there by the fact that with me there was one whose stately form might soon wither away in the same deadly pestilence or lie cold on the same sad ground. Why it came I need not tell—it was like the echo of a voice heard long ago, that said "there is a work to be done while each mortal being lives upon the earth—go home and do it."

And I went. What matters it now what the work was, or how it was done?—that is to be told in another place.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE are now sailing over the Kattegat—the cross-looking, harsh-visaged Kattegat. I dislike it very much, and I believe most seamen share my antipathy. The Skagerrack is as bad, and the cross current they maintain is by no means agreeable, even on a summer's day; but on a stormy one in autumn—the autumn of the North—to pass it once in a life-time might be enough, although it has been our unhappy lot to do so three times.

To come from the islands of Denmark down to the North gives the voyager a better means of judging of the coast of Jutland. Leaving the pretty little isle of Fyen—or as

we call it, Funen—we see, then, how the wooded coast and cultivated shores of Jutland gradually change their character; woods thin, and at last cease; cultivation becomes scantier and scantier, and the aspect of the coast, as it approaches the North, becomes more barren and bare, until, at its furthest point, Skägen—desolation—in one word describes it.

There is bleak Skägen, a hamlet of fishers and pilots—men of the coast, with their women and children, and their homes on the barren sand—and that sand runs out, narrowing on the sea, like a sharp-pointed tongue, until, as I once saw in the love-letter of a young apprentice in speaking of his lady's finger, "it tapers imperceptibly to nothing." But over its tapering point dash up the billows, and this point is the, to seamen, well-known Skaw. It is a very ugly thing, and I feel a perfect antipathy to it. The western coast of Jutland is more wild and dangerous still, but there is a blank desolation about the Skaw that makes one simply wish to keep away from it. I have compared the sands here to a narrowing tongue, but—sharp, alas! as tongues can be—I believe the simile of a dagger might be correct.

More near to the opposite extremity of this little Jutland—the land of the Jutes and of the Angli, the old invaders of England, and more anciently of the memorable Cimbri—there is an old mansion in which the flooring of one long room is made of the masts of shipwrecked vessels: each board of this strange floor is forty-eight feet in length. A sad coast though it is in autumn storms, for those who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters, it was probably more so formerly than it is now, since a traveller at the beginning of this century, in describing the western coast of Jutland, tells of “interminable rows of stranded vessels,” and thousands of masts, forming a range of palisades the whole seventy-three miles of their course.

When the British Fleet was once before in this sea—that is during the war which it is devoutly to be hoped will soon cease to be called “the *late* war”—three of its gallant vessels were lost on this same coast, with 2,000 of their crews.*

* While this was writing the papers announced the loss of another in the *present* Russian war.

And now the white cliffs of England—so dear a sight to many a returning wanderer, to many a departing exile—are passed, and the green, garden-like landscape of England, is around me. Even after a two-years' abode in the North of Europe, it looks so small, so pretty, so garden-like. I never before observed that England was not bare in winter; that the leafless hedges were still green with grass and a thousand little things that creep among them; that the fields were green, and the woods were greener than the solemn ever-green forests of the North. The holly and ivy, the hot-house plants of the North, never appeared to me so plentiful, and so much to be admired, before now. The trees are not bare, for the ivy still keeps them green.

In pretty Derbyshire the hedges, fields, and trees all looked so green and cheerful at Christmas-tide. Alas! that aspect was not reflected on human hearts, for sorrow and fear were there. Death was casting its night-shadow even on the freshness of Nature.

Great, indeed, is the contrast between a Northern forest and an English wood in the

winter. In the day-time the forest is often grandly impressive; when the strong sunlight falls on the ice-bedecked fir-branches, causing them to glitter with inconceivable brilliancy, and reflect back its rays in divers charming colours, while underneath all else of Nature lies entombed in immensely deep snow, over which the dark pines lift up their moveless heads, like solemn giants who had seen races pass away from the earth, and should see ourselves follow them.

But splendid above all is the forest in the bright night of a Northern winter! When the wonderful lights of Heaven look over it with their myriad eyes, while without speech or language their hallowing voices are heard among them, then the forest is an enchanted scene: its floor is of shining crystal; it is hung round with glittering diamonds; the lofty and slender branches of the birch-trees bear pendants of the purest water; the glittering icicles sparkle with such surpassing brilliancy in the gloriously clear moonlight; the small green twigs of the fir and juniper-trees wear a minute and exquisite silver edging: the forest is no longer bare, it is

loaded with ice-ornaments which shine like costly diamonds, with ice-pearls that gleam as bright as the jewels in the coronets of Queens, for millions of great stars are standing over them, and casting their wonderful brilliancy upon them.

On a Christmas-eve in the North, a light must be in every house; but Christmas-eve in the forest has its own jubilee, and requires not the pious, though insignificant art of man; there we see glorious Christmas-trees, bedecked in rime frost as no mortal hand could dress them; and there shine over them the same Christmas nights that shone on the plain of Bethlehem when angels sang of "Glory to God and good-will to men"—heralding the Advent of the True Light to this darkened world of ours—the Advent of the Prince of Peace.

* * * * *

But while I wrote these last pages of an often disconnected narrative, the narrative of our two summers' rambles in Northern Europe—having previously written that of our winter life—the spring has come forth in England; the winter is over and gone; the

time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. It is not the time of the death of the Frost-king, the lingering torments of the mighty and expiring winter of the North, neither is it the sudden and triumphant return of captive Balder, making glad the earth and sky; it is the English spring—coquettish, yet pleasant—the real spring of buds and blossoms, slow, gradual, checked, renewed, till laughing summer comes slyly on and pushes her younger sister aside. Yes, I do like a Northern winter, but I much prefer an English spring.

And lo! with the voice of spring, and with the voice of the turtle, is heard a voice more sweet—the turtle-dove of Peace is unfolding her blessed wings on our land—it calls to rejoice; but, alas! with that joy there is heaviness! It cannot call the dead to life, nor can the spring that calls forth bud and blossom call up from the earth the brave, and good, and loved—the young and the old whose blood that earth has drank like water.

The combinations and circumstances of life, most people admit, are often more singular than those produced by fictitious art; yet

when one relates a very common-place, simple coincidence on paper, one is frequently asked if it were real; and perhaps the fact that I began to write these pages when war was looming in the horizon around us, and close them in the very month, almost on the very day when Peace is announced, may appear rather a pretence than a reality. It is, however, the latter. The roar of war followed me here—that roar is hushed.

This work has been carried on at intervals; it has really occupied the whole interval of the war-time; and now, just as I thought it was to be concluded in that most unhappy time, the postman's ring at the gate, as I was walking in the garden seeing the spring come out, called me to it; he handed me a letter, with a loud voice saying—"Peace! Madam—Peace!"

And I said then what I say now—thank God for it!

THE END.

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