

A SUMMER
IN
NORTHERN EUROPE.

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IN
NORTHERN EUROPE,

INCLUDING

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

BY

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"LIFE IN SWEDEN," "OUR OWN STORY,"

&c. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO
ADMIRAL SIR EDMUND LYONS, BART.,

G.C.B., K.C.H., &c.

THE AUTHOR DEDICATES

THESE VOLUMES,

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF

THE FRIENDSHIP AND PATRONAGE FROM

WHICH WERE DERIVED

MANY FACILITIES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HER

TRAVELS IN NORTHERN EUROPE.

A SUMMER IN NORTHERN EUROPE.

CHAPTER I.

STOCKHOLM,

May 10th.

THE winter life of Sweden is at an end. It died a lingering death; a painful one, indeed, to some of those strangers who had to assist at its expiring moments, after having enjoyed its jocund, hearty, exhilarating existence.

That nondescript season called Spring in the North is really nothing but the term allotted to the death-struggle and obsequies of the brave old winter; of that hoary giant, the Frost-King, who will dispute the ground to the last, while his antagonist, the sun, actually seems to slacken his progress just at the time when one might expect he would hasten to

put an end to the conflict. I think I never felt the strength of the sun so great in the beginning of March as in Sweden, nor the cold anywhere so intense on the first of May as in Stockholm. In fact, the poetic spring of the North exists in poetry only. There is no spring here.

“O! 'tis the touch of fairy hand

That wakes the **spring** of northern land”—

are beautiful and favourite lines. But yet “summer,” if the word would suit the metre, would be more the truth. The fairy touch is not given until a preliminary process, of a nature by no means agreeable, has been carried on; and then the touch that wakens summer life* gives to Nature a sudden jerk, a start, a hasty coming out, that is, to me at least, less lovely than her ordinary morning habits, when the dame slowly wakens up from her shorter sleep in other lands, gradually opening her heavy eye-lids, glistening at the sun, and closing them again; and so wakening and attiring herself slowly, keeping expectation alive until she comes forth in her fresh young loveliness, her own spring time; blushes only kindling as she walks along, decking herself

with buds and blossoms and bursting leaves, and greeted with the triumphant song of birds.

Nature has no morning here. She bursts into her noontide at once; the season called by us spring is only here that of thaw. A quick spring is thought almost as much of as a hard winter. Both are excellent in their way, and the quickness of the former is usually proportioned to what we would call the severity of the latter; but the more severe, the better for the North. The goodness of a winter in Sweden depends on the hardness of the ice and the quantity of the snow. Without these, winter trade and winter pleasures would be sadly impeded.

The spring season, however, is often a cold, dark, dreary, and very dirty one, during which the iron-hard ice and deep, deep snow are slowly breaking up—broken up with pickaxes in the streets of Stockholm; and this melting away of the earth-covering which had given it such a majestic and interesting aspect, destroys all the beauty and grandeur of winter, without giving us the least glimpse of the lighter charms of spring. Old winter slips his icy

mantle very slowly from his broad shoulders, and then remains in a most disagreeable costume, until all at once we see his equal in her own way, great, strong Summer, stand laughing in his place.

I see in the face of young C—— the exemplification of what spring is here. That handsome, mischievous-looking face, with the dark eyes filled with constant laughter, has grown quite another thing since the skating and mad sledge-driving, the wild descents of the ice-mounts, the constant balls, and all other winter occupations, are gone, and to him a blank only remains. They say his only employment in England consisted in what is called sowing wild oats. I do not understand it, and when I asked what had been his amount of profit, he looked very droll, and said he was going to try a better system as a farmer in Sweden. And so he was waiting for the spring, on the second day of May, in order to go to the country, and study this better farming system. He says—but I really do not believe it—that, being the scion of an ancient Roman Catholic house of Scotland, the Pope himself had sent him to perform

a winter penance in Stockholm ; but I am sure, if this be so, the acts of penance must have been left to his own choice.

We have, however, one pursuit in common ; we are both watching and waiting for the opening of the water.

It was on the sixth of April that I took my last sledge drive in the pleasant park of Haga. I have already told about that park*—how, while the sun was bright and strong, those fine rocks and undulating grounds lay still deep in the unmelted snows of winter ; how silent, how solemn, all was there—the tall pine trees the only coloured things to be seen. The voice of spring had not come then ; its touch was unfelt ; not the chirrup of a bird, not the sign of a bud, not the vestige of a blade of grass, were there. The towering pines, the changeless firs, stood, as ever, solitary witnesses of the life and death of Nature, erect in fearless superiority, in cold, mournful, unenviable triumph ; their stern heads uttering a homily over the lighter and lovelier things that had fed on sunbeams, and danced in warm air, and been admired and loved, and were dead, despised,

* See 'Life in Sweden.'

trodden down—the victims of their own tenderness.

Trees that lose their leaves are called in Swedish, leaf-trees; they are thought a great deal more of than those never-ending firs; but in winter they become so utterly miserable in aspect, so earthy-coloured, dried up, and sapless, that one would think sunshine and shower could never more revivify things whose life seemed frozen up for ever.

The fir-forests of the North are most magnificent in winter—at all times to me they are charming; but yet I never thought a wood so pretty in England in winter time until I saw one after coming from the north of Europe. The holly and ivy—dear old things!—are not seen here. The green ivy is not twining round the bare stems of the leafless trees, faithful in sorrow and loneliness. An English wood seldom looks bare; it has always a look of greenness to an eye that has looked on northern scenery. Holly and ivy are here only known in hothouses and botanic gardens. Ivy, trained in geranium pots, is one of the favourite adornments of a sitting-room.

On the tenth of April I walked on a vik, or

arm of the Baltic; at one spot the ice had been broken, and my foot went down knee-deep. A tall Swede, whose head the waters could scarcely cover, pulled me out, and told me the ice was getting soft. I must not walk on it any more, "that would not go on." And shortly after that I saw the snow melting away from Carlberg park, and the straw-coloured grass appearing; and all around, beneath the giant pines, peeped up the most charming little blossoms—the wild hepatica, called here blå-sippa, red, white, blue, already in blossom, while not the bud of a leaf was to be seen save their own. These pretty things form their buds in the autumn, and then the snow comes and proves only a kindly covering for them, and when it melts away, lo! there are the flowers, ready to open their sweet eyes, and look up to their parent sun with a smile.

It is this previous formation of blossoms beneath the snow that gives the ground the flowery aspect which poets delight to celebrate. And yet the First of May—a grand day in Sweden—was the most unpoetic May-day that ever was felt. The cold was more intense, at

least far more miserable, than I had ever felt it in winter. A cold east wind is something unutterably bitter in Sweden. I have felt it when it was snow-laden, so unbearably keen that I actually feared I must be severed in two. The clear, cold, bright, joyous, sunny winter was quite unlike this May-day.

On the first afternoon of May, the King, Queen, the Court, the Diplomatic circle, the numerous class called nobles, the comfortable class denominated burghers—the whole, in short, of Stockholm, from the highest to the lowest, who can drive, ride, or walk—resort to the ever-delightful Djurgård, and, after a state procession round it, all those whose rank does not stand in the way of such enjoyments, repair to the countless restaurants with which it abounds, and close the day in feasting, dancing, and any other amusements. Thus has May-day been celebrated in Stockholm for longer than I can tell.

It was very soon after that un-May-like day, that my little maid, Karin, sprang quick and light, as if performing the gallopade, into my room.

“Madame, there is smoke! Ack, let us praise God! Now then the spring will be early this year!”

“Spring! what does Karin mean? Does smoke bring in the spring?”

“Ack! Madame knows what I will say;—the summer will be here soon—see, there is smoke! Hearken! —there—hark!” And Karin leaned with her eyes to the window, and her forefinger held up to her ear as a signal to me.

I heard the sound, provokingly common here during the summer, the sharp report of the gun fired whenever one of the numerous tribe of steam-boats go out and come in.

“Now that is right gladsome to hear,” cried Karin, “and there is the smoke, under the King’s window. Now the King himself may even come out to see it, for it is the first boat of the year. Yes, the King himself, and the dear Queen, and all the Princes and Princesses;—there are all the people coming.”

I looked out also, and saw a small boat getting up its steam at the pier before the Palace windows; it was going on a voyage of discovery among the floating icebergs of the

Baltic, or Lake Mälär; but it turned out like some voyages of more distant scope, and the steam-boat returned, saying the passage could not be made.

The excitement attending the closing up and opening of the Baltic or Lake, is something quite curious; the shutting and opening of the water, to a water-girdled, and for some months ice-bound capital, form two distinct epochs in the history of the year.

Only two days afterwards I heard a clanging military step, quite unlike the slip-shod sound of feet in Swedish galoshes, coming rapidly over the outer room, or salong, as they spell and pronounce the word salon, and my young acquaintance, C——, without having deposited his galoshes in the appointed place, entered the room, to the utter horror of a native housekeeper, in the very boots he had walked in.

“The water is open, and I am off.”

“You are going to live with a farmer, to study Swedish farming?”

“Um—m— Well, no; I am going to Russia.”

“To Russia.”

“Yes, the Emperor Nicholas, I am told, has a system more suitable to me.”

“Ah! you are going to take service there. And if a war breaks out with England?”*

“War! no fear of that. We shall have a war with France, that is certain; and then they will want me at home.”

“I think so, for I have just got a letter from a little nephew of mine of six years old, and he says he wants me, as I am abroad, to tell him whether the French do really mean to invade England, for in that case it would be well to be prepared; and Major —— had told him that even women and children would fight against them.”

“And what did you reply?”

“That there would be no war with France; and that unless I had lived in the time of the Crusades, and thought it right to share in the old hereditary zeal against the Turks, I was quite indisposed to join in arms with the women and children of England.”

“Why did you not tell him briefly that we should thrash the French army any day, without any help?”

* This discourse really took place in Stockholm shortly before the war with Russia was talked of.

“Because I doubted it.”

The answer drew forth a flood of eloquence, or wrath, that made me afraid to continue such a subject, on which indeed I spoke, as women do, from impression merely, without being at all able to give a reason for what I asserted.

“Well,” I said, “I want to go to Finland only; but do you know the Swedes tell me that they are so suspected there, that it may be unpleasant even to go in a Swedish vessel; however, I spoke to that nice Russian Attaché, and he said he would get me a passport, and that the English were always well received in the Russian dominions.”

“O yes! we are brothers, old allies, and friends. Russia will stand by us, never fear.”

“But, except at the Court, there is a general hatred of Russia in Sweden. Old jealousy, like the feeling in France against us. However, the matter for me to arrange is this:—the water is open; I want to go somewhere, but there are so many places I want to go to that I sit still and am likely to go nowhere, simply because I cannot go everywhere. See, now, how the case stands. When I talk of leaving Stockholm, the people here say I ought not to stir till all is green, which seems

to me an indefinite period, as there is not a green bud yet. But I want to go to Gottland in one direction, to Finland in another, to Dalecarlia in a third, and to Torneå in a fourth, besides travelling through Sweden generally."

"Do you know," said Mr C. gravely, "I once saw an English lady of nearly seventy years old, sitting with the map of the world before her, marking out all the places she designed to see; for she told me she had travelled almost over the world, but wished to refresh her memory by another tour."

"My tour would be easily managed if it were not that I want to be both at Torneå and in Dalecarlia on Midsummer-day. At least I want to see the Dalecarlians coming over the Lake, in their holiday garb, on Midsummer morning; and I want to see the midnight sun at Torneå on Midsummer-night. If some hundreds of miles did not lie between them I could do it. As this is the case, however, I will go and speak to Frederika Bremer, who has been to see the midnight sun, and says it looked like a cheese or a pewter plate; and then I will speak to Sir E. L., who puts everything right for every one; and lastly, I will try if that dear Finn Countess

and her amiable son, who pretends to witchcraft or conjuring, are going back to their home—if so, it would be a nice opportunity for me to get as far, at all events, as Helsingfors. In case I can ascertain that, I shall have time sufficient to return from the Gulf of Finland, in order to traverse that of Bothnia, and get either to Torneå or Leksand, in Dalecarlia, by Midsummer-day.”

“You must make haste, then,” cried C——, jumping up; and quite an impromptu leave-taking followed, for we were both impressed with the necessity of following out an old vulgar saying, which is fully verified in this land of short summers—“You must make hay while the sun shines.”

CHAPTER II.

THE twelfth of May has come—the water is open, the sky bright, the breeze fresh. The steam is up. A little host is there, both on the deck and on the pier, waiting, as they politely say, to have the pleasure of seeing us off. Well, a Swedish farväl, like a Swedish welcome, is a hearty one, although there is a very strong and singular mixture of formality—not mingled with it, but, as it were, laid over it, like those chemical compounds which have no real affinity, and yet form a whole.

Some strangers and foreigners had been waiting for their release ; some left the place of their captivity with regret. I think I was myself one of these. My winter life in Sweden had been on the whole a pleasant one. Thanks

for that to one who then, respected and beloved as he was, we little thought should so soon afterwards be the Nelson of our day. Brave and good Sir Edmund Lyons! how little did I think when last I saw that kindly face and unpretending aspect, as I sailed from Stockholm for the Russian dominions, of the strange changes that were so soon to take place. How little did the Russian Attaché, who then so kindly assisted my projects, fancy that there, before him, stood the leader of the British fleet against his mighty master!

I believe really brave hearts are always tender and kind, and cowardly ones, on the contrary, are hard and cruel; and his has again mourned, as it had not then yet ceased to mourn. But, as his Queen has said, in the loss of his gallant son he has had a nation for his sympathisers; and at a distance, and in silence, one who had owed to him many a pleasant hour of winter life in Sweden included herself in that national host, and in his second loss felt for the gallant Commander she admired, as she had done for the British Representative whom she respected. Yes, it does seem strange to recall the scenes of that Swedish steamboat and of the land it left!

Friends then are foes now, killing each other with apparent pleasure. Horrible war! Even if Sir Edmund were standing beside me I would write the words.

Well, the Captain is mounting the paddle-box. The deck must be cleared of all who will not come with us; there is no longer time for bowing, the Swedes must step on shore to finish that work. Now, one more hasty farväl to the natives—adieu to the Russians and French—good-bye to the English friends—and the steamer trembles, quivers, puffs, and we are off for Åland Isles. Hats and handkerchiefs waving, and “A fortunate voyage!” uttered in Swedish scores of times to the friends on board.

And I left some behind whom I was quite sure I should soon rejoin. “Firmum in vita nihil” happens to be the family motto of one who thought that, and many other equally unrealised things. So a hearty farewell, on paper, to all, of whom I scarcely thought it necessary to take it otherwise. Many there are among them who were kind friends to one who came as a stray waif among them.

So we moved away from beneath the win-

dows of Stockholm's royal palace; a truly noble, as well as truly Northern one, it is; and on through dear familiar scenes, which I recall now to my view just as if I were floating by them in my favourite paddle-boat worked by the jocund Dalkuller, the ever merry-hearted women of Dalecarlia. Perhaps few of the native ladies, especially of the higher classes, were more fond of them, or better acquainted with them.

There are the rocky heights of Södormalm, which had lately been a nightly delight to me in their snowy dress, as seen from the windows of my dwelling. Now they are bare, or dotted over with large patches of unmelted snow, but not a leaf, nor even a bud is yet seen.

I may, therefore, very well here describe the winter view that afforded me constant companionship, especially while a severe fall from a sledge at night on a frozen lake had laid me up motionless on a sofa. I was then living in the fashionable, which in Stockholm is the north, end of the capital, called Norrmalm, and this opposite extremity we are now passing in our steamboat is called Södormalm, or the South Suburb. My window looked over a

fine, open, houseless square, direct to the heights of Södor.

These heights are studded with houses, which climb up the rock in a most singular and irregular manner. It was once the most fashionable, and is now the most deserted quarter. Above all the other great and small, and many-windowed houses, rises Mosefacken, or the Hill of Moses, which reverend term designates one of the many places of amusement for the townspeople with which the capital abounds. The view from these heights is splendid; and in summer it is very pleasant to get up here, and look over lakes, and sea, and forests, and plains, and hills, and all Stockholm lying beneath you. But in winter it is far more delightful to sit up at a window at night, or in the evening, and look out upon a scene, which, often as I looked at it, ever seemed to me like a fairy tale description of a crystal region illumined with myriads of magic lights.

The large long space before my window, bordered with trees, was a sheet of frozen snow, reflecting, as in a mirror, the lights of

the dim oil lamps at the side, of the lanterns that flitted over it, and of the sparkling lights from the uncurtained windows which, indeed, in the absence of gas, gave to Stockholm at night an air of constant illumination. At the end of this open space, called Torg, or square, the Mäler lake and Baltic sea form a junction. The sides of the water are frozen and snow-covered, but in the centre the fresh water of the lake bursting from under the bridge that divides the two, whirls in a strong and circling current through the icy channel, the mingling of fresh water with salt producing a beautiful effect. This bridge, called Norrbro, is a splendid work, and, with the view from it, is the most beautiful part—it may be called the only grand and really beautiful part of the capital. At the north end is the square with the statue of Gustavus Adolphus, and called Gustaf Adolf's Torg; at the opposite end is the magnificent Palace, with the heights of Södor in the distance; at each side appear the extensive and interesting prospect of the Baltic on the one hand and the Mäler on the other. And just beneath that bridge is a little spot of ground, perhaps fifty feet in extent, which is the pet resort of

the Stockholmers in summer, who crowd there as thick as bottled wasps upon a southern wall, to drink coffee, punch, or anything else ; sitting if they can sit, standing, or walking if they have room to move, looking very happy, but very sedate ; even the little children behaving with a quietness and decorum which is quite awe-imposing. And the broad granite steps leading down to this little spot, called Strömsparterre in Swedish-French, but pronounced Strömpetter—are one moving mass of men, women, and children ascending and descending on a summer's evening. There was no place in all Sweden that tried my patience so severely as that.

Well, this view at night, whether seen from my window or during a midnight stroll on Christmas-eve, is, in winter, one of the most singularly charming I ever beheld. On the latter occasion, when I walked over Norrbro, the Mälar side was dark, except where two deep red lamps were reflected on the broken stream ; on the other, innumerable lights dancing on the circling water, with its white frozen edges, made it look as if the bright star-sky of the north had dived down there, and bathed

its myriads of glittering eyes beneath the flood. The ice-bound ships were all moored very securely there in thick-ribbed ice ; their tall masts looking just like the bare leaf-trees of the country, in that snowy scene and clear, clear light ; while the moon—not the least like a flat English moon, that seems to be stuck against the sky, but a spherical body—hung self-suspended in the pure atmosphere—so very large, so very bright. And when all is snow, frozen snow around, everything looks so great, so distinct, so open, and so universally white. Nothing but white, from the frozen-up Baltic, and snow-heaped ships, up the curious heights of Södor, which you can mount if you please, by a wooden staircase, as if you were mounting to the top of St Paul's, or drive round a longer carriage way if you wish to avoid that labour,—all is white, and all is hard, and clear ; and at night, the houses being occupied in floors, and being very large, high, and long, with many windows, the lights are so numerous, that little Karin could express the effect better than I could, by the simple movement not of a pen, but a hand ; a hand that always made itself understood even before I had learned to understand

her words—"Lights here, lights there, lights everywhere," says the hand, and then, having said the words also, she adds,

"Does not Madame think it pretty?"

"Yes; does Karin think so?"

"I think it heavenly-beautiful, but then I have not seen such grand things as Madame has in her country."

And when the snow had melted off the ice on my favourite Place, a sheet of water appeared to me in the day-time to supply its former room; but at three o'clock it was dark and the lights were in streets and houses, and then a cry of delight burst from my lips, for the Place was a sheet of glittering crystal—it was wet clear ice reflecting in its polished mirror a treble row of lights like sparkling stars. The only thing I ever saw resembling it was an underground lake formed by the dripping of water in an Austrian salt mine which we crossed in a boat, and which was circled with little lamps, while the white heaps of salt might look in the gloom like the snows of the north.

But Södermalm has now quite another aspect as I pass it in the middle of May

on my way to the Isles of Åland. Now all is bare and cold looking, and I can well understand how persons visiting Stockholm either in the spring or autumn, give but indifferent accounts of it. The English generally do the latter.

And now we are going away; there is my last look at Skepsholmen, the Admiralty of Stockholm, where I have had so many pleasant walks with one I may see no more. There is a parting glance of pleasant Djurgården; now we pass Castelholmen and its coloured castle disappears, and the great church on Södermalm is my latest mark, and finally all retires.

Now we are moving along through rocks, and rocky islets. But lately all here was solid ground with drifted snow-heaps, and tall pine and fir rising among the snow-covered rocks; here people were walking, sledging, drawing loads and carrying burdens. Now there is another kind of life; the water is open and crowded with boats and vessels large and small, pressing out with all speed; the inward bound have not had time to arrive yet.

Now there is the Fortress of Waxholm, standing on its rock in the Channel. How ever could invading Russian men-of-war pass that?—we say as we go by.

The whole of this coast is a Skäregård; the rocky islets lie chiefly in groups, but seldom far dissevered.

It is a strange scene; one that always gives me a notion of old Scandinavia, of Scandinavia such as I fancied it before I knew it.

The Fiords, or inlets of the Baltic sea, or in Swedish Östersjön, are studded with islands of rock of various sizes, some so small as only to afford a resting place for a solitary fir tree that grows up from their conical heads, others green and affording pasturage to flocks, some dotted with red wooden houses, others again covered with firs only.

In some of these Rock-yards, as the name may be put into English, the scene is cheerless. A supreme stillness reigns over a vast unanimated space; even in summer time, no living sound is heard save the flapping wing of a heavy water

bird; or its melancholy cry; and in winter when the air is more still, when no water gurgles, no wave murmurs, the idea employed to convey a notion of the darkness of Egypt may be here applied with equal significancy—it is a silence that may be felt.

How little did I think as I pencilled down such thoughts while passing to the Gulf of Finland that silence such as I described was soon to be broken by the roar of British guns.

Bomarsund! When we spoke of crossing that water we little expected that long before this narrative should be written its destruction by British fire should be announced in our papers, and so much talked of in our country.* We entered Ålands Haf, or sea. The group of isles are collectively called the Åland Isles, from the name of the largest one, which is Åland. They are eighty in number, but some are only a bare rock; they all form one of those great Skäregårds we have

* The fortress that was destroyed stood on the island of Bomar. Bomarsund is the narrow strait between that island and another small one named Prestö, which in English signifies Priest Island.

so often visited, and which continue in an almost continuous line for the space of 150 miles along the coast in approaching Stockholm from the Baltic. They are for the most part of the same formation, masses of granite, grown over with fir and pine; yet the largest ones present a pretty and even cheerful aspect: the snug-looking red wooden house of Sweden seated on its patch of green, a small vale strewn with great boulders, and a little shiny lake, form pleasant home scenes; but rock and water intercept one everywhere, and naturally render fishing and seal-hunting the chief industry pursued by the hardy islanders.

In the times of the Vikings or Sea Kings, this island region, which lies at the entrance of the Gulfs of Finland and of Bothnia, was most probably an independent power, ruled by its own roving chief. The pirates of Finland found it a suitable nest, and held possession of it for some time until Sweden took the Isles into her own power, and expelling the depredators, colonized them with her people. Their first inhabitants were Finns or Laps. After their colonization they suffered terribly from Russian incursions, the poor inhabitants, often

flying from their enemies, left their hard-earned industry to be their prey.

It is said that among all these isles there is only one stream of fresh water ; but there are many lakes. In the island of Åland there is a great deal of pasture and some tilled land, and it also produces wheat, rye, oats, and barley. Neither bears nor squirrels, which abound so much in the neighbouring land of Finland, exist here ; but wolves are plenty in winter, and on the frozen waters are terrible enough to sledge-drivers, even from the terror that seizes the poor horses, who often become unmanageable ; I have been told of a case where one was forced to be set free from the harness, and covered with foam and shaking from head to foot, was left on the ice. The number and variety of insects are said to be considerable, and bees are a favourite cultivation with the people.

From the earliest times the Åland Isles formed stations of transit between Sweden, Finland, and Russia ; but before steam-vessels were used, the passage was made from Grislehamn, on the coast of Upland, near to Upsala, to Ekerö, the nearest port of the opposite isles. It is said that before they were made a Russian

possession, an envoy of the Czar arriving here and finding the water was too far frozen to allow a boat to carry him on on his way to Sweden, was told by the people that his progress was impossible, as the ice was by no means hard enough to bear a sledge; on which, reproving them for supposing any obstacle could stop an envoy of so great a master, he desired them to cut him a canal through the ice, which they did, perhaps more from love of his master's gold than respect for his master's greatness.

Såtunga, the most outlying of the isles, is now the packet station. The islanders are a hardy, lively, good-humoured race, naturally resembling their relatives the Swedes; for though Barrows have been found here, which, with the names of existing places, tend to prove an original Lappic, or, which is perhaps the same thing, Finnic settlement, the present inhabitants are undoubtedly the children of Swedes. Their manner of living is much the same. In winter, with the exception of fishing and the hardy pursuit of seal-catching, they are generally shut up in their wooden homes, when spinning, weaving, and the necessary arts of home life, shoemaking, tailoring,

&c. are carried on. In summer they must indeed make hay while the sun shines. In the fourteenth century the bishopric of Åbo, in Finland, had the spiritual jurisdiction of the isles, which, though wrested for a time from Sweden in 1743 by Russia, were always a part of that kingdom until in that, to her, fatal year 1808, her great natural enemy took both Finland and the islands of Åland under the protection of her own mighty wing.

In that contest with Russia a priest of these Isles obtained no little renown for the expulsion of its Russian invaders. During the invasion of Finland, a considerable body of Cossacks and Russian infantry took possession of the Island of Åland, in the winter when the ice allowed free communication with the troops stationed in the other Isles. The oppression which the natives endured stimulated its pastor to attempt their deliverance. He despatched a bold peasant over the Gulf to Sweden, from whence he contrived to smuggle in some arms and ammunition. When the water was open the Russian garrison was isolated from their brethren, and when thus shut in the islanders rose in arms, headed

by the peasant and stimulated by the Priest, attacked the Russians by surprise, and after a severe contest in which many fell, the garrison, together with a general who commanded, submitted to the peasant force and were marched in triumph to Stockholm by their leader. Gustavus IV received them on the large square, before a vast concourse of spectators; and taking from his breast the medal of the highly esteemed Military Order of 'The Sword,' he placed it himself on the brave peasant's, saying: "My sense of your bravery can only be equalled by the gratitude of the country. May your countrymen, while admiring such virtue in so humble an individual, make it their model."

The poor fellow—a true Swede—was so overcome by this royal speech and action that he burst into tears. His sovereign was said to have been nearly equally affected. The brave are more easily moved, in this way, than the weak and cowardly. For my part, I always think cowardly persons are hard-hearted.

Åland, however, has for half a century learned to bear the yoke it then so bravely resisted. It is doubtful if it would even wish

now to shake it off. Russia perceived, perhaps, more quickly than her less wide-awake neighbour, or at that time foe, the admirable fortress which these Islands formed, choking almost as they do the mouth of the Gulfs. It was not the Fort of Bomar only that guarded them. The strait or 'sund' was strongly fortified, a semi-circular battery and martello towers appeared, as we looked on them in peace and sunshine, to be not very useful or interesting things; the small hamlets, the quietly browsing cattle, the actively working women, and the hut of the industrious fishers, were a thousand times more so.

How that scene of peace has been changed! Strömning, that little fish so abundant in Stockholm, is brought there from these waters; and fish, together with rye bread, milk, and butter, constitute the chief diet of the people; but the favourite dish is what we might call seal cutlets, being made of slices of seal dressed up with flour and lard.

In speaking of Åland I am reminded of a letter from that agreeable writer whose

Book of Travels used to be a favourite with me even in childhood, Sir H. K. Porter—in his letter dated from Åland on his way home from Russia, in I think 1808, he thus writes—‘Åland (or as your newspapers have it Oland).’

That a little knowledge is a dangerous thing the orthographical mistakes of travellers in the names of places abundantly proves, and I do not doubt that I may myself be an evidence of the assertion. Here, however, Sir H. K. Porter corrects the newspapers, but is—either himself or his printer—in error. Neither he nor the newspaper is right. If we pronounce the word as Sir H. K. Porter spells it we should not be understood by the natives, and if we wrote it as the newspapers of 1808 did, we should not, in writing, be understood any more; but if we called it in speech as they wrote it we should be all right.

The secret of the riddle is that in writing, you must put a little round cap over the head of a great Å, it is rather a troublesome thing to do when one's fingers are flying over paper, and a difficult matter it is to get English printers to comprehend its necessity; nevertheless a small o over an a turns the latter

in Swedish into long o, and thus Åland is called, much as the English newspapers of 1808 wrote it, Oland. But if you put two little dots over the last word you would turn it into the name of the Island opposite Gottland. Åland, thus properly spelt and pronounced, signifies water-land, a very appropriate designation, although the Isle is of rock. In the same way the old university town of Finland, with the name of which we are so long familiar, we call Abo, but the Swedes and Finns call it Obo, for it is written Åbo. It certainly is a troublesome work for such a trouble avoiding people as we are, to write or print words in their native forms. Nevertheless, if languages like human beings, have some eccentricities it as well to indulge them even on the selfish ground of avoiding greater trouble to ourselves. There is a nice distinction in Swedish, between Å and the single round O; but our English tongues do not so easily acquire it.

CHAPTER III.

MY companions on the Finland voyage are now three; they were two, leaving Stockholm, but one joined us from the Islands. This last is a young Russian officer, a Finn by birth, Count Ulric L——. His mother, my first companion, is a widow, a Swede-Finn by origin, and a Russian Countess by marriage. The second of the party with whom I left Stockholm I had not seen until we left Åland, as she was either indisposed or sad, and chose to stay below. She is a true Swede, born and bred, never having left the boundaries of her country until now.

The young Count had come from Viborg to

meet his mother, but she was in the cabin very unwell, and I had been made the channel of intercourse between them.

The Countess was returning to her home in Finland, after a rather romantic expedition which she had made, in mid-winter, to Stockholm.

On deck the air was still cold, for drifts of ice were often seen floating past in the water. Count Ulric offered me a share of the wolf-skin wrapper that defended his knees, which I gladly accepted. He speaks English so well that I sometimes forget he is a Finn-Russian, or a Russian-Finn. So I sat talking very comfortably for some time until I became sensible that while his lips spoke to me his mind had ceased to take any active share in the conversation—a rather mortifying as well as annoying discovery; and at last, as if addressing some invisible person in the air, he asked—“But did you ever see such a face?”

“No,” I replied, “not exactly such a one;” for, looking to the opposite side of the vessel I saw a face which I was sure he meant.

I had, indeed, never seen a Swedish face like that; for though really handsome faces are to

be seen among the fair Swedes, and although the pleasant characteristics of good sense, good humour, and sometimes that lovely expression of countenance, which can only be described by the term goodness, may all be found in such faces, a high order of intelligence, of intellect, rarely distinguishes them—is still more rarely united with such beauty of feature and refinement of expression as the face that Count Ulric alluded to possessed.

It was the rare union of sweetness and intelligence combined; it was mind, not merely the form of the material features, or the fine glow of the delicate complexion, that made this face so pleasant to look upon. You thought of what the clear brown eyes seemed to be looking into—something better and purer than many other eyes beheld.

There was a young woman, about nineteen or twenty years of age, who sat leaning an arm on the side of the packet, nearly opposite to us. She wore that species of mourning still worn in the country parts of Sweden by the plainer or more old-fashioned people: a black dress, with a long, white, linen apron, and a sort of veil thrown over the head, beneath which a rich

black silk kerchief, confining braids of shining hair, was the only covering. She classed herself with those who would not aspire to a bonnet—who would deem it a departure from their station to wear one.

“Do you know who she is, Count?”

“No.”

“I fancy she must be the Mamsell your mother is bringing home with her from Sweden.”

Now Mamsell, which is French-Swedish for Mademoiselle, is the title given to unmarried women who are not of rank sufficient to claim the more glorious one of Fröken; but it also is the term by which a class, as numerous in Sweden as poor governesses are in England, is designated. The Mamsell implies the poor clergyman's daughter, or other dependant, who manages the multifarious concerns of Swedish housekeeping; it means the attendant, or barmaid of inns—the woman who keeps the restaurant on steam-boats; it is, in fact, a current term, which may be applied to any one beneath nobility; but using it as I did, its employment was equivocal, and perhaps led Count Ulric to imagine this wonderful face

was to preside over the preparations for his dinner-table.

Shortly afterwards I saw him disappear down the cabin stairs, and I suppose he obtained whatever information he wished, for, strange to say, though the evening came on colder and colder, the wolf-skin wrapper was wholly left to myself. The young Swede appeared to be in sorrow, and I concluded the young Count was trying to give her a more cheering prospect of her new housekeeping life in Finland. When he came up from his visit to his mother in the cabin, I found I had lost my companion; but I kept my wolf-skin wrapper, and made amends to myself by thinking over the not very uncommon history of his widowed mother.

In the old *château* called Skokloster, on the edge of Lake Maler as you go to Upsala, there are two portraits of Ebba Brahe, the early love of the celebrated King Gustavus Adolphus, whom his mother prevented him marrying. One is exquisitely beautiful, with eyes that dwell in the beholder's mind—this is Ebba young. The other is that of a wrinkled, plain, withered face—that is Ebba old.

Now, from all I have heard, for I did not see

even her picture in youth, I should think my kind friend the Finn-Swede and Russian Countess must have changed as much as the lovely Ebba Brahe did, for they tell me she was young and beautiful once. She is not yet exactly old, but her beauty has departed.

In her maiden state she possessed neither rank nor wealth; nor does she now pride herself on either.

She was betrothed to a young Swede who held some situation in that part of Finland which was her native place. Before their marriage she went to visit some relations in Russia where an elderly Count L—— took a fancy to make the humble maiden his wife; and she, dazzled as women, and perhaps men too, sometimes are, by money and rank, gave up the poor young man and married the rich old count.

So far the tale is common enough. She broke the heart of the young Swede; but she did not know that at the time. Her husband lived little more than a year, and the young girl came back to Finland a widow and a countess.

Perhaps to marry her first love appeared then

a very easy matter. Many a novel ends so. But in real life matters sometimes turn out differently. She purchased a large property and formed a beautiful plan; she resolved to make liberal amends to the poor Swedish lover.

In pursuance of this plan she passed a year in close retirement, devoting herself to widowhood, to the care of her infant son, and the improvement of her estate.

The year was out; and not hearing anything of her former betrothed, she was obliged to enquire, and found he had left the neighbourhood almost as soon as she came to it.

More time passed, and she heard that he was poor, that he had given up the employment he had held, and was living in Sweden in the utmost poverty.

Then she thought she would act a noble part; and so she wrote to the poor man, and offered to renew the faith she had broken, believing she should make him happy as well as rich. His answer was a decided and cutting refusal. If revenge be sweet her forsaken lover had abundance of such sweetness.

He did not however add the tortures of

suspense to such a revenge, for to put her out of all doubt, he married, and completed the overthrow of the beautiful plan formed by the young widow.

His marriage, in one respect at least, formed a parallel to hers: it was a wrong step, for his heart had been given to her, and was not his to give to another; it was as short nearly as hers, for his wife died at the birth of her first child. Not even this similarity of circumstances, by any force of sympathy lessened the distance between them.

A pale, still life was her's: and his was no less so: he gave up active life, became a poet, a dreamer, or visionary—one meets some such odd beings in Sweden, though they are out of date among ourselves. He could not work, and he believed that literature offered him a resource. Alas! in most places it is a scanty, precarious one, but in Sweden it is a miserable one; and yet the biting ills of poverty are most deeply felt by those whose intellect like that of the Italian poet is coined, not into silver drachmas, but into the merest means of subsistence.

It was just twenty years after the date

of the letter that contained his rejection of her, that the poor Countess—poor in the midst of her wealth, received another letter from her some-time betrothed. It was to tell her he was dying, and could not die in peace without seeing her, imploring her to come to him.

She had spent the interval pretty much as did Mariana in the moated grange; she only said my life is dreary. Her son—she had called him Ulric after the poor young Swede—was at the Military College; the winter frost was set in, but the ice was not hard enough to render a passage over the water safe in a sledge. Still she set off without delay for Sweden.

Pleasant it is to gallop along on a bright calm day, covered up in your furs in an open sledge, and your cheeks tingling with a sensation like that of heat, either on roads sufficiently deep in snow to render sledging good, or on the smooth firm lakes, where, if the snow be melted and the surface again frozen, you cross over crystal, looking down into the water and scaring the fishes, whose

Here, however, on this gulf of Bothnia, the warm pure sky of the South is not overhead, neither do the sharp rugged ice-waves of winter resemble the soft fleecy clouds of the Pyrenees either in touch or aspect; yet the form is nearly the same. Each wave arrested as it rose retains its form, fixed in that magic-like thralldom. The effect of a fall of snow accompanied by frost is nearly instantaneous; it congeals the waves, and their crests are seen turned into ice, jagged and spray-like. Near to land the ice is generally smooth, as the water was; further out it is in disjointed regular ridges, peaks, ice-heaps, and high piles of frozen snow, a scene of strange disorder, wild and savage, and really quite unlike my Pyrenean clouds.

All sound is ice-bound, naturally, since the dash of the waves is stopped; and if your sledge stops its motion, you listen to that only sound, which is almost painfully discernible—the movement of the air; or, if it rises to wind, you hear it come with a loud-speaking whistle, dashing against some ice-pinnacle, or otherwise breaking the stillness by snipping off an ice-block, and hurling it as its football some perches off. The drifted snow congeals into

little mountains ; and beautiful stalactites, fantastic pinnacles, and enormous masses of ice, rise over the frozen sea, having the appearance of a chaos of ruin. These crackings of the ice-points are by no means pleasing sounds, when you know that the deep is beneath you, and that you are really only travelling over make-believe solid ground.

But it is at night, the glorious night of the North, you ought to see such a scene as this. In mid-winter I have waited for the night in order to see clearly—almost fulfilling the sacred prophecy, “In evening-time it shall be light.” It is then scarcely daylight at ten in the morning, and it is dark again about two, and it is possible that a grey, half-mourning colouring may fill up even this short space. But when the moon rises, fantastically colouring the sky before her as she often does, and when she hangs in mid-space between sky and earth, appearing equally far from either, yet so very far from us ; or when the great stars come out—so wonderfully beautiful ; or still more, when the many-coloured lights dance in the horizon—then look over such a scene, and feel how wonderful are the works of God.

“When I behold the heavens, the works of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast made, what is man that Thou art mindful of him?”—

Poor, toiling man! on whom these glorious works look down! There he goes forth, armed with his gun, and protected by his ice-pike, spending, perhaps, even the cold night out here, lying behind an ice-heap—not to gaze on the heavens, but to shoot a seal. The sheepskin, with the wool inside, forming his dress, and the seal skin defending his feet, and a great fur cap his head. The poor seals are shot during the day-time if they venture to look up through an ice-hole for a breath of air, and at night they are shot when they creep up—urged by parental love—to feed their offspring, carrying them fish from the sea. Thus are all things preying one on the other, from least to greatest in our strange world.

Over such a scene my present companion in travel, Countess L——, made her journey.

She reached Stockholm, and on the rocky heights of Södor she went to seek its object.

In one of those large, dreadfully high houses, in that once fashionable, but now very

unfashionable, locality, she mounted six flights of cold, dirty, dark, stone stairs, and ringing a bell, a door was opened by an old woman, showing her, within it, a small bare room, called the salong, with a still smaller one at each end of it. While she spoke to the old woman a voice issued from one of these, calling her by name—Leonore! Leonore! Twenty-three years ago she heard that voice; he who spoke had recognised her. She entered the little room, a pair of immensely large, vividly bright black eyes, met hers; and of that emaciated form they alone possessed even more than their youthful brightness and power. The dying poet had been dreaming of his young happy days, and his Leonore was pictured in his dream as she was then; his eyes watched for her actual appearance such as she had been; and when the faded, wan, shrivelled up Countess met their gaze, he dropt his face upon the pillow and wept.

He had lived in the country, and in his declining health had come to Stockholm in the hope that his literary gains would be greater. But his strength failed; he was dying in poverty, and had sent for her in order to bequeath

to her the only legacy he had to leave—his daughter. The Countess accepted the bequest. The girl was named Leonore, her son was Ulric, and the idea presented itself that Ulric and Leonore should be united at last in the persons of the children instead of the parents. Her son, she told him, would obey her wishes.

To this the dying man replied, speaking as the Swedes do of a state after death,

“If that should be so, and your son be worthy of her, my spirit up there on high, will be glad. But not for riches nor for honours must this Leonore be married. Leave the young people to themselves, and neither oppose nor influence their inclination.”

Perhaps when she saw the young Leonore, who was absent on her arrival, she was the more disposed to acquiesce in the wisdom of this plan. They watched together over the last days of her poor father, and laid him in the burial-ground of one of the two conspicuous churches of Södormalm, but whether it was that of St Catharine or St Maria I forget.

Her son only joined the steamboat at Sântunga, and had never seen Leonore; but if his mother had been sitting beside me when he

said—"But did you ever see such a face?" I am sure she would have thought that he was falling headlong into the net wherein she wanted him to be taken; for the face Count Ulric spoke of was that of Leonore.

CHAPTER IV.

BEFORE steam was invented the English were probably less impatient travellers than they have been since. If not I could well believe that some of them might have found their way to the bottom of this gulf before, on a calm day, their sailing vessel made its way to Abo. Becalmed in one spot, winding its way with difficulty through rocks and islands at another, for the water is divided by these into a series of lakes—water-basins studded over with masses of dark or green or white moss-covered rocks, the tops of some of which rise not high above it; the channel through them being marked, in some parts with poles, as, in

another part of the Baltic, the low rocks are whitened to serve as signals. An empty mind, or impatient spirit may, even in a steam-boat, complain of monotony and tedium, but in an old-fashioned sailing voyage, with a bad wind, or no wind, even one who possessed the art of mental employment, and the blessed faculty of seeing beauty in the commonest and simplest things, could wish the voyage ended.

The cold here was still great, I should have been glad to have had the wolf-skin wrapper for my feet, but, before we got to Åbo, I saw it was otherwise engaged.

Now comes the hearty, good-natured sailor, whom I have been teasing with questions, passing rapidly by me, without looking or stopping, he says—

“There is Åbo!” and we jump to our feet for a first sight.

There is the old castle on the hill, and the building now called the Observatory, and a little village of my favourite red wooden houses. All is quite Swedish.

It is strange that coming here should at once seem to place me back in my very

childhood. "Åbo, in Finland, where there is a University," were the first words passed through my mind, as I saw the view before us. They were the words of the geography, and wonderfully curious had been the notions I had formed of Åbo, where there was a University.

A young Goth, whom I met in the Island of Gothland, or Gottland, insisted that Upsala was the most learned University in the world, and, when driven from that point, he insisted on its supremacy on the ground of its being the most northern university in the world. I dare say there was a somewhat similar connection of ideas in my own brain at the age of seven years old, for, at the moment of approaching Åbo, my childish notions concerning it were uppermost in my mind. A place of deep learning, full of professors dressed in furs, and with skins as dry, hard, and brown as the covers of their old volumes; a place buried both in snow and learning, where, as there was but very little sun-light, I conjectured the old astronomers might be studying the heavens both day and night, and where the people were always praying or chanting in a great grand cathedral.

It was an amalgamation of ideas drawn from the leading facts stated in my geography.

My early vision of a northern university had been previously destroyed at Upsala, where I went with a picture before me of an old, old town, with high peaked houses, narrow streets, and an immense monastic-looking collegiate building, attached to an equally venerable cathedral. And I found a town of trim, coloured, wooden houses, very wide streets, no building of any kind appropriated to students, and a large wooden house serving for an examination hall. The cathedral was in Upsala, and the cathedral is in Åbo, and, of all my childhood's pictures these cathedrals alone are real.

Åbo is a fallen place. Its university is gone, its observatory idle; the wide streets are very silent.

To make Finland completely Russian, the conqueror changed the capital of Swedish Finland and made Helsingfors the capital of all Finland. It was a politic step; and the nearly total destruction of the former town in the fire of 1827, afforded a very reasonable excuse for the removal of the university also. The buildings had been destroyed in the fire, to-

gether with nearly three-fourths of the town and most part of the old library, consisting of ten thousand volumes. Even the altar and organ of the cathedral were burned,—the latter famous as one of the finest in Europe.

All Swedish towns are subject to conflagrations, from the use of wood in building, for which, among other reasons, there is no antiquity to be found just where one's traditional notion leads one to expect it.

One of its native professors, at the beginning of this century, wrote the history of Åbo, which he deduced from remote antiquity, although the university was only commenced by Gustavus Adolphus, and completed by his daughter Cristina; and the professor ascribed the loss of its previous dignity to the devastating Russians, asserting that the bricks of its buildings had been carried away to erect the first edifices of St Petersburg, and the wood employed in constructing galleys and rafts, to convey these to the new capital of Russia.

The town was consumed by fire in 1198 of our era, which fire also is ascribed to the Russian habit of predatory warfare; nevertheless, in the fifteenth century it ranked third

among the Swedish cities, Stockholm and Göteborg only preceding it. It possessed a considerable commerce with the German ports; though from the twelfth century up to what may be almost termed its final destruction by fire in 1827, Åbo was the scene of disasters. The fire of the skies as well as that of the earth seemed to have pleasure in consuming it. The list of the dates when it suffered by lightning or conflagration is long. The cathedral is little more than the shell of what it once was; externally it has the heavy, clumsy air of the brick churches of the north, but within the effect was different before it was quite gutted by fire, and its windows and altar destroyed.

This cathedral is said by all English writers who name it to have been built by an English artist named Henry. I cannot help doubting whether there may not be some confusion on this point, the cathedral being dedicated to St Henry, or Henrik, the Bishop of Upsala, and first Christian teacher of Finland, who there gained the honour of canonization by martyrdom. The magnificent adornments of its Catholic era were destroyed in the fires; in

1827 the fine old organ was burned, but a baker of the town bequeathed a large sum for the purchase of a new one, which is of singular power.

To me the most interesting monument at this church is one that might not be in such good repute with some others, that of Katrine Månsdotter, the poor beautiful child taken from selling nuts in Stockholm market to dwell in its palace, and finally to be made the wedded wife and splendidly crowned queen of the wretched Eric XIV—the loving, devoted woman who indeed was to him faithful unto death ;—all that can be pressed into a woman's history seem to meet in hers. Her insane and cruelly treated husband, whom English travellers very often call by the term they are accustomed to call Queen Mary, “ the bloody Eric XIV,” had one of his prison-houses appointed by his brother John, the usurper of his throne, in the castle near to Åbo, and after he was murdered by that brother his devoted wife retired to Finland, where she ended her days in privacy. Her daughter and King Eric's, named Sigfrid, is also buried in this cathedral, having married Count Tott, the governor of Finland, whose son, on

his death, caused the memorial tablet to be inscribed to his royal grandmother, his mother, his wife, and himself.

The story of the whole family of Gustavos Wasa is a wild romance. The story of this beautiful girl, a native of the north of Sweden, is not its darkest part. After being the suitor of our great Elizabeth, and her lovelier cousin Mary of Scots, Eric publicly married, and splendidly crowned the object of his passionate and constant but at first unlawful love—the Dalecarlian peasant girl. Devoted to him on the throne, she was more devoted to him in the prison, and perhaps her final choice of Finland as a place of retirement was influenced by the circumstance of Åbohus, once the residence of Duke John, the king's brother, murderer, and successor, having been also the prison of her unfortunate husband.

The small chamber is shown in what is now the palace of Gripsholm, near Stockholm, where his feet have sunk the floor during a fourteen years' confinement, close to the window from whence he could look out, and beneath which his queen and her children were for some time allowed to stand.

By the intervention of England a treaty between the belligerent powers of Russia and Sweden was signed at Åbo in 1743, and in 1812 the Crown Prince of Sweden, Bernadotte or Carl Johan XIV, here entered into the memorable treaty with Russia, which is supposed to have been the means of foiling Napoleon's invasion of that country.

Åbo is not the part of Finland to which one must come in order to try the thermometer of feeling towards Russia. No deserted exchanged capital is the place at which to measure the state of feeling towards the new ruling power. One judgment would be given at Åbo, another at Helsingfors; the latter, under Russian dominion, has advanced perhaps still more than the other has gone back.

I had the advantage of living a guest for a couple of weeks with a most agreeable family, the father had been a Scotchman, who brought his clear head and money-making propensities to Sweden, and at his death left his children in a very respectable position. One of the sons had established a paper-manufactory at Helsingfors, and went to Sweden, in order to establish one there, where indeed it was much wanted,

the native paper being quite a curiosity in our day. He promised me a ream of his new manufacture to write my new book, but I have not yet received it, and consequently am uncertain of its success. But as a resident of Helsingfors he certainly seemed to live very comfortably under Russian rule.

The passage up to Helsingfors from Åbo is full of charm to an imaginative mind and fancy, although, it is very possible that a plain John Bull, like one at my elbow as I write, may say, 'Why there is nothing that I can see but piles of rock, and fir trees and water.' That is very true, but still some eyes are not tired, for there is always some new shape, some curious appearance, some changing effect; like the coast at Båhuslän, the sea is sometimes a stilly lake inside the granite wall, and without that wall it is beating and roaring as though it would fain break its bounds.

And so we very comfortably, and in the judgment of some of our party, I should say, happily, reach Helsingfors, the present capital of Finland.

It is very fine, almost grand as we approach it. The fortress of Sveaborg—which I sup-

pose means the city or town of Sweden, Svea being the old poetic name for that land, is a water-fortress, seeming to rise out of it as the guardian of the Gulf. Thus wrote the great engineer who planned the works of that fortress which is considered second to Gibraltar only—“I can now die in peace. I have raised an impassable barrier between Sweden and her natural enemy Russia.” Alas! poor Ehrensvärd! And your own fortress, your impassable barrier gave Finland to that natural enemy!

That the last Swedish Governor of Sveaborg sold it to Russia, there seems no reason to doubt; it is the general belief of Swedes; and that was the last barrier to its final possession of that often disputed province, the granary of Sweden.

This fortress, usually called impregnable, is constructed as Stockholm is built, on seven small Islands; three united by bridges, and many of the works cut out of solid rock. Granite is the natural fortification of the North.

Sveaborg was commenced in 1748, and was not complete at the beginning of this century. On the 6th day of April 1808, in the reign of Gustavus IV, the last of the Wasa line.

Admiral Cronstedt delivered up this Gibraltar of the North to a small besieging force of the Russians, with its well stored magazines and about 300 gunboats and transport vessels, which he stipulated were to be restored to Sweden, in case England should act the same part by Denmark in restoring the fleet she had seized. Cronstedt died at Helsingfors. A return to Sweden might not have been a safe experiment. Hostilities had only commenced in Finland at the latter end of March, and the navigation of the Gulf rendering the transport of troops practicable, they were despatched thither, and together into Sveaborg, fell into the hands of the Russians, who then crossed over to the Island of Gottland and took possession of it, but were speedily overcome by the Swedes and Islanders and taken prisoners there.

The Swedes, proud of their old military fame, are perhaps not reluctant to ascribe the loss of Finland to treachery. But, however that may be, you can seldom meet a true Swede who will not tell you that Cronstedt sold Sveaborg.

Indeed, it is said that the besieging force

was so small that when evacuated there were not enough Russians to garrison the fortress.

None of the officers who had not protested against the surrender were ever allowed to re-enter Sweden.

Like Thorwaldsen at Copenhagen, Ehrens-vård desired to be buried among his own works—the works that were to defend for ever his country from her natural enemy. And there he lies—surrounded by a Russian garrison. His simple and impressive tomb being just opposite the Russian Governor's house. I do not know whether the words he wrote in his journal were inscribed upon it; but as a testimony to all human instability they ought to be so.

In the midst of the Museum dedicated to his beautiful sculpture the lowly flower-covered bed of the great Thorwaldsen, bears on its stone rim the words; "Thorwaldsen—born—died." All around tell the rest. And here at Sveaborg, the simple, appropriate, warrior-like tomb of a great engineer, bears only the words—

"Here, surrounded by his works, repose the remains of Count Auguste Ehrens-vård."

This tomb was raised in what is considered Sweden's age of taste, the reign of Gustavus III. Its durable and massive aspect are quite as appropriate to the spot, and the genius to which it is dedicated as the flowery bed of Thorwaldsen is to him whose life was devoted to a finer and milder art.

The entrance to the fortress is by a long arched passage, and the channel to the harbour is extremely narrow and quite commanded by its guns.

Nothing can be more delightful than this scene in winter. In fact in the north one gets to like ice and snow just as much as we dislike the misty and cold season called winter in England. I have enjoyed it so much that I find myself involuntarily gliding back to that time on paper, and forgetting that I am travelling in the early spring, that is in the middle of May, when the water is open.

But here, in winter, between Helsingfors and Sveaborg is a scene so gay and lively, that we might think Count Ehrensvärd had no need to build that terrible granitic barrier between Sweden and her, so-called, natural enemy. Here are

Russians, Finns, Swedes, a sprinkling of English, Scotch, and perhaps Irish, all as merry as possible. The fine military uniforms, and the furry dress of the Finn peasant, the handsome sledge, with its decorated horses and tingling bells, and the sledge of burthen ; the brisk little Finn horses and the quick galloping Russian. And then at evening there are the lights glancing, twinkling, and flashing along as the covered sledges glide off with lightly-dressed ladies to the balls. And one stands, and looks on at such a scene, and wonders what is the necessity of having a natural enemy at all, and, though Sveaborg is a very fine sight and its inmates add much to the life and beauty of the scene, one very devoutly hopes that whoever takes it next, may get it, as its present holders are said to have done, by expenditure of gold and not of human blood.

Helsingfors is quite another place from Åbo : one is the young wife, the other the antiquated dowager. It dates its actual beginning so late as the middle of the seventeenth century, for though the town bearing that name was founded by Gustavus Wasa, a century before, it was changed to its present more advantageous

locality about the latter period.* It is now the seat of both the University and Parliament of Finland, for like Norway, this province has an independent constitution, and in the senate house there is a throne for the great Autocrat when he deigns to preside there. Like Norway, too, it has its own military and naval service; the Finnish vessels sail under their own flag, and the sailors are considered the best of those employed by Russia.

The population of the town, independent of that of Sveaborg is upwards of sixteen thousand; having augmented perhaps more than one-half since it came under Russian dominion and was elevated into a capital.

The remains of the Åbo Library were carried here, but the manuscripts were mostly destroyed by the fire, and the original number of volumes was only about ten thousand. The manuscripts and codices relating to Swedish, Finnish, and Russian history amounted to eighty-six more, and were the most valuable part of the Åbo library which was comprised within the walls of the

* The old town of Helsingfors was the seat of a Swedish colony from Helsingland, which place had beforehand been the seat of the Skridfinns.

cathedral. Among these MSS. were many missals, and copies of the Bible and Koran. The Lutheran and Greek religions are both practised here.

The timber trade, as in other parts of Finland, is that most conspicuously carried on. Åbo, Helsingfors, Lovisa, have an old reputation for deal planks, with which these towns carried on a commerce with Spain; and Frederickshamn and Viborg were engaged in the same traffic.

CHAPTER V.

FROM Helsingfors I had intended to return to Stockholm in order to prepare for my journey to the north of Sweden. But who that sets out to travel can decide where he will turn back? Only those, I imagine, who act like a Frenchman, who, when I asked where he was going to travel, replied that he always threw his cap in the air and followed it—the readiest and swiftest mode of returning to the spot from whence you set out. I was not allowed to go back from Helsingfors, temptation was too strong; but then the question came how should we proceed? My companions wished me to go with them all the way to their home. It was first proposed to travel

to it overland, and this I should perhaps have preferred, as a means of seeing more of the country, although I believe it would have been less interesting ; but as the Countess had ordered her carriage to Viborg, in order to have the shortest distance of land journey, it was necessary to go on there by steamer. So we set off, and I did not regret the arrangement.

Frederickshamn, which signifies in English Frederick's Haven, was a notorious place in the history of Finland, while that poor province was being torn to pieces between Sweden and Russia. Like a painful death, the lookers-on might almost feel glad when the struggle was over. The arm of the gulf on which this fortress is situated is thickly studded with rocky islands. This place witnessed the victories of Gustavus III, and it was in the same place that his successor was forced to sign the renunciation of all Finland to Russia.

Near to Lake Samen—up there on the way we are to go—three thousand of the army of Gustavus III defeated ten thousand of that of the Emperor of Russia who attacked, and

were repulsed from the fortress they so gallantly defended; the Prince of Anhalt, their brave commander being killed. The king in person met the Russian gunboats and galleys off Frederickshamn, and captured forty of them, while the Duke of Södermania, usually styled his treacherous brother, and whose very statue is in ill-repute in Stockholm—is said to have been only prevented by a storm from entirely destroying the arsenal of Reval, with its magazine, stores, and shipping. It was after this that the “accident” of Viborg occurred to Gustavus III, which caused a Swedish Admiral, famous for his wit, and whose ship was named *La Folle*, to tell his Majesty that he meant thenceforward to name her *La Sage*—“Because she was not in the Bay of Viborg.” An accident, had prevented this admiral’s ship from joining the King’s fleet which was enclosed by the Russians as in a net, and escape by land or water was impracticable. The Duke of Södermania meant to blow up a couple of the enemy’s vessels which guarded the strait by which a passage could be effected; but he blew up two of his own instead, and in the

effort to escape from this peril four others got on the rocks, and were taken by the Russians.

Gustavus extricated himself and a great part of his fleet, with considerable skill, from an apparently hopeless position, but the Swedish loss was heavy. The King pouring a broadside right and left, cut his way through the very midst of the Russian vessels, and gained more honour by his escape than discredit by his entanglement.

A few days afterwards, aided by our own Sir Sidney Smith, or as my old friend of the Court of Gustavus III calls him, Sidney Schmidt, he turned on his enemies at Schvenkö-sund, defeated the Russians, took forty-two vessels and many prisoners, and returned to Stockholm in triumph—to be murdered. On the spot where he landed his statue was erected after that horrible deed. The anecdote of the two warriors is, I suppose, well known. Sir Sidney was knighted on the spot by King Gustaf, that is to say invested with the military order of Sweden, the Grand Cross of the order of the Sword. In return our brave

knight begged for the portrait of his royal brother in arms.

“Nay, my brave friend,” said the joyous Gustaf, “you shall have your own.” And he gave him the portrait of one who draws the military spirit of Sweden into a focus—Charles XII.

I fancy I hear the speaker, in true Swedish heartiness, saying the words. Stark is Swedish for brave, or strong; and the Swedes use it with peculiar emphasis: our use of that word is quite different.

I have been fighting my way on paper up to Viborg; but, if I need an excuse, I can, indeed, give one—I have nothing else to do—the excuse for half the foolish and wrong deeds that are committed in our world; the reason for all the intermeddling, mischief-making, or what people drolly call the performance of duty, that disturb social and domestic life.

Formerly when the Province of Finland was divided into Swedish and Russian, the traveller was subjected to a little more annoyance, and found a stronger line of demarcation on crossing the frontier of each. Between the German and Italian Tyrol there is a very perceptible differ-

ence, and between the Swedish and Russian Finland there was an equal distinction. This distinction as regards the personal appearance, the manners, and, perhaps, in some degree, even the feelings, of the people still exists ; but, in the latter case, there are mysteries in the Russian government I pretend not to understand ; and hearing and knowing of it what one does, it is possible only to account for the apparent willingness with which its subjects resign themselves to it, on the well-known precedent of the wife, even the free-born British one, who not only turns on the self-authorised defender who would release her from her tyrannical husband, but willingly returns to the tyranny from which she has been delivered.

Unsuccessful wars generally influence a national judgment of the government under which they occur, and perhaps the reigning dynasty of Sweden might not have changed as it did, had Finland not been lost. This history, and in fact many of these scenes have become familiarised to me from the following circumstance. Before I had been very long established in Stockholm I received a message, according to Swedish fashion, to

inform me that a Madame E—— would be glad to have the honour of a visit. The stranger must always be the first visitor. I left my card, morning visitors being rarely received, and in return received a note fluently and elegantly written in French to beg me to excuse a personal call and request me to visit an old lady of more than fourscore in the evening, who ardently desired the acquaintance of a countrywoman of her friends, Sir Sidney Smith, Sir John Moore, and Lord Nelson.

I really believed this was poetic language, and that she meant to speak of our illustrious heroes as her acquaintances in the pages of history.

Great was my surprise, and amusement, too, when almost as I entered her room, the old lady threw up her withered arm and made the salute, and uttered some words of the British General's which had clung to her memory, but have entirely forsaken mine. She had actually known the whole three, and perhaps she is living still.

She had spent her childhood and youth in the Swedish Court, was present at the Opera

on the night of the King's assassination, and had kept a bit of fringe from the sofa on which he was laid, which fringe was doubly precious because stained with his blood. She was afterwards maid of honour to his widow, the mother of Gustaf IV, and while still young married a Colonel who held some important military post at Gottenburg when our fleet was there, and poor Sir John Moore with his 11,000 men kept crooped up in transports, by the error of his own government, perhaps, in the first instance, and the blind infatuation of King Gustavus in the second.

She received, she told me, the compliments of some of these heroes, but which I forget, on her bravery, in cutting down with her own hands a wretched man who had hung himself, as if there had not been means enough just then of being killed otherwise. This worthy lady had quite lost the use of her ears when I knew her, but her tongue was wonderfully active. It was vain to ask a question; but she would talk on as if repeating a book; and beginning in the latter years of Gustavus III, she would run on, sometimes sinking her voice, as if talking to herself, relating

the horrid fate of Ankerström, the accession and appearance and character of young Gustaf IV, the events of the war in Finland, at the close of which her husband was engaged; the deposition of Gustaf; the death of the chosen crown Prince; the cruel murder of Count Fersen, which she witnessed from her window, and the arrival of the new Crown Prince, the late King who bestowed a pension on her.

Her memory, as that of a very old person does, went back to the earlier events of her life, and of what was passing at the present day she seemed almost ignorant. I met one evening at her house a splendidly fine-looking man, whose magnificent figure had none of the attributes of age. He had served with Bernadotte under Napoleon. Some mention of death was made, and the thought passed my mind that to him the idea of death must now be a familiar thing. To my surprise I saw a change pass over his countenance, that animated face and broad forehead were shadowed as by a passing cloud. The next week that man, who was then apparently in perfect health, was in his grave; having died a day or two after my meeting him almost suddenly.

It was the presage of that event had shadowed his face. The wing of the angel of death had touched him, unknown to those with whom he spoke. Another of these old heroes, the sharer in all Napoleon's brightest glories, was killed by a fall on the ice about the same time.

It was thus! in listening to this old lady's dreaming sort of talk, that I felt carried back to the dear days of childhood, the time I wished to be a man in order to try to be a Nelson.

With her hands working in a basket of worsted balls, and her mind floating away over the past, she would talk on for perhaps half an hour as if to herself, always in French, relating anecdotes, or carrying on conversations with divers illustrious and historical personages, calling Sir John Moore, as if the names were one, Sir Shonmor, so that it was some time before, by combining circumstances, I made out who it was she meant.

And then, if while rolling the worsted balls in the basket, as if all but the one she wanted were to be found, she would change her language, and murmur in Swedish, "Ja! ja! det var så." I knew what would follow—It was

the study of the Apocalypse that made Gustavus IV mad.

It would be no use to tell her that it was madness that made him study it as he did.

It is rather curious that while there are few countries of Europe where the Bible is less generally known and used than Protestant Sweden, it has become identified with the two great revolutions that have placed a new line on the throne, and with the rise of the first, and the fall of the last Gustavus Wasa.* The first had the Bible translated into Swedish, the last made a mistaken use of it. Never was a more devoted student of prophecy, even in England, than Gustavus IV; and as the interpreters of prophecy are usually prophets themselves, and esteemed such by their followers, he accepted the interpretation with the implicit faith that was due to the sacred Book it was supposed to expound.

Thus Napoleon became to him what a very different potentate is usually asserted by British commentators to be—the Man of Sin—Anti-christ—who was to be destroyed; and the

* English tourists often speak of the Swedes and Norwegians going to church with their Bibles rolled up in a handkerchief. The Bible is not used in church.

young King of Sweden was inspired by the belief that he, with the aid of heavenly agencies, was to be the instrument of his destruction.

It is the fashion to say that Russia 'wrested Finland from the feeble hand of Gustavus IV; ' yet few young monarchs have shown greater resolution and fixity of purpose than Gustavus IV. Ascending the throne at eighteen years of age, and at one period the sole ally of England in resisting the progress of Napoleon the Great on the Continent, his courage, dexterity, and single-minded enthusiasm would have given him a higher place in history or in public estimation, had his end been less unfortunate. His fate appears that of those who attempt resistance to a power they believe to be wrong, but have not strength to overcome. That his intellect in the end, if not in the beginning, was disordered, his conduct with regard to Sir John Moore and the British auxiliaries seems to prove; but his earlier course gave no indication of imbecility, although the 'Moniteur' of the day asserted that instead of being able to wield the sword of Charles XII, the young monarch of the North had inherited from him only his folly and his boots. Nevertheless, Napoleon attempted to

win him afterwards, both by affecting a high esteem for his character and by offering the annexation of Norway to his dominions. Nor did even the treaty of Tilsit and the desertion of the Emperor Alexander to the French shake the resolution of the King of Sweden. Alexander was the brother-in-law of his wife—the three fair Princesses of Baden having married the Emperor of Russia, the King of Sweden, and the father of the present Emperor of France.

But unaffected by this loss, Gustavus issued a spirited address to the vanquished nations of the Continent, calling on them to vindicate their honour and independence. It was after he had, in a most threatened and critical position, entered into the convention with England, by which not only were the two powers bound to make no peace or truce with their common enemy but by mutual agreement, but England also was to pay the subsidy of 1,200,000*l.* in monthly instalments, in order to enable him to keep up a larger naval and military force, that Alexander, then the ally of France, demanded that he should enforce the principle by which the Baltic was declared a shut sea, and thus co-operate with the allies of France in

taking vengeance on England for her unjust and unprincipled aggression on Denmark.

To this his Swedish Majesty replied by a declaration worthy of his good cause; reminding the Czar of his apostacy from his recent alliances, and his base desertion to the interests of the man who had insulted him personally, &c., and asserting that he never could consent to enforce an exclusive system against Great Britain so long as the French were allowed to possess so many ports and harbours on the German coast of the Baltic sea. To the hostile declarations of Denmark and Prussia he made an equally spirited reply.

Already Finland was occupied by an army of sixty thousand Russians. Yet it would seem that Gustavus believing himself to be menaced in more quarters than one, committed the fatal error of dividing his scanty forces into three divisions instead of employing them all for the defence of Finland, and even sent one to invade Norway.

The English troops arrived at Göteborg, under the command of Sir John Moore, but with orders to act as a separate corps, under the orders of the English general, and not to

remove so far from the coast as to lose the facility of re-embarkation in case it should be expedient.

Their disembarkation was consequently forbidden by the king, and the eleven thousand men remained on board the transports for the space of two months, the time required for obtaining fresh orders from England, and coming to an arrangement with Gustaf, whose obstinacy was not the only symptom of insanity he then displayed.

His proposal to Sir John Moore was to sail up the Gulf of Finland, storm Viborg, and brave Alexander in his capital, and to Sir John's remonstrance he replied by issuing an order for his arrest.

The old Court lady ought to tell the story of all this. We all know, in plain language, that Sir John Moore escaped from Stockholm, and sailed away for Spain, having first brought his unlanded army back to the Downs. Strange was the rapture of his old Swedish acquaintance at those beautiful lines on his death, which I showed her for the first time—

“ We carved not a line and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone in his glory.”

Gustaf was seized in his own palace by his own nobles and officers, and his uncle the Duke of Södermaina, suspected of being accessory to the death of his brother Gustavus III, became King Carl XIII: and now the statue of Carl treton is guarded by a sentry in Stockholm, for the people did not like it, and used to insult it; so a sentry was planted to guard it, and day and night a sentry used to walk there before my window, with his face as white as the statue; but his lantern burning on the snowy ground produced a more pleasing effect to my view.

Viborg! Viborg! is the sound now heard on board; all our heads are turning in one direction, and mine among the rest.

We are in a large Bay—the Bay wherein Gustavus III was caught and surrounded by the Russian Fleet. The walls and battlements and batteries of this great, and once frontier fortress rise before us. The entrance to the port is narrow, being enclosed between islands, and a fine old tower on a rocky islet looks the very emblem of peace. It reminds one of the old guest in the ‘Deserted Village,’ who
“Shouldered his crutch and shewed how fields were won;”

but peaceful as it now is I dare say if we could give it a tongue, it too might

“ Tell o'er its deeds, and tales of glory done.”

Would that all the martial towers and batteries of the world might ever remain as silent as this henceforth shall be. Splendid as it is to gaze upon them there, with battery and bastion rising from the water, I should never wish to see them more active than they are now. I am told 20,000 military would be required to garrison this fortress in time of war.

Ever since Viborg was taken from Sweden by Peter the Great in 1710 Russia has erected it into one of her strongest bulwarks on the Swedish side. Its fortifications were improved by him, and have been since considerably increased. So, at least, I am told, for I really understand nothing of fortification.

CHAPTER VI.

THE formalities of landing were not attended with any trouble to us, at least we knew little about them. The young Count presented to us a very gentleman-like but rather formidable-looking elderly officer, who invited the party to take refreshments at his house ; but that matter had been previously arranged by our Count with a younger friend of his, a Russian officer, who with his wife, an exceedingly pleasing lady, received us with the greatest kindness, but without that joyous heartiness of welcome and manner that distinguishes a Swedish reception ; grace and politeness on one side, and a frank

cordiality on the other, appear to characterise each.

We had only two hours to stay at Viborg; quite too short a time to examine its fortifications, even if I had been able to profit by the examination, but not understanding much about them, I only think that all such places have a sleepy idle look in time of peace, and must have a fierce and active one in time of war.

The Emperor Nicholas sailed down here last summer, and entering the port of Stockholm, stepped on shore, wrapped in a common horseman's cloak, and walked up to the palace; no one saying and no one knowing who the mighty stranger was. He asked to see their majesties, and instead of being shown to the state reception room was put into one in accordance with his apparent rank. But when their Majesties appeared, they found the great autocrat standing in the room, looking out of the window. It was thus Queen Josephine received the visit of her brother's father-in-law. Perhaps Queen Victoria would like to visit in the same manner.

The town of Viborg is merely an off-set to the Fortress. It has an old reputation in

the timber trade; but it was, I think, in the early part of this century that its merchants were ruined by an abrupt prohibition in the export of wood. *

An easy and very comfortable carriage nicely accommodated our party, four in number, and we were soon rattling over the paved ways on our road from Viborg. I have got accustomed to feel broken to pieces now, if not after some months smooth-going sledging it would be hard to bear the jolting one must sometimes do here. But I remember when the roads of France were the same, and, when a child, I recollect travelling in Normandy when we rattled for a whole day and night over roads paved with large rough stones in the centre. But with the truest disposition in the world, to look at the bright side of things, and find something to admire and something to like wherever one goes, I think few will carry this disposition so far as to find all things here pleasing, although, to me at least, they have a charm as being strange.

Fir, granite, water, and wide, barren, or swampy plains, are the generic features that most strongly present themselves to the eye

of the passing traveller. But corn-fields and pasture-lands abound here two ; and as one travels on into the heart of this little-known Finland, one will meet with other riches, one might not expect — riches of the human mind and of the imagination, even among its poor, out-of-the-world peasantry ;—but it is in that part, formerly called Swedish Finland, that this is to be most easily met with. The general aspect of the country in Russian Finland (that used to be) is level and bare, and far from what we term interesting. In Swedish Finland the hills and roads rise, and fir forests are in some parts as immense as in Sweden ; there is one which is eighty English miles long. To me these forests have a charm in winter, they do not possess in summer. It is true, when open little glades occur in the latter season, where the tall birch, the graceful lady of the Forest—waves her light arms among the dark stolid spectators around, casting flitting shadows over the green beneath,—it is then very pleasant. But a green glade seldom occurs, and when it does not the scene looks a thousand-fold more interestingly magnificent in winter, when below there is a robe of white, with

the great boulders thrown over it like snow heaps, and, among the dark unchanging green of the pine and fir, there occurs a black line, a charred space, with burned trees showing where a fire has been.

The description and sentiments of that most pleasing writer, Sir H. K. Porter, who used to please me in happy childhood, here recurred to my memory. How little did I then think that I should be, not only in the same scenes, but should see them under somewhat similar circumstances. He travelled this way just before Russia invaded Finland, and when a war between Russia and England was pending. "On my approach," he says, "to the borders" (of Swedish Finland) "I found the country to become hilly and assume a more savage outline. The mountainous and rugged scenery of Salvator Rosa will give you a just idea of the face of this wild country. It is the theatre in which a romance writer would place his supernatural visitants, or a painter his banditti. When the snow is off, I have no doubt that a return of warmer suns will cover many of these barren rocks with verdure. . . . Having left Aberfors, which is nothing more

than a long line of hills, well defended with large bulwarks of granite, I passed over a low piece of neutral territory that in a few moments brought me to the Swedish frontiers. Here I found a very slender guard, and after the usual formalities, passed them with ease. I was surprised to find so slight a force opposed to the coming enemy; but as I proceeded my astonishment increased, as I rarely saw anything that had the least affinity with arms; and, when I recalled the large army I had just quitted, on full march to overwhelm this country, I was totally at a loss to account for so unguarded a security. Either the information they receive must be very bad, or some policy is carrying on beyond my comprehension; for I cannot suppose that Baron de Sledding, the worthy representative of the royal Gustavus on the frontiers, would allow so hostile an appearance to escape his notice. Whatever be the reason all is at perfect rest in Swedish Finland—liberty and comfort smile everywhere; peace sits on every countenance. The view was delightful, and, had I not been sure that Bellona was at my heels, ready to burn up their present happiness, I might have enjoyed

the scene; but the prospect of its impending destruction, like the mystical lore of the Scottish Wizard, disturbed my fancy, and I was glad to press forward."

Bellona was not at my heels as I galloped down the hills, or drove through the dark forests of Finland; but little did I think that so soon Finland was to have her coasts battered by British ships of war, or that I was in a short time to be reckoned among the "natural enemies" of the people with whom I was then so friendly.

We were in Russian Finland, that used to be. Finland, politically divided at one time into Russian and Swedish, had also its third, natural division; the original Finns, that distinct race still found amid the lakes and forests in the provinces of Tavastehus and Savola, and who, occupying the interior, remained a distinct race from the Swedes; while the latter, settling along the coasts, became Swedish Finns, and bear still, on all the coast lying opposite to their motherland on the Gulf of Bothnia, a strong affinity to their neighbours; as the inhabitants of the Russian side also do to the people with whom they have been mingled.

Nests of lakes and immense fir forests cover the districts where the real Finns are found ; a hardy and wild race, despising the comforts and in profound ignorance of the business of civilised life, their character seems to correspond with that of the nature around them. They take in their country the position that the natives or aborigines of a subjugated country generally do, and have borne the imputation of all the crime or misdeeds that have been committed throughout the length of the land.

But historians, philologists, and antiquarians, still dispute regarding the origin of this remarkable people, and the different tribes into which it has become divided. The certain history of Finland only dates from the middle of the twelfth century, at which time paganism still reigned undisturbed in the land. St Eric, the good King of Sweden, who has been popularly canonised, though not by Rome, undertook an expedition with the view of converting them, and freeing his own country from the depredations of their pirates. He brought with him Bishop Henrik, or Henry, of Upsala, who became the first Christian missionary of Finland, and finally its patron saint, having

obtained the crown of martyrdom by being killed by some of the barbarous people who were zealots for the religion they practised.

Though other missionaries followed the good Bishop, Christianity made small progress for the greater part of a century afterwards, when the famous Birger Jarl hastened the conversion of Finland, by subjugating great part of the country to Sweden, and forming it into a colony for his son. And in the year 1293 the Regent of Sweden, Torkill Kundtson, brought the remainder to subjection, and built that old fortress on the island before Viborg, the ruins of which still remain. The Bishop of Westeraås accompanied this military expedition, and instructed the pagans whom Torkill conquered.

In the conflicts that ensued with Russia for the possession of this land, the Pope, who had given it to Sweden as a conquest to Christianity, took part with the latter, and sustained their cause with the weight of religious sanction. These Russian inroads were cruelly devastating to the new colonies and to the native Finns; but the grand war of Charles XII and Peter the Great exposed the unfortunate Finlanders to the direst calamities, and these being followed

by the common plague of war—famine, reduced Finland to a state of depression from which it was, perhaps, only recovering in the reign of Gustaf III. In that of his son, the Russians entered Finland again, and left it no more. This invasion of 1808 was less cruel and more decisive than their former forays; and Sweden, deploring the loss of her brave Finlanders, imputes to treachery rather than conquest its acquisition by Russia, who has ever since held undisputed possession of a province that has certainly not retrograded under her rule.

Russia left to Finland its own laws, religion, and language; improved its institutions, enlarged its means of commerce, and gave it that in which it was above all deficient—money. The population has increased since the latter end of last century from about 700,000 to 1,300,000.

While literature and learning naturally were kept back by the repressing circumstances of the country, the poetic genius of the people, their talent for improvising and story-telling have been most remarkable.

Of the mythology of Finland little is known. There is one part of its ancient creed that

strikes the Christian as the symbolism of a truth, lowered, and humanized—a Great Principle, absolute, immutable, Eternal,—and then, the intermediary God—the familiarised one, who, in Finland, was both Prometheus and Orpheus—who brought the fire of celestial love to earth—from whose divine science came those notes of heavenly harmony which sung of peace on earth and good-will to men.

Strange it is that wherever we look we find vestiges of the Grand Truth ; yet nowhere plainer than in the beloved God of ancient Finland mythology.

CHAPTER VII.

It is provoking to find oneself located in a place where one is in all respects well off; where hospitality awaits one, where perhaps new pleasures attend one; but, precisely where one cannot stay.

Such is my lot in this Finland home. I came to it bound to a time for my return, and all Count Ulric's pretensions to conjuring powers which were to deprive me of the power of leaving it, were to be proved unreal. Poor youth! he was himself within the magic circle, which, not a Finnish, but a Swedish witch had traced.

Perhaps the power that contradicted all the young Count's arts, lay really in the skies, for the weather was most truly disagreeable.

They had told me in Sweden that it was well to have snow in April as then the spring would come quickly on, and we should not have it in May. But this year we had April snow in Sweden, and May snow in Finland, and probably in Sweden also. Sleet, mist, rain and wind—enough to drive even Finnish witches out of their senses.

Here is a great forest I want to explore, and there is a nest of lakes I want to get to, and through the driving mist I can only dimly see fir, and lake, and granite rocks, and great boulders here and there,—and say to myself this is Finland.

There is a strange peculiarity in these immense forests which is not without charm to me. Dreary as it undoubtedly is to travel on a straight line of road, through one for a vast number of miles when all view at either side is precluded, there are in many of them scenes that produce a strong effect on the imagination.

The solemn silence may be for hours un-

broken by the slightest sound. It happened once that by the upsetting of a carriage, I was left alone in one until the driver had ridden back to procure another, and during that time my only fear was that the silence to which I *listened* should be broken; the fall of a leaf would have terrified me.

Strange sights meet one in such places where nature reigns in the gloomiest and most solitary aspect; the solemn firs, indeed, scarcely seem to own that reign, but rather to exist in despite of it.

It is true there are pretty and pleasant glades in these forests, where in summer the tall white-stemmed birch dances its light boughs over the greensward, green and bright as an English park, and the great boulders are covered with curious lichens. Very often these rocks are covered with a bright red one, in the most extraordinary patterns, having all the appearance of being painted on the rock. And here loves the little grey squirrel to sport till it pays with its life the penalty of wearing a valuable coat.

But, while these open glades do here and

there appear, they seem like little nooks where nature still held her sway, and are quite in contrast either with the stern, solemn, majestic aspect of the scene in general, or with the wild havoc, or fantastic disorder which are sometimes met with.

Ponderous pines perched on a barren rock may seem to scoff at the ordinary laws of nature, and many there are like fantastic dancers, resting a single toe on solid ground, while the other roots, like those reversed limbs, are stretched up into the air.

Then, great stems, so tall and straight and round, which one would think might make a noble mast—

“To brave a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze.”

lie cracked in two, and the green head, still green, is laid low.

Then there comes an open space in the dark forest: a strange dreary scene, where all around is blackened ground, no vegetation, no life. A fire has been there, and the blackened dust beneath your feet is all that remains of the mighty trees.

These devastating fires are generally the result of accident and carelessness; the dry white moss which covers the ground forms excellent tinder when the woodcutters light their fires, or even smoke their pipes in the forests. I saw a whole island—at least all that grew on it—consumed in this way, and a curiously beautiful sight it was, burning in the midst of a large and rapidly rushing river. Some fishermen had gone there and made a fire and cooked some fish, and eaten a dinner, and they set the island on fire and like a ship at sea, it burned down to the water's edge. In the dead of night it was a very strange spectacle; a burning mass, so large, so bright, so furious, in the midst of gushing water. The tall dark heads rising above the flames till the flames rose over them, and then descended again, satisfied with their prey, and lowering and lowering, until they were obliged to die because they could destroy no more. And the green isle was a black heap of charcoal, with the waters circling round it.

The wolf is plentiful here, and not much

feared. The bear, the old man of the forest as he is called, is the prime object of chase.

The Finlanders do not so much like to shoot the bear; their old-fashioned mode of attack is with an immense spear, having a cross bar at its junction with the handle, which prevents the danger that might result from a too rapid thrust bringing the hunter forward to the bear, or from the bear falling, when wounded, upon him.

When the creature is killed he is borne in triumph to the house of the hunter, and his funeral obsequies are splendid. His body, before dissection, is adorned with boughs and ornaments, and the local poet, or improvisatore—a personage not yet extinct in Finland—is often at hand to pronounce its elegy, in which, after all due praises of the deceased, he is requested to inform his comrades of the honours rendered to his body, in order that they may come and offer themselves for the same.

Finland has its reputation for poetry and music, the latter rather as a national passion than an art.

Franzen, the poet of Åbo, is one whom Sweden fondly ranks among her own. Runeberg, another celebrated poet of Finland, still lives at the red wooden-house town of Borgo. Franzen lives no more on earth, but one of his pieces, called "Pojkarne," or "The Boys," obtains that enthusiastic admiration in Sweden which what is Swedish can alone produce.

That popular piece reminds one, in measure and matter, of Hood's lines—

"O! when I was a tiny boy."

but the latter has a touch of poor-authorship misery, which the more jocund spirit of the other has not.

"No more in noontide sun I bask ;
 My authorship's an endless task ;
 My head's ne'er out of school."

Some of the famous Psalms, which, strangely enough, form the chief and favourite part of the Swedish Liturgy, are the composition of the Finn poet ; and, if I do not mistake, the man who may be called the author of that wonderful Psalm-book, which seems to displace Prayer-book and Bible both, in the religion of Sweden, was an inhabitant of the upper part of the Bothnian coast—Wallin, who

composed the introit for the Swedish service, which, though simply a paraphrase of that of a greater poet—"Awake up, my glory! Awake psaltery and harp!"—appears at once to awaken all the pulses of the national heart of Sweden. If you mention anything of their Lutheran service, be sure some one will repeat with enthusiastic warmth—

"Opp! Psaltare och harpa!"

just as if the Psalm had never been sung in Hebrew before it was sung in Swedish.

It is very possible that while the active business of life flourishes under the rule of Russia, much more than it did under that of Sweden, the poetic may in due proportion languish, or disappear altogether—commerce and poetry seldom go hand in hand. That spirit of poetry has been found, not merely in a Franzen or Runeberg, but essentially in the Finnish character and disposition. Thus a poor servant-maid bewails the absence of her lover in verses which have had some of the celebrity to which their powerfully characteristic spirit entitled them. If he would return, says the impassioned maiden, she would grasp his hand, though a serpent also entwined it; she

would kiss his lip, though it were red with the blood of the wolf.

A singular, ancient, and child-like amusement, is still to be found among the Finland peasantry, which is usually accompanied with music or recitation. It is one children naturally indulge in—namely, a pair sit opposite to each other with joined hands and feet firmly set on the floor: then follows the very entertaining feat of trying which will raise his opposite from his seat; but as they thus move back and forward they do it in time to the notes which the local musician is eliciting from the old national instrument; or, in his absence, the amusement is accompanied by the recital of verses, or of the old tales which still wile away the hours of home industry during the long winters of Finland.

The old delightful beliefs, which wise people term superstitions, are not yet quite worn out of the world—even in our own dreadfully wise England—though perhaps in England more than in most other lands superstition remains where a more harmless mythological faith has departed. A belief in a charm has been found

to exist there, but the whisper of a fairy, or a water sprite, would be thought ruinous to the morals of young or old.

The 'Lapland Witch' is a being of universal reputation, and her sister-spirits of Finland were once a numerous race. An Arctic voyager, who published an account of his voyage nearly three hundred years ago, relates having purchased from one of the latter a handkerchief with three knots, each knot containing a wind. When at sea he untied the first, and immediately had a wind west-south-west, which was quite to his purpose; but requiring a contrary one afterwards, he opened another knot and found it. This gave him confidence in untying the third when he required a favourable breeze, but this knot sent forth a terrible storm, which storm the German voyager believed was not raised by the Finn sorceress, but sent by heaven as a punishment for the compact he had made with her.

What is accounted pious zeal in one age is in another denounced as dark superstition; and thus the record of his labours in the destruction of sorcery and burning of witches, left behind

him by a wise Finland judge, now casts a different reflection on his memory from that the good man anticipated.

Wherever the reformation came this zeal appears to have been quickened, and, in the north, our first James had his co-equals in the art of discovering and reporting witchcraft. Yet the Trollkarl still exists in Sweden, though he is not burned as a sorcerer. In most districts here, as well as in Sweden, there is a wise man or woman who acts as its oracle or fortune-teller, its councillor or doctor. They are generally skilful in healing wounds and sprains, or even setting bones. The old belief in the value of relics is evinced in the practice of carrying about them as a charm the bone of a dead person. They are said to venture at night into cemeteries for the purpose of invoking spirits, and in visiting the sick they chant their cabalistic songs; and so expel the spirit of evil.

Fame and a love of power will give courage for much endurance and much toil; if it were not so one would be at a loss to account for the extraordinary zeal of the Trollkarl in the exercise of his gifts. Neither weather

nor distance will keep him from the bed of the sufferer or the house of the afflicted when his services are required, and no love of gain seems to mingle with his zeal, no doctor's bill comes to lessen the bliss of the patient he cures.

In many Protestant lands where the lighter, less dangerous, and more pleasing forms of what we term superstition, have died away, a belief in sorcery and charms exists. In the Channel Islands, especially that of Guernsey, this belief is most prevalent, and even here in Finland it has greatly taken the place of the old mythology which yet lingers in the traditions of the people and pleases children, as it once constituted the faith of their forefathers.

The Church-watchers are even still supposed to dwell under altars, and are a misshapen little race with an abundance of treasure to reward the charitable christians who do them service.

The Nakki, or Nek of Sweden, plays his silver harp in the waters of Finland also ; the House-spirit, or Brownie of Scotland, is just as busy here as there, and the hills are full

of the little mountain men who have untold treasures stored up in subterraneous halls.

The Forest-spirit is the worst and most dangerous. Sometimes as a bird, sometimes as a dog, he entraps the luckless hunter or woodcutter, inciting him to follow his eccentric course into paths from whence he returns no more, or leading him a weary chase at the end of which he finds himself, as world-hunters often do, spent and exhausted, with the retrospect of his toils for his reward.

The Finlanders have a curious idea concerning the cause of illness. If this does not proceed from a spell, they imagine that it is caused by the visit of the soul to the place of departed spirits. These spirits wish to retain it there; the poor body it has left complains, and desires its return. It suffers, and if the vagrant soul pleases itself in its separate existence, and if the soft language of its sister-spirits win it to remain, the body still suffers, languishes, and dies.

The interiors of houses present little difference to those of Sweden. The people sleep as in Norway and in parts of Sweden, in cots

raised in tiers like the berths of a ship, the whole family indiscriminately; and certainly in Eden-like innocence, so far as the toilette is concerned.

The Russian bath, so often described, is quite the same in Finland. Water is thrown on the heated stones of the stove, and in the vapour arising therefrom men, women, and children luxuriate, all in profound darkness, which spares blushes, and then if they like to walk into daylight and take a roll in the snow by way of change, it is not a thing prohibited by the laws of Finnish peasant pastime; and the previous switching of birch rods probably brings the skin into a state to undergo such a transition; although it is probable that such sights, if witnessed in England, would incur a fresh, and not self-inflicted, repetition of the discipline.

The Improvisatore is found among the native Finns as well as among the poetic Italians, and very generally among the women. At fairs and other public meetings these persons recite poems and songs of their own composition to circles of auditors; and deaths, weddings, and births, all call the poetic element, so general in these

northern constitutions, into ready, and often spontaneous exercise. An elegy, composed by a peasant of Finland on the death of his brother, was published at Åbo in the middle of the last century, and contains lines of great beauty:—

“The word went from Heaven, from Him in whose hands are all things. Come hither, I will make thee my friend; leave the seat of sorrow behind thee; enough hast thou suffered. The tears thou hast shed are sufficient. The hour of thy deliverance is come; thou art set free from evil days. Peace hasteneth to greet thee; relief from grief to come. Thus went he forth to his Maker; he hastened to extreme bliss; he departed to enjoy liberty; he quitted a life of sorrow; he left the habitations of earth.”

The wet and misty weather confined me, as has been already said, very much to the house; and in the lack of other amusement, we sometimes filled up the blank in a regular Finnish manner—by story-telling. In the long winter evenings, and long winter days also, home industry goes on more pleasantly when enlivened by the old Sagas, which generation after generation have heard with the same pleasure, or cheered by the songs which have been composed for the express purpose by women so employed.

Thus imitating the winter peasant fashion during our rainy May days, I listened to some

strange native tales, of which I will only relate a part of one told by Count Ulric.

Once upon a time there lived in Finland a very wild and wicked young man, who, after a long course of profanity and licentiousness, crowned all his bad deeds by becoming a Finn-Bluebeard. He married three young women almost at once, shut them up in a wicker basket, and burned them.

No one knew the fate of the three poor girls; they had disappeared. That was all. One morning the young man was found stretched on the threshold of his door dead, his body covered with dark blue spots. It was clear he had spent the night in wrestling with the Evil One, and been overcome.

They buried him, however, with the rites of the church.

The next morning the sacristan going early to ring the Angelus, saw to his horror the dead body of the young man whom they had buried standing erect in a niche in the outer porch of the church.

He ran to the priest, who, believing some one had raised the body from its tomb, buried it again. But up rose the corpse once more,

came back to the porch that night, and appeared in its niche the following morning. Three times they reburied it; three times he rose again. At last the good man perceived that other powers were engaged in this, and he suffered the corpse to remain unmolested in its niche.

Finally, only a skeleton was there, and no one passed it without the sign of the cross.

Years passed away, and the story might have been forgotten, if the skeleton in the porch did not tend to keep its memory fresh.

Perhaps it was a desire to get rid of such a monitor to his conscience, that led another wild young man to resolve to have it displaced from its niche. Instead, however, of trying to do so himself, he engaged the services of a young girl, whose innocent mind made her devoid of fear.

By the promise of a good reward, he prevailed on her to go one evening to the church and carry away the skeleton. She reached the outer porch, advanced to the niche, and approached the thing that had been so long erect there. But lo! instead of her extending her arms the skeleton stretched out his. More horrible still, it spoke. It told her she must be

squeezed to death in those dreadful arms, since she had dared to violate the repose of the dead. Her prayers and cries moved even a skeleton to pity her, and in its hollow voice it said:—

“If you will save yourself you may save me also. Go then into the church; there you will see three young girls kneeling before the altar. They are my three brides, whom I burned in one day. For that crime I am compelled to remain here. I can neither rest in the grave, nor enter the threshold of the holy temple. Here I must remain for ever unless I can obtain their pardon. For fifty years I have waited for this occasion of employing some one to ask them to pardon me: go, now, and do so.”

The girl tremblingly opened the door of the church; the whole nave was lighted up as if for a grand festival; and the soft tones of a plaintive chant resounded throughout it. At the foot of the altar three young girls were kneeling, covered in a long white veil. The chant was by them.

The poor mortal girl approached her spiritual sisters and tremblingly craved for the pardon for the skeleton at the porch door.

“No, no,” chanted the three spirits, “No pardon for him.”

The messenger returned with the fatal reply.

“Yet once more ask them, if not for my sake for yours to pardon me,” said the skeleton in answer, “else shall you die.”

She repeated her prayer to the three spirits with this addition.

“No, no ; there is no pardon for him.”

“Yet once more try if you can prevail,” said the skeleton.

Again she went, and falling on her knees, cried to the three spirits “Pardon him, pardon him for the sake of the Saviour !”

“He is pardoned, he is pardoned !” repeated each spirit. The chant ceased ; the lights went out ; the three spirit-brides disappeared, and the skeleton moved away from its niche ; sunk down in its grave, and lay there ever after.

“And now,” said Count Ulric, “it is your turn to tell us some stories of England.”

“Ack !” cried the beautiful Leonore, “but that must be dreadfully delightful to hear English stories told in Finland.”

“That is precisely what I cannot do now,” I answered, “for whenever I am asked to tell stories, I forget every one I know.”

“Well, read us one. What is that paper, for example?”

“It is merely an account which a lady gave me some time ago of a masquerade she was at in the Palace of Stockholm. It was given by the Crown Prince.”

Leonore looked as devout as Swedes generally do when the kingly family is alluded to. And was I really there? And could I tell her all about it? And had I seen the king himself? And what did they all do and wear and say? All that was so very interesting to hear up there in Finland.”

So the end of it was that I gave Count Ulric the full and true account of the whole matter written down in English, and he read it into Swedish to the infinite enjoyment of the fair Leonore.

I insert it here, though I fear it may not give as much to any one else as it did to her.

It was called “My Royal Masquerade,” and written, I believe, by an old lady, who, for the first time in her life, found herself at a Masquerade. The relation of all that occurred to her there will be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Is it night?” I asked myself as I lay reposing, not sleeping, in a large light room in Stockholm. The thin muslin curtains, their only blind, were drawn away from the wide windows, and the entire of the snowy scene beyond them, over “the Place,” and the frozen water, and up the rocky snow-covered cliffs of Söder, lay unveiled before me, clear, cold, and white.

The winter nights of the north are often clearer and lighter than the days. Now there is no golden glory streaming into my room from the great full-orbed moon that is up so very high above us, yet hangs mid-way between earth and sky; but there is a clear pale light

that makes all objects as distinct to vision as does that of the sun—much more so than did the daylight of twelve hours ago.

I could not sleep that night. The intensely hot rooms, stove-heated and air-tight, the charming prospect, the clear, not brilliant, moonshine, conspire to murder sleep more effectually than ever Macbeth did. Yet with all these there is still one more cause of sleeplessness. The door between my apartments is open, and on the writing table in the outer room everything is distinct, but one object there appears to attract an especial portion of the moonshine to itself. It is a very large envelope, with a more than proportionably large red seal. I can see that seal plainly from my couch, and think I see too the royal arms of Sweden upon it. Perhaps, after all, that appearance is the true cause of my restlessness—for the envelope contained an invitation to—a masquerade!—a sort of thing I never saw in my life—at which I should not in the least know what to do. But the worst of it was that the masquerade was a Royal one,—and to make it impossible to say no, the invitation would in England have been a command.

The masquerade was 'to be given by the dashing Crown Prince; all Stockholm—that is all the grand portion of it, had been half out of its wits for some time; such begging, borrowing, hiring, or buying of all sorts of things, odds and ends and all old trumpery that could be pressed into service for costumes. Young officers of the Guards getting a little deeper into debt, to be paid off some day by a marriage with a good (that is Swedish for rich) burgher's daughter; the father-in-law, who has obtained the honour, coming forward beforehand to arrange all that.

Never was friendship more severely taxed than in contributing scraps for this masquerade; the shops are nearly empty, and till the water is open, "Fins inte" is the fatal reply of every shopman to all would-be purchasers. Male and female ingenuity is cleverly exercised in the shifts demanded by this grand masquerade.*

There is an excitement too of a graver, if less anxious nature; there has been no royal masquerading since King Gustaf III was shot

* "Fins inte," when the season is advanced, is a terribly common sound in Stockholm. It answers to "Il n'y en a pas," or the English "we have not got it."

at the masquerade at the Opera ; such things have indeed been prohibited and made illegal in public or private assemblies, and on this occasion a good deal of superstitious feeling exists among the plainer people who are not to be at the Royal masquerade.* Certainly I had not troubled myself much about a costume, for I had resolved only to *see*, and neither to be seen nor known. Yet the very idea that I ought to sleep to-night as I must be awake all the next night tended to prevent my purpose, for sleep will not come by "paying attention to it," as the Irishman said he did.

The unrefulgent light was reflected from the snowy ground, and now gleaming Place, called Carl Treton's Torg,—the snow had lately melted on the surface and then frozen ; this has turned the open space into a sheet of crystal, giving it at night the aspect of a glittering, magical lake. I can see so far off

* It is a curious coincidence that no break had occurred in the charming Royal family of Sweden until after this event. Some months after this was written, the interesting Prince Gustaf died, and the Crown Prince lost his first-born son. That some misfortune would follow a royal masquerade was the prevalent feeling of the townspeople.

as I recline here, gazing out with eyes that will not keep closed. There are house lights still sparkling here and there ; some for revelers, some for watchers ; it is easy to tell the difference : a single twinkling light burning on and on—ah ! be sure there is something in the chamber behind that half-screened window, quite different from revelry !

There are the white heights of Söder, but between them and me there is the Palace—and back comes the idea of myself in a horrible mask, and away flies sleep further than ever.

Once more I rose, and tried to read by moonlight ; I had done so before, though the natives tell me it is as much as my life is worth to approach windows thus on winter nights, and indeed the thrill one feels in one minute's time, is almost terrifying. To put one's head out of the window of one of these hot rooms in the daytime, even if the sun is bright, is curiously painful. But a change was now coming over the moon. I had lately read the motto on King Oscar's seat, but now, when I tried to read a printed book dark shifting lines fell over the page : I looked up to enquire the cause. The Queen of Night

appeared to be in perplexity; the hour of her decline had not drawn on; yet she was by no means so large, so stately and magnificent as she had been. The moon may be a Queen in other skies; she is an Empress here. But somehow her royal power seemed to be threatened; but lately there was not a cloud to be seen in the immensely high, wide-spreading vault far below which she hung her oblong form, not stuck like a flat patch against it, but clearly self-suspended in ether. Now, there were dark wavy ridges like retreating billows all around her, and she herself appeared to be retreating, condensing, shrinking—it was a picture of Majesty in disgrace or fear. One large star there had been beside her—her prime-minister of state; and now it too seemed less, and, as Mr Dickens would undoubtedly say, “winking” from fear. Soon afterwards a great darkness came creeping on; sweeping over all that had been light and clear, the snow, the room, the envelope, the red seal—all were enwrapped in thick gloom. I thought it must be a snow cloud, but it passed too quickly for that; not long afterwards the light came back as if the moon were rising; and soon the Empress of

Night was herself again, dwelling serene in her native dominion. Then came the star, that shrinking satellite that had gathered itself up and kept out of the way of the trouble, and if it winked now at all it was from joy not fear.

I fell asleep at last, and when I woke and got up my old Countess housekeeper asked me if I had seen the great eclipse of the moon, and said she had meant to have been awake to see it, but had been asleep.

And I said I did not mean to be awake, and complained that she had not told me to be so.

“Ack! Madame,” said the good lady, “how could you care to see it dark here in Sweden when it is always dark in London, because there you see no sun, nor moon ever, on account of the fog and smoke?”

Three weeks after that night I read in an English paper the letter of a poor sea captain giving an account of the loss of his ship and its crew by striking on a rock, and it contained these words—“unfortunately at that moment there was a total eclipse of the moon.” So while I was enjoying the effect of the moon-eclipse others were perishing by it.

The following night comes, however: the sledge of a celebrated personage glides to the door; an English footman with the indispensable lantern runs up to my rooms; a black face pops out of them, the great stone stairs in their icy coldness are descended, and the sledge glides on again. It is the law of Stockholm that street lamps are not lighted when the moon ought to shine; but they do not make any regulations either for the hours previous to or after her allotted time, nor for the circumstances which may prove an unavoidable hindrance to her appointed duty. Thus in cloudy nights, or at an hour too early for her appearance, we are in utter darkness. The latter was now the case.

There was a figure wrapped in furs in one corner of the sledge; a black face with a pair of black eyes gleaming out of the mass of black fur were partially shown by the momentary gleam of the footman's lantern. I sat down beside it courageously. Shortly afterwards we stopped and another figure got in, of which I could see nothing except that something white was on the seat opposite to me, a white domino I fancied

it to be. This domino was presented to me by the extraordinary title of *Le Chevalier de Paradis*. The notion of a Knight of Paradise going to this northern masquerade was rather droll. As it was too dark for bows and curtesies, the Chevalier acknowledged the introduction by remarking that we ought to know each other's costumes, in order to be able to continue an acquaintance on arriving at the Palace, where a crowd would be entering at the same time.

This was just what I wished to avoid; for my intention was to be quite unknown and invisible. I was more resolved that this stranger should not know mine because I had been presented to him by name. Thinking, therefore, to turn his attention from the subject of mine by speaking only of his, I foolishly replied,—

“Monsieur *Le Chevalier de Paradis* wears without doubt the costume of Paradise.”

I cannot, even now, see anything so very ludicrous in the speech. When alluding to a paradisaical costume, I certainly had no other picture of Eden in my mind than

that in which angels are usually depicted either in statuary or painting—a white tunic (which I really imagined I saw indistinctly before me) girt round the waist, and a very long pair of wings.

The peals of laughter, however, that followed my carefully expressed speech, seemed to shake the solid sledge, and might, one would have supposed, melt the iron-hard coating of ice from its windows.

It is enough to say—I was tormented. The worst of it was that the fur-enveloped figure insisted that this Knight of Eden, or of Paradise, should escort me into the royal rooms in his national costume; which he in the blindest manner undertook to do.

I privately resolved to be lost the moment we got out of the carriage: in such a motley crowd that could not be difficult. The Chevalier de Paradis should not see my costume, nor would I any longer care to discover his; that it was something white I was sure, and, therefore, white I would avoid.

The resolve was easily executed; we were involved in a moving tide of dominos, and

I never saw a glimpse of either of my companions or of their costumes.

The scene in the entrance passage of the Palace was strange and startling; some hideous figures, to whom I believe that place was familiar, in harlequin dresses and frightful coloured masks, were thrown into grotesque postures, sparring with one another and performing a variety of uncouth manceuvres, as the guards of this now fantastic palace.

This scene stopped me for a moment, and when I moved on I took by mistake a direction that would lead me out of the Palace again instead of into it. My mistake was noticed by a sedate looking Portuguese Monk who seemed to have been moralising on the follies of these children of the world. It being his vocation to lead stragglers to the right way, I at once accepted his offered aid, and was conducted to the fine suite of rooms which were the scene of revelry. There it seemed that my Monk had another means of exercising his vocation, for after a little desultory chat and sundry twitchings of the head towards the entrance door, he walked abstractedly away and left me to myself. His

dress was a dark brown frock and cloak, with a cowl which hung over his face.

When alone, I felt that the bliss the poor poet of Scotland coveted,—

“The bliss o’ independence,”

must—to women at least—lie in a black mask.

I roamed through royal rooms ; I saw everything, looked at every one, and was seen by no one.

A blue and a pink domino were walking arm-in-arm, in regular lines, along the length of the rooms. As they passed, in measured tread, I unluckily dropped a handkerchief, which one of them picked up and presented, I was obliged to return thanks, on which they both squeaked out my name in the most ridiculous manner, which squeaking they adopted as the acmè of masquerading wit, and then inquired for my health, as in a morning visit in England. They were English ; and a little vexed at being discovered, I asked how they knew me ?

“We knew you by your nose,” they squeaked together. “You have got a mask with a nose exactly like your own.”

I knew, by feeling, that that was the case, and, vexed at the oversight, I went to a room where I had seen sundry masks deposited, and took one from the store with a nose quite unlike mine, leaving my own in its place.

I was then at ease, feeling certain of not being known.

I saw King Oscar, in plain clothes, and without a mask, shaking hands with the fur-enveloped figure of the sledge, and passed by in full security; and, as the evening advanced, I saw Queen Josephine, graceful, perhaps, as her poor grandmother, enter her royal son's apartments in a plain silk gown and a mantilla with hood, which hood, to humour the frolic, was at first drawn over her head, but immediately put back. And then came the dear little old Dowager Queen, in her own stereotyped dress, with the constant feather in the head and eye-glass in the hand, the same glass nodding with the head at everything and every one. The kind old lady came up to me, as a matter of royal duty, and said something not meant for any one in particular, but in French, for she cannot speak a word of

Swedish yet. I replied; and then, pointing the glass to my mask, she nodded and said—

“Ah! ah! you are here; that is well. But you cannot amuse yourself; you are a stranger; you do not know the costumes—that is *triste*. Have you guessed any of them? Ah! ah! No?” And she moved on to another.

I was glad she had answered her own question, for I had hazarded a guess on one costume, and that I did not wish to speak of.

How she had come to discover me was truly surprising. I felt sure it must still be the fault of my mask; and to prevent a recurrence of the danger I changed it again.

When I returned from doing so dancing had commenced; it was to represent a ball in the Court of Louis XV.

Very handsome indeed did some of Sweden's matronly ladies look in that stately costume, and no hideous masks concealed their beauty. The powdered hair turned back from the forehead, showed some of those faces to advantage.

The Crown Princess, I believe, never looked so well. She wore a rich, open robe of geranium-coloured velvet, over a petticoat of white

satin ; the very wide and long sleeves were open almost from the shoulder, and lined with the same white satin, the powdered hair fastened up erect from the forehead on the top of the head was looped with strings of pearl.

When she first appeared, a Neapolitan fisherman had sprung lightly to meet her, and she took his arm, and they went off together as if to give an example of equality and fraternity. But afterwards the fisherman was transformed into some great man of the court, Louis XV himself, or the handsome and wicked Richelieu.

And then there were the Follies—droll, little giddy things!—though most of them were wives, or even mothers. These were ladies of the princess's court. In the three royal households age descends in due ratio. The Follies were beautifully dressed ; their atoms of feet and tiny ankles, so fully displayed in short dresses and high-heeled, rose-coloured shoes ; their waists brought into the compass of a very few inches, and all hung round with tiny silver bells that rung when they moved or danced, like the maidens of old who were re-

proved for "making a tinkling as they go." And each carried a little doll with a bell on its head, and they shook the doll and twirled it about, and its bell rung in tune to their mad merry steps. They were very pretty little Follies indeed.

I saw the Portuguese monk looking gravely on; his cowl, bordered with a strip of white cloth, overhung his face; his air was more restless; he seemed to be looking for what he could not find. He was in that respect like many others. His eyes seemed to look over me without seeing me, and though he was the only masquerader I cared to converse with, since there was naturally something staid, sober, moralizing, and altogether appropriate in his manner of speech, I plainly saw he was occupied by some anxiety, and I left him turning his head and eyes in a rather nervous movement, and went into a quieter room.

Flitting through the rooms I had often observed a graceful sulphur-coloured domino; it struck me that this domino was the most elegant, and its wearer was apparently the most bewildered or distressed of all the assistants at the royal masquerade. As I

entered a more private room, I found her sunk into a corner, almost hidden from sight. I said something in passing.

“ Ah !” she said in answer, “ are you here again ?”

Recognised ! I thought to myself ; but before I could speak she added, addressing me by name—

“ You go everywhere ; I fear to do so ; but tell me have you seen——”

“ What ?” for she stopped as if in some pain.

“ A flower !”

I felt inclined to laugh.

“ There are plenty there,” I said, nodding towards the brilliant exotics.

“ No, no !—not like them—but—Oh ! I have lost it !” she said, with a gesture made by her hands very like that of despair.

Just as this took place, however, the hero of the night, the Proteus figure, who, whether as an Albanian chief, a Greek sailor, or Neapolitan fisherman, an Italian brigand, or an Arab of the Desert, still looked every inch a man—the joyous Crown Prince of Sweden happened to come so near to us, that I felt obliged to

move out of the way, and to say no more about the lost flower to the sulphur domino.

With eyes aching from glare, dancing-bells, rose-coloured feet and black faces, I retreated for a little repose to the boudoir of the princess. I placed myself in an easy chair, and was quite comfortable.

My enjoyment was soon over. A voice, speaking in French, requested to know how the lady who bore my name amused herself in Sweden, and more especially how she liked the royal masquerade.

I looked up, and saw a figure calculated to frighten any but a disbeliever in ghosts. A white linen tunic girt round the waist reached to the knees of this long, thin figure, a pair of loose white drawers completed the equipment to the feet, which were plunged into immensely long loose shoes.

A moment's thought might have recalled to my mind the figures I had seen sparring in the entrance passage, but I only caught a glimpse of a costume precisely like that I had supposed for the Chevalier de Paradis; and the fact that this figure addressed me by name, convinced

me still more that the person I most wished to conceal myself from stood before me.

The forlorn hope of deceiving him entered my mind. In Sweden all persons must be spoken to in the third person; thus, if you mean to say—How do you do? It must be put into Swedish as an enquiry, How is Mr or Mrs or Miss so and so? It was in the Swedish style that I was addressed in French, as if asking for another person, and though I was perfectly aware of the practice, it struck me that it would be very clever to make use of it as a means of escape from the Chevalier de Paradis. I had heard, during the evening, that my favourite Prince had decamped to Upsala; and so, thinking to mystify the Chevalier by answering his enquires for myself as if they were meant for one who was not present, I replied concerning that lady in an apparently innocent manner—

“O! you have not then heard of her intention to go off to Upsala with Prince ——.”

There was the least little sign of a start, and a slight guttural sound, like that of choked laugh, behind the mask; but before one word more could be said, forth

sprung a portly, elderly, royal chamberlain, with fine gold epaulettes on his shoulders, and presenting his arm to me said,

“Madame, the King is at supper; it is not proper to remain here, allow me the honour of conducting you.”

You may imagine a polite policeman—there are such persons I suppose, saying to his victim “allow me the honour of conducting you”—just so did I accept, or confer, the honour; and just so did I feel myself to be conducted; and as a convict at the bar did I feel to stand at the supper table directly opposite to the King, who, ignorant of my sufferings, was helping himself to Snö ripa—i. e. ptarmigan.

I only lifted my eyes to behold the white tunic at his Majesty’s side; the face of the wearer being in close propinquity with the royal ear.

“Who is that—that white figure, opposite—speaking to the King?” I whispered in a tremulous voice to a lady beside me.

“Do you not know? He is so easily recognised; every one finds him out; that is Prince ——.”

The Prince I had heard had gone to Upsala, and to whom I had made my clever speech!

I saw the Portuguese Monk standing a little behind, still turning head and eyes in all directions as if anxious to take a view of the world in its present guise before going back to his convent. I got beside him and gently plucking his brown frock, whispered in French, "Good father take me from this place of trial—alas! it is too strong for me."

"Willingly my daughter," he answered, but he presented his arm with an air more like that of an officer of the guards than a monk. So we went off moralising very nicely on the vanity of earthly joys and pleasures; indeed no hermit could speak better on the subject; there was even a degree of anger in his tone when he spoke of all human incertitude; of the falsity, fickleness, heartlessness of human nature in geueal—and perhaps it was for my edification he let that appear—of female human nature in particular.

I could only sigh and mourn with him, and had he gone on longer in this way, might in the end have convinced him there was one exception, at least, to his dismal theory; but before so great progress had been made in our rather sentimental intercourse, he ab-

ruptly enquired of whom I had been so much afraid at the supper table. Another dilemma for me! I knew how fond Stockholm was of stories, and if I told the Monk of my blunder, he might—as even Monks are not vowed against such things—repeat it to another, and so, as stories, like snow-balls, gather as they go, there would be no saying what my fabulous history might come to. I had therefore to lead the Monk astray, as I had stupidly wished to lead the Prince, I exclaimed with a movement of repugnance—

“O! of that horrible Chevalier de Paradis.”

The Monk then threw himself into an attitude.—

“What has he done to offend you?”

“Nothing!” I cried, rather frightened at the belligerent movement. “Nothing—I only want to avoid him.”

“What is his costume?” said the Monk.

* I groaned.

“You have seen him; you must also have seen his costume?”

“It was in the dark.”

The Monk laughed, a little, very proper, monk-like laugh.

“Well,” he said, “if that discourteous knight be here, costume or no costume, he shall soon be at your feet.”

“I pray—I beg—” were my words, but they were spoken to air, for the Monk, laying a hand on his breast, bowed and departed.

He had not left the room two minutes when up flitted the Sulphur domino, looking like the ghost of a domino revisiting the scene of some former pleasure or pain; it were hard to tell which; but full of pain rather than pleasure did she now appear.

Gracefully she sailed along, and I said, as she neared me—

“You have not found your Flower?”

“Alas, no!” and the folded hands, white and beautiful, fell on the sulphur-coloured breast.

I recollected reading in some story in which the celebrated Madame de Pompadour bore a part, of a dress adorned with roses with diamond leaves, and, though diamonds are somewhat rare in Sweden, I naturally thought such an ornament might have been used on an occasion that was descriptive of the Court of Louis XV. I therefore replied to her—

“There was surely something lost with the Flower that renders its loss so painful?”

“Happiness!” she cried, with a sudden bitter movement of the enfolded hands.

The poor child has lost her senses, I thought to myself; but a little reflection changed the thought. It occurred to me, that in our sentimental talk a great deal had been said by the Portuguese Monk about the flowers of earth—its buds not opening into blossoms—the very bowers of Eden seeming to invite our steps, and closing against us as we drew near them. And not only so, but on one or two occasions he had alluded to actual flowers, wondering why none of the masks wore them, and even enquiring once or twice in a round-about way whether I had observed any of them with a flower in her hand. I had not observed such, and in a domino flowers are not easily worn, had been my reply—but a bright idea—perhaps the brightest of this blundering night—occurred to me, and I asked the Sulphur domino if she had looked in the Boudoir for her lost Flower.

“No. She had not been there at all.”

“Go, then; and if you do not find it before I come, wait there till I do,” I said, and, without the least attempt at disobedience, she rose up and went.

I went back to the supper room, and soon espied the Portuguese Monk. As soon as he saw me he pretended to have been occupied only in a search for the Chevalier de Paradis, affirming that among all the costumes he could not make out one likely to be his.

“Good father,” I said gravely, and speaking in allusion to his former sentimental discourse—“I come now to crave your help in another matter; you, who have spoken so feelingly of the fading flowers which earth yields to her children, will, I am sure, give me your assistance in seeking to restore to one of those poor suffering children the flower she has lost.”

The Monk, in silence, turned his eye on mine, and that eye said almost in plain English—What can you mean?

So I answered it in terms as plain. “I want you to look for a flower a poor lady has lost, and when I asked her if anything were lost with it, she said—Happiness.”

The Monk started, almost bounded from the spot he stood on. I had only time to say—"In the Boudoir"—before that spot was empty space, and frock and cowl had disappeared.

Some time after that, I was going away, very heartily tired; but, before I left the Palace, I thought I ought to visit the Boudoir, for fear that the Sulphur domino should remain there for ever in obedience to my mandate. The Portuguese Monk was standing with his back to the door; two masks lay on the table, and before me was the unmasked face which I now saw to be the very sweet one—of one of my chief acquaintances—the Sulphur domino. Her bright brown eyes were full of tears, and her gentle countenance was, the while, beaming with happy smiles—her hand, dreadful to relate, was in that of the Monk. But when she saw me she drew it away and sprang forward, and put both hands on my shoulders, and, in the exuberance of her joy, kissed my cheek.

"Have you found your flower?" I asked tranquilly.

"No; but I have found mine!" cried the Monk.

“I hope you will take better care of it,” I said, sarcastically,

“I will guard it as the Knight of Paradise ought to do,” he replied, with a low bow. And I looked up at his face, and saw it too to be one I knew.

“What! are you the Chevalier de Paradis?”

“That *horrible* Chevalier,” he replied;—“and, after all, you must admit, I think, that if my costume were not Eden-like, at least it was unworld-like.”

“Ah!” I answered, “it was that strip of white cloth round the cowl that led me into a mistake.”

And so the Sulphur domino, whom I had met at some of the winter parties of Stockholm, clapped me and patted me, and whispered that I was a delightfully-good and dreadfully-excellent little, amiable, human being. And of the whole string of epithets I did not feel conscious of deserving that she could call me one—for truly it had been all a matter of accident.

But how did she come to know me, as indeed many others had done, I asked, when I never discovered her or any one else, and had

even changed my mask for one with a nose most decidedly unlike my own?

“Ack!” said the Sulphur domino, as she patted my hand between hers, “the dear, excellent, foreign human being must know that it was by her tongue and not by her nose that we found her out.”

So now it ends. My Royal Masquerade was over. Thankful was I for it.

The mystery of the Flower I cannot solve. I do not believe that any one but the Monk and the Sulphur domino knew anything about it.

A very short time afterwards the adjunct, or curate of our parish church, happened to tell me, in his mode of speaking English, that, according to the formulary for the publication of banns in Sweden, “a Christian-matrimonial-conjunction was publicated” from the pulpit of that church, between the gentleman who had been presented to me by the unfortunate title of the Chevalier de Paradis and the lady of the lost flower;—in other words, between the Portuguese Monk and the Sulphur-coloured domino of my Royal Masquerade.”

Count Ulric rendered the lady's Royal Masquerade into very good Swedish, at least I thought so, and suspect he must have made it a little more interesting than it appears in its native garb, for Leonore was quite enchanted; and they conversed together a long time afterwards, but whether it was solely about the sulphur domino or not, I do not know.

The very next day I went to find his mother, in order to announce my resolution to return to Sweden by the first steamer. When I entered the room I found the young man pacing across it, with quite a disturbed air, while she sat in the window, leaning both elbows on the small table that held her working apparatus, with her face completely hidden by her hands. I was about to retire, as I saw her son was excited or angry, and she appeared to be in grief; but when his return passage across the floor turned his back on her, the fingers of one of her hands opened, and a rather comical glance through them invited me to stay.

I went in accordingly, and Count Ulric instantly sprung out.

“May one ask what is the matter?”

She leaned back in her chair, put down her

hands, and burst into a hearty laugh, perhaps the first she had indulged in for a long time.

“What can have happened?”

“My son cannot live in the house with poor Leonore. He says I must lose one or the other.”

“In that case it cannot be difficult for you to decide which you will lose.”

“It is so difficult that I am going to show him my difficulties, and then the end of it will be that I shall be forced to consent to retain both my children by making them one.”

That this mode of arrangement was likely to succeed very soon became apparent, and in a very few days I was requested to wait for the next steamer, and postpone my return in order to be present at the betrothal of Count Ulric and Leonore.

The time was short, for the Count was obliged to rejoin his regiment at a very limited period, and his mother was at least as eager as himself to have this precursor of the matrimonial service over before his departure.

The ceremonial was quite in the Swedish style. The relatives and most intimate friends were invited to a grand entertainment. Leonore,

dressed almost as a bride, looked very lovely ; and the young Count, in the green uniform of Russia, looked extremely well.

In the course of the evening they both withdrew to a private apartment, where he placed a gold ring on her finger, and she placed another on his. He then led her back as his declared bride elect, and the gold rings were the signal for embracings and congratulations.

The Countess sat in a large chair, in a rather conspicuous position, ready to receive them ; but when they came in, looking so happy, so youthful and pleasant, a change came over her that perhaps she was not herself prepared for. She rose involuntarily up, clasped her hands with a gesture more like that of grief, or painful memory, than of joy, and dropped back, nearly fainting into the great chair. This weakness passed away in a few moments ; and the tender emotion with which she embraced her children, and folded the tearful Leonore to her heart, fully explained that from whatever other cause her apparent pain at first seeing them had arisen, regret at her son's choice had no part in it.

And still pale, and with tearful eyes, but a

smiling lip; she watched the young couple, as they celebrated their betrothal by merrily dancing the Polska; and only a few of those who were there assembled suspected that she thought of an Ulric and a Leonore to whom a different fate had been assigned.

And the next morning I started for Stockholm.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN we were on the deck of the little Crown Princess, Louisa, ready to steam away to the island of Gottland, Professor —— arriving at the last moment, had just time to say he had a friend on board whose acquaintance we must make ourselves, as there would be danger of the professor's being carried out to sea, during the time that would be occupied in a Swedish presentation.

“But how shall we know him?” I cried,
“He is a widower,” responded the retreating professor, and leaping on the pier made

there his farewell bows while we puffed off from it.

Sodertelje, a pleasantly situated little town on the verge of the canal which connects Mälaren with the Baltic, is a favourite resort of the Stockholmers in summer, for like their cousins, the Germans, they love even the name of mineral-water drinking and bathing.

Here we had to stop a long time: the strip of canal is very narrow, and the Crown Princess being rather bulky in build, it was no easy matter to squeeze her through it. The heat of the sun was almost insupportable: a kindly looking Swede offered me the shade of his umbrella seeing me just sinking beneath its fervour. He wore an enormous worsted worked pouch slung round his neck, guarding his chest like a breast-plate, and as gorgeous as Berlin wool of all colours could make it. .

As the offer of his sheltering umbrella led to some effort at conversation on my part, I looked at this pouch and hazarded the remark that Monsieur was possibly an artist.

“Ack no!” was the reply as an open

hand was laid on the worsted bag, pressing it closer to the breast it guarded—"Ack no!—my sainted wife worked me this."

"This is the professor's friend," I whispered my companion the Baroness.

"How do you know that?"

"He is a widower."

"Again, how do you know that?"

"He talks of his wife."

"I am travelling only for a little amusement," said this gentleman, who did not understand English. "Ah! when last I travelled, my sainted wife——"

"Pardon me," interrupted the Baroness, rising up and sinking down almost to the deck in a deep curtsy; "but may one make so bold as to ask if the noble gentleman is the friend of Professor ——?"

He was so, a great many bows and curtsies followed, and a great many entreaties for pardon. And then Friherrinan* presented herself by name and title, and explained who she was, and then performed the same ceremony for me.

"I can't speak to him," she whispered me, "for I do not know his title."

* Swedish for Baroness.

“His name is P——.”

“Yes, but his title? * What is he?” so she rose up again, and curtsying low, said,—

“Pardon me—may one be so indiscreet as to ask the noble gentleman’s title?”

“Kunsligen Secretarien,” was the answer, with the requisite bows.

So Kunsligen Secretarien, or the Royal Secretary, was our kind widower’s title; and a most convenient one it is in this kingdom of titles; all lawyers and writers are called by it; and the Royal Secretaries of Sweden form no small item in its population.

That singular passion for titles must be gratified in every way; I could not find out the man from whom we had hired the carriage in Stockholm, because I had only heard him called Mr coachmaker, and did not know his name.

But Kunsligen Secretarien proved a useful and very friendly acquaintance; and we heard a great deal of the sainted wife; though I must confess my sentimental tendencies were rather shocked, when having enquired in a pathetic

* The title, or office, or employment of the persons addressed, in the feminine as well as masculine, must be used, and not the name.

manner the purpose to which he put the brilliant worsted work on his breast, he laid a hand upon it as if pressing it lovingly there, and with a sigh replied, "It is for my tobacco."

After losing much time in squeezing our Crown Princess through the walls of this canal, and still more in twisting along its serpentine course, we at last emerge into the Skäregård, that wildly singular scene, which does not lose its charm to me from having been beheld more than once.

This "court of rocks," as the word implies, is the vestibule of the Baltic; a vast expanse of sea water is thickly set with islands of rock, some bare, some crowned with dark firs, some green and with sheep and cows pasturing there; some few having a solitary wooden house. A supreme silence is over all—a silence that we do not observe on the sea; even in summer this stillness is solemn, but in winter, as I have, I think, said before, when no wave murmurs, no water gurgles round these rocks, when the eider-duck sits here in solitude supreme—the lord of the lonely isles, and little else but the never-changing pines, are seen rising over ice-waves amid pillars of frozen snow, nature may indeed appear to have given

up this portion of her realm. These Skäregårds were the region of old legends and fearful tales. I have been among some of them in a time of storm, which verified in aspect one's early notions of old Scandinavia, though at that period nothing more terrible than smuggling was carried on there. The scenery was of the most savage character, the cold earthy-coloured rocks were only sometimes greened over by a scanty herbage, and rose to a great height on each side of the narrow channel through which our small vessel swept, the billows rolling from seaward, driving us in among great bare rocks, against whose sides they broke, forming water-spouts sometimes over their heads: there were the masts of a shipwrecked vessel sticking up among the breakers, and two or three of the dwellers in this wild scene, looking wonderingly at us from the tops of the rocks, were the only signs of life that was or had been there.

The Skäregård we are in now is quite another thing: we wind, cautious and slow, through our watery garden; the path is very narrow, and carefully traced out; the contrivance is a simple and ingenious one, branches of trees artistically secured at bottom, white poles, and often whitened

rocks, serve that purpose. Stillness, calmness, and bright, warm sunshine are here; down over the Baltic sea the sun is going, and the sky glows, and makes the forward prospect a radiant one. There is the open sea, there is the lighthouse marking its entrance; and now the pilot goes off, the breeze freshens, the sun sets, the sea looks bleak, and I am glad to retreat to my neat little hut.

A deep sleep was broken by a powerful voice calling down the cabin-stairs for the English "Fruentimmer." I answered to the appellative, for I had told the Captain I wished to have the first sight of Wisby from the sea. He anticipated my wish, however, for it was only three o'clock, and as yet only a dark haze on the horizon indicated the Island of Gottland. About an hour afterwards the numerous old towers of its once renowned little capital were seen beneath the gorgeous rays of a rising sun.

At a distance, and seen thus in a strong light from sea, this old town of ruins formed one of the most curious spectacles I ever saw. At first it had all the appearance of a range of

fortification ; but coming nearer, it appeared to be a ruined and dismantled fortress. Grey, fortified walls, thickly planted with towers, enclose it on three sides, leaving the fourth open to the water ; and these walls come down the sloping headland, with low limestone cliffs behind, and at each side. And then, entering the shallow, muddy pool, that is called the harbour, we see a still stranger sight—a mass of ruins ; fine old churches roofless ; warlike towers partly demolished ; antique stone houses ; blackened, wooden hovels, trim and brightly-painted new ones — all higgledy-piggledy. Passed away substantial greatness, modern misery and modern unsubstantial prettiness, are so blended together, that one feels in Wisby neither placed in the past nór the present.

We land, to find ourselves in a mass of ruins, civil, religious, and military : fine Gothic churches, ruined by the deeds of men far more than by the work of time ; broken towers, substantial and quaint houses of burghers of old—and then side by side with this there is a younger, more modern state, that seems more fallen still—a people and a state of things that appear, as we

would say, far behind their age, but who are not far enough behind it; for all around tells of a greater age for the town of Wisby than Wisby shall ever see again.

The English Consul met us on the shore, and kindly conducted us to the apartments taken for us.

CHAPTER X.

THERE never were, I believe, a more hospitable race than the Gottlanders are.

To an English person the most curious invitation is the commonest here—to drink coffee. That does not in the least signify what we mean by an invitation to drink tea. Coffee is served soon after dinner ; so it means, in short, to pay a visit after the people have dined, during which visit you drink coffee. But sometimes this coffee-drinking visit is lengthened out if it prove agreeable. In Sweden, and the customs here are in general the same, the stranger must pay the first visit, take the initiative at least in sending cards, expressing

a desire for acquaintance, or going the first to see persons who express a similar inclination. Friherrinan saved me all trouble in this respect; she went round all the little world of Wisby, and said I wished to know every one, and then came and said that every one wished to know me.

One of the first visits I paid was to the Bishop; a very noble presence his was, attired for the occasion, with a large gold cross suspended from his neck, and a handsome star on his breast. And we took a cup of coffee and a walk in his pleasant garden; and the next day he returned our visit, and then sent us an invitation to dinner at the hospitable home over which he presides in single-blessedness—an astonishing rarity in clerical life. This is the regular etiquette, both here and, as the Gottlanders say, on the continent—that is, in Sweden—only that among, plain people, tea and supper frequently take the place of dinner. Thus, from Landshöfningen, or the Governor, Biskopen, or the Bishop, downward, through all the kind, hospitable inhabitants of Wisby, did we visit from day to day.

“All Gottland is a ruin,” said a young lady to me, as we stood at a round supper-table,

eating fowl, and spinach sweetened with sugar—
“all Gottland is a ruin, and we can only live
amid its ruins.” And in its little fallen capital
I often recalled the saying.

Wisby in its ruins, supplies a good deal
of food to the imagination, but it is hard
for a stranger, especially an English one, to
sustain the mere animal existence there, un-
less one has access to the hospitable tables
of the comfortable citizens who draw their
own provisions from their country farms.
Neither white bread, meat, eggs, not even
fish can be procured for a hapless lodger
in ‘private apartments.’ So that such a one
is often forced to wish it were possible to live
really as well as imaginatively in the good
old times of Wisby’s history, when the fat
burghers had something better to sustain
them, and when its wealthy merchants drew
their luxuries from all lands—a time when,
as the children here, and perhaps some of their
elders too, really do believe

The streets were paved with penny loaves,
And the houses thatched with pancakes ;

when window-frames were made of gold and
their sills of precious marble, and the locks of
the doors of silver.

In fact, if we are to believe in the traditions of Wisby, gold, silver, and precious stones were as common things here as King Solomon in his time made them in Jerusalem.

These traditions of ancient wealth and splendour are known to the poorest here, but the history of the time to which they relate exists, for the most part, in mouldering ruins or solid stone-work which have resisted time and violence, and still preserve to the people of Wisby the traditionary belief in its fabulous riches and splendour. The reality of its former state when contrasted with its present might be surprising enough, and it is singular that no written documents, nor detailed history, records the interesting annals of the little Island of Gottland.

Fragments of stone are the chief chronicles of its former state. The past and the present are singularly contrasted in the aspect of this little capital. The ruins are so great, the old existing buildings so fine, the modern wooden houses so spruce, neat, and gaily coloured, the old wooden houses so black, confused, huddled together, and repulsive,

that one cannot help wishing the ancient curious town had been left in its ruins and a better site chosen for the modern one; for these modern wooden works, rising as they do amid broken walls, and towers, and churches, give the idea of temporary erections put up in a town which has been sacked and dismantled.

Those neat many-coloured wooden houses with their flower-shaded windows, or nicely netted white blinds, would look charmingly in a village, but are out of character within the old walls of a once fortified town, which walls are set around with no less than forty towers; and there is a rather disagreeable want of harmony between them and the great, strong, quaint stone-houses, where the wealthy and thrifty traders of other days had their ware-rooms over their dwelling rooms, and kept all snug and safe to themselves. The doors of these ware-rooms now lie open, wares there are none, but the rooms are sometimes inhabited by poor families.

In almost every street one comes on some fine piece of old stone-work whose solidity or beauty contrasts strongly with the poor little

dwellings that shelter the modern inhabitants of Wisby. The ruins of a demolished Palace, but above all the wonderful aspect, in this little town, of those of ten beautiful Gothic churches, with broken arches and windows telling more of violence than of time, delight the artist, and startle the wandering stranger whose aching feet perambulate the rough narrow streets that now only display the signs of poverty, dullness and decay.

Here, indeed, one must try to live as well as one can, in imagination; and *it* has food enough. Strange to say, there are no authentic documents relating to Wisby in existence. The Gottlanders style that brave ecclesiastical hero, Bishop Hans Bask, a robber, saying that he carried off all the archives of the town. Having long resisted the aggressions of Gustavus Wasa—the Henry VIII of Sweden in seizure of Church property and alienation of Church rights—and finding further resistance vain, he resolved to retire from his country, and embarking with whatever treasure he possessed, he sailed to Gottland, then ecclesiastically united to Sweden, and under his jurisdiction as Bishop of Lind-

köping; and then, it is said, he took all the archives, religious and civil, of this interesting island away, and carried them to his place of exile, from whence, up to the time of his death, he ceased not to write to the reformer, or spoiler, Gustavus, and warn him to desist and return to his church.

Etymologists give various derivations to the word Wisby—the last syllable is the common one, signifying town or village in Swedish; and one derivation of the name is taken from terms signifying holy room, or place—a signification which the multitude of its churches—of which twenty-five are believed to have once existed—its convents, and religious institutions, might indeed appear to warrant, however incompatible it may be with our modern ideas of a commercial town.

However fabulous may be the extraordinary tales that are told and believed by the people of the riches of this fallen place—its gates of brass, its window frames of gold and silver, its houses ornamented with precious stones—we may, independent of this fabulous history and even in the absence of any detailed one, learn from incidental notices enough to warrant the belief that

the high place it held in the Hanseatic league was fully justified by its commercial importance ; while the number of its once splendid churches might warrant the traditionary belief in the large amount of its population, although the small circuit comprised within the walls renders it necessary, in that case, to suppose that the working classes and artisans occupied the suburbs beyond them, while the 12,000 wealthy burghers which Wisby once boasted dwelt more securely within them in the luxurious or substantial houses of which some remain to this day.

It is hard to believe that in the bad, dangerous, nearly empty harbour of Wisby a fleet of armed merchantmen once anchored, and thence sailed out ; that here, where one remaining church is scarcely a quarter filled for one Sunday service, eighteen churches or more daily opened their doors ; that here, in this silent, rather gloomy little town, not only religious houses, but a guildhall existed, and all the pompous bustle of commerce in the olden time was here combined with that solemn religious display wherein the church and the world harmonised rather more than they do in our commercial days. Wisby was early enrolled among the Hanse towns, and

took a prominent place in their famous league. It had its own marine code, which it is said was as much respected in Northern commerce as that of Pisa was in Southern. It is a singular circumstance, that the first naval chart ever drawn up is believed to have issued from this now disregarded island capital.

The old chronicle of Wallin, in old Swedish printing, I find it difficult to make out, and it is the only chronicle one can get of Gottland: its most interesting records are its ruins. History is the record of war, ambition and crime, and what history remains of this island is occupied chiefly in such matters; showing it to be in strife almost incessantly with foreign or internal foes.

First, the Norwegian Viking, and Saint, King Olaf—from whom I believe our London church St Olave's is named—invaded, ravaged, converted the people, and built here the first Christian church, A.D. 1028. Then, in 1288, a civil war was the cause of providing the town with walls and towers. This was a war between the men of the country and the men of the town, the agriculturists quarrelled with the traders on the ever-

recurring matter of taxes; the burghers levying a toll on country produce entering their town which was deemed exorbitant a fierce war was the result—King Magnus Ladulas of Sweden interfered, and as a punishment caused each district of the island to build a portion of the walls and one tower upon it, as if to protect the town against themselves.

Two disastrous fires next occurred and nearly laid Wisby in ashes; in one of these, A.D. 1314, a number of churches are said to have been destroyed.

Shortly before that time an old Swedish historian relates that “King Birger, living without much consideration in his kingdom, could not prevail on his subjects to pay him taxes; he therefore prepared a fleet and set off to Gothland with a small army, thinking to force the rich Gottlanders out of their abundance to pay him more, but this expedition succeeded so ill that he was defeated and taken prisoner; the Gottlanders soon released him, but refused to pay him more than before.”

A tale similar to that of ancient history is told of Calf-skin House, an old house

yet in existence. King Birger, it is said, modestly requested the burghers of Wisby to give him as much ground within the town as a calf-skin would cover. The humble demand was granted, and the King cutting the skin in strips built upon the ground a goodly house in which he resided whenever he chose to visit Gottland.

In the year 1380, King Albert of Sweden, known commonly as Albert of Mecklenburgh, being at war with the Queen Margaret of Denmark, pawned the Island of Gottland to a German company for the money he wanted; and when he was defeated and taken prisoner by the Danes, his German relations offered Sweden for sale, and a horde of pirates got possession of Gottland. Queen Margaret extirpated these, redeemed the island, and annexed it to the crown of Denmark. Her weak successor, Erik of Pomerania, unable to retain the kingdom of Sweden, settled in Gottland, and maintained himself in a voluptuous and wicked life by piracy; plundering the vessels that passed the Baltic, while his noble and pious wife, Philippa, the daughter of our renowned Henry IV, after fruitless

efforts to reclaim her unworthy husband, and even to save his dominions, which she would have defended herself, quitted for ever a state and a throne so dishonoured, renounced the vanities of the world, and entering the celebrated Wadstena cloister, ended her life there as a nun.

After all these minor mishaps, the great blow to Wisby's prosperity was given by the famous Waldemar of Denmark. The name of Waldemar is even still used by the children of Gottland as a bugbear in their plays. In the year 1361, he defeated the citizens of Wisby, destroyed its walls, and rifled its treasures. A pleasant grassy spot without the old walls of Wisby was the actual scene of a sanguinary battle. When we visited it, it all was peace and calmness, and we trod lightly over little hillocks wherein doubtless many had been heaped together, whose bones the veneration that still exists for the memory of that time forbids to be upturned. The burghers gave Waldemar battle without the walls, and the spot where thirteen hundred of these great merchants of old are said

to be buried is distinguished by a very beautiful and tall stone cross.

So terrible was the fight that a stream of human blood is said to have flowed up to the very walls, where reaching a holy cross inserted in the wall it was stopped in its progress.

King Waldemar, fearing treachery, refused to enter by the gates of the town when its keys were delivered ; he made a breach in the walls so that thirteen of his men could enter abreast ; and on the battered-down wall thirteen pillars still appear, to tell where King Waldemar entered. Having despoiled the town, and even robbed the churches, he compelled the wealthy inhabitants to fill three large brewing vats with gold, which he embarked in a ship and sent off to Denmark. But the tempter led King Waldemar a step too far ; for he dared to take the sacred carbuncles from the wall of the church of St Nicholas, and embarked them with the gold, and the ship sunk to the bottom before it passed the little isle called Carlsö, and there the glittering light from the depth of the sea used (if it does

not to-day) to illumine the watery way of the devout sailor who passed the shores of Gottland.

There is a story, or legend, of Waldemar and his war with Wisby, which, although not much given to story-telling, I must relate, and the more willingly because I do not know that any traveller has yet related any legends of the Island of Gottland.

THE STORY OF UNGHAUS'S DAUGHTER.

The talented, proud, and haughty Ulrica was the only child of a wealthy burgher of Wisby. She was of German parentage, and boasted also a line of descent quite unknown to her matter-of-fact townspeople, who occupied themselves more in the present than in the past. Her father, being a widower, had sent her over sea to a relation, in her sixteenth year, and she returned in her womanhood, having her head filled with many new notions quite above those of her neighbours.

This might have passed off well enough if she had kept her new notions always where they were; but Ulrica liked to show her

superiority as well as to feel herself superior, and thus she soon shared the fate of those who do so. Her talents were by no means appreciated; she was disliked much more than admired, and, what was more galling to her, she was ridiculed instead of being feared.

The worst of it was, that a simple girl who possessed no arts nor accomplishments, who had never travelled, who was not even the only child of a wealthy burgher dwelling within the walls of the town, but the daughter of an artisan living in the suburbs outside them, attracted more regard than did the brilliant Ulrica.

This girl was merely known as Unghaus's daughter, except when some few would speak of her as "the beauty of Gottland," "the flower of the isle," or some such pet terms as they would not venture to apply to the rich and haughty lady of Wisby, whose dress was so amazingly costly, and whose pretensions were so high.

Ulrica's father died, and left her his wealth. Her suitors of course were many, but they were just those whose suit was valueless in her eyes. Even her love itself must be coupled

with her ruling passion—love of power. She could have no power over those who sued her for her gold and cared not for her heart. It so chanced, moreover, that among all the men of Wisby, only one had taken her fancy, or seemed worthy of her acceptance, and he offered his hand and heart to the artisan's child—to that simple girl they called Unghaus's daughter.

It is true that the modest little flower of the isle declined them both. She thought, and said, that it was not likely she ever should accept such offered gifts from any one. She never had loved, and believed she never should love any one as a wife must do. Perhaps she hesitated when she said this, and perhaps some dim vision rose up from the hidden depths of her maiden heart prefiguring vaguely some yet unseen object of that love which had ever been as a quiet undisturbing tenant of her young imagination, over whose magic glass it glided then, showing her for a moment what yet might be.

But the wrath of Ulrica was raised to the utmost, and the contempt of all the rich burghers' wives and daughters of Wisby was

far more endurable to her than the gentle sweetness of Unghaus's daughter.

Wealth was hers, but she cared not for wealth except as it gave her power,—power even over one heart, over one mind; for this alone she wanted to be loved; but she could not love, and love itself is power. She resolved to leave Wisby, and she resolved that her townspeople should one day feel the power they refused to grant her.

The proud and disappointed Ulrica went to Denmark; her wealth and talent soon obtained her distinction; she was brought to the Court of King Waldemar, and she saw the path of power and of vengeance opening to her; she determined to make that warrior Prince her instrument of both.

She told him tales of the opulence and treasures of her paternal home; of the gold and precious stones that were hoarded up in the ware-rooms of Wisby; of the treasures of its five-and-twenty churches—above all, of the inestimable value and mysterious properties of the two great carbuncles which burned in glowing lustre on the western wall of St Nicholas;—stones which twice twelve men

guarded by day and by night lest any mischance should befall them, for their light was the beam of safety to the richly-laden vessels that came to or sailed from the harbour of Wisby.

Now when King Waldemar heard all these things, the spirit of adventure being strong within him, he made up his mind to set out forthwith and see for himself if all were as was told to him. So he took the disguise of a travelling merchant, and privately leaving his Court, having Ulrica alone in his confidence, he embarked by himself in a trading sloop, and landed at the Port of Wisby.

It was night, the gates of the town were carefully shut; so the stranger by accident demanded and obtained hospitality at the modest house of an artisan beyond the walls.

When he knocked at the door, a maiden carrying a lamp came to open it. She held it high, and its light fell over a fair and gentle face.

The maid was Unghaus's daughter. The stranger was admitted, and for many days he was located there. He liked to remain; they did not wish him to go. Now there follows an

old tale, yet one that is ever made new again. The maiden gradually saw the indistinct vision of what had been afar off coming nearer and nearer, plainer and plainer to her actual sight—gradually, gradually saw the dim, spirit-like form that had haunted her maiden mind assuming the form, the face, the looks, the speech of the disguised King Waldemar—of the wandering merchant.

And in other ways King Waldemar used his time well, and saw and heard all that he wanted. And then he left Wisby and returned to his Court in Denmark, and told Ulrica that her report of her native place was not more than the truth: and he related to her his adventures, and filled her with unnatural joy, until he spoke these words:—"Much have I seen," said he, "to wonder at and to admire, but nothing that I ever saw is more admirable than Unghaus's daughter."

Then did Ulrica's pitying Angel whisper to her the prayer of the Litany; but Ulrica would not pray it, and her evil Angel stepped between, and then Envy, Hatred, and Malice entered her heart, and lodged there. So she inspired the king with the desire of conquering

Wisby and carrying away its treasures, constantly tantalizing him with assertions of the impossibility of the exploit, until at length he said to her, "All that thou shalt see that I can do, but Unghaus's daughter shall come to no harm though all Wisby should perish."

Then Ulrica secretly set fast her teeth in inward rage, and said within herself—

"Yet thou shalt destroy her, for it is Ulrica's will!"

So King Waldemar made ready his army and set forth, and soon came tidings to Wisby that the foe was at hand, and lo! the vessels of the Danes were already riding in the bay.

Then the gates of the town were shut, and the men-at-arms hastened to the walls, and great was the bustle of preparation; for Wisby had stood many an assault ere now, and even her portly and luxurious burghers were ready to meet such again. And now to do battle with the Danes did the stout citizens take arms and joined the ranks of the soldiers. Some there were who thought themselves better off within the walls, but the greater part were eager to march out and give the invader battle without them. Fourteen thousand burghers Wisby is

said to have then contained, whose ships were known on the seas; of these many went out with the army of Wisby, and among them was the lover of Unghaus's daughter, the man proud Ulrica loved. Sore went the fight that day before the walls of Wisby; children, and children's children, have talked of it from the year of grace 1361 to the present time of 1855. Bloody set the sun that had looked upon it, and saw thirteen hundred rich and valorous burghers lie dead on the field. But the battle was over all too soon; the Danes were victorious; the ground was wet with the blood of the men of Wisby. A dark current flowed downward to where the wall skirted the beach, it was a stream of human blood—the blood of the invader and the invaded, the blood of foes commingled in one stream. It flowed on near to the wall of Wisby, until it reached a spot whereon the holy cross confronted it—the sign of the Prince of Peace. There, saith the legend, the stream of blood stood still. A little cross, inserted in the old wall, still marks out the spot.

The ground was strewn with the dead and dying; the departed sun left the fatal field in

gloom. The victor and the vanquished had left it also—only two figures were there who were not among the wounded or the dead—they were those of a monk and a young girl. The priest was busy with the departing; the girl bore upon her knees the head of one who seemed wounded to death—she was trying to staunch his wounds. The girl was Unghaus's daughter; the wounded man had loved her, and she had not loved him, though Ulrica had. Ulrica had brought him to death, and Unghaus's daughter would fain restore him to life.

The Danes were victorious; thirteen men abreast entered at "Waldemar's breach," and the town of Wisby was taken.

At night, when a light faintly burned in the chamber of the wounded man, where Unghaus's daughter tended him, in her father's house, a knock came to the door;—she feared to open it—but, in answer to her tremulous summons, a voice she knew was heard, a voice that brought joy and hope to her sinking heart. The door flew open, and Unghaus's daughter, spent with fear and fatigue, had well nigh sunk with emotion into the arms of the travelling merchant.

“Thou art returned!—thou art returned!”
—was all the voice of her heart’s deep glad-
ness; and danger, fear, sorrow, all—even
almost to her care of the wounded—were
forgotten in that joy.

* * * *

Ere the next sun had set there was great consternation in Wisby. The gold and silver, the treasures of its wealthy merchants, were all taken; but this was as nothing;—the sacred carbuncles, whose resplendent lustre, on the wall of St Nicholas, lighted the mariners on the deep—the carbuncles, that twenty-four men constantly guarded—they, too, were sacrilegiously taken—packed up, like common things, with the three great brewing vats of gold, and now to be shipped off to the kingdom of Denmark.

“Woe! woe! woe! to the robber!” said Unghaus’s daughter, as, with pale face and clasped hands, she stood on the cliff and saw the laden vessel about to sail.

King Waldemar, clothed in glittering armour, and full of the pride of conquest, stood just before her. She saw not his face, but he waved his hand to the favouring breeze that

filled the sails of his preciously laden ship, and said, as in sport,

“Bear these spoils of her good townfolk, with my greetings, to Ulrica.”

At the sound of that voice there was a great and bitter cry behind him. The King turned, and Unghaus's daughter fell lifeless where she had stood.

It was the travelling merchant's voice she had heard; and she saw his face—and it was that of the Danish King.

They lifted her up and carried her home; but when there she spoke strange words of King Waldemar, and of her knowledge of him, whereat the men of Wisby marvelled.

The ship sailed away with a soft and favouring breeze; but it went not far. At Carlsö, that little rocky islet off the coast of Gottland, the sailors saw its sails hang down; they felt its motion cease; they saw it quietly settling down in the waters; slowly and calmly it sunk: so calmly that their hearts grew still—no sound of affright came from their lips. Slowly it sank, until at once its planks burst loose; without noise or sound they parted, and the treasure they had held went down in the deep,

deep sea, and shone there for ages and ages, and may shine there still ; for the niches which the carbuncles had filled in the church the seafaring men had built remain empty to this day.

And King Waldemar could no more see Unghaus's daughter, nor hear tidings of her ; for the maiden had left her father's house, and much did they wonder that the King should inquire after her. So he made sail, and went back to Denmark, not knowing that he passed over the treasure he had taken as it lay in the depths of the Baltic sea.

Unghaus's daughter stood at the gate of Isberga convent, and prayed for admittance there. But she was refused, for they said—

“Thou hast been in league with the sacrilegious robber of churches ; thou can'st have no shelter with us.”

Sorely surprised was Unghaus's daughter at this, and tearfully she answered and said—

“I do but seek shelter from the false vanities of life, and from the plague of my own heart. I have wandered like a lost sheep, I would hencefore stay within the fold ; I have lived and suffered.”

But they said,—“Thou can'st not enter here, for thy crime is great; thou hast played false with the enemy of thy land.”

Then Unghaus's daughter hung her head, and went away, saying,—“Yes, my crime is great. I loved in ignorance, and I was deceived.”

But to her father's house soldiers had already come, demanding her appearance before the Judges of the town. Undismayed was Unghaus's daughter at this, for though her maiden modesty was great, her innocence was strong; and as yet she knew not that Ulrica had already caused it to be reported that she had been in traitorous correspondence with King Waldemar, harbouring him secretly in her father's house, under the disguise of a travelling merchant, while he was forming his plans for the capture of Wisby.

When this charge was publicly brought against her, the maiden was condemned in outward aspect, for her heart died within her, and her countenance fell.

Yes, she had entertained the enemy of her country in disguise, but she had loved him too; and in answer to the question

whether she was guilty or no, Unghaus's daughter hung down her face, and her heart answered to herself—"Guilty, for I love King Waldemar of Denmark."

And so the Judges of Wisby, ruling still in their own place, for Wisby though robbed and ruined was left free, decreed the maiden a traitor to her land; and Unghaus's daughter was condemned to be immured alive in one of the stone turrets of the town walls.

That tower still stands, and it is called Jungfru torn, or the maiden's tower, to this day.

Unghaus's daughter was enclosed in the stone tower, and King Waldemar sailed away to his Court in Denmark, and told his triumphs to Ulrica. But whether he ever heard the fate they both had brought on Unghaus's daughter, history has not said.

CHAPTER XI.

WHENEVER I had spoken of visiting Gottland, while at Stockholm, I was told I must not go there till Pingst. Now Pingst dag means in English, Ascension day; and I at first supposed, when told the ruined churches should be visited on that day, that some religious ceremonies were then celebrated in this Holy Ground. On further enquiry I learned that the reason was that then all would be green; and that an excursion steamer would take pleasure parties to Gottland on that day at half-price.

The Swedes are excessively fond of holidays, by whatever name they are called, except it

be the name of a Saint; *that* they would esteem a part of the "old time" which vanished away with the new era of Gustaf Vasa. Pingst dag was translated to me, by an English-speaking Swede, as "the day of the heavenly journey;" but the manner in which it was to be commemorated did not quite coincide with an English notion of Ascension day. I had, therefore, gone to Gottland without waiting for the excursion steamer, and I had seen the green things wave around the ruined walls of the churches, without the additional pleasure of seeing a crowd of wild, somewhat brain-struck students, singing, shouting, smoking, and getting up a "procession" around them also.

The churches of Wisby—that is to say the ten ruined churches, for there is only one church in use—have been, I suppose, often examined and technically described by artists and ecclesiologists: I have enjoyed meditation among them.

On Whit-Sunday I entered the grass-covered nave of the best kept and altogether, I think, the most beautiful of these churches. The ivy, trained as an exotic in Sweden, here

grows not quite in the extravagant manner it does in England, but in light graceful tendrils, mingling with the branches of the wild rose, that nods its pink blossoms in gay fragility over the massive and broken walls, peeping in through the elegant stone windows, and casting a flickering shade on the greensward that now covers the floor on which knelt the worshippers of former years—a comment on the words “Man is crushed before the moth.”

Pleasant, yet very painful it was to sit there in deep stillness, after having left the existing church of Wisby, where boxed up in pews, the height and rigid appropriation of which must delight a truly protestant spirit, but which, their owners having the keys, were one-half empty as well as locked,—pleasant it was to come in here, and read our own Litany and the collect for the day just in the spot where perhaps they may have been read centuries ago. Pleasanter to me was this than the droning psalm-singing of the half-asleep congregation, who sitting down Presbyterian fashion in their deep pews, give one the notion of persons singing in sleep; and in this psalm-

singing the chief part of the Swedish service consists. The psalm-book—being not the psalms of David, but of Wallin, and other poets of Sweden—has taken the place both of prayer-book and bible. The latter is not used in the church at all, except in the epistle and gospel, and when travellers in the North tell of persons to be seen going to church with their bibles in their hands they should substitute for the word the name of that book which does duty in Sweden both for it and a prayer-book. The “psalm-bok” has a sort of magical influence for which I can only account by the fact that it is the composition of Swedes, and what Swedes have made Swedes will like.

This psalm-singing, with the sermon, constitute the favorite part of the service: the altar service comprises all the prayers, and I observe the congregations collect much more rapidly when that is over. For this altar service the priests are arrayed quite as gorgeously as those of the church of Rome; but no one is ever seen to kneel; indeed, one might fancy there was national antipathy to that posture, for persons have told me that even

in their private prayers they stand; and of course where there is no kneeling there can be no real aspect of devotion, nor is it possible for a stranger and foreigner to take any spiritual part in a service in which there seems to be no common address to the Father of all. When one enters a church filled with kneeling worshippers, although not a word is intelligibly heard, one can kneel too and pray, but it is quite another thing to get into one where people sit with a book on their knees droning out words the music to which may be very good, but the twang of the many voices by which it is uttered indescribably wearisome.

The Reformation bears the blame of spoiling many churches, but here in Gottland one feels a degree of anger against this spoliation which I fear is unchristian or unprotestant-like. The church of St Maria, built by the Lubeckers, or Lubeck merchants of Wisby, A.D. 1190, provokes one to this; although, as a little guide-book of the place says, "At the foot of the altar rests God's Lamb with the book and seven symbols, placed there in 1830, instead of a grand theatre decoration

which then was taken away;" but the cold whitewashed walls, and the evidence of the "love of man," in the poor epitaphs fastened all around the choir, setting forth the style, titles and virtues of the human dust that lies beneath, appear unworthy the dignity of a house dedicated to the worship of God; while the latter, by their vain pomposity, may increase the sense of surprise and repulsion with which, outside those walls, we mount a great flight of steps, composed of old tombstones, bearing the names and the curious runic-like symbols of the men of old who were laid in that churchyard. These stones meet no respect; but those that are set up in the church walls are highly esteemed. Indeed, the whole aspect of that old burying-ground is a painful sight.

The view from this grave-stone staircase is very fine and pleasing. The "green," of which I had heard so often, is here seen to advantage, for Gottland, after Sweden, appears a little garden when seen in the beginning of June, or even the end of May.

The church of St Catharina was attached to a Franciscan convent. It is the most elegant here. Some gentleman of Wisby took

pity on its desecrated state, and by his care it is, I believe, preserved in its present neat and pleasing aspect, the nave being covered with well-kept grass, while the graceful foliage of ruin-loving things is allowed to climb over its roofless walls and round its beautiful lancet windows at graceful liberty. •

While ruminating where its altar stood, I was startled by a loud voice. I looked up; a man stood on the wall calling to his fellows; another voice answered, and another called; and there was shouting, and running, and laughing, and hiding and seeking. It was a tourist party; a whiff of cigars came down to me; they were Swedes, but here among the ruins they were very like English.

Many persons give the preference to St Nicholas over St Catharine's church; one who judges simply by the effect mentally produced will prefer the latter. St Nicholas was built by the "seafaring men of Wisby" in its olden time. Ah! when shall we hear of the sailors of England building a church to Him who holdeth the winds in the hollow of his hand!

The extraordinary irregularity of its composition makes my eyes ache; no two windows

harmonize in size, form, or position ; one might almost fancy that each founder placed his own part of the building where and how he liked. The wonder of this fine church was its memorable and mysterious carbuncles. On the walls outside, facing seaward, are two round niches formed in rosettes, now empty, and the use of which no one can otherwise account for than as tradition has ever done. In these two rosettes of stone, says tradition, there were set two carbuncles of such wondrous value, that twice twelve men watched them by day, and no one could approach them with safety to life during the night. In the dark they shone as a beacon light for seamen on the deep, for this was the seaman's church. Whence these carbuncles came, or why they permitted King Waldemar to take them away, tradition does not say ; but, as has been before stated, tradition does relate that they still shine down below the waters, to aid the imperilled mariner who thinks of St Nicholas's church.

But if St Catharine's is the most elegant, and St Nicholas's, from the carbuncle legend, the most interesting of the ruined churches of Wisby, decidedly that named Helig-Ands, or

the Holy Spirit, is the most curious. It puzzles the antiquarians of Wisby almost as much as the ancient round towers do those of Ireland.

The curiosity of this most picturesque ruin is that there are two distinct storeys, the upper one having in the centre a large octagon-shaped opening, faced round with cut stone resembling the water-basin of a garden; the roof over this is supported by four round pillars, while that beneath has eight-sided pillars. From this opening the altar and its ceremonies could have been seen and the prayers heard. One of the round pillars bears at its base the impression of feet marked into the stone, as by persons frequently or long standing there. I placed myself on the spot, with the pillar at my back and my feet resting in the indentation left on the stone, and there I fancied to myself some offender standing thus in at least partial excommunication.

The general opinion I have heard as to the use of this second or over-storey is, that the church was attached to a religious order of nuns, who were occupied in the hospital adjoining it, and that they might have used this

upper portion of the building, from whence they could join in the services without being seen, while the convalescents of the hospital or the public generally were admitted to the lower part. If this were the case, there must, I should think, have been some grating or other defence over that open space, from whence a false step or slight overbalance must precipitate one on the heads of the worshippers below.

At each side of the altar are two cells, one over the other. In 1509 the Lübeckers, having assailed Wisby, are supposed to have caused the destruction of Helig-And's Kyrkan when they burned the town; but whether it were destroyed then, or in 1610, when the hospital it was attached to was laid in ashes, is not exactly known. A new hospital has replaced the old one, but not a new church: and one of those cells, already mentioned, I saw converted into a hideous dead-house, having a skull and cross-bones—a Death's head—that revolting means of emblematising what in Scripture is called falling on sleep—represented on the door within which are placed the hapless creatures who die in the hospital, while brief preparations are making for their inter-

ment. The cell is dark and drear. Were the church itself made the waiting-room of the dead a more beautiful one could not be.

The view from the summit of the ruined wall shows the town of ruins, with its walls and towers, to advantage. The Russians, too, had a church here; and indeed the great number of churches must partly be accounted for on the supposition that in the commercial times of Wisby rich merchants built their own when they settled there. "At St Hans Church," says a little guide-book, "was first preached Luther's doctrine, under strong opposition from Bishop Brask, who drove away the Lutheran priests; but King Gustaf soon got them back again."

A celebrated convent, called Solberga, was also here, but the ruins, as well as those of many churches, chapels, and religious houses, have disappeared.

Now the ivy creeps and the wild rose waves, and all around the apple and elder-blossoms bloom; and when nature springs into fresh life one feels still more the desolation of the great and beautiful works which men made and consecrated to God.

I do not wish to imagine what my fate might be were I obliged to live in Wisby, and often see, from the limestone cliffs at the back of the town, the whole of the church ruins, bathed in the glory of the gorgeous sunsets I have already seen here.

Our kind, though new acquaintances, do not leave me much time for such speculations. What with coffee-drinking visits, supper and dinner eatings, pleasure parties and drives to places of note, I have no leisure for ruminating, or indulging perhaps dangerous reflections, upon past and present things.

That commerce or trade should have flitted from this little island capital is less surprising than that they should have settled here; but, somehow, the aspect of those once beautiful churches falls on the heart like a knock from retreating faith, and leads one to wonder why Wisby has had so many a dark page in its history. During the war between Albert of Mecklenberg, King of Sweden, and the famous Margaret of Denmark, the former pawned the Isle of Gottland to supply his necessities. A band of rovers and pirates took possession of it, and infested the Baltic, until the Semiramis

of the North, having conquered her opponent, extirpated the pirates ; but some years later her miserable adopted successor, Eric of Pomerania, unable to remain in Sweden, settled in Wisby, establishing himself there as a Sea-king, or, in other words, a roving plunderer. Piracy and smuggling were common here, the latter indulged in I know not to how late a period.

One of our evening drives, after a coffee-drinking at the Governor's house, took us to a very remarkable place, which might make a scene for a romance. How the gentleman who once lived in that house had employed himself, it is not necessary to say, but so curious and wild a collection of sea relics I believe has seldom been seen. One would think it must have required hundreds of shipwrecked vessels to furnish them. A confused notion of a wild grim scene, that might be the haunt of some sea-robber, who was proof against all fear of ghosts, is all I retain of it ; but, leaving the door, we stepped on a large flat stone, and I started when one of the party said,

“There lie his three daughters.”

They were actually buried there, close to the

step of his door, where his foot must daily tread over them.

Returning from that place I saw a singular sight; the brilliant sun was going down over the sea, and all the ruined town of Wisby was at once flooded and veiled in a golden glory. People had told me it was compared to Troy, to Jerusalem, and to Rome. I had not seen either Troy or Jerusalem, but I smiled at the comparison to Rome. Yet now—shall I say it?—seen thus, with what was mean or poor concealed, and its great old ruins glowing in light, I was reminded of my first view of the Eternal City, and of the disappointment I felt when the postilion, flourishing his whip, shouted out “Roma!”

CHAPTER XII.

THE old English saying, when something desirable is not to be had, that it cannot be got for love or money, is out of use in England, where, above most other lands, what cannot be got for money is not likely to be got at all; but in Gottland, or the Good Land—not the land of the Goths—the case is reversed—not much can be got for money, but a good deal for love, *i. e.*, kindness, hospitality, or the habit of assisting strangers. I had experienced this in the way of eatables, but I never thought of testing it in the way of procuring the loan of a carriage to travel through the island. I wished to do so, but no such thing as a

travelling conveyance was to be got for money—that I was told, and then assured that, though I could not hire, I could readily borrow one.

It sometimes happens that where the phrenological organ of benevolence is well developed on a head, that of acquisitiveness is quite as much so; the consequence is that, the action of one organ being balanced by the other, kindness will show itself in any way that will not entail the necessity of giving, because acquisitiveness will retain when benevolence would help. Thus persons on whose heads the two organs are equally developed will be ever ready to employ themselves in acts of kindness; they will listen, sympathise, patronise, petition, collect, beg, borrow for a friend in need; they will give time, trouble, do anything but part with what belongs to themselves. I have often thought that such a phrenological organisation must be common to Swedish heads, for the facility with which they will propose that a friend should do for one what it is not convenient they should do for you themselves, is often startling to our less easy notions. Thus, when I mentioned

to a gentleman here my wish to have a travelling carriage, he assured me that such a thing was not to be had for money.

“Then I could not see Gottland as I intended.”

“Ja! that I might certainly do. Any one would lend a carriage.”

“Impossible! I could not think of asking such a thing.”

“Ja! that he would do with hearty pleasure.”

And so he asked, and got what he asked for too.

Then there was another obstacle to my travelling in Gottland. Another gentleman assured me an English Fruntimmer could not stop at the post-houses in the country. I fancied I could brave all their misery. The answer was—“Nay! nay! that was impossible;” and when a Swede says that, you feel that word *impossible* at least implies an impassable mountain in the way.

“Then I could not, after all, travel in Gottland?”

“Ja! that I could do very well, since any

one would give me addresses to priests and respectable persons, who would be only too happy to have the honour of giving me hospitality.

“Could he do so?”

“Ja—” lengthened into “Ja—a—a,” that he could not just do himself, but he would ask his friend.

Just then who should appear but our steam-boat acquaintance, the Royal Secretary, and he told us he was going to the north of the island to visit some friends, and was in want of a conveyance. I suspect another friend had been as kind to him, and suggested that he might very well have the third seat in the high phaeton that had been lent to us. However that was the arrangement that was speedily made; and as Kongligen Secretarien wished to proceed direct to his friends, I resolved to dispense with the proposed addresses, and trust to whatever chance might give us.

Our departure for the country was fixed for the next afternoon. The Royal Secretary urgently recommended that it should not be later than two o'clock, as he would then easily

reach the prestgård, or priest's-house, where, without any introduction but our verbal one, we could reckon on a reception for the night.

We wished it to be one hour later, in order to dine before setting out, but as he was urgent we yielded, saying we should be ready.

“At two,” said Kongligen Secretarien, emphatically, “the horses shall be at the door.”

“We shall not keep them waiting, we shall be at it also.”

So, as two o'clock came, we descended the long flight of stone steps from our apartments, and stationed ourselves at the door: punctuality is a failing that has often cost me the loss of time and patience. There we waited for two whole hours; unwilling to re-ascend the toilsome stairs while each moment believing that our promise of being ready would be claimed; so we sat down on them, and tried to be patient. At four came the roll of a carriage over the horrible pavement and silent streets of Wisby, and then we beheld our phaeton, and Kongligen Secretarien throwing from it the end of a cigar; for that he

was not to smoke while in the carriage with us had been a necessary stipulation. We had forgotten that two hours count by Swedish calculation as two minutes by English. When something was said as to the cause of delay, an earlier arrival appeared not to have been thought of; there was dinner and its needful subsequent—the cigar, and that was a necessity—ack! the sainted wife—

To spare the widower's remembrances, we told the postilion to drive on as fast as possible. Either the great wild-looking countryman who acted in that capacity, or the little wild-looking horses he drove, understood the order too literally, for before the poor Skjits could get himself rightly poised on his seat, which was simply the apron of the phaeton, they darted off at a pace that soon increased to a full gallop; and finally, breaking from the insecurely held rein, they dashed madly away, their unwinkered eyes glancing from side to side as they bounded along. The attempt to hold the reins was soon useless, for the poor postilion, not having got his feet on the rail that was to support them, began to slide down from the sloping

seat on the apron, and soon only his head was visible to us as he dragged along, screaming "Hjelp mig! hjelp mig!" while we could neither help him nor ourselves, though I too took up the cry, and called to the Royal Secretary, "Help him, help him." He, good man, was so pale, that, if it were not profane, one might hazard a suspicion that he actually feared an abrupt reunion with the sainted wife. I never could learn how to drive, but I caught the loosened reins and pulled one so much more decidedly than the other, that one of the wild steeds obeyed the tug and plunged right off the road, dragging the other and the carriage with it far into an open field, where it leaped into a mass of large excavated stones, and stuck us all fast; the horses, providentially for the poor driver's sake, being unable even to kick in such a position.

I was amazed to see two men with their hands in their pockets gazing on us; and gaze they did till our unfortunate Skjits speedily let himself complete the little downward descent, and emerging from beneath the carriage, got hold of the creatures' heads.

This I had called to the lookers on to do, but in my fright I spoke English.

We soon had a specimen of the post-houses of Gottland, of which in general may be said, that nothing much worse, more dirty or disagreeable, can be seen in any land. The same system of posting prevails here as in Sweden; that is to say, it is a sort of land-tax, by which farmers are obliged to supply horses at the fixed rate of from sixpence to ninepence per horse for each Swedish mile, which is nearly seven English miles. The post-stations are not always inns, but in all cases a room for travellers must be kept, where you can wait, or, *if* you can—sleep.

Just where these post-stations were most repulsive, it happened to us that there was close by some neat, pretty, “well-to-do” dwelling, where our visit was received as an especial courtesy and kindness, it never seeming to enter the heads of its nice agreeable inhabitants that we had come there to oblige ourselves, and not them; even when a perhaps undue sincerity has led me to say this, the question has been politely settled in the contrary way.

At Slite we stopped for the night at the house of a newly-married couple, whose happiness drew heavy sighs from beneath the worsted-worked tobacco pouch of our bereaved companion.

As a harbour, Slite was likely to be raised to some pre-eminence in Gottland, in consequence of having been spoken of in our Parliament as a desirable one for the British fleet, if made a free port.

The Gottlanders say that if the English fleet had their harbour, England would soon have their island; and some of them add that the island would not be the worse for that, but those who do so are few, for the people like to go on as they suppose their fathers did, and wish to keep British agriculturists and encroachers of all sorts at a distance.

This mention of Slite, however, brought it into more notice in Sweden, and the fleet has since anchored here frequently; its young chief, Prince Oscar, having been received by the whole island on this spot upon his first visit. Formerly this harbour was more esteemed, since two fortresses, one of which, built by Queen Christina, still remains, guarded its entrance.

There is a rivalry between Slite and Forusund, the north harbour, which contends with it the claim of being the most advantageous for the principal port of Gottland. That a new one is required instead of the bad and dangerous one of the little fallen capital is clear.

The English traveller whose book is best known and most disliked in Sweden—Laing, whose calm, deliberate statements to the prejudice of their country are read and felt, while the complaints of fly-away and ill-informed travellers are passed over—Laing remarks that Gottland, from its geographical position, is a padlock on the Gulfs of Finland and Bothnia, which, in the hands of an effective power, could lock up the Russian navy as in a pond, and secure the free navigation of the Baltic.*

Small and insignificant as this island now is, its position gives it, especially in a time of war, some of the importance it once possessed.

Gottland, which we wrongfully call and spell Gothland, is poetically called the eye of the Baltic. The Swedish words do not look or

* These words were written just as the war with Russia was coming on. Now, while this note is writing, the Russian navy seems to lock up itself.

sound poetic to a foreigner, but the natives think them so—Östersjöns ögon. It is not quite eighty miles long, and in its greatest extent rather more than thirty broad. In most respects it is unlike Sweden, and its inhabitants always call Sweden “the Continent,” and speak of Swedes as a separate people. Its geological formation is quite different. “The Continent,” or Sweden, is a mass of granite; Gottland is limestone, chalk, and sandstone; but lime meets you everywhere: you might fancy the whole island must soon be dug up to make it; lime-kilns are ever at work; at every port vessels are lading with lime; half the labourers appear to be whitewashed. Until now I never understood why it was that Swedes and Gottlanders too were so fond of whitewash in their churches; it must be from considering it a duty to employ home produce, for whitewash seems to be indissolubly connected with pure faith. This became to me a matter of irritation; for here, whatever other points of interest a traveller may miss, there is ever and anon rising before him the most surprising, most interesting—alas! the most pathetic—

memorials of a past age, in the rather startling appearance of an ancient and strikingly picturesque church, of which there are no less than a hundred still existing within the limits of this poor little isle. To judge by its religious memorials of the past, Gottland should have been indeed the island of saints.

But in all of these fine old churches there is now—whitewash.

Next to lime the chief export is, I believe, wood for sleepers; and it is curious to hear our railway word used in an untranslated form by the people here; for my part, when I heard them talk of “sleepers,” I thought in vain of what that term might signify in Swedish, until a good-humoured man said to me, “Ja; det är Ingelsk.” The fir of Gottland, of which there are numerous forests, as in Sweden, is harder than either the Russian or Swedish timber, and consequently most adapted for the sleepers of railways.

There is little, if any beauty to be seen, a degree of prettiness being generally the highest epithet that can be applied to the scenery. The coast is low and the interior level, not rising more than a hundred and eighty feet

above the sea. An old chronicler of Gottland, Bishop Wallin, records many incidents to prove the not unlikely supposition that Gottland originally consisted of several islets, like those of the Skäregårds seen on the Baltic coasts. It does indeed afford evidence itself of the retirement or absorption of water that once intersected land. The boggy lands, or swamps, called in Swedish Myrs, a word pronounced nearly the same as our word Moors, appear to be the ground left by the retirement of that water, and it is these myrs which were held out to British agriculturists as a profitable field for speculation ; but a Scotchman, who went to inspect them, returned saying he would rather drain a bog at home than in Gottland. Bishop Wallin, who wrote more than a hundred years ago, relates a story of an anchor having been found under the stump of a tree here, so that it must have been buried there before the tree grew ; and tells how a Dutch skipper actually sailed his ship into a forest, alleging afterwards that he had followed the chart which plainly marked out the course he took. The chart was discovered to be a very old one, correct at the

time it was made, when the sea would have flowed over the spot whereon trees grew when the Dutchman, it seems, cast anchor in the forest.

But that such physical transformations and changes should be matter of tradition or guesswork only is not surprising, when, of the once interesting history of this singularly renowned little isle, only scanty and incidental fragments are gained from the histories of nations who made it their prey. And this loss is the more provoking, since it is from the past, and not from the present, that Gottland possesses interest.

The Swedes who come here say that Gottland is fifty years behind Sweden in the way of progress, and as the English who go to Sweden say that country is more than a hundred years behind England, the distance between us and the Gottlanders must be considerable.

“All Gottland is a ruin,” said the young lady to me, and I felt it impossible to say no. But there is too generally a kind of contentedness with its ruin, a quiet, easy manner of living amongst it, which it

might be as well to get over. The country is believed to possess many advantages over Sweden. The climate is much milder, snow is comparatively nothing here to what it is there: productions which nature denies to that iron soil and rigid clime, might flourish here, and many of them naturally do so. Ivy, which in Swedish houses is an exotic, gracefully trained in geranium pots, twines over the ruined churches of Wisby. Mulberries, which will not grow there, here produce quantities of fruit which are made into an excellent and favourite preserve; even vines grow in the open air, as well as the walnut tree and the myrtle, none of which could bear the long ice-bound winter of Sweden. Yet it is only of late that the hop has begun to be cultivated in Gottland, under the direction of a company of Germans. They have also introduced the culture of the silk-worm, but it can hardly be supposed that this will prove of any great utility.

The want of capital must of course be felt in an impoverished land, but the want of energy is a more serious drawback. In the few cases where energy and perseverance

have been employed, good fortune has been the result.

Notwithstanding that there are many lakes, the greatest hindrance to agriculture in Gottland is the deficiency of water. The absence of rivers is most remarkable, no tumbling brooks or purling streams enliven the aspect of the country ways; and as to a broad and flowing river, there is no such thing in the island; the sight of a pool is refreshing. In addition to this there is a great scarcity of rain. The length of time which we were without rain in Gottland, with the exception of a few light showers in the month of June, was extraordinary. The rain clouds drift over this small island, which lies here in the midst of the open Baltic, surrounded with water, yet panting for that refreshment. The nature of its soil prevents exhalation, and even dew is unfelt.

This general want of water in rivers, brooks, streams or fountains, together with the level uniformity of the whole surface of the island, scarcely broken by an undulation, and the slovenly aspect of the fields, whose bare defences of loose stones, or, as is common

in Sweden also, of rugged palissades of stick, remind one of parts of Ireland, but are quite unlike the green hedgerows of England—combine in depriving the interior of Gottland of much appearance of beauty or interest.

At Bro, where was a station, I was again struck by the sight of a beautiful old church; leaving my companions at the post-house, I hastened on, and walking through a large yard, knocked at the door of a house adjoining this church, and requested the key.

The maid servant invited me to walk in, and though I would fain have refused on the plea of haste, I felt obliged by her polite manner to comply.

I entered a large salong, or eating-room, where a nice, plainly dressed woman soon came to me. I requested the key of the church door, which she said she would have the pleasure of showing me, speaking of the honour I did her in coming to see her, and regretting that her husband was not at home to share in it. On hearing which I rose up from my chair and, making the best curtsy I could make, said that I had then

the honour of seeing Prestinnan, or the Priestess—or the Priest's wife—as one may prefer to translate the title. And she rose up and curtsied and said, yes; and when I again asked for the key of the church door she said coffee would soon be ready. But, as I wanted the key of the church door more than the coffee, she agreed to come and show me the church first and give me the coffee afterwards.

And never was Priestess more proud of a church than she was; and, indeed—white-wash and pews and other horrible etceteras put out of the way—justly might she be so, for the church of Bro, like other churches of Gottland, is a beautiful thing—if it had been let alone.

Bro is a sort of Cathedral Church, for Gottland is now an independent Bishopric; and with not a little elation did kind Prestinnan lead me to that favoured spot—the vestry room—and show me the really magnificent vestments of the country parish priest—there was velvet and gold enough in cope and chasuble to make all England quake in horror at the notion of such being seen on

Protestant shoulders;—yet Protestant enough were those that bore them.

And, coming out, Prestinnan showed me five marks on the flag, at the entrance of the church, and told me a tale, or legend, which my memory may in one or two instances have confused, but thus, I think, it was.

A poor woman, in the olden time, had a sick cow, or child—I forget which; but she went to pray for its restoration in the church of Bro, and promised if it recovered to present six loaves of her own bread as a thank offering. The invalid, whatever it was, recovered; and the woman in the ebullition of her joy made the bread, and set off with it to the church of Bro, in her apron. When there she began to think that after all three loaves would have been enough: she had promised rather too largely, and three might have been accepted as well as six. She resolved to leave three and take three—the half was as much as could be expected. But while she began to deposit the three, the tempter whispered to her—it is too much—one is quite enough: the cure

is not so wonderful, and it is gained now. Leave one loaf and take five home.

So she left one, and with five still in her apron she was leaving the church of Bro, when her apron burst itself away from her hold and flung out the five loaves of bread on the floor; down they sank through the stone and there the impression of five loaves remain on the flag to this day in the church of Bro. I have seen the impression myself.

After the inspection of this very interesting church, I had inspected Prestinnan's immense baby in its cradle, and was taking coffee and eating delicious home-made biscuits, when my travelling companions, who had been waiting at the post station, found me out. Then my kind hostess was first favoured with any information respecting her visitor.

Fordume is considered, I think, the most beautiful spot in Gottland. The scenery is certainly very pretty. There is a fine lake and a great deal of wood. There are here also the last vestiges of a religious house, crumbled to dust. We walked about until

we were tired, and then approached the door of a neat cottage and asked leave to rest. We were requested to walk in. A very nice house belonging to a sea-captain received us; its mistress thanked us for our great kindness in coming to see her; coffee was ordered; but we ventured to object, knowing that we had had coffee three times that day already; however, drinking coffee in Gottland seems to be what eating salt is in other lands, and we were obliged to submit. At the next house we entered, however, our Royal Secretary telling me it would not be proper to refuse the offered hospitality, contrived to get coffee exchanged for a glass of home-made wine and cake. This good lady took me over her house-keeping department, which was truly admirable; such a store of fine, strong, home-woven linen. Here, as in Sweden, you hear the spinning-wheel and loom still in movement; here, a young lady, even the daughter of the Governor of the island, is not above telling you of the last gown she wove for herself. These home-woven fabrics are most durable and, I think, pretty. Looms

and spinning-wheels are in every house, and if among the higher classes of Sweden the fashion is dying out, one only regrets it should be exchanged for crochet or worsted work. Even still, however, young ladies, both in Sweden and Gottland, weave whole pieces of linen and coloured checks for dress.

CHAPTER XIII.

WE reached Forusund, the northern coast and harbour of Gottland. Here we were received by a personage already, I am sure, known to the English—at least to the English seamen—Herr Grub—the Man of Ross in his own way, that is to say the way of trade, of Forusund; for whatever is done there Herr Grub is the doer of it.

The harbour here was full of English traders, taking away lime, sleepers, and other things. Herr Grub had got the pier made, and was exporting the freights, and had opened shops and stores for the use of the crews.

I was told Herr Grub spoke English perfectly well, and I was presented to him with the full confidence that we should be at once

at home together in that delightful language. But when I spoke Herr Grub smiled his answer. Sweet as such answer may be, I at last expressed to our Royal Secretary a wish that Herr Grub would let me hear his English speaking voice. On hearing which wish expressed Herr Grub ceased to smile, and, shaking his head, said in his own speech—

“ I can talk English to English sailors, but I cannot talk English to an English lady.”

And thereat I smiled myself; for I remembered my first arrival in the town of Göteborg, or as we write it, Gottenburg.

It is now a good many years ago, and at the time of my first landing in Sweden. I had then been provided with an English handbook, made by some London traveller in Sweden, which told me that at Mrs Todd's hotel in Gottenburg all the household spoke English. Implicitly believing what I read I landed at Göteborg, and forthwith demanded Mrs Todd's hotel, only being able then to speak two intelligible words to a Swedish ear. A large woman stood in the doorway of that hotel, who eyed us sharply as we approached; she was only Mrs Todd's *locum tenens*, that lady being absent. At the

sound of our voices she beckoned forward a tall young woman, to whom we addressed the words, "You speak English?"

"Yes," was the gratifying reply.

We entered, saw the rooms, gave the requisite orders for their arrangement, and then said to our tall attendant that as it was late we should not mind dinner, but wished to have some tea and cutlets immediately. She replied yes, and after waiting to see if we spoke further, went away.

We waited for an hour, and the tea and cutlets not appearing, we found a bell, in answer to which our attendant entered the door.

"Are the tea and cutlets ready?"

"Yes."

"Be so good as to bring them."

"Yes."

We wait another hour, and ring again. Another flicka appears, who approaches close, and roars into our ear in order to make us understand Swedish by its loudness. We understand, however, so far as that the English speaking flicka is out, and we must wait for her return. On her return she comes to us.

“ We are tired waiting for this tea and cutlets.”

“ Yes.”

“ Is yes the only word you can say?”

“ Yes.”

So ended our English conversation, and so disappeared our visionary tea and cutlets, which we might as well have ordered in Hebrew as in our mother tongue.

Herr Grub's wife and daughters were at Wisby ; one of our party being Swedish, and consequently given to asking questions, inquired what they had gone there for ; to which Herr Grub good-humouredly replied that his wife wanted to get a new cap.

“ Stockholm,” said he, “ takes its fashions from Paris, and Wisby takes its fashions from Stockholm, so Forusund must take its fashions from Wisby.”

Forusund, however, consisted only of a few new houses and a vast quantity of lime.

And after leaving Forusund an unexpected difficulty occurred, for a lodging capable of accommodating myself could with difficulty be procured, and the Baroness and the Royal Secretary

I suppose, as being natives, and therefore less important personages, had to put up with whatever accommodation could be given them by an acquaintance who occupied a small farm house in the neighbourhood, while I was located in the house of the parish schoolmaster. And a prettier display of Swedish taste than my poor and not over-cleanly apartment presented when I first entered it, can hardly be imagined. It had been hastily prepared for me by a Swedish lady with whose family I was acquainted. On every article of furniture that could bear such adornment, a nicely-fringed white cover was laid, which cover was again adorned with the blossoms of innumerable flowers, all wild ones, picked off without stalks, and formed with various devices, garnished round, also, with a variegated border. In most Swedish houses the indispensable Kakelugn, or porcelain stove, retains before its fire-place, or at its foot, a horrible porcelain pan, filled with nicely-prepared sand, which is intended to preserve the floors from the disgusting practice that appears essential to a Swedish existence. The sand of this porcelain pan, as if to show me that my practices were recognised as foreign—was so

set round with blössoms, and figures traced throughout it by violets and primroses intermixed, that they must have defeated the ordinary purpose it was intended for. There had not, however, been time to wash the floor; and while I stood lost in admiration of my little bower, the door opened, and the most awfully ugly old woman I ever yet saw presented herself, and seeming to tremble at my august presence, kept only repeating "Her Grace—her Grace"—so often that I got annoyed at the sound, so tiresome to an English ear, and begged she would not say her Grace to me. The poor woman made an abrupt apology, looked frightened, and retreated immediately. I could not find her again when I wanted her, and it was some time afterwards that I discovered she had set off on a walk of more than two English miles, to ask the lady who decorated my apartment what was my title, since she supposed she had offended me by giving me one so much below my dignity as her Grace—one of the lowest in Sweden.

Whatever the lady told her I know not, or whether she misunderstood my Swedish, but the next day she took to calling me by

a title which I can only translate into "Female-Counsellor-of-State," or "Lady-State-Counsellor."

The possibility of being without a title, or of addressing any one without giving a title, be it what it may, is what cannot be understood in any part of the Swedish dominions.

"Be so good," I said, when she had tried all sorts of titles, from Countess downwards, "Be so good as to call me only Madame."

The poor creature raised up her hands, and exclaiming, what I think was "Heaven forbid," with one more piteous "Forlåt mig"—or Forgive me, she disappeared in a state of despair that really moved my compassion.

Madame is, in Sweden, an epithet very nearly bordering on contempt. They call a charwoman, or any person too low in society to have the ordinary title of Fru—answering to our ugly word, Mrs—Madame. So, when I told this good woman to call me only Madame, she took it as an evidence of my displeasure because she had not given me a sufficiently high and honourable title, as if I had said, reproachfully, "You had better call me Madame at once!" The consequence,

therefore, of my refusing all the Swedish titles, that either she or her dominie, the school-master, had ever heard of, was that I became at once an English Princess. And at this dignity I suppose I stopped short. They probably had some idea that Queen Victoria was not employing the sjuts of Gottland, nor travelling through their island in an old cabriolet of her Consul's.

Trying to overcome the repugnance I had felt to the old creature's person and manner, I put on a softer countenance when she came before me again, and inquired what I should call her.

"I am Eve," she answered. "Can the noble lady remember that I am Eve?"

"O yes! Eve was in the garden of Eden with Adam," and I looked round my flowery room.

"Ack, I have no Adam!" she sighed, with a simplicity, a sincerity of lamentation in her tone, that rebuked my disposition to laugh.

CHAPTER XIV.

EARLY on the following bright morning I left my bower to walk for a few minutes in the quiet country road, on the side of which the house was built.

It was a rather dreary-looking and lonely scene; but before the few minutes had expired I stood before one of the most beautiful churches, with the exception of the ruins at Wisby, that I had seen in the north. It rose among heaps of ruins,—the sole remains of the religious house to which it had been attached. It was of Gothic architecture, of considerable size, and standing within a large enclosure, on each of the four sides of which was a fine arched gateway of carved stone.

Behind the church lay the wreck of the cloister, part of which, patched up with loose stones, and rudely covered over, was now a cow-house.

The interior of this fine edifice filled the mind with the same sense of pity and tendency to lamentation as did its external aspect.

I have already said that the love of whitewash seems to be almost a part of the Swedish religion; but it is a pity that its votaries do not thoroughly carry it out, but only apply the modern art in such a way as to leave the ancient here and there perceptible. Here, on the walls of Bunge church, the whitewashing brush had been so lightly or fitfully applied, as to leave the long-enduring colouring of the old frescoed walls in general plainly perceptible through the new coating; and here and there, too, would be a patch appear as if purposely left open in the white daubing to show the figures of the coloured frescoes; while the fine pillars, ruthlessly daubed over with the same lime—for which I do not know that Martin Luther possessed any particular fondness—displayed in many a round patch, perhaps also purposely left uncovered, the pristine state

which that, I suppose, reforming, but treacherous whitewash, was meant to conceal.

Painful indeed was the state of that church. The clergy of Gottland are farmers as well as priests; they receive their tithes, or income, in produce, sometimes, if they can, compounding for it;—they are elected by vote, and the accounts given of some of these elections are pretty similar to those we have had at home of some of our famous parliamentary ones.

Nearly opposite to my window there was an ancient stone pedestal that excited my curiosity; the top was broken away, but within the pedestal was a cavity secured by a strong and rusty iron door; there was a small opening in the stone which showed this to be a box for offerings. To every other inquiry respecting the relics of Bunge cloister and church, the schoolmaster had replied in the usual manner—it was something belonging to the old time, or the old religion, they knew nothing about that now. But when I asked him about this money-box, he replied that it was still in use, that the pastor, or priest, as the clergy of Sweden are called, had the

key, and that passers-by might still, if they liked it, cast their money therein.

It was while here that I met at a neighbouring house the Adjunct, or as we would say, curate, of this church, a youth, I think, of twenty-one, who did not appear nearly so aged, though he was married, and if I mistake not, had just received an addition to his family—to whom Upsala was the capital of all universities—the university of the world. He seemed, indeed, almost to doubt that there was any other; for when I modestly hinted something about Oxford, he said, with a complacent smile, “Yes, there was Oxford, certainly, but Oxford was a new university, and Upsala was an ancient one.”

Our Royal Secretary refuted this assertion; whereon the Adjunct affirmed that Upsala was the most learned university in the world. This point we English ventured to dispute, and having speedily driven the Adjunct from his position, he returned again to his former one, asserting that Upsala was much older than Oxford University, and by way of proof, he turned to me and triumphantly demanded if there were any remains of paganism at Oxford.

I replied, with some hesitation, that I believed not, I hoped not.

Another triumphant laugh bespoke the superiority of Upsala, "For," said the Adjunct, "there were relics of paganism at Upsala, and there was the proof that Upsala existed in the pagan time."

"But in what age was paganism abolished in Sweden?" I demanded. "And in what age was the University of Upsala founded?"

We came to a question of dates and figures, which the Royal Secretary arranged for us, and the Adjunct, ceasing his triumphant laugh, took refuge in his last stronghold for the superiority of the only place in all the world that he knew beyond the limits of his native Gottland—Upsala was the most northerly university in the world. And so we left him to solace himself with the belief that he was an ornament to the most northerly university in the world; and we went and walked through wild woods and pleasant scenery, and went across a little lake, and came back to a hearty Swedish supper; and then I was taken back to my bower. I found Eve waiting for me, and wondered if the strange-looking

old woman really comprehended the honour of being Lady in Waiting to an English Princess ; and told her I must make my tea very early in the morning, as the cabriolet would come for me ; and so went to sleep, thinking of Bunge, and of its ruins, and its Adjunct.

The road we took returning to Wisby is much prettier than the way we came, and more interesting also, though two Swedish, *i. e.*, fourteen English miles longer. It leads through the parishes of Dalhem, Roma, and Follingbo, all of them interesting for their ecclesiastic remains of "the old time." The country here is rather pretty, especially about Dalhem, and the farm houses appeared to be much neater ; many pretty cottages with neat blinds of netted work, and an abundance of flowers in the windows, enlivened the way. The church of Dalhem is one of the oldest, and considered the most beautiful now existing in the island. It is less injured by modern taste, its eastern window of painted glass remains, and its marble portals are unwhitewashed. But the first object which

the sexton, who showed the church to us, took us to see, was, as usual in Sweden, the portraits of the deceased priests, with those of their wives generally, and children also. There is one placed between two female ones in Dalhem church, of a very comfortable-looking priest, with a Fru at each side—concerning which the man told some tale that made my companions laugh heartily, but as for me, I was stupid enough to miss the story. The Lutherans of Sweden do not object to sacred pictures in their churches; they are fond of altar-pieces, and their altars are always much decorated, but they seem to object to the saints, in any way of remembrance, abjuring their festivals, while they invent other fête days. It seems to me, therefore, that this singular fashion of hanging up the pictures of the deceased priests on the walls of the churches is little complimentary to them, because we must suppose that if they believed their departed pastor to be among the saints, they could not allow his picture to be in the church.

But now I come to the place which I think possessed more interest for me than any in

Gottland, with the exception of the churches of Wisby, although now there is little to be seen there, and disappointment, or a sense of annoyance, is the chief result of the stranger's visit.

This was Roma Kloster, a Bernardine monastery, founded A.D. 1163. In the latter part of the last century it was visited by the great naturalist, Linnæus, who found it, as he says, then become "the most costly cow-house in the kingdom."

Its marble columns, its beautiful stone tracery, still lie in fragments, too small to be turned to any meaner use, beneath the passer's feet. The report of its ancient beauty and greatness brings visitors to Roma, and they see only a large modern farm-house, all around which lie broken stones, which now people are beginning to think worthy of preservation, and forbear to destroy or even to profane.

Bishop Wallin, in telling of the beauty, richness, and grandeur of Roma Kloster in former times, says, "that a spire of pure gold was found in ploughing a field shortly after he came to Gottland, in the year 1738, close beside the Kloster, but what became of it," he adds, "no one knows; hastily it appeared, and hastily it

vanished; a great search was made after it without success."

At the time of the Reformation, Gottland belonged to Denmark, but its spiritual jurisdiction still was attached to the see of Linköping, in Sweden, of which the valiant Hans Brask was bishop. He drove out the first Lutheran preacher that appeared in Wisby, but the power of Gustavus Vasa prevailed; the preacher was replaced, and the bishop had to retire. The last Abbot of Roma embraced the prevailing faith, and became, it is said, "an evangelical church shepherd."

The destruction of Roma was rapid; in 1633 it was already falling to ruin, but its total overthrow is ascribed to a Governor or Landshöfding of Gottland, who has rendered his name more famous thereby than perhaps he reckoned upon.

In the year 1730, Roma having become, like other monastic properties, a royal farm, came into possession of Governor Grönhagen, who set about building the house which now stands on the site of Roma Kloster, as tasteless and ugly a thing as can be imagined, though built at a cost which Bishop Wallin, a very good Lutheran, describes thus:—

“He took the stones of the Cloister Church,” he says, “to build his house; and, moreover, he would make a new carriage road from his house to the parish church of Roma, so that he might pass there in his carriage without inconvenience. The same road he made which is there now to be seen, broad, high, dry, and even as a floor, planted with trees and provided with ditches at both sides. But men say, that when this same lord would make an ice-cellar at the east end of the cloister, he broke into a vault wherein were a great heap of the dead monks’ bones, which he caused to be removed and thrown upon the new road to assist in making it. But that,” adds the bishop, who wrote singularly near to the time of such transactions, “was the fault of the men who did the work. It is true, however, that this lord’s work did not succeed, for he was taken ill and died; and it is true that some days before his end the monks seemed to stand before his eyes, which spirits he called, after the eastern mode, dervises, often talking to them, and praying those who stood around his bed, of whom I also was one, that no harm should be done to the monks, but that they should be treated well. This,

without doubt, could only be a phantasy, as he must often have thought of these people while he lived in their possessions, visited their remains, and walked in their footsteps. I do not relate this to detract from the merits of the dead lord, because so high a servant of the king, so anxious for the good of the land, so good a friend to me and to the whole priesthood, deserves quite another verdict. I only write it down in order to set right the notions of the common people, who talk about his illness, and explain it in a less favourable manner."

There were five fish-ponds within the convent grounds, one of which yet remains; here, too, is a green mound, which once stood within the cloister bounds, and was a sanctuary for those who were guilty or accused, and pursued by their enemies. The cloisters, supported by pillars, ran round the sanctuary.

Leaving Roma, we went on to Follingbo church, which I had also a desire to see. Here we had been told some beautiful work of the old time lay thrown away in the belfry tower. We did not ask to climb up there, for as we were going to the church, after sending

for the key, we were overtaken by a good-humoured little man in a working dress, wearing a brownish sort of frock coat, who ushered us into the church, and hastened us on into the vestry, where we followed, expecting to see its treasures. There was nothing, however, to be seen but a whitewashed room, the merit of which consisted in its being new. He showed it with some pride, and told us it was newly built. There was evidently nothing about it of "the old time"; it was very light, for light, as well as lime, has everywhere in Sweden a sort of spiritual significance attached to it. Then, as we turned back into the church, our guide followed, and standing, still humming a tune, on the altar floor, he pointed out to us the recent improvements that had been made in putting in two square-paned, cottage-like little windows between the old Gothic ones of the church, adding, with a pleasant and complacent smile, "It is now a light and right gladsome church," and then he resumed his good-humoured hum. He invited us to go to the Prestgård, or Parsonage, and drink coffee, and by this we learned that he himself was the priest.

But we were engaged to another house, to one of a man of literature, for there are many such in Gottland, and there we spent a very agreeable evening, and after viewing one of the rich, gorgeous sunsets of Gottland, which, when standing on the cliffs of Wisby, and looking down on its ruins, bathed in that dazzling glow, inspire reflections to the poet or the moraliser, we returned to the poor fallen town, only to prepare for another excursion from it. An excursion steamer had come to Wisby from Stockholm, for now the day I had so often heard of when there had arrived—Pingst-dag, or in English Ascension-day; and this was the famous day for the Stockholmers' first visit in the year to Wisby.

It was to go the next day to Klintehamn, or the haven of Klinte, one of the prettiest spots in Gottland. This was a holiday trip; the boat was crowded; it turned out in some respects as pleasure excursions usually do, the weather proved very rough, the steamer injured one of her paddles, and we took five hours instead of two to get to Klintehamn; and did not get back to Wisby till long after

midnight. Yet I did not regret having made this little voyage, I saw, it is true, nothing actually to admire either on land or sea, but I found much to admire on board our crowded little steamer; the extreme kindness, attention, and politeness of the Gottlanders therein assembled, made an impression on me that was perhaps more pleasing than any that the scenery of their Isle could have made.

Their desire that a stranger should be gratified, that a stranger should see all she wished to see, the decorum that accompanied their good nature, and the affability that mingled with their respectful manner, as well as their cheerful and amusing conversation, actually rendered the roughness of the winds and waves, and the slowness of a crippled vessel, more tolerable than I have almost ever known them to be.

I certainly derived much advantage from having as my companion the adopted daughter, or niece, of the Commandant of Wisby, for some of our company were young officers of the Gottland army then assembled at Wisby.

The harbour of Klinte is a good one, and

has a fine aspect ; on landing there some of the young officers sprung on shore in a manner that looked rather like a precipitate retreat from the civilities they had exercised on board ; but I soon found they had hastened to the house of a resident to ask for the loan of his carriage, in order, as I was fatigued, to take me in it to Klinteberg, a fine hill, which affords a view of great part of the island.

Returned from thence, we went to the neatest little inn, with the most exquisitely neat old hostess I ever saw. She was more like the picture of a prim, old-fashioned lady, than the living hostess of a Gottland inn. But she made me tea which was a mixture of green tea and carraway seeds !

Our voyage home was slow, and it required all the polite agreeability of the young officers and fellow-passengers to keep us in patience. The wind was cold, though the sun was clear. It was an excursion steamer—a cheap trip—and the “forward” passengers, of whom there were many, being of course a little elated with that bane of Sweden, branvin,

were singing rather loudly, to the far greater annoyance of their compatriots than to that of the foreigner, for I was several times requested to believe that this rude jollity was not a trait of nationalism.

It was midnight when we landed at Wisby.

The next day I was too tired to do anything; so one of the kind literary gentlemen, who are really numerous in that little town, brought me an immense folio, containing the chronicles of Bishop Wallin, printed in the German character, and left it with me, in order that I might amuse myself with what was something worse than black-letter to me. The result of my study will be seen in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XV.

AMONG the folkvisor, or old popular ballads of the Swedish folk, there is one called "Barnhard den länge och skön Elisif," which we may translate into "Barnhard the tall and the fair Elisif." It is supposed to have been composed about the end of the fourteenth century, that is to say, about the era of the Union of Calmar, by which Denmark, Norway, and Sweden were united into one kingdom under the sceptre of a woman—the Semiramis of the North, Queen Margaret of Denmark. Its composition is ascribed to Bishop Nils of Lindköping, who was himself an actor in its circumstances, which circum-

stances I found reported in the learned chronicles of his Lutheran successor, Bishop Wallin, as a simple matter of history ; and although the story of this popular folkvisa seemed to me rather of the romantic cast, yet episcopal sanction warranted its extraction into these pages, which are, after all, of a much lighter character than those in which the right reverend chronicler of Wisby has allowed it a place. Those who read the story of " Riddar Barnard and the fair Elisif " will, besides, observe, as my second apology—that it is a little romance of history, full of allusions to events that occurred in nearly the wildest and saddest part of Sweden's wild and sad history.

The memory of that time was perpetuated in the ballads and traditions of the people ; the arrogance of the German knights—Riddaren—whom King Albert of Mecklenburg suffered to overrun the land while pirates took a like part on the sea, were celebrated in a song called " A pleasant likeness of King Albert and Sweden ; " and one of these knights was the Riddar Barnard, the narrative of whose exploit is related as a simple matter of

history which was as such to be recorded in the chronicles of Gottland, by Bishop Wallin, since it was on that coast that it reached its termination. If in copying it from his folio I have wandered from his quaint and pleasanter style I must only plead fatigue, and a dislike to the German character, which rendered copying from an old book trying to the eyes.

Here, then, follows the Bishop's history of

THE CLOISTER-ROBBER ;

OR,

RIDDAR BARNARD AND THE FAIR ELISIF.

Once on a time there lived, in the province of East Götaland, in Sweden, a certain honourable and wealthy man, who had one only child, a maiden of wonderful beauty, named Elisif, whom, her mother being dead, he sent in her seventh year to be educated at Risberga Kloster, near to Örebro. There the child attained much favour, and soon began to manifest dispositions for a holy life. Before it was decided whether she should become a nun or not, and when she was opening, as a rose-bud in dew and shade, into the first glow of her youth and loveliness, she was

brought home to her father's house, to try if the ties of earth would change her aspirations after heaven.

Now, it chanced on a time, while she was there, that the King of Sweden came riding that way, and with him rode one of his German knights, named Barnard the tall. At the same time was the kingdom sorely troubled, for a foreigner, Albert of Mecklenburg, was its king, and his German knights were its rulers. The nobles of Sweden, according to a practice familiar to them, had offered its crown to a foreigner who was willing to take it; and after a time those who were displeased with the new king offered that crown to the valiant Queen Margaret of Denmark; for the land and the sea were full of plunderers and pirates, and misrule and violence oppressed the people; Swedes and Germans were at enmity; the natives complained that strangers devoured the labour of the sons of the soil.

Now the Riddar Barnard was, of all his German knights, the one King Albert favoured the most. Riddar Barnard was the richest and boldest of these foreign favourites, and

none were so tall, so stately, and grand as he. Much were the homely and honest natives scandalised at the bravery of his attire. Until then the great men of Sweden were clad as the simple folk of the North still are, in jackets of skin, or in home-made cloth, called wadmal, that is almost as stout. But the German king and his knights brought in new fashions that were hard to be borne. Now came the Riddar Barnard riding with his lord, and his dress was of silk and velvet, the seams whereof were inlaid with gold, and he was hung over with little silver bells that made a pleasant tinkling whenever he moved.

So the king and his knight stopped at the house of Elisif's father, for there they would be entertained. And when the knight saw the maiden he loved her, for her beauty was great—it was the beauty of holiness, yet for that Riddar Barnard loved it the more, though he knew not what it was.

He wooed the maiden, and he sued her father, yet was he sent bootless away, for the father would not have the German for the husband of his child; he called King Albert's followers robbers, and not knights. But from

the moment Barnard the tall beheld the fair Elisif, neither riches, nor pleasures, nor dress, nor ambition, nor aught in the wide world seemed so precious to him as one favouring glance from her beautiful, downcast eyes ; and when he must ride away with King Albert, having his suit denied, he swore in his heart that the maiden should yet be his bride ; and King Albert knew of the vow, and pledged him his kingly support.

Sweden was now a nation divided against itself, for some took part with King Albert and some with Queen Margaret. The father of Elisif the fair joined the cause of the queen ; and fearing lest violence should rob him of his beautiful child, he sent her back to Risberga convent, where, in those troublous times, he thought she would be at peace, for, even in lawlessness, its sanctity would be respected.

Then came Olaf Olafson, the friend of her father, and comrade of her childhood, and pleaded his life-long love. But Elisif answered him herself, saying she would be no man's bride, but Christ's alone, to whom she would vow herself in Risberga cloister.

Much did he try to win her from her purpose, and spoke of her youth and beauty, and her gentle loving heart, that must dry up and wither in the dull shade of the barren cloister.

Elisif answered him with words that changed his thoughts, for from them he learned to see how the love of Christ might fill a human heart so as to satisfy its yearnings for what men call happiness. And he sought no more to stay her, for he saw that Heaven had called her.

Then went Elisif to Risberga, and the nuns rejoiced, for they received back from the world the loveliest flower they ever had charge of to train for Paradise.

Her father joined the troops of Margaret, the Queen of Denmark and Norway; but no one knew where his friend Olaf Olafson had taken his way. There was work now for King Albert and his knights, and for the people of the land there was neither peace nor safety.

Short was the noviciate of the fair Elisif, for her vocation was already sure.

The night before her profession drew on: the chapel was prepared for the coming

event. The lower end of it was in gloom, but around the richly decked altar the ever-burning silver lamp shed its soft sacred light. Before that altar the fair novice knelt; according to the rule, Elisif was to watch and pray alone, in preparation for her solemn vow; even as the knight had to watch by his armour ere he received the meed of valour. And valiant was the fair Elisif as she meekly knelt, praying in weakness to be made strong; her beautiful face bowed down, and her light figure clad no more in the habiliments of the world—while in joy blent with awe, she offered up herself as a living sacrifice to Him who was made a sacrifice for her, and calmly, in silent prayer and contemplation, beheld the destiny prepared for her.

She was to be alone in the chapel; till the last hour of prayer no one was to enter it. Yet a slight motion of her head might show that in the deep silence that reigned around her some slight sound, some stealthy movement, caught her ear. She rebuked herself for the momentary distraction; she thought it must be a temptation sent to withdraw her from her holy occu-

pation, for the orders of the abbess had been strict that none should enter the chapel, save the novice who on the morrow should be professed. Again there was a sound of moving, and without rising the young girl turned her face to look behind. What sight filled her with strange emotion, and caused her to stretch forth her arms and clasp them round the large cross before which she knelt? It was the Riddar Barnard—but the maiden believed it was her spiritual enemy come to assail her in his form.

“Elisif,” said that form, “you are mine—my bride.”

“I am the bride of Christ! Avaunt! Begone!” cried the novice, and laid her pale face on her snow-white arms.

“Nay, Elisif, thou art mine. Come, come.” He bent, and put his strong arms around her fragile form.

“Away! thou false tempter, away! Here is my place, here will I stay—my choice is made.” She wound hers frantically around the cross; but though so fair and round, they were but weak: their grasp was nothing in opposition to those that drew her away.

But would the support to which she clung fail to save her? The thought gave her strength,—and at the same moment a low stroke of the bell told that the hour of prayer was come. That stroke, the novice believed, dispelled the evil influence that had been around her: and the tempter vanished. The chapel door was opened; the whole quire of nuns, bearing lightedapers in their hands, came in, and found the young girl alone, exhausted, faint pale as death, with arms fast twined around the cross, more like the vanquished than the victor. Yet that she had been the victor was clear, not only to herself, but to all the good nuns and to the abbess too; and her conflict with a spirit of evil was considered as little short of a miracle. Elisif felt in her own trembling heart that she had been tempted, and in her simplicity she vowed a rich offering to the cross that had enabled her to resist the tempter.

The next day she was led to the altar, a spiritual bride, meek in her holy devotion, and absorbed in her sacred purpose.

Bishop Nils of Lindköping was to receive the vows of the lamb that was to be offered

up to Heaven, and to consecrate to God the child he had instructed from infancy. He was then to deliver her to the charge of the abbess, with an address which his Lutheran successor, Bishop Wallin, records in his old chronicles, from which it is here copied —“ See, before God and the saints, and in the presence of his holy church, I deliver over Christ’s bride into your hands and charge. If, through your carelessness, she should fall away, so shall her Bridegroom demand her of you. Therefore take heed and guard well the goods committed to your keeping; so that at the last reckoning she who is now delivered to you holy may be even holier delivered up again.”

“ Dear Father,” answered the Abbess, “ this is a weighty treasure, and the charge may be even beyond my power; but in trust on the aid of God, and the help of your prayers, I will undertake to do what you desire.”

This charge, however, was not yet spoken. For the same protestant and episcopal authority describes two ceremonies that were previously to attend the profession of the fair Elisif.

“ There was,” he says, “ in all these convents a strong door with iron bars, which only

opened on such great occasions. It opened now, and four nuns sprang hastily out, bearing a bier strewed over with earth, the priests meantime singing 'Veni Creator.' On this bier she who was dead to the world and to live to Heaven was to lay herself, and to be carried away in order to change her present worldly and bridal dress for the costume of the convent. In the north, and in Russia too, brides are always crowned, and the spiritual bride, Bishop Wallin relates, was to have her crown also.

"The crown was composed," says the chronicle, "of stiff white linen, having five knobs or tassels of red worsted, to represent five blood-drops, so disposed as to form a cross; one of these falling on the forehead of the wearer, one at the back, and one at each side of the head, over the ear, and the fifth forming the centre line on the top."

The fair Elisif was laid on her bier, and borne away by the four nuns towards the grated door, to change her dress within it, and return to be crowned at the altar. Her hair, not yet cut off, hung over her as she lay. But she did not return.

Just as the bier reached that door a tall

knight stepped forth, snatched up the prostrate form, and carried it out of the one that stood open beside him.

There was no cry raised, for the horror-stricken sisters had heard the story of the conflict on the evening before, and saw only the enemy returned for his prey. The panic spread, and the whole troop of nuns, with their Abbess at their head, pressed, like a flock of birds at the approach of the kite, round the astonished bishop. By the time their senses returned, Riddar Barnard was far in the deep forest, and on his steed before him he bore the uncrowned bride of Risberga.

As Riddar Barnard's sole object and desire was to get the fair Elisif for his wife, he carried her forthwith to the court of King Albert, where she was received and honourably lodged, yet kept a captive. But the object he desired was still hard to attain. Not only was she herself steadfast in her resolution to maintain her vows, but neither entreaty nor bribe could prevail on any priest in Sweden to marry a nun to the German knight.

On this, saith the Bishop Wallin, wrote King Albert to Pope Urban VI, praying for a

dispensation, and asking his Holiness to undertake that the marriage should be performed; but there came no answer to the letter, for the King with his robber-band, who called themselves knights, though they were only of the people, had already been excommunicated by the predecessor of Pope Urban.

And in the interim, while no answer came from Rome, the fate of King Albert was decided before that of his knight.

Queen Margaret, says the chronicle, and all other Swedish history says the same, having defeated King Albert in the battle of Falköping, took him prisoner, and fulfilled her royal promise of setting a hat on his head, in return for the one he sent her, which it would ill please him to wear. So she set a fool's cap on his head, of which the old saga says—

“ A cap she caused set on his head,
That was full fifteen yards in breadth,
The crown was nineteen good yards high.”*

* The tilting of wit between Albert and Margaret ended thus. He despised his opponent as a woman, and as a woman she revenged herself when he felt her power as a queen. He had sent her in mockery a hat, and begged an article of female attire in return. There is still kept in the treasures of Upsala cathedral an ancient rag, called “Margaret's Shift” (it ought in politeness to be written in French); but this shift, the subject of King

The Danish rule succeeded the German ; Margaret was Queen of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and Albert of Mecklenburg was in a dungeon. Riddar Barnard escaped with life from the fatal field of Falköping.

The fair Elisif was all this time a prisoner too, treated with all honour, but kept a captive ; her tears, her prayers did not avail. If the world were laid at her feet one only request she would make—Give me out of it the convent of Risberga, there to live and there to die.

But though all the other hopes of Riddar Barnard perished, the hope of still making Elisif his bride remained. The Germans still held Stockholm against Margaret, and the castles which they formed into robber strongholds were then so numerous that their total destruction has left scarcely the trace of such a ruin to be seen in the land. War and famine desolated the kingdom ; sea-robbers filled the waters of the Baltic. Elisif prayed.

Finally, Stockholm was to be delivered up to Margaret. Then came the Riddar Barnard, and gathered up the portion of

Albert's jest, was borne as a flag at the battle in which he was defeated.

good that yet remained to him; but the fair Elisif was the most precious part, and he left her not behind, but embarked her also in a fast-sailing ship, and sailed away over Mälarn Lake, and out in the Baltic Sea. For he said, "In Germany shall I find priests more compliant than those Swedish folk have been, and one that will wed me to the fair Elisif."

But Elisif prayed.

Then there arose a mighty wind, and the waves of the sea raged and were troubled. Riddar Barnard, the bold-hearted, feared exceedingly, for Elisif was in the tossing bark. He sought her when danger grew high, and found her on her knees in the bridal attire she had worn on the day of her heavenly espousals; and now she thought that betrothal should be completed. Her long hair fell glistening over it, as it had been left ready for the shears of the Abbess. She prayed for the Riddar Barnard, the cloister robber.

Then fell remorse with a keen heavy blow on the stubborn soul of the knight; but the prayer of Elisif was heard, and, stubborn though it was, it melted into penitence. Down knelt the robber knight beside the fair Elisif,

and cried, "Pardon! ere you go to Christ to witness against me!"

And Elisif cried, "Joy! joy! he repents! Now then, what recks it if my poor body lie in the deep cold sea instead of the holy ground of Risberga cloister!" And she laid her hand on the head of the kneeling knight, and prayed Christ to seal in heaven the pardon she gave him. * * * And there was a loud cry on the deck—the cry so terrible to hear—of strong men perishing: the ship was smitten with a billow, and it sundered in pieces.

* * * * *

On the coast of Gottland a fisherman saw something float on the water, and he caught it up, and lo! it was the form of a young girl in a bridal garb, with floating sea-wet hair. It was the fair Elisif, the only thing alive of all that the ship of the Riddar Barnard had carried away from the city of Stockholm. The fisherman supposed that the sea had devoured its prey, but it had cast it up alive, for Elisif was not to die out of Risberga convent.

He carried the fair body he had found into the seaman's church, the stately church of St

Nicholas, and he summoned a priest to pray over it.

And when the priest came, he knew well the beautiful face that lay pale and death-cold there, for he was her father's friend, Olaf Olafson, whom her holy words had turned from the love of earth to the love of heaven.

Bishop Nils of Lindköping, says the chronicle, was then on a pastoral visit to Gottland, which was in his jurisdiction, and he was quickly brought to find the lamb that had been stolen from the fold lying sea-drenched in the church of St Nicholas. He gave orders that she should be carried to the convent of Solberga; but the fair Elisif opened her eyelids to say, "Take me to Risberga," and this she continued to say so constantly, that faint and ill though she was, the good bishop could not withstand the appeal.

Together with the priest, Olaf Olafson, he attended her thither. She was borne on a litter when they landed from the ship. The whole community came to meet her: her rescue was to be celebrated as a miracle.

But, faint and weak, the fair Elisif em-

braced her mother in Christ with tears, saying in lowly humility,

“My prayer has been heard, I shall die in Risberga Kloster; but, good mother, grant that my short time here may be passed in penitence, and in prayer for the Riddar Barnard.”

One other request Elisif made; it was that her consecration might be completed, that she might die a spiritual bride. Good Bishop Nils consented, and placed the crown of the nun on the head of the fair Elisif. They had told her that her father had fallen at Falköping, and all his riches were her's. But she answered, “The poor will want money on earth, but I shall need none if I enter heaven.”

That day was a high day in the convent of Risberga. At its close, when the bell called the nuns to prayer in the chapel, they found the new-made nun kneeling beside the large cross; her arms were twined round it, and her head lay upon them. They raised up the head and untwined the arms, and saw that the maiden was dead.

The fair Elisif died praying for the soul of the 'Riddar Barnard.

The knight made his grave in the Baltic Sea, and Elisif found her's in the holy ground of Risberga Kloster.

So ends the story I borrowed from the learned Bishop Wallin and the folkvisor of Sweden.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE day after our return from the country there was a good deal of excitement in quiet Wisby, owing to a confirmation taking place that day in the old church of the Lübeck merchants, now both the cathedral and only one of the town.

The Church of Sweden holds the Catholic doctrine of baptism in its full significancy ; but the succeeding rite of the Church Catholic, that of confirmation, has been imported into it from England at a rather recent period. The pastor of the Swedish Church in London having seen its use, was the means of getting it adopted by his country, where it now holds a somewhat

remarkable position, both politically and religiously.

The State, indeed, makes a more decided use of it than does the Church. In all respects, however, the Church is here more or less the handmaid of the State, rather reversing the order of things, if Kings and Queens were meant to be nurses of the Church.

The Church of Sweden is not only united to the State, but is a part of the State. Its clergy have their appointed temporal duties as its officers; by their means a system of civil inspection is carried on throughout the kingdom. Thus, what with us is simply the religious and holy rite of confirmation is made in Sweden a state engine for securing that modicum of education or learning, which is more universal there than, I think, in any part of Europe; far beyond what it is in Scotland, where we generally suppose most persons learn enough to be able to read the Bible.

Confirmation is not optional, but obligatory, not only by the force of opinion, which makes it and a first communion the great religious duties of life, but by the laws of the State, which forbid any one without a

certificate from their parish priest testifying to the fulfilment of both, to hold any office, to enter as an apprentice in any trade, or even to be married. This certificate is, in short, required for all the purposes of life—even to be a soldier or sailor.

In order to be confirmed and receive the Holy Communion, it is necessary to read and write, and thus this amount of education is secured. The priests are obliged to give six months' religious instruction for the purpose of confirmation; this is the most important, and usually the most interesting portion of a young Swede's life; it is generally looked back upon with softened feeling:—"going to read before the priest" interests children as it interested their parents.

The certificate of confirmation is taken by each person who removes from his or her parish, and besides this are the priest's lines, or certificate of character, without which the working classes are not sure of employment elsewhere, and by means of which a delinquent in one parish must be known in another. This is sad—the lost character may be regained—the false step retrieved; but if the

fatal "lines" are borne about, the blot must still remain.

The clergy are an influential body, and form a powerful one in the legislature, where they have a house of their own, for there are four houses of Parliament, Lords, Burghers, Peasants, and Clergy. They have not to contend with sectaries, or be troubled by divers opinions and discussions; there is but one religion for the kingdom of Sweden and Norway, which is called that of Martin Luther, for most Swedes seem devoutly to believe there was no religion until he made one—and to that religion, its doctrines and observances, all must submit, at least outwardly. If any Swedish subject turns Roman Catholic, or Dissenter of any denomination, he incurs the penalty of banishment.

But while much good results from the ingenious use made of confirmation, the manner in which that sacred rite is performed renders it, in fact, no confirmation at all,—the "doctrine of the laying on of hands" is quite overlooked. It is not an episcopal, but simply a priestly office. Each parish priest not only prepares but confirms his flock :

it is in fact a public examination, and a pathetic exhortation, but not a confirmation. The *feelings* are excited, and parents and friends, as well as the young people, are most deeply affected.

I attended two confirmations, one in Stockholm, one in Wisby; at the former, being locked into a deep pew, egress was impossible, for the ladies who were imprisoned with me seemed to think my efforts to escape showed a degree of heretical depravity it was their duty to resist. At last I exclaimed that I was cold: the magic word was effectual—"she freezes!" was uttered, and the key was procured and I was set free. For, hardened as it does appear, though the priest himself mingled his tears with those of the numerous assistants, I felt an irresistible desire to get away.

Here, at Wisby, the bishop was the celebrant, therefore I was sure the matter would be quite differently performed. But it was not so. The young ladies were most attired in the state dress of old-fashioned or plain people in Sweden, that is to say, black—a black gown serves for christenings, con-

firmations, and marriages, as well as for funerals.

The long public catechetical examination is, I am informed, for the satisfaction of friends, otherwise it must be unnecessary, as it has been so long previously gone through in private. At the exhortation the crying began; a sobbing sound began to swell throughout the church, as well as around the altar, where the catechumens sat: but in the latter place it rose to a height which had unfortunately more of the grotesque than the pathetic in its effect. One very stout young woman in particular seemed resolved to roll off her seat in her energetic emotion—it was like the panting and puffing of a steam-engine. The bishop reproved this. It was to me more like what one sees at Methodist meetings than the solemn holy service one sees performed in England by the Bishop of *****

Though the bishop was present here, there was no laying on of hands: the young men and maidens retained seats at each side of the chancel, and when the service was over, adjourned with the bishop and priest to the vestry room.

But, next to marriage, I believe confirmation is the most interesting event in the life of a Swede, both to parents and children. The difficulty of preparing for it is often great; the schools are far apart, but the benefit arising from this obligatory system is seen in the fact that all parents can teach their little ones the elements of learning: yet there is still the due attendance on the priest's instruction required, and I have heard of young servant women walking for that purpose the distance of twenty English miles, having leave to do so on Saturday evenings, and being obliged to be home on the Sunday night. Should any convict in Sweden be found totally uninstructed, the priest of his parish is called to account for it.

Our departure from Gottland has been more sudden than we anticipated. A steamer to Calmar presented itself, and we embarked. Now we are looking back from the miserable empty harbour on its retreating coast. One can hardly believe that that harbour ever could have been filled with the merchant convoys

of old ; that Wisby was the *dépot* of eastern traffic, brought over Russia for the rest of Northern Europe : its interesting collection of coins, many of them dating from an early period of English or Anglo-Saxon history, would prove a greater intercourse with other nations than it is likely ever again to possess. These coins, found in Gottland earth, are now carefully arranged, in the charge of a native antiquary. But on this coast there are standing many of Wisby's kind, hospitable citizens, bowing an adieu to a stranger and traveller who had come among them, thinking to be unknown and unnoticed. And with these living memorials of what Wisby is, still before our eyes, we must not sigh over all that Wisby is no more.

There is a tradition concerning the formation of Gottland and its opposite sister, Öland, which, for aught I can tell, may be quite true. Tradition says that a terrible giant, perhaps the old Troll Ramunder, who dwelt on the white cliff in the true Gothland, or Götaland—the land of Goths—being one day in great anger and rage, tore up a handful of earth from the soil of Sweden, and flung

it away—I scarcely can tell how many miles—a couple of hundred perhaps, into the Baltic Sea. There it sunk down and formed the pretty island of Gottland; and the hole that the giant's hand made in the ground of Sweden was filled by the waters of Lake Wenern. Whereon, pleased it seems by his work, he took another handful of earth and cast it into the Baltic, quite close to the shores of Småland, and that second handful formed the Isle of Öland; a longer, but very much narrower one than its twin sister, so the hands of the Troll might have carried an even quantity of material; and it is remarkable that the lakes which sprung up in its place have precisely the same difference in their formation, Wettern being so much narrower than the sea-like Wenern. But then both lakes being larger than the islands, we must believe that the Troll dropped some of the earth in the passage. They are of limestone formation, which does not tend to prove the truth of their traditional origin.

Close to Öland is a very little islet, called, I think, Jungchen, which, I am told, is that

described by Linnæus in the journal of his botanical rambles, under the name of Blåkulla, because, he says, "the popular tale is that all the Trollpacker* travel there every Maunday Thursday; truly a troublesome journey it is, and those who once undertake it will leave it to the Trollpacker to do so again."

Here rocks are the walls, and within them a small forest of low leaf-trees, oak and birch, then higher rocky hills, then small forests again, then higher rocks, and at last the highest rising over all. These rocks of red spar are quite bare, or covered only with a black lichen, which, seen through the mists that rise from a distance, make Blåkulla seem like a mere speck at a distance.

With a great effort we crept up these steep rocks, between the clefts, which lay as if thrown on each other. Leaf-trees formed small groves in the declivities of the rocks; these trees were scarcely six feet high, though the stems of the oak were as thick as a man. Here and there oaks lay stretching along the ground like creeping plants. The

* Witches, magicians, &c.

groves were so tangled that one got in with difficulty, and, what was more extraordinary, so tangled by ivy, which runs over them like snare-grass over peas.* The desire to enter spurred us on, so that we did not desist till we came to the middle of the isle, from whence we could see it all. Here appeared no human creature, only a tröjeberg, built of small loose stones upon a rock, the work, doubtless, of some sailor detained here by misfortune or accident. The only living things were a pair of wild goats, which sprung among the rocks, and some dark birds that hovered round Blåkulla's coast. The seafolk related to us that a young girl was once sent here by a lieutenant with some goats, which she was to take care of; but she was left without any food, so that she must either eat the grass or the raw flesh of her goats, as she had no means of making a fire. Fortunately some seamen chanced to come by there, and released the poor 'flika from Blåkulla."

Öland was ravaged also by Waldemar Atterdag. The fine ruins of the old Castle of Borgholm have a noble aspect from the sea,

* Ivy does not grow out of doors in Sweden.

and the ancient churches of the island, like those of Gottland, give a silent answer to those who would erect for the worship of God those poor, perishable, room-like buildings, as unlike the type which He vouchsafed Himself to deliver to men, as they are far from conveying any symbolical idea of the high purpose to which they profess to be dedicated.

The old churches of these islands are much more beautiful than any old ones I have seen in Sweden; and, except for the addition of whitewash, and the removal of some fine pieces of art to the place appropriately named in Swedish *Gömmor*, or hiding-place, whether that be the sacristy or the floor of the belfry-tower—they are not nearly so much deformed by modern taste, or necessities, as are those of Sweden.

At Stensö, adjoining Kalmar, Louis XVIII of France, when spending some part of his exile there, with some of his royal relatives, put up a commemorative tablet in honour of the landing of Gustavus Vasa on this spot, when he had escaped from captivity at Lubeck. The combination of ideas must have been rather curious—if any combination there

were—that led the noble exile to employ himself thus. At Kalmar we embarked in a Russian steamer—we should not like to do so now—that was going to Carlskrona.

On board this steamer were a singular variety of human creatures. The most interesting among them was a very pretty Scotchwoman, married to a not very beautiful Swedish Baron, a fair Russian going home as the bride of a stiff-looking Englishman, and a very pleasing Finn Countess and her brother, who were going, as they informed me, for the health of the former, to drink goats' milk at the baths of Kreuth, in the Austrian Tyrol, the lovely scenery of which place might be more restorative to some constitutions than *le petit lait*, that is to say, goats' whey mingled with juice of herbs, which the poor lady hoped would cure consumption.

They were so affectionate, this pair of noble Finns; the tender care of the brother for the invalid sister was unremitting. They were alike in form, in features, and in years. She was a married woman, though now under a brother's charge.

The Baron pretended to the power of the Runes ; and he actually went so far in his divinations as to alarm me, and I was obliged to show him some of my historic lore by affirming my knowledge of an ancient Scandinavian law by which the practice of casting the spell of the Runes was punishable by confiscation and exile.

It is said, that while ignorant of the simple power of an alphabet, an ignorant people, seeing that ideas were communicated by the apparently unintelligible figures, called Runes, naturally imputed magical powers to them. But from whatever cause this belief took its rise, it subsisted in the North long after letters and the art of writing became known ; it was condemned by the Christian Church, and when the Runic characters were given up by the learned, and only used by the people for the inscriptions on their tombstones and on their wooden almanacs, the faith in their power, which had formed so curious a part of their heathen mythology, was long cherished, and in some parts is not believed to be yet wholly destroyed. Not Odin himself, who first mastered the

mystery of the Runes, professed greater power in casting their spells than did our fair-haired Baron of Finland. But alas! if one of Odin's Runic arts lay in raising storms at sea, so, it might seem, did the Finlander's too; for a Baltic squall arose which tossed us about in a merciless manner, until, when the morning sun was shining bright and cheerily, we cast anchor in the fine harbour of Carlskrona.

A beautiful sight it was, for the Swedish fleet was there, the vessels standing with full-spread canvas, and young Prince Oscar was just going on board one of them for a cruise.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRAVELLERS have spoken of the loss of the Rhone—"the arrowy Rhone"—which plunges somewhere underground, and, if it does not lose itself, is lost to human eyes. I am going to imitate the Rhone. I shall proceed underground from Carlskrona—that is, in English, Charles's crown—the Portsmouth of Sweden, to the pretty and pleasant wooden-house town of Jönköping, at the southern end of the interesting Wetteren.

Mine is a longer passage in the dark than that of the mighty river. I have, I think, to travel about 350 miles in the dark—murmuring along, precisely like the Rhone, without ever making my murmurings heard—lost

even to my companion, the good Baroness, who has promised to rejoin me when I re-issue to light.

Though my passage may be supposed to have been made, she has not effected that junction as yet; and I have been some days at Jönköping, the chief town of the province of Småland, or small land. Part of my progress hither was made over lake Wetter, and as I had, it is to be supposed, then emerged from under ground, I may suffer glimpses of that part of it to be seen.

My companions on the deck of the steam-boat were three young Russian lads, who were going to spend the holidays with a friend in this vicinity, and who tended to dispel ennui by dancing the most wild pantomimic dance of their nation beneath the overwhelming sun, that seemed to cause even the waters of the lake to frizzle.

Besides these there was a whole Swedish family, father, mother, a daughter, and two sons, one of whom was bringing home a splendid-looking young bride to their fine residence in Småland. They all wanted to know my opinion of the latter, for the opinion of

a foreigner seems to go a good way in this country. It was of course a high one. I do not know whether it was in return for this, or simply from that peculiarity of phrenological development to which I before alluded, that the head of this honourable house, finding my companion had been left behind, and that I was to be alone in Jönköping, wrote a line on the crown of his hat, which he requested me to bear to the priest of that place, and also wrote the address of a place where he advised me to put up.

I obeyed the last direction first. The maid, or rather housekeeper, who read the note I brought, said her mistress was absent in Stockholm, but that I could, undoubtedly, have her room; only, she added, I must be so good as to find all I wanted for myself, as she had no power to do that. It never entered my mind that I was considered other than a lodger, and therefore I told her I preferred doing so, and she should send me my bills; and it was not till I was paying those bills that I found the room of the mistress counted as naught.

It contained those great ornaments of a nice Swedish uncarpeted floor, little worsted-worked

mats laid before some of the great chairs, looking as if designed for feet, but as if feet never ventured upon them. There was the usual number of large mirrors and sofas, one of which, beyond all doubt, possessed within itself the materials for the bed whereon the proprietor of the room was to sleep, and at night I should see it nicely arranged, with a little table placed close beside the great pillows, holding the caraffe of water and glass, which were to be changed the first thing in the morning and fresh laid down ; a box of matches also, and a candle for the night. These sofas make rooms do double duty, so that, in a house occupied by eight or nine ladies, there was not a single bed to be seen during the day, while one for each sprung up at night.

But the only strange part of this room's inventory was, that it contained no less than five clocks, all going, all ticking, all striking ; except by the hum of mosquitos, I never was more irritated than by those clocks. The good lady whose room I thus appropriated was of the distinguished and truly noble order called old maids, and as even they are not above being fond of pets, I conclude that

clocks—loud-ticking ones, too—were that lady's pets.

Fortunately the pendulum of the loudest was accessible, and making a rush at that in the middle of the night, I silenced it. By degrees, and by some more underhand contrivances, I managed to stop them all; and that triumph effected, I went to the Prestgård, where I met with a hospitable reception, and found a charming family.

The day after I had dined there, as I sat alone in my room in Jönköping, its door opened, and a very pretty, pleasant-looking young lady came in with the customary "Forlåt mig," but now said in the sweetest English, "Pardon me for being the first to come to see you, but Presten said there was an English lady here, and I am so fond of English, I would see an English lady."

I assured her it gave me equal pleasure to see such a Swedish one. Our compliments having given mutual satisfaction, my unknown visitor told me that though she was so fond of the English language, yet her husband, who had some affairs with England, could not learn it.

This led me to enquire what her husband was.

The pretty face looked as if the answer was being considered, and after some short consideration, the young lady replied, "He is a match-maker."

I could have said that as he had so fair a specimen of his skill in that line to produce, his success in doing for others what he had so well done for himself could not be doubted. I replied, however, that I was sure her husband was an excellent match-maker.

"Yes, the matches he makes are indeed the best that are made; he makes them take fire so quick. He makes matches even for the English. If you allow him the honour to follow you, he will show you the workshop."

"O, thank you! I should like to see how that is manufactured."

It was only then I recollected having previously heard that Jönköping was famous for lucifer-matches, called "strike-lights" in Sweden, where the double meaning of our word is thus unknown; and these matches are exported in large quantities to England,

where, indeed, it might seem we have otherwise match-making enough.

The next question to be discussed was, whether there were any place in the neighbourhood or in the town that I wished to see, where my charmingly kind visitor could have the honour of following—*i. e.*, conducting me.

I wished to go to the iron-mountain, called Taberg, but that was about ten English miles off, and I had no carriage.

“ Yes ; that shall be of no consequence. I shall be happy to be allowed the honour of taking you there, and we shall have a little dinner in the valley.”

Who should ever speak well of Swedish kindness and hospitality if I do not? Much could I relate which cannot in these pages be recorded. Such has often been my lot in travel.

Yes, I have wandered far, dwelt among many people,

“ But never found I yet a land unsunned by human kindness.”

And when, it may be months, it may be years, have passed away, and the names, though not the memory, of the kind strangers

have passed with them, how does the heart feel oppressed by the retrospect of accumulated kindnesses from persons one shall hear no more of, see no more of, until that awful day when all shall meet. They know not that we even thank them—perhaps they think of us no more—are quite unconscious that we think of them.

The next day a nice little phaeton was at the door, hired and paid for by one who spoke English, and wished to show kindness to an English stranger!

We drove to the iron-mountain. Our road soon led by a winding lane, along which a rivulet, flowing from that mountain, came often into sight, and was hidden again by our many turnings.

The southern part of Småland, which is by no means one of the smallest provinces of Sweden, is beautifully varied, especially around the charming Lake Wetter—or, as we perhaps should write it, Vetter. Hills, dales, small lakes, and woods there constitute its character, but in the northern districts fir forests spread their dark shadow, and become indeed, as has been well said, I think, by

Fredrika Bremer, the countryman's workshop. The people of Småland are reckoned the most industrious and inventive of Sweden—certainly I have found them also among its kindest and pleasantest.

On this drive to Taberg the sun basked on our faces in a manner that almost proved too much for my power of endurance. A seat in an open phaeton, when the burning sun of the North is straight before you, is by no means pleasant. The high hills around the valley through which our road had run were covered with wood, in which "leaf-trees" mingled; but, on the ascent of a hill, we passed along a plain covered with small leaf-trees and underwood, and then the iron-mountain, called Taberg, presented itself to our sight.

A singular sight it was. A great, insulated, long-backed mountain, with a side of iron, cut straight and smooth, facing us, and the other side green and tree-covered, from whence trees and grass straggled up over the top. Straight before us, 400 feet in height, rose up this perpendicular side of iron, and fastened up against it was a ladder,

or a succession of ladders ; and nearly on the top of a ladder was a man—the rest were away, cutting down the iron as if planing it from the mountain—the sun that had scorched my face was on his back, and his face was to the sun-heated iron wall. And we had come there for amusement, and I had murmured at the heat of the sun as I sat in the carriage trying to defend myself with a parasol!

Well, I have not forgotten that iron-clipper ; and little does he think, whoever he may be, that he is now thought of by one who saw him on the high ladder stuck against the iron-mountain of Småland.

“ Set a Smålander,” says the proverb, “ on a house-top, and he will get his living.” The proverb must be true if he can earn one by cutting iron on a ladder from the face of Taberg when the midsummer sun is at his back.

We descended into the most charming little vale—the elves must have sported there before the miners came, with their huts, and their tools, and noise.

The rivulet that accompanied our way flowed beneath the leaf-trees, and cut the

valley off from the mine-huts, and miners, and mountain.

In this shady and pleasant place—which would be a bosquet in French, but somehow wants a word precisely to designate it in English—my pretty companion had spread a small repast, with native taste and nicety. Our dessert was delicious, for all was home-prepared. Never were such housekeepers in this world as the ladies of Sweden, and their confectionery, or what we aptly call “sweet things,” are quite unparalleled.

I am not sure if the wine were home-made or not; I am not a connoisseur. It was a white wine, and in colour had a yellowish tinge, like that of water that has stood long in a glass bottle; but I cannot, though travellers generally do speak of such matters, tell whether this were or not what they often describe as “excellent wine.” Much more confidently can I say that our ladies’ pic-nic went off excellently; and if it were not that the old fable of the sour grapes makes me fear to incur the suspicion of being in the predicament of the fox, I should venture to affirm that we did not regret the absence of the lords of the creation—rejoicing for a little

minute in believing that our rights to its possession were equal.

From the top of Taberg there is a delightful prospect, which well repays the toil of a walk up on a day when the sun is not so fiercely hot. As I said before, the side of the mountain which faced us as we approached it is a perpendicular wall of rock, from which the iron is cut down; one sees ledges, or projections, as the rock descends, but there is no natural slope, at least it is so slight as to be scarcely apparent. Masses of iron rock lie at its foot. The other sides of the mountain are not so steep, and are clothed with vegetation, and the trees growing from such a foundation add to its peculiarity. On the top there is a considerable level space, and a small valley, which causes the hill, like Vesuvius, to appear to be double, or to have a double summit.

The view from here gives one a fine idea of Sweden, seen in one of its best parts. An immense forest—the whole province would seem to be one forest, broken here and there by shining lakes; the magnificent and most romantic crown of all, Vettern, in its long expanse, its interesting banks, with that rare

sight in Sweden, old castles and towers—are seen from Taberg, together with the many-coloured wooden houses of Jönköping, and form a most admirable picture on a grand scale.

The iron-stone of Taberg is said to be more valuable on account of the facility with which it is cut—or blown up by gunpowder, which also has been done—than from the quantity or quality of the iron it yields. An attempt was made to mine it in the usual way, in hopes of finding richer ore in the interior, but that attempt was abandoned. A scientific traveller, who inspected this most curious mountain fifty years ago, says—“That it will continue to furnish a source of riches to the latest posterity, must be evident from the slightest view of its colossal mass.” The latest posterity is a long date, however, although the age of our world has been many a time settled to end within the fifty years that have passed since these words were written. The latest posterity would seem to imply that “the last man” would be employed as I saw that ever-to-be-remembered one on the side of the iron-mountain. I hope not.

A few more pleasant days were to be passed in Jönköping. Singularly dull and quiet as a Swedish country town is, a foreigner who is disposed to observation may manage to fill up time agreeably.

Lake Vener bathes the rear of the house I inhabit, as it does that of many others. I often walk out there, and see the women beating their linen in its waters ; I stand by the banks, and think of that mighty volume of water when its surface, like the surrounding earth, is all a sheet of ice and snow. The dangers of this lake are great, and faces here look gloomy when I ask if accidents and losses often occur. The boats of the fishermen are often lost in the sudden and capricious squalls to which it is subject. A source of amusement to me is also found in observing, or even counting, the various colours of the houses. Such a variety of colours—blue, pink, yellow, white, red—more, in short, than those of the rainbow, with differently coloured doors and windows, might, one would imagine, alone make a town or village look cheerful. Yet even this advantage—and an advantage, to my eye, it is—fails to remove from those of Sweden that air of profound tranquillity

which is not to be expressed by the word dulness, but which leads a stranger to believe the God of Silence has taken them all under his patronage.

Here, in Jönköping, the traffic on the lake and Göta canal gives an air of some little life, and it is, besides, the capital of a considerable province; nevertheless it is not exempt from that air of external decorum and quietude which gives to these many-coloured towns very much the aspect of a gaily-dressed prude. There never was a people so quiet out of doors as the Swedes, nor one much more jocund and hearty within. Mr Laing might carry on a parallel from this further than I would like to do; but without venturing on the intricate subject of morals, I would characterise Sweden, in one word, as the nation of outward decorum.

In old Scandinavia there is no visible antiquity; the Vikings have left no more trace behind than if their only resting-place had been the waves. The robber-fortresses and castles of the refractory nobles were all levelled to the ground when their multitude rendered their demolition needful; and really, in Sweden,

one cannot help being struck with the fact that nothing but the mighty fir forests, and the boulders, and granite rocks, have the air of antiquity about them.

Of course wooden houses derive no advantage from being old, and, even if time-blackened wood were of interest, the Swedish towns are too often burned down to allow any one of them to be ancient in more than its site or its history.

The great width of the streets—a precaution against fire—adds at once to the modern, and the quiet air of these towns. Such was the case at Upsala, where I went with my head full of some vague notion of an old university and cathedral, and found nothing but the latter and the old castle remaining of “the old time.” There was Upsala as new as all else, to my inexpressible disgust; the same wide, cleanly streets, which seem such a nice soil for the springing grass—the same painted wooden houses, and—except when the students who lodge in them verify their right to wear the ugly white cap, by making frantic musical noises—the same silence.

Småland has been the birth-place of some celebrated men, foremost among whom is Carl Linne, known to the world, according to the fashion of learned men latinising their names, as Linnæus. In the deep woods spreads and blooms the sweet little flower that bears the name of its discoverer—the *Linnæa Borealis*, the almost adored flower of Sweden—for it is Swedish, and has been made famous by a Swede.

It is indeed a sweet, wild thing, and a gentle little savage: scorning all the arts of civilised life, it keeps to its own wood-life, and dies when officious care would seek to cultivate it. I gathered this pretty little thing in the woods, and often wondered how it had come to live unknown until the great botanist brought into renown, and made it the heir of his name. I have had a specimen laid up in a book for two years, and its tiny branches preserve their wild and graceful form.

But if Småland has produced some celebrated men, what shall we say of its women, since even now there is a law extant which, says the native historian, gives the women of a certain district in Småland

the right to inherit property like men, to wear belt and sword, and march to church to be married by beat of drum; the two latter privileges being of so high a character as to lead one to envy the fair maidens who purchased them for their descendants, by bravely resisting the attack of the enemy with whom their nation was at war, while the men of the district were "not at home."

Up to the time of the Reformation, says the modern historian of Sweden, in noble families a spear formed a part of the gift presented to the bride on her marriage, which, after that event, was thrown out of the window of her house—"whether," says Geijer, "to denote the obligation of the wife to take part in its defence, we do not pretend to determine."

If the spear were thrown *into* the house such an exposition would be more probable. To throw *out* of it the weapon of defence appears to me a symbolism explanatory of the fact that the powers of self-defence were thenceforth taken out of the lady's possession.

I was invited to the house of my nice English-speaking acquaintance, in order to meet, as she said, "a great proprietor, who spoke English, and his agent." I met two gentlemen, one young and delicate-looking, the other stout, elderly, and comfortable-looking.

Naturally I concluded this last was the great proprietor, and the other his poor agent. The reverse was the case. The young man was coming from Helsingfors, and was a Scotch-Finn-Russian—that is to say, he was the son of a Scotchman, who brought his wits to Sweden and made his fortune, and his son being born in Finland was a Finn, and a Russian subject.

My kind young friend, the match-maker's wife, with the usual national management, had formed a plan for me. She knew I wished to see Wadstena, and as this gentleman lived near it she thought nothing could be more apropos than to propose to him to take charge of me there. I did not object at all, and he only objected on one ground—namely, that he should be sea-sick on the lake, and could not pay me the requisite attentions.

To which I frankly responded by saying, that all I desired was to see old Wadstena Kloster — or the ruins of Wadstena — and should not think about the attentions at all.

So that sweet lady, the match-maker's wife, arranged the whole affair, and the next day I stepped on board the steam-boat, and we trembled away over the glass-smooth lake; and, true enough, the Scotch-Finn-Russian was down in a berth, and only came up, with a real sea-sick face, when we stopped at a place not many English miles distant from Wadstena.

Then he told me a cart was coming down for the luggage, and mine should be landed with his; but luggage I had none, for I meant to return by the boat next day. But there came an old-fashioned carriage with the cart, and he put me into it, and sent me away by myself; and the carriage took me up a hill, or high bank, and brought me to a stately mansion in a grand and charming position, overlooking the lake at one end and the flowing river at the other; and there a nice lady received me as if I had been duly expected. Not one day was I to remain

there, but a whole week, in fact, till I could remain no longer; for my travelling companion, the Baroness, all this time was thinking that I never would re-issue from my underground passage, at least on the soil of Sweden.

Pleasant was it to walk in the "untrodden ways," not beside "the springs of Dove," but by those of Motala river: deep shades were there and silent walks, and much to refresh a travel-wearied wanderer; but I came only to see Wadstena, and to Wadstena I must go.

The kind "proprietor"—the word is significant when uttered by Swedes—conveyed me there in his carriage. I have seen in the notes of one or two English travellers who traversed the curious water-highway known as the Göta canal, the observation that on the banks of Lake Wetter had been observed the ruins of an old castle. Those ruins are decidedly the most interesting in Sweden.

Wadstena has a double interest. It was once the royal residence, and the walls seen from the lake are those of the palace, so closely identified with the earlier history of the kingdom—with some of its most romantic and most gloomy episodes.

The state room is now used as a store-house for corn ; and the window is still shown which is connected with one of those deadly domestic tragedies for which the family history of the famous Gustavus Wasa is so pre-eminent. The beautiful Cæcilia is still spoken of at Wadstena.

.But not this palace, with its old wild memories, was the object of interest to me.

It is to its convent, not its castle, that Wadstena owes its traditionary interest in Sweden.

St Brigitta is *the* Swedish saint. It is singular that almost all the missionaries who converted Sweden from paganism, a thousand years after the advent of our Lord, should have been Englishmen ; almost all the provinces had a tutelary saint who had come from England, and had the honour of being martyred by the Swedes. None of these names are now much heard of, for saints are out of fashion in Sweden ; but St Brigitta is remembered in tradition, in song, and in history. She was a native, and a truly wonderful woman—one that belonged to the Christian

era in which she lived, the earlier part of the fourteenth century.

The old tradition of the place says that before Birger Jarl laid the foundations of Stockholm, an old fortress here was already in ruins, and the people show an immense and curious stone, that has become fastened, they say, to the bottom of the lake, but which was a portion of that building, and they say the later name of Wadstena was derived from *vattna sten*, or water stone—a derivation by no means unlikely. No place in Sweden holds a more prominent position in its earlier history than does Wadstena. The old palace was built in the time of the famous Birger Jarl, most probably by his son Waldemar, elected King of Sweden in his boyhood; from it was named Waldemarshus. The marriage of King Waldemar, who was distinguished for his beauty, was celebrated with great pomp and rejoicings at Jönköping in the year 1262; but that old palace was a ruin in the time, so quickly succeeding, of Albert of Mecklenburg, scarcely more than a hundred years after its erection. The walls of the moated castle, or palace of

Wadstena, that still exist, date from the time of Gustavus Wasa. But a more interesting vestige of the old time remains than the ruins of that palace, where his frantic children have left a sad memory of sin or shame—for here is the church called by the people St Brita's kyrka. This was the cloister-church, and of Wadstena Kloster this alone remains. Gustavus Wasa, in his annihilation of religious houses and seizures of church property, did not call in his nobles to partake of the spoil—he took it all to himself; but unlike our Henry VIII, whose picture is in his palace of Gripsholm, he used little violence, proceeding in general with a velvet paw to take the prey; assuring the good people he never meant to change their religion, but only to correct its abuses.

The St Bridget of Sweden was one of that family who afterwards became so remarkable, and I believe have lately become extinct in that country—the family of Brahe. She was a wife, and the mother of eight children, one of whom, her eldest daughter Catherine, became also a saint, and her grand-daughter was the first Abbess of her Convent of

Wadstena. Writing of her time, the historian Geijer says—"Of Science and Art little can yet be related, but in the old time there were minds in the North attracted more than those of other men from the night and fogs of earth into 'that other light' as even the heathens called the invisible or spiritual world." And then this truly Protestant philosopher adds—"St Bridget is the seer of Catholicism, as we may call Swedenborg, in modern days, the seer of Protestantism (!) Both distinguished by virtuous lives, and intellect higher than ordinary, they appeal to visions and revelations, remarkable in the annals of the human soul. Of these we content ourselves with observing, that contrastedly they show how the unsubstantial may take the image, garb, and colouring of different ages, and speak to extraordinary persons in the echo of their own breasts, cramped though it be by the bonds of prejudice. The revelations of St Bridget, though brought into question at the Council of Basle, are not rejected by the Catholic Church, which canonised her in 1391."

Bridget, after a pilgrimage to Jerusalem,

died at Rome, at the age of seventy. "A strong and enduring spirit," says Fredrika Bremer, "did she possess—the mysterious being who went forth from Upland, and was canonised by Rome : and who, alternately praised and blamed by her contemporaries, is not yet at all understood, for she sought an honour that was not in the award of man, but said, when she resolved on her pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre—'I have neither begun, nor do I aim at concluding this for your sakes. I have determined in my soul to pay no regard to the remarks of men.' " The eldest son of St Bridget was proposed to be elected the King of Sweden when Magnus Ericson was deposed. The rules she formed for her convent were sanctioned by the Pope in 1370, and before that convent had been very long opened it received into its community a remarkable personage, Queen Philippa, the heroic daughter of our great Henry IV, and the ill-treated wife of the worthless Eric of Pomerania, the adopted successor of the valiant Margaret of Denmark. The same Eric who, as we noticed before, lived as a pirate in Gottland—made also a pilgrimage

to the Holy Sepulchre, during which time his queen ruled the united kingdom; introduced many improvements, especially in the coinage; and afterwards defended Copenhagen against the combined fleets of the Hanseatic League and Holstein, while her terrified husband was concealed in the monastery of Sorö, at a few miles distance.

Only two years after that gallant defence, Philippa having renounced her unworthy husband, her royal dignity and worldly estate, died in Wadstena Kloster, A.D. 1430.

In the opera-house of Stockholm I saw an interesting, though rather curious piece performed, in which the events of this period were represented. Engelbrekt Engelbrektson, the great miner of Dalecarlia, whose name has now lived in the traditions of the people longer than that of King Gustaf I, was its hero, and Queen Philippa, laying aside her robes of state in the Court of Denmark, formed one of the scenes, together with a curious procession-dance of the ladies, each holding a large wax-light in her hand. The worst parts of it were the praying scenes, which, on this stage, when they refer to "the

old time," are accompanied, not only by a cross, but a crucifix — most painful to a Christian mind to behold.

Unfortunately the Convent of Wadstena was of that double character which has never been found well to succeed, for nuns and monks do not, somehow, agree well together. And history asserts, though even history is often given to slander, that St Brigitta's rule was ill-observed. Yet still is her name held in honour, and her book of prayers is said to be the only one by a Swedish author ever translated into Arabic.

Perhaps Sigtuna and Wadstena are the two places in Sweden where one may best ponder over the history of that land, if inclined so to do. The diets, and councils, and statutes of Wadstena are ever referred to in it, and in the little dull and silent town, where the grass grows beneath the inhabitants' feet as well as over the roofs of their houses, one feels that it is not in ruins alone the changes of time are written.

Not very far from this is a charming spot, called Grenna, and the fine banks of the lake

present more interest, in the way of old castles and memorials of former ages, than one may find in many a day's journey in other parts of the country.

Beautiful, indeed, is Vettern—beautiful in the bright light of the summer sun; but, O! how beautiful in the mystic light of the summer's night! What deep thanks do we owe to the Providence who implants in the heart of a world-sufferer the blessed love of nature!—a love that makes, or keeps us young—a love that comes back to green over again the mental wastes that time will make. Yes, here, away from home and friends, that old love comes in to fill the space where an aching void might be.

These mystic nights—with their light that is not of the day, nor yet of the night—a poetic light—are so suited to Lake Vetter. But a winter night, when the great spherical moon of the North hangs in mid-space over the ice-bound lake, and dark fir-crowned islets, that rise like snow-heaps thickly over it, and gleams on the white banks, showing all around so clear, so large—then is the time for its old wild legends to

come to mind, and stranger and more fearful things to be thought of than enter the mind in the spiritual loveliness of a midsummer night.

“It is time, if you please, to go home,” said a voice that made me leap from my seat on a stone, so close to the lake that my feet were almost in its waters.

It was my Helsingfors friend; and there was the carriage waiting on the bank.

So we drove away from Wadstena ruins, and went afterwards to see a very different place. The time that was, and the time that is, represented by each. Here men once shut themselves up to pray—there men now were shut up to work. We went to the iron-works of Motola, the greatest in Sweden. Here, amid the heat of burning furnaces, are men and boys flinging red-hot bars about with horrid clang, on this burning hot day. Here is the age of money-making, of toil, of steam, when all must go fast, replacing that older age in which we have been idling.

Iron steamers, which are reputed excellent, as well as engines, and all sorts of iron-works, are carried on here; but the clang

and the heat makes one's head ache, and I would only go willingly into an iron foundry when I get tired of scribbling, and wish to return to my pen with a better heart.

END OF VOL. I.

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