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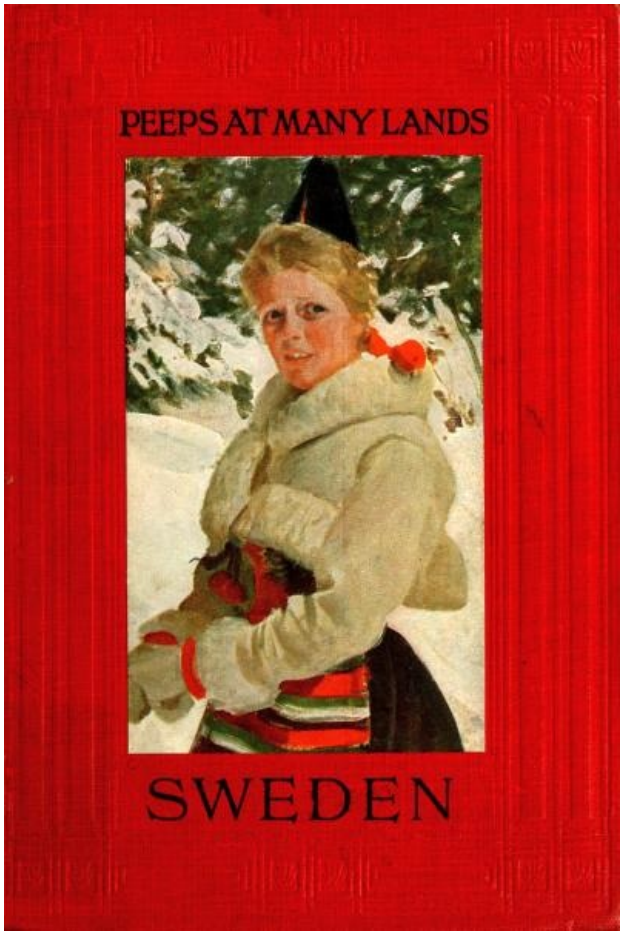

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS
SWEDEN

VOLUMES UNIFORM WITH THIS

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PEEPS AT NATURE

WILD FLOWERS AND THEIR WONDERFUL WAYS	BIRD LIFE OF THE SEASONS
BRITISH LAND MAMMALS	THE HEAVENS

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PEEPS AT GREAT RAILWAYS

THE LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY
THE NORTH-EASTERN AND GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAYS

PUBLISHED BY ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.

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Transcriber's Notes

Author's spelling, though often incorrect has been maintained.

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SWEDEN

A FLODA GIRL.

Anders Zorn.

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BY

REV. WM. LIDDLE, M.A., B.D.

AND

MRS. LIDDLE

WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

BY

ANDERS ZORN, CARL LARSSON, AND OTHERS

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ARTIST.

SKETCH-MAP OF SWEDEN.

SWEDEN

CHAPTER I
SWEDISH HISTORY

In one of the most beautiful and romantic districts of Sweden there is one of the oldest copper-mines in the world. It is situated at Falun in Dalecarlia. About 400 years ago a young man might have been seen looking into the open mine. He was full of thought and anxiety, for was not his country in the hands of the Danish King, Christian II., a cruel tyrant? and was not he himself being pursued and driven to seek concealment, as he was a direct descendant of the ancient Kings of Sweden? He had suffered much, but had never given up hope. He stood there thinking of his country's down-trodden condition, hopeful, trustful, and resolute, resolving to deliver his native land from the foreign yoke. He remembered how the miners had fought in days of old for their country. He would rouse them so that they would do it again. He donned the peasant costume, and became as one of themselves. He worked alongside them in the mines, and soon became a great favourite because of his bright, winning manner. He took every opportunity of speaking to them of the subject that lay nearest to his heart—the freedom of their native land. He told them of the massacre of many nobles at Stockholm, of ladies of rank being thrown into the sea, of boys being whipped to death, and of peasants hanged for the slightest offence at the order of King Christian, the Nero of the North.

After working in the mine for some time, he was recognized. He then took service with an old college friend, Anders Persson, of Rankhytta, who sympathized with him, but was unable to help him. He sent him to Squire Arendt Persson, who, eager to win the reward offered for Gustavus Vasa's capture, betrayed him to the Danish soldiers. Arendt's wife suspected treachery, and let the young man down with a towel from a window in the loft to the snow-covered ground outside, where a trusty servant was waiting with a sledge to convey him to a place of safety. When Persson arrived next morning with soldiers, he found the bird flown.

On another occasion he took refuge in a hut in the forest. The Danes had so entirely encircled the district, that Gustavus seemed completely in their power. A friend, however, hid him in a load of straw, and proceeded towards Rättvik. They were surrounded by Danish soldiers, who stopped the cart and roughly thrust their sharp pikes into the straw. Gustavus was pierced in the side by a spear. The pain was great, but he endured it without a groan. Satisfied he could not be there, the soldiers rode on. Blood, however, was seen on the ground. To account for this, the driver had cut his horse's leg close down to the hoof.

As soon as he recovered from this wound, he went with renewed vigour and zeal from hut to hut, exhorting the people to rise and throw off the Danish yoke. This led him into great difficulties and great suffering. He was often in want of food, and afraid to ask shelter. At one time he had scarcely a moment to conceal himself under a fallen tree before a party of Danish soldiers galloped up.

At last he made his way to Dalecarlia, where he had made his first venture. The Danish soldiers again got on his track. He rushed to the house of a peasant, and found the wife at her spinning-wheel. When she knew who he was, she put him into a dark cellar underneath the kitchen-floor, and covered the trap-door with a large brewing vat. The soldiers were baffled, and although they were strongly of opinion that Gustavus was there, left without him, but not without having been entertained by the good woman, who had never lost her presence of mind.

Gustavus Vasa, after many trials and disappointments, seemed to think that he must give up his scheme, and resolved to leave the country for Norway. He was away in a lonely spot, and preparing to cross the mountains, when he heard voices calling to him. He turned round, and saw some Dalecarlians on skis, who had been sent by their companions to recall him, as they had resolved to rise against the Danes under his leadership. Gladly he agreed to their request, and returned to Mora, where, on a Sunday after church, he addressed the men, recounting the miseries and sufferings of the land under the Danes. "He has a manly voice, and a winning tongue," said an old man, "and see the north wind blows. Let us attend to what he says." The north wind blowing was considered a good omen—a sign that God would be gracious. Gustavus was soon chosen lord and chieftain over Dalecarlia, and the whole realm of Sweden. After he had collected an army of several hundred men, he marched to Falun, seized the property of the Danish and German merchants, and distributed it among his men. Infected by his enthusiasm and encouraged by his early success, the Swedes assembled round his banner in large numbers. The Danes were struck by their courage and hardihood. On one occasion a Danish General asked how a large force of Swedes could be supported in so wild a country. A Swede, hearing the remark, said that the Dalecarlians were content to drink water, and, if need be, eat bread made from the bark of a tree. Thereupon the Dane said: "A people who eat wood and drink water, the devil himself cannot subdue," much less any other. The Swedes at first were poorly armed, but with bows and arrows, axes, and clubs, used with an intense love of Gustavus and country, they repeatedly defeated the Danes, who, after two years' hard fighting, were driven out of Sweden. On Midsummer's Eve, June 23, 1523, Gustavus made a triumphant entry into Stockholm as King. He reigned for thirty years. His memory is fresh to-day in Sweden as the liberator of the country from the Danish yoke.

Another name that is honoured by every true Swede, and by many who are not Swedes, is Gustavus Adolphus I. He is chiefly and justly held in honour because of what he did for the Protestant cause in Europe. The Protestant Princes had lost heart, as they had suffered very much at the hands of Generals Tilly and Wallenstein. Gustavus resolved to go to the aid of the Princes. With only 13,000 Swedes he set sail, but as soon as he reached Germany, large numbers of men joined his army. Emperor Ferdinand, when he heard of his arrival, said: "Oh, we have another little enemy come against us!" His courtiers replied with a laugh, and said: "The Snow King will melt as he approaches the southern sun." He did not melt, but proved an iron King, as he drove everyone before him. Soon he rallied the Protestant forces, and made his power felt from the Polar Sea to the Alps.

The Emperor's Generals found in him more than a match. He was cut off, however, very early in life. He was with his devoted men before Lützen preparing for a great battle. As usual, they prepared by worshipping God. They sang the King's hymn, "Fear not, little flock," and then engaged in prayer. The next day the King mounted his horse to lead his army. When his officers saw him, he was without his armour. They urged him to put it on. "God is my cuirass," said the King, and galloped into the thick of the fight. It was a desperate fight,

and a critical moment, when his riderless horse was seen rushing madly out of the fray. Gustavus Adolphus was dead. He had died in the hour of victory. He was not only a great man, but also a good man. He believed in God's willingness to help the right. "To pray often is almost to conquer," was a favourite saying of his.

Charles XII. was another warrior-King of Sweden, and was one of Europe's greatest and youngest of soldiers. At the age of fifteen, when most boys are thinking of amusement, he ascended the throne of Sweden after the death of his father, and a few months later took the reins of government into his hand and placed himself at the head of his army. He was possessed of great energy, very courageous—perhaps oftentimes foolhardy—but too ambitious of winning glory. Within twelve months, when he was only nineteen years of age, he had to encounter Denmark, Russia, and Poland. He first so attacked Denmark that the King had to sue for peace. On a November morning, with 8,000 Swedes, he attacked 50,000 Russians under the walls of Narva, and inflicted on them a great defeat. He then dethroned the King of Poland and put another in his place. His hatred of Russia was his downfall. In 1708 he again invaded that country. He spent the winter in an impoverished and hostile land, and when the Czar, Peter the Great, with 70,000 men, attacked him, he had but 23,000 worn-out and destitute men. He was defeated, and fled to Turkey, where he found a refuge; but at the end of 1715 he returned to Sweden. Notwithstanding his reverses, his passion for fighting led him to attack Norway in 1716 and 1718, when he was killed at Frederikshald at the early age of thirty-six.

He is one of the heroes of Sweden. He called upon his men to suffer much, which they did willingly, as they were devoted to him, because of his courage, his sympathy with them, and his ever-cheerful countenance. He, however, exhausted the country, as the wars he carried on drained her of her best blood, and emptied her treasury. From this date Sweden was no longer one of the great military powers. It was of Charles that Dr. Johnson wrote, in his "Vanity of Human Wishes," the celebrated lines:

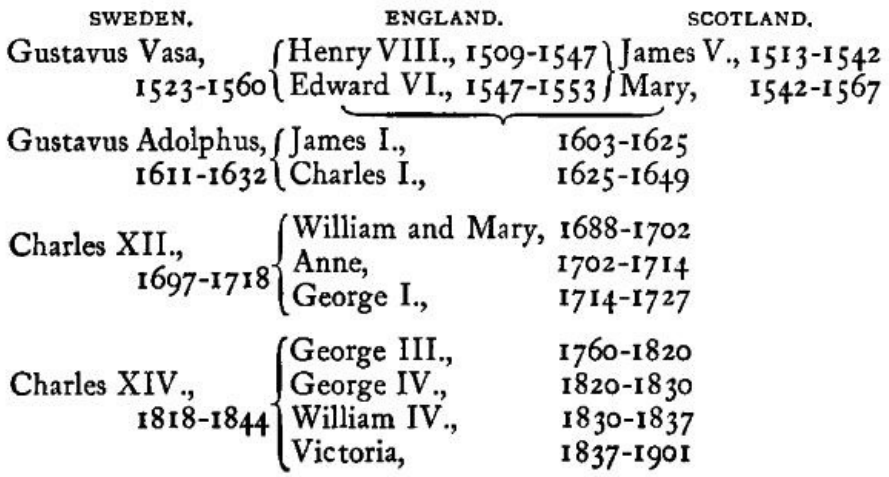
> "His fall was destin'd to a barren strand,
> A petty fortress, and a dubious hand.
> He left the name at which the world grew pale
> To point a moral or adorn a tale."

The last of this line of Kings was Charles XIII. He was an old, infirm, and childless man when the question arose who should succeed him. Napoleon Bonaparte was then carrying everything before him, and among his Generals was one Bernadotte, who had risen from the ranks, and proved himself to be one of the greatest powers in France at that time. The Swedes chose him as Crown Prince, very much against Napoleon's wish, who, no doubt, did not desire to lose so able a General, but at last, probably thinking that Bernadotte would help him in his schemes, said, "Well, go! may our fates be fulfilled." Bernadotte soon after this took a leading part in Napoleon's overthrow, and in 1818 ascended the throne of Sweden as Charles XIV. He reigned for twenty-six years, and proved a wise ruler. His great-grandson is the present King.

OUR COUNTRY.

Otto Hesselbom.

The following is a list of Kings in our country contemporary with the Swedish ones of whom a brief sketch has been given:



SWEDEN.	ENGLAND.	SCOTLAND.
Gustavus Vasa, 1523-1560	**Henry VIII., 1509-1547** **Edward VI.,1547-1553**	**James V., 1513-1542** **Mary, 1542-1567**
Gustavus Adolphus, 1611-1632	**James I., 1603-1625** **Charles I., 1625-1649**	
Charles XII., 1697-1718	**William and Mary, 1688-1702** **Anne, 1702-1714** **George I.,1714-1727**	
Charles XIV., 1818-1844	**George III.,1760-1820** **George IV., 1820-1830** **William IV.,1830-1837** **Victoria, 1837-1901**	

CHAPTER II
GOTHENBURG

Sweden is a country that is not very well known, but is one that is most interesting to visit, because of the kindliness of the people and beauty of the scenery as well as many historical associations. As soon as you have reached the little island of Winga, with its lighthouse, you are led to think of those days, long, long ago, when the Goths left these shores in their Viking ships, to sweep the seas and found kingdoms, or of those days when Gustavus Adolphus gathered the young able-bodied men of the country, that they might go with him to Germany to fight for the faith he loved, while the old men and women were left to till the land. In many places you come across beautiful castles containing great treasures which Gustavus and his Generals brought home from the war. These were days when the Swedes were known everywhere as heroes in the battle-field. Now, you do not think of them so much as a warlike nation, but as one peaceful and industrious, seeking to win honour and renown in the more peaceful field of science, industry, and art. The poet Tegner says:

> “We have conquered a world at the point of our sword,
> Let us now win the world by our song and our thought.”

The rough seas of the ocean are past. The calm waters of the Göta have been entered. You have still some hours to journey before you reach Gothenburg, the second city of Sweden. The steamer threads its way through a crowd of rocky islands, very bare, barren, and desolate, with scarcely any vegetation. Here and there can be seen a lonely fisherman’s hut, painted red, and perhaps an occasional lighthouse. If it be a Sunday afternoon or a holiday, there is plenty of life. There in summer can be seen hundreds of men and women bathing in the water, or basking in the open air on the banks of the river or on the islands. Every now and then you meet steamers crowded with pleasure-seekers, who are to spend the day at Marstrand, Lysekil, or one of the numerous watering-places in this northern archipelago. These islands, bare as they are, have a wonderful fascination. Spend a short time on one of them, and you have a desire to repeat your visit. There is the restfulness of the lonely island with the clear water dashing upon the rocky shore. What glorious sunsets, as the sun sinks into the ocean beyond Winga!

As the steamer wends her way up the river, among other places you pass Styrso, with its baths, sea-bathing, and many fine villas built by Gothenburg merchants, and Långedrag, another of the numerous sea-resorts. Your curiosity is aroused by the sight of large tin cans, similar in appearance to those that convey the milk from the farms to the towns in our country. These are water-cans. They have no fresh water suitable for drinking in many of the islands, so that it has to be carried every day from a town. Now you come to Elfsborg,

an abandoned and dismantled fort situated on an island rock in the channel. The church of Majorna looks down upon you from the top of a cliff. Then, after you pass the ship-building yard and factories, you arrive at the Harbour of Gothenburg, the fortress of the Göta.

The origin of all towns is interesting. How did Gothenburg come into existence? It dates back from the time of Gustavus Adolphus, who founded it in 1619. We are told that he came on a visit to this neighbourhood to decide upon the site of a new city. As he stood on the top of the Mountain Otterhällen, surrounded by his advisers and officers, a small bird, chased by an eagle, flew to the feet of the King for refuge. The King thought this was a message from heaven, and there and then decided that the new city should be built at the foot of the mountain. To keep the memory of the founder fresh, the inhabitants have erected a statue of King Gustavus Adolphus in one of the squares. It represents him with big boots, military cloak, hat with feathers, and finger pointing out the site of the city.

The steamer has arrived earlier than was expected. You cannot leave the ship, as your friends are coming for you. You need not remain on board because you cannot speak Swedish. Nearly every intelligent inhabitant of Gothenburg can converse fluently in English. Wait patiently for a little and the captain will allow you to telephone to your friends from the ship. Very many ships have the telephone. By the time the custom-house officer has examined and chalked your luggage, the telephone connection has been made. It saves one's friends many a long and weary wait for the uncertain arrival of a steamer.

Thus you are introduced to one of the striking features of Swedish life. The telephone is universal. Every place of business, of course, has one, but also every private house, every farm, and even the little kiosks on the street can boast of a connection.

After landing, as you drive through the streets you are struck by the Dutch appearance of the city. Canals intersect the streets. This is because the first inhabitants were chiefly Dutch merchants, called into the country by the King.

The city makes a splendid impression on one, as the streets are well laid out and the houses well built.

How bright and fresh everything appears in the King's Port Avenue or the Allée, lined, as they both are, with rows of spreading trees and stately buildings! These are the fashionable streets and favourite promenades, where can be seen the youth and beauty of Gothenburg.

The visitor must also see a large public park—Slottskögen—where the working-men, with their wives and children, listen to the music of the band. Then there are the Botanic Gardens, which are also a pleasure-resort.

You should not miss the market where you buy your fish alive. Near by is the fruit-market, where you see the old women behind their stalls of flowers, fruits, and vegetables. One wonders how they move, they are enveloped in so much clothing. There, too, can be seen the little boat with its load of firewood. Near by are tables laden with sausages and hams.

CHAPTER III

A SUMMER HOLIDAY AT MARSTRAND

I must now give you an idea how a holiday is spent at the seaside in Sweden. Early in the year the question is, Where shall we spend the summer? Three whole months of liberty and sunshine—this is what every boy and girl looks forward to in Sweden, as the public schools all close on the last days of May, or first days of June, and do not reopen till the first day of September.

This summer we decide to go to Marstrand, and I will try to give you an idea how a day is spent there. On a fine morning in the first week of June we board the pretty steamer *St. Erik*, and although we have come early, we find it already crowded with families hurrying off to the seaside, so great is the rush from town as soon as the schools are closed. We have to sit wedged in between beds and perambulators, so many and varied are the things it is necessary to take to a Swedish watering-place.

After the steamer has threaded its course for about two hours between the numerous rocks and islands, we suddenly get a glimpse of the tower of Marstrand's fortress, dominating the whole island, and overlooking the stormy Kattegat, whose waves beat on its shores from all sides. Then we steam up through a very narrow passage, cut in the rocks years ago, to allow the gunboats of that day to retreat under the guns of the fortress.

Many a time, as a child, I used to watch with anxiety the progress of the steamer when in that narrow canal, as the boat almost touches the cliffs on either side, and it needs great skill to pilot her through safely.

Having passed through, we are in full view of Marstrand. What a glamour rests over that sunny island to many a holiday-seeker!

But as your eyes gaze upon it, you look in vain for any handsome buildings or hotels; what you see is a lot of nicely-built houses with red tiled roofs, all clustered closely together at the foot of the fortress, which is built on the highest hill of the island. A prominent feature is the white church with its square tower. The town was founded in 1220 by the Norwegian King Hakon Hakonson. During the sixteenth century it rose into importance as one of the best herring fisheries of the North, but in these days it depends almost entirely on the support of its summer visitors. We have now arrived at Marstrand quay, which is crowded with happy, chattering people, everyone eager to welcome some friend; or it may be they have just come down to watch the arrival of the steamer, this being one of the excitements of the island.

A SWEDISH SHEPHERDESS.
Anders Zorn.

How delicious and soft the air is, full of the briny smell of the sea! Excitement runs high amongst the young people, as they think of all the delights of a summer at Marstrand, which are chiefly summed up in the three words, bathing, sailing, and fishing. We soon get settled into our home for the summer, a large, airy villa, standing in a shady garden, not far from the battery, and having a fine view of the sea.

Our first fishing expedition is planned to take place the day after our arrival. We are wakened early in the morning, between five and six o'clock. With eagerness we jump out of bed, and as we mean business and not only pleasure, we don an old serge skirt, as we know we shall get many a soaking of salt water from the spray of the waves as well as from the dripping fish. After a hurried breakfast we rush down to the quay, where we find our faithful old skipper Anders in his large, comfortable sailing-boat, waiting for us.

We sail right out into the open sea, where we drop anchor, and now the sport begins. The fishing-lines are unwound, each line often having about six hooks. These we bait with mussels. When luck is good, one has not long to wait; we were soon all busy pulling up and letting down our lines again as fast as we could, often getting two whiting or plaice at a time.

What fun it is to feel the tug and pull of the fish, but after a couple of hours we are ready to return home, feeling almost giddy with the strong air and the rocking of the boat; but we have enjoyed the morning immensely, and come back full of joy and spirits.

Another pleasure at Marstrand is the sailing. Along the quay are moored several large boats with their white sails hoisted, bearing various Northern names, such as *Thor*, *Balder*, *Gudrun*, *Ingeborg*, etc.

One hires these boats by the hour; the favourite sail is to the well-known "Paternoster" ledges, a group of rocky islets distant four miles from Marstrand, in beautiful open sea. These islands are much dreaded by sailors, and on Hamnskär, the largest of them, there is a lighthouse, and below it is the light-keeper's house, a low stone building, the only human dwelling-place on the island. There are also two little towers; one holds the fog-bell, and the other the windmill which winds the clock which gives the warning to the vessels that pass near those fatal rocks.

Often these pleasure sailings are extended for a whole day; the boats are large and comfortable, and the skippers are skilful, reliable men.

On the one half of Marstrand the town is built. It looks very quaint and old with its narrow, cobbled streets. There are two parks, one named Paradicet (the Paradise). This used to be the favourite meeting-place for the visitors, but lately the park which surrounds the Society House is the rendezvous, and near it are the public bathing-houses.

The sea-bathing house is built in a circle, and covers a good deal of water, the depth of the water being about 3 feet. From the enclosure there are doors that open out into the open sea for the more able swimmers. Each bather has a small room to undress in, and all these rooms lead out on to a gallery that runs entirely round the basin of water, into which steps descend at convenient intervals.

There is always a teacher of swimming to give lessons to those who do not know how to swim, and there are not many boys and girls in Sweden who do not learn this accomplishment very early.

The climate of Marstrand is very mild and balmy. There is scarcely any difference in the temperature between night and day; consequently, the temperature of the sea is very even, and sea-bathing is enjoyed till

late in September.

For the sight-seer the fortress “Carlsten,” of Marstrand, is an object of interest. It is still in a perfectly preserved condition. In some places the walls are blasted out of the cliffs; in others built of granite. From its high ramparts one gets a fine view of all the surrounding islands and sea.

Marstrand itself is all grey rock, with a very few trees. A favourite walk is round the island. At one place you pass between high cliffs, a very narrow passage called the Needle’s Eye. The extreme point of the island is called Tå Udden—the Cape of the Toe. This is a favourite resort, as here you gaze right out on the sea, and when it is stormy you see the grand spectacle of the waves dashing against the low rocks.

CHAPTER IV
ACROSS SWEDEN BY WATER

An interesting and comfortable way of reaching Stockholm from Gothenburg is by canal. Between these two cities are many lakes, including Vener, Vetter, Hjelmär, and Malar. These are so linked together by canals, that they form a waterway across Sweden through which fairly large passenger and cargo-boats can go from the North Sea to the Baltic.

Travelling by canal-boat is, as a rule, tedious. It is interesting in this case. The steamer passes through a country which has many towns, churches, and castles that make you think of long, long ago, and also many factories and workshops that speak of the present. You rarely lose sight of vast expanses of water and great stretches of forest. In the distance you can see a whitewashed parish church glistening in the sun, here and there farmhouses and woodmen’s huts nestling among the trees, and sometimes the castle where the nobleman of the district lives. How comfortable is the steamer, ever fresh-looking with its white paint, with its nice dining-room, clean and tidy cabins, food beautifully cooked, and well served by smart waitresses. Both mind and body have enough to make the time pass pleasantly.

To avoid the monotony of the first part of the journey, many join the steamer at Gothenburg about midnight, and arrive at Trollhättan early in the morning. After morning coffee with *kringlor* (ring-twisted) biscuits, you leave the steamer while it passes through the locks, eleven in number, and walk along the shaded paths until you come to the falls. They consist of a series of six rapids, and are noted not on account of their heights, but because of the volume of water. They are playing a large part in the industrial life of the country, and are destined to do much more.

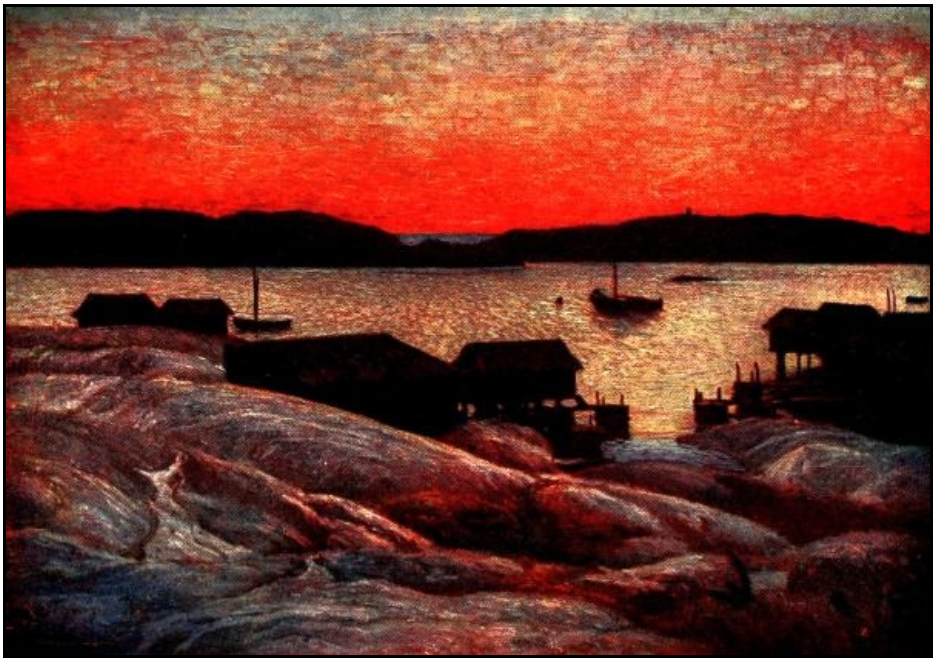
In a very short distance the steamer has ascended 144 feet, and once more enters the Göta River, along which it travels until it enters Lake Vener, the largest lake in Scandinavia. It is very picturesque and beautiful, with many houses and villages on its banks. More than thirty rivers run into it. You very often meet steamers and sailing-vessels, and for their safety a great many lighthouses have been erected. It is not till you have passed through this lake that you enter the Göta Canal.

The canal owes its origin to a desire in the sixteenth century to connect Lake Vener with the Baltic. It was not until 1808 that Baltzar von Platen, with the assistance of the English engineer Telford, staked out the course, and the work was completed in 1820 at a cost of about £1,000,000. Very many soldiers were engaged on it. The whole distance is about 125 miles, which is a long distance to travel by canal steamer, especially as passing through locks is slow, but the beauty and variety of the scenery, as well as the sights, ancient and modern, always keep up the interest.

After entering the canal at Sjötorp, the steamer proceeds very slowly, always ascending, until it reaches Lake Vetter, 308 feet above the Baltic. Next morning, when you come on deck, you find that you have entered the lake itself. Away to the south is Sweden’s greatest fortress. You can see it in the distance with the tower surmounted by the national flag. Lake Vetter is clear and blue and is beautiful to look upon, but every mariner dreads it, as, without any warning, violent storms arise. Sailing across in a south-easterly direction, you come to a famous old town—Vadstena. How times have changed! Before you rise the massive castle with its towers and spire. It was built by Gustavus Vasa, who when fifty-eight years of age brought here his third wife, Katarina Stenboch, who was only sixteen and a very unwilling bride. The lake comes up to the walls and fills the moat, which is used as a harbour.

There are here remains of two churches, which owed their origin, as the town did, to a convent founded by S. Brigitta in the sixteenth century. She was a splendid woman, and drew to her side ladies of noble birth from many countries. Life was very strict in the convent, no one could possess any wealth, no intercourse was allowed with old friends except on rare occasions. Every nun was driven out at the Reformation, and not much is left to tell of their having lived there, but in the town many women make beautiful lace of the old patterns the nuns used to work. Often on board the steamer a woman brings a basketful to sell. The steamer re-enters the canal at Motala, where there are very large engineering works, at which all the science of modern times is employed in turning out all sorts of engines and mechanical appliances.

When the steamer is entering Lake Roxen, we are again carried back to the old days. Here is Vreta Closter, where of old kings were buried, and here, too, can be seen several coffins in one of the chapels. These contain the remains of members of the Douglas family, who fought under Gustavus Adolphus. Their descendants have a high place among Swedish nobility at the present day.



SUMMER EVENING ON THE WEST COAST OF SWEDEN.

Oscar Hullgren.

Lake Roxen is a beautiful sheet of clear crystal water, with steep, rocky, and wooded shores on the one side, and fertile plains on the other. There are many old ruins that command our attention.

On the last morning of our trip, we wake up to find ourselves among those pretty islands that dot the Baltic Sea off the Swedish coast. We have, however, to pass through the Sodertelie Canal, which is entered at a village of that name. Of this you can make no mistake, for on board come women and children with baskets full of ring-twisted biscuits, which are known all over the world. At last we enter Lake Malar, surely one of the most beautiful of lakes, and with a warm sun and blue sky overhead, no one can but feel at peace and full of happiness. Soon the spires of Stockholm are visible, and the canal voyage is over when we moor at the Riddarholm quay.

CHAPTER V

STOCKHOLM—I

There are many beautiful cities in the world, and among them should be placed Stockholm, the Venice of the North. This is due not only to the enterprise of the people, but also very largely to its situation. What a lovely picture, or series of pictures, the traveller sees as he approaches Stockholm from the sea. The steamer wends its way among hundreds of small islands, covered with luxuriant verdure and foliage. On each of these islands brightly painted wooden houses are seen, surrounded by pretty gardens of flowers. These are the country residences of Stockholm’s business men. Every such house has its landing-stage, at which small but swift steamers call every morning and evening, and it is a never-failing source of pleasure to see the meetings and partings of father and family. The Swedes are very demonstrative, and speed the parting guest with waving of handkerchief until he is out of sight, although he may be returning in a few hours.

As the steamer passes through Lake Malar, towards Stockholm, the interest ever increases, as on its shores you see towns and villages, old castles and modern villas, farm and meadow alternating with huge masses of rock, while ever and anon you meet steamers and sailing-ships on their way to and from the sea. At last the towers and spires of Stockholm are in sight.

The history of Stockholm is most interesting. There are many legends that tell of the founding of the city. Here is one. In the twelfth century some robbers, who came from the East, entered Lake Malar, plundering and destroying the ancient city Sigtuna. The inhabitants gathered together what was left them of their jewels, and having placed them in a boat, made out of a log of wood (Swedish “stock”), set it adrift on Lake Malar. Away down towards the Baltic it floated, the despoiled ones following and wondering where it would find a harbour. At last the log or stock landed at the island of Agne’s Näs. Here the gods had decided their new home should be, and the “holm” where the “stock” harboured was named Stockholm.

There is, however, more accurate information than this legend. In the days when might was right, the Vikings made Lake Malar their stronghold. Its great length, with its numerous arms, made a secure anchorage for their ships. Thence they made forays in the Baltic. They were often successful, but many a time were pursued in turn. To prevent the entry of the pursuers, they built a fortress on the central island which commands the entrance to the lake. This was in the eleventh century. From this time Stockholm dates its origin.

Around the fortress they built houses for the Vikings and their families. Alongside these were built houses and stores for traders and merchants.

By the middle of the twelfth century there were a considerable number of people gathered together round the fortress for commerce and protection.

There is one man honoured by the people of Stockholm as the founder of the city. This was Birger Jarl, who was a King in all but name. He built walls and towers round the houses on the largest island, gave it the name and privileges of a city, and styled it the capital of Sweden. As he was a man of great power and influence, many more people were attracted to it. This city then took the place of Upsala, which before had been the seat of government. Birger Jarl's son, Waldemar, completed the work of his father, and enclosed the three islands within one large fortification. It soon became the centre of trade in Sweden, but could not possibly increase much in area, as the rovers did not encourage any building on the mainland, and would give no protection to anyone who dwelt outside the city walls.

Stockholm had many ups and downs, and when Gustavus Vasa, the Liberator of Sweden, entered the city on Midsummer's Day, 1523, he found it in ruins, and only 308 families left to form the population. Under his care life became more secure, and from this time the population gradually increased, until it became, as it is now, a very large and thickly populated city.

Now the city has extended its boundaries north and south of the site of the ancient fortress, and where it stood the Royal Palace now stands, and commands the whole city, as its predecessor did of old. It presents a very pleasing aspect, as the streets are very broad and the squares very deep. There are many handsome public buildings and private dwelling-houses. You see here what, in a marked degree, is a special feature of Swedish towns, large areas planted with trees and flowers, for the Stockholmers are very fond of what is beautiful in nature. They are always, when opportunity affords, adding to their planted spaces. Nearly one half of the area of the whole city is utilized as parks and gardens. The city has a great many flower-shops, and the flower-trade is one of the most thriving of all its trades.

In the summer, with the forest, which extends right up to the city boundary, and the gardens and parks presenting a great wealth of colour, a charming picture meets your eye.

Another feature of Stockholm is her waterways. Wherever you go, you are continually getting a peep of them. Every street seems to lead to a quay. Thus, while trams are numerous, little steamboats are seen in great numbers. They take you quickly from one place to another, and more directly than the tram. In winter, when the whole lake is frozen over, they form a most direct means of communication between the different parts of the city, as well as a large playground for those who indulge in skating.

CHAPTER VI
STOCKHOLM—II

We have been reading about the rise of the city. Let us have a look at some of the sights.

First of all we must visit the Royal Palace. It is a most imposing building as it stands on a height overlooking a very deep square. It is very large, as anyone can tell from the fact that when the late King had his Jubilee in 1897, all the foreign princes with their retinues were accommodated in it. The King and Queen and the Crown Prince, when in Stockholm, live here.

Every Tuesday forenoon the King gives an audience to any of his subjects who may desire it. If anyone has any grievance to complain of, or any request to make, he can do it in private to the King.

When the King is in the country in the summer months, many of the rooms can be seen by the public. They are, as one would expect, large and beautifully decorated. To most people the Armoury and Royal Robe Chamber are the most interesting, as there you can see so many relics and robes which belonged to famous Kings and Queens of days gone by. Here are the blood-stained shirt worn by Gustavus Adolphus when he was killed at Lützen, and the uniform and hat worn by Charles XII. when he was shot at Frederikshald.

During the Thirty Years' War, a great many went from England and Scotland to fight in the army of Gustavus Adolphus. You are reminded of this when you look at the walls of the Riddarhus (House of Nobles), which are covered with the coats of arms of the Swedish nobility. Amongst them can be seen a very large number of English and Scotch names. The nobles used to meet here as a chamber on the affairs of the country. They no longer do so. There is still to be seen the Speaker's chair presented to Gustavus Vasa in 1527. It is made of ivory, and in it several Bible scenes are inlaid with ebony.

We have seen that Sweden was at one time a great military power in Europe. We notice this if we visit the Riddarholm Church. The interior is adorned with 6,000 flags and trophies taken in war. This is the burial-place of the Kings of Sweden.

Very many years ago, when Stockholm was built chiefly of wood, St. Jacob's Church was a kind of signal station. There used to be in its tower a watchman, who would sing out the hours of night:

"The hour is ten:
God's mighty hand
Preserve our town
From fire and brand:
The hour is ten."

If he saw any sign of fire, instead of his rhyme he sounded a rattle as a warning.

GUSTAVUS VASA'S ENTRY INTO STOCKHOLM, MIDSUMMER, 1532.
Carl Larsson.

Things are now altering all over the country. Many old customs are passing away. To remind the young Swede of the past, Dr. Hazelius conceived the idea of a museum in which would be preserved old Swedish costumes, furniture, and other things which speak of the past. This has been arranged in a very large building. In connection with it there is a large open-air museum called Skansen. It encloses about 40 acres. It is a Sweden in miniature.

Buildings have been brought from every part of Sweden. You can see peasants, farms, and houses, summer houses of different centuries, and a Lapp encampment, where real Lapps live during the summer. The attendants are dressed in the old national costumes. On several days of the week you can see the graceful national dances and games. There are animals, wild and domestic, from all parts of Scandinavia, and plants and flowers are well represented. It is a most interesting place to visit, and gives a peep into the whole of Sweden.

Let us now visit the streets, and see something of the life of the people. They live chiefly in flats, and the street-door is generally shut. When the bell is rung, the porter, who is within, touches a spring, which opens the door mechanically. There are lifts as well as broad staircases to the different flats. The houses are heated in winter by means of large porcelain stoves, in which wood is burned. The wood is brought to the harbour in boats from the surrounding districts, and some houses have a man whose daily rôle is to go to the boat, buy the wood, cut it into pieces, and feed the stoves. Very often he is a Dalecarlian, and wears his native costume.

There are many open-air markets. Let us visit the fish-market. Here the fish is brought alive in tanks in the boats. We may see the owner of the boat, as we pass along, lift up fish for our inspection. As a rule, fish is sold alive.

The boys of this country are accustomed to see at railway-stations automatic machines for the sale of chocolates and a few other small things. In Sweden you find automatic restaurants. They require no waiters. There is a large room with tables, and on each wall are labels over different slots, such as "Tea," "Coffee," "Milk," etc. You put your coin in, and, putting your cup or tumbler under a tap, get what you want. There are some restaurants that also supply a hot lunch after the same manner. These are very popular, as they save time and tips.

In the winter there are in the squares of Stockholm huge cisterns containing hot milk, which is sold in the same automatic way.

The Swedes are very fond of music, and in their beautiful Opera-House one can hear the finest concerts for a comparatively low price.

Altogether Stockholm is a most attractive city. The beauty of its situation, combined with the culture and friendliness of its people, are bound to awake our admiration.

CHAPTER VII
THE SWEDES AT WORK

Let us now have a peep at the Swede at work, for, although he is very fond of pleasure, he is very hard-working and industrious, and is taking a foremost place among the manufacturers of the world.

Although only about one-tenth of the country is under cultivation, nearly one-half of the people are engaged in the fields. The people are very much devoted to the land. In most cases the farmer owns the farm, and, with the aid of his family, he is able to cultivate all his ground. Farming has changed very much of late years. A great deal of grain used to be grown, but nowadays more attention is being paid to rearing horses and cattle, and dairying.

The farmers are very intelligent and well educated, and employ the latest methods in their work. They have

made the export of butter one of their chief industries, and in most districts have erected cooperative dairies. The carts go to the farms, collect the produce, and take it to a central dairy, where the butter is made. This is exported in large quantities, with eggs, to Denmark and Britain. They employ the finest machinery, and have well-constructed dairies. Most of their appliances are made in Sweden. In Stockholm they manufacture a separator which is sent to every part of the world. It was invented by a Swede—Gustaf de Laval—and separates the cream from the milk.

In some parts of Sweden farmers have to be very economical as well as industrious. Sometimes you will see little yellow bundles hanging on trees; these are birch twigs, and when they are thoroughly dried, they are used as fodder for the sheep. In the Far North, the sun is not sufficiently strong to make hay, so they erect poles which look like fences, and as soon as the grass is cut, they hang it on these poles, and allow it to remain until it is cured.

As you sail round the coast and call at the various ports, you see great piles of timber, and ships from many countries loading planks; also huge ponds full of logs, and close at hand sawmills cutting them. You are here reminded that one of Sweden’s greatest industries is the timber trade. You would expect this if you travel through the country, for everywhere you see large forests, especially in the Norrland. More than half of the country is covered with forest. This industry is greatly helped by the many rivers. Men go up in the winter to these forests to cut down the trees, which they haul over the snow, when it is deep upon the ground, to the rivers. They have to make special roads in the woods for this, and in the spring the logs are allowed to float down the river to its mouth, where the sawmills are. Sometimes they take months, sometimes they take years. Very few are lost. At other times the logs are formed into huge rafts, which are kept in the centre of the stream by men with long poles. They usually try to get them done before the end of the summer, or they will need to return the following year, as the rivers are usually frozen every winter. As soon as they arrive at the river’s mouth, they are taken to the sawmills, and cut into planks of various sizes.

What is done with all this timber? A large number of the thin, short logs are sent to Britain to be props in the pits. Perhaps, when you are travelling in the train, the sleepers on which the rails are laid may have come from Sweden. A great deal of the timber is crushed into pulp, and then used for the making of paper. The Swedes make doors and windows for us. They even export wooden houses.

Another great industry is match-making. They do a wonderful thing in this industry. A Swede invented a so-called “complete machine,” which reduces the manual labour very much. The match material, which is first cut by other machines, is placed into the “complete machine” at one end, and comes out at the other ready made and packed in boxes, without a workman having to touch them. A machine can turn out 40,000 boxes in eleven hours.

These are but a few of the occupations of the Swedes. Very many are employed at iron and steel works. There are great ore-mines in the North. Swedish steel is considered the best in the world, and is used greatly in Sheffield for the well-known cutlery. Employment is found for great numbers of men in granite quarries, in manufacturing machinery, and in weaving cloth. Glass-works are numerous, and a great deal of very fine cut glass is exported. It would take too long to mention all the industries. Enough has been said to show that Sweden is not a poor but a rich and progressive country. There is work for all. The one drawback is the want of coal, which has all to be imported, but the Swedes are trying to utilize the waterfalls, and make them provide the power to drive machinery. When that is accomplished they will be able to take a place in the front rank of iron and steel-producing countries.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SWEDES AT PLAY

The Swedes are very fond of pleasure, and enter into all kinds of indoor and outdoor games with great spirit. They have many similar to ours, but there are some which our boys and girls might enjoy.

Blind-man’s buff is played in several ways. Here is one. The person who has been blindfolded is placed in the middle of the room with a cane in his hand, while all the company form a ring round him with joined hands. The blind man points towards one in the ring. This one must rise and put his mouth to one end of the cane, while the blind man puts his to the other. They hold a conversation with one another as if speaking through the telephone. The blind man guesses who has been talking to him, and if successful, changes places with his victim.

Sometimes the company sit on chairs in a circle. The blind man walks round and round, and at last sits down in the lap of someone who, if he guesses the name correctly, is blindfolded in turn. If not correct, the one on whose lap he is sitting gives him a slap and sends him on, but no words are spoken.

A SUMMER DAY IN NORTH SWEDEN.

Carl Johansson.

Still another game: it is called *Låna låna eld*. All the company except one are again seated in a circle. Then the one standing walks up to one of the company, and rapping on the ground with a cane, says: “Låna, låna, eld” (Lend, lend fire). The other replies: “Gå till nästa grannen” (Go to the next neighbour). He goes on doing this time after time, and always getting the same reply. While he is doing this the company are exchanging chairs with one another by rushing across the room. The questioner has to watch his chance to get into a chair that is vacant. The one deprived of the chair has then to get the cane and go in search of fire.

The Swedes, like all Scandinavians, have a great love of dancing, and very many of their games take the form of a simple dance. On a summer evening you can see the villagers of all ages, men and women, boys and girls, playing at dancing games on the village green to the accompaniment of a fiddle or accordion. A very pretty picture they present if they are, as often happens in Dalecarlia, dressed in their bright native costume. While dancing they generally sing a description of each movement as they perform it. One dance has been handed down from time immemorial. It is named *Väfva Vadmal* (Weaving Homespun). No doubt it arose from the fact that the Swedish women used to weave the cloth for all their clothes. The players imitate the weaving of cloth at the old handloom. Some represent the bobbins; others the warp and woof. In and out they go until they form a bale. Then they stand still for a time, after which they reverse, unwind themselves, and then disperse. This is a peculiarly Swedish game, and is enjoyed by every rank of Swedish society.

There is another dancing game called *Skära Hafre* (Reaping Oats). In this they tell in word and gesture how the farmer sows the seed, cuts the grain, binds it into sheaves, and threshes it.

Another favourite game is *Enke-leken* (The Widower’s Game). This is played in the open air, as a rule, by children and young people. They stand in pairs, a boy and girl, in a long row, one pair behind the other. There is an odd one who represents the widower. He stands in front with his back to the rest, so that he cannot see them. When he calls, “Enke-leken, enke-leken, sista paret ut” (The widower game, last pair out), this pair separate and run forward in a wide circle. The widower runs forward at the same time with a view to catching the girl, but as he is not allowed to look backward, he does not know on which side she may come. Very often the pair change places, and the widower comes in contact with the boy instead of the girl. If he succeed, however, in catching the girl, the other boy takes his place; if not, he has to try again. The pair that has just been out join the ranks at the front.

In all these games there is never seen any roughness, and the players gain a great deal of health and pleasure in a very simple and natural way.

Then there are what one might call the manly sports. The Swedes have ever excelled in these. The old Viking warriors are spoken of in the old legends as being often engaged in feats of strength and skill with the sword and javelin, bow and arrow, in jumping and wrestling, and other favourite sports. They have handed down this trait to the present generation. Nowadays the Swedes practise curling, football, acquired from other countries, and a system of gymnastics invented by a Swede, which is being used by nearly every nation in the world.

The summer sports are very much the same as found in other countries, but it is in winter sports that most interest is taken.

There is the national sport of skating. The Swedes excel all others in the rapidity and gracefulness of their skating. This is owing to the large number of lakes and rivers, and the severe winters, when the boys and girls have every opportunity of learning to skate. But see! What are these boys going to do? They have a pair of skates and a piece of canvas rolled upon poles. They are skate-sailors. They stretch the canvas on the poles, and putting the cross-bar over the shoulder, have a sail which enables them to go before the wind or tack as they wish, just as the sailor does at sea. They can sometimes go at the rate of forty miles an hour with great ease. They present a most beautiful sight as the white sails flit here and there over the ice, and gleam in the rays of the winter’s sun. Sometimes you see ice-yachts gliding over the frozen water guided by a powerful rudder.

There is also tobogganing. Wherever there is a hill, you see a large number of boys and girls enjoying themselves. Down the slope they come at a rapid rate on a little sledge, which the owner guides with his foot used as a rudder behind. Sometimes, in the public parks, there are specially prepared ice-courses, which require great skill to ride on, or the consequences may be serious.

The most popular and a very useful form of sport is skiing. The skis are two long pieces of thin wood, which are fastened to the boots. By means of these the peasant can travel very quickly from one farm to another, when there is sufficient depth of snow. As a sport it is most exhilarating, but it must be acquired when one is young. Hear those shouts from the woods! Some young men and women have come from the town. They have gone up the slope in a zigzag manner, and along the crest of the hill. Now they are coming down, slowly at first, then faster and faster. See how gracefully they glide with feet placed closely together. They have ever to be on the lookout, for they have often to sweep round a bush, bend under an overhanging branch, or jump a precipice. Those who are able to ski can take many short cuts, as they do not need to keep to the roads, but can often go to their destination as the crow flies. The speed is very great. Very many of the soldiers are trained regularly to go on skis.

A common form of sport is for ski-runners, gliding on their skis, to be drawn along by a horse. They hold on to a rope attached to the traces, and as there is little weight on the horse, a speed of ten miles an hour can be kept up for long distances. Sometimes eight or ten soldiers may be seen moving quickly along the road by means of ropes attached to the saddle of a mounted soldier.

The Lapps are the best ski-runners in the world. They are all trained from their very early days to travel by this means. A Lapp, under favourable conditions, can travel 162 miles in twenty-four hours.

CHAPTER IX
EDUCATION IN SWEDEN

No children are more fortunate than the Swedish in education. They have everything done to make their schooldays bright and happy, as well as useful. Their teachers are highly educated, and are very much respected, if they do not get large salaries. The school-house in every town is a very important and conspicuous building.

Unless a child is very well educated at home, he must go to the public school. He does not pay any fees. All education is free, even at the University, but not everyone can go there. Only those who can pass a very stiff examination are allowed to enter. The children go at the age of seven and remain at school until they are fourteen. They get a very thorough training in very much the same subjects as in our schools. There are no holidays on Saturdays for Swedish children. Thirty-six hours every week they must attend. When parents are found to be careless so that their children are suffering, the State sometimes takes the little ones to train and educate.

In the districts where the population is very scattered, a teacher comes for four months in the year, and then proceeds to another district. There is no district where education is not provided.

There are some features that may be of interest to a stranger. In many of the schools there are splendid libraries. No doubt most of the books are printed in Swedish, but there are also a large number in English, French, and German. They are not there for appearance, but are actually read, as the children begin at a very early age to learn these languages. The Swedes are splendid linguists, and are very proud of being able to speak English.

They are known all over the world as being very good gymnasts, and every school has a completely equipped gymnasium. Very often the instructor is a military officer. Their system is being universally adopted, and many readers of this book will have learned the same exercises as the Swedish boys and girls.

One of the most interesting features of school-life is the study of nature. No doubt this is because one of the greatest botanists that ever lived was a Swede—Linnæus. He devised the system of botany, which is in use throughout the whole world. From a very early age the children go out into the woods and collect plants, flowers, and leaves of trees. They are taught not only the names of the different plants, but also the science of botany. The result is that from childhood they are taught to take an intelligent interest in nature, and learn to love what is beautiful in gardens, field, and forest.

A SKI-RUNNER

GUNNAR HALLSTRÖM.
MARS 1904 Björnö

The Swedes are also taught to be cleanly. Everywhere can be seen a great many lakes, and in the bright summer days the children bathe and learn to swim in them. In the winter this is impossible, as the cold is very great and the lakes are frozen over. In some schools a large room is set apart as a bathroom. There is no large bath or swimming pond, but a very simple arrangement of a number of tubs in a circle. A child goes into each. They wash and scrub one another. It is a method for securing cleanliness easily carried out, and does not cost much. The result is health. The children never look shabby. A Swedish mother may be poor, but she takes a pride in seeing her children neat and tidy.

Nor does she forget to teach them politeness. Every boy is taught to be very respectful to his elders. On the street he lifts his cap to anyone he knows, whether he be rich or poor.

When the boy is fifteen, he may choose to go to a trade, or to a higher school with a view to entering a learned profession.

At this age, if he intends to become a Government servant, lawyer, doctor, or minister, he must be confirmed. This is a very important step in his life. On the day of confirmation he is examined in the church, and has publicly to answer questions. It is a great day for him. He is now a man, and is very proud of being looked upon as such.

After he has been at the higher school for some years, and wishes to enter the University, he must pass a very hard examination, and when he learns that he has been successful, he is very happy and bright. He comes out of the school wearing the white cap which all students have, and decked with wreaths and flowers bestowed on him by doting parents and admiring friends.

There are large Universities in Sweden both at Upsala and Lund. The former is the larger and older of the two, but they are both well known. The student has the same long and hard course as at school. Very few students finish their course till they are between twenty-five and thirty years of age, and up to this time, if they wish to be successful, must be faithful to their study. There are no very young doctors in Sweden. They generally do not begin to practise till they are about twenty-eight years of age. Still, they find some time for social life at the University towns. They enter into the gaiety of the place, and are great favourites with the townspeople. The students from each district or nation have a club-room for social gatherings. They are very proud of their own district, and in processions march together with a banner in front. They are very fond of singing. The students of Upsala have a world-wide reputation, as at the Paris Exhibition of 1897 they took the first prize when choirs from every part of the world were competing.

The Swedes as a class are intelligent and polite, and are taking a prominent part in the world’s affairs. We should expect this when we know how well they are educated.

CHAPTER X
DALECARLIA

No one touring in Sweden should omit a visit to the province of Dalecarlia. It is a most lovely district, inhabited by a people who stick to their old customs and national dress. They are very proud and manly, and have done a great deal for the freedom of their country.

The chief town is Falun, which is well known because of its copper mine, said to be the oldest in Europe, as it has been worked more than 600 years. It is named the Treasury of Sweden. More than £5,000,000 worth of copper has been extracted. It was here Gustavus Vasa worked when he was in hiding from the Danes, and got his men and money to fight against them. The fumes from the works have spoiled the vegetation in the neighbourhood; but travel in the train a short distance, and you soon get a sight of what the Dalecarlians are very proud of—Lake Siljan, the Eye of Dalecarlia. Down the slopes of the mountain the train proceeds until it reaches Rättvik on the edge of the lake. You seem in a new world, for you see young and old, men, women, and children, going about in costumes similar to what their grandfathers and grandmothers wore. In some parts of Sweden you see people wearing these costumes on Sundays and gala-days, but in Dalecarlia they wear them at church and at market. The men have a long coat which extends below the knee, knee-breeches, white woollen stockings, and shoes. On the head they wear a low-crowned felt hat. From the neck there hangs a long leather apron. The women wear a skirt of a blue colour with a green border. The bodice is of a dark colour, and is only as high as a broad belt, laced together in front with bright red ribbons, the eyelets being of silver. They have also a white blouse. Round the neck is a red kerchief with a bright pattern, fastened at the throat with an old-fashioned silver brooch. The apron is dark, with transverse stripes of blue, red, yellow, and white. The cap is a black, peaked one, with red trimming round it, and red tassels hanging down. It is something in shape like a helmet. In winter they wear a short jacket made of sheepskin. Their clothes-store is a treasure-house.

In days gone by the sound of the shuttle used to be heard in every Dalecarlian home, as the women used to spin and weave all the cloth required for the clothes of the family. They now buy from the merchant. The Dalecarlians are of a mechanical turn of mind. They make watches and baskets, and the women do hair-work. The natives travel over the country to sell their wares. The Rättvikians excel chiefly as painters, and they cover the walls of their houses with paintings instead of putting up hangings.

The traveller usually proceeds by steamer from Rättvik to Leksand, where on a Sunday a most interesting sight is seen.

Looking across the lake, you see many large boats, driven through the water by means of eight or ten pairs of oars. Each of them may contain forty, sixty, or eighty men, women, and children. They present a very picturesque appearance with their national costumes. They are very similar to the Rättvikians, except that the women wear a tight-fitting cap—that of the married women white, of the unmarried red. The little boys are dressed in yellow-coloured clothes, and the little girls in the same as their older sisters. They soon land and wend their way to church through a beautiful avenue of trees. Here they are joined by others, who have walked or driven in carts for perhaps ten miles. They are regular church-goers. The church is not only a religious, but also a social centre. Sunday is newspaper day. The gossip of the whole district is then retailed. The men meet in crowds in the avenue, and the women and children wander in the churchyard until the service begins. It is like fairyland to see the bright costumes moving among the luxuriant foliage on a Swedish summer day.

The church at Leksand is an imposing structure, in the shape of a Greek cross, with a Russian ball-spire. It was built by some Swedes who had been prisoners in Russia, and it holds about 5,000 people. The sight is most impressive when it is crowded, men and women sitting apart. The sermons must at one time have been longer or the people not so devout, as in some country churches can be seen a relic of bygone days in a long stick, with which an official, “the church awakener,” used to poke anyone who fell asleep. When the service is over, the horses are yoked, the boats pushed into the water, and the vast crowd is soon scattered.

There is, however, one place of interest that must not be passed over—Mora, a quiet little spot on the northern shore of Lake Siljan. It was here that the standard of revolt against the Danes was raised by the men of Mora under Gustavus Vasa. Near the church is the mound where he made his famous speech that roused them to action. Dear to the heart of the Swede is the national memorial at Mora. It is situated about a mile from the village, and is a little square building lit from the roof. In the middle of the stone floor is the cellar in which Gustavus Vasa hid when the Danes were pursuing him. The walls are covered with paintings of scenes in the life of the patriot, and one of them represents what took place here. You see the open trap-door, Gustavus Vasa descending into the cellar with an axe in his hand, the woman lifting a tub to cover the trap, and through the window you can see the Danes in the distance on horseback.

No one need be at a loss as to the meaning of any of the pictures. The custodian has a description written in English, French, and German. He usually succeeds in finding out the nationality of the visitor, and gives him the proper copy.

It is with reluctance one leaves Dalecarlia, with its proud and independent people, and its bright and smiling valleys.

“BRASKULLA”
(A PEASANT GIRL FROM MORA).
Anders Zorn.

CHAPTER XI
CUSTOMS

The Swedes are a most hospitable and kindly people, and enjoy entertaining. They do not mask their feelings, for as soon as a visitor arrives, he is made to feel at home with the words, “Välkommen till oss” (Welcome to us).

If it should be about the hour for dinner, he will be invited to partake with the family. If he be a foreigner, a surprise awaits him, for, on entering the dining-room, instead of sitting down at once to dinner, he is led up to a side-table. On this he sees bread, butter, and cheese, and numerous small dishes with anchovies, smoked salmon, caviare, and different kinds of meats, hot and cold, too numerous to mention. This is called *smörgosbord*. He is expected to take a piece of bread and butter and whatever of the other dishes he may feel inclined for. This is considered an appetizer for the proper meal, which no stranger must forget.

Then the company assembles round the dinnertable behind the chairs, and a very nice custom is observed. One of the children, perhaps one who can only lisp a prayer, asks God’s blessing on the food, at which the gentlemen bow, and the ladies curtsey. After dinner there is another beautiful custom, when the children go up to the parents, kiss their hands, and say: “Tack för maten” (Thanks for food). If the guest is present, he shakes hands with the host and hostess, at the same time expressing his thanks for the meal.

Weddings in every country are always looked upon with interest, but a Swedish country wedding is one especially interesting and picturesque. It is an event which demands the attention of the district for several days. A large number of people are invited. This means considerable expense, but the heads of the several families invited make a contribution of provisions.

If the wedding be in the church, the bride, with a silver crown on her head and pearls round her neck, goes there on horseback. She is escorted during the festivities by a number of musicians and young men also mounted. The hats of the men are decorated with ribbons of bright colours and with flowers. Some of them carry guns, which they frequently fire, and this is supposed to be a reminiscence of those days when a bride had to be protected from the attack of a hostile clan. The rest of the company follow in carriages or on foot. At the church there is a triumphal arch through which all pass. After the ceremony is over, the procession returns to the bride’s home for the rejoicings. Here again is a triumphal arch of green boughs. The young

men ride three times furiously round a maypole, while whips are cracked and guns are fired.

Then comes a banquet, which usually lasts for three or four hours, after which there come games and dancing, not for a few hours, but often for three days and three nights, during which the festivities continue without a break. Among the more wealthy they may last five or six days. If the provisions are exhausted, the hostess introduces a highly spiced rice-pudding. This information is understood, and soon, after great cheering, the company separates. The feasting is not yet over, as the young couple are expected to entertain all who have been present.

A pretty custom observed in some districts is “dancing the crown off the head of the bride.” The bride is blindfolded. The maidens present form a ring and dance round her, until she takes the crown off her head and places it haphazard on the head of one of the girls. She on whom this honour has been conferred will be the next to wear a crown at her own wedding. The girl places it on the head of another, and so on, till it has rested on the head of everyone.

If you enter a Swedish peasant’s home, you will see one or more long poles attached to the roof. On these are strung a number of very thin round discs. This is the rye bread, which is the only kind eaten by the peasant, and is also found at the King’s table. The peasantry do not eat much new bread. They only bake four times a year, and each baking lasts for three months.

A very common dish in a Swedish peasant’s house is solid sour milk. It is placed on the table in a wooden dish. After the housewife has added some sugar, all sit round the table with wooden spoons, and each marks out for himself what he considers his rightful share. After this they all set to work, and do not move until the whole is eaten.

The Swedes are very fond of open-air life. They practically spend the summer out of doors. Where you find a band, there is usually a large crowd of men, women, and children, sitting at little tables drinking their punch, beer, and coffee. The Swedes are very fond of family life. The father, mother, and children usually go out together. On Sunday afternoons and feast-days every town is a scene of gaiety. All the inhabitants give themselves up to pleasure. There is no rowdyism, but a great deal of enjoyment. The innate refinement of the Swede checks any inclination there might be for anything rough or uncouth. He shows this when he goes into a shop. Very many of those behind the counters are young women. The Swede takes off his hat to them, and wishes them “Good-morning” as pleasantly as he would to his greatest lady-friends.

One thing a Swede is never without, and that is his coffee. You may not always get good tea, but you will always get good coffee. The peasants will drink it as often as five times a day. They are also fond of sugar. They have a strange custom of putting a piece of sugar between the teeth, and sweetening the coffee as it passes through the sugar into their mouths. They call this *dricka på bit*. They seem to think they get more enjoyment from the sugar in this way than if it were dissolved in the coffee.

There is one other custom that people in England would like to know about. It is the festival of Santa Lucia. There are several stories as to its origin. Some say that it refers to the shortest day, though it falls on December 13. Lucia night, according to the peasants, is so long that the ox from hunger bites the crib. “Lucia night is mortal long,” said the cow. “It’s as good as two,” replied the ram. “That’s true,” put in the goat; “it’s a pity it exists.” Some speak of a beautiful virgin named Lucia, who was about to be married. She had given all her dowry to the Christians because of their courage. When her lover heard of this, he informed against her. She was condemned in the end to death by burning. When the fire was placed around her, she remained unhurt, and did not die until a sword was thrust into her throat.

The day is observed in a very quaint fashion. At a very early hour in the morning, perhaps as early as three or four, the sleeper is awakened, to find a maiden dressed in white standing by the bedside. Her hair is streaming down her back. On her head, which is encircled with a wreath of green leaves, are a number of lighted tapers. In her hands are a salver with coffee and cakes, which must be partaken of in bed. After this, in some houses, all get out of bed and sit down to a big feast. Afterwards they shoot a fish by the aid of a torch composed of slips of dry and resinous wood.

CHAPTER XII

THE ISLAND OF GOTHLAND AND TOWN OF VISBY

“In the days of old,” says the saga, “a fair and beautiful island, low and dim, floated on the sea by night, and the people beheld it as they sailed to and fro; but each morning at sunrise it disappeared beneath the waves, until the waning twilight had come again, when it would rise and float over the surface of the Östersjön (Baltic) as before.”

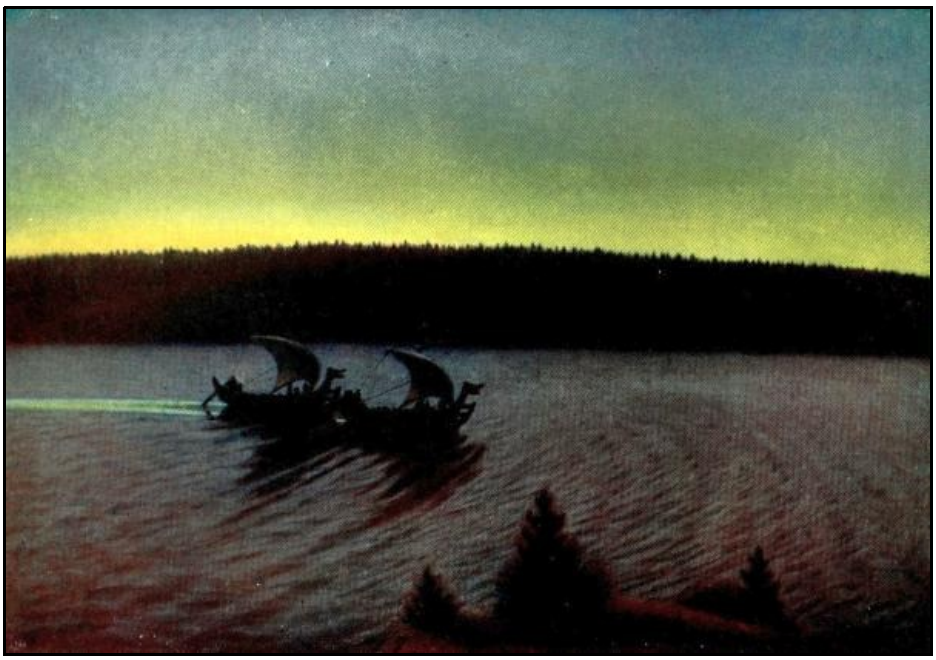
No one dared to land upon it, though the belief was general that it would become fixed if a fire was lighted there.

Thjelvar, with his men, finally landed in a little bay of the floating island, and lighted a fire, and the island became stationary. The name of this daring man, Thjelvar, means “the Industrious.”

Those with him seemed to be possessed with the same spirit, for in a short time they were building ships and trading with every part of Europe. They soon became wealthy, not only by fair means but also by foul, as they did not hesitate to plunder whenever they had an opportunity. Their forays led to reprisals. Their wealth excited envy. They did not feel strong enough of themselves, and, as Sweden was the nearest country, they proposed to put themselves under her protection, and sent an ambassador to negotiate. When he arrived at

Upsala, then the capital of Sweden, the King and Queen were sitting at meat. He was not received at once, nor even asked to sit down. After he had been standing some time at the entrance, the King said: “What news from Gothland?” “Nothing,” replied the ambassador, “except that a mare on the island has foaled three colts at a birth.” “Ah,” said the King, “what does the third colt do when the other two are sucking?” “He does as I do,” replied the ambassador, “He stands and looks on.” Thereupon the King laughed loudly, and invited the ambassador to share the meal. In the end a treaty was arranged, and Gothland became a part of Sweden.

This was in 890. In 1030 Olaf compelled the inhabitants of the island to become Christian, and be baptized, but by this time a city had sprung up where the heathens of old used to offer up sacrifices. This city was named Visby, “the city of the place of sacrifice.” It is situated on the west side of the island, and gradually rose in importance, until it became the chief trading centre of Europe. There was a great trade with Russia, and by means of the rivers of that country the treasures of the East were brought to Visby. The fame and the stories of her wealth and commerce spread far and wide. Soon merchants came from all parts of Europe to share her wealth. Very many of them removed their business entirely to Visby.



IN DAYS OF OLD.

Ankarcrona.

The wealth of the city was fabulous. The common saying was that the merchants used to weigh their gold with 20 pound weights, and play with choicest jewels. The women spun with silver distaffs. The pigs ate out of silver troughs.

Their houses, of which many are remaining to this day, were narrow and lofty, with their gable-ends to the streets. Their rooms were large with high ceilings, and most beautifully decorated. In one house can be seen a room with walls and roof completely covered with scenes from the Bible. The doors in many cases were made of copper, and the window-frames gilded.

The merchants lived most luxuriously, and were most exclusive in their social life. No artisans, except bakers and goldsmiths, were allowed to live within the city walls.

Their wealth and commerce gave them great authority, so that their sea-laws were adopted by European countries generally. They form the basis of the laws of the sea of the present day.

These were rough times, when might was right, and the inhabitants of Visby had always to be prepared for an attack upon the city, for the surrounding nations looked upon her wealth with an envious eye. One of the sorest experiences she had to undergo was at the hand of King Waldemar of Denmark. He defeated them in battle, tore down a part of the walls, entered with his army in battle array, and, placing three very large ale-vats in the square, commanded that these be filled with gold and silver within three hours. This was done with remarkable rapidity, and King Waldemar sailed with his gold and silver, as well as much spoil from the churches. The booty, however, never reached Denmark, as the vessels carrying it foundered in a storm. From this hour Visby began to decline in importance, and is now known chiefly as a summer resort and haunt of tourists who wish to learn something of this medieval town.

Notwithstanding all their love of wealth, the inhabitants of Visby did not seem to be stingy in giving to the Church, as no less than sixteen churches were built. All still exist, but are in ruins except one, the Cathedral or St. Mary’s Church which is quite complete. They are all large buildings. In the great square can be seen the Church of St. Catherine, which belonged to the abbey of a Franciscan Order. In the nave are twelve pillars, not in a straight line. They make a lasting impression on the visitor, they are so delicate in their tracery and overgrown with the ivy and the vine. The roof of the chancel has fallen, and now only the arches which unite the pillars to each other and to the outer walls remain.

Not very far from here are seen two churches. They are called *syskonkyrkorna*, or sister-churches, built side by side. They each possess immense towers, which are supposed to have been fitted up at one time for defence. If the story is true, the sisters did not love one another; indeed, it is said that they hated one another so much that they could not worship God in the same church, and each had to have a separate place of worship built for herself.

The largest of all the churches is St. Nicholas. On the western gable of it can be seen two twelve-leaved rosette-like bricks. They look like windows. In the centre of each, tradition says, were set most precious

carbuncle stones, that shone in the dark like fire. These served as guides to the sailors on the Baltic. Soldiers guarded them night and day, and no one was allowed to approach them after sunset on pain of death. King Waldemar, when he sacked Visby, removed the sacred carbuncles. Over the spot where the ship that conveyed them went down, a remarkable gleam is said to be seen. The Gothland fishermen say that it is the radiance of the carbuncles now lying in the depths of the sea.

Another remarkable feature of Visby is the city wall. It completely encircles the city, and is the only example in Scandinavia that has lasted to our time. It dates from early in the thirteenth century. It was gradually made stronger by adding to its height and its thickness, and also by building thirty-six towers, two to guard each gate. Many of these have a name. The powder-tower was named Silfverhättan (Silver-cap). Its shining roof is now replaced by dull tiles. One is used as a prison, and is named “Cæsar.” Another is called Jungfru Tornet (the Maiden’s Tower). It is said that a young girl betrayed this city to King Waldemar. As a punishment she was built into the wall of the tower. Near a gate on the south side of the city can be seen a cross put up to the memory of the 1,800 men of Visby who were killed when that King took the city. On it is an inscription in Latin, still legible—“In the year 1361, the Tuesday after St. James’s day, the Gothlanders fell before the gates of Visby by the hands of the Danes. They lie buried here. Pray for them.”

CHAPTER XIII
FAIRY-TALES

I wonder how children would do without fairy-tales. Every country and every age has these, and devours them eagerly, old as they are. Perhaps it would be interesting to inquire how they arose. It is said that a Queen saw her children looking very sad, although they had everything that she could think of for their happiness. The truth was they did not know what they wanted. She said, “If only I were a child again, I would know what is the secret of a child’s happiness.” While she was thinking a bird flew into her lap, but only for a moment. As soon as it had gone, she saw a golden egg. “Perhaps,” she thought, “this egg will contain what will give my children contentment, and remove their sadness.” She broke the egg, and out came the wonderful bird, Imagination, the Popular Tale. Now the children were happy and bright. For the tale took them far away, but brought them home again as soon as they desired. So it came about that not only children, but those who are older in years, found a peculiar joy and happiness in reading the story, provided they come in the spirit of the child. Here is one well known to Swedish children:

The Crafty Boy and the Stupid Giant

Once upon a time there was a boy who watched goats in the forest. He was alone, and one day had to pass a large dwelling. He had been enjoying himself, shouting and singing, as boys will do when in the woods, when suddenly he saw coming from the house a giant, of great size and fierce to look upon. The giant was very angry because he had been disturbed in his sleep, and the boy became so frightened that he at once took to his heels, and never stopped running till he got home. In the evening his mother had been making cheese, and he took a piece that was newly made, and put it in his wallet. Next morning he had again to pass the giant’s house. The giant, when he saw him, took up a piece of stone, crushed it into atoms, let it fall upon the ground, and said: “If you again disturb me with your noise, I will crush you as I have crushed this stone.” The boy, who was by this time quite bold, took up the cheese he had brought in his wallet, and squeezing the whey out of it, said to the giant: “I will squeeze thee as I squeeze the water out of this stone.” When the giant found out that the boy was so strong, he went away in great fear and trembling to his abode.

However, they soon met again, and then the boy suggested a trial of strength. The test was who could throw an axe so high in the air that it would never fall down again. The giant tried many times, but the axe always fell down again. The boy began to mock him, saying: “I thought you were a very strong man, but you are not. See how I can throw the axe.” With that he took the axe and swinging it as if with great force, very cleverly let it slide into the wallet on his back. The giant did not see the trick, and, looking in vain for the axe falling down again, thought the boy must be wonderfully strong.

The giant was so much impressed with the boy’s strength, that he asked him to enter his service. The boy’s first duty was to assist with the felling of a tree. “I will hold while you fell,” said the boy. But as the boy was not tall enough to reach to the top of the trunk, the giant bent it down to the level of the boy. As soon as the boy seized it, the tree at once rebounded and carried the boy out of sight. In a short time he came back lame, but saying nothing. “Why did you not hold?” said the giant. “Would you be brave enough to make a jump like that?” said the boy. “No,” replied the giant. “Well, then, if you are so afraid you can hold and cut for yourself.”

Soon the giant had cut down the tree. How was it to be carried home? It was arranged that the giant should carry the thin end, and the boy the thick one. The giant went in front, and raised his end on his shoulder. The boy behind called him to move it farther forward. Soon the giant had it so balanced on his shoulder, that he had the whole weight of it. After walking for some time, he shouted: “Are you not tired yet?” The boy, who had seated himself on his end of the tree, answered: “Certainly not.” When they arrived at the house, the giant was quite worn out. “Are you not tired even yet?” said the giant. The boy answered: “You must not think so little tires me. I could quite easily have carried it myself.”

The giant was amazed, and wondered what he would try next. He suggested they should thresh grain. “Let us do it very early in the morning, before we get our breakfast,” said the boy. The giant agreed. When they began the boy received a flail he could not lift, so he took up a stick and beat the ground while the giant

threshed. As they had been working in the dark, the boy's device had not been seen, and to escape detection, when daylight was approaching, he suggested that they should cease work for breakfast. "Yes," said the giant, "it has been very hard work."

A GIRL WITH "KICKER."

Carl Larsson.

Some time after the giant sent the boy to plough, and told him that when the dog came, he was to loose the oxen, bring them home, and put them in their stable. He brought them home, but as there was no entrance, he did not know how to get them in. As he could not lift the house like the giant, he made up his mind to kill the oxen, cut up their carcases, and put them in in this way. On his return the giant asked if he had put the oxen in the stall. "Yes," said the boy, "I got them in, although I divided them."

The giant now began to think the boy was too dangerous to have in the house, and, on the advice of his wife, resolved to put him to death while he slept. The boy was suspicious that something was going to happen, and when night came, put the churn in the bed, while he himself hid behind the door. In came the giant; down came the club, so that the cream from the churn bespattered all his face. "Ha, ha, ha! I have struck him so that his brains have bespattered the wall," said the giant afterwards to his wife. The two now lay down to rest in peace, believing they had rid themselves for ever of this terrible boy.

What a surprise they got next morning, when the boy appeared as if nothing had happened. "What," said the giant, "art thou not dead? I thought I had killed thee with my club." The boy answered: "Now that explains it. I had imagined that I felt a flea biting me in the night-time."

At the close of the day a large basin of porridge was placed between them. "What do you say to our trying to see who will eat most?" said the boy. The giant was quite willing. The boy was too cunning. He had tied a large bag before his chest, and let large quantities of the porridge fall into it. When the giant came to a standstill, he saw the boy still continuing with as good an appetite as when he began. "How can a little fellow like you eat so much?" said the giant. "Father, I will soon show you. When I have eaten as much as I can, I do so, and begin again." He then ripped up the bag, and the porridge ran out. The giant took up a knife in imitation of the boy, but was soon dead.

Then the boy gathered all the money he could get, and left by night. So ends the story of the crafty boy and the stupid giant.

CHAPTER XIV
JUL, OR CHRISTMAS

Jul is the great festival in Sweden. The festivities begin on Christmas Eve—Julafton—and continue for thirteen days. Since early autumn everyone has been sewing and embroidering beautiful presents. Amongst young girls there is a custom that for one night before Jul they should sit up the whole night and sew. This is looked forward to as a special pleasure, and two or three friends are invited to join the party.

A few days before Christmas the streets begin to be crowded, and young and old throng the shops.

In the market-place you find stalls containing all sorts of things—toys, clothing, and confectionery. Amongst the latter are special ginger-cakes, shaped like different animals, especially pigs, to commemorate the old boar that was sacrificed in heathen times. These stalls are greatly patronized by the country people.

Rich and poor, during Jul, are anxious to be kind and liberal to their family and friends, remembering each member with some token of their thought and love. Even the animal world is not forgotten. Horses and cows

get a special feed in their stalls, and on every house in the country, as well as many in the towns, you will see a pole erected, to which is fixed a sheaf of unthreshed grain as a treat for small birds that, in this hard season, have great difficulty in getting food. There is a saying in Sweden that on the anniversary of the coming of our Lord into the world all creatures should have cause to rejoice.

Within doors great preparations are being made. Servants are busy cleaning and scrubbing everything that can be scrubbed. In the kitchen a great amount of cooking is taking place, and six or seven different kinds of bread have to be baked, as, in the country, each servant and tenant are presented with a pile of special Jul-bread.

Jul at the present day, as in olden times, is a great festival with the Swedish peasantry. They have a special reverence for this season. No work that can be avoided will be done on this day.

“There is a belief which has existed for ages that, during Christmas, there is a second of time when not only the sun itself, but everything movable in creation, becomes stationary, and in consequence, at that particular moment, which no one can foretell, if a person should be occupied in any way, that which he is then about is sure to go wrong.”

On Christmas Eve, to show good feeling in a practical way, it is customary for the whole family to assemble in the kitchen, where a large pot is boiling, containing ham and sausages highly spiced. Mingling with the servants, you walk along plate in hand, and taking a slice of Christmas-bread, you dip it in the boiling fat in the pot, and eat together. This is called *doppa i grytan* (to dip in the pot).

In the afternoon the older members of the family are engaged in decorating the Christmas-tree, which is done in great secrecy from the children. Bright golden and silver stars, coloured glass globes, and confectionery are hung on the tree, as well as baskets made of coloured paper, containing raisins and almonds. Then, to every branch and twig, a taper is fastened. The national flag waves from the top, and the other nations are represented by smaller flags fixed here and there over the tree. When all is ready, and the many tapers on the tree are lit, as well as the chandeliers and lamps in the room, the great moment arrives for the children. When the door is opened, they are almost dazzled by the sea of light, and in rapture they rush to gaze at the beautiful tree, which rises from floor to ceiling, a mass of light and beauty. Their attention is somewhat divided, as their eyes are constantly turning to the door, as if they expected someone to arrive. Before long the door opens, and a small, old man and woman enter. These are the Christmas gnomes. The man has a long white beard and a red cowl, and carries in his hand a bell, which he rings, and the old woman carries a large basket containing parcels neatly tied up and sealed, addressed to different persons, but with no name of the givers. Often there are poetry and amusing rhymes written on the parcels. The old woman hands the parcels to those to whom they are addressed, much to the amusement of the whole company. There is much guessing as to who the donor may be, and the excitement is tremendous as the old pair vanish from the room to return with fresh supplies. At last the children are sent off to the servants’ quarters, each carrying a load of parcels for them. When the *Jul-klappan* (Christmas presents) have been duly admired, refreshments are brought in, such as fruits and confects, and after this music and games are indulged in, and later on all join hands and dance in a ring round the tree, singing lustily. Between nine and ten the company sit down to a Christmas supper. The first course is *lut*-fish, which is ling or cod-fish, specially prepared weeks before in lime. When cooked and ready, it is white and transparent, almost like a jelly. Seasoned with pepper and salt, and eaten with potatoes and melted butter, it is delicious. The next course is always pig in some form or other, either head or ham. Then is produced a large fat goose. Last of all comes the all-important rice-porridge, in which is hidden an almond, and whoever gets it will be lucky for the next year. From the King’s palace to the peasant’s hut you will find the very same kind of supper. However poor people may be, they always find means for a small Christmas-tree.

On Christmas morning, before daybreak, crowds flock to church for early service. In the country it is the custom for people to join together and form a procession, each carrying a torch. This makes a pretty sight, especially in hilly districts, when you are able to see at the same time several processions wending their way to church. On arriving there, all the torches are flung in a heap, which lights up the churchyard. The church is brilliantly illuminated by hundreds of candles, even the pews having their own candles. After the service is over the people make a rush for home. You ask why? It is an old superstition that he who arrives home first will reap his grain first.

The rest of the day is spent quietly in the home circle.

CHAPTER XV
MIDSUMMER

The festival of Midsummer, like that of Jul, has come down from old heathen times, and next to Christmas is the greatest festival of the year in Scandinavia.

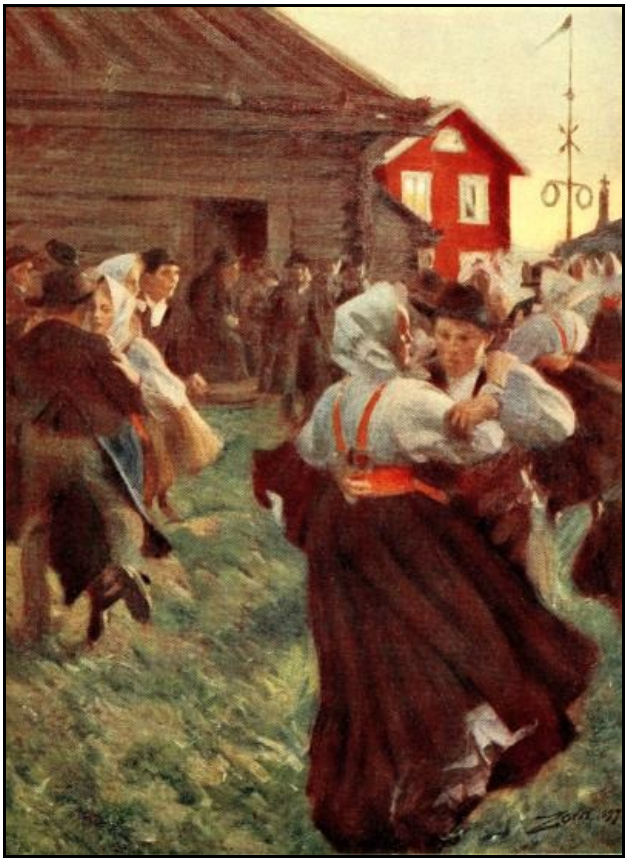
On this day the sun is at the height of its grandeur, conquering darkness. The night is the shortest in the year, just a glorious twilight, which, in a few hours, is merged into dawn.

Summer and winter have each their special enjoyments for those who know where to look for them. In Sweden, Midsummer Day is looked forward to especially by the young people.

Great preparations are made in town and country. In the country the houses have to undergo a special cleaning, and the rooms are decorated with branches of trees and flowers. In Stockholm there is what is

called a “Leaf-market,” where not only boughs and flowers are exposed, but also May-poles. In the harbour can be seen a large number of boats laden with branches.

It is a wonderful sight you see on this day. The houses, both inside and out, are decorated with green branches. Every train, steamer, and vehicle is dressed in the same fashion, and even every horse has its head ornamented with branches of leaves. Little children all have bunches of flowers in their hands, and very often a small May-pole, while older ones go out early in the morning to picnic, and return for the dancing in the evening.



DANCE ON MIDSUMMER’S EVE.
Anders Zorn.

The centre of attraction is the May-pole, similar to what is found in many English villages in the month of May, to celebrate the return of spring; but the Swedish word *Maj* does not in this instance refer to the month May, it means green leaf.

What a bustle there has been to get this pole ready! It has to be decorated. Early in the morning the young girls awaken with the birds, and hurry into the woods to gather flowers and boughs of the silver birch, to bind wreaths and garlands for the May-pole. The birch is the queen of the forest in the summer, just as the dark, sombre fir is the queen of the winter.

The raising of the pole is an important event in the day’s proceedings, and amidst shouting and music it is put into position. The people form themselves in a large ring round it, and to the sound of the violin or accordion, they dance the whole night long. How happy they look! They forget everything—all their troubles, and even the old grandmother may be seen dancing in the ring with her little grandchild of three years. By-and-by they sit down to supper, and one might think the festivities were drawing to an end; but no! the meal is no sooner over than the dancing is resumed and continued with more or less energy through the night. No one ever seems to think of going to bed.

There are a number of superstitions and customs in connection with this festival.

On the hills in the neighbourhood of towns in North Sweden people light fires at this season. These are but a reminiscence of the “pyre,” built on consecrated hills by the old heathen priests, and fired on Midsummer Eve in honour of the sun-god, the mild and beautiful Balder. Nowadays these fires are not in honour of Balder, but to prepare coffee. Many families do this. Each family has its own fire. They put the coffee on the fire when the sun is setting, but, as in these northern regions at this season of the year the sun takes little rest, he has risen again before the coffee has boiled.

Sometimes people gather different kinds of flowers to make up into a bouquet called a Midsummer *qvost*. Whoever does it, usually a young girl, must go alone. If she should encounter anyone, she must only answer by signs, and must not open her mouth under any circumstances until she gets home again. She places the bouquet under her pillow, and never fails to see in her dream her future lover.

This *qvost* has many wonderful qualities. It is hung up in the cattle-house, and if allowed to remain there protects the animals for a whole year against the *troll* (witches).

In some places a medicine is made from it, which will cure all diseases.

CHAPTER XVI
SOME WELL-KNOWN SWEDES

Carl Linnæus was the son of a poor clergyman, and was born at Råshult, in the province of Småland, in 1707. His father wished him to become a clergyman, but from infancy he showed a great love for flowers, and made up his mind to study medicine. He was a student at Upsala, where he underwent great privations, as his father allowed him only eight pounds per year. He so persevered that he attracted the attention of the professors, and was commissioned to study the plant-life of Swedish Lapland.

Poverty drove him to Holland for his degree as doctor of medicine. He found a friend there in a Dutch banker, Clifford, who enabled him to publish many works, in one of which he made known his classification of plants. At this time he visited London, and when walking on a common near the City saw furze for the first time. He was so attracted by the golden bloom of the flower that he fell down on his knees and admired it. He tried in vain to cultivate it in Sweden. On his return to Stockholm, he gained a reputation as a physician, but gave up his profession to be professor of botany in the University where he had studied. He attracted students from all parts, and gained a world-wide reputation, his class increasing from five to hundreds. He was made a noble, and when he died, aged seventy-one years, the King spoke from the throne of his death as being a national calamity.

Another man of whom Sweden is justly proud is Baron Johan Jakob Berzelius, one of the greatest of modern chemists. He is said to rank next to Linnæus in science in Sweden. He introduced a set of symbols on which those in use at the present day are based. The science of chemistry owes a great deal to the accuracy and extent of his researches. It is the wonder of many how he could accomplish so much as he did. He had, like Linnæus, the gift of perseverance.

Another well-known Swede is Alfred Nobel, who was born in Stockholm in 1833, and died in 1896. When young, he went with his father to Russia to help him in the manufacture of submarine mines and torpedoes. He took out patents for a gasometer and for an apparatus for measuring liquid. He will, however, always be remembered as the inventor of dynamite. Many precious lives were lost in the process. It was finally produced as dynamite gum in 1876. When one thinks of dynamite, immediately there are brought to the mind war, with all its horrors, and anarchism, with its bombs and nefarious practices; but it has been one of the greatest aids to man in his engineering triumphs. By its aid mountains have been tunnelled and rocks under the water more easily removed.

To show how extensively it is being used, in 1870 the total world’s output did not exceed eleven tons. At the present day it annual tonnage is to be reckoned by the hundred thousand. Works for its manufacture are all over the world.

Alfred Nobel left a large fortune, and so arranged that a large sum should be set aside for five annual prizes of £8,000 each for men who had distinguished themselves in science, literature, and the promotion of peace. Men from all parts of the world can compete, and the awards are made by a committee of Scandinavians.

Mention must be made of Baron Adolf Nordenskiold (1832-1907), who reached the highest latitude in the Arctic region till then attained by any ship, and in the *Vega* spent two years accomplishing the North-East Passage. Otto Nordenskiold, a nephew of Baron Adolf, also sailed in the northern seas, and after two years’ exploration discovered King Oscar Land; and Sven Hedin, who traversed the countries of Central Asia, and brought to light the secrets of past ages.

Sweden stands high in music and song. She has produced many gifted musicians, but none greater than Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale. She was born in Stockholm of very humble parentage. One day she, as a child, was heard singing to her cat. The listener was so entranced that she was the means of Jenny Lind being brought to the director of the Royal Opera House, who saw the quality of her voice, and arranged that she should be educated at Government expense. At the age of eighteen she made her first appearance. Wherever she went she captivated the people. She became the favourite of Stockholm, London, Berlin, and New York. Only eleven years did she remain in opera, and from religious convictions she resolved to confine herself to the concert-room. She is known as a singer, but her generosity and unselfishness will never be forgotten. In one tour in America her share of the profits was £35,000. More than half of that she spent in charity in her native land. In one year she raised £10,000 in England to help deserving institutions.

Many touching anecdotes of her life are told, to show the character of the woman. A young man was very ill in Copenhagen when Jenny Lind was filling the city with excitement. His young wife was full of regrets that her husband should not hear her. Jenny heard of the desire, and went on a Sunday afternoon and charmed the two young people with her voice.

As she was sitting one day on the sands, with her Bible on her knee, and looking at the setting sun, a friend said to her: “Oh, how is it that you ever came to abandon the stage at the very height of your success?” “When every day,” was the quiet answer, “it made me think less of *this*” (laying a finger on the Bible), “and nothing at all of *that*” (pointing out to the sunset), “what else could I do?” The spiritual was the supreme in her. She died a naturalized British subject in her country-home in the Malvern Hills in 1887.

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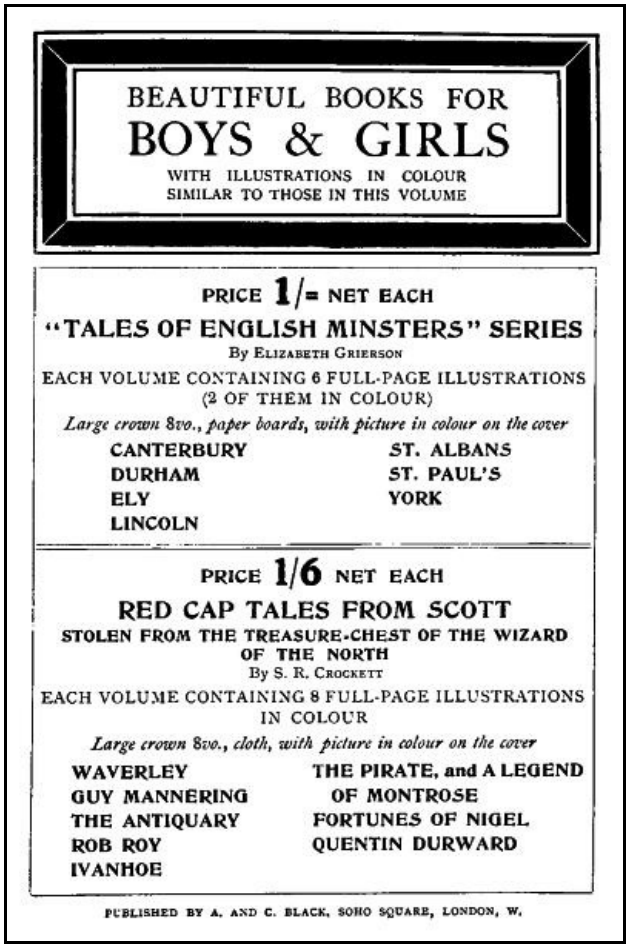

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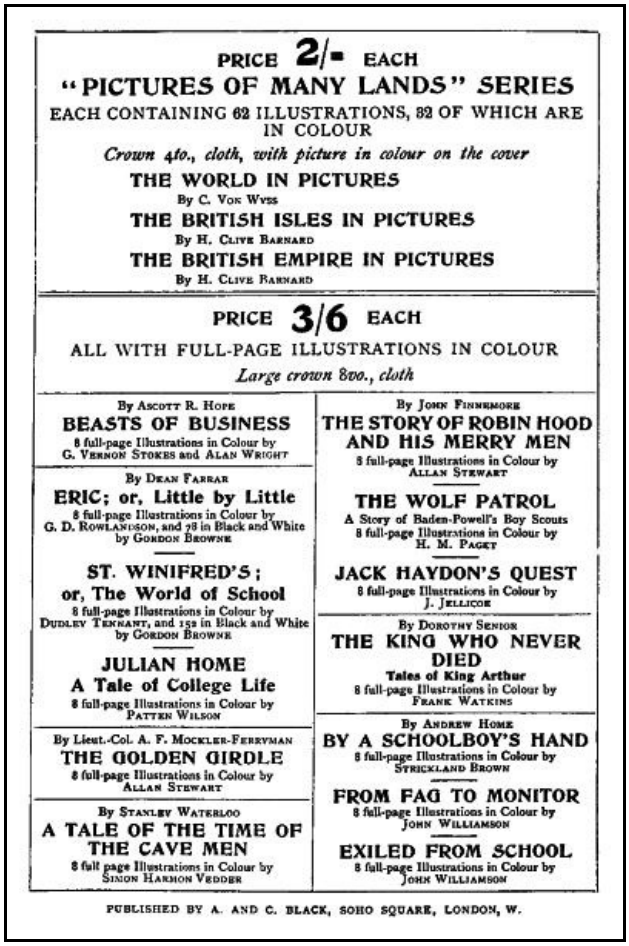

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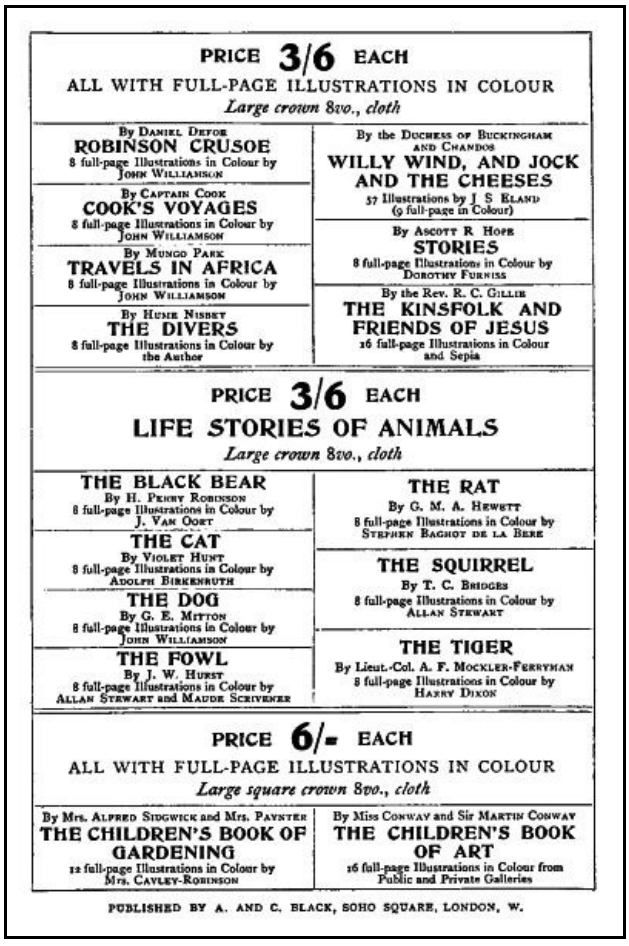

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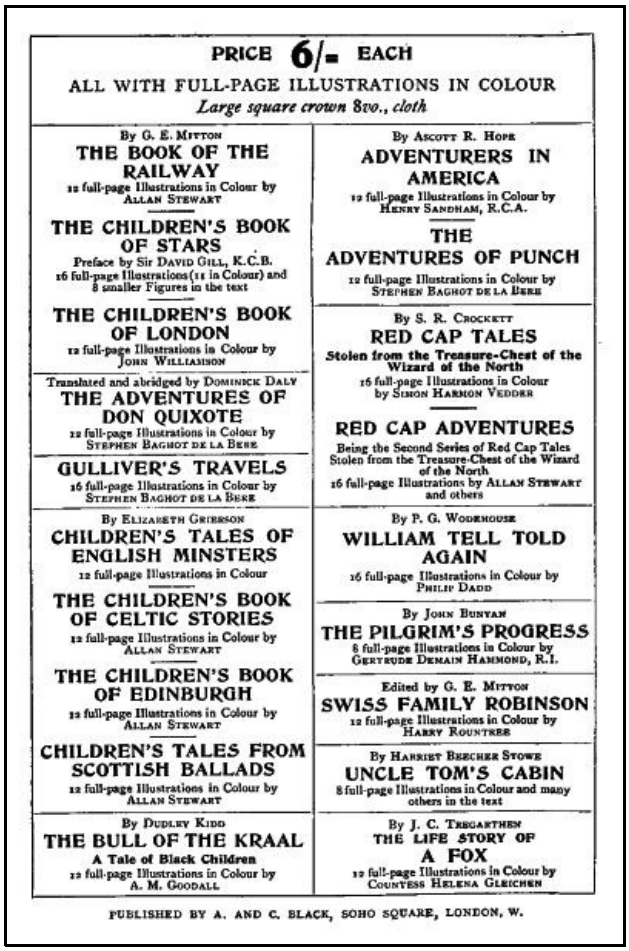

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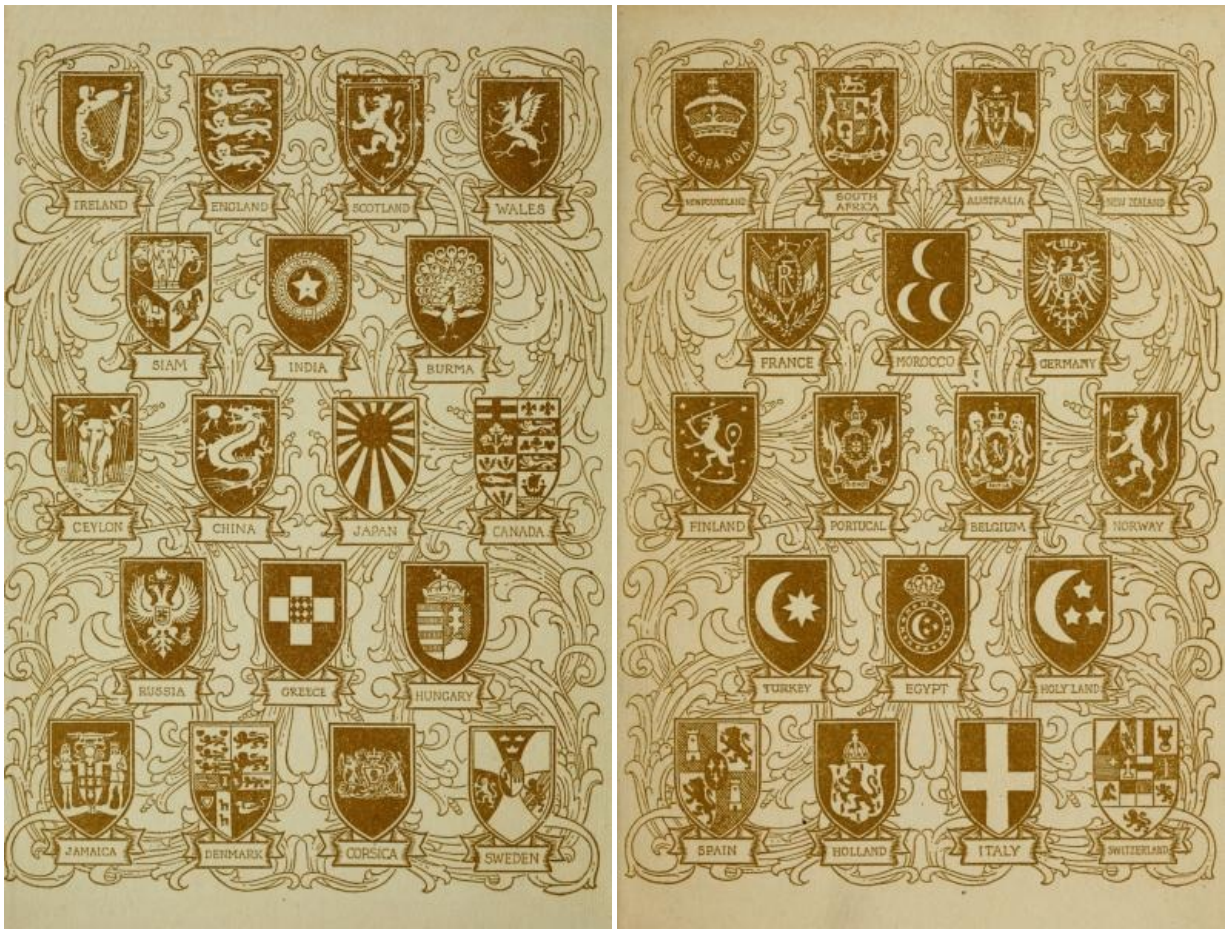

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