

had become even more necessary, as their slender means had been reduced through the failure of an unlucky investment. At one time Celia had seriously talked of embarking in life as a housekeeper to a school, or of going into a shop—she could never teach, she was sure—but Mrs. Lake had so strongly objected to this idea that she had given it up. Now she devoted her whole time to the extremely difficult task of making two ends meet, resolutely repressing any girlish longings of her own for pretty things and soft fare, and striving her utmost to make home happy for her mother and Janie. And she had succeeded. What though the walls were covered with flock paper of hideous design on a yellow ochre ground, and the carpet was decorated with bunches of magenta and pink roses tied together with bands of green riband? it was a comfortable, well-proportioned room for all that, and the mantelpiece (now that the landlady had been persuaded to remove a hearse-like arrangement of fringe and brass nails) would have delighted the eye of a connoisseur, with its delicate carving and inlaid marble. All about the room, in among the red mahogany furniture, were sundry remains saved from the sale of Mrs. Lake's home after her husband's death, such as the grand piano, a carved oak chair, and a dainty work-table. The ornaments belonging to the house had been removed one by one from the mantelpiece; the lustres, the ormolu clock, surmounted by a gilt figure of Dido, the white vases with pink medallions, had all taken up their quarters in a cabinet much shaded from the light. "You would not like them to be broken," Celia had said: "and we might meet with an accident;" and the landlady, conscious that the clock had not been heard to tick for ten years, was not offended.

Janie was much excited when she heard the contents of Mr. Greenleigh's letter, and Mrs. Lake was by this time so overcome that she could hardly be persuaded to drink her tea and eat the piece of toast that Janie made for her. Janie was sitting in front of the fire, and she whisked round every other moment to ask a question or express her astonishment anew at the lawyer's communication. Now that the first burst of indignation was over, Celia took her proposed honours very calmly, and even began to regard the second condition with approval.

"Perhaps, after all," she said, "I shall get the £3,000. Mr. Romaine will hardly be so foolish as to want me to marry him, and before April too! £3,000 is an immense sum. Why, mamma, I could send Janie abroad to study,

and you and I would go down to Bournemouth, or some nice warm place, and we would take a dear little lodging, and you would get quite strong and well. And Janie, you shall have a new serge dress, exactly like the one we saw this afternoon. Mamma! Would you like a fur-lined cloak or a sealskin jacket?"

"Do not be too positive, Celia. I should imagine that there must be some mistake. The whole affair sounds too improbable."

Poor Mrs. Lake had become so used to disappointments and trials that she invariably persisted in disbelieving that any stroke of good fortune could befall her or her girls. "It is too improbable," she repeated.

"Like a fairy tale, isn't it?" said Celia. "If we were in a story book, Janie and I would pretend we were each other, and mystify the colonist, so that he wouldn't have a notion which was which, and would propose to the wrong one. What a pity you didn't grow a little faster, Janie."

"It cannot be done," said Janie, who had a way of taking things from a literal point of view; "and, oh Celia! I should have liked the new dress!"

"You shall have it sure enough, when I come into my property."

"You never will," said Janie, shaking her head solemnly, and looking at her sister with intense interest; "he won't be able to help liking you, Celia, and then——"

"And then I shall say, 'No thank you, sir,' and pocket my £5 with a good grace. I suppose a mourning ring is only a conventional phrase. I could buy your dress all the same with the money, and order mother some luxuries; if I hadn't heard of the other legacy, I should have thought £5 boundless riches."

"He will consent to the proposal, I know he will! he almost says so," observed Janie, who, having once got an idea into her head, was slow to get it out again.

"Who will?"

"Mr. Alexander Romaine, directly he sees you."

"Well, then, I must pretend to be deaf or disagreeable—extra disagreeable—and see if I can't make him fly the house, never to return."

"Then he will write to you."

"I shall burn the whole of my correspondence unopened from this moment to ward off my fate. Dear me, mamma! we have chattered till you are tired out. I'll go and write to Mr. Greenleigh, and we won't talk about this stupid affair any more."

Celia wrote her letter, but, in spite of her protest to the contrary, she sat up an hour

later reading and re-reading her letters. Long after her mother and Janie had said good-night she paced up and down her little room, trying to make up her mind what she should say to Mr. Greenleigh to-morrow, and wondering whether Mr. Romaine really intended to come and see her, and what he would say if he did. "Shall I write and refuse at once?" thought Celia. "Perhaps, as mamma says, there's a mistake somewhere, and I had better not, besides I should like the £3,000—it would be the making of Janie to go abroad, and, as for poor mamma, there need be no more worries for her. We should be quite rich. I certainly consider that I am justified in making an effort to get the money."

It was very cold in the little room without a fire. Celia shivered and wrapt a shawl round her shoulders as she sat down to put the finishing touches to Janie's new hat (the child must have something to wear to-morrow, in case the sun shone). The harder she worked the harder she meditated on this crisis in her existence. One way out of the difficulty did not present itself to her mind, and yet it would have been the simplest to many girls—that she should wait and see if Mr. Romaine wished to carry out his share of the contract, and then accept his proposal. That was an idea that she never cherished for a single moment.

"I can't help thinking that papa's uncle was a very unpleasant old gentleman," she said, almost aloud, sticking a pin into the last knot of ribbon, and holding her head on one side to admire the effects of her handiwork; "but it is a comfort to know that if Mr. Romaine has a grain of intellect, or at least has the feelings of a gentleman, he will detest the very thought of having anything to do with me. I'm sure I should, if I were in his place! And then he is sure to be irritable and huffy, having been brought up in a colony!" Celia's notions of colonists being entirely derived from books of adventure, she regarded them as a body of backwoodsmen, with a slight veneer of civilization, and an aptitude for using a bowie knife; who dug deep for gold, sat alone on the hillside watching sheep, and were much given to strong drinks and still stronger language. She was perfectly ignorant as to the position her great-uncle had occupied in Youngsport, and had no notion whether his adopted son was a man of education. "He is sure to be tetchy about heaps of things!" So saying, she carefully covered Janie's hat and put it away out of the dust. "It will be the easiest thing in the world to make him quarrel with me."

(To be continued.)

SWEDISH GIRLS.

By ANNE BEALE.



SWEDISH girls seem to lead a more industrious home-life than do those of many other countries. The long winters and scattered houses may partly account for this, as each household is mainly dependent on its own resources for amusement and occupation, particularly in the country. Girls are, therefore, essentially domestic, and learn, naturally, such arts as will make them good housewives. Spinning, weaving, knitting, and sewing are practised by all classes;

while housekeeping is regularly taught by the mother of the family as soon as her daughters leave school. Sometimes girls who are deprived of their mother, or in any way debarred from home instruction, board for a year or so in some other family, where they are regularly instructed in culinary arts.

Whether at home or abroad, they are gradually initiated into all the mysteries of Swedish cookery. These are numerous and difficult, for, like the busy bee, the Swede must lay up in summer food for the winter. Thus the young maiden learns how to salt beef and pork, and to make sausages, as well as to preserve vegetables for winter use, without which the household would be sadly at

fault during the many months of frost and snow. She is also taught how to make all kinds of fine bread, biscuits, cakes, and puddings; to boil fruit-syrups and preserves, and to become, in short, her own cuisinière. This she finds very useful, for everybody knows how difficult it is to procure what is called a "good, sober, honest, steady cook," whether in Sweden or England.

If some young ladies open their eyes at this, they will uplift their eyebrows when they hear that their Scandinavian contemporaries can not only cook, but iron and starch. It is the custom, as in Germany, to wash the linen only three or four times a year. Of course, there is a good stock, and, when it is spun and woven by the household, is constantly

added to; moreover, it is durable, which is more than we can say of much of ours, washed every week and machine-made. The process of washing this "large book of clothes" is adapted to the heavy linen; and the use of wood ashes considerably lessens the quantity of soap required. "Washing week" must be an awful time in Sweden, if the men dread it as much as they do with us; but then it only comes once a quarter. It is to be hoped the girls like their part in it, for there must be plenty of starching and ironing. They are great adepts in producing the glaze on cuffs and collars, which make old things look "A'maist as weel as new," and devote themselves to their labours with praiseworthy zeal. Indeed, they are generally industrious.

There is an old custom, still practised, which acts as an incentive to this industry. When a girl is about thirteen or fourteen, she receives a gift of some twenty pounds of flax, grown on her father's farm, or other estate, and also retted, heckled, and spun into thread thereon. Women weave this by hand, and when it is bleached, it is ready for her to fashion into household linen, so that by the time she is twenty-one she is provided with an *infit*—to coin a word for the occasion. Meanwhile, she occupies herself with the finest crochet, lace, or embroidery, with which she adorns sheets and pillow-slips, which are so strong as to be likely to last her life. If she marries, she has her linen ready for her new abode; if she remains single, it is still considered a good investment, since she may either use it herself or sell it. But nothing can exceed the delicacy of the linen and its trimmings, or the neatness of a Swedish girl's bed-chamber. This is worthy of remark. It is usual in Sweden for the rooms on a floor to open into one another, without a corridor. Thus the bedrooms are used as sitting-rooms during the day. Cupboards and hanging closets for clothes, which serve as wardrobes, are hidden in the walls and papered like the apartment; the washstand is small, and closes; the bedstead is on the telescopic principle, which enables it to shut up to half its proper length. In the daytime the bedding is doubled up neatly, and has a pretty white covering thrown over it. This is removed in the evening, the bedstead is drawn out, and the linen sheets, with their dainty insertion, are laid over the coloured coverlet, which is either silk or cretonne, wadded and quilted at home, after the fashion of an eiderdown quilt. A small table is drawn at night near the bed, and on it are placed devotional books, water-bottle, candle and matches. The tall stove is the least ornamental but not the least useful adjunct to our friend's bedroom, and keeps it warm all through the twenty-four hours. Indeed, what with stove and double windows, Swedish rooms are often warmer in winter than English, despite external frigidity.

They are, however, more prim and stiff, owing to absence of carpets now and again, size, and sometimes scarcity of furniture; but there is a cleanliness and order everywhere, which is very noticeable, and to which the daughters of the house greatly contribute. Flowers, also, adorn the scene. The short summer renders the out-of-door garden a brief pleasure; but girls cultivate plants indoors very successfully. No nameday or birthday is allowed to pass without some floral offering, in addition to the customary presents. Wreaths are arranged round the various gifts on the breakfast-table by members of the family, and when, later on in the day, friends come to "congratulate," they always bring bouquets with them. In addition to the industrious custom we have quoted of preparing the house-linen against the much-desired wedding-day, there is a yet more elegant one of keeping, and tending carefully, myrtles for that happy occasion. Most girls grow them, and, strange as

it may seem, manage to keep them alive and thriving in their northern clime. Thus, on the eve of a wedding, the bridesmaids assemble to weave the "myrtle crown," which is to adorn the bride on the morrow. She wears it on her wedding-day, treasures it all her life, and, not infrequently, it eventually finds a place in her coffin. This speaks well for the purity and constancy of Swedish married women.

But there is much to be learnt and done before this myrtle crown is worn. Household matters and matrimony do not make up the whole of a girl's life. Education goes on in Sweden as elsewhere. At the public schools in towns a first-rate one can be obtained at a small cost; and whether there, or at home with a governess, is never neglected. The school-girl rises early, and must be at lessons by seven o'clock, continuing there until four, with short intervals for refreshment.

English, French, and German are generally learnt, and the best English writers are understood and appreciated. There are many excellent Swedish authors, amongst whom we must not forget Miss Brewer, whose delightful novels are translated into English, and were in every house some years ago. Of course, music forms a part of a girl's education; but it is not compulsory, and therefore friends are not stunned by the heavy fists of every school-girl, or expected to compliment when they are simply bored. Those who play the piano, play well, and read music at sight, or sit down naturally, and play from memory in an unpretending manner and without fuss. This is worthy of imitation. Singing does not seem to be so much practised by young girls as by young men, whose voices are more cultivated. Still, we have several Swedish nightingales and delightful Swedish choirs. Jenny Lind will ever fill a nook in history and memory, not only as the first of vocalists, but as one of the benefactresses of mankind; for whosoever she won the crown of song, there she left behind her generous help for the sick or suffering. We are thankful to know that she has chosen England as her home.

Swedish girls write neatly and legibly, and draw sufficiently well to design their patterns for embroidery, which is almost a necessary art, since ready-traced patterns are not easily procured. Neatness and order are their characteristics at school and at home, and their dress is generally simple and inexpensive, but made with great taste and fitting perfectly. They are usually their own dressmakers, and frequently one girl in a family takes lessons for a few months, to enable her to become cutter-out and fitter for the rest. Their needlework is perfection; but recently the sewing-machine has been introduced. Until lately, they marked all their clothing by needle and thread, and habitually made both sides show alike. Their crochet and embroidery work is so good that many girls earn sufficient by it during their spare time to provide themselves with clothes. There are dépôts in the large towns to which it is sent, and where, on the payment of a small sum, it remains till sold. They have, of course, other means of earning a living as well; many make good telegraphists, cashiers, and law-writers, besides occupying the acknowledged position as governesses. The latter are socially well off, as they are invariably treated as guests or members of the family, and with much consideration. They have their private sitting-room and bedroom, mixing with the family when they like, are present at their parties, and invited with them to those of their friends.

Society in towns has no special peculiarity, beyond what appears to be especial politeness. After a dinner-party it is customary for the guests to bow to the host and hostess as they pass from the dining to the drawing-room, and to thank them for their entertainment

before they leave, while children always thank their parents for their meal, often kissing their hands. On paying a visit, thanks are always tendered for "last time," and friends are received with a "Wälkommen" (welcome) as they are shaken heartily by the hand. Due respect is always paid by the young to their elders, an example we would gladly see followed in our own country. It is not allowable for a girl to seat herself on a sofa when a married lady is present, even though she does not occupy it.

Country visiting is very pleasant, and proves the hospitality of the Swedes. Friends arrive unexpectedly in parties, perhaps a carriageful at a time, and are welcomed for the day, or even the night, as may be. The horses are put up and the guests accommodated and supplied with whatever the house affords. It is at these times that the girls prove the benefit of their useful bringing-up, having at command the good things they have provided against all emergencies; and they interchange visits unceremoniously, frequently appearing without notice in the abodes of their friends. In summer they are mostly entertained out of doors—supposing there is a verandah to the house or suitable shelter—and the girls work and read in the open air most of the day, or bathe and swim in the lake, should there be one, thus making the most of their brief warm weather. Bathing-houses are generally to be found on the edge of the water.

In winter there is much skating, and sometimes parties are given which last into the night, when the fur-clad young people skate by the light of flambeaux and coloured lanterns, that are hung among the pines and make the scene eminently picturesque. The evening's amusement concludes with supper at the house. But even this can scarcely be so exhilarating as a large sleighing party. Some twenty or thirty sledges meet at an appointed rendezvous, all furnished with warm fur rugs, and drawn by a horse, over which is thrown a white net to keep off the snow which he kicks up with his iron heel. Some sledges are shaped like large swans, others gaily painted. Each gentleman is accompanied by a lady, whom he fetches, either from her home or some appointed place of meeting, and when they are comfortably seated, off go the sledges in procession, to the sound of merry sleigh-bells, which echo across the snow, and make the pine-woods and ice-bound lakes resound to their jingling music. After a drive of some five or six miles the merry party return to the place whence they started, where tea and coffee await them, followed by dancing and supper. The Swedish girl's toilette is easily adjusted, for after sledging it to a party, for ten or twelve miles, she is soon ready to appear in the drawing-room, often without the aid of a mirror. She dresses herself so carefully before leaving home, that in spite of being muffled in furs, hoods, and fur-lined boots, when she enters the well-warmed hall, the servant who receives her has only to take her wraps, and she emerges spick and span as from a band-box.

But we are not to suppose that house-keeping and visiting engage her whole attention. In the towns especially there is a great scope for earnest religious and philanthropic work. Girls help in Young Women's Christian Associations, coffee-taverns, sailors' homes, deaconesses' homes, crèches, cripples' homes, and Sunday-schools. In Sweden, as elsewhere, "where there's a will there's a way," and girls may imitate their blessed Saviour in "g-ing about doing good." In a country place that we know of, young ladies, half Swede, half English, invite the peasant children to classes for Bible reading and hymn singing; and the little people trudge miles across the snow to learn. The Lutheran hymns and services generally are



A SWEDISH HOUSEHOLD.

not so bright and hearty as those of our English Church, and the girls like Moody and Sankey's hymns, and others of our hymnology, better than their own. As in the Moravian churches, the men sit on one side of the aisle and the women on the other. Girls are very carefully prepared for confirmation by their pastors, who afterwards themselves confirm them and administer to them the Lord's Supper. It is compulsory under Swedish law that, after confirmation, which takes place when the candidate is fifteen, every one shall attend the Lord's Supper at least once a year. It seems strange that so blessed a feast should, under any circumstances, be made compulsory when it should be the Christian's gladdest time.

Both at confirmation and Holy Communion, girls wear black dresses, which would appear to symbolise sorrow for the sin which caused their Saviour's most precious sacrifice.

The next phase in a girl's life is marriage. The fashioning of the myrtle crown has already been described; the ceremony differs little from our own; but no girl is allowed to marry without her parents' consent until she is twenty-five. There are neither registry offices nor licences, and for rich and poor alike banns must be published three times in church; and

thus many foolish, inconsiderate, and forbidden marriages are avoided.

The Swedish peasant girl is hardy and industrious; works in the fields in summer, in the house in winter; eats coarse bread and little else; has not many amusements; and is, as a rule, thrifty, obedient to her parents, and God-fearing. Her wants are few and she is content.

She often lives from the cradle to the grave on the same spot of earth, and does not murmur at her lot.

"The grave!" This solemn word brings to mind the Swedish funeral. We will suppose it to be that of a young girl. The coffin is placed on an open car, is festooned with evergreens, and covered with flowers. As the procession moves along, friends strew bits of spruce fir before their houses, and when it reaches the churchyard, it passes beneath an archway of fir at the entrance, and over a pathway strewn with fir; the grave, also, is lined with this sturdy product of northern regions. As it adorns the everlasting hills with its fringe of green, so it brightens the snowy path and snow-surrounded grave — emblem of immortality. It must seem almost comforting to survivors to leave their beloved dead amid those fir-branches, lopped from trees contain-

ing the elements of heat and durability. But still more comforting the words, "I am the resurrection and the life," spoken equally over the mortal remains of old and young, and of those of all countries.

BITS ABOUT ANIMALS.

A STEAMER'S COW.

A CLASS of animals that have very little sympathy accorded to them, and who are forced to lead a hard, unnatural life, are seafaring cows. They voyage over the "wasteful ocean" with never even the briefest respite in green fields.

Cows on some American lines, I believe, have holidays on land, but those whose acquaintances I made belonged to the Peninsular and Oriental Company. They were well housed, but had reproachful faces, and their whole demeanour bespoke of resignation to their martyrdom.

I often thought how the poor, patient brutes must have been battered and wearied when their steamer strained and rolled through rough waters, and if we were cleaving our way