from under her, during Sam's visits. When nothing was left to spend or sell, he left her in the empty room to shift for herself as best she could, and lay up a store to be scattered again when he found occasion so to do.

The woman might have obtained protection; but she hated publicity, and held the strongest views as to the sacredness of her marriage vow. And there was the child—his child as well as hers.

This tie broken, Anna hesitated no longer. She sold the few things she had, and took service with Mrs. Cutclose, very much to her own comfort and that of her mistress. She was only thirty at the time, and had been seventeen years in her place when the death of Mrs. Cutclose left her in sole charge.

Anna Jukes did not get wholly rid of her husband by this action. He levied blackmail from time to time by working on her dread of creating scandal, or drawing attention to her wretched partner. But Mr. Cutclose stood between her and any great harm. He was firm enough to deal with any number of good-for-nothings; and Sam had a wholesome dread of being confronted by the master, instead of his too yielding wife, when his penniless condition made a stealthy call upon her a matter of necessity.

Probably the fact that there would be no chance of Mr. Cutclose marrying Anna Jukes, should he be left a widower, had a good deal to do with the request made by his wife on her death-bed.

So the years passed smoothly enough over the head of the owner of Crowe's Entry, and his affairs were so well managed that, at the end of each twelve months, he found himself a richer man than he had been at its beginning.

At fifty years of age, Mr. Cutclose was a man of great business ability, though it was exercised within a narrow groove, and he had never known what it was to care more for another human being than for himself. Hitherto his great object in life had been to use every person with whom he had to do for the advancement of his own interest, and the increase of his worldly possessions. That he usually attained this end was evinced by the success which attended all his business undertakings. If all he touched did not actually turn to gold, money in one shape or other poured into his pockets in a very steady stream, and caused him to feel well satisfied with his position.

(To be continued.)

LIFE AT A SWEDISH FARM.

By "PEVERIL," Author of "In the Good Old Days," "Glen Gordon," etc.

"Poor and content is rich, and rich enough."
—*Shakespeare.*

"From toil he wins his spirits light,
From busy day the peaceful night;
Rich, from the very want of wealth,
In heaven's best treasures—peace and health."—*Gray.*

Life at a Swedish farm is like life nowhere else. Contented, rather than ambitious, the people cling tenaciously to the manners and habits of their ancestors; carrying their love for primitive customs so far that they seem to belong more to the seventeenth than to the nineteenth century.

The peasant farmer, or "bonde," forms an important class in Sweden—a class which has been justly called the backbone of the country. Independent, industrious, and self-respecting, he is not unlike the British yeoman of olden days. But he will not change, like our yeoman. A bonde never aspires to rise above his class, and is, in fact, too proud to be other than he is. His farm, or "gaarde," has come down to him through a long line of bonde ancestors, and he has no higher aim than to live and die as they lived and died, with sons, daughters, and grandchildren growing up around him, and a goodly following of men-servants and maid-servants, who are treated as members of the family.

Since the greater part of Sweden is still covered by forest, it follows that wood is cheaper than stone, and is therefore largely used for building purposes. Houses are sometimes made of great trunks of trees, laid horizontally one above another, the interstices being filled with moss. This is the old style. A more modern plan is to saw the logs lengthwise into two, or to cut them into very thick planks, which are either placed horizontally or upright; the latter being thought the more durable, is often used for the building of churches.

A farmhouse, or gaarde, is sometimes built in a quadrangle; the court in the centre being entered through an archway; but more frequently the square is surrounded only on three sides, the dwelling house in the centre, flanked on one side by a stable, on the other by the cowhouse, or "ladugaarde." These are not under one roof, a slight space between each building serving as safeguard against fire. All wooden erections—houses, barns, and stake fences—are painted red, adding a picturesque element to the scenery; the artistic effect of which is heightened by the green roofs common in many rural districts. In places where neither tiles nor slate can be procured, the farmer roofs his house with wood; and as straw is too precious a commodity to be used for thatch, he overlays his beams with earth. Thither the wind carries grass, fern, and flower seeds; often also the seed of fir and mountain ash trees; so that quite a pretty garden is frequently to be seen upon the roofs of houses and barns, especially if the district is mountainous. The thrifty Swede does not fail to make use of this impromptu hay crop. Upon the true "Many a little makes a mickle" principle, he carefully mows his roof, and adds the produce to his scanty store of fodder.

A Swedish gaarde is rarely more than one story in height, and consists of two large rooms—a kitchen, and another which is literally the living-room of the family; for it is here they eat and drink, work, play, and also sleep. Some of the more wealthy have a third room; but this is kept as a guest chamber, and is only used by the family as a safe storing-place for their best garments.

The roomy kitchen looks what it is—a place in which to cook, bake, brew, and churn. The appliances for these housewifely arts are plainly to be seen. There are racks for crockery, shelves for pots and pans, and hooks for many small necessaries. A place for everything, and everything in its place, is evidently the good house-mother's rule. Fireplaces differ with locality. In the south you see stoves; but in the country open ranges are more usual; and in many parts the fire burns upon a broad stone platform, raised altar-like about two feet above the kitchen floor. Beneath the wide open chimney, supported by a strong bar, hang one or more iron chains, from whence the pans and kettles dangle over the blazing logs.

In the middle of the kitchen floor is a trap-door—the entrance into a cellar, wherein is stored barrels of salt meat, dried fish, potatoes, and turnips; not to mention a goodly supply of "branvin," and many a cask of "öl"—the light home-brewed beer of the country—etc. It was in just such a cellar that Gustavus Vasa was hidden once upon a time. When the Danes came to search for him, they found the kitchen in a great ferment and bustle. The good wife was brewing, and had her great vat placed over the trap-door. She was so indignant at this interruption to her all-important task of brewing Jul-öl for Christmas that the soldiers dared not ask her to move the vat. So once more the great Vasa escaped; and not for the first time he owed his safety to woman's wit.

The living room, or lofva, is large and comfortable, though a stranger might consider it too hot; for hardy as he is, a Swede likes warmth within-doors, and loves to see his hearth piled with blazing pine logs. There is no ceiling to the room, only broad rafters black with age, from which hang bunches of herbs, hanks of yarn, or other articles in general use. The floor is strewn with sprigs of pine or spruce, which emit a delightfully refreshing odour when trampled under foot. The robust health enjoyed by the Swedish bonde may possibly be greatly owing to this wholesome practice, which is universal from north to south, and, unlike most peasant customs, is also to be observed in towns.

The lofva is furnished simply, with a long deal table and benches, a loom, or perhaps two, and spinning-wheels, according to the number of workers. On either side of the hearth stands a large wooden armchair for the house-father and house-mother, while along

the wall are ranged pine-wood sofas or settles, evidently fixtures, which are often covered with cushions tastefully embroidered. At night these sofas change their character in a manner very startling to a stranger. The pretty cushions are laid aside, the deal seats removed, and there—behold the family beds! These pull out like a drawer, and can be used as single or double beds, as required. They are supplied with soft feather beds and pillows, white blankets woven by the house-mother herself, and coverings of sheepskin with the wool left on, soft as washleather, and white as snow. Here, and in this manner, the household sleep—master, mistress, servants, and children—and to judge by their appearance, the practice cannot be so unwholesome as might be supposed. It should be observed that, in a Swedish gaarde, going to bed does not involve undressing—the women merely take off their smart aprons, bodices, and upper skirts, and the men their boots and coats.

Saturday is washing day. If there is no proper bathhouse or "badstuga," the ladugaarde serves the purpose. The great pan, three feet in diameter, in which cattle fodder is prepared, now swings over the log fire full of steaming water; and by the time the evening meal is ready, the family assemble, fresh, rosy, and smiling, with hair neatly brushed and braided, and clothes sweet, clean, and tidy. So the week ends, and they are ready for the next.

A bonde is of all men the most industrious. "Laziness is the devil's cushion," he says, with a wise shake of the head; and certainly no one can accuse him of borrowing that Satanic luxury. Even in winter he rises at three o'clock in the morning, and his good wife and her maidens have finished their dairy work and set the house in order long before their more indolent sisters of the sunny south sit down to breakfast. The morning work accomplished, the house-mother seats herself at her loom, her daughters take each her spinning-wheel, while the maid-servants are busy carding wool. A happy party it is, and a merry one, for tongues may wag as fast as fingers. A story is told, or jokes fly round the circle, or perhaps one, with a sweeter voice than the rest, begins singing one of the ballads, or folk-viser, of which the bonde is so fond. Thus time flies.

Except in towns, there are no shops in Sweden, and no tradesmen. Every farmer is his own blacksmith and carpenter, his own glazier and his own miller. If he needs another barn, he applies to no builders, but bids his lads take their axes and follow him to the forest, where he chooses the trees best suited to his purpose. There is, in fact, no part of the work which he cannot do for himself, and do well.

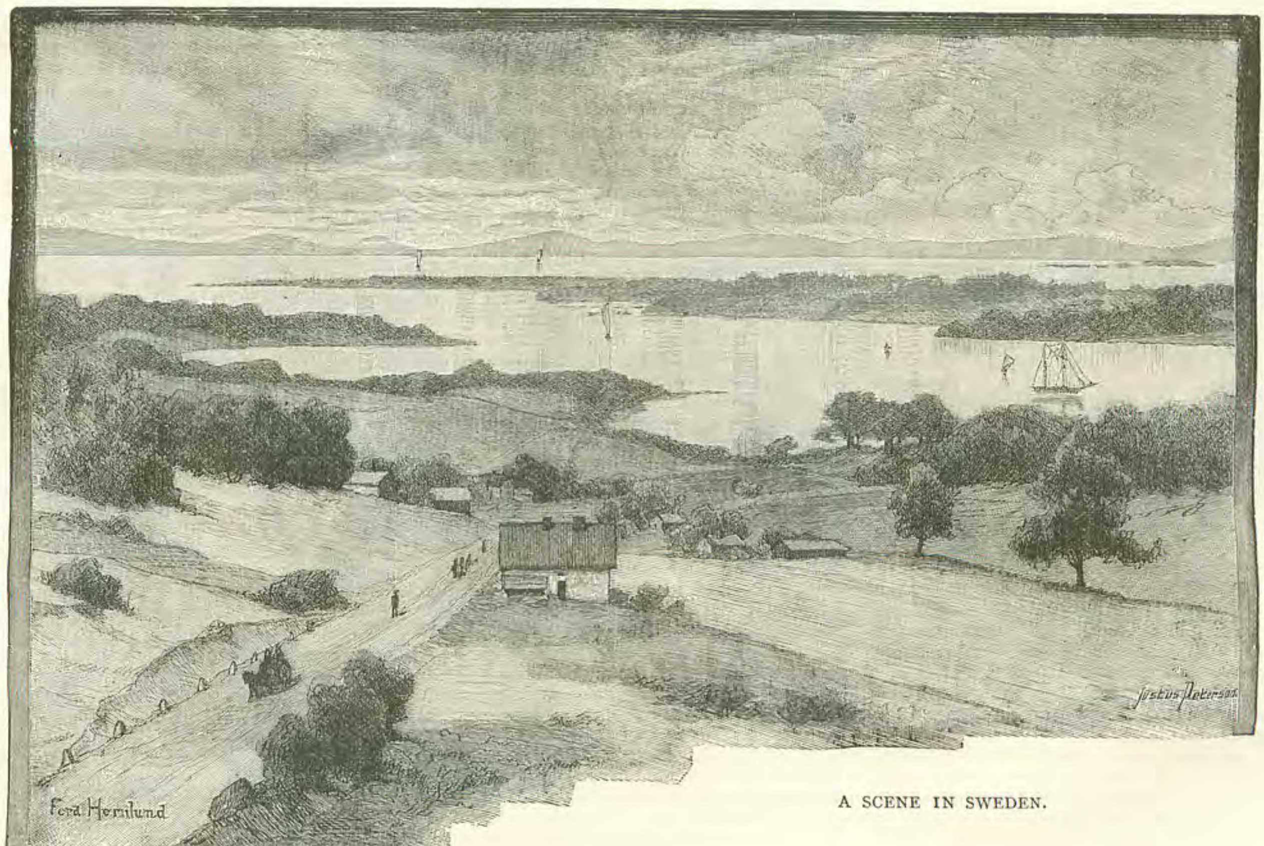
Twice a year, in April and October, comes slaughtering-time—a busy season for the farmer and his wife. By long experience he knows exactly how many pigs, sheep, and cattle will be required by his household. These he kills, giving the meat to his good wife, while he and his men are occupied with the hides, horns, and hoofs. Of the latter he makes glue; reserving the best horns that the young men who have a taste for carving may not lack material. Nothing is wasted. Even the sinews of the slaughtered cattle have their uses, and must be carefully cured and dried.

Every farmer is also a tanner, and understands the process needful to produce leather of every variety, from harness and stout boot leather to the soft, fine, dyed skins of which the women make pouches and belts. A few of the sheepskins are tanned with the wool on. These are for rugs and bed coverings. In some districts they are also used to make coats for winter wear, the wool acting as lining to the garment, and as trimming, for it forms a fringe to the wrists and bottom to the coat.

Slaughtering-time entails much work upon the house-mother and her maidens. Spinning-wheels are set on one side, and all hands are busy, some drying, smoking, or salting meat down into barrels; some rendering fat and making candles, others mincing, spicing, and pounding meat, and storing it away in bladders. They have also some way of preparing the blood of animals, which when dried to a powder can be kept a long time, and is used, mixed with oatmeal or rye-flour, to make pancakes and other savory dishes.

Self-helpful as he is, however, the farmer cannot supply all his needs; and when a country fair is held, which happens two or three times every year, he never fails to attend it, taking with him all the produce of his farm which can be spared, and returning laden with sugar, salt, coffee, tobacco, and corn brandy, which it is now not lawful for him to make at home.

There is, indeed, little a bonde cannot do for himself. He grows flax for his wife to spin and weave, hops for the annual öl-brewing, and if he lives upon a fjord, he grows also hemp enough to supply him with nets. The skin of his cattle gives him shoe-leather, and their wool provides him with clothing. But for all that he is fain to acknowledge that some few things can be done best by tradesmen—only a few. He can tan leather with anyone, but he would rather not try his hand at converting it into boots. And he need not. Twice a year a shoemaker makes the round of all the outlying farms and hamlets, staying at each house for several days—until, in fact, he has supplied every man, woman, and child on the premises with shoes to last for six months. In the same way a tailor comes round once in six months. As soon as he is seen approaching, the house-mother bustles out to receive him with due honour; and while some of her maidens prepare a meal for the traveller, others fetch out the bales of cloth, the fruits of months of busy spinning and weaving. Then follows a grand cutting out, fitting on, and stitching; and when the itinerant tailor journeys on to his



A SCENE IN SWEDEN.

next customer, he leaves behind him a household of simple folk delighted with and never tired of admiring their new garments, and praising the skill which has made them fit so cleverly.

In many parts of rural Sweden teaching and doctoring are carried on in the same curious manner. Once in a long while the doctor makes a tour, and is hospitably entertained at every farm on his wide circuit. If he finds invalids, he of course ministers to their needs; but the people are healthy, and "mother" has usually skill enough to deal with their simple maladies. When the doctor comes, however, each one begins to fancy a few aches or queer feelings—it seems such a pity to waste the opportunity! So much medicine is swallowed upon these occasions which had better have been thrown away.

The travelling schoolmaster is a national institution. "Flyttbara Skoler," or circular schools, are held periodically in all rural districts; and all that can be said for the system is, that it is better than no education at all; but as weeks or months must elapse between each course of study, high results cannot be expected.

Politeness is a striking characteristic of the Swedish nation; and in this particular all classes are alike. Not only do the rich treat their inferiors with kind consideration, but the poor are courteous to the poor; self-respect leading, as it should, to respect for others; for

> "Manners are not idle, but the fruit
> Of loyal natures and of loyal minds."

How true an insight into human nature is here displayed by our poet! The courtesy of the Swedish bonde is not merely the outcome of kindly goodwill, but is the natural result of his own innate honesty. His frank openhearted hospitality is marred by no distrust, no doubt of his guest's honour or kindly feeling; for he is too loyal himself to suspect disloyalty in others.

Life at a Swedish farmhouse must needs be happy, the patriarchal simplicity of the household obviating many of the self-made trials of so-called civilisation. Bonde matrons and maids have no time for nerves and fancies; and where there is no struggle to keep up appearances, there can be no needless anxiety to succeed, or distress at failure.

Unlike his Norwegian neighbour, a Swedish bonde is light of heart and jovial, fond of singing and dancing, and thoroughly appreciating the pleasures of the table. He never loses an opportunity for a kalas, or feast. Not only are all public festivals celebrated with great *éclat*, but every domestic event serves as the occasion for a grand merrymaking. A "bröllop," or wedding, lasts several days; also a betrothal, and a "bärns-öl," or christening. Besides these, there are minor festivities of an impromptu kind, which give great zest to ordinary life.

A bonde is always ready to help his neighbour at a busy time. It may be the building of a barn, or the raising of a hässja; whatever it is that calls the neighbours together, the opportunity is one for feasting. All hands work heartily until the supper hour arrives; then the host invites them to enter the house, where the smiling house-mother stands ready to welcome her guests to her well-spread table, and the grand business of eating and drinking begins. Not all at once, however. It is one of the canons of bonde etiquette that you should not accept of hospitality without demur. It is the proper thing to protest against the honour done to you, especially if you are invited to sit in the "uppermost room of the feast." Here again the custom is patriarchal. Under these circumstances the placing of guests is a work of time; but this distresses no one, for a bonde is never in a hurry. At length, all preliminary ceremonies duly observed, the company apply themselves vigorously to the pleasant duty of clearing the dishes set before them; the hostess waiting upon them herself.

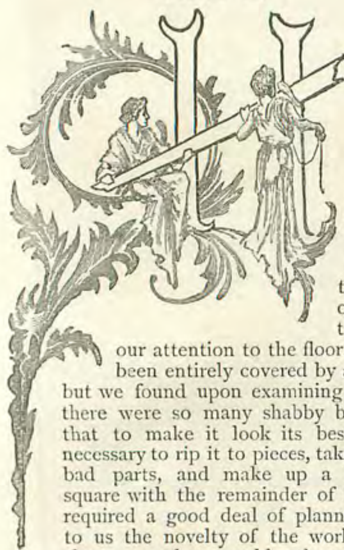
Supper ended, the guests rise, and each one shakes hands with his host and hostess, saying, "Tak för matt"—"Thanks for the meal"—to which they reply, "Väl-bekommet"—"Welcome to it." The custom of giving thanks for food is universal, from the highest to the lowest, and is as necessary a part of a grand city dinner-party as at a bonde kalas. This little ceremony over, the table is cleared with great dispatch; the musician of the party takes his fiddle and strikes up a lively tune, and the dance begins. Some of the prettiest national dances are combined with singing, the dancers keeping step to the cadence of their song.

While the young folk are thus employed, the elders of the party light their big pipes, and sit discussing the state of the crops, the prices of cattle at the last fair, and the prospects of the next. So time flies merrily, and before the party breaks up, another informal revel has been planned by the pleasure-loving lads and lasses.

OUR SCHOOLROOM.

By Mrs. J. NICHOLSON SHEARMAN.

PART II.



HAVING got the walls into good order, we turned our attention to the floor. It had been entirely covered by a carpet; but we found upon examining this that there were so many shabby bits in it, that to make it look its best it was necessary to rip it to pieces, take out the bad parts, and make up a bordered square with the remainder of it. This required a good deal of planning; but to us the novelty of the work gave a charm to what would otherwise have been a very disagreeable job. As soon as the square was made, we were able to ascertain what margin there would be all round it, and to mark it out upon the floor previous to staining it, using a carpenter's pencil to make the lines heavy.

There were a good many little splashes of paint upon the floor, made there at some former time when the woodwork round the room had been painted. So we made a strong solution of potash, and put a thick covering of it upon the paint we wished to remove, and left it to do its own work. The housemaid next morning scrubbed the floor for us, and all the disfiguring spots vanished immediately. In using the potash we had to be cautious not to burn our fingers.

For the floor stain we put an ounce of permanganate of potash into a gallon of water, and when it was thoroughly dissolved, applied it with the small whitewash brush which we had used for pasting the wall-paper. When the first coat of the stain had dried, we were somewhat disappointed with the result, as it seemed to have had very little effect upon the colour of the wood. However, as we had heard of the stain from a reliable source, we gave it another coat, and found it much improved. Thus encouraged, we put on coat after coat, until the margin was stained a beautiful warm dark brown, which allowed the grain of the wood to be seen through it, and had not the dead, monotonous colouring of some of the paints and varnishes more generally applied by amateur decorators. As the weather was very warm and dry, we were able to put on three coats in one day. At first we were inclined to splash the stain about a good deal; but a little experience made us more cautious, and we found that when any of it got on the skirting-board, if we rubbed it off immediately with a wet cloth it did no damage. When the last coat of stain was quite dry, we polished the margin with beeswax and turpentine. This was very tiring work; but as we are young and strong, we quite enjoyed it; and we were, moreover, very impatient to see the carpet down, so as to be better able to judge of the effect of our labours.

The curtain poles were very old and shabby, but they were made to look like new with Aspinall's black enamel, and a little touching up on the ends and rings with Judson's gold paint. By the time we had got the poles in their places, the curtains came home from the dyer's, and we got them sewed and hung up.

Some of the chairs and a small couch belonging to the schoolroom had been discarded from the drawing-room a few years before, and the bright colour of the rep covers was not at all in harmony with the curtains and carpet. The latter had been chosen for a blue room, and was a decided contrast to the shades of terra-cotta in the paper and curtains. So it was evident that to make the room look at all well, we must cover the chairs and couch with cretonne which introduced both colours. We tried in vain for this in B——e; but when wearied out with fruitless searching, I thought of taking a piece of paper, and painting on it great daubs of the colours in the paper and carpet, and sending it to one of the large well-known firms in London, describing what we wanted. Almost by return of post we got patterns of several very pretty cretonnes, any of which would have suited. We chose one which was rather darker than the rest, and likely to be serviceable, costing one shilling and twopence per yard. With eighteen yards of this we made loose covers with deep frills for the four rep-covered chairs and couch; we also upholstered two other chairs with some of it, and had sufficient left to make a frilled cover for a soft cushion for the couch. The loose covers were all easily made, as the sewing was principally done in the sewing machine. But the renovating of a little old arm-chair which we found in an unused room in which