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# PEEPS AT MANY LANDS

# FINLAND

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*Allan Stewart.*

A KARELIAN RUNO SINGER.

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS

# FINLAND

BY

M. PEARSON THOMSON

WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS
IN COLOUR

BY

ALLAN STEWART, ALEXANDER
FEDERLEY, VERNON STOKES,
AND ALAN WRIGHT

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1909

W10-1152

TO

MY FRIEND

M. C. H.

IN MEMORY OF OUR

HAPPY WANDERINGS IN FINLAND

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SKETCH-MAP OF FINLAND

ABO CATHEDRAL AND MARKET BOATS.

# FINLAND

## CHAPTER I

### A PEEP AT ITS HISTORY

I AM sure you think Finland a small, out-of-the-way place, inaccessible in summer and impossible in winter to any but the Laplander or Esquimaux! Nothing of the kind. It is true that its waters are ice-bound in the winter, but a passage is kept open by ice-breaking steamers between England and the Finnish ports of Åbo and Hangö; you can therefore reach this beautiful land at any time of the year.

If you would enjoy a unique experience, you must go there in the winter, and steam through the crashing thunder of breaking ice to reach the "Land of Heroes," as Finland is called by its people. In summer it is a land of midnight sun—warm, even hot, days, beautiful woodland and forest scenery, exquisite sunsets, sunny lakes, cool, shaded streams, and every modern means of travel. Its numerous attractions of scenery and sport draw

many Englishmen and others to its shores every summer, also in winter for its amusing skating, sleighing, ski-ing (snow-shoeing), and all kinds of winter games. Finland is called "Suomi" in Finnish, which means "marsh-land," and because of its numberless waters it is also called "The Land of a Thousand Lakes," although there are actually many more than that.

Few countries possess so many attractive names as Finland does. The children call it "Strawberry Land," because of its bountiful supply of this fruit; others, again, call it "The Land of a Thousand Isles," on account of the multitude of fir-clad islands scattered throughout its waters. I like the title of "Land of Heroes" best, and you will agree with me when I tell you about the Finns' brave struggle to keep their country (and language), although it is a border State between two greater Powers. Finland lies on the north-east shores of the Baltic Sea. It is bounded by the Gulf of Bothnia, the Gulf of Finland, and on the land side its boundaries are Russia, Norway and Sweden, as you will see by your map.

"It is water I want, not land," said a Czar; so you may suppose what the people of Finland suffered between Sweden and Russia before the latter got possession of the Finnish ports. Little is known of the history of Finland or its people

before the twelfth century, when King Eric of Sweden invaded the land with the avowed object of Christianizing the people. He was accompanied by Archbishop Henry, an Englishman, who converted and baptized the Finns at Åbo, the capital at that time.

Many Swedes followed their King, and settled on the South Coast of Finland as well as on the islands near its borders. Grants of land were given to many Swedish nobles by the King, to encourage settlement in this newly acquired territory. The Finns benefited largely by the Swedish laws and by contact with a more cultured nation, whose language they soon learned. Finland thus became a province of Sweden, who was able to keep her for six centuries against Russian invasion. These six centuries, however, were anything but peaceful ones for either Swede or Finn, for Russia was determined to get the mastery of the Baltic Sea and Finland's good shipping ports. So war soon broke out between Russia and Sweden, and the fighting continued, with intervals, for many long years. These were years of suffering and famine for the poor Finns. Fire and sword wrought destruction on this beautiful border country, the Finns being wellnigh crushed between the two Powers and their constant warfare.

Russia finally annexed Finland in 1808, by crossing

the frontier (while Sweden was engaged in the wars with Napoleon), on the pretext that the ports had not been closed against possible invaders.

The Finns were now left to defend themselves against Russia, Sweden being unable then to send reinforcements. However, they bravely held their own for some time, and the story of their skirmishing warfare on the various islands and lakes makes thrilling reading for boys. Alexander I., who was then Czar, did not wait for the end of this war, but proceeded to treat with the Finns, promising them independence for their country by a union with Russia. This the Finns, after a long struggle, finally agreed to, realizing the impossibility of retaining their independence under Sweden, when Russia, the stronger Power, was for ever waging war upon the land. In this they did the best possible for their country, Finland having prospered under Russia, owing to the cessation of wars. In 1809 the Finlanders took the oath of allegiance to Alexander I., and he became Grand Duke of Finland, Sweden ceding to Russia all her rights. By this Act of Union Finland's liberties as an independent State were guaranteed, special privileges being granted to the people which are much valued by them. The Finns are a very law-abiding, peace-loving nation, patriotic before all else, and very tenacious of their liberties.

# A Peep at its History

You must understand that the Finnish nation is composed chiefly of two races. The Svekoman is the descendant of the old Swedish settlers, while the Finoman is the true Finn and the original inhabitant of the land. These two races unite in calling themselves Finns, and combine to uphold their country's liberties and its language. Finnish is now the recognized official language; but formerly, when Finland was a province of Sweden, the prevailing language was Swedish, Finnish being very little spoken.

The determination of the Finns to maintain their country as an independent State, having its laws respected by Russia, has not succeeded without an occasional struggle. Although they are the Czar's most loyal subjects, there exists still constant friction between the Finns and the Russian officials placed over them, as the latter frequently ignore the Finnish laws.

Alexander II. was the monarch who did most for Finland, and always respected its laws. This Czar habitually visited the Grand Duchy in his yacht, the arrival of which was always hailed with delight by the loyal, warm-hearted Finns. As soon as the Imperial yacht anchored, small boats of every description might be seen skimming over the water, carrying peasants with offerings of flowers and fruit for their beloved Grand Duke.

# Finland

Although Finland is a little larger than Great Britain and Ireland combined, it possesses now neither army nor navy of its own ! The Finns, however, pay a large sum annually to Russia for home defence. It was a terrible calamity to Finland when its army was disbanded by the Czar. This punishment was in consequence of their refusing to serve in Russian regiments, or to be officered by Russians, as doing so would be breaking Finnish law. To be obliged to serve their country in a civil capacity only must be galling to these gallant soldiers of Finland, who, I am sure, will have the sympathy of every freedom-loving Briton.

## CHAPTER II

### THE LAND OF A THOUSAND LAKES

### I

How delightful this title sounds on a hot summer day, when a sail on the bosom of these wondrous blue waters, enjoying the sweet-scented, pine-laden air, seems the most inviting thing to do in the world! You might sail for days and weeks, always finding something fresh to amuse and attract you on these

wonderful lakes, which have been known and used as important waterways since the Middle Ages. About a tenth part of Finland, strange as it may sound, consists of water! Nowhere else could you find such a marvellous combination of land and water, tree and rock scenery. The summer days in Finland are very long. The month of June, indeed, has no night, so birds, beasts, and flowers forget to go to bed, and little children sleep when they are tired. The State combines also with Nature, by having no schools open after May until September, to make this land of "White Night" a happy holiday-time.

The lakes, with their wooded islands, are the favourite summer resort of the Finlanders as well as the Russians, both of whom have their country villas on them. These give a bright, picturesque effect to the landscape. You, perhaps, might like these waterways in winter, when they are all frozen, and are used as the highroad to everywhere. Then your journey to market or school is made in sleigh or on skis, and you realize what fairyland is like in its shimmering, winter dress.

Let us start on a tour of investigation, and have a peep at these unsurpassed waterways we, here in England, know so little about. We start from Viborg, the little garrison town on the Gulf of

# Finland

Finland, near the Russian frontier, taking our steamer at the quay. This is the starting-point for the interesting and famous Saima Canal. This canal is the work of a Swedish engineer named Ericson. It took eleven years to construct, but the cost was comparatively small, as granite, the principal material, lay at hand. This marvel of engineering skill is famous throughout the world. It is thirty-seven miles long, and thousands of vessels pass through it, laden with exports and imports, taking their cargoes to and from the Gulf of Finland and the interior of the country. The Saima Lake, to which this canal leads, is nearly 300 feet above sea-level, the vessels being raised by means of numerous locks, of which there are twenty-eight. In some places they are together in groups of four, rising above each other like giant steps. If you are lucky enough to see two or three steamers going through these locks at the same time, you will then have a curious and interesting spectacle, as the funnel of the steamer in the lowest lock will be on a level with the keel of the vessel in the highest, and the effect will be as of ships walking upstairs !

You may go ashore and amuse yourself on the beautiful banks of the canal while your steamer performs this feat, as it takes some time. It is interesting to see the water pour through the gates while

A. Federley.

SAIMA CANAL.

the boat slowly rises and majestically steps up into the next lock. You must also notice the construction of these magnificent locks, which are so splendidly built of massive blocks of the Finnish granite, which is scattered throughout the land in gigantic boulders. The canal banks are covered with beautiful wild flowers, together with ferns of all kinds, the pine forests making a cool, inviting background; but do not stray too far, or you will get beyond the sound of the three whistles which is to warn you of your captain's readiness to depart! On board you will find many Finnish and Russian children, who are on the way to their country homes for the holidays. The youthful Finn will differ in ways and costume from his Russian comrade, who almost invariably wears a semi-military uniform. Both Finn and Russian are excellent linguists, speaking three or four languages, English generally being one, so you will find no difficulty in understanding them. The beautiful villas and pretty cottages you notice along the banks of the canal, with their charming gardens, are the country homes of these youths. The scenes of busy life at the different locks are interesting, with passengers hurrying to and fro, greeting their friends under difficulties, as they are laden with various domestic packages. Here comes a country girl, in her quaint costume, with a birch basket of farm produce for the captain; there a

boy who has left his sheep in charge of his dog, while he takes a look at the steamer, with all its interesting load. This, no doubt, is the event of the day, and the country folk come down to get their packets and letters, also to hear the news, which has changed for the better since the old days of Swedish rule, when the news was always "war." Two enormous granite obelisks have been erected, one on either side of the canal. They bear the names of Nicholas I. and Alexander II., in whose reigns the canal was commenced and completed. Mon Repos is an estate which is celebrated, for it is said to reproduce in miniature typical Finnish scenery in its house and grounds. We pass many timber-laden barges on their way to the coast. The heavy scent of timber fills the air as they slowly glide by; the fussy little tugs, though slow, giving the bargemen plenty of work at the helm.

At the last lock we say good-bye to the Russian boys, who have informed us that their dress is the uniform of their Lyceum, for in every Russian public school a semi-military uniform is obligatory.

Starting again, we realize with regret that our long, happy day on this interesting canal is drawing to a close. Our progress has been slow, as the steamer's only fuel is wood, but the enjoyment has been such that we would not have it otherwise.

Finally, we sight the Saima Lake in the distance,

as we steam through a long, narrow gorge, which must have taxed all the powers of the engineer to cut through, for it is solid rock.

The intense, velvety blue of the Saima Lake is the first thing that impresses one : it is bluer than the sky above—at least, so it seems—for the vivid azure of its water is beyond description ; and this exquisite colouring is one of the beauties for which the lake is renowned. As our steamer wends its intricate way, rounding the countless wooded islands scattered over the lake's surface, you wonder at the captain's marvellous steering powers, as the deep-water channel is so narrow. After a few miles we arrive at the little garrison town of Villmanstrand. Here many of our fellow-passengers leave the steamer for the Falls of Imatra, and the boat waits for a few hours to take in cargo, passengers, and a fresh supply of fuel. It is rather amusing to watch the fuel-wood come aboard. It is carried by men, women, and children, who surprise you by the rapidity with which they make the huge stack on the quay disappear.

This bright, clean-looking town, with its beautiful environment and famous fortress, has a large garrison, and the Russian soldiers are fortunate who are quartered here.

The villa on the hill, in its charming grounds, belongs to the Czar, who is Grand Duke of Finland,

and often comes here in the summer. Its entire furniture is of Finnish manufacture.

Waiting on the quay is a smart Russian carriage, with its splendid pair of black horses and remarkably gorgeous coachman, attired in a crimson-and-gold Russian blouse and black Astrakhan cap and feathers. His mistress, who arrived by our boat, has her villa here. Finland is to Russia what Scotland is to England—the fashionable summer resort of the wealthy. Early in June the Russian goes to his villa in Finland for fishing, shooting, rest, and change, much as the Englishman goes to Scotland. This is why we see so much of the Russians and their fine equipages in our summer travels in this country.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LAND OF A THOUSAND LAKES

### II

VILLMANSTRAND being only the beginning of the lakes, we pursue our way, leaving the little town, with its atmosphere of quiet order, in the evening-time—a fortunate occurrence, as we shall now see the beautiful sunset on these waters. The sense of

restfulness which steals over you as, sitting comfortably ensconced in a lounge-chair on deck, you contemplate your surroundings is very refreshing. Nature seems to be waiting for something as the sun dips and sets straight in front of you : not a ripple, not a sound, except the soft cutting of the boat's prow through the limpid water. The glorious colouring of the sunset, though vivid, is almost too elusive. If each phase would only wait till you had it indelibly fixed within your book of memories ! Alas ! this it will not do : changing, ever changing in colour till you are bewildered by its grandeur and the lake of molten gold beneath it—orange, gold, crimson, and rose-pink fading gradually to a pearly grey, the colours in turn glinting through the trees' dark trunks and throwing long shafts of light upon the water, which, in its turn, reflects a delicate iridescent sheen. A soft radiance envelops the scene, as, with tranquil calm, the Northern summer night settles down upon the land. This is not night, as we understand it, but merely a softened twilight, the " mother-of-pearl " shimmer on the water only disappearing with the dawn, which very quickly dispels this fascinating scene.

The memory of this entrancing spectacle is good to retire upon, so we go below to our comfortable little cabins, and are soon asleep.

# Finland

Next morning we awake to find ourselves alongside the quay of the little town of Nyslott. Though early, the place is all bustle, there being half a dozen steamers in, having their cargoes carried on shore, also their fuel-wood replenished. The market-place being also on the quay accounts for some of the stir. This little town has a history. The old Castle of Olafsborg, situated on its own small island, surrounded by foaming waters, could tell many a harrowing tale of the wars between Sweden and Russia. It was built in 1475, and maintained a garrison until the middle of the last century, and stands now as a national memorial.

This town being built on a group of islands, quaint bridges connect them, suggesting a Japanese scene, with its sharp outlines and myriad reflections in the calm waters. Viewed from the Hungerborg Tower by moonlight, it is a veritable dreamland.

The Bishop's palace stands on the hill overlooking Olafsbad—the famous medicinal baths of the place, which have become quite celebrated, and stand on their own pretty island, with their casino and band-stand. In the season this is a gay little town.

Punkaharju, renowned for its curious formation and remarkable beauty, is about two hours' sail from here. It consists of a high, narrow peninsula, five and a half miles long, rising abruptly from the water's edge at the end, and sloping on either side.

The name in Finnish signifies "hog's back," which describes the narrow ridge, only wide enough at the top for a driving road. Tall, straight pine-trees clothe the sides and form a canopy overhead. This promenade is solitary, but beautiful, with its exquisite and varying peeps of the surrounding lake scenery as seen through the trees. This enchanted land of water, trees, and rocks, though in substance ever the same, presents strikingly fresh views at every turn of our intricate way.

The scenes at the different piers give us an interesting glimpse of the life of the people. A blast from the steamer's whistle informs the neighbourhood of our approach, and the peasants make for the landing-stage, either through curiosity or business instincts. The pier-"master," who is often a young woman, with dainty white or bright-coloured handkerchief tied over her head, is assisted in mooring the boat by one of our sailors, who jumps on the quay almost before we are alongside. Numerous clean-looking, flaxen-haired children, with wondering, round eyes, timidly tender their quaint birch-baskets of delicious wild strawberries, which they have gathered in the woods, in the hope of making a few pence. Old women come with cakes, loaves, and sweetmeats, farm produce, or a little of their own knitting or embroidery, to sell to the passengers. The aprons these women wear are

conspicuously bright with coloured needlework. The bulky fuel of birch and pine logs must be frequently renewed, for ours, though slow, is a very hungry steamer. Steerage passengers sometimes assist at this work when labourers are scarce on shore, and for this service they are carried free. Occasionally large packing-cases, containing an American organ or a piano, are put ashore, while we take on kegs of butter, a child's rocking-horse of homely make, and—sad sight !—a tiny white coffin, which is taken off at the next landing-place by a sorrowful-looking man. The life on the water is teeming with interest. Great rafts of timber, with the lumber-men living in a little hut on them, float down to the saw-mills and shipping-ports ; whilst sometimes several rafts are chained together and taken down by a small tug. Half the nation lives by the timber trade—in fact, so much wood do we pass in a day that we fear an end must soon come to the vast forests ; and the aromatic, pungent smell which fills the air as the hot sun streams upon these pine-rafts seems almost overpowering.

This timber is thrown into the rivers, to be carried down by the current to the different collecting-stations. It is cut down in the winter and brought to the water-side on sleighs, but often it takes over three years to reach the collecting-point.

So thick are these pine-boles in the water that

FLOATING TIMBER.

*A. Fenerley.*

sometimes the steamer is obliged to go dead slow. Even then they occasionally catch in the screw. When this happens, a sailor must descend into the little boat we drag behind us, and with a long pole-axe knock the bole free. This proceeding appears somewhat dangerous, as the little boat wobbles, and the logs constantly knock against it, while the man's efforts seem likely to precipitate him into the water at any moment. To the passengers, however, it is an exciting experience, and we wonder what the boles will do next, as they bob under the steamer and sail away, or roll on the top of their neighbours, making them do the bobbing.

The farmsteads, with their bright red painted buildings, give a cheerful aspect to the landscape, and the distant lowing of the cattle, with the tinkle of their bells, though we are "in the wilds," make us feel very much at home. The soft chatter of our fellow-passengers—which we do not understand—makes us realize, however, that we are very far away from it.

Sometimes we pass a busy saw-mill, whose tearing screech disturbs the peaceful quiet, or a horse ferry-boat being towed across, with its load of wheeled traffic, to the opposite bank. These boats are much used by the Finns when narrow places occur in the lakes, in order to avoid the longer road journey.

# Finland

All Finland's waters are tideless, including the Baltic Sea.

Very noticeable is the water-line at the base of the rocky islands, as of a receding tide, marking distinctly a difference of nearly 2 feet, thus proving that Finland is still rising out of the water. This is why she is called "The last-born Daughter of the Sea." This fact is especially apparent in the North. Where ships sailed formerly, only a canoe can now find sufficient water to float it!

The ramifications of these waterways are quite puzzling, and we are surprised when we are landed at our destination, Kuopio. Although the channel is marked in some places by bobbing barrels with brooms stuck into them, splashes of white-wash on rocks, and such-like, in the narrow places, yet there are many stretches of open water not marked, and we have turned and twisted so frequently that we almost expect to find ourselves at the place we started from.

## CHAPTER IV

### CHARACTERISTICS AND CUSTOMS

Personal cleanliness seems to take first place with the Finns; therefore the most important building of every country-house and farmstead is the bath-house. This is built apart from the dwelling-house, of pine-logs, on a foundation of stones and moss, with a thatched or wooden, moss-covered roof. The interior of this building is peculiar, having on one side a curious, stove-like arrangement, built round with large, loose stones; on the other side a series of wooden platforms, one above another, or, as an alternative, canvas hammocks are used. These platforms and hammocks are for the bathers to lie upon. Every morning in the summer, and every Saturday in winter, a fire of wood is lighted in the stove; then, when the stones are hot, water is thrown on them to make the steam. This is done at intervals during the day, while the fire is kept going merrily, and by evening the Finnish *sauna* is ready. So hot is this vapour-bath that it would be intolerable to English people, but Finns enjoy it perhaps more than anything else. In the evening the whole household marches into the *sauna*,

lie on the platforms, and beat themselves with bunches of little birch-twigs, to encourage perspiration and stimulate the circulation. These bath-whisks are made of the birch-twigs which are gathered in the early summer, when the leaves are soft. They are steeped in hot water before use, and this makes them pliable and fragrant; so the perfume of the bath-house is very invigorating when many little whisks are going at once. The floor is covered with clean straw, on which the children delight in dancing, whipping each other the while with their aromatic birch-rods! When they have perspired sufficiently, they sit in turn on a chair, and are washed down by a woman, who also gives them a little massage. Then helter-skelter for the lake, into which they plunge, swimming about for cool refreshment, or, in winter, when the lake is frozen, they roll themselves in the snow! I dare say you would think this part of the performance anything but inviting. The little Finn, however, thinks it glorious fun! This bath is also used medicinally. In cases of fever or illness it is most beneficial, and considered by some to be an antidote for every ill. In town-houses the bath-room is much the same as ours, except that the boiler is heated by a stove in the room. Plenty of public baths exist, which are much patronized, as no Finn, however poor, would forgo his Saturday

bath; nor does he think he is capable of washing himself, so a bath-woman is a necessity to him. She scrubs him down with soft brush and soap in place of the fragrant birch-twigs!

Although with the Finlanders cleanliness seems to come first, their religious life is not neglected. The Finns still keep up many old traditions and customs to which they are attached. When parting with friends, they always give flowers, and fellow-travellers benefit by these pretty bouquets, for their scent pervades boat and train. Midsummer is their greatest festival, as well as the most curious. Great branches of birch are cut down, and the houses, inside and out, are decorated liberally with them. In towns the shops and streets are dressed with garlands and birch-boughs hung from door to door, as well as from the lamp-posts. No one thinks of sleep, and darkness does not come to remind them of it. On this the 24th day of June —St. John the Baptist's Day—the *kokko* fires are lighted on every hill-top, island, lake-side, and even on the lake itself, on rafts or floats; every farm-stead and country-house must have a huge bonfire on its highest ground—the bigger the better. This is an old pagan custom, and these "Baal" fires are lighted in honour of the sun—the miracle-worker of the farmer. The people sing and dance around the fires, keeping them blazing for twenty-four

hours, though they show but little brilliancy, because of the continuous daylight. In this way, and by feasting, story-telling, and other amusements, the time is passed. The festive meal on this occasion consists of creamy soup, cold salmon, and every kind of sweet cake.

Lovers particularly enjoy this festival, and many betrothals take place. They go off in parties in boats, or wander into the fields, twine different coloured wools round the rye-stems, arranging the colours to indicate joy or sorrow, love or hate; then before harvest-time they revisit the fields, look for their marked rye-stalks, and whichever is the highest, whether "love" or "hate," "joy" or "sorrow," so will their fortune be till next Midsummer's Day. May Day is also a festival to welcome the beginning of summer. Bands begin playing early in the morning, and the streets are crowded with pleasure-seekers. The May Day drink of *mjöd*, also the sweet cake called *strupa*, are given freely to all.

The last Tuesday in February is a holiday for the boys and girls, who have picnics, starting off on skis and skates for a day's outing. Their meal on this occasion consists of hot milk and buns spread with almond-paste. On the return in the evening they have a carnival or masked ball.

On birthdays, or "name-days," the breakfast-

table is beautifully decorated with flowers in summer, leaves and berries in winter, by the children of the house, who always try to find new ideas for their decorations. The chair of the birthday child is dressed with birch-boughs; if it is a parent's name-day, then the porch of the house is festooned with birch-branches as well. There are also many interesting Christmas customs. On Christmas Eve corn and food are spread on the snow for the birds and wild animals, for it is believed that these creatures can speak on this one night in the year! If you listen intently behind the closed doors, you will be able to understand what they say, and find out their views of life in general and man in particular, so the Finns think. Another custom on this Eve is to wrap the presents securely in paper, with the name of the recipient on them accompanied by a verse, and these are flung through the door of the sitting-room where the family is gathered. Each name is called as the parcel is thrown. Even the dog is not forgotten, a piece of meat being wrapped up for him, and when his name is called, he runs for his packet, tearing it open, and devouring it with glee. Supper consists of codfish and rice-porridge on this night.

On New Year's Eve the young men and maidens try to obtain a glimpse into the future by melting lead in a big spoon over the wood embers in the

stove. When melted, it is poured into a pail of cold water, and in the grotesque figures produced the future may be read. An almond is also hidden in the rice-porridge, and he or she who finds it will be married before the end of the year.

The Finns are very hospitable and kind, but seem rather inquisitive, though this may be due to their innate love of progress. They never willingly lose an opportunity of improvement, and they realize that much knowledge may be gained by questioning strangers. It is customary for all men and boys to wear a sheathed knife, called a *pukko*, which is worn hanging from a belt round the waist. This is used as a pocket-knife, its leather sheath being often very prettily ornamented with various patterns in gilding and colour, and the end always tipped with brass.

The Finns hold the mountain-ash, or rowan-tree, sacred. The oak, too, is treasured—most likely because it is difficult to grow in Finland. The twigs of juniper-trees are burned in the houses in the evening, to get rid of mosquitoes and other insects. The children often have to walk many miles to find these twigs, as they only grow on clay soil.

Finns generally dine at four o'clock, so if you would pay a call on a friend you must do so between the hours of twelve and three. They are always

COUNTRY DANCE.

Allan Stewart.

pleased to see you, and while you chat you are given refreshment, consisting of coffee and cakes, or a delicious fruit like a large melon, of a deep pink colour inside, with black seeds, together with a tiny glass of home-made wine. This fruit is grown in the Crimea, is very luscious, and of a delicate flavour, and much appreciated in Finland.

The sofa in a Finnish drawing-room is reserved for honoured and married lady guests, the right-hand corner being given to the lady of highest rank present. Nothing would induce a young maiden to occupy a seat on the sofa, lest she should in consequence bring upon herself the ill-luck of spinsterhood for life!

## CHAPTER V

### FOLK-LORE AND LEGENDS

The children of this poetic, song-loving nation are more interested in the old mythical character-stories. of their country and the wonderful deeds of daring of their heroes than in the modern fairy-tale. Goblin and witch have some fascination for those who like "creepy" stories, but the happiest of evenings are spent by the majority of the people

in listening to the *runo* singers. The *runos* are stories in form of poems or ballads, and are the traditional history of the people, mixed with a good deal that is legendary and fictitious. From time immemorial these stories in ballad form have been handed down by the *runo* singers, each generation increasing the bulk by adding any thrilling episode or experience that happened to themselves or others in their lifetime.

Some of these old singers can remember over 3,000 *runos*, so marvellous are their memories; and so rhythmical and musical are these curious old stories that they can only be told in the form of a song. The value of these interesting ballads lies in their antiquity — so old are they that their origin is lost in obscurity—and in the glimpse they give us of the lives and work of the people in olden times.

Let us join this circle of happy village folk who have gathered round the great wood-fire on a cold winter's evening to listen to the *runo* singer, for we should also like to hear the tales of their heroes. The *runo* singer sits in the middle of the circle, chanting her story, monotonously at first, in a low minor key, but when she has warmed to her song by its more thrilling incidents, the firelight flickers over the excited and often weird face of an inspired bard. The children in the assembly, as a great

treat, are allowed to take it in turn to replenish the fire by throwing on the birch-logs every few minutes, as these burn very quickly. Väinämöinen, she sings, is the greatest bard, enchanter, sage, prophet, and patriarch, while as a minstrel he is unequalled; his wisdom is beyond knowledge. From the bones of a giant pike he made the first harp, playing on it with such marvellous effect that beasts, birds, and all Nature stood still to listen. In spite of his wisdom, however, poor Väinämöinen, who is the good genius of his country, is very unfortunate in his love-affairs. He woos a beautiful maiden called Aino (whose name is a favourite one for Finnish girls), but she thinks he is too old, so will not marry him. When forced to do so by her mother, poor Aino becomes crazed, wanders through the forest gaily dressed, and eventually drowns herself in a lake. So the wedding does not take place, after all! Later, he makes another attempt to wed, and chooses the daughter of Louhi, who is the mistress of Lapland; but he is equally unsuccessful, as she refuses him.

Ilmarinen, the wonderful blacksmith, is the children's favourite hero, and the faces of the whole group become strangely animated at his deeds of daring. The men's fierce, weather-beaten faces blaze with pride in and sympathy with this hero's adventures, and as the pine-logs flare up, they clasp

each other's hands tighter, making a most impressive picture of tense emotional manhood. To these people this is no ordinary tale, but the celebrating and keeping alive the memory of their ancestors. Ilmarinen was the most skilful and ingenious of blacksmiths, a craftsman to be proud of. The weapons he made, his adventurous deeds of strength and daring, would fill a book. Young, handsome, and attractive, it is not surprising that Louhi's daughter, the "Rainbow Maiden," should prefer him to the wiser, but older, Väinämöinen. Though Louhi gave him plenty of hard tasks to perform before she consented to her daughter's marriage with him, still, he managed to satisfy her, and in the end carried off the Rainbow Maiden for his bride.

Such a wedding-feast as they had! Rich and poor, young and old, were invited to the festivities; the whole of Pohjola * took part in it. The ox that was slain was large enough to wave its tail in one province and bellow in another! The wedding-hall was of gigantic dimensions; the feasting and song went on for days. The farewell of the Rainbow Maiden to her childhood's home was very pathetic. Ilmarinen's most difficult task had been the forging of the magic *sampo*, which was a "coin, corn, and salt-mill," and could grind out good

* Lapland.

fortune for the lucky possessor. Naturally, Louhi treasured this *sampo*, and hid it away securely. Väinämöinen and others were very anxious to obtain possession of this lucky talisman, so, taking ship, visited Pohjola. On arriving there, Väinämöinen lulled Louhi and her Court to sleep with his magic harp. While they slept, these heroes stole the treasure, then made for the ship; but Louhi, waking up, followed them. Finding she could not again get possession of the *sampo*, she spitefully broke it in the struggle, when most of it fell into the sea. Väinämöinen, however, managed to secure a few fragments, carrying them back to Finland, and this is why to-day Finland is a better country to live in than Lapland, as the former had the fragments, consequently luck and prosperity.

Lemminkainen is the next hero—a jovial, reckless personage, who, though he loves his mother very much, gives her many a pang by his terrible propensity for getting into scrapes, and his quarrelsome, rollicking ways. His mother frequently saves him from the result of his own evil-doing, for his adventures are many, and fraught with danger, even of death; but his mother's love is so great and wonderful that she is enabled to resuscitate him. His affection for his mother is the redeeming feature of his character, and as she is not exacting, she feels fully repaid for all her trouble by his decision to

give up his careless ways, and live with her in her old age.

Now you shall hear of the wicked hero, Kullervo, a morose slave of gigantic strength. He is a shepherd, and misuses his strength on every occasion to mar all he touches. He takes a terrible revenge on all his supposed enemies, but his wickedness is not so severely punished as one could wish, after all the havoc he has wrought, for he finally dies in the forest, after falling on his own sword.

There are many stories of heroines, also. Aino, the beautiful young Lapp girl, whose pathetic fate would move any heart in the telling, and who is mourned for many a long day by her disconsolate mother and lover. Then come Ilmatar, the powerful, and Marjatta, the petted and spoiled darling of her home, who became the mother of a wise hero, Väinämöinen's successor. Louhi, the mistress of the North, was a strong and powerful character, able always to hold her own. Legends of witches and furies, forest deities, beasts, birds, and trees, take their part in these ballads, and the magic-working heroes use all Nature to illustrate their own prowess and the glories of their country. Now, with a sigh of regret from all, Paraske, who is a celebrated *runo* singer, brings her song to a conclusion, with a twang of her ancient stringed instrument called a *kantole*, which she has only occasionally used.

The circle is broken, and our interesting evening ended.

These *runos* now form the national epic of Finland, having been collected by Elias Lönnrot and given to the world in book-form, with the title of "Kalevala," or Land of Heroes. Lönnrot, of whom the nation is justly proud, realized the value of these folk-tales, and set to work to make a systematic collection of them. He tramped all over the country listening to the *runo* singers, taking down in writing the wonderful store of ballads they could give him from memory. His devotion to this task has given to folk-lorists all over the world this beautiful national epic of Finland, which he pieced together from the memories of hundreds of *runo* singers. It was from the German translation of the "Kalevala" that Longfellow obtained the metre for his "Hiawatha," recently so beautifully set to music by Coleridge-Taylor, who has given us the true musical rhythm of it. Elias Lönnrot was a country doctor, and the son of a poor village tailor. He lived from 1802 to 1889. We, as well as the Finns, must be grateful to him, for this epic is a wonderful mirror of Nature.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE LAPPS AND THEIR WAYS

THERE are only about 2,000 of these interesting little people in the North of Finland, and many of them trade as fishermen. Your map will show you that Lapland includes the northern part of Norway, Sweden, and Russia, as well as the North of Finland. The Scandinavian Lapps are much more civilized than those under Russia. The latter have advanced little since pagan times, and are scorned by the Russians, who treat them with contempt and severity. These Russian Lapps are untruthful and not to be trusted, also much addicted to drinking vodka, but are harmless and inoffensive otherwise. The other Lapps have had the advantage of coming into contact with their Scandinavian neighbours, and have taken on many of their ways. Although a nomadic race, they are not without education; they have been Christianized, and become Lutherans, but are more superstitious than religious.

Finn and Lapp are not to be confused. Ethnologically, they are vastly different, though their language has some affinity.

A LAPP READY FOR A PULKA RIDE.

*Vernon Stokes and Alan Wright.*

# The Lapps and Their Ways

The Lapp is the true "Wizard of the North," though the British sailor gives the Finn this name, and has a strong objection to his being a member of his crew, because of the imaginary powers the name implies. The Lapps from earliest times have assumed and fully believe in their own magical powers. They have, and still use, a fortune-telling drum and other instruments by which they think they can foretell future events. By these superstitious rites they decide the path their wanderings shall take.

They, however, are not the only people who believe in their powers. The Finns have always thought them uncanny, and do not associate with them, except as far as they are obliged in trading. A Czar of Russia also consulted them once about something that troubled him, so it is not astonishing that they suppose themselves to be great magicians. They are a quiet, peaceable race, law-breaking of any kind being practically unknown amongst them. Shy and timid of other people, they prefer to keep themselves and their views apart. They call themselves "Samelats," and their country "Same"; but occasionally address each other as "Lapps," as a name of scorn and derision.

The Finns call them "Lappu," which means "Land-end Folk," and are always kind to them; while the Lapp has a great respect for the Finn.

# Finland

Once, during a famine, a number of Finnish ladies joined together in making a winter home for forty of the little Lapp children. These little ones took so kindly to their more civilized home-life that their parents scarcely recognized them on their return, the improvement was so marked, and the gratitude of the Lapp mothers to the Finnish ladies was quite touching.

Though their ways are not like ours, and are perhaps difficult for us to understand, their affections are the same, and it is a pretty sight to see a Lapp mother try to amuse her baby. The parent Lapps look old very early in life, and become wrinkled from hardship and exposure to weather; but the children are rather quaint and pretty. They have large, open, round eyes, hair straight and silky, dark or fair in colour, flat, broad noses, and fine dark skins.

In summer the parents as well as the children enjoy a bath in the river or lake, and when coming out of the water with long, straight, dripping hair, look rather like seals, as they have the same mild, timid expression in their round eyes.

They are muscularly strong, and, though small, are well proportioned. They never get fat; but many of the children, though sturdy, have crooked legs. Their principal food is dried fish, reindeer-flesh, milk and cheese, rye or barley cake, and, when

they can get it—which is not often—they enjoy coffee.

Superficially only does religion appeal to them; morally they cannot understand it. The Scandinavian missionaries work amongst them, and it is mainly due to their efforts that they have some school and religious books in their own language.

Because of their short stature they are supposed to be the Little Folk of Scandinavian legend. Their life is patriarchal, and they are averse to any change in their long-established habits.

As the Lapps live within the Arctic Circle, the winter is one long evening, and many dull hours must be brightened for the little ones by the Lapp mother. She has many exciting stories to tell them, of the wonderful giants that live in the mountains, the one-eyed monsters of the valleys, and the witches that fly over the forest without the aid of brooms. These tales help to pass the time pleasantly away. The story of Nyavvinna, the beautiful daughter of the Sun, who tamed the reindeer, and brought them from mountain and forest to serve and work for the Lapps, must always be the last story to soothe little sleepy heads.

Their indoor life is varied by a game out on the hard snow. The children are wrapped in woollen clothes and furs, wear natural skin-boots with furry insides, and only the little faces are left peeping out.

Then, with merry scuffle, they drive wooden sticks, like wickets, into the frozen snow, put a stone on top of each, and try to knock them off at a run with snowballs. They get plenty of exercise over this Lappish form of "Aunt Sally." The severe climate and long, dark winter make the Lapp a very dirty person, and this is reason enough for the Finn's unwillingness to come into personal contact with him; but the Lapp must keep himself and his family warm, and if his experience teaches him to do it satisfactorily in a "stuffy" way—well, he knows best.

The reindeer is the Lapp's most important and valuable possession, for it provides him with milk, meat, and skin for clothing, and does the work of the horse: three reindeer will draw the load of one horse. He is invaluable on the *tundra*,* and no other animal could serve the Lapp so well. When the reindeer-lichen, which is their principal food, is not found on the ground, the spruce-trees must be cut down to provide it for them. It takes from sixty to a hundred trees to give sufficient lichen for one reindeer. This seems very extravagant provender! There are fisher, mountain, and forest Lapps, and their ways and mode of life vary somewhat; but the last two are the true representatives

* Swampy land peculiar to Arctic regions, and generally covered with reindeer-moss and lichen.

of their race. The hill-man builds his hut or storehouse on the edge of the forest, raised above the ground on wooden piles. He pastures his herds in the mountains, makes his cheese, kills and cures his meat in the summer. In the winter he wanders to a town, stays there for the worst part of it, and then returns to his hill-side home. The forest Lapp keeps to his own district; he moves camp as he wanders over it, visiting every part in turn. In the spring he lets his reindeer loose, to ramble in search of food, and collects them in autumn by catching one of them and tying a bell on its neck, then driving it forward, when the others will follow. If mosquitoes are troublesome, the reindeer have to be collected much earlier, to be again set loose when these pesky little insects, who give them no rest, have disappeared. The fisher Lapp is superior in every way to the others, his occupation keeping him in touch with the more educated Scandinavian fishermen. He can read and write, also often speaks Finnish, Swedish, and Norwegian. These Lapps are hardy seamen, and sometimes make sufficient money to retire from their seafaring life, their ambition being to become small farmers and settle down. They reclaim land, breed cattle, till the soil, and become useful and very respectable members of the community.

These nomads must walk on their journeyings in

summer, but in winter they have a pleasant and quick means of moving camp, and it is interesting to see their long lines of reindeer-sledges moving over the snow. The reindeer is a swift-footed animal, and covers the ground at a great speed. If all unevenness of the forest-track is not levelled by the frozen snow, I don't think you would enjoy a ride in the *pulka*. The *pulka* is a boat-shaped sleigh, and the reindeer is driven with one rein, which is thrown from side to side. The quick turning and twisting of the track keeps you in perpetual motion, which is anything but pleasant to one unaccustomed to it; but apart from the tossing and bumping against trees, the skimming along in the frosty air is very exhilarating, and a swift and sure means of travel.

Swamps, desolate wastes, and moors do not constitute the country of Lapland, as you may suppose. The wastes and moors are there in plenty, but hills, forest, lake, and woodland make it a country of wild and beautiful scenery. To atone for the long, cold, dark winter there are the three months of glorious summer day, when all Nature makes the most of this period of brilliant, hot sunshine to mature rapidly. By the end of May the beautiful wild flowers are in full bloom; the birds are busy; and all kinds of seeds are sown. In June the grain is already well above ground; in July it is in ear; and August brings the bountiful harvest.

The Lapp finds all he requires in his own country, besides many things he does not use, such as minerals; the woods give a plentiful supply of game, capercailzie, ptarmigan, and partridges, as well as delicious edible berries of all kinds, including the wild strawberry and raspberry ; while the rivers and lakes swarm with salmon, trout, perch, and pike.

About New Year the Lapps hunt bears and wolves, so even in the dark season they find some pleasure in their lives. The summer is a roving, pleasant time, and the children spend delightful days gathering berries in the woods, the mosquito their only enemy. For protection from this troublesome insect they envelop themselves in veil-like nets, which reach to the waist, and are tied there. Sometimes the parents rub their faces and hands with tar, and this, though effectual, makes little Lapp a very funny sight.

## CHAPTER VII

### IMATRA—RAPIDS—WATERFALLS

Among Finland's most unique and marvellous natural wonders are its rapids. They are caused by the numberless gigantic granite boulders scattered through the rivers and the swiftness of currents

trying to find their level. The rush of these impeded waters, boiling and hissing around the boulders, tossing their spray high up into the air, then noisily tearing onwards, is an awesome sight, and not one to inspire a wish for closer acquaintance with them. Yet they are navigable in many places, being used by the Finns as a means of rapid transit, incredible as this may seem when you get your first view of them. You, however, are unacquainted with the clever Finnish pilot. The enormous bulk of these waters culminates occasionally in a waterfall, the largest of these being Imatra. The whole overflow of the Saima lake-system is poured into the River Vuoski, a few miles above this fall, finally reaching Lake Ladoga. Imatra is quite a show-place. Many Russians and other tourists visit it every year. This mighty torrent, whose deafening roar can be heard for miles, rushes through a deep granite gorge for about half a mile, falling 60 feet in its progress. Its impressive grandeur does not consist in the actual fall of these tormented waters, but in the ruggedness of the channel and its picturesque surroundings. As these chaotic waters thunder, leap and bound over their rocky bed, great columns of spray nearly 30 feet high are tossed into the air, and in the brilliant sunshine reflect wonderful rainbow colours. This blinding, white flood throws scornful reproach to

*A. Federley.*

RAPIDS IN THE ULEA RIVER.

the peaceful, pine-clad banks, with their dainty carpet of vivid flowers, as it triumphantly races on, exulting in the strength of its mad career.

In the winter a change comes over the spirit of these waters, though their galloping is not stayed nor their impressiveness lessened. The pine-forests along the banks are peaceful but mysterious in their silent grandeur and winter dress. Each branch of the firs, bending under its weight of snow, has caught the spray, while the fierce frost, holding it, has turned it into icicles of every conceivable fantastic shape. The banks are rough and dangerous with frozen ice and snow; every boulder is grotesque with its whimsical covering; while the huge lumps of ice tossed against them break with a deafening roar. Though the waters are less in volume, they are still noisy, as they grind the ice which they bring down against the walls of the rocky gorge, sending it gyrating among the boulders, to be again shattered and carried on. By moonlight this beautiful cold scene, in its awe-inspiring splendour, seems to have little in common with the joyous Imatra of summer, though many people admire it most in its shimmering winter dress. Once in the summer-time an enthusiastic Englishman, anxious to view this waterfall from the opposite bank, the present bridge not then existing, was swung across in a basket, the mechanism for drawing which by

means of ropes was kept close at hand. When about midstream, the mechanical contrivance refused to act, and the unfortunate man was suspended in the air over this rapid for about an hour before he could be released. I think this Englishman's enthusiasm for seeing waterfalls must have been somewhat damped by this Blondin-like feat! Vallinkoski is a smaller waterfall of the same kind a few miles lower down; but although its waters are considerably less in volume, its surroundings are even more beautiful. The Amma-Koski and Koivuskoski Falls at Kajana, the little town situated on the banks of the River Kajana, are very fine, though insignificant when compared with Imatra. The rapids of the Uleå River extend for miles, and are navigable only by a specially constructed boat, having a particularly well-instructed pilot. This "tar-boat" is long and narrow, in order to pass between the boulders; high-pointed fore and aft, to prevent the powerful currents driving it below the water; also light and flexible, in order to yield to chance shocks. These rapids are dangerous, and the licensed *laskumies*, as the pilots are called, have been educated from boyhood for their task, and know every eddy and hidden boulder; so with wonderful nerve and daring they steer their frail craft within an inch of destruction.

I must tell you why this particular boat is called

a "tar-boat." In the far northern interior the principal industry of the people is the primitive method of extracting tar from pine-trees, but of this important business I will tell you later. These tar-burners had to find a means of transporting their tar-barrels, when ready for export, to the coast, a distance of over 200 miles away from the kilns. This they have accomplished by constructing this peculiar tar-boat, and learning to navigate the dangerous rapids, which occur so frequently in the rivers leading to the coast, and which otherwise would have been quite useless as a means of transit. The tar-barrels, when filled, are dragged to the river-side, put on board the tar-boat, end to end lengthways, in the middle of it, each boat holding about twenty barrels, each of which weighs about three hundredweight. The crew consists of two men, or man and women, besides the pilot, on whose skill and coolness the safety of crew and cargo depends, and seldom does an accident of any kind happen to this heavily laden craft. The boats are started on their hazardous journey first by the men rowing over the sheets of smooth water which lie at intervals between the rapids. When close to the rapids, the currents seize them, carrying them along at a tremendous pace through the surging waters, the pilot skilfully guiding them with his long pole.

The long journey to the coast is accomplished in less than three days if a favourable breeze springs up, for by hoisting a curious square-shaped sail in the smooth waters much time and labour of rowing are saved.

The return journey often takes three weeks, and it is fortunate that these strong, muscular people do not mind the laborious hardship of towing the empty but heavy boat up the rapids again. This toilsome journey necessitates both rowing and towing against stream and currents, while occasionally the boat must be taken out of the water to avoid the gigantic boulders, and carried on a hand-barrow for some miles. Sometimes people with a spirit of adventure, or as a swift means of getting down to the coast, take passage in a tar-boat, and enjoy some excitement, if rather an uncomfortable journey. I once had the thrilling experience of making this journey down the rapids, though I did not go in a tar-boat, but a similar one built on purpose for tourists, which I found very comfortable. This boat carried twelve people and their luggage (the crew consisting of one man and the pilot), making a very jolly, adventurous party of various nationalities. We sat in couples behind each other on cushioned seats with backs to them. These seats, being just the width of the boat, were only capable of holding two persons, and, being very deep, the

sides of the boat came well above our elbows, forming a protection from splashes. With the rower fore and the pilot aft, we were ready to start. Some distance of smooth water had to be covered first by both men rowing, and as it was a bright, hot summer day, this was no light task, even with the stream helping them. When nearing the rapids, oars were shipped, the pilot stood up, and, taking his long heavy pole, steered towards the noisy, seething waters, we meanwhile bracing our nerves for the plunge. As the current caught the boat it rushed forward at terrific speed, and, almost overwhelmed with the excitement of our venture, we clutched the sides of the boat, as, dazed with the noise, we dived into the whirling, foaming torrent, which seemed to threaten annihilation. Finding, however, that nothing more happened than a feeling of exhilaration after our first mile of rapid travelling, we settled down to thoroughly enjoy the exciting experience.

Confidence in our pilot increased with every dive round the obstructing boulders and their eddying whirlpools, which we soon felt were less dangerous than they looked. The cool courage of the pilot, his stupendous nerve and cleverness in steering us safely through these tumultuous waters, seemed miraculous. We quickly came to the conclusion that this was the only mode of travelling

over water worth having. The Pyhäkoski, or Holy Rapids, are the grandest and the longest. They foam, boil, and roar for twelve miles between high cliffs, with well-wooded summits, the trees looking down upon us with calm majesty as we fly past them.

Our long day of fourteen hours' delightful travelling came to an end, strange to say, without fatigue, and it was difficult to believe we had journeyed so many miles. The rowing in the smooth stretches of water that lie between the rapids must, however, have tired our boatmen, though they declared they were so accustomed to the work that they did not feel it.

So, leaving us on the little landing-stage at Muhos, they turned and rowed back to Vaala, to bring the next venturesome party down, these men being employed in this work only during the summer season. Regretfully we said good-bye to our admirable and worthy pilot, realizing that had it not been for his brave self-reliance we should not have had the pleasure of this very exciting experience of " shooting the rapids."

## CHAPTER VIII

### FARM AND PASTORAL LIFE

Cows in Finland are not quite the "pampered darlings" of the farm that they appear to be in Holland, but still, they are remarkably well cared for, and treasured as valuable property. They remain in their warm sheds all the winter, well fed, and kept very clean. "Be a cow, and you will be well cared for," says a Finnish proverb; and butter-making being one of the principal industries, it is necessary that the cow should have the attention due to its importance in the life of the people. Cleanliness is known to be one of the chief characteristics of the Finns; their dairy produce, therefore, finds a ready market, and their butter is famed for its excellent quality. In Finland there are almost as many cows as people! The farm-life is a very hard one for all, for the children especially, as they are expected to take their share of the work as soon as they are able. However, they do not consider it a hardship, and manage to get a good deal of pleasure out of their life. The summer working-day is often over sixteen hours long, and never less; for as this season is short, the farmer must get all his field-

labour crowded into it, so there is little bedtime for anybody!

Numerous steam creameries are established throughout the country, the bulk of the milk from all the small farms being taken to these creameries, to be turned into golden butter, the milk-carrying being the work of the boy or girl of the farm, who takes it by boat, cart, or sleigh. These splendidly equipped steam dairies have every contrivance for perfect butter-making; they are very interesting, and quite a feature of modern Finnish farm-life.

The machinery is of the best, being generally of Finnish make. Scandinavian separators are used, and a lad dressed in linen overalls keeps up steam with wood fuel. The dairymaids, in their spotless white linen dresses and aprons, with dainty handkerchiefs tied over their heads, receive and weigh the milk, which is tested and sterilized before being made into butter. This precaution, as well as the perfect cleanliness of the churning, scalding, and butter-packing rooms, guarantee the quality of the produce. The Finnish cow gives a good quality as well as quantity of milk, although the pasturage is not rich. They have a small, white, polled cow—a mountain breed peculiar to the North, as well as others. Some Ayrshire cattle have been imported, and found satisfactory.

There is a small island near the monastery of

*Allan Stewart.*

SVEDJE," BURNING THE FOREST.

Valamo, on which is a breed of "woman-fearing" cows! They are milked by the monks, and seldom see a woman. When they do, they fly in every direction! Their fear is apparently inherited, for when taken as calves to the mainland, they will not allow a dairymaid to touch them. These handsome creatures are black and white—a breed said to have been originally imported from Holland by Peter the Great, and given to the monks as a present from him. The cattle, when grazing, are generally tended by a boy, who amuses himself by playing on his little reed pipe, his music being quite sufficient to keep any stray bear off, which otherwise might make rapacious inroads among them. Often an old woman may be seen sitting by the roadside knitting, while her few cows graze close by. Though the cow is best cared for, the horse is most loved by the Finns, and he repays it with patient, faithful service. Pigs are not numerous on the Finnish farm: neither they nor poultry are regarded as profitable. The pigs live in the woods or on the pasture-land, and do not fatten rapidly or cheaply, as maize must be imported, and is subject to a heavy duty. The pork, however, is excellent eating, and tastes somewhat like mutton.

Occasionally orphan children are boarded out with the farmers by the parish authorities, and though they have plenty of work, they are very

kindly treated both by the farmer and his wife. The farmer's wife is an adept at making all kinds of refreshing drinks from berries and fruit, mead being the favourite drink of the farmer and his servants. Bee-keeping is an industry in some localities, more especially round about Åbo.

The larger and better farms belong to the peasant proprietor, who answers to our yeoman farmer, and is generally pretty well to do. The poor farmer is called a *torper*, his position being somewhat like the crofter in Scotland, and he is often obliged to work for the peasant proprietor to eke out a scanty living.

The agricultural methods in outlying districts are still somewhat primitive and peculiar, for, owing to difficulties of soil and climate, the cultivation of the land is anything but easy for the farmer. Perhaps this is why the Finn has hit upon the productive but extravagant system of burning the forest to obtain fertile soil. This *svedje-bruk*, as the method is called, is done by cutting down trees and bushes and burning them. In the large clearing thus obtained the ashes of the burnt trees and undergrowth are raked over the surface of the ground, and in these ashes the seed is sown. Soil treated in this way is very productive, and the farmer obtains a plentiful crop for three or four seasons without further toil or expenditure. Profitable as this

method is to the individual, the waste of timber to a nation that depends entirely on its wood for fuel appears disastrous for the future. This simple and easy way of raising crops by burning is an interesting and fascinating sight. The lads and lasses thoroughly enjoy raking the glowing embers with their long poles, for though it is hard work, they do not mind the labour, and are just as merry over it as you would be over a bonfire. The men and women employed in this work are typical peasants, and as the light and shade of fire and smoke pass over their faces, they make a striking picture of toil-worn, courageous endurance in battling with Nature's hardships. Some of the implements used after the "burning" are very old and curious. The most primitive is the forked plough, consisting of two long forks, which move the earth without turning it over, and the branch-harrow, formed by a bundle of branches or fir-tops, the stumps of which are left on and used as harrow-teeth. The majority of farmers, however, are far above this primitive system of soil cultivation, and pride themselves on their up-to-date methods of raising crops. This they have every right to do, as their barley, rye, oats, and other grains are of the best, and their farm implements of the latest models.

Another peculiarity is the process of drying grain in a specially arranged barn called a *riar*. In late

and cold harvest seasons the sheaves are dried, first on stakes, then in the *riar*, before thrashing. A curious oven without a chimney is in the barn, and in this a wood fire is kindled, which is kept going for a few days. The heat and smoke kill the insects which destroy the germ of the grain. This is why Finnish grain for seed purposes is so highly valued and used by other countries, as grain (especially rye) treated in this way gives a quite reliable crop.

The Finnish system of hay-drying is also curious, but effectual. After cutting the hay, long poles, nearly 6 feet high, are driven into the ground at regular intervals. These have eight outstretched arms, the top ones being most extended. These arms have ends turned up like hands. On these poles the hay is arranged, the top being much larger than the bottom, as the hay is not allowed to touch the ground. The effect is comical, as of many balloons standing about the fields waiting to take flight! This practical hay-drying prevents the Finnish children experiencing the fun of our hay-making, for which I am sure you will pity them. The paling around the field is singular, but picturesque. Long posts are driven slantwise into the ground, and an occasional forked double upright supports them, while thongs of wood hold them in place. As the bark is left on these tree-posts, a touch of beauty is given to this quaint palisading

by the soft grey colour, which is in complete harmony with surrounding Nature. Hay-barns are large log-huts, with corrugated-iron roofs, larger at the top than below, in order to shelter the hay from snow. Large quantities of hay are exported. Grain is sown in early August; the fields are green by the fall of the first snow; then manure is spread over them, which penetrates with the melting snow in the spring. All gates are removed from the fields for the winter, to preserve them. These are repaired and new ones made, as are all new posts and hay-pegs. The boys help in this work in the winter, spending many happy evenings in the carpenter's shed, making amusing as well as useful things with their tools. So, you see, life on a Finnish farm has some compensations for its routine of hard work.

## CHAPTER IX

### RELIGION—MUSIC—ART

It is a beautiful sight to see the Finnish girls arrive at the church door in their pretty national costumes. Often they come by boat from the outlying islands in summer; in winter they drive across the frozen

lakes in sleighs, to the merry jingle of horses' bells. When coming by boat, women as well as men take a turn at the oars. Often they sing hymns together, which sounds pleasant across the water. In small villages the boat belongs to the community, is made and kept in repair by the village folk, and as the people are fond of their church service, the boat is generally heavily laden. Half a dozen of these boats may arrive at the little pier near the church at the same time; then all is bustle and dancing colour for a few minutes before they file into the church, men and women separately, chattering till they reach the porch; then the silence is only broken by scuffling feet.

The Finns are Lutherans, pious and very fond of long sermons. They will sit for hours, even in the winter, in their unwarmed churches, listening intently to a deep theological discourse in their own beautiful language. Sometimes two collections are made at the same service. One is always for church expenses, but when money is wanted for a special object, then a second alms-taking follows the first. In this way the people's alms are kept for the object which they wish to contribute to. Often the pastor gives out a notice that any member of the congregation unable to contribute in any other way may do so in labour. This is sometimes more useful to the pastor than money, as his principal

stipend is derived from the produce of his glebe-farm, and at harvest-time labour is scarce. The churches themselves are uninteresting as buildings, although some of them are very old. The interiors are large and plain ; the altars very simply adorned. The singing of psalms and hymns is accompanied by the organ. Some of these organs are rather old and curious, the bellows being blown by men treading on them, holding on meanwhile with their hands to a horizontal bar above their heads. Church bells ring on Saturday evening at six o'clock, not for service, but to tell people that Sunday is nigh. Services begin very early on Sunday morning, lasting, with an interval, till three o'clock ; then the religious part of the day is over, and pleasure begins. About four o'clock parties of people on pleasure bent start off in boats, with hampers of provisions, to picnic in the neighbouring woods. Hammocks are a necessary adjunct, for a Finnish picnic would not be complete without them. The remainder of the day is spent in swimming, lying in the hammocks, rambling through the woods, or in any other way inclination may suggest. Åbo being the ancient as well as the ecclesiastical capital of Finland, it follows that the Cathedral there is interesting because of its associations and its tombs, some of which, indeed, belong to our own countrymen.

Archbishop Henry, who is regarded as the patron

saint of Finland, was an Englishman. He was the crusading Bishop who, in the twelfth century, Christianized the Finns, and finally died a martyr's death by the hand of one of them. This pagan Finn, after killing the Bishop, cut off his thumb for the sake of the valuable ring on it, and ever since a "thumb and ring" has been the crest of the Bishops. The spring at which this Bishop is said to have baptized the first converts is near the Cathedral. His tomb and those of many other noble dead stand inside the edifice. Two Scottish officers, Colonel Samuel Cockburn and General Wedderburn, who served Finland well in the seventeenth century, during the wars between Sweden and Russia, are buried here also, and monuments have been erected to tell of their distinguished services.

A very interesting tomb is that of the beautiful peasant-Queen, Katrine Månsdottir, who was always a friend to poor Finns, and much beloved by them, spending her last years amongst them, although she was a Swedish Queen. This Queen's story is so full of pathos and romance that I must tell it to you here by the side of her tomb. Katrine was a young and lovely maiden, who sold fruit in the market-place. One day when King Eric XIV. passed that way he noticed the pretty fruit-seller, and, being much struck by her grace and beauty,

GIRLS ON THE WAY TO CHURCH.

*Allan Stewart.*

he took her to his Palace, to be cared for and educated. When she was grown up, he fell in love with and married her, this in direct opposition to his country's wishes. His brothers and his nobles were furiously indignant at the marriage, and one of them sent the King a magnificent robe as a wedding-gift, with its beauty marred by a patch of "homespun" being let into the valuable fabric. The gallant King had the patch embroidered in precious jewels and fine needlework, so that it became the most valuable part of the robe. He then returned it to the donor, who must have felt very small indeed when he received it. King Eric's chivalry was not misplaced, for Katrine was a good and noble Queen, devoting her life to the King's happiness, though it cost her so much, her life being anything but a happy one. This poor King was imprisoned by his brother, and, becoming mentally deranged, his Queen was the only person who could soothe him, so she spent much of her time in prison, too, and when the King died she gave up her crown, to find peace for her last years in Finland. A stained-glass window has been placed in the Cathedral, representing this Queen descending from the Swedish throne leaning on the arm of a Finnish page. Many interesting frescoes by Ekman also adorn the Cathedral. One of these depicts Bishop Henry baptizing the Finns. These frescoes

and a mummified royal (?) baby, said to be 300 years old, complete the principal interests of the Cathedral. Another Englishman, Bishop Thomas, was Bishop Henry's successor.

It is customary for the Finns to go to church at six o'clock on Christmas morning, the church being brilliantly illuminated with many candles. All the people attend this service, travelling from every hut or outlying farm by sleigh or on skis. The Finns are very musical, and the Finnish choirs are celebrated for their beautiful part-singing, their fame having travelled far beyond their own country. I heard one of these male choirs sing at a Scandinavian temperance meeting, held in the beautiful old island Castle of Olafsborg. There were delegates from all parts—Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland; and all who heard the singing of this choir in the old vaulted hall of the castle agreed that it was worth travelling many miles to hear such beautiful voices. Their national anthem and songs are soul-stirring melodies, the words and tunes being very characteristic of Finnish patriotism. Jean Sibelius is a very well-known Finnish composer, his music often being played in England, and his symphonic poem "Finlandia" is very popular. Sibelius, Melartin, and Palmgren are the three best-known Finnish composers, though Menikants came to the fore lately by his opera, "The Maid of

the North," which was played in Helsingfors, and much liked.

The artists, like the composers, are patriotic in their subjects, the national life and character furnishing plenty of interesting episodes. Finnish art was practically unknown before the last century, but has made rapid strides of late years, there being now a splendid collection of wonderfully realistic pictures in the Athenæum (the National Art Gallery) at Helsingfors. Ekman (1808-1865) is considered the father of Finnish art, for by his enthusiasm he stimulated his generation to cultivating a taste for refinement of expression of the romantic and national Finnish character. Albert Edelfelt (1854-1905) is the greatest and best-known Finnish artist, his historical and religious pictures being of world-wide fame.

Among the more celebrated artists are Viktor Vesterholm, Eero Järnefelt, Gallen, Munsterhjelm, and others, who have pictures in the Finnish National Gallery, the people being justly proud of the patriotic spirit of their work.

Some good statuary by Finnish sculptors is also in this gallery, as well as many beautiful monuments scattered throughout the land, which testify to their ability. I must mention the poet Runeberg, a well-known national character. No book on Finland, however short, would be complete without

his name. On the anniversary of his birthday all schools have a holiday, and his statue is decorated with flowers and laurels. The Academic Singers, "Akademiska Sångforēningen," sing standing round his statue, and in the evening have a torchlight procession; all the houses and the larger offices are illuminated with candles, and everywhere his bust may be seen adorned with flowers. All the restaurants have festal dinners, and his plays are given at the theatres, over which the red and yellow flag floats, as well as over all other public buildings. Topelius was a poet and writer for children—"Uncle Topelius" the little folks call him, for they love him and his charming stories.

## CHAPTER X

### TOWNS AND VILLAGES

HELSINGFORS—in Finnish "Helsinki"—the modern capital of Finland, is a very fine city, with its many magnificent buildings and splendid shipping port, which latter, however, can only be used in the summer, as it is ice-bound in winter; then all shipping business must be done either at the port of Åbo or Hangö. The town is built upon rock,

and has about 80,000 inhabitants of mixed nationalities, for many Russians, Germans, and others have their businesses and reside here the greater part of the year. Paul Ludwig Engel, a German, who commenced his career as an architect in St. Petersburg, was commissioned by the then Czar to plan a new capital on the site on which Helsingfors now stands. Engel planned the town with such ingenuity, utilizing to the utmost the beautiful site chosen, that charming sea-views are given to most of the houses, and his fine, broad streets are quite a feature of the place. His beautiful architectural designs appear to have little in common with the recent new school of architecture, which is purely Finnish, and characteristic of the taste of the modern Finn. The originality of the Finnish architect, the ornate and massive style of his work, impresses even the travelled stranger with wonder, if not with genuine admiration of its eccentricity and variety of design. The many new magnificent structures are built of granite, brick, and roughcast, and the short, sturdy granite pillars which are used, with their heavy capitals, to support the buildings, together with the strange decorative devices, give the distinctive character to these buildings and a strong individuality to the town.

I must tell you a little about this fantastic decoration on the outside of the houses, as it is

strongly characteristic of the architecture, and a walk down some of the streets would give keen delight to any youngsters looking about them. You would observe with amusement over one door a procession of swimming swans, or, supporting a bay-window, a group of sleepy owls ; a bear's head, a squatting frog, or a knot of mice tied by the tail, may be found on the keystone of an arch ; oak-leaves, with acorns, dandelions, or pine-cones, may form a frieze ; the glass panel of a door may represent a spider's web, with a fat spider in one corner ! One other instance I must mention, which will serve to show you how the object for which the buildings are erected appears in their decorative designs. The shipping-office has jolly sailor-men dancing round the pillars supporting the entrance, while copper ships are let into the oak doors, besides many other nautical and appropriate figures.

This being the University town as well as the capital, merry bands of students of both sexes may be seen everywhere, wearing the cap of their college, which, however, does not always become the women. There are many Russian officers and soldiers, whose uniforms help to give colour to the somewhat sombre streets of offices, banks, and shops, as the latter do not make any great display of their goods in the windows, as in other towns. The many outdoor restaurants, with their pretty flower-

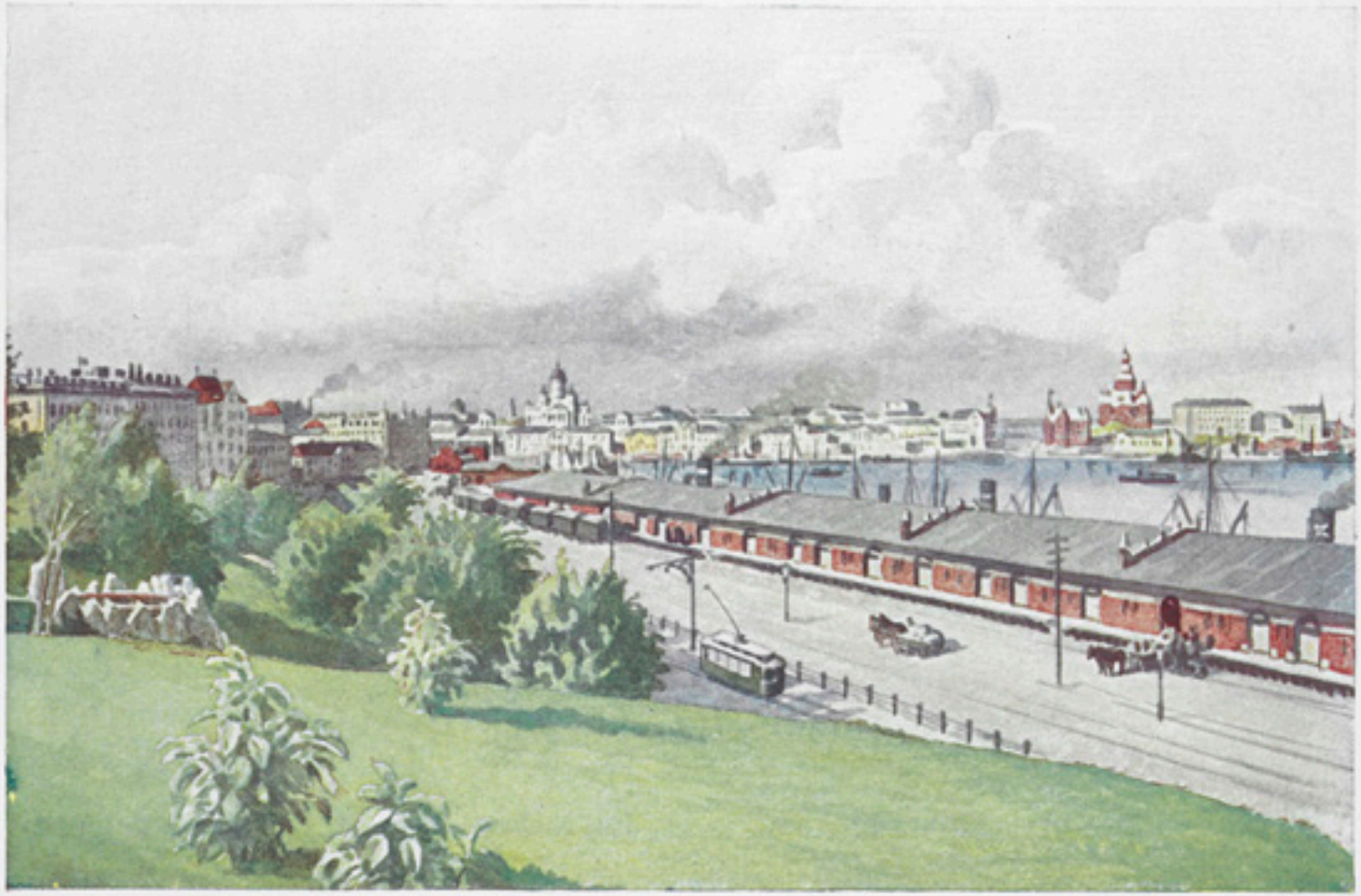
gardens and attendant bands, are much patronized, and present a lively, inviting scene, as nearly everybody prefers having their meals out of doors in warm weather.

The market is held on the quay in the early morning. The country carts and bright stalls in orderly array, covered with white awnings, together with the boats laden with farm produce, which are moored alongside the quay, form an attractive sight. Market-women, in gay cotton dresses, with dainty kerchiefs tied over their heads, serve customers from their boats, seeming quite indifferent to the constant wobbling motion caused by the wash of the passing steamers, even while counting eggs! The many stalls of fruit and flowers, and the bright costumes of the vendors against the background of trees and buildings, make up a very pretty and animated scene, which is accentuated by the bright blue sea in the foreground. By noon an army of street-cleaners, with hose and brooms, have washed down the whole quay, and every sign of market disappears until next day.

There is a fine promenade in beautiful gardens containing many handsome monuments (one of Runeberg, the poet, among others) along the whole front of the town, with band-stands at either end. Here there is always an atmosphere of pleasant gaiety.

The Finns are very up to date, telephones, electric light, and trams being universal. Smart little droskies, with their pairs of fast-trotting Finnish horses in pretty harness, ply for hire in all the towns. In these droskies you must be careful, and hold tight when turning corners, for so swiftly do they go that you may easily part company with your seat! In winter-time the droskies become sleighs by removing the wheels and substituting runners. At the same time some additions are made to the harness—a bell-collar and smart loin-cloth (generally crimson) for the horse. This last covers the animal, and, hanging well down, is fastened to the sleigh, thus preventing the snow from flying up on to the occupants.

Sveaborg, the impregnable fortress built on some islands near the entrance of the harbour, is famous for the part it has played in many of the wars. When staying in Helsingfors a few years ago, I was the unwilling witness of some severe fighting around this grim fortress. The Russian soldiers mutinied, killing many of their officers, and firing on all who tried to prevent them securing ammunition. Russia sent a war-ship, and succeeded in quelling the outbreak. This unwise revolt against authority caused much needless suffering, for the innocent suffered with the offenders. The arrival of boats at the quay-side



HELSINGFORS.

*A. Federley.*

laden with wounded on their way to the hospital was a very sad sight.

Åbo is the ancient as well as the ecclesiastical capital. Second only in size to Helsingfors, it is the principal port between Sweden and Finland. When the Baltic Sea is frozen, ice-breaking steamers keep an open passage to this important business centre.

In the winter a post-road over the ice between Stockholm and Åbo is maintained. This is an interesting old town, with wide, clean, cobbled streets, and pretty wooden houses, with large courtyards round them. These latter are useful in preventing the spread of fire, as well as being a picturesque addition to the houses.

All new houses in the towns are built of brick, to lessen the risk of fire, and the modern houses rather dwarf the charming wooden ones.

The Cathedral is very conspicuous, as it should be, but architecturally it is not interesting, though its tombs and associations are. These, however, you have read about in another chapter.

The Castle on the hill outside the town near the harbour has been a royal residence, then a prison for poor King Eric and others, but is now a museum, containing an historically interesting collection. In this museum are found sad reminders of Finland's army—registers, uniforms, and accoutrements of

all kinds, as well as the musical instruments which belonged to the bands, now lying pathetically dumb, their once inspiriting melodies silent, perhaps for ever. The reason of this is that the patriotic Finns refused to have their laws broken by Russia, consequently the Czar disbanded their army. Nâdendal is a beautiful little place on the coast, about thirteen miles from Åbo, famous for its mud-baths. It is also celebrated for its curious knitted dolls, which are the work of one old woman, who entirely supports herself by this industry. Viborg is the nearest town to the Russian frontier, and maintains a strong military force. It is regarded as the capital of Eastern Finland. Moreover, it is noted for its Viborg *kringlas*—queer twisted cakes, delicious, though peculiar in flavour—and every little Finn expects a "fairing" of the delicacy when his parents visit this town.

Tammerfors is the Manchester of Finland, and its cotton industries were started by a Scotsman, who utilized its splendid natural water-powers for this purpose.

Uleåborg and Torneå are the most northern towns, the former being famous for its salmon-fishing, which is the finest, and the latter for its railway, which is the most northern, in the world. The villages are very picturesque, with their wooden houses of soft brown or red colour, situated,

as they generally are, on the edge of a forest or on the banks of lakes. The very tall wooden spire of the church, the well, with its quaintly carved wooden top, stone base, and curious long pole, weighted at one end for raising the water, are always very noticeable objects.

Double windows are used in the houses in the winter. No blinds are drawn, so that the bright interiors may light the streets. A poor cottage is always beautifully clean, though there is often only one room to do everything in. The large stove occupies a prominent position, being built of rough brick, and reaching from floor to ceiling. The open rafters are used as a storeroom; the large hard cakes of rye-bread, having a hole in their middle, are threaded on a pole and slung up there, together with dried fish, bacon, and the family wardrobe! The insides of the village homes are kept very warm in winter by the large china-tiled stove in the corner of each room, which is never allowed to go out. The kitchens are bright with shining coppers, and the bedroom of son or daughter forms a study in the daytime. The bed which is peculiar to Finland is "telescopic," and shuts up when not in use. The dwelling-room is always very comfortable and pretty, with its flowers, books, pictures, and generally a piano, the whole suggesting an air of taste and refinement.

Great precautions are taken against fire, and every house must be provided with a ladder, which is placed against the roof, thus making a direct escape to the street. I am sorry I cannot tell you about the country towns, many of which are interesting, but mention must be made of Kuopio, as it is noted for the horse-fair held there annually on the ice. The Kuopio horses are the best in Finland. They "go like the wind," being famed for their speed and hardiness, as well as beauty, gentleness, and sagacity.

## CHAPTER XI

### SCHOOL AND HOLIDAY TIME IN STRAWBERRY-LAND

I AM sure English boys or girls would feel unjustly treated if compelled to learn at least two other languages besides their own when they started school-life, and no doubt would rebel at the arbitrary authority which obliged them to do it. Yet the Finnish children must do this, and much more, for they are very well educated, but perhaps, as they are naturally industrious, hard study does not trouble them—at least, they look happy enough over their lessons. Although education is considered of the utmost importance by the nation, the

State does not give any free schooling, and therefore education is not compulsory. But it will serve to show you how much the people desire it themselves when I tell you that, though they must pay for all education, it would be difficult to find an illiterate person in the country. If the State does not insist on education, the Church, however, does, and no pastor will confirm or marry any person who cannot read and write, so if there were any dunces in the land they would be left old-maids or bachelors! Schools are numerous, well managed, and the education is of the best. The majority of these are mixed schools—that is to say, boys and girls are educated together—an excellent plan for both, as they become good comrades, and have common interests, which tells on the welfare of their national life and the prosperity of the country. Children start school-life by attending a kindergarten, generally at the age of five years. At eight years they are ready for the primary schools; then comes high school; and later the University for those desiring it, or if destined for a profession. Schools of every description exist—agricultural, dairy, forestry, weaving, carpentry, and many others—in fact, you may learn anything you wish in a school, and for those who work in the daytime evening classes are arranged. Most children are taught German, Swedish, and Russian, in addition to their own language, the

grammar of which is very difficult, and, moreover, it has only twenty-one letters in its alphabet. Many of the children take English lessons as well. I once came across a girl of ten years of age who was learning five languages, and when asked if she did not find it very hard work, replied: "It is no use thinking about it; I must learn them, because no foreigner would understand mine, and I mean to be a clerk in my father's shipping-office." The school-year lasts only from September till May, with a week's holiday every month and three weeks at Christmas; also special days are given, such as the Czar's or Czarina's birthday, "Little Christmas" Day, and a few others. So you will see that Finnish children have a good deal to learn in their short school-time.

There are no boarding-schools; children, therefore, who are sent to school at a distance board with families, and attend as day-pupils. On the last Saturday in November a peculiar festival in Finnish school-life is celebrated. It is called "Little Christmas." A tiny Christmas-tree is decorated and laden with small "comic" gifts, which the children buy or make to give to their teachers and each other. This custom is peculiar to the South of Finland. Another singular practice is that of the "Star-Boys." On Christmas Eve poor boys array themselves in gilt-paper crowns and swords.

One boy, more gaudy than the rest, is dressed to represent King Herod; another, with blackened face and bright attire, is "King of the Moors." They carry a large paper star, which is transparent in the middle, on which is a representation of the Infant Jesus lying in a manger. This has a light behind it, and forms an illuminated picture. These boys go round to the houses singing, often very well, in chorus, asking for money, to enable them to pay for their tuition. This is a very ancient custom, for in old days, when education was expensive and difficult to obtain, poor students often could only get sufficient means to pay for their instruction by the money they collected as Star-Boys. When the fifth form is reached, and afterwards, the pupils meet together in the school-house every Saturday night, to consider the contributions to their own paper, of which the eldest one is the editor. Contributions must be original, and may take the form of prose, poetry, charade, or plays. These papers are called "convents," and their material is used to provide entertainment on guest-nights, which take place once a month. I once spent a pleasant evening at one of these entertainments. First, we had *tableaux vivants* of scenes from the "Kalevala," the staging of which was splendidly arranged. Then followed a little play, whose story told of two small strawberry-gatherers lost in the forest (the

counterpart of our "Babes in the Wood"), being very much frightened and in great distress; the animals and birds came to amuse and comfort them. Children were dressed to represent the different animals, and each did something comical. When the bear came, he danced so beautifully that the little strawberry-gatherers, as well as the audience, soon forgot their troubles, and joined in the fun. Finnish children dance very gracefully, and are passionately fond of it—in fact, it is their principal indoor exercise. On these guest-nights scholars provide refreshment for their friends by small contributions from each pupil. Before leaving school for Christmas holidays a large party is given to the children, a huge Christmas-tree being prepared, laden with gifts of sweetmeats, and splendidly decorated with flags and candles. Tea comes first—a sumptuous one—then follow dancing and amusements, a play being performed, for which the eldest pupil is responsible and has been preparing weeks beforehand. Then comes the distribution of prizes, which generally take the form of beautifully bound books. Should the pupil, however, be very poor, money is then given instead. In the Christmas holidays the young people arrange ski-ing parties to a neighbouring farm, with either teachers or parents as chaperons. There they have their dinner, and dance and play before returning home.

*Allan Stewart.*

CHILDREN ON SKIS.

It is customary on St. Stephen's Day to drive in large parties in sleighs—the longer the train of sleighs the better, for the higher will grow the flax to make the linen thread—at least, so think the Finns.

The long summer holidays are very happy ones for the young folk, as they spend them almost entirely in the open air, meals being seldom taken in the house. These delightful picnicking days are not, however, altogether idle ones, as some home-lessons must be done for the autumn school term. These home-lessons necessitate long, pleasant rambles in the woods, searching for botanical specimens, all pupils at the high-school having to take back with them to school thirty specimens in their first year, eighty in the second year, and a hundred in the third year. These botanical specimens must be carefully pressed, mounted on cards, and labelled with the local and Latin name, together with the province and village where each is found. These are placed in the school museum when passed as correct, with the scholar's name attached.

The woods and forests have a thick undergrowth of berries of all kinds—raspberries, cloud-berries, bilberries, cranberries, and others—besides large quantities of the delicious little wild strawberry. The Finns have a proverb which says, "My land

is strawberry-land, the stranger's land is bilberry-land, and my land is best"; and this every little Finn stanchly believes. A summer holiday is provided for all poor children habitually living in towns, for at least a month, and often longer. These children live in colonies, and in July, when the strawberries are ripe, spend their days gathering the fruit, thoroughly enjoying their holiday task. The strawberries are of a delicious, delicate flavour, but so small that dozens are required to make a spoonful! The children do not forget to eat largely of the berries, you may be sure, so for this purpose they always carry a long pin, with which they quickly and dexterously "spear" a dozen at a time, then neatly wipe them off into their little mouths! If you are travelling in Finland in the strawberry season, you are met at every station and quay by these little flaxen-haired merchants, with their birch-baskets of refreshing fruit, and very shrewd they are—especially the girls—at driving a bargain. They make these pretty baskets themselves, by cutting with their small *pukko** a section of bark from the birch-trees, and weaving it into fantastic shapes to form them. This bark is used for many purposes by the Finns, and they show great ingenuity in twisting it into useful articles, such as a drinking-cup by the side of a well, or as a mould for baking

* Knife.

bread, for baskets, and many other things. Very noticeable in the woods are the gigantic ant-hills, made of pine-needles, with innumerable tiny tracks leading up to them. On these roads you may observe the busy little insects toiling home with a burden, just as industrious in their way as the little strawberry-pickers.

## CHAPTER XII

### SPORTS AND PASTIMES

In a country like Finland, which consists of nearly as much water as land, and which has long, severe winters, when all outside work is at a standstill because the land is frozen, the people must vary the monotony of their indoor life by active exercise of some kind. This the Finns do by indulging in many exhilarating sports and pastimes, at which they are adepts, finding compensation in this way for the severity of their climate. The waterways becoming highways, they form a quick and cheap means of travel, so from necessity as well as choice the people become expert on skis, travelling many miles in this way, peasants often carrying their knapsacks strapped upon their backs. These ski-ers cover the ground quickly and gracefully, seeming

quite untroubled by their packs. It is very amusing to see several of them gliding along together. To these people the winter travelling on skis is as natural as walking, for they start learning in early childhood, tiny "tots" of three years old having their own small skis made for them just as we have our shoes. In the towns and villages competitive races for ski-ing and skating are organized and frequently held. Boys and girls take their part in these national sports, and all schools stimulate a wholesome rivalry of achievement between them by holding race-days, when guests are invited and prizes given. As ski-ing is the chief winter sport, and the most difficult to excel in, as well as requiring experience and nerve to avoid its dangers, it naturally follows that keen sportsmen like it best. Ski-ing races, therefore, take first place, and are always attended by an enthusiastic crowd of spectators, this sport inspiring excitement in the onlooker as well as in the performer. No doubt it will interest English boys to hear some details of this popular pastime, which, to the uninitiated, appears so perilous. Perhaps you know that the skis are long, narrow strips of wood, with leather fastenings in the centre, to attach them to the boots. The front ends of these skis are pointed, and curved upwards, so as to glide over obstructions. The proper length for each wearer is determined by his stand-

ing erect with his arms extended above the head, and the skis, being placed on end, should then reach to his finger-tips. Leather boots, cloth puttees, knickerbockers, thick woollen jersey and cap with ear-flaps, are generally worn to make the ski-er's outfit.

In Finland the little children, fully equipped, have their first lesson when about three years of age. Balance being the first essential, they are taught to stand on their skis, one foot in advance, knees bent, and the body thrust forward. Then they start off, tumbling, of course, at first, but soon looking upon the matter as a game, and, picking themselves up, try again. By the end of their second winter they are fairly proficient, and thoroughly enjoy a turn on their skis as well as on their skates, for skating is taught at the same time. All children must learn ski-ing and skating, as it is a necessary means of getting about the country. It is entertaining to see a party of children start off to school on their skis, warmly clad in rough home-spun and knitted woollen clothing, a happy, chattering throng, keen as to who will arrive there first, the girls often being the winners. A ski-jumping competition and race is a fine spectacle to witness, but it is only when you have realized how very difficult it is for a novice even to stand and keep his balance on the skis that you are fully impressed by

the Finnish ski-jumper. The best of these competitions take place in the Djurgården at Helsingfors, as some of the cleverest ski-ers in the world are to be found among the Finns. The excitement begins when the competitors mount the steep slope which is the starting-point. As the men gather at the top of the slope, a great shout goes up from the crowded grand stands at the bottom. The whole course is decorated with bright-coloured flags and banners, and these, together with the smart costumes of the ladies and gay-coloured jerseys of the men, make up a very pretty scene. At a given signal a hushed silence falls on the assembly as the first man starts down the slope. Gaining impetus, he comes on at a terrific speed till he reaches the bottom of the slope and its platform, which is raised some distance from the ground. When he arrives on the platform, he leaps up high into the air, with his feet close together, his body almost erect, with arms stretched out in a wonderful attitude of balance. After this gymnastic feat, he lands, much to our surprise, safely on the slope below, and rushes on, accompanied by the cheers of the crowd. Men stand below the platform ready to rake over the disturbed snow, which has been scattered right and left by the jumper, before the next competitor arrives. The judge's box is on one side of the platform, in order that he may

ascertain the highest " jump," and award the prize accordingly. So intense is the excitement of the spectators, as each man comes down the slope, jumps, and sails away, that you almost feel them holding their breath in readiness for the great cheer which goes up when he jumps and successfully lands on his skis.

The Finns are also clever skaters, of course, and in this, as in ski-ing, they have many professionals and skilled amateurs. Tobogganing is also a favourite pastime, and in every school recreation-ground a snow-covered erection is arranged for the children's toboggan exercise. Boys and girls are comrades in Finland, sharing equally in the home, the school, and in the field of sport.

Though the people often go to market on skis or skates, the sleigh is always used when carrying a load. It is the principal means of travelling, and takes the place of cart or carriage. These sleighs are drawn by the sure-footed, fleet, strong Finnish horses, with their smart bell-adorned harness, which makes such sweet music as they fly along. What a jolly time the youngsters have when they start off in sleighs for a visit to a neighbouring town ! Half a dozen sleighs packed with gay, laughing people drive through the exhilarating air to the merry chime of sleigh-bells, for this is St. Stephen's Day, and it is customary to drive in these large parties—

"driving Steffan" it is called. Often the back view of a fat woman off to market in her sleigh is quite a comical sight! The sleigh being meant for two ordinary-sized people, the girl who accompanies her to drive is squeezed into one corner, while the woman "boils over" in every direction! The girl appears from behind to be a large, bright-red toadstool, as her head is tied up in a crimson handkerchief, which covers her woollen cap; while the old woman looks like an enormous bundle of parti-coloured clothes, with a mandarin's bobbing head on top!

How beautiful is this country, the kingdom of Jack Frost, in its winter glory—the trees heavily laden with snow, and the ground, in its sparkling dress, making a veritable fairy-land, especially with the pale glint of winter sunshine on it! The Northern winter nights are exquisitely beautiful; the deep purply-blue of the heavens is ablaze with glittering stars, which intensify their sombre setting, while moonlight serves to add mystery to its charms. Often, too, the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis) float like flaming ribbons across the heavens, illuminating them brilliantly. This twinkling, scintillating canopy sheds a soft, radiant light throughout the land, which is not quite so dark as you might suppose.

Fishing and shooting are the chief summer sports,

*Allan Stewart*

SKI JUMPING.

and Finland being a fisherman's paradise, as yet little known, there are plenty of fish waiting to be caught by any young Briton who may be lucky enough to get the chance of throwing a fly in its waters. Shooting, also, is good, and birds plentiful, such as ptarmigan, black game, capercailzie, and wild-duck; or, if you like big game, and go North in winter, you may shoot a bear.

As the birds settle in the trees, the Finnish sportsman is accompanied by his trained dog, who stands under the trees barking, which frightens the birds, who fly out, and are then shot.

Yachting takes preference with some Finlanders, and there is a good yacht-club in Helsingfors, where races often take place, competing yachts coming also from St. Petersburg and Stockholm. Canoeing and boating have attractions for the youthful fraternity. The former, however, ranks first with the majority of young Finns, as only the skilled oarsman is allowed to go far afloat by canoe. Every boy and girl can manage a boat, and they often take the farm produce to market from their island homes. Swimming lessons begin very early in a Finnish child's life, and this is as it should be in a land of "many waters." It is an amusing sight to see a bevy of naked little urchins taking a morning swim. You would think they had been born in the water, like the fish, as they dart about in the clear, sunny lakes, laughing, spluttering,

and talking in their soft native tongue. Tennis, hockey, football, and cycling have all become fashionable within the last few years with the Finlanders, but they have yet to learn the fascinations of our national and beloved game of cricket.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PEOPLE'S EMPLOYMENTS

It will be very interesting to you, I am sure, to hear a little about the daily work of the people. No doubt you will be surprised to learn that we receive the most of Finland's exports. Industry and the equality of the men and women as regards work are the most striking features in Finnish life. You will always notice that where men are employed women are also—in the banks, architects' offices, railway bureaux, and other business places, even in the Parliament itself, where men and women debate amicably together on affairs of State. As I have told you a little about the three-quarters of the population who are agriculturists, I must now give you a brief sketch of other peasant employments. The tar-burner's curious and primitive method of obtaining tar from pine-trees is very

interesting. Up in the wild Northern interior this tar-extraction is the principal industry, but it is rather an extravagant process. The best trees being selected, all the bark is peeled off as high as a man can reach, except a narrow strip on the north side of the tree, which remains to preserve its life. It is then left to Nature. A thick, resinous fluid soon exudes from the scarified trunk, congealing into a hoary crust. Next year the operation is repeated, higher up the tree, and so on for several years, as long as the tree will bear this system of vivi-section without dying, the crust of resin growing richer every year. Then the trees are felled at the beginning of winter, and dragged over the snow to the tar-kilns. These ancient kilns are large saucer-shaped platforms, having a hole in the centre, through which the tar is drained into barrels. The resinous trunks are sawn into logs about 3 feet long, piled on to the kiln, and carefully turfed over. The pile is then lighted at various points, and under its thick blanket of turf it smoulders away for nearly a fortnight. As the heat increases the resin melts, pouring down the central funnel into the barrel below, which is waiting to receive it. The pine-trees used are about sixty years old, and one burning often produces a hundred barrels of tar. Throughout the whole Northern Zone the manu-facture of tar by this method is carried on. The

barrels often weigh 400 pounds each, so you will see it is a toilsome task to move them without other means than hand-labour to the river-side. After that, as you know, the "rapids" help them to quickly reach the coast, which is 200 miles away. Other useful products are obtained from the charred wood, such as pitch, lamp-black, charcoal, and wood-oil. Though Finland is not rich in minerals, it is one of the best wooded countries in Europe, forestry being one of the chief industries of the land, and the principal factor in its wealth.

Large quantities of timber are exported at little cost, being floated down the waterways, which are the greatest source of the nation's prosperity. Finland sends to us from her forests pit-props for our coal-mines, birch bobbins for our cotton factories, rafters, knees of fir-wood for keels of ships, and many other shipbuilding requisites. After the Crimean War steam-power was used at the saw-mills, which are placed generally at the mouths of big rivers, so that the timber may be floated down and "dressed" ready for export. From these mills comes wood-pulp, which makes the finest paper.

The manufactures of linen, cotton, and woollen goods at Tammerfors are very important industries, and some of the finest linen thread in the world comes from there. *Koski* means "waterfall," and

in Tammerfors, as well as in other places in Finland, the waterfalls are utilized (to the extent of 50,000 horse-power) in manufacturing. In these mills both boys and girls are employed, but they must be over twelve years of age, and have passed a certain standard of schooling. They can, however, be employed as long as seven hours a day between the ages of twelve and fifteen years, which appear to us long hours for little workers. The girls are more frequently employed in the weaving-mills, the boys more often in the glass, china, and tile works. In Tammerfors, which, as I have explained before, is the Manchester of Finland, there are paper, felt, and celluloid factories, besides the others I have mentioned. The superintendents of these mills are generally either Yorkshire or Lancashire men, and they say the Finns are not as yet so clever with their hands as the English operatives, but they are more painstaking and industrious. Tammerfors is a very pretty place, and quite unlike Manchester in any other way but its industries. Troops of mill-girls may be seen in the summer-time going to and from their work, through the forest or by the lake-side, dressed in bright-coloured prints, shawls over their heads, and with bare feet. It is due to two Scotsmen that these flourishing mills were started and became such a financial success. A large institution for these workers contains an excellent library,

gymnasium, and recreation-hall, where musical entertainments are frequently given. Finland is divided into provinces, and in many of these the people keep to one particular trade, working in their homes, all the members of a family helping to turn out the finished articles. For instance, all waggons and light carts are entirely made in the district of Viborg; while rocking-chairs, spinning-wheels, and threshing-machines are made in Ostro-Bothnia and Tavastehus. The Karelians, who belong to the province of Karelia, are the truest Finnish type in the land. These people are musical, bright, vivacious, and talkative. The women show great skill with their fingers. Charming in looks and manners, they are very fond of bright colours, their costumes being often a bright blue skirt, with coloured border, red or yellow jacket, while a white handkerchief or curious cap forms the head-dress. All of these are either heavily embroidered or finely wrought with needlework. The men are naturally artistic in their tastes, but they prefer earning their livelihood by horse-dealing, at which they prove very shrewd in making a bargain. They are, however, devoted to their horses. On Sunday evenings the Karelians assemble in the largest house in the village—men in one room, women in another—to gossip and amuse each other. Bears are often seen in this district, but quickly shuffle off at the sight of a man, cattle

being the only "game" they are after. Tavastland has a very different people—grave, stolid, enduring peasants these, faithful servants and plodding workers, whose employment is mainly agricultural. These provincial folk prefer black for their festive garb! An elk and her calf may sometimes be seen when driving through the country; but these handsome animals are becoming rare.

Very noticeable are the curious trade sign-boards hanging out over the shops in the villages and provincial towns. Each shop hangs out a picture-sign illustrative of what may be found within. Often a leather-seller will have a representation of a tanned skin painted in bright colours on his board. The pork-butcher will have sausages, bacon, and ham painted on his; so realistic are these as to be inviting! A butcher's sign may have a leg of mutton, and the greengrocer's sign exhibit a flourishing bunch of carrots, and perhaps a cauliflower. A roll twisted like a Staffordshire knot denotes the baker's shop, or, if he is a confectioner as well, a dish of attractive cakes is painted in addition on his board. The post-office may be easily found by its sign of a post-horn, and so on. These signs are most useful as guides to the foreigner, besides being a quaint addition to the appearance of the streets. At the corners of the streets a sign-post is usually placed, on which the name of the

street is given in three languages—Finnish, Swedish, and Russian. This is also the case at the railway-stations, where you may often observe the title of "porter" repeated in two languages on the man's cap. The engines of the trains are rather curious, with their enormous V-shaped, lidded funnels. This peculiarity is due to the fact that wood only is used as fuel; consequently the speed is not very great, but it is apt to be deceptive. Once a foreigner, who was in a hurry, told his fellow-passengers he could walk quicker, so, getting down at a country station, he started off in advance of the train, but was soon overtaken and outdistanced. His only resource, therefore, was to retrace his steps and wait until next day for another "slow" locomotive! The railway-tracks in Finland are not enclosed, and when the train passes a small hamlet, the dogs fly out and accompany it, barking loudly for some distance.

These pages will only permit of my giving you a peep at Finland and its people, but should my youthful readers chance to visit this beautiful land of many interests, I am sure they will receive a very hearty and kindly welcome from the hospitable Finns.

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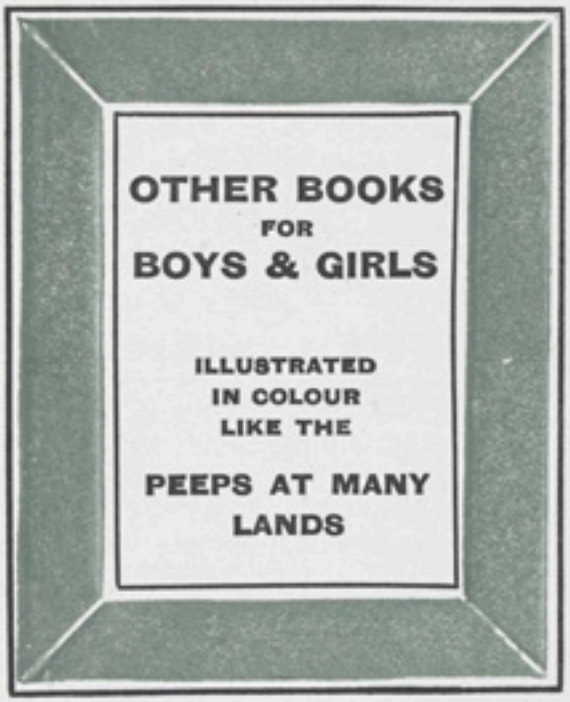

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