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THE CASTLE BUILDER

BY NEPHI ANDERSON,

Author of "Marcus King, Mormon," "Added Upon," "Romance of a
Missionary," etc.

THE DESERET NEWS
Salt Lake City, Utah
1909

Handwritten signature

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NEPHI ANDERSON
1902

THE
WASSEL
HALL, OGDEN

TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER

*Many of whose childhood experiences are herein faithfully
recorded*

This Book is Affectionately Dedicated

*Dream, O youth! dream nobly
and manfully, and thy dreams
shall be thy prophets.—Lord Bul-
wer Lytton.*

INTRODUCTION.

I read *THE CASTLE BUILDER* with infinite delight. Its characters have many counterparts among the "Mormons," a people whose every member has wrapped about his life a wondrous mantle of romance—under which, also, is hidden a store of heroic action.

THE CASTLE BUILDER faithfully describes scenes, and explains life, in Norway, one of the nations that early gave stalwart men and women to the Latter-day cause. While it portrays to the life, the convert's early hardships, moral battles, and sacrifices, it also tells how his heart is thrilled with new and consoling religious doctrine, and fascinated with suggested dreams of Zion. The whole is interwoven with the old but ever new story of life—the love of faithful hearts.

All this is well and good; but when I reluctantly parted with Harald and Thora, there appeared before them a still more romantic and fascinating career;—I wished to go with them over the waters, and plains, and mountains, to Zion; I wished to learn of their new hardships in redeeming the desert, in rearing and educating their children in the midst of poverty; how, in building their castles as Pioneers in the Rocky Moun-

tains, their souls were clarified in the furnace of heavy trial and sore affliction; and, typical of the Pioneers, how they yet conquered, and triumphed and proved faithful to the end, dying amidst their children's peaceful benedictions, with the gospel's polar light of truth beckoning them on to the glory of the Father.

IN *THE CASTLE BUILDER*, the story is only begun. To tell the remainder will require a greater volume. Some day, I hope, that may be written. If not by my friend, Nephi Anderson, then by a descendant of his characters,—a young man in whose soul the dream-and-work energy of Harald and the love-nature of Thora are curiously intertwined with the sweet spirit of an English Pioneer wanderer in the American desert, whose pretty castles, because Need pointed to low-lier things, only in the mists were builded.

In the meantime, the reader will find delight in the true-to-life introduction which this book gives to the lives of two typical "Mormon" converts.

EDWARD H. ANDERSON.

Salt Lake City, Utah.

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THE CASTLE BUILDER.

PART FIRST.

I.

THE BOY BUILDER.

The hill from the inland side was not hard to climb, so the boy made rapid progress, springing from rock to grassy plat, and stepping lightly from boulder up to moss-covered ledge. The elevation jutted from the main chain of the Dovre mountains out towards the ocean; but before it reached the sea it had been surrounded by an intricate tangle of fjords. In its eternal battle with the seaward elements, it had become scarred and seamed, and the forests of pine which covered the main chain had found but small foothold on the bare, weather-beaten promontory.

The boy at last reached the summit, and, as he stood panting, he lifted a ragged cap from a mop of straggling brown hair, and wiped his forehead. The boy took deep draughts of the bracing breeze that swept over the hill from the ocean. It was about noon. A

sweet May morning had awakened wild nature and coaxed her into her loveliest mood. The sun was pleasantly warm. The boy stood erect, looking out towards the open sea which lay beyond the fjord and a group of islands; then his eyes traced the long arm of the sea winding up into the land, until it was lost behind a distant wooded point; then landward he gazed, and there appeared naught but ridges upon ridges, covered with dark forest growth, broken now and then with a green valley, checkered into farms and dotted with red-roofed houses; but his gaze turned seaward again, and there it lingered. The boy had big, grey-blue eyes, and although he seemed to fix them on a long trail of black smoke on the horizon, caused by some passing steamer, the stare was intense, as though piercing farther yet into the mysterious depths of space.

The tinkle of a sheep's bell, which came up from a grassy slope below, suddenly awoke the boy from his reverie, and he hastened down the hill again to where a small flock of sheep was quietly taking its noon rest. As the sheep would be content for yet another hour or two, the young shepherd betook himself down to the fjord, under the ledge, where the warm sun shone brightly against the rocks. A smooth beach of sand stretched along at the base of the cliff, broken into now and then by confused masses of stone which had come down from the upper slopes. Here, then, was an ideal place in which to play. Outside was the ocean, often fierce and wild and so savage that it beat to pieces the frail vessels made by human hands and entrusted to its care; but here inside, protected by a barrier of isl-

ands, the waters of the fjord were calm and beautiful, reflecting the blue sky and gray cliffs in their still depths. Outside represented the harsh, unfeeling, grown-up world of men and women; inside was the sweet, trustful, sun-bathed world of childhood.

The boy sat down in the sand up farthest toward the rocks where it was warm and dry. The sand was clean—it would not soil his clothing, made both trousers and shirt, of a coarse hempen cloth. His shoes showed patch upon patch—but his stockings were of wool, fine and warm: the wearer certainly had a good grandmother living somewhere within reach. ✓

The boy dug in the sand with his birch stick. Then he wrote names in the smooth places. The sheep remained quiet, and so he wandered along the beach until he came to a beautiful nook where a mass of smooth stones lay against the cliff. He lifted one, and admired its clean-cut edges and corners. Then it occurred to him what fun it would be to build a house with these stones so well formed for the purpose. With his stick, he outlined a three-roomed building, and began at once laying the foundation with the largest stones, as he had seen the mason at home do. To make something, to build, is such a pleasure, and the boy entered into his work with eagerness.

For a whole hour he worked, though it seemed but a few minutes to him. The walls arose gradually, and he succeeded very well in placing proper openings for windows and doors. Once in a while he would step back a short distance to survey his work, and then he was reminded of the pictures of ancient castles he

had seen in a geography at school. There were no glass windows in them, and, of course, there could be none in his. If he could only raise that wall to make it look like one of those towers, with openings or spaces in the top, the effect would be quite grand. And then, the builder contemplated laying out grounds around his miniature castle, and enclosing the whole with a fence, or, better still, with a high stone wall.

Thus the boy worked and mused, and did not hear the tinkle of the sheep-bell up the hill-side. The afternoon was warm, the sky continued free from clouds, the small waves of the fjord lapped softly on the sands. In a niche above him, some soil had lodged, and in this, a bunch of tall grass and a slender willow had found root. Two birds were making a nest in this secluded spot, happy over their work; but their chirps and calls did not disturb the boy-builder.

He did not hear the patter of feet coming towards him from the other side of the projecting ledge, neither did he see the little girl's head as it peered around a large boulder, watching him as he worked. When his back was turned, the girl cautiously picked up a pebble and tossed it into the roofless castle. The builder did not see the action, but the second missile struck the top stone of the tower and slightly dislodged it. He turned quickly and saw her laughing at him from over the top of a large boulder.

"Halloo, Harald," she said. "What are you making? It looks like a castle. Is it? What a fine place to play in! Help me over this ledge, won't you, Harald?"

Startled as he was, he did not at once obey. His face flushed, and he made an effort to brush the sand from his clothes.

"Help me over, please, Harald. I want to see that beautiful house," and the girl threw the hat she had held in her hand over the boulder. It fell squarely on the tower of the castle, where it hung like a red Viking war-shield from the walls. Then she began to climb up the rocks, but as she could get only about half way over, Harald of necessity reached his strong arms over the ledge, and, taking her hands, nearly lifted her over to his side.

"My! how strong you are!" she cried. "I wish I were as strong as you, then I would build houses, too. I don't see how you can lift those big rocks. But you are a big, strong boy, and I am only a girl, and weak and sickly at that. How I wish I had brought my dolls. Your house is very nearly big enough for me to get into, isn't it? If you'd only make the door a bit larger, now."

She prattled on, while he stood awkwardly enough, not knowing what to say or do. He was not very well acquainted with Thora, daughter of the well-to-do merchant, Bernhard, down at Vangen. He was but the son of poor Einer Gundersen, the timberman. He had seen her a number of times at the church, and she had sometimes gone with her father to Opdal, when he had visited on business connected with the sheep. She was such a small, sickly-looking girl, Harald had thought, and he had wondered how it could be that he, who had scarcely enough to eat once a day, should be so strong,

while she who, no doubt, could eat all she wanted, as many times a day as she wished, should be so pale and puny. However, Thora had always treated him well, and at one time she had persuaded her father to give him a sick lamb for a present. Though Harald had nursed the lamb carefully, it had died; and with it went the boy's distant dream of owning a flock of sheep of his own.

Thora was well and warmly dressed, although the day was not cold. The pale face had a tingle of color in each cheek. She chatted freely with him, and admired his work. Harald's great, hungry, boy heart took her in, as the wild flower might take the warming beams of the sun; and, although he was not yet free of speech in her presence, he did forget himself and the fleeting time, as he endeavored to entertain his friend.

"Shall I build you a larger house?" he asked.

"Oh, no; this one is so cute. See, here we can make the lawn, and you might get some small trees, and plant them at the back. Would they grow, do you think? Of course the grass would not grow, but we can play that the sand is grass—it is so clean and warm anyway."

"I'll get some shells to put on the roof," said he, "and moss would make a soft carpet inside."

"Why, it will be a real castle, won't it?" she cried in delight. "All we will need then will be some queens and kings and princes, and such folks, to live in it. Then an army might come up and try to take it. Is it strong enough to resist, do you think? There's the red shield now on the walls, as a challenge to battle,"—at which they both laughed.

"If you will be the queen," said he, "I—I—can be the army that fights for you and protects you in your castle."

"But we must have a king, too," was her answer. "It wouldn't do to have a queen without a king, you know. Who could be king?"

"I don't know," said he.

And then, somehow, there came a pause in their conversation. After she had secured her hat, they walked together towards the ledge over which Thora had come.

"I must be going," she said; "Papa might be anxious for me. You will have to help me over again."

"Of course, I'll help you," and he scrambled nimbly up the cliffs, reached down for her hand, and soon they were perched on the topmost rock, looking down the fjord to where her father and another man were fishing in a small boat, near the shore. She shouted to him, and he waved his hand to her. He saw Harald, also, but said nothing to the boy and girl.

"How beautiful it is up here!" she cried. "Let's sit here a few minutes; I'm quite tired out. Doesn't the fjord look blue, today, Harald? Is it because the sky is so blue, too? Oh, look there! I can see just a tiny bit of the ocean, out there between the islands! How black it looks! I'm glad I'm not a sailor, aren't you, Harald?"

"I don't know," said the boy, because the truth of the matter was that he had lately begun to long for the sea and its hidden possibilities. "I've been out be-

yond the Three Trolds only once, and then I thought it great sport. The waves pitched us about merrily—”

“And made you sea sick.”

“No, it didn't. It was just fun!”

“Well, I don't think so—say, Harald, tell me the story of the Three Trolds, will you? I do so like to hear it.”

It took some coaxing to have him talk the necessary time needed for the telling of a story, but at last he began:

“Once upon a time, there were three wicked Trolds. Trolds, you must know, live only in the dark, and cannot stand the light of the sun. Therefore, whenever they wish to do anything—and it is generally to work some mischief to the human race—they must do it in the night time. Well, these three Trolds lived away back in the mountains, and were never known to visit the sea. Not that the sea had any special terrors for them, but they were land Trolds, and it is said that they often made the earth tremble when they were tumbling about too fiercely in their cave-houses under the mountains. These three Trolds had a beautiful princess in their keeping; in fact, they had stolen her from a king that lived far across the sea. This king had tried many times to rescue his child, and many princes had also tested their strength and courage against the power and craftiness of the Trolds, but to no avail; the princess was still a prisoner. So, one day Solus, Prince of the Sun, heard of the doings of the wicked Trolds, and he enquired of his father, the Sun, the secret of the Trolds' power. He was told

that these beings loved the evil, and therefore they also worked in the dark. If the sunlight could once shine upon them, they would lose their power, and in some manner be destroyed. With this knowledge, Prince Solus set out for the Trolds. Naturally, the prince, having the Sun for father, shone with a brilliant light; but this he now hid under a thick, dark mantle. He managed to make his way to where the princess was hidden, and to lead her out of the cave. Many other would-be-rescuers had reached so far, but the Trolds were very watchful, and so swift that they had always re-captured the princess in her efforts to escape. Prince Solus laid his plans wisely. It was nearly morning when he led the princess out. He had not traveled far before the Trolds discovered them, and came in swift pursuit. Away he sped towards the sea! He was strong and swift, too, but the Trolds were fast gaining on him. They bellowed after the prince until the hills shook; but he paid no heed. On they went until they got to the mountain yonder, that points out towards the sea. There the prince stopped, and the Trolds yelled in great glee, because they supposed they had them now; but as soon as the pursuers reached the promontory and were about to grasp the terrified princess, the prince threw off his cloak, and the brightness of the light which shone from his person blinded the Trolds, causing all three to fall off the cliff into the sea. Not being accustomed to water, they floundered about, and were so nearly drowned that they could not make their way back. So there they remained until the sun came up, and when its first rays shone upon them,

they were turned to stone—and there they are today, three rocky islands called the Three Trollds.”

Thora had sat in breathless wonder at the story. Harald told the legend as though he believed every word; and, at its close, the girl drew a long breath. Then she exclaimed:

“And did the prince marry the beautiful princess, and did they live happy ever after?”

“I don’t know,” said he; and he was about to make some further comment, but he suddenly startled. His face turned pale, and he trembled. The girl looked in the direction in which his eyes were set, half expecting to see an actual Trolld making towards them, but all she saw was Harald’s father, coming at a rapid pace down the hillside.

“The sheep, the sheep!” whispered the terrified boy; and quickly leaping from the ledge, he ran towards his father. They met at the castle of stones.

“Where are the sheep?” demanded the angry man.

“O, father, they’re just up the hill a little way, I’m sure.”

“They are not there, and not a trace of them have I seen. Where are they? What have you been doing, you lazy lounge, to neglect the sheep? They all may be in the sea, for aught you know, you—”

Then the father caught sight of the little play-house, which told the tale plainly. He did not see the little girl with a frightened face sitting on the rocks some rods away.

“This is what you have been doing, is it you good-for nothing! Making play-houses, instead of herding

your sheep," and with an oath, the man kicked down a wall of the structure.

"O, father, don't," the boy cried, as he rushed in between his angry father's form and the rude house of stones. "Don't father, don't knock it down! Beat me if you will, but don't spoil the house!"

Not for a moment did the boy think of himself. He had given the play-house to Thora. It was hers, and he pleaded for her. A son of the Vikings, the Viking spirit was but slumbering within the peasant-bred boy. It was for the girl that he stood up against the wrath of his father.

The boldness of the boy aroused the man to a greater anger. He took him by the arm, flung him upon the sand, and then, with kicks and shoves demolished the house. Turning again to the boy, he fiercely shook him, until it seemed that every joint in his body must have been loosened. Then he threw him on the sand again, where the boy lay for a few moments.

"Now, then, get up and find the sheep. If they are not brought safely home, this evening, every one of them, I'll break every bone in your body. Come, get up!"

The boy arose slowly, steadied himself for a moment, as if to get his bearings, and then went limping up the hill. The father followed.

At that moment Merchant Bernhard, fishing on the fjord, heard his little girl give a piercing scream. He hurried to her and carried her down. When she came to again, he asked her what had frightened her.

"O, papa," she said faintly, "I don't know whether it was Harald's father, or some terrible, wicked Troid!"

II.

CELEBRATION OF HARALD'S BIRTHDAY.

The day had been stormy and wet, so the sheep had been penned early. Harald Einersen was doing his chores, in the long, summer twilight. He did not hurry with his work—there was plenty of time; the Norwegian day, at this time of the year, and at this latitude, extends far into the hours of night.

The Gundersen houses, for there were two of them, occupied a small clearing on the gently sloping sides of the hill, which extended down to the waters of the Liffjord. Part of this clearing was grass-land, and part of it was planted to rye and potatoes. Near one of the huts was a small vegetable garden, and some goose-berry and currant bushes stood in a row from the door down to the spring. Some flowering shrubs could also be seen by the walls of this hut. The clearing on three sides was enclosed by the pine and spruce forest. The narrow fjord lay below, across which was another sloping hill, with some clearings and log huts upon it. Above the slope was a mountain, which reached back to other mountains, purple and blue in the distance.

Harald was up in the pines gathering dry twigs for the morrow's cooking. Through the dripping pine

branches, he could see the clouds scurrying before the wind to their rendezvous around the summit of the Dovre mountains. The rains had penetrated the sod, and the wild odor of wet woods was in the air. But to the boy gathering sticks, all this richness of woods and mountains, earth and sky, were as if it had never been. Not that it was altogether lost to him, for in future years, the very essence of it all seemed to find lodgment within his soul, and it gave him joy in many a weary hour.

Harald Einersen lived in the hut nearest the woods—the one with the flowers by the wall. The flowers had been his mother's. She had planted them, and had cared for them just a little longer than she had cared for him. In that log hut, Harald had been born, and there, a few months later, his mother had died. He lived there with his grandmother. His father lived in "the other house," as Harald always called the dwelling across the clearing, on the other side of the spring. Harald was the only child of that first wife. His father had married again, and he with his wife and four children occupied "the other house." This latter abode was a small improvement on the older house wherein Harald and his grand-mother lived. When Einer Gundersen had courted his second wife, she had demurred to going into the one-roomed hut to live with his mother and Harald; so, of necessity, the second house had to be built, and the grandmother was left in the old, with Harald to keep her company.

These were days of extreme scarcity and poverty. Sometimes Old Norway, struggling against the disad-

vantages of soil and climate, failed in supplying her children with bread. Then if the winter was severe, and the fishing poor, as sometimes happened, it became a daily battle for many of the poorer classes to keep life in their bodies. Einer Gundersen had a hard struggle to supply his family with the bare necessities, and, to make matters worse, he had a craving for drink, which he satisfied as often as he could get money enough to buy a bottle of rum. Sometimes, when he had work at some neighboring farm house, or obtained a job cutting timber in the forest, he would remain away from home days at a time after the work was over, and then he would come home as poor as when he went, but with an added nervousness in his step, and with a less fierce and brutal way of whipping his children. During these times, the responsibility of the home affairs rested on Harald, and especially the care of the small herd of sheep they had in charge for the summer for Merchant Bernhard.

The grass was now growing, and the potatoes and rye were food in prospective; but bright prospects could not exactly still that painful gnawing in the stomach of a growing boy. And oh, the food had been a mere pittance during the winter, and, was even scarcer now. By the spring stood a barrel full of the soft inner bark of the fir tree, ground into flour, and placed there to soak out the resinous matter. This flour was made into mush and then eaten. Bones were chopped and cooked, crushed with a hammer, and ground into flour. Out of this, mush and bread were made. The tender reindeer moss was also dried and

powdered, and even ground rye straw pressed into service as a help to eke out the meagre food supply.

Harald Einersen was hungrier than ever that evening, up there in the woods. Grandmother had been away all day—she had gone to Vangen, a distance of nine miles, to deliver some knitting, and she had not yet returned. If the berries had only been ripe—but it was useless to wish, so he munched the tender shoots which he picked from the trees, and, gathering up his bundle of twigs, trudged homeward.

He deposited his load under a small shed by the side of the house and then went in. With some dry wood from yesterday's gathering, he made a fire in the stove. This stove, by the way, was made of three old pots, with their bottoms knocked out, one placed on top of the other, the largest one underneath. One chair and a stool, a small pine board table, two rough bedsteads—one hidden in a corner by a curtain, a box-like cupboard, a small, odd-looking bureau, and a spinning wheel, were the chief articles of furniture in the room.

When Harald had gathered up the last bit of bark from his fire-making, grandmother came in. Grandmother could not tolerate rubbish around her stove, so she looked approvingly at the boy. She deposited a basket on the table, and then, taking the kerchief from her head, sat down to rest a few minutes. Grandmother could not walk the nine miles to Vangen and back so easily as formerly, therefore she was tired.

"Well, my boy, I suppose you're hungry," she said.

Harald cast a side glance towards the basket.

"Well, I think I am, grandmother."

"Yes; of course you are. God speed the growing crops. I saw they are doing well down the road. Have you done your work for the night? If not, get it finished, and then we'll see what we've got, my boy."

He went out again. Not that he had much to do, but he suspected there would be some cooking, and he did not wish to be tantalized by the delicious odors. In half an hour his grandmother called, "Come in, my boy, come in. I've got something for you—but stay, Harald, we are getting greedy. Run over and ask the children to come. Poor dears, it's little enough they have had this day, I am sure."

Harald soon came back with his two brothers, Holger and Jens, and his little sister, Hulda, whom he carried in his arms. They all came noisily into grandmother's house, and then how they stared and sniffed!

"Now then, behave yourselves, children, or not a mouthful you get," commanded grandmother, as she shook the wooden mush ladle at the noisy company. "Jens, you stand here, and Holger there, and you, Hulda, you may sit in grandmother's chair. Harald, draw up your stool."

So they all stood or sat around the little board table while grandmother gave each of them a small plate-full of steaming mush.

"Be careful now," she gave them warning, "don't be too greedy, and burn your mouths. Take your time there, Jens; you know you haven't any milk to cool it with."

"Oh, how fine!" said Holger.

"I believe there's wheat flour in it," remarked Jens.

"Now listen to that!" exclaimed the cook. "He believes there is wheat flour in it. I tell you, Jens Einersen, that that mush is made of one half wheat flour—the finest to be had in Merchant Bernhard's store, too."

Then there arose a chorus of exclamations and expressions of delight and gratification. The children took small spoonfulls from the edge of the dainty mass, and prolonged the pleasure as long as possible; but at length the last mouthful disappeared.

"Now, wait a minute," said grandmother, and the children became suddenly very quiet. Was there something more? What a wonder grandmother was, to be sure! Yes; out come a plate, and on it was a pile of warm pan-cakes. They were not much larger than the top of a tea-cup, and their thickness was nothing to boast of, but they were pan-cakes, anyway, and not made of bark or bone, but of beautiful white flour; and right in the middle of each cake rested a large raisin, surrounded by perhaps a dozen smaller ones arranged in a circle. The children could hardly believe their eyes, and they said nothing, for fear they were not intended for them.

"Now then," said grandmother, "I am going to give each of you one of these cakes. These are made of all-wheat flour, and the raisins were given to you by little Thora Bernhard. Some day you must all thank her for them, as she is a good girl, God bless her. Sh—listen! We are celebrating Harald's

birthday today. Today he is fourteen years old. Did you know that, Harald?"

"I had forgotten it, grandmother."

"Yes, I knew you had, so I gave you this surprise." She chuckled over the success of her plan, and Harald indeed looked the happy boy he was at that moment.

The raisins were carefully picked from the cakes. The cakes were then dispatched, and the raisins were kept, to be minced at leisurely. When the three children had been dismissed grandmother turned to Harald and said:

"Harald, I saw you give Hulda most of your mush. It was hardly a taste for you, and you so hungry. Now, it's your birthday, and you must have enough to eat for this once. See, I have saved a big plate-full for you, and here are some cakes and the raisins which Thora sent. She said they were for the children, but I knew by the way she talked that she wished you to have your full share. She told me what happened down by the rocks the other day."

"O, grandmother," said the boy, and then he choked. The tears stood in his eyes. "You haven't had any yet," he said.

"I had a good dinner at Vangen, so I'm not hungry; but I'll keep you company, anyway!" and she, too, took a spoon and ate.

Outside, the rain had begun again, and the evening was quite dark. The fire in the pot-stove had gone down. Grandmother put more wood in, and when it blazed up well, she took away the piece of

sheet iron that served for a door, which let the dancing light shine into the room. She then drew up her chair to the fire, and placed a low stool near it. The boy having finished his supper, the dishes were cleared away. Grandmother then got her knitting, and took her seat by the stove.

"Come, my boy," she said, "you need not spin to-night."—It had been the custom for Harald to spin yarn while she knitted. She did her spinning during the day—"Come, sit down by the stove, on this stool while I talk to you."

The boy obeyed. She was both father and mother to him. During the fourteen years of his life, he had known no other true counselor, no other true friend. From her, he had received what he had known of kindness; from her, he had obtained his crude ideas of life and the world; and from that kindly, deeply-marked soul, he had drawn his childish dreams and boyish ambitions.

"You are fourteen years old today, Harald. You are getting to be quite a man. Fourteen years ago, today,—yes, I remember it well."

Grandmother mused, while the needles nearly stopped their click. The boy looked into the fire.

"And, Harald, my boy, I want you to continue to be manly. You haven't had much chance in the world yet, but you will have your chances, many of them, and I want you to take advantage of them as they come.

"Your grandfather used to say that he could trace his ancestry back to Harald Haarfagre, and he

was not a little proud in the boast that he was of the ancient royal lineage. **I** don't know about that—I never took much interest in such matters. I always said that it matters very little what our forefathers were, but it matters very much what we are; and whether you, my boy, have in you the blood of Viking kings, or whether you have not, what you amount to will depend upon your own endeavors. I want you to remember that, Harald."

"Yes, grandmother."

"Your present poverty-stricken condition must not daunt you. Your extremely humble beginning must not make you discouraged. What credit has he who is born into so-called wealth and honor? Of far greater worth is your condition, my boy, down here at the bottom of the ladder, with energy and heart to climb by your own and God's help to the top. Remember, He who became the greatest of all, first became the humblest and lowliest of all. The whole, vast upward region is before you.

"But, my boy, in all you do, trust in God. In all our trials, and you will have many, see beyond the sore present into the blessed future. Your faith must never forsake you. God is behind everything, remember that. Outside, the air is dark, and the black clouds hang low over the earth, yet if you think a moment you will know that out beyond, above the clouds, shines unhindered, the glorious sun. So it is with God and His providences. * * * * * And now, we will read one chapter from the Bible and then go to bed. Harald, get it for me."]

But Harald did not move, and when the grandmother looked down at him, she saw his tired head resting against her knee. The boy was asleep. Not that he was disinterested in his grandmother's words, for she often talked to him in the same encouraging strain, but he was tired, and tonight he had an extra plate of mush for supper.

Grandmother said no more, but ran her fingers through the brown hair, smiling to herself.

III.

SCHOOLING AND CONFIRMATION.

There is a something, a wonderful, self-existing, powerful something, within the human soul, which training can not eradicate nor environment completely crush out; what is it but the spark of eternal fire which the human brings with him from the regions of celestial space as an heritage from God the Father, a fire which serves as a light by which he can read God's revelations to him throughout his mortal career. Pity the human race without it! This mystery of godliness is as the glint of a golden thread through life's fabric: to the child it is given in the love that it cherishes for its rag doll; to the boy, in the joy which he has in the possession of a bag of marbles; to the youth, in the sweet hopes of love returned in kind; to the man, in the faith of life eternal.

It was this occasional revelation of Godlight to Harald Einersen which supported him, as it does all of us. In the very nature of things, the thinly clad, poorly fed boy was very much absorbed in the tasks of keeping his body warm and satisfying his hunger; but for all that, at times his boy-spirit leaped beyond the

restraining walls, and roamed freely out into the wonderful and enticing realms of the big world's life. Seemingly trifling things touched the magic fire, and opened the heavens to him: The call of a bird on a summer's morning; the murmur of the creek; the roar of the waterfall; the sighing of the wind in the tree tops; the sight of a pretty flower; the reddening of the sky; the soft shadows of a departing day—such were the magic keys that let him out into the everlasting dominion of time and space, and gave into his possession all that God has created wherewith to build for himself castles of wondrous beauty and grandeur.

The summer advanced as only a summer in Norway can. The sun was in the sky for twenty hours or more at a time, thus rapidly warmed the earth, and making vegetation spring upward as if by magic. Harald enjoyed the summer. He was out of doors most of the time with the sheep; and he reveled in the wild nature around him. Best of all, the season was favorable to the growing crops. The vegetables in the little garden soon became large enough to eat, and, as soon as the potatoes were the size of a bird's egg, some were dug and made into potato cake. There was yet very little flour to be obtained, but the fish had come back to the nearby coast, and there had been a good spring catch. So, with fish and potatoes, and the addition of milk which the new grass brought, the children began to get enough to eat once more.

Harald received the sum of two dollars for one summer's work in herding sheep. This had been his salary for three past years; and how proudly he took

the silver coins home, when he had been paid, and threw them into his grandmother's lap. This summer, it occurred to him that he ought to earn more money. The two dollars certainly could not go very far, though handled by the very careful grandmother. Lately, they had received very little help from his father, and grandmother was getting older and not able to work so hard. Besides, his own clothing was getting shabby. He sat on a grass bank watching the sheep, thinking about these things, one afternoon. The boy's shoes were patch upon patch, and he amused himself trying to pick out which of the small pieces of which the shoe was composed belonged to the original shoe. He would also need some new clothing for winter, for the long-looked-for day of confirmation would come next winter. He must be better dressed on that day, at least. As regards his schooling and confirmation, he was somewhat behind. The hardships of the past winter had prevented him from attending school regularly like many of his mates, and so he had failed to prepare for the last examination and confirmation, when he should have completed his schooling. This had hurt the boy, and, as he thought of it now, he resolved to study hard and not miss next time. Meanwhile, he must earn some more money.

Just at that moment a trout in the pool into which he was looking, came to the surface, whisked its tail out of the water as if to say, "Catch me." Harald seemed to hear it, and said, "I will." Fresh trout brought a good price down at Vangen; why not catch some to sell? Having no hook nor line, he took off

his shoes and stockings and waded into the shallow creek. He could see half a dozen speckled beauties darting through the water, and he meant to have some of them. First he enclosed the pool with large stones, in a way that would allow the water to escape, but not the fish. Then he sub-divided the pond into smaller divisions, and continued thus until the fish were so closely penned that they could be caught with the hands. With running after the sheep and this work, it took him all the afternoon, but he was rewarded with the possession of four fair-sized trout.

The boy was all aglow with his success. He had his fish nicely strung on a willow, and was speculating on how he could get them to a market, when, who should come down the path leading across the creek but Herr Juel, the schoolmaster. He stopped and looked at the boy and his fish, and then saw, by the numerous dams in the water, how he had caught them.

The schoolmaster and Harald were good friends. The boy admired the man of great learning, and he had a fixed opinion that the schoolmaster could repeat every word in the catechism by heart. The schoolmaster, also, had much respect for Harald, "the best boy in school," when he attended.

"You caught them, I see, Harald," said Herr Juel, who emphatically trilled his r's as every loyal Norwegian should. "They will make a fine dinner for you."

"I'm going to sell them, sir."

"To whom, Harald?"

"To anybody who will buy. You see," said he as

if it had suddenly occurred to him, "you see, I must be making money if I am to get ready for school, and I mean to be confirmed next winter sure."

"That's a good resolution, my boy—but how much do you ask for your fish?"

He named a price which, as it was to the schoolmaster, was a very low one. Herr Juel paid the boy double the amount and took the fish. He was about to go on his way when Harald asked:

"When does school begin again?"

"Within two weeks," was the reply.

"I fear that I will be as bad as ever," said the boy, "because I can't start then, and I shall be so far behind again—and you know, the school stays such a short time at our house."

"Nuh," spoke the master, "you're an ambitious boy, and we'll see what can be done. Perhaps we can arrange to have you go along with the school. I'll not forget you, Harald."

This thought had not occurred to the boy. If only he might. The school remained but two days last winter at the house where he attended and then moved on to the next, and it was a whole week before it came back; but if he could go with the schoolmaster, along with the school, he could surely catch up. The boy was in a small fever of excitement to get home to consult his grandmother about the plan.

Shortly thereafter, he had another talk with the schoolmaster. In fact, Herr Juel came to the house, and the three talked it all over; it was finally arranged

that Harald should have all the chances possible for the coming year.

He was very much elated. But the money question continued to worry him. He even thought of going down to Vangen and applying to Merchant Bernhard for a raise in wages; but this he did not do, for the chief reason that Thora might see him in his ragged coat and patched shoes—and, somehow, his feelings in this matter had undergone a change in the past few months. However, all that summer he kept his eyes open for every opportunity to earn money, and, before fall, he deposited with his banker—his grandmother—quite a pile of copper and silver coins.

Harald's father, Einer Gundersen, did not willfully neglect his oldest son, but the fact that the boy lived with his grandmother, and that they both seemed to get along as well as his wife and other children did, led the father to believe that very little of his help was needed. Harald scarcely ever went to him for assistance or advice, so Einer was somewhat surprised, one day early in the autumn, to see Harald come to the "other house," stepping proudly in a new pair of shoes. Einer looked closely at his boy. How big and strong and rosy he had become! and there was his mother's wavy hair and blue eyes; and when he smiled, which he now did, the father's heart was touched with a joy akin to that first love, long ago.

"Father, I want to go to school," began the boy quite boldly. His new shoes seemed to give him a firmer footing.

"Well, my boy, of course you'll go to school. Herr

Juel told me the other day that he wished me to get my largest room ready for the school which will be here next week."

"Yes, but father, I want to go longer than the few days it will be kept here. I never will catch up if I don't, and I wish to be confirmed this winter. The schoolmaster said he would let me go around with him wherever he moves the school. Then, sometimes I would have to stay away from home nights and—and, I could do it if Holger and you would take care of the sheep and—and grandmother."

His father looked at the boy silently. Then Harald, fearful of a refusal, or perhaps a worse thing if his father lost his temper, pushed out a foot and showed his new shoe.

"I've earned and saved money enough during the summer to buy a pair of shoes," he said, "and grandmother is making me clothes which my wages will pay for. So you see, I'll look about as well as any of the boys."

"You'll not only look as well, but you'll do as well, too, my boy. We'll see what can be done for you to help you out."

The following weeks, Harald worked unceasingly to get ready for his school. There were many things to do, the greatest of which was to provide wood for his grandmother's pot stove. He worked early and late at his woodpile, and as he worked, his castle of learning arose in beauty before him. Yes, he would not be satisfied with confirmation, but would go on to the high school at Vangen, and then who could tell

—he might be able to go to the Seminary at Trondhjem, or even to the University at Christiania! Surely, then, he would be as wise as the schoolmaster or even Herr Ingman, the priest.

Harald received his chance. His father was to feed the sheep, when Harald would be away; but Holger had also been converted to the plan, since the father, though he meant ever so well, could not be depended upon. The school came to their district with the first snowfall of the season; but he did not care for the snow or cold now. His woolen stockings and leather shoes kept his toes warm, and he told his grandmother he could not be cold in his new suit of homespun.

It did not take Harald Einersen long to stand number one in his class, and he kept that position easily all the winter, though at one time he thought he would lose it. That was when his grandmother became sick, and, as his father was away on a bout, the boy had to stay at home for a week; but he made good use of his vacation, as the woodpile grew large again, and he studied his lessons in the evenings. During that week he was also quite lucky with his traps and snares in the woods, catching a good many wild fowls which always brought a good price in the market at Vangen.

His principal studies at school were arithmetic, geography, a little history—much of it told by the master, Bible history and the catechism. Most of the time was spent on the religious branches, supposedly, on the grounds that they were the hardest and most important. Harald agreed with the first proposition,

but could hardly see the wisdom of the second. The catechism consisted of questions and answers of the Christian religion as propounded by Lutheran divines. Though exceedingly dry to him, he managed to commit to memory most of the book. He could not be confirmed without this knowledge, so he went at it with a will. He liked his mathematics, and was quick at solving problems. His Bible was interesting reading as it was, but when it was chopped up into questions and answers, it lost its vitality to the boy.

As the winter advanced, Harald took his turn with the other boys and girls and went to Pastor Ingman once each week to be examined on the progress made in their religious training, as the pastor supervised this branch of the young people's education. Some who were eighteen years old, were yet going to the pastor. These were the dullards, who could not "get religion into their heads," hence could not be confirmed, and, until they were confirmed they were yet a sort of heathen.

Harald preferred going to school than to the priest's. The schoolmaster understood him, but the priest was cold and very formal in his instructions, and Harald often begrudged the two-mile walk to the parsonage. However, he never failed to answer correctly the priest's questions, and he stood number one at the priest's also, as well as at the school.

That was a happy winter for Harald, and when the spring came again he felt strong and ready for any test. As he got high marks in his examination he went to the priest the last time before confirmation

without fear of the results. That day he was to carry away the number of the position he was to occupy in the class on the day of confirmation, which was to be the Sunday following. He had hopes that he would still stand at the head. He had certainly worked for it. When the names were read out, number one was not Harald Einersen, neither number two nor three. All these belonged to some boys of well-to-do parents—Harald's was number four. When he heard it, his face burned with indignation. He had surely done better than any of the three boys ahead of him. He looked at the priest to see if there had not been a mistake, but there was no recognition in the pastor's eye. Even the boys, when outside, were quiet, as if something not altogether right had happened. Harald got home as soon as possible; and that evening he told his grandmother what had happened.

"I can't go to confirmation next Sunday, grandmother," he said. "It will be such a disgrace. I who have been at the head all the time now to stand number four. O, grandmother, why did he do it?"

"Hush, my boy, of course you'll go next Sunday. Number four is not bad; there will be a great many lower than that. After all, what does it amount to, where you stand in the row. Remember that God looks at your true qualifications and will see you at number four as well as at number one. The ceremony is between yourself and your God, and not between you and the priest."

"But it's so hard to be disappointed."

"It may be hard for some boys, Harald, who have

not done their best, but for you it should not be."

So with her soothing talk, Harald was quieted, and he promised to go through the ordeal with a stout heart.

Confirmation Sunday came warm and clear, with just enough wind to blow the boats on the fjord merrily to the church. Some of the farmers drove in their carts, but Harald walked with his grandmother, who would go, though she was not strong.

The church was situated three miles down the fjord towards Vangen. Some boys and girls from that small sea port were also to be confirmed that day.

As the ceremony of confirmation is a red-letter day in the lives of the young, there were many people out. The church was crowded. Two rows of seats had been arranged, one on each side of the large center aisle, and on these the boys and girls who were to be confirmed were seated. The girls sat on one side, the boys on the other, according to their grade number, number one being towards the altar. Harald mechanically took his seat in his place. His grandmother sat directly opposite him on the regular seats, and he could see many people whispering in surprise to her. The boys had on their best, which with one or two exceptions was not very fine. The girls were now at the magic point where the change from childhood to maidenhood takes place. They were therefore allowed to wear their dresses long, and their hair done up in coils.

Harald did not see much that was going on around him until a girl came in, walked up the aisle, and took the vacant seat at the head of the girl's row. Then

he gave a little start, and his face turned a little paler. He had not known that Thora Bernhard was to be confirmed that day. But was that tall girl in a black dress Thora? Harald hardly dared to look across to make sure. Yes; the hair was combed smoothly over the white forehead, and although she seemed so tall, it was certainly Thora. And there he was sitting in number four instead of opposite her, at number one. He had not courage to look up. The opening services were long and painful, and when they were all told to stand, Harald saw Thora looking at him. She seemed somewhat surprised at the tall, broad-shouldered boy, and Harald was sure that there was a look of disappointment in her face when she comprehended his position. Then the priest began to ask the usual catechisation as a public test of their religious knowledge. Harald answered his questions accurately, but as the priest went on down the line the boy's attention did not go with him. It rather strayed to the pale face at the head of the opposite row. Then the priest spoke some impressive words to the young people on the importance of living a good Christian life. They would now be held responsible for their own conduct, and he hoped the religious instructions they had received would be of great aid to them in the battle against the evil in the world. Many of the boys and girls cried, but Harald did not. He gave the usual assent to the priest's questions whether he would "forsake the devil and all his works."

Harald was glad that it was all over. The occasion was solemn enough to many minds, but to Har-

ald that day, it was rather more painful than impressive. Outside the church, his grandmother whispered to him, "You stood it well, my boy," but Harald had a hard time to keep the lump in his throat from choking him. Then when he overheard some of the boys telling what valuable presents their parents had given the priest, he could stand the presence of people no longer, so he urged his grandmother to go home with him.

The afternoon sun was sinking low in the north-western heavens when the two trudged through the short-cut forest path to their home in the clearing. The trees cast long shadows; the wind moaned in the branches; the birds ceased their singing. Grandmother had to sit down and rest, once in awhile. On any other occasion Harald would have hunted for wild flowers, but this afternoon he sat down beside the tired woman, seemingly as tired as she.

Then as they came down the hill into the main-traveled road again, they heard the rattle of a cariole coming towards them up the road. Harald turned and saw that it was Merchant Bernhard and his daughter. As they came up, they stopped, and Thora, scraping the soil from the wheel with her gloved hand, leaned over and said to the boy:

"I'm sure it was not fair, Harald. I think you should have been number one."

That was all. Grandmother courtesied and murmured her thanks. Harald said nothing; neither did the merchant. He smiled, and then drove on.

The sun was nearly behind the hills now, but the

world had suddenly been flooded with a beautiful light. The wind changed from a moan to a melting melody. The birds all came out and sang their sweetest songs. The boy was tired no more, but could have walked all the way back again without resting. Even grandmother revived, and did not complain of the ache in her back. They walked on in silence. Then, the boy took his grandmother by the hand and looking into her wrinkled face said:

“Never mind, grandmother, I’ll stand first yet, even though I had no fat goose to give to the priest.”

IV.

ALONG THE COAST TO THE LAND OF ICE AND SNOW.

If there was one form of out door exercise that Harald Einersen enjoyed more than another, it was to climb to the top of some high elevation that he might stand and look out over the surrounding view. It was often a hard task to scale some of the highest peaks around the Lifjord, but that wonderful feeling of expansion which his soul experienced when the summit had been reached, amply paid for the exertion. So, this afternoon, when there was a pause in the chopping, which seemingly would last all the remainder of the day, Harald, instead of taking it easy as the other choppers were doing, resolved to walk up through the pines to the top of a nearby ridge that he might gaze on what lay beyond. He was always saying to himself that he wished to see "what was just beyond."

Harald cut a stout birch cane, and left the group of men lying on the grass, smoking their pipes. He also was a chopper this summer, the third year after his confirmation, and was now out with his father in the woods. This work had helped to make a strong, man-like fellow out of him, and he now presented as handsome a picture as one would wish to see. With his cap in his hand, and his red shirt open at the throat, he met

the steep grade with a firm step, and in half an hour he stood on a ledge of rock from which he could get the desired view. On one side extended the pine-clad hills; and on the other side, at his feet, lay the ocean. He had never seen such a large stretch of the ocean before, nor had he ever seen it in such a phase as now. He sat down with his face turned towards it.

The sea was like glass; in the distance, it shone like a huge mirror spread out over the earth. Some islands lay out against the horizon, but they seemed to be lifted up into the air, swimming in a hazy atmosphere of warm, golden color. Sea and sky blended into one. If a white cloud sailed through the blue of the sky, the sea also did its best to follow with a changing patch of white. When the air gently stooped to caress the sea, ripples of joy danced upon its bosom.

The young man lay quietly, permitting the whole, sweet harmony of the elements to enter his heart; and then this spiritual elixir penetrated into some innermost recess of his soul, touching a secret spring. Ah, the Viking blood stirs within him; sluggishly at first, then swifter and swifter, until at last his whole body tingles. The Sea calls, and he answers. The Wind greets him and he knows its voice. The Waves come rolling towards him; they must stop on the strand below, but he hears them, and understands their message. "I will come to thee, I will come to thee," he whispers, as if he were speaking to a shy maiden at his side. Then, as he gazes and dreams, an ancient Viking fleet seems to sail before him. The long, open boats, each with its one square sail filled with wind, comes gliding into the scene one by one, until the whole wide expanse

is dotted with them. Each ship has a red shield at the prow, a sign of war, and each vessel is filled with warriors whose battle-axes and spears glisten in the sun. Then the whole fleet seems to sail slowly into the distance, and Harald's heart is drawn out with the departing boats, until at last when they disappear behind the horizon, the young man leaps to his feet as if he would follow the departing Vikings, to take part in the raids they had planned against some southern shore.

The sound of ringing axes came up from below. Harald shook himself as if to be free from some charmed power, and then, springing down the hillside, betook himself to work again; but that same afternoon he made up his mind to accept the invitation his Uncle Erik had sent him to come to Nordland and join him in his trip to the fishing grounds of Lofoten, the coming winter.

Einer Gundersen had no objection to Harald's going to Nordland. There was small opportunity for a young man of Harald's disposition in or around Updal, and at Lofoten there was always a chance of doing something profitable. Harald, of course, counseled with his grandmother about it. Holger was now the herder, and stayed with his grandmother when Harald was away; and the old lady enjoyed better health than she had for years.

"Yes, my boy," she had said to him, "I don't see why you shouldn't go. You are a big, strong boy, and I believe as true as you are strong. I think I can trust you now. I think I can trust you to do right under all circumstances, and I do not see why you should not have your chances in life. But Nordland and Lofoten

is a hard life, and you know you are not much of a sailor."

"It's not hard to learn, I hope, such a trifle as that, grandmother!"

So it was satisfactorily arranged, and Uncle Erik sent him money enough to pay his fare to Sandstad.

It was in the latter part of August when he was ready. He was to go early that he might take part in some summer fishing before he should go to the more strenuous life at Lofoten.

On the morning of his departure, the whole household was astir. Little Hulda cried when her father lifted Harald's little wooden box to carry it down to the landing; therefore, Harald lifted her on to his shoulders and bore her down, while the rest of the family followed. They all tried to appear pleased, but it was useless to try to conceal the deep emotions under which they were laboring. This was Harald's first long trip away from home, and there was no telling what might befall him ere he returned—and he might never return at all—the sea is such a cruel thing to deal with. The step-mother, whom Harald had so often of late helped and comforted, took the parting quite to heart, and there were tears in the eyes of the father when he pressed Harald's hand and said:

"Goodby, my son; be a good boy, and—and, don't drink, Harald; shun liquor as you would the very gates of hell. Fishermen are rough, and they drink much, but don't you do it, Harald; that's a father's last words to you, should he never see you again!"

Even Harald joined in the general sobbing—all but grandmother—she smiled still.

“Goodby, Harald,” she said, as she patted one cheek and kissed the other, “God bless you, and bring you safe home again.”

Harald jumped into his boat, and, seizing the oars, was soon speeding down the fjord. They all stood on the bank waving their hats and handkerchiefs until a projecting bank hid them from his sight.

It was a good half day’s row down the fjord to Vangen, but Harald did not wish the distance shorter that morning. He wished to take a good last look at the familiar scenes of mountain, dell and water, wherein he had herded his sheep, picked berries, and fished for the wily trout. Just down that beautiful, grassy slope, one summer day, with some other boys, he remembered having rolled old man Hansen’s grind stone. What a beautiful sight it had been, and what a fearful splash it made as it bounded into the deep waters of the fjord! He also remembered how much money the boys had been compelled to obtain to buy a new one. Here also was the cosy nook under the crags where he had become so interested in castle building that he had neglected his sheep. Just on that ledge, Thora had sat, and he had lifted her down. What a wee, slender thing she had been, and now—why the last time he had seen her, she had appeared so like a grown young lady that he had not dared to speak to her.

The boat glided smoothly towards Vangen. The rower must have reached beyond the region of his boyhood resorts, for now his thoughts were not so much with hill and vale as with the face and form of a pale girl who looked so much like a young woman.

Harald tied his boat at the wharf where the steam-

er was to touch. He had an hour yet to wait. Asking a ferryman at the wharf to keep an eye on his boat until his father should come after it, he strolled up the business street of the little town.

He intended to buy a few articles for his journey, but was a little nervous about going to Merchant Bernhard's, his usual place of business; why, he scarcely knew. He would like to say goodby to Thora, but somehow there was an unusual fear about it, so he walked by the store without looking in. "How silly I am getting!" he said to himself. "Thora doesn't work in the store. What's the matter with me, anyway? Thora is a rich merchant's daughter—I am a sheep-herder—a wood-chopper." Turning suddenly, he went into the store and made his purchases.

Now the nearest way to the steamboat landing was directly down the street again, but Harald had an abundance of time, so he decided to take a stroll another way, that thereby he might pass a white-painted house, set back in a large grass patch,—the Bernard residence. It was a beautiful place, and it would do no harm to take a last look at it. He saw Thora the moment he turned the corner. She was at work in the garden, and, just as he passed the gate, she spied him. Her straw hat was lying on the grass, and she had a small flower-shovel in her hand. When she saw Harald coming, she pushed the hair from her eyes, and said:

"Good day, Harald. You are just in time to help me. I was just wishing some one would come along to assist me with this flower. I want to carry it into the conservatory. Won't you help me?"

Pushing the little gate open, Harald went in. He took the tub containing the plant, and lifted it up to his shoulder, saying:

“Tell me where to put it.”

“Oh, but I wanted to help you!” she exclaimed. He laughed, walked across the grass to the glass-covered house at the side of the dwelling, and put his burden down in the spot directed.

“Now, you’ll excuse me if I run away so hurriedly,” he said. “I mustn’t miss the steamer.”

“Are you going away?”

“Yes; up to Nordland, to Uncle Erik’s. Goodby,” and he held out his hand.

“Well, I didn’t know you were going so far.—Well—there’s plenty of time—the steamer’s always late—thank you for your help, Harald; goodby,” and she shook his hand.

He hurried away and down to the landing, wishing the steamer would come. It was past due now. He had taken his box and the basket containing his lunch on to the pier, and was now pacing back and forth. Ten minutes, twenty minutes passed, then he heard the steamer’s whistle, down the fjord. Coming up to the wharf, it lay there fully fifteen minutes longer, while the men leisurely unloaded a few boxes, and took on board other articles of freight.

Stowing his box safely away in a corner between decks, Harald went up again; just as the men were getting ready to throw off the ropes, he beheld Thora Bernhard coming down the pier. Seeing him at the railing she walked up the gang plank and handed him

a small basket, saying, "This is for your lunch, Harald—goodby." Then she stood on the wharf waving her hand to him. He thought he saw a soft color of red in each pale cheek, as the steamer took him farther and farther down the opening waters of the fjord.

That day he saw some of the wonders of Norway's coastline scenery. Hour after hour, the steamer plowed its way through the maze of fjords and sounds, whose still, deep waters, protected by the outlying islands from the rough winds and waves of the ocean, reflected in its surface the gray of the barren mountains. Every few hours, the steamer headed up some fjord, stopping at some small town consisting often of but a few houses huddled together under a mountain wall. Then back again, and in and out of channels so narrow that a stone could be thrown to either side. Harald kept on deck most of the time, but when evening came, he went down to his box where the heat from the engine was not uncomfortable.

The next morning the steamer lay in the wharf at the city of Trondhjem, and since it would be some hours before it sailed, Harald walked up into the city. He was much interested in what he saw, this being the first time he had been in a large city. Especially was he interested in its ancient cathedral, of which he had read, and to which Norway's kings come to be crowned.

In the afternoon the steamer plowed on again. That night they left the still waters of a protected fjord to get out into the open sea to round a headland. The boat pitched quite lively, but Harald stood it well. In

the morning they were again behind some islands, only now and then catching a glimpse of the sea through the openings between two islands.

The youth seemed to be getting a long way from home; yet he enjoyed the journey greatly. There was so much to see that was new to him, while the grand scenery appealed forcibly to his nature. As the steamer crept on northward, he beheld the change in the country and saw that the green spots of earth became fewer and smaller as they came nearer the land of perpetual ice and snow. The air, also, became keen, especially at night, and now and then he caught a glimpse of newly fallen snow on the summits of mountains towards the north. Then, life on board was full of oddities, and there were many strange people whose ways and talk were entertaining to the inexperienced boy.

His lunch baskets were getting low. Of course he had not waited long to inspect the basket given him by Thora, and he had found it to contain a liberal supply of fine wheat bread, buttered, and laid with slices of cheese and sausage. Then there was a small honey-cake, and a piece of smoked salmon. These dainties he had kept as a dessert to his usual meal of rye bread and coffee, eating sparingly of them that they might prolong his pleasure. But the third day out, the larger basket was empty, and the smaller one contained but one piece of cake. Sandstad was to be reached that evening, and Harald thought he would be able to manage until he arrived there. Buying meals at the steamer's dining-table was beyond his purse; so he nibbled at his cake.

It was certainly genuine honey-cake, and not the cheap imitation made from molasses, such as was sold at the booths at the markets. He could taste the flavor of honey in it. "I wish there were more of it," he mused. "I wonder if Thora baked it herself." He had heard that Thora was an excellent cook, and could make all kinds of dainty things. "Hallo, I believe there is another piece left. Strange I did not see it before. Wrapped up in a separate piece of paper, and crushed, too, all out of shape. What a shame!"

He lifted the small package from the bottom of the basket, took off the double wrapping of paper, and in his hand lay, not a piece of honey-cake, but a rose—a large, beautiful, red rose, now crushed and quite withered. Harald was standing, at the time, down near the engine room, but the smell from the machinery seemed to stifle him, and so he made his way up on deck. He put the rose in his coat pocket, and went to the extreme point of the vessel's prow, where he could be alone. Then he took the flower out and smelled its fragrance. Tenderly he turned it over, and a few detached petals dropped to the deck. He picked them up again. What did it mean? Had Thora intentionally put it there. There could be no doubt of that, as the same kind of paper had enwrapped the cake and the rose. He looked at it for a long time, then carefully enfolded it between the leaves of a note book, and placed that in an inner pocket of his jacket.

He leaned over the railing, and watched the white wave spreading out from the steamer's prow. The sun sank in the north-west, and a path of golden light reached

from the horizon to the vessel. The sublime solitude of a northern fjord brooded over all, and the silence seemed broken only by the rythmical turning of the steamer's propeller. Suddenly the hoarse whistle belched forth the signal for Sandstad. Boats now came out to meet them, and Harald hurriedly carried his baggage up on deck. The boats lay alongside, while an iron door was opened in the side of the steamer, out of which he stepped.

"Is that you, Harald?" shouted a big, red-bearded man, whom Harald took to be his uncle Erik.

"Yes," answered Harald.

"All right, jump in. Anything else? Heave your box in. Be careful, boy; our boat dances like a cork."

Then they shoved away, the steamer went on its course, and Uncle Erik pulled with long, steady strokes towards the shore.

V.

HOME LIFE IN THE FAR NORTH.

Sandstad consisted of a score or more houses grouped on the small, level area where a valley opened out upon Lundfjord. A stream came dashing down the valley from a small lake not half a mile from the sea. The mountains all about were high and steep. That which Harald had often called "the everlasting pine forest" was here absent. Not one tree could be seen anywhere, but over the hillsides were patches of white-birch, willows, and brush.

Erik Svensen's house stood a few rods up from the strand. It was two stories high, boarded, and painted white. The side of the roof towards the sea was covered with wooden shingles, but the side away from the direction of storms and winds was covered with a green sod. All the houses were of one general type, save that some showed the bare logs and were devoid of paint.

Uncle Erik rowed up to the landing by the boat-house. The two leaped out, and the boat was drawn upon the sand. Shouldering his box, Harald followed his uncle to the house, where he was kindly received by his aunt Karen and his cousin Dagmar, a fair-haired, rosy-cheeked girl of sixteen. A number of other cousins

were married and lived at other places on the island.

True to the Norwegian custom, the first thing that Harald must do was to eat. There was a whispered consultation between Dagmar and her mother, and then a white cloth was spread over the table. China dishes, knives, forks, spoons, and, in fact, all the table settings were displayed that Harald occasionally had seen at the home of some well-to-do farmer, in his own locality. Harald sat by the tall, square stove in the corner, in which a slow turf fire was burning, and watched with much interest Dagmar at work. Soon the table was set, and Harald must at once eat, while Dagmar served him. He was not naturally timid, but, this being the first time he had thus been so much honored, he found it somewhat difficult to act properly. He was hungry from his day's fast, but he could eat scarcely half of the bowl of clabber milk which Dagmar had prepared by sprinkling sugar and cake crumbs over the thick cream. Then there were the delicious, crisp *flad brod*, (dry, thin, flat bread) the fresh cod, the cold potatoes, and coffee.

"Now you must eat, Harald," urged his aunt. "You have had a long journey, and I know you must be hungry. You are quite welcome to our poor fare. We haven't much cooked today, but I hope you'll make out a meal." Thus the good aunt talked and urged, until Harald could eat no more, when she reluctantly let him get up from the table.

Soon Uncle Erik and some hired helpers came in. The table was reset, the white table cloth being taken off, and a large dish of mush being placed before each

person. The mush was eaten, each spoonful being dipped into a cup of milk, placed by each plate—more to cool it than as a part of the dish.

After supper, the men lighted their pipes, and soon the room was filled with smoke. It nearly stifled Harald, as he was not accustomed to such an atmosphere, but he had to bear it, while he was kept busy answering the many questions about the folks down at Opdal. Dagmar sat in the farther corner of the room with her knitting, and Harald saw her as through a haze, and he wondered how she could endure breathing the thick tobacco smoke.

After an hour or more of conversation, Aunt Karen came to his rescue, declaring that he must be tired. She led him up stairs to his room, and, placing the lamp on a little table, bade him good night. When she had gone, Harald looked in wonder about the room. The walls and ceiling were boarded and painted. The floor was also painted. There was a table with a fancy cloth on, a bureau with a glass hanging over it, and some spindle-legged, straight-backed chairs, so frail-looking that he was afraid to sit on them. On the bed were two down mattresses, of which he knew only this, that he must sleep between them. The top one must have been made of the genuine eider-down, since it puffed up as if it had been filled with air when he moved it. It was difficult for him to go to sleep that night, tired though he was. Thoughts of Opdal would come: how he was resting snugly between soft, warm down, while poor grandmother was sleeping as usual on her bed of sheepskins. Grandmother ought to live in such a room,

and sleep in such a bed as he was in! As she got older, her bones would ache more—and then, he wondered if Holger would provide her with plenty of wood. His first money should go to grandmother, and—yes, if God would give him strength and prosper his efforts, grandmother should yet have comfort in her old age.

Harald found that life in Nordland was quite different from what it was farther south. Even the language was spoken with a peculiar accent, making it difficult to understand some of the older people. The short summer was drawing to a close, and every man, woman and child that could be spared was out in the fields gathering the precious harvest of barley and potatoes; so his help came timely to overworked Uncle Erik. The barley had yielded well that summer, and the land had been favored with a few days of bright, sunny weather, so that the sheaves could be gotten dry to the barn. The potatoes seemed unusually small to him, but he was told that they were quite large for Nordland. He and Dagmar did nearly all the potato harvesting, he digging up the potatoes with a heavy pointed hoe, while Dagmar gathered them into sacks.

The strangeness of associating with a girl instead of with boys, as he had done all his previous life, soon wore away, and the two cousins became good companions. Dagmar was somewhat proud of her strong, good-looking cousin, and it was not long before she acquainted him with most of the people at Sandstad. The Sunday rest was used to advantage. There was no church in their village, but usually some traveling preacher held services in the schoolhouse; nearly ev-

erybody attended, no matter to what denomination the preacher belonged.

After the rush of harvest was over, there were still a few days of pleasant weather, and so Dagmar fulfilled a promise to take Harald across the fjord to visit a married sister. The sky was free from clouds that morning, but the breeze came steadily from the sea, filling the one square sail which Dagmar herself lifted half way up the mast.

“You are a landsman, a farmer,” she laughingly said to Harald; “you sit still on the seat, and let me manage the boat.” Then she went to the tiller and seated herself by it, laughing merrily at him. She was a picture worth looking at, too, in her snug-fitting gray flannel dress, her round, rosy face beaming with smiles from the folds of the silken kerchief around her head. “I’ll let you help me,” she continued. “Just raise the sail a little, will you? I think we can stand a little more. There, that will do for the present; we’ll see how it blows, when we get farther out.”

Harald enjoyed the sail. To lounge on his seat, with nothing to do but to watch the porpoises make their graceful dives, and to feel the boat, as it gently rose and fell over the waves, was a new and novel sensation to the young man. Soon they rounded a huge, steep cliff, from which thousands of birds flew screaming over their heads. Then the boat was headed straight across the fjord to the opposite shore, which soon arose steep and frowning from the green water.

They landed at the base of a high mountain, where a small cove made a tiny harbor. Into this enclosure

a waterfall came tumbling from an opening in the rocky height. On one side were a few square rods of comparatively level land, and on this, close up to the cliffs, stood the fishermen's huts. A boat house stood near the water, and a stone pier made it easy to land. As they walked up the path, Harald thought, "What a neat, cosy place to live—lonesome though, especially when the sea rolls high." Not a soul came to meet them. Usually, either child or dog, or perhaps both, made a great commotion when Aunt Dagmar came to see them. It was explained when they found the housewife at work in the bake house mixing bread, and making great stacks of dough ready for the baking; the two children were fast asleep; and the dog was away on the other side of the island with Johan, the husband.

Cousin Maria was very much like her sister in looks. She was pleased to meet Harald, of whom she had heard. She could not shake hands because of the dough, and kissing is out of the question with Norwegian kinsfolks.

"You are just in time, Dagmar," said her sister, "to help us with the baking tonight. Johan will soon be back, and we'll begin right away. Johan is preparing to go south with a boat-load of fish, and he must have provisions. And here's Harald, he can help, too."

"I'm always pleased to be of assistance," said he.

"You talk!" exclaimed Dagmar. "Harald is one of those good-for-nothing southerners, you know. What does he know about baking bread?"

The visitors were led into the main living room,

and the noise awoke the two children—a boy of two, and a girl of five—who took kindly to Aunt Dagmar, but were shy of the strange man. A shining, copper coffee pot was placed on the stove, and Maria spread the table for a lunch. Then Johan came in and was introduced. He was a typical Norse fisherman—a big, broad-shouldered man with light, curly hair and beard, ruddy face, and blue eyes. Harald liked him at once. He was such an open-hearted, merry soul, that it did not take Harald long to become acquainted with him.

As they sat around the table sipping their coffee through the lumps of sugar, Harald noticed the interior furnishings of the fisherman's house. It was not what he would call "fine," yet it was cosy. It had the usual painted ceiling, but the walls were papered. The floor was as white and clean as if the pine boards had newly come from the planing mill. The covering on the folded-up bed, in the corner, was pure white. The heating stove shone with new blacking. The two small windows were filled with flowers—geraniums, fuchias, and myrtles. It was, in reality, a warm home-nest in the dreary wilds of that northern land.

Then all hands went to the baking. A birch-wood fire was made in the big, open fire-place of the bake-house. The dough was placed on one end of a long table, and was then moulded into long rolls. Dagmar divided these, with one cut of her knife, into pieces about the size of an egg, which she passed along to Maria at the other end of the table. This piece of dough Maria placed under her rolling pin, and rolled into a round sheet the thickness of cardboard. By this

time the fire had well heated a large, round iron plate, set on three legs, over the fire, and Johan began his work. With a broad, flat, wooden paddle, he lifted the thin dough on to the hot plate, let it bake for a moment, then turned it over, and then in another moment threw it on to the floor, which had previously been spread with clean cloths. This, when thoroughly dried, was the *flad brod* of the country.

Harald entered merrily into the work, trying his hand at all the processes. The rolling of the dough into strips was not difficult, and he could cut off the proper amount; but the rolling of this lump into the required thinness, without breaking it, was a trick he could not so easily master; and when he tried the baking part, he either burned his hands, or the paddle, or the bread. The others enjoyed his experiments, and laughed lustily at his failures.

Night came on, black outside, but the blaze from the fire lighted up the bake-house with a ruddy glow. For hours, they worked, until the pile on the floor grew high, and the dough was exhausted. Then they all went to bed, well tired out.

The next afternoon saw Harald and Dagmar out on the fjord, homeward bound. He had enjoyed his visit very much, and meant to have more of the company of cousins Johan and Maria. How happy they were, with their cosy home, their children, and their love for each other! The picture appealed strongly to him. He had known nothing of such home contentment and happiness. Would he ever know? Would he ever be a partaker of such love? Certainly no hu-

man being could ask for more than Johan Bernsen had.

The sea was smooth, and the breeze was hardly strong enough to move the boat. Dagmar was at her place by the tiller. She was not so noisy as usual. Her kerchief had slipped down on to her shoulders, and Harald saw the light silken curls against the background of green water; but Dagmar was thoughtful, and gazed far out over the fjord rather than at her companion in the other end of the boat.

Cousin Dagmar was a sweet girl; and no doubt she would make just such a wife as her sister. She was a worker, too, and not content with the oft-times rude environments which he had seen in other homes. He had some time ago discovered that the best room of his uncle's had been Dagmar's previous to his coming. And then the picture in his thoughts became bolder in outline; and he, also, had a home nestling beneath the shelter of the crags. There was a plot of ground in front in which grew vegetables and flowers. Behind the small window-panes bloomed the geranium and fuchsia; and when he came home, cold and hungry and wet from the sea, one met him at the door—and she would kiss him; and he would repay her, and then she would dry his clothes and set a steaming supper on the table. Then, perhaps, rosy-fingered children would pull at his hair and climb on his knee. But what would she look like? as sweet as she on the other side of the sail? Why was she so quiet? Perhaps it was his fault. He was stupid to live so in the uncertain future, when the real was present with him. Dagmar had treated him kindly but—but, he was her cousin,

and she could not do less—well, it did not cost anything to build air castles anyway.

The wind stiffened, the sail filled, and the boat went faster. Still Dagmar was silent. It was night ere they reached home; and when they walked from the boat up to the house, Harald thought she was crying. Had he dared, he would have taken her hand and enquired about her trouble. She left him at the house. As Harald entered, a letter was handed to him. It was from grandmother, the first he had received from her, because writing was no easy task for her.

Grandmother was well, it said. The children were growing fast. Holger was preparing for confirmation. Hulda often asked about "big brother." Father was away in the forest. The school-master had visited her and enquired after him. She had been down to Vangen with some knitting for Merchant Bernard—by the way, he must not forget to let her know when he needed stockings—Miss Bernard had treated her so kindly—had taken her into the dining-room and given her coffee and cake. She had asked about Harald, and had wished to be remembered to him when she wrote. "So, of course, I had to write, Harald, if for nothing else than to send you greetings from such a sweet young lady as Thora Bernhard."

Harald did not tell the family the latter bit of news. He got away to his room as soon as possible. Somehow, it seemed to him that a fair castle which he had built that afternoon was tumbling about his ears, and he was trying to dodge the pieces. Then, when the tumult was over, out of the mists, away in a din,

beautiful distance, there appeared to him another castle of indescribable grace and loveliness.

Before going to bed that night, he took from the pocket of his coat a little note-book. A withered rose fell into his hand, and its fragrance was laden with sweet remembrance.

VI.

LIFE OF THE NORWEGIAN FISHERMAN.

During the following months, Harald served his apprenticeship to the calling of a fisherman. The fall fishing being good, Uncle Erik was on the sea most of his time. Harald was with him, as they sailed from fjord to fjord, following the fish in their movements. During these trips, Harald received a share in the catch, the proceeds of which gave him more money than he had ever had before. Two weeks prior to Christmas, he sent the most of it to his grandmother, telling her to use it for her comfort—not by any means to save it, as he was going to earn more.

Preparations for the trip to Lofoten now occupied most of the time of the inhabitants of Nordland. Harald entered enthusiastically into the work. His uncle was a line fisher, and his greatest anxiety was to secure the required amount of small herring for bait. For this purpose they sailed in the wind, and rowed during still weather in and out of every corner, following every indication of herring. It was nearly time to start for Lofoten before they had secured enough.

On shore there was life also. Lines and nets must be repaired; the boats overhauled; chests, ropes, sails, oars, and the hundred and one other minor articles must be looked after. Hired help had to be engaged. The women were kept just as busy; and the house was alive

with their clatter, their gossip, their laughter, their singing, as they worked. Stacks of *flad brod* must be baked; loaves of black ryebread and cakes of wheat-flour were to be baked in the brick oven; the men's clothing must be patched and mended; great, thick stockings and mittens, knit. The girls worked until perspiration stood upon their rosy faces; the mother supervised. The grandmother, where there was one too old to help, sat in the corner, out of the way, with her knitting.

The Christmas holidays were celebrated in the usual Nordland manner, and then, about the middle of January, all were ready for Lofoten. Just before starting, Harald received a package from grandmother, containing a pair of thick stockings and a pair of woolen mittens. The mittens for the Lofoten fisherman's use should have two thumbs, so that when one side becomes wet, it can be slipped off the hand, and turned around to the dry side; but, of course, grandmother knew nothing about such a contrivance. They were warm and serviceable, even if they had but one thumb each. With the package came a letter, and within the letter was a note written very neatly on a piece of smooth, white birch-bark. It read as follows:

VANGEN, January 10, 18—

Friend Harald Einersen:

Grandmother often comes to see me. She is well, as we all are. Nordland must be a strange country, and the fishing at Lofoten very interesting. Will you not write and tell me all about your trip to the islands?

Respectfully,

THORA BERNHARD.

Harald certainly would. He provided himself with writing material, and from Lofoten sent a long letter to Thora. This is the communication :

KASTFJORD, LOFOTEN, January, 30, 18—

Friend Thora Bernhard:

Many thanks for your birch-bark letter. As the day is too stormy to fish, I will begin my answer to you, telling you about my trip here, and what I have done so far. We left Sandstad, on January 20th. A large crowd of fishers gathered at Uncle Erik's place preparatory to starting. There were forty-two men in our company. We had to wait two days for a favorable wind, but it came on the morning of the 20th. Then, after a hurried meal, good-byes were said, and we jumped into the boats. The partings were quite sad in some cases, because no one knows what might happen before the fishers return, and some may never come back at all.

We had a favorable wind most of the way. One day the breeze failed us altogether, and then you should have seen us all at the oars. The whole fleet took part in the race. I never worked so hard in my life, but our boat was not in the lead when the wind caught us again. The weather was pleasant, so everybody said, though I don't call snow storms and hurricanes pleasant weather, especially when one is in an open boat on the sea. The days are very short now, and we could not travel very far each day; though, sometimes when the moon shone bright, we kept on our way all night. My, how sleepy I became!

We have in our boat Uncle Erik, Cousin Johan, a hired man named Jens, and myself. Some of the boats have four and a half men, and others have five—boys are counted as half-men—Uncle Erik does not count me that way, however.

On dark and stormy nights, we managed to anchor at some port where we would get shelter on land. One night, we were part of a company consisting of nearly one hun-

dren men packed into a warehouse, much like herrings in a barrel. Most of us were wet when we landed, but the night was so cold that our clothing was frozen stiff in the morning—Grandmother's warm stockings came in handy.

Cousin Johan is a good fellow. He is not so rough and wild as many of the other fishermen. He assists me to understand this strange life and the best way to overcome difficulties. I must tell you that I have visited at his home a number of times. He has a wife, my cousin Maria, and two children. They have such a cosy home.

When we arrived at this place, the houses which have been built here for the accommodation of the fishermen during the fishing season, were nearly snowed under; but, in a short time, we had paths shoveled to them, and we moved in. The first thing we did was to build a good fire in the stove, and open door and window that the dampness might be driven out. Then we had a cooked supper, after which we scrubbed the floor with snow. We have done very little fishing. The weather is quite rough, and, as the cod have not arrived in great numbers yet, we are not doing much.

February 7th.

Since writing last, we have done some fishing, and I will tell you about it. This station has now some three hundred boats and over a thousand men. The fish have come in great numbers, and you might imagine what a stir there is. There are many government regulations regarding the fishing, by which each fisher is to have an equal chance. One of these rules is that no boat must leave the harbor for the fishing grounds until the signal is given, which is done by the hoisting of a flag. But then you should see us! Though it is hardly daylight away we go, rowing as if for life. There are racing, challenging, laughing, singing, and, sometimes, swearing. The sea gulls fly in circles over the fleet, uttering their harsh cries. Daylight comes, and we are at length on the banks, or fishing grounds, which are at present quite a distance out.

Then we set our lines. Each line contains about three

thousand baited hooks. Two of us are at the oars, while one lets out the lines. When these are all set properly, we go to work hauling in the lines which were set the day before. Two men haul in, one stands with a short, bent, steel spike, fastened into a handle, and with it helps each big, shining cod into the boat. Another man counts the fish, and stores them in their proper place. Sometimes our lines get tangled with others; then we have a great time to pick out our fish from those of our neighbors. This work requires all the daylight we have. If the wind is favorable, we can get to shore again about six o'clock; but, if we have to row, it sometimes takes us until nine or ten, but our day's work is not over yet. The fish must be disposed of, and our lines made ready for the next day. Some sell their fish, some hang them to dry, and sell only the livers, the eggs and the heads. It is often midnight before we get something to eat and then go to bed. Thus we labor day after day. We could not endure it long, were it not for the stormy days that occur two or three times a week, when we all remain on land to rest. We then sleep half the day, visit our neighbors, gossip, read the newspapers, sing songs, provide ourselves with food—and—and write long letters to young ladies at home.

February 20th.

Another stormy day. Uncle is sleeping. As Johan is very much interested in politics, he is reading Bjornson's latest article; Jens is off visiting. I am writing—isn't that news for you? In reading over what I last wrote, I see that it is about the life on the sea. You might also be interested in life on the shore.

Our house is situated about a stone's throw from the water. To get into our living room, you would have to go into the entre and through an aisle, barrels of all kinds being stacked up on each side, with fish lines hanging from the roof. Once inside, you would see the rusty stove near one wall; against two others, the bunks or beds are built. By the window stands the table, and under it are three empty butter kegs—the fourth I am sitting on. That is

about all the furniture. When we get home at nights, the first thing we do is to rid ourselves of our heavy fisher-boots, and put on our warm, dry, wooden shoes. Then we tumble into the bunks and rest a bit until supper is cooked. We always have fresh fish for supper. For dessert we have fish *molje*. With all your knowledge of cookery, you will not know what that is. At first I could not eat it, but now—well, I must describe it to you; you may wish to try it.

Fill a kettle about half full of *flat brod*. Pour over it hot fish soup, and let it stand until the bread is well soaked. Then pour most of the soup off, and stir the whole until it becomes something like mush. Then stir in the fat from a number of cod livers. Sweeten it with syrup, and make it tart with vinegar. Don't forget to stir all the time. Note: If any of the above mentioned ingredients are missing, don't try to eat it.

Johan has awakened Uncle Erik by his reading aloud; and, as there is now a warm political discussion—Uncle believes in the party of the Right and Johan belongs to the Left—I shall have to quit writing for today.

February 28th.

Sunday. What a blessing to rest! We have had a hard week. The fish move about from place to place around the islands, and the fishers try to follow. So last week we had big fishing, and great crowds of men. It makes a wonderful stir when thousands of men congregate in such a small place as this. * * * * *

Cousin Johan came in as I began writing today, and wished me to go to church with him. I have just come back, and I don't know how well I shall be able to write, because something occurred in the church which has affected me strangely. We have meetings here every Sunday, and sometimes, when it is stormy, on other days. I usually go. Johan scarcely ever goes. The preacher, today, was the well-known Pastor Bange. The house was crowded with fishermen. The pastor gave us the usual talk about the grace of God saving us all, if we but believe in Christ, and

how we can do nothing of ourselves, in regard to our salvation. It was all very pleasant, I thought. After the sermon, privilege was given persons present to bear testimony and in a moment, Cousin Johan was on his feet. The church was still as death—most of those present knew of Johan's unbelief, and his poor standing as a Christian.

"I should like you to explain, dear pastor," began Johan in his quiet, unhesitating way, "the Apostle James' expression that 'faith without works is dead;' also what is meant by the scriptural saying that all men shall be judged 'according to their works,' and that God 'will render to every man according to his deeds.' For my part I agree with the Apostle. By God's grace the Kastfjord may be full of cod, but what profiteth it, if we do not gather them in; yes, take advantage of God's grace by long, hard work on our part."

As he seated himself, a subdued hum swept through the room. Then the pastor arose again. I thought he was a little pale, but he smiled and was very calm. I scarcely heard what he said, he spoke so low, and I was myself so astonished at Cousin Johan; but I caught something about infant baptism, confirmation, and the sacrament being the works needed—the means whereby the grace of God is delivered to us. I'll admit, I was somewhat disappointed in the answer. It has all muddled me, and I hardly know what to think about it. Perhaps you can explain it to me. You stood at the head of your class, you remember, while I was only fourth.

March 3rd.

The fishing has become poor here, and we are to move to Vagsund; so I will close this letter, and mail it today. Kind regards to grandmother, all other friends, and to yourself, from

Your friend,
HARALD EINERSEN.

VII.

HARALD'S ADVENTURE ON THE SEA.

Vagsund lay under the steep wall of one of Lofoten's outermost islands. The fishing station itself was quite well protected, but the fishing grounds were some miles out from land directly in the sweep of the fierce Arctic storms which came rushing up the open Westfjord. Erik Svensen and his men found good fishing at Vagsund, although the weather was often so rough that they could not put to sea. It became colder, too. Fierce snowstorms often caught the home-coming boats, and sometimes made it difficult to land. But fish they must, if possible; and the Nordland fisherman cares little for the state of the weather, if there is fish to be caught. However, on stormy days, the station flag is not raised; that means, "stay on land—no fishing today."

During these lay-on-land days, Harald and Johan had many chats together. Harald found something attractive in his cousin. He enjoyed listening to his talk, which always seemed so sensible and straight-forward. Johan did not always "talk fish," as did the other men, nor did he usually join in the common gossip of the crowd. He had attended school only very little. He had not even been confirmed, which made him quite a

heathen in the eyes of many who knew it. It was told of him that the winter before, Pastor Bange had gone privately to him and offered to confirm him if he would come to the school of the priest and learn the catechism; but Johan Bernsen did not attend the school; neither was he confirmed.

Johan, however, was a great reader, and he made good use of the library furnished the Lofoten fishermen. One stormy day in March, Johan lay in his bunk reading aloud, while Harald mended lines. Uncle Erik and Jens were out.

Suddenly Johan closed his book with a bang, took his pipe from the shelf, relit it, but said nothing for a time.

“Well?” inquired Harald.

“Harald,” he asked, “you are not going to be a fisherman all your life?”

“I don’t know; I may be.”

“Don’t you do it.”

“Why?”

“This fishing business is a dog’s life. It’s slavery of the worst kind. What advancement can one make? I never saw a fisherman yet that did not have to work like a slave for a bare living. You’ve got to get out of this. Make a little to begin with, and then become a merchant—a fish buyer. If I could only obtain credit at Bergen for a year, I would come out on top—but say, Harald, why don’t you go to school?”

“Why, I’ve been to school; was confirmed nearly four years ago.”

"Tut, you were confirmed! I know. That means you have completed your education! Nonsense, you have just begun. I wish I were in possession of your chances, you wouldn't see me catching cod all my life."

"What would you do?"

"First, I would go to the high school at Tromso, and then to the University at Christiania." Johan arose to a sitting position, placed his pipe back on the shelf, and picked up the book again. "This is a history, a history of Norway. I know it quite well now, but I would learn all there is to learn about that subject. Then I would study the law—one must know something about that, and then, I might have to teach school awhile, but not long. I would get into *stortinget* (the Norwegian law-making body) somehow. I tell you, my boy, this country of ours has a glorious future. We are not going to be lorded over by a king much longer. We're going to be a republic, Harald, a free republic like the states in America. We are Norsemen, and we are going to be free in name as well as in fact. O, it makes my blood boil when I think of how we—sons of the Vikings of old, who made all Europe tremble—of how we sit quietly under the rule of a Frenchman! Of a Frenchman, think of it! We might tolerate one of Harald Haafagre's descendants, but a Frenchman—!"

Harald let the lines lay in a tangle while he listened. Johan jumped from the bunk, walked back and forth, and then he laughed quietly as if to himself.

"I don't often break out like that, though I feel

like it many times. I am visionary, perhaps, but I can't help being as God has made me."

Johan went to his clothes-box under his bunk, took out a Bible, pulled a butter keg from under the table and sat down.

"When I get worked up like that, I always read my Bible. That quiets me again."

"I thought you didn't believe in the Bible much," said Harald.

"Believe in it! Of course I do. I believe in it more than Pastor Bange does. Let me read you some of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. I think that is so grand."

The fisherman read, in his rich, deep-toned voice, while the young man listened. Certainly some deeper meanings were brought out even by the way it was read. After a half hour's reading, Johan closed the book and began talking again.

"So, you do not think I am religious," he said, much more quietly than when his theme was political, "but I claim to be quite religious. I believe in God, I believe in Jesus Christ, I believe in the doctrine which he taught, but I do not believe much of the stuff that is preached now-a-days. It seems to me that the religion of the preachers—and they are pretty much all alike—is so unreal, so unreasonable, so out of harmony with everything else in life that I can't comprehend it. My notion of religion is that it should be a divine essence that permeates all things—yet that does not define it. It should be something we could not put on and off, as the priest does his surplice. It should not be apart

from nature, from science, or from any known truth, but should harmonize with them all. It should smile from the flower; sing from the brook; shine from the stars in heaven; encompass the whole human family, past, present, and future; be the safety anchor in every storm, the Father-whisper to the son; and it should answer some of my soul's innermost questions on the mystery of my being."

Stamping the snow from his feet, Jens came in and announced that the storm was nearly ceased and that there were prospects of fishing on the morrow. That night Harald could hardly sleep. Johan's talk had disturbed him, had seemingly stirred some deep feeling within him. His thoughts were very much in a muddle, and he was glad when at length the gray dawn appeared.

But the storm was not over, though it lulled towards noon. Some of the fishermen were fretful, showing anxiety about their lines and nets. The flag was hoisted after dinner, but not many went out. Some said that the flagman had made a mistake, as the storm was not yet over.

Johan, Harald, and Jens went out to take in yesterday's lines. Uncle Erik would not go; not that he feared the sea, but he was not well. The wind blew from the land, and they were not long in reaching their lines which were well out in the open fjord; but the storm had driven them so that they had become entangled with others. They were, however, full of fish and must be hauled. The men worked hard that whole afternoon. The sky cleared, but the wind blew, strong

and cold. The waves rolled high, their white crests frequently breaking into the boat. The cold increased as night came on, yet the men silently and earnestly continued their labors.

The stars were out when the boat was ready to return. The wind blew more fiercely than ever from the land, and it became steadily colder. The boat had become coated with ice, both inside and along the top railing. It was, therefore, heavy, and clumsily and slowly moved along its zigzag course. When the men had finished their work, they were tired and sat down to rest. In a few minutes, their clothing was frozen stiff, and icicles hung from hair and beard. The spray seemed to freeze on their faces.

Still the cold increased. The boat became heavier with ice. Night came on. The sky was a deep blue, studded with diamond stars. The sea, of the same color, was nearly hidden under its covering of white-caps.

"We must not sit still," said Harald, "or we shall die in this cold. Here, let me steer, while you work at the oars."

Johan did not answer. Harald reached for the oars, but found them frozen fast to the boat! He chopped two of them loose and gave one to each of the others.

"No," said Johan, "you and Jens use them. I will steer."

"But you'll freeze to death, Johan, sitting still. Let me steer awhile."

So Harald took his turn at the tiller, while Johan

and Jens worked at the oars. It was nearly impossible to do anything with them, so heavy and clumsy were they with encrusted ice. In twenty minutes, both oars had been lost in the sea, and Johan went back to the tiller.

Both Johan and Jens produced brandy flasks from their pockets. The bottle which Jens had was nearly empty, as he had taken drinks from it during the afternoon, but that which Johan handed to Harald was nearly full.

"Drink," said Johan, "drink and get warm!"

Harald had never yet tasted strong drink, and he hesitated remembering his father's words, as he took the flask; but there could be no harm in taking a little now, if it would help keep him warm—the marrow seemed to be freezing in his bones. But Johan needed it more, as he must sit by the tiller. Harald put the flask to his lips and took a small sip. The liquor made a stinging sensation in his mouth.

"Johan, you must have what's left, urged Harald, "I can move about and keep warm. Jens, man, get up; don't lie there, you'll freeze to death!"

Jens had fallen into the boat, and lay in a stupor. Harald tried to shake him into action, but it was useless. He then lifted him bodily, and tried to have him move about, but the instant Harald let go his hold, Jens would lie down again.

"Shift the sail," said Johan, "we must tack." The ropes were like bars of iron, and it was nearly impossible to do anything with them; but it was movement, anyway, and in movement lay his only hope. The

lights from the fishermen's houses could be seen, twinkling now and then above the heaving sea. The distant roar of the waves, dashing themselves into spray against the rocks, could be heard. The boat crept slowly on. It would take an hour yet to reach the shore.

Harald felt drowsiness stealing over him. He knew what that meant. Perhaps he could get another swallow of brandy. Jens lay still, and Harald searched for his flask. He found it clenched in the dying man's hand, but it was empty. Harald had no desire to try to arouse the man. He moved up to the tiller where Johan sat.

"Have you any brandy left, Johan; I'm terribly cold?"

Johan did not answer. Harald shook his cousin fiercely. "Get up," he shouted, "get up, and move. O, Johan, wake up; don't sit there and die! Remember Maria and the children."

But the steersman sat immovable, a moan only escaping from his lips. The boat was now in danger of running on to the rocks. Once more, it must tack, into the harbor this time. Harald shifted the sail and shouted to Johan to turn the rudder; but Johan did not move. Harald hurried with all speed possible to the tiller, and gave it a turn. Harald made an effort to take Johan's hand from the tiller, but it seemed frozen to it, so that he wrenched with all his might to get it loose. Then Johan fell forward on his face. Harald turned him over, but could do no more.

As the boat drew nearer to the high mountain wall,

the wind slightly moderated, but this would not help the freezing fishermen, as it would take so much longer to reach land. Harald headed his boat for the lights. He was extremely tired, and a rest seemed so good. O, how cold it was! His mits were like iron gloves. Johan and Jens lay in the boat as if asleep, and Harald felt anxious to join them. How could he endure it, until he could reach the shore!

The schoolmaster, down at Opdal, had told them, one day, what were the sensations of freezing to death. Harald now remembered it clearly and a panorama went before his eyes: There were Opdal's beloved hills and vales, green in summer beauty. He heard the sweet music of the sheep's bell; he scented the wild odor of the pine woods. There was grandmother, sitting by the stove, spinning and humming as she spun. Father's sharp ax made the chips fly. The children shouted in their play. Little Hulda, little sister Hulda, climbed again upon his shoulders, and dug her tiny fingers into his curls, to hold on when her horse went fast. And then, down at Vangen, he saw a white-painted house, and a girl digging in the garden. She smiled at him, and, going to the flower-beds which were located under the glass frames, she picked the largest red rose on the bush, and gave it to him. He put it in his pocket, his inside pocket, right here—

Harald made a movement, as if to put his hand into an inner pocket of his jacket; but his fingers were stiff with cold. But the exertion awoke him to his senses again, and he realized that the withered flower was safe in the pocket of his best coat on shore. The

night grew dark and cold again, but the lights on the shore seemed much nearer. He must not give up. One more effort, just one more, for her sake—for her who had given him the rose.

Ten minutes later, a boat from the shore met him, and Harald had a faint recollection of being lifted out and rolled into a blanket. Then he knew no more, until he awoke, the next day in his Uncle Erik's bunk-house on the shore.

The church at Vagsund was filled to overflowing with fishermen, come to pay their last tokens of respects to their three dead comrades, Johan Bernsen, Jens Monson, and Ivar Soroe. The last named was brought in dead by another relief boat on that fateful afternoon of the storm.

The three black caskets lay side by side before the altar. Pastor Bange officiated. The silent gloom within was enhanced by the storm which howled without. On the front seat sat Erik Svensen and Harald Einesen, with a number of other fishermen, relatives or dear friends of the dead. Harald's face was pale and thin, as if he had been ill for a month.

At the close of the services, comrades bore the caskets to the little graveyard, at the foot of a steep crag. Paths had been shovelled to the graves, along which the long procession moved through the driving snow. The three coffins were lowered, and then the pastor, taking a small, spade-like implement, tossed three times a little earth on the coffin of Jens Monson, repeating the usual formula of, "Dust thou art, to dust thou shalt return, and of the dust thou shalt come

forth." Then the ceremony was performed over the grave of Ivar Soroe. Here the pastor stopped. He then breathed a short prayer, covered his head, raised his umbrella, and walked away from the graves between the long lines of men standing on each side of the path.

The silence was so perfect that the hard breathings of some of the men could be heard as also the lapping of the sea against the beach below. The men who were to fill the graves stood still, not knowing what to do.

Then Harald Einersen darted from the edge of Johan Bernsen's grave, ran along the path, and stopped in front of the retreating priest. He blocked the passage, and, holding up his open hand said:

"Give my cousin Christian burial!"

"I cannot give him Christian burial—he is not a Christian!"

"You lie, Pastor Bange—give my cousin Christian burial! I know Johan Bernsen—I knew him to be a Christian, a better Christian than I—or any of us here. Give him decent burial!"

The priest tried to pass, but Harald blocked the way. His pale face was paler yet, while his eyes fairly shone from their hollow depths.

"Men," said Harald to his comrades around him, "was my cousin a Christian?"

"Yes," shouted one close by.

"He was—yes, yes—" came from all directions. Then the murmur grew louder. The priest hesitated.

"Go back and finish your work!" shouted one.

“Go back, pastor!” said another.

There was more tumult. Harald stood firm in the path. Then the priest turned, walked back to Johan Bernsen’s grave, and performed the usual ceremony!

When the priest departed, his face was pale with emotion; and something like a cheer broke from the assembled fishermen when Harald stepped aside to let the pastor pass.

VIII.

CONVALESCENCE.

It was a sad home-coming to Sandstad. Maria had left her isolated and now desolate home, and had taken refuge with her mother and Dagmar, and there her father found her on his return. Harald was yet weak and unable to do hard work. He often went about as if he were dazed or stunned, and when he discovered Maria sitting in some corner, crying, he could not keep the tears back from his own eyes. He had done well at Lofoten up to the time of the great storm. His share was four hundred fish, which, when sold, gave him a considerable sum of money. A large portion of it, he sent to his grandmother, bidding her make such presents to the brothers and Hulda as she thought wise. A small part he placed in the savings bank at Tromso as a beginning for a boat of his own, as his uncle had suggested. He mourned for Johan as if he had been a brother. He had not known many intimate associates, nor enjoyed many close friendships. Johan had been much of an ideal to him. Now, something had gone out of his life. To whom could he talk as he had talked to his cousin? Who would laugh at his mistakes, and then good-naturedly show him his error, as Johan had done many times when teaching

him how to fish? He sailed over to Johan's deserted home every day when the weather was fair to look after the one cow Maria owned.

As the spring months came on, the sail across the narrow fjord was generally pleasant. The green grass began to grow on the sunny side of the big rocks, and some hardy flowers were shooting their first leaves above the soil.

On warm afternoons, Harald would sit in some sunny nook by Johan's house to let the solitude enwrap him as with a cloak. It was a kind of sad pleasure, to sit thus alone, to dream of his dead cousin. What ambitions that cousin had cherished! Had he lived, he would have been more than a mere fisherman all his life. He had scarcely attended school, yet he knew more of history and of knowledge in general, than many a schoolmaster. He had not been confirmed, yet he seemed to know vastly more about the Bible than he himself did. Their last conversation on religion and the Bible came to him now as a farewell and a benediction.

One day, Maria and Dagmar went with him. Dagmar did her best to direct the talk to other topics, but the other two insisted on finding something to say about Johan; and when Harald told of their last conversation, and what his cousin had advised him to do and to be, Dagmar ceased her light-mindedness to listen.

"He reminded me of my grandmother down at Opdal," said Harald; "she used to speak to me like that. She is constantly looking far ahead, to behold

wonderful opportunities. One could never get discouraged with grandmother for company, and so it was with cousin Johan. Life was always full of hope for him, as if he could see clearly some brilliant future."

"Which, in his case, has been realized," said Maria with a sob, "but his poor wife and children, what shall become of us?"

It was difficult to say more. Up at the lonely house, Maria went about from place to place with heart-breaking sadness. A box of articles, which had belonged to Johan, stood unopened on the floor. His wife opened it, and took out the things one by one. At the bottom of the box was found Johan's Bible. Maria placed it on the floor beside his watch, and Harald picked it up.

"Give me this, cousin Maria," said Harald. "I should like a keep-sake, too."

Maria took the book, turned over the leaves, and hesitated. "Yes," she said, "I have many more keep-sakes. Take it, Harald."

She pressed the book to her lips, then handed it to him.

Another afternoon when Harald was coming home from an errand to Maria's house, instead of sailing his boat to the usual landing, he headed up the fjord to where a sloop lay anchored close to the shore. From a tall pole on the land floated a white flag, whose meaning he well knew. The sloop was loaded with cod, fresh from the fisheries. On the clean, pebbled beach at the head of the fjord, the fish were to be cured.

The flag was a signal that help was wanted for this work, and on a nearer approach, he could see that many boys and girls from Sandstad were already busy spreading the split and salted cod on the warm rocks.

Harald sailed up to the sloop, climbed on board to have a chat with the owner, who, however, was on land directing the workers. Harald re-entered his boat and soon tied up to the rocks. He went up to the curing grounds. There was a busy scene of life and animation. The wooden shoes clattered on the rocks, and the youths' faces were rosy with color. Every heart was glad with the joy of living.

But Harald walked among them, lonesome still. He talked with the master of the vessel, chatted pleasantly with the boys and girls, yet it was a mere outward form. In his soul, he was alone. He walked across the rocky beach to the grass land. Then he climbed a small hill to the level, upland valley. Some distance away, he saw a party of turf-cutters working in the peat-bogs. He caught glimpses of gray-clad forms, with here and there a moving bit of color, red and yellow and blue—the kerchiefs of the girls. As Harald drew nearer, he heard snatches of songs come up from the marsh, and the echo of a peal of laughter came now and then to him through the clear air. Yes, they were all happy down there, though hard at work in the wet, black bog, and well smeared with its grime.

Harald seated himself on a warm rock, for he was not yet strong, and he soon tired. A few, soft, fleecy clouds sailed across the sky. The day was warm. The

fjord lay blue and still, curving in and out and around the rock-bound land. The last snow had vanished from the near-by mountain tops, and wherever there was a patch of soil, there was growing grass. The whole earth lay in a soft, warm embrace, and all life on its surface seemed glad.

Yet the young fisherman was not in touch with the day nor its beauties. He seemed apart from it all. The chain of sympathy which connects us to mother earth and all her creatures was broken in every link. He seemed absolutely alone. Though surrounded by all the wealth and beauty of earth, he could have sat there and cried all the afternoon.

Listlessly, he moved on down across the bogs to the turf-cutters. One man was down in a hole, left from last year's cutting; with a sharp, square spade, he was cutting away blocks from the sides of the exposed bog. These blocks he threw out, and they were loaded on barrows and wheeled away to higher ground to dry. Dagmar pushed a barrow, and her loads were neither small nor light. Yet when Harald came up, she laughingly invited him, if he wished to ride, to take a seat on the topmost turf-block of her load.

"No, thank you," replied Harald.

"Get on. I can wheel you," said Dagmar, and she shook the load until the top pieces tumbled off. Then she put down the handles of her barrow and seated herself on one of them.

"Did you ever do such dirty work as this, Harald?" she asked.

"I have never cut turf," he said.

"Then *you* don't know what hard work is. I believe that we girls in Nordland do more work than the men folks in the South—"

"Or in the North either. Make no distinctions, and I'll accept your statement."

"Well, our men do have it hard sometimes, on the sea, but I suppose it's no harder than cutting turf. Here, take this load over to the drying-ground. The pile near the pit is getting pretty large.

Harald pushed the barrow along the boards laid over the soft places. It wobbled from side to side, and at last the wheel slipped off into the mud. Then the workers shouted. Harald lifted the wheel back on to the boards and went on again safely to the drying-grounds, where he scattered his turf and then returned for more.

"That will do now. You mustn't overwork yourself. See how you are sweating already."

So Dagmar relieved him of the barrow, and he helped to load, during the remainder of the afternoon.

When it was time to go home, Harald explained that his boat was at the landing by the rocky beach, and he would have to go that way.

"Then I'll go with you," said Dagmar; "I would rather sail than walk, every time."

There were, no doubt, others in that company who shared her opinions; but they said nothing, so the two went down the valley towards the boat.

"Did you get your letter?" asked Dagmar.

"What letter?"

"The mail came just as I left home this morning, and there was one for you."

"I did not get it. Whom was it from?"

"Well, how should I know? However, it had the Vangen postmark, and you can guess the rest."

"Oh."

They walked along in silence. Harald plucked every blossom he found on the way—and there were yet a few of the dainty marshberry flowers on the bog. A letter from Thora—perhaps—it might be from someone else. Father or grandmother might have been at Vangen and mailed the letter there. Thora had answered his letters from Lofoten. Why should she write, she having now none of his to answer?

Dagmar stopped to take a stick from her shoe. The light hair went tumbling over her face as she stooped, and the movement brought vividly to Harald's recollection another girl. Dagmar was fair and full of limb and form. This other girl was darker, tall, and frail of form—and from this the young man went on in his comparisons: *She* was dainty; Dagmar was strong and robust. Her face was pale; his cousin's was rosy with health. She was the daughter of a merchant; Dagmar, like himself, was a working-man's child. Yet the thoughts of the far-off Thora did more to drive away the loneliness of the day, than the presence of the fair cousin by his side.

"If you pick any more flowers," said Dagmar, "you'll have to pay extra postage on your letter."

Harald colored; her aim had been true. He had thought of sending some of them in his next letter.

"Here, you have some of them," he laughingly said.

"Thank you. Now tell me, Harald, who is that girl at Vangen?"

"You mean the one who wished to know something about Nordland?"

"And the doings of one Harald Einersen. Yes."

"She's the daughter of a merchant down there, Thora Bernhard by name. My father has worked much for her father—we were confirmed on the same day. Now, what of it?"

"A merchant's daughter! Rich, too, I suppose! My, my, what a bold cousin I have!"

"Bold? why? Grandmother often told me that we could have anything we wanted in reason and righteousness, if God spared our lives, and we did our part, and—"

He checked himself. What was he saying! But the secret was out. Harald's thoughts had been along that line, and in an instant of forgetfulness, he had spoken from his heart. He had meant to ridicule the idea expressed by Dagmar, but now that was useless. She had his thoughts, and from that moment certain thoughts within her own mind underwent a change. Dagmar seemed not to be disquieted. She laughed as usual, and placed in her hair some of the flowers that he had given her.

The talk lagged again. At the beach, the cod were lying spread open on the warm rocks, and most of the workers had gone home. There was no wind, so Harald took one oar and Dagmar the other, and they rowed silently down the fjord to the wharf.

That night Harald did not open his letter until he had gone into his own room. The message was characteristic of the writer, for on a heavy, cream-tinted sheet, with wide margins, she had written this:

VANGEN, June 30—

Dear Friend Harald:

I am coming to Nordland to spend my vacation. Look out for me.

Sincerely,
THORA BERNHARD.

IX.

A WEEK WITH THORA IN THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT
SUN.

The pleasure derived from the receipt of Thora's letter was not altogether unalloyed. The note was provokingly indefinite. When would she come? where would she come? would she wish to stop at Sandstad? how would Aunt Karen entertain her? It was all very well when one could choose the time, place, and conditions of such a meeting; but to come unaware, finding them unprepared, might prove very humiliating indeed. Harald sensed his position. Thora had received training in polite society, had gone to the higher schools, had always been surrounded with the comforts and many elegancies of life. He was a farmer, a fisherman, living their lives. Nordland customs were oftentimes crude—perhaps, however, no cruder than he himself. What would Thora think of it all? Would she not go away disgusted?

But the situation must be faced. Thora was coming and, possibly, right away; so he read the short letter to Aunt Karen, explaining who the visitor was, and then asked for advice. His aunt smiled good naturedly at his agitation.

“Well, if she comes to Sandstad, she shall be wel-

come," she said. "We will give her the best we have, and that is all anyone can do."

The best up-stairs room was vacated, thoroughly cleaned, and left in rigid order, to await the coming of the expected guest.

The larger coast steamers did not stop at Sandstad. Six miles across the island was the port of Ringvik, where the mail steamers, going north and south, touched. From Ringvik smaller boats plied among the lesser water-ways, touching at all the small hamlets on the islands and along the mainland. It was hoped that if Miss Bernhard came to Sandstad direct from Ringvik, she would let them know by letter beforehand.

Fully a week passed, yet nothing was heard of the expected visitor. Harald's nerves had settled somewhat, he having had time to add some needed articles to his wardrobe, and to trim himself, as the occasion suggested. From his window, he could see the landing, and on the semi-weekly mail days, he watched the steamer closely to see if any one came on shore. Twice he had had a change of clothing ready, but each time there was no need of getting rid of his usual work-day attire.

The creek that flows into the sea at Sandstad comes tumbling over its rocky bed with much violence, and the energy thus exhibited is utilized by the Nordlanders of the village in running their primitive flour mills. Up the stream, a few rods apart, stand a number of small, one-roomed, log huts. Through the floor of each of these huts protrudes a beam which

reaches down to the water. The lower end of the beam is furnished with arms or paddles, against which the water is directed. The beam turning, turns one of the mill-stones in the room above, and thus the barley is ground.

One afternoon, Harald shouldered a sack of barley, and started out to fill up the box that the mill might grind all night. As he paused for breath on the top of a somewhat steep rise in the road, he saw coming down the opposite hill on a fast trot, Uncle Erik in his two-wheeled cart. Beside his uncle sat Thora Bernhard. Harald's first thought was to get away somewhere out of sight, but both had seen him, so that would be useless. He placed his sack of barley on the side of the road, and seating himself on it, awaited results. The cart rattled up, and with a p-r-r-r, the horse was stopped. Harald's face was full of color, though he tried hard to check it. Thora held out her gloved hand and said pleasantly, "How are you?"

"I've arrived, you see," she continued. "I met your uncle at Ringvik. He said I would have to wait there until tomorrow, there being no boat earlier. Then I asked him how he was going home, and he spoke depreciatingly of his good horse and cart here—why, I wouldn't have missed this delightful ride over the island for a great deal."

"You have been considerably shaken," suggested the driver.

"Not a bit. It has been fine—where are you

going with that sack, Harald? Here, I'll get out and you may then place your load by my valise."

She jumped out of the cart before he could remonstrate. Then, when he had explained, she said:

"So that's your mill, is it? I should very much like to see it. May I go with you? Mr. Svensen will take my baggage to the house, won't you, and I'll go along with Harald."

So Uncle Erik drove off and left them together. Harald shouldered his barley, and they soon reached the mill, where the grist was emptied into a large box from which a small stream of grain ran into the opening in the center of the revolving mill-stone. Thora was very much interested in what she saw, and cared little for the considerable flour dust on her clothing. She, of course, did not notice Harald's odd Nordland's dress nor his wooden shoes—he wore wooden shoes around the house only, not usually when there was company to entertain. Harald found little to say. What a change the year had brought in her! She was a full-grown woman, more beautiful than ever. Her thin face had become fuller. Her dark hair was long and lay coiled up under the small cap. She was the Thora of his dreams, and he—he, also must have changed, not much for the better.

"I am pleased to see you looking so well, Harald. You have had quite a time getting over your illness, I understand!"

"I'm getting quite strong now, yes, thank you; and how are you and all the folks in the south?"

Harald finished his errand. He should have taken

a sack of flour home with him, but this he neglected. They walked down the road together, and there was much peeping through windows at them as they passed.

“Father said I studied too hard last winter, and I agreed with him that a trip to Nordland would do me good. Your letters began it, and I am glad of it. I’ve had a splendid time thus far. I never appreciated the truth of Bjornson’s poem before when he likens our many islands around the coast to water fowls swimming around their mother,” Thora continued:

“But I must tell you of your grandmother. She keeps up wonderfully well—and she’s a philosopher, too, isn’t she? I get her into my room every time she comes to Vangen, and loosen her stock of wisdom by coffee and cake. It’s the best talk I ever hear; it makes one feel that nothing in this world is too good for us, or beyond our reach.”

“I am glad she is well.”

“Your brother Holger is a big, stout boy; Jens herds the sheep, I understand; and Hulda is growing to be quite a girl. Your father is getting along well, I believe.”

Aunt Karen and the cousins received Thora with the respect due her station. In the sitting room that evening, Uncle Erik was considerate enough not to fill the air with tobacco smoke. Dagmar and Maria did not appear in dresses in anyway stained with bog and out-door work. Harald had donned the neat, brown clothes which he had recently obtained. Thora was dressed in a very simple, becoming suit of gray.

"And you are traveling this long distance alone?" asked Aunt Karen, solicitously.

"Oh no; I left father at Namsos, and will join him again at Tromso. His business prevented him from coming this way, but he thought I would be safe in the hands of my friends at Sandstad. I wish he could have come. I now see that travelers who hurry by, stopping only at the larger places, miss much of the charm of Nordland. It is the hidden nooks and corners that give the most pleasure in seeing."

"So you think the country up here is worth looking at, do you?" enquired Uncle Erik.

"I think it's just grand!"

"Well, may be it is. The summer is well enough, I suppose, and especially to tourists whose living doesn't depend on the condition of the weather; but I sometimes think the icy Pole is slowly creeping down farther upon us, and will in time crowd us out. It's often a hard life up here in Nordland, Miss Bernhard."

"But I was surprised to see the richness of your vegetation," continued Thora. "I saw fields of barley and potatoes when crossing the island today. The hills were covered with birch-trees, and in the open spaces there was much grass and a profusion of many-colored flowers."

"Yes," replied Maria, "it is true as father says that life is oftentimes hard; but for all that we who have lived here all our lives love our home, and would not change it for any other in the world. I once went south as far as Christiania, but the low hills and flat country soon wearied me, and I was glad to return to

the wild, rocky land, the winding fjords, and the innumerable islands of Nordland."

"Tut, tut!" exclaimed the father, "a little imagination and romance. I always look at the real side of life."

"I have noticed, however," replied Maria, "that the people who get tired of Nordland and move away, always return."

"Always?" How about Lars Haling?"

"Oh, well, he went to America."

"That's where we all ought to go. What do you think, Miss Bernhard, about going to America?"

"I—I don't know; Norway is good enough for me, just now."

The talk went cherrily on until Aunt Karen came to Thora's rescue, as she had to Harald's the first evening he spent in Sandstad, and led her up to the neatly painted room above.

Next morning there was threatening rain, but Thora urged Dagmar to take her out on the fjord and teach her how to fish with the Nordland *pilk*, or tin-bait. Harald might go along to row, she said. Dagmar agreed to this, so after the morning's work was finished, the three set out for the boat-house. Water-proofs were brought along in case wet weather might overtake them, and Harald carried their lines. He obediently took the oars, as he was good-naturedly commanded to do, and soon the boat was out in good fishing water. Dagmar then sank her line with the heavy tin-fish sinker down in the bottom, then drew it up an arm's length. She instructed Thora how

to do the same. Harald rested on his oars and looked on. The pupil was instructed how to let the line slowly fall, then to jerk it upward swiftly. It was explained that the fish, seeing the glitter of the descending sinker, would take it for a small fish, and would make a dart for it. The swift upward movement would catch the fish on one of the two sharp hooks protruding from the lower end of the tin-bait. Whenever Thora felt a struggle on her line, she was to rapidly pull up. For fully five minutes, both girls sawed with their lines the gunwales of the boat, but neither caught anything. Harald put up his oars and lay back in the boat.

“Look here, Dagmar,” he said, “don’t saw the boat in two,” at which they all laughed good-naturally.

“My arm is getting tired,” said Thora.

“Try the other,” suggested Dagmar.

Then Dagmar had a bite. She pulled away with all her might, and Thora ceased to jerk her line in her interest in Dagmar; but the fish got off before it reached the surface. Then Thora felt a movement on her line, and she was sure it was much heavier. Hand over hand she pulled in her line, and there, sure enough, was a little shining whiting about eight inches long. Harald took it from the hook and asked her how much a pound she wished for it. Thus the morning passed very pleasantly. The threatened rain did not come, and quite a number of fish were caught.

Just as they had decided to quit, Thora’s line received a sharp pull, and then became taut. She braced

herself and pulled, giving a little scream as she did so, but the line pulled hard.

“O, help me! help me!” she cried.

Harald hastened to her side and took the line.

“You have a big one,” he said; “here, you pull it up, and I’ll help you.” So they both pulled, Harald taking care that he did no more than was necessary to avoid depriving her of the fun of catching a big, struggling fish. When it reached the surface, however, he got the hoat hook. They had caught, not a whiting nor a cod, but a big ugly *stenbid* or wolf-fish. As Harald caught it with his hook and threw it into the boat, it floundered around lively, closing its ugly mouth on an oar so hard that its big black teeth sank deep into the wood.

“What if that had been your foot!” said Harald to Thora, after he had dispatched it with a number of sharp raps.

Thora shuddered. She was quite pale for a moment; then she laughed.

“Ugh, what an ugly fish!” she said.

That ended their fishing for the day. Harald said that Thora wished to quit because she was anxious to show her trophy on land.

Thora established herself well in the opinion of the people of Sandstad, especially in the household of Erik Svensen. She was neither vain of mind nor showy in dress. She entered pleasantly into their daily affairs, and very much appreciated the efforts put forth to entertain her. Her actions toward Harald were circumspect and prudently fitting to the dif-

ferences in social station—so the gossipers said. After a day or two, when the first awkwardness had been overcome Harald was too much absorbed in a quiet happiness to do much analyzing. He was with her day after day. Her presence was enough; let him bask in the sunshine while it lasted. It would be time enough to reason about it on some cloudy day, or after the sun had gone down.

Thora enjoyed herself very much. Sometimes she had Maria and the children with her in her rambles; sometimes Dagmar went with her; at other times all went together; but seldom was Harald invited alone. They visited the sloop in the fjord and the drying grounds on the beach. The peat bog was inspected, and Thora soiled her hands in examining the various grades of peat, from the light porous article, cut at the top, to the dark, heavy cake, dug from the lowest layer. They climbed the mountains above Sandstad, and they all took turns in looking through Thora's opera glass at the snow-capped mountains on the mainland. Thora gathered specimens of flowers not found further south. They fished in the lake for trout, and on the fjord for *stenbid*. Once when they were caught in a shower, they took shelter in a summer-house on the hill-side, where they told stories until the storm passed. The days went rapidly, to Harald, as in a dream; and then the week was up and Thora must leave.

Then Harald awoke. Thora was going—and what of it? She could not stay at Sandstad forever. Her father would be waiting for her at Tromso. What

was it to Harald Einersen, the fisherman? Had it been Harald Einersen the—well, something else, it might have made some difference, but now it possibly could not. Thora was going, and she did not seem to care—she would not understand how he would feel it. She was going—going out of his life—perhaps forever. The gulf between them was too deep.

Then it came to him with the force of a shock: what had he done to bridge this gulf? what progress had he made to arise to her level? She might think much of him, yet she was helpless in the matter. It was he that must move, and that rapidly, if ever they should stand on equality. What puny castles he had built! The owner of a boat—the master of four men at Lofoten—that had been the extent of it! What a boy he had been! But now he was a man. Now he would be a man, and do manly things. If it were not now too late! Thora was going. The pleasant day was over. Night was coming, a cold, dark Nordland night. She had been a constant inspiration to him, and perhaps she could still continue to be that, even if nothing more than a will-o'-the-wisp to lead him on.

Then Cousin Johan's words came again to him, ringing in his ears as a voice from the ocean. They spoke to him like an echo from over the hills of eternity. They stirred his heart as it had never been stirred before; and then and there, Harald Einersen projected another castle, and made a solemn vow that, with God's help, he would yet complete it from foundation stones to pinnacle.

Thora was to board the coast steamer at Lundholm, a small port a few miles from Sandstad. The steamer was due at Lundholm about midnight, and Harald was to take the passenger there in his sail boat. Dagmar said she would go along, too, but Thora said no. She bade them farewell with invitations for them to pay her a visit at Vangen some day. Harald carried her valise to the boat, helped her in, spread the sail to the breeze, and away they sailed.

The night promised to be fair. The sky was clear, with the exception of a few soft clouds to the north. The sun sailed around into the northern sky, dipping lower and lower. As it neared the point of midnight, Thora called attention to the beautiful sea and sky, and Harald was willing that she should do the talking. He felt that he could not trust himself to say much.

"I have had such a good time, Harald; and I am ever so much obliged to you all. I'll tell grandmother all about it, when I reach home."

"When do you expect to return to Vangen?"

"From Tromso, I'm going to North Cape with papa, and then I suppose we shall return directly home."

Thora trailed her fingers through the water and looked down into the green waves as she asked, "Are you going to Lofoten next winter?"

"Yes," that's the place to earn money, and I must have some. I don't like Lofoten any too well, since passing through what I have, but one earns more there

in three months than in a year at any other occupation in Nordland."

"I suppose you will want to own a boat as Uncle Erik?"

"No; I want money to go to school. I'm going to school all I can—just fish long enough to keep me supplied with means."

"And then?"

"I don't know. Be something more than a mere fisherman, at least."

"You'll want to graduate; that will take a long time."

"Four or five years for that—ten for what I want to be."

"That's a long time—" She had no idea of what he was thinking.

"Yes; but it takes persons who are at the bottom of the ladder longer to reach the top than those who are already half way up."

"That depends on the rate traveled by each."

"True; and the strength of the force that drives one on."

The boat rounded a headland, and Lundholm was in sight.

"I think likely that I am through with school for a time," said she. Father wishes me to accompany him to England and perhaps farther, this fall, and I may be away for years."

He was silent. It was too true, then, that she was going—going for good. Why didn't she say so, and be done with it? Why had she come to Nordland? He

would give her back the withered rose. He could keep it no longer. He took it from between the leaves of his note book. She was looking at him, and he hesitated with nervousness; but retreat he would not now. She was sitting with her back to the sail, directly facing him. He placed the rose in her lap, saying nothing.

"What is it?" she asked. "A rose—and all withered. Where did you get it."

"You gave it to me, and now I suppose you want it back."

"I? yes—now I remember. O, Harald, don't you want it?" Her voice trembled.

"Yes, but—but—what's the use, Thora? You don't care for me. Why should I keep it as a continual reminder of—of my foolishness—call it what you will?"

"Don't say that, Harald."

"What else can I say? You are going away. I may never see you again. I have been foolish in thinking about you as I have, but I imagined that you loved me; something that you have done, trifling things, have led me to believe it. You have been to me as yonder Polar star is to the mariner, but now—"

"And why may I not be so still, Harald?" There were tears in her eyes now. "The Polar star never changes."]

The hour of midnight approaches. The sun sinks down behind the sea, yet it is as light as in the shade of noon-day. The breeze is gentle, and the sea is still, save for the shining swells which softly rise and fall. Then the sun comes forth again above the horizon. First appears its upper curved edge, then more and

more it seems to rock up and down on the waves until it rises above the sea—a round, blood-red disk, making a shining path from the horizon to the boat, a path paved with shimmering blocks of purple and gold. The whole sea is now tinged with red light. The clouds around the sun are bathed in blood, and the crimson reflection is cast on hills and rocks, waves and boat. Thora's face is rose-colored, and her whole form is bathed in the same warm tint. The mountains and the distant islands are enwrapped in a trembling haze of red. It is a golden night. Its beauty enters the soul, and banishes fears and worldly sorrow. Care departs into the mellow atmosphere. Earth-troubles sink into this sea of peace, and are lost. Faith comes back—faith in man and faith in God. The world is no longer a gray, lifeless larva, but a full-grown butterfly, floating on its shining wings in the balmy air of summer.

Harald had never seen the midnight sun in such glory before. Often he had watched it sink behind the mountain or disappear into the sea, but such color effects, such still, sweet, grand beauty he had never witnessed. After all it may have been that he looked out from other eyes—the point of view is everything.

The black smoke of the steamer appeared behind a headland, and soon the boat was in sight. Harald steered towards the anchorage and lay to, awaiting its coming. Out from the shore came the boatman with the mail. The water gurgled softly under their own boat, and the little waves lightly patted its sides—that was all they heard until the swish of the steamer broke

the silence, churning the water with its reversed propeller. The iron door in the vessel's side was opened, the mail was exchanged, and Thora was helped in. From the doorway, she reached out her hand to Harald, in the boat alongside. He held it for an instant, then raised it to his lips. As he did so, the little withered rose which she was about to give him, slipped from her hand into the sea, and its dry, loose petals floated over the waves in every direction. The iron door was closed, the propeller churned the water again, and the steamer headed on its course.

From the deck of the steamer, Thora waved her handkerchief as long as she could distinguish the little boat which lay dancing on the waves of the shining sea.

PART SECOND.

I.

REMINISCENT.

The rain came in great gushes from the storm-clouds as they were driven inland from the sea. It sputtered down the tin pipes from the roofs, and filled the gutters with a brown flood. Quite a number of people on the street had been caught unawares, and were making rapid strides for shelter. Among them was Harald Einersen, Head Master in the West Akerby school. He, it seems, was rather more amused than annoyed over the fact that he had left his umbrella at home, and was now getting a good soaking. His fur cap soon became heavy, and the drops of water trickled down to the lowest point of his closely-trimmed beard. The gas lamps on the corner of the side-street up which he turned, cast their reflections on the wet stone-pavement. The pools shone with light at the corner, but some distance away from the well-lighted windows of the business block, the mud resumed its usual, black color. Climbing up a number of steps, cut into the natural ledge of the hill, he soon turned into the hall of a house which stood on an elevation overlooking the town on one side and the sea on the other.

He stamped vigorously in the hall, and as he was hanging up his soaked coat and cap, a door opened and let in a stream of light.

"Is that you, Einersen?" some one asked.

"What isn't washed away. That is what I call rain." Harald stepped into the dining room, where Mrs. Jacobsen scolded him for not taking his umbrella. He took it all good naturedly, and smiled the while—smiled in a way which indicated that something was to be covered up by it.

"Had it been in Bergen, now, I might have caused a runaway," said he.

"What do you mean?"

"Why, don't you know that in Bergen, when the horses see a man without an umbrella, they think him some strange object, get frightened, and run away!"

Mrs. Jackson did not deign to encourage this levity, so she made no reply, but busied herself with the table.

"I do not wish any supper to night, explained Harald. "I had lunch down town, not long ago. If there's a fire, I'll go into my room now."

His room was warm and cosy. The lamp was burning low on the table. He turned it up to a full blaze, then drew down the blinds to the windows. He heard the rain beat against the glass. Drawing his chair up to the stove, he leaned his elbow on the table, took an envelope from his pocket, and drew from it a letter, which he read carefully. Then folding it again, he replaced it in the envelope which he put into his pocket. He opened the top door of the stove, and sat

for a long time intently looking at the red coals. * * * * * Another act in his life's drama was about to close; soon, the curtain would fall. Well, perhaps the act just played had been long enough, and it was time for a change. For nearly four years Harald Einersen had lived at Akerby; two years of that time, as a grade teacher, and nearly two years as Head Master; but now he had resigned, because his resignation had been expected, and the letter in his pocket stated that his services would not be needed longer, after the end of the term—and for this state of affairs, he could give thanks to his one-time acquaintance, the Reverend A. Bange who had recently been appointed to the district of Akerby.

Harald felt in reminiscent mood, and thought it a good time for stock-taking; so he went back to his boyhood days at Opdal, and lived again in memory its hardships and pleasures; then the moving to Nordland, and his fishing at Lofoten. One week especially of bright, summer weather at Sandstad was overflowing with remembrances; then his second year at Lofoten, his saving, his pinching to gather money. Then came his four long years of school life, breaking off his studies each year to catch cod with the Lofoten fleet. Oh, the joy, the hardships of those years! At times, how short; at other times, how long and painful; but at last, the final examinations and his diploma! He remembered how that on the day after he received it, he sold enough of his personal property to buy a steamboat ticket to Vangen, from which point he walked up to Opdal. It was in the month of June, and the woods

were delightful. He found his grandmother residing with his father. She was on her death bed, but when she saw Harald come in, she raised up from her pillow, took his head between her thin hands and pressed it down on her shoulder. Then Harald produced his diploma, a large sheet which made a creaking noise when he unrolled it, and showed it to her. She understood in a minute what it was, though she could read only the large, printed words. Grandmother was satisfied. A few days thereafter, she died.

And then he obtained the school at Akerby, and did so well in his work that he was promoted to Head Master.

Harald arose from his seat, poked the fire, then aimlessly rearranged some books on the table. He took down a violin from the wall, tightened some of its strings, scraped the bow across it a number of times, then replaced the instrument. On the wall hung an old-fashioned clock whose weights reached to the floor. He pushed the heavier weight up, then returned to his chair by the stove.

So far he had realized every proper ambition of his life—save one—and they had been many. He now smiled at some of these simple, childish castles, which had long since been built, then torn down to make room for others. These were some of them: to get away from herding sheep; to get enough to eat; to have a suit of clothes made by a tailor; to become a fisherman; to be able to handle a boat in a storm; to be master and owner of a boat at Lofoten, (this latter he could have been, as he had money enough to purchase one); to

make his grandmother comfortable; to become a schoolmaster; to—well, no—one castle was yet unbuilt. The foundation stones had been laid long years ago, and he had yet hopes that under the rank, dead grass that covered them, there still lay the solid rocks fit to bear a beautiful superstructure.

Harald's eyes wandered from the fire, and rested upon a photograph standing on his table. Moving it into a better light, he looked steadily at it. It was the same Thora Bernhard that he had seen years ago, but now a woman in very deed. The face was fuller, but there were the same large eyes, full, shapely mouth, wavy hair, and sweet, sad expression. Her signature was underneath, dated at Paris. That little trip to Nordland, eight years ago, had been the initiative, for Thora had traveled the world over, since. She had frequently written to him, telling of the sights in other lands, and he had answered, informing her of his progress at school. She had appeared pleased at the good news. On three occasions when he had been at Opdal, Thora had been away from home, so he had not seen her. Once, when she was at Bergen, he had made an effort to meet her, but he imagined that she wished to evade him; so from that time on, he was very careful. Her last letter bore a date two years old, but the photograph had been received less than a year ago. The signature bore proof that she was yet Miss Thora Bernhard; and, as he gazed intently at it under the lamplight on his table, bright, beautiful hope swelled anew within his heart. }

The postman's knock aroused Harald, and he went

to the door. In his mail was a letter from Nordland, from Uncle Erik. It recounted, first of all, that the season had been cold; the hay had barely been saved, and the barley had to be cut green. Last season's fishing at Lofoten, however, had been good. Uncle Erik was not well enough to go, but his boats had done well. Dagmar was happily married, and lived in Maria's former home. Maria still lived with father and mother, and the children were growing big and wise.

So, cousin Dagmar was married at last! Well, she had been long enough about it. Married happily—good for Dagmar—she deserved a good husband. And they now lived in Maria and Johan's cosy house under the cliffs. He remembered the picture that had formed itself in his mind the day that he had sailed across the fjord with Dagmar, and he smiled at the remembrance. Castle-building was such a pleasant occupation, anyway. What if all did not reach completion or the stage of realization! Material for more was unlimited, and it cost nothing, save the pleasing task of gathering; and so, true to this theory, Harald, as he reviewed the photograph before him, built another castle:

Thora stood in the doorway looking down the road for his coming. Her beautiful hair hung in two long braids down her shoulders—that was to please him. The white apron was a sign that dinner was ready. The house was a low, wooden structure, one of those airy, summer buildings which the well-to-do Norwegians were erecting, adorned with many projections and odd carvings. At the rear stood the unbroken pine forest. In the foreground was a small

patch of grass, with a path leading down from the door to the road which skirted the edge of the fjord.

Mrs. Jacobsen knocked at his door, and the picture vanished. Would he not have some coffee and bread and butter, before he went to bed? but he declined, with thanks, much to his good landlady's disappointment. He replenished the fire, and then made an effort to look over some affairs pertaining to his school work; but his mind wandered. Why had Pastor Bange again crossed his path? He entertained an aversion for the man, ever since their meeting at Lofoten, and it seemed that the pastor had neither forgotten nor forgiven Harald for the stand he had taken that day at his cousin's burial. As there would be no use in resenting the pastor's interference, the best thing for Harald to do was to resign as gracefully as possible, which he had done. Perhaps he had been unwise in the active part he had taken in politics during the past year. Perhaps, also, he had expressed his religious views rather freely, for his own worldly good, at least. Certainly, he neither could nor would change his most sacred beliefs in the hopes of worldly preferment or gain. He had been compelled, because of his position, to present, at least, an outward form of orthodoxy, but had often of late asked himself if he were doing right, even in that, when at heart he did not believe in many of the creeds and practices of the state religion. Many times Johan Bernsen's definition of religion came to him, and especially since he had become better acquainted with the laws of nature as revealed in the arts and sciences. Perhaps, after all, it was well that he was to get out of

the teaching profession. A man had no business to teach something which he, himself, did not thoroughly believe.

Did the face in the picture before him, smile? Harald Einersen, your imagination is very vivid to night. He went out. The rain had ceased. A steamer, all aglow with lights, was sailing across the bay. The town below him had grown quiet. The wind blew strong, and the waves were heard beating against the rocks below. Harald looked up into the sky. The clouds were scurrying by, now and then revealing patches of deep blue. Up towards the zenith he beheld the Polar Star immovably fixed in the heavens, shining brightly and steadily, bringing to his mind Thora and her words uttered that night on the fjord in Nordland.

II.

PASTOR BANGE TAKES A HAND.

Harald Einersen's dreams did not always end with the day. It was towards midnight that evening when he fell asleep, and then he had a strange dream. He thought he stood on a hill overlooking a wide, green valley. As he gazed, wondering where he was, his grandmother came up the grassy slope towards him. There was nothing strange in the meeting, but it seemed that there had been no long separation. She spoke very earnestly, somewhat in her old manner, bidding him always defend the right and honor the truth, no matter how difficult the task might seem. Then what appeared to be another woman came up the hill. She had in her arms shoots and roots of flowers and shrubbery, which, when she reached Harald, she placed on the ground. She approached him, took both his hands in hers, leaned over and touched her lips to his cheek; then picking up her plants again, she disappeared. Then he knew that his mother had kissed him. After this, Johan Bernsen came in sight, and following him, other men and women whom he did not know. These did not climb the hill, but pursued their journey down the valley. Johan waved his hand towards Harald as he passed. Men continued to come faster and faster,

more and more, great crowds of them, till they seemed to fill the valley, reaching to the horizon. Still they came, thousands, millions of them. The sight filled him with awe! The men were strong and stalwart, many of them with beards and long hair; the women were also wonderfully robust and beautiful, their hair falling in waves over their shoulders. The whole throng reminded him of the picture he had seen of his forefathers, the Vikings, as they appeared unequipped for war. As the throngs surged onward, Harald retreated further up the hill, fearful that he would be trampled underfoot.

"Fear not," said a voice at his side, and there stood his father, "these are Norsemen—your ancestors and mine, brave, noble, and virtuous. They lived according to the light which God gave to them, and that is all any of us can do."

Harald awoke in the morning, with the announcement from his landlady that his coffee was ready. He drank it as usual, from the small table at his bedside, sipping it with his pieces of cut sugar—but the dream remained with him all the day.

When it became known that the Head Master of West Akerby school was about to resign his position, speculation became rife as to the reason. Mr. Eiersen had certainly done his duty everybody said. He was well liked, both by teachers and students. His political friends especially asked him what was the cause of his action, but they received no satisfactory reply. The fact was that Harald himself was not sure of the cause of his removal. He supposed that Pastor Bange

had something to do with it, but to what extent he did not know. He made up his mind not to make a stir about it—the change would give him a rest, and a chance, perhaps, at other labor—but for his own satisfaction, he desired to know the status of his case. He would go to Pastor Bange and ask.

Harald no sooner came to this conclusion than he acted. The lamps were being lighted in the streets when he rang the bell at the parsonage. He had visited there many times when the former pastor was its occupant, but this call was his first since Pastor Vaag had removed. A girl came to the door and ushered him into the stuffy little room in which the provider for men's souls received his visitors. The girl lighted a hanging-lamp and went about her duties.

Harald seated himself on a very much-worn sofa. On the wall opposite hung a picture which had always given him the "shivers." It represented Christ on the cross, the crown of thorns piercing the flesh, and streams of blood flowing down the face, and, what an expression of horror the artist had concentrated in that face! How could people tolerate such alleged art in their best room!

The door quietly opened, and Pastor Bange stepped in. The clergyman had aged considerably during his Nordland experience, but his face still bore that sanctimonious smile so characteristic of many preachers. The lips and chin were clean-shaven. The hair was thick, long, and mixed with gray. Two straggling tufts reached down upon each round, sleek cheek.

Harald arose, and the pastor shook his hand, smil-

ing placidly all the while, his teeth gleaming in the lamp-light. Harald sat down, and the pastor rested in a chair by the table under the lamp.

"You are looking well, Pastor Bange," said Harald. He saw no use in being too blunt. "Nordland must have agreed with you."

"I try to make any part of the Lord's vineyard, to which His pleasure calls me, agreeable with me," was the reply.

"Very sensible, that," said Harald. "In life's various up's and down's, it is a blessing to be able to adjust one's self to each change."

"Yes; and a change is oftentimes for the best." Harald thought he detected a little aggressiveness in his tone, so he was reserved no longer.

"What I came to see you about, Pastor Bange, is this resignation which I have been asked to hand in. I'm not going to find fault with it at all, as I intended not to teach much longer, anyway; but you know, folks will talk—while I believe I have given satisfaction to most of our people—yet, for my own assurance, I should like to know why I am asked to resign.

The pastor said nothing, but his smile was as bland as ever.

"You know something about it, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," said the pastor.

"You had something to do with it?"

"Yes, I had something to do with it."

"And what is the fault? may I ask?"

"Well, Mr. Einersen, I wish to be plain with you. It is part of my duty, you know, to look after the edu-

cational interests of the people in my parish. I must see that the pure principles of Christianity are taught in our schools; and if I am anything of a shepherd of the fold of Christ, I must see that wolves are driven away."

"I am a wolf, then?"

"Ah, no; that was a mere figure, you understand. I wouldn't say that; but your Christian teaching—I mean your teaching of our holy religion, has never been very strong—it has been very weak, in fact; and there is always danger of our children drifting into heresies, or even into infidelity, altogether, if we are too loose in this respect."

"Have I been teaching heresies?"

"Yes."

"I am not aware of it. Will you please explain?"

"Yes, I will. You remember sometime ago in the class in physics, you were talking about the qualities of matter—you remember, don't you?"

"I remember, very well."

"You said that matter could not be destroyed; it could only be changed in form."

"The text-book said that."

"Well; then one of the students asked how it is that, if matter could not be destroyed, it could be created. You, if I am informed rightly, explained that matter is as uncreatable as it is indestructible. You said that substance is eternal. Then the boy—you remember him—said that he had learned in his catechism that God created the world out of nothing. Whereupon, you explained that the Bible did not teach that—it was merely the catechism."

It was Harald's turn to smile at the recollection of the event which the pastor had narrated correctly enough.

"Of course, Pastor Bange," said Harald, "that was the only thing in reason that I could say."

"You implied that the catechism was wrong."

"Certainly; when it came to a conflict between the catechism and the text-book on science, I decided in favor of the text-book."

"But the catechism teaches our children the Christian religion, and when you deride it, you weaken the faith of the learners."

"But I could not knowingly teach an untruth for all that."

"Teach an untruth! Don't you believe in the holy scriptures?"

"I do; but the scriptures nowhere teach that God made the world out of nothing. There's a Bible. Show me?"

"No; we'll not discuss the matter further."

The pastor arose and walked to his desk in the corner; but Harald remained seated. Pastor Bange saw that his visitor was not going, so he returned to the seat by the table. He kept his composure very well.

"That, Mr. Einersen, is but a sample of your unorthodox teachings," continued the pastor. "I don't say that you have meant any harm in it, but I will say that I consider it very unwise to keep you in your present position as Head Master of West Akerby

School." The movement of the lips was meant for a smile.

"Well, Pastor Bange, I am pleased that you have spoken so plainly to me; and now while we are about it, I may as well speak plainly, too—I hope you will not leave"—but the pastor simply arose to adjust the lamp-wick—"I want you to understand me, so that, if in the future we ever have dealings with each other, there will be a mutual understanding."

"Yes;" and the preacher clasped his hands piously in front of him.

"I claim to be a Christian," continued the schoolmaster. "I believe in Christ. I believe in the Bible, though there are many things there I cannot understand. I believe there are many good doctrines taught by the Evangelical Lutheran church. I also believe there are many truths in the Methodist church, in the Baptist church, and, in fact, in all churches. I am broad-minded enough not to judge other men's faiths. I am liberal enough, thank God, to allow all men a right to their beliefs. I never want to become so bigoted that I would deprive a fellow-being of a Christian burial, for instance"—the pastor did not wince at the thrust—"I am willing to accept truth from whatever source it comes. I hope I shall be ever willing to discard all error, when my reason decides that it is error. As to saying that the Lutheran church is repository of all God's truth, that is ridiculous. The church teaches—mind you, I do not say the Scriptures—many things that I have my doubts about. So, Pastor Bange, from your standpoint, I suppose you are justified in using

your influence in having me removed from my position.”

“Are you through?”

“Yes; I am through.”

“Then you’ll excuse me, I know. I have an appointment in twenty minutes to preach at a missionary meeting, down in Strand street.”

Both arose, and Harald hastened out. The self-contained old priest smiled at him from the doorway, as he proceeded down the path.

Harald did not go home; the evening was pleasant; the winter air was crisp. The fog had lifted, and, on such nights, he took delight in viewing the harbor or strolling along the strand, out from the town. To-night, his desire for a walk was strong, so he strode briskly down *Storgaden*, across the market place, to the opening by the wharves. Here a fisher woman was swinging her arms to keep warm, and was trying to dispose of her last cod at sacrifice prices. Harald knew all the fisherwomen. During the day, there were many of them, and he usually stopped to chat with them; but this one lone woman out in the cold, attracted him especially that night.

“Good evening, mother,” he said, as he approached her, “haven’t you sold out yet?”

“Not yet, professor,” said the woman, with a curtesy.

The school master took up two cod fish from the woman’s barrow—all she had.

“Pretty fine fish,” he said, “but I have caught better ones. How much are they worth?”

"I paid twenty-five *ore* each for them. You may have them for that, seeing they are the last, and I can't keep them over."

"All right, here's your money. Now pack up, and go home."

The woman willingly did so, after she had wrapped the fish in a newspaper and handed them to the purchaser. Then she trudged off with her barrow. Harald followed her, until she had passed the market square, and then he stopped her.

"Here, mother, how often do you eat fresh fish?"

"Not very often, sir."

"Well, *I* can't cook these fish, and I haven't a wife to cook them for me; so I'll give them to you, if you will promise not to go back and try to sell them again, but take them home and eat them yourself."

The woman looked at him and hesitated. Then she promised, taking the fish with apologies and profuse thanks.

"Tut, tut," said the school master, "have a good supper tonight, and be sure you take out the livers and make *molje* for the children."

Harald went on down the street towards the water. "It was worth fifty *ore*," he said to himself, "to get such a look from a woman's eyes, as that fisherwoman gave me."

A Salvation Army lass sold him a *War Cry*. As he looked under the ugly poke bonnet at the pretty face of the girl, the thought came to Harald that there was a brave soul. Indifferent to the scorn of the world, she went about doing her duty, as she under-

stood it. Would Pastor Bange, would he, himself, do as much? Yet Pastor Bange would say that she was a poor, deluded soul, and Harald, also, was in danger of judging her.

As he neared the water where the warehouses were, a strong odor of roasted coffee reached him. He hurried by, as the smell was never agreeable to him. As he passed "The Sailor's Home," he heard a merry company within: the sailor was on land again. Then he strode out on the open beach, where he loved to walk. He enjoyed feeling the firm yet yielding sand under his feet. Cliffs arose on one side; the water stretched far away on the other—and he was between. The rocks, immovable, bold, resisting; the sea, endless, powerful, restless. Here the elements displayed their majesty and power. The sea waged eternal warfare, yet the cliff laughed only, or roared, according to the fury of the onslaught. "Give me time," said the Sea, "and I will conquer you, I will grind you to atoms, and give you to the winds, or line my own bed with you—just give me time." But what then? Would the mountain be destroyed? Only the form; the material would be there. The earth might melt with fervent heat; the ocean be turned into mist; the whole globe might be ground into dust, yet the dust would be somewhere. Yet the world was made out of nothing—*made out of nothing!* Harald laughed aloud at such heights of absurdity.

His mind reverted to the interview with Pastor Bange. What a smooth man the pastor was! how strange that nearly all preachers whom he had known

partook somewhat of the same bland nature! Why should ministers of the gospel dress, and talk, and act, as if they belonged to another caste? Why should the study of religion make men foolish or unnatural? Better, then, return to the ancient, heathen worship of the forefathers. Their religion made them at least strong, and brave, and just; while the products of modern Christianity were, to an alarming extent, dull, and weak, and immoral.

Harald had never delved very deeply into religion. True, he had taken the usual superficial course of Biblical theology, but any profound thought he had never bestowed upon it. Perhaps the nearest he had got to a true religious feeling was when he sat with his grandmother reading the Bible for her. At confirmation, the principal impression was that, if he passed, he would be through with the priest. His later school studies had been mostly of a secular character. Yet Harald had a strong religious nature, perhaps more after the manner of that expressed by his cousin Johan than that exhibited by the clergy of the day.

On his way home Harald passed through Strand street. As he neared the mission church there, he remembered that Pastor Bange was to preach. The church was full of people, and Harald slipped in, and stood by the door. An unusual occasion must have brought together the unusually large crowd. Pastor Bange was summing up his arguments, which, Harald learned, were against certain heresies that had lately crept into their midst. The most dangerous of these doctrines was that of hope for the departed, who have died

unrepentant; that is, salvation for the dead. "We have nothing in Holy Writ to justify us in the belief that those who do not come to Christ in this life will ever have a chance in the life to come." * * * * *

"We have nothing here," and the pastor closed his Bible with a slam "we have nothing here inspiring the belief that the heathen will be saved, but we have many words of God which distinctly doom them to the everlasting torments of hell—let us pray."

A shudder went through Harald. He stood perfectly still, staring straight at the preacher, hearing every word of that prayer, which was:

"We thank Thee, O Lord, that we know there is no salvation for the dead; that in this life only, we have hope of salvation; that now is the accepted time of grace; that the gates of heaven are now open day and night—yea, wide open, and the sinner may freely come to Thee. Yea, Lord, we thank Thee that we are not tempted to sin now, by believing that there is hope beyond the grave. Help us, O Lord, to love Thee for this, and give Thy name the praise and honor. Amen."

Some deep feeling of the heart was touched in Harald Einersen. He could not analyse it; he could not describe it; but he knew its chief element was resentment. All else was chaos. He hardly knew how he reached home that night.)

III.

SEEKING AFTER THE TRUTH.

"We thank Thee, O Lord, that there is no salvation for the dead."

Harald could not forget the words. They rang in his ears day and night. The last days of his principalship of the West Akerby school approached, and he had much work to do; but in every pause, he heard the words, "There is no salvation for the dead;" and then, "We thank Thee, O Lord, for it." "It's a blessing this school business is coming to an end," he thought. Then again he doubted his own conclusions, for with school work he did have something definite to occupy his mind. What would he do when, all day long, the devil would have opportunity to whisper the damnable words into his ears!

When the public began to realize that Head Master Einersen had been forced out of his position by ecclesiastical pressure, there was considerable uproar; but he did not take it as a calamity, and informed all who asked him about it that he was glad of the change.

On the evening that his term expired, Harald heaved a sigh of relief; but something told him that as one burden was gone, another and much greater was coming. In the past, he had been able to shake off annoying thoughts, but now some religious questions

would not away, and he saw more approaching in the distance. He would have to meet them; why show a coward's fear? Surely, they could be met and disposed of.

"*There is no salvation for the dead!*" "You lie!" Harald hissed the words aloud. He was on the street, and had caught a glimpse of Pastor Bange. Harald was alone—he was thankful no one heard him.

The day was before him, so, after a vigorous tramp through the town, he climbed the stone steps on his way home again. Replenishing the fire, he took down his Bible, the leather-back one, scratched and stained with sea water, which he had received as a memento of his friend. He read for a time that he might observe if the reading should have the same effect on him as it once had on Johan. Having read for ten minutes, he went to the window and raised the blind. The sun shone brightly, and a great yellow stream entered the room. He paced back and forth not being able to read. The photograph on the table had fallen from the easel, and lay face down on the cloth. He looked at it for a moment and then continued his walking.

"Yes, Thora, you might well hide your face from me," he said. He remembered his dream of some nights previous, and again saw the mighty hosts of Norsemen. They had never heard of Jesus Christ. They had never heard of Christianity. They were doubtless marching to their final destruction, when he beheld them in vision—on, on, the multitude of brave men and beautiful women, on—on—to hell!

The heathen could not be saved. A heathen is

“one who does not worship the God of the Jew or the Christian”—so his dictionary gave it. His forefathers were heathens, therefore, they could not be saved. Well, they would have much company. Out of the millions who have lived on this earth, a very small fraction ever knew of Christ. Of the millions now living, only about one-third were Christians, and only a small part of the so-called Christians were Christian at heart. Nothing else could count, of course. So, after all, a mere handful would be saved. What a small place heaven must be, and how immense must be the borders of hell!

And God arranged all this. He made the earth—what knowledge of the laws of nature he must have! He formed man and placed him on the earth to run his little race. He gave him intelligence, a reasoning mind! He made him sensitive to joy and pain. He placed within his mind ambitions, and made it a part of his nature to yearn for eternal life and its possibilities. He implanted in his heart the sweet and tender plant which grows and expands until it entwines its delicate tendrils around wife and children—and they become as strong as bands of steel—and then, and then—they are all damned eternally!

Harald remembered having once read a book which related the story of a boy who had figured that every time the clock ticked, a soul went to hell. At every tick, a heathen died. Tick, tock—to hell they went. Tick, tock—two more.

Johan and grandmother had been among the crowds that he had seen in his dream. If ever there

were or had been a Christian, his grandmother was one; but what about Johan Bernsen? Pastor Bange had said that Johan was not a Christian. Pastor Bange ought to know, if anyone knew. If Johan was not a Christian, had not been confirmed, had not associated himself with the church, he must have been a heathen—and heathens go to hell.

And hell is a place where the souls of men and women suffer excruciating torment eternally.

“Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Men and women! Oh, surely not beautiful, tender, nerve-filled woman, who bears the burdens of the world, and in motherhood willingly goes near to the gates of death! Surely not woman, surely not such a sweet-faced woman as kissed him in his dream, or one like——.”

Harald’s face was ashen gray. His hands trembled. The muscles of his lips twitched painfully. He had been pacing the floor, but now sank helplessly in his chair, by the table, staring vacantly into the fire.

With rude hands, Horror had seized him, and he seemed to struggle in vain. The more he thought, the more he reasoned, the deeper became the gulf of dismay. The perspiration moistened his face, and he wiped it away with his kerchief.

Why should he worry, anyway? He was a believer. He could be saved. Why vex himself about others? But the thought, the principle! Why should God, Who is all wise and all powerful, make a plan for the salvation of mankind seemingly imperfect, so unjust, so cruel! If Christ is the only name under heaven

whereby men may be saved—and he knew the scriptures taught that—why had not provisions been made for His name to be heard by every kindred, tongue, and nation from the creation down? In all fairness, it appeared reasonable that every soul should have had a chance.

Then the feeling of resentment again arose within him. Christian doctrine is founded on the Bible. Did the Bible teach such abominable doctrine as that? If so, he would throw the book into the fire!

But he did not do that; and, shortly, he was ashamed of himself for the thought. Again he went to the window. It was a beautiful, sunny afternoon—he had thought it night. He went out, and down on the busy market place where he met his old friend Pastor Jensen of the Methodist church, who was just then buying a roast for the next day's dinner. Securing his package, the preacher slipped his arm into Harald's, and the two walked on together. Pastor Jensen began to speak sympathetically about the head master's losing his position, but Harald apparently, did not heed. Suddenly he looked into the parson's face and asked:

“Tell me, Pastor Jensen, do you believe there is any salvation for the dead?”

The surprised pastor managed to answer that certainly those who had died in the Lord were saved.

“But what about those who do not die in the Lord? Are they in hell?”

“Well, now, dear Mr. Einersen, you do startle me—but I might say that we have no assurance in God's

word that the unbeliever, or the heathen, will have an opportunity in the next world. You see, such a doctrine would be very dangerous, indeed, and—”

“So you believe that all our forefathers, men, many of whom were better than we, are now burning in hell?”

He suddenly let go the preacher’s arm and turned another corner. Pastor Jensen stood staring at the retreating figure, wondering what it all meant.

“Number two,” said Harald. “I might as well go the rounds, and finish this unpleasant business.”

He was not far from the meeting rooms of the *Indre Mission*, the home missionary department of the state church. The presiding parson resided in the rear of the rooms, and there Harald went. Pastor Skabo was at home, and he greeted this visitor warmly. Harald did not wish to be rudely abrupt, so the conversation was brought around smoothly to the subject. Pastor Skabo was surprised that anyone should doubt the great religious truth that when a person dies, he either goes to the arms of Jesus or to the regions of darkness. No; he could see no hope, in the hereafter, for the heathen. He was very emphatic on the point that this life fixed every soul’s eternal destiny.

“Then,” said Harald, as he took his hat and arose to go, “Solon and Pericles, with all the great and wise men of ancient Greece; Leondias and his three hundred brave Spartans who perished at Thermopylæ; Socrates, the philosopher, who taught the immortality of the soul, and who died for his convictions; the wise Plato and his followers—all—all were heathens, and, there-

fore, went to hell when they died, are there now, and will remain there throughout the endless ages of eternity! Impossible!" Harald bowed himself out.)

On the street, he laughed to himself when he thought of how he had startled the good pastor by his expressions. So far, no deviation. He would try the little Baptist minister who had lately arrived.

The Baptist seemed to think that he had a prospective convert in the earnest young man, but Harald went away having learned nothing new. Next he called on an Adventist preacher who had held forth in a tent as long as the weather permitted, but who, as he explained, had not been able to secure a hall for winter use. The Adventist talked Scripture as if he knew the Bible from memory, but Harald again went away empty.

A fog threatened to settle down over the town. Darkness came on, and Harald felt extremely tired. Perhaps he had accomplished enough for one day so he directed his steps homeward. He could scarcely climb the steps to the house. Mrs. Jacobsen was very solicitous. What a comfort she was! The warm beef-soup tasted delicious. When he went to bed, which he did early, he soon fell into a sound sleep.

Next morning his mind was much more quiet, though the effects of its riotous workings the day before were visible in the general haggardness of his face. He announced to his landlady that he would take a sail around the coast as far as Christiania, for a rest. She agreed with him that change of air and scenery would do him good.

He packed a small valise, and that same evening boarded the coast steamer. He enjoyed life on board ship, being sailor enough to avoid sickness in a rough sea. When the strong wind blew, and the waves danced merrily over the sea, he always paced the deck, where he gathered new life in breathing the bracing sea air, while the vessel steadily pushed its way through the angry waves.

At one of the stopping points, quite a fleet of fishing boats were making for an outer island where herring had been reported. The boats sailed by the steamer, and there were jolly crews in them. Harald had an instant's longing to jump into one, and to take part in the coming catch. One boat contained a man and two strong, healthy-looking girls who sang as they went by:

Oh, ho, oh, ho! the herring is coming!
The breezes are humming!
Aloft flies the sail.
The sea gulls are teeming,
And fighting and screaming,
Adrift on the gale.

When the steamer pointed northward into the Christiania fjord the ice became troublesome. Had it not been that a short distance ahead of them a large ocean steamer was smashing it and clearing a passage, there would have been danger of a blockade; but as it was, the coast steamer slowly made its way through the floating ice.

There was a pleasant company of passengers on

board, and the conversations in the salon were restful enough. Harald listened attentively to a commercial man's stories, one of which reminded him of his grandmother.

"When I was a lad about twelve," said the narrator, resting his arms on the table in front of him, "my mother and I walked a distance of sixty miles and back. My grandmother resided that distance from us, away back in the country, and it was no uncommon thing for my mother to get a longing to see her mother. Well, as I was saying, on one of these occasions, father was away the whole summer, and, as there was no one to stay with me, I was obliged to accompany her. I was not easily tired out in those days, but, oh! how my limbs did ache every night. Mother continued for hours along the road, knitting as she walked. I trudged by her side or lagged behind, as my disposition or condition allowed, and behind us came the pig."

"The pig!" exclaimed a lady on the opposite side of the table.

"Yes; mother's domestic animals shared a good deal of her attention, and the pigs especially followed her anywhere. I remember that pig yet, and what a worry it was to mother to keep it clean. She washed it as clean as a new brush—oh, it was a very small, young pig, madam—and then she would comb its hair—no, oh, no; she didn't put its tail in papers to make it curl; if I remember rightly, its tail was naturally curly. When the pig got tired, and wanted to lag, mother would coax it on with pieces of sugar."

"Why did she allow the pig to go with you?"

"It was a present to mother's mother."

"That reminds me," began another passenger; but Harald did not remain longer.

One day, down in the second cabin, Harald saw a Bible lying open on the table. As no one was present at the time, he picked up the book and began to read. Presently, a young man came in, who sat down opposite Harald and watched the reader closely. When the latter looked up, the young man asked:

"Understandest thou what thou readest?"

"How can I, except some man should guide me," answered Harald.

"The word of God is easily understood by those who will understand," said he.

"Some parts may be, but others are not," replied Harald. "If the Bible is so easily understood, why are there so many interpretations of it? All sects base their creeds on the Bible, yet each understands its teachings differently. I go to one denomination, and they prove to me from the Scriptures that they are right, and all the rest are wrong. I go to another, with the same result. I've come to the conclusion that you can find in the Bible anything you wish to find."

"Yes, yes," replied the other, "but it all amounts to this, after all: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved."

"I know that is the argument of last resort with religionists, but no sensible man can read his Bible, and believe that such a conclusion is the sum of the matter. If the Bible teaches anything at all, it teaches

that there is something to do as well as to think, or to say. But what that is, I haven't got clear."

"Come to Jesus," said the young man.

"Another stock phrase containing nothing definite. How shall I come? where? when? what does it mean to give your heart? I have never found that Jesus explained coming to Him to mean that one should kneel on a penitent bench and cry. You preachers—I suppose you are a preacher—stir up people, arouse their emotions, play upon their feelings but never appeal to their reason or good sense. I'll acknowledge that it's all a well mixed up business to me."

The other did not answer, but he took out his guitar, and sang some gospel hymns. He had a good voice, and soon the cabin was well filled with listeners. Whether he preached to them afterwards, Harald did not learn, for he soon thereafter went on deck.

A black, winter fog hung over the city of Christiania and Harald could not content himself there. He took a few walks up and down Karl Johan Street where he jostled with the crowd, made a number of visits to the *Storting*, the Norwegian Congress, and he was ready to depart. The thought now came to him that perhaps it had not been wise to leave Akerby as soon and as hurriedly as he had done. People might get a wrong impression. He would better return as soon as he could. After all, it was only a bit of sea travel he wanted; so back he went.

He remained restless, sometimes fearful that he would become altogether an unbeliever in God, at

which thought he shuddered. Grandmother's training had strong claims on him; yet, he acknowledged to himself that he was literally at sea on religious matters. His mind was in a turmoil. He had certain yearnings, but how chaotic they were! His thoughts were confused, his plans for the future, indistinct. He could build no castle that would stand over night. All was transitory, unreal, unsatisfying. His soul had appetite; yet it could not be filled.

On the return trip, he occupied himself with his books. He read Ibsen again, feeling more keenly than ever this writer's cynicism, irony, and resentment against the social orders of the day. Ibsen's vindictive thrusts found an echo in Harald's heart.

But, after all, there was very little satisfaction in Ibsen and he turned to Bjornson. The contrast was plainer than ever. Ibsen was the pessimist; Bjornson, the optimist. Ibsen's sentiments were contractive, bitter, and chill; Bjornson's were expansive, genial, sunny, full of hope. Ibsen thrust unsolvable problems on the world—and Harald had enough of them; Bjornson never discussed a question to which he did not see a solution. Bjornson was the child of nature, free, unrestraining. His writings were "colored with nature's brush, and steeped in the fragrance of Norwegian winds. Their grandeur, their eloquence were but the reflection of the Jotunheim, and the quieter, idyllic touches, the whisperings of the great deep, serene fjords." To Harald, Bjornson was a mighty giant, lifting his country up to greatness. He was the great patriot, the inspirer of every true Norwegian.

Yes, we love this land of ours,
Crowned with mountain domes;
Storm-scarred o'er the sea it towers,
With its thousand homes!

wrote Bjornson.

As Harald read, he perceived a glimmer of light in his gloom. He would serve his country. The plans which he contrived when a boy returned to him. Two years more and he would be eligible to the *Storting*. Meanwhile, he would work and prove worthy of the confidence which his fellow citizens had already imposed in him. Yes; within two years he must be a member of the *Storting*. (He would serve his country, until he could more intelligently serve his God.)

IV.

POLITICAL CASTLES.

Harald Einersen did not get back to Akerby too soon. Pastor Bange had intrusted to a friend some strange news about the actions of the late Head Master. Pastor Skabo had also told an acquaintance that Mr. Einersen had called on him, and had asked some odd questions; and then Pastor Jensen had recounted the school teacher's peculiar actions on the street. By putting it all together, with a little embellishment, the conclusion was easily reached that the Head Master had lost his wits with his position. But a week later, when the gossip was at its height, Harald Einersen reappeared at Akerby, associating as usual with neighbors and friends.

Mrs. Jacobsen said the journey had resulted in much good to him. The good lady was greatly pleased that he was himself again. All of Harald's friends were glad to see him. His sudden disappearance had been the special topic of discussion at the latest meeting of the West Akerby club; but when, at the following meeting, Harald had walked into the club rooms with head erect and bold step, there was something of a sensation. Again, during the discussions that evening, he had surprised the gathering by a splendid speech on the political issues of the day.

"Why," said a friend to him, "people had it that the trouble had turned your mind, and that you had run away from us."

Harald took the accusations pleasantly, saying, "Well, if my mind has been turned, it has been in the right direction. I am glad to have the time now to devote to the cause of our club."

During the few remaining winter days he read law and "talked politics" with his friends. In his own mind, he had decided not to try a merchantile pursuit, but to devote a year or more to study and political work. The *Storting* must be reached, first; from that foothold he could climb higher. His prestige as a member of the national legislature would greatly aid him and give him influence among the people. His motives were high. "If ever my country needed patriots, it is now," said he to himself. It needed men who were not afraid to speak the truth, who were not afraid of kingly might or name. Bjornson needed aids; what could one man do? The time was ripe for action.

One day in the early spring, Harald met Merchant Bernhard, on the street in Akerby. Harald had not seen him for years, yet he knew him at sight, although the merchant had aged much, and his cane did not touch the ground as lightly as when he had met him last. The merchant did not recognize the tall, bearded man as his former tender of sheep, and it was some time before Harald could be properly placed in the old man's mind. Then it came to him suddenly, and he exclaimed:

“Yes, yes; now I remember. You are Einer Gundersen’s son—and what are you doing here?”

Harald led him into a cafe, and ordered coffee, the merchant continually remonstrating in true Norwegian style; but when they had been comfortably seated in a retired corner of the room, the old gentleman seemed well pleased. He drew off his gloves, dropping them into his hat. Then, pushing back his bushy, gray hair, he looked closely at his young friend.

“And so you are young Einersen? Yes; I have heard of you. My daughter talked of the delightful times she had in Nordland, for years after her visit. In fact, London, New York, Paris, were nothing to the wonders of Nordland. Yes; Nordland is all right—in the summer,” he lowered his voice on the last phrase, “but hoot-toot-too! in the winter!”

“And Miss Bernhard,” asked Harald, disregarding the drift of the old gentleman’s conversation, “is she well?”

A cloud passed over the merchant’s face, and a firm, though sad expression came into it.

“Yes; she is well.”

The tone in which he said it seemed to forbid the young man asking any further questions along that line.

“Yes; thank you, I’ll take another cup,” said the merchant, and then he continued:

“Your grandmother kept me pretty well posted on your affairs, but since her death I have not heard much. What are you doing now?”

"I have been teaching school for four years, but now I am reading law."

"Ah! Going to be a lawyer next, are you? What under the sun will you not aspire to? You'll wish to be elected to the *Storting* next, I dare say; and from there to the Prime Minister would be an easy step for you."

Harald smiled at the old man's pleasantry.

"Well, it's all right, I suppose," he continued. "We are living in a wonderful age, anyway. I sometimes think there is a chance for the return of Norway to her true position among the nations of the world, when I see such young men as you, and the spirit which is working in you."

Harald thanked him earnestly, and assured him that his own life work would be to help bring about the happy result.

"Well, you young fellows are good for it. I wish you success. If I were but a trifle younger now—but no, I'm about through with life."

The old merchant bowed his head as if some great sorrow bent it. He finished his coffee in silence, and then arose to go. He had stopped off at Akerby on a matter of business, and would be compelled to leave on the evening boat, hence, could not accept Harald's pressing invitation to remain with him over night. Harald learned nothing more about Thora, only that she was then in Christiania. The father's lips appeared to be sealed against any word about his daughter, and Harald could not understand it. It worried him not a little.

It may be that some future Norwegian historian may reveal the details of the deep-laid plan to overthrow the kingdom of Oscar II, and to erect a republic on the Scandinavian peninsula; but at the present writing, very little is known to the public of the schemes and doings of the little band of country-loving men who worked and planned, and kept their secret plots so well to themselves. Harald Einersen might, if he would, tell it all; but it is very doubtful if more than is simply hinted at in this narrative will ever be given to the world, at least by the one man who was the chief worker, the life and spirit of the movement, and whose withdrawal from it marked the beginning of its downfall.

There can be no doubt that at some future day, the Norwegians will form a republic, patterned after the great republic of America. That will come when the time is fully ripe for it. Then, perhaps, the seed sown by Harald Einersen and his associates will bring returns. What he and his friends accomplished, in and around the city of Akerby, no man can yet say. Time alone will tell; but to this day certain intimate friends of Harald Einersen sadly bewail their loss, and have only anathemas for the fate that broke into their ranks and took their leading spirit away.

V.

AN INTRUDER AND HIS DOCTRINE.

Harald Einersen traveled much in the interest of the West Akerby Club and its extending branches. One day, in the latter part of May, while in the small fishing village of Aanes, a few miles up the coast from Akerby, he was spending the evening at the house of a friend; and, as the principal men of the village had been invited in, there was a room-full of company. A good-natured crowd it was, too, though the parish priest and the schoolmaster were both there to bring the gravity of their positions to bear on the general conduct.

Politics had been discussed in a general way; the business outlook had been reviewed; some gossip had been indulged in; and now the conversation was lagging. Out of respect to Mr. Einersen's well known temperance principles, the punch bowl was absent, and coffee and chocolate were served. Pastor Brun had not yet contributed his share to the intellectual feast which was supposed to be taking place, so he was called upon to say something.

"Well, I was just thinking," he began, as he slowly sipped the hot chocolate and munched the wheaten cakes—"I was just thinking of the preponderance of evidence in favor of the early Christians."

There was a pause. No one seemed to understand such a profound remark.

The pastor chuckled. "I'll have to explain myself, I see," he continued. "I was thinking that we latter-day Christians are greatly favored; but think of living in the time of the beloved Lord and Master, of having the blessed privilege of beholding His face and hearing His voice. Ah, what one could afford to suffer for that blessing! What do you think, Mr. Schoolmaster?"

As the teacher was thus appealed to, he had to continue the conversation along the same lines, which, in truth, he was not loath to do, for the schoolmaster was one who had "gotten religion" and was "saved."

"Yes, dear pastor, I have often thought the same. What if we could have helped an apostle or succored a persecuted saint. There was Paul, at Jerusalem, or at Cæsarea, for instance."

But the ship captain did not like such talk, and he managed to turn the conversation into another direction. Then, when the host was in the middle of a story, the door bell rang. He stopped, called for the girl, and sent her to the door, telling her to show the gentleman right in—it was no doubt friend Anders who had said he could not come until late. There was some talk at the door, and then the girl came back, saying that it was a stranger who desired lodging for the night.

"Tell him this is not a lodging house," said the host, quite loudly.

"Friend, I am surprised," said the priest. "Where

shall the man go to find such a place in Aanes? Reconsider."

"Tell the man to come in, then."

A young man, carrying a grip and an umbrella, entered the room, hat in hand.

"Good evening, all," he said, as he looked around the room.

"Good evening, sir," said the host, advancing towards him. "What can I do for you?"

The stranger placed his grip on the floor, and his hat on a chair. He looked tired and travel-stained. His shoes and clothing were not free from the wet soil of the country road.

"I am a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ," he said. His words came slowly, and with a foreign accent. "I have been traveling through this part of the land preaching, and arrived at Aanes this evening. I am looking for a place to stop over night. I have asked at quite a number of places, this evening, but, so far, I have been refused, though I have money to pay for my lodging."

The company remained quiet. There was something strange about the proceedings. Pastor Brun advanced.

"You are a minister of the gospel, you say, and yet can get no entertainment. That is strange! What society are you representing, my friend?"

"I am representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, commonly known by the name of Mormon."

The stillness in the room was broken by hurried

whispers, and subdued acclamations of "A Mormon! a Mormon!" The stranger stood erect and still. He did not attempt to sit down, and he was not invited to.

"Now I understand," exclaimed the pastor, "why people will not let you into their houses. So we are to be plagued with that basest of all delusions, are we? Not if I can help it, my friend. Take my advice, get out of the country." Go home to Utah, from where, I suppose, you came. We do not want any of your Mormonism. We do not want any of your impositions." Turning to the host, the pastor continued, "I would advise you to follow the good example of your neighbors, by refusing to entertain this man; for harboring him will bring down on your head the displeasure of God."

"Yes; I don't see how we can keep, you, sir. There is another house some distance further on and—"

But the "Mormon" had taken up his hat and grip, and was moving towards the door. As he passed the door-way into the hall, he looked Harald Einersen, who was standing near by, straight in the face. Something in his eyes pierced Harald to the soul. What it was, Harald could not tell, but the whole man reminded him of one whom he had loved, and had buried up in Nordland.

When the man was out of sight, the company heaved a united sigh of relief. It had surely been a narrow escape. The schoolmaster soon found his tongue, however, and began telling some wonderfully strange and horrible stories about the "Mormons," their beliefs and practices, to which the company listened with eager ears.

Ten minutes later, Harald went into the hall, took his hat from the hook, and stepped out at the front door. There were no gas lamps in the one street of Aanes, and the night was dark. The sky was filling with clouds; the wind howled dismally around the gables of the house. He hurried up the street as that would very likely be the direction the stranger had taken, though it was an hour's walk to the next house. He hurried on; the hill was on one side; the still forest on the other. Every moment or two, he paused to listen; but he heard nothing save the wind in the trees. The clouds came from the sea, thick and black, and now a few drops of rain fell.

Harald stopped. What a fool he was, chasing this stranger! What was he to him? He was but a preacher, any way, no doubt like all other preachers. Let him go his way.

A flash of lightning tore across the sky; and, in an instant, another lighted up the road in front of him. A few rods ahead, a high, stone wall extended down the hill to the road. By the side of this wall, Harald saw the man, sitting. His hat was off, and his grip was on the ground. Then came the crash of thunder. Harald advanced slowly. Another flash came, and by its light he saw the man kneeling on the grass by the wall. He was praying.

Harald stopped again, but could hear nothing save the noise made by the approaching storm; however, there the man was—he saw him again—there he was, out in the night alone, an outcast, praying to God. He stepped out of the road, and stood leaning against a

tree, deciding that he would not go farther to intrude upon the man. In a few minutes, he heard the stranger's footsteps coming down into the road again, and then, Harald shouted to him. They met in the road.

"You are the Mormon, are you?" inquired Harald.

"Yes, sir."

"Then come back with me. I will find a place for you."

"Thank you, sir, for your kindness."

They could not converse much for the storm came on. The stranger raised his umbrella, and Harald took shelter under it, walking in step with his companion. Harald took him to his own lodgings, and asked the lady of the house to make him comfortable for the night. If she had no spare room, she should make a bed in his own room, and give him some supper.

"Good night, sir," said Harald, "I shall see you again in the morning."

"Good night, and God bless you," heard Harald, as he hurried back to his company.

They met next morning at the breakfast table. Harald led the conversation to political conditions in America. Religion was not mentioned, and the "Mormon" had no inclination to broach the subject.

"I am to remain here until this afternoon," said Harald to his guest, after breakfast. "If you could spare the time, I should like to speak further with you."

"To talk to people is my whole business," replied the young preacher, "and I am only pleased to speak when I can get a hearing."

"Come into my room, then—no, I'll settle for the entertainment." He led the way into his room. "I'll have to ask for your name. It will hardly do to call you Mr. Mormon. Some one might hear it and be shocked."

"My name is Olsen."

"That's common enough not to frighten anybody."

"True; not long ago I was looking over the directory in Christiania, and there are only about five thousand of us in that city, alone."

"Not all Mormons, though!"

"Well—no."

"You'll excuse my light-mindedness, I'm sure; but you remind me so much of an old friend of mine whom I held very dear, but who is now dead. My name is Einersen; not quite as common as yours, but still the same sen. There are a lot of us. Were you born here?"

"No; I was born in America. You may, perhaps, hear that by my poor language; although my parents are Norwegians, I have spoken English all my life, until a year ago. My Norwegian is practically only one year old."

"You speak it exceedingly well, then—but hear—now answer me—what must I do to be saved?"

They drew their chairs up to the table. The "Mormon" took from his grip a Bible and opened it, Harald watching him closely. The preacher did not at once say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." In fact, this preacher did not look like a preacher, at all. He did not have the clerical air, as Harald defined it.

"Have you a Bible?" asked the missionary.

“Not with me—but look here, I see you are going to prove your points from the Bible. You are going to tell me how to be saved by reading from the Bible, exactly as all other preachers do. Is it not possible to be saved without that book? I can think of a time when the Bible was not in existence. How were men saved then?”

Mr. Olsen closed the book on the table in front of him, and pushed it aside.

“Yes,” he said, “I can tell you of the plan of salvation without the Bible, because this plan existed before that book was written. The gospel plan exists independently of any book. If it were not so, our salvation would depend upon the dead forms of a printed page; but, of course, I thought I would have to prove every statement I may make from these scriptures; and, in fact, they are very useful in establishing the truth of what we teach.”

“Don’t misunderstand me,” said the other, “I believe in the Bible.”

“And you believe in Christ?”

“Certainly.”

“Very well, then, that is the central idea, the foundation. Upon it, I think, we can build our structure.”

Harald enjoyed the ring of the last sentence. Here, at last, might be some tangible thing to do.

“Christ, then, is the starting point, for Him were all things created. * * ‘All things were created by Him and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things exist’—you will excuse me, if I sometimes

use the words of the scriptures to express the thought. In Him all fulness dwells. He has 'made peace through the blood of the cross,' and has reconciled 'all things unto Himself. That is the reason that Christ is back of it all. Now, sin and evil are in the world, and it is a continual struggle on our part to keep from getting under its dominion. Why sin is in the world, we can not now discuss, at length—enough that it is, and is in direct conflict with righteousness, the same as darkness is in opposition to light, bitter to sweet, sorrow to joy. Our contentions, then, are with sin; we have nothing else in this world to worry over or to combat. Sin appears in manifold forms, and comes in countless ways. Sin is the real enemy—the enemy of our souls; working out our salvation consists in fighting this enemy. To be saved is to overcome sin, in all its ramifications, and to place it under our feet, triumphantly, gloriously. Within and of ourselves, this is impossible; our mortality is too weak. We need divine aid, and we have it in the Lord Jesus Christ. He came from the realms of perfection, with more than mortal power within himself. He came to our rescue, glory be to His name for it. He came willingly, gladly, because of His great love for us. Sin came into the world through the transgression of the first man; 'The wages of sin is death.' Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world. He paid the penalty imposed by the Eternal Adjudicator of Justice. He died on the cross, that He might draw all men to Him. He broke the bands of death and opened the grave for all men, therefore are we saved from the effects of Adam's transgression. 'As in Adam all die,

even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' Christ, then, 'bought us with a price,' for we are not our own; we are the Master's. We are free from any original sin, for the blood of Christ washed it unconditionally from the soul of every living creature. But while we are in the world, we are liable to commit sin. We have our agency, and we may choose. The good is on one side, the evil is on the other. The right of choice is fundamental. We often chose the evil, and sin. Did Christ pay for these personal sins also? Yes; but the effects of His atonement for these personal sins come to us only upon conditions. Here is where *we* come in. Here is where we must act. Herein, again, is shown the eternal law of compensation."

At this point in the talk there came a knock at the door. The houseswife wished to tidy up the room, but Harald asked her to defer it until later. When she had withdrawn, he turned again to his companion and said, "Go on, please."

"As I said, Christ has bought us, and we are His. He, then, certainly has the right to say what we must do to get the full benefit of His atonement. This He has done, and we have a record of it here in the scriptures. These requirements we call the gospel plan of salvation. The first principles and ordinances of this plan are—first, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, repentance; third, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now, you will excuse me, if I use the Bible," he said as he again opened the book; "I wish to support my argument with apostolic evidence. I

think these examples will also make my points clearer. "You remember at the time Christ ascended into heaven, He told His apostles to tarry at Jerusalem that they might be endowed with power from on high. It seems that a divine authority was necessary to carry on the work of preaching the gospel and initiating those who believed into the fold of Christ. You will remember also that when this power came to the apostles, on that memorable day of Pentecost, they spoke with other tongues; and Peter, the chief of the apostles, arose and addressed the large assembly present. He told them of Christ, proving from the scriptures that He was the one spoken of by the prophets of old, even He whom they had taken and put to death. Peter told them of His resurrection and of His ascension to heaven. 'And now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?' They asked the same question, Mr. Einersen, that you asked me, a few minutes ago, the same question that has been asked by thousands of honest souls. Hear Peter's reply: 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' There it is, plain and simple. Not a word did Peter say about faith. Why? They already had faith, or they never would have cried, 'What shall we do?' Peter, seeing this, told them what should naturally follow, namely, repentance; and then came baptism in water for the remission of their sins; and then the promise was that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. We are not told in that passage

how baptism was performed, neither how the Holy Ghost was imparted, but we have numerous other instances which prove conclusively that baptism was performed by a burial in the water, to typify a new birth, and that it was given only to those who were old enough to sin, to have faith, and to repent of those sins. The Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, as witnessed in the case of the baptized Samaritans receiving this ordinance under the hands of Peter and John."

The young man paused. The two looked at each other earnestly, while Harald sat as one in a spell. It was all so new and strange, yet it seemed as if he had known it, at some time in the distant past.

"Have you no questions to ask?"

Harald aroused himself. Yes; he had a good many, and he proceeded to ask them. The "Mormon" turned the leaves of the Bible, and answered most of them by reading and commenting on scripture passages.

"This plan of salvation, as you call it," said Harald, "is based on Christ and His teaching. Is this the only plan, and must it apply to all who have lived and will live on the earth?"

"There is but one name, one plan under heaven given to man for his salvation."

"Then, what becomes of those who have died without a knowledge of this name or plan? Is there no hope for them?"

"Christ is 'Lord both of the dead and living.' He died for the sins of *all* men, past, present, or future. The redemption could mean nothing less. An infinite

plan could not be so unjust, so imperfect as to fail in saving nine-tenths of the human race.

“But, but, you said—”

“Wait; I understand you! God’s arm is not shortened. Christ said to His apostles: ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live;’ and the Apostle Peter plainly tells us that Christ, when put to death, went and preached to the spirits in prison. Without quoting so much of the Bible, the fact of the matter is, my friend, that the Gospel of Christ will be preached to every son and daughter of Adam, either in this life or the life to come, and they will be given an opportunity to either receive it, or reject it, before they are judged in the matter. That is fair, isn’t it? That is in accordance with the justice of God, is it not?”

“Does ‘Mormonism’ teach that?” asked Harald.

“The gospel of Jesus Christ teaches that,” replied the missionary; “some people call it ‘Mormonism,’ but I like to call a thing by its proper name.”

VI.

THE STRUGGLE TO DECIDE.

This first conversation was only the beginning of many. Harald Einersen seemed to forget all else except the young "Mormon" elder and his doctrines. He took him to Akerby, and gave him lodgings at Mrs. Jacobsen's, that they might be together. For a few days, at least, the interests of the West Akerby Club were neglected. The first thing in the morning, they talked. They went out over the hills back of the town, discussing as they walked. They rowed in the harbor, conversing as they rowed. The days were now warm and long, but the two men sat up half the night talking. Harald's weather-stained Bible had never been in use so much before. It was not his nature to go into anything half-heartedly; so he probed and argued and questioned. What appealed to him most forcibly was the new light that was thrown on old themes. Why couldn't he have thought of these things? they were simple enough. Then, again, the "Mormon" did not try to escape from reason; rather, he tested all his doctrine by it, as well as by the scriptures. The question of salvation for the dead was met in a clear, sensible manner. Were the Vikings of old to be punished for the non-observance of a law not given to them? Justice

answered, no. Were the Grecian, the Roman, the Chinese philosophers doomed to an everlasting noll? Justice and reason, yea, the gospel of Jesus Christ, answered, no. The explanations given by the "Mormon" to these questions which had vexed him so were indeed satisfying.

"Last evening you were speaking of a universal apostasy," said Harald. "That is hardly clear to me, besides, if we admit of such a thing, the consequences are so far-reaching and disastrous that I shudder at the thought." The two were seated on a hill-top, overlooking Akerby.

"Well," answered the elder, "facts are facts, even if they are unpleasant. The fact that the whole of the so-called Christian world today is divided and subdivided, each sect striving against the other, is conclusive proof that the pure principles of Christianity are scarce in the earth. Christ gave a key by which all men may test the Christianity of the world. He said, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' Apply that test to the nations. Are the Danes Christians, followers of Christ? Are the Germans Christians, disciples of Christ? If so, they love each other; yes, even with that love with which Christ loved them. But these two nations, adherents even to the same division of Christianity, go to war and slay each other. Do the English love the French? Do the French love the English? Both are Christian nations. Over in our country, the great America, we recently had a war. Methodists marched against Methodists, and slew each other by the thousands. Baptists

marshaled in arms against their fellow Baptists, and bathed their swords in each other's blood; yet, they were all Christians, disciples of the same Christ, who had said that if they were His they would be one, they would love one another, even to the laying down of their lives. Imagine for a moment members of the Church of Christ taking up arms one against another! Christ is not divided. Every kingdom divided against itself shall not stand."

Harald thought of the secret plots which even then were being talked about in the meetings of the West Akerby Club, but he said nothing.

"These truths are enough for me; still we have much historical evidence to prove the apostasy. The scriptures tell of a time of great wickedness, when men would be ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. Then the history of the great Roman church and the Reformation, proves much. Luther said the Roman church had become corrupt. The pope said Luther and all his followers were apostates, and cut them from the church. Luther never claimed any renewal of divine authority from the fountain head in heaven. The fact of the matter is that Luther did not reform the church as regards doctrine, because he taught some doctrines just as erroneous as those taught and practiced by the Catholic church. What Luther did, was to break the chains of despotism which the popes had bound around the people, and for this he should have the honor due him. Now, coming nearer home, how was Christianity introduced into Norway? You have read history, how Olaf Trygge-

son Christianized his kingdom by killing, maiming, or driving from the country all who would not be baptized. Do you think for a moment that what Olaf brought to Norway was the pure doctrine of the Master? No; of course not. Then again, what about the Reformation? That was little better than the first introduction. The Catholic bishops were forcibly ejected, and their property seized. The spirit shown by the Lutheran reformers was scarcely Christ-like."

"Well, I have thought as much, myself," said Harald.

"Then, again, another phase of this pretended authority to minister in sacred things will strike you as inconsistent. Who is the head of the church in Norway?"

"The king."

"And how did the king obtain a power which is divine?"

"Well, I suppose the constitution gives him that power."

"And who made the constitution?"

"Representatives of the Norwegian people."

"Yes; there we have it. The people, many of whom are not even believers in God, give Godly authority! No; the stream is made to flow up hill. Then, again, see how kings become converted. When the present king's grandfather, Marshal Bernadotte, was chosen crown prince to the Swedish throne, he should embrace the Lutheran religion. This, you will remember, he readily did, for when he landed at Elsinor, he made solemn professions of the protestant faith before

the archbishop of Upsala and the bishop of Lund. This conversion may have been sincere. I don't know; but it doesn't sound like the conversions we read about in the day of the first apostles."

"Well, but all this leaves us without a roof over our heads."

"My friend," said Elder Olsen, "we never demolish a man's house until we have a better one to give him. Listen to this reading: 'And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.' I bear testimony to you that the angel here spoken of has come, and has delivered that same pure, everlasting gospel again to the earth, with divine authority to preach it, and to administer its saving ordinances to all mankind."

"You mean the angel visits, and the revelations given to Joseph Smith?"

"Yes,"

"It can't be true."

Harald said this more to himself than as a contradiction. He sat and looked over the harbor, and then out beyond to the sea. What was all this coming to, anyway? what did it all purport? He must get away from this "Mormon." Here was another and a terrible disturber of the peace of life.

"I know what prejudice you must naturally have against such a belief," continued the elder. "All your religious teachers hold that God has had His say, and has ceased to speak. In fact, they have sealed the mouth of God. If He has a message to give to man, be it ever so important, it could not be received. I prefer believing that God can and will reveal His will to His children, just as well now as formerly."

"Well, now I must go," said Harald, somewhat impatiently. They went down the hill, silently, Harald avoiding the town. When they arrived at their lodgings, Harald explained that he must visit some towns around the coast. They would doubtless meet again, some day, but now he had no more time to talk.

"There, thank goodness, I am rid of him," said Harald, quite aloud, after the elder's departure. People were beginning to talk again, and the business of the club was being neglected. Why did he thus bother with religion when his country needed his whole attention? He would put the whole "Mormon" question out of mind.

Easier said than done. Harald did not leave Ak-erby that day, nor the next. For two nights, he lay awake, listening to the tick of his tall clock on the wall, until past midnight. Questions crowded themselves in and out of his bewildered mind. He could not get rid of that which he had heard; but, rather, that which he had received called for more. On the third day, he hunted up Mr. Olsen. He had left the town, but he traced him to a nearby village, and then followed after him.

"I must talk more with you," Harald explained. "Why did you go?"

The elder looked him in the face and smiled; Harald understood. The man seemed to know his thoughts.

"Forgive me," said Harald, "I sent you away—but, tell me, is all this true?" He said it as a child, groping for light. The young elder took him by the arm, his heart going out to him. How could Harald know of the secret prayers that this man had breathed for him?

"My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself? That is all I can say. I have borne my testimony to you; I have preached to you the gospel of Jesus Christ; I can do no more. I can not convince any man of its truth; that power belongs to God only."

"But this word 'Mormon,' and this man Joseph Smith. They make me nearly to shudder. What you have said about the doctrine is beautiful, but—"

"My friend, a bitter fountain does not bring forth sweet water. You must remember, to be evil-spoken of is an heritage of the saints. This thing is not my doing. As I explained to you, I get no money or worldly honor for this work; but God has put it upon us who have received of this gracious light to impart it to our neighbor. I come 'not to do mine own will.' I would have a much easier task and a more pleasant time at my work if I were a baby."

Harald took the "Mormon" once more back to Akerby. Once more they roamed the hills and sailed

on the water, talking, talking. Harald could never become quite satisfied. He read the tracts and books which the elder gave him, but they did not satisfy him like the word of mouth. Then, there was something about the young missionary that drew Harald to him, something so simple, humble, yet natural—something so different from other preachers he had known.

Harald lived those days as in a dream. The weather was unusually fair, so the two men spent much of the time out of doors. The arousing of the world from its long, cold sleep in the dark was but a type of his own awakening; and the beauties that daily sprang into view in the physical world, had their counterpart in the loveliness which unfolded to his eager soul.

With all his studying, Harald Einersen had never really delved into the great basic study of life, which might be divided into three great headings: first, where did I come from? second, what is the object of this life? third, where do I go when I leave this world? Perhaps the reason for his ignorance of this science of all sciences was the scarcity of text books, and the absence of teachers; but now, this young teacher had come to him with a broken speech and a simple way, and had taught him some of the first principles of this great science.

The "Mormon" missionary remained in and around Akerby for some weeks. Harald gave him the names and address of a number of his friends, and asked the elder to call upon them. This was gladly done; but the reports which he brought to Harald were discouraging. None of them could see any

good in "Mormonism," as they persisted in calling his doctrine. Some were very indifferent, and others again insulted him openly. Harald was grieved at this, but the elder simply smiled as he told how one of Harald's best friends had opened the door and told him to get out in a hurry, if he did not wish to be helped.

"Did he actually do that?" enquired Harald. "How did you feel?"

"Oh, I simply walked out, not thinking much about it. Such things discouraged me terribly at first—came in conflict with my Americanism, you know—but now, I have become accustomed to it, and do not mind it much."

"It must be hard—but I am surprised at him."

Elder Olsen left Akerby to attend some kind of conference at Bergen, and Harald went back to the duties of the West Akerby club. Some of his friends acted strangely towards him, he thought, but he paid no attention to it. Of course, his intimate association with the "Mormon" had become somewhat known, and had created some talk; but he tried not to care. Though he tried he did care. His friends were dear to him; their society was all he had in the social world. But above all, his political ambitions depended wholly on the good will of his friends. If he lost that, he himself was lost, and with him, his nicely laid plans.

But then, if all this which the "Mormon" had told him be true, what then of friends and well laid plans? Perhaps God had sent this man to him as an answer to his yearnings for light. If God had sent him, how

could he resist? If "Mormonism" was the truth, how could he consistently withstand it! Truth is all powerful and can not be overcome. No one can successfully fight against truth.

But oh, it must *not* be true, it can not be true! He must reject it. His plans were too well matured to be overturned now. His country needed his aid. He could not desert his friends, who placed the utmost confidence in him. They had promised to elect him to the *Storting*, and from that body, he could make his influence felt.

Then Harald tried to convince himself that he could go on with his plans, do it all, and still accept this new truth, if it proved to be such; but he could not deceive himself. He knew that if it came to an issue, his surroundings would compel him to choose—and that thought, as it came forcibly to him, made him sweat at every pore. The supreme struggle was at hand. He felt it coming, and tried to ward it off, but on it came, relentlessly on. His efforts were the puny exertions of a child. He tried to set his heart against this disturber of his peace, but his heart rebelled. He tried to close his eyes against the new outlook; but, time and again, his soul hungered for a sight of the new regions of beauty. The new force was already shaking to its foundation his latest and grandest castle.

Then arose another champion against the still, small voice, deep within his bosom—a voice which had to contend with so many foes already. This warrior was bold and strong, and might turn the tide of bat-

tle. Harald thought he could hear his voice saying: "You fool, to thus throw your life away! Here you have patiently worked your way up from poverty and ignorance to a high level; and through it all, Thora Bernhard has been true to you. She has had faith in you, that you would overcome the differences between you, that you would place yourself on her level. She has been your star of hope through all your struggles—and the north star is still in the heavens. And now, when you have attained to this, you would deliberately lower yourself again; or, if not that, fix a gulf between yourself and her that it will be impossible to span! Now, which will you choose? Contempt, degradation in the eyes of your friends, the loss of honor and respect, living all your life in common poverty; or the respect of your countrymen, a seat in the *Storting*, perhaps something higher, and, with it all, the love of Thora?"

And Harald Einersen bowed his face in his hands and groaned, "O God, I don't know!"

He was on a sea; the night was dark; the thick fog hung low; not a star could be seen; the wind blew hither and thither; no pilot on board; his ship was drifting, he knew not where; any moment, it might strike a hidden rock and go down—father was getting old; he was losing strength, and could not swing his ax as formerly; his brothers were men; Hulda was a beautiful maiden; there were other children—and Harald was adrift, knowing not where his harbor would be.

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the

whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

It was the still, small voice that spoke, and Harald could not answer it.

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

The elder had quoted these words to him many times. They had not touched his heart until now. The advice had been given with perfect assurance. No other preacher had ever told him to prove his doctrine by asking God. Here, then, was a glimmer of hope. He would try it—put it to the test. Why had he not thought of it before? He had depended on his own strength and wisdom; he now saw that they were pitifully lacking. Yes, he would ask God for wisdom, and leave the matter in His hands.

VII.

THE ROAD FROM THE SUMMIT OF DESPAIR TO THE LAND
OF PROMISE.

Harald was out early. Just as the eastern sky paled, and then opened its depths of light, he passed over the hillside and down to the highway which led up the valley back of Akerby. The last lingering star could yet be seen, as he crossed the bridge. Usually he stopped on this bridge to view the leaping waters of the river; but this morning, he went on without even a glance. When the sun arose he was out of sight of the town, though down over the low hills, he could see the smoke-filled air of the city.

He left the main road, and took a pathway which led over some rolling hills to the right. The farmers were astir. The lowing of the cattle and the bleating of the impatient sheep, came to his ears. Wherever the hills were not too steep and rocky, the land had been cleared of trees, and was growing crops of wheat and potatoes. Harald did not trespass by crossing the fields. He knew how the farmers disliked anyone tramping on their crops, so he always went around the stone walls.

Another half hour's walk, and the cultivated lands were passed. Above him stretched the hills with their

forests of fir, with here and there clearings and patches of birch trees and willows. Above and beyond the hills, arose the mountains, in places broken by rocky peaks, in other parts, pine-clad to their summits. He found a trail leading upward through the forest, and followed it; not hurriedly—there was no need of that; he had all day for his trip, yes, two days if he wished.

The bright, beautiful June morning on the mountains gave him strength. Had the earth been gray and cold, and the air chilling, he would have had so much more to overcome; but the life-inspiring morning braced him, and put spirit into his soul. He had always been a mountain-climber, a lover of the hills, and had often gone to them in his troubles. With their calm and their solemnity, they had often soothed his boyish fears. It was natural, then, that he should now go to the hills. On them, if anywhere, he could get away from the world, and approach near to God; and if at any time in his life he felt as if the heavens ought to be easy of access, it was that morning.

The sun was well up in the sky when he threw himself down to rest on the grass in an opening among the trees. He was out of sight and sound of any human object, save it were the toy-like houses, away down in the valley, from whose chimneys faint clouds of smoke arose. His eyes lingered on these buildings as if they were the last links that bound him to this world, from which he disliked to part. He saw them magnified in his vision. Brown, weather-beaten, low-roofed they were, with windows of small bottle-green glass which sent out dazzling reflections when the ev-

ening sun was low. The roofs were of sod, at this season covered with grass and flowers. What an indication of peace was the smoke from the chimneys, as it curled gracefully up into the still summer air! No doubt that farmer was at peace with the world and with his God. He could go about his daily toil, and return home in the evening to his wife and children, with only bodily weariness to make his footsteps slow. How blessed he was! Peace, heaven-kissed peace of soul! Did I own the world, and not thee, gladly would I barter my possessions for thee!

As he lay there on the grass, Harald Einersen reviewed again the arguments for and against his "accepting the gospel," as the "Mormon" put it. The world on one side; truth on the other. Honors on one side; ignominy with salvation on the other. The love of a woman, dearer than life to him, on one side; Christ and the peace of God, on the other.

"No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

"I will be fit, then, O Lord," said Harald, as he took up again his hat and continued on up the hill.

For another hour he journeyed upward. The sun emitted its warmth as it sailed through the clear sky. A breeze came down from the mountains, and the pines murmured their discontent that they were thus forced to remain in one spot all their lives. Ah, how Harald had seen them tug at their roots when the elements were aroused and went calling in the wind for their earthly kin to follow; but no, there they stood, and must stand until they became hoary with age, or

until the wood-chopper cut them down in their prime. "Blessed trees," said he, "you are not compelled to work out your salvation with fear and trembling."

As Harald had fasted since the evening before he now felt weak. He would have to husband his strength, or it would fail him before he returned to his home; so he walked more slowly and chose the easiest paths. At noon, the mountains were yet some distance ahead of him. The earth below him had become hidden in a mist, and he looked out as if on a sea of smoke. Before him the peaks arose into the clear air. He knew their distance, and considered he could reach the summit in two hours more.

About the middle of the afternoon, he came to the timber line. From there on, nothing but rocks and low bushes appeared. He sat again to rest before he should finally make his journey to the summit. On the sunny side of a rocky ledge were a number of butterflies darting hither and thither in the warm air. One of them fluttered on to his hand for an instant, and then spread its yellow wings again.

Yes, once you were an ugly, gray worm, Harald thought. Once you lived on the earth—in the earth, rather. You crawled in the dust; you ate coarse food; you knew nothing but what you came in direct contact with; you did not then dream of living in the air, floating on the summer breezes—or did you? Who can tell? Who knows the secrets of that gray worm? Who can tell but that within its tiny cell a world of thought existed—then you went to sleep. You lay wrapped in your cerements, all through the long, cold

winter. You were as dead, though we know your life still remained in you. Thus you lay until the warm sunlight of heaven touched you with its magic rays. You awoke; you arose as from the grave; you passed from one world to another; you spread your golden wings, and flew into space. Now you live on the nectar of flowers. Now you go where you will. You have been born again. You now see the beauty and light of the world, yea, live in and partake of that beauty and light. Before, you lived in the kingdom of the earth; now, you live in the kingdom of the air.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

How much, then, is man like the butterfly! He, also, must be born again. That is the only process by which he can shake off the old man of sin and put on the new man of righteousness. Yes, man must be born again, “born of water and of the Spirit,” or he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Harald went on up the mountain. There was no path, so he was obliged to make his way slowly over the rough hill-side. At last he reached the top of the peak, where he found a small, level space, strewn with loose boulders.

Once more he rested. Other peaks could be seen farther on, but there were smaller hills and valleys between. Towards Akerby the country seemed to terminate suddenly, and the ocean lay stretched out to the distant horizon. The low-lands were yet under the summer mist. Not a sound arose to him, not a

human object was in sight; no bird sang; not an insect chirped. The hilltop was bare, so the breeze had nothing to sway nor play upon. Harald was now surely alone, alone with his God! He sat on a large boulder on the side of the hill, looking down towards Akerby. What had he come that long distance for? Would not God have answered his prayer in the secrets of his own room, as well as here? True enough, but he had been compelled to get out—and then he had read of how God had talked to men in ancient days—from the tops of mountains. He remembered Moses and the prophets of Israel. He recalled Abraham, and how God had commanded him to take his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved, and offer him unto the Lord as a burnt offering on the mountain. Yes; God had also called him to the mountain; called on him to lay his all on the altar. Would God provide a ram in the thicket for him?

Then he went to the center of the level space on the summit, and with a stone marked the outlines of a small square. Gathering the larger stones lying loose near by, he placed them true to the line, making a walled square. The inside, he filled with smaller stones. Over the top of the structure he placed the smoothest stones he could find, and then his altar was ready.

The sun was nearing the western horizon. The breeze had fallen to a zephyr. The world was silent. Taking off his hat, he laid it on the ground, and knelt by the altar. Extending his arms over it he bowed his head into his hands.

He had never before approached God in vocal

prayer, other than in the prescribed form of his church. He had come there to pray, to ask of God for wisdom, for light, but now words failed him. The old forms came to him, but it would be mockery to utter them for they could not express the emotions of his bursting heart. What could he do? What could he say? He rested heavily on the altar of stones. Then tears came to his relief, and he sobbed, sobbed as a child does on its mother's breast. "Grandmother, mother, Jesus," he said, "teach me, help me to pray." And then came that soft, angel-touch which gave him quiet, and that sweet voice whispered rather to his heart than into his ear—"Speak to God as a child speaketh to his father."

Then he prayed. Out of the abundance of his heart, the words came to his lips. He spoke to God as one man speaks to another, telling of his desires, of his sorrows, of his trials, of his ambitions, holding nothing back. Then he asked for light, that he might be shown his duty; asked for a testimony of the truth or the falseness of the doctrines brought to him by the "Mormon" elder. He pleaded for strength to embrace it, if it were true, or for power to throw it from him, if it were false. "Father," he said, "I want to do the right, help me to do it. Let Thy light shine around me, let it enter my heart. I am weak, and but a child. I grope in darkness, not knowing what to do. Help me, show me Thy will, and then, O, Father in Heaven, I promise with Thy help to do my duty—only help me"—

Still he prayed on, afraid to cease, for fear of the old dread coming back to him; but at length as he

grew faint he arose to his feet. Yet he was not satisfied. He walked back and forth on the hill. The sun neared the horizon on the sea.

Jacob had wrestled all night with the Lord. "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" he had said. Jacob was in no greater need of a blessing than he.

Once more he knelt by the altar and prayed; but it was not until the third time that he arose satisfied.

The sun had set, and the summer twilight brooded, like a benediction from God, over the land, as he made his way down the mountain. It would be an all-night's journey home, but a night in June is never dark. He was weak, but what matter! There was an assurance in his soul that God would be with him. Miraculous manifestation he had not received; but there was a peace in his heart which comforted him. The truth shone undiminished into his soul. From the hills he beheld the dim valleys lying in the shadows of night, but the sea reflected the light of the sky, and out beyond it all, he could surely catch glimpses of the fair Land of Promise.

VIII.

HARALD'S RETURN TO FATHER AND HOME.

Early one summer morning in July, Harald Einesen was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was then that the term "born of the water and of the Spirit" came to him in its full and true meaning; and the Fathers' promise was realized in his case, as it inevitably will be in all cases. He had proved the matter: he had done God's will, and had received a testimony.

To be born again necessarily brings once more a period of childhood. In truth, the kingdom of God must be received as a little child or there is no admission therein. He felt the force of the Savior's teachings, in this respect. He surely felt as a little child, and ah, the glory of that feeling! "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." The peace of a new life lay about him; he seemed shorn of all his grown-up egotism. He could now trust implicitly in the Power that ruled on high. To do his simple duty, and to trust in God, what joy in that!

As in his first childhood he had looked forward with the trustful eye of faith, and had seen the glories of future accomplishments, so now, in the beginning of this new life, he looked into the future with buoyant

hopes, even as a child, reveling in the beauties of the golden sands on the shore, looking out on the limitless ocean before him, and dreaming of its vaster possibilities.

Harald Einersen was now a "Mormon," and did not care how soon the world, his world at least, knew of it. The struggle had been long and hard, but it was now over, and he was satisfied. He knew now that if the political movement which he had helped to forward was to be carried on, some one else would have to do it. His leadership was at an end. He had gone into a new world, and this change was as complete as if he had died and had arisen in another sphere.

The news that former Head Master Harald Einersen had become a "Mormon" spread rapidly through the town of Akerby, especially in the West district where he was well known. Pastor Bange rubbed his hands, smiled and said, "I suspected as much." Pastors Jensen and Skabo again recalled his peculiar mental condition earlier in the summer. There were universal expressions of pity and regret for Mr. Einersen, and unqualified condemnation on the head of the crafty "Mormon" elder who had thus made such havoc with at least one soul.

At the next meeting of the West Akerby Club, Harald was in his usual place. He was as calm and controlled as ever, and some remarked to each other that his becoming a "Mormon" had not lessened his dignity. At this meeting Harald talked plainly to his friends, telling them he had nothing to conceal, he had done nothing for which he wished to apologize. "I

have simply followed the right as God has given me to see it," he said. "If you, my friends, are doing that, I shall be the last one to find fault with you, or condemn you. I ask the same consideration for myself. I know the full consequences of my action; the contumely which I have brought down upon me; but knowing also that when God calls, no man should disobey, I dared not do otherwise. The Master said that 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me.' If Christ had laid His cross on you, would you refuse to carry it?—but, my friends, I will not talk religion to you—though I can give plain proof of my convictions, and if any wish to know them, I shall be pleased to have them call on me. What I now particularly wish to say is that you are not to distrust me. My past obligations to you and the cause of greater freedom are sacred; nothing shall come from my lips to injure you or betray you. I must leave you, but that need not materially affect you. You may go on—and may God bless you in your work. I wish now to hand in my resignation, and it will be best that it be accepted."

As he sat down, silence still continued in the hall. For a minute or two no one spoke or moved. He again arose and begged them to act on his resignation. Then a motion was made that it be accepted, which was carried unanimously, but without much spirit, it is true. Soon after, the meeting adjourned, and Harald Einersen walked home alone, for the first time since he had been connected with the West Akerby Club.

"No, you must not hold my room, Mrs. Jacobsen. I shall not need it longer. I may never come back to Akerby."

Mrs. Jacobsen was very much concerned; during the years of his residence with her, Harald had become more like a son than a mere boarder. There were tears in her eyes when he bade her farewell.

The coast steamer bore him towards Vangen and Opdal. He was going home. The fact was, he hardly knew where else to go. He had suddenly become homeless in his native land, and friendless in the midst of hundreds of friends. So he would go home to Opdal, home to his father's humble cot, to his brothers and sisters, and to the grave of his grandmother. It would be useless to try for a position as school teacher, as he was out of that for good, at least in the kingdom of Norway. He had not money enough to set up in business, so he would go home and await developments. Besides he had the gospel message to bear to his kinsfolk. They must also hear it, and, oh, the joy if some of them would heed its call!

Harald landed at Vangen early one evening. He told the deliveryman on the wharf to take his trunk to the hotel, and he followed it. After supper he walked through the little town, looking at the familiar scenes in the old sea-port. Then he went into Merchant Bernhard's former place of business. The store looked much the same. A stranger, however, was behind the counter, and he informed Harald that Merchant Bernhard had sold out some months ago, and he was now devoting his whole time to his business at Larvik. Mr.

Bernhard hardly ever came to Vangen now, and Miss Bernhard—well, she had not been seen for a long time. The clerk had never met the young lady, and he knew very little about her.

The next morning, Harald arose early and set out for Opdal. There had been a sprinkling of rain during the night, so the land was fresh and sweetly-scented. He greatly enjoyed the walk up the road bordering on the fjord, where recollections of boyhood scenes and exploits came to him at each new turn of the road. He remembered his row down the fjord, when first he went to Nordland. It seemed to the young man that he had lived a lifetime since then; and now he was returning home very much like the child that went away that morning years ago to make a mark in the world.

The sky was overcast with broken clouds; but here and there, the sunshine emerged in streams of yellow light. Where it fell upon the ledges, it threw every detail of grass and moss and flower into distinctness. The fjord shone in radiant patches. Up over the hills, the forests yet stood in sombre silence. The woods were full of life; the birds sang; the squirrels ran from tree to tree, leaping from one extended branch to another. Harald often went from the road up the hillside, and found blue-berries to eat.

A short distance from Opdal, he saw a man walking slowly in front of him. By the gait and the way his cane was swinging, he knew it was Mr. Juel, the old schoolmaster. Harald quickened his steps, and soon overtook him.

The schoolmaster was getting old, too. He leaned heavily on his cane, as he eyed Harald from head to foot. "Harald Einersen? Why, yes, certainly, I remember you—but you've changed so. Didn't you have a beard the last time you were at Opdal?"

"Yes." Harald's face was now smooth.

"That's why I did not recognize you. Well, I'm pleased to see you. You're home on your vacation, I suppose. I haven't heard of you for a long time. You were Head Master, then. Yes; I knew it was in you. I'm always glad to hear of my boys getting along in the world."

The two walked slowly up the road. Harald did not tell his companion of the changes in his life. He would discover it soon enough; besides, the young man had an idea that his brother should be the first to hear of the tidings of great joy which he had to bring. Harald asked the schoolmaster many questions about the people in and around Opdal.

"Your father, too, is getting old," Harald was told. "Yes; he still drinks, when he can get a chance: but the boys are all sober and God-fearing. In fact, I understand that Holger is studying for the ministry. Pastor Ingman is encouraging him very much. Oh, yes, Holger took to the catechism as a duck takes to water—not like you, eh?"

"But, you know, I learned mine well, and ought to have stood at the head, at confirmation."

"Yes, I remember. Well, I'll tell you, if you have not already learned it, that everything that goes under

the name of religion is not religion. Religion has not escaped the general adulterations of the age."

"I have found that to be true, Mr. Juel."

"Take your father, for instance, I respect that man, in spite of his great weakness. He gets drunk, and when he is drunk he often abuses his wife and children; but I tell you, Harald Einersen, aside from this, there is a heart of gold in Einer, the logger; there is substance to him, there is honesty, and, above all, there is not a trace of hypocrisy in your father. Harald, I want you to honor him for these things."

"I am glad to hear you say that," answered Harald.

The clearing and the two houses were now in sight. Before Harald parted with the schoolmaster, he promised to call on him. As he was to remain at Opdal for some time, they would have many talks together.

Harald left the road before he came to the path leading up to his father's house. The little, one-roomed house where he and his grandmother had lived was still standing, and he wished to take a peep at it first. He found it was falling to decay. The weeds and grass now grew up to the very door step; the little glass window had been taken out, and boards had been nailed up. His mother's flower garden was no more. The shrubs and climbing vines had been taken away from the walls.

Harald pushed the door open, and went in. One end of the room was piled high with wood, the result of the industry of one of his brothers, no doubt; but

for the wood, the room was vacant. Harald seated himself on the chopping block and looked around.

This, then, was his birthplace. Here his mother had died, leaving him to the care of his grandmother, and here they had lived together. Right in that corner, by the old pot-stove, the rude cradle had stood, and grandmother had sat, hour after hour, many and many a day, rocking that cradle and humming a droning melody for him to sleep, the stocking leg growing longer and longer, meanwhile. Oh, the hardships of those days! Oh, the joy of their childhood innocence! Grandmother's teachings came to him again. They had been truly prophetic, and the blessed assurance that he would be able to help her some day gave him unspeakable joy. There the bed had stood. By it he had repeated his little prayer that she had taught him.

Harald's eyes grew dim. He went to the door and looked about. He could hear children's voices over at "the other house," but no one was in sight. He went in again, closing the door after him, which made the hut dim and cool. Then Harald knelt by the log of wood, and offered a prayer. He had gotten into the habit of doing this, not only night and morning, but as often as place and circumstance prompted him. It was his main source of strength.

Then he walked over to his father's house, and, as he went, he wondered whether or not he was the prodigal son.

The children in the yard stopped their playing when they caught sight of him. They did not know

him. The mother came to the door, but she did not recognize him until he spoke.

Of course, they were all pleased to see him. Father was away, as usual, and would not return for a week. Holger and Jens were working at a neighboring farm. Hulda was reading with the priest, getting ready for confirmation. There were three younger children, who stood around Harald, barefooted and bareheaded, with eyes and mouths open in big wonder.

The step-mother was plainly embarrassed to know how to provide for Head Master Einersen. Another room had been built on to the house, but still everything was poor and crude, and Harald had, no doubt, been used to fine things for many years past. He, however, understood well her disadvantages, and soon made her feel that all he wanted was a welcome to stay and share with them their lot for a short time.

The next morning saw him dressed in farmer costume, digging in the garden which of late had become sadly neglected. He soon won the good graces of the children, and they all became fast friends. For a rest, he took them all up into the woods to pick berries. That afternoon, Hulda came home to see her brother. She was a bright girl, but somewhat shy of the learned "Professor Einersen," as the neighbors called him. Then the brothers also came home, and the next day, the father, having heard that Harald was home, could not resist the longing to see him.

What a field was here for Harald! To convert his whole family to the same gospel truths which he had received was certainly a task worthy of any sacri-

fice or labor; and they certainly could not help but understand. He would make his explanations so clear that "a wayfaring man, though a fool need not err"—and they were not fools by any means.

Harald did not go abruptly about this work. He approached his brothers first, leading them carefully on to religious topics. Then he preached faith, repentance, and baptism to them; but they did not get enthusiastic over his talk. At last, he came out boldly and told them his whole experience. He put into his words all the fervor of his own conversion, but a blank look of astonishment was all he saw in their faces.

"And have *you* become a 'Mormon?'" exclaimed Holger.

"That is what I shall be called."

"Why, that is terrible. Oh, brother, how could you! I must not listen to your talk."

Harald pleaded and explained, but it was no use. The whole household, from the mother to the smallest child, seemed frightened at him. Holger, especially, became bitter, telling him he had no business coming home with such detestable doctrine. It was a disgrace to be associated with such vile people, a people everywhere spoken evil of.

Harald was both astonished and grieved. Day after day, he dug in the garden and went into the woods alone. His father had gone back to his work, but when he should come home again Harald would no doubt have to pack up and leave.

He would go to his father and tell him the whole truth before Holger should give him a wrong impres-

sion. He would be first, anyway, and abide by the result.

Harald found his father in the pine-woods, away back in the hills, and his heart went out to him when he saw how slowly he worked. They sat down on a fallen tree, and talked for some time, and then Harald tried his hand at swinging the ax.

"A little bungling, but you haven't quite forgotten," said his father. "Harald, I'm glad you came. The men have gone down to the river today, and I would have been alone tonight."

That evening, in the hut among the pine-clad hills, after the supper had been eaten, Harald told his story, delivered his message to his father. He sat on one side of the rude pine-board table with his Bible open before him; his father sat on the other side smoking his pipe. The lamp burned red through the grime on the chimney.

For hours Harald talked, for he had never felt so free before. Explanations came easily to him. The father listened, saying not a word. When Harald would seem to stop, the father would simply say, "Go on." His pipe went out, and he placed it on the table. He leaned over, drinking in eagerly every word that fell from the lips of his son.

Outside was the stillness of night. The wind moaned in the pines. The night darkened towards the midnight hour; still the two men sat by the table, the young man talking, the old man intently listening. At last Harald paused.

"What do you think of it, father?"

The old man pushed back the stool on which he had been sitting, arose to his feet, and said :

“Thank God, thank God, the truth has come at last. My son, what you have been telling me is the everlasting truth of God. I have awaited for it many, many years, and now it has come—and you, my son, have brought it.”

The man sank down on his knees by the table, as if overcome. Harald kneeled beside him, and put his arm around his shoulder. Then the father prayed as Harald had never heard him pray before. He poured out his whole heart in words of gratitude, and Harald’s soul said amen to every uttered word.

All that night, they lay in their bed and talked, sleep not coming to their eyes until the morning, when they dozed for a short time. That day the father could not work; and when Harald prepared to return home, the father gathered up his tools, locked the cabin door, and went home with him.

“We’ll see about this,” he said. “Harald, you may send for Elder Olsen as soon as you wish.”

IX.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MERCHANT BERNHARD.

Some natures need to be patiently trained into a truth; others get it only by careful argument and a fierce struggle with themselves; others, again, grasp it at first sight. Einer Gundersen belonged to the latter class. With him, to hear was to understand. The gospel message "pricked him to the heart;" to understand was to obey. There was no struggle with him, no debating what to do with a great problem, no fears of what the world might say or do. The gospel came to him as something precious which he had known before, but had forgotten. Now that he had found it again, he decided not to let it pass lightly away.

Elder Olsen and companion soon arrived at Opdal, and Einer Gundersen announced to the neighbors that a gospel meeting would be held in his house. He gave Pastor Ingman and Mr. Juel special invitations, which the pastor declined, but the schoolmaster accepted. Holger and Jens attended because their father had rather forcibly requested them to. Gundersen's wife was, at first, somewhat nervous when she heard that two "Mormons" were to hold a meeting in her house, but she dared not object to her husband's plans. The arrival of the preachers reassured her somewhat. The afternoon before the first meeting, they both took off

their coats and helped Harald gather the hay. They worked as if they had been in the hay field before. The father was delighted with them.

"Well, yes," said one of them, in reply to a question, "I put up one hundred and fifty tons of hay on my farm the summer before leaving home. I ought to know something about hay."

The little room was well filled that evening. The schoolmaster sat in one corner, by the side of the speaker, and the master of the house sat on the other side. Einer Gundersen seemed to be in a quiet rapture all the evening, although none of the others showed signs of any great interest. No one asked any questions when the opportunity was given at the close of the meeting. The timberman was greatly astonished at this lack of enthusiasm.

The next day the two elders, Harald, and his father, went down to the pond, where Einer Gundersen received the ordinances of baptism and the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost.

The advent of the "Mormons" created quite a stir in the neighborhood, especially when it became known that both Harald and his father had become converts. Harald's dream of converting all his relations and friends soon vanished, but he took great comfort in having his father with him. The boys seemed impenetrable. At last they would neither listen nor reason, so they were left alone.

But a new force had entered the life of Einer Gundersen, a force that gave him power over the adversary of his soul. From the hour of his baptism

to his death, Einer Gundersen did not once taste of intoxicating liquor. When the elders, who often visited him, told him that it was not right to use tobacco, he at once threw away his pipe, and that was the end of it. In very deed he had been born again into another life. What little money he earned, he brought home to his wife, who, though she could not see as he did in the matter of religion, thanked God for the change in his life.]

But Harald could not stay at Opdal. He must be doing something more than dig in the garden and herd sheep. He thought of going to Bergen or to Christiania, where there were large branches of the Church. He also contemplated going to America, now that future prospects in Norway were small; but, to be plain, Thora Bernhard was yet somewhere in his native land; and, he must at least, learn something definite about her before he left.

Towards the close of the summer, he went down to Vangen, and took steamer to Larvik. Everything was quiet around the Bernhard residence. The grass had been neglected, and certainly there had been no flower beds in the lawn that summer. There was a deserted air about the house. He had visited the place only once before, but then it had been in Thora's gentle care.

A servant answered Harald's ring, who informed him that Mr. Bernhard was at home.

He found the merchant an old man. His hair was white, and his hand trembled as Harald took it in his own. How lonely he appeared? Thora must still

be away. What a pity, what a shame that he should be thus left alone! Why was she not here to take care of her father?

The old man peered at Harald from beneath his shaggy eyebrows, failing to recognize him at first.

"And so you are Harald Einersen, are you? Sit down, sit down. Yes; I remember meeting you at Akerby. You had been teaching school, you said, but were then studying law. You are not a full-fledged lawyer yet—but you young fellows—there's no telling what you can do. Now, in my days, it took time to learn a trade or prepare for a profession, but now—well, well, and you are young Einersen?"

The merchant, evidently, did not know of Harald's later history.

"And now you're going home on a visit, I suppose."

"I have been at home for some time."

"Then perhaps you're going back to Akerby. Well, I'm glad you called. You see, I'm pretty lonely at times, and lately I haven't been able to be out at all."

Harald explained that he was not going back to Akerby, just then. The merchant called his servant, and ordered coffee.

"You're not in a great hurry, I know, so take off your coat, and stay the evening. I want someone to talk to."

Harald's heart went out to the lonely old man.

"I shall be pleased to stay," he said. "Miss Bernhard is not yet at home, I presume."

"No; Thora is not at home." The merchant went

on with his rambling talk. Not another reference did he make to his daughter, and although Harald tried to lead the conversation around to her, the subject was avoided every time.

“Yes; I am getting old; and although I have made considerable money in my time, I can’t say that my life has been a success. What is a successful life? Is it to be able to die alone, deserted, as I shall die? I have money, but it cannot buy what I want. Young man, it’s all right to make money, but be sure that in your old age you have something more than money in your treasury.”

Harald talked to the old man as one would talk to a sick or fretful child, and his words had the desired effect. The merchant soon ceased his own comments and, leaning contentedly back in his arm-chair, listened to the young man. Harald was surely inspired to say what he did that evening. He thought of it afterwards, how he was able to remember his grandmother’s teachings, harmonize them with the words of the “Mormon” elders and the scriptures, and make reference to thoughts that seemed to spring instantly into his mind. At any rate, his words had the effect of music to the old man’s soul, and when he ceased and made ready to leave, the merchant clung to him, begging him to stay.

“I wish I had a son like you—excuse me, Einer- sen, but I can’t help it. My business is going to ruin. I have no one to look after it.” The tears were now rolling down the old man’s face as he stood clinging to Harald and urging him not to go.

"I'll stay as long as you wish," said Harald.

"Then stay with me always—there! you see I am childish—but I do want some one, I want you—you can help me in the business, I can trust you. Thora always spoke well of you."

The old man sank again into a chair. He covered his face with his hands as if in shame that a forbidden thought had entered his mind, a forbidden word had escaped his lips. Harald stood over him, until he saw the old man's form shake with emotion, then he drew a chair up to him and put his arm over the bowed shoulders. Harald himself could hardly speak, but he would try once more to learn something about Thora.

"Tell me about Thora? he said. "Excuse me, but I must know. What is this mystery? Why is she not here to take care of you? Mr. Bernhard, you can trust me. I have loved your daughter ever since we were children. I love her yet. Tell me the truth about her, and if it is as awful as you seem to think, let my heart break with yours."

The old man sobbed aloud, but said nothing. Harald, also, choked, while wild conjectures ran through his brain. Was, then Thora lost to him, too? She was not dead. Was her fate worse than death!

"Mr. Bernhard, come, tell me, tell me—"

"Sh," said the merchant, as he arose. His face was pale and set, but his emotions were again under control. "Sh! you must not mention her name in my hearing. I am but a father and may relent. Listen—my daughter must not enter my door as long as I live. She would come tomorrow, did I but say the word, but

my door is barred against her! You must not ask why—you must not mention her name—I will not talk of her—perhaps you would better go now. Come back to-morrow; I want to talk business with you. Good night!”

Harald went out into the street with the sweat of agony on his face. An icy hand seemed struggling to grasp his heart and stop its beating.

X.

THE MYSTERY OF THORA.

Harald returned hurriedly to his lodgings, and retired; but sleep would not come, and, as he could not bear to lie thus all the night, he arose, dressed, and went out. He walked up the steep streets of Larvik, and over the hill to the beach-grove which, at this season of the year, was deserted. The falling leaves rustled beneath his feet. The air was cold, so he kept moving, although he felt tempted to lie down on a pile of leaves to gaze out on Faris Lake, which lay fair in the moonlight, at the foot of the hill.

He could not rid his mind of its terrible thoughts about Thora; Thora, who had been his star of hope, during all these years; Thora whose sweet face had looked at him from his study table. That picture did not lie; those eyes were windows through which he could see a soul, pure and sweet. Yet Thora was not now permitted to cross her father's threshold, and the old man in his loneliness would die rather than forgive her and take her back.

The night deepened, and the wind arose, causing the waters of the lake to dance in shining billows, yet Harald continued to tread the footpaths through the grove. His heart was heavy, and at times a stinging

pain shot through it. If she had only died! The hope of making Thora his wife had vanished in the incense of the altar on which he had sacrificed his all for the gospel's sake, and he had ceased thinking about her in that light; so it was not the thought that she was lost to him that caused him such agony—it was another an indefinite, yet awful fear.

But he did not return to his home that night before laying his burden before God, and asking Him for a blessing on Thora Bernhard. He was comforted in prayer, and went home to sleep until late that morning.

Shortly after noon, Harald returned to the merchant's.

"You are late," he said to Harald. "Why did you not come earlier? I have been waiting for you."

"I overslept myself," was the reply.

"Yes, well, I suppose—I am selfish—I think only of myself."

The old man held Harald's hand in his own, as he said:

"You promised last night that you would stay with me as long as I wanted you. That may be a long time, but are you still in that mind?"

"If I can help you, I wish to do so. I have, at present, no engagements."

"Then I engage you. State your salary. I must have some help if I keep up my business."

So Harald agreed to stay with the merchant that winter, or until such a time as his services should not be needed. He thought such a time might come when

his religious standing became known. However, there was no need of publicly proclaiming that he was a "Mormon." The merchant was in need of help which he could give, and if he could assist and comfort Thora's father, why should he not do so?

He moved his few belongings to the Bernhard residence, the merchant insisting that he should live with him. If need be, he would put it in the contract, he said. The time not needed down at the little office in the warehouse, Harald should spend at the house, at least until such a time as the merchant would be able to get out again.

The two men were drawn together by that congeniality of spirits which is often found in persons having similar tastes. Both were lovers of books, and the long evenings were spent in the library in reading and talking. Social economy, politics, history, and religion, were all considered, and Harald could well keep up his end of the conversation on any of these topics. He himself was delighted when he discovered that his religious knowledge could be brought to bear, even as a great searchlight, on any of the arts and sciences, and illumine many a dark corner of doubt. The evenings were usually ended by the merchant leaning against his pillows listening in silence to the young man's talk.

The old man was of a religious nature, but dogmatic in the extreme. Set in his beliefs and opinions, it would be worse than useless to say anything against them; but Harald could slowly and quietly unfold to him the beauties of the gospel plan, could show him the

desirability of living in the newer and clearer light, and then, in time, the old man might see the undesirableness of the mists about him.

He said not a word about "Mormonism," or the Latter-day Saints, or Joseph Smith, but he talked to him of "the gospel." He took him, in an easy, philosophical way, back to first principles, and discussed the whys and wherefores of life.

"We are living as it were between two eternities," he said. "This life is but a meeting point of the past and the future. The past stretches out to an eternity; the future reaches into never ending time. Mortal birth is not the beginning of the soul's existence any more than death is its end. We are eternal beings, on the great highway of evolutionary progress, and this life is but one of its stages. Our future course depends greatly on what we do here, for one life leads naturally to another, as in school one course follows another. God is the great Schoolmaster. We are pupils. Sometimes the Master seems harsh, for we suffer; we complain because we cannot see God's purposes. Who knows but that suffering is often a door into a higher department?"

"Where did you learn to preach so well?" asked Mr. Bernhard, one evening, after Harald had talked for half an hour without an interruption. "I think there is one more calling open to you, my young friend, if you wish to try it."

He smiled at the old man, but did not answer him directly.

"Well, I don't quite understand it," he continued.

Our talk is so wonderfully elevating; and although it doesn't always agree with what I have been taught to believe, I cannot find fault with it. It is simple, yet sublime; it is deep, yet free from mystery; it is solemnity itself, yet full of light as a summer's day.

"Thank you," said Harald, "I am glad to hear you say that. The young man knew his words were having effect. It might be very slight, but a continued play of warm sunshine will eventually melt the largest iceberg.

The merchant was certainly improving in spirits and in health. On warm afternoons, he would venture out for short walks, leaning on the young man's arm. He became much more cheerful, also; and, once or twice, he mentioned Thora's name without any display of ill feeling. Harald, however, never asked him for further information regarding her.

Not that Harald had ceased to think of her. No; she was in his thoughts more than ever, since he had received an assurance that Thora's condition was not the awful one he had at first thought. Just as soon as the business could be safely left, and the merchant himself was a little stronger, Harald intended to discover the whole truth. He was continually on the watch to learn something of her, but strangely enough she was as if dead to all whom he could approach. He watched the mails closely for any letter from her, but none ever came.

Thus winter came on, and the ice filled Larvik fjord, stopping the shipping, for a time. There was little to do, and Merchant Bernhard was well enough

to attend to business a short time each day. Thora was in Christiania. He had learned that much. He would now take a run to the capital by the train. He could stand the uncertainty no longer.

The day before the planned departure, he received a letter, addressed to him in a familiar handwriting. Was the silence to be broken at last? Did it bring good news or bad? Yes, the letter was from Thora. It read:

Dear Friend Harald:

I have just learned that you are staying with my father, and I make bold to write you about him. Is he still in health?—I will not say good health—but is he able to be about and attend to his business? I have not heard from him for some months, and am anxious to know. Kindly send me a line in answer.

Respectfully, your friend,

THORA BERNHARD.

He read the short letter over and over. Not a word of greeting for him, not an indication of how she felt, only a solicitude for her father.

He delayed his trip to Christiania for a few days. To answer the letter was a task, and it was not until he had written half a dozen that he got one that satisfied him. In it, he told her of her father's condition, how he was improving in spirits and health, and how he, Harald, was doing all in his power to help him.

"Your letter was exceedingly meagre in news about yourself," he wrote. "Will you please answer this letter and tell how you are getting along. I should very much like to know. Believe me, I am your fath-

er's friend, and yours, I hope. Let me help you both."

That was as far as he dared to go, though he longed to pour out his soul to her. He hoped it would bring an answer which would give another opportunity.

In a few days, the reply came :

You say that you are father's friend, and hope you are mine. I thank you sincerely for your kindness to father, and I pray that God will bless you out of the abundance of His riches. I do not know what father has told you about me, but I conclude from your letter that he has said very little, and you, no doubt, have wondered why I am not at home taking care of my aged parent, being a comfort to him in his old age; but I may tell you that the sweetest words I could receive would be those from him, "Come home, daughter."

I am wondering now what brought you to Larvik. The last I heard of you you were Headmaster of the West Akerby School. Now you are at our Larvik home, taking the place of an absent child; you are enjoying the confidence of Merchant Bernhard. I envy you, I am jealous of you.

But you asked for tidings of myself, as if I were anybody worthy of notice. No; I am "one of the least." I fear you would not be interested in my doings during the last year. Previous to that time, I roamed about the world a good deal, and saw much of it—so much, in fact, that I wearied of it. About a year ago, I left the world—I hope the death of the body will not be harder than that of leaving the world was—yes; truly and verily, I separated from all that was near and dear in this world, yes, even my only near relative, my father. You, I am sure, will not care to know anything of one in such a state as I, you will not wish anything to do with her. Do I speak in parables? Well, if I do, it is because of my weakness in not wishing to lose one friend more—one who says he is pleased to call me his

friend. Oh, dear friend, if you only knew! I wonder if it would make a difference in you? But are you different to humankind? I am only asking you—you may answer, if you like.

Now I shall not tell you more. If you wish to know—if you wish to know why I am an outcast from my father's house, ask me in your next letter, and I shall tell you; but I warn you fairly, for the knowledge may make you hate me forever.

The mystery deepened. The letter with its vague suggestions was a puzzle to Harald; yet his heart went out to the writer, because he read the depth of feeling between every line. He delayed not in asking Thora for the whole truth.

It was a week before the answering letter came. It was as bulky as a manuscript. He kept it until the evening, when he was alone in his room. In no hurry to open it, he lay it on the table while he tried to glance at the paper. He put more coal in the stove, as if the task of reading it would be long and burdensome; but at last, when there was nothing else to be done, he almost feared to open it. Did it contain his sentence, his banishment to the land of despair?

At last, he began to read. Sheet after sheet was hurriedly scanned, then he read slowly, until he spent fully five minutes on the last sheet, the reason being perhaps, that his eyes were dimmed with tears

He went to the library door and knocked. No one answered. He entered, but the servant appeared and told him the merchant had gone to bed. Going back to his own room through the parlor, he noticed a picture hanging with the glass to the wall. "How

careless the servant is," thought he, as he went up to the picture and turned it around. It was a portrait of Thora. Harald understood, but he left it hanging in its proper position.

The next morning he could not wait for breakfast to be announced, so went out for a walk until he should be wanted. After breakfast, instead of going to the office as usual, he told the merchant that he wished to speak with him in the library. Harald had eaten very little, and had acted oddly, all of which the merchant noticed.

"Sit down, Harald," said Mr. Bernhard. "Don't stand up like that."

"No; I'll just stand here."

"What's the matter with you?"

"I must give you my resignation," said Harald with an effort to be calm. "I cannot work for you longer."

"Do you want more wages? I gave you what you asked, and will increase it if you say so now; but I can't listen to your leaving me. What would I do?"

"But I have been unfair to you, Mr. Bernhard. I am a usurper here. You do not know the whole truth regarding me. What Thora Bernhard should have enjoyed, as your child, I have received."

"What do you mean?"

"Yesterday, I received a long letter from your daughter, Thora, wherein she told me her whole story."

"What! that she had become a "Mormon?"

"Yes."

"Well, and why should that make you leave me.

Harald, my boy, it is bad enough as it is, but don't you desert me, too."

The old man arose and leaned heavily on the table in front of him. I can't help the disgrace of having such a child. I did all I could to prevent it."

"And this is why you have disowned your child!"

"Yes; is it not enough?"

Harald's face was pale, and the corners of his mouth twitched painfully.

"Then I also have no right to your esteem!"

"I don't understand."

"I, too, am a Mormon."

The old man looked fixedly at Harald, as if he did not hear. Then he sank down into his chair.

"You, you, too, a Mormon!" he gasped. "What does it all mean?"

"It means, Mr. Bernhard, that I, too, am one of those despised people called 'Mormons.' I am in your eyes no better than your daughter. Nay, she, brave, honest soul, is yet far above me. What I have suffered cannot compare with what she has endured. Oh, but I thought she had become something fallen and low—God forgive me for the thought—but now, I cannot express my gratitude."

The old man was now quite strong, and it did not take him long to rally from the blow.

"You are a Mormon, Mr. Einersen," he said, with some warmth, "and not ashamed of it?"

"Not ashamed, but truly grateful."

"Why did you not tell me of this before? Why should I treat you as a son, I who have made my

daughter an outcast—and you are no better than she.”

“Nay, not so good.”

“I have treated you as a son, and this is my reward! I have listened to your fine discourses. You, no doubt, thought to make a Mormon out of me also.”

“In our talks, Mr. Bernhard, have I ever told you anything false? Have I ever advanced any doctrine that has not been according to scripture, and elevating in its nature?”

“That was not Mormonism.”

“My dear friend, I have told you nothing but ‘Mormonism,’ pure and simple.] Under any other name, you say it is true, it is beautiful; the change of name cannot change the nature of the doctrine.”

“I will not argue with you! You would better go.”

“Yes; I am going to Christiania after Thora Bernhard.”

“Yes; go to her. I do not care.”

“But I am going to bring her to Larvik. I am going to bring her to her father.”

“Not to me!”

“Yes; to you, Merchant Bernhard, and you must not object. Have I not shown you by my actions what a ‘Mormon’ can be to you—yet even I cannot do you the good that your daughter can. Oh, you do not know what you are missing.”

Harald’s firmness had its effect on the old man.

“I know what religious prejudice is,” continued Harald. “I know that the hate engendered by that prejudice is stronger than anything else. I know that

all crimes have been forgiven but the crime of heresy. I know also that fathers have burned their daughters at the stake, because those daughters were firm in what they believed to be the truth. I know 'Mormonism' to be truth. Your daughter also knows it, and you should honor her the more for her fearlessness in accepting an unpopular religion in the face of such odds."

"Harald, be kind," the old man nearly sobbed; "I know not my own mind. Leave me. Talk no more to me. I must have time to think.

"I will go. This afternoon, I shall take the train for Christiania. I shall bring back to you a daughter as precious and as pure as gold refined seven times through the furnace."

But the old man bowed his face into his hands in silence.

XI.

THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE.

Snow was falling when Harald reached Christiania. The short winter day was closing, the gas lamps had been lighted, and a smoky haze had settled down over the city. He curbed his impetuosity, and waited until the next morning to call on Thora.

Her address led him to the outskirts of the city, away towards the fields where the rents were low. The street-car took him to within two blocks of the place, and then he walked on towards the street which had been extended into the country like a long arm stretching out from the body.

His heart beat fast as he climbed the stairs to the second story of the house. He paused for breath by the door bearing the proper number, fearful lest he should make a noise. The halls were still—no one seemed to be moving. Perhaps he had come out too early. He looked at his watch which marked the hour of half past ten.

Standing there "to settle his nerves," he heard the faint clicking of a sewing machine, accompanied by a low hum of a human voice coming from the room directly in front of him. Was it Thora, already at work?

Giving the little handle by the side of the door a pull, he heard a bell tingle within the room. The noise of the machine stopped, and light footsteps came towards him. The door opened and Thora Bernhard stood before him!

It was the Thora of years ago, rather than the Thora of the picture. Though taller than when he had last seen her, she had the same thin, pale cheeks, full lips, and large, expressive eyes, now so full of life's meaning—it might have been the day after her confirmation. Thora did not know him until he spoke. Then the color bathed her neck, and mounted to her face.

“Good morning, sister,” he said.

“Good morning, sir. Is it—is it Mr. Einersen?”

“And you do not know me? I must have changed. I could have picked you out from the largest crowd that ever promenaded on Karl Johan.”

“Well, come in, then. You must excuse my untidiness; but I have been at work all the morning, and, of course, I did not expect visitors.”

She placed him a chair, then busied herself with picking up the litter from her dress-making, shoving the machine into a corner. He could see that she was somewhat embarrassed.

Harald was a little disappointed. He had pictured to himself a scene, in which she should have taken refuge in his arms. When she had arranged her room a little more tidily, she sat down on a chair in the remotest corner from him.

“You came from Larvik?” she asked.

"Yes."

"You left father well?"

"Fairly well, yes."

Then there was a pause. Harald was at a loss how to act, or what to say. He had failed to put himself in her place.

"When I received your last letter, I lost no time in coming," he said.

"Yes?" She toyed with the cover on the table. "I thought that coming to see me would be the last thing you would do, after receiving my letter."

"Why so?"

"Oh, you would give me up as being beyond redemption—as being lost to all good influences."

"You would have me judge you as others have done?"

"My father has cast me off. What could I expect from any other?" There were tears in her eyes now. Then it came suddenly to him that this woman did not understand him. How could she, when he had not told her his own position? How foolish of him, not to tell her at once!

"Father would not understand me," she went on. "He would not listen to me——"

"But I understand you, Thora, I understand you. Sister Thora." Harald arose and went over to the table. "I have always understood you, I believe; and understand you now."

"You understand that I am a 'Mormon.' I made it plain to you in my letter, did I not?"

"I understand that you are a member of the

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Thora. I thank God for this knowledge, because—because—I also have received of the precious light.”

“What do you mean, Harald Einersen?”

“I also, am a ‘Mormon’—I also, Thora.”

“No!”

“Yes; it is true. I am not deceiving you. I am also a Latter-day Saint.”

“Oh! it can’t be true.”

“But it is, Thora, it is true.”

“But you are the Head Master in West Akerby school.”

“No; I am not. I am nothing now, nothing in this world’s estimation; but I hope something in the eyes of my Heavenly Father, and in the eyes of my brethren and sisters—and in yours also,—Thora.”

Thora had also arisen. She looked into the face of the young man as if to read his innermost thoughts. Harald had never seen such beauty before. The love of a life’s accumulation welled up in his heart for her. He saw that well-trying soul, in its strength, that purified heart in all its immaculateness. From his own experience, he judged of hers. The simplicity, the trustfulness, the innocence of the child, shone from her face. The longing to take her in his arms was well-nigh irresistible.

“Have you also given up everything for the salvation of your soul?” she asked.

“I have given up everything; that is, everything worldly—honor, ambition, riches, all have gone, and

I thought, love also,—but God has been good to me in that, I hope He has, Thora.

“I know what you have suffered. I know, oh, I know—I have also placed all on the altar.”

“All but your love, Thora.”

“I placed all, I said; yes, even my love, I placed that on the altar, too!”

“And God has accepted the sacrifice, but given back your love to you thrice blessed. Has he not, Thora?”

“I—I don’t know. How can I know?”

Harald stepped around to her side. “I can tell you,” he said; but he spoke not another word. He took her trembling hands. She looked into his face; ah, that look! but her eyes were full of tears, and she bowed her head. It was so near to his shoulder that he could not resist pressing it down. It lay there quietly, while he gently stroked back the wavy, brown curls from her forehead.

God had again been good—good beyond expression, to two human hearts.

“And now you must go back to Larvik with me. Can you get ready by tomorrow?”

“O, Harald, did father say so? May I come home?”

“Well, he didn’t exactly say yes; but we can manage it.”

“But I can not get ready by tomorrow as I have a dress to finish. Yes; I am a dressmaker now. I have to live.”

"It must be hard."

"What, to work? Oh, no; work has been a great help to me. Of course, I was somewhat clumsy at first, but now I pride myself on being a good dress-maker."

"Well, I don't think we ought to stay away from your father any longer than possible."

"Give me two days; I can be ready by that time. Poor, dear father, is he that ill?"

"He is not strong. I have been staying with him all winter, but he did not know I was a 'Mormon' until just before my leaving Larvik. I had not told him before, fearing that had he known, he would not have given me a chance to help him; and I believe I have helped him. But when I received your letter, I saw my true position, that I was usurping the place of his own child. Then I told him."

"What did he say?"

"He tried hard to be angry with me, but I don't think it amounted to much. However, I may have to leave his employ; but, if he has put up with an ugly 'Mormon' for three months, he can surely countenance a fair one for the same length of time."

She rewarded him with a glance of the eye, betraying a mind overflowing with love and happiness, then sprang up to prepare lunch, which, however, he prevailed upon her not to do.

"Go with me down to the Steam Kitchen," he said.

"Oh, but my sewing," she exclaimed.

"You will save time by taking a rest. The run

will do you good; we can be back in an hour or two at the most."

"Well, my quarters are rather stuffy, so I believe I'll go."

In a few minutes she appeared, ready for the street. Even if Thora had to work for a living, he noticed that her dress was in no way shabby nor poor.

So, walking to the street car line, and riding to town, they had their dinner at that rather democratic dining room, the Steam Kitchen. They took their time about it, too; Thora's press of work did not bother them. They were as heart-glad boy and girl, freed from some long and dreary school-room task.

Thora could not return before she had made Harald acquainted with the elders at the conference house, also some of her intimate friends, fellow rejoicers and sufferers in the cause of Christ; and Harald found keen pleasure in meeting them, many of whom were of the poorer classes; but the love that went with each firm hand-shake testified to him that they were indeed brethren and sisters. It was late in the afternoon before they returned.

"Now," said Thora, "you go down again to the office. Brother Olsen will be there, this evening, and I know you will want to talk to him. I must now go to work."

"So you are sending me away. Can't I sit here and watch you. I'll promise not to disturb you."

"No; you must not stay now. Come again tomorrow—tomorrow afternoon."

"I can't stay away from you that long."

"Tut, tut! You that could remain away all these years."

"Thora, don't say that—you know as well as I."

"There—yes, I know—forgive me. You may come tomorrow at noon, then, and I'll have a lunch for you. Will that do?" She smiled at him so bewitchingly, that it was harder than ever to leave her; but he saw the wisdom of her plan, and in half an hour he went back to the office where he met Elder Olsen and a number of other elders. He spent the evening with them.

In the afternoon of the third day, Harald and Thora were seated in a coupe of the Larvik train. When they emerged from the dingy city, they saw the snow-covered country glistening in the sun, while the forests of pine and fir looked black against the whiteness of the snow. To these two, sitting there side by side close together, peace had come at last. Not that all trials were over, or that the future would be all plain sailing, but nothing, it seemed to them, could come now to mar their peace. The great struggle was over!

"God is good," she whispered as if in prayer. After a time, he said:

"Thora, if we had only known, what a comfort and a strength we could have been to each other. To think that we were fighting the same battle alone and separate, when we could just as well have been together! It would not have been half so hard."

"No; perhaps it would have been no trial at all, Harald. God willed to try us alone. Had we known,

it might have been too easy to accept the truth, because—because—”

“Because we loved each other. That’s what you were going to say, isn’t it?”

He hardly heard the whispered, “yes.”

“And you have loved me all the time, Thora, even as I have loved you. You can’t deny it—you don’t deny it?”

“Why should I contradict. I don’t like to quarrel.”

“I always thought you cared for me, Thora, even away back in boyhood days, although I was a poor, ignorant boy.”

“Not ignorant, Harald. You were always smarter in school than I.”

“But I was not at the head of my class on confirmation day, was I?”

“No, but you ought to have been.”

“Yes; you have told me that before.”

“Thora,” said he again, after a pause, “was I not bold to think of you as I did?”

“No; I would not have loved you, had you been less courageous. I thought, I have always thought, that you were a sort of Viking, and would, like your ancestors, not let such little things as humble birth, or poverty, hinder you from getting anything you had set your heart upon.”

“Did you think that? Thank you for telling me. You are just like grandmother—”

“Oh, thank you; I know I am getting along in years, but—”

"You know what I mean," he laughed; "grandmother was always telling me that I could become what I wished, in righteousness, she always added, if I had the faith and grit; also she said that she could have traced her lineage back to Harald Haarfagre if she had taken any stock in the matter of blue-blooded pedigree."

"Well, you would better get that genealogy," said she. "It will be useful some day."

As the train rolled on, they repeated to each other their stories of life. Harald told of his resolutions to get an education, of his struggles at school, of his teaching, of his trouble with Pastor Bange, of his dismissal from the West Akerby school, of his political ambitions, and his connection with the West Akerby Club, of his meeting Elder Olsen, and all the rest, with Thora an eager listener.

"And I thought of you all the time, Thora. I thought of where you might be, of what you might be doing. At last when I concluded that you had forgotten me entirely, that photograph came and gave me new hope. It told me that you were still free, and that I could still think about you as I always had. Then came the gospel, and, well, then things were in a jumble for a time."

"Harald, I tell you in truth, my heart was with you all the time. I knew you would overcome those so-called barriers between us, if I could only give you time. That is one reason I traveled so much, keeping away from Vangen; but there was another reason. Father had great hopes of me. He wanted me to

marry a man he had picked out for me. Father has no son, you know, and his heart was set on the match. It was hard to disappoint him, I know, but I could not help it."

"Of course not," Harald agreed.

"When I heard of your teaching at Akerby, I made up my mind to come home; but just then the gospel found me. I have told you how it was. After I was baptized I went home and told father. Oh, but he was angry. Poor father, I could not make him understand. I thought he too, would be glad of such tidings of great joy, but you know how it is. Then it was that I understood the Master's saying, 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. * * * A man's foes shall be they of his own household?'"

"And he drove you from his house."

"Yes;" her eyes swam in tears as she looked into his face and said it. Then she continued:

"But I also read that 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me,' and so I went—went back to Christiania."

"Why did you not write to me?"

"Write to you! Well, at the first, at the very first, I thought of that, but afterwards I saw how useless it would have been. I dreaded to think of having your scorn also. I watched you rise in the world. I learned of you as the Head Master of the school, I heard some of your friends talking of your bright chances to be elected to the *Storting*, and when I gave it up. I could see that things had been reversed, as far as our worldly social positions were concerned.

I tried not to think of you any more. I would have to drop out of your world altogether."

The sun went down in a clear sky, reddening the snowy landscape. The little oil lamp in the roof of the car was lighted, and then the train rolled on into the night.

About ten o'clock, they arrived at Larvik. Merchant Bernhard's servant met them at the door. Mr. Bernhard was very ill, she said. The doctor was with him.

"O, Harald, are we too late?" exclaimed Thora.

"I hope not." They went in. "Tell the doctor that we would like to speak to him."

In a few minutes, the doctor came, and Harald explained matters to him.

"I fear he will not know you," said the doctor; "but you may come in as it can not harm him. He talks about you, Miss Bernhard, in his delirium."

They all went into the sick room, and Thora walked softly up to the bedside. The old man was lying with his face to the wall, as if asleep, so she did not disturb him, but stood looking at his pale, sunken face and head as white as the pillow on which it lay.

"If he is asleep, we would better not disturb him," said the doctor. "I believe he is resting."

Harald was surprised at the great change the few days of his absence had made. The old man must have suffered greatly.

The doctor said that there would be no objection to their watching by his bedside. In fact, their presence would help the patient, and if he should recog-

nize them, so much the better. But the doctor did not understand why they both were doubtful about that. As the sick man seemed to be sleeping, the doctor left, and Thora drew up a chair to the bedside where she sat watching the dear, pale face. After a time she told Harald to go to bed, as she would remain with her father the rest of the evening. She and the nurse would be able to manage for the night.

About midnight, the sick man turned towards the side of the bed where Thora was sitting. He looked the girl in the face, but did not seem to recognize her. However, he made no objections when she took his hand and held it firmly in her own; and when she, with her other hand, gently smoothed back the hair from his forehead, he lay peaceably looking at her until again he fell asleep.

The next morning, the doctor pronounced his patient much better, thanks to Miss Bernhard's assistance. It did seem that the daughter's subtle influence, or faith or prayer, call it what you will, had its effect on the father. He would lie for hours holding her hand and looking into her face. At first, it was certain that he did not know her; but in a day or two, Thora imagined that his eyes penetrated the mist, and that he recognized her; but he said nothing. Then a little, faint smile came over his face at times when he was looking at her, and at that Thora took courage.

Thus the days passed. The improvement was slow, still it was improvement, said the doctor. Harald attended to the business as usual. Thora devoted her whole time and attention to her father.

Then there came a time—in about ten days—when the father talked freely to both Thora and Harald. Never once did he mention the matter of religion or the “Mormons.” He acted as if his daughter had never been away from him, and never been forbidden to enter his door. And Thora was too overjoyed to say anything that would remind him of the past, even if he had forgotten. The old merchant was changed. His harshness had softened, his severe manner giving place to much gentleness.

One day when he was able to sit up, he called Harald to him.

“How goes the business, Harald?” he asked.

“As well as can be expected, I think.”

“Are you still in the mind of resigning your position?”

“Well, no, sir. Not if you want me.”

“I do want you, at least, until I am well again. Oh, I’m getting well rapidly now, and I’ll be around again after awhile. Then we’ll see; you’ll stay until then?”

“Certainly.”

“All right—and say, Harald, don’t imagine that I have forgotten about this ‘Mormon’ business. I haven’t; but we shall not say anything about it now. And as for Thora, she has saved my life, I think, and she will have to stay. I was going swiftly when she came and pulled me back—yes, pulled me back just as really as if she had had a rope on me, pulling me away from an awful chasm into which I was falling; and then, she is my daughter, isn’t she? and I can’t altogether for-

get that—she's the only one I have on earth, and it's so lonesome to be alone."

Thora came around to his chair, for she had been in the room all the time, and her father had known it.

"O, father, thank you, and God bless you," she cried, as her arms went around his neck, and she kissed him on the cheek. Then they both cried softly, and he held her brown curls tightly against his cheeks.

Harald went out and left them together.

XII.

CASTLES OLD AND NEW.

The winter months passed, and Merchant Bernhard slowly regained his health. Thora waited and watched over him with utmost solicitude. She was the life of the house again, and her smiles and songs gladdened the heart of her father.

The subject of her religious belief was never considered in their many talks. Once or twice, Thora had tried to explain some things, but, after listening long enough to get the drift of her argument, he had told her in a gentle way that he did not care to discuss such matters. Sometimes Thora, assisted by Harald, sang "Mormon" hymns, at which times, the father would listen with an expression on his face, as if he enjoyed the music; but no comment was made by him.

Yet they were sweet days to Harald and Thora, those days of getting better acquainted with each other, and of love-making. The long separation had made changes in both. In other conditions it would have taken more time to break through the strangeness between them, but the gospel is a wonderful, golden link which readily connects the sweet current of love.

"We have obeyed the new commandment," Harald told Thora one day.

“What is that?”

“That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

They often read the scriptures together, and discussed the new-found delights in them. The Bible became an open book to them now. Many dark passages were made clear, many truths that had escaped their eyes before, now shone from the inspired record. Had they not been “born again of the Spirit,” and “the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

Once again over the frozen northland, the frost giants were forced to retreat to their abode farther north; and Iduna, the goddess of spring, came with her wealth of sunshine and flowers. Thora appreciated the return of spring more than ever, as she had been confined to the house very closely. One afternoon when her father and Harald were talking of a business trip to Vangen which the latter was obliged to take, Thora asked to go, too. She longed to see the old home again and many of Vangen’s people, also, she said.

The father could not object, as he was now able to get about and take care of himself. The next day saw Harald and Thora on the way.

From the steamboat landing at Vangen, they went up the familiar street to Merchant Bernhard’s former place of business. Thora had looked forward with delight to meeting her old friends, but alas, she had again forgotten that she was no longer of this world, and that

this world loved only its own. Some of her acquaintances would hardly speak to her; many of them were not ashamed to openly taunt her. She had wished again to see the old white-painted home not far from the store, but its present owners did not even invite her in, so they had to be satisfied with leaning on the fence and looking at the lawn and garden.

"I see the conservatory is gone," she said. "They don't care much for flowers."

"Not even roses," said he. She looked coyly at him—they understood each other.

Thora remained at the little hotel while Harald transacted his business. It was late in the afternoon when he returned.

"Are you going out this evening?" he asked.

"No; I've had enough for one day. 'We are fools—for Christ's sake,'" she said.

"'But we are wise in Christ,' replied Harald, finishing the quotation.

The next morning, Harald secured a man to drive them up to Opdal, where they arrived just before noon, putting the Gundersen household in a flurry of excitement. The older boys were away, but the other children stood around staring at their brother and his fine lady. The mother was busy over a big pot of mush which she was preparing for dinner, and the mush-stick was going with much force into the depths of the boiling mass when the two visitors appeared at the door.

"Good! we're just in time," exclaimed Harald, cheerily. "I am so hungry for a plate of good, old-fashioned mush, and here we have it."

As a rule, mush was not good enough for visitors, but Harald set the housewife's fears at rest by saying that they would eat nothing else, so she need not prepare other dishes for them.

Soon the father came home for his mid-day meal, and there was a warm greeting between them.

"And this is Sister Bernhard, father," said Harald, as he presented Thora to him.

The father held her hand a long time, as he glanced from one to the other. "This is Merchant Bernhard's daughter, isn't it?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Harald, "but don't you understand? I said *Sister Bernhard*."

Then he understood. "Is it true?"

"Yes," she said.

"Then, welcome, sister; and God bless you, and give you strength according to your day."

"Thank you, Brother Gundersen."

The mush was relished, also the potatoes and salted herring. Harald noted that there was a snow-white cloth on the table, and that the dishes were new since he had been there the summer before. He saw many other signs of comfort and adornment in the home, which the wife had been able to procure with the money which before had gone to the whisky dealer.

The father was not so crowded with work but he could take a half holiday that afternoon. Harald must tell him many things, and he had much news to tell Harald. So they talked and sang all the afternoon. The wife no sooner had the dinner dishes cleared than she began preparations for the next meal.

"Elder Olsen has visited Opdal a number of times during the winter," said Harald's father. "He has held many meetings in the neighborhood, and before his last departure he ordained me an Elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." The old man said it with the deepest solemnity. "I don't know why I should be thus honored, I who have been a sinner all my days, and am not learned in the knowledge of the schools. However, I thank God for His goodness, and I try to honor the priesthood conferred upon me. I hold meetings nearly every evening, lately, and I have hopes of bringing many to a knowledge of the truth."

"Have you a meeting tonight?"

"Yes; one down at Gulbrandsen's."

"Then, we'll go with you."

Great was the surprise of the neighbors when they saw the whole of Einer Gundersen's family, save Holger, walk into the place of meeting. Ridicule turned to wonder when they saw Thora Bernhard take her seat close by the table and take part in the singing. Greater was the surprise when towards the close of the services, they saw her arise by the table, and bear her testimony to the truth of what the two previous speakers had said.

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth!" she said, in closing, "and I want all you good people here to know it. Many of you have known me for years. You know my father. You know what our standing is, yet I want to tell you that I am not ashamed of being called a 'Mormon.' The name is

nothing, but the principles are everything. In Christ's time it was as great reproach to be called a Christian as it is now to be called a 'Mormon.' Listen to this man; he will tell you the truth; and you know, all of you, what a power for good the gospel has been to him. Many of you need this power not only to save you in the eternal worlds, but to preserve you from the gross appetites of your own perverse nature. God bless you. Amen.

"Amen," said Einer Gundersen, so loudly that everyone heard.

The next afternoon Harald and Thora were sailing down the fjord towards Vangen. The day was fine. The breeze pushed the boat so gently through the water that scarcely a ripple appeared. Harald had passed in and out of that fjord many, many times, but never yet in such a happy mood. Thora sat in the prow of the little boat, and sang softly to the hills, which echoed back her voice in yet gentler strains.

Some miles down from Opdal, the mountain juts close to the sea, and high, rocky cliffs extend out into the water. Towards this point, Harald steered; and they were close under the rocks before Thora saw what he was doing.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"Do you recognize this place?"

Thora looked up to the rocks, and then at the narrow strip of clean sand which stretched away by their side.

"Yes, I remember—I remember your castle, too. Let us go ashore and see if there is any of it remaining.

“Just what I was going to propose,” he said, as he brought the boat in to a small cove. Then he leaped ashore, fastened the boat, and helped Thora out.

Up on the sand, close under the cilff, they saw a small pile of stones—once their playhouse on that afternoon, years and years ago, when they were children. Father Gundersen had pretty well demolished it that afternoon, but traces of the foundation stones could still be seen, laid to a square, and some of the larger blocks had tilted over in such a manner that a low roof had been formed in one corner of the ruins. Harald went around to where Thora had planned the forest, back of the castle—he remembered it all clearly—and peeped in between the rocks.

Whirr! a wild duck flew from its nest, and out on to the fjord. Harald motioned to Thora to come and see. There was the nest, cosily made with sea-weed and moss, and in it four beautiful eggs.

“The castle has been stormed and taken,” said he, and usurpers are living in our house. “What shall we do about it?”

“Let them live in peace,” she said. “There is room for us out on those rocks. Here—help me up, and we’ll sit on the ledge, while you tell me another fairy story.”

He lifted her up. She was heavier than when he had performed that same service years ago, but he was now stronger, too. She found a comfortable seat on a stone, and he sat down by her side.

The rocks faced the west, and the warm sun shone brightly upon them. Away out lay the Three Trolds, and just a glimpse of the ocean could be seen beyond.

The broad fjord basked in the sun, and even the bold headlands might have been sleeping giants. Up in the forest, on the hillside, there was the twitter of birds, and from the dim distance sounded the faint tinkle of a sheep's bell. Presently the wild fowl came back to her nest in the rocks. Thora watched the anxious mother cautiously enter her home, and when the duck had disappeared, the girl smiled upon the manly form by her side.

"So you wish a fairy story," he said. "I fear I have forgotten them all; but I can tell you a true story."

"That will not be so fascinating, I know. I don't see how you can sit here in this heavenly place and talk of common matters."

"But this story is the most interesting in the whole world. It is not new; it has been told millions of times, by all people, in all climes, from the days of Adam until now. Yet it always bears repeating, and it never gets common-place nor dull. In fact, this story is not the property of man only, but all nature can tell it, and be told it, in its own deep-hidden language. The birds warble it, the wild fowl tells it to his mate. This story may at times be forgotten, but it revives again, even as the lilies-of-the-valley appear each spring time on the hill-sides in the forest. Would you like to hear the story, Thora?"

She answered with a laugh; and then threw her glance away up the mountains, on the other side of the fjord.

"It's short—it'll not take long."

“Well?”

“It is composed of three words, or chapters, or parts, or books—but that is just as the teller tells it, and the listener takes it. They are, ‘I love you.’”

“That is a short story for such a long preface.”

“Oh, I can make it longer—I love you, I love you, I—”

“Hush! What a silly man you are!”

“Thora,” he continued, “I had a long talk with Elder Olsen when he called at Larvik to bid us goodby, and I asked his opinion about our getting married. As a rule, he said, the advice is that converts wait until they can gather with the Saints, and have the ceremony properly performed in the Temple; but, in our case, he thought it probably best not to wait. It may be some time before we can leave. Your father depends on us; the business needs us; and we can do much good where we are. What do you think of it?”

“I don’t know, Harald. I have desired to be married in a temple—but if you think—did Elder Olsen really say all that, or are you just fibbing a little?”

“No, Thora, I am in earnest. I think it will be best. We would better get married now, and when we reach Zion, we can go to the Temple and there obtain our blessings, and be united for time and all eternity. What a blessed hope that is!”

“It shall be just as you say, Harald. I will leave it to you.”

He found room beside her on the rocky shelf. Then he went on, telling her of his hopes and plans; and they were as bright as a heart overflowing with love can

inspire. She sat and listened with love's rapture in her eyes.

"You are such a castle builder!" she cried.

["Yes; I always have been, and always will be. When I cease to build castles, then I cease to live, which I pray God never will be, in this world nor in the world to come. I believe in castles, Thora, yes even in what men call castles in the air. History teaches me that back of what we call facts, there has always been a subtle force; before the act, there has been the dream; as the architect is to the builder, so is the vision to the realization. In fact, castle-building is but another name for Faith—that power which God himself exercises, we are told, and by which the worlds were framed. From boyhood I have built castles. Some of them have not materialized. That is because they were not constructed along the fundamental lines that God, the great Architect, has laid down. But most of them have been substantiated, and I firmly believe that those which we shall erect for the near future, Thora—you and I—will also be realized. As for the future life, my imagination is too weak, but here are some of the foundation stones on which we may build." Harald took from his pocket his Testament, and, turning from passage to passage, they read, both bending over the book:]

"For ye . . . took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

"That will be pretty fine material with which to build castles, won't it?"

"Again, the Lord promises the faithful 'An inher-

itance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.'

"'And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.'

"'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.'

"'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

"'There! conceive of it, Thora. We can not understand, only as God touches our eyes and our hearts with his love, when a faint glimpse of its glories is given to us.'

The two sat in silence. From the fjord come faint sounds of music, wafted by the breeze from the notes of an accordion which some fisher-lad was playing in his boat. The afternoon was passing, and yet they tarried.

[Yes, Thora," he said, "we will walk together, not only to the river of death, but also out beyond that stream into the golden realms of eternity. 'All things shall be ours, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come,' all shall be ours, as they are Christ's, and Christ is God's; for then all power will be given us, and we shall be celestial beings, to walk and work in God's universe forever.] Then we may build our castles, and set them in the garden of the Lord, there to stand eternally, reflecting the glory of God. We may adorn them with all the beauty that our hearts

can desire or our imagination conceive, for will not the riches of eternity be at our command and service! Then shall we be truly rich, for God will give to us our inheritance. Then shall we be truly wise, for all heights and depths of knowledge will be open to us. Then shall we be truly powerful, for nature's secrets will be to us as an open book, and the elements will be in our hands as clay in the hands of the potter.

“Thora, to live and love forever—my mind is lost in the infinitude. I may talk about the home I shall build you, my queen, with its gleaming marble and precious stones; I may try to picture it surrounded with trees and grass and flowers and singing birds; I may try to tell of the new joys forever springing up, the new triumphs to be celebrated, the fights to be taken into the regions of never-ending wisdom and knowledge—but, the human mind is weak. Though God has given us a glimpse, Thora, it is but a glimpse, after all—but I thank God for that much.” What lies before us yet in this life, we know not, but as long as we have this glorious light of hope shining along our path, though that path may be set with danger and suffering, and strewn with ruin and desolation, yet will we lift our eyes to the light, and journey on.”

The sun went down, and the sky grew full of color. In the solemn hush of evening, every small sound was distinctly heard. Then these minor notes were hushed, one by one. The breeze blew soft and low through the pine forest; the waters laveth soothingly the sand; the distant ocean murmured in deep, low tones; the shadows grew deeper, and the stillness

of night came on. Then all sounds melted into one—the soft, soul-penetrating cadence of a world asleep.

[Harald and Thora went silently down to the boat. The sail was hoisted, and they floated on to a silver sea. Over head, steady and true and constant, shone the Polar Star.]

[THE END.]





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