

HOW THE KING OF SWEDEN WAS CONQUERED.

The year 1659 was a sad one for the land of Denmark. The winter was unusually severe; trade was at a standstill; the harbors were icebound, and an invading army was laying the country waste from sea to sea.

It was the ice that had betrayed Denmark. It made a bridge so firm and wide that Charles Gustavus, King of Sweden, had crossed the Great Belt upon it, marching his troops over the white plain that only a few weeks before had been an expanse of stormy water. It was a daring deed, and the Danes trembled as they pondered what sort of a man this Swedish king must be.

He was indeed a fierce and dangerous man. "A prince should always be at war," he was heard to say, "for by that means he best amuses his subjects and terrifies his neighbors." He had overrun Poland; he had fought with Prussia, and now he was invading Denmark.

The Danes could make but little resistance. They were out-numbered and out-generalled. One town after another fell into the hands of the Swedes.

The little city of Nykoping was one of the last to be taken. It made a gallant fight for its liberty; but it was conquered at length, and Charles Gustavus demanded a large sum of money as an indemnity for the trouble it had given him.

But Nykoping was poor—poorer than ever just now, after enduring the bad times, and the siege, and after paying for all the gunpowder which had proved so useless—it could not pay the ransom.

"Then it must burn," the Swedish king said calmly.

"Our men shall rest in it for a few days, and then there shall be a bon-fire huge enough to warm all Denmark."

But on this Sunday heard many of his officers attended service in one of the Danish churches. He wore a plain uniform, with nothing upon it to reveal his rank, and no one recognized him as he took his place amongst the congregation.

The minister was roused to indignation at the sight. His eloquent words rang loudly as he spoke of the cruelty of men one to another; of the grasping greed that brought fire and sword on a peaceful land; of the guiltiness of needless bloodshed; and of the wrong and robbery that were cloaked under the name of the Prince of Peace.

Much more he said; and then his words grew softer, and his eyes were filled with light as he talked to his weeping flock of the "comfort" that remained even yet for them. They had erred and gone astray; they had forgotten their God in the time of prosperity; and now this trial time had come to draw them homeward; their sore troubles were sent by One who was as a Father pitying His children.

Low sobs sounded through the church as the sermon ended. Then there was a trampling of many feet, and a slight clash of steel as the congregation dispersed.

The minister went home to his house, and in spite of all he had said his own heart was very sad.

"Thou art tried to death," she said to him. "I will serve thy dinner, and then thou shalt sleep until the time of the evening service."

"It is not time for sleep," he answered, thinking of the misery which lay upon Nykoping, misery which it was his duty to cheer as far as his poor words could reach.

A violent knocking at his door started him. The old woman hurriedly opened it. Four Swedish soldiers stood there.

"Tell Pastor Lencus that the king is coming to dine with him," said they.

"The king!" stammered the good dame, aglast.

"Ay, the King of Sweden—he that may be King of Denmark, too, if it so should please him," answered the soldier, sharply.

The minister had arisen from his chair, now he stepped forward.

"Tell the king," he said with gentle dignity, "that the misfortunes of my country have left me but a handful of peas and a rind of bacon. It is not possible to let him partake of such fare as that. You will tell him so!"

He returned to his seat, vexed and flushed. Charles Gustavus, king though he might be, could never be a welcome guest beneath his roof.

Yet he was to be his guest notwithstanding.

Another knock at the door, and an officer entered whose face the minister had noticed amongst the Swedes that morning. Doubtless he had come with a message from his master. But he removed his helmet and sat down without a word.

"I have sent to tell the king that it is impossible that he should dine in my humble house," said the minister, standing before his self-invited guest, and regarding him with troubled looks.

"Bacon and peas you named, I think," the Swede said, "a good dinner; and here it is! Let us to table, my friend. I am the king, a plain man, you see, and a hungry one, upon my word!"

required a strong effort to fix his wandering thoughts. "I am a worthless follower of the King of Heaven, since I am thus excited by the presence of the King of Sweden, I fear," he said to himself wearily. "Lord, teach me to feel Thee close; teach me to trust to Thee whatever befall!"

That night, when the little Lutheran church was filled with the sad company who had gathered here "for the last time," as they said, a folded paper was delivered into the minister's hands.

It only contained these words: "I have conquered Denmark; Lencus has conquered me. Nykoping is safe."

Very heartily praises went up to God from that little church that night. The pastor chose part of the first chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians as the lesson, and his voice trembled as he read the words: "God is stronger than men. . . . He hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. . . . He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."—Crona Temple.

TO TAKE OUT scorch stains from white goods simply wet the parts and lay on the grass in the sun.

I once gave a young man of fine ability and education—I believe he was a graduate of Yale—a class of half-grown boys. I had experienced some difficulty in getting the class together, but finally succeeded, and thought I had got an excellent teacher for it. It went along swimmingly for a while, and then the teacher commenced to absent himself occasionally, then oftener, and so on from bad to worse. I had tried hard to get good substitutes, but the class, which was a difficult one to hold under more favorable circumstances, dropped off one by one, till at last the entire class was lost. As this young man ventured his way across the room towards the adult Bible class one Sunday, I said to him, not without a good deal of feeling, "Mr. —, what have you done with that class of boys that I gave you some weeks ago?" His face flushed, and he stammered, "I don't believe I am fitted for a teacher," and I entirely agreed with him except that he thought God had made him so, and I believed he had made himself so.

For a teacher to absent himself or herself from the class without an excellent reason, I regard as a breach of faith. If I make an engagement with you to meet at a certain time and place, and you fail to keep your appointment, you must either apologize to me and give me a good reason for your absence, or I will never trust you in like manner again.

That is the rule between business men. It is the rule everywhere (except in sacred things).

When you take a class in Sunday-school you tacitly agree with those boys or girls, men or women, that you will meet them there every Sunday at a certain time. When you fail to be there you owe them an explanation and an apology. When you must be absent, and we, of course, recognize this as an occasional necessity, provide a good substitute, if possible, and do not leave your class to be injured, it may be, by being entrusted to one unprepared or unfitted to instruct them. And if this be impossible, then, if you can, send word to the superintendent. Do not lose your interest in your class on account of a prolonged absence. Write them and send special messages to each scholar. You can hardly imagine how much interest such a course will excite. It is cold comfort for a class, however zealous they may be, to come together Sunday after Sunday without a word from the absent teacher, and has cost many a school many a good class.—Standard.

MUTTON STEW.—Two pounds of mutton from the neck or loin, two pounds of potatoes, peeled and cut in halves, half a pound of onions, peeled and sliced. Put a layer of potatoes in the bottom of the stew-pan; then some of the mutton and onions; then another layer of potatoes, and mutton, and onions, and repeat this until the mutton and vegetables are used. Add one and a half teaspoonful of salt, a small teaspoonful of white pepper, three gills of broth, or gravy, and two teaspoonfuls of mushroom catsup. Cover the stew-pan very closely, so as to prevent the steam from escaping, and stew for an hour and a half on a very slow fire. A great slice of ham is a great addition. Great care must be taken to prevent burning. The hour and a half must be reckoned from the time the stewing begins.

SIMPLE BREAD PUDDING.—Pour a quart of hot milk upon a pint of nice bread crumbs that have been placed in a buttered dish, add two eggs, flavor with nutmeg or cinnamon, put in a few raisins and bake it twenty minutes. Serve with cream and sugar.



PRESENCE OF THE TEACHER.

He drew his chair to the table as he spoke, and the pastor's sense of courtesy forbade him to utter another word of remonstrance. The bacon and the hard brown bread were passed before the monarch, and the old man waited upon him silently.

"Sit down, my friend," said Charles Gustavus. "I am come to talk to you, your discourse this morning. Sit down, I say and eat. It is ill arguing with a fasting man."

If the pastor could not eat, the king found out that he could talk! Very bravely and plainly he urged upon his visitor the things that he had touched upon in his sermon. He asked what use or glory would come to Sweden from the burning of Nykoping, a town whose only faults in Charles's eyes could be its bravery and its poverty. He urged that history reckoned cruel victories as a disgrace, but merciful ones as a glory. He bade the king remember the great house from which he came—a house that held as its brightest star Gustavus Adolphus, "the merciful victor."

The king stared Lencus full in the face for a minute or two, and then he burst into a laugh.

"Denmark should make thee her chancellor!" he said. "Truly thou art a son of thunder! I came to make you unsay your first sermon and, lo, you have given me a second!"

"I may have given you a sermon, sire," was the reply; "but it is God only that can give you a tender heart."

With another light laugh and half jeering word the king took his departure, and the pastor opened his Bible to prepare his mind for the evening service in his church. It