

The day was far advanced, evening was drawing near. Gunnar had again taken his station on the rock projecting into the lake, on the very same spot where Rhyme-Ola had found him the day before. On his knees rested a wooden board made of two rough fir-planks, whereon was spread out a large, square piece of thin white birch-bark. In his hand he had a pencil, with which he drew on the bark. The cattle showed evident signs of impatience, for it was already milking-hour; but Gunnar was too much absorbed in his work even to be conscious of their presence. Many new, strange thoughts had been playing in his mind since Rhyme-Ola's visit. Still the sad and yet bold and rousing strain of the song kept ringing in his ear, now wakening him to life and action, now turning his mind to blissful reverie. When he had first left the cottage in the valley and first had drunk the freshness of the mountain air, there had been a new life born in him. Fresh hopes and longings had thronged his mind; Necken, the Hulder, and all that was fair to his childish fancy had suddenly become living realities, and he could often feel their enchanting presence, when the day fell warm and wondering over the highlands, and the air held its breath in anxious silence. Often had he spent hour after hour searching through the dark and half-hidden copse in the hope of catching a glimpse of some hairy sprite. Never a loor-tone came floating over the plain, but he started to see if the Hulder might not be near; for he was sure the loor must be hers. True, shadows of doubt had been coming and passing,—shadows such as summer-clouds throw on the forest when the sun is bright. Like these they had again vanished, leaving the light the clearer for their presence. Then Rhyme-Ola came with his wondrous song. Although he did not sing of the Hulder, still either his song or himself in some strange manner again brought her to view. He had brought what had been lacking to make the chord full, the harmony complete; he had given form to the shapeless longings, had given rest to the restless chord. Gunnar no longer had need of looking without for the Hulder: into his own mind her image descended, clear and beautiful as the day. When he came to the saeter that night, he felt an irresistible desire to give expression to the powerful thoughts that moved within him. In the cottage at home he had always taken great delight in drawing the strange beings which lived in his fancy. For canvas he had used the cottage floor; paper he had never known. Since he had left home, he had often busied himself with projects for new drawings, but had never found an opportunity to execute his designs. To-night, however, he could allow nothing to defeat his purpose. Having searched the saeter cottages from one end to another, he finally discovered in the crevice of a beam a large pencil, which probably had been left there by the carpenters. Under one of the beds lay a pile of birch-bark, which the maids used for kindling-wood. From this he selected the largest and smoothest pieces, cut them square, and found them even more suitable for his purpose than anything he had hitherto tried.

It was late before Gunnar sought rest that night; but the sun is late, too, at midsummer, so there was nothing to remind him that midnight was drawing near. The next morning he brought his half-finished drawing with him as he started with the cattle, and took his seat on his favorite rock, while the flocks were grazing around on the lake-shore. Now the day was already leaning toward night; it had stolen away like a dream, and he knew not how or where it had gone. Soon he should give the last touch to his drawing; he saw that it was not finished, but somehow or other he could not decide where the finishing touch was needed. It was the Hulder he had attempted to picture, fair as she stood before his soul's eye. But the sketch before him was but a fair mortal maiden: that unearthly longing which gave its character to the tone of her loor, and that unfathomable depth of her eyes—that which really made her the Hulder—he had failed to express. As he sat wondering what the fault might be, a strong loor-tone shook the air and came powerful upon him. He looked up, and saw Brita, the fair-haired saeter-maid, standing on a hill-lock a few hundred yards from him, blowing her loor to call the cattle home. Glancing at the sun, and seeing that it was far past milking-hour, he quickly rose, put the loor to his mouth, and gave such a blast that the highlands echoed far and near. Brita's loor answered; the cattle understood the welcome signal, and started for the saeter.

"Indeed, you are a nice cattle-boy!" cried Brita, all flushed and out of breath, both from her running and from indignation. "Didn't I tell you to drive the flocks home early to-night? and instead of that you keep them out more than an hour after time. Now we shall have to stay at home from the St. John's Hill, all of us, only for your laziness, you hateful boy!" Brita was justly indignant, and her words were huddled forth with all the passionate fury of womanly wrath; but before she had finished she found herself nearly crying at the prospect of losing all the sport and merriment of the St. John's Eve. Gunnar, conscious of his guilt, attempted no apology. As soon as they reached the saeter, all the girls fell to milking as hard as they could, and, much against his will, he was obliged to assist them. When the cattle were disposed of, they all started for the St. John's Hill, which lay about midway between the saeter and the valley. As they approached the lake-shore, a pair of screaming loons flew up from their nest among the rushes. It was still bright day when they gained the

pine region. A confused murmur rose from below; as they came nearer they could distinguish the strain of many violins, the song of women, and the loud shouts of the men.

"No, indeed! I cannot run at this rate," groaned one of the girls, as she let herself drop down on a large, moss-grown stone. "If you have a mind to kill yourself for one dance, more or less, you may gladly do so. I shall not move one step farther until I am rested. Will you wait for me, Gunnar? for Brita hardly will, as long as she knows Endre is dancing with some other girl, down on the hill."

Gunnar promised to wait.

"A poor set of girls we have here in the valley," said Brita, laughing, "who can hear the fiddles calling, and the lads shouting, and then can talk of rest. So tired I never was, and hope never to be." So saying, she ran down the steep road, and was soon out of sight. One of the girls followed, the other remained.

On the long and even slope from the highlands to the fjord, there is not seldom found an abrupt and steep projection, as if the mountain all of a sudden had thrust out its back, and determined to check the luxuriant vegetation below, which threatens to grow straight up over its ears. From such a projection the eye has a wide range, both upward to the mountains and downward to the sea; for the pines too clumsy to climb, and the dwarf birch is neither thick nor tall enough to hinder the sight. It was on a ridge like this that Gunnar and the saeter-maid were resting. From above they saw the sun flooding with fire the western horizon, and the purple-burning glaciers gleaming and flashing. Below rose the waving crowns of the pine forest, with its heavy green hue slightly tinged with the flush of the sunset. Here and there a tall, slender fir, forgetful of the winter storms, lifted its airy head high above its humbler fellows, and graciously nodded to some admiring birches at its foot. In a wide opening between the thick-growing pine-trunks lay the St. John's Hill, which was, however, no hill, but rather a large and sunlit glade. From the centre of this glade a huge bonfire, strangely wrestling with the sunset, threw its glaring light upon a dense mass of human life, whirling away over the plain in wild enchantment. A thin, transparent dusk seemed to rise from below, as the sun sunk deeper behind the glaciers. The forest drew its dark, steady outline on the horizon in effective contrast to the wild, flushing scene it embraced.

"Now I suppose you are rested," said Gunnar to the saeter-maid, who, like himself, seemed anxious to take an active part in the merriment below.

"Yes, thank you," said she, and they both arose.

After a short walk they arrived at the St. John's Hill, where he immediately lost sight of his companion; he hardly had time to realize where he was, before he felt himself hurried along into the midst of the crowd, where the stunning noise, the fire, and the strange people worked his senses up to such a pitch of excitement that at last he was not sure whether he was standing on his feet or his head. Another boy of about his own age, seeing how frightened he looked, went up to him, and fired his gun close to his ear. That suddenly brought him back to his senses; the blood rushed to his face, he clinched his fist, and dealt the boy a blow right under his left eye, so that he tumbled backwards. His opponent, however, jumped to his feet, and returned the blow with good effect. In the next moment they held each other in close embrace, and a hot fight ensued. The people flocked densely around them, encouraging them with shouts of approval; and they both fought as if their lives were at stake. At first, Gunnar seemed likely to be the loser, as he received more blows than he gave; but this rather added to his strength. The boy tried repeatedly to trip his foot, but he was on his guard; then he made a last rush at him, and they both fell, the boy under and Gunnar upon him. He was just rising, proud in the consciousness of his victory, when he saw a tall, grave man elbowing his way through the throng. The man walked rapidly up to the combatants, gave each of them a box on the ear, seized Gunnar's adversary by the arm, and carried him off. The people roared with laughter. Then, instead of pride in his victory, a feeling of shame stole over him. He ran away as fast as his feet could carry him,—away from the fire, the din, and the people. Tired and confused, he sank down on the soft moss, buried his face in his hands, and felt unhappy as he had never felt before.

He did not know how long he had been lying in this position, when he heard a well-known voice hard by. It was the voice of Ragnhild, the widow of Rimul's daughter. "Who was the boy who struck Lars?" said she.

"It was Gunnar, your cattle-boy," answered another voice, which he concluded to be that of Gudrun, the timid little girl he had seen at Rimul.

"Gunnar, our cattle-boy!"

"Why, yes, of course. Lars came and fired his gun right in his ear, so it was no wonder he struck. I only wish he could be at hand when Lars strikes me; I never dare tell it to father, for when father strikes, he always strikes too hard, and then both mother and I cry."

Ragnhild was about to make some remark, when Gunnar, who lay half-concealed in the tall heather, raised himself on his elbows, to make them aware of his presence. Gudrun was a little frightened at his unexpected appearance, but Ragnhild walked up to him, sat down in the heather, and tried to open a conversation.

"Why do you like so much to fight?" said she.

Gunnar did not know what to answer; he felt as if he had something in his throat which nearly choked him. She fixed her large blue eyes upon him with an earnest, half-reproachful look. Then suddenly the tears rushed to his eyes, he pressed his burning face down in the moss, and wept as only a child can weep. He felt her hand on his head, and her fingers gliding through his hair. And there he lay weeping, until at last, consoled by Ragnhild's tenderness, he forgot the cause of his grief, and before long was engaged in a lively dispute with the little girls. Ragnhild, who had wondered ever since they first met at his strange story about Necken, now eagerly sought further information; and knowing little of the world of wonder, which he loved with life and soul, she could not conceal her doubt at the startling things he told her. He, of course, grew the more zealous being opposed; and the girls, who were naturally no less superstitious than he, were only too willing to be persuaded. He was just deep in the wondrous tale of Saemund of Tagerlien and Margit of Elgerford when he was interrupted by the same tall man who had interfered in his combat an hour ago. He came to take Ragnhild and Gudrun home. "It is near midnight, children," said he, in a deep voice, "and the way homeward is long." And as they went they cried their good-night to him from the distance. He followed slowly and returned to the glade, where the fire was still blazing high, and the dance wilder than ever. There he met Rhyme-Ola, who told him that the boy he had fought with was Lars Henjum, and that the tall man who struck them was Atle, Lars' father.

After a time the music ceased, and the merry dancers, both lads and maidens, thronged round the fire, where they sat down in a close ring, and talked, jested, and laughed, little heeding the waning hours and the solemn silence of the forest. It was a gay scene, indeed, and one which would have filled an artist with rapture. How fair did those fresh, healthy faces appear, blushing, perhaps, with a little deeper tinge, as the glow of the fire fell over their features! Here sat one leaning forward, with his hands knit around his knees, watching the flames in pensive silence; there, next to him, a merry couple, too much occupied with each other to take notice of what was going on around them. The young man was Endre, the same who had opened the dance at the Rimul saeter on the evening of their arrival at the highlands; and who should the girl be but the bright-eyed Brita, with the deep dimples in her cheeks. Endre must have been very interesting; for whenever he spoke, Brita laughed, blushed, and now and then turned half away, as if to avoid his gaze, while he sat bending over towards her, intently watching her face.

As the night advanced, and the soft night-glow spread over the forest, their minds were imperceptibly attuned to the supernatural. Now was the time for wonder-tales and legends; and there was none who could tell like Rhyme-Ola: there were few who denied that. So Rhyme-Ola was called upon for a story; and there was no need of asking him twice, for there was nothing he liked better than story-telling. It was Rhyme-Ola's arrival which interrupted Brita's and Endre's conversation. He came from behind them, and politely asked to be admitted into the ring, for he hardly could tell his story otherwise.

"Jump over, Rhyme-Ola," proposed Endre; but before the singer could have time to follow the advice, he seized him round the waist, lifted him high above his head, and amid a roar of laughter from the company, put him down within the ring right before the fire. Rhyme-Ola, being well used to sport of this kind, took it in good part, straightened his little figure, winked with his sad eyes, drew his mouth up to his customary smile, and began his story.

When it was ended the narrator let his eyes slowly glide from face to face along the listening circle, and saw, not without satisfaction, the frightened expressions and half-open mouths which sufficiently assured him that he had succeeded in securing attention. But in all that crowd there was hardly one who listened with so intense an interest as Gunnar. As soon as the tale had commenced he had joined the group and quietly taken his seat behind Brita's back, where he was still sitting when Rhyme-Ola found him.

"Gunnar," said Rhyme-Ola, "I have something I want to tell you." And he gently urged the boy on until they were out of hearing. Then, leaning against a large, white-stemmed birch-tree, he fixed his strange eyes on Gunnar and began again.

"I have been at Rimul to-day," said he, "and I have seen the widow." Here he hesitated, smiled his melancholy smile, and winked.

"I asked the widow of Rimul," he went on, "if she had not some cattle for me to watch too. She said she had. So, now I shall always be with you, Gunnar." And all his face laughed as he cried out the last words. Gunnar stood for a moment staring at his strange companion.

"What did you say?" asked he.

"From this time I shall always be with you," repeated Rhyme-Ola, laughing. "Now it is time to go home," added he; "it is very late, or, rather, very early."

Soon they were on their way, and reached the saeter at sunrise.

(To be continued.)

HARVEST.

All day we set the sheaves in shining rows
And capping them, hung fringes of dull gold
About their heavy brows; and at the close
Watched the wood-shadows their dark wings
unfold,
Hovering them, and said: So may we rest
In covert of soft plumage, happy when
From the blue east, lit by her silvery crest,
Tender as south-winds in the blossomy glen,
Peace comes again.

But what of those slain lilies, whose best yield
Was the faint perfume clinging to our hands
As went we up and down the sun-swept field,
Twisting them heedless in the wheat
bands?
Their wealth was safe in unseen garner stored;
To subtle essence changed, they gained their
quest.
Said we: If immortality so sweet reward
Service of sacrifice, then are we blest
Losing life's best.

For so did reapers slay our hopes' high blooms,
Reckless of tears and pleading, till they lay
Languishing, smothered 'mong the dusty
glumes,
When the swift binders blithely passed that
way
And glancing on them, pitted—and so caught
Sweets that will linger with them evermore.
Thus hath experience fragrant memories
brought
Into our hearts, making for us rich store
Of harvest lore.

Then homeward going by the bridge that spanned
The elmy stream, faint, after toil and heat,
The mist-wraith soothed us with her delicate
hand
Cool on our brows; and dewy to our feet
The red-tops' ragged plumelets lightly bent
In welcome; and robins kept the door.
We said: "They are good signs to us"—and
went
In 'neath the woodbine shadowing the floor,
Happy once more.

Overland Monthly.

REMARKABLE CLOCKS.

We must now give some account of foreign clocks of celebrity, the first-named of these being the most famous clock ever known. It is probable that our young readers have heard of the famous city of Strasburg, formerly the capital of the department du Bas Rhin in France, which forms part of the old province of Alsace, and was a bishop's see. It has six bridges between the different quarters of the city, and six gates, and the citadel and fortifications were considered the strongest in Europe. Now, however, it has been shattered, taken, and ruined by the Prussians in the late Franco-German war; but there still remains its renowned cathedral, although much injured by the bombardment. This cathedral has a beautiful pyramidal tower, 470 feet high, on which hung the standard of France; and it is said that, until quite lately, the Prussians, though making every exertion, could neither lower nor destroy it. It is now said that they have succeeded, by sending a man up in the dark, who lowered it, but the man was killed in so doing. Within the cathedral is the famous astronomical clock, the most celebrated that ever existed. It is about twenty feet high, and was preceded by another of monstrous size, of which nothing remains. The present clock at Strasburg was begun by Conradus Dasypodius, professor of mathematic, in 1571, and completed in 1574; and it is related that the original artisan of the clock (for several workmen were employed on it) became blind before he had completed his work; but notwithstanding he finished it himself, refusing to inform any one else of the design, and preferring to complete it blind as he was. In this curious piece of mechanism the revolutions of the sun, the moon, and the planets, are marked down with scientific exactness; and the instruments of these motions are hid in the body of a pelican, who is portrayed under the globe on which the signs are seen. It would be too long to describe all the particulars of this clock, but the eclipses which are to be seen for years to come are marked on it. On Sunday the sun is drawn about on his chariot till the day is spent, when he is drawn into another place; and as he disappears you have Monday, that is the moon, and the horses of Mars' chariot showing forth their heads, and so on for every day in the week. There is a dial for the minutes of the hour, so that you see every minute pass. Two beautiful figures of children are joined to either side of this. The one on the north side has a sceptre in his hand, and when the clock strikes he tells every stroke. The other, on the south side, holds an hour-glass in his hand, which runs exactly with the clock, and when the clock has struck he turns his glass. There are also four little bells, on which the quarters of an hour are struck. At the first quarter comes forth a little boy, and strikes the first bell with an apple, and then goes and stays at the fourth bell until the next quarter. Then comes a youth, and he with a dart strikes two bells, and succeeds into the place of the child. At the third quarter comes a man at arms with a halberd in his hand, which strikes three bells, and then he succeeds to the place of the youth. At the fourth quarter comes an old man with a staff, having a