

**THE WAIF OF THE
"CYNTHIA."**

By

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1885

CHAPTER I.

MR. MALARIUS' FRIEND.

There is probably neither in Europe nor anywhere else a scholar whose face is more universally known than that of Dr. Schwaryencrona, of Stockholm. His portrait appears on the millions of bottles with green seals, which are sent to the confines of the globe.

Truth compels us to state that these bottles only contain cod liver oil, a good and useful medicine; which is sold to the inhabitants of Norway for a "couronnes," which is worth one franc and thirty-nine centimes.

Formerly this oil was made by the fishermen, but now the process is a more scientific one, and the prince of this special industry is the celebrated Dr. Schwaryencrona.

There is no one who has not seen his pointed beard, his spectacles, his hooked nose, and his cap of otter skin. The engraving, perhaps, is not very fine, but it is certainly a striking likeness. A proof of this is what happened one day in a primary school in Noroe, on the western coast of Norway, a few leagues from Bergen.

Two o'clock had struck. The pupils were in their classes in the large, sanded hall—the girls on the left and the boys on the right—occupied in following the demonstration which their teacher, Mr. Malarius, was making on the black-board. Suddenly the door opened, and a fur coat, fur boots, fur gloves, and a cap of otter, made their appearance on the threshold. The pupils immediately rose respectfully, as is usual when a stranger visits the class-room. None of them had ever seen the new arrival before, but they all whispered when they saw him, "Doctor

Schwaryencrona," so much did the picture engraved on the bottles resemble the doctor.

We must say that the pupils of Mr. Malarius had the bottles continually before their eyes, for one of the principal manufactories of the doctor was at Noroe. But for many years the learned man had not visited that place, and none of the children consequently could have beheld him in the flesh. In imagination it was another matter, for they often spoke of him in Noroe, and his ears must have often tingled, if the popular belief has any foundation. Be this as it may, his recognition was unanimous, and a triumph for the unknown artist who had drawn his portrait—a triumph of which this modest artist might justly be proud, and of which more than one photographer in the world might well be jealous.

But what astonished and disappointed the pupils a little was to discover that the

doctor was a man below the ordinary height, and not the giant which they had imagined him to be. How could such an illustrious man be satisfied with a height of only five feet three inches? His gray head hardly reached the shoulder of Mr. Malarius, and he was already stooping with age. He was also much thinner than the doctor, which made him appear twice as tall. His large brown overcoat, to which long use had given a greenish tint, hung loosely around him; he wore short breeches and shoes with buckles, and from beneath his black silk cap a few gray locks had made their escape. His rosy cheeks and smiling countenance gave an expression of great sweetness to his face. He also wore spectacles, through which he did not cast piercing glances like the doctor, but through them his blue eyes shone with inexhaustible benevolence. In the memory of his pupils Mr. Malarius had never punished a scholar. But,

nevertheless, they all respected him, and loved him. He had a brave soul, and all the world knew it very well. They were not ignorant of the fact that in his youth he had passed brilliant examinations, and that he had been offered a professorship in a great university, where he might have attained to honor and wealth. But he had a sister, poor Kristina, who was always ill and suffering. She would not have left her native village for the world, for she felt sure that she would die if they removed to the city. So Mr. Malarius had submitted gently to her wishes, and sacrificed his own prospects. He had accepted the humble duty of the village school-master, and when twenty years afterward Kristina had died, blessing him, he had become accustomed to his obscure and retired life, and did not care to change it. He was absorbed in his work, and forgot the world. He found a supreme pleasure in becoming a model instructor, and in

having the best-conducted school in his country. Above all, he liked to instruct his best pupils in the higher branches, to initiate them into scientific studies, and in ancient and modern literature, and give them the information which is usually the portion of the higher classes, and not bestowed upon the children of fishermen and peasants.

"What is good for one class, is good for the other," he argued. "If the poor have not as many comforts, that is no reason why they should be denied an acquaintance with Homer and Shakespeare; the names of the stars which guide them across the ocean, or of the plants which grow on the earth. They will soon see them laid low by their ploughs, but in their infancy at least they will have drunk from pure sources, and participated in the common patrimony of mankind." In more than one country this system would have been thought

imprudent, and calculated to disgust the lowly with their humble lot in life, and lead them to wander away in search of adventures. But in Norway nobody thinks of these things. The patriarchal sweetness of their dispositions, the distance between the villages, and the laborious habits of the people, seem to remove all danger of this kind. This higher instruction is more frequent than a stranger would believe to be possible. Nowhere is education more generally diffused, and nowhere is it carried so high; as well in the poorest rural schools, as in the colleges. Therefore the Scandinavian Peninsula may flatter herself, that she has produced more learned and distinguished men in proportion to her population, than any other region of Europe. The traveler is constantly astonished by the contrast between the wild and savage aspect of nature, and the manufactures, and works

of art, which represent the most refined civilization.

But perhaps it is time for us to return to Noroe, and Dr. Schwaryencrona, whom we have left on the threshold of the school. If the pupils had been quick to recognize him, although they had never seen him before, it had been different with the instructor, whose acquaintance with him dated further back.

"Ah! good-day, my dear Malarius!" said the visitor cordially, advancing with outstretched hands toward the school-master.

"Sir! you are very welcome," answered the latter, a little surprised, and somewhat timidly, as is customary with all men who have lived secluded lives; and are interrupted in the midst of their duties.

"But excuse me if I ask whom I have the honor of—"

"What! Have I changed so much since we ran together over the snow, and smoked

our long pipes at Christiania; have you forgotten our Krauss boarding-house, and must I name your comrade and friend?"

"Schwaryencrona!" cried Mr. Malarius. "Is it possible.—Is it really you.—Is it the doctor?"

"Oh! I beg of you, omit all ceremony. I am your old friend Roff, and you are my brave Olaf, the best, the dearest friend of my youth. Yes, I know you well. We have both changed a little in thirty years; but our hearts are still young, and we have always kept a little corner in them for those whom we learned to love, when we were students, and eat our dry bread side by side."

The doctor laughed, and squeezed the hands of Mr. Malarius, whose eyes were moist.

"My dear friend, my good excellent doctor, you must not stay here," said he; "I will give all these youngsters a holiday, for

which they will not be sorry, I assure you, and then you must go home with me."

"Not at all!" declared the doctor, turning toward the pupils who were watching this scene with lively interest. "I must neither interfere with your work, nor the studies of these youths. If you wish to give me great pleasure, you will permit me to sit here near you, while you resume your teaching."

"I would willingly do so," answered Mr. Malarius, "but to tell you the truth, I have no longer any heart for geometry; besides, having mentioned a holiday, I do not like to disappoint the children. There is one way of arranging the matter however. If Doctor Schwaryencrona would deign to do my pupils the honor of questioning them about their studies, and then I will dismiss them for the rest of the day."

"An excellent idea. I shall be only too happy to do so. I will become their examiner."

Then taking the master's seat, he addressed the school:

"Tell me," asked the doctor, "who is the best pupil?"

"Erik Hersebom!" answered fifty youthful voices unhesitatingly.

"Ah! Erik Hersebom. Well, Erik, will you come here?"

A young boy, about twelve years of age, who was seated on the front row of benches, approached his chair. He was a grave, serious-looking child, whose pensive cast of countenance, and large deep set eyes, would have attracted attention anywhere, and he was the more remarkable, because of the blonde heads by which he was surrounded. While all his companions of both sexes had hair the color of flax, rosy complexions, and blue eyes, his hair was of deep chestnut color, like his eyes, and his skin was brown. He had not the prominent cheek bones, the short nose, and the stout frame of these

Scandinavian children. In a word, by his physical characteristics so plainly marked, it was evident that he did not belong to the race by whom he was surrounded. He was clothed like them in the coarse cloth of the country, made in the style common among the peasantry of Bergen; but the delicacy of his limbs, the smallness of his head, the easy elegance of his poise, and the natural gracefulness of his movements and attitudes, all seemed to denote a foreign origin. No physiologist could have helped being struck at once by these peculiarities, and such was the case with Dr. Schwaryencrona. However, he had no motive for calling attention to these facts, and he simply proceeded to fulfill the duty which he had undertaken. "Where shall we begin—with grammar?" he asked the young lad.

"I am at the command of the doctor," answered Erik, modestly.

The doctor then gave him two or three simple questions, but was astonished to hear him answer them, not only in the Swedish language, but also in French and English. It was the usual custom of Mr. Malarius, who contended that it was as easy to learn three languages at once as it was to learn only one.

"You teach them French and English then?" said the doctor, turning toward his friend.

"Why not? also the elements of Greek and Latin. I do not see what harm it can do them."

"Nor I," said the doctor, laughing, and Erik Hersebom translated several sentences very correctly.

In one of the sentences, reference was made to the hemlock drunk by Socrates, and Mr. Malarius asked the doctor to

question him as to the family which this plant belonged to.

Erik answered without hesitation "that it was one of the family of umbelliferous plants," and described them in detail. From botany they passed to geometry, and Erik demonstrated clearly a theorem relative to the sum of the angles of a triangle.

The doctor became every moment more and more surprised.

"Let us have a little talk about geography," he said. "What sea is it which bounds Scandinavia, Russia and Siberia on the north?"

"It is the Arctic Ocean."

"And what waters does this ocean communicate with?"

"The Atlantic on the west, and the Pacific on the east."

"Can you name two or three of the most important seaports on the Pacific?"

"I can mention Yokohama, in Japan; Melbourne, in Australia; San Francisco, in the State of California."

"Well, since the Arctic Ocean communicates on one side with the Atlantic, and on the other with the Pacific, do you not think that the shortest route to Yokohama or San Francisco would be through this Arctic Ocean?"

"Assuredly," answered Erik, "it would be the shortest way, if it were practicable, but all navigators who have attempted to follow it have been prevented by ice, and been compelled to renounce the enterprise, when they have escaped death."

"Have they often attempted to discover the north-east passage?"

"At least fifty times during the last three centuries, but without success."

"Could you mention a few of the expeditions?"

"The first was organized in 1523, under the direction of Franois Sebastian Cabot. It consisted of three vessels under the command of the unfortunate Sir Hugh Willoughby, who perished in Lapland, with all his crew. One of his lieutenants, Chancellor, was at first successful, and opened a direct route through the Polar Sea. But he also, while making a second attempt, was shipwrecked, and perished. A captain, Stephen Borough, who was sent in search of him, succeeded in making his way through the strait which separates Nova Zembla from the Island of Waigate and in penetrating into the Sea of Kara. But the fog and ice prevented him from going any further.

"Two expeditions which were sent out in 1580 were equally unsuccessful. The project was nevertheless revived by the Hollanders about fifteen years later, and they fitted out, successively, three

expeditions, under the command of Barentz.

"In 1596, Barentz also perished, in the ice of Nova Zembla.

"Ten years later Henry Hudson was sent out, but also failed.

"The Danes were not more successful in 1653.

"In 1676, Captain John Wood was also shipwrecked. Since that period the north-east passage has been considered impracticable, and abandoned by the maritime powers."

"Has it never been attempted since that epoch?"

"It has been by Russia, to whom it would be of immense advantage, as well as to all the northern nations, to find a direct route between her shores and Siberia. She has sent out during a century no less than eighteen expeditions to explore the coasts of Nova Zembla, the Sea of Kara, and the eastern and western coasts of Siberia.

But, although these expeditions have made these places better known, they have also demonstrated the impossibility of forcing a passage through the Arctic Ocean. The academician Van Baer, who made the last attempt in 1837, after Admiral Lutke and Pachtusow, declared emphatically that this ocean is simply a glacier, as impracticable for vessels as it would be if it were a continent."

"Must we, then, renounce all hopes of discovering a north-east passage?"

"That seems to be the conclusion which we must arrive at, from the failure of these numerous attempts. It is said, however, that a great navigator, named Nordenskiold, wishes to make another attempt, after he has prepared himself by first exploring portions of this polar sea. If he then considers it practicable, he may get up another expedition."

Dr. Schwaryencrona was a warm admirer of Nordenskiold, and this is why he had

asked these questions about the north-east passage. He was charmed with the clearness of these answers.

He fixed his eyes on Erik Hersebom, with an expression of the deepest interest.

"Where did you learn all this, my dear child?" he demanded, after a short silence.

"Here, sir," answered Erik, surprised at the question.

"You have never studied in any other school?"

"Certainly not."

"Mr. Malarius may be proud of you, then," said the doctor, turning toward the master.

"I am very well satisfied with Erik," said the latter.

"He has been my pupil for eight years. When I first took him he was very young, and he has always been at the head of his section."

The doctor became silent. His piercing eyes were fixed upon Erik, with a singular

intensity. He seemed to be considering some problem, which it would not be wise to mention.

"He could not have answered my question better and I think it useless to continue the examination," he said at last. "I will no longer delay your holiday, my children, and since Mr. Malarius desires it, we will stop for to-day."

At these words, the master clapped his hands. All the pupils rose at once, collected their books, and arranged themselves in four lines, in the empty spaces between the benches.

Mr. Malarias clapped his hands a second time. The column started, and marched out, keeping step with military precision. At a third signal they broke their ranks, and took to flight with joyous cries.

In a few seconds they were scattered around the blue waters of the fiord, where might be seen also the turf roofs of the village of Noroe.

CHAPTER II.

THE HOME OF A FISHERMAN IN NOROE.

The house of Mr. Hersebom was, like all others in Noroe, covered by a turf roof, and built of enormous timbers of fir-trees, in the Scandinavian fashion. The two large rooms were separated by a hall in the center, which led to the boat-house where the canoes were kept. Here were also to be seen the fishing-tackle and the codfish, which they dry and sell. These two rooms were used both as living-rooms and bedrooms. They had a sort of wooden drawer let into the wall, with its mattress and skins, which serve for beds, and are only to be seen at night. This arrangement for sleeping, with the bright panels, and the large open fire-place, where a blazing fire of wood was always kept burning, gave to the interior of the most humble homes an appearance of neatness and

domestic luxury unknown to the peasantry of Southern Europe.

This evening all the family were gathered round the fire-place, where a huge kettle was boiling, containing "sillsallat," or smoked herring, salmon and potatoes. Mr. Hersebom, seated in a high wooden chair, was making a net, which was his usual occupation when he was not on the sea, or drying his fish. He was a hardy fisherman, whose skin had been bronzed by exposure to the arctic breezes, and his hair was gray, although he was still in the prime of life. His son Otto, a great boy, fourteen years old, who bore a strong resemblance to him, and who was destined to also become famous as a fisherman, sat near him. At present he was occupied in solving the mysteries of the rule of three, covering a little slate with figures, although his large hands looked as if they would be much more at home handling the oars.

Erik, seated before the dining-table, was absorbed in a Volume of history that Mr. Malarius had lent him. Katrina, Hersebom, the goodwife, was occupied peacefully with her spinning-wheel, while little Vanda, a blonde of ten years, was seated on a stool, knitting a large stocking with red wool.

At their feet a large dog of a yellowish-white color, with wool as thick as that of a sheep, lay curled up sound asleep.

For more than one hour the silence had been unbroken, and the copper lamp suspended over their heads, and filled with fish oil, lighted softly this tranquil interior.

To tell the truth, the silence became oppressive to Dame Katrina, who for some moments had betrayed the desire of unloosing her tongue.

At last she could keep quiet no longer.

"You have worked long enough for to-night," she said, "it is time to lay the cloth for supper."

Without a word of expostulation. Erik lifted his large book, and seated himself nearer the fire-place, whilst Vanda laid aside her knitting, and going to the buffet brought out the plates and spoons.

"Did you say, Otto," asked the little girl, "that our Erik answered the doctor very well?"

"Very well, indeed," said Otto enthusiastically, "he talked like a book in fact. I do not know where he learned it all. The more questions the doctor asked the more he had to answer. The words came and came. Mr. Malarius was well satisfied with him."

"I am also," said Vanda, gravely.

"Oh, we were all well pleased. If you could have seen, mother, how the children all listened, with their mouths open. We were only afraid that our turn would come. But

Erik was not afraid, and answered the doctor as he would have answered the master."

"Stop. Mr. Malarius is as good as the doctor, and quite as learned," cried Erik, whom their praises seemed to annoy. The old fisherman gave him an approving smile.

"You are right, little boy," he said; "Mr. Malarius, if he chose, could be the superior of all the doctors in the town, and besides he does not make use of his scientific knowledge to ruin poor people." "Has Doctor Schwaryencrona ruined any one?" asked Erik with curiosity.

"Well—if he has not done so, it has not been his fault. Do you think that I have taken any pleasure in the erection of his factory, which is sending forth its smoke on the borders of our fiord? Your mother can tell you that formerly we manufactured our own oil, and that we sold it easily in Bergen for a hundred and

fifty to two hundred kroners a year. But that is all ended now—nobody will buy the brown oil, or, if they do, they pay so little for it, that it is not worth while to take the journey. We must be satisfied with selling the livers to the factory, and God only knows how this tiresome doctor has managed to get them for such a low price. I hardly realize forty-five kroners now, and I have to take twice as much trouble as formerly. Ah, well. I say it is not just, and the doctor would do better to look after his patients in Stockholm, instead of coming here to take away our trade by which we earn our bread."

After these bitter words they were all silent. They heard nothing for some minutes except the clicking of the plates, as Vanda arranged them, whilst her mother emptied the contents of the pot into a large dish.

Erik reflected deeply upon what Mr. Hersebom had said. Numerous objections

presented themselves to his mind, and as he was candor itself—he could not help speaking.

"It seems to me that you have a right to regret your former profits, father," he said, "but is it just to accuse Doctor Schwaryencrona of having diminished them? Is not his oil worth more than the home-made article?"

"Ah! it is clearer, that is all. It does not taste as strong as ours, they say; and that is the reason why all the fine ladies in the town prefer it, no doubt; but it does not do any more good to the lungs of sick people than our oil."

"But for some reason or other they buy it in preference; and since it is a very useful medicine it is essential that the public should experience as little disgust as possible in taking it. Therefore, if a doctor finds out a method of making it more palatable, is it not his duty to make use of his discovery?"

Master Hersebom scratched his ear. "Doubtless," he said, reluctantly, "it is his duty as a doctor, but that is no reason why he should prevent poor fishermen from getting their living."

"I believe the doctor's factory gives employment to three hundred, whilst there were only twenty in Noroe at the time of which you speak," objected Erik, timidly.

"You are right, and that is why the business is no longer worth anything," said Hersebom.

"Come, supper is ready. Seat yourselves at the table," said Dame Katrina, who saw that the discussion was in danger of becoming unpleasantly warm.

Erik understood that further opposition on his part would be out of place, and he did not answer the last argument of his father, but took his habitual seat beside Vanda.

"Were the doctor and Mr. Malarius friends in childhood?" he asked, in order to give a turn to the conversation.

"Yes," answered the fisherman, as he seated himself at the table. "They were both born in Noroe, and I can remember when they played around the school-house, although they are both ten years older than I am. Mr. Malarius was the son of the physician, and Doctor Schwaryencrona only the son of a simple fisherman. But he has risen in the world, and they say that he is now worth millions, and that his residence in Stockholm is a perfect palace. Oh, learning is a fine thing."

After uttering this aphorism the brave man took a spoon to help the smoking fish and potatoes, when a knock at the door made him pause.

"May I come in, Master Hersebom?" said a deep-toned voice. And without waiting for permission the person who had spoken

entered, bringing with him a great blast of icy air.

"Doctor Schwaryencrona!" cried the three children, while the father and mother rose quickly.

"My dear Hersebom," said the doctor, taking the fisherman's hand, "we have not seen each other for many years, but I have not forgotten your excellent father, and thought I might call and see a friend of my childhood!"

The worthy man felt a little ashamed of the accusations which he had so recently made against his visitor, and he did not know what to say. He contented himself, therefore, with returning the doctor's shake of the hand cordially, and smiling a welcome, whilst his good wife was more demonstrative.

"Quick, Otto, Erik, help the doctor to take off his overcoat, and you, Vanda, prepare another place at the table," she said, for,

like all Norwegian housekeepers, she was very hospitable.

"Will you do us the honor, doctor, of eating a morsel with us?"

"Indeed I would not refuse, you may be sure, if I had the least appetite; for I see you have a very tempting dish before you. But it is not an hour since I took supper with Mr. Malarius, and I certainly would not have called so early if I had thought you would be at the table. It would give me great pleasure if you would resume your seats and eat your supper."

"Oh, doctor!" implored the good wife, "at least you will not refuse some 'snorgas' and a cup of tea?"

"I will gladly take a cup of tea, but on condition that, you eat your supper first," answered the doctor, seating himself in the large arm-chair.

Vanda immediately placed the tea-kettle on the fire, and disappeared in the neighboring room. The rest of the family

understanding with native courtesy that it would annoy their guest if they did not do as he wished, began to eat their supper. In two minutes the doctor was quite at his ease. He stirred the fire, and warmed his legs in the blaze of the dry wood that Katrina had thrown on before going to supper. He talked about old times, and old friends; those who had disappeared, and those who remained, about the changes that had taken place even in Bergen. He made himself quite at home, and, what was more remarkable, he succeeded in making Mr. Hersebom eat his supper. Vanda now entered carrying a large wooden dish, upon which was a saucer, which she offered so graciously to the doctor that he could not refuse it. It was the famous "snorgas" of Norway, slices of smoked reindeer, and shreds of herring, and red pepper, minced up and laid between slices of black bread, spiced

cheese, and other condiments; which they eat at any hour to produce an appetite. It succeeded so well in the doctor's case, that although he only took it out of politeness, he was soon able to do honor to some preserved mulberries which were Dame Katrina's special pride, and so thirsty that he drank seven or eight cups of tea.

Mr. Hersebom brought out a bottle of "schiedam," which he had bought of a Hollander.

Then supper being ended, the doctor accepted an enormous pipe which his host offered him, and smoked away to their general satisfaction.

By this time all feeling of constraint had passed away, and it seemed as if the doctor had always been a member of the family. They joked and laughed, and were the best of friends in the world, until the old clock of varnished wood struck ten.

"My good friends, it is growing late," said the doctor.

"If you will send the children to bed, we will talk about more serious matters."

Upon a sign from Dame Katrina, Otto, Erik, and Vanda bade them good-night and left the room.

"You wonder why I have come," said the doctor, after a moments' silence, fixing his penetrating glance upon the fisherman.

"My guests are always welcome," answered the fisherman, sententiously.

"Yes! I know that Noroe is famous for hospitality. But you must certainly have asked yourself what motive could have induced me to leave the society of my old friend Malarius and come to you. I am sure that Dame Hersebom has some suspicion of my motive."

"We shall know when you tell us," replied the good woman, diplomatically.

"Well," said the doctor, with a sigh, "since you will not help me, I must face it alone."

Your son, Erik, Master Hersebom, is a most remarkable child."

"I do not complain of him," answered the fisherman.

"He is singularly intelligent, and well informed for his age," continued the doctor. "I questioned him to-day, in school, and I was very much surprised by the extraordinary ability which his answers displayed. I was also astonished, when I learned his name, to see that he bore no resemblance to you, nor indeed to any of the natives of this country."

The fisherman and his wife remained silent and motionless.

"To be brief," continued the doctor, with visible impatience, "this child not only interests me—he puzzles me. I have talked with Malarius, who told me that he was not your son, but that he had been cast on your shore by a shipwreck, and that you took him in and adopted him, bringing him up as your own, and

bestowing your name upon him. This is true, is it not?"

"Yes, doctor," answered Hersebom, gravely.

"If he is not our son by birth, he is in love and affection," said Katrina, with moist eyes and trembling hands. "Between him, and Otto, and Vanda, we have made no difference—we have never thought of him only as our own child."

"These sentiments do you both honor," said the doctor, moved by the emotion of the brave woman. "But I beg of you, my friends, relate to me the history of this child. I have come to hear it, and I assure you that I wish him well."

The fisherman appeared to hesitate a moment. Then seeing that the doctor was waiting impatiently for him to speak, he concluded to gratify him.

"You have been told the truth," he said, regretfully; "the child is not our son. Twelve years ago I was fishing near the

island at the entrance of the fiord, near the open sea. You know it is surrounded by a sand bank, and that cod-fish are plentiful there. After a good day's work, I drew in my lines, and was going to hoist my sail, when something white moving upon the water, about a mile off, attracted my attention. The sea was calm, and there was nothing pressing to hurry me home, so I had the curiosity to go and see what this white object was. In ten minutes I had reached it. It was a little wicker cradle, enveloped in a woolen cloth, and strongly tied to a buoy. I drew it toward me; an emotion which I could not understand seized me; I beheld a sleeping infant, about seven or eight months old, whose little fists were tightly clinched. He looked a little pale and cold, but did not appear to have suffered much from his adventurous voyage, if one might judge by his lusty screams when he awoke, as he did immediately, when he no longer

felt himself rocked by the waves. Our little Otto was over two years old, and I knew how to manage such little rogues. I rolled up a bit of rag, dipped it in some eau de vie and water that I had with me, and gave it to him to suck. This quieted him at once, and he seemed to enjoy the cordial. But I knew that he would not be quiet long, therefore I made all haste to return to Noroe. I had untied the cradle and placed it in the boat at my feet; and while I attended to my sail, I watched the poor little one, and asked myself where it could possibly have come from. Doubtless from some shipwrecked vessel. A fierce tempest had been raging during the night, and there had been many disasters. But by what means had this infant escaped the fate of those who had had the charge of him? How had they thought of tying him to the buoy? How many hours had he been floating on the waves? Where were his father and mother, those who loved

him? But all these questions had to remain unanswered, the poor baby was unable to give us any information. In half an hour I was at home, and gave my new possession to Katrina. We had a cow then, and she was immediately pressed into service as a nurse for the infant. He was so pretty, so smiling, so rosy, when he had been fed and warmed before the fire, that we fell in love with him at once; just the same as if he had been our own. And then, you see, we took care of him; we brought him up, and we have never made any difference between him and our own two children. Is it not true, wife?" added Mr. Hersebom, turning toward Katrina. "Very true, the poor little one," answered the good dame, drying her eyes, which this recital had filled with tears. "And he is our child now, for we have adopted him. I do not know why Mr. Malarius should say anything to the contrary."

"It is true," said Hersebom, and I do not see that it concerns any one but ourselves."

"That is so," said the doctor, in a conciliatory tone, "but you must not accuse Mr. Malarius of being indiscreet. I was struck with the physiognomy of the child, and I begged my friend confidentially to relate his history. He told me that Erik believed himself to be your son, and that every one in Noroe had forgotten how he had become yours. Therefore, you see, I took care not to speak until the children had been sent to bed. You say that he was about seven or eight months old when you found him?"

"About that; he had already four teeth, the little brigand, and I assure you that it was not long before he began to use them," said Hersebom, laughing.

"Oh, he was a superb child," said Katrinn, eagerly. "He was so white, and strong,

and plump; and such arms and legs. You should have seen them!"

"How was he dressed?" asked Dr. Schwaryencrona.

Hersebom did not answer, but his wife was less discreet.

"Like a little prince," she answered.

"Imagine a robe of piquè, trimmed all over with lace, a pelisse of quilted satin, a cloak of white velvet, and a little cap; the son of a king could not have more. Everything he had was beautiful. But you can see for yourself, for I have kept them all just as they were. You may be sure that we did not dress the baby in them. Oh, no; I put Otto's little garments on him, which I had laid away, and which also served, later on, for Vanda. But his outfit is here, and I will show it to you."

While she was speaking, the worthy woman knelt down before a large oaken chest, with an antique lock, and after

lifting the lid, began searching the compartments.

She drew out, one by one, all the garments of which she had spoken, and displayed them with pride before the eyes of the doctor. She also showed the linen, which was exquisitely fine, a little quilt of silk, and a pair of white merino boots. All the articles were marked with the initials "E.D.," elegantly embroidered, as the doctor saw at a glance.

"'E.D.;' is that why you named the child Erik?" he asked.

"Precisely," answered Katrina, who it was evident enjoyed this exhibition, while her husband's face grew more gloomy. "See," she said, "this is the most beautiful of all. He wore it around his neck."

And she drew from its box a rattle of coral and gold, suspended from a little chain. The initials "E.D." were here surrounded by a Latin motto, "Semper idem."

"We thought at first it was the baby's name, but Mr. Malarius told us it meant 'always the same,'" she continued, seeing that the doctor was trying to decipher the motto.

"Mr. Malarius told you the truth," said the doctor. "It is evident the child belonged to a rich and distinguished family," he added, while Katrina replaced the babe's outfit in the oaken chest.

"Have you any idea what country he came from?"

"How could we know anything about it, since I found him on the sea?" replied Hersebom.

"Yes, but the cradle was attached to a buoy, you said, and it is customary on all vessels to write on the buoy the name of the ship to which it belongs," answered the doctor, fixing his penetrating eyes upon those of the fisherman.

"Doubtless," said the latter, hanging his head.

"Well, this buoy, what name did it bear?"

"Doctor, I am not a savant. I can read my own language a little, but as for foreign tongues—and then it was so long ago."

"However, you ought to be able to remember something about it—and doubtless you showed it to Mr. Malarius, with the rest of the articles—make a little effort, Mr. Hersebom. Was not this name inscribed on the buoy, 'Cynthia'?"

"I believe it was something like that," answered the fisherman vaguely.

"It is a strange name. To what country does it belong in your judgment, Mr. Hersebom?"

"How should I know? Have I ever been beyond the shores of Noroe and Bergen, except once or twice to fish off the coast of Greenland and Iceland?" answered the good man, in a tone which grew more and more morose.

"I think it is either an English or a German name," said the doctor, taking no notice of

his crossness. "It would be easy to decide on account of the shape of the letters, if I could see the buoy. Have you preserved it?"

"By my faith no. It was burnt up ages ago," answered Hersebom, triumphantly. "As near as Mr. Malarius could remember, the letters were Roman," said the doctor, as if he were talking to himself—"and the letters on the linen certainly are. It is therefore probable that the 'Cynthia' was not a German vessel. I think it was an English one. Is not this your opinion, Mr. Hersebom?"

"Well, I have thought little about it," replied the fisherman. "Whether it was English, German, or Russian, makes no difference to me. For many years according to all appearances, they have lain beneath the sea, which alone could tell the secret."

"But you have doubtless made some effort to discover the family to whom the child

belonged?" said the doctor, whose glasses seemed to shine with irony. "You doubtless wrote to the Governor of Bergen, and had him insert an advertisement in the journals?"

"I!" cried the fisherman, "I did nothing of the kind. God knows where the baby came from; why should I trouble myself about it? Can I afford to spend money to find his people, who perhaps care little for him? Put yourself in my place, doctor. I am not a millionaire, and you may be sure if we had spent all we had, we should have discovered nothing. I have done the best I could; we have raised the little one as our own son, we have loved him and taken care of him."

"Even more than the two others, if it were possible," interrupted Katrina, drying her eyes on the corner of her apron. "If we have anything to reproach ourselves for, it is for bestowing upon him too large a share of our tenderness."

"Dame Hersebom, you must not do me the injustice to suppose that your kindness to the little shipwrecked child inspires me with any other feeling than the greatest admiration," said the doctor.

"No, you must not think such a thing. But if you wish me to speak frankly—I must say that this tenderness has blinded you to your duty. You should have endeavored to discover the family of the infant, as far as your means permitted."

There was perfect silence for a few minutes.

"It is possible that we have done wrong," said Mr. Hersebom, who had hung his head under this reproach. "But what is done can not be altered. Erik belongs to us now, and I do not wish any one to speak to him about these old reminiscences."

"You need have no fear, I will not betray your confidence," answered the doctor, rising.

"I must leave you, my good friends, and I wish you good-night—a night free from remorse," he added, gravely.

Then he put on his fur cloak, and shook hands cordially with his hosts, and being conducted to the door by Hersebom, he took the road toward his factory.

The fisherman stood for a moment on the threshold, watching his retreating figure in the moonlight.

"What a devil of a man!" he murmured, as at last he closed his door.

CHAPTER III.

MR. HERSEBOM'S REFLECTIONS.

The next morning Dr. Schwaryencrona had just finished breakfast with his overseer, after having made a thorough inspection of his factory when he saw a person enter whom he did not at first recognize as Mr. Hersebom.

He was clothed in his holiday suit: his embroidered waistcoat, his furred riding

coat, and his high hat, and the fisherman looked very different to what he did in his working clothes. But what made the change more apparent, was the deep sadness and humility portrayed in his countenance. His eyes were red, and looked as if he had had no sleep all the night.

This was in fact the case. Mr. Hersebom who up to this time had never felt his conscience trouble him, had passed hours of sad remorse, on his mattress of skins. Toward morning he had exchanged confidences with Dame Katrina, who had also been unable to close her eyes.

"Wife, I have been thinking of what the doctor said to us," he said, after several hours of wakefulness.

"I have been thinking of it also, ever since he left us," answered his worthy helpmate.

"It is my opinion that there is some truth in what he said, and that we have perhaps

acted more egotistically than we should have done. Who knows but that the child may have a right to some great fortune, of which he is deprived by our negligence? Who knows if his family have not mourned for him these twelve years, and they could justly accuse us of having made no attempt to restore him to them?"

"This is precisely what I have been saying to myself," answered Katrina, sighing. "If his mother is living what frightful anguish the poor woman must have endured, in believing that her infant was drowned. I put myself in her place, and imagine that we had lost Otto in this manner. We would never have been consoled."

"It is not thoughts of his mother that trouble me, for according to all appearances, she is dead," said Hersebom, after a silence broken only by their sighs.

"How can we suppose that an infant of that age would travel without her, or that

it would have been tied to a buoy and left to take its chances on the ocean, if she had been living?"

"That is true; but what do we know about it, after all. Perhaps she also has had a miraculous escape."

"Perhaps some one has taken her infant from her—this idea has often occurred to me," answered Hersebom. "Some one might be interested in his disappearance. To expose so young a child to such a hazardous proceeding is so extraordinary that such conjectures are possible, and in this case we have become accomplices of a crime—we have contributed to its success. Is it not horrible to think of?"

"And we thought we were doing such a good and charitable work in adopting the poor little one."

"Oh, it is evident that we had no malicious intentions. We nourished it, and brought it up as well as we were able, but that does not prevent me from seeing that we have

acted rashly, and the little one will have a right to reproach us some of these days." "We need not be afraid of that, I am sure. But it is too bad that we should feel at this late day that we have done anything for which we must reproach ourselves."

"How strange it is that the same action regarded from a different point of view, can be judged so differently. I never would have thought of such a thing. And yet a few words from the doctor seems to have turned my brain."

Thus these good people talked during the night.

The result of their nocturnal conversation was that Mr. Hersebom resolved to call upon the doctor, and ask him what they could do to make amends for the error of which they had been guilty.

Dr. Schwaryencrona did not revert to the conversation which had taken place the previous evening. He appeared to regard the visit of the fisherman as simply an act

of politeness, and received him cordially, and began talking about the weather and the price of fish.

Mr. Hersebom tried to lead the conversation toward the subject which occupied his mind. He spoke of Mr. Malarius' school, and at last said plainly: "Doctor, my wife and I have been thinking all night about what you said to us last evening about the boy. We never thought that we were doing him a wrong in educating him as our son. But you have changed our opinion, and we want to know what you would advise us to do, in order to repair our fault. Do you think that we still ought to seek to find Erik's family?"

"It is never too late to do our duty," said the doctor, "although the task is certainly much more difficult now than it would have been at first."

"Will you interest yourself in the matter?"

"I will, with pleasure," answered the doctor; "and I promise you to use every exertion to fulfill it, upon one condition: that is, that you let me take the boy to Stockholm."

If Mr. Hersebom had been struck on the head with a club, he would not have been more astonished than he was by this proposal.

"Intrust Erik to you! Send him to Stockholm! Why should I do this, doctor?" he asked, in an altered voice.

"I will tell you. My attention was drawn to the child, not only on account of his physical appearance, which was so different to that of his companions, but by his great intelligence and his evident taste for study. Before knowing the circumstances which had brought him to Noroe, I said to myself that it was a shame to leave a boy so gifted in a village school—even under such a master as Malarius; for here there is nothing to

assist in the development of his exceptionally great faculties. There are no museums, nor scientific collections, nor libraries, nor competitors who are worthy of him. I felt a strong desire to give him the advantages of a complete education. You can understand that, after the confidence which you have bestowed upon me, I am more anxious to do so than before. You can see, Mr. Hersebom, that your adopted son belongs to some rich and distinguished family. If I succeed in finding them, would you wish to restore to them a child educated in a village, and deprived of this education, without which he will feel out of place among his kindred? It is not reasonable; and you are too sensible not to understand it."

Mr. Hersebom hung his head: without his being aware of it, two large tears rolled down his cheeks.

"But then," he said, "this would be an entire separation. Before we ever know

whether the child will find his relations, he must be taken from his home. It is asking too much, doctor—asking too much of my wife. The child is happy with us. Why can he not be left alone, at least until he is sure of a better one?"

"Happy. How do you know that he will be so when he grows older? How can you tell whether he may not regret having been saved? Intelligent and superior as he will be, perhaps he would be stifled with the life which you would offer him in Noroe."

"But, doctor, this life which you disdain, is good enough for us. Why is it not good enough for him?"

"I do not disdain it," said the doctor.

"Nobody admires and honors those who work more than I do. Do you believe, Mr. Hersebom, that I forget my birth? My father and grandfather were fishermen like yourself, and it is just because they were so far-seeing as to educate me, that I appreciate the value of it, and I would

assure it to a child who merits it. It is his interest alone which guides me, I beg of you to believe."

"Ah—what do I know about it? Erik will be almost grown up when you have made a gentleman of him, and he will not know how to use his arms. Then if you do not find his family, which is more than possible, since twelve years have passed since I found him, what a beautiful future we are preparing for him! Do you not see, doctor, that a fisherman's life is a brave one—better than any other: with a good boat under his feet and four or five dozen of cod-fish at the end of his lines, a Norwegian fisherman need have no fear, nor be indebted to any one. You say that Erik would not be happy leading such a life. Permit me to believe the contrary. I know the child well, he loves his books, but, above all, he loves the sea. It also almost seems as if he felt that he had been rocked upon it, and all the museums

in the world would not console him for the loss of it."

"But we have the sea around us also at Stockholm," said the doctor, smiling—touched in spite of himself by this affectionate resistance.

"Well," said the fisherman, crossing his arms, "what do you wish to do? what do you propose, doctor?"

"There, you see, after all, the necessity of doing something. Well this is my proposition—Erik is twelve years old, nearly thirteen, and he appears to be highly gifted. We will say nothing about his origin—he is worthy of being supplied with the means of developing and utilizing his faculties; that is all we need trouble ourselves about at present. I am rich, and I have no children. I will undertake to furnish the means, and give him the best masters, and all possible facilities for profiting by their instructions. I will do this for two years. During this time I will make

inquiries, insert advertisements in the newspapers; make every possible exertion, move heaven and earth to discover his parents. If I do not find them in two years, we shall never do it. If his relatives are found, they will naturally decide his future career in life. If we do not find them, I will send Erik back to you. He will then be fifteen years old—he will have seen something of the world. The hour will have arrived to tell him the truth about his birth. Then aided by our advice, and the opinions of his teachers, he can choose what path he would prefer to follow. If he wishes to become a fisherman, I will not oppose it. If he wishes to continue his studies, I engage to furnish the means for him to follow any profession that he may choose. Does this seem a reasonable proposition to you?" "More than reasonable. It is wisdom itself issuing from your lips, doctor," said Mr. Hersebom, overcome in spite of himself.

"See what it is to have an education!" he continued, shaking his head. "The difficulty will be to repeat all you have said to my wife. When will you take the child away?"

"To-morrow. I can not delay my return to Stockholm any longer."

Mr. Hersebom heaved a deep sigh, which was almost a sob.

"To-morrow! So soon!" he said. "Well, what must be, must be. I will go and talk to my wife about it."

"Yes, do so, and consult Mr. Malarius also; you will find that he is of my opinion."

"I do not doubt it," answered the fisherman, with a sad smile.

He shook the hand which Dr.

Schwaryencrona held out to him, and went away looking very thoughtful.

That evening before dinner the doctor again directed his steps toward the dwelling of Mr. Hersebom. He found the family assembled round the hearth, as

they were the evening before, but not wearing the same appearance of peaceful happiness. The father was seated the furthest from the fire, silent, and with idle hands. Katrina, with tears in her eyes, held Erik's hands between her own, whose cheeks were reddened by the hope of the new destiny which seemed opening before him, but who looked sad at leaving all whom he loved, and who did not know what feeling he ought to yield to.

Little Vanda's face was hidden in her father's knees, and nothing could be seen except her long braids of golden hair. Otto, also greatly troubled at this proposed separation, sat motionless beside his brother.

"How sad and disconsolate you look!" said the doctor, stopping on the threshold. "If Erik were about to set out on a distant and most perilous expedition you could not show more grief. He is not going to do anything of the kind, I assure you, my

good friends. Stockholm is not at the antipodes, and the child is not going away forever. He can write to you, and I do not doubt that he will do so often. He is only going away to school, like so many other boys. In two years he will return tall, and well-informed, and accomplished, I hope. Is this anything to feel sad about? Seriously, it is not reasonable."

Katrina arose with the natural dignity of the peasant of the North.

"Doctor," she said, "God is my witness that I am profoundly grateful to you for what you propose to do for Erik—but we can not help feeling sad because of his departure. Mr. Hersebom has explained to me that it is necessary, and I submit. Do not think that I shall feel no regret."

"Mother," said Erik, "I will not go, if it causes you such pain."

"No, child," answered the worthy woman, taking him in her arms. "Education is a benefit which we have no right to refuse

you. Go, my son, and thank the doctor who has provided it for you, and prove to him by constant application to your studies that you appreciate his kindness." "There, there," said the doctor, whose glasses were dimmed by a singular cloudiness, "let us rather speak of practical matters, that will be better. You know, do you not, that we must set out to-morrow very early, and that you must have everything ready. We will go by sleigh to Bergen, and thence by railroad. Erik only needs a change of linen, I will procure everything else that is necessary at Stockholm."

"Everything shall be ready," answered Dame Hersebom.

"Vanda," she added, with Norwegian hospitality, "the doctor is still standing." The little girl hurriedly pushed a large arm-chair toward him.

"I can not stay," said the doctor. "I promised my friend Malarius to dine with

him, and he is waiting for me. Little girl," he said, laying his hand gently upon Vanda's blonde head, "I hope you do not wish me any harm because I am taking your brother away from you?"

"No, doctor," she answered gravely. "Erik will be happier with you—he was not intended to live in a village."

"And you, little one, will you be very unhappy without him?"

"The shore will seem deserted," she answered; "the seagulls will look for him without finding him, the little waves will be astonished because they no longer see him, and the house will seem empty, but Erik will be contented, because he will have plenty of books, and he will become a learned man."

"And his little sister will rejoice in his happiness—is it not so, my child?" said the doctor, kissing the forehead of the little girl. "And she will be proud of him when he returns—see we have arranged the

whole matter—but I must hurry away. Good-bye until to-morrow."

"Doctor," murmured Vanda, timidly, "I wish to ask a favor of you!"

"Speak, child."

"You are going in a sleigh, you said. I wish with my papa's and mamma's permission to drive you to the first relay."

"Ah, ah! but I have already arranged that. Reguild, the daughter of my overseer, should do this."

"Yes, I know it, but she is willing that I should take her place, if you will authorize me to do so."

"Well, in that case you have only to obtain the permission of your father and mother."

"I have done so."

"Then you have mine also, dear child," said the doctor, and he took his departure. The next morning when the sleigh stopped before the door of Mr. Hersebom little

Vanda held the reins according to her desire, seated upon the front seat. She was going to drive them to the next village, where the doctor would procure another horse and sleigh, and thus procure relays until he reached Bergen. This new kind of coachman always astonishes a stranger, but it is the custom in Norway and Sweden. The men would think it a loss of time to pursue such a calling, and it is not rare to see children of ten or twelve years of age managing heavy equipages with perfect ease. The doctor was already installed in the back of the sleigh, nearly hidden by his furs. Erik took his seat beside Vanda, after having tenderly embraced his father and brother, who contented themselves by showing by their mute sadness the sorrow which his departure caused them; but the good Katrina was more open in the expression of her feelings.

"Adieu, my son!" she said, in the midst of her tears. "Never forget what you have learned from your poor parents—be honest, and brave, and never tell a lie. Work as hard as you can—always protect those who are weaker than yourself—and if you do not find the happiness you merit come back and seek it with us."

Vanda touched the horse which set out at a trot, and made the bells ring. The air was cold, and the road as hard as glass. Just above the horizon a pale sun began to throw his golden beams upon the snowy landscape. In a few minutes Noroe was out of sight behind them.

CHAPTER IV.

AT STOCKHOLM.

Doctor Schwaryencrona lived in a magnificent house in Stockholm. It was in the oldest and most aristocratic quarter of the charming capital, which is one of the most pleasant and agreeable in Europe.

Strangers would visit it much more frequently if it were better known and more fashionable. But tourists, unfortunately for themselves, plan their journeys much upon the same principle as they purchase their hats. Situated between Lake Melar and the Baltic, it is built upon eight small islands, connected by innumerable bridges, and bordered by splendid quays, enlivened by numerous steam-boats, which fulfill the duties of omnibuses. The population are hardworking, gay, and contented. They are the most hospitable, the most polite, and the best educated of any nation in Europe. Stockholm, with its libraries, its museums, its scientific establishments, is in fact the Athens of the North, as well as a very important commercial center. Erik, however, had not recovered from the sadness incident upon parting from Vanda, who had left them at the first relay. Their parting had been more

sorrowful than would have been expected at their age, but they had not been able to conceal their emotion.

When the carriage stopped before a large brick house, whose double windows shone resplendently with gaslight, Erik was fairly dazzled. The copper knocker of the door appeared to him to be of fine gold. The vestibule, paved with marble and ornamented with statues, bronze torches, and large Chinese-vases, completed his amazement.

A footman in livery removed his master's furs, and inquired after his health with the affectionate cordiality which is habitual with Swedish servants. Erik looked around him with amazement.

The sound of voices attracted his attention toward the broad oaken staircase, covered with heavy carpet. He turned, and saw two persons whose costumes appeared to him the height of elegance.