EFNADELSTULST they call it in Sweden, the “Joy of Life,” the love of work for the working, the whole-souled mirth of healthful play. Not that the word itself slips from lip to lip at the breakfast tables of Stockholm; it is a definition sacred to poets, they who solve the great equations and reduce the unknown quantities of life to their simplest terms.

Lefnadslust is that which every Swedish peasant breathes, that which even the mechanic in the city is beginning to experience, in that vigorous Northern land where craftsmanship is no longer the pastime of a few but the buoyant expression of a nation.

Those who are so fortunate as to visit this season the exhibit of Swedish Industrial Art imported by the Swedish Club of Chicago, will appreciate the external results of this national awakening in Sweden. They will see beaten silver chased with the sun-wheels and dragon motives of pagan antiquity; they will see the gossamer lace of the peasant women of Vadstena, the hand-carved tables, the white linen woven on the farm, the tapestries and gay woolen stuffs of Dalecarlia. They will see also machine-made articles which reveal, in beauty of line and color, the competition and inspiration of handicraft. What they cannot see, however, are the rosy cheeks, the clear and confident eyes; nor can they hear the laughter and song of the craftsmen.

But he who writes has both seen and heard. He has returned at evening with hale old grandfather from the furrow, and sat beside him at his bench, in one corner of the great, low-raftered living-room, while he carved a bowl out of birch; he has bent over grandmother with her needle; heard son Erik hammering his kettle; watched wife Karen at her loom, while fourteen-year-old Oscar played the fiddle; and what is more, he has danced with granddaughter, flaxen haired Ebba, through the multi-colored midsummer night, amid a thousand whirling figures of flushed youth, singing folk-songs of wooing, as old and as young again as the pagan past.

The Swedish peasant is not as other peasants. He has an advantage, almost unfair, in his ancestry. In Viking days a freeholder, free he has remained, each farmer his own squire, never cowed and subdued by feudalism into the dejected pose of the Man with the Hoe. Throughout the Middle Ages and down to modern times the farmsteads of Sweden were alive with hand industry, each family growing its own dye and wool, and producing clothing in the gorgeous patterns peculiar to each separate parish.
SWEDEN—A NATION OF CRAFTSMEN

There came a break, however, in this proud tradition. The nineteenth century brought, with other blessings, the machine. It became cheaper to send flax and wool to the cities to be made into inferior stuffs and black clothes uniform for all. City folk laughed at the old-fashioned, fantastic peasant dress. The spinning wheel stopped whirring. The hammer lay idle on the anvil. The young people, many of them, went to the city to work in the factory, while still more crossed the sea to America with its promise of gold. Those who remained at home on the farm became discouraged, shiftless, and easy victims of disease; for the color had gone out of their lives just as it had gone out of their clothes. As for the old tapestries, it is said that some of the most beautiful patterns are lost forever.

Tradition was broken; but here the arts and crafts movement stepped in. The year eighteen hundred and seventy marked the beginning of the crusade,—six years before American industry received its artistic shock at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Why mention names? The movement was national. Into the museums of Stockholm a Swedish Mæcenas, Arthur Hazelius, foreseeing the total extinction of household industries, hurried specimens of what remained of the old home arts. Here the foreign guest may study them today. At the same time, in eighteen hundred and seventy-four, some public spirited citizens founded at Naas a school of sloyd,—the name sloyd as well as the conception is Swedish,—to direct teachers of manual training who should go out to cultivate in the youth of Sweden and other lands a respect for manual toil, a dexterity of hand, and an appreciation for grace of line and form.

Not content with school sloyd, the crusade aimed directly at the home. In eighteen hundred and seventy-four a group of intelligent women in Stockholm founded the first Swedish society for the rejuvenation of home textiles, naming it The Friends of Handiwork. Their leader, Baroness Adlersparre, appealed to the aesthetic by showing how handiwork developed an artistic sense and added charm to home life; to the practical, by claiming that Swedish peasant women could in this way gain subsistence without leaving the farm.

The Friends of Handiwork met with no easy task. Teachers had first to be trained and sent out through the country districts urging the women to return again to their forsaken looms. They carried with them from farm to farm patterns and models. When they found a grandmother who remembered the pattern of a forgotten lace, they promptly commissioned her as schoolmistress and gathered about her a group of willing pupils. A market also they had to find, and for this purpose they established a network of provincial depots with a central shop in the capital.
TWO DESIGNS FOR PANELS IN A TAPESTRY BY ANDERS ZORN.
TWO VIEWS IN THE GREAT LIVING ROOM IN THE HOME OF ANDERS ZORN, MORA: FURNISHED THROUGHOUT WITH THE WORK OF SWEDISH CRAFTSMEN.
A SWEDISH PEASANT WOMAN, PICTURESQUE AND CONTENT, KNITTING BY HER HEARTHSTONE.

THE WIFE OF CARL LARSSON, THE SWEDISH PAINTER, BUSY IN HER LINEN ROOM WHICH IS FURNISHED IN TYPICAL SWEDISH STYLE, THE WORK OF HER HUSBAND WHO IS CRAFTSMAN AS WELL AS PAINTER.
A BIT OF RARE SWEDISH TAPESTRY, ILLUSTRATING FOLK SONG: DESIGNED BY MARTHA PRALTERSTROM.

OLD SWEDISH HAUTE LISSE TAPESTRY: PEASANT WORK FROM SKANE.
SWEDISH DESIGN FOR SCONCE. MODERN SWEDISH LAMP. SWEDISH DESIGN FOR FIRE DOGS.

A SWEDISH PIANO, THE CASE DESIGNED AND CARVED IN THE HOME OF AND BY THE OWNER.
YOUNG WOMEN OF SELMA LAGERLOF'S PROVINCE IN SWEDEN,—WOOL CARDERS AND TYPICAL PEASANT WOMEN OF THAT REGION, VIGOROUS, HAPPY AND GOOD-LOOKING.

LACE MAKERS OF MOCKFJERD IN THEIR BEAUTIFUL BRIGHT COLORED NATIVE DRESS, FAMOUS AS WORKERS, WIVES AND BEAUTIES.
SWEDEN—A NATION OF CRAFTSMEN

Other societies followed, which extended the revival of handicraft into the fields of metal, wood and clay. In eighteen hundred and ninety-nine the artist prince, Eugen, and a group of friends, established the Home Sloyd Union, which has been the means of bringing a new interest into the homes of artisans similar to that felt upon the farms. In the salesroom of the Union at Stockholm, articles can be purchased to supply every practical need of the home.

The crusade for handicrafts has been successful in Sweden as in no other land. Incidentally, it has added millions of dollars annually to the economic prosperity of the nation. Into one formerly poverty-stricken farming village the revival of homemade basketry is bringing thirty thousand dollars a year; in another, lace making adds an equal amount; in a third parish, the old men, too old for toil in the fields, earn twenty thousand dollars a year by carving furniture. Home crafts have saved many a farm from desolation and made it possible for the peasant population, in the face of industrial competition, to remain in possession of their ancestral estates. Emigration to America has materially abated, and many emigrants are returning to their old homes. Far from infringing upon machine industries, arts and crafts have, on the other hand, compelled the factory to produce more beautiful and durable objects.

But more important than external economic prosperity is the exuberance of life and health which their beautiful toil brings to the workmen in Sweden. If you doubt it, go into the north, to Dalecarlia; visit the parish of Mockfjörd in summer, and see a group of glad-eyed women gathered under the birch trees about a table decked with pillows and bobbins and piles of delicate lace. Their clothing,—kerchief and bodice and apron,—embroidered with a gay flower pattern, in keeping with the perpetual springtime of their moods. Or stop by the roadside in Värmland and watch a gay family party, grandmother and grandchildren, breaking and scuttling flax amid story-telling and fun and frolic. If you are playful you will receive a baptism of soft white chaff showered on you by nimble hands.

Another evidence of the return of youth to the nation is the revival of national dress. One Swedish princess requires peasant costume of all her ladies-in-waiting at her summer court. The artist Zorn, when at home, goes about in the blue knickerbockers and white leather apron that are traditional to the men of Mora. It is not merely a fad for the few. There are villages in Dalecarlia where, on the sabbath, every man, woman and child goes to church in a costume into which mother or wife has woven her own intimate expres-
sion of the beautiful, and which symbolises for the wearer the joy of worship.

A gorgeous spectacle they present on the road home from church. Each parish has its own fashion,—the cockade of Rättvik, the striped apron of Leksand, the red braid in the hair of the Mora girl,—while the connoisseur recognizes at once the more subtle badges which distinguish maid from mother, and wife from widow. The effect is unlike anything in Europe,—more varied than the gala costume of Brittany, more decorative than the dress of the Bavarian peasant,—almost Asiatic in its richness. Yet the total disregard for modern fashions and Parisian modes does not impress one as retrograde or ridiculous even in up-to-date Sweden, where the telephone service is the best and clearest in the world. The knickerbockers of the men are more comfortable than trousers, and cannot the farmer’s daughter ring the telephone and ride her bicycle to market in a scarlet bodice and a dainty white embroidered kerchief?

There is a girl in Mora named Margot, a Swedish type, whose flaxen hair nature, by special favor, has ripened into gold. Like many of the girls in Mora, she has sat for Zorn, the artist, and her beauty has gone abroad to delight thousands to whom Sweden is nothing but a geographical name. Margot gave the American visitor a stool opposite herself in the spis,—the hearth in the corner,—and they sat facing each other, sharing the evening meal of sago pudding and strawberries, while her aged mother knitted and knitted incessantly, smiling approval on the foreigner who could enter into the spirit of a Swedish farm. The American asked the story of the old fairy-tale tapestry which hung on the wall, of the rows of shining kettles suspended from the cross-beams, of the arm-chair with dragon’s claws which grandpa had carved. Her own costume also Margot explained; why the fronting of her woollen skirt was green; how Anders Zorn, the artist, insisted that the girls of Mora observe the custom of braiding a red ribbon in their hair.

“And now,” she added, “I have just finished making my new winter cloak.”

“Would that I could see it,” cried the American.

“Shall I?,” she asked, with a laugh, and an inquiring look at her mother. The nod must have meant approval, for Margot ran lightly from the room, and quickly returned transformed into a queen of winter, a Freyja of the north. Her close fitting cloak was of that heavy woolen fabric which the northern peoples call vadmal, stained scarlet and lined with soft, lamb’s fleece, peeping out white around the edges. A red and white turban half concealed her curls. Picture
this glorious Swedish girl as Zorn has seen her, with sparkling eyes, in her warm red habit in midwinter, speeding on skis over the white snow fields!

The American saw also the “linen press” with its fresh, new table cloths, its rugs and hangings. They were not for the farm; they were to be sent up to Stockholm with grandfather’s pots and grandmother’s lace, where their sale should add materially to the modest income from cows and crops.

Every summer Margot drives the herds up to the mountain and lives in the little chalet, boiling the winter’s supply of cheese. Even here the artists follow her, not Zorn alone, but also his friends, and a sculptor from Denmark and a “lady painter” from Finland over the sea, not so much on account of the accidental glory of her hair as to snatch and preserve the radiance of life that she has won from her toil.

Margot’s proudest treasure, after her winter costume, is an etching of herself by Zorn. A cloud swept across her face for an instant when the thoughtless American told her that he had seen it before in New York and Paris.

Zorn himself is an artisan as well as an artist. At home in Mora he is not only a painter, but a master wood-carver and a master blacksmith, while his wife goes from farm to farm, teaching the women new patterns in needlework and weaving.

Carl Larsson, the painter of the home, is another of the master craftsmen. His “House in the Sun” was built, furnished and decorated largely by the very hands of this Viking giant and untiring worker. His wife and children, familiar in picture books in practically every Swedish home, are in reality happier even than they are painted. “Larssons’” is a paradise of activity and contentment.

The arts and crafts movement has been in no small degree responsible for the renaissance of the fine arts which meets every visitor to the public buildings and galleries of Sweden today. Still more has it contributed to the happiness of a united people, who are learning more and more each year to combine play and beauty with toil and utility in a sane and joyous expression of life.