

VISIT TO
FINLAND.



Siirotetty Gripenbergin kokoelmasta
27. V. 1950.

Joseph Sturge
BIBLIOTHECA
UNIV. HELV.

REPORT

OF A

VISIT TO FINLAND,

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1856.

CONFIDENTIAL.

BIRMINGHAM:

WHITE & PIKE, PRINTERS, BULL STREET.



REPORT

VISIT TO FINLAND

CONFIDENTIAL

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LIBRARY

INTRODUCTION.

During the late war with Russia, the property of unarmed citizens and merchants was burned to a large amount, and in many cases, especially in the Gulf of Bothnia and the Sea of Azoff, the possessions of the humblest classes were either destroyed, or seized and carried away without payment, by the soldiers and sailors of Great Britain; proceedings not justified even by the usages of war. These acts were, it is true, by no means universal on the part of the fleets, but were the consequence of measures, adopted or permitted by the commanders of particular ships or squadrons. Nevertheless they were sufficiently numerous and extensive to produce a deep impression, and to excite feelings towards this country of a very unfavorable kind.

The journey, now reported, was undertaken with the purpose; first, of inquiring into the facts upon the spot; secondly, of ascertaining if it would be practicable to relieve the poorest class of the sufferers, by the restoration of the whole or a part of their little property; and lastly, with the hope, under the divine blessing, of promoting "good will among men," and preparing the way for the restoration of the cordiality and attachment, which the inhabitants, especially of Finland, had long cherished towards Great Britain. This object would have been in some respects most satisfactorily attained by an appeal to the public, and by imparting, through the small contributions of a large number of persons

INTRODUCTION.

somewhat of a national character to the act of restitution. It is believed that such an appeal would be responded to even by many who did not condemn the war itself; but it will be obvious to the readers of this report, that there are reasons, which forbid the adoption of this course. To those, however, who would wish, in a private way, to contribute, whether to a larger or smaller amount, in aid of the relief proposed to be afforded, an opportunity of doing so may shortly be offered.

It may be well to add a few cautionary words on the "confidential" character of the ensuing pages. Some portions of it, if of sufficient interest, might not unsuitably be published, and these may possibly appear in another shape. Other portions of the report could not be *published*, in any proper sense of the term, without a breach of propriety, if not of confidence. And lastly, there are topics regarding which, the effect of publicity would be almost certainly injurious. A painfully interesting fact may be adduced as an illustration. The report in the newspapers of the day, of a speech delivered at a meeting of the Bible Society in England about thirty years ago, eloquently setting forth the tendency of the spread of the Holy Scriptures to destroy the corruptions and errors of the Greek Church, the national religion of Russia, was made use of by the enemies of light and progress, to extort from the reluctant Alexander I. the suspension of the circulation of the Bible in the Russian language. Not long afterwards, in a remote corner of his dominions, that emperor died, broken-hearted, as there is reason to believe, from the failure of his designs, in this and other respects for the good of his country.

For the reasons assigned, it is earnestly requested that the following report may be regarded as strictly "confidential;" that no part of it may be copied; and that those in whose hands it is placed, will exercise judicious care in quoting or referring to it verbally.

10th Month, 31st, 1856.

R E P O R T .

(CONFIDENTIAL.)

We left England via Dover for Calais on the afternoon of 9th Month 8th, 1856, and by a rapid railway transit proceeded to Lubeck, where we arrived about eight p. m., on the 10th. We had intended to go by way of Stockholm to Abo, but finding a steamer proceeding direct to Helsingfors at nine the following morning, we were induced by the recommendation of our kind friend Dr. Voigt, of Lubeck, to take that route, as likely to save some days detention at Stockholm. We accordingly embarked on board the '*Hengist*,' a screw steamer and slow vessel, but otherwise comfortable, and being favoured with fair weather, we reached Helsingfors about ten a. m., on 2nd day, the 15th of 9th Month.

The approach to a place of such note in connection with the late war, and which has been termed "the Gibraltar of the north," could not but excite feelings of interest, though far from wholly of a pleasurable kind. The first object seen of Helsingfors is its large white church, built on an elevated site, and surmounted by one large and four lesser domes, painted bright blue and spangled with golden stars; next appears in view a white range of handsome buildings along the quay side. Soon we approach and pass the semi-circle of little islets, bare rocks which form the fringe, as it were, of the ocean barrier of the harbour. On one of these to the westward the French planted a battery at the bombardment of Sweaborg.

Within this circle and about a mile distant, are the seven fortified islands, of which Sweaborg is the central and the largest. These close up all but two narrow entrances to the harbour, one of which is artificially obstructed by a large sunken man of war, still remaining and visible. Sweaborg bears traces in marks of fire and ruined buildings, of the attack of the allied fleets; its church, similar in form to that of Helsingfors, but less in size, and some ranges of buildings, remain apparently unscathed. To a non-military eye there is nothing at first view to suggest impregnable strength; yet a little reflection upon the cannon, peeping at intervals out of the live rock, and upon the long, turf-covered mounds of square outline, which are masked batteries of granite and earthwork of the strongest construction, quickly leads to the conclusion, that the defences of Sweaborg are of a kind not likely to be impaired by any bombardment, and which threaten destruction to any hostile vessel approaching the entrance to the harbour. That, however, which defied the whole power of the allied fleets, offered no obstruction to our little steamer, freighted with peace and goodwill, and we accordingly passed and soon found ourselves in the midst of a panorama of great interest and beauty; for such is the harbour of Helsingfors, with its beautiful islands, the rocky coast of the mainland, the shipping and the cheerful town with its market on the quay, and various aspects both of man and nature, that are new to an English eye.

After we had obtained permission to land, we secured apartments at the principal Hotel, 'THE SOCIETY HOUSE,' and proceeded to call upon — Kisseleff, a merchant to whom we had a letter of introduction from Boldemann, Borries and Co., of Newcastle upon Tyne. The principal was absent in France, and neither of his partners or clerks could speak

English or French. After some time they called in the assistance of an acquaintance, who spoke our language; this gentleman, Frederic Lerche, holding some appointment in the Chancery of the Governor General, was very kind and useful to us. Through him we purchased a suitable carriage, and he aided the Kisseleffs in engaging a sailor, speaking Swedish, Finnish, and a little English, to accompany us to Tamerfors as interpreter. F. L. spent the evening in our company, and though we did not state the direct object of our visit to Finland, yet the conversation was much on points interesting to us. His statements were quite in accordance with those circulated in England. He said the British Commanders on certain parts of the coast behaved in a generous and honorable manner, doing no damage to private property, and taking nothing without compensation; while other captains opposite such and such places, (naming particularly Nystad and Raumo,) wantonly destroyed the property of individuals, many of them of the poorest classes, and carried off provisions and cattle without payment. He said there were records in the Governor General's office of all this damage, down to every single sheep or cow; he also referred to the destruction of the stores of deals and tar at Uleaborg and Brahested, by Admiral Plumridge, and said he had been employed to translate the manifesto of the latter, issued immediately before setting fire to the stores, in which he pledged himself to protect private property. The original document was transmitted to St. Petersburg. (A copy is given in the *Herald of Peace*, for August, 1854.)

Having completed our arrangements and obtained our Russian passports, we left Helsingfors about one p. m. on the 16th, in our newly acquired vehicle, with three post-horses driven abreast. The arrangements

for travelling in Finland are similar to those that prevail in other parts of Northern Europe. The country is penetrated throughout with roads, which are maintained by the land-owners, a large proportion of whom in Finland are peasant-proprietors. At distances varying from ten to twenty versts, (the Russian verst being about two-thirds of a mile,) are post-houses, which consist usually of two or three good rooms, attached to a peasant's house, and furnished with a stove, beds, &c., for the use of travellers. Here is kept a "Dag-bok," on the first page of which is a table of the distance and charge for each horse to the first station in every direction. The following pages are ruled in columns with suitable headings, for the traveller to enter his name, where he is from, whither going, and the number of horses he requires; a wide column being reserved for his complaints, if he has any to make. The regulations for travelling are hung up on the walls, and also a tariff of the prices, revised every six months, at which the wants of the traveller must be supplied, every post-house being also his hostelry or inn for the time being, if required. To the post-house, the neighbouring farmers must each in rotation send a horse, one of their small country carts without springs, and a man or boy, to the number of twelve in most country places, besides holding others in reserve in the neighbourhood. The charge is four copeks silver, (the copek is one-hundredth part of a ruble silver, which is equal to about three shillings and two-pence of our money,) per horse, per verst, for the first stage out of every town; and two copeks and a half for every other stage throughout the country. For the use of the cart, if required, the charge is two copeks for ten versts; the post-boy usually gets a gratuity of two copeks per stage.

This system must be regarded as a land-tax, especially in summer, when both men and horses are wanted on the farm, but its general working is no doubt beneficial, as whole wide regions of this thinly-peopled country in which there are so very few inland towns, might relapse into barbarism, but for these complete arrangements for inter-communication, attended comparatively with so little expense or difficulty. The charge amounting to four-pence or five-pence per English mile for three horses, and the post-boy, whom we paid extravagantly, (four or five copeks per stage,) approaches more nearly to a remunerating payment than is readily conceivable in England; and the service is generally willingly rendered. The horses are small ponies, their speed six to twelve versts per hour, according to the state of the roads and the quality of the animals. The roads are marked off with short posts, numbered, and occurring at irregular intervals, which point out the divisions to be kept in good order by each estate or farm; snow-ploughs lie off the road, ready to make it smooth for the sledge in winter; and, what the traveller prizes highly, tall red verst-posts, with large black figures on their white capitals, inform him the distance he has come from the last post-house, and the number of versts yet remaining to the next.

The point we were anxious to reach was Tamerfors, a town in the interior, distant about one hundred and forty miles, the residence of Ferdinand Uhden, well known as a Christian philanthropist, to some of our dear friends in England. He was connected with the flourishing cotton mill at Tamerfors, carried on for many years under the firm of Finlaison & Co.; and though now retired from the partnership, still lends his aid to the superintendence of the concern. We travelled through the night

and arrived at Tamerfors about one p. m. of the following day, from half an hour to an hour having been spent in waiting at three or four stations, when, as our sailor-interpreter expressed it, some one had to be sent into the fields to "jump after horses."

F. U. received us with much kindness, and entered with cordial interest into our views and objects. Wearied with travel and our minds solicitously occupied with the consideration of the best means of proceeding, our intercourse with him proved truly refreshing. He had already sent a letter to meet us at Abo, the recommendations contained in which, he now repeated to us; and he engaged for us the services of an interpreter, in Charles Macmann, the son of their English manager, a young man of seventeen or eighteen, speaking Swedish and Finnish fluently. F. U. expressed himself decidedly as to the healing and conciliating effect of the attempt to replace the property of the poor Finns, on the coast and islands; he was anxious at the same time to guard us against fictitious claims, as it was well known, he said, that many of the English captains paid honorably for what they took. He concurred in the opinion that the proceedings on the coast of a contrary character, had caused a strong revulsion of feeling from the former high estimation of England. This, he hoped, would prove but temporary. He promised us his valuable co-operation through his correspondence with merchants and clergymen, in whom he had confidence, residing in or near the localities where the injuries had been committed.

It was interesting to find how favorable an impression of the present Emperor Alexander II., F. U. had derived from a recent visit of the

sovereign to Tamerfors, which had been further strengthened by the declarations made at his coronation at Moscow, of which the news had just arrived. Besides the political amnesties, remission of arrears of taxes, and the cessation of conscription for four years, unless, as regards the latter war should again break out, "which," said the Emperor, "may God forbid;" he had further promised to abolish the virtual slavery of the sons of soldiers, by declaring that they should no longer be drafted as a matter of course into the army, but, when of suitable age, should have the free choice of their mode of livelihood.

We returned the next day from Tamerfors to Abo, a distance of nearly one hundred and ninety versts, which journey with delays as before, in addition to bad roads again, occupied twenty-four hours continuous travelling. More than half of these two journies was through dense forest of pine or birch; many miles were along the shores or in view of one or other of the beautiful lakes, with which Finland abounds, and which cover, it is said, one-fourth or one-fifth of the surface of the country. The granite rock which almost everywhere forms the foundation of Finland, continually crops out of the earth in bold masses, sometimes overtopping the trees, detached boulders of the same of all sizes and forms, lying scattered over the surface. These rocks covered with beautiful mosses and many-coloured lichens, are a striking feature of the Finnish landscape. On these two roads, villages and detached houses are frequent. The land in cultivation is chiefly owned by peasants, and produces rye, oats, barley, peas, potatoes, flax, hemp, &c. Near the homesteads, patches of tobacco and little hop gardens are common. The farming is very slovenly: the buildings are all of wood, constructed of squared trunks of trees, placed

horizontally with moss between ; and the structure, if a dwelling house, is raised above the ground on four low granite walls, or on piles of stones. Many of the houses are sufficiently spacious and comfortable, but the approaches are deep in mire and dirt. Cattle of small size, ponies, sheep, and long-legged, long-snouted swine seem abundant. Houses of a superior class, still of wood and generally of one story, but well finished and painted, occasionally occur; being the residences of priests, official persons, or affluent peasants. The quaint churches with their steep gables, and with the belfry or spire a detached building, also strike the eye of the stranger. We passed a few large estates in a higher state of cultivation, and with mansions usually commanding some noble prospect of rock, lake and forest scenery. Below the "peasants," (a term here implying ownership of land,) there is a class cultivating land on a labour-rent, or subsisting on casual employment. Hence, though there are evidences of a plentiful supply of the necessaries and even the comforts of life, in a somewhat rude and primitive style, there is a part of the population whose pallid looks, dirty persons, and inadequate clothing, tell a tale of privation, corroborating a remark made to us by F. Uhden, that half the infant population of Finland dies before attaining the age of ten years. On these jounies we passed and met great numbers of country carts, going to the nearest town with wood, hay, dairy and other produce, or returning empty or laden with town merchandise. On the road to Abo we met at intervals twenty or thirty carts, each conveying three bales of cotton to the cotton mill at Tamerfors, a two-weeks journey there and back with the same man and horse. The only effect of the war upon this establishment, employing nearly one thousand hands, was to lead them to transfer their correspond-

ence for the purchase of cotton from Liverpool to New Orleans, where their business still remains. Their supply of cotton, by way of Sweden and across the Gulf of Bothnia, was never interrupted by the presence of the British fleet; a few hours sail enabling the small vessels, laden with cotton, coffee or salt, to get among the islands lining the coast, where, comparatively hidden and safe from pursuit, aided by local knowledge of the intricacies of the navigation, they could watch their opportunity of landing cargoes at one of the small ports on the mainland.

On arriving at Abo, after needful rest, we called upon Erik Julin, a merchant, and one of Finland's most influential and public-spirited men. F. Uhden had directed us to him as the person best calculated to give us effectual aid. We had also an introduction for his firm, from the house of Boldemann and Co., of Newcastle-on-Tyne. E. Julin, who is an elderly man, of thoughtful and benevolent aspect, received us very cordially, and thanked us warmly for the interest manifested on behalf of Finland. He had already heard from F. U., respecting our visit, and together with his son, John Julin, who speaks English, entered at once into a consideration of our views; and as the result of a long conference with them, J. Julin kindly proposed to accompany us to Nystad and Raumo, and assist us in a personal investigation into some of the cases; while his father intended, in the mean time, to form a committee to carry into effect such plan of relief as might be decided on. Accordingly, on 7th day, the 20th of 9th month, we left for Nystad, distant about ninety versts, and arrived there about nine p. m. We did not think it unsuitable to devote a portion of the following day to the business in hand. Our kind and very efficient companion called

upon G. W. Ramsell, a merchant, and the consul for Denmark, and engaged him to meet us and in the interim to look out for and bring to our quarters, (the Post-house,) any of the people from the islands off the coast, who might have come over to Nystad, to attend church, and who had suffered during the war. Our interview with these persons took place about noon, soon after public worship was concluded, and the following are notes of the statements then made to us:—

NOTES TAKEN AT NYSTAD, 9Mo. 21, 1856.

“G. W. Ramsell, merchant and consul at this port for Denmark, states, that the town was entirely unarmed and without troops. Captain Storey, of the *Harrier*, had frequently got fresh provisions from Nystad, which he had paid for. On the 23rd June, 1855, Captain Storey destroyed seven ships in the harbour. After burning these ships, he came in and asked for provisions, and said he would burn no more vessels, provided no shot was fired at him or his people; yet, though no one fired, five boats came in again on the 30th June, and destroyed the ships remaining in the harbour, nine in number. One of these vessels was his (G. W. R.'s) property. The (Russian) government peremptorily forbade any more provisions being supplied to the hostile fleet. Captain Storey again applied for fresh meat, &c., on the 6th July, when his demand was refused, the above order being alleged as the reason. He replied if he did not obtain his supplies by eleven o'clock he would bombard the town, which threat he carried into execution. The bombardment continued one hour and a quarter. Some houses near the town were set on fire by rockets. Little damage was done to the town itself. One man was killed, leaving a widow and one child; another received a contusion, from which he afterwards died, leaving a widow; and a woman had her leg shot off, and afterwards died in hospital at Abo.”

“He estimates the value of the ships and property destroyed at Nystad at about

one hundred and three or one hundred and four thousand rubles silver."

"Although Captain Storey always paid for such provisions as he obtained from Nystad, yet on the neighbouring islands, the sheep and cattle were sometimes hunted up and seized without payment; and, in some cases, the sailors ransacked the houses, taking away clothing and other things, besides wantonly destroying property, including many small vessels and fishing nets. He should think twenty or thirty boats were destroyed between Nystad and Raumo."

"Ellen Lemberg is widow of the man killed in the bombardment, and has one daughter, aged twenty-seven, who is in service. Having received a small share of the Emperor's gift after the fire, has subsisted on it since, and now and then gets a little work. Her husband, when alive, earned thirty-five or forty copeks a day; but being an old man, only got three or four days' work in the week."*

"Gustav Grimroos, fisherman, living on Stoorkaskis island, states that a party from Captain Storey's ship, destroyed his nets and one boat, afterwards went through his cottage, opening drawers and looking for everything; did not take anything from the house except a locker used to take food, &c. to sea in his boat, which they broke open and destroyed. He values the property destroyed at nine silver rubles. He has lived since by repairing some old nets and borrowing a boat."

"Ellen Christine Biorn, servant to Johann Friman, peasant, residing on Raudais island, (Nykyrka Parish) says: After the five boats had destroyed the nine ships at Nystad, the men came on shore on this island, and from her masters' house took the man's clothes, and such articles of women's dress, shawls, handkerchiefs, &c., as they could use; also two or three wedding rings. Close to theirs was a cottage from which they took nine sheep."

"Mattias Lunden, peasant, Hahkuarja (on the main-land), Nykyrka parish, had

* A large part of Nystad was destroyed last year by an accidental fire. The Emperor sent 6,000 rubles (nearly £1000 sterling) to be distributed among the sufferers.

a vessel laden with wood, from which they took chains, anchor, rigging, &c., and left merely the hull of the vessel. He has a farm, but his partners in the ship are very poor. Estimates the loss at four hundred and fifty silver rubles."

"Henrik Alsten, an old pilot and fisherman, living on Loko island, had thirteen sheep and two cows taken without payment, by a boat's crew from Captain Storey's ship. Says there was an officer with the sailors. They afterwards went to the village and took milk and some boat-loads of wood. The boats were restored, and no property destroyed but what they took."

"Henrik Sjogren, Saikmari island, Nykryka parish. Has a little farm, to which he pays rent in money and labour. They took from him the sails of his boat, and a great deal of fish from his cottage, besides other provisions and bed-clothes. They cut down a plot of peas and carried it off, and a quantity of hay. There were two boats with forty or fifty men in each. The officers remained on the strand to bathe, while the soldiers and sailors were plundering the village. The women ran off to the wood; he remained in the house, and a soldier pointed his musket at his breast and threatened to shoot if he did not shew them what he had—especially sweet milk and sour milk. Estimates his loss at twenty silver rubles."

"Gustav Ericson's wife, Vakova island. This family is in similar circumstances to the last. They lost three cows and one calf, which were shot in the field and carried off by the boats; have one cow left, which ran off and escaped. The cows were worth fifteen rubles each, the calf five rubles. Total estimated loss, fifty silver rubles."

After an early dinner we journeyed on to Raumo, another small port, fifty or sixty versts distant from Nystad. F. Uhden had supplied us with an introduction to J. Ilwan, an aged merchant, who, along with a younger merchant, named Ridderstadt, invited by our companion, called upon us the

following morning, bringing a few individuals belonging to Raumo, who came within the scope of our inquiry. The following statements were taken down from the lips of the parties:—

NOTES TAKEN AT RAUMO, 9mo. 22, 1856.

“ John Michal Ilwan, merchant, and — Ridderstad, merchant, state that this town is also without defences, and had no troops within it, though there were soldiers in the vicinity. On the 2nd July, 1855, the *Driver* came in and anchored broadside against the town, then sent off four boats with armed men, and one with a flag of truce. The burgh-master went to meet the flag of truce, when a demand was made for all the ships, with the rigging belonging to them. He replied, the ships were not his, and he must ask the merchants. The boat's crew boarded two ships and set them on fire. “An attack,” lasting for ten minutes, took place between the crew of one of the boats and some Russian soldiers, commenced by one of the sailors firing a pistol at the soldiers. The *Driver* then bombarded the town from four to nine o'clock, but without doing damage. On the 25th July, two British ships came in and as soon as they anchored began to fire. The commander of the Russian troops in the neighbourhood having no cannon and seeing he could do nothing, withdrew his men, on which, the English ships sent out boats and burned the buildings on the islands near the harbour, completed the destruction of the two ships partially burned on the 2nd of July, and of a third ship belonging to a widow. One of these vessels belonged to an old ship-master, named Emanuel Ankar; a storehouse of his in the harbour was also destroyed, being all his property; he is now employed as master of a ship belonging to another, but, being an old man, cannot much longer follow this occupation.”

“ Carl Gustav Ekroth's wife says her husband was some years ago inspector of weights and measures in Raumo, for which, in lieu of salary, he had the occupation of the small island Korkian-Karri, five or seven versts off shore, and

belonging to the town. Although, owing to his age, he had been relieved from his office, he was still permitted to occupy the said island. His boat was destroyed in Raumo harbour when the shipping was destroyed, and the English boats also destroyed all his property on the island; buildings, nets, sails and furniture, viz. on the 25th of July, 1855. They are now living without means, dependant on friends in the town; she estimates their loss at about seventy silver rubles."

"Matthias Sheliünd, a fisherman, lost two sheep from the same island, which were either destroyed or taken away by the English."

"Gustav Molande, a pilot, had two boats burned, value about twenty-five silver rubles."

"Christine Blom, widow; her husband owned one ship, built or bought with borrowed money, and a cargo of deals. The ship was burned on the 25th July, and the cargo which had been placed on shore, was also burnt. This was the whole of his property; value of the ship eight hundred rubles silver, of the deals one hundred ditto, of which he owed six hundred rubles. Her husband was an elderly man, and took his loss so much to heart, that he never got over it, but declined and died on the 16th June last. She is left with one child, four years old, and will be obliged to go through bankruptcy to cancel her debt. Her brother and relations have supported her." (This woman was very respectable in dress and demeanour, occupying apparently a higher grade in society than the other poor people examined. She wept while giving the above statement.)

We must do the persons we examined the justice to say that no disposition was shewn to exaggerate their grievances. The merchants did not obtrude their own losses on our notice, and we ascertained them only by direct inquiry. Need it be said that it was evident the reputation of our country had suffered deeply in the estimation of these simple, honest-hearted people, through the lawless proceedings of our navy? Formerly no country

stood so high as England in the esteem and affection of the Finn; but, now, as one of these poor fishermen then said to us, "They can't think of the English as before." The more intelligent, of course, made distinctions, as thus: "The navy is not the nation," and "There are rascals in every country, &c." F. Uhden had before remarked to us that the printing of 100,000 copies, by the British and Foreign Bible Society, of the New Testament and the Psalms, in their own language, had made a deep impression on the Finnish people; but, after the ravages committed on the property of unarmed and unoffending fishermen and peasants, during the war, the cry was "Can these be the English—our friends?" to which he sometimes replied, "The English who send you the Bible are not the same persons as the English who carry on the war."

Our work in this quarter seemed now done; our object being not to pursue the inquiry in detail, but simply to examine a few cases that might be regarded as fair specimens of their class. We, therefore, returned to Abo, arriving late in the evening of the 22nd instant.

On this route, as elsewhere near the coast, the farming was better and the cattle larger than in the interior. The people, also, were generally well-clad, especially on the sabbath day, when nearly all seemed clean, warm, and comfortable. The pulled flax everywhere spread on the fields, or steeping in the retteries, is used up in making home-spun linen, nearly every dwelling having its hand-loom. Each farm has a building for stove-drying the rye and other grain in the straw. This operation requires three days for each quantity stoved at one time, and when completed it is thrashed out immediately and will then keep almost any length of time.

During our stay at Abo we became acquainted with a gentleman, temporarily resident there, who was one of the interpreters on board the British fleet during the war. He was in the Gulf of Bothnia in 1854, and in the Gulf of Finland in 1855. He was present at the conflagration of the stores of tar and deals, at Uleaborg and Brahested, which proceeding, he said, was disapproved by Admiral Napier and the British government, and orders were sent out to discontinue similar attacks on the coasts of Finland; which orders, by a conjunction mortifying to the fleet, were received just after the repulse at Old Carleby, a check that was about to be avenged by the destruction of the place. In 1854, little further damage he said, was done to private property, unless in the Aland Islands, where the people were often punished by the destruction of their boats, &c., for transgressing the prohibitions of the British commanders, as regarded communicating with Finland. These orders, he admitted, might often be imperfectly or not at all understood. He spoke highly of Captain Otter and Captain Scott, whom we had also heard spoken well of by the Finns. He confirmed, as far as his knowledge went, the doings of Captain Storey and other commanders off Nystad, &c., in 1855; and told us these proceedings had been disapproved by Admiral Dundas. He thought the plunder and depredation on the small islands off the coast must have been committed by the sailors without orders or permission; he said it was wholly unnecessary to extort provisions, or to seize sheep and cattle from the Finns, as the ships could always obtain supplies from the opposite coast of Sweden. In his opinion, the losses and sufferings of the inhabitants of the Aland isles had been the most severe; first, from the British as above stated, and next and most, from the Russian authorities,

who, previous to the opening of the campaign of 1855, compelled great numbers of the pilots and fishermen and all the richer peasants, to remove into the interior of Finland; a similar deportation took place from the islands off the coast. Our informant complained of the French fleet as very idle; when the French ships met a vessel, they would go on board, and after looking round, say, "we will not take you, but mind and keep out of the way of the English, or they will capture you."

He described, in stronger terms than any we had previously conversed with, the feeling in Finland as very much embittered against the English. Every deed of tresspass or violence, though unauthorized, was regarded as a national act by the peasantry and fishermen; and among many of the educated classes, even of those who had sustained no injury themselves, he found, if possible, yet stronger feelings of hostility. He believed such a mission as the one we were endeavouring to accomplish, will be of most beneficial effect in allaying such feelings, and preparing the way for a return of the old cordiality and esteem.

A portion of our time at Abo was employed in seeing some of the objects of interest in the city. Though the name is ancient, the place has been so often consumed by fire, (the last time in 1827), that the existing town is nearly all new; the cathedral, an unsightly structure of granite and brick, on an elevated site, is a partial exception, the oldest portion dating from the first conversion of the Finns to Christianity in the twelfth century. The most conspicuous building in Abo is a handsome circular edifice, crowning the highest hill, which serves the double purpose of an

observatory and a school for merchant-seamen. Here during the vacant winter, the Finnish sailors, who aspire to rise in their vocation, come to be instructed in the scientific part of navigation. The course occupies several seasons; after passing a first examination, they are eligible to be mates, and after a further course of instruction and a final examination, can become captains; and we were told they can be neither mate nor captain without obtaining their certificates of qualification. The building, instructor, instruments, &c., are provided gratuitously, leaving only a trifling expense for lights and fuel, to be defrayed by the pupils. Would not our merchant service be benefited by similar institutions? We also visited an exposition of Finnish manufactures, now open, comprising linen, cotton and woollen fabrics; and also a store or warehouse of the productions of Finnish industry exclusively, in which a great variety of manufactures in woollen, linen, cotton, wood, metals, leather, glass, &c., was displayed for sale. As far as our transient survey enabled us to judge, the prices of ordinary qualities were moderate, but much higher than in England, for goods of a superior description.

At the request of Erik Julin, J. S. drew up and handed to him a memorandum as follows:—

“That a Committee be appointed, consisting of Erik Julin, Ferdinand Uhden, John Julin, and such other gentlemen as they shall nominate, to assist them in undertaking to investigate into the losses sustained during the late war, from the soldiers and sailors of Great Britain, by the inhabitants of Finland, who were chiefly supported by their own labour and that of their families; and that they be at liberty to extend relief to an amount not exceeding twenty thousand

rubles silver in the whole, which, on behalf of a Committee to be formed in England, we engage to furnish.

That the relief or compensation be handed, as far as circumstances will admit, in the restoration of property destroyed; the amount to no single head of a family to exceed one hundred rubles.

That a report of the names of the persons to whom the relief is granted in each case be sent to the Committee in England, and if twenty thousand rubles is not found sufficient, or the Committee in Finland should think it desirable to exceed one hundred rubles in some instances, they will please to report such cases to the Committee in England.

It is hoped that those will be treated with special liberality and consideration who have been deprived by death of the members of the family, on whom they were dependant for support."

In the evening of the 24th we met at the house of E. Julin the gentlemen whom he had engaged to act as a Committee. The chair was taken by our host, who commenced by reading a paper in the Swedish language, of which a copy translated into English by N. I. Sondahl, the Honorary Secretary, was next read and subsequently presented to us. The following is a verbatim transcript from his M.S., and shows an unusual command of our language in a foreigner, who was never in England, except for a single short visit of two or three weeks;

“ COMMITTEE OF RELIEF, ABO, SEPTEMBER 24TH, 1855. OPENED
BY THE CHAIRMAN AS FOLLOWS:

“ Mr. Joseph Sturge and Mr. Thomas Harvey, members of the Society of Friends, in England, whom we have the pleasure now to see amongst us, visit this country on purpose to find out those cases of loss of property, suffered during

the last war by the inhabitants of the poorer classes along the coast of Finland through the English fleet, and consisting in their fishing boats, cottages, and so on.

To gain this purpose they have applied to Mr. Ferdinand Uhden and to me for assistance, both in finding out such cases, and in the distribution of a just compensation to the sufferers. In consequence, I have, knowing the general interest you take in the sufferings of a fellow-creature, and your activity in matters connected with common weal, in concert with Messrs. Sturge and Harvey, made free to ask for your presence to-day, and in my own, as well as in behalf of Mr. Uhden, not only for your kind advice respecting the manner and means to gain this object, but moreover, for your opinion of the sundry cases that may come under our examination, that we may fulfil the wishes of our employers.

When acting in this case, we should not deviate from the circumstances as a main point, that the gentlemen in Great Britain who have prompted this mission do not aim at charity, but simply wish to commit justice to those poor islanders and inhabitants of the coasts of Finland, that were exposed to the unjust and hard treatment of the crews of British cruisers during last war, Let us therefore pray to the Almighty for his aid and blessing in this undertaking, that we may justly fulfil this our important vocation.

Our employers do not leave to the Committee any further instruction than the general rule stated above, excepting that the Committee should not distribute above one hundred rubles silver to any separate family or individual. Should cases, however, come to the knowledge of the Committee which deserve a greater compensation, the Committee should lay down such cases before the before-mentioned gentlemen in Great Britain, for decision.

As for the accounts to be rendered to the said gentlemen of the funds placed with or at the disposal of the Committee for the above purpose, it will be a matter

of conscience to the members of the Committee; but said gentlemen would wish, as circumstances may prompt and require, monthly or every second month, to be advertised of the proceedings of the Committee.

We go now on, beforehand, to beg Mr. Sturge and Mr. Harvey to accept our hearty thanks for the development of their kind feelings towards the inhabitants of Finland; be kind, gentlemen, to remember us to your friends at home with our sincere feelings of gratitude and esteem. I finally beg to declare the activity of the Committee has now commenced.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:—

Ferdinand Uhden, of Tamerfors, *Factory Owner*.

E. Julin, Abo, Chairman, *Merchant*, of the firm E. Julin & Co.

G. W. Savi, Abo, *Merchant*.

F. H. Broman, Abo, *Merchant*.

G. A. Lindblom, Abo, *Merchant*.

F. C. Ceder, Abo, *Merchant*.

G. Soderstrand, Abo, *Painter*.

John Julin, Abo, *Merchant*.

N. J. SUNDAHL, SECRETARY."

After J. S. had made a few remarks by way of acknowledgement of our kind reception, our notes taken at Nystad and Raumo were read; the Committee deliberating upon each case separately, and inquiring our opinion as to the amount and kind of relief to be afforded, provided on further inquiry, the facts should be fully substantiated. Some of the cases were already known to members of the Committee, and in their judgment, these will be found fair specimens of the whole, along the coast, wherever such trespasses occurred. The Committee engaged at once to

proceed with the inquiries, and were authorised to incur such reasonable expenses as might be requisite in order to gain a competent knowledge of the facts. So far therefore as related to preliminary investigation, all that we could desire seemed in the way of being attained. In regard however, to the distribution of relief, E. Julin, after privately consulting some persons high in rank and office, intimated to us that it would be needful to obtain the sanction of the Governor-General. This view was also taken by the Committee, and we therefore prepared the following letter to Count Berg, which would be forwarded to him on his return from the coronation, along with suitable representations from E. Julin and F. Uhden, both of whom stand high in his esteem. We were further informed that, in the opinion of the persons in authority referred to, the Governor General would not decide without referring the question to St. Petersburg.

“ TO THE GENERAL, COUNT BERG, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF
FINLAND, &c., &c.

“ The undersigned present their respects to the Governor-General, and, being prevented by his absence from personally waiting on him, they feel it their duty to submit a brief explanation of the motives that have induced them to visit Finland.

The undersigned belong to a religious body, (the Society of Friends or Quakers,) who, as is well known, believe that war under all circumstances, is forbidden by the precepts and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. In common with their fellow-members of the said Society, and with many of their fellow-countrymen not belonging to its ranks, but ardent lovers of peace, they observed with much sorrow the outbreak and progress of the late unhappy contest. Most cordially and with thankfulness to Almighty God, do they rejoice at the return

of a peace, which they desire may prove as lasting as the ties of a common brotherhood are sacred.

During the continuance of the war, many in England marked with strong disapprobation the destruction of property in Finland, not belonging to the State but to merchants, shipowners, peasants, fishermen and others. Had they a potential voice with the rulers of their beloved country it would be employed to induce them to reimburse every ruble of the property thus destroyed, and this, not as an act of bounty or of mercy, but of mere justice.

In the case of the poorest classes thus injured, the undersigned have been induced, on behalf of a number of persons in Great Britain, sympathizing in their views, to visit Finland for the purpose of more exactly inquiring into the facts. Having done this as far as circumstances allowed, and finding in Erik Julin, Ferdinand Uhden and others, gentlemen in whose discretion and fidelity they can place full confidence, and who are generously willing to undertake the labour of further inquiry and distribution, they have placed a few thousand rubles at the disposal of these gentlemen for the above stated purpose, viz : to reimburse, in a private manner, a portion of the losses sustained on the coasts and islands of Finland by the poorest classes of the population, through the destruction of their boats, nets, or buildings, and the carrying off without payment, of sheep, cattle and other property.

The undersigned have been made aware that the Emperor has given substantial and munificent proofs of his sympathy with the losses sustained by his Finnish subjects, and they trust it will not be displeasing to the Governor-General that some British subjects should offer this slight tribute of Christian sympathy in alleviation of the same distresses.

We are, with much respect,

JOSEPH STURGE,

Abo, 9th Mo. 23rd, 1856.

THOMAS HARVEY."

The destruction of private property in Finland could not in the least affect the objects or duration of the war; and it may serve to show the foolish impolicy, as well as wickedness of such acts, if we point out, that the "exasperation and burning indignation," as some have expressed it; or, to use the mildest term, the alienated feelings towards Great Britain, thereby produced in the mind of the Finns, may possibly be regarded as politically useful by the Russian government, which may be unwilling to allow any British subjects, from motives however unexceptionable and free from political design, to take measures for the healing of the breach. Yet we hope better things, and will not at present anticipate that any obstacle will be interposed by the Imperial Government, although some delay may occur, and the hands of our friends at Abo may be weakened by the uncertainty hanging over the final result of their labours.

The consideration of the cases and a general interchange of sentiments ended the business of the first sitting of the Committee. We were very favorably impressed, not only with the heartiness with which those present entered upon the work, but with the proofs they gave of efficiency and business talent.

The purpose of our visit to Finland seemed now attained, so far as depended on our own efforts there. Had time been ours and the season less far advanced, we should have wished to proceed northward to Brahested and Uleaborg, the scene of the burning of tar and deals, to an amount estimated, (doubtless somewhat in excess,) by Admiral Napier, in his despatch, at from £300,000 to £400,000 sterling. This proceeding,

though defended in the House of Commons, was, we believe, privately condemned by the Government, and it is said, that compensation has been made to the British owners of a portion of the property. It may be conceived what a feeling of irritation this enormous and wanton outrage by Admiral Plumridge, in immediate violation of his own spontaneous pledge to respect private property, has left on the minds of the aggrieved parties and their fellow-countrymen. Although not embraced within the scope of our mission for relief, it might have been useful to have shown the sufferers that there are those in England, who utterly disown the acts of which they so justly complain. To avoid recurring to a painful topic, we will add here, that during our subsequent stay at St. Petersburg, we were inmates of the same house with Abbott Lawrence, a near relation of the late U. S. minister to London, who had visited Helsingfors, and had naturally received more unreserved communications as to the state of feeling left by the war, than would be likely to be made to Englishmen. His description of the sentiments and feelings, produced in the minds of the people of Finland by the aggressions upon private property, particularly those of a petty character, was expressed in more emphatic terms than were used by any other individual with whom we conversed upon the subject. He added, that similar acts on the coast of the United States during the war of 1812, had left heart-burnings and feelings of enmity towards Great Britain, which were only now beginning to be effaced.

A few words may not be out of place on the character of the Finns. The merchants and middle classes in the towns on the coast are so much like our own countrymen, (language excepted,) of the same condition, that

in England they would scarcely be taken for foreigners. The country-people appear honest, simple-minded, affectionate and primitive. Of the first quality some pleasing traits came under our notice. The national vice appears to be intemperance, drawing of course other sad evils in its train. They are attentive to outward religious observances; the national religion being the Lutheran; and we were assured by every witness whom we had the opportunity of consulting, that every Finn of sound mind and adult age can read. Every individual must be able to read before he can be confirmed, without which rite he cannot legally marry, or, we believe, be considered otherwise than a minor. We had no opportunity to ascertain whether this general acquirement amounted to the power of reading the Scriptures with intelligence and facility. Within a few years every family has been supplied with a copy of the sacred volume. It is a truly interesting fact, that the mother of the family is the teacher of her children, with some little aid from the parish minister and his clerk. At Abo in the Atelier of R. W. Ekmann, a painter of some eminence, we saw a picture, entitled "*Sunday Morning*;" representing the interior of a peasant's house, and the mother reading the Bible aloud to her husband, children, servant-maids and lads, forming a beautiful counterpart of the "*Cotter's Saturday Night*," so vividly depicted by Burns in a different walk of art.

The difficult Finnish language prevails almost exclusively, after leaving the towns a few miles behind. Among the educated classes and partially on the coast, Swedish is spoken. The country is still governed by its old Swedish laws and usages under native officials, and to the passing stranger

appears rather like a country occupied by Russia for naval and military purposes, than as an incorporated portion of the Russian empire.

We wish these impressions of the country and people to be taken with due allowance, as the result of the observations and inquiries which so comparatively short a visit enabled us to make.

We left Abo early on the morning of the 25th for Helsingfors, which we reached on the afternoon of the next day. The road runs at no great distance from the coast, and through a well cultivated country, with numerous large estates and handsome houses ; we met many yokes of oxen on the road, equal in size to those of our own country. The rocks rise into considerable hills in endless variety of colour, size, form and position, always partially covered with trees, which find root-hold on the mosses and lichens thinly covering the otherwise bare granite. Almost every turn of the road opened out some park-like expanse, bounded by rocks and forest, with now and then a lake or river to add to the charm of the landscape. But the chief glory of the scene was the masses of colour of the forests of birch, aspen and other deciduous trees clothed in their most vivid autumnal foliage, and contrasting with the rich dark green of the intermingling pines. We left Helsingfors on the morning of the 27th, and passing through the picturesque, quaint old town of Borga, spent first-day, the 28th, at Lovisa. A large portion of this town is now a scene of desolation from the effects of an accidental fire, which occurred a year or two ago. The feeling of insecurity caused by the war, has probably prevented its being rebuilt. On the 29th we pursued our journey by Fredericksham and

Wyborg to St. Petersburg, where we arrived on the evening of Fourth-day, the 1st of 10th Month, a distance from Abo of about six hundred and seventy versts.

It had been the intention of Joseph Sturge to proceed from St. Petersburg to the shores of the Sea of Azoff, and endeavour to make there a similar investigation with the same objects in view; and he expected to have been joined by our friend Joseph Cooper, who left London for the purpose. But after reaching the capital, the consideration of the lateness of the season, the report of the state of the roads and other circumstances, especially the existing uncertainty of obtaining the Emperor's sanction for the distribution of relief in Finland, induced J. S. to determine upon returning home direct. We had an opportunity of exchanging messages by telegraph with Joseph Cooper at Riga, and he returned from thence.

During our stay at St. Petersburg we had much interesting conversation with Archibald Merrillies, a pious merchant long resident there, as well as with other persons on the character of the new Emperor, of whom the general impression in such circles is highly favorable. In addition to the boons accorded to various suffering classes at his coronation, we were informed he had previously, (soon after his accession,) addressed his nobility in a speech at Moscow, on the necessity of taking the question of serfage into consideration, with a view to its abolition; telling them the question could not be much longer postponed, and asking them: "Is it not much better that a change which is inevitable, should come from above than from below?"

J. S. had long had the condition of the serfs pressing upon his mind, and now the opportunity seemed within reach of addressing the Emperor upon that and another subject of scarcely less importance,—international arbitration. After much thought, an address was prepared and our kind friend A. Merrillies consulted upon it. He decidedly approved and even urged its transmission, but was anxious we should also introduce the topic of the free circulation of the Scriptures in the Russian language, suspended since the last years of the Emperor Alexander I. This important suggestion we were glad to adopt. After inquiring in an influential quarter, it seemed best simply to forward the address by post, having ascertained that by that channel it would be more likely to reach unopened the Emperor's own hands, as far as we could judge, than through any other medium readily accessible to us. The following is a copy :—

“TO ALEXANDER II., EMPEROR OF ALL THE RUSSIAS.

“May it be permitted to two private persons, British subjects, to express to the Emperor at this moment of general congratulation, their desire that his reign may be long and peaceful, a blessing to his Empire and the world.

The recollection of the favour shewn by successive Sovereigns of Russia to members of the religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, to which they belong, and especially of the very kind reception accorded by the late Emperor Nicholas to one of the undersigned as a part of the Deputation, which presented an Address from the said Society, in the Second month, 1854, emboldens them to give utterance to their fervent hope, that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon the person and government of the Emperor; that his counsels may be inspired from above with true wisdom, and guided to a safe and happy issue.

The undersigned have been led to visit the dominions of the Emperor by motives springing, as they trust, from that Christian love, which is not limited by geographical boundaries, nor interrupted by international contests, but which embraces the whole human family as children of one Father, and objects of the same redeeming love. On this broad ground, and apart from all political or party motive, do they venture to entreat the Emperor to give his favourable consideration to the proposition now beginning to be discussed in the Councils of nations, that provision should be made, by treaties, for the adjustment of international disputes, as they may arise, by friendly mediation; or in the last resort, by arbitration, instead of by war: in which, besides the awful sacrifice of life, too often the just cause succumbs to brute force, and the seeds of future strife are sown.

The proofs of a humane, pacific, and beneficent policy given by the Emperor since the commencement of his reign, and particularly in his recent declarations at the coronation, are calculated to inspire every christian mind, both within and beyond his own wide territories, with emotions of gratitude and joy.

May the undersigned be also suffered to give expression to aspirations that have long dwelt in their hearts, on behalf of the vast population held in the state of serfage. May they be permitted to urge how greatly the elevation of the labouring class from the condition of Serfs into that of free agents, would promote the advancement, both moral and material, of the Russian Empire, and inaugurate for this great nation a new era of solid prosperity and true glory. Nor would they plead only for the liberation of the body, but for the emancipation of the mind. For many years the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, (given by inspiration of God, to impart to man that knowledge which "is able to make wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus,") has been suspended, in the sole language in which they can be understood by the great mass of the people. What greater or worthier boon, from a paternal Sovereign to his people, than permission to read the Holy Scriptures in their mother tongue?

Commensurate with the splendour of his position, and the greatness of his power, is the magnitude of the responsibilities of him who is called, in the providence of God, to rule over this vast empire, and to impress his will on the destinies of so many millions of men. But that which opens the prospect of true and lasting glory, is the unequalled greatness of his opportunity of making himself a benefactor to his species, and of conferring blessings, which shall not only enrich the present population, but descend to the remotest generations of their posterity.

May He, 'by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree justice,' guide the Emperor, 'with His counsel and afterwards receive him to glory.'

We are, with the greatest deference and respect,

JOSEPH STURGE,
THOMAS HARVEY."

St. Petersburg,

10th Month, (October) 6th, 1856."

Nothing remains to be added except our desire to cherish a deep and thankful sense of the many mercies bestowed upon us, and of the help that from time to time has seemed to be extended just as it was needed, to open our way and make our journey prosperous. We desire to commit all that has been attempted and planned into the hands of Him, whom it has been our desire to serve, and to leave the results, in humble hope and trust, to His all-wise disposal.

We left St. Petersburg, (per mail steamer to Stettin,) on the 11th of 10th Month, and proceeded by railway, via Berlin, Cologne and Calais, reaching London on sixth-day the 17th of 10th Month, 1856.

JOSEPH STURGE,
THOMAS HARVEY.

London, 10th Month, 17th, 1856.

~~Grip. 11. 25.~~

Maantiede 2

D 753

