

Little Gunnar made many friends at the "saeter," but among the warmest and truest was Ranghild, daughter of the wealthy widow. In her he placed implicit confidence, showing to her his pictures and being rewarded by exclamations of childish delight.

Thus the summer passed away, and another summer came, but still his confidence in Ranghild remained unshaken,—it only deepened into a pure, boyish love, which as the years rolled by, grew stronger and deeper. But "the road was steep between Henjumhei and Rimul, and the river ran swift between." Ranghild's mother understood these words, and bitterly opposed their friendship. Many a cruel word, many a heavy burden this noble lad had to bear, till at last he left his native land. Whither he had gone, when he would return, no one knew.

Three years later the whole parish rang with his fame. Gunnar was an artist, an artist who had taken the gold medal for his wonderful painting of the "Hulder." A grand result it was of grandmother's stories, but they alone could not have accomplished this end. Gunnar was working to become more than a "houseman's son," and for a higher prize than a gold medal, a prize which was soon won in the hand of fair Ranghild.

Gunnar is a typical Norwegian lad, perhaps of the finest type. The author has described him as not only attaining a fine physical development, but having a strong mind, a warm, noble heart, and a high, moral character, with which to meet the many obstacles in his pathway, and which enabled him to persevere to the end.

Ranghild is gentle and true, and has all the characteristics that we might wish to find in a noble young girl. She is of rare, physical beauty, but her sweet face is a mirror of the purity within. We follow her through the story with constant admiration, prompted by her gentleness, obedience, and loyalty.

Mr. Boyesen has given us many beautiful and vivid pen pictures throughout the story. How pleasing is his description of life at the "saeter!" We seem to feel the invigorating breeze of the highlands; we see the well kept cottages, the bright-faced milkmaids, and the lowing herds scattered over the plain; we even seem to hear the low, long tones of the "loor," calling home the flocks. All presents to us a picture of happiness and content.

After we have read "Gunnar," we shall no

longer look upon Norway as a cold, dreary region, but instead there will rise in our minds, whenever the country is mentioned, the beautiful pictures of Norwegian scenery and life impressed upon us by Mr. Boyesen.

What is it that makes "Gunnar" so attractive and interesting? As we have seen, the plot is very simple. It is not only the simplicity of the story, but the simple, graceful, vigorous style in which it is written, that makes it so delightful. A critic says, "The breath of the pine is in his pages; they may be taken as an antidote to morbidness." We find a dewy freshness throughout the book from beginning to end; "the prose is pervaded by a spirit of poetry." This perhaps is due to the figures in which the book abounds, and which indicate that Mr. Boyesen and nature are very close friends. The first chapter is written in the form of an allegory, in which the fir, the pine, and the lake are gracefully personified. In speaking of Gunnar's ambition the author says, "Every morning awoke him with new resolutions and plans; every evening closed over a tale of withering courage and fading hopes; and only night brought him rest and consolation, when she let her dream-painted curtain fall over his slumber, like a mirage over a parched desert."

Since the publication of this little story, the author has written several more ambitious works, "A Norseman's Pilgrimage," "Goethe and Schiller," "Falconberg" and others, but we doubt if any of them will touch the heart more deeply than "Gunnar."

CHARACTER SKETCHES.

Nestled among the lofty Sierras is the beautiful valley of S——. In the northern end of this valley are two small villages, not more than a half a mile apart. The inhabitants look forward to a time in the dim future when the two shall have grown into one, but now they are connected only by the churches and schoolhouses, which are situated midway between.

In the larger of these two villages lives the subject of this sketch, that necessary evil, the village physician. You have all seen him—a little old man, with a long gray beard, and that indescribable sage expression which makes his will law, and his opinion indisputable. By some unaccountable freak of nature, however, this particular country doctor resembles not his predecessors, except, perhaps, in the fact that in his own opinion, his assertions are unquestionable.