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She Comes From Stockholm . . .

By Kathryn Soth

LIVING in Margaret Hall is a very new experience for Ruth Stjerner, the girl from Stockholm, Sweden, who is spending a year on our campus. At Swedish colleges, she says, there are no dormitories for either men or women, with the exception of a few maintained by associations, scattered here and there. The student usually rents a room in a private house, where he or she has little or no connection with the family.

Ruth finds Margaret Hall a pleasant place to stay and the girls who live there very friendly. Asked if she expects to become homesick, she looked puzzled and seemed to understand the meaning of the word "homesick." She declared she does not think she will become anxious to go home before the year is over.

"I guess we Swedes easily accommodate ourselves to new circumstances," she said.

Ruth has come to Iowa State College to study botany, working toward her "magister's" or master's degree. She has a scholarship awarded to a representative girl by the American Association of University Women and the Women's Self-Governing Association of Iowa State College. In Stockholm she completed the gymnasium, which corresponds to our high school and junior college. Then she spent two years at the University of Stockholm. She will study here for one year and after two more years at the University of Stockholm she will receive her Master of Science degree.

A very young-looking girl to be a college graduate, Ruth has the blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin which mark her as typically Swedish. She is small, rather quiet, unassuming, and very polite. Her English is plain and easy to understand; and her accent is delightful. She has studied English for five years, but has spoken it for less than a month, just since her arrival in this country. On the ship, she explains, she spoke German almost entirely. She finds it quite easy to understand and to speak English now, after a few weeks at Iowa State.

RUTH left Stockholm on September first and came directly to Ames. She had never been out of Sweden before, so she had many new experiences on her trip. Asked what was her first impression of America, she said, "Oh, Wrigley's everywhere!"

She noticed that in the United States there are many more advertisements of all kinds than there are in Sweden, and mentioned especially the gum and cigarette advertisements.

At the University of Stockholm there is no large campus like ours at Iowa State College. The university is located in the center of the city, with no "park" around it, as Ruth says. When asked, "Are the buildings scattered or close together?" she again looked puzzled and produced a small dictionary to look up a definition of the word "scattered." She understood that in this sense it meant "separated" or "far apart" and said that some of the old university buildings played very differently in Sweden than it is here. The players wear short, knee-length trousers and little blouses and play much less roughly.

There are extra-curricular activities for everyone at the University of Stockholm. The women students have a club, and there are clubs of students in different courses, such as botany clubs, French clubs, and so on. The university publishes a monthly newspaper, but has no departmental publications such as we have here. There is a student theater association at the university; and there are orchestras and other musical organizations.

Ruth says that Swedish women dress somewhat differently than women in the United States. "Our clothes are heavier, and we do not use so much silk stockings," she explains. American women use much more silk in dresses and in all types of clothing, she says. Swedish women wear woolen clothing almost entirely in the winter time. Dresses are worn at about the same length as ours, and hats are worn in the same way. Ruth demonstrated this the other day by placing one hand on the back of her head and moving the other from the side of her head down over one eye, as if tipping her hat a la mode.

The players wear short, knee-length trousers and little blouses and play much less roughly. There is no home economics course offered at the University of Stockholm, but there are various private schools for girls "to learn to be good wives," Ruth reports. There is also a special home economics college at Uppsala, and there are two schools for farm home economics.

Another great difference between Swedish and American colleges, Ruth says, is in athletics for women. In Stockholm the only women's athletics are gymnastics. However, the men play tennis, football, and other games common in the United States. She explains that football is played very differently in Sweden than it is here. The players wear short, knee-length trousers and little blouses and play much less roughly.

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They were the heaviest things I could find," she laughs.

She plans to study at Iowa State more specialized courses in botany, biology, and other sciences than she could obtain in Sweden. It is not possible to specialize a great deal for a master's degree there, as most of the advanced and specialized courses are offered only to students working for still higher degrees.

Ruth has not decided what sort of work she will enter when she has earned her Master of Science degree. She expects to teach, but she will have to complete an extra year in a special course in order to do this. To teach in her field, botany, in Swedish gymnasiurns it would be necessary for her to have a doctor's degree.

She expects her year in America to be of real value to her.