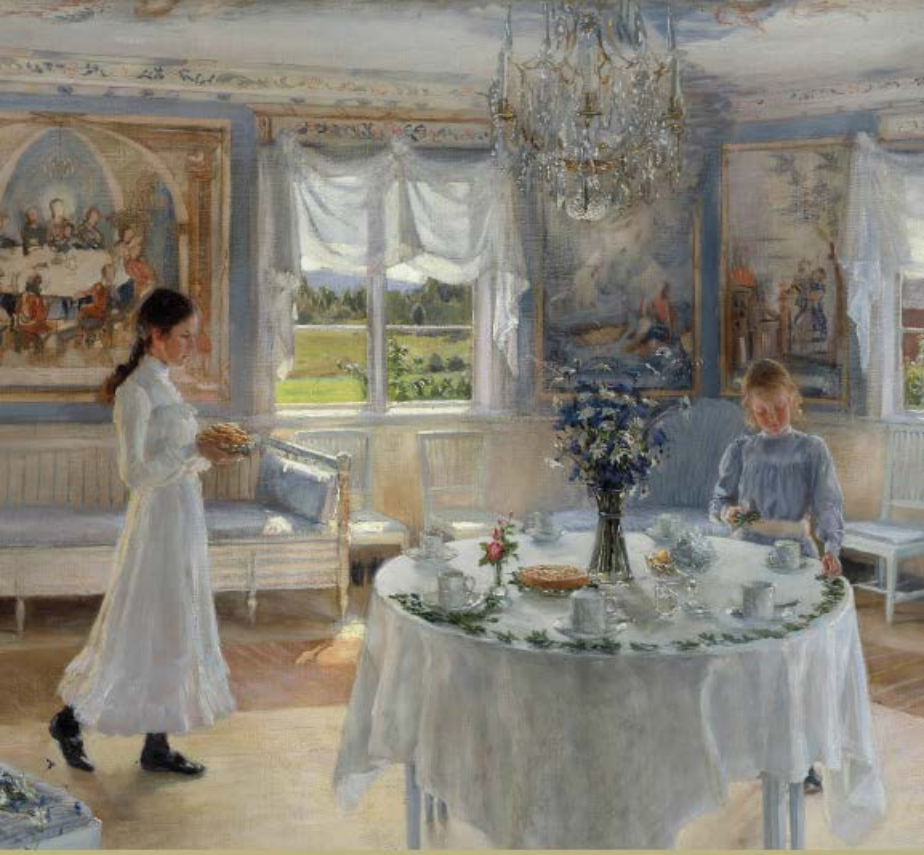


Our Little Scandinavian Cousins

Norwegian, Swedish, Danish

VOLUME ONE

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Our Little Scandinavian Cousins

Norwegian, Swedish, Danish

Volume 1

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Libraries of Hope

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Our Little Norwegian Cousin

Mary Hazelton Wade



Mari

Preface

Long before Columbus discovered America, there were brave men in the north of Europe who dared to sail farther out upon the unknown waters of the Atlantic than any other people in the world. These daring seamen were called Vikings. Their home was the peninsula of Scandinavia, now ruled over by one king, although divided into two distinct countries, Norway and Sweden.

It was along the shores of Norway, with rugged mountains fringing its deep bays, that the Vikings learned command of their curious, high-prowed ships, and overcame all fear of wind and storm. Their strong nature shows itself today in the people of Norway, who patiently endure many hardships while trying to get a living on the rough mountainsides or along the rocky coasts.

Many of our Norwegian cousins have come to America to make a new home for themselves where the sun shines more warmly and the winds blow less keenly. Their fair-haired children are growing up amongst us, showing us the

qualities their parents most admire.

Be brave, be honest, be kind to all creatures, be faithful to every little duty—these are the lessons they have been taught from babyhood, as well as their brothers and sisters who have not as yet ventured far from the land they love so well—the land of rapid-flowing rivers, deep, dark bays, and narrow valleys.

Come with me to-day to the home of one of these blue-eyed cousins and join her for a while in her work and play.

CHAPTER I
The Farm

"Come, Mari, my little daughter, and you shall help me make the cakes," called her mother.

Mari stood in the middle of the big farm-yard with a flock of hens around her. She was scattering grain among them from a big bag on her arm; not a sound could be heard except once in a while the scratching of the hens' feet. They were too busy to notice each other or the big dog that sat on the door-step.

The little girl laughed quietly as she watched them. "They are so happy; they love this pleasant summer-time as much as I do," she said to herself.

But the moment she heard her mother's voice, she turned quickly toward the house without stopping a moment longer to see whether her pet hen, Biddy Wee, or cross old Yellow Legs got the most dinner. Mari never in her life thought of answering her parents by saying:

"Why, papa?" or "Why, mamma?" or "I'll come in a moment."

Mari lives in Norway, and Norwegian parents train their children to obey without delay.

The little girl was only too glad to come now, however. Her mother had promised she should learn to make flat-bread to-day. She was pleased that she was old enough to be trusted with this important work. Why, she could keep house alone when she had mastered this necessary art, and her mother could leave her in charge.

Mari remembers when she was such a tiny tot that her head barely reached above the table. Even then she loved to watch her mother as she sat at the big moulding-board, rolling out the dough until it was nearly as thin as paper.

This dough was made of barley-meal which was raised here at the farm. It was rolled out into sheets almost as wide as the table itself, for each cake must be about a half-yard across. Then came the cooking. The cake was lifted from the board to a hot flat stone on the fireplace, where it was quickly baked. How fast the pile grew! and how skillful mother always was. She never seemed to burn or break a

single cake.

Wherever you go in Mari's country you will find flat-bread. You can eat quantities of it, if you like, yet somehow it will not easily check your hunger, and it gives little strength.

"Now, dear, be careful not to get a grain of dust on the floor," said her mother, as Mari stood at the table ready for directions.

The child looked very pretty, with her long, light hair hanging down her back in two braids. The snowy kerchief was tied under her chin just as it was when she came in from the farm-yard. She had no need to put on an apron before beginning her work, for she already wore one. She was never without it, in fact, and hardly thought herself dressed in the morning until her apron had been fastened around her plump little waist.

Her cheeks looked rosy enough to kiss, but such a thing seldom happened, for mothers in Norway believe that is a bad habit. They think that it often leads to the carrying of disease from one person to another.

"Shake hands with the baby and the children," they

would say, "but please don't kiss them." They are wise in this—don't you think so?

Before Mari had rolled out six cakes, her cheeks grew rosier yet. It was hard work, although it had seemed easy enough when mother was doing it.

The first three cakes had to be rolled over and over again because they would stick to the board. Then the lifting was not such a simple thing as Mari had supposed before she came to do it herself. But she kept trying. Her mother was very patient and encouraged her with loving smiles and kind words. At last the little girl made a really good cake and landed it all by herself on the stone, without doubling, or even wrinkling it.

"Good, good," said her mother, "you will soon be a real helper, Mari. But now you have worked long enough for the first time. I will finish the baking while you take the baby and give him an airing."

And where was the baby, bless him? Mari knew, for she went at once to the other side of the room where a pole was fastened into the wall. A big basket was hanging down from the end of this pole, and in the basket was a little blue-eyed

baby, cooing softly to himself.

Mari's mother was a very busy woman. There was always something to do, either inside the house or out-of-doors. She had very little time for holding a baby. So when Mari and her brothers were away at school, and mother was left alone, that dear little rosy-cheeked fellow sometimes began to cry in a very lively manner. The cooking and the cheese-making and the spinning must go on just the same, and time could not be spent in holding a baby.

But he must be amused in some way. So the strong pole was fastened into the wall, and the cradle attached to the end. Do you wonder what fun there could be in staying up in that basket, hour after hour? The baby enjoyed it because the pole would spring a little at every movement of his body. As long as he kept awake, he could, and did, bob up and down. That was amusement enough.

He was glad to see Mari now. She was a perfect little mother, and soon had his hood and cloak fastened on. They were hardly needed, for he was already done up in so many garments, it didn't seem possible he could be cold, wherever he went.

The living-room, where Mari had been working, was large and high. The beams were dark with age, but the floor was white from the many scrubbings Mari's mother had given it.

On one side of the room was the big fireplace where all the cooking was done. During the long winter evenings the family and servants sat in front of the blazing logs and told stories of the famous sea-captains of the olden times. Or perhaps they talked of the fairies and giants, in whom Mari firmly believed. Her mother laughed at the idea of these wonderful creatures. Yet, after all, it was not more than a hundred years ago that they seemed real to many grown-up people.

Wonderful creatures who made themselves seen from time to time dwelt in the mountains, the fields, and the rivers. This is what Mari's great-grandma had believed, and was she not a sensible woman? It is no wonder, therefore, that our little cousin loved to think that these beings were still real. When she went to sleep at night, she often dreamed of the gnomes who live far down in the earth, or the giants who once dwelt among the mountains.

When she was very little she sometimes waked up from such dreams with a shiver. "O, don't let the cruel giant get me," she would cry. Then she would jump out of her own little cot into the big bed of her parents. She felt quite safe as soon as her mother's loving arms held her tightly, and she was sound asleep again in a minute.

That big bed certainly looked strong enough to be a fortress against the giants or any other of the wonderful creatures of fairy-world. It stood in the corner of the living-room, where Mari's mother worked all day, and where the family ate and sat. It was so high that even grown people did not get into it without climbing up the steps at one side. It had a wooden top, which made it seem like a little house. It was not as long as bedsteads in other countries. No grown person could stretch out in it to his full length. He must bend his knees, or curl himself up in some way, for he certainly could not push his feet through the heavy wooden foot-board.

Mari's people, however, never thought of its being uncomfortable. All Norwegian bedsteads are made in this way, so they became used to it as they grew up. But

sometimes English travellers had stayed at the farmhouse all night when they had been overtaken by a storm. They would be sure to get up in the morning complaining. They would say:

"O yes, this country of Norway is very beautiful, but why don't you have beds long enough for people to sleep in with comfort."

The farm where Mari lives lies in a narrow valley half a mile from the sea. The cold winter winds are kept off by the mountain which stands behind the houses. No one but Mari's family and the servants who work on the farm live here. Yet I spoke of houses.

This is because the little girl's home is made up of several different houses, instead of one large farmhouse, such as one sees in America.

Mari's father thinks that two, or perhaps three, rooms are quite enough to build under one roof. He settled here when he was a young man. Mari's mother came here to live when they were married. At that time there was but one house. It contained the living-room and the storeroom. After a while another house was built close by, for the farm

hands to sleep in. Still another little building was added after a while for the winter's supplies, for there is no store within many miles of the farm.

Mari's mother never says, "Come, my child, run down the road and buy me five pounds of sugar," or, "Hurry, dear, go and get two pounds of steak for dinner." It would be useless for her to think of doing such a thing. All the provisions the family may need must be obtained in large quantities from the distant city, unless they are raised here on the farm.

The storehouse was built very carefully. It was raised higher than the other buildings so that rats and other wild creatures should have hard work to reach the supplies. There is not a great deal on hand now, for it is summer-time, but in the autumn the bins will be full of vegetables, and large quantities of fish and meats will hang from the rafters. There will be stores of butter and cheese and a large supply of coffee, for Mari's people drink it freely.

CHAPTER II
Visitors

"Mother, mother, I hear the sound of wheels," cried the little girl, as she came hurrying into the house, panting for breath. The baby was such a big load it is a wonder she could hurry at all.

"Could you see what is coming?" asked her mother.

"Yes, there are two carriages, I know, for I saw a cariole, and I could hear another gig, although it was still out of sight round the bend of the road. They must be in a hurry, for I could hear the driver of the cariole clucking to his horse to make him go faster."

"Run right down to the rye-field, Mari, and tell your father to send Snorri up with the horses. Leave the baby with me."

Mari hurried away, while her mother went out into the yard to greet her visitors who had now drawn near.

The first carriage was a cariole, as Mari had said. It was a sort of gig with very long shafts. It had a seat in front just wide enough to hold one person, with a small place behind, where the post-boy sat. A lady rode in this cariole and drove the sturdy little horse.

Behind her came a second carriage, which could not be very comfortable, as there were no springs and the seat was directly over the axle. Two people were in this, also, a gentleman and the driver.

"We are in great haste to reach the next station by afternoon," the gentleman tried to explain to the farmer's wife. He spoke brokenly, for he seemed to know but few Norwegian words.

"He must be an American," Mari's mother said to herself. "Those people always seem to be in a hurry." She dropped a deep curtsy to the lady, who seemed to be the gentleman's wife.

"Won't you come into the house while you wait for the carriage?" she asked. The lady smiled, and followed her into the living-room.

"What a lovely big fireplace you have!" exclaimed the

visitor, as she sat down. "And what good times you probably have here in the long winter evenings. Indeed they must seem long when the daylight only lasts two or three hours."

Mari's mother smiled. "Yes, and the summer days seem long now that there are only two or three hours of darkness in the whole twenty-four," she answered. "At least, they must seem long to you who are a stranger," she went on. She spoke in good English, of which she was very proud. She had learned it when she was a girl in school, and was already teaching Mari to use it.

"Is that your spinning-wheel?" asked the visitor, as she looked around the room. "Excuse me for asking, but I do wish I could watch you spinning. In America everything we wear is made in the mills and factories, and a spinning-wheel is not a common sight nowadays."

"I make all the clothing for my family," answered Mari's mother. "It is so strong it lasts nearly a lifetime. Look at my dress; I have worn it every working-day for many years, and it is still as good as new."

"Dear me! what a smart woman you are. If you don't mind, I should like to examine the goods. I suppose that is



“It was a sort of gig with very long shafts.”

what people call homespun. And I suppose the wool of which it was made came from your own sheep, did it not?"

"Yes, indeed, and my husband raised every one of the flock himself," was the answer. "I will gladly spin some of the wool for you now. But see! the carriages are waiting, and your husband looks impatient."

"Then I must not keep him waiting, for we have a long journey before us. So goodbye. Perhaps we may stop here again on our way back from the north. Thank you very much for your kindness."

The lady went out, and Snorri helped her into the cariole and himself jumped up behind, and away they went. The lady's husband followed in another carriage in the same manner they had driven into the yard. The ones that had brought them here had gone away as soon as the travellers stepped out. Their drivers would take them back to the station where they belonged.

"Mother, why is our house a posting-station?" asked Mari, when the travellers had gone. "I think it is a great bother. No matter how busy father and the men are, they must stop their work and harness up the horses to carry

strangers along the road. They don't get money for it, either, do they?"

"That is the way your father pays his taxes," her mother answered. "You know what good roads we have in our country, Mari. You know, too, that many other things are done by the government to make this country a fine one. Of course every one must share in the cost of these things. As we live on a farm and have horses, your father is allowed to pay his share in work. That is, he agrees to carry the travellers who come this way to the next station. After all, it isn't very much bother," she said, thoughtfully. "But come, dear, set the table; it is near dinner-time, and your father will soon be here."

The table did not stand in the middle of the room. It was in the corner nearest the fireplace. A wide bench was built round the two sides of the room nearest it, so that most of those who gathered around the table could sit on these benches.

Mari's mother soon had a steaming junket ready, besides a dish of smoked salmon, plenty of boiled potatoes, a large, dark-coloured cheese which looked like soap, and last, but

not least, a plate was piled high with flat-bread.

"May father have the cakes I made?" asked Mari.

"Sure enough, little daughter. He will eat them with pleasure, I know."

In a few minutes the farmer and his helpers appeared. All gathered around the table together.

"What a fine junket this is to-day," said Mari's father, as his wife helped him to another plateful.

The junket was made of milk, barley, and potatoes, and was a dish of which he was very fond.

"Dear me! how good the flat-bread is, too. And only to think that our little Mari made it all herself," continued the farmer. "She will soon be a woman at this rate."

Mari's rosy cheeks grew redder still at her father's praise.

"I shall be glad to see Gretel back again," said the little girl's mother, after a while. "I miss her very much, though Mari is a good little helper. But Gretel is having a good time with Henrik, I'm sure."

Gretel and Henrik had gone up on the mountain to the summer-house, where the cows were pastured during the two warmest months of the year. Henrik was now fourteen

years old, and his father felt that he could be trusted to care for the cows as well as he could do it himself; while Gretel could make good cheese and butter, although she was only thirteen. This boy and girl were now living together all alone up on the mountain-side, but they were not the least bit lonely.

Every Saturday afternoon Henrik brought down the butter and cheese his sister had made during the week. He had so many stories to tell of their good times, that Mari would say:

"Oh, dear! Henrik, I wish I could go back with you."

"I wish you could, little sister, but mother must not be left alone, you know." And Henrik would put his arms around her and kiss her lovingly.

"Where is Ole?" asked the farmer, as the family finished eating their dinner. "He should not be late to meals and give you trouble, good wife."

"He went up to the river on a fishing trip. I told him I should not scold if he was late this time," said his mother. "I was glad of the thought of having some fresh salmon."

"Very well, then. But come, my men, we must get back

to the field now. The noon hour has passed." And the farmer led the way out of the house.

But before he rose from the table little Mari said:

"Thanks for the food, dear father and mother," while she went first to one, then the other, and gave each of them a loving kiss.

Then the workmen rose and went in turn to the farmer and his wife and shook hands, to show they, too, were thankful.

It was very pleasant and cheerful in this farmer's house, you can plainly see; and it was all quite natural for these simple country people to show how kindly they felt for each other.

"There comes Ole, now," said the farmer's wife. "I can hear his call. Run, Mari, and see if he has met with good fortune."

"O, mother, mother, see what I have here," cried Mari, a few moments afterward. "Ole has a fine string of fish, and that will please you, I know. But do look at this young magpie. It was snared in his trap while he was fishing. He says I may have it for my very own. May I keep it, please?"

"It seems as though you had enough pets now, Mari. You have your own pony and your dog Kyle. But I hate to refuse you, my dear. Yes, you may have it, but you and Ole must keep it out of mischief. Magpies are sometimes very troublesome birds, for they notice shining objects and carry them off if they get a chance."

Mari's mother now turned to the string of trout which she hastened to put away in the storeroom. Ole had cleaned them nicely before he brought them home. He now ate his dinner as quickly as possible, after which he and his sister went out into the yard to make a cage for their new pet.

"In a little while he will get tame so he will follow us around," said Ole, as he cut the wooden bars for the cage. "Then we shall need to shut him up only when we wish."

"Isn't he a beauty," exclaimed Mari, as she stroked the magpie. "Look, Ole, at the green and purple feathers in his wings and tail. They are very handsome and glossy."

"Be careful, Mari, or he may bite you. That hooked bill of his is pretty sharp, if he is a young bird. See him look at you with his bright eyes. They say that magpies will grow fond of one in a very short time."

"Did you ever see a magpie's nest, Ole?"

"Yes, I passed one this morning as I went through the woods. It was way back in a thick bush. I crept up and looked in.

The mother bird was away, and I saw five pretty green eggs dotted with little purple spots."

"What did you do, Ole? I hope you did not touch them."

"At first, I thought I would, Mari, because, you know, those pretty eggs will sometime hatch out, and the five magpies will fly away to harm smaller and more helpless birds. Besides, they go into the grain-fields and pick the grain. Father isn't very fond of magpies, I can tell you.

"But after thinking for a moment I said to myself, 'No, mother magpie sha'n't be made unhappy to-day by coming home to find her nest empty,' Then I went away, and ended my morning's sport by trapping this young fellow."

Ole kept on working while he talked. He did his work so cleverly that one could see he was quite a carpenter. He was a tall boy for twelve years, and looked healthy and happy.

You might possibly have laughed at his clothes, for he

wore a pair of his father's old trousers, and they were gathered in at the waist to keep them in place. They must have been cut off at the knees so that they should not be too long for the boy. That was the only change made. His mother said:

"There, those trousers are too much worn for my husband to use any longer. They will do very well for Ole as he runs about on the farm. I will not take time to cut them any smaller. On holidays the boy shall wear his fine clothes, of course."

It is no wonder the good woman had to be careful of her time, for she not only spun, wove, and made their clothing, but she also spun the yarn and knit their stockings. Ole's stockings are often patched with leather to make them last longer. But his feet are not tender, and he does not mind it in the least.

"What kind of a nest did the magpie have?" asked Mari, as Ole finished the cage and they placed the bird inside.

"It was lined with wool and hair and had a sort of roof over it. The opening was very narrow; I really don't see how the mother-bird could get in and out."

"I suppose the roof is to protect the young birds from enemies, don't you, Ole?"

"Yes, Mari; but come, let us go and find some worms for our bird. He must be hungry."

CHAPTER III
The Christening

"O mother, I have something to tell you. I have just been down to the village, and I heard there that neighbour Hans's wife has a new baby. It is a boy. Every one says he is a fine little fellow," said Mari, one beautiful afternoon.

"Dear me! dear me! that is fine news, truly," said her mother. "I must make her a dish of my best porridge and take it to her in the morning."

"Did everybody remember you when I was born, mother?"

"Yes, dear, the people of the village seemed to vie with each other in preparing a dish of flödegrod. It did taste so good! It was hard to tell whose was the best. You must learn how to make this cream porridge now, Mari; you are quite old enough. You will never be thought a good housekeeper

if you cannot make smooth flödegrod."

"The baby is to be christened next week. Everybody will be there, of course, mother."

The farm was only half a mile from a little fishing village on the shore of a deep bay. Such a long, narrow bay is called a fiord. There are many fiords in Norway.

There were only about a dozen cottages in the village, but in their midst was a tiny little church and a small building used as the school-house. But school was not kept there all the year round. Half of the time the master taught in this place, and the rest of the year he spent in another little village a few miles up the coast. Neither of them was large enough to pay for a teacher the whole year round. The children, however, were glad to work hard while he was among them. They loved their teacher and their school, and they learned quickly.

Every one in the place was busy now, getting ready for the christening. At last came the great day, as bright and sunny a one as could be wished.

All the work on the farm was stopped and every one in the family was dressed in his best. Mari had a fresh white

linen kerchief tied under her chin, and also a finely starched apron. Her plump little arms were bare. Her stomacher was worked with bright beads on scarlet cloth. She had embroidered it all herself and she could not help being proud of it.

But perhaps you do not know what a stomacher is. It is a piece of cloth worn as an ornament on the waist and over the stomach. Mari's mother wore one also, but hers was sparkling with silver trimmings that had belonged to her great-grandmother.

How fine the father looked in his short coat and knee-breeches. He wore a bright red vest, over which hung his long light beard.

But Mari's mother was the prettiest sight of all. Her muslin apron was trimmed with three rows of lovely open-work. Her scarlet waist was finished with bands of black velvet, with the beautiful stomacher in front of that. She had loose white linen sleeves, and such an odd cap. You never saw one like it, I am sure. It was made of crimped white muslin with a wide rim over the forehead, with a narrow band beneath that hid her hair. The corners fell

down behind nearly to the waist.

Her silver ornaments must also be mentioned. They were really beautiful, and were hundreds of years old.

Ole looked fine, too, in a suit much like his father's and a little round cap, fitting tightly to his head. You would scarcely have known the family in their holiday dress.

They stepped off gaily, and soon reached the village. They arrived at the church just as the christening party reached it.

"Do look at the dear baby, Ole," said Mari. "Isn't he lovely?"

The nurse was carrying him. He was so swaddled in his fine clothes that you would have almost thought he was an Indian pappoose. Only his face could be seen. The swaddling bands were of many colours—red, green, and white, and there was a large white satin bow, of course. Every Norse baby wears such a bow to its christening.

And now the flock of people followed the minister into the little church. They passed up to the front and gathered around the altar.

"The baby behaves finely, doesn't he?" whispered Ole.

"I am real proud of him because he is to have the same name as myself. Did you hear the minister say Ole, Mari?"

"Yes, but look now. The baby's father and mother and his godparents are all going up behind the altar. What is that for?"

"They are laying presents there for the minister. Of course they want to thank him for the christening. I declare, Mari, our baby was christened only last year, and you have forgotten what people do at such times."

"I was so excited then, Ole, I don't believe I noticed it. But come, everybody is going out of the church. Now we shall have the best time, for you know we are invited to the party."

The building was soon empty, and all the people started gaily for the home of the new baby. The minister went with them, of course. He looked very dignified in his long black gown, with a great white ruff about his neck. He loved his people, and took part in all their merry-makings. Ole and Mari were very fond of him. They ran to his side as soon as they got outdoors. Ole took one hand and Mari the other.

It was only a few steps to the little home of the

fisherman. Everything had been made ready for the company. The table was spread with the good things that the Norse people love best.

In the centre of the table stood the old silver bowl from which every one must drink to the health of the new baby. This bowl was the most precious thing in the simple home. It had not been used before since the parents of the baby came here and held their wedding-feast.

There is much eating, and frequent hand-shaking. It seemed as though the company could only show how loving they felt toward one another by the hearty shakes which they gave so often.

When every one had eaten so much that he could hold no more with comfort, the table was quickly cleared, and a young man brought out a fiddle from the corner of the room.

"Now for some of our Norse songs," cried one of the company.

"Good, good," cried all, and soon the room was filled with lively music. The new baby behaved very well, and went to sleep in the midst of it.



The Christening

But Mari's baby brother, who had come to the party with the rest of the family, was having too good a time to shut his eyes for a moment. It was not until the dancing began that his little head commenced to nod and his eyes could keep open no longer.

The older folk and children sat against the wall and talked together while the younger people waltzed around the room.

"Gustav, we want to see you and Frigga in the Spring Dance," said one of the party after a while.

"O yes, Gustav, you can both do it so well," cried another. "We must see it before we go home."

Gustav stepped out into the middle of the room and was followed by the young girl whom he was soon to marry. Her cheeks grew rosy as every one looked at her. She was a pretty girl, and her long, fair braids reached way below her waist.

And now the fiddler started up again with a lively tune. Who could keep still now? Surely Gustav could not. He took hold of one of Frigga's hands, and away they spun around the room. But it was not a simple waltz such as you

have seen. The young girl held her other hand above her head and showed her grace as she kept moving around Gustav; she kept perfect time and step as she did so.

Other odd dances followed the Spring Dance. Ole's and Mari's eyes were wide open with delight as they watched their older friends.

Whenever one of the dances came to an end, there was a general shaking of hands in which the children joined with a right good will.

The time to go home came all too soon. But as it was near the middle of summer, it was not dark even now at ten o'clock in the evening.

"Gud nag, gud nag," cried every one, after they had drunk again to the health of the baby and his proud parents, and the hands of all had been heartily shaken once more.

CHAPTER IV
The Lost Pin

"Mari, Ole, come here to me at once," called their mother.

It was the morning after the christening. The two children were sitting with their pet magpie under a tree near the house.

"What can be the matter, mother speaks so quickly?" whispered Ole, as he and his sister hurried to obey.

"Have you seen the silver brooch I wore at my throat yesterday?" said their mother, as soon as they came into the house.

The good woman seemed nervous. Her words came quickly, which was not a common thing, for she was a slow speaker, like other Norse people.

"Why, no, mother, of course not," said Mari. "Didn't you put it away in the box where you always keep it?"

"Certainly, my child, but I did not lock the box as usual.

I found it open just now. Can it be possible that a thief has been here? It does not seem probable. Besides, my other ornaments are there safe. A thief would have taken all."

"I shouldn't wonder if I could guess who took the brooch, mother," said Ole. "It's the magpie. You know you said magpies like all kinds of shining objects."

"You handsome little mischief, have you done it?" said the boy, as he looked at his pet.

The magpie had kept his seat on Ole's shoulder when the children came into the house. He looked from him to the boy's mother with bright eyes, as much as to say, "I could tell all about it, if I wished."

"It seems as though the bird understands what we are talking about, but of course he doesn't. Still, I believe he has done something with your brooch, mother," said Mari.

"It may be so, indeed, children. The box was possibly left open, although I am generally so careful. If that is so, Ole and Mari, you must find it. Unless you are able to do so, you cannot keep your pet any longer."

You may be sure the children were anxious to find the brooch now. All that day they searched in every nook and

corner of the house and yard.

"You know, we let him fly around for a long time this morning," said Ole, when night came and still the brooch could not be found. "If it was carried up into some tree, we may never see it again."

Ole had crawled out upon the limbs of all the trees near the house, and his legs were pretty tired.

"You can't do any more to-night, children," said the farmer, when supper was over and the family were gathered on the porch to talk over the trouble. "Go to bed, and do not fret. In the morning, let the magpie out of the cage, and allow him to go where he pleases. Watch him, and perhaps you will find he has some hiding-place where he stores his treasures."

Those were wise words. The next morning the children did as their father had directed, and the magpie was set free. Five minutes afterward he flew out of the house, and away he went toward the barn.

Now it happened that a pole stretched out from under the low roof of this building. In winter-time a bundle of grain was fastened to this pole from time to time. It was

placed there to give food to the hungry birds that came that way. They might starve during freezing weather, if kind people did not think of them.

A bunch of the old straw was still fastened to the pole. The magpie flew to it, and alighted.

"The brooch may be stowed away in that straw," said Ole. "I'll get a ladder and see, anyway."

A moment after, the boy was shouting in delight.

"I have it, I have it, Mari. How glad mother will be. O, you naughty magpie. We will be careful that you don't get any more brooches of my great-grandmother's."

Delighted indeed was the mother when they came in with the lost brooch.

"You may go down to the shore, and spend the afternoon," she said. "You can have a fine time with your playmates in the village."

A half-hour later Ole and Mari were playing barefooted on the edge of the bay, or fiord, as, you remember, Mari calls it. But there was no beach of smooth sand here, for rocks and ledges covered the shore. There was only one little nook where it was easy for boats to land.

The village was built at the head of this narrow bay, as it reached far into the land. It was a long sail out to the open ocean. Mari had never yet seen it, although she had lived so near the water all her life.

It was a wonderful sight that the children looked upon this afternoon. Great cliffs rose high up from the water on each side of the bay. They were so straight and tall, they seemed to join it to the sky above.

A waterfall came rushing down from the top of one of these cliffs. It made a whirlpool in the spot where it fell into the bay. But everywhere else the water was very quiet. It was so still, that as you looked up to the steep mountains on each side, it would have made you almost fearful, it seemed so lonely and apart from the rest of the world.

"I climbed way up that cliff by the waterfall last spring," Ole told his sister, as the children sat down upon a rock to rest.

"Weren't you afraid?" she asked, as she looked at him proudly. Then she added, quickly, "Of course you weren't. I never knew you to be afraid of anything in your life. But why did you do it?"

"I was after down for mother's cloak. The eider-ducks build their nests in the crannies of the rocks. I found three of them that day, I remember. It seemed almost too bad to rob the nests, but still you know there is nothing so soft and warm as the down. And I shall be proud when mother has enough to line her cloak and finish it."

"Those ducks have a queer habit of plucking the softest feathers from their own breasts to line their nests. Don't you think so, Ole?"

"Yes, birds are a great deal nicer than we are apt to think. You know the mother-bird covers the eggs with this down before she flies away for food. She seems to understand that they must be kept warm, and the father-duck doesn't help her by bringing her food or taking her place while she is away. She has all the care on her own shoulders, poor thing.

"If her nest is robbed of the down, she will pluck more feathers from her breast and line it again. It if happens the third time, she flies to her mate and takes enough from him to fill their place. But after that her patience is worn out, she goes away and seeks another place in which she can

build a new nest undisturbed."

"She certainly is a wise little creature, for she wouldn't be warm enough if she robbed herself too much," said Mari. "Mother has been to the city of Bergen, and she says cloaks lined with eider-down are sold in the stores there, and that they are worth a great deal of money."

"Of course, Mari. Some men make a business of robbing the nests of eider-ducks. It must be hard work, too. But see, there comes the postman. Let's go to meet him."

The children looked down the bay, and what do you think they saw?

At first it seemed as though a pine-tree standing up on the water were sailing straight toward them. But no! one could see as it came nearer that the tree was fastened into an odd little boat with a high curved bow. The tree must be taking the place of a sail, for the man inside was not rowing, yet the boat came steadily onward.

"Is it rough outside?" asked Ole, as the boat drew near.

"Yes, the wind was blowing so hard I did not dare to put up the sail. But right in here it is quiet and calm enough to suit any one."

When the postman had carried his letters up to the office, in the leading house in the village, he came back to the shore and sat down for a few moments' talk with the children.

"This is a wonderful country of ours," he said, as he looked at the shadows of the great mountains in the water. "And we who live here belong to a noble and a mighty race. Never forget that, Mari, will you, my child?"

"O no, Olaf, I love to think of the grand old times when the Vikings sailed out of these bays and travelled all over the world. They were the ones who discovered America, weren't they? Although I have heard it said that the honour is given now to Columbus, the Italian."

"Hundreds of years before Columbus lived, Mari, our great seamen crossed the ocean. Many of our people went with them and settled in Iceland. But they did not forget their native land and the wonderful stories that had been handed down for centuries from father to son.

"At last a wise man said, 'I will gather together these stories of the Norse people. I will write them down, and our children shall have them for ever.' In this way the 'Eddas'

came to be written. They are dearer to us now than any other books except the Bible. Is it not so, children?"

"Yes, yes, Olaf," cried Mari and Ole together.

And Mari added, "We are so happy when father reads to us from the 'Eddas.' I hardly know what story I like best."

"I have sometimes heard strangers in the land speak about our boats," Olaf went on. "They call them old-fashioned and say they remind them of the ships the Vikings sailed in a thousand years ago, they have such high curved prows and are so broad. But what do we care if they do call them old-fashioned? We like it, children, for the old ways were good ways."

"I wish I had lived in the time of the Vikings," said Ole. "I should like to have gone with them on their daring voyages. But why were they better sailors than any other people at that time, Olaf?"

"In the first place, they were strong and brave. They loved the sea and spent their lives upon it. They trained themselves from boyhood to bear cold and hardships. And, besides all these things, these deep bays were good places for sailors to learn their craft.

"But I have stayed here longer than I thought; I must go home. This was the last village where I had to deliver letters or I could not have stopped with you so long. I will try sailing back, but if I find the wind still strong when I get outside the fiord, I can easily take the sail down. Good-bye."

The postman was soon far down the bay. He passed several fishermen in their boats just coming back from their day's catch. Ole and Mari waited till they came in.

"What luck, what luck?" cried the children.

"I have had such a good haul," said Gustav, who was the first to touch the shore, "that here is a fine large haddock to take home to your mother, Ole."

"Many thanks, Gustav, my mother will be much pleased," answered the boy, as he received the gift. Then the two children trudged homeward, clasping hands and singing one of the songs they had learned at school.

CHAPTER V
The Birthday

"Ten years old, my daughter. Do you believe you have grown any taller since last night?" said Mari's mother, when she called her that morning.

"It seems so, anyway," answered the little girl, as she watched her mother making the birthday cake.

"Bring the citron and currants from the storeroom, Mari. I have sugar enough, I think. This must be a beautiful cake for my daughter. The frosting shall be thick. Here comes Ole now with the flowers."

Ole's arms were full. "Do you think I have enough to decorate your cake, Mari?" He laughed as he spoke.

"We can't use half of them, of course. Look at the quantity of fruit mother is using. There! see how yellow the dough looks since she put in the saffron. Won't it be lovely

when it is done?"

"Come, Ole, get to work on that tub you are making for me. And, Mari, take your knitting and go out on the porch. I wish to be quiet while I watch the baking of the cake. There will be fun enough for you this afternoon."

Mari's mother had promised her a coffee party in honour of her birthday. Soon after dinner the children began to arrive. They were dressed in their best and looked very happy, although the white kerchiefs tied around the rosy faces of the girls made them appear like little old women.

There was plenty of coffee to drink, for the children of the North are as fond of it as the older people. Then there was the magnificent birthday cake, rich in the fruits and sugar, and trimmed with the flowers Ole had gathered in the morning. Of course, there were piles of flat-bread on the table, besides other things of which the children were fond.

Many games were played outdoors in the sunshine. Mulberry-bush was the favourite, and it was played over and over again.

"I shall never forget my tenth birthday," said Mari, that

night, after her little friends had gone home. "I have had a lovely time, mother, and you were so good to let me have the party."

"You can repay me by being more diligent in all your work the coming year, my child. Learn to be more careful in your knitting and spinning. Always be ready, with a cheerful face, to help me in the churning, and I shall think you are growing to be a noble woman."

Our little cousin certainly had many duties. Her hands were seldom idle during the long winter afternoons and evenings, for there were stockings to knit for Ole and herself, scarfs to crochet, wool to be spun and woven, besides many other things which Norse girls need to learn if they are to grow up to be good house-keepers.

And Ole had much to do, also. In summer there was plenty of work in the garden, besides fishing and shooting the wild ducks. During the winter time he must make many useful things at his carpenter's bench. His father was his teacher in this kind of work.

Why, he had made every piece of furniture in the house; and although it was not beautiful, it was well made and

strong.

"I love to carve," Ole once said to his sister. "I wish it were the fashion to decorate our buildings as the people of Thelemarken do. I have seen pictures of their storehouses. They are just beautiful, Mari. The men carve with their knives all sorts of figures on the outside. The side posts of the porches are fairly covered with lovely patterns."

"The people there don't dress as we do, either," answered Mari. "Even the farmers wear the same clothes at work as on the holidays. I should think it would be hard to keep clean their white jackets all trimmed with silver buttons. The women there sometimes make their aprons out of silk handkerchiefs. And they wear their silver belts and brooches every day. I should like to go there and see them. Just think, Ole, I've never been away from this place in my life!"

"Never mind, little sister. You and I will travel some day and go all over our country. We will even go to the North Cape and see the sun set at midnight and then rise a moment afterward. We can almost do that here on mid-summer nights, but not quite. You know people from all

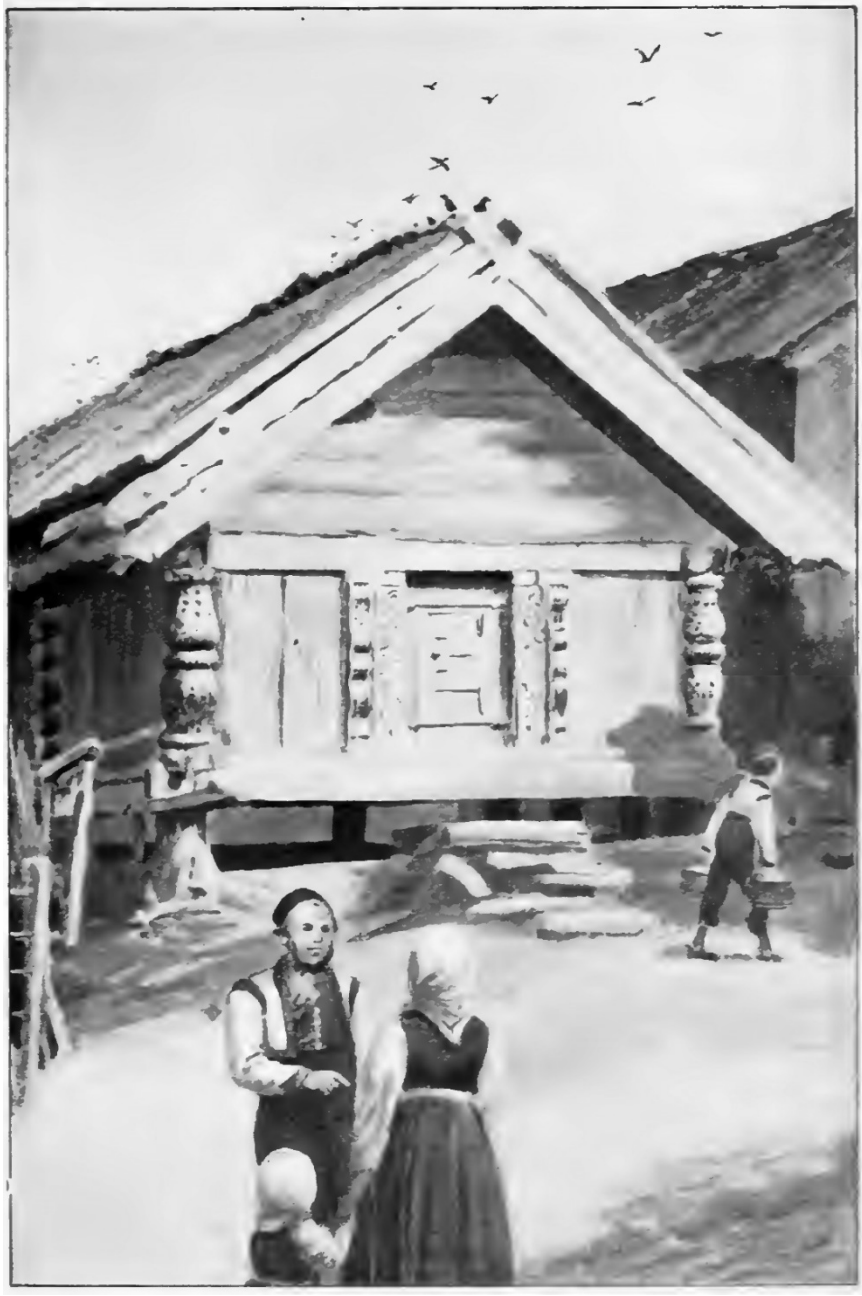
over the world travel to the North Cape, Mari."

"What else do they see there besides the midnight sunset and sunrise?"

"Our friend Ernst, over in the village, went there once. He belonged to the crew of a ship that carries people there every summer. He says it is a high mass of rocks, and it is hard to climb. When you reach the top, you can get a good view of the Arctic Ocean, but there is nothing to see but the dreary water; no land nor ship in sight. That is, of course, as you look toward the north. On one side of the cape there is a small glacier, but those can be seen in many other parts of the country. One doesn't need to go to the North Cape to look at a glacier."

"Our teacher told me, Ole, that a long time ago this whole country was covered with ice. Of course, there were no people then. But after a while the land became warmer and the ice went away. Here and there, the ice-rivers, or glaciers, were left among the mountains, and they have stayed there ever since. I don't see why."

"Of course, it's terribly cold above us, Mari, up among the mountains. The snow falls and changes into ice. It slides



Carved Houses at Thelemarken

slowly down into the valleys and begins to melt, but there is always plenty of ice above. People like to come to our country to see the glaciers as well as the other wonderful sights. I declare, I'm getting sleepy and I am going to bed. Good night, little sister."

CHAPTER VI
The Wedding

"There they are. They are just rounding the point," exclaimed Mari.

She was standing on the shore and looking anxiously down the bay. She was not alone, by any means, for every one of the village was there with her. Why were they all dressed so finely? Why were they all looking in one direction? And why was the church door standing open? It was not Sunday, and it was the time when every one was usually at work.

Gustav and Frigga, who lived farther up the coast, you remember, were to be married. There was no church in Frigga's village, so the wedding party must come here.

For what would a wedding be if it were not held in a church? Half of the beauty would be missing.

Ah! here come the boats. The first one, of course,

contains the fair bride and her lover. They sit on a raised seat, with the bridesmaid and best man near them.

The bride looks quite charming with the high silver crown on her fair head. It seems as though a queen and her royal party were drawing near. The boat is trimmed with flowers, and the rowers pull with a will.

Two other boats follow close behind, containing the dearest friends of the bride and groom. As they draw near, the people on the shore hasten to greet them with a rousing welcome.

And now the procession is formed and starts out toward the church. First comes the fiddler with his violin under his arm. He is followed by a man bearing a large silver tankard. The health of the newly married pair will be drunk from this many times before the festival is over. Next comes the best man, with Gustav and Frigga close behind; after whom follow the fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers of the couple. Last, come the other relatives and friends. All are laughing and joking, and are bright with the pretty colours of their holiday clothes.

Now they enter the little church and pass down the

aisles strewn with juniper-tips. The air is very sweet with the odour of the freshly cut sprigs. The minister is at the altar to meet them. He is dressed as usual in his long black gown with the great white ruff around his neck.

But the bride! How lovely she looks as she stands with bent head, with the silver crown resting on her fair hair. A heavy silver chain is around her neck, and she sparkles with rings, and brooches, and other ornaments without number. Her stomacher is covered with silver embroidery. Her apron is of the finest muslin, and is also embroidered beautifully.

The little church was so full that Ole and Mari were crowded near the door with the other children. But they could see everything that was going on.

"Isn't she beautiful?" whispered Mari, to a little girl behind her. "I don't believe our queen in her own palace can look grander than she."

When the service was over, the wedding party left the church and turned toward the shore. Was the good time over now, do you think? By no means, for a whole week's merriment had only begun.

The bridal party seated themselves in the boat in which they had arrived. The other boats were quickly filled; the fiddler began to play a lively air; the rowers pulled with long, steady strokes, and as they moved out over the clear, sunlit waters, one of the party began to sing. Others joined in the song until the air seemed filled with music.

Ole and Mari stood on the shore together with the others who had not gone with the young couple to their new home.

"Gustav has made a lovely new house for Frigga," Ole told his sister. "I sailed over there last week with Olaf, and it was just done. The last piece of furniture was also finished. I wish we were going there to-day; what fun everybody will have, feasting and dancing."

"Never mind, Ole, we shall be grown up before many years. And then we shall be invited to the wedding-parties," said Mari. "Let's go in swimming and have some fun by ourselves this afternoon."

Several other children followed the example of Ole and Mari. Soon there was such a splashing and diving that the echoes of the noise came sounding back from the

mountain-sides. Norse children are great swimmers.

When Mari was no more than five years old she had learned to feel as much at home in the water as the mermaids of whom her mother told in stories. She could stay below as long as Ole; she could dive, and tread water, and swim backwards. There was nothing to fear, for sharks were never seen near that shore, and the water was so clear one could see to the very bottom, no matter how deep it might be.

CHAPTER VII
Legends

"I am afraid I shall have to go to lumbering this winter," said Mari's father, as the family sat around the great open fireplace.

Henrik had been home from the mountain pasture for two weeks. It was growing cold, and Jack Frost had paid several visits to the farm already.

"What a shame it is that the crops turned out so badly," answered his wife. "In one more week of good weather, you could have saved everything."

"Yes, that is true, wife, but we cannot help it. We lost nearly everything on account of the frost. If you are to live in comfort, I must earn money now in some other way. Two of the farm-hands can go with me to the camp in the woods, so I shall not be very lonely."

The farmer looked around the cheerful room, and

sighed. Mari went to his side, and put her arms around his neck.

"Dear father, we shall miss you so much," she said. "You will come home at Christmas, anyway, won't you?"

"O yes, the camp is not so far away but I shall try to be back for one night out of every two weeks. Henrik and Ole will take good care of you girls and your mother, I know. They will be able to visit me, too. They are both good runners on the skis (skees). Although the camp is miles away, it will not seem much to them, eh, Ole?"

"It will be grand sport," answered the boy, quickly. "We will run a race to see which one of us can get there first. Of course Henrik will win. But who cares? I don't."

The two boys had been busy all day making new skis for themselves. Great sport the children would have all this winter sliding down the hillsides.

Coasting on sleds! yes, there was plenty of that, too, on the snowy slopes around Mari's home. But ski-lobing was better fun, by far. Mari had learned to slide on skis long ago. They were made from two strips of wood, six feet long, with pointed ends curved upward. When they were strapped on

her stout shoes the little girl could slide over the snow at a wonderful rate, without sinking or falling.

No, there was no sport like ski-lobing. Mari had the sled Henrik made for her two years ago, and her two brothers sometimes dragged her on it down to the village. Sometimes all the children went coasting with their sleds. "But it isn't as good as ski-lobing," they would always say when they came home.

And it was no wonder; you would agree with them, if you could once see them travel. It was almost like flying. They would stand together at the top of a slope.

"Ready!" Henrik would cry.

Then away! they would all start downwards. It seemed but a second before all were standing at the foot of the hill, out of breath and rosy as the reddest winter apples.

"Now for the top," cried the leader, after a moment's rest; and up they would go again.

It is easy to understand now why Ole and Henrik were not afraid of a long trip on skis over the snow-covered fields and hills. They were so skillful they would get to the camp in two hours at most.

After an afternoon's sport on the hillside, the children once more gathered in the big living-room.

"Tell us some of the good old stories we love so much," said Mari. "There is no one who tells them so well, dear father."

It was the last evening he would be at home. The next morning he must start out for the cold, dreary camp in the woods. Every one was feeling sad, but all tried to hide it and seem gay and cheerful.

"What shall it be, a fairy-story, or a tale of the gods and goddesses in whom the Vikings believed?" he asked when the children had gathered around him, in front of the blazing logs in the fireplace.

"First let us hear that wonderful legend of the beginning of the world," answered Mari. "It is told in the Eddas, you know."

"Very well, then. Shut your eyes and try to think of a time when there was no earth, nor sun, nor stars, and the Great Father was All."

Mari opened her eyes after a moment and said, softly, "How lonely it must have been, papa."



Ski-Lobing

"A time came, however," her father went on, "when all was changed. For out of the thoughts of the All-Father, the Land of Winter was formed in the far north. It was wrapped in ice and cold and mist. Then, far away to the south, arose the Land of Heat and Fire, whose flames never died nor burned low. "Now, between the land of darkness and cold, and the land of light and heat, there was a great abyss, into which the icy rivers from the north were ever flowing. Mist rose from these waters and rushed to meet the sparks from the fires which were ever burning in the south lands. And as they met, a wondrous giant came into life, the child of Heat and Cold."

"Who was there to care for him when he was little?" asked Mari.

"He needed no one, because he was not like ourselves, my dear; still, he must have food. And so a wonderful cow appeared, to give him milk. As she licked the ice from the stones, a new being gradually took shape and arose. He was like ourselves, Mari, only larger, nobler, mightier. He was the father of all the gods, of whom you have read so many stories. I believe you are fondest of the god Odin, are you

not, Ole?"

"Yes, father, and it is because so many brave and noble things are told of him. But please go on with the story. You haven't yet told us how this world was made."

"The gods made it out of the body of the giant, whom they were obliged to kill."

"They killed him because he grew wicked and evil, didn't he, papa?"

"Yes, Mari, and that was a good reason, without doubt. The gods now used all their thought and power in making the world beautiful. The mountains that reach up so grandly toward the sky were their work, as well as the beautiful valleys, the rivers winding through the green meadows, the rushing cataracts, and the blue lakes. It is, indeed, a wonderful earth. Round it all the gods wrapped the great oceans which send their arms far up into our shores."

"But how were the stars made?" asked Mari.

"The gods first made the blue heaven which stretches above us, and dwarfs were put at each corner to keep it in place. Sparks arising from the realm of fire were caught and

changed into stars, and they were set on high to give light.

"A giantess whose name was Night had a son called Day. The gods were kind to them and gave them beautiful chariots and swift horses with which to ride through the heavens. Look out of the window, children, and see how bright it is. That is because the mane of Night's horse is shedding light upon the earth as he travels onward.

"When the sun and the moon, day and night, were established, the gods set to work to build a home for themselves. They looked about for the most beautiful spot, and decided upon a high plain on the summit of a lofty mountain. The glorious city was built, and the gods settled in their new home. It was the Golden Age of the world, for there was no sickness, nor death, nor sorrow, nor pain.

"In the very centre of the wondrous city the gods fashioned a golden hall for themselves, and in it there was a shining throne for each one. They had many games and sports, in which they vied with each other in strength and skill. They had a smithy, where they shaped iron and gold and silver into powerful tools and weapons. It was here that the rainbow was made, which you see at times arching over

the heavens.

"But the gods were not satisfied. They looked over the earth and saw no living creatures. They said among themselves:

"'We will make the dwarfs, who shall live in the earth and work the mines.'

"But this was not all, for Odin, your favourite among the gods, said to his brothers:

"'Look yonder at those two trees, the ash and the elm, standing side by side. We will make man and woman from them. They shall people the earth and we will care for them as our children.'

"So it came to pass that our race began to live among the hills and valleys, and has been here ever since. But the gods have never deserted us, but are ever ready to help and protect us. At least, all this is what the legend teaches."

"Of course, there are no real gods, are there?" said Mari.

"The only gods are our beautiful souls, my daughter. They can never die nor do evil, any more than these gods in whom our old Vikings really believed. The giants are our earthly natures that are constantly trying to make us forget

our godlike souls. But we shall conquer them at last, just as the gods always succeeded in mastering the giants, no matter how strong or clever they were."

"Didn't it take a long time to do it, papa? The Golden Age didn't last after quarrelling began, did it?"

"No. The gods had their troubles and sorrows as well as men. But, as I said before, the gods always ended by being successful."

"Are you too tired to tell another story, father? This time I wish we could hear something about the fairies. Won't you tell us about Ashiepattle?"

Now Ashiepattle is one of the favourites of all Norse children, and many tales are told of his wonderful deeds.

"Which story shall it be?" asked the farmer.

"The one about his eating with the troll," cried Mari and Ole, together.

Their father laughed. "You are never tired of that, although you are almost a man, Ole. Listen, then, and you shall hear how this brave boy ate with the giant.

"Once upon a time there was a man who had three sons. The older boys were idle and lazy and would do no work.

Their father was too old and feeble to compel them. He had a fine wood-lot, and he wished them to go out and cut down the trees. Then he would be able to sell lumber and pay his bills; but for a long time the sons gave no heed to his request.

"At length, however, they began to listen and think the plan was a good one. The oldest son shouldered his axe and started for the forest. But he had no sooner begun his work upon a big tree, than a troll suddenly appeared at his side.

"'That is my tree,' said the troll. 'If you cut it down, I will kill you at once.'

"The boy was terribly frightened. And it is scarcely to be wondered at, for the troll was an immense, fierce-looking creature. Dropping his axe, he started for home on the run, and did not stop to look around till he got there.

"'You coward,' cried his father when he heard his story. 'When I was a boy no troll was ever able to scare me away from my work.'

"'I will go,' said the second son. 'I shall not be afraid, you may believe.'

"He started out with a brave heart, and was soon at work

in the forest. But his axe had hardly struck the first tree when the troll appeared before him.

"'Spare the tree, if you wish me to spare your life,' cried the giant.

"The boy did exactly as his brother had done before him. All his bravery disappeared the moment he looked upon the giant. Without stopping a moment he fled for home, and rushed into the house breathless.

"'What a foolish, cowardly fellow,' cried his father. 'You are not much like me when I was young. No troll ever drove me away from my work.'

"'Let me try, father,' said little Ashiepattle. 'I am not afraid.'

"His two brothers looked at him in astonishment. 'You try, when we have both failed! You, who never go out of the house, what an idea!' And they laughed in scorn.

"Nevertheless, Ashiepattle went to the forest. But first, he asked his mother for a good supply of food. She at once put on the pot and made him a cheese, for she had nothing ready. With this in his bag, he started out merrily and was soon at work. The axe was sent straight into the heart of

the tree, and the chips flew right and left. But just then a deep, gruff voice was heard close by.

"'Stop at once!' cried the troll, 'or you shall die.'

"Now, do you suppose Ashiepattle followed his brothers' example, and that he fled from the troll? He never thought of such a thing. He did run, to be sure, but only for a short distance, to the spot where he had left his cheese. Coming back to the place where the troll stood, he squeezed his cheese with all his might.

"'Keep still, or I will squeeze you just as I am squeezing this cheese,' he shouted.

"It would have made you laugh to see that little fellow talking to the big giant in this way; but the troll was a coward, as all big blusterers are, and somehow Ashiepattle felt it. His quick mind told him that he was a human being, and wiser than all the trolls. What do you suppose the troll did, children? He cried, 'Spare me!' with a voice trembling with fear. 'If you will only spare me, I will help you cut down the trees,' he added, in haste.

"That afternoon great work was done in the forest. Many great trees were laid low; for the troll had wonderful

strength in his big arms, and he showed himself a fine helper.

"When night came the troll proposed that Ashiepattle should go home with him to supper.

"'It is nearer than your house,' he said.

"So Ashiepattle went with the troll to his home in the forest.

"Before the supper could be made ready, a fire must be made in the fireplace. The troll said he would do this if Ashiepattle would draw some water from the well.

"When the boy looked at the iron buckets he should have to fill, he knew that he could not even lift them; but he was too wise to say this.

"'I won't bother with those buckets,' he told the troll, 'I will bring the well itself. Then you will be sure to have water enough.'

"'O, don't do that,' cried the troll, in fear, 'for I will have no well left. Let me get the water, while you make the fire.'

"This suited Ashiepattle, of course, for it was exactly what he wished. The water was brought, and a great kettle-ful of porridge was soon ready to eat, so the troll and the

boy sat down together at the table.

"'I can eat more than you, although you are so much larger,' said Ashiepattle to his host.

"'Let us see you try,' said the troll, who felt sure he could beat the boy.

"What do you think Ashiepattle did? When the troll was not looking, he seized the bag in which he had kept the cheese, and, fastening it in front of him, he slipped most of the porridge he received into that, instead of his mouth. At last it was quite full.

Ashiepattle then took his knife and cut a hole in it, while the troll watched him in wonder. After awhile the giant exclaimed:

"'I really can't eat any more. I shall have to admit you have beaten me.'

"'Didn't you see what I did?' cried his visitor. 'If you cut a hole in your stomach as you saw me do, you can eat as long as you wish.'

"'But didn't it hurt terribly?' asked the troll.

"'No, indeed. Try it and see for yourself,' replied Ashiepattle, laughing inside all the while.

"The troll did as he was told, and you may guess what happened. He fell on the floor in agony and died in a few moments.

"And what did our brave little Ashiepattle do? He searched for the stores of gold and silver belonging to the troll, and soon succeeded in finding them. He started for home in great glee, for now he could pay his father's debt and free the old man from trouble."

"Listen," cried Henrik, as his father finished the story. "There is a noise outside as though something were the matter. Do you suppose foxes have dared to come near and are disturbing the hens?"

"We will soon find out," cried the farmer, jumping to his feet. "Hand me my gun from the wall, good wife, and Henrik, take yours and follow me."

They crept out of the house with as little noise as possible, while Ole and Mari flattened their noses against the window-panes. But it was pitch-dark outside, and they could see nothing.

Bang, bang! went a gun.

"They found him, they found him," shouted Ole,

jumping up and down. "I do hope he was hit."

A few minutes after, steps were heard coming back to the house. Ole rushed to the door and opened it. There stood his father holding a large red fox by the nape of the neck. The eyes of the animal were glassy, for he was quite dead.

"He was creeping away over the snow when we saw him," said the farmer, "and he had one of my finest hens in his mouth. I don't believe this was his first visit, either, for you know, wife, we have lost several fowls lately. Henrik, you and Ole may skin this sly fellow and make a mat for your mother. But it is getting late and I must start early in the morning, so to bed one and all."

CHAPTER VIII
The Lumber Camp

The whole family were awake bright and early the next morning. Mari and Greta helped their mother in packing the birch-bark knapsack with the provisions their father needed to carry with him to the forest. There must be a good supply of dried meat and fish, sugar, butter, and flour. Last, but not least, the coffee was packed safely inside. What would the good man and his helpers do without this refreshing drink? When they returned to the hut after a day's chilling work, a bowl of hot coffee would fill them with new life.

"Ole and I will come next week and bring you fresh supplies," said Henrik, as his father bade them good-bye and the three men started out on their snow-shoes over the crisp snow.

They were soon out of sight and the rest of the family

returned to their work. But little Mari, who loved her father very tenderly, kept thinking of the hard, cold work before him. What kind of a home would he find when he got into the forest? There would be no shelter of any kind.

He and his men must go to work at once and saw some logs, with which they would build a rough hut. They would stuff the chinks with moss to keep out the great cold, or else they would freeze to death.

What furniture would they have? A large, flat stone would serve as a fireplace, while the bed would be made of poles placed side by side and covered with moss. That was all. They must sleep as close to the fire as possible, and even then they would suffer greatly during the long, freezing nights.

"I am so sorry the crops failed," said Mari to her mother when she had thought of all these things. "I almost wish father had gone to work fishing this winter. I don't believe that would have been as hard work."

"The sea has its own dangers, my daughter," answered her mother. "Think of the fearful storms that rage along our coast and the sad deaths that have come to some of our

friends. No, Mari, lumbering is hard work, but it is safer, I think, than fishing in the winter season."

Ole had come into the room while they were talking.

"It's cold and uncomfortable for father this winter, I know," he said, "but the greatest danger is in the spring-time, when he has to float the logs down the narrow streams to the sawmills."

"Why is that so dangerous?" asked Mari.

"Because his work isn't over when he has once launched the logs into the water. He must watch them in their course and see that they get to their journey's end. Suppose one log gets across the stream and blocks the way? Then father must wade out into the water and pull that log aside with his boat-hook. He has to spend a good deal of his time in the water, and is likely to freeze his feet, or get a terrible cold, at any rate. Perhaps he has to jump on the logs as he pulls them apart. Suppose he slips and, falling through, is jammed to death between the logs!

"There, there, Mari, dear, don't cry. I shouldn't have said all this. Father will probably get along all right and come home safe in the spring."

Henrik put his strong arms around his little sister, and she had soon forgotten her fears and was laughing heartily over the fairy-story he was telling her.

The next week after their father left home, Henrik and Ole started out on a visit to the camp, carrying with them a stock of provisions large enough to supply the men for several days longer.

"Take your gun, Henrik," said his mother, "for you can't tell what wild creatures you may meet on the way. It would be a fine surprise for your father if you should present him with a hare or a deer. Some fresh meat would make a rare treat for the men."

The boys skimmed over mile after mile of snowy ground, and nothing unusual happened. No houses were in sight all this time, and there were no tracks of living creatures. It was lonely, and dreary, and quiet.

They were nearing their journey's end, and were climbing the side of a hill, when Henrik suddenly stopped.

"See, Ole," he whispered, "there are the tracks of some four-footed beast ahead of us. They are too heavy and big for hares'. It may be we are near some bear's den. Look out,

for you know the old ones are sometimes very fierce. Let us follow the tracks for a while and see what we come to, anyway."

"Shouldn't we be proud if we could find him and kill him?" answered Ole. "Roasted bear's meat makes a pretty good dinner."

The boys travelled very carefully now, for they had come into the thick woods. The tracks suddenly came to an end at a pile of logs lying at one side.

"Perhaps the bear has a snug home under those logs," said Henrik, in a low tone, as he seized his gun.

At that very moment the boys heard a sound, and at once a huge brown bear appeared. He moved sleepily, as though he had just been wakened, but as soon as he got sight of the boys he roused, and his face became fierce.

No time was to be lost, but Henrik was as cool as any old hunter. His hand did not tremble as he took careful aim. Whizz! flew the bullet just as the bear prepared to come at them. It would have gone straight into his heart if he had not suddenly raised his paw, but it entered that instead.

"Run for your life, Ole," shouted his brother, as the huge

and angry brute dashed toward them.

Even as he spoke, the bear knocked Ole down, and would have made short work of him if it had not been for Henrik's coolness. A second shot from his gun broke the animal's neck. He rose on his hind legs, and plunged blindly forward only to fall dead at Henrik's feet.

"It's a good thing we are trained to be soldiers at school," the brave boy said afterward, when he told the story to his father. "I really believe I should have lost my head, if it hadn't been for that training. But I said to myself: 'You never fail at home in hitting the mark, why should you now?' It gave me courage, father."

His father smiled and answered, "You have done well, Henrik. I am proud of you."

This was said as the boys sat around the fire in the log hut that night. As soon as they were sure the bear was really dead, they had hurried on to the camp, which was only a short distance away. Then, as soon as they had told of their luck, the men went back with them to skin the bear and cut up and bring in the meat. They brought it to the camp on a rough sledge.

"He is a beauty," exclaimed one of the men, as he looked at the bear.

"And as big a one as I ever set eyes on," said the other. "I don't see how you ever dared to tackle him, Henrik. I should have hesitated for a moment, myself."

It was so late in the day when they all got back to the camp that father said:

"Boys, you had better stay all night, unless you think your mother will worry about you."

"We told her we might not come home to-day," said Ole. "It is such a long tramp, she said we had better not try, for we would get too tired. So it is all right."

How good the bear steak looked when it was set on the rough supper-table. It was smoked a good deal—that was certain; but no one spoke or even thought of that. And the table was not elegant, for there was no cloth to cover the rough pine boards. But the fresh cheese the kind mother had sent, the hard brown bread baked by the men, with plenty of bear steak and a bowl of steaming coffee, made a supper "fit for a king," as the boys declared when they could eat no more.

CHAPTER IX
The Lapps

"Perhaps this seems a cold place to you, when you think of the warm farmhouse you left yesterday," said one of the workmen to Henrik. "You ought to go to the far north, and visit the Lapps. Ah! you will find plenty of cold weather there. But those queer people don't seem to notice it very much. I suppose that is because they have got used to it, since they never lived anywhere else."

"Do tell us about them," begged Ole. "I didn't know you had ever been to Lapland, Adolf."

"Yes, when I was a young man I was a great hunter, Ole. I have travelled all over this country and have seen many strange sights."

"I should like to be a hunter, too," said Henrik. "It must be great sport getting the wild reindeer. But go on, Adolf, and tell us about the homes of the Lapps, and their herds of tame reindeer, as well as the queer ways of the people."

"They are a strange people, that is a fact," said Adolf. "They are queer-looking and queer in their ways. They are very small, few of them over five feet tall, and they are quite stout. Their skin is of a dark yellow; the hair is jet-black, coarse and straight; their cheek-bones, high; and their eyes are blue and small. Their little noses turn up in a comical way, and their mouths are often open as though they were surprised at something."

"I suppose they dress in fur, don't they?" asked Ole.

"O yes, from head to foot. But they get all they need from the skins of their reindeer. They wear high boots bound tightly around their legs in winter-time, so they are able to keep dry, even if they are out in the worst snow-storm."

"What are their houses made of?" asked Henrik. "I suppose lumber is scarce where they live."

"Sometimes the people make a frame-work of timber and cover it first with skins and then with turf. Sometimes the hut is built of stones, over which the turf is thickly laid. But it is always in the shape of a mound."

"Are there any windows in the hut?"

"No, Ole, and so, of course, the air inside is very close and unpleasant. There isn't even a chimney. A hole is left in the roof large enough to let out the smoke; that is all. When the short summer comes round, the Lapps prefer to live in deer-skin tents, and I can't say I blame them."

"Did you ever visit them in their homes, Adolf?" asked Henrik.

"Yes, I stayed with a family of them over night. They seemed very friendly and tried to make my visit pleasant, but I didn't enjoy it very much, it was such a dirty, smoky place.

"In the middle of the room was a stone fireplace, over which hung the kettle when our supper was cooked. They all squatted on deer-skins around the fire. When I had been there a few minutes, I heard a noise overhead. I looked up and saw a dear little blue-eyed baby, swinging in a hammock and cooing to me.

I reached up and took it down, and it snuggled in my arms as though it knew I was a friend."

"What did you have for supper?" asked the farmer.

"Everything came from the reindeer, of course. There

was plenty of rich milk, besides a good-sized cheese and a meat stew. I have eaten worse meals since, many times."

"But how did you sleep?"

"The beds were easily made by stretching deer-skins on the floor. We covered ourselves with more skins, and lay snug and warm till morning."

"Did you sleep more warmly than we do here?" The farmer laughed as he said it.

"I must say I did," replied Adolf, with an answering laugh. "Although the Lapps' huts are far from beautiful, they are made so that wind and snow cannot blow in, at any rate." Adolf pointed to a ridge of snow that had sifted in through the wall, although they had stuffed the cracks as well as they could with dried moss.

"But, dear me! the Lapps wouldn't mind it very much if it did," he went on. "The men will lie down to sleep in an open field on rocks or snow, if they are not near their home. They are not afraid of the cold, and it seldom seems to hurt them, either.

"As I lay on the floor of the hut that night, I could see rows of smoked meat and fish hanging against the sides of



"'It is always in the shape of a mound.'"

the walls. They have neither storehouses nor closets, so they are obliged to keep their provisions in the huts.

"The next morning I went out among the reindeer with the chief of the settlement. I believe there were more than a thousand reindeer in sight. It was milking-day and the men were having a lively time of it. They had to catch each animal and hold it still with a lasso while the milking was done."

"Why did you speak of milking-day, Adolf? Don't the Lapps milk the reindeer as often as we do our cows?"

"No, indeed. It is done only once a week, because the creatures are so wild. They are not gentle and tame, as you have probably supposed. They can be managed very well in driving, however. It is great sport to ride behind a team of reindeer, for one flies over the snow like the wind. Their masters sometimes drive them a hundred miles in a day."

"That is good, for I have heard that the Lapps don't stay in one place all their lives. They are a wandering people, aren't they?"

"Yes, Ole, but one reason for that is the need of finding good feeding-grounds for their deer. When one place

becomes bare, they must seek another. Then, again, in the summer-time they like to go to the rivers and camp beside them for the sake of the salmon fishing. They are as fond as we of a good dish of salmon for dinner."

"What do the reindeer feed on?" asked Henrik.

"In winter they paw away the snow and find the lichen, which is a little gray plant very much like the moss you see growing on the mountainside about here. In summer they eat the young and tender shoots on the bushes and low trees. They are very hardy creatures and among the most useful."

"Just think!" cried Ole. "The reindeer furnish the Lapps with everything they need—their clothing, food, and shelter; and, as if that were not enough, they make good beasts of burden, and carry their masters wherever they wish to go."

"I shall tell Mari all about them when I get home," Ole went on. "I know one question my busy little sister will ask at once. She will say, 'What do the women and children do with themselves all the time?' How shall I answer that question, Adolf?"

"You may tell Mari there is plenty of work for them. They dress the reindeer skins, and make lovely rugs and warm slippers turned up at the toes and bound with red."

"Why, yes, Ole, your mother has a pair of slippers made by the Lapp women," interrupted his father. "I bought them for her at Bergen, and she wears them on cold winter mornings."

"That is so, I remember them; but I never thought about the Lapps when I looked at them," answered Ole. "Is there anything else the women of Lapland make, Adolf?"

"Many things. They showed me knives and spoons they had shaped out of the horns of the reindeer. They were very pretty, and a great deal of time must have been spent on the carving. The men and boys do most of this last work. I really think the most wonderful thing I saw was the thread the women make of the reindeer sinews. It is fine and even, yet very strong. I wish I could have seen them making it."

Adolf yawned. "I am so sleepy I think it must be bed-time. There's a hard day's work before us to-morrow."

After fresh wood had been laid on the fire, the party quickly settled themselves for the night's rest.

CHAPTER X
Holiday Frolics

"Father's coming, father's coming!" cried Mari as she stood looking down the snow-covered valley.

She rushed into the house and put on her skis, then skimmed across the fields with long strides.

"Everything is ready," she told her father as soon as she reached him. "And now we shall have a lovely Christmas because you have come."

Yes, everything was ready for the greatest day of the year. Even the birds were not forgotten, for a fresh sheaf of wheat had been fastened on the pole where the magpie had hidden the silver brooch. Ole had made a new collar for the dog, Kyle; Henrik had shot enough wild game for the Christmas dinner; Mari and Greta had helped their mother in making some wonderful cakes.

There was nothing for the tired father to do except to

sit in the chimney-corner and frolic with his children. It was a jolly time, for no one was expected to be quiet now, and all were allowed to do as they pleased.

Christmas comes but once a year, and the children realized it fully.

They played games and told stories; they danced and sang to the music of Henrik's violin. There was no spinning, or even crocheting, for the girls, while the boys did only what farm work was needed to keep the horses and cattle comfortable.

On Christmas Day a party of the villagers came to the farm to share in the games and feasting. Even the magpie, mischievous little fellow, seemed to enjoy the fun. He flew from one to the others of the party and, lighting on the shoulders of the young girls suddenly, would startle them and make every one else laugh.

The baby, bless his heart, had the best time of all. He was not left to hang in his cradle for a single moment. Everybody wished to hold him, and he was passed from one to another of the company, where he enjoyed himself fingering the shining silver ornaments of his friends.

He had his new toys to amuse him, also, for Henrik and Ole had carved him a doll and a queer-looking horse out of wood.

Everybody was jolly and happy, and there was much drinking of coffee and shaking of hands. It was eleven o'clock when the tired but happy children climbed the steps of their beds to dream of the good time just over.

After this, it did not seem a very long time to Fastilevn, which is the next best holiday to Christmas. At least, that is what Mari thought, and if you lived with her you would surely think so too.

Fastilevn comes in the early spring, on the first Monday of Lent, and on that day the Norse children are allowed to do exactly as they wish. Their parents may be strict and stern all the rest of the year, but at Fastilevn all rules are laid aside and the little ones may run wild if they like.

Cakes and buns! If you could see Mari, Greta, and their brothers eat sweet things on this day, you would wonder where they could possibly find room in their stomachs to stow them all away.

The feasting was not the best part of the fun, however.

You would never guess what strange thing the children were allowed to do on that day. They might whip their mother! Of course, it was all in sport. The boys took long birch twigs and fastened many tissue-papers and coloured ribbons and tinsel upon them. The night before the great day, these twigs were set up in a corner of the living-room, all ready for the next day's fun.

With the first light of morning those gay switches began to be plied, while the children followed their mother about, laughing gaily all the while.

How long did the fun last, do you suppose? Until the last shred of paper was gone from each switch.

And how do you suppose there ever came to be such an odd custom? The Norse parents believe firmly in the old maxim, "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Their children are likely to be often whipped for wrong-doing; Fastilevn is supposed to make up for twelve months of whippings, whether they were deserved or not.

Mari has seldom needed punishment, for she is a good, helpful little girl; but she enjoys Fastilevn very much, nevertheless.

The holiday came to an end, as all days must, whether they are good or bad. In the evening, when the bare switches had been thrown away, Mari went to her mother and put her arms around her neck, whispering:

"Mamma, I wouldn't really hurt you for the world, even if you had to give me a thousand whippings. And I am going to try harder than ever to be your little helper."

The good woman's eyes filled with tears. "God bless you, little daughter," she said, as she bent down and kissed her.

THE END.

Our Little Swedish Cousin

Claire M. Coburn



Sigrid

Preface

For more than five thousand years, the ancestors of our little Swedish cousin have dwelt in the Scandinavian peninsula. No wonder she loves the stories of the Vikings, the old legends, customs, and *fête*-days. They are her priceless heritage from the days of long ago.

The snow and glaciers on the extreme north cut off this long tongue of land, so that it is as separate from the rest of Europe as an island. In the olden days, almost every Swede tilled the soil and lived remote from his neighbour. Villages were few, so that each family created its own little world of work and pleasure. Even the children must be very industrious and ingenious to help supply the needs of the family. Whether she lives in the city or the country, every little Swedish girl to-day is taught this same thrift and industry.

Because the winter months, when the sun shows his face but a few hours each day, are long and dreary, our northern relatives fairly revel in their short summers. The whole

nation lives out-of-doors and rejoices in the merry sunshine. All day excursions, picnics, and water trips are crowded into the brief season.

The peasant still owns his little red cottage and the well-to-do farmer and the nobleman live in their old homesteads. The cities continue to be small in number and in size, but slowly, slowly, the great throbbing life of the outside world is creeping in to steal away much of the picturesqueness of this old nation.

You will be surprised to learn in how many ways the life of our little Swedish cousin is similar to that of American children. But she is such a very hospitable and polite little maid, I am sure she will give you a hearty welcome if you visit her and see her for yourself at work and at play.

CHAPTER I
The Skating Carnival

"Sigrid, Sigrid, hurry and get your skates. The ice is at last safe, and mother says that we may go to the park with Miss Eklund, this afternoon."

Erik thrust his head through the nursery door to announce the good news to his sister, who was poring over her lessons for the next day.

"Oh!" cried the little girl as she quickly slipped out of her seat at the long table, "I am so glad, for I thought I should never have a chance to wear the new skates that father gave me on my birthday."

In a trice, she had gathered up all her books, packed them neatly away, and was off to put on her warm furs. She was a flaxen-haired little maid, with very blue eyes, and

plump rosy cheeks as round as an apple, because she lived out-of-doors a great deal and romped with her brothers.

In just no time at all, she had put on her warm blue coat, lined with gray squirrel, and a little cap to match, with the fur also on the inside. She quickly fastened on her rubber overshoes, which had a border of fur around the top and down the front. When she had found her white woolen mittens with a quaint red and blue pattern knitted right across the back, she was ready to join her brothers Erik and Anders.

They were a jolly little party of merry-makers, for it was the first skate of the season. Our Swedish cousins who live in the city may not go skating whenever they like. They must wait till some wise person appointed by the government says the ice is quite thick and firm.

"I will beat you running down-stairs to the porter's door," called Sigrid, who was bubbling over with good spirits. Away she flew, down the long flight of stone steps, and stood dancing up and down on one foot, waiting for the others.

Sigrid's father was an officer in the king's army, and in

the winter-time, she and her big brother Erik and her little brother Anders lived with their parents and their governess, Miss Eklund, in a large apartment house in Stockholm. All the city people in Sweden live in these houses, plain and substantial on the outside, but comfortable inside, and not so very unlike American houses. In the centre of every house is a great stone stairway, and at the entrance sits a doorkeeper behind a tiny port-hole window. Every one who came to call on Sigrid's mother, who was a very hospitable lady, and had many guests, must ring the porter's bell. Then up would bob his head before the little window to see if he should let them in. He peered through the window so quickly after any one rang the bell that he always reminded Sigrid of a Jack-in-the-box.

"Gerda and Per are coming too," said little Anders as he walked by Miss Eklund's side. He had just learned to skate, so that he felt quite grown-up to be allowed to go at all. Everybody can skate in Sweden, so that the children learn when they are very young.

The merry group crossed the street to the left side,

instead of to the right as we should go, and started off briskly. Every few steps, Sigrid would make a little bobbing courtesy as she met some older friend. Such a funny little bow it was, made by quickly bending the knee without stopping her walk.

"Brita has such a beautiful new foot-pusher that her father has bought her," exclaimed Sigrid. They had reached the open country near the skating-park, and a couple of children rapidly skimmed past them on these strange sleds. "Don't you think that I am old enough to have a foot-pusher now. Miss Eklund?"

Christmas was very near and the air was already full of secrets, so Miss Eklund smiled to herself and replied, "Perhaps you might ask the good father at home what he thinks about it."

I don't believe that you know what a "foot-pusher" or "kicker" is. I am sure I don't know why you should. Picture to yourself the framework of an ordinary sled with two wooden rods fastened at right angles to each runner. In the front part of this odd-looking object, Brita had strapped her skates to a low narrow seat. She stood on one runner,

grasped these rods, and gave a quick little kick with the other foot, which hastened the sled along at a lively pace.

Soon the gleaming sheet of ice spread out before them. Already it was quite dark with people who were gliding merrily about.

"Oh, Sigrid, the band has begun to blow," cried Erik gleefully, for a Swedish ice carnival is never complete without a band to blow, as they say.

"When I came home from school this noon," continued Erik, "I saw them thrusting the little evergreen trees into the snow around the seats."

Fir-trees and clumps of old beeches grew on the snow-clad hills about the pond, but this wreath of evergreen trees on the rim of the ice, was to shelter the older people who sat wrapped in furs to watch the sport.

"Those boys look like great white birds!" said Sigrid, who was already fastening on her skates. She stopped a minute to watch a group of three boys who were skating with sails attached to their backs; big white sails shaped like a capital A with the top cut off.

"Now for a race," cried Anders, and away they glided

over the ice to find Gerda and Per, who lived in the same big apartment house.

Though it was only three o'clock in the afternoon, the sun had already set, for you will remember that in Stockholm the winter days are very short, and in the middle of the winter the lazy sun does not get up till after nine o'clock in the morning. But the twilight lingers for a long time, so that it does not get dark for a couple of hours after sundown.

All too soon, it was time to start for home, but none of the children thought of teasing to stay longer, for Swedish children are taught to obey without asking why.

Already a couple of huge bonfires flamed up along the shore. Just as they were leaving the edge of the pond, a dozen dark figures with blazing torches passed them. So silently and swiftly did the little procession twinkle by, that you might have thought them will-o'-the-wisp lights. But the children knew they were expert ski-runners, who were bound for the smooth hillside.

The long white slope was just the best place for the ski-lobing, and it was quite alive with people, for no winter



Brita and Her Foot-Pusher

sport is more wildly exciting. Every one wore narrow strips of wood, sometimes twelve feet long, turned up at the front, to the centre of which the foot was firmly secured. At a given signal, they placed their feet together, and down the hillside they shot, as though they had wings.

"I never see ski-lobing without thinking of the olden times when the fleet-footed peasants on skis were our only postmen," said Miss Eklund.

"They can go over frozen rivers and hills as straight as a bird flies," said Erik.

"Yes," said Miss Eklund, "when we had no post, the only way a message could be sent in winter, was by these ski-runners. The swiftest runner in a hamlet would start for the nearest village. There he would give the message to another runner to carry on to the next hamlet. It is wonderful how soon they could arouse the whole country.

"Instead of a letter, they carried staffs of wood. If this stick was burned at one end, it meant that a forest was afire. But if a red rag was attached, then the enemy had invaded the land and men were called to arms."

They were almost home now, and as they turned a

corner a rough shed appeared in the corner of a park. Several people were just coming out. "Please, Miss Eklund, may we stop just a minute to see the ice figures?" exclaimed all the children at once.

"You must be quick or we shall be late to supper," replied Miss Eklund, who always enjoyed these beautiful snow pictures as much as the children.

Inside the low shed was the figure of a young mother, with a sad but lovely face, who held a wee baby close in her arms. A fierce wind seemed to swirl her draperies, and she was trying to shelter the tiny creature at her breast, while a little boy was weeping bitterly against her skirts. The group was made of snow and ice, yet so wonderfully moulded were the figures, they looked like pure white marble.

As they went out the door. Miss Eklund slipped a coin into a little box which was placed there to receive money for the poor at Christmas.

"Elsa and Karl must have been out in the country to see their grandmother!" said Sigrid, as a sleigh jingled past. The mother and two children were cosily packed in front. The driver stood on a little platform built in the rear. A white

net with a wide border of tassels covered the back of the horse and the dasher of the sleigh.

"Father!" burst out Erik, as he came in from the cold, "we did have the best time. Little Anders can skate as well as the rest of us now."

"Well," replied Major Lund, "you certainly look as though you had enjoyed yourself. But somebody will lose his porridge if he is not ready for supper soon."

The family gathered about the table. Before they began, the father turned to his oldest child and said, "Erik, I believe it is your turn to say grace tonight. Sigrid said it yesterday."

Every one stood while the boy solemnly bowed his head and said the simple words. Oh, they were so hungry! Didn't their supper of rice porridge, flat rye bread, pancakes and milk taste good! The three children sat very quietly at the table and ate all the food that was served them. Not a spoonful of porridge or a crumb of rye bread was left.

Perhaps you never saw Swedish flat bread. Even the king's family eat these big brown cakes, which are as much as a foot across, and look like a thin, crisp cookie. They

have a large hole in the centre. In the farmers' houses, they run a long pole through this hole, and hang their bread from the ceiling.

When the meal was over, each child rose and shook hands with the father and mother and said, "Tack for matin," or as we should say, "Thanks for food." Then the parents thanked each other. So many thanks may seem very strange to you, but it is an old and beautiful custom in Sweden.

"I am glad my little girl had such a happy afternoon," said Mrs. Lund as she sat embroidering with her daughter beside her. "But there will be very little time for skating, during the next few days. Christmas will be here before we know it, and you can help me about many small things."

"Mother, may I go with you to the Christmas market this year? You know I was sick and could not go last year," said Sigrid.

"I remember, Sigrid," replied her mother. "You must go to bed now, and we will plan about it in the morning."

CHAPTER II
The Knitting Lesson

"Won't mother be surprised, Miss Eklund, when she finds out how fast I have learned to knit?" said Sigrid.

"Yes, I am sure she will be much pleased," replied Miss Eklund.

Sigrid was very soberly knitting a red worsted square, while her governess sat near to help her when the little steel needles behaved badly. It was Sigrid's first piece of knitting, so she was flushed and eager over her task.

The morning sun poured through the window on a pretty picture. Against the heavy dark wooden chair, Sigrid's pale gold hair shone and glistened. It was brushed back very tight and trim, for that is the way Swedish mothers think little girls should wear their hair. The two smooth braids were fastened with a broad blue ribbon. Over

her plain dark blue woolen dress, she wore a blue and white checked gingham apron. Except for the aprons which she always wore, Sigrid's dresses were much like those of her little American cousin, only they were very plain and simple. She did not have any rings, or bracelets or necklaces. That was not because she did not love the pretty trinkets. Oh, no. But she must wait till she is older.

The nursery where they were sitting was a large comfortable room with a huge porcelain stove which filled all one corner of the room and reached way to the ceiling. It was made of shiny green tiles, the colour of the walls of the room, and down in the front were two large brass doors, behind which was the fire.

This was the only kind of stove that Sigrid had ever seen, so she never thought that it was queer.

I must not forget to tell you about the odd decoration of the nursery windows. After the fashion of all Swedish windows, they swung out from the middle like doors. When the cold winter months came, on went double windows. Though Sigrid was the healthiest child in the world, she never knew what it was like to open a window in winter

and let the fresh, pure air blow in, for all around the inside of the frame were neatly pasted narrow strips of paper. You buy these strips at the store with mucilage on the back like a postage stamp. In the little narrow space between the two windows, Sigrid's mother had planted bright green mosses and gray lichens with tiny red cups. A little wooden house and several painted wooden men and women were placed in this miniature park, that kept green all winter. Sigrid liked her window better than any in the house, for all the others had only the mosses and coloured berries.

"Before many months, I believe you will be able to knit a pair of stockings," said Miss Eklund, as she watched her industrious pupil.

"Did you have to make all your stockings when you were a little girl?" said Sigrid.

"Yes, indeed. I was smaller than you are when I began to learn to knit, for my father was a poor farmer and there was a large family of us. The first thing I ever made was a cozy for a coffee-urn, just as you are doing," said Miss Eklund.

"Oh, tell me what you used to do when you were a little

girl. Did you learn your lessons at home as Anders and I do?" asked Sigrid.

"It was very different when I was your age, for we lived way out in the country in a big red farmhouse, and our nearest neighbour was two miles away. We lived in the far north, so that when the winter days were only a few hours long, I could not go to school, but I learned a great deal at home. During the long evenings, father and my big brothers could not see to work on the farm or cut timber, so we would all sit together in the living-room with its huge open fire. Father made mother's chairs or a cradle for the baby, or whittled tools for the farm. Brother Olaf carved wooden platters and spoons with wonderful animals and figures. Then in the spring-time he would sell these things in the city markets.

"Mother used to spin and weave our warm clothes, and she taught me how to do all these things, besides sewing and embroidering. Sometimes, father would tell us the same old sagas that you children love to hear."

"Did you have to study catechism, too?"

Sigrid's rosy face looked quite solemn at the thought, for

every day she had to learn a portion of the catechism, and also Bible history. She loved the stories of David and Saul and Daniel in the lions' den, but the catechism! Oh, that was very, very hard for a little girl!

"All little Swedish girls must learn their catechism, Sigrid, and my father was even more strict than your good parents," replied Miss Eklund.

"Elsa's big sister, who went to England last year, says that English children do not have to learn to knit and sew and embroider just as they learn their geography and spelling. Why do I have to learn to do these things, when my father could buy them for me?" asked Sigrid.

Just then, Sigrid dropped a stitch in her knitting, and had to unravel two rows before Miss Eklund could reply.

"Even though your mother lived in a beautiful house and her father was very rich, she also learned to knit and sew and crochet. You must know how to do these things so you will be able to take care of your own home when you grow up. But it is time for dinner now and I hear your mother's callers going. Make haste and put your knitting away lest she see her present."

Every morning, Sigrid had an early breakfast with her brother Erik, who went to a private school. He was studying very hard to go to the university at Upsala. Then she must study her lessons and learn many of the same things which her governess had been taught in the long winter months on the farm. And after that came her gymnastic exercises every day, as much a lesson as her reading and spelling.

"Erik," called Sigrid, after dinner, as her brother walked past the nursery. Though he was only three years older than his sister, he was a tall, sturdy boy, and Sigrid felt very proud of him. She beckoned him to a quiet corner where they could whisper unobserved.

"I have a surprise for mother. Miss Eklund has taught me to knit, and mother does not know yet. If I can get it finished, it is going to be a cozy for Christmas."

"That's fine," said Erik, "but you wait till I show you something which I learned to make in my sloyd class at school." Erik glanced around cautiously. Nobody was in sight, so he drew a carved tray from his school-bag.

"Oh, it's beautiful!" and Sigrid clapped her hands with glee. "How could you make it? Why, it is just like an old

Viking ship with the dragon's head peering at you from the prow. And you have made the sides like the scales of some strange monster. Mother will be so delighted.

"It must be splendid to be a big boy and go to your school," continued Sigrid. "You do such interesting things. I wish that I could go on a school journey with my teacher for two or three days and see some of our wonderful old castles, as you do. Mother says perhaps Miss Eklund and I may go with her and father when they go through the Göta Canal to Göteborg, next summer, to visit Aunt Frederika. That will be better than a school journey."

"But, Sigrid, there are many wonderful things to see right here in our own beautiful Stockholm," said Erik. "Many school-children come here every spring with their teachers."

"Some time you promised you would tell me an old saga about Stockholm before there was any city here," said Sigrid.

"Oh, you mean about King Agne," said Erik. "Once father pointed out to me the place where he was supposed to have landed with his ships, so I always like that story."

"Yes, yes, that is the one. Do tell me," said Sigrid.

Erik loved to tell his little sister these stories that he had often heard from his mother and father, so he did not need to be urged.

"Many hundred years ago, when the bold Vikings sailed out from our harbours and conquered far and wide. King Agne ruled in Upsala. Where our city is to-day, was only a group of green wooded islands with a few huts. Late in the summer. King Agne came sailing in from the Baltic, and dropped anchor near the large island, where the king's palace is to-day."

"Why, I can see that from mother's window," said Sigrid.

"Yes, we are so high up from the water, we can easily see the island. These old Viking kings often went on voyages of conquest along our shores. Way off to the east. King Agne had warred against King Froste of Finland and slain him. Then the victor plundered the country and sailed over here with much booty. He had taken captive the king's beautiful daughter Skialf, his son Loge, and many others.

"King Agne was exultant over his victory and he wanted to make the Princess Skialf his bride. So he said to his

henchmen:

"'Let a spacious tent be erected beneath that fine oak-tree on yonder tongue of land. Then let my swiftest runners carry staffs of invitation to all the chieftains round about and bid them gather at a royal feast to celebrate the wedding of King Agne and the fair Princess Skialf. Command them that they bring a goodly store of meat and drink for the feast.'"

"Miss Eklund told us about the messengers' staffs when we went skating, so I know about them," interrupted Sigrid.

"These sticks were burned at one end, with a noose at the other end. This was a very plain way of telling the chieftains that they would be hanged and their houses burned, if they neglected to send the message on to the next chief.

"So a large number gathered in the huge tent which looked out on the Baltic, where the dragon-prowed ships lay at anchor.

"All this time the poor princess was very unhappy. But she dared not let the king know her fears. She thought and thought how she could escape becoming his bride.

"Finally a plan grew in her mind and she said to the king:

"'O brave and generous king, I beseech you that, before the royal wedding feast, you hold a funeral banquet in honour of my noble sire. My lord, may you give ear to this great favour which a captive maiden begs for her father!'

"The princess prayed so piteously that the heart of the old Viking was melted, and he again commanded:

"'Let the two feasts for my slain enemy and for my wedding be celebrated at the same time!'

"The goodly company gathered around the royal board, and fell to eating and drinking with great zest. The grave-ale was handed around in a huge drinking-horn, and the lusty warriors drank so long and so deep that soon they became boisterous and began to fight among themselves.

"Now the king wore about his neck a long and massive chain of gold. It was so long that it hung way down on his chest. Many other Viking kings had worn this royal treasure.

"In the midst of the carousal, the princess whispered to the king:

"'My lord, have a care for your beautiful gold necklace,

lest you lose it during the revels!'

"'Ah, my lovely bride, you are right. What a prudent and careful wife you will make!' said the king, as he coiled the chain several times around his neck.

"Ere long, the fiery-hearted warriors were so drunk with ale that sleep overcame them, and one by one they fell from their places at the table. As soon as they were soundly slumbering, the princess rose from her place by the king's side. She and the other captives had only pretended to drink. She fastened a ship's rope to the coil of gold about the king's neck and then handed the rope to her brother, who was outside.

"Whist! the men threw the rope over the branch of the huge oak. Up went the tent into the air, and the king was strangled with his own golden chain."

"What a horrible story!" said Sigrid with a shudder. "What became of the princess?"

"Oh, she and the other captives hastened away to the ships and sailed back to Finland. When the Vikings awoke from their heavy sleep, they were wild with rage. But there was nothing to do but to bury the king beneath a great

mound of earth, which the waves long since washed away."

"Ugh! I am glad I did not live in those cruel days, aren't you, Erik?"

But Erik shook his head and laughed. "Just think what fun it would be to sail away in a brave ship, out on the wild ocean where no man had ever been before. Those old Vikings were as strong as giants and feared nothing in the world. I must finish studying my lessons now, but I'll tell you another tale some other time."

CHAPTER III
Yule - Tide

"I'll bring you a gingerbread goat," said Sigrid to little Anders as she started for the Christmas market with her mother.

"Next year you shall go too, my son," said Mrs. Lund. She kissed the little lad, who was trying to look brave because he must stay at home. From the nursery window, he watched them as far as he could see down the long avenue. Behind Sigrid and her mother, a cheery-faced housemaid followed at a respectful distance. She carried a huge market-basket.

"Just think, mother. There are only three days before Christmas. Won't it be jolly to see Grandma and Aunt Frederika and all the cousins?" said Sigrid, who was dancing along beside her mother.

"Yes, indeed. They will all be here by to-morrow night," replied the mother.

"What crowds of people are on the street," said the child, as they wound their way through the good-natured throngs.

"Most of them are bound for the same place that we are," laughed Mrs. Lund, who was rosy-cheeked and flaxen-haired like Sigrid.

"When we come to the big open space at the top of this hill, where all the booths are, you must keep very close to my side, for you might easily lose me."

"I never saw so many little booths before," said Sigrid. I like their white roofs, for they look like snow. Do they always have the Christmas market on this hilltop?"

"Yes, for hundreds of years the peasants have been allowed to build their shelters here and sell their Christmas wares. In some places, for months, the whole family has been carving, knitting, weaving, and sewing all these things that we shall see as we walk along," replied Mrs. Lund.

"I see a booth with lots of little gingerbread pigs and goats. May I buy one for Anders, over there?" asked Sigrid.

"In a minute. But first I must get some of old Brita's knitted caps for some poor children I know."

They halted in front of one of these booths, which have a few rough boards for a roof and a narrow counter. Here was an old peasant woman, so wrapped up in warm clothes that you could scarcely see her pleasant, wrinkled face. A black shawl was tied over her head, and a second dark woolen shawl was crossed over her breast and tied behind. Her petticoats were so heavily wadded that you wondered how she ever walked at all.

"Doesn't she look funny, mother?" whispered Sigrid, who was clinging to her mother's hand.

"Speak low, child!" said Mrs. Lund. "I would not have you hurt the old creature's feelings. It is bitter cold standing here all day. She needs all her warm clothes. As long ago as when I was a child, she came here to sell these garments that she knits and crochets all summer."

"I think that must be King Oscar's sleigh which has just come up the hill," said Sigrid as they turned away from Brita's booth.

"Sure enough. He is making his annual visit to the

Christmas market. Let us stand here and watch him for a minute."

Just then the big Christmas crowd burst into a shout: "Long live King Oscar!"

The white-haired old gentleman, who is so tall and stately that you would notice him anywhere, bowed graciously to his people.

"Would he ask me what I wanted for Christmas, if I stood near him?" asked Sigrid.

"No, he asks only the poor little children who don't look as though they would have a tree at home," replied Mrs. Lund. "Ah, he is talking to that ragged little fellow who watched us buy the accordion for Karl. By and by, his servant will buy a lot of things and give them to the children. He is a kind-hearted man as well as a good king."

"Hear all those birds singing!" exclaimed the child.

"Listen again and see if you cannot tell where they are," said Mrs. Lund.

"Why, I believe they are cuckoo whistles, only I never heard so many all at once," cried Sigrid.

"Suppose we go over and buy two or three," said Mrs.

Lund. They threaded their way to the booth where these cheap little clay birds were so popular.

The buxom maid was loaded with bundles long before Sigrid wanted to go home.

For the next two days, there was a great stir all over the house. Everything that could be washed and scoured was made clean and radiant. All the family were making presents. Oh, such mystery everywhere!

"There, Miss Eklund," said Sigrid. "I have finished the cozy. Now I want some more red sealing-wax. I have helped Anders wrap up his presents, and mine are almost ready."

"Have you fastened on your rhymes?" asked Miss Eklund.

"All except the one for Aunt Frederika's present. I cannot seem to think of a verse for her," was the reply.

"You must be sure and have a pretty verse for your dear aunt, who has come way from Göteborg. Perhaps I can help you later."

Miss Eklund left her little charge labouring with pencil and paper. Sigrid would never think her Christmas gifts complete without a verse for each one.

"Here come father and Erik with the tree!" shouted Anders.

"Isn't this a beauty?" inquired Erik, as he and his father rested for a minute.

"Did you get it in the Christmas market, father? Mother and I saw a whole forest of little Christmas trees there," said Sigrid.

"Yes," replied Major Lund. "I wanted to take you children out in the country and cut it down myself. Sometime, when we have Christmas at grandmother's, that's what we will do. Then you all shall help choose the tree before I cut it.

"No one must go into the parlour now," he continued, as he carried the tree through the doorway. "Mind you, not one peep till to-morrow night." He shook his finger playfully at the children.

"I always like 'Dipping Day,'" said Sigrid, the day before Christmas, to her brother Erik. "It is such fun to eat in the kitchen."

She was waiting for her turn to dip the piece of black bread on her plate, into the kettle of sizzling hot fat. All the

family, the relatives who had come to spend the holidays and the servants, stood about in the clean kitchen, eating the noonday meal. The walls fairly gleamed with copper and brass pans and kettles. Even the brick oven had a fresh coat of whitewash, in honour of the day. Every other little Swedish girl over the land was eating her dinner in the kitchen on that day, just as Sigrid was doing.

In the centre of the room, a long table was loaded with good things to eat. And here was the big kettle in which the Christmas ham and other meats had been cooked.

Later in the afternoon, when the children returned from a brisk walk in the park, they gathered in the nursery for afternoon coffee. How Sigrid loved this coffee-drinking on Christmas Eve! All the grown-up people in Sweden drink a great deal of coffee. But Sigrid was seldom allowed to have it except on a few holidays.

The children could hear the pleasant chatter of the older people, whose coffee was served in the parlour. But they knew what was waiting for them in the nursery.

On the little table there, a plate was prepared for each child with a pyramid of different kinds of bread. Some of

these rolls were in such odd shapes that I am sure you would not call them bread at all. There was black bread, white bread, saffron-coloured bread, some shaped like little men and others like pigs and goats. Of course there were gingerbread men, and even chocolate bread figures.

Each little mound had candy and nuts tucked away in the corners. The kind of candy which Sigrid liked best was done up in a small package with bright paper. Pictures and mottoes were pasted on the outside.

I am afraid you will be getting as impatient for the Christmas tree as Sigrid. But a Swedish Christmas is the most joyous season of the year. And the merrymaking often lasts three weeks. Even the birds are not forgotten, for a sheaf of grain is fastened up in the yard of every country home for their Christmas dinner.

At last, the folding doors of the parlour were opened by invisible hands. There stood the tree ablaze with candles and ornaments, but no presents. For a moment every one was silent for the wonder of it.

Mrs. Lund began to sing the old carol, "Now the Christmas Has Come," and the others joined in.

After Major Lund had read the story of the Babe in the Manger, the children caught hold of hands and danced about the tree.

Round and round they spun. In a wink, the circle broke and the long line of young people went dancing in and out through the rooms of the house.

"Come and join us, father," they shouted. "Come, Aunt Frederika and mother." Soon every one was drawn into the chain, even the servants in the kitchen.

When they were out of breath with laughing, singing, and dancing, they sat round a large table near the tree.

"What is all that noise about?" exclaimed Major Lund. He pretended to be surprised.

"Erik, there seems to be a great to-do outside the door. Open it and see what is wanted."

Erik opened it a crack. In ran a little old man with a long white beard. He wore a rough gray jacket, knee-breeches, and a tall, pointed red cap.

"The Tomt, the Tomt," cried Sigrid.

"Is there any naughty child here, who doesn't deserve a present?" asked the gnome. He hopped about and made a

great deal of noise for a small person.

Anders hid behind his mother's skirt. He was always a little afraid of Tomt, who is much like our Santa Claus.

"No, we haven't any naughty children," replied the father.

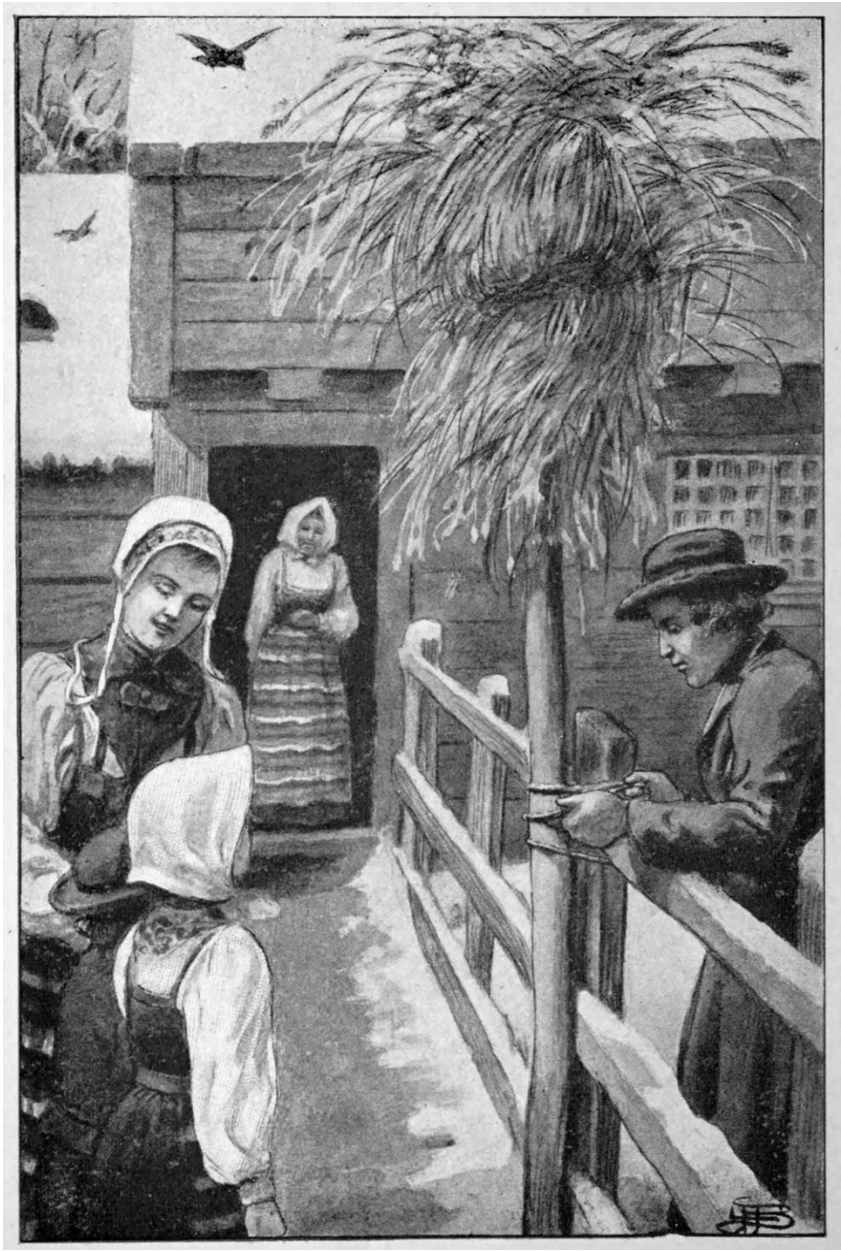
"Then I shall leave some presents from my packet," cried Tomt. He darted out into the hall and came back slowly tugging some large packages. Then he vanished as quickly as he had come.

"Now, Erik, you may bring the baskets and help me give out the presents," said Major Lund.

Beneath the low boughs of the fir-tree were several large baskets, heaped with presents. Major Lund read aloud the verse on each neat package before Erik passed it. Oh, such a heap of presents for each and all! It was quite late in the evening before all the bundles were opened. What a hand-shaking and kissing there was!

"I thought that looked like a foot-pusher when Tomt brought it in," said Sigrid, who shone with happiness over her new treasure.

"How proud I am of my children," said Mrs. Lund, as



“A sheaf of grain is fastened up in the yard of every country home”

Sigrid and Erik were thanking her for their gifts. "I am sure I had no idea you could knit so well. I shall use the cozy for afternoon coffee to-morrow. And the Viking ship tray is really beautiful, Erik."

Little children should have been abed and asleep when the family finally sat down to their supper. But it was Christmas Eve, and nobody minded. Among all the good things that Sigrid ate that night, I must tell you about two dishes that every Swedish girl eats for her Christmas supper; lut-fisk and rice porridge. The big bowl of porridge had a crisscrossing of powdered cinnamon over the top. Inside was one almond. The person who found it would be the next one in the family to be married.

For weeks, the Christmas lut-fisk, a kind of fish, had soaked in lye. Then it was cooked a long time. Whenever Sigrid lifted a portion on her fork, it fell apart in delicate flakes that were quite transparent.

"We must not forget to put out a dish of porridge and milk for Tomt when he comes back in the night," said Erik, as the children were getting ready for bed.

"I'll bring Anders' little chair from the nursery, because

it is so low Tomt can reach up to it," said Sigrid. "If I put it beside the kitchen door, I am sure he will see it when he comes in."

Early the next morning, oh, very, very early, Anders crept down-stairs to see if Tomt had been there.

"He drank all the milk and ate most of the porridge!" cried Anders, in great excitement. Then he ran back to let Miss Eklund finish dressing him.

"It seems more like night than morning," exclaimed Erik. It was not six o'clock, but the children were starting for church. Indeed, it could not have been blacker at midnight. But in almost every window that they passed two candles burned brightly. When they returned for their breakfast, after the joyous Christmas service, the sun had not yet risen.

For days the festivities continued.

"Please, mother, may we keep the tree till Knut's Day?" begged Anders on New Year's afternoon. The candles had been relighted on the tree for a party for some poor children. The last happy child had gone home, loaded with goodies.

Mrs. Lund consented. But even Knut's Day, the thirteenth of January, came all too soon. Then the children helped to "rob the tree" as the Swedes say when they take off its pretty trinkets. They looked very solemn as one of the maids carried the tree into the back-yard.

"Now Christmas is really over!" mourned Erik, "and school begins to-morrow."

CHAPTER IV
At Grandmother's

"Pera, you do remember me, don't you? Oh, you nice old dog!" Anders threw his arms around the neck of a small shaggy yellow dog that was wriggling almost out of his skin with joy. You could not have told which was the happier, the dog or the boy.

"Just think! I haven't seen you for six months, Pera!" The two playmates romped across grandmother's lawn to the porch, where Erik was sitting on the steps with a tennis racket, waiting for his father.

"Sigrid has been hunting everywhere for you, Anders," said Erik.

"Here you are," exclaimed Sigrid a minute later, as she spied Anders. "Larsson says there is a baby calf over in the barn, and he will show it to us if we will go now."

Anders jumped up quickly, and followed by the dog, the children ran toward the group of barns and stables, at some distance from the house.

"Look at all those wild strawberries in this field," said Anders.

"I had forgotten that it was time for them. I must ask grandmother if we can pick all we want," said Sigrid.

"I want to see father's new sailboat. Have you been down to the lake yet?" asked Anders.

"No," said Sigrid. Let's go around and see everything. Mother says we shall stay all summer, because poor grandmother is so old and feeble she doesn't like to leave her. Larsson, Larsson, where are you?"

The old farmer, who had taken care of the grounds and farm for many years, hobbled out to the barn door to welcome the children and to show them the new calf, the little pigs, and the chickens.

No place in the world is quite so interesting as grandmother's old house, whether you are a Swedish or an American girl.

Sigrid's grandmother lived in a fine old house on a

hilltop which overlooked Lake Malar. It was only a short journey of two or three hours from Stockholm, yet it was quite out in the country, several miles from any village. As you drove through the avenue of huge beech-trees, you would be curious to know why so many small, low-lying buildings were grouped near the house. They were placed to form three sides of a square, after the fashion of many Swedish country places.

Off in the distance were the barns, which the children visited, and another group of red cottages, where the farm-helpers and their families lived. These people lived in a little world by themselves, with everything they needed right on the grounds. If Mrs. Lund wished fish for dinner, she could not send a maid to market to buy a live fish from a tank of water, as she did in Stockholm. Instead, one of the servants caught the fish in the lake, or she ordered smoked fish from the storehouse.

On each side of the family residence were houses for the servants. Some of the small separate sheds were used for washing, baking, tools, and provisions. But you would enjoy a peep into some of these buildings with the children.

"The new sailboat was anchored at the wharf near the bath-house. Father has promised to teach Erik how to sail this summer," said Sigrid. They were clinging to the wharf railing, so that they could get a glimpse of the little cabin, with its two bunks and red cushions. "I am glad you learned to swim last summer, for now we can have such sport when Karin and Elsa get here."

Sigrid had learned to swim when she was very small. Look in your geography and you will see that almost one-tenth of the whole surface of Sweden is covered with lakes and rivers. There is water, water everywhere. Just fancy how miserable a Swedish mother would be if her little daughter could not swim!

The door of the storehouse stood open when the children climbed the hill from the lake, so they slipped in after Svea. On the outside, it was just a mound of grassy earth, with a door cut in the grass, but no windows.

"Isn't it cool in here!" exclaimed Anders. "Svea, aren't you going to skim the milk?"

"Later in the day, Anders," said the maid, who held her lantern up over her head while she hunted for the sausages.

From above, hung long strings of sausages, smoked hams, and fish. In the dim light of the lantern, the children could see the big round cheeses and the bins of potatoes. The pans of milk were set to cool in another room of this queer storehouse.

"I wish you would give us some lingon jam," said Sigrid. "The kind we had last year, Svea."

"Wait till I open a new jar. Now, run ahead, for I want to lock the door," replied Svea. She had not forgotten how the children had teased her the summer before for their favourite jam of red Swedish berries.

"Next week will be the time for washing. Perhaps mother will let us ride down to the lake when the clothes are carried there," said Sigrid. She tried to lift herself up on the window-sill to look into the wash-house, where the huge copper kettle was ready to boil the clothes, but she was not tall enough.

"Never mind," she said. "We can get into the bake-house, I am sure. Sometime, Svea says, I may help her bake bread. It must be almost time now, for she hasn't made any for several months."

In the city, Sigrid's mother bought her rye bread from a baker, but grandmother had her bread baked three or four times a year in this little house. Most of the room was filled by the huge stone fireplace, which was heated to a high temperature. Then the coals were raked off and the rye bread cooked on the hot stones.

"What does she do with this flat round piece of wood with a short handle?" asked Anders, who was exploring.

"Oh," said Sigrid, "it is a great lark to watch her. She rolls out the batter quite thin, and slips that wooden shovel beneath each cake. Then she takes this other wooden spade with a long handle, shakes the cake from the little spade to that one, and thrusts it on the hot stones. Svea does it very quickly, but she laughed when I asked if it was hard, so I don't believe it is as easy as it looks."

"Don't you think it is time for dinner? I am so hungry," said Anders.

"Guess what we are going to have to-day," said Sigrid.

"Pancakes and jelly," Anders replied promptly.

"No, sour milk, with powdered ginger on top."

"Let's run, then," said Anders, because I don't want to

be late and have father say I cannot have any."

But they arrived in season and ate their full share of the white curds, which they always enjoyed.

Inside of the old house, you would be amazed at the size of the rooms. Though they were simply furnished, there was much choice old carved furniture, lovely plants, and vines, so that the rooms were very cheery.

The floors were scrubbed beautifully clean and covered with rugs. Everywhere was exquisite order and neatness.

As in the city home, the children had a large nursery, where they always played during the little time they were indoors. A trapeze hung between the nursery and an adjoining room; a large cushion rested beneath. On rainy days, the children hung from this indoor swing and climbed the ropes like young monkeys.

"One, two, three, four, five," counted Sigrid, as she sat on the porch a few days after their arrival. "Why, are all those old women going to help with the washing to-morrow, mother?"

"Yes; we shall need them all. Larsson has arranged for them to sleep at some of the servants' houses, so they will

be ready to begin very early in the morning."

The queer procession of old women, with coloured kerchiefs tied over their heads, slowly filed down the road. Long before the children were awake the next morning, a fire had been lighted in the wash-house beneath the monster kettle, and the women were at work.

Wasn't that a lively week, though! Sigrid's mother was an excellent housekeeper, but she never had all the clothes and linen of the family washed but three times a year! Such scores and scores of garments went into that copper kettle —enough to clothe a whole village. Even if her family had been quite poor, Sigrid would still have had many more dresses and aprons than her American cousin.

By the time the oxen were harnessed to a long, low wagon with latticed sides, Sigrid and Anders were ready to climb in and ride to the lake with the old women and the tubs of clothes which had boiled in the kettle.

As soon as they arrived at a clean, sandy beach near the wharf, the children hopped out of the wagon.

"Let's sit in the rowboat at the end of the wharf," said Anders. Then we can play we are pirates and watch the

women on the shore."

The washerwomen took off their shoes and stockings, pinned up their skirts, and waded into the water. Then there was such a splashing and rinsing of clothes, and bobbing of kerchiefed heads, and swinging of long arms!

"They are bad children. We must beat them very hard," one wrinkled old woman explained to Anders. She had carried her pile of dripping clothes from the water's edge to a big stone, where she pounded them with a flat wooden beater. "But they will be as white as a lily when I am done."

Later all the garden bushes were spread with garments. You needed only to half-close your eyes to fancy a summer snow-squall had whitened the green grass over a large area.

"Everything in the house will be fresh and sweet for Midsummer's Day," sighed Mrs. Lund, when the last washerwoman had returned to the country district where she lived.



Baking Rye Bread at Grandmother's

CHAPTER V
Midsummer's Eve

"It looks more like the mast of one of the big ships in the harbour than anything else," said Erik. He and his father were standing beside the huge May-pole which lay flat on the green grass in grandmother's front lawn. Nearby several men were hammering away on a large wooden platform, in the centre of which the pole was to be hoisted.

"Yes, my son, I have often thought so. This pole is not more than fifty feet high. I have seen them twice as tall. But if we are going to cover all these cross-bars with birch boughs and wreaths, we must hitch up old Maja and drive into the woods soon."

"Indeed, you must," said Mrs. Lund, as she hurried across the lawn with a huge wreath of daisies over her arm and a basket of nodding bluebells. You will find us under that clump of beeches, making our wreaths, when you

return. Oh! there is plenty for every one to do before the pole is trimmed for tonight."

"Mother, you do make wreaths so fast," said Sigrid. She was sitting in the midst of a group of friends and relatives, who had gathered at grandmother's to celebrate Midsummer's Eve and the day following. As she talked, she sorted daisies, or "priests'-ruffs," as she called them, into bunches for her mother.

"Just hand me a clump of those white daisies, so I can tie their long stems to this rope, and you will soon see how I do it," said Mrs. Lund.

"To-night will be the longest of the whole year," said Miss Eklund, while her fingers plaited birch leaves. "How I love these long days of sunshine! Why, last night I read in my room without a lamp till almost eleven o'clock!"

"Please tell Karin and me about how you made pancakes on Midsummer's Eve when you were a little girl, Miss Eklund," begged Sigrid, who, with her cousin, was sitting near the governess.

"Oh! the young girls out in the country where I used to live will have a merry time of it to-night. I wonder if they

still make pancakes. I was about sixteen years old the night I tried it with two other girls, for the charm would not work unless there were three. Together we took the bowl from the cupboard, beat the eggs, and added the flour. All three of us stirred it at once and threw in the salt at the same time. Of course, we got in too much salt. Not one of us must speak or laugh the whole time. That was the hardest of all. Dear me, I hadn't thought of that night for years," Miss Eklund delayed her tale to laugh as heartily as if she was making up for lost time.

"After we had poured out the batter and cooked it, each of us ate a third of the very salty cake. But we couldn't drink before we went to bed. During our dreams, the older girls told us that a young man would appear to each of us and offer us a glass of water."

Karin interrupted the story by exclaiming, "What is that coming down the road? I believe it is the boys with our green boughs. Old Maja doesn't look as though he liked those branches thrust behind his ears. Why, the wagon is all one bower of birch-trees!" As the wagon drove into the yard, Erik spied his newly-arrived cousin and sung out:

"There once was little Karin,
Who at the royal hall
Among the handmaids serving
The fairest was of all.

"Then spoke the King, 'Fair Karin,
Wilt thou my sweetheart be?
My horse and golden saddle
I'll straightway give to thee.'"

The children all laughed merrily at the new turn to the familiar old song.

"How pretty we shall make the Maypole!" exclaimed Sigrid.

She called it a "May-pole," though it was the middle of June. The Swedish word for "May" means green leaf. And a green-leaf pole it certainly was when they had draped the cross-bars with leaves and garlands and added scores of the yellow and blue flags of Sweden.

Toward the close of the afternoon, the pole in its gala-dress was swung into place by means of huge ropes. Then a

great shout went up from the little crowd of relatives and working people who lived on the grounds.

"Strike up a dance, Per," cried Major Lund to the fiddler. In a twinkling, the children had caught hold of hands and were dancing around the pole. Old and young, servants and all, shared in the merrymaking.

As Sigrid ran about in a gay costume, you would scarcely have recognized her. Instead of her plain city clothes, she wore a pretty peasant dress. Many fashionable Swedish mammas let their children wear this dress on holidays in the country. Over her dark blue woolen skirt, Sigrid wore a bright apron, striped in red, blue, yellow, black, and white. The waist was white, with a red silk bodice and shoulder-straps. An embroidered kerchief was folded quaintly about her throat. On her yellow braids rested a tall pointed blue cap, with red pipings and tassels in back. Several other little girls at the dance wore similar dresses.

"Erik," said Sigrid, quite late in the evening, as the fiddler stopped to tune up for the next dance, "several times to-night I have seen some one over by the well-sweep. I thought perhaps he was one of the farmers' children. But

he hides there as though he was afraid to come out."

"Suppose we go over and speak to him," said Erik.

When they reached the well-sweep, no one was there.

"I know that I saw him only a minute ago. There, I think he is behind that elm-tree. You run this side and I will go the other," said Sigrid.

All escape was cut off this time, and Erik dragged the cowering child from his hiding-place.

"If he isn't a chimney-sweep!" exclaimed Erik when he saw the boy away from the shadow of the tree.

"You needn't be afraid of us, little boy," said Sigrid, kindly. "You can't help it because you have to go down into the chimneys and your face is always black with soot. Don't you want something to eat?"

The sooty youngster grinned and shifted his coil of rope from one shoulder to the other. He managed to murmur, "Thank you." Sigrid ran ahead to the kitchen to get some salt herring, rye bread, and coffee. The little sweep left his long broom and rope on the grass, and began to eat greedily.

"Aren't you ever afraid to go down inside of a pitch-black chimney?" asked Sigrid. Her interest in the dances

had waned for a few minutes, for she had never talked with one of these forlorn little creatures before.

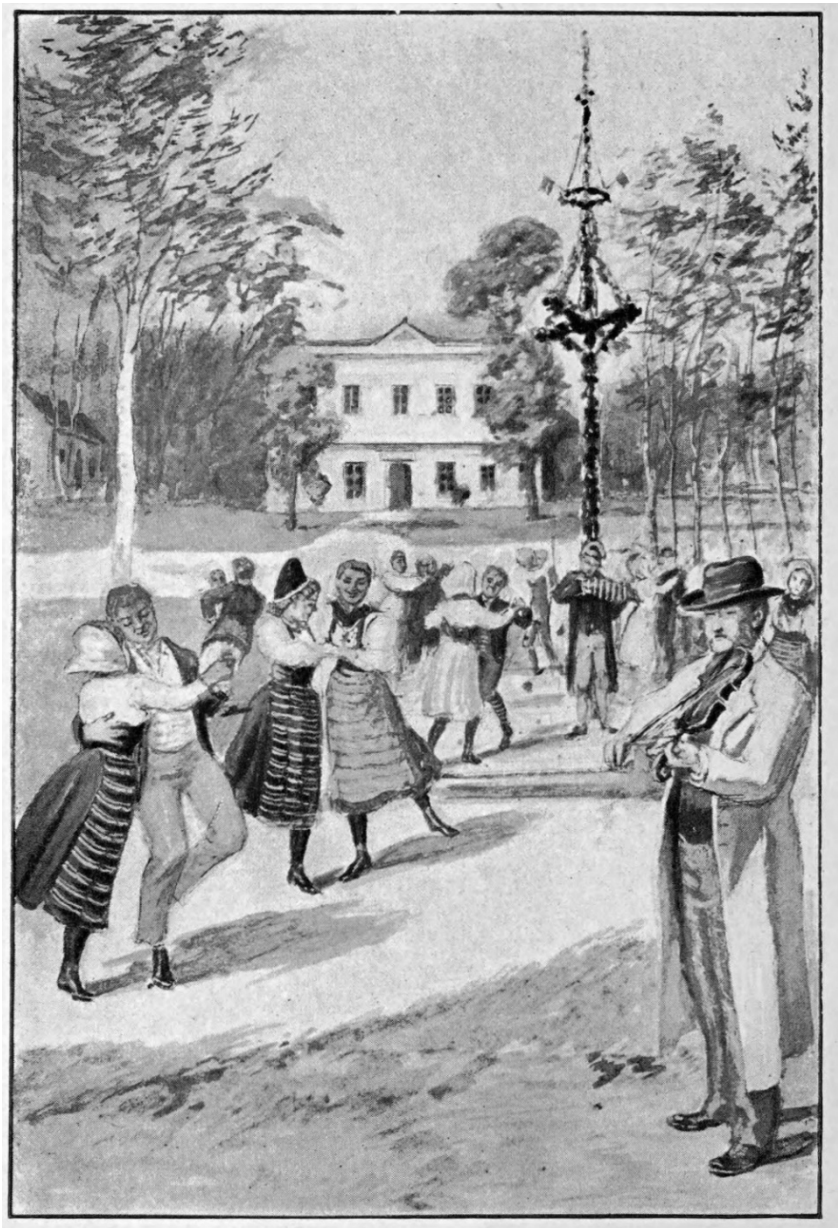
The boy shook his head in reply. He was too busy with his salt herring to waste any words.

"I am going to ask mother if she will let him stay here all night," said Sigrid. She did not know that this outcast, who was so shy with her, could take very good care of himself. All summer, he wandered through the country, cleaning chimneys. At night, he slept in strange barns or haymows and was very happy and comfortable.

Mrs. Lund talked to the lad and told him that he could spend the night in one of the outhouses. The next day was a holiday and no one would want a chimney swept.

Sigrid's tender heart was at ease again, and she returned to the dancers. The older people stayed up far into the bright night, but the children soon went to bed. From her chamber window, Sigrid could see the huge bonfires on the hillsides far away. The witches are abroad on Midsummer's Eve, and these fires drive them away.

Every one goes to church on Midsummer's Day, which is also called St. John's Day. So the next morning, the Lund



"In a twinkling, the children . . . were dancing around the pole"

family drove several miles to a little country church. Before they started, Sigrid went to find the sweep. But the little wanderer had started on his travels again.

"Larsson says all the school-children will sing carols this morning," said Mrs. Lund. "I am sure we shall have a beautiful service."

As they drove along the road, they met many country people on their way to church. The women all carried their hymn-books wrapped neatly in a silk handkerchief.

"Why do the men all sit on one side and the women on the other?" whispered Anders. His family sat in a little gallery of the church.

Down below, the altar and the square box pews with doors were banked with lilacs.

"Hush, dear," replied his mother. "You must remember the country people are used to it, so it is not strange to them."

The ride home and the noonday meal seemed endless. As soon as ever they had thanked their parents for their food, the children were out-of-doors again. A big wagon, trimmed with birches and filled with hay, was ready at the

door. Midsummer's Day without a picnic in the woods is almost as bad as Christmas without presents.

"Don't forget the nets for the crayfish, Erik," said Major Lund, who was stowing away luncheon baskets in the wagon.

"They are in all right, father. The big kettle in which to boil them and the coffee-pot are under the seat," said Erik.

Even a plain every-day picnic, where you eat sandwiches and cakes under a tree, is fun. But on this picnic, the children were going to help catch crayfish, which look like small lobsters. Then they were planning to cook them over a camp-fire.

The last child nestled into the hay and they were off.

CHAPTER VI
A Visit to Skansen

"I want to see the Lapps and the reindeer. Aren't we almost there?" said Anders to his mother.

"Yes, little son, we are nearly at the top of the hill," replied Mrs. Lund.

The Lund family were on their way to Skansen, a famous park near Stockholm. Soon the car stopped and every one scrambled out.

"We are so high up that we can see the harbour," said Erik, as he trudged along beside his sister with one of the luncheon baskets hung over his arm. At their feet lay the city of islands with its ribbon-like canals of blue. Away on the horizon, the water of the bay sparkled in the sun, like a huge amethyst. The children halted a minute to look back on the fair scene.

"Out there the Vikings sailed away to new lands," said

Erik, who was never weary of dreaming about the heroes of the old sagas.

"Hurry up, children," called Mrs. Lund. "We have too much before us to see, to spend time looking back."

Through the entrance gate, they passed into a grove of pines and birches, with winding roads. Among the trees were many wild animals in pens, and queer houses and buildings, such as the children had never seen in the city or at grandmother's. Every few steps, they met a soldier with a helmet and shield, or a brightly dressed peasant. You would think you had come to a foreign country, and so did Sigrid.

As they turned a bend in the road, they saw a low cottage of hewn timber. It was painted red and had a hood over the door. In the yard was a wagon that might have been made by sawing a huge wooden cask from top to bottom, and then placing one half on wheels.

"I never saw such a funny cart," said Anders.

"It is odd," replied his father. "A long time ago, people used to ride in a wagon like that. Suppose we go over and look at that house."

"You don't know the people who live there, do you, father?" enquired Sigrid.

"No, my daughter," he replied. "But all these people are accustomed to visitors. You see, a few years ago, there lived a wise man named Artur Hazelius, who loved his country very dearly. He travelled from the fields and glaciers where the Lapps live to the fertile fields of Skäne, in the south.

"Something troubled him very much. He cared a great deal for the queer old homes which he saw in out-of-the-way villages. No one makes such houses to-day. He knew they would soon be destroyed.

"Then he was sorry that only a few peasants still wear their old gay costumes.

"So he said to himself, 'I will go to the king and ask him to give me a large park. There I will fetch some of these houses. Our children will not have to read in books about the way their great-grandfathers lived. They shall visit the very houses they lived in.'"

"How could he bring a whole house here?" asked Erik.

"That was hard sometimes," Major Lund replied. "Often they pulled down a house, brought the timber here, and set

it up as it was before. Then he had people come here and wear the same clothes and live in the same way they did in the olden times. Nowhere in the world is there a park like this."

"See that little girl with a kerchief over her head, peeping at us from the window," said Anders.

A moment later, a smiling peasant woman came to the door. She made a curtsey and invited them to enter.

"Why, I can scarcely see at all," said Sigrid.

The big living-room was lighted by the tiniest little window. The two sleeping-rooms were also as dark as your pocket, and very small. Hemlock tips were strewn over the clean floor. From the ceiling hung a pole of flat rye bread.

"You dear baby!" exclaimed Sigrid's mother, for she had discovered a small canvas hammock hung in a dark corner. The baby was asleep in its hanging nest.

"She is a very good child and lies there all day by herself," said the baby's mother.

"They never can move their beds at all," said Sigrid, who was making a tour about the room. She peered curiously between some striped hand-woven curtains which hung in

front of a wooden bed, built into the house. Similar beds lined the walls.

"Many of the peasants use that kind of bed," said Major Lund. "Once, when I was in Lapland, I slept in a big drawer."

"Was that the time that you were snowed in and you climbed out through the chimney to dig a path?" asked Erik.

"Yes, that was the same time," said his father.

"I should think you would have smothered in the drawer," said Anders, who had been very quiet.

"There was no danger of that," replied Major Lund. "All around the rooms were wooden sofas. At night, you pulled out a big drawer beneath the seat. The drawer was filled with hay, and over that you spread blankets."

Mrs. Lund talked to the peasant woman while the children continued to look about. A huge fireplace filled one corner of the room. On a low brick platform that came out into the room, the fire was built.

Across another corner a rope was stretched. Over it hung dresses and coats.

"What do they do that for?" whispered Sigrid to her mother.

"They haven't any closet for their dresses except that," replied Mrs. Lund.

For a moment or two, after they came out of the gloomy interior, the sun was dazzling. They ate dinner under some pine-trees, and then kept on through the woods.

"We haven't time to visit all these houses. But you would like to see the hut half-buried in the ground. The herdsmen live in such places in summer while they are tending their cattle. And we won't forget the Lapps, Anders," said the father, gently tweaking his son's ear.

"Who are all those people in that carriage?" asked Mrs. Lund.

"I had almost forgotten that this is Bellman's day. Those people live here. They always dress in the costume of the time of our beloved poet on his anniversary day."

An old carryall drove slowly past. Within were several men dressed in black velvet coats and knee-breeches, white wigs, and three-cornered hats.

"Later in the day, we will walk over to Bellman's statue,

where I am sure we shall find many people."

"I see the reindeer," exclaimed Anders. "There they are on those high rocks."

Before them stretched the group of Laplander tents of birch poles covered with canvas.

"That dark-skinned girl playing with the dog looks about my age. I wonder what she does with the wooden spoon which hangs from her belt," said Sigrid.

"Go and ask her, if you like," said Mrs. Lund. "I don't believe that she will understand you. That tent has the flap turned back. Do you see that flat stone in the centre? Her dinner is cooked in a big kettle on that stone. When the meal is ready, she will dip her ladle into the kettle for her share."

"Over yonder is the summer-house of our famous seer, Swedenborg. It used to be in his garden in Stockholm, and there he worked and wrote," said Major Lund, nodding in the direction of a neat pavilion.

"We have just time before the dances to see the people who are celebrating Bellman's day," said Mrs. Lund.

Wreaths and flowers decked the bronze bust of the poet.

At the foot of the pedestal a man was reciting, and the crowd was very quiet.

"How he loved to come here and lie out in the warm sun and sing those same songs that man is reciting!" said Major Lund. They lingered only a few minutes.

"This is what I like," said Sigrid, with an air of great content. She and her brothers had hurried ahead of their parents. They sat watching some lively dancing on a large platform.

"They have begun 'Weaving Homespun,'" said Erik, as the fiddler and accordion player struck up a quaint air.

The peasants faced each other in two lines. Then the men and maidens wove in and out in the figures of the dance. "Like weaving on an old loom," Erik explained to Sigrid.

"I wish I could have a red dress and a stiff white cap with pointed ears," said Sigrid, who could not keep her eyes away from one of the dancers.

"The crown princess also admires that dress," said Mrs. Lund. "She requires all her maids of honour to wear it, in the forenoon, at Tullgarn. I am sure it is so pretty, I don't

believe they mind at all."

"No two of those girls are dressed alike," continued Sigrid, who was still interested in costumes.

"That is because each maid wears the peasant dress of one of the provinces of Sweden, and there are many provinces. One of those Dalecarlian girls has a dress like the one you wore on Midsummer's Eve. In that part of the country, the girls wear their bright aprons and kerchiefs more than anywhere else in Sweden."

"Why, where is Anders?" asked Major Lund. He had been chatting with an old friend and had just returned to his family.

Sure enough, the lad had disappeared. The crowd had pressed in close about the platform. Every one was so pleased with these old folk-dances, that they had forgotten the child.

"Do you suppose he has gone back to look at the seals or the polar bears?" asked Erik.

It was sometime before Major Lund returned from his hunt. But Anders was with him.

"Where do you think I found the rogue?" asked Major

Lund. "He was drinking raspberry juice with a nice old lady who thought he was lost. Do you know what happens to little boys who run away?"

Major Lund looked very stern. But the mother was so glad to find the child that I don't believe anything did happen.

CHAPTER VII
Through the Göta Canal

The gong clanged. The big steamer churned the water into foamy suds as it left the wharf at Stockholm. Sigrid and her father and mother waved their handkerchiefs to the friends on shore as long as they could see them.

"Let us find seats in the bow of the boat, where we shall have a good view of the canal," said Mrs. Lund.

"I never was in such a large boat before. It is just like a house," cried Sigrid, who was much excited.

"Wait till you see the small state-room with the red plush sofas that turn down at night for a bed," said Major Lund. "We must leave all these posies there before we come on deck again."

All three of them had their arms full of flowers which their friends had brought them.

"How long will it take us to get to Aunt Frederika's

house, father?"

"Nearly three days. You will enjoy the trip, Sigrid. We are to cross the whole of Sweden. But we shall see beautiful country and many old castles before we reach Göteborg. You won't have to stay on the steamer all the time, for we shall often get off at the locks and wander through old towns."

"Wherever shall we sleep?" Mrs. Lund asked with a smile. The great mass of flowers almost filled the tiniest room you ever saw. They finally had to throw some of them away when they went to bed.

"I wish Erik and Anders could have come too," said Mrs. Lund when they were on deck again. She almost never took a journey without her whole family.

"Grandmother would be very lonely if we were all gone. Our two weeks' trip will soon be over!" replied her husband.

"Father," said Sigrid, a few hours later, "sometimes the canal is not much wider than the boat. Why, it seems just as if we were riding on top of the land instead of the water."

"Yes, I know what you mean." Major Lund was amused at the child's distress of mind. "We shall go through several

places in the canal, so narrow that trees on opposite banks arch over the boat. But when we reach the big lakes you will think we are at sea. Sometimes they are so broad, you cannot see the shore."

"I thought it was the Göta Canal all the way," said Sigrid.

"So it is," replied her father. "But that is like a family name for wide rivers, big lakes, and little short canals that all join hands to make a waterway across the country."

Long before bedtime, Sigrid felt quite at home in her new quarters. After supper, she again sat on deck with her parents.

Suddenly, they heard a sharp cry. "Oh, Isabella, you will drown! Can't you get her, father? What shall I do! Oh! Oh!"

Several people hastened to the side of the boat where the cry rose. A pretty child was weeping bitterly, while her father was trying to comfort her.

"She has only lost her doll in the water, madam," explained the gentleman to Mrs. Lund, who was eager to help. He spoke in English.

"What did he say?" asked Sigrid, who was too far off to hear.

"She dropped her doll overboard while she was waving her hand to some children on the shore. Poor child! She is all alone with her father."

"Is she an English girl?" asked Sigrid.

"I think she is an American. Perhaps she would like some of your twisted ring cakes, when she stops crying."

When the child's sobs finally ceased, Mrs. Lund said to her kindly:

"Won't you come and sit beside my little daughter? She wants to give you some of her cakes."

The two children glanced at each other shyly.

"May I, father?" asked the American child.

"Certainly, Anna. You are very kind to amuse her," said the stranger politely to Mrs. Lund.

Sigrid could speak in English as well as Swedish, which seemed to surprise Anna.

"What nice sweet pretzels!" said Anna as she nibbled at one of the cakes.

"Mother bought them of a peasant girl who came on

board at that funny place where the banks were so high we couldn't see the town," explained Sigrid.

"Did you bring your doll with you?" asked Anna, who still mourned the lost Isabella.

"Oh, yes!" said Sigrid, "and a whole trunk of clothes. Wait a moment and I will get her."

She returned with a pretty yellow box on which red and blue flowers were painted. Grandmother had a large chest at home exactly like this toy.

"Oh! you have a peasant doll. How I wish I had one like that! Mother bought Isabella for me in Paris," said Anna.

During the next two days of the trip, the little girls were often together.

"What a giant stairway! I don't see how the steamer can go up to the top," Sigrid exclaimed, the next morning. They had reached the town of Berg, and as she looked at the canal before her, she saw seventeen locks, which mounted to the sky.

"But it can," said Major Lund. "Hundreds of vessels climb those locks every year. It will take several hours, so that we may as well go ashore.

"When we come to Vadstena, Sigrid, we shall have just time to cross the drawbridge and visit a grim old castle there. Gustaf Vasa, our first Swedish king, built it more than three hundred years ago."

"Didn't we have any kings before him?" asked Sigrid.

"Yes," said Major Lund. "But he was the first king to unite our people and make Sweden a strong nation."

"Mother and I took a trip once while we were in Stockholm. Some one pointed out the Castle of Gripsholm, where a nobleman named Vasa hid during the 'Blood Bath of Sweden.'"

"Was that the same man?" asked Anna, who was standing near.

"Erik told me all about that once," replied Sigrid. "I am sure he is the same man. King Christian, the Dane, ruled Sweden then. He was very cruel, Anna. Why, he murdered so many Swedish noblemen that people call that time 'The Blood Bath.' No one knew who would have his head chopped off next."

Anna shuddered. "Did they kill Gustaf Vasa?"

"His father was slain, but Gustaf Vasa fled away into the

mountains," replied Sigrid. Ever since she was a baby, she had heard these stories of the old kings. They were real people to her.

"He had many wild adventures in Dalecarlia. Some time, if you go there, Anna, you will see where he lived. The people there loved him dearly and wanted him for king instead of the tyrant Dane," said Major Lund.

"Do tell me about his adventures, Major Lund," said Anna.

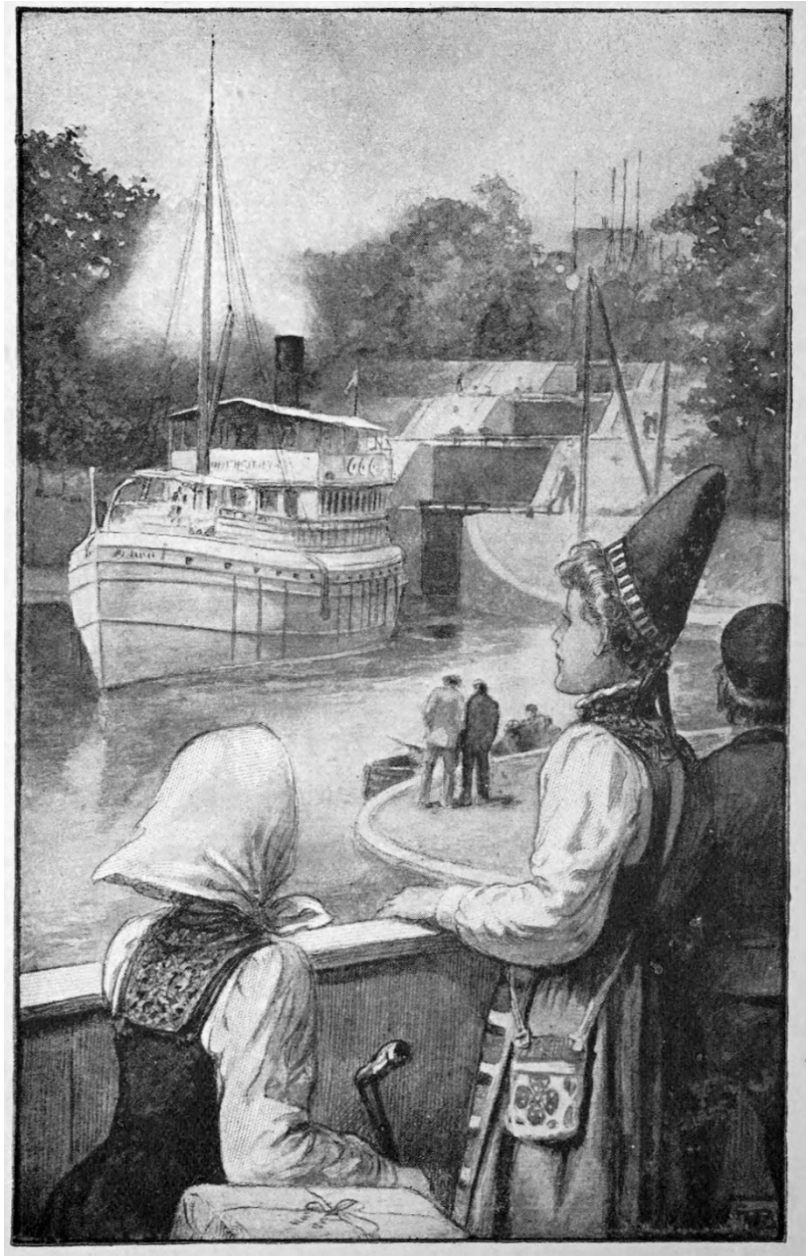
"Ask Sigrid; I am sure she knows," he replied.

Sigrid's eyes shone with delight. "I know, I know," she exclaimed. "He cut off his hair and put on homespun clothes, so he looked like a peasant. Then he worked in the mines and on farms."

"Didn't the peasants know who he was?" asked Anna.

"Some of them did. They wanted to save him from the Danish soldiers. Father saw a house where a woman helped him to escape. She hung a towel from a window. With that for a rope, he climbed down and ran away.

"The story I like best is the one about the farmer who hid Gustaf Vasa in a load of straw.



The Göta Canal

"The soldiers thrust their spears all through the straw, but they could not find him.

"One spear did wound him. The farmer feared the soldiers would return and see the blood-stains on the snow. So he took his jack-knife and cut a small place on his horse's leg. When the soldiers came back, they saw the red spots on the white ground. The peasant showed them the wound on the horse and they were satisfied."

"Don't forget about Margit's quick wits," said Major Lund.

"She was a peasant woman in whose house Gustaf Vasa stayed," continued Sigrid. "One day she heard the soldiers coming.

"'My lord, where shall I hide you?' she cried.

"That day she had brewed a huge tub of Christmas ale. In a second, she thought of a plan.

"'Here, hurry down this ladder.' She pulled up a trap-door in the kitchen floor and he fled into the cellar. By the time the soldiers reached the gate she had pulled the tub of ale over the trap-door. The soldiers never guessed where the prince was."

"I suppose they caught him, at last," said Anna.

"That's the best part," said Sigrid. "After a long time, he gathered an army. Then he fought the Danes and made them give up Sweden for ever."

"Did you ever fight in a real war. Major Lund?" asked Anna, after a minute of silence.

"Not yet," he replied. "Awhile ago, when Norway wanted her own king, many people feared war between Norway and Sweden. But everybody is glad that Haakon, the new King of Norway, was chosen without blood-shed."

"That Frenchman you were talking to this morning, father, called King Oscar a 'Bernadotte.' What did he mean?" asked Sigrid.

"He was only referring to King Oscar's French ancestor. King Karl XIII, who lived a hundred years ago, had no children. So the people tried to decide who should be the next king. Finally they chose a famous French officer, named Bernadotte, who fought under Napoleon. He was elected crown prince."

"I am sure that must be Vadstena in sight now," said Mrs. Lund. "It will be pleasant to go ashore for awhile.

Grandmother asked me to buy her some of the lovely lace they make here."

"You will have to be quick, if you want to see the castle, too," said Major Lund.

The last few hours of the journey, they steamed down the Göta River toward the city of Göteborg.

"Gustaf Adolf chose well when he built a city at the mouth of this river," said Major Lund to his wife. They were watching the huge rafts of timbers that were floating on their way to the seaport.

"Was he any relation to Gustaf Vasa?" asked Sigrid.

"Yes, Gustaf Adolf was his grandson. A nobler and braver king never lived," replied Major Lund. He spoke with the love and reverence which every Swede feels for Gustaf Adolf, the greatest king the nation ever had.

"I do hope Aunt Frederika will be at the pier to meet us," said Sigrid as they approached the landing. "Oh, I think I see her! No, I don't."

But Aunt Frederika did find them, and welcomed them warmly. Such a fine visit they all had together! Erik and Anders heard about little else for the rest of the summer.

CHAPTER VIII
The Name-Day

The summer months had winged themselves away. All through the golden days, Sigrid had lived in the sunshine, as blithe and merry as an elfin maid. To be sure, there had been a short lesson nearly every day with Miss Eklund, for Sigrid's mother did not believe that her little girl should spend all the holiday months in frolicking.

September had come, and with it hints of long lesson days and a return to Stockholm. But in the excitement over Sigrid's name-day party, it was easy to forget such unpleasant things. Karin, Elsa, and Karl, the cousins who had also been making a long visit with their grandmother, had begged to be allowed to stay for the party. Several little friends who lived in fine villas on the lake were coming to

spend the day.

"Be sure to call me at five o'clock in the morning, Miss Eklund," said Elsa, on the evening before the party.

Miss Eklund promised, so Elsa arose at an early hour and awoke the others. Followed by them, with their arms full of flowers and green leaves, she tiptoed into Sigrid's room.

"Hush, Anders, your boots squeak. We must not waken her. That would spoil everything," whispered Elsa.

"Hang the end of your garland over the bedpost, so," continued Elsa. She festooned the brass post of Sigrid's bed with the long chain of green leaves. Then she silently motioned to her sister Karin to do the same with her end.

"I'll tie this bunch of bachelors' buttons to the corner of the foot-board where she will see them when she first opens her eyes," whispered Karin.

"My, doesn't it look pretty!" said Elsa. The children then filed out into the hall and peered through the doorway. Sigrid's rosy cheeks were half-buried in her plump arm, which was thrown up over her head. She appeared to be soundly sleeping in the midst of a huge nosegay of posies and green leaves.

"Now I wish she would wake up," exclaimed Anders in a very loud whisper.

Elsa put her hand over his mouth, but not before the quiet figure in bed stirred a little. Suddenly Sigrid sat upright, rubbed her eyes, and clapped her hands.

"Oh! Oh! Who did it?" she cried aloud.

In rushed the children, and then there was much laughing and kissing. Each child very politely congratulated Sigrid because it was her name-day. Even in the midst of a jolly good time, Swedish children do not neglect these graceful forms of speech which their parents have carefully taught them.

"Here comes Svea with a tray," somebody called out.

The children made way for the neat and smiling maid. On the dainty tray which she placed in Sigrid's lap, was a cup of steaming coffee and a plate of crisp caraway cookies. You might think that she had been sick, so that every one was trying to cheer her on her name-day. Dear me, no. Sigrid always had coffee and cakes served to her in bed every birthday and every name-day, just as if she was a grown-up society lady.

Anders and Karin sat on the edge of the bed, and the others drew up their chairs while Sigrid sipped her coffee.

"My big sister has two name-days," said Elsa.

"Does she have three parties every year?" asked Sigrid.

"Yes, indeed," replied Elsa. "Her real birthday comes in January. Then her name-days are in July and October. I wish I had two name-days. But mother says there are so many of us children that if we all had two name-days, we should be having a party about once in every three weeks all the year."

Everybody burst into laughter. Elsa had five brothers and sisters, so what her mother had said was quite true.

In Sigrid's land, you see, they name all the days of the year. When a little girl is born, she is generally given a name in the calendar. Sigrid's birthday was in March, but Sigrid day in the calendar is in September. So she had two parties every year.

"Name-day greetings, little daughter," said Mrs. Lund as Sigrid came into the dining-room for breakfast. Again there was much kissing and hand-shaking. Sigrid's chair at the table was draped with festoons of leaves. As she ate her

breakfast in silence, she could not keep her eyes away from one corner of the room. There stood a little table covered with a snowy cloth. The centre was heaped with bundles of all shapes, done up in white paper with red sealing-wax. On the white cloth "Sigrid" was written with almonds and raisins.

What good fun it was, after breakfast, to open all the mysterious bundles! Such a heap of pretty things were concealed!

"Here is 'Little Women,'" said Sigrid in great delight. "How did you know it was just what I wanted, mother?" For the tenth time Sigrid got up to run and kiss her mother. The green and gold bound book from which she had torn the wrapping was a translation of Louisa M. Alcott's story, which is as dear to the little Swedish girl as to her American cousin.

"No lessons to-day," said Miss Eklund, as the children came out of the dining-room.

"Hurrah!" shouted Erik. "Won't you take us for a sail on the lake, father? You promised to go with us once more before I started for school."

"Sigrid's name-day would be a fine time to go. Let me see. How many of you are there?" Major Lund looked around at the bright faces. Gerda and Per and several other neighbours had already arrived. "Twelve—just two more than you are years old, Sigrid."

"You had better start early," said Mrs. Lund. "Remember the party this afternoon."

Just as if any one could forget!

The boys helped Major Lund to unfasten the boat from its moorings. A puff of wind filled out the white sail and they were soon off.

"They thought I was asleep this morning when they were trimming my room," Sigrid confided to Erik, who was showing her how to steer the boat.

"Fie on you, Sigrid!" said Erik, quite seriously, but he gave her plump cheek a little pinch.

"It was such fun," Sigrid laughed softly.

"When I heard Elsa tell Anders his boots squeaked, I thought I couldn't keep quiet a second longer."

"Look at all those snipe, Erik," Major Lund interrupted. The boat was sailing quite close to the shore. Several of

these long-legged birds, which were picking their way across the beach, were startled by the voices and flew into the air.

"What a queer call they have, uncle," said Elsa.

"Listen a moment till you hear it again," said Major Lund.

They were very quiet for a couple of minutes.

"It sounds like the noise old Maja makes when he wants us to give him a lump of sugar," said Gerda.

"They make that sound with their wings as they fly," said Major Lund. "The 'horse-cuckoo,' some people call the snipe. Do you know how it received that name?"

"Do tell us, father," said Anders.

"It is just a short story about a careless farmer who had a lazy servant. For many days, the servant rode his master's horse to pasture without giving the poor animal any water to drink. That was a very dry summer, so the horse suffered greatly.

"One day the farmer wanted to drive to market. So he said to his servant:

'"Fetch my horse from the pasture.'

"The servant went after the horse, but it had disappeared. He delayed so long that the master finally followed him into the field. But he could not find the horse either. Just as they had given up the search, they heard a neigh. In the next meadow, where they had been hunting, they saw the horse drinking at a spring.

"'Are you really there?' cried the farmer. He hastened over the stone wall to catch the horse. As he was about to put the halter over its neck, the horse disappeared, and a snipe flew into the air. There the bird neighed till sunset."

"That served the farmer quite right," said Erik, indignantly, and the others agreed with him.

The broad waters of Lake Malar were alive with sailing craft and small steamers. Who would stay indoors on such a day! Along the wooded slopes of the lake they sailed past many a lovely villa, half-hidden by trees, and occasionally some ancient castle.

"That is the place where I saw a water-sprite late one afternoon," said Sigrid. The breeze had died down and the boat seemed to rest at anchor near an old wooden bridge beneath which a hillside brook rushed joyously into the

lake.

"Did you really?" asked Elsa. Sigrid believed in trolls, sea-nymphs, fairies, and water-sprites. But Elsa was several years older than her cousin, and she wasn't at all certain that trolls and water-sprites still lived in the wild country, though they might have in the olden times.

"Look underneath the bridge in that dark corner, just behind those rushes. Erik was rowing me home from your house, Gerda. When we got just there, something white and misty rose up out of the water. I heard a soft, sweet note, and Erik thought perhaps he did too. Then I thought I saw him dimly resting on the waves, just as Miss Eklund says water-sprites do."

"Weren't you frightened?" asked Karin in wide-eyed surprise.

"I wanted Erik to stop rowing so I could listen, but he wouldn't. Mother said he must never take me there again toward night. Father, won't you tell us the story of the water-sprite and the budding staff, while we are waiting for the wind to come up?" begged Sigrid.

"It doesn't look as though we should do much sailing for

awhile. But you must all know the old legend, I am sure," said Major Lund.

"We should like to hear it just the same," the children all chimed in.

"Well," began Major Lund, "this water-sprite lived under an old bridge just like that one over there. He was such a happy fellow that he sat playing his harp half the livelong day. One afternoon, a grim and sour-faced old priest came ambling along on his horse, over the bridge.

"Suddenly he drew rein, for he heard the sweetest music. He rode back across the bridge and hunted several minutes before he discovered the merry sprite.

"In his ugliest tone of voice the priest called out:

"'Why do you play your harp so joyously? Have you nothing to do but idle away the day and the night in such foolishness? A lazy sprite like you will never get to heaven. I should sooner expect to see this staff which I carry grow green and blossom, than find you there.'

"The water-sprite threw down his harp in great terror and began to weep bitterly. What had he ever done that the old priest should frighten him so?

"Without giving further heed to the sprite, the priest rode on. For many years, his own life had been so dull and solemn, that it made him bitter to see other people happy. He found a cruel pleasure in making the little sprite wretched.

"While he was buried in his own gloomy thoughts, he did not see that the staff in his hands was slowly changing into the green branch of a living tree. Tiny green buds, then leaves, slowly, silently unfurled. As silently, flower-buds appeared and opened into rosy blossoms, spicy with fragrance.

"The priest, at last, beheld the branch of leaves and flowers in his hand. He was filled with great wonder at himself. While the dead staff of wood slowly bloomed in his hands, something hard and cold in his heart seemed to melt. Not since he was a small boy had he listened to the singing of the birds with such joy. He dismounted from his horse to gather a handful of wild lilies-of-the-valley.

"He even smiled on a whistling peasant boy who passed him on the road. Then he thought of the weeping sprite. In all haste he rode back to the bridge.

"To the sobbing lad, he said:

"'Behold how my old staff has grown green and flowers like a rose-bush in June. This is a symbol, my good fellow, that hope blooms in the hearts of us all. You may yet go to heaven.'"

At that minute, the limp sails stirred, the ropes rattled in the breeze, and the boat was soon under way.

Early in the afternoon, the other guests of the party arrived. I could not begin to tell you all the games they played. Some were like those of their American cousins, but there were many new ones. Next to "Blind Man's Buff," and "Last Couple Out," the best fun was "Lend, Lend Fire."

All the children sat in a circle for this game. Karin, who had a cane, walked up to Erik and rapping on the floor, said, "Lend, Lend Fire."

But Erik replied, "Go to the next neighbour." Half-way around the circle Karin went, but every one made the same answer. In the meantime, the children were beckoning across to each other and exchanging seats. Finally, Karin was nimble enough to slip into a chair which was vacant for a second. It happened to be Sigrid's place, so it was her turn

to take the cane and hunt for fire.

Mrs. Lund played for the children to dance old-fashioned ring dances. Sigrid would no more have thought her party complete without these dances in a big circle than if there had been no name-day cake. For of course she had a name-day cake. It did not have any candles, and it was not like any birthday cake you ever saw. Across the top of the round loaf of sweetened bread, "Sigrid" was written in twisted strips of bread, with cardamom seeds and currants sprinkled all over.

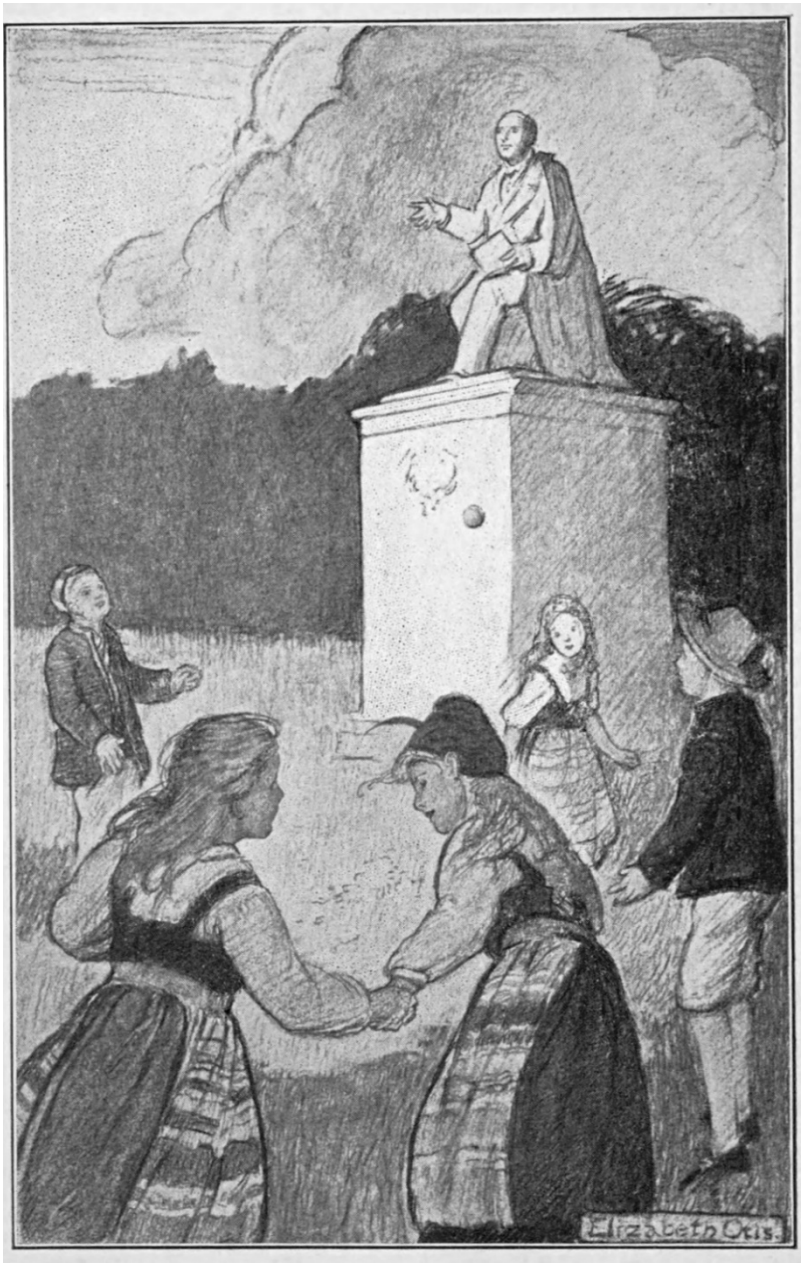
Where could you find a prettier, cosier supper-room than within the round lilac hedge with its wide opening for a door? Here the table was set for the guests.

Inside the lilac-bush hedge, with her other guests, we must say good-bye to our little Swedish cousin. Some time, I hope you will cross the seas and meet her again. She is such a winsome maid, so healthy, happy, and well-mannered, that I am sure you would soon be good friends.

THE END.

Our Little Danish Cousin

Luna May Innes



Little Children Were Playing about the Statued Form of
Their Beloved Story-Teller, Hans Christian Andersen

Preface

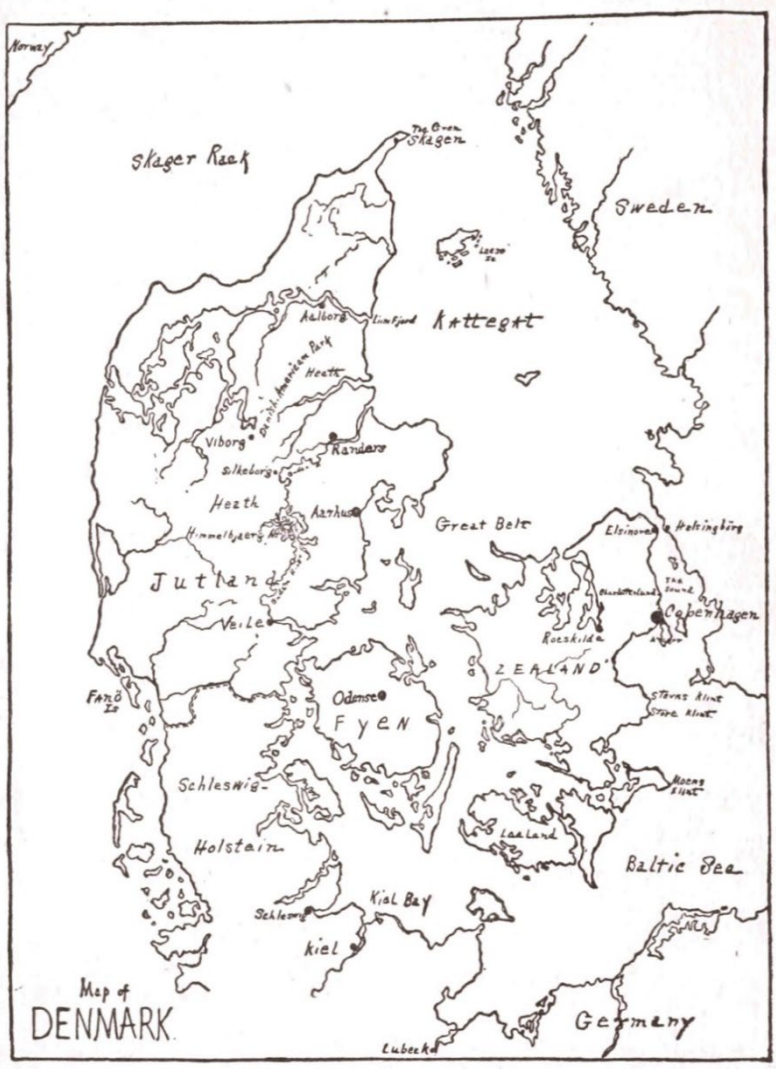
Denmark means "Land of dark woods." Although one of the smallest states of Europe, the little kingdom of Denmark holds a very large place in the world's history, having supplied rulers for many of the countries of Europe.

The Dane loves his beautiful country, the land of Thorvaldsen and of Hans Christian Andersen, of blue lakes, and "fairy-tale" castles. Since the days of Leif and Biarne, Denmark and the United States have been allied, and therefore I feel sure that the children of America will be interested in the story of their little Danish Cousin.

I wish to express grateful acknowledgment to Hr. Georg Beck, Consul for Denmark in Chicago; also to Mr. Haakon Arntz, and to Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Andersen, for generous information given in regard to the manners and customs of the Danish people.

Luna May Innes.

Chicago, February 1912.


Norway
Skager Rack
Sweden
Kattegat
Aalborg
Limfjord
Viborg
Randers
Silkeborg
Heath
Aarhus
Great Belt
Elsinore
Helsingborg
Jutland
Copenhagen
Roskilde
ZEALAND
Vejle
Odense
FYEN
Schleswig-
Holstein
Laaland
Baltic Sea
Kiel Bay
Kiel
Map of
DENMARK
Germany
Lubeck

CHAPTER I
The Distinguished Visitor

"Hurtig! kaere Karen, mit lommetorklaede!

Fru Oberstinde Ingemann and her little flaxen-haired daughter, Karen, were sitting at their embroidery work in the deep window-seat that made one whole side of the cozy Ingemann living-room overlooking the Botanical Gardens. Between stitches, Karen was watching the rain patter on the little diamond window-panes, now and then pausing to take a quick look at some favorite newly-blossomed flower in the brilliant, long line of window-boxes which bordered the windows "like a long bright ribbon," as Karen said.

The bell rang.

"Hurtig! kaere Karen, mit lommetor-klaede!" sounds like something terrible, but Fru Ingemann was only saying in Danish: "Quick, dear Karen, my handkerchief!"

"Thank you, Karen," said the lady, as the fair child

replaced the sheer bit of linen in her mother's hand with a pretty courtesy, for Karen was a well-bred little girl.

It was a morning of excitement for Fru Else Ingemann. Two important letters had come to her from over the seas. One had come from Chicago in far-away America, saying that her brother-in-law, the Hon. Oscar Hoffman, was coming once more to pay a visit to dear old Denmark. Mr. Hoffman was an important man in America. He was the president of the "Danish-American National Park" in north Jutland, and it was in his loyal Danish brain that the whole idea of the great Park had originated. It had been his dream to save to the glory of Denmark, for all time to come, a wonderful, wild tract of heather-covered hills where, year by year, thousands of loyal Danish-Americans might meet in the Fatherland, and celebrate America's Independence Day on Danish soil. At last the Park was a reality, and he was coming to make necessary arrangements.

He was bringing his son, Karl, with him, and, while they were to be in Copenhagen, they would spend their time with the Ingemanns. He hoped that the little cousins would become great friends. They would arrive in Copenhagen on

Saturday. Today was Thursday. The other exciting message came from Fru Ingemann's favorite brother, Hr. Thorvald Svensen. It was postmarked Rome, Italy, and informed her that at last he was coming back to live in his dear old home in Copenhagen. Hr. Svensen had been living in Rome for eight long years, and in those years of persistent, hard work he had finally realized his one great ambition, and become Denmark's greatest sculptor—greatest, at least, since the day of Denmark's beloved Thorvaldsen, whose namesake he was.

To Fru Ingemann there was no more welcome news in all the world. His letter said that he longed to see her and the children once more.

Little Valdemar, who was the sculptor's godson, was wild with joy. "Let me stay home from school to-day, mother!" he implored.

"No, no, Valdemar," firmly answered his mother, as she handed him his school luncheon, a box of delicious *smörrebröd*.* When Valdemar's mother said "No, no," he knew that further protests were useless. So he kissed her

* The great Danish national dish.

and was off, calling back: "Good-bye, mother dear; keep *Gudfar*† Thor until I come home from school, please!"

All that morning Fru Ingemann flew about in happy expectancy, making more cozy the pretty little apartment. Karen could hear her mother, as she worked, singing softly those familiar old lines from Baggesen, the well-known Danish poet:

"Ah, nowhere is the rose so red,
Nowhere so small the thorn,
Nowhere so soft the downy bed
As those where we were born."

Above the patter of the rain came the sound of approaching carriage wheels. Fru Ingemann paused.

"Quick, Karen—the bell! It may be Uncle Thor!"

And so it proved! All the eight, long, lonesome years since she had last seen this dear brother, years in which she had lost her husband, were quickly forgotten in his great hearty embrace.

"Min kaere Soster!"

"Min kaere Broder!"

† Godfather.

Their hearts were so full they could not find words.

Karen, tiptoeing, wanted to fling her tiny arms about her big, yellow-bearded, Viking-like, Uncle Thor's neck, so he lifted the little maid high in his strong arms and kissed her.

"Ah, Karen, *min lille skat!*[‡] How you have grown!" he said affectionately. Soft yellow curls framed her pretty face, and two heavy braids of the same glorious hair hung far down her back. "Why, you were just a little, two-year-old baby when I went away to Rome, and now, I've no doubt, you are dreaming of a boarding-school off in France or Switzerland one of these days!"

But Karen only shook her little blond head and laughed, while Uncle Thor's beauty-loving eye beamed on the dainty little damsel in white embroidered frock, half-hose and slippers, as he settled himself comfortably in the big arm-chair near the great, green-tiled stove, whose top almost touched the living-room ceiling.

"Congratulations, dear brother," said Fru Ingemann. "Why didn't you write us all about the great honor you have brought to the family? I saw in this morning's 'National-

[‡] "My little treasure."

tidende,' that you have just been appointed Court Painter to His Majesty, the King! It is the greatest honor that can come to a Danish artist. I am so proud of you!"

"It is true," he acknowledged, briefly, "but tell me, sister Else, how are the boys, Aage and Valdemar?"

"Oh, Aage is now a big boy of sixteen, off doing his eight years of compulsory military service in the army. Aage will grow up with a straighter back and a better trained body because of his soldiering days. He will be home for Christmas with us."

"And Valdemar?"

"Valdemar is only thirteen, but he is in his second year at the Metropolitan School, one of the best State Latin Schools in all Denmark. He will be back home at three o'clock. I could hardly get him to consent to go to school at all, this morning, after he was told that his Gudfar Thor was coming."

"And Karen studies with her private tutors, here, at home?"

"Yes, Thorvald, besides learning to be a good little housekeeper, as well. But you must be both hungry and

tired. It is nearly twelve o'clock. Come, Karen, help me spread the table with something good for *Frokost,*[§] for Uncle Thor."

A cloth of snowy damask was quickly spread with various viands and meats; tongue, salad, salmon, anchovies, plates of butter, with trays containing French (white) bread, and other trays full of thin slices of rye bread, which is such a favorite with all Danes. Fru Ingemann then placed a bottle of beer beside Hr. Svensen's plate, and brought in the steaming hot tea, which she herself poured into the delicate cups of that wonderful crystalline ware, the famous Royal Copenhagen porcelain—a set doubly cherished by her as an heirloom in her family for many generations.

Karen, who could herself make delicious tea, loved to gaze at the fascinatingly delicate decoration of the cups, which looked, as she said, "like frost on the window-pane;" but she never was allowed to touch this precious set of old Royal Copenhagen, of which not one piece had yet been broken.

"And *smörrebröd*, brother?" politely urged Fru

§ Breakfast.

Ingemann, for no good Danish housewife would ever think of inviting any one to breakfast without having *smörrebröd* on the table.

"Thanks, sister Else," replied the hungry artist, who immediately set about thickly spreading butter—famous Danish butter—over a slice of rye bread, as did also Karen and her mother, after which each proceeded to select the particular kind of fish or meat preferred, and, arranging it upon the slice of buttered bread, ate it much as we would a sandwich. Uncle Thor made an especially delicious one for Karen, who had already become a great favorite with him.

Frokost over, Fru Ingemann arose, and, bowing slightly to her brother, said: *"Velbekomme!"*[**] And Hr. Svensen did the same.

"Tak for Mad, Moder,"[††] said Karen courtesying first to her mother and then to her Uncle Thor, and kissing them both—a beautiful old Danish custom.

Uncle Thor was a great lover of flowers. To-day there were beautiful flowers on the table, in the windows, every-

[**] "Well may it agree with you."
[††] "Thank you for food, Mother."

where! In fact, the whole Ingemann apartment seemed overwhelmed with the loveliness of them. Besides the vases, there were little flower-pots galore, all decked in brightly-colored paper, some containing blooming plants, others, little growing trees.

"Ah, Karen, has there been a birthday here?" asked Uncle Thor, in mock surprise.

"Run out in the hall and see what came all the way from Naples, Italy, to Frederiksberg-Alle, in Copenhagen, for a good little girl with long pigtails."

Karen came running back with a tiny white kid box in her hand. Opening it, she beheld the most beautiful set imaginable of pale pink corals. She just couldn't wait to put the necklace on before hugging her dear old Uncle Thor, who himself had to fasten the pretty chain around her slender little neck for her.

"Yes, Uncle Thor, we had a splendid time, and mother gave us chocolate, tea and cakes, and this is what all the boys and girls at my party yesterday sang:

"'London Bridge is broken down,
Gold is won and bright renown,

Shields resounding, war-horns sounding,
Hild is shouting in the din.
Arrows singing,
Mailcoats ringing,
Odin makes our Olaf win.'"

Karen had hardly finished singing her song describing the days of old, when there had been a mighty encounter on London Bridge between the Danes and King Olaf the Saint, ending in the burning of the bridge, when there came a sudden great clatter and uproar on the stairs, with the loud barking of a dog, and the sound of a boy's heavy boots, and Valdemar burst into the room.

"Oh, my dear, dear Gudfar Thor!" he exclaimed, throwing his arms tight round his uncle's neck.

"Why, Valdemar, you are the very image of your father!" exclaimed Hr. Svensen. "Don't you think so, sister Else?" he questioned, as he gazed admiringly at the sturdy, big frame, rumpled flaxen hair, and the merry twinkle in the honest blue Danish eyes of his godson.

"Oh, yes, Thorvald, Valdemar certainly is the image of his father. The King thinks so, too," agreed Fru Ingemann.

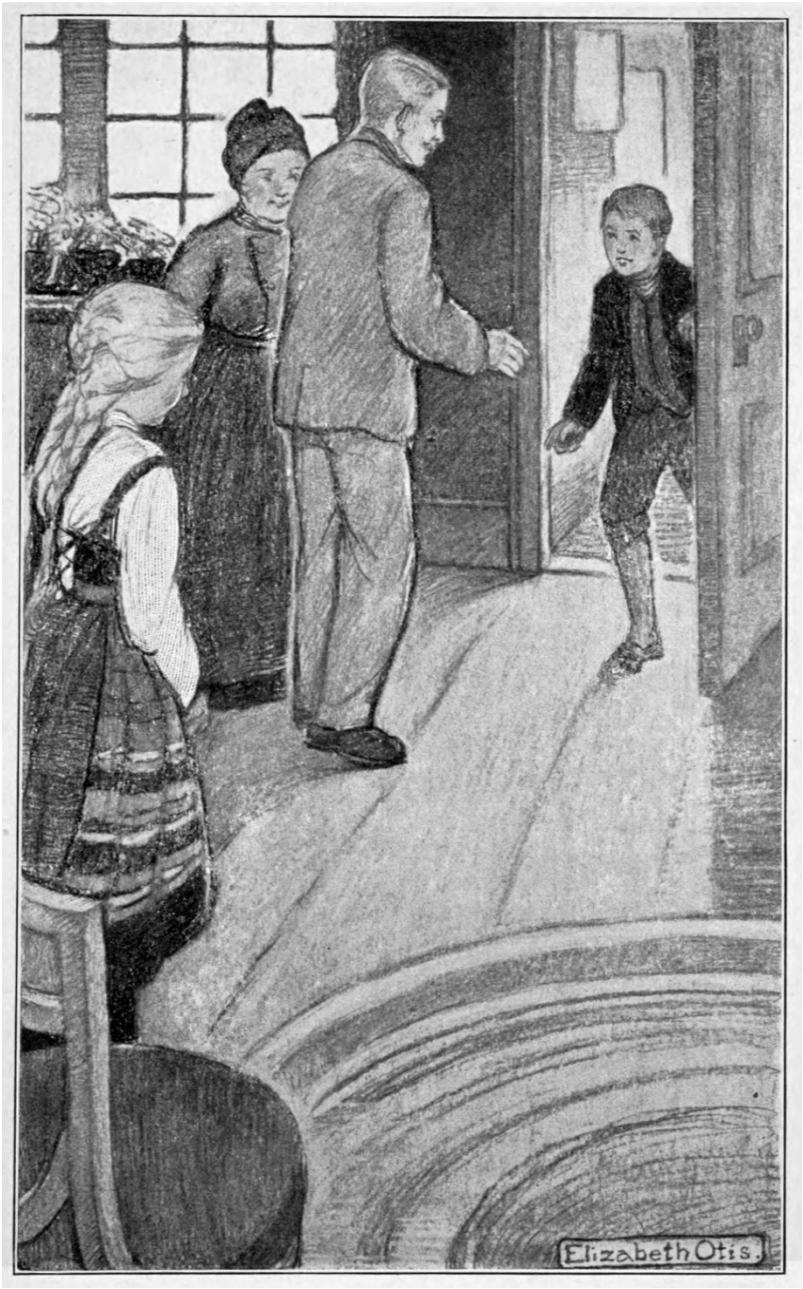
"King Frederik? Why, how is that, sister? Has the king never forgotten Valdemar?" questioned Hr. Svensen in surprise.

"Oh, Thorvald, you know the King's wonderful memory. It never fails him. And you must remember the great friendship that always existed between my dear husband and King Frederik, from the days when, as boys together, they went through the Military College; and later both were recruits in the same regiment, and had to do sentry duty, turn about, outside his grandfather's palace. Only the other day, Valdemar came bounding into the house, overjoyed, to tell me that he had just passed their Majesties, King Frederik and Queen Lowisa, out walking on the *Langelinie,*[‡‡] entirely unattended, and that, when he doffed his cap to the King, his Majesty immediately returned his salute, with a friendly smile!"

"But, sister Else, how do you know that King Frederik thinks Valdemar the image of his father? I don't understand," persisted Hr. Svensen, perplexed.

"We know!" Fru Ingemann spoke softly as she recalled

[‡‡] **Long Line**



Valdemar Burst into the Room

days long gone.

"Valdemar was only a little child when his father died," she continued. "His father had always taught Valdemar to love the King, and he does so with all his boyish little heart. An accident, a broken arm, soon afterwards put the child in the Queen Lowisa Children's Hospital, where, as you know, King Frederik makes a monthly visit to cheer the little sufferers. The King loves children. They say that not one little baby-face ever escapes him, and that he even notes each child's improvement from time to time.

"Valdemar, in his little cot near the door, heard the nurses saying: 'The King comes today!'

"His little mind was all expectation. Finally, the King arrived. Valdemar was the first little patient to see him enter, silk hat in his hand as usual. Sick as he was, the boy drew himself quickly from out of the covers, stood up in the middle of his bed, and saluted his King with a low bow, so low that his forehead almost touched his pillow. The King paused in surprise at Valdemar's cot and spoke:

"'My child, why do you do that? Why do you salute me?'

"'Because I like you! You are the King!'

"They say that the King looked into the child's face a moment, drew his hand to his eyes, lost in thought, then, turning quickly to Prince Christian, who accompanied him, exclaimed with a smile:

"'*Du ligner din Fader! Oh, vilde jeg onske at din Fader levede! Gid Legligheden maa komme til at hjalpe denne opvagte Dreng, for min käre gamle Ven Ingemann's Skyld!*'[§§]

"Then, placing his hand on the child's golden locks, he spoke tenderly: 'Yes, little Valdemar Ingemann, I am the King. Always remember that your father and I were great friends,' and he passed on.

"Valdemar has never forgotten that moment. He never will. You and the King are the two great heroes of the world in his eyes."

"Where is he now? Come, Valdemar! Tell me all about what you like most to read," called Uncle Thor.

"Oh, Uncle Thor, I love to read in the old Sagas and Chronicles all about the mighty sea-fights of the Vikings, and about the glorious battles of the Valdemars, in the

§§ "The face of his father! Oh, that his father were still living! May the opportunity some day be given me to benefit this bright boy, for my dear old friend Ingemann's sake!"

books that Aage left me. They make me want to be a soldier. Then I love to read everything about Linnaeus, who loved the trees and the flowers and the whole outdoors just as I do. But, best of all, I'd rather become a famous sculptor like my Godfather Thor! I'd like that better than anything else in all the world! See, Uncle Thor, I've modelled some little things already. Here is one—my Great Dane, Frederik—and here is a stork, and here is a little Viking ship. They're not very good, but—"

"Oh, *min lille Billedhugger!*"*** interrupted Hr. Svensen, with feeling, as he took the little toy animals from Valdemar to examine them. "This is not half bad work. But what have you done them in, my boy?"

"In pie-paste!" laughed his mother. "I have to hide the pie-paste when I'm baking, to keep Valdemar from slipping it off to use for modelling!"

"Valdemar, you shall have some modelling clay. Thorvaldsen once made the Lion of Lucerne in butter. I must tell you that story some day," said Hr. Svensen, as he patted his little nephew's head affectionately.

*** "My little sculptor."

There was a sharp ring at the bell.

Karen flew to the door, then back to her mother, excitedly exclaiming: "A box and a letter for you, mother!"

Fru Ingemann tore the note open and read: "Will be expelled if it occurs again!" The words swam before her eyes.

"Oh, Valdemar, my son, come explain all this to me at once! It is from your Latin teacher. Surely there is some mistake. It is not like my boy!"

Meantime Karen had opened the box, and displayed a most laughable clay caricature of Valdemar's Latin teacher, with the word "TEACHER" scratched underneath in large letters. She burst out giggling. Even Uncle Thor's look of mock horror soon gave way before the cleverly done effigy, and he laughed. He had been a boy once himself, and it was funny.

"Well, that's exactly the way teacher looks!" vehemently protested Valdemar in self-justification. "Indeed he does. Ask Hendrik or any of the boys. None of us like him one bit, and at recess to-day Hendrik drew chalk cartoons of teacher all over the blackboard, and said: 'Oh,

Valdemar, you'd never dare do it in clay!'

"'Yes, I would dare do it in clay,' I answered him, and then, mother—I did it. But I didn't mean Hr. Professor Christiansen to see it. I'm glad school's over for all summer on Friday!"

Even Valdemar's mother had to laugh, as Uncle Thor took the offending statuette in his hand to give it a closer examination, for it was as irresistibly funny as it was clever.

"Brilliant, Valdemar!" he exclaimed. "Your work has merit. Work hard enough, my boy, and you may become a great artist, some day. You have the talent. Come over to my studio to-morrow morning. I'll help you a little with your modelling, and then, after luncheon with me, I will take you through the Thorvaldsen Museum. Would you like that? And, by the way, I think there is something nice for you in my trunk. Now I am due at the Royal Palace. I must go and pay my respects to the King. He will be expecting me."

"Oh, Uncle Thor, I'll be there!" called out Valdemar. "Good-bye, Uncle Thor, goodbye!"

CHAPTER II
Copenhagen

Summer bursts suddenly in Copenhagen. First, winter, with its deep snows, its fogs and frosts and thaws; then a few days of showers and a few of sunshine, *Blinkeveir*[*] the Danes call this showery weather; and then, all at once, the bare trees throw out their tender green foliage and the spring flowers burst into life! The long cold winter is over. Even then, there sometimes come dense sea-mists which envelop Denmark's capital, and only vanish with the sun's warm rays. So Copenhageners have a popular weather saying:

"Monday's weather till mid-day is the week's weather till Friday,
Friday's weather is Sunday's weather,
Saturday has its own weather."

[*] Blinking weather.

Saturday's weather fortunately proved ideal, a rare June day. Copenhagen's beautiful Public Gardens and Parks were all aglow with fragrant, blossoming spring flowers. Valdemar's school was at last over.

"Now to the woods!" he cried in joy. "And, mother dear, can't we keep Cousin Karl all summer with us up at our country place on the *Strandvej,*[†] while Uncle Oscar has to be away in Jutland attending to that Park of his? But I should like to be there with him when they have their big American Fourth of July celebration, and see them raise their great Star Spangled Banner over our beloved flag! Wouldn't you, Karl? I've heard about the American 'Fourth,' with the Stars and Stripes waving everywhere, and of the army manœuvres and big times they have over there in the States on that historic day! But Denmark's never had anything like it before, has she, Uncle Thor?"

They were in Fru Ingemann's pretty dining-room having their twelve o'clock little *frokost* of tea and *smörrebröd*, this happy little party of six, for the American relatives had arrived.

[†] Sea-side.

Early that morning, Valdemar and his Uncle Thor had hurried to the dock to meet the steamer, "and, but for Uncle Oscar's waving handkerchief, and his good memory for faces, we might have missed them entirely," explained Valdemar, who was delighted with this first acquaintance with his new American cousin.

With the first warm spring day, half of Copenhagen whitewashes her town house windows against the sun's hot rays, and prepares to migrate farther north, to the famous *Strandvej*, where soft breezes from the blue Sound play all day over the broad sandy beach, and rustle through the leaves of the beech-trees in the Deer Park nearby. Rich and poor alike own their own villas, country houses or little cottages, as the case may be, and these thickly dot the beautiful east Sound Shore all the way from Copenhagen to Elsinore, for great is the Dane's love of *at ligger på Landet.*[‡]

Like all the rest, through wise and careful planning, Fru Ingemann had her little country place on the beautiful east Shore, where each summer Karen and Valdemar took long

[‡] To linger in the country.

walks through the glorious beech-woods, went swimming, boating and bathing, made their own flower-gardens and dug in the ground to their hearts' content. By the end of each short, happy summer, they were both as tanned and brown as the baskets of beech-nuts they gathered and brought back with them for the winter.

"We will have great times, if only Cousin Karl can come up for the summer with us!" begged little Karen.

"I'll think about it," was the only promise they could get out of Uncle Oscar for the moment. "I'm sure Karl would like it, but I'm not ready to decide anything just now."

"If I'm not mistaken, the first thing Karl wants is to see some of the sights of Copenhagen," said Hr. Svensen, as they were leaving the breakfast table. "Suppose we all go together and give him a bird's-eye view of Copenhagen and the Harbor from the top of the Round Tower! How's that, Karl?"

"Great! Can't we start right away?" said the little American, for Karl was a typical little Chicago boy, eager-minded and anxious to take in everything at once.

"And the Thorvaldsen Museum, Uncle Thor? Can't we

go back there again to-day?" urged Valdemar, for the wondrous beauty of Thorvaldsen's masterpieces still filled all his thoughts. On the way home from the Museum, the previous day, he had listened to fascinating stories told him by his godfather, stories about the "Lion of Lucerne," and about the little peasant boy who loved art, and worked hard, and finally became one of the world's greatest sculptors. Valdemar couldn't forget Thorvaldsen's lovely "Guardian Angel," or his wonderful figure of "Christ," with its bowed head and arms outstretched in benediction, or the heavenly beauty of his "Angel of the Baptism kneeling at Christ's feet." Never, thought Valdemar, had he seen anything half so beautiful in all his life! Then, there were mighty gods and heroes, and graceful nymphs. "And only think," continued Valdemar, "when Thorvaldsen was just a little boy eleven years old—three years less than I am—he so loved his drawing and modelling that his father, who was a poor Icelandic ship-builder and carver of figureheads, placed him in school at the Academy of Arts, where he won prize after prize, not stopping until he had gained even the great gold medal, together with the travelling scholarship

which took him to Italy to study. There he worked hard day by day, from early dawn till dark without stopping. No wonder the great Museum is completely filled with masterpieces from his hand!"

"Valdemar, my boy, you, too, shall enter as a student at the Academy next fall, if your work during the summer continues to show the talent and improvement that will justify my sending you. But that means you must work hard. I leave next week for my summer studio up at Skagen, but, until I go, you shall have a lesson each day, if you like, and more lessons up there all summer long, if you will come, for there is no little boy in all the world I would rather help than you, my Valdemar."

"Oh, Uncle Thor!" cried Valdemar, throwing his arms around his godfather's neck, wild with joy. "I will begin tomorrow. And do you really mean that I am to study at the Academy?"

"Yes, my little artist," answered Hr. Svensen. "And now let us start at once and see some of Copenhagen's sights."

"And will Fru Oberstinde not accompany us?" politely inquired Mr. Hoffman, of his sister-in-law.

Danish wives and widows are given the same titles their husbands bear, so that Fru Ingemann, who was the widow of a Colonel, or "Oberst," in the King's army, was often addressed as "Oberstinde," or "Coloneless."

"Not to-day, thank you. Karen and I will wait for you at home," said Fru Ingemann, smiling as she observed the big book in her child's hands. "You see what Karen is reading, Hans Christian Andersen's fascinating '*Billedbog unden Billeder.*'[§] Be sure to be back in time for dinner," she called as the party set off.

"*God Dag,*"[**] said the tram conductor politely as they entered. Karl smiled. Then he began to ask questions, for he had never crossed the ocean before, and never before had he seen any city like Copenhagen. Chicago certainly had its broad avenues, parks and boulevards, great sky-scrapers and fine buildings; but Chicago had never dreamed of permitting its one great canal to run right up through the city streets, among the office buildings and houses, with all its shipping, launches and water-craft, as the Copenhagen

§ Picture book without pictures
** "Good day."

canals all seemed to do in the friendliest possible fashion.

"Copenhagen must look much more like Amsterdam than like Athens, father. I can't see why it is called the 'Athens of the North.' I don't see any Greek-looking buildings here," protested Karl.

"Yes," agreed Karl's father, who had once lived in Denmark long years ago. "Copenhagen may look much more like Amsterdam, Karl; but, while you will not see Greek buildings here, nevertheless the title of 'Athens' comes justly, not only because of Copenhagen's charming position on the borders of the Sound at the entrance to the Baltic, giving the city a great advantage commercially, and because of its beautifully wooded environs, but particularly on account of its splendid libraries, art galleries, museums and great university and schools, which rank among the best to be found anywhere in Europe. Before we reach the Round Tower we will doubtless get a view of some of these."

"Fa' vel,"[††] said the tram conductor, bowing pleasantly to them as they got off at their destination.

Karl laughed outright. "Dear me! In Chicago car

[††] "Farewell."

conductors are given prizes for politeness, but I must say, none of them have ever yet reached the point of saying 'farewell' to you as you leave. I'm glad they don't. Gee!

"We'd never get anywhere in Chicago if we stopped for all that."

"Half of Copenhagen seems to be out on the streets today," remarked Mr. Hoffman, who had not been back to Denmark's beautiful capital for so long that he had forgotten what a large city it was. "Look, I believe that must be the New Picture Gallery, isn't it?"

"You are right," replied Hr. Svensen.

"Half the charm of Copenhagen must be traced to her museums and rich art treasures. Shall we give the boys a peep inside?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed both boys at once, for Karl had pleasant memories of Saturday afternoons he had spent studying all the fine exhibits in the Museum of the Art Institute of Chicago. They had soon climbed the broad granite steps, and were walking through the long corridors and halls filled with great paintings, each bearing the artist's name on the frame.

"The New Picture Gallery affords a good opportunity for studying Danish pictorial art, just as the New Glyptothek does for studying Danish sculpture," said Hr. Svensen, as they were leaving.

"What canal is that?" asked Karl. "It certainly is a pretty one, with that beautiful promenade and park along one side."

"Yes, that is Holmen's Canal, one of the finest in Copenhagen," answered Hr. Svensen. It was full of ships and other water-craft. "And that marble building which looks like an Etruscan tomb is the Thorvaldsen Museum, one of the principal attractions of Copenhagen. We shall have to take another day for that. But, just to please Valdemar, we will spend a moment inside the church where Thorvaldsen's 'Christ,' the 'Angel of the Baptism' and 'The Twelve Apostles' are all standing in the places for which they were designed."

"The Danes have accomplished much more in sculpture than in painting, haven't they, Uncle Thor?" Valdemar asked.

"Yes, you are quite right, Valdemar. Denmark, as yet,

has produced no painter to compare with Thorvaldsen."

They paused a moment at the *New Raadhaus-plads,* with its castellated roof, and paved semicircle in front, and again, nearby, at the New City Hall.

"What an attractive part of Copenhagen this is," remarked Karl, as he observed the many broad, fine, well-kept *Pladser*[‡‡] with their electric cars gliding noiselessly back and forth with American celerity. "Copenhagen seems to me a much cleaner, prettier city than Chicago, father. Don't you think so? But where are its beggars? We've not yet seen one."

Hr. Svensen was quick to answer that they were not likely to see one. That Copenhagen, with a population of nearly five hundred thousand, has a pauper element of less than three per cent. "For the Danes are naturally a thrifty, industrious people, more than half of whom are farmers, and many also go to sea in ships," explained Hr. Svensen.

They took a tram down Stormgade over a bridge to the island of Slotsholmen, with its famous Fruit and Flower Market, where jolly-looking women with quaint

[‡‡] Squares

headdresses were selling their wares; then over another bridge into *Kongens Nytory*, the King's New Market.

"Here we are in a different world from that which we just left," said Hr. Svensen. They had reached a large Square, a great centre of life and bustle, from which thirteen busy streets radiated. Through the trees in the centre of this great open space the statue of a king was seen, and red omnibuses crept slowly along on each side of the tram line. Here they saw the Royal Theatre, the famous Tivoli Gardens, and the beautiful old Palace of Charlottenburg, close to an inlet of the sea, which reached right into the Square with all its shipping, so that masts and sails and shops and buildings took on the same friendly aspect that they have in Holland.

"But I don't see any 'skyscrapers,' Uncle Thor, like we have in Chicago, sometimes twenty stories high! Where are they?" inquired the little American.

"In a moment or so, Karl, I will show you two 'skyscrapers' that will amuse you!" said Hr. Svensen. "But, look! here is a lively scene for us first."

They were passing the Copenhagen fish-market, or

Gammelstrand, as it is called, where the fish are sold alive, after having been kept in large perforated boxes in the canal.

"Now look, Karl; how's that for a skyscraper?"

They were looking at the tall tower of the *Bors,* or Exchange, one hundred and fifty feet high, with its upper part formed by four great dragons whose tails were so intertwined and twisted together, high up in the air, that they gradually tapered to a point, like a spire against the sky.

Then there was another tower which interested Karl. It was on the Church of Our Redeemer. Circled by a long spiral stairway of three hundred and ninety-seven steps of gleaming brass, which wound round and round and up and up to the very top of the sharp cone, this tower gave the persevering climber a good panoramic view over Copenhagen.

"But not so good a view as we can get from the top of the Round Tower," said Hr. Svensen. "Here we are now."

They were glad to quit the jostling crowds on the streets —throngs of busy shoppers, students in cap and gown,



"Where jolly-looking women with quaint headdresses were selling their wares"

sightseers, and, to-day, bright-coated soldiers at every turn. The soldiers were arriving in Copenhagen by hundreds every day now, they were told, in order to be ready, Monday morning, to welcome King Haakon of Norway, who was expected to arrive by ship.

"Oh, Uncle Thor, will you or Uncle Oscar not bring us down to the city, Monday, and let us see King Haakon drive past?" cried out both boys at once.

"Yes, boys," said Mr. Hoffman, "I will be glad to bring you. I leave for Jutland in the afternoon, Monday, and that will give me my last chance to see a little more of Copenhagen."

At last they were in the Round Tower, and felt themselves slowly ascending. Up and up, and round and round and round on an inclined plane, they went—past curious niches in the wall, containing ancient monuments covered with Runic inscriptions; past a door leading to the university library, with its valuable collection of rare Icelandic manuscripts; slowly, on and on, until finally they reached the very top with its observatory, once the home of the great astronomer, Tycho Brahe.

"Peter the Great once drove a coach and four to the top of this very same tower," volunteered Karl. "I've read all about that at school in Chicago. What a splendid view of the city we are having. It is all spires, and red roofs and gables built stairway fashion, isn't it?"

"And how beautiful and sparkling the waters of the harbor look, all alive with ships, great and small," said Valdemar. "It certainly is a splendid seaport!"

Far away, the Baltic, blue as the Bay of Naples, shimmered in the bright sunlight; and close at hand, at the various wharves, merchantmen, with valuable cargoes from far countries, were loading and unloading. It was a scene of busy life. The boys counted the flags of many different nations. No wonder the city had been named Merchant's Haven, or Kjöbenhavn.

"What a good view of the coast of Sweden we get up here," said Valdemar. "And north of us lies Elsinore, the scene of Hamlet's tragedy. And, Karl, I'm sure that, on a clearer day, we could see Rugen, the German island, where, one day long ago, the Kaiser sat on the top of the cliff four hundred feet high, and watched the famous sea-fight

between the Swedes and the Danes. But I don't like to talk about Germany. I'm glad that Aage is a soldier. Some day he will help us get Schleswig back again!" said patriotic little Valdemar. "And, only think, some of the geography books have even dared to call the North Sea the German Ocean! Kiel Harbor, now bristling with German war-ships, once belonged to Denmark, and so did the whole Baltic!"

"Yes, and once the Danes were ruling half of England, Ireland, and Scotland, and they even gained a foothold in Normandy," said little Cousin Karl, by way of consolation.

"And the Germans once stood in terror of our great Vikings, who lorded it over the seas in every direction!" added Valdemar, with growing enthusiasm. "Their graves may be seen on both sides of the North Sea to-day. And wasn't it here, Uncle Thor, when an unusually severe winter had bridged the Baltic, that the Swedish king, Karl Gustav, led his army, horse, foot and guns, over the frozen seas where no one had dared to cross before, and finally took Copenhagen? But Denmark and Sweden are at peace now."

"I'm glad that they are," replied Karl, "and that Norway

and Denmark are, too, or we might not see King Haakon next Monday!"

"Come!" said Uncle Thor. "Let us hurry home now, before we are late to dinner. It is a wonderful old tower, having survived both fires and bombardments. Once Copenhagen was fortified with a wall and a moat, for Denmark's capital has passed through many vicissitudes, but in these peaceful days they both have been turned into parks for the people."

Dinner had been awaiting the hungry sightseers for some time when they reached home.

When they had all gathered about the dinner table, it was plain that there was some great secret in the air. Fru Ingemann's face wore a bright smile, in spite of the late dinner, and little Karen held herself with an air of supreme importance, her cheeks bright, and her blue eyes dancing with suppressed excitement.

"Great news, Brother Thorvald!" began Fru Ingemann, handing him a great white envelope bearing the arms of His Majesty, King Frederik. "When Karen and I were quietly studying the recipe book, and thinking of the dinner far

more than of kings, the bell rang sharply, and, lo and behold! there stood the King's royal *Jaeger*[§§]—in green uniform, three-cornered hat and all—inquiring for you, brother!

"'His Majesty, the King, sends this message to Hr. Professor Svensen,' he said with a gracious bow, and, again bowing low, departed. Karen and I, as you can well imagine, have been guessing everything possible and impossible ever since, and given up in despair, waiting for you to explain it all to us yourself, Thorvald."

By this time, Valdemar's and Karen's eyes were bulging wild with curiosity, and even Mr. Hoffman's face showed extreme interest. What could it be?

"I am summoned to the Royal Palace Tuesday at eleven o'clock," explained Hr. Svensen, "to begin immediate work upon a statue of His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince Olaf of Norway, who has graciously consented to give me a few sittings during his short visit in Denmark."

When Uncle Thor had finished reading, he passed the great white envelope, headed "Royal Palace," with its

§§ Hunter, or Messenger.

interesting contents, over to his sister and the children. Never before had the King's *Jaeger* come to Fru Ingemann's little apartment out on Frederiks-berg-Alle!

Valdemar was the first to speak.

"Oh, Uncle Thor! I wonder if dear little Prince Olaf will pose with his beautiful big dog! He is never without him, you know. And oh, *dear!* Uncle Thor, can't you take me along with you to mix your clay—keep it damp for you, and just do lots of things you'd like done? I want to go with you so much, Uncle Thor, to watch you work! I know I could help you ever so much, if *only* you would just take me!" urged the little embryo sculptor of the now great one.

"My dear little Valdemar," said Uncle Thor with much tenderness in his voice, "you are very welcome to go with me to the Royal Palace 'to watch me work.' But, first, I want to watch you work. Watching me will not do you much good, my little artist, until you have done more work, yourself! This summons may delay my leaving for my summer studio, up at Skagen, until the end of the week, and I am willing to give half of every day, until I go, to teaching you. Now try to have some work ready to show me by to-

morrow. I will bring you more modelling clay when you have used up what you have here. In fact, I will bring you some of my own tools, and some casts for you to use as studies. Perhaps I can fit up a real little studio right here in your own home for you. I want to see what talent you have, Valdemar."

"Oh, brother, how very good of you!" exclaimed Fru Ingemann. "Valdemar must work very hard. He has talent, I feel sure."

They had all finished their soup, a kind of very sweet gruel with vegetables, and a dish of ham was then placed before Fru Ingemann, who carved it, and passed around the slices, beginning with her nearest guest. Fish, preserves, and stewed fruits were served with it. Then followed *Röd-gröd,* a kind of jelly to which the juice of different fruits had been added, tea and coffee, and the little dinner ended with the same ceremony as breakfast. Karl tried to suppress a smile as Valdemar and little Karen courtesied to their mother and uncles, as they said politely: "Thank you for the food," and went around and kissed them.

"My son," said Karl's father, reprovingly, "I like these

beautiful old Danish customs. I only wish you and all our little American boys and girls had more of this feeling of gratitude."

"Come, Karl," called Valdemar, "and see my beautiful Della Robbia 'Singing Boys,' that Uncle Thor brought to me all the way from Italy!"

As the boys disappeared, the two men withdrew to the smoking-room for a chat over their cigars, while Fru Ingemann busied herself assembling all the "birthday flowers" into the front window overlooking the avenue, according to an old-time custom in Copenhagen. Then she tucked little Karen snugly in bed with a great pillow propped up against her feet to keep the drafts off, for the early June day had grown suddenly cooler towards night.

CHAPTER III
"Hurrah for King Frederik!"

"Valdemar, tell me! What is a real king like?" exclaimed Karl, as both boys sprang quickly out of bed bright and early Monday morning. "Is a real king something like a President, only he's all gorgeous with flashing decorations, and a sword and helmet, like the pictures of Napoleon and the German Emperor?"

"Karl, you must have been dreaming about kings! I can't tell you whether a king is like a President or not, for I've never seen a President," said Valdemar. "But I am sure of one thing, and that is that our King isn't one bit like the German Emperor! King Frederik just looks like the very best king Denmark ever had, and that is what he really is!"

"Oh, excuse me, Valdemar. I forgot that you don't love the Germans. But does King Frederik come riding a great

prancing charger with an arched neck and—"

"You'll soon enough see for yourself how the King looks, Karl. Oh, there's Uncle Thor! Uncle Thor, how long before we can start?" cried Valdemar, who was himself almost as excited over the prospect of seeing two great kings at once, as was Karl. Valdemar had never seen King Haakon of Norway, son of his own dear King, and, although Karl, who was nearly twelve years old, had seen two Presidents, and gone once with his father to the White House in Washington, he had never seen a real live king in all his short life.

"Oh, father dear!" he cried, "when can we start? There! I think I heard a bugle! Oh, do let's go!"

"We will start before very long, Karl, but not until you boys have had your tea and bread. And, if I'm not mistaken, I heard Valdemar's uncle say that he was to have a good lesson in drawing this morning. King Haakon's ship does not arrive in Copenhagen harbor before almost noon, so there will be plenty of time."

"Yes, I do want my lesson!" said Valdemar, as they finished their cups of hot tea.

"I'm ready, Uncle Thor," he called out, as he saw his

uncle passing.

Valdemar was in a very happy frame of mind this fine June morning, for his uncle had praised his work of the day before. Valdemar had modelled a half life-sized figure of his Great Dane, Frederik, and, to his great surprise, Uncle Thor had not only said that it was good, but had told his mother that it undeniably showed evidence of real talent. Nothing could please Valdemar more.

Saturday's sightseeing had given them all a taste for more. Fortunately, Karl had brought his bicycle with him from Chicago, and so the two boys followed on their wheels, while Fru Ingemann took her brother, Mr. Hoffman, and little Karen all in a carriage, and drove the length of the beautiful Shore Road, called the *Langelinie*, or Long Line—Copenhagen's fashionable drive, that stretches for miles along the sea. The place was gay with Sunday crowds—walking, riding, wheeling, driving—all out enjoying the warm June sunshine, as well as the bracing sea-breeze.

When they reached the quaint old Citadel, they left the carriage and strolled about the earthworks, viewing the monument made from the guns of the wrecked *Dannebrog,*

a ship fitly named after the Danish flag. Promenaders thronged the Shore Road at this point, gazing at the shipping of all nations which here covered the Sound, and off into the dim distance, at the shores of Sweden.

Karl thought that his Aunt Else must have hosts of little friends, for all the small boys bowed, and the little girls courtesied so prettily, as she passed. But Fru Ingemann explained to him that it was only a custom of all well-bred Danish children to bow and courtesy to their elders, and then she told him how, every spring at *Paaske,* or Easter, as we call it, this beautiful Shore Road is thronged all day long with gay crowds all decked out in their *Paaske* finery, as it is again later at *Store Bededag,* or Great Praying Day, on the fourth Friday after Easter.

From here they drove out to the old Castle of Rosenborg, with its fine garden where little children were playing about the statued-form of their beloved story-teller, Hans Christian Andersen; and then straight home again, passing, on their way, the royal residential quarter, Amalienborg, which forms a great open Square, adorned with the beautiful Marble Church, and in the centre of the Square,

with a statue of King Frederik V.

"Now we're off!" said Uncle Thor, as Valdemar finished a very good drawing lesson, for Karl and his father, and Karen and her mother were already waiting.

At first the electric tram simply flew. But, as they approached the down-town section of the city, its way was often blocked by the dense crowds, who, like themselves, were coming to witness the arrival of Copenhagen's honored royal guest, His Majesty, King Haakon of Norway.

"Norroway-over-the-Foam, as it was once called," laughed Fru Ingemann, "is a land of beauty which we must all visit some day. It is so many, many times the size of our little Denmark that it makes us feel, by comparison at least, a very small country indeed."

"But Denmark occupies more space on the map than either Belgium or Holland," said Valdemar.

"And Denmark is nearly twice the size of Massachusetts," added Karl. "But, oh! Just do look at the terrible crowds!—and right here is where we get off! Father says 'Come!'"

All at once they were thrust into the vast crowd. All

Copenhagen seemed suddenly to have poured by thousands forth into the streets, and the flags of Norway and Denmark floated everywhere side by side.

"If only we can make the opposite side of the street!" said Uncle Thor, nervously looking about him in every direction, "we shall be safe, for right up there, on the second floor of that building, is my friend's office, from the window of which we are to view the royal procession. Ah! we're safe now!"

No sooner had they taken their positions in the large open window, than they heard, in the distance, a cannon's loud report. It was followed by a salute of guns and loud cheering.

"There!" said both boys at once. "That means that King Haakon has landed, and is now on his way here!" The cheering sounded nearer and nearer, and the cannon continued to boom.

"Forty guns!" said Valdemar, who had been counting. "Forty guns is Denmark's royal salute. Karen dear, can you see?"

"Yes, thank you, brother," said the child, whose feet

were fairly dancing with so much excitement. "But look! They are clearing the street! The people are being made to keep back on the sidewalks. Listen! That is our glorious old National Hymn that the splendid Royal Guards are now playing. The King must be near! Listen, Karl! Oh, isn't it all thrilling!"

Nearer and nearer sounded the familiar strains.

"It is splendid, Karen," conceded Karl, "but I'd like the Star Spangled Banner just as well, and, besides, I guess a king's no bigger'n a President! Oh, look!" But it was only an advance guard of mounted police.

"I'm glad, mother, that our window has the largest flag in town flying from it," said Valdemar. "I just do hope the King will look up here and see it! Listen! Now the people are beginning to cheer right down here under our very window! And the men are doffing their hats!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" cheered the loyal thousands, as the scarlet-coated King's Guard came in view.

"Oh!" gasped Karen, with a long-drawn breath of delight. "Oh! isn't it glorious! Hear the bugle! And here come the mounted Hussars with their little red capes

fastened on one shoulder, and swords flashing! How splendidly they ride!"

"Mother, I'm going to wave my own flag when the King's carriage passes!" cried patriotic little Valdemar. "If King Frederik will only look up! Don't you hope he will, Karl? Oh! there's his carriage now! Yes, he sees my flag waving! He's looking! I'm going to cheer! Hurrah for King Frederik!"

The King heard and raised his head. His eyes fell directly upon Valdemar's bright face, as had been the case that long ago day, in the Children's Hospital. King Frederik smiled, bowed, and gave the lad a military salute of recognition. King Haakon was seated beside King Frederik, but Valdemar did not see him. In the following carriage were the two queens. Queen Maud of Norway, and their own beloved Danish Queen Lowisa, with little Crown Prince Olaf, of Norway, seated between them; but Valdemar saw only King Frederik.

"Mother! He *knew* me!" cried Valdemar, as the brilliant procession passed slowly out of sight, and the music, whose strains came faintly back to them, had changed from

Denmark's "Kong Christian" to the Norwegian National Hymn in honor of King Haakon.

CHAPTER IV
Up the Sound to Hamlet's Castle

"Mother dear, how fine and cool the sea-breeze feels!" exclaimed Valdemar, as the little Sound steamer puffed along over the bright Baltic waves, past the big merchant-ships on the blue Sound, making many stops on its way up towards historic old Elsinore, the spot made famous by Shakespeare.

Uncle Oscar had departed three days before, going directly to the Jutland Park, to begin preparations for the entertaining of the thousands of loyal Danish-American visitors, expected to arrive in time for the Fourth celebration, and Fru Ingemann had given him her promise to meet him there, with the three children, for that great event.

For it had not taken Fru Ingemann long to decide that

Uncle Oscar's plan for the summer was best. Summer days are long, but few, in Denmark—the winters cold and stormy—and Karen and Valdemar needed the trip as much as did Karl, she told herself. So the little party of four were already on their way north, to see for themselves all the wonders and beauties of Jutland, of which Karl's father had been telling them.

Once Fru Ingemann had decided, the days fairly flew. Valdemar wanted to start at once. But there was all the packing to be done—of things to be left, and things to be taken—and the flat to be closed for at least several months.

Karen, who had never before been farther from home than their own little villa up on the *Strandvej*, was overjoyed and danced busily about, saving her mother steps in a thousand different ways; while Valdemar and Karl surprised Fru Ingemann by getting out ladders, buckets and brushes, and nicely whitewashing all the flat windows, which was really being very useful indeed.

"Aunt Else, why is our steamer so awfully crowded with people? Are the Sound boats always like this?" asked Karl, who could hardly turn his chair around without knocking

into some one.

"Yes, Karl, it's like this every year at 'Deer-Park-time.' The huge crowds are as eager as ourselves to leave Copenhagen with the first warm day and flee to *Skoven,*[*] for we Danes love our beautiful woods. With the first bursting of the beech-buds, everybody asks everybody else: 'Have you been in the woods yet?' And then by thousands—young and old—they flock to our beloved beech-woods. Those who cannot find room on the boats take the first train, or carriage, or cycle, or car, or even foot it—any way at all in order to reach the Deer Park, for that is where most of them go. After we make a stop there, we shall have plenty of room on our boat, Karl. Look! We are passing Charlottenlund, the Crown Prince's palace. You can see it up among those fine old trees."

"Then, Aunt Else," asked Karl, "isn't 'Deer-Park-time' something like our American 'Indian Summer,' only that it comes in the spring? It's your finest part of spring, and our best part of fall, when every one wants to live out of doors. Isn't that it?"

[*] The woods.

"That's just right, Karl," laughed Fru Ingemann. "And a little Danish boy would feel almost as badly not to be taken to the beechwoods when 'Deer-Park-time' comes, as would a little English boy if he got no plum pudding on Christmas day, or a little Scotch boy without his currant bun on New Year's Day, or a nice little American boy like you, Karl, if he couldn't have any firecrackers for his Fourth of July celebration. But here we are stopping at the Deer Park now. Half the people are getting off."

Valdemar's eyes looked far beyond the disembarking crowds landing at the pier. He saw only the dark pine trees in the distance, straight and tall, suggesting to his imaginative mind giant masts for Viking ships. Many a fine day had he spent tramping through those tree-shaded walks with his mother, while she told him wonderful stories about Denmark's great heroes of old.

"In America, we like to go to the woods, too," said Karl; "but not just to walk and walk all day. We like to play ball, or climb the trees for nuts, or keep doing something all the time. Do you ever do anything but just walk, in your woods?"

"Sometimes, on a warm summer's evening in the woods, we sing some beautiful old hymn, like Grundtwig's:

"'Danes have their home where the fair beeches grow,
By shores where forget-me-nots cluster,
And fairest to us, by cradle and grave,
The blossoming field by the swift-flowing wave.'

"There are no people in all the world, Karl, who have the same simple love for their trees, as do the Danes," explained his Aunt Else. "There, Karl, we are starting again," said Valdemar.

The beautiful Deer Park, with its masses and pyramids of green foliage, followed the Sound-Shore for five miles before the steamer had left it behind. The boat kept close to the shore, stopping frequently at the little, red-roofed settlements, inviting little villas and sea-bathing resorts, to let off more passengers, for everybody in Copenhagen who can, must lie on the *Strandvej* for at least a part of every summer, enjoying the out-of-doors amusements, the bathing, the woods, sea, sky and sunshine. Nestling among the trees of the *Strandvej*, for miles, were little white, yellow, and green villas, among them Fru Ingemann's—at the sight

of which Karen, who always felt a little sick on the water, brightened, and exclaimed:

"There, Karl, is ours! You must come back and spend another summer with us up there. We do have the best times, don't we, Valdemar?"

The afternoon was singularly fine. Hundreds of ships were gliding silently past them in one continuous procession.

"Why," exclaimed Karl, "there must be the flags of every nation on the globe. I've counted the Russian, German, French, English, Swedish, Norwegian, Italian, Greek, Spanish and Portuguese flags, and, look!—there is a steamer with our dear old United States flag! How narrow the sound is growing, Aunt Else. The mountains of Sweden look nearer and nearer. I believe that, if I yelled loud enough, the people over there could easily hear me."

"Yes, Karl, we must be nearing Helsingör, for the Sound certainly is narrowing rapidly. It is less than two miles wide at that point. It hardly seems three hours since we left Copenhagen," remarked Fru Ingemann.

"Oh, mother, look! Isn't that old Kronborg now?"

exclaimed Valdemar. "That is surely Hamlet's Castle, mother! Helsingör is where we land!"

"Yes, it is grim old Kronborg Castle, Valdemar. Many a tale its old gray walls could tell of terrible fighting, royal merrymaking, and of sadness. Karen and you, boys, shall go all through it when we land. For three hundred years Kronborg was the key to the Sound, keeping a sentry-like guard over the gate between the Baltic and the North Sea. For before the Kiel Canal was cut, as many as twenty thousand ships every year passed through this narrow strait, bound for Russian and Swedish ports; and Denmark grew rich from the Sound dues she collected. Now, the gates are open to the ships of all countries, and, when foreign sovereigns or men-of-war glide through this narrow silvery streak dividing Sweden and Denmark, old Kronborg's cannon give a friendly salute. But, come, we are landing now."

It was but a few minutes' walk up to the frowning old fortress on the promontory, with its many lofty, gray stone towers rising from the castellated roof. Karl was seeing for the first time in all his life a real "fairy-tale" castle,

surrounded by a broad moat and ramparts.

First they were shown the apartments occupied by the royal family when, at rare times, they visit Kronborg. Passing a little chapel, with its carved choir-stalls and pulpit, they found themselves, after a fatiguing ascent, out upon the flat roof of a great square tower, from which they gazed in admiration in all directions, for the day was remarkably clear and bright.

Far and near, over land and sea, the view was magnificent. To the east rose the mountainous Swedish coast, and, to the north, the gleaming blue waters of the Sound expanded into the equally blue Kattegat. All was still, like noon. Nothing seemed to move but the multitude of white sails silently passing and repassing through the narrow silvery strait below.

"Mother dear, do you think I shall ever be able to paint anything so beautiful as this? Uncle Thor could do it justice, mother; but I—"

"Yes, dear. If you work hard enough," was his mother's only answer, as she drew his coat collar closer about his neck, for a chill wind had risen.

"The Swedish coast is so near, mother, that I can see the windows of the houses," said Karen. "The coast doesn't look dangerous, does it, mother; but Valdemar says the guard told him he had seen as many as six shipwrecks here in one night."

"Yes, child, there are often bad storms on this coast; for the Kattegat is very rough and dangerous at times. Now we must go."

"But, Aunt Else, I want to see the famous platform where the ghost of Hamlet's father walked that night," protested Karl, as the little party started down.

"Why, my dear boy, the ghost of Hamlet's father is believed to have paraded this very platform, right here where we are standing," laughed his aunt, as she put her arm about little Karen, who shuddered at the thought.

"Don't you know the familiar verse, Karl?

"'And I knew that where I was standing,
In old days long gone by,
Hamlet had heard at midnight
The ominous spectre cry.'

"This is, indeed, the far-famed castle of Elsinore, of

glorious Shakespeare's fancy, Karl. You must, of course, have read about it in your school in Chicago," said Fru Ingemann, with a twinkle in her eye. "Through the magic of Shakespeare's great genius this out-of-the-way corner of our beloved little Denmark has become forever famous the whole world over. But come quickly, all of you; we have much yet to see this afternoon, before we take our steamer for Aarhus."

"Wasn't it here in this fortress, too, that beautiful Queen Caroline Matilda was imprisoned until her brother, George III, sent her to Germany, where she soon died?" asked Valdemar, as they hurried down.

"And, oh, Aunt Else, isn't it right here in this castle that Holger Danske stays?" demanded Karl.

"Yes, Valdemar, Queen Caroline Matilda was a prisoner here; and Karl, no one can ever see Holger Danske, although it is believed that he is alive somewhere down in the underground vaults of this fortress, and that, whenever Denmark needs him, he will arise and come to her aid. All little Danish boys know him. Valdemar, you tell Karl the story," said Fru Ingemann, as the little party hurried on.

"Well, Karl, Holger Danske is the great national hero of Danish tradition, the founder of the Danish nation, in fact," began Valdemar, who was thoroughly familiar with his country's history and traditions. "Holger Danske's cradle was a warrior's shield, so the story goes, and he sits down in the deep dark dungeon of this fortress, all alone, clad in iron and steel, his head forever resting on his strong arms, bending over a marble table to which his great long beard has grown fast. There he forever slumbers and dreams that he sees and knows everything that is happening above in his beloved Denmark. Whenever his country is in peril, or stands in need of his services, he will appear. But, every Christmas night, one of God's angels visits him in his dungeon, and assures him that all his dreams are true, and that Denmark is threatened with no extraordinary danger, and that he may sleep on again."

As they reached the Castle grounds, the guide pointed out the old moat, where Ophelia drowned herself, and the spring nearby that bears her name. Then he took them to the grave of the melancholy Dane, in a beautiful shaded spot, marked by a moss-grown cairn of stones, and a granite

shaft bearing the inscription:

"HAMLET'S GRAV."

CHAPTER V
"Fairy-Tale" Castles and Palaces

"'Fredensborg' means 'Castle of Peace.' It is an idyllic spot near here, famous the whole world over as the happy holiday gathering-place, every summer, of half the present crowned heads, majesties, and royal highnesses of Europe," said Fru Ingemann. "Let us take this waiting carriage now for a quick drive over there and back again in time for our steamer this afternoon to Aarhus. All this part of Eastern Zealand is so rich in romantic, fairy-tale castles and palaces, that I only wish we had time enough to see them all. But Fredensborg's hospitable roof has sheltered all the royal children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of good old King Christian IX of Denmark, who was affectionately called 'The Grandfather of Europe.' Only think of a family reunion including King Frederik VIII and Queen Lowisa,

of Denmark; their son, King Haakon, of Norway; former Queen Alexandra, of England, and her sister, the Dowager Empress Dagmar, of Russia, who were both Danish princesses; King George and Queen Mary, of England; King George, of Greece; and the Czar of all the Russias—all meeting, every summer, in a quiet little family reunion in our obscure little Denmark at Fredensborg Palace!"

"But, Aunt Else, you left out the German Emperor!" observed Karl, who persisted in always mentioning the Germans.

"The German Emperor never comes to these royal gatherings, Karl. He is the only king who is not welcomed on Danish soil," explained Fru Ingemann, gently. "But here we are now at the palace."

They approached the palace through an avenue of magnificent old lindens, through whose interlaced branches they caught glimpses of the blue sky and of the still bluer Lake Esrom, nearby. Then, entering a very stony courtyard, the carriage stopped before a few steps, guarded by two stone lions.

Soon they were walking through the apartments of the

Queen, on the right, and of those of the King, on the left. From the King's plain working room, on the floor above, they looked out over the beautiful Marble Garden, so called from the elaborate statuary romantically placed among the old beech-trees, under whose deep shadows King Edward and Queen Alexandra of England, did their courting. Nor was theirs the only royal love tale those mighty old trees could tell.

In one room still stood the historic old Settee of the Czar, so called because the present Czar's father, who loved children, used to sit there and play for hours with his own royal children, whom he loved so well.

Nothing interested them all more than the inscriptions —tender and pathetic—which they found on several of the historic old windows. Karl could only read a few, which happened to be in English, such as "Alexandra, September, 1868," and another, "Willie," which the King of Greece had written. But, when it came to a French inscription: *Que Dieu veille sur la Famille Royale et la protége,* Alexandra, 1867," Karl had to call upon Valdemar to translate it for him, as well, of course, as all the Danish ones.

"'May God watch over the royal family and protect it,' is the translation of the French one, Karl, by Queen Alexandra; and Olga, Queen of Greece, has written in Danish here on this window: *'Danmark, Danmark, elskede Hjem,'* which means : 'Denmark, Denmark, beloved home,' and here is a touching one by the late Czar: *'Farv el kjaere gamle Fredensborg,'* 'Farewell, dear old Fredensborg.'"

"And, mother," said Karen, "here is: 'Farewell, my beloved Fredensborg. Alexandra, September, 1868;' and 'Christian-Louise, 1864,' and 'Valdemar-Marie, 1885.'"

They drove away through the royal grounds, which reached down to the shores of beautiful Esrom Lake, glimmering like a sapphire in the setting sun's soft light, and were soon back once more at Helsingor.

"Aunt Else," said Karl, "Fredensborg Castle looked exactly like the pictures of castles in the books of fairy tales."

"If that is what you like, Karl, then some day you must surely see Frederiksborg Palace, in the lovely forest region north of Copenhagen. It stands on an island in a lake, and is all spires, turrets and battlements, and certainly looks like

a real fairy-tale castle," said Fru Ingemann. "Some of its venerable beeches are five hundred years old. But here is the little inn where we must have something nice and warm to eat before we take our steamer, in just a few minutes, for we will be sailing all night. We have barely time, if we hurry."

After finishing their little dinner of hot cinnamon-flavored soup, broiled fish, rye bread, preserves and *röd-gröd,* all of which tasted so good after their drive back through the woods, they boarded the little steamer which was to take them on their all-night trip over the Kattegat to Aarhus, on the east coast of the peninsula of Jutland, or the Continent, as the Danes call it.

"Aunt Else, on one of those windows at Fredensborg, was the inscription: 'Valdemar - Marie, 1885.' Won't you tell me all about the Valdemars? They were Denmark's greatest kings, weren't they?" urged Karl.

"Yes, but Valdemar will be glad to tell you all about them and about all the other kings of Denmark, too, Karl; but wait—here comes Fróken Johanne Nielsen, with her little nephews, Tykke and Hans, to talk to us. Fróken

Nielsen is a great traveller. Children, don't you remember meeting them one summer up on the *Strandvej?*"

Karen courtesied prettily, while the boys arose, bowed, and politely gave their seats to the Nielsens. Then Fru Ingemann listened while Fróken Johanne, who only remained a few minutes, told them of the famous sights of Stevns Klint, or cliff, on Zealand's eastern coast, where they had just been; and of the still more wonderful scenery on the romantic little island of Moen, in the Baltic, where the dazzling white limestone cliffs of Lille and the Store Klint adorn the sea-coast, and where the summer-time sunset comes after nine o'clock, and the clear northern light lasts until morning.

"And don't forget about Faxö, Aunt Johanne, or Svendborg. Faxö was the best of all," put in little Tykke, as he delved deep down into his pockets and brought forth some pieces of fine coral.

"Yes, Faxö is an ancient coral crag jutting out into the Baltic," explained Fróken Johanne. "It is full of beautiful and rare fossils, and from Svendborg, on Fyen Island, we had such a beautiful view for miles and miles. From one

high place the children could see alternate land and water five times, as well as the coasts of Sweden and Germany. The islands seemed like stepping-stones in the Baltic. But come, children, say good-bye; we must go."

While they had been talking the setting sun had thrown a yellow glory over the waters in front of Elsinore, which was now fading slowly away. The forests about the old castle on the promontory became dark, blurred masses, and the white sails below were mere moving shadows. The children could no longer see even the many fine specimens of fossils and coral which Hans and Tykke had generously divided with them.

The little steamer advanced upon the rolling Kattegat, with great flocks of white-winged seagulls following in its wake. Fru Ingemann noticed that Karen, who never could stand the churning motion of a boat, was turning perceptibly pale, and that a vague, uncertain feeling seemed to be creeping over even Valdemar and Karl, so she took her sleepy little brood below and soon had them all tucked snugly into bed for the night.

CHAPTER VI
The Legend of the Sacred "*Dannebrog*"

"It's a letter from Uncle Oscar, mother! I just know it is!" cried Valdemar, as Fru Ingemann opened and commenced reading aloud the only letter found awaiting them the next day, upon their arrival in the ancient town of Aarhus.

"And best of all," concluded the letter, "I have a great surprise in store for you all when you reach the Park next week. Karl will be especially delighted."

"Oh, Aunt Else, what can it be? How I wish I knew what father means!" exclaimed Karl, dancing about the room in anticipation of so soon seeing his father again.

"Let us make plans quickly," said Fru Ingemann. "I am wondering how we shall ever crowd into one short week all the fine trips and excursions we shall want to take before we leave here, for Fru Petersen tells me that the

surrounding country is far more interesting than Aarhus itself."

"Yes, mother, the Riis Skov and the Marselisborg Skov, on the outskirts of Aarhus, are at their very best now for picnicking," added Valdemar, who always loved the woods. "A farmer passed us on our wheels this morning, and told us so."

"And he said we should not fail to visit the beautiful chains of lakes and fir-forests around Silkeborg," put in Karl. "He told us that Silkeborg was once just a manor, the property of the bishops of Aarhus; and that it came to be built in such a funny way. He said that one of the bishops was so charmed with the scenery in that part of the country that he took a vow that he would build a house wherever his silk cap, which a gust of wind had blown away, should remain. And so the strange name came about. Isn't that a funny story, Karen? Can't we go over to Silkeborg right now, Aunt Else?"

"Oh, not to-day, Karl, for it's much too late. Besides, the sky looks threatening. I thought I heard something like low, distant thunder just a moment ago. But to-morrow we can

take an all-day trip over to Mt. Himmelbjaerg and back, if we're all up bright and early in the morning," said Fru Ingemann.

They were stopping with the Petersen family, in a little red-roofed, many-gabled house on a quiet side street in Aarhus. Karen and her mother had taken a short walk through the residential portion of the old town and back, and the two boys had been out on their wheels most of the day, eagerly exploring every nook and cranny of the healthy little trading city on the Kattegat, which was a town of standing in the far-off days when Copenhagen was but a mere little fishing village. They had ridden past the Public Library, the artistic Custom-house, pretty little theatre, the interesting Art Gallery, with its fine collections by Danish artists, the grim old red-brick Gothic Cathedral, with its gables, narrow pointed windows and massive tower, and finally down to the busy harbor of Jutland's thriving capital, where large vessels enter, for it is built out on the open shore.

"Aunt Else, the other day, I remember, you called Jutland 'the peninsula;' Fru Petersen always says 'the

Continent;' and once I heard somebody speak of 'us Islanders;' so which is it?" asked Karl.

"I'm not surprised that you are confused, Karl. I will try to explain it all to you," said his aunt. "Denmark is literally an Island Kingdom, for she has about two hundred islands in all, situated at the entrance of the Baltic. Since the cutting of the Kiel Canal, even Jutland, which originally was, and still is in name, the Cimbrian Peninsula, has now become in reality an island, some of whose parts, being actually below the sea-level, are protected by dykes and embankments. Even the Limfjord, which is no longer a fjord but a Sound, cuts Jutland in two again, adding one more to the list of Denmark's many islands. Even Copenhagen, Denmark's capital, is built upon two islands—the great island of Zealand and the little island of Slotsholmen, over which it extends.

"Besides these, and many other smaller islands of the Danish archipelago, Denmark has colonies, much larger than herself, which, strangely enough, are all islands. One is Iceland, with its volcanic fires and geysers spouting through the ice; and the great snow-buried island of

Greenland is another of Denmark's frigid possessions. There is also a group of islands in the West Indies."*

"Yes, Aunt Else, thank you for telling me all about it. But I do wish I knew what father's 'great surprise' is to be!" sleepily murmured Karl, closing his eyes. "Valdemar, you were going to tell us all about Denmark's kings. Won't you do it now?"

"Yes, do, brother," begged Karen, as she yawned and buried her flaxen head in a big, soft pillow. "Tell my best stories to such a sleepy audience? I guess not!" said Valdemar, himself yawning.

"Such a sleepy lot of children! Off to bed, every one of you, and up early in the morning," said Fru Ingemann, kissing them good night.

Hardly had they been in bed an hour, when a terrific thunder-storm broke over Aarhus. With the first deafening crash of thunder, the whole Petersen family sprang from

* In 1902, the United States negotiated with Denmark for the purchase of St. Thomas, one of these islands, as a coaling station, or naval base; but the Danish Rigsdag refused, by a single vote, to authorize the sale. It is believed the matter will shortly be again considered by the two countries.
Addendum: The sale took place in 1917 and is still the location of a United States military installation.

their beds, dressed and rushed to the sitting-room, where they huddled around the great tile stove, their arms loaded down with their most treasured family possessions, Fru Petersen herself carrying the family plate and the cherished recipe book, which in Danish households is handed down from grandmother to mother and daughter.

The storm passed as quickly as it had come. By morning the ground was dry, the sky fair and blue, and Fru Ingemann and her charges well on their way to famous old Himmelbjaerg, which means Heaven's Mountain, for it is the highest spot in all Denmark.

"Why didn't we all jump out of our beds last night, too, mother," questioned Karen, as their train was passing through much low, hilly country, in the midst of beautiful woods and lakes.

"Oh, that was just *noget snak,*[†] Karen. The Petersens were brought up in the country, and they were afraid of fire by lightning. But here we are, Karl, in the scattered little town of Silkeborg, where the bishop's silk cap blew."

They first armed themselves with a large basket of

[†] Some nonsense.

provisions, then took a trim little motor-boat, which carried them past woods and gardens and picturesque little stork-inhabited farmsteads, up a pleasant river which soon widened into a lake, and then from one blue lake into another, on and on, until they finally stopped at the foot of heather-covered old Himmelbjaerg, on whose summit they could see a tall, obelisk-like monument.

"It's Denmark's Pike's Peak! Isn't it, Aunt Else?" exclaimed Karl in delight. "Father and I have climbed Pike's Peak in Colorado, and, I can tell you, mountain climbing is just lots of fun! Can't we go to the very top to-day, Aunt Else?"

With their long alpenstocks, Karen and the boys led the way up the gentle slope, while Fru Ingemann closely followed with the basket of good things to eat—*smörrebröd*, oranges, tarts, cake and sugar-plums, which disappeared as though by magic when they spread them on the grass in the shadow of the great brick tower.

The view from the "Kol," or top, was indescribably beautiful, reaching as far as the eye could see over far-stretching forests, and valleys and corn fields and chains of

lakes, in every direction to the unbroken horizon.

"Mother, mother! how wonderful!" exclaimed Valdemar, after he had looked long and silently at the impressive scene before him. "It's like one of Turner's great paintings!"

The grass on the mountain-side waved in the strong summer wind. Beetles hummed, insects buzzed in the heather about them, and a little field-lark, perched on a near-by beech-tree, poured forth its song, while Karen chased the brilliant-winged butterflies as they dashed through the sunlight.

"'Erected by Frederik VII,'" read Valdemar aloud, deciphering the inscription on the base of the brick tower.

Karen and Karl came running up, their arms full of mountain wild-flowers they had found almost hidden among the deep heather.

"Valdemar, are you going to tell us all about the Danish kings now?" urged Karl, who was a good student of United States history, and loved hero-tales of any country. "Please start at the very beginning. Karen wants to hear, too."

"And after the story is finished, perhaps we shall have time for a little row on the lake," added Fru Ingemann.



“They spread them on the grass in the shadow of the great brick tower.”

Quickly they ranged themselves comfortably on the grass in the shade of one of Himmelbjaerg's giant old beeches, whose long arms swept the ground about them.

"Denmark means 'land of dark woods,'" began Valdemar, who loved his beautiful country, and was familiar with her legends and history from his babyhood up. "The Northmen were a fire-worshipping heathen people, according to Snorre Sturlason, who says that Odin, their chief god, was a real personage, who used to appear to men. But all this early history of Denmark is so full of legend, petty fights of kings, piratical exploits, and strange, wild stories and romances of the Skalds, that it is very hard to tell which is fact or fable, until we come to the last thousand years of Danish history.

"But in those early mythological days, when Denmark was covered with dark forests of mighty firs, Dan the Famous was one of the earliest kings, reigning in 1038 B.C. He became powerful, after uniting many small chieftains to himself, and so, according to some authorities, the country was called 'Danmark,' or the border of the 'Dans,' or Danes.

"Gorm the Old, in the middle of the ninth century, was

really the first king to rule over the whole of Denmark, and his was called the Golden Age. His beautiful young wife, Queen Thyra Dannebod (the Dane's Joy), was full of goodness and wisdom, and after Gorm's death, she built the famous Dannewirke, a great wall that stretched across Denmark from the North Sea to the Baltic, for her people's protection against the fearful inroads and plunderings of their southern neighbors. One may see the graves near Jellinge, to-day, of Gorm the Old and Queen Thyra, two heather-covered, flat-topped cairns marked by massive old Runic stones.

"Then Gorm's son, King Harold Blaatand (Blue-tooth),[‡] ruled over Denmark, and was slain one night as he slept by a camp-fire, by the gold-tipped arrow of his heathen enemy, Planatoke. After him came his son, Svend Tveskaeg, who commenced the conquest of England, which was ended by Knud den Store, or Canute the Great, thus uniting the crowns of both kingdoms during his reign and that of his son, Harthaknud (Hardicanute), who was

[‡] This is the origin of the name for our modern Bluetooth technology.

followed by King Svend Estridsen.

"Sometime I must tell Karl some of the wonderful tales I've read about all these old kings—tales re-told from the ancient Sagas and Chronicles, with their warrior-songs, giant-songs, hero-tales and ballads. Danish literature is full of them.

"But now we come to the three great Valdemars, and their glorious battles."

"And all about our *Dannebrog*—the flag that fell from heaven, Valdemar," broke in Karen, who never could hear that story often enough.

"And tell us all about the king who was put into a bag, won't you, Valdemar?" urged Karl.

"Yes, I'm coming right now to both those stories, which happened in the reign of Valdemar II. But first I want to say that it was Valdemar I who cleared the Baltic and North Seas of all the terrible Wend pirates, and it was also during his reign that Denmark's war-like bishop, Absalon, founded Copenhagen and gave the people a constitution.

"With Valdemar II a great and glorious era for Denmark set in. The old ballads and folk-songs tell how he courted

Dagmar, the fair Bohemian princess, for his bride, and never was a Danish queen more beloved by her people.

"Indeed, the Golden Age seemed to have returned to Denmark under the early reign of this successful young monarch, who was as knightly and handsome as he was courageous. His empire grew until he finally became master of Holstein, Schwerin, and all the provinces of Northern Germany, and his people called him Valdemar Seir (the Victorious). When the Pope granted him sovereignty over all the peoples he could convert, he set out upon a crusade against the pagans of Esthonia, with more than a thousand ships, and many thousands of men. With the Pope's blessing he sailed across the Baltic, but so vast did the host of the enemy appear, as his fleet neared the shore, that the Danes at first feared to land. But their archbishop reassured them, and they landed in safety. Towards evening, with King Valdemar at their head, the battle raged furiously. The struggle grew fiercer and fiercer, until the Danes, who were outnumbered, were beginning to give way, when there arose a great cry: 'The Banner! The Banner!' Pagan and Christian paused. All eyes turned towards the sky, where,

as though miraculously flung from heaven, was seen falling into the midst of the Christian ranks a blood-red banner bearing a great white cross—our sacred *Dannebrog.* 'For God and the King,' cried the crusading Christians, as they seized the Heaven-sent flag, and again charged their enemy, who now fled in terror. The victory was won, and the *Dannebrog*, from that hour, became the sacred national standard of Denmark.

"Now I'm coming to the 'king in a bag' story, Karl," said Valdemar. "Denmark's power was now supreme throughout Scandinavia, Northern Germany and even over to Russia. Valdemar's reign was at its height. His people adored him. But there were secret foes—the conquered princes of Germany—awaiting his downfall. Among them was one in particular called Black Henry, who hated Valdemar, and was biding his chance to overthrow, if not to kill him. All in one single night the treacherous deed was done. Wearied by a day spent in hunting, the King and his son slept that night in a small, unguarded tent in the woods of the little island on Lyö. Suddenly their slumber was broken into by an unseen foe. The King could scarcely

move, or speak, or see, or breathe. Black Henry had fallen upon King Valdemar and his son, bound, gagged and tied them up into two bags, and fled with his royal captives to a waiting boat in the river, and hurried them to Germany, where they were thrown into prison.

"Some years after, the King was ransomed by his loyal people with gold and lands, and he finally returned to his beloved Denmark amid the greatest rejoicing, to find most of his splendor gone. He was no longer king of a great empire, but he had his people's love, and spent his remaining years faithfully improving all the laws of his country."

"Oh, what glorious stories you do tell!" exclaimed Karl, who, with Karen, had been listening spell-bound to the end. "I shall never again see the famous old *Dannebrog* without thinking of that wonderful story of how it fell from heaven, and saved the battle for the Danes."

"If Valdemar never makes his mark in the world as a celebrated sculptor, he certainly will as a great historian, with that memory of his," said his mother, indulgently. The afternoon sun was sinking in the west as they made their

way down the mountainside, and soon left beautiful old Himmelbjaerg far behind.

CHAPTER VII
The Story of the Danish "Ahlhede"

Soon they were tramping past wind-tossed rye-fields and through sweet-smelling meadows from which, every now and then, a long-legged stork flapped its wings and flew skyward at their approach.

Their way to the boats of pretty Tul Lake—gleaming through the trees in the sunlight—lay along the banks of the Gudenna River, which has its source among the picturesque hills near Veile; then meanders northward through ranges of hills and green fields, winding with many a bend and curve on past old Himmelbjaerg, past Silkeborg and Randers, finally emptying through Randers Fjord into the Kattegat.

"Are you looking for the row-boats?" came a sweet voice just behind them. "They are just around the bend. I will show you the way."

Turning in the direction of the voice, Valdemar saw a pretty, rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed little peasant girl, in embroidered bodice and cap, carrying a great arm-load of poppies and forget-me-nots, and, stiltily walking along the middle of the road back of her, was a great white, red-billed stork.

"There are the boats now," she said, pointing down a wooded bank just ahead of them, and turning to go. Fru Ingemann offered her a small coin with her thanks and a smile, but the proud child refused the coin with an indignant: *"Nej tak! Ingenting! Ingenting!"*[*] and started on her way—the stork still following in stately tread.

"Is that your stork?" Karl couldn't help calling after her, for he thought it awfully funny to see the big white stork following a little girl in such friendly fashion.

"My stork? Why, no! I have no stork," laughed the merry-faced little peasant maid. "But there is a stork's nest on the top of the white church tower over there, and another one up on farmer Andersen's chimney, where he placed an old wagon wheel last year for them. And over

[*] "No, thank you! Nothing! Nothing!"

yonder, in the eaves of the village houses, there must be several hundred storks. They are very tame, and often follow the plough in search of food for their nestlings, which they find in the newly-turned earth. This is their nesting time now. Then, when fall comes, they will fly with their little ones down to France and Egypt for the winter. But the same storks always come back. This same one followed me about last year. I think it knows me."

In Karl's land there were no friendly, red-legged storks stalking about the country roads, but he had read all about them in his "Andersen's Fairy Tales."

"Storks bring happiness and good luck," explained Valdemar, "and to kill a stork in Denmark is a greater crime, if anything, than to kill a fox in England."

As the boat moved out into the blue lake, through the silent reeds and water-lilies along the shore, with its drowsy white swans, Karl could still see in the distance the little peasant girl with her wild-flowers, the stork in the middle of the road still keeping stately pace with her. Then he burst out laughing at the funny sight.

Valdemar and Karl were both good oarsmen, and so

they rowed far out across the lake, then drifted lazily along, while Fru Ingemann entertained them with one of Evald's charming fairy-tales, parts of Öhlenschläger's delightful "Aladdin," and tales from old Danish Saga-lore.

"Mother, won't you sing something?" begged Valdemar, who always loved to hear his mother's beautiful voice.

"Yes, while you are both rowing back to shore, for it is growing late," said Fru Ingemann, as she began and sang for them one of Weyses's old Saga-like romances.

The cool evening breezes, whispering among the trees, told them that the long, happy day was over, and that they must catch their train back to Aarhus at once.

Then came the day when they went by boat down the coast and sailed up Veile Fjord, to spend two happy days at the Munkebjerg,[†] with many a ramble through the woods, guided to and from all the loveliest views by following the red or the yellow arrows on the trees, pausing now and then, after a stiff climb, to rest a moment in front of some little wooden chalet, or to sit and enjoy the scene from Atilla's Bench or Baron Lovenskjold's Bench, if they had

[†] **Monk's Mountain**

followed the red route, or at Ryeholm's Bench or The Bench of the Four-Leaved Clover, when they had followed the yellow marks.

And from Munkebjerg they had gone to Jellinge, a town perched upon the breezy upland, and there they saw the two large, flat-topped, heather-covered "barrows," or graves, of Gorm the Old and Queen Thyra, of which Valdemar had been telling them, and Karl was surprised to hear that there still remained in Zealand, alone, some thousands of these Viking cairns, or Warrior's Hills, as they are called.

Then, as the end of their short week drew near, the children begged Fru Ingemann to take them by motor-car to Randers, where the famous annual Horse-Fair was being held, and they strolled through the streets of the cheerful old town, with its quaint old houses with their slanting roofs and protruding windows.

The Danish flag, with its sharp white cross on a blood-red field, fluttered everywhere. Hundreds of them decorated the exhibition field, to which the towns-folk and farmers, in their Sunday-best, swarmed, from far and near,

to hear the speeches and witness the awarding of prizes to the superbly groomed, arch-necked horses of the famous Jutland breed.

The children had hoped to see the peasants still wearing Hessian boots and velvet coats covered with great silver buttons, but Fru Ingemann told them it was fifty years too late for that. They bought tickets—little bits of blue and white ribbon with "Randers" and the date printed on them —to the cake-man's booth, and there they bought all sorts of cakes fantastically made into queer-shaped men and horses and hearts, all covered with sugar and almonds and candies, each with a little motto on it.

Karen soon grew tired and sleepy, so they did not stay to witness the general fun and frolic and peasant dancing at night. As they left the grounds Karl, who was beginning to learn a few Danish words, exclaimed at an advertisement he saw on a signboard: *Industriforeningshygningen!*‡ "Valdemar, is all that just one word?" he asked.

"Just one word, Karl," replied his cousin.

"As we are all to leave Monday morning for the Park,

‡ Manufacturers and Sealer's Associations Building

and Randers is half-way there," said Fru Ingemann, "I have decided not to return to Aarhus at all, but to remain here over Sunday."

No one wanted to go anywhere on Sunday, so the day was quietly passed at home. In Monday morning's mail came a letter from Uncle Thor, asking how soon Valdemar could start up to Skagen, and also a telegram from Uncle Oscar, saying: "Meet me at noon, Monday, at Ribald. Pleasant surprise for Karl."

"Oh, Aunt Else, what can father's surprise be? I don't see how I can ever wait to find out." But his aunt only advised him to be more patient, for he would soon know.

"Tell me all about the Heath then, Aunt Else, and this Park, where we are going," said Karl, as their train sped rapidly northward through the low moorland hills, past clover fields where herds of fat red Danish cattle stood separately tethered; past prosperous little farms, some of them with their waving rye-fields, others all aglow with yellowing grain.

"Long, long ago," began Fru Ingemann, "in the days when Grandmother Ingemann was only a little girl, before

there was any telegraphs or telephones, the very heart of all Jutland—as large a space as the whole island of Zealand—was just a dangerous, wild, barren desert, all sand and peat-bogs. The few Heath-dwellers who tried to live there led very lonely and dangerous lives. The Natmaend, a strange race of gypsy robbers, smugglers and kidnappers, wandered there. History records many dark tragedies enacted on the Heath. It was on Grathe Heath that young King Valdemar the Great met and overpowered his treacherous enemy, Svend; and, a century later, the Heath was the scene of a still grimmer tragedy, the murder of King Erik by Marsk Stig.

"The Ahlhede, or All-Heath, as the Danes called it, had not always been a desert-land, covered for miles with Viking barrows. There had once been beautiful forests of spruce and oak and fir-trees stretching over this four thousand miles of waste land. But what forests the long droughts and merciless west winds and cold blasts from the North Sea failed to destroy the ancient Vikings and their subjects cut down for their ships, huts and for fuel, leaving only a great silent, desolate, desert land. It remained thus

for such ages that no one ever believed that it could be reclaimed—that is, no one until Captain Dalgas set to working out his dreams and theories for conquering it. His hope was to win back to Denmark, through the conquering of the Heath, the territory lost through the Schlesvig-Holstein war. He formed the Heath Society and replanted the treeless wastes.

"To-day, countless farmsteads, meadows and pastures of the Danish peasantry dot the Heath from Germany to the Skaw. Trees again flourish; all has been changed as if by magic, and the plough goes over more and more acres of it every year, until a group of patriotic Danes, like your Uncle Oscar, have taken alarm lest all the breezy stretches of heather be reduced to farms, and none of the old-time Heath be preserved untouched for its own natural beauty's sake."

"Uncle persuaded a lot of Danes away off in Chicago, where he lives, to buy up a lot of the wildest and most beautiful part of it so that Denmark might keep it forever as a Park. Isn't that it, mother?" questioned Valdemar.

"Yes, exactly, Valdemar," replied his mother. "And,

because of the untiring efforts of a group of patriotic American Danes, like your Uncle Oscar, a beautiful wild spot of three hundred acres up in Northern Jutland, near Ribald, has been purchased, and will be formally presented to the Danish government as a reservation, with the one condition that, every year, in that spot, when Danish-Americans cross the ocean to meet there and celebrate their Fourth of July on Danish soil, the Stars and Stripes shall float above Denmark's sacred *Dannebrog.* Now that everything is ready, the Park is to be formally presented to the Danish Government."

"Presented to-day, mother?" asked Karen in surprise.

"Yes, this very afternoon. There will be a great crowd. Every steamer for weeks past has been bringing over hundreds of Americans, and, Karl, look out, for you may meet some of your Chicago friends among them."

"From home, Aunt Else? There's nobody I'd rather see from home than my own mother!" said little Karl, rather wistfully. "Gee! I do wish I could see my mother! I just wonder what daddy's 'great surprise' can be! Oh, just look at the big crowd!"

The train had stopped. "Ribald!" sang out the conductor. In a twinkling the car was emptied. As Fru Ingemann and her charges reached the platform, Karl saw two waving handkerchiefs making their way through the dense crowd towards him, and in an instant more he felt his mother's arms around him.

"Mother! mother! I'm so glad you've come!" he cried in joy. "Daddy, you did give me a pleasant surprise!" He laughed as Fru Ingemann and her sister Amalia greeted each other.

"Aunt Amalia, won't you stay over here in Denmark with us all summer?" urged Valdemar, as the happy little party was being driven rapidly on their way to the Park.

"Yes, Valdemar—that is, I'm going to remain until your Uncle Oscar can get back from the United States again. That is why I have come—so as to stay with Karl, and let him see some more of Denmark during his father's absence. And then I'm glad to see this wonderful Park, too, of course."

"Why, Daddy! Must you go back to America, and leave us?" protested Karl, who was having another surprise.

"I'm sorry, but business calls me back to Chicago at once, my little Karl. I leave this afternoon, immediately after the festivities, but I'll come back again soon. Here we are at the Park now."

As Mr. Hoffman, as president of the Danish-American Park, took his place upon the speaker's platform, and began his address, welcoming the thousands of American visitors he saw before him, back to the Fatherland—to the Park—their Park forever, a great cheer arose, which was redoubled in volume as the Stars and Stripes were impressively hoisted over the beloved *Dannebrog*—and then from a thousand voices the Star Spangled Banner floated forth over the Danish hills.

There were complimentary speeches by both the American and Danish ministers, and by Crown Prince Christian. Then every one sang one of those beautiful old national songs the Danes love so well to sing in their woods, and Karl told Valdemar and Karen the story of the "Birth of Old Glory," as the United States flag is sometimes called.

In the evening, the whole forest seemed one vast fairyland, with its myriad sparkling lights, strains of soft music,

gay crowds and waving flags. Multitudes of lamps, of all colors and sizes, swung from the trees, throwing a romantic fairy-like light over the rustling beech-trees. Torches had been stuck wherever it had been possible to fasten them, and here and there a huge bon-fire flung its lurid glare over the whole scene, sending up great volumes of black smoke into the darkness overhead.

Three very tired and sleepy children were those whom Fru Ingemann put to bed that night, even before their usual time. The happiness of the long day—so full of new sights, surprises and excitement for Valdemar as well as Karl—was only marred by the leave-taking of Uncle Oscar for his long trip back to his home in far-away Chicago.

CHAPTER VIII
Skagen

To Valdemar it seemed like a week, rather than just three days, since he had bidden goodbye to his mother, Karen and Aunt Amalia, and brought Karl with him up to the little painter's village of Skagen on the Kattegat, where they were to spend the months of July and August visiting Uncle Thor, who had built for himself one of the most charming of the pretty, long, low, vine-covered homes of the famous Artist-Colony, of which he, as Court Painter, was by far the most distinguished member.

Up here was Uncle Thor's summer studio, with its row of fifteen great windows between which glorious red hollyhocks towered almost up to the red roof-tiles. On the south, the windows overlooked a gay, flower-massed garden where, on warm summer afternoons, the great sculptor loved to chat with painter-friends, and serve tea under his

wind-swept old elms.

Here, in this bare and lofty studio, with its half-finished paintings and groups in clay, and, if the day be chilly, its crackling wood hearth-fire at the further end, throwing a flickering, rosy light over all—here Valdemar was to spend many hard, long hours every day under his gifted godfather's instruction.

"In the whole of Denmark was there ever any boy half so fortunate?" thought Valdemar to himself, as he made a mental resolution to show Uncle Thor his appreciation by the hardest work of his life. Valdemar could work hard, and he meant not only to prove to his uncle what earnest toil and definite purpose could do, but also to win his offer to send him to the Academy in the fall.

On a low platform, in the centre of the studio, stood the unfinished statue of the little Crown Prince Olaf of Norway which Uncle Thor had commenced in Copenhagen at the Royal Palace. Day by day it was nearing completion.

"And here," said Valdemar's great teacher, uncovering a smaller but similar clay figure of the same charming subject, "is work my ambitious little pupil is to finish before

he leaves Skagen. It will be hard work, Valdemar, and it will put your ability as a young sculptor to a fine test. But you can do it, Valdemar, and do it creditably, too!"

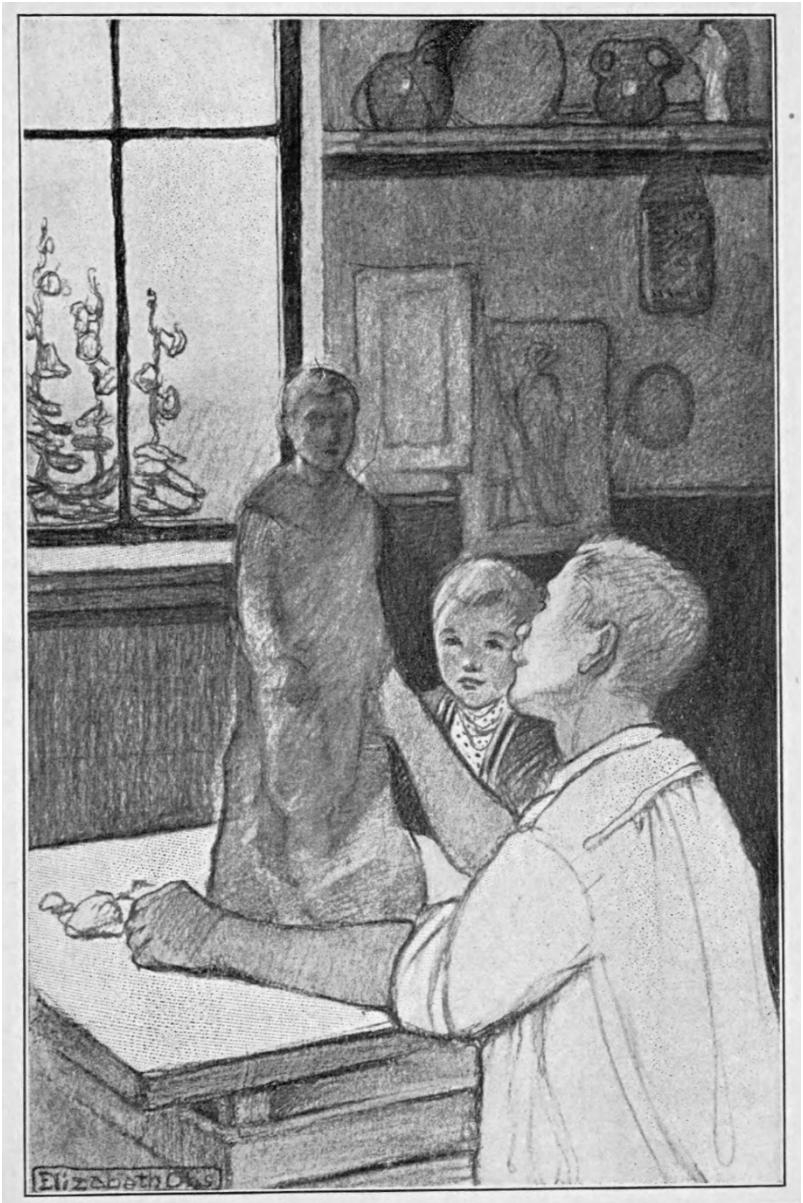
"Oh, Uncle Thor! Do you really think so? I'll try hard enough!" promised the lad as he set to work in good earnest.

The long hours, which Valdemar spent daily in the studio, Karl passed either out of doors or in reading all the fascinating books on Danish history in Uncle Thor's library.

There were frequent letters to both boys from Fano, the little island in the North Sea, where Karen, her mother, and Aunt Amalia were spending the summer. Later they were going to spend a few weeks on a large farm, for a change.

And so the weeks passed. Finally Holme Week, with its clear, bright evenings, came; but the midsummer sun was growing uncomfortably warm even as far north as Skagen.

Valdemar's work on his little Prince Olaf statue was so far advanced that Uncle Thor readily consented when the two boys begged him to let them take the dog, Frederik, along with them, and tramp over the two miles of mountainous sand-ridges which led to Denmark's most



“In the centre of the studio stood the unfinished statue of the little Crown Prince.”

northern point, Grenen, or the Gren—a mere desolate sand-reef, the last little tip of Jutland's mainland, which extends between the waters of the North Sea and the Baltic.

The only signs of life the boys passed on the way, as they trudged along together, often ankle-deep in the sand, were a few long-legged birds, and several huge hares which shot across the road in front of them.

"We didn't bring along more than half the sand-hills with us, did we, Valdemar?" laughed Karl, as they threw themselves down on the beach at Grenen, emptied the sand from their shoes, and donned their bathing suits.

"Talking about sand, Karl, some day I must show you all that remains of an old Gothic church tower near Skagen. One day, during a service, a great sand-storm came up and buried the church itself so suddenly that the only escape the people had was from the belfry. That is all that can be seen of that church even to-day."

Frederik barked loudly and dashed back and forth after the two boys, who were soon bubbling over with the fun and excitement of dipping their feet first into the breakers

of the Skager-Rak, and then into the waters of the Kattegat, the warm July salt wind and spray tanning their bare arms and faces. Then, Frederik following, Valdemar swam far out into the sea and back again, with the utmost ease. All Danish boys can swim well, and Valdemar wanted to give Karl a demonstration of his ability as an expert swimmer.

"Kattegat! Skager-Rak!" shouted Karl, who liked something in the sound of the words. "Grenen's great! But, honest, Valdemar, never in my life did I expect to bathe in both these raging seas at once! But here I go—look now!" and he plunged out into the breakers. Frederik dashed after him to make sure that he was safe, then came bounding back again to Valdemar.

"Ow! ow!" cried Karl, limping back on one foot.

"Crabber?" inquired Valdemar. "Uncle Thor warned us to look out for crabs and shrimps up here on the beach. You sit down here and rest, Karl. I'm going to gather some of those fine sea-gull's feathers scattered along the beach for you to take back home with you for your collection of Danish souvenirs. It was mighty nice of Uncle Thor to give

you that letter from King Frederik!"

"And I'm going to put my shoes and stockings right back on again while you're gone!" said Karl, surveying his painful foot with a frown.

"Oh, look, Karl!" exclaimed Valdemar, as he soon came running back, his arms full of something. "Look what I've found for you! Sea-gulls' eggs! All greenish, with brown peppery spots on them, and here's a lot of the loveliest white wing-feathers, every one tipped with black! They're all for you, Karl."

"Oh, thank you, Valdemar. Let's blow the eggs. Do you know how?"

"Yes, of course. I've got a piece of wire in my pocket. You just run this wire straight through both ends—so! Then blow and blow!"

Together the boys had soon blown all the eggs, and tied them up with the feathers in a piece of old fish-net they found on the beach. Then Karl watched Valdemar while he made a hasty sketch of Skagen Fyr, the great white light-house towering above the sand-hummocks near the Signal Station, where it is said that every year seventy thousand

ships are signalled.

As they started on their two-mile tramp over the desolate sand-ridges back to Skagen, Valdemar gave one last lingering look towards the wild, wind-swept stretch of endless beach they were leaving, where the North Sea and the Baltic have battled against each other for countless ages, with one ceaseless roar. Back of them, range after range of low shifting sand-dunes glistened in the sun, as they stretched towards the unbroken horizon in every direction. It was a strange new world to both boys.

"What are you thinking so long about, Valdemar?" asked Karl.

"Oh, Karl, it was off there that our noble Tordenskj old's little frigate, *White Eagle,* pursued the great Swedish man-of-war *Ösel,* and made her fly in terror. There's something about the very desolation of this place that I like," said Valdemar. "Something strange, and picturesque, and romantic, I mean, Karl. One feels some way—up here at the Gren—as though he had actually reached the world's end! I'd like to come back up here often. Wouldn't you, Karl?"

"No! There's something I don't like one bit about it! I liked the Massachusetts Cape Cod beach at home; but that was different. I'd hate to have to live very long anywhere near here! Romantic isn't the right word, Valdemar. It's a lonely, wild, and forsaken spot, with nothing at all 'romantic' about it in my eyes. To me it feels like the 'jumping off place,' all right. And I've heard, too, Valdemar, that when a great storm is blowing, and the waves are rolling mountain high, that there are just terrible shipwrecks up here at this dangerous point! Down at the Skagen Hotel, the figureheads and name-boards, that they have collected from ships of all nations, tell the tale, Valdemar."

"That's true. There was the wreck of the Daphne, with the lives of eight of the brave life-saving crew lost. Sometimes there are twenty shipwrecks a year. But, Karl, this is the sea that made Vikings! Over these same seas, where our smoky steamers now pass, once danced Long Ship, Serpent and Dragon, with their gilded dragon-beaks gleaming in the sunlight! Can't you see them, Karl? I can! Uncle Thor has often told me the wonderful Viking tales. And I've read

about their marvellous courage and daring. The Eddas and Sagas of the Vikings are rich in lore of those fiery-hearted warriors, who sailed over the stormy seas in their fleets of light ash-wood ships, conquering far and wide, and meeting death light-heartedly! They say some great Viking chief is buried near here. Their cairns and barrows by thousands cover Denmark to-day."

"Oh, I've read about them at home," answered Karl, who loved courage and bravery as much as did any healthy American boy, but who loved also to tease. "They were just a race of bold sea-robbers, and pirates, always 'hatching their felonious little plans,' always ready to burn and kill; and, according to history, some of the deaths they dealt out to their enemies were truly 'Vikingish.'"

"And yet, Karl, the ancient Sagas and chronicles tell that it was our brave Vikings who first of all discovered your North America, and founded a colony they called Vineland, near where your great Harvard College is to-day. The Sagas say that, five hundred years before Columbus lived, Viking Biarne sailed to America with his ship Eyrar, and that later, Lief, a son of Eric the Red, went over to America,

too."

"Yes, I know. I've read Longfellow's poem, 'The Skeleton in Armor,' and I've seen the 'Old Mill' at Newport, which was long believed to be a Viking relic," said Karl. "But we know differently now. Nothing has been really proved."

The sun was sinking in the west as the two tired, but happy boys reached the outskirts of the straggling little village of Skagen, and trudged down the sandy road which led in and out among the fishermen's huts, with their tarred or heavily thatched roofs, and color-washed walls—some of them even built from wreckage.

Strings of fish, strung from pole to pole, were hung out to dry. Groups of sturdy fish-wives, here and there, with bronzed arms bare to the shoulder, and prettily kerchiefed heads, sat at tubs, dressing flounders for drying; and from the doorway of one hut came a voice so sweet and clear, crooning a quaint old Danish lullaby to the sleeping baby in the mother's arms, that the boys paused to listen as she sang:

"Den lille Ole, med Paraplyen

Han kender alle Smaa Folk i Byen
Hver lille Pige, hver lille Dreng,
De sover sodt i deres lille Seng."

"That was a pretty song. Tell me what it was all about," asked Karl, as they hurried on at a more rapid gait, for they were getting hungrier every minute.

"Oh, it was just a little folk-song every Dane knows. She was singing to her baby about the 'Sandman,' or *den lille Ole,* as we Danes say. She was telling him that 'the Sandman, with his umbrella, knows all about the little folks in town. Each little girl—each little boy—they are all sleeping sweetly in their beds.'"

They passed an old fisherman, mackintosh-clad, and another one in jersey and high boots, both hurrying towards the beach, where, in the gathering twilight, they could see a dim craft, a small fishing boat, with a few dark figures plying their trade, slowly rounding the promontory, its lights reflecting picturesquely in the water.

"Some day we must come back earlier, when more of the fishermen are home from their trips, and watch the crews at practice," said Valdemar. "These Skagen fishermen are

true sons of the Vikings. It is said that there was one, once, who boasted of having saved two hundred lives."

"I hope you didn't worry about our getting home so late. Uncle Thor," said Valdemar, at the supper table that night.

"No, but here is a letter for you."

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Valdemar, as he finished reading it. "It's from mother. She says that Grandmother Ingemann has invited us all to spend Christmas with her down in Odense, and that Aage will be home for his vacation from the Military College, and be there with us, and Uncle Oscar, too, will be back again from America. Mother has decided that I am not to return to school until after Christmas, for she thinks that Karl and I are learning more by seeing our country than we could learn in school. And, best of all, mother says that I can remain up here studying with you, Uncle Thor, until September!"

"Hurrah!" said Karl. "No school until New Year's for me!"

"That means five more weeks up here with you, dear Uncle Thor!" continued Valdemar. "Now I can entirely finish the task you gave me to do, the Prince Olaf statue.

I'm so glad, Uncle Thor!"

"And I'm glad, too, Valdemar, for you are doing me great credit as a pupil. I am going to be very proud of that statue of yours, Valdemar, when it is finished."

These last five weeks passed for Valdemar much as the first five had—in the studio.

"Study—diligent, earnest and honest," said Uncle Thor, "will win many honors for you when you are older, Valdemar. If you work hard, you should some day gather some of the roses that strew the path of the Danish artist, my boy."

"But once you said that Denmark was almost over-crowded with art students, Uncle Thor, didn't you?"

"That is true. But many of them fail to go on with their work; they lose courage and drop out. Others become interested in something else, and so leave their art studies. The few who do keep on usually learn all they can from the art schools in Denmark, and then go to Italy for further study."

"Yes, as you did, Uncle Thor, and as Thorvaldsen did, too," said Valdemar. "Oh, Uncle Thor! Do you think that,

when I am older, I may ever be able to study in Italy?"

"My dear little Valdemar, anything is possible for you, if you work hard enough," was the great artist's answer.

CHAPTER IX
A Danish Peasant Wedding

Karen's fair skin was tanned so many shades darker than her flaxen locks that Valdemar and Karl hardly knew her. Far down on the delightful *Vesterhavet,*[*] on the sandy little island of Fanö, she had spent the happy summer-time with her mother and Aunt Amalia, first at the seashore, and later on the great farm of Peder Sörensen, near Nordby, where, most of the time, she had played out of doors in the sun and wind.

The merry harvest season had passed soon after Valdemar and Karl had arrived. They remembered how the harvesters had laid aside the last sheaf, decorated it with flowers and ribbons, and carried it in procession. Then had followed the great *Höst Gilde,* or Harvest Feast, a very festive function when sturdy men and rosy-cheeked

[*] West Sea.

maidens danced hand-in-hand.

Then, later, in the same beautiful month of October, had followed another folk-festival, and Mortin's Day,[†] when in the evening everybody ate "Mortin's Goose," stuffed with boiled apples and black fruit.

Sometimes, on some of the children's many trips over to play on the beach by the West Sea, they had brought back pieces of amber washed up by the water. Karl found some pretty big pieces to add to his rapidly growing collection of Danish souvenirs, which now included not only the coral specimens, sea-gull's eggs and wing-feathers, but Fanö amber, and, best of all, Uncle Thor's gift of the great white envelope and letter from the Royal Palace.

Peder Sörensen was not a farmer himself. Like most of the men of Fanö, he was a sailor. It was the Fanö wives who, in their picturesque though rather unbecoming dress, cultivated the land, drove the cattle to pasture and the sheep to graze among the sand-hills, and it was they who milked the fine "Red Danish" cows at night, and made the far-famed "Best Danish" butter, with which they welcomed

[†] So named for Martin Luther

home their seafaring husbands.

Fru Anna Sörensen, who had studied farming and dairying at the Agricultural College, always presented a neat and attractive appearance in her dark blue dress with its one note of bright color down around the very hem, and her quaint red and blue kerchief head-dress, with its inevitable loose ends, which Valdemar graphically described as "rabbit's ears."

All the women of Fanö dressed just so, except, of course, upon some great occasion like Lowisa Nielsen's wedding, which was to take place in November.

Almost before they knew it, the short summer had flown, and November, with its cool, bright days, had come, bringing Lowisa Nielsen's wedding invitation, which the *Bydemand*,[‡] in white trousers, topboots, and a nosegay in his buttonhole, carried over to the Sörensens on horseback.

For propriety's sake, Fru Sörensen allowed him to knock a second time before opening the door, then politely asked him within.

"Greetings from the father and mother, and Lowisa, to

[‡] **The "Asking Man"**

yourself, your husband and guests," he began, as he took the proffered seat. "Your presence is truly desired at the wedding on Thursday next at ten o'clock. Come early, accompany the bridal party to the church, and hear their marriage service, return with them for dinner, remain for supper, then amuse yourselves with dancing and games the whole night; and then come again the next day, and take your places from the first day, and they will be sure to do the same for you when wanted from choice, on some enjoyable occasion."

This unique invitation being delivered, the *Bydemand* arose as if to go, but Fru Sörensen, with Danish hospitality, and according to an old custom, quickly produced a flagon of home-brewed beer, and a raisin-decorated wheaten cake, which she offered him.

As he finished the flagon and was about to leave, he turned at the door to add, as though an afterthought: "Then you must not forget to send a convenient amount of butter, eggs, a pail of fresh milk and two jars of cream."

"I will gladly," replied Fru Sörensen, as he departed.

On the wedding morning, at the appointed time, Fru

Anna Sörensen and her guests, Fru Ingemann, Mrs. Hoffman, and the children, who had never seen a peasant wedding before, drove over to the great Nielsen *Bonnegaard*[§], passed through the massive stone gateway, and into the open courtyard. They were graciously received by Fru Nielsen, and seated with the other guests upon wooden benches ranged around the walls of a spacious family apartment, whose polished rafters converged into a sharp-spiked peak at the centre.

Lowisa, a fair-haired, blue-eyed Danish peasant maiden, to-day looked unusually attractive, decked out in bridal array—a pretty but tight-fitting homespun, escaping the floor all around by several inches. From Lowisa's richly gold-embroidered, tall scarlet cap, or "hood," as the Danes call it, hung pendent innumerable brilliant ornaments—round balls of metal and other fantastic dangles, all waving and twinkling as she moved. Extending from the back were vast bows and streamers of scarlet ribbon, under which she wore a head-dress of very rare and delicate lace. And the filmy white fichu, which crossed over her bosom, disclosed

§ Literally, "Peasant's Domain."

a rounded throat, circled by a bangle necklace of gold and silver coins.

As soon as the last guest had arrived, the whole party was driven over to the church—the bride and her family in the forward "rock-away," the bridegroom in the next, then, in another, a band of rustic musicians, who, as soon as all the guests were seated in the different vehicles, struck up a lively air. At the proper moment, the bridegroom, young Nils Rasmussen, a fine-looking fellow of true Saxon type, took his position beside Lowisa at the altar.

On returning to the house, the little church party was met by an eager, expectant company of guests, who had been invited to join them for the wedding-dinner. The bridal couple took their places at the middle of the cross-tables, which were arranged to form a square, after the fashion of ancient banquet tables, and, when all the guests were seated, the serving-maids brought in great bowls of steaming rice, and placed four to each table, deftly dividing the contents of each into as many sections, by making deep cross-shaped indentures, into which they sprinkled cinnamon and sugar and poured a cupful of hot butter.

Then each guest, four to a bowl, lifted his spoon, dipped it into the delicious *grod*, and began to eat. Meats followed, with wheaten cakes, highly decorated, and home-brewed beer of a very peculiar, rich, honeyed taste, and with the singing of a beautiful old Danish hymn the repast was brought to a close.

Then the room was cleared and the dancing began. It was certainly a beautiful sight, with every one decked out in festive attire.

"Nie tak,"[**] coyly refused each girl upon her first invitation to dance, according to an old law of peasant decorum, which also prevented the bridal couple, who led the dancing, from speaking to, or even noticing each other again during the entire festivities.

As the afternoon wore on, the dancing continued. Between seven and eight, supper without rice was served, followed immediately by more dancing, which continued until four o'clock in the morning.

By ten o'clock the next morning the fiddlers had again arrived, and the dancing was renewed, this time with a

[**] "No, thank you."

noticeable increase in the number of rosy-cheeked, snowy-haired, elderly couples, in quaint holiday dress of home-spun, with silver-buckled shoes. The bride continued to dance gracefully and bravely on, although paling cheeks told of her weariness.

Fru Nielsen explained that the third and last day would only differ from the first in that there would be fewer guests present, after which all would begin making formal calls upon the bride, which was considered the height of good form.

CHAPTER X
Jul-Tide at Grandmother Ingemann's

A freshly fallen, deep, feathery snow covered Odense on Christmas Eve, and the merry jingle of sleigh-bells was in the air, as the little Ingemann party reached Fyen's prosperous capital.

Grandmother Ingemann did not live within the town itself, but a long drive in a big sleigh brought her Christmas guests within sight of the great old house with its many gables—all of the oddest stairway design—where most of her long, happy life had been lived.

Although it was only the middle of the wintry afternoon, darkness was fast gathering, and from many a window on their way a candle's soft glow shone out through the fluttering snow to guide the wayfarer to warmth and cheer.

"Welcome! and *Glaedelig Jul!*"* called out both

* "Merry Christmas."

Grandfather and Grandmother Ingemann, who, in spite of the cold, had appeared on the door-step as the sleigh drew up.

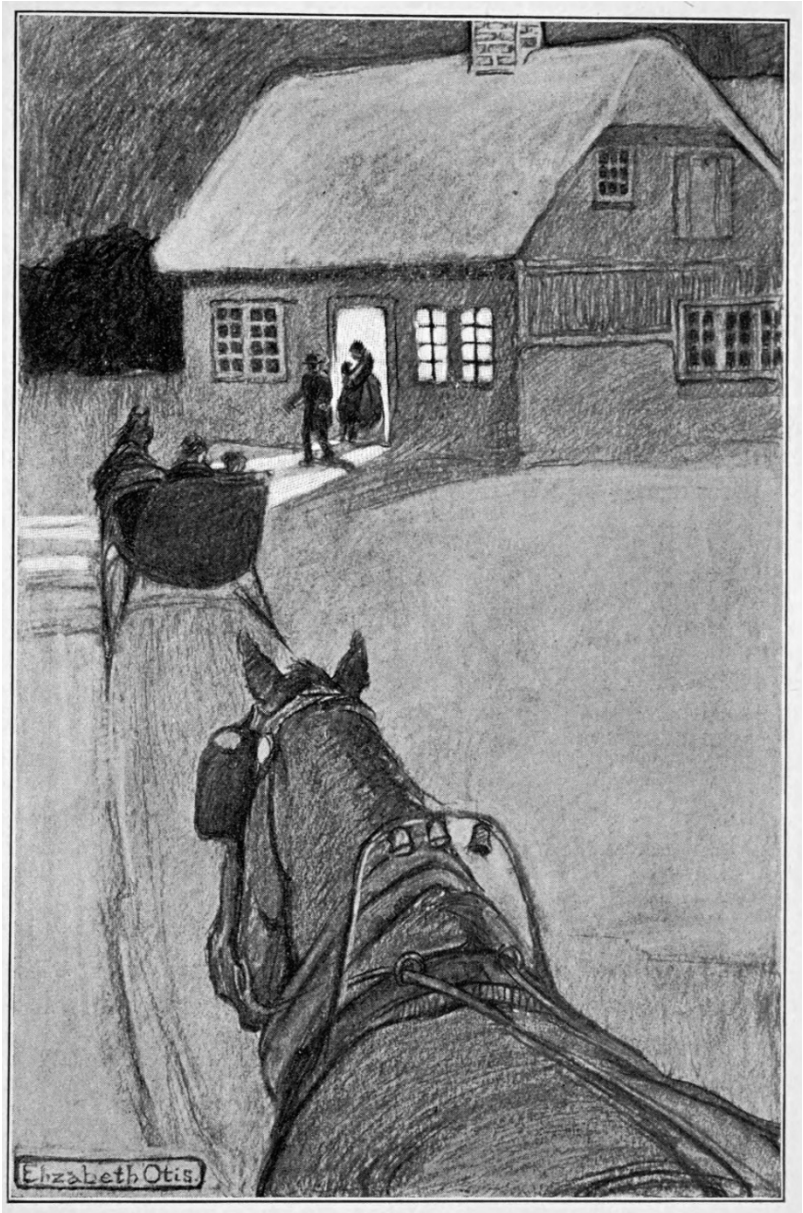
"*Glaedelig Jul!* cried Valdemar and Karen, kissing their dear grandparents, as Fru Ingemann introduced Aunt Amalia and cousin Karl.

"Where's Uncle Thor, and where's Aage?" demanded Valdemar as they entered the house. "And where's Daddy? Didn't Daddy come?" was Cousin Karl's first question.

"Yes, dear children, everybody's here," gently answered Grandmother Ingemann, smiling as she glanced out of the window.

Out rushed the children to welcome the sleigh that came jingling up to the door, out of which jumped Uncle Thor, Aage, and Uncle Oscar, just back from the States. Such huggings and greetings as then took place! Never had there been such a happy Christmas family reunion at Grandmother Ingemann's for long years and years!

Since his mother had last seen him, Aage had grown into a tall, broad-shouldered young man who carried himself with such fine military bearing—and preceded all his



"'Welcome! and Glaedelig Jul!' called out both Grandfather and Grandmother Ingemann."

remarks with: "In my regiment"—that Valdemar and Karl soon idolized him. And as for skating—well, he would show them something in the half hour, or so, that still remained before the time to start for the annual Christmas Eve service at the little church on the hill.

Then it was Valdemar's turn to receive compliments. Uncle Thor had great news! He announced that his talented little pupil's work had appeared at the Fall Exhibit of the Academy—and had won a prize!

"A prize at the Academy! Oh, Uncle Thor!" exclaimed Valdemar, throwing his arms about his distinguished master's neck for joy. "Dear Uncle Thor! You didn't even tell me that my statue was to be entered at the Academy Exhibit this fall! Oh, I am so happy!"

Compliments showered upon him from Grandfather, and Grandmother, and from his own dear mother, and everybody, so fast that he was glad to make his escape with Aage and Karl, who were starting out to the frozen lake, with their skates.

Aage and Valdemar, like all Danish boys, were famous skaters. Karl was a fair one. Soon the two brothers were

outdoing each other cutting figure-eights, hearts and arrows on the ice, and Aage even cut the face of his sweetheart. Then, as the music of a waltz Aunt Amalia was playing reached them, they called:

"Come on, Karl, it's easy," and proceeded to waltz on the ice as gracefully as if on a ball-room floor. But Karl fell flat, and felt he had made a miserable failure.

Then they all came rushing into the house at the sight of several waiting sleighs at the door, which reminded them that it must be nearly time for the five o'clock Christmas Eve service. Soon every one was bundled into warm furs and crowded into the sleighs, servants and all, and the happy little procession made its way through the falling snow to the church.

As they passed through the village streets, candle-lights gleamed from hundreds of windows, and here and there the children caught glimpses inside of brightly festooned little Christmas trees, and of sheaves of wheat or rye, fastened to the window-shutters out in the snow for the birds; and, strangest of all, Karl thought, were bowls of steaming hot oatmeal standing on many door-steps. But his mother

explained to him that the bowls of oatmeal were placed there for the good little *Jul-nissen,* the Little People, or Christmas Nixies, the knee-high, little red-jacketed old men, with pointed red caps and long gray beards, who are supposed to form a part of every good Danish household.

When Grandmother's sleighing party entered the little whitewashed church, and took the places reserved for them, they found it already full to overflowing, and a crowd gathering outside as well.

The smiling priest in his dignified long black gown and deep-gauffered white *Pibekrave*[†] around his neck, joined heartily in the singing of hymns and carols, which were re-echoed by the voices of the greater throng standing out in the snow. Then followed the Christmas sermon, and the usual touching prayer "for our brethren in South Jutland."

It was Holy Eve, the one night in all the year when services are held by candle-light, and the myriad wax candles, burning on the altar, threw a soft and mysterious light over the spruce and laurel boughs decorating the chancel.

[†] Starched ruffle.

The light snowfall had become a blinding snow storm before the little procession of sleighs had finally reached home, where the great dinner of the year was awaiting them, with its roast goose, stuffed with prunes and chestnuts, its cinnamon-flavored rice pudding, and a famous Danish dessert called *röd-gröd,* the repast ending with nuts, Christmas cakes, candy and hot tea. Low over the table, illumined with a dozen tiny, candle-lighted Christmas trees, hung green festoons of laurel and spruce with a secreted sprig of mistletoe; while at every one's place were little mementoes, stuffed Nixies, snappers, and a small Danish flag—except at Uncle Oscar's, Aunt Amalia's and Karl's places, where the Stars and Stripes were thoughtfully combined with the *Dannebrog.*

Towards the end of the dinner Grandfather Ingemann arose and proposed a toast to "our Danish-American guests"—whereupon all arose, touched glasses and drank, uttering the word for health, "Skaal!" Again, Grandfather Ingemann proposed the healths of "Our illustrious Court Painter and his talented little pupil"—when all again arose with their host, and the process was repeated. The last toast

was "for our absent friends," after which Grandfather made a complimentary little speech, wishing every one joy in the years to come.

Then all withdrew to the drawing-room, where the lights suddenly went out, and the folding-doors of an adjoining room were flung wide, where, in dazzling beauty, its topmost boughs brushing the rafters, stood the great Jule-tree. Then every one formed a circle around the tree, and Grandfather distributed a basket of hymn books, from which all joined in singing that beautiful old Danish carol, "A Child is Born in Bethlehem."

Then, to the soft notes of a violin, all joined hands again, and slowly danced around the tree, singing as they danced another beautiful old carol. The servants were then called in, and Grandfather Ingemann called off the names, and distributed the presents. There were so many gifts for every one, from little Karen up to Grandfather Ingemann himself, that the floor was soon covered deep with the tissue-paper wrappings.

When the laughter and merrymaking had reached its height, there came a sharp ring at the door-bell, so sharp

that every one paused in strange expectation, and little Karen rushed to the door after the maid. In the fast-falling snow stood a tall man in a green uniform and a three-cornered hat, who handed a great white envelope to the servant, with the words: "To Valdemar Ingemann, from his Majesty, King Frederik," then quickly departed.

Karen rushed breathlessly back to her mother ahead of the serving-maid. "Oh, mother! It was the King's *Jaeger!* Valdemar, it's for you! For you!" she cried, as the awe-stricken maid put into the boy's hands the great white envelope inscribed with the words: "To Valdemar Ingemann, from his Majesty, the King."

Every one looked inquiringly at every one else, but in the Court Painter's eye there lurked a knowing twinkle.

"Oh, mother! *mother!* Oh, *Uncle Thor!*" excitedly exclaimed the little artist, dancing about the room. "It's from my friend the King! He says he has visited the Academy and seen with great pleasure my statue of little Prince Olaf of Norway. He congratulates me upon winning a prize, and, mother dear, he wants to see me at the Palace, Thursday, at one!"

Even before Twelfth Night had come and gone, the American relatives had said their good-byes to Copenhagen and to the Ingemanns, and sailed for New York. Valdemar, accompanied by his Uncle Thor, had made the call at the Palace, and been entered as a student at the Academy, with the King's promise to him of long years of study in Rome just as soon as he was ready for it. So we too will bid goodbye to our ambitious little Danish Cousin, with his rose-colored dreams of the future.

THE END.