THE FRIENDLY PLAYMATE

AND OTHER STORIES

EMILIE POULSSON

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AND

Other Stories from Norway

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THE FRIENDLY PLAYMATE

and

OTHER STORIES FROM NORWAY

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PREFACE

In consideration of American children, for whom this book is intended, much freedom of treatment rather than a close following of the original has often been deemed advisable. Not all the stories have been changed, but some have been shortened, versified, or otherwise adapted in order that they might make a more direct appeal and give more pleasure to the children.

When the material I have used was copyrighted, the author's permission was obtained. However, I wish to express here my appreciation of the work of all the authors represented in this collection.

To my friend, Miss Sölvi Greve, whose sight was ever at my service during the preparation of this book, I give my unstinted thanks.

Emilie Poulsson.

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To *The Congregationalist*, Boston, Mass., for "Little Bear Cub."

EMILIE POULSSON

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THE FRIENDLY PLAYMATE

THE bushes on the hillside were full of ripe, juicy berries, and the four children from Espesett Farm had gone to have a berry feast one bright September afternoon.

The eldest of the children was a big boy of ten, the youngest was a sturdy baby of two years. When they had found a good place, they put the baby on the heather and gave her a little cup made of birch bark. Into this, one or another of the children would put a few berries from time to time so that the baby should be as happy as they were. My, what a feast they were having!

Not far from where the children were, a burly brown animal had been lying on some thick moss. When he heard the voices of the berry-pickers, he stretched himself lazily, blinking at the bright sun, got up and walked clumsily along on his thick stumpy legs. Up the hill he went, stopping to eat what berries he could find on his way.

He soon came to the place where the children were, and one of them called out, "Oh, see the funny big brown pig! How good-natured he looks!" The animal came nearer, but he seemed so friendly that the children never thought of chasing him away. In fact, they liked having him with them.

The baby was the only one who did not like him, and no wonder, for the big creature went to her, lay down on the heather close beside her and began to eat the berries from her birch-bark cup. At first, the baby tried to tell him to go away, but when he still kept on eating her berries, she put her small fist against his face, pushing him from her with all her might. Still he did not move. Then the baby got very angry and began to scream lustily.

Finally, the creature seemed to understand that the baby did not like him and did not want him so near; so he obligingly walked off a little way, and sat down on his haunches. Then he looked about in a friendly manner, as if he would say, "I won't bother the baby any more."

The children were delighted with his kindly looks

and thought it would be a pity to let him sit there without any berries; so when they brought more berries to the baby, they brought some to the "pig," too. At first, they dropped the berries into his big mouth, but soon they would put their little hands full of berries right inside his mouth, which he held wide open till the hand was withdrawn. Not a scratch, even, did one of the children get from the sharp teeth.

By and by, when the children had eaten all the berries they wanted, they looked about for something else to do. A beautiful little pine tree full of cones stood not far from their clump of bushes, and Hans, the biggest boy, began throwing stones at the cones, trying to make some of them fall down. Like other country children, these children from Espesett Farm found cones to be very good playthings. With little sticks for legs and horns, cows and pigs and other animals could be made from them.

Hans could not bring down many cones by his stone-throwing, and the friendly brown "pig" seemed to understand what the boy wanted, so he went to the tree and shook it a little. A few cones fell, but as if

he thought these were not enough, he stood on his hind legs, took hold of the tree with his forepaws and shook it violently.

This brought a great shower of cones to the ground, and the children were delighted. They thought their new playfellow was very clever and very kind to do this for them, so they patted and praised him, gathered all the cones they wanted, and made enough animals to stock their play farm.

Then they started towards home, their brown friend keeping them company. Soon they came to a large old tree, near whose roots was a big ant hill. Here their friend stopped and began to poke his nose under the tree roots, and to lick up the eggs of the ants, which he seemed to like very much. The ants, however, were not at all pleased to have their home disturbed and their eggs eaten, so they came out in great swarms, running not only over the ground but up the brown beast's legs and all over his body.

When the child next older than the baby saw that a great many of the ants were crawling over their good playfellow's back, she got a little branch with leaves

on it and began brushing his rough brown coat to get the ants off.

While she was doing this, a voice sounded through the clear air. It was Helga, the milkmaid at the farm, sending the cows back to the pasture after they had been milked.

As soon as their brown friend heard this sound, he turned away from the children and hurried off toward the woods. The children tried to get him to come back, but he paid no attention to their coaxing calls, and they were surprised to see how fast he could run on his stumpy legs. Then they, too, hurried home to tell what a good time they had had with the funny brown "pig" that had played with them so nicely all the afternoon.

Mother and Father listened with astonishment. Could all this be true? And as Father asked questions about their playfellow, Mother's face grew white, though the children did not notice this, nor did they see Father take his gun as he went out.

On his way to the berry-bushes, he saw a bed of moss where a heavy beast had evidently been lying. The

footprints of a heavy beast were also plain, from this mossy bed to the bushes where the children had been. Next he found the small pine tree with its trunk deeply scratched and marred from sharp claws, and on the ground about were many cones which had evidently just been shaken from the tree.

Following the tracks, Father found the big ant hill where the ants were still running about as if in great trouble; and holes in the ground, where the beast had poked his nose under the roots to get at the ant eggs. From here the animal's tracks led toward the forest so the father returned home.

The children's playfellow had evidently been a clever, good-natured bear instead of the brown pig they had thought him.

Do you think the children ever forgot their friendly brown playmate? Indeed, they did not. They often talked of him and told other children about him; and now that they are grown up, there is no tale that their children like better to hear than this true story of the afternoon when the big brown bear and they had such a happy time together.

From the Norwegian.

LITTLE BEAR CUB

In the forest green and gay,
Fretful little Bear Cub lay,
Grumbling as he sucked his paw,

"Dullest place I ever saw."
Silly cub! He could not find
Anything to please his mind

In the free and pleasant wood,
As the other bear cubs could.
For they frolicked in a throng,
Full of fun the whole day long.

So he trotted, grumbling still,
To the bear cave by the hill.
"Oh, Big Bear! I want to go

Out into the world. I know
I can rise to something there
Better than a common bear."
"Better than a bear, indeed!
G-r-r-r! Well, run along with speed.

Quick! Be off with you, I say!
Here's to help you on your way."
Big Bear's foot with sudden thrust
Sent Cub rolling in the dust.

When the little bear could rise,
After this unkind surprise,

Upright, paw in mouth, he stood.
Then he strutted through the wood
Out into the world. "How grand!
I will be a prince!" he planned

Soon he met a boy who gazed
On the little bear amazed.
"Is this Bear Cub that I see?
Whither do you go?" asked he.

"Oh!" said Bear Cub proudly then,
"Out into the world of men.

I expect to be out there
Something better than a bear."
"But you *are* a bear, you know:

And to nothing else can grow.
Then, besides, you have no shoes,
Clothes, nor hat, as menfolk use."
"Pooh!" said Bear Cub. "I don't fret.

Clothes are easy things to get."
Presto! There stood Bear Cub clad
In the clothes the boy had had,
All except the little shirt,

Though he left the boy unhurt.
"Ha!" said Cub. "Now I'm a man!"
Straightway to the King he ran;
Planning for a princely life
Asked the Princess for his wife.
But the King said, "Who are you?

Show us now by what you do."
"I can dance," said Little Bear.
"Dance, then," said the Princess fair.
So he danced with all his might,
To the Princess' great delight.
"Surely you're a prince!" quoth she,

"For you dance so gracefully."
"Yes, a prince," the rascal said.
"Let us now at once be wed."

So the King invited all
To a wedding feast and ball;
Naught was spared of splendor since
'Twas in honor of a prince.

Standing at the Princess' side,
Little Bear Cub swelled with pride;
And so well did he appear
No one dreamed a bear was near,

Till a servant in the hall
Let a dish of honey fall.
Then—oh, what a sudden change!
Bear Cub sprang, with growling strange,
Scrambled quickly to the spot.

Bride and manners quite forgot,
Down upon all fours went he,
Lapped the honey greedily.
Then 'twas plain to great and small
That he was no prince at all.
Courtiers, Princess, and the King
Called, "Out with the horrid thing!
Prince? Not even man, forsooth!
Look! His act shows out the truth.

Greedy, clumsy, rude and rough,
He's a bear, that's plain enough.
Quick! Out with him! Bring the chain,
Never let him in again."
So, instead of Princess fair

And a palace, Little Bear
Got a chain that held him bound.
Never could he roam around
As he might have done, had he
Been content a bear to be
With the other cubs at play,
In the forest green and gay.

Adapted from the Norwegian of Louis Moe

MOTHER STORK AND HER LITTLE ONES

UP on the top of a chimney (which is a delightful place for a nest, though you may not know it), lived a family of storks. No little, delicate nest would do for them, great big heavy birds as they were; why! they couldn't even get one foot into a nest like that of the sparrow or robin, and as for the oriole's nest, Mother Stork might have liked to carry it about for a pocket, but it would be of no use as a nest, dear me, no! Storks must have a big, big nest and a firm place for it, and so they choose the chimney tops, if you please! and live sociably in the cities instead of off in the woods.

They and the little German children are great friends. The grown people, too, are kind to the big birds and glad to have their nests on the chimneys, which have four posts up from the corners and a slab across the top of the posts where the storks may build and go

to housekeeping. Of course the smoke comes puffing out of the chimney, but it blows away from the nest quickly and the storks do not mind it in the least; while the warm air which comes up steadily right under their nest is very comfortable.

"Really," Mother Stork used to say, "I don't see how birds get along who live in nests which are not warmed underneath as ours are. We never could be comfortable in a cold nest, but I suppose that is because we are used to a warm climate." This was, indeed, just the reason, as the storks do spend much of their time in Egypt.

Mother Stork had been talking to her children one morning about the delights of flying, for they were little young things as yet, and had never even tried their wings.

"Just think," she said, "to go everywhere
Sailing along in the high blue air,
Looking down, as we swiftly go,
On the fields and waters far below!

Never a road or a path we use,
Winging and floating wherever we choose.

Joy, joy, my children, for you 'twill be
Away and afar to fly with me
And learn what it is to be a bird!"

And the four young storks with wonder heard
And eagerly cried: "To fly, to fly!
Oh, Mother, when will you let us try?"

But their mother had suddenly darted away from the nest and was fluttering anxiously about. The smoke that poured out of the chimney was very black and thick, and the rush of air much hotter than usual, and almost instantly sparks, and then flames, mingled with the smoke. The chimney was on fire!

Then Mother Stork in terror flew back to the nest where her children were trembling with fright at the thick smoke which made the nest as dark as night, and at the great heat. "Oh, Mother," said they, "we are choking for breath!"

But they felt less frightened as soon as she was with them. The mother, however, knew the great danger, and that something must be done quickly if her little ones were to be saved. Oh, if they were only old enough to fly! What should she do? Try to carry

them away? She could carry them only in her beak, and that would strangle them. Should she coax and help them out of the nest? Alas! then they would surely fall and be dashed to pieces!

While the poor Mother Stork was trying to find some way of saving her babies she hovered a little above the nest flapping her great wings constantly, and so driving the smoke away somewhat and making the air a little better for the young storks to breathe.

But the fire grew hotter and the flames higher, and some burning soot began to fall. Would it fall on the nest? on the poor little storks? No! no! Good Mother Stork could not have that! She quickly dropped to the nest, with her great wings spread to shield it, covering all her dear children, though the burning soot then fell upon herself. It burned one of her wings very badly, but she did not move. She was saving her children,—true mother that she was!

While the stork family was in all this danger and fright, the people of the house and their neighbors were trying to put out the fire; and when they saw that the fire was reaching the nest, and that the good loving

Mother Stork would not leave her little ones, they brought ladders as quickly as they could, and a man climbed up, up, up, till he reached the nest.

The poor mother's wing was so much burned that she could not fly, so he carried her, as well as the nest and the four young storks, down, down, down the ladder and to a safe place away from the fire and smoke. Oh, how joyful Mother Stork was then!

"You're safe, my children, all safe! all here!
Poor little ones, now you need not fear.
Come, nestle in here and take a rest
And Mother will cuddle you under her breast.
It was a terrible fright you had.
But now we must all be glad,—be glad!"

In this way Mother Stork comforted and cheered her children, saying not a word to them of her burned wing, though it pained her sorely; and, of course, the little ones, that had been only frightened and not hurt, were soon as happy as ever.

People were very kind to Mother Stork, and took good care of her. Her wing had been so badly burned

that she could never fly again, so the little German children used to feed her as she went about from one house to another, and they always loved her and called her the Good Mother.

A German story retold

THE LAPPS' BIG IRON KETTLE

THE LAPP FAMILY AT HOME

WHEN the little Lapp mother is ready to cook,
For something to cook in, she has but to look
For the big iron kettle.

No closet has she with fine pots and pans in,
No saucepans to choose from of copper or tin,
Just the big iron kettle.

No chairs have the Lapps, so they sit on the ground.
And having no table, they gather around
The steaming big kettle.

When dinner is cooked to the Lapp mother's wish,
The kettle must serve as the family dish,
The big iron kettle.

Each Lapp, big and little, then dips in his spoon,
And the soup, fish, or reindeer stew disappears soon
From the big iron kettle.

And though it seems queer to us, where do you think
The little dog goes when he wishes a drink?
To the big iron kettle!

When Guri and Lars some fresh water must bring,
They carry it home from the brook or the spring
In the big iron kettle.

When milking time comes for the nanny goat, then
As milkpail, the kettle is useful again,
The big iron kettle.

The big kettle surely serves many a need,
And we must agree it is useful indeed—
The Lapp's big iron kettle.

Adapted from the Norwegian

EMBORG AND THE ANIMALS

EMBORG was going out into the world all by herself for the first time in her life. She wished to get a birthday present for her mother. "Mother is always so kind and good," she thought.

EMBORG STARTED OUT

Emborg started out, a kerchief on her head, a small bag in one hand, and an umbrella in the other ("One should always be ready for rain," said Mother). On a

string around her neck was a two-öre* piece with a hole in it; "a luck penny" Mother called it. It was the first money Emborg had ever had.

"Can I buy everything I wish with it?" asked Emborg.

"Oh, perhaps so," said Mother, "if you have good luck."

Emborg's little cat followed her all the way to the gate, rubbing against her and begging to go with her.

"Mew, mew, I want to go, too," said Puss, but that she was not allowed to do.

Next came Emborg's little dog, wagging his tail and looking as if he were sure of going with her.

"No, no," said Emborg, "you and Puss must stay at home with Mother while I am away, because you must look after the house."

"Bow-wow," said the little dog, "I am the one to take care of the house. If any one comes here, I shall tell him that."

So now off went Emborg, after taking care to fasten the gate behind her. She had not gone far when she

* A two-öre piece is worth about half a cent.

heard a charming sound. A boy was coming along the road blowing a whistle.

"Can I buy that whistle of yours with a two-öre piece?" called Emborg.

THE WHISTLE

"Oh, you may have it for nothing," said the boy; "and when you learn to blow it, you will be happy whenever you whistle."

"Then I shall blow it every day," said Emborg as she took the whistle. She did not forget to thank the boy, and she curtsied nicely, too. Yes, indeed, she

knew how to behave herself, even when Mother was not with her.

After she had left the boy, Emborg came to a foot-path, and here she met a sheep and a lamb. "Baa,"

"MAAA!" SAID THE SHEEP

went the sheep, and "Baa" went the lamb, exactly like its mother. Emborg stopped to speak to them.

"I have a two-öre piece which is a luck penny," said she, "and I should like to buy some wool with it."

"Oh, you may have the wool, a whole sack full," said the sheep; "and if you have a luck penny, it is best that you should keep it yourself, for you will have more use for it than I shall."

"You are very kind," said Emborg. "Now we shall have new stockings and warm clothes for both Mother and me and so we sha'n't be cold when winter comes. So I thank you. But the sun is getting high, and I must hurry on."

Farther along she came to a big cow that stood in a grassy field. "Moo, moo!" it called to her. "Come here! Come here!"

Did you ever see anything like it! If there wasn't a pail of fresh milk and tub of newly-churned butter, and besides some cream in a bowl on which was printed "For a Little Girl". All these things were for Emborg, and without spending her luck penny, either, for the cow would not take it.

Oh, how sweet and good the cream tasted! After drinking it, Emborg really had to go to the cow and pat it and scratch its forehead and say "Thank you" many times before she hurried on.

Soon she came to a rail fence, on the top of which stood a hen calling with all its might:

SHE REALLY MUST PAT IT

"Cut, cut, cut, cadahcut!
Every day an egg I lay
Cluck, cluck! Cluck, cluck!

Cut, cut, cut, cadahcut!
Take from me the eggs you see
Cluck, cluck! Good luck!"

It kept cackling as if it would never stop, but Emborg thought she would try a little hen-talk herself, so she called:

"Thanks, thanks, thanks to you,
Mother would like to thank you too."

"CUT, CUT! CUDAHCUT!"

Beside the fence stood a basket filled with great big white eggs.

"Oh, what beautiful eggs!" said Emborg. And to think that the hen would not take so much as a single öre for them!

"THAT IS CHEAP CHEESE"

Now the path led into an old road, and there Emborg met a goat. He had a fine white beard and two pretty horns, and a bell was hung around his neck. The goat was very friendly. Before Emborg had a chance to ask if he had anything to sell, he said:

"Would you like some goat's-milk cheese? At the *saeter** up on the mountain, there is plenty already made, and it is rich and good, I can tell you. I'll hurry up there after it for you; and that cheese you may have without taking your luck penny off your neck, either."

"Thank you. That is cheap cheese," said Emborg. "It is well I met you." Oh, how kind all the animals were!

"I always mean to be kind, too," thought Emborg as she walked away.

Only think! Ahead of her in the road stood an animal that she had never seen before; and it had horns so big that she had never imagined anything like them. But Emborg was not the least bit afraid.

"Who are you that have such big horns? and where do you come from?" she asked.

"I am a reindeer, and I usually live far up in the mountains, but I came down here to give you greeting," answered the reindeer.

"O my! Are you really a reindeer?" asked Emborg.

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* A mountain dairy farm.

"Yes," said the reindeer. "I thought I would ask if you would like these horns of mine. Knife-handles and spoons can be made of them, and as for me, I sha'n't need them any more, for every year new horns

"WHO ARE YOU THAT HAVE SUCH BIG HORNS?"

grow out on my head. And since you are a kind little girl willing to spend all your money for a birthday present for your mother, you shall not pay me anything."

"It seems almost too much for you to give me, but

you have my best thanks," said Emborg; and as she trudged along she added to herself:

"I believe that every one who gives something away is happy. Mother is, and the animals seem so, too."

By this time she had walked so far that she felt like sitting down to rest herself. There was much to see on all sides, and she amused herself watching the bees and butterflies flying about in the bright sunshine. Many flowers were blooming in the grass near the rock on which she sat, so when she had rested a while she plucked some of the prettiest ones and made a bouquet. Mother would certainly be pleased with a bunch of beautiful flowers.

But now a great question had come into her mind. How in the world could she take home to Mother all the good things that had been given her?

At that moment a horse came along. Emborg could scarcely believe her eyes, but—yes,—wonder of wonders —loaded on his back were all the things the animals had given to her! The horse looked big and strong and kind, and it whinnied and neighed and then stood

stock-still; and before Emborg knew what was happening—whisk, whirl—there she was, seated upon his back! Then home to Mother she went with the whistle, the butter and milk, the goat's-milk cheese,

THERE SHE WAS, SEATED ON HIS BACK

the eggs, the sack of wool, the big horns, and the bunch of flowers.

Well, well, think of that!

Adapted from the Norwegian of Lisbeth Bergh

MIKKEL FOX AND BAMSA BEAR

ONE day when old Bamsa was walking along eating the blueberries that grew so plentifully on the hillside, he unexpectedly came upon the entrance to Mikkel Fox's den.

BAMSA CONSIDERING DEEPLY

"Ho, ho," said Bamsa to himself. "See this. Now at last I have caught him, that rascally fox that has

played me so many tricks, and fooled me so often and so thoroughly that there have been many stories told and written about it."

Thus talking to himself, he sat down and began to consider deeply how best he could make use of his good luck.

Bamsa Bear had never bothered himself to study the ways and habits of other animals, but he knew very well that he was the strongest creature in the forest. Therefore he came and went as he chose and wherever he chose. It was for other animals to keep out of his way. If one happened to be where he wished to go, Bamsa only said, "Don't you see who is coming? Get out of my way as fast as you can. I won't have any one here staring at me."

Because Bamsa was so proud and cared nothing about the other animals or their ways of living, he had not the least idea that Mikkel Fox had more than one entrance to his den. Indeed he sometimes had many, so that he could always slip in or out when danger threatened him.

But now Bamsa had made up his mind what to do.

He would close the den so thoroughly that Mikkel Fox would be imprisoned there, never to see daylight any more and never again make a fool of a decent beast, stronger and more important than any fox.

All about on the ground lay big heavy stones. These Bamsa Bear began to collect and to put into the entrance to the den. He did not save his strength, but worked hard and steadily. Just as he brought the last heavy stone, however, and thought that he had done a grand piece of work, he heard some one whistle behind his back. "Who can that be?" thought Bamsa. He turned around to find out. Well, of course, it was that saucy scamp of a fox, standing there, grinning.

"Good day, old fellow," said Mikkel Fox. "I must really thank you for all this help. I have been thinking that I should have to close this entrance, it makes the den so draughty. I have grown sensitive to draughts of late."

One moment Bamsa stared at the fox as if he did not believe his own eyes or ears. Then he growled fiercely, took a big stone and threw it after the fox. But Mikkel did not wait for it to hit him; he was

far away in no time. Bamsa Bear, however, had noticed the direction in which Mikkel had disappeared, and now he knew that there must be another

MIKKEL DID NOT WAIT FOR THE STONE TO HIT HIM

entrance to the den. So he began to sniff and hunt about.

Yes, sure enough, very soon he did find another door to the fox's hole. Bamsa had not enough patience to drag stones and pile them up against this entrance.

Now he would go into the den, get hold of the fox in there, and thus have a chance to vent his anger upon the impudent fellow.

"If you can dig yourself out, then I can dig my way in," he growled. "I haven't less strength and weaker claws than such a miserable creature as you."

Bamsa now began to dig so vigorously that stones and gravel and roots flew about him, as if a small whirlwind were at work.

While he was digging, he kept growling angrily to himself of all that he would do to that rascally fox when he caught him.

"I shall make an end of you, I promise," he threatened. "You shall not escape me alive this time."

The ground was now very hard, and the farther he dug into the den, the harder it was, but that did not bother Bamsa. He kept on digging as furiously as ever.

Ow! Ow! What was that? Some one outside had begun to beat him on his back, the only part of him that was out of the den.

Ow! Ow! He really had to groan, and as the

thrashing kept on, there was nothing to do but to go out and see what this meant.

"Ow! Ow! Stop that!"

"OW! OW! STOP THAT!"

But the one outside there did not stop. It was again Mikkel Fox, this time wielding a big stick.

The fox had been in the farther end of his den; and had heard Bamsa digging. Waiting until the bear had dug his way so far into the narrow passage that he

would find it hard to get back, Mikkel sneaked out of a third door to his den, picked up a big, heavy stick that lay there, and began to beat the old bear to his heart's content.

"I'll tan your bear's hide for you" he shouted, and kept on beating poor Bamsa so that his hair flew in every direction until the air seemed full of it.

"Is this the proper way to visit folk?" called Mikkel. "Couldn't you be polite and knock at the door?"

Swish, swish! The blows fell swift and hard, while Bamsa found it slow work to wriggle himself backward out of the narrow passage. He was getting very sore from the blows.

At last he was out in the open air again.

There he stood, looking ragged and miserable and anything but clean. His coat was full of small sticks and gravel and bits of roots; and there was so much dirt on his face that he could scarcely see out of his eyes; and oh, how his back hurt!

The worst of all, however, was to see Mikkel Fox standing there looking at him, and laughing so loud that the laughter could be heard a long way off. Were

all the forest folk to know that that impudent fox had again made a fool of him, Bamsa Bear, the strongest creature in the forest? Oh, yes, Mikkel Fox would be sure to tell every one about it.

BAMSA WALKED HEAVILY HOME

Very quietly, though sometimes groaning, Bamsa Bear walked heavily home. He was no longer full of courage and pride.

"Never will things be any different," he thought.

"There is such an outrageously clever head on that fox that all my strength is of no use with him.

From back on the hill Mikkel Fox called after him: "Yes, old fellow. That's the way it goes when one has strength without cleverness. Why didn't you learn before now how many doorways a fox has to his den?"

From the Norwegian of Louis Moe

A DANISH DINNER

FOR dinner on Rogation Day
Nine kinds of cabbage must alway
Be served upon the Danish board,
That is, if nine you can afford.
If not nine, surely eight or seven
For dinner must that day be given.

And yet, of course, if you're not able
With seven sorts to supply the table,
Why, six may stand, or five or four;
Or three sorts, if you can't get more.
To keep this custom old, indeed,
Two kinds of cabbage serve at need.

But if you are a Norseman true,
Less than *one* kind will never do!

From the Danish

THE DOWN COVERLET

OLA had a new little baby sister. So tiny she was, so pink and soft and delicate, that Ola scarcely dared to touch her. He would have been entirely happy if Mother had only had a down coverlet for the baby, but she could not make one as she had no down.

"It is so costly," said Mother, "and we are so poor."

Then Ola thought that he might go to the birds themselves for some down. They had no use for money and might perhaps give him their down, if he asked them very nicely. So Ola slung a big bag over his shoulder and started off, saying nothing to any one of his plan.

The first bird he met was a starling.

"Good day," said Ola.

"Good day to you," whistled the starling.

"I have come," said Ola, "to ask you for some down for a coverlet for my new baby sister. She is so little and we are so poor."

"My dear," whistled the starling, "I myself have

four small naked young ones. You had better go to the crow over there on the fence."

So Ola went to the fence where the crow sat, looking around and cawing.

"Good day," said Ola.

"Good day," said the crow. "Why have you come to me?"

"I have come," said Ola, "to ask you for some down for a coverlet for my new baby sister. She is so little and we are so poor."

"Down?" said the crow. "Have you ever heard of any one's sleeping on crow-down? If any one did, he might come to say only "Caw, caw! Go to the grouse in the forest. He is the ruler there, and must have plenty of everything.

So Ola went to the forest grouse.

"Good day," said Ola.

"Good day," said the grouse. "You are not a hunter, so I welcome you."

"Thank you," said Ola. "I have come to ask you for some down for a coverlet for my new baby sister. She is so little, and we are so poor."

"Down for a down coverlet?" asked the grouse. "You had better take moss. That is what my wife does, and she has fourteen small children and they are all much finer and smaller than human children. Yes, do that. Take as much moss as you please. I give you permission, for I am the ruler in the forest."

"Thank you," said Ola, "but it should be down, because my new baby sister is so little and delicate."

"Is she so? Well then, go to the big owl in the cleft of that rock there. The owl has down, I know. Farewell," said the lordly grouse, and off he flew to the next tree.

So Ola went to the big owl in the cleft of the rock. It was dark there, but Ola thought of his baby sister and that gave him courage.

"Good day," he said, as he saw the great bird owl sitting there. It turned its big yellow eyes, blinking tremendously.

"I never had a good day," said the owl. "It is only night that is good for me. What do you want with me, anyway? Have you a mouse for me or a snake?"

"No," said Ola as soon as he had courage to speak.

"HAVE YOU A MOUSE FOR ME, OR A SNAKE?"

"I would only ask for some down for a coverlet for my new baby sister. She is so little and we are so poor."

"Down?" snarled the owl. "You want me to pluck myself for your sister's sake, and you haven't as much as a snake or a toad to pay me with? Down you won't get from me—not a bit. Go rather to the ptarmigan on the mountain above here. She is an easy-going bird that will give you anything she has for no pay at all. But, anyway, leave me in peace. I can't bear to see those bright blue eyes of yours."

So Ola left the owl and went up the mountain to the ptarmigan.

"Good day," called Ola even before he had come near to the bird.

"Good day," clucked the ptarmigan. "Are folk like you on the mountain to-day?"

"Yes, I am here," said Ola, "and I have come to ask you for some down for a coverlet for my new baby sister. She is so little and we are so poor."

"Oh, you poor child," said the ptarmigan. "To have come so far! Well, if you could only find an empty nest now—there might be a little down hanging

on it. I myself can't spare any down, for I have nine small chicks to be kept warm. Here you see them. Aren't they sweet? Has your mother only one? Too bad. How poor she is! But listen, now. You'd better go straight to the king himself, the eagle, though it is a long climb, even from here, to the height where he lives."

So Ola must go farther. He climbed with great difficulty, higher and higher up the rough, rocky side of the mountain. At last he saw the eagle sitting on the highest peak and looking about sharply with his big sparkling eyes.

Ola laid down his bag and his stick, and went to stand on a rock as near to the eagle as he dared.

This was surely a time when he must be very polite, so he took off his hat and made a low bow to the king of the mountain.

"I wanted to ask you . . . "

"Don't you say 'Good day' first?" interrupted the eagle a little roughly.

"Yes," said Ola. (How could he have forgotten?) "Good day, Your Majesty."

Then he began to repeat his request, but before he had finished, the eagle stopped him.

"Yes, thank you. That is all good; but look at me, my dear Ola. Do you think that I have any down to fill a quilt with for a little child? Put on your hat and take your bag and stick and go to the seashore to the cormorant. She will have the right kind of down for you, or will tell you where you can get it."

Ola bowed and took his way to the sea. The first bird he saw was the cormorant. It sat on a piece of a wrecked ship and stared straight up in the air.

"Good day," said Ola.

"Do you mean a stormy day?" asked the cormorant. "Stormy days are good days for me, but we sha'n't get any bad weather very soon. I see that clearly. What are you here for, anyway?"

"I have come," said Ola, "to ask you for some down for a coverlet for my new baby sister. She is so little, and we are so poor." He was now so very tired that he was near bursting into tears.

"Poor?" said the cormorant. "Do you think there are any poorer folk than we? You say it is down you

"GOOD MORNING, YOUR MAJESTY"

want, but my dear, don't you know it is eider-down that you should have? Eider-down is the right thing. It is the very finest down there is. Go to the eider duck. See, there she is swimming with all her flock of ducklings following her. She has plenty of down."

Ola was glad that the eider duck was not farther away, for now he could feel that his strength was almost gone.

"Are you talking of down?" called the eider duck. She came swimming toward the shore, her ducklings following her as usual.

"Yes, we are," said the cormorant, and Ola added, "Oh, I wish so much to get some down for a coverlet for my new baby sister. She is so little, and we are so poor."

"Are you so poor?" asked the eider duck. "Well, down you shall have, as much as you wish. My nest is full and my children do not need down any more. So go to the nest. Yes, go there and take all the down you will. There will be plenty for you in other nests, too, because all my neighbors' children are out swim-

ming with their mothers and will not go back to the nests."

Gladly did Ola do as the good eider duck told him. He filled his bag bursting full. Then he said, "I thank you for myself, for my mother, and for my baby sister, who is so tiny and so sweet." Then he hurried home.

"Why, my dear!" said Mother. "What have you there? Down? Eider-down?"

"Yes," said Ola. "Down for a coverlet for little sister," Then he told the whole story of how he had traveled, and how many birds he had asked for down before he had found the eider duck.

"You certainly are a good brother to your little sister," said Mother. "Eider-down is the very softest, nicest down there is. Baby will sleep well under it."

Ola was now for the first time allowed to kiss his little sister's cheek. When he had kissed her, he did not feel the least bit tired any more.

From the Norwegian of Louis Moe

THE CAT AND THE GOAT

LITTLE Miss Puss Cat was once walking out on the road. She was mewing so sadly and seemed so full of sorrow that it was very pitiful. As she went along, she met an old goat.

"What are you mewing so for?" asked the old goat, nodding his head as is the manner of goats.

Miss Puss Cat paid no attention to him but kept on with her mewing. This the good old goat thought was so distressing that he asked again, "What are you mewing so for, little Miss?" and again he nodded his head as is the manner of goats.

Still Miss Puss Cat made no answer but mewed and mewed even more sorrowfully than before. It seemed now to the good old goat that he could not stand this any longer, so very kindly he asked for the third time, "What are you mewing so for, you poor little Miss Puss Cat?" And again he nodded his head as is the manner of goats.

Then the cat became very angry and all out of

patience with the stupid old goat because he wouldn't let her mew about her sorrow in peace as she had wished to do. She began to hiss and screech at him,

JUMPING ABOUT IN A FUNNY ZIGZAG FASHION

"Isch, sptss, yeow!" This frightened the poor old goat so that he bleated with terror, "Maa-aa-aa-! Maaa-Maa-aa-aa!"

While he was bleating, he began to run away, jumping about in a funny zigzag fashion as fast as he could, and getting over the ground at a great rate.

Now little Miss Puss Cat had never in her life seen anything so comical as this, and she had to laugh. "Hi hi hi! Isch! Hi hi hi!" Indeed she laughed so heartily and so long that when at last she stopped laughing, she had altogether forgotten what it was she had been mewing so sorrowfully about!

But perhaps it is only cat-sorrow that can be forgotten because one meets an old goat that nods his head and dances zigzag and bleats, "Maa-aa-aa! Maa! Maa-aa-aa!"

From the Norwegian of Louis Moe

WISE OLD DAGROS

WAITING FOR SPRING

THE cows on Solberg Farm were restless and uneasy. All winter they had been in the barn without a chance to stretch their legs, as it were, and with nothing to eat but a little hay and leaves. Oh, yes, they had been glad of the warm barn in the bitter cold weather, and of the hay, but now their thoughts were of spring when they should be free to go to the forest and eat green grass and drink from the brook. It was already time to be out and away. Every cow in the barn from Dagros, who was the most experienced, to Blackie, the youngest was sure that spring had come long ago, though the stupid herdsmen had not let them out.

Whenever the door was opened at an unusual time, the cows that were standing would bellow and stamp in their stalls, and those that were lying down heaved themselves up with one spring and joined in the uproar. Now they should be let loose, but, no, it was only a

boy whom the mistress had sent to the barn for a bucket, or a herdsman looking in to see that all was well. Even when the mistress herself came to pat the cows or milk them with her soft gentle hands, they were disappointed, and if they could have spoken they would have said:

"Open the door, good mistress, for spring is surely here."

Then one morning when they had almost given up hope they distinctly heard the sound of bells outside the door. It could be nothing else, but they scarcely dared to believe their own ears. But—yes—the sound came again; the barn doors were opened, and there stood the men with the cowbells in their hands.

One of these was a fine new bell. This was to be given to the cow chosen as leader of the herd, and now the mistress came to make the choice. The four oldest cows were Red Top, Brown Dolly, Kranselli, and Dagros. Which should be chosen? The mistress had no doubt about this, however.

"Put the big bell on Dagros," she said at once. Well, that was only right. Dagros was a wise cow and could

be trusted. She was proud of the honor, too. No sooner was the bell hung on her neck than she shook herself so that the other cows might hear what a fine clear sound it had.

"PUT THE BIG BELL ON DAGROS"

After the leader was selected, the herdsmen hung bells on all the other cows, and they shook themselves and bellowed besides. The mistress gave each of them a bunch of hay. What in the world was she thinking of? Did she imagine that any of them would care to

eat hay when the green grass was waiting for them? Out they would go now, this very minute, or they would knock the whole barn down!

The men made haste to bring halters, which they fastened to the collars of the cows before loosing them from the stalls. Every cow wished to be the first one to get out, so they all tried to hurry forward, but this only hindered everything.

Soon the commotion was greater than ever. The cows bellowed, and pulled and jerked, and tossed their heads; they kicked and pushed and were as unruly as cows could be; but at last all were led from the stalls and let out of the barn one at a time.

When they were finally out in the brilliant sunshine, it seemed as if some of them were fairly crazy. They did all sorts of strange things—raised themselves on their hind legs, then on their forelegs, and sniffed and snorted. Huff! That strong, fresh air! That beautiful field of young green grass! A couple of the cows began to eat, but the men tugged at their halters, and they soon understood that they were not to stay here but to go up to the forest pasture. That was near the

saeter. Dagros led the way and the others followed, with bells tinkling and jingling in a jolly chorus, as the cows began to run. Now was the winter ended! Now it was spring again! And summer would soon be here! Who wouldn't be thankful for that?

THE RESCUE OF RED TOP

NO other cow knew the saeter region so thoroughly as Dagros did, and every day she led the herd to some green spot on the hillside or to a meadow where the grass was long and deep.

She knew, too, that the best place for cows on horse-fly days was a pond where they might stand in water and thrash their backs with their dripping tails. It was to the pond also that little birds would often come to perch on the backs of the cows and search for flies and gnats. No sooner had Dagros felt the sting of one of these than she would say:

"Come, we must be off to the pond and stay till night, for to get rid of these troublesome insects is better than to eat." Yes, Dagros was a wise cow, but

it was on the day that Red Top was in danger that she showed plainly her great wisdom; every one agreed to that.

On one side of the hill was a deep narrow ravine beside which grew a rowan tree. The branches of the tree were tempting, and Red Top standing on the bank reached after one. As it happened, the turf broke away suddenly from under her fore feet, and Red Top tumbled down the steep slope, rolling over twice before she finally stopped. There she lay on her back against a little hillock. Dagros hastened to her but could not help her; and help Red Top must have and that soon, for she would die if she lay long like this.

"There is nothing to do but to see if I can't get hold of menfolk," thought Dagros. So she took the shortest way to the high point above the summer barn-pasture and called and roared as loud as she could. Then she ran all the way down to the pasture near the summer barn and called, and then ran up again.

"Huff!" said she. "Can't they understand anything to-day? Or have they lost their ears? Moo! Moo! Moo! Moo!" She shook herself hard, so that her bell

RED TOP TUMBLED DOWN THE STEEP SLOPE

should ring its loudest, then ran once more down the hill. They must know her well enough to understand that she would not come here alone and make all this hullabaloo unless something dreadful had happened.

Moo! Moo! Would they never come? Yes, yes, a couple of men came running towards her at full speed. At this sight Dagros kicked up her heels in excitement and joy. Now she thought that she would run at once to Red Top and tell her that help was coming, but when she reached the height, she stopped and looked back. She must make certain that the men were coming in this direction. Yes, they were already almost halfway to the summer barn. She had better stay above the ravine until they came that far, to be sure that they understood where they were to go. But no sooner had they appeared than she started down the ravine.

Red Top lay in the spot where Dagros had left her, groaning with fright and discomfort. Well, it was a good thing that the men were strong, for it is not easy to lift a fallen cow. Once she was almost up and slipped again, but the men kept trying. Now she was

on her feet. Huff! What a fright she had had! And Dagros, too.

One of the men went up the bank and broke a branch of the rowan tree and gave it to Red Top; and the other man broke a still larger one. Who would have that one, thought Dagros. What? Really? What a surprise! Was it Dagros herself who was to have the larger branch? It seemed as if the men wished to reward her because she had fetched them to help Red Top. Yes, it must be so, for when they had made sure that Red Top was all right, both the men came to Dagros. They fed her with leaves, they patted and stroked her, they scratched her neck, praising her all the while.

"You are the cleverest cow that walks on four feet in all Norway," they said to her.

DAGROS AND HER CALF

ONE night Dagros had a big beautiful red calf. No one knew anything about it until the next morning, not even the other cows, for she was in a little green dell apart from the herd. Dagros was glad of this, especially because here she could take care of the precious calf herself without interference from the herdsmen.

She went quickly to work to lick him all over so that he should be nice and clean. How soft and cuddle-y he was! And, oh, see, he was trying to get up! Poor thing! Down he fell. He couldn't manage it yet,—it was not to be expected, either,—but he would be strong enough soon. Already he was trying again, and see that! My horns, if he isn't really standing! What a fine fellow he is, to be sure. Huff! Huff! He knows what he wants. It won't be long before he will be looking for something to eat. . . . Oh, he's fallen down again, poor little thing! You didn't hurt yourself did you, Baby? Try again and it will go better; and the third time you will stand beautifully!

When the calf got up on his shaky legs once more he was hungry, but Dagros had a bag full of milk all ready for him. He soon found it and drank from it as eagerly as a baby drinks from its nursing-bottle. My,

IT WAS A JOY TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR CALF YOURSELF

what a hungry little calf! He will be strong and lively before long. Now he is down again; but never mind. Lie there and rest a while and Mother will lie beside you.

As Dagros lay down by the calf, she put her head

over his back to give him a little warmth and also to prevent him from getting up before it was time. Yes, it was a joy to take care of your calf yourself. By and by both the cow and calf were asleep, and when they awoke the sun stood high in the heavens. Folk from the farm were out looking for Dagros now, she well knew, for she could hear them calling and shouting: "Dagros! Come Dagros!"

She was not witless enough to answer them, though. That she would certainly take care not to do. The longer she could hide away with her calf, the better she would like it. But the worst of it was that she dared not eat anything lest they should hear her bell. Huff! That foolish bell that tinkled if she moved her head. She wished now that it were not about her neck.

All her care was for nothing, however, for the very next minute one of the herdsmen appeared, peeping over a rock. He smiled knowingly at Dagros but said nothing, and went away immediately. Alas! There was no doubt about it. He had seen both her and the calf. She might as well give up at once. Huff! Huff! Never might a mother-cow be left in peace to enjoy

herself. Always must some one come spying and nosing around to find her.

The best thing to do now was to go right out in full sight. Yes, that would be best, if only the calf were strong enough to go with her. O dear! O dear! Her joy had been short-lived, indeed. She grew anxious and troubled. What would happen now? What would they do with her calf? Wouldn't they let her have him any longer?

After a while, the man came again with a big basket on his back. He gathered a good quantity of moss and put it in the bottom of the basket; then he took the calf, tied his legs together and laid him on the moss. Dagros did not quite understand what he was going to do until he took the basket on his back, after fastening a halter to her collar. A halter, indeed! Was he so foolish as to think that she would stay behind if he went away with her calf? Huff! Rather would she follow to the end of the world.

The man led her straight home to the farm. Wasn't this just what she had felt afraid would happen? They would be put into that prison-barn, she in a stall and

the calf in a pen; so now their free, happy, open-air life together would end just when it had begun.

Huff! Huff! It was never worth while to rejoice too early over anything! But she wouldn't complain very much if they didn't take her calf away from her.

Well, well. Here they were at home,—the man and the calf and Dagros; and here at the same time came the mistress, bringing a big bucket of meal-water.

"What a fine calf!" she said, "and nobody can take such care of him as Dagros can. We must leave him with her for a while at least."

Dagros could not understand the words but she knew the meaning, and in her happiness she licked the calf again. Well, after all it was pleasant to have the farm folk see him. He was such a beautiful calf!

A SURPRISE FOR THE COWS

IN the latter part of the summer the cows began to get tired of the saeter region. The food grew scarce, the marshes were soaking wet and the weather was often cold and damp for days together. Huff! Huff! Why didn't the herdsmen come to take them home? Even Dagros, who had returned to the herd by this time, was beginning to be anxious.

One day they had gone to the south of the great marsh to graze. At about the time they should take their noontide rest, they heard a voice calling coaxingly, "Come Dagros! Come Brown Dolly! Come Red Top! Come, come, all you good cows!"

The cows raised their heads, turned and looked around. On the homeward side of the moor stood the men from the farm calling loudly. Could this mean anything special? Probably not, not anything worth thinking of.

Then the men came all the way over to them and began to drive them. Oh, well. That was another matter. If they really were to go somewhere else,

they could, but they couldn't understand why or where—unless—There! Yes! The farm gate was open! Well, well. It wasn't worth while to make too much of that, after all, for sometimes when a well-meaning cow went through an open gate, the people would come swarming out like wasps from a nest, and they would hit her over the back and act as if she were a wild beast! No, remembering this, it was best not to go through the gate. They hung back waiting for the leader to start.

Suddenly Dagros sprang forward. Whatever happened, she would go through the gate. But no one stopped her. It must really be meant that they should go home. At first Dagros had to stand still for very joy, but she moved on when Brown Dolly, capering gaily, set out towards the gate. Red Top came next; then all the other cows. Huff! Huff! This was a great day.

They hurried on, stopping a moment occasionally to eat greedily of the grass they could reach at the side of the road; but they had not peace of mind enough to stay long in one place to-day. Home they must go, and that at once.

They sprang up the last slope and came to the outlook over the farm. How strange! Could that be home? Where was the barn? And the cowshed? And what was that big new red house over there by the hill?

"It seems very queer indeed," said Dagros; and the other cows were of the same opinion.

When they reached the place where the old barn had been, they looked about anxiously. "This is where the door ought to be," said Red Top, standing by the doorstone of the old barn, "but where it is now, only the witches know." The other cows chewed their cuds thoughtfully. They all agreed that this was where the door had been, but they had nothing further to say.

They began to think how comfortable it would be to go into the good old barn. Perhaps it didn't matter much to-night, but what should they do when winter came and they had no barn to stay in?

But now came the men again and drove the cows towards the new red house by the hill,—yes, drove them even right up to it! One man opened the door and acted as if he wanted them to go in, but they had

enough sense to know that it would never do for cows to step into such a magnificent house as that.

Well, really! Who would believe it? The men lifted their sticks as if they were going to hit the cows! If an honest cow were not to be left in peace when she had done nothing wrong, there was no more to be said. None of them had done anything to deserve whip or stick to-day, that they knew.

But two of the men caught hold of Dagros and tried to push her into the new house. Red Top and the other cows watched eagerly. Dagros was strong, they knew, and she wouldn't give up and be made a fool of by these horrid men!—But look! Look! The men are getting her in! Huff! They might as well all go, now. It would be fun for once to see what such a fine house was like inside.

What do you think? Here were stalls, great roomy stalls! Could it be that the cows were to stay in such a grand place? They went about spying and sniffing everywhere. The walls were whitewashed, the floor was smooth and even. There were windows to let in the warm sun, and no cracks through which the bitter

wind could come as it had done in the old barn. Well, this winter they would be warm and cozy.

They had just reached this conclusion when the mistress came in with her milking-stool and pail.

THE MEN ARE GETTING HER IN

"How do you like your new barn?" she said, and by her tone they understood that everything was as it should be. Suddenly they felt very much at home. Huff! How pleasant it was to live at Solberg Farm!

From the Norwegian of Hans Seland

ROAST GOOSE FOR MARTINMAS

ST. MARTIN'S DAY is bad for geese,
As all in Denmark know.
For, slaughtered, by the wagon-load
To market they must go.

And would you know the reason why
So sad a fate they meet,
And why the Danes on Martinmas
Rejoice roast goose to eat?

Then listen: Bishop Martin once
From enemies would hide,
And in a pen among the geese
To find concealment tried;

But, silly creatures! they began
To make so great ado
That straightway then the enemy
The Bishop's refuge knew.

Alack, alack! their hiss and clack
Are punished in this way;
The Danes since then all eat roast goose
On each St. Martin's Day.

From the Danish

SLIM PETER

IN a corner of the attic there was a pile of rubbish,—empty spools, faded ribbons, old-fashioned hats, and many other old things. On the top of this pile of trash lay Slim Peter, staring up at the attic roof with his black bead eyes. He was dressed in checked trousers and a red jacket with bright brass buttons, and had yellow wool hair that spread out untidily in every direction.

Mother herself had made him once upon a time for her little girl, May Lisa. She had painted his cheeks a beautiful red; but these roses had faded long ago, and he was now both ragged and dirty. Poor Slim Peter! No one thought of him any longer, for May Lisa had outgrown playing with dolls some years ago.

"Oh, well! Oh, well! Everything changes," sighed Slim Peter. "Now I am old and forgotten, I who was once a member of the family and lived in the children's nursery. There was pretty white furniture there, and

the covers were of white with blue flowers. I remember it all as if it were yesterday. And now I lie here! But no one knows what yet may happen. Once more may Slim Peter be remembered and honored. I shall keep on hoping."

One day not long after this Mother came up to the attic. While she was putting things in order, she caught sight of Slim Peter lying on the rubbish heap gray with dust.

"Well! Who would have thought it! There lies May Lisa's old doll." said Mother. "I will take it downstairs and fix it up—yes, that I will surely do." So she took Slim Peter away with her.

"Yes, now I am here again," said Slim Peter as he lay on the sewing-table and looked around. "How long it is since I was here last! But did I not say this might happen? I have been remembered, and shall be honored again."

You should have seen what happened next to Slim Peter. A new jacket and new trousers were put on him, new roses were painted on his cheeks, and his untidy hair was brushed till it was clean and smooth.

"Now I shall sit on the yellow damask sofa in the parlor," he thought, "Now I shall see the sunbeams play on the flowered rug, and hear the grandfather's clock strike its ringing sound. Oh, yes, now there is coming a delightful time for me!"

But can you believe it? Slim Peter did not at all come to sit on the yellow damask sofa. Instead, he was packed in a box which was sent to little Ann Margaret, who had broken her leg and was in the hospital and who suffered a great deal. You can well understand that she was very glad to see Slim Peter. Now she had something to play with, a kind little playmate who would do whatever she wished. Now she even forgot altogether to long to go home to Father and Mother, the days went by so fast, so fast.

Uncle Doctor thought that Ann Margaret had become remarkably patient and sweet. But it was really Slim Peter who had helped her to be patient. He himself thought so and was very proud over it.

As little Ann Margaret grew better, however, and was able to play with the other children in the hospital, Slim Peter was rather neglected. He began to find it

tedious to see nothing but bare cold walls and beds and beds, so he often wished himself out in the world again. He knew, too, that little Ann Margaret would soon be leaving to return to her home.

One day he had been laid on the sill of the open window. It was now springtime. Slim Peter felt the spirit of adventure rising in him, although he was only sawdust. There! A lively breeze came past the window. Heigh-ho! how it whistled as it went by.

"Wait a little, let me go with you!" called Slim Peter. One, two, three! The spring wind lifted him high up, whirled him about till he was dizzy and didn't know anything; and then the wind tossed him into the gutter.

"Here perhaps I shall lie until I am swept up into the trash-barrel," thought Slim Peter. "No one has time to bother about a poor thing like me!"

But after all, some one came who did have time. It was a poor washerwoman who was on her way home. When she saw Slim Peter her heart leaped for joy. She had a little girl at home who had to sit alone in the dark kitchen all day, and wait and wait until her

mother came home;—a little lonesome child who had nothing at all to play with.

"God is always good!" thought the poor woman. "Now he has sent my little girl a plaything, for he knows I have no money to buy one for her. Oh, how glad she will be!"

The woman lived in a crowded part of the city where the tall houses stood so close together that only a little strip of sky could be seen and no sunshine could get into the houses. But never mind. Slim Peter would now brighten the days for the child.

He lay rolled up in the woman's shawl, but when he was taken out and the child saw him, she gave a little cry of joy and reached out her hands for him.

Slim Peter stayed there in the dark kitchen, and all day long he and the little girl played and had very good times together. Slim Peter, to his astonishment, was very happy. He had once been used to a beautiful home where the sunshine made the pretty nursery bright with its golden light or played on the flowery rug in the parlor while he sat on the yellow damask sofa.

Everything was different here, and he certainly never saw the sunshine.

"But yet I am happy," Slim Peter said to himself. "Perhaps belonging to a good family and having fine surroundings doesn't matter so much after all. I give pleasure to this little one and I see the light of joy in her eyes. Perhaps that is what makes me happy."

And do you know that when Slim Peter thought this, he had found out what many persons, not made of sawdust as he was, have never yet discovered!

From the Swedish of Britta Kilander Sahlin

THE TWO BROTHERS

ONCE there were two brother boys,
Who looked just like each other;
One boy learned the baker's trade,
The blacksmith's trade, his brother.

Wearing cap and apron white,
His big sieve often shaking,
White with flour the baker stood
While sifting, mixing, baking.

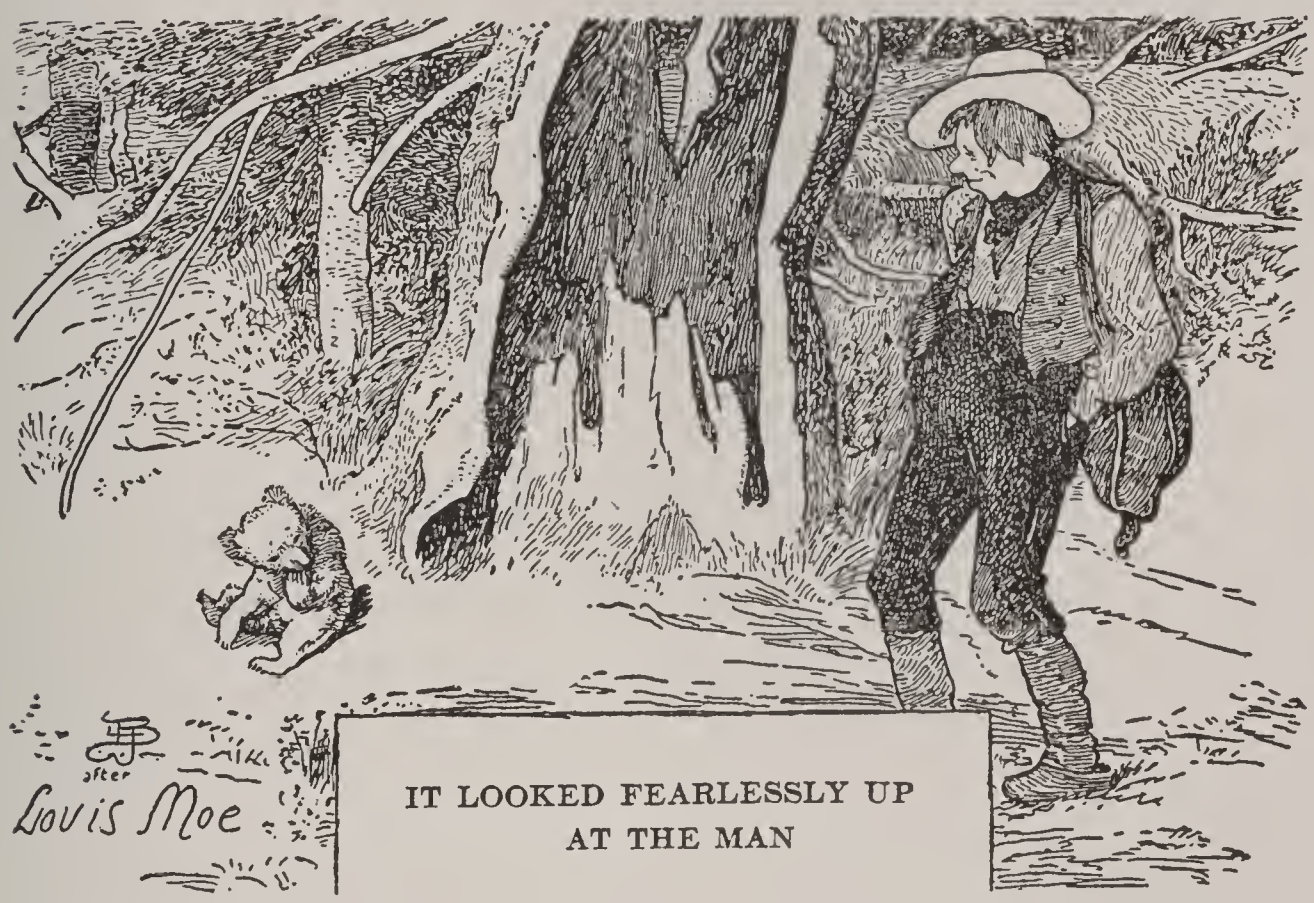
'Mid the soot and smoke and grime,
All day his hammer swinging,
Black as coal the blacksmith stood,
His anvil loudly ringing.

Week days showed the one man white,
And black, this white man's brother;
Sundays, fresh and clean at church,
Each looked just like the other.

From the Norwegian

A PLAYTHING FOR CHRISTMAS

NILS, a poor peasant with a big empty leather bag strapped on his back, was walking along a lonely forest path. He had been far in the deep



IT LOOKED FEARLESSLY UP AT THE MAN

woods all day cutting wood, and was now on his way home.

As he walked along, he saw something sitting in the middle of the path ahead of him. It was nothing more

nor less than a baby bear; a little, light-brown fellow, with big ears and lively, sparkling eyes. There it sat and looked fearlessly up at the man as if to say, "So you've come here, have you? I wonder what you are, for you don't look like a bear."

Nils at once stood stock-still and looked at the baby bear. It was Christmas Eve, and he was going home to his wretched hut without anything to make Christmas glad for his children. He glanced sharply around in every direction, for a sudden thought had come to him.

What more splendid plaything could his children have than this lively baby bear? How happy they would be with it! It might make them forget for a while that he could not give them a Christmas feast nor the new clothes which Norwegian children usually receive at Christmas time.

Yes, the children would love this plaything; and later, he could sell it, because such young bears were worth money. Yes, yes, he would take it home. Luckily, his big bag was empty.

He grabbed the little bear by the back of the neck,

put it into the bag, fastened the straps firmly, and laughed heartily to himself as he went quickly along the forest path.

Bear babies are open-air children, and this baby bear did not like the small, dark prison in which he had been put, so he began to whine, to fret and fuss at a great rate as he sat there in the bottom of the bag.

The man took longer and longer steps, striding on very fast. He did not like all this noise. Perhaps the mother bear was not very far away and might hear it.

Soon there was so much music in the bag that the peasant thought he might almost as well have a church organ on his back as far as

HE GRABBED THE LITTLE BEAR

HE THOUGHT OF THE PLEASURE HIS CHILDREN WOULD HAVE IN THIS PLAYTHING

noise was concerned. He did not feel very safe. Wasn't that music-box ever going to stop?

The noise grew louder and louder with no sign of stopping. If the baby bear would only keep quiet until he got out of the woods!

Nils thought of letting him out of the bag, but then he remembered his children with no Christmas feasting or presents, and the pleasure they would have in the plaything he was taking to them. He thought again, also, of the money that he might receive for the bear later when he sold it, perhaps to the menagerie man in the city. He seemed to see

already the shining silver coins he would get, so he walked faster and faster, hoping that he was the only one who heard the noise the little prisoner was making.

But mothers have sharp ears for their babies' cries, and baby bear's mother was nearer the forest path than the peasant thought. When she heard that baby voice crying and complaining, she knew it was her baby's voice. What was wrong with him? She hurried toward the sound. Her precious baby! She would not lose him for anything in the world. Klump-a-dunk, her feet struck heavily on the ground. Crack, crack, went the branches and brush that were in her way.

"There, if the mother bear is not coming now!" thought Nils. He began at once to run as fast as ever he could. The bear mother galloped after as fast as she could.

Nils thought that the forest path would never come to an end. Perhaps she would not follow him if he could once get out of the woods. He did not wish to give up his treasure if he could manage to keep it, for he still had in mind the joy of his flock of children and

the usefulness of the shining silver coins if he could only reach home with the baby bear in the bottom of his bag. So he dashed along over stock, over stone, like a rushing stormy wind.

He kept well ahead for a while, but before long the mother bear was almost at his heels, and the next thing

SHE WAS REACHING UP TO THE BAG

he knew she was reaching up to the bag with her fore-paws. She was determined to have that bag from which her baby's voice still came in frightened and angry cries.

"Well, if it's a matter of life and death," thought Nils, "it is better to let the plaything go."

He could not take time to undo the straps that were so well fastened but he pulled the bag, straps and all,

BEST OF ALL WAS THAT FATHER HAD NOT BEEN CAUGHT

off his back and threw it behind him, and did not stop running to draw breath until he reached the door of his house.

All the children were out in front of the house trying to think of something to do and wishing they were to have Christmas pleasure of some sort.

When they saw their father coming at such speed, they wondered why he was running. So as soon as he could get breath enough he told them the whole story.

How they wished he could have brought the baby bear home with him! A live plaything would have been such fun! But the story was something, and best of all was that Father had not been caught by the angry mother bear, but was safe at home.

Out in the forest sat the mother bear rejoicing over her baby which she had so nearly lost. And the baby bear was happy, too, out of the bag and near his mother. Besides, he had a grand plaything, the man's big empty leather bag.

When it was found later, there was nothing left of it but shreds. The little bear, instead of the children, had had a Christmas plaything that year.

From the Norwegian of Louis Moe

THE CANDY PIG

ONE Christmas little Kaisa had
A charming candy pig.
"The pinkest, prettiest ever seen,"
Thought Kaisa, "and so big!"

"No shop in Sweden anywhere
A finer pig can show;
I'm going to keep it all my life,
However old I grow."

But soon another thought she had:
"I don't see why it should
Have ears. I think I'll eat them up."
(They tasted very good.)

A moment later, "Little pig,
For legs why should you care?
You know I always carry you
When we go anywhere."

The candy legs were very sweet,
So, as you may have guessed
The thought popped into Kaisa's head;
"Why not eat all the rest?"

And that is just what Kaisa did;
Although it was so big,
She ate and ate the whole of it,
That charming candy pig.

What next? "Oh, Mother, help!" she called,
"Do help, I've such a pain.
I never, never wish to see
A candy pig again."

From the Swedish

NEVER AGAIN!

THE CHRISTMAS CAKES

MAKING THE CAKES

IT was two days before Christmas, and high time to make the Christmas Cakes.

Mother bustled to and fro, getting together all the materials for the cake, while Father worked hard over the fire to keep that good for baking.

Father had had to build an oven in the fireplace, because the family had no stove. But it was a very good oven indeed, with fire on top and fire underneath, and you could see whatever was baking in it.

The children looked from Mother to Father and from Father to Mother, trying to see everything that was done; for these Christmas Cakes were very special cakes, such as the children had never had before. They were to be made from rye grown in their own field, and they were to have raisins in them,—yes, *raisins!*

Only Thomas, of all the six children, had ever tasted raisins. He had had some when he went with a tourist over the mountain last summer, and Mother had said then that when Christmas time came, she would make some Christmas Cakes and stuff them full of raisins!

And now she was stirring the raisins into the dough. Regular thick big rascals of cakes they were going to be, Father said.

At last, came the great moment the children had been longing for. The fire was ready, the oven was ready, the dough with the raisins in it was ready, and now Mother was going to make the separate cakes.

First, she made a tiny wee cake for Hilma, (but it was a big cake for such a little girl).

Then a cake that was a little bit bigger and thicker for Hàlgrim.

And one a little bigger and thicker than his for Ragnhild.

And one bigger yet for Lil.

And one still bigger for Dagny.

And one even bigger than that for Thomas!

Then she made two cakes, a great deal bigger than

any of the children's cakes. One was for Grandmother and one for herself.

And last of all came the biggest of all,—an *enormous* big thick cake for Father.

There they lay on the baking-board, all nine of them; and each cake had two round holes near the middle.

"Those are for eyes," said little Hilma, who was always ready to explain everything.

Mother took the tiny wee cake and put it into the oven.

"Bake nicely for little Hilma," she said to it, "and don't crack."

Then she took the cake that was a little bit bigger and thicker.

"Enjoy yourself while you are baking, and keep round and nice for Hàlgrim," said Mother.

At last she had taken all the cakes from the baking-board. There they were in the oven, from the littlest to the biggest,—nine plump Christmas Cakes.

THERE THEY LAY ON THE BAKING-BOARD, ALL NINE OF THEM

THE BAKING

The children sat down on a long bench in front of the fireplace to keep watch over the cakes as they baked.

Soon little Hilma put her pointer finger over to her cake and got a speck of dough to taste.

"My cake is a swe-e-eet one!" she sang.

Hàlgrim did the same with his cake.

"My cake is swe-e-eet, too!" he chanted lustily.

"Listen to me," said Thomas. He felt very important, and that he ought to rule the others because he was the eldest and because he had learned all the Commandments.

"My cake is the swe-eet-est of all—all—all," he sang; and he was so pleased with his song that he kept on singing it, until the other children were quite provoked. Little Hilma looked ready to cry, and clouds gathered along the whole bench. It was a good thing that Mother came in just then.

"You know very well that the cakes are all alike,—

NOW THEY WERE IN THE OVEN

one just as sweet as the others," she said comfortingly. "They are all made of the same dough." And the sun shone out quickly again.

A few moments later, Mother tried the cakes. They were done,—crusty and brown and plump, and humpy and lumpy, too, there were so many raisins crowded into them! And if ever anything smelled delicious, it was these Christmas Cakes as Mother took them from the oven.

First, she took out the tiny wee cake for Hilma,—(after all, it was certainly a big cake for such a little girl,) and put it on the clean baking-board on the table.

"That is my cake," said Hilma.

Then Mother took out the cake that was a little bit bigger and thicker.

"That's mine," said Hàlgrim.

Then the one next bigger and thicker.

"Oh, that's mine," said Ragnhild.

Then a still bigger one.

"That's mine," said Lil.

Then the one that was bigger yet.

"That's mine," said Dagny.

KEEPING WATCH OVER THE CAKES

And then the one that was bigger than Dagny's.

"That's my big rascal of a cake," said Thomas, in his deepest voice.

Then Mother took out the two big cakes that were for Grandmother and herself; and last of all, the biggest of all, the *enormous*, big, thick cake that Father should have on Christmas morning.

The children looked at the row of nine brown cakes with great content. There was no doubt about it,—they were wonderfully fine Christmas Cakes. The raisins seemed as close together as the nails in a shoe-heel, and some had pushed through at the sides and tops of the cakes as if in a hurry to be eaten! Ummmm! How good they would taste!

"Any one might be glad to have a mouth," said little Hilma in her knowing way. "Any one might be glad to have a mouth when he can bite into such Christmas Cakes as these!"

HILMA'S DREAM

As the evening came on, one after another of the children began to nod, so Mother helped them to get ready for bed, whispered a little prayer over each one and tucked the blankets close around their small bodies. (How good it is to have a mother!)

In the night, one of the children awoke, and then another, and another, until the whole flock was astir. Grandmother was moaning and groaning in her bedroom, and this was what had awakened them. Every groan from dear Grandmother made them feel more and more sorry for her.

Hilma and Ragnhild stole in to see her, but she said it was her rheumatism that hurt her so much, and that nobody could help her, not even Mother.

So the little girls went sadly back to bed; and all the children, still wishing they could do something to cure Grandmother, soon dropped off to sleep.

Later, however, the children were again awakened.

They could hear that Grandmother's pain was as bad as ever, perhaps even worse.

"Well," said Hilma, a little slowly, "I dreamed of something to do to cure Grandmother. I dreamed that we gave our Christmas Cakes to the little birds, and that that cured her; so now we must do it," she added with a determined air.

This suggestion gave a shock to all the brothers and sisters. Oh, no! It wasn't to be thought of that they should give up their Christmas Cakes,—those rich, delicious cakes, stuffed with raisins and baked to a turn and all ready to be eaten Christmas morning! It wasn't possible.

But Hilma was so full of the plan that they couldn't keep from listening to her.

"We could put the cakes on a pole the way the Christmas sheaf is put up for the birds," she told them.

"You will give your cake to help cure Grandmother, won't you Hàlgrim? Do—that's a good boy."

"Ye-es," sighed Hàlgrim, in a choking uncertain voice. The tears sprang to his eyes at the thought of having no cake on Christmas morning.

HILMA AND RAGNHILD STOLE IN TO SEE HER

"Won't you, too, Sister Lil," begged Hilma coaxingly.

"Yes, I will. Poor Grandmother. If I had two cakes, I would give them both to the birds if it would cure her," said Lil, squeezing Hilma's hand. "We'll do it bright and early in the morning," she added.

Before the children fell asleep again, however, Grandmother began groaning as if the pain were worse than ever.

Little Hilma jumped out of bed and fumbled after her clothes in the dark.

"What are you getting up for?" asked Dagny. "You aren't going to give your Christmas Cake to the birds now, in the middle of the night."

"Yes," whispered Hilma.

"Wait till morning, and then we'll all give our cakes at once," suggested Ragnhild.

"But it wouldn't be good for poor Grandmother to have the pain as long as that," said Hilma. She was already tying her shoe.

Lil, too, was up; and when the others saw how determined the two little girls were and heard Grand-

mother's continued pitiful moaning, they all crept out of their warm beds.

The room was so icy cold that their teeth chattered. The snow beat against the windows and the wind howled. It was real winter weather and no mistake.

In a very few moments, the children were dressed and had found their Christmas Cakes.

"Shall we put the bigger cakes on first, and so on?" asked Dagny, taking a small pole that Thomas had brought her from a pile on the woodshed floor.

"Why, then the little birds couldn't get any but the top one," objected Hilma, "and they must have *all* our cakes, for that's what I dreamed would cure Grandmother. We must have a stick for each cake."

Yes, that would be the best way, the other children agreed.

So they took the tiny wee cake that was Hilma's and stuck that on a short pole. Then the cake a little bit bigger and thicker, Hàlgrim's, on another pole; and so on, up to the big cake that was Thomas's. This stood at the end of the line and was the Captain, Thomas said.

"Come, all you little birds, and eat," coaxed Hilma in her gentle voice.

"WE MUST HAVE A STICK FOR EACH CAKE"

"Fine Christmas Cakes," added Dagny. "With raisins sweet," said Thomas. Then all the children chanted the rhyme together, delighted with their brother's cleverness.

"Come, all you little birds, and eat
Fine Christmas Cakes with raisins sweet."

But by this time the children were shivering so that they could scarcely speak. The North Wind blew around them as if it would lift them up and give them a ride out to some big snowbank, but no, thank you! All they wanted now was to slip back into the house and into bed before they should be frozen through and through.

But they all felt as if they could dance with joy,—they were so happy in thinking they had done something that would cure Grandmother.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND CHRISTMAS JOY

Alas and alas! When the children awoke in the morning, and before they had had time to remember that it was the day before Christmas, they heard Grandmother groaning.

Oh, but the children were sorry and disappointed! Hilma could scarcely believe her own ears, but by the time she was dressed, she had thought out, in her wise little head, exactly what the matter was.

The birds hadn't had the least bit of good from the Christmas Cakes, for they were,—you could see from the window,—each on its own stick but wearing a hat of new-fallen snow, and of course, frozen as hard as stones.

She and Dagny went out, brushed the snow from the cakes and brought them into the house again. There was no use in leaving them out, since they were too hard for the birds to eat.

Such a disappointment! The children had hoped so earnestly that giving up their Christmas Cakes might make Grandmother well, as Hilma had dreamed it would, but now that this had failed, there seemed nothing they could do.

"You might tell Grandmother about the cakes, anyway," suggested Mother. "You may all go in to see her after Dagny has taken her coffee to her."

So by and by Grandmother heard the whole story.

"Well, well! Well, well!" said she. "To think that my grandchildren were willing to give up their fine Christmas Cakes to make me well! Were there ever such loving little grandchildren as these? The very

DAGNY TAKES GRANDMOTHER'S COFFEE TO HER

thought of it makes me better!" A wonderfully happy look came into Grandmother's face.

As the day went on, the pain lessened and Grandmother really was better. Whether it was her happiness in the children's love, or Mother's careful nursing or both, that helped her, who can tell? But that she was better was very plain.

The children waited on her all day, and she grew so very much better and slept so well that night that on Christmas, morning, up she got without a pain or an ache anywhere!

When Grandmother took her place at the breakfast table, there was an uproar of joy among the whole "kit and boodle" as Father called the flock of children.

The Christmas Cakes, from Hilma's tiny wee cake to Father's *enormous* big thick cake, were all on the table, each one before its owner. They were tasted thoughtfully and found to be delicious beyond words. That they had been stuck on poles and offered for bird-food, and frozen as hard as stone had not hurt the children's cakes in the least.

ENJOYING THE CHRISTMAS CAKES

The raisins were as sweet and tasty as raisins could be. They had puffed out in baking, and were crowded so close together that it was impossible to set your teeth into a cake without biting into a raisin. But dear me! That was just what they liked, those Christmas Cake raisins!

Every bite pleased them and, of course, every bite pleased the children.

As the family, with Grandmother well and smiling, sat there enjoying the Christmas cakes, it seemed as if no Christmas could ever be more joyful.

"It's as good as two Christmases at once," said little Hilma.

From the Norwegian of Hallvard Bergh

GIVING

HAVE you plenty? Then rejoice;
Rejoice and freely share.
Have you scanty store? E'en then
A little you can spare.

And have you only bit or crumb,
A donor yet you may become
Since morsel from your less or least
For bird or insect makes a feast.

Be the portion small or great,
The loving, generous heart
Will always find it large enough
To give away a part.

From the Norwegian