

Andersen Hans Christian

The Sand-Hills of Jutland



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Содержание

The Sand-hills of Jutland	6
The Mud-king's Daughter	25
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	30

Andersen H. C. Hans Christian The Sand-Hills of Jutland

The Following Tales

ARE DEDICATED,

WITH THE HIGHEST SENTIMENTS OF

ESTEEM AND REGARD,

TO

THE BARON CHARLES JOACHIM HAMBRO,

BY

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

The Sand-hills of Jutland

This is a story from the Jutland sand-hills, but it does not commence there; on the contrary, it commences far away towards the south, in Spain. The sea is the highway between the two countries. Fancy yourself there. The scenery is beautiful; the climate is warm. There blooms the scarlet pomegranate amidst the dark laurel trees; from the hills a refreshing breeze is wafted over the orange groves and the magnificent Moorish halls, with their gilded cupolas and their painted walls. Processions of children parade the streets with lights and waving banners; and, above these, clear and lofty rises the vault of heaven, studded with glittering stars. Songs and castanets are heard; youths and girls mingle in the dance under the blossoming acacias; whilst beggars sit upon the sculptured blocks of marble, and refresh themselves with the juicy water-melon. Life dozes here: it is all like a charming dream, and one indulges in it. Yes, thus did two young newly-married persons, who also possessed all the best gifts of earth – health, good humour, riches, and rank.

"Nothing could possibly exceed our happiness," they said in the fulness of their joyful hearts; yet there was one degree of still higher happiness to which they might attain, and that would be when God blessed them with a child – a son, to resemble them in features and in disposition.

That fortunate child would be hailed with rapture; would be loved and daintily cared for; would be the heir to all the advantages that wealth and high birth can bestow.

The days flew by as a continual festival to them.

"Life is a merciful gift of love – almost inconceivably great," said the young wife; "but the fulness of this happiness shall be tasted in that future life, when it will increase and exist to all eternity. The idea is incomprehensible to me."

"That is only an assumption among mankind," said her husband. "In reality, it is frightful pride and overweening arrogance to think that we shall live for ever – become like God. These were the serpent's wily words, and he is the father of lies."

"You do not, however, doubt that there is a life after this one?" asked his wife; and for the first time a cloud seemed to pass over their sunny heaven of thought.

"Faith holds forth the promise of it, and the priests proclaim it," said the young man; "but, in the midst of all my happiness, I feel that it would be too craving, too presumptuous, to demand another life after this one – a happiness to be continual. Is there not so much granted in this existence that we might and ought to be content with it?"

"To us – yes, there has been much granted," replied the young wife; "but to how many thousands does not this life become merely a heavy trial? How many are not, as it were, cast into this world to be the victims of poverty, wrangling, sickness, and misfortune? Nay, if there were no life after this one, then everything in this globe has been unequally dealt out; then God would not be just."

"The beggar down yonder has joys as great, to his ideas, as are those of the monarch in his splendid palace to him," said the young man; "and do you not think that the beasts of burden, which are beaten, starved, and toiled to death, feel the oppressiveness of their lot? They also might desire another life, and call it unjust that they had not been placed amidst a higher grade of beings."

"In the kingdom of heaven there are many mansions, Christ has told us," answered the lady. "The kingdom of heaven is infinite, as is the love of God. The beasts of the field are also His creation; and my belief is that no life will be extinguished, but will win that degree of happiness which may be suitable to it, and that will be sufficient."

"Well, this world is enough for me," said her husband, as he threw his arms round his beautiful, amiable wife, and smoked his cigarette upon the open balcony, where the deliciously cool air was laden with the perfume of orange trees and beds of carnations. Music and the sound

of castanets arose from the street beneath; the stars shone brightly above; and two eyes full of affection, the eyes of his charming wife, looked at him with love which would live in eternity.

"Such moments as these," he exclaimed, "are they not well worth being born for – born to enjoy them, and then to vanish into nothingness?"

He smiled; his wife lifted her hand and shook it at him with a gesture of mild reproach, and the cloud had passed over – they were too happy.

Everything seemed to unite for their advancement in honour, in happiness, and in prosperity. There came a change, but in place – not in anything to affect their well-being, to damp their joy, or to ruffle the smooth current of their lives. The young nobleman was appointed by his king ambassador to the court of Russia. It was a post of honour to which he was entitled by his birth and education. He had a large private fortune, and his young wife had brought him one not inferior to his own, for she was the daughter of one of the richest men in the kingdom. A large ship was about that time to go to Stockholm. It was selected to convey the rich man's dear daughter and son-in-law to St. Petersburg; and its cabin was fitted up as if for the use of royalty – soft carpets under the feet, silken hangings, and every luxury around.

Amidst the ancient Scandinavian ballads, known to all Danes under their general title of *Kæmpeviser*, there is one called "The King of England's Son." He likewise sailed in a costly ship; its anchor was inlaid with pure gold, and every rope was of twisted silk. Every one who saw the Spanish vessel must have remembered the ship in this legend, for there was the same pageantry, the same thoughts on their departure.

"God, let us meet again in joy!"

The wind blew freshly from off the Spanish shore, and the last adieux were therefore hurried; but in a few weeks they would reach their destination. They had not gone far, however, before the wind lulled, the sea became calm, its surface sparkled, the stars above shone brightly, and all was serenity in the splendid cabin.

At length they became tired of the continued calm, and wished that the breeze would rise and swell into a good strong wind, if it would only be fair for them; but they still lacked wind, and if it did arise, it was always a contrary one. Thus passed weeks, and when at length the wind became fair, and blew from the south-west, they were half way between Scotland and Jutland. Just then the wind shifted, and increased to a gale, as it is described to have done in the ballad of "The King of England's Son."

"The sky grew dark, and the wind it blew,
They could see neither land nor haven of rest;
So then they cast out their anchor true,
But to Denmark they drove with the gale from the west."

This was many years ago. King Christian the Seventh occupied the Danish throne, and was then a young man. Much has happened since that time, much has changed; lakes and morasses have become fruitful meadows, wild moors have become cultivated land, and on the lee of the West Jutlander's house grow apple trees and roses; but they must be sheltered from the sharp west winds. Up there one can still, however, fancy one's self back in the period of Christian the Seventh's reign. As then in Jutland, so even now, stretch for miles and miles the brown heaths, with their tumuli, their meteors, their knolly, sandy cross roads. Towards the west, where large streams fall into the fiords, are to be seen wide plains and bogs, encircled by high hills, which, like a row of Alpine mountains with pinnacles formed like saws, frown over the sea, which is separated from them only by high clay banks; and year after year the sea bites a large mouthful off of these, so that their edges

and summits topple over as if shaken by an earthquake. Thus they look at this day, and thus they were many years ago, when the happy young couple sailed from Spain in the magnificent ship.

It was the end of September. It was Sunday and sunshine: the sound of the church bells reached afar, even to Nissumfiord. The churches up there were like rocks with spaces hewn out in them: each one of them was like a piece of a mountain, so heavy and massive. The German Ocean might have rolled over them, and they would have stood firmly. Many of them had no spires or towers, and the bells hung out in the open air between two beams. The church service was over. The congregation had passed from the house of God out into the churchyard, where then, as now, not a tree, not a bush was to be seen – not a single flower, not a garland laid upon a grave. Little knolls or heaps of earth point out where the dead are buried; a sharp kind of grass, lashed by the wind, grows over the whole churchyard. A solitary grave here and there has, perhaps, a monument; that is to say, the mouldering trunk of a tree, rudely carved into the shape of a coffin. The pieces of tree are brought from the woods of the west. The wild ocean provides, for the dwellers on the coast, beams, planks, and trees, which the dashing billows cast upon the shore. The wind and the sea spray soon decay these tree monuments. Such a stump was lying over the grave of a child, and one of the women who had come out of the church went towards it. She stood gazing upon the partially loosened piece of wood. Shortly afterwards her husband joined her. They remained for a time without either of them uttering a single word; then he took her hand, and led her from the grave out upon the heath, across the moor, in the direction of the sand-hills. For a long time they walked in silence. At last the husband said, —

"It was an excellent sermon to-day. If we had not our Lord we should have nothing."

"Yes," said the wife, "He sends joy, and He sends affliction. He is right in all things. Tomorrow our little boy would have been five years old if he had been spared to us."

"There is no use in your grieving for his loss," replied the husband. "He has escaped much evil. He is now where we must pray to be also received."

They dropped the painful subject, and pursued their way towards their house amidst the sand-hills. Suddenly, from one of these where there was no lyme-grass to keep down the sand, there arose as it were a thick smoke. It was a furious gust of wind, that had pierced the sand-hill, and whirled about in the air the fine particles of sand. The wind veered round for a minute; and all the dried fish that was hung up on cords outside of the house knocked against its walls, then everything was still again. The sun was shining warmly.

The man and his wife entered their house, and having soon divested themselves of their Sunday clothes, they hastened over the sand-hills, which stood like enormous waves of sand suddenly arrested in their course. The sea-reed's and the lyme-grass's blue-green sharp blades gave some variety to the white sand. Some neighbours joined the couple who had just come from church, and they assisted each other in dragging the boats higher up the beach. The gale was increasing; it was bitterly cold; and when they were returning over the hills, the sand and small stones whisked into their faces, the waves mounted high with their white crests, and the spray dashed after them.

It was evening; there was a doleful whistling in the air, increasing every moment – a wild howling, as if a host of unseen despairing spirits were uttering their complaints. The moaning sound overpowered even the angry dashing of the waves, although the fisherman's house lay so near to the shore. The sand drifted against the windows, and every now and then came a blast that shook the house to its foundation. It was very dark, but the moon would rise at midnight.

The air cleared; yet the storm still raged in all its might over the deep gloomy sea. The fishermen and their families had retired for some time to rest, but no one could close his eyes in such terrible weather. Some one knocked at the windows of some of the cottages, and when the doors were opened the person said, —

"A large ship is lying fast upon the outer shoal."

In a moment the fishermen and their wives were up and dressed.

The moon had risen, and there was light enough to see if they had not been blinded by the sand that was flying about. The wind was so strong that they were obliged to lie down, and creep amidst the gusts over the sand-hills; and there flew through the air, like swan's down, the salt foam and spray from the sea, which, like a roaring, boiling cataract, dashed upon the beach. A practised eye was required to discern quickly the vessel outside. It was a large ship; it was lifted a few cable lengths forward, then driven on towards the land, struck upon the inner sand-bank, and stood fast. It was impossible to go to the assistance of the ship, the sea was running too high: it beat against the unfortunate vessel, and dashed over her. The people on shore thought that they heard cries of distress – cries of those in the agony of death; and they saw the desperate, useless activity on board. Then came a sea that, like a crushing avalanche, fell upon the bowsprit, and it was gone. The stern of the vessel rose high above the water – two people sprang from it together into the sea – a moment, and one of the most gigantic billows that were rolling up against the sand-hills cast a body upon the shore: it was that of a female, and every one believed it was a corpse. Two women, however, knelt down by the body, and thinking that they found in it some sign of life, it was carried over the sand-hills to a fisherman's house. How beautiful she was, and how handsomely dressed! – evidently a lady of rank.

They placed her in the humble bed; there was no linen on it, only blankets to wrap her in, yet these were very warm.

She soon came to life, but was in a high fever. She did not seem to know what had happened, or to remark where she was; and this was probably fortunate, since all who were dear to her on board the ill-fated ship were lying at the bottom of the sea. It had been with them as described in the song, "The King of England's Son: " —

"It was, in sooth, a piteous sight!
The ship broke up to bits that night."

Portions of the wreck were washed ashore. She was the only living creature out of all that had so lately breathed and moved on board the doomed ship. The wind was howling their requiem over the inhospitable coast. For a few minutes she slept peacefully, but soon she awoke and uttered groans of pain; she cast up her beautiful eyes towards heaven, and said a few words, but no one there could understand them.

Another helpless being soon made its appearance, and her new-born babe was placed in her arms. It ought to have reposed on a stately couch, with silken curtains, in a splendid house. It ought to have been welcomed with joy to a life rich in all this world's goods; but our Lord had ordained that it should be born in a peasant's hut, in a miserable nook. Not even one kiss did it receive from its mother.

The fisherman's wife laid the infant on its mother's breast, and it rested near her heart; but that heart had ceased to beat – she was dead! The child who should have been nurtured amidst happiness and wealth was cast a stranger into the world – thrown up by the sea among the sand-hills, to experience heavy days and the fate of the poor. And again we call to mind the old song: —

"The king's son's eyes with big tears fill:
'Alas! that I came to this robber-hill.
Here nothing awaits me but evil and pain.
Had I haply but come to Herr Buggé's domain,
Neither knight nor squire would have treated me ill."

A little to the south of Nissumfiord, on that portion of the shore which Herr Buggé had formerly called his, the vessel had stranded. Those rough, inhuman times, when the inhabitants of

the west coast dealt cruelly, it is said, with the shipwrecked, had long passed away; and now the utmost compassion was felt, and the kindest attention paid to those whom the engulfing sea had spared. The dying mother and the forlorn child would have met with every care wherever "the wild wind had blown;" but nowhere could they have been received with more cordial kindness than by the poor fishwife who, only the previous morning, had stood with a heavy heart by the grave wherein reposed her child, who on that very day would have attained his fifth year if the Almighty had permitted him to live.

No one knew who the foreign dead woman was, or whence she came. The broken planks and fragments of the ship told nothing.

In Spain, at that opulent house, there never arrived either letter or message from the daughter and son-in-law; they had not reached their destination; fearful storms had raged for some weeks. They waited with anxiety for months. At last they heard, "Totally lost – every one on board perished!"

But at Huusby-Klitter, in the fisherman's cottage, there dwelt now a little urchin.

Where God bestows food for two, there is always something for a third; and near the sea there is plenty of fish to be found. The little stranger was named Jörgen.

"He is surely a Jewish child," said some people, "he has so dark a complexion."

"He may, however, be an Italian or a Spaniard," said the priest.

The whole tribe of fishermen and women comforted themselves that, whatever was his origin, the child had received Christian baptism. The boy thrived, his noble blood mantled in his cheek, and he grew strong, notwithstanding poor living. The Danish language, as it is spoken in West Jutland, became his mother tongue. The pomegranate seed from the Spanish soil became the coarse grass on the west coast of Jutland. Such are the vicissitudes of life!

To that home he attached himself with his young life's roots. Hunger and cold, the poor man's toil and want, he was to experience, but also the poor man's joys.

Childhood has its bright periods, which shine in recollection through the whole of after life. How much had he not to amuse him, and to play with! The entire seashore, for miles in length, was covered with playthings for him – a mosaic of pebbles red as coral, yellow as amber, and pure white, round as birds' eggs, all smoothed and polished by the sea. Even the scales of the dried fish, the aquatic plants dried by the wind, the shining seaweed fluttering among the rocks – all were pleasant to his eye, and matter for his thoughts; and the boy was an excitable, clever child. Much genius and great abilities lay dormant in him. How well he remembered all the stories and old ballads he heard; and he was very quick with his fingers. With stones and shells he would plan out whole scenes he had heard as if in a picture: one might have ornamented a room with these handiworks of his. "He could cut out his thoughts with a stick," said his foster-mother; and yet he was but a little boy. His voice was very sweet – melody seemed to have been born with him. There were many finely-toned strings in that breast; they might have sounded forth in the world, had his lot been otherwise cast than in a fisherman's house on the shores of the German Ocean.

One day a ship foundered near. A case was thrown up on the land containing a number of flower-bulbs. Some took them and put them into their cooking pots, thinking they were to be eaten; others were left to rot upon the sand; none of them fulfilled their destination – to unfold the lovely colours, the beauty that lay in them. Would it be better with Jörgen? The poor flower-roots were soon done for: there might be years of trial before him.

It never occurred to him, or to any of the people around him, to think their days lonely and monotonous: there was abundance to do, to hear, and to see. The ocean itself was a great book; every day he read a new page in it – the calm, the swell of the sea, the breeze, the storm. The beach was his favourite resort; going to church was his event, his visit of importance, though of visits there was one which occasionally took place at the fisherman's house that was particularly welcome to him. Twice a year his foster-mother's brother, the eel-man from Fjaltring, up near Rovbjerg, paid

them a visit. He came in a painted cart full of eels. The cart was closed and locked like a chest, and painted with blue, red, and white tulips; it was drawn by two dun-coloured bullocks, and Jörgen was allowed to drive them.

The eel-man was a very good-natured, lively guest. He always brought a keg of brandy with him; every one got a dram of it, or a coffee-cup full if glasses were scarce; even Jörgen, though he was but a little fellow, was treated to a good thimbleful. That was to keep down the fat eels, said the eel-man; and then he never failed to tell a story he had often told before, and, when people laughed at it, he immediately told it over again to the same persons; but this is a habit with all talkative individuals; and as Jörgen, during the whole time that he was growing up, and into the years of his manhood, often quoted phrases in this story, and applied them to himself, we may as well listen to it.

"Out in the rivulet dwelt eels, and the eel-mother said to her daughters, when they begged to be allowed to go a little way alone up the stream. 'Do not go far, lest the horrible eel-spearer should come, and take you all away.'

"But they went very far, and of eight daughters only three returned to their mother, and these came wailing, 'We only went a short way from the door, when the terrible eel-spearer came and killed our five sisters.' 'They will come back again,' said the eel-mother. 'No,' said the daughters, 'for he skinned them, cut them in pieces, and fried them.' 'They will come again,' repeated the mother. 'Impossible, for he ate them.' 'They will come again,' still persisted the eel-mother. 'But he drank brandy after he had eaten them,' said the daughter. 'Did he? Oh! oh! then they will never come again,' howled the mother. 'Brandy buries eels.'

"And therefore one must always drink a little brandy after that dish," said the eel-man.

And this story made a great impression on little Jörgen, and partly influenced his life. He took the tinsel for the gold. He also wished to go "a little way up the stream" – that is to say, to go away in a ship to see the world – and his mother said as the eel-mother had done. "There are many bad men – eel-spearers." But a little way beyond the sand-hills, and a little way on the heath, he was allowed to go, he begged so hard. Four happy days, however – days that seemed the brightest among his childish years, turned up: he was to go to a large meeting. What pleasure, although it was to a funeral!

A relation of the fisherman's family, who had been in easy circumstances, was dead. The farm lay inland – "eastward, a little to the north," it was said. The father and mother were both going, and Jörgen was to accompany them. On leaving the sand-hills, they passed over heaths and boggy lands, until they came to the green meadows where Skjærumaa winds its way – the river with the numerous eels, where the eel-mother with her daughters lived, those whom the cruel man speared and cut in pieces, though there were men who had scarcely treated their fellow-men better. Even Herr Buggé, the knight who was celebrated in the old song, was murdered by a wicked man; and though he was himself called so good, he wished to put to death the builder who had built for him his castle, with its tower and thick walls, just where Jörgen and his foster-parents stood, where Skjærumaa falls into the Nissumfiord. The sloping bank or ascent to the ramparts was still to be seen, and red fragments of the walls still marked out the circumference of the ancient building. Here had Herr Buggé, when the builder had taken his departure, said to his squire – "Follow him, and say, Master, the tower leans to one side. If he turns, slay him on the spot, and take the money from him that he got from me; but, if he does not turn, let him go on in peace." And the squire overtook the builder, and said what he was ordered to say; and the builder replied, "The tower does not lean to one side, but by and by there will come from the westward one in a blue cloak, and *he* will make it bend." A hundred years afterwards this prediction was fulfilled, for the German Ocean rushed in, and the tower fell; but the then owner of the property, Prebjörn Gyldenstjerne, erected a habitation higher up, and that stands now, and is called Nørre-Vosborg.

Jörgen, with his foster-parents, had to pass this place. Of every little town hereabout he had heard stories during the long winter evenings; now he saw the castle, with its double moats, its

trees and bushes, its ramparts overgrown with bracken. But the most beautiful sight was the lofty linden trees, that filled the air with so sweet a perfume. Towards the north-west, in a corner of the garden, stood a large bush with flowers that were like winter's snow amidst summer's green. It was an elder tree, the first Jörgen had ever seen in bloom. That and the linden trees were always remembered during his future years as Denmark's sweetest perfume and beauty, which the soul of childhood "for the old man laid by."

The journey soon became more extended, and the country less wild. After passing Nörre-Vosborg, where the elder tree was in bloom, he had the pleasure of travelling in a sort of carriage, for they met some of the other guests who were going to the funeral feast, as it might be called, and were invited into their conveyance. To be sure they had all three to stuff themselves into a very narrow back seat, but that was better, they thought, than walking. They drove over the uneven heaths; the bullocks which drew their cart stopped whenever they came to a little patch of green grass among the heather. The sun was shining warmly, and it was wonderful to see, far in the distance, a smoke that undulated, yet was clearer than the air – one could see through it: it was as if rays of light were rolling and dancing over the heath.

"It is the Lokéman, who is driving his sheep," was told Jörgen, and that was enough for him. He fancied he was driving into the land of marvellous adventures and fairy tales; yet he was only amidst realities. How still it was there!

Far before them stretched the heath, but it looked like a beautifully variegated carpet; the ling was in flower, the Cyprus-green juniper bushes and the fresh oak shoots seemed like bouquets among the heather. But for the many poisonous vipers, how delightful it would have been to roll about there! The party spoke of them, and of the numerous wolves that had abounded in that neighbourhood, on account of which the district was called Ulvborg-Herred. The old man who was driving related how, in his father's time, the horses had often to fight a hard battle with these now extirpated wild animals; and that one morning, on coming out, he found one of his horses treading upon a wolf he had killed; but the flesh was entirely stripped from the horse's legs.

Too quickly for Jörgen did they drive over the uneven heath, and through the deep sand. They stopped at length before the house of mourning, which was crowded with strangers, some inside, some on the outside. Vehicle after vehicle stood together; the horses and oxen were turned out amidst the meagre grass; large sand-hills, like those at home by the German Ocean, were to be seen behind the farm, and stretched far away in wide long ranges. How had they come there, twelve miles inland, and nearly as high and as large as those near the shore? The wind had lifted them and removed them: they also had their history.

Psalms were sung, and tears were shed by some of the old people, otherwise all was very pleasant thought Jörgen. Here was plenty to eat and drink – the nicest fat eels; and it was necessary to drink brandy-snaps after eating them, "to keep them down," the eel-man had said; and his words were acted upon here with all due honour.

Jörgen was in, and Jörgen was out. By the third day he felt himself as much at home here as he had done in the fisherman's cottage, where he had lived all his earlier days. Up here on the heath it was different from down there, but it was very nice. It was covered with heather-bells and bilberries; they were so large and so sweet; one could mash them with one's foot, so that the heather should be dripping with the red juice. Here lay one tumulus, there another; columns of smoke arose in the calm air; it was the heath on fire, they said, it shone brightly in the evening.

The fourth day came, and the funeral solemnities were over – the fisherman and his family were to leave the land sand-hills for the strand sand-hills.

"Ours are the largest though," said the father, "these are not at all important-looking."

And the conversation fell on how they came there, and it was all very intelligible and very rational. A body had been found on the beach, and the peasants had buried it in the churchyard; then commenced a drifting of sand – the sea broke wildly on the shore, and a man in the parish who

was noted for his sagacity advised that the grave should be opened, to ascertain if the buried corpse lay and sucked his thumb; for if he did that, it was a merman whom they had buried, and the sea would force its way up to take him back. The grave was accordingly opened, and lo! he they had buried was found sucking his thumb; so they took him up instantly, placed him on a car, harnessed two oxen to it, and dragged him over heaths and bogs out to the sea; then the sand drift stopped, but the sand-hills have always remained. To all this Jörgen listened eagerly; and he treasured this ancient legend in his memory, along with all that had happened during the pleasantest days of his childhood – the days of the funeral feast.

It was delightful to go from home, and to see new places and new people; and he was to go still farther away. He went on board a ship. He went forth to see what the world produced; and he found bad weather, rough seas, evils dispositions, and harsh masters. He went as a cabin-boy! Poor living, cold nights, the rope's end, and hard thumps with the fist were his portion. There was something in his noble Spanish blood which always boiled up, so that angry words rose often to his lips; but he was wise enough to keep them back, and he felt pretty much like an eel being skinned, cut up, and laid on the pan.

"I will come again," said he to himself. The Spanish coast, his parents' native land, the very town where they had lived in grandeur and happiness, he saw; but he knew nothing of kindred and a paternal home, and his family knew as little of him.

The dirty ship-boy was not allowed to land for a long time, but the last day the ship lay there he was sent on shore to bring off some purchases that had been made.

There stood Jörgen in wretched clothes, that looked as if they had been washed in a ditch and dried in the chimney: it was the first time that he, a denizen of the solitary sand-hills, had seen a large town. How high the houses were, how narrow the streets, swarming with human beings; some hurrying this way, others going that way – it was like a whirlpool of townspeople, peasants, monks, and soldiers. There were a rushing along, a screaming, a jingling of the bells on the asses and the mules, and the church bells ringing too. There were to be heard singing and babbling, hammering and banging; for every trade had its workshop either in the doorway or on the pavement. The sun was burning hot, the air was heavy: it was as if one had entered a baker's oven full of beetles, lady-birds, bees, and flies, that hummed and buzzed. Jörgen scarcely knew, as the saying is, whether he was on his head or his heels. Then he beheld, at a little distance, the immense portals of the cathedral; light streamed forth from the arches that were so dim and gloomy above; and there came a strong scent from the incense. Even the poorest, most tattered beggars ascended the wide stairs to the church, and the sailor who was with Jörgen showed him the way in. Jörgen stood in a sacred place; splendidly-painted pictures hung round in richly-gilded frames; the holy Virgin, with the infant Jesus in her arms, was on the altar amidst flowers and light; priests in their magnificent robes were chanting; and beautiful, handsomely-dressed choristers swung backwards and forwards silver censers. There was in everything a splendour, a charm, that penetrated to Jörgen's very soul, and overwhelmed him. The church and the faith of his parents and his ancestors surrounded him, and touched a chord in his heart which caused tears to start to his eyes.

From the church they proceeded to the market. He had many articles of food and matters for the use of the cook, to carry. The way was long, and he became very tired; so he stopped to rest outside of a large handsome house, that had marble pillars, statues, and wide stairs. He was leaning with his burden against the wall, when a finely-bedizened porter came forward, raised his silver-mounted stick to him, and drove him away – him, the grandchild of its owner, the heir of the family; but none there knew this, nor did he himself.

He returned on board, was thumped and scolded, had little sleep and much work. Such was his life! And it is very good for youth to put up with hard usage, it is said. Yes, if it makes age good.

The period for which he had been engaged was expired – the vessel lay again at Ringkiöbingfiord. He landed, and went home to Huusby-Klitter; but his mother had died during his absence.

The winter which followed was a severe one. Snow storms drove over sea and land: one could scarcely face them. How differently were not things dealt out in this world! Such freezing cold and drifting snow here, whilst in Spain was burning heat, almost too great; and yet when, one clear, frosty day at home, Jörgen saw swans flying in large flocks from the sea over Nissumfiord, and towards Nörre-Vosborg, he thought that the course they pursued was the best, and all summer pleasures were to be found there. In fancy he saw the heath in bloom, and mingling with it the ripe, juicy berries; the linden trees and elder bushes at Nörre-Vosborg were in flower. He must return there yet.

Spring was approaching, the fishing was commencing, and Jörgen lent his help. He had grown much during the last year, and was extremely active. There was plenty of life in him; he could swim, tread the water, and turn and roll about in it. He was much inclined to offer himself for the mackerel shoals: they take the best swimmer, draw him under the water, eat him up, and so there is an end of him; but this was not Jörgen's fate.

Among the neighbours in the sand-hills was a boy named Morten. He and Jörgen left the fishing, and they both hired themselves on board a vessel bound to Norway, and went afterwards to Holland. They were always at odds with each other, but that might easily happen when people were rather warm-tempered; and they could not help showing their feelings sometimes in expressive gestures. This was what Jörgen did once on board when they came up from below quarrelling about something. They were sitting together, eating out of an earthen dish they had between them, when Jörgen, who was holding his clasp-knife in his hand, raised it against Morten, looking at the moment as white as chalk, and ghastly about the eyes. Morten only said, —

"So you are of that sort that will use the knife!"

Scarcely had he uttered these words before Jörgen's hand was down again; he did not say a syllable, ate his dinner, and went to his work; but when he had finished that, he sought Morten, and said, —

"Strike me on the face if you will – I have deserved it. There is something in me that always boils up so."

"Let bygones be bygones," said Morten; and thereupon they became much better friends. When they returned to Jutland and the sand-hills, and told all that had passed, it was remarked that Jörgen might boil over, but he was an honest pot for all that.

"But not of Jutland manufacture – he cannot be called a Jutlander," was Morten's witty reply.

They were both young and healthy, well-grown, and strongly built, but Jörgen was the most active.

Up in Norway the country people repair to the summer pastures among the mountains, and take their cattle there to grass. On the west coast of Jutland, among the sand-hills, are huts built of pieces of wrecks, and covered with peat and layers of heather. The sleeping-places stretch round the principal room; and there sleep and live, during the early spring time, the people employed in the fishing. Every one has his *Æsepige*, as she is called, whose business it is to put bait on the hooks, to await the fishermen at their landing-place with warm ale, and have their food ready for them when they return weary to the house. These girls carry the fish from the boats, and cut them up; in short, they have a great deal to do.

Jörgen, his father, and a couple of other fishermen, with their *Æsepiger*, or serving girls, were together in one house. Morten lived in the house next to theirs.

There was one of these girls called Elsé, whom Jörgen had known from her infancy. They were great friends, and much alike in disposition, though very different in appearance. He was of

a dark complexion, and she was very fair, with hair almost of a golden colour; her eyes were as blue as the sea when the sun is shining upon it.

One day when they were walking together, and Jörgen was holding her hand with a tight and affectionate grasp, she said to him, —

"Jörgen, I have something on my mind. Let me be your *Æsepige*, for you are to me like a brother; but Morten, who has hired me at present — he and I are sweethearts. Do not mention this, however, to any one."

And Jörgen felt as if a sand-hill had opened under him. He did not utter a single word, but nodded his head by way of a yes — more was not necessary; but he felt suddenly in his heart that he could not endure Morten, and the longer he reflected on the matter the clearer it became to him. Morten had stolen from him the only one he cared for, and that was Elsé. She was now lost to him.

If the sea should be boisterous when the fishermen return with their little smacks, it is curious to see them cross the reefs. One of the fishermen stands erect in advance, the others watch him intently, while sitting with their oars ready to use when he gives them a sign that now are coming the great waves which will lift the boats over; and they are lifted, so that those on shore can only see their keels. The next moment the entire boat is hidden by the surging waves — neither boat, nor mast, nor people are to be seen: one would fancy the sea had swallowed them up. A minute or two more, and they show themselves, looking as if some mighty marine monsters were creeping out of the foaming sea, the oars moving like their legs. With the second and the third reef the same process takes place as with the first; and now the fishermen spring into the water and drag the boats on shore, every succeeding billow helping and giving them a good lift until they are fairly out of the water. One false move on the outside of the reefs — one moment's delay, and they would be shipwrecked.

"Then it would be all over with me, and with Morten at the same time." This thought came across Jörgen's mind out at sea, where his foster-father had been taken suddenly ill: he was in a high fever. This was just a little way from the outer reef. Jörgen sprang up.

"Father, allow me," he cried, and his eye glanced over Morten and over the waves; but just then every oar was raised for the great struggle, and as the first enormous billow came, he observed his father's pale suffering countenance, and he could not carry out the wicked design that had suggested itself to his mind. The boat got safely over the reefs, and in to the land; but Jörgen's evil thoughts remained, and his blood boiled at every little disagreeable act that started up in his recollection from the time that he and Morten had been comrades, and his anger increased as he remembered each offence. Morten had supplanted him, he felt assured of that; and that was enough to make him hateful to him. A few of the fishermen remarked his scowling looks at Morten, but Morten himself did not; he was, just as usual, ready to give every assistance, and very talkative — a little too much of the latter, perhaps.

Jörgen's foster-father was obliged to keep his bed; he became worse, and died within a week; and Jörgen inherited the house behind the sand-hills — a humble habitation to be sure, but it was always something. Morten had not so much.

"You will not take service any more, Jörgen, I suppose, but will remain among us now," said one of the old fishermen.

But Jörgen had no such intention. He was thinking, on the contrary, of going away to see a little of the world. The eel-man of Fjaltring had an uncle up at Gammel-Skagen; he was a fisherman, but also a thriving trader who owned some little vessels. He was such an excellent old man, it would be a good thing to take service with him. Gammel-Skagen lies on the northern part of Jutland, at the other extremity of the country from Huusby-Klitter, and that was what Jörgen thought most of. He was determined not to stay for Elsé and Morten's wedding, which was to take place in a couple of weeks.

"It was foolish to take his departure now," was the opinion of the old fisherman who had spoken to him before. "Now Jörgen had a house, Elsé would most likely prefer taking him."

Jörgen answered so shortly, when thus spoken to, that it was difficult to ascertain what he thought; but the old man brought Elsé to him. She did not say much; but this she did say, —

"You have now a house: one must take that into consideration."

And Jörgen also took much into consideration. In the ocean there are many heavy seas — the human heart has still heavier ones. There passed many thoughts, strong and weak mingled together, through Jörgen's head and heart, and he asked Elsé, —

"If Morten had a house as well as I, which of us two would you rather take?"

"But Morten has no house, and has no chance of getting one."

"But we think it is very likely he will have one."

"Oh! then I would take Morten, of course; but one can't live upon love."

And Jörgen reflected for the whole night over what had passed. There was something in him he could not himself account for; but he had one idea — it overpowered his love for Elsé, and it led him to Morten. What he said and did there had been well considered by him — he made his house over to Morten on the lowest possible terms, saying that he would himself prefer to go into service. And Elsé kissed him in her gratitude when she heard it, for she certainly loved Morten best.

At an early hour in the morning Jörgen was to take his departure. The evening before, though it was already late, he fancied he would like to visit Morten once more, so he went; and amongst the sand-hills he met the old fisherman, who did not seem to think of his going away, and who jested about all the girls being so much in love with Morten. Jörgen cut him short, bade him farewell, and proceeded to the house where Morten lived. When he reached it he heard loud talking within: Morten was not alone. Jörgen was somewhat capricious. Of all persons he would least wish to find Elsé there; and, on second thoughts, he would rather not give Morten an opportunity of renewing his thanks, so he turned back again.

Early next morning, before the dawn of day, he tied up his bundle, took his provision box, and went down from the sand-hills to the sea-beach. It was easier to walk there than on the heavy sandy road; besides, it was shorter, for he was first going to Fjaltring, near Vosbjerg, where the eel-man lived, to whom he had promised a visit.

The sea was smooth and beautifully blue — shells of different sorts lay around. These were the playthings of his childhood — he now trod them under his feet. As he was walking along his nose began to bleed. That was only a trifle in itself, but it might have some meaning. A few large drops of blood fell upon his arms; he washed them off, stopped the bleeding, and found that the loss of a little blood had actually made him feel lighter in his head and in his heart. A small quantity of sea-kale was growing in the sand; he broke a blade off of it, and stuck it in his hat. He tried to feel happy and confident now that he was going out into the wide world — "away from the door, a little way up the stream," as the eel's children had said; and the mother said, "Take care of bad men; they will catch you, skin you, cut you in pieces, and fry you." He repeated this to himself, and laughed at it. He would get through the world with a whole skin — no fear of that; for he had plenty of courage, and that was a good weapon of defence.

The sun was already high up, when, as he approached the small inlet between the German Ocean and Nissumfiord, he happened to look back, and perceived at a considerable distance two people on horseback, and others following on foot: they were evidently making great haste, but it was nothing to him.

The ferry-boat lay on the other side of the narrow arm of the sea. Jörgen beckoned and called to the person who had charge of it. It came over, and he entered it; but before he and the man who was rowing had got half way across, the men he had seen hurrying on reached the banks, and with threatening gestures shouted the name of the magistrate. Jörgen could not comprehend what they wanted, but considered it would be best to go back, and even took one of the oars to row the faster.

The moment the boat neared the shore, people sprang into it, and before he had an idea of what they were going to do, they had thrown a rope round his hands, and made him their prisoner.

"Your evil deed will cost you your life," said they. "It is lucky we arrived in time to catch you."

It was neither more nor less than a murder he was accused of having committed. Morten had been found stabbed by a knife in his neck. One of the fishermen had, late the night before, met Jörgen going to the place where Morten lived. It was not the first time he had lifted a knife at him, they knew. He must be the murderer; therefore he must be taken into custody. Ringkjöbing was the most proper place to which to carry him, but it was a long way off. The wind was from the west. In less than half an hour they could cross the fiord at Skjærumaa, and from thence they had only a short way to go to Nörre-Vosborg, which was a strong place, with ramparts and moats. In the boat was a brother of the bailiff there, and he promised to obtain permission to put Jörgen for the present into the cell where Lange Margrethe had been confined before her execution.

Jörgen's defence of himself was not listened to; for a few drops of blood on his clothes spoke volumes against him. His innocence was clear to himself; and, if justice were not done him, he must give himself up to his fate.

They landed near the site of the old ramparts, where Sir Buggé's castle had stood – there, where Jörgen, with his foster-father and mother, had passed on their way to the funeral meeting, at which had been spent the four brightest and pleasantest days of his childhood. He was conveyed again the same way by the fields up to Nörre-Vosborg, and yonder stood in full flower the elder tree, and yonder the lindens shed their sweet perfume around; and he felt as if it had been only yesterday that he had been there.

In the west wing of the castle is a subterranean passage under the high stairs; this leads to a low, vaulted cell, in which Lange Margrethe had been imprisoned, and whence she had been taken to the place of execution. She had eaten the hearts of five children, and believed that, could she have added two more to the number, she would have been able to fly and to render herself invisible. In the wall there was a small, narrow air-hole. No glass was in this rude window; yet the sweetly-scented linden tree on the outside could not send the slightest portion of its refreshing perfume into that close, mouldy dungeon. There was only a miserable pallet there; but a good conscience is a good pillow, therefore Jörgen could sleep soundly.

The thick wooden door was locked, and it was further secured by an iron bolt; but the nightmare of superstition can creep through a key-hole in the baronial castle as in the fisherman's hut. It stole in where Jörgen was sitting and thinking upon Lange Margrethe and her misdeeds. Her last thoughts had filled that little room the night before her execution; he remembered all the magic that, in the olden times, was practised when the lord of the manor, Svanwedel, lived there; and it was well known how, even now, the chained dog that stood on the bridge was found every morning hung over the railing in his chain. All these tales recurred to Jörgen's mind, and made him shiver; and there was but one sun ray which shone upon him, and that was the recollection of the blooming elder and linden trees.

He would not be kept long here; he would be removed to Ringkjöbing, where the prison was equally strong.

These times were not like ours. It went hard with the poor then; for then it had not come to pass that peasants found their way up to lordly mansions, and that from these regiments coachmen and other servants became judges in the petty courts, which were invested with the power to condemn, for perhaps a trifling fault, the poor man to be deprived of all his goods and chattels, or to be flogged at the whipping-post. A few of these courts still remain; and in Jutland, far from "the King's Copenhagen," and the enlightened and liberal government, even now the law is not always very wisely administered: it certainly was not so in the case of poor Jörgen.

It was bitterly cold in the place where he was confined. When was this imprisonment to be at an end? Though innocent, he had been cast into wretchedness and solitude – that was his fate. How

things had been ordained for him in this world, he had now time to think over. Why had he been thus treated – his portion made so hard to bear? Well, this would be revealed "in that other life" which assuredly awaits all. In the humble cottage that belief had been engrafted into him, which, amidst the grandeur and brightness of his Spanish home, had never shone upon his father's heart: *that* now, in the midst of cold and darkness, became his consolation, God's gift of grace, which never can deceive.

The storms of spring were now raging; the roaring of the German Ocean was heard far inland; but just when the tempest had lulled, it sounded as if hundreds of heavy wagons were driving over a hard tunnelled road. Jörgen heard it even in his dungeon, and it was a change in the monotony of his existence. No old melody could have gone more deeply to his heart than these sounds – the rolling ocean – the free ocean – on which one can be borne throughout the world, fly with the wind, and wherever one went have one's own house with one, as the snail has his – to stand always upon home's ground, even in a foreign land.

How eagerly he listened to the deep rolling! How remembrances hurried through his mind! "Free – free – how delightful to be free, even without soles to one's shoes, and in a coarse patched garment!" The very idea brought the warm blood rushing into his cheeks, and he struck the wall with his fist in his vain impatience. Weeks, months, a whole year had elapsed, when a gipsy named Niels Tyv – "the horse-dealer," as he was also called – was arrested, and then came better times: it was ascertained what injustice had been done to Jörgen.

To the north of Ringkjöbing Fiord, at a small country inn, on the evening of the day previous to Jörgen's leaving home, and the committal of the murder, Niels Tyv and Morten had met each other. They drank a little together, not enough certainly to get into any man's head, but enough to set Morten talking too freely. He went on chattering, as he was fond of doing, and he mentioned that he had bought a house and some ground, and was going to be married. Niels thereupon asked him where was the money which was to pay it, and Morten struck his pocket pompously, exclaiming in a vaunting manner, —

"Here, where it should be!"

That foolish bragging answer cost him his life; for when he left the little inn Niels followed him, and stabbed him in the neck with his knife, in order to rob him of the money, which, after all, was not to be found.

There was a long trial and much deliberation: it is enough for us to know that Jörgen was set free at last. But what compensation was made to him for all he had suffered that long weary year in a cold, gloomy prison; secluded from all mankind? Why, he was assured that it was fortunate he was innocent, and he might now go about his business! The burgomaster gave him ten marks for his travelling expenses, and several of the townspeople gave him ale and food. They were very good people. Not all, then, would "skin you, and lay you on the frying-pan!" But the best of all was that the trader Brönne from Skagen, he to whom, a year before, Jörgen intended to have hired himself, was just at the time of his liberation on business at Ringkjöbing. He heard the whole story; he had a heart and understanding; and, knowing what Jörgen must have suffered and felt, he was determined to do what he could to improve his situation, and let him see that there were some kind-hearted people in the world.

From a jail to freedom – from solitude and misery to a home which, by comparison, might be called a heaven – to kindness and love, he now passed. This also was to be a trial of his character. No chalice of life is altogether wormwood. A good person would not fill such for a child: would, then, the Almighty Father, who is all love, do so?

"Let all that has taken place be now buried and forgotten," said the worthy Mr. Brönne. "We shall draw a thick line over last year. We shall burn the almanac. In two days we shall start for that blessed, peaceful, pleasant Skagen. It is said to be only a little insignificant nook in the country; but a nice warm nook it is, with windows open to the wide world."

That *was* a journey – that *was* to breathe the fresh air again – to come from the cold, damp prison-cell out into the warm sunshine!

The heather was blooming on the moorlands; the shepherd boys sat on the tumuli and played their flutes, which were manufactured out of the bones of sheep; the Fata Morgana, the beautiful mirage of the desert, with its hanging seas and undulating woods, showed itself; and that bright, wonderful phenomenon in the air, which is called the "Lokéman driving his sheep."

Towards Limfiorden they passed over the Vandal's land; and towards Skagen they journeyed where the men with the long beards, *Langbarderne*,¹ came from. In that locality it was that, during the famine under King Snio, all old people and young children were ordered to be put to death; but the noble lady, Gambaruk, who was the heiress of that part of the country, insisted that the children should rather be sent out of the country. Jörgen was learned enough to know all about this; and, though he was not acquainted with the Langobarders' country beyond the lofty Alps, he had a good idea what it must be, as he had himself, when a boy, been in the south of Europe, in Spain. Well did he remember the heaped-up piles of fruit, the red pomegranate flowers, the din, the clamour, the tolling of bells in the Spanish city's great hive; but all was more charming at home, and Denmark was Jörgen's home.

At length they reached Vendilskaga, as Skagen is called in the old Norse and Icelandic writings. For miles and miles, interspersed with sand-hills and cultivated land, houses, farms, and drifting sand-banks, stretched, and stretch still, towards Gammel-Skagen, Wester and Osterby, out to the lighthouse near Grenen, a waste, a desert, where the wind drives before it the loose sand, and where sea-gulls and wild swans send forth their discordant cries in concert. To the south-west, a few miles from Grenen, lies High, or Old Skagen, where the worthy Brönne lived, and where Jörgen was also to reside. The house was tarred, the small out-houses had each an inverted boat for a roof. Pieces of wrecks were knocked up together to form pigsties. Fences there were none, for there was nothing to inclose; but upon cords, stretched in long rows one over the other, hung fish cut open, and drying in the wind. The whole beach was covered with heaps of putrefying herrings: nets were scarcely ever thrown into the water, for the herrings were taken in loads on the land. There was so vast a supply of this sort of fish, that people either threw them back into the sea, or left them to rot on the sands.

The trader's wife and daughter – indeed, the whole household – came out rejoicing to meet the father of the family when he returned home. There was such a shaking of hands – such exclamations and questions! And what a charming countenance and beautiful eyes the daughter had!

The interior of the house was large and extremely comfortable. Various dishes of fish were placed upon the table; among others some delicious plaice, which might have been a treat for a king; wine from Skagen's vineyard – the vast ocean – from which the juice of the grape was brought on shore both in casks and bottles.

When the mother and daughter afterwards heard who Jörgen was, and how harshly he had been treated, though innocent of all crime, they looked very kindly at him; and most sympathising was the expression of the daughter's eyes, the lovely Miss Clara. Jörgen found a happy home

¹ Langobarder, a northern tribe, which, in very ancient times, dwelt in the north of Jutland. From thence they migrated to the north of Germany, where, according to Tacitus, they lived about the period of the birth of Christ, and were a poor but brave people. Their original name was Vinuler, or Viniler. "When these Viniler," say the traditions, or rather fables of Scandinavia, "were at war with the Vandals, and the latter went to Odin to beseech him to grant them the victory, and received for answer that Odin would award the victory to those whom he beheld first at sunrise, the warlike female, Gambaruk, or Gunborg, who was mother to the leaders of the Viniler – Ebbe and Aage – applied to Frigga, Odin's wife, to entreat victory for her people. The goddess advised that the females of the tribe should let down their long hair so as to imitate beards, and, early in the morning, should stand with their husbands in the east, where Odin would look out. When, at sunrise, Odin saw them, he exclaimed, 'Who are these long-bearded people?' whereupon Frigga replied, that since he had bestowed, a name upon them, he must also give them the victory. This was the origin of the *Longobardi*, who, after many wanderings, found their way into Italy, and, under Alboin, founded the kingdom of Lombardy." — *Trans.*

at Gammel-Skagen. It did his heart good, and the poor young man had suffered much, even the bitterness of unrequited love, which either hardens or softens the heart. Jörgen's was soft enough now; there was a vacant place within it, and he was still so young.

It was, perhaps, fortunate that in about three weeks Miss Clara was going in one of her father's ships up to Christiansand, in Norway, to visit an aunt, and remain there the whole winter. The Sunday before her departure they all went to church together, intending to partake of the sacrament. It was a large, handsome church, and had several hundred years before been built by the Scotch and Dutch a little way from where the town was now situated. It had become somewhat dilapidated, was difficult of access, the way to it being through deep, heavy sand; but the disagreeables of the road were willingly encountered in order to enter the house of God – to pray, sing psalms, and hear a sermon there. The sand was, as it were, banked up against, and even higher than, the circular wall of the churchyard; but the graves therein were kept carefully free of the drifting sand.

This was the largest church to the north of Limfiorden. The Virgin Mary, with a crown of gold on her head, and the infant Jesus in her arms, stood as if in life in the altar-piece; the holy apostles were carved on the chancel; and on the walls above were to be seen the portraits of the old burgomasters and magistrates of Skagen, with their insignia of office: the pulpit was richly carved. The sun was shining brightly into the church, and glancing on the crown of brass and the little ship that hung from the roof.

Jörgen felt overcome by a kind of childish feeling of awe, mingled with reverence, such as he had experienced when as a boy he had stood within the magnificent Spanish cathedral; but he knew that here his feelings were shared by many. After the sermon the sacrament was administered. Like the others, he tasted the consecrated bread and wine, and he found that he was kneeling by the side of Miss Clara; but he was so much absorbed in his devotions, and in the sacred rite, that it was only when about to rise that he observed who was his immediate neighbour, and perceived that tears were streaming down her cheeks.

Two days after this she sailed for Norway, and Jörgen made himself useful on the farm, and at the fishery, in which there was much more done then than is now-a-days. The shoals of mackerel glittered in the dark nights, and showed the course they were taking; the crabs gave piteous cries when pursued, for fishes are not so mute as they are said to be. Every Sunday when he went to church, and gazed on the picture of the Virgin in the altar-piece, Jörgen's eyes always wandered to the spot where Clara had knelt by his side; and he thought of her, and how kind she had been to him.

Autumn came, with its hail and sleet; the water washed up to the very town of Skagen; the sand could not absorb all the water, so that people had to wade through it. The tempests drove vessel after vessel on the fatal reefs; there were snow storms and sand storms; the sand drifted against the houses, and closed up the entrances in some places, so that people had to creep out by the chimneys; but that was nothing remarkable up there. While all was thus bleak and wretched without, within there were warmth and comfort. The mingled peat and wood fires – the wood obtained from wrecked ships – crackled and blazed cheerfully, and Mr. Brønne read aloud old chronicles and legends; among others, the story of Prince Hamlet of Denmark, who, coming from England, landed near Bovbjerg, and fought a battle there. His grave was at Ramme, only a few miles from the place where the eel-man lived. Hundreds of tumuli, the graves of the giants and heroes of old, were still visible all over the wide heath – a great churchyard. Mr. Brønne had himself been there, and had seen Hamlet's grave. They talked of the olden times – of their neighbours, the English and Scotch; and Jörgen sang the ballad about "The King of England's Son" – about the splendid ship – how it was fitted up: —

"How on the gilded panels stood
Engraved our Lord's commandments good;
And clasping a sweet maiden, how

The prince stood sculptured on the prow!"

Jörgen sang these lines in particular with much emphasis, whilst his dark eyes sparkled; but his eyes had always been bright from his earliest infancy.

There were songs, and reading, and conversation, and everything to make the winter season pass as pleasantly as possible; there was prosperity in the house, plenty of comfort for the family, and plenty even for the lowest animals on the property; the shelves shone with rows of bright, well-scoured pewter plates and dishes; and from the roof hung sausages and hams, and other winter stores in abundance. Such may be seen even now in the many rich farm-houses on the west coast – the same evidences of plenty, the same comfortable rooms, the same good-humour, the same, and perhaps a little more, information. Hospitality reigns there as in an Arab's tent.

Jörgen had never before spent his time so happily since the pleasant days of his childhood at the funeral feast; and yet Miss Clara was absent – present only in thought and conversation.

In April a vessel was going up to Norway, and Jörgen was to go in it. He was in high spirits, and, according to Mrs. Brönne, he was so lively and good-humoured, it was quite a pleasure to see him.

"And it is quite a pleasure to see you also," said her husband. "Jörgen has enlivened all our winter evenings, and you with them; you have become young again, and really look quite handsome. You were formerly the prettiest girl in Viborg, and that is saying a great deal, for I have always thought the girls prettier there than anywhere else."

Jörgen said nothing to this. Perhaps he did not believe that the Viborg girls were prettier than any others; at any rate, he was thinking of one from Skagen, and he was now about to join her. The vessel had a fair, fresh breeze; therefore he arrived at Christiansand in half a day.

Early one morning the trader, Mr. Brönne, went out to the lighthouse that is situated at some distance from Gammel-Skagen, and near Grenen. The signal-lights had been extinguished for some time, for the sun had risen tolerably high before he reached the tower. Away, to some distance beyond the most remote point of land, stretched the sand-banks under the water. Beyond these, again, he perceived many ships, and among them he thought he recognised, by aid of the spy-glass, the "Karen Brönne," as his own vessel was called; and he was right. It was approaching the coast, and Clara and Jörgen were on board. The Skagen lighthouse and the spire of its church looked to them like a heron and a swan upon the blue water. Clara sat by the gunwale, and saw the sand-hills becoming little by little more and more apparent. If the wind only held fair, in less than an hour they would reach home; so near were they to happiness, and yet, alas! how near to death!

A plank sprung in the ship. The water rushed in. They stopped it as well as they could, and used the pumps vigorously. All sail was set, and the flag of distress was hoisted. They were about a Danish mile off. Fishing-boats were to be seen, but were far away. The wind was fair for them. The current was also in their favour, but not strong enough. The vessel sank. Jörgen threw his right arm around Clara.

With what a speaking look did she not gaze into his eyes when, imploring our Lord for help, he threw himself with her into the sea! She uttered one shriek, but she was safe. He would not let her slip from his grasp. The words of the old ballad, —

"And, clasping a sweet maiden, how
The prince stood sculptured on the prow,"

were now carried into effect by Jörgen in that agonising hour of danger and deep anxiety. He felt the advantage of being a good swimmer, and exerted himself to the utmost with his feet and one hand; the other was holding fast the young girl. Every possible effort he made to keep up his strength in order to reach the land. He heard Clara sigh, and perceived that a kind of convulsive

shuddering had seized her; and he held her the tighter. A single heavy wave broke over them – the current lifted them. The water was so clear, though deep, that Jörgen thought for a moment he could see the shoals of mackerel beneath; or was it Leviathan himself who was waiting to swallow them? The clouds cast a shadow over the water, then again came the dancing sunbeams; harshly-screaming birds, in flocks, wheeled over him; and the wild ducks that, heavy and sleepy, allow themselves to drive on with the waves, flew up in alarm from before the swimmer. He felt that his strength was failing; but the shore was close at hand, and help was coming, for a boat was near. Just then he saw distinctly under the water a white, staring figure; a wave lifted him, the figure came nearer, he felt a violent blow, it became night before his eyes – all had disappeared for him.

There lay, partially imbedded in the sand-bank, the wreck of a ship; the sea rolled over it, but the white figure-head was supported by an anchor, the sharp iron of which stuck up almost to the surface of the water. It was against this that Jörgen had struck himself when the current had driven him forward with sudden force. Stunned and fainting, he sank with his burden, but the succeeding wave threw him and the young girl up again.

The fishermen had now reached them, and they were taken into the boat. Blood was streaming over Jörgen's face; he looked as if he were dead, but he still held the girl in so tight a grasp that it was with the utmost difficulty she could be wrenched from his encircling arm. As pale as death, and quite insensible, she lay at full length at the bottom of the boat, which steered towards Skagen.

All possible means were tried to restore Clara to animation, but in vain – the poor young woman was dead. Long had Jörgen been buffeting the waves with a corpse – exerting his utmost strength and straining every nerve for a dead body.

Jörgen still breathed; he was carried to the nearest house on the inner side of the sand-hills. A sort of army surgeon who happened to be at the place, who also acted in the capacities of smith and huckster, attended him until the next day, when a physician from Hjörning, who had been sent for, arrived.

The patient was severely wounded in the head, and suffering from a brain fever. For a time he uttered fearful shrieks, but on the third day he sank into a state of drowsiness, and his life seemed to hang upon a thread: that it might snap, the physician said, was the best that could be wished for Jörgen.

"Let us pray our Lord that he may be taken; he will never more be a rational man."

But he was not taken; the thread of life would not break, though memory was swept away, and all the powers and faculties of his mind were gone. It was a frightful change. A living body was left – a body that was to regain health and go about again.

Jörgen remained in the trader Brönne's house.

"He was brought into this lamentable condition by his efforts to save our child," said the old man; "he is now our son."

Jörgen was called "an idiot;" but that was a term not exactly applicable to him. He was like a musical instrument, the strings of which are loose, and can no longer, therefore, be made to sound. Only once, for a few minutes, they seemed to resume their elasticity, and they vibrated again. Old melodies were played, and played in time. Old images seemed to start up before him. They vanished – all glimmering of reason vanished, and he sat again staring vacantly around, without thought, without mind. It was to be hoped that he did not suffer anything. His dark eyes had lost their intelligence; they looked only like black glass that could move about.

Everybody was sorry for the poor idiot Jörgen.

It was he who, before he saw the light of day, was destined to a career of earthly prosperity, of wealth and happiness, so great that it was "*frightful pride, overweening arrogance*," to wish for, or to believe in, a future life! All the high powers of his soul were wasted. Nothing but hardships, sufferings, and disappointments had been dealt out to him. A valuable bulb he was, torn up from his rich native soil, and cast upon distant sands to rot and perish. Was that being, made in the image of

God, worth nothing more? Was he but the sport of accidents or of chance? No! The God of infinite love would give him a portion in another life for what he had suffered and been deprived of here.

"The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works."

These consolatory words, from one of the Psalms of David, were repeated in devout faith by the pious old wife of the trader Brønne; and her heartfelt prayer was, that our Lord would soon release the poor benighted being, and receive him into God's gift of grace – everlasting life.

In the churchyard, where the sand had drifted into piles against the walls, was Clara buried. It appeared as if Jörgen had never thought about her grave; it did not enter into the narrow circle of his ideas, which now only dwelt among wrecks of the past. Every Sunday he accompanied the family to church, and he generally sat quiet with a totally vacant look; but one day, while a psalm was being sung, he breathed a sigh, his eyes lightened up, he turned them towards the altar – towards that spot where, more than a year before, he had knelt, with his dead friend at his side. He uttered her name, became as white as a sheet, and tears rolled down his cheeks.

He was helped out of church, and then he said that he felt quite well, and did not think anything had been the matter with him; the short flash of memory had already faded away from him – the much-tried, the sorely-smitten of God. Yet that God, our Creator, is all wisdom and all love, who can doubt? Our hearts and our reason acknowledge it, and the Bible proclaims it. "His tender mercies are over all His works."

In Spain, where, amidst laurels and orange trees, the Moorish golden cupolas glitter in the warm air, where songs and castanets are heard, sat, in a splendid mansion, a childless old man. Children were passing through the streets in a procession, with lights and waving banners. How much of his enormous wealth would he not have given to possess one child – to have had spared to him his daughter and her little one, who perhaps never beheld the light of day in this world. If so, how would it behold the light of eternity – of paradise? "Poor, poor child!"

Yes; poor child – nothing but a child – and yet in his thirtieth year! for to such an age had Jörgen attained there in Gammel-Skagen.

The sand-drifts had found their way even over the graves in the churchyard, and up to the very walls of the church itself; yet here, amidst those who had gone before them – amidst relatives and friends – the dead were still buried. The good old Brønne and his wife reposed there, near their daughter, under the white sand.

It was late in the year – the time of storms; the sand-hills smoked, the waves rolled mountains high on the raging sea; the birds in hosts, like dark tempestuous clouds, passed screeching over the sand-hills; ship after ship went ashore on the terrible reefs between Skagen's Green and Huusby-Klitter.

One afternoon Jörgen was sitting alone in the parlour, and suddenly there rushed upon his shattered mind a feeling akin to the restlessness which so often, in his younger years, had driven him out among the sand-hills, or upon the heath.

"Home! home!" he exclaimed. No one heard him. He left the house, and took his way to the sand-hills. The sand and the small stones dashed against his face, and whirled around him. He went towards the church; the sand was lying banked up against the walls, and half way up the windows; but the walk up to the church was freer of it. The church door was not locked, it opened easily, and Jörgen entered the sacred edifice.

The wind went howling over the town of Skagen; it was blowing a perfect hurricane, such as had not been known in the memory of the oldest man living – it was most fearful weather. But Jörgen was in God's house, and while dark night came on around him, all seemed light within; it was the light of the immortal soul which is never to be extinguished. He felt as if a heavy stone had fallen from his head; he fancied that he heard the organ playing, but the sounds were those of the storm and the roaring sea. He placed himself in one of the pews, and he fancied that the candles were lighted one after the other, until there was a blaze of brilliancy such as he had beheld in the

cathedral in Spain; and all the portraits of the old magistrates and burgomasters became imbued with life, descended from the frames in which they had stood for years, and placed themselves in the choir. The gates and side doors of the church opened, he thought, and in walked all the dead, clothed in the grandest costumes of their times, whilst music floated in the air; and when they had seated themselves in the different pews, a solemn hymn arose, and swelled like the rolling of the sea.

Among those who had joined the spirit throng were his old foster-father and mother from Huusby-Klitter, and his kind friend Brønne and his wife; and at their side, but close to himself, sat their mild, lovely daughter. She held out her hand to him, Jörgen thought, and they went up to the altar where once they had knelt together; the priest joined their hands, and pronounced those words and that blessing which were to hallow for them life and love. Then music's tones peeled around – the organ, wind instruments, and voices combined – until there arose a volume of sound sufficient to shake the very tombstones over the graves.

Presently the little ship that hung under the roof moved towards him and Clara. It became large and magnificent, with silken sails and gilded masts; the anchor was of the brightest gold, and every rope was of silk cord, as described in the old song. He and his bride stepped on board, then the whole multitude in the church followed them, and there was room for all. He fancied that the walls and vaulted roof of the church turned into blooming elder and linden trees, which diffused a sweet perfume around. It was all one mass of verdure. The trees bowed themselves, and left an open space; then the ship ascended gently, and sailed out through the air above the sea. Every light in the church looked like a star. The wind commenced a hymn, and all sang with it: "In love to glory!" "No life shall be lost!" "Away to supreme happiness!" "Hallelujah!"

These words were his last in this world. The cord had burst which held the undying soul. There lay but a cold corpse in the dark church, around which the storm was howling, and which it was overwhelming with the drifting sand.

The next morning was a Sunday; the congregation and their pastor came at the hour of church service. The approach to the church had been almost impassable on account of the depth of the sand, and when at length they reached it, they found an immense sand-heap piled up before the door of the church – the drifting sand had closed up all entrance to its interior. The clergyman read a prayer, and then said that, as God had locked the doors of that holy house, they must go elsewhere and erect another for His service.

They sang a psalm, and retired to their homes.

Jörgen could not be found either at Skagen or amidst the sand-hills, where every search was made for him. It was supposed that the wild waves, which had rolled so far up on the sands, had swept him off.

But his body lay entombed in a large sarcophagus – in the church itself. During the storm God had cast earth upon his coffin – heavy piles of quicksand had accumulated there, and lie there even now.

The sand had covered the lofty arches, sand-thorns and wild roses grow over the church, where the wayfarer now struggles on towards its spire, which towers above the sand, an imposing tombstone over the grave, seen from miles around – no king had ever a grander one! None disturb the repose of the dead – none knew where Jörgen lay, until now – the storm sang the secret for me among the sand-hills!

The Mud-king's Daughter

The storks are in the habit of relating to their little ones many tales, all from the swamps and the bogs. They are, in general, suitable to the ages and comprehensions of the hearers. The smallest youngsters are contented with mere sound, such as "krible, krable, plurremurre." They think that wonderful; but the more advanced require something rational, or at least something about their family. Of the two most ancient and longest traditions that have been handed down among the storks, we are all acquainted with one – that about Moses, who was placed by his mother on the banks of the Nile, was found there by the king's daughter, was well brought up, and became a great man, such as has never been heard of since in the place where he was buried.

The other story is not well known, probably because it is a tale of home; yet it has passed down from one stork grandam to another for a thousand years, and each succeeding narrator has told it better and better, and now we shall tell it best of all.

The first pair of storks who related this tale had themselves something to do with its events. The place of their summer sojourn was at the Viking's loghouse, up by *the wild morass*, at Vendsyssel. It is in Hjöring district, away near Skagen, in the north of Jutland, speaking with geographical precision. It is now an enormous bog, and an account of it can be read in descriptions of the country. This place was once the bottom of the sea; but the waters have receded, and the ground has risen. It stretches itself for miles on all sides, surrounded by wet meadows and pools of water, by peat-bogs, cloudberryes, and miserable stunted trees. A heavy mist almost always hangs over this place, and about seventy years ago wolves were found there. It is rightly called, the wild morass; and one may imagine how savage it must have been, and how much swamp and sea must have existed there a thousand years ago. Yes, in these respects the same was to be seen there as is to be seen now. The rushes had the same height, the same sort of long leaves, and blue-brown, feather-like flowers that they bear now; the birch tree stood with its white bark, and delicate drooping leaves, as now; and, in regard to the living creatures, the flies had the same sort of crape clothing as they wear now; and the storks' bodies were white, with black and red stockings. Mankind, on the contrary, at that time wore coats cut in another fashion from what they do in our days; but every one of them, serf or huntsman, whosoever he might be who trod upon the quagmire, fared a thousand years ago as they fare now: one step forward – they fell in, and sank down to the Mud-king, as *he* was called who reigned below in the great morass kingdom. Very little is known about his government; but that is, perhaps, a good thing.

Near the bog, close by Liimfjorden, lay the Viking's loghouse of three stories high, and with a tower and stone cellars. The storks had built their nest upon the roof of this dwelling. The female stork sat upon her eggs, and felt certain they would be all hatched.

One evening the male stork remained out very long, and when he came home he looked rumpled and flurried.

"I have something very terrible to tell thee," he said to the female stork.

"Thou hadst better keep it to thyself," said she. "Remember I am sitting upon the eggs: a fright might do me harm, and the eggs might be injured."

"But it *must* be told thee," he replied. "She has come here – the daughter of our host in Egypt. She has ventured the long journey up hither, and she is lost."

"She who is of the fairies' race? Speak, then! Thou knowest that I cannot bear suspense while I am sitting."

"Know, then, that she believed what the doctors said, which thou didst relate to me. She believed that the bog-plants up here could cure her invalid father; and she has flown hither, in the magic disguise of a swan, with the two other swan princesses, who every year come hither to the north to bathe and renew their youth. She has come, and she is lost."

"Thou dost spin the matter out so long," muttered the female stork, "the eggs will be quite cooled. I cannot bear suspense just now."

"I will come to the point," replied the male. "This evening I went to the rushes where the quagmire could bear me. Then came three swans. There was something in their motions which said to me, 'Take care; they are not real swans; they are only the appearance of swans, created by magic.' Thou wouldst have known as well as I that they were not of the right sort."

"Yes, surely," she said; "but tell me about the princess. I am tired of hearing about the swans."

"In the midst of the morass – here, I must tell thee, it is like a lake," said the male stork – "thou canst see a portion of it if thou wilt raise thyself up a moment – yonder, by the rushes and the green morass, lay a large stump of an alder tree. The three swans alighted upon it, flapped their wings, and looked about them. One of them cast off her swan disguise, and I recognised in her our royal princess from Egypt. She sat now with no other mantle around her than her long dark hair. I heard her desire the other two to take good care of her magic swan garb, while she ducked down under the water to pluck the flower which she thought she saw. They nodded, and raised the empty feather dress between them. 'What are they going to do with it?' said I to myself; and she probably asked herself the same question. The answer came too soon, for I saw them take flight up into the air with her charmed feather dress. 'Dive thou there!' they cried. 'Never more shalt thou fly in the form of a magic swan – never more shalt thou behold the land of Egypt. Dwell thou in *the wild morass!*' And they tore her magic disguise into a hundred pieces, so that the feathers whirled round about as if there were a fall of snow; and away flew the two worthless princesses."

"It is shocking!" said the lady stork; "I can't bear to hear it. Tell me what more happened."

"The princess sobbed and wept. Her tears trickled down upon the trunk of the alder tree, and then it moved; for it was the mud-king himself – he who dwells in the morass. I saw the trunk turn itself, and then there was no more trunk – it struck up two long miry branches like arms; then the poor child became dreadfully alarmed, and she sprang aside upon the green slimy coating of the marsh; but it could not bear me, much less her, and she sank immediately in. The trunk of the alder tree went down with her – it was that which had dragged her down: then arose to the surface large black bubbles, and all further traces of her disappeared. She is now buried in 'the wild morass;' and never, never shall she return to Egypt with the flower she sought. Thou couldst not have borne to have seen all this, mother."

"Thou hadst no business to tell me such a startling tale at a time like this. The eggs may suffer. The princess can take care of herself: she will no doubt be rescued. If it had been me or thee, or any of our family, it would have been all over with us."

"I will look after her every day, however," said the male stork; and so he did.

A long time had elapsed, when one day he saw that far down from the bottom was shooting up a green stem, and when it reached the surface a leaf grew on it. The leaf became broader and broader; close by it came a bud; and one morning, when the stork flew over it, the bud opened in the warm sunshine, and in the centre of it lay a beautiful infant, a little girl, just as if she had been taken out of a bath. She so strongly resembled the princess from Egypt, that the stork at first thought it was herself who had become an infant again; but when he considered the matter he came to the conclusion that she was the daughter of the princess and the mud-king, therefore she lay in the calyx of a water-lily.

"She cannot be left lying there," said the stork to himself; "yet in my nest we are already too overcrowded. But a thought strikes me. The Viking's wife has no children; she has much wished to have a pet. I am often blamed for bringing little ones. I shall now, for once, do so in reality. I shall fly with this infant to the Viking's wife: it will be a great pleasure to her."

And the stork took the little girl, flew to the loghouse, knocked with his beak a hole in the window-pane of stretched bladder, laid the infant in the arms of the Viking's wife, then flew to his

mate, and unburdened his mind to her; while the little ones listened attentively, for they were old enough now to do that.

"Only think, the princess is not dead. She has sent her little one up here, and now it is well provided for."

"I told thee from the beginning it would be all well," said the mother stork. "Turn thy thoughts now to thine own family. It is almost time for our long journey; I begin now to tingle under the wings. The cuckoo and the nightingale are already gone, and I hear the quails saying that we shall soon have a fair wind. Our young ones are quite able to go, I know that."

How happy the Viking's wife was when, in the morning, she awoke and found the lovely little child lying on her breast! She kissed it and caressed it, but it screeched frightfully, and floundered about with its little arms and legs: it evidently seemed little pleased. At last it cried itself to sleep, and as it lay there it was one of the most beautiful little creatures that could be seen. The Viking's wife was so pleased and happy, she took it into her head that her husband, with all his retainers, would come as unexpectedly as the little one had done; and she set herself and the whole household to work, in order that everything might be ready for their reception. The coloured tapestry which she and her women had embroidered with representations of their gods – Odin, Thor, and Freia, as they were called – were hung up; the serfs were ordered to clean and polish the old shields with which the walls were to be decorated; cushions were laid on the benches; and dry logs of wood were heaped on the fireplace in the centre of the hall, so that the pile might be easily lighted. The Viking's wife laboured so hard herself that she was quite tired by the evening, and slept soundly.

When she awoke towards morning she became much alarmed, for the little child was gone. She sprang up, lighted a twig of the pine tree, and looked about; and, to her amazement, she saw, in the part of the bed to which she stretched her feet, not the beautiful infant, but a great ugly frog. She was so much disgusted with it that she took up a heavy stick, and was going to kill the nasty creature; but it looked at her with such wonderfully sad and speaking eyes that she could not strike it. Again she searched about. The frog gave a faint, pitiable cry. She started up, and sprang from the bed to the window; she opened the shutters, and at the same moment the sun streamed in, and cast its bright beams upon the bed and upon the large frog; and all at once it seemed as if the broad mouth of the noxious animal drew itself in, and became small and red – the limbs stretched themselves into the most beautiful form – it was her own little lovely child that lay there, and no ugly frog.

"What is all this?" she exclaimed. "Have I dreamed a bad dream? That certainly is my pretty little elfin child lying yonder." And she kissed it and strained it affectionately to her heart; but it struggled, and tried to bite like the kitten of a wild cat.

Neither the next day nor the day after came the Viking, though he was on the way, but the wind was against him; it was for the storks. A fair wind for one is a contrary wind for another.

In the course of a few days and nights it became evident to the Viking's wife how things stood with the little child – that it was under the influence of some terrible witchcraft. By day it was as beautiful as an angel, but it had a wild, evil disposition; by night, on the contrary, it was an ugly frog, quiet, except for its croaking, and with melancholy eyes. It had two natures, that changed about, both without and within. This arose from the little girl whom the stork had brought possessing by day her own mother's external appearance, and at the same time her father's temper; while by night, on the contrary, she showed her connection with him outwardly in her form, whilst her mother's mind and heart inwardly became hers. What art could release her from the power which exercised such sorcery over her? The Viking's wife felt much anxiety and distress about it, and yet her heart hung on the poor little being, of whose strange state she thought she should not dare to inform her husband when he came home; for he assuredly, as was the custom, would put the poor child out on the high road, and let any one take it who would. The Viking's good-natured wife had not the heart to allow this; therefore she resolved that he should never see the child but by day.

At dawn of day the wings of the storks were heard fluttering over the roof. During the night more than a hundred pairs of storks had been making their preparations, and now they flew up to wend their way to the south.

"Let all the males be ready," was the cry. "Let their mates and little ones join them."

"How light we feel!" said the young storks, who were all impatience to be off. "How charming to be able to travel to other lands!"

"Keep ye all together in one flock," cried the father and mother, "and don't chatter so much – it will take away your breath."

So they all flew away.

About the same time the blast of a horn sounding over the heath gave notice that the Viking had landed with all his men; they were returning home with rich booty from the Gallic coast, where the people, as in Britain, sang in their terror, —

"Save us from the savage Normands!"

What life and bustle were now apparent in the Viking's castle near "the wild morass!" Casks of mead were brought into the hall, the pile of wood was lighted, and horses were slaughtered for the grand feast which was to be prepared. The sacrificial priests sprinkled with the horses' warm blood the slaves who were to assist in the offering. The fires crackled, the smoke rolled up under the roof, the soot dropped from the beams; but people were accustomed to that. Guests were invited, and they brought handsome gifts; rancour and falseness were forgotten – they all became drunk together, and they thrust their doubled fists into each other's faces – which was a sign of good-humour. The skald – he was a sort of poet and musician, but at the same time a warrior – who had been with them, and had witnessed what he sang about, gave them a song, wherein they heard recounted all their achievements in battle, and wonderful adventures. At the end of every verse came the same refrain, —

"Fortune dies, friends die, one dies one's self; but a glorious name never dies."

And then they all struck on their shields, and thundered with their knives or their knuckle-bones on the table, so that they made a tremendous noise.

The Viking's wife sat on the cross bench in the open banquet hall. She wore a silk dress, gold bracelets, and large amber beads. She was in her grandest attire, and the skald named her also in his song, and spoke of the golden treasure she had brought her husband; and he rejoiced in the lovely child he had only seen by daylight, in all its wondrous beauty. The fierce temper which accompanied her exterior charms pleased him. "She might become," he said, "a stalwart female warrior, and able to kill a giant adversary." She never even blinked her eyes when a practised hand, in sport, cut off her eyebrows with a sharp sword.

The mead casks were emptied, others were brought up, and these, too, were drained; for there were folks present who could stand a good deal. To them might have been applied the old proverb, "The cattle know when to leave the pasture; but an unwise man never knows the depth of his stomach."

Yes, they all knew it; but people often know the right thing, and do the wrong. They knew also that "one wears out one's welcome when one stays too long in another man's house;" but they remained there for all that. Meat and mead are good things. All went on merrily, and towards night the slaves slept amidst the warm ashes, and dipped their fingers into the fat skimmings of the soup, and licked them. It was a rare time!

And again the Viking went forth on an expedition, notwithstanding the stormy weather. He went after the crops were gathered in. He went with his men to the coast of Britain – "it was only

across the water," he said – and his wife remained at home with her little girl; and it was soon to be seen that the foster-mother cared almost more for the poor frog, with the honest eyes and plaintive croaking, than for the beauty who scratched and bit everybody around.

The raw, damp, autumn, mist, that loosens the leaves from the trees, lay over wood and hedge; "Birdfeatherless," as the snow is called, was falling thickly; winter was close at hand. The sparrows seized upon the storks' nest, and talked over, in their fashion, the absent owners. They themselves, the stork pair, with all their young ones, where were they now?

The storks were now in the land of Egypt, where the sun was shining warmly as with us on a lovely summer day. The tamarind and the acacia grew there; the moonbeams streamed over the temples of Mahomet. On the slender minarets sat many a pair of storks, reposing after their long journey; the whole immense flock had fixed themselves, nest by nest, amidst the mighty pillars and broken porticos of temples and forgotten edifices. The date tree elevated to a great height its broad leafy roof, as if it wished to form a shelter from the sun. The grey pyramids stood with their outlines sharply defined in the clear air towards the desert, where the ostrich knew he could use his legs; and the lion sat with his large grave eyes, and gazed on the marble sphinxes that lay half imbedded in the sand. The waters of the Nile had receded, and a great part of the bed of the river was swarming with frogs; and that, to the stork family, was the pleasantest sight in the country where they had arrived. The young ones were astonished at all they saw.

"Such are the sights here, and thus it always is in our warm country," said the stork-mother good-humouredly.

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