

A HAPPY BOY AND LATER SKETCHES

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A happy boy and later sketches by Björnstjerne Björnson & Rasmus B. Anderson

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BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON & RASMUS B. ANDERSON

A HAPPY BOY AND LATER SKETCHES

A HAPPY BOY



LATER SKETCHES

WORKS OF
BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON

A HAPPY BOY AND
LATER SKETCHES

Translated from the Norse

By

RASMUS B. ANDERSON

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PREFACE.

"A HAPPY BOY" was written in 1859 and 1860. It is, in my estimation, Björnson's best story of peasant life. In it the author has succeeded in drawing the characters with *remarkable distinctness*, while his profound psychological insight, his perfectly artless simplicity of style, and his thorough sympathy with the hero and his surroundings are nowhere more apparent. This view is sustained by the great popularity of "A Happy Boy" throughout Scandinavia.

It is proper to add, that in the present edition of Björnson's stories, previous translations have been consulted, and that in this manner a few happy words and phrases have been found and adopted

RAMSUS B. ANDERSON.

ASGARD, MADISON, WISCONSIN,
November, 1881

A HAPPY BOY.

CHAPTER I.

His name was Öyvind, and he cried when he was born. But no sooner did he sit up on his mother's lap than he laughed, and when the candle was lit in the evening the room rang with his laughter, but he cried when he was not allowed to reach it.

"Something remarkable will come of that boy!" said the mother.

A barren cliff, not a very high one, though, overhung the house where he was born; fir and birch looked down upon the roof, the bird-cherry strewed flowers over it. And on the roof was a little goat belonging to Öyvind; it was kept there that it might not wander away and Öyvind bore leaves and grass up to it. One fine day the goat leaped down and was off to the cliff; it went straight up and soon stood where it had never been before. Öyvind did not see the goat when he came out in the after-

noon, and thought at once of the fox. He grew hot all over, and gazing about him, cried, —

“Killy-killy-killy-killy-goat !”

“Ba-a-a-a !” answered the goat, from the brow of the hill, putting its head on one side and peering down.

At the side of the goat there was kneeling a little girl.

“Is this goat yours ?” asked she.

Öyvind opened wide his mouth and eyes, thrust both hands into his pants and said, —

“Who are you ?”

“I am Marit, mother’s young one, father’s fiddle, the hudder of the house, granddaughter to Ola Nordstuen of the Heidegards, four years old in the autumn, two days after the frost nights — I am !”

“Is that who you are ?” cried he, drawing a long breath, for he had not ventured to take one while she was speaking.

“Is this goat yours ?” she again inquired.

“Ye-es !” replied he, raising his eyes.

“I have taken such a liking to the goat ; — you will not give it to me ?”

“No, indeed I will not.”

She lay kicking up her heels and staring down at him, and presently she said : “But if I give you a twisted bun for the goat, can I have it then ?”