

BILLY WHISTERS' TRAVELS

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*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK BILLY WHISKERS' TRAV-
ELS ***

Produced by Al Haines.

[image]

Cover art

BILLY WHISKERS'

TRAVELS

BY
F. G. WHEELER

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER

- I. [Billy Runs Away from Home](#)
- II. [He Loses his Mother](#)
- III. [Billy Sees his Mother Again](#)
- IV. [The Burgomaster is Bumped](#)
- V. [The Wooden Goat](#)

- VI. A Celebration with Fireworks
- VII. Billy Finds his Mother
- VIII. An Encounter with the Tiger
- IX. Alone in an Ocean Storm
- X. The Goats Become a Fiery Dragon
- XI. Billy Joins a Happy Family
- XII. Billy Earns his Name
- XIII. A Happy Reunion

ILLUSTRATIONS

A Boat was lowered to rescue Billy. (missing from source book)

”Grab him, Caspar! Hold him!”

Billy saw him coming, and splashed around to the far side of the fountain.

Billy felt his courage coming back.

”Well, old fellow, if broken bones are all, we can fix those.”

”Shake hands,” said Bobby.

CHAPTER I
BILLY RUNS AWAY FROM HOME

[image]

he other kids of the big flock on the pretty Swiss farm thought that they were having a very nice time, but Billy did not like it very well. He could run faster, jump higher and butt harder than any of the other kids of his age, and he wanted more room. Nearly every day he stopped for a while beside the high fence and looked out through it at the green slopes that ran up to the mountains. The leaves looked so much fresher and more tender there, and the sun so much brighter; besides, there were rocky places—he could see them—which would make such fine playgrounds and jumping places. His wise old mother shook her head when he told her about these things.

"You are too little yet, Billy," she always said. "You are not yet strong enough to be out in the world alone, even if you could get away from here."

"Just wait till I get big," Billy would say, shaking his head, and then he would scamper away to slyly nip the whiskers of some sober old goat, or to romp or play fight with one of the other youngsters.

He was the most mischievous kid in the flock, and because of that his mother named him Billy Mischief. Farmer Klausen, who owned him, was nearly as proud of him as Billy's own mother could be.

"That's the smartest and strongest young goat I've got," he used to brag to his neighbor, fat Hans Zug, but for all that he kept a sharp eye on Billy and would not allow him to break away from the flock and escape, as he sometimes tried to do when they were being driven across the road from one pasture to another.

One day, when Billy was almost a full-grown goat, his chance came at last. Farmer Klausen was standing in the middle of the road to see that none got away, while his boys were driving the flock over to the lower meadows. Billy, who came up with the others, looking as innocent as a goat can look, suddenly wheeled, and with a hard jump landed his broad head and horns square in the stomach of his master. Farmer Klausen gave a yell, threw up both his hands and went heels over head into the dust, while Billy, scampering over him, ran as hard as he could for the hills.

Coming down the road toward him was fat Hans Zug with a yoke across his shoulders from which hung two great pails of goat's milk which he was taking down to the chocolate factory in the valley. Slow-witted Hans, when he saw neighbor Klausen's goat getting away, never thought of setting down his pails, but spread out his arms and stood square in the middle of the road, waving his hands and shouting: "Shoo! Shoo!" It was a big mistake to think that he could scare this scamp goat by saying "Shoo!" or by keeping his fat body in the road, for Billy came straight on with his head down, and just as Hans thought that maybe he had better step to one side, Billy gave a mighty leap and doubled Hans up just like he had Farmer Klausen.

"A thousand lightnings yet again!" yelled Hans as he went over. The two pails came down with a thud and a swish, and goat's milk ran all over the road and down the gulleys at the side. Hans Zug's dog, which had been sniffing at the roadside to see if he could find the trail of a rabbit, now jumped out and came at Billy. With one jerk of his strong little neck the runaway goat picked the dog up on his horns and tossed him clear over his head, where he landed plump on top of fat Hans and knocked the breath out of him for a second time, just as Hans was getting up. Then Billy, feeling fine from this nice bit of exercise, kicked up his heels and galloped on.

[image]

The two pails came down with a thud and a swish

Just as he reached the woods he turned around and looked back. Farmer Klausen was on his feet again but had no time to chase Billy, for he was cracking his long whip and running from one side of the road to the other to keep the rest of the goats from breaking away. Billy could hear his loud voice from where he stood. Hans had also rolled to his feet and was holding his pudgy hands across his stomach, where he had been hit, while he looked dumbly at the rich, yellow milk which was in puddles everywhere. Thick-headed Hans was just making up his mind that the milk had really been spilled when another goat dashed by him, as fast as its feet could patter. As it drew nearer Billy saw with joy that it was his mother, and he waited for her. When she came close Billy called to her:

"Hurry up! We are never going back any more."

He kicked up his heels again in pure delight and was about to plunge into the woods when his mother called on him to wait, and he did so, though he did not like to do it, for the last of the flock was now safely in the other pasture, the gate was being closed on them and Billy knew that in a moment more Farmer Klausen and his boys and neighbor Hans would be coming after them.

When Billy's mother came up even with him she was panting so hard that she could not speak, but she did not stop. She kept right on running, and he followed, curious to see what she meant to do. As soon as they were out of sight of the men, she turned from the road into the woods, and by-and-by reached a little hollow which was all overgrown with bushes. Into this she raced, and Billy, now seeing what she was up to, scampered lightly along behind, thinking it to be great fun. The hollow grew deeper and wider and shadier as they went on, and at last she turned and scrambled up the dim, pebbly bank, where she plunged into a dry little cave. Here she lay down upon the ground to get her breath, while

Billy climbed in beside her and listened. Soon he could hear the heavy pat, pat, of the feet of Farmer Klausen and his boys on the road, which was now high above them.

"They'll never find us here," he said.

"Don't 'baah' so loud or they will hear us," panted his mother. "My! I'm getting too fat to run any more, but if you were bound to go out in the world, I was bound to come with you. You're not old enough even yet to be trusted alone. But you are right about one thing; unless they catch us, we're never going back."

Suddenly they both became very still. The noise of the footsteps had died away, but there was a slow rustling of the leaves in the hollow. Something was coming toward them!

Nearer and nearer to where Billy and his mother lay hidden came the noise, and soon they saw a dim, dark-gray shape among the underbrush turn straight up toward them. It was a large wild boar, one of the fiercest animals that rove the forests of Europe. It had a great, shaggy head and cruel-looking curved tusks nearly a foot long. The two goats were in one of his hiding-places, and they knew that he would not stop to say "Beg your pardon" when he came up; whatever he had to say would be said with those sharp tusks. The space was too narrow for them to run out past him. Billy's mother was scared, but not Billy.

"The only thing for us to do is to fight," said he, and, jumping to his feet, he stood at the mouth of the little cave and gave a loud "baah!" which was to warn the boar that it had better go about its business.

The boar stopped and looked up at Billy with little wicked eyes, then he gave a loud snort, and, lowering his head, started to run straight up the hill toward them. Billy waited until the boar was close upon him, then he gave a sudden jump and landed square upon the fierce animal's back. The beast squealed and whirled around to rip Billy with his tusks, but before he could do so Billy himself had whirled and had hooked the big animal in the side. There was another squeal and Billy jumped out of the way. The animal turned and dashed after him, but in turning, his side was for an instant toward the mouth of the cave. It was just that instant for which Billy's mother was watching, and with all her might she jumped, butting him in the side with such force that he went rolling over and over, squealing and grunting, into the hollow. Billy was for jumping down after him but his mother knew better than that. She knew that it would be only an accident if they could whip this wicked animal, as the boar was so much the stronger, and that it was better to run than fight.

"Come quickly!" she cried, springing up the hill.

Billy stood for a moment, hardly knowing whether to follow her or not, but just then the boar scrambled to his feet and started after them, snorting and with fire-red eyes.

"Billy! Billy!" screamed his mother. "Do as I tell you!"

Even then, Billy, who never had known what it was to be afraid, wanted to stay and fight it out, but the sight of his mother scampering up the hill decided him. He was more afraid that he might lose her than he was that he could not whip the boar, so he took after her. The boar was also a good runner, but he was not nearly so nimble a climber as the goats and they soon out-distanced him, gaining the road, where they ran on as fast as they could go.

The road soon came to a narrow place where the trees stopped and the rocks rose straight up on either side. They were half way through this narrow stretch when Billy's mother stopped.

"Goodness!" she exclaimed. "I forgot about Farmer Klausen and his boys. They will be coming back past this way pretty soon, and if they meet us in here there will be trouble. We can't turn back on account of the boar and they will surely catch us."

"Well, then," said Billy, once more showing his bravery, "if we can't go back on account of the boar, we might just as well go on ahead and meet whatever comes, as to stand here wasting time. Maybe if we hurry we can get out before they get to us."

"I'm proud of you, Billy," said his mother.

They started to run on again, but had no more than done so when, sure enough, they saw a man coming toward them. It was fat Hans Zug, and the minute they saw who it was Billy laughed.

"Just watch me roll him over," he said, and started, as hard as he could go, toward the big round farmer.

When Hans saw Billy coming toward him this time he did not wave his arms and cry, "Shoo!" In place of that he put his hands on his stomach and turned around to run away from this little, white cannon-ball of a goat. It was comical to see the fat fellow waddling along, holding his hands in front of him, but he was making such slow progress that Billy felt sorry for him and thought that he ought to help him a little. It only took a few jumps to catch up with Hans and then—biff!—he struck him from behind so hard that Hans almost bounced when he hit the ground.

"A thousand lightnings, yet again!" yelled poor Hans.

He was just grunting his way to his hands and feet again when Billy's mother came along behind and—whack!—she gave him another tumble. This time he did not stop to look in either direction, but rolled over to the side of the road and, getting to his feet, tried to claw his way up the steep rocks, feeling almost sure that a whole regiment of goats of all colors and sizes was after him.

"Ten thousand, a hundred thousand lightnings!" wailed Hans. Billy, nearly laughing himself sick, waited for his mother, and when she came up they both

pranced on. They had nearly reached the end of the narrow pass when they saw coming toward them Farmer Klausen and his two boys. The boys were running on ahead, quite a little distance in front of their father, and Billy said quickly:

"You take Chris and I will take Jacob!"

So when they came up to the boys they just dived between their legs. Billy upset Jacob easily enough, but Chris was lighter, and when the fatter goat tried to escape between his legs he simply fell over on top of her. Without stopping to think what he was doing, he grabbed his arms about her middle and hung tight, while she raced on for dear life. By this time they were up to the farmer. Billy easily dodged him, but it was not so easy for his mother. With Chris hanging on her back, Farmer Klausen was able to grab her by the horns and hold her tight.

[image]

He grabbed his arms about her middle and hung tight.

"Billy, Billy! Help!" squealed his mother, and Billy whirled around to come back at once. He flew through the air as if he had been shot out of a gun, and when he landed against the stooping Farmer Klausen, that surprised man turned a somersault clear over Chris and the old goat, then Billy's mother easily shook Chris loose and away they went again.

As soon as they got through the narrow pass they turned once more into the woods, which here sloped upward. They had now passed the last of the farms, and beyond them lay nothing but wooded hills and the mountains. Up and up they scrambled until at last, near nightfall, they came to a little, grass-grown tableland, watered by a tiny stream that tumbled down from the mountains, and here, after taking a long drink, they rested. After a while they made a good meal from the tender young grass that grew at the side of the stream, and lay down again. Soon they were fast asleep, side by side.

It was nearly midnight and the moon was shining brightly overhead, when they were both awakened by a terrific scream, and at the same moment a soft, heavy body landed upon Billy's back! Sharp claws struck his hide and sharp teeth sank into the back of his neck!

[image]

"GRAB HIM, CASPAR! HOLD HIM!"

CHAPTER II

HE LOSES HIS MOTHER

[image]

It was a mountain lynx that had sprung upon Billy from the rocks above. This lynx often came down to the highest of the goat farms, and had many times annoyed fat Hans Zug and Farmer Klausen by stealing nice, fat young kids for his supper. This time, however, he had met his match, for Billy's mother no sooner saw the animal light upon her offspring than she scrambled to her feet, and, with a short, quick jump, plunged her sharp horns into his side. The lynx screamed, and loosing his grip on Billy, turned to fight with the mother goat. The moment his weight was lifted, Billy, quick as a flash, ripped at the underside of the beast with his sharp horns. That made the animal snarl and loosen his hold upon Billy's mother, and between them they soon, in this way, gave the lynx more than he had bargained for, so that presently he fled howling up the steep rocks with the two goats chasing him as far as they thought it safe. Then they came back to their grassy spot, and bathed their hurt places in the cool, running water.

"Now, Billy, you see what the world is like," said his mother. "Don't you wish that we were safely back in Farmer Klausen's pasture?"

Billy dipped his scratched hind leg in the water and held it there while he shook his head.

"No," he said, "this is better. Only I'm glad that I didn't get a chance to run away until I was so big and strong."

His mother sighed, but looked at him proudly.

"You are a brave young goat," she said, "and it would be a shame to keep you shut up in a pen."

In the morning they were a little stiff from their hurts, but Billy was still eager to travel and see the world, so they went on into the mountains. About noon they followed a little ravine down to a plateau where there was a whole herd of chamois. These graceful animals are about the size of a goat, but they are not so heavily built and are much swifter. At first the chamois did not want to let the goats join them, but old Fleetfoot, the leader of the herd, said that they might stay if they were not quarrelsome, but that they would have to look out for themselves if hunters came that way.

This little plateau was a beautiful place, all carpeted with grass and backed up by towering rocks. At one end was a cliff looking out over a valley, at the

further end of which was a little village. Billy, in his eagerness to see the world, ran at once to the edge of the cliff.

"You reckless Billy!" cried his mother, running after him. "Don't go so close to that cliff or you will surely fall over and break your neck!"

"I'm not afraid," boasted Billy, and actually stood on his hind legs at the very edge.

[image]

Stood on his hind legs at the very edge.

Just then a few loose stones came rolling down the ravine, and like a flash the entire herd of chamois were gone, leaping across a broad chasm to a little ledge upon the other side, where there was a second path that led among the rocks.

"Oh, what shall we do?" cried Billy's mother. "Here come two hunters with guns, and we can't jump where they did. Why, it's twelve feet across there!" She was frightened half to death but not for herself, for she threw herself squarely between Billy and the hunters.

The hunters were ignorant fellows, and as soon as they caught sight of the two goats they thought that these also were chamois, and one of them, lifting his gun, shot at them, grazing the head of the mother goat. She toppled over against Billy, and that knocked him over the cliff. If it had not been for a small tree which grew out of the cliff about half way down, Billy would have been dashed to death, but the tree broke his fall and so he only lay in the valley stunned, while the hunters picked up his mother and in great glee carried her away, thinking they had shot a chamois.

When they got back to their guide he told them their mistake, and saw, too, that the goat was only stunned; so they gave it to him and he sold it next day to a man who was buying some extra goats for Hans Zug, to stock a goat farm in America.

In the meantime poor Billy lay almost dead at the base of the cliff, where a man found him about an hour later.

"You poor goat!" said the man, looking up at the cliff. "Did you fall down from that dizzy height?" and he put his hand on Billy's sleek coat. "At least you are not dead," he went on, feeling Billy's heart beat. "I'll get you some water."

He took off his little round hat and ran back to where a tiny waterfall came splashing and tumbling down the cliff, and, filling his hat full of water, brought it and emptied it on the goat's head. The cool shower revived Billy so that he

raised his head a little, and by the time the man got back with the second hatful of water he was able to drink a little. This revived him still more, and presently he scrambled weakly to his feet. He stumbled and swayed and nearly fell down, but by spreading his feet out he managed to stand up, and by-and-by he took a few tottering steps. With each step he grew stronger, and after another good drink he was able to follow this kind man across the valley to the little village.

Billy was glad enough to lie down and take a nap as soon as he got to the man's house, and he did not wake up until late at night. After his good sleep he felt as strong as ever and thought he would get something to eat, then see if he could not find his mother. He found that he was tied to a fence not far from a little whitewashed building, under which ran a stream of water, but it did not take long for him to jerk himself loose. Going toward the little white building, he smelled something that reminded him of milk. He tried to get in at the door. It was fastened with a wooden button but Billy did not care for that. He went back a little piece to get a run, and bumped head first into the door, which flew open at once.

"Milk!" said Billy, sniffing around in delight. "Nice sweet milk! I'm sure that kind man would want me to have some."

There was a little board walk down the center of this spring-house, and on each side of this were a number of crocks setting in the water, each one of them covered with a plate and containing milk. A stone was laid on top of each plate to weight the crock down in the water, and in trying to nose off one of these plates Billy reached over too far and fell. He landed right among the crocks, which, of course, bumped into each other, breaking and overturning and spilling the milk, and making a great clatter. At the noise, two dogs came running down and dashed into the spring-house, where, seeing something floundering around in the water, they promptly dived in after it and Billy found himself very busy. The noise the dogs made aroused the man and his wife, and they, too, came down; the noise they made aroused the neighbors on both sides, who came running over to see what was the matter; a young man, who was coming home late from calling on a girl, passed by that way and saw the people from both sides running to this house and thought there must be a fire, so he ran to the town hall, where the rope of the fire bell hung outside, and began ringing it as loud as he could, which aroused everybody in the village. Hearing the commotion many got out of bed and came out on the streets to learn where the fire was.

All this time Billy, the cause of the hubbub, was battling with the dogs among the milk crocks in the spring-house, and using his horns right and left as hard as he could, until finally he was able to jump out between them and on to the board walk. Out of the door he dashed, upsetting the man and his wife, butting into the neighbors and, all dripping with white milk, ran like the ghost

of a goat through the village street, making women and girls scream, scattering people right and left and being chased by yelping dogs and halloing men and boys.

Billy easily outran his pursuers, but he never stopped until he was far out in the country, where he crept under a stone bridge to rest from his long run. As soon as he had got his breath, he broke into a near-by field and made a splendid supper from some nice young lettuce heads, then he trotted contentedly back under his bridge and went to sleep. In the morning, bright and early, he went back into the market garden and made a fine breakfast from beet and carrot tops, all sparkling with cool dew. He enjoyed this garden very much and would like to have stayed there until all the nice vegetables were eaten up, but he remembered how Mr. Klausen had whipped him for breaking into his turnip patch one time, and made up his mind that it would not be safe to linger in this part of the country much longer, so he jumped the fence and started again on his travels.

A little dog was trotting down the road, and as soon as he saw Billy he began to bark. To ordinary persons the barking would have sounded merely like a lot of bow-wows, but in the animal language it said:

"Where did *you* come from, you big white tramp? You go right on away from here or I'll call the police."

Billy wasn't going to take that sort of talk from any dog, big or little, so he gave one "baah!" lowered his head, and started for that dog. The dog suddenly found out that he had very important business back home, and he started up the road as hard as he could go, with Billy close after him. There never was a dog that ran so hard and so earnestly as that one, and all the breath that he could spare from running he used in howling, to let the folks at home know that he was coming. All at once he was very anxious indeed to get home in time for breakfast, and Billy was just as anxious to toss him over a fence before he got there. Up one hill and down another went the two, lickaty-split, first a little white streak bent low in the dust, and then a bigger white streak coming along close behind in a whirling cloud. Pretty soon they came in sight of a big square farmhouse with a wide-spreading roof, and then the little dog, his tongue hanging away out, gave an extra wild howl and ran faster than ever. When they got to the house the dog turned in at the open gate with Billy right at his heels. He tore up the path and around to the kitchen door, up the steps and into the kitchen, pell-mell, where he dived under the table at which the Oberbipp family was having breakfast.

Billy did not know where he was going and did not very much care. All he knew was that he was chasing that dog and meant to catch him, so without looking, he followed, too, up the steps and under the table. Such shrieking and howling never was heard. Herr Oberbipp jumped up so quickly that he upset his chair, and in trying to catch the chair he upset himself, turning a back somersault

on the floor and landing in a tub of soapsuds in which the clothes were soaking to be washed. Frau Oberbipp grabbed a loaf of bread in one hand and a sausage in the other, and never left off screaming until she was out of breath. Greta Oberbipp sprang up on her chair and shook her skirts as hard as she could, while she helped her mamma scream. Baby Oberbipp jumped up on the table at first, but the snarls and howls and "baahs" from underneath excited his curiosity so much that he soon jumped down to the floor and looked under the table. Then he began to dance on one foot and yell.

"Hang on, you Flohbeis!" he cried, for the dog, now full of courage because he was under his own table, had grabbed Billy by the nose. Shake his head as hard as he might, Billy could not loosen Flohbeis, or Fleabite, as his name would be called in English, so he reared straight up, and the table began to dance across the room toward the father of the family, while Frau Oberbipp and Greta screamed louder than ever. Herr Oberbipp was just getting out of the tub when the table got over to him, and he made a grab at it when Billy gave an extra strong jump. The table overturned, and all the breakfast things, with a mighty crash of dishes, slid on Herr Oberbipp and knocked him back in the suds again. By this time Billy had unfastened the grip of Fleabite from his nose and had butted that yelping dog into the bottom of the tall clock case; then Billy started for the door, but Herr Oberbipp was already yelling to Caspar not to let him out.

"Grab him, Caspar! Hold him!" yelled the man. "He is a nice young goat. He spoils our breakfast and we make a dinner of him."

When Billy heard that, he was more anxious than ever to get out, but Caspar had slammed the door shut, and Billy, seeing it closed, tried to butt it down. The door was too strong and Billy grew desperate. Caspar ran after him and Billy suddenly turned, running under Caspar's legs and toppling him over; then he made for the window, meaning to go through it, sash and all. But Caspar had already jumped up, and, as the goat went through a pane of glass, Caspar grabbed him by the hind legs and held him, while Billy, fairly caught and pinched in between the window bars, could only struggle with his fore feet.

Herr Oberbipp in the meantime got himself out of the tub of water, took the butter out of his hair and the mush out of his shirt front, untangled himself from the table-cloth, wiped the coffee from his face and ran outside, where he grabbed Billy by the horns and pulled him on through the window. Herr Oberbipp was a big, strong man, and, holding Billy by the horns, he carried him at arm's length down to the barn, letting him kick and struggle all he wanted to, and there he tied the goat in a stall with a good stout wire, after which he went back to the house and washed himself. Frau Oberbipp and Greta were still screaming.

The glass had given Billy two or three little cuts, but they did not amount to much and he had already licked them clean when Caspar came out with some

water and a plate of cold potatoes which Billy was very glad to get. While the goat was eating, Caspar examined the cut places, and, running into the house, brought out something which he put on the cuts. It smarted at first, and Billy tried to butt Caspar for putting it on, but by-and-by he could feel that the smarts were being soothed and that the cuts were healing by reason of the stuff that the boy had put on, so he began to see that Caspar was not such a bad sort after all. He had something to worry about, however, when, after breakfast, the farmer came out and looked the goat over.

"Roast kid is a very fine dish," said the farmer. "I don't know to whom this goat belongs, but whosoever it is he owes us a meal, so we're going to roast him."

CHAPTER III

BILLY SEES HIS MOTHER AGAIN

[image]

obody, not even a goat, likes to think of being roasted for dinner, and so, the minute he heard that, Billy gave an extra hard tug at the wire, but it only cut his neck and choked him and would not break. So he gave it up and "baahed" pitifully while he looked to Caspar for help.

"Indeed you will not roast this goat," said sturdy Caspar. "He's my goat; he chased my dog and I'm going to keep him."

Caspar looked up at his father and his father looked down at Caspar. Billy looked up at both of them. Little Caspar and big Caspar stood exactly alike, both of them with their fists doubled on their hips and both of them with square jaws and firm lips, and it was big Caspar, who, proud to see his boy looking so much like himself, finally gave in. He laughed and said:

"All right, he's your goat, but you have got to take the whippings for all the damage he does."

"Very well," said Caspar, "I'll do it," and his father walked away.

Billy was so pleased with this that he made up his mind to be very nice to the boy, and when Caspar stooped down to take the empty plate away, Billy ran his nose affectionately into young Oberbipp's hand. Right after breakfast Caspar took off the wire from Billy's neck, holding a switch in his hand to whip the goat

over the nose in case he tried to butt or run away. But Billy did neither of these things. He followed his new master out in the yard, and there he was backed up between the shafts of a little wagon that had been made for Fleabite. The dog capered and barked and made a run or two at Billy, but the goat only shook his horns at him and Fleabite ran under the barn. The dog was jealous. He did not like the wagon, but, rather than have the goat hitched up to it, he wanted to haul it himself.

[image]

He was backed up between the shafts of a little wagon.

"It's no use, Fleabite," said Caspar, "you might as well make friends with him. Anyhow, you're not big enough to haul this wagon, and you always lay down in the harness. You can come along behind, though. I'm going to drive in to Kasedorf and show my goat to cousin Fritz."

At first Billy was afraid that Kasedorf might be the village where he had torn up the spring-house, and he had very good reasons for not wanting to go back there, but when they clattered out of the gate Caspar turned his head in the other direction, and he was very glad of this. He was so pleased with his new master that he went along at a splendid gait, pulling Caspar nicely up one hill after another. Fleabite ran along, sometimes behind, sometimes ahead, and sometimes slipping up at the side and snapping at Billy's nose; but Billy had only to shake his horns in the dog's direction and Fleabite would run about a mile before he would take it into his foolish head to try that trick again.

Pretty soon they went whizzing down a little hill and into a far prettier village than the first one. Just as they turned into the main street, along came a flock of goats driven by two men and half a dozen boys, and who should Billy see in that flock but his own mother! Of course he called loudly to her. She heard him, and though she was in the center of the flock, quickly made her way to the edge, where she kissed him. She had no time to tell him where she was going, nor he to tell her all that had happened to him since he had fallen from the cliff, but it was a joy for each of them to know that the other was still alive and in good health.

Before they could speak further, a sharp whip cracked over them and the lash landed on Billy's nose. He jumped back with the pain and again the whip cracked. This time Billy's mother got the sting of it. Billy looked around, and there, handling the whip, was fat Hans Zug! Billy, mad as a hornet, whirled and was going to make for Hans, when Caspar, who had jumped out of the cart, hit

him a sharp crack across the nose with his fist, and it pained Billy so much that the tears came to his eyes and he could not see. Before he could make another start for Hans or run after his mother, Hans had passed by, and Caspar's uncle Heinrich, who had come up in the meantime, had Billy by the horns and was holding him. Billy struggled as hard as he could to get away. He wanted to butt Hans Zug for whipping his mother and himself, and he wanted to go with his mother if he could, so he was a very sulky goat.

Even when Caspar took him to his uncle's house and gave him some nice, tender vegetables and potato parings to eat, he was very sulky as he stood there munching his dinner, so that when Fleabite came up and stole some of his potato parings he butted that poor dog plump into a barbed wire fence. You must not suppose that Fleabite liked potato parings. He would not eat them at home, but he was such a jealous dog that he wanted to eat up Billy's dinner, no matter what it was. After dinner Caspar rubbed Billy's sleek coat until it was all clean and glossy, then he let Fritz have a ride in the cart. Fritz drove proudly up into the main street, and there, standing at the corner, talking to another man, was Hans Zug!

"Yes," Hans was saying in English to the other man, "I go me also by America next week. I got such a brother there what is making more as a thousand dollars a year mit such a goat farm, and I take me my goats over. I got a contract mit another Switzer what owns the land. Yess!"

Billy did not wait for any more, but raised up on his hind feet. Fritz tried his best to hold him back, but he might as well have tried to hold the wind, and Billy, feeling the tug at his reins, gave a jump that toppled Fritz over backwards out of the cart. He gave one more jump and landed with all his might and main against poor, round Hans, and as his enemy went down Billy jumped on him and ran up one side of him and down the other side. Poor Hans got up and clasped both pudgy hands on his stomach.

"A thousand lightnings yet again!" he exclaimed as he looked sorrowfully at his print in the dust. Hans had been butted that time for Billy's mother; now Billy whirled and came back to give Hans one for himself, but this time Hans was too quick for him and dodged behind a tree, letting Billy butt the tree so hard that it stunned him, and before the fiery tempered goat could make up his mind what had happened to him, Caspar came running up and grabbed him by the horns. Billy could have jerked away from Caspar, but he felt that the boy was now the best friend he had, and he did not want to hurt him, so he let Caspar pat him on his sleek sides and climb into the cart behind him.

"You'll have to walk, Fritz," said Caspar loftily. "It takes a good strong boy to manage this goat."

Billy laughed at this, but when Caspar "clicked" for him to "get up," he

trotted right along without making any fuss about it.

At the next corner a carriage turned into the main street, and in it, on the seat back of the driver, were a man and a boy, the latter being of about Caspar's age.

"Oh, papa, do look at that beautiful goat!" exclaimed the boy. "Please buy him for me, won't you?"

Mr. Brown shook his head.

"I don't mind you having a goat, Frank," he said, "but I can get you just as good a one when we get back to America. There is no use in carrying a goat clear across the ocean with us when there are so many at home."

"All right," said the boy, obediently, and the carriage drove on.

Poor Billy! His heart sank. He had just heard from Hans that his mother was going to America, and he did hope that this fine looking man would buy him and take him there, too, so that he would have more chance to find his mother; but now his chance was gone. Was it though? He was not a goat to give up easily, and he made up his mind to try once more.

Billy stopped dead still to think it over. He simply could not bear to let this man get away without another trial, so suddenly he whirled, nearly upsetting the cart, and ran after the strangers. He soon caught up with them, and then, slowing down, he trotted along at the side of the carriage, showing off his beauty as much as he could.

"Oh, papa, there is that beautiful goat again," said the boy. "How I do wish I could have him! Of course you can buy me one in America, as you have promised to do, but they say that there are no goats in the world so fine as the Swiss goats, and I am sure that I never saw any so pretty as this one."

The man smiled indulgently at his son and stopped the carriage.

"How much will you take for your goat, my boy?" he asked.

"I don't want to sell him," replied Caspar. "He's my goat and I like him."

Just then Billy tossed his fine head and pranced, daintily lifting his feet.

"See how graceful he is!" exclaimed the boy. "Do buy him, papa!"

"I'll give you ten dollars for him," said the gentleman, pulling out his pocketbook.

Caspar caught his breath. He knew the value of an American dollar, and ten dollars was equal to more than forty German marks. It was a great lot of money, too much for a poor boy to refuse. Caspar drew a long sigh and began to slowly unhitch his goat. The driver of the carriage threw him a strap, and with this he tied Billy to the rear axle of the carriage.

Fleabite, as soon as Billy was safely tied, began to caper with joy and to snap at Billy's heels, but Caspar, when the man had paid him his money, grabbed Fleabite and hitched him to the cart. Then he ran up and patted Billy affection-

ately on the flanks, and the carriage drove away, with Billy following gladly behind in the dust.

Down the village street the carriage rolled until it came to a quaint little Swiss inn, where it turned through a wide gateway that led into a brick-paved courtyard. Here Billy was unfastened from the carriage by a servant and led back of the inn, where he was tied by the strap to a post, while Mr. Brown and his son Frank went to their mid-day meal. Billy didn't like to be tied; he was not used to it, so he began to chew his strap in two. It was very tough leather but Billy's teeth were very sharp and strong, and he had it about half gnawed through when a little, lean waiter came from the kitchen across the courtyard, carrying, high up over his head, a great big tray piled with dishes of food. The waiter saw Billy gnawing his strap in two and thought that he ought to keep him from it.

"Stop that, you hammer-headed goat!" he cried and gave Billy a kick.

Billy was not going to stand anything like that, so he gave a mighty jump and the strap parted where he had been gnawing upon it. As soon as the lean waiter saw this he started to run, but, with the heavy tray he was carrying, he could not run very fast and he looked most comical with his apron flopping out behind him and his legs going almost straight up and down in his effort to run and to balance the tray at the same time.

When Billy pulled the strap in two, the jerk of it sent him head over heels and by the time he had scrambled to his feet again the waiter was half way to the back door of the inn. The fat cook, who was looking out of the door of the summer kitchen, saw Billy start for the waiter and he started after the goat, but he got there too late, for the goat caught up with the lean waiter in about three leaps and with a loud "baah!" sent him sprawling. The big tray of dishes came down with a crash and a clatter, and meats, vegetables, gravies and relishes, together with broken dishes, were scattered all over the fellow who had kicked Billy, all over the clean scrubbed bricks, spattered up against the walls and into the long rows of geraniums that grew in a wooden trough at the end of the house.

Billy turned and was about to trot back when he saw the fat cook coming just behind him, so he ran right on across the little waiter, through the mess and to the back door. Crossing the winter kitchen he found a big, rosy-cheeked girl standing in his way and made a dive at her. With a scream she jumped and Billy's horns caught in her bright, red-checked apron, which jerked loose. With this streaming along his back, he dashed on into a long hall, and there at the far door whom did he see, just starting into the dining-room, but his old enemy, fat Hans Zug, who had that morning whipped Billy's mother and himself. Billy stood up on his hind feet for a second and shook his head at Hans, and then he started for him. Hans saw him coming.

"Thunder weather!" he cried, and ran on through the door.

He tried to shut the door behind him but he was not in time, for Billy butted against it and threw it open right out of Hans Zug's hand. The long room into which Hans had hurried was the dining-room, and here were seated, around a long table, a number of ladies and gentlemen, among them Mr. and Mrs. Brown and their son Frank, waiting for the dinner that now lay scattered around the courtyard. Everybody looked up, startled, when Hans came bursting through the door closely followed by an angry goat with a red-checked apron streaming from his horns. A great many of the men jumped up and scraped their chairs back, adding to the confusion, and a great many of the ladies screamed. Hans, not knowing what to do, started to run around and around the table with Billy close behind him and the fat cook close after Billy. Billy would easily have caught Hans except that every once in a while Hans would upset a chair in the goat's road and Billy would have to jump over the chair. Sometimes the fat cook would almost catch Billy and finally did succeed in catching the apron. When it came loose in his hand he did not know what to do with it. He started to throw it down, he started to stuff it in his pocket, he started to mop his perspiring face with it, and at last he threw it around his neck and tied the strings in front to get rid of it, then once more he chased after Billy, with the red apron flopping out behind him.

At last he grabbed Billy by the tail just as he was going to jump over the chair, and held on tightly, but Billy's jump had been too strong for him and the fat cook stumbled head over heels. Jumping up the angry cook ran until he again caught the goat, and this time he fell on top of Billy and then both rolled over and over on the floor.

"Ugh!" grunted the fat cook. "Beast animal!"

Billy jumped up in such a hurry that he simply danced on the fat cook's stomach. While Billy was doing this, Hans had stopped for a minute to mop his face and to look wildly around for some way to escape. Around and around, around and around the two raced, poor Hans puffing and blowing and his face getting redder and redder every minute with the chase.

Some men had been calsomining the wooden ceiling of the dining-room, but they had quit during meal time. At one end of the room stood two step-ladders with some long boards resting across them, and on these were a number of buckets of green calsomine. Hans had tried to get out through the doorway, but there were too many people crowded into it and he knew that if he got into that crowd Billy would surely catch him, but now he saw the step-ladders, and running to one of them started to climb up. Billy, however, was through with the cook and had taken after Hans again.

Hans, being so fat, was very slow in climbing a step-ladder, and he had only puffed his way up one step when Billy tried to help him up a little farther with his

head and horns after a big running jump. Smash! went the step-ladders. Crash! went the long boards. The buckets of green caldome flew everywhere. One of them tumbled down right over Hans' head like a hat that was a couple of sizes too large for him, and the green paint ran all over his face, down his neck and over his clothes. Another bucket of it landed in the middle of the dining-room table, splashing and splattering all over the clean cloth and over everybody who sat around it.

Billy, having done more damage than a dozen ordinary goats could hope to do in a lifetime, now made for the door, and the people there scattered very quickly to let him through. Billy himself had received his share of the green caldome and he was a queer looking sight as he darted out and went flying up the street, with an enemy after him in the shape of the fat cook, who had grabbed down a shot-gun from where it hung over the mantelpiece in the dining-room and had started out after him.

The cook was mad clear through and he was going to kill that goat. Frank, however, was close after the cook, and being able to run much the faster, soon caught up with him.

"Wait!" he panted, tugging at the tail of the cook's white jacket. "Wait! That's my goat!" he cried. "Don't you kill my goat!"

"Away with you, nuisance!" cried the cook, jerking loose from Frank and at the same time pushing him.

Frank fell over backwards, although it did not hurt him, and while he was getting to his feet the cook took careful aim at the flying goat and pulled the trigger.

CHAPTER IV

THE BURGOMASTER IS BUMPED

[image]

illy Mischief was lucky. In his excitement the fat cook had forgotten that the shotgun had not been loaded for five years. The cook was so angry that he nearly burst a blood vessel. Grabbing the gun by the barrel, he jammed it, as he thought, butt end on the ground. Instead of that, however, he struck his broad foot a mighty thump.

"Thunder and hailstones!" he screamed, and jerking his foot up he began to hop along on the other leg, making the most ridiculous faces while he did it. In spite of the pain that the gun must have caused the cook, Frank could not help but laugh, and he forgot all his anger at the push the man had given him.

"What's the matter?" asked Frank when he could catch his breath. "Does it hurt?"

The cook did not understand English but he felt that Frank was poking fun at him, and stopped his dance long enough to shake his fist at Frank. He wanted to say something very sharp and cutting to the boy, but he could not think of anything strong enough, so, after drawing his breath hard two or three times and screwing up his mouth with pain, he turned the gun muzzle end down, and, using it for a crutch, swung along back to the inn, muttering and mumbling all the way.

Frank laughed so hard that he had to sit down at the edge of the sidewalk a moment to hold his sides, but all at once he thought of his goat. There it was, going up the street, and although little more than a green and white speck now, Frank bravely took after it. He probably never would have caught it except that Billy, also being tired and feeling himself free from pursuit, stopped before a big house set well back from the street, on a wide, fine lawn.

Now the house in front of which he had stopped was the residence of the burgomaster, or mayor of the village, a very pompous fellow who thought a great deal of his own importance, and in the center of his lawn he had a fountain of which he was very proud. The water in the base of the fountain was clear as crystal and it looked very cool and inviting to Billy after his dusty run, and, besides, the paint on his back felt sticky. Without wasting any time about it, Billy trotted up across the nice lawn and jumped into the fountain for a bath, just as the burgomaster came out of his front door with his stout cane in his hand.

"Pig of a goat!" cried the burgomaster, hurrying down the walk and across the lawn. "Out with him! Police!" and he drew a little silver whistle from his pocket, whistling loudly upon it; then, shaking his cane in the air, he ran up to the edge of the fountain, the waters of which were turned a bright green by this time. Billy saw him coming, but, instead of jumping out of the fountain and running away, he merely splashed around to the far side of the basin. The burgomaster ran to that side of the fountain but Billy simply splashed around out of his reach. Then the burgomaster, up on the stone coping of the fountain, began to run around and around after Billy, the goat keeping just out of his reach and the burgomaster trying to strike him with the cane. At last, after an especially hard blow, the burgomaster went plunging headlong into the green water of the basin, where he floundered about like a cow in a bath tub.

Billy jumped on him and used him as a stepping stone out of the basin,

running back to the street just as Frank and a stupid looking policeman came running up from different directions. At first the policeman was going to arrest the goat, but Frank pointed to where the burgomaster was still flopping around in the fountain and the policeman ran to help the burgomaster, who was now dyed a beautiful green, face and hands and clothes, while Frank took Billy by one horn and raced back down the street with him. This was what Billy liked. He was a young goat, and, like other young animals, was playful, and he thought that Frank's racing with him was good fun, so he went along willingly enough, and when Frank let go of his horn, he galloped along beside his young master very contentedly.

Frank ran back to the hotel with his goat as fast as he could go, but when they drew near he saw a large crowd out in front and their carriage waiting for them, with the horses hitched and the driver sitting up in front. Mrs. Brown was in the carriage and Frank's father was in front of the crowd handing out money, first to one and then to the other. When Frank and his goat came up his father looked at the goat very sternly.

"See all the trouble that animal has made us!" he said. "I have had to pay out in damages nearly every cent of cash I have with me, and as there is no bank in this little village, my letter of credit is worth nothing here. We must hurry on to Bern as fast as we can, and I want you to leave that goat behind you. We can't bother with him any more. Come on and get in."

"But, father," explained Frank, "the goat did not know what he was doing."

"It does not matter," replied Mr. Brown. "There's no telling what kind of mischief he will get into next."

"But, father," again urged Frank, "if you've had to pay out all that money for him you might as well have the goat. There is no use of losing the goat and money, too."

"Get in the carriage," said Mr. Brown, sharply.

"But, father—" again Frank began to argue. This time, however, Mr. Brown cut him short, and, picking him up, put him into the carriage with a not very gentle hand. Then, climbing in himself, he ordered the driver to start.

Billy had taken his place back where he had been tied the other time, and he was surprised to find the carriage moving on without him. The cook, seeing that the goat was to be left behind, started forward to give the animal a kick, but Billy was too quick for him. Wheeling, he suddenly ran between the cook's legs and doubled him over. Just behind the cook stood Hans Zug, and as Billy wriggled out sideways from beneath the cook's feet, the cook tumbled back against Hans and both of them went to the ground. Billy stood and shook his head for a moment as if to double them up again before they got to their feet, but the sight of the retreating carriage made him change his mind and he ran after it with Hans and

the fat cook chasing him.

The carriage was not going very rapidly, and Billy, after he had caught up with it, merely trotted along back of the rear axle, so that when the carriage passed the burgomaster's house, Hans and the cook were not very far behind. They were bound to catch that goat and punish him for what he had done, although it is very likely that before they got through they would have sold him and kept the money. The burgomaster was still out in front, fretting and fuming, but the stupid policeman was gone. He had been sent down to the hotel to arrest the foreign boy and his goat, and he was too stupid to notice them, even with Hans and the cook paddling along behind. He had nothing in his mind but the hotel to which he had been sent. The burgomaster, however, recognized the green-tinted goat as soon as he saw him.

"There he goes!" cried the burgomaster. "Brute beast of a goat! Halt, I say!" Blowing his little whistle, he, too, so filled with anger that it made him puff up like a toad, started out after the carriage; and there they ran, the three clumsy-looking fat men, one after the other, puffing and panting and blowing, just out of reach of the goat.

[image]

There they ran, the three clumsy-looking fat men.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Frank were too intent on getting up the steep street and out of the town to notice what was going on behind them, but just now they came to the top of the hill and began to go down the gentle slope on the other side. The driver whipped up his horses, the goat also increased his pace, and away they went. The cook, seeing that the goat was about to escape, made a lunge, thinking that he could grab it by the tail or the hind legs, but as he did so his feet caught on a stone and over he went. Hans Zug, being right behind him, tumbled over him, and the fat burgomaster tumbled over both of them. The burgomaster was so angry that he felt he surely must throw somebody into jail, so, as soon as he could get his breath, he grabbed Hans Zug by the collar with one hand and the cook with the other.

[image]

BILLY SAW HIM COMING, SPLASHED AROUND TO THE FAR SIDE OF THE FOUNTAIN.

"I arrest you in the name of Canton Bern for obstructing a high officer!" he exclaimed, and the stupid policeman running up just then, he turned poor Hans and the cook over to him and sent them to jail.

All the hot, dusty afternoon Billy followed Mr. Brown's carriage, now up hill and now down hill, without ever showing himself to them. Whenever he thought of straying off into the pleasant grassy valleys and striking out into the world for himself again, he remembered that the Browns were going to America and that if he went with them he might see his mother again. He did not know, of course, that America was such a large place, so, while now and then he stopped at the roadside to nibble a mouthful of grass or stopped when they crossed a stream to get a drink of water, he never lost sight of them, but when he found himself getting too far behind, scampered on and overtook them.

[image]

Billy followed Mr. Brown's carriage.

It was not until nightfall that the carriage rolled into the city of Bern. Billy had never seen so large a city before and the rumbling of many wagons and carriages, the passing of the many people on the streets and the hundreds of lights confused and surprised him. He was not half so surprised at this, however, as Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Frank were to find Billy behind their carriage when they stopped in front of a large, handsome hotel. Frank was the first one to discover him.

"Oh, see, papa!" he cried. "My Billy followed us all the way from the village; so now I do get to keep him, don't I?"

Mr. Brown smiled and gave up.

"I'm afraid he's an expensive goat, Frank," was all he said, and then he gave Billy in charge of one of the porters who had crowded around the carriage.

"Wash the paint from this goat and lock him up some place for the night where he can't do any damage," he directed the porter.

Billy was glad enough to have the dry green paint scrubbed off his back and he willingly went with the porter to a clean little basement room, where he got a good scrubbing. Then the porter went into another room and brought him out some nice carrots with green tops still on them, and, leaving a basin of water for him to drink, went out and closed the door carefully after him. Billy liked the carrots, but he did not like to be shut up in a dark room, so he soon went all around the walls trying to find a way out. There was no way except the two doors and a high, dim window. He tried to butt the doors down but they were of solid,

heavy oak, and he could not do it. In a few minutes, however the porter came back for his keys, and the moment he opened the door Billy seized his chance. Gathering his legs under him for a big jump, he rushed between the man's legs and dashed up the stairs, out through the narrow courtyard and on the street. The porter, as soon as he could get to his feet, rushed out after him, but Billy was nowhere in sight and the poor porter did not know what to do. He did not dare to go back and tell Mr. Brown that the goat had gotten loose, because he would be charged with carelessness.

In the meantime Billy had galloped up the street and turned first one corner and then another, until he came to a street much wider and brighter and busier than any of the others. By this time first one boy and then another and then another had followed him, until now there was a big crowd of them running after him and shouting at the top of their lungs.

A large dog that a lady was leading along the sidewalk by a strap broke away from his mistress as soon as he saw Billy and ran out to bark at him. Billy lowered his head and shook it at the dog. The dog began to circle round him closer and closer, barking loudly all the while. A man driving a big dray stopped to watch them; the boys crowded round in a big ring; men came from the sidewalks and joined the crowd; a carriage had to stop just behind the dray, then another; a wagon coming from the other direction could not get through; and presently the street was filled from sidewalk to sidewalk, the whole length of the block, with a big crowd of people and a jam of vehicles of all kinds. Policemen tried to push their way through the crowd and tried to get the blockade loosened and moving on, but their time was wasted.

In the meantime Billy was turning around and around where he stood, always facing the dog which now began to dart in with a snap of his teeth and dart away again, trying to get a hold on Billy. The goat was too quick, however, and dodged every time the dog made a snap. He was waiting for his chance and at last it came. The dog, in jumping away from one of his snaps, turned his body for a moment sideways to the goat and in that moment Billy gathered himself up and made a spring, hitting the dog square in the side and sending him over against the crowd. Billy followed like a little white streak of lightning and, before the dog could get on his feet, had butted him again.

Such a howling and yelling as there was among that side of the crowd; Billy and the dog were now among them and they could not scatter much for there were too many people packed solidly behind them. The dog yelped as Billy butted him and began to run around and around the circle with Billy right after him. After they had made two or three circles, Billy overtook the dog and, giving him one more good one, jumped between the legs of the crowd and wriggled his way through among carriages and wagons, under horses and between wheels,

until at last he was free from the crowd.

Nobody at the outer edge noticed him getting away because they did not know what the excitement was and they were all pressing forward to see. Just as he left, somebody who could not understand what else could make such excitement cried, "Fire!"

The cry was taken up, and that made still more confusion. People began pouring into that block from every direction. More wagons and carriages came. Some one had turned in a fire alarm, and presently here came the fire engines from three or four directions at once, clanging and clattering their way to this crowded block. The city of Bern had never known so much excitement.

CHAPTER V

THE WOODEN GOAT

[image]

illy trotted contentedly on, liking all the noise and hubbub very much but not knowing that he was the cause of it all. Blocks away he could hear their shouting, but he did not care to go back there, for all of that. He was finding a great many things to interest him in the shop windows, which were all brilliantly lighted. Before one of these low windows he suddenly stopped. There, just inside the show window, was a big, brown goat. Billy did not know it, but this was a wooden goat, poised on its hind feet and ready to make a spring to butt somebody. The Swiss woodcarvers are the finest in the world, and they carve animals so naturally that one would think they were alive. If even human beings can be fooled, there was very good excuse for Billy's believing this to be a real, live goat, particularly as it had very natural looking glass eyes; besides, its head was separate and was cunningly arranged to shake a little bit from side to side.

Now it is a deadly insult for one Billy goat to stand on his hind legs and wag his head at another one. Billy Mischief for one was not going to take such insults as that, even though the goat that gave it to him was much larger and older than himself, so he backed off into the middle of the street and gave a great run and jump. Crash! went the fine plate-glass window! The sharp edges of the glass cut Billy somewhat and stopped him so that he landed just inside the window glass.

The other goat was right in front of him, still insultingly wagging its flowing beard at him so Billy gave one more spring from where he stood and knocked that goat sixteen ways for Sunday. It was the hardest headed goat that Billy had ever fought, and its sharp nose hurt his head considerably, almost stunning him, in fact, so that he stood blinking his eyes until the people in the store had come running up and surrounded the show window.

[image]

Gave a great run and jump.

Billy was still dazed when the manager of the store, a nervous little man with a bald head, hit him a sharp crack across the nose with a board. The pain brought the tears to Billy's eyes and still further dazed him. The manager hit him another crack but this time on the horns, and that woke Billy up. He looked back at the broken window through which he had just come but the crowd had quickly gathered there. There were less people inside, so suddenly gathering his legs under him, he gave a spring and went clear over the manager, kicking him with his sharp hind hoofs upon the bald head as he went over. The place was a delicatessen store and Billy landed in a big tub of pickles. He did not care much for pickles anyhow, so he quickly scrambled out of them, knocked over three tall glass jars that stood on a low bench, and turned over big cakes of fine cheese. The manager was right after him with the board and hit him two or three thumps with it.

Billy was just about to turn around and go for the little bald-headed man when he noticed at the far end of the store a round, plump man with his back turned to him. There seemed something familiar about his figure and the cut of his short little coat, and it flashed across Billy at once that here was his old enemy Hans Zug.

Paying no attention to the manager and his little board, he dashed headlong down the store for the plump man. Just as Billy had almost reached him, the man turned around. It was not Hans Zug after all, but Billy was going too fast to stop now. Anyhow, ever since he had known Hans he had taken a dislike to all fat men, so he dashed straight ahead. The man darted behind the counter and ran up the aisle, Billy close after him.

There never was a fat man in the world who ran so fast as this one. Everybody had cleared out of the aisle behind the counter to make room for them. Nobody wanted to get in the way of that heavy man and the hard headed goat. The man stepped upon a pail of fish, overturning it, jumped upon the counter

and was over in the center aisle, Billy right after him. Everybody in the store was packed in the center aisle, together with a lot who had come in from the outside when the excitement began, and they all made way for the fat man and for Billy. Women were screaming and men were shouting and laughing. The manager was still right after Billy with his little board and thumping him every now and then on the back, but Billy scarcely knew it, so interested was he in giving the fat man one for Hans Zug.

The man headed straight up the middle aisle for the door, but, looking over his shoulder, he found that Billy would overtake him before he got there, so he sprang over another counter, upsetting a pair of scales and some tall, open jars of fine olives. Billy was still right after him but this time the man fooled him by jumping back over the counter. Billy followed up that aisle to the end where he turned into the crowd, just as the fat man went out on the street. Here he upset two ladies and a policeman who was just coming in, and then took after the man who looked like Hans. He was flying down the street as fast as he could go. After Billy came the manager of the store and two of his clerks, and all of the boys that had congregated on the sidewalk.

Pell-mell they went, a howling, yelling mob, with the fat man and Billy in the lead. The man by this time was puffing like a steam engine and the sweat was pouring from his face in streams. His collar was wilted like a dish rag. He had lost his hat and one of his cuffs, and he could hardly get his breath.

Policemen, by this time, were coming running from every direction and one of them, who turned off a side street just then, thinking the fat man must be a thief, got right in his road and opened up his arms. The fat man, who had scarcely any strength left, fell right against the policeman who was also a very heavy fellow, and just at that time Billy overtook them and gave the man he was chasing all that was coming to Hans Zug. Down in a pile together went the fat man and the policeman. The policeman had not seen the goat and for a moment imagined that the fat man had jumped upon him and was trying to overpower him, so he pulled out his club and, though he was underneath, began, in a way that was comical, to try to pound the fat man.

They lay there, a struggling, wriggling mass, the policeman with his short arms trying to reach around the big round man on top of him in order to hit him some place. Billy Mischief had stopped and backed up to give his fallen enemy another bump, and was just in the air after his spring when the manager of the store caught his hind leg, and he also was dragged on top of the struggling two on the ground. The manager held to Billy's leg, however, and the crowd which had been following them closely now crowded around them. The manager scrambled to his feet, still holding the kicking Billy by the hind leg, and it would, probably have been all up with the goat if a big, strong man had not at that moment come

up and putting his great arms around Billy, jerked him loose. Billy squirmed and struggled, but it was no use. The big man held him tightly and began to run. The store manager got to his feet and started after them, followed by his two clerks, but the big strong fellow who was carrying Billy darted down an alley, then through another alley, and before the pursuers could see where they had gone, the man darted through the back gate of a high board fence with Billy, closed the gate after him, ran along the side of a great building which was blazing with lights, ran down some cellar steps, opened the door, went in, closed it after him, turned on a light and set Billy down.

"There, you fool goat!" exclaimed the man. "I'll wash the blood off of you and nobody will know that you have been out."

The big man was the porter and he had brought Billy back to the little basement room under the hotel. So ended Billy's first night in a big city.

All that night, all the next day and night, and all the following day, Billy was cooped up in that little basement room with no chance to get out, and with only Frank Brown and the porter to visit him twice a day. How he did fret. The porter kept him well fed and saw that he had good bedding and plenty of water, but he gave Billy no more chances to escape and see the city. He watched carefully as he opened and closed the door that the goat should not again scramble between his legs or butt him over. On the third evening, however, the porter forgot to completely close the door which led into the other part of the basement, and you may be sure that Billy lost no time in finding out what was in there. The room next to his led up into the kitchen and it was stocked with vegetables and all sorts of kitchen stores.

Billy was not very hungry, but he nibbled at everything as he went along, pulling the vegetables out of place, upsetting a barrel half filled with flour in his attempt to see what was in it and working the faucet out of a barrel of syrup in his efforts to get at the sweet stuff which clung to it. Licking up all of the syrup that he cared for, Billy went on to investigate another barrel which lay on its side not far away, and knocked the faucet out of it. This, however, proved to be wine and he did not like the taste of it at all, so he trotted on out of the store-room into the laundry, leaving the two barrels to run to waste.

[image]

Pulling the vegetables out of place.

Everybody in the laundry had gone up into the servants' hall for their suppers, and the coast was clear for Billy. They had just finished ironing, and dainty

white clothes lay everywhere. From a big pile of them that lay on a table, a lace skirt hung down, and Billy took a nibble at it just to find out what it was. The starch in it tasted pretty good, so he chewed at the lace, pulling and tugging to get it within easier reach, until at last he pulled the whole pile off the table on the dirty floor.

Hearing some steps then, he scampered out through the storeroom and into another large room where stood a big, brass-trimmed machine which he did not at all understand. It was a dynamo, which was run by a big engine in the adjoining engine-room, and it furnished the electric lights for the hotel. Two big wires ran from it, heavily coated with shellac and rubber and tightly-wound tape to keep them from touching metal things and losing their electricity. These crossed the basement room to the further wall, where they distributed the electric current to many smaller cables.

Billy sniffed at the two big cables at a point where they were very near together. They had a peculiar odor and Billy tasted them. He scarcely knew whether he liked the taste or not, but he kept on nibbling to find out, nipping and tearing with his sharp teeth until he had got down to the big copper wire on both cables; then he decided that he did not care very much for that kind of food and walked away. It was not yet dark enough for the dynamo to be started, or Billy might have had a shock that would have killed him.

Hunting further, he found over in a dark corner a nice bed which belonged to the engineer, and it looked so inviting that Billy curled up there for a sleep. When he awoke it was nearly midnight and there was a blaze of light in the basement. There was a strange whirl of machinery and he could hear anxious voices. Billy, of course, did not know that he had been the cause of it but this is what had happened:

When the electric current passes through a wire, the wire becomes slightly heated and stretches a little bit. In stretching, the two cables where he had chewed them bare, came near enough together to touch each other once in a while, and that made the lights all over the big building wink, that is, almost go out for a second, and the engineer was very much worried about it.

What interested Billy more, however, was a small, wire-screened room that stood near to him. Presently a big cage, brightly lighted, came down in it with a man and a boy. It stopped when it got down into the basement, when the man and the boy stepped out, going down into the engineer's room. They were the proprietor of the hotel and his elevator boy. Billy, as curious as any boy could have been, walked into the little cage to see what it was like. The sides of it were padded with leather, there were mirrors in it that made it a place of light, and there was a seat at the back end of it. At the front side near the door a big cable passed up through it, and to this the boy who ran it had left hanging a leather pad

with which he gripped the cable. Billy could barely reach it with his teeth and he pulled sharply on it. It would not come away so he hung his weight on it, and immediately the cage began to go up. Billy was in an elevator and he was taking a ride all by himself. It never stopped until it reached the top floor where a safety catch caught it. Luckily the door on the top floor had not been carefully closed, and Billy was able to slide it open with his horns and walk out into a narrow hall which had a thick velvet carpet upon it and from which opened many doors and other halls.

[image]

BILLY FELT HIS COURAGE COMING BACK.

Billy trotted along this hallway, liking the soft feel of the carpet underneath his feet. As he did so, all the lights about the building went out and everything was dark. The cables in the cellar had at last settled down so that they lay square across each other where Billy had chewed the covering off, thus making all the electric current which ran out of the machine on the one side come right back into it on the other, with the result of burning out the dynamo so that there could be no more lights from it that night. This did not worry Billy any. Light came in from the street at the far end of the hall where some white lace curtains fluttered in the breeze. It worried a great many people who were still awake in their rooms, however, and of course they opened their doors to see about it.

By this time Billy had reached the curtains and took a nibble at one of them, and, found that it was finished with the same starch, the taste of which he had liked so much in the laundry. He wanted it down where he could get a good bunch of it in his mouth, so he pulled hard, raising up on his hind feet and throwing his weight upon it. The curtain gave way at the top but it was not so convenient as he had expected, for the long, wide curtain came right down over his back. He tried to get out from under it and his horns ran through the open work. He tried to turn round and his hind feet ran through other open work places. He tried to back out of it and his forefeet got tangled in some more of it. The more he tried to get loose from his starched meal, the more tangled up he got, and at last, growing angry, he began to jump as high in the air as he could.

In the half darkness, he was a great white figure with a long trailing white robe behind him, and the first woman he met in the hall screamed like a steam calliope. Of course her screams brought others out into the hall and everybody, even the men, began to run when they saw this jumping white ghost coming toward them, every once in a while letting out a loud "baah!" Many ladies were

so frightened that when they came to their doors, instead of running into their rooms, they started down the hall ahead of Billy, shrieking and screaming at the top of their voices.

The noise only confused Billy the more. The more confused he grew, the harder he jumped and struggled to get out of the curtain, until at the very end of the hall, he came to a stairway and went down it head over heels to the next floor.

Here things were even worse than they had been on the top floor, for by this time the hubbub above them had brought everybody out of their rooms, and the crowd was already there. As soon as Billy scampered to his feet after his tumble and made another jump high into the air, they too began running and screaming.

Billy now had gotten into a series of halls that ran the whole length of the building and had a stairway at each end, so now he jumped and struggled his way along until he came to a stairway, tumbled down it, jumped back through another hall full of screaming people to another stairway, and so on until he reached the ground floor. Here the stairway opened into the great, marble-paved, main corridor of the hotel. This was just now thronged with men, all wanting to know why the lights were out and what all the uproar was about. Through these men Billy dashed like a hurricane, having now torn the curtains enough to let his legs have some action. One big fellow whom he upset fell on the long trailing end of the curtain, and the shock nearly tore Billy's horns loose from his head, but the curtain pulled in two and at last Billy was free except for a few stray shreds and small pieces that still clung to his legs and horns.

Now he could see where he was going, and, darting out of the side door, he ran back to where he remembered the cellar steps into the porter's room to be. The door was wide open and inside he found his friend, the porter, with a lantern, looking for him. The porter saw at once from the shreds of curtain that Billy had been into mischief again, but as before, he was afraid to say anything about it for fear somebody would find out that he had left the door of the store-room open, so he simply took the shreds of lace curtain off of Billy to carry away with him, and fixed Billy's bed nicely for the night.

"Bet you came from the Bad Place sure, goat-beast," said the porter, shaking his head.

CHAPTER VI

A CELEBRATION WITH FIREWORKS

[image]

he next morning, bright and early, the porter came down to Billy's room with a queer looking box made of heavy slats. One side of the box was off and the porter carried it in his hand. Setting the box down with the open side towards Billy, the porter put an extra bunch of carrots in it, and Billy, never having seen anything like this before, walked right in and began to eat his breakfast, upon which the porter quickly slapped on the side of the box and nailed it tight. Billy did not realize that he was trapped until the porter and another man whom he called lifted the box and began to carry it up the stairs. Then Billy was angry in earnest. He jumped and jerked as much as he could and nearly threw the men down-stairs by his bouncing. As soon as they got up on the level ground, however, the porter and the other man began to shake the crate as hard as they could, so that, in place of Billy doing the bouncing, he was being bounced until he had plenty of it and was glad to lie down on the floor of the crate and hold still, while he was being carried to a big dray that stood in waiting.

While it was being loaded on the dray, Mr. Brown and Frank came out in the courtyard to see him.

"Isn't he a beauty, papa?" said Frank. "And he behaves himself so nicely, too. I've been down to see him every other day and he's just as nice and quiet as he can be."

"I don't know," said his father, shaking his head. "I don't believe that a goat able to stir up as much trouble as he did back in the village where we bought him will be anything but a scamp goat to the end of his days. I'm really sorry that I bought him. It's going to cost a lot of money, too, to send him by express from here to Havre and to pay his passage over to America. I have a big notion to turn him loose."

When Billy heard that he was frightened, and, turning his solemn eyes around to Mr. Brown, he "baahed" as pitifully as he could.

"Just hear that, papa," said Frank, "he wants to go with us. He likes us."

"Oh, very well," said Mr. Brown. "But come, we must hurry up. We have only a few minutes to make our train."

As soon as Mr. Brown and Frank had walked away, the driver of the wagon cracked his whip, the horses started up, and Billy was rapidly taken to the depot. Here he was loaded into an express car, and in a few moments more was headed toward France at as swift a pace as the engine could pull the train. The

express messenger in the car, as soon as his work was done, lit a short black pipe and commenced teasing Billy. Reaching his hand between the slats, he suddenly poked Billy in the ribs, and Billy, already nervous from the rapid motion, jumped straight up off his forefeet. Of course his horns hit the top of the box and pained him. The man laughed at the funny motion and poked the goat again. This time, Billy, afraid to jump up, merely danced, and the man laughed aloud. Again and again he repeated his trick until the goat was nearly frantic. Billy tried to burst out the side of his cage so that he could get at the man, but the crate was too stout for him to do it any damage and he only hurt himself by trying, so after a while he gave it up.

At the next stop they made, however, the express agent, while he was taking on the parcels, slammed a heavy box on top of the crate. Billy heard the timbers crack and felt the box giving end-wise a trifle. For a moment he was afraid that the heavy box would break down his crate and squeeze him flat underneath it, but as soon as the train had started again the messenger moved the box into the far end of the car and Billy was delighted to find that at last the boards on one side of his prison were loosened. The messenger had laid aside his glowing pipe at this stop, but now he took it up again, although smoking was against the rules, and came over to tease Billy. He had no more than thrust his hand through than Billy lurched his body sideways as hard as he could against the boards, and out he tumbled.

He was on his feet as quick as a cat and made a jump at the man. The express agent dodged him and ran to the far end of the car, hunting wildly for something with which he might strike the angry goat. Billy was up to him before he had time to find anything, however, and chased him from one end of the car to the other. At last the man stopped in front of the big box that he had taken on at the last station, and waited for Billy to jump for him. When Billy jumped, he sprang aside and let the goat plunge head first into the side of the box, breaking open one of the boards and hurting his head considerably. By this time the man was at the other end of the car and laughing. Billy ran after him again, but this time he knew the man's ways. When he started to dodge back from the other end of the car, Billy also turned like a flash and was right after him. This time he got him and gave him a bump that sent the man sprawling headlong on the floor. As the man went down, his arm gave a jerk and his lighted pipe went through the hole that Billy had butted in the big box.

[image]

Dodged him and ran to the far end of the car.

The man was just scrambling to his feet when a big, blue ball of fire shot out of the side of the box and scooted along his back. Billy had wheeled to give the man another dose of his medicine, but just then a big ball of red fire hit him in the side and he, too, tried to hunt a corner. The box was full of fireworks that was being shipped for a lawn fete, and for the next few minutes there was the most exciting time that ever happened inside of an express car going at full speed.

Skyrockets and Roman candles, whistling bombs and silver fountains, flower-pots and pin-wheels filled the air, spitting and spluttering, popping about from one end of the car to the other, bouncing first off of the man and then off the goat. No place was safe. The side of the box was soon burst open by the force of the explosions, and the fireworks came tumbling out at greater speed than ever.

Both Billy and the express agent were hit until they were bruised and burned and sore all over. Billy had a great deal of his hair singed off and the express agent's face was as black as a coal-miner's. The smoke became so thick that they could scarcely see, and it smarted and blinded their eyes until the express agent thought to open the side doors when the rapidly rushing wind swept in and carried away most of the smoke.

Luckily the car did not catch fire, though some of the goods that were being expressed did. The agent had a pail of drinking water in the car and as soon as the fireworks were nearly burned out he ran around from one place to another using his water sparingly and beating out the fire wherever he could.

Billy, too, seemed to know that burning things were dangerous, for when a bundle of rugs began to smoulder he jumped on the burning places and stamped them with his feet until the fire was beaten out. The express agent saw him at this and he at once forgot his anger at the goat. Billy went scampering around after that, stamping out fire wherever he could find a coal. After all danger was passed and the express man had tidied up his car, he sat down puffing and looked at Billy.

"Well, Mr. Goat," said he, "we've had a busy time of it and I guess we'd better be friends. Don't you tell on me and I won't tell on you. I don't want to let anybody know that I was smoking a pipe anyhow. It's against the rules of the company."

"Baah!" said Billy, and that's all the talk they had about it. After that they had no further trouble except that the express agent tried to coax Billy back into his crate, but had to give it up as a bad job.

It was night when the train bearing Billy Mischief drew into Paris. Billy could not be coaxed or driven back into his cage, so, when the train stopped, the express messenger had another man come in to help him. Between them they managed, after a hard struggle, to get Billy in the crate, but as they were trying to fasten the lid on he burst out of it, jumped out of the car door, ran as hard as

he could and soon was safe from pursuit and alone in the streets of Paris.

With a natural instinct to hide from the men who wanted to put him in that close, uncomfortable box, he turned into the alley-ways and dark, narrow streets and for a long time ran on without meeting anyone. But this sort of thing was not very much to Billy's liking. He wanted to see all the excitement that there was, so by-and-by he turned into one of the broad, brilliantly lighted streets, where he trotted along sedately, minding his own business and looking around him curiously at the gayly dressed throngs. A great many people turned round to look after him and laugh, he trotted along so solemnly.

All this time there was great excitement at the railroad station. Mr. Brown had left word that his goat was to be held until the next night's train to Havre as he intended to spend a day in Paris, but the express department had no goat to hold, so the matter was reported to the police department, and within a few moments all the red-trousered gendarmes of Paris were looking for a mischievous white goat with freshly singed spots on his shiny coat.

One of these gendarmes, soon after he had received his instructions, found Billy and a big stray Tom cat eyeing each other with every intention of immediate war. Billy had never spoken to a cat before and so when he saw this strange animal on the street he walked straight up to it and said "baah!" He intended to mean something like our "Good evening. It's pleasant weather, isn't it?" but Billy's voice at best was not a very gentle one and his long horns looked threatening, so the big cat arched his back and bristled his hair and stuck his tail straight up. Billy did not know much about cats but he could easily see that this one meant fight, so he shook his head angrily. They were standing in front of one of the pleasant Paris sidewalk cafés and a great many ladies and gentlemen were seated at little round tables under the broad awning.

[image]

Billy and a big stray Tom cat eyeing each other.

Just as the gendarme recognized Billy by his singed coat, the cat let out an ear-splitting "meow!" and, jumping up, scratched Billy's face with the sharp claws of both his forefeet; then it sprang up on one of the empty tables and down on the other side. Billy, smarting with the pain, jumped after him, upsetting the chairs on the other side with a crash. The express department had offered a good reward to whoever should find Billy, so the gendarme took after the goat, overturning some more chairs. The cat darted here and there and everywhere among the little round tables and Billy right after him. The cat ran under a table

at which were sitting two gentlemen and two ladies, and Billy, now so angry that he did not notice where he was going, forced his way right after him, upsetting the table, spilling the glasses and bottles upon it into the laps of the ladies and making a tremendous noise. Table after table they overturned in this way.

Another gendarme, attracted by the hubbub, came up and saw Billy. He, too, gave chase, adding to the confusion. Everybody began to shove back their chairs. All of the people were either talking or laughing or screaming at the top of their voices. Waiters came running, and one of them, a little excitable man with a funny little black mustache, tried to head Billy off. All he got for it was a good bump right in the middle of his big white apron and he landed back against another waiter who was bringing a big tray full of glasses. The two of them went to the floor together in a noisy pile of tables and chairs, and Billy dashed right on over them. This time, the cat, which was bewildered by the crowd and had scarcely known which way to run, found an opening to the street. Having a clear track, he would easily have gotten away from Billy except that just at that moment a third gendarme saw the cat and the goat coming and jumped square in the road of them.

The cat had tried to dart around him but the gendarme's legs came right in his road, so the cat began to climb the gendarme, and Billy, coming up just then, made a dive head first at the cat, catching it just as the animal reached the gendarme's lower vest button. The gendarme sat right down with a grunt to think things over, while the cat sprang for the top of a high fence and was over with a whisk of his tail. Billy could not climb the fence so he ran back a piece and tried to butt it down, but he could not do it. By this time the gendarme he had knocked down was on his feet again, and two others came running up.

There were now five of the red-trousered little police soldiers after him, and things began to look very lively for Billy. They tried to surround him but he ran through them, and all five of them chased after him up the street. At nearly every block they were joined by another gendarme, so that before he had gone very far Billy was heading quite an army of French soldiers. To escape he turned down a dark street. They were digging a wide ditch across this dark street and the lights they had placed there as danger signals had been taken away by some mischievous boys. Billy, who could see well in the dark, perceived this ditch as he came to it and leaped lightly over it, but the excited gendarmes who were following him could not see it, and the whole crowd of them fell headlong in the ditch, which, fortunately, was not yet deep enough to hurt them much.

Billy turned now into another well-lighted street. Here again he found a gendarme who, as soon as he saw and recognized Billy, started out to stop him. He went like a streak between this fellow's legs. Now he began to wonder why all of these little fellows in the red trousers were such enemies of his, and when,

at the end of the block, he saw three of them standing in a row, he got angry. Shaking his head, he determined to give the big one in the middle the hardest bump he had ever given to anyone in his life. Lowering his head and shaking it, he went on as if he had been shot out of a cannon, and, as he drew near, gave a mighty jump and butted the big gendarme right in the stomach.

Alas for Billy! In place of the soft human figure that he thought he was butting, it turned out that the gendarme in the middle was printed in glowing colors on paper and pasted against a solid brick wall, as an advertisement for a play then performing at one of the theatres. The two gendarmes who had happened to stand alongside of it were real, however, so when Billy dropped back stunned from his hard jolt the two real gendarmes promptly arrested him, and it was a very sick and sorry goat that was shortly afterwards returned to the Express Department to be held for the Havre train.

CHAPTER VII

BILLY FINDS HIS MOTHER

[image]

oor Billy, forced back into his crate and nailed up again, began to think he did not like traveling very well. So far he had been in two cities and so far he had seen neither one of them by daylight, while everywhere he went he got hurt. All that night and all the next day, he moped in his crate with a sore head. On the following night he was bundled into an express car, and giving up in despair, lay down and went to sleep.

When he awoke it was daylight and he was being taken off the train in Havre where the Browns were to take the boat for Cherbourg and then for America. This was the first time that Frank had seen Billy since they left Bern and when he and Mr. Brown walked up to the crate after it had been taken off the train, Frank's heart was filled with pity. There were raw places on Billy's head, his fine shiny coat had the black marks of fire on it, and altogether he was as woe-begone and miserable a looking goat as ever was seen. Of course the Browns did not know anything of the adventures that Billy had been through, but Frank was a boy who did not like to see animals suffer and he was very angry.

"Just see, papa," he cried, "how they have abused my poor goat, shut up in that tight crate all this time! I'm sure he's not so bad a goat as you thought. He has been imposed upon. Please let me take him out of that crate and lead him by a rope. I know that he will come along nicely."

Billy "baahed" gratefully at this, and with some reluctance Mr. Brown allowed the goat to be taken out of the crate, let Frank secure a rope and tie him on behind the carriage which was to take them to their steamer.

It was not Billy's fault that the knot was an ordinary single bow hitch, and Billy did not know, when he nipped at the little end which stuck out, that he would loosen the whole knot and let himself free, but that is exactly what happened. For a time he trotted along nicely behind the carriage, but, as they reached the wharves, Billy saw a sight that filled him with eager interest. Near a big cattle boat was an enormous pen filled with goats which were soon to be loaded on the boat, and Billy at once ran down to this pen, which was about a block away. His heart beat high with hope as he neared it, and when he came close up to the bars he began to "baah" as loud as he could.

From inside the pen came an answering bleat. Billy's mother was there and she had recognized his voice! She crowded close up to the bars and soon she and Billy were affectionately rubbing noses through the little spaces between the boards and telling each other all that had happened to them since they had become separated. How Billy did wish that he could get inside the pen and go to America with her! He trotted around and around the high fence trying to find a weak place where he could break in, but the pen was built strong enough to make all such trials useless, so after every round Billy would have to come back to where his mother stood waiting and tell her of his failure. After he had made a third trial and came back up to her the wise old goat struck a happy idea.

"Just stand where you are, Billy," she said, "and by-and-by maybe one of the drivers will come this way and think that you belong in here with us. Then he will let you in and we will go on board together."

She had scarcely more than finished speaking when the lash of a sharp whip that had whizzed through the air hit Billy on the flank. Looking up, he saw a young man opening a gate for him to be driven through. The young man had no whip, however, so Billy turned in the other direction to see where the stinging blow had come from. Standing only a few feet away from him was a short, wide man with a whip in his hand, and Billy started for him with a snort.

[image]

The lash of a sharp whip.

"A thousand lightnings yet again!" exclaimed the fat man, who was none other than our old friend and Billy's old enemy, Hans Zug.

Hans knew better this time than to run when he had a way so much easier to escape. With all the speed that his pudgy body would let him have he climbed the bars of a high pen just in time to escape the hard bump that Billy jumped up to give him. Sitting on the top bar, Hans whirled his whip around his head and lashed Billy across the back. Wild with rage, Billy tried to reach his enemy, but he could not jump high enough, and Hans, laughing till he shook like a bowl of jelly, reached down and lashed Billy once more. Feeling that with all his strength he certainly ought to jump high enough to reach his tormentor, Billy tried to leap again and again, but every time all he got for his pains was a whack with the long whip.

At last, however, Hans made his big mistake. After whipping poor Billy until he was tired, Hans laughed so heartily that he fell backwards off the fence, and you'd better believe that Billy's mother made him welcome. She met him with her hard head while he was on the way down. Hans dropped his whip and grabbed for dear life at the fence, and he caught hold with both hands just at the right height to make a good mark for Billy's mother. That strong and sturdy old goat bumped him twice for every lash that he had given Billy, and every time she bumped him, Hans Zug grunted and yelled. He clawed his feet desperately to get a foothold on the bars to climb up, but every time he would get one foot placed Billy's mother would give him another terrific bump and he would lose his footing.

Billy, on the outside, ran backward and forward, hoping for Hans to get to the top and fall over on his side of the fence, and poor Hans was in an awful predicament. At last, seeing that Hans' comical struggles were not going to put him over where Billy could get at him, that anxious youngster ran to where the young man was still holding the gate open a little way, and ran inside, upon which the gate closed sharply behind him. He made his way rapidly among the other goats and quickly ran up beside his mother. He watched her motion, jumping when she jumped, and they both butted Hans together so hard that, with a mighty grunt, he went way up in the air, both his feet landing at once on a bar higher than the one he had been trying to catch.

[image]

They both butted Hans.

Billy and his mother both laughed, but they were so delighted and so ex-

cited that the next time they tried to bump Hans their horns clashed, they stumbled and fell back, and in that moment Hans Zug climbed up out of reach.

When he got to the top of the fence he lay down straddle of it, clinging with both hands and feet to the topmost bars for safety.

"Hasenpfeffer and pretzels!" groaned poor Hans, panting for breath, while the big drops of sweat rolled off his cheeks. "Thunderclaps and sunstrokes! Oh, my poor trousers!"

He had good reason to say that last, for the sharp horns of the two goats had ripped his trousers' legs until they were in shreds, and there were some sharp red marks on his legs, too. Billy Mischief and his mother only capered in joy. What did they care about poor Hans trying to get his breath on top of the fence? They were together, and together they were going to America!

It was not long until the gate of the pen was opened and all the goats were driven out through a fenced runway across a fenced gangplank and through a wide, dark doorway into the hold of the cattle ship. Billy and his mother found themselves in a long, low compartment, dimly lighted by little round windows close under the ceiling. The goats were driven up to the forward end of the boat and put on both sides of the center aisle, behind strong, high bars. By this arrangement Billy and his mother were separated, in spite of all they could do to keep together, and could only stand close to the bars looking sorrowfully at each other across the aisle. They soon quit this, however, because of a new interest. Some surprising passengers came to join them. First, six big camels were driven in, two by two, and fenced off next to the goats; then a herd of small elephants followed these and then came a vast number, of snarling, growling animals in strong cages; lions and tigers and other fierce wild beasts. An American circus that had been traveling in Europe was on its way back home.

At last the ship was loaded and began to move out of its slip toward the ocean. The wild animals had been nervous and noisy before, but as soon as the ship began to move they became still more excited. The elephants trumpeted, the tigers snarled, the hyenas set up their screeching cry, the lions roared. It was a perfect pandemonium of shrieks and howls and yells, and for the first time in his life Billy trembled with fear. It was not for long, however. Billy was a brave goat and a smart goat, and he knew that so long as those fierce animals stayed in their cages they could not hurt anything. The only thing that bothered him was that he remembered how he had broken out of his own crate in the railroad train.

This was the worst trip Billy ever made. The animals were never quiet for more than a minute at a time. There would be a lull when none of them would make any noise, and Billy would lie down, hoping for a moment of rest. All at once some animal would grunt, the next one would grumble, the next one would

growl, the next one would snarl, and by that time they would all be at it; then suddenly the hyenas would begin. Then one of the fiercer animals would begin to roar and the old hubbub would begin all over again, winding up always with the lions' deep and terrifying "Hough! Hough! Hough!"

Billy got tired of it by-and-by, and thought that he would like to go away into some quiet corner and rest. A great many of the goats had been thinking the same thing, and one after another they had been trying the stout boards, some of them attempting to push them out or break them and some trying to pry them loose with their stout horns. None of them, however, had the patience and strength and determination of Billy, and at last, down in one corner, he found a board that did not seem so strongly fastened as the others, and on this board he began prying cautiously with his horns. Billy would pry carefully until he was tired, then lie down and rest a while, then go at it again. For nearly an hour he worked at it and at last he was rewarded by having the board come loose. He squeezed out through it and the board sprang back into place. Another goat tried to follow but he did not know the trick, and in place of pulling with his horns, pressed against the board, so Billy was the only one to get loose.

Billy trotted between the long rows of animals, being very careful to keep in the exact center of the aisle and as far away from all of them as he could. One of the elephants reached out his long trunk and caught Billy by the tail, but it was only a playful nip, and, after jerking Billy back a little piece, the elephant let him go. Billy looked around at the big gray beast and saw by his twinkling eyes that it was only in fun, so, kicking up his heels, he trotted on with a friendly "baah!" The lions and tigers and the leopards snarled and howled at him as he went past, while the hyenas laughed—if the terrible noise they make can be called laughing.

[image]

One of the elephants reached out his long trunk.

Down toward the middle of the ship was a steep stairway up to an open doorway that led out on the deck, and up this Billy climbed with ease. It was delightful, after that close, stuffy place, to stand on the cool, breeze-swept deck. The steamer was making good headway now and all around was the ocean; the shore was only a low, hazy line, away out there at the edge of the water. Billy was interested in the gaily colored circus wagons, some of which, crowded out of the lower hold, were grouped on the big, bare after-deck, and Billy did not notice, until up very close to him, that a big, fat man was leaning over the rail. It was Hans Zug, and although the ship was riding easy and the ocean was very calm,

Hans was already beginning to feel very sorry that he had not staid on solid land.

"Ach, I am so sick!" groaned poor Hans. "I wish I could die, yet! I should feel me so much better!"

"Now it would be a kindness to cheer Hans up a little bit and make him forget his misery," thought Billy. Lowering his head and backing off a little way, he gave a run and bumped Hans a good one which he felt he still owed him for the whipping of the morning. He struck harder than he knew, and Hans, a big part of his heavy body already lying far out over the rail, got such a boost that he lost his balance and went bumping down the side of the ship into the water.

"Man overboard!" shouted the first mate, who was up on the bridge, and immediately the ship was in great commotion. Sailors came tumbling up out of another stairway and Billy thought it was time for him to make himself scarce. He did not care to go back into the hold, so he ran in among the circus wagons and hid. The ship stopped and turned round. A small boat was hastily lowered and the sailors in it began rowing like mad to where Hans had gone down. Poor Hans did not know how to swim, but when a boy he had learned to float, and now, turning on his back, he kept his hands down to his sides and his face turned up. When the sailors got there with the row boat his fat round face was bobbing along above the little waves like a pumpkin in a pond.

"Ach, those dear mountains at home!" wept Hans, when they pulled him into the boat. "How I should wish I was back in Switzerland again. I said it that I wanted to die, but it iss not, aindt it? Thank you, gentlemens! Thank you!"

A little rope ladder was let down and Hans, all dripping, his clothes clinging around him and making him look like a wet balloon, climbed up on the deck.

"Where is that fire and brimstone goat?" he cried, having now had time to get over his fright and his seasickness enough to be angry. "When I find him I throw him in all the ocean what iss! Yes!"

Billy kept as still as he could, but one of the sailors saw his stubby tail and pointed him out. Then the chase began. Billy dashed around and around the deck with Hans and the sailors close after him, and at last, when they were almost upon him, he came to the open door of the hold. Seeing no other way to escape, he was about to dash down this and had already placed his forefeet on the topmost stair, when he saw two great greenish-yellow eyes close to him, staring up at him out of the dimness. One of the tigers had broken loose from his cage

and had come slinking up the stairs, and Billy stood face to face with him!

CHAPTER VIII

AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE TIGER

[image]

Billy felt his heart beat hard and fast, and for a moment his knees trembled under him. He backed slowly up to the solid deck and the great flaming eyes slowly crept up after him. Billy still backed away. The men who had been chasing him were now very close, but one of them saw the tiger's head coming up on the deck, and he yelled to the others, who immediately pressed back. As soon as he felt the firm deck floor under him and could see the animal's head as well as his eyes, Billy felt his courage coming back to him. He knew that he had to stand and fight. He felt that he could never run fast enough to get away from this powerful animal, and that before he could even turn and start to run the tiger would be upon him.

Slowly Billy backed away with his sharp horns lowered, and slowly the tiger came out on the deck, crouched down until his body almost touched the boards, his tail, full of hard muscles, waving slowly like a red and yellow snake. The men were panic-stricken and scattered in all directions, seeking places of safety wherever they could find them. Poor Hans Zug was the slowest of all. In his fright he stumbled over his own feet and fell three times to his hands and knees in trying to get away, and then he tried to hide himself behind a slim iron rod that ran up from the deck to the bridge, for he was too much paralyzed with fear to pursue his hunt any further for some safe hiding-place.

The tiger was not in a very big hurry about making his spring. He did not like the looks of Billy's horns, although he knew that he was much stronger and more powerful than the little white goat. Still they came on, Billy backing away and the tiger creeping toward him until they were almost where Hans Zug stood trembling so hard that his teeth chattered. Suddenly the tiger, with a swift spring, went up in the air, intending to jump clear over Billy's long horns and land upon his back, but Billy, himself as watchful and as careful as the tiger had been, sprang aside just as the tiger jumped, jerking his head sharply upward as the tiger went

over him. One of his horns caught in the tiger's under side and ripped a big gash in him. Billy immediately sprang in the other direction, and the tiger, now fiercer than ever, wheeled quickly. This time his sharp claw caught Billy's shoulder as Billy jumped aside, tearing a big patch of Billy's hide loose. The pain staggered Billy and made him feel faint, but he knew it would never do to give up. The animal men now came running up from the rear hold, where some of the other animals were being fed, and one of them had a pistol, but the two animals were jumping about so swiftly that he could not be sure of shooting the tiger without shooting Billy, so he waited to see how the fight would turn out.

Time after time the tiger tried to get hold of Billy, but the goat was too quick for him, though each time they met one or the other of them got a mark. At last Billy felt that he was nearly whipped. The two animals were now facing each other for another spring. The tiger, too, was suffering from the last hook that Billy had given him but he was fresher than the goat. Billy swayed on his feet. The light seemed to turn into darkness before his eyes and he felt as if he were sinking down, down on a soft bed, but he kept his head bent in the tiger's direction. He felt, rather than saw, the tiger spring once more, and in spite of his weakened condition he braced himself up and gave one more sharp, hard toss of his strong neck. His horn caught the tiger right behind the front shoulder blade and pressed deeply in. This time he had found a vital spot. The tiger rolled over on his side, and, after a quiver or two, lay still. He was dead, but Billy did not know it, for the brave little goat had sunk to the floor with the tiger and lay as motionless as his dead enemy. The animal men came running up first, the one with the revolver in front of the others. Holding his revolver pointed straight to where he knew it would reach the animal's heart, he approached as slowly and cautiously as a cat creeping up to a mouse hole, felt the tiger's side and pronounced him really dead. Two of the men dragged the tiger away and the others crowded around the poor goat. At first they thought that he too was dead, but when they examined him they found that his heart was still beating slowly. One of them ran to bring water and another to get bandages.

When Billy woke up his wounds had been nicely washed, ointment had been applied to them, and bandages were carefully bound over them. The men were patting him gently and saying what a fine, brave goat he was and what a splendid fight he had made of it, and one big gruff voice, which Billy found out afterwards belonged to the captain, said:

"Well, this goat is not to be tied up any more. He shall have the freedom of the ship."

Billy moved his legs feebly and tried to get up, but not feeling quite strong enough yet, he sank back and found that his head was lying on somebody's knee. And now came the biggest surprise of all, for when Billy looked up to see who it

was, here it was Hans Zug who was holding him!

"Ach, such a fine little goat, yet," Hans was saying, patting Billy's neck gently, while the great tears rolled down his round cheeks. "Such a brave little goat, yet. Thunder weather! He can butt me overboard once again if he should to like it! Aindt it?"

[image]

*"WELL, OLD FELLOW, IF BROKEN BONES ARE ALL, WE CAN
FIX THOSE."*

Billy was the hero of the ship. It did not take him long to get well, and on the third day he was trotting around the deck as unconcerned as if he had never had a fight in his life. His bandages were off and only a little, red-edged scar on his shoulder remained to show how bravely he had fought the tiger. Hans Zug never was through praising him, but nevertheless, every time he went to speak to Billy he came toward him from behind, for Billy still had a way of shaking his head at him that made Hans feel like climbing a ladder. On the first day that he could go around unbandaged, nobody seemed to be able to pat Billy enough, but, true to his name, Billy could not long stay out of mischief.

Soon tiring of pacing the long decks, he went below in the cook's galley and began to hunt for dainties. He had learned by this time that people were very curious about things to eat. When they saw a goat helping himself, something was almost sure to happen to the goat and he could not understand it. You see, he could not know that everything belonged to somebody. All that he knew about it was that if you saw anything you wanted, and was lucky enough or strong enough or quick enough to get it, it was all right. Accordingly, he watched the cook, and when the cook's back was turned Billy grabbed a fine, big bunch of celery and trotted off with it. When he got in a dark corner he ate it and it was so fine that he wanted more. He went back into the cook's galley but could not see any. Then he went into a little, dark room that opened into it and found himself in a place full of the nicest things to eat he had ever seen in one pile. There were carrots and radishes and peas and fine, crisp, tender lettuce and all sorts of green stuff which had been brought aboard for the captain's table. Billy ate until he could hold no more, and then he happened to think that his mother would like some of that nice celery, so he picked out an extra fine bunch and trotted off with it. No one saw him and he made his way down into the hold where his mother was crowded in the pen with the other goats. He gave her the celery and while she was eating it he told her all that had happened to him and how much the

ship's crew thought of him, and how even Hans Zug had become his friend.

"My, that was fine!" said his mother as she finished the last of me celery. "It is the nicest thing I have had to eat since we left home."

"Ho!" said Billy. "That is nothing. We cabin passengers have some of the finest things in the world to eat. What you need now is a bunch of tender lettuce to finish off with, and I'll go get you some," and he hurried off, leaving his mother very proud of his rise in the world.

Billy trotted boldly through the cook's galley, and the cook, who knew all about Billy's fight, tossed him some carrot tops as he passed. Billy was not at all hungry, but he ate the carrot tops just out of politeness, then he went on into the store room and picked out a nice big head of lettuce for his mother. He was just going out of the cook's galley with it when the cook turned round and saw him. Right away the cook forgot what a hero Billy was, and angry that Billy had taken some of his precious lettuce, cried:

"Hey! Drop that, you bobtailed thief!" and threw a skillet at Billy. It hit the goat in the side with a thump, but Billy never stopped. He only ran on until he had gained the hold where his mother was and had given the nice, cool lettuce to her, when he turned round to hurry away.

[image]

Threw a skillet at Billy.

"Wait a minute, Billy!" she called after him. "I want to talk to you."

"I haven't got time," Billy called back over his shoulder. "I've got a little business with the cook."

When Billy got back into the cook's galley, the cook was over in a corner reaching up for some baking powder that he kept on a high shelf. He was stretched out just right for a good bump and Billy gave it to him.

"Great Scott!" cried the cook, and jumped up until his head bumped the shelf. He quickly turned around but Billy had backed off and now jumped for him again. This time the man put out his hands and caught Billy by the horns firmly enough to keep the bump Billy gave him in front from smashing him. Billy, however, jerked away and backed off for another bump, and the man, jumping up, grabbed the shelf with the foolish notion of climbing up out of range. He could not have been in a better position for another bump behind, so Billy gave him that one and he dropped loose from the shelf, yelling for help with all his might. In dropping, he turned around, and this time Billy landed with all his weight right in the middle of the man's appetite.

By this time the cook had lost his head so that all he could do was to spread his arms and legs like an old-fashioned, jointed doll and yell for help. Several men came running down the ladder and the foremost one was Hans Zug with his whip. Hans had just been over to straighten out a fight in the goats' pen, and when he saw one of his goats butting the cook, he never stopped to think that it was the same Billy he had been petting and praising, so he hauled off and gave Billy a mighty slash with his sharp leather whip. Billy got through with the cook in a hurry!

So Hans Zug, who had been following him around and patting him on the back and calling him nice goat and fine goat and brave goat, was ready to start in again, was he? Well, Billy would show him! Like a flash he wheeled and was after Hans.

"Donnervetter!" cried Hans, and turned to run.

The men who had followed him down the steps were in the way, however, and Hans ran square into them. A second later Billy ran into Hans with enough force to send him sprawling among the men, and four or five of them went to the floor grunting, with Hans on top. Before Billy could back off for another stroke Hans turned quickly and was just in time to grab Billy by the fore legs. At the same moment the cook caught Billy by the hind legs, and these two carried him upstairs to the deck.

"Over he goes," yelled the angry cook.

"Sure!" said Hans. "He done it to me. Ein! swei! drei!"

As Hans counted his one, two, three in German, they gave three mighty swings, and with the last one they let go.

Splash! went Billy into the sea!

CHAPTER IX

ALONE IN AN OCEAN STORM

[image]

oor Billy! Once more he had lost his mother! He looked for the ship to turn round and send out a boat as it had done when Hans fell overboard, but it did nothing of the sort. Instead, it steamed straight ahead. In the excitement nobody had noticed that Billy had been thrown into the water.

The cook got a life preserver and threw it over after Billy, thinking it a good joke, then the cook went below and Hans stood at the stern railing shaking his fist at the poor goat. Billy swam as long and as hard after the boat as he could, but it was no use; he could not begin to keep up with its great speed. Presently, however, he came to where the life preserver floated. It was a big circular one and Billy put his front paws upon it. His weight made it tip on edge and Billy was surprised and delighted to find that it held him up in the water, making the work of swimming much easier. In trying to get his legs further into it he slipped once or twice, but finally in his struggles his head and horns went through it, and, after swimming and wriggling a little bit, he got his front shoulders through and there it clung round him, holding him up splendidly. It was too small to pass backwards over his body, and it could not get off over his head on account of Billy's horns.

It was a lucky thing for Billy that this happened, for that night a terrific storm came up. The wind shrieked and howled, the lightnings glared, the thunders rolled, and great foam-capped waves, some of them nearly as high as a house, broke over Billy, one after another, nearly drowning him and sometimes almost crushing him by their weight.

In all his life Billy had never passed such a terrific night as this, but through it all the big life preserver held him up and carried him safely through. Many times there seemed to come a lull in the storm and Billy began to breathe easier, thinking that he would get a little rest, but the storm would break out again with new fury each time, until, when morning came, the poor goat was battered and bruised and nearly dead. With the dawn, however, the storm calmed down. The skies began to clear, the waves grew smaller, and the wind, shifting by-and-by to the opposite direction from that in which it had been blowing all night, beat back the waves and smoothed them down until by ten o'clock the ocean was quiet, only ruffled by gentle swells over which Billy and his life preserver bobbed in comfort, although he was very tired and beginning to get hungry.

Ever since the sky had cleared he had seen smoke away off where sea and sky seemed to join. Billy knew what smoke meant. Wherever there was smoke there were people, and wherever there were people there was food, so he started toward it, swimming a little bit and resting a long while between times. The smoke grew blacker and presently he saw a little speck under the smoke. It grew larger and larger, and by-and-by he was able to make out that it was a big ship coming in his direction. Poor Billy swam harder than ever then, and fortunately for him the ship was coming almost straight toward him. Still more fortunately, the captain, sweeping the sea with his glass, made out the life preserver holding up something white, and immediately thought it must be a woman in a white dress. He altered the direction of the ship slightly so that it came nearer to Billy,

and had ordered a boat to be lowered before he made out that it was only a goat, otherwise he might have passed on by. The boat, however, was already lowered, so he let it go.

[image]

The ship was coming almost straight toward him.

The ship was a big passenger steamer, and by this time scores of passengers were thronging to the rails to see what the excitement was all about, and when the boat was drawn up, Billy, a comical looking sight with his big life preserver around him, was placed on the deck. A boy among the passengers at once ran forward with a shout.

"Why, it's my Billy goat!" he cried. "Papa, come and look! See the single marks on his back?"

Billy "baahed" joyfully. He rather liked Frank and was very glad that he had found a friend. The captain himself, interested and amused, had joined the crowd by this time.

"Your goat?" he asked Frank, in amazement. "Do you always keep your goats out at sea in life preservers?"

"Not always," laughed Frank. "In fact, this is the only goat I have. We lost him in Havre. The last I saw of him he was tied to the back of our carriage with a rope. When we got down to the wharf he was gone. Then we went down to Cherbourg, where papa had some business, caught your ship the next day and here we are. How Billy ever got here from Havre, I don't know, but here he is and he's my goat."

"Well, according to the law of the sea," said the captain with a twinkle in his eye, "he is salvage now and belongs to the men there who picked him up. Of course I have a share in the salvage too, but I'll take a cigar for mine."

Mr. Brown, laughing, gave him the cigar and then gave the sailors some money, and Billy was taken below to a large, white, clean room where some fine blooded horses were hitched in roomy stalls. Here he was given a big bowl of warm milk and a bed of clean straw, both of which he was very glad to get. As soon as he had drunk the bowl of milk, he felt so good and warm that he lay down and went sound asleep.

When Billy woke up he saw something that made him gasp with surprise, and at first he thought he must be dreaming. Right beside him, sleeping peacefully, an empty bowl that had contained milk just in front of it, lay another goat. It was his mother! Billy was so overjoyed that he did not know what to do. He

licked her face gently and when she opened her eyes he capered around till the horses in the stalls near by thought that he must have gone crazy. Billy's mother was no less happy and when they had calmed down Billy told her how Hans Zug had thrown him overboard, how he had suffered through the storm and how the ship had picked him up.

"You were lucky, I guess, that he threw you over," said his mother. "We got into that same terrible storm and our ship struck upon the rocks and broke to pieces. I do not know what became of the other goats or of Hans Zug. Of course all the circus animals in the cages went down. I was swimming about in the water when some sailors in a boat grabbed me and took me with them. They said that they had not had time to get provisions and that they might have to eat me. I would have jumped overboard when I heard this but they had already forced me under one of the seats in such a way that I could not scramble out. The storm was still upon us and the waves spun us around like a top, and two or three times we thought we were gone. By morning, however, the storm calmed down and we were safe, although some of the men had been swept overboard by the big waves that broke over us. All day long we drifted about. One of the men had brought along a box of crackers and another one had got some dried beef. A keg of water was already in the boat so that there was nearly enough for everybody for breakfast, and when the noonday meal came, one of the men wanted to kill me, but the others would not let him. They wanted to save me, they said, until the next day. It was nearly dusk when this ship saw us and stopped to take us on board. If this ship had missed us I suppose that to-night would have been my last."

Billy shuddered.

"Well," said he, "at any rate we are together again, and this time I suppose that we will stay together. If you are rested enough come on and let us look around the ship."

First the two goats trotted side by side past the big clean stalls of the horses and all around the room they were in, then they made their way to the stairway that led up to the deck. They were about to climb this when Billy spied the open door of a little closet, scarcely large enough to put his head in. Full of curiosity, he went up to it and stuck his nose inside.

"Oh, come here, mother!" he suddenly cried. "Here is a rope with a very strange taste. I had some of it in a big hotel in Bern and I did not care for it very much, but it has such a queer taste that you must eat some of it."

The rope Billy meant was not exactly like the ones he had chewed in Bern, for those were single big wires with a covering to keep them from touching. This rope in the little closet was not a solid one but was a big bundle of tiny wires, each one covered with a queer tasting sheath. The wires ran from the pilot's

room and the captain's room to the engineer's room and to the other working rooms of the ship, and, by the use of little push buttons were intended to direct the movements of the mighty floating palace.

"Why, this is quite a treat," said Billy's mother, taking a big bundle of the wires in her mouth. Another little closet just like this one stood alongside of it and Billy saw that the door of this was also slightly ajar. He pushed it open with his nose, and inside he found another bundle of wires. These ran from the passengers' cabins to the steward's cabin, and the electrician had just been fixing them, carelessly leaving the doors unfastened.

"Why, here's another bundle! I'll try some of them myself," remarked Billy, so both the goats got to work at once.

Billy's mother had only chewed at her rope of wires a little while when the coverings began to come off and the wires to touch. Instantly things began to happen. The first wires that touched gave the engineer a signal to stop and instantly the mighty ship began to slow up. Within a short time it had come almost to a standstill and the first mate, up in the pilot room, immediately took down his telephone and called up the engineer.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing, sir," said the engineer. "You gave the signal to stop and we stopped."

"I did no such thing," said the mate. "At any rate, start up again and we'll investigate."

Just then came another signal, and with a great jangling of bells the big engines began to turn and the ship wheeled square around. There was another jangling of bells, and, shaking with the force of the mighty engines, the ship began to pick up speed, headed straight back for France. Again the first mate called up the engineer.

"What are you doing?" he asked. "Are you crazy? Why have you tacked about?"

"Had orders, sir," said the engineer.

"You lay her northwest by north at once. Put the second engineer in charge and report to me immediately."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the engineer and started up to present himself to the first mate.

The ship was swung back on her proper course and had gone straight a little way, when all at once the whistles began to blow and bells to ring, and with this the captain came running up to the pilot room. The first mate already had his telephone off the hook and was screaming down to the engineer.

"What are you doing, sir?" he demanded. "I thought I told you to report to me at once!"

"This is the second engineer, sir," repeated the voice. "The chief engineer has just gone up to report to you, sir."

"Well, why did you blow a landing whistle out here in mid-ocean? Can't you obey orders? Are you crazy, too? Are you all crazy?"

"I had the signal and obeyed orders, sir," said the second engineer.

By that time the captain came bursting into the pilot room, while Billy Mischief and his mother were chewing wires.

"Are you a plum idiot?" demanded the captain. "Can't you be left in charge of this ship? Have you been drinking? First you stopped the ship, then you put back for France, then you turn again, and now you blow a landing whistle."

At that moment the fog horn began to sound, although the sea was almost as bright as day with a round moon shining overhead and the stars studded thick in the sky.

The captain himself grabbed the telephone.

"I want to know who's doing all this!" he demanded. "Who's in charge there?"

"I am, sir; the second engineer," answered the voice.

"Put your assistant in charge and report to me in the pilot room at once."

Just then the chief engineer came in.

"What does all this mean?" roared the captain.

"I don't know, sir," said the engineer. "I got signals to stop, then to put about, then to come back on the course, all of which I did."

"I don't want you to attempt to put this on to me," said the mate. "I haven't touched a button for an hour. There has been no necessity. We have been going straight on our course."

[image]

"SHAKE HANDS," SAID BOBBY.

All this while the steward had been going nearly crazy. The bells were ringing from every cabin on the ship, and the waiters were running about the place like mad. First one bell, then another would ring, and always when the waiters went to those cabins they were told that nothing was wanted and were abused for waking people up. That part of it was Billy Mischief's work and he did as much to put the ship in an uproar as had his mother. The sound of the fog horn and the stopping and starting of the ship, the whistling and the clanging of the bells, kept everybody awake that had been awakened by the waiters, and hastily throwing on clothing, the passengers began to hurry out on to the decks

to find out what was the matter.

The steward came hunting the captain, right after the second engineer.

"This ship is bewitched," he cried, wringing his hands, and he told the captain of all the trouble he was having with false alarms.

Everybody looked at everybody else as if they thought that the others had all better be in the asylum, and it was just at that moment that Billy Mischief, down in the hold, turned to his mother and said:

"Oh, come on! I don't like this stuff very well, anyhow," and leaving the little closets to themselves, they trotted innocently upstairs not knowing all the trouble they had made.

CHAPTER X

THE GOATS BECOME A FIERY DRAGON

[image]

ot stopping on the lower deck, they went on up until they reached the main saloon deck. It was ever so much wider and nicer than the deck of the cattle ship, and just now it was crowded with passengers who had hastily dressed themselves and had come out on deck to see what was the matter with the ship and its queer actions.

"Oh, there's my goat!" said a boy who was standing at the rail just at the head of the stairway.

It was Frank Brown and, walking up to Billy, he patted him on the neck. A bright faced young man who was with Frank also stooped over and patted Billy.

"Whose goat is this other one?" he asked, turning to pat Billy's mother, who, being jealous like most animals, crowded up to get her share of the attention.

"I don't know," said Frank. "It was picked up from a wreck; but the two goats seem to be very chummy."

Frank was looking along the deck at the long row of excitable passengers, and suddenly he began to laugh.

"I wish we could play some sort of a trick on all these people," he said.

The young man's face lit up with a smile as he gazed at the nervous and

worried looking passengers, then all at once he laughed aloud.

"I've got it!" he cried. "Bring your goats and come into my cabin quickly. It's just inside here."

So Billy, willingly enough, was led by the horns into the young man's cabin, and his mother followed after. As soon as they had reached the cabin the young man rang the bell, and when the waiter came to him the young man gave him a check and sent him after a trunk which was soon brought up. Opening it, the young man took out an enormous dragon's head made of papier maché and painted in bright colors. It was a fierce looking head and almost filled the trunk. It had a great, double row of gleaming white teeth, red lips, a red tongue that worked out and in, immense saucer-like eyes and winged ears, while a "scary" looking spine started from the top of its nose and arched high over its neck. The balance of the trunk was filled with a long, thin, sack-like arrangement which was painted green and red and yellow, and which was to represent the dragon's body.

"You know I told you," said the young man, "that I am the property man of a big spectacular show company, and this is a new dragon that I have just had made. It is intended for men to get inside of to walk it across the stage. We'll put the goats in it and start them along the deck, and then we'll see some fun."

Neither Billy nor his mother wanted to get inside that strange looking thing, but the two boys suddenly slipped the big head over Billy and there was no way for him to get out. Then, catching Billy's mother by the horns, they dragged her to the second slit and put her inside. The young man quickly straightened up the ridges and the long, scalloped, folding side fins of the body, while Frank held the head tightly and let the goats prance inside. The young man opened the door and looked out. The passageway was clear and they soon gained the deck. The young man lit a match and stooped down for a moment. Instantly the big eyes were lit up with red. Red flames came out of the tip of the tongue and smoke rolled out of the nostrils.

They headed the dragon up the deck before anybody noticed it, and as soon as the goats were let go they started to run in their efforts to get away from this heavy, dark thing that surrounded them. The young man put his hands to his mouth, and making a megaphone of them, gave a tremendous roar. Instantly everybody looked, and when they saw this great, red-eyed and fire-breathing monster coming toward them there was a grand scamper. A great many of the passengers thought that a sea serpent had got aboard and they did not care to see it any closer. Away they went, making as much noise as a Sunday school picnic, with the fiery dragon right after them. Around and around the deck they chased and the two poor goats were as scared as any of the women on board.

It had been twice around the deck when the red powder that the young

man had lighted in its tongue began to die out, so the young man grabbed it just as it passed the place where they had started it off and, quickly turning it in toward his cabin, was struggling with the now thoroughly frightened goats. He got the dragon safely into his room, but, as soon as it was lifted off of Billy and his mother, those frightened goats made a dash for the door and out on deck. Their only idea was to run as fast as they could to get away from that dreadful thing, so when the passengers saw them coming, they thought that some other sort of a monster was loose and they began to run again. Some of the men stopped to see what it was, however, and more than one of them had his revolver in his hand ready to shoot. One of them, in fact, had his finger on the trigger and was going to pull it when another man suddenly called out:

"Wait a minute! They're only goats."

The men caught the goats as they were struggling to get through and the captain, who had been everywhere trying to stop the panic, now came up. The second mate came up also, and when he saw the two goats he was very angry and called one of his men.

"Here," said he, "take these animals down where they belong and tie them up with wires or chains so that they can't gnaw themselves loose. If I see them again before we get to New York there's going to be trouble for somebody."

So Billy and his mother, their fun all over, were taken back down in the hold and tied up tightly, and it was the last time they got loose until they landed in America.

"At any rate," said Billy's mother, "we are together."

"I don't know how we can stay together, though," said Billy, shaking his head. "I belong to Frank Brown and, so far as I can tell, you don't belong to anybody. If you only did, maybe Mr. Brown would buy you, although I don't believe he wants any more."

And Billy was right about Mr. Brown's not wanting any more goats.

The day they landed Frank Brown went to claim his goat. Billy and his mother were still together, but as Frank was about to take Billy away a woe-begone looking little fat man came rushing up.

"Those should been my goats yet!" he exclaimed.

"Your goats?" said Mr. Brown, rather angrily. "Why, man, that one with the singed spots on his back we have just brought over with us from France."

"It makes me nothing out!" exclaimed the man. "They should been my goats! I know them both like it was mine own brother and sister, yes! I know the biggest one by such a black spot on her forehead and the other one by such singed places like vat iss on his back. So! I should bring them both over from Havre, and our ship got such a wreckness in the big thunder weather, and Ach, I could cry mit weeping. My name is Hans Zug and I am a poor man. Yes! I had

more as two hundred goats and these two is all what I got now, and if you take them away I don't got any. No!"

One of the sailors from the cattle-ship who had been taken on board with Billy's mother came up just then and said that Hans was telling the truth. Mr. Brown looked perplexed.

"It's true," he said, "that we got this goat out of the ocean. It is scarcely possible that two goats should be burned exactly alike and this one either slipped loose from our carriage in Havre or was taken away from us there by this man. I have already paid twice for it; once in Europe, once on the ocean, and now I am expected to pay for him a third time in America. Frank, get your goat and come on!"

Poor Hans did not know what to say or do. Mr. Brown was evidently rich and powerful and Hans was afraid he might get himself into trouble. He looked so miserable, however, that Mr. Brown relented, and taking out his pocket-book, handed Hans some money.

"Here," he said, "I'll buy this goat again and then I'll be tempted to hire somebody to hang it, only I'm afraid some butcher would sell it to me a fourth time for mutton."

Frank giggled at this and his father, too, cleared up his anger in a laugh. Then Billy, in spite of all his mother's bleatings, was led away from her. Within an hour he was put in a baggage car of a train for the West where the Browns lived. This time he was not crated, but was tied to a ring with a stout rope.

Up to the time that the train began to start he struggled and pulled, hoping to get away and run back to join his mother, but it was no use. The train pulled out, and every minute Billy was carried farther and farther away from the one goat in the world that was dear to him. He was a very sad goat and he would have been sadder still if he had known that his real misfortunes had only begun. All through that afternoon he chewed at the stout rope, trying to get it loose, and all that night whenever he woke up he began to gnaw at it, not knowing, of course, how far he was being carried away, nor how impossible it would be for him ever to get back to New York, over hundreds of miles of ground, across rivers, through tunnels and over ferries, or even find his mother if he ever did reach New York City.

By morning he had his rope nearly gnawed through. Not long after daylight the train stopped at a little station and the baggage doors on both sides of the car were standing open when the train pulled out. Billy gave a tug at his rope and then another one. It came loose, and, giving a short run, he jumped out of the door. The train by this time was going at a good speed, and Billy landed in the gravel of a steep embankment, rolling over and over. After the train went on he lay quite still, for he had fainted. Poor Billy had broken a leg.

[image]

Poor Billy had broken a leg.

After a long time he crawled painfully up to the country road that crossed the railroad track and led into the village they had just passed. He dragged himself along this road quite a way toward the village, but the pain was too great for him to continue very far, so presently he crawled to the side of the road and lay down in the cool grass. He tried to nibble a bit at this but he was too sick, and finally he stretched himself out and closed his eyes. More and more, now, he missed his mother, and felt that if she could only be there to lick his wounds his leg would get well again, but now he felt that there was no hope for him. All he could do was to close his eyes and die.

CHAPTER XI

BILLY JOINS A HAPPY FAMILY

[image]

hoa!" cried a brisk, cheery voice.

Billy slowly opened his eyes. There on the road above him a pretty Shetland pony stopped suddenly and shook his saucy looking head, while a boy a little bigger than Frank Brown jumped down from a little cart full of grass and ran to the pony's head.

"Now stand still, Dandy, till we see whether our friend here by the roadside needs any help," went on the boy. "It's a fine looking goat, Dandy, but he looks sick."

Dandy danced his front feet up and down and rubbed his nose affectionately against the boy's neck, while a beautiful collie came rushing up and capered and danced around them both, giving little, short, sharp, playful barks.

"Steady now, King, steady," said the boy. "That's no way to make a noise when there are sick people around. Behave yourself," and patting the dog's silken coat with a hearty thump, he turned to see what he could do for Billy.

The dog reached the goat first and Billy shivered as he felt the dog's muzzle touch him. He jerked his head and began to gather his limbs to get up and defend himself, when the dog whined a little and he felt that the touch was a friendly one.

"Why, you poor goat!" said the boy, as he saw the bruised and bleeding leg. "I wonder how you ever broke such a pretty, fine limb as that. Well, old fellow, if broken bones are all, we can fix those."

He passed his hand gently down Billy's neck to his fore flanks, where it rested for a moment. Billy felt better right away. He liked this young fellow. He had never heard a voice or felt a touch that seemed to do him so much good. A tiny little stream ran across the road not far ahead, and, taking a bright little pail from his cart, the boy ran to this stream and came back with some water. He carefully bathed Billy's leg with his handkerchief and then, wetting the handkerchief thoroughly, he tied it around Billy's leg.

"That will do for a little bit," said the boy, "and now we will just take you right home and fix you up properly."

He stooped down to pick Billy up, and Billy, just as the pony had done to the boy's neck, rested his nose affectionately on the boy's bare arm. They were strong arms, too, and with but very little trouble they lifted Billy up and laid him in the cart on the bed of soft, springy grass, King barking joyous circles around them all the way.

"It's lucky for you, old fellow," said the boy, as he gave Billy a light pat and climbed back to his seat, "that I happened to be out cutting some feed for my pets."

The dog, King, sprang up on the seat beside the boy and sat there looking as grave as an owl.

"Get up, you Dandy!" said the boy.

The saucy little pony stopped to prance for just a minute to show how good he felt, and then away he darted. The road was smooth, the little cart was supplied with good springs and the grass kept off the jar still more, so that the ride was a very easy one. Just at the outskirts of the village the boy sprang down again and opened a wide gate. Billy raised up his head a little to look after this splendid fellow. He wore a gray sweater, a pair of overalls, and a straw hat, and he was in his bare feet. His nose tilted up a little at the end and his face was all covered with freckles, but he was tall and straight, his yellow hair curled from under his hat and his blue eyes were bright and kind, and Billy thought he had never seen any human being in this world so fine and handsome. As soon as the gate was opened, the busy little pony darted through it and, without a word from the boy, stopped until his driver could close the gate and take his place again. Two other dogs came running down to meet them.

"Hello, Curly! Hello, Spot!" called the boy, and he patted each of the dogs on the head before he climbed back up on his seat and took the reins.

Back a little way from the road sat a small, white house with green vines and bright red flowers clambering all over the wide front porch. The ground in front of the house was glowing with flower beds; everything looked neat and clean, and as if happy, contented people lived there. The road from the gate led right past this house, and back by the kitchen the boy stopped with a "Whoa!" A pleasant looking woman came out of the kitchen door, and in her hands she held up a cooky.

"Just out of the oven, Bobby boy," she said, and came up to the wagon to hand it to him. He reached down and patted her cheek and with the same hand took the hot cooky.

"Look in the wagon, mother," he said smiling.

"Well, Bob Sanders!" she cried. "Another animal! I don't know what your father will say."

"Oh, but look, mother!" said the boy, turning round to show her. "I picked him up at the side of the road and see, he has broken a leg."

"Oh, the poor goat!" said Mrs. Sanders, her voice as full of sympathy as Bobby's own. Billy liked her voice too. The sound of it seemed to do him good in the same way that Bobby's voice had. "I'll go right in and get him some milk," she added.

"No, I'd rather you wouldn't, mother," said Bobby. "I'll give him a drink of water out at the barn, but I don't want him to eat anything just now. I have got to set that leg and it's likely to be very painful for him. If he ate anything it might make him very sick. After it is all through, I'll make him a little mash and feed it to him."

"All right, Bobby, you know best," said his mother, and she stood there watching them until Bobby and his wagon had disappeared through the gates of the barnyard and behind the barn.

When Bobby jumped out of the wagon, chickens came squawking and running to him, and clustered around his feet so he could hardly walk without stepping on them; down from the gable of the barn whirred some pigeons, which circled about his head and one of them lit on each shoulder, while another one tumbled off in trying to get a foothold. Bobby laughed, and, stooping down, stroked the feathers of some of the chickens and then he reached up and took one of the pigeons in each hand.

"Go, Flash! Go, Rocket," he called, pitching each one of them into the air as he spoke, and after circling about him they flew back to their perch under the eaves of the barn while Bobby unhitched Dandy.

No sooner was that surprising pony unhitched than he ran back to the

pump. There was a little water standing in the bucket under the spout, but Dandy upset this at once, and then turned the bucket right side up again with his nose. There was a leather loop nailed firmly to the pump handle and, gripping this with his teeth, Dandy jerked his head up and down until he had pumped a bucket of water, which he drank with great relish. Then he trotted into the barn where Bobby presently carried the goat.

He gave Billy a drink of cool, fresh water and then, after preparing splints and bandages and getting everything ready, he set the broken bone in Billy's leg with cool, firm hands. Poor Billy! It hurt him far worse than it had hurt to break his leg, but after Bobby had put some ointment on the leg and wrapped it up in soft bandages and had bound the stiff boards on it to keep it firm while the bone was healing, it felt a great deal better. Billy's bed was made of some sweet smelling hay right in front of Dandy's stall, just where a cool breeze could blow across him, and after Bobby had gone away, Billy closed his eyes in comfort. Next to being back on Farmer Klausen's farm with his own mother, this was the nicest place he had ever been in his life.

After a long nap, Billy woke up to find Dandy clattering into his stall.

[image]

After a long nap, Billy woke up.

"Whew, but I'm hot!" said Dandy. "How do you feel?"

"Pretty good," said Billy, "only my leg does throb and hurt."

"No doubt," replied Dandy. "I know when Queen had her leg broken she told me how it hurt her. You must get around and see Queen and her babies as soon as you are able, although I expect by that time they will be in here, tumbling around you. They are the cutest little puppies I ever saw in my life."

"I shall be glad to," said Billy, "but just now I'm only thinking about one thing. I'm hungry."

"That's good," laughed Dandy, "you'll get something to eat all right. Nobody stays hungry around here. Bobby will be here with something to eat soon. He's the best boy in the world. As soon as you get well enough, he'll teach you to do tricks."

"Tricks?" said Billy in surprise. "I never heard of them. What are they?"

"Oh, you'll find out," said Dandy. "I can do a few of them myself. I can waltz on my hind legs, and stand on my head, and roll a barrel, and now I'm learning to stand on a globe and roll it backwards and forwards."

"My, but you are smart!" said Billy. "And does he ever whip you if you don't

do them right?"

Dandy laughed and tossed his head.

"No indeed!" said he. "Bobby never had a whip in his hand. We're all of us glad to do anything he tells us."

"If you know how, stupid," croaked a new voice, and Billy looked up to see a tame black crow sitting in the window.

"Stupid yourself, Tarwings," said the pony, but it was in a friendly tone.

"You must have good times here," said Billy, sighing as he thought of all the places of trouble he had seen in his travels.

"We do," replied Dandy. "Of course it isn't all play. Now I just came in from hoeing the corn."

"You mean that Bobby hoed the corn while you pulled the hoe," croaked the crow. "Don't mind what he says, Mr. Goat. He'll make you think that he does it all around here," and then, laughing hoarsely, the crow flapped his wings and flew away.

Dandy laughed heartily.

"He thinks he's a great mischief maker, but nobody gets angry at what he says. He doesn't mean a bit of harm by it."

Just then Bobby came in with a pail of warm mash for Billy. The goat hardly knew whether he liked it at the first taste, but as he ate more of it and felt it warming him up inside, he began to realize how good it was, and after he had eaten all that Bobby thought it wise for him to have just then, he lay very contented and lazy while Bobby rubbed Dandy's smooth coat with a cloth.

Later in the evening a pretty, little red and white cow came into the barn and turned into her stall beside Dandy's. She was properly introduced to Billy, and the crow made so much fun of their politeness that he laughed until he fell out of the window, where he lay on the hay with his legs sticking up until he was quite through cackling.

"Yes, I heard all about your case," said Tiny, the cow. "King came out in the pasture to tell me about it. You were very unfortunate, but after all you were very lucky that you got to come here, where nobody ever even gets cross."

A sharp yelp behind her heels made Tiny jump half out of her hide, and then King, laughing at the trick he had played on her, sprang from behind her and over her stall to inquire about Billy. It seemed strange to Billy to have a dog come near him without getting ready for a fight, and he could not get over the surprise of being in a place where everybody seemed to get along so nicely. He could not understand it at all until Bobby came in again, and then he reflected that all these animals were simply trained to the kindness and gentleness that was in their master. Before he went to sleep that night Billy had some more mash and a few tender mustard plants to eat, and he slept like a top until morning.

Those were tiresome days for Billy. He did long to get out and play with the other animals, but he knew that he must first let his leg heal, so he stood it as patiently as he could. Bobby came to see him at least two or three times a day and rebandaged his leg as often as was needed. The leg healed rapidly, and at last Bobby said one morning:

"Well, old fellow, be good two more days to make sure and we'll let you out."

Those were the most welcome words that Billy had heard in a long time, and he licked Bobby's hand for saying them. After Bobby went away he began to wonder how he should put in those two long, long days, but before he had time to fret about it he heard a whole chorus of little yelps, and here came Bobby with King and Queen and half a dozen pretty baby collies.

"Here, old fellow," said Bobby, "I brought you some playmates. Introduce them, King, and amuse our friend Billy all you can." Bobby took Dandy from his stall to hitch him up and go into the village for some lumber, leaving Billy in good company. Such puppies as those were! They nipped at him, they pulled his tail, they clawed his beard, they hung on his horns, they sprawled all over him and came tumbling down on all sides, little, awkward, white and brown bunches of down. There was no chance for Billy to get blue or fretful, for those puppies kept him laughing all the time. Their awkward antics would have made anyone laugh. For the two whole days that Billy had to stay bandaged up for safety's sake, those puppies kept him amused, and when on the third day his splints were taken off and he was allowed to walk out-doors with only a cloth bandage wrapped around his leg, the puppies scampered out after him.

Billy blinked his eyes when he got out-doors again.

My, what a fresh, pretty, green world this was, to be sure! How good it was to be alive! How good it was to be in such a fine home as this!

CHAPTER XII

BILLY EARNS HIS NAME

[image]

he first day Billy was allowed to walk around for only an hour. The second day he was allowed out for two hours, and by the end of that week he was turned

loose without a bandage of any sort on his leg, as well as ever. And how he did enjoy his freedom! He had all the chickens to get acquainted with, including the two little black bantam roosters, Spunk and Saucebox, who would jump up on Bobby's finger and crow whenever they were told to do so. A dozen pigeons he had to meet, and four dogs—a pair of pointers, Ponto and Patty, and a pair of greyhounds, Hurricane and Lightning,—none of which had been in the barn to see him while he was sick.

It was while he was meeting all these new friends that he felt something suddenly swoop on his head, just between his horns, while something sharp dug into his hair. The other animals to whom he had been talking began to laugh and a hoarse voice from between his horns joined in the merriment. Then Billy knew that Tarwings was taking one of his surprising ways of saying good morning.

"Of all the animals here you're the only one that hasn't given me a ride," said Tarwings, "and now I think I'll take it. Get up!" He grabbed his beak into the hair on Billy's forehead and spread his jet-black wings.

"Oho!" said Billy, "I'll give you a ride you won't like." So he started forward, but all at once lay down and rolled over. Tarwings was too quick for him, however, for as Billy went over he flew up in the air a foot or two, and as Billy came back on his feet there was the crow again, holding tight with beak and talons, and laughing more than ever. The pony and the cow were both loose in the barnyard and they enjoyed the joke on Billy as much as the dogs or the chickens or pigeons. Billy was the only one in the barnyard who did not seem to see the fun. His next attempt to get rid of Tarwings was to run straight at the fence and butt it, but once more the crow was too quick, and Billy only got a hard bump for his pains, while the crow settled down on his head again.

"You're the best of all," laughed the crow. "You put so much more spirit and spunk into your work. I believe I'll ride with you always after this."

"All right," said Billy, "this time I'll give you a good ride." So Billy began to go in a circle around and around the barnyard. All the time he had his eye on a thick clump of gooseberry bushes over in one corner, and as he ran he gradually widened the circle until one trip was right close up to those bushes. On the next circle, just as he came to them, he suddenly wheeled and dived head first in among them, and this time he caught Jimmy Tarwings. The sharp branches scraped the crow off of Billy's back and mussed up his feathers till he looked as if he had been in a cyclone. The thorns scarcely bothered Billy's tough hide and he quickly made his way out of the bushes, to join his particular friends, Dandy and King. This time it was Billy's laugh.

"Caw, caw!" cried the crow presently, limping out from the bushes. He was a sorry looking sight, but the other animals did not have much pity on him, for

he was such a mischief and it was fun to see him caught at his own game, so they simply capered around and laughed at him. Bobby, who had just come out in time to see Billy plunge into the gooseberry bushes, also stopped to laugh, but when the crow flew to him he quit at once, and smoothing down the feathers, examined Tarwing carefully to see whether he had any serious hurt.

"Serves you right, old fellow," said he, holding the bird close up to his cheek. "If you will indulge in rough play, you may expect to get hurt now and then. Come here, Dandy!"

Dandy came running to him and Bobby quickly hitched him up. Bobby was a busy boy and a thrifty one. He had bought an acre of ground just behind the barnyard on credit a long time ago, and had paid for it out of the proceeds of the garden truck which he had raised on it. He sold eggs and chickens in the village and raised squab which he sent to the near-by city. Besides this he sometimes used Dandy and his wagon for light hauling, turning an honest penny wherever he could. As Mr. Sanders ran the mill in the village and was doing very nicely in a business way, Bobby was free to keep all his money for himself and to do with it as he pleased, for he had long ago proved that he could be trusted with money. To-day he had a little hauling to do and he drove Dandy out to the road with a cheery good-bye to his happy barnyard family.

Bobby left the barnyard gate slightly ajar and he had no more than gone when Billy, as full of curiosity as ever, managed to swing the gate and push it wide open, then he darted out followed by all the chickens, which immediately scattered to the flower beds and vegetable garden to scratch and eat the tender leaves.

Mrs. Sanders had just hung out her clothes. Nice white linen always had struck Billy as being a fine thing to chew on. He liked it almost as well as boys and girls do chewing gum. Of course when he saw some hanging down for his especial benefit, it was no more than polite for him to walk up and take a nibble.

Just as he reached up for it, however, Jimmy Tarwings swooped down on Billy's back to give him a scratch with his talons and a nip with his bill, and Billy, not expecting it, of course gave a jump and his head ran right through the neck of one of Mr. Sander's undershirts, where he stuck. Of course Billy struggled to get away and of course Jimmy Tarwings, seeing that Billy was fastened, jumped on his back again and began to claw him with his sharp nails.

[image]

Jimmy Tarwings swooped down on Billy's back.

"Get up!" croaked Jimmy. "I'm ready for another ride now. Get up, goat!"

Billy ran backwards but the undershirt stuck on his horns and he could not get it off over his head. He ran forward and it stuck on his shoulders. One of the clothes-props came down and the line sank still lower, so that he had a better chance to struggle, which he did. Another clothes-prop came down and now a great many of the nice, white clothes lay dragging on the ground. Billy, goaded on by the crow, gave another terrific lunge, and this time the line came loose at both ends and the whole string of clothes dragged on the ground after the galloping goat, while Jimmy Tarwings spread his wings and shrieked with joy. He was having the ride of his life.

Around the house and past the kitchen Billy tore, scattering chickens right and left and followed by all the dogs, yelping and barking and thinking it the greatest fun that had happened in a long time. Around to the front of the house went the queer procession and straight through Mrs. Sanders' pet geranium bed, all scarlet with beautiful blossoms that Billy's samples of wet clothing mashed down flat.

Mrs. Sanders was just opening the front door to scrub off her porch when she saw her clothes making such a queer trip. Of course she ran out, but just as she stooped to catch the line a flapping sheet whipped around her foot and gave her a jerk that sent her rolling over in the grass, while the rest of the string of clothes swept on over her, some of the wet garments dragging right across her face. She was not hurt a bit and she even had to laugh at what a ridiculous figure she must have cut if anybody had been looking, but nevertheless she took after Billy and her clothes again. Billy, by this time, had made a circle which wiped out a pansy bed and now, frantic to get away from this strange harness and from his tormentor, the crow, he made a dash for the open front door. The line of clothes caught on the front step, but now Billy was going so fast that the undershirt tore and let him kick himself free. Moreover, as it passed on over his back it caught Jimmy Tarwings, and for the second time that morning swept him from Billy's back. This time he was in a worse fix than before, for the wet garment, in springing back, rolled him up in a tight wad and thumped him back on the steps.

Billy dashed straight on toward an open door across the room. He was so confused that he did not see exactly where he was going and did not dodge the center table quite in time. He ran against one leg of it, and over the table went with a crash, throwing a big lamp over and spilling it on the sofa, drenching it with oil and breaking a lot of choice china bric-a-brac that Mrs. Sanders had collected.

Out through the kitchen Billy hurried with the dogs, Mrs. Sanders right after him. The kitchen door was closed but the window was open, so Billy gave a jump through it, and here he made more trouble, for on a low, wide shelf, just

outside the kitchen window, Mrs. Sanders had placed some pies which she had just taken from the oven. Billy landed on this shelf and upset it, throwing all the pies upside down on the ground, while the dogs came pouring out of the window in such haste that some of them turned somersaults when they reached the gravel. Even the collie puppies had toddled behind on this chase, and now they could be heard yelping in the kitchen and wishing that they would hurry and grow up so that they too could jump through windows. Billy began to think it was time for him to get away from there, so he whirled again for the front of the house, ran with all his might down to the gate and jumped square over it into the road outside.

"Fine!" said a cheery voice that Billy recognized at once. "That was a great jump. I guess I'll have to make a high jumper out of you."

Billy stopped, ashamed of himself. For a minute he had been wanting to run away from this kind friend of his, but all at once he made up his mind to stay right where he was and take a whipping if he had to have it, and, as all the dogs piled out of the gate after him and set up a yelping and capering around Bobby and Dandy, Billy stood among them, his head hanging down, feeling very cheap. Bobby, who had forgotten something and come back for it, was a little puzzled, until he looked up to the house and saw his mother sitting on the front porch holding up her line of draggled, dirty clothes, while Tiny, the cow, was calmly eating up her nasturtium bed, unnoticed. Then Bobby understood.

"You're a bad goat," he said to Billy, shaking his finger at him. "I have been puzzling what to name you, but now I know," and by some strange accident he landed on the very name that Billy's mother had given him long before. "I'm going," he said, "to call you Billy Mischief."

Billy had to behave himself splendidly to make the Sanders family forget that morning's mischief, but at last Mrs. Sanders remembered that she had seen Jimmy Tarwings on Billy's back when he was running with the clothes fast to his neck, and so they blamed it on the crow. They were used to blaming mischief on that busy bird, so that a little more or less did not matter much to him.

And now Billy's education began. Every day, for an hour or so, Bobby taught tricks to the pets. The first time Billy saw this he scarcely knew his new friends, they were so different and so much in earnest. First of all, Bobby, who had been training his animals for a long time, placed a row of boxes in front of the barn.

"Dandy!" he cried, and the pony ran quickly to the big box in the center and stood upon it. "King! Queen!" Bobby cried, and the two dogs jumped upon the boxes, one each side of the pony. "Ponto! Patty!" and the next box on each side was filled. "Curly! Spot! Hurricane! Lightning!" and the next four boxes, two on each side, were occupied.

This disposed of all the dogs except the six little collie puppies, and Bobby next called the names of these, one at a time. Of course the puppies did not know what to do, but as soon as Bobby had called the name of one of them he set that one up on its box so that it would soon learn to know where it belonged.

"Jimmy!" called Bobby, and down from the barn fluttered Jimmy Tarwings and sat on the pony's head. Then Bobby gave a peculiar low thrilling whistle, and with a whirl and a rush the pigeons came circling and fluttering down, each one landing on a head of one of the dogs. "Spunk! Saucebox!" Bobby called, and the two bantams jumped up, one on each of his outstretched hands. Two of the pigeons settled down on each of Bobby's shoulders and one on top of his head. The two bantam roosters started to crow as loud as they could and that was the signal for the pony and all the dogs except the puppies to stand up on their hind feet, while the crow and the pigeons fluttered their wings. "Down!" said Bobby, and they all settled back upon their haunches. Bobby dropped his arms and the bantam roosters fluttered to the ground.

Next Bobby brought out a barrel and called Dandy. The pony came running and with a little jump landed right on top of the barrel, rolling it forwards and backwards, without Bobby helping him in any way or even coming near him. Then Bobby took a mouth harp from his pocket and began to play a lively little waltz tune, upon which Dandy jumped on top of a little platform that Bobby had built and standing on his hind feet, began to waltz.

"On your head, now, Dandy," called Bobby, and the pony, after much struggling, managed to stand on his head for a moment. This was a new trick that Bobby had been nearly a year in teaching him, but now he was almost able to do it without trouble although it was very, very difficult. This was not all of the tricks that Dandy could do, for he could spell his own name and Bobby's and some others by pawing printed cards around, and could pick out colors when told to do so, and could answer questions by nodding his head, and count up simple figures by pawing with his foot, but his master did not ask him to do all these tricks this time. Bobby was as considerate of his animals as if they were human friends.

Bobby next called King and Queen and they came with a rush, jumping upon the platform and sitting with their fore legs up, happy and eager. Bobby put the empty barrel, which was open at both ends and scraped smooth inside, on the platform. Then King and Queen got one on each side of it and rolled it backward and forward, then they both jumped on top of it, one facing one way and the other the other, and rolled it, King walking backwards and Queen walking forwards. When it was at the very edge of the platform King walked forwards and Queen walked backwards and rolled it the other way. Then, at Bobby's command, they stopped it in the middle of the platform where King

stood toward one end of it, tilting the other end up while Queen pushed that end so that it stood upright. Then King and Queen jumped into it, both at once from opposite directions, tilting the barrel over and coming out side by side, a very difficult trick and one that had taken Bobby a long while to teach them. Then he threw them a light rubber ball, and King, taking it in his teeth, would toss it and Queen would catch it. Then she would toss it back. They were ready to do still more tricks, but Bobby never put them through all that they knew at one time, not wishing to tire them.

"Ponto and Patty!" he called, and the two pointers took the places of the collies. They stood on rolling globes, turned somersaults and jumped straight up in the air to catch a piece of red leather that Bobby had hung from a light, horizontal bar which he kept putting higher and higher for them. They did other tricks, and then the greyhounds did some very wonderful high jumping. The terriers waltzed and turned back springs and walked a tight rope. The pigeons, at Bobby's command, wheeled in the air, two by two, by four's, in single file, and in fact went through a regular drill just above Bobby's head.

It was a finer performance than those usually seen in traveling shows. Bobby had taught all these pets of his just for his own amusement and they seemed to enjoy it just as much as he did, and after each one had done his part, Bobby always had some little delicacy for him; a lump of sugar for the pony, little pieces of meat for the dogs, some special seed for the pigeons, and he had a pat on the head and a loving word for all of them.

"All over!" he cried at last, and the patient animals ran scampering from their boxes. "Now, Billy Mischief," said Bobby, turning to our friend, the goat, "come on, and we'll learn a stunt or two ourselves."

Billy came willingly enough when his name was called and when Bobby patted his hands on the boards, Billy jumped upon the platform.

"Shake hands," said Bobby.

Of course Billy did not know what this meant, but Bobby caught hold of one of his fore feet and lifted it up, shaking it gently, then he set it down and patted Billy on the flanks. "Shake hands," he said again, and this time he tapped Billy on the leg. Still Billy did not know what to do, so Bobby once more picked up his foot and shook it, then patted him on the shoulder. A dozen times Bobby patiently did this, until at last when he said, "Shake hands!", and tapped Billy gently on the leg, Billy lifted up his hoof and laid it in Bobby's hand to be shaken.

"Good boy," said Bobby, patting him and, reaching in his pocket, he drew out some tender lettuce leaves which he had found Billy liked better than anything else. That was all for that morning.

The next morning Bobby only had to say, "Shake hands!" twice until Billy lifted up his hoof, and before that lesson was over he only needed the words and

did not even need to be tapped on the leg. For two or three days longer that was all the lesson he got, because it does not do to try to teach animals too many tricks at once. It only confuses them, but Billy, once started, was very quick to learn. Soon he could do as many tricks as the best of them, and had his box right alongside his friend Dandy's. Some of the tricks that he had learned were brand new ones. They had never been seen in a show or anywhere else, and how Billy did like the work! How he did like Bobby and all his animal friends, and how he did like this peaceful happy place!

CHAPTER XIII

A HAPPY REUNION

[image]

ne evening Bobby and his father were standing at the front gate talking when a dusty, red-faced, little fat man came trudging along the road with a white goat dragging at his heels. He was a queer looking figure and he seemed to be very much worried as he came up to them.

"Mister," said he to Mr. Sanders, "could you told me where I should get such a job yet?"

"I don't know of any place," said Mr. Sanders. "Where are you from? What countryman are you?"

"I been a Switzer," said the man. "I got no money, no job, no anything, only this one dumb-headed goat."

Mr. Sanders smiled as he looked from the man to the goat, both of them woe-begone tramps.

"Rather queer," he said, "to be tramping around the country with a goat. Where did you get it?"

"That should be all of my troubles, yet," said the man mournfully. "When I start von Switzerland I have more as two hundred goats what I have bought for a partnerships to a man for a goat farm back there about four hours' walk. I have such a wrecks by my ship and I lose me all but this one dumb-headed goat. Well, I have my ticket by the railroad to where this man should have the goats. I promise him some goats, I got one left, I come all the way von New York und

take it to him and what you think? He won't have any. Because I don't bring him the more as two hundred goats what I promise, he won't take even this one dumb-head," and he scowled at the poor goat at his heels as if it had been the cause of all of his woe.

"How much will you take for your goat?" suddenly broke in Bobby.

"Oh, Bobby boy, you don't want another goat?" objected his father. "You've got the place overrun now."

"Oh but, father, I want a team," said Bobby. "I've been wishing for one to put on the other side of Billy when I'm having them do stunts, besides hitching them up to a cart that I am making. They will make a fine team."

"Don't you think you could find better ways than that to spend your money?" said Mr. Sanders.

"I don't think so," said Bobby. "If I can get it at the right price, it's a good investment. How much will you take?" he asked, turning to the man.

"I take me ten dollars," said the man.

"Too much," said Bobby. "It's more than I think the goat is worth and more than I care to pay."

"How much then?" asked the man.

"Seven dollars," answered Bobby. "I don't want to dicker with you or I would have offered you less. That is the most I can pay."

"Take the goat yes!" said the man. "It's a dumb-head, anyhow. I believe me."

Bobby opened the gate joyfully and patted the goat on the neck. The goat, tired and dusty, felt grateful for that touch just as Billy had felt and when Bobby said "Come on," it followed gladly.

"I'll bring you the money right away," said Bobby. "Come on," he called again to the goat, and ran back to the barn. Running into Billy's stall, he said: "Billy, my boy, I've brought a new friend for you and I want you to be good to this stranger." With that the strange goat came in after him and Billy leaped up with a bleat of joy. The new goat was his mother!

Bobby ran back to the house to get his money, leaving the two goats together, and they had so much to tell each other at once that neither one of them heard very much what the other was saying, until Billy happened to pay attention to where his mother was explaining how she had just been sold to Bobby.

[image]

Neither one of them heard very much what the other was saying.

"Wait a minute," said Billy, "did you say that man was out there now?"

"Yes," answered his mother. "Bobby just went to get him some money."

"Wait right here a minute," said Billy. "I owe him something for throwing me overboard into the sea, and I always like to pay my debts."

Out of the barn he ran, through the gate, down the drive, and cleared the road gate with a pretty jump. Then he wheeled to where the fat man, the money in his pocket, was saying good-bye to Bobby and his father. Billy had no time to say anything just then; he just ran with his head down. The fat man turned and saw Billy coming and started to run toward the village, going so fast that he fairly waddled sideways, but there was no use for him to run. Like two freight cars bumping together, Billy landed on fat Hans Zug just once.

"A thousand lightnings yet again!" yelled Hans.

Billy did not stop to answer him. He just trotted back, jumped over the gate and hurried on to the barn to talk to his mother, about this splendid, contented home that was to be theirs for a long time to come. And we could not say good-bye to them in a happier place.

* * * * *

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