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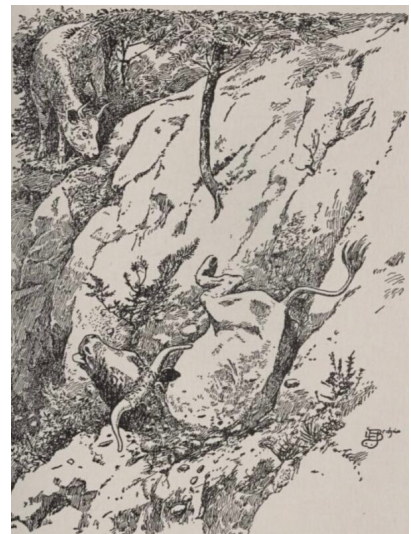
The Rescue of Red Top

Emilie Poulsson

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

She knew, too, that the best place for cows on horsefly days was a pond where they might stand in water and thrash their backs with their dripping tails. It was to the pond also that little birds would often come to perch on the backs of the cows and search for flies and gnats. No sooner had Dagros felt the sting of one of these than she would say, "Come, we must be off to the pond and stay till night, for to get rid of these troublesome insects is better than to eat." Yes, Dagros was a wise cow, but it was on the day that Red Top was in danger that she showed plainly her great wisdom; everyone agreed to that.

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



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

"Huff!" said she. "Can't they understand anything today? Or have they lost their ears? Moo! Moo! Moo! Moo!" She shook herself hard, so that her bell should ring its loudest, then ran once more down the hill. They must know her well enough to understand that she would not come here alone and make all this hullabaloo unless something dreadful had happened.

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

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

One of the men went up the bank and broke a branch of the rowan tree and gave it to Red Top, and the other man broke a still larger one. Who would have that one, thought Dagros. What? Really? What a surprise! Was it Dagros herself who was to have the larger branch? It seemed as if the men wished to reward her because she had fetched them to help Red Top.



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