

## CHAPTER XX.

Yes; it was Ole Kamp! Ole Kamp, who, by a miracle, had survived the shipwreck of the "Viking." The reason the "Telegraph" had not brought him back to Europe can be easily explained. He was no longer in the region visited by the dispatch-boat, for the very good reason that he was already on his way to Christiania on board the vessel that had rescued him.

This is what Sylvius Hogg was telling. This is what he repeated to all who would listen to him. And what a crowd of listeners he had! This is what he related with the triumphant accents of a conqueror! Those around him repeated it to those who were not fortunate enough to be near him, and the good news flew from group to group until it reached the crowd that filled the court-yard and the neighboring streets.

In a few moments, all Christiania knew that the young mate of the "Viking" had returned, and that he had won the grand prize of the Schools Lottery.

It was a fortunate thing that Sylvius Hogg was acquainted with the whole story, as Ole certainly could not have told it, for Joel nearly smothered him in his embrace while Hulda was regaining consciousness.

"Hulda! dearest Hulda!" said Ole. "Yes, it is I--your betrothed--soon

to be your husband!"

"Yes, soon, my children, very soon!" exclaimed Sylvius Hogg. "We will leave this very evening for Dal. And if such a thing was never seen before, it will be seen now. A professor of law, and a member of the Storthing will be seen dancing at a wedding like the wildest youth in the Telemark."

But how had Sylvius Hogg become acquainted with Ole Kamp's history? Simply through the last letter that the Naval Department had addressed to him at Dal. In fact this letter--the last he had received, and one whose receipt he had not mentioned to any one--contained another letter, dated from Christiansand. This second letter stated that the Danish brig "Genius" had just reached Christiansand, with several survivors of the "Viking" on board, among them the young mate, Ole Kamp, who would arrive in Christiania three days afterward.

The letter from the Naval Department added that these shipwrecked men had suffered so much that they were still in a very weak condition, and for this reason Sylvius Hogg had decided not to say anything to Hulda about her lover's return. In his response he had also requested the most profound secrecy in regard to this return--and in compliance with this request the facts had been carefully kept from the public.

The fact that the "Telegraph" had found no traces nor survivors of the "Viking" can also be easily explained.

During a violent tempest the vessel--which had become partially disabled--being obliged to scud along before the wind in a north-westerly direction, finally found herself about two hundred miles from the southern coast of Iceland. During the nights of the third and fourth of May the worst nights of the gale--it collided with one of those enormous icebergs that drift down from the shores of Greenland. The shock was terrible, so terrible, indeed, that the "Viking" went to pieces five minutes afterward.

It was then that Ole hastily penned his farewell message to his betrothed, and after inclosing it in a bottle, cast it into the sea.

Most of the "Viking's" crew, including the captain, perished at the time of the catastrophe, but Ole Kamp and four of his comrades succeeded in leaping upon the iceberg, just as the vessel went down; but their death would have been none the less certain if the terrible gale had not driven the mass of ice in a north-westerly direction. Two days afterward, exhausted and nearly dead with hunger, these survivors of the catastrophe were cast upon the southern coast of Greenland--a barren and deserted region--but where they nevertheless managed to keep themselves alive through the mercy of God.

If help had not reached them in a few days, it would have been all over with them, however; for they had not strength to reach the fisheries, or the Danish settlements on the other coast.

Fortunately the brig "Genius," which had been driven out of her course by the tempest, happened to pass. The shipwrecked men made signals to her. These signals were seen, and the men were saved.

The "Genius," delayed by head-winds, was a long time in making the comparatively short voyage between Greenland and Norway, and did not reach Christiansand until the 12th of July, nor Christiania until the morning of the 15th.

That very morning Sylvius Hogg went aboard the vessel. There he found Ole, who was still very weak, and told him all that had taken place since the arrival of his last letter, written from Saint-Pierre-Miquelon, after which he took the young sailor home with him, though not without having requested the crew of the "Genius" to keep the secret a few hours longer. The reader knows the rest.

It was then decided that Ole Kamp should attend the drawing of the lottery. But would he be strong enough to do it?

Yes; his strength would be equal to the ordeal, for was not Hulda to be there? But had he still any interest in this drawing? Yes, a hundred times, yes; both on his own account and that of his betrothed, for Sylvius Hogg had succeeded in getting the ticket out of Sandgoist's hands, having repurchased it from him at the same price the usurer had given for it, for Sandgoist was only too glad to

dispose of it at that price now there were no more bidders for it.

"It was not for the sake of an improbable chance of gain that I wished to restore it to Hulda, my brave Ole," Sylvius Hogg remarked, as he gave him the ticket; "but because it was a last farewell you had addressed to her at the moment when you believed all was lost."

And now it seemed almost as if Professor Sylvius Hogg had been inspired of Heaven, certainly much more so than Sandgoist, who was strongly tempted to dash his brains out against the wall when he learned the result of the drawing. And now there was a fortune of one hundred thousand marks in the Hansen family. Yes, one hundred thousand marks, for Sylvius Hogg absolutely refused to take back the money he had paid to secure possession of Ole Kamp's ticket.

It was a dowry he was only too glad to offer little Hulda on her wedding-day.

Perhaps it will be considered rather astonishing that Ticket No. 9672, which had attracted so much attention from the public, should have happened to be the one that drew the grand prize.

Yes, it was astonishing, we must admit; but it was not impossible, and at all events, such was the fact.

Sylvius Hogg, Joel, and Hulda left Christiania that same evening.

They returned to Dal by way of Bamble, as, of course, Siegfrid must be informed of her good fortune. As they passed the little church of Hitterdal, Hulda recollected the gloomy thoughts that beset her two days before, but the sight of Ole, seated beside her, speedily recalled her to the blissful reality.

By Saint Olaf! how beautiful Hulda looked under her bridal crown when she left the little chapel at Dal, four days afterward, leaning on her husband's arm. The brilliant festivities that followed were the talk of the whole Telemark for days and days afterward. And how happy everybody was! Siegfrid, the pretty bride-maid, her father, Farmer Helmboe, Joel, her affianced husband, and even Dame Hansen, who was no longer haunted by a fear of Sandgoist.

Perhaps the reader will ask whether all these friends and guests--Messrs. Help Bros., and hosts of others--came to witness the happiness of the newly married couple, or to see Sylvius Hogg, professor of law and a member of the Storthing, dance. It is hard to say. At all events he did dance, and very creditably, and after having opened the ball with his beloved Hulda, he closed it with the charming Siegfrid.

The next day, followed by the acclamations of the whole valley of Vesjorddal, he departed, but not without having solemnly promised to return for Joel's marriage, which was celebrated a few weeks afterward, to the great delight of the contracting parties.

This time the professor opened the ball with the charming Siegfrid, and closed it with his dear Hulda; and he has never given any display of his proficiency in the terpsichorean art since that time.

What happiness now reigned in this household which had been so cruelly tried! It was undoubtedly due in some measure, at least, to the efforts of Sylvius Hogg; but he would not admit it, and always declared:

"No, no; it is I who am still under obligations to Dame Hansen's children."

As for the famous ticket, it was returned to Ole Kamp after the drawing; and now, in a neat wooden frame, it occupies the place of honor in the hall of the inn at Dal. But what the visitor sees is not the side of the ticket upon which the famous number 9672 is inscribed, but the last farewell that the shipwrecked sailor, Ole Kamp, addressed to Hulda Hansen, his betrothed.