

## GODFATHER'S PICTURE BOOK

Godfather could tell stories, so many and such long ones, he could cut out pictures and draw pictures, and when Christmas was on the way, he could take out a copybook with blank white pages, on these he would paste pictures, taken from books and newspapers; if he didn't have enough for what he wanted to relate, he drew them himself. When I was small, I was given a number of such picture books, but the loveliest one of all was the one from 'the remarkable year when Copenhagen got gas lighting instead of the old train-oil lamps, and this was mentioned on the very first sheet.

'That book must be kept most carefully,' father and mother said, 'it must only be taken out on special occasions.'

On the cover, though, godfather had written:

To tear up the book is hardly a crime,  
Other young friends do worse most of the time.'

The nicest thing of all was when godfather himself showed us the book, read aloud verses and other things written there, and related so much more as well; for then the story became precisely a real story.

On the first page was a picture taken from 'The Copenhagen Flying Post', where one saw Copenhagen with the Round Tower and The Church of Our Lady, on the left a picture had been pasted that showed an old lamp on which was written 'Train-Oil', on the right was a candelabrum on which 'Gas' had been written.

'See, this is the poster!' godfather said; 'this is the introduction to the story you are about to hear. It could also be presented as a whole play to which the title "Train-Oil and Gas, or the Life and Times of Copenhagen" had been given. That is a very good title! At the bottom of the page yet another picture can be seen; it is not all that easy to understand, so I will explain it to you, it is a three-legged ghost horse, a hell-horse. He was originally to have been placed at the conclusion of the book, but has run out front so as to say that neither the beginning, middle or end are any good; he could have done it better if he had been able to do it. This horse, I would point out, stands tethered to the newspaper during the day, he 'is stabled between the columns', as one says, but in the evening he slips out and stands outside the poet's door and whinnies so that the man inside will die on the spot, but he doesn't die if there is plenty of life in him. This horse is nearly always a poor fellow who cannot make head or tail of himself, cannot earn a living, and has to have air and food to be able to go around whinnying. I am quite sure he doesn't like godfather's picture book one bit, but even so it can be worth the paper it has been written on.

See, this is the first page in the book, this is the playbill!

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It was the very last evening that the old train-oil lamps were lit; the city now had gas lighting instead, and its light was so bright that the old lamps seemed to be almost non-existent.

'I was out in the street that evening,' godfather said. 'People walked up and down to look at the new and the old street-lighting. There were many people and twice as many legs as heads. The night-watchmen stood around looking melancholy, they didn't know if they would be dismissed like the train-oil lamplighters had been; they were recalling things far back – they didn't dare think forward. They could recollect so much from the quiet evenings and the dark nights. I leant up

against a lamp-post,' godfather said, 'it sputtered with its wick and train-oil, I heard what the lamp said and you are about to hear it as well.'

'We've done what we could,' the lamp said. 'We have done enough for our age, provided light for gladness and sadness; we have experienced many strange things; we have, so to speak, been the night-eyes of Copenhagen. So just let the new flames replace us and take over our office; but how many years they will illuminate and what they will light up only time will tell! They admittedly shine a little more brightly than us old ones, but that is an easy task when one has been cast as a gas candelabrum and has the connections that they have, the one pours into the other! They have pipes in all directions and can fetch new strength from the city and outside the city! But each of us train-oil laps shines with what it has inside it and not via family connections. We and our forefathers have provided light for Copenhagen from olden times, from far, far back. But since it is now the last evening we will stand shedding light, so to speak, in a second row here with you in the street, you gleaming comrades, we will be neither sullen or sulky, far from it, we will be glad and good-natured. We are the old sentinels that are replaced by newly cast lifeguards in a better uniform than ours. We will tell you what the generations of our family, right back to our great-great-great-great-grandmother lamp have seen and experienced: the entire history of Copenhagen. Let us hope that your descendants, down until the very last gas candelabrum, may experience and be able to tell just as strange things as we can when your at some point are dismissed, as you certainly will be! That you must be prepared for. Humanity are sure to invent some form of lighting that is brighter than gas. I have heard a student say there is a rumour that it will one day be possible to burn salt water;' the wick sputtered when the lamp said these words,; it was as if it had already got water in it.

Godfather listened carefully, thought about it and found it an excellent idea of the old lamps, in this transitional evening from train-oil to gas, to tell and present the entire history of Copenhagen. 'One must not let go of a good idea,' godfather said, 'I immediately seized it, went home and made this picture book for you, it goes even further back in time than the lamps were able to.'

Here is the book, here is the history: 'The Life and Times of Copenhagen', it begins in pitch darkness, a jet-black page, it is known as the Dark Ages.'

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'Let us now turn the page!' godfather said.

'Do you see the picture? Only the wild ocean and the gale-force northeast wind; it is shifting vast blocks of ice; no one is out sailing on them except great boulders of rock which up in Norway tumbled down from the mountains onto the ice. The northeast wind blows the ice on its way; it wants to show the German mountains what protuberances exist up in the North. The ice floe has already reached the Sound off the coast of Sealand, where Copenhagen now lies, but then there was no Copenhagen. Under the surface of the water were large sandbanks, against one of these the blocks of ice with the large boulders struck; the entire ice floe stopped moving, the northeast wind could not dislodge it and this made it as furious as it could be, and it brought down a curse on that sandbank, 'that thieving ground' as it called it, and it swore that if it ever lifted itself above the surface of the sea, thieves and robbers would come there, and breaking wheels be raised there.

But while it was swearing and cursing, the sun came out, and on its rays bright, mild spirits hung and swung, children of light; they danced over the chilling blocks of ice causing them to melt and the large boulders to sink down to the sand below.'

'Villain sun!' the northeast wind said. 'Is that camaraderie and family solidarity! I'll not forget this and will take my revenge. I hereby pronounce a curse on you!'

'We pronounce a blessing!' the children of light sang. 'The sandbank will rise up, we will protect it! The True, the Good and the Beautiful will build there!'

‘Balderdash!’ the northeast wind said.

‘See, all of this the lamps were unable to relate,’ godfather said, ‘but I know about it, and it is of great importance for The Life and Times of Copenhagen.’

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‘Let us now turn the page!’ godfather said.

‘Years have passed, the sandbank has risen up; a sea bird has settled on the largest boulder, which is sticking up out of the water. You can see this in the picture. Years and more years have passed. The sea flung dead fish up onto the sand, the tough lyme grass grew up, withered, rotted, fertilised; more types of grass and plant life started to grow, the bank became a green *holm*, or island. The Vikings came ashore. There was good level ground for duels to the death as well as good anchorage on Holmen, off Sealand. The first train-oil lamp was lit, I think they cooked fish over it, and there was plenty of fish here. The herring passed through the Sound in large shoals, it was difficult to steer a boat over them, they gleamed in the water as if there was summer lightning down there, it shone in the depths like northern lights, the Sound had an abundance of fish, so houses were built along the shore of Sealand; the walls were of oak and the roofs of bark, there were trees enough for that. The ships made for the harbour; the train-oil lamp hung in the swaying ropes; the northeast wind blew and sang: “Ooh-who-hoo!” If any lamp gleamed on Holmen, it was that of a thief: smugglers and thieves practised their profession on “Thieves’ Island”.’

‘I think all the evil I wished for is on its way,’ the northeast wind said. ‘Soon the tree will come and I can shake down the fruit.’

‘And here stands the tree,’ godfather said. ‘Here you can see the gallows on Thieves’ Island. There robbers and murderers hang in iron chains, just as they once hung. The wind blew so strongly that their long skeletons rattled, but the moon shone down extremely pleasantly on them, as it now shines on a woodland dance. And the sun also shone pleasantly down, causing the dangling skeletons to crumble and out of the sun’s rays sang the children of light: ‘We know it, we know it! It will be beautiful here in the future! It will be fine and wonderful!’

‘Codswallop!’ the northeast wind said.

‘Let us now turn the page!’ godfather said.

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The bells were ringing in the town of Roskilde, there lived Bishop Absalon; he could read his Bible and swing his sword; he had might and will-power; he wanted to protect from attack the industrious fishermen down at the harbour, whose town grew larger and became a marketplace. He sprinkled the dishonest ground with holy water: Thieves’ Island gained an honest reputation. Masons and carpenters started to work over there; a building was erected at the bishop’s command. The sun’s rays kissed the red walls as they rose higher and higher.

There stood Axel’s House.

‘A mighty castle  
Nobly born  
With spiral stairs  
And bays adorned;  
Whee!  
Scree!  
The northeast wind shrieks

With bloated cheeks,  
Huffing,  
Puffing,  
But the fort stood firm!’

And beyond it stood ‘Hafn’, the merchants’ harbour.

Mermaid bower with waters gleaming,  
Built in a leafy grove

Foreigners came there and bought the plentiful fish, built huts and houses with bladder skins as window panes, for glass was too expensive; warehouses sprang up with gables and winches. Look, in there you can see the old journeymen sitting inside their huts, they are not allowed to get married, they deal in ginger and pepper, they are known as “pepper-men”, which now means “bachelors”!’

The northeast wind blows through the streets and alleyways, causing the dust to swirl, also ripping off roofs of thatch. Cows and pigs live in the street ditches.

‘I will tease and squeeze,’ the northeast wind says; ‘howl round the houses and Axel’s House! I cannot fail! They call it Pike Fort on Thieves’ Island.’

And godfather showed us a picture he had drawn himself. On the wall was one pike after the other, on each of them sat a captured pirate’s head with grinning teeth.

‘It really happened,’ godfather said; ‘it is worth knowing and easy to understand. Bishop Absalon was in the bath and through the thin wall he could hear a buccaneer’s ship passing outside. He immediately leapt out of his bath and onto his vessel, blew his horn and his crew arrived, the arrows flew into the pirates’ backs, they wanted to get away, they rowed as hard as they could; arrows pierced their hands, there was no time to pull them out. Bishop Absalon captured every man alive and then cut off their heads; every one was placed on the castle’s ring wall. The northeast wind blew with its puffed-out cheeks, with foul weather in its jaws, as sailors say.

‘Here I want to stretch out for while,’ the wind said; ‘here I want to lie down and see the whole spectacle.’

It rested for hours, it blew for days on end; the years passed.

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The night watchman came out at the top of the castle tower; he gazed to the east, to the west, to the south and to the north.

‘There you can see it in the picture,’ godfather said, showing it. ‘You can see him there, but now I’ll tell you what he saw.’

‘From the wall of Stake Fort there is open water all the way to Køge Bay, and the fairway over to the coast of Sealand is wide. In front of Serristlev field and Solbjerg field, where the large villages lie, the new town continues to grow with gabled half-timbered houses. There are entire narrow streets for shoemakers and tanners, for spice-dealers and beer folk; there is a marketplace, and a guildhall, and close to the shore, where there once was an island, there is a magnificent church consecrated to St. Nicholas. It has towers and spires, is incredibly tall; oh, how it is reflected in the clear water! Not far from here stands the Church of Our Lady, where the masses are read and sung, the incense wafts, the candles burn. Købmandshavn, or the merchants’ harbour, is now the bishop’s city; the bishop of Roskilde reigns and rules.

Bishop Erlandsen resides in Axel’s House. Food is roasted in the kitchen, beer and claret are poured out, there is the sound of fiddles and copper drums. Candles and lamps are lit, the castle

gleams as if it was the lamp for the entire land and kingdom. the northeast wind blows about the towers and the walls, they stand firm; the northeast wind blows around the town's fortifications to the west, no more than an old wooden fence; it survives! Outside it stands the king of Denmark, Christopher I. The rebels have defeated him at Skælskør; he is seeking refuge in the bishop's city.

The wind blows and says like the bishop: 'Stay out there! Stay out there! The gate is shut for you.'

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It is a turbulent time, a time of heavy days; every man wants to go his own way. The Holstein banners flutter from the castle tower. It is a time of hardship and sighing, a night of fear: strife in the country and the Black Death, pitch-dark night – but then came Valdemar IV, known as 'Atterdag'.

The city of the bishop is now the that of the king; it has gabled houses and narrow streets, it has night watchmen and a city hall, it has a walled gallows at Vesterport, the West Gate. No man from outside the city walls may be hanged there; one has to be a citizen to be able to dangle there, to get one's neck wrung like a chicken that high up, and see all the way to Køge.

'It's a lovely gallows,' the northeast wind says; 'the Beautiful grows!' and then it huffed and puffed.

Harm and hardship blew in from Germany.

The Hansa men came,' godfather said; 'they came from warehouse and counter, the rich merchants from Rostock, Lübeck and Bremen, they wanted to snatch more than the golden goose from Valdemar's Tower; they governed in the city of the Danish king more than the Danish king did himself, they came with armed ships, no one was prepared; nor did King Erik feel like fighting his German kinsmen, they were so numerous, so strong. King Erik and all his courtiers hastened out of Vesterport, the West Gate, to the town of Sorø, to the quiet lake and the green woods, to the songs of love and the clink of goblets.

One person, however, remained in Copenhagen, someone with the heart and mind of a king. Just look at this picture, the young woman so fine and slender, with sea-blue eyes and flaxen hair is Philippa, queen of Denmark, princess of England. She remained in the distracted city, in whose streets and alleyways, with their steep stairways, shelters and wattle-and-daub shacks, citizens swarm to and fro, at their wits' end. She has the courage and heart of a man; she calls together the townspeople and peasants, encourages, enlivens. The ships are rigged, the blockhouses manned, the cannons roar; there is fire and smoke, people are in high spirits, the Good Lord will not abandon Denmark. And the sun shines into everyone's heart, it shines out of everyone's eyes in the joy of victory. God bless Philippa! She is everywhere, in huts, in houses, in the king's castle, where she takes care of the wounded and the sick. I have cut out a wreath and placed it round this picture,' godfather said. 'God bless Queen Philippa!'

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'We now leap some years ahead!' godfather said. 'Copenhagen leaps too. King Christian I has been to Rome, has been blessed by the Pope, and been honoured and praised on his long journey. Back home he builds a college of fired brick; there learning is to flourish, be presented in Latin. Poor men's children from plough and workshop can also be catered for, live on alms, gain the long, black silk gown, sing outside citizens' doors.

Close to this seat of learning, where everything is in Latin, there lies a small house; inside Danish reigns supreme, in language and in customs. There is ryebread porridge for breakfast and lunch at ten o'clock in the morning. The sun shines in through small window panes onto food

cupboard and bookcase; in the later lie written treasures, Mr. Mikkell's 'Rosary' and 'divine comedies', Henrik Harpestreng's 'Manual of Medicine' and Denmark's 'Rhymed Chronicle' by Friar Niles in Sorø, which every Dane ought to know, the master of the house said, and he is the sort of man who does his utmost to make them known. It is Denmark's first printer, the Dutchman Gotfred van Gehmen. He practises the wonderful black art – the art of printing.

And the books reach the king's castle and the houses of ordinary people. Sayings and songs gain eternal life. What individuals dare not say in sorrow and joy the Bird of Folklore sings, enigmatically and yet clearly; it flies so free, it flies so wide through common people's rooms and baronial castles; it sits like a falcon on the baroness's wrist and chirps, like a tiny mouse it steals in and cheeps in the dungeon for the enslaved peasant.'

'It's nothing but empty talk, all of it!' the sharp northeast wind says.

'It's spring!' the sun's rays say; 'see how all that's green is sprouting!'

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'Let us now leaf forward in our picture book!' godfather says. How Copenhagen glitters! There are tournaments and games, there are magnificent processions; see the noble knights in their armour, see the fine, distinguished ladies in silk and gold. King Hans gives his daughter Elisabeth to the prince elector of Brandenburg. How young she is, how glad she is! she walks on velvet; the future is in her thoughts: domestic bliss. Close beside her stands her royal brother Prince Christian with his heavy-lidded eyes and hot, fiery blood. The common people hold him dear, he knows their burden, he has the future of the poor man in his thoughts.

God alone is the master of good fortune!

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'Let us now leaf forward in our picture book!' godfather said. 'The wind blows sharply, sings of the sharp sword, of heavy times, of turbulent times.'

It is an icy day, it is mid April. Why are the crowds thronging outside the castle in front of the old customs house, where the royal ship lies with sails and flags? People are at their windows and up on the roofs. There is grief and sorrow, expectation and fear. They look towards the castle, where formerly there was torch-lit dancing in the golden halls, but where it is now silent and empty; they look towards the window oriel, where King Christian so often gazed out across the 'Court Bridge' and along the narrow 'Court Bridge Street' to his turtledove, the Dutch girl he fetched from the town of Bergen. The shutters are closed. The crowds look towards the castle, now the gate is opened, the drawbridge lowered. Here comes King Christian with his faithful wife Elisabeth; she refuses to leave her royal master now that he is so hard pressed.

There was fire in his blood, there was fire in his speech; he wanted to make a break with the old times, lift the peasant's yoke, be kind to the common man, clip the wings of 'the greedy hawks'; but there were too many of them to take on. He has to leave his land and kingdom, to find friends and kinsmen elsewhere. His wife and those faithful to him accompany him; every eye is moist at this hour of parting.

The song of the age has mixed voices, for him and against him, a threefold choir. Hear the world of the nobility, they have been written down and printed:

'Woe betide you, Christian the Wicked! the blood spilt on Stockholm's square cries out a curse of woe!'

And the cry of the monks is equally harsh in its judgment: 'May you be disowned by God and by us! You summoned the Lutheran teaching here; to it you gave both church and pulpit, let the devil's tongue speak. Woe betide you, Christian the Wicked!'

‘But peasants and citizens weep profusely: ‘Christian, beloved by your people! The peasant shall not be sold like cattle, or be exchanged for a hound! That law is your testimonial!’ But the word of the poor man is like chaff before the wind.

Now the ship sails past the castle and the people of the city hurry up the ramparts to get one last glimpse of the departing royal vessel.

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Times drag past, times are harsh; do not trust your friends, do not trust your kinsmen! Uncle Frederick at his castle in Kiel was eager to become king of the land.

King Frederick lies off Copenhagen. Look at this picture: ‘Faithful Copenhagen’. Pitch-black clouds surround you in picture upon picture; just look at each and every one! It is a telling picture, it still speaks in legend and song: the heavy, harsh and bitter times in the passing years.

What became of King Christian, the stray bird? The birds have sung of him, and they travel far and wide, over land and ocean.

The stork came in early spring, from the South over the land of Germany; it had seen what is now going to be related.

‘I saw the fugitive King Christian travelling over the heather-clad heathland, where a humble vehicle met him, drawn by a single horse; in it sat a woman, King Christian’s sister, the Margravine of Brandenburg; faithful to Lutheran teaching, she had been chased away by her husband. They met on the dark heath, the two royal exiles. Times drag past, times are harsh; do not trust friends or kinsmen!’

The swallow came from Sønderborg Castle with a song of woe. ‘King Christian has been betrayed! He sits in the tower’ well-deep dungeon; his heavy footsteps wear grooves in the stone floor, his fingers leave marks in the hard marble.’

‘Oh, what woe could ever find words  
that spoke as the grooves in the stone?’

The osprey came from the heaving sea; it is open and free, there a vessel flies past, it is the gallant man from Funen, Søren Nordby. Fortune follows him – but fortune, like wind and weather, is fickle.

In Jutland and on Funen, ravens and crows screech: ‘Fill our maw, our maw! Carcass and carrion galore, of horses and of men.’ A turbulent time, that of the Count’s Feud. The peasant took his cudgel, the townsman his knife, they cried aloud: ‘We will kill the wolves till no cubs are left!’ Clouds and smoke drift from the towns on fire.

King Christian is a prisoner at Sønderborg Castle; he cannot escape, cannot see Copenhagen and its dire distress. On Nørre-Fælle Christian III stands where his father once did. Fear is rife in the city; there is hunger and plague.

Against a church wall emaciated woman sits, she is but a corpse; two live children lie in her lap and suck blood from her breasts.

The mother is dead, resistance is dying. Ah, you faithful Copenhagen!

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A fanfare sound; hear the drums and trumpets!

In rich robes of silk and velvet and with waving plumes the noblemen come on their gold-bordered horses; they are riding to Gammeltorv. Is there to be a carrousel or tournament as is the

tradition? Citizens and peasants in their best clothes also make for the square. What is there to see? A bonfire has been made to burn papist images, or is the executioner there, as he was when Didrik Slaghoek was burnt alive? The king, the ruler of the country, is a Lutheran, it is to be made known, proclaimed and its legitimacy declared.

Ladies of high rank and noblewomen sit with high collars and pearls on their bonnets behind the open windows and gaze at the spectacle. On an outspread cloth, under a cloth canopy, sits the council of state in ancient attire, close to the king's throne. The king is silent. Now his will, the will of the council, is read allowed in the Danish language; citizens and peasants are given harsh words, words of castigation, for all the resistance that has been shown the high nobility. The commoner is humiliated, the peasant is made a bondsman. Now the words of condemnation are spoken against the country's bishops. Their power is over. All the estates of the church and the monasteries are transferred to the king and the nobility.

There is haughtiness and hatred, display and dismay.

'Poor bird come hobbling,  
Comes wobbling...  
Rich bird come whizzing,  
Comes sizzling!' –

The age of upheaval has heavy clouds but also sunshine; just now there a gleam was seen in the seat of learning, the home of the students, and names emit radiance from there up to the present day. Hans Tausen, the son of a poor Funen smith:

'The lad Hans Tausen, from Birkende came,  
His fame grew swiftly, people knew his name.  
A Danish Martin Luther, God's word his sword,  
By spirit he conquered, won hearts for the Lord.'

The name Petrus Palladius shines out, Peter Plade in Danish, the Bishop of Roskilde, also the son of a poor smith in Jutland. And of the aristocratic names, that of Hans Friis, the Lord Chancellor, gleams bright. He let students sit at his table, took care of them and of the scholars as well. And above all others, there was one who was praised with cheers and songs:

'While Axels Havn one student still  
Can house who knows his spelling,  
King Christian's name with loud cheers will  
Be greeted from each dwelling.'

There were rays of sunshine between the heavy clouds in the age of upheaval.

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Let us now turn the page.

What is it softly singing in the Great Belt under the coast of Samsø? From the sea rises a mermaid with hair the colour of seaweed, she predicts for the peasant: A prince will be born who will become a king, mighty and great.

He was born out in the fields, under a blossoming hawthorn. Now his name blossoms in legends and songs, in baronial estates and castles around the country. The Stock Exchange thrust



upwards with tower and spire; Rosenborg castle rose up, gazed far out over the ramparts; the student himself gained his own house, and close by stands, pointing towards the sky, the Round Tower, a column of Urania that looks out towards the island of Hven, where Uranienborg stood; its golden domes gleamed in the moonlight, and mermaids sang of the man inside it, one whom kings and great scholars visited, the genius of noble blood, Tycho Brahe. He lifted Denmark's name so high that with the firmament of heaven it was known in all the enlightened countries of the world. And Denmark thrust him aside.

In his pain, he sang in consolation:

‘Are not the heavens omnipresent  
What then need I ask for more?’

His song lives as long as the folksong, as the mermaid's song about Christian IV.

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‘Here comes a page you really must take a look at!’ godfather said, ‘there is picture upon picture, just as a ballad has verse upon verse. It is a song that starts out so joyfully, but ends so sadly.’

A royal child as dancing at the King's castle, how delightful she is to look at! She is sitting in Christian IV's lap, his beloved daughter Eleonore. She waxes strong in female customs and virtues. The finest man of the mighty aristocracy, Korfits Ulfeldt, is her bridegroom. She is still a child; she is also scolded by her strict governess; she complains to her sweetheart and is right in doing so. How bright she is, cultivated and well-educated, knows Greek and Latin, sings in Italian to her lute, can talk about the Pope and Luther.

King Christian lies in the sepulchral chapel in Roskilde Cathedral, Eleonore's brother is king. There is magnificence and splendour at the castle in Copenhagen, there is beauty and sagacity, firstly the queen herself: Sophie Amalie of Lüneburg. Who commands her horse as well as she? Who displays such majestic grace in dancing as she, who speaks with knowledge and intellect as the Queen of Denmark?

‘Eleonore Christine Ulfeldt!’ the words are spoken by the French emissary. ‘In beauty and wit she outshines everyone.’

From the polished floors of the castle the burr of envy grew; it clung, became entangled and wound around itself mockery and disdain: ‘That bastard child! Her carriage shall wait at the castle gate, where the queen may ride, my lady shall walk!’ There is a flurry of slander, full of false rumours and lies.

And Ulfeldt takes his wife by the hand in the quiet night. He has the keys to the city gates; he opens one of them. The horses are waiting outside. They ride along the shore, and then sail away to Sweden.

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‘Let us now turn the page, as fortune also turns for the two of them.’

It is autumn, the day is short, the night long; it is damp and dreary, the wind so cold and gaining in strength. It sighs in the leaves of the trees on the ramparts, the leaves are swept into Peder Oxe's residence; it stands empty and abandoned by its master and mistress. The wind whirls out over Christianshavn, around Kai Lykke's residence, which is now a gaol. He himself has been hounded from honour and country, his coat of arms broken, his effigy hung in the highest gallows; that is the punishment for his thoughtless, flippant remarks about the country's respected queen.

The wind howls and rushes over the empty space where the residence of the seneschal once stood; all that remains now is a single stone, 'I propelled it like a rolling stone down here onto the floating ice,' the wind roars, 'the stone stranded at the spot where Thieves' Island later grew, cursed by me; and so it was used in Sir Ulfeldt's manor, where his wife sang to the sound of the lute, read Greek and Latin and was toweringly proud, now all that towers here is the stone with its inscription:

'The traitor Corfitz Ulfeldt  
to everlasting derision, disgrace and dishonour.'

But where is she now, the fine lady? Hoo-hoo-oo! the wind whistles with its ear-piercing voice. In 'The Blue Tower' behind the castle, where the sea water beats against the slimy wall, there she has already been sitting for many a year. There is more smoke in the room than heat; the small window is high up near the ceiling. King Christian IV's spoilt child, once the finest young maiden and lady, in what wretchedness, in what misery she now sits! Memory hangs curtain and tapestry around the smoky walls of the prison. She recalls the delights of her childhood, the mild, beaming countenance of her father; she recalls her magnificent wedding celebrations: her days of glory, her times of adversity in Holland, in England and on Bornholm.

'Nothing seems heavy to genuine love!'

And yet, then she was with him, now she is alone, forever alone! She does not even know his grave, nor does anybody else.

'Marital faithfulness was her sole crime!'

— She sat there for many a long year, while life went on outside. It never stands still, but we will do so for a moment here, think of her and of the words of the song:

'I stayed true to my marriage vow  
In trouble and affliction!'

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'Just look at the picture here!' godfather said.

It is winter; the frost builds a bridge between Lolland and Funen, a bridge for Carl Gustav, who advances relentlessly. There is plundering and arson, fear and affliction in the entire land.

The Swedes lie outside Copenhagen. It is icy cold with driving snow; but faithful to their king and faithful to themselves men and women stand ready to do battle.

Every tradesman, shopkeeper, student and schoolmaster is up on the ramparts, to protect and defend them. They are unafraid of the sizzling cannonballs. King Frederik swore he wanted to die in his own nest. He rides up there, as does also his wife. There is courage and discipline and patriotism. Just let the Swede don his shroud and crawl forwards in the white snow, attempt to storm the place! Beams and stones rain down on them; and the women come with their cauldrons and pour boiling pitch and tar over the storming foes.

That night king and citizen are a united force. And there is deliverance and there is victory. The bells ring, the song of thanksgiving is sung. Common folk, here you won your knightly spurs!

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What comes now? Just look at this picture!

Bishop Svane's wife arrives in a closed carriage; only the high and mighty nobility dare do such a thing. The proud young noblemen break the carriage to pieces; the bishop's wife has to proceed to her bishop's palace on foot.

Is that the whole story? – Far greater ones are to be broken in the immediate future, the power of pride.

Mayor Hans Nansen and Bishop Svane join hands to act in the name of the Lord. They speak with shrewdness and with honesty; their message is heard in both church and commoners' houses. A handshake and the harbour is blocked, the gates are closed, the tocsin rings, power is given solely to the king, he who remained in his own nest in the hour of danger; may he rule, may he govern over both great and small!

It is the age of absolute monarchy.

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Let us now turn the page and the age as well.

'Halloo, halloo, hallay!' The plough is laid aside, the heather allowed to grow, but the hunting is good. 'Halloo, hallay!' Hear the strident horn and the baying hounds. See the host of hunters, see the king himself, King Christian V; he is young and glad. In castle and city there is merriment. In the halls wax candles, in the manors torches and the city streets have acquired lamps. Everything has a fresh gleam to it! The new aristocracy fetched from Germany, barons and counts are granted favours and gifts; now it's a question of titles and ranks and the German language.

And then a voice rings out that is genuinely Danish, it is the weaver's son who now is bishop; it is the voice of Kingo; he sings his beautiful hymns.

There is another commoner's son, the son of a tapster, his thoughts burn bright in the rule of law; his book of statutes became a gold ground for the king's name, one that stands solid for ages to come. That commoner's son, the mightiest man in the land, gains an escutcheon and enemies as well, so the sword of the executioner is raised above the head of Griffenfeldt. Then he is pardoned and given life-imprisonment instead. They send him to a rocky island of the coast of Trondheim:

'Munkholm – Denmark's St. Helena.'

But they dance light-footed in the palace hall, there is pomp and circumstance, there is lively music, there courtiers and their wives take the floor.

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Now comes the age of Frederik IV!

See the proud ships with their flags of victory! See the heaving sea! Yes indeed, it can tell of mighty deeds, of Denmark's glory. We recall such names as the triumphant Sehested and Gyldenløve. We recall Hvitfeld, who, so as to save the Danish fleet, blew up his ship and flew heavenwards with the Danish flag. We think of that age of strife, and of the hero who leapt down from the Norwegian mountains to protect Denmark: Peter Tordenskjold. From the magnificent sea, from the heaving sea, his name thunders from coast to coast:

'Through battle smoke there came a lightning flash,

And thunder roared when voices seemed to fail;  
From tailor's table down a lad did dash,  
From Norway's coast a small sloop then set sail.  
O'er northern seas there flew a Viking zeal  
With youth's audacity and girt with steel.'

There came a light breeze from Greenland's coast, a fragrance as from the land of Bethlehem; it announced the light of the gospel through Hans Egede and his wife.

So this half-folio has a gold ground; the other half, which indicates sorrow, is ash-grey with a splash of black, as from the sparks of a fire, as from contagion and disease.

In Copenhagen the plague rages. The streets are empty, the doors shut, crosses in chalk mark the door-frames: inside there is the plague, but where the cross is black everyone is dead.

The bodies are borne away at night, with no bell soundings; they take the half-dead in the street as well; the hearses rumble, they are full of corpses. But from the taverns comes the rowdy singing and wild cries of those who are drunk. In drink they try to forget their dire distress and Copenhagen's trials and tribulations.

Frederik IV is still alive; his hair has turned grey with the passing years. From his window at the palace he looks out into the stormy weather; it is late in the year.

In a small house near Vesterport a boy is playing with his ball; it flies up into an attic. The young boy takes a taper and goes up to look for it, and sets the small house on fire, and the whole street. There is so much glare that the clouds start to gleam. See the flames grow! There is plenty of fuel for the fire, there is hay and straw, there is salt pork and tar, there are piles of firewood for the winter ahead. And everything burns. There is weeping and screaming, there is utter confusion. Into all this turmoil the old king rides out, encourages, commands. There are planned explosions, houses are pulled down. Now the fire has spread to the northern precincts and the churches are burning: St Peter's, Our Lady! Hear the carillon play its very last song: 'Spare us your wrath, O God of mercy!'

Only the Round Tower and the Royal Palace still stand, around there are smoking ruins. Frederik IV is good to his people, he consoles and feeds, he stays with them, he is the friend of the homeless. God bless Frederik IV!

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Just look at this page!

Look at the golden coach with footmen around it, with armed horsemen before and behind, coming from the palace, where an iron chain has been stretched across the entrance to prevent people from getting too close. Every commoner must cross the square with his head bare; so not many people are to be seen, they avoid the place. Now one person comes along, with downcast gaze, his hat in his hand, and it is precisely the man, in that age, whose name we say aloud:

'Like a purging storm wind his words did sing,  
Brought sunshine to days soon forthcoming;  
And smuggled-in notes like crickets did spring  
Back along the way they'd been coming.'

It is witty, it is humorous, it is Ludvig Holberg. The Danish stage, the palace of his greatness, has been closed down, as if it were a hotbed of scandal. All pleasure has been shelved: dancing, singing and music are forbidden and banned. A grim form of Christianity reigns.

‘Der Dänenprinz,’ as his mother called him, now his time comes with sunny weather, with the song of birds, with happiness. Danishness and gaiety: Frederik V is king. And the chains are removed from the square outside the palace; the Danish stage is re-opened, there is laughter and cheerfulness, there is good humour. And the peasants bring summer into the city! It is a time of merriment after a time of fasting and of down-heartedness. The beautiful thrives, bringing blossom and fruit in notes, in colours, in the visual arts. Listen to Gréty’s music! Watch Londemann’s acting! And Denmark’s queen loves what is Danish. Louise of England, delightful and mild; may God in his heaven bless you! The sun’s rays sing sweetly in chorus of queens in the land of Denmark: Philippa, Elisabeth, Louise.

Their earthly selves has long since been shelved, but their souls and their names live on. Once more England sends a royal bride: Mathilde, so young and soon so forlorn! Poets will sing of you in days to come, of your youthful heart and time of tribulation. And the song has power, an unnameable power through time and people. See the palace fire, King Christian’s castle. Attempts are made to save what is of greatest worth. See the people from Holmen drag away a basket with silverware and precious things; they represent great riches, but see how suddenly, through the open door were the flames gleam, a bust of bronze, that of Christian IV. They then fling down the riches they are carrying; his statue in there is of much greater value to them! they have to save it, no matter how heavy it might be to lug away. They know him from Ewald’s song, from Hartmann’s lovely melody.

There is strength in the words and the song, and some day it will tell so powerfully of poor Queen Mathilde.

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‘Let us now leaf forward in our picture book.’

On Ulfeldt’s square stood the stone of disgrace; where in the world will one such as this be raised? At Vesterport a column was raised, how many in the world are there such as that one?

The sun’s rays kissed the rolling stone, the foundation under the ‘Column of Liberty’. All the church bells rang, the flags fluttered; the people shouted with joy for Crown Prince Frederik. Young and old bore in their hearts and spoke the names Bernstorff, Reventlow, Colbjørnsen. With gleaming eyes and grateful hearts the blessed inscription on the column is read:

‘At the king’s command, villeinage is to end, the Land Act is to come into force, so that the free peasant can become a spirited and enlightened, zealous and good, honest citizen, happy!’

What a day of sunshine! What a ‘Summer in the City’!

The spirits of light sang: ‘The Good flourishes! The Beautiful flourishes. Soon the stone on Ulfeldt’s Square will fall, but the ‘Column of Liberty’ will stand in sunlight, blessed by God, king and people.’

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‘We have a highway from of old  
That to the world’s end reaches.’

The open sea, open to friend and foe, and the foe was there. This foe, the mighty British fleet, came to attack, a major power against a smaller one. The battle was fierce, but the people courageous:

‘Each man stood firm, quite undismayed,  
Fought on and met death unafraid.’

They gained the admiration of their enemy, and inspired Denmark's bards. That battle day is commemorated to this very day with waving flags: Denmark's honourable Second of April, the Maundy Thursday Battle of Copenhagen.

The years passed. A fleet was sighted out on the Sound. Was it bound for Russia or Denmark? No one knew, not even those on board.

According to popular legend, when on that morning out on the Sound the sealed orders were opened and read out, that the Danish fleet was to be taken, a young captain stepped up to his commander, high-minded in word and deed, a son of Britain: 'I swore,' he said, that until my death I would fight under the Union Jack in open, honest battle, but not that I would seek to overpower a weaker foe.'

'And with that, he leapt overboard!'

The fleet for Copenhagen then did steer. –  
Far from the spot where battle was to be,  
The captain – name unknown – who'd shown no fear  
Now lay a clammy corpse hid by the sea,  
Until the current washed him up, and Swedes  
Out night-time fishing found him in their nets,  
Took him back to the shore and out of greed  
Cast dice for both his gold-braid epaulets.

The enemy was off Copenhagen; the whole city was in flames, we lost our fleet, but not our courage and our faith in God; he casts down, but lifts up once more. The wounds heal as in the Battle of the Einherjar. The history of Copenhagen is rich in consolation.

The common belief has always been  
The Lord God is Denmark's friend unseen.  
If we hold on, then he will hold back.  
And soon the sun will be back on track.

Before long it was shining on the rebuilt city, on rich fields of corn, on shrewdness and ingenuity; a delightful summer day of peace, when poetry shimmered so full of colour and glory in a *fata morgana* created by Oehlenschläger.

And in natural science a find was made even greater than a gold horn in ancient times, a bridge of gold:

– – 'a bridge for the lightning of thought  
Throughout all ages into peoples and kingdoms.'

There Hans Christian Ørsted wrote his name.

And look! At the palace next to the church a mansion was built, to which even the poorest man and woman gladly contributed their mite.

'You recall from the beginning of the picture book,' godfather said, 'the old stone boulders that tumbled down from the Norwegian mountains and were borne south to Denmark by the ice; they have now been raised once more from their deep sandbank at Thorvaldsen's bidding in the beauty of marble; a joy to behold!'

Remember what I have shown you and have told you! The sandbank in the sea raised itself up, became a protection for the harbour, bore Axel's House, bore the bishop's palace and the king's palace and now bears the temple of the Beautiful. The words of the curse have wafted away, but what the children of sunlight sang about the time to come has been fulfilled.

So many storms have died away, they can come again and will die away once more. The True and the Good and the Beautiful are victorious.

And this concludes the picture book; but not the history of Copenhagen by any means. Who knows what you may experience one day.

It has often looked ominous, a storm has blown up, but the sunshine has never been blown away, *it* remains! and stronger than even the strongest sunshine is God! Our Lord reigns over more than just Copenhagen.'

So said godfather and gave me the book. His eyes shone, he was so sure of himself. And I took the book, so gladly, so proudly and carefully as when I recently held my little sister for the first time.

And godfather said: 'You're most welcome to show your picture book to somebody or other, also say that I have made, pasted and drawn the whole thing. But it is vitally important that they are immediately told where I got the idea for it from. You know this, so tell them this. The idea comes from the old train-oil lamps, which precisely on the last evening they were lit appeared to the city's gas candelabra to be a fata morgana, everything that had been seen since the first lamp was lit down by the harbour until Copenhagen on that evening was lit by both train-oil and gas.

You may show the book to whoever you like, by which I mean people with mild eyes and a friendly disposition, but if a hell-horse should come along – then make sure you shut

Godfather's Picture Book.'