CHAPTER III.

THE RETURN HOME.

"Home is not merely four square walls,
Though with pictures hung and gilded;
Home is where affection calls,
Filled with shrines the heart has builded.

Home is not merely roof and room,
It needs something to endear it;
Home is where the heart can bloom,
Where there is some life to cheer it."

One morning, the following week, after Ed had milked my mother and fed me he said: "Jim, you and Tom will have to milk the cows, feed the calves and do the rest of the chores; for I have to go down to the depot after the Fosters, they will come on the morning train."

The cows were milked and turned out, except my mother; the men said Mrs. Foster would want to see her as soon as she got home, so left her in the barn for awhile. The calves and hogs were fed and the barn all cleaned up and everything put in order; when, after a while, I heard a wagon drive into the yard, and from what my mother and the men said, I knew that Mrs. Foster would soon come to see my mother and me, and sure enough she did; for I soon heard voices and expected to see Mrs. Foster come walking in, and a large sized woman; but was greatly astonished to see a man, whom I knew to be Mr. Foster, bringing in a wee, little lady in a wheel chair. I afterwards learned that she was a great sufferer from rheumatism,
and had not walked a step for many years. Harry and Nellie came too, to see my mother and me, and all of them seemed delighted to be at home again. Mr. Foster wheeled the chair close to my mother, then patted and stroked her neck and said: "Well, Yeksa, old girl, how goes it since I have been gone? You look well and have done well; for they tell me you have got the finest baby heifer in the country. Your

MRS. H. E. FOSTER.

mistress has given it a grand name." Then he helped Mrs. Foster to stand up by my mother. She smoothed her soft hair and said: "Yes indeed Yeksa, you have done well, and we are proud of you." My mother licked their hands as if she was glad to see them, and Mrs. Foster said: "We must go now and see the baby queen of yours."
Mr. Foster then wheeled Mrs. Foster near the door where it was lighter and cooler, then came to my pen and, while carressing me, said: "You are a beauty sure enough, and will make as handsome a cow as your mother, you are even finer than her other two babies."

He then took me carefully out of my pen and led me to Mrs. Foster who, as quick as she saw me said: "Oh, you dear little baby," then gently stroking my hair, continued: "Isn't she beautiful? Her hair is as soft as silk and yellow as gold."

Oh, she seemed so good and kind when I took her soft fingers in my mouth and she smoothed my head. After she had looked me over carefully she said: "You are a wee bit of a darling now, but some day, if you live to grow up and nothing happens to you, you will make a grand cow and will win a great name, and make a record that will live long after we are all dead and gone; for you represent far more than your sister or brother, a type that I have had in mind for years, and for which I have been working and searching—and right now I feel like saying Eureka! for I have surely found it. When Governor Hoard first saw your father and mother at the Monroe County fair, where they and your sister and brother were very much admired and carried off the blue ribbons, he predicted that they and their descendant would fix a type and an individuality that would make its mark in the Guernsey world, and said of your mother: 'She is the mother of a coming family of great excellence.'

"I see in you an advance in the methods of breeding that makes it possible to fix a type and an individuality permanently in a family and keep it pure, and continue it from generation to generation. So strong was my faith that you would be what you are, that I gave you a name that no cow before you ever had, so that you could be properly registered among the best of your race. The name itself typifies individuality. I have named you Queen Vashti, after a noble woman of bible times, of whom we read in the book of Esther. I have always
admired her for having the courage to assert her God-given rights, and preserve her purity and individuality, by refusing to obey the command of King Ahasuerus to appear before him with the crown regal, that he might show her great beauty to the people and the princes. Because she refused to obey him he divorced her and made Esther, the beautiful Jewess, his queen, thinking she would be more submissive.

"Puck and Yeksa, your parents, are thoroughbreds, of royal descent and have so marked you with their type and individuality that it is safe to believe that you, the daughter of their more mature years, will possess the same characteristics and the same power to transmit them as perfectly to your posterity as they have done. So your name is Queen Vashti and your number in the American Guernsey Cattle Club Book is 6,051."

After looking at the other calves and noticing how they had grown during her absence, she asked to be wheeled back to the house, as she wanted to rest after her journey. That evening when the cows were brought up, she came down to the barn again and sat near my pen and near where my mother stood, and talked to us awhile, then Mr. Foster carried her around to my father's stall. He seemed to be a pet with all of them, the same as my mother was. I thought my lot had fallen in a pleasant place at Riverview farm, among such kind and intelligent people; for Mr. and Mrs. Foster were so kind to my mother and me, and Mr. Foster was so proud of her and so kind to her and their children, and the men were so kind to all the cattle. Mrs. Foster stayed at the barn while the men were milking and read to them, from a paper she had, a couple of funny stories. The first one was about a bashful boy who went to see his best girl and got caught in the rain. It continued to rain hard all the evening, and, finally, at a late hour for retiring, she told him she did not have the heart to send him home in the rain, so invited him to remain all night. He accepted her invitation, when she excused herself and said she would go up stairs and prepare a bed for him. It did not take
her long and when she returned she was surprised to see him standing there dripping wet, and said to him: "Where in the world have you been to get so wet?" He replied: "Oh, I just run home to get my night shirt."

The other story was a composition a little girl, back in Connecticut, wrote on the cow. Her story goes as follows:

"A cow is an animal with four legs on the underside. The tail is on the other end from the head and is longer than the legs, but is not used to stand on. The cow kills flies with her tail. A cow has big ears that wiggle on hinges, so does the tail. A cow is bigger than a calf but not so big as an elephant. She is made so small that she can go into the barn when no one is looking. Some cows are black and some hook. A dog was hooked once. She tossed the dog that worried the cat that killed the rat. Black cows give white milk, so do other cows. Milk men sell milk to buy their little girls white dresses, which they put water in and chalk. Cows chew cuds and each cow finds its own chew. This is all there is about cows."

When Mrs. Foster finished reading the story she said: "There are very many grown people who do not know any more about a cow than that little girl does. To them a cow is merely a cow, regardless of breed, care or feed. All they know about her is that she was made to produce milk and butter; that she is nothing more than an animate machine, provided by an all-wise Creator for the sole benefit of man, and that man's only consideration should be how to make the machine yield the greatest profit; the law of kindness forming no part of the consideration. They never think that the poet meant animals as well as men when he wrote the following lines:

'Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make our earth an Eden,
Like the heaven above.'

"The whole civilized race, from the time their baby lips
could lisp the words, have been taught this stanza; but how little they apply it to every-day life, or dream that it can have any bearing on their business affairs. Repeat it to most dairy-men and tell them that their happiness and that of their families depend on their daily practice of it, it falls on leaden ears; but just whisper that the practice of it in the care of his dairy cattle will add to his profits, he will prick up his ears and listen, and by a little plain reasoning, it can be ploughed into his convictions until he can almost hear the musical jingle of the silver dollars as they multiply in their pockets. If a man’s make-up is devoid of the proper proportions of the milk of human kindness, he needs a generous diet of albumnoïds in the shape of convincing logic. But it is deplorable to think that the most perfect of God’s creatures can only be taught to be kind and humane by appealing to his love for the ‘almighty dollar.’

The little calves had nothing to do but eat, sleep and grow. Mrs. Foster told the men to always put a little oil meal, which had been previously soaked in cold water for twelve hours, in the milk when they were fed all skim milk, which was when they were about two weeks old. As I grew older my mother talked to me more. She told me about my sister, Bonnie Jean, and my brother, Yeksa’s Prince, who, as I said before, went to Minnesota. She, also, told me about my father, Puck, who was born at Kenosha, Wis., on the same farm where she was born, which was owned by I. J. Clapp. My father was named after the Puck Magazine. His father was a noted individual, his name was Sir Champion XVI; his grandfather was imported Champion 38; his mother was imported Meg and his grandmother was imported Daisy 2d, and were all descended from a long line of royal ancestors, on the Island of Guernsey, that were noted for their great milk and butter production. The Sir Champions were noted for transmitting their excellent characteristics to their posterity.

My father and mother were selected, by Mr. Foster, from I. J. Clapp’s fine herd of Guernseys, as a nucleus of a Guernsey
family. Mr. and Mrs. Foster were not satisfied with the dairy breeds they had tried, so concluded to try the Guernseys, about which Mrs. Foster had read in an article, signed I. J. C., in the Western Rural, saying they were larger,hardier and more amiable than the Jerseys and not so sensitive and nervous as they were; that they also gave more and richer milk and colored their own butter. The Fosters were so pleased with the description of them that Mrs. Foster looked in the Breeder's Gazette and found the advertisements of two Guernsey breeders, to whom she wrote for a catalogue and price list, I. J. Clapp being one of them. They decided that after Mr. Foster had seen some of these cattle that if they were as good as represented they would buy a male to head their dairy herd. With this purpose in view, Mr. Foster took a trip through Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota and looked over some of the best herds of Jerseys and other dairy breeds, and liked the Guernseys better than any of them, and thought they were the coming dairy cows. She said, "your father was a younger animal than Mr. Foster wanted, but his pedigree was so good and he possessed so many fine dairy points that he purchased him. And he was so greatly impressed with the record of the Sir Champions and their remarkable powers of transmission, that he decided to purchase me too. So your father and I came to Riverside Farm together and were the first Guernseys in this part of the state.

"Your father is a handsome animal and his picture that Fred Foster, the artist at Sparta made, looks just like him. He has a very amiable disposition, and when young was very playful, and he and Mr. Foster had many a pleasant romp together. One day, when they were having a big playspell, one of the neighbors came into the yard and said to Mr. Foster, 'What are you up to? Don't you know you'll spoil that fellow playing with him that way? Why, you'll get him so he will want to hook everybody he sees, and will be so ugly when he gets older that you can't do anything with him.'"
"In reply Mr. Foster said, 'There is where you are off; for the more you handle such animals and play with them when young, and the kinder you are to them, yet make them obey you, the more amiable and gentle they will be when grown up. They need to be handled and trained the same as children, because the nature of animals is not so very much different than that of the human family. If you should shut up a young boy, away from playmates and never allow him any liberty, and punish him every time he offered to play or try to get free, what kind of a man do you suppose he would grow up to be? Why, he couldn't help but be morose and ugly, and, thinking as he would have a right to think, that everybody was against him he would be against them, and always ready to defend himself and fight for his rights. That is just the reason there are so many ugly, vicious bulls. They have been spoiled in their early training, and the more sensitive and nervous their temperament the easier they are spoiled. Why, you know, don't you, that it is much easier to break a colt to drive that has been kindly handled and trained from its birth until it is old enough to work? One kind of animal is no different in that respect than another.'

"Yes" replied the man, 'you are right about horses, but I never thought about it making any difference with other animals, but I guess you are right, and, hereafter, I'll follow your plan for it has worked well with you.'

"Your father has always been so kind, and though he spent much of his time with the calves in their lot, he never offered to hurt them. Mrs. Foster said of him that his power of transmission was unusually strong; that even his grade progeny bore his color and markings to a great degree, so much so, that when Governor Hoard saw his first grade heifer at the fair, he said she was a typical Guernsey.

"When we came here a fine large Jersey called Hero headed the herd. He was fat and sleek, with hair as smooth and glossy as satin and looked as if he always had the best of care.
He was very kind and gentle; so gentle that when sometimes, he was led, with only a rope around his horns, past Mrs. Foster, as she sat, with a red shawl around her shoulders, in her wheel chair, he would look calmly and pleasantly at her when she spoke to him, and neither the men nor calves were afraid of him, though one of the men said that when Mr. Foster bought Hero he was counted the most vicious animal in the county. He stayed here nearly two years after we came, until your father was old enough to fill his place. At first we had pens near his stall and he told us his story, which was a very sad and pitiful one. It does not seem possible that any man could be so cruel to a dumb animal that was dependent on him for food and care. One day your father and I were talking to each
other, and telling how lonely we were so far from our old home, and among strangers, and how much we missed our parents and brothers and sisters and friends; when Hero, who heard us, said, ‘you have come to a good place and will have a good home, where you will be well cared for, and where everybody will be kind to you. It is the best home I ever had, and I have had a good many. I have had a very hard life, though I am only seven years old.’

‘How did you come to have so many homes?’ said I, ‘you look as if you had always had a good home and an easy time?’

‘Oh, yes,’ replied Hero, ‘I know I look that way now, but if you had seen what a sorry looking object I was when I came to this good home you would have thought that I had never had anything but a hard time.’ ‘Tell Puck and me all about it, won’t you?’ said I, ‘It must be a very interesting story.’

‘Yes, I will,’ he replied, ‘then you will know why I said you had come to a good place and would have a good home here; but I don’t like to tell it, for it makes me feel ugly whenever I think how cruelly I was treated.’