

there was still so much of our former piratical appearance left that no one recognized us; they scarcely looked at us, and the only being that took any notice of the returned wanderers was an intelligent cow, which stopped in the middle of a narrow street and stared at us in astonishment as we tried to pass. That cow was so delightfully summery to look at that I felt inclined to go up and pat her; I felt now that I really was in Norway. When I got to the telegraph-station I laid a huge bundle down on the counter, and said that it consisted of telegrams that I should like to have sent as soon as possible. There were nearly a hundred of them, one or two rather long, of about a thousand words each.

The head of the telegraph-office looked hard at me, and quietly took up the bundle; but as his eye fell upon the signature of the telegram that lay on the top, his face suddenly changed, he wheeled sharp round, and went over to the lady clerk who was sitting at the table. When he again turned and came towards me his face was radiant, and he bade me a hearty welcome. The telegrams should be despatched as quickly as possible, he said; but it would take several days and nights to get them all through. And then the instrument began to tick and tick and to send through the country and the world the news that two members of the Norwegian Polar Expedition had returned safe and sound, and that I expected the *Fram* home in the course of the autumn. I pitied the four young ladies in the telegraph-office at Vardö;