

The Fox As Herdsman

by Sir George Webbe Dasent
from *Popular Tales from the Norse*

Once on a time there was a woman who went out to hire a herdsman, and she met a bear.

'Whither away, Goody?' said Bruin.

'Oh, I'm going out to hire a herdsman', answered the woman.

'Why not have me for a herdsman?' said Bruin.

'Well, why not?' said the woman. 'If you only knew how to call the flock; just let me hear?'

'OW, OW!' growled the bear.

'No, no! I won't have you', said the woman, as soon as she heard him say that, and off she went on her way.

So, when she had gone a bit further, she met a wolf.

'Whither away, Goody?' asked the Wolf.

'Oh!' said she, 'I'm going out to hire a herdsman.'

'Why not have me for a herdsman?' said the Wolf.

'Well, why not? if you can only call the flock; let me hear?' said she.

'UH, UH!' said the Wolf.

'No, no!' said the woman; 'you'll never do for me.'

Well, after she had gone a while longer, she met a fox.

'Whither away, Goody?' asked the Fox.

'Oh, I'm just going out to hire a herdsman', said the woman.

'Why not have me for your herdsman?' asked the Fox.

'Well, why not?' said she; 'if you only knew how to call the flock; let me hear?'

'DIL-DAL-HOLOM', sung out the Fox, in such a fine clear voice.

'Yes; I'll have you for my herdsman', said the woman; and so she set the Fox to herd her flock.

The first day the Fox was herdsman he ate up all the woman's goats; the next day he made an end of all her sheep; and the third day he ate up all her kine. So, when he came home at even, the woman asked what he had done with all her flocks?

'Oh!' said the Fox, 'their skulls are in the stream, and their bodies in the holt.'

Now, the Goody stood and churned when the fox said this, but she thought she might as well step out and see after her flock; and while she was away the Fox crept into the churn and ate up the cream. So when the Goody came back and saw that, she fell into such a rage, that she snatched up the little morsel of the cream that was left, and threw it at the fox as he ran off, so that he got a dab of it on the end of his tail, and that's the reason why the fox has a white tip to his brush.