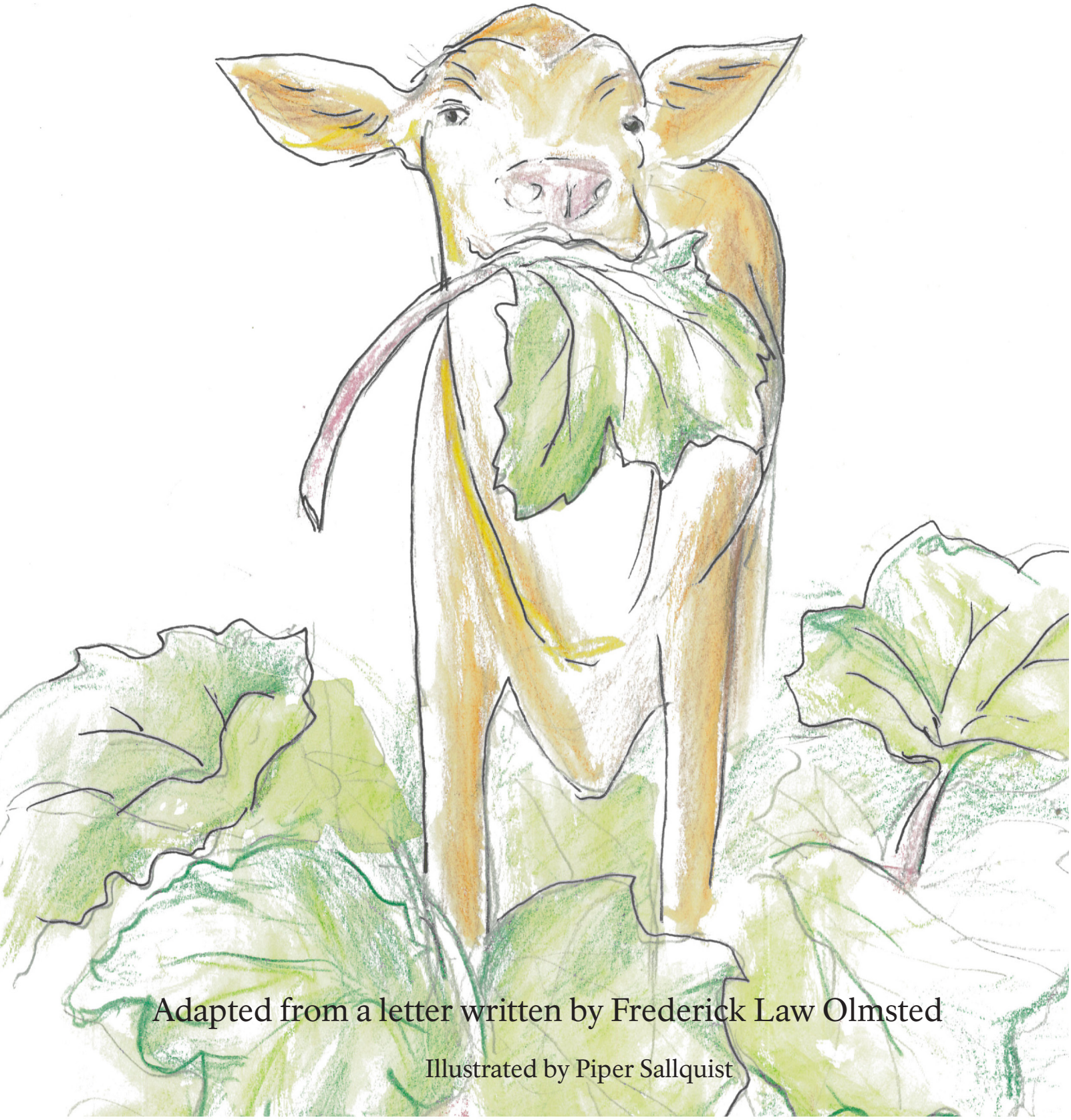
Dear Harry



Adapted from a letter written by Frederick Law Olmsted

Illustrated by Piper Sallquist

Adapted from a letter written by Frederick Law Olmsted to his son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.

209 W. 46th St
New York, NY
13 May, 1875.

Dear Harry,

The cats keep coming into the yard,
six of them every day,

and Quiz drives them out.

If I should send Quiz to you to keep
the cows away from your rhubarb,

he would not be here to drive the cats
out of the yard.

If six cats should keep coming into the yard
every day and not go out,

in a week there would be 42 of them

and in a month, 180

and before you came back next November, 1260!

If half of them had six kittens apiece, there would be more than 5000 cats and kittens in the yard.

They would make a great pile as high as the top of my windows.

A pile of 5000 cats and kittens would make my office so dark I would not be able to write in it.

I expect they would make such a great squalling all the time that I would not be able to sleep, and if I was not able to sleep, I would not be able to work, and if I did not work I should not have any money, and if I had no money I could not send any to Plymouth-

and so I could not send you any rhubarb seeds or supplies for your garden.

No, Sir. I can't spare Quiz and you will have to watch for the cows and drive them off yourself or you will raise no rhubarb.

Your Affectionate Father.

QUIZ

This book was adapted from a letter written by Frederick Law Olmsted to his son, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. (known for a time as Harry).

The original letter is below:

To Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

209 W. 46th St.
New York, NY
13 May, 1875.

Dear Harry;

The cats keep coming into the yard, six of them every day, and Quiz drives them out. If I should send Quiz to you to drive the cows away from your rhubarb he would not be here to drive the cats out of the yard.

If six cats should keep coming into the yard every day and not go out, in a week there would be 42 of them and in a month 180 and before you came back next November 1260.

(Then) if there should be 1260 cats in the yard before next November half of them at least would have kittens and if half of them should have 6 kittens apiece, there would be more than 5000 cats and kittens in the yard.

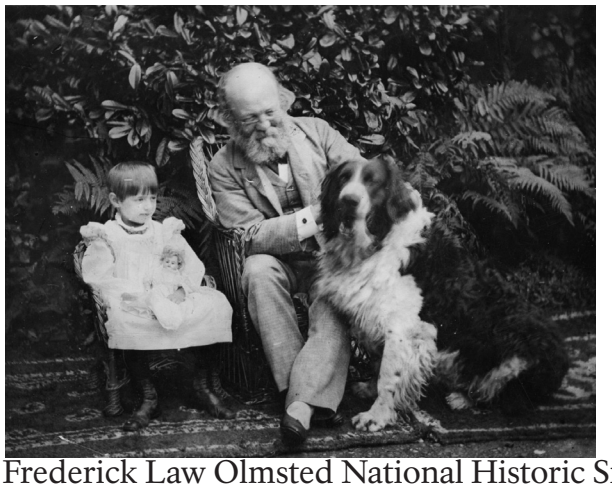
There would not be any place for Roseanna to spread the clothes unless she drove them all off the grass plot, and if she did they would have to crowd at the end of the yard nearest the house, and if they did that they would make a great pile as high as the top of my windows.

A pile of 5000 cats and kittens, some of them black ones, in front of my window would make my office so dark I should not be able to write in it.

Besides that those underneath, particularly the kittens, would be hurt by those standing on the top of them and I expect they would make such a great squalling all the time that I should not be able to sleep, and if I was not able to sleep, I should not be able to work, and if I did not work I should not have any money, and if I had no money I could not send any to Plymouth and so you and I would not ever see each other any more.

No, Sir. I can't spare Quiz and you will have to watch for the cows and drive them off yourself or you will raise no rhubarb.

Your affectionate father.



A photo of Frederick Law Olmsted sitting in a garden enjoying the company of a dog (not Quiz).

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site.