

Poems and Songs

Bjornstjerne Bjornson

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This eBook was produced by Nicole Apostola.

POEMS AND SONGS
BY BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON
TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN
IN THE ORIGINAL METERS
BY
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INTRODUCTION

BJÖRNSON AS A LYRIC POET

I lived far more than e'er I sang; Thought, ire, and mirth unceasing rang
Around me, where I gusted; To be where loud life's battles call For me was well—nigh more than all
My pen on page arrested.

What's true and strong has growing—room, And will perhaps eternal bloom,
Without black ink's salvation, And he will be, who least it planned, But in life's surging dared to stand, The best
bard for his nation.

A life seventy—seven years long and but two hundred pages of lyrical production, more than half of which was written in about a dozen years! The seeming disproportion is explained by the lines just quoted from the poem *Good Cheer*, with which Björnson concluded the first edition of his *Poems and Songs*. Alongside of these stanzas, in which the cause of his popularity and powerful influence is also unconsciously revealed, may well be placed the following one from *The Poet*, which discloses to us the larger conception of the mission that Björnson himself in all his work and life, no less than in his lyrics, so finely fulfilled:

The poet does the prophet's deeds; In times of need with new life pregnant, When strife and suffering are
regnant, His faith with light ideal leads. The past its heroes round him posts, He rallies now the present's hosts,
The future opes
Before his eyes,
Its pictured hopes
He prophesies.

Ever his people's forces vernal
The poet frees, —by right eternal.

“The best bard for his nation” is he who “does the prophet's deeds,” who “rallies now the present's hosts,” and “frees, —by right eternal.” Poet and prophet Björnson was, but more than all else the leader of the Norwegian people, “where loud life's battles call,” through conflict unto liberation and growth. It has been said that twice in the nineteenth century the national soul of Norway embodied itself in individual men,—during the first half in Henrik Wergeland and during the second half in Björnstjerne Björnson. True as this is of the former, it is still more true of the latter, for the history of Norway shows that the soul of its people expresses itself best through will and action. Björnson throughout all his life willed and wrought so much for his country, that he could give relatively little time and power to lyrical self—expression.

But Björnson strikingly represented the past of Norway as well as his contemporary age. He was a modern blending of the heroic chieftain and the gifted skald of ancient times. He was the first leader of his country in a period when the battles of the spirit on the fields of politics and economics, ethics, and esthetics were the only form of conflict,—a leader evoking, developing, and guiding the powers of his nation into fuller and higher life. In his many—sidedness Björnson was also in his time the first skald of his people, almost equally endowed with genius as a narrative, a dramatic, and a lyric poet; with talents scarcely less remarkable as an orator, a theater—director, a journalistic tribune of the people (his newspaper articles amounted, roughly estimated, to ten thousand book—pages), a letter—writer, and a conversationalist.

If, furthermore, we take into account also Björnson's labors and achievements in the domain of action more narrowly considered, it is no wonder that his *Poems and Songs* make only a small volume. Examining the book more closely, we find that three—quarters of its pages were written before the year 1875, so that the lyrical output, here published, of the thirty—four years thereafter amounts to but fifty pages. From the year 1874 on in Björnson's life the chieftain supplanted the skald, so far as lyrical utterance was concerned. He was leading his nation in thought and action on the fields of theology and religion, of politics, economics, and social reform; he was tireless in making speeches, in writing letters and newspaper articles; his poetic genius flowed out copiously in the dramatic and epic channels of his numerous modern plays, novels, and stories.

That soon after 1874 Björnson passed through a crisis in his personal thought and inner life was probably, in view of the sufficient explanation suggested above, without influence in lessening his production of short poems. This crisis was in his religious beliefs. His father was a clergyman in the Lutheran State Church, and from his

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home in western Norway Björnson brought with him to Christiania in 1850 fervent Christian faith of the older orthodox sort. Here his somewhat somber religion was soon made brighter and more tender by the adoption of Grundtvig's teachings, and until past mid-life he remained a sincere Christian in the fullest sense, as is repeatedly shown in his lyrics. But in the years just before 1877 study of modern science and philosophy, of the history of the Church and dogma, led him to become an evolutionist, an agnostic theist. Nevertheless, he ever practiced the Christian art of life, as he tried to realize his ideals of truth, justice, and love of humanity. This large and simple Christian art of life, in distinction from the dogmas of the Church, he early sung in lines which sound no less true to the keynote of his later years:

Love thy neighbor, to Christ be leal!
Crush him never with iron-heel,
Though in the dust he's lying!
All the living responsive await
Love with power to recreate,
Needing alone the trying.

II

The quantity, then, of Björnson's short poems is small. Their intrinsic worth is great. Their influence in Norway has been broad and deep, they are known and loved by all. If lyrical means only melodious, "singable," they possess high poetic value and distinction. In a unique degree they have inspired composers of music to pour out their strains. When a Scandinavian reads Björnson's poems, his ears ring with the familiar melodies into which they have almost sung themselves.

Here is not the place for technical analysis of the external poetic forms. A cursory inspection will show that Björnson's are wonderfully varied, and that the same form is seldom, if ever, precisely duplicated. In rhythm and alliteration, rhyme sequence and the grouping of lines into stanzas, the form in each case seems to be determined by the content, naturally, spontaneously. Yet for one who has intimately studied these verses until his mind and heart vibrate responsively, the words of all have an indefinable melody of their own, as it were, one dominant melody, distinctly Björnsonian. This unity in variety, spontaneous and characteristic, is not found in the earlier poems not included in this volume. So far as is known, Björnson's first printed poem appeared in a newspaper in 1852. It and other youthful rhymes of that time extant in manuscript, and still others as late as 1854, are interesting by reason of their contrast with his later manner; the verse-form has nothing personal, the melodies are those of older poets. It is in the lyrics of *Synnöve Solbakken*, written in 1857 or just before, that Björnson for the first time sings in his own forms his own melody.

Style and diction are the determining factors in the poetic form of lyric verse, along with the perhaps indistinguishable and indefinable quality of melodiousness. Of Björnson's style or manner in the larger sense it must be said that it is not subjectively lyrical. He is not disposed to introspective dwelling on his own emotions and to profuse self-expression without a conscious purpose. In general he must have some definite objective end in view, some occasion to celebrate for others, some "cause" to champion, the mood of another person or of other persons, real or fictitious, to reproduce synthetically in a combination of thoughts, feelings, similes, and sounds. In his verses words do not breed words, nor figures beget figures unto lyric breadth and vagueness. When Björnson was moved to make a poem, he was so filled with the end, the occasion, the cause, the mood to be reproduced, that he was impatient of any but the most significant words and left much to suggestion. Often the words seem to be in one another's way, and they are not related with grammatical precision. Thus in the original more than in the translation of the poem *Norway, Norway!* the first strophe of which is:

Norway, Norway,
Rising in blue from the sea's gray and green,
Islands around like fledglings tender,
Fjord-tongues with slender
Tapering tips in the silence seen.
Rivers, valleys,
Mate among mountains, wood-ridge and slope
Wandering follow. Where the wastes lighten,

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Lake and plain brighten,
Hallow a temple of peace and hope.
Norway, Norway,
Houses and huts, not castles grand,
Gentle or hard,
Thee we guard, thee we guard,
Thee, our future's fair land.

Such abrupt brevity of expression, not uncommon among Norwegian peasants, was no doubt natural to Björnson, but was confirmed by the influence of the Old Norse sagas and skaldic poetry. The latter may also have increased his use of alliteration, masterly not only in the direct imitation of the old form, as in *Bergliot*, but also in the enrichment of the music of his rhymed verse in modern forms. Conciseness of style in thought and word permitted no lyrical elaboration of figures or descriptions; it restricted the poet to brief hints of the ways his spirit would go, and along which he wished to guide that of the hearer or reader. Herein is the source of much of the power of Björnson's patriotic songs and poems of public agitation. Those who read or hear or sing them are made to think, or at least to feel, the unwritten poetry between the lines. Scarcely less notable is this paucity in the expression of wealth of thought and feeling in the memorial and other more individual poems.

Björnson's diction corresponds to the quality of style thus briefly characterized. The modern Norwegian language has no considerable, highly developed special vocabulary for poetic use. From the diction of prose the poet must quarry and carve the verbal material for his verse. It sometimes seems, indeed, as if it were hard for Björnson to find the right block and fit it, nicely cut, into his line. In describing his diction critics have used the figures of hewing and of hammer-strokes, but then have said that it is not so much laborious effort we hear as the natural falling into place of words heavy with thought and feeling. Here it is that translation must so often come short of faithful reproduction. The choice of words in relation to rhythm and euphony is a mystery difficult to interpret even in the poet's own language. If we try to analyze the verse of great poets, we frequently find, beyond what is evidently the product of conscious design, effects of suggestion and sound which could not be calculated and designed. The verbal material seems hardly to be amenable to the poet's control, but rather to be chosen, shaped, and placed involuntarily by the thought and the mood. *The Ocean* is a good example of the distinctive power and beauty of Björnson's diction.

Such, then, in melody, rhythm, style, and diction is the form of Björnson's verse: compact, reticent, suggestive, without elaborate verbal ornamentation, strong with "the long-vibrating power of the deeply felt, but half-expressed." It challenges and stimulates the soul of the hearer or reader to an intense activity of appropriation, which brings a fine reward.

III

What, now, is the content that finds expression in this form? As we turn the pages from the beginning, we first meet lyrics that may be called personal, not utterances of Björnson's individual self, but taken from his early tales and the drama *Halte Hulda*, with strains of love, of religious faith, of dread of nature, and of joy in it, of youthful longing; then after two patriotic choral songs and a second group of similar personal poems from *A Happy Boy* follow one on a patriotic subject with historical allusions, a memorial poem on J. L. Heiberg, and one descriptive, indeed, of the ocean, but filled with the human feelings and longings it arouses; then come a lyric personal to Björnson, and one that is not. As we progress, we pass through a similar succession of descriptive, personal, or memorial poems, some of religious faith, historical ballads, lyrical romances, patriotic and festival choral songs, poems in celebration of individual men and women, living or dead, and towards the end poems, like the *Psalms*, of deep philosophic thought suffused with emotion.

Now these subjects may be gathered into a small number of groups: love, religious faith and thought, moods personal to the poet, patriotism,—love of country, striving for its welfare, pride in Norway's history, and joy in the beauty and grandeur of its scenery. The occasional songs and poems in celebration of great personalities, —whether they were of high station and renown, or lowly and unfamed, —or for festivals, earnest or jovial, are nearly all conceived in the spirit of patriotism,—love of Norway, its historic past, its present, its future. They may be social songs memorial or political poems, ballads or lyrical romances,—all are inspired by and inspire love of country.

Not very many of Björnson's lyrics have love as their subject. From his tales, novels, and dramas we know

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that his understanding of love was comprehensive and subtle, yet this volume contains but few of the love-lyrics of strong emotion, which Björnson must have felt, if not written. He was a man of will and action with altruistic ideals; sexual love could not be the whole nor the center of life for him.

Nor are the purely religious poems numerous, although Christian faith is at once the ground and the atmosphere of his lyrics in the earlier period, and some of the latest are expressions of a broad and deep philosophy of life. "Love thy neighbor!" and "Light, Love, Life" in deeds were characteristic of Björnson, rather than the utterance of passive meditations of a theoretic nature on God and man's relation to Him.

Björnson's unflinching bent towards activity in behalf of others could not favor either the lyric outpouring of other purely personal moods. Such purely personal poems are then also relatively rare. Some of them, however, are most beautiful and deeply moving. Generally he frees himself in an epic or dramatic way from subjective introspection; he projects his feeling into another personality or sends it forth in choral song in terms of "we" and "our." The moods he does express more directly for himself are vague youthful longing for the great and the instant, joyous trustfulness even in adversity and under criticism, love of parents, wife, family, and friends, faith in the future and in the power of the good to prevail.

By far the largest number of the *Poems and Songs* have as their subject patriotism in the broadest sense, a theme at once simple and complex. It is in them that the skald and chieftain so typically blend in one. Of this group the influence has been widest and deepest. In his oration at the unveiling of the statue of Wergeland in Christiania, Björnson spoke of him and of Norway's constitution as growing up together; with reference to this it has been maintained that we have still greater right to say that Björnson and Norway's full freedom and independence grew up together. The truth of the statement is very largely due to Björnson's patriotic poems. Through them the poet-prophet interpreted for his nation the historic past and the evolving present, and forecast the future. Simplifying the meaning of life, he accomplished the mission which he himself made the ideal of *The Poet*, and became for his own people the liberalizing teacher and mold, leading them to freedom in thought and action, in social and political life. Of this large and seemingly complex group of patriotic lyrics,—whether they be on its history, or on contemporaneous events and deeds of individuals with political significance; or on men, both known and unknown to fame, who had made and were making Norway great; or on historical, political, and other national festivals; or on the country, its land and sea and fjords and forests and fields and cities, in aspects more genial or more stern, —whether they be poems of the individual or social and choral songs, manorial poems or ballads or lyrical romances, or descriptions of Norway's scenery,—the unifying simple theme is Norway to be loved and labored for.

Not a single poem is, however, merely descriptive of external nature. Björnson's relation to nature is indeed more intimate than that of any other Norwegian writer of his time, but here also he is epic and dramatic rather than subjectively lyrical. He sees and hears through what is external, and his feeling for and with nature is but a profounder looking into the soul of his nation or the inner life of other human beings. For him Norway's scenery is filled with the glory of the nation's past, the promise of its future, or the needs of the present. The poems that contain nature descriptions are primarily patriotic. In the national hymn *Yes, We Love*, it is the nation, its history and its future, which with the land towers as a whole before his vision; in *Romsdal* the scenery frames the people, their character and life. More personal poems, as *To Molde* or *A Meeting*, are not merely descriptive; in the former childhood's memories and the love of friends fill the scene, while in the latter the freshly and tenderly drawn snow-landscape is but the setting for a vivid picture of a deceased friend.

The contents of this volume befit the verse-form, as if each were made by and for the other. The subjects are simple, large, weighty; the form is compact, strong, suggestive. Björnson is distinctly not subjectively lyrical, but has a place in the first rank "as a choral lyric poet and as an epic lyric poet." (Collin.) Georg Brandes wrote of him many years ago: "In few [fields] has he put forth anything so individual, unforgettable, imperishable, as in the lyric field."

SYNNOVE'S SONG

(FROM SYNNOVE SOLBAKKEN)

Have thanks for all from our childhood's day,
Our play together in woodland roaming.
I thought that play would go on for aye,
Though life should pass to its gloaming.

I thought that play would go on for aye,
From bowers leading of leafy birches
To where the Solbakke houses lay,
And where the red-painted church is.

I sat and waited through evenings long
And scanned the ridge with the spruces yonder;
But darkening mountains made shadows throng,
And you the way did not wander.

I sat and waited with scarce a doubt:
He'll dare the way when the sun's descended.
The light shone fainter, was nearly out,
The day in darkness had ended.

My weary eye is so wont to gaze,
To turn its look it is slow in learning;
No other landmark it seeks, nor strays,
Beneath the brow sorely burning.

They name a place where I help may find,
And fain to Fagerli church would guide me;
But try not thither to move my mind;
He sits there ever beside me.

—But good it is, that full well I know,

Poems and Songs

Who placed the houses both here and yonder,
Then cut a way through the woods so low
And let my eye on it wander.

But good it is that full well I know,
Who built the church and to pray invited,
And made them meeting in pairs to go
Before the altar united.

THE HARE AND THE FOX

(FROM SYNNOVE SOLBAKKEN)

The fox lay still by the birch–tree's root
In the heather.
The hare was running with nimble foot
O'er the heather.
Was ever brighter a sunshine–day,
Before, behind me, and every way,
O'er the heather!

The fox laughed low by the birch–tree's root
In the heather.
The hare was running with daring foot
O'er the heather.

I am so happy for everything!
Hallo! Why go you with mighty spring
O'er the heather?

The fox lay hid by the birch–tree's root
In the heather.
The hare dashed to him with reckless foot
O'er the heather.
May God have mercy, but this is queer! —
Good gracious, how dare you dance so here
O'er the heather?

NILS FINN

(FROM HALTE HULDA)

(see Note 1)

Now little Nils Finn had away to go;
The skis were too loose at both heel and toe.
—“That's too bad!” rumbled yonder.

Then little Nils Finn in the snow set his feet:
“You ugliest troll, you shall never me cheat!”
—“Hee–ho–ha!” rumbled yonder.

Nils Finn with his staff beat the snow till it blew
“Your trollship, now saw you how hapless it flew?”
—“Hit–li–hu!” rumbled yonder.

Nils Finn pushed one ski farther forward with might;
The other held fast,—he reeled left and right.
—“Pull it up!” rumbled yonder.

Nils' tears wet the snow, while he kicked and he struck;
The more that he kicked there, the deeper he stuck.
—“That was good!” rumbled yonder.

The birch–trees, they danced, and the pine–trees said “Hoo!”
They more were than one,—were a hundred and two.
—“Know your way?” rumbled yonder.

A laugh shook the ridge till it made the snow fly;
But Nils clenched his fists and he swore 't was a lie.
—“Now beware!” rumbled yonder.

Poems and Songs

The snow-field yawned wide, and the heavens came low;
Nils thought 't was now time for him also to go.
—“Is he gone?” rumbled yonder.—

Two skis in the snow looked about everywhere,
But saw nothing much; for there was nothing there.
—“Where is Nils?” rumbled yonder.

THE MAIDENS' SONG

(FROM HALTE HULDA)

Good-morning, sun, 'mid the leaves so green —
Mind of youth in the dales' deep reaches,
Smile that brightens their somber speeches,
Heaven's gold on our earth-dust seen!

Good-morning, sun, o'er the royal tower!
Kindly thou beckonest forth each maiden;
Kindle each heart as a star light-laden,
Twinkling so clear, though a sad night lower!

Good-morning, sun, o'er the mountain-side!
Light the land that still sleep disguises
Till it awakens and fresh arises
For yonder day in thy warmth's full tide!

THE DOVE

(FROM HALTE HULDA)

I saw a dove fear–daunted,
By howling storm–blast driven;
Where waves their power vaunted,
From land it had been riven.
No cry nor moan it uttered,
I heard no plaint repeated;
In vain its pinions fluttered —
It had to sink, defeated.

THE MOTHER'S SONG

(FROM ARNE)

Lord! Oh, hold in Thy hand my child,
Guard by the river its playing!
Send Thou Thy Spirit as comrade mild,
Lest it be lost in its straying!
Deep is the water and false the ground.
Lord, if His arms shall the child surround,
Drowned it shall not be, but living,
Till Thou salvation art giving.

Mother, whom loneliness befalls,
Knowing not where it is faring,
Goes to the door, and its name there calls;
Breezes no answer are bearing.
This is her thought, that everywhere
He and Thou for it always care;
Jesus, its little brother,
Follows it home to mother.

LAMBKIN MINE

(FROM ARNE)

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,
Though it often be hard to climb
Over the rocks upswinging,
Follow thy bell's sweet ringing!

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,
Take good care of that fleece-coat thine!
Sewed to one and another,
Warm it shall keep my mother.

Kille, kille, lambkin mine,
Feed and fatten thy flesh so fine!
Know, you dear little sinner,
Mother will have it for dinner!

BALLAD OF TAILOR NILS

(FROM ARNE)

If you were born before yesterday,
Surely you've heard about Tailor Nils, who flaunts him so gay.

If it's more than a week that you've been here,
Surely you've heard how Knut Storedragen got a lesson severe.

Up on the barn of Ola-Per Kviste after a punchin':
"When Nils heaves you again, take with you some luncheon."

Hans Bugge, he was a man so renowned,
Haunting ghosts of his name spread alarm all around.

"Tailor Nils, where you wish to lie, now declare!
On that spot will I spit and lay your head right there."—

"Oh, just come up so near, that I know you by the scent!
Think not that by your jaw to earth I shall be bent!"

When first they met, 't was scarce a bout at all,
Neither man was ready yet to try to get a fall.

The second time Hans Bugge slipped his hold.
"Are you tired now, Hans Bugge? The dance will soon be bold."

The third time Hans fell headlong, and forth the blood did spurt.
"Why spit you now so much, man?" —"Oh my, that fall did hurt!"—

Poems and Songs

Saw you a tree casting shadows on new-fallen snow?
Saw you Nils on a maiden smiling glances bestow?

Have you seen Tailor Nils when the dance he commences?
Are you a maiden, then go!—It's too late, when you've lost your senses.

VENEVIL

(FROM ARNE)

(See Note 2)

Fair Venevil hastened with tripping feet
Her lover to meet.
He sang, so it rang o'er the church far away:
"Good-day! Good-day!"

And all the little birds sang right merrily their lay:
"Midsummer Day
Brings us laughter and play;
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!"

She twined him a wreath of the flowers blue:
"My eyes for you!"
He tossed it and caught it and to her did bend:
"Good-by, my friend!"
And loudly he exulted at the field's far distant end:
"Midsummer Day
Brings us laughter and play;
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!"

She twined him a wreath: "Do at all you care
For my golden hair?"
She twined one, and gave in life's hour so rare
Her red lips' pair;
He took them and he pressed them, and he blushed as she did there.

She twined one all white as a lily-band:
"T is my right hand."
She twined one blood-red, with her love in each strand:
"T is my left hand."
He took them both and kept them both, but would not understand.

She twined of the flowers that bloomed around

Poems and Songs

“Every one I found!”
She gathered and twined, while tears would her eyes fill:
“Take them you will!”
In silence then he took them, but to flight he turned him still.

She twined one so large, of discordant hue:
“My bride's—wreath true!”
She twined it and twined, till her fingers were sore:
“Crown me, I implore!”
But when she turned, he was not there, she never saw him more.

She twined yet undaunted without a stay
At her bride's—array.
But now it was long past the Midsummer Day,
All the flowers away:
She twined it of the flowers, though they all were now away!
“Midsummer Day
Brings us laughter and play;
But later know I little, if she twines her wreath so gay!”

OVER THE LOFTY MOUNTAINS

(FROM ARNE)

(See Note 3)

Wonder I must, what I once may see
Over the lofty mountains!
Eyes shall meet only snow, may be;
Standing here, each evergreen tree
Over the heights is yearning;—
Will it be long in learning?

Pinions strong bear the eagle away
Over the lofty mountains
Forth to the young and vigorous day;
There he exults in the swift, wild play,
Rests where his spirit orders,—
Sees all the wide world's borders.

Full-leaved the apple-tree wishes naught
Over the lofty mountains!
Spreading, when summer hither is brought,
Waiting till next time in its thought;
Many a bird it is swinging,
Knowing not what they are singing.

He who has longed for twenty years
Over the lofty mountains,
He who knows that he never nears,
Smaller feels with the lapsing years,
Heeds what the bird is singing
Cheerily to its swinging.

Garrulous bird, what will you here
Over the lofty mountains?
Surely your nest was there less drear,
Taller the trees, the outlook clear;—
Will you then only bring me
Longings, but naught to wing me?

Shall I then never, never go
Over the lofty mountains?
Shall to my thoughts this wall say,—No!
Stand with terror of ice and snow,
Barring the way unwended,
Coffin me when life is ended?

Out will I! Out!—Oh, so far, far, far,
Over the lofty mountains!
Here is this cramping, confining bar,
Baffling my thoughts, that so buoyant are;—
Lord! Let me try the scaling,
Suffer no final failing!

Sometime I know I shall rise and soar
Over the lofty mountains.
Hast Thou already ajar Thy door?—
Good is Thy home! Yet, Lord, I implore,
Hold not the gates asunder,—
Leave me my longing wonder!

THE DAY OF SUNSHINE

(FROM ARNE)

It was such a lovely sunshine–day,
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;
I roved to the woods, on my back I lay,
In cradle of fancy rolled me;
But there were ants, and gnats that bite,
The horse–fly was keen, the wasp showed fight.

“Dear me, don't you want to be out in this fine
weather?” —said mother, who sat on the steps and sang.

It was such a lovely sunshine–day,
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;
A meadow I found, on my back I lay,
And sang what my spirit told me;
Then snakes came crawling, a fathom long,
To bask in the sun,—I fled with my song.

“In such blessed weather we can go barefoot,”—said mother,
as she pulled off her stockings.

It was such a lovely sunshine–day,
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;
I loosened a boat, on my back I lay,
While blithely the current bowled me;
But hot grew the sun, and peeled my nose;
Enough was enough, and to land I chose.

“Now these are just the days to make hay in,”—said mother,
as she stuck the rake in it.

It was such a lovely sunshine–day,
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;
I climbed up a tree, oh, what bliss to play,
As cooling the breeze consoled me;

Poems and Songs

But worms soon fell on my neck, by chance,
And jumping, I cried: "T is the Devil's own dance!"

"Yes, if the cows aren't sleek and shiny to-day, they'll
never be so,"—said mother, gazing up the hillside.

It was such a lovely sunshine-day,
The house and the yard couldn't hold me;
I dashed to the waterfall's endless play,
There only could peace enfold me.
The shining sun saw me drown and die,—
If you made this ditty, 't was surely not I.

"Three more such sunshine-days, and everything will
be in,"—said mother, and went to make my bed.

INGERID SLETTEN

(FROM ARNE)

Ingerid Sletten of Sillejord
Neither gold nor silver did own,
But a little hood of gay wool alone,
Her mother had given of yore.

A little hood of gay wool alone,
With no braid nor lining, was here;
But parent love made it ever dear,
And brighter than gold it shone.

She kept the hood twenty years just so:
“Be it spotless,” softly she cried,
“Until I shall wear it once as bride,
When I to the altar go.”

She kept the hood thirty years just so:
“Be it spotless,” softly she cried,
“Then wear it I will, a gladsome bride,
When it to our Lord I show.”

She kept the hood forty years just so,
With her mother ever in mind.
“Little hood, be with me to this resigned,
That ne'er to the altar we'll go.”

She steps to the chest where the hood has lain,
And seeks it with swelling heart;
She guides her hand to its place apart,—
But never a thread did remain.

Poems and Songs

THE TREE

(FROM ARNE)

Ready with leaves and with buds stood the tree.
“Shall I take them?” the frost said, now puffing with glee.
 “Oh my, no, let them stand,
 Till flowers are at hand!”
All trembling from tree-top to root came the plea.

Flowers unfolding the birds gladly sung.
“Shall I take them?” the wind said and merrily swung.
 “Oh my, no, let them stand,
 Till cherries are at hand!”
Protested the tree, while it quivering hung.

The cherries came forth 'neath the sun's glowing eye.
“Shall I take them?” a rosy young girl's eager cry.
 “Oh my, yes, you can take,
 I've kept them for your sake!”
Low bending its branches, the tree brought them nigh.

THE MELODY

(FROM ARNE)

The youth in the woods spent the whole day long,
The whole day long;
For there he had heard such a wonderful song,
Wonderful song.

Willow-wood gave him a flute so fair,
A flute so fair,—
To try, if within were the melody rare,
Melody rare.

Melody whispered and said: “I am here!”
Said: “I am here!”
But while he was listening, it fled from his ear,
Fled from his ear.

Oft when he slept, it to him crept,
It to him crept;
And over his forehead in love it swept,
In love it swept.

When he would seize it, his sleep took flight,
His sleep took flight;
The melody hung in the pallid night,
In the pallid night.

“Lord, O my God, take me therein,
Take me therein!
The melody rare all my soul doth win,
My soul doth win.”

Answered the Lord: “‘T is your friend alone,

Poems and Songs

Your friend alone;
Though never an hour you it shall own,
You it shall own.”

OUR COUNTRY

(1859)

(See Note 4)

A land there is, lying near far–northern snow,
Where only the fissures life's springtime may know.
But surging, the sea tells of great deeds done,
And loved is the land as a mother by son.

What time we were little and sat on her knee,
She gave us her saga with pictures to see.
We read till our eyes opened wide and moist,
While nodding and smiling she mute rejoiced.

We went to the fjord and in wonder beheld
The ashen–gray bauta, that record of eld;
Still older she stood and her silence kept,
While stone–studded hows all around us slept.

Our hands she then took and away o'er the hill
She led to the church ever lowly and still,
Where humbly our forefathers knelt to pray,
And mildly she taught us: “Do ye as they!”

She scattered her snow on the mountain's steep side,
Then bade on swift skis her young manhood to glide;
The North Sea she maddened with scourge of gales,
Then bade her young manhood to hoist the sails.

Of beautiful maidens she gathered a throng,
To follow our daring with smiles and with song,
While she sat enthroned with her saga's scroll
In mantle of moonlight beneath the Pole.

Poems and Songs

Then “Forward, go forward!” was borne on the wind,
“With forefathers' aim and with forefathers' mind,
For freedom, for Norsehood, for Norway, hurrah!”
While echoing mountains voiced their hurrah.

Then life-giving fountains burst forth on our sight,
Then we were baptized with her spirit of might,
Then gleamed o'er the mountains a vision high,
That summons us onward until we die.

SONG FOR NORWAY

(1859)

NATIONAL HYMN

(See Note 5)

Yes, we love this land that towers
Where the ocean foams;
Rugged, storm-swept, it embowers
Many thousand homes.
Love it, love it, of you thinking,
Father; mother dear,
And that night of saga sinking
Dreamful to us here.

This the land that Harald guarded
With his hero-throng,
This the land that Haakon warded,
Hailed by Eyvind's song.
Olaf here the cross erected,
While his blood he shed;
Sverre's word this land protected
'Gainst the Roman dread.

Peasants whetted axes carried,
Broke th' invader's blow;
Tordenskjold flashed forth and harried,
Lighted home the foe.
Women oft to arms were leaping,
Manlike in their deed;
Others' lot was naught but weeping,
Tears that brought their meed.

Many truly were we never,
But we did suffice,
When in times of testing ever
Worthy was the prize.
For we would the land see burning,
Rather than its fall;
Memory our thoughts is turning
Down to Fredrikshald!

Harder times we bore that tried us
Were cast off in scorn;
In that crisis was beside us
Blue-eyed freedom born.
That gave father-strength for bearing
Famine-need and sword,
Honor death itself outwearing,
And it gave accord.

Far our foe his weapons flinging
Up his visor raised;
We in wonder to him springing
On our brother gazed.
Both by wholesome shame incited
Southward made our way;
Brothers three, in heart united,
We shall stand for aye!

Men of Norway, high or lowly,
Give to God the praise!
He our land's Defender Holy
In its darkest days!
All our fathers here have striven
And our mothers wept,
Hath the Lord His guidance given,
So our right we kept.

Yes, we love this land that towers
Where the ocean foams;
Rugged, storm-swept, it embowers
Many thousand homes.
As our fathers' conflict gave it
Vict'ry at the end,
Also we, when time shall crave it,
Will its peace defend.

THE CALL

(FROM A HAPPY BOY)

Come calf now to mother,
Come lamb that I choose,
Come cats, one and t' other,
With snowy-white shoes,
Come gosling all yellow,
Come forth with your fellow,
Come chickens so small,
Scarce walking at all,
Come doves, that are mine now,
With feathers so fine now!
The grass is bedewed,
The sunlight renewed,
It's early, early, summer's advancing
But autumn soon comes a-dancing!

EVENING

(FROM A HAPPY BOY)

Evening sun in beauty is shining,
Lazy puss on the step's reclining.

“Two small mice,
Cream that was so nice,
Four fine bits of fish,
Stolen from a dish,
And I'm so good and full,
And I'm so lazy and dull!”
Says the pussy.

Mother-hen her wings now is sinking,
Rooster stands on *one* leg a-thinking:

“That gray goose,
High he flies and loose;
But just watch, you must admit,
Naught he has of rooster-wit.
Chickens in! To the coop away!
Gladly dismiss we the sun for today!”
Says the rooster.

“Dear me, it is good to be living,
When life no labor is giving!”
Says the song-bird.

MARIT'S SONG

(FROM A HAPPY BOY)

“Dance!” called the fiddle,
Its strings loudly giggled,
The bailiff's man wriggled
Ahead for a spree.

“Hold!” shouted Ola
And tripped him to tumbling,
The bailiff's man humbling,
To maidens' great glee.

“Hop!” said then Erik,
His foot struck the ceiling,
The beams rang their pealing,
The walls gave a shriek.

“Stop!” said now Elling,
And seizing him collared,
He held him and hollered:
“You still are too weak!”

“Hei!” said then Rasmus,
Fair Randi embracing:
“Be quick now in placing
The kiss that you know!”

“Nay!” answered Randi.
A slapping she gave him,
And from her she drave him:
“Here take what I owe!”

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

(FROM A HAPPY BOY)

Love thy neighbor, to Christ be leal!
Crush him never with iron-heel,
 Though in the dust he's lying!
All the living responsive await
Love with power to recreate,
 Needing alone the trying.

OYVIND'S SONG

(FROM A HAPPY BOY)

Lift thy head, thou undaunted youth!
Though some hope may now break, forsooth,
Brighter a new one and higher
Shall throe eye fill with its fire.

Lift thy head to the vision clear!
Something near thee is calling: "Here!"—
Something with myriad voicing,
Ever in courage rejoicing.

Lift thy head, for an azure height
Rears within thee a vault of light;
Music of harps there is ringing,
Jubilant, rapturous singing.

Lift thy head and thy longing sing!
None shall conquer the growing spring;
Where there is life-making power,
Time shall set free the flower.

Lift thy head and thyself baptize
In the hopes that radiant rise,
Heaven to earth foreshowing,
And in each life-spark glowing!

LOVE SONG

(FROM A HAPPY BOY)

Have you love for me,
Yours my love shall be,
 While the days of life are flowing.
Short was summer's stay,
Grass now pales away,
 With our play will come regrowing.

What you said last year
Sounds yet in my ear,—
 Birdlike at the window sitting,
Tapping, trilling there,
Singing, in would bear
 Joy the warmth of sun befitting.

Litli—litli—lu,
Do you hear me too,
 Youth behind the birch—trees biding?
Now the words I send,
Darkness will attend,
 May be you can give them guiding.

Take it not amiss!
Sang I of a kiss?
 No, I surely never planned it.
Did you hear it, you?
Give no heed thereto,
 Haste I make to countermand it.

Oh, good—night, good—night
Dreams enfold me bright
 Of your eyes' persuasive mildness.
Many a silent word
From their corners heard,—
 Breaking forth with gentle wildness.

Poems and Songs

Now my song is still;
Is there more you will?
All the tones, to me returning,
Laughing, luring, soar;
Did you wish me more?
Still and warm the night is yearning.

MOUNTAIN SONG

(FROM A HAPPY BOY)

When you will the mountains roam
And your pack are making,
Put therein not much from home,
Light shall be your taking!
Drag no valley—feters strong
To those upland spaces,
Toss them with a joyous song
To the mountains' bases!

Birds sing Hail! from many a bough,
Gone the fools' vain talking,
Purer breezes fan your brow,
You the heights are walking.
Fill your breast and sing with joy!
Childhood's mem'ries starting,
Nod with blushing cheeks and coy,
Bush and heather parting.
If you stop and listen long,
You will hear upwelling
Solitude's unmeasured song
To your ear full swelling;
And when now there purls a brook,
Now stones roll and tumble,
Hear the duty you forsook
In a world—wide rumble.

Fear, but pray, you anxious soul,
While your mem'ries meet you!
Thus go on; the perfect whole
On the top shall greet you.
Christ, Elijah, Moses, there
Wait your high endeavor.
Seeing them you'll know no care,
Bless your path forever.

**ANSWER FROM NORWAY
TO THE SPEECHES IN THE
SWEDISH HOUSE OF NOBLES, 1860**

(See Note 6)

Have you heard what says the Swede now,
Young Norwegian man?
Have you seen what forms proceed now,
Border-watch to plan?
Shades of those from life departed,
Our forefathers single-hearted,
Who, when words like these were said,
Mounted guard and knew no dread.

Says the Swede now: That our cherished
Norseland's banner red,
That which flew when Magnus perished,
As to-day outspread,
Which o'er Fredrikshald victorious
And o'er Adler waved all glorious,
That the Swedish yellow-blue
Must in shame henceforth eschew.

Says the Swede now: Lost their luster
Have our memories,
Brighter honors shall we muster,
If we borrow his.
Bids us forth to Lützen stumble,
Close this straw-thatched cottage humble,
Drag our grandsire's ancient seat
To the Swedes for honor meet.

Let it stand, that poor old lumber,
To us dear for aye;
Sweden's ground it could but cumber,
And it might not pay.
For, we know from history's pages,
Some sat there in former ages,
Sverre Priest and other men,
Who may wish to come again.

Poems and Songs

Says the Swede now: We must know it,
 He our freedom gave,
But the Swedish sword can mow it,
 Send it to its grave.
Yet the case is not alarming,
He must fare with good fore-arming,
 For in truth some fell of yore,
 There where he would break a door.

Says the Swede now: We a clever
 Little boy remain,
Very suitable to ever
 Hold his mantle's train.
But would Christie be so pliant,
With his comrades self-reliant,
 If they still at Eidsvold stood,
 Sword-girt, building Norway's good?

Big words oft the Swede was saying,
 Only small were we,
But they never much were weighing,
 When the test should be.
On the little cutter sailing,
Wessel and Norse youth prevailing,
 Sweden's flag and frigate chased
 From the Kattegat in haste.

Sweden's noblemen are shaking
 Charles the Twelfth's proud hat;
We, in council or war-making,
 Peers are for all that.
If things take the worse turn in there,
Aid from Torgny we shall win there.
 Then o'er all the Northland's skies
 Greater freedom's sun shall rise.

JOHAN LUDVIG HEIBERG

(1860)

(See Note 7)

To the grave they bore him sleeping,
Him the aged, genial gardener;
Now the children gifts are heaping
From the flower-bed he made.

There the tree that he sat under,
And the garden gate is open,
While we cast a glance and wonder
Whether some one sits there still.

He is gone. A woman only
Wanders there with languid footsteps,
Clothed in black and now so lonely,
Where his laughter erst rang clear.

As a child when past it going,
Through the fence she looked with longing,
Now great tears so freely flowing
Are her thanks that she came in.

Fairy-tales and thoughts high-soaring
Whispered to him 'neath the foliage.
She flits softly, gathering, storing
Them as solace for her woe.

Far his wanderings once bore him,
Bore this aged, genial searcher;
One who listening sat before him
Much could learn from time to time.

Life and letters were his ladder
Up toward that which few discover,
Thought's wide realm, with vision gladder
He explored, each summit scaled.

In his manhood he defended
All that greatness has and beauty;
Later he the stars attended
In their silent course to God.

Older men remember rather
"New Year!" ringing o'er the Northland.
How it power had to gather
Leaders to a greater age

Do you him remember leaping
Forth, his horn so gladly winding,
Back the mob on all sides sweeping
From the progress of the great?

Play of thought 'mid tears and laughter,
Fauns and children were about him;
Freedom's beacons high thereafter
Kindled slowly of themselves.

And his words soon found a hearing,
Peace of heart flowed from his music;
All the land thrilled to the nearing
Of a great prophetic choir.

In his manhood he defended
All that greatness has and beauty;
Later he the stars attended
In their silent course to God.

Northern flowers were his pleasure,
As an aged genial gardener,
From his nation's springtime treasure
Culling seed for deathless growth.

Now with humor, now sedately,
He kept planting or uprooting,
While the Danish beech-tree stately
Gave his soul its evening peace.

There the tree we saw him under,
And the garden gate is open,
While we cast a glance and wonder
Whether some one sits there still.

THE OCEAN

(FROM ARNLJOT GELLINE)

(See Note 8)

... Oceanward I am ever yearning,
Where far it rolls in its calm and grandeur,
The weight of mountain-like fogbanks bearing,
Forever wandering and returning.
The skies may lower, the land may call it,
It knows no resting and knows no yielding.
In nights of summer, in storms of winter,
Its surges murmur the self-same longing.

Yes, oceanward I am ever yearning,
Where far is lifted its broad, cold forehead!
Thereon the world throws its deepest shadow
And mirrors whispering all its anguish.
Though warm and blithesome the bright sun stroke it
With joyous message, that life is gladness,
Yet ice-cold, changelessly melancholy,
It drowns the sorrow and drowns the solace.

The full moon pulling, the tempest lifting,
Must loose their hold on the flowing water.
Down whirling lowlands and crumbling mountains
It to eternity tireless washes.
What forth it draws must the one way wander.
What once is sunken arises never.
No message comes thence, no cry is heard thence;
Its voice, its silence, can none interpret.

Yes, toward the ocean, far out toward ocean,
That knows no hour of self-atonement!
For all that suffer release it offers,
But trails forever its own enigma.
A strange alliance with Death unites it,
That *all* it give Him,—itself excepting!

I feel, vast Ocean, thy solemn sadness,

Poems and Songs

To thee abandon my weak devices,
To thee let fly all my anxious longings:
May thy cool breath to my heart bring healing!
Let Death now follow, his booty seeking:
The moves are many before the checkmate!
Awhile I'll harass thy love of plunder,
As on I scud 'neath thy angry eyebrows;
Thou only fillest my swelling mainsail,
Though Death ride fast on thy howling tempest;
Thy billows raging shall bear the faster
My little vessel to quiet waters.

Ah! Thus alone at the helm in darkness,
By all forsaken, by Death forgotten,
When sails unknown far away are wafted
And some swift-coursing by night are passing,
To note the ground-swell's resistless current,
The sighing heart of the breathing ocean —
Or small waves plashing along the planking,
Its quiet pastime amid its sadness.
Then glide my lingering longings over
Into the ocean-deep grief of nature,
The night's, the water's united coldness
Prepares my spirit for death's dark dwelling.

Then comes day's dawning! My soul bounds upward
On beams of light to the vault of heaven;
My ship-steed sniffing its flank is laving
With buoyant zest in the cooling billow.
With song the sailor to masthead clammers
To clear the sail that shall swell more freely,
And thoughts are flying like birds aweary
Round mast and yard-arm, but find no refuge. ...
Yes, toward the ocean! To follow Vikar!
To sail like him and to sink as he did,
For great King Olaf the prow defending!
With keel unswerving the cold thought cleaving,
But hope deriving from lightest breezes!
Death's eager fingers so near the rudder,
While heaven's clearness the way illumines!

And then at last in the final hour
To feel the bolts and the nails are yielding
And Death is pressing the seams asunder,
That in may stream the absolving water!

Poems and Songs

Wet winding—sheets shall be folded round me,
And I descend to eternal silence,
While rolling billows my name bear shoreward
In spacious nights 'neath the cloudless moonlight!

ALONE AND REPENTANT

(TO A FRIEND SINCE DECEASED)

(See Note 9)

A friend I possess, whose whispers just said,
“God's peace!” to my night-watching mind.
When daylight is gone and darkness brings dread,
He ever the way can find.

He utters no word to smite and to score;
He, too, has known sin and its grief.
He heals with his look the place that is sore,
And stays till I have relief.

He takes for his own the deed that is such
That sorrows of heart increase.
He cleanses the wound with so gentle a touch,
The pain must give way to peace.

He followed each hope the heights that would scale
Reproached not a hapless descent.
He stands here just now, so mild, but so pale; —
In time he shall know what it meant.

THE PRINCESS

The princess looked down from her bower high,
The youth blew his horn as he lingered thereby.
“Be quiet, O youth, will forever you blow?
It hinders my thoughts, that would far away go,
Now, when sets the sun.”

The princess looked down from her bower high,
The youth ceased his blowing, his horn he laid by.
“Why are you so quiet? Now more shall you blow,
It lifts all my thoughts, that would far away go,
Now, when sets the sun.”

The princess looked down from her bower high,
The youth blew again, as he lingered thereby.
Then weeping, she whispered: “O God, let me know
The name of this sorrow that burdens me so! —
Now has set the sun.”

FROM MONTE PINCIO

Evening is coming, the sun waxes red,
Radiant colors from heaven are beaming
Life's lustrous longings in infinite streaming;—
Glory in death o'er the mountains is spread.
Cupolas burn, but the fog in far masses
Over the bluish-black fields softly passes,
Rolling as whilom oblivion pale;
Hid is yon valley 'neath thousand years' veil.

Evening so red and warm
Glow as the people swarm,
Notes of the cornet flare,
Flowers and brown eyes fair.

Great men of old stand in marble erected,
Waiting, scarce known and neglected.

Vespers are ringing, through roseate air
Nebulous floating of tone-sacrifices,
Twilight in churches now broadens and rises,
Incense and word fill the evening with prayer.
Over the Sabines the flame-belt is knotted,
Shepherds' lights through the Campagna are dotted,
Rome with her lamps dimly breaks on the sight,—
Shadowy legend from history's night.

But to the evening's spell
Dances the Saltarell';—
Fireworks flash and play,
Mora and laughter gay;—

Colors and tones in all thoughts are enthroning
Harmony's gracious condoning.

Lost has the light in its soundless affray,
Heaven its vaulting of dark-blue is framing,
Where from infinity deep stars are flaming,
Earth's masses sink into vapor away.
Fleeing the darkness, the eyes seek the city,
Meet with its torches a corpse borne in pity;
These seek the night, but a flag is each light,
Waving the hope of eternity bright.

Gaily to dance and wine
Mandolins give the sign.
Monkish song, noise of streets,

Poems and Songs

Drowned by a drum's stern beats;—
Through all the dreaming life's arteries flowing,
Glimpses of daylight are going.

Silence o'er all, and the darker blue sky
Watches serenely expectant, 'mid cheering
Dreams of the past and the future that's nearing:—
Fluctuant gleams in the gray that is nigh.
But they will gather, and Rome be resurgent,
Day-dawn from Italy's midnight emergent:
Cannon shall sound and the bells ring the new,
Mem'ries illumine the future's bright blue!—
 Greeting a bridal pair
 Charming in hope so rare,
 Voices bring soft salute,
 Music of harp and flute.
Mightier yearnings sweet sleep is beguiling;—
Lesser dare waken to smiling.

IF ONLY YOU KNEW IT

I dare never speak up to you,
For you to look down would not do,
But always you are there each day,
And always I wander this way.
Our thoughts go by stealth to make search and renew it,
But neither dares question nor give answer due it;
If only you knew it!

When constantly I could be found,
You often in pride on me frowned;
But now that I rarely appear,
I see that you wait for me here!
Two eyes, oh, two eyes made a snare and then drew it,
And who would escape must beware, and eschew it!
If only you knew it!

Yes, if you but guessed, this might be
A poem for you made by me,
Whose billowy lines just now fly
Up where you stand graceful and high!
But look you, this knowledge, to no purpose grew it,
I farther will go, Heaven guard, lest we rue it,—
If only you knew it!

THE ANGELS OF SLEEP

Asleep the child fell
When night cast its spell;
The angels came near
With laughter and cheer.

Her watch at its waking the mother was keeping:
“How sweet, my dear child, was your smile now while sleeping!”

To God mother went,
From home it was rent;
Asleep the child fell
'Neath tears' troublous spell.

But soon it heard laughter and mother-words tender;
The angels brought dreams full of childhood's rare splendor.

It grew with the years,
Till gone were the tears;
Asleep the child fell,
While thoughts cast their spell.

But faithful the angels their vigils were keeping,
The thoughts took and whispered: “Have peace now, while sleeping!”

THE MAIDEN ON THE SHORE

She wandered so young on the shore around,
Her thoughts were by naught on earth now bound.
Soon came there a painter, his art he plied
 Above the tide,
 In shadow wide,—
He painted the shore and herself beside.

More slowly she wandered near him around,
Her thoughts by a single thing were bound.
And this was his picture wherein he drew
 Herself so true,
 Herself so true,
Reflected in ocean with heaven's blue.

All driven and drawn far and wide around
Her thoughts now by everything were bound.
Far over the ocean,—and yet most dear
 The shore right here,
 The man so near,
Did ever the sunshine so bright appear!

SECRET LOVE

He gloomily sat by the wall,
As gaily she danced with them all.
Her laughter's light spell
On every one fell;
His heartstrings were near unto rending,
But this there was none comprehending.

She fled from the house, when at eve
He came there to take his last leave.
To hide her she crept,
She wept and she wept;
Her life—hope was shattered past mending,
But this there was none comprehending.

Long years dragged but heavily o'er,
And then he came back there once more.
—Her lot was the best,
In peace and at rest;
Her thought was of him at life's ending,
But this there was none comprehending.

OLAF TRYGVASON

(See Note 10)

Broad the sails o'er the North Sea go;
High on deck in the morning glow
Erling Skjalgsson from Sole
Scans all the sea toward Denmark:
“Cometh never Olaf Trygvason?”

Six and fifty the ships are there,
Sails are let down, toward Denmark stare
Sun-reddened men;—then murmur:
“Where is the great Long Serpent?
Cometh never Olaf Trygvason?”

When the sun in the second dawn
Cloudward rising no mast had drawn,
Grew to a storm their clamor:
“Where is the great Long Serpent?
Cometh never Olaf Trygvason?”

Silent, silent that moment bound,
Stood they all; for from ocean's ground
Sighed round the fleet a muffled:
“Taken the great Long Serpent,
Fallen is Olaf Trygvason.”

Ever since, through so many a year,
Norway's ships must beside them hear,
Clearest in nights of moonshine:
“Taken the great Long Serpent,
Fallen is Olaf Trygvason.”

A SIGH

Evening sunshine never
Solace to my window bears,
Morning sunshine elsewhere fares;—
Here are shadows ever.

Sunshine freely falling,
Wilt thou not my chamber find?
Here some rays would reach a mind,
Mid the dark appalling.

Morning sunshine's gladness,
Oh, thou art my childhood bright;
While *thou* playest pure and white,
I would weep in sadness.

Evening sunshine's whiling,
Oh, thou art the wise man's rest;—
Farther on! Then from the west
Greet my window smiling!

Morning sunshine's singing,
Oh, thou art the fantasy
That the sun-glad world lifts free,
Past my powers' winging.

Evening sunshine's quiet,
Thou art more than wisdom's rest,
Christian faith glows in thee blest:
Calm my soul's wild riot!

TO A GODSON

(1861)

(With an album containing portraits of all those who at the time of his birth were leaders in the intellectual and political world.)

Here hast thou before thee that constellation
Whereunder was born thy light;
These stars in the vault of high thoughts' mutation
Will fashion thy life with might.
Their prophecy, little one, we cannot know,
They light up the way that, unknown, thou shalt go
And kindle the thoughts that within shall glow.
Thou first shalt them gather,
Then choose thine own,—
So canst thou the rather
Grove on alone.

BERGLIOT

(See Note 11)

(Harald Haardraade's saga, towards the end of Chapter 45, reads thus: When Einar Tambarskelve's wife Bergliot, who had remained behind in her lodgings in the town, learned of the death of her husband and of her sort, she went straight to the royal residence, where the armed force of peasants was, and eagerly urged them to fight. But in that very moment the King (Harald) rowed out along the river. Then said Bergliot: "Now miss we here my kinsman, Haakon Ivarson; never should Einar's murderer row out along the river, if Haakon stood here on the river-bank.")

(In her lodgings)

To-day King Harald
Must hold his ting-peace;
For Einar has here
Five hundred peasants.

Our son Eindride
Safeguards his father,
Who goes in fearless
The King defying.

Thus maybe Harald,
Mindful that Einar
Has crowned in Norway
Two men with kingship,

Will grant that peace be,
On law well grounded;
This was his promise,
His people's longing.—

What rolling sand-waves
Swirl up the roadway!
What noise is nearing!
Look forth, my footboy!

—The wind's but blowing!
Here storms beat wildly;
The fjord is open,

Poems and Songs

The fells low-lying.

The town's unchanged
Since child I trod it;
The wind sends hither
The snarling sea-hounds.

—What flaming thunder
From thousand voices!
Steel-weapons reddened
With stains of warfare!

The shields are clashing!
See, sand-clouds rising,
Speer-billows rolling
Round Tambarsskelve!

Hard is his fortune!—
Oh, faithless Harald:
Death's ravens roving
Ride o'er thy ting-peace!

Fetch forth the wagon,
Drive to the fighting!
At home to cower
Would cost my life now.

(On the way)

O yeomen, yield not,
Circle and save him!
Eindride, aid now
Thine aged father!

Build a shield-bulwark
For him bow-bending!
Death has no allies
Like Einar's arrows!

And thou, Saint Olaf,
Oh, for thy son's sake!
Help him with good words

In Gimle's high hall!

(Nearer)

Our foes are the stronger ...
They fight now no longer ...
Subduing,
Pursuing,
They press to the river,—
What is it that's done?
What makes me thus quiver?
Will fortune us shun?
What stillness astounding!
The peasants are staying,
Their lances now grounding,
Two dead men surrounding,
Nor Harald delaying!
What throngs now enwall
The ting-hall's high door! ...
Silent they all
Let me pass o'er!
Where is Eindride!—
Glances of pity

Fear lest they show it,
Flee lest they greet me ...
So I must know it:
Two deaths there will meet me!—
Room! I must see:
Oh, it is they!—
Can it so be?—
Yes, it is they!

Fallen the noblest
Chief of the Northland;
Best of Norwegian
Bows is broken.

Fallen is Einar
Tambarskelve,
Our son beside him,—
Eindride!

Poems and Songs

Murdered with malice,
He, who to Magnus
More was than father,
King Knut the Mighty's
Son's counselor good.

Slain by assassins
Svolder's sharp-shooter,
The lion that leaped on the
Heath of Lyrskog!

Pride of the peasants
Snared in a pitfall,
Time-honored Tronder,
Tambarskelve.

White-haired and honored,
Hurled to the hounds here,—
Our son beside him,
Eindride!

Up, up, ye peasants, he has fallen,
But he who felled him is living!
Have you not known me? Bergliot,
Daughter of Haakon from Hjörungavaag;—
Now I am Tambarskelve's widow.

To you I appeal, peasant-warriors:
My aged husband has fallen.
See, see, here is blood on his blanching hair,
Your heads shall it be on forever,
For cold it becomes, while vain is your vengeance.

Up, up, warriors, your chieftain has fallen,
Your honor, your father, the joy of your children,
Legend of all the valley, hero of all the land,—
Here he has fallen, will you not avenge him?

Murdered with malice within the king's hall,
The ting-hall, the hall of the law, thus murdered,
Murdered by him whom the law holds highest,—
From heaven will lightning fall on the land,
If thus left unpurged by the flames of vengeance.

Poems and Songs

Launch the long-ships from land
Einar's nine long-ships are lying here,
Let them hasten vengeance on Harald!

If he stood here, Haakon Ivarson,
If he stood here on the hill, my kinsman,
The fjord should not save the slayer of Einar,
And I should not seek you cowards who flinch!

Oh, peasants, hear me, my husband has fallen,
The high-seat of my thoughts through years half a hundred!
Overthrown it now is, and by its right side,
Our only son fell, oh, all our future!
All is now empty between my two arms;
Can I ever again lift them up in prayer?
Or whither on earth shall I betake me?
If I go and stay in the places of strangers,—
I shall long for those where we lived together.
But if I betake me thither,—
Ah, them, themselves I shall miss.

Odin in Valhall I dare not beseech;
For him I forsook in days of childhood.
But the great new God in Gimle?—
All that I had He has taken!

Vengeance? Who speaks of vengeance?
Can vengeance the dead awaken,
Or cover me warm from the cold?
Find I in it a widow's seat sheltered,
Solace to cheer a childless mother?

Away with your vengeance! Let me alone!
Lay him on the wagon, him and our son!
Come, we will follow them home.
That God in Gimle, new and fearful, who all has taken,
Let Him now also take vengeance! Well He knows how!
Drive slowly! For so drove Einar always;
—Soon enough we shall come home.

The dogs to-day will not greet us gladly,
But drearily howl with drooping tails.
And lifting their heads the horses will listen;
Neighing they stand, the stable-door watching,

Poems and Songs

Eindride's voice awaiting.

In vain for his voice will they hearken,
Nor hears the hall the step of Einar,
That called before him for all to arise and stand,
For now came their chieftain.

Too large the house is; I will lock it;
Workmen, servants send away;
Sell the cattle and the horses,
Move far hence and live alone.

Drive slowly!
—Soon enough we shall come home.

TO MY WIFE

(WITH A SET OF ROMAN PEARLS)

(See Note 12)

Pray, take these pearls!—and my thanks for them
You lavished, the home of my youth to gem!
The thousands of hours of peaceful luster
Your spirit has filled, are pearls that cluster
 With beauty blest
 On my happy breast,
 And softly shining
 My brow are entwining
With thoughts whence the truth gleams: Thus gave his wife,
Who jeweled with tenderest love his life!

IN A HEAVY HOUR

(See Note 13)

Be glad when danger presses
Each power your soul possesses!
 In greater strain
 Your strength shall gain,
Till greater vict'ry blesses!
Supports may break in pieces,
Your friends may have caprices,
 But you shall see,
 The end will be,
Your need of crutches ceases.
 —'T is clear,
 Whom God makes lonely,
To him He comes more near.

KAARE'S SONG

(FROM SIGURD SLEMBE)

(See Note 14)

KAARE

What wakens the billows, while sleeps the wind?
What looms in the west released?
What kindles the stars, ere day's declined,
Like fires for death's dark feast?

ALL

God aid thee here, our earl,
God aid thee here, our earl,
It is Helga, who comes unto Orkney.

KAARE

What drives the fierce dragon to ride the foam,
While billows with blood are red?
The sea—fowl are shrieking, they seek their home,
And hover around my head.

ALL

God aid thee here, our earl,
God aid thee here, our earl,
It is Helga, who comes unto Orkney.

KAARE

What maiden so strange to the strand draws nigh,
In light with soft music nears?
What is it that makes all the flowers die,
What fills all your eyes with tears?

ALL

God aid thee here, our earl,
God aid thee here, our earl,
It is Helga, who comes unto Orkney.

IVAR INGEMUNDSON'S LAY

(FROM SIGURD SLEMBE)

(See Note 15)

Wherefore have I longings,
When to live them strength is lacking?
And wherefore see I,
If I see but sorrow?

Flight of my eye to the great and distant
Dooms it to gales of darkening doubt;
But fleeing backward to the present,
It's prisoned in pain and pity.

For I see a land with no leader,
I see a leader with no land.
The land how heavy-laden
The leader how high his longing!

Might the men but know it,
That he is here among them!
But they see a man in fetters,
And leave him to lie there.

Round the ship a storm is raging,
At the rudder stands a fool. Who can save it?
He, who below the deck is longing,
Half-dead and in fetters.

(Looking upward)

Hear how they call Thee
And come with arms uplifted!
They have their savior at hand,
And Thou sayest it never?

Shall they, then, all thus perish,
Because the one seems absent?
Wilt Thou not let the fool die,
That life may endure in many?

What means that solemn saying:
One shall suffer for many?
But many suffer for one.
Oh, what means it?

The wisdom Thou gavest
Wearies me with guesswork.
The light Thou hast dealt me
Leads me to darkness.

Not me alone, moreover,
But millions and millions!
Space unending spans not all the questions
From earth here and up toward heaven.

Weakness cowers in walls of cloisters,
But wills of power press onward,
And thronging, with longing,
They thrust one another out of the lands.—

Whither? Before their eyes is night,
“In Nazareth a light is set!” one says aloud,
A hundred thousand say it;
All see it now: To Nazareth!

But the half–part perish from hunger by the wayside,
The other half by the sword of the heathen,
The pest awaits the pilgrim in Nazareth,—
Wast Thou there, or wast Thou not there?

Oh, where art Thou?
The whole world now awakens,
And on the way is searching
And seeking after Thee!

Or wast Thou in the hunger?
Wast Thou in the pest?
Wast Thou in the sword of the heathen?

Saltest Thou with the salt of wrath?
Refinest Thou with suffering's fire?
Hast Thou millions of millions hidden in Thy future,
Whom Thou thus wilt save to freedom?

Oh, to them are the thousands that now suffer
But *one*,
And that one I would beseech Thee for—
Nothing!

I follow a little brook
And find it leads to an ocean,
I see here a little drop,
And swelling in mist it mounts a mighty cloud.

See, how I'm tossed so will-less
By troublous waves of doubt,
The wind overturned my little boat,
The wreck is all my refuge.

Lead me, lead me,
I see nowhere land!
Lift me, lift me,
I nowhere footing find!

MAGNUS THE BLIND

(FROM SIGURD SLEMBE)

(See Note 16)

“Oh, let me look once again and see
Starlight the heavens o'ersweeping!”
Begged young Magnus on bended knee,
It was sore to see.
All the women afar were weeping.

“Oh, till to-morrow! The mountains to see
And ocean its blue displaying,
Only once, and then let it be!”
Thus he bent the knee,
While his friends for mercy were praying.

“Oh, in the church let God's blood so bright
Be the last blessing that greets me!
It shall bathe with a flood of light
Through eternal night
My eyes, when the darkness meets me!”

Deep sank the steel, and each seeing eye
Lightning-like night had swallowed.
“Magnus, King Magnus, good-by, good-by!”
—“Oh, good-by, good-by,—
You who eighteen summers me followed!”

SIN, DEATH

(FROM SIGURD SLEMBE)
(See Note 17)

Sin and Death, those sisters two,
 Two, two,
Sat together while dawned the morning.
Sister, marry! Your house will do,
 Do, do,
For me, too, was Death's warning.

Sin was wedded, and Death was pleased,
 Pleased, pleased,
Danced about them the day they married;
Night came on, she the bridegroom seized,
 Seized, seized,
And away with her carried.

Sin soon wakened alone to weep,
 Weep, weep.
Death sat near in the dawn of morning:
Him you love, I love too and keep,
 Keep, keep.
He is here, was Death's warning.

FRIDA

(See Note 18)

Frida, I knew that thy life—years were counted.
If but before thee a lifting thought mounted,
Upward thy gaze turned all wistful to view it,
As wouldst thou pursue it.

Eyes that so clear saw the wonderful vision
Looked far away beyond earth's indecision.
Snow—white unfolded the pinions that later
Bore thee to the greater.

Speaking or asking thou broughtest me sorrow;
Eyes thine and words thine seemed wanting to borrow
Clearness more pure and thoughts, victory gaining
Beyond my attaining.

When thou wert dancing in all a child's lightness,
Shaking thy locks like a fountain in brightness,
Laughing till heaven was opened in gladness
Over thy gladness,—

Or when affliction in sternness had spoken,
So that thy heart in that moment seemed broken,
Far from thy thoughts in thy suffering riven
Were both earth and heaven,—

Then, oh, I saw then: thy joy and thy grieving
Ever the bounds of the mortal were cleaving.
All seems so little where silent we ponder,—
But room they have yonder.

BERGEN

(See Note 19)

As thou sittest there
Skerry-bound and fair,
Mountains high around and ocean's deep before thee,
On thee casts her spell
Saga, that shall tell
Once again the wonders of our land.

Honor is thy due,
"Bergen never new,"
Ancient and unaging as thy Holberg's humor;
Once kings sought thine aid,—
Mighty now in trade,—
First to fly the flag of liberty.

Oft in proud array,
As a sunshine-day
Breaks forth from thy rain and fog wind-driven,
Thou didst come with men
Or great deeds again,
When the clouds were darkest o'er our land.

Thy soul was the ground,
Wit-enriched and sound,
Whence there sprang stout thoughts to make our country's harvest,
Whence our arts exist,
In their birth-hour kissed
By thy nature, somber, large, and strong.

In thy mountain-hall
Learned our painter, *Dahl*;
Wand'ring on thy strands our poet dreamed, *Welhaven*;
All thy morning's gold
Ole Bull ensouled,
Greeted on thy bay by all the world.

With thy sea-wide sway
Thou hast might for aye,
Fjords of blue convey thy life-blood through our country.
Norway's spirit thou
Dost with joy endow,—

Great thy past, no less thy future great.

P. A. MUNCH

(1863)

(See Note 20)

Many forms belong to greatness.
He who now has left us bore it
As a doubt that made him sleepless,
But at last gave revelation,—
As a sight-enhancing power,
That gave visions joined with anguish
Over all beyond our seeing,—
As a flight on labor's pinions
From the thought unto the certain,
Thence aloft to intuition,—
Restless haste and changeful ardor,
God-inspired and unceasing,
Through the wide world ever storming,
Took its load of thoughts and doubtings,
Bore them, threw them off,—and took them,
Never tired, never listless.

Still! for he had one haven of rest:
Family-life peace-bestowing!
Powers of light gave repose to his breast,
Calm 'mid the strife of his knowing.

Softly with music his wife led him in
Unto the sweet-smelling birches!
Unto the flowers and still deeper in
Under the fir-forest's churches!

Daughters drew near him in love secure
Cooling his forehead's hot fever;
Gently their message of innocence pure
Made him a childlike believer.

Or he joined glad in their light-hearted game,
Colors and music surrounding,—
Gone were the clouds, in the heavens came
Sparkling of star-light abounding.

But as in an autumn evening
Silent, dreamy, dark, sheet-lightning
Wakens thought and feeling stormward,—
Or as in a boat a sudden
Stroke when gliding as in slumber
On between the cliffs that tower
In a quiet, balmy spring night,—
But a single stroke and soft, then
Echo takes it up and tosses
To and fro 'mid walls of mountains,
Thrush and grouse send forth their wood-calls
Deer rise up and listen keenly,
Stones are rolling, all are up now,
Dogs are barking, bells are clanging,
Ushering in the strife of daytime,—
Thus could oft a recollection
Down-light falling in that playtime,
Waken all his thought and doubting!

Then it roved the wide world over,
Then it hottest burned within him,—
But it lavished light for others!

Rise of races, spread of language,
Birth of names, all laws' close kinship,
Small and great in equal passion,
Equal haste and doubting goal-ward!—
There where others stones saw only,
He saw precious gems that glistened,
Sunk his shaft the mine to deepen.
And where others thought the treasure
Sure and safe for years a hundred,
Doubt possessed him as he burrowed
Day and night —and saw it vanish!
But the unrest that gave power
Made him oft the goal pass over;
While to others he gave clearness,
Intuitions new deceived him.
Therefore: where he once had striven,
Thither he would turn him never,
Changed his ground and shifted labor,
From his own thought-conquests fleeing.
But his thoughts pursued, untiring,
Followed, growing, as the fire,
Kindled in Brazilian forests,
Storm-wind makes and storm-wind follows!
Where before no foot had trodden,
Ways were burned for many millions!

Northward stretches Scandinavia
'Mid the fog that dims the Ice-sea,
Darkness of the months of winter
Lays its weight on sea and mountain.
Like our lands are too our peoples.
Their beginnings prehistoric
Stretch afar in fog and darkness.
But as through the fog a lighthouse,
Or as Northern Lights o'er darkness,
Gleamed his thought with light and guidance.
When with filial fond remembrance
Tenderly he sought and questioned,
Searching for his people's pathways—
Names and graves and rusty weapons,
Stones and tools their answer gave him.
Through primeval Asian forests,
Over steppes and sands of deserts,
'Neath a thousand years that moldered,
Saw he caravan-made footsteps
Seek a new home in the Northland.
And as they the rivers followed,
Followed them his thought abundant,
Into Nature's All full-flowing.—

See his restless soul's creation!
Harmony of truth he yearned for,
Found it not, but wonder-working
New discoveries and pathways,
—Like those alchemists aforetime
Who, though gold was all their seeking,
Found not that, but mighty forces,
Which to-day the world are moving.—

Deepest ground of all his being
Was the polar power of contrast,
For his thought, to music wakened
By the touch of *Northern Saga*,
Vibrated melodious longing,
Toward the *South* forever tending.
In his eye the lambent fire,
Of his thought the glint, showed kinship
With the free improvisator
In the land of warmth and vineyards.
And his swiftly changing feeling
And his all-consuming ardor,

That could toil the livelong winter
Till caprice the fruit discarded,—
That immeasurable richness
Wherein thoughts and moods and music,
Joy and sorrow, jest and earnest,
Gleamed and played without cessation,—
All a Southern day resembled!

Therefore was his life a journey,
Towards the South in constant movement,—
Through the mists of intuition,
From the darker to the brighter,
From the colder to the warmer,—
On the bridge of ceaseless labor
Bearing over sea and mountain!

Oh, the time with wife beside him
And his bonny playmate—sisters
(Gladsome children, winsome daughters),
When he stood, where evening sunshine
Glowed on Capitol and Forum,—
Stood where from the great world—city,
As from history's very fountain,
Knowledge wells in streams of fullness;—
Where a clearness large and cloudless
Falls upon the bygone ages
That have laid them down to rest here;—
Where to him, the Northern searcher,
It would seem, he had been straying
Too long lost in history's fogland,
Rowing round the deep fjords' surface;—
Stood where dead men burst the earth—clouds
And themselves come forth for witness
In their heavy marble togas;—
Where the goddesses of Delos
In the frescoed halls are dancing,
As two thousand years before now;—
Pantheon and Coliseum
In their spacious fate have sheltered
All the world's swift evolution;—
Where a Hermes from that corner
Saw the footsteps firm of Cato,
Pontifex in the procession,—
Saw then Nero as Apollo
Lifted up take sacrifices,
Saw then Gregory, the wrathful,
Riding forth to rule in spirit
Over all the known world's kingdoms,—
Saw then Cola di Rienzi

Poems and Songs

Homage pay to freedom's goddess
'Mid the Roman people's paeans,—
Saw Pope Leo and his princes
Choose instead of the Lord Jesus
Aristotle dead and Plato;—
Saw again how stouter epochs
Raised the Church of Papal power,
Till the Frenchman overthrew it
And exalted Nature's Godhead;
Saw anew then wonted custom
In its pious, still processions
With a Lamb the great world's ruler!—
All this saw the little Hermes
On the corner near the temple,
And the wise man from the Northland
Saw that Hermes and his visions.

Yes, when over Rome he stood there
In that high, historic clearness,
And his eye the mountain-ridges
Followed toward the red of evening,—
Then all beams of longing focused
In a blessed intuition,
And—he saw a church before him
Greater far than that of nature,
And he felt a peace descending,
Larger far than all the present.

When the second time he came there,
After days and nights of labor,
Hard as were it for redemption,—
Then the Lord Himself gave welcome,
Led him gently thither, saying:
“Peace be with thee! Thou hast conquered!”

But to us with sorrow stricken
Turned the Lord with comfort, saying:
“When *I* call, who then dares murmur,
That the called man had not finished?”

Whoso dies, he here had finished!
Spite our sorrow we believe it,
Hold that He, who unrest giveth
(The discoverer's disquiet,
That drove Newton, drove Columbus),
Also knows when rest is needed.

But we question, while reviewing
All that mighty thought—armada
Now disbanded, home—returning:
Who again shall reunite it?

For when *he* cut his war—arrow,
Lords and liegemen soon were mustered,
And to aid from Sweden, Denmark,
England, France, swift—flying vessels
Coursed the sea—ways toward his standard.

Royal was that fleet and mighty,
By our shore at anchor lying;
We were wont to see it near us
Or to hear the wondrous tidings
Of its cruises and its conquests.

What it won we own forever;
But the fleet is sailing homeward.
Here we stand the last sail watching
As it sinks on the horizon.
Then we turn and breathe the question:
Who again shall reunite it?

KING FREDERIK THE SEVENTH

(1863)

(See Note 21)

Our King is bereft of a trusty friend!
And in dismay
We lower our banners and sad attend
On his burial day.
But Denmark, in sorrow most deep thou waitest,
For fallen the life that was warmest, greatest,
And fallen the tower
Of mightiest power.
Bewailing the death of their kingly chief,
Men voice their grief.

For Denmark's salvation the man was born
Who now is dead.
When banished in youth from the court in scorn,
To his people he fled.
There throve he right well, there grew he together
With peasants and sailors in foul and fair weather,
While fullness of living
Its schooling was giving;
When ready for Denmark was laid the snare,
Then he was there!

Now soon it was plain, he was peasant-skulled
For their tricks; and hence
The traitors' shrewd schemings were all annulled
By his bit of sense.
He knew but one thing;—what his people thought them,
And therefore in danger he freedom brought them.
The whole was his vision,
He would no scission;
His words were but few, and of these the key:
“It shall not be!”

He stood by the helm like a sailor good,
In no storm remiss;
Of praise the tribute he never would,
But he shall have *this*!

Poems and Songs

The ship to the North he unswerving directed,—
In storm or in fog, exposed or protected;—
 And fear allaying,
 All folk were saying:
“He isn't so stupid as people tell,
 For all goes well!”

“On deck every man!” was his last command,
 “‘There's storm again!’”
When answered the cry from the mast-head: “Land!”
 Oh, then, just then,
Were loosed from the helm the true hands that were steering,
In death he sank down, while the ship began veering—
 No, never veering!
 To the course adhering!
Now, Denmark, united, with all thy force
 Hold straight his course!

He made it his honor, in line to stand,
 No rank to know;
But shoulder to shoulder to lend a hand,
 And pride forego.
They gather now fruit of his faithful training:
Well drilled, every man at his post is straining.
 The course is steady,
 For tried and ready
Is many a helmsman, and all their will
 Is “Northward still!”

Naught else can they do now, but with good cheer
 Hold out they must,
Stand guard in the darkness and have no fear,
 In God their trust.
It is sultry and silent, and yearning in sorrow
All breathless they listen and wait for the morrow,—
 'T is time for waiting,
 Till, night abating,
The eastern sky reddens and bright dawn speeds
 The day of deeds!

TO SWEDEN

(DECEMBER 28, 1863)

(See Note 22)

Lift thou thine ancient yellow-blue!
Aloft the front must show it.
The German's slow to take the cue,
But seeing that he'll know it.

He'll know that greater danger's near
Than ink on Bismarck's trousers;
That it will cost him doubly dear,
Men, horses, bovine browsers;

That ten years' nonsense now is done,
The daily quarrel dirty
Will soon become a war with one
Who held his own for thirty;

The Northland's stubborn folk allied
Their forces are uniting,
With glorious memories to guide,
The Northern heavens lighting;

That great Gustavus once again
To battle glad is riding,
But now *against* the Southern men
With Christian Fourth is siding,—

With Haakon Earl the times of old
Round Palnatoki gather;
Near Charles the Twelfth stands Tordenskjold,
Placid, and smiling rather,—

That we, who have so well known how

Poems and Songs

To fight against each other,
Shall not exactly scorn earn now,
When brother stands with brother.

But forward *thou* the way must lead
With stirring drum-beats' rattle,
Thy marching-step we all must heed,
Thou 'rt known on fields of battle.

That ancient Swedish melody,
Renowned in world-wide glory,
Not merely for the heart's deep plea
In Jenny's travel-story,—

But for the solemn earnestness
To Lützen's battle calling,
And for the daring strains no less,
That rang at Narwa's falling,—

The song thou sang'st the North t' inspire
With virtue and with power,
The three must with united choir
Lift up this very hour!

It now must bear aloft a hymn,
The call of God proclaiming;
Pictures of blood its lines shall limn,
Drawn bold in letters flaming,—

Its name shall be: "The Free North's Hymn!"
Of all the hymns thou voicest,
Whose glory time shall never dim,
It shall be first and choicest.

OUR FOREFATHERS

(JANUARY 13, 1864)

(See Note 23)

High memories with power
Shine through the wintry North
On every peak's white tower,
On Kattegat so swarth.
All is so still and spacious, `
The Northern Lights flow free,
Creating bright and gracious
A day of memory.

Each deed the North defending,
Each thought for greater might,
A star-like word is sending
Down through the frosty night!
To hope they call and boldness,
And call with double cheer
To him, defying coldness,
On guard the Eider near.

No anxious shadows clouding,
No languid, lukewarm mist
Our heaven of mem'ries shrouding,
This eve of battle-tryst!
May, as of yore, while ringing
The bells unseen loud swelled,
Come leaders vict'ry bringing,
Whom th' army ne'er beheld.

WHEN NORWAY WOULD NOT HELP

(EASTER EVE, 1864)

(See Note 24)

When Kattegat now or the Belt you sail,
 No more will you sight
The Danish proud frigate, no more will you hail
 The red and white;
No more will the ringing command be heard
 In Wessel's tongue,
No rollicking music, no jocund word,
 'Neath Dannebrog sung.
No dance will you see, no laughter meet,
 As the white sails shine,
From mast and from stern no garland you greet,
 Of arts the sign.
But all that we owned of the treasures on board
 The deeps now hold;
One sad winter night to the sea—waves were poured
 Our memories old.

It was that same night, when the frigate nigh
 To Norway's land
Distress—guns was firing, the surf running high
 With sea—weed and sand.
To help from the harbor men put out boats,
 But they turn back, ...
The frigate toward Germany drifting floats,
 A broken wrack!
What once had been ours overboard was strown,
 Each kinship mark
Was quickly removed, to the sea it was thrown
 With curses stark!
The Northern lion, that figure—head gray,
 Now had to fall,
In pieces 'twas hewn, and the frigate lay
 Like a shattered wall.

...

Repaired and refitted, its canvas it spread
 Near Germany's coast,
With black—yellow flag and an eagle dread
 In the lion's post.
When sailing we Kattegat sweep with our eyes,
 'T is still evermore.
But a German admiral's frigate lies
 Near Scania's shore.

DANIEL SCHJÖTZ

(DIED OF OVER-EXERTION AS VOLUNTEER MILITARY-SURGEON, 1864)

He gave heed to no Great Power
But the one that God we call.
Hastening on to death's high hour,
He before asked not the Gaul,
Nor the Briton, nor the others,
If he too had leave to die
In the battle of his brothers
Underneath the Danish sky.
First to act with ardor youthful,
First a strong, clear faith to show,
First to swear in spirit truthful,
First o'er death's dark bridge to go.

Knowing not, in times so trying
None would come but he alone,
Thus he struggled, death defying,
For the sacred things we own.
He of thousands here remaining
Single would the name redeem,
Sank then with his zeal unwaning
Down beneath death's silent stream.
First of souls in hope believing,
Freedom's right 'gainst wrong to wield,
First warm drop, full-flowing, cleaving,
Of our blood on Denmark's shield.

TO THE DANNEBROG

(WHEN DYBBÖL WAS CAPTURED)

(See Note 25)

Dannebrog of old was seeming
 Snow—white, rosy red,
Through the mists of ages beaming,
 Heaven's gift outspread,
Rich as fruits of Denmark's planting,
Grand as song of heroes chanting,
Spirit-winged to deeds of daring
 O'er the wide world faring.

Dannebrog, thou now art seeming
 Death—pale, bloody red,
Like a dying sea-gull gleaming
 White with blood o'erspread.
Purple tides the wounds are showing
From thy faith in justice flowing;
Denmark, bear the cross, thy burden
 Honor is thy guerdon!

TOAST FOR THE MEN OF EIDSVOLD

(MAY 17, 1864)

(See Note 26)

'Twas then this land of ours we drew
From centuries of ice and sorrow,
And let it of the sun's warmth borrow,
And law and plow brought order new;
We dug the wealth in mountain treasured,
Our stately ships the oceans measured,
And springtime thoughts were free to run
As round the Pole the midnight sun.

And still with God we'll conquer, hold:
Each plot reclaimed for harvest-reaping,
Each ship our sea takes to its keeping,
Each child-soul we to manhood mold,

Poems and Songs

Each spark of thought our life illuming,
Each deed to fruit of increase blooming,—
A province adds unto our land
And o'er our freedom guard shall stand.

THE NORRÖNA-RACE

(NOVEMBER 4, 1864)

Norröna-race's longing,
It was the sea's free wave,
And fight of heroes thronging,
And honor that it gave;
Their thoughts and deeds upspringing
From roots in Surtr's fire,
With branches topward swinging
To Yggdrasil aspire.

His course alone each guided,
Oft brother-harm was done;
Our vict'ries were divided,
The honor gained was one.
Each heard his call time-fated,
First Norway, Denmark, came,
The Swede the longest waited,
But greatest grew his fame.

In eastern, western regions
The Danish dragons shone,
To Norway's roving legions
Jerusalem was known.
From sparks the Swedish spirit
Struck forth in Poland's night,
Through Lützen must inherit
Full half the world its light.

First Norseman, Dane, agreeing
In trying times were found,
But Saga's will far-seeing
By little men was bound;
Then Norseman, Swede, agreeing,
Time in its fullness found,
And Saga's will far-seeing
Shall nevermore be bound.

Poems and Songs

There is prophetic power
In longing hearts of men,
Foretells our union's hour '
For great deeds once again.
Each festival so glorious
To solemn vows us draws:
Forever be victorious
Our blood's, our race's cause!

HYMN OF THE PURITANS

(FROM MARIA STUART)

Arm me, Lord, my strength redouble,
Heaven open, heed my trouble!
God, if my cause Thine shall be,
Grant a day of victory!
Fell all Thy foes now!
Fell all Thy foes now!
Roll forth Thy thunders, Thy lightning affright them,
Into the pit, the bottomless, smite them,
 Their seed uproot,
 Tread under foot!
Send then Thy snowy white dove peace-bringing,
Unto Thy faithful Thy token winging,
Olive-branch fair of Thy summer's fruition
After the deluge of sin's punishment!

HUNTING SONG

(FROM MARIA STUART)

Round us rolls the heather's sheen,
 Heather's sheen,
'Neath the falcon of our queen,
 Of our queen.

Birch and cherry balm exhale,
 Balm exhale,
Loud our horns the cliffs assail,
 Cliffs assail.

Light the air and clear the sky,
 Clear the sky,—
Hurrah! onward, she is nigh,
 She is nigh.

Hunt ye joy with every breath,
 Every breath,
Hunt it to the stream of death,
 Stream of death!

TAYLOR'S SONG

(FROM MARIA STUART)

For joys the hours of earth bestow
With sorrow thou must pay.
Though many follow close, yet know,
They're loaned but for a day.
With sighing in thy laughter's stead
Shall come a time of grief,
The load of usury bow thy head,
With loss of thy belief.
Mary Anne, Mary Anne,
Mary Anne, Mary Anne,
Hadst thou not smiled upon me, thou,
I were not weeping now.

May God help him who never can
Give only half his soul;
The time comes surely for that man
To take the sorrow whole.
May God help him who was so glad,
That he cannot forget,
Help him who lost the all he had,
But not his reason yet.
Mary Anne, Mary Anne,
Mary Anne, Mary Anne,
The flowers that my life had grown,
Died out when thou went gone.

LECTOR THAASEN

(See Note 27)

I read once of a flower that lonely grew,
Apart, with trembling stem and pale of hue;
The mountain–world of cold and strife
 Gave little life
 And less of color.

A botanist the flower chanced to see
And glad exclaimed: Oh, this must sheltered be,
Must seed produce, renewing birth,
 In sun–warmed earth
 Become a thousand.

But as he dug and drew it from the ground,
Strange glitterings upon his hands he found;
For to its roots clung dust of golden hue;
 The flower grew
 On golden treasure!

And from the region wide came all the youth
To see the wonder; they divined the truth:
Here lay their country's future might;
 A ray of light
 From God that flower!—

This I recall now even while I mourn;
The Lord of life has lifted him and borne
From mountain–cold and wintry air
 To fruitage fair
 In warmth eternal.

For where the roots were of that life replete,
What gleams and glitters! See, they ran to meet
The shafts of wisdom's goodly mines,

Poems and Songs

The gold that shines
In veins of God's thought.

Now he is lifted up, to light are brought
The riches he to guard so faithful sought.
The treasures of our past are there,
 And glintings rare
 Of future riches.

Come, Norway's youth! Unearth to use the hoard
That round this heaven-borne flower's roots was stored!
To you his message! Hear and heed!
 Achieve in deed
 His dream and longing!

DURING A JOURNEY IN SWEDEN

(See Note 28)

My boyish heart in thee confided,
For to the great by thee 't was guided.
As man, my waiting is for thee,—
The Northern cause with thee, with thee!

Rich lands and talents are thy dower,
But fallow lie thy wealth and power.
*Thou must the North in concord bind,
Or never shalt thy true self find.*

There's longing in thy folk arisen,
Poetic hope—but yet in prison.
Though forces great within thee dwell,
Thou art not wholly sound and well.

Too many things are undertaken,
Too oft the task is soon forsaken.
Though rich in promptings of the heart,
In faith and duty faint thou art.

In danger only hast thou thriven,
When something great to guard was given.
When every breast with warmth shall glow
At Sweden's name, thy strength thou'lt know.

What's thine alone lifts not thy feeling,
Till honor's cause the skies are pealing,
Thou hast no joy but daring deed
In fortune's favor or in need.

For thy fair memories inspiring

Poems and Songs

Are far too great, much more requiring:
The Northern cause! Lead thou the way!
'T will double glory thee repay!

Of all thou canst, this is the greatest,
Thy duty earliest and latest.
Thy future rests in its embrace
With cure for ills that now abase.

Thou land of heart-born fancies thronging,
Thou land of poetry and longing,
Fill now thy heart, thy spirit free!
The Northern banner waits for thee!

THE TRYST

Silent I'm biding,
While softly gliding
Sink the still hours to eternity's sleep.
My fancies roaming
List in the gloaming:—
Will she the trysting now keep?

Winter is dreaming,
Bright stars are beaming,
Smiling their light through its cloud-veil they pour,
Summer foretelling
Sweet love compelling;—
Dare she not meet me here more?

'Neath the ice lying,
Longing and sighing,
Ocean would wander and warmer lands woo.
Anchored ships swinging,
Sail-thoughts outflinging;—
Come we together, we two!

Whirling and fallings
Pictures enthralling,
Fairy-light made in the forest the snow;
Wood-folk are straying,
Shadows are playing;—
Was it your footstep? Oh, no!

Courage is failing,
Hoar frost assailing
Boughs of your longing surrounds with its spell.
But I dare enter,
Break to the center,
Where in dream-fetters you dwell.

SONG FOR THE STUDENTS' GLEE CLUB

(See Note 29)

Now, brothers, sing out our song,
Whose train of light shall follow long!
 With love are its measures beating
 And victory's joyous greeting,
While round about it flower-seeds
In will of youth shall grow to deeds!

Our song has gone far and wide,
Bright mem'ries on our way abide,
 In flags flying, friends that love us,
 In wreaths from fair hands above us,
In feasts where youth's full spirits stream,
Our nation's past, our nation's dream.

At *Hald* on a sunny day
That shot-torn flag of many a fray
 Was waving above our singing,
 Soul-fire to our music bringing,
The ardor of that glorious band,
Who died as heroes for our land.

To *Arendal* our summer-way
"For might and fame!"—remember aye!
 The fleet on the bay was riding,
 Our singer-ship through it gliding.
Our merchant-ships shall rule the wave!
This joyous hoisting-song we gave.

We gathered in *Bergen* town
Of ancient and of new renown.
 The horns of our fathers greet us,
 King Sverre comes forth to meet us;
But fresh and full the present spoke
In heartfelt song from all its folk.

Poems and Songs

Upsala, Copenhagen, Lund,
In each our song its garland won,
Fair fetters of music winding,
Harmonious the Northland binding;
Our mighty choral theme shall be
The Northern races' unity.

With courage, then, onward roam!
Where echo answers is our home.
Our past that we sing draws nearer,
Our future in song grows clearer,
E'en while we wander hand in hand
And summer sing into our land.

+

MRS. LOUISE BRUN

(JANUARY 30, 1866)

(See Note 30)

CHORUS

(Behind the scenes)

Farewell, farewell,
From friends, from all, from fatherland!
Your soul's calm power is from us riven,
Your words, your song, to spirit's praise
In art's glad temple given.

CHORUS OF MEN

We thank you that with youthful fire
You came the doubting to inspire,
Who anxious stood with strength untried!

CHORUS OF WOMEN

We thank you that in morning–dawn
Your woman's tact and aid were drawn
Our boisterous youthful art to guide!

ALL

Thanks for the spring of your life's year,
Thanks for the tones so sweet and clear,
Thanks for the tints of pearly hue,
That colored all you touched anew.
For all your noble life on earth,
 Thanks, thanks!
And that you gave our calling worth,
 Thanks, thanks!

EPILOGUE

'T is but a short time since we saw pass by
A picture drawn from life, austere and dark,
A soul in servitude to strong desires;
And all its life in prison–labor spent.
Although religion prays and sings its hymns,
And poetry and art their sunshine spread,
That soul in slavery toils, till white the hair.

She, in whose memory we gather here,
 Was early made to feel by hard conditions,
 That clouded life and rudely barred her soul,—
 How men and women live as toiling slaves!
 And she rebelled against this servitude;
 Great powers have birth to longings for the light;
Freedom she craved, that others she might free!
 With restless spirit outward went her quest
 To people, books; but thoughtful she became,
 As one whose search was vain; reserved and shy,
 As one whose courage fails;—until one day
He, who from fairy-tale and hero-legend
 That wondrous bow received of magic might,
 Stood up and to the vale and mountain played:
 “Come forth, come from our nation's heart—deep forth,
 Creative might, that in our nation's morning
 Didst lift its image up to dread, to greatness,
 In myths of Asas fair and giants grim!
 As mountain-walls lean o'er their own reflection,
 In that thought-ocean we our life could see,
 With spring, with winter, and with spring again.
 Thou gav'st our image oft in song and story,
 In times of darkness and in times of light;
 Our image meets us wheresoe'er we go,—
 But yet our nation sees it not, nor looks
 Up from its toiling thoughts and dull routine!—
 Oh, wake it, lift it, *make it see itself!*
 Then shall it put to use the powers it owns!”

And living echoes answered! Lo, there swarmed
 Elves of the Stage about him, as he played!
 They made the lamps to burn, and reared the grotto,
 They brought and brushed the costumes Holberg knew,
 And in them played their pranks 'neath powdered wigs,—
 Roamed on the mountains of a summer night
 And stole the saeter-maiden while she slept,
 And filled with mortal fear the aged wooer!
 They danced the goblin-dance in dusk of winter,
 Played hide-and-seek with their own shadows;
 They snared the hypocrite in his own sighs,
 In his own web the pettifogger bound;
 They scattered wide the hoard a miser gathered,
 They tripped and threw the petty parish-pope
 They saved the tears of innocence seduced
 And on the altar laid as lustrous pearls;
 They melted hatred in the ice-hard breast,
 It fell as rain upon the enemy's fields;
 They bound the slanderer, Mazeppa-like,

Poems and Songs

Upon the back of his wild calumnies;—
The crafty man of stealthy selfishness
They set afloat within an open boat;—
But one who freely gave himself, his all,
They bore to heaven upon their joyous laughter.
They drew the magic ring round those who loved,
And to the altar led the blushing pair.
They brought heroic forms from barrows old
To tower in might among the teeming present.
—There was not one could longer rest in peace;
Himself, his folly, all our country's need,
Wholeness victorious, halfness doomed to fail,
The power of honest faith, the wreck of doubt,—
All this our nation saw in its own image,
When strongly lighted on the Stage 't was set.—

And she was part of this! The first full tone
Thrilled her breast too and woke a thousand mem'ries
Of something that she ne'er before had known!
On that first evening, when the curtain rose,
With timid step one clad in white came forth
And begged for Norway's art, for our young drama
A home in Norway,—but with so great fear,
The gentle voice was trembling, dim the eyes;
Yet from the voice, the eyes, the form, the bearing
Was heard a promise in sweet modesty;
For she who spoke those first words on this Stage,
That maiden dark with eyes so deep and true,
Lo, it was she!

And soon her art shone clear
And softly radiant through the evening hours.—
With fairy lightness fell its magic gleams
On hidden longings, sorrows half-concealed,—
But gently, tenderly. If joy she touched,
'T was always softly. But we all could feel
A stream of power so full, that if she had
In an unguarded hour let it flow free
With all its deep and swelling tide sincere,
It would have borne herself from earth away.

In truth, the calmness of her course through life
Was never weakness, but was strength controlled;
Was never fear, but veneration deep
For those whose souls are great: a model she
For noble women as for forceful men,—
This wreath we weave for her pure memory.

But what she thus had early taught herself,
She taught to others. When upon the stage
She stood, depicting woman's painful conflict
With rudeness, violence, and wild desire,
Then,—though she wielded but a woman's weapons,
Her silent dignity, her subtle smile,
Her light derision, all—subduing laughter,—
A spirit—dawn gleamed from their flashing play,
To usher in a day of victory.
She barriers raised around the woman weak
(Down—trodden in a half—built social order),
She stood forth here so many an evening—hour
And talked to thousands of a woman's worth.
though her call was not fully to free
All that a woman's heart may hope and dream,
She shielded it secure in all its beauty.

This conflict made her reticent, severe;—
But sometimes in a song her spirit could
Send forth glad tidings, messages of freedom,
Her large free soul revealing. *Then* we heard
Such longing after full, unbroken peace,
Our thoughts were captive held by sad foreboding.—

'T is now come true!—The crape of mourning droops
About her name, the tolling bell is still.
Her final summons gather us once more
Before her stage, and here our thanks we utter
For what she gave us. So as *she* had given,
Has no one given. She gave of her sorrow,
With bleeding heart beneath her winsome smile.
She shared with us the tears her conflict brought,
The radiant glory of her victory.

Thanks, prayer—borne thanks, you noble soul,
From all your brothers, from your sisters all!
From Norway's youthful art enduring thanks!
From women to their pure interpreter
Farewell and thanks!—From all those whom you lifted
On pinions of the spirit high to beauty
Once more a wreath is brought,—it is the last.

(Laying it before the bust)

Now God in His bright heaven makes you glad,
And we will make you glad with good remembrance.

CHORUS

(Behind the scenes, softly)

Farewell, farewell!
Now in your grave
No want is known;
But what you gave,
We ever own.
Your spirit's seed
Shall blossom here,
Bear fruit in deed,
And sad hearts cheer.

TO JOHAN DAHL, BOOKDEALER

(ON HIS SIXTIETH BIRTHDAY)

(See Note 31)

Our glasses we lift now and drink to our host!

“Hurrah!”

Give heed to our ditty, we sing you our toast!

“Aha!”

The first thing appearing is what he was nearing,

When uproar not fearing he came for a hearing

'Fore skerry-bred eagle

And Wergeland regal.

Oh! Ha!

He came like an innocent spring-lambkin ewe-born,

Oh, woe!

So neat and so fine in his guilelessness new-born

Like snow.

The flesh so delicious was chopped up to farce-meat,

And later by Wergeland found for a farce meet,

And gayly 't was swallowed,

And all the bones hollowed

And strown.

But swift as Thor's he-goats to life again skipping,

He sprang

Whole skinned together, and gave them a whipping

That rang.

This made him seem worthy to join the gay party,

At once they received him in fellowship hearty!

And soon was no other

More loved as a brother

Than Dahl.

The light from his shop spread afar and made brighter

Our day.

His drawing-room gathered so many a fighter

In play.

Our taste there was made and our critical passion,

The shop was a power, new Norway to fashion.

Though little, its story

Poems and Songs

Shall some time in glory
Be writ.

For what you have kindled, endured, and aspired,
Our thanks!
For hearts you have gladdened and souls you have fired,
Our thanks!
For all your good faith in your fervor and ranting,
Yes, for your whole-heartedness free from all canting,
You whimsical, queer one,
Old fellow, you dear one,
Our thanks!

TO SCULPTOR BORCH

(ON HIS FIFTIETH BIRTHDAY)

(See Note 32)

With friends you stalwart stand and fair,
To-day of fifty years the heir;
The past your works rejoicing praise,
But forward goes your gaze.
Your childlike faith, your spirit true,
Your hand that never weary grew,
A home's sweet music, love of wife,
Make ever young your life.

You dared believe with heart alive
That here in Norway art can thrive.
You forced the hardness of our stones
To harmony of tones.
You laid our wild world's secrets bare
And caught "The Hunter" near the lair.
Our nation's moods, of beauty born,
Your "Girl with Eggs" adorn.

As o'er a slope's snow-covered brow
A youth came swiftly flying now,
You saw him, raised your hand, and lo!
He stood there, chiseled snow.
But your "Ski-runner's" courage good,
It was your own, when forth you stood
Art's champion by the world unawed,
And with your faith in God.

You won your victory supreme
Through rock-like faith and will's full stream
While with unnumbered hours of rest
Your love has others blessed.
Were all now here from west and east
Whose hearts you own, oh, what a feast!
From Akershus the convicts e'en
Would bear a freeman's mien.

Now we whose lives with good you filled
For you to-day a palace build,
On heights of heart's-ease lifting square
Its golden tower of prayer.
In peace you oft shall dwell in it,
Whene'er you need to rest a bit,
And feel through them who hold you dear
Yourself to heaven near.

Long since our country to you gave
The meed of thanks that most you crave;
It gave a maid with golden hair,
Its springtime's image fair.
She came from where the fairies dwell,
With nixie's charm and wood-nymph's spell,
With peace all holy, sweet, and calm,
To sing of life the psalm.

So may your life yet long endure
To light our gland, your home secure!
May all that from your heart you gave,
Still blossom on your grave!
May God's protecting mercy hold
Your spirit ever fresh and bold,—
May He to genius oft impart
Just such a mind and heart!

THE SPINNER

Oh, what was it he meant
By his question as he went?
“I am making a loom,
'T will be up in April's bloom;
If you think it may be,
Spin for me!”

Oh, what shall I believe?
Does he think himself to weave?
And the yarn that I spin,
Lo, he thinks to weave it in?
And so soon as the Spring
Flowers shall bring?

And he laughed when he'd done;
Oh, he is so full of fun.
Dare I trust all my skein
To so young and wild a swain?—
May God help to bind in
All I spin!

THE WHITE ROSE AND THE RED ROSE

The white rose and the red rose,
So sisters two were named, yes, named.
The white one was so quiet,
The red one laughed and flamed.
But different was their doing, yes,
When came the time of wooing, yes.
The white one turned so red, so red,
The red one turned so white.

For him the red one favored,
Him father would not bless, not bless.
But him the white one favored,
He got at once his "Yes."
The red one now was paling, yes,
With sorrow, psalms, and wailing, yes.
The white one turned so red, so red,
The red one turned so white.

Then father grew so fearful
And had to give his "Yes," oh, yes!
With songs and music cheerful
The wedding rang, oh, yes!
And soon sprang children rosen, yes,
In shoes and little hosen, yes.
The red one's, they were white,—and oh,
The white one's, they were red.

YOUTH

Mood of youth,
Mood of youth,
Eagle-like must seek the blue,
Dauntlessly its course pursue,
All the mountain-heights must view.
Blood of youth,
Blood of youth,
Steam-like puts full-speed to sea,
E'en though storm and ice there be,
Makes its way and romps in glee.
Dream of youth,
Dream of youth,
Rogue-like stealing sets its snare
In the maiden's morning-prayer;
All the springtime, fragrant, glowing,
In its airy waves is flowing.
Joy of youth,
Joy of youth,
Waterfall-like foams in truth,
Laughing, rainbow-gifts forth flashing,
Even while to death 't is dashing.
Joy of youth,
Dream of youth,
Blood of youth,
Mood of youth,
Clothe the world with colors golden,
Singing songs that never olden.

THE BLONDE MAIDEN

Though *she* depart, a vision flitting,
If I these thoughts in words exhale:
I love you, you blonde maiden, sitting
Within your pure white beauty's veil.
I love you for your blue eyes dreaming,
Like moonlight moving over snow,
And 'mid the far-off forests beaming
On something hid I may not know.

I love this forehead's fair perfection
Because it stands so starry-clear,
In flood of thought sees its reflection
And wonders at the image near.
I love these locks in riot risen
Against the hair-net's busy bands;
To free them from their pretty prison
Their sylphs entice my eyes and hands.

I love this figure's supple swinging
In rhythm of its bridal song,
Of strength and life-joy daily singing
With youthful yearnings deep and long.
I love this foot so lightly bearing
The glory of sure victory
Through youth's domain of merry daring
To meet first-love that hers shall be.

I love these hands, these lips enchanting,
With them the God of love's allied,
With them the apple-prize is granting,
But guards them, too, lest aught betide.
I love you and must say it ever,
Although you heed not what you've heard,
But flee and answer: maidens never
May put their trust in poet's word.

THE FIRST MEETING

(FROM THE FISHER MAIDEN)

The first fond meeting holy
Is like the woodbirds' trilling,
Is like a sea-song thrilling,
When red the sun sinks slowly,—
Is like a horn on mountain,
That wakes time's sleep thereunder
And summons to life's fountain
To meet in nature's wonder.

GOOD-MORNING

(FROM THE FISHER MAIDEN)

Day's coming up now, joy's returned,
Sorrow's dark cloud-castles captured and burned;
Over the mountain-tops glowing
Light-king his armies is throwing.
"Up now, up now!" calls the bird,
"Up now, up now!" child-voice heard,
Up now my hope in sunshine. "

MY FATHERLAND

(FROM THE FISHER MAIDEN)

I will fight for my land,
I will work for my land,
Will it foster with love, in my faith, in my child.
I will eke every gain,
I will seek boot for bane,
From its easternmost bound to the western sea wild.

Here is sunshine enough,
Here is seed—earth enough,
If by us, if by us all love's duty were done.
Here is will to create;
Though our burdens be great,
We can lift up our land, if we all lift as one.

In the past we went wide
O'er the sea's surging tide,
And the Norman's high walls stand on many a shore.
But our flag flies its way
Ever farther to—day
And is red with life's vigor as never before.

Great our future shall be;
For the Northern lands three
Shall unite once again and their true selves shall know.
Give your strength and your deed,
Where you nearest see need,
As a brook to the river that forward shall flow.

Yes, this land where we dwell,
Oh, we love it so well,
All was, all it is, all it can be again.
As our love had its birth
In this homeland's dear earth,
Shall the seed of our love bring it increase again.

CHOICE

(See Note 33)

April for me I choose!
In it the old things tumble,
In it things new refresh us;
It makes a mighty rumble,—
But peace is not so precious
As that his will man shows.

April for me I choose,
Because it storms and scourges,
Because it smiles and blesses,
Because its power purges,
Because it strength possesses,—
In it the summer grows.

NORWEGIAN SEAMEN'S SONG

(FOR THE STAVANGER REGATTA, 1868)
(See Note 34)

Norwegian seamen are
A folk grown strong 'neath sail and spar;
Where boats can find a way,
The best men there are they.
On high seas or at home,
In calm or when the storm-waves comb,
To God their prayer they make,
Their lives they gladly stake.

Incessant is their strife,
They wage with death a war for life,
And dear their souls they sell
In conflicts none can tell.
All that is commonplace
In history seldom leaves its trace,
And often none is there,
The tidings home to bear.

But fishing-boats in need
Have shown so many a daring deed
Of courage fine and skill,
Though unrecorded still.
And many a seaman's head
A wreath of sea-weed wore when dead,
Whose name should shine in gold
Among great heroes bold.

Saint Olaf's Cross's praise
Would on that pilot fitly blaze
Who saved a hundred men,
And hundred once again.
To many a boy so young,
Who riding home to boat's keel clung,
His father set on board,
We honor should accord.

In Norway's mountain-coast
Our land's own mother-breast we boast,
With food for us and tears
For sons whom danger nears.
In it each deed has lot,
And there no brave son is forgot,
From Hafurfjord's great day
To the last castaway.

This each one felt and found
Who homeward came and looked around;
This each one felt who went,
In the last look he sent.
They felt the ocean o'er:
Their ships our country's fortune bore;
Honor and power it sought,—
And these the white sails brought.

Hurrah for them to-day
Who the Norwegian flag display!
Hurrah for pilots true
Who forth to meet them flew!
Hurrah for them who ply
Their fishing-boats 'twixt sea and sky!
Hurrah for all our boast,
Our skerry-skirted coast!

HALFDAN KJERULF (1868)

(See Note 35)

Winter had sought his life's tree to o'erthrow,
Youthful and strong. But his blood's vernal flow
Saved it from death through the cold and the maiming;
Late in the summer bright flowers were flaming,
Late in the autumn they swelled to completeness,—
Fruits that were few, but of fragrance and sweetness.

Poets received them to endless seed—sowing,
Where for his folk endless summer is glowing,—
While more and more,
Stricken he hung o'er the death—river's shore,
Fighting in weakness the winter abhorred,
Fighting for summer, the singer's reward,
Fighting while failing, with modesty rare,
Soon but in prayer.

Summer received him! He now is victorious!
Now, while they harvest the yellowing corn,
Now, while the hills hear the notes of the horn,
He enters glorious.

Mirrored in him is true poetry's force,
Marked by our winter, in summer its source.
E'en as the air with its quivering sheen,
Leaves of the forests and red peaks serene,
Waters that wander 'mid meadows delaying
Sound with the music the sunshine is playing,—
Poetry also shall leap with new life,
If it, though failing, is faithful in strife:—
Leap from death's thronging:—
Soon comes the summer with summer's pure longing.

NORWEGIAN STUDENTS' GREETING WITH A PROCESSION

TO PROFESSOR WELHAVEN

(See Note 36)

Hear us, O age-laden singer!
Streams of your tones are returning,
 Touching your heart!
Spirit of youth is their bringer,
Under your window with yearning
 Called by your art.
Now our soul's echoes abounding
 Soar in the blue,
In the sun-shimmering blue,
High where your silvery song-notes are sounding.

Smile on your labor now lightened,
You who in winter perfected
 Seeds to be sown!
All that your courage has brightened,
All that your pity protected,
 Now it is grown;
Over your shoulders upswinging,
 Folds round your frame,
Bringing in roses your name,
Joyous the sprite of your poetry bringing.

Onward our life is now marching,
Banner-like high thoughts are flying,
 Lifted to view.
One 'mid the foremost o'erarching
Leads where the pathway is lying,—
 It came from you!
Runes of our past with their warning
 Carved on its shaft,
Show us the spring you have quaffed,
Leading our land to the light of the morning.

FOR A CHARITY FAIR

(IN A COPY OF MINOR PIECES)

Some poor man in need
To bless and to feed,
I bring at its worth,
This day of my birth,
A book,—from my youth I must own.
But Who in His power
Gave bud and gave flower,
To bread can transform
In want's winter—storm
Each leaf that my Springtime has grown.

FORWARD

(See Note 37)

“Forward! forward!”
Rang our fathers' battle-cry.
“Forward! forward!”
Norsemen, be our watchword high!
All that fires the spirit and makes the heart's faith bright,
For that we forward go with might
And faithful fight.

“Forward! forward!”
Whoso loves a home that's free.
“Forward! forward!”
Freedom's course must ever be.
Though it shall be tested by doubt and by defeat,
Who will the losses' count repeat
When vict'ries greet?

“Forward! forward!”
Whoso trusts in Norway's day.
“Forward! forward!”
Whoso goes our fathers' way.
Hid in Northern mountains are spirit-treasures true
They shall, when dawns the morning's blue,
Come forth anew.

THE MEETING

(AT THE STUDENT MEETING OF 1869)

(See Note 38)

Thoughts toward one another coursing
To their pole must run,
Hearts that meet, all bonds are forcing,
Like the springtime sun.
Though to-day too heavy sorrow
Dull the mind of youth,
Higher on the meeting's morrow
Roll the tides of truth.

Though each man with courage fired
Hundreds forward bore,
Though a thousand died inspired,
There is need of more.
May a Northern Spring come blowing
Over wood and field,
Wake the hundred thousands, knowing
Meeting-hour revealed!

Hail! A Northern day is written
In the brightening sky;
Darksome dread, that erst had smitten,
Flees, now dawn is nigh.
After Gjallar-horn blasts hollow,
Tears and shame and blood,
As so often, now shall follow
Full the spirit's flood.

In our people's life deep-seated
This is felt each day:
Who grows stronger when defeated,
Victor stands for aye.
Our Spring-meeting's fullness swells now,
Bearing prophecy
Of the Spring whose hope upwells now:
Hail, the Northern three!

NORSE NATURE

(IN RINGERIKE DURING THE STUDENT MEETING OF 1869)
(See Note 39)

We wander and sing with glee
Of glorious Norway, fair to see.
Let sweetly the tones go twining
In colors so softly shining
On mountain, forest, fjord, and shore,
'Neath heaven's azure arching o'er.

The warmth of the nation's heart,
The depth, the strength, its songs impart,
Here opens its eyes to greet you,
Rejoicing just now to meet you,
And giving, grateful for the chance,
In love a self-revealing glance.

Here wakened our history first,
Here Halfdan dreamed of greatness erst,
In vision of hope beholding
The kingdom's future unfolding,
And *Nore* stood and summons gave,
While forth to conquest called the wave.

Here singing we must unroll
Of our dear land the pictured scroll!
Let calm turn to storm of wildness,
Bring might into bonds of mildness:
Then Norsemen mustering, each shall see
This is our land's whole history.

To them first our way we wing,
The hundred harbors in the spring,
Where follow fond love and yearning,
When sea-ward the ships are turning.
For Norway's weal pure prayers exhale
From sixty thousand men that sail.

See sloping the skerried coasts,
With gulls and whales and fishing-posts,
And vessels in shelter riding,
While boats o'er the sea are gliding,
And nets in fjord and seines in sound,
And white with spawn the ocean's ground.

See Lofoten's tumult grand,
Where tow'ring cliffs in ocean stand,
Whose summits the fogs are cleaving,
Beneath them the surges heaving,
And all is darkness, mystery, dread,
But 'mid the tumult sails are spread.

Here ships of the Arctic sea;
Through snow and gloom their course must be;
Commands from the masthead falling
The boats toward the ice are calling;
And shot on shot and seal on seal,
And souls and bodies strong as steel.

On mountains we now shall guest,
When eventide to all brings rest,
In dairy on highland meadow,
On hay-field 'neath slanting shadow,
While to the alphorn's tender tone
Great Nature's voice responds alone.

But quickly we must away,
If all the land we would survey,—
The mines of our metal treasures,
The hills of our hunters' pleasures,
The foam-white river's rush and noise,
The timber-driver's foot-sure poise.

Returning, we linger here,
These valleys broad to us are dear,
Whose men in their faithful living
To Norway are honor giving;

Poems and Songs

Their fathers, strong in brain and brawn,
Lent luster to our morning–dawn.

We wander and sing with glee
Of glorious Norway fair to see.
Our present to labor binds us,
Each how of the past reminds us,
Our future shall be sure and bright,
As God we trust and do the right.

I PASSED BY THE HOUSE

(See Note 40)

I passed by the house one summer day,
Morning sunshine upon it lay;
Toward the windows that blood-red burned
Flaming my soul was turned, was turned.
 There spring had found me
 And captive bound me
 To lissome hands and soft lips entralling,
 To smiles now stained by the teardrops falling.

Till the view from my vision dies,
To it backward I send my eyes;
All that was becomes new and near,
The forgotten grows warm and dear;
 Mem'ries wander,
 While this I ponder,
 And from the springtime all love's sweet dreaming
 Forward and back in my soul is streaming.

Joyous that time and joyous now,
Sorrow that time and sorrow now.
Sun on meadows bedewed appears,
Soul in mem'ries of smiles and tears.
 When they waking
 Their bounds are breaking,
 When streams their ebbing with sinking power,
 The soul bears poetry's bud and flower.

THOSE WITH ME

(See Note 41)

As on I drive, in my heart joy dwells
Of Sabbath silence with sound of bells.
The sun lifts *all* that is living, growing,
God's love itself in its symbol showing.
To church pass people from near and far,
Soon psalms ascend from the door ajar.
—Good cheer! Your greeting hailed more than me,
But that in hastening you failed to see.

Here's goodly company with me riding,
Though oft they cunningly keep in hiding;
But when you saw me so Sunday-glad,
It was because of the mates I had.
And when you heard me so softly singing,
The tones attuned to their hearts were ringing.

One soul is here of such priceless worth,
For me she offered her all on earth;
Yes, she who smiled in my boat storm-driven,
And blanched not, braving the waves wind-riven,
In whose white arms that in love caressed me
Full warmth of life and of faith possessed me.

The snail in this I am like when faring,—
My home I ever am with me bearing;
And who believes it is burdensome,
He ought to learn how it's good to come
And creep in under the roof thereafter,
Where she gives light amid children's laughter.

No poet paints nor can thinker tell
So vast a vault or so deep a well,
As where the glory of God's own love
On cradle-mirror falls from above.
Your soul is brighter, your heart more tender,
When by the cradle your thanks you render.

Who knows not love in the small and near,
The many in memory hold not dear.
Who cannot build him a house his own,
What towers he builds will be soon o'erthrown.
From Moscow victor to Carthage,
He vanquished dies on his Saint Helena.

When such a stronghold you've reared with labor,
It often safely protects your neighbor;
Though work of woman's and children's hands,
Your soul finds strength where that fortress stands,
You go hence braver to battle—dangers,
Can courage give unto countless strangers.

One home bore often a whole land's fate,
And sent the hero who saved the state;
Thousands of *homes*, when the war was o'er,
The land delivered in safety bore.
So bear it onward in peace and beauty
The hearts of homes beating true to duty.

Though foreign perfumes be fine and rare,
Still pure alone is the home's sweet air.
Naught meets you there but the childlike, truthful,
And sin is kissed from your forehead ruthful.
To heaven's home leads its door ajar,
For thence it came and it lies not far.

Good cheer, to church on your way not staying!
For those we love we shall both be praying;
In prayer together the way we wander
That leads from this to the home up yonder.
You enter in; I must journey far,
While follow psalms from the door ajar.
Good cheer! Your greeting hailed more than me,
But that in hastening you failed to see.

TO MY FATHER

(UPON HIS RETIREMENT)

(See Note 42)

In all the land our race was once excelling.
In richer regions it e'en now possesses
Broad seats and fruitful; but by fate's hard stresses
Our branch was bent and bowed to blows compelling.
Now toward the light again it lifts aloft
Its top, and fresh buds crown it, fair and soft.
The flowing fountain of *your* faith has laved it,
To life's late evening thus your strength has saved it.

As rests the race in time of chill and rigor,
And from the deeps that lie within its being
Draws to it what alone can nourish, freeing
Its powers to full prophecy of vigor,—
So I divined the unseen stir in you
Of nature's might that you could not subdue;
It was so strong, from sire to son surviving,
In mystery mute descends this power's striving.

Upon this poured its radiant warmth pervading
My mother's soul; of wedded joy the glory
Crowns not alone your aged heads and hoary;
But it shall death outlive in light unfading.
And if my people ever truly prize
The pictured home that in my writings lies,
Honor of love and faith serene, unbroken,—
Of father, mother, both, shall praise be spoken.

If men remember the Norwegian peasant,
As from the field of toil or saga fateful
I conjured him; to you they shall be grateful,
Father, in whom love let me find him present.
And if the woman whom I made them view
In sun-like splendid faith and spirit true,
By women is approved, it is the other
Who has their homage, my sweet-natured mother.

Poems and Songs

And now you'll rest the evening long and cheery
From the day's work in fair or troubled weather,
And of the by-gone time you'll talk together,
Of many a mile you trod with footsteps weary,—
Now will as sunlight on the winter's snow,
A warmth of thanks in through the window glow,
Harsh memories mellow with its golden shining,
Your life in faith complete find its refining.

But none gives thanks as now that son in gladness,
For whom you lived in anxious fear unceasing,
Since forth he flew with strength of wing increasing,
For whom to God you prayed in joy and sadness.
Oh, know, when hot my blood burned over—much,
I felt your soothing hands my forehead touch,
And oft, my heart in mute repentance bleeding,
In thoughts of you I heard God's gentle pleading.

And so I pray that I may have the power
(Since we again for life shall be united,
And hope 'mid mirthful mem'ries be relighted),
To brighten now their every evening-hour!
When children's children in their arms shall be,
Oh, let them morning in their evening see!
So shall they gladly lay, when death gives warning,
Their gray heads down to greet the dawning morning.

TO ERIKA LIE

(See Note 43)

When Norse nature's dower
Tones will paint with power,
There is more than mountain–heights that tower,—
Plains spread wide–extending,
Whereon at their wending
Summer nights soft dewes are sending.

Forests great are growing,
And in long waves going
Glommen's valley fill to overflowing,—
There are green slopes vernal,
Glad with joy fraternal,
Open to the light supernal.

For revealing wholly
All things fine and holy—
As in sunshine birds are soaring slowly,
Or, their spells transmitting,
Northern Lights are flitting,—
None but maiden–hands are fitting.

Your hands came, and playing,
O'er their secrets straying
Picture after picture are portraying,
As the poet dreamed them,
In soul–travail teemed them,
Till your artist hands redeemed them.

Now their light far–flinging
We see flashing, swinging,
Sparks as from your father's humor springing;
Now there meets us nigher,
Mirroring the higher,
Mother's eye of softer fire.

Child–heart tones are holding
All our minds and molding,
So its faith the wide world is enfolding,
While your sweet sounds sally,
Truth to tell and rally,

Maiden blonde from Glommen's valley.

+
AT MICHAEL SARS'S GRAVE

(See Note 44)

Ever he would roam
Toward th' eternal home;
From the least life deep in ocean
To each gleam of stars in motion,
Worth of all he weighed.
Now the Lord lends aid.

Still he passed beyond,
Softly dreaming; fond
Nature met him as her lover.
God with strength his soul shall cover
'Mid the starry throng
Through the spheres' pure song.

Even here on earth
Harmony's sweet birth—
When discovery new truth sunders,
When the small reveals its wonders—
Filled his soul with song
For the ages long.

Where his watch he kept,
Eyes a hundred swept.
Where millenniums sand assembled,
Where the tiniest life—pulse trembled,
There he sought the clue,
Silent, wise, and true.

In a water glass
Searching he saw pass
All the ocean's life; his thinking
To unfathomed deeps was sinking;
Where lay riddles locked,
There he came and knocked.

Fair our fatherland,
While such faith shall stand!
With an eye so true and tender,
With a sense so fine for splendor

In the small and still,—
Great ends we fulfil!

TO JOHAN SVERDRUP

(See Note 45)

When now my song selects and praises
 Your forceful name, think not it raises
 The rallying—flag for battle near;
 The street—fight shall not reach us here.
 If sacred poetry's fair hill
 Lies open to assassination,—
 Is *this* the newer revelation,
 Then I withdraw and hold me still.
 Then I the words of Einar borrow,
 When southern change of kings brought sorrow,
 And Harald's hosts their ravage spread:
 I follow rather Magnus dead
 Than Harald living thus,—and then
 I sail away with ships and men.
 Nor therefore do I lift anew
 The flag of song just now for you,
 Because my spirit's deepest yearning
 To you for new light now is turning.
 No, where the *greatest* questions started,
 Just there it is our ways were parted—
 From where the deepest thought can reach,
 To plan and goal of daily speech.
 My childhood's faith unshaken stands,
 And thence our equal rights deriving,
 I for a people free am striving
 And brotherhood in kindred lands.
 Though both of us are *Christian* men,
 So wide a gulf between us lies;
 Though both are true *Norwegian* men,
 We Norway see with different eyes.
 If but to—day we victory gain,
 We must to—morrow fight amain.
 But now I honor you in singing,
 Because what ought just now to be
 With strongest will you clearly see,
 And foremost to the fight are springing.
 When sinks the land 'neath heavy fogs
 And no fair prospect cheers the eye,
 The thickening air our breathing clogs,
 Yes, all things dull in torpor lie,—
Then mounts your mind with freest motion,
 Its thunder—wings the mist—banks driving,
 Its lightning—talons cloud—walls riving,
 Till sunlight spreads o'er land and ocean.

You are the freshening shower clean
 Upon our sluggish day's routine.
 You are the salt sea-current poured
 Into each close and sultry fjord.
 Your speech a mine-shaft is, deep-going
 To where the veins of ore are showing.
 And by your flashing eyes far-sighted
 The past is for our future lighted.
 So long as Sverre's sword you wield,
 So long as you our hosts are heading,
 We know we'll win on every field;
 Foes flee, your battle trumpet dreading.
 We see their struggling ranks soon rifted,
 We see them set so many a snare:
 Your head unharmed in thought's pure air
 Above the waves of war is lifted.
 We love you for this courage good,
 That e'er *before* the banner stood,
 We love the strength you boldly stored
 In your self-forged and tempered sword.
 Your vigilance we love and prize,
 That sickness, slander, loss defies,
 We love you, that at duty's call
 You gave your peace, your future, all,
 We love you still—hate cannot cleave!—
 Because you dared in us believe.

How can they hope that backward here
 Our land shall go? No, year by year,
 Forward in freedom and in song,
 Forward the truly Norse disclosing.
 What might can now avail, opposing
 The travail of the centuries long?
 People and power no more divided;
 In peace to save or war to kill,
 Our freedom with *one* guard provided,
One nation only and *one* will.

The spirit of our nation's morn,
 The unity of free gods dreaming,
 And all things great to be great deeming,
 Forever must the spurious scorn.
 The spirit that impelled the viking
 'Gainst kingly power for freedom striking,—
 That, threatened, sailed to Iceland strong
 With hero-fame and hero-song,
 And further on through all the ages,—
 That spirit never dwells in cages.
 The spirit that at Hjørung broke
 For thousand years the foreign yoke,
 By might of king ne'er made to cower,
 Defying e'en the papal power,—
 The spirit that, to weakness worn,

Held free our soil with rights unshorn,
 Held free, with tongue and hand combined,
 'Gainst foreign host and foreign mind,—
 By which our Holberg's wit was whetted,
 And Wessel's sword and Wessel's pen,
 And to whose silent forge indebted
 The thoughts that armed our Eidsvold-men,—
 The spirit that in faith so high
 Through Odin could to God draw nigh,
 As bridge the myth of Balder threw,
 And almost found the free way new
 To truth's fair home in radiant Gimle,
 When this was closed and warded grimly
 By monkish lies and papal speech,—
 That threw a second bridge to reach
 On freedom's lightly soaring arches
 To heights whereon the free soul marches,—
 So, when for Luther blood was shed,
 The North but razed a fence instead,
 —The spirit that, when men were deeming
 True faith in all the world were dead,
 Brun, Hauge, and their lineage spread,
 From soul-springs in our nation streaming,—
 Though pietism's fog now thickens,
 Still guards the altar lights and quickens;—
 Can *this* they make the fashion better,
 By modern bishop-synod's letter?
 Is *this* by politics provided,
 When into "Chambers" 't is divided?
 Can *this* into a box be juggled
 And o'er the boundary be smuggled?

And that just now when beacons lighted
 On all the mountain-tops are sighted,
 And when our folk-high-school's young day
 The Norse heart kindles with its ray,
 Renewing mem'ries, courage bringing,
 While they are hearing, trusting, singing;—
 Just when the deep in billows surges,
 Responsive to the tempest's might,
 And over it the Northern Light
 Of Youth's refulgent hope emerges;—
 Just when the spirit everywhere,
 While walls lie low as trumpets blare,
 Is breaking from the ancient forms,
 And will of youth the heights now storms.

A battle-age,—and we are in it!
 The greatest thing on earth: to be

Poems and Songs

Where powers that are bursting free,
Self-shaping seek their place and win it;—
Our fusing passion all to give,
To cast the statue that shall live,
To press the mold of our own form
On what shall be the future's norm,
Into the age's soul thus breathed
The spirit God to us bequeathed.

'T was this that now I wished to say
To you, who late and early, aye
Within time's workshop great are going,
What is, what shall be, ever knowing;—
To you, who all our people's might
Have roused for freedom new to fight;—
To whom our people gave this power,
And sorrow, its eternal dower.

THE CHILD IN OUR SOUL

Toward God in heaven spacious
With artless faith a boy looks free,
As toward his mother gracious,
And top of Christmas-tree.
But early in the storm of youth
There wounds him deep the serpent's tooth;
His childhood's faith is doubted
And flouted.

Soon stands in radiant splendor
With bridal wreath his boyhood's dream;
Her loving eyes and tender
The light of heaven's faith stream.
As by his mother's knee of yore
God's name he stammers yet once more,
The rue of tears now paying
And praying.

When now life's conflict stirring
Leads him along through doubtings wild,
Then upward points unerring
Close by his side his child.
With children he a child is still
And whatso'er his heart may chill,
Prayer for his son is warming,
Transforming.

The greatest man in wonder
Must ward the child within his breast,
And list 'mid loudest thunder
Its whisperings unrepressed.
Where oft a hero fell with shame,
The child it was restored his name,
His better self revealing,
And healing.

All great things thought created
In child-like joy sprang forth and grew;
All strength with goodness mated,
Obeyed the child's voice true.
When beauty in the soul held sway,

Poems and Songs

The child gave it in artless play;—
All wisdom worldly-minded
Is blinded.

Hail him, who forward presses
So far that he a home is worth
For there alone possesses
The child-life peace on earth.
Though worn we grieve and hardened grow,
What solace 't is our home to know
With children's laughter ringing
And singing.

+
OLE GABRIEL UELAND

(See Note 46)

Of long toil 't is a matter
Through many a silent age,
Before such power can shatter
Time-hallowed custom's cage.
The soul-fruit of the peasant,
Though seldom seed was sown,
It is our honor present,—
Our future sure foreknown.

The fjords that earnest waited
Mid mountain-snows around
His childhood's thoughts created
And depth of life profound.
The highlands' sun that played there
On fjord and mountain snow
So wide a vision made there
As one could wish to know.

When *he* to Ting repairing
Would plead the peasant's right,
Each word a beam was bearing.
To make our young day bright.
It came like ancient story
Or long-lost song's refrain;
What crowned our past with glory
It made our present gain.

Though in his boat a seaman,
A farmer in his field,
Ne'er finer thoughts did freeman
In royal council wield.
His years bear witness ready
That we shall yet achieve
Our people's self-rule steady,
He taught us to believe.

Poems and Songs

When weary, worn, and aged,
His faith was ever strong;
The people's war he waged
For victory erelong.
Beneath the banner dying,
He would not yet give o'er,
And him Valkyries flying
Home to Valhalla bore.

From wintry night and bitter
He was with stately tread
In Saga's hall a-glitter
Before the high-sear led.
Old heroes proud or merry
Rising to greet him went,
But first of all King Sverre,
From whom was his descent.

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ANTON MARTIN SCHWEIGAARD

(IN THE CHURCH AFTER THE FUNERAL ORATION)

(See Note 47)

Give us, God, to Thee now turning,
Fullness of joy, tears full and burning,
Of will the full refining fire!
Hear our prayer o'er his inurning:
His will was *one*, the whole discerning,
His whole soul would to it aspire.

Yes; give us yet again,
With power to lead, great men,—
Power in counsel our folk to lead,
Our folk in deed,
Our folk in gladness and in need!

Thou, O God, our want preventest;
To raise the temple *him* Thou lentest,
A spirit bright and pure and great.
When Thou from time to call him meantest,
Her tender soul to him Thou sentest
Who went before to heaven's gate.

When Thou didst set him free,
An epoch ceased to be.
Men then marveled, the while they said:
“Living and dead,
O'er all our land he beauty spread.”

Help us, God, to wiser waring,
When to our land Thou light art bearing,
That we Thy dayspring then may know.
God, our future Thou'rt preparing,
Oh, give us longing, honor's daring,
That we the great may not forego!

Thou sentest many out,—
Cease not, our God, nor doubt!
Let us follow Thy way, Thy call,
Men, words, and all!
Thy mercies shall our North enwall!

+

TO AASMUND OLAFSEN VINJE

(SUNG AT HIS WIFE'S GRAVE)

(See Note 48)

Your house to guests has shelter lent,
While you with pen were seated.
In silent quest they came and went,
You saw them not, nor greeted.
 But when now they
 Were gone away,
Your babe without a mother lay,
And you had lost your helpmate.

The home you built but yesterday
In death to-day is sinking,
And you stand sick and worn and gray
On ruins of your thinking.
 Your way lay bare
 Since child you were,
The shelter that you first could share
Was this that now is shattered.

But know, the guests that to you came
In sorrow's waste will meet you;
Though shy you shrink, they still will claim
The right with love to treat you.
 For where you go
 To you they show
The world in radiant light aglow
Of great and wondrous visions.

What once you saw, now passing o'er,
Will but be made the clearer;
It is the far eternal shore,
That on your way draws nearer.
 Your poet-sight
 Will see in light
All that the clouds have wrapped in night;—
Great doubts will find an answer.

And later when you leave again
The waste of woe thought-pregnant,
Whom you have met shall teach us then.
Your pen in power regnant.
 From sorrow's weal
 With purer zeal,
Inspiring light, and pain's appeal
Shall shine your wondrous visions.

GOOD CHEER

(1870)

(See Note 49)

So let these songs their story tell
To all who in the Northland dwell,
 Since many friends request it.
(That Finland's folk with them belong
In the wide realm of Northern song,
 I grateful must attest it.)

I send these songs—and now I find
Most of them have riot what my mind
 Has deepest borne and favored:
Some are too hasty, some too brief,
Some, long in stock, have come to grief,
 Some with raw youth are flavored.

I lived far more than e'er I sang;
Thought, ire, and mirth unceasing rang
 Around me, where I gusted;
To be where loud life's battles call
For me was well-nigh more than all
 My pen on page arrested.

What's true and strong has growing-room,
And will perhaps eternal bloom,
 Without black ink's salvation,
And he will be, who least it planned,
But in life's surging dared to stand,
 The best bard for his nation.

I heard once of a Spanish feast:
Within the ring a rustic beast,
 A horse, to fight was fated;
In came a tiger from his cage,
Who walked about, his foe to gauge,
 And crouching down, then waited.

The people clapped and laughed and cheered,
The tiger sprang, the horse upreared,
 But none could see him bleeding;
The tiger tumbling shrinks and backs
Before the horse's rustic whacks,
 Lies on his head naught heeding.

Then men and women hooted, hissed,
With glaring eyes and clenched fist
 Out o'er the balcony bending;
With shouts the tiger's heart they tease,
Their thirst for blood soon to appease,
 To onset new him sending.

The people clapped and laughed and cheered
The tiger sprang, the horse upreared;
 No blood to see was given,
For fortune held the horse too dear,
To him the tiger could not near,
 In flying curves hoof-driven.

To say who won I will not try;
For lo, this rustic horse am I,
 And on the conflict's going;—
The city, though, where it occurs,
And where it cheers and laughter stirs,
 Is known without my showing.

I fight, but have no hate or spite,
From what I love draw gladness bright,
 My right to wrath reserving.
It is my blood, my soul, that goes
In every line of all my blows,
 And guides their course unswerving.

But as I stand here now to-day,
Nor grudge nor vengeance can me sway,
 To think that foes I'm facing.
So in return some friendship give

To one who for the *cause* would live,
With love the North embracing!

But first my poet-path shall be
With veneration unto *thee*,
Who fill'st the North with wonder;
In wrath thou dawn didst prophesy
Behind the North's dark morning-sky,
That lightnings shook and thunder.

Then, milder, thou, by sea and slope,
The fount of saga, faith, and hope
Mad'st flow for every peasant;—
Now from the snow-years' mountain-side
Thou seest with time's returning tide
Thine own high image present.

To *thee*, then, in whose spring of song
Finland's "the thousand lakes" belong
And sound their thrilling sorrow:—
Our Northern soul forever heard
Keeps watch and ward in poet's word
'Gainst Eastern millions' morrow.

But when I stand in our own home,
One greets me from the starry dome
With wealth of light and power.
There shines he: HENRIK WERGELAND,
Out over Norway's pallid strand
In memory's clear hour.

OLD HELTBERG

(See Note 50)

I went to a school that was little and proper,
Both for church and for state a conventional hopper,
Feeding rollers that ground out their grist unwaiting;
And though it was clear from the gears' frequent grating
They rarely with oil of the spirit were smeared,
Yet no other school in that region appeared.
We *had* to go there till older;—though sorry,
I went there also,—but reveled in Snorre.

The self-same books, the same so-called education,
That teacher after teacher, by decrees of power royal,
Into class after class pounds with self-negation,
And that only bring promotion to them that are loyal!—
The self-same books, the same so-called education,
Quickly molding to one type all the men in the land,
An excellent fellow who on *one* leg can stand,
And as runs an anchor-rope reel off his rote-narration!—
The self-same books, the same so-called education
From Hammerfest to Mandal—('tis the state's creation
Of an everything-and-every-one-conserving dominion,
Wherein all the finer folk have but one opinion!)—
The self-same books, the same so-called education
My comrades devoured; but my appetite failed me,
And that fare I refused, till, to cure what had ailed me,
Home leaving I leaped o'er those bars of vexation.
What I met on the journey, what I thought in each case,
What arose in my soul in the new-chosen place,
Where the future was lying,—this to tell is refractory,
But I'll give you a picture of the "student factory."

Full-bearded fellows of thirty near died of
Their hunger for lore, as they slaved by the side of
Rejected aspirants with faces hairless,
Like sparrows in spring, scatter-brained and careless.
—Vigorous seamen whose adventurous mind
First drove them from school that real life they might find—
But now to cruise wide on the sea they were craving,
Where the flag of free thought o'er all life wide is waving.
—Bankrupted merchants who their books had wooed
In their silent stores, till their creditors sued

Poems and Songs

And took from them their goods. Now they studied "on credit."
Beside them dawdling dandies. Near in scorn have I said it!
—"Non-Latin" law-students, young and ambitious,
"Prelims," theologs, with their preaching officious;
—Cadets that in arm or in leg had a hurt;
—Peasants late in learning but now in for a spurt:—
Here they all wished through their Latin to drive
In *one* year or in two,—not in eight or in five.
They hung over benches, 'gainst the walls they were lying,
In each window sat two, one the edge was just trying
Of his new-sharpened knife on an ink-spattered desk.
Through two large open rooms what a spectacle grotesque!

At one end, half in dreams, Aasmund Olavsen Vinje's
Long figure and spare, a contemplative genius;
Thin and intense, with the color of gypsum,
And a coal-black, preposterous beard, Henrik Ibsen.
I, the youngest of the lot, had to wait for company
Till a new litter came in, after Yule Jonas Lie.

But the "boss" who ruled there with his logical rod,
"Old Heltberg" himself, was of all the most odd!
In his jacket of dog's skin and fur-boots stout
He waged a hard war with his asthma and gout.
No fur-cap could hide from us his forehead imperious,
His classical features, his eye's power mysterious.
Now erect in his might and now bowed by his pain,
Strong thoughts he threw out, and he threw not in vain.
If the suffering grew keener and again it was faced
By the will in his soul, and his body he braced
Against onset after onset, then his eyes were flaming
And his hands were clenched hard, as if deep were his shaming
That he seemed to have yielded! Oh, then we were sharing
Amazed all the grandeur of conflict, and bearing
Home with us a symbol of the storms of that age,
When "Wergeland's wild hunt" o'er our country could rage!
There was power in the men who took part in that play,
There was will in the power that then broke its way.
Now alone he was left, forgotten in his corner:—
But in deeds was a hero,—let none dare to be his scorner!
He freed thought from the fetters that the schools inherit,
Independent in teaching, he led by the spirit;
Personality unique: for with manner anarchic
He carved up the text; and absolute-monarchic
Was his wrath at mistakes; but soon it subsided,
Or, controlled, into noblest pathos was guided,
Which oft turned in recoil into self-irony

Poems and Songs

And a downpour of wit letting no one go free.—
So he governed his “horde,” so we went through the country,
The fair land of the classics, that we harried with effront'ry!
How Cicero, Sallust, and Virgil stood in fear
On the forum, in the temple, when we ravaging drew near!
'T was again. the Goths' invasion to the ruin of Rome,
It was Thor's and Odin's spirit over Jupiter's home,
—And the old man's “grammar” was a dwarf-forged hammer,
When he swung it and smote with sparks, flames, and clamor.
The herd of “barbarians” he thus headed on their way
Had no purpose to settle and just there to stay.
“Non-Latins” they remained, by no alien thought enslaved,
And found their true selves, as the foreign foes they braved.

In conquering the language we learned the laws of thought,
And following him, his fine longing we caught
For wanderings and wonders, all the conqueror's zeal,
To win unknown lands and their mysteries reveal.
Each lesson seemed a vision that henceforth was ours,
Inspiring each youth's individual powers.
His pictures made pregnant our creative desire,
His wit was our testing in an ordeal of fire,
His wisdom was our balance, to weigh things great and small,
His pathos told of passions, burning, but held in thrall,

Oft the stricken hero scarce his tedious toil could brook,
He wished to go and write, though it were but a single book,
To show a *little* what he was, and show it to the world:
He loosed his cable daily, but ne'er his sails unfurled.

His “grammar” was not printed! And he passed from mortal ken
To where the laws of thought are not written with a pen.
His “grammar” was not printed! But the life that it had,
In ink's prolonging power did not need to be clad.
It lived in his soul, so mighty, so warm,
That a thousand books' life seems but poor empty form.
It lives in a host of independent men,
To whose thought he gave life and who give it again
In the school, at the bar, in the church, and Storting's hall,
In poetry and art,—whose deeds and lifework all
Have proved to be the freer and the broader in their might,
Because Heltberg had given their youth higher flight.

FOR THE WOUNDED

(1871)

(See Note 51)

A still procession goes
Amid the battle's booming,
Its arm the red cross shows;
It prays in many forms of speech,
And, bending o'er the fallen,
Brings peace and home to each.

Not only is it found
Where bleed the wounds of battle,
But all the world around.
It is the love the whole world feels
In noble hearts and tender,
While gentle pity kneels;—

It is all labor's dread
Of war's mad waste and murder,
Praying that peace may spread;
It is all sufferers who heed
The sighing of a brother,
And know his sorrow's need;—

It is each groan of pain
Heard from the sick and wounded,
'T is Christian prayer humane;
It is their cry who lonely grope,
'T is the oppressed man's moaning,
The dying breath of hope;—

This rainbow-bridge of prayers
Up through the world's wild tempest
In light of Christ's faith bears:
That love and loving deeds
May conquer strife and passion;
For thus His promise reads.

LANDFALL

(See Note 52)

And that was Olaf Trygvason,
Going o'er the North Sea grim,
Straight for his home and kingdom steering,
Where none awaited him.
Now the first mountains tower;
Are they walls, on the ocean that lower?

And that was Olaf Trygvason,
Fast the land seemed locked at first,
All of his youthful, kingly longings
Doomed on the cliffs to burst,—
Until a skald discovered
Shining domes in the cloud—mists, that hovered.

And that was Olaf Trygvason,
Seemed to see before his eyes
Mottled and gray some timeless temple
Lifting white domes to the skies.
Sorely he longed to win it,
Stand and hallow his young faith within it.

TO HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

(AT A SUMMER-FÊTE FOR HIM IN CHRISTIANIA, 1871)
(See Note 53)

We welcome you this wondrous summer-day,
When childhood's dreams on earth are streaming,
To bloom and sing, to brighten and to pale;
 A fairy-tale,
A fairy-tale, our Northland all is seeming,
And holds you in its arms a festal space
With grateful glee and whisperings face to face.
 Th' angelic noise,
 Sweet strains of children's joys,
Bears you a moment to that home
Whence all our dreams, whence all our dreams have come.

We welcome you! Our nation all is young,
Still in that age of dreams enthralling,
When greatest things in fairy-tales are nursed,
 And he is first,
And he is first, who hears his Lord's high calling.
Of childhood's longings you the meaning know,
And to the North a goal of greatness show.
 Your fantasy
 Has just that path made free,
Where, past the small things that you hate,
We yet shall find, we yet shall find the great.

TO STANG

(1871)

(See Note 54)

May Seventeenth in Eidsvold's church united,
To hallow after fifty years the day
When they who there our charter free indited,
Together for our land were met to pray,—
We both were there with thanks to those great men,
With thanks to God, who to our people then
In days of danger courage gave unbounded.

And when so mighty through the church now sounded
“Praise ye the Lord!” lifting our pallid prayer
To fellowship with all her sons, our brothers,
I saw you, child-like, weep in secret there
Upon the breast we love, our common mother's.

Then I remembered that from boyhood's hour
With all your strength to serve her you have striven,
Your youthful fire, your counsel cool have given,
And till it waned, your manhood's wealth of power.
With blessing then and praise of you I thought
In thankful prayer, as one of those who fought
To shield our land from storms of fate's hard weather,
Till 'neath the roof in peace we sat together.

Of you I thought;—but so think few and fewer.
Your manhood's fame ere you yourself has crumbled,
And you, alas, will not find justice truer,
Till you and yours one day have fallen, humbled.

For see, the roads you drew o'er hill and plain
For all our people's onward—pressing longing,
You dare not travel with the joyous train,
That greater grows while towards its future thronging.
You knew not what it was your labor wrought,
When steam and powder, bursting every barrier,
Gave new-born cravings each its speedy carrier
And to the people's spirit power brought.
The new day's work, as 't were the tempest's welter,
In din about you seemed a dream, a fable,

Poems and Songs

And with your like you built in fear a shelter
From soul-unrest, a looming tower of Babel.

While now you wait for the impending fight,
With gentle eye and stately head all hoary,
And o'er the mountains gleams the morning's glory,—
Your foes half hid amid the mists of night,—
As from an outpost in the wooded wild,
These words I send, of peace a token mild.

You fear the people? 'Tis your own that rally,
And like the fog arisen from the valley.
You think them rebels, void of sense and oneness?
Yes, spring's full floods obey no rule precise;
Storm-squalls and slush render the roads less nice,
The snow's pure white is partly soiled to dunness.
But spring is born! The man of genius free,
Prophetic, heeds its holy harmony;
For genius shares the soul of what shall be.
This you have not and never had an hour,
And so you shrink before the people's power.

You were a foreman with the gift of leading,
When pioneers cleared up a pathless tract;
Your lucid thinking and your gracious tact
Oft helped them over obstacles impeding.
But what new growths the ancient fields have filled,
From western seed to feed our land's wants tilled,
And what new light shines through your window-pane,
Longing for truth beneath religion's reign,
And what new things but whispering we say,—
And what foretells the dawning reckoning-day,—
You fail to understand and find but madness
In our young nation's fairest growth and gladness.

You answer: Poet's deeming is but dreaming,
And in the statesman's art most unbeseeing.
I answer: None has might men's life to sway,
If impotent the worth of dreams to weigh.
From cravings, powers that seek their form, ascending,
They fill the air; their right to be defending,
Till all men wakened to one goal are tending.
His nation's dreams are all the statesman's life,
Create his might, direct his aim in strife,
And if he this forgets, the next dreams blooming
Bring forth another, unto death him dooming.

Poems and Songs

The tempest—clouds that mount afresh and thicken
Cannot so dense before the morn's light hover
That we may not through cloud—rifts clear discover
Great thoughts that new—born victories shall quicken.

Such thoughts are radiant over me to—day,
And to my heart the warmer blood is streaming,
And all we live for, all that we are dreaming,
Its summons sends and strengthens for the fray.

The war—horns soon beneath the woods shall bray,
Through dewy night th' assailing columns dash,
Amid the sudden gleams of shot and slash
The fog dissolve before our new—born day.

Soon, though you threaten, will the heights be taken
For future ages, and our nation's soul
Can thence o'erlook the land in might unshaken,
With even hand and right to rule the whole.
It soon shall roll war's billows on to battle,
While from the clouds the fathers' weapons rattle!
O aged man, look round you where you stand,
For soon you have against you all our land.

But when you fall defeated on the field,
Then shall we say by your inverted shield:
He stood against us, since he knew not better,
A noble knight and never honor's debtor.

ON A WIFE'S DEATH

(See Note 55)

With death's dark eye acquainted she had been made ere this,
When to her son, her first-born, she gave the farewell kiss,
And when afar she hastened beside her mother's bed,
It followed all her faring with warning fraught and dread;
It filled her with foreboding when standing by the bier:
More sheaves to gather hopeth the harvester austere.
So soon she saw her husband, that man of strength, succumb,
She said with sorrow stricken: « I knew that it would come!”
She thought that he was chosen by God from earth to go,
Would check, her hands upthrusting, the harsh behest of woe;
And with her slender body, too weak for such a strife,
Would ward her gallant consort,—and gave for him her life.

She smiled, serene and blissful, as death's dark eye she braved;
Her sacrifice was given, her heart's proud hero saved.
Our love and admiration lifted a starry dome
Of happiness above her in life's last hour of gloam,
And snow-white pure she passed then to her eternal home.
Such tender love and holy to heaven's bounds can bear
The souls that it embraces in sacrifice and prayer.

THE BIER OF PRECENTOR A. REITAN

(1872)

(See Note 56)

With smiles his soft eyes ever gleamed,
When God and country thinking;
With endless joy, his soul, it seemed,
Faith, fatherland, was linking.
His word, his song,
Like springs flowed strong;
They fruitful made the valley long,
And quickened all there drinking.

Poor people and poor homes among
In wintry region saddest,
In Sunday's choir he always sung,
Of all the world the gladdest:
"The axis stout
It turns about,
Falls not the poorest home without,
For thus, O God, Thou badest."

With sickness came a heavy year
And put to proof his singing,
While helpless children standing near
His trust to test were bringing.
But glad the more,
As soft notes soar
When winds o'er hidden harp—strings pour,
His song his soul was winging.

His life foretold us that erelong
With faith in God unshaken
Shall all our nation stand in song,
And church, home, school, awaken,
In Norway's song,
In gladness' song,
In glory of the Lord's own song,
From life's low squalor taken.

Poems and Songs

Fair fatherland, do not forget,
The children of his bower!
He, poor as is the rosebush, yet
Gave gladness till death's hour—
With failure's smart
Let not depart
From this thy soil so glad a heart,—
His garden, let it flower!

SONG

Song brings us light with the power of lending
 Glory to brighten the work that we find;
Song brings us warmth with the power of rending
 Rigor and frost in the swift-melting mind.
Song is eternal with power of blending
 Time that is gone and to come in the soul,
Fills it with yearnings that flow without ending,
 Seeking that sea where the light-surges roll.

Song brings us union, while gently beguiling
 Discord and doubt on its radiant way;
Song brings us union and leads, reconciling
 Battle-glad passions by harmony's sway,
Unto the beautiful, valiant, and holy
 —Some can pass over its long bridge of light
Higher and higher to visions that solely
 Faith can reveal to the spirit's pure sight.

Songs from the past of the past's longings telling,
 Pensive and sad cast a sunset's red glow;
Present time's longings in sweet music dwelling,
 Grateful the soul of the future shall know.
Youth of all ages in song here are meeting,
 Sounding in tone and in word their desire;
—More than we think, from the dead bringing greeting,
 Gather to-night in our festival choir.

ON THE DEATH OF N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG

(1872)

(See Note 57)

E'en as the Sibyl in Northland—dawn drew
Forth from the myth—billows gliding,
Told all the past, all the future so true,
Sank with the lands' last subsiding,—
Prophecies leaving, eternally new,
 Still abiding

Thus goes his spirit the Northland before,—
Though, that he sank, we have tiding,—
Visions unfolding like sun—clouds, when o'er
Sea—circled lands they are riding,
Northern lands' future, till time is no more,
 Ever guiding.

**FROM THE CANTATA FOR
N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG**

(1872)

His day was the greatest the Northland has seen,
It one was with the midnight–sun's wonders serene:
The light wherein he sat was the light of God's true peace,
And that has never morning, nor night when it must cease.

In light of God's peace shone the *history* he gave,
The spirit's course on earth that shall conquer the grave.
Might of God's pure peace thus our *fathers' mighty way*
Before us for example and warning open lay.

In light of God's peace he beheld with watchful eye
The people at their work and the spirit's strivings high.
In light of God's pure peace he would have all learning glow,
And where his word is honored the “Folk–High–Schools” must grow.

In light of God's peace stood 'mid sorrow and care
For Denmark's folk his comfort, a castle strong and fair;
In light of God's pure peace there shall once again be won
And thousand–fold increased, what seems lost now and undone.

In light of God's peace stands his patriarch–worth,
The sum and the amen of a manful life on earth.
In light of God's pure peace how his face shone, lifted up,
When white–haired at the altar he held th' atoning cup.

In light of God's peace came his word o'er the wave,
In light of God's pure peace sound the sweet psalms he gave.
In light of God's pure peace, as its sunbeam curtains fall
To hide him from us, stands now his memory for all.

**AT A BANQUET FOR
PROFESSOR LUDV. KR. DAA**

(See Note 58)

Youthful friends here a circle form,
Elder foes now surrender.
Feel among us in safety, warm,
Toward you our hearts are tender.
Once again on a hard-fought day
Hero-like you have led the way,
Smiting all that before you stood;—
But now be good!

With no hubbub, without champagne,
Dress-suit, and party-collar,
We would honor o'er viands plain
Grateful our "grand old scholar"!
When all quiet are wind and wave,
Seldom we see this pilot brave;—
When storm-surges our ship might overwhelm,
He takes the helm!

—Takes the helm and through thick and thin
(Clear are his old eyes burning),
Steers the course with his trusty "grin,"
Straight, where the others are turning!
Thanks gave to him I know not who,
For he scolded the skipper, too!—
Back he went to his home right soon:
We had the boon.

He has felt what it is to go
Hated, till truth gains the battle;
He has felt what it is to know
Blows that from both sides rattle.
He has felt what the cost is, so
Forward the present its path to show:
He, whose strength had such heights attained,
Stood all disdained.

Poems and Songs

Would that Norway soon grew so great
That it with justice rewarded
Heroes who its true weal create,
Who are no laggards sordid.
Shall we always so slowly crawl,
Split forever in factions small,
Idly counting each ill that ails?—
No! Set the sails!

Set the sails for the larger life,
Whereto our nation has power!
Daily life is with death but rife,
If there's not growth every hour.
Rally to war for the cause of right,
Sing 'neath the standard of honor bright,
Sail with faith in our God secure,
And strong endure

OH, WHEN WILL YOU STAND FORTH?

(See Note 59)

Oh, when will you stand forth, who with strength can bring aid,
To strike down the injustice and lies
That my house have beset, and with malice blockade
Every pathway I out for my powers have laid,
And would hidden means find
With deceit and with hate
To set watch on my mind
And defile every plate
In my beautiful home where defenseless we wait?

Oh, when will you stand forth? This detraction through years
For my people has made me an oaf,
Hides my poetry's fount in the fog of its fleers,
So it merely a pool of self-worship appears;
Like a clumsy troll I
Am contemned with affront,
Whom all "cultured" folk fly,
Or yet gather to hunt,
That their hunger of hate at a feast they may blunt.

When I publish a book: "It is half like himself;"
If I speak, 't is for vanity's sake.
What I build in the stage-world of fancy's free elf
Is but formed from my fatuous self.
When for faith I contend
And our land's ancient ways,
When the bridge I defend
From our fathers' great days,
'Tis because my poor breast no king's "Order" displays.

Oh, when will you stand forth, who shall sunder in twain
All this slander so stifling and foul,
And shall sink in the sea all the terror insane
That they have of heart-passion and will-wielding brain,—
And with love shall enfold
A soul's faith wide and deep,
That in want and in cold
Would its morning-watch keep

Poems and Songs

Undismayed, till the light all the host shall ensweep?

Come, thou Spirit of Norway, God-given of yore
In the stout giant-conquering Thor!
While the lightning thou ridest, thy answer's loud roar
Drowns the din that the dwarfs in defiance outpour;
Thou canst waken with might
All our longings to soar,
Thou canst strengthen in right
What united we swore,
When at Hafur thy standard in honor we bore.

Hail, thou Spirit of Norway! To think but of thee
Makes so small all the small things I felt.
To thy coming I hallow me, wholly to thee,
And I humbly look up to thy face, unto thee,
And I pray for a song
With thy tongue's stirring sound,
That I true may and strong
In the crisis be found,
To rouse heroes for thee on our forefathers' ground.

AT HANSTEEN'S BIER

(1873)

(See Note 60)

God, we thank Thee for the dower
Thou gavest Norway in his power,
Whom in the grave we now shall lay!
Starlit paths of thoughts that awe us
His spirit found; his deeds now draw us
To deeds, as mighty magnets play.
He was the first to stand
A light in our free land;
Of our present the first fair crown,
The first renown,
At Norway's feet he laid it down.

We his shining honors sharing,
And humble now his body bearing,
Shall sing with all the world our praise.
God, who ever guides our nation,
Hath called us to a high vocation
And shown where He our goal doth raise.
People of Norway, glad
Go on, as God us bade!
God has roused you; He knows whereto,
Though we are few.
With Him our future we shall view.

**RALLYING SONG FOR FREEDOM IN THE NORTH
TO "THE UNITED LEFT"**

(Tirol, 1874)
(See Note 61)

Dishonored by the higher, but loved by all the low,—
Say, is it not the pathway that the new has to go?
By those who ought to guard it betrayed, oh yes, betrayed,—
Say, is it not thus truth ever progress has made?

Some summer day beginning, a murmur in the grain,
It grows to be a roaring through the forests amain,
Until the sea shall bear it with thunder-trumpets' tone,
Where nothing, nothing's heard but it alone, it alone.

With Northern allies warring we take the Northern
For God and for our freedom—is the watchword we bring.
That God, who gave us country and language, and all,
We find Him in our doing, if we hear and heed His call.

That doing we will forward, we many, although weak,
'Gainst all in fearless fighting, who the truth will not seek:—
Some summer day beginning, a murmur in the grain,
It goes now as a roaring through the forests amain.

'T will grow to be a storm ere men think that this can be,
With voice of thunder sweeping o'er the infinite sea.
What nation God's call follows, earth's greatest power shall show,
And carry all before it, though it high stand or low.

**AT A BANQUET
GIVEN TO THE DEPUTATION OF THE SWEDISH RIKSDAG
TO THE CORONATION, IN TRONDHJEM, JULY 17, 1873**

(See Note 62)

You chosen men we welcome here
 From brothers near.
We welcome you to Olaf's town
That Norway's greatest mem'ries crown,
Where ancient prowess looking down
 With searching gaze,
The question puts to sea and strand:
Are men now in the Northern land
 Like yesterday's?

'T is well, if on the battlefield
 Our "Yes" is sealed!
'T is well, if now our strength is steeled
To grasp our fathers' sword and shield
And in life's warfare lift and wield
 For God and home!
For us they fought; 't is now our call
To raise for them a temple-hall,
 Fair freedom's dome.

List to the Northern spirit o'er
 Our sea and shore!
Here once high thoughts in word were freed,
In homely song, in homely deed;
And ever shall the selfsame need
 That spirit sing:
Heed not things trivial, foreign, new;
Alone th' eternal, Northern, true
 Can harvest bring.

O brother-band, this faith so dear
 Has brought us here?
The spirit of the North to free,
Our common toil and prayer shall be,
Those greater days again to see,—
 As once before,

Poems and Songs

Of home and trust a message strong
To send the warring world we long
Forevermore.

OPEN WATER!

Open water, open water!
All the weary winter's yearning
Bursts in restless passion burning.
Scarce is seen the blue of ocean,
And the hours seem months in motion.

Open water, open water!
Smiles the sun on ice defiant,
Eats it like a shameless giant:
Soon as mouth of sun forsakes it,
Swift the freezing night remakes it.

Open water, open water!
Storm shall be the overcomer
Sweeping on from others' summer
Billows free all foes to swallow,—
Crash and fall and sinking follow.

Open water, open water!
Mirrored mountains are appearing,
Boats with steam and sail are nearing,
Inward come the wide world's surges,
Outward joy of combat urges.

Open water, open water!
Fiery sun and cooling shower
Quicken earth to speak with power.
Soul responds, the wonder viewing:
Strength is here for life's renewing.

**SONG OF FREEDOM
TO "THE UNITED LEFT"**

(1877)

(See Note 63)

Freedom's father—power strong,
Freedom's mother—wrath and song.
Giant—stout, a youth self—taught,
Soon a giant's work he wrought.
Ever he, full of glee,
Thought and wit and melody,
Mighty, merry, made his way,—
Labor's toil or battle—fray.

Enemies whom none could tell
Lay in wait this foe to fell,
Found him waking all too stark,
Sought his sleeping hours to mark,
Tried their skill, bound him still;
When he wakened, they fared ill.
Glad he forward strode firm—paced,
Full of power, full of haste.

Bare fields blossom 'neath his feet,
Commerce swells about his seat,
From his fire gleam thought—rays bright,—
All things doubled are in might!
For the land law he planned,
Keeps it, guards with head and hand,
Of all rue and error quit,
Crushing him who injures it.

Freedom's God is God of light,
Not the bondsman's god of fright,—
God of love and brotherhood,
Springtime's hope and will for good.
To earth's ends *peace* He sends!
Heed the words His law commends:
“One your Lord, and I am He,
Have no other gods but Me!”

TO MOLDE

(See Note 64)

Molde, Molde,
True as a song,
Billowy rhythms whose thoughts fill with love me,
Follow thy form in bright colors above me,
Bear thy beauty along.
Naught is so black as thy fjord, when storm-lashes
Sea-salted scourge it and inward it dashes,
Naught is so mild as thy strand, as thine islands,
Ah, as thine islands!
Naught is so strong as thy mountain-linked ring,
Naught is so sweet as thy summer-nights bring.
Molde, Molde,
True as a song,
Murm'ring memories throug.

Molde, Molde,
Flower-o'ergrown,
Houses and gardens where good friends wander!
Hundreds of miles away,—but I'm yonder
Mid the roses full-blown.
Strong shines the sun on that mountain-rimmed beauty,
Fast is the fight, let each man do his duty.
Friends, who your favor would never begrudge me,
Gently now judge me!—
Only with life ends the fight for the right.
Thought flees to you for a refuge in light.
Molde, Molde,
Flower-o'ergrown,
Childhood's memories' throne.

Oh, may at last
In thine embrace, life's fleeting
Conflict past,
Glad thine evening—glory greeting,
—Where life let thought awaken,—
My thought by death be taken!

+
PER BO

(1878)

Once I knew a noble peasant
From a line of men large-hearted.
Light and strength were in his mind,
Lifted like a peak clear-lined
O'er the valley in spring sunshine,
First to feel the morning's beam,
First refreshed by cloud-born stream.

Wide the springtime spread its banner,
Waving in his will illumined,
Bright with promise, color-sound;
Heritage of toil its ground.
Round that mountain music floated,
Songsters sweet of faith and hope
Nestled on its tree-clad slope.

Sometime, sometime all the valley
Like him shall with light be flooded;
Sometime all his faith and truth
Sunward grow in dewy youth,
And the dreams he dreamt too early
Live and make him leader be
For a race as true as he.

HAMAR-MADE MATCHES

(1877)

(See Note 65)

“Here your Hamar-made matches!”—
Of them these verses I sang;
A thought to which humor attaches,
But yet to my heart sparks sprang.

Sparks from the box-side flying
Sank deep in my memory,
Till in a light undying
Two eyes cast their spell on me,—

Light on the fire that's present,
When faith blazes forth in deed.
Know, that to every peasant
Those eyes sent a light in need.

Sent to souls without measure
The flame of love's message broad,
Gathering in one treasure
Fatherland, home, and God.

For it was Herman Anker
Took of his fathers' gold,
Loaned it as wisdom's banker,
Spread riches of thought untold,

Scattered it wide as living
Seed for the soil to enwrap;
Flowers spring from his giving
Over all Norway's lap.

Flowers spring forth, though stony

Poems and Songs

The ground where it fell, and cold.
Never did patrimony
Bear fruitage so many fold.

Heed this, Norwegian peasant,
Heed it, you townsman, too!
That fruit of love's seed may be present,
Our thanks must fall fresh as dew.

“Here your Hamar-made matches!”
My thanks kindle fast. And oh!
This song at your heart-strings catches,
That kindling your thanks may glow.

The matches hold them in hiding,—
Scratching one you will find
The light with a warmth abiding
Carries them to his mind.

“Here your Hamar-made matches!”
Only to strike one here,
Our thanks far-away dispatches,
With peace his fair home to cheer.

His matches in thousands of houses,
In great and in small as well!—
The light that thanksgiving arouses
Shall scatter the darkness fell.

His matches in thousands of houses!—
Some eve from his factory
He'll see how thanksgiving arouses
The land, and its love flames free.

He'll see in the eyes so tender,
Through gleams that his matches woke,
The thanks that his nation would render,

Poems and Songs

His glistening wreath of oak,—

He'll feel that Norway with double
The warmth of other lands glows;
The harvest must more be than trouble,
When faith in its future grows.

“Here your Hamar-made matches!”
No phosphorus-poison more!
The bearer of light up-catches
The work of the school before:—

From home all the poison taking,
Hastening the light's advance,
Longings to warm light waking,
That lay there and had no chance.

THEY HAVE FOUND EACH OTHER

(FROM THE DRAMA THE KING, THIRD INTERLUDE)

Mute they wander,
Meeting yonder,
In the wondrous Spring new-born,
That though old as Time's first morn,
Brings fresh youth to all the living,
Now held fast, now far retreating,
But through hearts in oneness beating
Ever fullest bloom is giving.
Mute they wander. E'en the eye
Speaks no thought. For from on high
To their souls sweet strains have spoken
From the wide world's harmony,
Born of light, the darkness broken,
In the dawn of things to be.
Power crowned—
Earth around
Like a sun-song rolled the sound.
Mute they wander. Sweet strains ending—
Eye nor tongue dares yet the lending
Speech to thought.
But lo! quick blending,
All things speak! They sound and shimmer,
Bloom in fragrance, ring and glimmer,
Tint and tone combining, nearer,
Meet as one—with all their thinking
In one beauty, higher, clearer,—
Heaven itself to earth is sinking.

But in this great hour of trysting
Life is opened, its course brightened,
Growth eternal calls, enlisting
Every spirit—power heightened.

THE PURE NORWEGIAN FLAG

(Note: That is, without the mark of union with Sweden.)
(See Note 66)

I

Tri-colored flag, and pure,
Thou art our hard-fought cause secure;
Thor's hammer-mark of might
Thou bearest blue in Christian white,
And all our hearts' red blood
To thee streams its full flood.

Thou liftest us high when life's sternest,
Exultant, thou oceanward turnest;
Thy colors of freedom are earnest
That spirit and body shall never know dearth.—
Fare forth o'er the earth!

II

“The pure flag is but pure folly,”
You “wise” men maintain for true.
But the flag is the truth poetic,
The folly is found in you.
In poetry upward soaring,
The nation's immortal soul
With hands invisible carries
The flag toward the future goal.
That soul's every toil and trial,
That soul's every triumph sublime,
Are sounding in songs immortal,—
To their music the flag beats time.
We bear it along surrounded
By mem'ry's melodious choir,
By mild and whispering voices,
By will and stormy desire.
It gives not to others guidance,
Can not a Swedish word say;
It never can flaunt allurement:—
Clear the foreign colors away!

III

The sins and deceits of our nation
Possess in the flag no right;
The flag is the high ideal

In honor's immortal light.
The best of our past achievements,
The best of our present prayers,
It takes in its folds from the fathers
And bears to the sons and heirs;
Bears it all pure and artless,
By tokens that tempt us unmarred,
Is for our will's young manhood
Leader as well as guard.

IV

They say: "As by rings of betrothal
We are by the flag affied!"
But Norway is *not* betrothèd,
She *is* no one's promised bride.
She shares her abode with no one,
Her bed and her board to none yields,
Her will is her worthy bridegroom,
Herself rules her sea, her fields.
Our brother to eastward honors
This independence of youth.
He knows well that by it only
Our wreath can be won in truth.
When we from the flag are taking
His colors, *he* knows 't is no whim,
But merely because we are holding
Our honor higher than him.
And none who himself has honor
Will seek him a different friend;
Our life we can for him offer,
But naught of our flag can lend.

V

TO SWEDEN

Respectful I seek a hearing,
With trust in your temper sane,
And plead now our cause before you
In words that are calm and plain:

If, Sweden, *you* were the smaller,
Were young your freedom's renown,
Had *your* flag a mark of union
That pressed you still farther down
By saying that you, as little,
Were set at the greater's board
(For this is the mark's real meaning,
By no one on earth ignored),

Yes, if it were you,—and your freedom
 Not hallowed by age, but young,
 And a century's want and weakness
 Still heavy in memory hung,
 The soul of your nation harrowed
 By old injustice and need,
 By luckless labor and longing,
 —And did you its meaning heed;
 Yes, if it were you, whose duty
 To teach your people were tried,
 To honor their new-born freedom,
 To find in their flag their guide:
 Would longer you suffer it Sundered,
 Leave foreign a single field?
 Would you not claim it un plundered,
 Your independence to shield?
 Would not to yourself you say then:
 "If one has high lineage long,
 If greater his colors' glory,
 The more alluring his song.
 Oh, tempt not him who from trouble
 Is rising with new found might;
 With pure marks direct him, rather,
 To honor's exalted height."

Thus *you* would speak, elder hero,
 If *you* in *our* home abode;
 Your wont is the way of honor,
 You fare on the forward road.
 From eighteen hundred and fourteen,
 And down to the latest day,
 So oft for our independence
 We stood like the stag at bay,
 Brave men have risen among you,
 And scorning the strife that swelled
 Have talked for our cause high-minded,
 Like Torgny to them of eld.

VI

ANSWER TO THE AGED RIDDERSTAD

You say, it is "knightly duty,"
 The fight for the flag to share,—
 I hold you full high in honor,
 But—*that* is our own affair!
 For just because we encounter

THE PURE NORWEGIAN FLAG

Poems and Songs

The storm-blasts of slander stark,
It's "knightly duty" to free now
The flag from the marring mark.
The "parity" that mark preaches
Flies false over all the seas;
A pan-Scandinavian Sweden
Can never our nation please.
From "knightly duty" the smaller
Must say: I am not a part;
The mark of my freedom and honor
Is whole for my mind and heart.
From "knightly duty" the greater
Must say: A falsehood's fair sign
Can give me no special honor,
No longer shall it be mine.
For both it is "knightly duty,"
With flags that are pure, to be
A warring world's bright example
Of peoples at peace, proud and free.

TO MISSIONARY SKREFSRUD IN SANTALISTAN

(See Note 67)

I honor you, who, though refused, affronted,
Have heard the voice, and victory have won;
I honor you, who still by malice hunted,
Show miracles of faith and power done.

I honor you, God-thirsting soul so driven,
Mid scorn and need the spirit's war to wage;
I honor you, by Gudbrand's valley given,
And of her sons the foremost in this age.

I do not share your faith, your daring dreaming;
This parts us not, the spirit's paths are broad.
For, all things great and noble round us streaming,
I worship them, because I worship God.

POST FESTUM

(See Note 68)

A man in coat of ice arrayed
Stood up once by the Arctic Ocean;
The whole earth shook with proud emotion
And honor to the giant paid.

A king came, to him climbing up,
An Order in his one hand bearing:
“Who great become, this sign are wearing.”
—The growling giant said but “Stop!”

The frightened king fell down again,
Began to weep with features ashen:
“My Order is in this rude fashion
Refused by just the greatest men.

“My dear man, take it, 't is but fit,
Of your king's honor be the warder;
On your breast greater grows the Order,
And we who bear it, too, by it.”—

The Arctic giant was too good,—
A foible oft ascribed to giants,
Who foolish trust in little clients,—
He took it,—while we mocking stood.

But all the kings crept to him then,
And each his Order brought, to know it
Thereby renewed and greater, so it
Gave rank to needy noblemen.

Honi soit ... and all the rest;
Soon Orders covered all his breast.

But oh! they greater grew no tittle,
And he grew so confounded little.

ROMSDAL

(See Note 69)

Come up on deck! The morning is clear,—
Memory wakes, as the landmarks appear.

How many the islands, green and cheery,
The salt-licking skerries, weed-wound, smeary!

On this side, on that side, they frolic before us,
Good friends, but wild,—in frightened chorus
Sea-fowl shriek round us, a flying legion.

We are in a region
Of storms historic, unique for aye.

We fare the fishermen's venturesome way!
Far out the bank and the big fish shoaling,
The captain narrates; and just now unrolling
Sails run to shore a swift racing match;—
Good is the catch.

Yes, yes,—I recognize them again,
Romsdal's boats' weather-beaten men.
They *know* how to sail, when need's at hand.

But I'm forgetting to look towards land!
———It whelms the sight
Like lightning bright,—
In memory graven, but not so great.

Wherever I suffer my eyes to wander,
Stand mountain-giants, both here and yonder,
The loin of one by the other's shoulder,
Naught else to where earth and sky are blending.
The dread of a world's din daunts the beholder;
The silence vastens the vision unending.

Some are in white and others in blue,
With pointed tops that emulous tower;

Poems and Songs

Some mass their power,
In marching columns their purpose pursue.
Away, you small folk!—In there "The Preacher"
In high assembly the service intoning
Of magnates primeval, their patriarch owning!
Of what does he preach, my childhood's teacher?
So often, so often to him I listened,
In eager worship, devout and lowly;
My songs were christened
In light that fell from his whiteness holy.

—How great it is! I can finish never.
Great thoughts that in life and legend we treasure
Stream towards the scene in persistent endeavor,
The mighty impression to grasp and measure,—
Dame's hell, India's myth—panorama,
Shakespeare's earth—overarching drama,
Aeschylus' thunders that purge and free,
Beethoven's powerful symphony,—
They widen and heighten, they cloud and brighten
—Like small ants scrambling and soft—cooing doves,
They tumble backward and flee affrighted;—
As if a dandy in dress—coat and gloves
The mountains approached and to dance invited.
No, tempt them not! Their retainer be!
You'll learn then later,
How life with the great must make you greater.

If you are humble, they'll say it themselves,
That something is greater than e'en their greatest.
Look how the little river that delves
High in the notch within limits straitest,
Through ice first burrowed and stone, a brook,
Slowly the giants asunder wearing!
Unmoved before, their face now and bearing
They had to change 'mid the spring—flood's laughter;
Millions of years have followed thereafter,
Millions of years it also took.
In stamps the fjord now to look on their party,
Lifts his sou'—wester, gives greeting to them.
Whoever at times in their fog could view them
Has seen him near to their very noses;—
The fjord's not famed for his well—bred poses.

Towards him hurry, all white—foam—faced,

Poems and Songs

Brooks and rivers in whirling haste,
All of his family, frolicsome, naughty.
If ever the mountains the fjord would immure,
Their narrows press nigher, a prison sure;—
His water-hands then with a gesture haughty
Seize the whole saucy pass like a shell;
Set to his mouth, he begins to blow it
With western-gale-lungs,—and then you may know it,
Loud is the noise, and the swift currents swell.

Forcing the coast, a big fjord, black and gray,
Breaks us our way;
Waterfalls rushing on both sides rumble.
Sponge-wet and slow,
Cloud-masses over the mountain-flanks fumble;
The sun and mist, lo,
Symbol of struggle eternal show.

This is my Romsdal's unruly land!
Home-love rejoices.

All things I see, have eyes and have voices.
The people? I know them, each man understand,
Though never I saw him nor with him have spoken;
I know this folk, for the fjord is their token.

One is the fjord in the storm's battle-fray,
Another is he when the sunbeams play
In midsummer's splendor,
And radiant, happy his heart is tender.
Whatever has form,
He bears on his breast with affection warm,
Mirrors it, fondles it,—
Be it so bare as the mossy gray rubble,
Be it so brief as a brook's fleeting bubble.

Oh, what a brightness! Beauty, soul-ravishing,
Shines from his prayer, that now he be shriven
Of all the past! And penitence lavishing,
All he confesses; with glad homage given
Mirrors and masses

Poems and Songs

Deep the mountains' high peaks and passes.

The old giants think now: He's not really bad;
In greater degree he's wrathful and glad
Than others perchance; is false not at all,
But reckless, capricious,—true son of Romsdal.

Right are the mountains! This race-type keeping,
They saw men creeping
Over the ridges, scant fodder reaping.
They saw men eager
Toil on the sea, though their take was meager,
Plow the steep slope and trench the bog-valley,
To bouts with the rock the brown nag rally.
Saw their faults flaunted,—
Buck-like they bicker,
Love well their liquor,—
But know not defeat,—hoist the sail undaunted!

Different the districts; but all in all:
Spirits vivacious, with longings that spur them,
Depths full of song, with billows that stir them,
Folk of the fjord and the sudden squall.

Viking-abode, I hail you with wonder!
High-built the wall, broad sea-floor thereunder,
Hall lit by sun-bows on waterfall vapors,
Hangings of green,—your dwellers the drapers.
Viking-born race,—'t is you I exalt!

It costs in under so high a vault
A struggle long unto lordship stable;
Not all who have tried to succeed, were able.
It costs to recover the wealth of the fjord
From wanton waste and in power to hoard.
It costs;—but who conquers is made a man.
I know there are that can.

HOLGER DRACHMANN

(See Note 70)

Spring's herald, hail! You've rent the forest's quiet?
Your hair is wet, and you are leaf-strewn, dusty ...
With your powers lusty
Have you raised a riot?
What noise about you of the flood set free,
That follows at your heels,—turn back and see:
It spurts upon you! —Was it that you fought for?
You were in there where stumps and trunks are rotting
Where long the winter-graybeards have been plotting
To prison safe that which a lock they wrought for.
But power gave you Pan, the ancient god!
They cried aloud and cursed your future lot?
Your gallant feat they held a robber's fraud?
—Each spring it happens; but is soon forgot.

You cast you down beside the salt sea's wave.
It too is free; dances with joy to find you.
You know the music well; for Pan resigned you
His art one evening by a viking's grave.

But while on nature's loving lap you lie,
The tramp of battle on the land you hear,
You see the steamers as they northward steer
With freedom's flag;—of your name comes a cry.

And so is torn between the two your breast:—
Freedom's bold fighters, who now proudly rally,
In nature's life and legend dreamy rest;
The former chide, the latter lures to dally.

Your songs sound, some as were a war-horn braying,
Some softly purl like streams on reedy strand.
Half nature-sprite and half as man you stand,
The two not yet one law of life obeying.

But as you seem and as yourself you are
(The faun's love that the viking's longing tinges),
We welcome you, no lock is left nor bar,—
You bring along the door and both the hinges.

Poems and Songs

Just this it is that we are needing now:
The spring, the spring! These stifling fumes we bear
Of royal incense and of monkish snuff,
Of corpses in romantic cloak and ruff,
Are bad for morals and for lungs: Fresh air!

Rather a draught of Songs Venetian, cheerful,
With southern wantonness and color-wonders,—
Rather “Two Shots” (although they make us fearful)
Against our shallow breeding and its blunders.

Spring's herald, hail! come from the forest's choir,
From ocean's roar, from armèd hosts and grim!
Though sometimes carelessly you struck the lyre,—
Where rich growth is, one can the rank shoots trim.
The small trolls jeer the gestures of a giant,
I love you *so*,—unique and self-reliant.

+
A MEETING

(See Note 71)

... O'er uplands fresh swift sped my sleigh ...
A light snow fell; along the way
 Stood firs and birches slender.
The former pondered deep, alone,
The latter laughed, their white boughs shone;—
 All brings a picture tender.

So light and free is now the air;
Of all its burdens stripped it bare
 The snow with playful sally.
I glimpse behind its veil so thin
A landscape gay, and high within
 A snow-peak o'er the valley.

But from the border white and brown,
Where'er I look, there's peeping down
 A face ... but whose, whose is it?
I bore my gaze 'neath cap and brim
And see the snowflakes swarm and swim;—
 Will some one here me visit?

A star fell on my glove ... right here ...
And here again ... its unlike peer; ...
 They will with riddles pose me.
And smiles that in the air abound
From eyes so good ... I look around ...
 'T is memory besnows me.

The stars spin fine their filigree,
Can hidden spirits in it be?
 There haunts me something awing ...
You finer birch, you snow unstained,
You purer air,—a soul you've gained?
 Who is it here now drawing

His features dear in nature's face,
In all this fascinating grace,
In falling stars that cheat me,—
In these white gleams that finely glance,
In all this silent rhythmic dance? ...
Hans Brecke!—comes to meet me.

THE POET

(See Note 72)

The poet does the prophet's deeds;
In times of need with new life pregnant,
When strife and suffering are regnant,
His faith with light ideal leads.
The past its heroes round him posts,
He rallies now the present's hosts,
 The future opes
 Before his eyes,
 Its pictured hopes
 He prophesies.
Ever his people's forces vernal
The poet frees,—by right eternal.

He turns the people's trust to doubt
Of heathendom and Moloch—terror;
'Neath thought of God, cold—gray with error,
He sees grow green each fresh, new sprout.
Set free, these spread abroad, above,
Bear fruit of power and of love
 In each man's soul,
 And make it warm
 And make it whole,
 In wrath transform,
Till light and courage fill the nation:
In *life* is God's best revelation.

Away the kingly cloak he tears
And on the people's shoulder places,
So it no more need make grimaces
To borrowed clothes some highness wears,
But be itself its majesty
In right of spirit—dynasty,
 In saga's light
 On heart and brain,
 In men of might
 From its loins ta'en,
In will unbiased and unbroken,
In manly deed and bold word spoken.

His songs the nation's sins chastise,
He hates a lie, as truth's high teacher
(No Sunday—, but a weekday—preacher,
Who, suffering, still the wrong defies).
Against false peace he plies his lance,
'Gainst cowardice and ignorance,—
 No bribe he knows
 From nation's hand
 Nor king's command;
 But *his* way goes.
And when he wavers, sorrow scourges
His heart and free of passion purges.

He is a brother of the small,
Of women, as of all who suffer,
The new and weak, when waves grow rougher,
He steers, till fairer breezes fall.
Greater he grows without his will
By deeds his calling to fulfil,
 And near the tomb
 To God he sighs,
 That soon may rise
 A richer bloom
To deck his people's soul with flowers
Of beauty far beyond his powers.

PSALMS

I

I seem to be
Sundered from Thee,
Thou Harmony of all creation.
Am I disowned
For talents loaned
And useless hid in vain probation?
Now powerless,
In weariness,
Now in despair a beggar humble
For help, for cheer,
A voice, an ear,
To hear and guide, while on I stumble.
God, let me be.
Of use to Thee!
If vain my purpose and my powers,
Then sinks from sight
My star,—and night
Henceforth my steps enfolding lowers.
Then break and bind
My ravaged mind
The terrors dread of doubt and anguish.
I know the pack,
I drove them back;—
Only to-day does courage languish.
Oh, come now, peace!
Come faith's increase,
That life's strong chain shall ever bind me!
That not in vain
I strive and strain
Myself to seek until I find me!

II

Honor the springtide life ever adorning,
That all things has made!
Things smallest have some resurrectional morning,
The forms alone fade.
Life begets life,

Poems and Songs

Potencies higher surprise.
Kind begets kind,
Heedless of time as it flies.
Worlds pass away and arise.

Nothing so small but there's something still smaller,
No one can see.
Nothing so great but there's something still greater
Beyond it can be.
Worms in the earth—
Mountains to make they essay.
Dust without worth,
Sands with which sea-billows play,—
Founders of kingdoms were they.

Infinite all, where the smallest and greatest
Oneness unfold.
No one has seen what was first,—and the latest
None shall behold.
Laws underlie,
Order the all they maintain.
Need and supply
Bring one another; our bane
Boots to the general gain.

Eternity's offspring and germ are we all now.
Thoughts have their true
Roots in our race's first morning; they fall now,
Query and clue,
Freighted with seed
Into eternity's soil;
Joy be your meed,
That your brief life's fleeting toil
Fruit for eternity bears.

Join in the joy of all life, every being,
Brief bloom of its spring!
Honor th' eternal, our human lot freeing
From fetters that cling!
Adding your mite,
With the eternal unite!
Though you decay,
Breathe as a moment you may,

Air of eternity's day!

III

CHORUS

Who art *Thou*, whom a thousand names trace
Through all times that are gone and each tongue?
Thou wert infinite yearning's embrace,
Thou wert hope when the yoke heavy hung,
Thou wert darkening death—terror's guest,
Thou wert sun that with life—gladness blessed.
Still Thine image we changefully fashion,
And each form we would call revelation;
Each man holds his for true with deep passion,—
Till it crumbles in poignant negation.

SOLO

Who Thou art, none can tell.
But I know Thou dost dwell
As the limitless search in my soul—it is Thou!—
After justice and light,
After victory's right
For the new that's revealed, it is Thou, it is Thou!
Every law that we see
Or believe there may be,
Though we never can knowledge attain, it is Thou!—
As my armor and aid
Round my life they are laid,
And with joy I avow, it is Thou, it is Thou!

CHORUS

Since we never Thine essence can know,
We have thought mediators of Thee;—
But the ages their impotence show,
We stand still, while no way we can see.
If in sickness for succor we thirst,
Is there balm in the dreams that have burst?
Stars of hope and of longing eternal,
That we saw o'er life's sorrows arisen,
Shall they sink in death's terrors nocturnal,
Only turn into worms in our prison?

SOLO

He that liveth in me,
Needeth no one to be
Mediator; I own Him indeed: it is Thou!
Is eternal hope prized
As from Him; is baptized
By His spirit my own,—is it Thou, is it Thou —:
Shall not I, who am dust,
His eternity trust?
I take humbly my law; for I know, it is Thou!
Was I worth Thy word: Live!
Let Thy life power give,
When Thou wilt, as Thou wilt,—it is Thou, it is Thou!

QUESTION AND ANSWER

THE CHILD

Father! Within the forest's bound
No bird I found,
No sound of song the woods around.

THE FATHER

The bird that glad his song us gave,
Flies o'er the wave;
Perhaps he there will find his grave.

THE CHILD

But why does he not wait till later?

THE FATHER

He goes where light and warmth are greater

THE CHILD

Father! It selfish seems to me,
Far off to flee,
When all we others here must be.

THE FATHER

With new-born spring comes new-born song;
By instinct strong
The better new he'll bring erelong.

THE CHILD

But if in death the cold waves swallow—?

THE FATHER

Others will come; his kin will follow.

SUNG FOR NORWAY'S RIFLEMEN

(1881)

(See Note 73)

Fly the banner, fly the banner!
For our freedom fight!
'Neath the banner, 'neath the banner,
Riflemen unite!
Graybeard in the Storting
Gives his vote for right and truth,
Rifle-voice supporting
Of our armèd youth.
 Music runeful
 Ring out tuneful
Bullets sent point-blank,
 Fiery coursing,
 Freedom forcing
Way to royal rank;
They from silent valleys
To the Storting's rallies
Bring the clear "Rah! Rah!"
And there clamors o'er us
Loud the rifle chorus,
Piercing and repeated: "Rah! Rah!
Rah-rah, rah-rah, rah-rah, rah-rah."

As the lingering echo rattles,
Listens sure our Mother Norway,
That her sons can go the war-way,
Fight her freedom's future battles.

WORKMEN'S MARCH

(See Note 74)

Left foot! Right foot! Lines unbroken!
Keeping time is power's token.
That makes *one* of many, many,
That makes bold, if fear daunts any,
That makes small the load and lighter,
That makes near the goal and brighter,
Till it greets us gained with laughter,
And we seek the next one after.

Left foot! Right foot! Lines unbroken!
Keeping time is power's token.
Marching, marching of few hundreds,
No one heeds it, never one dreads;
Marching, marching of few thousands,
Here and there wakes some to hearing;
Marching, marching hundred thousands,—
All will mark that thunder nearing.

Left foot! Right foot! Lines unbroken!
Keeping time is power's token.
Let us march all, never weaken
Time from Vardö down to Viken,
Vinger up to Bergen's region,—
Let us make *one* marching legion,
Then we'll rout some wrong from Norway,
Open wide to right the doorway.

THE LAND THAT SHALL BE

(DEDICATED TO HERMAN ANKER AND M. ANKER ON THE
OCCASION OF THEIR SILVER-WEDDING, SEPTEMBER 15, 1888)
(See Note 75)

Land that shall be
Thither, when thwarted our longings, we sail,—
Sighs to the clouds, that we breathe when we fail,
Form a mirage of rich valley and mead
Over our need,—
Visions revealing the future until
Faith shall fulfil,—
The land that shall be.

Land that shall be!
All of our labor to sow seeds of gain
Grows in the ages when *our* names shall wane,
Gathered with others', 't is stored in the true
Will to renew.
This then shall carry our labor within,
Safely within
The land that shall be.

Land that shall be!
Tears that are shed over evil's foul blight,
Blood-sweat in conflict to win higher right,
Hallow the will unto victory's cost.
Let us be lost,
Rooting out wrong, that the good we may sow,
Soon overgrow
The land that shall be.

Land that shall be!
Looming in beauty of colors and song,
Golden in sunlight that glad makes and strong,
Present in children's eyes, looking to-day
Down when you pray.
Winning good victories gives us the power
To own a brief hour
The land that shall be.

YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN, STRONG AND SOUND

Young men and women, strong and sound,
Adorn with beautiful excess
Of play and song and flower-dress
Our fatherland's ancestral ground.
They dream great deeds of ages older,
They long to lead to battles bolder.

Young men and women, strong and sound,
Our nation's honor are, in whom
Our whole life has its better bloom,
Rebirth upon our fathers' ground
Of them of yore. Anew there flower
The old in young folks' summer-power.

Young men and women, strong and sound,
Can doubly do our deeds and fill
With higher hope for all we will,—
Are growth in character's deep ground,
To larger life drawn by the spirit
They from our forefathers inherit.

NORWAY, NORWAY

(See Note 76)

Norway, Norway,
Rising in blue from the sea's gray and green,
Islands around like fledglings tender,
Fjord-tongues with slender,
Tapering tips in the silence seen.
Rivers, valleys,
Mate among mountains, wood-ridge and slope
Wandering follow. Where the wastes lighten,
Lake and plain brighten
Hallow a temple of peace and hope.
Norway, Norway,
Houses and huts, not castles grand,
Gentle or hard,
Thee we guard, thee we guard,
Thee, our future's fair land.

Norway, Norway,
Glistening heights where skis swiftly go,
Harbors with fishermen, salts, and craftsmen,
Rivers and raftsmen,
Herdsman and horns and the glacier-glow.
Moors and meadows,
Runes in the woodlands, and wide-mown swaths,
Cities like flowers, streams that run dashing
Out to the flashing
White of the sea, where the fish-school froths.
Norway, Norway,
Houses and huts, not castles grand,
Gentle or hard,
Thee we guard, thee we guard,
Thee, our future's fair land.

MASTER OR SLAVE

Lo, this land that lifts around it
Threatening peaks, while stern seas bound it,
With cold winters, summers bleak,
Curtly smiling, never meek,
'Tis the giant we must master,
Till he work our will the faster.
He shall carry, though he clamor,
He shall haul and saw and hammer,
Turn to light the tumbling torrent,—
All his din and rage abhorrent
Shall, if we but do our duty,
Win for us a realm of beauty.

IN THE FOREST

List to the forest—voice murmuring low:
All that it saw when alone with its laughter,
All that it suffered in times that came after,
Mournful it tells, that the wind may know.

WHEN COMES THE MORNING?

(FROM IN GOD'S WAY)

(See Note 77)

When comes the real morning?
When golden, the sun's rays hover
Over the earth's snow-cover,
And where the shadows nestle,
Wrestle,
Lifting lightward the root enringèd
Till it shall seem an angel wingèd,
Then it is morning,
Real, real morning.

But if the weather is bad
And my spirit sad,
Never morning I know.
No.

Truly, it's real morning,
When blossom the buds winter-beaten,
The birds having drunk and eaten
Are glad as they sing, divining
Shining
Great new crowns to the tree-tops given,
Cheering the brooks to the broad ocean riven.
Then it is morning,
Real, real morning.

But if the weather is bad
And my spirit sad,
Never morning I know.
No.

When comes the real morning?
When power to conquer parries
Sorrow and storm, and carries
Sun to the soul, whose burning
Yearning
Opens in love and calls to others:
Good to be unto all as brothers.
Then it is morning,
Real, real morning.

Greatest power you know

—And most dangerous, lo!—
Will you *this* then possess?
Yes.

MAY SEVENTEENTH

(1883)

(See Note 78)

Wergeland's statue on May seventeenth
Saw the procession. And as its rear-guard,
Slow marching masses,
Strong men, and women with flower-decked presence;
Come now the peasants, come now the peasants.

Österdal's forest's magnificent chieftain
Bore the old banner. Soon as we see it
Blood-red uplifted,
Greet it the thousands in thought of its story:
That is our glory, that is our glory!

Never that lion bore crown that was foreign,
Never that cloth was by Dannebrog cloven.
I saw the *future*,
When with that banner by Wergeland's column
Peasants stood solemn, peasants stood solemn.

Most of our loss in the times that have vanished,
Most of our victories, most of our longing,
Most that is vital:
Deeds of the past and the future's bold daring
Peasants are bearing, peasants are bearing.

Sorely they suffered for sins once committed,
But they arise now. Here in the Storting
Stalwart they prove it,
All, as they come from our land's every region,
Peasants Norwegian, peasants Norwegian.

Hold what they won, with a will to go farther;
Whole we must have independence and honor!

Poems and Songs

All of us know it:
Wergeland's summer bears soon its best flower,—
Power in peasants, peasants in power.

FREDERIK HEGEL

(See Note 79)

I
DEDICATION

You never came here; but I go
Here often and am met by you.
Each room and road here must renew
The thought of you and your form show
Standing with helpful hand extended,
As when long since in trust and deed
My home you from my foes defended.

...

So often, while I wrote this book,
The light shone from your genial eye;
Then we were one, both you and I
And what in silence being took;
So here and there the book possesses
Your spirit and your heart's fresh faith,
And therefore now your name it blesses.

I love the air, when growing colder
It, clear and high,
The purer sky
Broadens with sense of freedom bolder.

I find in forests joy the keenest
In autumn days
When fancy plays,
And not when they are young and greenest.

I knew a man: in autumn clearness
His even course,—

His heart's fine force
Like autumn sky in soft-hued sheerness.

His memory is, as—when a—swarming
The cold blasts first
Of winter burst—
The gentle flame my room first warming.

When all our outward longings falter,
And summer's mind
Within we find,
Is friendship's feast round autumn's altar.

OUR LANGUAGE

(1900)

(See Note 80)

Thou, who sailest Norse mountain-air,
And Denmark's songs by the cradle singest,
Who badest in Hald the war-flames flare,
And, heard in our children's joy, gently ringest,—

Thou treasure of treasures,
Our mother-tongue,
In pains as in pleasures
Our home and our tower,
With God our power,—
We hallow thee!

Whispering secrets that Holberg stored,
Thou borest him home to a brighter morning,
Didst serve him with armor and whet his sword
For satire's assaults and for laughter's warning.

Thou spirit all knowing,
Our mother-tongue,
The ages foregoing,
The future now growing,
The present glowing,—
We hallow thee!

Kierkegaard thou to the deeps didst bring,
Where life's full currents in God he sounded.
For Wergeland wert thou the eagle's wing,
That lifted him sunward to heights unbounded.

Thou treasure of treasures,
Our mother-tongue,
In pain as in pleasures
Our home and our tower,
With God our power,—
We hallow thee!

Radiant warmth of a May-day
Thou to the spring of our freedom gavest.
In thy clearness our Norse flags aye

With song and honor afar thou waviest.
Thou spirit all knowing,
Our mother-tongue,
The ages foregoing,
The future now growing,
The present glowing,—
We hallow thee!

O'er the ocean unrollest thou
Thy carpet of flowers, a bridge that nigher
Can bring dear friends to meet even now,—
While faith grows greater and heaven higher.
Thou treasure of treasures,
Our mother-tongue,
In pain as in pleasures
Our home and our tower,
With God our power,—
We hallow thee!

Best of friends that I found wert thou;
Thou waitedst for me in the eyes of mother.
And leave me last of them all wilt thou,
Who knewest me better than any other.
Thou spirit all knowing,
Our mother-tongue,
The ages foregoing,
The future now growing,
The present glowing,—
We hallow thee!

NOTES

PREFATORY

Björnstjerne Björnson was born in 1832 and died in 1909. The last edition of his Poems and Songs in his lifetime is the fourth, dated 1903. It is a volume of two hundred pages, containing one hundred and forty-one pieces, arranged in nearly chronological order from 1857, or just before, to 1900. Of these almost two-thirds appeared in the first edition (1870), ending with Good Cheer and including ten pieces omitted in the other editions, eight poems and two lyrical passages from the drama King Sverre; the second edition (1880) added the contents in order through Question and Answer and inserted earlier The Angels of Sleep; the third (1900) extended the additions to include Frederik Hegel.

This translation presents in the same order the contents of the fourth edition, with the exception of the following ten pieces:

Bryllupsviser Nr. I.
Bryllupsviser Nr. II.
Bryllupsviser Nr. III.
Bryllupsviser Nr. IV.
Bryllupsviser Nr. V.
De norske studenter til fru Louise Heiberg.
De norske studenters hilsen med fakkeltog til deres kgl. høiheder
kronprins Frederik og kronprinsesse Louise.
Til sorenskriver Mejdells sølvbryllup.
Nytaarsrim til rektor Steen.
Til maleren Hans Gudes og frues guldbryllup.

Nine of these are occasional longs in the narrowest sense, with little or no general interest, and showing hardly any of the author's better qualities: five Wedding Songs, a Betrothal Song, a Silver-Wedding Song, a Golden-Wedding Song, and a Students' Song of Greeting to Mrs. Louise Heiberg. The tenth, a characteristic, rather long poem of vigor and value, New Year's Epistle in Rhyme to Rector Steen, is extremely difficult to render into English verse.

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The translator has thought it best not to include any of Björnson's lyric productions not contained in the collection published with his sanction during his life, the other lyrics in his tales, dramas, and novels, many occasional short poems in periodicals and newspapers which were abandoned by their author to their fugitive fate, two noble lyrical cantatas, and a few fine poems written after the year 1900.

The translation aims to reproduce as exactly as possible the verse-form, meter, and rhyme of the original. This has been judged desirable because music has been composed for so many of these songs and poems, and each of them is, as it were, one with its musical setting. But such reproduction seems also, on the whole, to be most faithful and satisfactory, when the translator is not endowed with poetic genius equal to that of the author. The very numerous double (dissyllabic) rhymes of the Norwegian are not easy to render in English. Recourse to the English present participle has been avoided as much as possible. If it still seems to be too frequent, the translator asks some measure of indulgence in view of the fact that the use here of the English present participle is formally not so unlike that of the inflectional endings and of the post-positive article Norwegian.

The purpose of the Notes is to assist the better understanding and appreciation of the contents of the book, by furnishing the necessary historical and biographical information. Of the persons referred to it is essential to know their dates, life-work, character, influence, and relation to Björnson. The Notes have been drawn from the accessible encyclopedias, biographical dictionaries, bibliographies, and histories. The notes of Julius Elias to his edition of German translations of Björnson's poems made by various writers and published in 1908 have been freely and gratefully used.

The Introduction is designed not so much to offer new and original criticism as to present the opinions generally held in Scandinavia, and, of course, chiefly in Norway. The lyric poetry of Björnson has been excellently discussed by Christian Collin in *Björnsterne Björnson. Hans Barndom og Ungdom* by Henrik Jaeger in *Illustreret norsk litteraturhistorie*, and by various authors, including Swedes and Danes, in articles of *Björnsterne Björnson. Festskrift I anledning af hans 70 aars fødselsdag*. To all of these special indebtedness is here acknowledged.

Poems and Songs

New Haven, Connecticut, June, 1915

Note 1

NILS FINN. "There has hardly been written later so excellent a continuation of the old Norwegian humorous ballad as this poem (from the winter of 1856–57), written originally in the Romsdal dialect with which Björnson wished 'to astonish the Danes.'" (Collin, ii, 147.)

Note 2.

VENEVIL. Midsummer Day=sanktehans=Saint John's (Feast), on June 24, next to Christmas the chief popular festival in Norway; the time when nature and human life have fullest light and power.

Note 3.

OVER THE LOFTY MOUNTAINS. "Really Björnson's first patriotic song. ... Describes one of the main motive forces in all the history of the Norwegian people, the inner impulse to expansion and the adventurous longing for what is great and distant. ... Written in the narrow, hemmed-in Eikis valley." (Collin, ii, 308, 309)

Note 4.

OUR COUNTRY. Written for the celebration of the Seventeenth of May in Bergen in the year 1859. This is Norway's Constitution Day, corresponding to our Fourth of July, the anniversary of the day in 1814 when at Eidsvold (see Note 5) a representative convention declared the country's independence and adopted a Constitution. The celebration day was instituted as a result of King Karl Johan's proposals for changes in the Constitution during the years 1821 to 1824, especially in favor of an absolute veto. It was taken up in Christiania in 1824, and spread rapidly to all the cities in the land, was opposed by the King and omitted in 1828, taken up by the students of the University in 1829, and soon after 1830 made by Henrik Wergeland (see Note 78) the chief of Norwegian patriotic festivals. In 1870 Björnson conceived and put into practice the "barnetog" or children's procession on this day, when the children march also, each carrying a flag. Bauta, prehistoric, uncut, narrow, tall, memorial stone, from the bronze age.

Hows, burial mounds, barrows.

Note 5.

NOTES

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SONG FOR NORWAY. Written in the summer of 1859 in connection with the tale Arne, but not included in that book. The people of Norway have adopted this poem as their national hymn, because it is vigorous, picturesque summary of the glorious history of the country in whose every line patriotic love vibrates.

Stanza 2. Harald Fairhair (860–933) was the first to unite all Norway in one kingdom as a sort of feudal state. His success in his struggles with the petty kings who opposed him was made complete by his victory over viking forces in the battle on the waters of Hafursfjord, 872. Many of the rebels emigrated, a movement which led to the settlement of Iceland from 874 on. Haakon the Good (935–961) was the youngest son of Harald Fairhair, born in the latter's old age. He was reared in England with King Ethelstane, who had him taught Christianity and baptized. When he was well settled on the throne in Norway, he tried to introduce Christianity, but without success. He improved the laws and organized the war forces of the land.

Eyvind Finnsson, uncle of Haakon, was a great skald, who sang his deeds and Norway's sorrow over his death.

Olaf the Saint (1015–1030) was a man of force and daring, as shown by his going on viking expeditions when only twelve years old. He became a Christian in Normandy. Returning to Norway in 1015, he established himself as King and spread his authority as a stern ruler. With more or less violence he Christianized the whole land. This and his sternness led to an uprising, which was supported by the Danish King, Knut the Great. Olaf died a hero's death in the battle of Stiklestad, and not long after became Norway's patron saint, to whose grave pilgrimages were made from all the North. His son, Magnus the Good, (see Note 6), was chosen King in 1035.

Sverre (1182–1202) was a man of unusual physical and mental powers, calm and dignified, and wonderfully eloquent. Yet he was a war king, and the civil conflicts of his time were a misfortune for Norway, although he bravely defended the royal prerogatives and the land against the usurpation of temporal power by the Church of Rome, and put an end to ecclesiastical rule in Norway.

Stanza 3. About five centuries of less renown for Norway are passed over, and this and the following stanza refer to the time of the Great Northern War, 1700–21, and the danger arising from Charles XII of Sweden. From 1319 to 1523 Norway was in union with Denmark and Sweden; from 1523 with Denmark only. In this war, waged by Denmark–Norway, Russia, and Saxony–Poland against Charles XII, in order to lessen the might which Sweden had gained by the Thirty Years' War, Norwegian peasants, men and women, took up arms against the Swedes.

Peasant is in this volume the usual rendering of the word "bonde" in the original; for its fuller significance see Note 78.

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Tordenskjold, Peter (1691–1720), a great Norwegian naval hero, whose original name was Wessel, and who was born in Trondhjem. He received the name Tordenskjold when he was ennobled. By his remarkable achievements he contributed much to the favorable issue of the Great Northern War; he often had occasion to ravage the coast of Sweden and to protect that of Norway.

Stanza 4. Fredrikshald. Here, on September 11, 1718, Charles XII met his death on his second invasion of Norway. The citizens had earlier burned the City, so that it might not afford shelter to the Swedes against the cannon of the fortress Fredriksten.

Stanzas 5 and 6. Again a rather long period of peace is passed over. In 1807 Denmark was induced by Napoleon to join the continental system. England bombarded Copenhagen and captured it and the Danish fleet. The war lasted seven years for Norway also, which was blockaded by the English fleet and suffered sorely for lack of the necessaries of life. But the nations sense of independence grew, and when the Peace of Kiel in January, 1814, separated Norway from Denmark, Norway refused to be absorbed by Sweden, and through a representative assembly at Eidsvold declared its independence, adopted a Constitution on May 17, 1814, and chose as King, Prince Christian Frederik, the later King Christian VIII of Denmark. The Swedish Crown Prince Karl Johan led an invasion of Norway in July, and there was fighting until the Convention of Moss, August 14, in which he approved the Norwegian Constitution in return for the abdication of Christian Frederik. Negotiations then led to the federation of Norway as an independent kingdom with Sweden in a union. This was formally concluded on November 4, 1815, by the adoption of the Act of Union, and the election of the Swedish King Karl XIII as King of Norway.

The last four lines of stanza 6 refer to “Scandinavism,” i.e., a movement beginning some time before 1848 to bring about a close federation or alliance of the three Northern kingdoms (see Note 21).

Note 6.

ANSWER FROM NORWAY. First printed in a newspaper, April 7, 1860, with the title “Song for the Common People,” this poem refers to a stage of the long conflict over the question of a viceroy in Norway, so important in the history of the union of Sweden and Norway. The Norwegian Constitution gave to the King power to send a viceroy to reside in Norway, and to name as such either a Swede or a Norwegian.

Until about 1830 the viceroy had always been a Swede, thereafter always a Norwegian. On December 9, 1859, the Norwegian Storting voted to abolish this article in a proposed revision of the

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Constitution. The matter was discussed in Sweden with vehemence and passion. The storm of feeling raged most violently in March, 1860, when on the 17th, in Stockholm, this revision was rejected.

However, no viceroy was appointed after 1859, and in 1873 the question was amicably settled as Norwegians desired.

While the situation was tense, an unfounded rumor had spread, that on one occasion the Norwegian flag had been raised over the residence of the Swedish–Norwegian Minister in Vienna. This caused loud complaints in Sweden, that “the Norwegian colors had displaced the Swedish,” while in the House of Nobles a member declared that Norway ought to be “an accessory” to Sweden; that “young, inexperienced” Norway's demand of equality with Sweden was like a commoner's importunity for equality with a nobleman. He went on to say that the Swedish nation must crave again its (pure) flag: “For in our ancient blue–yellow Swedish flag, that waved over Lützen's blood–drenched battlefield, are our honor, our memories, and thousand–fold deaths.”

The (pure, i.e., without the mark of union) Swedish flag consists of a yellow cross on a blue ground, the (pure) Norwegian flag of a blue cross within a white border on a red ground; in each the cross extends to the four margins. At the date of this poem each flag showed a mark of union, a diagonal combination of the colors of both, in the upper field nearest the staff. (For a brief history of the flag of Norway, see Note 66.)

Stanza 2. Magnus the Good, son of Olaf the Saint, reigned from 1035 till his death in 1047. He was victorious in conflict with the Danish King Knut the Hard, and by agreement received Denmark after his death. Magnus died in Denmark on one of several successful expeditions against the rebellious Svein Jarl.

Fredrikshald, see Note 5.

Ad(e)ler, Kort Sivertsen (1622–1675), was a distinguished admiral, born in Norway. He reorganized the Danish–Norwegian fleet, which late in the seventeenth century several times defeated the Swedish.

Stanza 3. Lützen. In the battle of Lützen, November 16, 1632, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden was killed.

Grandsire's ancient seat, symbol of Norway's ancient power and glory. In one of the Swedish speeches were these words: “If Norway had had a Gustavus Adolphus, a Torstenson, a Charles the Twelfth, if its name like ours had gone forth victorious in history, no Swede would deny its right to stand before us. This, however, is not the case. ...”

Stanza 4. Sverre Priest, see Note 5. When young he was a priest.

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Stanzas 5 and 6. Christie, Y. F. K. (1779–1849), was a vice-president of the convention of Eidsvold, April 10–May 20, 1814, and president of the first extraordinary Storting after the convention of Moss, August, 1814. To him more than any other man was due the securing of Norway's independence and welfare in the framing and adoption of the Constitution and the Act of Union. In a sense he was the real founder of Norway's liberty (see Note 5).

Stanza 7. Wessel=Tordenskjold, see Note 5.

Stanza 8. Torgny. At the Ting in Upsala, February, 1018, when the Swedish King Olaf refused peace and his daughter's hand to the Norwegian King, Olaf the Saint, the aged and revered peasant lawman, Torgny, the wisest and most influential man in the land, rebuked the King, declaring that the peasants wished peace with Norway, and concluding thus: "If you will not do what we say, we shall attack and kill you and not suffer from you breach of peace and law." The King yielded, and made a promise which he afterwards broke.

Note 7.

JOHAN LUDVIG HEIBERG (December 14, 1791–August 25, 1860), the leading Danish dramatist and critic of his time, an esthetic genius, with, however, the stamp of the man of the world always on his life and works. He early studied mathematics and natural science, medicine and philology, Danish and foreign literature, and was also very musical. He was uncertain whether to become a poet and esthetic critic, a physician, or a natural scientist, or a surveyor, or —a diplomat. From about 1824 he studied and adopted the Hegelian philosophy, on which based his esthetics, and for which he was the first spokesman in Denmark. In the years 1825 to 1836 he founded the Danish vaudeville, in which his aim was to recreate the national drama. His vaudeville was a lighter musical-dramatic genre, a situation-play with loosely-sketched characters and the addition of music to concentrate the mood. In it he sought a union with the national comedy, and like Holberg to treat subjects from his own age and land. From 1830 to 1836 Heiberg was professor of logic, esthetics, and Danish literature in the Military School. From 1839 on, censor of the Royal Theater, of which he was director from 1849 to 1856, without great success because of circumstances beyond his control. In the year 1840 he began to deeply interested in the study of acoustics, optics, and astronomy, and soon fitted up a small astronomical observatory at his residence; he published an

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astronomical manual, 1844–46. In 1831 Heiberg married Johanne Louise Pätges (1812–1890). The daughter of poor parents, she became a pupil of the dancing-school of the Royal Theater in 1820, but went over to the drama in 1826. Wonderfully gifted, she developed rapidly and became Denmark's greatest actress. Her last appearance on the stage was in 1864. She favored the performance of Björnson's and Ibsen's earlier dramas on the stage in Copenhagen, with management of which she had official connection from 1867 to 1874.

“New Year” ringing o'er the Northland. Shortly before Christmas, 1816, Heiberg published his polemical romantic comedy *Yule Jests and New Year's Jokes*, a brilliant revelation of his superiority as a wit and a satirist. Attacking the excessive sentimentality of Danish literature and taste at that time, it made a sensation and led to the improvement of both.

Note 8.

THE OCEAN. Arnljot Gelline, a man of prowess, from Tiundaland, the Region about Upsala. When Olaf the Saint went from Sweden to Norway in 1030, Arnljot Gelline was present in his army at Stiklestad, and after baptism was assigned to a place nearest in front of the royal standard. He fought stoutly, but fell early in the battle.

Vikar, a brother of Arnljot Gelline, who sailed with Olaf Trygvason on the Long Serpent, and died fighting in his post of honor on the prow. (See notes below.)

Note 9.

ALONE AND REPENTANT. This poem was first printed in 1865, but was probably written in 1861 or 1862 in Germany or Italy. The friend was Ivar Bye, whom Björnson had saved from distress and social ostracism in Christiania before 1857, when Bye went as an actor with Björnson to the theater in Bergen. He was no great actor but an unusual man, for whom Björnson had deep respect and warm sympathy. Björnson described his character and life-experience in the study “Ivar Bye,” first published in 1894, in which he said: “Our literature possesses a memorial of his way of receiving what was confided to him. It lies in the poem: 'A friend I possess.' I wrote it far away from him,—not that he might have it, his name is not mentioned, and he never had it, but because at that time things were hard for me.”

Note 10.

OLAF TRYGVASON. Grandson of Harald Fairhair, and King from 995 to 1000. On one of his viking expeditions to England he was converted to Christianity. Returning to Norway to win back his ancestral inheritance from Haakon Jarl (see Note 14), he had fortune with

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him; for as he steered into the Trondhjem Fjord, he received the tidings of the successful uprising of the peasants against Haakon. He founded Nidaros, the present city of Trondhjem, established Christianity in a large part of the country, and soon became dearer to the people than any other Norwegian King. But he had powerful enemies outside of the land: the Danish King, Svein Forkbeard, the Swedish King, Olaf, and Erik, son of Haakon Jarl. By a large sea-force under these he was attacked off the island Svolder (near the island of Ringen), and there lost his life. Erling Skjalgsson, a great chieftain, holding large fiefs from Olaf and married to his sister, lived at Sole in southwestern Norway. With a large number of the smaller ships of Olaf Trygvason he had been allowed to sail away in advance and did not know of the battle at Svolder.

Long Serpent was the name of the large fighting ship that Olaf had built for this expedition. It held six hundred men.

Note 11.

BERGLIOT. Einar Tambaraskelve was one of the most powerful men in Norway during the first half of the eleventh century. His mastery of the bow gave him the epithet Tambaraskelve, "bow-string-shaker." He fought, when eighteen years old, on the Long Serpent at Svolder. After Erik and Svein were established in power as a result of that battle, Einar became reconciled and married their sister Bergliot. In 1023 he went to King Knut the Great in England, who was also King of Denmark, and urged him to conquer Norway. Knut did so in 1028 and made his son Svein King of Norway. Einar opposed this, and Magnus the Good (see Note 6) was called to rule, whose most faithful vassal Einar became. He followed King Magnus and his co-regent Harold Hardruler to Denmark, where Magnus died. Here and in Norway Einar, as the champion of all that was good, opposed many of the illegal and unrighteous deeds and plans of Harald, and incurred the latter's bitter enmity. In the year 1055, under the pretext of reconciliation, Harold lured Einar with his wife and son Eindride (pronounced as three syllables) to Nidaros (Trondhjem), where the murder was committed within the hall of the royal residence, as related in the poem.

Haakon Ivarson was a man of force and influence.

Harald Hardruler was a half brother of Olaf the Saint. Late in the reign of Magnus the Good, after adventurous wanderings in Russia and the Orient, he returned to Norway and demanded a share in the kingdom. By agreement they divided the royal power and their wealth. Before his death Magnus determined that Harald should be King of Norway, but Svein Estridson King of Denmark. Harald, however, tried unsuccessfully to conquer Denmark. He died in England, being slain at the battle of Stanford Bridge in 1066. His harshness as King secured him his epithet. The murder of Einar brought him much hate.

Ting-peace. The spelling "ting" is adopted in place of "thing."

Peasants, for this word see Note 78.

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Gimle, the heaven of the new Christian faith.

Heath of Lyrskog, in Jutland. Magnus the Good, at the time also King of Denmark, won a decisive victory here in 1043 over a much larger invading army of Wends. (See also Note 23.)

Trönder, one from the region about Trondhjem.

Haakon from Hjörungavaag. Haakon Jarl (970–995) was the last pagan King in Norway. His defeat in 986 of the Jomsborg vikings, allies of King Harald Bluetooth of Denmark, in a naval engagement at Hjörungavaag, a bay in western Norway, was the greatest naval battle ever fought in that country.

Valhall, the hall where those slain in battle dwell after death.

Note 12.

TO MY WIFE. Written in Rome in 1861 or 1862, first printed in 1865. Björnson's wife was Karoline Reimers, born December 1, 1835. They were married on September 11, 1858; she is still living (June, 1915). At the celebration of their golden wedding Björnson addressed touching words of gratitude to her, saying at the close: "I know that you will live longer than I. It will be your lot to cover the sheet over me. There is much in a man that needs to be covered over. Of our life, Karoline, you shall have the honor. See also the poem *Those with Me*, and notes thereto.

Note 13.

IN A HEAVY HOUR. Written in Italy rather late in 1861, after Björnson received tidings of the sharp criticism of his drama *King Sverre* and of its lack of success on the stage in Christiania, where it was first performed on October 9. In a letter from Hans Christian Andersen Björnson wrote on December 10, 1861: "At a time when I was in a mood to write the following verses, which perhaps tell so much that I need not tell more [the poem is quoted],—at a time when I, the man, nay, the product of friendship, was in a mood to write this, it came just like a Christmas hymn among strangers, to hear that you had dedicated to me your last four Tales. You ..., you had a heart to remember me, when many friends from tested times did not."

Note 14.

KAARE'S SONG. Helga was the daughter of Maddad, a prominent and wealthy man at Katanes. She came to Orkney, where the ruler, Haakon Earl, fell in love with her and made her his mistress. She bore him a son, Harald, and lived at Orkney sixteen years in spite of the hate and disdain showed her by so many, especially by the Earl's lawful wife. She and her sister Frakark exerted an evil influence over Haakon Earl, inciting him among other things to murder his co-

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ruler and kinsman Magnus Erlendson. It was believed that Haakon Earl became crazy when he first saw Helga. This song, which Kaare, one of the Earl's men, sings, describes this first meeting and was commonly sung by Helga's enemies.

Note 15.

IVAR INGEMUNDSON'S LAY. In the first half of the twelfth century an Icelandic skald of this name lived and sang at the court of King Eystein in Norway. He loved a young Icelandic girl, but had not declared his love. When his brother was going home to Iceland, Ivar asked him to tell her of his love and beg her to wait for him. But on his later coming to Iceland, she met him as that brother's wife. Ivar returned Norway and was thereafter always melancholy and thoughtful. When Harald Gille became King, Ivar lived at his court, but sympathized warmly with the able and bold Sigurd Slembe, who claimed to be Magnus Barefoot's son and Harald Gille's half-brother. After many years of hardship Sigurd came to Harald Gille and asked him to recognize him. Harald was a good-natured, but weak and ignorant man, entirely controlled by his chieftains, who persuaded him to have Sigurd imprisoned, with the intention of killing him. Sigurd, however, escaped and fled.

Note 16.

MAGNUS THE BLIND. Magnus was born in 1115, and became King in 1130. He had Harald Gille as co-regent. Their agreement was that Harald could not demand a larger share in the kingdom as long as Magnus lived. But Magnus made himself hated by his own deeds, and in 1131 a breach resulted between the Kings. The chieftains were on Harald's side. He seized Magnus in 1135, had him blinded and castrated, and sent him into the monastery at Nidarholm. Sigurd Slembe, who made war on Harald and conquered him, freed Magnus from the monastery and caused him to fight in his army. He died in the sea-battle of Holmengraa.

Note 17.

SIN, DEATH. Written during the latter half of 1862 in Munich, and possibly, according to an oral statement of Björnson's, under impressions received from German ecclesiastical art: "It is only natural that in Munich symbolical poems should present themselves."

Note 18.

FRIDA. This poem was first printed March 24, 1863, soon after the death, at the age of twenty-two, of her whom it commemorates. She

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was a younger sister of the leading Danish literary critic, Clemens Petersen, born 1834. He became Björnson's friend in 1856 and aided greatly in opening the way for him in Denmark. Until 1868 Petersen had much influence on public opinion. Soon after that he came to America, and did not return to Copenhagen until 1904. He was a follower of Heiberg, but more liberal.

Note 19.

BERGEN. Written in 1863 for a musical festival in which Björnson and Ibsen took part. Bergen's unusually favorable situation made it for a long time Norway's first city in commerce; it has only recently fallen behind Christiania. It has ever had a large local fleet and great traffic in its harbor. Founded about 1070 by King Olaf the Quiet, Bergen was very important in the older history of the land, as the residence of the Kings, until about 1350, when Hanseatic control began, continuing until late in the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century Bergen was incomparably the first commercial city in the Danish–Norwegian monarchy; in the eighteenth it was surpassed by Copenhagen. The people of Bergen have always been distinctly liberal in thought and feeling.

Holberg, Ludvig (1684–1754), was born in Bergen, but resided in most of his life in Denmark. His comedies, which founded modern Danish–Norwegian literature, are indeed immortal.

Dahl, John Christian Clausen (1788–1857), a Norwegian landscape painter, who, though born in Bergen, went in 1811 to Copenhagen and from 1818 resided in Dresden. As subjects he preferred water, rock, and strand, and showed a realistic tendency in his light-effects.

Welhaven, see Note 36.

Ole Bull (1810–1880), a violinist of world-wide renown. In his later life he passed most of his time in the United States, but every year he returned to the home which he maintained near Bergen, at a distance of about two hours by steamer. Carrying out a plan conceived in 1848, he established in Bergen with his own means the first Norwegian National Theater, which was opened January 2, 1850.

Collin says that the last line of the poem sums up Björnson's view of Norway's historical memories as motive power for new achievement. This seems realized in Bergen's recent development,—it now had the largest steam-fleet of all the cities in Norway.

Note 20.

P. A. MUNCH. Peter Andreas Munch (born in Christiania, December 15, 1810; died in Rome, May 25, 1863) became professor of history in 1841 and Keeper of the Archives in 1861. He was not only one of the greatest historians of Norway, but also a philologist, an ethnographer, an archaeologist, a geographer, and a publicist. His chief field was the prehistoric age and the medieval period. He traveled much in the Scandinavian lands and elsewhere in Europe,

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made several long stays in Rome, and was buried there. His main and best known work is the *History of the Norwegian People*, in eight large volumes, published from 1851 to 1863. This and his other writings greatly strengthened the national self-consciousness and sense of independence. Munch had a phenomenal memory, marked talent for music and drawing, playful humor, incredible capacity for work, rare intuition for epoch-making discoveries. In a speech in 1892 Björnson placed Munch by the side of Wergeland (see Note 78) as a fosterer of national self-consciousness and faith in the future: “We can remember when we were young, how P. A. Munch's *History* came out in parts, and how he fought with the Danish professors, to get Norway brought home again from Danish captivity in history also, —we can remember how eventful it was for us, and how it had its share in molding us. ... He had his large share in what our generation has done. I put his work in this way by the side of Wergeland's.”

Through provincial Asian forests, etc. These lines refer to the so-called “immigration-theory” advanced by Rudolf Keyser and elaborated by Munch, which maintained that the remote ancestors of the Swedes and the Norwegians migrated from the northeast into the Scandinavian peninsula about 300 B.C.: the Swedes from Finland and the Northmen through Lapland. These scholars also held that Old Norse literature, as being the product of Norway and Iceland, was distinctly Norse, and not “Northern” or joint-Scandinavian.

When I call, paraphrase of Isaiah xlvi, 13

Who again shall reunite fit? Munch left no peer in international reputation. Coursed the sea-ways toward his standard. Not only was Munch honored throughout Europe, but he was the first to secure for Norwegian history its rightful place in European history.

Note 21.

KING FREDERIK THE SEVENTH. His death occurred November 15, 1863, just before the crisis with Prussia and Austria. He was born October 6, 1808, the son of Prince Christian Frederik, later King Christian VIII of Denmark, and his first wife. The early divorce of his parents resulted in his education being neglected; he was left for several years in the hands of relatives and strangers; had unsympathetic teachers and almost no trace of parental guidance. All his life he had less than average attainments in knowledge, except in a practical way in Scandinavian archaeology. He had natural dignity, but a broad, undisciplined nature, and shunned court etiquette and constraint. In 1834, he was in effect banished to Jaegerspris, a royal estate near Frederikssund, and later was sent on a cruise to Iceland. Afterwards he resided in disfavor in Fredericia, where his tendencies to plain, direct intercourse with people of all classes were further developed. When Christian VIII ascended the throne, Frederik's position was somewhat improved, and his free association with officials and commoners made him very popular. It was found that he could show at times

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surprisingly clear and sure insight into practical conditions. His interest continued active in archaeological investigations, sea-voyaging, and fishing. During the increasing national and political difficulties Frederik, because of his pronounced Danish feeling and sympathy with the common people, was disposed to take a stand more national and constitutionally liberal than could please the government circles. This became known among the people and made him a still greater favorite. In 1847 he submitted a proposal for the introduction of a joint Constitution for the entire monarchy, but King Christian died before action could be taken. Frederik VII ascended the throne January 20, 1848. The change of ministry which he made in March as a result of the Schleswig revolt, his opposition to the division of Schleswig, and his establishment of really constitutional government made his popularity forever secure, although he was not a sure and purposeful ruler. Frederik's character played an important part in the relations of Denmark with Sweden and Norway. The personal friendship between the two Kings united the countries more closely and lifted political "Scandinavism" to the height it reached shortly before the war of 1864 with Prussia and Austria over Schleswig-Holstein.

This "Scandinavism" is referred to in the poem by the words "to the North," "his course," and similar expressions. It was the name given to the sense of kinship of the three Northern peoples and the desire of closer union, whether in spiritual or material or political relations. It was evoked first by poets and scholars, and gathered strength from 1843 on in meetings of university students. In 1848 there was warm sympathy in both Sweden and Norway with the cause of Denmark; the assistance of volunteers and even of Swedish-Norwegian troops was given. Towards 1864 the three countries came more closely together politically, promises of help to Denmark were made by Sweden and Norway, and there was even talk of a treaty of alliance. But the end of the war of 1864, and Germany's victory over France in 1870-71, destroyed the hopes of political Scandinavism, and thereafter it became rather cultural and practical, at least until 1905, when Norway's full independence of Sweden led to emphasis on individual nationality. The war of 1914-15 may bring about a revival of political Scandinavism. (See also Note 38.)

Note 22.

TO SWEDEN. This poem and several following breathe the spirit of Scandinavism described above.

Yellow-blue. The flag of Sweden shows a yellow cross on a blue ground.

Christian Fourth, King of Denmark and Norway, 1588-1648.

Haakon Earl, see Note 14.

Palnatoki, the legendary leader of the Jomsborg vikings. Ancient enemies are now allies, and so also Tordenskjold (see Note 5) fights by the side of, not against, Charles XII.

Jenny=the famous singer, Jenny Lind, 1820-1887.

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Lützen. Gustavus Adolphus prayed and his troops sang hymns before the battle.

Narva, where Charles XII, in November, 1700, was victorious over the Russians under Peter the Great.

Note 23.

OUR FOREFATHERS. A festival, memorial poem, written just before the outbreak of the Danish–German war. Danish troops were stationed along the river Eider, which the Germans crossed on February 1, 1864. The last lines of the poem refer to what is told in the saga of Magnus the Good about the battle of Lyrskog Heath (see Note 11): “The night before the battle Magnus was wakeful and prayed to God for victory. Towards morning he fell asleep and dreamed that his father, King Olaf the Saint, came to him and said: ‘You are now very sick at heart and full of fear, because the Wends are coming against you with a great army; but you must not be afraid of the heathen host, though they be many together. I shall follow you into this battle and join in the fight, when you hear my horn.’ At dawn the King awakened, and then all heard up in the air the ringing of a bell, and those of the King’s men who had been in Nidaros [Trondhjem] recognized by its sound the bell which King Olaf had given to the church of St. Clement. Then Magnus had the signal for battle blown, and his men made such a furious onset on the Wends, that fifteen thousand fell and the rest fled.”

Note 24.

WHEN NORWAY WOULD NOT HELP. Written upon the adjournment of the extraordinary meeting of the Norwegian Storting, called in March, 1864. The action of the Storting providing for Norway’s participation with Denmark in the war coupled this with conditions which made it equivalent to a refusal to help.

Wessel, see Note 5.

Dannebrog, see next note.

Note 25.

TO THE DANNEBROG. The original title was “The 19th of April, 1864.”

Dybböl [Düppel]. This strongly fortified Danish place in Schleswig was taken by the Germans on April 18, 1864.

Dannebrog, the traditional name of the Danish flag, consisting of a red ground whereon is a broad white cross, extending to all four margins. According to an old legend the original Dannebrog (“broge” is an old Danish word, meaning a piece of colored cloth) soared down from Heaven during the battle of Reval in 1219 and brought victory to the Danes, while a voice was heard promising the Danes a complete victory as often as they raised this banner against their enemies.

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Note 26.

TOAST FOR THE MEN OF EIDSVOLD. First called "Toast for the 17th of May;" written for the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution (see Note 5).

Note 26.

THE NORRÖNA–RACE. Written for the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Act of Union with Sweden.

Norröna= Northern.

Surtr. According to Norse mythology there were in the beginning two worlds, the first of which, called Muspell, was filled with fire, light, and warmth; over this Surtr ruled, sitting with a sword of flame at its border. The other world was Niflheim, cold and dark.

Yggdrasil. The tree Yggdrasil is a symbol of the present world.

Dragons, warships with carved dragons as figure-heads.

Poland's night. For Gustavus Adolphus the Polish War, which he waged before he took part actively in the Thirty Years' War in Germany, was also undertaken for the defense of Protestantism.

Saga, here=History.

Note 27.

LECTOR THAASEN. Johan Edvard Thaasen (born in 1825; died February 17, 1865) was a classical philologist and a man of broad culture, well versed in Old Norse and in modern French and German literature. From 1852 he was teacher in the Cathedral School in Christiania, and from 1860 lecturer in Greek at the University, where he treated chiefly the Greek poets and archaeology. He came from a poor family and passed his early life under hard conditions. During the last few years he was sickly, and he died of consumption. In 1858 he was president of the Students' Union, and spokesman for the Norwegians at the Student Meeting in Copenhagen in 1862.

Note 28.

DURING A JOURNEY IN SWEDEN. Written in the summer of 1866, Björnson's speeches then made a sensation by reason of the warmth of his feeling for Sweden. Ellen Key has written with approval of his characterization of the Swedes here, which agrees with that of Schück in his *History of Swedish Literature*, i, 325, 326.

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Note 29.

SONG FOR THE STUDENTS' GLEE CLUB. Written in 1863 for the journey of the Club to Bergen (see Note 19).

Hald, Fredrikshald, see Note 5.

Arendal. This city is an important shipping center.

Sverre, see Note 5.

Note 30.

MRS. LOUISE BRUN. Louise Gulbrandsen was born in Bergen, December 16, 1831, and died in Christiania, January 21, 1866. In childhood she knew the narrowness and darkness of poverty. Made her first appearance as an actress at the opening performance of Ole Bull's theater in Bergen, January 2, 1850, when she also recited the Prologue. An attractive personality, a voice clear and flexible both in speech and song, and unusual mentality made her the most talented actress of her time in Norway. Her power was comprehensive; she began with romantic parts and always liked these best, though later she was distinguished in conversation—plays. In 1851 she married Johannes Brun, Norway's most gifted comedian. They came to Christiania in April, 1857. A picture drawn from life, etc., refers to the romantic drama, *The Sisters at Kinnekullen*, of the Dane, Carsten Hauch (1790–1872). It was his most frequently performed play, dealing with the mysterious power of gold over the human mind, as something demonic in the servitude it imposes. It had recently been played with Mrs. Brun in the part of Ulrika.

He, who from fairy-tale, etc. Ole Bull, see Note 19. Thus is introduced here a poetical history and eulogy of Ole Bull's Norwegian Theater.

Note 31.

TO JOHAN DAHL, BOOKDEALER. Johan Fjeldsted Dahl was born in Copenhagen, January 1, 1807, and died in Christiania, March 16, 1877. He came to Christiania in 1829, and established in 1832 a business of his own, both publishing and selling. In the mercantile, social, literary, and artistic life of the city he came to have an important place and influence. Dahl had published *Norway's Dawn*, by Welhaven, and in the time of the Wergeland–Welhaven conflict (see Note 36, and as to Wergeland, Note 78) a violent personal quarrel developed between Wergeland and Dahl about an entirely unimportant matter. Dahl had provided his porter with a green livery having red borders. Wergeland, who regarded Dahl as the leading representative of the “Copenhagenism” (Danish, anti–Norwegian tendencies) he was contending against, had an epigram printed, *The Servant in Livery*, and insulted the porter on the street. This led to a slashing newspaper feud between Wergeland and Dahl. After everybody's feelings had grown calmer, Wergeland wrote about the burlesque occurrence in a farce entitled *The Parrot*, and Dahl had humor

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enough, himself to publish this satirical skit.

The light from his shop. Wergeland derisively styled Dahl's store "the first slander-shop of the city;" it was, in fact, the meeting-place of the "party of intelligence," those interested in European culture and esthetic criticism, i.e., it was the resort of those opposed to Wergeland.

Note 32.

TO SCULPTOR BORCH. Christopher Borch (1817–1896) was a lifelong friend, of whom in 1857 Björnson wrote in letter: "The most childlike, natural man I know, with his even, light walk, and his fine, small hands," and "there is poetry in that man. Oh, how you have misunderstood him!" It was this friend who, about the same time as these letters were written, helped Björnson open his spirit to the influence of Grundtvig (see Note 57). Borch for many years gave free instruction to convicts in the Akershus prison in drawing and other subjects, and so helped them to a future when they came out.

Note 33.

CHOICE. A Danish publisher issued a calendar with poems on the months by different Scandinavian poets. When Björnson was invited to contribute, all the other months were already written up or assigned, and only April was left.

Note 34.

NORWEGIAN SEAMEN'S SONG.

Saint Olaf's Cross. Of the insignia of the Royal Norwegian Order of St. Olaf, founded in 1847 by King Oskar I; the characteristic feature is a white cross.

Hafursfjord's great day (see Note 5), near Stavanger.

Note 35.

HALFDAN KJERULF was born September 15, 1815, and died August 11, 1868. He early showed talent for music, and though he had to study law from 1834 on, he yet studied and wrote music with a crushing sense of lack of knowledge and opportunity. He was dangerously ill in 1839, and always weak physically. His father died in 1840, and Kjerulf then began to earn his living by music. A stipend received in 1850 enabled him to go to Leipzig for a year. In 1851 he settled in Christiania as a teacher of music, where for the rest of his life his influence as a composer was most important. His compositions are all of the lesser forms; his best work was done from 1860 to

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1865. He was in general a pioneer of modern Norwegian music, and one of the first to draw from the inexhaustible fountain of folk-music. He wrote exquisite music for many songs of Welhaven, Wergeland, Moe, Björnson, and others.

Note 36.

NORWEGIAN STUDENTS' GREETING TO PROFESSOR WELHAVEN. Johan Sebastian Cammermeyer Welhaven was born December 22, 1807, lived from 1828 in Christiania, was lector from 1840 to 1846, and from 1846 to 1868 professor of philosophy in the University; he died October 21, 1873. His poetical works were: *Norway's Dawn*, 1834; *Poems*, 1839; *New Poems*, 1845; *Half a Hundred Poems*, 1848; *Pictures of Travel and Poems*, 1851; *A Collection of Poems*, 1860. A polemical writer, gifted with wit and fine taste, and a social-political author, Welhaven represented in his earlier period the "party of intelligence" over against the chauvinism of the radical Peasant party of Wergeland (see Note 78). He was an adherent of Danish culture and of the esthetic view of art and life, who hated all national exclusiveness and showed a love of his country no less true and intense than Wergeland's by chastising the Norwegians of his time for their big, empty words and their crass materialism. For this he was rewarded with abuse, and called "traitor to his country" and "matricide." In reality Welhaven was a dreamer, a worshiper of nature, a man of tender feeling. His subjective lyric poetry is not surpassed in richness of content and beauty of form by that of any other Norwegian. Outside of his ordinary University duties Welhaven was also active; he was a favorite speaker at student festivities and musical festivals, notably at the Student Meetings in Upsala, 1856, and in Copenhagen, 1862. But early in 1864 his health failed and he was unable thereafter to lecture regularly. In August, 1868, he requested to be retired; on September 24, the University Authorities granted his request and a pension at the highest rate; but the Storting, on November 12, reduced this to two-thirds of the amount proposed. The same day the students brought to Professor Welhaven their farewell greeting, marching with flags to his residence, where this poem of homage was sung.

Note 37.

FORWARD. The composer Grieg and his wife spent Christmas Eve, 1868, with Björnson's family in Christiania. Grieg, who then gave to Björnson a copy of the first part of his *Lyriske Smaastykker*, has written the following account of the origin of this poem: "Among these was one with the title 'Fatherland's Song.' I played this for Björnson, who liked it so well that he said he wanted to write words for it. That made me glad, although afterwards I said to myself: It probably will remain a want, he has other things to think of. But the very next day I met him in full creative joy: 'It's going

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excellently. It shall be a song for all the youth of Norway. But there is something at the beginning that I haven't yet got hold of—a certain wording. I feel that the melody demands it, and I shall not give it up. It must come.' Then we parted. The next forenoon, as I was giving a piano lesson to a young lady, I heard a ring at the entry-door, as if the whole bell apparatus would rattle down; then a noise as of wild hordes breaking in and a roar; 'Forward! Forward! Now I have it! Forward!' My pupil trembled like an aspen leaf. My wife in the next room was frightened out of her wits. But when the door flew open and Björnson stood there, glad and shining like a sun, there was a general jubilee, and we were the first to hear the beautiful new poem.”

Note 38.

THE MEETING. The Student Meetings, i.e., conventions of university students in the three countries, were originally an important part of “Scandinavism” (see Note 21). The first was held in 1843; that of 1862 was the last to have a distinctly political character.

After 1864 the chief aim of these gatherings was to improve the position and strengthen the influence of the student in the community. In 1869 Christiania invited the Danish students to meet there with their Swedish and Norwegian comrades, in the interest of culture, better acquaintance with one another, people, and land, and cooperation in general for the future of the kingdoms.

Gjallar-horn, Heimdall's horn, to be blown especially at the beginning of Ragnarok, symbolical here of the painful passing of the old order, which ushers in a new world.

Note 39.

NORSE NATURE. See note to the preceding poem.

King Halfdan the Black (died 860) was the father of Harald Fairhair. It was said of him that he once dreamed he had the most beautiful hair one could see, luxuriant locks of various lengths and colors, but one of them larger, brighter, and fairer than all the others. This was interpreted to mean that King Halfdan would have many descendants, and they would rule Norway with great honor; but one of them would surpass the others, and later this was said to be Olaf the Saint.

Nore, the largest mountain of Ringerike.

Note 40.

I PASSED BY THE HOUSE. Written in 1869. The translator has not been able to verify the statement that the poem refers to a cousin, to whom Björnson was devoted from his student days.

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Note 41.

THOSE WITH ME. This poem of tender homage to his wife (see Note 12) and home was written during the summer of 1869, while Björnson was on a lecture tour, which took him to northernmost Norway. His fourth child, and first daughter, Bergliot, was born June 16, 1869, in Christiania. When their golden wedding was celebrated in 1908, Björnson said to his wife: “You knew me and knew how ungovernable I was, but you loved me, and there was a holy joy in that. To you always came back from much wildness and many wanderings. And with all my heart I give you the honor. To you I wrote the poem: 'As on I drive, in my heart joy dwells'. It was not poetical and not sentimental, but just plain and direct. I wrote it to glorify my home and you. And I believe that no more beautiful and deep poem in praise of home has been written. For there is life's wisdom in it. It is yours, Karoline, and your honor.”

Note 42.

TO MY FATHER. Written in 1869. Peder Björnson was settled as a pastor at Kvikne in Österdal at the time of the poet's birth. Originally he was an independent farmer, like his father and grandfather, on the large farm Skei on the Randsfjord, where he was born in 1797. He completed his theological training in 1829, came to Kvikne in 1831, to Nes in Romsdal in 1837, and to Sogne in 1852. On retiring in 1869 he moved to Christiania, where he died, August 25, 1871. His large frame and great physical strength were hereditary in his father's family. Our race. Allusion to the tradition of the descent of the Björnsons from ancient kings through the poet's great-grandmother, Marie Öistad.

The Norwegian peasant, see Note 78.

Note 43.

TO ERIKA LIE (-NISSEN) (1847–1903). One of the great pianists in Norway, she was born in Kongsvinger on the river Glommen, where her parents resided also when this poem was written in 1869. She gained European fame by her concerts from 1866 on, married the physician Oskar Nissen in 1874, and after 1876 resided in Norway. She was distinguished for the poetic quality of her playing, for warmth and fullness of tone, and for faultless technique.

Note 44.

AT MICHAEL SARS'S GRAVE. He was born in Bergen, August 30, 1805, and died in Christiania, October 22, 1869. In 1823 he became a student of the University in Christiania, where for a time he

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devoted himself to natural science, continuing his boyhood's lively interest. But the necessity for self-support turned him to theology. In 1830 he was appointed pastor at Kinn in the Söndfjord, married in 1831 a sister of Welhaven, and in 1839 was transferred to Manger, near Bergen. Both the places mentioned were very convenient for zoölogical study, which Sars resumed at once and continued unbrokenly. His earliest published work appeared in 1829; it was of first-rate importance, and his reputation was soon established everywhere in the world of learning. In 1853 he sought retirement from the Church, and in 1854 was professor of zoölogy in the University, where he continued his remarkable researches until his death. He was a pioneer in his special field, the lower marine fauna, and his aim from the beginning was not merely to discover new species, but to trace the physiological processes and the development of these lower, minuter forms of life,—ovology, embryology, organology. It was his work that led to the deep-sea expeditions of *The Challenger* and other similar voyages.

Note 45.

TO JOHAN SVERDRUP. Written in November, 1869. Johan Sverdrup (1816–1892) was the greatest political leader and statesman of Norway in the nineteenth century, and left the deepest traces in all its recent history. He settled in Laurvik in 1844 as a lawyer, was soon active in municipal politics, laboring for the interests of the working-class, was elected to the Storting in 1851. Reëlected in 1854, and regularly thereafter till 1885, his authority in the Storting and his power in public life steadily increased. From 1871 on he was President of the Storting, except in 1881 for reasons of health; from 1884 to 1889 he was Prime Minister. A consistent democrat, he created and led the party of the Left, or “Peasant-Left,” and contended all his active life for the establishment of real government by the people, i.e., a constitutional democracy with parliamentary rule. This, the fulfillment of his famous saying, “All power ought to be gathered in this hall [i.e., in the Storting],” was consummated in June, 1884. Few men in Norway have been so bitterly assailed by political opponents, and few so idolized by followers. He was a masterful orator, inferior only to Björnson.

Assassination. An allusion to Ibsen's *The Young Men's Union*, first performed in Christiania on September 30, 1869. Björnson regarded the drama as directed against himself and his political friends. In 1881 he wrote: “With the word assassination I did not mean that conditions and well-known men were aimed at. What I meant was, that *The Young Men's Union* tried to make our young liberal party into a band of ambitious speculators, whose patriotism could be carried off with their phraseology, and especially that prominent men were first made recognizable, and that then false hearts and base characters were fictitiously given them and spurious alliances pasted on them.”

The words of Einar. For Einar Tambarskelve, see Note 11, and for Magnus the Good, Note 6. Immediately after the death of Magnus

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in Denmark, Harald proposed to make himself King over all Denmark, but Einar arose and spoke, ending with the words: "It seems to me better to follow King Magnus dead, than any other King living." Nearly all the Norwegians joined Einar, and Harald was left with too small a force to carry out his plan.

My childhood's faith unshaken stands. Björnson was at the time With full conviction an orthodox Christian; Sverdrup was for himself a free thinker in religion.

Brotherhood in all three lands. Sverdrup was always opposed to any close federation of the three countries, and to Scandinavism, see Note 21.

What ought just now to be. The whole political programme of the Left, as it was gradually wrought out during the next two decades.

Sverre, see Note 5.

One nation only and *one* will, Sverdrup's ideal, as outlined above.

That impelled the viking, see note on Harald Fairhair, Note 5.

At Hjörung, see Note 11.

Wessel's sword, see Tordenskjold, Note 5.

Wessel's pen. Johan Herman Wessel (1742–1785) was a grand-nephew of Peder Wessel Tordenskjold. He was the leader and most popular member of the "Norwegian Society" in Copenhagen, in spirit and style the most Norwegian of the writers born in Norway in the eighteenth century.

That in faith so high, etc., refers to the teaching of Grundtvig (see Note 57), who looked upon the Edda-gods as representing a religion originally akin to Christianity.

Brun. Johan Nordal Brun (1745–1816) became bishop in 1804. A popular poet, he was the creator of the older national hymn and other patriotic songs; an ardent lover of his country, opposed to Danish influences in politics and culture; strictly orthodox and a powerful orator.

Hauge. Hans Nilsen Hauge (1771–1824), a peasant lay-preacher, of whom a biographer has said: "Since the Reformation no single man has had so profound an influence on ecclesiastical and Christian life in Norway." The "Haugian revival" of the emotional religious life is proverbial. Its value was great in every way; directly and also by his widely distributed writings it fostered intellectual enlightenment. The peasant political movement started soon after 1830 among his followers. This explains Björnson's great sympathy with Hauge and his school.

Modern bishop-synod's letter, the dogmatic literalism of the State Church, seeking to impose itself on free popular religious faith.

Chambers, reference to proposals to revise the Act of Union with Sweden, in particular to the plan of a Union-Parliament, all of which were rejected by Norway.

Folk-high-school's, see Note 65.

Note 46.

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OLE GABRIEL UELAND (born October 28, 1799; died January 9, 1870) was the son of a farmer. He was self-taught, reading all the books he could find in the region about his home; became a school teacher in 1817. His marriage in 1827 brought to him the farm Ueland, whose name he took. He early became foremost in his district, and from 1833 to 1869 was member of the Storting for Stavanger. He organized and led the Peasant party. In his time one of Norway's most remarkable men, the most talented peasant and most powerful member of the Storting, belonging to the generation before Sverdrup, he prepared the way for the latter, with whom he then coöperated. Sverdrup once said: "All of us who are engaged in practical politics are Ueland's pupils."

Note 47.

ANTON MARTIN SCHWEIGAARD, jurist and statesman, was born in Kragerö, April 11, 1808, and died in Christiania, February 1, 1870. After five years as lecturer in the University he was, in 1840, made professor of law, political economy, and statistics. Regarded as the most representative Norwegian of his age and its aspirations, he was called by his countrymen "Norway's best son." Though interested in the reform of education and the introduction of European culture, and hence favorable to Danish literature, standing with Welhaven and against Wergeland, it was in economics that his influence was greatest, and indeed greater than that of any other one man in all Scandinavia. He was the soul of the organizing labor that accompanied and conditioned Norway's surprisingly rapid material advance in the decades before and after the middle of the nineteenth century. A friend of Scandinavism, in politics a liberal conservative, but never a party man, he was member of the Storting for Christiania from 1842 to 1869. Schweigaard's personality contributed most to the high esteem in which he was universally held; his character was open and direct, actively unselfish, loftily ideal. His wife died on January 28, 1870. On a walk the next day he suddenly was seized with intense pains, had to go home and to bed, and died on February 1. An autopsy showed that his heart had ruptured. Their joint funeral was held on February 5.

Note 48.

TO AASMUND OLAFSEN VINJE. Vinje, the son of a poor cottager, was born on a farm in Telemarken, April 6, 1818, and died July 30, 1870. Poverty and his peculiar personality made life hard for him from first to last. Bent on testing all things for himself, he came into conflict with the authorities. He was discharged from a school in Mandal in 1848 because of his scoffing criticism of a religious schoolbook. He went then to Heltberg's School (see Note 50) in Christiania, soon after became a student in the University, and passed the state examination in law in 1856. But his life was

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devoted to literary pursuits, and he was most gifted as a lyric poet. In 1858 Vinje went over completely to the Landsmaal (see Note 80), and in this form of dialect found his natural medium of expression. In October of the same year he began his weekly paper, *Dölen*, in which he treated all the current interests.

Although one of the most advanced thinkers and keenest combatants in his country's spiritual conflicts, he stood very much alone, a great skeptic and satirist, who practiced irony with the highest art.

Vinje had no home of his own until after his marriage on June 20, 1869. His wife died immediately after the birth of a son, on April 12, 1870. At her burial on April 16 Björnson was present, and taking Vinje's hand ended an estrangement which had existed for some years because of Vinje's unjustly harsh criticism of Björnson's early peasant tales, and other rather personal attacks.

Guests, the angel of life and the angel of death.

You stand sick, with the incurable disease which caused his death a few months later.

Great and wondrous visions, probably (cf. also the following stanza) of the truth of the orthodox faith, which Björnson at the time still firmly held.

Note 49.

GOOD CHEER. This poem stood last in the first edition, with the title "Last Song." It is a vigorous, partly humorous, beautiful, true self-characterization of Björnson's position in the life of Christiania and Norway just prior to 1870, and a statement of his ideals and models in the three Scandinavian countries, Grundtvig, Runeberg, and Wergeland. From the beginning of 1865 to the middle of 1867 he had been director of the Theater, and since March, 1866, as editor no less than as author, active in polemics, political and literary. His election early in December, 1869, as president of the Students' Union, was a demonstration in his favor, shortly after which this poem was written. Compare also the poem, *Oh, When Will You Stand Forth?*, and note thereto.

The twelfth and thirteenth stanzas refer to Grundtvig, for whom see Note 57.

The fourteenth stanza refers to the Finnish Swedish poet, Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804–1877), whose lyric, ballad, and epic genius was of national importance for Sweden. He was a champion of true freedom and naturalness in literature and life.

Wergeland, see Note 78.

Note 50.

OLD HELTBERG. Henrik Anton Schjött Heltberg was born February 4, 1806, and died March 2, 1873. In early life he was an active member of Wergeland's Party in the attack on Danish influence, and this spirit ever controlled him, a "power-genius" of independent originality, grotesque appearance, and odd manners. From 1838 he was

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teacher in various schools, until in his later years he founded in Christiania a Latin School, continued until after 1870, with a course of two years for mature pupils, whose ages ranged between sixteen and thirty-five years, the so-called "Student Factory," a higher cramming-school, chiefly preparing for entrance into the University. It was, however, attended also by those who for other reasons wished to learn Latin and Greek. He was a powerful teacher, a uniquely rousing and educating force.

I went to a school, etc. When ten years old Björnson was sent to Molde and entered the "Middel-og Real-skole" there, which had only two classes and, when he left it, twenty-eight pupils. In 1850, seventeen years old, he went to Christiania and the "Factory."

Prelims, those who had passed only an examination preliminary to the "Norwegian" (not Latin) official examination.

Vinje, see Note 48.

Jonas Lie, born November 6, 1833; died July 5, 1908; the noted author of novels and tales.

Grammar. Heltberg's method was a grammatical short-cut system, to cram Latin and Greek in the shortest time possible. For twenty years he talked about publishing it, and received a grant from the Storting for this purpose. But it was always to be improved, and nothing was published except a fragment after his death.

Note 51.

FOR THE WOUNDED. This song was written in 1871, and sung at bazaars which were held in all the cities of Norway in order to raise funds for sending nurses, bandages, and money to the French wounded.

Note 52.

LANDFALL. Written in 1872 for a musical festival in Trondhjem, the profits of which were given to aid in the restoration of the Cathedral there.

Olaf Trygvason, see Note 10.

Note 53.

TO HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN. Although Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) traveled frequently and far in the earlier years, he made after 1863 only one journey out of Denmark. This was to Norway, to receive the homage of the brother-nation. Björnson had been quite intimate with him, both personally in Copenhagen and especially in Rome, and by correspondence. Andersen's genius was misjudged and condemned by the Danish critic Heiberg (see Note 7), but his very lack of the then prevailing Danish qualities made Björnson admire and sympathize with him.

A fairy-tale. Andersen's chief work, *Tales told for Children*,

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appeared in 1835; his *New Tales and Stories* in 1858–61.

Note 54.

To STANG. Fredrik Stang (born March 4, 1808; died June 8, 1884) was an active and successful lawyer from 1834 to 1845. In the latter year he became Secretary of the then established Department of the Interior, beginning a most meritorious career and opening a new era in Norway's internal development. By him industry and trade were made freer, the sea–fisheries and agriculture fostered, roads built, the postal service was improved, the first telegraph line and the first railroad were instituted. He retired because of illness in 1854. But after the great minister–crisis of December, 1861, he presided over the Norwegian government until the summer of 1873, when, after the abolition of the viceroyship, he was made Prime Minister and continued as such until 1880. He was a thorough conservative, a member of the Right, and so opposed to the political ideals cherished by Sverdrup (see Note 45) and Björnson.

For the opening lines compare the poem *Toast for the Men of Eidsvold*, and notes thereto.

Note 55.

ON A WIFE'S DEATH. In memory of Queen Louisa (1828–1871), consort of King Karl XV of Sweden and Norway. A princess of the Netherlands, whose mother was the sister of Emperor William I, she was married in 1850, and died March 30, 1871. She bore a son on December 4, 1852, who died March 13, 1854. In November, 1870, she was called to her dying mother in The Hague. Karl XV died in September, 1872, after several years of precarious health. Queen Louisa was an unassuming, truly noble woman of deeply religious feeling and large benevolence.

Note 56.

AT THE BIER OF PRECENTOR A. REITAN. Anders Jörgensen Reitan, a peasant, was born July 26, 1826, and died August 30, 1872. After attending the Teachers' Seminary, he took up this calling, and in 1853 became precentor (and teacher) in Kvikne, Björnson's birthplace. He remained in this position the rest of his life, making himself, by his influence at meetings, through lectures, and in visits from farm to farm, a pioneer in popular enlightenment, an important bearer of culture. He was a member of the Storting for the term 1871–73, but was seriously ill a large part of the session of 1871, and in April, 1872, received leave of absence. He died in Christiania.

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Note 57.

ON THE DEATH OF N. F. S. GRUNDTVIG. Few men have so influenced the spiritual development of Denmark, and indeed that of all Scandinavia, as Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, the noted Danish theologian, historian, and poet (born September 8, 1783; died September 2, 1872). He made a name for himself early by historical, mythological, religious, and poetical writings. He successfully opposed the rationalistic thought of the earlier nineteenth century with his simple exposition of Christianity according to the pure teachings of Jesus. His effort was to present to Scandinavia Christianity in a popular form, closely connected with the national thought of the time. There gathered about him a host of able and enthusiastic followers, through whom his religious and political influence extended over all the North. His characteristic religious views were, as a system, called Grundtvigianism. For the Church his ideal was a church of the people with wholly independent congregations. For the nations his ideal was a free, vigorous civic life. As member of the Danish parliament for many years he showed his intense patriotism by his liberal activity and by his participation in the struggle with Germany for Schleswig–Holstein. He rendered great service also in the reform of education, in particular as founder of the uniquely valuable “folk–high–schools” (see Note 65). Björnson was a Grundtvigian until 1877, having heard Grundtvig speak in Christiania in 1851, and having come under his personal influence in Copenhagen during the winter of 1856–57 and the following spring. It was Grundtvig's writings on history and mythology that led Björnson to deeper study of the Old Norse sagas and poetry. It was Grundtvigianism that, especially through its faith in the power of renewal and in the resurrection of what must first die away, vitalized Björnson's religious faith and practical philosophy of life. Björnson once said: “Grundtvig and Goethe are my two poles,” and in a speech in 1902: “There is a poet who has exerted the greatest influence on my development—old Grundtvig.”

Sibyl. In *The Sibyl's Prophecy*, a poem of the Elder Edda, she (according to one reading of the text) sinks from sight after foretelling the passing away of this world and the coming of a new and better one.

Note 58.

AT A BANQUET FOR PROFESSOR LUDV. KR. DAA. The historian, geographer, ethnologist, publicist, editor, and political leader, Ludvig Kristensen Daa, was born August 19, 1809, and died June 12, 1877. As a friend of Wergeland he was a liberal of the old stamp, later an ardent supporter of the Sverdrup–Björnson policies, and elected three times to the Storting. He was early a leader of the National party among the students. Too independent ever to submit wholly to party control, he was always more or less in opposition. In the flourishing times of Scandinavism he was prominent and of

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excellent influence. Because of his political opposition to the Conservative government of Stang, he did not receive the merited University professorship of history until 1863. Although feared as a caustic writer by all, he was warm-hearted and in reality a noble personality, one of the most original and best figures in the modern history of Norway. This poem must have been written soon after 1870.

Note 59.

OH, WHEN WILL YOU STAND FORTH? Written early (in February?) in 1872. For the mood of this poem compare the poem Good Cheer, and notes thereto, and some of the notes to the poem To Johan Sverdrup. The years just before and after 1870 were a time of intense conflicts, in all of which Björnson had a large part. His personality was fanatically admired by many adherents, but was also bitterly attacked even with misrepresentation and slander, by those who supported the party of the Right. He was almost persecuted by the leading Conservative newspaper in Christiania, whose editor was in large measure the model for the title-hero of Björnson's drama, *The Editor*, written soon after.

Hafur, see Note 5.

Note 60.

AT HANSTEEN'S BIER. The astronomer and physicist, Christopher Hansteen, was born September 26, 1784, and died April 15, 1873; he was buried April 21. Made lecturer in 1814, he was professor of astronomy and applied mathematics in the University until his retirement in 1861. He was the leader of the world's study of magnetism, and made Christiania the clearing-house of the labors in this field of science. The earliest Norwegian scientist of world-wide fame, he was a member of many learned societies and the recipient of many Orders.

Note 61.

RALLYING SONG FOR FREEDOM IN THE NORTH. "The United Left" is here the liberal, democratic party of the Lower House (Folketing) of the Danish Parliament. As earlier, 1868–69, in Norway, a constitutional conflict had now begun in Denmark, which continued with acute crises at intervals until the compromise of 1894 and the accession of the Left to control of the government in 1901. The theme of the poem is the parallel between the political movements in the two countries, the union of the peasant opposition with that of the town-people in favor of a liberal policy. The power of truth to prevail is also set forth by Björnson in his later drama, *The New System*.

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Note 62.

AT A BANQUET. The coronation was that of Oskar II, as King of Norway.
Olaf, Olaf Trygvason, see Note 10.

Note 63.

SONG OF FREEDOM. See the poem, Rallying Song, etc., and notes thereto.

Note 64.

TO MOLDE. This poem, begun in 1878, was finished the next year in Copenhagen. Björnson attended a school in Molde from his eleventh to his eighteenth year. The varied beauty, not too grand and not too somber, of the scenery about Molde left on him indelible impressions.

Note 65.

HAMAR-MADE MATCHES. To this poem Björnson appended a note: "The founder of Norway's first folk-high-school, Herman Anker, built later in Hamar a match factory [the first large one in the country], the product of which was quickly distributed in Norway and offered for sale on the street with the cry: 'Here your Hamar-made matches!' The poem is a sort of allegorical comparison of these two 'works of enlightenment' from the hand of the same man." Herman Anker (1839-96) studied theology, and after the death of his father, a wholesale merchant, inherited a very considerably fortune, which he applied mostly to cultural purposes. With O. Arvesen he founded in 1864 the first Norwegian folk-high-school at Sagatun, near Hamar.

Folk-high-schools are schools for adult men and women, where the instruction aims directly at making good citizens. The method of instruction is "historical," but the teacher's personality is all-important in relation to the pupil's individuality. The subjects are the country's language and history, history of the world, mathematics and physics, besides the elementary subjects; physical exercise is also made important. The home of these schools is Denmark, whence they spread to Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Danes in North America. Originated by N. F. S. Grundtvig (see Note 57), who began to plan them early in the nineteenth century as part of the national restoration of Denmark after 1813-14, the first was opened in 1844 at Rödning in Jutland. Since 1861 these schools have received women during the summer, May to August, and men from November to April. Many were established after 1864, which have flourished in the country, but not in the cities. Quite a few were started in Norway, and all were highly successful for some years.

Note 66.

THE PURE NORWEGIAN FLAG. The poems here grouped were written in 1879 during the active beginning of the so-called "Flag-conflict" in behalf of the removal from the flag of Norway the mark of union with Sweden. For a description of the flags of Norway and Sweden, see Note 6.

The history of the flag of Norway is briefly this: In 1748 the use of the Dannebrog (see Note 25) was fixed by law for Denmark and Norway. In February, 1814, a decree of Prince Regent Christian Frederik made Norway's flag to be the Dannebrog with Norway's arms (a crowned lion bearing an axe) in the upper square nearest the staff. Article 11 of the Constitution of 1814 declared: Norway shall have its own merchant-flag; its war-flag shall be a union-flag. Because of the Barbary Coast pirates, however, the Swedish flag with the mark of union was used south of Cape Finisterre, and north of it Christian Frederik's Norwegian flag. In 1821 the present pure Norwegian flag was established by Royal resolution as the merchant-flag, to be used north of Cape Finisterre; in 1838 its use was extended by the King to all waters. The war-flag was still the Swedish flag with a union-mark consisting of a white diagonal cross on a red ground. In 1844 King Oskar I by resolution decreed that both the merchant-flag and the war-flag of Norway should be the flag of 1821, with the addition of a mark of union. There was at once some criticism of the union-mark in the merchant-flag, but in general the situation was quietly accepted for a generation. This was due to Scandinavism, which began to flourish soon after 1844. Towards 1870, however (i.e., after 1864), Scandinavism lost its force, and the pure flag began to be used within Norway more and more. The real conflict began in 1879 with a motion in the Storting on February 17 to reënact the flag-law of 1821. There was bitter opposition from Conservatives in Norway, and naturally from Sweden, and the conflict gradually broadened to embrace everything involved in the union with Sweden, in proportion as the national spirit of Norway was quickened and strengthened. The famous flag-meeting in Christiania on March 13, 1879, and Björnson's speech there were the first decisive blow. Essentially the law of 1821 was passed by three Stortings, in 1893, 1896, and 1898, and proclaimed as law without the King's sanction.

Thor's hammer-mark. Thor's weapon was a hammer—the blue lightning. The symbol of this was the T-mark, to which shape the name cross has also been given; this mark was much used in the viking period as a sign of Thor's protection. In the flag the blue cross is within a white cross on a red ground. Colors of freedom. On the institution of the flag of 1821, its red, white, and blue were especially acceptable in Norway, as being the colors characteristic of free states, typified by the French tricolor.

Torgny, see Note 6.

Ridderstad. The author and journalist, Karl Fredrik Ridderstad

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(1807–1886), who had published in his newspaper a conciliatory poem in defense of the Swedish view, to which Björnson here makes answer.

Note 67.

TO MISSIONARY SKREFSRUD IN SANTALISTAN. Written in 1879. Lars Olsen Skrefsrud, born in Gudbrandstal in 1840, at first a metal worker, led for a time a wild life, and was committed under a sentence of four years to a penitentiary, where he remained from February, 1859, to October, 1861. Here he underwent a complete inner transformation and resolved to become a Christian missionary. Rejected by the Norwegian missionary institutions, he went in 1862 to Berlin, and entered a School for Missions there. He supported himself by work as an engraver, and by unflagging private study acquired learning and the knowledge of languages. He went to a German Mission in India, which he left in January, 1866. In 1867 he began his independent work in Santalistan. Here his persistence and success attracted the attention and support of the English, and thus he gradually became known and esteemed in his native land, where a Santalistan Society was formed to aid his undertakings. In 1882 he was duly ordained as clergyman by a bishop of the State Church. In 1873 he published a grammar and in 1904 a dictionary of the language of Santalistan.

I do not share your faith. The memorable speech which Björnson delivered to the students in Christiania on October 31, 1877, the anniversary of Luther's posting his theses in Wittenberg, revealed that after a hard inner struggle he had freed himself from the religious faith of his early life. The theme of his speech "Be in the truth!" showed that for him henceforth the supreme thing was freedom of thought and fidelity to the truth as expanding development might manifest it to the individual. Liberal in thought from the beginning, Björnson departed more and more, not least through the influence of Grundtvig, from the strict dogmatic orthodoxy of the State Church. The study of Darwin, Spencer, Mill, and Comte led him still farther on to a position which may be called that of the agnostic theist, that of Spencer, who does not deny God, but says ignoramus. We may recall the late utterance of Björnson, quoted above: "Grundtvig and Goethe are my two poles." It was the dogma of Hell, the teaching of eternal damnation and punishment, that began Björnson's breach with the Church. He saw how this doctrine enslaved and dwarfed the souls of the peasants, and blighted all liberal development, both personal and political.

Note 68.

POST FESTUM. Björnson was a decided opponent of the whole system of decorations and orders, royal and other. Here he attacks the Swedish polar explorer, A. E. von Nordenskjöld (November 18, 1832–August 20, 1901), who earlier had taken the same stand. After Nordenskjöld had

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successfully made the Northern Passage, there was a great formal reception for him on his return to Stockholm, April 24, 1880, at which King Oskar II decorated him. He also received similar honors from most of the rulers of Europe.

Note 69.

ROMSDAL. Written in 1880 on a lecture tour along the western coast. The scenery and the people described Björnson knew intimately from his boyhood's years at Nes and in Molde, and from later visits to his parents at the former place. Collin says: "The whole poem fits like a frame about the poet and his life-work . . . Both with its [Norway's scenery's] violence and brusqueness and with its surprising gentleness Björnson has kinship." The last line of the poem includes the poet himself.

Note 70.

HOLGER DRACHMANN. Probably written in 1879. This Danish productive author (and painter), best known as lyric poet and novelist, was born in 1846 and died in 1908. Here he received from Björnson a reply to verses of homage addressed by him to the latter in 1878. Drachmann's early years were turbulent and revolutionary, full of feuds with everybody. He belonged to the literary and esthetic Left, opposing all existing institutions. Björnson's characterization exhibits Drachmann at the height of his poetic production. His most popular prose book had recently stirred the Danish national heart and roused the spirit of Scandinavism. The collections of his poems: *Songs by the Sea*, *Tendrils and Roses*, *Youth in Poem and Song*, he never surpassed. Perhaps the best were the group of *Venetian Songs*, written in Venice in the spring of 1876, to which time belongs also his finest story, *Two Shots*. During the next decade Drachmann underwent an extreme conservative reaction, but about 1890 returned again to his youthful passion for rebellion, romantic radicalism, and the religion of esthetic freedom.

Note 71.

A MEETING. Hans Thorvald Brecke was born December 1, 1847, and died June 9, 1875. As student from 1864 to 1870 he wrote several witty student comedies, and is described as a remarkably charming personality. In 1871 he became judge's clerk in Molde, and here had one bright and happy year. Against the disease which showed itself in the fall of 1872 he contended in vain. This poem was probably written in the latter part of 1875.

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Note 72.

THE POET. This poem, the following Psalms, and Question and Answer conclude the second edition of Poems and Songs, which was published April 29, 1880. They were probably written late in 1879 or very early in 1880. In a crisis of renewed literary and political attacks upon him, the poet Björnson, under the inspiration of his motto "Be in the truth!" (see Note 67), proclaims the mission to which he is called: To be in religion and life, political and social, the liberator of his people from falsehood and ignorance, and the comforting helper of all who suffer.

Note 73.

SONG FOR NORWAY'S RIFLEMEN. In 1881 the constitutional conflict between the Left and the Right over the nature of the King's veto had become acute. The question was whether the veto-power was suspensive or absolute as to amendments of the Constitution. The Left maintained that it was only suspensive, and the conflict was ended in favor of this view by the Supreme Court in 1884; an amendment enacted by three independently elected Stortings is valid without the King's sanction. This poem shows that the people were preparing to defend their right by force in the spirit of Björnson's often quoted words in his electoral campaign speech about the same time at Sticklestad: "If any one says that the monarchy [the King] declares it [he] cannot give up the absolute veto, you must answer openly: 'Then the Norwegian people must give up the monarchy [the King].'"

Note 74.

WORKMEN'S MARCH. Published in the third edition of 1890, and written not long before for the Workmen's Union in Christiania. It is a plea for the universal franchise and party organization.

Vardö = northernmost, Viken and Vinger = southernmost Norway.

Note 75.

THE LAND THAT SHALL BE. See the poem Hamar-made Matches, and notes thereto.

Note 76.

NORWAY, NORWAY! First published in the edition of 1890. The poet has himself stated that he wrote it at Aulestad, on being asked to furnish a song for the flag-procession of boys and girls on the 17th of May (see Note 4).

Runes in the woodlands, as it were written records of the labors

of past generations.

Note 77.

WHEN COMES THE MORNING? From the novel, *In God's Way*, published in 1889.

Note 78.

MAY SEVENTEENTH. In memory of the unveiling of Henrik Wergeland's statue in Christiania on the 17th of May, 1881, when Björnson also delivered a great oration. Henrik Arnold Wergeland was born June 17, 1808, in Christiansand, and died August 12, 1845, in Christiania. Though he studied theology, he devoted his life to poetry and politics. His earliest writings, farces and poems, showed powerful, but uncontrolled, genius. His great popularity began in 1829 with his active entrance into public life. He labored for the enlightenment of his people through his writings and his personal influence in journeyings all over the land, and especially through speeches at political meetings. His chief poetic work, the rationalistic–republican didactic poem, *Creation, Man, and Messiah*, appeared in 1830. It was severely criticised in a special, polemical writing by Welhaven (see Note 36), who continued his attack on all Wergeland's views and teachings in his *Norway's Dawn*. Thus arose the Wergeland–Welhaven conflict, which was carried on hotly for many years by their adherents, and contributed much to the intellectual development of the nation. Wergeland was very productive as editor, publicist, and poet. In 1840 he was appointed Keeper of the Archives, and held this government office until his death.

In his own time Wergeland was in spirit the head of the radical–national “Peasant party,” which was indeed patriotic and democratic, but too narrowly Norwegian, in opposition to all that was Danish, European, foreign. During the years preceding 1881 he had come to be in the constitutional conflict a national hero, the idol of the peasants, as their political power increased.

Come now the peasants. In this volume of translations “peasant” is the rendering of the Norwegian word “bonde.” The meaning is “farmer,” i.e., in general the independent owner of land, which he cultivates and on which he lives. In Norway the conditions have for many centuries been more favorable for the “peasant” than in any other European country; this is due to the topography and to the absence of a powerful nobility. At the present time scarcely one–twentieth of the tilled area in Norway is cultivated by tenants. The Norwegian “peasants” have always had great self–consciousness in the best sense, and importance in the political, economic, and social life of the country, especially since the adoption of the democratic Constitution of 1814. Very often the “peasants” have an aristocratic pride in a lineage traced back to ancient “kings,” and

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in their own distinctively “Norse” culture.

Österdal's ... chieftain, a peasant of large stature, named Hjelmstad, a radical member of the Storting.

The old banner. A flag much used in earlier times as specifically Norwegian, dating back to King Erik (1280–1299), before the union with Denmark, showed on a red ground a lion wearing a golden crown and bearing an axe. As late as 1698 it flew over the fortress Akershus in Christiania. The future, i.e., the independence realized in 1905 through the dissolution of the union with Sweden.

Note 79.

FREDERIK HEGEL. This poem is the last in the third edition (1890), for which it seems to have been written. Hegel (1817–1887) was from 1850 the head of the Gyldendal publishing house in Copenhagen. Björnson made his acquaintance in 1860, and, beginning with King Sverre in 1861, Hegel became Björnson's publisher. In 1865 Björnson's influence secured to him Ibsen's works, and later those of Lie and many other Norwegian authors. The cultural dependence of Norway upon Denmark for centuries had prevented the prosperous growth of the publishing business in the former country, whose leading publisher went into bankruptcy soon after 1860. That Björnson thus went to Copenhagen with his books may seem to have been a blow to the cause of Norwegian independence, and to have delayed the rise of a thriving, stable business, but on the other hand Björnson's action and influence contributed greatly to establish for perhaps half a century a certain dominance of the Norwegian spirit in all Scandinavia. For Björnson personally, as his correspondence with Hegel shows, it was certainly a great good fortune to gain Hegel as his publisher and later as his friend. This Hegel was to all his authors in the most faithful, self-sacrificing way, and no less their valued financial adviser.

Note 80.

OUR LANGUAGE. Written in defense of the Norwegian–Danish speech of the cultured classes and of the cities in Norway, the result of development and tradition through several centuries, the so-called Riksmåal (language of the kingdom) or Bymåal (city–language). This, and with it the higher spiritual interests of the nation, seemed to Björnson to be endangered by the agitation in behalf of the Landsmaal (rural language). The Landsmaal arose from a movement after 1814, to make Norway independent of Denmark in language also. The rural dialects were regarded as more purely Norwegian; on them and the Old Norse as a basis was constructed somewhat artificially this standard rural language. It has been gradually perfected, and is now, in fact, spoken and written a good deal. Björnson advocated rather the natural process of making the language of the country

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more national by gradually introducing dialect words and reforming the orthography. He thought that the Riksmåal thus modified alone could preserve, increase, and transmit the treasures of culture.

Hald=Fredrikshald, see Note 5.

Holberg, see Note 19.

Kierkegaard. Søren Aaby Kierkegaard (1813–1855) was the most subtle and profound thinker produced by Denmark, with a prose style noble, poetic, and eloquent. His writings deal with religion, ethics, and esthetics, and present his individual, ideal conception of Christianity.

Wergeland, see Note 78.