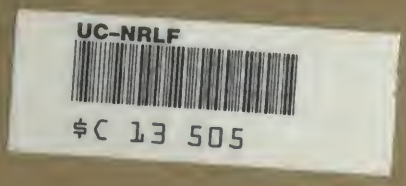

1616–1916

On the Tercentenary Commemoration

OF

SHAKESPEARE

ULTIMA THULE

Sendeth Greeting

AN ICELANDIC POEM BY

MATTHIAS JOCHUMSSON

WITH TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH BY

ISRAEL GOLLANCZ

HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Price One Shilling net

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This poem, in the ancient mother-tongue of Scandinavia and in the old Northern *Kviða*, was intended for the "*Book of Homage*", but was belated owing to the great disturbance of mail routes and navigation. The author is the veteran poet of Iceland and translator of Shakespeare. No one more nobly represents the living tradition of Old Northern poetry.

The translation was printed in the *Times Literary Supplement* of September 14.

The translator desires to thank Dr. Jón Stefansson for kind help.

I. G.

VILHJÁLMUR SHAKESPEARE

1616-1916

I

HEILL þér Albion !
Ultima Thule
sendir *salutem*
Shakespeare's móður,—
sendir *salutem*
—sól og stjörnur
vitni séu—
veröld allri.

Sendir *salutem*
Shakespeare's anda,
þeim er enginn eins
áður né síðan
lunderni lýða
með listum dró,
og andans eining
í óði sýndi.

þig veit eg Shakespeare,
sona verþjóða
í skáldaheimi
skörung mestan :
spámönnum spakari,
spekingum vitrari,
börnum bjartsýnni,
Braga líkastan.

I

HAIL to thee, Albion !
Ultima Thule
sendeth *salutem*
to Shakespeare's Mother.
Sendeth *salutem*
—Sun and stars
be my witness !—
to all the wide world.

Sendeth *salutem*
to Shakespeare's spirit !
None like to him,
aforetime or after,
the cravings of mortals
so cunningly drew,
the soul universal
in song-craft revealed.

Thee know I, Shakespeare,
of the sons of men
in the mansions of song
foremost, supreme :
wiser than seer,
wiser than sage,
more bright-eyed than child,
likest to Bragi !

II

Tamdi eg ungur
—em nú áttræður—,
orð að yrkja
á Óðins tungu;
var og enn ungur
er mig ofurhugi
í arma Shakespeare's
við arnsúg dró.

Macbeth fyrstur,
inn meginrammi,
freistaði mín
til Fjölnis iðju;
hét eg á Iðunni,
hét á Braga,
en fyrst og fremst
mína feðratungu.

Því að und hennar
hjartarótum
vissi eg feiknstafi
flesta liggja,
Egils og Ormstungu
afl og kyngi,
svik svartálfa,
söng ljósálfa.

Minti mig *Macbeth*
á megingrimman
Hákon jarl
og Hölgabrúði,

II

Young was I wont
—now four-score years—
to fashion words
in Odin's tongue;
and young was I,
when Shakespeare's arms,
with eagle's swoop,
drew me, too bold.

Macbeth first,
mighty and fateful,
tempted me onward
to Odin's task;
invok'd I Ithunn,
invok'd I Bragi,
foremost of all
my Father-speech.

For deep a-down,
under its heart-roots,
hidden I wist
dark runes enow,—
the prowess and craft
of Egil and Wormtongue,
the swart-elves' guile,
the light-elves' song.

Minded me *Macbeth*
of twain of grim might,—
Hakon the Earl,
Helgi's weird bride,

á rógmálm Rínar,
á Regins mál,
Helreið Brynhildar
og Hundingsbana.

of the deadly Rhine-gold,
Regin's deceit,
Brynhild's hell-journey,
dead Helgi's return.

Loks var teninga
tólfum kastað,
greip eg fárramman
fylki Skota
báðum mundum
að Bragafulli ;
þýddi þrjár rennur,
þrisvar skráði.

The dice were cast
—the double six !
Gripp'd I the chieftain,
grimmest of Scots,—
with two hands gripp'd I
the vowing cup ;
and thrice I ventured,
and thrice I wrought.

Næst fann eg nornir
norræns anda
í draumdjúpum
Dana-prinsi ;
sá þar sýnir
seinni alda
sjúkra sálna
og siðspillingar.

Next found I Norns
—the breath of the North—
in the dreamy depths
of *Denmark's Prince* ;
saw I foreshadow'd
the sicken'd souls
of the later age,
and the wasted lives.

Saman dragast þar
dulvísindi
eilífðar óms
og ægidóma ;
dreymt hefir Hamlet
Dies illa,
náhljóð þau er nú
nísta heiminn.

Compact are there
close mysteries
of heav'nly harmony
and direst dooms ;
yea, Hamlet dreamt
this day of wrath,
these cries of death
that crush the world.

Þá við *Othelló's*
ægi-*drama*
átti mín íþrótt
erfiðan leik.
Set eg það sjónspil
sýnu ofar
harmleik hverjum,
er eg hefi séð.

Rómeó og Júlíu
reyndi eg síðast
í Sögulands
að sýna gerfi—
óð þess elds
er ísa bræðir
eins á Ísafold
sem Ítalíu ;
þar sem elskendur
ástir sungu
svo veröld öll
viknaði og grét ;

Þá er Rómeó
reis frá dauðum
krýndur keisari
af kossi meyjar ;
en draumur sá
varð dauðaspá :
djarfari dómsdag
dró eigi Angeló.

Then on *Othello's*
awesome plot
plied I my skill,—
no petty sport !
Set I these scenes
supreme, above
all themes of woe
mine eyes have met.

Romeo and Juliet
reach'd I last,
in Saga-land
to shape anew,—
the song of fire
that melteth ice
in Iceland
as in Italy ;
where the twain lovers
so their love did sing,
that all the world
was moved and wept ;

When Romeo
from death arose,
crown'd Emperor
by maiden's kiss,
and yet his dream
foreboded death,
bolder doomsday
drew not Angelo !

III

Heyri Albion,
heyri allir lýðir
orð áttræðs manns
frá Ultima Thule—
heyr þau Urðarorð
að með ofríki
aldregi vinnast
hin æðstu gæði.

Sú ein þjóð
mun sigri hrósa,
er bezt skilur
sína beztu menn ;
allur ofstopi
er auðnuleysi,
því að rétt og satt
skal ráða heimi.

Heyr þú, heyr
höfuðengill skálda :
Sér þú eigi hið vitstola
veraldarstríð ?
Tak lúður þinn
og lát hann gjalla
ógnar-orði
yfir æði þjóða !

Blás inar bölvuðu
banavélar
niður fyrir Niflheim
og Nástrandir.
Blás í brottu
blóðs og tára
syndaflóð
fyr en sekkur fold.

III

Hear, Albion,
hear peoples all,
an old man's words
from Ultima Thule !
Hear fateful words :—
By brutal force
ne'er shall be won
the highest good.

That folk alone
shall vaunt of victory
who knoweth best
her best of men ;
over-weening
is ill-fated ;
right and truth
shall rule the world !

Hear thou, hear,
the skalds' archangel :—
See'st not all-witless
this war of the world ?
Take thou thy trump,
let it blare forth
menacing words
o'er the madness of men !

Blow hence accurs'd
machines of death,
deeper than hell,
than the homes of Death !
Blow hence afar
this deluge of blood,
this deluge of tears,
ere the world be drown'd !

VILHJÁLMUR SHAKESPEARE

Blástu, blástu
bruna heiftir
blindra lýða
brott af jörðu !
Blástu, blástu
bræðra sættir,
vek úr álögum
vitstola þjóðir !

Boða þú Bretaskáld
betri tíma,
þú sem þrjár aldir
þótt sért liðinn
sungið hefir samúð
og sáttir þjóða
öllum betur
andaðra og lífs.

Ekkert afl,
engir herflotar,
eins og andi þinn
England verja :
blás þú og blás :
betri koma tíðir :
þú og Albion
munuð æ lifa !

Blow hence, blow hence,
the burning hate
of blinded men,
afar from Earth !
Blow thou, blow,
great reconciler,
wake from their spells
the witless world !

Speak, Britain's bard,
of better times !
Through ages three,
tho' thou art gone,
hast sung of kinship,
the goodwill of men,
better than any,
living or dead.

No mighty force,
no fleets of war,
can as thy spirit
England guard !
Blow thou, blow !
Come better times.
Thou and Albion
shall live for aye !

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