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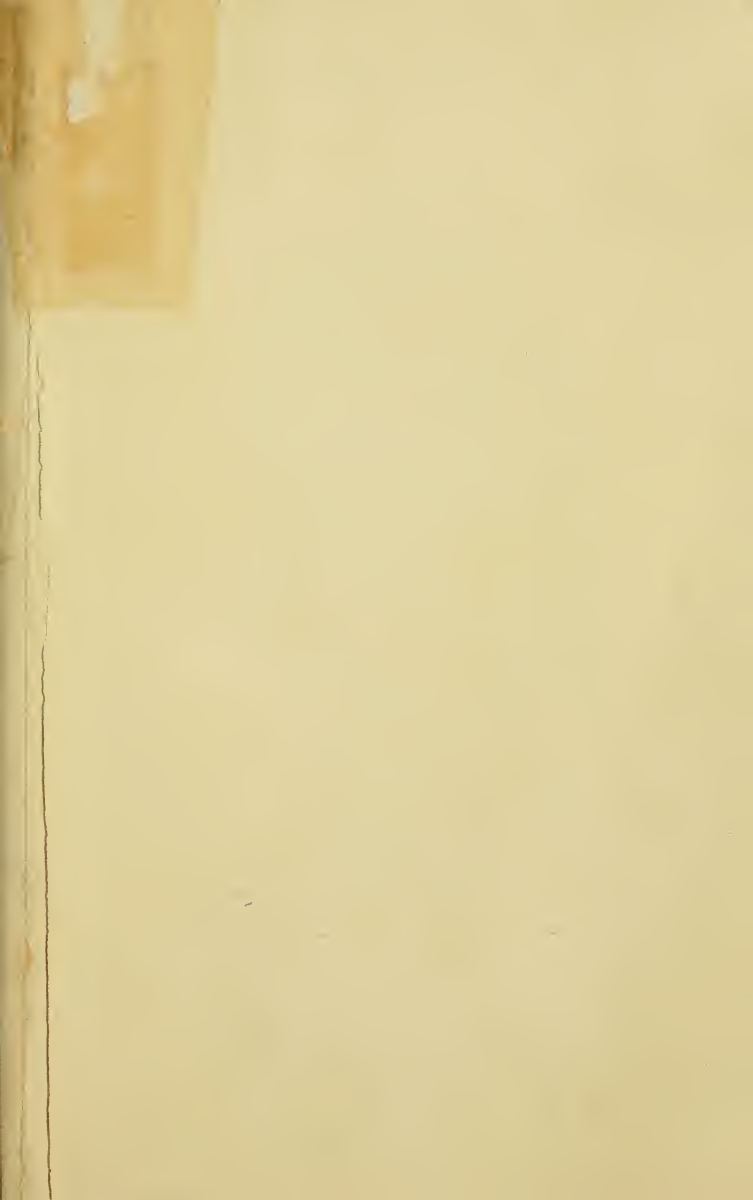


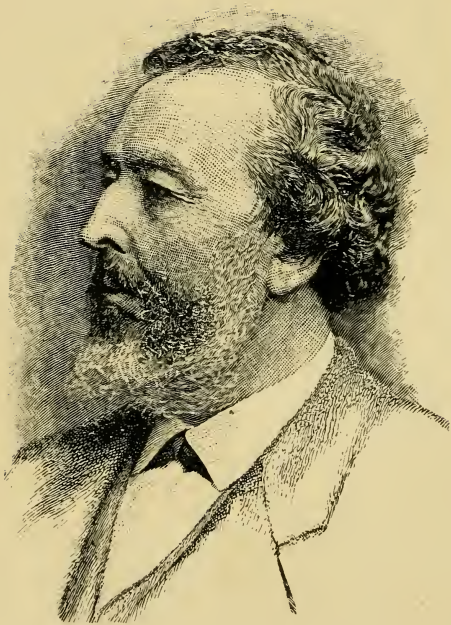












Bayard Taylor



The Riverside Literature Series

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LARS  
A PASTORAL OF NORWAY  
AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
BAYARD TAYLOR

WITH NOTES AND A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH



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## BAYARD TAYLOR.



### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

BAYARD TAYLOR was born January 11, 1825, in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. He was of Quaker descent, and although not actually belonging to the "Friends," was reared in the principles of their Society. His education was restricted to that of a country academy, which did not afford him more than the commonest teaching. He himself, however, supplemented this by his eagerness to gain information in any way that offered. He read at an early age all the books to be found in the village library and in the possession of friends; but outside of books Nature was his teacher. Roaming through the woods which surrounded his father's farm, and musing on the banks of rippling streams, he caught the melodies of song, the expression of which was a necessity to him as long as he lived. Even as early as in his eighth year he began to write poetry, and when a youth of sixteen he saw his first poem in print. The year after, in 1842, he was placed in a printing-office, to become a printer — a vocation which he soon left, to satisfy his desire for travel. It was a true instinct which led him to see the world; he gained by it what he could not get in any other way — his university education; and the knowledge he gathered of countries and peoples

was so much capital invested in the interest of poetry. Each record of travel published by him was followed by a volume of poems ; and later in life, when his works of travel ceased, and his prose took the form of fiction, poetry became more than ever the controlling object of interest.

His first volume of poems, which afterwards he wished forgotten, was published in 1844, just before he left the printing-office to make his first journey in Europe. It is called "Ximena ; or, The Battle of the Sierra Morena, and other Poems." The fruit of his two years' wanderings in Europe was "Views Afoot ; or, Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff," succeeded by "Rhymes of Travel, Ballads, and Poems," which appeared in 1848, shortly after he had settled in New York, and had become engaged on the staff of the New York "Tribune." The following year he made his second journey, as correspondent for that paper, to California, the newly discovered gold-mine of the continent. The result was a prose volume, "Eldorado ; or, Adventures in the Path of Empire," which was soon followed by a new collection of Poems, entitled, "A Book of Romances, Lyrics, and Songs." When this volume made its appearance, its author was already embarked for Egypt and the Orient, India and Japan — a series of travels which occupied more than two successive years. He returned at the close of 1853, and brought back with him material for three volumes of prose : "A Journey to Central Africa ; or, Life and Landscapes from Egypt to the Negro Kingdoms of the Nile ;" "The Lands of the Saracens ; or, Pictures of Palestine, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain ;" and "A Visit to India, China, and Japan in the year 1853." Almost simultaneously with these the "Poems of the Orient" came forth, to be followed by a new collection of the

older poems, with the addition of a number of new ones, under the title of "Poems of Home and Travel." The summer of 1856 saw him once more in Europe. This time he visited Scandinavia, Russia, and Greece, and then published, "Northern Travel," and "Travels in Greece and Russia, with an Excursion to Crete." "The Poet's Journal," which was written not long after (in 1860, although not published until two years later), was not directly connected with these travels; the poems contained in it were rather the healthy reaction from a most unpoetical field of labor into which he had been driven by circumstance — the lecturing business.

With the completion of "The Poet's Journal" Bayard Taylor entered upon a new epoch of his poetical career. His travels for the sake of seeing the world and its people were now a thing of the past; he turned to the delineation of and the problems propounded by human character in three successive novels, "Hannah Thurston," "John Godfrey's Fortunes," and "The Story of Kennett," to be followed by a fourth one, "Joseph and his Friend," several years later (1870); he became also absorbed in contemplating the development of the artistic nature, as set forth in his next volume of poetry, "The Picture of St. John," whilst his mind was already busy with his great work, the translation of Goethe's "Faust." The former appeared in 1866; the first volume of the latter in 1870, and the second volume in 1871. Of prose volumes belonging to this period, aside from the novels, there are "By-Ways of Europe," sketches written during a two years' stay abroad, and "Beauty and the Beast, and Tales of Home," a collection of short magazine stories.

The study entailed by the translation of "Faust" must have stimulated the creative power of the poet; for

within the two years following the publication of the second part of "Faust," Bayard Taylor produced three large poems. Two of them — "The Masque of the Gods," and "The Prophet: A Tragedy" — are dramatic in form; the third, written between these two, is "Lars: A Pastoral of Norway." The two latter poems he wrote whilst taking a holiday abroad. After returning home, he published also a volume of all his shorter poems hitherto uncollected, which he called "Home Pastorals, Ballads, and Lyrics." In 1876 he was called upon to write the "National Ode" for the Centennial Fourth of July; and shortly before his death, his last work of importance — the dramatic poem "Prince Deukalion" — was issued.

There are publications of Bayard Taylor's of which no mention has been made in this brief sketch. They are those of minor consideration, which did not seem pertinent to our purpose. It is the poet with whom we have to deal here, and as a poet we see him not only in his poetical works, but also in his books of travel, in his novels and tales. From a youth, worshipping devoutly at the shrine of Poesy, he grew into the man setting his poetic goal higher and higher the more he advanced, never flagging in aspiration to the end. He died at Berlin, Germany, where he was the representative of the United States, on December 19, 1878.

LARS:

A PASTORAL OF NORWAY.

TO

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

---

THROUGH many years my heart goes back,  
Through checkered years of loss and gain,  
To that fair landmark on its track,  
When first, beside the Merrimack,  
Upon thy cottage roof I heard the autumn rain.

A hand that welcomed and that cheered  
To one unknown didst thou extend ;  
Thou gavest hope to Song that feared ;  
But now, by Time and Faith endeared,  
I claim the sacred right to call the Poet, Friend !

However Life the stream may stain,  
From thy pure fountain drank my youth  
The simple creed, the faith humane  
In Good, that never can be slain,  
The prayer for inward Light, the search for outward Truth !

Like thee, I see at last prevail  
The sleepless soul that looks above ;  
I hear, far off, the hymns that hail  
The Victor, clad in heavenly mail,  
Whose only weapons are the eyes and voice of Love !

Take, then, these olive leaves from me,  
To mingle with thy brighter bays !  
Some balm of peace and purity,  
In them, may faintly breathe of thee ;  
And take the grateful love, wherein I hide thy praise !



## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

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THE story of "Lars" is an invention of the author, as he himself tells us in one of his letters lately published ("Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor," p. 611). There is only one little germ of fact, he says in the same letter, out of which it grew—the circumstance that there is (or was) at Arendal, in Norway, a small community of Quakers.

The idea underlying the poem—the triumph of the principle of peace over passion and violence—is embodied in characters which are in striking contrast to each other. On one side they are Quakers, void of external attraction, but informed with a spiritual light, lending them guidance and safety on the most perilous paths; on the other side Norwegians, picturesque like the country they inhabit, and inheritors of the surging Norse blood of their heathen ancestors. The scenes by which they are surrounded the author found ready to his hand. When he wrote "Lars," fifteen years had passed since he had visited Norway, but the pictures which had then impressed him of scenery and people were stored in his capacious memory and ready for use; it was merely necessary now to invest them with the nimbus of his poetic art. Nor was the shifting of the scene to the banks of the Delaware and the lovely valley of Hockessin otherwise than a most natural reversion for our author, for here

he was at home ; he knew every landmark, every mood of the changing seasons.

The story is such a simple one, and told in such a straightforward style, that it is fitly called a "Pastoral—a term more grassy, cloverly, and homelike" than "Idyl," as the author expresses himself to his publisher, when writing to him about the title for "Lars" ("Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor," p. 617). With the slight assistance of the accompanying foot-notes, the whole poem will be clear in every particular to any reader. It remains only to add the very decided opinion the author held in regard to the reading of blank verse. He expressed himself about it in his paper "Autumn Days in Weimar" ("Critical Essays, and Literary Notes"), where he insists that it ought to be read by the metrical feet, and *not* by the punctuation. There should be a rest, he says, at the end of each measured line—the merest lingering of the tone, by which to prevent the verse from lapsing into prose. This direction of the author of "Lars" will prove itself a valuable assistance to the reader of the poem, in bringing forth the full-toned rhythm of its lines.

# LARS:

## A PASTORAL OF NORWAY.

---

### BOOK I.

ON curtained eyes, and bosoms warm with rest,  
On slackened fingers and unburdened feet,  
On limbs securer slumber held from toil,  
While nimble spirits of the busy blood  
5 Renewed their suppleness, yet filled the trance  
With something happy which was less than dream,  
The sun of Sabbath rose. Two hours, afar,  
Behind the wintry peaks of Justedal,  
Unmarked, he climbed; then, pausing on the crest  
10 Of Fille Fell, he gathered up his beams  
Dissolved in warmer blue, and showered them down  
Between the mountains, through the falling vale,  
On Ulvik's cottages and orchard trees.  
And one by one the chimneys breathed; the sail

8. The valley of *Justedal*, with its mighty glaciers and snowy mountain-peaks, is part of the grandest region of Norway.

10. *Fell* — a barren and stony hill — is used here instead of the Norwegian *Fjeld*, — one of the characteristic features of Norwegian scenery. The *fjelds* are mountain-plateaus, rising abruptly from their bases. They are bleak and desolate, and some of them, as the *Jötun Fjeld* and the *Dovre Fjeld*, are covered with snow all the year round. The *Fille Fjeld* is about 3,000 feet above the sea, overshadowed by mountains whose wild and barren summits rise to the height of 6,000 feet.

13. *Ulvik* is a small village, beautifully situated on the water's edge. It is inhabited by peasant-farmers, who live in low red houses, studding the green hill-sides. The termination *vik*, common in Norwegian names, corresponds to the English cove, and *Ulvik* is Wolf-cove.

- 15 That loitered lone along the misty fiord  
 Flashed like a star, and filled with fresher wind ;  
 The pasturing steers, dispersed on grassy slopes,  
 Raised heads of wonder over hedge and wall  
 To call, unanswered, the belated cows ;  
 20 And ears that would not hear, or heard in dreams,  
 The lark's alarum over idle fields,  
 And lids, still sweetly shut, that else unclosed  
 At touch of daybreak, yielded to the day.

- Then, last of all, among the maidens, met  
 25 To dip fresh faces in the chilly fount,  
 And smoothen braids of sleep-entangled hair,  
 Came Brita, glossy as a mating bird.  
 No need had she to stoop and wash awake  
 Her drowsy senses : air and water kissed  
 30 A face as bright and breathing as their own,  
 In joy of life and conscious loveliness.  
 If still her mirror's picture stayed with her,  
 A memory, whispering how the downcast lid  
 Shaded the flushing fairness of her cheek,  
 35 And hinting how a straying lock relieved  
 The rigid fashion of her hair, or how  
 The curve of slightly parted lips became  
 Half-sad, half-smiling, either meaning much

15. A *Fiord* is an arm of the sea, thrust deep into the land ; some of them are even a hundred miles long. The *fiords* are winding and irregular, usually shut in by steep precipices and overhanging mountain sides. They are found along the whole coast of Norway, except between the capes of Lindesnæs and Stavanger. Ulvik lies on an arm of the Hardanger Fiord, the grandest and most beautiful of all ; to the east of it is the Hardanger Fjeld, running parallel with the coast.

36. The author of "Lars" in his "Northern Travel" describes a peasant-girl of Ulvik thus : "She wore her Sunday dress, consisting of a scarlet bodice over a white chemise, green petticoat, and white apron, while her shining flaxen hair was plaited into one long braid with narrow strips of crimson and yellow cloth and then twisted like a garland around her head."

Or naught, as wilful humor might decide, —

40 Yet thence was born the grace she could not lose :  
Her beauty, guarded, kept her beautiful.

“Wilt soon be going, Brita?” Ragnil asked;

“And which the way, — by fiord or over fell?”

“Why, both!” another laughed; “or else the rocks

45 Will split and slide beneath the feet of Lars,

Or Per will meet the Kraken!” Brita held

One dark-brown braid between her teeth, and wove

The silken twine and tassels through its fringe,

Before she spake; but first she seemed to sigh:

60 “I will not choose; you shall not spoil my day!

All paths are free that lead across the fell;

All wakes are free to keels upon the fiord,

And even so my will: come Lars or Per,

Come Erik, Anders, Harald, Olaf, Nils,

55 Come sæter-boys, or sailors from the sea,

No lass is bound to slight a decent lad,

Or walk behind him when the way is wide.”

“No way is wide enough for three, I’ve heard,”

Said Ragnil, “save there be two men that prop

60 A third, when market’s over.”

“Go your ways!”

Then Brita cried: “if two or twelve should come,

I call them not, nor do I bid them go:

A friendly word is no betrothal ring.”

Then tossed she back her braids, and with them tossed

65 Her wilful head. “Why, take you both, or all!”

46. *Kraken* is a name applied to the mythical sea-serpent.

55. A *sæter* is a cattle station upon the highland. To this place the cattle are driven in summer, and there the women of the farm, with the help of the sæter-boys, take care of the cattle and make butter and cheese.

She said, and left them, adding, "if you can!"

With silent lips, nor cared what prudent fears,  
Old-fashioned wisdom, dropped in parrot-words,  
Chattered behind her as she climbed the lane.

70 Along her path the unconverted bees

Set toil to music, and the elder-flowers

Bent o'er the gate a snowy entrance-arch,

Where, highest on the slope, her cottage sat.

Her bed of pinks there yielded to the sun

75 Its clove and cinnamon odors; sheltered there

Beneath the eaves, a rose-tree nursed its buds,

And through the door, across the dusk within,

She saw her grandam set the morning broth

And cut a sweeter loaf. All breathed of peace,

80 Of old, indulgent love, and simple needs,

Yet Brita sighed, — then blushed because she sighed,

"Dear Lord!" the ancient dame began, "'t is just  
The day, the sun, the breeze, the smell of flowers,  
As fifty years ago, in Hallingdal,

85 When I, like thee, picked out my smartest things,

And put them on, half guessing what would hap,

And found my luck before I took them off.

See! thou shalt wear the brooch, my mother's then,

And thine when I am gone. Some luck, who knows?

90 May still be shining in the fair red stone."

So, from a box that breathed of musky herbs,

She took the boss of roughly fashioned gold,

With garnets studded: took, but gave not yet.

Some pleasure in the smooth, cool touch of gold,

84. *Hallingdal* is a deep mountain valley southeast of the Fille Fjeld.

92. The gold and silver ornaments of the Norwegian peasantry still preserve the crude, knobby character of the trinkets made and worn by their semi-barbaric ancestors, the Norsemen.

95 Or wine-red sparkles, flickering o'er the stones,  
 Or dream of other fingers, other lips  
 That kissed them for the bed they rocked upon  
 That happy summer eve in Hallingdal,  
 Gave her slow heart its girlhood's pulse again,  
 100 Her cheek one last leaf of its virgin rose.

Oh, foolishness of age! She dared not say  
 What then she felt: Go, child, enjoy the bliss  
 Of innocent woman, ripe for need of man,  
 And needing him no less! Some natural art  
 105 Will guide thy guileless fancies, some pure voice  
 Will whisper truth, and lead thee to thy fate!  
 But, ruled by ancient habit, counselled thus:  
 "Be on thy guard, my Brita! men are light  
 Of tongue, and unto faces such as thine  
 110 Mean not the half they say: the girl is prized  
 Who understands their ways, and holds them off  
 Till he shall come who, facing her, as she  
 And death were one, pleads for his life with her:  
 When such an one thou meetest, thou wilt know."

115 "Nay, grandam!" Brita said: "I will not hear  
 A voice so dreadful-earnest: I am young,  
 And I can give and take, not meaning much,  
 Nor over-anxious to seem death to men:  
 I like them all, and they are good to me.  
 120 I'll wear thy brooch, and may it bring me luck,  
 Not such as thine was, as I guess it was,  
 But, in the kirk, short sermon, cheerful hymn,

122. *Kirk* is a Scotch word for church (in German *Kirche*). The Norwegians are mostly Lutherans. It is the custom in Norway, as everywhere on the continent of Europe, to go to church in the morning, and to spend the remainder of the day in merry-making, which among the young people of the lower classes usually ends with a dance.

Good neighbors on the way, and for the dance  
 A light-foot partner !” With a rippling laugh  
 125 That brushed the surface of her heart, and hid  
 Whatever doubt its quiet had betrayed,  
 She kissed the withered cheek, and on her breast  
 Pinned the rough golden boss with wine-red stones.  
 “Come, Brita, come !” rang o’er the elder-flowers :  
 130 “I come !” she answered, threw her fleeting face  
 Upon the little mirror, took her bunch  
 Of feathered pinks, and joined the lively group  
 Of Sundayed lads and lasses in the lane.

They set themselves to climb the stubborn fell  
 135 By stony stairs that left the fields below,  
 And ceased, far up, against the nearer blue.  
 But lightly sprang the maids ; and where the slides  
 Of ice ground smooth the slanting planes of rock,  
 Strong arms drew up and firm feet steadied theirs.  
 140 Here lent the juniper a prickly hand,  
 And there they grasped the heather’s frowsy hair,  
 While jest and banter made the giddy verge  
 Secure as orchard-turf ; and none but showed  
 The falcon’s eye that guides the hunter’s foot,  
 145 Till o’er their flushed and breathless faces struck  
 The colder ether ; on the crest they stood,  
 And sheltered vale and ever-winding fiord  
 Sank into gulfs of shadow, while afar  
 To eastward many a gleaming tooth of snow  
 150 Cut the full round of sky.

“Why, look you, now !”

Cried one : “the fiord is bare as threshing-floor

134. The churches are often far apart, and difficult to reach. The Norwegians are earnest church-goers, climbing the fjelds, and braving the waves for long distances and in all weathers, to attend divine service.



When winter 's over : what 's become of Per ? ”  
 “ And what of Lars ? ” asked Ragnil, with a glance  
 At Brita's careless face ; “ can he have climbed  
 155 The Evil Pass, and crossed the thundering foss,  
 His nearest way ? ” As clear as blast of horn  
 There came a cry, and on the comb beyond  
 They saw the sparkle of a scarlet vest.  
 Then, like the echo of a blast of horn,  
 160 A moment later, fainter and subdued,  
 A second cry ; and far to left appeared  
 A form that climbed and leaped, and nearer strove.  
 And Harald, Anders Ericssen, and Nils  
 Set their three voices to accordant pitch  
 165 And shouted one wild call athwart the blue,  
 Until it seemed to quiver : as they ceased  
 The maids began, and, moving onward, gave  
 Strong music : all the barren summits rang.

So from the shouts and girlish voices grew  
 170 The wayward chorus of a sæter-song,  
 Such as around the base of Skagtolstind  
 The chant of summer-jötun seems, when all  
 The herds are resting and the herdsmen meet ;  
 And while it swept with swelling, sinking waves  
 175 The crags and ledges, Lars had joined the band,  
 And from the left came Per ; and Brita walked  
 Between them where the path was broad, but when  
 It narrowed to such track as tread the sheep

155. *Foss* is a waterfall. Norway abounds in cataracts, some of which are the finest and grandest in the world.

171. The *Skagtolstind* rises 7,860 feet above the sea-level, and thus is the highest mountain in Norway. It is to the north of the Fille Fjeld.

172. *Jötuns* are the giants of the Northern mythology, corresponding to the Titans of the Greeks. They represent the elements and the forces of nature, and therefore we read of fire-giants, sea-giants, air-giants, frost-giants, forest-giants, etc.

Round slanting shoulder and o'er rocky spur  
 180 To reach the rare, sweet herbage, one went close  
 Before her, one behind, and unto both  
 With equal cheer and equal kindliness  
 Her speech was given : so both were glad of heart.

A herdsman, woodman, hunter, Lars was strong,  
 185 Yet silent from his life upon the hills.  
 Beneath dark lashes gleamed his darker eyes  
 Like mountain-tarns that take their changeless hue  
 From shadows of the pine : in all his ways  
 He showed that quiet of the upper world  
 190 A breath can turn to tempest, and the force  
 Of rooted firs that slowly split the stone.  
 But Per was gay with laughter of the seas  
 Which were his home : the billow breaking blue  
 On the Norwegian skerries flashed again  
 195 Within his sunbright eyes ; and in his tongue,  
 Set to the louder, merrier key it learned  
 In hum of rigging, roar of wind and tide,  
 The rhythm of ocean and its wilful change  
 Allured all hearts as ocean lures the land.  
 200 Now which, this daybreak with his yellow locks,  
 Or yonder twilight, calm, mysterious, filled  
 With promise of its stars, shall turn the mind  
 Of the light maiden who is neither fain  
 To win nor lose, since, were the other not,  
 205 Then each were welcome ? — how should maid de-  
 cide ?

187. *Tarn*, the Scotch word for a small lake on high land.

194. The coast of Norway, with but few breaks, is lined with more or less precipitous rocks, through which the sea has eaten its way in the *fiords*. A chain of *skerries*, or insulated rocks, follows the coast-line wherever the *fiords* exist.

For that the passion of the twain was marked,  
 And haply envied, and a watch was set,  
 She would be strong : and, knowing, seem as though  
 She nothing knew, until occasion came  
 210 To bid her choose, or teach her how to choose.

On each and all the soberness of morn  
 Yet lay, the weight of hard reality  
 That even clogs the callow wings of love ;  
 And now descending, where the broader vale  
 215 Showed farm on farm, and groves of birch and oak,  
 And fields that shifted gloss like shimmering silk,  
 The kirk-bells called them through the mellow air,  
 Slow-swinging, till, as from a censer's cup  
 The smoke diffused makes all the minster sweet,  
 220 The peace they chimed pervaded earth and sky.  
 As under foliage of the lower land  
 The pathway led, more harmless fell the jest,  
 The laugh less frequent : then the maidens drew  
 Apart, set smooth their braids, their kirtles shook,  
 225 And grave, decorous as a troop of nuns,  
 Entered the little town. Ragnil alone  
 And Anders Ericssen together walked,  
 For twice already had their banns been called.  
 Lars shot one glance at Brita, as to say :  
 230 " Were thou and I thus promised, side by side !"  
 Then looked away ; but Per, who kept as near  
 As decent custom let, all softly sang :

219. *Minster* is another term for a cathedral.

224. Although a *kirtle* may be either the short jacket worn by the peasants, or the upper skirt attached to it, the word here evidently is applied only to the latter.

225. Read *decō'rous*.

228. The *banns* are the proclamation, in a church, of intended marriage. In the Lutheran church the banns must be called during the service on three successive Sundays.

“ Forget me thou, I shall remember still ! ”

That she might hear him, and so not forget.

235 Thus onward to the gray old kirk they moved.

The bells had ceased to chime: the hush within  
With holy shuddering from the organ-bass

Was filled, and when it died the prayer arose.

Then came another stillness, as the Lord

240 Were near, or bent to listen from afar,

And last the text ; but Brita found it strange.

Thus read the pastor : “ Set me as a seal

Upon thy heart, yea, set me as a seal

Upon thine arm ; for love is strong as death,

245 And jealousy is cruel as the grave.”

She felt the garnets burn upon her breast,

As if all fervor of the olden love

Still heated them, and fire of jealousy,

And to herself she thought : “ Has any face

250 Looked on me with a love as strong as death ?

But I am Life, and how am I to know ? ”

Then, straightway weary of the puzzle, she

Began to wander with her dancing thoughts

Out o'er the fell, and up and down the slopes

255 Of sunny grass, while ever and anon

The preacher's solemn voice struck through her  
dream,

Its sound a menace and its sense unknown.

Then she was sad, and vexed that she was sad,

And vexed with them who only could have caused

260 Her sadness : “ Grandam's luck, forsooth ! ” she  
thought :

“ If one were luck, why, two by rights were more,

But two a plague, a lesser plague were one,

And not a fortune ! ” So, till service ceased,

And all arose when benediction came,  
 265 She mused with pettish thrust of under lip,  
 Nor met the yearning eyes of Lars and Per.

The day's grave duty done, forth issued all,  
 Foregathering with the Vossevangen youth,  
 The girls of Graven and the boys of Vik,  
 270 Where under elms before the guest-house front  
 Stood tables brown with age: already bore  
 The host his double-handed bunch of cans  
 Fresh-filled and foaming; and the cry of *Skaal!*  
 Mixed with the clashing kiss of glassy lips.  
 275 But when in gown of black the pastor came,  
 All rose, respectful, waiting for his words.  
 A pace in front stood Anders Ericssen,  
 Undignified in bridegroom dignity,  
 Because too conscious: Ragnil blushed with shame,  
 280 And all the maidens envied her the shame,  
 When reverend fingers tapped her cheek, and he,  
 That good man, said: "How fares my bonny bride?  
 She must not be the last this summer; look,  
 My merry lads, what harvest waits for you!"  
 285 And on the maidens turned his twinkling eyes,  
 That beamed a blessing with the playful words.

Then Lars slipped nearer Brita, where she stood  
 Withdrawn a little, underneath the trees.

"You heard the pastor," said he; "would you next  
 290 Put on the crown? not you the harvest, nay,

269. *Vossevangen*, *Graven*, and *Vik* are small villages lying not far apart, near the head of the Hardanger Fiord. The former boasts of a massive old church with pointed tower.

270. The *guest-house* is a public house — the tavern where the people gather after the morning service.

273. "*Skaal!*" (pronounced skoal) is equivalent to "hail!" or "health!"

290. The Norwegian peasant-girl on her wedding-day wears a silver crown which is preserved in the family and handed down from mother to daughter.

The reaper, rather ; and the grain is ripe.”

“ A field,” she answered, “ may be ripe enough  
When half the heads are empty, and the stalks  
Are choked with cockle. I’ve no mind to reap.

295 Indeed, I know not what you mean : the speech  
The pastor uses suits not you nor me.”

She meant reproof, yet made reproof so sweet  
By feigned impatience, which betrayed itself,  
That Lars bent lower, murmured with quick breath

300 “ Oh, take my meaning, Brita ! Give me one, —  
But one small word to say that you are kind,  
But one kind word to tell me you are free,  
And I not wholly hateful ! ” “ Lars ! ” she cried,  
Her frank, sweet sympathy aroused, “ not so !

305 As friendly-kind as I can be, I am,  
But free of you, and all ; and that’s enough !  
You men would walk across the growing grain,  
And trample it because it is not ripe  
Before the harvest.” Thereupon she smiled,

310 Sent him one dewy glance that should have been  
Defiant, but a promise seemed ; then turned,  
And hastening, almost brushed the breast of Per.  
He caught her by the hands, that Viking’s son,  
Whose fathers wore the eagle-helm, and stood

315 With Frithiof at the court of Angantyr,

313. The *Vikings* were originally sea-robbers. The name is derived from *vik* (a cove or bay), where they hid their ships, or sea-dragons, as they were called, from the shape of the prow. They were powerfully built, hardy, and fearless, combining the vices and the virtues of the half-barbaric warrior. During the ninth and tenth centuries they gained great power by extending their piratical voyages, and conquering some of the fairest provinces of ancient Europe. In this way they obtained possession of Normandy, and were known in history as the Normans. Their helmets were adorned with eagles’ or sea-gulls’ wings.

315. Frithiof the Brave is a mythical Scandinavian hero, the “ *saga* ” or story of whose deeds was first written in Icelandic in the fourteenth century ; in our day, the Swedish Bishop Esaias Tegnér rendered the “ *Frithiof’s Saga* ”

Or followed fair-haired Harald to the East,  
 Though fishing now but herring, cod, and bass,  
 Not men and merchant-galleys : he was red  
 With mead, no less than sun and briny air :  
 320 He caught her by the hands, and said, as one  
 Who gives command and means to be obeyed :  
 " You 'll go to Ulvik, Brita, by the fiord !  
 Björn brings my boat ; the wind is off the sea,  
 But light as from a Bergen lady's fan :  
 325 Say, then, you 'll go ! "

The will within his words

Struck Brita harshly. For a moment she  
 Pondered refusal, then, with brightening face  
 Turned suddenly, and cried to all the rest :  
 " How fine of Per ! we need not climb the fell :  
 330 He 'll bear us all to Ulvik by the fiord ;  
 Björn brings his boat ; the wind is off the sea ! "  
 And all the rest, with roaring skaal to Per,  
 Struck hands upon the offer ; only he  
 For plan so friendly showed a face too grim.  
 335 He set his teeth and muttered : " Caught this time,  
 But she shall pay it ! " till his discontent  
 Passed, like a sudden squall that tears the sea,  
 Yet leaves a sun to smile the billows down.  
 His jovial nature, bred to change, was swayed

famous by making it the theme of his verse. His poem tells us how Frithiof was sent by King Helge to Angantyr, Earl of the Orkneys ; how he went, and what new splendor he beheld at the court of this ruler.

316. Harald III., surnamed Hardraade, King of Norway 1047-1067. Before his accession to the throne he spent many years in the East, and was captain of the body-guard of the Greek Emperor at Constantinople.

318. A *galley* is a low, flat vessel, propelled by sails and oars.

319. *Mead*, the favorite and almost the sole drink of the ancient northern races, is made of honey and water, boiled and fermented.

324. One of the principal cities of Norway is *Bergen*, situated on two capes, the projecting spurs of a high mountain, which rise steeply from the water, leaving a narrow, almost land-locked harbor.

- 340 By the swift consequence of Brita's whim,  
 The grasp of hand, the clap of shoulder, clink  
 Of brimming glass, and whispers overheard  
 Of "Luck to Per, and Björn, and all the boys  
 That reap, but sow not, on the rolling fields!"
- 345 And Brita, too, no sooner punished him  
 Than she relented, and would fain appease;  
 Whence, fluttering to and fro, she kept the plan  
 Alive, yet made its kindness wholly Per's:  
 Only, when earnestly to Lars she said:
- 350 "You'll go with us?" he answered sullenly:  
 "I will not go: my way is o'er the fell."

He did not quit them till they reached the strand,  
 And on the stern-deck and the prow was piled  
 The bright, warm freight; then chose a dangerous  
 path,

- 355 A rocky ladder slanting up the crags,  
 And far aloft upon a foreland took  
 His seat, with chin upon his clenching hands,  
 To watch and muse, in love and hate, alone.  
 But they slid off upon a wind that filled
- 360 The sail, yet scarcely heeled the boat a-lee:  
 They seemed to rest above a hanging sky  
 'Twixt shores that went and shores that slowly came  
 In silence, and the larger shadows fell  
 From heaven-high walls, a darker clearness in
- 365 The air above, the firmament below,  
 Crossed by the sparkling creases of the sea.  
 Björn at the helm and Per to watch the wind,  
 They scarcely sailed, but soared as eagle soars  
 O'er Gousta's lonely peak with moveless plumes,

369. The pyramidal peak of the Gousta rises 2,000 feet above a conical mountain platform more than 4,000 feet high. It is in the province of Telle-



- 370 That, level-set, cut the blue planes of air ;  
 And out of stillness rose that sunset hymn  
 Of Sicily, the *O sanctissima* !  
 That swells and fluctuates like a sleepy wave.  
 Thus they swam on to where the fiord is curved
- 375 Around the cape, where through a southward cleft  
 Some wicked sprite sends down his elfish flaws.  
 So now it chanced : the vessel sprang, and leaned  
 Before the sudden strain ; but Per and Björn  
 Held the hard bit upon their flying steed,
- 380 And laughing, sang : “ Out on the billows blue  
 You needs must dance, and on the billows blue  
 You sleep, a babe, rocked by the billows blue ! ”  
 As suddenly the gust was over : then  
 Found Per a seat by Brita. “ Did you fear ? ”
- 385 He said ; and she : “ Who fears that sails with Per ? ”  
 “ Nay then,” he whispered, “ never fear me more,  
 As twice to-day : why give me all this freight,  
 When so much less were so much more to me ? ”  
 “ Since when were maidens free as fishermen ? ”
- 390 Not since the days of Brynhild, I believe ; ”  
 She answered, sharply : “ I was fain to sail,  
 And place for me meant place for more beside.”  
 “ Not in my heart,” he said ; “ it holds and keeps

mark in Southern Norway, and near it is the famous Riukan Foss, the “ king of European waterfalls.”

372. The poet here refers to the old Latin hymn sung by the people of Southern Italy every evening at sunset before the shrine of the Virgin :—

“ O sanctissima,  
 O piissima,  
 Dulcis Virgo Maria !  
 Mater amata,  
 Intemerata,  
 Ora, ora pro nobis ! ”

390. *Brynhild* was one of the *walkyries*, or battle maidens of the Scandinavian mythology, who carried those slain in combat on their winged horses to the joys of the Norse heaven, *Walhalla*. Brita probably thought of the age when women often shared with their husbands, or fathers, all the dangers and the heroism of barbaric warfare.

Thee only ; thou canst not escape my love ; ”  
 395 And tried to take her hand : she bending o'er  
 The low, black bulwarks, saw a crimson spark  
 Drop on the surface of the pale-green wave,  
 And sink, surrounded by a golden gleam.

“ Oh, grandam's brooch ! ” she cried, and started up,  
 400 Sat down again, and hid her face, and wept.  
 Some there lamented as the loss were theirs,  
 Some shook their heads in ominous dismay,  
 But all agreed that, save a fish should bring  
 The jewel in its maw (and tales declared  
 405 The thing once happened), none would see it more.  
 Said Guda Halstensdatter : “ I should fear  
 An evil, had I lost it.” Thorkil cried :  
 “ Be silent, Guda ! Loss is grief enough  
 For Brita : would you frighten her as well ?  
 410 There 's many think that jewels go and come,  
 Having some life or virtue of their own  
 That drives them from us or that brings them back.  
 'T was so with my great-grandam's wedding-ring.”

“ Now, how was that ? ” all asked ; and Thorkil spake :  
 415 “ Why, not a year had she been wedded, when  
 The ring was gone : how, where, a mystery.  
 It was a bitter grief, but nothing happed  
 Save losses, ups and downs, that came to all :  
 Both took their lot in patience and in hope,  
 420 And worked the harder when the luck was least.  
 So from the moorland and the stony brake  
 They won fresh fields ; and now, when came around  
 The thirteenth harvest, and the grain was ripe  
 On that new land, my grandsire, then a boy,  
 425 One morn came leaping, shouting, from the field.  
 High in his hand he held a stalk of wheat,

And round the ripened ear, between the beards,  
 Hung, like a miracle, the wedding-ring!  
 And father heard great-grandam say it shone  
 430 So wonderful, she dropped upon her knees;  
 She thought God's finger touched it, giving back.  
 Who knows what fish may pounce on Brita's brooch  
 Before it reach the bottom of the fiord,  
 And then, what fisher net the fish?" Some there  
 435 Began to smile at this, and Per's blue eyes  
 Danced with a cheerful light, as, in the cove  
 Of Ulvik entered, fell his sagging sail.  
 No more spake Brita; homeward up the hill  
 She walked alone, sobbing with grief and dread.

440 The world goes round: the sun sets on despair,  
 The morrow makes it hope. Each little life  
 Thinks the great axle of the universe  
 Turns on its fate, and finds impertinence  
 In joy or grief conflicting with its own.  
 445 Yet fate is woven from unnoted threads;  
 Each life is centred in the life of all,  
 And from the meanest root some fibre runs  
 Which chance or destiny may intertwine  
 With those that feed a force or guiding thought,  
 450 To rule the world: so goes the world around.

And Brita's loss, that made all things seem dark,  
 Was soon outgrieved: came Anders' wedding-day  
 And Ragnil's, and the overshining joy  
 Of these two hearts from others drove the shade.  
 455 Forth from her home the ruddy bride advanced,  
 Not fair, but made so by her bridal bliss,  
 The tall crown on her brow, and in her hand  
 The bursting nosegay: Anders, washed and sleeked,

- With ribbons on his hat, from head to foot  
 460 Conscious of all he wore, each word he spake,  
 And every action for the day prescribed,  
 Stuck to her side. It was a trying time ;  
 But when the strange truth was declared at last  
 That they were man and wife, so greeted with  
 465 The cries of flute and fiddle, crack of guns,  
 And tossing of the blossom-brightened hats,  
 They breathed more freely ; and the guests were  
 glad  
 That this was over, since the festival  
 Might now begin, and mirth be lord of all.
- 470 In Ragnil's father, Halfdan's home, the casks  
 Of mead were tapped, the Dantzig brandy served  
 In small old glasses, and the platters broad,  
 Heaped high with salmon, cheese, and caviar,  
 Tempted and soothed before the heavier meal.
- 475 No guest in duty failed ; and Per began —  
 The liquor's sting, the day's infection warm  
 Upon his blood — to fix his sweetheart's word,  
 Before some wind should blow it elsewhere.
- “ Your hand, my Brita.” stretching his, — “ your hand  
 480 For all the dances : see, my heels are light !  
 I have a right to ask you for amends,  
 But ask it as a kindness.” “ Nay,” she said,  
 “ You have no right ; but I will dance one dance  
 With you, as any other.” “ Will you then ? ”
- 485 He cried, and caught her sharply by the wrist :

469. In most parts of Norway a wedding lasts for three or four days. There are numerous guests, who enjoy themselves in feasting and drinking, and the end of it all frequently is a bloody fight.

473. *Caviar* is the name of an article of food made, principally in Russia, from the salted roe of the sturgeon. It is the custom in Scandinavia, as well as in Russia, to preface the dinner by an appetizer — a *smörgås* (butter-geese) — consisting of the piquant dishes just mentioned.

“ I ’ll not be ‘ any other,’ do you hear?  
 I ’ll be the one, the only one, whose foot  
 Keeps time with yours, my heart the tune thereto ! ”  
 Then shouting comrades whirled him from her  
 side,

490 And Ragnil called the maids, to show her stores  
 Of fine-spun linen, lavendered and cool  
 In nutwood chests, her bed and canopy  
 Painted with pictures of the King and Queen,  
 And texts from Scripture, o’er the pillows curled  
 495 Where she and Anders should that night repose.  
 They shut the door to keep the lads without,  
 Then shyly stole away ; and Brita found  
 Alone, among the garden bushes, Lars.

His eyes enlarged and brightened as she came ;  
 500 He said, in tones whose heartfelt sweetness made  
 Her pulses thrill : “ I will not bind you yet :  
 Dance only first with me that sæter-dance  
 You learned on Graafell : Nils will play the air.  
 Then take your freedom, favor whom you will.  
 505 I shall not doubt you, now and evermore.”

“ But, Lars ” — she said, then paused ; he would not  
 wait,

The mirthful guests drew near. “ I ’ll keep you,  
 then,”

He whispered, “ till I needs must let you go.  
 This much will warm me on the windy fells,  
 510 Make sunshine of the mists, melt frost in dew,  
 And paint the rocks with roses.” Could she turn  
 From that brave face, those calm, confiding eyes ?  
 Could she, in others’ sight, reject the hand  
 Now leading to the board ? If so, too late  
 515 Decision came, for she had followed him,

And sat beside him when the horns of mead  
 Made their slow pilgrimage from mouth to mouth,  
 And while the stacks of bread sank low, the haunch  
 Of stall-fed ox diminished to the bone,  
 520 Till multeberries, Bergen gingerbread,  
 With wine of Spain, made daintier end of all.  
 Then, like a congress of the blackbirds, held  
 In ancient tree-tops on October eves,  
 The tables rang and clattered ; but, ere long,  
 525 Brisk hands had stripped them bare, and, turning  
       down  
 The leaves, made high-backed settles by the wall.

Through all the bustle and the din were heard  
 The fiddle-strings of Nils, as one by one  
 They chirped and squeaked in dolorous complaint,  
 530 Until the bent ear and the testing bow  
 Found them accordant : then a flourish came  
 That scampered up and down the scale, and lapsed  
 In one long note that hovered like a bird,  
 Uncertain where to light ; but so not long :  
 535 It darted soon, a lark above the fells,  
 And spun in eddying measures. Here a pair,  
 And there another, took the vacant floor,  
 Then Lars and Brita, sweeping in the dance  
 That whirled and paused, as if a mountain gust  
 540 Blew them together, tossed, and tore apart.  
 And ever, when the wild refrain came round,  
 Lars flung himself and sideways turned in air,  
 Yet missed no beat of music when he fell.

516. In ancient times the horns of the bull were used as drinking-vessels : hence the term is still applied to a drinking-cup.

520. *Multeberries* (*Rubus chamæmorus*) grow in abundance on the rocky Hardanger Fjeld.

“ By holy Olaf ! ” gray-haired Halfdan cried :  
 545 “ There ’s not a trick we knew in good old days,  
 But he has caught it : so I danced myself.”

Upon the sweeping circles entered Per,  
 Held back, at first, and partially controlled  
 By them who saw the current of his wrath,  
 550 And whitherward it set ; but now, when slacked  
 The fiery pulses of the dance, he broke  
 Through all, and rudely thrust himself on Lars.  
 “ Your place belongs to me,” he hoarsely cried, —  
 “ Your place and partner ! ” “ Brita ’s free to choose,”  
 555 Said Lars, “ and may be bidden ; but this floor  
 Is not your deck, nor are you captain mine :  
 I think your throat has made your head forget.”  
 Lars spake the truth that most exasperates :  
 His words were oil on flame, and Per resolved,  
 560 So swayed by reckless anger, to defy  
 Then, once, and wholly. “ Deck or not,” said he,  
 “ You know what right I mean : you stand where I  
 Allow you not : I warn you off the field ! ”  
 Lars turned to Brita : “ Does he speak for you ? ”  
 565 She shook her head, but what with shame and fear  
 Said nothing. “ We have danced our sæter-dance,”  
 He further spake, “ and now I go : when next  
 We meet at feast, I claim another such.”  
 “ Aye, claim it, claim ! ” Per shouted ; “ but you ’ll first  
 570 Try knives with me, for blood shall run between  
 Your words and will : where you go, I shall be.”  
 “ So be it : bid your mother bring your shroud ! ”  
 Lars answered ; and he left the marriage house.

544. Olaf was the first Christian King of Scandinavia. He lived about A. D. 1000, and was sainted by the Church of Rome as the Apostle of Christianity in the North.

572. It was the custom formerly for wives to take a shroud along to a wed-

The folk of Ulvik knew, from many a tale  
 575 Of feud and fight, from still transmitted hates  
 And old Berserker madness in their blood,  
 What issue hung : but whoso came between  
 Marked that the mediation dwelt with her  
 Who stood between : if she would choose, why, then  
 580 The lover foiled forsooth must leave in peace  
 The lover favored, — further strife were vain.  
 But Lars was far upon the windy heights,  
 And Per beyond the skerries on the sea,  
 And Ragnil bustling busy as a wife,  
 585 That might have helped ; while those to Brita came,  
 More meddlesome than kind, who hurt each nerve  
 They touched for healing. What could she, but cry  
 In tears and anger : “ Shall I seek them out,  
 Bestow myself on one, take pride for love,  
 590 And forfeit thus all later pride in me ?  
 Rather refuse them both, and on myself  
 Turn hate of both : their knives, i' faith ! were dull  
 Beside your cutting tongues ! ” She vowed, indeed,  
 In moonlit midnights, when she could not sleep,  
 595 And either window framed a rival face,  
 That seemed to wait, with set, reproachful eyes,  
 To smile on neither, hold apart and off  
 Their fatal kindness. She repel, that drew ?  
 As if an open rose could will away  
 Its hue and scent, a lily arm its stem  
 600 With thorns, a daisy turn against the sun !

ding-feast, since it was uncertain whether their husbands would come away alive.

576. *Berserker* (from *ber*, bare or naked, and *serkr*, a breast-plate) was the name of a Scandinavian mythical hero. Contrary to the custom of the age, he went unarmed into battle ; the want of helmet and shield was supplied by a mad rage which took possession of him while fighting. Thence his descendants were called Berserkers. They inherited his fury in combat ; and later the blind, unreasoning rage of fight was called after him Berserker madness.



The fields were reaped ; the longer shadows thrown  
 From high Hardanger and the eastern range  
 Began to chill the vales : it was the time  
 When on the meadow by the lonely lake  
 605 Of Graven, from the regions round about  
 The young men met to hold their wrestling-match,  
 As since the days of Olaf they had done.  
 There, too, the maids came and the older folk,  
 Delighting in the grip of strength and skill,  
 610 The strain of sinew, stubbornness of joint,  
 And urge of meeting muscles. All the place  
 Was thronged, and loud the cheers and laughter rang  
 When some old champion from a rival vale  
 Bent before fresher arms, and from his base  
 615 Wrenched ere he knew, fell heavily to earth.  
 Until the sun across the fir-trees laid  
 His lines of level gold, they watched the bouts ;  
 Then strayed by twos and threes toward the sound  
 Of wassail in the houses and the booths.  
  
 620 And Brita with her Ulvik gossips went.  
 Once only, when a Lærdal giant brought  
 Sore grief upon the men of Vik, she saw  
 Or seemed to see, beyond the stormy ring,  
 The shape of Lars ; but, scarce disquieted  
 625 If it were he, or if the twain were there,  
 (Since blood, she thought, must surely cool in time,)  
 She followed to the house upon the knoll  
 Where ever came and went, like bees about  
 Their hive's low doorway, groups of merry folk.  
 630 A mellow dusk already filled the room ;  
 The chairs were pushed aside, and on the stove,

619. *Wassail* — an old English word for carousing.

621. *Lærdal* is situated in the neighborhood of the Fille Fjeld.

As on a throne of painted clay, sat Nils.  
Behold! Lars waited there; and as she reached  
The inner circle round the dancing-floor  
635 He moved to meet her, and began to say  
“Thanks for the last” — when from the other side  
Strode Per.

The two before her, face to face  
Stared at each other: Brita looked at them.  
All three were pale; and she, with faintest voice,  
640 Remembering counsel of the tongues unkind,  
Could only breathe: “I know not how to choose.”  
“No need!” said Lars: “I choose for you,” said Per.  
Then both drew off and threw aside their coats,  
Their broidered waistcoats, and the silken scarves  
645 About their necks; but Per growled “All!” and  
made

His body bare to where the leathern belt  
Is clasped between the breast-bone and the hip.  
Lars did the same; then, setting tight the belts,  
Both turned a little: the low daylight clad  
650 Their forms with awful fairness, beauty now  
Of life, so warm and ripe and glorious, yet  
So near the beauty terrible of Death.  
All saw the mutual sign, and understood;  
And two stepped forth, two men with grizzled hair  
655 And earnest faces, grasped the hooks of steel  
In either’s belt, and drew them breast to breast,  
And in the belts made fast each other’s hooks.  
An utter stillness on the people fell

632. Stoves in the north of Europe are huge structures of tiles, which give out a moderate but constant warmth, and therefore afford a secure and comfortable seat for the musician.

636. According to a peculiarly polite custom prevalent in the Scandinavian peninsula, Lars, before asking Brita for a dance, thanks her for the last one she gave him.

While this was done: each face was stern and  
strange,

660 And Brita, powerless to turn her eyes,  
Heard herself cry, and started: "Per, O Per!"

When those two backward stepped, all saw the flash  
Of knives, the lift of arms, the instant clench  
Of hands that held and hands that strove to strike:

665 All heard the sound of quick and hard-drawn breath,  
And naught beside; but sudden red appeared,  
Splashed on the white of shoulders and of arms.

Then, thighs entwined, and all the body's force  
Called to the mixed resistance and assault,

670 They reeled and swayed, let go the guarding clutch,  
And struck out madly. Per drew back, and aimed  
A deadly blow, but Lars embraced him close,  
Reached o'er his shoulder and from underneath  
Thrust upward, while upon his ribs the knife,

675 Glancing, transfixed the arm. A gasp was heard:  
The struggling limbs relaxed; and both, still bound  
Together, fell upon the bloody floor.

Some forward sprang, and loosed, and lifted them  
A little; but the head of Per hung back,

680 With lips apart and dim blue eyes unshut,  
And all the passion and the pain were gone  
Forever. - "Dead!" a voice exclaimed; then she,  
Like one who stands in darkness, till a blaze  
Of blinding lightning paints the whole broad world,

685 Saw, burst her stony trance, and with a cry  
Of love and grief and horror, threw herself  
Upon his breast, and kissed his passive mouth,  
And loud lamented: "Oh, too late I know  
I love thee best, my Per, my sweetheart Per!"

890 Thy will was strong, thy ways were masterful ;  
 I did not guess that love might so command !  
 Thou wert my ruler : I resisted thee,  
 But blindly. Oh, come back ! — I will obey.”

Within the breast of Lars the heart beat on,  
 695 Yet faintly, as a wheel more slowly turns  
 When summer drouth has made the streamlet thin.  
 They stauched the gushing life ; they raised him up,  
 And sense came back and cleared his clouded eye  
 At Brita's voice. He tried to stretch his hands :  
 700 “ Where art thou, Brita ? It is time to choose :  
 Take what is left of him or me ! ” He paused :  
 She did not answer. Stronger came his voice :  
 “ I think that I shall live : forget all this !  
 'T was not my doing, shall not be again,  
 705 If only thou wilt love me as I love.”  
 “ I love thee ? ” Brita cried ; “ who murderest him  
 I loved indeed ! Why should I wish thee life,  
 Except to show thee I can hate instead ? ”  
 A groan so deep, so desperate and sad  
 710 Came from his throat, that men might envy him  
 Who lay so silent ; then they bore him forth,  
 While others smoothed the comely limbs of Per.  
 His mother, next, unrolled the decent shroud  
 She brought with her, as ancient custom bade,  
 715 To do him honor ; for man's death he died,  
 Not shameful straw-death of the sick and old.

716. The mythology of the Norsemen made it a disgrace to die the *straw-death*, — that is, death on a bed, which was usually of straw, — rather than a bloody death on the field of battle ; for only those who were slain in fight were admitted to the joys of the gods.

## BOOK II.

LARS lived, because the life within his frame  
Refused to leave it ; but his heart was dead,  
He thought, for nothing moved him any more.  
He spake not Brita's name, and every path  
5 Where he had scattered fancies of the maid  
Like seeds of flowers, but whence, instead, had grown  
Malignant briars, to clog and tear his feet,  
Was hated now : so, all that once seemed life,  
So bright with power and purpose, rich in chance,  
10 And dropping rest from every cloud of toil,  
Became a weariness of empty days.

Thus, not to 'scape the blood-revenge for Per  
Which Thorsten vowed, his brother ; not to shun  
The tongues and eyes of censure or reproach,  
15 Or spoken pity, angering more than these ;  
But since each rock upon the lonely fell  
Kept echoes of her voice, each cleft of blue  
Where valleys wandered downward to the wave  
Held shadows of her form, each meadow-sod  
20 Her footprints, — all the land so filled with her,

12. There is a reference to *Blood-revenge* in the "still-transmitted hates," line 575 (page 32). This fearful custom, of shedding blood for blood, which Christianity has never been able to suppress in some mountainous districts of Europe, is based on the belief that a violent death must be wiped out by the blood of the slayer. It is the sacred duty of the next male relation of the slain to kill his murderer, whose death is again avenged by a relative. In this private warfare whole families have been exterminated in different countries.

Once hope, delight, but desolation now, —  
 Forth must he go, beyond his father's hearth,  
 Beyond the vales, beyond the teeth of snow,  
 The shores and skerries, till the world become  
 25 Too wide for knowledge of his evil fate,  
 Too strange for memory of his ruined love !

He recked not where ; but into passive moods  
 Some spirit drops a leaven, to point anew  
 Men's aimless forces. Was it only chance  
 30 That now recalled a long-forgotten tale ?  
 How Leif, his mother's grandsire, crossed the seas  
 To those new lands the great Gustavus claimed :  
 How, in The Key of old Calmår, their ship,  
 A trooper he, with Printz the Governor,  
 35 Sailed days and weeks ; the blue would never turn  
 To shallower green, and landsmen moped in dread,  
 Till shores grew up they scarce believed were such,  
 Low-lying, fresh, as if the hand of God  
 Had lately finished them. But farther on  
 40 The curving bay to one broad river led,  
 Where cabins nestled on the rising banks,  
 With mighty woods, and mellow intervalles,  
 Inviting corn and cattle. Then rejoiced  
 The Swedish farmers, and were set ashore :  
 45 But on the level isle of Tinicum  
 Printz built a fort, and there the trooper, Leif,

27. To *reck* is the same as to reckon or to care.

33. The first Swedish colonists arrived in the Delaware River in the spring of 1638, in two ships, The Griffin and The Key of Calmår, and landed in the Minquas Creek, called by them the Christiana.

34. John Printz, Governor of "New Sweden," was sent from Stockholm to the banks of the Delaware with an armed force.

46. Printz named the fort "New Gottenburg." The island of Tinicum — called Tenacong by the Indians — is situated on the west shore of the Delaware, between Chester and Philadelphia. It is formed by the river, Darby Creek,

Abode three years : and he was fain to tell,  
 When wounds and age had crippled him, how fair  
 And fruitful was the land, how full of sun  
 50 And bountiful in streams, — and pity 't was  
 The strong Norse blood could not have stocked it all !

Lars knew not why these stories should return  
 To haunt his gloomy brain : but it was so,  
 And on the current of his memory launched  
 55 His thought, and followed ; then neglected will  
 Awoke, and on the track of thought embarked,  
 And soon his life was borne away from all  
 It knew, and burst the adamantine ring  
 Which bound its world within the greater world.  
 60 As one who, wandering by the water-side,  
 Steps in an empty boat, and sits him down,  
 Not knowing that his step has loosed the chain,  
 And drifts away, unwitting, on the tide,  
 So he was drifted : no farewell he spake,  
 65 But happy Ulvik and the fiord and fell  
 Passed from his eyes, and underneath his feet  
 The world went round, until he found himself,  
 Like one aroused from sleep, upon the hills  
 That roll, the heavings of the boundless blue.

70 As unto Leif, his mother's grandsire, so  
 To him it seemed the blue would never turn  
 To shallower green, till shining fisher-sails  
 Came, stars of land that rose before the land ;  
 Then fresher shores and climbing river-banks,  
 75 And broken woods and mellow intervalles,

and Bow Creek. Beside the fort Printz 'built a church, and a large house for himself, which went by the name of "Printz Hall," and stood until the beginning of the present century, when it was burned down.

- With houses, corn, and cattle. There, perchance,  
 He dreamed, the memory of Leif might bide  
 Upon the level isle of Tinicum,  
 Or farms of Swedish settlers : if 't were so,  
 80 One stone was laid whereon to build a home.  
 But when the vessel at the city's wharf  
 Dropped anchor, and the bright new land was won,  
 The high red houses and the sober throngs  
 Were strange to him, and strange the garb and  
 speech.
- 85 Awhile he lingered there ; until, outgrown  
 The tongue's first blindness and the stranger's shame,  
 His helpless craft was turned again to use.

- Then sought he countrymen, and, finding now  
 Within the Swedish Church at Weccacoe  
 90 No Norse but in the features, else all changed,  
 He left and wandered down the Delaware  
 Unto the isle of Tinicum ; and there  
 Of all that fortress of the valiant Printz  
 Some yellow bricks remained. The name of Leif  
 95 Who should remember ? Do we call to mind,  
 Years afterward, the clover-head we plucked  
 Some morn of June, and smelled, and threw away ?  
 But when we find a life erased and lost  
 Beneath the multitude's unsparing feet,—  
 100 A life so clearly beating yet for us  
 In blood and memory, — comes a sad surprise :  
 So Lars went onward, losing hope of good,  
 To where, upon her hill, fair Wilmington

84. It was at Philadelphia that Lars landed, when for the first time he heard the English tongue and beheld the peculiar dress of the Quakers.

89. The Swedes' church at Wicaco or *Weccacoe* still stands at the foot of Christian Street, Philadelphia. It was built in 1698, and is the oldest in that city.



Looks to the river over marshy meads.

- 105 He saw the low brick church, with stunted tower,  
 The portal-arches, ivied now and old,  
 And passed the gate : lo ! there, the ancient stones  
 Bore Norland names and dear, familiar words !  
 It seemed the dead a comfort spake : he read,  
 110 Thrusting the nettles and the vines aside,  
 And softly wept : he knew not why he wept,  
 But here was something in the strange new land  
 That made a home, though growing out of graves.

- Led by a faith that rest could not be far,  
 115 Beyond the town, where deeper vales bring down  
 The winding brooks from Pennsylvanian hills,  
 He walked : the ordered farms were fair to see,  
 And fair the peaceful houses : old repose  
 Mellowed the lavish newness of the land,  
 120 And sober toil gave everywhere the right  
 To simple pleasures. As by each he passed,  
 A spirit whispered : " No, not there ! " and then  
 His sceptic heart said : " Never anywhere ! "

- The sun was low, when, with the valley's bend,  
 125 There came a change. Two willow-fountains flung  
 And showered their leafy streams before a house  
 Of rusty stone, with chimneys tall and white ;  
 A meadow stretched below ; and dappled cows,  
 Full-fed, were waiting for their evening call.  
 130 The garden lay upon a sunny knoll,  
 An orchard dark behind it, and the barn,  
 With wide, warm wings, a giant mother-bird,

105. The name by which the first Swedish settlers called Wilmington, on the Delaware, was " Christina "—after their Queen. The church which they built in 1698 remains to this day, surrounded by its ancient graveyard.

Seemed brooding o'er its empty summer nest.  
 Then Lars upon the roadside bank sat down,  
 135 For here was peace that almost seemed despair,  
 So near his eyes, so distant from his life  
 It lay : and while he mused, a woman came  
 Forth from the house, no servant-maid more plain  
 In her attire, yet, as she nearer drew,  
 140 Her still, sweet face, and pure, untroubled eyes  
 Spake gentle blood. A browner dove she seemed,  
 Without the shifting iris of the neck,  
 And when she spake her voice was like a dove's,  
 Soft, even-toned, and sinking in the heart.  
 145 Lars could not know that loss and yearning made  
 His eyes so pleading ; he but saw how hers  
 Bent on him as some serious angel's might  
 Upon a child, strayed in the wilderness.  
 She paused, and said : " Thou seemest weary, friend,"  
 150 But he, instead of answer, clasped his hands.  
 The silent gesture wrought upon her mind :  
 She marked the alien face ; then with a smile  
 That meant and made excuse for needful words,  
 She said : " Perhaps thou dost not understand ? "  
 155 " I understand," Lars answered ; " you are good.  
 Indeed, I 'm weary : not in hands and feet,  
 But tired of idly owning them. I see  
 A thousand fields where I could take my bread  
 Nor stint the harvest, and a thousand roofs  
 160 That shelter corners where my head might rest,  
 Nor steal another's pillow ! "

As to seek

The meaning of his words, she mused a space.  
 In that still land of homes, how should she guess  
 What fancies haunt a homeless heart ? Yet his  
 165 Was surely need : so, presently, she spake :

"Work only waits, I've thought, for willing hands;  
 A meal and shelter for the night, we give  
 To all that ask; what more is possible  
 Rests with my father." Lars arose and went  
 170 Beside her, where the cows came loitering on  
 With udders swelled, and meadow-scented breath,  
 Through opened bars and up the grassy lane.  
 "Ho, Star!" and "Pink!" he called them coaxingly  
 In soft Norse words: they stared as if they knew.  
 175 "See, lady!" then he cried: "the honest things  
 Like him that likes them, over all the world."  
 But "Nay," she said, "not 'lady'! — call me Ruth:  
 My father's name is Ezra Mendenhall,  
 And hither comes he: I will speak for thee."

180 So Lars was sheltered, and when evening fell,  
 And all, around the clean and peaceful board,  
 Kept the brief silence which is fittest prayer  
 Before the bread is broken, he was filled  
 With something calm, which was akin to peace,  
 185 With something restless, which was almost hope.  
 The white-haired man with placid forehead sat  
 And faced him, grave as any Bergen judge,  
 Yet kindly; he the stranger's claim allowed,  
 And ample space for hunger, ere he spake:  
 190 "What, then, might be thy name?" "My name is  
     Lars,  
 The son of Thorsten, in the Norway land.  
 My father said the blood of heathen kings  
 Runs in our veins, but we are Christian men,  
 Who work the more because of idle sires,  
 195 And speak the truth, and try to live good lives."

Lars ceased, as if a blow had closed his mouth,  
 But Ezra said: "The name sounds heathenish

Indeed, yet hardly royal ; blood is naught to us,  
 Yea. less than naught, or I, whose fathers served  
 200 The third man Edward, and his kindly wife  
 Philippa, loved the vanities of courts  
 And cast away the birthright of their souls,  
 Were now, perchance, a worldly popinjay,  
 The Lord forgetting and provoking Him  
 205 Me to forget. But this is needless talk :  
 Thy hands declare that thou art bred to work ;  
 Thy face, methinks, is truthful ; if thy life  
 Be good, I know not. I can trust no more  
 Than knowledge justifies, and charity  
 210 Bids us assume until the knowledge comes."

"No more I ask," Lars answered ; "simple ways  
 To me are home-ways : I can learn to serve,  
 Because, when others served me. I was just."

"Our ways are strange to thee," said Ezra ; "thine  
 215 Unsuitable, if here too long retained.  
 The just in spirit find in outward things  
 A voice and testimony, which may not  
 Be lightly changed : what sayest thou to this ?"

"To change in mine ? Why, truly, 't were no change  
 220 To do thy bidding, yet to call thee friend ;  
 To use the speech of brethren, as at home ;  
 And, feigning not the faith that still may part,  
 To bide in charity till knowledge comes, —  
 So much, without a promise, I should give."

225 "Thou speakest fairly," Ezra said ; "to me  
 Is need of labor less than faithful will,

But this includes the other : if thou stand  
 The easier test, the greater then may come.  
 The man who feels his duty makes his own  
 230 The beasts he tends or uses, and the fields,  
 Though all may be another's." "Then," said Ruth,  
 "My cows already must belong to Lars :  
 His speech was strange, and yet they understood."

So Lars remained. That night, beneath the roof,  
 235 His head lay light ; the very wind that breathed  
 Its low, perpetual wail among the boughs  
 Sufficed to cheer him, and the one dim star  
 That watched him from the highest heaven of  
 heavens

Made morning in his heart. Too soon passed off  
 240 The exalted mood, too soon his rich content  
 Was tarnished by the daily round of toil,  
 And all things grown familiar ; yet his pride,  
 That rose at censure for each petty fault  
 Of ignorance, supported while it stung.  
 245 And Ezra Mendenhall was just, and Ruth  
 Serenely patient, sweetly calm and kind :  
 So, month by month, the even days were born  
 And died, the nights were drowned in deeper rest,  
 And fields and fences, streams and stately woods,  
 250 Fashioned themselves to suit his newer life,  
 Till ever fainter grew those other forms  
 Of fiord and fell, the high Hardanger range,  
 And Romsdal's teeth of snow. Yea, Brita's eyes  
 And Per's hot face he learned to hold away,  
 255 Save when they vexed his helpless soul in dreams.

253. The most towering amongst the snowy peaks of the famous Romsdal is the Snæhätten, rising to a height of 7,700 feet.

The land was called Hockessin. O'er its hills,  
High, wide, and fertile, blew a healthy air :  
There was a homestead set wherever fell  
A sunward slope, and breathed its crystal vein,  
260 And up beyond the woods, at crossing roads,  
The heart of all, the ancient meeting-house ;  
And Lars went thither on an autumn morn.  
Beside him went, it happened, Abner Cloud,  
A neighbor ; rigid in the sect, and rich,  
265 And it was rumored that he crossed the hill  
To Ezra's house, oftener than neighbor-wise.  
This knew not Lars : but Abner's eye, he thought,  
Fell not upon him as a friend's should fall,  
And Abner's tongue perplexed him, for its tone  
270 Was harsh or sneering when his words were fair.  
He spake from every quarter, as a man  
Who seeks a tender spot, or wound unhealed,  
And probes the surface which he seems to soothe  
Until some nerve betrays infirmity.  
275 This, only, were the two alone : if Ruth  
Came near, his face grew mild as curded milk,  
And unctuous kindness overflowed his lips  
Precise and thin, as who should godlier be ?  
Perhaps he wooed, but 't was a wooing strange,  
280 Lars fancied, or his heart were other stuff  
Than those are made of which can bless or slay.  
It was a silent meeting. Here the men  
And there the women sat, the elder folk  
Facing the younger from their rising seats,  
285 With faces grave beneath the stiff, straight brim

256. The lovely district of Hockessin, with its old homesteads, built by the early Quaker settlers, is situated near the Wilmington and Lancaster turn pike, in Mill Creek Hundred, Delaware.

261. The venerable building of gray stone, surrounded by its old grove of tall trees, still attracts large gatherings of "Friends."

Or dusky bonnet. They the stillness breathed  
 Like some high air wherein their souls were free,  
 And on their features, as on those that guard  
 The drifted portals of Egyptian fanes,  
 290 Sat mystery : the Spirit they obeyed  
 By voice or silence, as the influence fell,  
 Was near them, or their common seeking made  
 A spiritual Presence, mightier than the grasp  
 Of each, possessed in reverence by all.  
 295 But o'er the soul of Lars there lay the shade  
 Of his own strangeness : peace came not to him.  
 Awhile he idly watched the flies that crawled  
 Along the hard, bare pine, or marked, in front,  
 The close-cut hair and flaring lobes of ears,  
 300 Until his mind turned on itself, and made  
 A wizard twilight, where the shapes of life  
 Shone forth and faded : subtler sense awoke,  
 But dream-like first, and then the form of Per  
 Became a living presence which abode ;  
 305 And all the pain and trouble of the past  
 Threatened like something evil yet to come.  
 At last, that phantasm of his memory sat  
 Beside him, and would not be banished thence  
 By will or prayer : he lifted up his face,  
 310 And met the cold gray eyes of Abner Cloud.

The man, thenceforward, seemed an enemy,  
 And Ruth, he scarce knew why, but all her ways  
 So cheered and soothed, a power to subjugate

289. The solemn stillness of a "silent meeting," the immovable composure and perfect repose of the Friends who have risen to the distinction of the higher seats, suggested to the poet the solemn grandeur of such stone images as those sitting enthroned on either side of the entrance to the temple of Abu-Simbel. The parallel is not a strange one when we consider that amongst the gods worshipped in Egypt there was one glorifying Silence, the guardian of Eternal Truth.

The devil in his heart. But now the leaves  
 315 Flashed into glittering jewels ere they fell ;  
 The pastures lessened, and, when day was done,  
 Came quiet evenings, bare of tale and song,  
 Such as beneath Norwegian rafters shook  
 Tired lids awake ; and wearisome to Lars,  
 320 Till Ruth, who noted, fetched the useless books  
 Of school-girl days, and portioned him his task,  
 Herself the teacher. Oft would Ezra smile  
 To note her careful and unyielding sway.  
 "Nay, now," he said ; "I thought our speech was  
 plain,  
 325 But thou dost hedge each common phrase with thorns,  
 Like something rare : dost thou not make it hard ?"  
 "A right foundation, father," she replied,  
 "Makes easy building : thus it is in life.  
 I teach thee, Lars, no other than the Lord  
 330 Requires of all, through discipline that makes  
 His goodness hard until it lives in us."  
 With paler cheeks Lars turned him to his task,  
 Thus innocently smitten ; but his mind  
 Increased in knowledge, till the alien tongue  
 335 Obeyed the summons of his thought. So toil  
 Brought freedom, and the winter passed away.

Where Lars was blind, the eyes of Abner Cloud  
 Saw more than was. This school-boy giant drew,  
 He fancied, like a rank and chance-sown weed  
 340 Beside some wholesome plant, the strength away  
 From his desire, of old and rightful root.  
 'T was not that Ruth should love the stranger, — no  
 But woman's interest is lightly caught,  
 So hers by Lars, that might have turned to him.  
 345 Had he not worldly goods, and honest name,



And birthright in the meeting? Who could weigh  
 Unknown with these deserts? — but gentleness  
 Is blind, and goodness ignorant; so he,  
 By malice made sagacious, learned to note  
 350 The large, strong veins that filled and rose, although  
 The tongue was still, the clench of powerful hands,  
 The trouble hiding in the gloomy eye,  
 And wrought on these by cunning words. But most  
 He played with forms of Scandinavian faith  
 355 In that old time before King Olaf came,  
 And made their huge, divine barbarities,  
 Their strength and slaughter, fields of frost and blood,  
 More hideous. “These are fables, thou wilt claim,”  
 It was his wont to say; “but such must nurse  
 360 A people false and cruel.”

Then would Lars  
 Reply with heat: “Not so! but honest folk, instead,  
 Too frank to hide the face of any fault,  
 And free from all the evil crafts that breed  
 In hearts of cowards!”

Ruth, it rarely chanced,  
 365 Heard aught of this, but when she heard, her voice  
 Came firm and clear: “Indeed, it is not good  
 To drag those times forth from their harmless graves.  
 Their ignorance and wicked strength are dead,  
 And what of good they knew was not their own,  
 370 But ours as well: this is our sole concern,  
 To feed the life of goodness in ourselves  
 And all, that so the world at last escape  
 The darkness of our fathers far away.”

As when some malady within the frame

346. Those born within the Society of Friends have the right of membership and belong to the meeting.

375 Is planted, slowly tainting all the blood,  
 And underneath the seeming healthy skin  
 In secret grows till strong enough to smite  
 With rank disorder, so the strife increased ;  
 And Lars perceived the devil of his guilt  
 380 Had made a darkness, where he ambushed lay  
 And waited for his time. Against him rose  
 The better knowledge, breeding downy wings  
 Of prayer, yet shaken by mistrust and hate  
 At touch of Abner's malice. Thus the hour,  
 385 The inevitable, came.

A Sabbath morn

Of early spring lay lovely on the land.  
 Upon the bridge that to the barn's broad floor  
 Led from the field, stood Lars : his eyes were fixed  
 Upon his knife, and, as he turned the blade  
 390 This way and that, and with it turned his thought,  
 While musing if 't were best to cover up  
 This witness, or to master what it told,  
 Close to the haft he marked a splash of rust,  
 And shuddered as he held it nearer. " Blood,  
 395 And doubtless human ! " spake a wiry voice,  
 And Abner Cloud bent down his head to look.  
 A sound of waters filled the ears of Lars  
 And all his flesh grew chill : he said no word.  
 " I have thy history, now," thought Abner Cloud,  
 400 And in the pallid silence read but fear ;  
 So thus aloud : " Thou art a man of crime,  
 The proper offspring of the godless tribes  
 Who drank from skulls, and gnawed the very  
                   bones  
 Of them they slew. This is thine instrument,  
 405 And thou art hungering for its bloody use.  
 Say, hast thou ever eaten human flesh ? "

Then all the landscape, house, and trees, and hills,  
 Before the eyes of Lars, burned suddenly  
 In crimson fire : the roaring of his ears  
 410 Became a thunder, and his throat was brass.  
 Yet one wild pang of deadly fear of self  
 Shot through his heart, and with a mighty cry  
 Of mingled rage, resistance, and appeal,  
 He flung his arms towards heaven, and hurled afar  
 415 The fatal knife. This saw not Abner Cloud :  
 But death he saw within those dreadful eyes,  
 And turned and fled. Behind him bounded Lars,  
 The man cast off, the wild beast only left,  
 The primal savage, who is born anew  
 420 In every child. Not long had been the race.  
 But Ezra Mendenhall, approaching, saw  
 The danger, swiftly thrust himself between,  
 And Lars, whose passion-blinded eyes beheld  
 An obstacle, that only, struck him down.  
 425 Then deadly hands he dashed at Abner's throat,  
 But they were grasped : he heard the cry of Ruth,  
 Not what she said : he heard her voice, and stood.

She knew not what she said : she only saw  
 The wide and glaring eyes suffused with blood,  
 430 The stiff-drawn lips that, parting, showed the teeth,  
 And on the temples every standing vein  
 That throbbed, dumb voices of destroying wrath.  
 The soul that filled her told her what to do :  
 She dropped his hands and softly laid her own  
 435 Upon his brow, then looked the devil down  
 Within his eyes, till Lars was there again.  
 Erelong he trembled, while, o'er all his frame  
 A sweat of struggle and of agony  
 Brake forth, and from his throat a husky sob.

440 He tried to speak, but the dry tongue refused ;  
 He could but groan, and staggered toward the  
       house,  
 As walks a man who neither hears nor sees.

With bloodless lips of fear gasped Abner Cloud :  
 “ A murderer ! ” as Ezra Mendenhall  
 445 Came, stunned, and with a wound across his brow.  
 “ Oh, never ! ” Ruth exclaimed ; but she was pale.  
 She bound her father’s head ; she gave him drink ;  
 She steadied him with arms of gentle strength,  
 Then spake to Abner : “ Now, I pray thee, go ! ”  
 450 No more : but such was her authority  
 Of speech and glance, the spirit and the power,  
 That he obeyed, and turned, and left the place.

Then Ezra’s strength came back ; and “ Ruth,” he  
       said,

“ I see thou hast a purpose : let me know ! ”  
 455 “ I only feel,” she answered, “ that a soul  
 Is here in peril, but the way to help  
 Is not made plain : the knowledge will be given.”  
 “ I have no fear for thee, my daughter : do  
 What seemeth good, and strongly brought upon  
 460 Thy mind by plain direction of the Lord !  
 There is a power of evil in the man  
 That might be purged, if once he saw the light.”

She left him, seated in the sunny porch :  
 Within the house and orchard all was still,  
 465 Nor found she Lars, at first. But she was driven  
 By that vague purpose which was void of form,  
 And climbed, at last, to where his chamber lay,  
 Beneath the rafters. On the topmost step

He sat, his forehead bent upon his knees,  
 470 A bundle at his side, as when he came.  
 He raised his head: Ruth saw his eyes were dull,  
 His features cold and haggard, and his voice,  
 When thus he spake to her, was hoarse and strange:  
 "Thou need'st not tell me: I already know.  
 475 I hope thou thinkest it is hard to me.  
 I am a man of violence and blood,  
 Not meet for thy pure company; and now  
 When unto peaceful ways my heart inclined,  
 And thou hadst shown the loveliness of good,  
 480 My guilt, not yet atoned, brings other guilt  
 To drive me forth: and this disgrace is worst."

Ruth stood below him where he sat: she laid  
 One hand upon the hand upon his knee,  
 And spake: "I judge thee not; I cannot know  
 485 What grievous loss or strong temptation wrought;  
 But if, indeed, to good and peaceful ways  
 Thy heart inclines, canst thou not wrestle with  
 The Adversary? This knowledge of thy guilt  
 Is half-repentance: whole would make thee sound."  
 490 "And then — and then" — his natural voice re-  
 turned;  
 "Then — pardon?" "Pardon, now, from me and  
 him,  
 My father, — for I know his perfect heart, —  
 Thou hast; but couldst thou turn thy dreadful strength  
 That so it lift, and change, and chasten thee?"  
 495 "If I but could!" — he cried, and bowed again  
 His forehead. "Wait!" she whispered, left him  
 there,  
 And sought her father

Now, when Ezra heard

- All this repeated, for a space he sat  
 In earnest meditation. "Bid him come!"
- 500 He said, at last, and Ruth brought Lars to him.  
 Upon the doubting and the suffering face  
 The old man gazed; then "Put thy bundle by!"  
 Came from his lips; "thou shalt not leave, to-day.  
 Thy hands have done me hurt; if thou art just,
- 505 One service do thyself, in following me.  
 Come with us to the meeting: there the Lord  
 Down through the silence of fraternal souls  
 May reach His hand. We cannot guess His ways;  
 Only so much the inward Voice declares."
- 510 But little else was said: upon them lay  
 The shadow of an unknown past, the weight  
 Of present trouble, the uncertainty  
 Of what should come; yet o'er the soul of Ruth  
 Hung something happier than she dared to feel,
- 515 And Lars, in silence, with submissive feet  
 Followed, as one who in a land of mist  
 Feels one side warmer, where the sun must be.  
 Then, parted ere they reached the separate doors,  
 Lars went with Ezra. Abner Cloud, within,
- 520 Beheld them enter, and he marvelled much  
 Such things could be. Straightway the highest seat  
 Took Ezra, where the low partition-boards  
 Sundered the men and women. There alone  
 Sat they whom most the Spirit visited,
- 525 And spake through them, and gave authority.

Then silence fell; how long, Lars could not know,  
 Nor Ruth, for each was in a trance of soul,

518. As the men and women sit on opposite sides of the meeting-house, so they are also obliged to enter by separate doors.

Till Ezra rose. His words, at first, were few  
 And broken, and they trembled on his lips ;  
 530 But soon the power and full conviction came,  
 And then, as with Ezekiel's trumpet-voice  
 He spake : " Lo ! many vessels hath the Lord  
 Set by the fount of Evil in our hearts.  
 " Here envy and false-witness catch the green,  
 535 There pride the purple, lust the ruddy stream :  
 But into anger runs the natural blood,  
 And flows the faster as 't is tapped the more.  
 Here lies the source : the conquest here begins,  
 Then meekness comes, good-will, and purity.  
 540 Let whoso weigh, when his offence is sore,  
 The Lord's offences, and his patience mete,  
 Though myriads less in measure, by the Lord's !  
 This yoke is easy, if in love ye bear.  
 For none, the lowest, rather hates than loves ;  
 545 But Love is shy, and Hate delights to show  
 A brazen forehead ; 't is the noblest sign  
 Of courage, and the rarest, to reveal  
 The tender evidence of brotherhood.  
 With one this sin is born, with other, that ;  
 550 Who shall compare them ? — either sin is dark,  
 But one redeeming Light is over both.  
 The Evil that assails resist not ye  
 With equal evil ! — else ye change to man  
 The Lord within, whom ye should glorify  
 555 By words that prove Him, deeds that bless like  
       Him !  
 What spake the patient and the holy Christ ?  
 Unto thy brother first be reconciled,

531. Ezekiel was one of the prisoners taken from Judæa to Babylon during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. There he became inspired, and prophesied the total destruction of Judæa as a punishment for the idolatry of the Hebrews.

Then bring thy gift! and further: Bless ye them  
 That curse you, and do good to them that hate  
 560 And persecute, that so the children ye may be  
 Of Him, the Father. Yea, His perfect love  
 Renewed in us, and of our struggles born,  
 Gives, even on earth, His pure, abiding peace.  
 Behold, these words I speak are nothing new,  
 565 But they are burned with fire upon my mind  
 To help — the Lord permit that they may save!”

Therewith he laid his hat aside, and all  
 Beheld the purple welt across his brow,  
 And marvelled. Thus he prayed: “Our God and  
 Lord

570 And Father, unto whom our secret sins  
 Lie bare and scarlet, turn aside from them  
 In holy pity, search the tangled heart  
 And breathe Thy life upon its seeds of good!  
 Thou leavest no one wholly dark: Thou giv’st  
 575 The hope and yearning where the will is weak,  
 And unto all the blessed strength of love.  
 So give to him, and even withhold from me  
 Thy gifts designed, that he receive the more:  
 Give love that pardons, prayer that purifies,  
 580 And saintly courage that can suffer wrong,  
 For these beget Thy peace, and keep Thee near!”

He ceased: all hearts were stirred; and suddenly  
 Amid the younger members Lars arose,  
 Unconscious of the tears upon his face,  
 585 And scarcely audible: “Oh, brethren here,  
 He prayed for my sake, for my sake pray ye!

567. The Friends take off their hats only during “supplication,” as they call prayer, at their religious gatherings.



I am a sinful man : I do repent.  
 I see the truth, but in my heart the lamp  
 Is barely lighted, any wind may quench.  
 590 Bear with me still, be helpful, that I live ! ”  
 Then all not so much wondered but they felt  
 The man’s most earnest need ; and many a voice  
 Responsive murmured : “ Yea, I will ! ” and some,  
 Whose brows were tombstones over passions slain,  
 595 When meeting broke came up and took his hand.

The three walked home in silence, but to Lars  
 The mist had lifted, and around him fell  
 A bath of light ; and dimly spread before  
 His feet the sweetness of a purer world.  
 600 When Ezra, that diviner virtue spent  
 Which held him up, grew faint upon the road,  
 The arm of Lars became a strength to him ;  
 Yet all he said, before the evening fell,  
 Was : “ Gird thy loins, my friend, the way is long  
 605 And wearisome : haste not, but never rest ! ”

“ I will not close mine eyes,” said Lars to Ruth,  
 And laid aside the book, *No Cross, No Crown*,  
 She gave him as a comfort and a help,  
 “ Till thou hast heard the tale I have to tell.  
 610 Thou speakest truth, the knowledge of my sin  
 Is half-repentance, yet the knowledge burns  
 Like fire in ashes till it be confessed.  
 Revoke thy pardon, if it must be so,  
 When all is told : yea, speak to me no more,  
 615 But I must speak ! ” So he began, and spared  
 No circumstance of love, and hate, and crime,

The songs and dances which the Friends forbid,  
 The bloody customs and the cries profane,  
 Till all lay bare and horrible. And Ruth  
 620 Grew pale and flushed by turns, and often wept,  
 And, when he ceased, was silent, "Now, farewell!"  
 He would have said, when she looked up and spake:  
 "Thy words have shaken me: we read such tales,  
 Nor comprehend, so distant and obscure:  
 625 Thou makest manifest the living truth.  
 Save thee, I never knew a man of blood:  
 Thou shouldst be wicked, and my heart declares  
 Thy gentleness: ah, feeling all thy sin,  
 Can I condemn thee, nor myself condemn?  
 630 Thy burden, thus, is laid upon me. Pray  
 For power and patience, pray for victory!  
 Then falls the burden, and my soul is glad."

Lars saw what he had done. His limbs unstrung  
 Gave way, and softly on his knees he sank,  
 635 And all the passion of his nature bore  
 His yearning upward, till in faith it died.  
 He rose, at last; his face was calm and strong:  
 Ruth smiled, and then they parted for the night.

Yet Ezra's words were true: the way was long  
 640 And wearisome. The better will was there,  
 But not the trust in self; for, still beside  
 Those pleasant regions opening on his soul,  
 Beat the unyielding blood, as beats afar  
 The vein of lightning in a summer cloud.  
 645 And, as in each severe community  
 Of interests circumscribed, where all is known  
 And roughly handled till opinions join,  
 So, here were those who kindly turned to Lars,

And those who doubted, or declared him false.  
650 In this probation, Ruth became his stay :  
She knew and turned not, knew and yet believed  
As did no other, — hoping more than he.  
Meanwhile the summer and the harvest came.  
One afternoon, within the orchard, Ruth  
655 Gathered the first sweet apples of the year,  
That give such pleasure by their painted cheeks  
And healthy odor. Little breezes shook  
The interwoven flecks of sun and shade,  
O'er all the tufted carpet of the grass ;  
660 The birds sang near her, and beyond the hedge,  
Where stretched the oat-field broad along the hill,  
Were harvest voices, broken wafts of sound,  
That brought no words. Then something made her  
start ;  
She gazed and waited : o'er the thorny wall  
665 Lars leaped, or seemed to fly, and ran to her,  
His features troubled and his hands outstretched.  
“ O Ruth ! ” he cried ; “ I pray thee, take my hands !  
This power I have, at last : I can refrain  
Till help be sought, the help that dwells in thee.”  
670 She took his hands, and soon, in kissing palms,  
His violent pulses learned the beat of hers.  
Sweet warmth o'erspread his frame ; he saw her face,  
And how the cheeks flushed and the eyelids fell  
Beneath his gaze, and all at once the truth  
675 Beat fast and eager in the palms of both.  
“ Take not away ; ” he cried : “ now, nevermore,  
Thy hands ! O Ruth, my saving angel, give

664. The early settlers of this region, in trying to reproduce the features of their old-world homes, planted the hawthorn around their new fields. Some of these hedges are still green and thriving, while others have been replaced by the thornier osage-orange.

Thyself to me, and let our lives be one!  
 I cannot spare thee: heart and soul alike  
 680 Have need of thee, and seem to cry aloud:  
 'Lo! faith and love and holiness are one!' ”  
 But who shall paint the beauty of her eyes  
 When they unveiled, and softly clung to his,  
 The while she spake: “I think I loved thee first  
 685 When first I saw thee, and I give my life,  
 In perfect trust and faith, to these thy hands.”  
 “The fight is fought,” said Lars; “so blest by thee,  
 The strength of darkness and temptation dies.  
 If now the light must reach me through thy soul,  
 690 It is not clouded: clearer were too keen,  
 Too awful in its purity, for man.”

So into joy revolved the doubtful year,  
 And, ere it closed, the gentle fold of Friends  
 Sheltered another member, even Lars.  
 695 The evidence of faith, in words and ways,  
 Could none reject, and thus opinions joined,  
 And that grew natural which was marvel first.  
 Then followed soon, since Ezra willed it so,  
 Seeing that twofold duty guided Ruth,  
 700 The second marvel, bitterness to one  
 Who blamed his haste, nor felt how free is fate,  
 Whose sweeter name is love, of will or plan.  
 And all the country-side assembled there,  
 One winter Sabbath, when in snow and sky  
 705 The colors of transfiguration shone,  
 Within the meeting-house. There Ruth and Lars

705. *Transfiguration* — a change of outward appearance — is the term applied especially to the glory in which the disciples, Peter, James, and John, beheld Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor (Matt. xvii.). Here it is the effect of sunshine in winter which is shedding light and brilliancy over sky and snowy landscape.

Together sat upon the women's side,  
And when the peace was perfect, they arose.  
He took her by the hand, and spake these words,  
710 As ordered : " In the presence of the Lord  
And this assembly, by the hand I take  
Ruth Mendenhall, and promise unto her,  
Divine assistance blessing me, to be  
A loving and faithful husband, even  
715 Till death shall separate us." Then spake Ruth  
The same sweet words ; and so the twain were one.

### BOOK III.

LOVE's history, as Life's, is ended not  
By marriage : though the ignorant Paradise  
May then be lost, the world of knowledge waits,  
With ample opportunities, to mould  
5 Young Eve and Adam into wife and man.  
Some grace of sentiment expires, yet here  
The nobler poetry of life begins :  
The squire is knight, the novice takes the vow,  
Old service falls, new powers and duties join,  
10 And that high Beauty, which is crown of all,  
No more a lightsome maid, with tresses free  
And mantle floating from the bosom bare,  
Confronts us now like holy Barbara,  
As Palma drew, or she, Our Lady, born  
15 On Melos, type of perfect growth and pure.

So Lars and Ruth beside each other learned  
What neither, left unwedded, could have won :  
He how reliant and how fond the heart  
Whose love seemed almost pity, she how firm  
20 And masterful the nature, which appealed  
There for support where hers had felt no strain ;  
And both, how solemn, sweet, and wonderful

13. Art shows no more exalted types of mature womanhood than Saint Barbara (Venice), painted by the older Palma (sixteenth century), and the antique statue (Louvre, Paris) of the Venus of Melos, so called after the island in the Ægean Sea where it was discovered.

- The life of man. Their life, indeed, was still,  
 Too still for aught save blessing, for a time.
- 25 All things were ordered : plenty in the house  
 And fruitfulness of field and meadow made  
 Light labor, and the people came and went,  
 According to their old and friendly ways.  
 Within the meeting-house upon the hill
- 30 Now Ezra oftener spake, and sometimes Lars,  
 Fain to obey the spirit which impelled ;  
 And what of customed phrase they missed, or tone,  
 Unlike their measured chant, did he supply  
 With words that bore a message to the heart.
- 35 All this might seem sufficient ; yet to Ruth  
 Was still unrest, where, unto shallow eyes  
 Dwelt peace ; she felt the uneasy soul of Lars,  
 And waited, till his own good time should come.  
 Yea, verily, he was happy : could she doubt
- 40 The signs in him that spake the same in her ?  
 Yea, he was happy : every day proclaimed  
 The freshness of a blessing rebestowed,  
 The conscious gift, unworn by time or use,  
 And this was sweet to see ; yet he betrayed
- 45 That wavering will, the opposite of faith,  
 Which comes of duty known and not performed.  
 It seemed his lines of life were cast in peace,  
 In green Hockessin, where Lars Thorstensen,  
 A sound that echoed of Norwegian shores,
- 50 Became Friend Thurston : all things there conspired  
 To blot the Past, but in his soul it lived.

Then, as his thoughts went back, his tongue revealed :  
 He spake of winding fiord and windy fell,  
 Of Ulvik's cottages and Graven's lake,

55 And all the moving features of a life  
 So strange to Ruth ; till she made bold to break,  
 Through playful chiding, what was grave surmise :

“ I fear me, Lars, that thou art sick for home.

Thy love is with me and thy memory far :

60 Thou seest with half thy sight ; and in thy dreams  
 I hear thee murmur in thine other tongue.

So soft and strange, so good, I cannot doubt,

If I but knew it ; but thy dreams are safe.”

“ Nay, wife,” he said ; “ misunderstand them not !

65 For dreams hold up before the soul, released

From worldly business, pictures of itself,

And in confused and mystic parables

Foreshadow what it seeks. I do confess

I love Old Norway’s bleak, tremendous hills,

70 Where winter sits, and sees the summer burn

In valleys deeper than yon cloud is high :

I love the ocean-arms that gleam and foam

So far within the bosom of the land :

It is not that. I do confess to thee

75 I love the frank, brave habit of the folk,

The hearts unspoiled, though fed from ruder times

And filled with angry blood : I love the tales

That taught, the ancient songs that cradled me,

The tongue my mother spake, unto the Lord

80 As sweet as thine upon the lips of prayer :

It is not that.”

Then he perused her face

Full earnestly, and drew a deeper breath.

“ My wife, my Ruth,” his words came, low yet firm ;

“ Thou knowest of one who brake a precious box

35 Of ointment, and refreshed the weary feet

Of Him who pardoned her. But, had He given

Not pardon only, had He stretched His arm



And plucked, as from the vine of Paradise,  
 All blessing and all bounty and all good,  
 90 What then were she that idly took and used?"

"I read thy meaning," answered Ruth; "speak on!"  
 "Am I not he that idly uses? Are there not  
 Here many reapers, there a wasting field?  
 In them the fierce inheritance of blood  
 95 I overcame, is mighty still to slay;  
 For ancient custom is a ring of steel  
 They know not how to snap. By day and night  
 A powerful spirit calls me: 'Go to them!'  
 What should mine answer to the spirit be?"

100 If there were aught of struggle in her heart,  
 She hid the signs. A little pale her cheek,  
 But with untrembling eyelids she upraised  
 Her face to his, and took him by the hands:  
 "Thy Lord is mine: what should I say to thee,  
 105 Except what she, whose name I bear, ere yet  
 She went to glean in Bethlehem's harvest-field,  
 Said to Naomi: 'Nay, entreat me not  
 To leave thee, or return from following thee?'  
 Should not thy people, then, be mine, as mine  
 110 Are made thine own? I will not fail: He calls  
 On both of us who gives thee this command."

So Ruth, ere long, detached her coming life  
 From all its past, until each well-known thing  
 No more was sure or needful, to her mind.  
 115 Her neighbors, even, seemed to come and go  
 Like half-existences; her days, as well,  
 Were clad with dream; she understood the words,  
 "I but sojourn among you for a time,"

And, from the duties which were habits, turned  
120 To brood o'er those unknown, awaiting her.

But Ezra, when he heard their purpose, spake :  
“ Because this thing is very hard to me,  
I dare not preach against it ; but I doubt,  
Being acquainted with the heart of man.  
125 'T is one thing, Lars, to build thy virtue here,  
Where others urge the better will : but there,  
Alone, persuaded, ridiculed, assailed,  
Couldst thou resist, yet love them ? Nay, I know  
Thy power and conscience : Try them not too soon !  
130 Is all I ask. See, I am full of years,  
And thou, my daughter, thou, indeed a son,  
Stay me on either side : wait but awhile  
And ye are free, yea, seasoned as twin beams  
Of soundest oak, for lintels of His door.”

135 They patiently obeyed. The years went by,  
Until five winters blanch'd to perfect snow  
The old man's hair. Then, when the gusts of March  
Shook into life the torpid souls of trees,  
His body craved its rest. He summoned Lars,  
140 And meekly said : “ I pray thee, pardon me  
That I have lived so long : I meant it not.  
Now I am certain that the end is near ;  
And, noting as I must, the deep concern  
On both your minds, I fain would aid that work,  
145 The which, I see, ye mean to undertake.”  
Then counsel wise he gave : it seem'd his mind,  
Those five long years, had pondered all things well,  
Computed every chance and sought the best,  
Foresaw and weigh'd, foreboded and prepared,  
150 Until the call was made his legacy.

At last he said : “ My sight is verily clear,  
And I behold your duty as yourselves ; ”  
Then spake farewell with pleasant voice, and died.

When summer came, upon an English ship  
155 Sailed Lars and Ruth between the rich green shores  
That widened, sinking, till the land was drowned,  
And they were blown on rolling fields of blue.  
Blown backward more than on ; and evil eyes  
Of sailors on their sober Quaker garb  
360 Began to turn. “ Our Jonah ! ” was the cry,  
When Lars was seen upon the quarter-deck,  
And one, a ruffian from the Dorset moors,  
Became so impudent and foul of tongue  
That Ruth was frightened, would have fled below,  
162 But Lars prevented her. Three strides he made,  
Then by the waistband and the neck he seized  
That brutish boor, and o’er the bulwarks held,  
Above the brine, like death for very fear.  
“ Now, promise me to keep a decent tongue ! ”  
170 Cried Lars ; and he : “ I promise anything,  
But let me not be lost ! ” Thenceforth respect  
Those sailors showed to strength, though clad in  
peace.  
“ Now see I wherefore thou wert made so strong,”  
Ruth said to him, and inwardly rejoiced ;  
175 And soon the mists and baffling breezes fled  
Before a wind that down from Labrador  
Blew like a will unwearied, night and day,  
Across the desert of the middle sea.  
Out of the waters rose the Scilly Isles,  
180 Afar and low, and then the Cornish hills,  
And, floating up by many a valley-mouth  
Of Devon streams, they came to Bristol town.

Awhile among their brethren they abode,  
 For thus had Ezra ordered. There were some  
 185 Concerned in trade, whose vessels to and fro  
 From Hull across the German Ocean sailed,  
 And touched Norwegian ports ; and Lars in those,  
 The old man said, must find his nearest stay.  
 But soon it chanced that with a vessel came  
 190 A man of Arendal, in Norway land,  
 Known to the Friends as fair in word and deed,  
 And well-inclined ; and Gustaf Hansen named.  
 Norse tongue makes easy friendship : Lars and he  
 Became as brothers in a little while,  
 195 And, when his worldly charge was ordered, they  
 Together all embarked for Arendal.  
 Calm autumn skies were o'er them, and the sea  
 Swelled in unwrinkled glass : they scarcely knew  
 How sped the voyage, until Lindesnæs,  
 200 At first a cloud, stood fast, and spread away  
 To flanking capes, with gaps of blue between,  
 Then rose, and showed, above the precipice,  
 The firs of Norway climbing thick and high  
 To wilder crests that made the inland gloom.  
 205 In front, the sprinkled skerries pierced the wave ;  
 Between them, slowly glided in and out  
 The tawny sails, while houses low and red  
 Hailed their return, or sent them fearless forth.  
 "This is thy Norway, Lars ; it looks like thee,"  
 210 Said Ruth : "it has a forehead firm and bold ;  
 It sets its foot below the reach of storms,  
 Yet hides, methinks, in each retiring vale,  
 Delight in toil, contentment, love, and peace, —  
 My land, my husband ! let me love it, too !"

190. *Arendal* is situated to the northeast of Cape Lindesnæs, which is the most southern point of Norway.

- 215 So on their softened hearts the sun went down  
 And rose once more ; then Gustaf Hansen came  
 Beside them, pilot of familiar shores,  
 And said : “ To starboard, yonder, lies the isle  
 As I described it ; here, upon our lee
- 220 Is mainland all, and there the Nid comes down,  
 The timber-shouldering Nid, from endless woods  
 And wilder valleys where scant grain is grown.  
 Now bend your glances as my finger points, —  
 Lo ! there it is, the spire of Arendal !
- 225 Our little town, as homely, kind, and dear,  
 As some old dame, round whom her children’s  
       babes  
 Cling to be petted, comforted, and spoiled.  
 And here, my friends, shall ye with me abide  
 And with my Thora, till the winter melts,
- 230 Which there, beyond yon wall of slaty cloud,  
 Possesses fell and upland even now.  
 Too strange is Ruth to dare those snowy wastes,  
 Nor is there need : good Thora’s heart will turn  
 To her, I know, as mine hath turned to Lars ;
- 235 And Arendal is warmly-harbored, snug,  
 And not unfriendly in the time of storms.”

They could not say him nay. The anchor dropped  
 Before the town, and Thora, from the land,  
 Tall, broad of breast, with ever-rosy cheeks

240 O’er which the breezes tossed her locks of gray,  
 Stretched arms of welcome ; and the ancient house,  
 With massive beams and ample chimney-place,  
 As in Hockessin, made immediate home.  
 To Ruth, how sweetly the geraniums peeped

245 With scarlet eyes across the window-sill !  
 How orderly the snowy curtains shone !

Familiar, too, the plainness and the use  
 In all things; presses of the dusky oak,  
 Fair linen, store of healing herbs that smelled  
 250 Of charity, and signs of forethought wise  
 That justified the plenty of the house.  
 It was as Gustaf said: good Thora loved  
 The foreign woman, taught and counselled her,  
 Taking to heart their purpose, so that she  
 255 Unconsciously received the truth of Friends.  
 And Gustaf also, through the soul of Lars,  
 To him laid bare, and all that blessing clear  
 Obedience brings when speaks the inward voice,  
 Believed erelong; then others came to hear,  
 260 Till there, in Arendal, a brotherhood  
 Of earnest seekers for the light grew up,  
 Before the hasty spring of northern lands  
 Sowed buttercups along the banks of Nid.

But when they burst, those precious common flowers  
 265 That not a meadow of the world can spare,  
 Said Lars, one Sabbath, to the little flock:  
 "Here we have tarried long, and it is well;  
 But now we go, and it is also well.  
 This much is blessing added unto those  
 270 That went before; hence louder rings the call  
 Which brought me hither, and I must obey.  
 My path is clear, my duty strange and stern,  
 The end thereof uncertain; it may be,  
 My brethren, I shall never see ye more.  
 275 Your love upholds me, and your faith confirms  
 My purpose: bless me now, and bid farewell!"  
 Then Gustaf wept, and said: "Our brother, go!  
 Yet thou art with us, and we walk with thee  
 In this or yonder world, as bids the Lord."

- 280 Their needful preparations soon were made :  
 Two strong dun horses of the mountain breed,  
 With hoofs like claws, that clung where'er they  
 touched,  
 Unholstered saddles, leathern wallets filled  
 With scrip for houseless ways, close-woven cloaks  
 285 To comfort them upon the cloudy fells,  
 And precious books, by Penn and Barclay writ  
 And Woolman, — these made up their little store.  
 The few and faithful went with them a space  
 Along the banks of Nid ; there first besought  
 290 All power and light, and furtherance for the task  
 Awaiting Lars : they knew not what it was,  
 But what it was, they knew, was good : then all  
 Gave hands and said farewell, and Lars and Ruth  
 Rode boldly onward, facing the dark land.
- 295 Across the lonely hills of Tellemark,  
 That smiled in sunshine, went their earnest way,  
 And by the sparkling waters of the Tind ;  
 Then, leaving on the left that chasm of dread  
 Where, under Gousta's base, the Riukan falls  
 300 In winnowing blossoms, tendrilled vines of foam,  
 And bursting rockets of the starry spray,  
 They rode through forests into Hemsedal.  
 The people marvelled at their strange attire,  
 But all were-kind ; and Ruth, to whom their speech  
 305 Was now familiar, found such ordered toil,  
 Such easy gladness, temperate desire,  
 That many doubts were laid : the spirit slept,

286. Robert Barclay, the "Laird of Ury" of Whittier's ballad, was the son of a Scotch laird. He lived from 1648 to 1690, and was the author of three volumes of religious essays. John Woolman was a New Jersey Friend, born near Burlington in 1720. He, too, was the author of several religious essays.

299. See note to line 369, pages 24-25

She thought, and waited but a heartsome call.  
 Then ever higher stood the stormy fells  
 310 Against uncertain skies, as they advanced;  
 And ever grander plunged the roaring snow  
 Of mighty waterfalls from cliff to vale:  
 The firs were mantled in a blacker shade,  
 The rocks were rusted as with ancient blood,  
 315 And winds that shouted or in wailing died  
 Harried the upper fields, in endless wrath  
 At finding there no man.

The soul of Lars  
 Expanded with a solemn joy; but Ruth,  
 Awed by the gloom and wildness of the land,  
 320 Rode close and often touched her husband's arm;  
 And when within its hollow dell they saw  
 The church of Borgund like a dragon sit,  
 Its roof all horns, its pitchy shingles laid  
 Like serpent scales, its door a dusky throat,  
 325 She whispered: "This the ancients must have left  
 From their abolished worship: is it so?  
 This is no temple of the living Lord,  
 That makes me fear it like an evil thing!"  
 "Consider not its outward form," said Lars,  
 330 "Or mine may vex thee, for my sin outgrown.  
 I would the dragon in the people's blood  
 As harmless were!" So downward, side by side,  
 From ridges of the windy Fille Fell  
 Unto the borders of the tamer brine,  
 335 The sea-arm bathing Frithiof's home, they rode;

322. This remarkable building is probably the oldest church in Norway dating as far back as the twelfth century.

335. *Framnäs*, the home of Frithiof, is described in Tegnér's *Frithiof's Saga* as follows:—

"Three miles around him extended the lands that he held; upon three sides  
 Valleys and mountains and hills, but the fourth was swept by the ocean."



Then two days floated past those granite walls  
 That mock the boatman with a softer song,  
 And took the land again, where shadow broods,  
 And frequent thunder of the tumbling rocks  
 340 Is heard the summer through, in Nærödal.  
 To Ruth the gorge seemed awful, and the path  
 That from its bowels toiled to meet the sun,  
 Was hard as any made for Christian's feet,  
 In Bunyan's dream; but Lars with lighter step  
 345 The giddy zigzag scaled, for now, beyond,  
 Not distant, lay the Vossevangen vale,  
 And all the cheerful neighborhood of home.

At last, one quiet afternoon, they crossed  
 The fell from Graven, and below them saw  
 350 The roofs of Ulvik and the orchard-trees  
 Shining in richer colors, and the fiord,  
 A dim blue gloom between Hardanger heights, —  
 The strife and peace, the plenty and the need;  
 And both were silent for a little space.  
 355 Then Ruth: "I had not thought thy home so  
 fair,  
 Nor yet so stern and overhung with dread,  
 It seems to draw me as a danger draws,  
 Yet gives me courage: is it well with thee?"  
 "That which I would, I know," responded Lars,  
 360 "Not that which may be: ask no more, I pray!"

Birch woods crowned the tops of the hills, on whose slopes to the valleys  
 Flourished the golden corn, and the rye swayed tall as a warrior.  
 Lakes full many in number their mirrors held out to the mountains, —  
 Held them out to the forests, whose depths the elk with broad antlers  
 Roamed on his kingly progress, and drank of brooklets a hundred."

*Frithiof's Saga.* By E. Tegnér. Translated by L. A. Sherman. Canto III.

The spot where Framnäs stood is said to be near the point of Vangnæs, on the Sogne Fiord.

340. The famous *Nærödal* is situated between the Hardanger and Sogne Fiords. It is shut in by steep walls of rock 1,000 feet high.

- Then downward, weary, strangely moved, yet glad,  
 They went, a wonder to the Ulvik folk,  
 Till some detected, 'neath his shadowy brim,  
 The eyes of Lars ; and he was scarcely housed  
 365 With his astonished kindred, ere the news  
 Spread from the fountain, ran along the shore.  
 For all believed him dead : in truth, the dead  
 Could not have risen in stranger guise than he,  
 Who spake as one they knew and did not know,  
 370 Who seemed another, yet must be the same.  
 His folk were kind : they owned the right of blood,  
 Nor would disgrace it, though a half-disgrace  
 Lars seemed to bring ; but in her strange, sweet self  
 Ruth brought a pleasure which erelong was love.  
 375 Her gentle voice, her patient, winning ways,  
 Pure thought and ignorance of evil things  
 That on her wedlock left a virgin bloom,  
 Set her above them, yet her nature dwelt  
 In lowliness : sister and saint she seemed.
- 380 Soon Thorsten, brother of the slaughtered Per,  
 Alike a stalwart fisher of the fiord,  
 Heard who had come, and published unto all  
 The debt of blood he meant to claim of Lars.  
 “ The coward, only, comes as man of peace,  
 385 To shirk such payment ! ” were his bitter words.  
 And they were carried unto Lars : but he  
 Spake firmly : “ Well I knew what he would claim :  
 The coward, knowing, comes not.” Nothing more ;  
 Nor could they guess the purpose of his mind.  
 390 In little Ulvik all the people learned  
 What words had passed, and there were friends of  
 both ;  
 But Lars kept silent, walked the ways unarmed,

And preached the pardon of an utmost wrong.  
 Now Thorsten saw in this but some device  
 395 To try his own forbearance : his revenge  
 Grew hungry for an answering enmity,  
 And weary of its shame ; and so, at last,  
 He sent this message : “ If Lars Thorstensen  
 Deny not blood he spilled, and guilt thereof,  
 400 Then let him meet me by the Graven lake, —  
 On such a day.”

When came the message, Lars  
 Spake thus to all his kindred : “ I will go :  
 I do deny not my blood-guiltiness.  
 This thing hath rested on my soul for years,  
 405 And must be met.” Then unto Ruth he turned :  
 “ I go alone : abide thou with our kin.”  
 But she arose and answered : “ Nay, I go !  
 Forbid me not, or I must disobey,  
 Which were a cross. I give thee to the Lord,  
 410 His helpless instrument, to break or save ;  
 Think not my weakness shall confuse thy will ! ”  
 Lars laid his hand upon her head, and all  
 Were strangely melted, though he spake no more,  
 Nor then, nor on the way to Graven lake.

415 Lo ! there were many gathered, kin of both,  
 Or friends, or folk acquainted with the tale,  
 And curious for its end. The summer sky  
 Was beautiful above them, and the trees  
 Stood happy, stretching forth forgiving arms ;  
 420 Yet sultry thunder in the hearts of men  
 Brooded, the menace of a rain of blood.  
 Lars paused not when he came. He saw the face  
 Of Thorsten, ruddy, golden-haired like Per's,  
 Amid the throng, and straightway went to him

425 And spake : " I come, as thou invitest me.  
 My brother, I have shed thy brother's blood ;  
 What wouldst thou I should do thee, to atone ? "

" Give yours ! " cried Thorsten, stepping back a pace.

" That murderous law we took from heathen sires,"  
 430 Said Lars, " is guilt upon a Christian land,  
 I do abjure it. Wilt thou have my blood,  
 Nor less, I dare not lift a hand for thine."

" You came not, then, to fight, though branded here  
 A coward ? "

" Nay, nor ever," answered Lars ;

435 " But, were I coward, could I calmly bear  
 Thy words ? " Then Thorkil, friend of Thorsten,  
 cried,

" These people, in their garments, I have heard,  
 Put on their peace ; or else some magic dwells  
 In shape of hat or color of the coat,  
 440 To make them harmless as a browsing hare.  
 That Lars we knew had danger in his eyes ;  
 But this one, — why, uncover, let us see ! "  
 Therewith struck off the hat. And others there  
 Fell upon Lars, and tore away his coat,  
 445 Nor ceased the outrage until they had made  
 His body bare to where the leathern belt  
 Is clasped between the breast-bone and the hip.

Around his waist they buckled then a belt,  
 And brought a knife, and thrust it in his hand.  
 450 The open fingers would not hold : the knife  
 Fell from them, struck, and quivered in the sod.  
 Thorsten, apart, had also bared his breast,

And waited, beautiful in rosy life.

Then Thorkil and another drew the twain

455 Together, hooked the belts of each, and strove

Once more to arm the passive hand of Lars :

In vain : his open fingers would not hold

The knife, which fell and quivered in the sod.

He looked in Thorsten's eyes ; great sorrow fell

460 Upon him, and a tender human love.

“ I did not this,” he said ; “ nor will resist.

If thou art minded so, then strike me dead :

But thou art sacred, for the blood I spilled

Is in thy veins, my brother : yea, all blood

465 Of all men sacred is in thee.” His arms

Hung at his side : he did not shrink or sway :

His flesh touched Thorsten's where the belts were

joined,

And felt its warmth. Then twice did Thorsten lift

His armèd hand, and twice he let it sink :

470 An anguish came upon his face : he groaned,

And all that heard him marvelled at the words :

“ Have pity on me ; turn away thine eyes :

I cannot slay thee while they look on me !”

“ If I could end this bloody custom so,

475 In all the land, nor plant a late remorse

For what is here thy justice,” answered Lars,

“ I could not say thee nay. Yet, if the deed

Be good, thou shouldst have courage for the deed !”

Once more looked Thorsten in those loving eyes,

480 And shrank, and shuddered, and grew deadly pale,

Till, with a gasp for breath, as one who drowns

Draws, when he dips again above the wave,

He loosed the clutching belts, and sat him down

And hid his face : they heard him only say :

485 “ 'T were well that I should die, for very shame !”

Lars heard, and spake to all : "The shame is mine,  
 Whose coward heart betrayed me unto guilt.  
 I slew my brother Per, nor sought his blood :  
 Thou, Thorsten, wilt not mine ; I read thy heart.  
 490 But ye, who trample on the soul of man  
 In still demanding he shall ne'er outgrow  
 The savage in his veins, through faith in Good,  
 Who Thorsten rule, even as ye ruled myself, —  
 I call ye to repent ! That God we left,  
 495 White Balder, were more merciful than this :  
 If one, henceforward, cast on Thorsten shame,  
 The Lord shall smite him when the judgment comes ! "

Never before, such words in such a place  
 Were preached by such apostle. Bared, as though  
 500 For runes of death, while red Berserker rage  
 Kindled in some, in others smouldered out,  
 He raised his hand and pointed to the sky :  
 Far off, behind the silent fells, there rolled  
 A sudden thunder. Ruth, who all the while  
 505 Moved not nor spake, stood forth, and o'er her face  
 There came the glory of an opening heaven.  
 Now that she knew the habit of the folk,  
 She spake not ; but she clothed the form of Lars  
 In silence, and the women, weeping, helped.  
 510 Then Thorsten rose, and seeing her, he said :

495. *Balder*, or *Baldur*, who is also called the White God, is the beneficent deity of spring and sunshine of the Northern mythology.

500. The alphabet of the ancient Germans and Scandinavians consisted of *runes*. There were originally sixteen of them ; and they served principally as means to foretell the future, to work enchantment, and keep off evil. For these purposes the characters were scratched on strips of beech or willow-bark, each rune signifying a word which began with the respective letter. There were runes of victory, of hearth and home, of love, etc. Old men, rather than die the disgraceful "straw-death" shed their own blood by cutting death-runes into their breasts. These represented words in praise of Oden, their god of battle, who was at the same time *Allvater* (father of all).

“Thou art his wife ; they tell me thou art good.  
 I am no bloodier than thy husband was  
 Before he knew thee : hast thou aught to say ? ”  
 She took his hand and spake, as one inspired :

515 “Thou couldst not make thyself a man of blood !  
 This is thy seed of blessing : let it grow !  
 Gladness of heart, and peace, and honored name  
 Shall come to thee : the unrighteous, cruel law  
 Is broken by thy hands, no less than his  
 520 Who loves thee, and would sooner die than harm ! ”

“They speak the truth,” said Thorsten ; “thou art  
 good,  
 And it were surely bitter grief to thee  
 If I had slain him. Go ! his blood is safe  
 From hands of mine.”

His words the most approved ;

525 The rest, bewildered, knew not what to say.  
 In these the stubborn mind and plastic heart  
 Agreed not quickly, for the thing was strange,  
 An olden tale with unforeboded end :  
 They must have time. The crowd soon fell apart,  
 530 Some faces glad, all solemn, and dispersed ;  
 Except one woman, who, from time to time,  
 Pressed forward, then, as with uncertain will,  
 Turned back as often. Troubled was her face  
 And worn : within the hollows of her eyes  
 535 Dwelt an impatient sorrow, and her lips  
 Had from themselves the girlish fulness pressed.  
 Her hair hung negligent, though plenteous still ;  
 And beauty that no longer guards itself,  
 But listlessly beholds its ruin come,  
 540 Made her an apparition wild and sad,  
 A cloud on others' joy.

526. *Plastic* is used here in its original meaning of moulding, making an impression, from a Greek word signifying to form.

Lars, as he left

That field unsullied, saw the woman stand.

- “Brita!” he cried; and all the past returned  
 And all the present mixed with it, and made  
 545 His mouth to quiver and his eyes to fill:  
 “Unhappy Brita, and I made thee so!  
 Is there forgiveness yet for too much love  
 And foolish faith, that brought us double woe?  
 I dare not ask it; couldst thou give unasked?”  
 550 Her face grew hard to keep the something back  
 Which softened her: “Make Per alive,” she said,  
 “One moment only, that he pardon me,  
 And thou art pardoned! else, I think, canst thou  
 Bear silence, as I bear it from the dead.  
 555 Oh, thou hast done me harm!” But Ruth addressed  
 These words to her: “I never did thee harm,  
 Yet on my soul my husband’s guilt to thee  
 Is made a shadow: let me be thy friend!  
 Only a woman knows a woman’s need.”

- 560 Lars understood the gesture and the glance  
 Which Ruth then gave, and hastened on the path  
 To join his kindred, leaving them alone.  
 So Ruth by Brita walked, and spake to her  
 In words whose very sound a comfort gave,  
 565 Like some soft wind that o’er an arid land,  
 Unfelt at first, fans on with cooling wings  
 Till all the herbage freshens, and the soil  
 Is moist with dew; and Brita’s arid heart  
 Thus opened: “Yea, all this is very well.  
 570 So much thou knowest, being woman, — love  
 Of man, and man’s of thee, and both declared:  
 But say, how canst thou measure misery  
 Of love that lost its chances, made the Past



One dumbness, and forever reckons o'er  
 575 The words unspoken, which to both were sweet,  
 The touch of hands that never binding met,  
 The kisses, never given and never took,  
 The hopes and raptures that were never shared, —  
 Nay, worse than this, for she withheld, who knew  
 580 They might have been, from him who never knew ! ”

Therewith her passion loosed itself in sobs,  
 And on the pitying breast of Ruth she wept  
 Her heart to calmness ; then, with less of pain,  
 She told the simple story of her life :  
 585 How, scarce two years before, her grandam died,  
 Who would have seen her wedded, and was wroth,  
 At times, in childish petulance of age,  
 But kinder — ’t was a blessing ! — ere she died,  
 Leaving the cottage highest on the slope,  
 590 Naught else, to Brita ; but her wants were few.  
 The garden helped her, and the spotted cow,  
 Now old, indeed : she span the winter through,  
 And there was meal enough, and Thorsten gave  
 Sometimes a fish, because she grieved for Per ;  
 595 And, now the need of finery was gone, —  
 For men came not a-wooing where consent  
 Abode not, — she had made the least suffice.  
 Yes, she was lonely : it was better so,  
 For she must learn to live in loneliness.  
 600 As much as unto Ruth she had not said  
 To any woman, trusting her, it seemed,  
 Without a knowledge, more than them she knew.  
 “ Yea, trust me, Sister Brita ! ” Ruth replied,  
 “ And try to love : my heart is drawn to thee.”  
 605 Thereafter, many a day, went Ruth alone  
 To Brita’s cottage, vexing not with words

That woke her grief, and silent as to Lars,  
 Till Brita learned to smile when she appeared,  
 And missed her when she came not. Now, mean-  
 while,

- 610 The news of Lars, and Thorsten's foiled revenge  
 Beside the lake of Graven, travelled far  
 Past Vik and Vossevangen, o'er the fells,  
 To all the homesteads of the Bergenstift;  
 And every gentle heart leaped up in joy,  
 615 While those of restless old Berserker blood  
 Beat hot with wrath. Who oversets old laws,  
 They said, is dangerous; and who is he  
 That dares to preach, and hath not been ordained?  
 This thing concerns the ministers, they whom  
 620 The State sets over us, with twofold power,  
 Divine and secular, to teach and rule.  
 Then he, the shepherd of the Ulvik flock,  
 Not now that good old man, but one whose youth  
 More hateful showed his Christless bigotry,  
 625 Made Sabbaths hot with his anathemas  
 Of Lars, and stirred a tumult in the land.  
 Some turned away, and all grew faint of heart  
 Seeing the foothold yield, and slip; till Lars,  
 Now shunned at home, and drawn by messages  
 630 From Gustaf Hansen and the faithful souls  
 In Arendal, said: "It is time to go."

"Nay, tarry but a little while," spake Ruth.

"I have my purpose here as thou hadst thine:

613. Norway is divided into four dioceses or *stifts*, one of which is *Bergen*.

625. In the New Testament the meaning given to anathema is that of a curse. The formula: "Anáthema esto" — be cursed — is used by the Roman Catholic Church for excommunication, that is casting out of the pale of the Church those who differ from its doctrines. Outside of it, it is used in the sense of a religious denunciation.

Grant me but freedom, for the end, I think,  
 635 Is justified."

Lars answered: "Have thy will!"

She summoned Brita, and the twain went down  
 To pace the scanty strand beside the wave,  
 Which, after storm, was quiet, though the gloom  
 Of high, opposing mountains filled the fiord.  
 640 Ruth spake of parting; Brita answered not,  
 But up and down in silence walked the strand,  
 Then suddenly: "No message sendeth Lars?  
 My pardon he implored; and that, to thee,  
 I know, were welcome. Hadst thou asked, per-  
 chance,  
 645 Perverse in sorrow, I should still withhold;  
 But thou departest, who hast been so kind,  
 And I — ah, God! what else have I to give?"  
 "The Lord requite thee, Brita!" Ruth exclaimed;  
 "The gift that blesses must be given unasked:  
 650 What now remains is easy. Come with us,  
 With Lars and me, and be our home thy home,  
 All peace we win, all comfort, thine as ours!"

Once more walked Brita up and down the strand,  
 Bowing her face upon her shielding hands,  
 655 As if to muse, unwatched; then stood, and seemed  
 About to speak, when, with a shrilling cry  
 She sprang, and fell, and grovelled on her knees,  
 And thrust her fingers in the wet sea-sand.  
 Ruth, all in terror, ran to her, and saw  
 660 How, from the bones of some long-wasted fish  
 An osprey dropped, or tempest beat to death,  
 Caught in the breakers, and the drifted shells,

661. The *osprey* (*falco ossifragus*) is a sea-bird, whose principal food is fish.

And tangles of the rotting kelp, she plucked  
 Something that sparkled, pressed it to her lips,  
 665 And cried: "A sign! a sign! 't is grandam speaks!"  
 Then trembling rose, and flung herself on Ruth,  
 And kissed her, saying: "I will follow thee.  
 My heart assented, yet I had denied,  
 But, ere I spake, the miracle was done!  
 670 Thy words give back the jewel lost with Per:  
 Tell Lars I do forgive him, and will serve  
 Thee, Ruth, a willing handmaid, in thy home!"  
 So Brita went with them to Arendal.  
 There milder habits, easier government  
 675 Of bench and pulpit for a while left all  
 In peace: and not alone within the fold  
 Of Friends came Brita, but the Lord inspired.  
 She spake with power, as one by suffering taught  
 A chastened spirit, and she wrought good works.  
 680 She was a happy matron ere she died,  
 And blessing came on all; for, from that day  
 Of doubt and anguish by the Graven lake,  
 The Lord fulfilled in Ruth one secret prayer,  
 And gave her children; and the witness borne  
 685 By Lars, the voice of his unsprinkled blood,  
 Became a warning on Norwegian hills.

Here, now, they fade. The purpose of their lives  
 Was lifted up, by something over life,  
 To power and service. Though the name of Lars  
 690 Be never heard, the healing of the world  
 Is in its nameless saints. Each separate star  
 Seems nothing, but a myriad scattered stars  
 Break up the Night, and make it beautiful.

663. *Kelp* is a species of sea-weed (of the genus *Salicornia*).

## THE SONG OF THE CAMP.

“GIVE us a song !” the soldiers cried,  
The outer trenches guarding,  
When the heated guns of the camps allied  
Grew weary of bombarding.

5 The dark Redan, in silent scoff,  
Lay, grim and threatening, under ;  
And the tawny mound of the Malakoff  
No longer belched its thunder.

There was a pause. A guardsman said  
10 “ We storm the forts to-morrow ;  
Sing while we may, another day  
Will bring enough of sorrow.”

They lay along the battery’s side,  
Below the smoking cannon :  
15 Brave hearts, from Severn and from Clyde,  
And from the banks of Shannon.

They sang of love, and not of fame ;  
Forgot was Britain’s glory :

3. The chief feature of the Crimean War (1854-1855) was the siege of Sebastopol, a Russian town, with an important harbor, on the Black Sea. The allied forces besieging it were those of England, France and Turkey.

5. The most powerful fortifications erected by the Russians for the defence of Sebastopol were on the *Malakoff* hill, and among them the one most prominent and threatening was the tower, called the great *Redan*.

Each heart recalled a different name,

20 But all sang "Annie Laurie."

Voice after voice caught up the song,

Until its tender passion

Rose like an anthem, rich and strong, —

Their battle-eve confession.

25 Dear girl, her name he dared not speak,

But, as the song grew louder,

Something upon the soldier's cheek

Washed off the stains of powder.

Beyond the darkening ocean burned

30 The bloody sunset's embers,

While the Crimean valleys learned

How English love remembers.

And once again a fire of hell

Rained on the Russian quarters,

35 With scream of shot, and burst of shell,

And bellowing of the mortars!

And Irish Nora's eyes are dim

For a singer, dumb and gory ;

And English Mary mourns for him

40 Who sang of "Annie Laurie."

Sleep, soldiers ! still in honored rest

Your truth and valor wearing :

The bravest are the tenderest, —

The loving are the daring.

## THE PALM AND THE PINE.

WHEN Peter led the First Crusade,  
A Norseman wooed an Arab maid.

He loved her lithe and palmy grace,  
And the dark beauty of her face :

5 She loved his cheeks, so ruddy fair,  
His sunny eyes and yellow hair.

He called : she left her father's tent ;  
She followed wheresoe'er he went.

She left the palms of Palestine  
10 To sit beneath the Norland pine.

She sang the musky Orient strains  
Where Winter swept the snowy plains.

Their natures met like Night and Morn  
What time the morning-star is born.

15 The child that from their meeting grew  
Hung, like that star, between the two.

The glossy night his mother shed  
From her long hair was on his head :

1. *Peter of Amiens*, a monk, was the first to exhort the people of Europe to rescue Jerusalem and its holy places from the hands of the Infidels. He put himself at the head of the undisciplined masses who, under the sign of the Cross, gathered for the purpose of marching to Palestine and conquering Jerusalem. He failed in his attempt of leadership (1096) ; but, nevertheless, the first Crusade was carried to a successful end three years later, by Godfrey of Bouillon.

But in its shade they saw arise  
 20 The morning of his father's eyes.

Beneath the Orient's tawny stain  
 Wandered the Norseman's crimson vein :

Beneath the Northern force was seen  
 The Arab sense, alert and keen.

25 His were the Viking's sinewy hands,  
 The arching foot of Eastern lands.

And in his soul conflicting strove  
 Northern indifference, Southern love ;

The chastity of temperate blood,  
 30 Impetuous passion's fiery flood ;

The settled faith that nothing shakes,  
 The jealousy a breath awakes ;

The planning Reason's sober gaze,  
 And fancy's meteoric blaze.

35 And stronger, as he grew to man,  
 The contradicting natures ran, —

As mingled streams from Etna flow,  
 One born of fire, and one of snow.

25. The name *Vikings* applied in the middle ages to the Scandinavians, and especially to the population of Norway.

37. *Mount Etna*, in Sicily, is the highest of the three active volcanoes of Europe. Its upper regions are bare of all vegetation, and for the greater part covered with ice and snow.



And one impelled, and one withheld,  
40 And one obeyed, and one rebelled.

One gave him force, the other fire ;  
This self-control, and that desire.

One filled his heart with fierce unrest ;  
With peace serene the other blessed.

45 He knew the depth and knew the height,  
The bounds of darkness and of light ;

And who these far extremes has seen  
Must needs know all that lies between.

So, with untaught, instinctive art,  
50 He read the myriad-natured heart.

He met the men of many a land ;  
They gave their souls into his hand ;

And none of them was long unknown,  
The hardest lesson was his own.

55 But how he lived, and where and when  
It matters not to other men ;

For, as a fountain disappears,  
To gush again in later years,

So hidden blood may find the day,  
60 When centuries have rolled away ;

And fresher lives betray at last  
The lineage of a far-off Past.

That nature, mixed of sun and snow  
Repeats its ancient ebb and flow :

65 The children of the Palm and Pine  
Renew their blended lives — in mine.

## SCOTT AND THE VETERAN.

### I.

AN old and crippled veteran to the War Department  
came ;  
He sought the Chief who led him on many a field of  
fame, —  
The Chief who shouted “Forward !” where’er his  
banner rose,  
And bore its stars in triumph behind the flying foes.

### II.

5 “Have you forgotten, General,” the battered soldier  
cried,  
“The days of Eighteen Hundred Twelve, when I was  
at your side ?  
Have you forgotten Johnson, that fought at Lundy’s  
Lane ?  
’T is true, I ’m old and pensioned, but I want to fight  
again.”

2. General *Winfield Scott* was the highest in command of the United States Army at the beginning of the War of the Rebellion.

7. *Lundy’s Lane* is near Niagara Falls. A battle was fought there during the war of 1812, in which the British army was defeated.

## III.

“Have I forgotten?” said the Chief; “my brave old soldier, No!

10 And here’s the hand I gave you then, and let it tell you so:

But you have done your share, my friend; you’re crippled, old and gray,

And we have need of younger arms and fresher blood to-day.”

## IV.

“But, General,” cried the veteran, a flush upon his brow,

“The very men who fought with us, they say, are traitors now;

15 They’ve torn the flag of Lundy’s Lane, — our old red, white, and blue;

And while a drop of blood is left, I’ll show that drop is true.

## V.

“I’m not so weak but I can strike, and I’ve a good old gun

To get the range of traitors’ hearts, and pick them, one by one.

Your Minié rifles, and such arms, it a’n’t worth while to try:

20 I could n’t get the hang o’ them, but I’ll keep my powder dry!”

## VI.

“God bless you, comrade!” said the Chief; “God bless your loyal heart!

But younger men are in the field, and claim to have their part:

They 'll plant our sacred banner in each rebellious  
town,  
And woe, henceforth, to any hand that dares to pull it  
down! ”

## VII.

25 “ But, General, ” — still persisting, the weeping veter-  
eran cried,

“ I 'm young enough to follow, so long as *you* 're my  
guide ;

And some, you know, must bite the dust, and that, at  
least, can I, —

So, give the young ones place to fight, but me a place  
to die !

## VIII.

“ If they should fire on Pickens, let the Colonel in  
command

30 Put me upon the rampart, with the flag-staff in my  
hand :

No odds how hot the cannon-smoke, or how the shells  
may fly ;

I 'll hold the Stars and Stripes aloft, and hold them  
till I die !

## IX.

“ I 'm ready, General, so you let a post to me be  
given,

Where Washington can see me, as he looks from  
highest heaven,

29. *Fort Pickens*, at Pensacola, was one of the three forts whose command-  
ers refused to give them up to the Confederacy when ordered to do so, in  
February, 1861, immediately after the secession of Florida.

35 And say to Putnam at his side, or may be, General  
Wayne ;  
' There stands old Billy Johnson, that fought at Lundy's Lane !'

## X.

" And when the fight is hottest, before the traitors  
fly,  
When shell and ball are screeching and bursting in  
the sky,  
If any shot should hit me, and lay me on my face,  
40 My soul would go to Washington's and not to Arnold's place."

## A THOUSAND YEARS.

[NOVGOROD, RUSSIA, SEPTEMBER 20, 1862.]

A THOUSAND years ! Through storm and fire,  
With varying fate, the work has grown,  
Till Alexander crowns the spire,  
Where Rurik laid the corner-stone.

3 The chieftain's sword, that could not rust,  
But bright in constant battle grew,  
Raised to the world a throne august, —  
A nation grander than he knew.

Nor he, alone ; but those who have,  
10 Through faith or deed, an equal part :

4. It was during the reign of *Alexander II.* that the celebration took place of the one thousandth anniversary of the foundation of the Russian Empire by *Rurik*, the chieftain of a tribe of Northern origin.

The subtle brain of Yaroslav,  
 Vladimir's arm and Nikon's heart :

The later hands, that built so well  
 The work sublime which these began,  
 15 And up from base to pinnacle  
 Wrought out the Empire's mighty plan.

All these, to-day, are crowned anew,  
 And rule in splendor where they trod,  
 While Russia's children throng to view  
 20 Her holy cradle, Novgorod.

From Volga's banks ; from Dwina's side ;  
 From pine-clad Ural, dark and long ;  
 Or where the foaming Terek's tide  
 Leaps down from Kasbek, bright with song :

25 From Altaï's chain of mountain-cones ;  
 Mongolian deserts, far and free ;  
 And lands that bind, through changing zones,  
 The Eastern and the Western sea !

12. *Vladimir*, surnamed the Great, was a great-grandson of Rurik. He fought against neighboring tribes, subjected them to his rule, and added their territories to his own possessions. *Yaroslav*, his son, succeeded him. He proved himself a statesman in promoting the inner development of the young empire. *Nikon*, born 1605, was a peasant's son, who rose to be Patriarch of Russia.

20. The old province of *Novgorod*, situated southeasterly of St. Petersburg, is the nucleus from which Russia has grown to what it is to-day. The town of Novgorod is the oldest of the Empire, having been built by Rurik.

24. The river *Terek* has its sources in one of the most romantic parts of the Caucasian mountain chain, of which the *Kasbek* is one of the highest peaks. "The Songs of Mirza-Shaffy," by the German poet Friedrich Bodenstedt, are closely connected with that grand and picturesque mountain region.

To every race she gives a home,  
 30 And creeds and laws enjoy her shade,  
 Till, far beyond the dreams of Rome,  
 Her Cæsar's mandate is obeyed.

She blends the virtues they impart,  
 And holds, within her life combined,  
 35 The patient faith of Asia's heart, —  
 The force of Europe's restless mind.

She bids the nomad's wanderings cease ;  
 She binds the wild marauder fast ;  
 Her ploughshares turn to homes of peace  
 40 The battle-fields of ages past,

And, nobler yet, she dares to know  
 Her future's task, nor knows in vain ;  
 But strikes at once the general blow  
 That makes her millions men again !

45 So, firmer-based, her power expands,  
 Nor yet has seen its crowning hour, —  
 Still teaching to the struggling lands  
 That Peace the offspring is of Power.

Build then, the storied bronze, to tell  
 50 The steps whereby this height be trod, —  
 The thousand years that chronicle  
 The toil of Man, the help of God !

And may the thousand years to come, —  
 The future ages, wise and free, —

44. Alexander II., a year before the celebration at Novgorod, had given freedom to the Russian serfs.

35 Still see her flag, and hear her drum  
 Across the world, from sea to sea! —

Still find, a symbol stern and grand,  
 Her ancient eagle's wings unshorn :  
 One head to watch the Western land,  
 30 And one to guard the land of morn

## MARIGOLD.

HOMELY, forgotten flower,  
 Under the rose's bower,  
 Plain as a weed,  
 Thou, the half-summer long,  
 5 Waitest and waxest strong,  
 Even as waits a song  
 Till men shall heed.

Then, when the lilies die,  
 And the carnations lie  
 10 In spicy death,  
 Over thy bushy sprays  
 Burst with a sudden blaze  
 Stars of the August days,  
 With Autumn's breath.

15 Fain would the calyx hold ;  
 But splits, and half the gold  
 Spills lavishly :  
 Frost, that the rose appalls,  
 Wastes not thy coronals,  
 20 Till summer's lustre falls,  
 And fades in thee.













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