A Swedish Poem: Review of The Saga of Frithiof

Lucian Minor
A SWEDISH POEM.


The first sensation which three-fourths of our readers will experience, upon seeing the caption of this article, will probably be surprise, at the novelty of a poem from the neighborhood of the Arctic zone. They will find it somewhat hard to realize the idea of an epic, in twenty-four cantos, coming from furry, frozen Finland—the climate of the white bear and the reindeer. The common thought among us—if perchance that out-of-the-way region occurs to our thoughts at all—is, that imagination there, like the waters and mountains, is ice-bound for more than nine months in the year; that amid such snowy wastes, the streams of Castalia cannot flow freely enough for deep or lengthened inspiration; and that the utmost effort of any muse in that dense atmosphere, is to flutter through a few quatrains on the subject of love, or drink, or war—such as the Laplander's Ode to his Mistress, which we read, of yore, in The Spectator. Vine-covered hills, and valleys laughing with luscious fruits and waving with plenteous harvests, are the abodes we habitually allot to poetic genius: and though Burns, Campbell, Beattie, Scott, Home, and Allan Ramsay—to say nothing of Ossian—have tuned the lyre at the foot of Scotland's bare, brown mountains, to strains such as Greece or Italy might not disdain; yet we are accustomed to explain this away by referring to the insular position of Britain, as mitigating the effect of her far northern latitude—and to the influence of civilization, still further assuaging the natural rigors of her sky. The fantasy, that in climes so much beyond the solar road, genius must sicken and fancy must die—despite both examples and reasonings to the contrary—remains

* For a copy of this work, we are indebted to one of Virginia's finest and most accomplished daughters,—wife to him, whose bravery and military skill are the most distinguished among her living sons.

[Since this article was committed to the printer, we have seen a notice of Frithiof's Saga in the North American Review; written, apparently, by one familiar with the language of Sweden, and even personally with her cities, woods, and hills.—It awards much less merit to the present translation than we do: condemning it as free—nay, even licentiously paraphrastic. One who well understands the original of a foreign poem, always thus differs from one who does not understand it, with respect to a translation. The former prefers a literal version; the latter a spirited—that is to say a free—one. Thus a friend of ours who has the Greek Homer at his finger's ends, extols Cowper's translation above Pope's:—a judgment refuted by the fact, that Pope is in every library of a hundred volumes, while Cowper can rarely be found in those of five thousand,—or in any bookstore. Thus, too, Don Quixote, recently done into English by Jarvis, is preferred by Spanish scholars to Smollett's version—which, to our poor English mind, is as far before the other, as life and wit excel dulness. Thus, again, the North American Review appears to deem certain renderings given by itself, of passages in Tegner's Poem, superior in merit to those given by the London translators: while we are quite sure that 99 out of every hundred English readers—and tasteful ones, too—would prefer the latter no less decidedly, than they would prefer Murphy's flowing and elegant (though too free) translation of Tactus, to the butchery perpetrated on him by a common schoolboy.

The Review informs us, that Tegner is a Bishop—now somewhat aged, but still retaining his faculties of body and mind, and enjoying the name which this work has gained him,—of "the Swedish Homer."]
rooted in our minds: nor shall we be disquieted of the prejudice, till oft-repeated instances shall have demonstrated its groundlessness. The effusion now before us, is one of these instances—is one of the most powerful, practical evidences, that GENIUS, like JUSTICE and COURAGE, has no climate—no country; or if any, that she must find it where the free-spirited exile of old found his country:—

"ubi libertas, ibi patria!"

"Where thou art, oh Liberty! there is my home!"

"The Saga of Frithiof" does indeed embody unquestionable proofs of great poetical talent. Even under the disadvantage of a translation—and that, by three different hands—a disadvantage heightened perhaps by its being the first English version ever made—this poem displays a richness and beauty of thought in its detail, and an originality in its general conformation, such as mark it for the work of no common mind. The versification too—judging from what the translator’s preface tells us of the singular resemblance between the two languages, rendering it easy to translate literally without dulness—and judging, too, from the prevalent vigor and harmony of numbers in this English version—the versification too, of the original, must abound in melody and power.

"Tegner," says the preface, is "one of the most distinguished poets of Sweden. This work was published at Stockholm in 1825; and so rapid was its success, that in 1851, it had already gone through as many as five editions. Its celebrity was not long confined to Sweden. Shortly after its appearance, Müller gave an elegant and faithful Danish version of it: and in Germany it received the unusual honor of being translated by three different persons; viz.—the baroness de Holwig, Dr. Molnike, and M. Rudolph Schley. Each of these versions enjoys a high reputation, and has passed through three or four editions. It seems high time, therefore, that a poem so popular, and admired in the countries where its merits could be best appreciated, should receive the homage of the English reader. * * * The legend on which the poem is founded, and to which the author has adhered pretty closely, is of great antiquity. Frithiof, the Viking, must have flourished in the eighth or ninth century, a considerable time before the introduction of Christianity into Scandinavia. The author has taken this occasion to interweave various interesting allusions to the Gothic mythology, and to introduce many striking examples of its operation and influence. Of supernatural agency he has, with great good taste, been sparing. The 24th canto contains a short but clear analysis of the Edda doctrine; there is also a touching allusion to the future appearance of the Christian religion in Scandinavia, in a prophetic strain, and in a style worthy of Virgil. The monotony incident to most poems has been ingeniously avoided, by each canto being written in a different metre, the result of which is an uninterrupted freshness, variety, and spirit."

We shall present the reader of the Messenger with an outline of the story contained in the poem; and then add some extracts, to give him an idea of its poetical quality.

Frithiof, the son of a rich landed proprietor named Thorsten, and Ingeborg, the daughter of Bele king of Sogn, were brought up together in the house and under the care of Heling, a trusty subject, to whom king Bele and his friend Thorsten had confided their offspring in childhood. Frithiof grew up, accomplished in every manly exercise; Ingeborg ripened into womanhood, graced with all the charms which even a princess need desire. From the tenderest years, they played together: roamed the wood, climbed the mountain, and forded the torrent. A passionate attachment necessarily ensued between them. Frithiof encountered the fiercest wild beasts, to present Ingeborg with their spoils. He carved her name on trees; he composed songs, in which she was likened to the rosy-winged and golden-haired beings, that adorn the palace of Freya,—and her beauty made to surpass that of Odin’s own consort. Ingeborg, in return, dreamed of Frithiof. He, or one modelled after him, was the hero of her songs: and she embroidered his image as foremost in all the hunting matches and battle-scenes wrought by her needle. Hilding saw the trouble his wards were preparing for themselves, and warned Frithiof to shun the hope of so unequal an alliance. "She is the daughter of a king, and a descendant of Odin,"—said the prudent and good old man: "let not the son of a mere bondes aspire to the hand of a royal and heaven-descended maiden." But his counsels were laughed to scorn.

At length King Bele lay upon his death-bed. His two sons and fair daughter, with Thorsten and Frithiof, are summoned to attend him. He appoints both sons to succeed him on the throne; entrusting, however, to Helge the elder, a superior authority, and especially delegating to him paternal power over Ingeborg. He gives them much good advice, commends to them the studious cultivation of Frithiof’s friendship, and bids them farewell. Thorsten then declared his resolution not to outlive his friend the King. He gave his son, too, a long and earnest exhortation to faith, valor, and loyalty: and soon afterwards, the aged heroes were borne together to the tomb.

Helge and Halfdan ascended the throne. Helge was gloomy, superstitious, haughty and cruel. Halfdan was a blooming boy, light-minded and effeminate, yet kind-hearted and brave.

Frithiof also succeeds to his father Thorsten’s wealth—his palace and domain of Frannæus, with herds, flocks, and treasures vast and rare. The banquet hall in the palace could with ease contain five hundred guests. Its ceiling was of strongest fir, its walls of firnest oak: the table, of oak, polished and shining like a hero’s sword, extended nearly from end to end; surmounted, at its head, by a throne for the chief, placed between two stately columns, on which stood the images of Frey and Odin. Here Thorsten had been used to sit, on the spoils of a vanquished bear, quaffing mead, and recounting to the joyous partakers of his hospitality the achievements of his prime, when,

* A country probably coinciding with a part of modern Sweden.
† The Scandinavian Venus.
¶ Odin was the Jupiter, and Friggs was the Juno, of Scandinavian mythology.§ Bonde—cultivator. It is a word of two syllables. So is Bele.
|| Frey seems to have been, in Scandinavian, what Apollo and Bacchus were with the heathen of Greece and Italy.
gay as a boy, yet firm and bold as becomes the prey of manhood, and sage as he upon whose brow many winters had written the traces of thought. From childhood, he had been as a brother to Frithiof: they had quaffed together the cup of blood; and over that surest pledge of Northern faith, had sworn mutual and inextinguishable friendship.

After a brief time of mourning, Frithiof was invited by Helge and Halfdan into the royal park. There, he saw Ingeborg: they exchanged the pressure of hands, and recollections of their childhood, and whispers of mutual affection. Too soon, however, they were obliged to part: and, in his palace, Frithiof relapsed into sadness. Biorn strove to rouse him from lethargy:

"Why doth our engel-idly rest?
Are his proud wings and talons torn?
What wounds now rankle in his breast?

"Say, what canst thou, my friend, desire?
Hast thou not viands—meat at will?
And scolds* enow, who never tire
Thy praise to sing with accents shrill?

"Thy eager courser neighs in vain;
Thy falcons now impatient rise;
Will Frithiof never hunt again?
What mean those stifled, deep-drawn sighs?

"Ellida sleeps not on the wave;
She heaves incessant on her side:
Oh noble bark! why vainly rave?
Quench'd is the gallant Frithiof's pride!

"On straw I will not basely die;
To Odin I my blood can drain,—
And thus avoid stern Helg's eye,
Her pale, blue cheek, and icy reign."

Animated by this expostulation, or prompted by love, Frithiof mounted Ellida, and steered to the court of Bele's sons. He found them holding a council of their people, by Bele's tomb; and without preface, asked Ingeborg in marriage. Helge, with stern pride, refused the proposal; telling the bold suitor that a maiden descended from Odin should be bride only to a monarch; and offering him a vassal's place in the royal train. In a transport of indignation, Frithiof drew his good sword, flashed it before the king's daunted eyes, and eft his golden shield at a blow; but forbore further violence, through reverence for the place. He then returned home.

King Ring at that time reigned in Norway: a wise, virtuous and powerful, though an aged monarch. Under his sway of thirty years, his kingdom had prospered in peace, justice and liberty. Having lost his queen, he announces to the assembled nobles, his resolve to claim the hand of King Bele's daughter. Envoys are accordingly despatched, bearing costly presents, and attended by bards, whose harps were to sound the glories of their venerable master. Arrived,—they keep wassal for three days; on the fourth, they declare the object of their mission. Helge, whose "joy was priestly craft alone," slays victims, and consults their entrails. The signs prove unfavorable. He therefore rejects Ring's offer: and Halfdan adds words of consternation. The King of Norway instantly takes fire at the insult-

* Viking, means the chieftain of sea adventurers. The venerable Thorsten, it is to be feared, had been little better than a pirate.
† Mead.
‡ God of the sea, answering to Neptune.
§ Biorn is of one syllable.

† Bards.
† Hel, the goddess of Death and of the Shades.
ing refusal; he vows vengeance, and prepares for war.
A hundred ships, with copper keels, laden with helmed and lance-armed warriors, bound over the waves.
Helge also makes preparation; and places his sister in the temple of Baldor.* There she is sought and found by Frithiof, who enjoys a prolonged and rapturous interview—no less pure than rapturous—resulting in a repetition of the most ardent vows of attachment.
He had meantime sent word to Helge, that the only prior for which his assistance in the coming war could be obtained, was the hand of Ingeborg. He now goes in person, to learn the king’s determination.
Helge was thrown in solemn state, amidst his council. His brow was black and fierce; his gaze cold and scornful. Halfdan sat beside him, decked ill jewels, and playing childishly with the handle of his sword.
To Frithiof’s frank offer of help and deliverance if Ingeborg might be his wife, a thousand swords of the surrounding warriors flashed consent; a thousand voices wished him success. Hilding feared his white locks, and in accents gentle yet earnest and persuasive, seconded the suit: Halfdan, too, implored his brother to yield. But Helge remained dark and cold. Not deigning a look at Frithiof, he repulsed him harshly, with reproaches for having profaned the sacred grove of Baldor, by there talking of earthly love. When they heard this imputation, denied by Frithiof,—the warriors were seized with superstitious horror: they started from him, as if he wore—
brow. Helge, with insolent clemency, announced to him that although the just punishment of sacrilege was death, yet his might be commuted to an expedition who had long withheld a tribute which he owed to Belde, 
“Obtain that tribute,” said the tyrant, “and you are pardoned. The jarl doats like a miser upon his gold, and guards it like a dragon. Wretst it from him, and it will be a nobler feat than discoursing of love in Balder’s grove. Paul,—and you are banished forever from your country.”

Full of rage, Frithiof returned to Ingeborg; imparted to her the sentence of her brother; and besought her to flee with him over the sea, to some more friendly shore.

Frithiof once more embarked in Ellida: but scarcely had he left the shore when a furious storm arose—excited by the prayers of Helge, to the fiends with whom he was allied. Two of them rode before the good ship, on the flapping winds of the tempest: Ham arouses the wind: Heid calls down the snow. The sea-bird flies to land, with screams of affright; the lightning, for

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* Baldor was the god of plenty, warmth, and light; the son of Odin, and the most benevolent of the Scandinavian deities. The legend of his character, struggles, death, and resurrection, bears a faint analogy to the Christian history of the Messiah.

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palace, where they were entertained in princely state for several months. At a favorable moment, he explained to his host the object of his visit. Argus tyr disdainedfully repelled the claim of tribute, but he presented to his guest, in token of personal regard, a costly purse, filled with gold.

In the spring, Frithiof returned home. On the seventh day of the voyage, his native hills reappeared to his view. He entered the bay, whereon Balder's temple stood: but no friendly step met—no fond visage greeted him. His own falcon alighted on his arm, and flapped its wings as if in terror: but no tongue explained what grief awaited him. Gliding at length around the promontory behind which his home had stood, he beheld that home no longer! Instead of his palace, a murky pile of ruins met his eye: a pile cheerless and dismal, as the skeleton in a warrior's tomb. His blooming gardens and fertile fields, were a dreary waste, sprinkled over with ashes! From Hilding he learned, that Ring with numerous forces had invaded the country—defeated the two brother-kings—compelled them to give him their sister as his bride—and borne her away to Norway. With speechless grief, she had submitted to her fate.

"No smile betrayed the royal consort's pride:
Pale was her cheek, and deadly white her brow;
Even as we see the lightning's vivid glow
Cast a pale glimmer o'er a midnight cloud,
While echoes round the sky the thunder's accent loud."

At the altar, Helge had beheld, on her arm, the mysterious bracelet, given her by Frithiof. He tore it from her, and placed it on the wrist of Balder's image. He beheld that home no longer; with soul on fire, and voice reaching the King's ears, he summoned the stranger forth. At the altar, Helge had beheld, on her arm, the mysterious bracelet, given her by Frithiof. He tore it from her, and placed it on the wrist of Balder's image. He beheld that home no longer; with soul on fire, and voice reaching the King's ears, he summoned the stranger forth.

"Over his shoulders broad, and eke around his forehead high
His flowing locks of gold fall down in graceful symmetry.

"With gallant mien erect he stood, in velvet mantle blue:
His loins were girded by a belt of silver, bright to view.
Boars, deer and foxes were engraven with wondrous skill thereon,
And round the hero's waist they seemed in eager haste to run."
Like harken'd lightning by his side his trusty sword
hangs down,
And glittering on his brawny arm the golden bracelet shone:
Around the hall his eyes he cast with stern majestic air,
As tall as Asa* Thor in size; as Asa-Balder, fair.

How swift on Ingeborg's cheek the roses come and go,
Changing its hue like northern light, reflected on the snow!

As water-lilies up and down are mov'd on troubled wave,
Thus did the bosom of the queen with strong pulsations heave.

Ring, apparently unsuspicous that his guest is Frithiof, welcomes him to the coming feast. A roasted boar is served up, holding an apple in his mouth, and crowned with garlands. Shaking aside his snowy locks, the aged king touches the boar's head, and vows to seek and vanquish Frithiof. A scoring laugh burst from the young hero: a gleam of anger flashed across his brow; and the pommel of his sword struck the table with a noise that made each champion present start up in alarm. "Oh! King!" said he, "hear now my vow. I know Frithiof well; he is my friend: and I swear to fight in his behalf against a world in arms!"—The entertainment sped on, harmoniously, with wine and music, till the crowning of the cock told the approach of morning.—Frithiof stood long at Ring's palace. One day, the king and queen drove in a sledge over the frozen lake. Their guest attended them on foot, with skates—passing and flying round them at pleasure, and graving on the ice a thousand sketches it and its blush then from peril. He has self-command enough to shun incidents of the poem; conveyed in strains so rich, musical, and powerful, that no abridgment or paraphrase could do them justice. We are half doubtful, whether our whole narrative had not been better omitted, or our meaning lost, if our author's varied merits. It is, after all, but a skeleton we have given: as gaunt, nerveless, and spiritless, when compared with the poem itself, as a human skeleton is to a perfect human form, instinct with life and grace, corded with strong muscles, and rounded into complete symmetry. We beseech the reader, therefore, to make allowances accordingly, in his judgment of the work before us.

A touching lamentation at his father's tomb—a rebuilding of the burned Temple, far more sumptuously than ever,—his reconciliation with the offended Deity,—and his union with Ingeborg,—are the chief remaining incidents of the poem; conveyed in strains so rich, musical, and powerful, that no abridgment or paraphrase could do them justice. We are half doubtful, whether our whole narrative had not been better omitted, or our meaning lost, if our author's varied merits. It is, after all, but a skeleton we have given: as gaunt, nerveless, and spiritless, when compared with the poem itself, as a human skeleton is to a perfect human form, instinct with life and grace, corded with strong muscles, and rounded into complete symmetry. We beseech the reader, therefore, to make allowances accordingly, in his judgment of the work before us.

In assigning that work its place in the world of letters,—considering the languages into which it has been rendered, the favor it has experienced in them all, and the merits which in its English dress are manifest to our view,—we have no hesitation in ranking it above Marmion, or any other of Sir Walter's poems except the Lady of the Lake: and even above that we rank it, though hesitatingly. Let us not be understood as saying that we—Virginia born and English-speaking—derive more pleasure from reading this Swedish poem than from reading the master-pieces of Scott. On the contrary, there is no one of his five longest poems which does not both afford us more pleasure and excite in us higher admiration, than Bishop Tegner's does. But (our meaning is) if we had no vernacular language,
and no country with its host of associations to prepossess our minds,—but understood equally well, all the languages in which "The Saga of Frithiof" has appeared,—we believe that it would claim in our unbiassed judgment, the place we have designated.

We said, the translation was by three different hands. We know not their names;—only the initials being given, at the end of their several cantos. They are W. E. F.,—H. G.,—and R. C. They are names, which from the strength and beauty of the English itself, done their authors so much credit—judging merely by the country with its host of associations to pleae us.

We have designated the plan we have adopted. We have given, at the end of their severn cantos, such number of translations, for very few translations have been so much credit—judging merely by the country with its host of associations to please us.

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The poem thus opens:

FRITHIOF AND INGEBORG.

"There grew, in Hilding's garden fair,
Two plants beneath his fostering care;
Such plants the North had never seen;
How gloriously they deck the green!"

One like the oak-tree soars on high,
Whose trunk all proudly greets the sky;
While bending still, by winds caress'd
Its branches wave like warrior's crest.

The other blossoms like the rose,
Ere yet the vernal suns disclose
The charms in that the chalice* dawn,
Though winter hath its breath withdrawn.

But storms arise and shake the earth;
The oak must struggle from its birth;
And the bright sun, with nys of gold,
The rose's bud will soon unfold.

In peace and joy, 'neath Hilding's view,
These lovely plants together grew;
And Frithiof was the oak-tree light;
The rose was Ingeborg bright.

Didst thou behold them during day,—
In Freya's palace, thou wouldest say,
Are only found such beings fair,
With rosy wings and golden hair.

But when they dance in hour of night,
Beneath the moon's transparent light,—
Sure 'tis the Elfin king and queen,
Thus dancing on the meadow green!

He cons his task with eager joy,—
For he can now,—that smiling boy—
To Ingeborg, the runes impart,
And lessons that he learnt by heart.

She loves to skim the dark blue sea
In Frithiof's bark; and oft as he

Or reefs the sail, or now expands,
She claps with joy her small white hands. *

No tree too high, no rock too bold,
When she a bird's nest would behold:
The eagle's eggs and young he laid,
With joyful pride, before the maid,

No torrent could his path arrest;
How sweet to be more closely gazed
By the fair maiden in his arms.
When foaming waters round alarms!

The first bright rose that spring unfolds,
The first red cherry he beholds,
The first ripe ear that autumn yields,
For her he gathers from the fields.

But hours of childhood quickly fly;
A blooming youth, with flashing eye,
Now gazes on the maiden bright,
Whose charms full blossom to the sight.

He seeks no longer childish sport;
Unarmed the hardy youth resorts
To the dark forest, where the bear
Lies growling in his gloomy lair:

And breast oppos'd to breast they fight;
And Frithiof conquers; with delight
To Ingeborg he bears the spoil;
Forgotten are his wounds and toil;—

For woman loveth danger's task;
As plumes hang fondly o'er the casque,
When no light zephyrs rouse their pride,
Thus beauty clings to valor's side.

When during the long winter's night,
In the vast hall, while flames shine bright,
He sings a lay, or reads a story
Of Asat and Valhalla's glory.

'Of gold,' he says, 'is Freya's hair,—
It waves like wheat-shaft in the air:
But I know locks of brighter gold
That a more polished brow enfolds.

'Iduna's breast is soft and fair;
It pants beneath a tissue rare:
I know a verdant silken vest
That covers a far whiter breast.

'And Frigg's eyes are deepest blue;
Like heaven their soft and brilliant hue:
But I know eyes whose dazzling ray
Rivals the brightest vernal day.

'A sun-beam on new fallen snow
Is Gerda's cheek; a maid I know,
And she, though but a mortal meek,
Can boast a far more glowing cheek.

'I know a heart as pure as thine,
Fair Nanna! poet's bliss assign
To thee, oh Balder! 'twas thy pride
That tender Nanna was thy bride.

'And if beheld in death like thee,
One faithful maiden, true to me,
Would weep like Nanna o'er my grave,
Stern Hel's terrors I would brave.'

* Original—stma livita hunder.
† Asat, the chief divines of Scandinavia.
‡ Valhalla—Heaven.

* Colyer.
† Frithiof, this word is either of two or three syllables.
‡ Ingeborg—the final g is not pronounced.
In their sage mien, their princely air, their stately martial tread?
Yes! they have noble warriors been; and plainly may be read
The story of their battles fierce, on each deep sword's brow.
Why are their breasts incased in steel? they cannot combat now:
Oh! it was thus on battle field, by Thorsten's side they mov'd,
They will not cast away the arms their honor'd chieftain lov'd.
Close to these aged warriors sat a gallant, blooming youth,
'Biond' was his name, of Frithiof's age; and there he shone, in truth,
Like the fresh rose 'midst faded leaves, in autumn's stormy time;
Gay as a boy, yet firm and bold, as suitereth manhood's prime,
And sage as he whose thoughtful eye hath many winters seen.'

King Ring, from hearnsay, gives to his council the following account of Ingeborg, when he announces his design to ask her hand:

"King Bele, who, when summer breezes play'd,
Came often to this land,
Hath, dying, left a daughter: will that maid
Accept my proffer'd hand?
She like the lily blooms, that decks the flow'ry glade:
Yes! she is young, and flowers alone delight
The joyned mind of youth;
My leaf is scald, alas! and in his flight
To melt the hnte that burns ill Frithiof's breast,
By Dele's sepulchre; well chosen spot!
To giro his hand
To the morning breeze, and Frithiof comes not yet;
To the world's bright king with hair of gold,
'Twixt ty love's lock with flow'rets bright;
Oh! it was thus on battle field, by Thorsten's side they mov'd,
Yet I feel this flame;
I know not how, nor whence this feeling came,
And almost fancy it was born with me.
As we the fruit each year successive see
Fount of the nut, and swell, and gather force
From each bright ray the sun throws in its course—
(Its golden food!) thus I can also prove
I grew and ripen'd round the nut of love.
"Is this for love I now exist alone,—
What would the fruit be, if the core were gone?
Balder! great god! receive this vow of mine!
Not was it pure when I apprised thy shrine,
And I will leave it with as pure a flame.
I'll fearless pass, Bifrost, thy bridge of fame;
With my fond love before the gods appear;
And in Valhalla it shall shine as clear
As any child of Asa there in view,
Whose golden buckler may reflect its hue:
With pure and dove-like wings it then shall fly
Across the blue empyreal vault on high,
To seek for refuge in Alfador's breast;
From thence it sprang, and there should ever rest."

In rejecting Frithiof's entreaty that she would fly
With him to Greece, she contrasts his free condition
With her own dependence upon the tyrannical brother
to whose guardianship she had been committed; illustrating it as follows:

"Say, what would woman be, if, in her pride
Sheherd'd the tied Alfador from her side?
'Fies that unites her to a firmer bond,
And lend the strength her weakness must demand.
She's like a lily of the water still,
That sinks or rises with the current's will:
While thus it floats, in pure and snowy vest,
The passing boatman wounds its tender breast;
He holds it not; the vessel hastens on;
The lily fades; but should its root alone
Cling fast to earth, that drooping flower again
May lift its head, and all its bloom regain
From the bright stars, its sisters of the sky,
And like a star itself on liquid azure lie.
But should it lose its hold, and for from home
Be cast by billows, it will soon become
A dry and wither'd leaf, and unregarded round."

Irritated by her refusal, Frithiof is breaking abruptly away;
When she utters a remonstrance, to which we scarcely know any superior in pathos and eloquence:

"Oh Frithiof! is it thus that we must part?
Canst thou thus wound thy Ingeborgh's heart?
On Frithiof! can thy brow so sternly lower
On her, the friend of thy first childhood's hour?
Canst thou no glance of tenderness bestow
On her who tends for thee must ever flow?
And can no pressure of thy hand now tell
The full—deep meaning of the word farewell?
Or dost thou fancy I shall now repose,
Where blushing roses all their sweets disclose?
That I can with indifference see depart
The food and treasure through the tempest sent?
Thou wert my thought by day, my dream by night;
'Twas Frithiof's name bore all that gave delight;
And all that great or good in life I saw,
Resembled him: his accents were my law.
Let not that image, once so fair and bright,
Assume a frown to terrify my sight.
Oh, not be hard! I now must bid adieu
To all the bliss I ever had in view;
To all that more dearly even lov'd,
Than the pure joys no mortal yet has prov'd,
The joys that in Valhalla we shall taste;
This world to me is now a dreary waste:
Say! must this sacrifice be all in vain?
And can it not one friendly word obtain?" }

The storm is thus described:

"How black and how low'ring the once azure sky!
And loud burst the thunder-peal rolling on high!
How roughly and fiercely the wild ocean roars!
Why rises he thus, with his white foaming waves?
The lightning's keen dart, with its bright flashing glare,
For a moment illuminates the dark lurid air!
Hark! the scream that announces the sea bird's affright,
As he hastens to shore—and how rapid his flight!

Frithiof,—'Hard must we combat, friends!
Its force the tempest sends;
Its flapping wings we hear;
But warriors know not fear.
My love, in thy lone bower,
Dost weep for me this hour?
Thy tears, thy fond alarms
Do but augment thy charms.'

'Fore the bark now glide
Two friends, Ham and Heid!
Hail the storm exults;
Heid in snow delights.

The tempest begins its dark wings to display,—
Oh, summon your strength for this terrible fray!
Now plunges the bark; oh, how deep is that cave?
But still she remounts on the high swelling wave.
All the demons of terror more horribly yell,
And grin with their visage fantastic and fell!
They ride on the billows with fiendish delight,
And play with the foam ever sparkling and white!

The waves rise more high!
More black grows the sky!
The masts and yards reed,
And loud groans the keel.

Now all's well again, and each furious wave
Thus fiercely may roll, and thus loudly may rave:
Ellida obeys the proud chieftain's command;
The tempest's wild ravings she now may withstand.
The shooting star thus, through the blue vault of night,
Speeds swift in its path so unerring and bright;
She bounds o'er the billows,—untam'd is her pride;
The chamois thus leaps on the high mountain's side."

The following allusion to Christianity and its founder,
is made in the last canto. It is a priest of Balder who speaks:

"Rumor hath reach'd me of a southern Balder,
Son of a virgin, by Alfador sent.
To expound the runes mysterious, that are graven
On the fates' baleful buckler, yet unravell'd.
Peace was his end and aim; his faction, love;
And like a dove, sat innocence upon
His silver helmet: piously he lived,
And pious taught; but preaching' forgiveness too:
And under distant palm trees, and mid tomb,
His doctrine, so 'tis said, from vale to vale
Wanders triumphant; melteth stoney hearts;
Joins hands together; and constructs on earth
A realm of peace and charity and love.
I do not rightly comprehend his law,
But in my better hours, methinks, I feel
A distant glimmering of its holy fire:
And at such times all hearts must feel like mine.
The day will come, and I foresee it clear,
When o'er the rugged mountains of the North
'Twill spread its dove-like pinions, and on high
Will wave victoriously its sacred banner.
But ere that day arrives, the North will be
For us no more; and off the oak shall wave

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Its branches o'er our long forgotten graves.
All hail, ye generations yet unborn!
Than us for happier, ye shall one day drink
That cup of consolation, and behold
The torch of truth illuminate the world!
This will disperse each murky vaporous cloud,
Which threatening o'er the sun of life impends,
Yet do not us despise, for we have sought
With earnest zeal, and unaverted eye,
'To catch one ray of that ethereal light.
Allader still is one, and still the same;
But many are his messengers divine."

The extracts we had marked for insertion are not yet exhausted: some others are so fine, that we shall probably present them in a future number. We take leave of this valuable addition to our literature, with a hope that publishers on this side the Atlantic will soon favor their world with an American edition.