

11557. F38

AXEL, AND SVEA.

POEMS FROM THE SWEDISH

OF

ESAIAS TEGNÈR. K

BY

OSCAR BAKER.



LONDON:
JAMES CARPENTER,
OLD BOND STREET.

1840.

THE FOLLOWING EFFORT
IS INSCRIBED TO *ONE*
DEEPLY ANXIOUS FOR MY PROSPERITY, HOPING
THAT IT MAY BE RECEIVED BY HIM
AS AN HUMBLE, THOUGH SINCERE, TRIBUTE OF
AFFECTION AND GRATITUDE.

S V E A.

A POEM FROM THE SWEDISH OF
ESAIAS TEGNÈR.

1811.

HEAR me, O Sweden! thou that gavest me birth,
Within thy bosom rests all bygone worth ;
Swedes ! heirs to names without one galling blot,
Those very names have ye so soon forgot ?
From this still vale where no intruders stray,
To you I dedicate my simple lay. [youth,
Though Flattery's tongue benumbs the northern
Deign but for once to hear the voice of truth ;
Let fawning parasites to you indite [light ;
Strains that bepraise some new and pleasing
Let them, in lying words and fulsome verse,
The modern manners of the times rehearse ;
And rail, reclining upon pleasure's bed
(Born but for folly, but for envy bred), [fled :
At strength named brute, and heroes that are
Each has his thoughts, each must his fancy
 please—
For me, the times seem as a fickle peace,

That falsely smiles with a beguiling joy,
And lingers but to ruin and destroy.

I love to hear the angry whirlwinds roar ;
I love the names of times that now are o'er,
Ere Sweden's sons, by foreign climes seduced,
Took, and with joy, whate'er their land produced.
Away with folly, that but brings distress,
And showy glitter, and voluptuousness !

Thou nation bred upon the desert's brow,
In fickle harvests, once more blessed than now,
That round the pole o'er mountain and o'er wood,
Must force the stubborn ore to yield you food !
Whence this rash frenzy o'er thy senses came,
That vilely thus thou barterest thy fame,
All that is best and greatest in thy land,
For empty pleasures from a foreign strand,
That suck the marrow of thy native shore,
And leave it poorer, baser than before ?
Thou likenest now, forgetful of thy race,
The weakly south, devoid of all her grace.
For kindly nature gave, in various zones,
Colours to manners, and to tongues their tones.

In the south's Eden, where the orb of day
Mellows the vine with his enlivening ray,
And harvests, smiling to the heavens of blue,
Unaided grow, blessed with the genial dew ;
There the gold orange 'neath eternal spring
Wafts its sweet odours on the zephyr's wing ;

There balmy shades the kindly laurels throw,
 And streamlets murmur, as they onward flow—
 E'en there the language seems to melt away,
 And Nature bids us to enjoy the day
 In pleasure's dance, and music's harmony,
 A life from sorrow and from trouble free.
 But Nature here, around great Odin's mound,
 A chain of ice and rocky walls has bound ;
 And snow-capped mountains are the northman's
 home,
 Who once victorious held the sway of Rome.
 Clouds big with whirlwinds o'er those mountains
 rest,
 And vivid north-lights deck their towering crest ;
 O'er the deep torrent juts the daring rock,
 And echoes dauntless to her maddening shock :
 Here the dark woods with many a patriarch tree
 In gloomy melancholy gaze on thee ;
 Here rocks on rocks, up-piled upon the strand,
 Seem the vast structure of some giant's hand ;
 While high aloft the lucid meteors glow,
 And veins of iron in the mountains grow.
 Here Nature strives simplicity to find,
 And graft contentment on a peaceful mind ;
 That mid the rocks a race should wander free,
 And do their duty, for their liberty,
 And tho' bred up midst poverty most drear,
 Should gaze on death, without one harrowing fear.

Thus grew a race, in times that long are o'er,
 That soon became the proud East's conqueror;
 For like the lightning spread their mighty fame,
 And e'en the South grew pallid at their name.

O bygone days of Sweden great and blessed!
 And ye our fathers that beneath us rest!
 Through the long nights of ages that are run,
 Ye gleam a moment, and again are gone.
 Live yet in verse! The time, alas! is passed,
 When free as wind, and as the mountain fast,
 With all his nurture from his fields and rills,
 Europa's Victor dwelled on Sweden's hills:
 For right and honour, for his king and land,
 He talked not vainly, but he armed his hand;
 Over his fathers' fields his plough he drew,
 And there inherited their manners too.
 Thus did he live without one want or fear,
 And gazed serenely on his sepulchre:
 From his true mind all folly far was hurled,
 He lived untaxed, and honoured by a world;
 No foreign dainties yet his fancy fed,
 For him the vineyards of the south ne'er bled;
 And pleasure's poison, with repentant smart,
 As yet had shunned his pure and steadfast heart:
 Pleased with the produce of the earth and wave,
 He sought no luxuries, and he owned no slave;
 And with a sword and friend he deemed him
 blessed,
 Nor did his hut e'er turn away the guest.

Thus did he live, altho' his cares were great,
 And met undaunted all the storms of fate :
 But to his God he bent his sorrowing brow,
 And kissed the hand from which all blessings
 flow.

His faith was virtue, and his hand his oath ;
 Ne'er was he known to break his plighted troth.
 Ye noble souls ! o'er each forgotten bone,
 The moss commemorates your deeds alone !
 Another world, my sires, around you spreads.
 Who is this race that o'er your ashes treads ?
 Is this the relic of the Gothic race,
 With sin and envy stamped upon their face ;
 With baubles pleased, renowned for vanity,
 Mocking the South in realms of poverty ?

Sweden ! where is thy strength and prudence,
 where

That name and energy that mocked despair ?
 Where is that nobleness, and life, and fire,
 Those manners handed down from sire to sire ?
 Now dost thou sport o'er their forgotten tomb,
 And idly strive to catch the floweret's bloom.
 No song have I for such of idle fame ;
 Buy other tombs, dismiss thy ancient name.

O Sweden ! do I speak these words in truth ?
 Forgive my grief, forgive the words of youth !
 I fain would give my life's-blood o'er and o'er,
 To see thy ruin and disgrace no more.

Lo ! from the chasm where you tottering stood,
 You late were rescued by a hero's blood ;
 With heart so mild, with brow that time has
 graved,

Charles yet protects the ruins that he saved ;
 And near the conqueror stands fair revealed,
 Oscar the sword of Fingal born to wield.
 Shall they ne'er rouse thee to be great and free,
 Shall each endeavour prove a mockery ?
 And wilt thou thus their virtuous deeds reward ?
 And to thy country nought but shame afford ?
 And sin's foul drama wilt thou still rehearse ?
 Thou bearest a foreign yoke, thine own is
 worse.

Guilt is a tyrant that controls his slave ;
 The coward bears the bonds his foeman gave,
 When meanness prompts him to lay down his
 glaive. [lower ?

Who shall dispel the clouds that round thee
 The sword of treachery or the club of power ?
 They lurk around. O that my song might soar
 With the grave's voice and with the thunder's roar !
 Thy fathers' blades with mighty foes have crossed ;
 Now the sun shines o'er lands that thou hast lost !
 O Finland, home of faith, once Sweden's mate !
 Now like a bloody shield torn from the state !
 A throne from swamps without a name is raised,
 And kings bow down where once our herds have
 grazed.

Farewell, thou Succour of the northern land !
 Our tears the Baltic carries to thy strand ;
 Since nations' fates from powers eternal tend,
 Sweden, lament ; but what thou hast, defend.
 From the Sound's shore to where the hills appear,
 And the free Lapman wanders with his deer,
 How green the hills that Time's rude shocks
 have scorned !
 How sweet the meadows with their crops adorned !
 Love we our country—we have land enough—
 O let thy mountains, that be rich tho' rough,
 A double increase from their bosoms yield,
 And change the forest to a blooming field !
 Leading the waves like slaves around thy shore,
 Regain, O Sweden, what thou lost before
 Of former treasures : thou hast not a part—
 Have more than treasure, have a virtuous heart !
 The placid greatness, and the daring soul,
 In safer bands thy country will control.
 Gaze not in apathy on worlds in arms,
 Rest on thy sword, tho' free from war's alarms.
 Thy strength regained, oh ! let us once more see,
 Let this abasement thy last lesson be.
 If to my voice thou wakenest not soon,
 It is humanity that craves the boon.
 And do the times to folly now give birth ?
 Lo ! victors rush like meteors thro' the earth ;
 And hapless Europe is trod down and gored,
 And new creations rise beneath the sword.

What thrones are crushed ! what lands to
pieces fall !

What fortune wills the victors justice call.
And thinkest thou that thou art safe alone ?
Be sure, that war soon smites thy gates of stone.
E'en now our destiny may be hovering fast
To write our doom, the eternal, and the last !
A single moment ! and no more, revealed
Stand Sweden's triple crowns upon her shield.
Awake ! while time allows thee to defend
Thy fathers' cairns that o'er thy hills extend,
Thy king and state, thy heroes' memory,
Canst thou not save them, thou canst surely die.
The Belts around thee throw their bosoms free,
And yet shall Heaven in kindness pity thee :
Yet hast thou fields ; and in thy hills remain
Ore fraught with thunder, and with steel for men :
Still in the battle canst thou show the same,
And, tho' thou fallest, save at least thy fame !

THE END.

21 DE 69

CHISWICK PRESS :
PRINTED BY C. WHITTINGHAM.