

**KALEVALA. THE LAND OF
HEROES. IN
TWO VOLUMES.
VOLUME ONE. NO. 259**

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Kalevala. The Land of Heroes. In Two Volumes. Volume One. No. 259 by W. F. Kirby & J. B. C. Grundy

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W. F. KIRBY & J. B. C. GRUNDY

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KALEVALA

THE LAND OF HEROES

TRANSLATED BY W. F. KIRBY
INTRODUCTION BY J. B. C. GRUNDY

IN TWO VOLS.

VOLUME ONE



No. 259

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VOLUME ONE

'As the Kalevala holds up its bright mirror to the life of the Finns moving among the first long shadows of medieval civilization it suggests to our minds the proto-twilight of Homeric Greece. Its historic background is the misty age of feud and foray between the people of Kaleva and their more ancient neighbours of Pohjola, possibly the Lapps. Poetically it recounts the long quest of that singular and prolific talisman, the Sampo, and ends upon the first note of Christianity, the introduction of which was completed in the fourteenth century. Heroic but human, its men and women march boldly through the fifty cantos, raiding, drinking, abducting, outwitting, weeping, but always active and always at odds with the very perils that confront their countrymen today: the forest, with its savage animals; its myriad lakes and rocks and torrents; wind, fire, and darkness; and the cold.'

From the Introduction to this Everyman Edition by J. B. C. Grundy.

The picture on the front of this wrapper by Akseli Gallen-Kallela illustrates the famous passage in 'Kalevala' where the young poet Joukahainen, whose sister Väinämöinen had seduced, lies in wait for him. The old lady's arguments so disturb his aim that he fires three bolts and misses every time.

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KALEVALA

*EVERYMAN, I will go with thee,
and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side*

ELIAS LÖNNROT

Born 1802. Finnish philologist, poet and folklorist. Practised medicine in country districts, where he transcribed traditional ballads, among them the *Kalevala* cycle, which he published from 1838 to 1849. Became professor of Finnish literature at Helsinki, and died 1884.

The Kalevala Society is a foundation formed in Helsinki in 1919 for promoting the collecting, publishing, study and cultivation of Finnish folklore. The annual meeting of the society is held on 28th February or Kalevala Day, i.e. the day when the Introduction to the first edition of the *Kalevala* was signed by Elias Lönnrot in 1835. The society has published a year-book since 1921 and a number of works on folklore.

Kalevala

THE LAND OF THE HEROES

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TRANSLATED BY
W. F. KIRBY

INTRODUCTION BY
J. B. C. GRUNDY, M.A., PH.D.



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INTRODUCTION

No national epic lies so firmly in the heart of its people as the *Kalevala*. Its influence on modern Finland has been and is—to offer the least remote of possible comparisons—an immensely more potent force than the tradition of the Edda collections in western Scandinavia or the Nibelungen cycle among the Germanic nations. As the poem holds up its bright mirror to the life of the Finns moving among the first long shadows of medieval civilization it suggests in our minds the proto-twilight of Homeric Greece. Its historic background is the misty age of feud and foray between the people of Kaleva and their more ancient neighbours of Pohjola, possibly the Lapps. Poetically it recounts the long quest of that singular and prolific talisman, the Sampo, and ends upon the first note of Christianity, the introduction of which was completed in the fourteenth century. Heroic but human, its men and women march boldly through the fifty cantos, raiding, drinking, abducting, outwitting, weeping, but always active and always at odds with the very perils that confront their countrymen to-day: the forest, with its savage animals, its myriad lakes and rocks and torrents; wind, fire, and darkness; and the cold. Yet, wild as the scene may be, it is far from barbaric. The craft of the shipwright, the blacksmith, the goldsmith, or the brewer has plainly reached a high level; household management and the laws of hospitality are well understood; fine fabrics are woven, fine jewels esteemed; personal cleanliness and the rites of the *sauna*, or Finnish steam-bath, are fully practised; music is an important part of life, and songs are often accompanied on the *kantele*, a stringed instrument still in use; there is constant and highly poetic praise of beauty, whether of bird or tree or maiden. Imagination is perhaps the outstanding talent of the characters, who conspicuously prefer skill or guile or magic to the use of force.

The northern rune-singers laid hand early upon the songs and episodes of the *Kalevala*, a feature of which is the "echo" line which repeats or adds but slightly to the sense of its predecessor (e.g. lines 17 and 18 of Runo I). This often arose from