

**WORKS OF BJORNSTJERNE  
BJORNSON,  
PATRIOTS EDITION: THE  
FISHER MAIDEN. PP.1-273**

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Works of Bjornstjerne Bjornson, Patriots Edition: The Fisher Maiden. pp.1-273 by Rasmus B. Anderson

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**RASMUS B. ANDERSON**

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**THE FISHER MAIDEN**

WORKS OF  
BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON  
Patriots Edition

**THE FISHER MAIDEN**

*Translated from the Norse*

By

RASMUS B. ANDERSON



NEW YORK  
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY

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*Colonial*  
4-18-47  
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## PREFACE.

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THE Fisher Maiden was written in 1867 and 1868, and was published simultaneously in Norway and Germany. The popularity of the story is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that it has appeared in four German and in two English translations, the present being the third.

5-8-47 H.E.M.  
The characters are, perhaps, less ideal than those of his peasant stories, and the style throughout indicates that the author has entered upon a new era in his literary development. His aim here is to show how irresistible is the power of innate vocation and natural talent, and to vindicate the theatre as a place not only of amusement, but also of instruction, against the unjust criticisms of the clergy.

In the weird poem, in the eleventh chapter, on the young viking, Mr. Björnson depicts, in strangely profound sentences, his own career, his early struggles, and the victory he so quickly gained. Indeed, as Björnson said to me in 1872, the Fisher Maiden is Björnson himself, and in the young viking he

has given, in a few enigmatic strokes, a picture of both the heroine and the author. Nowhere does Mr. Björnson's patriotism burst forth in purer and nobler strains than in the short poem that follows soon after that on the young viking. It is all aglow with love and pride and confidence and hope, and is a perfect mirror of the poet's feelings and aspirations in the midst of his great success.

The poems in this volume are translated by Augusta Plesner and Frederika Richardson, with the exception of the one at the end of chapter iv., beginning, "Ah, sweet is Love's first meeting!" and the one in chapter ix., beginning "Joy now is kindled," both of which are by Auber Forestier. Music has been written for "Ah, sweet is Love's first meeting," by Halldan Kjerulf, and for "Joy now is kindled," by Edward Grieg. The latter may be found in the "Norway Music Album."

RASMUS B. ANDERSON.

ASSARD, MADISON, WISCONSIN.  
March, 1892.



## THE FISHER MAIDEN.

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### CHAPTER I.

WHERE herring have for a long time been caught in abundance, there gradually grows up a town, provided that other circumstances are favorable. Not only may it be said of such towns that they are cast up out of the sea, but at a great distance they actually resemble washed-up timber and fragments of wreck, or a mass of keeled boats, overturned by the fishermen for shelter some stormy night. A nearer view shows how entirely by chance the whole has been built, for here a rock lies in the midst of a thoroughfare, there water divides the borough into three or four parts, while the streets wind and curve in every direction. But there is one quality common to them all: there is refuge in the harbor for the largest ships; it is as snug in there as in a box; and therefore these havens are very grateful to vessels that with tattered sails and battered

bulwarks are driven in from the open sea in search of a breathing-place.

In a small town of this kind all is still; everything noisy is banished to the wharves, where are moored the peasants' boats, and where ships load and unload. Along the wharves runs the one street of our little town; the white and red one and two-story houses are on the opposite side; but they are not built wall to wall, they have neat gardens around them; and so there is a long, broad street which, when the wind blows landward, is filled with the odor of whatever may be on the wharves. It is quiet here — not from fear of the police, for as a rule there is none, — but from dread of gossip, since all the inhabitants know one another. When you walk down the street you must bow at each window, where usually sits an old lady who is ready to return your greeting. Moreover, you must salute every one you meet; for all these people, as they move so noiselessly about, are continually reflecting on what is proper in general and for themselves in particular. He who oversteps the standard prescribed for his rank or social position, forfeits his good name, for not only is *he* known to his neighbors, but so are his father and his grandfather, and inquiries are

at once made as to whether there has ever before been seen a tendency in the family to unseemly behavior.

To this peaceful town fared, many years ago, that worthy man, Per Olsen. He came from the country, where he had earned a livelihood by peddling and fiddling. He opened a shop in the town for his old customers, where, in addition to his other wares, he sold brandy and bread; and he might often be heard pacing up and down in the chamber behind the shop, playing spring-dances and wedding-marches. Each time he passed the glass loop-hole in the door, he would peep through, and if a customer was entering the shop he would wind up his playing with a trill and go in. Business flourished; he married and had a son whom he named after himself, calling him not Per, though, but Peter.

Little Peter was to become what Per knew he was not — an educated man; and so the boy was entered at the Latin school. When those who should have been his comrades thrashed him home from their games because he was a son of Per Olsen, his father thrashed him back again, — there was no other way of educating the boy. Consequently little Peter felt forsaken at school, grew indolent, and gradually