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THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH.
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GHOSTS.
AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE.
PEER GYNT
A DRAMATIC POEM

BY
HENRIK IBSEN

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION
BY
WILLIAM AND CHARLES ARCHER

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INTRODUCTION.

HENRIK IBSEN was in his thirty-seventh or thirty-eighth year when he wrote Peer Gynt, published in Copenhagen in 1867. He had left Norway in the spring of 1864, having by that time produced his historical and legendary tragedies in prose, and his fascinating, if somewhat juvenile, Love's Comedy; written in rhymed decasyllables. Proceeding to Rome, he there (or, more precisely, at Ariccia, under the Alban Mount) wrote the satiric tragedy, Brand, which at once made him famous throughout Scandinavia. Brand was published in 1866, while the poet, who had now wandered still further southward, to Ischia and Sorrento, was writing Peer Gynt. The production of two such poems within the space of two consecutive years is surely unique in the history of letters. It is unique, at any rate, in Ibsen's record, for he is, as a rule, an extremely deliberate worker.

Unlike Brand, which is entirely of the poet's own invention, Peer Gynt has its roots in Norwegian Folk-lore. In the invaluable collections of popular tales made by P. C. Asbjörnsen and Jørgen Moe,¹ we find the germs of several scenes and

¹ Norske Folkeeventyr, samlade vad P. C. Asbjörnsen og Jørgen Moe, Christiania, 1842; second (enlarged) ed., Christiania, 1852; third ed., 1866; fourth, 1868; fifth, 1874. Many of these translated by Sir George Webbe Dasent, Popular Tales from the Norse, Edinburgh, 1859; second ed. (enlarged), same place and date. See also Tales from the Fjeld, a second series of Tales from the Norse of P. C. Asbjörnsen, by G. W. Dasent, London, 1874. Also Norske Huldré-Eventyr og Folketsagen, by P. C. Asbjörnsen, Christiania, 1848 and 1859; third ed., Christiania, 1870. Also Norske Folke-og Huldré-Eventyr, i Udvælg vad P. Chr. Asbjörnsen, Copenhagen, 1879, translated under the title of Round the Yule Log, by H. L. Brekstad, London, 1881.
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Incidents. The very name "Peer Gynt" is suggested by Asbjørnsen's "Reindeer-hunting in the Rondë Hills;"¹ and in the same group of tales occurs the adventure of Gudbrand Glesne on the Gedin-Edge, which Peer Gynt works up so unblushingly in Act I., Sc. 1. The text of both these tales will be found in the Appendix, and the reader will recognise how very slight are the hints which set the poet's imagination to work. The encounter with the Seter-Girls (Act II., Sc. 3), and the struggle with the Boyg (Act II., Sc. 7), are foreshadowed in Asbjørnsen, and the concluding remark of Anders Ulsvolden evidently suggested to Ibsen the idea of incarnating Fantasy in Peer Gynt, as in Brand he had given us incarnate Will. But the Peer Gynt of the drama has really nothing in common with the Peer Gynt of the story, and the rest of the characters are not even remotely suggested. Many scattered traits and allusions, however, are borrowed from other legends in the same storehouse of grotesque and marvellous imaginings. Thus the story of the devil in the nutshell (Act I., Sc. 3) appears in Asbjørnsen under the title of "The Boy and the Devil."² The appearance of the Green-Clad One with her Ugly Brat, who offers Peer Gynt a goblet of beer (Act III., Sc. 3), is obviously suggested by an incident in "Berthe Tuppenhaug's Stories."³ Old Berthe,⁴ too, supplies the idea of correcting Peer Gynt's eyesight according to the standard of the hill-trolls (Act II., Sc. 6), as well as the germ of the fantastic yarn-ball episode in the last Act (Sc. 6). The castle, "East of the Sun and West of the Moon" (Act III., Sc. 4), gives its title to one of Asbjørnsen's stories,⁵ which may be read in English in Mr. Andrew Lang's Blue Fairy Book; and "Soria Moria Castle" is the title of another legend.⁶ Herr Passarge (in his Henrik Ibsen, Leipzig, 1883) goes so far as to trace the idea of Peer Gynt's shrinking

¹ Norske Huldre-Eventyr og Folkesagn, Christiania, 1848, p. 47. See also Copenhagen edition, 1879, p. 154.
² Norske Folke-og Huldre-Eventyr, Copenhagen, 1879, p. 44.
³ Ibid., p. 134.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 130, 139.
⁵ Ibid., p. 243.
⁶ Not included in the Copenhagen 1879 edition. See edition, Christiania, 1866, p. 115.
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from the casting-ladle, even though hell be the alternative (Act V., Sc. 7, etc.), to Asbjörnsen's story of "The Smith whom they dared not let into Hell;"* but the circumstances are so different, and Ibsen's idea is such an inseparable part of the ethical scheme of the drama, that we can scarcely take it to have been suggested by this (or any other) individual story. At the same time there is no doubt that "Folk-Lore of Peer Gynt" might form the subject of a much more extended study than our space or our knowledge admits of. The whole atmosphere of the first three acts and of the fifth is that of the Norwegian "Folk and Fairy Tales." A careful study of Asbjörnsen and Moe would probably reveal many direct suggestions besides those above enumerated. It must be remembered, too, that in the early sixties Ibsen was commissioned by the Norwegian Government to visit Romsdal and Söndmøre for the purpose of collecting folk-songs and legends, so that he must have come in direct personal contact with the mythopoeic faculty of the peasantry in its very strong-
exception of its symbolic scheme. At a second reading, with
the aid of such side-lights as we can here afford him, he will
probably find many of the obscurities vanish. But he must
not seek in Peer Gynt for a clear, consistent, cut-and-dried
allegory, with a place for everything and everything in its place.
It is not an allegory, but a phantasmagory. Its chief fascina-
tion, to our thinking (apart from its aforesaid charm as a mere
romance), lies in the multiplicity of meaning which may be read
into it. The poet, no doubt, had his own more or less distinct
and definable purpose in every scene, and this purpose it is
interesting to decipher. But Peer Gynt takes its place, as we
hold, on the summits of literature, precisely because it means
so much more than the poet consciously intended. Is not this
one of the characteristics of the masterpiece, that every one can
read in it his own secret? In the material world (though
Nature is very innocent of symbolic intention) each of us finds
for himself the symbols that have relevance and value for him;
and so it is with the poems which are instinct with true vitality.

The conscious and deliberate meanings of Peer Gynt fall
under three heads. First we have “allgemein-menschlich”
satire and symbolism, bearing upon human nature in general,
irrespective of race or nationality. Next we have satire upon
Norwegian human nature in particular, upon the religious and
political life of Norway as a nation. Lastly, we find a certain
number of local and ephemeral references—what, in the slang
of our stage, are called “topical allusions.” The English reader
would scarcely thank us if we attempted to identify and
elucidate all the sub-intentions of this third order. It will be
enough if we point out some of the most obvious as they occur.

In order to provide the reader with a clue to the complex
meanings of Peer Gynt, on its higher lines or planes of signifi-
cance, we cannot do better than quote some paragraphs from
the admirable summary of the drama given by Mr. P. H.
Wicksteed in his Four Lectures on Henrik Ibsen.ivo Mr.
Wicksteed is in such perfect sympathy with Henrik Ibsen in the stage
of his development marked by Brand and Peer Gynt, that he

1 London: Sonnenschein, 1892.
has understood these poems, to our thinking, at least as well as any other commentator, whether German or Scandinavian. He writes as follows:

"In Brand the hero is an embodied protest against the poverty of spirit and half-heartedness that Ibsen rebelled against in his countrymen. In Peer Gynt the hero is himself the embodiment of that spirit. In Brand the fundamental antithesis, upon which, as its central theme, the drama is constructed, is the contrast between the spirit of compromise on the one hand, and the motto 'everything or nothing' on the other. And Peer Gynt is the very incarnation of a compromising dread of decisive committal to any one course. In Brand the problem of self-realisation and the relation of the individual to his surroundings is obscurely struggling for recognition, and in Peer Gynt it becomes the formal theme upon which all the fantastic variations of the drama are built up. In both plays alike the problems of heredity and the influence of early surroundings are more than touched upon; and both alike culminate in the doctrine that the only redeeming power on earth or in heaven is the power of love.

"Peer Gynt, as already stated, stands for the Norwegian people, much as they are sketched in Brand, though with more brightness of colouring. Hence his perpetual 'hedging' and determination never to commit himself that he cannot draw back. Hence his fore-
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swing, self-poised, round the great central light. But what if a poor
devil can never puzzle out what on earth God did mean when he made
him? Why, then, he must feel it. But how often your 'feeling'
misses fire! Ay! there you have it. The devil has no stauncher ally
than want of perception! [Act V., Sc. 9.]

"But, after all, you may generally find out what God meant you for
if you will face facts. It is easy to find a refuge from facts in lies, in
self-deception, and in self-sufficiency. It is easy to take credit to your-
self for what circumstances have done for you, and lay upon circum-
stances what you owe to yourself. It is easy to think you are realising
yourself for refusing to become a 'pack-horse for the weal and woe of
others' [Act IV., Sc. i], keeping alternatives open and never closing
a door behind you, or burning your ships, and so always remaining the
master of the situation and self-possessed. If you choose to do these
easy things you may always 'get round' your difficulties [Act II., Sc.
7], but you will never get through them. You will remain master of
the situation indeed, but the situation will become poorer and narrower
every day. If you never commit yourself, you never express yourself,
and your self becomes less and less significant and decisive. Calcul-
ating selfishness is the annihilation of self."

The significance of the drama in relation to the poet's
countrymen is well indicated by Herr Jæger in his valuable
biographical study.1

"The contest," he says, "did not end with Brand. The following
year Ibsen stepped forward once more, armed with a new dramatic
poem. Peer Gynt stands in the closest connection with Brand. If
Brand is the antithesis of the typical Norwegian, Peer Gynt is the
man himself; the former represents what the Norwegian nation lacks,
the latter what it is. Already in Brand's sketch of the Norwegian
people we have the outlines of Peer Gynt's portrait. In the following
verses, for instance, we find all the essential traits:--

Go but around in this our land,
and question every man you meet,
you'll find each one has learnt to be
a little bit of everything.

In all he's but a little bit;
his faults, his merits, go not far;
a fraction he in great and small,
a fraction, both in ill and good;
and, what's the worst, the fraction's parts,
each of them murders all the rest."

1 Henrik Ibsen, 1828-1888. Et Litterat Lænsbillede. Copenhagen,
1888.

* That is, the satiric war which the poet was waging.
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"Peer Gynt, then, is the nation thrown into relief as a single typical figure; all the defects which Ibsen saw in his fellow-countrymen are to be found in him; he is half-heartedness, want of character, egotism personified. . . . At the same time, Peer Gynt could never have been the complete and living work it is had the poet adhered strictly and exclusively to the conception of his hero as a national type. In this case, too, he began by conceiving an abstraction, and ended by portraying a living, individual character.

"Peer Gynt is not the Norseman in general, but the Norseman of a particular epoch, to wit, the end of the romantic period. Attacks on the outworks of romanticism are to be found even in Brand—the sheriff's enthusiasm for the age of King Bele, for example. In Peer Gynt the blow is aimed at the very heart of the system. Similar types from the transition period between romanticism and our modern world are to be found in several other literatures. In Turgenieff's Rudin, for example, and in Spielhagen's Problematische Naturen . . . we find personages who have this in common with Peer Gynt, that they are visionaries, incapable of playing their part in the life of reality. Ibsen, however, has gone his own way; while the others went to the cultured classes for their typical figures, he has taken his from among the people. Peer Gynt is not, like the others, a product of the romanticism of culture, but of the national, popular romanticism, on which the cultured variety was based. Thus not only the name, Peer Gynt, but various details of
and those he has only dreamt of, but mixes them all up in one hotchpotch. [Act II., Sc. 4.]

"Whenever he is confronted by the earnest things of real life he has recourse to the plan his mother has taught him; he takes refuge in his fantastic world, to"

"'Forget what's awry and crooked, and all that is sharp and sore.'"

He invariably 'goes roundabout'—never straight through. Not even by his mother's death-bed [Act III., Sc. 4] will he look the truth in the face, but spirits her and himself away from it in a tissue of inventions.

What a difference between Brand's hard but honest behaviour towards his dying mother, and the pitiful fantasy-mongering with which Peer Gynt lies his mother away from life. There can be no doubt that Ibsen conceived Åse's death-scene as a contrast and a parallel to the death of Brand's mother.

"The double existence which Peer Gynt thus leads necessarily develops in his character the half-heartedness of the true romanticist; it develops cowardice and impotence, egoism and bungling; it opens an impassable gulf between desire and action, between willing a thing and carrying it out; its motto is the characteristic—"

"'Ay, think of it,—wish it done—will it to boot,—
But do it—! No, that's past my understanding.'—[Act III., Sc. 1.]

"All that Peer Gynt does is only half done; he rubs out with one hand what he has done with the other, and accordingly he is and remains characterless and effaced, and must end in the casting-ladle [Act V., Sc. 7], like everyone who has made of himself, not a personality, but only an egoist, the caricature of a personality—who has not 'been himself,' but has only been 'to himself—enough.' [Act II., Sc. 6].

In reading Peer Gynt one is reminded involuntarily of H. C. Ørsted's maxim: 'Forget thyself, but never lose thy self.' It is in Peer Gynt's nature that he should completely reverse this maxim in practice; he loses himself, though he has never forgotten himself.

"Thus the figure, which was originally conceived as a national type, underwent a transformation into a personage typical of a special period, the latest phase of which Ibsen himself had lived through, and with which, in producing Brand and Peer Gynt, he finally and decisively broke.

"Directly satirical sallies are obviously much rarer in Peer Gynt than in Brand. The first three acts contain only one instance, a bit at Norwegian chauvinism in the patriotic maxim of the Old Man of the Dovre—"

"'The cow gives cakes and the bullock mead; ask not if its taste be sour or sweet; the main matter is, and you mustn't forget it, it's all of it home-brewed.'—[Act II., Sc. 6.]"
"A similar satirical passage addressed specially to the 'Målstræver' is introduced into the scene in the mad-house at Cairo [Act IV., Sc. 13], where Huhu deprecates the extinction of the language of the orang-outangas. The characters of the two other madmen, who are brought forward in this scene, are satiric references to conditions then existing in the north. The Fellah with the royal mummy on his back is—like Trumpeterstråle—a cut at the Swedes, the mummy being Charles the Twelfth. Like the Fellah, it is implied, the Swedes are extremely proud of their 'Hero-king,' and yet during the Dano-German war they showed not the smallest sign of having anything in common with him, unless it were that they, like him, 'kept still and completely dead.' In the delusion of the minister Husseini, who imagines himself a pen, there is a general reference to the futile address- and note-mongering which went on in Norwegian-Swedish officialdom during the Dano-German war, and a more special one to an eminent Swedish statesman, who, during the war, had been extremely proud of his official notes, and had imagined that by means of them he might exercise a decisive influence on the course of events.

"General political and psychological considerations, however, and not special and occasional satiric objects, were those which mainly influenced the poet during the production of Peer Gynt; and accordingly, in drawing in the hero a transition-figure characteristic of our century, he created a type, which has relevance far beyond the limits whether of Norway or of Scandinavia."

Readers who desire further assistance in solving the riddles of Peer Gynt will find an elaborate, not to say laborious, commentary on the poem in Passarge's Henrik Ibsen: ein Beitrag zur neuesten Geschichte der norwegischen National-literatur (Leipzig, 1883). Passarge quotes largely from Valfrid Vasenius's Henrik Ibsen: ett Skaldepòrratt (Stockholm, 1882), which may also be consulted, not without profit, by those who read Swedish. Both Passarge and Vasenius, however, attempt to compress the

1 "Målstræver" may be translated "language reformer." It was the name given to a party which desired to substitute a language compounded from the various local dialects, for the Norwegian of the bourgeoisie and of literature, which they called Danish, and declared to be practically a foreign tongue to the peasants and the lower classes generally. The peasants, they argued (like Huhu's orang-outangas), lived and died "uninterpreted." The movement attained no little force in the sixties and seventies, and a considerable literature sprang up in the so-called "mål," the work of such men as Ivar Asen, A. O. Vinje, and Kristofer Janson. Some of the dialect poems which the movement produced, more especially those of Ivar Asen, are highly esteemed even by the opponents of the "Målstræv."
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poem into a mould of scholastic psychology and ethics which it bursts on every hand. The phrase "ondoyant et divers" might have been invented to characterise Peer Gynt. A more profitable commentary, both from the literary-historical and the philosophic point of view, will be found in Auguste Ehrhard's Henrik Ibsen et le Théâtre Contemporain (Paris, 1892), probably the most thorough-going and competent piece of Ibsen criticism which has yet appeared. M. Ehrhard (in a passage suggested by Henrik Jæger's essay on "Synnøve Solbakken and its Period" in his Norske Forfattere) tries to show that Ibsen deliberately intended Peer Gynt as a satiric counterblast to Björnson's first and most characteristic peasant-novel. In this, to our thinking, he goes too far. Synnøve Solbakken is no doubt a typical production of the period of national romanticism, against which (as we have seen above) Peer Gynt marks the reaction. But the analogies on which M. Ehrhard founds his theory that Peer and Solveig are designed as counterparts to Thorbjørn and Synnøve seem to us fortuitous where they are not purely fanciful. Again, the French critic accepts with too great facility Herr Georg Brandes's very inadequate interpretation of the Boyg as representing "Akkordens And," the spirit of compromise, and his criticism of the yarn-ball scene (Act V., Sc. 6.) as an utter-

1 Deeming it unnecessary to trouble the English reader with niceties of pronunciation, we have represented the "Bøig" of the original by the more easily pronounceable "Boyg." The root-idea seems to be that of bending, of sinuosity; compare Norwegian bøie, German bögen, to bend. The German translator, both in the folk-tale and in the drama, renders "Bögen" by "der Krumme." So far as we are aware, the name occurs in no other folk-tale save that of Peer Gynt. It is not generic, but denotes an individual troll-monster. We may pretty safely conjecture that the idea of this vague, shapeless, ubiquitous, inevitable, invulnerable Thing was what chiefly fascinated the poet's imagination in the legend of Peer Gynt. There are no doubt many possible sub-intentions in the Boyg as presented by Ibsen, and we may, if we please, understand it as the Spirit of Compromise among other things. But the key to its primary significance is unquestionably to be found in Act IV., Sc. 12.
ance of personal self-reproach on Ibsen's part, Peer Gynt being "too miserable a creature" ever to have experienced such an emotion. Herr Brandes is justly esteemed one of the most competent of living critics, but his treatment of Peer Gynt is decidedly perfunctory. Yet again, the reader must judge for himself how much weight to attach to M. Ehrhard's suggestion that Ibsen had Goethe's Faust distinctly present to his mind in conceiving Peer Gynt. To our thinking, the analogies on which he dwells are, as in the case of Synnøve Solbakken, either fanciful or fortuitous. The redemption of the hero through a woman's love is the only real point of similarity; and this we take to be a mere commonplace of romanticism, which Ibsen, though he satirised it, had by no means finally outgrown when he wrote Peer Gynt. Peer's return to Solveig is (in the original) a passage of the most poignant lyric beauty, but it is surely a shirking, not a solution, of the ethical problem. It would be impossible to the Ibsen of to-day, who knows (none better) that "No man² can save his brother's soul, or pay his brother's
Act, for example, twenty-five out of the forty lines end in double rhymes, and there are three sets of three lines ending in the same double rhyme. The tintinnabulation of these double rhymes, then, gives to most of the scenes a metrical character which it might puzzle Mr. Swinburne himself to reproduce in English. Moreover, the ordinary objections to rhymed translations seemed to apply with exceptional force in the case of Peer Gynt. The characteristic quality of its style is its vernacular ease and simplicity. It would have been heart-breaking work (apart from its extreme difficulty) to substitute for this racy terseness the conventional graces of English poetic diction, padding here and perverting there. From such a task even a master of rhymes and metres might well have shrank, as from a "labor improbus" in a double sense; and we were the less tempted to essay it as we knew ourselves no masters either of metre or rhyme. To a prose translation, on the other hand, the objections seemed even greater. It is possible to give in prose some faint adumbration of epic dignity and even of lyric loveliness; but we had here no epic, no lyric, to deal with; not even a poetic drama, like Tasso or Hernani, based on a single rhetorical convention. We found (though the statement may at first seem paradoxical) that the same vernacular simplicity of style which forbade a translation in rhyme, militated no less strongly against a translation in prose. The characteristic quality of the poet's achievement lay precisely in his having given to the most easy and natural dialogue (natural in expression, however fantastic in idea) new beauty, aptitude, and elevation by the aid of rhythm and rhyme. Entirely to

3 Brott—og brott igjen oø binder——
Djævelen stå i alt som minder——
Djævelen stå i alle kvinder——

Uden en. Hvem er den ene——
Fort! Til fær din e. Kjære, ven®——
Ti! Du kan umuligt men®——

Godt! så se da hvem som vinder——
Djævelen stå i alt som minder——
Djævelen stå i alle kvinder——
eliminate these graces of form was to reduce the poem to prose indeed. It seemed little better than casting a silver statue into the crucible and asking the world to divine from the ingot something of the sculptor's power. A prose translation, in short, could not but strip Fantasy of its pinions, rob Satire of its barbs. We put the matter to the test; for one of us made a complete translation in prose, with some vague intention of publishing it along with the original text—the Norwegian on one page, the English on the next. It was found, however, that the expense of such a publication would be prohibitive; and we rejected at once all idea of publishing the English alone, our own dissatisfaction with it being reinforced by Henrik Ibsen's express declaration that he would rather let Peer Gynt remain untranslated than see it rendered in prose. But, as there is no copyright between England and the Scandinavian kingdoms, it was not in Ibsen's power to lay upon others the injunction which to us was absolutely binding. We knew that, in one form or another, the poem was certain ere long to be translated;
version is designed to facilitate, not to supersede, the study of
the original, for all who would really master a poem which we,
its translators, are the first to declare essentially untranslatable.
But, apart from our desire to provide a "crib" to Peer Gynt,
we felt that, in taking the liberty of suppressing the rhymes, we
abjured our right to any other liberty whatsoever. A rhymed
paraphrase of a great poem may have a beauty of its own;
an unrhymed version must be no paraphrase but a faithful
transcript, else "the ripple of laughing rhyme" has been
sacrificed in vain. Our fundamental principle, then, has been
to represent the original line for line; and to this principle we
have adhered with the utmost fidelity. There are probably not
fifty cases in the whole poem in which a word has been
transferred from one line to another, and then only some
pronoun or auxiliary verb. It is needless to say that in adhering
to this principle we have often had to resist temptation. Many
cases presented themselves in which greater clearness, grace,
and vigour might easily have been attained by transferring a
word or phrase from this line to that, or even altering the
sequence of a whole group of lines. In no case have we yielded
to such temptation, feeling that, our rule once relaxed, we
should insensibly but inevitably lapse into mere paraphrase.
Temptation beset us with especial force in the less vital
passages of the poem. The first scene of the fourth Act, for
example, is written in a spirit of reckless whimsicality, not to
say sheer burlesque, and the style becomes in places decidedly
flaccid. In these places it would have been easy to give our
rendering some approach to grace and point by disregarding
inversions and other defects of expression, justified in the
original by the wit and spirit of the rhymes, but of course
deprived in our transcript of any such excuse. Here, as else-
where, we were proof against temptation; it is for our readers
to decide whether our constancy was heroic or pedantic.

It would be folly to pretend either that we have reproduced
every word of the original, or that we have avoided all
necessity for "padding." The chief drawback of our line-for-
line principle is that it has debarred us from eking out the
deficiency of one line with the superfluity of the next. We
trust, however, that few essential ideas, or even words, of the original will be found quite unaccounted-for; while with regard to padding, to *cheville*, we have tried, where we found it absolutely forced upon us, to use only such mechanical parts of speech as introduced no new idea into the context. Only in the rarest cases have we made use of an epithet not supplied us in the original. For example, we have had no scruple (on occasion) in saying "very true" or "true indeed" where Ibsen said only "true"; we may sometimes, but not often, have said "milk-white" or "sky-blue" where he said only "white" or "blue"; we have never (to the best of our belief) made a horse "white" or a rose "red" when its colour was undetermined in the original. We have found by experiment that the fact of writing in measure has frequently enabled us to keep much closer to the original than would have been possible in prose. This is not in reality so strange as it may at first sight appear. A prose translation of verse can avoid paraphrase only at the cost of grotesque inelegance; whereas in rendering metre into
INTRODUCTION.

Hvor lysi! | Nej, skulde | du sæt | en slig!
Skotted ned | paa skøen | og det hvil. | de spræde!
Og saa bøldt | hun i mo- | derens skjær. | teflig,
og bør | en såme- | bog svøbt i | et klæde.

Nøtterne | tænge og | døgene | tømme
bør mig det | bød at | nü fik jeg | kømme.
Det blev som | livet var | slukket der- | nede;
jeg kunde Ik. | ke hjerte- | fyldt lè el. | ler græde;
jeg vidste Ik. | ke tryggt hvad | sind du | åtte;
jeg vidste | kun tryggt hvad | jeg skulde | og mætte.

We have not attempted to reproduce each line of this measure accurately, foot for foot, holding it enough to observe the law of the four accents. On the average, probably, our lines will be found somewhat longer than those of the original, for we have throughout been conscious of a tendency to increase the proportion of three-syllable to two-syllable feet. Where the four-accent rule is obviously departed from, it will generally be found to be in obedience to the original; for Ibsen now and then (but very rarely) introduces a line or couplet of three or of five accents.

Of the eight scenes in which this measure is not employed, three—Act I. Sc. 1, Act II. Sc. 1, and Act IV. Sc. 7—are in a perfectly regular trochaic measure of four accents, the lines containing seven or eight syllables, according as the rhymes are single or double. For example:

Først saa | rénder | dø till. | fjelds
måned-. | vis i | tråle | ñannen,
sør at | vêde | rën paa | ñannen,
kømmer | hjém med | réven | pels,
úden | byrde, | úden | vildt;—
óg till. | slút med | ñåbne | ñjne
måer | dû at | ñåa mig | bøldt
find de | værste | skjælter- | ñågne.

In dealing with this measure, we have not thought it necessary to follow the precise arrangement of the original in the alternation of seven and eight syllable lines. In other words, we have sometimes represented a seven-syllable line by one of eight
syllables, an eight-syllable line by one of seven. In the short first scene of the second act, however, every line represents accurately the length of the corresponding line in the original.

The fourth scene of Act II. is written in lines of three accents, consisting for the most part of trochees, dactyls, and amphibrachs. For example:

Fløgt over | Gændin | éggen.
Digt og for- | båndet | løgn !
opover | brættelse | væggen
med brúden | — og drúkken | et døgn ;
jåget af | høg og | glénter,
trødet af | trød og | sligt,
tåret med | gälne | jénter ; —
løgn og for | båndet | digt !

The last scene of the third Act—Åse's death-scene—is written in lines of three accents with alternate double and single rhymes, the normal lines consisting of three amphi-
INTRODUCTION.

Finally, the sixth scene of Act V. consists mainly of eight-line lyrical stanzas, with two accents in each line, Peer Gynt's interspersed remarks being in trochaic verses, like those of Act I., Sc. 1. In such intercalated passages, so to speak, as the rhapsodies of Huhu and the Fellah in Act IV., Sc. 13, and the Pastor's speech at the grave in Act V., Sc. 3, we have accurately reproduced the measures of the original. The Pastor's speech is the only passage in the whole poem which is couched in iambic pentameters.

In dealing with idioms and proverbial expressions, our practice has not been very consistent. We have sometimes, where they seemed peculiarly racy and expressive, translated them literally; in other cases we have had recourse to the nearest English equivalent, even where the metaphor employed is quite different. In the latter instances we have usually given the literal rendering of the phrase in a footnote.

W. A.

C. A.
CHARACTERS.

ÄSE,¹ a peasant's widow.
PEER GYNT,² her son.
TWO OLD WOMEN with corn-sacks. ASLAK, a smith. WEDDING-GUESTS. A MASTER-COOK, A FIDDLER, etc.
A MAN AND WIFE, newcomers to the district.
SOLVEIG and LITTLE HELGA, their daughters.
THE FARMER AT HEGSTAD.
INGRID, his daughter.
THE BRIDEGROOM and His PARENTS.
THREE SÅTER- GIRLS. A GREEN-CLAD WOMAN.
THE OLD MAN OF THE DOVRÆ.
A TROLL-COURTIER. SEVERAL OTHERS. TROLL-MAIDENS and TROLL-URCHINS. A COUPLE OF WITCHES. BROWNIES, NIXIES, GNOMEs, etc.
AN UGLY BEAT. A VOICE IN THE DARKNESS. BIRD-CRIES.
KARI, a cottar's wife.
MASTER COTTON, MONSIEUR BALLON, HERREN VON EBERKOFF and TRUMPETERSTRÄLE, gentlemen on their travels. A THIEF and A RECEIVER.
ANITA, daughter of a Bedouin chief.
ARABS, FEMALE SLAVES, DANCING-GIRLS, etc.
PROFESSOR BRIFFENFELDT, Dr. phil., director of the madhouse at Cairo.
HUHU, a language-reformer from the coast of Malabar. HUSSEIN, an eastern Minister. A FELLAH, with a royal mummy.
SEVERAL MADMEN, with their KEEPERS.
ANorwegian Skipper and His Crew. A STRANGE PASSENGER.
A PASTOR. A FUNERAL-PARTY. A PARISH-OFFICER. A BUTTON-MOULDERT. A LEAN PERSON.

(The action, which opens in the beginning of the present century, and ends towards our own days, takes place partly in Gadbrandsdale, and on the mountains around it, partly on the coast of Morocco, in the desert of Sahara, in a madhouse at Cairo, at sea, etc.)

¹ Pronounce Öse. The letter å is pronounced like the e in "home."
² Pronounce Paar Gënt—the G hard, the y like the German modified å.
PEER GYNT.

ACT FIRST.

SCENE FIRST.

(A wooded hillside near Hæ's farm. A river rushes down...
See, you dare not!

It's a lie from first to last.

Peer
(stopping).

It is true—each blessed word!

Ask
(confronting him).

Don't you blush before your mother?
First you skulk among the mountains
monthlong in the busiest season,
stalking reindeer in the snows;
home you come then, torn and tattered,
gun amissing, likewise game;
and at last, with open eyes,
think to get me to believe
all the wildest hunters'-lies!—
Well, where did you find the buck, then?

Peer.

West near Gendin.\(^1\)

Ask
(laughing scornfully).

Ah! Indeed!

Peer.

Keen the blast towards me swept;
hidden by an alder-clump,
he was scraping in the snow-crust
after lichen—

\(^3\) Pronounce Vendeen.
Sc. 1]

PEER GYNT.

ÅSE
(as before).

Doubtless, yes!

PEER.

Breathlessly I stood and listened,
heard the crunching of his hoof,
saw the branches of one antler.
Softly then among the boulders
I crept forward on my belly.
Crouched in the moraine I peered up;—
such a buck, so sleek and fat,
you, I'm sure, have ne'er set eyes on.

ÅSE.
Ase
(involuntarily).

Jesus save us——!

Peer.  Have you ever
chanced to see the Gendin-Edge?
Nigh on four miles long it stretches
sharp before you like a scythe.
Down o'er glaciers, landslips, scaurs,
down the toppling grey moraines,
you can see, both right and left,
straight into the tums that slumber,
black and sluggish, more than seven
hundred fathoms deep below you.

Right along the Edge we two
clove our passage through the air.

Never rode I such a colt!
Straight before us as we rushed
'twas as though there glittered suns.
Brown-backed eagles that were sailing
in the wide and dizzy void
half-way 'twixt us and the tums,
dropped behind, like motes in air.

Ice-floes on the shores broke crashing,
but no murmur reached my ears.
Only sprites of dizziness¹ sprang,
dancing, round;—they sang, they swung,
circle-wise, past sight and hearing!

Ase
(dissey).

Oh, God save me!

¹ This is the poet's own explanation of this difficult passage.
"Hvirivens vatter," he writes, is equivalent to "Svimmelhedens
under"—i.e., spirits of dizziness or vertigo.
All at once,
at a desperate, break-neck spot,
rose a great cock-ptarmigan,
flapping, cackling, terrified,
from the crack where he lay hidden
at the buck's feet on the Edge.
Then the buck shied half around,
leapt sky-high, and down we plunged
both of us into the depths!

(ÆSE totters, and catches at the trunk of a tree.
PEER GYNT continues:)
Mountain walls behind us, black,
and below a void unfathomed!
First we clove through banks of mist,
in a moment clashed together,
scattering foam-flecks all around.

There we lay then, floating, plashing.—
But at last we made our way
somehow to the northern shore;
buck, he swam, I clung behind him:—
I ran homewards——

 Åse.

But the buck, dear?

Peer.

He's there still, for aught I know;—

(Snaps his fingers, turns on his heel, and adds:)
catch him, and you're welcome to him!

Åse.

And your neck you haven't broken?
Haven't broken both your thighs?
and your backbone, too, is whole?
Oh, dear Lord—what thanks, what praise,
should be thine who helped my boy!
There's a rent, though, in your breeches;
but it's scarce worth talking of
when one thinks what dreadful things
might have come of such a leap——!

(Stops suddenly, looks at him open-mouthed and
wide-eyed; cannot find words for some time,
but at last bursts out:)

Oh, you devil's story-teller,
Cross of Christ, how you can lie!
All this screed you foist upon me,
I remember now, I knew it
when I was a girl of twenty.
Gudbrand Giesnê1 it befell,
ever you, you—

PER.
Me as well.
Such a thing can happen twice.

A Se
(exasperated).

Yes, a lie, turned topsy-turvy,
can be prinked and tinselled out,
decked in plumage new and fine,
till none knows its lean old carcass.
That is just what you've been doing,
vamping up things, wild and grand,
banishing with eagles' backs.
Darling, pretty little mother,
you are right in every word;—
don’t be cross, be happy—

ÆSE.

Silence!

Could I, if I would, be happy,
with a pig like you for son?
Think how bitter I must find it,
I, a poor defenceless widow,
ever to be put to shame!

(Weeping again.)

How much have we now remaining
from your grandsire's days of glory?
Where are now the sacks\(^1\) of coin
left behind by Rasmus Gynt?
Ah, your father lent them wings,—
lavished them abroad like sand,
buying land in every parish,
driving round in gilded chariots.
Where is all the wealth he wasted
at the famous winter-banquet,
when each guest sent glass and bottle
shivering 'gainst the wall behind him?

PEER.

Where’s the snow of yester-year?

ÆSE.

Silence, boy, before your mother!
See the farmhouse! Every second
window-pane is stopped with clouts.

\(^1\) Literally, "bushels."
Sc. i.]  

PEER GYNT.  

Hedges, fences, all are down,  
beasts exposed to wind and weather,  
fields and meadows lying fallow,  
every month a new distraint——

PEER.

Come now, stop this old-wife's talk!  
Many a time has luck seemed drooping,  
and sprung up as high as ever!

ASE.

Salt-strewn is the soil it grew from.  
Lord, but you're a rare one, you,—  
just as pert and jaunty still,  
just as bold as when the Pastor,  
newly come from Copenhagen,  
had you tell your Christian name.
Ah, you're big and strong enough,
you should be a staff and pillar
for your mother's frail old age,—
you should keep the farm-work going,
guard the remnants of your gear;—

(Crying again.)

oh, God help me, small's the profit
you have been to me, you scamp!
Lounging by the hearth at home,
grubbing in the charcoal embers;
or, round all the country, frightening
girls away from merry-making—
shaming me in all directions,
fighting with the worst rascallions—

PEER
(turning away from her).

Let me be.

ASK
(following him).

Can you deny
that you were the foremost brawler
in the mighty battle royal
fought the other day at Lundë,
when you raged like mongrels mad?
Who was it but you that broke
Blacksmith Aslak's arm for him,—
or at any rate that wrenched one
of his fingers out of joint?

PEER.

Who has filled you with such prate?
Sc. i.] Peer Gynt.

Ase
(hoity).

Cottar Kari heard the yells!

Peer
(rubbing his elbow).

Maybe, but 'twas I that howled.

Ase.

You?

Peer.

Yes, mother,—I got beaten.

Ase.

What d'you say?
What if he be ne'er so limber,
need you therefore be a weakling?

PEER.

Though I hammer or am hammered,—
still we must have lamentations.

(Laughing.)

Cheer up, mother——

ÆSE.

What? You're lying

now again?

PEER.

Yes, just this once.
Come now, wipe your tears away;—

(Clenching his left hand.)
see,—with this same pair of tongs,
thus I held the smith bent double,
while my sledge-hammer right fist——

ÆSE.

Oh, you brawler! You will bring me
with your doings to the grave!

PEER.

No, you're worth a better fate;
better twenty thousand times!
Little, ugly, dear old mother,
you may safely trust my word,—
all the parish shall exalt you;
only wait till I have done
something—something really grand!
Sc. i.]  

**PEER GYNT.**

**ASE**  
*(contemptuously).*

**You!**

**PEER.**

Who knows what may befall one!

**ASE.**

Would you'd get so far in sense  
one day as to do the darning  
of your breeches for yourself!

**PEER**  
*(hottly).*

I will be a king, a kaiser!
had you not been steeped for ever
in your lies and trash and moonshine.
Hegstad's girl was fond of you.
Easily you could have won her
had you wooed her with a will——

PEER.

Could I?

ÅSE.
The old man's too feeble
not to give his child her way.
He is stiff-necked in a fashion;
but at last 'tis Ingrid rules;
and where she leads, step by step,
stumps the gaffer, grumbling, after.

(Begins to cry again.)

Ah, my Peer!—a golden girl—
land entailed on her! Just think,
had you set your mind upon it,
you'd be now a bridegroom brave,—
you that stand here grimed and tattered!

PEER

(briskly).

Come, we'll go a-wooing, then!

ÅSE.

Where?

PEER.

At Hegstad!

ÅSE.

Ah, poor boy;
Hegstad way is barred to wooers!
Sc. i.]  

**PEER GYNT.**

**PEER.**

How is that?

**ÅSE.**

Ah, I must sigh!

Lost the moment, lost the luck——

**PEER.**

Speak!

**ÅSE**

*(sobbing).*

While in the Wester-hills

you in air were riding reindeer,

here Mads Moen's¹ won the girl!

**PEER.**
Pie now! Would you crown our miseries
with a load of all men's scorn?

Peer.

Never fear; 'twill all go well.

(Shouting and laughing at the same time.)
Mother, jump! We'll spare the waggon;
'twould take time to fetch the mare up——

(Lifts her up in his arms).

As.

Put me down!

Peer.

No, in my arms
I will bear you to the wedding!

(Wades out into the stream.)

As.

Help! The Lord have mercy on us!
Peer! We're drowning——

Peer.

I was born
for a braver death——

As.

Ay, true;
sure enough you'll hang at last!

(Tugging at his hair.)

Oh, you brute!
Sc. i.]  PEER GYNT.  

PEER.

Keep quiet now; here the bottom’s slippery-slimy.

ÆSE.

Ass!

PEER.

That’s right, don’t spare your tongue; that does no one any harm. Now it’s shelving up again—

ÆSE.

Don’t you drop me!

PEER.

Heave! Heave!
That's a miserable fate!

Put me down!

First to the wedding.
Be my spokesman. You're so clever;
talk to him, the old curmudgeon;
say Mads Moen's good for nothing——

Put me down!

And tell him then
what a rare lad is Peer Gynt.

Truly, you may swear to that!
Fine's the character I'll give you.
Through and through I'll show you up;
all about your devil's pranks
I will tell them straight and plain——

Will you?

(kicking with rage).

I won't stay my tongue
till the old man sets his dog
at you, as you were a tramp!
Sc. i.] PEER GYNT. 19

PEER.

Hm; then I must go alone.

ÆSE.

Ay, but I'll come after you!

PEER.

Mother dear, you haven't strength——

ÆSE.

Strength? When I'm in such a rage, I could crush the rocks to powder! Huf! I'd make a meal of flints! Put me down!

PEER.
PEER

Perch you on the mill-house roof.

(He puts her up on the roof. Ase screams.)

Ase.

Lift me down!

Peer.

Yes, if you'll listen—

Ase.

Rubbish!

Peer.

Dearest mother, pray——

Ase

(throwing a sod of grass at him).

Lift me down this moment, Peer!

Peer.

If I dared, be sure I would.

(Coming nearer.)

Now remember, sit quite still.
Do not sprawl and kick about;
do not tug and tear the shingles,—
else 'twill be the worse for you;
you might topple down.

Ase.

You beast!

Peer.

Do not kick!
Peer Gynt

Aск.
I'd have you blown,
like a changeling, into space! ¹

Пер.
Мother, sir!

Aск.
Bah!

Пер.
Rather give your
blessing on my undertaking.
Will you? Eh?

Aск.
I'll thrash you soundly,
smiling fellow though you be!

Пер.
Well, good-bye then, mother dear!
Patience; I'll be back ere long.

(As going, but turns, holds up his finger warningly, and says:)

Children now, don't kick and sprawl!

(Goes.)

Aск.
Peer!—God help me, now he's off;
Ruin-deer-rider! Liar! Hei!
Will you listen!—No, he's striding
over the meadow!—!

(Shears.) Help! I'm dizzy!

(Two old women, with sacks on their backs, come
down the path to the mill.)

¹ It is believed in some parts of Norway that “changelings” (elf-children left in the stead of those taken away by the fairies) can, by certain spells, be made to fly away up the chimney.
FIRST WOMAN.
Christ, who's screaming?

ASE.
It is I!

SECOND WOMAN.
ASE! Well, you are exalted!

ASE.
This won't be the end of it;—
soon, God help me, I'll be heaven-high!

FIRST WOMAN.
Bless your passing!

ASE.
Fetch a ladder;
I must be down! That devil Peer——

SECOND WOMAN.
Peer! Your son?

ASE.
Now you can say you have seen how he behaves.

FIRST WOMAN.
We'll bear witness.

ASE.
Only help me;
straight to Hegstad I will hasten——

SECOND WOMAN.
Is he there?
Peer Gynt.

First Woman.

You'll be revenged, then;
Aslak Smith will be there too.

Ase

(wringing her hands).

Oh, God help me with my boy;
they will kill him ere they're done!

First Woman.

Oh, that lot has oft been talked of;
comfort you: what must be must be!

Second Woman.
SCENE SECOND.

(A hillock, covered with bushes and heather. The high-road runs behind it; a fence between.)

(PEER GYNT comes along a footpath, goes quickly up to the fence, stops, and looks out over the stretch of country below.)

PEER.

There it lies, Hegstad. Soon I'll have reached it.

(Puts one leg over the fence; then hesitates.)

Wonder if Ingrid's alone in the house now?

(Shades his eyes with his hand, and looks out.)

No; to the farm guests are swarming like gnats.—

Hm, to turn back now perhaps would be wisest.

(Draws back his leg.)

Still they must titter behind your back,
and whisper so that it burns right through you.

(Moves a few steps away from the fence, and begins
absently plucking leaves.)

Ah, if I'd only a good strong dram now.
Or if I could pass to and fro unseen.—
Or were I unknown.—Something proper and strong
were the best thing of all, for the laughter don't bite then.

(Looks around suddenly as though afraid; then
hides among the bushes. Some WEDDING-1
GUESTS pass by, going downwards towards the
farm.)

1 "Sendingsfolk," literally, "folks with presents." When the Norwegan peasants are bidden to a wedding-feast, they bring with them presents of eatables.
A MAN

(in conversation as they pass).

His father was drunken, his mother is weak.

A WOMAN.

Y, then it's no wonder the lad's good for nought.

(They pass on. Presently PEER GYNT comes forward, his face flushed with shame. He peers after them.)

PEER

(softly).

'as it me they were talking of?

(With a forced shrug.)
None of them glitters like him in the sunshine.—
Down by the fence stand the people in clusters,
lifting their hats, and agape gazing upwards.
Women are curtseying. All the world knows him,
Kaiser Peer Gynt, and his thousands of henchmen.
Sixpenny pieces and glittering shillings
over the roadway he scatters like pebbles.
Rich as a lord grows each man in the parish.
High o'er the ocean Peer Gynt goes a-riding.
Engelland's Prince on the seashore awaits him;
there too await him all Engelland's maidens.
Engelland's nobles and Engelland's Kaiser,
see him come riding and rise from their banquet.
Raising his crown, hear the Kaiser address him——

ASLAK THE SMITH
(to some other young men, passing along the road).
Just look at Peer Gynt there, the drunken swine——!

PEER
(starting half up).
What, Kaiser——!

THE SMITH
(leaning against the fence and grinning).
Up with you, Peer, my lad!

PEER.
What the devil? The Smith! What do you want here?

THE SMITH
(to the others).
He hasn't got over the Lundé-sпрее yet.
Sc. ii.] Peer Gynt.

Peer
(jumping up).
You'd better be off!

The Smith.
I am going, yes.
But tell us, where have you dropped from, man?
You've been gone six weeks. Were you troll-taken, eh?

Peer.
I have been doing strange deeds, Aslak Smith!

The Smith
(winking to the others).
Let us hear them, Peer!

Peer.
They are nought to you.

The Smith
(after a pause).
You're going to Hegstad?

Peer.
No.

The Smith.
Time was
they said that the girl there was fond of you.

Peer.
You grimy crow——!

The Smith
(falling back a little).
Keep your temper, Peer!
Though Ingrid has jilted you, others are left;—
think—son of Jon Gynt! Come on to the feast;
you'll find there both lambkins and widows well on—

PEER.

To hell—!

THE SMITH.

You will surely find one that will have you.—
Good evening! I'll give your respects to the bride.—

(They go off, laughing and whispering.)

PEER

(looks after them a while, then makes a defiant
motion and turns half round).

For my part, may Ingrid of Hegstad go marry
whoever she pleases. It's all one to me.

(Looks down at his clothes.)

My breeches are torn. I am ragged and grim.—
If only I had something new to put on now.

(Stamps on the ground.)

If only I could, with a butcher-grip,
tear out the scorched from their very vitals!

(Looks round suddenly.)

What was that? Who was it that tittered behind there?
Hm, I certainly thought— No no, it was no one.—
I'll go home to mother.

(Begins to go upwards, but stops again and listens
towards Hegstad.)

They're playing a dance!

(Gazes and listens; moves downwards step by step,
his eyes glisten; he rubs his hands down his
thighs.)
Now the lasses do swarm! Six or eight to a man!

A, galloping death,—I must join in the frolic!—

What about mother, perched up on the mill-house——

*His eyes are drawn downwards again; he leaps and laughs.*

Aye, how the Halling⁰ flies over the green!

O, Guttorm, he can make his fiddle speak out!

Gurgles and booms like a foss² o'er a scaur.

And then all that glittering bevy of girls!—

A, galloping death, I must join in the frolic!

*Leaps over the fence and goes down the road.*

SCENE THIRD.
A MAN.

Thanks to you, friend; but you fill up too quick.

A LAD

(to the fiddler, as he flies past, holding a girl by the hand).

To it now, Gutterm, and don't spare the fiddlestrings!

THE GIRL.

Scrape till it echoes out over the meadows!

OTHER GIRLS

(standing in a ring round a lad who is dancing).

That's a rare thing!

A GIRL.

He has legs that can lift him!

THE LAD

(dancing).

The roof here is high,¹ and the walls wide asunder!

THE BRIDEGROOM

(comes whimpering up to his father, who is standing talking with some other men, and twitches his jacket).

Father, she will not; she is so proud!

HIS FATHER.

What won't she do?

THE BRIDEGROOM.

She has locked herself in.

---

¹ To kick the rafters is considered a great feat in the Halling-dance. The boy means that, in the open air, his leaps are not limited even by the rafters.
iII.]  

PEmER GYNT.  

HIS FATHER.

Ill, you must manage to find the key.

THE BRIDEGROOM.

Don't know how.

HIS FATHER.

You're a nincompoop!

(Turns away to the others. The BRIDEGROOM drifts across the yard.)

A LAD

(come from behind the house).

it a bit, girls! Things 'll soon be lively!
PEER GYNT

(comes in heated and full of animation, stops right in front of the group, and claps his hands).

Which is the liveliest girl of the lot of you?

A GIRL
(as he approaches her).

I am not.

ANOTHER
(similarly).

I am not.

A THIRD.
No; nor I either.

PEER
(to a fourth).

You come along, then, for want of a better.

THE GIRL.

Haven't got time.

PEER
(to a fifth).

Well then, you!

THE GIRL
(going).

I'm for home.

PEER.

To-night? are you utterly out of your senses? ¹

¹ A marriage party among the peasants will often last several days.
THE SMITH
(after a moment, in a low voice).

see, Peer, she's taken a greybeard for partner.

PEER
(turns sharply to an elderly man).

Where are the unbespoke girls?

THE MAN.

Find them out.

(Goes away from him.)

(Peer Gynt has suddenly become subdued. He glances shyly and furtively at the group. All look at him, but no one speaks. He approaches
Peel Gynt.

The First Man.

Ay, the people from Hedal.

The Other.

Ah yes, so they are.

Peer

(places himself in the path of the new-comers, points to Solveig, and asks the Father.)

May I dance with your daughter?

The Father

(quietly).

You may so; but first we must go to the farm-house and greet the good people.

(They go in.)

The Master-Cook

(to Peer Gynt, offering him drink).

Since you are here, you'd best take a pull at the liquor.

Peer

(looking fixedly after the new-comers).

Thanks; I'm for dancing; I am not athirst.

(The Master-Cook goes away from him. Peer Gynt gazes towards the house and laughs.)

How fair! Did ever you see the like?

Looked down at her shoes and her snow-white apron—!

And then she held on to her mother's skirt-folds, and carried a psalm-book wrapped up in a kerchief—!

I must look at that girl.

(Going into the house.)
Sc. iii.

Peer Gynt.

A Lad

(coming out of the house, with several others).

Are you off so soon, Peer,

from the dance?

Peer.

No, no.

The Lad.

Then you're heading amiss!

(Takes hold of his shoulder to turn him round.)

Peer.

Let me pass!

The Lad.

I believe you're afraid of the Smitn.

Peer.

I afraid!

The Lad.

You remember what happened at Lundé?

(They go off, laughing, to the dancing-green.)

Solveig

(in the doorway of the house).

Are you not the lad that was wanting to dance?

Peer.

Of course it was me; don't you know me again?

(Takes her hand.)

Come, then!
SOLVEIG.
We mustn't go far, mother said.

PEER.
Mother said! Mother said! Were you born yesterday?¹

SOLVEIG.
Now you're laughing——!

PEER.
Why sure, you are almost a child.

Are you grown up?

SOLVEIG.
I read with the pastor last spring.²

PEER.
Tell me your name, lass, and then we'll talk easier.

SOLVEIG.
My name is Solveig. And what are you called?

PEER.
Peer Gynt.

SOLVEIG
(withdrawing her hand).

Oh heaven!

PEER.
Why, what is it now?

¹ Literally, "last year."
² "To read with the pastor," the preliminary to confirmation, is currently used as synonymous with "to be confirmed."
PEER GYNT.

SOLVEIG.

My garter is loose; I must tie it up tighter.

(Goes away from him.)

THE BRIDEGROOM

(pulling at his MOTHER'S gown).

Mother, she will not——!

HIS MOTHER.

She will not? What?

THE BRIDEGROOM.

He won't, mother——

HIS MOTHER.
PEER GYNT.

[Act i.

PEER.

No.

THE LAD.

Only a drain?

PEER

(looking darkly at him).

Got any?

THE LAD.

Well, I won't say but I have.

(Pulls out a pocket-flask and drinks.)

Ah! How it stings your throat!—Well?

PEER.

Let me try it.

(Drinks.)

ANOTHER LAD.

Now you must try mine as well, you know.

PEER.

No!

THE LAD.

Oh, nonsense; now don't be a fool.
Take a pull, Peer!

PEER.

Well then, give me a drop.

(Drinks again.)
A GIRL
(half aloud).

Come, let's be going.

PEER.

Afraid of me, wench?

A THIRD LAD.

Who isn't afraid of you?

A FOURTH.

At Lundø

you showed us clearly what tricks you could play.

PEER.
PEER. I can call up the devil!

A MAN. My grandam could do that before I was born!

PEER. Liar! What I can do, that no one else can. I one day conjured him into a nut. It was worm-bored, you see!

SEVERAL (laughing). Ay, that's easily guessed!

PEER. He cursed, and he wept, and he wanted to bribe me with all sorts of things——

ONE OF THE CROWD. But he had to go in?

PEER. Of course. I stopped up the hole with a peg. Hei! If you'd heard him rumbling and grumbling!

A GIRL. Only think!

PEER. It was just like a humble-bee buzzing.

THE GIRL. Have you got him still in the nut?
PEER GYNT.

PEER.

Why, no;

time that devil has flown on his way.

A LAD.

judge the Smith bears me is all his doing.

PEER.

I went to the smithy, and begged

would crack that same nutshell for me.

mised he would!—laid it down on his anvil;

ok, you know, is so heavy of hand;—

swinging that great sledge-hammer—

A VOICE FROM THE CROWD.
PEER GYNT.

OTHERS.
About his best.

PEER.
Do you think I am making it up?

A MAN.
Oh, no,
that you're certainly not; for I've heard the most on't
from my grandfather.

PEER.
Liar! It happened to me!

THE MAN.
Yes, like everything else.

PEER
(with a fling).
I can ride, I can,
clean through the air, on the bravest of steeds!
Oh, many's the thing I can do, I tell you!
(Another roar of laughter.)

ONE OF THE GROUP.
Peer, ride through the air a bit!

MANY.
Do, dear Peer Gynt——

PEER.
You may spare you the trouble of begging so hard.
I will ride like a hurricane over you all!
Every man in the parish shall fall at my feet!

1 See Introduction, p. vi.
AN ELDERLY MAN.

Now he is clean off his head.

ANOTHER.

The dolt!

A THIRD.

Braggart!

A FOURTH.

Liar!

PEER

(threatening them).

Ay, wait till you see I

A MAN
PEER GYNT.

[Act 1.

PEER.
The Invisible Hat, do you mean? Yes, I have.

(Turns away from him. SOLVEIG crosses the yard, leading little HELGA.)

PEER
(goes towards them; his face lights up).

Solveig! Oh, it is well you have come!

(Takes hold of her wrist.)

Now will I swing you round fast and fine!

SOLVEIG.

Loose me!

PEER.

Wherefore?

SOLVEIG.

You are so wild.

PEER.

The reindeer is wild, too, when summer is dawning.

Come then, lass; do not be wayward now!

SOLVEIG
(withdrawing her arm).

Dare not.

PEER.

Wherefore?

SOLVEIG.

No, you've been drinking.

(Moves off with HELGA.)
PEER GYNT.

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P. E E R.

ye if I had but my knife-blade driven
an through the heart of them,—one and all!

T H E  B R I D E G R O O M

(nudging him with his elbow).

or, can't you help me to get at the bride?

P E E R

(absently).

be bride? Where is she?

T H E  B R I D E G R O O M.

In the store-house.
Peer Gynt.

Peer.

Yes! And I've taken a drop as well; but that was to spite you, because you had hurt me. Come then!

Solveig.

Even if I would now, I daren't.

Peer.

Who are you frightened of?

Solveig.

Father, most.

Peer.

Father? Ay, ay; he is one of the quiet ones! One of the godly, eh?—Answer, come!

Solveig.

What shall I say?

Peer.

Is your father a psalm-singer?¹

And you and your mother as well, no doubt? Come, will you speak?

Solveig.

Let me go in peace.

Peer.

No!

(In a low but sharp and threatening tone.)

I can turn myself into a troll! I'll come to your bedside at midnight to-night.

¹ Literally, "A reader."
If you should hear some one hissing and spitting, you mustn't imagine it's only the cat.
It's me, lass! I'll drain out your blood in a cup, and your little sister, I'll eat her up;
ay, you must know I'm a were-wolf at night;—
I'll bite you all over the loins and the back——

(Suddenly changes his tone, and entreats, as if in dread.)

Dance with me, Solveig!

SOLVEIG
(looking darkly at him).

Then you were grim.¹

(Goes into the house.)
Peer Gynt.

(The Smith
(pulling off his jacket).

No, we must fight it out here.¹

Peer Gynt or I must be taught a lesson.²

Some Voices.

Ay, let them fight for it!

Others.

No, only wrangle!

The Smith.

Fists must decide; for the case is past words.

Solveig's Father.

Control yourself, man!

Helga.

Will they beat him, mother?

A Lad.

Let us rather tease him with all his lics!

Another.

Kick him out of the company!

A Third.

Spit in his eyes!

A Fourth
(to the Smith).

You're not backing out, Smith?

¹ Literally, "Here shall judgment be called for."
² Literally, "Must be bent to the hillside," made to bite the dust—but not in the sense of being killed.
THE SMITH
(flinging away his jacket).

The jade shall be slaughtered!

SOLVEIG'S MOTHER
(to SOLVEIG).

There, you can see how that windbag is thought of.

ASE
(coming up with a stick in her hand).

Is that son of mine here? Now he's in for a drubbing!
Oh! how heartily I will dang him!

THE SMITH
(rolling up his shirt-sleeves).
50

**Peer Gynt.**

[Act i.

**The Bridesgroom**

*(comes running up).*

Oh, God's death on the cross!

Come father, come mother, and——!

**His Father.**

What is the matter?

**The Bridesgroom.**

Just fancy, Peer Gynt——!

*Ase*

*(screams).*

Have they taken his life?

**The Bridesgroom.**

No, but Peer Gynt——! Look, there on the hillside——!

**The Crowd.**

With the bride!

*Ase*

*(lets her stick sink).*

Oh, the beast!

**The Smith**

*(as if thunderstruck).*

Where the slope rises sheerest
he's clambering upwards, by God, like a goat!

**The Bridesgroom**

*(crying).*

He's shouldered her, mother, as I might a pig!
Scene II

Peck. (Pouting for sale of land.)

Ward. (God you ought to!)

(Snerces out in anger.)

Take care of your feeting!

The second actness.

(Enter in, how-loud and with much anger.)

I'll have his life for this breach(rep yet!

Peck.

Oh no, God punish me if I let you.
ACT SECOND.

SCENE FIRST.

(A narrow path, high up in the mountains. Early morning.)

(Peer Gynt comes hastily and sulkily along the path. Ingrid, still wearing some of her bridal ornaments, is trying to hold him back.)

Peer.

Get you from me!

Ingrid

weeping.

After this, Peer?

Whither?

Peer.

Where you will for me.

Ingrid

wringing her hands.

Oh, what falsehood!

Peer.

Useless railing.

Each alone must go his way.
Sc. i.]

PEER GYNT.

INGRID.

Sin—and sin again unites us!

PEER.

Devil take all recollections!
Devil take the tribe of women—
All but one—!

INGRID.

Who is that one, pray?

PEER.

'Tis not you.

INGRID.

Who is it then?
And what terms have you to offer?

Hegstad Farm, and more besides.

Is your psalm-book in your kerchief?
Where's the gold-mane on your shoulders?
Do you glance adown your apron?
Do you hold your mother's skirt-fold?
Speak!

No, but——

Went you to the Pastor\(^1\)
this last spring-tide?

No, but Peer——

Is there shyness in your glances?
When I beg, can you deny?

Heaven! I think his wits are going!

Does your presence sanctify?\(^2\)
Speak!

---

\(^1\) See note on page 36.

\(^2\) "Bli der Hieig når en dig ser?" literally, "Does it become a holy-day (or holy-tide) when one sees you?"
PEER GYNT.

INGRID.

No, but——

PEER.

What’s all the rest then?

(Going.)

INGRID

(blocking his way).

Know you it will cost your neck
should you fail me?

PEER.

What do I care?

INGRID.
INGRID
(threatening).
Dearly shall you pay for this!

PEER.
Dearest payment cheap I'll reckon.

INGRID.
Is your purpose set?

PEER.
Like flint.

INGRID.
Good! we'll see, then, who's the winner!

(Goes downwards.)

PEER
(stands silent a moment, then cries:)

Devil take all recollections!
Devil take the tribe of women!

INGRID
(turning her head, and calling mockingly upwards:)

All but one!

PEER.
Yes, all but one.

(They go their several ways.)
SCENE SECOND.

(Near a mountain tarn; the ground is soft and marshy round about. A storm is gathering.)

Ase enters, calling and gazing around her despairingly, in every direction. Solveig has difficulty in keeping up with her. Solveig's father and mother, with Helga, are some way behind.)

Ase
(tossing about her arms, and tearing her hair).

All things are against me with wrathful might! Heaven, and the waters, and the grisly mountains! Fog-scuds from heaven roll down to bewilder him!
It's a terrible thing to look fate in the eyes;
and of course one is glad to be quit of one's cares,
and try all one can to keep thought far away.
Some take to brandy, and others to lies;
and we—why we took to fairy-tales
of princes and trolls and of all sorts of beasts;
and of bride-ropes as well. Ah, but who could have dreamt
that those devil's yarns would have stuck in his head?

(In a fresh access of terror.)

Huf! What a scream! It's the nixie or droog! 1
Peer! Peer!—Up there on that hillock——!

(She runs to the top of a little rise, and looks out
over the tarn. Solveig's father and mother
come up.)

Aaah.

Not a sign to be seen!

THE FATHER

(quietly).

It is worst for him!

Aaah

(weeping).

Oh, my Peer! Oh, my own lost lamb!

THE FATHER

(nods mildly).

You may well say lost.

Aaah.

Oh no, don't talk like that!

He is so clever. There's no one like him.

1 A malevolent water-monster.
Peek Gynt. 59

The Father.

You foolish woman!

Ase.

Oh ay; oh ay;

I am, but the boy's all right!

The Father

(still softly and with mild eyes).

His heart is hardened, his soul is lost.

Ase.

(in terror).

No, no, he can't be so hard, our Lord!

The Father.
Oh, cross of Christ!

THE FATHER.
In the hangman’s hands,
it may be his heart would be turned to repentance.

Oh, you’ll soon talk me out of my senses!
We must find him!

THE FATHER.
To rescue his soul.

And his body!
If he’s stuck in the swamp, we must drag him out;
if he’s taken by trolls, we must ring the bells for him.

Hm!—Here’s a sheep-path——

The Lord will repay you
your guidance and help!

THE FATHER.
It’s a Christian’s duty.

Then the others, fie! they are heathens all;
there wasn’t one that would go with us——

They knew him too well.


PREF GYNT.

ÁSE.

He was too good for them!

(Wrings her hands.)

And to think—and to think that his life is at stake!

THE FATHER.

Here are tracks of a man.

ÁSE.

Then it's here we must search!

THE FATHER.

We'll scatter around on this side of our sister.¹

(He and his wife go on ahead.)

SÕLVŒIG
SCENE THIRD.

(Low, treeless heights, close under the mountain moorlands; peaks in the distance. The shadows are long; it is late in the day.)

(Peer Gynt comes running at full speed, and stops short on the hillside.)

PEER.

The parish is all at my heels in a pack!
Every man of them armed or with gun or with club.
Foremost I hear the old Hegstad-churl howling.—
Now it's noise'd far and wide that Peer Gynt is abroad!
It is different, this, from a bout with a smith!
This is life! Every limb grows as strong as a bear's.

(Stikes out with his arms and leaps in the air.)

To crush, overturn, stem the rush of the foss! ¹
To strike! Wrench the fir-tree right up by the root!
This is life! This both hardens and lifts one high!
To hell then with all of the savourless lies!

THREE SÆTER GIRLS ²
(rush across the hillside, screaming and singing).

Trond of the Valsfeld! ³ Bård and Kårèl!
Troll-pack! To-night would you sleep in our arms?

PEER.

To whom are you calling?

¹ See note, p. 29.
² See Introduction, p. vi., and Appendix.
³ Pronounce Vaalsfeld.
To the trolls! to the trolls!

FIRST GIRL.
Round, come with kindness!

SECOND GIRL.
Bär, come with force!

THIRD GIRL.
The cots in the sæter are all standing empty!

FIRST GIRL.
Force is kindness!

SECOND GIRL.
And kindness is force.
THIRD GIRL.
Mine put an end to our bastard brat.
Now his head's grinning aloft on a stake.

ALL THREE.
Trond of the Valsjeld! Bard and Kåré!
Troll-pack! To-night would you sleep in our arms?

PEER
(stands, with a sudden leap, in the midst of them).
I'm a three-headed troll, and the boy for three girls!

THE GIRLS.
Are you such a lad, eh?

PEER.
You shall judge for yourselves!

FIRST GIRL.
To the hut! To the hut!

SECOND GIRL.
We have mead!

PEER.
Let it flow!

THIRD GIRL.
No cot shall stand empty this Saturday night!

SECOND GIRL
(hissing him).
He sparkles and glisters like white-heated iron.

THIRD GIRL
(doing likewise).
Like a baby's eyes from the blackest tarn.
Scene Fourth.

(Among the stern mountains. Second. Shining snow-pricks in around.)

(PEER GYNT enters, dizzy and bewildered.)

PEER.

Tower over tower arises:
Hei, what a glittering gate:
Stand! Will you stand? It's drifting
further and further away:
High on the vane the cock stands
lifting his wings for flight;—
blue spread the rifts and bluer,
locked is the fell and barred.—

What are those trunks and tree-roots,
that grow from the ridge's clefts?
They are warriors heron-footed!
Now they, too, are fading away.
A shimmering like rainbow-streamers
goes shooting through eyes and brain.
What is it, that far-off chiming?
What's weighing my eyebrows down?
Hu, how my forehead's throbbing—
a tightening red-hot ring——
I cannot think who the devil
has bound it around my head!

(Sinks down.)

Flight o'er the Edge of Gendin—
stuff and accursed lies!
Up o'er the steepest hill-wall
with the bride,—and a whole day drunk;
hunted by hawks and falcons,
threatened by trolls and such,
sporting with crazy wenches:—
lies and accursed stuff!

(Gazes long upwards.)

Yonder sail two brown eagles.
Southward the wild geese fly.
And here I must splash and stumble
in quagmire and filth knee-deep!

(Springs up.)

I'll fly too! I will wash myself clean in
the bath of the keenest winds!
I'll fly high! I will plunge myself fair in
the glorious christening-font!
I will soar far over the sæter;
I will ride myself pure of soul;
I will forth o'er the salt sea waters,
and high over Engelland's prince!

Ay, gaze as ye may, young maidens;
my name is to some of you,
which naming your name in naming—
I'll name it standing under me—
What are some of the two known eagles—?
They're named; the rest knows whom!
There's the peer of a gentle lion;
it's sitting on every hand;
it's growing from out the spume—
set, the gateway a standing wide!
Here, ember house, I know it;
it's grandfather's new-built farm;
Some are the clouds from the windows;
the PRESS old frame is gone.
The lights gleam from every casement;
there's a beast in the hall to-night.

There, that was the provost climbing
the back of his horse on his glass;—
there's the captain drinking his bottle,
and shuttering the mirror to bits.—
Let them waste; let it all be squandered!
Peace, mother; what need we care?
'Tis the rich Jon Gynt gives the banquet;
bear out for the race of Gynt!
What's all this bustle and hubbub?
Why do they shout and bawl?
The captain is calling the son in;—
oh, the provost would drink my health.
In then, Peer Gynt, to the judgment;
it rings forth in song and shout:
Peer Gynt, thou art come of great things,
and great things shall come of thee!

(Leaps forward, but runs his head against a rock,
falls, and remains stretched on the ground.)
SCENE FIFTH.

(A hillside, wooded with great sovthing trees. Stars are gleaming through the leaves; birds are singing in the tree-tops.)

(A GREEN-CLAD WOMAN is crossing the hillside; PEER GYNT follows her, with all sorts of lover-like antics.)

THE GREEN-CLAD ONE
(stops and turns round).

Is it true?

PEER
(drawing his finger across his throat).

As true as my name is Peer;—
as true as that you are a lovely woman!
Will you have me? You'll see what a fine man I'll be;
you shall neither tread the loom nor turn the spindle.
You shall eat all you want, till you're ready to burst.
I never will drag you about by the hair——

THE GREEN-CLAD ONE.

Nor beat me?

PEER.

No, can you think I would?
We kings' sons never beat women and such.

THE GREEN-CLAD ONE.

You're a king's son?

PEER.

Yes.
Sc. v.] Peer Gynt.

The green-clad one.
I'm the Dovrë-King's daughter.

Peer.
Are you? See there, now, how well that fits in!

The green-clad one.
Deep in the Rondë has father his palace.

Peer.
My mother's is bigger, or much I'm mistaken.

The green-clad one.
Do you know my father? His name is King Brosë.
THE GREEN-CLAD ONE.
Have you other garments besides those rags?

PEER.
Ho, you should just see my Sunday clothes!

THE GREEN-CLAD ONE.
My week-day gown is of gold and silk.

PEER.
It looks to me liker tow and straws.

THE GREEN-CLAD ONE.
Ay, there is one thing you must remember:—
this is the Rondë-folk's use and wont:
all our possessions have twofold form.
When you shall come to my father's hall,
it well may chance that you're on the point
of thinking you stand in a dismal moraine.

PEER.
Well now, with us it's precisely the same.
Our gold will seem to you litter and trash!
And you'll think, mayhap, every glittering pane
is nought but a bunch of old stockings and clouts.

THE GREEN-CLAD ONE.
Black it seems white, and ugly seems fair.

PEER.
Big it seems little, and dirty seems clean.
THE GREEN-CLAD ONE
(falling on his neck).

Ay, Peer, now I see that we fit, you and I!

PEER.

Like the leg and the trouser, the hair and the comb.

THE GREEN-CLAD ONE
(calls away over the hillside).

Bridal-steed! Bridal-steed! Come, bridal-steed mine!

(A gigantic pig comes running in with a rope's end for a bridle and an old sack for a saddle.
PEER GYNT vaults on its back, and seats the GREEN-CLAD ONE in front of him.)
SCENE SIXTH.

(The Royal Hall of the King of the Dovre-Trolls. A great assembly of TROLL-COURTIERS, Gnomes, and Brownies. The Old Man of the Dovre sits on the throne, crowned, and with his sceptre in his hand. His children and nearest relations are ranged on both sides. Peer Gynt stands before him. Violent commotion in the hall.)

THE TROLL-COURTIERS.

Slay him! a Christian-man's son has deluded the Dovre-King's loveliest maid!

A TROLL-IMP.

May I hack him on the fingers?

ANOTHER.

May I tug him by the hair?

A TROLL-MAIDEN.

Hu, hei, let me bite him in the haunches!

A TROLL-WITCH
(with a ladle).

Shall he be boiled into broth and bree?

ANOTHER TROLL-WITCH
(with a chopper).

Shall he roast on a spit or be browned in a stewpan?
To my daughter,

When I was young, I heard many stories of the old days. Some were about heroes and villains, while others were about ordinary people and their struggles. I always found these tales fascinating, as they offered a glimpse into the past that we cannot fully understand.

One of the most memorable stories was that of the pirate Blackbeard. He was known for his fierce nature and his sailor beard, which was said to have been so thick that it concealed his face. I remember my father telling me about how Blackbeard's crew would sail the high seas, attacking merchant ships and capturing their cargo.

Despite their reputation, many of these pirates were not evil. They were simply individuals who saw an opportunity in the lawless sea and decided to take advantage of it. Blackbeard was just one of many such individuals.

I hope this story has inspired you to learn more about history and the people who shaped it. Remember, every action has a consequence, and it is up to us to make the right choices.

Your devoted father,

P.S. Never forget that we should respect the law and follow ethical principles.
Pee[r Gunt.

Peer.
Only call me king, and that's easy to keep.

The Old Man.
And next—now for putting your wits to the test.

(Draws himself up in his seat.)

The Oldest Troll-Courtier
(to Peer Gunt).

Let us see if you have a wisdom-tooth
that can crack the Dovre-King’s riddle-nut!

The Old Man.
What difference is there 'twixt trolls and men?

Peer.
No difference at all, as it seems to me.
Big trolls would roast you and small trolls would claw you;—
with us it were likewise, if only they dared.

The Old Man.
True enough; in that and in more we're alike.
Yet morning is morning, and even is even,
and there is a difference all the same.—
Now let me tell you wherein it lies:
Out yonder, under the shining vault,
among men the saying goes: "Man, be thyself!"
At home here with us, 'mid the tribe of the trolls,
the saying goes: "Troll, to thyself be—enough!"

The Troll-Courtier
(to Peer Gunt).

Can you fathom the depth?
PEER GYNT.

PEER.

It strikes me as misty.

THE OLD MAN.

My son, that "Enough," that most potent and sundering word, must be graven upon your escutcheon.

PEER

(scratching his head).

Well, but——

THE OLD MAN.

It must, if you here would be master!

PEER.
THE OLD MAN.

The bowl's given in, and it's fashioned of gold. Whoso owns the gold bowl, him my daughter holds dear.

PEER

(pondering).

It is written: Thou shalt bridle the natural man;— and I daresay the drink may in time seem less sour. So be it!

(Complies.)

THE OLD MAN.

Ay, that was sagaciously said. You spit?

PEER.

One must trust to the force of habit.

THE OLD MAN.

And next you must throw off your Christian-man's garb; for this you must know to our Dovré's renown: here all things are mountain-made, nought's from the dale, except the silk bow at the end of your tail.

PEER

(indignant).

I haven't a tail!

THE OLD MAN.

Then of course you must get one. See my Sunday-tail, Chamberlain, fastened to him.

PEER.

I'll be hanged if you do! Would you make me a fool?
Sc. vi.]  Peer Gynt.

The Old Man.

None comes courting my child with no tail at his rear.

Peer.

Make a beast of a man!

The Old Man.

Nay, my son, you mistake; I make you a mannerly wooer, no more. A bright orange bow we'll allow you to wear, and that passes here for the highest of honours.

Peer

(reflectively).

It's true, as the saying goes: Man's but a mote. And it's wisest to follow the fashion a bit.
PEER.

Why, in spite of your many conditions, you a:
a more reasonable chap than one might have expected.

THE OLD MAN.

We troll-folk, my son, are less black than we’re painted;¹
that’s another distinction between you and us—
But the serious part of the meeting is over;
now let us gladden our ears and our eyes.
Music-maid, forth! Set the Dovré-harp sounding!
Dancing-maid, forth! Tread the Dovré-hall’s floor!

(Music and a dance.)

THE COURTIER.

How like you it?

PEER.

Like it? Hm—

THE OLD MAN.

Speak without fear!

What see you?

PEER.

Why, something unspeakably grim:²
a bell-cow with her hoof on a gut-harp strumming,
a sow in socketts a-trip to the tune.

THE COURTIOERS.

Eat him!

¹ Literally, "Better than our reputation."
² "Ustygelgig stygg." "Ustygelgig" seems to be what Mr. Lewis Carroll calls a portmanteau word, compounded of "usigelg" = unspeakable, and "stygg" = ugly. The words might be rendered "beyond grimness grim."
Sc. vi.]

Peer Gynt.

The Old Man.

His sense is but human, remember!

Troll-Maidens.

Hoo, tear away both his ears and his eyes!

The Green-Clad One

(weeping).

Hoo-hoo! And this we must hear and put up with,

when I and my sister make music and dance.

Peer.

Oho, was it you? Well, a joke at the feast,

you must know, is never unkindly meant.

The Green-Clad One.
had for good and all been kicked out of doors;
but lo! in two shakes he's atop again!
Ay ay, my son, we must treat you, I see,
to cure this pestilent human nature.

PEER.

What will you do?

THE OLD MAN.

In your left eye,\(^1\) first,
I'll scratch you a bit, till you see awry;
but all that you see will seem fine and brave.
And then I'll just cut your right window-pane out——

PEER.

Are you drunk?

THE OLD MAN

(lays a number of sharp instruments on the table).

See, here are the glazier's tools.
Blinkers you'll wear, like a raging bull.
Then you'll recognise that your bride is lovely,—
and ne'er will your vision be troubled, as now,
with bell-cows harping and sows that dance.

PEER.

This is madman's talk!

THE OLDEST COURTIER.

It's the Dovrë-King speaking;
it's he that is wise, and it's you that are crazy!

\(^1\) See Introduction, p. vi.
Sc. vi.]

PEER GYNT.

THE OLD MAN.

Just think how much worry and mortification
you'll thus escape from, year out, year in.
You must remember, your eyes are the fountain
of the bitter and searing lye of tears.

PEER.

That's true; and it says in our sermon-book:
If thine eye offend thee, then pluck it out.
But tell me, when will my sight heal up
into human sight?

THE OLD MAN.

Nevermore, my friend.

PEER.

Indeed! In that case, I'll take my leave.
Peek Gvnt.

Peek.

Yes, I would, sure enough.
For a bride and a well-managed kingdom to boot,
I can put up with losing a good many things.
But there is a limit to all things on earth.
The tale I've accepted, it's perfectly true;
but no doubt I can loose what the Chamberlain tied.
My breeches I've dropped; they were old and patched;
but no doubt I can button them on again.
And lightly enough I can slip my cable
from these your Dovrefied ways of life.
I am willing to swear that a cow is a maid;
an oath one can always eat up again;—
but to know that one never can free oneself,
that one can't even die like a decent soul;
to live as a hill-troll for all one's days—
to feel that one never can beat a retreat,—
as the book has it, that's what your heart is set on;
but that is a thing I can never agree to.

The Old Man.

Now, sure as I live, I shall soon lose my temper;
and then I am not to be trifled with.
You pasty-faced loon! Do you know who I am?
First with my daughter you make too free——

Peek.

There you lie in your throat!

The Old Man.

You must marry her.

Peek.

Do you dare to accuse me——?
Sc. vi.]             PEER GYNT.  

THE OLD MAN.

What? Can you deny
that you lusted for her in heart and eye?

PEER
(with a snort of contempt).

No more? Who the deuce cares a straw for that?

THE OLD MAN.

It's ever the same with this humankind.
The spirit you're ready to own with your lips,
but in fact nothing counts that your fists cannot handle.
So you really think, then, that lust matters nought?
Wait; you shall soon have ocular proof of it——

PEER.
PEER GYNT.  [Act ii.

PEER.
You can send him to the parish!

THE OLD MAN.
Well well, Prince Peer; that's your own look-out.
But one thing's certain, what's done is done;
and your offspring, too, will be sure to grow;
such mongrels shoot up amazingly fast——

PEER.
Old man, don't act like a headstrong ox!
Hear reason, maiden! Let's come to terms.
You must know I'm neither a prince nor rich;——
and whether you measure or whether you weigh me,
be sure you won't gain much by making me yours.

(THE GREEN-CLAD ONE is taken ill, and is carried
out by TROLL-MAIDS.)

THE OLD MAN
(looks at him for a while in high disdain; then says:)
Dash him to shards on the rock-walls, children!

THE TROLL-IMPS.
Oh dad, mayn't we play owl-and-eagle first!
The wolf-game! Grey-mouse and glow-eyed cat!

THE OLD MAN.
Yes, but quick. I am worried and sleepy. Good-night!
(He goes.)

PEER
(Hunted by the TROLL-IMPS).
Let me be, devil's imps!
(Tries to escape up the chimney.)
Bite him behind!

Peer.

Ow!

(Tries to slíp down the cellar trap-door.)

Peer.

Now the small-fry are happy!

(Trying to get the little imp to help him)

The Imps.

Come brownies! Come nixies!

Shut up all the crannies!
PEER GYNT.

[Act ii.

PEER.

Oh, would I were small as a mouse!

(Rushing around.)

THE IMPS

(swarming round him).

Close the ring! Close the ring!

PEER

weeping.

Would that I were a louse!

(He falls.)

THE IMPS.

Now into his eyes!

PEER

(buried in a heap of IMPS).

Mother, help me, I die!

(Church-bells sound far away.)

THE IMPS.

Bells in the mountain! The Black-Frock's cows!

(The Trolls take to flight, amid a confused uproar
of yells and shrieks. The palace collapses; everything disappears.)
Sc. vii.] Peer Gynt. 87

Scene Seventh.

(Pitch darkness.)
(Peer Gynt is heard beating and slashing about him with a large bough.)

Peer.

Answer! Who are you?

A Voice in the Darkness.

Myself.

Peer.

Close the door!
THE VOICE.

Myself.

PEER.

That stupid reply
you may spare; it doesn’t clear up the matter.
What are you?

THE VOICE.

The great Boyg.¹

PEER.

Ah, indeed!
The riddle was black; now I’d call it grey.
Clear the way then, Boyg!

THE VOICE.

Go roundabout, Peer!

PEER.

No, through!

(Cuts and slashes.)

There he fell!

(Tries to advance, but strikes against something.)

Ho ho, are there more here?

THE VOICE.

The Boyg, Peer Gynt! the one only one.
It’s the Boyg that’s unwounded, and the Boyg that was hurt,
it’s the Boyg that is dead, and the Boyg that’s alive.

¹ See Introduction, pp. vi. and xiv., and Appendix.
PEER

(throws away the branch).
The weapon is troll-smeared;1 but I have my fists!
(Fights his way forward.)

THE VOICE.

Ay, trust to your fists, lad, trust to your body.
Hee-hee, Peer Gynt, so you'll reach the summit.

PEER

(falling back again).

Forward or back, and it's just as far;—
out or in, and it's just as strait!2
He is there! And there! And he's round the bend!
No sooner I'm out than I'm back in the ring.—
Name who you are! Let me see you! What are you?
Peer Gynt. [Act ii.

The Voice.
The Boyg strikes not.

Peer.
Fight! You shall!

The Voice.
The great Boyg conquers, but does not fight.

Peer.
Were there only a nixie here that could prick me!
Were there only as much as a year-old troll!
Only something to fight with. But here there is nothing.—Now he's snoring! Boyg!

The Voice.
What's your will?

Peer.
Use force!

The Voice.
The great Boyg conquers in all things without it.¹

Peer
(biting his own arms and hands).

Claws and ravening teeth in my flesh!
I must feel the drip of my own warm blood.
(A sound is heard like the wing-strokes of great birds.)

Bird-cries.

Comes he now, Boyg?

¹ "Med lempes," literally "by gentleness" or "easy-goingness." "Quiescence" is somewhere near the idea.
Sc. vii.]

PEER GYNT.

THE VOICE.

Ay, step by step.

BIRD-cries.

All our sisters far off! Gather here to the tryst!

PEER.

If you'd save me now, lass, you must do it quick!

Gaze not adown so, lowly and bending.—

Your clasp-book! Hurl it straight into his eyes!

BIRD-cries.

He totters!

THE VOICE.
SCENE EIGHTH.

(Sunrise. The mountain-side in front of Hane’s sather.
    The door is shut; all is silent and deserted.)
(Peer Gynt is lying asleep by the wall of the sather.)

PEER

(wakes, and looks about him with dull and heavy eyes.
    He spits).

What wouldn’t I give for a pickled herring!

(Spits again, and at the same moment catches sight
    of Helga, who appears carrying a basket of
    food.)

Ha, child, are you there? What is it you want?

HELGA.

It is Solveig——

PEER

(jumping up).

Where is she?

HELGA.

Behind the sather.

SOLVEIG

(unseen).

If you come nearer, I’ll run away!

PEER

(stopping short).

Perhaps you’re afraid I might take you in my arms?
For shame!

PEER.

Do you know where I was last night?—
Like a horse-fly the Dovrë-King's daughter is after me.

SOLVEIG.

Then it was well that the bells were set ringing.

PEER.

Peer Gynt's not the lad they can lure astray.—
What do you say?

HELGA

(criing).
PEER GYNT.

PEER.

God pity you if you don't — I

HELG.

Uf, how you scare me!

PEER

(gently; letting her go).

No, I only meant: beg her not to forget me!

(HELG. runs off.)
ACT THIRD

SCENE FIRST

[Day in the nine-months. Grey autumn weather. Snow is falling.
A man, with a stick in his right-hand, sitting in a large chair, with twisted branches.)

MAN. (sitting in a large chair, with twisted branches.)

Oh, ye, you are rough, you ancient churl;
but it's all in vain, for you'll soon be down.

[Enter as is again.)

I see well enough you've a chain-mail shirt,
but I'll wear it through, were it never so stout—
Ay, ay, you're shaking your twisted arms;
you've reason enough for your spite and rage;
but none the less you must bend the knee—1

([Breath of sudden joy.)

Lies! 'Tis an old tree, and nothing more.
Lies! It was never a steel-clad churl;
it's only a sin-tree with fissured bark—
It is heavy labour this hewing timber;
but the devil and all when you hew and dream too—
I'll have done with it all—with this dwelling in mist,
and, broad-awake, dreaming your senses away.—
You're an outlaw, lad! You are banned to the woods.

(Awks for a while rapidly.)

Ay, an outlaw, ay. You've no mother now
to spread your table and bring your food.
If you'd eat, my lad, you must help yourself;
fetch your rations raw from the wood and stream,
split your own fir-roots¹ and light your own fire,
bustle around, and arrange and prepare things.
Would you clothe yourself warmly, you must stalk your deer;
would you found you a house, you must quarry the stones;
would you build up its walls, you must fell the logs,
and shoulder them all to the building-place.—

(His axe sinks down; he gazes straight in front of
him.)

Brave shall the building be. Tower and vane
shall rise from the roof-tree, high and fair.
And then I will carve, for the knob on the gable,
a mermaid, shaped like a fish from the navel.
Brass shall there be on the vane and the door-locks.
Glass I must see and get hold of too.
Strangers, passing, shall ask amazed
what that is glittering far on the hillside.

(Laughs angrily.)

Devil's own lies! There they come again.
You're an outlaw, lad!

(Hewing vigorously.)

A bark-thatched hovel
is shelter enough both in rain and frost.

(Looks up at the tree.)

Now he stands wavering. There; only a kick,

¹ "Tyrl," resinous pine-wood which burns with a bright blaze.
and he topples and measures his length on the ground;—
the thick-swarming undergrowth shudders around him!

(Begins lopping the branches from the trunk;
suddenly he listens, and stands motionless with
his axe in the air.)

There's some one after me!—Ay, are you that sort,
old Hegstad-churl;—would you play me false?

(Crouches behind the tree, and peeps over it.)

A lad! One only. He seems afraid.
He peers all round him. What's that he hides
neath his jacket? A sickle. He stops and looks round,—
now he lays his hand on a fence-rail flat.
What's this now? Why does he lean like that——?
Ugh, ugh! Why, he's chopped his finger off!
A whole finger off!—He bleeds like an ox—
SCENE SECOND.

(A room in Åse's house. Everything in disorder; boxes standing open; wearing apparel strewn around. A cat is lying on the bed.)

(Åse and the Cottar's Wife are hard at work packing things together and putting them straight.)

Åse

(running to one side).

Kari, come here!

Kari.

What now?

Åse

(on the other side).

Come here—!

Where is—? Where shall I find—? Tell me where—?

What am I seeking? I'm out of my wits!

Where is the key of the chest?

Kari.

In the key-hole.

Åse.

What is that rumbling?

Kari.

The last cart-load
they're driving to Hegstad.
ASE
(sweeping).

How glad I'd be
in the black chest myself to be driven away!
Oh, what must a mortal abide and live through!
God help me in mercy! The whole house is bare!
What the Hegstad-churl left now the Bailiff¹ has taken.
Not even the clothes on my back have they spared.
Fie! Shame on them all that have judged so hardly!

(Seats herself on the edge of the bed.)

Both the land and the farm-place are lost to our line;
the old man was hard, but the law was still harder—
there was no one to help me, and none would show mercy;
Peer was away; not a soul to give counsel.
PEER GYNT.

KARL.

Had I not better send word to the parson?
Mayhap you're worse than you think you are.

ASE.

To the parson? Truly I almost think so.

(Starts up.)

But, oh God, I can't! I'm the boy's own mother;
and help him I must; it's no more than my duty;
I must do what I can when the rest forsake him.
They've left him this coat; I must patch it up.
I wish I dared snap up the fur-rug as well!
What's come of the hose?

KARL.

They are there, 'mid that rubbish.

ASE

(rummaging about.)

Why, what have we here? I declare it's an old
casting-ladle, Kari! With this he would play
button-moulder, would melt, and then shape, and then
stamp them.

One day—there was company—in the boy came,
and begged of his father a lump of tin.

"Not tin," says Jon, "but King Christian's coin;
silver; to show you're the son of Jon Gynt."
God pardon him, Jon; he was drunk, you see,
and then he cared neither for tin nor for gold.
Here are the hose. Oh, they're nothing but holes;
they want darning, Kari!

KARL.

Indeed but they do.
Ase.

When that is done, I must get to bed;
I feel so broken, and frail, and ill—
(Joyfully.)

Two woollen-shirts, Kari;—they’ve passed them by!

Karl.

So they have indeed.

Ase.

It’s a bit of luck.
One of the two you may put aside;
or rather, I think we’ll e’en take them both;—
the one he has on is so worn and thin.

Karl.

But oh, Mother Ase, I fear it’s a sin!
Bars I must fix me; bars that can shut out
all the cantankerous little hobgoblins. —

They come with the darkness, they knock and they rattle:
Open, Peer Gynt, we're as nimble as thoughts are!
'Neath the bedstead we bustle, we rake in the ashes,
down the chimney we hustle like fiery-eyed dragons.
Hee-hee! Peer Gynt; think you staples and planks
can shut out cantankerous hobgoblin-thoughts?

(Solveig comes on snow-shoes over the heath: she
has a shawl over her head, and a bundle in
her hand.)

Solveig.

God prosper your labour. You must not reject me.
You sent for me hither, and so you must take me.

Peer.

Solveig! It cannot be——! Ay, but it is!—
And you're not afraid to come near to me!

Solveig.

One message you sent me by little Helga;
others came after in storm and in stillness.
All that your mother told bore me a message,
that brought forth others when dreams sank upon me.
Nights full of heaviness, blank, empty days,
brought me the message that now I must come.
It seemed as though life had been quenched down there;
I could nor laugh nor weep from the depths of my heart.
I knew not for sure how you might be minded;
I knew but for sure what I should do and must do.

Peer.

But your father?
Sc. iii.]  

SOLVEIG.

In all of God's wide earth
I have none I can call either father or mother.
I have loosed me from all of them.

PEER.

and to come to me?

SOLVEIG.

Ay, to you alone;
you must be all to me, friend and consoler.

(In tears.)
The worst was leaving my little sister;—
but parting from father was worse, still worse;
and worst to leave her at whose breast I was borne;—
oh no, God forgive me, the worst I must call
PEER GYNT

[Act iii.

PEER.
Away, away then with nails and planks!
No need now for bars against hobgoblin-thoughts.
If you dare dwell with the hunter here,
I know the hut will be blessed from ill.
Solveig! Let me look at you! Not too near!
Only look at you! Oh, but you are bright and pure!
Let me lift you! Oh, but you are fine and light!
Let me carry you, Solveig, and I'll never be tired!
I will not soil you. With outstretched arms
I will hold you far out from me, lovely and warm one!
Oh, who would have thought I could draw you to me,—
ab, but I have longed for you, daylong and nightlong.
Here you may see I've been hewing and building;—
it must down again, dear; it is ugly and mean——

SOLVEIG.
Be it mean or brave,—here is all to my mind.
One so lightly draws breath in the teeth of the wind.
Down below it was airless; one felt as though choked;
that was partly what drove me in fear from the dale.
But here, with the fir-branches soughing o'erhead,—
what a stillness and song!—I am here in my home.

PEER.
And know you that surely? For all your days?

SOLVEIG.
The path I have trodden leads back nevermore.

PEER.
You are mine then! In! In the room let me see you!
Go in! I must go to fetch fir-roots¹ for fuel.

¹ See note, p. 96.
Sc. iii.]  Peer Gynt.  105

Warm shall the fire be and bright shall it shine,
you shall sit softly and never be a-cold.

(IHe opens the door; Solværg goes in. He stands
still for a while, then laughs aloud with joy
and leaps into the air.)

Peer.

My king's daughter! Now I have found her and won her!
Hei! Now the palace shall rise, deeply founded!

(He seizes his axe and moves away; at the same
moment an old-looking woman, in a tattered
green gown, comes out from the wood; an
ugly brat, with an ale-flagon in his hand,
limps after, holding on to her skirt.)

The Woman.

Good evening, Peer Lightfoot!

Peer.

What is it? Who's there?

The Woman.

Old friends of yours, Peer Gynt! My home is near by.
We are neighbours.

Peer.

Indeed? That is more than I know.

The Woman.

Even as your hut was builded, mine built itself too.

Peer

(going).

I'm in haste—
THE WOMAN.
Yes, that you are always, my lad;
but I'll trudge behind you and catch you at last.

PEER.
You're mistaken, good woman!

THE WOMAN.
I was so before;
I was when you promised such mighty fine things.

PEER.
I promised——? What devil's own nonsense is this?

THE WOMAN.
You’ve forgotten the night when you drank with my sire?
You’ve forgot——?

PEER.
I've forgot what I never have known.
What’s this that you prate of? When last did we meet?

THE WOMAN.
When last we met was when first we met.

(To the brat.)
Give your father a drink; he is thirsty, I'm sure.

PEER.
Father? You’re drunk, woman! Do you call him——?

THE WOMAN.
I should think you might well know the pig by its skin!
Why, where are your eyes? Can't you see that he’s lame in his shank, just as you too are lame in your soul?
Sc. iii.]

Peer Gynt.

Peer.
Would you have me believe——?

The Woman.
Would you wriggle away——?

Peer.
This long-legged urchin——!

The Woman.
He’s shot up apace.

Peer.
Dare you, you troll-snout, father on me——?
PEER.
I'll split your skull open——!

THE WOMAN.
Just try if you dare!
Ho-ho, Peer Gynt, I've no fear of blows!
Be sure I'll return every day of the year.
I'll set the door ajar and peep in at you both.
When you're sitting with your girl on the fireside bench,—
when you're tender, Peer Gynt,—when you'd pet and caress
her,—
I'll seat myself by you, and ask for my share.
She there and I—we will take you by turns.
Farewell, dear my lad, you can marry to-morrow!

PEER.
You nightmare of hell!

THE WOMAN.
By-the-bye, I forgot!
You must rear your own youngster, you light-footed scamp!
Little imp, will you go to your father?

THE BRAT
(spits at him).

Faugh!
I'll chop you with my hatchet; only wait, only wait!

THE WOMAN
(kisses the brat).

What a head he has got on his shoulders, the dear!
You'll be father's living image when once you're a man!
PEER
(stamping).

Oh, would you were as far——!

THE WOMAN.

As we now are near?

PEER
(clenching his hands).

And all this——!

THE WOMAN.

For nothing but thoughts and desires!

It is hard on you, Peer!

PEER.

It is worst for another!—

Solveig, my fairest, my purest gold!

THE WOMAN.

Oh ay, 'tis the guiltless must smart, said the devil;
his mother boxed his ears when his father was drunk!

(She trudges off into the thicket with THE BRAT, who throws the flagon at PEER GYNT.)
There's a text on repentance, unless I mistake. But what? What is it? I haven't the book, I've forgotten it mostly, and here there is none that can guide me aright in the pathless wood.—

Repentance? And maybe 'twould take whole years, ere I fought my way through. 'Twere a meagre life, that. To shatter what's radiant, and lovely, and pure, and clinch it together in fragments and shards? You can do it with a fiddle, but not with a bell. Where you'd have the sward green, you must mind not to trample.

'Twas nought but a lie though, that witch-snout business! Now all that foulness is well out of sight.— Ay, out of sight maybe, not out of mind. Thoughts will sneak stealthily in at my heel. Ingrid! And the three, they that danced on the heights! Will they too want to join us? With vixenish spite will they claim to be folded, like her, to my breast, to be tenderly lifted on outstretched arms? Roundabout, lad; though my arms were as long as the root of the fir, or the pine-tree's stem,— I think even then I should hold her too near, to set her down pure and untarnished again.— I must roundabout here, then, as best I may, and see that it bring me nor gain nor loss. One must put such things from one, and try to forget.—

(Goes a few steps towards the hut, but stops again.)

Go in after this? So besouled and disgraced? Go in with that troll-rabble after me still? Speak, yet be silent; confess, yet conceal——? ( Throws away his axe.)

It's a holy-day evening. For me to keep tryst, such as now I am, would be sacrilege.
Sc. iii.]

**Peer Gynt.**

Solveig

*(in the doorway)*

Are you coming?

**Peer**

*(half aloud)*

Roundabout 1

Solveig.

What?

Peer.

You must wait.

It is dark, and I've got something heavy to fetch.

Solveig.
SCENE FOURTH.

(Asie's room. Evening. The room is lighted by a wood fire on the open hearth. A cat is lying on a chair at the foot of the bed.)

(Asie lies in the bed, fumbling about restlessly with her hands on the coverlet.)

Asie.

Oh, Lord my God, isn't he coming?
The time drags so drearily on.
I have no one to send with a message;
and I've much, oh so much, to say.
I haven't a moment to lose now!
So quickly! Who could have foreseen!
Oh me, if I only were certain
I'd not been too strict with him!

Peer Gynt

(enters)

Good evening!

Asie.

The Lord give you gladness!
You've come then, my boy, my dear!
But how dare you show face in the valley?
You know your life's forfeit here.

Peer.

Oh, life must e'en go as it may go;
I felt that I must look in.
Ay, now Kari is put to silence, 
and I can depart in peace!

Depart? Why, what are you saying? 
Where is it you think to go?

Alas, Peer, the end is nearing; 
I have but a short time left.

See there now! I'm fleeing from trouble; 
I thought at least here I'd be free——! 
Are your hands and your feet a-cold, then?
Peer Gynt.

Peer

(with a writhc)

Again!

(Harshly.)

Well, I know it was my fault.
What's the use of reminding me?

Åse.

You! No, that accursed liquor,
from that all the mischief came!
Dear my boy, you know you'd been drinking;
and then no one knows what he does;
and besides, you'd been riding the reindeer;
no wonder your head was turned!

Peer.

Ay, ay; of that yarn enough now.
Enough of the whole affair.
All that's heavy we'll let stand over
till after—some other day.

(Sits on the edge of the bed.)

Now, mother, we'll chat together;
but only of this and that,—
forget what's awry and crooked,
and all that is sharp and sore.—
Why see now, the same old pussy;
so she is alive then, still?

Åse.

She makes such a noise o' nights now;
you know what that bodes, my boy!
(changing the subject).

What news is there here in the parish?

(whispering).

There’s somewhere about, they say, a girl who would fain to the uplands—

(hastily).

Mads Moen, is he content?

The map that leads me to the heart...
Are you thirsty? I'll fetch you water.
Can you stretch you? The bed is short.
Let me see;—if I don't believe, now,
It's the bed that I had when a boy!
Do you mind, dear, how oft in the evenings
you sat at my bedside here,
and spread the fur-coverlet o'er me,
and sang many a lilt and lay?

Ase.

Ay, mind you? And then we played sledges
when your father was far abroad.
The coverlet served for sledge-apron,
and the floor for an ice-bound fiord.

Peer.

Ah, but the best of all, though,—
mother, you mind that too?—
the best was the fleet-foot horses——

Ase.

Ay, think you that I've forgot?——
It was Kari's cat that we borrowed;
it sat on the log-scooped chair——

Peer.

To the castle west of the moon, and
the castle east of the sun,
to Soris-Moria Castle
the road ran both high and low.
A stick that we found in the closet,
for a whip-shaft you made it serve.
Right proudly I perked on the box-seat—

Peer.

Ay, ay; you threw loose the reins,
and kept turning round as we travelled,
and asked me if I was cold.
God bless you, ugly old mother,—
you were ever a kindly soul—- I
What's hurting you now?

Ase.

My back aches,
because of the hard, bare boards.
Best bring from the closet the prayer-book:
I feel so uneasy of soul.

In Soria-Moria Castle
the King and the Prince give a feast.
On the sledge-cushions lie and rest you;
I'll drive you there over the heath—

But, Peer dear, am I invited?

Ay, that we are, both of us.

(Goe-up! Will you stir yourself, Black-boy?
Mother, you're not a-cold?
Ay, ay; by the pace one knows it,
when Granê begins to go!)

Why, Peer, what is it that's ringing—?

The glittering sledge-bells, dear!

Granê (Grani) was the name of Sigurd Fafnirbane's horse, descended from Odin's Sleipnir. Sigurd's Granê was grey; Peer Gynt calls his "Svarten," Black-boy, or Blackey.—See the "Volsunga Saga," translated by Morris and Magnusen. Camelot edition, p. 43.
ASE.
Oh, mercy, how hollow it's rumbling!

PEER.
We're just driving over a fiord.

ASE.
I'm afraid! What is that I hear rushing and sighing so strange and wild?

PEER.
It's the sough of the pine-trees, mother, on the heath. Do you but sit still.

ASE.
Wine! Has he cakes as well, Peer?

Cakes? Ay, a heaped-up dish. And the dean's wife¹ is getting ready your coffee and your dessert.

Oh, Christ; shall we two come together?

As freely as ever you will.

Oh, deary, Peer, what a frolic you're driving me to, poor soul!

Gee-up; will you stir yourself, Black-boy!

Peer, dear, you're driving right?

Ay, broad is the way.

This journey, it makes me so weak and tired.

¹ "Salig provostinde," literally "the late Mrs. Provost."
There's the castle rising before us;
the drive will be over soon.

I will lie back and close my eyes then,
and trust me to you, my boy!

Come up with you, Grané, my trotter!
In the castle the throng is great;
they bustle and swarm to the gateway.
Peer Gynt and his mother are here!
What say you, Master Saint Peter?
"Have done with these jack-in-office airs, sir;
Mother Ase shall enter free!"

(Laughs loudly, and turns towards his mother.)

Ay, didn't I know what would happen?
Now they dance to another tune!

(Uneasily.)

Why, what makes your eyes so glassy?
Mother! Have you gone out of your wits——?

(Goes to the head of the bed.)

You mustn't lie there and stare so——!
Speak, mother; it's I, your boy!

(Feels her forehead and hands cautiously; then
throws the string on the chair, and says softly.)

Ay, ay!—You can rest yourself, Grané;
for even now the journey's done.

(Closes her eyes, and bends over her.)

For all of your days I thank you,
for beatings and lullabys——
But see, you must thank me back, now——

(Presses his cheek against her mouth.)

There; that was the driver's fare.¹

THE COTTAR'S WIFE
(entering).

What? Peer! Ah, then we are over
the worst of the sorrow and need!
Dear Lord, but she's sleeping soundly—
or can she be——?

¹ Tak for skyde, literally "thanks for the drive."
Hush; she is dead.

(KARI weeps beside the body; PEER GYNT walks up and down the room for some time; at last he stops beside the bed.)

PEER.

See mother buried with honour.
I must try to fare forth from here.

KARI.

Are you faring afar?

PEER.

To seaward.
ACT FOURTH.

SCENE FIRST.

(On the south-west coast of Morocco. A palm-grove. Under an awning, on ground covered with matting, a table spread for dinner. Further back in the grove hammocks are slung. In the offing lies a steam-yacht, flying the Norwegian and American colours. A jolly-boat drawn up on the beach. It is towards sunset.)

(Peer Gynt, a handsome middle-aged gentleman, in an elegant travelling-dress, with a gold-rimmed double eyeglass hanging at his waistcoat, is doing the honours at the head of the table. Mr. Cotton, Monsieur Ballon, Herr von Eberkopf, and Herr Trumpeterstråle, are seated at the table finishing dinner.)

PEER GYNT.

Drink, gentlemen! If man is made for pleasure, let him take his fill then.
You know 'tis written: Lost is lost,
and gone is gone——. What may I hand you?

TRUMPETERSTRÅLE.

As host you're princely, Brother Gynt!

1 In the original, "Master Cotton."
2 A Swede. The name means "trumpet-blast."
Sc. i.] PEER. GYNT. 125

PEER.

I share the honour with my cash,
with cook and steward——

MR. COTTON.

Very well;¹ let's pledge a toast to all the four!

MONSIEUR BALLON.

Monsieur,² you have a *gout,* a *ton,*³
that nowadays is seldom met with
among men living *en garçon,*—²
a certain—what's the word——²

VON EBERKOFF.
VON EBERKOPF.

_Ei war_ ¹ That language is so stiff.—
But the phenomenon's final cause
if we would seek——

PEER.

It's found already.
The reason is that I'm unmarried.
Yes, gentlemen, completely clear
the matter is. What should a man be?
_Himself_, is my concise reply.
He should regard _himself_ and _his_.
But can he, as a sumpter-mule ²
for others' woe and others' weal?

VON EBERKOPF.

But this same in-and-for-yourself-ness,
I'll answer for't, has cost you strife——

PEER.

Ah yes, indeed; in former days;
but always I came off with honour.
Yet one time I ran very near
to being trapped against my will.
I was a brisk and handsome lad,
and she to whom my heart was given,
she was of royal family——

MONSIEUR BALLOON.

Of royal——?

¹ So in original.
² Literally, "pack-camel."
Sc. i.]

Peer Gynt.

Peer
(carelessly).
One of those old stocks,
you know the kind—

Trumpeterstråle
(thumping the table).
Those noble-trolls!

Peer
(shrugging his shoulders).
Old fossil Highnesses who make it
their pride to keep plebeian blots
excluded from their line's escutcheon.
I'm finical in certain ways,
and like to stand on my own feet.
And when my father-in-law came out
with delicately veiled demands
that I should change my name and station,
and undergo ennoblement,
with much else that was most distasteful,
not to say quite unacceptable,—
why then I gracefully withdrew,
point-blank declined his ultimatum—
and so renounced my youthful bride.

(Drums on the table with a devout air.)

Yes, yes; there is a ruling Fate!
On that we mortals may rely;
and 'tis a comfortable knowledge.

Monsieur Ballon.

And so the matter ended, eh?

Peer.

Oh no, far otherwise I found it;
for busy-bodies mixed themselves,
with furious outcries, in the business.
The juniors of the clan were worst;
with seven of them I fought a duel.
That time I never shall forget,
though I came through it all in safety.
It cost me blood; but that same blood
attests the value of my person,
and points encouragingly towards
the wise control of Fate aforesaid.

Von Eberkopp.

Your outlook on the course of life
exalts you to the rank of thinker.
Whilst the mere commonplace empiric sees separately the scattered scenes, and to the last goes groping on, you in one glance can focus all things. One norm to all things you apply. You point each random rule of life, till one and all diverge like rays from one full-orbed philosophy.—And you have never been to college?

PEER.

I am, as I've already said, exclusively a self-taught man. Methodically naught I've learned; but I have thought and speculated,
PEER

(lights a cigar).

Dear friends,
just think of my career in general.
In what case came I to the West?
A poor young fellow, empty-handed.
I had to battle sore for bread;
trust me, I often found it hard.
But life, my friends, ah, life is dear,
and, as the phrase goes, death is bitter.
Well! Luck, you see, was kind to me;
old Fate, too, was accommodating.
I prospered; and, by versatility,
I prospered better still and better.
In ten years' time I bore the name
of Cæsarus 'mongst the Charleston shippers.
My fame flew wide from port to port,
and fortune sailed on board my vessels——

MR. COTTON.

What did you trade in?

PEER.

I did most
in negro slaves for Carolina,
and idol-images for China.

MONSIEUR BALLON.

Fi doux!\(^1\)

TRUMPETERSTRÄLLE.

The devil, Uncle Gynt!

\(^1\) So in original.
You think, no doubt, the business hovered
on the outer verge of the allowable?
Myself I felt the same thing keenly.
It struck me even as odious.
But, trust me, when you've once begun,
it's hard to break away again.
At any rate it's no light thing,
in such a vast trade-enterprise,
that keeps whole thousands in employ,
to break off wholly, once for all.
That "once for all" I can't abide,
but own, upon the other side,
that I have always felt respect
for what are known as consequences;
Yes, at a profit?

**MR. COTTON.**

Why, of course.
It prospered. Dauntlessly they toiled.
For every idol that was sold
they got a coolie well baptised,
so that the effect was neutralised.
The mission-field lay never fallow,
for still the idol-propaganda
the missionaries held in check.

**MR. COTTON.**

Well, but the African commodities?

**PEER.**

There, too, my ethics won the day.
I saw the traffic was a wrong one
for people of a certain age.
One may drop off before one dreams of it.
And then there were the thousand pitfalls
laid by the philanthropic camp;
besides, of course, the hostile cruisers,
and all the wind-and-weather risks.
All this together won the day.
I thought: Now, Peter,\(^1\) reef your sails;
see to it you amend your faults!
So in the South I bought some land,
and kept the last meat-importation,
which chanced to be a superfine one.
They throve so, grew so fat and sleek,
that 'twas a joy to me, and them too.

\(^1\) So in original.
Sc. i.]  Peer Gynt.

Yes, without boasting, I may say
I acted as a father to them,—
and found my profit in so doing.
I built them schools, too, so that virtue
might uniformly be maintained at
a certain general niveau,¹
and kept strict watch that never its
thermometer should sink below it.
Now, furthermore, from all this business
I've beat a definite retreat;—
I've sold the whole plantation, and
its tale of live-stock, hide and hair.
At parting, too, I served around,
to big and little, gratis grog,¹
so men and women all got drunk,
of life's affairs is simply this:
to keep one's ear close shut against
the ingress of one dangerous viper.

MR. COTTON.

What sort of viper, pray, dear friend?

PEER.

A little one that slyly wiles you
to tempt the irretrievable.

(Drinking again.)
The essence of the art of daring,
the art of bravery in act,
is this: To stand with choice-free foot
amid the treacherous snares of life,—
to know for sure that other days
remain beyond the day of battle,—
to know that ever in the rear
a bridge for your retreat stands open
This theory has borne me on,
has given my whole career its colour;
and this same theory I inherit,
a race-gift, from my childhood's home.

MONSIEUR BALLON.

You are Norwegian?

PEER.

Yes, by birth;
but cosmopolitan in spirit.
For fortune such as I've enjoyed
I have to thank America.
My amply-furnished library
I owe to Germany's later schools.
Sc. i.] PEER GYNT. 

From France, again, I get my waistcoats,
my manners, and my spice of wit,—
from England an industrious hand,
and keen sense for my own advantage.
The Jew has taught me how to wait.
Some taste for dolce far niente
I have received from Italy,—
and one time, in a perilous pass,
to eke the measure of my days,
I had recourse to Swedish steel.

TRUMPETERSTRÅLE
(lifting up his glass).

Ay, Swedish steel——?

VON EEBERKOPF.
PEER.

Well, first of all, I want to travel.
You see, that's why I shipped you four,
to keep me company, at Gibraltar.
I needed such a dancing-choir
of friends around my gold-calf-altar——

VON EBERSKOPF.

Most witty!

MR. COTTON.

Well, but no one hoists
his sails for nothing but the sailing.
Beyond all doubt, you have a goal;
and that is——?

PEER.

To be Emperor.1

ALL FOUR.

What?

PEER
(nodding).

Emperor!

THE FOUR.

Where?

PEER.

O'er all the world.

MONSIEUR BALLON.

But how, friend——?

1 In the original "kejser." We have elsewhere used the word
"Kaiser," but in this scene, and in Scenes 7 and 8 of this act, the
ordinary English form seemed preferable.
Sc. i.]

PEER GYNT. 137

PEER.

By the might of gold!

That plan is not at all, a new one;
it's been the soul of my career.
Even as a boy, I swept in dreams
far o'er the ocean on a cloud.
I soared with train and golden scabbard,—
and flopped down on all-fours again.
But still my goal, my friends, stood fast.—
There is a text, or else a saying,
somewhere, I don't remember where,
that if you gained the whole wide world,
but lost yourself, your gain were but
a garland on a cloven skull.
That is the text—or something like it:
(more and more elevated).

The Gyntish Self—it is the host
of wishes, appetites, desires,—
the Gyntish Self, it is the sea
of fancies, exigencies, claims,
all that, in short, makes my breast heave,
and whereby I, as I, exist.
But as our Lord requires the clay
to constitute him God o' the world,
so I, too, stand in need of gold,
if I as Emperor would figure.

MONSIEUR BALLON.

You have the gold, though!

PEER.

Not enough.

Ay, maybe for a nine-days' flourish,
as Emperor à la Lippe-Detmold.
But I must be myself en bloc,¹
must be the Gynt of all the planet,
Sir Gynt² throughout, from top to toe!

MONSIEUR BALLON
(enraptured).

Possess the earth's most exquisite beauty!

VON EBERSKOPF.

All century-old Johannisberger!

TRUMPETERSTRÄLE.

And all the blades of Charles the Twelfth!

¹ So in original.
Sc. i.]  

PEER GYNT.  

MR. COTTON.

But first a profitable opening
for business—

PEER.

That's already found;
our anchoring here supplied me with it.
To-night we set off northward ho!
The papers I received on board
have brought me tidings of importance—!

(Rises with uplifted glass.)

It seems that Fortune ceaselessly
aids him who has the pluck to seize it—

THE GUESTS.

WELL? Tell us—!
And I with war-whoops—from a distance

And I as well—by taking contracts!

Lead on! I'll find again in Bender
the world-renowned spur-strap-buckles!¹

Forgive me, friend, that I at first
misjudged you quite!

I, stupid hound,
took you for next door to a scoundrel!

Too strong that; only for a fool——

I, Uncle, for a specimen
of Yankee riff-raff's meanest spawn——!
Forgive me——!

¹ An allusion to the spurs with which Charles XII. is said to have
torn the caftan of the Turkish Vizier who announced to him that the
Sultan had concluded a truce with Russia. The boots and spurs, it
would appear, have been preserved, but with the buckles missing.
We now see gathered
in glory all the Gynish host
of wishes, appetites, and desires——!

Monsieur Ballon
(admiringly).

So this is being Monsieur Gyn!

Von Eberkopp
(in the same tone).

This I call being Gyn with honour!

Peer.

But tell me——?

Monsieur Ballon.

Don't you understand?

Peer.

May I be hanged if I begin to!
PEER GYNT.

PEER

(contemptuously).

No, many thanks! I side with strength,
and lend my money to the Turks.

MONSIEUR BALLON.

Impossible!

VON EBERKOFF.

Witty, but a jest!

PEER

(after a short silence, leaning on a chair and assuming
a dignified mien).

Come, gentlemen, I think it best
we part before the last remains
of friendship melt away like smoke.
Who nothing owns will lightly risk it.
When in the world one scarce commands
the strip of earth one's shadow covers,
one's born to serve as food for powder.
But when a man stands safely landed,
as I do, then his stake is greater.
Go you to Hellas. I will put you
ashore, and arm you gratis too.
The more you eke the flames of strife,
the better will it serve my purpose.
Strike home for freedom and for right!
Fight! storm! make hell hot for the Turks;—
and gloriously end your days
upon the Janissaries lances.—
But I—excuse me—

(Slaps his pocket.)
Sc. i.]  

PEER GYNT.  

I have cash,  

and am myself, Sir Peter Gynt.  

(Puts up his sunshade, and goes into the grove, where  
the hammocks are partly visible.)  

TRUMPETERSTRÅLE.  

The swinish curl  

MONSIEUR BALLON.  

No taste for glory—— !  

MR. COTTON.  

Oh, glory's neither here nor there;  
but think of the enormous profits  
we'd reap if Greece should free herself.
If to its fame the mountain answers, 
there must be veins of copper in it, 
that could be opened up again. 
And furthermore, that stream Castalia,¹ 
which people talk so much about, 
with fall on fall, at lowest reckoning, 
must mean a thousand horse-power good——!

TRUMPFERSTRÄLE.
Still I will go! My Swedish sword 
is worth far more than Yankee gold!

MR. COTTON.
Perhaps; but, jammed into the ranks, 
amid the press we’d all be drowned; 
and then where would the profit be?

MONSIEUR BALLON.
Accurst! So near to fortune’s summit, 
and now stopped short beside its grave!

MR. COTTON
*(shakes his fist towards the yacht).*
That long black chest holds coffered up 
the nabob’s golden nigger-sweat——!

VON EBERKOFF.
A royal notion! Quick! Away! 
It’s all up with his empire now! 
Hurrah!

MONSIEUR BALLON.
What would you?

¹ Mr. Cotton seems to have confounded Olympus with Parnassus.
Seize the power!  
The crew can easily be bought.  
On board then! I annex the yacht!  

MR. COTTON.

You—what—?  

VON EBERSKOPF.

I grab the whole concern!  
(Goes down to the jolly-boat.)

MR. COTTON.

Why then self-interest commands me  
to grab my share.  
(Goes after him.)
SCENE SECOND

(Another part of the coast. Moonlight with drifting clouds.
The yacht is seen far out, under full steam.)

(Peer Gynt comes running along the beach; now pinching
his arms, now gazing out to sea.)

PEER.

A nightmare!—Delusion!—I'll soon be awake!
She's standing to sea! And at furious speed!—
Mere delusion! I'm sleeping! I'm dizzy and drunk!

(Clutches his hands.)

It's not possible I should be going to die!

(Tearing his hair.)

A dream! I'm determined it shall be a dream!
Oh, horror! It's only too real, worse luck!
My brute-beasts of friends——! Do but hear me, oh Lord!
Since thou art so wise and so righteous——! Oh judge——!

(With upstretched arms.)

It is I, Peter\(^1\) Gynt! Oh, our Lord, give but heed!
Hold thy hand o'er me, Father; or else I must perish!
Make them back the machine! Make them lower the gig!
Stop the robbers! Make something go wrong with the
rigging!

Hear me! Let other folks' business lie over!
The world can take care of itself for the time!—
I'm blessed if he hears me! He's deaf as his wont is!
Here's a nice thing! A God that is bankrupt of help!

(Beckons upwards.)

\(^1\) So in original.
Hist! I’ve abandoned the nigger-plantation!
And missionaries I’ve exported to Asia!
Surely one good turn should be worth another!
Oh, help me on board——!

(A jet of fire shoots into the air from the yacht,
followed by thick clouds of smoke; a hollow
report is heard. Peer Gynt utters a shriek,
and sinks down on the sands. Gradually the
smoke clears away; the ship has disappeared.)

PEER

(softly, with a pale face).

That’s the sword of wrath!
In a crack to the bottom, every soul, man and mouse!
Oh, for ever blest be the lucky chance——
Can that be a lion that growled in the reeds——?

*(His teeth chattering.)*

No, it wasn't a lion.

*(Mustering up courage.)*

A lion, forsooth! Those beasts, they'll take care to keep out of the way. They know it's no joke to fall foul of their betters. They have instinct to guide them;—they feel, what's a fact, that it's dangerous playing with elephants.—But all the same——. I must find a tree. There's a grove of acacias and palms over there; if I once can climb up, I'll be sheltered and safe,—most of all if I knew but a psalm or two.

*(Clambers up.)*

Morning and evening are not alike; that text has been oft enough weighed and pondered.

*(Sits himself comfortably.)*

How blissful to feel so uplifted in spirit. To think nobly is more than to know oneself rich. Only trust in Him. He knows well what share of the chalice of need I can bear to drain. He takes fatherly thought for my personal weal;—

*(Casts a glance over the sea, and whispers with a sigh:)*

but economical—no, that he isn't!
Scene Third.

(Night. An encampment of Moroccan troops on the edge of the desert. Watch-fires, with soldiers resting by them.)

A Slave
(Enters, tearing his hair.)

Gone is the Emperor's milk-white charger!

Another Slave
(Enters, rending his garments.)

The Emperor's sacred robes are stolen!

An Officer
Are you there again? This is most accursed!
Now they're throwing fruit. No, it's something else.
A loathsome beast is your Barbary ape!
The Scripture says: Thou shalt watch and fight.
But I'm blest if I can; I am heavy and tired.

(Is again attacked; impatiently:)

I must put a stopper upon this nuisance!
I must see and get hold of one of these scamps,
get him hung and skinned, and then dress myself up,
as best I may, in his shaggy hide,
that the others may take me for one of themselves.—
What are we mortals? Motes, no more;
and it's wisest to follow the fashion a bit.—
Again a rabble! They throng and swarm.
Off with you! Shoo! They go on as though crazy.
If only I had a false tail to put on now,—
only something to make me a bit like a beast.—
What now? There's a patterning over my head——!

(Looks up.)

It's the grandfather ape,—with his fists full of filth——!

(Huddles together apprehensively, and keeps still for a while. The ape makes a motion; Peer Gynt begins coaxing and wheedling him, as he might a dog.)

Ay,—are you there, my good old Bus!
He's a good beast, he is! He will listen to reason!
He wouldn't throw;—I should think not, indeed!
It is me! Pip-pip! We are first-rate friends!
Ai—ai! Don't you hear, I can talk your language?
Bus and I, we are kinsfolk, you see;—
Bus shall have sugar to-morrow——! The beast!
The whole cargo on top of me! Ugh, how disgusting!—
Or perhaps it was food? 'Twas in taste—indecipherable;
and taste's for the most part a matter of habit.
What thinker is it who somewhere says:
You must spit and trust to the force of habit?—
Now here come the small-fry!

(Hits and slashes around him.)

It's really too bad
that man, who by rights is the lord of creation,
should find himself forced to——! O murder! murder!

the old one was bad, but the youngsters are worse!

SCENE FIFTH.

(Early morning. A stony region, with a view out over the
desert. On one side a cleft in the hill, and a cave.)
My father received;
so his son keeps receiving.  

THE THIEF.

Thy lot shalt thou bear still;
thyself shalt thou be still.

THE RECEIVER
(listening).

Steps in the brushwood!
Flee, flee! But where?

THE THIEF.
The cavern is deep,
and the Prophet great!

(They make off, leaving the booty behind them. The
horsemen gradually disappear in the distance.)

PEER GYNT
(enters, cutting a reed whistle).

What a delectable morning-tide!—
The dung-beetle's rolling his ball in the dust;
the snail creeps out of his dwelling-house.
The morning; ay, it has gold in its mouth.—
It's a wonderful power, when you think of it,
that Nature has given to the light of day.
One feels so secure, and so much more courageous,—
one would gladly, at need, take a bull by the horns.—
What a stillness all round! Ah, the joys of Nature,—
strange enough I should never have prized them before.

1 This is not to be taken as a burlesque instance of the poet's
supposed preoccupation with questions of heredity, but simply as an
allusion to the fact that, in the East, thieving and receiving are regular
and hereditary professions.
Why go and imprison oneself in a city,
for no end but just to be bored by the mob.—
Just look how the lizards are whisking about,
snapping, and thinking of nothing at all.
What innocence ev'n in the life of the beasts!
Each fulfils the Creator's behest unimpeachably,
preserving its own special stamp undefaced;
is itself, is itself, both in sport and in strife,
itsfelf, as it was at its primal: Be!

(\textit{Puts on his eye-glasses.})

A toad. In the middle of a sandstone block.
Petrifaction all round him. His head alone peering.
There he's sitting and gazing as though through a window
at the world, and is—to himself enough.—

(\textit{Reflectively.})

\textit{Enough? To himself—? Where is it that's written?}
and arrange matters so that I get a fresh start.
This is only a trial; deliverance will follow,—
if only the Lord lets me keep my health.

(Dismisses his misgivings, lights a cigar, stretches
himself, and gazes out over the desert.)

What an enormous, limitless waste!—
Far in the distance an ostrich is striding.—
What can one fancy was really God's
meaning in all of this voidness and deadness?
This desert, bereft of all sources of life;
this burnt-up cinder, that profits no one;
this patch of the world, that for ever lies fallow;
this corpse, that never, since earth's creation,
has brought its Maker so much as thanks,—
why was it created?—How spendthrift is Nature!—
Is that sea in the east there, that dazzling expanse
all gleaming? 'Tis can't be; 'tis but a mirage.
The sea's to the west; it lies piled up behind me,
dammed out from the desert by a sloping ridge.

(A thought flashes through his mind.)

Dammed out? Then I could—–?
The ridge is narrow
Dammed out? It wants but a gap, a canal,—
like a flood of life would the waters rush
in through the channel, and fill the desert! 1
Soon would the whole of yon red-hot grave
spread forth, a breezy and rippling sea.
The oases would rise in the midst, like islands;
Atlas would tower in green cliffs on the north;
sailing-ships would, like stray birds on the wing,
slip to the south, on the caravans' track.

3 This proposal was seriously mooted about ten years after the appearance of Peer Gynt.
Life-giving breezes would scatter the choking vapours, and dew would distil from the clouds. People would build themselves town on town, and grass would grow green round the swaying palm-trees. The southland, behind the Sahara's wall, would make a new seaboard for civilisation. Steam would set Timbuctoo's factories spinning; Bornu would be colonised apace; the naturalist would pass safely through Habes in his railway-car to the Upper Nile. In the midst of my sea, on a fat oasis, I will replant the Norwegian race; the Dalesman's blood is next door to royal; Arabic crossing will do the rest. Skirting a bay, on a shelving strand, I'll build the chief city, Peeropolis.
I don't quite know where, that the will can move mountains;—
but how about moving a horse as well——?
Pooh! Here stands the horse, that's a matter of fact;—
for the rest, why, *ab esse ad posse*, et cetera.

*(Puts on the dress and looks down at it.)*

Sir Peter—a Turk, too, from top to toe!
Well, one never knows what may happen to one.—
Gee-up, now, Granè, my trusty steed!

*(Mounts the horse.)*

Gold-slipper stirrups beneath my feet!—
You may know the great by their riding-gear!

*(Gallops off into the desert.)*

**SCENE SIXTH.**

*(The tent of an Arab chief, standing alone on an oasis.)*

*(Peer Gynt, in his eastern dress, resting on cushions. He is drinking coffee, and smoking a long pipe. Anitra, and a bevy of girls, dancing and singing before him.)*

**CHORUS OF GIRLS.**

The Prophet is come!
The Prophet, the Lord, the All-Knowing One,
to us, to us he come,
* o'er the sand-ocean riding!
The Prophet, the Lord, the Unerring One,
to us, to us he come,
* o'er the sand-ocean sailing!
Wake the flute and the drum!
The Prophet, the Prophet is come!
ANITRA.

His courser is white as the milk is
that streams in the rivers of Paradise.
Bend every knee! Bow every head!
His eyes are as bright-gleaming, mild-beaming stars.
Yet none earth-born endureth
the rays of those stars in their blinding splendour!

Through the desert he came.
Gold and pearl-drops sprang forth on his breast.
Where he rode there was light.
Behind him was darkness;
behind him raged drought and the simoom.
He, the glorious one, came!
Through the desert he came,
like a mortal apparelled.
To grub and grub in the bins of trade—
as I think it all over, I can't understand it;—
it happened so; that's the whole affair.—
To be oneself on a basis of gold
is no better than founding one's house on the sand.
For your watch, and your ring, and the rest of your
trappings
the good people fawn on you, grovelling to earth;
they lift their hats to your jewelled breast-pin;
but your ring and your breast-pin are not your person.—¹
A prophet; ay, that is a clearer position.
At least one knows on what footing one stands.
If you make a success, it's yourself that receives
the ovation, and not your pounds-sterling and shillings.²
One is what one is, and no nonsense about it;
one owes nothing to chance or to accident,
and needs neither licence nor patent to lean on.—
A prophet; ay, that is the thing for me.
And I slipped so utterly unawares into it,—
just by coming galloping over the desert,
and meeting these children of nature en route.
The Prophet had come to them; so much was clear.
It was really not my intent to deceive——;
there's a difference 'twixt lies and oracular answers;
and then I can always withdraw again.
I'm in no way bound; it's a simple matter——;
the whole thing is private, so to speak;
I can go as I came; there's my horse ready saddled;
I am master, in short, of the situation.

ANITRA

(approaching from the tent-door).

Prophet and Master!

¹ Or "ego." ² In original, "Pfundsterling og shilling."
Sc. vi.] PEER GYNT.

PEER.
What would my slave?

ANITRA.
The sons of the desert await at thy tent-door;
they pray for the light of thy countenance—

PEER.
Say in the distance I'd have them assemble;
say from the distance I hear all their prayers.
Add that I suffer no menfolk in here!
Men, my child, are a worthless crew,—
inveterate rascals you well may call them!
Anitra, you can't think how shamelessly
they have swind—— I mean they have sinned, my child!—

Stop!
But what is beauty? A mere convention,—
a coin made current by time and place.
And just the extravagant seems most attractive
when one of the normal has drunk one's fill.
In the law-bound one misses all intoxication.
Either plump to excess or excessively lean;
either parlously young or portentously old;—
the medium is mawkish.—
Her feet—they are not altogether clean;
no more are her arms; in especial one of them.
But that is at bottom no drawback at all.
I should rather call it a qualification—
Amitra, come listen!

Amitra
(approaching).
Thy handmaiden hears!

Peer.
You are tempting, my daughter! The Prophet is touched.
If you don't believe me, then hear the proof;—
I'll make you a Houri in Paradise!

Amitra.
Impossible, Lord!

Peer.
What? You think I am jesting?
I'm in sob'ry earnest, as true as I live!

Amitra.
But I haven't a soul.

Peer.
Then of course you must get one!
How, Lord?

Peer.

Just leave me alone for that;—
I shall look after your education.
No soul? Why, truly you're not over bright,
as the saying goes. I've observed it with pain.
But pooh! for a soul you can always find room.
Come here! let me measure your brain-pan, child.—
There is room, there is room, I was sure there was.
It's true you never will penetrate
very deep; to a large soul you'll scarcely attain;—
but never you mind; it won't matter a bit;—
you'll have plenty to carry you through with credit——

Anitra.
The Prophet is gracious——

Peer.

You hesitate? Speak!

But I'd rather——

Peer.

Say on; don't waste time about it!

Anitra.

I don't care so much about having a soul;—
give me rather——

Peer.

What, child?
ANITRA
(pointing to his turban).
That lovely opal!

PEER
(enchanted, handing her the jewel).
Anitra! Anitra! true daughter of Eve!
I feel thee magnetic; for I am a man.
And, as a much-esteemed author has phrased it:
"Das Ewig-Weibliche zieht uns hinan!" 1

SCENE SEVENTH.

(A moonlight night. The palm-grove outside ANITRA's
tent.)

(PEER GYNT is sitting beneath a tree, with an Arabian lute
in his hands. His beard and hair are clipped; he
looks considerably younger.)

PEER GYNT
(plays and sings).

I double-locked my Paradise,
and took its key with me.
The north-wind bore me seaward ho!
while lovely women all forlorn
wept on the ocean strand.

Still southward, southward clove my keel
the salt sea-currents through.

3 Ithen writes "Ziehet uns an." We have ventured to restore the
exact wording of Goethe's lines.
Sc. vii.] Peer Gynt. 163

Where palms were swaying proud and fair,
a garland round the ocean-bight,
    I set my ship afire.

I climbed aboard the desert ship,
    a ship on four stout legs.
It foamed beneath the lashing whip;—
oh, catch me; I'm a flitting bird;—
    I'm twittering on a bough!

Anitra, thou'rt the palm-tree's must;
    that know I now full well!
Ay, even the Angora goat-milk cheese
is scarcely half such dainty fare,
    Anitra, ah, as thou!

(He hangs the lute over his shoulder, and comes forward.)

Still here I. Is the fish one listening?
Balmy night is made for music;
music is our common sphere;
in the act of singing, we are
we, Peer Gynt and nightingale.
And the maiden's very sleeping
is my passion's crowning bliss;—
for the lips protruded o'er the
beaker yet untasted quite—
but she's coming, I declare!
After all, it's best she should.

**ANITRA**
(from the tent)

Master, call'st thou in the night?

**PEER.**

Yes indeed, the Prophet calls.
I was wakened by the cat
with a furious hunting-hubbub—

**ANITRA.**

Ah, not hunting-noises, Master;
it was something much, much worse.

**PEER.**

What, then, was't?

**ANITRA.**

Oh, spare me!

**PEER.**

Speak.

**ANITRA.**

Oh, I blush to—
Sc. vii.] PEER GYNT. 165

PEER
(approaching).

Was it, mayhap,

that which filled me so completely
when I let you have my opal?

ANITRA
(horrified).

Lik'en thee, O earth's great treasure,
to a horrible old cat!

PEER.

Child, from passion's standpoint viewed,
may a tom-cat and a prophet
come to very much the same.
Fudge, avaunt! *En tête-à-tête*
I'm Peer—well, the man I am.
Hei, away now with the prophet;
me, myself, you have me here!

*(Seats himself under a tree, and draws her to him.)*

Come, Anitra, we will rest us
underneath the palm's green fan-shade!
I'll lie whispering, you'll lie smiling;
afterwards our rôles exchange we;
thен shall your lips, fresh and balmy,
to my smiling, passion whisper!

**ANITRA**
*(lies down at his feet).*

All thy words are sweet as singing,
though I understand but little.
Master, tell me, can thy daughter
catch a soul by listening?

**PEER.**

Soul, and spirit's light and knowledge,
all in good time you shall have them.
When in east, on rosy streamers
golden types print: Here is day,—
then, my child, I'll give you lessons;
you'll be well brought-up, no fear.
But, 'mid night's delicious stillness,
it were stupid if I should,
with a threadbare wisdom's remnants,
play the part of pedagogue.—
And the soul, moreover, is not,
looked at properly, the main thing.
It's the heart that really matters.
ANITRA.

Speak, O Master! When thou speakest,
I see gleams, as though of opals!

PEER.

Wisdom in extremes is folly;
coward blossoms into tyrant;
thrust, when carried to excess,
ends in wisdom written backwards.
Ay, my daughter, I'm forsworn
as a dog if there are not
folk with o'erfed souls on earth
who shall scarce attain to clearness.
Once I met with such a fellow,
of the flock the very flower;
Aged eagle moults his plumage,
aged fogey lags declining,
aged dame has ne'er a tooth left,
aged churl gets withered hands,—
one and all get withered souls.
Youth! Ah, youth! I mean to reign,
as a sultan, whole and fiery,—
not on Guntiana's shores,
under trellised vines and palm-leaves,—
but enthronèd in the freshness
of a woman's virgin thoughts.—

See you now, my little maiden,
why I've graciously bewitched you,—
why I have your heart selected,
and established, so to speak,
there my being's Caliphate?
All your longings shall be mine.
I'm an autocrat in passion!
You shall live for me alone.
I'll be he who shall enthrall
you like gold and precious stones.
Should we part, then life is over,—
that is, your life, nota bene!
Every inch and fibre of you,
will-less, without yea or nay,
I must know filled full of me.
Midnight beauties of your tresses,
all that's lovely to be named,
shall, like Babylonian gardens,
tempt your Sultan to his tryst.

After all, I don't complain, then,
of your empty forehead-vault.
With a soul, one's oft absorbed in

1 Literally, "on the basis of."
Sc. viii.]  Peer Gynt.  169

contemplation of oneself.
Listen, while we're on the subject,—
if you like it, faith, you shall
have a ring about your ankle:—
'twill be best for both of us.
I will be your soul by proxy;
for the rest—why, status quo.

(Anitra snores.)

What!  She sleeps!  Then has it glided
bootless past her, all I've said?—
No; it marks my influence o'er her
that she floats away in dreams
on my love-talk as it flows.

(Rises, and lays trinkets in her lap.)

Here are jewels!  Here are more!

[Exit Anitra.  Peer of Norway.}
What would you?

What would I? Play hawk and dove!
Run away with you! Frolic and frisk a bit!

For shame! An old prophet like you——!

Oh, stuff!

The prophet's not old at all, you goose!
Do you think all this is a sign of age?

Let me go! I want to go home!

Coquette!

What, home! To father-in-law! That would be fine!
We madcap birds that have flown from the cage
must never come into his sight again.
Besides, my child, in the self-same place
it's wisest never to stay too long;
for familiarity lessens respect;——
most of all when one comes as a prophet or such.
One should show oneself glimpse-wise, and pass like a dream.
Faith, 'twas time that the visit should come to an end.
They're unstable of soul, are these sons of the desert;——
both incense and prayers dwindled off towards the end.

Yes, but are you a prophet?
ANITRA.

Give me that ring that you have on your finger.

PEER.

Take, sweet Anitra, the whole of the trash!

ANITRA.

Thy words are as songs! Oh, how dulcet their sound!

PEER.

How blesséd to know oneself loved to this pitch!
I'll dismount! Like your slave, I will lead your palfrey!

(Hands her his riding-whip, and dismounts.)

There now, my rosebud, my exquisite flower!
Here I'll go trudging my way through the sand,
till a sunstroke o'ertakes me and finishes me.
I'm young, Anitra; bear that in mind!
You mustn't be shocked at my escapades.
Frolics and high-jinks are youth's sole criterion!
And so, if your intellect weren't so dense.
Am I not? There, grab! I can leap like a buck!
Were there vine-leaves around, I would garland my brow.
To be sure I am young! Hei, I'm going to dance!

(Dances and sings.)
I am a blissful game-cock!
Peck me, my little pullet!
Hop-sa-sa! Let me trip it;—
I am a blissful game-cock!

ANITRA.
You are sweating, my prophet; I fear you will melt;—hand me that heavy bag hung at your belt.

PEER.
Tender solicitude! Bear the purse ever;—hearts that can love are content without gold!

(Dances and sings again.)
Young Peer Gynt is the maddest wag;—he knows not what foot he shall stand upon.
Pooh, says Peer;—pooh, never mind!
Young Peer Gynt is the maddest wag!

ANITRA.
What joy when the Prophet steps forth in the dance!

PEER.
Oh, bother the Prophet!—Suppose we change clothes!
Heiss! Strip off!

ANITRA.
Your caftan were too long,
your girdle too wide, and your stockings too tight—-
Sc. viii.] Peer Gynt. 173

Peer.

*Eh bien!* 1

*(Kneels down.)*

But vouchsafe me a vehement sorrow;—
to a heart full of love, it is sweet to suffer I
Listen; as soon as we're home at my castle——

Anitra.

In your Paradise;—have we far to ride?

Peer.

Oh, a thousand miles or——

Anitra.
ANITRA.

Anitra obeyeth the Prophet!—Farewell!

(Gives him a smart cut across the fingers, and dashes off, at a tearing gallop, back across the desert.)

PEER

(stands for a long time thunderstruck).

Well now, may I be—1

SCENE NINTH.

(The same place, an hour later.)

(PEER GYNT is stripping off his Turkish costume, soberly and thoughtfully, bit by bit. Last of all, he takes his little travelling-cap out of his coat-pocket, puts it on, and stands once more in European dress.)

PEER GYNT

(throwing the turban far away from him).

There lies the Turk, then, and here stand I!—These heathenish doings are no sort of good. It's lucky 'twas only a matter of clothes, and not, as the saying goes, bred in the bone. —What tempted me into that galley at all? It's best, in the long run, to live as a Christian, to put away peacock-like ostentation, to base all one's dealings on law and morality, to be ever oneself, and to earn at the last a speech at one's grave-side, and wreaths on one's coffin.

(Walks a few steps.)
The hussy;—she was on the very verge
of turning my head clean topsy-turvy.
May I be a troll if I understand
what it was that dazed and bemused me so.
Well; it's well that's done: had the joke been carried
but one step on, I'd have looked absurd.—
I have erred;——but at least it's a consolation
that my error was due to the false situation.
It wasn't my personal self that fell.
'Twas in fact this prophetical way of life,
so utterly lacking the salt of activity,
that took its revenge in these qualms of bad taste.
It's a sorry business this prophetising!
One's office compels one to walk in a mist;
in playing the prophet, you throw up the game
the moment you act like a rational being.
In so far I've done what the occasion demanded,
in the mere fact of paying my court to that goose.
But, nevertheless——

(Bursts out laughing.)

Hm, to think of it now!
To try to make time stop by jigging and dancing,
and to cope with the current by capering and prancing!
To thrum on the lute-strings, to fondle and sigh,
and end, like a rooster,—by getting well plucked!
Such conduct is truly prophetic frenzy.—
Yes, plucked!—Phew! I'm plucked clean enough indeed.
Well, well, I've a trifle still left in reserve;
I've a little in America, a little in my pocket;
so I won't be quite driven to beg my bread.—
And at bottom this middle condition is best.

1 Literally, "you're loosed" or "euchred."
2 Literally, "behave as though sober and wakeful."
I’m no longer a slave to my coachman and horses;
I haven’t to fret about postchaise or baggage;
I am master, in short, of the situation.—
What path should I choose? Many paths lie before me;
and a wise man is known from a fool by his choice.
My business life is a finished chapter;
my love-sports, too, are a cast-off garment.
I feel no desire to live back like a crab.
"Forward or back, and it’s just as far;
out or in, and it’s just as strait,"
so I seem to have read in some luminous work.—
I’ll try something new, then; ennoble my course;
find a goal worth the labour and money it costs.
Shall I write my life without dissimulation,—
a book for guidance and imitation?
Or stay——! I have plenty of time at command;—
what if, as a travelling scientist,
I should study past ages and time’s voracity?
Ay, sure enough; that is the thing for me!
Legends I read e’en in childhood’s days,
and since then I’ve kept up that branch of learning.—
I will follow the path of the human race!
Like a feather I’ll float on the stream of history,
make it all live again, as in a dream,—
see the heroes battling for truth and right,
as an onlooker only, in safety ensconced,—
see thinkers perish and martyrs bleed,
see empires founded and vanish away,—
see world-epochs grow from their trifling seeds;
in short, I will skim off the cream of history.—
I must try to get hold of a volume of Becker,
and travel as far as I can by chronology.—
It’s true—my grounding’s by no means thorough,

1 Literally, "spiritual."
Peer Gynt.

Not wheels within wheels are deceptive;—
; the wilder the starting-point,
will oft be the more original.—
ing it is, now, to choose a goal,
straight for it, like flint and steel!

(With quiet emotion.)
off all round one, on every side,
that bind one to home and friends,—
to atoms one's hoarded wealth,—
's love and its joys good-night,—
to find the arcana of truth,—

(Wiping a tear from his eye.)

test of the true man of science!—
self happy beyond all measure.
ve fathomed my destiny's riddle.
put persevering through thick and thin!
ible, since if I hold up my head.
SCENE TENTH.

(A summer day. Far up in the North. A hut in the forest. The door, with a large wooden bar, stands open. Reindeer-horns over it. A flock of goats by the wall of the hut.)

(A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, fair-haired and comely, sits spinning outside in the sunshine.)

THE WOMAN

(glances down the path, and sings).

Maybe both the winter and spring will pass by, and the next summer too, and the whole of the year;—but thou wilt come one day, that know I full well; and I will await thee, as I promised of old.¹

(Calls the goats, spins, and sings again.)

God strengthen thee, whereso thou goest in the world! God gladden thee, if at his footstool thou stand! Here will I await thee till thou comest again;
and if thou wait up yonder, then there we'll meet, my friend!

SCENE ELEVENTH.

(In Egypt. Daybreak. MEMNON'S STATUE amid the sands.)

(Peer Gynt enters on foot, and looks around him for a while.)

PEER GYNT.

Here I might fittingly start on my wanderings.—So now, for a change, I've become an Egyptian; but Egyptian on the basis of the Gyntish I.

¹ Sitst—literally, "when last we met."
Assyria next I will bend my steps,
begin right back at the world's creation
'ld lead to nought but bewilderment.
'll go round about all the Bible history;
ecular traces I'll always be coming on;
to look, as the saying goes, into its seams,
etirely outside both my plan and my powers.

(Sits upon a stone.)

I will rest me, and patiently wait
the statue has sung its habitual dawn-song.
In breakfast is over, I'll climb up the pyramid;
re time, I'll look through its interior afterwards.
I'll go round the head of the Red Sea by land;
saps I may hit on King Potiphar's grave.—
't I'll turn Asiatic. In Babylon I'll seek for
far-renowned harlots and hanging gardens,—
MEMNON'S STATUE
(sings).
From the demigod's ashes there soar, youth-renewing,
birds ever singing.
Zeus the Omniscient
shaped them contending
Owls of wisdom,
my birds, where do they slumber?
Thou must die if thou rede not
the song's enigma!

PEER.

How strange now,—I really fancied there came
from the statue a sound. Music, this, of the Past.
I heard the stone-accents now rising, now sinking.—
I will register it, for the learned to ponder.

(Notes in his pocket-book.)

"The statue did sing. I heard the sound plainly,
but didn't quite follow the text of the song.
The whole thing, of course, was hallucination.—
Nothing else of importance observed to-day."

(Proceeds on his way.)
SCENE TWELFTH.

The village of Gizeh. The great Sphinx carved out of the rock. In the distance the spires and minarets of Cairo.

Peer Gynt enters; he examines the Sphinx attentively, now through his eyeglass, now through his hollowed hand.

Peer Gynt.

Here in the world have I met before; is it I have, in the north or the south. Half forgotten that's like this hobgoblin? And, if so, who? It afterwards crossed my mind.
Are you still good at riddling? Come, let us try.
Now we shall see if you answer as last time:

(Calls out towards the Sphinx.)

Hei, Boyg, who are you?

A VOICE

(behind the Sphinx).

Ach, Sphinx, wer bist du?

PEER.

What! Echo answers in German! How strange!

THE VOICE.

Wer bist du?

PEER.

It speaks it quite fluently too!
That observation is new, and my own.

(Notes in his book.)

“Echo in German. Dialect, Berlin.”

(BEGRIFFENFELDT comes out from behind the Sphinx.)

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

A man!

PEER.

Oh, then it was he that was chattering.

(Notes again.)

“Arrived in the sequel at other results.”

BEGRIFFENFELDT

(with all sorts of restless antics).

Excuse me, mein Herr—! Eine Lebensfrage—!¹
What brings you to this place precisely to-day?

¹ So in original.
Sc. xii.] Peer Gynt. 183

Peer.
A visit. I'm greeting a friend of my youth.

Begriffenfeldt.
What? The Sphinx—? 

Peer.
(nods).
Yes, I knew him in days gone by.

Begriffenfeldt.
Famos!—And that after such a night!
My temples are hammering as though they would burst!
You know him, man! Answer! Say on! Can you tell what he is?

Peer.
What he is? Yes, that's easy enough.
BEGRIFFENFELDT

(in rapt admiration).

Peer Gynt! Allegoric! I might have foreseen it.—
Peer Gynt? That must clearly imply: The Unknown,—
the Comer whose coming was foretold to me——

PEER.

What, really? And now you are here to meet——?

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

Peer Gynt! Profound! Enigmatic! Incisive!
Each word, as it were, an abysmal lesson!

What are you?

PEER

(modestly).

I've always endeavoured to be myself. For the rest, here's my passport, you see.

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

Again that mysterious word at the bottom.

(Seizes him by the wrist.)

To Cairo! The Interpreters' Kaiser is found!

PEER.

Kaiser?

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

Come on!

PEER.

Am I really known——?

BEGRIFFENFELDT

(dragging him away).

The Interpreters' Kaiser—on the basis of Self!
SCENE THIRTEENTH.

(In Cairo. A large courtyard, surrounded by high walls and buildings. Barred windows; iron cages.)

(THREE KEEPERS in the courtyard. A FOURTH comes in.)

THE NEW-COMER.

Schafmann, say, where's the director gone?

A KEEPER.

He drove out this morning some time before dawn.

THE FIRST.

I think something must have occurred to annoy him; for last night——
it's been lately increased by a hundred and sixty——

(Shouts to the Keepers.)

Mikkel, Schlingelberg, Schafmann, Fuchs,—
into the cages with you at once!

THE KEEPERS.

We!

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

Who else, pray? Get in, get in!
When the world twirls around, we must twirl with it too.

(Forces them into a cage.)

He's arrived this morning, the mighty Peer;—
the rest you can guess,—I need say no more.

(Locks the cage door, and throws the key into a well.)

PEER.

But, my dear Herr Doctor and Director, pray——?

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

Neither one nor the other! I was before——
Herr Peer, are you secret? I must ease my heart——

PEER

(with increasing uneasiness).

What is it?

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

Promise you will not tremble.

PEER.

I will do my best, but——

BEGRIFFENFELDT

(draws him into a corner, and whispers).

The Absolute Reason
departed this life at eleven last night.
Sc. xiii.]

Peer Gynt. 187

Peer.

God help me—— I

Begtriffenfeldt.

Why, yes, it's extremely deplorable. And as I'm placed, you see, it is doubly unpleasant; for this institution has passed up to now for what's called a madhouse.

Peer.

A madhouse, ha, ha!

Begtriffenfeldt.

Not now, understand!

Peer.

(softly, pale with fear).

Now I see what the place is!
PEER GYNT. [Act iv.

PEER.

Where can rescue be found!

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

A snick round his neck, and whip! out of his skin!

PEER.

He's raving! He's utterly out of his wits!

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

Now it's patent, and can't be dissimulated,
that this from-himself-going must have for result
a complete revolution by sea and land.
The persons one hitherto reckoned as mad,
you see, became normal last night at eleven,
accordant with Reason in its newest phase.
And more, if the matter be rightly regarded,
it's patent that, at the aforementioned hour,
the sane folks, so called, began forthwith to rave.

PEER.

You mentioned the hour, sir; my time is but scant——

BEGRIFFENFELDT.

Your time, did you say? There you jog my remembrance!
(Opens a door and calls out.)

Come forth all! The time that shall be is proclaimed!
Reason is dead and gone; long live Peer Gynt!

PEER.

Now, my dear good fellow——!
(The lunatics come one by one, and at intervals,
into the courtyard.)
Sc. xiii.]  Peer Gynt.  189

Begriffenfeldt.
Good morning! Come forth,
and hail the dawn of emancipation!
Your Kaiser has come to you!

Peer.
Kaiser?

Begriffenfeldt.
Of course!

Peer.
But the honour's so great, so entirely excessive——

Begriffenfeldt.
Oh, do not let any false modesty sway you
at an hour such as this.
We go, full sail, as our very selves.
Each one shuts himself up in the barrel of self,
in the self-fermentation he dives to the bottom,—
with the self-bung he seals it hermetically,
and seasons the staves in the well of self.
No one has tears for the other's woes;
no one has mind for the other's ideas.
We're our very selves, both in thought and tone,
ourselves to the spring-board's uttermost verge,—
and so, if a Kaiser's to fill the throne,
it is clear that you are the very man.

**PEER.**

O would that the devil——!

**BEGRIFFENFELDT.**

Come, don't be cast down;
almost all things in nature are new at the first.
"Oneself;"—come, here you shall see an example;
I'll choose you at random the first man that comes——

*(To a gloomy figure.)*

Good-day, Huhu! Well, my boy, wandering round
for ever with misery's impress upon you?

**HUHU.**

Can I help it, when the people,
race by race, dies untranslated?

*(To PEER GYNT.)*

You're a stranger; will you listen?

**PEER**

*(bowing.)*

Oh, by all means!

---

1 See Introduction, p. xiii.
2 Literally, "generation."
3 Literally, "uninterpreted."
Huhu.
Lend your ear then.—
Eastward far, like brow-borne garlands,
lie the Malabarish seabords,
Hollanders and Portugeses
compass all the land with culture.
There, moreover, swarms are dwelling
of the pure-bred Malaharis.
These have muddled up the language,
they now lord it in the country.—
But in long-departed ages
there the orang-outang was ruler.
He, the forest's lord and master,
freely fought and snarled in freedom.
As the hand of nature shaped him,
just so grinned he, just so gaped he.
I have tried to fight the battle
of our real, primal wood-speech,—
tried to bring to life its carcass,—
proved the people's right of shrieking,—
shrieked myself, and shown the need of
shrieks in poems for the people.—
Scantly, though, my work is valued.—
Now I think you grasp my sorrow.
Thanks for lending me a hearing;—
have you counsel, let me hear it!

PEER

(softly).

It is written: Best be howling
with the wolves that are about you.

(Aloud.)

Friend, if I remember rightly,
there are bushes in Morocco,
where orang-outangs in plenty
live with neither bard nor spokesman;—
their speech sounded Malabarish;—
it was classical and pleasing.
Why don't you, like other worthies,
emigrate to serve your country?

HUHU.

Thanks for lending me a hearing;—
I will do as you advise me.

(With a large gesture.)

East! thou hast disowned thy singer!
West! thou hast orang-outangs still!

(Goes.)
Well, was he himself? I should rather think so. He's filled with his own affairs, simply and solely. He's himself in all that comes out of him,—himself, just because he's beside himself. Come here! Now I'll show you another one, who's no less, since last evening, accordant with Reason.

(Ordered: To a Fellah, with a mummy on his back.)

King Apis, how goes it, my mighty lord?

THE FELLAH

(wildly, to Peer Gynt).

Am I King Apis?

Peer

(getting behind the Doctor).
All the pyramids yonder he builded,
and hewed out the mighty Sphinx,
and fought, as the Doctor puts it,
with the Turks, both to rechts and links.
And therefore the whole of Egypt
exalted him as a god,
and set up his image in temples,
in the outward shape of a bull.—
But I am this very King Apis,
I see that as clear as day;
and if you don't understand it,
you shall understand it soon.
King Apis, you see, was out hunting,
and got off his horse awhile,
and withdrew himself unattended
to a part of my ancestor's land.
But the field that King Apis manured
has nourished me with its corn;
and if further proofs are demanded,
know, I have invisible horns.
Now, isn't it most accursed
that no one will own my might!
By birth I am Apis of Egypt,
but a fellah in other men's sight.
Can you tell me what course to follow?—
then counsel me honestly.—
The problem is how to make me
resemble King Apis the Great.

Peer.

Build pyramids then, your highness,
and carve out a greater Sphinx,
and fight, as the Doctor puts it,
with the Turks, both to rechts and links.
Ay, that is all mighty fine talking!
A fellah! A hungry louse!
I, who scarcely can keep my hovel
clear even of rats and mice.
Quick, man,—think of something better,
that'll make me both great and safe,
and further, exactly like to
King Apis that's on my back!

Peer.

What if your highness hanged you,
and then, in the lap of earth,
'twixt the coffin's natural frontiers,
kicked still and completely dead.
PEER GYNT.

PEER.
Transition? To what? With your leave—I must go—

BEGRIPPENFELDT
(holding him).

Are you crazy?

PEER.
Not yet——. Crazy? Heaven forbid!

(A commotion. The Minister HUSSEIN forces his way through the crowd.)

HUSSEIN.
They tell me a Kaiser has come to-day.

(To PEER GYNT.)

It is you?

PEER
(in desperation).

Yes, that is a settled thing!

HUSSEIN.
Good.—Then no doubt there are notes to be answered?

PEER
(tearing his hair).

Come on! Right you are, sir;—the madder the better!

HUSSEIN.
Will you do me the honour of taking a dip?

(Bowing deeply.)

I am a pen.

PEER
(bowing still deeper).

Why then I am quite clearly a rubbishy piece of imperial parchment.

1 See note, p. 145.
HUSSEIN.

My story, my lord, is concisely this:
they take me for a sand-box, and I am a pen.

PEER.

My story, Sir Pen, is, to put it briefly:
I'm a blank sheet of paper that no one will write on.

HUSSEIN.

No man understands in the least what I'm good for;
they all want to use me for scattering sand with!

PEER.

I was in a woman's keeping a silver-clasped book;—
it's one and the same misprint to be either mad or sane!
BEGRIFFENFELDIT.

Here's a knife!

HUSSAIN
(seizing it).

Ah, how I shall lick up the ink now!
Oh, what rapture to cut oneself!

(Cuts his throat.)

BEGRIFFENFELDIT
(stepping aside).

Pray do not sputter.

PEER
(in increasing terror).

Hold him!

HUSSAIN.

Ay, hold me! That is the word!

Hold! Hold the pen! On the desk with the paper——!

(Falls.)

I'm outworn. The postscript—remember it, pray:
He lived and he died as a fate-guided'pen!

PEER
(dissily).

What shall I——! What am I? Thou mighty——, hold fast!

I am all that thou wilt;—I'm a Turk, I'm a sinner——
a hill-troll——; but help;—there was something that burst——!

(Shrieks.)

I cannot just hit on thy name at the moment;—
ob, come to my aid, thou—all madmen's protector!

(Sinks down insensible.)

1 "En påholden pen." "Underskrive med påholden pen"—to sign
by touching a pen which is guided by another.
beside me.—To crown him now!

(Presses the wreath on Peer Gynt's head, and shouts.)

Long life, long life to Self-hood's Kaiser!

SCHAFMANN
(in the cage).

Es lebe hoch der grosse Peer!
ACT FIFTH.

SCENE FIRST.

(On board a ship on the North Sea, off the Norwegian coast. Sunset. Stormy weather.)

'PEER GYNT, a vigorous old man, with grizzled hair and beard, is standing aft on the poop. He is dressed half sailor-fashion, with a pea-jacket and long boots. His clothing is rather the worse for wear; he himself is weather-beaten, and has a somewhat harder expression. — The captain is standing beside the steersman at the wheel. The crew are forward.)

PEER GYNT
(leans with his arms on the buttwork, and gases towards the land).

Look at Hallingskarv¹ in his winter furs; — he's ruffling it, old one, in the evening glow. The Jökel,¹ his brother, stands behind him askew; he's got his green ice-mantle still on his back. The Folgefann,¹ now, she is mighty fine,— lying there like a maiden in spotless white. Don't you be madcaps, old boys that you are! Stand where you stand; you're but granite knobs.

¹ Mountains and glaciers.
THE CAPTAIN

Two hands to the wheel, and the lantern aloft!

PEER.

It's blowing up stiff——

THE CAPTAIN.

——for a gale to-night.

PEER.

Can one see the Rondë Hills from the sea?

THE CAPTAIN.

No, how should you? They lie at the back of the snow-fields.

PEER.
When I left the country, I sailed by here;
And the dregs, says the proverb, hang in to the last.

(Spits, and gases at the coast.)

In there, where the scours and the clefts lie blue,—
where the valleys, like trenches, gloom narrow and black,—
and underneath, skirting the open fiords,—
it's in places like these human beings abide.

(Looks at the Captain.)

They build far apart in this country.

THE CAPTAIN.

Ay;

few are the dwellings and far between.

PEER.

Shall we get in by day-break?

THE CAPTAIN.

Thereabouts;
if we don't have too dirty a night altogether.

PEER.

It grows thick in the west.

THE CAPTAIN.

It does so.

PEER.

Stop a bit!
You might put me in mind when we make up accounts—
Sc. i.]  

**Peer Gynt.**  

I'm inclined, as the phrase goes, to do a good turn to the crew—

**The Captain.**

I thank you.

**Peer.**

It won't be much. I have dug for gold, and lost what I found;—we are quite at loggerheads, Fate and I. You know what I've got in safe keeping on board—that's all I have left;—the rest's gone to the devil.

**The Captain.**

It's more than enough, though, to make you of weight among people at home here.
What do you say? Have they wives and children?
Are they married?

Married? Ay, every man of them.
But the one that is worst off of all is the cook;
black famine is ever at home in his house.

Married? They've folks that await them at home?
Folks to be glad when they come? Eh?

Of course, in poor people's fashion.

And come they one evening,
what then?

Why, I daresay the goodwife will fetch
something good for a treat——

And a light in the sconce?

Ay, ay, may be two; and a dram to their supper.

And there they sit snug! There's a fire on the hearth!
They've their children about them! The room's full of chatter;
Sc. i.] PEER GYNT. 205

not one hears another right out to an end,
for the joy that is on them——!

THE CAPTAIN.

It's likely enough.
So it's really kind, as you promised just now,
to help eke things out.

PEER.

(thumping the bulwark).

I'll be damned if I do!
Do you think I am mad? Would you have me fork out
for the sake of a parcel of other folks' brats?
I've slaved much too sorely in earning my cash!
There's nobody waiting for old Peer Gynt.
PEER GYNT.

To have a whole bevy of youngsters at home;—
still to dwell in their minds as a coming delight;—
to have others' thoughts follow you still on your path!—
There's never a soul gives a thought to me.—
Lights in the sconces! I'll put out those lights.
I will hit upon something!—I'll make them all drunk;—
ot one of the devils shall go sober ashore.
They shall all come home drunk to their children and wives!
They shall curse; bang the table till it rings again,—
they shall scare those that wait for them out of their wits!—
The goodwife shall scream and rush forth from the house,—
clutch her children along! All their joy gone to ruin!

(The ship gives a heavy lurch; he staggers and keeps his balance with difficulty.)

Why, that was a buffet and no mistake.
The sea's hard at labour, as though it were paid for it;—
it's still itself here on the coasts of the north;—
a cross-sea, as wry and wrong-headed as ever—

(Listens.)

Why, what can those screams be?

THE LOOK-OUT
(forward).

A wreck a-lee!

THE CAPTAIN
(on the main deck, shouts).

Helm hard a-starboard! Bring her up to the wind!

THE MATE.

Are there men on the wreck?
Sc. 1.]

PEER GYNT.

THE LOOK-OUT.

I can just see three!

PEER.

Quick! lower the stern boat—

THE CAPTAIN.

She'd fill ere she floated.

(Goes forward.)

PEER.

Who can think of that now?

(To some of the crew.)

If you're men, to the rescue!
Bear away from the sea,

The mate.

There she went never more

Prel.

—All is silent of a sudden—

The mate

Where they landed as you think,

there are three new-made villains even now in the world.

(The storm increases. Prel. goes away off.

Prel.

There is no faith left among men any more—
no Christianity,—well, say they say it and write it—
their good deeds are few and their prayers are still fewer.
and they pay no respect to the Powers above them—
In a storm like to-night's, let's avenge the Lord is.
These beasts should be careful, and take what's the meat
that it's dangerous playing with elephants;—
and yet they must openly bear his displeasure.
I am no whit to blame; for the sacrifice
I can prove I stood ready, my money is intact.
But how does it profit me?—What says the proverb?
A conscience at ease is a pillow of down.
Oh say, that is all very well on dry land,
but I'm blest if it matters a snuff on board ship,
when a decent man's out on the seas with such.

At sea one never can be one's self;
one must go with the others from deck to keel;
if for boatswain and cook the hour of vengeance should
strike,
I shall no doubt be swept to the deuce with the rest;—
one's personal welfare is clean set aside;—
one counts but as a sausage in slaughtering-time.—

My mistake is this: I have been too meek;
and I've had no thanks for it after all.
Were I younger, I think I would shift the saddle,
and try how it answered to lord it awhile.
There is time enough yet! They shall know in the parish
that Peer has come sailing aloft o'er the seas!
I'll get back the farmstead by fair means or foul;—
I will build it anew; it shall shine like a palace.
But none shall be suffered to enter the hall!
THE PASSENGER.
A mistaken impression, which now is set right.

PEER.
But it's singular that, for the first time to-night,
I should see you——

THE PASSENGER.
I never come out in the day-time.

PEER.
Perhaps you are ill? You're as white as a sheet——

THE PASSENGER.
No, thank you—my health is uncommonly good.

PEER.
What a raging storm!

THE PASSENGER.
Ay, a blessed one, man!

PEER.
A blessed one?

THE PASSENGER.
The sea's running high as houses.
Ah, one can feel one's mouth watering!
Just think of the wrecks that to-night will be shattered;—
and think, too, what corpses will drive ashore!

PEER.
Lord save us!

THE PASSENGER.
Have you ever seen a man strangled,
or hanged,—or drowned?
Hold off from me——!

THE PASSÉ

Only
If we, for example, should strike
and sink in the darkness——

PEER.

You

THE PASSÉ

I really don't know what I ought
But suppose, now, I float and yo

Oh, rubbish——

THE PASSÉ

It's just a hype
But when one is placed with one
one grows soft-hearted and open-h
This is too much!

THE PASSENGER.

No more than your body you know:
To help my researches in science——

PEER.

Negone.

THE PASSENGER.

But think, my dear sir—the advantage is yours:
I'll have you laid open and brought to the light.
What I specially seek is the centre of dreams,—
and with critical ease I'll look into your secrets——

PEER.

Away with you!

THE PASSENGER.

Why, my dear sir—a drowned corpse——

PEER.

Blasphemer! You're goading the rage of the storm:
I call it too bad! Here it's raining and howling,
a terrible sea on, and all sorts of signs
of something that's likely to shorten our days;——
And you carry on so as to make it come quicker:

THE PASSENGER.

You're in no mood, I see, to negotiate further;
but time, you know, brings with it many a change——

(Nota bene)
We'll meet when you're sinking, if not before;
perhaps I may then find you more in the humour.

(Enters into the cabin.)
THE BOATS

I know of no passenger here by.

PEER

No others? This thing's getting

(To the ship's boy, who.

Who went down the companion.

THE BOATS

(Passes

THE LOOKOUT

(shout

Land close ahead!

PEER

Where's my

All the baggage on deck!

THE BOATS
The jib's blown away!

And there went the foresail!

Breakers under the bow!

She will go to shivers!

(Close under the land, among sunken rocks and surf. The ship sinks. The jolly-boat, with two men in her, is seen for a moment through the scud. A sea strikes her; she fills and upsets. A shrick is heard; then all is silent for a while. Shortly afterwards the boat appears floating bottom upwards.)

(Peer Gynt comes to the surface near the boat.)

Help! Help! A boat! Help! I'll be drowned! Save me, oh Lord—as saith the text!

(Clutches hold of the boat's heel.)
Peer Gynt.

The Cook

(comes up on the other side).

Lord God—for my children's sake, save mercy! Let me reach the land!

(Seizes hold of the heel.)

Peer.

Let go!

The Cook.

Let go!

Peer.

I'll strike!

The Cook.

So'll I!

Peer.

I'll crush you down with kicks and blows!

Let go your hold! She won't float two!

The Cook.

I know it! Yield!

Peer.

Yield you!

The Cook.

Oh yes!

(They fight; one of the Cook's hands is disabled; he clings on with the other.)

Peer.

Off with that hand!
Peer Gloz.

The Cook.

Oh, kind sir—spare.

Think of my little ones at home:

Peer.

I need my life far more than you.

for I am lone and childless so—

The Cook.

Let go! You've lived, and I am young.

Peer.

Quick; haste you; sink;—you drag me down.

The Cook.

Have mercy! Yield in heaven's name!

There's none to miss and mourn for you—

(His hand slips; he screams):

I'm drowning!

Peer.

(seizing him).

By this wisp of hair

I'll hold you; say your Lord's Prayer, quick:

The Cook.

I can't remember; all turns black—

Peer.

Come, the essentials in a word—

The Cook.

Give us this day—
Sc. ii.]  

**Peer Gynt.**

**Peer.**
Skip that part, Cook; you'll get all you need, safe enough.

**The Cook.**

Give us this day——

**Peer.**

The same old song!

One sees you were a cook in life——

(*The Cook slips from his grasp.*)

**The Cook**

(*sinking.*

Give us this day our——

(*Disappears.*)
Let me get you some more...

The Parson...

If in the end I am not so far...
If I, the result of all that I
my inquiry has made me escape
But requires your help—

Well...

The Parson...

The rest, of course, is made for you—

No more...

The Parson...

Lastly as you please.

Well...

Well...

Satan's tricks—

What now?

The Parson...

I'm waiting.
Sc. ii.]  

PEER GYNT.  

PEER  
(tearing his hair).  
I'll go mad!—  

What are you?  

THE PASSENGER  
(nods).  
Friendly.  

PEER.  
What else? Speak!  

THE PASSENGER:  
What think you? Do you know none other that's like me?  

PEER.
PEER

Why, one's afraid when danger threatens;—
but all your words have double meanings.¹

THE PASSENGER

Ay, have you gained but once in life
the victory that is given in dread?

PEER

(looks at him).

Came you to ope for me a door,
'twas stupid not to come before.
What sort of sense is there in choosing
your time when seas gape to devour one?

THE PASSENGER

Were, then, the victory more likely
beside your hearth-stone, snug and quiet?

PEER.

Perhaps not; but your talk befooled me.
How could you fancy it awakening?

THE PASSENGER

Where I come from, there smiles are prized
as highly as pathetic style.

PEER.

All has its time; what fits the taxman,²
so says the text, would damn the bishop.

¹ Literally, "Are set on screws."
² "Toller," the biblical "publican."
Sc. iii.]  Peer Gynt.

The Passenger.
The host whose dust inurned has slumbered
treads not on week-days the cothurnus.

Peer.
Avaunt thee, bugbear! Man, begone!
I will not die! I must ashore!

The Passenger.
Oh, as for that, be reassured;—
one dies not midmost of Act Five.
(Glides away.)

Peer.
Ah, there he let it out at last;—
he was a sorry moralist.

Scene Third

(Churchyard in a high-lying mountain parish.)
(A funeral is going on. By the grave, the priest and a
 gathering of people. The last verse of the psalm is
 being sung. Peer Gynt passes by on the road.)

Peer
(at the gate).

Here's a countryman going the way of all flesh.
God be thanked that it isn't me.
(Enters the churchyard.)
Now, when the soul has gone to meet its doom, and here the dust lies, like an empty pod,—
now, my dear friends, we'll speak a word or two about this dead man's pilgrimage on earth.

He was not wealthy, neither was he wise, his voice was weak, his bearing was unmanly, he spoke his mind abashed and faltering, he scarce was master at his own fireside; he sidled into church, as though appealing for leave, like other men, to take his place.

It was from Gudbrandsdale, you know, he came. When here he settled he was but a lad;—and you remember how, to the very last, he kept his right hand hidden in his pocket.

That right hand in the pocket was the feature that chiefly stamped his image on the mind,—and therewithal his writhing, his abashed shrinking from notice wheresoe'er he went.

But, though he still pursued a path aloof, and ever seemed a stranger in our midst, you all know what he strove so hard to hide,—the hand he muffled had four fingers only.—

I well remember, many years ago, one morning; there were sessions held at Lundé. 'Twas war-time, and the talk in every mouth turned on the country's sufferings and its fate.

I stood there watching. At the table sat the Captain, 'twixt the Bailiff ¹ and the sergeants; lad after lad was measured up and down, passed, and enrolled, and taken for a soldier.

¹ See footnote, p. 99.
The room was full, and from the green outside,  
where thronged the young folks, loud the laughter rang.
A name was called, and forth another stepped,  
one pale as snow upon the glacier's edge.
They bade the youth advance; he reached the table;  
we saw his right hand swaddled in a clout;—  
he gasped, he swallowed, battling after words,—  
but, though the Captain urged him, found no voice.
Ah yes, at last! Then with his cheek aflame,  
his tongue now failing him, now stammering fast,  
he mumbled something of a scythe that slipped  
by chance, and shore his finger to the skin.
Straightway a silence fell upon the room.
Men bandied meaning glances; they made mouths;  
they stoned the boy with looks of silent scorn.
He felt the hail-storm, but he saw it not.
Then up the Captain stood, the grey old man;  
he spat, and pointed forth, and thundered "Go!"
And the lad went. On both sides men fell back,  
till through their midst he had to run the gauntlet.
He reached the door; from there he took to flight;—  
up, up he went,—through wood and over hillside,  
up through the stone-slips, rough, precipitous.
He had his home up there among the mountains.—
It was some six months later he came here,  
with mother, and betrothed, and little child.
He leased some ground upon the high hillside,  
there where the waste lands trend away towards Lomb.
He married the first moment that he could;  
he built a house; he broke the stubborn soil;  
he trove, as many a cultivated patch  
bore witness, bravely clad in waving gold.
At church he kept his right hand in his pocket,—  
but sure I am at home his fingers nine
toiled every bit as hard as others’ ten.—
One spring the torrent washed it all away.
Their lives were spared. Ruined and stripped of all,
he set to work to make another clearing;
and, ere the autumn, smoke again arose
from a new, better-sheltered, mountain farm-house.
Sheltered? From torrent—not from avalanche;
two years, and all beneath the snow lay buried.

But still the avalanche could not dunt his spirit.
He dug, and raked, and carted—cleared the ground—and the next winter, ere the snow-blasts came,
a third time was his little homestead reared.

Three sons he had, three bright and stirring boys;
they must to school, and school was far away;—
and they must clamber where the hill-track failed,
by narrow ledges through the headlong scree.
What did he do? The eldest had to manage
as best he might, and, where the path was worst,
his father cast a rope round him to stay him;—
the others on his back and arms he bore.

Thus he toiled, year by year, till they were men.
Now might he well have looked for some return.
In the New World, three prosperous gentlemen
their school-going and their father have forgotten.

He was short-sighted. Out beyond the circle
of those most near to him be nothing saw.
To him seemed meaningless as cymbals' tinkling
those words that to the heart should ring like steel.
His race, his fatherland, all things high and shining,
stood ever, to his vision, veiled in mist.

But he was humble, humble, was this man;
and since that sessions-day his doom oppressed him,
as surely as his cheeks were flushed with shame,
and his four fingers hidden in his pocket.—
PEER GYNT.

"Hath nature's country's laws? Ay, true! Where is one thing that the law outshineth as the snow-white tent of Glittertind \(^1\) clouds, like higher rows of peaks, above it. The patriot was old. Both for church and state a wuthless tree. But the small circle where he was great, because he was himself, its inborn note rang true until its days were as a lute without strings.

And therefore, peace be with that warrior, that fought the peasant's lithe and fell! It is not ours to search the reins;—that is no task for dust, but for its roots;—yet dare I freely, firmly, speak my hope:

he scarce stands crippled now before his God!

(The gathering disperses. PEER GYNT remains behind, alone.)

PEER.

Now \_that\_ is what I call Christianity! Nothing to seize on one's mind unpleasantly.—And the topic—immovably being oneself,—that the pastor's homily turned upon,—is full, in its essence, of edification.

(Looks down upon the grave.)

Was it he, I wonder, that hacked through his knuckle that day I was out hewing logs in the forest? Who knows? If I weren't standing here with my staff by the side of the grave of this kinsman in spirit, I could almost believe it was I that slept, and heard in a vision my panegyric.—

\(^1\) A mountain in the Jotunheim. The name means "glittering peak."

15
It's a seemly and Christianlike custom indeed
this casting a so-called memorial glance
in charity over the life that is ended.
I shouldn't at all mind accepting my verdict
at the hands of this excellent parish priest.
Ah well, I dare say I have some time left
ere the gravedigger comes to invite me to stay with him;—
and as Scripture has it: What's best is best,—
and: Enough for the day is the evil thereof,—
and further: Discount not thy funeral.—
Ah, the church, after all, is the true consoler.
I've hitherto scarcely appreciated it;—
but now I feel clearly how blessed it is
to be well assured upon sound authority:
Even as thou sowest thou shalt one day reap.—
One must be oneself; for oneself and one's own
one must do one's best, both in great and in small things.
If the luck goes against you, at least you've the assurance
of a life carried through in accordance with principle.—
Now homewards! Though narrow and steep the path,
though Fate to the end may be never so biding—
still old Peer Gynt will pursue his own way.
and remain what he is: poor, but virtuous ever.

(Goes out.)

1 "Den tid den sorg"—literally, "That time that worry" or "care."
SCENE FOURTH.

(A hillside seamed by the dry bed of a torrent. A ruined mill-house beside the stream. The ground is torn up, and the whole place waste. Further up the hill, a large farm-house.)

(An auction is going on in front of the farm-house. There is a great gathering of people, who are drinking, with much noise. Peer Gynt is sitting on a rubbish-heap beside the mill.)

PEER.

Forward and back, and it's just as far;
out and in, and it's just as strait.—
Time wears away and the river gnaws on.
Go roundabout, the Boyg said;—and here one must.

A MAN DRESSED IN MOURNING.

Now there is only rubbish left over.

(Catches sight of Peer Gynt.)

Are there strangers here too? God be with you, good friend!

PEER.

Well met! You have lively times here to-day.
Is't a christening junket or a wedding feast?

THE MAN IN MOURNING.

I'd rather call it a house-warming treat;—
the bride is laid in a wormy bed.

PEER.

And the worms are squabbling for rags and clouts.
THE MAN IN MOURNING.

That's the end of the ditty; it's over and done.

PEER.

All the ditties end just alike;
and they're all old together; I knew 'em as a boy.

A LAD OF TWENTY
(with a casting-ladle).

Just look what a rare thing I've been buying!
In this Peer Gynt cast his silver buttons.

ANOTHER.

Look at mine, though! The money-bag bought for a half-penny.

A THIRD.

No more, eh? Twopence for the pedlar's pack!

PEER.

Peer Gynt? Who was he?

THE MAN IN MOURNING.

All I know is this:
he was kinsman to Death and to Aslak the Smith.

A MAN IN GREY.

You're forgetting me, man! Are you mad or drunk?

THE MAN IN MOURNING.

You forget that at Hegstad was a storehouse door.

1 Literally, "the bushel." See note, p. 9.
THE MAN IN MOURNING.

If only she doesn't give Death the slip—

THE MAN IN GREY.

Come, kinsman! A dram, for our kinship's sake!

THE MAN IN MOURNING.

To the deuce with your kinship! You're mauldering in drink—

THE MAN IN GREY.

Oh, rubbish; blood's never so thin as all that; one cannot but feel one's akin to Peer Gynt.

(Goes off with him.)

PEER
(to himself).

One meets with acquaintances.

A LAD
(calls after the MAN IN MOURNING).

Mother that's dead will be after you. Ask a, if you met her whistle.
a lad

rais a roar: - well.

Look, the cat of the deuce - well, my dears.
It was he chased the cats out in Christmas Eve.

another

rais a roar: - well.

Here is the wonderful tinder box here.
at Gendin, Peer Gynt overogenic and mean.

a tool

(with a hammer, oùst on the man in nothing.
Hei, Aksel, this steeple-caster. say do you know I?
Was it this that you used when the devil came the wall?

a name

'sumpy-sumery'.

Mads Møen, here's the invisible cloak.
Peer Gynt and Ingrid sewed through me as with.

تردد

Brandy here, boys! I feel I'm grown old now.
I must put up to auction my rambler and nummer.

a lad

What have you to sell, then?

تردد

A palace I have; -
it lies in the Rondé; it's solidly built.

1 See Appendix, p. 286.
Sc. iv.]  

PEER GYNT.

THE LAD.

A button is bid!

PEER.

You must run to a dram.
'Twere a sin and a shame to bid anything less.

ANOTHER.

He's a jolly old boy this!
(The bystanders crowd round him.)

PEER

(shouts).

Granë,¹ my steed;

who bids?

ONE OF THE CROWD.

Where's he running?

PEER.

Why, far in the west!

Near the sunset, my lads! Ah, that courser can fly
as fast, ay, as fast as Peer Gynt could lie.

VOICES.

What more have you got?

PEER.

I've both rubbish and gold!
I bought it with ruin; I'll sell it at a loss.

A LAD.

Put it up!

¹ See footnote, p. 118.
A dream of a silver-clasped book!
That you can have for an old book and eye.

To the devil with dreams!

Here's my Kaiserdom!
I throw it in the midst of you; scramble for it!

Is the crown given in?

Of the loveliest straw.
It will fit whoever first puts it on.
Hei, there is more yet! An addled egg!
A madman's grey hair! And the Prophet's beard!
All these shall be his that will show on the hillside
a post that has writ on it: Here lies your path!

(who has come up).
You're carrying on, my good man, so that almost
I think that your path will lead straight to the lock-up.

(hat in hand).
Quite likely. But, tell me, who was Peer Gynt?

Oh, nonsense—

1 See footnote, p. 99.
Sc. iv.]

PEER GYNT.

PEER.

Your pardon! Most humbly I beg—!

THE BAILIFF.

Oh, he's said to have been an abominable liar—

PEER.

A liar—?

THE BAILIFF.

Yes—all that was strong and great he made believe always that he had done it.
But, excuse me, friend—I have other duties—

(Goes.)

PEER.

And where is he now, this remarkable man?

AN ELDERLY MAN.

He fared over seas to a foreign land;
it went ill with him there, as one well might foresee;—
it's many a year now since he was hanged.

PEER.

Hanged? Ay, ay! Why, I thought as much; our lamented Peer Gynt was himself to the last.

(Bows.)

Good-bye,—and best thanks for to-day's merry meeting.

(Goes a few steps, but stops again.)

You joyous youngsters, you comely lasses,—shall I pay my shot with a traveller's tale?

1 "Dichter"; means also "poet."
SEVERAL VOICES.

Yes; do you know any?

PEER.

Nothing more easy.—

(He comes nearer; a look of strangeness com's over him.)

I was gold-digging once in San Francisco.
There were mountebanks swarming all over the town.
One with his toes could perform on the fiddle;
another could dance a Spanish halling on his knees;
a third, I was told, kept on making verses
while his brain-pan was having a hole bored right through it.
To the mountebank-meeting came also the devil;—
thought he'd try his luck with the rest of them.
His talent was this: in a manner convincing,
he was able to grunt like a flesh-and-blood pig.
He was not recognised, yet his manners attracted.
The house was well filled; expectation ran high.
He stepped forth in a cloak with an ample cape to it;
man muss sich drappiren, as the Germans say.
But under the mantle—what none suspected—he'd managed to smuggle a real live pig.
And now he opened the representation;
the devil he pinched, and the pig gave voice.
The whole thing purported to be a fantasia
on the porcine existence, both free and in bonds;
and all ended up with a slaughter-house squeal—
whereupon the performer bowed low and retired.—
The critics discussed and appraised the affair;
the tone of the whole was attacked and defended.

1 See footnote, p. 39.
In the original, “Persönlichkeit”—personality.
Some fancied the vocal expression too thin, while some thought the death-shriek too carefully studied; but all were agreed as to one thing: qua grunt, the performance was grossly exaggerated.—

Now that, you see, came of the devil's stupidity in not taking the measure of his public first.

(He bows and goes off. A puzzled silence comes over the crowd.)

SCENE FIFTH.

(Whitsun Eve.—In the depths of the forest. To the back, in a clearing, is a hut with a pair of reindeer horns over the porch-gable.)

(Peer Gynt is creeping among the undergrowth, gathering wild onions.)

PEER.

Well, this is one standpoint. Where is the next? One should try all things and choose the best. Well, I have done so,—beginning from Caesar, and downwards as far as to Nebuchadnezzar.

So I had, after all, to go through Bible history.
like the bear, I will heap up a leaf-mound above me,
and I'll scratch in big print on the bark of the tree:
Here rests Peer Gynt, that decent soul,
Kaiser o'er all of the other beasts.—
Kaiser?

(Laughs inwardly.)

Why, you old soothsayer-humbug!
no Kaiser are you; you are nought but an onion.
I'm going to peel you now, my good Peer!
You won't escape either by begging or howling.

(Takes an onion and pulls off layer after layer.)

There lies the outermost layer, all torn;
that's the shipwrecked man on the jolly-boat's keel.
Here's the passenger layer, scanty and thin;—
and yet in its taste there's a tang of Peer Gynt.
Next underneath is the gold-digger ego;
the juice is all gone—if it ever had any.
This coarse-grained layer with the hardened skin
is the peltry-hunter by Hudson's Bay.
The next one looks like a crown;—oh, thanks!
we'll throw it away without more ado.
Here's the archaeologist, short but sturdy;
and here is the Prophet, juicy and fresh.
He stinks, as the Scripture has it, of lies,
enough to bring the water to an honest man's eyes.
This layer that rolls itself softly together
is the gentleman, living in ease and good cheer.
The next one seems sick. There are black streaks upon it;—
black symbolises both parsons and niggers.

(Pulls off several layers at once.)

What an enormous number of swathings!
Isn't the kernel soon coming to light?

(Pulls the whole onion to pieces.)
I'm blest if it is! To the innermost centre,  
its nothing but swathings—each smaller and smaller.—  
Nature is witty!  

(Throws the fragments away.)  

The devil take brooding!  

If one goes about thinking, one's apt to stumble.  
Well, I can at any rate laugh at that danger;—  
for here on all fours I am firmly planted.  

(Scratches his head.)  

A queer enough business, the whole concern!  
Life, as they say, plays with cards up its sleeve;  
but when one snatches at them, they've disappeared,  
and one grips something else,—or else nothing at all.  

(He has come near to the hut; he catches sight of it  
and starts.)
Is thy burden heavy,
take time, take time;—
I will await thee;
I promised of old.\(^1\)

(\textit{Peer} (\textit{rises, quiet and deadly}).
One that's remembered,—and one that's forgot.
One that has squandered,—and one that has saved.—
Oh, earnest!—and never can the game be played o'er!  
Oh, dread!—here was my Kaiserdom!  
(\textit{Hurries off along the wood path}).

\textbf{Scene Sixth.}

(\textit{Night. A heath, with fir-trees. A forest fire has been raging; charred tree-trunks are seen stretching for miles. White mists here and there clinging to the earth.})

(\textit{Peer. Gynt comes running over the heath}).

\textit{Peer.}
Ashes, fog-scuds, dust wind-driven,—
here's enough for building with!  
Stench and rottenness within it;
all a whitened sepulchre.
Figments, dreams, and still-born knowledge
lay the pyramid's foundation;
o'er them shall the work mount upwards,
with its step on step of falsehood.

\(^1\) See footnote, p. 178. \(^2\) See footnote, p. 219.
Earnest shunned, repentance dreaded,
flaunt at the apex like a scutcheon,
fill the trump of judgment with their:

*Petrus Gyntus Caesar fecit*

(Listens.)

What is this, like children's weeping?
Weeping, but half-way to song—
Thread-balls ¹ at my feet are rolling!—

(Kicking at them.)

Off with you! You block my path!

**The Thread-balls**

(on the ground).

We are thoughts;
thou shouldst have thought us;—
feet to run on
thou shouldst have given us!

**Peer**

(going round about).

I have given life to one;—
'twas a bungled, crook-legged thing!

**The Thread-balls.**

We should have soared up
like clangorous voices,—
and here we must trundle
as grey-yarn thread-balls.

**Peer**

(stumbling).

Thread-clue! You accursed scamp! Would you trip your father's heels?

(Fleas.)

¹ See Introduction, p. vi.
WITHERED LEAVES

(flying before the wind).

We are a watchword;
thou shouldst have proclaimed us!
See how thy dozing
has woefully riddled us.
The worm has gnawed us
in every crevice;
we have never twined us
like wreaths round fruitage.

PEER.

Not in vain your birth, however;—
lie but still and serve as manure.

A SIGHING IN THE AIR.

We are songs;
thou shouldst have sung us!—
a thousand times over
hast thou cowed us and smothered us.
Down in thy heart’s pit
we have lain and waited;—
we were never called forth.
In thy gorge be poison!

PEER.

Poison thee, thou foolish stave!
Had I time for verse and stuff?

(Approaching the leafless tree)

DEWDROPS

(dripping from the branches).

We are tears
unshed for ever.
Ice-spears, sharp-wounding,
we could have melted.
Now the barb rankles
in the shaggy bosom;—
the wound is closed over;
our power is ended.

PEER.
Thanks;—I wept in Rondé-cloisters,—
none the less they tied the tail on!

BROKEN STRAWS.

We are deeds;
thou shouldst have achieved us!
Doubt, the throttler,
has crippled and riven us.
On the Day of Judgment
we'll come a-flock,
and tell the story,—
then woe to you!

PEER.
Rascal-tricks! How dare you debit
what is negative against me?

(Hastens away.)

Åse's voice
(far away).

Fie, what a post-boy!
Huh, you've upset me!
Snow's newly fallen here;—
sadly it's smirched me.—
You've driven me the wrong way.
Peer, where's the castle?
The Fiend has misled you
with the switch from the cupboard!
PEER.
Better haste away, poor fellow!
With the devil's sins upon you,
soon you'll faint upon the hillside;—
hard enough to bear one's own sins.
(Runs off.)

SCENE SEVENTH.

(Another part of the heath.)

PEER GYNT
(sings).
A sexton! A sexton! where are you, hounds?
A song from braying precentor-mouts;
around your hat-brim a mourning band;—
my dead are many; I must follow their biers!

(THE BUTTON-Moulder, with a box of tools, and a
large casting-ladle, comes from a side path.)

THE BUTTON-Moulder.
Well met, old gasfer!

PEER.
Good evening, friend.

THE BUTTON-Moulder.
The man's in a hurry. Why, where is he going?

PEER.
To a grave-feast.
Sc. vii.]  

**Peer Gynt.**

**The Button-Moulder.**

Indeed? My sight's not very good;—excuse me,—your name doesn't chance to be Peer?

**Peer.**

Peer Gynt, as the saying is.

**The Button-Moulder.**

That I call luck I
It's precisely Peer Gynt I am sent for to-night.

**Peer.**

You're sent for? What do you want?

**The Button-Moulder.**
It can’t be! Like this, without any warning——

The Button-Moulder.

It’s an old tradition at burials and births
to appoint in secret the day of the feast,
with no warning at all to the guest of honour.

Peer.

Ay, ay, that’s true. All my brain’s awhirl.
You are——?

The Button-Moulder.

Why, I told you—a button-moulder.

Peer.

I see! A pet child has many nicknames.
So that’s it, Peer; it is there you’re to harbour!
But these, my good man, are most unfair proceedings!
I’m sure I deserve better treatment than this;——
I’m not nearly so bad as perhaps you think,—
I’ve done a good deal of good in the world;——
at worst you may call me a sort of a bungler,—
but certainly not an exceptional sinner.

The Button-Moulder.

Why that is precisely the rub, my man;
you’re no sinner at all in the higher sense;
that’s why you’re excused all the torture-pangs,
and land, like others, in the casting-ladle.

Peer.

Give it what name you please—call it ladle or pool;¹
spruce ale and swipes, they are both of them beer.
Avaunt from me, Satan!

¹ "Föll," otherwise "Svælpöll"—the sulphur pool of hell.
be off; and be careful what you're

THE BUTTON-MAN

My friend, you're making a great
We're both in a hurry, and so, to
I'll explain the reason of the whole
You are, with your own lips you tell
no sinner on the so-called heroic
scarcely middling even——

PEER.

Ah, no

to talk common sense——

THE BUTTON-MAN

Just had
but to call you virtuous would be

PEER.

Well, you know I have never laid

THE BUTTON-MAN

You're nor one thing nor t'other t
A sinner of really grandiose style.
Ay, it's very true, this remark of yours: one has to lay on, like the old Jacobins.

**The Button-Molder.**

You, friend, on the other hand, took your sin lightly.

**Peer.**

Only outwardly, friend, like a spinet of mud.

**The Button-Molder.**

Ah, we'll soon be at one now. The sinister pool is no place for you, who but pleased in the mine.

**Peer.**

And in consequence, friend, I can go as I came?

**The Button-Molder.**

No, in consequence, friend, I must meet you up.

**Peer.**

What tricks are these that you've hit upon at home here, while I've been in foreign parts?

**The Button-Molder.**

The custom's as old as the Scape's creation; it's designed to prevent loss of good material.

You've worked at the craft—you must know that after a casting turns out, to speak plainly, mere dross; the buttons, for instance, have sometimes no legs to them. What did you do, then?

**Peer.**

Fixed the ribbons away.
THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

Ah, yes; Jon Gyn was well known for a waster,
so long as he'd aught left in wallet or purse.
But Master, you see, he is thrifty, he is;
and that is why he's so well-to-do.
He flings nothing away as entirely worthless
that can be made use of as raw material.
Now, you were designed for a shining button
on the vest of the world; but your loop gave way;
so into the waste-box you needs must go,
and then, as they phrase it, be merged in the mass.

PEER.

You're surely not meaning to melt me up,
with Dick, Tom, and Harry,\(^1\) into something new?

THE BUTTON-MOLDERS.

That's just what I do mean, and nothing else.
We've done it already to plenty of folks.
At Kongsberg\(^2\) they do just the same with money
that's been current so long that its stamp's worn away.

PEER.

But this is the wretchedest miserliness!
My dear good friend, let me get off free;—
a loopless button, a worn out farthing,—
what is that to a man in your Master's position?

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

Oh, so long, and inasmuch as, the spirit's in one,
one always has value as so much metal.

---
\(^{1}\) Literally, "With Peter and Paul."
\(^{2}\) The Royal Mint is at Kongsberg, a town in southern Norway.
No, I say! No! With both teeth and claws
I'll fight against this! Sooner anything else!

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.
But what else? Come now, be reasonable.
You know you're not airy enough for heaven——

PEER.
I'm not hard to content; I don't aim so high;—
but I won't be deprived of one doit of my Self.
Have me judged by the law in the old-fashioned way!
For a certain time place me with Him of the Hoof;—
say a hundred years, come the worst to the worst;
that, now, is a thing that one surely can bear;
for they say the torment is only moral,
so it can't after all be so pyramidal.
It is, as 'tis written, a mere transition;
and as the fox said: One waits; there comes
an hour of deliverance; one lives in seclusion,
and hopes in the meantime for happier days.—
But this other notion—to have to be merged,
like a mote, in the carcass of some outsider,—
this casting-ladle business, this Gynt-cessation,—
it stirs up my innermost soul in revolt!

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.
Bless me, my dear Peer, there is surely no need
to get so wrought up about trifles like this.
Yourself you never have been at all;—
then what does it matter, your dying right out?

PEER.
Have I not been——? I could almost laugh!
Peer Gynt, then, has been something else, I suppose!
No, Button-moulder, you judge in the dark.  
If you could but look into my very reins,  
you'd find only Peer there, and Peer all through,—  
nothing else in the world, no, nor anything more.

**THE BUTTON-Moulder.**

It's impossible.  Here I have got my orders.  
Look, here it is written: Peer Gynt shalt thou summon.  
He has set at defiance his life's design;  
clap him into the ladle with other spoilt goods.

**Peer.**

What nonsense!  They must mean some other person.  
Is it really Peer?  It's not Rasmus, or Jon?

**THE BUTTON-Moulder.**

It is many a day since I melted them.  
So come quietly now, and don't waste my time.

**Peer.**

I'll be damned if I do!  Ay, 'twould be a fine thing  
if it turned out to-morrow some one else was meant.  
You'd better take care what you're at, my good man!  
I think of the onus you're taking upon you——

**THE BUTTON-Moulder.**

I have it in writing——

**Peer.**

At least give me time!

**THE BUTTON-Moulder.**

What good would that do you?
I'll use it to prove
that I've been myself all the days of my life;
and that's the question that's in dispute.

You'll prove it? And how?

Why, by vouchers and witnesses.

I'm sadly afraid Master will not accept them.

Impossible! However, enough for the day—
My dear man, allow me a loan of myself;
I'll be back again shortly. One is born only once,
and one's self, as created, one fain would stick to.
Come, are we agreed?

Very well then, so be it.
But remember, we meet at the next cross-roads.

(Peer Gynt runs off.)

See footnote, p. 226.
SCENE EIGHTH.

(A further point on the heath.)

PEER
(running hard).

Time is money, as the scripture says.
If I only knew where the cross-roads are;—
they may be near and they may be far.
The earth burns beneath me like red-hot iron.
A witness! A witness! Oh, where shall I find one?
It's almost unthinkable here in the forest.
The world is a bungle! A wretched arrangement,
when a man must prove a right that's as patent as day!

(An OLD MAN, bent with age, with a staff in his hand
and a bag on his back, is trudging in front of him.)

THE OLD MAN
(stops).

Dear, kind sir—a trifle to a houseless soul!

PEER.

Excuse me; I've got no small change in my pocket——

THE OLD MAN.

Prince Peer! Oh, to think we should meet again——!

PEER.

Who are you?

THE OLD MAN.

You forget the Old Man in the Rondë?
PEER. Why, you're never——?

THE OLD MAN. The King of the Dovrē, my boy!

PEER. The Dovrē-King? Really? The Dovrē-King? Speak!

THE OLD MAN. Oh, I've come terribly down in the world——!

PEER. Ruined?

THE OLD MAN. Ay, plundered of every stiver. Here am I tramping it, starved as a wolf.

PEER. Hurrah! Such a witness doesn't grow on the trees!

THE OLD MAN. My Lord Prince, too, has grizzled a bit since we met

PEER. My dear father-in-law, the years gnaw and wear one.—Well well, a truce to all private affairs,—and pray, above all things, no family jars. I was then a sad madcap——

THE OLD MAN. Oh yes; oh yes;—His Highness was young; and what won't one do then?
But his Highness was wise in rejecting his bride; he saved himself thereby both worry and shame; for since then she's utterly gone to the bad——

Peer.

Indeed!

The Old Man.

She has led a deplorable life;¹ and, just think,—she and Trond are now living together.

Peer.

Which Trond?

The Old Man.

Of the Valsfeld.

Peer. It's he? Aha; it was he I cut out with the sister-girls.

The Old Man.

But my grandson has flourished—grown both stout and great, and has strapping children all over the country——

Peer.

Now, my dear man, spare us this flow of words;—I've something quite different troubling my mind.—I've got into rather a ticklish position, and am greatly in need of a witness or voucher;—that's how you could help me best, father-in-law, and I'll find you a trifle to drink my health with.

¹ "Hun gik sm for koldt vand og lød"—literally, "to live on cold water and lye"—to live wretchedly and be badly treated.
Peer Gynt.

The Old Man.

You don’t say so; can I be of use to his Highness?
You’ll give me a character, then, in return?

Peer.

Most gladly. I’m somewhat hard pressed for cash,
and must cut down expenses in every direction.
Now hear what’s the matter. No doubt you remember
that night when I came to the Rondé a-wooing——

The Old Man.

Why, of course, my Lord Prince!

Peer.

Oh, no more of the Prince!

But no matter. You wanted, by sheer brute force,
to bias my sight, with a slit in the lens,
and to change me about from Peer Gynt to a troll.
What did I do then? I stood out against it,—
sware I would stand on no feet but my own;
love, power, and glory at once I renounced,
and all for the sake of remaining myself.
Now this fact, you see, you must swear to in Court——

The Old Man.

No, I’m blest if I can.

Peer.

Why, what nonsense is this?

The Old Man.

You surely don’t want to compel me to lie?
You pulled on the troll-breeches, don’t you remember,
and tasted the mead——
Peer Gynt.

Peer.

Ay, you loved me seductively;—
but I fianily declined the decisive test,
and that is the thing you must judge your man by.
It's the end of the story that all depends on.

The Old Man.

But it ended, Peer, just in the opposite way.

Peer.

What rubbish is this?

The Old Man.

When you left the Rondë,
you inscribed my motto upon your 'scutcheon.'

Peer.

What motto?

The Old Man.

The potent and swarming word.

Peer.

The word?

The Old Man.

That which severs the whole race of men
from the troll-folk. *Troll! To thysel be enough!*

Peer

(*falls back a step*).

Enough!

The Old Man.

And with every nerve in your body,
you've been living up to it ever since.

1 Literally, "Wrote my motto behind your ear."
What, I? Peer Gynt?

**The Old Man**

*It's unimportant if you.*

You've lived as a troll, but now will also a wise.
The word I taught you has shown you the way
to swing yourself up as a man of substance —
and now you must needs come and turn up your nose
at me and the word you've so thanked for it all.

**Peer.**

*Enough! A hal-troll!* As before.
This must be all rubbish; that's perfectly certain.

**The Old Man**

*(pulls out a bundle of old newspapers).*

I daresay you think that we've no newspapers?
Wait; here I'll show you in red and black,1
how the Bloksherg Post excoriates you;
and the Hicklefield Journal has done the same
ever since the winter you left the country.—
Do you care to read them? You're welcome, Peer.
Here's an article, look you, signed *S.inhombiek.*
And here too is one: *On Troll-Nationalism.*
The writer points out and lays stress on the truth
that horns and a tail are of little importance,
so long as one has but a strip of the hide.
"Our enough," he concludes, "gives the hal-mark of trolldom
to man," — and proceeds to cite you as an instance.

1 Clearly the troll-substitute for "in black and white."
Sc. viii.]

PEER GYNT. 257

PEER.

A hill-troll? I?

THE OLD MAN.

Yes, that's perfectly clear.

PEER.

Might as well have stayed quietly where I was?
Might have stopped in the Rondë in comfort and peace?
Saved my trouble and toil and no end of shoe-leather?
Peer Gynt—a troll? Why it's rubbish! It's stuff!
Good-bye! There's a halfpenny to buy you tobacco.

THE OLD MAN.

Nay, my good Prince Peer!

PEER.

Let me go! You're mad, or else doting. Off to the hospital with you!

THE OLD MAN.

Oh, that is exactly what I'm in search of.
But, as I told you, my grandson's offspring have become overwhelmingly strong in the land, and they say that I only exist in books.
The saw says: One's kin are unkindest of all;
I've found to my cost that that saying is true.
It's cruel to count as mere figment and fable——

PEER.

My dear man, there are others who share the same fate

THE OLD MAN.

And ourselves we've no Mutual Aid Society, no alms-box or Penny Savings Bank;—in the Rondë, of course, they'd be out of place.
PEER.
No, that cursed: *To thyself be enough* was the word there!

THE OLD MAN.
Oh, come now, the Prince can't complain of the word. And if he could manage by hook or by crook——

PEER.
My man, you have got on the wrong scent entirely; I'm myself, as the saying goes, fairly cleaned out——

THE OLD MAN.
You surely can't mean it? His Highness a beggar?

PEER.
Completely. His Highness's ego's in pawn. And it's all your fault, you accursed trolls! That's what comes of keeping bad company.

THE OLD MAN.
So there came my hope toppling down from its perch again! Good-bye! I had best struggle on to the town——

PEER.
What would you do there?

THE OLD MAN.
I will go to the theatre. The papers are clamouring for national talents——

PEER.
Good luck on your journey; and greet them from me. If I can but get free, I will go the same way.

1 Literally, "On a naked hill."
SCENE NINTH.

(At a cross-road.)

PEER GYNT.

Now comes the pinch, Peer, as never before! This Dovrish *Enough* has passed judgment upon The vessel's a wreck; one must float with the seas; All else; only not to the spoilt-goods heap!

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS

(at the cross-road).

Well now, Peer Gynt, have you found your vouch.

PEER.

Have we reached the cross-road? Well, that's si

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

I can see on your face, as it were on a signboard, The gist of the paper before I've read it.
Peer Gynt. [Act v.

Peer.

True enough; in the wood, and by night as well—

The Button-Moulder.

There's an old man, though, trudging. Shall we call him here?

Peer.

No, let him go. He is drunk, my dear fellow!

The Button-Moulder.

But perhaps he might—

Peer.

Hush; no—let him be!

The Button-Moulder.

Well, shall we turn to then?

Peer.

One question only:

What is it, at bottom, this "being oneself"?

The Button-Moulder.

A singular question, most odd in the mouth of a man who just now—

Peer.

Come, a straightforward answer.

The Button-Moulder.

To be oneself is: to slay oneself.

But on you that answer is doubtless lost;
and therefore we'll say: to stand forth everywhere with Master's intention displayed like a signboard.

PEER.

But suppose a man never has come to know what Master meant with him?

THE BUTTON-MOULDPER.

He must divine it.

PEER.

But how oft are divinings beside the mark,—then one's carried ad undas¹ in middle career.

THE BUTTON-MOULDPER.

That is certain, Peer Gynt; in default of divining the cloven-hoofed gentleman finds his best hook.

PEER.

This matter's excessively complicated.—See here! I no longer plead being myself;—it might not be easy to get it proven. That part of my case I must look on as lost. But just now, as I wandered alone o'er the heath, I felt my conscience-shoe pinching me; I said to myself: After all, you're a sinner——

THE BUTTON-MOULDPER.

You seem bent on beginning all over again——

PEER.

No, very far from it; a great one I mean; not only in deeds, but in words and desires. I've lived a most damnable life abroad——

¹ So in original.
Perhaps; I must ask you to show me the schedule!

Peer.

Well well, give me time; I will find out a parson, confess with all speed, and then bring you his voucher.

The Button-Moulder.

Ay, if you can bring me that, then it is clear you escape this business of the casting-ladle. But Peer, I'd my orders——

Peer.

The paper is old; it dates no doubt from a long past period;— at one time I lived with disgusting slackness, went playing the prophet, and trusted in Fate. Well, may I try?

The Button-Moulder.

But——!

Peer.

My dear fellow, I'm sure you can't have so much to do. Here, in this district, the air is so bracing, it adds an ell to the people's ages. Recollect what the Justedal parson wrote: "It's seldom that any one dies in this valley."

The Button-Moulder.

To the next cross-roads then; but not a step further.
This may come in useful in many ways, or at least be a point upon which we may hang the issue. Who could have thought such an incident of such vast importance to come so near and so far? Well, whatever it was, it's a matter of business; a man from the synagogue into the inn;—but there's a reason of well-grounded validity which says that as long as there's life there's hope.

**Scene Two.**

[Enter a man, in a priest's costume, knelt up high, and with a binding set over his shoulder, seems hurrying along the ridge.]

**Frail.**

Who goes there? A priest with a binding set! 

**Friar.** Beyond a doubt; a child of fortune indeed! 

**Scene Three.**

Good evening, Friar Patro: the path is hard —

**The Lean One.**

Aye; but what wouldn't one do for a soul?

*1 Literally, "she seeks."*
Aha! then there's some one bound heavenwards?

THE LEAN ONE.

I hope he is taking a different road.

PEER.

May I walk with Herr Pastor a bit of the way?

THE LEAN ONE.

With pleasure; I'm partial to company.

PEER.

I should like to consult you——

THE LEAN ONE.

Heraus! Go ahead!

PEER.

You see here before you a good sort of man. The laws of the state I have strictly observed, have made no acquaintance with fetters or bolts;—— but it happens at times that one misses one's footing and stumbles——

THE LEAN ONE.

Ah yes; that occurs to the best of us.

PEER.

Now these trifles you see——

1 So in original.
Sc. x.]  Peer Gynt.

The Lean One.

Only trifles?

Peer.

Yes; from sinning en grov I have ever refrained.

The Lean One.

Oh then, my dear fellow, pray leave me in peace;—I’m not the person you seem to think me.—You look at my fingers? What see you in them?

Peer.

A nail-system somewhat extremely developed.

The Lean One.

And now? You are casting a glance at my feet?

Peer.

(pointing).

That’s a natural hoof?

The Lean One.

So I flatter myself.

Peer.

(raises his hat).

I'd have taken my oath you were simply a parson; and I find I've the honour——Well, best is best;—when the hall door stands wide,—shun the kitchen way; when the king’s to be met with,—avoid the lackey.

1 So in original.
THE LEAN ONE.

Your hand! You appear to be free from prejudice. Say on then, my friend; in what way can I serve you? Now you mustn't ask me for wealth or power; I couldn't supply them although I should hang for it. You can't think how slack the whole business is;—transactions have dwindled most pitiable. Nothing doing in souls; only now and again a stray one——

PEER.
The race has improved so remarkably?

THE LEAN ONE.
No, just the reverse; it's sunk shamefully low;—the majority end in a casting-ladle.

PEER.
Ah yes—I have heard that ladle mentioned; in fact, 'twas the cause of my coming to you.

THE LEAN ONE.
Speak out!

PEER.
If it were not too much to ask, I should like——

THE LEAN ONE.
A harbour of refuge? eh?

PEER.
You've guessed my petition before I have asked. You tell me the business is going awry; so I daresay you will not be over-particular.
Sc. x.]  

PEER GYNT.  

THE LEAN ONE.  

But, my dear——  

PEER.  

My demands are in no way excessive.  

I shouldn't insist on a salary; but treatment as friendly as things will permit.  

THE LEAN ONE.  

A fire in your room?  

PEER.  

Not too much fire;—and chiefly the power of departing in safety and peace,—the right, as the phrase goes, of freely withdrawing should an opening offer for happier days.

THE LEAN ONE.  

My dear friend, I vow I'm sincerely distressed; but you cannot imagine how many petitions of similar purport good people send in when they're quitting the scene of their earthly activity.

PEER.  

But now that I think of my past career, I feel I've an absolute claim to admission——

THE LEAN ONE.  

’Twas but trifles, you said——  

PEER.  

In a certain sense;—but, now I remember, I’ve trafficked in slaves——
THE LEAN ONE.

There are men that have trafficked in wills and souls, but who bungled it so that they failed to get in.

PEER.

I've shipped Bramah-figures in plenty to China.

THE LEAN ONE.

Mere fustian again! Why, we laugh at such things. There are people that ship off far gruesomer figures in sermons, in art, and in literature—yet have to st...y out in the cold—

PEER.

Ah, but then, do you know—I once went and set up as prophet!

THE LEAN ONE.

In foreign parts? Humbug! Why, most people's *sehen ins Blaue*¹ ends in the casting-ladle. If you've no more than that to rely upon, with the best of goodwill, I can't possibly house you.

PEER.

But hear this: In a shipwreck—I clung to a boat's keel,—and it's written: A drowning man grasps at a straw,—furthermore it is written: You're nearest yourself,—so I half-way divested a cook of his life.

THE LEAN ONE.

It were all one to me if a kitchen-maid you had half-way divested of something else.

¹ So in original.
What sort of stuff is this half-way jargon, saving your presence? Who, think you, would care to throw away dearly-bought fuel in times like these on such spiritless rubbish as this? There now, don't be enraged; 'twas your sins that I scoffed at; and excuse my speaking my mind so bluntly.—

Come, my dearest friend, banish this stuff from your head, and get used to the thought of the eingladie.

What would you gain if I lodged with you? boarded you?

Consider; I know you're a sensible fellow.

Well, you'd keep your memory; but the retrospect o'er recollection again would be, both for heart and for mind, what the Swedes call "Mighty poor sport." Indeed, you have nothing either to howl or to smile about, no cause for rejoicing nor yet for despair, nothing to make you feel hot or cold; only a sort of a something to fret over.

PEER.

It is written: It's never so easy to know where the shoe is tight that one isn't wearing.

THE LEAN ONE.

Very true; I have—praise be to so-and-so!—no occasion for more than a single odd shoe. But it's lucky we happened to speak of shoes; it reminds me that I must be hurrying on;—I'm after a roast that I hope will prove fat; so I really mustn't stand gossiping here.

1 Literally, "knock out that tooth."
2 "Era litet rolig."
And may one inquire, then, what sort of sin-diet
the man has been fattened on?

THE LEAN ONE.

I understand
he has been himself both by night and by day,
and that, after all, is the principal point.

PEER.

Himself? Then do such folks belong to your parish?

THE LEAN ONE.

That depends; the door, at least, stands ajar for them.
Remember, in two ways a man can be
himself—there's a right and wrong side to the jacket.
You know they have lately discovered in Paris
a way to take portraits by help of the sun.
One can either produce a straightforward picture,
or else what is known as a negative one.
In the latter the lights and the shades are reversed,
and they're apt to seem ugly to commonplace eyes;
but for all that the likeness is latent in them,
and all you require is to bring it out.
If, then, a soul shall have pictured itself
in the course of its life by the negative method,
the plate is not therefore entirely cashiered,—
but without more ado they consign it to me.
I take it in hand, then, for further treatment,
and by suitable methods effect its development.
I steam it, I dip it, I burn it, I scour it,
with sulphur and other ingredients like that,
till the image appears which the plate was designed for,—
that, namely, which people call positive.
But if one, like you, has smudged himself out,
neither sulphur nor potash avails in the least.

Peer.
I see; one must come to you black as a raven
to turn out a white ptarmigan? Pray what's the name
inscribed 'neath the negative counterfeit
that you've now to transfer to the positive side?

The Lean One.
The name's Peter Gyst.

Peer.
Peter Gyst? Indeed?

Is Herr Gyst himself?

The Lean One.
Yes, he vows he is.

Peer.
Well, he's one to be trusted, that same Herr Peter.

The Lean One.
You know him, perhaps?

Peer.
Oh yes, after a fashion;—
one knows all sorts of people.

The Lean One.
I'm pressed for time;
where saw you him last?

1 So in original.
It was down at the Cape.

Di Buona Speranza?

Just so; but he sails very shortly again, if I'm not mistaken.

I must hurry off then without delay.
I only hope I may catch him in time!
That Cape of Good Hope—I could never abide it;—
it's ruined by missionaries from Stavanger.

(He rushes off southwards.)

The stupid hound! There he takes to his heels with his tongue lolling out. He'll be finely sold.
It delights me to humbug an ass like that.
He to give himself airs, and to lord it forsooth!
He's a mighty lot, truly, to swagger about!
He'll scarcely grow fat at his present trade;—
he'll soon drop from his perch with his whole apparatus.—
Hm, I'm not over-safe in the saddle either;
I'm expelled, one may say, from self-owning nobility.1

(A shooting star is seen; he nods after it.)

1 "Selvejer-Adlen." "Selvejer" (literally, "self-owner") means a freeholder, as opposed to a "husband" or tenant. There is of course a play upon words in the original.
Sc. x.]

Peer Gynt.

Bear all hail from Peer Gynt, Brother Starry-Flash!
To flash forth, to go out, and be naught at a gulp—

(Pulls himself together as though in terror, and
goes deeper in among the mists; stillness for
awhile; then he cries:)

Is there no one, no one in all the turmoil,—
in the void no one, no one in heaven—!

(He comes forward again further down, throws his
hat upon the ground, and tears at his hair.
By degrees a stillness comes over him.)

So unspeakably poor, then, a soul can go
back to nothingness, into the grey of the mist.
Thou beautiful earth, be not angry with me
that I trampled thy grasses to no avail.

**Thou beautiful sun, thou hast squandered away**
thy glory of light in an empty hut.

There was no one within it to hearten and warm;—
the owner, they tell me, was never at home.

Beautiful sun and beautiful earth,
you were foolish to bear and give light to my mother.
The spirit is niggard and nature lavish;
and dearly one pays for one's birth with one's life.—
I will clamber up high, to the dizziest peak;
I will look once more on the rising sun,
gaze till I'm tired o'er the promised land;
then try to get snowdrifts piled up over me.
They can write above them: "Here No One lies buried;"
and afterwards,—then—!

**CHURCH-GOERS**  
*(singing on the forest path).*

Oh, morning thrice blessed,
when the tongues of God's kingdom
struck the earth like to flaming steel!
from the earth to His dwelling
now the heirs' song ascendeth
in the tongue of the kingdom of God.

PEER

(crouches as in terror).

Never look there! there all's desert and waste.—
I fear I was dead long before I died.

(Tries to slink in among the bushes, but comes upon the cross-roads.)

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

Good morning, Peer Gynt! Where's the list of your sins?

PEER.

Do you think that I haven't been whistling and shouting as hard as I could?

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

And met no one at all?

PEER.

Not a soul but a tramping photographer.

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

Well, the respite is over.

PEER.

Ay, everything's over.
The owl smells the daylight. Just list to the hooting!

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

It's the matin-bell ringing——
Sc. x.]  PEER GYNT.  275

PEER
(pointing).
What's that shining yonder?

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

Only light from a hut.

PEER.
And that wailing sound——?

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

But a woman singing.

PEER.
Ay, there—there I'll find

the list of my sins——

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS
(seizing him).

Set your house in order!

(They have come out of the underwood, and are standing
near the hut. Day is dawning.)

PEER.

Set my house in order? It's there! Away!
Get you gone! Though your ladle were huge as a coffin,
it were too small, I tell you, for me and my sins!

THE BUTTON-MOULDERS.

Well, to the third cross-road, Peer; but then——

(Turns aside and goes.)

PEER
(approaches the hut).

Forward and back, and it's just as far.
Out and in, and it's just as strait.

(Stops.)
No!—like a wild, an unending lament,
is the thought: to come back, to go in, to go home.

(Takes a few steps on, but stops again.)

Round about, said the Boyg!

(Hears singing in the hut.)

Ah no; this time at least
right through, though the path may be never so strait!

(He runs towards the hut; at the same moment
Solveig appears in the doorway, dressed for
church, with a psalm-book wrapped in a kerchief,
and a staff in her hand. She stands there erect
and mild.)

PEER

(flings himself down on the threshold).

Hast thou doom for a sinner, then speak it forth!

SOLVEIG.

He is here! He is here! Oh, to God be the praise!

(Stretches out her arms as though groping for him.)

PEER.

Cry out all my sins and my trespasses!

SOLVEIG.

In nought hast thou sinned, oh my own only boy.

(Gropes for him again, and finds him.)

THE BUTTON-MOULDennifer

(behind the house).

The sin-list, Peer Gynt?
Hiram.

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Hiram.
Oh, that riddle is easy.

PEER.

Then tell what thou knowest!
Where was I, as myself, as the whole man, the true man?
where was I, with God’s sign upon my brow?

SOLVEIG.

In my faith, in my hope, and in my love.¹

PEER.

(starts back).

What sayest thou——? Peace! These are juggling words.
Thou art mother thyself to the man that’s there.

SOLVEIG.

Ay, that I am; but who is his father?
Surely he that forgives at the mother’s prayer.

PEER.

(a light shines in his face; he cries:)

My mother; my wife; oh, thou innocent woman!—
in thy love—oh, there hide me, hide me!

(Clings to her and hides his face in her lap. A
long silence. The sun rises.)

¹ “I vis Tro, i mit Håb og i min Kjærlighed.”

We have entirely sacrificed the metre of the line, feeling it impossible
to mar its simplicity by any padding. “Kjærlighed” also means
“charity,” in the biblical sense.
Solveig

(sings softly).

Sleep thou, dearest boy of mine!
I will cradle thee, I will watch thee——

The boy has been sitting on his mother's lap.
They two have been playing all the life-day long.

The boy has been resting at his mother's breast
all the life-day long. God's blessing on my joy!

The boy has been lying close in to my heart
all the life-day long. He is weary now.

Sleep thou, dearest boy of mine!
I will cradle thee, I will watch thee.

**The Button-Moulder's Voice**

*(behind the house).*

We'll meet at the last cross-road again, Peer;
and then we'll see whether——; I say, no more.

Solveig

*(sings louder in the full daylight).*

I will cradle thee, I will watch thee;
Sleep and dream thou, dear my boy!
APPENDIX.

[The stories of Peer Gynt and Gudbrand Glesne both occur in Asbjørnsen's "Reindeer-hunting in the Rondé Hills" (Norske Huldré-Eventyr og Folkesagn, Christiania, 1848). They are told by the peasant guides or gillies who accompany a shooting party into the mountains—the first by Peer Fugleskjelle, the second by Thor Ulvsvolden. Our translation of "Peer Gynt" is based on Mr. H. L. Bræstad's version, published in Round the Yule Log, London, 1881.]

PEER GYNT.

In the old days there lived in Kvam a hunter, whose name was Peer Gynt. He was always up in the mountains shooting bears and elks; for in those days there were more forests on the mountains to harbour such wild beasts. One time, late in the autumn, long after the cattle had been driven home, Peer set out for the hills. Every one had left the uplands except three sáter-girls. When Peer came up towards Hövring, where he was to pass the night in a sáter, it was so dark that he could not see his fist before him, and the dogs fell to barking and baying so that it was quite uncanny. All of a sudden he ran against something, and when he put his hand out he felt it was cold and slippery and big. Yet he did not seem to have got off the road, so he couldn't think what this could be; but unpleasant it was at any rate.

"Who is it?" asked Peer, for he felt it moving.
"Oh, it's the Boyg," was the answer. Peer was no wiser for this, but skirted along it for a bit, thinking that somewhere he must be able to pass. Suddenly he ran against something again, and when he put out his hand, it too was big, and cold, and slippery.

"Who is it?" asked Peer Gynt.

"Oh, it's the Boyg," was the answer again.

"Well, straight or crooked, you'll have to let me pass," said Peer; for he understood that he was walking in a ring, and that the Boyg had curled itself round the sæter. Thereupon it shifted a little, so that Peer got past. When he came inside the sæter, it was no lighter there than outside. He was feeling along the wall for a place to hang up his gun and his bag; but as he was groping his way forward he again felt something cold, and big, and slippery.

"Who is it?" shouted Peer.

"Oh, it's the great Boyg," was the answer. Wherever he put his hands out or tried to get past, he felt the Boyg encircling him.

"It's not very pleasant to be here," thought Peer, "since this Boyg is both out and in; but I think I can make short work of the nuisance."

So he took his gun and went out again, groping his way till he found the creature's head.

"What are you?" asked Peer.

"Oh, I am the big Boyg from Etnedale," said the Troll-Monster. Peer did not lose a moment, but fired three shots right into its head.

"Fire another," said the Boyg. But Peer knew better; if he had fired another shot, the bullet would have rebounded against himself.

Thereupon Peer and his dogs took hold of the Troll-Monster and dragged him out, so that they could get into the sæter. Meanwhile there was jeering and laughing in all the hills around.

"Peer Gynt dragged hard, but the dogs dragged harder," said a voice.

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1 See footnote, p. xiv.
Next morning he went out stalking. When he came out on the uplands he saw a girl, who was calling some sheep up a hillside. But when he came to the place the girl was gone and the sheep too, and he saw nothing but a great flock of bears.

"Well, I never saw bears in a flock before," thought Peer to himself. When he came nearer, they had all disappeared except one.

"Look after your pig: Peer Gynt is out with his gun so big," shouted a voice over in a hillock.

"Oh, it'll be a bad business for Peer, but not for my pig; for he hasn't washed himself to-day," said another voice in the hill. Peer washed his hands with the water he had, and shot the bear. There was more laughter and jeering in the hill.

"You should have looked after your pig!" cried a voice.

"I didn't remember he had a water-jug between his legs," answered the other.

Peer skinned the bear and buried the carcass among the stones, but the head and the hide he took with him. On his way home he met a fox.

"Look at my lamb, how fat it is," said a voice in a hill.

"Look at that gun* of Peer's, how high it is," said a voice in another hill, just as Peer took aim and shot the fox. He skinned the fox and took the skin with him, and when he came to the steter he put the heads on the wall outside, with their jaws gaping. Then he lighted a fire and put a pot on to boil some soup, but the chimney smoked so terribly that he could scarcely keep his eyes open, and so he had to set wide a small window. Suddenly a Troll came and poked his nose in through the window; it was so long that it reached across the room to the fireplace.

1 Literally, "with his tail." A gun loosely slung over the shoulder bears a certain resemblance to a tail sticking up in the air.

2 Literally, "tail."
"Here's a proper snout for you to see," said the Troll.

"And here's proper soup for you to taste," said Peer Gynt; and he poured the whole potful of soup over the Troll's nose. The Troll ran away howling; but in all the hills around there was jeering and laughing and voices shouting—

"Soup-snout Gyri! Soup-snout Gyri!"

All was quiet now for a while; but before long there was a great noise and hubbub outside again. Peer looked out and saw that there was a cart there, drawn by bears. They hoisted up the Troll-Monster, and carted him away into the mountain. Just then a bucket of water came down the chimney and put out the fire, so that Peer was left in the dark. Then a jeering and laughing began in all the corners of the room, and a voice said—

"It'll go no better with Peer now than with the sæter-girls at Vala."

Peer made up the fire again, took his dogs with him, shut up the house, and set off northward to the Vala sæter, where the three girls were. When he had gone some distance he saw such a glare of light that it seemed to him the sæter must be on fire. Just then he came across a pack of wolves; some of them he shot, and some he knocked on the head. When he came to the Vala sæter he found it pitch dark; there was no sign of any fire; but there were four strangers in the house carrying on with the sæter-girls. They were four Hill-Trolls, and their names were Gust of Værø, Tron of the Valsfeld, Tjostøl Aabakken, and Rolf Eldførpungen. Gust of Værø was standing at the door to keep watch, while the others were in with the girls courting. Peer fired at Gust, but missed him, and Gust ran away. When Peer came inside he found the Trolls carrying on desperately with the girls. Two of the girls were terribly frightened and were saying their prayers, but the third, who was called Mad Kari, wasn't afraid; she said they might come there for all she cared; she would like to see what stuff there was in such fellows. But when the Trolls found that Peer was in the room they began to howl, and told Eldførpungen to make up the fire. At that instant the dogs set upon Tjostøl and pulled him over on his back into the fireplace, so that the ashes and sparks flew up all round him.
"Did you see my snakes, Peer?" and that was what he called the wolves.

"You shall go the same way as you shot him; and then he killed Aabakke rifle. Eldsförpungen had escaped up Peer took the girls back to their home, stay any longer up at the søster.

Shortly before Christmas-time Peer heard of a farm on the Dovrefjeld where number of Trolls every Christmas-eve farm had to turn out and get shelter for the trolls. He was anxious to go there, for the Trolls. He dressed himself in and took with him a tame white bear tawl, some pitch, and waxed twine. W he went in and begged for houseroom.

"God help us!" said the farmer; We have to clear out of the house on Christmas-eve the whole place is full of But Peer Gynl said he thought he the house of Trolls; and then he gave him a pig's skin into the barge behind the fireplace, and Peer took out twine, and set to making a big shoe, the skin. He put a strong rope in for lace the shoe tight together at the top; and handspeaks ready.

All of a sudden the Trolls came, with some began dancing, while others fell fare on the table; some fried bacon, at toads, and other disgusting things: the dainties they had brought with them. The Trolls found the shoe Peer had made be for a very big foot. Then they all when each of them had put a foot into rope, shoved one of the handspeaks into they were all stuck fast in the shoe.

Just then the bear put his nose out an
"Will you have a sausage, white pussy?" said one of the Trolls, and threw a red-hot frog right into the bear's jaws.

"Claw and smite, Bruin!" said Peer Gynt.

And then the bear got into such a rage that he rushed at the Trolls and smote and clawed them all, and Peer Gynt took the other handspike and hammered away at them as if he wanted to beat their brains out. So the Trolls had to clear out, and Peer stayed and enjoyed himself on the Christmas cheer the whole feast-time. After that the Trolls were not heard of again for many years. The farmer had a light-coloured mare, and Peer advised him to breed from her, and let her foals in their turn run and breed among the hills there.

Many years afterwards, about Christmas-time, the farmer was out in the forest cutting wood for the feast-time, when a Troll came towards him and shouted—

"Have you got that big white pussy of yours yet?"

"Yes, she's at home behind the stove," said the farmer;

"and she's got seven kittens now, much bigger and fiercer than herself."

"We'll never come to you any more, then," shouted the Troll.

"That Peer Gynt was a strange one," said Anders. "He was such an out-and-out tale-maker and yarn-spinner, you couldn't have helped laughing at him. He always made out that he himself had been mixed up in all the stories that people said had happened in the olden times."

GUDBRAND GLESNÉ.

"There was a hunter in the West-Hills," said Thor Ulvdal, "called Gudbrand Glesnē. He was married to the grandmother of the lad you saw at the sæter yesterday evening, and a first-rate hunter they say he was. One autumn he came across a huge buck. He shot at it, and from the way it fell he couldn't tell but that it was stone dead. So he went up to it, and, as one often does, seated himself astride on its back, and was
just drawing his knife to cleave the neck-bone from the skull. But no sooner had he sat down than up it jumped, threw its horns back, and jammed him down between them, so that he was fixed as in an arm-chair. Then it rushed away; for the bullet had only grazed the beast's head, so that it had fallen in a swoon. Never any man had such a ride 1 as that Gudbrand had. Away they went in the teeth of the wind, over the ugliest glaciers and moraines. Then the beast dashed along the Gjende-edge; and now Gudbrand prayed to the Lord, for he thought he would never see sun or moon again. But at last the reindeer took to the water and swam straight across with the hunter on its back. By this time he had got his knife drawn, and the moment the buck set foot on shore, he plunged it into its neck, and it dropped dead. But you may be sure Gudbrand Glesnæ wouldn't have taken that ride again, not for all the riches in the world."

"I have heard a story like that in England, about a deer-stalker that became a deer-rider," said Sir Tottenbroom. 2

"Bliecher, in Jutland, tells a similar one," I said.

"But what sort of a place was this Gjender-edge you spoke of, Thor?" he interrupted me.

"Gjende-edge, you mean?" asked Thor. "It's the ridge 3 of a mountain lying between the Gjende-lakes, and so horribly narrow and steep that if you stand on it and drop a stone from each hand, they will roll down into the lakes, one on each side. The reindeer-hunters go over it in fine weather, otherwise it's impassable; but there was a devil of a fellow up in Skiager—Ole Storebraten was his name—who went over it carrying a full-sized reindeer on his shoulders."

"How high is it above the lakes?" asked Sir Tottenbroom.

"Oh, it's not nearly so high as the Rondå-hills," said Thor.

"But it's over seven hundred ells high." 4

1 "Skysd"—conveyance.
2 An English sportsman who accompanies Asbjørnsen on his rambles.
3 "Rygge"—back-bone, æste.
DEATH OF HENRIK IBSEN

Celebrated Norwegian Poet and Playwright

Won Fame Only After Years of Painful Struggles

Yet Bitter Attacks, Then Highest Praise

Boston First Saw One of His Plays Acted in 1889

Had Been Near to Death for More Than a Year

During This Time None of His Friends Saw Him

Only Members of His Family Present at End

Christiania, Norway, May 23—Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian poet and dramatist, died at 2.30 o'clock this afternoon. The death of Ibsen was unexpected, although for the past year he had been very weak and it was known that his death was only a question of time. He was unconscious towards the end and passed away peacefully. None of his friends was allowed to see him during his long illness, the only persons admitted to his room being the doctor, the dramatist's wife and his son. The news of Ibsen's death made a great impression in this city, where he was much beloved.

The Life of Henrik Ibsen

His Childhood Immortalized in "Peer Gynt"—His Father, Once Rich, Suddenly Forced into Bankruptcy and the Son Compelled to Make His Own Way—The Rise to Fame Against Most Discouraging Odds

Life of

Ibsen's recent acquisition of popularity, if not to his income. That play was regarded as a veiled attack on progressive political ideas, and especially on the ideas and men of the liberal party in Norway. The author was denounced as a disguised reactionary.

Life of

When the first performance took place at the Christiania theatre, the students carried their hostile demonstrations to such a point that the curtain had to be dropped in the middle of the second act. Another performance was not attempted. Ibsen visited Sweden and Denmark that same year. He did not put his foot on Norwegian soil again until 1877.

Life of

Ibsen's reputation outside of the Scandinavian countries may be said to date from 1879, and the appearance of "Pillars of Society." It seemed at that period as if he and the world had made their peace and as if he would be accepted by the world on its own conditions. In 1879 he sent out "A Doll's House." Poor, disillusioned Nora left home and husband and children for good at the end of the last act in the original version of the play. The theatrical managers shelved at such an ending. For once Ibsen consented to compromise. He changed the final scene to make Nora say she would think the matter over for the sake of the children. This did not mend matters at all with the public. Ibsen was denounced as an enemy of marriage and a blasphemer against domestic sanctity. The hubbub that followed was deaconing. Invitations to dinner parties in the Scandinavian capital had this request appended to them: "The guests are respectfully besought not to discuss 'A Doll's House.'"

Life of

But worse was to follow. "Ghosts" appeared in 1881. It set the world by the ears at once. One-half declared the author to be crazy, while the other half found him unpardonably immoral. The reviewers cried out against the "introduction on the stage of the clinico and the insane asylum, with all their horrors." Thirteen years passed between the first and second editions of the book. The principal Scandinavian theatres refused for two years to have anything to do with the play. They said they feared a popular outbreak if they put it on the stage. Ibsen showed how deeply he felt the public's failure to understand and appreciate "Ghosts" by writing "An Enemy of the People," his next play, where the hero is stoned for daring to speak the truth and for trying to save the people against their will from the dire results of their own blindness and folly. The play ends with these words, spoken by Dr. Stockman: "That man is strongest who stands most alone." These words, however, were not the result of a homely disappointment on the part of Ibsen.
Life of

The other means Ibsen took in his remuneration of the treatment. "Ghost" was to demand twice the price from the Christiania Theatres rights to "An Enemy of the People." This demand was granted without delay, but that price might therefore have been raised for all his productions. But on completion of "A Wild Duck" he reduced the price to the basis prevailed prior to the "Ghost." Then followed, at the rate of one or more productions a year, a series of plays which stroke the fame of their author, and which brought him as a literary power that another the European nations took into account. Ibsen rechristened Christiania in 1881, "just for a habitation and a nest", and was received like a triumph. But he never left his native country.

Life of

The Master and the World was troubled in 1894. Some critics hastened to declare that Ibsen had gone bankrupt at last. recanted when "John Gabriel Borkman" appeared two years later. This was general approval at once. Many clowned that to think it Ibsen's greatest. Then came "When We Dead Awaken," which the author himself called his "derivative epilogu.

Ibsen's Aims and Ideals

The chief fact about Ibsen is that he is an individualist. His chief aim is that the individual is suppressed, on the one hand by society, and on the other by the organized machinery which we call the state. Ibsen's emotion of intellectual energy, whether as he grew mature, intellectual, matured intellect made it distinct good. He writes to Georg Brandt, "Besten, I am... of the individual..."

Life of

Individualism in Youth. His rebellion against the spirit of his time, in Maturity. His fragmentary and dogmatic. Ibsen was the leading element in the final settlement, and we shall have to do with his spirit that will be with us. It is this view of the life, betraying the enthusiasm for the philosopher, the impatience for men and woman rather than the slowness of nature's slow processes of evolution, which tingles nearly that Ibsen wrote. Even in his dramas we find its influence, as line, when he turns into an is digenous at the universal rotten period.
Life of Long

It is in the stage pieces of his which
with modern life that we get the fully
deployed Ibsen philosophy—in "The Pillars
Society," for example, with its lashings
local hypocrisy; in "The Doll's House."

Life of M

"Where the dramatist for the first time as-
verts the principle of individuality for
women as well as men; in "Ghosts," which
works out "the consequences of those con-
ventional opinions that stalk among us like
great spectres," and in "An Enemy of the
People."

Life of N

"A strong man is he who stands alone."

Life of M

Yet Ibsen was not wholly absorbed in
his struggle with social forces. He was a
poet as well as a dramatist, and his tender
solicitude for the poor and oppressed, what-
ever the source of their misfortune, was
continually manifesting itself. At the age
of twenty-two he knew enough of life to be
moved to write:

Life of R

"A scholar.

Life of I

"He wrote "Rosmersholm" to teach
the duty and power of self-sacrificing love, as
opposed to selfishness. It his attitude to-
ward man was critical, he always pictured
woman as a radiant, poetic being, and
summed up his conception of her in a sen-
tence: "To love, to sacrifice all, and to for-
got—that is the saga of woman." To man
and woman alike he addressed the lines:

Life of S

Be altogether what thou art—
Be something wholly, not in part!

Life of O

His Habits and Mannerisms

Mark of M

Apparently "Affected to an Extreme"
-His Morning Poses in the Grand
Hotel—His Working Methods

Three years ago, when William E. Curtis,
the author and traveller, was in the land of
Norsemen, he wrote: "Everybody in Nor-
way knows all about Ibsen. His name is
a household word, even among the peas-
ants, and his eccentricities are the topic of
conversation in every drawing-room and at
every dinner table. He is affected to an
extreme, and most people believe it to be
for advertising purposes, or at least to
emphasize his originality and individuality.

Life of C

The characteristic of which he is himself
most proud, Ibsen considers himself a
man with a mission, and his eccentricities
are part of his stage business. He has
himself said that "the strongest man upon
earth is he who stands most alone," which
is no doubt, the key to his exclusiveness, of
which the people complain. To his equals
he is always reserved and reserved, but he
never fails to enliven any company with

Life of L

"A book account of a
undervalued—
volume."—Man-
nes the
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Life of L

"A set of Puritanism

toish Leader.

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"The beauty of

Life of L

"The -distribution of more
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er."—Manchester

Sir Walter Scott
To the best existing proof that Ibsen was admired but disliked, that he was eminent but unloved; that the people had a reverence and respect for his ability, but despised him for his vanity and selfishness. His pictures appear in every shop window, however, and if the number of copies sold is a criterion he is the most popular man in Norway. One of Ibsen's peculiarities is his dress. He wears a very long black broadcloth coat, reaching nearly to his heels, with a silk hat carefully polished, a broad white muslin tie, and trims his hair and beard in a manner that suggests Horace Greeley. He is said to be very particular about his person, and takes an hour and a half every morning to dress, but during this time he does a good deal of thinking, and makes pencilled notes upon a tablet of paper while his patient and long-suffering valet stands by with his shirt or collar or trousers in hand awaiting his master's pleasure.

Ibsen is so regular in his habits that the people of Christiania can set their watches by his coming and going. He leaves his house, which is near the centre of the city, every morning at precisely 11.30 o'clock, and always walks down the same street at leisurely pace, with great dignity, but an air of abstraction. At 11.45 he reaches the university buildings and never fails to stop and compare his watch with the clock in the tower. His students' usual
may be on his hat, and then returns to his home for a two o'clock dinner.

"Ibsen has a wife and one son, Sigurd Ibsen, now about forty years old, who has been in the consular service, and I believe spent several years at Washington as secretary of legation. He is at present occupying a subordinate position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sigurd married a daughter of Bjørn Sørven Bjørnson, his father's most formidable rival in literature and popular estimation. The two authors are not friends. They are very jealous of each other. Ibsen envies Bjørnson's great popularity and prosperity, while the latter regards Ibsen as 'an affected old donkey,' and often calls him such. In front of the new theatre in Christiania are bronze statues of both men in heroic size, which were erected at the expense of the public and generally admired, but are unsatisfactory to the subjects. A few days after his statue was in position Ibsen varied his morning walk by strolling over in that direction. For several moments he stood gazing at the effigy of himself, showing his long coat, his bushy hair and whiskers and his big eyeglasses, then shook his head sadly as if in disapproval and went on his way. He has never been near the statue since.

Ibsen is supposed to be a rich man, although he is said to be very pensive and never contributes money to any cause. He receives a large income from his plays, and saves the most of it. His only extravagance is pictures. He has a fine taste for art, and has one of the best private collections of paintings in Norway. Ibsen is as vain as a man can be, and, although he never notices anybody on the street, loves to be stared at, and is especially gratified to have strangers call at his house and ask the privilege of seeing him. At the same time, his manners are not gracious or attractive. He is affected with a natural diffidence and reserve which he cannot overcome, and seldom appears to advantage in public or among strangers."

Speaking of Ibsen's exclusiveness, it seems to have been a part of his philosophy. Some twelve years ago he wrote to George Brandes, the Danish literary critic:

"Friends constitute an expensive luxury. The man who has invested his capital for life in a calling and a mission, cannot afford to keep friends. The expense of keeping them does not lie so much in what one does for them as in what one omits doing for their sakes." A German writer who spent much of his time at Munich about twenty years ago, relates that he often saw the playwright and his wife take their common morning constitutional. Nobody who did not know them could suspect them of being in company. Ibsen was always ten steps ahead of his wife—or perhaps she was so much behind. But they never got further together than that.
ous occasions that am I to this extent human ideals to also an optimist, to the power of those and to develop.” An interview: “It a of every dramatist prevailing order of the work.” An interest of Dr. Ibsen’s per.

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Ibseen, says Mr. Sherard, is a pessimist by theory, and a misanthrope in practice: "I should describe him as a typical misanthrope, by natural tendency. His domestic life has not been a happy one, and woman has won but few celestial roses into his life. In his "Master-Builder" he expressed what were his ambitions as a young man—ambitions which he has scarcely been able to realize."

Illustrated to one of his few confidential friends recently that some of his greatest dramas he had written in six weeks. His method of work was very peculiar. He spent many months thinking out the plot, the characters, the dialogue. But not a word was put on paper. Everything was carried in his mind. Suddenly he shut himself up to write. During this time he saw no one. He did not come to the hotel for his breakfast and soda. He dined, drank, slept, lived alone. His meals were sent in to him as if he was a prisoner. He would not permit the members of his family to talk to him. "I am living with my characters," he explained to his friend. "They have form and life. They are all about me. They dine with me, sleep with me, talk to me. They talk to me. I write down what they say. My work comes along very fast. I never find it necessary to erase or do over. It is all in my mind, from the first scene to the last, even the words and the rhymes and it is only necessary for me to write it out as quickly as I can. During this time I am not Henrik Ibseen. I do not live in Norway, nor in the world. It is an existence apart from life, with my creations."
Illustrated with 

LANDSEER

"This little world of ours is such that every man's feet must stamp it so that the world is under his feet."

REYNOLDS

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TURNER, J.

"The Life of Sir Robert

ROMNEY, G.

BART, F.

"Sir Herbert's art is delightful, and it is a pleasure to read of it, and to see it written with such style."

WILKIE, S.

CONSTABLE, WINDSOR

RAEBURN, G.

GAINSBOROUGH, HOGARTH, MILL.
The Actors and the Public.

I.

No one who has seen "Brand," as in nearly all his later plays, especially after "Emperor and Gallican," is to show what terrible sacrifices of human lives are made to ideas of all kinds, which have no longer any validity. In "The Wild Duck" we have an idealist trying to force his ideas on family, with disastrous results; in "A Doll's House" the happiness of a family is again sacrificed to the conventional social ideals. "Rosmersholm" points much the same moral. The theme of freedom, complete freedom from the accepted social ideals, is continually the chief, underlying thought in Ibsen's dramas. It is not, of course, the only one. Nobody has brought home to people's minds with a greater effect of awful reality the dread truths of heredity.

For this alone he deserves the grateful thanks of mankind. The last act of "Ghosts" must have had a beneficent influence on many a light-hearted. In any case, to talk about Ibsen as immoral or obscene or prurient is nowadays the mark of an inferior intellect. We are slowly being educated to understand him and his point of view. His presentation of his view of life is essentially, and, without doubt, deliberately provocative.

"What does Ibsen stand for?" asks James Huneker. "His perversities of execution, aberrations in form, contrarities and monotonous obstinacy are too much for the average commentator's nerves—why should he be enjoyed by the public when doctors of the drama disagree? His warmest admirers deny him the gift of humor, and we believe that he is the greatest humorist—as well as dramatist—of the nineteenth century. No man, not even Browning, has kept such rigid features in the very face of idiotic abuse and still more silly praise.

Not a sense of humor? Ibsen's types are often suburban, but, then, whether we like to acknowledge it or no, the majority of city folk is suburban in intelligence. Citizenship in a metropolis is no brief of mental freedom or wide culture. Ibsen's characters are all Norwegian and they are as normal as the creatures of any great dramatist—often they are middle-class to a tiresome degree. The fact is that the Ibsenites have been quite as annoying—and we presume necessary—as the Browning societies and the Wagnerites. They have diverted attention from their master to themselves, drawing down some of his lightnings from the clouds to gleam about their own unlaurelled skulls. His imitators, as is always the case, have only caught the externals of his stage technique, his marvellous economies of time and place, his drastic dialogue and his predilection for unpleasant people. His intellectual range, his gripping magnetism, his tremendous evocation of flesh-and-blood beings,
The world recognizes today in the death of Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian dramatist, the closing of a career making a chapter in its history, is cheering proof that letters and art have not entirely lost their importance in a materialistic age. It seems after all that a poet is a power, that the drama is one of the great interests of human society. We may not make a national holiday, as did classic Athens, for the production of a new piece—we may not crown the dramatic author with the civic bays as we do in some cases a politician who is not dead, and, therefore, by Speaker Reed's dictum not yet a statesman. But Ibsen forces the admission that a great career can be achieved in literature, even in the literature of acting plays, today produced in the better class of theatres; that, indeed, the maker of plays may be in the forefront of human achievement. It is a sheer triumph of intellectuality and moral purpose and character in Ibsen's case, standing primarily and preeminently against 'conventionality' and hypocrisy in life, and for classic of worn-out sham and artifice upon the stage, in favor of truth and manly courage and real art.
XVI. The Revolutionair.

"By far the generalists among the revolutionaries of 1848-49 were the young men who came to prominence in the 1870s. Their movement was characterized by a spirit of reform and innovation.

XVII. The Young Men of the 1870s.

By Prof. Smith

"The young men of the 1870s were the driving force behind the reform movement. They were characterized by a spirit of innovation and a willingness to challenge the status quo."

XVIII. The Anthropologists.

M. L. selected a "Wise"

"M. L. selected a wise person as his role model."

XIX. Voltaire.

"A very wise person."

XX. The Present.

"Not a statistician, but a philosopher."

XXI. The Modern World.

"Of course, the modern world is not without its flaws."

XXII. The Future.

"The future depends on our actions."

ROSO. Illustration of facts and figures.

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"The rights of the working people, the rights of women, the spreading of democracy, the disestablishment of privilege, these are the objects for which his vigorous nature contended through the medium of the stage in the public interest."

"But as he said in one of his letters, "I believe..."
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HENRIK IBSEN DEAD.
Norway's Greatest Dramatist Passes Away—His Life and Work.

By Prof. A. H. Reimers, Ph.D., Academy of Sciences, Copenhagen.

"It is one of the most serious and distressing events in the history of Norwegian literature. Ibsen was not only a great playwright, but also a man of extraordinary intellectual and emotional depth. His works have left a profound impact on the world of literature and art."

H. L. SIMMONS.

Editor of the "New York Dramatic Mirror."
XXXIX. THE
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his death his condition became disquieting, and on last Tuesday night another seizure left him unconscious. His death came peacefully.

Telegrams of condolence were sent from all parts of the world. Among those who sent messages of sympathy were King Frederick of Denmark, Björnsterne Bjornson, and representatives of the principal theatres of Europe and America. At a session of the Parliament on Friday a motion offered by the President, that a state funeral be arranged, was unanimously approved. May 31 was set as the date.

Career of the Great Dramatist.

With or Henrik Ibsen was by many accounted the greatest author and playwright of this age. His plays, especially the gross dramas dealing with the evils of modern society, have been presented in practically every important theatrical centre of Europe and America. Many scholars have questioned the moral and educational value of these pessimistic masterpieces, but Ibsen's standing as the greatest contemporary limmer of character, a master of construction and dramatic technique, is indisputable. Many students regard him as the most consummate dramatic genius since Shakespeare.

Especially in the later years of his life Ibsen was noted for his personal eccentricities and the morose and solitary character of his disposition. His married life was happy. His one son married the daughter of Bjornson, his most prominent literary rival. Since 1891 Ibsen had lived in Christiania, where he received literary homage from all quarters of the habitable globe and where he was singularly honored during his lifetime by the erection of a statue in front of the National Theatre. He was created an honorary Doctor of philosophy by the University of Upsala and has received the grand cross of the Order of St. Olaf for literary merit from the Norwegian Government.

Henrik Ibsen was born at Skien, Norway, March 20, 1828, of a seafaring family. His ancestry proves him to have had a certain amount of Scotch and German blood as well as the native Norwegians. His father met with financial disasters and he suffered six years of extreme poverty from 1830 to 1842, during the latter part of which period he studied at a local scientific school. In 1843 he began to write poetry, and in 1845 he wrote his first drama, 'Catilina,' and in 1856 he went to the University of Christiania as a medical student. Catiline was not a success, but Professor Mourad, of the Royal University, one of the foremost critics of the time, recognized the spirit of genius and wrote a review in which he predicted a great future for the new author. He gave up the study of medicine altogether when The Warrior's Mound was successfully produced in the same year. During 1851 he became interested in a weekly journal called Man, in which he published a number of short stories, essays and reviews. In 1856 his first national drama, The Banquet at Solhaug, was produced and met with a very favorable reception both in Norway and Sweden. The succeeding year he accepted the post of Director of the Norwegian Theatre in Christiania, which was reduced to bankruptcy by five years of his management. While here he wrote Lady Inger of Ostrast, a so-called "national drama" with a plot in Norway; The Vikings of Heilsgand, and Love's Companions, a stirring satire on everyday life. In 1860 he published the "latest of his major works" The Mountain Play the. When Ibsen's theatre failed in 1860 he was refused a Government pension as
the same time that one was granted to

in great bitterness he left home two years earlier and journeyed to Rome, stopping on the way at Berlin and Trieste. In Rome, Brand, an attack of absolute Norwegian society, was produced and created an immense sensation both at home and abroad. As a result of this the coveted pension was granted him in 1866. Two years later he went from Rome to Dresden, where he remained until 1874. Then, after a voluntary exile of ten years, he revisited his native country.

His hat of Ibsen's important works is as follows: Catiline (1849), The Warrior's Mound (1850), St. John's Night (1851), The Banquet at Sohagen (1856), Lady Linger of Ostrung (1857), The Vikings of Heligoland (1858). On the Mountain Plains (1860), Love's Comedy (1862), The Pretenders (1864), Brand (1866), Peer Gynt (1867), The League of Youth (1869), Emperor and Galilean (1873), The Pilgrims of Conquest (1877), A Doll's House (1879), An Enemy of the People (1882), The Wild Duck (1884), Rosmersholm (1886), The Lady from the Sea (1888) Lead in Gable (1890), Little Eyolf (1894), John Gabriel Borkman (1896), and When We Dead Awak

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"Ibsen's comedy. The Pilgrims of Society was played as long ago as 1889 by German actors in the German language. In 1891 it was given in English twice, first at a matinee performance at the Lyceum Theatre by pupils of the Lyceum School, and a few days later by a regular company at Hamerstein's Opera House. In April, 1904, it was revived at the Lyric, with Wilton Lackaye in the role of Consul Bieracke. A Doll's House has been the most popular and the most frequently presented of all the tragedies, because it is really one of the best, because the situations may be applied to any community, and because Mrs. Fiske has made the character of Nora particularly famous. Before it was given in New York Madame Modjeska is recorded as having acted the role of Nora in Love's Ky. In December, 1889, it was presented at
Palmer's Theatre with Beatrice Cameron in the leading role. On Feb. 15, 1904, Mrs. Fiske was first seen as Nora in a special matinée performance at the Empire Theatre, with W. H. Thomsen as Krogstad and Courtenay Thorpe as H水泥. The play was revived by Mrs. Fiske at the Garden Theatre in 1896 and at the Manhattan in the Spring of 1902, and it has been played by Mrs. Fiske in many cities. In May, 1905, Ethel Barrymore appeared in the part of Nora. Ghosts was presented in German during the season of 1891 at Amberg's Theatre. In January, 1894, it was played in English, first at the Berkeley Lyceum and then at the Garden Theatre by a company in which Courtenay Thorpe was Oswald and Ida J. Goodfriend Mrs. Alving. In 1903 the play was presented at the Manhattan Theatre with Mary Shaw—who had appeared in the part previous to that time at the Carnegie Lyceum—as Mrs. Alving. One of the most unusual as well as one of the most remarkable performances of this piece was the production by Paul Olenski's Russian company late in the Spring of 1905.

An Enemy of the People has had just one production in New York, that of the Progressive Stage Society in January, 1905. Rosmersholm was produced at the Princess Theatre on March 29, 1904, with William Morris as Rosmer and Florence Kahn as Ebba. Hedda Gabler appeared at the London Vandervellie scarcely more than a year after it was written, but it was not given here until Elizabeth Robins, the Hedda of the English cast, appeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in 1898. In 1900, at the Manhattan Theatre, Mrs. Fiske assumed the role with a success equal to her triumph as Nora in A Doll's House, and she has appeared in the play in various cities. In 1905 Nance O'Neill undertook the part at the time Mrs. Fiske was appearing in a revival of the piece. On May 12, 1908, there was a matinée production of Master Builder Solness with Dr. Herda as David Elmer. When We Dead Awakened was produced at the Knickerbocker Theatre on March 7, 1905, with Frederick Lewis as Professor Rubek.

IBSEN.

The death of HENRIK IBSEN had long been expected, for at various times during the past five years announcements that he had been fatally stricken were made; yet as he lived on, admirers of his works hoped, in spite of his ripe age, that he would still add to his great life work—a series of plays several of which promise to stand as monuments to his genius for a time beyond the possibility of prediction, and to continue to influence the stage increasingly in the direction of absolutely truthful studies of human life and impulse.

The story of Ibsen's life is told elsewhere in THE MIRROR. It is a story that has had repetition in the cases of other great men, reformers, whose determination overcame not only great difficulty and sore hardship, but also that which emphasizes hardship and the lack of appreciation, and yet...
the future, whereas Ibsen passes from life accepted by the better intellects the world over; and he lived to see his philosophy recognized and his plays not only a living force, but a revolutionary power, in the theatre.

Ibsen, of course, is not yet commonly accepted, for the world is slow to throw off mental as well as physical habits; yet his genius in handling certain phases of life with absolute fidelity to truth has shown the utter worthlessness of superficial and artificial drama except for the thoughtless and the simple. Before Ibsen's plays had become known in English, at a time when false heroics and fustian were accepted, an author like Sardou was deemed great, even by critics of note. But as James Huneker says, in a critique of Ibsen, 'Sardou's creatures are all hollow gesticulation, and empty, sonorous rhetoric, mere passionate marionettes, beside Ibsen's'—a truth that naturally could not be evolved until contrasting genius made comparison possible. As one writing in the New York Sun says: "No sane and sober minded person would exaggerate Ibsen's peculiar merits by comparing him to Sophocles or Shakespeare. Yet it was given to him to exhibit, to an extent unparalleled in recent times, the specific and sovereign quality which was so conspicuous and so memorable in the Greek and Elizabethan dramatists. By him, as by them, not merely surface phenomena, evanescent manners and ephemeral ideals, but the primal truths and basic realities were bodied forth upon the stage in shapes of beauty or of terror. Like them, he pointed no particular moral, but by poignant or appalling examples drove home to the quivering conscience the moral lesson of human life. Like them, he was a philosopher, teaching and preaching through consummate works of art; an artist in whom a thinker was articulate."

It may be useless to attempt to add to this brief, but truthful, powerful and essential tribute, yet a few words should be said against the petty minds that have seen nothing noble and that have professed to see nothing but that which is ignoble, in Ibsen's works. Ibsen has been called the
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