

An Essay Toward a History of Shakespeare in Norway

Martin B. Ruud



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**THE PROJECT GUTENBERG eBook OF AN ESSAY TOWARD A
HISTORY OF SHAKESPEARE IN NORWAY**

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TOWARD A HISTORY OF SHAKESPEARE IN NORWAY ***

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A number of typographical errors have been corrected.
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The University of Chicago

An Essay Toward a History
of Shakespeare in
Norway

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE
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BY

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PREFATORY NOTE

I have attempted in this study to trace the history of Shakespearean translations, Shakespearean criticism, and the performances of Shakespeare's plays in Norway. I have not attempted to investigate Shakespeare's influence on Norwegian literature. To do so would not, perhaps, be entirely fruitless, but it would constitute a different kind of work.

The investigation was made possible by a fellowship from the University of Chicago and a scholarship from the American-Scandinavian Foundation, and I am glad to express my gratitude to these bodies for the opportunities given to me of study in the Scandinavian countries. I am indebted for special help and encouragement to Dr. C.N. Gould and Professor J.M. Manly, of the University of Chicago, and to the authorities of the University library in Kristiania for their unfailing courtesy. To my wife, who has worked with me throughout, my obligations are greater than I can express.

It is my plan to follow this monograph with a second on the history of Shakespeare in Denmark.

M. B. R.

Minneapolis, Minnesota.

September, 1916.

CHAPTER I

SHAKESPEARE TRANSLATIONS IN NORWAY

A

In the years following 1750, there was gathered in the city of Trondhjem a remarkable group of men: Nils Krog Bredal, composer of the first Danish opera, John Gunnerus, theologian and biologist, Gerhart Schøning, rector of the Cathedral School and author of an elaborate history of the fatherland, and Peter Suhm, whose 14,047 pages on the history of Denmark testify to a learning, an industry, and a generous devotion to scholarship which few have rivalled. Bredal was mayor (Borgermester), Gunnerus was bishop, Schøning was rector, and Suhm was for the moment merely the husband of a rich and unsympathetic wife. But they were united in their interest in serious studies, and in 1760, the last three—somewhat before Bredal's arrival—founded "Videnskabsselkabet i Trondhjem." A few years later the society received its charter as "Det Kongelige Videnskabsselskab."

A little provincial scientific body! Of what moment is it? But in those days it was of moment. Norway was then and long afterwards the political and intellectual dependency of Denmark. For three hundred years she had been governed more or less effectively from Copenhagen, and for two hundred years Danish had supplanted Norwegian as the language of church and state, of trade, and of higher social intercourse. The country had no university; Norwegians were compelled to go to Copenhagen for their degrees and there loaf about in the anterooms of ministers waiting for preferment. Videnskabsselskabet was the first tangible evidence of awakened national life, and we are not surprised to find that it was in this circle that the demand for a separate Norwegian university was first authoritatively presented. Again, a little group of periodicals sprang up in which were discussed, learnedly and pedantically, to be sure, but with keen intelligence, the questions that were interesting the great world outside. It is dreary business ploughing through these solemn, badly printed octavos and quartos. Of a sudden, however, one comes upon the first, and for thirty-six years the only Norwegian translation of Shakespeare.

We find it in *Trondhjems Allehaande* for October 23, 1782—the third and last volume. The translator has hit upon Antony's funeral oration and

introduces it with a short note:^{1.1} "The following is taken from the famous English play *Julius Caesar* and may be regarded as a masterpiece. When Julius Caesar was killed, Antonius secured permission from Brutus and the other conspirators to speak at his funeral. The people, whose minds were full of the prosperity to come, were satisfied with Caesar's murder and regarded the murderers as benefactors. Antonius spoke so as to turn their minds from rejoicing to regret at a great man's untimely death and so as to justify himself and win the hearts of the populace. And in what a masterly way Antonius won them! We shall render, along with the oration, the interjected remarks of the crowd, inasmuch as they too are evidences of Shakespeare's understanding of the human soul and his realization of the manner in which the oration gradually brought about the purpose toward which he aimed:"

Antonius: Venner, Medborgere, giver mig Gehør, jeg kommer for at jorde Cæsars Legeme, ikke for at rose ham. Det Onde man gjør lever endnu efter os; det Gode begravnes ofte tilligemed vore Been. Saa Være det ogsaa med Cæsar. Den ædle Brutus har sagt Eder, Cæsar var herskesyg. Var han det saa var det en svær Forseelse: og Cæsar har ogsaa dyrt maattet bøde derfor. Efter Brutus og de Øvriges Tilladelse—og Brutus er en hederlig Mand, og det er de alle, lutter hederlige Mænd, kommer jeg hid for at holde Cæsars Ligtale. Han var min Ven, trofast og oprigtig mod mig! dog, Brutus siger, han var herskesyg, og Brutus er en hederlig Mand. Han har bragt mange Fanger med til Rom, hvis Løsepenge formerede de offentlige Skatter; synes Eder det herskesygt af Cæsar—naar de Arme skreeg, saa græd Cæsar—Herskesyge maate dog vel væves af stærkere Stof.—Dog Brutus siger han var herskesyg; og Brutus er en hederlig Mand. I have alle seet at jeg paa Pans Fest tre Gange tilbød ham en kongelig Krone, og at han tre Gange afslog den. Var det herskesygt?—Dog Brutus siger han var herskesyg, og i Sandhed, han er en hederlig Mand. Jeg taler ikke for at gjendrive det, som Brutus har sagt; men jeg staar her, for at sige hvad jeg veed. I alle elskede ham engang, uden Aarsag; hvad for en Aarsag afholder Eder fra at sørge over ham? O! Fornuft! Du er flyed hen til de umælende Bæster, og

Menneskene have tabt deres Forstand. Haver Taalmodighed med mig; mit Hjerte er hist i Kisten hos Cæsar, og jeg maa holde inde til det kommer tilbage til mig.

Den Første af Folket: Mig synes der er megen Fornuft i hans Tale.

Den Anden af Folket: Naar du ret overveier Sagen, saa er Cæsar skeet stor Uret.

Den Tredje: Mener I det, godt Folk? Jeg frygter der vil komme slemmere i hans Sted.

Den Fjerde: Har I lagt Mærke til hvad han sagde? Han vilde ikke modtage Kronen, det er altsaa vist at han ikke var herskesyg.

Den Første: Hvis saa er, vil det komme visse Folk dyrt at staae.

Den Anden: Den fromme Mand! Hans Øien er blodrøde af Graad.

Den Tredje: Der er ingen fortræffeligere Mand i Rom end Antonius.

Den Fjerde: Giver Agt, han begynder igjen at tale.

Antonius: Endnu i Gaar havde et Ord af Cæsar gjældt imod hele Verden, nu ligger han der, endog den Usleste nægter ham Agtelse. O, I Folk! var jeg sindet, at ophidse Eders Gemytter til Raserie og Oprør, saa skulde jeg skade Brutus og Cassius, hvilke, som I alle veed, ere hederlige Mænd. Men jeg vil intet Ondt gjøre dem: hellere vil jeg gjøre den Døde, mig selv, og Eder Uret, end at jeg skulde volde slige hederlige Mænd Fortræd. Men her er et Pergament med Cæsars Segl: jeg fandt det i hans Kammer; det er hans sidste Villie. Lad Folket blot høre hans Testament, som jeg, tilgiv mig det, ikke tænker at oplæse, da skulde de alle gaa hen og kysse den døde Cæsars Saar; og dyppe deres Klæder i hans hellige Blod; skulde bede om et Haar af ham til Erindring, og paa deres Dødsdag i deres sidste Villie tænke paa dette Haar, og testamentere deres Efterkommere det som en rig Arvedel.

Den Fjerde: Vi ville høre Testamentet! Læs det, Marcus Antonius.

Antonius: Haver Taalmodighed, mine Venner: jeg tør ikke forelæse det; det er ikke raadeligt, at I erfare hvor kjær Cæsar havde Eder. I ere ikke Træe, I ere ikke Stene, I ere Mennesker; og da I ere Mennesker saa skulde Testamentet, om I hørte det, sætte Eder i Flamme, det skulde gjøre Eder rasende. Det er godt at I ikke vide, at I ere hans Arvinger; thi vidste I det, O, hvad vilde der da blive af?

Den fjerde: Læs Testamentet; vi ville høre det, Antonius! Du maae læse Testamentet for os, Cæsars Testament!

Antonius: Ville i være rolige? Ville I bide lidt? Jeg er gaaen for vidt at jeg har sagt Eder noget derom—jeg frygter jeg fornærmer de hederlige Mænd, som have myrdet Cæsar—jeg befrygter det.

Den Fjerde: De vare Forrædere!—ha, hederlige Mænd!

The translation continues to the point where the plebeians, roused to fury by the cunning appeal of Antony, rush out with the cries:^{[1.2](#)}

2. **Pleb:** Go fetch fire!

3. **Pleb:** Plucke down Benches!

2. **Pleb:** Plucke down Formes, Windowes, anything.

But we have not space for a more extended quotation, and the passage given is sufficiently representative.

The faults are obvious. The translator has not ventured to reproduce Shakespeare's blank verse, nor, indeed, could that be expected. The Alexandrine had long held sway in Danish poetry. In *Rolf Krage* (1770), Ewald had broken with the tradition and written an heroic tragedy in prose. Unquestionably he had been moved to take this step by the example of his great model Klopstock in *Bardiete*.^{[1.3](#)} It seems equally certain, however, that he was also inspired by the plays of Shakespeare, and the songs of Ossian, which came to him in the translations of Wieland.^{[1.4](#)}

A few years later, when he had learned English and read Shakespeare in the original, he wrote *Balders Død* in blank verse and naturalized Shakespeare's metre in Denmark.^{[1.5](#)} At any rate, it is not surprising that this unknown

plodder far north in Trondhjem had not progressed beyond Klopstock and Ewald. But the result of turning Shakespeare's poetry into the journeyman prose of a foreign language is necessarily bad. The translation before us amounts to a paraphrase,—good, respectable Danish untouched by genius. Two examples will illustrate this. The lines:

.... Now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.

are rendered in the thoroughly matter-of-fact words, appropriate for a letter or a newspaper "story":

.... Nu ligger han der,
endog den Usleste nægter ham Agtelse.

Again,

I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it,

is translated:

Jeg er gaaen for vidt at jeg sagde Eder noget derom.

On the other hand, the translation presents no glaring errors; such slips as we do find are due rather to ineptitude, an inability to find the right word, with the result that the writer has contented himself with an accidental and approximate rendering. For example, the translator no doubt understood the lines:

The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones.

but he could hit upon nothing better than:

Det Onde man gjør *lever endnu efter os*;
det Gode begravnes ofte tilligemed vore Been.

which is both inaccurate and infelicitous. For the line

He was my friend, faithful and just to me.

our author has:

Han var min Ven, trofast og *oprigtig* mod mig!

Again:

Has he, Masters? I fear there will come a worse in his place.

Translation:

Mener I det, godt Folk?—etc.

Despite these faults—and many others could be cited,—it is perfectly clear that this unknown student of Shakespeare understood his original and endeavored to reproduce it correctly in good Danish. His very blunders showed that he tried not to be slavish, and his style, while not remarkable, is easy and fluent. Apparently, however, his work attracted no attention. His name is unknown, as are his sources, and there is not, with one exception, a single reference to him in the later Shakespeare literature of Denmark and Norway. Not even Rahbek, who was remarkably well informed in this field, mentions him. Only Foersom,^{[1.6](#)} who let nothing referring to Shakespeare escape him, speaks (in the notes to Part I of his translation) of a part of Act III of *Julius Caesar* in *Trondhjems Allehaande*. That is all. It is not too much to emphasize, therefore, that we have here the first Danish version of any part of *Julius Caesar* as well as the first Norwegian translation of any part of Shakespeare into what was then the common literary language of Denmark and Norway.^{[1.7](#)}*

B

It was many years before the anonymous contributor to *Trondhjems Allehaande* was to have a follower. From 1782 to 1807 Norwegians were engaged in accumulating wealth, an occupation, indeed, in which they were remarkably successful. There was no time to meddle with Shakespeare in a day when Norwegian shipping and Norwegian products were profitable as never before. After 1807, when the blundering panic of the British plunged Denmark and Norway into war on the side of Napoleon, there were sterner things to think of. It was a sufficiently difficult matter to get daily bread. But in 1818, when the country had, as yet, scarcely begun to recover from the agony of the Napoleonic wars, the second Norwegian translation from Shakespeare appeared.^{[1.8](#)}

The translator of this version of *Coriolanus* is unknown. Beyond the bare statement on the title page that the translation is made directly from Shakespeare and that it is printed and published in Christiania by Jacob Lehmann, there is no information to be had. Following the title there is a brief quotation from Dr. Johnson and one from the "Zeitung für die elegante Welt." Again Norway anticipates her sister nation; for not till the following year did Denmark get her first translation of the play.^{[1.9](#)}

Ewald, Oehlenschläger, and Foersom had by this time made the blank verse of Shakespeare a commonplace in Dano-Norwegian literature. Even the mediocre could attempt it with reasonable assurance of success. The *Coriolanus* of 1818 is fairly correct, but its lumbering verse reveals plainly that the translator had trouble with his metre. Two or three examples will illustrate. First, the famous allegory of Menenius:^{[1.10](#)}

Menenius:

I enten maae erkjende at I ere
Heel onskabsfulde, eller taale, man
For Uforstandighed anklager Eder.
Et snurriigt Eventyr jeg vil fortælle;
Maaskee I har det hørt, men da det tjener

Just til min Hensigt, jeg forsøge vil
Nøiagtigen det Eder at forklare.

.

Jeg Eder det fortælle skal; med et
Slags Smil, der sig fra Lungen ikke skrev;
Omtrent saaledes—thi I vide maae
Naar jeg kan lade Maven tale, jeg
Den og kan lade smile—stikende
Den svarede hvert misfornøiet Lem
Og hver Rebel, som den misundte al
Sin Indtægt; Saa misunde I Senatet
Fordi det ikke er det som I ere.

Første Borger:

Hvorledes. Det var Mavens Svar! Hvorledes?
Og Hovedet, der kongeligt er kronet,
Og Øiet, der er blot Aarvaagenhed;
Og Hjertet, som os giver gode Raad;
Og Tungen, vor Trumpet, vor Stridsmand, Armen,
Og Foden, vores Pragthest, med de flere
Befæstingner, der støtte vor Maskine,
Hvis de nu skulde....

Menenius:

Nu hvad skulde de?...
Den Karl mig lader ei til Orde komme,
Hvad vil I sigte med det *hvis de skulde?*

Første Borger:

Hvis de nu skulde sig betvinge lade
Ved denne Slughals Maven som blot er
En Afløbs-Rende for vort Legeme?

Menenius:

Nu videre!

Første Borger:

Hvad vilde Maven svare?
Hvis hine Handlende med Klage fremstod?

Menenius:

Hvis I mig skjænke vil det som I have
Kun lidet af, Taalmodighed, jeg mener,
Jeg Eder Mavens Svar da skal fortælle.

Første Borger:

I! Den Fortælling ret i Langdrag trækker!

Menenius:

Min gode Ven, nu allerførst bemærke.
Agtværdig Mave brugte Overlæg;
Ei ubetænksom den sig overiled
Som dens Modstandere; og saa lød Svaret:
I Venner som fra mig ei skilles kan!
Det Sandhed er, at jeg fra første Haand
Modtager Næringen som Eder føder,
Og dette i sin Orden er, thi jeg
Et Varelager og et Forraads-Kammer
Jo er for Legemet; men ei I glemme:
Jeg Næringen igjennem Blodets Floder
Og sender lige hen til Hoffet-Hjertet—
Til Hjernens Sæde; jeg den flyde lader
Igjennem Menneskets meest fine Dele;
Og de meest fast Nerver, som de mindste
Blandt Aarene fra mig modtager hver
Naturlig Kraft, hvormed de leve, og
Endskjøndt de ikke alle paa eengang—
I gode Venner (det var Mavens Ord)
Og mærker dem heel nøie....

Første Borger:

Det vil vi gjøre.

Menenius:

Endskjøndt de ikke alle kunde see,
Hvad jeg tilflyde lader hver især,
Saa kan jeg dog med gyldigt Dokument
Bevise at jeg overlader dem

Den rene Kjærne, selv beholder Kliddet.
Hvad siger I dertil?

Første Borger:

Et svar det var—
Men nu Andvendelsen!

Menenius:

Senatet er
Den gode Mave: I Rebellerne.
I undersøge blot de Raad det giver
Og alt dets Omhue. Overveier nøie
Alt hvad til Statens Velferd monne sigte,
Og da I finde vil, at fra Senatet
Hver offentlig Velgjerning som I nyde
Sit Udspring bar, men ei fra Eder selv—
Hvad tænker I, som er den store Taae
Her i Forsamlingen?

Aside from the preponderance of feminine endings, which is inevitable in Scandinavian blank verse, what strikes us most in this translation is its laboriousness. The language is set on end. Inversion and transposition are the devices by which the translator has managed to give Shakespeare in metrically decent lines. The proof of this is so patent that I need scarcely point out instances. But take the first seven lines of the quotation. Neither in form nor content is this bad, yet no one with a feeling for the Danish language can avoid an exclamation, "forskruet Stil" and "poetiske Stylter." And lines 8-9 smack unmistakably of *Peder Paars*. In the second place, the translator often does not attempt to translate at all. He gives merely a paraphrase. Compare lines 1-3 with the English original; the whole of the speech of the first citizen, 17-24, 25-27, where the whole implied idea is fully expressed; 28-30, etc., etc. We might offer almost every translation of Shakespeare's figures as an example. One more instance. At times even paraphrase breaks down. Compare

And through the cranks and offices of man
The strongest and small inferior veins,
Receive from me that natural competency
Whereby they live.

with our translator's version (lines 50-51)

jeg den flyde lader
Igennem Menneskets meest fine Dele.

This is not even good paraphrase; it is simply bald and helpless rendering.

On the other hand, it would be grossly unfair to dismiss it all with a sneer. The translator has succeeded for the most part in giving the sense of Shakespeare in smooth and sounding verse, in itself no small achievement. Rhetoric replaces poetry, it is true, and paraphrase dries up the freshness and the sparkle of the metaphor. But a Norwegian of that day who got his first taste of Shakespeare from the translation before us, would at least feel that here was the power of words, the music and sonorousness of elevated dramatic poetry.

One more extract and I am done. It is Coriolanus' outburst of wrath against the pretensions of the tribunes ([III.1](#)). With all its imperfections, the translation is almost adequate.

Coriolanus:

Skal!
Patrisier, I ædle, men ei vise!
I høie Senatorer, som mon mangle
Al Overlæg, hvi lod I Hydra vælge
En Tjener som med sit bestemte Skal
—Skjøndt blot Uhyrets Talerør og Lyd—
Ei mangler Mod, at sige at han vil
Forvandle Eders Havstrøm til en Sump,
Og som vil gjøre Jer Kanal til sin.
Hvis han har Magten, lad Enfoldighed
Da for ham bukke; har han ingen Magt,
Da vækker Eders Mildhed af sin Dvale,
Den farlig er; hvis I ei mangle Klogskab,
Da handler ei som Daaren; mangler den,
Lad denne ved Jer Side faae en Pude.
Plebeier ere I, hvis Senatorer
De ere, og de ere mindre ei
Naar begge Eders Stemmer sammenblandes

Og naar de kildres meest ved Fornemhed.
De vælge deres egen Øvrighed,
Og saadan Een, der sætte tør sit Skal,
Ja sit gemene Skal mod en Forsamling,
Der mer agtværdig er end nogensinde
Man fandt i Grækenland. Ved Jupiter!
Sligt Consulen fornedrer! Og det smerter
Min Sjæl at vide, hvor der findes tvende
Autoriteter, ingen af dem størst,
Der kan Forvirring lettelig faae Indpas
I Gabet, som er mellem dem, og hæve
Den ene ved den anden.

C

In 1865, Paul Botten Hansen, best known to the English-speaking world for his relations with Bjørnson and Ibsen, reviewed^{[1.11](#)} the eleventh installment of Lembcke's translation of Shakespeare. The article does not venture into criticism, but is almost entirely a resumé of Shakespeare translation in Norway and Denmark. It is less well informed than we should expect, and contains, among several other slips, the following "...in 1855, Niels Hauge, deceased the following year as teacher in Kragerø, translated *Macbeth*, the first faithful version of this masterpiece which Dano-Norwegian literature could boast of." Botten Hansen mentions only one previous Danish or Norwegian version of Shakespeare—Foersom's adaptation of Schiller's stage version (1816). He is quite obviously ignorant of Rosenfeldt's translation of 1790; and the Rahbek-Sanders translation of 1801 seems also to have escaped him, although Hauge expressly refers to this work in his introduction. Both of these early attempts are in prose; Foersom's, to be sure, is in blank verse, but Foersom's *Macbeth* is not Shakespeare's. Accordingly, it is, in a sense, true that Hauge in 1855 did give the Dano-Norwegian public their first taste of an unspoiled *Macbeth* in the vernacular.^{[1.12](#)}

Hauge tells us that he had interested himself in English literature at the risk of being called an eccentric. Modern languages then offered no avenue to preferment, and why, forsooth, did men attend lectures and take examinations except to gain the means of earning a livelihood? He justifies his interest, however, by the seriousness and industry with which Shakespeare is studied in Germany and England. With the founts of this study he is apparently familiar, and with the influence of Shakespeare on Lessing, Goethe, and the lesser romanticists. It is interesting to note, too, that two scholars, well known in widely different fields, Monrad, the philosopher—for some years a sort of Dr. Johnson in the literary circles of Christiania—and Unger, the scholarly editor of many Old Norse texts, assisted him in his work.

The character of Hauge's work is best seen in his notes. They consist of a careful defense of every liberty he takes with the text, explanations of grammatical constructions, and interpretations of debated matters. For example, he defends the witches on the ground that they symbolize the power of evil in the human soul.

Man kan sige at Shakespeare i dem og deres Slæng har givet de nytestamentlige Dæmoner Kjød og Blod.

(We may say that Shakespeare in them and their train has endowed the demons of the New Testament with flesh and blood). Again, he would change the word *incarnadine* to *incarnate* on the ground that *Twelfth Night V* offers a similar instance of the corrupt use of *incardinate* for *incarnate*. The word occurs, moreover, in English only in this passage.^{1.13} Again, in his note to Act IV, he points out that the dialogue in which Malcolm tests the sincerity of Macduff is taken almost verbatim from Holinshed. "In performing the play," he suggests, "it should, perhaps, be omitted as it very well may be without injury to the action since the complication which arises through Malcolm's suspicion of Macduff is fully and satisfactorily resolved by the appearance of Rosse." And his note to a passage in Act V is interesting as showing that, wide and thorough as was Hauge's acquaintance with Shakespearean criticism, he had, besides, a first-hand knowledge of the minor Elizabethan dramatists. I give the note in full. "*The way to dusty death—*

Til dette besynderlige Udtryk, kan foruden hvad Knight og Dyce have at citere, endnu citeres af Fords *Perkin Warbeck*, II, 2, "I take my leave to travel to my dust."

Hauge was a careful and conscientious scholar. He knew his field and worked with the painstaking fidelity of the man who realizes the difficulty of his task. The translation he gave is of a piece with the man—faithful, laborious, uninspired. But it is, at least, superior to Rosenfeldt and Sander, and Hauge justified his work by giving to his countrymen the best version of *Macbeth* up to that time.

Monrad himself reviewed Hauge's *Macbeth* in a careful and well-informed article, in *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Videnskab og Literatur*, which I shall review later.

D

One of the most significant elements in the intellectual life of modern Norway is the so-called Landsmaal movement. It is probably unnecessary to say that this movement is an effort on the part of many Norwegians to substitute for the dominant Dano-Norwegian a new literary language based on the "best" dialects. This language, commonly called the Landsmaal, is, at all events in its origin, the creation of one man, Ivar Aasen. Aasen published the first edition of his grammar in 1848, and the first edition of his dictionary in 1850. But obviously it was not enough to provide a grammar and a word-book. The literary powers of the new language must be developed and disciplined and, accordingly, Aasen published in 1853 *Prøver af Landsmaalet i Norge*. The little volume contains, besides other material, seven translations from foreign classics; among these is Romeo's soliloquy in the balcony scene.^{1.14} (Act II, Sc. 1) This modest essay of Aasen's, then, antedates Hauge's rendering of *Macbeth* and constitutes the first bit of Shakespeare translation in Norway since the *Coriolanus* of 1818.

Aasen knew that Landsmaal was adequate to the expression of the homely and familiar. But would it do for belles lettres?

Han lær aat Saar, som aldri kende Saar.—
Men hyst!—Kvat Ljos er dat dar upp i glaset?
Dat er i Aust, og Julia er Soli.
Sprett, fagre Sol, og tyn dan Maane-Skjegla,
som alt er sjuk og bleik av berre Ovund,
at hennar Taus er fagrar' en ho sjølv.
Ver inkje hennar Taus; dan Ovundsykja,
so sjukleg grøn er hennar Jomfru-Klædnad;
d'er berre Narr, som ber han. Sleng han av!
Ja, d'er mi Fru, d'er dan eg held i Hugen;
aa, giv ho hadde vist dat, at ho er dat!
Ho talar, utan Ord. Kvat skal ho med dei?
Ho tala kann med Augom;—eg vil svara.
Eg er for djerv; d'er inkje meg ho ser paa,

d'er tvo av fegste Stjernom dar paa Himlen,
som gekk ei Ærend, og fekk hennar Augo
te blinka i sin Stad, til dei kem atter.
Enn um dei var dar sjølve Augo hennar.
Kinn-Ljosken hennar hadde skemt dei Stjernor,
som Dagsljøs skemmer Lampen; hennar Augo
hadd' straatt so bjart eit Ljos i Himmels Høgdi,
at Fuglar song og Trudde, dat var Dag.
Sjaa, kor ho hallar Kinni lint paa Handi,
Aa, giv eg var ein Vott paa denne Handi
at eg fekk strjuka Kinni den.—Ho talar.—
Aa tala meir, Ljos-Engel, med du lyser
so klaart i denne Natti kring mitt Hovud,
som naar dat kem ein utfløygd Himmels Sending
mot Folk, som keika seg og stira beint upp
med undrarsame kvit-snudd' Augo mot han,
naar han skrid um dan seinleg-sigand' Skyi
og sigler yver høge Himmels Barmen.

It was no peasant jargon that Aasen had invented; it was a literary language of great power and beauty with the dignity and fulness of any other literary medium. But it was new and untried. It had no literature. Aasen, accordingly, set about creating one. Indeed, much of what he wrote had no other purpose. What, then, shall we say of the first appearance of Shakespeare in "Ny Norsk"?

First, that it was remarkably felicitous.

Kinn-Ljosken hadde skemt dei Stjernor
som Dagsljøs skemmer Lampen, hennar Augo, etc.

That is no inadequate rendering of:

Two of the fairest stars in all the Heaven, etc.

And equally good are the closing lines beginning:

Aa tala meir, Ljos-Engel med du lyser, etc.

Foersom is deservedly praised for his translation of the same lines, but a comparison of the two is not altogether disastrous to Aasen, though, to be

sure, his lines lack some of Foersom's insinuating softness:

Tal atter, Lysets Engel! thi du straal
i Natten saa høiherlig over mig
som en af Nattens vingede Cheruber
for dødeliges himmelvendte Øine, etc.

But lines like these have an admirable and perfect loveliness:

naar han skrid um dan seinleg-sigand' Skyi
og sigler yver høge Himmels Barmen.

Aasen busied himself for some years with this effort to naturalize his Landsmaal in all the forms of literature. Apparently this was always uppermost in his thoughts. We find him trying himself in this sort of work in the years before and after the publication of *Prøver af Landsmaalet*. In *Skrifter i Samling* is printed another little fragment of *Romeo and Juliet*, which the editor, without giving his reasons, assigns to a date earlier than that of the balcony scene. It is Mercutio's description of Queen Mab (Act I, Sc. 4). This is decidedly more successful than the other. The vocabulary of the Norwegian dialects is rich in words of fairy-lore, and one who knew this word treasure as Aasen did could render the fancies of Mercutio with something very near the exuberance of Shakespeare himself:

No ser eg vel, at ho hev' vore hjaa deg
ho gamle Mabba, Nærkona aat Vettom.
So lita som ein Adelstein i Ringen
paa fremste Fingren paa ein verdug Raadsmann,
ho kjøyrer kring med smaa Soldumbe-Flokar
paa Nasanna aat Folk, dan Tid dei søv.
Hjulspikann' henna er av Kongleføter,
Vognfelden er av Engjesprette-Vengjer,
og Taumann' av den minste Kongleveven.
Av Maanestraalanne paa Vatn er Selen,
og av Sirissebein er Svipeskafted
og Svipesnerten er av Agner smaa.
Skjotskaren er eit nett graakjola My
so stort som Holva av ein liten Møl,
som minste Vækja krasa kann med Fingren.

Til Vogn ho fekk ei holut Haslenot
av Snikkar Ikorn elder Natemakk,
som altid var Vognmakarann' aat Vettom.^{[1.15](#)}

The translation ends with Mercutio's words:

And being thus frightened, swears a prayer or two,
And sleeps again.

In my opinion this is consummately well done—at once accurate and redolent of poesy; and certainly Aasen would have been justified in feeling that Landsmaal is equal to Shakespeare's most airy passages. The slight inaccuracy of one of the lines:

Av Maanestraalanne paa Vatn er Selen,

for Shakespeare's:

The colors of the moonshine's watery beams,

is of no consequence. The discrepancy was doubtless as obvious to the translator as it is to us.

From about the same time we have another Shakespeare fragment from Aasen's hand. Like the Queen Mab passage, it was not published till 1911.^{[1.16](#)} It is scarcely surprising that it is a rendering of Hamlet's soliloquy: "To be or not to be." This is, of course, a more difficult undertaking. For the interests that make up the life of the people—their family and community affairs, their arts and crafts and folk-lore, the dialects of Norway, like the dialects of any other country, have a vocabulary amazingly rich and complete.^{[1.17](#)} But not all ideas belong in the realm of the every-day, and the great difficulty of the Landsmaal movement is precisely this—that it must develop a "culture language." To a large degree it has already done so. The rest is largely a matter of time. And surely Ivar Aasen's translation of the famous soliloquy proved that the task of giving, even to thought as sophisticated as this, adequate and final expression is not impossible. The whole is worth giving:

Te vera elder ei,—d'er da her spyrst um;
um d'er meir heirlegt i sitt Brjost aa tola
kvar Styng og Støyt av ein hardsøkjen Lagnad

eld taka Vaapn imot eit Hav med Harmar,
 staa mot og slaa dei veg?—Te døy, te sova,
 alt fraa seg gjort,—og i ein Sømn te enda
 dan Hjarteverk, dei tusend timleg' Støytar,
 som Kjøt er Erving til, da var ein Ende
 rett storleg ynskjande. Te døy, te sova,
 ja sova, kanskje drøyma,—au, d'er Knuten.
 Fyr' i dan Daudesømn, kva Draum kann koma,
 naar mid ha kastat av dei daudleg Bandi,
 da kann vel giv' oss Tankar; da er Sakji,
 som gjerer Useldom so lang i Livet:
 kven vilde tolt slikt Hogg og Haad i Tidi,
 slik sterk Manns Urett, stolt Manns Skamlaus Medferd,
 slik vanvyrd Elskhugs Harm, slik Rettarløysa,
 slikt Embæt's Ovmod, slik Tilbakaspenning,
 som tolug, verdug Mann fær av uverdug;
 kven vilde da, naar sjølv han kunde løysa
 seg med ein nakjen Odd? Kven bar dan Byrda
 so sveitt og stynjand i so leid ein Livnad,
 naar inkj'an ottast eitkvart etter Dauden,
 da uforfarne Land, som ingjen Ferdmann
 er komen atter fraa, da viller Viljen,
 da læt oss helder ha dan Naud, mid hava,
 en fly til onnor Naud, som er oss ukjend.
 So gjer Samviskan Slavar av oss alle,
 so bi dan fyrste, djerve, bjarte Viljen
 skjemd ut med blakke Strik av Ettetankjen
 og store Tiltak, som var Merg og Magt i,
 maa soleid snu seg um og strøyma ovugt
 og tapa Namn av Tiltak.

This is a distinctly successful attempt—exact, fluent, poetic. Compare it with the Danish of Foersom and Lembcke, with the Swedish of Hagberg, or the new Norwegian "Riksmal" translation, and Ivar Aasen's early Landsmaal version holds its own. It keeps the right tone. The dignity of the original is scarcely marred by a note of the colloquial. Scarcely marred! For

just as many Norwegians are offended by such a phrase as "Hennar Taus er fagar' en ho sjølv" in the balcony scene, so many more will object to the colloquial "Au, d'er Knuten." *Au* has no place in dignified verse, and surely it is a most unhappy equivalent for "Ay, there's the rub." Aasen would have replied that Hamlet's words are themselves colloquial; but the English conveys no such connotation of easy speech as does the Landsmaal to a great part of the Norwegian people. But this is a trifle. The fact remains that Aasen gave a noble form to Shakespeare's noble verse.

E

For many years the work of Hauge and Aasen stood alone in Norwegian literature. The reading public was content to go to Denmark, and the growing Landsmaal literature was concerned with other matters—first of all, with the task of establishing itself and the even more complicated problem of finding a form—orthography, syntax, and inflexions which should command general acceptance. For the Landsmaal of Ivar Aasen was frankly based on "the best dialects," and by this he meant, of course, the dialects that best preserved the forms of the Old Norse. These were the dialects of the west coast and the mountains. To Aasen the speech of the towns, of the south-east coast and of the great eastern valleys and uplands was corrupt and vitiated. It seemed foreign, saturated and spoiled by Danish. There were those, however, who saw farther. If Landsmaal was to strike root, it must take into account not merely "the purest dialects" but the speech of the whole country. It could not, for example, retain forms like "dat," "dan," etc., which were peculiar to Søndmør, because they happened to be lineal descendants of Old Norse, nor should it insist on preterites in *ade* and participles in *ad* merely because these forms were found in the sagas. We cannot enter upon this subject; we can but point out that this movement was born almost with Landsmaal itself, and that, after Aasen's fragments, the first Norwegian translation of any part of Shakespeare is a rendering of Sonnet CXXX in popularized Eastern, as distinguished from Aasen's literary, aristocratic Western Landsmaal. It is the first translation of a Shakespearean sonnet on Norwegian soil. The new language was hewing out new paths.

Som Soli Augunn' inkje skjinn,
og som Koraller inkje Lipunn' glansar,
og snjokvit hev ho inkje Halsen sin,
og Gullhaar inkje Hove hennar kransar,
Eg baae kvit' og raue Roser ser—,
paa Kinni hennar deira Lit'kje blandast;

og meire fin vel Blomsterangen er,
en den som ut fraa Lipunn' hennar andast.
Eg høyrte hev hennar Røyst og veit endaa,
at inkje som ein Song dei læter Ori;
og aldri hev eg set ein Engel gaa—
og gjenta mi ser støtt eg gaa paa Jori.
Men ho er større Lov og Ære vær
enn pyntedokkane me laana Glansen.
Den reine Hugen seg i alting ter,
og ljust ho smilar under Brurekransen. [1.18](#)

Obviously this is not a sonnet at all. Not only does the translator ignore Shakespeare's rime scheme, but he sets aside the elementary definition of a sonnet—a poem of fourteen lines. We have here sixteen lines and the last two add nothing to the original. The poet, through lack of skill, has simply run on. He could have ended with line 14 and then, whatever other criticism might have been passed upon his work, we should have had at least the sonnet form. The additional lines are in themselves fairly good poetry but they have no place in what purports to be translation. The translator signs himself simply "r." Whoever he was, he had poetic feeling and power of expression. No mere poetaster could have given lines so exquisite in their imagery, so full of music, and so happy in their phrasing. This fact in itself makes it a poor translation, for it is rather a paraphrase with a quality and excellence all its own. Not a line exactly renders the English. The paraphrase is never so good as the original but, considered by itself, it is good poetry. The disillusionment comes only with comparison. On the whole, this second attempt to put Shakespeare into Landsmaal was distinctly less successful than the first. As poetry it does not measure up to Aasen; as translation it is periphrastic, arbitrary, not at all faithful.

F

The translations which we have thus far considered were mere fragments—brief soliloquies or a single sonnet, and they were done into a dialect which was not then and is not now the prevailing literary language of the country. They were earnest and, in the case of Aasen, successful attempts to show that Landsmaal was adequate to the most varied and remote of styles. But many years were to elapse before anyone attempted the far more difficult task of turning any considerable part of Shakespeare into "Modern Norwegian."

Norway still relied, with no apparent sense of humiliation, on the translations of Shakespeare as they came up from Copenhagen. In 1881, however, Hartvig Lassen (1824-1897) translated *The Merchant of Venice*.^{1.19} Lassen matriculated as a student in 1842, and from 1850 supported himself as a literateur, writing reviews of books and plays for *Krydseren* and *Aftenposten*. In 1872 he was appointed Artistic Censor at the theater, and in that office translated a multitude of plays from almost every language of Western Europe. His published translations of Shakespeare are, however, quite unrelated to his theatrical work. They were done for school use and published by *Selskabet for Folkeoplysningens Fremme* (Society for the Promotion of Popular Education).

To *Kjøbmanden i Venedig* there is no introduction and no notes—merely a postscript in which the translator declares that he has endeavored everywhere faithfully to reproduce the peculiar tone of the play and to preserve the concentration of style which is everywhere characteristic of Shakespeare. He acknowledges his indebtedness to the Swedish translation by Hagberg and the German by Schlegel. Inasmuch as this work was published for wide, general distribution and for reading in the schools, Lassen cut out the passages which he deemed unsuitable for the untutored mind. "But," he adds, "with the exception of the last scene of Act III, which, in its expurgated form, would be too fragmentary (and which, indeed, does not bear any immediate relation to the action), only a few isolated passages have been cut. Shakespeare has lost next to nothing, and a great deal has

been gained if I have hereby removed one ground for the hesitation which most teachers would feel in using the book in the public schools." In Act III, Scene 5 is omitted entirely, and obvious passages in other parts of the play.

It has frequently been said that Lassen did little more than "norvagicize" Lembcke's Danish renderings. And certainly even the most cursory reading will show that he had Lembcke at hand. But comparison will also show that variations from Lembcke are numerous and considerable. Lassen was a man of letters, a critic, and a good student of foreign languages, but he was no poet, and his *Merchant of Venice* is, generally speaking, much inferior to Lembcke's. Compare, for example, the exquisite opening of the fifth act:

Lassen

Lor: Klart skinner Maanen, i en Nat som denne,
da Vinden gled med Lys igjennem Løvet,
og alt var tyst: i slig en Nat forvist
Trojas Murtinder Troilus besteg,
til Grækerlejren, til sin Cressida
udsukkende sin Sjæl.

Jes: I slig en Nat
sig Thisbe listed ængstelig, over Duggen
saa Løvens Skygge før hun saa den selv,
og løb forskrækket bort.

Lor: I slig en Nat
stod Dido med en Vidjevaand i Haanden
paa vilden strand, og vinked til Kartago
sin elsker hjem igjen.

Jes: I slig en Nat
Medea plukked Galder-Urt for Aeson
hans Ungdom at forny.

Lor: I slig en Nat
stjal Jessica sig fra den rige Jøde,
Løb fra Venedig med en lystig Elsker
til Belmont uden Stands.

Jes: I slig en Nat
svor ung Lorenzo at han elsked hende,
stjal hendes Sjæl med mange
Troskabsløfter
og ikke et var sandt.

Lor: I slig en Nat
skjøn Jessica, den lille Klaffertunge,
løb paa sin Elsker, og han tilgav hende.

Jes: Jeg gad fortalt dig mer om slig en Nat,
hvis jeg ei hørte nogen komme—tys!

Lembcke

Klart skinner Maanen, i en Nat som denne,
mens Luftningen saa sagte kyssed Træet
at knapt det sused, i en saadan Nat
steg Troilus vist up paa Trojas Mur
og sukked ud sin Sjæl mod Grækerlejren
der gjemte Cressida.

En saadan Nat
gik Thisbe bange trippende paa Duggen
og øjned Løvens Skygge før den selv
og løb forfærdet bort.

En saadan Nat
stod Dido med en Vidjekvist i Haanden
paa vilden Strand og vinkede sin Elsker
tilbage til Carthagos Kyst.

Det var
en saadan Nat, da sankede Medea
de Trolddomsurter der foryngede
den gamle Aeson.

Og en saadan Nat
sneg Jessica sig fra den rige Jøde
og løb med en Landstryger fra Venedig
herhid til Belmont.

Og en saadan Nat
svor ung Lorenzo hende Kjærlighed
og stjal med Troskabseder hendes Hjerte
og aldrig en var sand.

I slig en Nat
bagtalte just skjøn Jessica sin Elsker
ret som en lille Trolld, og han tilgav det.

Jeg skulde sagtens "overnatte" dig
hvis ingen kom; men tys, jeg hører der

Lembcke's version is faithful to the point of slavishness. Compare, for example, "Jeg skulde sagtens overnatte dig" with "I would outnight you." Lassen, though never grossly inaccurate, allows himself greater liberties. Compare lines 2-6 with the original and with Lembcke. In every case the Danish version is more faithful than the Norwegian. And more mellifluous. Why Lassen should choose such clumsy and banal lines as:

I slig en Nat
Trojas Murtinder Troilus besteg

when he could have used Lembcke's, is inexplicable except on the hypothesis that he was eager to prove his own originality. The remainder of Lorenzo's first speech is scarcely better. It is neither good translation nor decent verse.

In 1882 came Lassen's *Julius Caesar*,^{1.20} likewise published as a supplement to *Folkevennen* for use in the schools. A short postscript tells us that the principles which governed in the translation of the earlier play have governed here also. Lassen specifically declares that he used Foersom's translation (Copenhagen, 1811) as the basis for the translation of Antony's oration. A comparison shows that in this scene Lassen follows Foersom closely—he keeps archaisms which Lembcke amended. One or two instances:

Foersom: Seer, her foer Casii Dolk igjennem den;
seer, hvilken Rift den nidske Casca gjorde;
her rammed' den høitelskte Bruti Dolk, etc.

Lembcke: Se, her foer Cassius' Dolk igjennem den;
se hvilken Rift den onde Casca gjorde.
Her stødte Brutus den høitelskede, etc.

Lassen: Se! her foer Casii Dolk igjennem den;
se hvilken Rift den onde Casca gjorde.
Her rammed den høielskte Bruti Dolk, etc.

For the rest, a reading of this translation leaves the same impression as a reading of *The Merchant of Venice*—it is a reasonably good piece of work but distinctly inferior to Foersom and to Lembcke's modernization of Foersom. Lassen clearly had Lembcke at hand; he seldom, however,

followed him for more than a line or two. What is more important is that there are reminiscences of Foersom not only in the funeral scene, where Lassen himself acknowledges the fact, but elsewhere. Note a few lines from the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius (Act IV, Sc. 3) beginning with Cassius' speech:

Urge me no more, I shall forget myself.

Foersom (Ed. 1811) has:

Cas:

Tir mig ei mer at jeg ei glemmer mig;
husk Eders Vel—og frist mig ikke mere.

Bru:

Bort, svage Mand!

Cas:

Er dette muligt?

Bru:

Hør mig; jeg vil tale.
Skal jeg for Eders vilde Sind mig bøie?
Troer I jeg kyses af en gal Mands Blik?

Cas:

O Guder, Guder! skal jeg taale dette?

Bru:

Ja, meer. Brum saa dette stolte Hierte brister;
Gak, viis den Hæftighed for Eders Trælle,
og faa dem til at skielve. Skal jeg vige,
og føie Eder? Skal jeg staae og bøie
mig under Eders Luners Arrighed?
Ved Guderne, I skal nedsvælge selv
al Eders Galdes Gift, om end I brast;
thi fra i dag af bruger jeg Jer kun
til Moerskab, ja til latter naar I vredes.

And Lassen has:

Cas:

Tirr mig ei mer; jeg kunde glemme mig.
Tænk paa dit eget Vel, frist mig ei længer.

Bru:

Bort, svage Mand!

Cas:

Er dette muligt?

Bru:

Hør mig, jeg vil tale.

Skal jeg *mig bøie* for din Vredes Nykker?

Og skræmmes, naar en gal Mand glor paa mig?

Cas:

O Guder, Guder! maa jeg taale dette?

Bru:

Dette, ja mer end det. Stamp kun mod Brodden,

ras kun, indtil dit stolte Hjerte brister;

lad dine Slaver se hvor arg du er

og *skjelve*. Jeg—skal jeg tilside smutte?

Jeg gjøre Krus for dig? Jeg krumme Ryg

naar det behager dig? Ved Guderne!

Du selv skal *svælge* al din *Galdes Gift*,

om saa du brister; thi fra denne Dag

jeg bruger dig til Moro, ja til Latter,

naar du er ilsk.

The *italicized* passages show that the influence of Foersom was felt in more than one scene. It would be easy to give other instances.

After all this, we need scarcely more than mention Lassen's *Macbeth*^{1.21} published in 1883. The usual brief note at the end of the play gives the usual information that, out of regard for the purpose for which the translation has been made, certain parts of the porter scene and certain speeches by Malcolm in Act IV, Sc. 3 have been cut. Readers will have no difficulty in picking them out.

Macbeth is, like all Lassen's work, dull and prosaic. Like his other translations from Shakespeare, it has never become popular. The standard

translation in Norway is still the Foersom-Lembcke, a trifle nationalized with Norwegian words and phrases whenever a new acting version is to be prepared. And while it is not true that Lassen's translations are merely norvagicized editions of the Danish, it is true that they are often so little independent of them that they do not deserve to supersede the work of Foersom and Lembcke.

G

Norwegian translations of Shakespeare cannot, thus far, be called distinguished. There is no complete edition either in Riksmåal or Landsmaal. A few sonnets, a play or two, a scrap of dialogue—Norway has little Shakespeare translation of her own. Qualitatively, the case is somewhat better. Several of the renderings we have considered are extremely creditable, though none of them can be compared with the best in Danish or Swedish. It is a grateful task, therefore, to call attention to the translations by Christen Collin. They are not numerous—only eleven short fragments published as illustrative material in his school edition (English text) of *The Merchant of Venice*^{1.22}—but they are of notable quality, and they save the Riksmåal literature from the reproach of surrendering completely to the Landsmaal the task of turning Shakespeare into Norwegian. With the exception of a few lines from *Macbeth* and *Othello*, the selections are all from *The Merchant of Venice*.

A good part of Collin's success must be attributed to his intimate familiarity with English. The fine nuances of the language do not escape him, and he can use it not with precision merely but with audacity and power. Long years of close and sympathetic association with the literature of England has made English well-nigh a second mother tongue to this fine and appreciative critic. But he is more than a critic. He has more than a little of the true poet's insight and the true poet's gift of song. All this has combined to give us a body of translations which, for fine felicity, stand unrivalled in Dano-Norwegian. Many of these have been prepared for lecture purposes and have never been printed.^{1.23} Only a few have been perpetuated in this text edition of *The Merchant of Venice*. We shall discuss the edition itself below. Our concern here is with the translations. We remember Lassen's and Lembcke's opening of the fifth act. Collin is more successful than his countryman.

Lor:

Hvor Maanen straal'er! I en nat som denne,
da milde vindpust kyssed skovens træer

og alting var saa tyst, i slig en nat
Troilus kanske steg op paa Trojas mure
og stønnet ud sin sjæl mod Grækerteltene
hvor Cressida laa den nat.

Jes:

I slig en nat
kom Thisbe angstfuldt trippende over duggen,—
saa løvens skygge, før hun saa den selv,
og løb forskrækket bort.

Lor:

I slig en nat
stod Dido med en vidjekvist i haand
paa havets strand og vinkede Æneas
tilbage til Karthago.

Jes:

I slig en nat
Medea sanked urter som foryngede
den gamle Æsons liv.

Lor:

I slig en nat
stjal Jessica sig fra den rige Jøde
med en forfløien elsker fra Venedig
og fandt i Belmont ly.

Jes:

I en saadan nat
svor ung Lorenzo at hun var ham kjær
og stjal med mange eder hendes hjerte,
men ikke en var sand.

Lor:

I slig en nat
skjøn Jessica, den lille heks, bagtalte
sin elsker og han—tilgav hende alt.

"A translation of this passage," says Collin,^{1.24} "can hardly be more than an approximation, but its inadequacy will only emphasize the beauty of the original." Nevertheless we have here more than a feeble approximation. It is not equal to Shakespeare, but it is good Norwegian poetry and as faithful as translation can or need be. It is difficult to refrain from giving Portia's plea for mercy, but I shall give instead Collin's striking rendering of Shylock's arraignment of Antonio:^{1.25}

Signor Antonio, mangen en gang og tit
har paa Rialto torv I skjældt mig ud
for mine pengelaan og mine renter....
Jeg bar det med taalmodigt skuldertræk,
for taalmod er jo blit vor stammes merke.
I kalder mig en vantro, blodgrisk *hund*
og spytter paa min jødiske gaberdin—
hvorfor? for brug af hvad der er mit eget!
Nu synes det, I trænger til min hjælp.
Nei virkelig? I kommer nu til mig
og siger: Shylock, laan os penge,—I,
som slængte eders slim hen paa mit skjæg
og satte foden paa mig, som I spændte,
en kjøter fra Jer dør, I be'r om penge!
Hvad skal jeg svare vel? Skal jeg 'ke svare:
Har en hund penge? Er det muligt, at
en kjøter har tre tusinde dukater?
Eller skal jeg bukke dybt og i trælletone
med sænket røst og underdanig hvisken
formæle:

"Min herre, I spytted paa mig sidste onsdag,
en anden dag I spændte mig, en tredje
I kaldte mig en hund; for al den artighed
jeg laaner Jer saa og saa mange penge?"

It is to be regretted that Collin did not give us Shylock's still more impassioned outburst to Salarino in Act III. He would have done it well.

It would be a gracious task to give more of this translator's work. It is, slight though its quantity, a genuine contribution to the body of excellent translation literature of the world. I shall quote but one more passage, a few lines from *Macbeth*.[I.26](#)

"Det tyktes mig som hørte jeg en røst;
Sov aldrig mer! Macbeth har myrdet søvnen,
den skyldfri søvn, som løser sorgens floke,
hvert daglivs død, et bad for mødig møie,
balsam for sjælesaar og alnaturens
den søde efterret,—dog hovednæringen
ved livets gjæstebud....

Lady Macbeth:

Hvad er det, du mener?

Macbeth:

"Sov aldrig mer," det skreg til hele huset.
Glarais har myrdet søvnen, derfor Cawdor
skal aldrig mer faa søvn,—Macbeth,
Macbeth skal aldrig mer faa søvn!"

H

We have hitherto discussed the Norwegian translations of Shakespeare in almost exact chronological order. It has been possible to do this because the plays have either been translated by a single man and issued close together, as in the case of Hartvig Lassen, or they have appeared separately from the hands of different translators and at widely different periods. We come now, however, to a group of translations which, although the work of different men and published independently from 1901 to 1912, nevertheless belong together. They are all in Landsmaal and they represent quite clearly an effort to enrich the literature of the new dialect with translations from Shakespeare. To do this successfully would, obviously, be a great gain. The Maalstrævere would thereby prove the capacity of their tongue for the highest, most exotic forms of literature. They would give to it, moreover, the discipline which the translation of foreign classics could not fail to afford. It was thus a renewal of the missionary spirit of Ivar Aasen. And behind it all was the defiant feeling that Norwegians should have Shakespeare in Norwegian, not in Danish or bastard Danish.

The spirit of these translations is obvious enough from the opening sentence of Madhus' preface to his translation of *Macbeth*:^{1.27} "I should hardly have ventured to publish this first attempt at a Norwegian translation of Shakespeare if competent men had not urged me to do so." It is frankly declared to be the first Norwegian translation of Shakespeare. Hauge and Lassen, to say nothing of the translator of 1818, are curtly dismissed from Norwegian literature. They belong to Denmark. This might be true if it were not for the bland assumption that nothing is really Norwegian except what is written in the dialect of a particular group of Norwegians. The fundamental error of the "Maalstrævere" is the inability to comprehend the simple fact that language has no natural, instinctive connection with race. An American born in America of Norwegian parents *may*, if his parents are energetic and circumstances favorable, learn the tongue of his father and mother, but his natural speech, the medium he uses easily, his real mother-tongue, will be English. Will it be contended that this American has lost anything in spiritual power or linguistic facility? Quite the contrary. The use

of Danish in Norway has had the unfortunate effect of stirring up a bitter war between the two literary languages or the two dialects of the same language, but it has imposed no bonds on the literary or intellectual powers of a large part of the people, for the simple reason that these people have long used the language as their own. And because they live in Norway they have made the speech Norwegian. Despite its Danish origin, Dano-Norwegian is today as truly Norwegian as any other Norwegian dialect, and in its literary form it is, in a sense, more Norwegian than the literary Landsmaal, for the language of Bjørnson has grown up gradually on Norwegian soil; the language of Ivar Aasen is not yet acclimatized.

For these reasons it will not do to let Madhus' calm assertion go unchallenged. The fact is that to a large part of the Norwegian people Lassen's translations represent merely a slightly Danicized form of their own language, while to the same people the language of Madhus is at least as foreign as Swedish. This is not the place for a discussion of "Sprogstriden." We may give full recognition to Landsmaal without subscribing to the creed of enthusiasts. And it is still easier to give credit to the excellence of the Shakespeare translations in Landsmaal without concerning ourselves with the partisanship of the translator. What shall we say, then, of the *Macbeth* of Olav Madhus?

First, that it is decidedly good. The tragedy of Macbeth is stark, grim, stern, and the vigorous, resonant Norwegian fits admirably. There is little opportunity, as in Aasen's selections from *Romeo and Juliet* for those unfortunate contrasts between the homespun of the modern dialect and the exquisite silk and gossamer of the vocabulary of romance of a "cultured language." Madhus has been successful in rendering into Landsmaal scenes as different as the witch-scene, the porter-scene (which Lassen omitted for fear it would contaminate the minds of school children), the exquisite lines of the King and Banquo on their arrival at Macbeth's castle, and Macbeth's last, tragic soliloquy when he learns of the death of his queen.

Duncan and Banquo arrive at the castle of Macbeth and Duncan speaks those lovely lines: "This castle has a pleasant seat," etc. Madhus translates:

Duncan:

Ho hev eit fagert lægje, denne borgi,
og lufti lyar seg og gjer seg smeiki

aat vaare glade sansar.

Banquo:

Sumar-gjesten,
den tempel-kjære svala, vitnar med,
at himlens ande blakrar smeikin her,
med di at ho so gjerne her vil byggje.
Det finst kje sule eller takskjeggs livd
og ikkje voll hell vigskar, der ei ho
hev hengt si lette seng og barne-vogge.
Der ho mest bur og bræer, hev eg merkt meg,
er lufti herleg.

This is as light and luminous as possible. Contrast it with the slow, solemn tempo of the opening of Act I, Sc. 7—Macbeth's "If it were done when 'tis done," etc.

Um det var gjort, naar d'er gjort, var det væl,
um det vart snart gjort; kunde løynmordsverke,
stengje og binde alle vonde fylgdir
og, med aa faa hurt honom, naa sitt maal,
so denne eine støyten som maa til,
vart enden, alt, det siste som det fyrste
i tidi her—den havsens øyr og bode
me sit paa no—,—med live som kjem etter
det fekk daa vaage voni. Men i slikt
vert domen sagd alt her. Blodtankane,
me el, kjem vaksne att og piner oss,
som gav deim liv og fostra deim; og drykken,
som me hev blanda eiter i aat andre,
vert eingong uta miskunn bodin fram
av rettfjerds hand aat vaare eigne munnar.

The deep tones of a language born in mountains and along fjords finely re-echo the dark broodings in Macbeth's soul.

Or take still another example, the witch-scene in Act IV. It opens in Madhus' version:

Fyrste Heks:

Tri gong mjava brandut katt.

Andre Heks:

Tri og ein gong bust-svin peip.

Tridje Heks:

Val-ramn skrik. D'er tid, d'er tid.

Fyrste Heks:

Ring um gryta gjeng me tri;
sleng forgiftigt seid—mang i.
Gyrme-gro, som under stein
dagar tredive og ein
sveita eiter, lat og leid,
koke fyrst i vaaro seid.

Alle:

Tvifaldt træl og møda duble;
brand frase, seid buble!

Andre Heks:

Møykjöt av ein myr-orm kald
so i gryta koke skal.
Ødle-augo, skinnveng-haar,
hundetunge, froskelaar,
slève-brodd, firfisle-svórd,
ule-veng og lyngaal-spórd
til eit seid som sinn kann rengje
hèl-sodd-heitt seg saman mengje!

This is not only accurate; it is a decidedly successful imitation of the movement of the original. Madhus has done a first-rate piece of work. The language of witch-craft is as international as the language of science. But only a poet can turn it to poetic use.

Not quite so successful is Macbeth's soliloquy when the death of Lady Macbeth is announced to him:

Det skuld'ho drygt med.

Aat slikt eit ord var komi betre stund.—
"I morgo" og "i morgo" og "i morgo,"
slik sig det smaatt fram etter, dag for dag,
til siste ord i livsens sogubok;
og kvart "i gaar" hev daarer vegen lyst
til dust og daude.

It is difficult to say just where the fault lies, but the thing seems uncouth, a trifle too colloquial and peasant-like. The fault may be the translator's, but something must also be charged to his medium. The passage in Shakespeare is simple but it breathes distinction. The Landsmaal version is merely colloquial, even banal. One fine line there is:

"til siste ord i livsens sogubok."

But the rest suggests too plainly the limitations of an uncultivated speech.

In 1905 came a translation of *The Merchant of Venice* by Madhus,^{1.28} and, uniform with it, a little book—*Soga um Kaupmannen i Venetia* (The Story of The Merchant of Venice) in which the action of the play is told in simple prose. In the appendatory notes the translator acknowledges his obligation to Arne Garborg—"Arne Garborg hev gjort mig framifraa god hjelp, her som med *Macbeth*. Takk og ære hev han."

What we have said of *Macbeth* applies with no less force here. The translation is more than merely creditable—it is distinctly good. And certainly it is no small feat to have translated Shakespeare in all his richness and fulness into what was only fifty years ago a rustic and untrained dialect. It is the best answer possible to the charge often made against Landsmaal that it is utterly unable to convey the subtle thought of high and cosmopolitan culture. This was the indictment of Bjørnson,^{1.29} of philologists like Torp,^{1.30} and of a literary critic like Hjalmar Christensen.^{1.31} The last named speaks repeatedly of the feebleness of Landsmaal when it swerves from its task of depicting peasant life. His criticism of the poetry of Ivar Mortensen is one long variation of this theme—the immaturity of Landsmaal. All of this is true. A finished literary language, even when its roots go deep into a spoken language, cannot be created in a day. It must be enriched and elaborated, and it must gain flexibility from constant and varied use. It is precisely this apprentice stage

that Landsmaal is now in. The finished "Kultursprache" will come in good time. No one who has read Garborg will deny that it can convey the subtlest emotions; and Madhus' translations of Shakespeare are further evidence of its possibilities.

That Madhus does not measure up to his original will astonish no one who knows Shakespeare translations in other languages. Even Tieck's and Schlegel's German, or Hagberg's Swedish, or Foersom's Danish is no substitute for Shakespeare. Whether or not Madhus measures up to these is not for me to decide, but I feel very certain that he will not suffer by comparison with the Danish versions by Wolff, Meisling, Wosemose, or even Lembcke, or with the Norwegian versions of Hauge and Lassen. The feeling that one gets in reading Madhus is not that he is uncouth, still less inaccurate, but that in the presence of great imaginative richness he becomes cold and barren. We felt it less in the tragedy of *Macbeth*, where romantic color is absent; we feel it strongly in *The Merchant of Venice*, where the richness of romance is instinct in every line. The opening of the play offers a perfect illustration. In answer to Antonio's complaint "In sooth I know not why I am so sad," etc, Salarino replies in these stately and sounding lines:

Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies, with portly sail,—
Like signiors and rich burghers of the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,—
Do overpeer the petty traffickers
That curt'sy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

The picture becomes very much less stately in Norwegian folk-speech:

Paa storehave huskar hugen din,
der dine langferd-skip med staute segl
som hovdingar og herremenn paa sjø
i drusteferd, aa kalle, gagar seg
paa baara millom kræmarskutur smaa',
som nigjer aat deim og som helsar audmjukt
naar dei med vovne vengir framum stryk.

The last two lines are adequate, but the rest has too much the flavor of Ole and Peer discussing the fate of their fishing-smacks. Somewhat more successful is the translation of the opening of Act V, doubtless because it is simpler, less full of remote and sophisticated imagery. By way of comparison with Lassen and Collin, it may be interesting to have it at hand.

Lor:

Ovfagert lyser maanen. Slik ei natt,
daa milde vindar kysste ljuve tre
so lindt at knapt dei susa, slik ei natt
steig Troilus upp paa Troja-murane
og sukka saali si til Greklands telt,
der Kressida laag den natti.

Jes:

Slik ei natt
gjekk Thisbe hugrædd yvi doggvaat voll
og løveskuggen saag fyrr løva kom;
og rædd ho der-fraa rømde.

Lor:

Slik ei natt
stod Dido med ein siljutein i hand
paa villan strand og vinka venen sin
tilbake til Kartago.

Jes:

Slik ei natt
Medea trolldoms-urtir fann, til upp
aa yngje gamle Æson.

Lor:

Slik ei natt
stal Jessika seg ut fraa judens hus
og med ein fark til festarmann for av
so langt som hit til Belmont.

Jes:

Slik ei natt

svor ung Lorenzo henne elskhugs eid
og hjarta hennar stal med fagre ord
som ikkje aatte sanning.

Lor:

Slik ei natt
leksa ven' Jessika som eit lite troll
upp for sin kjærst, og han tilgav ho.

Jes:

I natteleik eg heldt nok ut med deg,
um ingin kom; men hyss, eg høyrer stig.

But when Madhus turns from such flights of high poetry to low comedy, his success is complete. It may be a long time before Landsmaal can successfully render the mighty line of Marlowe, or the manifold music of Shakespeare, but we should expect it to give with perfect verity the language of the people. And when we read the scenes in which Lancelot Gobbo figures, there is no doubt that here Landsmaal is at home. Note, for example, Act II, Sc. 1:

"Samvite mitt vil visst ikkje hjelpe meg med aa røme fraa denne juden, husbond min. Fenden stend her attum òlbogen min og segjer til meg: "Gobbo, Lanselot Gobbo; gode Lanselot, eller gode Gobbo, bruka leggine; tak hyven; drag din veg." Samvite segjer: "nei, agta deg, ærlige Gobbo," eller som fyr sagt: "ærlige Lanselot Gobbo, røm ikkje; set deg mot røming med hæl og taa!" Men fenden, den stormodige, bed meg pakka meg; "fremad mars!" segjer fenden; "legg i veg!" segjer fenden; "for alt som heilagt er," segjer fenden; "vaaga paa; drag i veg!" Men samvite heng un halsen paa hjarta mitt og talar visdom til meg; "min ærlige ven Lanselot, som er son av ein ærlig mann, eller rettare: av eit ærligt kvende; for skal eg segja sant, so teva det eit grand svidt av far min; han hadde som ein attaat-snev; naah; samvite segjer: "du skal ikkje fantegaa." "Du skal fantegaa," segjer fenden; "nei; ikkje fantegaa," segjer samvite. "Du samvit," segjer eg, "du raader meg godt." "Du fenden," segjer eg, "du raader meg godt." Fylgde eg no

samvite, so vart eg verande hjaa juden, som—forlate mi synd—
er noko som ein devel; og rømer eg fraa juden, so lyder eg
fenden, som—beintfram sagt—er develen sjølv. Visst og sannt:
juden er sjølve develen i karnition; men etter mitt vit er samvite
mit vitlaust, som vil raade meg til aa verta verande hjaa juden.
Fenden gjev meg den venlegaste raadi; eg tek kuten, fenden;
hælane mine stend til din kommando; eg tek kuten."

This has the genuine ring. The brisk colloquial vocabulary fits admirably the brilliant sophistry of the argument. And both could come only from Launcelot Gobbo. For "the simplicity of the folk" is one of those fictions which romantic closet study has woven around the study of "the people."

Of the little re-telling of *The Merchant of Venice*, "Soga um Kaupmannen i Venetia"^{I.32} which appeared in the same year, nothing need be said. It is a simple, unpretentious summary of the story with a certain charm which simplicity and naïveté always give. No name appears on the title-page, but we are probably safe in attributing it to Madhus, for in the note to *Kaupmannen i Venetia* we read: "I Soga um Kaupmannen i Venetia hev ein sjølve forteljingi som stykkji er bygt paa."

I

In the year 1903, midway between the publication of Madhus' *Macbeth* and the appearance of his *Kaupmannen i Venetia*, there appeared in the chief literary magazine of the Landsmaal movement, "Syn og Segn," a translation of the fairy scenes of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Erik Eggen.^{1.33} This is the sort of material which we should expect Landsmaal to render well. Oberon and Titania are not greatly different from Nissen and Alverne in Norwegian fairy tales, and the translator had but to fancy himself in Alveland to be in the enchanted wood near Athens. The spirit of the fairy scenes in Shakespeare is akin to the spirit of Asbjørnson's "Huldre-Eventyr." There is in them a community of feeling, of fancy, of ideas. And whereas Madhus had difficulty with the sunny romance of Italy, Eggen in the story of Puck found material ready to hand. The passage translated begins Act II, Sc. 1, and runs through Act II to Oberon's words immediately before the entrance of Helen and Demetrius:

But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Then the translator omits everything until Puck re-enters and Oberon greets him with the words:

Velkommen, vandrar; hev du blomen der?
(Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.)

Here the translation begins again and goes to the exit of Oberon and the entrance of Lysander and Hermia. This is all in the first selection in Syn og Segn, No. 3.

In the sixth number of the same year (1903) the work is continued. The translation here begins with Puck's words (Act III):

What hempen homespuns have we swaggering here?
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?
What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor, too, if I see cause.

Then it breaks off again and resumes with the entrance of Puck and Bottom adorned with an ass's head. Quince's words: "O monstrous! O strange!" are given and then Puck's speech: "I'll follow you: I'll lead you about a round." After this there is a break till Bottom's song:

"The ousel cock, so black of hue," etc.

And now all proceeds without break to the *Hail* of the last elf called in to serve Bottom, but the following speeches between Bottom and the fairies, Cobweb, Mustardseed and Peaseblossom, are all cut, and the scene ends with Titania's speech:

"Come, wait upon him, lead him to my bower," etc.

Act III, Sc. 2, follows immediately, but the translation ends with the first line of Oberon's speech to Puck before the entrance of Demetrius and Hermia:

"This falls out better than I could devise."

and resumes with Oberon's words:

"I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy,"

and includes (with the omission of the last two lines) Oberon's speech beginning:

"But we are spirits of another sort."

Eggen then jumps to the fourth act and translates Titania's opening speech. After this there is a break till the entrance of Oberon. The dialogue between Titania and Oberon is given faithfully, except that in the speech in which Oberon removes the incantation, all the lines referring to the wedding of Theseus are omitted; the speeches of Puck, Oberon, and Titania immediately preceding the entrance of Theseus, Hippolyta, Egeus, and their train, are rendered.

From Act V the entire second scene is given.

Eggen has, then, attempted to give a translation into Norwegian Landsmaal of the fairy scenes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He has confined himself severely to his task as thus limited, even cutting out lines from the middle of speeches when these lines refer to another part of the action or to another group of characters. What we have is, then, a fragment, to be defended only

as an experiment, and successful in proportion as it renders single lines, speeches, or songs well. On the whole, Eggen has been successful. There is a vigor and directness in his style which, indeed, seem rather Norwegian than Shakespearean, but which are, nevertheless, entirely convincing. One is scarcely conscious that it is a translation. And in the lighter, more romantic passages Eggen has hit the right tone with entire fidelity. His knowledge is sound. His notes, though exhibiting no special learning, show clearly that he is abreast of modern scholarship. Whenever his rendering seems daring, he accompanies it with a note that clearly and briefly sets forth why a particular word or phrase was chosen. The standard Danish, Norwegian, and German translations are known to him, and occasionally he borrows from them. But he knows exactly why he does borrow. His scholarship and his real poetic power combine to give us a translation of which Landsmaal literature has every reason to be proud. We need give only a few passages. I like the rollicking humor of Puck's words:

Kor torer uhengt kjeltrings pakk daa skvaldre
so nære vogga hennar alvemor?
Kva?—skodespel i gjerdom? Eg vil sjaa paa—
kann hende spele med, um so eg synest.

And a little farther on when Bottom, adorned with his ass's head, returns with Puck, and the simple players flee in terror and Puck exclaims:

Eg fylgjer dykk og fører rundt i tunn,
i myr og busk og ormegras og klunger,
og snart eg er ein hest og snart ein hund,
ein gris, ein mannvond bjørn, snart flammetungur,
og kneggjer, gøyr og ryler, murrar, brenn,
som hest, hund, gris, bjørn, varme—eitt um senn.

we give our unqualified admiration to the skill of the translator. Or, compare Titania's instructions to the fairies to serve her Bottom:

Ver venlege imot og tén den herren!
Dans vænt for augo hans, hopp der han gjeng!
Gjev aprikos og frukt fraa blaabærlid,
ei korg med druvur, fikjur, morbær i!
Stel honningsekken bort fraa annsam bi!

Til Nattljøs hennar voksbein slit i fleng,—
kveik deim paa jonsok-onn i buskeheng!
Lys for min ven, naar han vil gaa i seng.
Fraa maala fivreld slit ein fager veng,
og fraa hans augo maaneljose steng.
Hels honom so, og kyss til honom sleng.

Fyrste Alven:

Menneskje.

Andre Alven:

Heil deg!

Tridje Alven:

Heil!

Fjorde Alven:

Heil og sæl!

Titania:

Tén honom so! Leid honom til mitt rom!
Eg tykkjer maanen er i augo vaat;
og naar han græt, daa græt kvar litin blom,
og minnest daa ei tilnøydd dygd med graat.
Legg handi paa hans munn! Og stilt far aat!

It is, however, in his exquisitely delicate rendering of the songs of this play—certainly one of the most difficult tasks that a translator can undertake—that Eggen has done his best work. There is more than a distant echo of the original in this happy translation of Bottom's song:

Han trostefar med svarte kropp
og nebb som appelsin,
og gjerdesmett med litin topp
og stare med tone fin.
Og finke, sporv og lerke graa
og gauk,—ho, ho!^{I.34} han lær,
so tidt han gjev sin næste smaa;
men aldri svar han fær.

The marvelous richness of the Norwegian dialects in the vocabulary of folklore is admirably brought out in the song with which the fairies sing Titania to sleep:^{[1.35](#)}

Ein alv:

Spettut orm med tungur tvo,
kvass bust-igel, krjup kje her!
Øle, staa-orm, fara no,
kom vaar alvemor ei nær!

Alle alvene:

Maaltrost, syng med tone full
du med oss vaart bysselull:
bysse, bysse, bysselull,
ei maa vald,
ei heksegald
faa vaar dronning ottefull;
so god natt og bysselull.

Ein annan alv:

Ingi kongrov vil me sjaa,
langbeint vevekjering, gakk!
Svart tordivel, burt her fraa,
burt med snigil og med makk!

Alle alvene:

Maaltrost, syng med tone full
du med oss vaart bysselull:
bysse, bysse, bysselull,
bysse, bysse, bysselull,
ei maa vald,
ei heksegald
faa vaar dronning ottefull;
so god natt og bysselull.

It is easy to draw upon this fragment for further examples of felicitous translation. It is scarcely necessary, however. What has been given is sufficient to show the rare skill of the translator. He is so fortunate as to possess in a high degree what Bayard Taylor calls "secondary inspiration,"

without which the work of a translator becomes a soulless mass and frequently degenerates into the veriest drivel. Erik Eggen's *Alveliv* deserves a place in the same high company with Taylor's *Faust*.

Nine years later, in 1912, Eggen returned to the task he had left unfinished with the fairy scenes in *Syn og Segn* and gave a complete translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In a little prefatory note he acknowledges his indebtedness to Arne Garborg, who critically examined the manuscript and gave valuable suggestions and advice. The introduction itself is a restatement in two pages of the Shakespeare-Essex-Leicester-Elizabeth story. Shakespeare recalls the festivities as he saw them in youth when he writes in Act II, Sc. 2:

 thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid upon a dolphin's back, etc.

And it is Elizabeth he has in mind when, in the same scene, we read:

That very time I saw, but thou could'st not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all armed, etc.

All of this is given by way of background, and it is of little importance to the general readers what modern Shakespeare scholars may say of it.

Eggen has not been content merely to reprint in the complete translation his earlier work from *Syn og Segn*, but he has made a thoroughgoing revision.^{1.36} It cannot be said to be altogether happy. Frequently, of course, a line or phrase is improved or an awkward turn straightened out, but, as a whole, the first version surpasses the second not in poetic beauty merely, but in accuracy. Compare, for example, the two renderings of the opening lines:

SYN OG SEGN—1903

Nissen:

Kor no ande! seg, kvar skal du av?

Alven:

Yver dal, yver fjell,
gjenom vatn, gjenom eld,

REVISION OF 1912

Tuften:

Hallo! Kvar skal du av, du vesle vette?

Alven:

Yver dal, yver fjell,
gjenom vatn, gjenom eld,
yver gras, yver grind,

yver gras, yver grind,
gjenom klunger so stinn,
yver alt eg smett og kliv
snøggare enn maanen sviv;
eg i gras dei ringar doggar,
der vaar mori dans seg voggar.
Hennar vakt mun symrur vera,
gyllne klæde mun dei bera;
sjaa dei stjernur alvar gav deim!
Derfraa kjem all angen av deim.
Aa sanke dogg—til de eg kom;
ei perle fester eg til kvar ein blom.
Far vel, du ande-styving! Eg maa vekk;
vaar dronning er her ho paa fljugand' flekk.

gjenom klunger so stinn,
alle stad'r eg smett og kliv
snøggare enn maanen sviv;
eg dogge maa
dei grøne straa
som vaar dronning dansar paa.
Kvart nykelband
er adelsmann,
med ordenar dei glime kann;
kvar blank rubin,
paa bringa skin,
utsender ange fin.
Doggdropar blanke
skal eg sanke,
mange, mange,
dei skal hange
kvar av hennar
adels-mennar
glimande i øyra.

Now, admitting that
eg dogge maa
dei grøne straa
som vaar dronning dansar paa.

is a better translation than in the *Syn og Segn* text—which is doubtful enough—it is difficult to see what can be the excuse for such pompous banality as

Kvart nykelband
er adelsmann,
med ordenar dei glime kann;

the first version is not above reproach in this respect. It might fairly be asked: where does Eggen get his authority for

sjaa dei stjernur alvar gav deim!

But the lines are not loaded down with imagery which is both misleading and in bad taste. Eggen should have left his first version unchanged. Such uninspired prose as:

kvar blank rubin,
paa bringa skin,
utsender ange fin.

have to the ears of most Norwegians the atmosphere of the back stairs. Better the unadorned version of 1903.

In the passage following, Robin's reply, the revised version is probably better than the first, though there seems to be little to choose between them. But in the fairy's next speech the translator has gone quite beyond his legitimate province, and has improved Shakespeare by a picture from Norwegian folklore. Following the lines of the original:

Misleade nightwanderers, laughing at their harm,

Eggen has added this homelike conception in his translation:

som òg kann draga fôr til hest og naut,
naar berre du kvar torsdag fær din graut.

Shakespeare in Elysium must have regretted that he was not born in the mountains of Norway!

And when Robin, in the speech that follows, tells of his antics, one wonders just a little what has been gained by the revision. The same query is constantly suggested to anyone who compares the two texts.

Nor do I think that the lyrics have gained by the revision. Just a single comparison—the lullaby in the two versions. We have given it above as published in *Syn og Segn*. The following is its revised form:

Fyrste alven:

Spettut orm, bustyvel kvass,
eiter-ødle, sleve graa,
fare burt fraa denne plass,
so vaar dronning sova maa!

Alle:

Maaltrost, syng med oss i lund
dronningi i sælan blund:
Byssam, byssam barne,
gryta heng i jarne.
Troll og nykk,
gakk burt med dykk

denne sæle skymingsstund!
So god natt! Sov søtt i lund!

Andre alven:

Burt, tordivel, kom kje her!
Makk og snigill, burt dykk vinn!
Kongro, far ei onnor ferd,
langt ifraa oss din spune spinn!

Alle:

Maaltrost, syng med oss i lund, etc.

The first version is not only more literal but, so far as I can judge, superior in every way—in music and delicacy of phrase. And again, Eggen has taken it upon himself to patch up Shakespeare with homespun rags from his native Norwegian parish. It is difficult to say upon what grounds such tinkerings with the text as:

Byssam, byssam barne,
gryta, heng i jarne,

can be defended.

But we have already devoted too much space to this matter. Save for a few isolated lines, Eggen might very well have left these scenes as he gave them to us in 1903. We then ask, "What of the much greater part of the play now translated for the first time?" Well, no one will dispute the translator's triumph in this scene:[1.37](#)

Mønsaas: Er heile kompanie samla?

Varp: Det er best du ropar deim upp alle saman, mann for mann, etter lista.

Mønsaas: Her er ei liste yver namni paa alle deim som me i heile Atén finn mest høvelege til aa spela i millomstykke vaareses framfyre hertugen og frua hans paa brudlaupsdagen um kvelden.

Varp: Du Per Mønsaas, lyt fyrst segja kva stykke gjeng ut paa; les so upp namni paa spelarne, og so—til saki.

Mønsaas: Ja vel. Stykke heiter: "Det grøtelege gamanspele um Pyramus og Tisbi og deira syndlege daude."

Varp: Verkeleg eit godt stykke arbeid, skal eg segja dykk, og morsamt med. No, min gode Per Mønsaas, ropa upp spelarne etter lista. Godtfolk, spreid dykk.

Mønsaas: Svara ettersom eg ropar dykk upp.
Nils Varp, vevar?

Varp: Her! Seg kva for ein rolle eg skal hava, og haldt so fram.

Mønsaas: Du, Nils Varp, er skrivin for Pyramus.

Varp: Kva er Pyramus for slags kar? Ein elsker eller ein fark?

Mønsaas: Ein elsker som drep seg sjølv paa ægte riddarvis av kjærleik.

Varp: Det kjem til aa koste taarur um ein spelar det retteleg. Fær eg spela det, so lyt nok dei som ser paa, sjaa til kvar dei hev augo sine; eg skal grøte steinen, eg skal jamre so fælt so. For resten, mi gaave ligg best for ein berserk. Eg skulde spela herr Kules fraamifra—eller ein rolle, der eg kann klore og bite og slaa all ting i møl og mas:

Og sprikk det fjell
med toresmell,
daa sunder fell
kvar port so sterk.
Stig Føbus fram
bak skyatram,
daa sprikk med skam
alt gygere-herk.

Det der laag no høgt det. Nemn so resten av spelarane.
Dette var rase til herr Kules, berserk-ras; ein elsker er meir klagande.

There can be no doubt about the genuineness of this. It catches the spirit of the original and communicates it irresistibly to the reader. When Bottom (Varp) says "Kva er Pyramus for slags kar?" or when he threatens, "Eg skal

grøte steinen, eg skal jamre so fælt so," one who has something of Norwegian "Sprachgefühl" will exclaim that this is exactly what it should be. It is not the language of Norwegian artisans—they do not speak Landsmaal. But neither is the language of Shakespeare's craftsmen the genuine spoken language of Elizabethan craftsmen. The important thing is that the tone is right. And this feeling of a right tone is still further satisfied in the rehearsal scene (III, Sc. 1). Certain slight liberties do not diminish our pleasure. The reminiscence of *Richard III* in Bottom's, "A calendar, a calendar, looke in the Almanack, finde out moonshine," translated "Ei almanakke, ei almanakke, mit kongerike for ei almanakke," seems, however, a labored piece of business. One line, too, has been added to this speech which is a gratuitous invention of the translator, or rather, taken from the curious malaprop speech of the laboring classes; "Det er rett, Per Mønsaas; sjaa millom aspektarane!" There can be no objection to an interpolation like this if the translation does not aim to be scholarly and definitive, but merely an effort to bring a foreign classic home to the masses. And this is, obviously, Eggen's purpose. Personally I do not think, therefore, that there is any objection to a slight freedom like this. But it has no place at all in the fairies' lullaby.

When we move to the circle of the high-place lovers or the court, I cannot feel that the Landsmaal is quite so convincing. There is something appallingly clumsy, labored, hard, in this speech of Hermia's:

Min eigin gut,
eg sver ved beste bogen Amor hev,
ved beste pili hans, med odd av gull,
ved duvune, dei reine og dei kvite
som flyg paa tun hjaa fagre Afrodite,
ved det som knyter mannehjarto saman,
ved det som føder kjærlerks fryd og gaman,
ved baale, der seg dronning Dido brende,
daa seg Æneas trulaus fraa ho vende,
ved kvar den eid som falske menn hev svori—
langt fleir enn kvinnelippur fram hev bori,
at paa den staden du hev nemnt for meg,
der skal i morgo natt eg møte deg.

In spite of the translator's obvious effort to put fire into the passage, his failure is all too evident. Even the ornament of these lines—to which there is nothing to correspond in the original—only makes the poetry more forcibly feeble:

ved duvune, dei reine og dei kvite
som flyg paa tun hjaag fagre Afrodite,

Shakespeare says quite simply:

By the simplicity of Venus Doves,

and to anyone but a Landsmaal fanatic it seems ridiculous to have Theseus tell Hermia: "Demetrius er so gild ein kar som nokon." "Demetrius is a worthy gentleman," says Shakespeare and this has "the grand Manner." But to a cultivated Norwegian the translation is "Bauernsprache," such as a local magnate might use in forcing a suitor on his daughter.

All of which goes back to the present condition of Landsmaal. It has little flexibility, little inward grace. It is not a finished literary language. But, despite its archaisms, Landsmaal is a living language and it has, therefore, unlike the Karathevusa of Greece, the possibility of growth. The translations of Madhus and Aasen and Eggen have made notable contributions to this development. They are worthy of all praise. Their weaknesses are the result of conditions which time will change.

J

One might be tempted to believe from the foregoing that the propagandists of "Maalet" had completely monopolized the noble task of making Shakespeare accessible in the vernacular. And this is almost true. But the reason is not far to seek. Aside from the fact that in Norway, as elsewhere, Shakespeare is read mainly by cultivated people, among whom a sound reading knowledge of English is general, we have further to remember that the Foersom-Lembcke version has become standard in Norway and no real need has been felt of a separate Norwegian version in the dominant literary language. In Landsmaal the case is different. This dialect must be trained to "Literaturfähigkeit." It is not so much that Norway must have her own Shakespeare as that Landsmaal must be put to use in every type of literature. The results of this missionary spirit we have seen.

One of the few translations of Shakespeare that have been made into Riksmaal appeared in 1912, *Hamlet*, by C.H. Blom. As an experiment it is worthy of respect, but as a piece of literature it is not to be taken seriously. Like Lassen's work, it is honest, faithful, and utterly uninspired.

The opening scene of *Hamlet* is no mean test of a translator's ability—this quick, tense scene, one of the finest in dramatic literature. Foersom did it with conspicuous success. Blom has reduced it to the following prosy stuff:

Bernardo:

Hvem der?

Francisco:

Nei, svar mig først; gjør holdt og sig hvem der!

Ber:

Vor konge længe leve!

Fra:

De, Bernardo?

Ber:

Ja vel.

Fra:

De kommer jo paa klokkeslaget.

Ber:

Ja, den slog tolv nu. Gaa til ro, Francisco.

Fra:

Tak for De løser av. Her er saa surt, og jeg er dødsens træt.

Ber:

Har du hat rolig vagt?

Fra:

En mus har ei
sig rørt.

Ber:

Nu vel, god nat.
Hvis du Marcellus og Horatio ser,
som skal ha vakt med mig, bed dem sig skynde.

Fra:

Jeg hører dem vist nu. Holdt hoi! Hvem der.
(Horatio og Marcellus kommer.)

Horatio:

Kun landets venner.

Marcellus:

Danekongens folk!

Fra:

God nat, sov godt!

Mar:

Godnat, du bra soldat!
Hvem har løst av?

Fra:

Bernardo staar paa post.
God nat igjen. (Gaar.)

It requires little knowledge of Norwegian to dismiss this as dull and insipid prose, a part of which has accidentally been turned into mechanical blank verse. Moreover, the work is marked throughout by inconsistency and carelessness in details. For instance the king begins (p. 7) by addressing Laertes:

Hvad melder *De* mig om *Dem* selv, Laertes?

and two lines below:

Hvad kan *du* be mig om?

It might be a mere slip that the translator in one line uses the formal *De* and in another the familiar *du*, but the same inconsistency occurs again and again throughout the volume. In itself a trifle, it indicates clearly enough the careless, slipshod manner of work—and an utter lack of a sense of humor, for no one with a spark of humor would use the modern, essentially German *De* in a Norwegian translation of Shakespeare. If a formal form must be used it should, as a matter of course, be *I*.

Nor is the translation itself so accurate as it should be. For example, what does it mean when Marcellus tells Bernardo that he had implored Horatio "at vogte paa minutterne inat" (to watch over the minutes this night)? Again, in the King's speech to Hamlet (Act I, Sc. 2) the phrase "bend you to remain" is rendered by the categorical "se til at bli herhjemme," which is at least misleading. Little inaccuracies of this sort are not infrequent.

But, after all, a translator with a new variorum and a wealth of critical material at hand cannot go far wrong in point of mere translation. The chief indictment to be made against Blom's translation is its prosiness, its prosy, involved sentences, its banality. What in Shakespeare is easy and mellifluous often becomes in Blom so vague that its meaning has to be discovered by a reference to the original.

We gave, some pages back, Ivar Aasen's translation of Hamlet's soliloquy. The interesting thing about that translation is not only that it is the first one in Norwegian but that it was made into a new dialect by the creator of that dialect himself. When we look back and consider what Aasen had to do—first, make a literary medium, and then pour into the still rigid and inelastic forms of that language the subtlest thinking of a great world literature—we gain a new respect for his genius. Fifty years later Blom tried his hand at

the same soliloquy. He was working in an old and tried literary medium—
Dano-Norwegian. But he was unequal to the task:

At være eller ikke være, det
problemet er: Om det er større av
en sjæl at taale skjæbnens pil og slynge
end ta til vaaben mot et hav av plager
og ende dem i kamp? At dø,—at sove,
ei mer; og tro, at ved en søvn vi ender
vor hjerteve og livets tusen støt,
som kjød er arving til—det maal for livet
maa ønskes inderlig. At dø,—at sove—
at sove!—Kanske drømme! Der er knuten;
for hvad i dødsens søvn vi monne drømme,
naar livets lænke vi har viklet av,
det holder os igjen; det er det hensyn,
som gir vor jammer her saa langt et liv' etc.

K

Much more interesting than Blom's attempt, and much more significant, is a translation and working over of *As You Like It* which appeared in November of the same year. The circumstances under which this translation were made are interesting. Fru Johanne Dybwad, one of the "stars" at the National Theater was completing her twenty-fifth year of service on the stage, and the theater wished to commemorate the event in a manner worthy of the actress. For the gala performance, Herman Wildenvey, a poet of the young Norway, made a new translation and adaptation of *As You Like It*.¹³⁸ And no choice could have been more felicitous. Fru Dybwad had scored her greatest success as Puck; the life and sparkle and jollity of that mischievous wight seemed like a poetic glorification of her own character. It might be expected, then, that she would triumph in the rôle of Rosalind.

Then came the problem of a stage version. A simple cutting of Lembcke seemed inappropriate to this intensely modern woman. There was danger, too, that Lembcke's faithful Danish would hang heavy on the light and sparkling Norwegian. Herman Wildenvey undertook to prepare an acting version that should fit the actress and the occasion. The result is the text before us. For the songs and intermissions, Johan Halvorsen, Kapelmester of the theater, composed new music and the theater provided a magnificent staging. The tremendous stage-success of Wildenvey's *As You Like It* belongs rather to stage history, and for the present we shall confine ourselves to the translation itself.

First, what of the cutting? In a short introduction the translator has given an apologia for his procedure. It is worth quoting at some length. "To adapt a piece of literature is, as a rule, not especially commendable. And now, I who should be the last to do it, have become the first in this country to attempt anything of the sort with Shakespeare.

"I will not defend myself by saying that most of Shakespeare's plays require some sort of adaptation to the modern stage if they are to be played at all. But, as a matter of fact, I have done little adapting. I have dusted some of the speeches, maltreated others, and finally cut out a few which would have

sputtered out of the mouths of the actors like fringes of an old tapestry. But, above all, I have tried to reproduce the imperishable woodland spirit, the fresh breath of out-of-doors which permeates this play."

Wildenvey then states that in his cuttings he has followed the edition of the British Empire Shakespeare Society. But the performance in Kristiania has demanded more, "and my adaptation could not be so wonderfully ideal. *As You Like It* is, probably more than any other of Shakespeare's plays, a jest and only in part a play. Through the title he has given his work, he has given me the right to make my own arrangement which is accordingly, yours truly *As You Like It*."

But the most cursory examination will show that this is more than a mere "cutting." In the first place, the five acts have been cut to four and scenes widely separated, have often been brought together. In this way unnecessary scene-shifts have been avoided. But the action has been kept intact and only two characters have been eliminated: Jacques de Bois, whose speeches have been given to Le Beau, and Hymen, whose rôle has been given to Celia. Two or three speeches have been shifted. But to a reader unacquainted with Shakespeare all this would pass unnoticed, as would also, doubtless, the serious cutting and the free translation.

A brief sketch of Wildenvey's arrangement will be of service.

Transcriber's note:

The summary is given here exactly as it appears in the Ruud text. Note in particular Wildenvey's I, 2, and Shakespeare's II, 1.

- Act I, Sc. 1. An open place on the road to Sir Oliver's house.
The scene opens with a short, exceedingly free rendering of Orlando's speech and runs on to the end of Scene 1 in Shakespeare.
- Act I, Sc. 2. Outside of Duke Frederik's Palace.
Begins with I, 2 and goes to I, 3. Then follows without change of scene, I, 3. and, following that, 1, 3.
- Act II
In Wildenvey this is all one scene.
Opens with a rhapsodical conversation between the banished

duke and Amiens on the glories of nature and the joys of out-door life. It is fully in Shakespeare's tone, but Wildenvey's own invention. After this the scene continues with II, 1. The first lord's speech in Wildenvey, however, is merely a free adaptation of the original, and the later speech of the first lord, describing Jacques' reveries on the hunt, is put into the mouth of Jacques himself. A few entirely new speeches follow and the company goes out upon the hunt. There is then a slight pause, but no scene division, and Shakespeare's II, 4 follows. This is succeeded again without a break, by II, 5, II, 6, and II, 7 (the opening of II, 7 to the entrance of Jacques, is omitted altogether) to the end of the act.

- Act III. This act has two scenes.
Sc. 1. In Duke Frederik's palace. It opens with II, I and then follows III, 1.
Sc. 2. In the Forest of Arden. Evening.
Begins with III, 2. Then follows III, 4, III, 5, IV, 1.
- Act IV. Wildenvey's last act (IV) opens with Shakespeare's IV, 2 and continues: IV, 3, V, 1, V, 2, V, 3, V, 4.

A study of this scheme shows that Wildenvey has done no great violence to the fable nor to the characters. His shifts and changes are sensible enough. In the treatment of the text, however, he has had no scruples. Shakespeare is mercilessly cut and mangled.

The ways in which this is done are many. A favorite device is to break up long speeches into dialogue. To make this possible he has to put speeches of his own invention into the mouths of other characters. The opening of the play gives an excellent illustration. In Wildenvey we read:

Orlando: (kommer ind med tjeneren Adam)

Nu kan du likesaa godt faa vite hvordan alle mine bedrøveligheter begynder, Adam! Min salig far testamenterte mig nogen fattige tusen kroner og paala uttrykkelig min bror at gi mig en standsmæssig opdragelse. Men se hvordan han opfylder sin broderpligt mot mig! Han lar min bror Jacques studere, og rygtet melder om hans store fremgang. Men mig

underholder han hjemme, det vil si, han holder mig hjemme uten at underholde mig. For man kan da vel ikke kalde det at underholde en adelsmand som ellers regnes for at staldfore en okse!

Adam: Det er synd om Eder, herre, I som er min gamle herres bedste søn! Men jeg tjener Eders bror, og er alene tjener...

Orl: Her hos ham har jeg ikke kunnet lægge mig til noget andet end vækst, og det kan jeg være ham likesaa forbunden for som hans husdyr hist og her. Formodentlig er det det jeg har arvet av min fars aand som gjør oprør mot denne behandling. Jeg har ingen utsigt til nogen forandring til det bedre, men hvad der end hænder, vil jeg ikke taale det længer.

Orlando's speech, we see, has been broken up into two, and between the two new speeches has been interpolated a speech by Adam which does not occur in the original. The same trick is resorted to repeatedly. Note, for instance, Jacques first speech on the deer (Act II, 7) and Oliver's long speech in IV, 3. The purpose of this is plain enough—to enliven the dialogue and speed up the action. Whether or not it is a legitimate way of handling Shakespeare is another matter.

More serious than this is Wildenvey's trick of adding whole series of speeches. We have noted in our survey of the "bearbeidelse" that the second act opens with a dialogue between the Duke and Amiens which is a gratuitous addition of Wildenvey's. It is suggested by the original, but departs from it radically both in form and content.

Den Landflygtige Hertug (kommer ut fra en grotte i skogen)

Vær hilset, dag, som lægges til de andre
av mine mange motgangs dage.

Vær hilset nu, naar solen atter stempler
sit gyldne segl paa jordens stolte pande.

Vær hilset, morgen, med din nye rigdom,
med dug og duft fra alle trær og blomster.

Glade, blanke fugleøines perler
blinker alt av sol som duggens draaper,

hilser mig som herre og som ven. (En fugl flyver op over hans hode.)
Ei, lille sangerskjelm, godt ord igjen?

Amiens:

(hertugens ven, kommer likeledes ut av hulen).
Godmorgen, ven og broder i eksilet.

Hertugen:

Godmorgen, Amiens, du glade sanger!
Du er vel enig i at slik en morgen
i skogen her med al dens liv og lek
er fuld erstatning for den pragt vi tapte,
ja mer end hoffets smigergyldne falskhet?

Amiens:

Det ligner litt paa selve Edens have,
og trær og dyr og andre forekomster
betragter os som Adamer, kanhænde.

Hertugen:

Din spøg er vel en saadan sanger værd.
Du mener med at her er alting herlig,
sommer, vinter, vaar og høsttid veksler.
Solen skinner, vind og veiret driver.
Vinterblaasten blaaser op og biter
og fortæller uden sminket smiger
hvem vi er, og hvor vi os befinder.
Ja, livet her er ei ly for verdens ondskap,
er stolt og frit og fuldt av rike glæder:
hver graasten synes god og kirkeklok,
hvert redetræ er jo en sangers slot,
og alt er skjønt, og alt er saare godt.

Amiens:

Du er en godt benaadet oversætter,
naar du kan tolke skjæbnens harske talesæt
i slike sterke, stemningsfulde ord...
(En hofmand, derefter Jacques og tjenere kommer.)

Hertugen:

Godmorgen, venner—vel, saa skal vi jage
paa vildtet her, de vakre, dumme borgere
av denne øde og forlate stad...

Jacques:

Det er synd at søndre deres vakre lemmer
med pile-odd.

Amiens:

Det samme sier du altid,
du er for melankolsk og bitter, Jacques.

A careful comparison of the translation with the original will reveal certain verbal resemblances, notably in the duke's speech:

Din spøk er vel en saadan sanger værd, etc.

But, even allowing for that, it is a rephrasing rather than a translation. The stage action, too, is changed. Notice that Jacques appears in the scene, and that in the episode immediately following, the second part of the first lord's speech is put into Jacques' mouth. In other words, he is made to caricature himself!

This is Wildenvey's attitude throughout. To take still another example. Act IV, 2 begins in the English with a brief dialogue in prose between Jacques and the two lords. In Wildenvey this is changed to a rhymed dialogue in iambic tetrameters between Jacques and Amiens. In like manner, the blank verse dialogue between Silvius and Phebe (Silvius and Pippa) is in Norwegian rendered, or rather paraphrased, in iambic verse rhyming regularly abab.

Occasionally meanings are read into the play which not only do not belong in Shakespeare but which are ridiculously out of place. As an illustration, note the dialogue between Orlando and Rosalind in II, 2 (Original, III, 2). Orlando remarks: "Your accent is something finer than could be purchased in so remote a dwelling." Wildenvey renders this: "Eders sprog er mer elevert end man skulde vente i disse vilde trakter. De taler ikke Landsmaal." Probably no one would be deceived by this gratuitous satire on the Landsmaal, but, obviously, it has no place in what pretends to be a translation. The one justification for it is that Shakespeare himself could not have resisted so neat a word-play.

Wildenvey's version, therefore, can only be characterized as needlessly free. For the text as such he has absolutely no regard. But for the fact that he has kept the fable and, for the most part, the characters, intact, we should characterize it as a belated specimen of Sille Beyer's notorious Shakespeare "bearbejdelser" in Denmark. But Wildenvey does not take Sille Beyer's

liberties with the *dramatis personae* and he has, moreover, what she utterly lacked—poetic genius.

For that is the redeeming feature of *Livet i Skogen*—it does not translate Shakespeare but it makes him live. The delighted audience which sat night after night in Christiania and Copenhagen and drank in the loveliness of Wildenvey's verse and Halvorsen's music cared little whether the lines that came over the footlights were philologically an accurate translation or not. They were enchanted by Norwegian verse and moved to unfeigned delight by the cleverness of the prose. If Wildenvey did not succeed in translating *As You Like It*—one cannot believe that he ever intended to,—he did succeed in reproducing something of "its imperishable woodland spirit, its fresh breath of out-of-doors."

We have already quoted the opening of Act II. It is not Shakespeare but it is good poetry in itself. And the immortal scene between Touchstone and Corin in III, 2 (Shak. III, 2), in which Touchstone clearly proves that the shepherd is damned, is a capital piece of work. The following fragment must serve as an example:

Touchstone: Har du været ved hoffet, hyrde?

Korin: Visselig ikke.

Touch: Da er du evig fordømt.

Korin: Det haaber jeg da ikke.

Touch: Visselig, da er du fordømt som en sviske.

Korin: Fordi jeg ikke har været ved hoffet? Hvad mener I?

Touch: Hvis du ikke har været ved hoffet, saa har du aldrig set gode seder, og hvis du ikke har set gode seder, saa maa dine seder være slette, og slette seder er synd, og syndens sold er død og fordømmelse. Du er i en betænkelig tilstand, hyrde!

And the mocking verses all rhyming in *in-ind* in III, 3 (Shak. III, 2): "From the East to western Ind," etc., are given with marvelous cleverness:

Fra øst til vest er ei at finde
en ædelsten som Rosalinde.
Al verden om paa alle vinde

skal rygtet gaa om Rosalinde.
Hvor har en maler nogensinde
et kunstverk skapt som Rosalinde?
Al anden deilighet maa svinde
av tanken bort—for Rosalinde.

Or Touchstone's parody:

Hjorten skriker efter hinde,
skrik da efter Rosalinde,
kat vil katte gjerne finde,
hvem vil finde Rosalinde.
Vinterklær er tit for tynde,
det er ogsaa Rosalinde.
Nøtten søt har surhamshinde,
slik en nøtt er Rosalinde.
Den som ros' med torn vil finde,
finder den—og Rosalinde.

With even greater felicity Wildenvey has rendered the songs of the play. His verses are not, in any strict sense, translations, but they have a life and movement which, perhaps, interpret the original more fully than any translation could interpret it. What freshness and sparkle in "Under the Greenwood Tree!" I give only the first stanza:

Under de grønne trær
hvem vil mig møte der?
Hvem vil en tone slaa
frit mot det blide blaa?
Kom hit og herhen, hit og herhen,
kom, kjære ven,
her skal du se,
trær skal du se,
sommer og herlig veir skal du se.

Or what could be better than the exhilarating text of "Blow, blow, thou winter wind," as Wildenvey has given it? Again only the first stanza:

Blaas, blaas du barske vind,
troløse venners sind
synes os mere raa.
Bar du dig end saa sint,
bet du dog ei saa blindt,
pustet du ogsaa paa.
Heiho! Syng heiho! i vor skog under løvet.
Alt venskap er vammelt, al elskov er tøvet,
men her under løvet
er ingen bedrøvet.

Livet i Skogen, then, must not be read as a translation of *As You Like It*, but is immensely worth reading for its own sake. Schiller recast and rewrote *Macbeth* in somewhat the same way, but Schiller's *Macbeth*, condemned by its absurd porter-scene, is today nothing more than a literary curiosity. I firmly believe that Wildenvey's "bearbeidelse" deserves a better fate. It gave new life to the Shakespeare tradition on the Norwegian stage, and is in itself, a genuine contribution to the literature of Norway.

SUMMARY

If we look over the field of Norwegian translation of Shakespeare, the impression we get is not one to inspire awe. The translations are neither numerous nor important. There is nothing to be compared with the German of Tieck and Schlegel the Danish of Foersom, or the Swedish of Hagberg.

But the reason is obvious. Down to 1814 Norway was politically and culturally a dependency of Denmark. Copenhagen was the seat of government, of literature, and of polite life. To Copenhagen cultivated Norwegians looked for their models and their ideals. When Shakespeare made his first appearance in the Danish literary world—Denmark and Norway—it was, of course, in pure Danish garb. Boye, Rosenfeldt, and Foersom gave to their contemporaries more or less satisfactory translations of Shakespeare, and Norwegians were content to accept the Danish versions. In one or two instances they made experiments of their own. An unknown man of letters translated a scene from *Julius Caesar* in 1782, and in 1818 appeared a translation of *Coriolanus*. But there is little that is typically Norwegian about either of these—a word or a phrase here and

there. For the rest, they are written in pure Danish, and but for the title-page, no one could tell whether they were published in Copenhagen or Christiania and Trondhjem.

In the meantime Foersom had begun his admirable Danish translations, and the work stopped in Norway. The building of a nation and literary interests of another character absorbed the attention of the cultivated world. Hauge's translation of *Macbeth* is not significant, nor are those of Lassen thirty years later. A scholar could, of course, easily show that they are Norwegian, but that is all. They never succeeded in displacing Foersom-Lembcke.

More important are the Landsmaal translations beginning with Ivar Aasen's in 1853. They are interesting because they mark one of the most important events in modern Norwegian culture—the language struggle. Ivar Aasen set out to demonstrate that "maalet" could be used in literature of every sort, and the same purpose, though in greatly tempered form, is to be detected in every Landsmaal translation since. Certainly in their outward aim they have succeeded. And, despite the handicap of working in a language new, rough, and untried, they have given to their countrymen translations of parts of Shakespeare which are, at least, as good as those in "Riksmaal."

Herman Wildenvey stands alone. His work is neither a translation nor a mere paraphrase; it is a reformulating of Shakespeare into a new work of art. He has accomplished a feat worth performing, but it cannot be called translating Shakespeare. It must be judged as an independent work.

Whether Norway is always to go to Denmark for her standard Shakespeare, or whether she is to have one of her own is, as yet, a question impossible to answer. A pure Landsmaal translation cannot satisfy, and many Norwegians refuse to recognize the Riksmaal as Norwegian at all. In the far, impenetrable future the language question may settle itself, and when that happy day comes, but not before, we may look with some confidence for a "standard" Shakespeare in a literary garb which all Norwegians will recognize as their own.

I.1. It has been thought best to give such citations for the most part in translation.

I.2. *Julius Caesar*. III, 2. 268-70. Variorum Edition Furness. Phila. 1913.

[I.3.](#) Rønning—*Rationalismens Tidsalder*. 11-95.

[I.4.](#) Ewald—*Levnet og meninger*. Ed. Bobe. Kbh. 1911, p. 166.

[I.5.](#) *Ibid.* II, 234-235.

[I.6.](#) *William Shakespeares Tragiske Værker—Første Deel*. Kbh. 1807. Notes at the back of the volume.

[I.7.*](#) By way of background, a bare enumeration of the early Danish translations of Shakespeare is here given.

1777. *Hamlet*. Translated by Johannes Boye.

1790. *Macbeth*. Translated by Nils Rosenfeldt.

Othello. Translated by Nils Rosenfeldt.

All's Well that Ends Well. Translated by Nils Rosenfeldt.

1792. *King Lear*. Translated by Nils Rosenfeldt.

Cymbeline. Translated by Nils Rosenfeldt.

The Merchant of Venice. Translated by Nils Rosenfeldt.

1794. *King Lear*. Nahum Tate's stage version. Translated by Hans Wilhelm Riber.

1796. *Two Speeches*.—To be or not to be—(*Hamlet*.)

Is this a dagger—(*Macbeth*.)

Translated by Malthe Conrad Brun in *Svada*.

1800. Act III, Sc. 2 of *Julius Caesar*. Translated by Knut Lyhne Rahbek in *Minerva*.

1801. *Macbeth*. Translated by Levin Sander and K.L. Rahbek. Not published till 1804.

1804. Act V of *Julius Caesar*. Translated by P.F. Foersom in *Minerva*.

1805. Act IV Sc. 3 of *Love's Labour Lost*. Translated by P.F. Foersom in *Nytaarsgave for Skuespilyndere*.

1807. Hamlet's speech to the players. Translated by P.F. Foersom in *Nytaarsgave for Skuespilyndere*.

It may be added that in 1807 appeared the first volume of Foersom's translation of Shakespeare's tragedies, and after 1807 the history of Shakespeare in Denmark is more complicated. With these matters I shall deal at length in another study.

[I.8.](#) *Coriolanus, efter Shakespeare*. Christiania. 1818.

[I.9.](#) The first Danish translation of *Coriolanus* by P.F. Wulff appeared in 1819.

[I.10.](#) *Coriolanus*—Malone's ed. London. 1790. Vol. 7, pp. 148 ff.

[I.11.](#) *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*—1865, p. 96.

[I.12.](#) *Macbeth—Tragedie i fem Akter af William Shakespeare*. Oversat og fortolket af N. Hauge. Christiania. 1855. Johan Dahl.

[I.13.](#) This is, of course, incorrect. Cf. *Macbeth*, Variorum Edition. Ed. Furness. Phila. 1903, p. 40. Note.

[I.14.](#) Ivar Aasen—*Skrifter i Samling*—Christiania. 1911, Vol. 11, p. 165. Reprinted from *Prøver af Landsmaalet i Norge, Første Udgave*. Kristiania. 1853, p. 114.

[I.15.](#) Ivar Aasen: *Skrifter i Samling*. Christiania. 1911, Vol. I, p. 166.

[I.16.](#) *Skrifter i Samling*, I, 168. Kristiania. 1911.

[I.17.](#) Cf. Alf Torp. *Samtiden*, XIX (1908), p. 483.

[I.18.](#) "Ein Sonett etter William Shakespeare." *Fram*—1872.

[I.19.](#) *Kjøbmanden i Venedig*—Et Skuespil af William Shakespeare. Oversat af Hartvig Lassen. Udgivet af Selskabet for Folkeoplysningens Fremme som andet Tillægshfte til *Folkevennen* for 1881. Kristiania, 1881.

[I.20.](#) *Julius Caesar*. Et Skuespil af William Shakespeare. Oversat af Hartvig Lassen. Udgivet af Selskabet for Folkeoplysningens Fremme som første Tillægshfte til *Folkevennen* for 1882. Kristiania, 1882. Grøndal og Søn.

[I.21.](#) *Macbeth*. Tragedie af William Shakespeare. Oversat af H. Lassen. Udgivet af Selskabet for Folkeoplysningens Fremme som andet Tillægshfte til *Folkevennen* for 1883. Kristiania. Grøndal og Søn.

[I.22.](#) *The Merchant of Venice*. Med Indledning og Anmærkninger ved Christen Collin. Kristiania. 1902. (This, of course, does not include the translations of the sonnets referred to below.)

[I.23.](#) I have seen these translations in the typewritten copies which Professor Collin distributed among his students.

[I.24.](#) Collin, *op. cit.*, *Indledning*, XII.

[I.25.](#) Collin, *op. cit.*, *Indledning*, XXVI. (*M. of V.*, 1-3)

[I.26.](#) Collin, *op. cit.*, *Indledning*, XXV. *Macbeth* II, 1.

[I.27.](#) William Shakespeare: *Macbeth*. I norsk Umskrift ved Olav Madhus. Kristiania. 1901. H. Aschehoug & Co.

- [I.28.](#) William Shakespeare—*Kaupmannen i Venetia*. Paa Norsk ved Olav Madhus. Oslo. 1905.
- [I.29.](#) Bjørnson: *Vort Sprog*.
- [I.30.](#) Torp. *Samtiden*, Vol. XIX (1908), p. 408.
- [I.31.](#) *Vor Literatur*.
- [I.32.](#) *Soga um Kaupmannen i Venetia*. Oslo, 1905.
- [I.33.](#) *Alveliv. Eller Shakespeare's Midsumarnatt Draum* ved Erik Eggen. *Syn og Segn*, 1903. No. 3-6, pp. (105-114); 248-259.
- [I.34.](#) The translator explains in a note the pun in the original.
- [I.35.](#) Act II, Sc. 2.
- [I.36.](#) William Shakespeare—*Jonsok Draumen*—Eit Gamenspel. Paa Norsk ved Erik Eggen. Oslo, 1912.
- [I.37.](#) Act II, Sc. 2.
- [I.38.](#) *As You Like It*, eller *Livet i Skogen*. Dramatisk Skuespil av William Shakespeare. Oversat og bearbeidet for Nationaltheatret av Herman Wildenvey. Kristiania og København. 1912.
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CHAPTER II

SHAKESPEARE CRITICISM IN NORWAY

The history of Shakespearean translation in Norway cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be called distinguished. It is not, however, wholly lacking in interesting details. In like manner the history of Shakespearean criticism, though it contains no great names and no fascinating chapters, is not wholly without appeal and significance. We shall, then, in the following, consider this division of our subject.

Our first bit of Shakespearean criticism is the little introductory note which the anonymous translator of the scenes from *Julius Caesar* put at the head of his translation in *Trondhjems Allehaande* for October 23, 1782. And even this is a mere statement that the passage in the original "may be regarded as a masterpiece," and that the writer purposes to render not merely Antony's eloquent appeal but also the interspersed ejaculations of the crowd, "since these, too, are evidence of Shakespeare's understanding of the human soul and of his realization of the manner in which the oration gradually brought about the result toward which Antony aimed."

This is not profound criticism, to be sure, but it shows clearly that this litterateur in far-away Trondhjem had a definite, if not a very new and original, estimate of Shakespeare. It is significant that there is no hint of apology, of that tone which is so common in Shakespearean criticism of the day—Shakespeare was a great poet, but his genius was wild and untamed. This unknown Norwegian, apparently, had been struck only by the verity of the scene, and in that simplicity showed himself a better critic of Shakespeare than many more famous men. Whoever he was, his name is lost to us now. He deserves better than to be forgotten, but it seems that he was forgotten very early. Foersom refers to him casually, as we have seen, but Rahbek does not mention him.^{[II.1](#)} Many years later Paul Botten Hansen, one of the best equipped bookmen that Norway has produced, wrote a brief review of Lembcke's translation. In the course of this he enumerates the Dano-Norwegian translations known to him. There is not a word about his countryman in Trondhjem.^{[II.2](#)}

After this solitary landmark, a long time passed before we again find evidence of Shakespearean studies in Norway. The isolated translation of *Coriolanus* from 1818 shows us that Shakespeare was read, carefully and critically read, but no one turned his attention to criticism or scholarly investigation. Indeed, I have searched Norwegian periodical literature in vain for any allusion to Shakespeare between 1782 and 1827. Finally, in the latter year *Den Norske Husven* adorns its title-page with a motto from Shakespeare. *Christiania Aftenbladet* for July 19, 1828, reprints Carl Bagger's clever poem on Shakespeare's reputed love-affair with "Fanny," an adventure which got him into trouble and gave rise to the bon-mot, "William the Conqueror ruled before Richard III." The poem was reprinted from *Kjöbenhavns Flyvende Post* (1828); we shall speak of it again in connection with our study of Shakespeare in Denmark.

After this there is another break. Not even a reference to Shakespeare occurs in the hundreds of periodicals I have examined, until the long silence is broken by a short, fourth-hand article on Shakespeare's life in *Skilling Magazinet* for Sept. 23, 1843. The same magazine gives a similar popular account in its issue for Sept. 4, 1844. Indeed, several such articles and sketches may be found in popular periodicals of the years following.

In 1855, however, appeared Niels Hauge's afore mentioned translation of *Macbeth*, and shortly afterward Professor Monrad, who, according to Hauge himself, had at least given him valuable counsel in his work, wrote a review in *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Videnskab og Literatur*.^{II.3} Monrad was a pedant, stiff and inflexible, but he was a man of good sense, and when he was dealing with acknowledged masterpieces he could be depended upon to say the conventional things well.

He begins by saying that if any author deserves translation it is Shakespeare, for in him the whole poetic, romantic ideal of Protestantism finds expression. He is the Luther of poetry, though between Luther and Shakespeare there is all the difference between religious zeal and the quiet contemplation of the beautiful. Both belong to the whole world, Shakespeare because his characters, humor, art, reflections, are universal in their validity and their appeal. Wherever he is read he becomes the spokesman against narrowness, dogmatism, and intolerance. To translate Shakespeare, he points out, is difficult because of the archaic language, the obscure allusions, and the intense originality of the expression.

Shakespeare, indeed, is as much the creator as the user of his mother-tongue. The one translation of *Macbeth* in existence, Foersom's, is good, but it is only in part Shakespeare, and the times require something more adequate and "something more distinctly our own." Monrad feels that this should not be altogether impossible "when we consider the intimate relations between England and Norway, and the further coincidence that the Norwegian language today is in the same state of flux and transition, as was Elizabethan English." All translations at present, he continues, can be but experiments, and should aim primarily at a faithful rendering of the text. Monrad calls attention to the fact—in which he was, of course, mistaken—that this is the first translation of the original *Macbeth* into Dano-Norwegian or into Danish. It is a work of undoubted merit, though here and there a little stiff and hazy, "but Shakespeare is not easily clarified." The humorous passages, thinks the reviewer, are a severe test of a translator's powers and this test Hauge has met with conspicuous success. Also he has acquitted himself well in the difficult matter of putting Shakespeare's meter into Norwegian.

The last two pages are taken up with a detailed study of single passages. The only serious error Monrad has noticed is the following: In Act II, 3 one of the murderers calls out "A light! A light!" Regarding this passage Monrad remarks: "It is certainly a mistake to have the second murderer call out, "Bring a light here!" (Lys hid!) The murderer does not demand a light, but he detects a shimmer from Banquo's approaching torch." The rest of the section is devoted to mere trifles.

This is the sort of review which we should expect from an intelligent and well-informed man. Monrad was not a scholar, nor even a man of delicate and penetrating reactions. But he had sound sense and perfect self-assurance, which made him something of a Samuel Johnson in the little provincial Kristiania of his day. At any rate, he was the only one who took the trouble to review Hauge's translation, and even he was doubtless led to the task because of his personal interest in the translator. If we may judge from the stir it made in periodical literature, *Macbeth* fell dead from the press.

The tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth (1864) aroused a certain interest in Norway, and little notes and articles are not infrequent in the newspapers and periodicals about that time. *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*^{II.4} has a short,

popular article on Stratford-on-Avon. It contains the usual Shakespeare apocrypha—the Sir Thomas Lucy story, the story of the apple tree under which Shakespeare and his companions slept off the effects of too much Bedford ale—and all the rest of it. It makes no pretense of being anything but an interesting hodge-podge for popular consumption. The next year, 1864, the same periodical published [II.5](#) on the traditional day of Shakespeare's birth a rather long and suggestive article on the English drama before Shakespeare. If this article had been original, it might have had a certain significance, but, unfortunately, it is taken from the German of Bodenstedt. The only significant thing about it is the line following the title: "Til Erindring paa Trehundredsaarsdagen efter Shakespeares Födsel, d. 23 April, 1563."

More interesting than this, however, are the verses written by the then highly esteemed poet, Andreas Munch, and published in his own magazine, *For Hjemmet*, [II.6](#) in April, 1864. Munch rarely rises above mediocrity and his tribute to the bard of Avon is the very essence of it. He begins:

I disse Dage gaar et vældigt Navn
Fra Mund til Mund, fra Kyst til Kyst rundt Jorden—
Det straaler festligt over fjernest Havn,
Og klinger selv igjennem Krigens Torden,
Det slutter alle Folk i Aandens Favn,
Og er et Eenheds Tegn i Striden vorden—
I Stjerneskrift det staaer paa Tidens Bue,
Og leder Slægterne med Hjertelue.

and, after four more stanzas, he concludes:

Hos os har ingen ydre Fest betegnet
Vort Folks Tribut til denne store Mand.
Er vi af Hav og Fjelde saa omhegnet,
At ei hans Straaler trænge til os kan?
Nei,—Nordisk var hans Aand og netop egnet
Til at opfattes af vort Norden-Land,
Og mer maaske end selv vi tro og tænke,
Har Shakespeare brudt for os en fremmed Lænke.

One has a feeling that Munch awoke one morning, discovered from his calendar that Shakespeare's birthday was approaching, and ground out this poem to fill space in *Hjemmet*. But his intentions are good. No one can quarrel with the content. And when all is said, he probably expressed, with a fair degree of accuracy, the feeling of his time. It remains but to note a detail or two. First, that the poet, even in dealing with Shakespeare, found it necessary to draw upon the prevailing "Skandinavisme" and label Shakespeare "Nordisk"; second, the accidental truth of the closing couplet. If we could interpret this as referring to Wergeland, who *did* break the chains of foreign bondage, and gave Norway a place in the literature of the world, we should have the first reference to an interesting fact in Norwegian literary history. But doubtless we have no right to credit Munch with any such acumen. The couplet was put into the poem merely because it sounded well.

More important than this effusion of bad verse from the poet of fashion was a little article which Paul Botten Hansen wrote in *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*^{II.7} in 1865. Botten Hansen had a fine literary appreciation and a profound knowledge of books. The effort, therefore, to give Denmark and Norway a complete translation of Shakespeare was sure to meet with his sympathy. In 1861 Lembcke began his revision of Foersom's work, and, although it must have come up to Norway from Copenhagen almost immediately, no allusion to it is found in periodical literature till Botten Hansen wrote his review of Part (Hefte) XI. This part contains *King John*. The reviewer, however, does not enter upon any criticism of the play or of the translation; he gives merely a short account of Shakespearean translation in the two countries before Lembcke. Apparently the notice is written without special research, for it is far from complete, but it gives, at any rate, the best outline of the subject which we have had up to the present. Save for a few lines of praise for Foersom and a word for Hauge, "who gave the first accurate translation of this masterpiece (*Macbeth*) of which Dano-Norwegian literature can boast before 1861," the review is simply a loosely connected string of titles. Toward the close Botten Hansen writes: "When to these plays (the standard Danish translations) we add (certain others, which are given), we believe that we have enumerated all the Danish translations of Shakespeare." This investigation has shown, however, that there are serious gaps in the list. Botten Hansen calls Foersom's the first Danish translation of Shakespeare. It is curious that he should have overlooked Johannes Boye's *Hamlet* of

1777, or Rosenfeldt's translation of six plays (1790-1792). It is less strange that he did not know Sander and Rahbek's translation of the unaltered *Macbeth* of 1801—which preceded Hauge by half a century—for this was buried in Sander's lectures. Nor is he greatly to be blamed for his ignorance of the numerous Shakespearean fragments which the student may find tucked away in Danish reviews, from M.C. Brun's *Svada* (1796) and on. Botten Hansen took his task very lightly. If he had read Foersom's notes to his translation he would have found a clue of interest to him as a Norwegian. For Foersom specifically refers to a translation of a scene from *Julius Caesar* in *Trondhjems Allehaande*.

Lembcke's revision, which is the occasion of the article, is greeted with approval and encouragement. There is no need for Norwegians to go about preparing an independent translation. Quite the contrary. The article closes: "Whether or not Lembcke has the strength and endurance for such a gigantic task, time alone will tell. At any rate, it is the duty of the public to encourage the undertaking and make possible its completion."

We come now to the most interesting chapter in the history of Shakespeare in Norway. This is a performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* under the direction of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson at Christiania Theater, April 17, 1865. The story belongs rather to the history of Shakespeare on the Norwegian stage, but the documents of the affair are contributions to Shakespearean criticism and must, accordingly, be discussed here. Bjørnson's fiery reply to his critics of April 28 is especially valuable as an analysis of his own attitude toward Shakespeare.

Bjørnson became director of Christiania Theater in January, 1865, and the first important performance under his direction was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Skjarsommernatsdrömmen) in Oehlenschläger's translation, with music by Mendelssohn.^{[II.8](#)} Bjørnson had strained the resources of the theater to the utmost to give the performance distinction. But the success was doubtful. *Aftenposten* found it tiresome, and *Morgenbladet*, in two long articles, tore it to shreds.^{[II.9](#)} It is worth while to review the controversy in some detail.

The reviewer begins by saying that the play is so well known that it is needless to give an account of it. "But what is the meaning," he exclaims, "of this bold and poetic mixture of clowns and fairies, of mythology, and

superstition, of high and low, of the earthly and the supernatural? And the scene is neither Athens nor Greece, but Shakespeare's own England; it is his own time and his own spirit." We are transported to an English grove in early summer with birds, flowers, soft breezes, and cooling shadows. What wonder that a man coming in from the hunt or the society of men should fill such a place with fairies and lovely ladies and people it with sighs, and passions, and stories? And all this has been brought together by a poet's fine feeling. This it is which separates the play from so many others of its kind now so common and often so well presented. Here a master's spirit pervades all, unites all in lovely romance. Other plays are mere displays of scenery and costume by comparison. Even the sport of the clowns throws the whole into stronger relief.

Now, how should such a play be given? Obviously, by actors of the first order and with costumes and scenery the most splendid. This goes without saying, for the play is intended quite as much to be seen as to be heard. To do it justice, the performance must bring out some of the splendor and the fantasy with which it was conceived. As we read *A Midsummer Night's Dream* it is easy to imagine the glorious succession of splendid scenes, but on the stage the characters become flesh and blood with fixed limitations, and the illusion is easily lost unless every agency is used to carry it out. Hence the need of lights, of rich costumes, splendid backgrounds, music, rhythm.

The play opens in an apparently uninhabited wood. Suddenly all comes to life—gay, full, romantic life. This is the scene to which we are transported. "It is a grave question," continues the reviewer, "if it is possible for the average audience to attain the full illusion which the play demands, and with which, in reading, we have no difficulty. One thing is certain, the audience was under no illusion. Some, those who do not pretend to learning or taste, wondered what it was all about. Only when the lion moved his tail, or the ass wriggled his ears were they at all interested. Others were frankly amused from first to last, no less at Hermia's and Helen's quarrel than at the antics of the clowns. Still others, the cultivated minority, were simply indifferent."

The truth is that the performance was stiff and cold. Not for an instant did it suggest the full and passionate life which is the theme and the background of the play. Nor is this strange. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is plainly

beyond the powers of our theatre. Individual scenes were well done, but the whole was a cheerless piece of business.

The next day the same writer continues his analysis. He points out that the secret of the play is the curious interweaving of the real world with the supernatural. Forget this but for a moment, and the piece becomes an impossible monstrosity without motivation or meaning. Shakespeare preserves this unity in duality. The two worlds seem to meet and fuse, each giving something of itself to the other. But this unity was absent from the performance. The actors did not even know their lines, and thus the spell was broken. The verse must flow from the lips in a limpid stream, especially in a fairy play; the words must never seem a burden. But even this elementary rule was ignored in our performance. And the ballet of the fairies was so bad that it might better have been omitted. Puck should not have been given by a woman, but by a boy as he was in Shakespeare's day. Only the clown scenes were unqualifiedly good, "as we might expect," concludes the reviewer sarcastically.

The article closes with a parting shot at the costuming and the scenery. Not a little of it was inherited from "Orpheus in the Lower World." Are we so poor as that? Better wait, and for the present, give something which demands less of the theatre. The critic grants that the presentation may prove profitable but, on the whole, Bjørnson must feel that he has assisted at the mutilation of a master.

Bjørnson did not permit this attack to go unchallenged. He was not the man to suffer in silence, and in this case he could not be silent. His directorate was an experiment, and there were those in Christiania who were determined to make it unsuccessful. It was his duty to set malicious criticism right. He did so in *Aftenbladet*^{II.10} in an article which not only answered a bit of ephemeral criticism but which remains to this day an almost perfect example of Bjørnson's polemical prose—fresh, vigorous, genuinely eloquent, with a marvelous fusing of power and fancy.

He begins with an analysis of the play: The play is called a dream. But wherein lies the dream? 'Why,' we are told, 'in the fact that fairies sport, that honest citizens, with and without asses' heads, put on a comedy, that lovers pursue each other in the moonlight.' But where is the law in all this? If the play is without law (Lov = organic unity), it is without validity.

But it does have artistic validity. The dream is more than a fantasy. The same experiences come to all of us. "The play takes place, now in your life, now in mine. A young man happily engaged or happily married dreams one night that this is all a delusion. He must be engaged to, he must marry another. The image of the 'chosen one' hovers before him, but he can not quite visualize it, and he marries with a bad conscience. Then he awakens and thanks God that it is all a bad dream (Lysander). Or a youth is tired of her whom he adored for a time. He even begins to flirt with another. And then one fine night he dreams that he worships the very woman he loathes, that he implores her, weeps for her, fights for her (Demetrius). Or a young girl, or a young wife, who loves and is loved dreams, that her beloved is fleeing from her. When she follows him with tears and petitions, he lifts his hand against her. She pursues him, calls to him to stop, but she cannot reach him. She feels all the agony of death till she falls back in a calm, dreamless sleep. Or she dreams that the lover she cannot get comes to her in a wood and tells her that he really does love her, that her eyes are lovelier than the stars, her hands whiter than the snow on Taurus. But other visions come, more confusing. Another, whom she has never given a thought, comes and tells her the same story. His protestations are even more glowing—and it all turns to contention and sorrow, idle pursuit and strife, till her powers fail (Helena).

"This is the dream chain of the lovers. The poet causes the man to dream that he is unfaithful, or that he is enamored of one whom he does not love. And he makes the woman dream that she is deserted or that she is happy with one whom she cannot get. And together these dreams tell us: watch your thoughts, watch your passions, you, walking in perfect confidence at the side of your beloved. They (the thoughts and passions) may bring forth a flower called 'love in idleness'—a flower which changes before you are aware of it. The dream gives us reality reversed, but reversed in such a way that there is always the possibility that it may, in an unguarded moment, take veritable shape.

"And this dream of the lovers is given a paradoxical counterpart. A respectable, fat citizen dreams one night that he is to experience the great triumph of his life. He is to be presented before the duke's throne as the greatest of heroes. He dreams that he cannot get dressed, that he cannot get his head attended to, because, as a matter of fact, his head is not his own

excellent head, but the head of an ass with long ears, a snout, and hair that itches. 'This is exactly like a fairy tale of my youth,' he dreams. And indeed, it is a dream! The mountain opens, the captive princess comes forth and leads him in, and he rests his head in her lap all strewn with blossoms. The lovely trolls come and scratch his head and music sounds from the rocks. It is characteristic of Shakespeare that the lovers do not dream fairy tales of their childhood. Higher culture has given them deeper passions, more intense personal relations; in dreams they but continue the life of waking. But the good weaver who lives thoroughly content in his own self-satisfaction and in the esteem of his neighbors, who has never reflected upon anything that has happened to him, but has received each day's blessings as they have come—this man sees, the moment he lays his head on the pillow, the fairies and the fairy queen. To him the whole circle of childhood fantasy reveals itself; nothing is changed, nothing but this absurd ass's head which he wears, and this curious longing for dry, sweet hay.

"This is the dream and the action of the play. Superficially, all this magic is set in motion by the fairies; Theseus and his train, with whom come hunting horn and hunting talk and procession—*are*, in reality, the incarnation of the festival. And the comedy at the close is added by way of counterpiece to the light, delicate fancies of the dream. It is the thoughts we have thought, the painfully-wrought products of the waking mind, given in a sparkle of mocking laughter against the background of nightly visions. See the play over and over again. Do not study it with Bottom's ass's head, and do not be so blasé that you reject the performance because it does not command the latest electrical effects."

Bjørnson then proceeds to discuss the staging. He admits by implication that the machinery and the properties are not so elaborate as they sometimes are in England, but points out that the equipment of Christiania Theater is fully up to that which, until a short time before, was considered entirely adequate in the great cities of Europe. And is machinery so important? The cutting of the play used at this performance was originally made by Tieck for the court theater at Potsdam. From Germany it was brought to Stockholm, and later to Christiania. "The spirit of Tieck pervades this adaptation. It is easy and natural. The spoken word has abundant opportunity to make itself felt, and is neither overwhelmed by theater tricks nor set aside by machinery. Tieck, who understood stage machinery

perfectly, gave it free play where, as in modern operas, machinery is everything. The same is true of Mendelssohn. His music yields reverently to the spoken word. It merely accompanies the play like a new fairy who strews a strain or two across the stage before his companions enter, and lends them wings by which they may again disappear. Only when the words and the characters who utter them have gone, does the music brood over the forest like a mist of reminiscence, in which our imagination may once more synthesize the picture of what has gone before."

Tieck's adaptation is still the standard one. Englishmen often stage Shakespeare's romantic plays more elaborately. They even show us a ship at sea in *The Tempest*. But Shakespeare has fled England; they are left with their properties, out of which the spirit of Shakespeare will not rise. It is significant that the most distinguished dramaturg of Germany, Dingelstedt, planned a few years before to go to London with some of the best actors in Germany to teach Englishmen how to play Shakespeare once more.

Bjørnson closes this general discussion of scenery and properties with a word about the supreme importance of imagination to the playgoer. "I cannot refrain from saying that the imagination that delights in the familiar is stronger and healthier than that which loses itself in longings for the impossible. To visualize on the basis of a few and simple suggestions—that is to possess imagination; to allow the images to dissolve and dissipate—that is to have no imagination at all. Every allusion has a definite relation to the familiar, and if our playgoers cannot, after all that has been given here for years, feel the least illusion in the presence of the properties in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, then it simply means that bad critics have broken the spell." Why should Norwegians require an elaborate wood-scene to be transported to the living woods? A boulevardier of Paris, indeed, might have need of it, but not a Norwegian with the great forests at his very doors. And what real illusion is there in a waterfall tumbling over a painted curtain, or a ship tossing about on rollers? Does not such apparatus rather destroy the illusion? "The new inventions of stage mechanics are far from being under such perfect control that they do not often ruin art. We are in a period of transition. Why should we here, who are obliged to wait a long time for what is admittedly satisfactory, commit all the blunders which mark the way to acknowledged perfection?"

It would probably be difficult to find definite and tangible evidence of Shakespeare's influence in Bjørnson's work, and we are, therefore, doubly glad to have his own eloquent acknowledgement of his debt to Shakespeare. The closing passus of Bjørnson's article deserves quotation for this reason alone. Unfortunately I cannot convey its warm, illuminating style: "Of all the poetry I have ever read, Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has, unquestionably, had the greatest influence upon me. It is his most delicate and most imaginative work, appealing quite as much through its intellectual significance as through its noble, humane spirit. I read it first in Eiksdal when I was writing *Arne*, and I felt rebuked for the gloomy feelings under the spell of which that book was written. But I took the lesson to heart: I felt that I had in my soul something that could produce a play with a little of the fancy and joy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—and I made resolutions. But the conditions under which a worker in art lives in Norway are hard, and all we say or promise avails nothing. But this I know: I am closer to the ideal of this play now than then, I have a fuller capacity for joy and a greater power to protect my joy and keep it inviolate. And if, after all, I never succeed in writing such a play, it means that circumstances have conquered, and that I have not achieved what I have ever sought to achieve.

"And one longs to present a play which has been a guiding star to oneself. I knew perfectly well that a public fresh from *Orpheus* would not at once respond, but I felt assured that response would come in time. As soon, therefore, as I had become acclimated as director and knew something of the resources of the theater, I made the venture. This is not a play to be given toward the end; it is too valuable as a means of gaining that which is to be the end—for the players and for the audience. So far as the actors are concerned, our exertions have been profitable. The play might doubtless be better presented—we shall give it better next year—but, all in all, we are making progress. You may call this naivete, poetic innocence, or obstinacy and arrogance—whatever it is, this play is of great moment to me, for it is the link which binds me to my public, it is my appeal to the public. If the public does not care to be led whither this leads, then I am not the proper guide. If people wish to get me out of the theater, they may attack me here. Here I am vulnerable."

In *Morgenbladet* for May 1st the reviewer made a sharp reply. He insists again that the local theater is not equal to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. But

it is not strange that Bjørnson will not admit his own failure. His eloquent tribute to the play and all that it has meant to him has, moreover, nothing to do with the question. All that he says may be true, but certainly such facts ought to be the very thing to deter him from giving Shakespeare into the hands of untrained actors. For if Bjørnson feels that the play was adequately presented, then we are at a loss to understand how he has been able to produce original work of unquestionable merit. One is forced to believe that he is hiding a failure behind his own name and fame. After all, concludes the writer, the director has no right to make this a personal matter. Criticism has no right to turn aside for injured feelings, and all Bjørnson's declarations about the passions of the hour have nothing to do with the case.

This ended the discussion. At this day, of course, one cannot pass judgment, and there is no reason why we should. The two things which stand out are Bjørnson's protest against spectacular productions of Shakespeare's plays, and his ardent, almost passionate tribute to him as the poet whose influence had been greatest in his life.

And then there is a long silence. Norwegian periodicals—there is not to this day a book on Shakespeare by a Norwegian—contain not a single contribution to Shakespearean criticism till 1880, when a church paper, *Luthersk Ugeskrift*^{II.11} published an article which proved beyond cavil that Shakespeare is good and safe reading for Lutheran Christians. The writer admits that Shakespeare probably had several irregular love-affairs both before and after marriage, but as he grew older his heart turned to the comforts of religion, and in his epitaph he commends his soul to God, his body to the dust. Shakespeare's extreme objectivity makes snap judgments unsafe. We cannot always be sure that his characters voice his own thoughts and judgments, but, on the other hand, we have no right to assume that they never do. The tragedies especially afford a safe basis for judgment, for in them characterization is of the greatest importance. No great character was ever created which did not spring from the poet's own soul. In Shakespeare's characters sin, lust, cruelty, are always punished; sympathy, love, kindness are everywhere glorified. The writer illustrates his meaning with copious quotations.

Apparently the good Lutheran who wrote this article felt troubled about the splendor which Shakespeare throws about the Catholic Church. But this is no evidence, he thinks, of any special sympathy for it. Many Protestants

have been attracted by the pomp and circumstance of the Catholic Church, and they have been none the worse Protestants for that. The writer had the good sense not to make Shakespeare a Lutheran but, for the rest, the article is a typical example of the sort of criticism that has made Shakespeare everything from a pious Catholic to a champion of atheistic democracy. If, however, the readers of *Luthersk Ugeskrift* were led to read Shakespeare after being assured that they might do so safely, the article served a useful purpose.

Eight years later the distinguished litterateur and critic, Just Bing, wrote in *Vidar*^{II.12}, one of the best periodicals that Norway has ever had, a brief character study of Ophelia, which, though it contains nothing original, stands considerably higher as literary criticism than anything we have yet considered, with the sole exception of Bjørnson's article in *Aftenbladet*, twenty-three years earlier.

Bing begins by defining two kinds of writers. First, those whose power is their keen observation. They see things accurately and they secure their effects by recording just what they see. Second, those writers who do not merely see external phenomena with the external eye, but who, through a miraculous intuition, go deeper into the soul of man. Molière is the classical example of the first type; Shakespeare of the second. To him a chance utterance reveals feelings, passions, whole lives—though he probably never developed the consequences of a chance remark to their logical conclusion without first applying to them close and searching rational processes. But it is clear that if a critic is to analyze a character of Shakespeare's, he must not be content merely to observe. He must feel with it, live with it. He must do so with special sympathy in the case of Ophelia.

The common characteristic of Shakespeare's women is their devotion to the man of their choice and their confidence that this choice is wise and happy. The tragedy of Ophelia lies in the fact that outward evidence is constantly shocking that faith. Laertes, in his worldly-wise fashion, first warns her. She cries out from a broken heart though she promises to heed the warning. Then comes Polonius with his cunning wisdom. But Ophelia's faith is still unshaken. She promises her father, however, to be careful, and her caution, in turn, arouses the suspicion of Hamlet. Even after his wild outburst against her he still loves her. He begs her to believe in him and to remember him in her prayers. But suspicion goes on. Ophelia is caught between

devotion and duty, and the grim events that crowd upon her plunge her to sweet, tragic death. Nothing could be more revealing than our last glimpse of her. Shakespeare's intuitive knowledge of the soul was sure. The determining fact of her life was her love for Hamlet: it is significant that when we see her insane not a mention of it crosses her lips.

Hamlet and Ophelia are the delicate victims of a tragic necessity. They are undone because they lose confidence in those to whom they cling with all the abandon of deep, spiritual souls. Hamlet is at last aroused to desperation; Ophelia is helplessly crushed. She is the finest woman of Shakespeare's imagination, and perhaps for that reason the most difficult to understand and the one least often appreciated.

The next chapter in Norwegian Shakespeareana is a dull, unprofitable one—a series of articles on the Baconian theory appearing irregularly in the monthly magazine, *Kringsjaa*. The first article appeared in the second volume (1894) and is merely a review of a strong pro-Bacon outburst in the *American Arena*. It is not worth criticising. Similar articles appeared in *Kringsjaa* in 1895, the material this time being taken from the *Deutsche Revue*. It is the old ghost, the cipher in the first folio, though not Ignatius Donnelly's cryptogram. Finally, in 1898, a new editor, Chr. Brinckmann, printed [II.13](#) a crushing reply to all these cryptogram fantasies. And that is all that was ever published in Norway on a foolish controversy.

It is a relief to turn from puerilities of this sort to Theodor Caspari's article in *For Kirke og Kultur* (1895) [II.14](#)—*Grunddrag ved den Shakespeareske Digtning, i særlig Jevnførelse med Ibsens senere Digtning*.

This article must be read with caution, partly because its analysis of the Elizabethan age is conventional, and therefore superficial, and partly because it represents a direction of thought which eyed the later work of Ibsen and Bjørnson with distrust. These men had rejected the faith of their fathers, and the books that came from them were signs of the apostasy. But *For Kirke og Kultur* has been marked from its first number by ability, conspicuous fairness, and a large catholicity, which give it an honorable place among church journals. And not even a fanatical admirer of Ibsen will deny that there is more than a grain of truth in the indictment which the writer of this article brings against him.

The central idea is the large, general objectivity of Shakespeare's plays as contrasted with the narrow, selfish subjectivity of Ibsen's. The difference bottoms in the difference between the age of Elizabeth and our own. Those were days of full, pulsing, untrammelled life. Men lived big, physical lives. They had few scruples and no nerves. Full-blooded passions, not petty problems of pathological psychology, were the things that interested poets and dramatists. They saw life fully and they saw it whole. So with Shakespeare. His characters are big, well-rounded men; they are not laboratory specimens. They live in the real Elizabethan world, not in the hothouse of the poet's brain. It is of no consequence that violence is done to "local color." Shakespeare beheld all the world and all ages through the lens of his own time and country, but because the men he saw were actual, living beings, the characters he gives us, be they mythological figures, Romans, Greeks, Italians, or Englishmen, have universal validity. He went to Italy for his greatest love-story. That gave him the right atmosphere. It is significant that Ibsen once thought it necessary to seek a suggestive background for one of his greatest characters. He went to Finmarken for Rebecca West.

Shakespeare's characters speak in loud, emphatic tones and they give utterance to clear, emphatic thoughts. There is no "twilight zone" in their thinking. Ibsen's men and women, like the children at Rosmersholm, never speak aloud; they merely whimper or they whisper the polite innuendos of the drawing room. The difference lies largely in the difference of the age. But Ibsen is more decadent than his age. There are great ideas in our time too, but Ibsen does not see them. He sees only the "thought." Contrast with this Shakespeare's colossal scale. He is "loud-voiced" but he is also "many-voiced." Ibsen speaks in a salon voice and always in one key. And the remarkable thing is that Shakespeare, in spite of his complicated plots, is always clear. The main lines of the action stand out boldly. There is always speed and movement—a speed and movement directly caused by powerful feelings. He makes his readers think on a bigger scale than does Ibsen. His passions are sounder because they are larger and more expansive.

Shakespeare is the dramatist of our average life; Ibsen, the poet of the rare exception. To Shakespeare's problems there is always an answer; underneath his storms there is peace, not merely filth and doubt. There is even a sense of a greater power—calm and immovable as history itself.

Ibsen's plays are nervous, hectic, and unbelieving. In the words of Rosmer: "Since there is no judge over us, we must hold a judgment day for ourselves." Contrast this with Hamlet's soliloquy. And, finally, one feels sure in Shakespeare that the play means something. It has a beginning and an end. "What shall we say of plays like Ibsen's, in which Act I and Act II give no clue to Act III, and where both question and answer are hurled at us in the same speech?"

In the same year, 1895, Georg Brandes published in *Samtiden*,^{II.15} at that time issued in Bergen, two articles on *Shakespeare's Work in his Period of Gloom* (Shakespeare i hans Digtningens mørke Periode) which embody in compact form that thesis since elaborated in his big work. Shakespeare's tragedies were the outcome of a deep pessimism that had grown for years and culminated when he was about forty. He was tired of the vice, the hollowness, the ungratefulness, of life. The immediate cause must remain unknown, but the fact of his melancholy seems clear enough. His comedy days were over and he began to portray a side of life which he had hitherto kept hidden. *Julius Caesar* marks the transition. In Brutus we are reminded that high-mindedness in the presence of a practical situation often fails, and that practical mistakes are often as fatal as moral ones. From Brutus, Shakespeare came to Hamlet, a character in transition from fine youth, full of illusions, to a manhood whose faith is broken by the hard facts of the world. This is distinctly autobiographical. *Hamlet* and Sonnet 66 are of one piece. Shakespeare was disillusioned. Add to this his struggle against his enemy, Puritanism, and a growing conviction that the miseries of life bottom in ignorance, and the reason for his growing pessimism becomes clear. From Hamlet, whom the world crushes, to Macbeth, who faces it with its own weapons, yet is haunted and terrified by what he does, the step is easy. He knew Macbeth as he knew Hamlet.

The scheming Iago, too, he must have known, for he has portrayed him with matchless art. "But *Othello* was a mere monograph; *Lear* is a cosmic picture. Shakespeare turns from *Othello* to *Lear* in consequence of the necessity which the poet feels to supplement and round out his beginning." *Othello* is noble chamber music; *Lear* is a symphony played by a gigantic orchestra. It is the noblest of all the tragedies, for in it are all the storm and tumult of life, all that was struggling and raging in his own soul. We may feel sure that the ingratitude he had met with is reflected in Goneril and

Regan. Undoubtedly, in the same way, the poet had met the lovely Cleopatra and knew what it was to be ensnared by her.

Brandes, as has often been pointed out, did not invent this theory of Shakespeare's psychology but he elaborated it with a skill and persuasiveness which carried the uncritical away.

In his second article Brandes continues his analysis of Shakespeare's pessimism. In the period of the great tragedies there can be no doubt that Shakespeare was profoundly pessimistic. There was abundant reason for it. The age of Elizabeth was an age of glorious sacrifices, but it was also an age of shameless hypocrisy, of cruel and unjust punishments, of downright oppression. Even the casual observer might well grow sick at heart. A nature so finely balanced as Shakespeare's suffered a thousandfold. Hence this contempt for life which showed only corruption and injustice. Cressida and Cleopatra are sick with sin and evil; the men are mere fools and brawlers.

There is, moreover, a feeling that he is being set aside for younger men. We find clear expression of this in *All's Well That Ends Well*, in *Troilus and Cressida*. There is, too, in *Troilus and Cressida* a speech which shows the transition to the mood of *Coriolanus*, an aristocratic contempt for the mass of mankind. This is the famous speech in which Ulysses explains the necessity of social distinctions. Note in this connection Casca's contemptuous reference to the plebeians, Cleopatra's fear of being shown to the mob. Out of this feeling grew *Coriolanus*. The great patrician lives on the heights, and will not hear of bending to the crowd. The contempt of Coriolanus grew to the storming rage of Timon. When Coriolanus meets with ingratitude, he takes up arms; Timon is too supremely indifferent to do even this.

Thus Shakespeare's pessimism grew from grief over the power of evil (Othello) and misery over life's sorrows, to bitter hatred (Timon). And when he had raged to the uttermost, something of the resignation of old age came to him. We have the evidence of this in his last works. Perhaps, as in the case of his own heroes, a woman saved him. Brandes feels that the evolution of Shakespeare as a dramatist is to be traced in his women. We have first the domineering scold, reminding him possibly of his own domestic relations (Lady Macbeth); second, the witty, handsome women

(Portia, Rosalind); third, the simple, naive women (Ophelia, Desdemona); fourth, the frankly sensuous women (Cleopatra, Cressida); and, finally, the young woman viewed with all an old man's joy (Miranda). Again his genius exercises his spell. Then, like Prospero, he casts his magician's staff into the sea.

In 1896 Brandes published his great work on Shakespeare. It arrested attention immediately in every country of the world. Never had a book so fascinating, so brilliant, so wonderfully suggestive, been written on Shakespeare. The literati were captivated. But alas, scholars were not. They admitted that Brandes had written an interesting book, that he had accumulated immense stores of information and given to these sapless materials a new life and a new attractiveness. But they pointed out that not only did his work contain gross positive errors, but it consisted, from first to last, of a tissue of speculations which, however ingenious, had no foundation in fact and no place in cool-headed criticism.^{[II.16](#)} Theodor Bierfreund, one of the most brilliant Shakespeare scholars in Denmark, almost immediately attacked Brandes in a long article in the Norwegian periodical *Samtiden*.^{[II.17](#)}

He acknowledges the great merits of the work. It is an enormously rich compilation of Shakespeare material gathered from the four corners of the earth and illuminated by the genius of a great writer. He gives the fullest recognition to Brandes' miraculous skill in analyzing characters and making them live before our eyes. But he warns us that Brandes is no critical student of source materials, and that we must be on our guard in accepting his conclusions. It is not so certain that the sonnets mean all that Brandes would have them mean, and it is certain that we must be cautious in inferring too much from *Troilus and Cressida* and *Pericles* for, in the opinion of the reviewer, Shakespeare probably had little or nothing to do with them. He then sketches briefly his theory that these plays cannot be Shakespeare's, a theory which he later elaborated in his admirably written monograph, *Shakespeare og hans Kunst*.^{[II.18](#)} This, however, belongs to the study of Shakespearean criticism in Denmark.

So far as I have been able to find, Bierfreund's review was the only one published in Norway immediately after the publication of Brandes' work, but in 1899, S. Brettville Jensen took up the matter again in *For Kirke og*

Kultur^{II.19} and, in 1901, Christen Collin vigorously assailed in *Samtiden* that elaborate and fanciful theory of the sonnets which plays so great a part in Brandes' study of Shakespeare.

Brettville Jensen praises Brandes highly. He is always interesting, in harmony with his age, and in rapport with his reader. "But his book is a fantasy palace, supported by columns as lovely as they are hollow and insecure, and hovering in rainbow mists between earth and sky." Brandes has rare skill in presenting hypotheses as facts. He has attempted to reconstruct the life of Shakespeare from his works. Now this is a mode of criticism which may yield valuable results, but clearly it must be used with great care. Shakespeare knew the whole of life, but how he came to know it is another matter. Brandes thinks he has found the secret. Back of every play and every character there is a personal experience. But this is rating genius altogether too cheap. One must concede something to the imagination and the creative ability of the poet. To relate everything in Shakespeare's dramas to the experiences of Shakespeare the man, is both fanciful and uncritical.

The same objection naturally holds regarding the meaning of the sonnets which Brandes has made his own. Here we must bear in mind the fact that much of the language in the sonnets is purely conventional. We should have a difficult time indeed determining just how much is biographical and how much belongs to the stock in trade of Elizabethan sonneteers. Brettville Jensen points out that if the sonnets are the expression of grief at the loss of his beloved, it is a queer contradiction that Sonnet 144, which voices his most poignant sorrow, should date from 1599, the year, according to Brandes, when Shakespeare's comedy period began!

It is doubtless true that the plays and even the sonnets mark great periods in the life of the poet, but we may be sure that the relation between experience and literary creation was not so literal as Brandes would have us believe. The change from mood to mood, from play to play, was gradual, and it never destroyed Shakespeare's poise and sanity. We shall not judge Shakespeare rightly if we believe that personal feeling rather than artistic truth shaped his work.

Two years later Collin, a critic of fine insight and appreciation, wrote in *Samtiden*^{II.20} an article on the sonnets of Shakespeare. He begins by

picturing Shakespeare's surprise if he could rise from his grave in the little church at Stratford and look upon the pompous and rather naive bust, and hear the strange tongues of the thousands of pilgrims at his shrine. Even greater would be his surprise if he could examine the ponderous tomes in the Shakespeare Memorial Library at Birmingham which have been written to explain him and his work. And if any of these volumes could interest him at all it would doubtless be those in which ingenious critics have attempted to discover the poet in the plays and the poems. Collin then gives a brief survey of modern Shakespearean criticism—Furnivall, Dowden, Brandl, Boas, ten Brink, and, more recently, Sidney, Lee, Brandes, and Bierfreund. An important object of the study of these men has been to fix the chronology of the plays. They seldom fully agree. Sidney Lee and the Danish critic, Bierfreund, do not accept the usual theory that the eight tragedies from *Julius Caesar* to *Coriolanus* reflect a period of gloom and pessimism. In their opinion psychological criticism has, in this instance, proved a dismal failure.

The battle has raged with particular violence about the sonnets. Most scholars assume that we have in them a direct presentation (fremstilling) of a definite period in the life of the poet. And by placing this period directly before the creation of *Hamlet*, Brandes has succeeded in making the relations to the "dark lady" a crisis in Shakespeare's life. The story, which, as Brandes tells it, has a remarkable similarity to an ultra-modern naturalistic novel, becomes even more piquant since Brandes knows the name of the lady, nay, even of the faithless friend. All this information Brandes has, of course, taken from Thomas Tyler's introduction to the Irving edition of the sonnets (1890), but his passion for the familiar anecdote has led him to embellish it with immense enthusiasm and circumstantiality.

The hypothesis, however, is essentially weak. Collin disagrees absolutely with Lee that the sonnets are purely conventional, without the slightest biographical value. Mr. Lee has weakened his case by admitting that "key-sonnet" No. 144 is autobiographical. Now, if this be true, then one must assume that the sonnets set forth Shakespeare's relations to a real man and a real woman. But the most convincing argument against the Herbert-Fitton theory lies in the chronology. It is certain that the sonnet fashion was at its height immediately after the publication of Sidney's sequence in 1591, and

it seems equally certain that it had fallen off by 1598. This chronology is rendered probable by two facts about Shakespeare's work. First, Shakespeare employs the sonnet in dialogue in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and in *Romeo and Juliet*. These plays belong to the early nineties. Second, the moods of the sonnets exactly correspond, on the one hand, to the exuberant sensuality of *Venus and Adonis*, on the other, to the restraint of the *Lucrece*.

An even safer basis for determining the chronology of the sonnets Collin finds in the group in which the poet laments his poverty and his outcast state. If the sonnets are autobiographical—and Collin agrees with Brandes that they are—then this group (26, 29, 30, 31, 37, 49, 66, 71-75, 99, 110-112, 116, 119, 120, 123, and 124) must refer to a time when the poet was wretched, poor, and obscure. And in this case, the sonnets cannot be placed at 1598-99, when Shakespeare was neither poor nor despised, a time in which, according to Brandes, he wrote his gayest comedies.

It seems clear from all this that the sonnets cannot be placed so late as 1598-1600. They do not fit the facts of Shakespeare's life at this time. But they do fit the years from 1591 to 1594, and especially the years of the plague, 1592-3, when the theaters were generally closed, and Shakespeare no doubt had to battle for a mere existence. In 1594 Shakespeare's position became more secure. He gained the favor of Southampton and dedicated the *Rape of Lucrece* to him.

Collin develops at this point with a good deal of fullness his theory that the motifs of the sonnets recur in *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*—in *Venus and Adonis*, a certain crass naturalism; in *Lucrece* a high and spiritual morality. In the sonnets the same antithesis is found. Compare Sonnet 116—in praise of friendship—with 129, in which is pictured the tyranny and the treachery of sensual love. These two forces, sensual love and platonic friendship, were mighty cultural influences during Shakespeare's apprentice years and the young poet shows plainly that he was moved by both.

If all this be true, then the Herbert-Fitton theory falls to the ground, for in 1597 Herbert was only seventeen. But unquestionably the sonnets are autobiographical. They reveal with a poignant power Shakespeare's sympathy, his unique ability to enter into another personality, his capacity

of imaginative expansion to include the lives of others. Compare the noble sonnet 112, which Collin translates:

Din kjærlighed og medynk dækker til
det ar, som sladderer paa min pande trykket.
Lad andre tro og sige, hvad de vil,—
du kjærlig mine fejl med fortrin smykket.
Du er mit verdensalt, og fra din mund
jeg henter al min skam og al min ære.
For andre er jeg død fra denne stund,
og de for mig som skygger blot skal være.
I avgrunds dyp jeg al bekymring kaster!
for andres røst min høresans er sløv.
Hvadenten de mig roser eller laster,
jeg som en hugorm er og vorder døv.
Saa helt du fylder ut min sjæl herinde,
at hele verden synes at forsvinde.

At this point the article in *Samtiden* closes. Collin promises to give in a later number, a metrical translation of a number of significant sonnets. The promised renderings, however, never appeared. Thirteen years later, in 1914, the author, in a most interesting and illuminating book, *Det Geniale Menneske*,^{II.21} a study of "genius" and its relation to civilization, reprinted his essay in *Samtiden* and supplemented it with three short chapters. In the first of these he endeavors to show that in the sonnets Shakespeare gives expression to two distinct tendencies of the Renaissance—the tendency toward a loose and unregulated gratification of the senses, and the tendency toward an elevated and platonic conception of friendship. Shakespeare sought in both of these a compensation for his own disastrous love affair and marriage. But the healing that either could give was at best transitory. There remained to him as a poet of genius one resource. He could gratify his own burning desire for a pure and unselfish love by living in his mighty imagination the lives of his characters. "He who in his yearning for the highest joys of love had been compelled to abandon hope, found a joy mingled with pain, in giving of his life to lovers in whom the longing of William Shakespeare lives for all time.

"He has loved and been loved. It was he whom Sylvia, Hermia, Titania, Portia, Juliet, Beatrice, Rosalind, Viola, and Olivia loved,—and Ophelia, Desdemona, Hermione and Miranda."

In the second chapter Collin argues, as he had done in his essay on *Hamlet*^{II.22} that Shakespeare's great tragedies voice no pessimism, but the stern purpose to strengthen himself and his contemporaries against the evils and vices of Jacobean England—that period of moral and intellectual disintegration which followed the intense life of the Elizabethan age. Shakespeare battles against the ills of society as the Greek dramatists had done, by showing sin and wickedness as destroyers of life, and once this is done, by firing mankind to resistance against the forces of ruin and decay. "To hold the mirror up to nature," that men may see the devastation which evil and vice bring about in the social body. And to do this he does not, like some modern writers, shun moralizing. He warns against sensual excess in Adam's speech in *As You Like It*, II, 3:

Let me be your servant;
Though I look old, yet am I strong and lusty;
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;

Or, compare the violent outburst against drunkenness in *Hamlet* Act 1, Sc. 4, and the stern warning against the same vice in *Othello*, where, indeed, Cassius' weakness for strong drink is the immediate occasion of the tragic complication. In like manner, Shakespeare moralizes against lawless love in the *Merry Wives*, in *Troilus and Cressida*, in *Hamlet*, in *Lear*.

On the other hand, Shakespeare never allows artistic scruples to stand in the way of exalting simple, domestic virtues. Simple conjugal fidelity is one of the glories of Hamlet's illustrious father and of the stern, old Roman, Coriolanus; the young prince, Malcolm, is as chaste and innocent as the young barbarians of whom Tacitus tells.

In a final section, Collin connects this view of Hamlet which he has developed in his essay on *Hamlet* and the Sonnets, with the theory of human civilization which his book so suggestively advances.

The great tragedies from *Hamlet* to *Timon of Athens* are not autobiographical in the sense that they are reflections of Shakespeare's own concrete experience. They are not the record of a bitter personal pessimism. In the years when they were written Shakespeare was contented and prosperous. He restored the fortunes of his family and he was hailed as a master of English without a peer. It is therefore a priori quite unlikely that the tragic atmosphere of this period should go back to purely personal disappointments. The case is more likely this: Shakespeare had grown in power of sympathy with his fellows and his time. He had become sensitive to the needs and sorrows of the society about him. He could put himself in the place of those who are sick in mind and heart. And in consequence of this he could preach to this generation the simple gospel of right living and show to them the psychic weakness whence comes all human sorrow.

And through this expansion of his ethical consciousness what had he gained? Not merely a fine insight as in *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*, an insight which enables him to treat with comprehending sympathy even great criminals and traitors, but a high serenity and steady poise which enables him to write the romances of his last years—*Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. He had come to feel that human life, after all, with its storms, is a little thing, a dream and a *fata morgana*, which soon must give place to a permanent reality:

We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

In 1904 Collin wrote in *Nordisk Tidskrift för Vetenskap, Konst och Industri*^{II.23}** a most suggestive article on Hamlet. He again dismisses the widely accepted theory of a period of gloom and increasing pessimism as baseless. The long line of tragedies cannot be used to prove this. They are the expression of a great poet's desire to strengthen mankind in the battle of life.

We need dwell but little on Collin's sketch of the "Vorgeschichte" of *Hamlet*, for it contributes nothing that is new. *Hamlet* was a characteristic "revenge tragedy" like the "Spanish Tragedy" and a whole host of others which had grown up in England under the influence, direct and indirect, of Seneca. He points out in a very illuminating way how admirably the

"tragedy of blood" fitted the times. Nothing is more characteristic of the renaissance than an intense joy in living. But exactly as the appetite for mere existence became keen, the tragedy of death gained in power. The most passionate joy instinctively calls up the most terrible sorrow. There is a sort of morbid caution here—a feeling that in the moment of happiness it is well to harden oneself against the terrible reaction to come. Conversely, the contemplation of suffering intensifies the joys of the moment. At all events, in such a time, emotions become stronger, colors are brighter, and contrasts are more violent. The "tragedy of blood," therefore, was more than a learned imitation. Its sound and fury met the need of men who lived and died intensely.

The primitive *Hamlet* was such a play. Shakespeare took over, doubtless with little change, both fable and characters, but he gave to both a new spiritual content. Hamlet's revenge gained a new significance. It is no longer a fight against the murderer of his father, but a battle against "a world out of joint." No wonder that a simple duty of blood revenge becomes a task beyond his powers. He sees the world as a mass of faithlessness, and the weight of it crushes him and makes him sick at heart. This is the tragedy of Hamlet—his will is paralyzed and, with it, his passion for revenge. He fights a double battle, against his uncle and against himself. The conviction that Shakespeare, and not his predecessor, has given this turn to the tragedy is sustained by the other plays of the same period, *Lear* and *Timon of Athens*. They exhibit three different stages of the same disease, a disease in which man's natural love of fighting is turned against himself.

Collin denies that the tragedy of Hamlet is that of a contemplative soul who is called upon to solve great practical problems. What right have we to assume that Hamlet is a weak, excessively reflective nature? Hamlet is strong and regal, capable of great, concrete attainments. But he can do nothing except by violent and eccentric starts; his will is paralyzed by a fatal sickness. He suffers from a disease not so uncommon in modern literature—the tendency to see things in the darkest light. Is it far from the pessimism of Hamlet to the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Tolstoi? Great souls like Byron and Heine and Ibsen have seen life as Hamlet saw it, and they have struggled as he did, "like wounded warriors against the miseries of the times."

But from this we must not assume that Shakespeare himself was pessimistic. To him Hamlet's state of mind was pathological. One might as well say that he was a murderer because he wrote *Macbeth*, a misogynist because he created characters like Isabella and Ophelia, a wife murderer because he wrote *Othello*, or a suicide because he wrote *Timon of Athens* as to say that he was a pessimist because he wrote *Hamlet*—the tragedy of an irresolute avenger. This interpretation is contradicted by the very play itself. "At Hamlet's side is the thoroughly healthy Horatio, almost a standard by which his abnormality may be measured. At Lear's side stand Cordelia and Kent, faithful and sound to the core. If the hater of mankind, Timon, had written a play about a rich man who was betrayed by his friends, he would unquestionably have portrayed even the servants as scoundrels. But Shakespeare never presented his characters as all black. Pathological states of mind are not presented as normal."

Collin admits, nevertheless, that there may be something autobiographical in the great tragedies. Undoubtedly Shakespeare felt that there was an iron discipline in beholding a great tragedy. To live it over in the soul tempered it, gave it firmness and resolution, and it is not impossible that the sympathetic, high-strung Shakespeare needed just such discipline. But we must not forget the element of play. All art is, in a sense, a game with images and feelings and human utterances. "In all this century-old discussion about the subtlety of Hamlet's character critics have forgotten that a piece of literature is, first of all, a festive sport with clear pictures, finely organized emotions, and eloquent words uttered in moments of deep feeling." The poet who remembers this will use his work to drive from the earth something of its gloom and melancholy. He will strengthen himself that he may strengthen others.

I have tried to give an adequate synopsis of Collin's article but, in addition to the difficulties of translating the language, there are the difficulties, infinitely greater, of putting into definite words all that the Norwegian hints at and suggests. It is not high praise to say that Collin has written the most notable piece of Shakespeare criticism in Norway; indeed, nothing better has been written either in Norway or Denmark.

The study of Shakespeare in Norway was not, as the foregoing shows, extensive or profound, but there were many Norwegian scholars who had at least considerable information about things Shakespearean. No great piece

of research is to be recorded, but the stimulating criticism of Caspari, Collin, Just Bing, and Bjørnson is worth reading to this day.

The same comment may be made on two other contributions—Wiesener's *Almindelig Indledning til Shakespeare* (General Introduction to Shakespeare), published as an introduction to his school edition of *The Merchant of Venice*,^{II.24} and Collin's *Indledning* to his edition of the same play. Both are frankly compilations, but both are admirably organized, admirably written, and full of a personal enthusiasm which gives the old, sometimes hackneyed facts a new interest.

Wiesener's edition was published in 1880 in Christiania. The text is that of the Cambridge edition with a few necessary cuttings to adapt it for school reading. His introduction covers fifty-two closely printed pages and gives, within these limits, an exceedingly detailed account of the English drama, the Elizabethan stage, Shakespeare's life and work, and a careful study of *The Merchant of Venice* itself. The editor does not pretend to originality; he has simply tried to bring together well ascertained facts and to present them in the simplest, clearest fashion possible. But the *Indledning* is to-day, thirty-five years after it was written, fully up to the standard of the best annotated school editions in this country or in England. It is, of course, a little dry and schematic; that could hardly be avoided in an attempt to compress such a vast amount of information into such a small compass, but, for the most part, the details are so clear and vivid that their mass rather heightens than blurs the picture.

From the fact that nothing in this introduction is original, it is hardly necessary to criticise it at length; all that may be demanded is a short survey of the contents. The whole consists of two great divisions, a general introduction to Shakespeare and a special introduction to *The Merchant of Venice*. The first division is, in turn, subdivided into seven heads: 1. *The Pre-Shakespearean Drama*. 2. *The Life of Shakespeare*. 3. *Shakespeare's Works—Order and Chronology*. 4. *Shakespeare as a Dramatist*. 5. *Shakespeare's Versification*. 6. *The Text of Shakespeare*. 7. *The Theatres of Shakespeare's Time*. This introduction fills thirty-nine pages and presents an exceedingly useful compendium for the student and the general reader. The short introduction to the play itself discusses briefly the texts, the sources, the characters, Shakespeare's relation to his material and, finally,

the meaning of the play. The last section is, however, a translation from Taine and not Wiesener's at all.

The text itself is provided with elaborate notes of the usual text-book sort. In addition to these there is, at the back, an admirable series of notes on the language of Shakespeare. Wiesener explains in simple, compact fashion some of the differences between Elizabethan and modern English and traces these phenomena back to their origins in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English. Inadequate as they are, these linguistic notes cannot be too highly praised for the conviction of which they bear evidence—that a complete knowledge of Shakespeare without a knowledge of his language is impossible. To the student of that day these notes must have been a revelation.

The second text edition of a Shakespearean play in Norway was Collin's *The Merchant of Venice*.^{II.25} His introduction covers much the same ground as Wiesener's, but he offers no sketch of the Elizabethan drama, of Shakespeare's life, or of his development as a dramatic artist. On the other hand, his critical analysis of the play is fuller and, instead of a mere summary, he gives an elaborate exposition of Shakespeare's versification.

Collin is a critic of rare insight. Accordingly, although he says nothing new in his discussion of the purport and content of the play, he makes the old story live anew. He images Shakespeare in the midst of his materials—how he found them, how he gave them life and being. The section on Shakespeare's language is not so solid and scientific as Wiesener's, but his discussion of Shakespeare's versification is both longer and more valuable than Wiesener's fragmentary essay, and Shakespeare's relation to his sources is treated much more suggestively.

He points out, first of all, that in Shakespeare's "classical" plays the characters of high rank commonly use verse and those of low rank, prose. This is, however, not a law. The real principle of the interchange of prose and verse is in the emotions to be conveyed. Where these are tense, passionate, exalted, they are communicated in verse; where they are ordinary, commonplace, they are expressed in prose. This rule will hold both for characters of high station and for the most humble. In Act I, for example, Portia speaks in prose to her maid "obviously because Shakespeare would lower the pitch and reduce the suspense. In the following scene, the conversation between Shylock and Bassanio begins in

prose. But as soon as Antonio appears, Shylock's emotions are roused to their highest pitch, and his speech turns naturally to verse—even though he is alone and his speech an aside. A storm of passions sets his mind and speech in rhythmic motion. And from that point on, the conversations of Shylock, Bassanio, and Antonio are in verse. In short, rhythmic speech when there is a transition to strong, more dramatic feeling."

The use of prose or verse depends, then, on the kind and depth of feeling rather than on the characters. "In Act II Launcelot Gobbo and his father are the only ones who employ prose. All the others speak in verse—even the servant who tells of Bassanio's arrival. Not only that, but he speaks in splendid verse even though he is merely announcing a messenger:"

"Yet have I not seen
So likely an ambassador of love," etc.

Again, in *Lear*, the servant who protests against Cornwall's cruelty to Gloster, nameless though he is, speaks in noble and stately lines:

Hold your hand, my lord;
I've served you ever since I was a child;
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

When the dramatic feeling warrants it, the humblest rise to the highest poetry. The renaissance was an age of deeper, mightier feelings than our own, and this intense life speaks in verse, for only thus can it adequately express itself.

All this is romantic enough. But it is to be doubted if the men of the renaissance were so different from us that they felt an instinctive need of bursting into song. The causes of the efflorescence of Elizabethan dramatic poetry are not, I think, to be sought in such subtleties as these.

Collin further insists that the only way to understand Shakespeare's versification is to understand his situations and his characters. Rules avail little. If we do not *feel* the meaning of the music, we shall never understand the meaning of the verse. Shakespeare's variations from the normal blank verse are to be interpreted from this point of view. Hence what the metricists call "irregularities" are not irregularities at all. Collin examines the more important of these irregularities and tries to account for them.

1. Short broken lines as in I, 1-5: *I am to learn*. Antonio completes this line by a shrug of the shoulders or a gesture. "It would be remarkable," concludes Collin, "if there were no interruptions or pauses even though the characters speak in verse." Another example of this breaking of the line for dramatic purposes is found in I, 3-123 where Shylock suddenly stops after "say this" as if to draw breath and arrange his features. (Sic!)

2. A verse may be abnormally long and contain six feet. This is frequently accidental, but in *M of V* it is used at least once deliberately—in the oracular inscriptions on the caskets:

"Who chooseth me shall gain what men desire."

"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."

"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he has."

Collin explains that putting these formulas into Alexandrines gives them a stiffness and formality appropriate to their purpose.

3. Frequently one or two light syllables are added to the close of the verse:

Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster.

or

Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice.

Again, in III, 2-214 we have two unstressed syllables:

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?

"Shakespeare uses this unaccented gliding ending more in his later works to give an easier more unconstrained movement."

4. Occasionally a syllable is lacking, and the foot seems to halt as in V, 1-17:

As far as Belmont. In such a night, etc.

Here a syllable is lacking in the third foot. But artistically this is no defect. We cannot ask that Jessica and Lorenzo always have the right word at hand. The defective line simply means a pause and, therefore, instead of being a blemish, is exactly right.

5. On the other hand, there is often an extra light syllable before the caesura. (I, 1-48):

Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy, etc.

This extra syllable before the pause gives the effect of a slight retardation. It was another device to make the verse easy and unconstrained.

6. Though the prevailing verse is iambic pentameter, we rarely find more than three or four real accents. The iambic movement is constantly broken and compelled to fight its way through. This gives an added delight, since the ear, attuned to the iambic beat, readily recognizes it when it recurs. The presence of a trochee is no blemish, but a relief:

Vailing her high tops higher than her ribs. (I, 1-28)

This inverted stress occurs frequently in Norwegian poetry. Wergeland was a master of it and used it with great effect, for instance, in his poem to Ludvig Daa beginning:

Med døden i mit hjerte,
og smilet om min mund,—

All this gives to Shakespeare's verse a marvellous flexibility and power. Nor are these devices all that the poet had at his disposal. We frequently find three syllables to the foot, giving the line a certain fluidity which a translator only rarely can reproduce. Finally, a further difficulty in translating Shakespeare lies in the richness of the English language in words of one syllable. What literature can rival the grace and smoothness of:

In sooth I know not why I am so sad.

Ten monosyllables in succession! It is enough to drive a translator to despair. Or take:

To be or not to be, that is the question.

To summarize, no other language can rival English in dramatic dialogue in verse, and this is notably true of Shakespeare's English, where the word order is frequently simpler and more elastic than it is in modern English.

Two reviews of Collin quickly appeared in a pedagogical magazine, *Den Höiere Skole*. The first of them, [II.26](#) by Ivar Alnæs, is a brief, rather perfunctory review. He points out that *The Merchant of Venice* is especially adapted to reading in the gymnasium, for it is unified in structure, the

characters are clearly presented, the language is not difficult, and the picture is worth while historically. Collin has, therefore, done a great service in making the play available for teaching purposes. Alnæs warmly praises the introduction; it is clear, full, interesting, and marked throughout by a tone of genuine appreciation. But right here lies its weakness. It is not always easy to distinguish ascertained facts from Collin's imaginative combinations. Every page, however, gives evidence of the editor's endeavor to give to the student fresh, stimulating impressions, and new, revealing points of view. This is a great merit and throws a cloak over many eccentricities of language.

But Collin was not to escape so easily. In the same volume Dr. August Western^{II.27} wrote a severe criticism of Collin's treatment of Shakespeare's versification.

He agrees, as a matter of course, that Shakespeare is a master of versification, but he does not believe that Collin has proved it. That blank verse is the natural speech of the chief characters or of the minor characters under emotional stress, that prose is *usually* used by minor characters or by important characters under no emotional strain is, in Dr. Western's opinion, all wrong. Nor is prose per se more restful than poetry. And is not Shylock more emotional in his scene (I, 3) than any of the characters in the casket scene immediately following (II, 1)? According to Collin, then, I, 3 should be in verse and II, 1 in prose! Equally absurd is the theory that Shakespeare's characters speak in verse because their natures demand it. Does Shylock go contrary to nature in III, 1? There is no psychological reason for Verse in Shakespeare. He wrote as he did because convention prescribed it. The same is true of Goethe and Schiller, of Bjørnson and Ibsen in their earlier plays. Shakespeare's lapses into prose are, moreover, easy to explain. There must always be something to amuse the gallery. Act III, 1 must be so understood, for though Shakespeare was undoubtedly moved, the effect of the scene was comic. The same is true of the dialogue between Portia and Nerissa in Act I, and of all the scenes in which Launcelot Gobbo appears.

Western admits, however, that much of the prose in Shakespeare cannot be so explained; for example, the opening scenes in *Lear* and *The Tempest*. And this brings up another point, i.e., Collin's supposition that Shakespeare's texts as we have them are exactly as he wrote them. When

the line halts, Collin simply finds proof of the poet's fine ear! The truth probably is that Shakespeare had a good ear and that he always wrote good lines, but that he took no pains to see that these lines were correctly printed. Take, for example, such a line as:

As far as Belmont.

In such a night

This would, if written by anyone else, always be considered bad, and Dr. Western does not believe that Collin's theory of the pauses will hold. The pause plays no part in verse. A line consists of a fixed number of *heard* syllables. Collin would say that a line like I, 1-73:

I will not fail you,

is filled out with a bow and a swinging of the hat. Then why are the lines just before it, in which Salarino and Salario take leave of each other, not defective? Indeed, how can we be sure that much of what passes for "Shakespeare's versification" is not based on printers' errors? In the folio of 1623 there are long passages printed in prose which, after closer study, we must believe were written in verse—the opening of *Lear* and *The Tempest*. Often, too, it is plain that the beginnings and endings of lines have been run together. Take the passage:

Sal:

Why, then you are in love.

Ant:

Fie, fie!

Sal:

Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad—

The first line is one foot short, the second one foot too long. This Collin would call a stroke of genius; each *fie* is a complete foot, and the line is complete! But what if the line were printed thus:

Sal:

Why, then you are in love.

Ant:

Fie, fie!

Sal:

Not in

Love neither? Then let us say you are sad.

or possibly:

Love neither? Then let's say that you are sad.

Another possible printer's error is found in I, 3-116:

With bated breath and whispering humbleness

Say this;

Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last.

Are we here to imagine a pause of four feet? And what are we to do with the first folio which has

Say this; Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last.

all in one line? Perhaps some printer chose between the two. At any rate, Collin's theory will not hold. In the schools, of course, one cannot be a text critic but, on the other hand, one must not praise in Shakespeare what may be the tricks of the printer's devil. The text is not always faultless.

Finally, Dr. Western objects to the statement that the difficulty in translating Shakespeare lies in the great number of monosyllables and gives

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad

as proof. Ten monosyllables in one line! But this is not impossible in Norwegian:

For sand, jeg ved ei, hvi jeg er saa trist—

It is not easy to translate Shakespeare, but the difficulty goes deeper than his richness in words of one syllable.

With the greater part of Dr. Western's article everyone will agree. It is doubtful if any case could be made out for the division of prose and verse based on psychology. Shakespeare probably wrote his plays in verse for the same reason that Goethe and Schiller and Oehlenschläger did. It was the fashion. And how difficult it is to break with fashion or with old tradition, the history of Ibsen's transition from poetry to prose shows. It is equally certain that in Collin's *Introduction* it is difficult to distinguish ascertained

facts from brilliant speculation. But it is not easy to agree with Dr. Western that Collin's explanation of the "pause" is a tissue of fancy.

In the first place, no one denies that the printers have at times played havoc with Shakespeare's text. Van Dam and Stoffel, to whose book Western refers and whose suggestions are directly responsible for this article, have shown this clearly enough. But when Dr. Western argues that because printers have corrupted the text in some places, they must be held accountable for every defective short line, we answer, it does not follow. In the second place, why should not a pause play a part in prosody as well as in music? Recall Tennyson's verse:

Break, break, break,
On thy cold, grey stones, o sea!

where no one feels that the first line is defective. Of course the answer is that in Tennyson no accented syllable is lacking. But it is difficult to understand what difference this makes. When the reader has finished pronouncing *Belmont* there *must* be a moment's hesitation before Lorenzo breaks in with:

In such a night

and this pause may have metrical value. The only judge of verse, after all, is the hearer, and, in my opinion, Collin is right when he points out the value of the slight metrical pause between the bits of repartee. Whether Shakespeare counted the syllables beforehand or not, is another matter. In the third place, Collin did not quote in support of his theory the preposterous lines which Dr. Western uses against him. Collin does quote I, 1-5:

I am to learn.

and I, 1-73:

I will not fail you

is a close parallel, but Collin probably would not insist that his theory accounts for every case. As to Dr. Western's other example of good meter spoiled by corrupt texts, Collin would, no doubt, admit the possibility of the proposed emendations. It would not alter his contention that a pause in the

line, like a pause in music, is not necessarily void, but may be very significant indeed.

The array of Shakespearean critics in Norway, as we said at the beginning, is not imposing. Nor are their contributions important. But they show, at least, a sound acquaintance with Shakespeare and Shakespeareana, and some of them, like the articles of Just Bing, Brettville Jensen, Christen Collin, and August Western, are interesting and illuminating. Bjørnson's article in *Aftenbladet* is not merely suggestive as Shakespearean criticism, but it throws valuable light on Bjørnson himself and his literary development. When we come to the dramatic criticism of Shakespeare's plays, we shall find renewed evidence of a wide and intelligent knowledge of Shakespeare in Norway.

[II.1.](#) "Shakespeareana i Danmark"—*Dansk Minerva*, 1816 (III) pp. 151 ff.

[II.2.](#) *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*, 1865, pp. 96 ff.

[II.3.](#) See Vol. III (1855), pp. 378 ff.

[II.4.](#) Vol. XII (1863), pp. 199 ff.

[II.5.](#) Vol. XIII (1864), pp. 65 ff.

[II.6.](#) Vol. V, p. 572.

[II.7.](#) Vol. XIV, p. 96.

[II.8.](#) Blanc. *Christianias Theaters Historie*, p. 196.

[II.9.](#) April 26-27, 1865.

[II.10.](#) April 28. Reprinted in Bjørnson's *Taler og Skrifter*. Udgivet af C. Collin og H. Eitrem. Kristiania. 1912. Vol. I, pp. 263-270.

[II.11.](#) Vol. VII, pp. 1-12.

[II.12.](#) 1880, pp. 61-71.

[II.13.](#) *Kringsjaa*. Vol. XII, pp. 777 ff. The article upon which this reply was based was from the *Quarterly Review*.

[II.14.](#) Vol. I, pp. 38 ff.

[II.15.](#) Vol. VI, pp. 49 ff.

[II.16.](#) Cf. Vilhelm Møller in *Nordisk Tidskrift för Vetenskap, Konst och Industri*. 1896, pp. 501-519.

[II.17.](#) *Samtiden*, 1896. (VII), pp. 382 ff.

[II.18.](#) Copenhagen, 1898.

[II.19.](#) Vol. VI (1899), pp. 400 ff.

[II.20.](#) Vol. XII, pp. 61 ff.

[II.21.](#) Chr. Collin, Christiania. 1914. H. Aschehoug & Co.

[II.22.](#) See pp. 71 ff. below.

[II.23.](#) ** This article is reprinted in *Det Geniale Menneske* above referred to. It forms the second of a group of essays in which Collin analyzes the work of Shakespeare as the finest example of the true contribution of genius to the progress and culture of the race. Preceding the study of *Hamlet* is a chapter called *The Shakespearean Controversy*, and following it is a study of Shakespeare the Man. This is in three parts, the first of which is a reprint of an article in *Samtiden* (1901).

In *Det Geniale Menneske* Collin defines civilization as that higher state which the human race has attained by means of "psychic organs"—superior to the physical organs. The psychic organs have been created by the human intellect and they are controlled by the intellect. Had man been dependent upon the physical organs solely, he would have remained an animal. His psychic organs have enabled him to create instruments, tangible, such as tools and machines; intangible, such as works of art. These are psychic organs and with their aid man has become a civilized being.

The psychic organs are the creation of the man of genius. To create such organs is his function. The characteristics, then, of the genius are an immense capacity for sympathy and an immense surplus of power; sympathy, that he may know the needs of mankind; power, that he may fashion those great organs of life by which the race may live and grow.

In the various chapters of his book, Collin analyzes in an illuminating way the life and work of Wergeland, Ibsen, and Bjørnson as typical men of genius whose expansive sympathy gave them insight and understanding and whose indefatigable

energy wrought in the light of their insight mighty psychic organs of cultural progress.

He comes then to Shakespeare as the genius par excellence. The chapter on the *Shakespearean Controversy* gives first a survey of the development of modern scientific literary criticism from Herder to Taine and Saint Beuve. He goes on to detail the application of this method to the plays and sonnets of Shakespeare. Furnivall, Spalding, and Brandes have attempted to trace the genesis and the chronology of the plays. They would have us believe that the series of tragedies—*Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Coriolanus*, and *Timon* are the records of an increasing bitterness and pessimism. Brandes and Frank Harris, following Thomas Tyler have, on the basis of the sonnets, constructed a fascinating, but quite fantastic romance.

Vagaries such as these have caused some critics, such as Sidney Lee and Bierfreund, to declare that it is impossible on the basis of the plays to penetrate to Shakespeare the man. His work is too purely objective. Collin is not willing to admit this. He maintains that the scientific biographical method of criticism is fundamentally sound. But it must be rationally applied. The sequence which Brandes has set up is quite impossible. Goswin Kønig, in 1888, applying the metrical tests, fixed the order as follows: *Hamlet*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *Timon*, and *Lear*, and, in another group, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*. These results are confirmed by Bradley in his *Shakespearean Tragedy*.

Collin accepts this chronology. A careful study of the plays in this order shows a striking community of ethical purpose between the plays of each group. In the plays of the first group, the poet assails with all his mighty wrath what to him seems the basest of all wickedness, treachery. It is characteristic of these plays that none of the villains attains the dignity of a great tragic hero. They are without a virtue to redeem their faults. Shakespeare's conception of the good and evil in these plays approaches a medieval dualism. In the plays of the second group the case is

altered. There is no longer a crude dualism in the interpretation of life. Shakespeare has entered into the soul of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, of Antony and Cleopatra, of Coriolanus, and he has found underneath all that is weak and sinful and diseased, a certain nobility and grandeur. He can feel with the regicides in Macbeth; he no longer exposes and scourges; he understands and sympathizes. The clouds of gloom and wrath have cleared away, and Shakespeare has achieved a serenity and a fine poise.

It follows, then, that the theory of a growing pessimism is untenable. We must seek a new line of evolution.

[II.24.](#) *Shakespeares The Merchant of Venice. Med Anmærkninger og Indledning.* Udgivet af G. Wiesener. Kristiania, 1880.

[II.25.](#) *The Merchant of Venice.* Med Indledning og Anmærkninger ved Chr. Collin. Kristiania. 1902.

[II.26.](#) Vol. 5 (1903), pp. 51 ff.

[II.27.](#) *Ibid.* pp. 142 ff.

CHAPTER III

PERFORMANCES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS IN NORWAY

Christiania

The first public theater in Christiania was opened by the Swedish actor, Johan Peter Strömberg, on January 30, 1827, but no Shakespeare production was put on during his short and troubled administration. Not quite two years later this strictly private undertaking became a semi-public one under the immediate direction of J.K. Böcher, and at the close of the season 1829-30, Böcher gave by way of epilogue to the year, two performances including scenes from Holberg's *Melampe*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin*. The Danish actor Berg played Hamlet, but we have no further details of the performance. We may be sure, however, that of the two translations available, Boye's and Foersom's, the latter was used. *Hamlet*, or a part of it, was thus given for the first time in Norway nearly seventeen years after Foersom himself had brought it upon the stage in Denmark.[III.1](#)

More than fourteen years were to elapse before the theater took up Shakespeare in earnest. On July 28, 1844, the first complete Shakespearean play was given. This was *Macbeth* in Foersom's version of Schiller's "bearbeitung," which we shall take up in our studies of Shakespeare in Denmark.[III.2](#) No reviews of it are to be found in the newspapers of the time, not even an announcement. This, however, does not prove that the event was unnoticed, for the press of that day was a naive one. Extensive reviews were unknown; the most that the public expected was a notice.

We are equally ignorant of the fate of *Othello*, performed the next season, being given for the first time on January 3, 1845. Wulff's Danish translation was used. Blanc says in his *Historie*[III.3](#) that Desdemona and Iago were highly praised, but that the play as a whole was greatly beyond the powers of the theater.

Nearly eight years later, November 11, 1852, *Romeo and Juliet* in Foersom's translation received its Norwegian premiere. The acting version used was that made for the Royal Theater in Copenhagen by A.E. Boye in

1828. [III.4](#) *Christiania Posten* [III.5](#) reports a packed house and a tremendous enthusiasm. Romeo (by Wiehe) and Juliet (by Jomfru Svendsen) revealed careful study and complete understanding. The reviewer in *Morgenbladet* [III.6](#) begins with the little essay on Shakespeare so common at the time; "Everyone knows with what colors the immortal Shakespeare depicts human passions. In *Othello*, jealousy; in *Hamlet*, despair; in *Romeo and Juliet*, love, are sung in tones which penetrate to the depths of the soul. Against the background of bitter feud, the love of Romeo and Juliet stands out victorious and beneficent. Even if we cannot comprehend this passion, we can, at least, feel the ennobling power of the story." Both of the leading parts are warmly praised. Of Wiehe the reviewer says: "Der var et Liv af Varme hos ham i fuldt Maal, og den grændseløse Fortvivlelse blev gjengivet med en næsten forfærdelig Troskab."

The same season (Dec. 11, 1852) the theater also presented *As You Like It* in the Danish version by Sille Beyer. The performance of two Shakespearean plays within a year may rightly be called an ambitious undertaking for a small theatre without a cent of subsidy. *Christiania Posten* says: "It is a real kindness to the public to make it acquainted with these old masterpieces. One feels refreshed, as though coming out of a bath, after a plunge into their boundless, pure poetry. The marvellous thing about this comedy (*As You Like It*) is its wonderful, spontaneous freshness, and its freedom from all sentimentality and emotional nonsense." The acting, says the critic, was admirable, but its high quality must, in a measure, be attributed to the sympathy and enthusiasm of the audience. Wiehe is praised for his interpretation of Orlando and Jomfru Svendsen for her Rosalind. [III.7](#) Apparently none of the reviewers noticed that Sille Beyer had turned Shakespeare upside down. Her version was given for the last time on Sept. 25, 1878, and in this connection an interesting discussion sprang up in the press.

The play was presented by student actors, and the performance was therefore less finished than it would have been under other circumstances. *Aftenposten* was doubtless right when it criticised the director for entrusting so great a play to unpractised hands, assuming that Shakespeare should be played at all. "For our part, we do not believe the time far distant when Shakespeare will cease to be a regular part of the repertoire." [III.8](#) To this statement a contributor in *Aftenposten* for Sept. 28 objected. He admits that

Shakespeare wrote his plays for a stage different from our own, that the ease with which Elizabethan scenery was shifted gave his plays a form that makes them difficult to play today. Too often at a modern presentation we feel that we are seeing a succession of scenes rather than unified, organic drama. But, after all, the main thing is the substance—"the weighty content, and this will most certainly secure for them for a long time to come a place in the repertoire of the theater of the Germanic world. So long as we admit that in the delineation of character, in the presentation of noble figures, and in the mastery of dialogue, Shakespeare is unexcelled, so long we must admit that Shakespeare has a place on the modern stage."

Where did *Aftenposten's* reviewer get the idea that Shakespeare's plays are not adapted to the modern stage? Was it from Charles Lamb? At any rate, it is certain that he anticipated a movement that has led to many devices both in the English-speaking countries and in Germany to reproduce the stage conditions under which Shakespeare's plays were performed during his own life.

Of the next Shakespearean piece to be performed in Christiania, *All's Well That Ends Well*, there is but the briefest mention in the newspapers. We know that it was given in the curiously perverted arrangement by Sille Beyer and was presented twelve times from January 15, 1854 to May 23, 1869. On that day a new version based on Lembcke's translation was used, and in this form the play was given eight times the following seasons. Since January 24, 1882, it has not been performed in Norway.[III.9](#)

At the beginning of the next season, October 29, 1854, *Much Ado About Nothing* was introduced to Kristiania theater-goers under the title *Blind Alarm*. The translation was by Carl Borggaard, director of the theater. But here, too, contemporary documents leave us in the dark. There is merely a brief announcement in the newspapers. Blanc informs us that Jomfru Svendsen played Hero, and Wiehe, Benedict.[III.10](#)

After *Blind Alarm* Shakespeare disappears from the repertoire for nearly four years. A version of *The Taming of the Shrew* under the title *Hun Maa Tæmmes* was given on March 28, 1858, but with no great success. Most of the papers ignored it. *Aftenbladet* merely announced that it had been given.[III.11](#)

Viola, Sille Beyer's adaptation of *Twelfth Night* was presented at Christiania Theater on November 20, 1860, the eighth of Shakespeare's plays to be presented in Norway, and again not merely in a Danish text but in a version made for the Copenhagen Theater.

Neither the critics nor the public were exacting. The press hailed *Viola* as a tremendous relief from the frothy stuff with which theater-goers had been sickened for a season or two. "The theater finally justified its existence," says *Morgenbladet*,^{III.12} "by a performance of one of Shakespeare's plays. *Viola* was beautifully done." The writer then explains in conventional fashion the meaning of the English title and goes on—"But since the celebration of *Twelfth Night* could interest only the English, the Germans have "bearbeidet" the play and centered the interest around *Viola*. We have adopted this version." He approves of Sille Beyer's cutting, though he admits that much is lost of the breadth and overwhelming romantic fulness that mark the original. But this he thinks is compensated for by greater intelligibility and the resulting dramatic effect. "Men hvad Stykket ved saadan Forandring, Beklippelse, og Udeladelse saaatsige taber af sin Fylde idet ikke alt det Leende, Sorgløse og Romantiske vandre saa ligeberettiget side om side igjennem Stykket, mens det Øvrige samler sig om *Viola*, det opveies ved den større Forstaaelighed for vort Publikum og denne mere afrundede sceniske Virkning, Stykket ved Bearbejdelsen har faaet." As the piece is arranged now, *Viola* and her brother are not on the stage at the same time until Act V. Both rôles may therefore be played by Jomfru Svendsen. The critic is captivated by her acting of the double rôle, and Jørgensen's Malvolio and Johannes Brun's Sir Andrew Aguecheek share with her the glory of a thoroughly successful performance.

Sille Beyer's *Viola* was given twelve times. From the thirteenth performance, January 21, 1890, *Twelfth Night* was given in a new form based on Lembcke's translation.

A thorough search through the newspaper files fails to reveal even a slight notice of *The Merchant of Venice* (*Kjøbmanden i Venedig*) played for the first time on Sept. 17, 1861. Rahbek's translation was used, and this continued to be the standard until 1874, when, beginning with the eighth performance, it was replaced by Lembcke's.

We come, then, to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Skjærsommernatsdrømmen) played in Oehlenschläger's translation under Bjørnson's direction on April 17, 1865. The play was given ten times from that date till May 27, 1866. In spite of this unusual run it appears to have been only moderately successful, and when Bjørnson dropped it in the spring of 1866, it was to disappear from the repertoire for thirty-seven years. On January 15, 1903, it was revived by Bjørnson's son, Bjørn Bjørnson. This time, however, it was called *Midsommernatsdrømmen*, and the acting version was based on Lembcke's translation. In this new shape it has been played twenty-seven times up to January, 1913.

The interesting polemic which Bjørnson's production occasioned has already been discussed at some length. This may be added, however: A play which, according to the poet's confession, influenced his life as this one did, has played an important part in Norwegian literature. The influence may be intangible. It is none the less real.

More popular than any of the plays which had thus far been presented in Norway was *A Winter's Tale*, performed at Christiania Theater for the first time on May 4, 1866. The version used had, however, but a faint resemblance to the original. It was a Danish revision of Dingelstedt's *Ein Wintermärchen*. I shall discuss this Holst-Dingelstedt text in another place. At this point it is enough to say that Shakespeare is highly diluted. It seems, nevertheless, to have been successful, for between the date of its premiere and March 21, 1893, when it was given for the last time, it received fifty-seven performances, easily breaking all records for Shakespearean plays at the old theater. And at the new National Theater, where it has never been given, no Shakespearean play, with the exception of *The Taming of the Shrew* has approached its record.

Aftenbladet^{III.13} in its preliminary review said: "Although this is not one of Shakespeare's greatest plays, it is well worth putting on, especially in the form which Dingelstedt has given to it. It was received with the greatest enthusiasm." But *Aftenbladet's* promised critical review never appeared.

More interesting and more important than most of the performances which we have thus far considered is that of *Henry IV* in 1867, while Bjørnson was still director. To his desire to give Johannes Brun an opportunity for the display of his genius in the greatest of comic rôles we owe this version of

the play. Bjørnson obviously could not give both parts, and he chose to combine cuttings from the two into a single play with Falstaff as the central figure. The translation used was Lembcke's and the text was only slightly norvagicized.

Bjørnson's original prompt book is not now available. In 1910, however, H. Wiers Jensen, a playwright associated with the National Theater, shortened and slightly adapted the version for a revival of the play, which had not been seen in Kristiania since February 8, 1885. We may assume that in all essentials the prompt book of 1910 reproduces that of 1867.

In this *Kong Henrik IV* the action opens with I Henry IV, II-4, and Act I consists of this scene freely cut and equally freely handled in the distribution of speeches. The opening of the scene, for example, is cut away entirely and replaced by a brief account of the robbery put naively into the mouth of Poins. The opening of Act II is entirely new. Since all the historical scenes of Act I of the original have been omitted, it becomes necessary to give the audience some notion of the background. This is done in a few lines in which the King tells of the revolt of the nobles and of his own difficult situation. Then follows the king's speech from Part I, Act III, Sc. 2:

Lords, give us leave; the prince of Wales and I
must have some conference...

and what follows is the remainder of the scene with many cuttings. Sir Walter Blunt does not appear. His rôle is taken by Warwick.

Act II, Sc. 2 of Bjørnson's text follows Part I, Act III, Sc. 3 closely.

Act III, Sc. 1 corresponds with Part I, Act III, Sc. 1 to the point where Lady Mortimer and Lady Percy enter. This episode is cut and the scene resumes with the entrance of the messenger in Part I, Act IV, Sc. 1, line 14. This scene is then followed in outline to the end.

Act III, Sc. 2 begins with Part I, Act IV, Sc. 3 from the entrance of Falstaff, and follows it to the end of the scene. To this is added most of Scene 4, but there is little left of the original action. Only the Falstaff episodes are retained intact.

The last act (IV) is a wonderful composite. Scene 1 corresponds closely to Part II, Act III, Sc. 4, but it is, as usual, severely cut. Scene 2 reverts back to Part II, Act III, Sc. 2 and is based on this scene to line 246, after which it is free handling of Part II, Act V, Sc. 3. Scene 3 is based on Part II, Act V, Sc. 5.

A careful reading of Bjørnson's text with the above as a guide will show that this collection of episodes, chaotic as it seems, makes no ineffective play. With a genius—and a genius Johannes Brun was—as Falstaff, one can imagine that the piece went brilliantly. The press received it favorably, though the reviewers were much too critical to allow Bjørnson's mangling of the text to go unrebuked.

Aftenbladet has a careful review.^{[III.14](#)} The writer admits that in our day it requires courage and labor to put on one of Shakespeare's historical plays, for they were written for a stage radically different from ours. In the Elizabethan times the immense scale of these "histories" presented no difficulties. On a modern stage the mere bulk makes a faithful rendition impossible. And the moment one starts tampering with Shakespeare, trouble begins. No two adapters will agree as to what or how to cut. Moreover, it may well be questioned whether any such cutting as that made for the theater here would be tolerated in any other country with a higher and older Shakespeare "Kultur." The attempt to fuse the two parts of *Henry IV* would

be impossible in a country with higher standards. "Our theater can, however, venture undisturbed to combine these two comprehensive series of scenes into one which shall not require more time than each one of them singly—a venture, to be sure, which is not wholly without precedent in foreign countries. It is clear that the result cannot give an adequate notion of Shakespeare's 'histories' in all their richness of content, but it does, perhaps, give to the theater a series of worth-while problems to work out, the importance of which should not be underestimated. The attempt, too, has made our theater-goers familiar with Shakespeare's greatest comic character, apparently to their immense delight. Added to all this is the fact that the acting was uniformly excellent."

But by what right is the play called Henry IV? Practically nothing is left of the historical setting, and the spectator is at a loss to know just what the whole thing is about. Certainly the whole emphasis is shifted, for the king, instead of being an important character is overshadowed by Prince Hal. The Falstaff scenes, on the other hand, are left almost in their original fulness, and thus constitute a much more important part of the play than they do in the original. The article closes with a glowing tribute to Johannes Brun as Falstaff.

Morgenbladet^{III.15} goes into greater detail. The reviewer seems to think that Shakespeare had some deep purpose in dividing the material into two parts—he wished to have room to develop the character of Prince Henry.

"Accordingly, in the first part he gives us the early stages of Prince Hal's growth, beginning with the Prince of Wales as a sort of superior rake and tracing the development of his better qualities. In Part II we see the complete assertion of his spiritual and intellectual powers." The writer overlooks the fact that what Shakespeare was writing first of all—or rather, what he was revising—was a chronicle. If he required more than five acts to give the history of Henry IV he could use ten and call it two plays. If, in so doing, he gave admirable characterization, it was something inherent in his own genius, not in the materials with which he was working.

The history, says the reviewer, and the Falstaff scenes are the background for the study of the Prince, each one serving a distinct purpose. But here the history has been made meaningless and the Falstaff episodes have been put in the foreground. He points out that balance, proportion, and perspective are all lost by this. Yet, granting that such revolutionizing of a masterpiece

is ever allowable, it must be admitted that Bjørnson has done it with considerable skill. Bjørnson's purpose is clear enough. He knew that Johannes Brun as Falstaff would score a triumph, and this success for his theater he was determined to secure. The same motive was back of the version which Stjernstrøm put on in Stockholm, and there can be little doubt that his success suggested the idea to Bjørnson. The nature of the cutting reveals the purpose at every step. For instance, the scene in which the Gadskill robbery is made clear, is cut entirely. We thus lose the first glimpse of the sterner and manlier side of the royal reveller. In fact, if Bjørnson had been frank he would have called his play *Falstaff—based on certain scenes from Shakespeare's Henry IV, Parts I and II*.

Yet, though much has been lost, much of what remains is excellent. Brun's Falstaff almost reconciles us to the sacrifice. Long may he live and delight us with it! It is one of his most superb creations. The cast as a whole is warmly praised. It is interesting to note that at the close of the review the critic suggests that the text be revised with Hagberg's Swedish translation at hand, for Lembcke's Danish contains many words unusual or even unfamiliar in Norwegian.

Henry IV remained popular in Norway, although from February 8, 1885 to February 10, 1910 it was not given in Kristiania. When, in 1910, it was revived with Løvaas as Falstaff, the reception given it by the press was about what it had been a quarter of a century before. *Aftenposten's*^{III.16} comment is characteristic: "The play is turned upside down. The comic subplot with Falstaff as central figure is brought forward to the exclusion of all the rest. More than this, what is retained is shamelessly altered." Much more scathing is a short review by Christian Elster in the magazine *Kringsjaa*.^{III.17} The play, he declares, has obviously been given to help out the box office by speculating in the popularity of Falstaff. "There is no unity, no coherence, no consistency in the delineation of characters, and even from the comic scenes the spirit has fled."^{III.17}

To all this it may be replied that the public was right when it accepted Falstaff for what he was regardless of the violence done to the original. The Norwegian public cared little about the wars, little even about the king and the prince; but people will tell one today of those glorious evenings when

they sat in the theater and revelled in Johannes Brun as the big, elephantine knight.

In the spring of 1813, Foersom himself brought out *Hamlet* on the Danish stage. Nearly sixty years were to pass before this play was put on in Norway, March 4, 1870.

The press was not lavish in its praise. *Dagbladet*^{III.18} remarks that though the performance was not what it ought to have been, the audience followed it from first to last with undivided attention. *Aftenbladet*^{III.19} has a long and interesting review. Most of it is given over to a criticism of Isaachson's Hamlet. First of all, says the reviewer, Isaachson labors under the delusion that every line is cryptic, embodying a secret. This leads him to forget the volume of the part and to invent all sorts of fanciful interpretations for details. Thus he loses the unity of the character. Things are hurried through to a conclusion and the fine transitions are lost. For example, "Oh, that this too, too solid flesh would melt" is started well, but the speech at once gains in clearness and decision until one wonders at the close why such a Hamlet does not act at once with promptness and vigor. There are, to be sure, occasional excellences, but they do not conceal the fact that, as a whole, Isaachson does not understand Hamlet.

Since its first performance *Hamlet* has been given often in Norway—twenty-eight times at the old Christiania Theater, and (from October 31, 1907) seventeen times at the new National Theater. Its revival in 1907, after an intermission of twenty-four years, was a complete success, although *Morgenbladet*^{III.20} complained that the performance lacked light and inspiration. The house was full and the audience appreciative.

Aftenposten^{III.21} found the production admirable. Christensen's Hamlet was a stroke of genius. "Han er voxet i og med Rollen; han har trængt sig ind i den danske Prins' dybeste Individualitet." And of the revival the paper says: "The performance shows that a national theater can solve difficult problems when the effort is made with sympathy, joy, and devotion to art."

In my judgment no theater could have given a better caste for *The Merry Wives of Windsor* than that with which Christiania Theater was provided. All the actors were artists of distinction; and it is not strange, therefore, that the first performance was a huge success. *Aftenposten*^{III.22} declares that

Brun's Falstaff was a revelation. *Morgenbladet*^{III.23} says that the play was done only moderately well. Brun as Falstaff was, however, "especially amusing." *Aftenbladet*^{III.24} is more generous. "*The Merry Wives of Windsor* has been awaited with a good deal of interest. Next to the curiosity about the play itself, the chief attraction has been Brun as Falstaff. And though Falstaff as lover gives no such opportunities as Falstaff, the mock hero, Brun makes a notable rôle out of it because he knows how to seize upon and bring out all there is in it."

Johannes Brun's Falstaff is a classic to this day on the Norwegian stage. In *Illustreret Tidende* for July 12, 1874, K.A. Winterhjelm has a short appreciation of his work. "Johannes Brun has, as nearly as we can estimate, played something like three hundred rôles at Christiania Theater. Many of them, to be sure, are minor parts—but there remains a goodly number of important ones, from the clown in the farce to the chief parts in the great comedies. Merely to enumerate his great successes would carry us far afield. We recall in passing that he has given us Falstaff both in *Henry IV* and in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Autolycus in *A Winter's Tale*. Perhaps he lacks something of the nobleman we feel that he should be in *Henry IV*, but aside from this petty criticism, what a wondrous comic character Brun has given us!"

As to the success of *Coriolanus*, the sixteenth of Shakespeare's plays to be put on in Kristiania, neither the newspapers nor the magazines give us any clew. If we may believe a little puff in *Aftenposten* for January 20, 1874, the staging was to be magnificent. *Coriolanus* was played in a translation by Hartvig Lassen for the first time on January 21, 1874. After thirteen performances it was withdrawn on January 10, 1876, and has not been since presented.

In 1877, *Richard III* was brought on the boards for the first time, but apparently the occasion was not considered significant, for there is scarcely a notice of it. The public seemed surfeited with Shakespeare, although the average had been less than one Shakespearean play a season. At all events, it was ten years before the theater put on a new one—*Julius Caesar*, on March 22, 1888. It had the unheard of distinction of being acted sixteen times in one month, from the premiere night to April 22. Yet the papers passed it by with indifference. Most of them gave it merely a notice, and the promised review in *Aftenposten* never appeared.

Julius Caesar is the last new play to be presented at Christiania Theater or at the National Theater, which replaced the old Christiania Theater in 1899. From October, 1899 to January, 1913 the National Theater has presented eight Shakespearean plays, but every one of them has been a revival of plays previously presented.

Bergen

Up to a few years ago, the only theater of consequence in Norway, outside of the capital, was at Bergen. In many respects the history of the theater at Bergen is more interesting than that of the theater at Christiania. Established in 1850, while Christiania Theater was still largely Danish, to foster Norwegian dramatic art, it is associated with the greatest names in Norwegian art and letters. The theater owes its origin mainly to Ole Bull; Henrik Ibsen was official playwright from 1851 to 1857, and Bjørnson was director from 1857 to 1859. For a dozen years or more "Den Nationale Scene i Bergen" led a precarious existence and finally closed its doors in 1863. In 1876 the theater was reopened. During the first period only two Shakespearean plays were given—*Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*.

As You Like It in Stille Beyer's version was played twice during the season 1855-56, on September 30 and October 3. The press is silent about the performances, but doubtless we may accept Blanc's statement that the task was too severe for the Bergen theater.[III.25](#)

Rather more successful were the two performances of *Twelfth Night* in a stage version adapted from the German of Deinhardstein. The celebrated Laura Svendsen played the double rôle of Sebastian-Viola with conspicuous success.[III.26](#)

The Merchant of Venice was given for the first time on October 9, 1878, two years after the reopening of the theater. *Bergens Tidende*[III.27](#) calls the production "a creditable piece of amateur theatricals," insisting in a review of some length that the young theater cannot measure up to the demands which a play of Shakespeare's makes. *Bergensposten* is less severe. Though far from faultless, the presentation was creditable, in some details excellent. But, quite apart from its absolute merits, there is great satisfaction in seeing

the theater undertake plays that are worth while.^{III.28} Both papers agree that the audience was large and enthusiastic.

The next season *A Winter's Tale* was given in H.P. Holst's translation and adaptation of Dingelstedt's German acting version *Ein Wintermärchen*. The press greeted it enthusiastically. *Bergens Tidende*^{III.29} says: "*A Winter's Tale* was performed at our theater yesterday in a manner that won the enthusiastic applause of a large gathering. The principal actors were called before the curtain again and again. It is greatly to the credit of any theater to give a Shakespeare drama, and all the more so when it can do it in a form as artistically perfect as was yesterday's presentation."

Concerning *Othello*, third in order in the Shakespearean repertoire in Bergen, the reviews of the first performance, November 13, 1881, are conflicting. *Bergens Tidende*^{III.30} is all praise. It has no hesitation in pronouncing Johannesen's Iago a masterpiece. *Bergensposten*^{III.31} calls the performance passable but utterly damns Johannesen—"nothing short of a colossal blunder." Hr. Johannesen is commended to the easily accessible commentaries of Taine and Genée, and to Hamlet's speech to the players. Desdemona and Cassio are dismissed in much the same fashion.

A few days later, November 18, *Bergensposten* reviewed the performance again and was glad to note a great improvement.

Bergens Adressecontoirs Efterretninger^{III.32} agrees with *Bergensposten* in its estimate of Johannesen. "He gives us only the villain in Iago, not the cunning Ensign who deceives so many." But Desdemona was thoroughly satisfying.

Whatever may have been its initial success, *Othello* did not last. It was given four times during the season 1881-2, but was then dropped and has never since been taken up.

Three different groups of *Hamlet* performances have been given in Bergen. In September, 1883, the Ophelia scenes from Act IV were given; the complete play, however, was not given till November 28, 1886. The press,^{III.33} for once, was unanimous in declaring the production a success. It is interesting that an untried actor at his debut was entrusted with the rôle. But, to judge from the press comments, Hr. Løchen more than justified the

confidence in him. His interpretation of the subtlest character in Shakespeare was thoroughly satisfying. [III.34](#)

Finally, it should be noted that a Swedish travelling company under the direction of the well-known August Lindberg played *Hamlet* in Bergen on November 5, 1895.

It is apparent, from the tone of the press comment that a Shakespearean production was regarded as a serious undertaking. The theater approached the task hesitatingly, and the newspapers always qualify their praise or their blame with some apologetic remark about "the limited resources of our theater." This explains the long gaps between new productions, five years between *Othello* (1881) and the complete *Hamlet* (1886); five years likewise between *Hamlet* and *King Henry IV*.

Henry IV in Bjørnson's stage cutting promised at first to establish itself. Its first performance was greeted by a crowded house, and enthusiasm ran high. The press questions the right of the play to the title of *Henry IV*, since it is a collection of scenes grouped about Prince Hal and Falstaff. But aside from this purely objective criticism the comment is favorable. [III.35](#)

With the second performance (March 4, 1891) comes a change. *Bergens Tidende* remarks that it is a common experience that a second performance is not so successful as the first. Certainly this was true in the case of *Henry IV*. The life and sparkle were gone, and the sallies of Falstaff awakened no such infectious laughter as they had a few evenings before. [III.36](#) There was no applause from the crowded house, and the coolness of the audience reacted upon the players—all in violent contrast to the first performance. The reviewer in *Aftenbladet* predicts that the production will have no very long life. [III.37](#) He was right. It was given once more, on March 6. Since then the theater-goers of Bergen have not seen it on their own stage.

Sille Beyer's *Viola* (which, in turn, is an adaptation of the German of Deinhardstein) had been played twice at the old Bergen Theater, July 17 and 18, 1861. It was now (Oct. 9, 1892) revived in a new cutting based on Lembcke's Danish translation. *Bergens Aftenblad* declares that the cutting was reckless and the staging almost beggarly. The presentation itself hardly rose above the mediocre. [III.38](#) *Bergens Tidende*, on the other hand, reports that the performance was an entire success. The caste was unexpectedly

strong; the costumes and scenery splendid. The audience was appreciative and there was generous applause.^{[III.39](#)}

The last new play to find a place on the repertoire at Bergen is *Romeo and Juliet*. This was performed four times in May, 1897. Like *Henry IV*, it promised to be a great success, but it survived only four performances.

Bergens Tidende^{[III.40](#)} gives a careful, well-written analysis of the play and of the presentation. The reviewer gives full credit for the beauty of the staging and the excellence of the acting, but criticises the censor sharply for the unskillful cutting, and the stage manager for the long, tiresome waits.

Bergens Aftenblad^{[III.41](#)} praises the performance almost without reserve.

And the last chapter in the history of Shakespeare's dramas in Bergen is a revival of *A Winter's Tale* in the season 1902-3. The theater had done its utmost to give a splendid and worthy setting, and great care was given to the rehearsals. The result was a performance which, for beauty, symmetry, and artistic unity ranks among the very best that have ever been seen at the theater. The press was unanimous in its cordial recognition.^{[III.42](#)} The play was given no less than nine times during October, 1902. Since then Shakespeare has not been given at *Den Nationale Scene i Bergen*.

[III.1.](#) Blanc: *Christianias Theaters Historie*, p. 51.

[III.2.](#) Blanc does not refer to this performance in his *Historie*. But this and all other data of performances from 1844 to 1899 are taken from his "Fortegnelse over alle dramatiske Arbejder, som siden Kristiania Offentlige Theaters Aabning, den 30. Januar 1827, har vært opført af dets Personale indtil 15 Juni 1899." The work is unpublished. Ms 4to, No. 940 in the University Library, Christiania.

[III.3.](#) See p. 94, note 1.

[III.4.](#) See Aumont og Collin: *Det Danske Nationalteater*. V Afsnit, pp. 118 ff.

[III.5.](#) *Christiania Posten*. [November 15, 1845](#).

[III.6.](#) *Morgenbladet*. [November 15, 1845](#).

[III.7.](#) *Christiania Posten*. Dec. 12, 1852.

[III.8.](#) *Aftenposten*. Sept. 21, 1878.

- [III.9.](#) See Blanc's *Fortegnelse*. p. 93.
- [III.10.](#) See Blanc's *Fortegnelse*. p. 93.
- [III.11.](#) *Aftenbladet*. [March 22, 1858](#).
- [III.12.](#) November 23, 1860.
- [III.13.](#) May 5, 1866.
- [III.14.](#) February 18, 1867.
- [III.15.](#) February 17, 1867.
- [III.16.](#) *Aftenposten*. February 25, 1910.
- [III.17.](#) *Kringsjaa* XV, III (1910), p. 173.
- [III.18.](#) March 5, 1870.
- [III.19.](#) March 8, 1870.
- [III.20.](#) November 1, [1907](#).
- [III.21.](#) November 1, 1907.
- [III.22.](#) May 15, 1873.
- [III.23.](#) May 15, 1873.
- [III.24.](#) May 15, 1873.
- [III.25.](#) Norges Første Nationale Scene. Kristiania. 1884, p. 206.
- [III.26.](#) *Ibid.*, p. 304.
- [III.27.](#) *Bergens Tidende*, October 10, 1878.
- [III.28.](#) *Bergensposten*, October 11, 1878.
- [III.29.](#) April 20, 1880. Cf. also *Bergensposten*, April 21, 1880.
- [III.30.](#) November 14, 1881.
- [III.31.](#) November 15, 1881.
- [III.32.](#) November 15, 1881.
- [III.33.](#) Cf. *Bergens Tidende*, November 29, 1886; *Bergens Aftenblad*, November 29, 1886; *Bergensposten*, December 2, 1886.
- [III.34.](#) Cf. *Bergens Tidende*, November 30, 1886; *Bergens Aftenblad*, November 29, 1886; *Bergensposten*, December 1, 1886.

[III.35.](#) Cf. *Bergens Tidende*, March 2, 1891; *Bergens Aftenblad*, March 2, 1891.

[III.36.](#) Cf. March 5, 1891.

[III.37.](#) Cf. March 5, 1891.

[III.38.](#) October 10, 1892.

[III.39.](#) October 10 and 13, 1892.

[III.40.](#) May 15, 1897.

[III.41.](#) May 15, 1897.

[III.42.](#) See *Bergens Aftenblad* for October 6-9, 1902; *Bergens Tidende*, October 6, 1902.

APPENDIX

REGISTER OF SHAKESPEAREAN PERFORMANCES IN NORWAY

Kristiania

I. Christiania Theater.

The following record is an excerpt of all the data relating to Shakespeare in T. Blanc: *Fortegnelse over alle dramatiske Arbejder, som siden Kristiania Theaters offentlige Aabning den 30 Januar, 1827, har været opførte paa samme af dets Personale indtil 15 Juni 1899*. This *Fortegnelse* is still unpublished. The MS. is quarto No. 940 in the University Library, Kristiania.

1. BLIND ALARM. Skuespil i fem Akter af Shakespeare. (Original Title: *Much Ado About Nothing*). Translated by Carl Borgaard, from the nineteenth performance, May 18, 1878, under the title *Stor Staahei for Ingenting*), Oct. 29, 1854, May 26, 1878. 18 times.
2. CORIOLANUS. Sørgespil i 5 Akter af Shakespeare, bearbejdet for Scenen af H. Lassen. Jan. 21, 1874—Jan. 10, 1876. 13 times.
3. DE MUNTRE KONER I WINDSOR. Lystspil i 5 Akter af Shakespeare. (Adapted for the stage by H. Lassen.) May 14, 1873, Nov. 8, 1876. 12 times.
4. EN SKJÆRSOMMERNATSDRØM. Eventyrkomedie i 5 Akter af W. Shakespeare. (Original Title: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.) Translated by Oehlenschläger. Music by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. April 17, 1865, May 27, 1866. 10 times.
5. ET VINTEREVENTYR. Romantisk Skuespil i 5 Akter. Adapted from Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale* and Dinglestedt's *Ein Wintermärchen* by H.P. Holst. Music by Flotow. May 4, 1866, March 21, 1893. 57 times.
6. HAMLET. Tragedie i 5 Akter af W. Shakespeare. Translated by Foersom and Lembcke. March 4, 1870, April 27, 1883. 28 times.

7. HUN MAA TÆMMES. Lystspil i 4 Akter. Adapted from Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. March 21, 1858, April 12, 1881. 28 times.
8. JULIUS CAESAR. Tragedie i 5 Akter af William Shakespeare. Translated by H. Lassen. March 22, 1887, April 22, 1887. 16 times.
9. KJØBMANDEN I VENEDIG. Skuespil i 5 Akter af Shakespeare. Adapted for the stage from Rahbek's translation. From the eighth performance (Oct. 14, 1874) probably in a new translation by Lembcke. Sept. 17, 1861, June 12, 1882. 23 times.
10. KONG HENRIK DEN FJERDE. Skuespil i 5 Akter af W. Shakespeare. Adapted by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson from *King Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2* in Lembcke's translation. Feb. 12, 1867, Feb. 8, 1885. 17 times.
11. KONG RICHARD III. Tragedie i 5 Akter af W. Shakespeare. Translated by Lembcke. May 27, 1877, March 10, 1891. 26 times.
12. KONGENS LÆGE. Romantisk Lystspil i 5 Akter efter Shakespeares *All's Well That Ends Well*. Adapted by Sille Beyer. From the thirteenth performance (May 23, 1869) given under the title *Naar Enden er god er Alting godt* in a new translation by Edvard Lembcke. Jan. 5, 1854, Jan. 24, 1882. 20 times.
13. LIVET I SKOVEN. Romantisk Lystspil i 4 Akter efter Shakespeares *As You Like It*. Adapted by Sille Beyer. Dec. 9, 1852, Sept. 25, 1878. 19 times.
14. MACBETH. Tragedie i 5 Akter af W. Shakespeare. Schiller's version translated by Peter Foersom. Music by Weyse. July 28, 1844, Jan. 6, 1896. 37 times.
15. OTHELLO, MOREN AF VENEDIG. Tragedie i 5 Akter af Shakespeare. Translated by P.L. Wulff. Jan. 3, 1845, March 10, 1872. 10 times.
16. ROMEO OG JULIE. Tragedie i 5 Akter af W. Shakespeare. Translated by P. Foersom and A.E. Boye. From the sixth performance (April 4, 1880) probably in a new translation by Lembcke. Nov. 11, 1852, July 12, 1899. 42 times.
17. VIOLA. Lystspil i 5 Akter efter Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Translated and adapted by Sille Beyer. From the thirteenth performance (Jan. 21, 1890) under the title *Helligtrekongersaften, eller hvad man vil*. (In Lembcke's translation with music by Catherinus Elling.) Nov. 20, 1860, May 31, 1891. 30 times.

II. Nationaltheatret.

The record of the Shakespearean performances at Nationaltheatret has been compiled from the summary of performances given in the decade 1899-1909 contained in *Beretning om Nationaltheatrets Virksomhed i Aaret 1909-1910*. Kristiania, 1910. The record of performances subsequent to 1910, as well as the date of the first performances of all plays, has been found in the Journal of the theater.

1. HELLIGTREKONGERSAFTEN. (Twelfth Night). Oct. 5, 1899. 10 times.
2. TROLD KAN TÆMMES. (The Taming of the Shrew.) Dec. 26, 1900. 35 times.
3. EN SOMMERNATS DRÖM. (A Midsummer Night's Dream) Jan. 15, 1903. 20 times.
4. KJÖBMANDEN I VENEDIG. (The Merchant of Venice) Sept. 5, 1906. 20 times.
5. HAMLET. Oct. 31, 1907. 17 times.
6. OTHELLO. Oct. 22, 1908. 12 times.
7. HENRY IV. Feb. 10, 1910. 10 times.
8. AS YOU LIKE IT. Nov. 7, 1912. This play was still being given when the investigation ceased. Ten performances had been given.

Bergen

I. The First Theater in Bergen (1850-1863)

The information relating to Shakespeare at the old theater is gathered from T. Blanc: *Norges første nationale Scene. Bergen 1850-1863. Et Bidrag til den norske dramatiske Kunsts Historie. Kristiania, 1884.*

1. LIVET I SKOVEN. Romantisk Skuespil i 4 Akter efter Shakespeares *As You Like It*. Adapted by Sille Beyer. Sept. 30 and Oct. 9, 1855. 2 times.
2. VIOLA. Lystspil i 5 Akter efter Deinhardsteins Bearbejdelse af Shakespeares *What You Will*. Adapted by Sille Beyer. July 17 and 18, 1861. 2 times.

II. The New Theater at Bergen (1876)

The following data have been communicated to me by Hr. Christian Landal, of the theater at Bergen. They have been compiled from the *Journal (Spillejournal)* of the theater.

1. KJÖBMANDEN I VENEDIG (The Merchant of Venice) Oct. 9, 11, 13, 1878. Friday, June 18, 1880, the Shylock scenes, with Emil Paulsen (of the Royal Theater in Copenhagen) as guest. 4 times.
2. ET VINTEREVENTYR. (A Winter's Tale) April 19, 21, 25, 26, 28, 1880; May 9, 1880; Nov. 28, 29, 1889; Oct. 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 20, 1902. 18 times.
3. OTHELLO. Nov. 13, 16, 18, 28, 1881. 4 times.
4. HAMLET. Nov. 28 and 29; Dec. 1, 5, 19, 1886. The Ophelia scenes from Act 4 with Ida Falberg Kiachas as guest. Sept. 12, 14, 16, 21, 1883. Guest performance by August Lindberg and his Swedish company. Nov. 15, 1895. 10 times.
5. HELLIGTREKONGERSAFTEN. (*Twelfth Night*) in Lembcke's translation. Oct. 9, 12, 14, 16, 1892; April 23, 1893 in Stavanger. 5 times.
6. ROMEO OG JULIE. May 12, 16, 19, 27, 1897. 4 times.

SUMMARY

There have been played in Christiania seventeen plays of Shakespeare's with a total of 540 performances. In Bergen seven Shakespearean plays have been played with a total of 49 performances.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK AN ESSAY
TOWARD A HISTORY OF SHAKESPEARE IN NORWAY ***

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