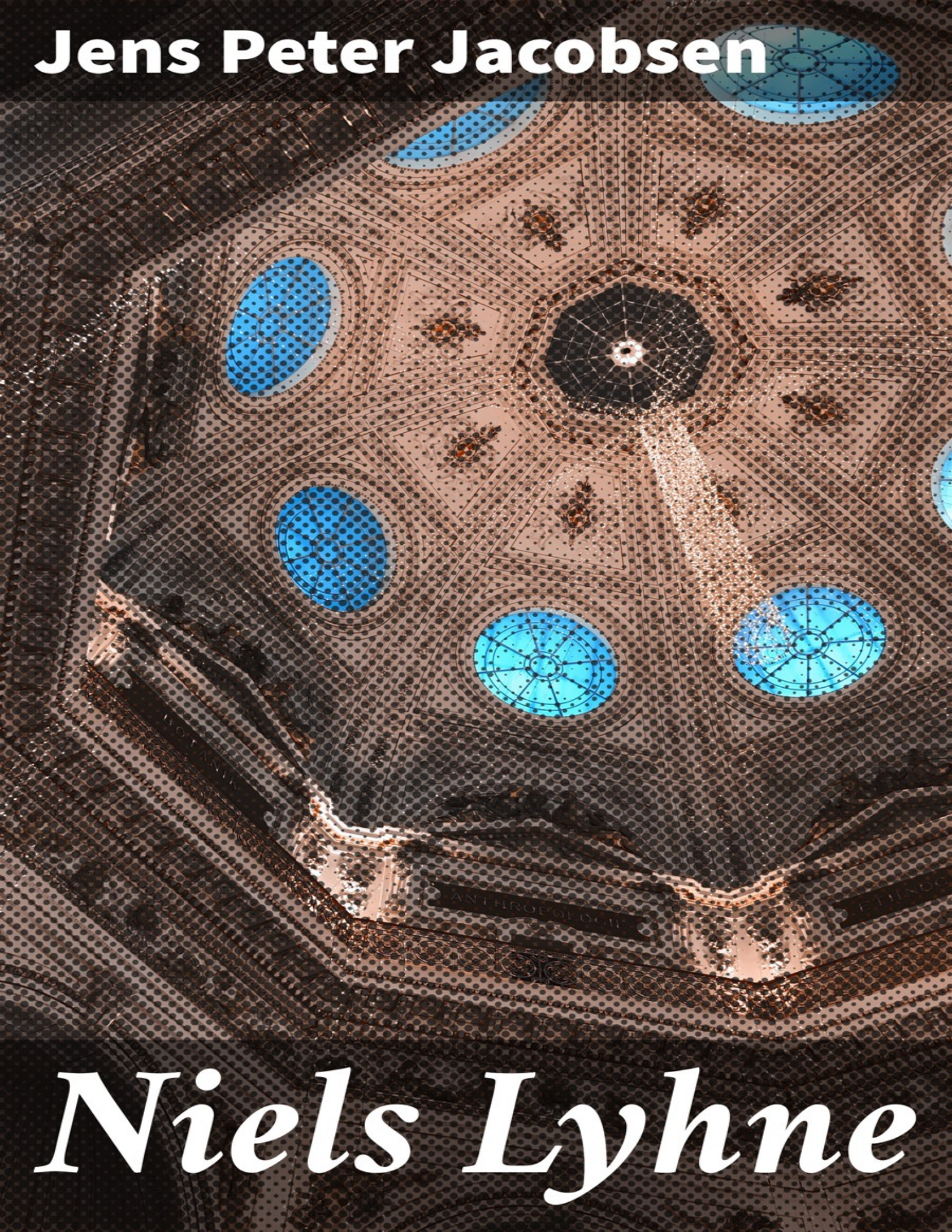
Jens Peter Jacobsen



Niels Lyhne

Jens Peter Jacobsen

Niels Lyhne

Published by Good Press, 2022

goodpress@okpublishing.info

EAN 4066338088857

Table of Contents

Chapter I

Table of Contents

SHE had the black, luminous eyes of the Blid family, with delicate, straight eyebrows; she had their boldly shaped nose, their strong chin, and full lips. The curious line of mingled pain and sensuousness about the corners of her mouth was likewise an inheritance from them, and so were the restless movements of her head. But her cheek was pale, her hair was soft as silk and was wound smoothly around her head.

Not so the Blids; their coloring was of roses and bronze. Their hair was rough and curly, heavy as a mane, and their full, deep, resonant voices bore out the tales told of their forefathers, whose noisy hunting parties, solemn morning prayers, and thousand and one amorous adventures were matters of family tradition.

Her voice was languid and colorless. I am describing her as she was at seventeen. A few years later, after she had been married, her voice gained fullness, her cheek took on a fresher tint, and her eye lost some of its luster, but seemed even larger and more intensely black.

At seventeen she did not at all resemble her brothers and sisters; nor was there any great intimacy between herself and her parents. The Blid family were practical folk who accepted things as they were; they did their

work, slept their sleep, and never thought of demanding any diversions beyond the harvest home and three or four Christmas parties. They never passed through any religious experiences, but they would no more have dreamed of not rendering unto God what was God's than they would have neglected to pay their taxes. Therefore they said their evening prayers, went to church at Easter and Whitsun, sang their hymns on Christmas Eve, and partook of the Lord's Supper twice a year. They had no particular thirst for knowledge. As for their love of beauty, they were by no means insensible to the charm of little sentimental ditties, and when summer came with thick, luscious grass in the meadows and grain sprouting in broad fields, they would sometimes say to one another that this was a fine time for traveling about the country, but their natures had nothing of the poetic; beauty never stirred any raptures in them, and they were never visited by vague longings or day-dreams.

Bartholine was not of their kind. She had no interest in the affairs of the fields and the stables, no taste for the dairy and the kitchen--none whatever.

She loved poetry.

She lived on poems, dreamed poems, and put her faith in them above everything else in the world. Parents, sisters and brothers, neighbors and friends--none of them ever said a word that was worth listening to. Their thoughts never rose above their land and their business; their eyes never sought anything beyond the conditions and affairs that were right before them.

But the poems! They teemed with new ideas and profound truths about life in the great outside world, where

grief was black, and joy was red; they glowed with images, foamed and sparkled with rhythm and

---

rhyme. They were all about young girls, and the girls were noble and beautiful--how noble and beautiful they never knew themselves. Their hearts and their love meant more than the wealth of all the earth; men bore them up in their hands, lifted them high in the sunshine of joy, honored and worshiped them, and were delighted to share with them their thoughts and plans, their triumphs and renown. They would even say that these same fortunate girls had inspired all the plans and achieved all the triumphs.

Why might not she herself be such a girl? They were thus and so--and they never knew it themselves. How was she to know what she really was? And the poets all said very plainly that this was life, and that it was not life to sit and sew, work about the house, and make stupid calls.

When all this was sifted down, it meant little beyond a slightly morbid desire to realize herself, a longing to find herself, which she had in common with many other young girls with talents a little above the ordinary. It was only a pity that there was not in her circle a single individual of sufficient distinction to give her the measure of her own powers. There was not even a kindred nature. So she came to look upon herself as something wonderful, unique, a sort of exotic plant that had grown in these ungentle climes and had barely strength enough to unfold its leaves; though in more genial warmth, under a more powerful sun, it might have shot up, straight and tall, with a gloriously rich and

brilliant bloom. Such was the image of her real self that she carried in her mind. She dreamed a thousand dreams of those sunlit regions and was consumed with longing for this other and richer self, forgetting--what is so easily forgotten--that even the

---

fairest dreams and the deepest longings do not add an inch to the stature of the human soul.

One fine day a suitor came to her.

Young Lyhne of Lönborggaard was the man, and he was the last male scion of a family whose members had for three generations been among the most distinguished people in the country. As burgomasters, revenue collectors, or royal commissioners, often rewarded with the title of councillor of justice, the Lyhnes in their maturer years had served king and country with diligence and honor. In their younger days they had traveled in France and Germany, and these trips, carefully planned and carried out with great thoroughness, had enriched their receptive minds with all the scenes of beauty and the knowledge of life that foreign lands had to offer. Nor were these years of travel pushed into the background, after their return, as mere reminiscences, like the memory of a feast after the last candle has burned down and the last note of music has died away. No, life in their homes was built on these years; the tastes awakened in this manner were not allowed to languish, but were nourished and developed by every means at their command. Rare copper plates, costly bronzes, German poetry, French

juridical works, and French philosophy were everyday matters and common topics in the Lyhne households.

Their bearing had an old-fashioned ease, a courtly graciousness, which contrasted oddly with the heavy majesty and awkward pomposity of the other county families. Their speech was well rounded, delicately precise, a little marred, perhaps, by rhetorical affectation, yet it somehow went well with those large, broad figures with their domelike foreheads, their bushy hair growing far back on their temples, their calm, smiling eyes, and

---

slightly aquiline noses. The lower part of the face was too heavy, however, the mouth too wide, and the lips much too full.

Young Lyhne showed all these physical traits, but more faintly, and, in the same manner, the family intelligence seemed to have grown weary in him. None of the mental problems of finer artistic enjoyments that he encountered stirred him to any zeal or desire whatsoever. He had simply striven with them in a painstaking effort which was never brightened by joy in feeling his own powers unfold or pride in finding them adequate. Mere satisfaction in a task accomplished was the only reward that came to him.

His estate, Lönborggaard, had been left him by an uncle who had recently died, and he had returned from the traditional trip abroad in order to take over the management. As the Blid family were the nearest neighbors of his own rank, and his uncle had been intimate with them, he called, met Bartholine, and fell in love with her.

That she should fall in love with him was almost a foregone conclusion.

Here at last was some one from the outside world, some one who had lived in great, distant cities, where forests of spires were etched on a sunlit sky, where the air was vibrant with chimes of bells, the pealing of organs, and the twanging of mandolins, while festal processions, resplendent with gold and colors, wound their way through broad streets; where marble mansions shone, where noble families flaunted bright escutcheons hung two by two over wide portals, while fans flashed, and veils fluttered over the sculptured vines of curving balconies. Here was one who had sojourned where victorious armies had tramped the roads, where tremendous battles

---

had invested the names of villages and fields with immortal fame, where smoke rising from gypsy fires trailed over the leafy masses of the forest, where red ruins looked down from vine-wreathed hills into the smiling valley, while water surged over the mill-wheel, and cowbells tinkled as the herds came home over wide-arched bridges.

All these things he told about, not as the poems did, but in a matter-of-fact way, as familiarly as the people at home talked about the villages in their own county or the next parish. He talked of painters and poets, too, and sometimes he would laud to the skies a name that she had never even heard. He showed her their pictures and read their poems to her in the garden or on the hill where they could look out over the bright waters of the fjord and the brown, billowing

heath. Love made him poetic; the view took on beauty, the clouds seemed like those drifting through the poems, and the trees were clothed in the leaves rustling so mournfully in the ballads.

Bartholine was happy; for her love enabled her to dissolve the twenty-four hours into a string of romantic episodes. It was romance when she went down the road to meet him; their meeting was romance, and so was their parting. It was romance when she stood on the hilltop in the light of the setting sun and waved one last farewell before going up to her quiet little chamber, wistfully happy, to give herself up to thoughts of him; and when she included his name in her evening prayer, that was romance, too.

She no longer felt the old vague desires and longings. The new life with its shifting moods gave her all she craved, and moreover her thoughts and ideas had been clarified through having someone to whom she could speak freely without fear of being misunderstood.

She was changed in another way, too. Happiness had made her more amiable toward her parents and sisters and brothers. She discovered that, after all, they had more intelligence than she had supposed and more feeling.

And so they were married.

The first year passed very much as their courtship; but when their wedded life had lost its newness, Lyhne could no longer conceal from himself that he wearied of always seeking new expressions for his love. He was tired of donning the plumage of romance and eternally spreading

his wings to fly through all the heavens of sentiment and all the abysses of thought. He longed to settle peacefully on his own quiet perch and drowse, with his tired head under the soft, feathery shelter of a wing. He had never conceived of love as an ever-wakeful, restless flame, casting its strong, flickering light into every nook and corner of existence, making everything seem fantastically large and strange. Love to him was more like the quiet glow of embers on their bed of ashes, spreading a gentle warmth, while the faint dusk wraps all distant things in forgetfulness and makes the near seem nearer and more intimate.

He was tired, worn out. He could not stand all this romance. He longed for the firm support of the commonplace under his feet, as a fish, suffocating in hot air, languishes for the clear, fresh coolness of the waves. It must end sometime, when it had run its course. Bartholine was no longer inexperienced either in books or in life. She knew them as well as he. He had given her all he had--and now he was expected to go on giving. It was impossible; he had nothing more. There was only one comfort: Bartholine was with child.

Bartholine had long realized with sorrow that her con-

---

ception of Lyhne was changing little by little, and that he no longer stood on the dizzy pinnacle to which she had raised him in the days of their courtship. While she did not yet doubt that he was at bottom what she called a poetic nature, she had begun to feel a little uneasy; for the cloven hoof of prose had shown itself once and again. This only

made her pursue romance the more ardently, and she tried to bring back the old state of things by lavishing on him a still greater wealth of sentiment and a still greater rapture, but she met so little response that she almost felt as if she were stilted and unnatural. For a while she tried to drag Lyhne with her, in spite of his resistance; she refused to accept what she suspected; but when, at last, the failure of her efforts made her begin to doubt whether her own mind and heart really possessed the treasures she had imagined, then she suddenly left him alone, became cool, silent, and reserved, and often went off by herself to grieve over her lost illusions. For she saw it all now, and was bitterly disappointed to find that Lyhne, in his inmost self, was no whit different from people she used to live among. She had merely been deceived by the very ordinary fact that his love, for a brief moment, had invested him with a fleeting glamor of soulfulness and exaltation--a very common occurrence with persons of a lower nature.

Lyhne was grieved and anxious, too, over the change in their relationship, and tried to mend matters by unlucky attempts at the old romantic flights, but it all availed nothing except to show Bartholine yet more clearly how great had been her mistake.

Such was the state of things between man and wife when Bartholine brought forth her first child. It was a boy, and they called him Niels.

Chapter II

Table of Contents

IN a way, the child brought the parents together again. Over his little cradle they would meet in a common hope, a common joy, and a common fear; of him they would think, and of him they would talk, each as often and as readily as the other, and each was grateful to the other for the child and for all the happiness and love he brought.

Yet they were still far apart.

Lyhne was quite absorbed in his farming and the affairs of the parish. Not that he took the position of a leader or even of a reformer, but he gave scrupulous attention to the existing order of things, looked on as an interested spectator, and carried out the cautious improvements recommended, after deliberate--very deliberate--consideration, by his old head servant or the elders of the parish.

It never occurred to him to make any use of the knowledge he had acquired in earlier days. He had too little faith in what he called theories and far too great respect for the time-hallowed, venerable dogmas of experience which other people called practical. In fact, there was nothing about him to indicate that he had not lived here and lived thus all his life--except one little trait. He had a habit of sitting for half hours at a time, quite motionless, on a stile or a boundary stone, looking out over the lusc-

ious green rye or the golden top-heavy oats, in a strange, vegetative trance. This was a relic of other days; it recalled his former self, the young Lyhne.

Bartholine, in her world, was by no means so ready to adapt herself quickly and with a good grace. No, she first had to voice her sorrow through the verses of a hundred poets, lamenting, in all the broad generalities of the period, the thousands of barriers and fetters that oppress humanity. Sometimes her lament would be clothed in lofty indignation, flinging its wordy froth against the thrones of emperors and the dungeons of tyrants; sometimes it would take the form of a calm, pitying sorrow, looking on as the effulgent light of beauty faded from a blind and slavish generation cowed and broken by the soulless bustle of the day; then again it would appear only as a gentle sigh for the freedom of the bird in its flight and of the cloud drifting lightly into the distance.

At last she grew tired of lamenting, and the impotence of her grief goaded her into doubt and bitterness. Like worshipers who beat their saint and tread him under foot when he refuses to show his power, she would scoff at the romance she once idolized, and scornfully ask herself whether she did not expect the bird Roc to appear presently in the cucumber bed, or Aladdin's cave to open under the floor of the milk cellar. She would answer herself in a sort of childish cynicism, pretending that the world was excessively prosaic, calling the moon green cheese and the roses potpourri, all with a sense of taking revenge and at the same time with a half uneasy, half fascinated feeling that she was committing blasphemy.

These attempts at setting herself free were futile. She sank back into the dreams of her girlhood, but with the

---

difference that now they were no longer illumined by hope. Moreover, she had learned that they were only dreams--distant, illusive dreams, which no longing in the world could ever draw down to her earth. When she abandoned herself to them now, it was with a sense of weariness, while an accusing inner voice told her that she was like the drunkard who knows that his passion is destroying him, that every debauch means strength taken from his weakness and added to the power of his desire. But the voice sounded in vain, for a life soberly lived, without the fair vice of dreams, was no life at all--life had exactly the value that dreams gave it and no more.

So widely different, then, were Niels Lyhne's father and mother, the two friendly powers that struggled unconsciously for mastery over his young soul from the moment the first gleam of intelligence in him gave them something to work on. As the child grew older, the struggle became more intense and was waged with a greater variety of weapons.

The faculty in the boy through which the mother tried to influence him was his imagination. He had plenty of imagination, but even when he was a very small boy, it was evident that he felt a great difference between the fairy world his mother's words conjured up and the world that really existed. Often his mother would tell him stories and describe the woeful plight of the hero, until Niels could not

see any way out of all this trouble, and could not understand how the misery closing like an impenetrable wall tighter and tighter around him and the hero could be overcome. Then it happened quite a number of times that he would suddenly press his cheek against his mother's and whisper, with eyes full of tears

---

and lips trembling, "But it isn't *really* true?" And when he had received the comforting answer he wanted, he would heave a deep sigh of relief and settle down contentedly to listen to the end.

His mother did not quite like this defection.

When he grew too old for fairy tales, and she tired of inventing them, she would tell him, with some embroideries of her own, about the heroes of war and peace, choosing those that lent themselves to pointing a moral about the power dwelling in a human soul when it wills one thing only and neither allows itself to be discouraged by the short-sighted doubts of the moment nor to be enticed into a soft, enervating peace.

All her stories went to this tune, and when history had no more heroes that suited her, she chose an imaginary hero, one whose deeds and fate she could shape as she pleased--a hero after her own heart, spirit of her spirit, aye, flesh of her flesh and the blood of hers, too.

A few years after Niels was born, she had brought forth a still-born boy child, and him she chose. All that he might have been and done she served up before his brother in a confused medley of Promethean longings, Messianic

courage, and Herculean might, with a naive travesty, a monstrous distortion, a world of cheap fantasies, having no more body of reality than had the tiny little skeleton mouldering in the earth of Lonborg graveyard.

Niels was not deceived about the moral of all these tales. He realized perfectly that it was contemptible to be like ordinary people, and he was quite ready to submit to the hard fate that belonged to heroes. In imagination he willingly suffered the wearisome struggles, the ill fortunes, the martyrdom of being misjudged, and the vic-

---

tories without peace; but at the same time he felt a wondrous relief in thinking that it was so far away, that nothing of all this would happen before he was grown up.

As the dream-figures and dream-tones of night may walk abroad in the wakeful day like vapory forms, mere shadows of sound, calling on thought and holding it for a fleeting second, as it listens and wonders whether anyone really called--so the images of that dream-born future whispered softly through Niels Lyhne's childhood, reminding him gently but ceaselessly of the fact that there was a limit set to this happy time, and that presently one day it would be no more.

This consciousness roused in him a craving to enjoy his childhood to the full, to suck it up through every sense, not to spill a drop, not a single one. Therefore his play had intensity, sometimes lashed into a passion, under the pressure of an uneasy sense that time was flowing away from him before he could gather from its treasure-laden waters all they brought, as one wave broke upon another.

He would sometimes throw himself down on the ground and sob with despair when a holiday hung heavy on his hands for the lack of one thing or another--playmates, inventiveness, or fair weather--and he hated to go to bed, because sleep was empty of events and devoid of sensation.

Yet it was not always so.

It would sometimes happen that he grew weary, and his imagination ran out of colors. Then he would be quite wretched and feel that he was too small and insignificant for these ambitious dreams. He seemed to himself a mean liar, who had brazenly pretended to love and understand what was great, though if the truth were told, he cared only for the petty, loved only the commonplace, and

---

carried all, all low-born wishes and desires fully alive within himself. Sometimes he would even feel that he had the class hatred of the rabble against everything exalted, and that he would joyfully have helped to stone these heroes who were of a better blood than he and knew that they were.

On such days, he would shun his mother, and, with a sense of following an ignoble instinct, would seek his father, turning a willing ear and receptive mind to the latter's earth-bound thoughts and matter-of-fact explanations. He felt at home with his father and rejoiced in the likeness between them, well-nigh forgetting that it was the same father whom he was wont to look down upon with pity from the pinnacles of his dream castle. Of course this was not present in his

childish mind with the clearness and definiteness given it by the spoken word, but it was all there, though unformed, unborn, in a vague and intangible embryo form. It was like the curious vegetation at the bottom of the sea when seen through layers of ice. Break the ice, or draw that which lives in the dimness out into the full light of speech--what happens is the same: that which is now seen and now grasped is not, in its clearness, the shadowy thing that was.

Chapter III

Table of Contents

THE years passed. One Christmas trod upon the heels of another, leaving the air bright with its festive glow till long after Epiphany. Whitsun after Whitsun scampered over flower-decked meadows. One summer holiday after another drew near, celebrated its orgy of fresh air and sunshine, poured out its fiery wine from brimming goblets, and then vanished, one day, in a sinking sun; only memory lingered with sunburnt cheek and wondering eyes and blood that danced.

The years had passed, and the world was no longer the realm of wonder that it had been. The dim recesses behind the mouldering elder bushes, the mysterious attic rooms, the gloomy stone passage under the Klastrup road--fancied terrors that once thrilled him no longer lurked there. The hillside that bloomed at the first trill of the lark, hiding the grass under starry, purple-rimmed daisies and yellow buttercups, the fantastic wealth of animals and plants in the river, the wild precipices of the sand-pit, its black rocks and bits of silvery granite--all these were just flowers, animals, and stones; the shining fairy gold had turned into withered leaves again.

One game after another grew old and silly, stupid and

---

tiresome like the pictures in the ABC, and yet they had once been new, inexhaustibly new. Here they used to roll a

barrel-hoop--Niels and the pastor's Frithjof--and the hoop was a ship, which was wrecked when it toppled over, but if you caught it before it fell, then it was casting anchor. The narrow passage between the outhouses, where you could hardly squeeze through, was Bab-el-Mandeb or the Portal of Death. On the stable door "England" was written in chalk, and on the barn door "France." The garden gate was Rio de Janeiro, but the smithy was Brazil. Another game was to play Holger the Dane: you *could* play it among the tall burs behind the barn; but if you went up in the miller's pasture, there were two sink-holes known as the gorges, and there were the haunts of the veritable Prince Burmand and his wild Saracens, with reddish gray turbans and yellow plumes in their helmets--burdocks and Aaron's rod of the tallest. That was the only *real* Mauretania. That rank, succulent growth, that teeming mass of exuberant plant life, excited their lust of destruction and intoxicated them with the voluptuous joy of demolishing. The wooden swords gleamed with the brightness of steel; the green sap stained the blade with red gore, and the cut stalks squashing under their feet were Turks' bodies trampled under horses' hoofs with a sound as of bones crunched in flesh.

Sometimes they played down by the fjord; mussel shells were launched as ships, and when the vessel got stuck in a clump of seaweed, or went aground on a sand bank, it was Columbus in the Sargasso Sea or the discovery of America. Harbors and mighty embankments were built; the Nile was dug out in the firm beach sand, and once they made Gurre Castle out of pebbles--a tiny dead

fish in an oyster shell was the corpse of Tove, and they were King Valdemar who sat sorrowing by her side.

But this was all past.

Niels was quite a lad now, twelve years old, nearing thirteen, and he no longer needed to hack thistles and burdocks in order to feed his knightly fancies, any more than he had to launch his explorer's dreams in a mussel shell. A book and a corner of a sofa were enough for him now, and if the book refused to bear him to the coast of his desires, he would hunt up Frithjof and tell him the tales which the book would not yield. Arm in arm, they would saunter down the road, one telling, both listening; but when they wanted to revel to the full and really give their imagination free play, they would hide in the fragrant dimness of the hayloft. After a while, these stories, which always ended just when you had really entered into them, grew into a single long story that never ended, but lived and died with one generation after the other; for when the hero had grown old, or you had been careless enough to let him die, you could always give him a son, who would inherit everything from the father, and whom, in addition, you could dower with any other virtues that you happened to value particularly just at the moment.

Whatever stamped itself on Niels's mind, what he saw, what he understood and what he misunderstood, what he admired and what he knew he ought to admire--all was woven into the story. As running water is colored by every passing picture, sometimes holding the image with perfect clearness, sometimes distorting it or throwing it back in wavering, uncertain lines, then again drowning it completely

in the color and play of its own ripples, so the lad's story reflected feeling and thoughts,

---

his own and those of other people, mirrored human beings and events, life and books, as well as it could. It was a play life, running side by side with real life. It was a snug retreat, where you could abandon yourself to dreams of the wildest adventures. It was a fairy garden that opened at your slightest nod, and received you in all its glory, shutting out everybody else. Whispering palms closed overhead; flowers of sunshine and leaves like stars on vines of coral spread at your feet, and among them a thousand paths led to all the ages and the climes. If you followed one, it would lead you to one place, and if you followed another, it would lead you to another place, to Aladdin and Robinson Crusoe, to Vaul-under and Henrik Magnard, to Niels Klim and Mungo Park, to Peter Simple and Odysseus--and the moment you wished it, you were home again.

About a month after Niels's twelfth birthday, two new faces appeared at Lönborggaard.

One was that of the new tutor; the other was that of Edele Lyhne.

The tutor, Mr. Bigum, was a candidate for orders and was at the threshold of the forties. He was rather small, but with a stocky strength like that of a work-horse, broad-chested, high-shouldered, and slightly stooping. He walked with a heavy, slow, deliberate tread, and moved his arms in a vague, expressionless way that seemed to require a great deal of room. His high, wide forehead was flat as a wall, with

two perpendicular lines between the eyebrows; the nose was short and blunt, the mouth large with thick, fresh lips. His eyes were his best feature, light in color, mild, and clear. The movements of his eyeballs showed that he was slightly deaf. Nevertheless, he loved music and played his violin with passion-

---

ate devotion; for the notes, he said, were not heard only with the ears, but with the whole body, eyes, fingers, and feet; if the ear failed sometimes, the hand would find the right note without its aid, by a strange, intuitive genius of its own. Besides, the audible tones were, after all, false, but he who possessed the divine gift of music carried within him an invisible instrument compared to which the most wonderful Cremona was like the stringed calabash of the savage. On this instrument the soul played; its strings gave forth ideal notes, and upon it the great tone poets had composed their immortal works.

The external music, which was borne on the air of reality and heard with the ears, was nothing but a wretched simulation, a stammering attempt to say the unutterable. It resembled the music of the soul as the statue modeled by hands, carved with a chisel, and meted with a measure resembled the wondrous marble dream of the sculptor which no eye ever beheld and no lip ever praised.

Music, however, was by no means Mr. Bigum's chief interest. He was first of all a philosopher, but not one of the productive philosophers who find new laws and build new systems. He laughed at their systems, the snail-shells in

which they dragged themselves across the illimitable field of thought, fondly imagining that the field was within the snail-shell! And these laws--laws of thought, laws of nature! Why, the discovery of a law meant nothing but the fixing of your own limitations: I can see so far and no farther--as if there were not another horizon beyond the first, and another and yet another, horizon beyond horizon, law beyond law, in an unending vista! No, he was not that kind of philosopher. He did not think he was vain, or that he overvalued himself, but he could not

---

close his eyes to the fact that his intellect had a wider span than that of other mortals. When he meditated upon the works of the great thinkers, it seemed to him that he strode forward through a region peopled by slumbering thought-giants, who awoke, bathed in the light of his spirit, to consciousness of their own strength. And so it was always; every thought, mood, or sentiment of another person which was vouchsafed the privilege of awakening within him rose up with his sign on its forehead, ennobled, purified, with wings strengthened, endowed with a power and a might that its creator had never dreamed of.

How often had he gazed with an almost humble amazement on the marvelous wealth of his soul and the divine assurance of his spirit! For it would often happen that different days would find him judging the world and the things of the world from entirely divergent points of view, looking at them through hypotheses that were as far apart as night and morning; yet these points of view and