

A photograph of a person standing on a metal pier or walkway, looking out over a large body of water. The sky is overcast and grey. In the distance, there are hills or mountains. The text 'FREDRIKA BREMER' is overlaid in the top left corner, and 'STRIEF AND PEACE' is overlaid in the bottom right corner.

***FREDRIKA  
BREMER***

***STRIEF  
AND  
PEACE***

**Fredrika Bremer**

# **Strife and Peace**

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# OLD NORWAY.

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Still the old tempests rage around the mountains,  
And ocean's billows as of old appear;  
The roaring wood and the resounding fountains  
Time has not silenced in his long career,  
For Nature is the same as ever.

MUNCH.

The shadow of God wanders through Nature.

LINNÆUS.

Before yet a song of joy or of mourning had gone forth from the valleys of Norway—before yet a smoke-wreath had ascended from its huts—before an axe had felled a tree of its woods—before yet king Nor burst forth from Jotunhem to seek his lost sister, and passing through the land gave to it his name; nay, before yet there was a Norwegian, stood the high Dovre mountains with snowy summits before the face of the Creator.

Westward stretches itself out the gigantic mountain chain as far as Romsdahlshorn, whose foot is bathed by the Atlantic ocean. Southward it forms under various names (Langfjeld, Sognefjeld, Filefjeld, Hardangerfjeld, and so forth), that stupendous mountainous district which in a stretch of a hundred and fifty geographical miles comprehends all that nature possesses of magnificent,

fruitful, lovely, and charming. Here stands yet, as in the first days of the world, in Upper Tellemark, the Fjellstuga, or rock-house, built by an invisible hand, and whose icy walls and towers that hand alone can overthrow: here still, as in the morning of time, meet together at Midsummer, upon the snowy foreheads of the ancient mountains, the rose-tint of morning and the rose-tint of evening for a brotherly kiss; still roar as then the mountain torrents which hurl themselves into the abyss; still reflect the ice-mirrors of the glaciers the same objects—now delighting, now awakening horror; and still to-day, even as then, are there Alpine tracts which the foot of man never ascended: valleys of wood, "lonesome cells of nature," upon which only the eagle and the Midsummer-sun have looked down. Here is the old, ever young, Norway; here the eye of the beholder is astonished, but his heart expands itself; he forgets his own suffering, his own joy, forgets all that is trivial, whilst with a holy awe he has a feeling that "the shadow of God wanders through nature."

In the heart of Norway lies this country. Is the soul wearied with the tumults of the world or fatigued with the trifles of poor every-day life—is it depressed by the confined atmosphere of the room,—with the dust of books, the dust of company, or any other kind of dust (there are in the world so many kinds, and they all cover the soul with a great dust mantle); or is she torn by deep consuming passions,—then fly, fly towards the still heart of Norway, listen there to the fresh mighty throbbing of the heart of nature; alone with the quiet, calm, and yet so eloquent, objects of nature, and there wilt thou gain strength and life! There falls no dust.

Fresh and clear stand the thoughts of life there, as in the days of their creation. "Wilt thou behold the great and the majestic? Behold the Gausta, which raises its colossal knees six thousand feet above the surface of the earth; behold the wild giant forms of Hurrungen, Fannarauken, Mugnafjeld; behold the Rjukan (the rushing), the Vöring, and Vedal rivers foaming and thundering over the mountains and plunging down in the abysses! And wilt thou delight thyself in the charming, the beautiful? They exist among these fruitful scenes in peaceful solitude. The Säter-hut stands in the narrow valley; herds of cattle graze on the beautiful grassy meadows; the Säter-maiden, with fresh-colour, blue eyes, and bright plaits of hair, tends them and sings the while the simple, the gentle melancholy airs of the country; and like a mirror for that charming picture, there lies in the middle of the valley a little lake (kjøern), deep, still, and of a clear blue colour, as is generally peculiar to the glacier water. All breathes an idyllian peace."

But a presentiment of death appears, even in the morning hour of creation, to have impressed its seal upon this country. The vast shadows of the dark mountain masses fall upon valleys where nothing but moss grows; upon lakes whose still waters are full of never-melted ice—thus the Cold Valley, the Cold Lake (Koledal and Koldesjö), with their dead, grey-yellow shores. The stillness of death reigns in this wilderness, interrupted only by the thunderings of the avalanche and by the noise which occasions the motion of the glaciers. No bird moves its wings or raises its twittering in this sorrowful region; only the melodious sighs of the cuckoo are borne thither by the winds at Midsummer.

Wilt thou, however, see life in its pomp and fairest magnificence? Then see the embrace of the winter and the summer in old Norway; descend into the plain of Svalem, behold the valleys of Aamaadt and Sillejord, or the paradisaically beautiful Vestfjoldal, through which the Mån flows still and clear as a mirror, and embraces in its course little, bright green islands, which are overgrown with bluebells and sweet-scented wood-lilies; see how the silver stream winds itself down from the mountains, between groups of trees and fruitful fields; see how, behind the near hills with their leafy woods, the snow-mountains elevate themselves, and like worthy patriarchs look down upon a younger generation; observe in these valleys the morning and evening play of colours upon the heights, in the depths; see the affluent pomp of the storm; see the calm magnificence of the rainbow, as it vaults itself over the waterfall,—depressed spirit, see this, understand it, and—breathe!

From these beautifully, universally known scenes we withdraw ourselves to a more unknown region, to the great stretch of valley where the Skogshorn rears itself to the clouds; where Urunda flows brightly between rocks,—the waterfalls of Djupadah stream not the less charmingly and proudly because they are only rarely admired by the eyes of curious travellers. We set ourselves down in a region whose name and situation we counsel nobody to seek out in maps, and which we call—

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## HEIMDAL.

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Knowest thou the deep, cool dale,  
Where church-like stillness doth prevail;  
Where neither flock nor herd you meet;  
Which hath no name nor track of feet?

VELHAVEN.

Heimdal, we call a branch of Hallingdal, misplace it in the parish of Aal, and turn it over to the learned—that they may wonder at our boldness. Like its mother valley it possesses no historical memories. Of the old kings of Hallingdal one knows but very little. Only a few monumental stones, a few burial-mounds, give a dim intelligence of the mighty who have been. It is true that a people dwelt here, who from untold ages were renowned as well for their simplicity and their contentedness under severe circumstances as for their wild contest-loving disposition; but still, in quiet as in unquiet, built and dwelt, lived and died here, without tumult and without glory, among the ancient mountains and the pine-woods, unobserved by the rest of the world.

One river, the son of Hallen-Jokul, flows through Heimdal. Foaming with wild rage it comes through the narrow mountain-pass down into the valley, finds there a freer field, becomes calm, and flows clear as a mirror between green shores, till its banks become again compressed together by granite mountains. Then is it again seized upon by disquiet, and rushes thence in wild curves till it flings itself into the great Hallingdal river, and there dies.

Exactly there, where the stream spreads itself out in the extended valley, lies a large estate. A well-built, but somewhat decayed, dwelling-house of wood stretches out



its arms into the depths of the valley. Thence may be seen a beautiful prospect, far, far into the blue distance. Hills overgrown with, wood stretch upward from the river, and cottages surrounded with inclosed fields and beautiful grassy paths, lie scattered at the foot of the hills. On the other side of the river, a mile-and-half from the Grange, a chapel raises its peaceful tower. Beyond this the valley gradually contracts itself.

On a cool September evening, strangers arrived at the Grange, which had now been long uninhabited. It was an elderly lady, of a noble but gloomy exterior, in deep mourning. A young, blooming maiden accompanied her. They were received by a young man, who was called there "the Steward." The dark-appareled lady vanished in the house, and after that was seen nowhere in the valley for several months. They called her there "the Colonel's lady," and said Mrs. Astrid Hjelm had experienced a very strange fate, of which many various histories were in circulation. At the estate of Semb, which consisted of the wide-stretching valley of Heimdal, and which was her paternal heritage, had she never, since the time of her marriage, been seen. Now as widow she had again sought out the home of her childhood. It was known also and told, that her attendant was a Swedish girl, who had come with her from one of the Swedish watering-places, where she had been spending the summer, in order to superintend her housekeeping; and it was said, that Susanna Björk ruled as excellently as with sovereign sway over the economical department, over the female portion of the same, Larina the parlour-maid, Karina the kitchen-maid, and Petro the cook, as well as over the

farm-servants Mathea, Budeja, and Göran the cattle-boy, together with all their subjects of the four-footed and two-legged races. We will now with these last make a little nearer acquaintance.

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## **THE POULTRY. THE WATER OF STRIFE.**

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### **FIRST STRIFE.**

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"For Norway!"

"For Sweden!"

DISPUTANTS.

The morning was clear and fresh. The September sun shone into the valley; smoke rose from the cottages. The ladies-mantle, on whose fluted cups bright pearls trembled; the silver-weed, with its yellow flowers and silver glittering leaves, shone in the morning sun beside the footpath, which wound along the moss-grown feet of the backs of the mountains. It conducted to a spring of the clearest water, which after it had filled its basin, allowed its playful vein to run murmuring down to the river.

To this spring, on that beautiful morning, went down Susanna Björk, and there followed her "cocks and hens, and chickens small."

Before her waddled with consequential gabblings a flock of geese, which were all snow-white, excepting one—a grey gander. This one tottered with a desponding look a little

behind the others, compelled to this by a tyrant among the white flock, which, as soon as the grey one attempted to approach, drove it back with outstretched neck and yelling cries. The grey gander always fled before the white tyrant; but bald places upon the head and neck proved that he had not come into this depressed condition, without those severe combats having made evident the fruitlessness of protestation. Not one of the goose madams troubled herself about the ill-used gander, and for that reason Susanna all the more zealously took upon herself, with delicate morsels and kind words, to console him for the injustice of his race. After the geese, came the well-meaning but awkward ducks; the turkey-cock, with his choleric temper and his two foolish wives, one white and the other black; lastly, came the unquiet generation of hens, with their handsome, quarrel-loving cocks. The prettiest of all, however, were a flock of pigeons which, confidingly and bashfully at the same time, now alighted down upon Susanna's shoulders and outstretched hand; now flew aloft and wheeled in glittering circles around her head; then settled down again upon the earth, where they neatly tripped, with their little fringed feet, stealing down to the spring to drink, whilst the geese with great tumult bathed themselves in the water and splashed about, throwing the water in pearly rain over the grass. Here also was the grey gander, to Susanna's great vexation, compelled by the white one to bathe itself at a distance from the others.

Susanna looked around her upon the beautiful richly-coloured picture which lay before her, upon the little creatures which played around her and enjoyed themselves,

and evident delight beamed from her eyes as she raised them, and with hands pressed together, said softly, "O heavens! how beautiful!"

But she shrunk together in terror, for in that very moment a strong voice just beside her broke forth—

"How glorious is my fatherland,  
The old sea-circled Norrøway!"

And the steward, Harald Bergman, greeted smilingly Susanna, who said rather irritated—

"You scream so, that you frighten the doves with your old Norrøway."

"Yes," continued Harald, in the same tone of inspiration—

"Yes, glorious is my fatherland,  
The ancient, rock-bound Norrøway;  
With flowery dale, crags old and grey,  
That spite of time eternal stand!"

"Old Norway," said Susanna as before; "I consider it a positive shame to hear you talk of your old Norway, as if it were older and more everlasting than the Creator himself!"

"And where in all the world," exclaimed Harald, "do you find a country with such a proud, serious people; such magnificent rivers, and such high, high mountains?"

"We have, thank God, men and mountains also in Sweden," said Susanna; "you should only see them; that is another kind of thing!"

"Another kind of thing! What other kind of thing? I will wager that there is not a single goose in Sweden which could compare with our excellent Norway geese."

"No, not one, but a thousand, and all larger and fatter than these. Everything in Sweden is larger and more

excellent than in Norway."

"Larger? The people are decidedly smaller and weaker."

"Weaker? smaller? you should only see the people in Uddevalla, my native city!"

"How can anybody be born in Uddevalla? Does anybody really live in that city? How can anybody live in it? It is a shame to live in such a city; it is a shame also only to drive through it. It is so miserably small, that when the wheels of the travelling-carriage are at one end, the horse has already put his head out at the other. Do not talk about Uddevalla!"

"No, with you it certainly is not worth while to talk about it, because you have never seen anything else besides Norwegian villages, and cannot, on that account, form any idea to yourself of a proper Swedish city."

"Defend me from ever seeing such cities—defend me! And then your Swedish lakes! what wretched puddles they are, beside our glorious Norwegian ocean!"

"Puddles! Our lakes! Great enough to drown the whole of Norway in!"

"Ha, ha, ha! And the whole of Sweden is beside our Norwegian ocean no bigger than my cap! And this ocean would incessantly flow over Sweden, did not our Norway magnanimously defend it with its granite breast."

"Sweden defends itself, and needs no other help! Sweden is a fine country!"

"Not half as fine as Norway. Norway reaches heaven with its mountains; Norway comes nearest to the Creator."

"Norway may well be presumptuous, but God loves Sweden the best."

"Norway, say I!"

"Sweden, say I!"

"Norway! Norway for ever! We will see whose throw goes the highest, who wins for his country. Norway first and highest!" and with this, Harald threw a stone high into the air.

"Sweden first and last!" exclaimed Susanna, whilst she slung a stone with all her might.

Fate willed it that the two stones struck against each other in the air, after which they both fell with a great plump down into the spring around which the small creatures had assembled themselves. The geese screamed; the hens and ducks flew up in terror; the turkey-hens flew into the wood, where the turkey-cock followed them, forgetting all his dignity; all the doves had vanished in a moment,—and with crimsoned cheeks and violent contention as to whose stone went the highest, stood Harald and Susanna alone beside the agitated and muddied water of discord.

The moment is perhaps not the most auspicious, but yet we will make use of it, in order to give a slight sketch of the two contending persons.

Harald Bergman had speaking, somewhat sharp features, in which an expression of great gravity could easily be exchanged for one of equal waggery. The dark hair fell in graceful waves over a brow in which one saw that clear thought was entertained. His figure was finely proportioned, and his movements showed great freedom and vigour.

He had been brought up in a respectable family, had enjoyed a careful education, and was regarded by friends and acquaintances as a young man of extraordinary promise. Just as he had left the S. seminary, and was

intending a journey into foreign countries, in order to increase still more his knowledge of agriculture, chance brought him acquainted with the widow of Colonel Hjelm, at the time in which she was returning to her native country, and in consequence thereof he altered his plans. In a letter to his sister, he expresses himself on this subject in the following manner:

"I cannot properly describe to you, Alette, the impression which she made upon me. I might describe to you her tall growth, her noble bearing, her countenance, where, spite of many wrinkles and a pale-yellow complexion, traces of great beauty are incontrovertible; the lofty forehead, around which black locks sprinkled with grey, press forth from beneath her simple cap. I might tell of her deep, serious eyes, of her low and yet solemn voice; and yet thou couldst form to thyself no representation of that which makes her so uncommon. I have been told that her life has been as much distinguished by exemplary virtue as by suffering—and virtue and suffering have called forth in her a quiet greatness, a greatness which is never attained to by the favourites of fortune and of nature, which stamps her whole being. She seemed to me as if all the frivolities of the world passed by her unremarked. I felt for her an involuntary reverence, such as I had never felt before for any human being; and at the same time a great desire to approach her more nearly, to be useful to her, to deserve, and to win her esteem—it seemed to me that I should thereby become somewhat greater, or at least better; and as I was informed that she sought for a clever and experienced steward for her sorely decayed estate, I offered myself as such, in all

modesty, or rather without any; and when accepted, I felt an almost childish joy, and set off immediately to her estate, that I might make myself at home there, and have everything in readiness to receive her."

Thus much for Harald, now for Susanna.

Barbara Susanna Björk was not handsome, could not be even called pretty (for that, she was too large and strong), but she was good-looking. The blue eyes looked so honestly and openly into the world; the round and full face testified health, kindness, and good spirits; and when Susanna was merry, when the rosy lips opened themselves for a hearty laugh, it made any one right glad only to look at her. But true is it, that she was very often in an ill humour, and then she did not look at all charming. She was a tall, well-made girl, too powerful in movement ever to be called graceful, and her whole being betrayed a certain want of refinement.

Poor child! how could she have obtained this in the home abounding in disorder, poverty, and vanity, in which the greater part of her life had been passed.

Her father was the Burgomaster of Uddevalla; her mother died in the infancy of her daughter. Soon afterwards an aunt came into the house, who troubled herself only about the housekeeping and her coffee-drinking acquaintance, left her brother himself to seek for his pleasures at the club, and the child to take care of herself. The education of the little Susanna consisted in this, that she learned of necessity to read, and that when she was naughty they said to her, "Is Barbra there again? Fie, for shame, Barbra! Get out, Barbra!" and when she was good again, it was, "See now, Sanna is here again! Welcome, sweet Sanna!" A method



which certainly was not without its good points, if it had only been wisely applied. But often was the little girl talked to as "Barbra" when there was no occasion for it, and this had often the effect of calling forth the said personage. In the mean time, she was accustomed as a child to go out as Barbra, and to come in again as Sanna, and this gave her early an idea of the two natures which existed in her, as they exist in every person. This idea attained to perfect clearness in Susanna's religious instruction,—the only instruction which poor Susanna ever had. But how infinitely rich is such instruction for an ingenuous mind, when it is instilled by a good teacher. Susanna was fortunate enough to have such a one, and she now became acquainted in Barbra with the earthly demon which should be overcome in Sanna, the child of heaven, which makes free and enlightens; and from this time there began between Barbra and Sanna an open strife, which daily occurred, and in which the latter, for the most part, got the upper hand, if Susanna was not too suddenly surprised by a naturally proud and violent temper.

When Susanna had attained her twelfth year her father married a second time, but became a second time a widower, after his wife had presented him with a daughter. Two months after this he died also. Near relations took charge of the orphan children. In this new home Susanna learned to—bear hardships; for there, as she was strong and tall, and besides that made herself useful, and was kind-hearted, they made her soon the servant of the whole house. The daughters of the family said that she was fit for nothing else, for she could learn nothing, and had such

unrefined manners; and besides that, she had been taken out of charity; she had nothing, and so on: all which they made her feel many a time in no gentle manner, and over which Susanna shed many bitter tears both of pain and anger. One mouth, however, there was which never addressed to Susanna other tones than those of affectionate love, and this was the mouth of the little sister, the little golden-haired Hulda. She had found in Susanna's arms her cradle, and in her care that of the tenderest mother. For from Hulda's birth Susanna had taken the little forlorn one to herself, and never had loved a young mother her first-born child more warmly or more deeply than Susanna loved her little Hulda, who also, under her care, became the loveliest and the most amiable child that ever was seen. And woe to those who did any wrong to the little Hulda! They had to experience the whole force of Susanna's often strong-handed displeasure. For her sake Susanna passed here several years of laborious servitude: as she, however, saw no end to this, yet was scarcely able to dress herself and her sister befittingly, and besides this was prevented by the multitude of her occupations from bestowing upon her sister that care which she required, therefore Susanna, in her twentieth year, looked about her for a better situation.

From the confined situation in which Susanna spent such a weary life, she was able to see one tree behind a fence, which stretched out its branches over the street. Many a spring and summer evening, when the rest of the inhabitants of the house were abroad on parties of pleasure, sate Susanna quietly by the little slumbering Hulda, within the little chamber which she had fitted up for herself and

her sister, and observed with quiet melancholy from her window the green tree, whose twigs and leaves waved and beckoned so kindly and invitingly in the wind.

By degrees the green leaves beckoned into her soul thoughts and plans, which eventually fashioned themselves into a determined form, or rather an estate, whose realisation from this time forth became the paradise of her soul and the object of her life. This estate was a little farm in the country, which Susanna would rent, and cultivate, and make profitable by her own industry and her own management. She planted potatoes; she milked cows and made butter; she sowed, she reaped; and the labour was to her a delight; for there, upon the soft grass, under the green, waving tree, sate the little Hulda, and played with flowers, and her blue eyes beamed with happiness, and no care and no want came near her.

All Susanna's thoughts and endeavours directed themselves to the realising of this idea. The next step towards it was the obtaining a good service, in which, by saving her wages, she could obtain a sum of money sufficient to commence her rural undertaking. Susanna flattered herself, that in a few years she could bring her scheme to bear, and therefore made inquiries after a suitable situation.

There were this year among the visitors at the watering-place of Gustafsberg, which lay near to Uddevalla, a Norwegian Colonel and his lady. He was lame from a paralytic stroke, and had lost the use of his speech and of his hands. He was a large man, of a fierce, stern exterior; and although he seemed to endure nobody near him but his