

NECKEN.

BY HJALMAR HJORTH BOYENSEN.

I.

She sat at the opened window
And mused o'er an old romance,
And the glorious peal of the legend
Still held her soul in its trance.
But her heart was thronged with yearnings
That cried for utterance.

II.

The world seemed so pale and dreary,
A vain and inglorious play;
The thundering heroes of old time
Had left it to fade and decay;
The radiant soul had departed
And left the inanimate clay.

III.

She closed the dear book of her heroes,
And down from the tower she sped,
Where the shivering leaves of the birches
A lingering glamour spread.
Strange murmurs stole through the forest,
Strange voices of warning and dread.

IV.

She stood at the brink of the cascade,
And heard the loud waters fall;
Now rising with passionate thunder
And wresting with clamorous brawl;
Now breathing a quivering whisper
Adown o'er the rocky wall.

V.

Anon o'er the darksome waters
The shadows of midnight brood,
And the ghosts of a thousand legions
Flit through the shuddering wood;
But still at the brink of the cascade
The maiden, wondering, stood.

VI.

There was a strong soul in the cascade;
A soul grand, noble, and free,—
For her yawning abysses panted
With tremulous ecstasy,—
Which rose with a misty fullness,
Then burst into melody.

VII.

And hushed was the night winds' murmur,
And hushed seemed the cataract's roll,
While clear and airily trembling
The tones through the forest stole.
They came like familiar voices,
That soothe the unrest of the soul.

VIII.

The hopes her young heart had cherished,
The dreams of the days gone by,
The yearnings that throbb'd in her bosom,
Deep hidden from mortal eye,
Had gained a voice in the music,
And joyfully rose to the sky.

IX.

A tenderly luring sadness
Abode in the mellow tone.
Ah, there was love and solace
For a life that was drear and lone!
A leap in the dark, a brief flutter,
And darkly the waves rolled on.

X.

Two men, at morn, sought the river;
And lo! to the tree-roots clung
The form of a lifeless maiden,
So wondrously fair and young.
"Twas Necken," they said "who allured her,
Beguiling her heart with his song."

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