RUNES
AND
ripples
by
JoHan G. R. Baner.

To Theodore Vebas.
With the Author's Best Wishes.

Massinen's Print, Ironwood, Mich.
FROM MY HERBARIUM.

NORTH PARK COLLEGE.

Chicago, Ill., Dec. 3rd, 1914.

My dear friend Baner:

My belief is that opinions which Hubbard and others have given you are well deserved. It is really a wonderful interest you have in our old Mythology. If I should try to find something resembling your poetry among great antecedors, then Ling’s creations would, I think, be chosen; both because of your interest in the world of Saga, and the ecstasy that bears your songs up. In our materialistic and dust-wise times, such poetic flights as yours certainly are refreshing. Thanks.

Your friend

David Nyvall.

East Aurora, N. Y., Dec. 1st 1914.

Dear Mr. Baner:

The two poems ("Yggdrasil" and "The Vikings’ Dialogue") you sent us are—wonderful. And there is nothing we would like better than to print them up in true Roycroft style....

Sincerely yours,

Ingham.

Lindsborg, Kansas, Dec. 18th 1914.

I know you not, Baner, and yet I do,
For c’er in "Flakes" you prove a singer true,
With heart aglow with love for Northern lore—
And hence I ask you: 'Strike your lyre some more!'

Alf Bergin.

Duluth, Minn., Dec. 21st 1914.

Dear Mr. Baner:

I am much pleased with the poems you sent me. You have an imagination or fancy that is almost riotous in its luxuriance, a vocabulary that amazes me with its resources, a grasp of metrical feats that is bewildering, and a sense of harmony that is admirable.

Very truly

Stillman H. Bingham
(Editor Duluth Herald).
RUNES
AND
RIPPLES
BY
JOHAN G. R. BANER.

MASSINEN'S PRINT.
IRONWOOD, MICH.
The Vikings' Dialogue.

LEIF:—

Strengthen thy eagle-wings, "Jarl", for flight over billowing water,
Give to thy iron-clad bow a becalming probation.
Polar-star, lead — I command! In gloom lurks but blood-rain and slaughter:
Eddies and shoals, without thee, would be numbing our passion.
Sinewy arms shall we need, ye war-tempered barsarks,
when roaming There on the uncharted sea; and your courage is needed!
Mighty is Ocean, when storms have angered him, when he is foaming!
But — with your lead can his strength not by viking be heeded.

Not for the glimmering gold satanical dangers we wrestle,
Go we, my dragon, to isle, where the sun is reposing;
No, but the Thunderer's bolt, commanded from fate-spinning trestle,
May under rumble and glare — be a kingdom disclosing.
Hjorwar, the rudder is thine; steer out to the unknown, the calling;
Unerring falcon-eyes strain toward realms occidental.
Ravens have sung me a lay of wine-fruit from silver-trees falling,
Whispered of glorious domain under sky oriental.
HJORWAR:—

Fill thy lungs, thou sea-steed prancing,
And begin thy norn-sung dancing,
Where the music, ever lusty,
Never swung o'er orbits dusty.
There, my copper-headed ranger,
Shall we quench and conquer danger!

Fill thy lungs, thou sea-steed prancing,
And begin thy norn-sung dancing;
Let us with the storm-gods clamber
On the sea-queen's boiling amber.
If we reach the goal, our story
Fame shall write in north-light's glory!

LEIF:—

Comrades, our tournament hard is a memory's frond:
Yonder I spy the contours of a cloud-piercing pine,
Verdure like em'ralds I see, I see rivulets shine;
And to our war-eagle's scream I hear others respond.

Beautiful beaches and wild, like my Scandia's best!
Bloom-scattered coves, and the capes, where she coos to her love,
Coos to her brood and the sun-beams, the gold-feathered dove.
Heavenly is she, my North, and entralling, my West!

* * *

Free like the fathomless churner,
Dreaded, but also respected.
Here I my castle erected,
Founded my throne.
I, the destroyer, the burner,
I, who have crushed and — protected,
Have as my kingdom selected
Unbounded zone.

Peace under birches and willows
Ever its hymns shall be singing;
Liberty-bells shall be ringing
Here on my shore.
Playful, but death-dealing billows,
Here my farewell I am bringing
Ye, who my dragon were swinging,
Comrades of yore!

1890.—1914, 26—11.

Jarl, earl, may or may not have been the name of Leif Ericson's dragon, the sea-king's battle-ship. Saga tells of more than one of the Vikings of old ordering the powers of nature, stars, etc., to serve. Barsarks, the wildest and most dangerous of all the Vikings; they despised shields, helmets and Brynies; arrows and spears were by them looked upon with contempt; and their only weapons were swords "an ell long". The Thunderer, Thor, the God of Thunder. The fate-spinning trestle, Nom Urda's three-legged footstool, the sibyl's throne. Ravens, Odin's all-knowing news-hunters. "Crushed and protected" points to the fact, that the Vikings were builders and law-givers fully as often as despoilers.
Eagle-miles afar, on beaches where Immensity is bounding
To Infinite's sea, whose billows drape themselves in somber gray;
In the depths, where earthly spy-glass never shall be rightly sounding,
There is Gimle's world—your Fylgia may its realm to you betray.
As the em'rald and the ruby gleam upon a fillet golden
When engulfed by heaven's flambeaux or in holy altar-fire,
So we dreamed her wings and hoped them, we and sires from ages olden,
Saw the world that gives us chambers, when our leases here expire.
Shallow are interpretations of the starry scripts so beaming—
Weight and measure should not always be allowed to so suffice!
But the spying, soaring poets have their grand translations gleaming,
Where we ever see their beauty plead with us from cloudless skies.
"Dreamers" know the springs of Bygone, they have cast their lead in Dawning,
O'er whose sanctuary's treasures gloomy curtains never fall;
And they know the climes, the regions, know Ginungagap, the yawning,
Know the world our fathers dreamed of, know domain awaiting all.

There, on Sirius, the perfect home of bliss and vernal beauty,
Home of wondrous exultation, never known on Earth by name;
Home of privilege, but never fetter-bound or whipped by duty,
Where Benev'lence owns the sceptre — therefrom all their wisdom came.

Their description of Olympus, of Valhalla, Gimle's presage.
Came in olden times from Bragi's golden harp and Dvalin's song;
And I will, if reach is given, here relate their dual message
From poetic, norne-empowered, asa-born norraena tongue.

* * *

Ramparts are there none, no gateway; guards are unknown, nothing tightens
There your throat, or gives vibrations, borne by fear to human hearts;
No! But friendly greeting bids you out from shadow world that frightens,
In to eider-covered high-bench, where your former world departs.

If you "lost your way", if "errors" followed in your track for ages,
Were pursuing you in all your thousand lives from birth to grave,
Or if sanctified by pious deeds you roamed: Allfather's pages
Will have — neither "accusations", nor "rewards": they would enslave.

But from tablets consecrated, where your Fylgia carved your graces,
From the slates of hallowed longings, golden deeds, angelic hopes,
From that source alone, and Mem'ry's holy font, your father traces
Your meandering incarnation's craggy cliffs and flow'ry slopes.

There we find that one life's hemlock bore an other's glowing honey,
Find that we received, not drosses, but of purest gold our share;
And we learn that "darksome shadows" had their suns and planets bonny,
That a "hostile fate" has led us with fidelity and care.

Good we, under ages thousand, wished and hoped for, there is hoarded,
Good we dreamed of or believed in, good we loved, us there awaits:
And upon Allfather's visage is in friendly smiles recorded:
These, my loved ones, were your dream-worlds! Now they are your real estates.

No chronometer is splitting Time in small decades and stages
Here in marvel-timbered Gimle on our happy, blissful isle;
No! Uncomprehended are they, "Hours" and "Centuries" and "Ages": All where struck, with "Death", from word-book, which interprets only smiles.

Trans. by Author Nov. 8th '14.

*) Gimle, pronounced "Gimlae", the gold-roofed hall in which the generations of coming ages are to enjoy eternal bliss; the ultimate Valhalla. Viktor Rydberg in "Fadernas Gudasaga".


Gimle, the masterpiece of all Creation; home-land of perfect happiness, where "The Great Unmentionable" is direct ruler.

Fylgia, the guardian angel. We all have our own, and she is our cicerone and protector through all of our incarnations. Our Conscience.

Ginungagap, pronounced Ginung-a-gap, the abyss of chaos.

Sirius, ALPHA CANIS MAJOR of Astronomy. By far the brightest fixed star in the sky. About 1,000,000 times further from us than our sun, and 20 times as great.

Valhalla, Oden's hall (Castle ?) in Asgaard, the North-mythological heaven.

Bragi, the bard of Asgaard. Dvalin, the skald of Vanaheim, the dream-poet.

Allfather, properly the Ruler of Gimlae, but also Asgaard's royal Chief. The father of all.

J. G. R. B.

Among the eighty-seven "estimates" I received on my original "Gimle", two of the most interesting are here translated:

Gimle is well thought, well written and beautiful; but your liberality when distributing blessedness would probably not be acknowledged by Lector Waldenstrom.

Ernst Skarstedt.

I thank you very much for your poem, "Gimle". It is stately, but your philosophy is difficult to understand.

(Lector) P. Waldenstrom.

(Skarstedt is one of America's foremost Swedish "all around" Authors, but not exactly a churchman. Waldenström is the Ward Beecher of Sweden, the father of the "Mission Church". B.)
"Clouds."
(Nursery-rhymes. 1.)

When "but a child" — yes, so we brag, and sigh for childhood's gold,
Where we retained our hearts, before our birth-rights we had sold! —
When but a child, my loving Nurse, Miss Fancy — her you knew? —
Read many stories from her book for me, and all were true.

She read about the wondrous sky, where Heaven's children play:
She read about their charming Nurse, their playmates bright and gay.
"Tell me their names, dear Nurse", I said; "in dance they seem to go."
"They are — a flock of Heaven's doves, are Cirrus; you should know!"

"And those, where Heaven ends — yes, there, where Day has gone to sleep?"
"O, that, my dear, is God's own flock of playful lambs and sheep."
He named them Cum'lus, when He built for them His boundless fold,
When He upon their pasture strewd His beaming children's gold".
"But who are they, those over there, where Morning soon should be?
They seem so dark, so threatening, as if they hated me!"
"They could not hate, they would not harm: they are the Dew-maids, dear!
Their name is Nimbus, they give rain and life, so do not fear.

"Above our heads, and edged with gold and silver, you may see
A living curtain, stretched between His children there and thee.
That curtain's name is Stratus, and behind its gleaming lace
Shall other questioners like you — some day perceive Your face."

Ironwood, Mich., Nov. 29th 1914,

— 11 —

Sometimes the clouds are very high up, and look like delicate down or feathers, when they are called cirrus; at other times they look like masses of wool, and are then called cumulus. The heavy, black ones are known as nimbus, and those that stretch in straight lines over the sky are stratus.

After having seen the above in manuscript, my friend A. J. Lan-
nces wrote me as follows:

Friend Baner:
I appreciate your compliment, "Super-idealistic", at the same time recognizing it to be in your usual style, exaggerated. But there is one thing I regret and that is your seeming unwillingness to look into that idealism that deals with realities, i. e. Christian Science. How far wouldn't you be able to raise your talent then:
I like your "Clouds" for the quaintness of the metaphors, but what is the message? I have amused myself by enlarging upon your idea in the following manner:
Speed on, o thought of "Heavenly Doves", rise o'er the fleecy clouds, 
Attain the realms of Truth where no mortality enshrouds. 
Your downy specks, when symbol-sensed, mean more than "Heaven's dove".
The Cirrus-streamers — one and all proclaim unending Love.

The Cumuli — so named by men who vainly guess and brag —
Unfold the changlessness of Truth, when piling crag on crag.
Ye "Lambs and Sheep of heav'n", let men turn back from finite's quest
And in the boundless fold of Love find full and perfect rest.

And what be yonder Nimbus-clouds along the eastern sky?
Ah, "Dew-maids", — yes, their showers voice Love's infinite supply.
Of Life devoid, of lack they be a symbol true, indeed; And as before "will Love divine meet every Human need."

When darkling strata cover up the cupola above, 
It does seem hard to think of them as symbol-forms of Love, 
Yet, looking at their other side, their gold — and silver hem, 
We would perceive the symbol-streets of New Jerusalem.

Sincerely yours
A. J. Lannes.

These beautiful lines may not call for an answer, but I think they do. My old friend Lannes should be repaid for his subtle "exaggerated". And here is my "check": 
Brother Lannes:

You may be either right or wrong — a friend should never doubt! —
But, seemingly, you are as well as I — a Fancy's scout.
The only difference I can see between our argent realms is that I rediscovered but you painted some their films,

All diagrams of higher worlds than ours may — hit or miss,
But ALL have message, if they bear to heart or brain their bliss.
Now, mine portrays a world like ours — the only one I know! —
But with the section-lines erased, which here us hamp-er so.

MY heaven must have spruce and fir — not ONLY laurel trees,
It must have roaring northern-storm — not only fawning breeze.
It must have streams and oceans wild, but springs and brooks as well,
I love the craggy mountain, but admire flowery dell.

The amaryllis and the rose I love, but thistles should adorn my spirit-world as well, or feel forlorn I would!
I love the mighty organ's roar, I love the wondrous harp —
But little more than herdsman's horn or clarion-voices sharp.

I love the snow-white linen, but — the verdure I adore;
I love the jeweled crown, like you, but — a sombrero more.
I love the nightingale, but must — a jackdow judge it by;
And thunder-clouds I love as much as gold-down on the sky,
The beasts, which I have loved on earth — and I have loved them all! —
I shall expect behind the blue, with winter, spring and fall.
A gilded ceiling I would hate, despise a woven floor;
And boundless be my domicile, with spacious panes and door!

No ruler! But a comrade wise — a Father, always kind—
Should be companion, not a guide, should neither free nor bind.
Much rather through eternity I slumber here as free
Than I would be an errand-page, though I — could serve with thee.

Each harmless wish should reach its goal, should reach it with its thought,
Should reach it well enlarged and well with only blessings fraught.
None should be sheep, none should be goat, and cackenations there
Should be as free as harmless smiles are deemed among us here.

And there we are: YOUR heav’n is YOURS, created by YOUR taste!
And mine, perhaps, is ONLY mine — may be to you a waste.
I, therefore, would not paint it there, ’mong "Clouds" upon the blue:
THAT slate belongs to ALL of us, not only me and you.

Your "exaggerating" friend

J. G. R. B.

READ!

Read poetry, all kinds of it. You will find some of it good, some better and some best; others will turn your estimates around a little, but all of us have a warm spot for poetry, the perfume and sunshine of life, if we are — rightly developed.

If you are a Swedish American and able to read the wonderful language of Saga, do so. But it is not necessary to have your Swedish poetry imported, not at all. The home-Swedes do not import ours. And we have here fully as good Swedish poets as they ever had over in our mother-land.

By following the alphabet down you will find all your favorites: Bonggren, Enander, Holmes, Lönnquist, Linder, Norman, Peterson, Skarstedt, Sundell, Swärd, Stolpe, Tapper, Wærner, Wiklund, etc. Just make up your list and forward it to:

AUGUSTANA BOOK CONCERN,
ROCK ISLAND, ILL.

And there you may get Shaw's translations of "Fri-thiof's Saga", "The Angel of Death", etc.

Write now.

Invest your money in real estate; dependable such. Nothing else is absolutely sure. Duluth's is, perhaps, the very best; next to land in the right place and purchased at right prices. Write to the one that knows all about it:

J. G. R. Baner,
Ironwood, Mich.