

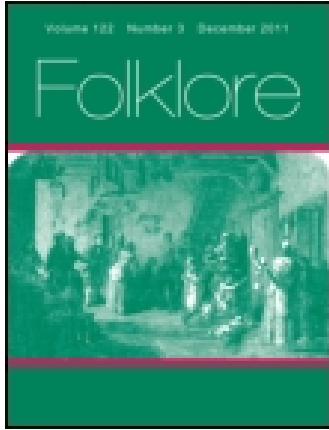
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A Few Norwegian Proverbs

E. E. Speight

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small objects, only of value as homage. Rag offerings are naturally most frequent where there is a "blessed bush" at the well, but they are frequently hung on a bramble, or even, on the Atlantic coast, kept in place by stones. Rags abounded, with other offerings, at Gleninagh, at least till 1899, being tied to the twigs of an old elder bush. They were hung in quantities on the stunted old hawthorn at Oughtmāma well, and were found at Tobersraheen, at Aglish graveyard in Ogonello, and on the large fallen hawthorn near the basin at Kiltinanlea. They are often accompanied by rosaries, religious medals, necklaces and ribbons, broken or whole plaster and china figures and vessels, and glass, buttons, pins, and nails. Such objects are abundant at many wells, such as the little rock well in Glensleade between the largest Berneens dolmen and the road, Killone altar, St. Senan's well near Kiltinanlea (Plate XI.), Fortanne, Kilseily, St. Lachtin's well near Milltown Malbay, Kilcredaun, and a well of St. Inghean Baoith (stopped by a too zealous Protestant, but recently reopened and dedicated to St. Joseph) near Inchiquin lake. The almost disused dolmen-well of Tobergrania had in 1893 two rude crosses of laths tied together, buttons, bottles, glass, crockery, and a coin.¹⁸ In 1889 Kilfarboy well near Milltown was frequented on Sundays and Thursdays by sick persons, and abounded in such offerings as bits of leather, crockery, and blacking pots. (I am not certain whether this note refers to St. Lachtin's well or to one near Kilfarboy church.) China and pebbles have been offered at Kilcredaun in a cleft beside the Shannon estuary, and pebbles placed in the "Font" of Doughnambraher in central Clare.¹⁹

THOS. J. WESTORPP.

(*To be continued.*)

A FEW NORWEGIAN PROVERBS.

The following group of Norwegian proverbs has been selected by my good friend Captain Einar Sagen, of the Fifth Regiment

¹⁸ Cf. view of well and its offerings, *Proceedings of Royal Irish Academy*, Ser. lil., vol. iv., p. 87.

¹⁹ See Plate iv., *ante*, p. 54.

of the Norwegian army. They come from various parts of the country, and are mainly typical of farm-life. They were best translated into Lowland Scots, but the following plain English may suffice. The burning question in Norway during the past few years has been the relative value of the literary language and what is called *Landsmaal*, or country speech. The former is practically Danish, and does not represent the speech of the people. *Landsmaal* as recognised by the authorities is an attempt to preserve in a uniform speech the innumerable excellencies of word and phrase which have come down into modern dialects from Old Norse. It is one remove from any one dialect, but lies very close to all. It partakes of the pliable and practical nature of Old Norse. It is infinitely richer in resource than the literary language, which ekes out its poverty with foreign words and phrases in a very ungainly manner.

The *Landsmaal* party is strong in the land, though bitterly opposed by the professional classes, especially of Kristiania. More and more books are being published in *Landsmaal*, and the leader of the party is Arne Garborg, the poet, whose works, especially *Haugtussa*, give an intensely characteristic representation of Norwegian country life.

Captain Sagen himself is an ardent worker in the cause. His special aim hitherto has been the introduction of *Landsmaal* into army orders, in place of the bombast which is so often quite unintelligible to the man in the ranks. He has issued a Dictionary of military phrases. He speaks and writes only *Landsmaal*, on principle, and it may be interesting to quote from his letter to me covering this list of proverbs.

“De bad meg senda nokre ordtöki. Eg sender her ei liti samling. Det er korkje av dei beste eller av dei klenaste. Men det finst daa inkje so faa sanningar, og mykje morosamt er det og so. Skrifti mi er desvarre inkje god aa lesa. Men eg vonar like vel De skynar det meste. Det maa vist finnast i tusúndtal av slike ordtöki her i landet. Men dei er ingen stad samla alle saman. Det skulde vera forvitneleg aa sjaa ei samling av vaar beste *proverbs*. Det ligg mykje livsvisdom og livsröynsla göymt i deim. Men arbeidet med norsk maal, norske erveimne, norsk saga, norske ordtöki, norske fornleivder, er enno berre i sin barndom. Her er enno vidsveimte vidder aa dyrkja. Eg skulde ynskja De kunde finna eit og annat godt korn mellom desse ordtöki.”

“You asked me to send some proverbs. I send herewith a little collection.

They are neither of the best nor of the poorest. Still they contain not a few truths, and they are very amusing too. My writing is not easy to read, I am sorry to say. But all the same I hope you will understand the greater part. There must be thousands of such proverbs here in the land. But they have never been collected anywhere. It would be interesting to see a collection of our best proverbs. Much life-wisdom and life-experience lie hidden in them. But work on Norse speech, folklore, stories, proverbs, and antiquities is still in its infancy. Here are still vast tracts to open up. I could hope that you might find one and another true grain among these proverbs."

1. Den som har hund, han slepp á göya sjölv.
He who has a dog, need not bark himself.
2. Nár husbonden gjeng or högsetet, set katten sig uppi.
When the master leaves the high seat, up jumps the cat.
3. Husmanns hage kann og bera blomar.
A cottager's garden also can bear flowers.
4. Det er ingen so hög, han ei má tøygja seg.
Og ingen so lág, han ei má böygja seg.
There is no one so tall that he has not to stretch himself,
and no one so small that he has not to bend.
5. Höling er vel höyrande men lite göymande.
Flattery listens well, but remembers little.
6. Det er betre turr kaka enn inkje smaka.
Better is dry cake than having nothing to eat.
7. Ein kann vel vera kar um ein inkje segjer det sjölv.
One can be a brave fellow, even if one does not proclaim it.
8. Det er betre á föda ein katt enn mange myser.
It is better to feed one cat than many mice.
9. Det vil harde kilar til harde kubbar.
Hard wedges are needed for hard tree-stumps.
10. Ei kona og ein katt høyrer huset til.
A house needs a wife and a cat.
11. Det kostar á sitja fyre gjest og gangande mann.
It costs money to be obliged to receive guests constantly.
12. Kui gjeng aldri so langt, at rova ei fylgjer med.
A cow never goes so far that her tail does not follow.

13. Kui vil inkje höyra at höyet minker.
A cow will not hear that the hay is dwindling away.
14. Det vil mykje til á kveikja ein kald áre.
It is hard work to kindle fire on a cold hearth.
15. Máteleg kvilt er ingi tid spillt.
Rest in reason is not time lost.
16. Ein kann inkje baade ausa og ro.
One cannot both bale and row.
17. Ei fager brud treng lite skrud.
A fair bride needs little finery.
18. Ein skal bryggja so ein hev noko til á tyggja.
One must brew so that one has something to chew.
19. Ein stor buskap treng stort beite.
A large stock needs much pasture.
20. Ein kjem inkje djupare enn aat botnen.
One cannot fall deeper than to the bottom.
21. Det er ofte dygd i bur der ingen trur.
There is often virtue where no one would think it.
22. Ettetanken er god men fyretanken er betre.
Afterthought is good, but forethought is better.
23. Fatigmanns föring er altid lett.
Poor man's luggage is always light.
24. Der fanden inkje er sjölv, der hev han sveinarne sine.
Where the devil is not present himself, he has his young fellows.
25. Ein kjem ikkje paa fjellet med flat veg.
You can't climb a mountain by a level road.
26. Det er vondt aa fljuga vengjelaus.
It is hard to fly without wings.
27. Tri gonger slutt er som ein gong brennt.
Three times' removing is as bad as once burnt out.
28. Ein fær ikkje retta foten lenger enn felden rekk.
One must not stretch the foot further than the bed-covering (of skin) reaches.

29. Stor fugl tarv stort reiv.
A big bird needs a big prey.
30. Den som vil fylgja naar byren bles fær fylgja i andróren med.
He who would follow when a fair wind blows must follow
in a head-wind (lit. take part in the against-rowing).
31. Det er betre aa vera fyre var enn etter snar.
It is better to be wary beforehand than smart after.
32. D'er logi som dömer, inkje domaren.
'Tis the law that judges, not the judge.
33. Ein gap treng god lukka.
A fool needs good luck.
34. Det skal vera gard millom gode grannar.
There must be a fence between good neighbours.
35. Det er beste gaava, som inkje ventar attergaava.
The best gifts are those which expect no return.
36. Geiti er ikkje god aa gjerda fyre (*or* inne).
A goat is not easy to fence in.
37. Di meir ein bannar geiti di meir trivst ho.
The more one curses a goat the more she thrives.
38. Kvardags gjest fær kvardags helsing.
A weekday guest gets a weekday greeting.
39. Det er ofte ei turr grein paa eit grönt tre.
There is often a withered branch on a green tree.
40. Den som lyfter hamaren for högt, han slær skakt.
He who lifts the hammer too high, strikes too clumsily.
41. Heime er hunden djervaste.
The dog is boldest at home.
42. Det er dá heilt holamillom.
Anyhow, it is all right between the holes [of an old
garment].
43. Helgarplagg vert ei gong kvardagsplagg.
Holiday wear one day becomes weekday wear.

44. Hjelp er alltid god so nær som i grautarfatet.
Help is always good, except in the porridge-dish.
45. Mange hogg fella store trær.
Many blows fell great trees.
46. Naar horni er av er det for seint á stanga.
When the horns are off, it is too late to butt.
47. Hugen dreg halve lasset.
Mood draws half the load.
48. Naar hugen er god er foten lett.
When the spirits are good, the step is light.
49. Det kann ingen sin lagnad fly.
No one can escape his fate.
50. Eitt lamb er liten buskap.
One lamb makes a small flock.
51. Ein leikar so lenge med katten, at ein fær kjenne klørne.
One plays with the cat until one feels the claws.
52. Det er lite liv i den som döyr av store ord.
There is little life in him who dies of big words.
53. Ein fær inkje skera ljuset so hardt at det sloknar.
One must not trim the light so closely that it goes out.
54. Den som skal ljuga lyt hava godt minne.
He who would lie must have a good memory.
55. Ein fær log fylgja eller land fly.
One must follow the laws or flee the land.

E. E. SPEIGHT.

FIFTY HAUSA FOLK-TALES¹ (*continued*).

37. *The Origin of the Crow.* (A.)

A certain King was always saying to his son (that he) was not his own son. As for the son he was like him. He (King) said,—

¹ *Ante*, p. 70, l. 10, for draughts read *durra* (a well-known game).