

**OUR SCANDINAVIAN
FOREFATHERS:
TWO LECTURES**

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Our Scandinavian forefathers: two lectures by William Miller

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WILLIAM MILLER

**OUR SCANDINAVIAN
FOREFATHERS:
TWO LECTURES**

Y. Bight. Thurso. Aug. 10. 1881.

Our

Scandinavian Forefathers:

TWO LECTURES,

BY

WILLIAM MILLER, A. M.,

PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

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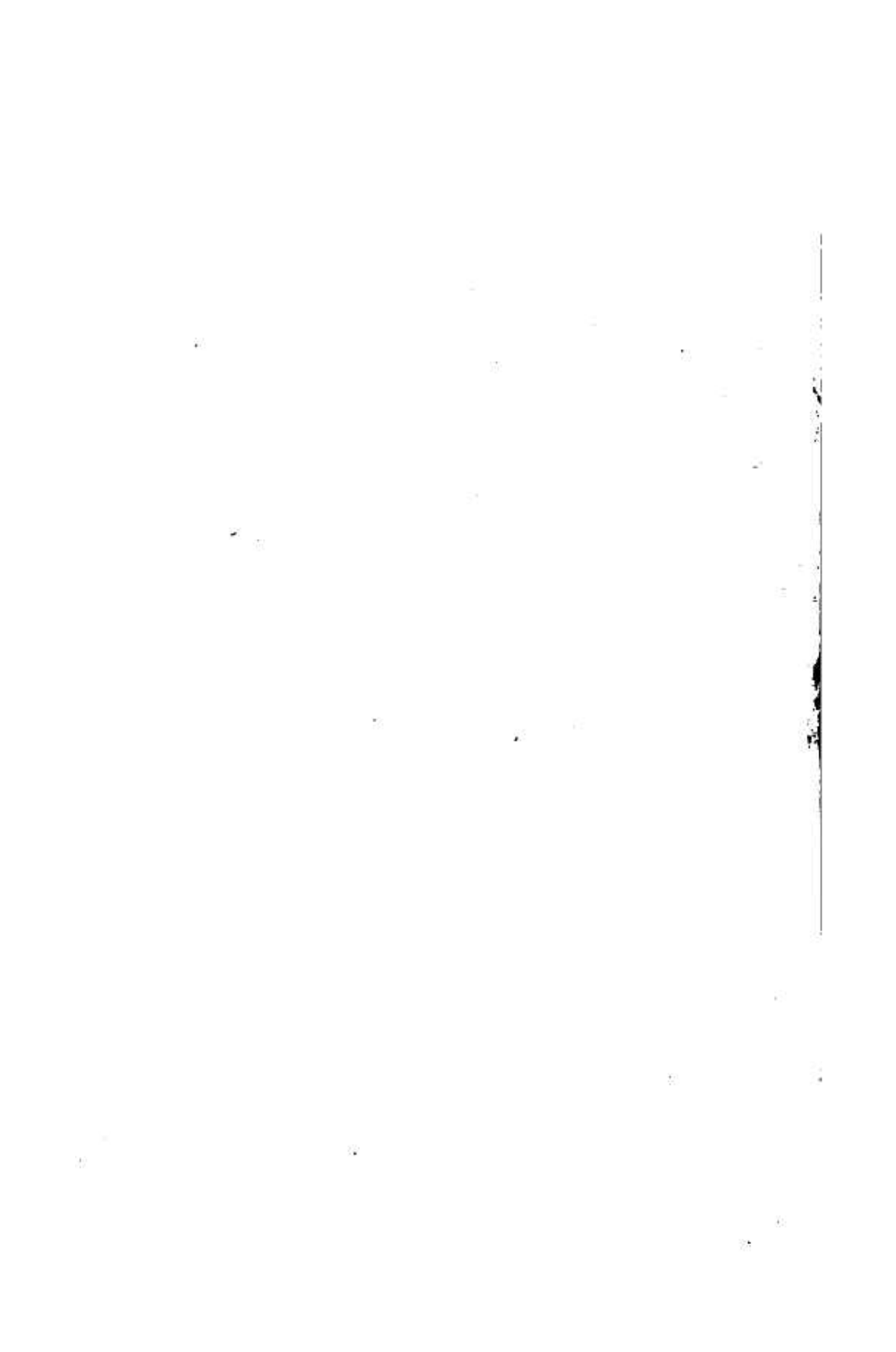
TO THE
YOUNG MEN OF THURSO,
WITH THE PRAYER THAT THEY MAY FIND
THE PERFECT FREEDOM, TRUTH, AND SYMPATHY,
WHICH IT IS OUR HEREDITARY CHARACTERISTIC TO SEEK FOR,
BY SUBMITTING THEMSELVES
TO HIM IN WHOM ALL PERFECTION DWELLS,
THE SON OF MAN, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD,

These Lectures

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

BY

WILLIAM MILLER.





PREFATORY NOTE.

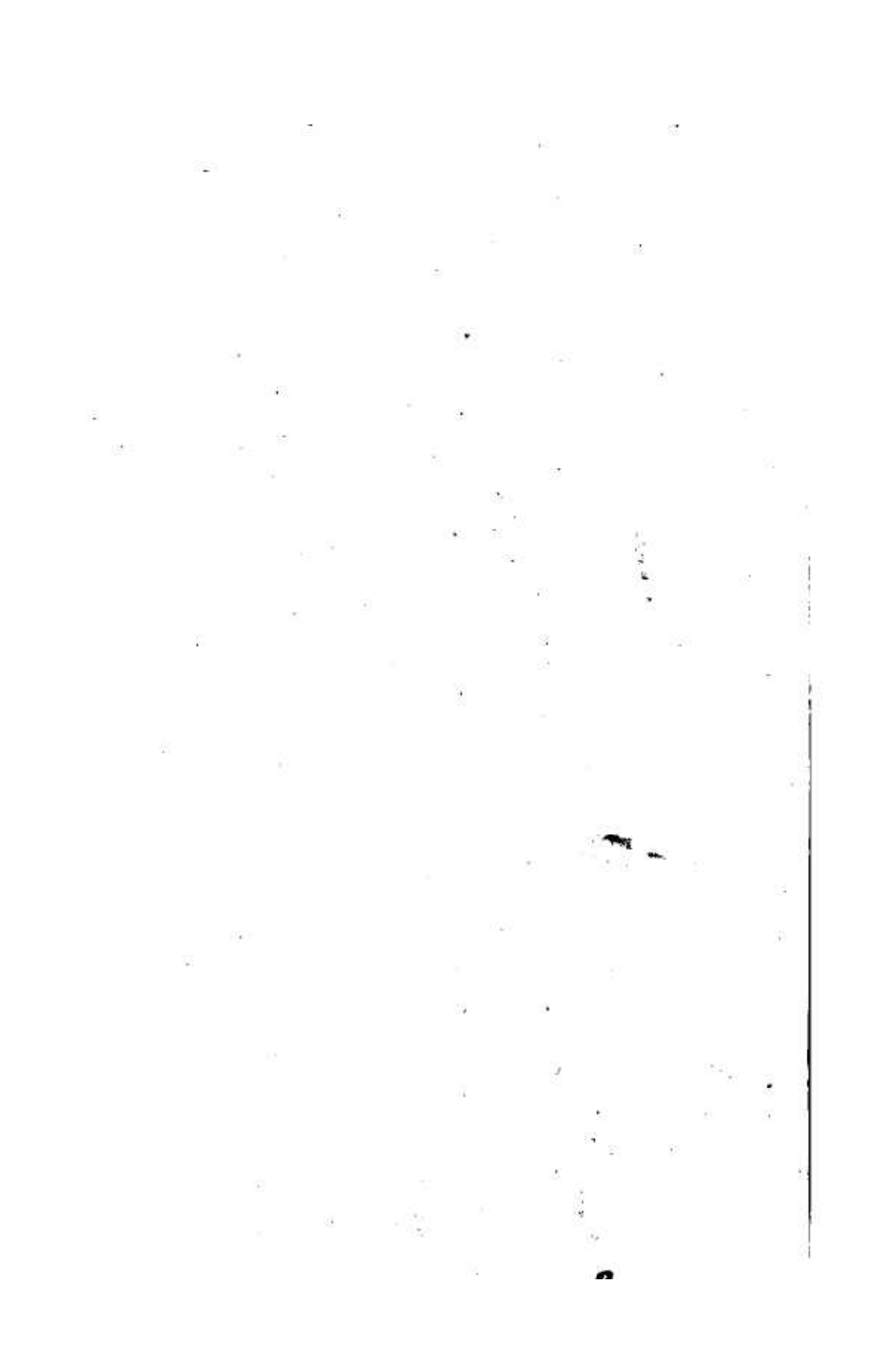
THE Thurso Benevolent Institution, in aid of which these Lectures were delivered, is intended for the education of the female children of the poor belonging to the town and neighbourhood. Such of the parents as are able pay a very small fee; but, with this exception, it is supported entirely by voluntary contribution.

The occasion and object of the Lectures will be best shown by inserting part of the original advertisement—

“At the request of the Committee of the THURSO BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION, the Rev. WILLIAM MILLER, A.M., will deliver two Lectures in aid of a fund for building an INFANT CLASS-ROOM and a WASHING HOUSE, in connection with the Institution. Subject of Lectures:—*Our Scandinavian Fore-fathers*. Lecture 1. Their Origin, Institutions, and Religion. Lecture 2. Their Character and Literature.”

After some hesitation, I agreed to comply with the request for the publication of the Lectures, addressed to me by the committee and others, provided it appeared that my doing so would be of any pecuniary benefit to the institution. The number of subscribers is already such that a considerable sum will certainly remain in the hands of the committee after the cost of publication has been defrayed. I therefore deem myself warranted in laying these pages before the public, since, at the very least, some benefit will thereby accrue to an institution most worthy of cordial support. Were it not for this, I would scarcely let a production see the light which has been so hastily composed; and which, from the extent of its subject, is necessarily so superficial. Other demands too upon my time prevent my doing anything now in the way of addition or improvement. Indeed, the endeavour to make these lectures a worthy presentation of their theme, might end in my publishing not a pamphlet but a bulky volume. Therefore, with the exception of some unimportant omissions, and the addition of the notes and appendix, they are printed exactly as delivered.

W. M.



OUR SCANDINAVIAN FOREFATHERS.

LECTURE I.

BEFORE entering on the subject which is to engage our attention for these two evenings, there are a few things which I think it right to mention, by way of preface or apology.

Thus, as regards the subject I have chosen, it is not—at least at first sight—one which has any great connection with the object aimed at by those at whose request I appear before you. Nor is it perhaps in all respects the theme which my own inclination would lead me to fix on for a lecture here. But the fact is that, if I were to have the pleasure of addressing you at all, I had no alternative but to select a subject not requiring much investigation, or thoughtful preparation. For these I have had no time. And thus, I am compelled to ask you to accompany me in the exploration of a field which has been long familiar to me, and in which I may serve as guide, without much extra trouble. Further, I must warn you at the outset that, on this same plea of want of time for investigation, I cannot vouch for the minute accuracy of any historical details that may be set forth. In the composition of these papers I have had almost no access to works bearing on their subject; and though, for several years, I have paid some little attention to Scandinavian history and literature, still one cannot be expected always to remember, with perfect correctness, the dates and other minute though important particulars which form the skeleton of history—especially when, as is in this matter the case with me, the attention has for a considerable time been turned in a wholly different direction. My aim is to present you with a true and, if possible, a vivid picture of bygone times, and of the character of those who were actors in them; and this aim, fortunately, it is possible in some measure to fulfil, even though there may be some mistake as to the name of a poet or king, the date of a battle, or the precise locality of the planting of a colony. And surely the subject of these lectures is one which may suitably challenge some attention from us, whoever else may afford to pass it by. From those of whom I am to speak, you, the men of Caithness, are descended. By knowing them,