

**YOUNG
OFEG'S DITTIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649015061

Young Ofeg's ditties by Ola Hansson

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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OLA HANSSON

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YOUNG OFEG'S DITTIES

BY OLA HANSSON

TRANSLATED FROM
THE SWEDISH BY
GEORGE EGERTON

LONDON: JOHN LANE, VIGO ST
BOSTON: ROBERTS BROS., 1895



INTRODUCTORY NOTE

It has been urged upon me by many that translation is an unworthy form of literature; and with this view I entirely agree, if the translator be not in such sympathy with the writer he endeavours to give in his own tongue, as to make translation a labour of love, and not merely a branch of literary trade. In offering this necessarily poor version of these beautiful prose poems, which are an exposition of Friedrich Nietzche's triumphant doctrine of the Ego, I am not

alone actuated by my individual admiration of Ola Hansson's writings, but also by a desire to make known to others one of the most remarkable writers of our day.

Ola Hansson is the youngest and most striking personality amongst Scandinavian writers. He was born on the 12th of November 1860, in Skåne (Skania), the most southern province in Sweden. His family is one of the oldest in the province, and have held the same estate for many centuries as freehold proprietors. Herr Ola's father was the first to marry an outsider, and his eldest brother the first to enter a University—for the dis-

tinguishing characteristic of such families in Sweden is jealousy of innovation, tenacity in the preservation of family tradition, and intermarriage. He joined the University at Lund, and passed a brilliant examination in philosophy as one year's student, but the expectation that he would be a shining light as lecturer was not fulfilled, as he devoted himself to letters.

After his return to Skania he issued his first book, "Sensitiva Amorosa," in which he broke new ground in literature: that of physiological mysticism, with which he plumbed greater depths in the mysteries of human life than even the Ibsen, Björnson, or Strindberg

problem-plays had led one to believe possible. As the niceties of his psychology and the peculiar depths of his analysis met, not alone with little understanding, but called down a storm of opprobrium and scurrilous personal attacks from the press, he left his native land and settled finally in Germany; and here he gained in a few years a leading position as poet and critic in the newer school of letters.

His fame spread from Germany to France, where attention was first drawn to him by the publication of "Young Ofeg's Ditties." His numerous lyrical and critical works have been translated into most European languages, and every