

**MACMILLAN'S SERIES OF FOREIGN
SCHOOL CLASSICS. SELECTIONS FROM
UHLAND'S BALLADS
AND ROMANCES: WITH BIOGRAPHICAL
NOTICES, AND HISTORICAL, AND
GRAMMATICAL NOTES**

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Macmillan's Series of Foreign School Classics. Selections from Uhland's Ballads and Romances:
With Biographical Notices, and Historical, and Grammatical Notes by G. Eugène Fasnacht

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G. EUGÈNE FASNACHT

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OF
FOREIGN SCHOOL CLASSICS

EDITED BY

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Author of 'The Progressive French and German Courses,'
'The Organic Method of Studying Languages,' &c.*

SELECTIONS
FROM
UHLAND'S BALLADS AND
ROMANCES

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES, AND HISTORICAL
AND GRAMMATICAL NOTES

BY
G. EUGÈNE FASNACHT

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1888

PREFACE

THE remarkable simplicity of Uhland's poetry, simple not only in language and style but also in thought and sentiment, marks out his poems from among all German literature as eminently fitted for the study of young beginners. No easier, and at the same time no more captivating, readings can possibly—I speak from long experience—be placed in the hands of English boys and girls.

Some of his best romances, as "Bertrand de Born," "Der Waller," "Das Schloz am Meer," and a few others, will no doubt be missed by old friends of the poet; but as the selection has been made especially with a view to suit the capacities of mere tyros in the language, I had no alternative but to exclude all poems, however excellent, which either in thought or in language seemed to me to be beyond the grasp of those for whom the selection is intended.



BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

JOHANN LUDWIG UHLAND was born at Tübingen, in the kingdom of Württemberg, on the 26th of April 1787. He early devoted himself to the study of law in the university of his native town, but felt himself more powerfully attracted towards the cultivation of the Muses. His first poems date from his fourteenth year. Having matriculated, and in due course taken his degree of Doctor of Laws (1810), he availed himself of a stipend to pursue his law studies in Paris, especially with a view to make himself acquainted with the *Code Napoleon*. In reality, however, he spent the best of his time in deciphering in the Imperial library the manuscripts of mediæval French literature. It is to this period of his life that we are indebted for some of his best ballads, particularly those bearing upon the ancient troubadours and trouvères (Durand, der Castellan von Coucy, Taillefer, etc.)

Though we are only concerned here with Uhland the poet, it would be doing but scant justice to his character if we were not to mention, though only incidentally, his almost lifelong struggles in the cause of the constitutional freedom of his native country.

Elected a member of the Württembergian Parliament (*Stände-Versammlung*) for the electoral district of Tübingen (1819), he proved himself throughout his long parliamentary career one of the staunchest supporters of the old time-honoured Charter (*Das gute alte Recht*) which King William attempted to suppress. In this period fall his political poems, which, at the outset, won for him great popularity, and contributed to awaken his fellow-countrymen to a sense of their civic duties.

No less distinguished were his labours in the field of scholarship. His essay on "Old French Epic Poetry" (1812), on "Walther von der Vogelweide" (1822), his excellent collection of Popular Songs (1844-5), and a few other writings, subsequently collected and published under the title of *Uhland's Schriften zur Geschichte der Dichtung und Sage* (1865), claim for him a very high rank among

German scholars. His contributions to dramatic literature, however, "Herzog Ernst von Schwaben" (1817), and "Ludwig der Baier" (1819), although noble conceptions, are wanting in dramatic life, and cannot be said to have added to his fame as a poet.

In 1830 he was appointed Professor of the German Language and Literature at the University of Tübingen, but he soon resigned this post when he found it incompatible with his parliamentary duties. He died after a protracted illness on the 18th of November 1862.

We conclude with an article on "Uhland" in the English Cyclopædia, in which the characteristic features of his poetry are well appreciated:—

"His songs, ballads, and romances form the most valuable portion of Uhland's literary works. His songs are distinguished by their spirit and energy, their truth and depth of feeling, their lively and picturesque representations of nature, and their varied subjects; his patriotic songs, in particular, contain some heart-stirring appeals to all the better national feelings that were likely to arouse his countrymen, and in them is a mixture of earnestness and jocularly, with a fervent love of country, and aspiration after the great and good inspired by the recollections of their ancestors. His ballads and romances are remarkable for their apparent simplicity, the result of a most carefully exercised art, shown by the extreme skill and felicity in the choice of words, and the masterly way in which characters are sketched perfectly but briefly."

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