

**THE HERITAGE OF  
THE KURTS.  
VOLUME II**

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The Heritage of the Kurts. Volume II by Björnstjerne Björnson & Cecil Fairfax

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**BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON & CECIL FAIRFAX**

**THE HERITAGE OF  
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BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON  
*Edited by EDMUND GOSSE*  
VOLUME XII

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NEW YORK

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

# THE HERITAGE OF THE KURTS

BY

BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON

*Translated from the Norwegian by*

*CECIL FAIRFAX*

VOLUME II



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## CHAPTER II

### THE STAFF

Fair Milla and brown Tora,  
Broad Tinka and slender Nora.

It was disputed where this remarkable verse with its rhythm and rhyme was heard for the first time, whether in the senior Latin or senior Commercial. The dispute can never be settled now, but when these girls showed themselves it was often shouted, sung, and bawled after them—at first in turns with another by Dösen, which ran, "*Nora, Tora, ora pro nobis*;" but as it was incomplete, the names of Tinka and Milla not being mentioned, it was dropped in favour of the former. This one was also given up; it was perfectly well known who was father to the latest name for them; Rendalen called them on a certain occasion "The Staff," and after him the whole school, after it the boys' school, and at last all who were inclined to pay them a compliment. We know three of the Staff already—that is to say, we know them from the others, not more than that. "Fair Milla" is no other than Emilie Engel; she looked like a picture in enamel in her mourning. Broad

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Tinka is Katinka Hansen, Augusta's sister, the contralto; and slender Nora is the Sheriff's daughter, the one who hid under the sail, the one with big eyes and wavy hair.

Brown Tora, on the other hand, we do not know, and she shall remain a little longer shrouded in mystery.

A year ago a new sheriff was appointed to that part of the country, a secretary in a government office, called Jens Tue, otherwise known as the ladies' man.\* Instead of becoming resident he went abroad with his wife, whose chest was rather delicate.

This lady had, by jealousy and insincerity, missed her true foothold in life, and both in her thoughts and actions she flitted like a bird from one interest to another; she wished to appear so immensely delighted, so taken up with intellectual questions and music—until one day her strength proved insufficient; she collapsed.

Her husband carried her off with him, and as during their tour he was all that was pleasant and amiable, her bird-like nature required nothing more. She came home again, well and happy.

It would have seemed more natural for Nora to remain at Christiania with her friends and relations. It was said certainly that Fru Rendalen's school was so very superior, but that could hardly be the whole explanation; all were curious about the Sheriff's daughter when she appeared. She was a fashionable young lady, tall and slender,

\* *Pigerne Jens.*

### THE STAFF

and if not exactly elegant, still stylish in dress and manner; a little supercilious; still she did not give offence—she was too pliable for that, too quick as well, entirely taken up with the fancy of the moment. She gave an impetus to all she did, and people forgive a great deal for that.

But no one would forgive her letter-writing, or the incredible number of letters which she received weekly! Not the teachers, for she neglected the schoolwork; not her companions, for she neglected them; nay, she had hardly looked at them! She went to sleep every night with inky fingers and a heap of letters beside her bed; either she was writing letters or reading letters, or crying over them. During every recreation time she ran upstairs to add a few lines, or to read a letter over again which she had just received. As she was worried by the pursuit of the others, she disappeared after every meal. Where was she? There was a hunt for her, and she was found up in the top attic, writing of course, this time upon a large barrel; she was blue with cold. She had left at least twenty particular friends behind her at Christiania; all the twenty wrote to her, and all received answers, long answers—one must never be shorter than the others. Happily, she had another passion, and it often chances that one thing counteracts another. She was crazy about music. She sang snatches of songs with great feeling, but, partly because at her age she could not sing much at a time, partly because she had not training enough to carry out a delicate interpretation, she could never properly render