

**KING RENE'S  
DAUGHTER, A DANISH  
LYRICAL DRAMA**

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King Rene's daughter, a Danish lyrical drama by Henrik Hertz

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**HENRIK HERTZ**

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DAUGHTER, A DANISH  
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# KING RENÉ'S DAUGHTER

*A DANISH LYRICAL DRAMA*

BY

HENRIK HERTZ

TRANSLATED BY

THEODORE MARTIN



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*PUBLISHERS' NOTICE.*

It is surprising that the American press has issued so small a number of the foreign poems which are intimately known throughout Europe. There are many which have gone through several editions in each one of the principal European languages, English included, which have not been printed in America at all. The little poem herewith presented is as intimately known in England and Germany as almost any one in native literature. In the United States the only issue of it before the present, was a pamphlet printed—probably for stage uses—nearly twenty years ago.

In the hope of adding more of these foreign works to the American stock of good reading, we have already begun the preparation of "Frithiof's Saga," translated from the Swedish of Tegnér by Blackley, and edited, with a copious introduction and notes, by Bayard Taylor; also the "Nathan the Wise" of Lessing, with an introductory essay by K. Fischer—translated from the German by Miss Ellen Frothingham, of Boston.

If these great works meet with a favorable reception,

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we will add others as long as the public taste shall warrant. Among those we have in contemplation are Goethe's "Hermann and Dorothea;" Molière's "Tartuffe;" Calderon's "Life is a Dream;" Tasso's "Aminta," translated by Leigh Hunt; "The Wooing of the King's Daughter," from the Norwegian of Munch; "Boris Godounoff," from the Russian of Pouschkine; "Nala and Damajanti," translated from the Sanscrit by Milman; and a translation of Bodenstedt's version of the Turkish songs of Mirza-Schaffy.



## INTRODUCTORY SKETCHES.

### I.—THE POET.

HENRIK HERTZ was born at Copenhagen, on the twenty-fifth of August, 1798. His parents were Jews. In 1817 he entered the law school of the Copenhagen University. While studying law with little interest, he was enthusiastically at work on general æsthetic studies, and especially on Persian literature. Though Hertz cared little for law, his works bear evidence that he probably owes much to it. The accurate framework of his writings, the just balance of his characters, and the ingenious construction of his scenes, would be natural to the very highest dramatic genius, but could hardly be wrought by a mind such as that of Hertz, unless its discriminative powers had received special culture. In spite of his attention to other things, he graduated creditably in law in 1825.

In 1826 he published, anonymously, his first work, *Herr Bughard og hans Familie*—a comedy. This work bears unmistakable evidence of having been modelled on

the comedies of Holberg, who, a century before, had infused the true catholic spirit into Danish literature. Hertz wrote about one play a year, publishing anonymously, until 1830, when he produced a queer poetical satire called "Letters of a Ghost" (*Gjenganger-breve*). It had the form of epistles from Paradise, and its principal objects of attack were the somewhat diverse ones of the bad literary taste and the snobbishness of the age. He especially assailed a school that he considered servile imitators of Oehlenschläger, and he was not prophet enough to refrain from disturbing Hans Christian Andersen, who was then just rising into fame. This satire produced a furor fit to be compared with that called forth by English Bards and Scotch Reviewers. No literary event in Denmark had produced such a stir since the quarrel between Baggessen and Oehlenschläger, about a quarter of a century before. In the same year with the satire, he published the first versified comedy in Danish literature. It is called "Cupid's Master-Stroke" (*Amors Geniestreger*). The form of the dialogue is the same as in the French classical drama. It was another great success. Despite all this, he worked on anonymously, and the Danes called him their Great Unknown. Not till 1832 did he claim the laurels which his works had been earning for him. In the same year he embraced Lutheranism.

In 1833 he was admitted to the "travelling pension," with which the Danish Government encourages the promising young men of the nation. During that year and

the one succeeding, he travelled in Germany, France, and Italy, and seems to have done nothing in literature beyond gathering materials.

The next one of his works deserving special notice was "Svend Dyring's House," a tragedy in four acts, which appeared in 1837. This play excited universal praise, and is one of the best exponents of the modern Scandinavian genius. It has been translated at least twice into German, and was played at Berlin in 1849. "The Plu-mage of the Swan" (*Svanekammen*), a comedy in three acts (1841), also deserves to be considered a representative play.

In 1839 Hertz published a novel called "Characters and Circumstances" (*Stemninger og Tilstande*)—an interesting and well-constructed book, but the course of the story is too much interrupted by political disquisitions. These are of such a character, that, on the work's appearance, they called down upon the author severe attacks from the liberal press. Nevertheless, the book went through at least two editions.

KING RENÉ'S DAUGHTER appeared in 1845. Although in plot and structure far less ambitious than many of his other plays, it has merits that have seldom, if ever, been elsewhere combined in the same degree. It took its place in literature at once. It has been translated into German four times—once by Breseman, with the assistance of the author—and four times into English. It has been represented at leading theatres in Germany, Holland, Sweden, England, and the United States. A