

## CHAPTER IX.

Sylvius Hogg was the name that the stranger inscribed upon the inn register, that same evening, directly underneath the name of Sandgoist, and there was as great a contrast between the two names as between the men that bore them. Between them there was nothing whatever in common, either mentally, morally, or physically. One was generous to a fault, the other was miserly and parsimonious; one was genial and kind-hearted, in the arid soul of the other every noble and humane sentiment seemed to have withered and died.

Sylvius Hogg was nearly sixty years of age, though he did not appear nearly so old. Tall, erect, and well built, healthy alike in mind and in body, he pleased at first sight with his handsome genial face, upon which he wore no beard, but around which clustered curling locks of silvery hair; eyes which were as smiling as his lips, a broad forehead that bore the impress of noble thoughts, and a full chest in which the heart beat untrammelled. To all these charms were added an inexhaustible fund of good humor, a refined and liberal nature, and a generous and self-sacrificing disposition.

Sylvius Hogg, of Christiania--no further recommendation was needed. That told the whole story. And he was not only known, appreciated, loved and honored in the Norwegian capital, but throughout the entire country, though the sentiments he inspired in the other half of the

Scandinavian kingdom, that is to say in Sweden, were of an entirely different character.

This fact can easily be explained.

Sylvius Hogg was a professor of law at Christiania. In some lands to be a barrister, civil engineer, physician, or merchant, entitles one to a place on the upper rounds of the social ladder. It is different in Norway, however. To be a professor there is to be at the top of the ladder.

Though there are four distinct classes in Sweden, the nobility, the clergy, the gentry, and the peasantry, there are but three in Norway--the nobility being utterly wanting. No aristocracy is acknowledged, not even that of the office-holder, for in this favored country where privileged persons are unknown, the office-holder is only the humble servant of the public. In fact, perfect social equality prevails without any political distinctions whatever.

Sylvius Hogg being one of the most influential men in the country, the reader will not be surprised to learn that he was also a member of the Storting; and in this august body, by the well-known probity of his public and private life even more than by his mighty intellect, he wielded a powerful influence even over the peasant deputies elected in such large numbers in the rural districts.

Ever since the adoption of the Constitution of 1814, it may be truly said that Norway is a republic with the King of Sweden for its president; for Norway, ever jealous of her rights, has carefully guarded her individuality. The Storthing will have nothing whatever to do with the Swedish parliament; hence it is only natural that the most prominent and patriotic members of the Storthing should be regarded with distrust on the other side of the imaginary frontier that separates Sweden from Norway.

This was the case with Sylvius Hogg. Being extremely independent in character, and utterly devoid of ambition, he had repeatedly declined a position in the Cabinet; and a staunch defender of all the rights of his native land, he had constantly and unflinchingly opposed any threatened encroachment on the part of Sweden.

Such is the moral and political gulf between the two countries that the King of Sweden--then Oscar XV.--after being crowned at Stockholm, was obliged to go through a similar ceremony at Drontheim, the ancient capital of Norway. Such too is the suspicious reserve of Norwegian men of business, that the Bank of Christiania is unwilling to accept the notes of the Bank of Stockholm! Such too is the clearly defined line of demarkation between the two nations that the Swedish flag floats neither over the public buildings of Norway, nor from the masts of Norwegian vessels. The one has its blue bunting, bearing a yellow cross; the other a blue cross upon a crimson ground.

Sylvius Hogg was a thorough Norwegian in heart and in soul, and stoutly defended her rights upon all occasions; so, when in 1854 the Storting was discussing the question of having neither a viceroy nor even a governor at the head of the state, he was one of the most enthusiastic champions of the measure.

Consequently, though he was by no means popular in the eastern part of Scandinavia, he was adored in the western part of it, even in the most remote hamlets. His name was a household word throughout Norway from the dunes of Christiansand to the bleak rocks of the North Cape, and so worthy was he of this universal respect that no breath of calumny had ever sullied the reputation of either the deputy or the professor. But though he was a Norwegian to the core he was a hot-blooded man, with none of the traditional coldness and apathy of his compatriots; but much more prompt and resolute in his thoughts and acts than most Scandinavians, as was proved by the quickness of his movements, the ardor of his words, and the vivacity of his gestures. Had he been born in France, one would have unhesitatingly pronounced him a Southerner.

Sylvius Hogg's fortune had never exceeded a fair competence, for he had not entered into politics for the purpose of making money. Naturally unselfish, he never thought of himself, but continually of others; nor was he tormented by a thirst for fame. To be a deputy was enough for him; he craved no further advancement.

Just at this time Sylvius Hogg was taking advantage of a three months'

vacation to recuperate after a year of severe legislative toil. He had left Christiania six weeks before, with the intention of traveling through the country about Drontheim, the Hardanger, the Telemark, and the districts of Kongsberg and Drammen. He had long been anxious to visit these provinces of which he knew nothing; and his trip was consequently one of improvement and of pleasure. He had already explored a part of the region, and it was on his return from the northern districts that the idea of visiting the famous falls of the Rjukan--one of the wonders of the Telemark--first occurred to him. So, after surveying the route of the new railroad--which as yet existed only on paper--between the towns of Drontheim and Christiania, he sent for a guide to conduct him to Dal. He was to meet this guide on the left bank of the Maan; but lured on by the beauties of the Maristien, he ventured upon the dangerous pass without waiting for his guide. An unusual want of prudence in a man like him and one that nearly cost him his life, for had it not been for the timely assistance rendered by Joel and Hulda Hansen, the journey would have ended with the traveler himself in the grim depths of the Rjukanfos.