

Classic Poetry Series

Johannes Helms
- poems -

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Johannes Helms(1828-1895)

Johannes Helms (November 8, 1828-December 4, 1895) was a Danish writer and schoolmaster who experienced the Three Years' War firsthand.

Johannes was born on Saturday the 8th of November in the year 1828 in his parents home in Esbønderup County. His father, Søren Bagger Helms (1788-1872), was the local rector and his mother, Nicoline Marie Zeuthen (1789-1870), was her husband's second wife. The Helms household also contained a four year elder brother Jakob Helms who became priest and made extensive reconstruction of several Danish churches.

He graduated from Frederiksborg Gymnasium in 1847 and continued onto Philology at the University of Copenhagen that same year. At the time he was a member of the notorious "Studenter Væbningen"(consisting of university students and a regular substitute for the police). In march of 1850 he joined the Danish army partaking in the nationalistic frenzy erupting in those months. He was promoted to "Fourer"(sergeant)before the battle of Fredericia and received "The Silver Cross" for his actions there. He returned to his studies two-and-a-half year later and continued as a member of the "Student Guard" for the remainder of his student-period.

Career

In 1856, after working as a private teacher, Johannes became teacher at "Domskolén i Slesvig"("The judiciary school of Slesvig"). He had to leave this position due to the War of 1864. In 1867 he was appointed headmaster of Borgerdydsskolén at Christianshavn, a position he held to his death. In 1887 he became "Titulær Professor" at the university and in 1892 he was elected as a member of the "citizenrepresentation" in Copenhagen. In July of 1875 he accepted two of the first female students in Denmark: Nielsine Nielsen and Marie Glerup and who were graduated by Ludvig Trier July 9th 1877.

Marriage and children

In 1857, at 28 years of age, he married the ten year younger woman Marie Sophie Hansen, daughter of well-to-do businessman Hans Peter Hansen. The couple had nine children; Sofie, Johanne Marie, Helene, Nikoline Marie, Povl, Johan Kristian, Astrid, Holger and Ingeborg Helms, three died in infancy, Ingeborg founded "Det åbne gymnasium", Johan Kristian became a judge and Holger an inventor.

Works

Helms wrote consistently throughout his life and published several books and a variety of songs and poems. "Some Verses" published in 1856. "Soldierlife in War and Peace a Generation ago" published in 1875 and his personal story as a soldier in the Three-Years War. "Stories and Poems,Songs and Verses" published in 1888, a compilation of his lyrical works and the only account of the happenings in Slesvig in the beginning of 1864.

Death and afterward

He died on the fourth of December in the year 1895 and his successor as headmaster was his son-in-law, Peter C.G. Leuning. Many of Johannes's works, particularly the songs, are still in print. "Soldaterliv i Krig og Fred" was re-printed and published at the 150years day of the breakout of the war in 1848.

En Svensk Konstabel Fra Sverrig

Nu vil jeg indvie jer i
Historien om en Person,
en svensk Konstabel fra Sverrig,
som skød sig med en Kanon.

Han var lidt hidsig i Blodet,
for Resten god og reel;
nu havde han sat sig i ho'det,
at han vilde slaa sig ihjel.

Han tømte sin Brændevinsflaske
og smed den paa en Bastion,
saa krøb han med Sabel og Taske
paa Hovedet i en Kanon.

Cigaren, han havde i Munden,
til Lunte benyttede han,
thi da han var kommet til Bunden,
den tændte Kanonen an.

Men Bakkens- og Knebelsbarter
sved først den svenske Rad,
derpaa i tusinde Parter
Konstabelen splittedes ad.

En Finger blev fundet i Skagen,
et Øje og næsen ved Lund,
et dygtigt stykke af Bagen
neddumped i Øresund.

Fra Kronborg man det observerte,
det gav en stor Konfusion;
til Staden de telegraferte:
„En Sejler af ny konstruktion!

De alliertes Marine
ej mere behøves vil;
det er Lord Cochranes Maskine,
der styred ad Kronstadt til.“

Som Lemmerne, Bukser og Kjolen
blev spredt til Lands og til Vands;
en Bukseknep fandt man i Polen,
men den var nok slet inte hans.

Paa Prent har jeg læst det i „Tiden“;
men Sandheden simpel og nøgen
er, at det er længe siden,
40 saa længe, at det er Løgn.

Men Folk der paa Stedet beretter,
og det maa mærkes især,
han døde først Dagen derefter
af Mangel paa Luft og paa Vejr.

Johannes Helms

Jeg Elsker De Grønne Lunde

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