



**THE  
SCANDINAVIAN  
QUESTION**

**W. Barnes Steveni**

# THE SCANDINAVIAN QUESTION

*Large Crown 8vo. Cloth, 5s.*

*"The Story of the Nations" Series.*

# A History of Norway.

From the Earliest Times.

By Professor HJALMAR H. BOYESEN.

With a Chapter by C. F. KEARY.

*With 77 Illustrations and Maps.*

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The  
Scandinavian Question

By  
WILLIAM BARNES STEVENI

AUTHOR OF "THROUGH FAMINE-STRICKEN RUSSIA"

*With a Map.*



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# SWEDEN AND NORWAY WITH DENMARK

SHOWING

Annexations of Swedish Territory by Russia from  
1689 to 1808

ALSO

Annexation of Danish Territory by  
Germany in 1866

## EXPLANATION

Russian Military Route runs from  
Tornaa to Three Engins Point  
(eighteen miles from Lyngen Fiord)  
thus .....

Railways -----

Frontier Boundaries ----- Lofoden IS

Boden Fortress +



Annexations by Peter the Great, 1689-1725

Annexations by Elizabeth . . . 1741-1762

Finmark probable next annexation by Russia; now that she has been driven from the Pacific

Annexations by Catherine II . . 1762-1795

Annexations by Alexander I . . 1808-

# THE SCANDINAVIAN QUESTION

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## INTRODUCTION

THE greater part of the following booklet on the Scandinavian Question has now been written some time—in fact, prior to my recent tour through Northern Scandinavia, Lapland, Finland, and Russia; but it was not published, as I thought that the recent Congress at Karlstad had settled the Scandinavian Question once and for all time.

But the more I read the Russian and Continental papers, and consider the political changes that are now taking place—not only in our own country, but abroad—the more I feel convinced that the recent Congress has only helped us to tide over a very serious crisis, but not to solve the Scandinavian Question, which is perhaps just as important



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to us as the Eastern or Far Eastern Question.

Another reason which decided me to publish this work was not only to induce the Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian people to forget their differences in view of the grave dangers threatening them from their colossal neighbours, but also to correct some of the false and misleading statements that have appeared in our Press concerning Sweden and her dealings with Norway, since the latter ceased to be under the Danish yoke and became united, as a free and independent nation, with Sweden, *i.e.*, as free as two nations under a union with common representatives abroad and such unequal responsibilities could possibly be.

For those who may entertain doubts concerning any statements I have made in this booklet, I would advise them to study three serious works that have appeared this autumn on this much vexed question. They are "The Swedish - Norwegian Union Crisis," by K. Nordlund; "Sweden for Peace," by Nils Edin, Professor at the University of

Upsala; and "Fiction and Fact," by the President of the Press Club, Stockholm. All these works, which can be purchased at Mr David Nutt's, are founded on historical documents, treaties, parliamentary minutes and reports, the originals of which may be seen in Stockholm and Christiania. For those who wish to go still deeper into the subject, I would advise them to visit the British Museum, and there see for themselves what was the position of Norway before she was united to Sweden, and why the latter country was forced to compel Norway to enter the Union. In fact this compulsory Union, for which we are responsible, and which has been disguised by the smooth words of diplomatists, has been one of the main causes of the recent unhappy events in Scandinavia, which nearly resulted in one of the saddest wars in modern times.

In fact, only by studying the historical events that preceded the Union of 1814, and the part each of the Scandinavian powers played in the wars of Napoleon and the wars against Russia, can we understand the present

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question, which, as I have previously stated, still awaits its solution.

When the whole truth—not half-truths and distorted facts—is known, I am certain that the British public will do justice to both sides, not only because the British people believe in justice and fair play, but because it is also to our interest to see a strong and united Scandinavia, and the Scandinavian races—from whom so many of us have our origin—if not living in union, then in unity, constituting a bulwark of freedom and liberty in the north of Europe, which has been for centuries, and I trust always will be, the home of freedom.

In fact it is partly this intense love of freedom and independence—not unmixed with a spirit of pagan patriotism—that is one of the causes of the present trouble. The other causes I will leave the public to find out; for, sooner or later, the truth will be known about this unhappy quarrel which may ultimately again plunge the whole of Northern Europe, ourselves included, into war. My earnest hope is that the whole

truth, of which this pamphlet contains but a part, will be made public before it is too late, *i.e.*, before the Press and the public men of Britain, France, and Germany, acting on insufficient and incorrect data, make some serious mistake for which all Europe will suffer.

Personally, I have always had at heart the union of the Scandinavian peoples, not only because I am of Scandinavian origin, but because I believe that a closer union of the three northern kingdoms is essential to the peace and progress of Northern Europe. This dream, if it can be so called, has been rudely dispelled by the action of the Norwegian Storting of the 7th June, which act, if good, will bear good fruit, but if evil, misfortune and misery for future generations—or, in the words of one of the Karlstad delegates to me, it will be a source of unrest in the North.

Much of what I have written here will doubtless cause anger and vexation in Norway; but this cannot be helped; for the truth, such as I have discovered it during

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my long study of that question, and my travels in Scandinavia, ought to be known.

I have only been once in Norway, and that was this summer, a part of which I spent among the fiords of the coast and the beautiful Lofoden Isles. During the short time that I was in that delightful country I learnt to like the Norwegians; for they had so much in common with my own sympathies and tastes, and I found them simple and manly, inspired with the poetry and memories of past ages. In fact many of the Norwegians appeared to live more in the past than the present, and their dreams of past greatness seem to have had much to do with their recent acts.

But we, who live in the twentieth century, cannot act as our Viking forefathers did a thousand years ago. They were indeed grand times; but, nevertheless, cruel, dark, and grim. Surely we have got past that stage of our development. Why should we then perpetuate them by treating kindred races in the same spirit as the old Norsemen did, and teach our children to hate and revenge

themselves on, instead of loving, kindred and sister nations? In heathen times, to be a good hater and to revenge a wrong, when violence begot violence, was a duty; these Viking virtues, if we may so call them, were not out of place. But now, a thousand years after Christianity has been introduced into Norway, these old teachings, which do not belong to our times, must be eradicated. The Norwegian children, instead of being taught to hate the Swedes, who are universally regarded as one of the kindest, most cultured, and polite races in Europe, will, in future, if taught to love them, perhaps in time wish to be united to them in closer bonds.<sup>1</sup> Some day when the storm breaks on Norway's ship of State, now alone on the ocean of European politics, the Norwegian people will learn how blessed a thing is unity, and how cursed a thing is disunion and dissension. May these simple truths dawn on the Scandinavian races before it is

<sup>1</sup> This is in reference to the Norwegian school books, which deliberately inculcate hatred of Sweden and the Swedish people. On the other hand, Swedish children are taught to regard the Norwegians as brothers.

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too late, *i.e.*, before they are swallowed up by their mighty neighbours. Patriotism is a good thing when it teaches us our duty to our country and rulers; but if it only teaches us to hate our neighbours, and prevents the future union of the States of Europe, it is truly an accursed thing.

I am grieved that I should have to write in such a strain; but after working for a united Scandinavia, the present sad spectacle the three ancient kingdoms of the North present is indeed one to make one despondent. Had they held together, instead of weakening one another by strife and discord, the three Scandinavian races would now have occupied the place of the Germans in the Councils of Europe.

What will be their future, with their past grand history, Providence alone knows; but let us hope, for the sake of peace, liberty, progress, and unity, that it will be as peaceful and bright as the old heathen times were miserable and full of discord.

Nothing in the following pages has been written with the intention of causing the

Norwegian people any kind of offence. My object in writing this pamphlet is the following, viz. :—(1) to make known the truth, as far as it is in my power to do so with the material at my disposal; (2) to prepare the way for a union of hearts between the three Scandinavian kingdoms; and (3) to express my gratitude to my friends in Sweden, and to do them justice who are now smarting under injustice and misconception.

During the short time I was in Norway I learned, as I have already said, to like the Norwegian people exceedingly. Even the Swedes tell me that they like the Norwegians, and that “they are not a bad people, but misled by their leaders”; and I believe with those who have studied the underlying causes of this tragic rupture of the Union, that the Norwegians have been systematically misled by those whose duty, as leaders and teachers, it was not to sow hatred and discord between kindred people, but love and concord. On their heads rest the responsibility and all the misery—and, perhaps, bloodshed and strife—that may follow from their narrow and



misguided patriotism, unless a new school of statesmen, with a broader and nobler spirit, arises in Norway.

If I have said aught unkind in these pages, I have done it, not out of malice, but from a sincere desire for the welfare of the Scandinavian peoples, with whom we in England and Scotland—especially in East Anglia and Eastern Scotland—are so closely related. How much so, it will surprise many Englishmen to learn, if they have not read the works of Du Chaillu and other writers on the origin of the English people. They will there find that the very name of our country—England—is Scandinavian, and that not only the Danes, the Norsemen, the Normans, and the Angles came from the countries colonised by the Scandinavian races, but many of the so-called "Saxons" also did not come from Germany, but from Scandinavia.

But there are other and more telling reasons why we should interest ourselves in our Norse kindred. They are not only of the same Gothic origin as ourselves, but they are practically the only free nations remaining in

the north of Europe; for one can hardly apply the term free to the Germans or the Russians, who, in their worship of autocratic methods, have much in common.

For the peace of Northern Europe it were best that both nations should speedily compose this unhappy quarrel, which is more the result of misunderstanding, agitation, and intrigue, than of any deep-seated hatred of each other.

It is evident that the only chance of their maintaining their liberties and independence lies *in federation*, if not in complete amalgamation, or, in the words of a great English organ, which writes on this question as follows:—

“Divided, the presence of two great militarist Empires on their frontiers must be a constant source of disturbance. There can be no doubt that such a federation would make for the interests of Europe as a whole. It would diminish, in some degree, the number of possible changes to European peace, and serve as a barrier against any policy of adventure in the Baltic on the part of Germany, or any expansion towards the North Sea on the Russian side. At the same time it would give to the Scandinavian

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peoples more weight in the councils of Europe, and win for them the position to which their intelligence and education entitle them in the making of international opinion."

Such is the fair prospect opened out to these kindred nations, if they will but act in the spirit of the religion they all three profess. But should they again turn back to their old pagan traditions of hatred, revenge for past injuries in the spirit of narrow-minded, un-Christian patriotism, love of bloodshed and strife, then their fate is sealed; for now, as ever, it is true that "a house divided against itself shall fall"—and the people of the North will fall from that high position they have held as free-born men for nearly two thousand years. They will not only fall, but the Scandinavian kingdoms will be divided between their two mighty neighbours, and their place in history will be known no more; for, through their want of unity and their love of strife, they will have struck themselves off the roll of the free nations of the world.