

E X H I B I T I O N O F
"BONADER" OR PEASANT
WALL-HANGINGS OF SWEDEN
FROM THE COLLECTION OF
FLORENCE DIBELL BARTLETT

THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
DEC. 22, 1931 TO JAN. 24, 1932

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7. A Marriage at Cana in Galilee

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FOREWORD

SWEDEN is an ancient seat of culture, and from the period of the Vikings throughout its entire history, some form of art has ever been manifest as an important part of the life of the people. One of the most remarkable examples of Scandinavian folk art is the painted picture indigenous to the Swedish peasant home. The commonly used name for these peasant paintings is "bonader," and their provenance was to decorate the walls and ceilings of the homes at Christmas time and on feast days, thus adding a note of color and gaiety to the otherwise dark interiors. Between festivities, these canvas or paper panels were taken down and carefully kept, to become a part of the family inheritance.

The Swedish peasant was generally his own smith, carpenter and painter, and at all times a keen and appreciative observer of nature's rich coloring and diversity of form. Among them were those who were possessed of a vivid imagination and these men became real artists, painting with facility, both worldly and Scriptural subjects, allegories dealing with Christian and general motives, historical episodes and even ventured into the realm of poetic expression. Their drawing is both bold and full of character and while the colors used were limited to tones of red, blue, green, yellow and a vigorous use of black, they are both rich and of varied intensity.

Each province developed its own style of expression, the most outstanding work coming from such districts of Southern and Central Smaoland, Halland, Blekinge, Darlecarlia, Gastrickland and Helsingland. The period that produced these original and naïve painted wall hangings of purely provincial origin was short—only a matter of some sixty years, beginning at the end of the eighteenth

century and ending in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The general size and shape of painted hangings were dictated by the living or architectural conditions, the dwelling houses being of small dimension with low cottage windows and walls whose greater portion was occupied by furniture and furnishings. A series of long narrow strips became the most practical form for decorative effects as these could be hung beneath the roof beam and the window or on the slanted ceiling or fastened to the continuous shelf usual to the average domestic interior. Such a series of running panels could even be cut apart without losing interest. In general the composition suggests a stage setting. One type has at the top a finish of festooned tasseled drapery of canopy form, while another is adorned with a clever compact bordering of leaves and flowers. Narrow bandings of inscriptions in Gothic lettering follow across the series of illustrative pictures with references to the topics depicted, the date of making and occasionally the artist's initial. The most popular figure subjects were either scenes chosen from the home or public life of the peasantry, or topics from both the Old and the New Testaments, such as Joseph's Dream, Elias in the Chariot of Fire, the Adoration of the Magi, the Marriage at Cana, the Wise and the Foolish Virgins, Abraham and Sarah, etc.

In addition to the figures, the compositions introduce architectural details such as tall, many-storied buildings with towers and numerous windows, while all the spaces between the buildings and the groups of people, are filled with rich flower motives of extraordinary size.

Uncommonly interesting is the costuming of the characters portrayed in the various pictures—the use of the style prevailing at the time of the decoration, serving to clothe the Biblical as well as the peasant images.

CATALOGUE

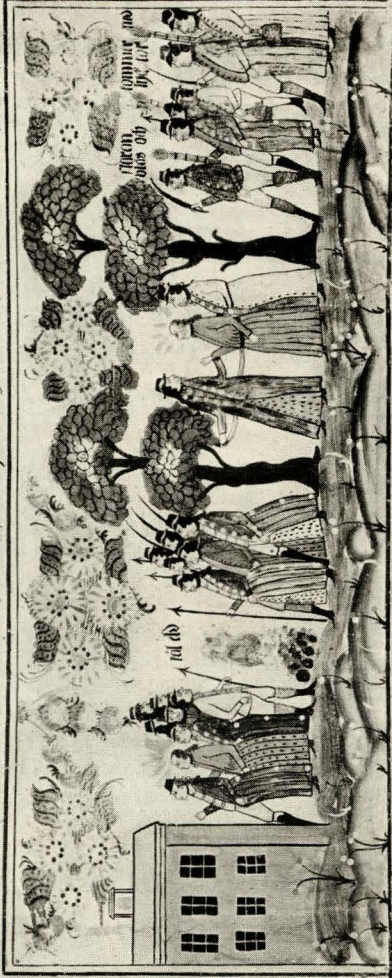
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- 1 A PEASANT WEDDING DANCE.
- 2 JUDAS' BETRAYAL OF JESUS. DATED 1805.
- 3 A MARRIAGE AT CANA IN GALILEE. DATED 1831.
SIGNED "D."
- 4 A MARRIAGE AT CANA IN GALILEE.
- 5 PEACOCK AND FLOWERS.
- 6 A MARRIAGE AT CANA IN GALILEE.
- 7 A MARRIAGE AT CANA IN GALILEE.
- 8 THE NATIVITY; HONOR TO GOD ON HIGH AND PEACE
ON EARTH.
- 9 HEROD; THE THREE KINGS; THE THREE WISE MEN; THE
WISE AND THE FOOLISH VIRGINS. DATED 1839.
SIGNED "S. G."
- 10 THE LAST SUPPER; THE ANNUNCIATION; THE NATIV-
ITY; A WOMAN OF SAMARIA AND JESUS AT
JACOB'S WELL; JESUS APPEARS.
- 11 THE WISE MEN PRESENTING GIFTS; THE THREE KINGS,
MELCHIOR, KASPER, BALTHASAR; THE WISE AND
THE FOOLISH VIRGINS; THE LAMB OF GOD; GOD
THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY GHOST;
THE CROWN OF LIFE; THE VISION OF JACOB'S
LADDER; THE HOUSE OF GOD. DATED 1821. SIGNED
"D."
- 12 THE THREE KINGS; THE THREE WISE MEN; THE WISE
AND THE FOOLISH VIRGINS. DATED 1837.

- 13 DETAIL: A BESTIARY: LION, BEAR, DROMEDARY,
ELEPHANT.
- 14 THE CAPTIVES APPEAR BEFORE EZEKIAL.
- 15 ASSES LADEN WITH SACKS OF CORN.
- 16 THE ISRAELITES CROSSING THE RED SEA.
- 17 THE LORD VISITS ABRAHAM AND SARAH. DATED
1815.
- 18 THE ANNUNCIATION.
- 19 THE DEATH OF ABSALOM. DATED 1832.
- 20 WEDDING TABLET. DATED, LEKSAND, 1846.
- 21 THE QUEEN OF SHEBA LISTENING TO THE WISDOM OF
KING SOLOMON; ZACCHEUS IN THE MULBERRY
TREE; GOD FATHER, SON AND HOLY GHOST; I AM
ALPHA AND OMEGA; JESUS' COMMANDMENT;
MARTHA AND MARY; CHRIST AND NICODEMUS.
DATED 1826.
- 22 JESUS' ENTRY INTO THE CITY OF JERUSALEM.
- 23 A PARISH CHURCH—A HORSEMAN.
- 24 THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DANCING BEFORE THE
IMAGE OF THE GOLDEN CALF. DATED 1808.
- 25 THE PROPHET MICAIAH FORECASTS TO THE KINGS OF
ISRAEL AND JUDEA. DATED 1844. SIGNED L.L.S.
- 26 JESUS AND THE WISE VIRGINS IN THE TEMPLE. DATED
1854. SIGNED "A.O.S."
- 27 THE MARRIAGE AT CANA IN GALILEE.

- 28 THE WEDDING AT CANA IN GALILEE IN JEWISH LAND.
DATED 1854. SIGNED "A.O.S."
- 29 JONAH PREACHING TO THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH.
DATED 1851. SIGNED "A.O.S."
- 30 THE FEAST OF BELSHAZZAR.
- 31 JESUS ENTERING JERUSALEM.
- 32 THE QUEEN OF SHEBA JOURNEYS TO KING SOLOMON.
DATED 1839.
- 33 THE SEVEN AGES OF MAN, FROM THE CRADLE TO THE
GRAVE. DATED 1830.
- 34 BEHOLD MY GOOD ROSE AND BEAUTEOUS DAMSEL.
DATED 1854.
- 35 JESUS HEALING THE SICK. DATED 1854. SIGNED "A.O.S."
- 36 MARY PRESENTING JESUS TO SIMEON IN THE TEMPLE;
THE ANGEL OF THE LORD SPEAKING TO THE
SHEPHERDS.
- 37 JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN. DATED 1841.
- 38 THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH VIRGINS.
- 39 A CONVERSATION: "MY DEAR FATHER TELL ME
WHAT GOOD I CAN EXPECT AFTER THIS! MY DEAR
SON NOTHING ELSE THAN WORK AND LABOR AND
AT LAST DEATH ITSELF."
- 40 VASE OF FLOWERS.
- 41 THE WEDDING PARTY IN MORA. DATED 1854. SIGNED
"E."
- 42 SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

... Om nio Judarhos eunare fommio of ego Arum of sedo honom of inestharchina Joha 12. 90 65



2. Judas' Betrayal of Jesus. 1805



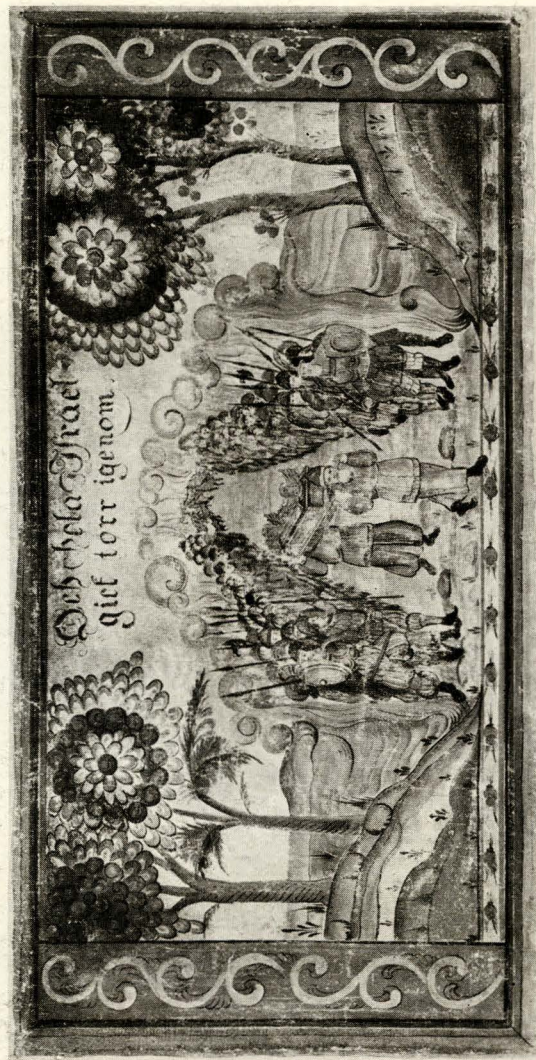
3. A Marriage at Cana in Galilee. 1831



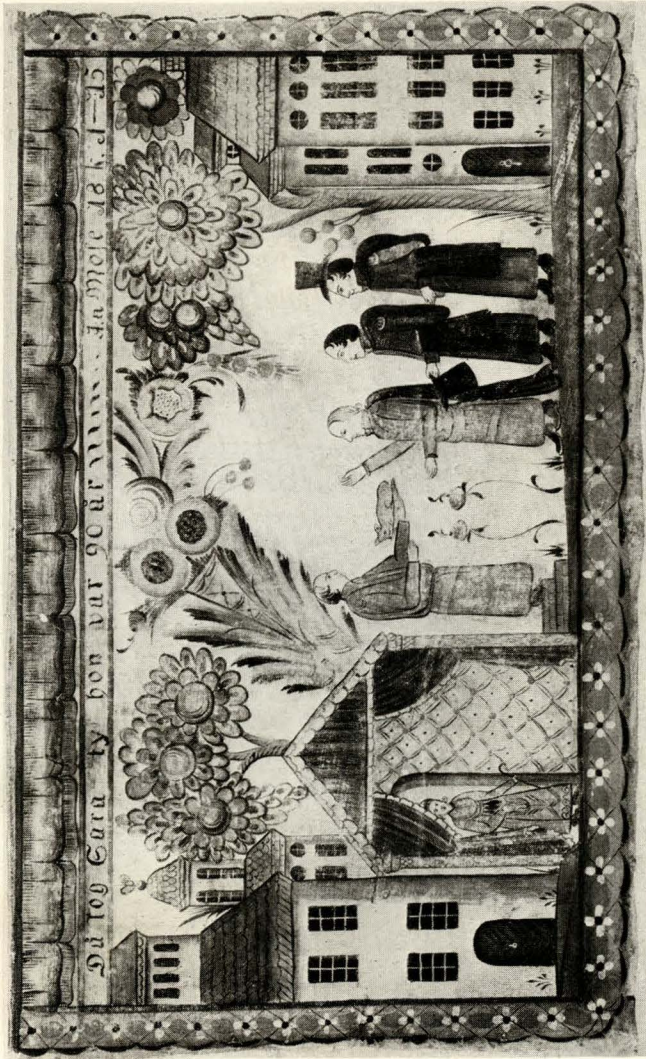
12. The Three Kings—the Three Wise Men—the Wise and the Foolish Virgins. 1837



15. Asses Laden with Corn



16. The Israelites Crossing the Red Sea



17. The Lord Visits Abraham and Sarah. 1815

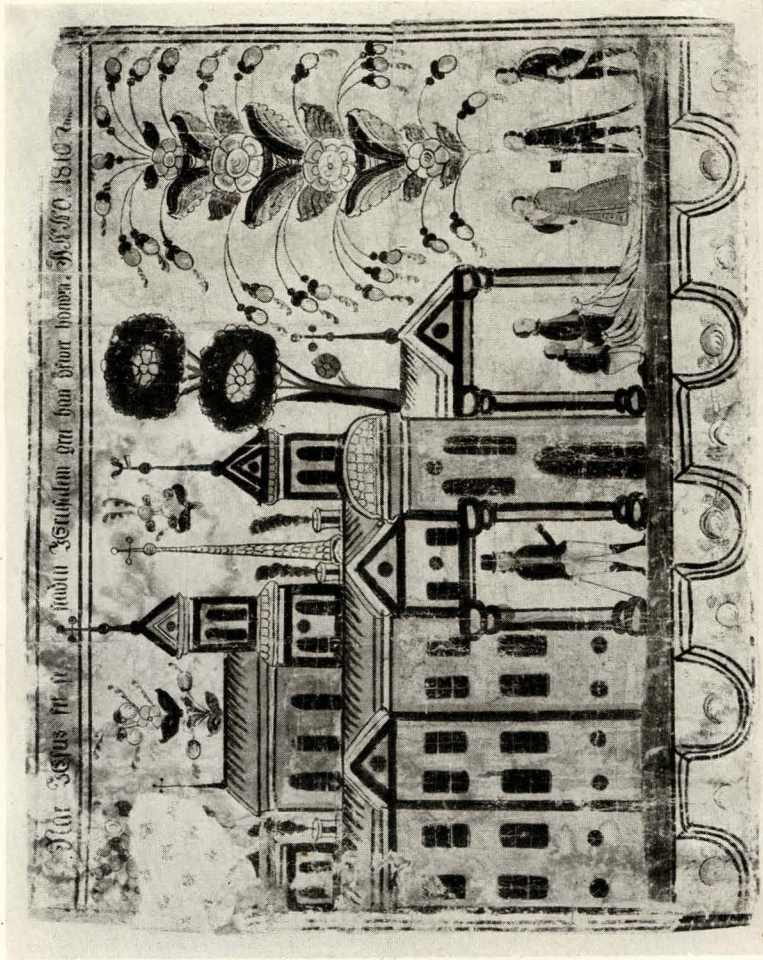


18. The Annunciation

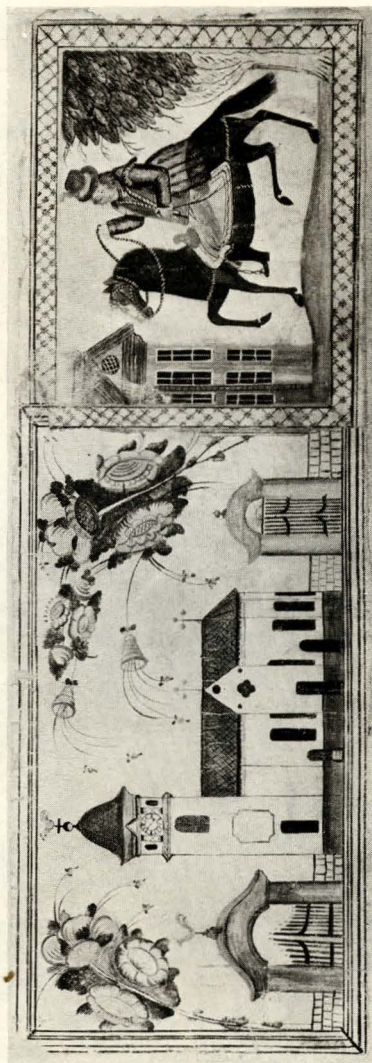


1832

19. The Death of Absalom. 1832



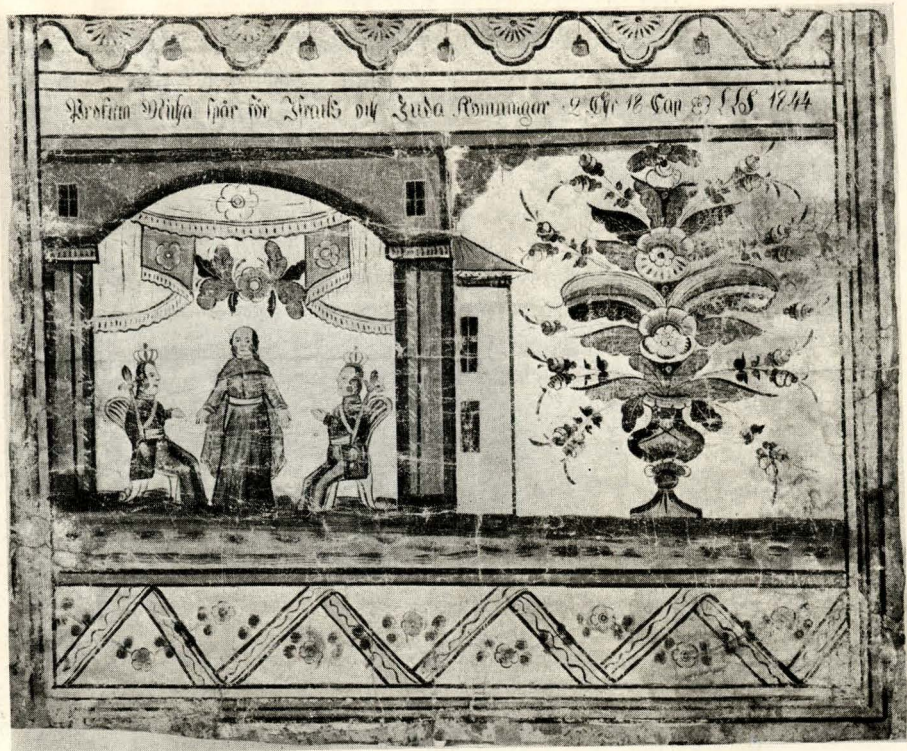
22. Jesus' Entry Into the City of Jerusalem. 1810



23. A Parish Church—a Horseman



24. The Children of Israel Dancing Before the Golden Calf. 1808



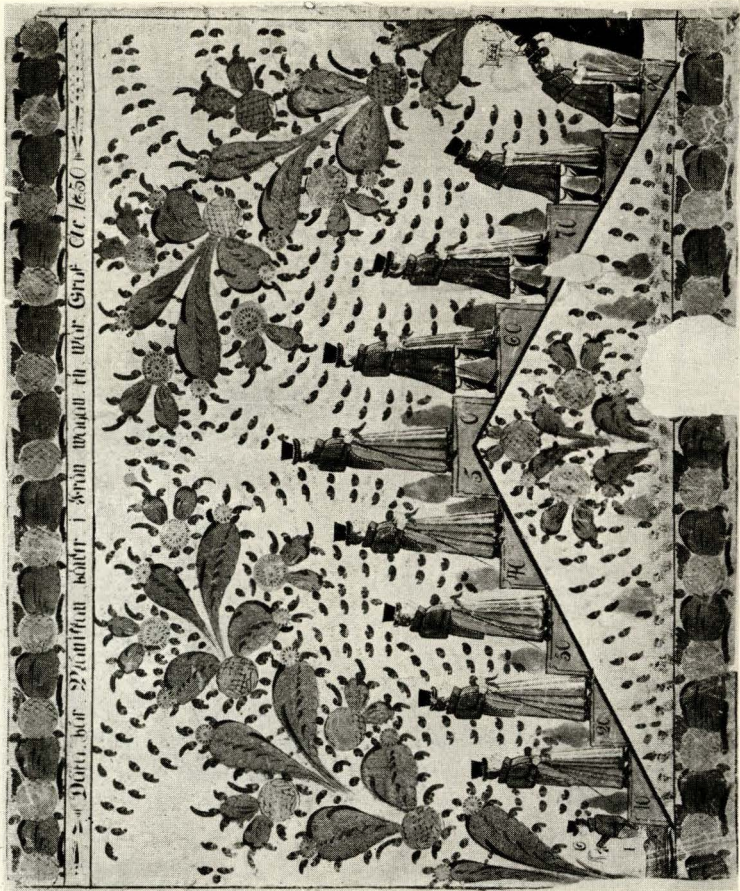
25. Prophet Micaiah Forecasts to the Kings of Israel and Judea. 1844



29. Jonah Preaching to the People of Nineveh. 1851



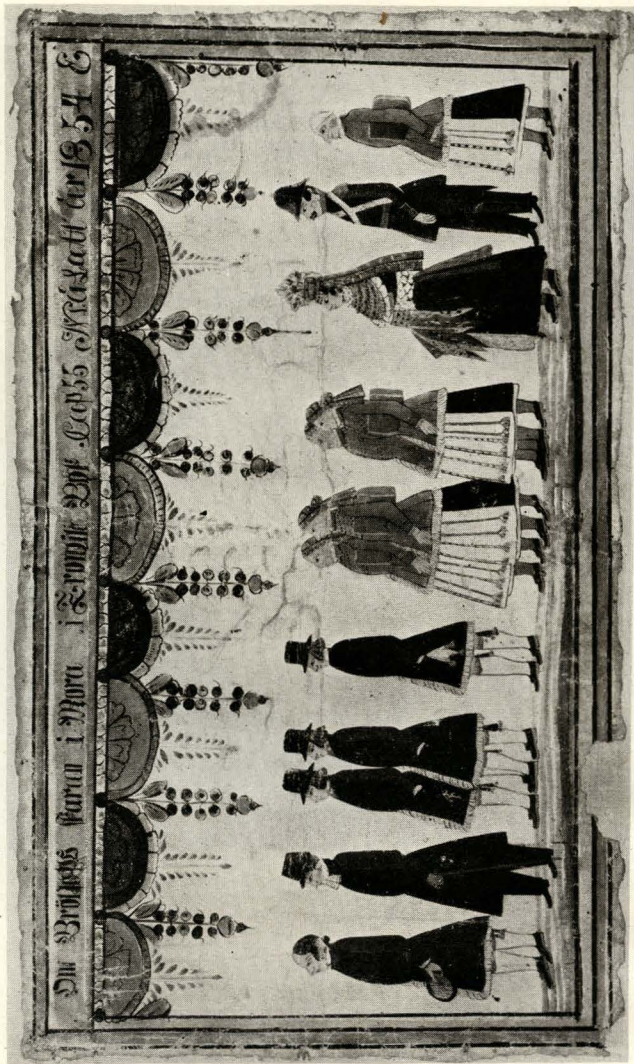
32. The Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. 1839



33. The Seven Ages of Man. 1830



34. Behold My Good Rose and Beauteous Damsel. 1854



41. The Wedding Party in Mora. 1854