

1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 11 — Franzén, Frans Mikael



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FRANZÉN, FRANS MIKAEL (1772–1847), Swedish poet, was born at Uleåborg in Finland on the 9th of February 1772. At thirteen he entered the university of Åbo, where he attended the lectures of H. G. Porthan (1739–1804), a pioneer in the study of Finnish history and legend. He graduated in 1789, and became “*eloquentiae docens*” in 1792. Three years later he started on a tour through Denmark, Germany, France and England, returning in 1796 to accept the office of university librarian at Åbo. In 1801 he became professor of history and ethics, and in 1808 was elected a member of the Swedish Academy. On the cession of Finland to Russia, Franzén removed to Sweden, where he was successively appointed parish priest of Kumla in the diocese of Strengnäs (1810), minister of the Clara Church in Stockholm (1824) and bishop of Hernösand (1831). He died at Säbrå parsonage on the 14th of August 1847. From the autumn of 1793, when his *Till en ung Flicka* and *Menniskans anlete* were inserted by Kellgren in the *Stockholmspost*, Franzén grew in popular favour by means of many minor poems of singular simplicity and truth, as *Till Selma*, *Den gamle knekten*, *Riddar St Göran*, *De Små blommorna*, *Modren vid vaggan*, *Nyårsmorgonen* and *Stjernhimmelen*. His songs *Goda gosse glaset töm*, *Sörj ej den gryende dagen förut*, *Champagnevinet* and *Beväringssång* were widely sung, and in 1797 he won the prize of the Swedish Academy by his *Sång öfver grefve Filip Creutz*. Henceforth his muse, touched with the academic spirit, grew more reflective and didactic. His

longer works, as *Emili eller en afton i Lappland*, and the epics *Svante Sture eller mötet vid Alvastra*, *Kolumbus eller Amerikas upptäckt* and *Gustaf Adolf i Tyskland* (the last two incomplete), though rich in beauties of detail, are far inferior to his shorter pieces.

The poetical works of Franzén are collected under the title *Skaldestycken* (7 vols., 1824–1861); new ed., *Samlade dikter*, with a biography by A. A. Grafström (1867–1869); also a selection (*Valda dikter*) in 2 vols. (1871). His prose writings, *Om svenska drottningar* (Åbo, 1798; Örebro, 1823), *Skrifter i obunden stil*, vol. i. (1835), *Predikningar* (5 vols., 1841–1845) and *Minnesteckningar*, prepared for the Academy (3 vols., 1848–1860), are marked by faithful portraiture and purity of style. See B. E. Malmström, in the *Handlingar* of the Swedish Academy (1852, new series 1887), vol. ii.; S. A. Hollander, *Minne af F. M. Franzén* (Örebro, 1868); F. Cygnaeus, *Teckningar ur F. M. Franzéns lefnad* (Helsingfors, 1872); and Gustaf Ljunggren, *Svenska vitterhetens häfder efter Gustaf III. 's död*, vol. ii. (1876).

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