

Fisher Lass," "A Gauntlet," and "In God's Way," which latter novel has a special interest to Unitarian readers, its hero being another well known Norwegian author, Kristofer Janson, who for many years worked as a missionary among his Americanized countrymen in our great Northwest. A republican in politics, Bjornson was a liberal in religion; and while not a confessed Unitarian and not connected with the distinctly Unitarian denomination, he was one of the great leaders of the liberal movements in the world "which, while not taking any specifically theological name, are in general agreement and hold friendly fellowship with Unitarians."

As a platform speaker Bjornson was masterful and accomplished. He was able to hold his audience spellbound for hours. His manly presence, his bland and pleasing voice, joined with his impressive and forceful thoughts and enlivened by his buoyant enthusiasm, left a never to be forgotten impression on his hearers. His lecture tours throughout Norway, Sweden and Denmark were also extended to this country, and everywhere he left behind him the impression of a character, a man back of his word, one of the few writers who really and actually proved his faith in his own ideals and ideas by living them, fighting for them and suffering for them.

When a great man like Bjornstjerne Bjornson leaves the stage the world feels its loss. But it also realizes even better than while he lived what it has gained through his life work. Bjornson has stood for honesty and character in politics, uprightness and righteousness in religion, faithfulness to principles in life, purity of morals and sacredness of family relations and the inviolability of the marriage tie, and last but not least for the realization of the Hope of the Nations—International Peace; and these are all ideas that will never die, but for ever sparkle like a jeweled laurel wreath around the temples of the immortalized fallen hero.

AXEL LUNDEBERG.

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BJORNSON'S VISIT TO AMERICA.

Lewis R. Larson in the Minneapolis Journal of May 1, Slightly Revised by the Author for The Public.

One of the pleasantest and most inspiring memories of my life is the recollection of the visit to Eau Claire, Wis., of Bjornstjerne Bjornson, in the latter part of the year 1880 or the early part of the year 1881, on the occasion of his trip to this country. I will not stop to fix the date, as that is not important. He came there on a lecturing tour. I was then living at that place. He made several addresses, all of which I heard. One was on Hans Nielson Hauge, a lay preacher, a severe critic of the state church, a church reformer, and one of Norway's greatest sons. I had a special

interest in that theme, because my parents were followers of Hauge. Bjornson, as is well known, was the son of a minister of the state church. I remember he gave Hauge credit for having wrought great good for Norway. To Bjornson, who no longer held to the doctrines of evangelical religion, Hauge, who was more evangelical even than the state church, seemed in that regard reactionary, but he was withal a great preacher of righteousness, and in that respect had Bjornson's sympathy and support. And, if I remember rightly after all these years, Bjornson did not emphasize his work for orthodoxy. Besides, Hauge's work made for democracy in church and state.

And above all else, Bjornson was a democrat, one of the world's greatest, worthy to rank alongside of his great contemporaries in other lands, Lincoln and Hugo, not to mention others. Democracy was the inspiration of all Bjornson said in story, poem, play, editorial or speech. Primarily he was neither novelist, poet, dramatist nor orator, though almost of the first rank as each. He was first of all an agitator for democracy. That was his vocation, of which any of his occupations, when not in a particular line of effort for democracy, was a mere incident of his life work. And he would at any time drop any occupation in which he was engaged, if at that time he thought he could do more for democracy in some other way. In 1859, just after being chosen manager of the Bergen theater, a political campaign coming on, he threw himself into it with the utmost zeal, speaking as no other Norwegian of his day could speak. That was not exceptional. It was the rule of his life. Any time in any place he believed he could do anything in the people's cause, he volunteered or responded to request. With every qualification for public office he never held any. Like Abraham Lincoln, he considered sentiment making the most important public service. That he performed indefatigably. He made thousands of speeches; and his communications to the newspapers on political questions would make a much greater mass of print than all his books. He did not limit his efforts for freedom to his own country. He had a passion for liberty. Any people struggling for liberty found in him a champion. Like Milton, he, too, could truly say of his use of his great powers:

In Liberty's defense, my noble task,
Of which all Europe sings from side to side.

He was a stalwart supporter of peace and international arbitration. He was blessed in this, that in his lifetime he saw great advancement of the causes he supported. And his beloved Norway he saw become independent and the freest country in Europe, unless it be Switzerland, with equal political rights for women and men, and a woman a member of the Storting, her king little more than the social head of the state and chosen by

the votes of the people. He more than any other man helped to make her what she is.

Bjornson, when I saw him, was 48 years old. Notwithstanding his magnificent head and face, indicating clearly his great intellectual and moral qualities, what struck me most in him was his appearance of extraordinary physical strength. And I doubt not the appearance indicated the fact. He seemed an ideal sculptor's model of a viking. He came naturally by it. His father's physical strength amazed strong men who saw exhibitions of it, it was so extraordinary. The son had every physical advantage desirable in an orator, including a fine voice of great range and volume. All his addresses I heard were academic except a reply to an address of welcome of a leading magistrate of the city at a largely attended banquet, presided over by the Mayor. That reply was very felicitous. I heard him in private express his appreciation of the banquet generally and especially of the address to him; and I am satisfied that what he said on that subject was entirely sincere, and not simply conventional politeness. But he did not much enjoy such functions. I think he told me so. He, of course, wished the good opinion of his fellow men and enjoyed learning of it, but the impression remains with me that the expression of it to him in this particular manner was irksome. I doubt not, instead of attending a banquet in his honor, he would personally have much preferred to spend the evening perusing "Endymion," Disraeli's last novel, just then from the press, which I caught him reading at three different calls I made on him, or in conversation with congenial spirits. He was the most interesting converser I ever had the privilege of talking with. In his conversation with men of religious and political views similar to his own he sometimes showed heat that was absent from his academic addresses. And I imagine there was the same difference between Bjornson the lecturer and Bjornson the stump speaker that there was between Wendell Phillips delivering his lecture on "The Lost Arts," and making a speech on slavery with eggs and other missiles thrown at him from the audience. On the stump he frequently was interrupted the same as was Wendell Phillips, and bore himself in the same intrepid way. When speaking against privilege, he too sometimes took his life in his hands. Privilege treats the spokesman for equality similarly in all countries.

In this connection an incident which Bjornson himself related as one of the proudest experiences of his life is worth telling. During a political campaign a mob of his opponents surrounded his house and threw stones through the windows. Having vented their spite against the radical in that way, apparently the only thing they could unite in on taking their departure was a song, and Bjornson heard them singing in stentorian tones his own poem, "Yes, we love this land." It has since become the unquestioned national hymn.

Bjornson was one of the greatest stump speakers who ever lived. His speeches influenced the Norwegian people as much as, if not more than, his books. His speeches had greater weight because he was always speaking for his cause and not for himself. He never was a candidate for office—of course he could, had he wished at almost any time during his later years, have been elected a member of the Storting. Though having no official title, for the last twenty-five years of his life he was the chief public man in the state, of greater influence than the king or prime minister, and he will be gratefully remembered by generations of his countrymen long after most of her kings and prime ministers are forgotten. He was the greatest Norwegian who ever lived. And still "he was not a man who did things." Just talked; that is all. He was, too, time and again by the privileged classes called names that are the equivalent of "muckraker." He did not escape that distinction of the assaulters of privilege.

He came to this country heralded by his already world-wide fame. There was no disillusionment on seeing and hearing him. He seemed the great man he was.

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THE JUDGMENT.

For The Public.

'Tis written that a day shall come
When the cycles of Earth's time are closed;
And a mighty trumpet blast shall halt
The human hosts on gain or pleasure bent,
Like a retreat suddenly sounded,
E'en when the victor's speeding banners wave,
And conqueror's spoils doth no one pause to save;
A trumpet blast so vibrant, shrill and wide
That e'en the dead, deaf in the earth's cold breasts,
Shall startled wake, and the weakest soul
That ever dwelt in flesh, shall gaze at last
On the face of Him who made it.

Kings, warriors, martyrs, priests,
Princes (spiritual, temporal),
Law-makers, law-breakers, law-menders, law-benders,
Judges, robbers (rich and poor),
Harlots, prostitutes (high and low),
Wisemen, madmen, idiots (from birth and world-made),
Heroes, panderers, liars, murderers, seducers, cowards,
Hypocrites, tricksters, and fools—

O Motley Throng, how shall you each comport
Before the Great Judge whose eyes supernal
E'er sift the secrets of Eternity?
May your tongues be deft to plead the individual cause,

If in the o'er-laboured womb of earth
Sinners may claim their seeds were careless sown
To sprout to weeds of crime,
And luckless harvesting;
Weaklings who in the swift commercial tides
Sank in the breakers of debauchery.