

changed by the King to imprisonment for life. For twenty long years Arne had to remain in prison, and not until the summer of 1880 was he released. By that time his wife had died, and his family were scattered. He found himself alone and friendless.

After twenty years of confinement within the walls of a prison, liberty itself scarcely seemed a boon. He came to Wisconsin, where he had a married daughter. Hearing of Bjornson's arrival in Madison, he immediately came to visit him; and the meeting of these two men was indeed an affecting scene. At the sight of his benefactor the man was much moved, and as he attempted to greet the great Skald of the North he sobbed like a child, the tears choking his voice. Arne was poor and felt nowhere at home in America. The poet received him cordially as a brother. He offered to care for the unfortunate man in his old age and directed that he be advanced the necessary funds for defraying his expenses back to Norway, where he was given a home and employment on Bjornson's estate. This man's greatness is not alone in his fiction, but its presence is also felt in his life.

The creator of the *Comedie Humane* upon one occasion, before France had come to acknowledge his surpassing genius, wrote to his sister that like all great men he was living in a garret and starving there. It was much the same with Bjornson, as with Balzac. Three times a week while at the Christiana University, he spent the money for his dinner in a second-hand book-store. The dealer became interested in the boy and allowed him to use his store as a library. In the days of his success, Bjornson remembered this kind act, and made the son of the old dealer his secretary. His only light was a tallow candle and, like Alphonse Daudet, by its flame he read all night. With all his saving, the income which his father, a poor clergyman, was able to give him, did

not suffice, and he was obliged to become a daily tutor. In one family they forced him to act as janitor, and despite his buoyant humor it was a great strain on his proud spirit. At last, tired of this drudgery he set himself to work and wrote his first novel, *Synnove Solbakken*, and from that time his star arose in the sky and shed its light in all literary circles. Following this and in the order named, came,—Arne, *A Happy Boy*, *The Fisher Maiden*, *The Bridal March*, *Magnhild*, *Mansana*, and his latest novel, *The Heritage of the Kurts*. He also published a number of dramas which take rank in the North only after those of his great contemporary, Henrik Ibsen. Sometimes he produces nothing for months, and even years, and he never writes save on inspiration. This is in somewhat glaring contrast to the dictum of New York's celebrated apostle of realism. I am not acquainted with anyone of modern times, who surpasses Bjornson in his delineation of delicate female types; this alone would establish his claim to rank among the master poets of the age. His Norwegian sketches, and indeed all of his novels, contain pieces of scenic word-painting, which almost approach the perfection of Ruskin himself. As we catch these exquisite glimpses of Norwegian scenery, we must not lose sight of the fact that we do so only through what Carlyle calls the somewhat yeasty version of a translation; and at the same time we should remember the words of that pre-eminently witty Irishman, Dean Swift, when he says that nothing in the world bears translation well except a bishop.

I am aware of the fact that it is customary in papers of this kind, to extract scenes from the more important works of the author in question, and after giving them a more or less appropriate setting to follow it up with an enthusiastic panegyric. I do not intend to do so here. Someone has well said that if you cut a word