

above quoted from were addressed, was with me in Christiania, and shared in our talks. In 1899, it was the festivities connected with the opening of the National Theatre that took me to Norway; and though I saw Ibsen several times during those crowded days, there was little opportunity for quiet conversation.

In one of his poems, written in 1870, and entitled, "A Balloon-Letter," he had said,

Yes, the age for Beauty hungers—

That's what Bismarck little guesses.

He had now come to doubt whether he was right in that. Perhaps it was rather truth that the age was hungering for. But the two ideas tended, by psychological necessity, to flow together; and he could not but hope that the religious idea might one day follow suit, and blend with the idea of the true and the beautiful, into something different from any of those ideas as they at present exist. This course of thought—though he did not seem to realise it at the moment—runs exactly parallel with his transition from romanticism to realism, and from that again to a poetic elevation bordering on mysticism.

He spoke of the mission which the Government had assigned him in his youth, to travel through the country and collect folk-songs. As a matter-of-fact, he picked up no folk-songs at all, but brought back a store of folk-tales—all told him by one man, however. On the other hand, he gathered many impressions, which he afterwards used in *Brand*. He came to one valley where the parsonage had just been destroyed by an avalanche. The pastor and his wife were living in one room of a peasant's house. The wife, who had just given birth to a child, occupied a screened-off corner, while the husband transacted all the business of the parish in the remainder of the room. The scenery of *Brand* was mainly suggested to him by a side valley off the Geiranger Fjord—the Sunnelvsfjord, I think he said. He also spoke of coming down from the Jotunfjeld at a place where he looked straight down upon a steeple in the valley hundreds of feet