

BJORNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON.

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It lies far away to the north, and is beaten by the waters of the Atlantic. It is a land where the summer is one long warm day of sunlight, and the winter a constant night of mist and gloom. A land where the snow rests white on the mountains, and the valleys are beautiful with flowers. Where the midnight sun of the summer, half veiled in the mists from the sea, is magnified three or four fold, and hangs above the horizon a luminous globe of fire. It is a land where the warm light falls in a rich play of color that illumines the landscape with every tint from the deepest glowing red to a delicate yellow that is almost white. In the winter, when night reigns supreme, and the sun returns no more to the sky, when the wind from the ice-bound seas of the north sweeps down with intense cold, filling the valleys deep with drifted snow and driving the waters of the ocean furiously against the coast; above on the leaden sky, with wild and ever changing unrest, flash the northern lights. It is a land where the coast-line cliffs rise up rugged and erect from the waves of the Atlantic which break unceasingly at their feet, while inland the roar of water-falls is hardly ever absent from the ear. It has the greatest glaciers in the world. It is the land where Oeyvind fell in love with Marit Heid-farms, and Baard, the schoolmaster, knew it was well that it should be so, where the sunlight lingered longest on Sloping Hill until Synnove became so like the sunlight, Thorborn could not tell the difference; where Arne sang of the beauty of Eli Boen; where Magnhild resisted the evil and kept herself pure and untarnished; the land of Saemund and Guttorm, of Thore and Ole, Nordistuen of Nils and

Margit:—Norway! the land of him who created all these exquisite realities of fiction, Bjornstjerne Bjornson.

Before we contemplate the man, and appropriate what of his works will best suit our need, by considering the questions, who is he? and what has he done? it may not be amiss to ask the question from whence does he come? To any one who had heard the little German child at six years exclaiming with awe upon his face, "Mother, I am a me," it should scarcely have been a matter of great difficulty to shadow forth, however dimly, some great part of the subsequent career of Jean Paul Richter, the philosopher. It need have been a matter of little effort to any one who heard St. Pierre at seven years as he gazed at the pigeons flying in and out of the tower of Rouen cathedral exclaim to his father, "My God, how high they fly," to forecast that his love of nature would lead him one day to make the world better with such a work as Paul and Virginia. Perhaps it may not be amiss to say here that we are told of Bjornson, that in his boyhood he was fonder of nature and story-reading than he was of his regular scholastic work, and upon one occasion having, as we would call it, played truant, so as to obtain the pleasures he preferred, he was taken to task for it by his father. He answered stoutly that he had stayed from school because the king was dead. The family being strong royalists he was of course forgiven, and when next day they found that the king was not dead their joy was so great that the young Bjornson escaped the impending thrashing after all. I merely mention this to draw your attention to the fact that this great writer's genius for story-telling