

How wonderful love was, she thought; how wonderful that so many millions who had loved had come and gone, and yet of all they felt they had spoken no word that laid bare the exact feeling to her or to any other. Every one must feel in order to know. The barbarians who had set up these stones she sat on, they had loved and hated, and everything they had dared or suffered was recorded — but where? And who could know exactly what they felt? There again the pain of life came to her, the universal agony, the trying to speak, to reveal; and the proof, the hourly proof the wisest and most gifted have, that what they feel they cannot quite express, by sound, or by color, or by the graven stone, or by the spoken word. . . . But life was good, ah yes, and all that might be revealed to her she would pray for; and Philip — her Philip — would help her to the revelation!

Her Philip! Her heart gave a great throb, for the knowledge that she was a wife came home to her with a pleasant shock. Her name was no longer Guida Landresse de Landresse, but Guida d'Avranche. She had gone from one tribe to another; she had been adopted, changed. A new life was begun.

She rose, slowly made her way down to the sea, and proceeded along the sands and shore paths to the town.

Presently a large vessel, with new sails, beautiful white hull, and gracious form, came slowly round a point. She shaded her eyes to look at it.

"Why, it's the boat Maître Ranulph has launched to-day," she said. Then she stopped suddenly. "Poor Ranulph! poor Ro!" she added gently. She knew that he cared for her, loved her. Where had he been these two weeks past? She had not seen him once since that great day when they had visited the Ecréhos.

Gilbert Parker.

(To be continued.)

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS OF BJÖRNSON AND IBSEN.

I.

THE day I reached Christiania, on my first visit to Norway, the city was in a state of great excitement. There was evidently something unusual about to happen. All Norwegians seemed to feel that the morrow was certain to be a memorable day in the annals of their country. They realized that then a splendid opportunity would be given them to show their affection for *Gamle Norge* (Old Norway), their native land; to declare once more with earnest sincerity that they were proud of their birthright; and that, undivided by party strife, they all stood ready to receive with rejoicing a countryman of theirs, who in crowning

himself with glory had brought honor to the land he loved. Nansen was coming home!

King Oscar had made the journey from Stockholm to represent the government. But who was to put into words the long-pent-up enthusiasm of the citizens for this brave patriot who seemed to them to represent *Young Norway* rising to take her place among the nations of the world? Who, I asked, would be the spokesman of the people at this important festival? And there was but one answer: Björnstjerne Björnson was the only name suggested. Radicals and conservatives alike felt that he, above all others, was the one fitted to bear the message of the united, exultant nation

to its heroic son ; that he was sure to find suitable words in which to express the bold patriotism of this proud though comparatively powerless people.

Nor were they disappointed. The morrow rose clear and bright, and dense crowds filled the gala-decked streets, and poured in unending stream beneath triumphal arches, all hastening to the spacious square by the ancient fortress of Akershus. An eager, expectant multitude encircled the central tribune. Nansen had been greeted with tremendous cheers, which had subsided for the moment, when a tall man, of kingly bearing, of supreme, self-confident, imposing personality, stepped forward from beside him, and stood erect as if in rapt vision gazing over the heads of his hearers to the beautiful fir-clad hills beyond.

A few cheers arose, but were quickly stifled, and then, as if by magic, the whole gathering simultaneously broke forth into a verse of the national anthem.

It was solemn. This inspiring hymn thrilled every soul in the vast assembly. Never before had it seemed to express their patriotic devotion so completely. And he, that fine, impressive figure, who stood now with head bowed before them, *he* had written it. No wonder he was chosen with one accord to voice their feelings on this great occasion.

Björnson was indeed a worthy representative. His words poured forth, sonorous, eloquent, burdened with emotion. The hearts of the hearers went out toward the moving orator as much as toward the poet, who in reality had received the dignity of laureate from their hands. They found his eloquence irresistible. They associated him with their beloved land whose praises he had sung ; and even his enemies loved him.

For Björnson has enemies. The impetuosity of his nature has led him into many distressing situations, from which he has found difficulty in extricating himself with honor. He has been

accused of stirring up unnecessary strife, of untrustworthiness, of faithlessness to friends. He has apparently made such a sorry mess of his political meddlings, has created by his hasty, impolitic utterances so much ill will between Norway and its ally and neighbor-land Sweden, has shown such obvious inability to keep to one consistent policy, that he has come near undermining, at least in the cities, the beneficent influence which in his earlier years he unquestionably exercised.

Few, in truth, can escape the spell of Björnson's presence. All feel drawn at once to the big, generous, whole-souled man, who, without losing dignity, can stoop to play with a little child or make merry with congenial friends. His personality is dominating. He was never intended to play second fiddle to another, and he never will. He is convinced of his superior powers of management, and no rebuff or failure jars his self-confidence for more than a moment. He may suffer humiliation in one matter ; he has soon forgotten this, and is bubbling over with enthusiasm for some new proposal. He throws all his energies into the movement which arouses his interest for the time ; and his advocacy is always brilliant and effective, but it is rarely constant. His friends open their mouths in astonishment at his vagaries, and deplore his excesses ; but they still admire and love him. The conservative papers call him a traitor and a fool ; they still revere and honor him. One moment he is termed "the uncrowned king of Norway," the next "a blundering meddler who is bringing disgrace and dishonor to his land."

Björnson is certainly a bundle of contrasts. He has led an impulsive, inconsequent life ; and yet no one, perhaps, in his generation has exerted in Norway a more powerful dominion. Especially in the country districts is his sway supreme.

"I always think my latest book my best," he once said to me in conversation ; and no remark could be more

characteristic of the man. It is his capacity of concentrating his energy, his enthusiasm, his brilliance, upon one subject, to the exclusion of all others, that gives force and convincing reality to his work. He has himself a nature so many-sided, so sympathetic and imaginative, so truly poetic, that it is no wonder his books are marvelous in their charm.

I remember very well the first conversation I had with him after his return from Munich, where, as often before, he had spent the winter months. When I came in upon him that morning, he was clad in a long dressing-gown, and wore cocked carelessly on one side of his head a picturesque silk Tam O'Shanter, somewhat like a college cap, though of soft material, — a headgear which accorded superbly with his stalwart figure and striking face. He welcomed me cordially, and, introductory politeness over, began at once to talk of America.

"I have been at Harvard," he said. "You have so much to be proud of there on the other side of the ocean. I am always indignant when I observe that the European papers print only the extraordinary things which happen in the United States. It is because of this unfortunate habit our papers have got into that such erroneous ideas of America are widespread here among us. I myself am very fond of your land, and have great hopes for its future. I am always delighted when my books receive a favorable reception there."

I spoke of the presentation of his latest drama, *Over Ævne*, in Paris, and he expressed his satisfaction with the event. The performance had been more effective, he thought, because his son Björn, the actor, had been present to make the arrangements in person. He mentioned his forthcoming translations from the verse of Victor Hugo, and explained that he was even then trying to commit them to memory, for use in a proposed series of public entertainments, when he would recite them to the people,

and his daughter would accompany him and sing.

"Then you know I have written many political articles, of late, in various reviews."

"Yes," I replied. "We who are most interested in literature grudge the time you spend in this way."

"No," said he, "I feel that I can be most useful there. I have always been interested in politics: but *before* I was only a dreamer, and talked and wrote a great deal of stuff; *now*, however, it is different. People are beginning to accord me the right to have a sensible opinion on practical things, even though I am a poet. Perhaps you have seen what has been written about me in the papers?"

"To be sure," I rejoined; "opinions seem to be divided as to the utility of your political articles in the Russian reviews."

"True, true, true! They don't understand me!" he exclaimed. "And that is just what I can't endure, — that my own countrymen should judge me from the Swedish point of view." Whereupon he stood up beside the table and made a glowing oration on the hopes he had for the future prosperity of his land. "That is what so many of my countrymen will not believe I am working for. It pains me more than anything else to know that they pass a Swedish judgment on me."

A gentle tap. The door opened, and in came Björnson's daughter, Fru Sigurd Ibsen, — married to the only son of the great dramatist, though I may add that since the appearance of *The League of Youth* there has been little love lost between the two fathers.

"This is my daughter, Fru Sigurd Ibsen," he said; and as he presented me to her, he broke out impulsively, "Now, there is a man you should get to know well."

I remarked that I had once heard Dr. Ibsen give a trial lecture on soci-

ology in the university before a great throng of people, and that I had had the pleasure of sitting near Fru Ibsen at the *première* of John Gabriel Borkman.

"Oh, that's a piece I can't stand," interrupted Björnson, — "entirely pessimistic and useless; not the kind of thing we want at all. It won't do anybody any good."

His daughter soon withdrew, and I ventured to express my admiration for her beauty, which had often riveted my attention in public gatherings where I had seen her. His face lighted up with evident pleasure. "She is pretty, isn't she?" he exclaimed. "But you ought to see them all together, — my children. It is splendid to see them all happy."

The conversation then turned again to the pessimism which he thought characterized too much our modern literature; and Björnson was very forcible in expressing his dissatisfaction with the way things are drifting. "Have you met a young man here, Christian Collin?" he asked. I bowed in the affirmative, and he added, "Don't you think that he is a pioneer in a new method of criticism? He takes moral questions into consideration, and denounces what is not calculated to do good. What we want in the future is a literature which will make men better."

And with these words ringing in my ears I took my leave; not, however, before I had received from the impulsive, generous man a hearty invitation to visit him, on my return in the summer, at his beautiful country home.

II.

Could two men be more unlike than Björnson and Ibsen? Björnson, as we have seen, friendly, enthusiastic, outspoken, exuberant, fond of his family, interested in his fellows. Ibsen, reserved, cold, cautious, taciturn, never caught off his guard, always alone. Björnson has been called the heart of Norway, Ibsen its head. Björnson de-

lights in being the centre of an admiring gathering. Ibsen abhors the curious crowd. Björnson has always a word for every one; an opinion on every question, an eloquent speech for every occasion. Ibsen is one of the most uncommunicative of men: he has almost never been induced to address a meeting; he avoids expressing his opinion on any subject whatever. Björnson fills columns of the radical newspapers at a moment's notice. Ibsen keeps his ideas to himself, broods over them, and produces only one book every two years, but that as regularly as the seasons return. Björnson tells you all about his plans in advance. As for Ibsen, no one (not even his most intimate friends, if he may be said to have such) has the remotest idea what a forthcoming drama is to be about. He absolutely refuses to give the slightest hint as to the nature of the work before it is in the hands of the booksellers, though the day on which it is to be obtained is announced a month ahead. Even the actors who are to play the piece almost immediately have to await its publication.

So great has been the secrecy of the "buttoned-up" old man (if I may be allowed to translate literally the expressive Norwegian word *tilknapet*, which is so often applied to him) that the inhabitants of the far-off Norwegian capital, who have, as a rule, but little to disturb their peaceful serenity, are wrought up to an unusual pitch of curiosity on that day during the Christmas-tide when Ibsen's latest work is expected from the Copenhagen printers. Orders have been placed with the booksellers long in advance, and invariably the first edition is sold before it appears. The book then becomes the one topic of conversation for days and weeks afterward. "What does it mean?" is the question on every lip; and frequently no answer comes.

"Why not ask Ibsen himself?" the foreigner suggests. A sympathetic smile comes over the Norwegian he addresses,

who replies, "You have n't been here long; but try it, — there he comes now." And in the distance I saw (for I was the innocent foreigner who, not having then seen Ibsen, ventured to make this thoughtless remark) a thick-set man, rather under medium height, wearing a silk hat and frock coat, his gloves in one hand, a closely wrapped umbrella in the other, approach slowly with short, gingerly steps. When he came opposite us, no impulse stirred me to ask the question, and instead I watched him, then as often afterward, make his way slowly down Carl Johans Gade, the main thoroughfare of Christiania, to the Grand Hotel, where at a fixed hour every day he drinks his coffee in a little room reserved for him, and reads all the Scandinavian and German papers to be had. Ibsen, I felt, was unapproachable.

His unwillingness to speak of his own works is proverbial in Norway. No man ever was so loath to say anything regarding what he himself had written. It is thus he shields himself from the importunities of curious travelers and interviewers who plague him beyond endurance. Once I had the pleasure of attending a ball at the royal palace, at which Ibsen also was present; for, curiously enough, he seems to take delight in such festivities, where he is not expected to talk at length with any one, and where he can move about from one to another, greet his acquaintances, and gather impressions. Even at court balls, however, he is not rid of the importunate; and on this occasion it was a German lady who received one of those quiet rebukes to impertinence which have given him a well-merited reputation for silent reserve. Hardly had she been presented to him before she broke out into expressions of enthusiastic admiration, and finally wound up with the question which Ibsen has heard so often that he is now tired of it: "Do you mind telling me, Dr. Ibsen, what you meant by Peer Gynt?"

A dead silence reigned for a moment in the little group surrounding the old man, and I expected him to change the subject without answering the query. But no; he finally raised his head, threw back his shock of white hair, adjusted his glasses, looked quizzically into the woman's eyes, and then slowly drawled out, "Oh, my dear madam, when I wrote *Peer Gynt* only our Lord and I knew what I meant; and as for me, I have entirely forgotten."

I must say, however, that Ibsen always treated me very kindly when I was in Christiania, and invited me to his house on several occasions.

His apartment is an index to the man's character, — most carefully arranged, everything in its proper place, precise in the extreme. In the Italian paintings on the walls he takes quiet delight, and of the delicate furniture stiffly disposed in the drawing-room he seems to be proud. Nor is there more disorder in his study than in his parlor. Very few books are to be seen anywhere, and what there are seemed to me to be more ornamental than useful. His working-table is in the recess of a window looking out on a crowded street, and is not much larger than the window-sill. Ibsen does not need a large table on which to do his work. Nearly all he writes is the result of personal reflection on events in his own experience, and few ideas come to him suggested by the thoughts of others. His home has not been made as happy for him as he deserved, and not a few of his books (among others the latest, John Gabriel Borkman) reveal much of that home-life which has been so important an aid to him in generalization.

One morning when I was sitting in his study, on the sofa (the place of honor in Norway as in Germany), he became delightfully talkative. He spoke freely of his plays, and explained why he thought *The Emperor* and *the Galilean* the best and most enduring of them all.

He seemed for once to be off his guard, and expressed opinions on various subjects. Suddenly he fell into a reverie. Unwilling to interrupt it, I was forced to listen for some time — rather uneasy, I admit — to the passing trolley cars, which kept up their incessant hissing in the street below. Finally, he said slowly, almost unconscious of my presence, "Yes, I have tried always to live my own life, — and I think I have been right."

This seemed to me a self-revelation of the man's guiding principle. No writer in recent times has been less influenced by the works of other men. He has deliberately refrained from extensive reading, and has kept himself from under the sway of dominating personalities, ancient or modern. He does not understand a word of English or French when spoken, and can scarcely read even a newspaper article in either language. The assertion commonly made until lately, that he has been much influenced by French authors, is the veriest nonsense; he hardly knew of their existence.

He has narrated in charming verse the ancient stories of the land of the viking chieftains, but the old Norse sagas in their original form he has never examined. He has devoted his life almost exclusively to the drama, and has made himself, as I believe, incomparably the leading dramatist of his time; but even of Shakespeare, the greatest of all play-writers, he knows practically nothing, and those of his works with which he is acquainted he has read in a Danish translation. He seemed reluctant to accept my assurance that Shakespeare is still enjoyed by theatre-goers in both England and America.

Indeed, his self-devotion seems almost to have blinded his eyes to merit in others. Very rarely is he betrayed into making criticisms on other men. If he has conceit, he seldom reveals it. But I have noticed that sometimes his prejudices amount almost to intolerance. We happened once to speak of Goethe, when

he shrugged his shoulders and said that he did not think much of anything Goethe had produced. I suggested that the First Part of Faust was a masterpiece. "Yes, that is the best," he agreed, "but" — "Is there anything better in German?" I queried. "Oh no, nothing better in German," he replied; but after a moment's hesitation he changed the subject abruptly. Of English and French literature he knows practically nothing; of German, the only foreign literature with which he is at all familiar, he is unwilling to speak in admiration.

This may be a weakness, but it is the result of his theories of life, or rather, of the peculiar circumstances of the life he himself has been forced to lead. He is content to live within himself, and refrains from blaming as much as from praising others. It is possible, indeed, that this ignoring of the works of other writers may even have contributed to make Ibsen what he is, one of the most original authors of the century, the acknowledged leader of a new movement which has affected creative effort in almost every European land. It would, of course, be a misfortune if many followed his example with respect to lonely insularity. But we dare not criticise in the case of the master: his plan has permitted the fruition of his genius.

Deliberately he decided years ago to live his own life, to develop his own personality, to stand independent and express what he himself thought, unaffected by the opinions of his fellows. And this note resounds throughout his works: let every man, he teaches, make the most of the talents God has given him, strive to develop to their full the peculiar powers with which he has been endowed, so that dull uniformity shall cease, and curbing conventionality no longer check the advance of mankind.

Such feelings, occasioned, perhaps, by the circumstances of his domestic life from early boyhood, made Ibsen determine to live an isolated life. He has

been faithful to his purpose, and now in his triumphant old age, on this 20th of March, his seventieth birthday, when all his countrymen, with hosts of others, are ready to bow to him in grateful admiration, he inhabits glory in solitude, self-centred and alone.

Yet there is something inspiring in such a picture. The poor apothecary boy in a tiny country village, hopelessly

remote from the great centres of literary endeavor, has risen by the sheer force of indomitable will and by unswerving fixity of purpose to be perhaps the greatest writer his land has ever known; the one Norwegian in this century who, above all others, has succeeded in influencing profoundly the thoughts of men far, far beyond the confines of that wild but glorious land which gave him birth.

William Henry Schofield.

THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB.

I HAVE just finished reading a volume of French stories, avowedly of an impossible character, — *contes incroyables*. One or two of them are what we generally call detective stories. The author speaks of two well-known tales of Poe (whose name Frenchmen see fit to write Poë), *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and *The Purloined Letter*, as if they had been models to him.

In the introduction to the former of these stories, Poe has a great deal to say about analytic power, skill in solving a mystery from following up indications: and such is indeed the art or science of the actual "detective." But in reading the whole mass of detective stories, it is amusing to reflect that they exhibit none of this analytic, this unfolding art at all. Their art, such as it is, is purely synthetic or constructive. The author has the solution of his own mystery all in his mind; he knows perfectly well who is the murderer; he then proceeds carefully to cover up his own tracks, and, having got them into the requisite state of concealment, elaborately to withdraw his own veils. Much skill is often shown in the selection of circumstances which are to lead to the desired solution; but art in solving the mystery there is none, for to the author it was no mystery from the beginning.

The real way to write a detective story would be this: Let one writer of fiction conceive a criminal situation, and surround the *corpus delicti* with as many events and circumstances, slight or prominent, as he sees fit. In this work, as far as possible, he must keep his murder, his forgery, or his abduction a mystery to himself. Let another writer, not in cooperation with the first, work out a complete solution, accounting for every circumstance, and introducing no new ones at all inconsistent with the asserted facts. The interest might be prolonged by calling on the original author to criticise the offered solution, with reference not to any theory in his own mind, but solely to the situation as he originally drew it. Of course he will have been bound originally by no restriction as to what this is to be, except that he must not create a purely physical impossibility; his personages must not be described as being in two places at once.

After author number one has written his critique, author number two will be invited to defend and develop his solution. If not, the fiction passes into the realm of unsolved mysteries, — common enough in real detective history.

A certain society at college once held a mock trial, — a classmate was tried for the murder of a tutor. The counsel for