

That nothing may be lacking to complete the picture, far beyond, on the remote horizon, a little mountain summit is visible like a younger sister of the loftier heights about us. Involuntarily my gaze centres upon it. It is a miracle of transparent luminosity; it glows like a topaz — like a celestial tear. One might fancy that all the elements of heaven and earth — the half-hidden sun, the liquid clarity of the horizon, the deep violet of the

neighboring mountains, the dark verdure of the forests — had mingled to produce that luminous effect, that miracle of color.

Just then I hear someone calling. It is the English lady, who has likewise been admiring the distant view. She has a book in her hand, and with an attention-compelling gesture reads these immortal words of Coleridge: —

Methinks it should have been impossible
Not to love all things in a world like this.

STRINDBERG'S SUSPICION

BY ERIK LIE

From *Berliner Tageblatt*, July 24

(LIBERAL DAILY)

It was early in 1880 — a period of Reddest radicalism. Ibsen's famous saying that the civilized world should be torpedoed was being quoted everywhere by revolutionists. Arne Garborg had published *The Song of the Anarchists*, proclaiming that mankind must settle with its fair-speaking rulers with the knife, and not with arguments. Just at this time Strindberg arrived in Paris and was finishing *The Red Chamber*, in which he proclaimed the evangel of direct action more boldly even than most of his comrades. He was more irritable and suspicious than usual.

One morning Björnson came to Jonas Lie and told him he had just met Strindberg on the street, and the latter had confided to him that he would be ejected from his lodgings if he did not pay a thousand francs overdue rent within twenty-four hours. Björnson said: —

'He looked miserable, and was poorly

dressed. The man is hardly normal but he excites my pity.'

Lie replied: 'We cannot allow Sweden's greatest poet to live like this. It is simply our duty to get him out of his trouble.'

They finally arranged with a Swedish publisher, Nilsson, to publish a Christmas book, for which they and Ibsen and Strindberg were to write articles, and were to receive an advance payment of a thousand francs from Nilsson on account.

Björnson observed: 'We ought to be worth that much. I pledge the devil himself we are worth that much.'

One evening soon after Strindberg came to Lie in great excitement.

'Say,' he exclaimed, 'do you know, by some miracle I have just received a draft for more than a thousand francs by post from Sweden. I am beginning to believe in God.'

The next morning Lie was to ac-

company him to the bank to cash the draft. I myself was then a young lad, and went with them. In front of us was a portly, well-dressed citizen, who might have been a postal director, or a head bookkeeper. This comfortable-looking gentleman, who kept just ahead of us, irritated Strindberg exceedingly. Finally he exclaimed: 'Such men should have their throats cut!'

Lie asked in surprise: 'Why in the world would you do that?'

'He belongs to the upper class,' replied the Swedish poet.

After this compromising remark, he did not utter another word. I observed how threadbare his clothing was. The bottoms of his trousers frayed, and one overshoe was torn behind. A person who did not observe his lofty majestic brow, and merely noted the little wrinkles around his mouth, and his careless garb, might fancy him some poor serving-lad, who was embittered and embarrassed at finding himself abroad in the fashionable part of the city.

When we reached the *Crédit Lyonnais*, Strindberg shoved Lie ahead of him and kept prudently in the background. During those uncertain days every foreigner was more or less watched. It was quite natural therefore, that the bank-teller should demand to see his passport when he presented the check. Strindberg's eyes flashed. Naturally he was under suspicion, he assumed; his radical views were known here in Paris!

Hesitatingly he handed his passport to the teller.

'It is not viséd. It must be signed by your ambassador,' replied the teller, after glancing at the document.

Lie looked at the man; and suddenly there flashed into his face some of the hauteur of an irritated, angered aristocrat.

Lie suggested: 'Let's take a cab and

go to the embassy; we have time enough; it will be an hour or more before the bank closes.'

The face of Strindberg spoke volumes. His feelings evidently ranged all the way from bitterness and resentment to suspicion and a consciousness of guilt.

'I will never go to the Swedish ambassador!' he declared. 'He hates me. It's a trap. I will not be trapped. I will let my landlady turn me into the street first.'

Lie pondered a moment on the embarrassing situation. He did not try to argue the matter. Strindberg had an obstinate disposition, and he was now possessed of the idea that the authorities were on his track.

'I know the ambassador, and will manage it, if you will give me your passport.'

'Will you do that, my dear friend?' said Strindberg, in an appealing tone, like a helpless child. 'I will stop in the café next door and wait. But do not give him my address.'

Lie departed, and came back an hour later with everything settled.

Again the two poets approached the teller's window, and waited there while the viséd passport went the rounds of the office. Strindberg was exceedingly nervous; he expected any moment that a warrant would be served on him, and he might possibly be arrested. He acted as if he were really a criminal, and kept in the background as much as possible, casting uneasy glances in all directions.

When he was finally called back to the teller's window and a thousand francs were handed to him, his face lighted up with a great smile. Quickly sticking the bills into his pocket-book, he hastened away.

During his stay in Paris Strindberg became a close friend of both Björnson and Lie. One result of this was that he dedicated his *Somnambulist Nights* to the two Norwegian poets. The beauti-

ful poem with which this dedication begins reveals as well as anything he ever wrote what was, in spite of everything, the fundamental quality of his nature — deep sympathy for his fellow men.

Every one knows that his friendship with Björnson was followed later by a violent rupture, easily explained by the absolute contrast between the two men. Björnson was not a person to handle his opponent with gloves; and Strindberg was like a cask of powder, ready to blow up at the slightest spark. The relations between the Swedish poet and Jonas Lie were very different; they remained intimate friends. Strindberg had the happy feeling that he could open his heart and disclose his boldest thoughts to Lie without reserve, and yet find perfect understanding.

When his book, *The Red Chamber*, caused a famous lawsuit in Stockholm, Strindberg wrote a series of letters to Jonas Lie, some of which were published shortly after. Quite naturally he was at that time in a belligerent state of mind; he was nervous and excited, and

morbidly suspicious. When it was proposed to show him honors on his return to Sweden, and to present one of his dramas in commemoration of the event, he could conceive no other reason for this than a desire to bribe him — to 'clip his wings' and make him a 'court poet.' And he actually fancied that the prime mover behind this clever intrigue was King Oscar II.

But Strindberg naturally was not going to be made a fool of. He would know how to avenge himself. With this in view he conceived a devilish project — an attack upon His Majesty's person. In one of his letters he enclosed a drawing to show how a dynamite bomb might be placed in the royal palace under the throne! But in his very next letter his common sense reasserted itself, and he said that he had given up that plan, and preferred 'to smash my enemies with bombs out of my ink-bottle.'

The talented poet was right. No actual dynamite would have had the effect on popular opinion which his writings eventually exerted.

OLD RICH AND NEW RICH

BY ROBERT DE FLERS

[Robert de Flers, one of the most spirituel of French writers, has recently become a member of the Academy. He also had a successful diplomatic career in Rumania during the war.]

From *L'Indépendance Belge*, July 17
(BRUSSELS LIBERAL NATIONALIST DAILY)

LE NOUVEAU RICHE. — I am delighted, sir, to meet you at this resort, which must be fashionable since I am here. It seems to me that you view me with rather more favor than formerly. I wish to consult you.

L'ANCIEN RICHE. — I shall be glad to give you any advice in my power, the more so as it is the only thing I am now able to give.

LE NOUVEAU RICHE. — This has been a fine summer for me. Since the war is over, I have been very busy. I have had to secure a residence, a good tailor, a furniture man with a stock of antiques, some good pictures, an equipment of political ideas, and church connections. Now I've got that done. So ever since spring, we have been finishing our education. I mean by that, our children. It's too late for us older ones.

L'ANCIEN RICHE. — In any case you are frank and honest.

LE NOUVEAU RICHE. — Desperately so. But that will pass. It will take some time, though. You can't master the conventional hypocrisies of society in a day. I know that a regular set of lies should go with a large fortune, and that without them our wealth would be insupportable for others and dangerous for ourselves.

L'ANCIEN RICHE. — Don't let that worry you. Money does n't betray its source.

LE NOUVEAU RICHE. — Don't delude yourself, my dear sir. It advertises its source blatantly when it is newly gained. Your money came into your family long ago, and its source has been forgotten. Unhappily, I have n't reached that point. People want to know exactly how I acquired my wealth, at what date, in what business, and with whose aid. The result is that people both flatter me and despise me. I am surrounded by people who stretch out their hands to me, but hardly venture to shake mine.

L'ANCIEN RICHE. — You should, my dear sir, conceal your money.

LE NOUVEAU RICHE. — Ah, sir, it is so beautiful! It is so new. To be rich and not have it known would make me miserable. Then my wife just has to tell everyone about it, in order to establish social connections. We already have too many of them. We can't get rid of some of them. They are n't all of our selection. Some of them have been thrust upon us.

L'ANCIEN RICHE. — How do you spend your time?

LE NOUVEAU RICHE. — I'm fairly driven to death. I'm learning to swim, to play lawn tennis, and to ride horseback. I nearly drowned myself yesterday. My horse threw me this morning. I'm so lame that I have n't been able to take my fencing-lesson.