Nils Nilsen Ronning

Fifty Years in America

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Fifty Years in America

By Nils Nilsen Rønning

Minneapolis, Minnesota
THE FRIEND PUBLISHING COMPANY

With Happy Memories
Of
My wife, Inga Rønning,
Who always said when at times I
expressed regret for having entered
the field of independent Christian
literature, “This is your mission.”

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

Nils Nilsen Rønning (1870-1962) came to America from Norway when he was 17. He attended Red Wing Seminary (Haugean Lutheran) and the University of Minnesota, and published Christian books and pamphlets for Lutherans, most notably the magazine *The Friend*, which featured religious fiction. *Lars Lee: The Boy from Norway* is his best known book.

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Please have patience with us when you come across typos. Over time we are revising the books to make them better and better. If you would like to send the errors you come across to us, we'll make sure they are corrected.

The Brook That Sought The Sea

THE BROOK began like a silver thread way up in the solitude of the mountains. Where it came from and where it was going, it knew not. It heard the call of the distant sea and started off on the long, long journey, alone and unafraid.

It slipped down a grassy slope with a light heart and a merry song, a mere whisper, which only the swaying bluebells could hear.

At the bottom of the grassy slope the brook heard the murmur of another brook. They soon met and merged and went laughing and leaping down a shady glen. Waving ferns and graceful reeds grew in the wet soil and birds and beasts of the forest drank of the sparkling water.

After heavy rains on the mountains the brook swelled into a turbulent current, but during the dry season it grew smaller and smaller. It began to fear that it was never to reach the distant sea.

Proceeding on its way the brook was joined by many other brooks. Together they went swirling down the white cascades till they finally became a roaring river.

Entering the valley the river grew wider and flowed slowly between fertile farms. On summer days when the sky was cloudless, high and clean, it mirrored a lovely landscape. It would have liked to linger there, but the call of the sea urged it onward, ever onward.

As a child I was strangely drawn by some subtle power of the river as it flowed past my home. I would often slip away from my playmates to listen to the gentle swish-swash of the wavelets along the sandy shore and to look at the swaying reeds in the ever restless current.

In the early spring when the river was at flood tide, I would stand spellbound and watch the men, lithe of limbs, with daring and skill leap from log to log, breaking up jams and steering the logs down stream. In the summer time I felt “the cool silver shock of the plunge in the pool’s living water,” and in the winter time we fairly flew on our skates across the smooth ice, the steel flashing in the sun.

How far the river flowed before it reached the sea, I did not know, but the time came when I knew that the water of the brook finally washed the shores of distant lands. The long, long journey had come to an end.

Nothing comes to an end. The water of the sea rises as mist and forms clouds, which drift inland, and thus the water of the brook returns to the mountains. Again it hears the call of the distant sea and starts off in search of it, alone and unafraid. The eternal mystery of life and death and life again.

The story of the brook is your story and mine. Whence we come, whither we go, we know not. Early in life we hear the call to go forth into the world of time and space, the world of mind and spirit. We touch other lives. Experience is added to experience, thought to thought. There is the ripple of laughter, the rain of tears, the hope of becoming, the fear of failure.

But ever and anon, as the water of the brook returns to the mountains to be renewed, so the spirit of man returns to the memories of the past to be renewed. The eternal mystery of life and death and life again.

What Excuse For This Book?

I'LL TELL YOU, but let me first introduce myself. I am afraid to let others do it; if they know me well, they may say too much; if not, too little.

This introduction business is seldom a satisfactory affair. Once when I was introduced as the main speaker, it was not much of an occasion, I was wondering what a remarkable man the chairman was talking about. When it dawned on me that I was the man, I realized with a pang what I might have been; now it was too late.

Sometimes the chairman says, "The speaker needs no introduction." I take that to mean that he has nothing good to say about me and is too generous to say anything else. The most striking introduction I ever got was this: "The speaker's name begins with N. N., but it ends with N. G." I think I lived up to my reputation.

So here I am going to introduce myself. My name has already made its appearance in the book and the title of the book suggests that I have been in America fifty years.

I came from Norway at the age of seventeen. All my ancestors, as far as there is a record, were *bønder*, people who owned and worked their farms. None of my ancestors are mentioned in the histories of Norway. I read in an old newspaper that my father was asked by the king of Norway and Sweden to kick a hat held high aloft on a pole. My father did kick the hat. The king laughed and slapped himself on the knee. I must have inherited my father's vaulting proclivity for when on my way to America the first time, I kicked the hanging lamp in a hotel, but there was no king present to applaud or to pay the fine.

When I come to think of it I am not altogether Norwegian. One day when I met the Danish publisher, Christian Rasmussen, on a street in Minneapolis, he stopped, took off his broad-rimmed hat with an elegant gesture, made a graceful bow and asked me why I looked so sad. I told him that I had just discovered that there was Danish blood in my veins. "Congratulations, I always thought so," he cried. Now I am proud of my Danish blood.

I came to America because my brother wrote me that here' I could go to school as long as I wanted to. After confirmation I attended a continuation school two years. That would have been the end of my formal education. In this country I attended public school in Faribault, Minnesota, two years, Red Wing Seminary three years, and the University of Minnesota nearly five years. When people hear me talk or they read what I write they never guess that I have much of an education. How could they?

When I graduated from the last school I attended, I did not dare to accept positions offered-me, so I kept on going tr school almost a year more. I drifted into the work of wielding a pen and hitting the keys on a typewriter. Anybody can write, don't you know. Somewhere in this book I may incidentally refer to my work as writer, editor and publisher. It may be more of a warning than an encouragement to young writers.

I have served on a number of boards, committees and commissions, but the main contribution has been that without me there would sometimes have been no quorum. Then, too, I moved that we adjourn. When seconded, such a motion can't be debated.

Why do I write this book? Well, it is hardly in the hope of making money. When a certain person who did not know my financial status asked me to mention the books I had written and I mentioned more than a dozen, he wanted to know how much I had made on them. My answer was that I had made enough to take a trip from Minneapolis to St. Paul, a distance of ten miles, if I walked one way. At a banquet where there were present many professional men, each man had to give his name and profession. When it came to my turn I gave my mum and said that I had tried to make my living by writing and by looking at me they could see what came of having it had been. Well, I got them to look at me anyway.

I didn't write this book to win fame. When I have not gotten fame by this time, it is futile to try now.

I wrote the book because I knew it would be a lot of fun to live over again my life as the brook that sought the sea and it it turned to the mountains to be renewed. I also wrote it because I believe that some of the sketches may throw light on the life and work of the Norwegian people in America.

Some of my readers will say, "Oh, I could tell more about this man that the author of 'Fifty Years in America'." Well, why don't you tell it? It's a tragedy that more has not been written about the men I have mentioned, and

others. The time will come when every scrap of paper throwing light on their life and work will be eagerly sought and studied.

Some sensitive souls may think that I have revealed myself too much. The main if not the only value of this book lies in the fact that an ordinary immigrant tells simply and naturally just what he has observed. One cannot play "Hamlet" and leave Hamlet out, though at times he didn't seem to "be all there."

Some readers may regret that I touch so frequently on religion. I pity the man to whom religion is a burden he tries to get rid of, but can't. When one faces religion with courage, it may become a sustaining power. No person can write adequately about the Norwegians in America and leave out religion, for that has been their chief interest outside their interest in things material. What I say about my own religious attitude is perhaps the frankest statement ever made by a Norwegian Lutheran. I am not preaching, I am just telling.

An Amazing Half Century

THE LAST FIFTY YEARS in America have been a smashing, smoking, roaring, stupendous period — nothing like it in the world's history.

During this half century was practically finished the spreading of a network of railroads over the land, with bridges thrown across wide rivers and yawning canyons, the stringing of wires carrying thought, light and power from cities to hamlets, from hamlets to homes.

Breath-taking inventions followed one another in swift succession; one machine doing the work of hundred hands, the luxuries of the rich becoming the necessities of the poor.

Like sweeping waves the immigrants continued to come from every land in Europe, blond and brown, strong and sturdy, eager and hopeful, to take possession of land which until recently had been untouched by man save the light foot of the Indian or the stealthy step of the hunter.

And wherever the pioneers blazed new trails, they were followed by teachers and preachers, by men who planned and planted towns and cities, or who fought fevers or interpreted the law of the land.

Plows cut straight furrows in virgin soil, and the strokes of the axe resounded in the forest, trees crashed to the ground as wild animals fled, and light from heaven shone down on new clearings and the sites of new homes.

Elevators leaped toward the sky and trains, bulging with golden grain, roared toward the hungry cities of the East.

Fifty years ago was witnessed the high tide of emigration from Norway to America.

Histories have been written and more will be written of the Norwegians in America, but no man can tell adequately of the tearing asunder of tender ties, the hardships and dangers crossing the deep, the work and worry, the

hopes and fears, the laughter and tears, of men and women who with both hands carved out of a wilderness a new kingdom.

With the exception of Ireland, Norway has proportionally sent more of her sons and daughters to America than any other land under the sun. More than half as many people of Viking stock live in the New World as in the Old World.

From fishermen's huts and tenants' cabins and from small towns they came to the Wonderland in the West. As the "land taking" in Iceland became famed in song and story, so the settling of the Norwegians in America will furnish bards with ballads and scribes with achievements worthy of brave words.

Here is the element of tragedy in the disappearance of a large part of a people, but tragedy may turn to romance when they merge with a larger group, producing a more splendid people.

The Norsemen of old who settled in England, Ireland and France merged with the inhabitants of those lands and disapeared as distinct groups, having no great and distinct interests of their own.

What will happen to the Norwegian-Americans? Their nalive tongue is heard less and less and they are entering with use and enthusiasm into the larger American life, but having certain valuable and distinct religious, educational and cultural interests they will retain group consciousness for generations.

The romance is this that the better they preserve these interests the finer and larger will be their contribution to the sum total of true Americanism.

Cultural And Religious Background

BEFORE introducing the violinist, Steinar Odden, to the Tele convention, I said something like this:

"The loveliest thing made by man that I saw as a boy was Halvor Lie's violin. When not playing at weddings and concerts he left his violin in a chest upstairs in our home. Sometimes, when alone at home, I went upstairs, opened the lid of the chest and gazed with awe and admiration at this thing of beauty. The graceful curves, the pearl inlays, the carved head, the delicate blending of colors — well, there was something divine about it.

"Once I touched a string and the sound vibrated in my soul for a long time afterwards. Mr. Odden will now play Halvor Lie's composition."

The first velvety strokes swept me back to my boyhood home and I could see my parents and brothers and sisters listening bewitched, as Halvor, young and handsome, poured out his soul in tones that sang and sobbed, that laughed ant leaped; again I saw and heard the man who captivated my heart as a lad, and as I thought of his pathetic and untimely death, I simply could not help it — I wept right in front of the big crowd — wept as a child.

When the last tones had trailed off like a silvery thread and died away in silence, as we held our breath, I saw hundreds of handkerchiefs fluttering in the hall, but when I said, "AEg ae like gla, aeg, sa gutten som gret" ("I am happy anyway, said the boy who cried"), those crazy Telers made the rafters ring.

I had not dreamed how strong were the ties which linked us to Telemark.

The other day my nephew, Talbert Rønning, having visited my home in Telemark on his way back from China, gave me flowers from my parents' graves and small stones from the rock where I played as a boy, the mountain I climbed and even from the towering top of Gausta. Then again I realized how the deepest roots of my being stretch back through manhood and

youth to childhood days and then back into the dim and distant past of the race from which I sprang.

The typical newcomer brought with him something which the custom officers did not discover and on which there was no tariff. It was the memories of the old homestead, be it far on the inland, surrounded by majestic mountains, thundering waterfalls, and pensive woods, or on the coast where the mean hurls itself against the everlasting rocks or lies there smooth as a mirror, reflecting the floating clouds by day and the multitudinous stars by night.

These memories were his to have and hold to his dying day; it was to be a constant source of inspiration and sadness.

Several years ago the firm with which I was connected published a book containing 250 poems by Norwegian-Americans; almost every poem had been inspired by memories of the homeland and an undertow of sadness was sweeping through most of them.

Such poems are seldom written now. I wonder if the children of the Northwest will ever sing their own songs?

Did the immigrant learn to love America? I don't mean what America stands for — he did learn to love that America; he had loved it for years. That's the reason he came here. Did he learn to love the woods and prairies, the grass and trees and flowers and birds? He loved the piece of land that was his from the first time he saw it; the love sang in heart when he turned the first furrow and the rich soil appeared. It was his land, his soil, every bit of it! With high hope he scattered the golden seed, and anxiously waited while rain fell and sun shone and tender roots sucked the soil. Then early one morning he calls his wife to come out, and as she stands in the open door of the sod-house he points to the lovely sheen of green in the field on the hillside, bathed in the soft light of the rising sun.

A few months later the pioneer and his wife behold a beautiful sight — a waving field of whitening wheat. They glory in their soil and in the rich promise of bread and clothes and houses and churches for themselves and their children and their children's children, and — perhaps a visit back to the old home.

At first outdoor America did not appeal to me. Then one summer, with the help of a book, I could name 48 birds along a river bank. No spring ever brought me greater thrill than the next, when the birds returned from the South and I recognized them by flash of wing and song in the air or in

woodland thicket. The following summer, with the aid of another book, I studied trees and wild flowers. Since that time fields and forests sing the glory of God.

But the other night I dreamed that I stood in front of my boyhood home looking at the mountain peaks rising like church spires in the golden light of the setting sun.

As our physical, religious. and social background determines to a great extent the impressions we receive, the ideas we form, the way we are, I shall briefly sketch my own background. I take it that it was somewhat typical.

I had not been in this country very long before I sensed that the pioneers had found something here they had been denied in the homeland. They had found opportunities. Here it was not a question of caste or class but of initiative, energy character. The sky was the limit.

But I also sensed that they had left behind rich cultural values. The folklore was taboo among the people I met. The violin was the devil's instrument. Even Bjørnson's charming novels were condemned. There was no art of any kind in the homes. The beautiful liturgy of the church had been outlawed.

My home was an average home, but there was hardly a piece of furniture, a tool or utensil which did not reveal the finest kind of workmanship. My grandfather was one of the best "*rosmalere*" in the whole parish. How I admired the fine figures and decorations and the beautiful blending of colors of the paintings on chests, cabinets, chairs, bedposts and the crown of the bed. Some of the wooden spoons were delicately carved. There were decorations on coats, aprons and stockings, artistically sewn in carefully matched colors. How I missed all this in the bare, crude homes of the pioneers.

Until I was seventeen years old I had never been outside the wall of mountains surrounding my parish. As a child I knew nothing about the world on the other side of the mountains.

But I had my own world, a world of superstition (to me it was very real) and a world of make-believe (also very real). These invisible realms nourished my imagination.

Besides the human beings I saw and heard every day, there were in hills and woods and mountains invisible beings, more or less with human forms. They were the underground folks. Had not the marvelous Miller Boy ("*Myl-*

largutten") caught his most bewitching melodies from the "*nøkken*" in the waterfalls? Had not many a young man seen a beautiful woman, a "*hulder*," running through the forest?

On every farm there dwelt down by the barn the "*nisser*, small men who brought luck to the farmer if treated right; for instance, by leaving a bowl of cream-porridge ("*flødegrod*") Christmas eve by the barn or at the foot of a tree. One of our neighbors must have neglected this, for late one night when he was going to put his horse in the stable, a"*nisse*" blocked his way, and when the farmer wanted to push him aside he found himself instantly on his head in a snow pile.

Mother often sang while at work a plaintive ballad which had been sung by the lover of a girl, Margit Juxebø, who had been bewitched by a troll into his home in the mountain. When Margit had lived in the mountain nine years, one day ,while spinning, she heard the church bells in Bø:

"Daa høyrde ho Bøherads kjørkeklokkur klong,
Dae va aeg som bar sorja saa tong."

"Then she heard the bells from Bø church;
It was I who carried the heavy sorrow."

The first time when my faith in the underground people was shaken was one evening on the "*saeter*" or mountain pasture. In the afternoon my sister asked me if I dared to stay in the cabin alone, while she made a trip home. She would return next morning. No, I was not a bit afraid, I told her, but I regretted my promise the next minute.

When she had left, I sat outside the cabin playing with the lambs. All of a sudden I became conscious of the loud noise of the waterfall close by. I looked toward the river and there on the hillside was an ugly troll. It squatted on the ground and looked straight at me. If my hair had not already been white it might have turned white in a few minutes. I was too scared to run into the cabin. I could not turn my eyes away from the troll which sat there without moving, staring at me. Then I discovered that it was not a troll, but some gnarled branches which had been thrown on top of a stump.

From that time my faith in the underground folks began to waver.

Such superstitions undoubtedly created fear in our mind but at the same time they awakened an awareness of things beyond the reach of the senses.

There was still another world, the world of kings and queens, princes and princesses, and not to forget "*akeladden*" the poor and despised boy who spent his time digging in th ashes, but who went forth to win the princess and half the kingdom. These fairy tales were laughed at by the more educated people in days of old, but the time came when men like Asbjørnson and Moe began to gather these tales and lift them into the realm of literature.

As a boy I believed these tales were absolutely true. The fairy tales enrich the imagination. They have been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation; they represent the highest kind of story telling. Not a word is wasted; every word goes straight home.

I was more than surprised when I met many young men and women of Norwegian stock in this country who had never heard a fairy tale.

I had not been here very long before I began to wonder why the Norwegians had more than one church body. They had all been baptized and instructed and confirmed in the same faith in the homeland. Probably a brief sketch of my own religious and churchly background may throw some light on the matter.

While I have many precious memories from my childhood and boyhood, I have some which I wish I could strip from my mind. Swearing was common and shockingly vulgar. At Christmas, weddings and dances there was much drinking and even fighting. Funerals were made less sad by drinking.

At a Christmas party I saw one man throw his brother to the floor, his head striking the sharp point of the fireplace night in front of me, and the blood shot up in the air. All these people were church members.

The Haugean revival barely touched our parish. Hauge preached there as far as is known only once. In my boyhood there were only three Haugeans or "*laesere*" ("readers") in the parish. They were called "readers," because they read the Bible and devotional books. When a person was given to reading that kind of books, he was considered queer. I remember it being said of a certain person that he must be "*feig*," that is he had a premonition that he soon was going to die, because he was one day reading in the hymn book.

The three "readers" were marked men in the community. They were looked upon as hypocrites, for they claimed that they were saved and the children of God. Nobody could know that until after they were dead. The main thing was live a good life and then be able to "heave a sigh" unto God just before closing one's eyes in the last sleep. That was all.

The minister who baptized me had undoubtedly received the required training for the ministry and been ordained by a bishop. He was a worldly-minded man. The only time he spoke with power was when he lambasted the "readers."

Then a new minister came — Theodore Crøger. His first sermon was a John the Baptist sermon. That sort of preaching was bad, but what was worse was, that instead of re-appointing the three richest men in the parish as his council, he chose the three "readers." Was the man crazy?

He went to dances and preached. Some young people wept and some swore, but dances grew less frequent. One person after another was converted. The revival did not come like a wave and did not subside like a wave. But "daily" souls were added to the Church of the Living Lord.

My two older brothers and my oldest sister were converted. I think mother had always been a Christian. Now her spiritual life was deepened. She rejoiced in the change brought about in her own home and community. Time and again she would remark, "I must say with pastor Magelsen." He was the only preacher she ever quoted. Evidently he must have made a great impression on her. Not very long ago I discovered that Magelsen belonged to the Magelsen tribe of ministers in this country.

Father was puzzled. He admired Crøger and was pleased to see the effect of his work, but he thought there was no need to take matters so seriously. But the time came whey with tears and great travail of soul he found the peace that passeth understanding.

Crøger chanted beautifully. He certainly looked like a minister at the altar and in the pulpit in that clerical gown of his. It set him apart from the rest of the world as a man of God. Where is my Haugeanism, anyway? Well, Haugeanism is not a matter of form or dress. It is a spiritual attitude. It is possible to become a formalist even though the regular church forms have been thrown out of the window.

First Impressions of America

AFTER A STORMY JOURNEY on board of a small steamer a passenger is glad to see any kind of land, but still more so when that land is America.

To the immigrant the word "America" belongs to the same class of words as heaven, mother, love, hope. It stands for the fulfillment of dreams, for equality, liberty and opportunity. I have seldom been more thrilled in my life than when I caught sight of America, but America did not seem to be particularly thrilled to see me.

Part of this sketch is taken from "The Boy in Telemark." If it was worth reading once, it is worth reading twice.

When we arrived in New York, Uncle Sam did not meet us with a brass band and a speech of welcome. His representatives herded us together in Castle Garden as though we were dumb cattle. After considerable delay, my sister, my cousin, and myself found ourselves on a train.

I had never been on a train before, and as soon as it attained considerable speed, in fact greater speed than any other vehicle I had ever been in before, I was seized with a feeling of exhilaration. But then my cousin reminded me of the many railroad wrecks in America. He was sure that the engineer had lost control of the locomotive and that any moment we might be hurled to a frightful death. As the train kept on hour after hour, our fears subsided. When the train stopped in Chicago I got off and went to a nearby stand to buy some milk. I was able to make the girl understand what I wanted. I got the milk and handed her a dollar. She took it and put it in a drawer and then turned away. I tried to call her attention to her mistake, but she did not seem to understand, and only shook her head. As I was afraid I might miss the train, I let her keep the dollar and walked off with the most expensive milk I had ever bought. The girl evidently regarded me as a milk-sop, or she reasoned that a green newcomer would soon be fooled out of the dollar anyway, and she might just as well get it as anybody else. Probably she was right.

While I was inside being swindled, my train had moved up a short distance and another train had taken its place. I did not know this and started for the wrong train. I had not gone very far before a policeman called to me. As he undoubtedly wanted me to hurry up in order to catch the train, I started to run. He kept on shouting and, looking back, I saw him following me as fast as his bulky form would permit. I have forgotten what I thought — a newcomer is not given much credit for thinking anyway — but I may have thought that he was going to arrest me for being foolish enough to pay a dollar for a small pail of milk. Coming from a land where officers of the law are respected, I stopped. He turned me around and led me into my own train. If I ever should become mayor of Chicago and this man is still living, he can have any appointive office within my gift. After a while the train came to a stop, and my cousin and I were directed to get off and enter another train. I was not able to understand why this was done, but as the railroad problem in this country had engaged the best minds for year, it was not to be expected that a newcomer could understand it. I was fully convinced that I was never again to see my sister.

Great was my joy when, on being transferred to another train later on, I met her. My cousin, however, was lost in the transaction, but I was getting used to such trifles and did not mind it much.

My sister and I had bought tickets to Faribault, Minnesota, but just before leaving Norway we got a letter from our brother in this country stating that we should buy tickets for Kenyon, where he would meet us. It was too late to make any change and when we came to Faribault there were only strange faces to be seen. I went from one person to another and asked them if they spoke Norwegian, but they all shook their heads. Finally I saw a policeman and spoke to him. He took me by the arm and led me across the tracks to a Danish family. Since that time I have had a warm spot in my heart for policemen, but somehow or other I could never like girls who sell milk.

A boy took us to a Danish hotel. We were practically without money. It was hard telling when our brother would find us, if he ever did. My uncle had once told me that he sometimes found money when walking along the sidewalk in the city. Well, if he could find money, why could not I? So out I started looking for money on the sidewalks of Faribault. I admit that a boy who lets himself be swindled out of a dollar for a pail of milk and who

looks for money on the sidewalks is not very promising material for American citizenship.

When I came back to the hotel, there stood my brother in the lobby. All is well that ends well.

The next morning I learned my first English word. It was such a simple word, just the kind of word to give to a newcomer. It was "whiffle-tree." According to modern teaching we ought to proceed from the simple to the complex. If "whiffle-tree" was simple, what would the complex be?

The first summer my sister and I stayed at the parsonage of Rev. Østen Hansen in Goodhue County, Minnesota.

The minister's son, Thomas, took a great deal of interest in me. Whatever I said and did furnished him an immense amount of fun. I could not always look upon what he did do me as being funny. He is now a prominent preacher and, as Peer Strømme says, "I hope he has forgiven me for all the tricks he played on me." One day he volunteered to teach me English. Instead of saying, "Ja," I must say, "Yes, man Yankee." I started in to use this expression at once. I knew that practice makes perfect. I was just aching to have people ask me a question which called for an affirmative answer, that I might say, "Yes, man Yankee." The minister's wife suspected something was wrong when I had given her this answer several times. "Where did you learn this?" she asked. When I told her that her son was kind enough to teach me English, she remarked that I had better not learn English from him. For some time I clung to my precious whiffle-tree.

In the fall I went back to Faribault where my brother lived and had one of his congregations. I was to attend the public school and at the same time earn my room and board at the home of Dr. Bemis by taking care of his horses.

To my surprise I was given a place at the table with the family. I had expected that I was to take my meals in the kitchen.

As my English vocabulary was very limited, Dr. Bemis had some difficulty in making me understand that when he rapped at the door and said, "Nils, Tom," it meant that I was to harness Tom. If there ever was a beautiful, gentle, intelligent horse, Tom was that horse. He could run very fast and he always wanted to run. Sometimes I went with the doctor out into the

country. Then Tom would be given free reins. “Have you horses in Norway that can run as fast as Tom?” the doctor would ask me. “No, sir,” was my answer.

One day Dr. Bemis asked me to bring him something. As the weather was cold I thought he wanted the blanket. When I brought him the blanket, he tore it out of my hand, ran to the stable and brought back a whip. He cried, “Whip, whip, whip.” Even now I know the difference between a blanket and a whip.

The doctor must have seen me standing in front of the posters announcing a circus, for he took me with him to the circus. He was an old man with white hair and a long white beard. He was a dignified man, but that day he threw dignity to the winds. We drank pink lemonade and ate peanuts; we looked at the animals, and he told me their names. If I got a “kick” out of looking at the performances — and I did — he got a “kick” out of watching me. When we came home, Mrs. Bemis asked me to tell her what I had seen. When words failed me, I used my hands and feet. I think I gave her a very good idea of how the clowns had acted.

I had planned my entrance to school carefully. When I rapped at the door, the school teacher would open it and ask me if I wanted to go to school. I would then bow and say, “Yes.” As I was not sure but that complications might arise, I had asked a Swedish boy to go with me. He took me to the primary room. I rapped at the door. The teacher opened it and asked, “What is your name?” I made my bow and said “Yes.” When I noticed a puzzled look on her face, I knew I had made a mistake and turned the case over to my interpreter.

The teacher seemed to agree with him that I belonged in the primary room. I did not remain there very long. The reason for my promotion was the fact that there was not a chair that was big enough for me. Oh, you ought to have seen the look in the faces of all the children and heard the giggles whenI tried to squeeze myself into one of the small seats. The teacher did not feel called upon to give me her chair. She had a difficult problem on her hands. She had, no doubt, studied her pedagogy and had attended many conventions, but never had she learned how to act in such a case. The law of association of ideas came to her rescue. The thought “problem” suggested arithmetic. She went to the blackboard and wrote something like this: 3x5x2x4=. I knew how to count in English. To her surprise I gave the right answer. Then" she wrote two columns. Before she had

struck a line under the figures, I again gave the right answer. This convinced her that I was not as ignorant as I looked. She directed me to the next higher class.

At first some of the children pestered me a good deal; they evidently reasoned that since I did not know English I did not know anything else. They called me the "green Norwegian." But when I always was perfect in arithmetic and passed from class to class, they called me the "smart Norwegian," and' when I wrestled with the biggest rowdy in school and won, the boys wanted to feel of the muscle in my arm.

The second summer I stayed with the Bemis family, the granddaughter was presented with a pony. As the pony had more vivacity than tact, I had to ride him until he had acquired more sense. When he had been well trained, I decided to have a parade all by myself down the main street. When we came to one of the busiest corners, the pony stopped and remained stopped. He stood without hitching. No matter whether I spoke to him in Norwegian or English or used whip or spurs, he refused to move.

Soon a crowd gathered around us. Advice came from all sides. All kinds of remarks were made, pertinent and impertinent. Suddenly, the pony made a leap to one side, almost throwing me out of the saddle. The crowd set up a roar. The pony probably thought it was time for his oats. I do not remember if he got his usual portion. I have my suspicions.

I must tell about my first Christmas in this country. My brother had gone away and my sister was working for strangers. I called on her Christmas Eve. It had been raining for several days. The slush was deep in the streets. A piercing wind came sweeping from the north. In Norway we always had snow at Christmas and the air on Christmas Eve was full of the music of many bells. As my sister had heard that people gave each other Christmas presents in this country, she handed me a quarter and told me to buy myself a present. On the way home I went into a bookstore and bought my first book in English. I do not think I understood the meaning of the title, but it expressed the sentiment of a newcomer on his way to a cold, cheerless room to spend his first Christmas away from the lights and laughter and love of the old home; the title was, "Is Life Worth Living?"

When I awoke next morning, the merry sound of sleigh bells fell on my ears and when I looked out of the window, the world was white. Oh, yes, life was worth living in America, too.

The next year I stayed with my brother and sister. All I had to do was to bring the cow to the pasture in the morning and bring her back in the evening. As the morning walks interfered with my sleep, I paid a neighbor boy a few cents for acting as substitute in the morning. I stayed up till late at night reading Danish novels and writing poetry. Quite often I went out on the hills and through the woods watching the birds and listening to their songs.

I had by this time made such progress in learning English that my brother asked me one day to go with a farmer to one of the state schools as interpreter, as he himself had to go away.

There are several state schools in Faribault. Not knowing one from the other, I took the farmer to the first school we came to.

The president received us cordially. When I had told him that the man had a son whom he wanted to enter at this school, he sat down at a table and got ready to ask for information.

When he asked a question, I repeated it to the father in Norwegian, and then translated the answer into English.

The questions concerning the boy's name, age, father, and mother were easily answered. Then the president asked, "How long has the boy been blind?"

I submitted the question to the father.

"Blind?" he fairly shouted. "He is not any more blind than I am."

"He say dat boy iss not blind."

The president whirled around in his chair. "What do you come here for then? This is the school for the blind. You had better go to the school for the feeble-minded."

I have often wondered whether he wanted to insinuate that the father and I belonged there, or if he thought of the boy.

I told the father that this was a school for the blind and that the president said we ought to go to the school for crazy people.

"The boy acts kind of funny at times," he said, "but he is not crazy. Let's go home." That struck me as a very sensible suggestion.

All my teachers were exceedingly kind and helpful. They were of New England stock, the finest stock in the world. These teachers were more appreciative and courteous than the Norwegians in the rural districts in Norway. They were more democratic than the official class in Norway. They

did not hesitate to praise me at times. They said “Please,” “Thank you,” “Excuse me,” and “Beg your pardon.” I was not used to that sort of a thing.

There was especially one teacher who took a great deal of interest in me. Forty-seven years later I called on a friend in Faribault and asked her if any of my teachers were still alive. Yes, one of them lives right in town. When I came back to my hotel I telephoned to her. When a woman answered, I asked if she had been Miss So and So. Yes. “Do you remember a newcomer by the name of Nils who was in your class?” “Yes, I remember him. What became of him? Do you know?” “He is talking to you.” “Oh, are you in town? You come up to my home at once.”

She was now an old, white-haired woman, still beautiful, with the same brown eyes. She received me as were I a long lost son or brother. What had I done, what was I doing, and so on and so on. She introduced me to her husband when he came home. “This was one of my boys,” she said. Then she turned to me and said with some of her old heartiness, “This is your home every time you come to Faribault.”

The second year I attended school in Faribault there was another teacher who helped me a great deal. She was in poor health and looked frail and delicate. Every now and then she asked me to stay after school. When the other pupils had left, she and I walked up to the assembly hall. When we got half-way up, she had to rest. I had to go up on the platform while she seated herself in the middle of the hall. I read aloud in a book and every now and then she stopped me. “Say mouth, though, John.” Over and over again she said the words, and over and over again I had to repeat them, and when she noticed a slight improvement, she smiled and nodded her head. The next year I met her sister and inquired about my teacher. In a sad, hushed voice she answered that she had passed away. That was my first sorrow in America, and it was a real sorrow.

I was fortunate in coming in contact with the finest traits in American life from the very first.

At Red Wing Seminary

I FIRST HEARD of Red Wing Seminary when, at the age of 13, I received a letter from my brother from Red Wing, Minnesota. On the outside of the envelope was the picture of the main building at Red Wing Seminary. Would it not be wonderful if some day I might attend school in a three-story building?

I came to Red Wing late in the evening in the fall of 1889. We walked through the town and then began to climb a bluff, up, up. On the top was the dim outline of a building with lights in many of the windows.

When I stepped out on the campus the next morning I was thrilled by the magnificent scenery — high, brown bluffs, the lower sides a riot of colors, the picturesque city of Red Wing on the plain below, the Mississippi river flowing majestically by on its way to the sea.

"Høgt paa haugen ligger haugianernes høiskole."

I did not know then that Red Wing Seminary was the culmination of the first efforts made by the Norwegians in America to start a church school.

In the spring of 1904 I wrote the history of Red Wing Seminary on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the school.

In the constitution of the "Elling Synod" (The Evangelical Lutheran Church), the first organized church body among Norwegian Lutherans in America, adopted in 1846, it is stated that schools and education must be furthered, so that teachers and ministers may acquire the necessary knowledge. Four attempts to start a school were made: In Lisbon, Illinois, 1855, with one teacher and three students, lasted one year; the school in Deerfield, Wisconsin, 1865, with about 20 students, two years; foundation was laid for a school at Red Wing, Minnesota, 1871; then offer to build school and church together in Chicago, Illinois, was accepted. Building erected but not

used for school. In 1877 school property in Red Wing bought. School opened in 1879.

What a pity, some will say, that these Haugeans did not secure theological professors from Norway at the very beginning of their efforts to establish a church school in America or that they did not send young men to Norway to be trained for the ministry there.

The answer is that they tried in vain to secure theologians from Norway who represented their particular tendency and they could not wait for ministers till young men had received the proper training either in Norway or anywhere else.

Later other Norwegian Lutheran groups tried to solve the problem of securing trained ministers of their own by cooperating with the Swedes or the Germans, but it was but a temporary arrangement.

It has repeatedly been said that the early Haugeans were against schools and a well-trained ministry. That is partly true. You can't blame them, when you bear in mind the kind of schools and ministers they had known.

But many of them realized that learning was not always an evil. They said that the devotional books they read had been written by learned men and that the Bible had been translated by men well versed in ancient languages. "Had the Bible not been translated, we should be heathen still," argued Hans Markussen Sande, a layman.

So there was nothing else to do but ordain their most trusted and ablest lay preachers. Children must be baptized and confirmed, the Lord's Supper administered, weddings performed and funerals conducted with churchly ceremonies.

It may be of interest to read what a recognized historian says about the lay preachers and in particular about the scholastically untrained ministers in the Hauge's Synod who worked the hardest to establish a school of their own. I quote from Dr. Laurence M. Larson's book, "The Changing West":

"Scoffers might object that the lay preacher had only one sermon in his repertoire and the charge was frequently true. No matter what the scripture was used to introduce the discourse, his actual text was likely to be the cry of John in the wilderness, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' At all the times the emphatic word was 'repent'. His great task, as the preacher saw it, was to awaken souls who were asleep in sin; and this he believed could not be achieved through historical and theological disquisitions. Such matters were left to those who wore the black gown and the

white ruff. As for himself he would go on in the old way calling souls to repentance.

"The great majority of Eielsen's colleagues were wholly without training, as the world understands the term. They were carpenters and shoemakers, sailors and farmers, who believed that they had heard the call of the spirit and had gone forth to preach in response to this call.

"One is not to conclude from this, however, that these men were inferior personalities or inefficient pastors. Perhaps they could not shine on the higher levels of theological debate; but for the work that most of them found to do they were peculiarly well equipped. Among them, too, were men who were endowed with the qualities of leadership; there is no discounting the importance of church men like Arne Boyum, Gudmund Strand, Østen Hanson and Rasmus Hill. A few like Christoffer O. Brohough and O. A. Bergh had literary interests which they indulged as their duties allowed. The men who gathered about the Chieftain from Voss may have been lacking somewhat in culture and refinement, but they were not wanting in intellectual strength."

Now back to my first day at Red Wing Seminary.

Of course I took a good look at the members of the faculty: H. H. Bergsland, tall, loose-jointed, awkward, but with a wonderful light in his eyes; O. S. Meland, short, stocky, good-looking; G. O. Brohough, dignified and distinguished looking; C. R. Hill, bushy-haired, alert, nervous; Edw. Schmidt, tall, swarthy, modest; H. H. Elstad, friendly, mild.

C. R. Hill

I reported to Professor C. R. Hill. He was teaching arithmetic in the first class. He gave me some tests and told me to start in second class.

The teacher who made the deepest impression on me was Professor Hill. He was a son of one of the pioneer pastors in the Hauge's Synod, Rev. Rasmus Hill, and was an M.A. from the University of Wisconsin. His father, I have heard, also preached in English. There was nothing so desperately slow about the Haugeans.

I often went to Hill's office and was always welcome. I can still see that curly, reddish hair of his and the bushy beard. His eyes were friendly, his face smiling.

The first day in English composition we were asked to write a composition on anything we chose. I wrote a description of a rain storm and the sun breaking through the clouds and shining gloriously on the green hills. In that fine handwriting of his, Hill wrote at the bottom of the composition: "You have a faculty for descriptive writing; cultivate it." That was the first definite encouragement I received to write.

Knowing that I was lonesome, he invited me and a few other students to his home one Sunday afternoon. Tea was to be served. I had never tasted tea in my life. "Do all of you boys drink tea?" asked Mrs. Hill. They all did. I said nothing. I drank the nasty stuff, but vowed I would never drink tea again.

Toward spring I received a "call" to teach parochial school in Faribault and Webster, the latter place some fourteen miles from Northfield. I had to begin a month before school closed at the Seminary. I was all upset. How could I enter the third class the next year when I had not passed examinations in the second class? I hurried off to Hill and told him of my predicament. "Take the examinations before you leave; you will pass." I did.

When I bade him goodbye that spring he said, "If you ever get lonesome, write me." I did get lonesome and did write him. I still have that four-page letter in the fine handwriting of his, full of good cheer and encouragement.

The next year I studied Latin under Hill. All I remember is: "*Gallia est ominis divisa in partes tres*."

It was something about a country which was divided in three parts. It might be true for all I knew, but there was nothing exciting about it. Hill was also my teacher in Logic and Mental Philosophy. I did not care for Logic, I preferred reasoning my own way. I had read in one of Holberg's comedies about a student who said to his peasant mother: "A hen has two legs; you have two legs. Ergo — you are a hen." She burst into tears. Logic is a dangerous instrument.

I reveled in Haven's Mental Philosophy; the language was so beautiful. Hill was a philosopher by birth. I would not say that he was the best instructor I ever had. He did not have the patience to wait for an answer. But he was one of the most inspirational teachers I ever had.

He was not a Haugean in the strict sense of the word, but he was sympathetic toward Haugeanism, and a devout, confessing Christian. He did not teach Christian philosophy; he did not go out of his way to preach, but his

character — noble, gentle, lovable — was a Christian testimony. I was always impressed by his prayers in chapel.

When I bade him goodbye the last year at school, he took my hand in both his hands, looked me kindly and earnestly in the face and said, "Rønning, I expect to hear from you." He expected to hear from all his "boys." Had he lived for a number of years, I hope he would have heard nothing from any of them that would hurt his tender soul.

He became president of Jewell Lutheran College, Jewell, Iowa. He put all his enthusiasm and energy into the work, but his health failed him and he died a young man.

When his "boys" meet and talk about the glorious days at Red Wing Seminary, and Hill is mentioned, someone is sure to say, "What a wonderful man." He was a wonderful man.

G.O. Brohough

Professor Brohough was the best teacher I ever had. I have yet failed to find one of his former students, when Brohough was at the height of his power, who did not give him the same testimony.

A good teacher is born, not only made. Brohough was a born teacher. At the first sight of him he awed you with his dignity, his austere personality, his piercing eyes, and that incisive, authoritative voice of his. Later you admired him and worked your head off to please him.

When he entered the classroom, erect as a Norway pine, he carried his hat in one hand, his books in the other. After blowing the dust off the desk, he put down his hat and books, seated himself slowly, looked at the class with those keen, steady eyes of his and said, "Good morning." To the senior class he said, "Good morning, gentlemen."

Never hurried, never ruffled, always sure of himself, the master of the situation. He told some of the same stories, year after year. Well, they were new to each class, and they were good stories. He joined in the laughter, almost closing his eyes; the lips parted, showing fine, white teeth. Then went up the right hand, and with a graceful gesture he stroked his Grecian nose with the thumb and the forefinger.

Once his laughter was at my expense. We were to make a list of all the figures of speech we could find. In some inexplicable manner I had the

longest list and was asked to read it. I mentioned "hyperbole," pronouncing it with the accent on the first syllable, instead of on the second. "What was that?" Brohough asked, his eyes dancing. I repeated the word the same way. Then he threw his head back and laughed till he got red in the face. The students joined in the laughter, but I bet you, those nuts didn't know why he laughed. "Oh, you mean 'hy-per-bo-lee'," he said. It's a crazy word, anyway.

When I had examined the textbook in Algebra, I called on Brohough and said that I would never be able to pass examination in that subject. Could I not take something else? He laughed and said that I would have no trouble. I didn't believe him.

So I had to study Algebra. We went through the first part over and over again, till we had the rules, or whatever you call them, on the tip of our tongues. When we came to the rule (or is it not a rule?), "Two things being equal to a third are themselves equal," he took three dimes out of his pocket and placed them on the table and illustrated what it meant. That stuck. I got 100 in Algebra.

In Physical Geography we did not have the proper equipment. Brohough made us use our imagination. One day he said, "Close your eyes." We did. "There is a plate right in front of you; on the plate is an apple; on the right-hand side of the plate is a knife. Do you see all this?" Sure, we did. "Now, take the apple in your left hand, the knife in the right and cut the apple in two. There you have the two hemispheres." That's what we had.

We studied Laplace theory. One student said that was rank heresy and left the class; I guess he came back. Brohough taught it as a theory, and let it go at that. I never heard any of the teachers at Red Wing Seminary refer to science as "science falsely so called," or that "science was one thing today and something else tomorrow."

He was not ashamed of being a Norwegian, though he did not express any great pride, but he was an admirer of America and England. He often called attention to England's success as a colonizer. He stressed over and over again his preference for the Anglo-Saxon element in the English language. He had no use for Latin anyway. At a convention of the Hauge's Synod a motion had been made that another year of Latin should be added to the curriculum. I don't know if Brohough had ever before spoken at a convention. Now he asked for the floor. He strode to the platform. I remember his last sentence: "*Naar humanismen traeder ind ad en dør, gaar hau-*

gianismen med bøiet hoved ud en anden dør" ("When humanism enters one door, Haugeanism leaves with bowed head through another door"). When the fathers in the Synod heard it was that dangerous to add another year of Latin, they would not be guilty of anything like that.

When some pressure was brought to bear on me to take up the study of theology, I went to Brohough and asked his advice. I told him that I did nor think I was cut out for the ministry. I was too bashful. "Mr. Rønning," he said slowly, "modesty is a charming quality in a minister; why don't you go to the university?"

I sent Brohough a copy of my booklet "*Bare for Moro*" ("Just for Fun"). Shortly afterwards I received this brief letter in Norwegian (the only time he ever wrote me in Norwegian): "*Jeg modtog din bog 'Bare for Moro' paa posthuset; saa spiste jeg en god middag. I kraft af samme laeste jeg bogen helt igjennem med en gang uden at snu paa bussen*" ("I received your book 'Just for Fun' at the postoffice; then had a good dinner. On the strength of the same I read the book through at one sitting without turning the chew of tobacco"). That latter expression must not be taken figuratively, because I doubt if he ever had tasted tobacco.

Brohough certainly was a charming man to call on. I walked straighter away from him than when I came.

Upon invitation by President H. E. Jorgensen I delivered the commencement address at Red Wing Seminary one spring. Brohough listened attentively. I hope I used the right gesture when I said "The good, the true and the beautiful."

Entering the assembly hall I walked beside Professor Edward Tiller, right behind Brohough. Looking at Brohough, Tiller whispered to me, "Look more dignified, Rønning."

It is not strange that some of us who had Hill and Brohough as teachers are non-conformists.

Edward W. Schmidt

I studied German under Professor Edward W. Schmidt two years. He also was an MA. from the University of Wisconsin. He was an excellent teacher in any subject, I take it, but especially so in German, that being his mother tongue.

One day being asked a question, he said that he would look it up and answer it the next day. We thought it strange that a professor had to look up anything. Later on I admired him for his honesty. I have known teachers who tried to bluff their way through.

What impressed in Schmidt was his modesty and his gentleness. He had no difficulty in the matter of discipline. Who would ever think of hurting his feelings?

Professor Schmidt married Miss Inga Eistenson, a girlhood friend of Mrs. Rønning. When Mrs. Schmidt was conducting a large chorus of students at a concert in Red Wing and later in Minneapolis, Mrs. Rønning was the accompanist for the chorus and the soloists. It was during a rehearsal in Red Wing that Schmidt asked me if I wanted to take a walk with him. We started off at two o'clock in the afternOon and returned at six. I have always prided myself on being not only good at running but also walking, but Schmidt simply tuckered me out. We climbed the bluffs and crossed ravines, hour after hour, and all the time he was pointing out the work wrought by erosion. Well, he certainly had fine object lessons in that territory. He told me that once the whole country within our view had been level, but that water down through the centuries had carried away the top soil, then dug down and down through the layers of rocks, till the broad and deep Mississippi basin had been scooped out. When one studied the layers on one side of the basin, he would find corresponding layers in the same order on the other side.

And every now and then when we crossed a plowed field he picked up Indian arrows and gave me a lecture on the Indian tribes and their habits.

That afternoon was the longest "class hour" I ever attended, but, tired as I finally became, physically, I enjoyed every minute. I was pleased some time ago when I received a postal card from him saying he had enjoyed reading the descriptions of nature in "A Boy from Telemark." Well, he helped me to observe nature. Professor Schmidt later became president of Red Wing Seminary; at present he is a member of the faculty at St. Olaf College.

The professors Hill, Brohough and Schmidt were college graduates. Hill and Schmidt had, as I have stated, M.A. degrees from the University of Wisconsin. Brohough kept on studying and got his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota and also other degrees.

This does not indicate that the leaders in Hauge's Synod were strenuously opposed to education. In fact these three men had a more all-around education than the theologically trained teachers at other church academies and colleges.

I am not so sure that teachers like ours made all of us hundred percent Haugeans, but they made us open-minded, free and independent in our thinking and attitudes. Perhaps too free and independent for the good of man-made systems. It made us poor church politicians, but we leave that to others.

H.H. Elstad

Finally there is Professor Elstad, respected and loved by more of the former students than any other teacher. I called on him, his wife and daughter the other Sunday. He now lives in Minneapolis, at 3710 Morgan Avenue, North. Write him, boys, and call on him when in the city. He still swings his arms the same old way, nods his head when he speaks and takes furtive glances at you with those kind eyes of his. Elstad did not have as complete an education as the other teachers, but he was a student all his days, and taught efficiently subjects which he had mastered all by himself.

As a teacher he was thorough, methodical and exacting. And who would be a slacker in his class? He more than any other teacher was conscious of the fact that he was teaching in a church school. In that respect he was an ideal teacher of secular studies in a church school. No, he did not go out of his way to preach, but when a certain phase of a subject touched religion, he called attention to it, Christian that he was. I am afraid some teachers at church schools are so afraid of "preaching" in class that they go to other extreme and become negative in their influence.

It was not only the teacher Elstad that we remember and love. It was the man Elstad. His simplicity, straightforwardness, gentleness, kindliness, his Christian nobility won the respect and love of all his students.

Elstad was the most Haugean of all the teachers, and the best in Haugeanism is directness, humility and love.

H.H. Bergsland

Professor Bergsland would have been one of the greatest Lutheran theologians in America had he received a longer and broader preparatory training. For sheer logical thinking few surpassed him. When once interested in a question, his mind found no rest before he had thought it through. His students stood in awe of his profundity. He was profound, but lacked the ability at times to state his views in a simple way. He once said that he did not care to make use of illustrations. His was abstract thinking.

In his chapel talks I often simply did not know what he was talking about, but it was always interesting to watch his postures and gestures. He was a contortionist of no mean order. There were times, however, when he held me spellbound. I shall never forget his sermon on John the Baptist. "John the Baptist was so great," he said, "that I could fall down at his feet and worship him."

If he was hard to understand when he lectured it was a revelation to listen to the simplicity of his prayers and his brief testimonies at the weekly prayer meetings. He not only approved of prayer meetings; he was present and took part.

That counts with the students as long as they live, whether they did much praying at school or not.

Bergsland, being a Tele, was not lacking in humor, but he looked so serious that one would not guess it. Once I climbed the fire escape and crawled through the window. There, on the inside, stood Bergsland. With a twinkle in his eyes he remarked dryly that he believed that there was a door somewhere to the building.

In his class in religion he asked me what was meant by the heart. I did not know, but no teacher should catch me without an answer, so I answered that the heart was the center of our consciousness. He looked up in the ceiling. "The center of our consciousness, hm! Well, yes, there may be something to that." Then he went on to explain. I have forgotten what he said, but I remember what I said.

He enjoyed being present at the debates in the Literary Society. Once I was on a debate. One of the opponents had prepared an elaborate chart which he tried to explain, but made a bungling job of it. I saw the chart was killing. The only thing I could say was that since my honorable opponent did not know what the chart meant, I did not feel called on to help him. Bergsland stroked his whiskers in that characteristic way of his and

laughed. My side won the decision, but would not have done so, if that chart had been explained the right way.

O.S. Meland

Professor O. S. Meland taught in the theological department and also taught church history and Norwegian grammar in the preparatory department. As I had studied Norwegian grammar in Norway, I did not pay much attention to the les — sons. I wrote poetry when not too closely observed. I sat next to one Mr. Giske who had gotten the notion that I was a humorist. I hardly dared to look at him without his laughing aloud. We were asked to learn by heart certain words belonging to a certain class. I wrote them out in form of a poem, and handed the poem to Giske.

> "Thi, da, eftersom, saasom, som,
> Var der flere saa blev jeg dom."

Unfortunately this gem of poetry would lose much in translation. After enumerating several words I added that if there were more, I would become dumb.

Giske burst out laughing. The class was startled; so was Meland. "What are you laughing at?" Meland demanded with authority. "I laughed at Rønning's poem," came the answer in a voice choking with laughter. "Let me see it," said Meland and came down to our desk. He read it, crushed the slip of paper in his hand and threw it in the woodbox without saying a word. What was the use of writing poetry when people did not appreciate it?

When on the subject of humor, let me add another incident. One day I was. entertaining a group of students on the campus. They all seemed to enjoy it with the exception of a theological student. He stood and listened with a cloud on his face. When I was through and thought the time was ripe for taking up a collection to defray my traveling expenses to my room, he turned to me. I shall never forget what he said. It has stuck to my mind like a burr. It had a determining influence upon my life. But for his words I might have degenerated into a clown. This is what he said, and he said it with great unction: "Everybody laughs at a monkey; nobody respects him."

Is it not remarkable how a little word fitly spoken at the psychological moment may change the course of a whole lifetime?

But back to Meland. He was a very good-looking man, with a fine, well-shaped head and sparkling eyes. He had the most silvery voice of almost any man I ever heard. He was a powerful preacher and at times rose to heights of eloquence. I still remember his sermon on Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem. I was right in the procession and cried my "Hozanna." His brief talks at Communion services were exceedingly beautiful. "Do this in remembrance of me," still rings in my ears.

I enjoyed his classes in Bible History and Church History. He made the characters live. A man without imagination and the ability to make historical characters live and breathe should not teach in a church school.

Meland was not a man who ran away from a controversy. He and Bergsland got into a discussion which rocked the whole synod. It was something, I think, about the nature of the church.

After Meland resigned as pastor he became rector at Fairview Hospital in Minneapolis. He often called at my office and I called at his. I have seldom seen a greater change in a man. While formerly he was critical of men and groups, he was now one of the gentlest men I ever knew.

Much was said of "the spirit of Red Wing Seminary." I think that the school, as I knew it, represented some of the finest things in Haugeanism: a mellow, gentle piety; deep seriousness; an inner glow of happiness; an ever present but not demonstrative concern for the spiritual welfare of others; hard work; eagerness to serve in the field the spirit would indicate.

"The spirit of Red Wing Seminary" was created not so much by the teachers as by the students. The teachers, however, gave the spirit room and encouragement. Most of the students during the earlier years came from Haugean homes in Norway or had been converted in that country. Later they came from Haugean homes in the country. Sometimes boys were sent to Red Wing Seminary in the hope that they might be converted. It did not always work, but no student ever left the seminary without having been confronted with the challenge of Jesus Christ.

Red Wing Seminary is no more, but I am happy to believe that the same kind of spirit existed at some other schools and that it now is winning its way into all our schools. "Our dear school at Red Wing" is more than a memory; it is an abiding spiritual influence.

At The University of Minnesota

FIVE YEARS after I stepped on American soil I entered the University of Minnesota. I studied or rather stayed there nearly five years. I got one degree and might have gotten another one. I had two initials in front of my name and saw no need of having any initials after my name.

Some people have earned or have been given for good behavior so many titles and degrees that their name looks like a kite with a long tail.

I don't know why I went to the university. Probably because I did not want to study theology and was ready for nothing in particular. The fact that Julius Boraas and Olaf Stageberg had gone there the year before had something to do with it. Why should they be the only ones winning fame?

There was an exodus from Red Wing Seminary to the University of Minnesota then and for many years afterwards. There was quite a difference in ages and attitudes between the theological students and the graduates of the Preparatory Department. The former were almost without exception born in Norway; the latter, with few exceptions, were born in this country.

The students from Red Wing Seminary were better prepared for university life than students from other Lutheran church schools. We had had university men as teachers and had no fear of the university as a godless institution.

Without financial help from my brother, then in China, I could not have attended the university. That's the penalty he had to pay for telling me that in America I could go to school all I wanted to. He did it gladly, though he could ill afford it.

Besides Boraas and Stageberg the following Red Wingites attended the university while I was there: O. M. Haugan, George H. Ellingsen, Jorgen Vigen, N. T. Moen, Elias Rachie, Edward O. Ringstad, William Williams and James Buer. Some of us belonged to the secret and exclusive "*Griselabklub*" ("Pigs' Feet Club").

We were very proud when Julius Boraas became the valedictorian of his class and Olaf Stageberg was one of the commencement orators.

Is it not strange that when the alumni of a school meet they seldom or ever talk about this and that subject they studied, but almost invariably about this or that teacher? And then not about how learned the teacher was, but about his peculiarities or what a fine personality or splendid teacher he was.

Let me introduce some of the members of the faculty who made the most lasting impression on me.

Cyrus Northrop

President Cyrus Northrop won my heart the first day I saw and heard him. He became my ideal in almost everything. I had never before met a more well-balanced man: dignified, democratic; religious, human; profound, simple; serious, humorous; strong, gentle.

When at chapel exercises the first day I saw the faculty seated in a semicircle on the platform, I sensed that the stocky man with the fine head and the commanding presence must be Prexy. Every now and then he mopped his mustache.

Prexy stepped up to the desk, opened the big Bible, adjusted his glasses, and read a chapter. There was something about the whole person that gripped one. What a wonderful prayer! So simple and fervent. He prayed "as seeing Him who is invisible." He made a brief address of welcome to the freshmen. I remember one sentence. It was to the effect that he felt sorry for the man who did not believe in immortality. A wave of the hand, a witty remark, and a gale of laughter swept the audience. Then some good advice. Another wave of the hand and another gale of laughter. It was something unusual to me to have a man read the Bible, pray, preach, and joke.

Outside speakers often addressed us during the chapel hour. When we heard that a stranger was to speak, we said, "Let's go and hear Prexy introduce him."

When Professor Arthur Haynes for the first time entered the president's office, Dr. Northrop asked him, "Why do you think I wanted you to come to the university?" "To teach mathematics." "Yes, of course. I also wanted you because you are a confessing Christian."

I do not suppose that there are many university presidents like that at the present time. Sometimes I wonder if all church college presidents are like

that.

In an address delivered November 18, 1908, at Whitman College, Washington, he said:

"I would not stay one day at a state university if I were hampered in the maintenance of Christianity, and were compelled to recognize agnosticism as being as good as Christianity. I said to the Regents of the University of Minnesota in my inaugural address that I must be free as a believer in Christianity, and daily service in chapel, with singing of hymns, reading of scriptures, and prayer to God, has gone on all these years, and hundreds of students daily attend these services, their attendance being entirely voluntary and not on compulsion.

"The students know where I stand and what I stand for… but for all that the Christian college can do more in the line of Christian teaching and work than the state university can… . We of the state universities are simply glad that the Christian colleges can do more of this work than we can. We welcome, then, the Christian college as an ally in the work of education."

In another address delivered at the commencement of the University of Wisconsin, June 21, 1893, he said: "I have a very genuine contempt for a class of men who are forever proclaiming the failure of Christianity, or the failure of education, or the failure of the human mind, or the failure of God, because everything is not yet perfect."

John Hutchinson

Professor John Hutchinson almost swept me off my feet the first hour I attended his class in mathematics. He was a tall man, with bushy hair and piercing eyes. After having assigned the lesson for the next day, he seated himself on the edge of the table and for several minutes he gave us the most earnest talk any teacher of mine ever delivered in class or out of class. H spoke as a fervent evangelist. No platitudes, no heating around the bush. A straightforward, right from the shoulder appeal to us to make Christ our master.

I always thought of him as one of the prophets of old. I must make a digression. When during my fourth year, my roommate, Otto M. Haugan, received a letter that his father was dead, he sat for a time in our room, stunned. Then he picked up his hat and went to Professor Hutchinson.

Many years afterward, when Otto was a physician in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, he got a message that a man had drowned in a lake near by. When he came to the lake he was told to go down to a cabin. He entered quietly. There a young man was stretched out on a bed. By the bedside sat a tall man with bushy hair, his face buried in his hands. When Otto put his hand gently on his shoulder, the man looked up. It was Professor Hutchinson. The man he had comforted now tried to comfort him.

A student once said that he liked to hear "Hutchie" pray for on such occasions he "always had the feeling that someone was on the other end of the line."

Dr. John Walker Powell, who was a senior when I entered the University, wrote of Hutchinson: "Of all the professors, there was none whose impression upon the Campus life was so vivid as 'Hutchie.' His tall, spare figure, black curls and gleaming eyes marked him a man apart. The passionate earnestness of his teaching, his devotion to the highest spiritual ideals, his interest in the personal welfare no less than the scholarly attainment of his students impressed the most thoughtless. The man seemed always burning with an inner fire. He could not be content merely to teach mathematics or Greek paradigms. He was a born crusader, a prophet of the Highest. The by-products of his classroom were more important than its direct objective. One never knew when a sudden impulse would start him off on something which had only the remotest relation to the subject of the hour, but which opened up vistas of thought and life never to be forgotten. Never could he lose sight of the bearing of scholarship upon character and life. Himself a Methodist preacher, his professor's rostrum became often an altar of spiritual fire."

"President Vincent called him 'The most important figure in the university.' He said, 'It is a liberal education just to see him walk across the campus.'

"He was a rare combination of liberal thinking and conservative religious devotion. He was never afraid of truth. He dared to face facts, and to assimilate them into his religious creed. There was only one thing of which he was intolerant, and that was mental slovenliness and insincerity. Small wonder we loved him, and that as the years passed, the inspiration of his

personality, the joy of occasional contacts with him, the example he set of steadfastness and earnest devotion, came to mean more and more to us."

Willis M. West

I had the privilege of studying history under Professor Willis M. West, author of several textbooks in history. To him history was more than the names of kings and the dates of battles. It was a record of man's struggle for rights which had been usurped and the development of political institutions.

In studying the causes of the French Revolution he time and again drew lessons for the present. One statement of his stuck to my mind like a burr. He said, "The common people of England never got their rights before they knocked on the doors of parliament with their bare knuckles." He pounded the table to emphasize. Professor West became more and more outspoken as the years passed by and pointed out dangerous tendencies in American life. He suffered the fate of a radical.

While doing post graduate work under West, he assigned me as a topic for a three months' study, the development of the Austria-Hungarian government. He told me where I could find source material in the university library. I also had to go the the public library to consult some bulky volumes containing annual reports from the different governments in Europe. At first I was lost in a mass of details. Gradually I caught sight of the outlines of the history and every name, every date, every piece of legislation became absorbingly interesting. I had to give an oral fifteen minute report of the result of my study. All West said was, "That was a breezy report."

What good did it do me or anyone else to dig into dusty and musty volumes for facts pertaining to the topic assigned? I did not see much sense to it myself, but later I saw that it had taught me to use a library, to hunt for facts, to sort them, arrange them and tell in a few words what it was all about.

O. Breda

Professor O. Breda was my teacher in Norwegian and Swedish and Old Norse literature. I studied Icelandic sagas and ballads three years under him.

Breda was a splendid lecturer, one of the best I ever listened to. He was a graduate of the University of Oslo and Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis. He was pastor for awhile and also taught at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. Later he studied philology abroad two years. He made frequent trips to Norway. "When I am in America," he said, "I criticize America and praise Norway; when I am in Norway I criticize Norway and praise America." He went back to Norway for good. I called on him on my trip to Norway in 1899 at his home in Horton. We spent a pleasant afternoon together.

Few men declaimed "Peer Gynt" better than Breda. I can still hear him declaiming, "*Jeg vil op, jeg vil ud; jeg vil vaske mig ren i de hvasseste Vindes bad*."

Once in awhile he told stories, and he told them well. A Swede happened to see the full moon while he was drunk. Breda imitated him by looking up into the sky and saying in a thick voice: "*Ja, du er fuld, som jag*" ("Yes, you are full as I am").

Harlow Gale

Professor Harlow Gale was a queer specimen of humanity. He taught Experimental Psychology. At least, he was supposed to do it. He had no roll call, no textbook, no lectures, no examinations. He had the walls covered with all sorts of charts. We studied the brain and nervous system, and how impressions from things we felt, saw, heard, smelled, and tasted were carried to the brain and gave rise to ideas and thoughts. He read to us from a record he had kept of his baby's actions and reactions from its birth till it was six years old. The result of all this was that I, for one, became suspicious of all philosophic and theological systems. It made me ask: What are .the facts in the case? What is it all about? What are you driving at? His work was unsatisfactory to the authorities and he was let out. I considered him one of the best teachers I ever had.

Maria Sanford

She startled me the first time I saw her. There was an expression of sadness in her face, but also a light as had she beheld a vision and was still under

the spell of it.

Not very many knew of the deep tragedy in her life; a tragedy which had left marks on her beautiful face, purged and purified her soul, steeled her with that unconquerable courage, and given her that infinite tenderness.

One day she told her story to some of the older students. Hers were the only eyes which remained dry. With that strange light in her face she said as she looked up toward heaven, "After suffering, glory."

According to modern standards she would not be called a good teacher. But if the mission of a teacher of literature is to lead the students to an appreciation of the best in prose and poetry, she was a marvelous teacher. To her literature was a beautiful expression of beautiful thoughts and sentiments. She was an idealist, not a realist. Her sensitive soul shrank from the ugly, no matter how true. She walked in flowery fields and on wind swept hills where the air was fresh and bracing, and some of us went with her and are still blessing her name.

She could quote Longfellow, Lowell, Bryant, Whittier, Ruskin, Browning and Tennyson by the hour, and what a marvelous voice was hers! A teacher of elocution said that Maria Sanford could express the finer shades of thought better than any other person he knew.

I can still hear her voice sounding like a silver trumpet as she declaimed: "Ring out, wild bells, to the wild, wild sky." Or when she read Paul's tribute to love: "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I gave my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." The words, "My body to be burned," were cut as with a sharp knife. That was the first time I learned that Paul was more than a theologian, he was also a poet.

At first she did not like me. She got the impression that I was too radical and that I was saying things for effect. Perhaps she was right. I hope her criticism influenced me for good. She gave me 100 for the first oration I delivered in her class. She never felt, however, thatI was quite safe. Upon my graduation she sent for me and offered to see to it through friends of hers, that I might study political science and kindred subjects at some eastern university. I thanked her, but said I was going to work among my own people.

That's where I went, and they have found me perfectly harmless. In fact I have been very amiable.

Maria Sanford belonged to an old New England family. She represented the best in New England life. When as a young girl she taught school, she would read a chapter in the Bible and kneel down in prayer. Some of the parents protested against this, but she paid no attention to it. She often preached in churches where that sort of thing was permitted.

Once a student gave a certain term a suggestive twist. Bang! came her hand down on the table. A painful expression came into her face as though she had been hurt to the quick. Slowly, deliberately she began to talk while her eyes seemed to look into the distance. We think of judgment day with thunder and lightning; this was judgment day, but it was quiet as in a church at midnight save for that quiet, wounded voice. "Class dismissed," she said, though it was not at the end of the hour. We walked out slowly, quietly, with_the fear of the Lord in our hearts.

She had borrowed $ 30,000 and invested in real estate. She lost every cent. She refused to go into bankruptcy. Every cent was to be repaid — that was her firm decision. She kept on paying till her dying day. She died at the age of 83.

After having sustained the loss, began days and months and years of sacrifice of all but the bare necessities of life and occasional financial assistance to young relatives who were attending college. Instead of taking the street car she walked long distances. Her clothes were of the simplest kind; they looked like some sort of a uniform. She cared not that people thought her queer. She took care of her stoves, put on and took off storm windows, mowed the lawn. Save, save, save.

She bore bravely, heroically, her burdens alone. She did not complain when the authorities reduced her salary.

But the deeper tragedy was this that she gave up the man she had loved and who had loved her for twenty years.

She gave herself so completely at times to the class that when it was dismissed, she buried her face in her hands, resting it on the table. Many a time I entered her room, walking on tiptoe, when she sat thus. When the next class had come, she straightened herself up like a spry young woman, stroked her forehead with her hands, smiled at the students and called out in that silvery voice of hers, "Good morning. Fine day."

During the World war she traveled a good deal in the interest of the Red Cross and the Liberty Loans. One day in March, 1918, a railroad conductor called on the committee in charge and registered a complaint because they

did not provide her with a Pullman berth. When asked concerning it she replied that she did not sleep very well in a berth, because she was thinking of the soldiers, many of whom were her “boys,” who had to stand in the wet and cold trenches during the night.

Five years after I had left the university I sent her a poem I had written. She wrote me a long letter, beginning, “It does me good to hear from you again. I wish I might see you.” And ending, "I am glad you feel like writing poetry sometimes. I wish you would do it oftener. It is worth while. The poetic impulse is stimulating and one should make the inward ear quicker to catch the footsteps of beautiful thought.

“With high regard and sincere friendship, I am ever yours, Maria L. Sanford.”

It seems proper at this place to introduce a woman, one of Maria Sanford’s favorites pupils, one of the most beautiful and talented girls in our class.

The class of ’96 was holding its twenty-fifth reunion. One after another of the men and women told of his or her achievements. Some of us did not have much to say; we could say, however, that our Alma Mater had not been disappointed in us, because she had never expected anything.

Then one of the men told of a trip to China where one day he heard that a member of our class, Caroline Fullerton, was working there as a medical missionary.

By this time one could hear a pin drop, for Caroline Fullerton was one of the most popular members of the class. There was a particular reason why I was interested in her story, for I had been sitting next to W. Pendergast in many a class. He was a fine lad. He and Miss Fullerton became engaged to be married, but a year or so after his graduation, he died.

Then to my surprise I heard that Miss Fullerton was studying medicine. I thought she would be the last person in the world to take up that study. Then I heard nothing more about her till the evening of the reunion.

The man telling her story said that with a missionary he went through the narrowest and dirtiest and “smelliest” streets he had ever seen. Finally they came to a compound surrounded by a wall. The gates were opened and, entering, there in front of them were fine buildings and flower-beds, and children playing on the greensward in the sunshine. Here Caroline Fullerton was serving humanity.

Somehow the other speakers after this did not have much to say about what they had done. We were all paying tribute in our hearts to our classmate in distant China.

As you notice I have dealt mainly with outstanding personalities at the university; several of them confessing, witnessing Christians. I have said nothing about social life, for I did not enter it; nothing about football, for I did not play football; nothing about scholarship, for that was not my line. It was some of the teachers who made the deepest and most lasting impression on me.

I do think the university life gave me a wider horizon than if I had attended only a church school. The main difference between a university and a church school is this, it seems to me, that at a university, truth is to be discovered under the guidance of teachers; at a church school, truth is taught by teachers who know how truth is defined by a particular church body.

It is my observation that our own church schools are more and more developing the university attitude, at the same time introducing the students to the faith handed down by the fathers. It could hardly be otherwise, for most of the teachers have studied more or less at universities and have been chosen because of special fitness as teachers in a church school.

The fact that a considerable number of students at our church schools come from non-Lutheran homes inevitably makes for greater toleration and the spirit of universality.

What about the large number of Lutheran students at universities? Are they not exposed to anti-Christian influences? They are. There are not many Northrops, Hutchinsons and Sanfords at the universities today. There is one thing parents, teachers and pastors should do: they should prepare young people for what they will meet in the future be it at schools or anywhere else. They do not prepare young people by telling them that science is one thing today and something else tomorrow or referring to science as "science falsely so called." Paul did not have modern science in mind.

There is nothing that will so help young people retain faith in Christ as having come in contact in their younger days, with true, broad-minded, open-minded Christians.

And in our student work there should preferably be employed university graduates who know from personal experience and observation the problems of university life and who can answer a student's questions without first thinking what the Lutheran church teaches. And first and foremost they must have Christian experience.

A Peculiar People

I REFER to the Haugeans, especially to those I associated with in the Hauge's Synod. The Haugeans were the followers of the Norwegian lay preacher, Hans Nielsen Hauge.

I taught parochial school in ten different communities in the Hauge's Synod. I visited every home where there were school children and many homes where they were no school children. I have talked with them about sacred things and I have told them stories and listened to their stories. I have prayed with them and laughed with them. I have walked with them to and from church and prayer meetings, and have even read sermons to them in church when there was no minister present.

I am wondering how I may introduce them to you. I know. If it is true that "a man's selection from Scriptures always throws light upon his deepest being," then I will mention some of the Scripture passages which were much in vogue among the Haugeans.

One passage was: "The law worketh wrath." I take that to mean that when a person comes face to face with the law and its demand upon him for perfection, he grows angry, not with himself, but with this thing that steps in front of him and says: "No, you can't do that!"

As the law continues to speak to him and reveals his sin down to the innermost recesses of his heart, he begins to make excuses. But the law does not accept excuses. "Every mouth shall be stopped." When every mouth, every excuse, has been stopped, panic seizes upon the soul.

Then gradually or suddenly the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the sinner and this passage becomes living: "There is, therefore, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

How often I heard these words ring out again and again in a voice of wonder and gratitude.

Another expression was heard very often: "Christ not only for us but Christ in us." Knowledge concerning Christ is essential, but knowledge is not enough. Christ must become our personal Savior, and dwell in our

hearts with His light and power. The Haugeans would have understood Kierkegaard when he said that truth must be transferred from the realm of static being into a realm of dynamic becoming.

The Haugeans were never accused of harboring false doctrine. They stressed the importance of pure doctrine, but they also stressed life.

These people were often criticized for being presumptuous enough to claim that they were the children of God. How could anyone know he was saved before death? Did the Haugeans have any Scriptural ground for their claim? Yes, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Finally, the Haugeans seized upon a saying of Paul which more than any other word in the Bible suggests a solution to the most difficult of all problems, that of suffering, hardship, injustice and even martyrdom: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."

If it is true that "A man's selection from the Scriptures always throws a light upon his deepest being," then the passages which were current among the Haugeans throw a light upon their deepest being.

I admit that I did not agree with the Haugeans in the Hauge's Synod in their ridicule of chanting and the clerical gown. I had enjoyed Rev. Th. Crøger's beautiful chanting; his clerical gown set him apart from the laity as a spiritual leader. Most of the Haugeans, however, had had ministers in the old country who might be represented-by the one who said when he had thrown off his gown, "There is the minister, here am I." Liturgy was an empty form, a poor substitute for spirituality.

The Haugeans might be considered by some as unchurchly, but they certainly were not unLutheran. No church body made larger use of the old Lutheran literature than they. Gradually Red Wing Seminary became a school which not only stood for fervent piety but a fair degree of scholarship. The Haugeans turned away from forms and faced the reality of sin and grace. Men like Crøger and Kildahl, who understood this, found no difficulty in winning their confidence and love, despite making use of the liturgy of the church. If all Lutheran ministers had been like the two I mentioned, the history of the Norwegian Lutheran church in America would have been different.

I must not forget to add that the women freely took part in prayer and testimonies at devotional meetings and joined in the discussions of religious and even theological topics. More than once the pointed and pertinent ques-

tion of a woman caused confusion among the men who had drifted into the realm of speculation and now were brought down on solid ground again. There may be times and places where the women should ask the men at home, but there were not a few men even in the Hauge's Synod who might profitably ask their wives questions pertaining to religion. It is interesting to notice that the woman, Pricilla, is twice mentioned ahead of her husband, Aquilla.

Well, suppose I introduce you to some of the men that made the deepest impression on me.

Søren Pettersen did not have much of a farm and he was a poor farmer. If ever a man had the natural qualifications for a theological professor, it was Søren. He was the ablest and most learned layman I ever met. Small of stature, with a large head, a Roman nose, small eyes, and an unusually wide mouth. The first time I heard him preach, he began thus in a slow voice: "Today I am going to talk to you about a very small word; a word with only three letters: 't-r-o' (faith)." When he and his wife came to town, Mrs. Pettersen sold and bought while he spent the time in my brother's library to see if he had any new books. They had a big, bony horse. Mrs. Pettersen was a large woman and her part of the seat in the dilapidated buggy sank down, while Mr. Pettersen's part was higher.

Some years ago Rev. Holter told me when he was a young pastor, he attended a free conference at Gol church, near Kenyon, then served by Rev. M. Bookman. Østen Hanson was there and his son, Martin, and L. M. Biørn, B. J. Muus, J. N. Kildahl and many others. The ministers all sat up in front, naturally. The second day some one down in the audience called out in a meek voice: "Formand." The ministers looked around to see who this individual might be. A small man with a big head arose. Some of the ministers looked rather embarrassed and resumed their position. The layman spoke slowly and deliberately. First one minister, then another, then all were looking at him. Séren Pettersen.

Johan Gunning was very tall and slim. He had bushy hair and bushy eyebrows but with a very gentle face. When he warmed up in a conversation, his face fairly shone. "Det er saare kostelig" (It is very precious.) This was a favorite expression of his when contemplating the grace of God.

My brother says that he learned more pastoral theology from Gunning than from any theological professor. Once when a member of the congregation — it was the only case of that kind I heard of — had fallen back into

the habit of drinking, two deacons were sent to see him, but he showed them the door. Then Johan Gunning went to see the man. He found him splitting wood outside the house. They talked about the weather for a while. Then the man asked Gunning if he would not step inside. Well, he might do that. The wife of the man was a confessing Christian and she left the two alone, going into the kitchen. She probably left the door slightly ajar. For a while she heard the even voices of the two men. Then she heard her husband weeping and later heard Gunning praying. She hurried and cooked coffee, then entered the room and asked Gunning and her husband to have coffee. Well, that would be fine, remarked Gunning.

A couple of years ago I heard this story. When black diphtheria raged through the community, Gunning volunteered to care for three children, not his own, who had caught the dreaded disease. The parents warned him that his own children might be exposed. No, he didn't think so. One child after another died. Gunning went to town and bought a casket and alone at night went to the cemetery and took care of the burial. When I heard the story my eyes became wet with tears. I could see that tall, kindly, Lincoln-like man stand at the small grave, lifting his eyes to the starry sky and commit the soul of the child to the heavenly Father. Oh yes, there were giants in those days, but the giants I refer to are not considered worthy of being admitted into the realm of literature.

One of the finest laymen I ever knew was Edward Bergh. He lived on a farm some twelve miles from Northfield, near what is now called Little Chicago. Edward was the youngest son of Rev. O. A. Bergh, and had two brothers in the ministry. Before I met him he had lost a wife and all his children in black diphtheria. He later married again and raised a fine family.

He was a short, stocky man, with unruly hair and very bushy eyebrows. He held his head high and looked the world in the face, always smiling and unafraid, always radiating health, happiness and good will. If he had an enemy in the world, it was all the fault of the other party. There was a good deal of kindly humor in this man, and if several other people had laughed at my stories, quips and wisecracks as much as he, I would have thought I was a humorist.

It was a genuine pleasure to visit him, drive with him from and to church and walk with him across the field. Every now and then he would burst into song with as much spontaneity as that of a lark in the sky. How that man could sing! And what an endless number of spiritual songs and hymns he

knew by heart. He was not as profound as Pettersen and Gunning but he was an eloquent speaker and his religion was one of joy, victory, and praise.

Though he lived quite a distance from church, he was one of the first to be there and only sickness in the family or absence from home kept him away from church.

I often went to Webster to help with the Christmas program for the children. Edward bought the tree and brought it to church and helped decorate it. He bought often, if not all the time, the candy and gifts. He sat with the children and beamed on them when they sang their songs and recited their pieces, and he even beamed on me when I led the program and made a short talk. What an inspiration he was to me and all who knew him.

Mentioning singing, it occurred to me that the Haugeans certainly made a joyful noise unto the Lord and to one another. Oh, for the good old days when people sang in the homes, out in the field, on the way to church and while driving along country roads at night. Sang without notes and instruments and hymn books!

Time and again it happened that when the minister was late for service, some man or some woman would start to sing and the whole audience would join in till the rafters rang.

But did not the Haugeans have serious faults and weaknesses? Sure they had. I could write a book about their faults and weaknesses, but I am not going to write such a book before I have less faults and weaknesses than they had.

Many, very many, of the Haugeans I learned to know were the finest people I ever met. They were kind, gentle, humble. They were facing the realities of sin and grace. They were good to me, very good. I owe them a debt of gratitude. I would have no fear for our church and for our nation if all church members and all citizens were like them.

A Summer In Telemark

I LIVE over and over again the most marvelous summer in my life — the summer of my visit in 1899 to my home in Norway after an absence in America of 12 years. As I have written about "A Summer in Telemark" several times before I shall now merely refer to it.

My brother wrote from China that on his way back to America he and his family would visit our home; he suggested that we meet there.

Of course it was wonderful to meet father, brothers and sisters, neighbors and schoolmates, but what I carry with me when alone in the twilight hour or when mingling with the crowds in the city, is the beautiful scenery in my home parish, Bø. I cannot describe the thrill I experienced when I caught the first sight of Lifjeld, the mountain region where I spent seven summers herding cattle, fishing, climbing the mountains, roaming through the woods, often alone from early morning till late in the afternoon. The majesty, the mystery, the solitude of the mountains cast their spell upon my soul, a spell that never has been broken and which makes a man indifferent to praise, criticism, crowds and money.

The first morning at home I got up before the rest and made a tour of the garden, mother's garden, a visit to the big boulder where we children played, to the meadow where the buttercups blowed and to the thicket where the anemonies waved in the breeze. Every foot of ground has been made sacred by the toil and the sweat of ancestors. How soft and tender the grass, how beautiful the flowers, how crystal — clear the brooks, how soothing the rhythm of the distant waterfall! How could I have had the heart to leave this garden of God?

My brother, with wife and three children, Nilius, Chester, and Almah, and with a large number of trunks filled with Chinese curiosities — the children talking Chinese and English and Norwegian — made a sensation, and people from all over the parish came to stare and to listen.

I made ever so many trips to Vihus, the "saeter" or mountain pasture, and spent days there tramping through the forest, wandering on the bare

plateaus, climbing the highest peaks.

Late in the afternoon the cows and calves and sheep would return home, a long string of them coming down the winding path, amidst a clamor of bells of all sizes and sounds. “It was like listening to the St. Olaf College band,” as an old Telemark lady in America described such a scene.

It was not easy to part with relatives, friends, mountains, brooks and woods. Voices seemed to be pleading with me not to leave, “You are part of us; we breathed our spirit into your childhood and boyhood. You belong here; don’t leave us!”

But stronger voices called me back to America, the voice of my work and the voice of love.

One of the last evenings I built a fire on the hearthstone. I sat there alone. Father, who had been confined to his bed for years, usually very talkative, did not have much to say. Was he thinking of the time when the whole family had been gathering around the flaming fire while the wind whispered in the chimney and the snow beat against the window pane? I know I was thinking of what had been but was no more.

No, I would not have been satisfied in staying in Norway. I had become too much of an American for that. But, oh, the glory of that summer in Telemark!

As A Writer And Editor

IT WOULD not shock me at all if someone asked, "Who cares about you as a writer, editor and publisher?" I can think of only two reasons why I should refer to my work: It throws some light on the cultural aspect of my people in America, and it may be of some help to young writers, possibly more of a warning than an encouragement.

Most of my literary work has been done under pressure and at high speed and mostly in noisy surroundings. It is impossible to write well in the presence of other people.

There was seldom time for the subconscious mind to "knead the dough," and to re-write and revise. I had no money for new books and no time to read those I might have borrowed. But few literary people to associate with. Very little time for traveling and attending conventions. No person can sit in a room day after day, year after year, and remain fresh and keen and stimulating. An editor, as Dr. Boe says, must be where the lightning strikes. A writer should have an opportunity often to walk the wind-swept hills, climb the mountains, or sit by the brook that winds its way to the sea.

I have worked among pioneers and the children of pioneers where literature was not a necessity and scarcely a luxury. Somebody had to be foolish enough to do it, and that privilege has been mine, thank God!

What slight measure of success I may have had as a writer is due to two or three things: I would rather write than do anything else. When once in awhile I found somewhat adequate expressions for my thoughts and sentiments, especially sentiments, I walked the clouds for hours afterwards. The kind of literature a person enjoys is that which expresses his own views and sentiments better than he can express them himself. As a parochial and Sunday school teacher I learned to know parents and children and young people. I knew their thoughts, their language, their views. I was at one with the common people, God's people. Finally most of my reading as a boy and most of my studies as a young man made for simplicity of style. The short word was my word. It was the easiest to spell and it was the word that goes

home as the arrow that hits the mark or the bee which carries its honey to the hive.

I had the good fortune to be born in Telemark, a district which had more fairy tales, legends and ballads than all the rest of Norway together. I reveled in fairy tales. They are told in the simplest language and stimulate the imagination. I read Bjørnson's peasant novels which were written in the old Saga style, simple and direct.

Professor Brohough admired the Anglo-Saxon element in the English language. In studying "The Deserted Village" we had to underscore all the words of Anglo-Saxon origin. At the university I studied Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse — read most of the old Sagas in the original.

Now I read the Bible for the message it brings; I used to read it for the incomparable way in which it tells its stories and its beautiful language in King James edition.

I have found it of great value to have someone to talk to when writing a sketch or an article or preparing a speech. As long as my wife lived I published very little that I had not first read to her. "You can do better than that," she often said. At other times she looked up with a smile and said, "That's good." Sometimes when I was all muddled up and could not get anywhere, I would tell her what I was trying to say. To my delight, I said it.

Let me tell something about some of the books I have written. As most of them are out of print, it is not done to push the sale.

Upon returning from Norway in 1899 I wrote a series of sketches under the heading, "En Sommer in Telemark."

There was especially one sketch that rang the bell. It was a calf story. When I had written the story, I though it too foolish to print. The superintendent of our print shop came into the office and asked for copy. I told him I had none. That did not please him at all. Then in a moment of utter recklessness I handed him the calf story. When I read proof of it, I wished I had not handed it in. Well, it proved to be the most popular thing I ever wrote. Even now when I am introduced to some of the older people, they look at me roguishly and say, "Oh, yes, you wrote that calf story." Several of the other sketches were also well received.

It was suggested to me that I ought to turn the sketches into English. I so did. I printed 1,000 copies and was wondering what I should do with the money I was sure to earn. I must have at least a thousand friends and each

one wanted a copy of the book. Well, it turned out that I had only a dozen friends, and each one expected to get a copy free.

The reviews in the Norwegian newspapers were so good that I thought they ought to be published in pamphlet form. They made better reading than the book itself. “A Summer in Telemark” went through several editions.

Later I published the Norwegian text in book form; it also went through several editions.

When I was about ten years old a cousin of mine let me read a small paper-covered book. I read it down in the garden, as I was not sure that mother would approve of the book. I was hoping it was a fairy tale.

It was a fairy tale, but the boy did not win a princess and half a kingdom. He won a whole kingdom and he became a king, though he was not called by that title. A long and cruel war broke out. It saddened his heart, for he loved the enemies as well as his own people. While the war was still raging, he set free millions of slaves, but shortly after the war had been won, he was shot to death.

When I read that a whole nation followed him, as it were, to the grave with tears and lamentations, I knew it was a true story. And when I finally looked up from the book, I noticed that the whole landscape was covered with a mist. Then and there the heart of the little Norwegian boy went out to the great heart of Abraham Lincoln.

As soon as I had learned to read English I read everything I could find about Lincoln. It was a labor of love to write my next book, “Abraham Lincoln,” in Norwegian, in 1909, the centennial of Lincoln’s birth. Three thousand copies were sold in three months. People bought books at that time. There were no automobiles, no radios, very few telephones and not so many committee meetings, conferences and conventions. People had time to read and they did their own thinking.

The book I spent the most time and thought on was “Gutten fra Norge,” later turned into English under the title “Lars Lee.” The book has an interesting story.

From early childhood I had had considerable trouble with what may be called the order of salvation as presented in the Explanation of the Catechism. I found difficulty in understanding the definitions of the different steps. There were such steps as conversion, regeneration, justification and sanctification. I could not see where one step ended and the other began. Finally I gave the intellectual gymnastics up in despair. Later I found a way, a

very simple way, and with it came an urge to share my experience with others. I decided to write a story and began to plan it. Believe it or not it took me twenty-four years to finish the story. The introduction to the English translation throws some light on how the story developed in my mind. This is the way it runs:

I did not make up the story; Lars told it to me. It is his story.

When I first met him he was very bashful and I had to do most of the talking. When we became better acquainted, he did most of the talking.

Where he came from, when he called on me, I never knew.

Where he went, I never knew. Now he was with me; now he was gone.

Often when I was walking alone in the evening under the silent stars and listening to the whisper of the breeze in the swaying branches, there was Lars walking with me before I had sensed his presence.

It also happened quite often when I was attending a concert that Lars would slip into a seat next to mine and begin to tell me in a whisper so low that no one else heard him, about singing birds, purling brooks, and glorious sunsets. How he managed to get into the hall, I never understood. He was too poor to pay and too proud to beg. When the performer was through with his or her number, the audience applauded. I applauded too, but I applauded Lars, not the performer.

Even while I was listening to a sermon, Lars would suddenly appear at my side, but then I nudged him gently and shook my head slowly. I had to move the head very slowly, otherwise the minister might see me and think that I disagreed with him.

When I was foolish enough to drink coffee late at night and could not sleep, Lars would come and sit beside the bed and tell me fairy tales or remind me of life on the mountains herding cattle. I could hear the lowing of the cows, the bleating of the lambs, the soughing of the wind in the treetops, the tinkling and clanging of cowbells and the music of the cascades. I fell asleep, but Lars followed me into dreamland with his stories.

At other times he would bring with him a whole company of his friends, and little by little they too would tell me their stories.

This finally got on my nerves and I told Lars to stay away with his friends. “If you don’t let me alone,” I said, “I will publish your story.”

Do you think that helped? That was just what he wanted. There was nothing to do but to write the story.

Gradually the story unfolded in my mind. There is no hero in the story but there is a leading character, Lars Lee, and his search after truth represents my search. All the characters were taken from real life, but most of them changed so much that there was no danger that anyone would recognize himself or herself. Helga was in real life a meek, mild woman; she became the strongest character in the story. I made up my mind that no relative of mine would serve as a type, but when the story was half done, I discovered to my consternation that Lars' mother was my mother.

Some years I did not write a line; other times I wrote a good deal. At last I had a box full of notes and manuscripts. I never found time to write the story in full. To leave it unfinished would be a calamity. The world could ill afford to miss such a masterpiece. One day I announced that the story, "Gutten fra Norge," would begin as a serial in the next issue. That made it necessary for me to write it in full.

The story was run as a serial in "Skandinaven" and was translated into the Bohemian language.

While planning and writing the story, I was thinking in particular of young people who were in spiritual trouble. Not for a single moment did I ever think of the children, but no sooner was the book in the English translation published before I received letters from the parents saying that the children had enjoyed the story. One pastor wrote me that his eleven year old son had read "Lars Lee" three times. One summer when I traveled quite extensively and visited hundreds of homes, the parents would say to their boys and girls of ten, eleven or twelve years old, "This is the man who wrote 'Lars Lee'," and the boys and girls would look at me and not entirely without some admiration.

"Great idea," exclaimed Prof. H. M. Blegen; "write 'The Boy from Telemark'." "How many copies will you buy?" "Twelve." The book was written.

One Sunday I was listening to a sermon by my pastor, Rev. A. Oftedal, at Olivet church, when I was struck by this statement: "Jesus walked out into the dark and silent street of Capernaum." I am afraid I did not pay close attention to the rest of the sermon. Then and there I decided to read everything I could find on Jesus in prayer. I did so, then gave a talk on it which seemed to interest my listeners. I gave 24 talks on the topic "Jesus in

Prayer" during two years, revising it all the time. Finally, I wrote it out in full. I have received many letters of thanks for the booklet.

I remember once I was waiting for a train in a town in northern Minnesota that I became interested in a man leaning against the depot. That was before the radio had told us about all the wonderful safety razors and shaving soaps, for the man's face had neither been shaved nor washed for some time. His hat rested on his ears; he must have celebrated some anniversary years ago and had bought too big a hat. Every now and then he would spit tobacco juice, always hitting with unerring accuracy the same spot. "It's hot today," I said to him. When he answered that it was, I understood that he was one of my countrymen and began to talk Norwegian to him. "What's your name?" he asked. I told him. "Is it N.N.?" he asked eagerly. It was. He spat out all the tobacco in his mouth, stretched forth his hand and shook mine vigorously. "I have read your book 'Bare for Moro' ('Just for Fun'), then my wife read it, then the neighbors, and now there is not left a rag of it," he cried.

I wished he had mentioned something else than that foolish little book, but at the same time I was glad that I had brought some cheer to people fighting stones and stumps in northern Minnesota.

A minister asked me to go with him to call on "the finest Christian woman in the community."

When we entered her room I saw a middle-aged large woman sitting in a wheel chair with her feet on a foot stool. "This is Mr. Rønning," said the minister introducing me. "Is it N.N.?" she asked. It was. "Come here," she said, stretching forth both arms. I thought it would be enough to give her my hand. "Oh," she said cheerfully, "I have laughed at you many times and I have cried too." Then she mentioned one foolish sketch I had written after another; sketches I had forgotten or tried to forget and that I hoped everybody else had forgotten. It sounded like the reading of a bibliography.

And this was the finest Christian woman in the community? What sort of members did the minister have anyway? After a while she began to talk Christianity, cheerfully, optimistically. She had a deep insight into the ways and will of God.

Later on "it went up for me," as the Norwegians say it, that perhaps I had rendered her a service by making her laugh. I don't suppose the good Lord would have made it so easy for some people to laugh, if laughing is sin. I went away feeling that my life as a writer was not entirely in vain.

I quote a few paragraphs from a chapel talk I recently delivered at St. Olaf College:

"Is there anything to write about in this part of the country? Yes, there is, if you have the eyes to see and the ears to hear and, above all, have an understanding heart. That is if you are a keen observer and can enter sympathetically into any life, no matter how simple. Life anywhere and everywhere is a baffling mystery challenging our interpretation. There is material on every hand for tragedies and comedies, story and song. Every day you meet heroes and heroines, men and women who bear their burdens bravely, without a murmur and complaint, but you also meet frustrations, failures and defeats.

"Perhaps the most inviting field for young writers in the Middle West and the Northwest is the pioneer novel and pioneer short story. That field has scarcely been touched.

"This kind of material is inviting and close at hand. The Norwegian-American Historical Society has done fine work in collecting and publishing documents and studies of a historical nature, but its books and periodicals are read by but the few. In order to reach the many, not only popular historical sketches must be written but novels and short stories.

"First the young writer must gather facts, catch the spirit of the pioneers, their hopes and aspirations, then recreate scenes and characters in his own mind, and then finally present them to the readers of today with sincerity, simplicity and artistic skill.

"What material for stories and novels in the experiences of many men and women and not to forget children during the long depression. Accumulations of years were swept away over night. Many who lost all their material assets, lost everything; they had nothing else to lose. Others again were compensated by entering into the enrichment of intellectual, cultural and spiritual values which in days of prosperity they had neglected to cultivate.

"I mentioned the experience of children. Oh, that we had a Charles Dickens to give us a David Copperfield, an Oliver Twist, a Little Nell, a Little Tim of the present time.

"I wish that some of the young writers of today would portray the lives of poor, starving, neglected boys and girls in such a realistic manner that those who live in comfort and ease would be unable to sleep at night.

"Despite the fact that a flood of reading matter is pouring from the printing presses by day and night, very little of it gives light and power. There

are so few authors who have sounded the depths of human sorrow and scaled the heights of human joy, and who give their impressions and emotions time to mature in their subconscious mind, till the new creations emerge in the conscious mind, ready to be wedded to words which live and breathe and sing.

"I know there are those who will say that there is no such a thing as Christian literature. They seem to think that it is literature to quote an oath but not a prayer. By Christian literature I have now in mind stories which portray inner, spiritual experiences.

"As a matter of fact all immortal literature portrays the everlasting struggle between light and darkness, the higher and the lower, the good and the bad. Why then ignore the struggle between the flesh and the spirit and the doubts and fears, the defeats and Victories, in Christian life?

"No person who wishes to produce Christian literature can afford to neglect reading the Bible. The Bible from beginning to end is a graphic portrayal of the colossal struggle between good and evil. And as for literary style, there is nothing in secular literature that is comparable with the parables of Jesus. They grew out of the ground. They were told in the simplest terms of the things and life which surrounded the Master Story Teller.

"There is great need today of Christian literature which is written with understanding and skill; Christian literature which people not only ought to read but will read with eagerness, because it expresses in simple terms the very problems they themselves cannot express and suggests solutions they have sought in vain. To produce that sort of literature the writer must himself have Christian experience."

For three or four years I gave half of my time to Augsburg Publishing House of the Norwegian Lutheran Church editing three volumes of "Folkekalender," two volumes of "Our Church at Work" and writing "The Acts of the Apostles" for pupils and teachers, besides working for the "Search the Scripture Movement" and the Synodical Brotherhood. Mr. A. M. Sundheim laid a broad foundation during the many years he was manager. Under the able and energetic management of Randolph E. Haugan the publishing house is on the way of taking a place in the sun. I suspect that he

wishes that there were more people who had something to say and knew how to say it.

In The Publishing Business

Is there a place for independent publishing concerns among the Lutherans in America, or will the publishing houses owned and controlled by the different church bodies fill the bill?

As I have probably longer experience in the field of independent Christian literature among the Lutherans than any other person, I will be pardoned, I am sure, if I tell briefly my experience and try to answer the question.

The young people's paper, *Ungdommem Ven*, had been in existence between six and seven years when I began to work for its publisher, K. C. Holter.

There was never a widespread demand for a literary magazine among the Norwegians in America. While religious, social, literary and political questions kept the people of Norway at white heat, their brethren in America were chiefly concerned with making a living.

Toward the close of the eighties, a new era was being ushered in. The church strife had spent its force and the question of uniting several church bodies was being discussed. The temperance movement and young people's movement were under way. Choirs were being organized and men and women wrote poetry. A new generation was coming upon the stage, a generation with new interests and wider horizon.

It was at that time *Ungdommem Ven* appeared. It came when the time was ripe for it, as an exponent of what was stirring in the minds and hearts of the more forward-looking people of Norse descent.

It was three pastors who established *Ungdommem Ven*: B. B. Haugan, Lars Heiberg and K. C. Holter. They belonged to the more progressive wing of the Hauge's Synod, and were among the leaders in the new movements.

Mr. P. B. Anderson of Bardo, Alberta, Canada, writes me that B. B. Haugan, while a student at Red Wing Seminary, 1879-1886, was talking about the need of a Norwegian young people's paper.

The first issue, published in March, 1890, bears the name of L. Heiberg, editor; B. B. Haugan, secretary and treasurer. The August issue, the same year, bears the names B. B. Haugan, editor, and K. C. Holter, publisher. Holter, however, had taken care of the printing of the publication from the very first number.

L. Heiberg was a brilliant writer and an eloquent speaker. B. B. Haugan struck a new note in Norwegian-American journalism. He was a man of high ideals, deep sentiments and a most delicious humor. Few men could more easily move people to laughter or tears as B. B. His style was marked by fluency and simplicity. His writing in prose and poetry was like a fresh breeze from the mountains on a sultry summer day.

But the man who furnished the stability, the perseverance and the untiring application to the task was K. C. Holter. Mrs. Holter soon began to write poems and sketches for *Ungdommem Ven* which were highly appreciated. Before very long she did most of the literary work, Holter furnishing timely articles.

The name of the publication was changed in 1916 to *Familiens Magasin*, which was discontinued in 1928. *The Friend* was started January, 1924. During the years 1918 and 1919 Mr. Herman E. Jorgensen was associate editor of *Familiens Magasin* and the *North Star*. He is an unusually brilliant man who commands an excellent style. Later he served as president of Red Wing Seminary and still later entered the ministry. In the spring of 1939 he takes over the position of editor of *Lutheraneren*.

In connection with Ungdommens Ven, *Familiens Magasin* and *The Friend* there have been published in all 40 titles with more than 200,000 copies.

I hasten to state that the first 20 titles owe their existence to the initiative and energy of K. C. Holter. He laid the foundation; I built on that foundation.

Among the books published when Holter was the manager must be mentioned *Frydetoner*, volumes I, II, III and IV, containing music and text for mixed choirs. 60,000 copies were sold of *Frydetoner*. This book met the demand of the large number of church choirs which sprang into being. It contained music by Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, German, American and Scandinavian composers. B. B. Haugean started *Frydetoner I*. The other volumes were published with the cooperation of Haugan, A. L. Skoog, Theodors Reimstad and others.

Besides the four volumns of "Frydetoner," there were printed the following music books: "Ekko fra Norden," "Fram," "Korsangeren," totaling 10,000 copies. Some of the more significant books were — by K. C. Holter: "Ved Mesterens Fødder;" Mrs. K. C. Holter: "Minder og Stemninger," Prof. E. Kr. Johnsen: "Paulus," "Paa Reise," "Guds Rige i Det Gamle Testamente;" Dr. J. O. Evjen: "Scandinavian Immigrants in New York 1630-1674;" Wilhelm Pettersen: "Light in the Prison Window," "Life and Work of Hans Nielsen Hauge;" Dr. A. O. Fonkalsrud: "The Scandinavian- American;" Simon Johnson: "I det nye Rige;" James. A. Petersen: "Hjalmar;" Waldemar Ager: "Udvalgte Fortaellinger;" L. Lima: "2 5o Norsk-Amerikanske Digte;" Dr. C. B. Gohdes: "Calling Across the Fence;" N. N. Rønning: Nine titles.

When I now take a look at the books published by us, I realize with a pang that conditions have changed and not for the better. Until some 20 years ago the Norwegians in America bought books and read books. That was the day before the automobile, telephone, radio, movie and the daily newspaper; I might add the day before all sorts of committee meetings, conferences and conventions.

There was more time to read and less to read. The farmers were raising mainly wheat and had not much to do during the winter months. Then, too, the Norwegians were still talking and dreaming about the land they had left and gave expression to their sentiments through the written and printed word.

I am particularly proud that I published John O. Evjen's monumental book, "Scandinavian-Americans in New York 1630-1674." No book written by a Scandinavian in America has received higher praise than this, and that from leading historians and from representative magazines and newspapers throughout the country. It was immediately ordered by universities, colleges, historical societies and persons interested in our colonial history.

It was a new field and Dr. Evjen spent years in gathering data and in writing the book. Only a man thoroughly trained in research work and with boundless patience and persistence could have accomplished such a task.

I am glad that it was my privilege to publish Wilhelm Pettersen's "The Light in the Prison Window" — the life and work of Hans Nielsen Hauge and to translate and publish Jacob B. Bull's "Hans Nielsen Hauge."

Before starting *The Friend* 15 years ago, I made two unsuccessful attempts to establish an English publication, *The Northland Weekly* and *The*

North Star. The first one died during a prolonged printers' strike and the other succumbed when the cost of paper went sky high during the war.

I was firmly convinced that some day I would "ring the hell" with a publication in the language of the land.

Then one day Mr. John H. Field showed me an article in the English language which had appeared in some church paper; he wanted to know how much it would cost to print it in pamphlet form. I suggested that we run it in the English department of *Familiens Magasin* and offer reprints of it free of charge. Mr. Field was willing to finance the printing. Orders for the reprints came from all over. Rev. S. L. Tallaksen, (irand Forks, N. Dak., ordered 400 copies for distribution among Lutheran students at the University of North Dakota and among other young people. That was a powerful suggestion as to what kind of reading matter was needed. *The Friend* was the result. It "rang the bell" instantly. Rev. J. J. Jacobson, Hendrum, Minn., canvassed his congregations and sent 150 subscribers; Rev. P. Nordsletten sent 100; other pastors sent long lists. Inside a few months *The Friend* had over 6,000 subscribers.

Without the advice, encouragement and financial help of Mr. Field there would have been no *The Friend*, and I doubt if I would have been devoting my time ever since to Christian literature.

There are two other persons without whose assistance I would not have been able to continue the magazine. Miss Dorothea Johnson has for many years been in charge of the mailing list and the mailing. She has done her work quietly, methodically and efficiently. Miss Jenny Johnson, her sister, has been with me even longer. During the last seven or eight years she had had full charge of the more mechanical or rather artistic work on the, magazine, a work which has received much praise from subscribers and publishers. Gradually she has been doing more and more editorial work. Since last spring, when I had to give all my time for several months to the writing of "Fifty Years in America," she has served as editor. It has been the love of *The Friend* and what it stands for and not the financial remuneration which has made her carry on.

There are hundreds of other persons, living and dead, who should have been mentioned with gratitude, but it would be hard to know where to draw the line. To all who have given the magazine support, my heartfelt thanks.

The Friend was read at first by Lutherans of Norwegian descent; now it is read by members of all the different Lutheran church bodies and by not a

few outside the Lutheran church.

Is there need of independent publishing concerns among the Lutherans in this country or will the church publishing houses fill the bill?

Real literature, be it religious or secular, cannot be written when the authors have constantly to keep in mind that their work must pass muster of some board or committee. Literature can be produced only in an atmosphere of freedom.

Even if such freedom were afforded the authors, the Lutheran leaders do not understand that writing is the most heartbreaking and back-breaking of all kinds of work, and that a writer should be paid at least as much as the man who sets the type, runs the press or wraps the books for mailing.

The Lutheran church bodies are spending large sums on Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Education and Charity, and that is the way it ought to be, but what consternation and indignation would sweep a church convention if someone moved that $10,000 be added to the budget for the writing of Christian literature. Try it and you will see.

It seems strange that we should train young men and women in the art of writing at our church schools and not make use of them in our own church. It is a niggardly and shortsighted policy.

An independent Christian publishing house has a great field among us, but it must be heavily subsidized and conducted by people who are not tied to the Lutheran theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but who. have the insight, ability and courage to interpret in terms of today Lutheranism at its best. Such a concern should not be organized to make money; there would be no money in it. The attempts which have been made in this field have been on a small scale and have been carried on by men and women who had more idealism than they had sense to provide for a rainy day.

Was It A Waste of Time?

SOME OF MY READERS will not finish this sketch. They will find it trivial. They think I wasted my time in being a Sunday School worker covering a period of 48 years.

There was no money in it, not a cent. There was certainly no honor in it. Anybody can crack a joke at the expense of a Sunday School worker. The Sunday School is looked upon as a proper field for sentimental women and effeminate men or "Sissies."

And yet, had there been no Sunday School in America where religious instruction cannot be given in the public school, what sort of church life, if any, would there have been in this country today, and what would have been the moral status of this nation?

America would have been a pagan country. If you think that would be all right or even preferable, then I am not surprised that you look upon the Sunday School worker with contempt.

I don't pose as a diligent Bible student or as an authority on Lutheran doctrines, but I would know much less about the Bible and about these doctrines had I not been a Sunday School worker. If I have had any success as a writer and editor it is in a large degree due to the fact that Sunday after Sunday I either taught a class or spoke to the whole Sunday School. A teacher or superintendent must reduce his thought down to the very simplest terms, find points of contacts in the interests of the children, and put across his message with directness and enthusiasm. A person who tries to do that on Sunday is not going to write above the heads of the readers on Monday.

I know of nothing that so strengthens one's faith in the Word and Work of God as to observe how the Truth grips the children and develops strong Christian characters.

I have associated with many fine people in my life, but with none finer than the Sunday School teachers. They are the best informed people in the church in matters pertaining to Christianity; they are the gentlest, the most patient, the most optimistic; they are the least critical. They have to meet

their class Sunday after Sunday with a positive message. They live on affirmations and not on negations. They have to present what they actually do believe, not what they doubt.

In the first pioneer days it happened often that boys and girls of confirmation age knew by heart Pontoppidan's Large Explanation without having attended any school in religion. Most of the children who attended my parochial schools or Sunday Schools had learned to read Norwegian at home, and not a few had committed the Catechism to memory. All of them were familiar with some of the more interesting Bible stories. There was a good deal of singing in the homes, and the children knew many of the melodies. That was before the radio blared forth the latest love songs and jazz music.

It was no difficulty at that time to get the children to learn their lessons by heart. It was the thing to do, and they did it. Did they understand what they had committed to memory? No, perhaps not, but it was the business of the teacher to explain it in terms the children did understand. Not only that, but to apply the lesson to life. That the children had memorized the lesson made it possible to devote all the time to explaining and applying the lesson.

One of the sad memories is the pathetic hunger on part of children for stories outside the Bible stories. There was very little reading matter in the homes suited to children. I shall never forget how the children listened with mouths and eyes wide open when I brought to school a "Reader" and read aloud stories. Some of the girls stayed in during recess that they might read the stories.

One woman who attended my school told me the other day how she and her sisters sat up till late at night when the hired man read about the catacombs at Rome. The telling of fairy tales was taboo in the Haugean homes, and there was a sad need of reading matter for children. I am afraid that at the family devotion the selections read from the Bible were not chosen for the sake of the children. We elders are cruelly selfish. We have forgotten the command, "Feed my lambs."

Once when I was selling Pilgrim's Progress I called at a home where there were several children. The father was out in the field harrowing. The mother said she would like to have the book for the children, but I had to see the husband. I went out to the field and began with my sales talk. He would not listen, whipping up the horses. I ran alongside him, with the sam-

ple book in my hand and talked. Finally he shouted, "We have books enough at home; the children don't read the books we do have."

I had seen his "library." There was a Bible, a book of sermons, Johan Arndt's "True Christianity," two or three hymn books, some copies of the annual reports of the synod meeting, and copies of the church organ and of "Skandinaven." No, it was only too true, the children did not read the books "we do have."

My most interesting experiences as a Sunday School worker are connected with Olivet Lutheran Church. I may at some other time mention my coworkers there. At this time I want to make mention of four.

In order to solve the English question in Trinity Lutheran Church, Olivet Lutheran Church was established. Rev. Asmund Oftedal, son of Prof. Sven Oftedal, was the first pastor. He and his wife, Clara, as leaders, built up a large Sunday School. At one time only 26 children belonged to the church, while some 270 did not belong to the church. Forty percent of the children moved out of the district every year, but new pupils took their place. Both Rev. Oftedal and his wife were born in this country, had attended public school, and had been Sunday School workers since the year they were confirmed. Both of them often attended inter-denominational Sunday School conventions and had profited greatly thereby. They entered upon the work in Olivet with energy and enthusiasm. They knew the American child, they were loyal to the Lutheran Church, and they were thoroughly familiar with the best Sunday School methods.

I have long wished for an opportunity to pay tribute to two Sunday School teachers — Maude and Netta Amonson. I worked with them for twenty-three years in Trinity and in Olivet. They were and still are public school teachers and they are still teaching Sunday School. Maude could teach any class equally well. She made the Lutheran doctrines interesting by teaching them her own way. Before other Lutheran Sunday Schools had heard of a Teachers' Training class, she conducted one. She insisted that the children must be even more well behaved in Sunday School than in public school. She saw to it that they entered and left the church orderly and quietly. As far as I remember, we never had the slightest trouble with any child. Netta has always been in charge of the Kindergarten. She was a marvel. I attended her department once in a while. It seemed to me that she could take any lesson and make it absorbingly interesting to the little tots. Once I had to take charge of her class. I was mighty glad when the bell rang. I told

stories, I asked questions, I pointed to this and that, but I was a good deal of a failure.

I asked Netta how she prepared for the class. “Oh, there was not much to say,” she remarked. When she got home from church and had had lunch, she helped her mother wash the dishes. Then she read again the Bible story for the next Sunday. During the week she told the story to herself in the words of the children. Then she asked, what were the main points in the story which might interest the children, and what sort of illustrations would help to bring out the main points. Of course, these illustrations had to be taken from the child’s world.

In case the plan prepared did not work, she had to be ready to go at it in a different way. One can never know what may turn up in a class of little boys and girls. Oh no, there was not much to tell, she said. That brief talk, given in such a humble way, was the best lecture I ever heard on how to prepare a Sunday School lesson. I have made use of it many times when addressing Sunday School teachers’ meetings and institutes. I now pass it on to the Sunday School teachers who read this.

How could I serve as superintendent with such a pastor and pastor’s wife and two public school teachers? It was easy. Whenever they suggested something, I said, “That sounds good to me.” And it was good.

Sometimes it happens that a teacher is privileged to see some fruit of his labor.

Late one night a woman phoned me, begging with sobs that I go at once to a certain hospital where her brother, who had been away from home for years, was dying, but refused to have the rector see him.

I rushed off to the hospital. There was John, in bed, emaciated and very pale. A smile flitted across his face when he saw me. He beckoned me to come closer. He spoke in a whisper. He had wandered around a great deal, he said, and had tried all kinds of religions; now he did not know if he believed anything.

That was not the place for sermonizing. I asked him if we should read together the Psalm we had read in Sunday School. I began, “The Lord is my shepherd.” He read it with me, slowly, very slowly. Then when I said “Amen,” he smiled.

As I put my hand on his, I said, “John, the God of your childhood still loves you. He is here with you now. Pray to Him. I’ll be praying for you.”

When I called the next day, John whispered, “I have been praying all the time.” “God has heard your prayer,” I said with glad assurance. That night he died.

During the more recent years I have had much to do with high school students. I have been asked some very discerning questions, and not all my answers would have been approved by some theologians. In a class of high school students I was asked on the same day: Why are there so many denominations? Why don’t we have a pope like the Catholics? Why don’t the Baptists baptize children? What is wrong with Christian Science?

Then there come the questions in regard to movies and dancing. And not to forget the question concerning evolution. One of the brightest girls, a senior in high school, asked all of a sudden, “Why do the scientists say that the world is millions of years old, when the Bible says it was created four thousand years before Christ?” I asked her to turn to the place in the Bible where such a statement was made. “It says so in the Bible History,” she answered. I had her read the first verse in Genesis. She read, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth.”

“When did God create heaven and earth?” “In the beginning?” “When was that?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, I don’t know either, and nobody else knows.”

Parents, pastors and teachers should bear in mind that the children at an early age will be exposed to all kinds of teachings, doctrines and philosophies. It is our duty to prepare the children, and especially the young people, for what they are bound to meet.

I nearly forgot to say that people who are instructing children and young people in Christianity are more hopeful concerning the future of the kingdom of Christ than those who are sitting on the sidelines. The Gospel is still a power for good, and it is encouraging to see how effectively it works in minds and hearts of young people today.

It is heartening to have faith to believe that men and women are fighting the battles of life more bravely because of what the Sunday School did for them. It is that sort of people who are going to build a better world.

Re-Thinking What I Was Taught

RELIGION presses upon us as the air we breathe. The pity is that what is meant to be a blessing is to many a burden.

I was taught the Christian religion according to the Lutheran doctrines. I believed everything I was taught, but the time came when I had to re-think what I had been taught.

Given to brooding and being much alone, especially when herding cattle on the mountain sides and plateaus, I thought of many things.

Once in my boyhood when told of a girl that fell down from a cliff and was killed while the father looked for her, I asked, "Where was God then?"

Even before I was confirmed I could not see how a soul, a spirit, could be hurt by fire or be bitten by serpents; I could not see that it was fair that the heathen who had never heard of God were condemned for not believing in God.

Later I could not see the value of Christianity when people who did not call themselves Christians lived finer lives, were more kind and gentle and unselfish than some people who confessed that they were Christians.

At the university I began to doubt verbal inspiration, then inspiration itself; that naturally led to doubt concerning the deity of Jesus, miracles, atonement and the value of the Sacraments.

One teacher taught that evolution was a theory; another that evolution was a fact.

I came to believe in the inspiration of the Bible not through arguments, but through an experience. I realized that I had to decide for or against Christ. There was no honorable middle ground. He was either what He claimed to be or He was not. If He was what He claimed to be, I did not see how I could escape Him; I had to deny Him as Lord and Master or accept Him as Lord and Master.

I wrote to Rev. M. G. Hanson, Grand Forks, N. Dak., who in a certain sense was my guardian, that I could no longer teach parochial school and

gave him the reason why. With return mail came an invitation to spend part of my vacation at his home. "You need a rest," he said.

He did not debate with me, but told me when we sat alone late at night in his study what Jesus had come to mean to him. He did it in the indescribable, gentle way of his. Then he gave me this advice: "Read the Bible till you come to a passage that fits you."

Why not try it? I read about Abraham begetting Isaac and Isaac begetting Jacob, about the Philistines, and justification by faith. Nothing hit me. Then I came upon a verse that startled me with its simplicity and audaciousness: "Whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

How simple! Just come. But it was not so simple after all. To come called for some sort of an effort. What was that effort and could I make it? Again I was up against a stone wall. But it did give me satisfaction to know that I was turning my face in the right direction, if there was a right direction. I kept on repeating Christ's challenge. No other man in the world would have dared to make such a promise. He was either a God or He was a fanatic.

Then late one evening as I passed Hanson's door, I heard my name mentioned. Had he called me? I stopped. He was praying for me. Something broke within me. I went to my room, threw myself on the bed and cried as I had not cried since mother died.

A new hunger for the Bible came into my soul. I found one precious promise after another. After awhile it dawned on me that by exposing myself to the Word of God I had been coming. With a flash of genius Luther says that we cannot believe or come to Christ without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works upon us, in us, through the Word. I no longer doubted the deity of Jesus. I never seriously had.

In my study of languages it was called to my attention that at first a language deals with things close at hand: food, shelter, clothing, weapons, tools. As more abstract ideas begin to emerge, new words and phrases are coined or old words and phrases take on new and higher meanings.

The most perfect language is an inadequate vehicle for the conveyance of thought. We use illustrations, make gestures, draw figures.

When Infinite Mind is to convey His thoughts to finite mind He must use a human language. It proves a poor instrument. Human language breaks down under the weight of eternal truth.

If we bore this in mind we would realize how futile it is to try to cover truth with definitions. "We see through a glass, darkly."

Christianity came out of the Orient with its deep contemplation, haunting mystery, fanciful figures of speech, richly colored imagery.

We of the Occident are more matter of fact. "What do you mean?" "Talk plain English." Theologians of the West are more noted for passion for definitions than a vivid imagination. They define, defy and defend. They do not seem to have awareness of the great mystery behind the written word. They want you to sign on the dotted line and wear a label.

"Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find, out the Almighty unto perfection?" asks Job. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Paul exclaims.

What about the inspiration of the Bible? By reading, studying, teaching the Bible, the conviction grew upon me and finally became overwhelming, that God does reveal His will and His ways in the Bible. I am not arguing, I am testifying. Once a year or so I turn to Ibsen, Bjornson, Garborg, Browning, Keats, Shelly, Tennyson for a brief evening or two with each one of them, but I can read and do read the Letter to the Ephesians, the last chapters in Isaiah, the Twenty-third Psalm, the thirteenth and fifteenth chapters in First Corinthians several times every year and find new truths and new beauty. For the life of me I can't help believing that there shines through these and other portions of the Bible which I often read, a light from above. Mere man could not have written these things unaided, unguided.

What about verbal inspiration? I don't know what to say, for those who claim that God gave the writers of the Bible the very words they should write, do not admit that God dictated to these writers the way one dictates to a stenographer; that the process is wholly mechanical. If that were the case, Paul and John and James would write the same way. They don't. Evidently they were more or less free agents. Luke does not claim that he got his information from God direct. He tells us that he writes "After careful investigation of the facts from the commencement."

Since Luke had to seek and verify the facts there is no reason to believe that he did not use his own words. What then becomes of inspiration?

If God sent His Son to the world and the Son sent apostles out into the world to teach, it was necessary also to select men to put in writing what was essential for all generations to know the way.

I believe the Bible is inspired. How, I don't know; nobody knows; nobody has any business to formulate a theory and demand that others accept it. The main thing is not how God inspired but what is the main burden of His message as given through poor human speech and then to accept that message.

The way to find out if the Bible is inspired is to read it with an open mind and prayerful heart, or if you do not feel like praying, to read it anyway. Give the Bible 3 chance! . And don't turn away when the Bible becomes a mirror revealing yourself as a sinner. The realism, the honesty, the truthfulness of the Bible may convince you that it is not the word of man, but the word of God.

The atonement has caused me more thought than any other doctrine. I think the reason is that it was presented to me as a legal procedure and not as a mystery, with a tremendous reality back of it.

Man sinned against God; God's justice demanded punishment of the guilty. But God loved man and willed to save him. He sent His Son in the form of a man and His justice was satisfied by the suffering and blood and death of the Son.

That sounded reasonable enough, but the time came when it struck me as one-sided, too legalistic. I sensed there was more to it than that. Personally I found it a great healing mystery which defied definition.

When I read that Jesus "Learned… obedience through the things which he suffered," I asked, "Was growth in obedience necessary to meet God's justice or did it make Jesus a greater and an all-sufficient Savior for humanity for all times?"

Another passage seemed to support this thought: "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Here suffering stood for more than satisfying justice. It made Him able to help us, having had personal experience in suffering. This thought brings Christ very close to us as a living, loving, powerful, ever present personality.

The following passage seems to indicate that Jesus was more than a passive sufferer. He took upon Himself flesh and blood, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power over death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

"Destroy," "deliver." Here was something that suggested struggle, battle, warfare, action. And Jesus conquered. The element of satisfaction is in the atonement, but there is also the element of victory won through action.

Later I learned that there have for centuries existed two views concerning the atonement. One stresses satisfaction, the other Christ the Victor. Satisfaction theory is derived from the age of chivalry, not from the Bible.

When we suspect that other people are not stressing enough a certain truth, we sometimes stress it more than we otherwise would do. That may be one of the reasons why some preachers and laymen were talking so much about the blood of Jesus. They accused some ministers of having a bloodless theology.

Now these same people would scarcely accuse Paul of having a bloodless theology, and yet in how many of his thirteen letters does Paul mention blood?

Ever since I saw them plunge a knife into the throat of my favorite sheep I have had an aversion to blood. I could never sing the Gospel hymn, "There is a fountain filled with blood."

Finally I began to sense that there was something behind the term blood, Life! When Jesus shed His blood He gave His life, He gave His all, He made the supreme sacrifice. Isaiah says that Christ "poured out his soul unto death."

Why did He have to do it? I don't know. The element of sacrifice in humanity is a tremendous fact, an awe-inspiring reality. A mother suffers for her wayward child. She pours out her soul for the erring one. What makes her do it? Her great loVe. God so loved the world that He sent His son; the Son loved the world so that He gave Himself. God, who is love, was in Christ, who is love, and in a way that we cannot understand, reconciled the world unto Himself. That's the atonement, the great healing Mystery.

From my eastern window I love to look at the sun-kissed cross which rises high above the sin and the shame of the city. The cross, once the sign of disgraceful death, has become a sign of victory.

Baptism? Jesus instituted the Sacrament of Baptism. He commanded His apostles to go forth to teach and baptize. That settles it as far as I am concerned. If I am to select out of His words what appeals to me, I might just as well do away with Him and His words altogether.

It is a comforting thought that the eternal and loving God makes covenant with even a child. But can a child believe? Can you of your own

strength believe?

For some time I did not go to the Lord's Supper because of the crude and literal way in which they tried to ram a certain exegesis down my throat. It did not help that they said, "This is Christ's true body." Where did they get the word "true?" From the Bible? No, it is a remnant of a theological discussion dragged into the Holy of Holies.

Then I began to reason with myself: Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. There is no escaping that fact. The Lord's Supper has been a source of strength and inspiration to the weakest and to the strongest down through the centuries. Some walked up to the altar with firm steps and came back humbled; others walked up to the altar with hesistancy, not being sure if they had a right to go, and came back with a glad light in their eyes. Now, are you going to deprive yourself of this source of inspiration because of what you consider a crude and unscriptural explanation?

Then one Sunday something in the sermon made me decide to go to communion despite doubts and fears and unbelief. Fortunately for me, in that church the communicants went up to the altar only once during the service and neither church members nor non-church members had to hand in their names. That may not be churchly, but had not that practice obtained, I would not have gone to communion that day. While waiting to kneel at the altar, every swear word I had heard in my boyhood — and I had heard plenty — rushed through my mind. I was on the point of turning back when the minister said, "Do this in remembrance of me." I turned to the Devil. "You are strong but one stronger than you invites me to come, and I am coming." I fairly flung myself down at the railing. Since that time I have had no doubt, no question.

Evolution? I am not a scientist. If evolution should be proven to be a fact, I don't see that my status would be changed in the slightest. I would still be facing the same problems.

Miracles? If I were to believe only what I understand, I would not be believing anything. The enemies of Jesus did not dare to deny that He performed miracles. Why should I deny them, being removed from His time by two thousand years?

What about fire and serpents in hell? Those terms are used to make us realize the awful consequences of refusing so great a salvation. Are the heathen going down to hell like a hailstorm? I leave that to God. No person

will ever be able with justice to shake his hand in the face of God and say, "You did not treat me right!"

Are there not so-called worldly people who are much better than many confessing Christians? Apparently. If I confess Christ it is up to me so to live that I am not a stumbling block to others or bring dishonor upon that Name. If I am not a confessing Christian, it is no excuse to remain that way because there are so many poor Christians. What an opportunity for me to show the world what a Christian ought to be!

When we think of the suffering in the world, the injustice, the wrecked lives, we cry out, "Doesn't God know? Doesn't God care?" Things don't make sense; the world is a madhouse, life a mockery.

But life at times is such a lovely thing. There is music and love and friendship; there are flowers and stars and beautiful sunsets; there are souls who bear their burdens with a song and a smile; there are men and women made perfect through suffering. And — there is the Christ!

In the hushed twilight hour she often sang, "There is a Hand Divine." In days of old that Hand touched blind eyes and they looked up into a smiling face, touched deaf ears and they heard a sweet voice. That Hand is still touching the lonely, the sick and the sorrowing. It gives strength to the weak and guidance to the strong. Have we not all felt the touch of that Hand in moments when we were so utterly helpless and alone?

When my soul grows weary and I am far from home, when reason fails to penetrate the darkness, and frantic questions come back a mocking echo, then my faith finally leaps all bounds and barriers and somehow, somewhere finds a God who must care, who does care.

I have changed my views concerning definitions, dogmas, creeds and confessions. There was a time when I did not have much use for them. Now I begin to see their necessity and value. As long as man needs religion and thinks about religion, he is bound to formulate his beliefs in brief statements or to subscribe to such statements made by others.

Great creeds and confessions come out of great struggles when earnest men fight what they consider error and defend what they consider truth.

The trouble is that other men, later on, insist that their particular interpretation — an interpretation arrived at without much thinking — must be

accepted without asking why. They speak with finality because they do not sense that back of weak human words is the great Mystery in the center of which is God.

Norwegian-American Lutheran Church Life

CHRISTIANITY was introduced into Norway not so much by the preaching of the Word as by the threat of the sword. But the new religion did become a barrier against the brutalities of paganism and gradually brought about a better civilization.

The Lutheran Reformation came to Norway at the command of a king. Even so, the purer doctrines paved the way for a mild wave of Pietism and the Haugean revival.

The Haugean revival made itself felt mainly among the middle and lower classes and but slightly among the upper classes; that explains why there has been less blending of true Christianity and culture in Norway than in Sweden, Denmark and England.

The Haugean tendency dates back to the preaching of the young farmer, Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824). He preached repentance with a directness and the Gospel with a persuasiveness as had never been done before in Norway. There were few parishes which did not feel the impact. The converts, usually called "Readers," because they read the Bible and Lutheran devotional books, also "Haugeans" and later Pietists, came together for public testimony and prayers, and many laymen went forth to preach. The Haugeans were loyal to the Lutheran doctrines and were the most regular of church goers. Now, was there anything wrong and dangerous about all this?

The Church and the State thought so. With studied cruelty they combined to persecute Hauge, broke his spirit, wrecked his health and sent him to an untimely grave — the blackest chapter in the history of Norway. They claimed, with some show of authority (not divine), that it was against the law for a layman to preach and that it was unchurchly for the laity to come together for testimonies and prayers. With some shining exceptions, the ministers were Rationalists, many shockingly worldly.

It should be said in all fairness that the State Church had for centuries instructed the people in the Lutheran doctrines and had developed in the people a respect for the Word and the Sacraments and for the ministry, if not always for the ministers. But for such instruction and respect, the Haugean revival would have been impossible.

The Haugean tendency in this country was at first represented by a considerable number of lay preachers. "It is a startling and also highly significant fact," writes Dr. Laurence M. Larson in his book, "The Changing West," "that for more than twenty years such divine services as the Norwegian pioneers were privileged to attend were conducted chiefly by laymen or by laymen who had received ordination." Dr. Larson calls attention to Rasmus B. Anderson's list of seventeen preachers who were active in the first decade of our history. "All but one of these were laymen, or began their careers as lay preachers. It may safely be assumed that they were all of the Haugean tendency or adhered to that movement. Since the Norwegian communities were as yet neither large nor numerous one may conclude that they did not suffer from a dearth of preaching."

It is rather strange that it took a layman, a learned professor, not connected with a Lutheran church school, to give us this "startling and highly significant fact."

Of organized church bodies representing more or less the Haugean movement comes, first, the "Elling Synod" (the larger part of which became the Hauge's Synod), the Norwegian Augustana and the Conference. The two former considered themselves the sole representatives, but the others were largely molded by it. In fact the best interpreter, at least from a theoretical point of view, of the Haugean movement was Professor Georg Sverdrup of the Conference.

It would be far from fair to say that the Norwegian Synod represented fully the State Church tendency. The Norwegian Synod ministers were not Rationalists and they were not worldly-minded men. As to zeal and self-sacrifice in finding and ministering to the pioneers scattered throughout the wide wilderness, their names and deeds should never be forgotten. Not a few Haugeans coming from Norway joined the Norwegian Synod and a few laymen, after careful examination, were ordained. But, by and large, this church body was not sympathetic toward the Haugean movement, and found better fellowship with German Missourians.

It may not be such an idle question after all to ask: "Had it not been better for the Norwegian Lutherans in America if the fellowship referred to had not come about?" At first it seemed to be the proper thing for the Norwegian Synod to send students to St. Louis to be trained for the ministry there, but it was unfortunate that the Norwegians came under the influence of the Missourians at a time when the Missourians, springing from pietistic sources, had been forced, in face of the rank unionism of some Lutherans of German extraction, to stress pure doctrines so one-sidedly. Hair-splitting definitions were introduced among the Norwegians concerning doctrines which otherwise would never have been raised among them. For instance concerning slavery and predestination. The Norwegians had always been free and had worn no man's collar; and they believed that God "willeth that all men should be saved," and let it go at that.

There is no doubt that the Missourians made the Norwegians more careful how they stepped.

I refer to these matters for a specific reason: Attempts are now being made to bring about a better understanding between the Missourians and the American Lutheran Church and also the United Lutheran Church. That's fine. There can be no objection for any Lutheran church body to meet with the Missourians and discuss doctrinal questions, to establish pulpit and altar fellowship and cooperation in social work and the home mission field, but it would not be well, I believe, for a long time, to enter into organic union with church bodies of German origin. The Germans would let the Scandinavians pull at the oars but they would do the steering. The boat would move in quiet inland seas. The Scandinavians love the wider horizon, the salty air, and sometimes even the wild waves. The blood of adventure and freedom is still coursing in their veins.

Church people who are indebted to Hauge, Rosenius and Beck should get into closer fellowship to begin with.

What has become of the two old tendencies? Well, we live in a new day. A host of young people don't know anything about the past and care less. Many of our church members have come from other denominations. No tendency during modern times, with the quick means of transportation and communication and with winds blowing from the four horizons, lasts long unaltered. The former Hauge's Synod, the Augustana, the Conference, the Anti-Missourians and by far the larger part of the Norwegian Synod now belong to the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, with its 500,000

souls and perhaps 200,000 souls outside the church but served more or less by this church.

Go to the Bible Camps, Luther Leagues, church schools and conventions and you will hear testimonies and public prayers by the laity. There is no official or public disapproval expressed against this sort of a thing any more. At the same time, you will find a sincere and intelligent loyalty to the Lutheran doctrines.

It is heartening to note that now during the preparation for the Centennial in 1943 of the first call to a minister by a Norwegian Lutheran congregation, and the ordination of Elling Eielsen and C. L. Clausen, tributes are being paid to all the pioneer church workers regardless of traditions and tendencies; it is being recognized that all of them, clergy and laity, men and women, laid a broad, deep and solid foundation on which has been reared a splendid superstructure.

Among the more noticeable changes witness these fifty years may be mentioned:

The gradual passing of the Norwegian language; the strong drift toward union (two large mergers have taken place, one in 1890 and one in 1917); a kindlier evaluation of the attitudes of other Norwegian Lutheran church bodies; growing cooperation with other Lutherans in this country and in Europe; the larger place given women in the church through coeducation, women's suffrage, separate organizations, publications and projects; the growth of men's organizations and boys' organizations; the popularity of large national conventions besides the regular conventions of the church bodies; increasing interest in Foreign Missions and more wisely planned Home Missions; the use of evangelists, ordained and not ordained; greater stress on the application of the Gospel to present day problems, individual and social.

There is another change of far-reaching consequence — the infiltration of people of other nationalities and other denominations into the Norwegian Lutheran congregations through inter-marriages and otherwise. The roster of some of our city congregations read like a city directory. This increasingly large element, together with the fact that our own people are now more American-minded than Norwegian-minded, will soon make the term Norwegian obsolete.

We have long since entered with ease and enthusiasm into the larger American life; a thousand years of victorious struggle for freedom and a

hundred years of disciplined democracy had prepared us for American citizenship. Always a religious people, thoroughly instructed in the Word of God as rediscovered and freed from human traditions by that great intellectual giant and Spirit-guided Martin Luther, we may have a contribution to make to American religious life, but if so, we must consciously preserve the best in our historical and religious background and our traditions in this country — and that is not primarily theology or liturgy or conservatism.

There were six church bodies among the Norwegian Lutherans in America fifty years ago; there are five now. There is a vast difference, however, between then and now. Then four or five of the bodies were of considerable size. Now one represents nearly 90 per cent of all the Norwegian Lutherans, while the other four represent only about 10 per cent.

The following church bodies united in 1890: the Augustana, the Conference, the Anti-Missourians, forming the United Norwegian Church. In 1917 the Hauge's Synod, the Norwegian Synod and the United Norwegian Church amalgamated, organizing the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

The Norwegian Lutheran Church numbers 512,636 souls. To this number might be added at least 200,000 souls which in one way or other are served by this church. On account of its numerical strength and its readiness to adjust itself to new conditions, eager to make its contribution to America's religious and cultural life, it has great possibilities. For several years after its organization the different groups and tendencies made it necessary for the leaders to do their utmost in keeping peace in the family, and the church body as a whole was rather nondescript. A better understanding, a greater tolerance and more open-mindedness has developed. A new generation, an American generation, is making itself felt. Its dynamic president, Dr. J. A. Aasgaard, has won the confidence of the older generation, is forward-looking and in hearty sympathy with the younger generation. This church body may have a contribution to make to the Lutheran Church as a whole, and that contribution should be the best in Haugeanism. Haugeanism has nothing to do with church policy, forms, organizations, liturgy or theology. It stands for spirituality, evangelism, fervor and the expression in words and work of the priesthood of believers.

The Lutheran Free Church is an off-shoot of the United Norwegian Church, and is wholeheartedly committed to the old spirit of Augsburg Seminary and to the views of Sverdrup and Oftedal. It is becoming more and more a compact and harmonious body, due in no small measure to the

influence of the late George Sverdrup, Jr., and the tactful and consecrated leadership of its president, Dr. T. O. Burntvedt. The Lutheran Free Church numbers 45,927 souls. It is on increasingly friendly terms with the Norwegian Lutheran Church.

The Church of the Lutheran Brethren ("Brodersamfundet") is a small but vigorous body, with 2,010 souls. While the Lutheran Free Church stresses living congregations, the Lutheran Brethren stress pure congregations.

The Norwegian Synod, a remnant of the Old Norwegian Synod, numbers 7,934 souls. It is on friendly terms with the Missouri Synod.

Finally we have the old Elling Synod, still standing on the old constitution, with 1,370 souls.

So while it is true that there were six church bodies among the Norwegian Lutherans in America fifty years ago and still five now, the cause of union has made great strides, since about 90 per cent are found in one church body.

At a time when the church is being criticized for not taking a larger part in solving the social and economic problems of the day (which of course implies that the critics believe the church can contribute toward a solution) it is pertinent to ask, "What about the Lutheran Church?" Well, look at the record! The Scandinavian countries, overwhelmingly Lutheran, are the most progressive countries in the world, and Scandinavian Lutherans in America are in the forefront of progressive movements. This much can be said that the Lutheran Church is not a hindrance in the path of progress.

While the history of the Norwegians in America is to a great extent a church history, America has not been the loser on that account.

Attitude Toward Other Denominations

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I once served as a member of a Commission on Fellowship. The question had been raised, "What should be the attitude of Lutherans toward other denominations?" As a basis for our discussion we had a booklet which contained a large number of Scripture references which the compiler claimed defined what our attitude should be.

Well, the members of the commission could not agree, and so we began to discuss another question; I have forgotten which. When we reported to the proper body, we were asked about the booklet with its Scripture references. Our chairman kept silent, our secretary kept silent; we had no treasurer. As the silence grew too oppressive for my comfort, I arose and said that I would spill the beans. We could not agree and so we discussed something else. The only thing we could agree on was that all the references were found in the Bible. By the way, what became of the question of fellowship?

In my home parish in Norway we were all Lutherans with the exception of one family, a Baptist family. I felt sorry that I should miss the boys in heaven.

I had been in this country only a few months when I began to attend the Y.M.C.A. meetings in Faribault, Minnesota. I scarcely understood a word of what was said, but I liked the singing, the cheerful faces and the hearty handshakes.

While at Red Wing Seminary many of us students used to listen to Rev. Jennings in the Methodist church. We were never warned by the proper authorities. President Cyrus Northrop's prayer in chapel my first morning at the university made a tremendous impression on me with its simplicity, fervency and beauty. Professor John Hutchinson's prayers stormed the very gates of heaven. At the meetings of the Christian Students

Association many students took part in testimonies and prayer. I don't think any Lutheran students took part the first year.

I attended the Hauge's church in Minneapolis Sunday forenoon and some "American" church in the evening, listening to Marion Shutter, Universalist; Pleasant Hunter, Presbyterian; Wayland Hoyt, Congregationalist. Shutter was the most eloquent of all of them. I never heard a minister who prayed the Lord's Prayer more beautifully. "Hallowed be Thy name" sounded like a silver bell. He had recently left the Baptist church and had all the zeal of a new convert. I heard several sermons or lectures in which he tried to prove that Paul, with his dogmas, had wrought great harm to the simple teachings of Jesus.

The man who made the greatest impression on me was Pleasant Hunter. He was an impressive personality. Tall, powerfully built, hair graying, mustache big and black, eyes deep and piercing, voice melodious.

One winter on Sunday evenings he delivered a series of sermons on Paul's letters. By giving the historical setting and stating the reason for the writing of a letter he aroused our interest in what Paul would say. He then analyzed the letter, read and commented on the more significant passages and made an application to our own personal or social problems.

I do not think he could have given lectures which attracted a large number of university students if he had waited till Saturday evening with the preparation of his sermon.

One incident I shall never forget. He had spoken on the preeminence of Christ. It was a moving portrayal. Then he stopped abruptly, swept the large audience with those piercing eyes of his and asked slowly and with deep earnestness, "Am I speaking to failing men and women?" An audible sigh rose from the audience. I never witnessed anything like it before nor since.

When Cyrus Northrop delivered the commencement address at Wesley Methodist Church, upon my graduation I became interested in the pastor of the church, Rev. Matt. Hughes. There was something so clear-cut about the man. I heard him almost every Sunday evening for a whole winter. I would not say that he was a great preacher, but he would have made a greater teacher of psychology. Later he became a bishop.

One Christmas forenoon Rev. K. C. Holter, Mr. O. M. Haugan and I went to hear Matt. Hughes. He spoke on the coming of Christ in the fulness of time. Briefly he sketched the conditions in the pagan world and among the Jews. There was peace throughout the world; mighty Rome saw to that.

There was one language, almost universal, the Greek language. Splendid roads radiated from Rome to distant lands on which not only Roman soldiers and merchants could travel, but also the messengers of the Gospel. The pagan religions had lost their grip on many thoughtful people in all lands; they were eagerly looking for something new, something better. The Jews were chafing under Roman yoke and were hoping and waiting for the Great Deliverer. Then Christ came; He came in the fulness of time.

"That was a wonderful sermon," said Holter on the way home.

The sermons by these and other ministers in the Reformed Churches impressed me in three ways: The elegant language, the social application of the Gospel, the beautiful portrayal of the humanity of Jesus.

But the time came when I preferred a Lutheran sermon with its stress on the Law and Gospel. If the conviction of sin, the forgiveness of sin, and the assurance of forgiveness are seldom if ever stressed, the message becomes more and more diluted. So much is said about the application of the Gospel that the Gospel itself is lost sight of. A blending of the two kinds of messages would make ideal sermons. Some day we'll get them.

I have been accused of unionism. If by unionism is meant to have spiritual fellowship with other Christians, I plead guilty. If it is true that all who believe in Jesus Christ are members of His church, then who am I that I should refuse to have fellowship with such members?

Am I in favor of wiping out all denominational lines without further ado? No, there are difference so deep that to join in worship and work with all others would simply lead to friction, confusion and dissension. But that is not saying that we must not have spiritual fellowship with all believers. It is a matter of common sense and expediency.

I have seen the Lutherans embrace one movement after another which they at first condemned. It's a good thing to be cautious and careful, but not too much so. We need brakemen, but we also need conductors. Since many Lutherans who feel called upon to be censors have changed their attitude time and again, some of us prefer to do our own thinking and act accordingly.

People Worth Knowing

I AM NOT WRITING BIOGRAPHIES, I am giving bits of information, snatches of conversations and hurried glimpses of people within the field of my observation who rose high above the foothills or who were just good friends.

Two or three of them came up from the "grass roots." With scarcely any schooling but that of stern reality, by sheer force of character they made future generations their debtors. Several of the others enjoyed the best advantages Norway had to offer, and came here to guide the immigrants in building the kingdom which knows no boundaries while carving a new kingdom out of a vast wilderness.

A few of the men I sketch blazed new trails in the realm of thought; trails which are now broad and crowded highways. One man gained wide fame in portraying the struggles of early pioneers, another proved that a Norseman discovered America, a third sang our bravest songs.

In the following pages you will meet men whose eloquence thrilled and inspired, and some whose good humor and scintillating wit made the worries of the day flee and filled the hearts with sunshine.

With deep gratitude I tell of teachers who pointed youth to sunlit mountain tops and sped them on to a life of glad discovery and high adventure. I pay tribute to the sturdiest statesman of our group and to other statesmen, not of our nationality, who cast a spell upon me which never was broken.

Friends there are, too, just friends. You will like them, I am sure. As I again walked with them on wind-swept hills and talked with them in the gathering twilight, I wrote about them with a mist before my eyes.

Elling Eielsen

On a wooden pillar in front of the Art Building at St. Olaf College is carved a face by Professor Arne Flaten, head of the art department which arrests attention by ruggedness and strength.

It is the strong and rugged face of Elling Eielsen, the man who started more things in pioneer days than all the other pioneer ministers together.

It is fit and proper that he should be singled out for special honors at St. Olaf College, for no man worked harder for the starting of a church school than did Eielsen and that before others had even thought of the necessity of starting such a schooL

The attempts by Eielsen at starting a church school led to the establishing of Red Wing Seminary, and the college department of Red Wing Seminary was in 1917 merged with that of St. Olaf College. There is nothing arbitrary about the carving on that pillar of Elling Eielsen.

There is no need to write the biography of Elling Eielsen. That has been done so well by Rev. C. J. Carlson, who was awarded his M.A. degree at the University of Minnesota on the thesis, "Elling Eielsen," that it need not be done again for a long time to come, if ever.

I never saw Eielsen but I had not been in this country very long before I heard his name over and over again. Many of the Haugeans I associated with knew him personally and some had been converted by his powerful preaching.

Later, when I met members of other church bodies, I heard stories not particularly favorable to Eielsen. Only a few years ago one of our best known men delivered a lecture on Norwegian Lutheran church schools. Now Eielsen was one of the first to advocate the founding of such a church school. But all this man said about Eielsen was that once when he came to a place and asked for permission to rest awhile and saw a violin hanging on the wall, he jumped up and ran out of the house.

Some four years ago an old minister told me in all seriousness that Eielsen, while kneeling at the bedside of a sick person, stole an ax. I said that I had heard the same story about a Haugean in my parish in Norway; it was remarkable that these Haugeans had such a fondness for axes belonging to other people.

What has struck me by reading and in my interviews with people who knew Eielsen, some of whom had been baptized or confirmed by him, was his love for children and children's love for him. This fact warmed my heart toward the man with the austere face.

Children have an uncanny way of seeing through a person and evaluating more correctly than the grownups. Since children loved Eielsen, he must have been worthy of their love, and that is a high compliment to pay any person.

Here is a translation of an article by Gabriel Stene:

"I was born on Bonett Prairie, Columbia County, Wisconsin, and was baptized by old Elling Eielsen. That, of course, I can't remember, but it has been recorded in the Bible, and this record was to me like a magnet which gave me an electric shock as a youngster.

"What an indescribable joy when Elling and Sigrid came to our home! I called them grandfather and grandmother, and they liked it. Oh, my, oh, my, what children's friends they were. They never came empty handed, those two; they always had something with them, if nothing else Elling gave me a few cents so I could go with mother to the Otsego store and buy something. I was sometimes in a predicament; they were both so good, these two folks, but whom should I prefer? I had to go to one first without offending the other one. Elling had no sooner sat down before I climbed up on his knee and begged him to tell me about the man who was so kind to little children. He patted my head and stroked my hair and told me that I had grown so big; this pleased me greatly. Then he kept my attention arrested by telling me about Jesus, the children's best friend. But then I suddenly got up to tricks. He had such a long beard. I got hold of the beard and gave a sharp pull. Then he cried aloud and jumped up and I laughed uproariously. I kept on doing this and he was very patient.

"If there ever was a man who loved children it was Elling Eielsen. No one grieved more over the death of his own grandfather than I did when I heard that Elling had passed away. He died the 10th of January, 1883."

Several years ago Rev. I. Olson told me that he had been baptized by Eielsen. There were many children in the family and when they saw Eielsen coming, all the older children rushed out to meet him. The younger children hung back, but he had no sooner come in before he smiled at them and beckoned to them to come to him. They came. He usually had something to give them, and he would tell them Bible stories.

About a year ago I was sitting in the office of my old friend, Mr. A. G. Anderson, Fergus Falls, Minn. Anderson was one of the first students to attend Red Wing Seminary. There is always a mild light in his eyes when he tells about the time he studied there. Then he began to tell about Elling Eielsen. Anderson came to this country at the age of nine and settled with his parents near Story City, Iowa. At his home there were often held meetings when laymen preached. Eielsen came there from time to time, and as soon as he had come, Anderson had to run across the fields and tell the neighbors that there was going to be "midden" at his home — Eielsen had come.

In a sketch of Eielsen and his cane, Dr. O. M. Norlie writes:

"Yes, he came to our humble home… He seated himself by the cozy stove and began to talk with the children, while mother prepared coffee. Bashful as I was and quite scared of this stranger with the austere face and ugly beard — but his voice was friendly and I thought he would do me no harm — I soon got acquainted with him and before long sat in his lap and listened to some word of God and was permitted to play with his cane."

I have in front of me a copy of "Eielsen's Catechism: Photographically Reproduced from Original," published by O. M. Norlie, 1925. I take the freedom of giving in full Dr. Norlie's interesting and illuminating "Introduction":

Born at Voss, Norway, September 19, 1804. He died January 10, 1883.

Parents: Eiel Ingebrigtsen Sundve and Anna (nee Ellingsen Sundsvaal).

Trained as a blacksmith and carpenter.

Lay preacher, 1832-1839, touring all Norway and parts of Sweden and Denmark. Met with much opposition, including imprisonment.

Immigrated to United States in 1839. Settled in Norway, Fox River Settlement, LaSalle County, Illinois.

In 1841, he built a two-story house used as a church — the first Norwegian Lutheran church, and as an immigrant home — the first Norwegian Lutheran hospice in America. His Fox River charge was the first Norwegian Lutheran congregation in America.

In 1841, he walked to New York and had a supply of Luther's "Smaller Catechism" printed in English — the present book. This is the first book printed in America by a Norwegian.

In 1842, to meet the shortage in Norwegian school books, he walked to New York again and had Pontoppidan's "Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed" and

"Den Augsburgske Konfession" printed in one volume. He had to go to Philadelphia to secure the "Gothic" type for this book. This is the first Norwegian book printed in America.

In 1843 — October 3 — he was ordained by Rev. F. A. Hoffman, a German Lutheran pastor, thus becoming the first Norwegian Lutheran pastor in America.

In 1846 — April 13-14 — he organized at Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin, the first Norwegian Lutheran Synod in America, called the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Also Eielsen Synod or Elling Synod. He was president of this synod from 1846 to 1883.

He served congregations at Fox River, Illinois, Racine, Wisconsin, Winchester, Wisconsin, Muskego, Wisconsin, Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin, etc., 1841-1883.

He made many home mission journeys in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, South Dakota and Texas, and is the first home mission pastor, missionary and superintendent among the Norwegians in America.

He early supported the foreign missions and was the first Norwegian to advocate Christianizing the Indians.

He founded a church paper called "Organ," 1856-1866. When he died, in 1883, his synod established another paper, "Den Kristelige Leegmand."

He helped to found three higher schools — Lisbon Seminary, Lisbon, Ill., 1855-1856; Eielsen Seminary, Cambridge, Wis., 1865-1868; and Hauge College and Eielsen Seminary, Chicago, Ill., 1871-1878. He was a friend of the parochial schools and his wife was a far-famed catechist. In the constitution of his synod he makes provision for the teaching of the young "in both languages" (Norwegian and English), and in this document as well as by his first two printed books he bravely and sanely attacked the vexed language problem — the first one to do so.

He intended to build an orphans' home in memory of his son, Elias, who was killed while working as a carpenter on the Palmer House, Chicago, and made provision in his will for the erection of this home.

He was married in 1843 to Sigrid Nilsen Tufte of Muskego, Wis. One of his daughters, Mrs. M. N. Runden, is the owner of the Catechism here reproduced. Through her kindness, and that of Rev. J. M. Hestenes, the book was secured for reproduction.

On account of its historical priority among books published by Norwegians in America, it is believed that this Norse-American Centennial Edi-

tion of Eielsen's "Catechism" should find a place of honor on the book tables of Norwegian-Americans. If the republication serves no other purpose, it will, at least, call attention to the work and worth of Elling Eielsen.

O. M. NORLIE

Four years ago when Mr. S. H. Holstad and I passed through Chicago on our way to Toledo, Ohio, Holstad pointed out the place where once stood the "Hauge College and Eielsen Seminary" and where Eielsen delivered the main address when the cornerstone was laid in 1871. Later the same day we stood at the graves of Eielsen and his wife, Sigrid. What a quiet, peaceful place this was, far from the dust and din, the toil and turmoil, of the hectic life of today. There was nothing to suggest the often turbulent life of this soldier of the cross. His warfare was over. God giveth His beloved sleep.

The granite stone suggested ruggedness and strength, but at its foot beautiful flowers waved gently in the breeze.

On our way back to Minneapolis we stopped at Muskego, Wisconsin, and spent some time in the house which Eielsen had built on Jefferson Prairie, but which had been moved to Muskego. The furniture had once belonged to Eielsen and his wife.

When passing through Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, we called at the Dahle mansion. On the wall I saw a large painting of the first Mr. Dahle; by the side of it was a painting of Mrs. Sigrid Eielsen! Surprised, I asked, "How come?" I was informed that Mrs. Dahle (for it was she) and Sigrid were sisters. They looked that much alike. Both were unusually gifted women.

By the way, Elling met Sigrid in New York when he had gone there to have his Catechism printed. I imagine that when he walked back to Illinois he walked with lighter steps and with a smile on that face cut out of granite.

Østen Hanson

"In a few minutes you'll meet the bishop of the Hauge's Synod," said my brother as we approached the parsonage, "but don't get scared. He is a Telemarking, too. There he is!"

This was a momentous occasion in my young life and I straightened up. Østen Hanson certainly looked like a bishop. A splendid specimen of humanity, over six feet tall, straight as an arrow, handsome, dignified.

He greeted us most cordially and wished me welcome to America in a ringing Telemark dialect. All my fears vanished.

I soon had my doubt about this bishop business, for the next day he and my brother helped the men in the field for a while, and the same day I saw "bispinden" washing dishes.

My brother evidently wanted to teach me not to believe everything I heard in America. If so, I am grateful; otherwise I might not have learned it.

If there ever was a home flooded with sunshine and good cheer, it was the Hanson parsonage. When people tell me that the Haugeans were a lot of sober, serious, joy-killing people, I could laugh aloud, and sometimes I do. Most of the Haugeans I knew, and I knew a good many, were on the whole quite cheerful. They were serious mainly when they attended religious meetings and when they met members of other church bodies.

Mrs. Hanson was one of the wisest women I ever met. She became like another mother to me. She ran the large household with kindness, diplomacy and tact. She always spoke in deliberate, unhurried tones. I don't think she ever got excited. She had a keen mind and could take part in a theological discussion as effectively as any man. When the men got into a heated discussion, she would stop in her work and make a remark or ask a question, and that sometimes ended the debate. Once she thought that she got the better even of Rev. B. Muus. He had stated that he had not much against religious meetings in the homes in the afternoon, but he was opposed to evening meetings.

"But, pastor Muus," she said, "did not Paul once preach a whole night?" "Yes," he answered, "but Paul preached to pagans." She laughed heartily when she told this story. By the way, did Paul preach to pagans that night?

Once while serving lunch to a group of ministers during a church convention, she humorously chided a theological professor, a frequent visitor at the parsonage, for something he had said in the forenoon. One of the pastors was so shocked that she dared to criticize a theological professor that he poured gravy in his coffee. When he discovered his mistake, he got still more excited and everybody noticed it. Mrs. Hanson broke the oppressive silence by drawling, "Oh, I have seen a nervous minister before."

There was much laughter in the Hanson parsonage. Hanson was often the "life of the party." He was an inimitable story-teller, and not all his stories were about the Haugeans, either.

I remember one morning that Thomas and Simon were repeating a story told by a temperance speaker the previous evening. A man, caught in a rainstorm, sought shelter in a hollow tree. When the sun began to shine, he discovered to his horror that the tree had shrunk and he could not get out again. While wondering what was going to happen, he remembered that recently he had voted the Republican ticket instead of the Prohibition ticket. This made him so ashamed and small that he slipped out of the tree.

We all laughed, but Hanson — I can still see him — stroked his chin, looked up into the ceiling and said: "Well, but that's what saved the man's life."

No wonder he was feared in debate. His wit was as devastating as his logic.

At the age of fifteen Hanson came from Norway to Rio, Wisconsin. He had a superabundance of vitality and was full of pranks, fun and frolic. The Haugeans shook their heads sadly. He seemed a hopeless case. Then one evening he surprised them by coming to a prayer meeting. Someone whispered that if Østen could become holy, anybody might. Several women offered prayer. Then suddenly Hanson arose and said, "I have been a wild character, but now I want to become a Christian," and burst into tears. The men sat there somewhat helplessly, but a woman went over to Østen and thanked him for what he had said.

Hanson took a homestead in Goodhue county, Minnesota, and was asked to preach, there being no minister. At the age of 25 he was ordained. He served the Immanuel church 37 years. When I first met him he was 51 and was at the height of his power.

Now some may ask how a man who had but a common school education could become a great preacher and a successful and popular leader of a lot

of independent and outspoken individuals.

In the first place, Hanson was a brainy man, and somehow nothing can take the place of brains. He was a converted man. Dr. Walther says that those who in their youth have experienced the greatest sorrow concerning their salvation become the best preachers and theologians. He had an insatiable hunger for knowledge and was an assiduous and discerning reader. He sought every occasion to talk with learned men. He had a passion for thinking things through. Such a man may outdistance many a man with a long kite of titles after his name.

Some of the diaries kept by Hanson, covering practically every day for 18 years, have been preserved. Every now and then I came across notes like these: "I read all day." "Today I have read an outline of Christian doctrines; a very profitable book; must be read thoughtfully." "Finished Tonning's dogmatics." "Read church history." "Have read mission history." "Have for several days read about the difference between the Lutheran Church and the Reformed Churches."

One of his sons said: "Father had a book close at hand all the time. When at home he always read or wrote. He preferred to remain in the same charge because it gave him time to study. When I drove him around he used to tell me stories from the world's history. I got 100 in history at Red Wing Seminary, because father had given me the important facts."

For 37 years he went through each year with his confirmation classes Pontoppidan's Double Explanation. That was a stiff course in dogmatics.

He had a prodigious memory. As a boy he would come home from church and repeat almost word for word the whole sermon. He knew the church book by heart. He made diligent use of dictionaries and even studied some Latin. At the age of 50 he took private lessons in composition.

The Bible was the book for Hanson. Everything he preached was riveted in the Bible. He wrestled with the Word. He found no peace of mind before he had mastered it, only to find, of course, that it was not fully mastered. He must have known the Letter to the Romans by heart; at least he had the more significant passages at the tip of his tongue.

Østen Hanson was born at Saude, Telemark, Norway, July 8, 1836; came to America at the age of 15; was ordained at the age of 25 in the "Elling Synod" ("The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America").

For nearly 30 years Eielsen and his followers "putla" (puttered) along without much internal trouble. One of them expressed it, "We had a fine

time; we had no order." But it was hardly to be expected that their form of organization would stand the test of time. It was mainly paragraph 2 in the constitution which caused dissatisfaction. The paragraph was to the effect that no person could become a member of the church body who "was not converted or on the way of conversion."

Østen Hanson became the leader of the growing element who demanded a change, but Eielsen saw no need of a change. He agreed with Hanson that we cannot see into the hearts of men, but he was "going to stand by the old constitution, in life and death, with good conscience."

This brought from Hanson a spirited and eloquent response. He declared that he prized highly the fellowship in the church body, but when he joined it, he had never seen the constitution nor heard about it.

"When I became a pastor in this church body," he said, "I was a mere child in age and Christian knowledge. When at my ordination I was told that I must accept the constitution, I objected openly to paragraph 2. The other paragraphs, I am sorry to say, I accepted, but I did not know any better."

He closed his address by saying: "I am constrained by my conscience to make the confessions before God and this convention that at my ordination, due to ignorance, I did wrong in accepting this paragraph. I earnestly ask God, this convention, and all men for forgiveness for Christ's sake.

"Brethren! With this declaration you understand that I no longer can accept the old constitution in its original form. If we cannot agree in changing it, then I must, according to my conviction, reject it… I love and respect the fellowship with all those who love the Lord Jesus, but I will rather give up my connection with the church body and my ministry than give up any part of truth and a good conscience."

It should be stated that Elling later visited Østen Hanson and held several meetings in his churches.

The struggle about the constitution made Østen Hanson the leader in the Hauge's Synod, a position he occupied practically during the rest of his life. He was a born leader.

We have already noted the leading part he took in establishing the Red Wing Seminary.

Of the prominent men in other synods that Hanson associated with, I shall mention two: the pastors B. J. Muus and J. N. Kildahl.

Rev. Hanson of the Hauge's Synod and Rev. Muus of the Norwegian Synod lived less than two miles apart for 37 years. They simply had to see and meet one another every now and then, whether they cared to or not. The time came when they did want to meet; in fact they became very intimate friends. During Hanson's last sickness, Muus was a daily caller at his bedside. The last time they were together, Muus sat and stroked Hanson's hand while tears streamed down their faces.

Though Hanson had hardly any schooling and Muus was quite a learned man, being a graduate of the University of Oslo, they at first engaged in many a hot debate, and Hanson did not always get the worst of it. One of Hanson's sons told me recently, "Father got a good deal of his theology from Muus." The learned man had such a profound respect for the self-made theologian that he persuaded Holden church to ask Hanson to serve it while he made a trip to Norway. While Hanson was pondering what to do, Muus met Mrs. Hanson and asked her what her husband Was going to do abOut it. "Oh," she said, "would it not be foolish for him to wear a clerical gown?" "Holden church does not demand that," answered Muus. "They might just as well use the gown in Hauge's Synod, too."

Later, Muus proposed to Holden church that it call Hanson as pastor and he himself would serve as assistant.

Under date of February 14, 1883, I came across this surprising entry in his diary: "I continued to read my mail. No matter what papers I pick up, church papers or newspapers, wherever one turns his eyes, there is the miserable (usalige) church strife. Oh, that our Norwegian Lutheran church people might be agreed in holding fast to the simple, true and sound 'barnelerdom' (Luther's Small Catechism and, at that time, Pontoppidan's Explanation of the Catechism), and unitedly use their power in the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God, instead of, as now, tear one another to pieces. God grant it!"

Hanson's association with Muus had undoubtedly something to do with this attitude, but even more so his intimate association with a man whose name, 17 years after his death, is still mentioned with love and reverence — Johan Nathan Kildahl.

How to explain that Hanson and Kildahl became such friends, that Kildahl served one year as president of Red Wing Seminary and preached to large crowds in Hanson's church and that the Haugeans flocked to hear him wherever he preached?

The answer will be found in the sketch of Kildahl. Suffice here to say that Kildahl had as a student gone through a deep religious experience and when he preached, the Haugeans said, "Kildahl is one of us." What mattered it what schools he had attended and what church body he belonged to?

July 12, 1855, Hanson wrote: "Felt great sympathy with Kildahl in his great sorrow" (the death of a child). December 29: "Kildahl preached in (our) church for full house. He and Rev. Rønning had dinner with us. We had a fine time."

These two men did not wait for any action by their respective synods. They found themselves at one in attitude and experience. Theirs was a fellowship of believers, and they forthwith began to practice that fellowship. What's wrong about that?

A few years ago, Mrs. Rønning and myself took part in a family reunion at the Hanson parsonage. The house had stood vacant since the previous year's reunion. The grandchildren thought it was a lot of fun. The rest of us did not have much to say. After dinner, Mrs. Hanson (she, too, has now passed away) and I went into a room whose walls were covered with portraits and paintings of the Hanson family. As she looked at those no longer in the land of the living, she shook her head sadly and said in a low voice, "Only shadows, only shadows." Then with a smile she joined the grandchildren.

As we drove away, I turned around and looked at the dear old parsonage, and I thanked God for all the fine influences which had gone forth from this house of God. Only shadows? No, blessed realities.

B.J. Muus

When Red Wing Seminary was no more, I chose St. Olaf College as my Alma Mater. There was nothing arbitrary about it, for the college department of the former was merged with that of the latter.

I make frequent trips to my living Alma Mater. I get free rides with Mr. S. H. Holstad. On these trips I never disagree with him. When we reach a certain hill and catch sight of the tall smokestack, he lifts his hat. Architecturally it is the most churchly smokestack in the world. We always bared our head in Norway when the church bells rang.

When I feel the need of getting rid of cobwebs or want to regain peace of mind or get the latest slant in philosophy, I call on Julius Boraas, George H. Ellingsen and Edward Ringstad, respectively. When I want to test my views I call on the president, L. W. Boe. He tells me not "to fool myself;" he doesn't believe I could fool him. Boe tries to be intellectually honest and succeeds better than most of us. One always knows where he stands. Few men have given me more encouragement in my work. Had not he and Dr. Theodore Blegen urged me to do so, I might not have written this book. I hope their reputation will not rest on the success of this book or be shaken by its failure. Boe says he wants my impressions during these fifty years. At least that's the impression I got. He says he does not care for my opinions. I know he doesn't. Who of us does care for anybody's opinions?

I do love the campus on Manitou Hieghts. I have seen it in the spring when the grass was tender and green and the bridal wreaths looked like white cascades; I saw the campus early one morning when the trees were a riot of color. I have walked the campus when not a human being was in sight and have bared my head in the quiet, cathedral-like valley where the soughing of the breeze in the tree tops sounded like dying music. At other times I have mingled with hundreds of keen, healthy, happy young men and women, and I forgot that I was no longer young.

One morning when I sat on the hill in front of Old Main I closed my eyes and imagined that there was nothing but a wilderness and that I heard voices of men coming up the slope looking for a place for a school.

In the sketch of Østen Hanson reference has been made to B. J. Muus. The fact that Muus, a graduate of the University of Oslo and a minister in the Norwegian Synod, became a close friend of Hanson who had hardly any schooling at all and belonged to another church body, speaks volumes. It took a big, broad-minded, generous man to sweep aside prejudices and class distinction and synodical barriers and to recognize true greatness and true worth.

An illuminating incident is recorded by Rev. Ole Paulson, the "grandfather of Augsburg Seminary," in his book, "Memories." In the spring of 1859 Paulson visited Goodhue county and met for the first time a young man belonging to the Elling Synod by the name of Østen Hanson. The two laymen held meetings together.

Rev. Muus had recently come from Norway. One Sunday afternoon Muus preached in a farm house. "When the service was over," writes Paulson, "Rev. Muus asked, 'Who is the man who goes from house to house in the congregation selling books?' 'That must be I,' I volunteered. 'Well, what kind of books are you selling?' 'It is books published by the American Tract Society, whose agent I am.' I mentioned Pilgrim's Progress, books by Baxter, Holazes and others. 'They are all good books,' remarked Muus. 'When you call on me I shall buy some of your books for distribution in the congregation.'" Mrs. Muus was an attractive woman, refined and in my estimation a Christian. That Muus was too, undoubtedly.

Next morning Muus bought a considerable number of books which he also recommended to his people. Paulson asked him if he had any objection to his preaching to his people, if they so desired. "If you preach the pure Lutheran doctrines it is not only permissible but desirable." The following two evenings Paulson preached at the home of a neighbor of the minister. One evening Muus was present. He loved singing, though he could not sing himself. He was pleased to have Paulson, the lay preacher and book agent, sing Oscar Ahnfelt's songs.

I imagine that this story will come as a revelation to many. No church body, no denomination has a monopoly on Christianity.

The story of Red Wing Seminary begins with a school which was started in Lisbon, Illinois, in 1855; the story of St. Olaf College begins with a school which was started in Holden congregation, Goodhue county, Minnesota, in 1869, fourteen years later.

The school in Lisbon had one teacher and three students; the school in Goodhue county had one teacher and three students. Now, 69 years later, St. Olaf College has 1,100 students. This is a sample of the story of the Norwegians in America, from three to eleven hundred.

Professor I. F. Grose was kind enough to present me with a copy of his "Fifty Memorable Years At St. Olaf College." It is a gripping story; but nothing so gripped me as this paragraph: "Many interesting facts, particularly concerning Pastor Muus, seem to have gone with them (the pioneers). We realize, only when it is too late, that many facts which would illumine the life and character of the founder and which should have been gathered long ago are gone forever."

It is a tragedy that many facts "are gone forever." We have been so busy making history that we have not had time to write history. There is much material left, but we are too blind and too stingy to pay for the gathering of it and the writing of it in a popular form. We have bulky volumes, it is true, but they are written for the high-brows and not for our young people. But — I am rambling as usual.

Some of the most important facts from Professor Grose's book: The Reverend Bernt Julius Muus was born in the bishopric of Trondheim in Norway, March 15, 1832. His birthplace lies no great distance from Stiklestad where King Olaf fell in battle on July 29, 1030. St. Olaf College bears his name. "Onward, Onward, Men of Christ, Men of the Cross, Men of the King" was the famous King Olaf's battle cry that sounded and resounded in the battle of Stiklestad. Pastor Muus adopted it as the motto or slogan of the institution, omitting "Men of the King."

Pastor Muus needed preachers, teachers and in general educated men and women to render him assistance in the great work he was doing. He was a loyal supporter of Luther College, but he also needed teachers for giving instruction in religion to the increasing number of his constantly growing congregations. So What did he do but start a school in the Holden parsonage in 1869, called the Holden Academy, with one teacher and three students. This school, sporadically indeed, did its work for years. The average annual attendance never exceeded five students. Pastor Muus reached the conclusion that he would have to locate his school in some town or city having railroad connections. Receiving encouragement from Muus, Harold Thorson of Northfield offered to the church (the Norwegian Synod) at its convention at Holden church, in June, 1874, a donation of fifteen acres of

land with houses thereon, if it would establish on this land an academy and maintain it. The church adopted a resolution thanking Mr. Thorson for his offer and encouraged the idea that an academy be erected but would assume no financial obligations for financing it. Muus later called a meeting of the ministers and influential laymen in the territory continuous to Northfield. Muus and Thorson received no encouragement from the meeting, excepting from Rev. N. A. Quammen of Christiania, Dakota county.

The business men of Northfield at an enthusiastic meeting passed this resolution: "We extend to our Norse brethren a cordial invitation to locate their college at Northfield, and we pledge them our hearty sympathy and support."

It was proposed that for temporary quarters four lots and two buildings thereon, formerly occupied by the public school, be secured. Muus then formed a corporation of five members. Harold Thorson subscribed $2,000 and procured the public school buildings. Rev. Thorbjørn Mohn was selected as the administrative head of the new school, then called St. Olaf School, which was opened January 8, 187 5. The total attendance the first year was fifty.

One day in February, 1875, as Mr. Thorson and Professor L. S. Reque, who was President Mohn's assistant, returned from a drive out to Pastor Quammen's parsonage; they tied their horse to a tree near the present corner of St. Olaf avenue and Lincoln street and walked to the top of the hill, there being no wagon road to it at that time. Both unanimously agreed that no finer place could be found in the vicinity of Northfield for the location of an institution of learning than the spot on which they stood.

St. Olaf College, as it was now called, moved into the new building, now Old Main, in the fall of 1878.

When one walks over the lovely campus and looks at all the buildings and mingles with the teachers and students, he may well whisper one name with respect and gratitude — B. J. Muus.

Johan Nathan Kildahl

The name Kildahl sounds like a benediction which follows after prayer.

J. N. Kildahl was one of the noblest products of Norwegian Lutheran church life.

What was the secret of that strange hold he had on all who saw him, heard him or who only read what he wrote?

A noble countenance he had, a winsome personality, a deep earnestness, clarity of thought, a charming simplicity of style. But back of all this, beneath it, and permeating it was that something which can be felt but not defined.

The first time I heard Kildahl's name mentioned was at the age of thirteen, when my brother wrote that he had a teacher at Red Wing Seminary by the name of Kildahl; he was a wonderful man, he said.

I came to admire Kildahl's courage. I remember how thrilled I was when I read his glowing report of a Student Volunteer convention which he had attended. This movement was looked at with suspicion by most Lutheran leaders at that time.

At the suggestion of Mr. S. H. Holstad I invited Kildahl to be one of the main speakers at the convention of the interdenominational Laymen's Missionary Movement, held in Westminster church, Minneapolis, in 1910. Kildahl accepted the invitation and made a powerful speech. The other speaker at the mass meeting was the noted Campbell White.

My admiration for Kildahl did not lessen when I read his lecture on women's suffrage in the congregation and another lecture on the work of evangelists. He favored both.

The following sketch by Rev. H. B. Kildahl, a brother of J. N., gives a vivid picture of the background of the two brothers:

A Tribute To A Good Mother

Our family had recently come from Norway. They came to Red Wing, Minn., Aug. 8, 1866, with the intention of going farther northwest to acquire a free homestead; but their resources were exhausted so they stopped in Goodhue county hoping to replenish them, and to move on farther. The

family consisted of father, mother and five children. They dug themselves in what was called a "dug-out" in the side of a hill on another man's land which was quite customary in those times. There were several families similarly situated so there was a little colony of dugouts in the valley.

The people were kind to the immigrants. Work was plentiful and although the wages were small, they prospered so that they expected soon to move to their original destination. Their great ambition was to acquire a farm of their own, and they had made all preparations to move, when father was taken sick and was confined to his bed. Naturally, he expected to recover soon, but there was no apparent improvement. One dug-out family after another moved away, but they stayed on in their dug-out. The care and provision for the family developed upon mother, who was equal to the occasion. Mother was a very practical, resourceful, and energetic woman, and did everything honorable that she could do. She wove carpets for others, collected rags and wove carpets for sale. The first work I can remember doing was to sew carpet rags at the rate of one pound per day. She constructed baskets of basswood bark and willows that she sold. Some years ago I visited that community and a farmer presented me with a basswood bark basket that he said he had bought from mother. She cleaned up the threshing places in the fall and thus procured wheat that she had ground to flour. She sewed work shirts and sold to the neighbors. In this way she managed to keep the wolf from the door of the dug-out which consisted of dirt walls, dirt floor and straw roof.

At one time, however, she realized that her small supply of provisions was dwindling at an alarming rate. She exhausted her ingenuity to make it appear plentiful in order that father should not be worried, but the appetite of the children quickly reduced her store. In spite of her best efforts at appearing cheerful her poverty seemed to assume crushing proportions. She had been able to bear it so far; but she could not bear to think of having to resort to begging from her neighbors. Finally one evening she had only enough left for a scant breakfast for father and the children, providing she did not eat any herself. She was at the point of despair. How could she ever hope that father would get well if she could not furnish him good and nourishing food? After preparing father for the night and the children were in bed and asleep, she broke down and wept, for her situation seemed so utterly hopeless.

As she sat thus, these words came to her: “Cast all your cares upon the Lord, for He careth for you.” She knew those words. They had been of great comfort and encouragement to her, but now they came to her with unusual force and power. She seemed to hear them so that she was quite startled by them. Why yes! Why had she not thought of that before? God had so often been her very present help in trouble. She dried her tears and began to pray to God for food for herself and her dear ones. She felt relieved as the assurance dawned upon her that her wants would be satisfied. She went to bed and to sleep.

The next morning, she seemed even more cheerful than usual. She prepared breakfast which she divided between us. She took her share, too, and told us that we would eat what we had and, if we did not have enough, we would eat more when our supplies arrived. She sang while she washed the dishes and put the room in order, but every once in a while, she peeked out of the only window we had.

It was quite an event when a team and wagon drove into our yard. Imagine our surprise then when about ten o’clock, Mr. and Mrs. Ditley Holstad drove up to the house. But mother was not surprised. He brought her a large sack of flour and some other provisions. “I did not know who it was, but I knew that somebody was coming,” she said. By chance, Mr. Holstad had visited us and become acquainted with us.

When the provisions were unloaded, he told his story. That morning as he was doing his chores, it had come to him so forcibly that he should bring us some provisions. At the breakfast table, he told his wife about it, and asked her to go with him, which she did. So God prompted those two kind people to set aside their work that forenoon and drive seven miles in order that He might care for us. Mother was happy, but she thought they were happier still. “I felt that I should do this,” he said, “but I did not know that God was sending me.”

After they had gone, mother wept again, but then it was for joy, and gratitude to her Father who took away her cares and cared for her. She told me that she also felt ashamed of herself that she wept because she seemed to lack food, when she could go to her heavenly Father. She felt that she was not placing her trust in Him and showing Him the confidence that she should, and that she had not realized how rich she was, when she had His unlimited supply to depend on.

Father remained bedridden for four years, but finally regained his strength to some extent, and their ambition to have their own farm was realized when they moved to the Maza community in 1883 and took up a homestead, where they lived until they died.
— H. B. Kildahl

In a sketch J. N. Kildahl writes: "It is not easy to get schooling for one who has no means. But if one absolutely wants to study and has health, there will always be a way out.

"As far back as I can remember, I had a desire to become a minister. But that I mentioned to no human being. What good would that do? There was not the slightest prospect that that could happen. I might just as well desire to be a king or make a trip to the moon.

"The last time I attended the confirmation class, the minister (Rev. B. J. Muus) took me aside and asked me if I would not like to study? '*Aa, du store verden*." Could the minister see straight through me? Did he know that I, the son of poverty, had been dreaming and imagining that very thing?

"The minister said that if I had the desire and the courage, God would find a way.

"Well, it so happened that after a while I could attend school. I studied nine years, six years at the college and three at the theological seminary. When I now try to figure out how I managed to get through, I do not understand it; but I do understand that the heavenly Father knew that I needed all this.

"It was not easy many a time; it was especially once when I saw no way out. The pocketbook was entirely empty. Nothing with which to pay for board; even the washerwoman could not get the few cents she so honestly had earned. It did not seem that the Lord wanted me to become a minister. Had I only had money to get home! Or, if I could get some work where I was! All doors were closed. Should I tell the president of the college about my situation? What good would that do? He could not make money. And did he not have worries enough anyway?

"Thus a week passed by.

"Then I received a letter with five dollars from a woman I once had learned to know, but I had never dreamed that she would send me money. A

couple of days afterwards there came a letter with twelve dollars. It was from a man who had taken a liking to me, but I did not expect to receive money from him any more than from the man in the moon. And inside three weeks from the time I was without money, I had received a third letter enclosing thirty-five dollars."

We are not left in doubt concerning Kildahl's spiritual experience. We have two testimonies, one by Dr. C. M. Weswig and one by Kildahl himself.

Dr. Weswig writes that while Kildahl was a theological student he was asked by a cousin, a young lady, if he was a Christian. He answered yes. He could not, however, get rid of the question. Had he spoken the truth? He wrote her that he had not told her the truth. He was often deeply depressed, and wept, when alone. At this time he often called on a student who did not live at the seminary, Johan Gustav Nielsen, a lovable and experienced Christian who had recently come from Norway. This man became Kildahl's spiritual guide, and he found peace with God. It was Nielsen who suggested to him that he read the writings of Carl Olof Rosenius. Not only as a student but later as a pastor he was a diligent student of this noted Swedish pietist, who had a determining influence upon his spiritual development and his preaching.

At his installation as theological professor, Kildahl tells in a perfectly natural manner of his spiritual experience. Not all theological professors feel called on to do that sort of a thing.

Toward the close of his address he stated that he had come to realize that the doctrines of the Lutheran church were nothing else than what God Himself had taught us in Holy Scripture. But he also wanted to add that his experience as a Christian, and which he daily was making, was in full harmony with the Lutheran doctrines. Were he to deny these doctrines, he would have to deny his life's deepest and most precious experience.

In his youth he had fallen from baptismal grace. But as the Word of God had been sown in his soul by his parents and as the Holy Spirit had been constantly working within him, he never found peace in a worldly life. He became deeply concerned about his soul's salvation. At first he tried earnestly to make himself better, believing that that was necessary before God could do anything with him or for him. His efforts, however, spelt total failure. He did not become better but worse. It seemed more and more impossible that he could become a Christian, but when his "mouth was stopped," then God showed him through the Gospel that "what the law

could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."

"Although I, as far back as I can remember," he said, "had learned that we are saved by grace, on the basis of Christ's merit, by faith alone, this came to me as a revelation. By grace I was permitted to comprehend some of that which formerly had been bid to me, namely what grace is, what it means to be saved by grace, and to be justified by faith. I now grasped what is meant by the words: 'All is ready.' And since that time it has been a passion and a joy to exalt God's free grace. I know of nothing more beautiful on earth than to preach Christ and salvation in Him."

Small wonder that a man with such an experience and such a simple, direct testimony won the confidence of people of like experience, no matter what church body they belonged to.

Though Kildahl was first and foremost a preacher, he served his church 21 years as an educator, 15 years as president of St. Olaf College and six years as theological professor.

The following notes are based on Prof. O. E. Rølvaag's excellent sketch, "Kildahl at St. Olaf College."

Kildahl had finished ten successful years as pastor of Bethlehem church in Chicago and was looking forward to the quiet life as pastor of Holden church in Goodhue county, Minnesota, where his spiritual father, B. J. Muus, had preached for a generation, when his church body, the United Norwegian Church, called him as president of St. Olaf College. When elected he went outside the church and wept. He wanted to be a preacher.

When in the summer of 1899 he moved to Northfield, the Old Main was practically the only building on the campus.

Kildahl was a good teacher, "says Rølvaag, very exacting, but he was a still greater president. When he returned to the college after a longer or shorter absence, the faculty and students"felt such a blessed sense of security."

Two great problems faced the new president, the problem of adjusting the curriculum to the changed views in the field of education, and the problem of finances.

Up to this time St. Olaf College had stressed classical education. The intellectual development attained thereby would, it was maintained, help the student to solve the problems he was to meet. He was to acquire the art of living nobly and richly. The new demand was that the student must gain ef-

ficiency and usefulness. It was far from easy for a man of Kildahl's strong idealistic view of life to make the adjustment. But he realized that the curriculum must be so shaped that it would attract students and not drive them away. For him the main thing was to get hold of the young people. After they had attended secular schools it was too late to influence them. Then, too, the college must not only prepare students for the study of theology, but must send forth teachers, politicians, physicians, business men, farmers and even housekeepers.

How Kildahl had to struggle! With mouth and pen. Nor was prayer neglected. Who does not remember his powerful addresses before the church conventions on co-education?

Equally powerful was he when he spoke on behalf of larger appropriations which the college must have in order to carry on. And almost always he won out. It was not because most of the delegates agreed with his views relative to higher education. It was because it was Kildahl who argued and pleaded. When Kildahl said it, it must be so.

Sven Oftedal

A cheerful voice came across the wire. “Have you noticed what a beautiful day it is?” I had. “Do you want to go with me to Minnehaha Park to see if we can find flowers?” I did.

The speaker did not say who he was. I knew. It was Professor Sven Oftedal.

He told me where to meet him. I came there first.

A street car came bowling along from the city and stopped at the park. I saw Oftedal coming from behind the car. He walked with short, quick steps, with a swaying motion of his body, swinging a cane as marching ahead of a band.

When he caught sight of me, he smiled that winning way of his which made everybody believe that he was their very best friend. He excused himself for being late and complimented me on being so prompt.

He suggested that we go over to a bench in the sunshine. It was a beautiful day. The young grass formed a soft carpet between the trees and on the hillside; light-green where the sun shone, dark-green in the shade. Buds were bursting and tender leaves waved in the wind. Birds were hopping from branch to branch, chirping, twittering, or flinging themselves up into the sunlit air in a burst of melody.

After chatting together for a while we walked down toward the river.

He began looking for flowers. Right here he and his sister, Laura, had once found a certain flower, he said. “There’s one!” he cried, happy as a child. He found more, still more. He called each different flower by name as he placed it carefully in a small box. What he was going to do with the flowers, he did not say; later I was to know.

When he had picked all he cared for, he looked at the tall trees and the swaying crowns and then at the Mississippi flowing majestically by on its way to the sea. Was it not wonderful, he said, that such a beautiful, quiet, secluded place could be found right close to the city, and was it not strange that so few people ever came here to enjoy the beauty of it all?

I can still see him standing there that lovely day in spring. We were in a sanctuary. The trees were the pillars, the blue sky was the dome, the wind as it rose and fell was the music. Was it possible that this was the learned the-

ologian, the great church leader, the man so many loved and not a few feared? Here was a soul sensitive to sounds, lines and colors, an artist, a poet who found peace and solace in the solitude of nature.

When we parted he told me he was going to give the flowers to an old minister at the Deaconess Home, a minister who had worked for years out on the frontiers. With a handshake, a bow and a smile he bade goodbye and hurried off with his flowers to a dying friend.

The young grass is again growing in Minnehaha Park, the flowers are blooming on the hillside and the river is flowing on the way to the sea, but Oftedal comes there no more.

When they speak of him as a church leader or a champion of this and that cause, I think of him as I saw him that day picking flowers for a dying friend.

It would have surprised some of Oftedal's adversaries had they been present at the regular congregational meetings in Trinity church. Instead of lording it over church and pastor, he was the personification of good will, gentleness and conciliation.

He was at his best as president of the men's society. He met all who entered the room with a smile, a pleasant word and a hearty handshake. There was one thing I liked about him — he was always himself, never tried to pose or to impress people. He made every man feel that he was his friend, his brother.

One evening he read the story of Joseph in the new Norse translation. He was an admirable reader, and the old story became a new story. Joseph was no longer a Hebrew boy, he was a Norwegian peasant boy. Oftedal himself was so gripped by the story that his voice broke and he wept.

I remember that at a business meeting of the club a certain man made a motion. Many a chairman would have shaken his head and said that the society could not undertake such a piece of work. Oftedal listened as though the man was proposing something of great value. The motion was seconded.

"Well, here is an idea. Brethren, what do you think of it?"

Another man pointed out that it was not a practical idea at all. When he was through, Oftedal remarked that it was always valuable to have things discussed. Others also expressed themselves as being opposed. Finally the man withdrew the motion.

Oftedal looked at him in a friendly way and remarked that perhaps that it was the wisest thing to do. But I am sure the man was pleased when Oftedal had stated that he did have an idea.

At that time I had a boys' club and had, upon Oftedal's suggestion, invited the members to come to the men's society. They came, huddled over in a corner and looked rather embarrassed. Oftedal went over to the bunch and soon had them smiling and laughing. He later gave a very entertaining talk which the boys enjoyed immensely.

I saw Oftedal at gatherings where noted men were present, some of them not church men. Cosmopolitan as he was he would fit into any gathering. More often I saw him at gatherings where common ordinary men and women offered prayers and testimonies. He would often sit there with closed eyes, sometimes nodding his head in approval and appreciation. When he testified or prayed he was a humble brother, simple, sincere, devout.

Once I was disappointed in him. It was shortly after my first book, "A Summer in Telemark," was published. I imagined that everybody was talking about the book and what a wonderful thing it must be to be born in Telemark.

Then one day while walking down Riverside Avenue with Oftedal, I expected him to tell me what a wonderful book I had written. All of a sudden he said, "Rønning, where did you come from in Norway?"

I remember the first time I gave a talk in Trinity church.

It was on Thanksgiving day. I told the story of the first Thanksgiving in America. I was a trifle nervous till I happened to see Professor Oftedal sitting close up to the front. He listened to me as though he had never heard the story before, or, if he had heard it, that nobody had ever told it so well.

The last winter Oftedal lived I called on him often. Almost every time I came he looked up with a smile and said: "Dette er da en stor og glaedelig overraskelse" ("This is indeed a great and happy surprise").

That winter I tried to teach a class of recently confirmed girls the Letter to the Ephesians. I can still remember the members of the class: Klara Holter, Ragna Sverdrup, Martha Blegen, Pauline Vetlesen, Ida Johnson and Gertie Christian. Some of these young girls were among the brightest Bible class students I ever had.

There were several passages in the Ephesians which puzzled me, so I went to Professor Oftedal for light. He was not feeling well that evening

and was resting on a sofa. He was glad to learn that I was teaching the Ephesians, sat up and answered my questions. He grew more and more animated, explaining the passages, sometimes in Norwegian, sometimes in English, telling what this and that word meant in Greek.

After a while the conversation or rather monologue turned to other subjects. I looked at my watch and jumped up. I came when it was seven o'clock; now it was nearly nine. I told Oftedal that I should have been at a trustee meeting at Trinity church at eight. He looked at me roguishly and said: "Ja, men du er da slik en pratemaker" ("You are so talkative").

As I turned to go, he arose, went with me to the door, stopped suddenly and fixed those piercing eyes of his on me. "Can you guess how many times I have read the Ephesians this winter?" If I should have guessed I would probably have said four or five times. When I did not answer, he said: "Forty times, forty times."

One evening with Oftedal stands sharply etched against the background of other pleasant memories.

On my birthday one year our home was crowded to capacity with young people. Mrs. Rønning and I were presented with a beautiful bookcase. There were seven talks by representatives of that many organizations to which we belonged. When the evening was far spent, Oftedal called but stayed only a few minutes. He said he would call some evening later on. He came.

I never saw him in a happier mood than that evening. He seemed to have thrown off every care. He related interesting experiences from Telemark, where he had been private teacher, and touched on many topics.

After a while he went over to the music cabinet. With a cry of happy surprise he picked up a volume, put it on the piano and beckoned to Mrs. R. to come and play. It was "Frithjofs Saga" by Esaias Tegner. With upturned face, shaking his head so the long curls danced on his broad shoulders, he sang through the whole book, ending with the tender farewell song.

Afterwards we had refreshments and late in the evening he said goodbye, thanking us for the wonderful time he had had. Oftedal thanking us!

When I now "celebrate" my birthdays alone, I think of that evening when our home was full of happy young people; then my thoughts go back to that memorable time when Oftedal spent an evening with us in our humble home. Again I hear that wonderful voice ringing through the house, accompanied by a rain of silvery notes from the piano.

Professor Sven Oftedal was born at Stavanger, Norway, March 22, 1844. Graduate of Oslo University, studied abroad, professor of theology at Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Died March 30, 1911.

Oftedal was not one of the university men from Norway who resided in America and lived in Norway. He had been in this country only five years when he was elected a member of the school board of Minneapolis and later also a member of the library board. He is given credit for the establishment of branch libraries. He took active part in temperance work and was the leader in the fight to establish patrol limits in the city.

But first and foremost he was a church leader. That will be dealt with in the sketch of Professor Georg Sverdrup, his lifelong friend and coworker. Upon Oftedal's death Wilhelm Petterson wrote a moving poem, the last verses of which are here quoted.

Nu synes mig, her blev med et saa stille,
Som naar en sangerflok er reist afsted,
Som naar en hostkveld, efter vennegilde
Hver krans er visnet, flaget halet ned.
Med vemod gaar vi ind; vi døren lukker,
Og lys paa lys i stuerne vi slukker.

Hans liv var som en davidssalme sunget
Med enkle toners rige harmoni,
Med trostens vingekraft i hoiden svunget
Skjønt livets bitre sorg laa skjult deri.
Hver tone var et bloddryp fra hans hjerte,
Men Gud alene saa hans dybe smerte.

Hans død var lig en harpetone rundet
I evigheden stilhed langsomt ud.
Han søgte, hvad vi ved han nu har fundet —
Sit hele liv hernede Gud, kun Gud.
Og handte det iblandt han tabte leden,
Saa fandt han den igjen i kjeerligheden.

Jeg kunde lzegge blomster paa din kiste;
Men blomsterl — aa, dem faar du mange af.
Saa vil jeg heller dig en rune riste
Og saette den som minde paa din grav:
Du var en mand, i strid, i fredens virke,
Den sidste af de store i vor kirke.

Georg Sverdrup

The day after I had told one of our leading churchmen a story about Professor Georg Sverdrup, he wrote me a letter thanking me for the story. "I knew Sverdrup only as my father's opponent," he said.

Well, that's the trouble, we get our information about men and things from secondhand sources.

Sverdrup's reserve forbade familiarity, but during the years I lived in the neighborhood of Augsburg Seminary and was a member of Trinity church, to which he also belonged, I became fairly well acquainted with him.

Almost invariably he asked me, when we met on the street, "How is your health?" As my health was always good, there was nothing more to say about that.

Once at least I failed to approve of his judgment — he invited me to become a member of the faculty. I was perhaps not a total failure in teaching children, but I would have been a failure teaching college students.

On my way to Lake Minnetonka one afternoon I sat with Sverdrup on the train from the city to Spring Park. I must have answered the question as to health in a rather unusual manner, for he laughed heartily. The rest of the way to Spring Park and on our way across the lake, he was one of the most charming conversationalists I had met. No man could be in a more pleasant mood. But the next day when I went down to the shore, where he was tinkering with his boat, I discovered that we had not become such great chums after all. Yes, he was fixing his boat and the weather was fine, he agreed. Well, that was that.

The first time I heard him lecture I was struck by the clarity and logical presentation of thought. He spoke with authority.

I had been a great admirer of his uncle in Norway, Johan Sverdrup, the great leader for a lifetime of the "Left," as he forced through one measure after another making for equality in the union with Sweden. Wherever you find a Sverdrup, there is a man who thinks straight and makes the words go home. The Sverdrup name has been one to conjure with since the day of Georg Sverdrup, the outstanding figure of the national assembly at Eidsvold in 1814. The father of the present sketch was a leading educator. His uncle, Johan Sverdrup, has been referred to — perhaps the greatest political leader

Norway has produced. An uncle, Jacob, was a member of the Norwegian cabinet and minister of worship and education.

At the age of 25 Georg Sverdrup came to America with a definite aim in View toward the realization of which he gave all his time and thought, his brilliance, his learning, his leadership till his dying day.

The aim was to develop free and living congregations in a free church in a free country; that called for the training of ministers who could go forth with a living testimony. His slogan was: "A free congregation and living testimony" ("En fri menighet og levende forkyndelse").

Other churchmen came from Norway to preach, to teach and to work along time-honored lines. Sverdrup came to blaze new trails.

Before he left Norway he was mentioned as a future professor of theology at the theological department at the university. Sooner or later he might have had any position within the gift of the State Church of Norway. That would have meant honor, comfort, the constant association with people of culture and refinement. He chose to cast his lot with the pioneers and the children of pioneers in a new and strange country.

He realized that conditions in Norway offered him no field for his views relative to the church and the training of ministers. Conditions in America, he believed, did.

One cannot think of Georg Sverdrup without thinking of Sven Oftedal. They constituted a remarkable team, though differing in temperament and interests, outside the church, as any two men could differ. They formed a warm friendship in youth which lasted through life.

One of the most dramatic incidents I ever witnessed was when Oftedal laid a wreath on Sverdrup's coffin in Trinity church, Minneapolis, and said in a voice of deep emotion:

"On my own behalf I will say the last farewell, thou soul of my soul, thou spirit of my spirit, half my life, my last friend. Now thou art gone and I am left in a foreign land, but what is our loss is thy gain. Soon I shall follow thee. Farewell again, Georg, and well met in God."

I remember Oftedal telling me that he and "Georg" had discussed their common aims and plans in Paris while cracking nuts.

Before trying to point out more definitely what those aims and plans were let me refer to Sverdrup's analysis of the churchly conditions in Norway and what it meant to be a conscientious minister there.

On one occasion he said that the congregation in the State Church of Norway had practically disappeared. The ministers were appointed to serve parishes established along geographical lines; all persons inside the boundaries belonged to the church and were baptized and confirmed.

It was a system where the minister was the only active person, the people were simply receiving what the minister gave them. Such a system, whether in Norway or among the Norwegian Lutherans in America, pleased the worldly-minded ministers and the worldly-minded congregations.

On another occasion he tells of a minister in Norway: "It was to him a daily torture of conscience to serve as a minister in the State Church when he considered how little a congregation corresponded to the pattern of the church in the Word of God. Several theological candidates preferred to become educators. They were unwilling," Sverdrup says, "to enter the ministry in the State Church as they found the whole organization and methods of work out of harmony with the essence and spirit of Christianity."

Oftedal and Sverdrup accepted calls from the Norwegian Conference as theological professors at Augsburg Seminary.

This school, Sverdrup said, has been founded "that the Norwegian spiritual awakening might find its way and work in the new land."

By a "free congregation" was meant, as I understood Sverdrup and Oftedal, that the local congregation is its own supreme authority under the guidance of the Holy Spirit working through the Word of God. The general church body is established for the purpose of providing cooperation between congregations in matters which. a local congregation cannot do alone. The annual conventions are advisory, not legislative.

By a "living congregation" was not meant a pure congregation where all members must be recognized Christians, but a congregation where the Christians constitute the dominant element and where spiritually dead members are born again and enter into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ and other believers and take part in the work of 'the congregation according to the gifts and the power and the light of the Holy Spirit.

There is nothing sensational about such views now, some may say. If so, and it is so, then it is to a great extent due to Sverdrup's work and influence.

"Living testimony" ("Levende forkyndelse") in preaching calls for men who have had a spiritual experience, who are converted and consecrated men, whose main but not only study is the Word of God. To send forth such men as ministers and missionaries and to encourage and develop such testi-

mony by the laity, men and women, was Sverdrup's objective with Augsburg Seminary.

A physician told me that upon graduating from the college department at Augsburg he went to Sverdrup and said that he did not know whether he should study theology or medicine. "Study medicine," said Sverdrup. Another student came to Sverdrup and said that he was convinced that it was the Lord's will that he should study theology. "I am the one to decide that," said Sverdrup.

Augsburg Seminary did not neglect the classics, but they were studied to the extent and in the manner they would prepare a student for the study of theology. They were means to an end and not an end in themselves. In this field, too, Sverdrup blazed a new trail.

I could not see much difference between the spirit at Red Wing Seminary and Augsburg Seminary. The spirit of a school is not created by the faculty but by the students. The students at both schools were at first young men — and some not so young either — who had been converted in Norway or in this country and who came from congregations where there had been revivals and where men and women prayed and testified.

I noticed one difference: Red Wing Seminary was more American and Augsburg more Norwegian. I have in mind the academy and the college. At the time I came in contact with Augsburg Seminary, it throbbed with all sorts of interests: temperance agitation, singing, the writing of poetry. One of the greatest poems written by a Norwegian in America is the following which Wilhelm Pettersen wrote in memory of Georg Sverdrup:

Nu rammet du haardt, du grumme dod,
Nu tog du vor bedste mand.
At tolke vor sorg, vort savn, vor nød,
Det er der ingen som kan.

Den sorg som ikke har lise og bod,
Den fik vi ved dette slag.
Det savn som gnaver ved hjertets rod,
Vi beer paa fra denne dag.

Vi graeder ikke, vort tab er for stort,
Vort saar saa ulaegelig dybt.
Det er, som om solen med ett gik bort
Med ham i den skumle krypt.

Vor leder og lzrer, vor bedste ven
Baade i vel og ve,
Var der blit raad til at faa ham igjen,
Hvad gav vi vel ei for det.

Men nu er han borte, hans dagverk endt,
Og kranse høiner hans grav.
Tilbage staar som et monument
Den gjerning som Gud ham gav.

Den reistes ved kraft og ved
Aandens drift I kjaerlighed dyb og varm,
Den sprang fra Guds egen hellige skrift
Ind i hans egen barm.

Han leved i sandhedens funklende skjar
Sit liv fra dag til dag,
og ordet faldt baade her og der
Med skarpe sviende slag.

Han vandred sin mesters tornede vei,
Han fulgte de blodige spor,
og derfor havde hans tale ei
De søde, leflende ord.

Hans liv laa høit, lig en sollys tind,
Der haever sig over sky.
Nu skuer forklaret hans øie ind
I saligheds morgengry.

Vi graeder ikke; vi baerer ham blot
Saa varlig, saa stille hen.
Hans hjerte brast — aa, vi ved det godt;
Gud hentede selv sin ven.

Laur. Larsen

For years I was prejudiced against the Norwegian Synod and its ministers.

I sensed, though, that not all the Norwegian Synod ministers could be such a bad bunch. J. N. Kildahl, who was a product of Norwegian Synod schools, was looked upon by the Haugeans as one of their own, and B. J. Muus, a Synod minister, was an intimate friend of Østen Hanson.

It was not easy to get next to a Synod minister. There was a peculiar aloofness and reserve. I thought they suspected me of being a heretic.

During a recess at the convention of the Norwegian-Danish Press Association at the Odin Club in Minneapolis, I walked over to a window and looked at the city.

An elderly, white-haired, handsome man came over to me. Very pleasantly he said, "You are Mr. Rønning, are you not? You are editing a very fine paper."

It was Laur. Larsen, editor of "Luthersk Kirketidende" and former president of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa. Several years later I told this incident to his son, Lauritz Larsen. "Father was that way," he remarked.

When I had edited *Ungdommem Ven* 25 years, I received three letters of appreciation. Two were from Norwegian Synod ministers, one from a United Norwegian Church. Rev. A. Mikkelsem was for many years a subscriber to papers I edited. He often sent me a friendly note. When I started the Nortbland Weekly, I was surprised when Rev. J. A. Thorson, Byron, Minnesota, and Rev. H. Halvorsen, Westby, Wisconsin, were among the first subscribers.

Since that time I have learned to know and respect many ministers and laymen in the former Norwegian Synod. Some of them are among my best friends and supporters. The other day four ministers of that affiliation stepped up and subscribed for *The Friend* at the close of my address.

I am sorry that I did not meet more of the old leaders in that church body; then I would have written about them, too.

It might have done me good to know them and I hope I would not have misrepresented the Haugeans if they had learned to know me. I might have told them that I liked chanting, had nothing against a clerical gown and that I believed in the Augsburg Confession even though I had not read it.

Years ago I gave a lecture on the beginning of Norwegian Lutheran schools in America before a literary society in Minneapolis. I was therefore very interested in reading Professor Larsen's sketch, "Nogle gamle minder" in "Symra" and now recently the splendid volume by his daughter, Dr. Karen Larsen, "Laur. Larsen: Pioneer College President," published by the Norwegian-American Historical Association.

In his sketch Larsen says that in 1857, two years after becoming a theological candidate, at the age of 24, he was surprised in reading in the newspapers that there were six vacant charges among the Norwegians in America. When he received a call from one of these charges he accepted it and left for America in the autumn.

The first Norwegian Synod ministers soon felt the need of more ministers. It was out of the question to start a school of their own where young men could get the proper training; that is first a classical education and later three years of theology. They believed that a minister in this country should not get along with less of an education than in Norway.

After careful investigation the Synod decided to send students to St. Louis, Mo., to be educated in the Missouri Synod. A Norwegian professor had to be secured. Rev. Laur. Larsen was called. When the school in St. Louis was closed on account of the Civil War, the Norwegian Synod decided in 1861 to establish its own theological seminary, and chose at the suggestion of Rev. V. Koren, a beautiful piece of land near Decorah, Iowa.

The school, however, was not to begin at Decorah that year. At Halfway Creek, about thirteen miles from La Crosse, Wisconsin, there had been erected an unusually large parsonage, which was vacant at that time. A school at Halfway Creek was opened September 6, 1861, with two teachers, Professor Larsen and Professor F. A. Schmidt. The latter was efficient in the English language, and the next year, at the convention in Goodhue county, Minn., he delivered a sermon in Norwegian. The three first years the salaries were $600 with free house.

I am taking the liberty of quoting a number of paragraphs from Dr. Karen Larsen's book:

"Schmidt brought a piano with him, and when I went to see him during his last ten years, he sat down at the piano and played, with the touch of a true lover of music, a well-known classic. 'I often played that in Halfway Creek. Those were happy days,' he said."

Here is a charming description of life at the school:

"The students lived in close daily contact with professors and their families. They all ate at the same table and were in many respects like one large family. And they were all young together and full of the joy of living. It was fun, thought the boys, to have the professors join in their sports, but if they could amuse the professors' wives, who came out to watch them, that added even more exhilaration to their games. By their kindness and gentle breeding these two women added to the primitive life of the little community a note of refinement, which was not forgotten by the impressionable young boys.

"Although the professors' wives took a lively interest in the affairs of the big family, they probably felt more keenly than anyone else the privations of the cramped quarters in the parsonage. There was little opportunity for privacy and there were practically no facilities for the many activities that belong to the making of a normal home. As most of the books of the Larsens were still in St. Louis, it was difficult to make their one room look like a home. Physically Mrs. Larsen was not fitted to endure the hardships of pioneer life, and in the fall her grief at the death of her younger child was a drain on her strength and courage. Yet she was persistent in her efforts to make the most of her surroundings. She and Mrs. Schmidt became close friends as they worked and planned together how to maintain to some degree the type of life to which they were accustomed, and to keep their families properly clothed when there was almost no money to be had. They were not without their rewards, and probably they too, as I know their husbands did, looked back with pleasure to the 'good old days' at Halfway Creek.

"In the early part of June the year's work was ended. The little band of students hired a farmer to take their trunks to La Crosse; most of them walked to the city, and then went each his way. In the autumn many were to gather in Decorah, but few ever saw again the modest first home of their college.

"For three years the college was conducted in a four — story building in the town of Decorah intended for a hotel.

"During the summer of 1863 the oak woods and the hazel brush on the college grounds began to fall before the ax.

"The college property was a mile from the center of town, west of the little river winding its way through the valley. A few rods southwest of the brick yard there had been staked out the site of the building which was to rise on the highest point on the grounds. The eastern front faced a gentle

slope and commanded a View of the town. To the north lay a level stretch of dense oak woods, while on the west, a steep bluff fell away to the river bottom where the stream made a bend, partly encircling the college grounds. From the point of natural advantages, it was a fine campus.

"On June 30, 1864, the cornerstone was laid, and the institution hitherto unnamed was called ‘The Norwegian Luther College.’ This was the first great festal day of the Norwegian Synod. The people formed a procession on the courthouse square, opposite the temporary home of the school, marched through the streets of the little town to the campus and, standing within the foundation walls and among the brushwood and building materials, took part in the festive program. All the ministers joined in lifting into place the cornerstone.

"During that summer, as the massive walls of the building were gradually rising, every step was eagerly watched by the little group of friends in Decorah. When there was not time to go to the campus, they went up on a hill where the courthouse stood to see what progress had been made. On a summer evening, one of them noticed above the unfinished walls a rugged pine, sharply outlined against the sunset sky, stretching out its branches in the shape of a cross. He thought of the vision of Constantine. ‘By this sign thou shalt conquer.’ The tree, which stood on the bluff beyond the river valley west of the college, was for years pointed out to the young people, even after it had lost its significant shape. Now it has long disappeared, but the story still lives.

"When the Synod decided to proceed to the actual building, Larsen was placed on the committee because it was necessary to have someone who was on the spot. Naturally most of the work fell on him. His final report for the building committee has an almost heroic ring. The matter-of-fact account reveals how obstacle after obstacle had been pushed aside and every difficulty conquered till the great task was completed.

"The dedication of the Luther College building on October 14, 1865, was the greatest event that had ever been celebrated among the Norwegian Lutherans in America. Never had so many Norwegians been gathered on this side of the Atlantic. It was estimated that six thousand took part in the celebration and that from fifteen hundred to two thousand were fed at the long tables loaded with food which had been donated by the farmers in the vicinity. The congregations within a radius of twenty or thirty miles attended en masse, and from farther off there came great throngs by team, by

stage and by train. It was an impressive procession that wound its way to the building on the hill.

"People had heard that the building was large and had cost a good deal of money ($5,000), and they had read in the *Emigranten* that it was the most beautiful building in Iowa. Yet they were surprised. Was it really so large and beautiful, and was it really theirs? A solemn joy filled the memorable day, and as the farmers drove home in the dusk they could see the building illuminated with countless candles and the motto, *Soli Deo Gloria*, gleaming from the tower." (So far Dr. Karen Larsen.)

Basing my opinion on the impressions received by seeing, hearing and reading Professor Larsen, on what his daughter writes about him and the testimonies of many of his students, he was a kind-hearted, generous, painstaking, thorough and scholarly man; a man who worked steadily and patiently for long-ranged objectives. It was not easy for him to adjust himself to changing conditions in the field of education, but when he had to yield, he did so as the Christian gentleman that he was.

While Professor C. K. Preus was president of Luther College, I called on him on my first Visit to Decorah. I give credit to the Synod men for one fine thing — they know how to receive a stranger. When I expressed a desire to see the museum, he asked me to go with him and under his guidance I had an opportunity to look at the wonderful collection of objects from pioneer days.

The present president, Dr. Ove Preus, invited me to give two addresses at Luther College. My fears vanished at the graceful way in which he introduced me. It was an inspiration to face the student body and to speak one day on Abraham Lincoln and the next on Bible reading. I was told that Professor Knute Gjerset was too weak to be called on, but he sEnt for me. I was told not to remain more than a few minutes. He made me stay an hour; we had coffee together and he spoke with enthusiasm about the projected volumes on Norwegians in America. His history of Norway and his history of Iceland are valuable contributions.

Bersvend Anderson

"I was more than half worn out when I came to America," wrote Rev. Bersvend Anderson in 1914, three years before his death.

And yet this more than half worn out man became one of the most outstanding home missionaries for nearly 39 years!

Another striking thing about this man is that he attended school as a boy only five weeks. To this should be added one week's schooling preparing for confirmation.

Anderson was a life-long student of the Bible. He knew the Word of God and he knew what people needed, and he gave it to them with an ever burning passion for souls — did this man who had gone to school only six weeks.

The following sketch is based mainly on one which appeared in "Nord-Norge," edited by Julius Bauman:

Bersvend Anderson was born December 7, 1821, on the farm Kroken in Bardo, Tromsø *stift*, Norway. His mother died at his birth, and the child was so weak that they postponed the mother's funeral that mother and child might be buried at the same time. A childless married couple reared him.

In his childhood, he says, he was left to God and himself. His foster father built himself a homestead in the woods. Here the boy roamed about as he pleased. He calls himself "en vildbasse" by nature, with a sanguine temperament. In the wild nature he found free play for his childish ideas. Among the thousand thoughts, the one that always remained with him was that he wanted to become a preacher.

In a poem he tells how he stood on stones and stumps and preached, to cows and sheep while tears streamed down his face.

Even in his tender years he felt the power of good and the power of evil. At the age of ten he was fully convinced that without conversion he was condemned. But he also knew that if God was given a chance to do His work in a human heart, it would lead to salvation.

He was hungry for knowledge, but all doors to attend school were closed. Nothing but the Catechism and the Explanation were given him to read by his kind but unwise foster parents. They thought that was all he needed. Otherwise he was left to himself. Finally he was able to borrow

books. Among the simple-minded Haugeans in Bardo there were hardly any but religious books, which met their spiritual needs. Of books of common information and enlightenment there were none. He learned to write mainly through his own efforts. According to the American saying he was a self-made man, but this did not satisfy him. "God has in His infinite mercy and patience been my teacher," he wrote.

Between the years 15-18 he gradually came to spiritual clarity. The awakening started by Hans Nielsen Hauge had taken deep roots in his parish. He was gripped by this movement and it influenced his whole life and work. At the age of 20 he began to travel and preach in company with an older brother. The old Haugeans kept strict discipline with the newly converted who felt an urge to witness. They were not allowed to travel alone, but had to go with an older and experienced Christian.

During the winter months he took part in fishing in Lofoten and in the summer time worked on a farm.

At least 20,000 men went to the Lofoten fishing grounds. Life was rough and tough in more ways than one. The scum of society came there to prey on the fishers.

For several years he worked as an evangelist in the northern part of Norway. He visited the most out of the way places. He went where none else went. He traveled long stretches on skis, across high mountains, from valley to valley. He was often in great danger. People were amazed at his courage and zeal.

In the year 1876, at the age of 55, he immigrated to America with his wife and eight children, and settled near Crookston, Minn. There was great scarcity of ministers, and Anderson began to preach to the settlers, but he was not in position to administer the Sacraments, to confirm and to marry. He was urged to let himself be ordained, but refused for some time. Finally he yielded and was ordained minister in the Hauge's Synod in June, 1878.

He considered himself as "nød-hjaelp," that is he served as minister as a matter of necessity, until younger and better trained men could take over the work in the congregations. As soon as this was possible, he resigned that he might work free and unhindered. He traveled almost continuously, summer and winter. It was no easy matter to travel in those days. Roads were bad and bridges were poor, and there were no railroads as yet in North Dakota. But somehow or other he always found his way. A team of oxen and a lumber wagon were usually his means of transportation. In the summer time he

often got stuck in the mud, and it was quite a job to get out of it. The mosquitoes were a pest and plague to man and beast. In the winter time it often happened that snowstorms obliterated every trace of roads; then Anderson put on his skis and with a bundle on his back started off cheerfully across the prairie and sought out the settlers in their snow covered shanties. And whenever he stepped across the threshold, he was received with joy. Messages were sent to the neighbors that a meeting was going to be held. The Word was preached and the Sacraments administered.

Often he was in grave danger. Once when he was visiting a Norwegian family in Fargo, N. D., a gale blew down the house and crushed it. All, with the exception of a girl, escaped injuries.

Thus he traveled for 18 years, from 1876 to 1894. During sixteen years he was home missionary in the Hauge's Synod in the Red River Valley and as far north as Turtle Mountains, close to the Canadian boundary. As far as is known he had no fixed salary. But that did not matter. His family made their living on the farm and what he needed was provided by voluntary gifts. Sometimes he probably received some support from the home mission.

In this manner he performed a wonderful work. He did not pay much attention to organizing congregations. He preached the Word of God and administered the Sacraments and left it to the people to express their wish to have a congregation organized. Where he served the people in those days are now large congregations.

In 1894 the 73-year-old servant of the Lord started out on a long journey. One of his sons, a son-in-law, and other relatives left that spring for Alberta, Canada, took land and formed a colony. They were among the first Norwegian settlers in Canada, and here Anderson became the minister. On the 3rd of November, 1894, the first meeting was held in the home of his son, Peder. This was undoubtedly the first Norwegian Lutheran service held in Alberta and in the whole of northwestern Canada east of the Rocky Mountains. During the next four-five years he was the only Norwegian Lutheran minister there, and for seven years the only Hauge's Synod minister. He was thus continuing the work he had carried on in Minnesota and North Dakota.

But old age could not be staved off. The cold winters were especially hard on him. Did he quit his work? Not he. Always interested in making things, he built himself a sled covered with canvas and made a small stove

of sheet iron. All this he made with his own hands. With the faithful old "Sam" hitched to the sled, with smoke curling cheerfully from the chimney, he started off though the cold might be quite severe. In this manner he was able to meet his appointments. But old and weak as he was, this sort of a life was not without dangers. One winter night he came to a place where he expected to get lodging till next morning, but the houses were empty, the people having moved away. As it was far to the nearest neighbor and the night was getting dark, he dared not go any further. He got the horse into a shed and he himself sat in the sled all night.

Another time darkness fell on him before he reached his destination, and he lost his way. It was late in the fall and pitch dark. Then he decided to let "Sam" have free reins. He was not disappointed. After a long time they came to a house, but the folks did not understand Anderson's language. He was given lodging over night, and next morning he discovered where he was and again found his way.

Younger men came and took over the work, but Anderson continued to travel and to preach till he was nearly 90 years old.

In 1915, in his 94th year, he attended the convention of the Hauge's Synod in Grand Forks, N. D. It was the Mayville circuit, his old field, with Rev. N. Løhre as a sponsor, who invited him and who paid his expenses. He was very reluctant about making the long journey but finally decided to go. He was the guest of honor of the convention. It was touching to see the many ways in which people showed him their love and respect. Many shook hands with him who said, "You baptized me, you confirmed me, you married me, etc." He did not know them, but when they mentioned their parents, he knew who they were and where they had lived. Folks from "Norland" who were present presented him with a cane with a golden head. Rev. I. A. Johansen, who made the speech of presentation, said that he knew Anderson did not care much for gold in his old days, but as he soon was to walk on streets of gold, he should not mind if here on earth he walked with a cane with a head of gold.

Well, he thought it vanity to walk with such a cane, but he used it during the convention for the sake of those who had given it to him. Later he used it but seldom.

Now Anderson has gone to his eternal home and is "walking the streets of gold," but the cane is still hanging at Bardo, Alberta, Canada. Here Anderson died, June 14, 1917, in his 96th year. It was said at his funeral that

Bersvend Anderson had had many friends in his life and no enemies. He was loved and respected by many, because he loved his fellowmen and gave his life to their service. Therefore, his name will live long in their midst.

Gjermund Hoyme

If I were to give my impression in one word of Rev. G. Hoyme the first time I saw him, I would have said, “Høvding” (“Chief”).

He was one of the most distinguished-looking men among the Norwegians in America. Tall, straight, dignified; eagle eyes, long black hair. When he entered an assembly, people did not see anybody else. “Høvding.”

When he “let go” he was undoubtedly the most powerful speaker we ever bad. There will be none like him for generations, if ever, for that at times almost flamboyant language of his has gone out of style. It suited him. He needed wide-spreading wings in that majestic flight of his.

I saw him often and heard him speak many times after he had been elected president of the Norwegian United Church, which was the result of the union in 1890 of the Augustana Synod, the Conference and the Anti-Missourians. Hoyme, more than anyone else, was instrumental in bringing about that union. He did not rest with that. On his death-bed he penned a message to the annual convention of his church, pleading with the brethren to “remember the cause of union.”

I have translated — I am afraid I have not done justice to the original — parts of two of his greatest speeches. His style abounds in rich imagery, musical alliterations, high-sounding words, epigrammatic sentences, and striking idioms.

At a meeting of church leaders from several church bodies he gave the introductory address. It reveals his passion for clearing away all hindrances in the way of a larger fellowship.

"Brethren, may I be permitted to point to another stumbling block which is a great hindrance to our people’s spiritual welfare and progress in the way of salvation. I mean the lamentable church dissensions which have raged among us until this day. Should it not be high time to clear them out of the way? Am I mistaken when I call these dissensions a stumbling block? Or have they possibly served to guide our people in the growth of grace?

"I know there are those who claim that the dissensions were necessary, that God’s honor had to be defended, and that they have led to the searching of Scriptures. There may be some truth to this claim, but have not perhaps many fought more for their own definitions than for the truth in God’s

Word, defended more their own honor than God's, and searched Scriptures to find weapons against adversaries rather than to attain a clearer spiritual discernment?

"Let every awakened conscience give answer! May I ask: What benefit have we had of the strife? How many souls have been saved thereby? How many hearts healed? How many lost souls led back to the living way? How many sorrowing have been comforted? How many tears have been wiped away? Oh, let me rather ask: To how many has it been a cause of eternal damnation, how many hearts has it torn asunder, how many has it led astray, how many has it caused sorrow, and how many tears has it wrung forth?

"Go out on the battlefields and look at the slain of the children of the daughters of Zion, see if you can count them. Go out into the congregations and look at the cutting and splitting asunder. Enter the congregational meetings — listen to accusations, insinuations, threats; see how the ship of church is being battered and broken against the rocks of dissension — and behold how the waves of partisanship are playing with the wreckage and spit the froth all around, while Satan's mocking laughter mingles with the moaning of the dying as they are hurled against the ragged rocks and sink back and are swallowed by the deep."

"Am I painting the picture in too dark colors? No, I have not the ability, I have not colors to paint the black reality. It is but a faint outline presented in a simple frame."

Pleading for understanding and union, he closes the address:

"Our people will it! They are tired of the strife. Our young people will it! They pledge themselves to love the church of their fathers, to preserve their childlike faith, to bless our memory. The mothers will it! They are testifying to that end with prayers and tears. The little children will it! They stretch forth their hands for help by throwing them around our necks. Pastors in home and pastors in church will it! Foreign fire on their altars has long enough been burning, and they yearn for the fire of the Lord to ascend from the Temple's holy of holies. Christ, the great High Priest, wills it! With His help we shall succeed. We can do all things through Him who strengthens

us. Forward in God's name! Forward to worthy deeds! Clear the way for God's Church! Forward toward the reddening dawn. Forward to fellowship! Amen."

On the last night of the Nineteenth Century he delivered another memorable address:

"Just now sounded a cry from the watch-tower: 'Stop thou restless generation, thou art standing at the end of a century.'

"It grew quiet for a moment, millions turned to the clock in the Tower of Time and lifted their eyes. The hand moved across the sign of the midnight hour; the clock struck twelve strokes.

"The old century sank into the arms of Eternity, the Ancient of Days wrote with His almighty finger: Nineteen Hundred and One. Then was heard a murmur as of distant thunder: 'The end of the Nineteenth Century.'"

"We are the children of the Nineteenth Century. It bore us and bred us to become its heirs.

"It is fit and proper to remind ourselves of its greatness and glory; for great it was, splendidly equipped to perform glorious deeds.

"Terrible indeed were the conditions in the Old World at the close of the Eighteenth Century. Dark it was as usual in the Pope's Palace. Even the light Luther had placed on the candlestick flickered in the wind. 'The Enlightenment' from France sought to extinguish it with swollen phrases about virtue and providence. France dethroned God and placed a harlot on the pedestal.

"The chastisement fell upon France from the God who will not be mocked. The nation was forced to punish itself. The Marseilles sounded over headless bodies, blood flowed over the Guillotine and the ruins of Versailles and the Bastille."

"The conditions were better in the New World. Washington had struck the arm of the king, stretched across the ocean to rob a people whose Christian

faith was grounded in the Bible and in Puritanism, a people who fought for freedom.

"In the regalia of Liberty, with a wreath around its head, the American Republic marched forth at the dawn of a new day with promise of better times and a welcome to the old generation's young generation.

"Then paled and vanished the Eighteenth Century."

Hoyme continued with keen analysis to evaluate men and movements which had made the Nineteenth Century so great.

It was a century of Foreign Missions, the Gospel spreading from continent to continent, from shore to shore. Bible societies carried the Word of God to all parts of the world; orphanages, hospitals and old folks' homes were built. Education was brought Within reach of the millions; great was the power of the press.

It was the century that saw the liberation of slaves, God choosing spokesmen for the cause of freedom — Wilberforce, Garrison, Lincoln — Lincoln the greatest of the great. It was a century of inventions; steam and electricity became the servants of humanity, and men and women in civilized countries were freed of heavy burdens by labor-saving machines.

"Farewell, thou conquering Nineteenth Century! Farewell! Future generations will place a crown on thy brow, and soon the bard will appear to sing thy eternal praise. Farewell! Farewell!"

"We salute thee, Twentieth Century!

"What wilt thou bring our people, our homes, our church, our nation? Oh, thou wilt give the answer day by day. year by year. That is perhaps the best for us. But we divine that significant times are in store for us, great for good, great for evil.

"In both cases the signs are clear to the anointed eyes. The Word of the Lord shines like a star in Jesus' name over the birth of a new century. That

gives hope to the wise that humanity will be guided to achievements which will crown coming years with splendor and honor.

"But wisdom is not blind to the signs which portend opposition by the prince of darkness, who, disturbed by the Light of the Word, has long brooded over plans to extinguish the Light of the World.

"Again unbelief lifts its head. It not only sneers at and throws overboard the Word of the Lord as in days of old; science searches in its own light the Book of Books, shakes its head and grunts its doubts, tearing leaf after leaf till nothing is left for the healing of the hurt of the nations.

"Higher criticism, as it is called, flings about with big words concerning truth and the search after truth. With Pilate it asks, 'What is truth?' and then delivers to death Him who is the Truth. Then it washes its hands in the water of innocence and writes 'mene' — weighed and found wanting!

"From the time of Enlightenment the new day has inherited the power of intelligence which promised to raise mankind to greater heights and wider horizons.

"But signs — easy to read — tell of an ignonimous fall. Materialism threatens to drag the soaring spirit of man down into a quagmire, where firm foundation is not found. Creation is worshipped and the Creator is forgotten — and the soul of man is fed husks for daily food.

"The counseling together of the Great Powers at the Hague concerning world peace through arbitration gave heartening promise of the end of war and promise of peace and goodwill between the nations of earth.

"But the lightning and thunder of the armaments of the Great Powers, making defenseless people fear and tremble; the manufacture of cannons, the building of armored fleets, the erection of fortifications, the bowing and scraping of diplomats, with plans of conquest in the back of their head, presage something else than peace from the Hague.

"Assuredly there will be a clash in this Twentieth Century as never before between evil and good, between darkness and light.

"For when we interpret the signs of the times in the light of the Word, we may say, though the gift of prophecy is not ours, that there is being burned and brewed and baked to a Belshazzar feast which will usher in the coming night with the drinking of the wine of lust in consecrated vessels from the Lord's temple, ending with fear and fright and the finger of God writing on the walls of the world's palace.

"Shall this Feast of Death be celebrated to its end in this, the Twentieth Century?

"Perhaps. Who knows? If so, it is the last century.

"God knows!

“Sufficient for us to know that the Ancient of Days lives, that Light and Truth shall finally conquer, fully and completely, over darkness and deceit; that He who stands in the center of the centuries, the Christ, is soon coming to set free His kingdom, transplanting it to a newborn world, where right-eousness dwells, and where He will rule as king throughout eternity, for His is the kingdom, His the power, His the glory, forever and forever.”

Hans Gerhard Stub

No church leader was better qualified to bring about a union of the Norwegian Synod, the Hauge's Synod and the United Norwegian Church than was Dr. H. G. Stub.

Born at Muskego, Wisconsin, in 1849, he knew from personal experience and observation the struggles of pioneer life; as a boy he came in contact with the different church tendencies and their leaders; he studied in Norway and later at Concordia College and Concordia Seminary of the Missouri Synod, and at Leipzig University; he was an unusually sympathetic man; he loved peace but was ever ready to defend what he thought was right.

With the Norwegian Synod at one extreme and the Hauge's Synod at the other, one high church, the other low church, a merger of those two would have been impossible, but occupying the middle ground was the United Norwegian Church, at that time an exceedingly vigorous and aggressive church body. "Union of all the Norwegian Lutherans in America" was one of its slogans.

Dr. Stub, the president of the Norwegian Synod, had more than one problem on his hands. In the Norwegian Synod there was a large element hostile to union. This hostility was encouraged by the Missouri Synod. Stub was well qualified to take up the fight against his former friends in the Missouri Synod. He succeeded in swinging most of the Norwegian Synod people toward union. On the other hand it was up to Stub to convince the representatives of the Hauge's Synod that the Synod people were not such a bad lot after all. His sympathetic nature, and honest and earnest efforts to understand the Haugeans made a favorable impression on them. They liked him, they trusted him, and he did not fail them.

Preaching is the mission of the Stub tribe. Dr. H. G. Stub's great grandfather was a preacher, so was his grandfather, so was his father. His mother was the daughter of a preacher and way back there was a bishop. This bishop was married to a minister's daughter.

Dr. Stub was a minister; so is his son, J. A. O. Stub, pastor of Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, and so is the other son, H. A. Stub, Seattle, Washington.

Several years ago Mrs. Rønning and myself spent a day at the old and celebrated Muskego settlement in Wisconsin. We also saw the place where Dr. Stub was born. This memorable visit made me interested in knowing more about the Muskego settlement as it was seen by Stub as a boy. I therefore read eagerly his sketch, “Fra fars og mors liv,” which was printed in “Symra,” 1907. I give a brief resume of certain parts of the sketch.

On the first of July, 1848, his parents landed in New York and went from there to Milwaukee. They were advised to go to Walker’s Point where one Reinertsen had a house half finished.

When Rev. and Mrs. Stub arrived at Reinertsen’s house they found a crowd of homeless, helpless, bewildered newcomers. When the word spread among the people inside and outside the house that a Norwegian minister and his wife were there, they gathered around them and strong men and strong women wept for joy. Some of them had lost dear ones on the journey and had seen them lowered into a watery grave. Stub and his wife shook hands with all of them and spoke words of comfort and cheer.

"To Muskego my father and mother set their course from Milwaukee with a hired livery team, with Even Heg’s hotel as the destination.

"Finally they reached Wind Lake and Heg’s famous hotel. Mr. Even Heg met them on the lawn and did not give them a particularly warm welcome. He and Rev. Dietrichson had clashed, and he thought undoubtedly that my father was a continuation of Dietrichson.

"Heg showed the newcomers a bed on the second floor, which he himself had hammered together of oak planks. This was the place of honor. The driver was assigned a flat bed beside a lot of other beds spread on the floor. There were no partitions. Before my parents retired they had a long talk with Heg. His mood changed. He became their friend and continued as such from that time. With lighter hearts they went upstairs. But when my mother could not sleep at all, it was due to the fact that the big bed was a favored dwelling place of what an American lady designated as ‘wall-animals.’

"The next day they were naturally to inspect the new parsonage, about which Heg had told them. It was located about two miles from the church; a small loghouse in a clearing in the woods. Close by was a slough. No neighbors near by. Only Indians, rattlesnakes and mosquitoes. Per Jacobson was plastering when they came. This was the place where they were going to live! Then, said my mother, who certainly did not require much, but who knew that during my father’s frequent journeys she would remain there en-

tirely alone, 'No, my dear friends, I don't dare to live here. Let me live together with other people and share a room with someone in the congregation.'

"They all found this reasonable enough. Temporarily they remained with the Heg's.

"As it was of importance that the minister should have a study, my mother thought that she would prepare him a great surprise. One day, with the help of Heg's daughters, she carried water from the lake and washed and scrubbed the empty Heg house on the Indian Hill, which was in a very dilapidated condition. My mother pasted newspapers on the walls, put in table and chair and even some shelves for father's small library. When father came home, mother led him to the new study, which aroused his undivided admiration. But the glory of it did not last long. One night there broke loose a terrible storm with rain, thunder and lightning. The windows were smashed and the water rushed in. Next morning they saved what the storm had left. Heg's Indian Hill as a studio remained only as a saga."

Near the Indian Hill lived four families, the "Four Leaf Clover," as Rev. Stub called them. They were Peder Jacobson, Syvert Ingebrigtson, Ole Haagensen and Ole Andersen and their, wives. They were all kindred souls. One of the women, Gunhild Ingebrigtson, especially, wielded a fine Christian influence. The young minister and his wife spent many a precious hour with these families. They found time to meditate on and talk about the one thing needful.

On the 23rd of February, 1849, was born Hans Gerhard Stub.

One of the most interesting parts of Dr. Stub's sketch is the following story of the criminal from Norway who became the white angel in the "Region of Death." The reference to the four families and the fact that the converted criminal found a home at the parsonage and became the pastor's best help seem to indicate that Christianity was practiced not only among the followers of Elling Eielsen.

"One evening in the fall of 1850 my father was sitting in the parsonage at Muskego in conversation with Rev. A. C. Preus. A man was announced who wanted to talk with my father. A tall, handsome man greets him and hands him a letter which he asks him to read. Father returns to the room

where Preus is sitting and hands it to him. When he had read it, he exclaims: ‘Can this be possible?’ He had heard about this criminal in Norway. Father goes again out to the man and invites him to enter. He is rather bashful at first. But he told his story.

"He came from Lillehammer. At the age of 15 he had been present at a trial. One of his friends had been arrested for theft, but declared that he was innocent. During the cross examination he got so mixed up in self-contradictions that he finally had to admit that he was guilty. Young Hansen was sad and chafed on account of his friend’s helplessness. If he had been in his place, he should not have been caught in such self-contradictions. In a spirit of bravado he commits theft. He was arrested, tried and found guilty. One step, so fraught with consequences, led to other steps. Again and again he was punished, till he finally became one of the most noted burglars in the country. He landed in prison in Akershus. There he sat 16 years. Then he was converted especially through the efforts of pastor Wexel. Stensrud was the prison chaplain, but Wexel often visited the prisoners and mainly those who were considered incorrigible. The cell on the second floor was 12 feet high and the light came from the top. There was a small table in the cell. On it Wexel had left a Bible and some tracts. But at first Hansen had shoved them aside. He would not listen, nor read, he was tired of everything, tired of life.

"But he could not but open the Bible. He read about the four kinds of soil. What especially struck him were the words at the close: ‘Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.’ Constantly he heard an inner voice: ‘To whom is this said? Is it said to me? Have you not ears? How is it with you?’ The more he read the more he was convinced what an ungodly man he had been. He passed through a terrible crisis. He almost went crazy, jumped up with all his might, ran his forehead against the wall. He could hardly sleep, would scarcely eat, cried and screamed, almost despairing. But Wexel did not give him up.

"In the Lord’s good time he grasped the word about Jesus as the friend of sinners. He found peace for his conscience and became happy in his faith in his Savior. His cell resounded with the songs of praise of a saved soul. His conversion caused a sensation. The strong agitation for his pardon, in which all the ministers in Oslo took part, resulted in his freedom, with the understanding that within a short time he was to leave the country. He said that it was as if an invisible power led him on his way.

"What a lovable man had not this former criminal become! He had but one mission in life — to do good. He carried for a while the mail between Muskego and Milwaukee and had no other means of communication than his own feet. He had a small shop where he made and sold tinware. But in reality he was Muskego's nurse.

"Muskego certainly needed one. Fever raged year after year in the homes. But the greatest visitation was that of cholera.

"There were three great cholera epidemics during the years 1849, 1850 and 1852. Father and mother lived through these three. All the oral and written descriptions of the ravages of the epidemics are shocking. No wonder that Muskego was called the 'Region of Death.' Already during the first epidemic many members of the congregation fell as victims. A hospital was established with room for 50, and at some times it was nearly full. The man who during the last epidemic volunteered as nurse was Hansen. As a comforting angel he went from one to another with temporal and spiritual help. He was the minister's best assistant. Sometimes there died three, four, sometimes more, one right after the other. Funerals were out of the question. The dead were wrapped in a white sheet, put in an ordinary box and driven by ox teams to the cemetery on the Indian Hill. The settlement was almost depopulated during these epidemics. Many left for other settlements.

"Finally the powerful Hansen also succumbed, but not to cholera. Father and mother had made a trip to Koshkoning. In the meantime Hansen, who lived in the parsonage when he was not at his shop, was taken sick with typhoid. There was a girl in the parsonage and she had him placed in the bedroom of the minister and his wife. When they returned they found him there. After a long and hard sickness he died. Mother nursed him all the time.

"In the parsonage there was also cholera. A hired man was attacked and mother nursed him. She must in a peculiar way have been surrounded by an angel watch."

Besides being a human interest story this sketch brings us face to face with the hardships endured and the sacrifices made by the pioneer pastors; it also reveals the lovable and sympathetic character of Dr. Stub's parents, and which he inherited and developed in such a large measure.

M. G. Hanson

Rev. M. G. Hanson was one of the gentlest men I ever knew, and I knew him well. When my brother and sister went to China, Hanson became my advisor. I met him often, he wrote me frequently, I spent one-never-to-be forgotten summer at his home.

Has it ever occurred to you that the men and the women we love to remember, and that we do remember, are not those who always stand up for their rights, who give people a "piece of their mind," but it is the gentle folks. They win out in the long run by love, courtesy and consideration.

I know of no man who so completely won the confidence of people by his mere appearance as did Hanson. He was a handsome man, with large, luminous eyes which always expressed love of mankind. I believe that Hanson could go into the pulpit, take a good look at the congregation, pray the Lord's Prayer and go down again and people would say, "Wasn't that a beautiful service?"

Hanson's gentleness and strength were harmoniously bound together into one organic whole. He was lenient towards others, but strict as a Spartan with himself. On rare occasions, when pushed to the wall, he could strike swift and sure, but the occasions were so rare that it may be said that heart and hand were always open to bless and give.

I can still see him the way I saw him the first time. It was on the lawn of the Østen Hanson parsonage in Goodhue county, when Østen, the father, and his two sons, Martin and Hans, walked side by side, three splendid specimens of humanity.

I have forgotten what he said to me, but I never forgot the friendly way he looked at me. The last time I saw him his face was wet with tears. I was giving an address in the Hauge's church in Red Wing, Minnesota. Hanson and his wife sat right in front of me. Toward the close of the address I said that there was one man in the audience that I owed more, in a spiritual way, than any other man. I looked at Martin and his eyes filled with tears. Afterwards he shook my hand, looked at me in that friendly, intimate way of his, and whispered a "God bless you."

Hanson was always a busy man. During the years he was my advisor he was president of the Hauge's Synod and also served several congregations

and was a member of many boards and committees, but he found time to write me at least once a month. Sometimes a few lines, at other times several pages. Often the letter closed with these words: “It is now late in the night.” Many letters were written on the train or at railroad stations.

There was not much preaching in the letters, but always words of encouragement and good cheer. I doubt if there was another university student who had a father, mother, pastor or friend who wrote them so many and so wonderful letters. I guess my brother knew What sort of advisor to give me.

When the time came that I felt I had no right to teach parochial schools it was only natural that I told Hanson so. In the sketch, “Rethinking What I Was Taught,” I have written what he did for me in that indescribably, gentle and wise way of his.

Many others would have debated with me or given me long lectures what to believe. Hanson’s testimony as to his own personal faith was given in such a natural and winning way that my heart cried out, “Oh, that I had what you have!”

That was a wonderful summer I spent at the Hanson home in Grand Forks, N. Dak. Mrs. Hanson treated me like a son, and the children, Adolph and Mabel, became good friends of mine. Adolph is now a celebrated physician in Faribault, Minn. He was a queer little chap, always investigating and experimenting. He was not physically strong, but as a boy he read books on physical culture and by sheer will power and regular exercise he developed an iron constitution.

Mabel expressed her admiration toward me by calling me “Stygge Rønning” (“The mean Rønning”). Once when saying grace, she began, “God bless (then she looked at me and added) ‘Stygge Rønning’!” Mrs. Hanson laughed aloud and Hanson shook his head sadly but with a smile on his face. “Aa du Mimy, du Mimy.”

I came late to a church concert. When Mabel, sitting up in front with her mother caught sight of me, she cried out so everybody could hear it, “Stygge Rønning.” She had gotten my number all right enough.

Many years later when I came to Kenyon, Minnesota, I heard that the Hanson tribe was holding reunion at Mrs. Hanson’s home. I went there and entered the house without ringing the door bell. When all of a sudden I stood in the midst of the crowd, I was greeted with a lusty shout. Then from the corner came a teasing voice, “Stygge Rønning.”

When spending that summer in Grand Forks, Hanson had recently bought two bronchos. They looked tough. I washed them and combed them and fed them till they fairly shone. All the Hansons loved horses and none more so than Martin. Often in the evening he would take me for a ride out in the country. I was scared stiff as the bronchos reared and plunged, but Hanson was in his element. When outside the city they went like a streak of lightning. Then Hanson's face was one big, broad smile.

Few men knew M. G. Hanson better than Professor H. H. Elstad. In a sketch written for "Ungdommens Ven," December, 1915, Elstad says that he and Hanson started as students at Red Wing Seminary in the fall of 1880. Hanson was lively and cheerful but with an undertow of seriousness which made itself felt wherever he moved. The students were to arise at five in the morning and be in bed at 10:15 in the evening, but there was nothing to prevent Hanson from lighting the lamp at three or half past three in the morning and sit in bed and study. Hanson soon became a leader and the best speaker among the students.

He was born June 11, 1859, and died October 8, 1915, at the age of 54.

At the time he was confirmed he was fully determined to be a Christian, but through association with frivolous companions he grew careless. In the spring of 1880 he had to rush off to Red Wing Seminary where his brother, Hans, was seriously sick. Hans had during his sickness found peace with God and wasted no time in telling Martin about it. Martin was deeply shaken, broke with his companions and after a fierce struggle also found peace with God. The next fall he became a student at the seminary.

After having been in the ministry a few years he served as theological professor for some time but went back into the ministry. He was offered the opportunity to go abroad and study and prepare himself still further for teaching theology, but he always felt that preaching was his mission. Yet, when conditions were such at the seminary that a man in whom the people had confidence was needed as president, he reluctantly accepted the position.

For many years Hanson was the leader in the Hauge's Synod. It was no easy task, for the Haugeans were not easy to lead. The synod at that time had a considerable number of strong laymen, and when these laymen said no, that was the end of it. Hanson was so popular and so wise that in the long run he swung the laymen to his side by gentle suggestions. He would

respectfully suggest to the brethren to consider carefully and prayerfully such and such a proposition.

Late one night I got out of my car and walked into the cemetery at Aspelund, Goodhue county. A cemetery is no favorite place of mine at night, but I would have no fear where Martin Hanson was sleeping the long, last sleep. In the bright moonlight I read his name on a monument. Again I could see that noble face and hear that friendly voice and I could say with the leading character in Maeterlinck's "Blue Bird," as he stood amidst the graves at midnight and lifted his radiant face toward the starlit heavens and said, "There are no dead."

E. Kr. Johnsen

I like to remember Professor Johnsen the way I saw him at the close of an autumn day on the campus of Luther Theological Seminary. He was standing under an oak tree near his home. The setting sun shed a glory on the many-colored leaves; every now and then a leaf came floating slowly to the ground.

When he caught sight of me he called out, "Ah, there is 'Ungdommens Ven'." We sat down on a bench. He was unusually quiet, just sat there and looked at the falling leaves. Did he have a premonition that he, too, would soon be like a falling leaf?

Then finally he turned his large, expressive eyes to me. I stated my errand. I was going to recommend to the readers of *Ungdommem Ven* that they study the Gospel according to Matthew with special reference to the kingdom, and then read the Acts and some of the Epistles, and study the development of the kingdom. Did he not think it would be a good thing to give the readers a sketch on the kingdom idea in the Old Testament?

While I was talking there came a new light into his eyes. He was seeing something more beautiful than the glory of that autumn evening. He was seeing the king in His beauty. was seeing the glory of the kingdom which has no end.

Yes, he said, we must go back to the Old Testament. Would he write a brief sketch? Oh, one brief sketch would not be enough; a series of sketches would be necessary. He would think about it. The subject appealed to him.

And while forms and colors grew dim in the gathering twilight and leaf after leaf floated slowly to the ground, he continued to speak with growing enthusiasm about Christ's kingdom. "Thou shalt see the king in his beauty."

I was told that in his last lecture he used this expression several times. He used the English translation. It appealed to him more than the Norwegian translation.

One Thursday afternoon he came breezing into my office with a batch of manuscript. He would soon bring me the rest. The following Monday morning I heard that he had passed away Sunday night.

I was wondering if he had finished the sketches. If not, it would be a great loss. He had come to the place where the people of Israel returned

from the Babylonian captivity.

Some time later I called on Dr. C. M. Weswig and told him that I was anxious to know if Johnsen had finished his manuscript. He suggested that we call on Mrs. Johnsen. We three went up to Johnsen's study. I had spent many a delightful hour there.

Mrs. Johnsen said that she had left everything on his table undisturbed. On the table, right in front of his chair, was a neat pile of manuscript. I went up to the table and looked at it. At the bottom of the page on top of the pile I read, "Now the kingdom of God was there in Jesus Christ." The line was underscored. It was the last line he ever wrote. "Thou shalt see the king in his beauty."

Prof. E. Kr. Johnsen had not been in this country very long before he took a fancy to *Ungdommem Ven* and began to write for it. He found it a medium better to his liking than any other publication, because he could write with full freedom.

Johnsen was an awkward, angular, breezy, independent chap. I can see him coming shuffling into the office, his large eyes shining, his face wreathed in smiles. Handing me a pile of manuscript he would say: "Her ska du faa ei go skjinke" ("Here I am giving a good slice").

When I was fifty years old Johnsen made a witty speech at the banquet held in my honor. He said that I could not be kept in a stall, and being hard on the harness, he was going to present me with an appropriate gift. It was a pair of suspenders. My friend, Dr. C. M. Roan, was toastmaster.

Johnsen had Haugean background. His father was a friend of John Haugvaldstad and had taken part in building the first "bedehus" in Stavanger. At the University of Oslo, where Johnsen studied, the theological faculty was at its height. Caspari and Gisle Johnson were, it is true, getting old, but Petterson and Bugge were at their best. Pettersen wielded a great influence as a liberating force. He tried to harmonize science and theology. He urged that a student should test everything before accepting or rejecting it. Johnsen urged his own students to do the same. That is more than many other theological teachers dare to do.

I have just gone through somewhat hurriedly the sketches Johnsen wrote about his trip to Europe. I published them later in book form, same format as *Ungdommem Ven*. It would make an ordinary book of 500 pages.

He covered a wide range of subjects. He had a remarkable knowledge of the history of each country visited and of the literature, art, artists, poets,

theologians and statesmen of each country. He was undoubtedly one of the best informed men among the Norwegians in America.

He devoted 27 pages to Søren Kierkegaard. I have read considerable of what others have written about Kierkegaard. It seems to me that Johnsen had a firmer grasp of him than any of the other Kierkegaard scholars.

Rather crudely, I am afraid, I translate one paragraph:

"One of the most illustrious names Denmark has presented to the world is that of Søren Aabye Kierkegaard. Had he been born in one of the great culture lands or had he written in a language more widely read, he would have won world fame and his writings would have been studied by the thousands, for there are few thinkers who surpass him. He was a genius of the highest rank and his works will furnish material for study down through the centuries. Undoubtedly his name will in future years be more widely known than has been the case to this time. German scholars have begun to translate him and he is finding many admirers in Germany."

Johnsen was a prophet of no mean order. Everybody is talking about Kierkegaard now. A theological professor should be ahead of his time and not behind.

His greatest work was "The Letter to the Hebrews." It had been his ambition for years to write a book on the Hebrews. It was one of his great disappointments that so few people bought the book. Well, we are still pioneers and children of pioneers.

I have read many books on the Hebrews. Johnsen's surpasses all I have read. It should be turned into English. It is a gold mine.

May I give a sample of what the book offers? Johnsen made his own translation. I have tried to render his translation into English of the four first verses and of his introductory comment on the same.

"God, who of old spoke many times and in many ways to the forefathers through the prophets, has now in these last days spoken to us through his son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom he also has made the world. And since he is the reflection of his glory and the express image of his person and upholds all things by his all-powerful word, he has — having himself purged our sins — seated himself at the right hand of majesty on high. And he has become so much greater than the angels as he has inherited a more excellent name than they. — Heb. 1:1-4.

"These festive-sounding sentences no translation can reproduce without their losing a great deal of their majestic and wonderfully artistic form in

the original.

"The Letter to the Hebrews is like a grand cathedral and the first verses constitute the beautiful portal, where the main outlines of the sanctuary have found expression in concentrated form.

"Through this glorious portal we look into a sanctuary. A marvelous sight meets our eyes. Everything earthly becomes insignificant in comparison. It surpasses anything made by man as heaven sweeps above earth, as God's thoughts tower above our thoughts. This temple sprang from the mind of God and was fashioned by His almighty hand.

"Along the wall are paintings of men of days of old: prophets, singers, and heroes in God's army. Up in front, at the altar, we see God on His throne, surrounded by a shining host of angels and saints. A song of jubilation rolls like waves under the high dome.

"But forward, in the middle aisle, moves the High Priest, clothed in matchless splendor, with the blood of atonement in His hands, till He stands in front of the Mercy Seat, bring — ing an eternal sacrifice for the sins of the world, and then takes His seat on the Father's right hand.

"The sight is overwhelming."

It must be admitted that the Norwegian Lutherans in America can point with pardonable pride to great achievements. But there has been produced very little real theology or even religious literature characterized by originality and skill. Dr. Herman A. Preus, Dr. L. W. Boe and Dr. J. O. Evjen have somewhat recently called attention to this fact. Among the reasons for this dearth of contributions among all the Lutherans in America in the field of theology may be mentioned: Our theologians are too busy teaching; there is lack of intellectual freedom; we have not a theologically minded public.

The church bodies or their publishing houses should make it possible for some of our theologians to devote sufficient time to write, and we should not tell them what conclusions they must arrive at. Clergy and laity would buy books and read them if they dealt in an independent and vigorous manner with vital topics. It is fine that we raise a lot of money and that we can stage great conventions, but if we continue to chew cud there will be no growth and no progress.

C. J. Eastvold

Rev. Eastvold was a winsome man; to see him was to like him, to know him was to love him.

When he stepped into my office, which he often did when he was president of Southern Minnesota district, the room grew lighter. He came so quietly, looked so friendly. When he asked, "Well, my friend, how are you?" no matter how I had felt before, now I always said, "Just wonderful."

We were students at Red Wing Seminary at the same time; he was studying theology and I was not. Eastvold was everybody's friend. We might make fun of other theological students — some of them were funny — but never of Eastvold. We might doubt the sincerity of some other student, but never his sincerity. He was a living, radiating testimony whether he spoke or was silent.

When I often heard him preach in later years, I marveled at the change which had taken place in him. As a student he was one of the most fiery preachers I had ever heard. He preached till he was almost black in the face. There was often more power than light. There were no pauses, no modulation of voice; just one hot stream of lava. But in the literary society, he was cool and deliberate. There it was not a question of winning souls, but of winning the debate.

The time came when he preached with poise and ease, but always with great earnestness. He was an exegetical and evangelical preacher, rightly dividing the Word, but beneath all was a persuasiveness which vibrated in his voice and radiated from his face.

On one occasion when he addressed a mass meeting of ten thousand people, he paid a tribute to Norway so beautiful and gripping that the stands seemed like one mass of white.

Carl Johan Eastvold was born at Jaederen, near Stavanger, Norway, March 19, 1863; came to America at the age of seventeen; studied at Red Wing Seminary and one year at Chicago Lutheran Seminary. He was president of the Hauge's Synod from 1904 till 1912. He served on the Union Committee from 1905 till 1917, from the time that Hauge's Synod was instrumental in re-opening the negotiations looking toward union of the

Hauge's Synod, the Norwegian Synod and the Norwegian United Church, till union was effected in 1917.

As the Hauge's Synod never had engaged in a doctrinal controversy with other church bodies, its representatives on the Union Committee served as a sedative. It was a question of formulating theses which expressed what everybody believed and left each group able to say that it did not give up anything. It is remarkable how easy it is for church leaders to agree when laity calls on them to agree. On one occasion when there had occurred a deadlock Eastvold's points were made the basis of the discussion.

As president of the Southern Minnesota district, the numerically strongest district in the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America, he won the hearts of all elements by his fairness, sound judgment and not the least by his gentleness. I don't think I betray a confidence when I say that there was a time when he passed through a great anguish of soul. In trying to keep peace in the large family, he felt that he had not been true to his convictions and his attitudes. He poured out his soul to close friends and came out of the struggle a still stronger man, fearing God but no man.

But he longed to get back into the ministry, and back he went. The ministers in the former Hauge's Synod were first and foremost preachers, "sjaelesørgere." They were not administrators; they certainly were not politicians. As a "sjaelesørger" Eastvold had few equals and no superior. I can still hear him say, "Well, how are you my friend?"

George Sverdrup

> Now you struck so hard, O cruel Death,
> Our best man was struck down.

Thus wrote Wilhelm Petterson upon the death of Georg Sverdrup; it could have been said with equal force upon the death of his son, George.

When one learned to know him well, he was a prince of a fellow. Once he took me with him to Glen Lake and back again. I thought of the pleasant trip with his father from Minneapolis to Lake Minnetonka many years earlier. As the father had done most of the talking then, his son did most of the talking now, and both of them radiated the finest fellowship, wit and humor.

Sometimes George called me up to meet him at Dayton's tea rooms to drink coffee. Then he unbent and we had a glorious time together. It was on one of those occasions I told him the following story which he enjoyed immensely: There was a little girl who spent a good deal of the time playing with the children of faculty members and who knew by first name many of the students. One day she called at our home, right across the street from the Augsburg campus. All of a sudden we heard a great commotion as the fire wagons came rushing up the street and stopped right in front of the Old Main. The girl shot down the stairs and went like a streak of lightning across the street. It was not much of a fire; just some rubbish had caught fire. Professor Georg Sverdrup came walking slowly over to the fire, the girl almost knocking him over in her haste. In his peculiar drawl Sverdrup said to her, "Go home, little girl, go home; we cannot even have a fire at Augsburg without you being here."

When talking with the younger Sverdrup I had the same feeling as when talking with his father. They seemed to see straight through a person with those steady eyes of theirs. My great thoughts seemed all at once foolish and flimsy. Then it was better to listen to them. As a straight line is the shortest distance between two objects, so the Sverdrups always in their thinking and speaking and writing found the shortest distance.

For some twelve years he and I were on the Board of the Free Church Hospital Mission; from the time it was organized till it was dissolved. This board raised money toward the support of Rev. William Hagen so that he

could give most of his time to visiting hospitals, and sick and old poor people in their homes. Sverdrup acted as president and treasurer all the time, as far as I can remember. I wrote most of the appeals for money.

There was not much business to transact, but whatever there was, was transacted under his leadership with directness, fairness and dispatch. When some member talked without saying much, Sverdrup listened patiently and attentively, but firmly and with tact led us to the question before us. When all had expressed themselves, he summed up the whole in a few words and suggested a solution. That was the end of the discussion.

Rev. Hagen was a very remarkable and lovable man. He spoke rather slowly when telling about his work and about this patient and that patient, but it was worth listening to. Hagen was a philosopher and psychologist, a mystic and a poet. His prose was about the finest of any Norwegian- American writer. His sketches covering some of the individuals he became acquainted with in his work as a hospital missionary — atheists, agnostics, believers, homeless and helpless — were literary gems. Then I noticed more than once that Sverdrup's face would twist and that there was an expression of infinite sadness in his eyes.

Time and again I asked him to write for *The Friend* on some Old Testament character, his favorite subject. Finally he promised to write on Job. I did not know then that he was "carrying death in his bosom." Only he himself, his relatives and closest friends knew that he was a marked man. Shortly before his death I spent an hour with him at his home.

He and his wife had recently returned from a trip to Michigan. There was nothing to indicate that this was to be the last time I saw him. I was surprised at the enthusiasm and with what beauty he described the scenery they had passed through.

He was his father's son; the same native dignity, the same reserve, the same straight thinking, the same love of freedom. He was more of an American than a Norwegian, and he sensed the problems of a new day as an American. Perhaps I should have said as a cosmopolitan, for that he was.

George was not like his father, a blazer of new trails. Where his father went straight toward his goal, the son had often to feel this way, for he lived in a different day, a day of adjustment.

After graduating from South Side high school, he studied at Augsburg College, then at the University of Minnesota two years. In 1902 he earned a master's degree from Yale University and returned there to study from 1903

to 1905. During 1905 and 1906 he held the Thayor fellowship at the American School of Archeology at Jerusalem. In 1908 and 1909 he studied at the Universities of Berlin and Leipzig, and from 1914. to 1915 attended the University of Oslo.

In 1908 he was elected vice president of Augsburg Seminary and was appointed president in 1911, holding that position to his death.

At first he seemed weak and timid and there were those who took advantage of him, but the time came when he showed plenty courage and when his voice rang out with clarity and conviction. Before hardly anybody was aware of it, he was the leader in the Lutheran Free Church. Not by diplomacy, not by scheming or compromise, but because he .had a firmer grasp of the principles of the church body and had the patience to work for long-range objectives.

When he became president of Augsburg Seminary he faced a difficult position. That he was a Sverdrup had much to do with his appointment. Few people knew him. He did not have his father's religious, social and political background. He was to a great extent a product of American and European institutions of learning and had hardly associated at all with the laity in the Lutheran Free Church.

George Sverdrup was an intellectually honest man. Many other men would have tried to win the confidence and good will of the people by using the old slogans. Not he. He did his own thinking and gave expression in his own way to his thoughts, but being intellectually honest he would not have accepted and retained his position had he not in his heart been in full sympathy with the Free Church principles and views. Gradually clergy and laity sensed this, and during the last years before his death, they waited for him to say the word, and that settled it.

I quote from an article which appeared in The Lutheran Messenger:

"When Dr. Sverdrup took charge of the school in 1907, Augsburg College and Academy were strictly preparatory departments to the theological seminary. Young men desiring to follow some other profession than the Christian ministry were often compelled to get their college education at some other institution. Four years spent at another school usually severed a young man's connection with the church of his fathers. And so during the war years Dr, Sverdrup broadened the scope of Augsburg's curriculum to include the sciences and educational courses. The English courses were also broadened.

"In the early twenties the need for making provision for the young ladies of our churches to receive a college education within our own borders came to a head. Once more Dr. Sverdrup gave his sanction and support to a progressive step and as a consequence the young ladies of our churches may be given a college education together with their brothers.

"As a result of these two forward looking steps a large number of our young people have been entering upon teaching careers in the public schools of the Northwest.

"Also during the middle twenties Dr. Sverdrup sanctioned Augsburg's entrance into intercollegiate athletics. This forward step, like the others, was taken against a considerable opposition, but Dr. Sverdrup knew the mind of youth and saw the needs of the future. This athletic program has recently been modified under the direction of James Pederson, and once more Dr. Sverdrup gave his support to an experiment which claims to be an advance upon all present day college athletic programs.

"Thirty years have taken their toll of the faculty members at Augsburg. Only two of the faculty of 1907 remain. But Dr. Sverdrup has during the years gathered about him a faculty of which Augsburg may well be proud. They have come from various backgrounds, schools and even races. However, there is a sufficient number of Augsburg trained men on the faculty to maintain the traditions of Augsburg and the Lutheran Free Church. From time to time Dr. Sverdrup has brought men from abroad to teach at Augsburg."

K. C. Holter

It was my privilege to work by the side of Rev. K. C. Holter for 26 years.

I started by correcting the mailing list of "Ungdommens Ven" and addressing envelopes. Then I translated a short story and gave to Holter; he read it and suggested that I translate more stories. I wrote a sketch, and he suggested that I write more sketches. I handed in stories and articles selected from other papers. "Let me have some more," he said. Then after a few years of this kind of cooperation he placed my name in the paper as editor without saying anything to me about it.

The reason why two men so different in almost everything could work together in the finest harmony for a quarter of a century, I think was that each one of us was big enough to give up his particular plan or scheme when realizing that the other fellow's plan or scheme was the better one.

Time and again when I made a suggestion he would say that it might be worth thinking about. The next day he would come over to my desk and say, "You had better go ahead with what you mentioned." Or he would ask me a question concerning the plan, and the plan went hay-wire at once. When he made a suggestion, it was usually so well considered beforehand, that there was no need of discussing it.

Holter had an uncanny ability to read the signs of the times. It was not a matter of intuition or inspiration. He was a brainy man, he sought information from the most reliable sources, he seized upon the essentials, was not swayed by emotions, thought logically and spoke and wrote with deliberation. I would take his judgment in preference to that of any other man.

He never criticized me; he never rubbed it in. I think he reasoned, that I should learn by my mistakes. He did not want to be bossed, and he did not stoop to boss others.

His most outstanding characteristic was his faith in God and in God's plans and purposes. One of his favorite texts was, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." His greatest hero in the realm of religion was Abraham, "the father of the faithful." Once when he preached on the incident in the life of Abraham when ordered to sacrifice his son, Holter rose to the heights of impassioned eloquence. His own faith in God and in God's

plans and purposes made him an optimist. When others said that the night was coming, he said that it was the dawn of a new day. He was a tower or strength, this gentle, patient, kindly, cheerful man.

He was a Haugean by birth and by a second birth. He studied theology under Sverdrup and Gunnersen at Augsburg Seminary, but served congregations only in the Hauge's Synod. He was always a friend of the cause of union and served on many inter-church committees and commissions.

Holter was one of the first Norwegian Lutheran ministers in America to champion the cause of temperance by devoting a good deal of his time in lecturing. I remember the two first times I heard him speak. I had been in this country only a few months when he preached in my brother's church in Faribault. During his sermon he exclaimed, "An old woman on the North Dakota prairie who has the Holy Spirit in her heart has a greater insight into the counsels of God than an unconverted theologian."

The next time I heard him be delivered a temperance lecture. There was an old man in Faribault who always looked so sad that if he had walked down town with his hat in his hand, people would have thrown coins into it. I never saw him smile. I should not have been surprised if his favorite book was "Lamentations." He sat right in front of me, with his eyes on the floor. Then Holter told how Edison, even as a boy, was always experimenting and that when he heard that chickens came out of the eggs when the hen sat on them, he got hold of some eggs and sat on them. The old man in front of me burst out laughing, then stopped all of a sudden, but I noticed that his shoulders were shaking every now and then.

K. C. Holter was born December 19, 1851, at Nannestad, Romerike, Norway, and came to America at the age of nine together with his parents and six brothers and sisters. They finally settled in Fillmore county, Minnesota. Three years later the whole family was attacked by typhoid and the father died, leaving a poor widow and ten children, none of them twenty years old.

Mother Holter was a woman with indomitable will power. With a team of oxen she brought the whole family through rain and slush, first to Pope county, Minnesota, and the next year to Norway Lake, Kandiyohi county. They were practically without means. Two years in succession the grasshoppers destroyed their crops. All the children were eager for an education, but only two of the boys, Christian and Karl, were able to get away to school. K. C. Holter died November 7, 1923. At his funeral I closed my

brief address by saying: “These flowers will soon fade and weak words of ours will soon be forgotten, but his name will remain, under God, a tower of strength and a fountain of inspiration to all who knew him and loved him.”

Anne Marie Holter

Anne Marie Holter, the wife of Rev. K. C. Holter, contributed many poems and sketches to *Ungdommens Ven* and for some time did most of the editorial work. At one time when her husband was on the point of giving up the publication, she pleaded with him to carry on. He did.

Mrs. Holter was an unusually gifted woman. On the mother side she had several noted relatives. Both her parents were of the Haugean type. There was much reading and singing and even laughter in her childhood home. Ministers and professors and students and lay preachers would go out of their way to visit the home.

Anne was the oldest child and at an early age showed marked ability. Rev. O. A. Bergh, who confirmed her, said she was the best confirmand he had ever had. She had "Pontoppidan's Double Explanation" at the tip of her tongue and could give the answers not only in the words of the book, but in her own words. She had committed to memory a large number of hymns and I don't think she ever forgot them.

She was married at the age of eighteen and having to spend a good deal of her time alone while her husband visited distant preaching places, she devoured his small but well-chosen library. She had mastered Mortensen's "Ethik" to such an extent that she could discuss the subject intelligently with any theologian. After the family moved to Minneapolis she read history and literature and biographies and could hold her own in a conversation with anyone. I have met few people who had a finer appreciation of the best in literature.

She had but the meagerest kind of schooling, but so great was her thirst for knowledge, so retentive her memory and so unusual her faculty of expression that a college graduate, who did not know her, would get the impression that she must have several degrees.

Of course the fact that she had received no formal training was a handicap. It seems strange that so many of the pioneers who had much to say were denied the opportunity to develop more fully their gifts, while so many of this generation have received the training but have nothing to say.

At first she was sensitive to criticism; what she had written must not be altered either by herself or others — it might bleed to death. Later she in-

vited criticism and revised what she wrote till it finally was an adequate expression of the best she thought and felt.

As indicated, *Ungdommem Ven* saw the light of day at a time when there was a real renaissance among the Norwegian people in America. The drudgery and privations of pioneer life were becoming somewhat of a memory; people were tired of church strife and yearned for a better understanding; there was more time to read and more to read; choirs and young people's societies were organized; large inter-synodical song festivals were held, and the temperance movement swept like a wave throughout many congregations.

The Holter home in Minneapolis became a meeting place for writers, lecturers, musicians and missionaries. Mrs. Holter was a charming hostess and entered into the new movements with enthusiasm. It was my privilege to be a "member" of the Holter family at that time for three years. Things are pretty dull and dead now compared with those days. Mrs. Holter's background, her sensitive soul and her deep Christian experience made her a good exponent, through her writings, of the stirrings of that day. She was born May 4, 1863, at Klaabo, Trondheim, Norway, and died in Minneapolis, June 19, 1936.

I have touched only on the high spots in her life. That she was an invalid for nearly forty years, that the days were long and the nights weary, but that she never lost faith in her childhood God and that He never failed her, that is the inner story. That is perhaps the real story.

B. B. Haugan

I heard more stories about B. B., as we called him, while I attended Red Wing Seminary than about any other former student.

The first one was to the effect that the president of the school had begun to suspect that some of the students were playing cards. One evening when he was walking on tiptoe past Haugan's room he heard much merriment inside.

Haugan had invited some of his friends and was going to serve them oatmeal. Suddenly there was a loud rapping on the door. "Who is it?" Haugan asked. "It is the president of the school; open the door at once!"

Haugan decided that the best thing was to dispose of the oatmeal in a hurry. He grabbed the utensil and rushed into the closet. While standing there, another student opened the door. When the president saw Haugan putting something in a coat pocket he hurried over to him to get hold of the cards. He thrust his hand into the pocket but did not keep it there very long.

Another story was that Haugan had made a disparaging remark about the nose of one of the theological professors. He was commanded to apologize to the professor before the faculty and the student body. Very humbly he ascended the platform and said in a voice of repentance: "I did make a remark about the professor's nose. It is true. I apologize."

The first time I saw Haugan was when he visited his Alma Mater and was asked to speak in the chapel. I imagine Professor Bergsland did not feel quite safe as to what Haugan would say, but he could not slight him by not asking him to speak, for Haugan was a minister in the Hauge's Synod.

I can still see that brown, almost reddish, curly hair, the laughing eyes, the prominent nose, that fine, mobile face. When he looked at us in that kindly, whimsical way of his, we were his captives.

He started in by saying that he received a shock when the first student he met on the campus was carrying a rope. That looked bad, bad for the student. "My boy, what are you going to do with that rope?" Haugan felt greatly relieved when he discovered that the student was a relative of his and that he had come upon him at that particular time.

I do not remember what application he made, but he had at least succeeded in arresting our attention. It was a different kind of chapel talk from

what we were used to. Yes, B. B. was different from all others.

He pulled out a copy of the Minneapolis Journal and said that some people who had read that paper daily for years were still unable to spell the word journal. He urged us to keep our eyes open and to study not only books but men and things.

At that time there was a great deal of interest in the China Mission among the students. Haugan had undoubtedly heard of this and wanted to warn the students against rushing off to China without the proper preparation. “Some of you think that all you need is a guitar and a ticket. You need more than that,” he said.

A book could be filled with Haugan stories, stories about himself and stories which he told. He was one of the greatest story tellers I have ever heard. He not only used words, but he used every muscle in that mobile face of his.

But don’t believe for a moment that he only told stories to raise a laugh or to entertain. He was at bottom like all real humorists a very serious man. Haugan was a reformer, a blazer of new trails. Who struck the liquor traffic harder blows than he? Who did more for choir singing and for the large song festivals than he? Who championed the cause of young people more eloquently than he?

B. B. was incomparable. There was none like him. When it was announced that he was coming to lecture, people came long distances, walking through the brush, or across the prairie, driving in lumber wagons. And for days and weeks and months, yes, for years afterwards, they would tell about it and hope he would soon return.

It was perhaps unfortunate that he was reared in the Hauge’s Synod and that he studied theology and became a minister. Not that he lacked seriousness and spiritual experience. He was too big for narrow forms. The leaders in the church had their doubts about him. Once they wanted to give him a test. They had heard that his lectures were not in keeping with the Haugean traditions. At a church convention they permitted him to give a young people’s lecture. The fathers in the synod sat well up in front that they might hear and observe.

He began in a perfectly proper and orthodox manner. He spoke about the need of using tact when dealing with unbelievers. Yes, that was true. The Haugeans did use tact.

He illustrated his point by telling the story of a barber who often spoke to his customers about spiritual matters. But there was one customer, a regular roughneck, that he had not had the courage to speak to about such matters.

One day when this man was in the chair and the barber had worked the lather on his face in fine shape, it occurred to him that now was the time to speak to him. While he was sharpening the razor on the strop (Haugan was now acting the story) he said to himself, "Now I must talk to him, now I must talk to him." With the razor lifted high in his right hand, he fairly shouted at the man, "Are you prepared to die?" The man shot out of the chair and bolted for the door, the lather flying to right and left.

The old Haugeans were caught off their guard and burst out laughing, but the next day they looked very serious. What should they do with such a man? Was he fit for the ministry?

Well, it did not take long before he answered the question by withdrawing from the ministry and giving his whole time to traveling for *Ungdommem Ven*, publishing "Frydetoner," lecturing, writing. He made a trip to the Holy Land and wrote about it in *Ungdommem Ven*.

Haugan made Holter's home his headquarters while in Minneapolis. I often had the honor of carrying his satchel to the depot. Once he said that if he ever could do me a favor I should feel free to ask him. The time came when I did ask a favor. He winced when I mentioned it, but was too good a sport to turn me down.

I had promised to give a talk in a certain church, but found it impossible to hit upon a subject. Just then Haugan came to Holter's and I asked him to go with me and speak in my place. He went with me. When we were seated, the minister came down to me, shook hands and asked me to sit up in front. He finally but perfunctorily shook hands with Haugan. When I said that Haugan was taking my place, the minister said, "No, you speak."

He relented, however, for when I was to speak, he said that B. B. Haugan was going to speak in my place. Then he went and sat down and looked glum.

It did not take many minutes before Haugan had the audience smiling and laughing and after a while the minister also smiled and laughed. How could he help it?

Haugan used to say that the highest office he ever got in the Hauge's Synod was to be elected as the last member of the Committee of Tellers,

Number Four. I remember K. C. Holter saying that the convention should have elected Haugan a delegate to big national conventions.

It brought sorrow to his friends when reports came that he was scoffing at doctrines he formerly had taught and preached. Of course we still loved him. After his death a minister wrote that he had visited B. B. shortly before he died, and that he passed away with a fine Christian confession on his lips.

B. B., we shall remember you as you were at your best, and that best was wonderfully good.

Wilhelm Pettersen

He ascended the platform and faced the audience as a captain would come upon the deck and take command. By the way, Wilhelm Pettersen's father had been a sea captain and the son had sailed the seven seas with him several seasons and _ he had himself at the age of seventeen entered the harbor at Boston as second mate of a large sailing vessel.

When I first saw Professor Wilhelm Pettersen we had no such a thing as a superiority and inferiority complex. One thing is sure, Pettersen neither then nor later suffered from inferority complex. I don't mean to say that he was a proud man or overestimated his talents, but he was always sure of himself, he knew what to say and knew that he could say it.

He delivered an eloquent address; his diction was flawless, his style brilliant, his delivery at times impassioned.

Our friendship began in a peculiar manner. One evening, Pettersen and Mrs. Pettersen, my wife and I had been invited to a social gathering at Mrs. Laura Vetlesen's. Pettersen and Mrs. Vetlesen did most of the talking. Finally someone happened to mention Miss Alice Roosevelt, "Princess Alice," who soon was going to be married. The papers were full of stuff about the princess. For some unaccountable reason I had committed to memory part of a description of her trousseau. During a lull in the conversation I told how she was going to be dressed as a bride. The ladies were amazed, and Pettersen stared at me in surprise. I said that her bodice extended way up to her neck. Pettersen burst out laughing and asked if all bodies did not extend to the neck. When I remarked that that was a good neck-joke, he came hurriedly over to me and shook my hand.

The next evening he called on me and said that we must get better acquainted. We did.

Shortly afterwards when he had the grippe he read my booklet, "Bare for Moro" ("Just for Fun"). He claimed that sketches made him well sooner than otherwise would have been the case. It worked differently with a certain woman.

Upon reading my sketch, "When We Have the Grippe," she actually got the grippe and had to go to bed. If she had not been a friend of mine she might have sued me for damages.

I did not want to play a trick on anybody but it almost worked out that way once. I was invited to the alumni banquet at Augsburg Seminary. I thought I had better prepare a toast. One never knows where and when the lightning will strike. I did prepare a toast, and, sure enough, I was called on. Professor J. N. Nydahl, the toastmaster, announced that I was the only speaker who had not been given a chance to prepare. Pettersen wrote in "Folkebladet" that it was a good toast and that it was entirely unprepared. When I told him later the truth, he looked embarrassed. It was so easy for him to speak or write without any preparation that he thought others could do the same.

Wilhelm Mauritz Pettersen was born December 17, 1860, at Mandal, Norway. He studied navigation and, as stated, became second mate at an early age.

But cultural and spiritual interests drew him away from the sea. He studied at Augsburg Seminary and at the University of Minnesota. He was a brilliant student and had a good reading knowledge of Latin and Greek and spoke not only Norwegian and English, but also German and French with fluency. He was a member of many historical and literary societies.

For 24 years he taught languages, history, literature and mathematics at Augsburg Seminary. He served as alderman one term. Later he entered the ministry. During the last years of his life he devoted all his time to literary work.

I suggested to him that he write the life of the great Norwegian revivalist, Hans Nielsen Hauge. He took. hold of the task with his usual enthusiasm or even more so. He called the book, "Light in the Prison Window," based on the pathetic incident in the prison life of Hauge when two of his friends, having traveled on foot a long distance across the mountains to visit him, were denied admittance to the prison. Standing outside the prison, beneath the window in his cell, they sang a song. All at once a light shone in the window. A candle with a long, blackened "thief" was lifted high and threw a warm, blood-red light into the darkness. It was Hans Nielsen Hauge, who, from his lonely cell, preached the victory of light over darkness. This message the two men would bring from farm to farm, from cottage to cottage, all through the land, as far as the brethren were found. "Light in the Prison Window" was a striking and appropriate title.

The book received enthusiastic reviews in the religious and secular press. An Episcopalian bishop who received a copy during Christmas read

it at one sitting and expressed his admiration for the way Pettersen had portrayed that amazing man of God.

Two editions were printed, one of 2,000 copies and one of 4,000. After revising the second edition Pettersen added these lines:

"As long as there is a living church, the name of Hauge will shine as a bright star, and grow ever brighter as his life and work becomes better known… His day was the darkest in Norway since the Reformation, the darkness before dawn. With no authority of man, with the power of the State and Church opposed to him, he set to work to win his people for God. God called him and he went."

Of other books by Pettersen may be mentioned: "Poems," "The Pilot's Christmas," "From Birch Woods and Pine Forest," and the historical novel, "Slaegten i Vaagefjord." At the time when illness overtook him he was working on a large volume in defense of the Christian faith against Modernism.

Pettersen was my pastor for several years. His sermons were not of the ordinary kind, but they were always interesting and inspiring. He was at his best when he touched upon history and literature. There were times when his impassioned eloquence surpassed that of almost any minister I have heard. He could undoubtedly have done his best as a writer, but here was no field for a writer among pioneers.

Jeg Vil Syge Det Ud

Jeg vil synge det ud, hvor i verden jeg gaar,
At jeg tror der med tiden vil komme en vaar,
Da den saed, som blev saaet med suk og med graad,
Skal staa fager i solen, af himmeldug vaad —

Da hver renhedens tanke, hvert sandhedens ord
Skal faa baere sin frugt for vor hungrige jord —
Da hver sjael, som er sulten og sorgfuld og traet,
Skal faa hvile sig ud, blive glad, blive maet.

Jeg vil synge det ud, hvor i verden jeg gaar,
At de tusinde ting, som jeg ikke forstaar,
Kan ei rokke min barnlige tillid og tro
Eller røve mig sjaelenes evige ro —

At jeg klamrer mig fast til mit haab som et pant
Paa at sandhedens ord er i evighed sandt,
At trods modgang og nederlag skal dog tilsidst
Min tro bli min seier i evighed hist.

— Wilhelm Pettersen

O. E. Rølvaag

I cannot remember the first time I met Rølvaag; he was not a man who made a great impression on a stranger. He was one of the persons who grow on you.

When informed that Rølvaag was "Paul Mork," author of the "Amerikabreve," I became interested in him. I realized that he had possibilities as a writer.

I was somewhat disappointed in his next books. True, there were passages which showed considerable promise. Rølvaag had evidently not found himself as yet. There might be several reasons for this. He had not found the material which moved him mightily; he had not a public that drew out of him the best that was in him; he had not given the material sufficient time to mature in his mind, and had not revised enough.

As a matter of fact, I was disgusted with "Paa Glemte Veie" ("Forgotten Paths"). I threw the book away several times before finishing it. The first part of "Glemselens Baad," which has been translated under the title "The Boat of Longing," appealed to me very much. Here he gave us a picture of his native Nordland with its majesty and mystery. I found difficulty in making myself read the second part. I got tired of following the Norwegian newcomer on the streets and into the rooming houses and hovels of South Minneapolis. The ending was peculiar; one of the characters got into a boat and rowed and rowed and was never heard of again.

Then something happened, that seemed like a clash, which brought us close together. A Norwegian-American journalist stated that there could be no Norwegian-American literature, because we did not have a literary language. I felt that this was not the trouble, so I wrote a brief article in "Familiens Magasin" in which this paragraph occurred:

"We have nothing to say, We dare not say it, We do not say it well enough, We get nothing for it."

This stung Rølvaag. Here was something to discuss. He attacked my paragraph with a good deal of gusto. The only true statement was the last one, he said; "We get nothing for what we write." All the rest was wrong, absolutely wrong. He suggested to several of his literary friends that they join in a discussion in "Duluth Skandinav." Several did so. For months the

discussion raged, gradually getting away from my four points. Rølvaag wrote me that I had four points while Wilson had fourteen. I answered that if I had fourteen, he probably would have found thirteen of them wrong.

I joined in the fray with one brief article, adding fuel to the fire. Editor Johannes Wist of "Decorah Posten" wrote that he thought I was enjoying the situation. I was.

People might have gotten the impression that Rølvaag and I were not on speaking terms, but often when he came to Minneapolis, he called me up, inviting me to meet him for a cup of coffee and a piece of pie. We had a grand old time. He was accomplishing what he had started, a discussion. He later wrote a book, "Om Faedrearven," in which he reviews the discussion around my four unlucky points.

Mentioning "derearven" ("Our Inheritance") reminds me of a largely attended open-air meeting near Rothsay, Minnesota, where I was also one of the speakers. There were many speeches, of which mine was the shortest. It was getting late in the afternoon and the farmers wanted to go home for the milking. There was a good deal of restlessness in the audience. Under these unfavorable circumstances Prof. O. E. Rølvaag was introduced. I can still see him step out to the edge of the platform. He began to talk, just talk. People standing near the platform drew closer. Then he said something that made them laugh. People further away heard the laughter and also came closer to the platform. For half an hour he held that large crowd in the hollow of his hand. No flights of fancy, no eloquence, no posing. Just a common sense talk in simple language. When I complimented him, he said that both of us had made rotten speeches.

He wrote a fine review of my book, "Gutten fra Norge," and quoted with relish some of my criticisms of the Norwegians. He remarked that such a dangerous man should not be allowed to be at large. He criticized some features of my story, and I am sure he was right. That was characteristic of Rølvaag, he was intellectually honest and fearless.

His "To Tullinger" revealed great strength. The characters were sharply etched. The author was arriving.

When I read the first paragraph, I may say the first sentence, of "I de Dage" ("Giants in the Earth"), I was staggered. It was the most brilliant piece of descriptive writing I had read for many a day. I read with bated breath. What a marvelous transformation in an author! Formerly he had written in a more or less uncertain manner; now he steps forth as a literary

giant, magnificently sure of himself. The style was epigrammatic and gripping; the characters were sharply etched against the pioneer background like a row of pines on a ridge at eventide. What had happened? I don't know; I only guess.

The explanation may be that Rølvaag was thoroughly captivated by the material and that, as the book was published in Norway, he no longer wrote for the ordinary church people, but for an audience that would appreciate fine workmanship and realism. I wrote an enthusiastic review of the book, but expressed regret that in one incident at least he was not true to life. I stated that a certain fine woman was made to say something which no decent Norwegian pioneer woman would ever say. This brought on my head a good deal of criticism. Some of his friends were so thrilled by the fact that one of their own had won international fame that they thought it showed poor sportsmanship on my part not to join wholeheartedly in the chorus of praise.

But Rølvaag, though he said I was wrong, did not mind. We still continued to drink coffee and eat pie together. "You don't know anything about literature," he said and then we continued to discuss literature.

I was puzzled concerning his two other pioneer stories. In "Giants in the Earth" he gave the world a picture of pioneer life as he had heard it described and as he knew it. In the other novels he was presenting his philosophy. It was undoubtedly good philosophy but perhaps not so good literature. Rolvaag will be remembered mainly by "Giants in the Earth." He made a unique contribution to the literature on Norwegian pioneer life. We may find fault with this and that expression, but no man can rob him of the honor of being one of the outstanding authors of his day.

Often I called on Rølvaag; sometimes when he heard I was in town he sent for me. The time came when I knew he was in failing health. Once when I was calling on Prof. George Ellingsen, Rølvaag phoned and asked me to call on him. I went. He asked me to go with him up to his study. He showed me several new books recently received from Norway. Then he told me that he would like to write another book. "That will be a book that even you will like," he said. He was going to portray the best and the finest in our inheritance. He described the minister who was going to be one of the leading characters. I got the impression that it was to be a man like J. N. Kildahl, but I would not interrupt him in his talk by asking him. He was under the spell of the story.

When I was on the point of leaving he held my hand a little bit longer than usual. As he looked at me with those steady eyes of his, no longer illumined by the creative spirit, he said slowly, but bravely, the Viking that he was: "Any day you may hear that I am no more; I carry death in my bosom" ("Jeg baarer døden i min barm"). I feared it was the last goodbye. It was.

Three years ago I spent a weekend at a lake in Northern Minnesota with a fine bunch of men: Dr. George Berg, Professor Erik Hetlie, Joseph Norby, S. H. Holstad and "Bill" Holstad. We were to "rough it." They did. It is surprising how otherwise dignified men can act like a lot of kids when outside the field of observation. Unfortunately frivolity is contagious, and it was hard at times even for me to retain my customary poise and composure.

Some of the men were going to show us what fine fishermen they were. They told some "long" fish stories. I could have told them of the pickerel I once caught, but refrained as I am tempted to add a pound to its weight every time I tell the story. Neither did I tell them about the monster I once had on the hook, but which unfortunately got away.

As there was only one boat and as some of us did not have a license (I am not sure if the others had licenses either), only Erik, Joseph and "Bill" had opportunity to show off. S. H. Holstad took a walk along the shore to scare the fish toward the boat. I built a huge fire on the shore, and Dr. Berg came down to watch it. I was delighted to find that this modest man was a scholar and gentleman of the highest type.

I had been pledged to write a poem for every fish that was brought back. I had more poems than they had fish. The poems were highly appreciated and so were the fish. The fish must have been caught the same day.

About eight o'clock I got tired of listening to the deep discussion which had started. I barely caught the drift of what some of them were saying. I said I was going to take a walk in the brilliant moonlight along the trail through the woods. Mr. Norby said he was going along.

We followed the winding path for quite a while. What a marvelous night it was! No sounds. were heard with the exception of the breeze in the gently swaying trees and the occasional chirping of a bird. On certain places we saw a bunch of birch trees which looked ghostlike surrounded by the somber pines. The moon rode high in the sky, splashing white spots on the path ahead of us. I asked Mr. Norby if it was far to the Rølvaag cottage. No, not very far, he said and added, "Let us go there."

After a while we caught sight of the silvery surface of a lake on the left, then on the right. In front of us, on a lovely point sticking into the moonlit water, was a cabin. It was dark and empty. We walked silently and slowly around it. Here, far from the dust and din of the cities, far from the crowded thoroughfares, Rølvaag had dreamed dreams and beheld visions. The past became the present. Woods and lake disappeared; he was with the pioneers on the South Dakota prairies. He worked with them, talked with them, hoped with them, suffered with them. He knew them better than he knew his own friends, for he was creating them. They were not mere ghosts or shadows; they were living, breathing men and women. Later he introduced them to the world, and the world applauded. But no man knew the travail of soul which was his from the time he began the story, till he had added the last finishing touches.

On the way back to our cottage very little was said. That night will always remain in our memory as something sacred.

Rasmus B. Anderson

I did not have the slightest idea that Prof. R. B. Anderson had ever heard of me. Then one day James A. Petersen, the Minneapolis attorney, asked me to come to his office. He told me that he had written a pioneer novel and that R. B. Anderson had suggested me as a publisher.

Some years afterwards, Mrs. Rønning and I were visiting Albert 0. Barton, the historian, in Madison, Wis. He talked a good deal about Rasmus B. Anderson, and when I expressed a desire to meet him, Barton said he would go with me to the office of "Amerika," of which Anderson was editor.

Anderson was at that time an old man, but full of vitality and vigor. He invited me to come to his home in the evening. "Come at eight o'clock, and stay one hour," he said.

With my watch in my hand I stood beside my wife in front of Anderson's house. On the second I rang the bell, and Anderson, with a graceful bow, met us and ushered us in. We were introduced to Mrs. Anderson. She must have been very beautiful in her younger days and still was.

Mrs. Anderson invited Mrs. Rønning to sit downin a comer. Later Mrs. Rønning told me that her hostess had told her about all the fine people she had met when Anderson was United States minister to Denmark.

Anderson did most of the talking; in fact it developed into a monologue. He certainly was full of "pep." I never met a man who used his hands and fingers more when he talked. They were constantly in motion. He touched on many subjects. Told stories about Bjornson, Ibsen, Ole Bull and Sven Oftedal. He showed me how he had led a certain prominent Norwegian — American to the door. He grabbed me by the arm and led me to the door.

Then he began to recite Norwegian poems, using his hands all the time. Poem after poem. I never met a man who had committed so many poems to ,memory. A phenomenal memory. His voice rang out and his eyes sparkled. Every now and then I took a look at my watch and on the second of nine, I got up. "Sit down, sit 'doWn," he commanded. More poems, more stories about noted men in America and in Europe.

At ten I again got up, but was told to sit down. At eleven Barton came, wondering what had become of us. The monologue continued, with a few

questions and remarks by Barton and myself. It was nearly midnight before we said goodbye.

Several years later I again called on Anderson. In the meantime Mrs. Anderson had passed away. He had aged a good deal. He leaned on me when we walked from one room to another. I gave him a copy of my book, "Lars Lee." I had to autograph it and he thanked me profusely. He was acquainted with "The Friend" and volunteered to write a fine recommendation. This he did with great difficulty as his eyes were quite weak.

When I stretched forth my hand to say goodbye, he indicated that he wanted to walk with me to the door. Leaning heavily on my arm, he walked to the door. With a remarkably strong grip of his hand he bade me goodbye. It was the last time I saw him.

Rasmus Bjorn Anderson, says Dr. O. M. Norlie, was "internationally known as university professor, author, editor, lecturer, business promotor, diplomat and authority on things Norwegian-American." In 1869 he was asked to take a position at the University of Wisconsin and was the first Norwegian to hold a professorship of Scandinavian at an American university. Anderson was also the first Norwegian-American to represent the United States in foreign lands. He was appointed by President Cleveland as US minister to Denmark, 1885-1889. He is perhaps best known for his book, "America Not Discovered by Columbus."

Peer Strømme

Someone announced that Peer Strømme was in poor health and moved that we send him flowers. The motion was seconded. As president of the Norwegian-Danish Press Association I was going to put the motion when the door flew open and in stalked the bulky, angular form of Peer Strømme. That motion was never voted on, but the members of the association gave him a tumultuous welcome.

He was far from being a well man. At the banquet in the evening he was called on for a toast. A banquet without a toast by Strømme, if present, would be a tame affair. He did not have to try to be humorous or witty. He was humorous and witty.

Strømme rose slowly and leaned against his chair. He began in a low, hesitating voice. Then after a while he straightened up and that peculiar twisting of his face indicated what was coming. His toast was one of the most brilliant ever delivered at any banquet of the association. The audience went wild. Then in between sparkling wit came bits of philosophy, striking a melancholy note now and then. When he sat down, he almost slumped in his chair.

On the way back from the Iron Range to Duluth where the convention had been held, I sat with him in the coach. He did not say much for a while; then he started to talk about serious things, but when one of the "boys" went by and stopped, Strømme sent him away laughing.

A friend wrote that Strømme felt lonesome and suggested that his old friends write him a few words of encouragement. I penned a poem at once, which began:

> "Du er ei alene, for tusinders tanker
> Slaar kreds rundt dit leie ikveld."

(You are not alone, for the thoughts of thousands gather around your bed tonight.)

Hans A. Urseth

Did you ever have the experience that when you met a person for the first time, you felt that you had known that person a hundred years?

That's the way I felt when I met Professor Urseth for the first time. There was something so friendly in his eyes and Winsome in his smile, and when he talked I knew that he was an honest, straightforward man, and that he had a good deal more to say.

After a man has finished college he seldom forms real friendships. I did not think that I ever would find friends like Otto Haugan, Julius Boraas, O. O. Stageberg, George H. Ellingsen and Elias Rachie. I have found a few good friends since then, and one of them was Urseth. It was right and proper that I should meet J. O. Evjen in Urseth's office and that it was Urseth's mention of O. H. Sletten that led to my friendship with him.

Urseth and I had some things in common, but he had more of those things than I had. I have found few men with a church school training who were so open minded as Urseth.

It was almost providential that I met him at the time I did. He had passed through a deep spiritual experience and had studied theology under Sverdrup and Oftedal, and literature and history under Pettersen. He was one of the best students who graduated from Augsburg Seminary. He was not only older than I as far as years go, but he was ever so much more mature. Without knowing it, without intending it, he became a spiritual guide.

During the three years I lived across the street from Augsburg Seminary there was hardly a week in the winter time when we were not together two or three evenings. As members of the same Christian Endeavor Society and as Sunday School teachers we were also much together. During one winter, every Friday evening, the English Sunday School teachers in Trinity church met at the home of Clara and Hannah Michaelsen and studied our lesson. The other teachers were Maude and Netta Amonson, Asmund Oftedal and Inga Sverdrup. We always had pink lemonade and cake for refreshments. Urseth usually led the meetings.

But my most precious memories of Urseth are linked to the two summers that we were neighbors at Forest Lake, near Spring Park. We bought a hillside together and built our cabins only a few rods apart. How distinctly I

remember that lovely day in April when we cleared the brush where we intended to build. I can still smell the smoke of the fire and the aroma of the coffee when we had our noonday rest.

Many a morning we walked together to Spring Park and came back from Minneapolis on the same train. We often went out fishing together. In the evening we sat under the tall trees and talked, and when we did not talk, we enjoyed the fellowship of silence. Silence in the presence of a good friend is often very eloquent. Then the soul searches the deep things and words are a disturbing factor.

When I read him the first chapter of "A Summer in Telemark," he beamed on me and said, "That book will appeal to our people; it is written with enthusiasm." Once when I had made a speech, he said, "I was disappointed in you."

Urseth started a Christian Endeavor Society in Trinity church and was the real leader whether he was the president or not. He was not a fluent speaker, but the young people listened to him gladly, and he wielded a great influence. It was largely due to his influence that many of the members entered into a conscious and happy relation to Christ.

For several years he fought bravely his sickness, good soldier that he was. I asked him once if he was able to attend a teachers' meeting at my home. He said he would be glad to come. He came, but did not look any too well. I think we all felt that this was probably the last time he would be with us. It was. He led the meeting but did not discuss the lesson. I can still hear that pleasant voice as he spoke amidst deep silence. He remained a while after the rest had gone. He was wet with perspiration, but was cheerful and brave.

I have been wondering if I should tell of two dreams. I think I will. Once I dreamed that he and I sat and talked. Suddenly I turned to him and said, "But Urseth, you are dead." He smiled that winsome smile of his, shook his head. I awoke, but always thought that it was more than a dream.

For days I had been worrying about something. Then one night I dreamed that I was sitting in a large, strange room. I looked up and there Urseth was standing in front of me, smiling. He came closer and looked into my face, still smiling. He passed his hand several times over my face, but did not touch it. All at once I felt very happy, the burden had rolled off my shoulders. He walked away but turned around, looked at me, smiled and waved his hand. I woke Up and my face was wet with tears.

During the next day I walked in a daze and did not dare to tell my wife about the dream. I thought it was some sort of premonition. When nothing unusual happened I began to analyze the dream. The day before I had passed by the cemetery where he was sleeping, but as I was driving an old Ford I did not think of my departed friend in that cemetery, otherwise I might have joined them. There was something unfinished in my thinking. It had to come to a head in a dream. Then, too, if Urseth had lived I would probably have gone to him and told him about my worry. My sub-conscious mind brought him to me in the dream.

You may think me foolish for telling you this, but honestly, are we not living in a world of mystery? We don't know ourselves. There are depths we never fathomed. We dream sometimes such strange things. It is something in us, something part of us which is thinking and creating without our knowing what it is or how it works. We call it our sub-conscious mind, but it is the larger, the more creative part of our mind. It is our real self.

And out of this mystery, out of these unknown depths, out of this strange thing called life there come poems, music, cathedrals, statuaries, paintings, religions, prayers, faith.

You may not understand what I am talking about. Well, I am sorry for you. Urseth would have understood me and that explains why he was such a wonderful friend.

Let me add a letter which his father wrote me and a tribute to Urseth by one of his closest friends, Professor H. N. Hendricksen. His father wrote:

"His life through childhood and youth ran smoothly; he was obedient, upright and eager to learn. He gave us nothing but joy.

"At play, as a boy, he liked to act as 'teacher' and his younger brothers and sisters were the 'pupils.' When we got an organ in the home, there was great rejoicing on the part of the whole family. With but the meagerest instruction in the rudiments of music, he became somewhat efficient in playing the organ; at the same time he learned to play the comet, and before very long there was a brass band 'in full blast,' making at first a terrible noise.

"With hardly any encouragement by or support from the older and leading men in the congregation, he organized the first Young People's Society in that community; he also organized a church choir which he led. This was after he had attended Augsburg Seminary one year.

"The Word of God had early made a deep impression on him; first at home and later through the religious instruction by Rev. C. Saugstad and Rev. Bersvend Anderson.

“Having a great thirst for knowledge he read everything he could lay his hand on. The time came when he felt the need of faith he could live by and die by. After a great struggle while at Augsburg Seminary he found the outstretched hand of the Savior.”

Professor Hendricksen’s tribute:

“Hans Andreas Urseth was born October 3, 1866, at Dyrgzl, in the northern part of Norway. At the age of nine years he came to this country with his parents, who settled in the neighborhood of Crookston, Minn. Here he grew up under the usual conditions in a pioneer settlement. There was plenty of work in summer on the farm, and in winter in the woods chopping cordwood and hauling it to Crookston. Many a time, he told me, did he trudge along the country road driving his yoke of oxen hitched to a load of wood.”His work as a student was uniformly excellent. But he shone in composition work. When we came to compare notes, his paper was invariably the freest from those scarlet signs which disfigured so many a page. When we reached the freshman year several members of our class became infected with ‘ars poetica.’ At times it was almost virulent. It is strongly suspected that the infection started over in Urseth’s corner; at any rate he was never able to disprove it. The facility with which he could toss off a humorous or satirical verse was somewhat disconcerting to the rest of us. He was always humorous, and at times crushingly witty. We all loved him and were proud of him, and when it became time to elect a class orator, Urseth was the unanimous choice. His valedictory at commencement was pronounced by our professor in English to be the best of its kind he had ever heard." Professor Urseth wrote several beautiful hymns. One, “Kun et skridt” (“But a Step”), has become one of the most popu — ’ lar hymns at evangelistic meetings. It is set to music by F. Melius Christiansen; I quote in Norwegian this and another popular hymn:

Kun Et Skridt

Kun et skridt, kun et skridt, du som tvivlende staar,
Og som ved, at det ikke baer hjem:
Det vil vinde dig vei, det vil aabne dig aar
Fyldt af fred, faar det føre dig frem.
Kun et skridt over graznsen fra verden til Gud,
Har du mod, har du mod til at ta det helt ud —
Et skridt ifra verden til Gud?

Kun et ord, kun et ord, fra det fremmede land
Baaret hjem til den ventende far:
Det vil lette dit sind, det vil løfte din stand,
Det vil fjerne det tyngste, du bar.
Kun et ord i din angst og din nød op til Gud —
Kan du tro, kan du tro, det vil redde dig ud —
Et ord ifra dig til din Gud?

Kun et blik, kun et blik ifra smerternes sted,
Der hvor Herren af kjaerlighed dørz
Det vil sondre din synd, det vil give dig fred,
Som du aldrig fik eie den før.
Kun et blik til din fattige ijl ifra ham,
Dette blik, som slog ned i din nød og din skam —
O, 533 du det blik ifra ham?

Herlige Livsens Ord

Herlige livsens ord, Bedste af alt paa jord!
Det stiller hjertets trang, Trøster mig dagen lang.
Tages alt andet bort, Alt som er gildt og stort,
Har du paa Herrens bord Altid et livsens ord.

Samles om livsens ord, Børnene vidt om jord,
Den som er tørst og treat, Reiser sig glad og let;
AEngstet af syndens nød, Mattet af himmelbrød,
Synger Guds børni kor: Herlige livsens ord.

Herlige livsens ord, Himmerigs saed paa jord,
Saaet ved men'ske-haand, Vaeksten gir Herrens aand,
Stiger, før nogen ved, Blomster mod evighed,
Blomster i syd og nord Baarne af livsens ord.

Jesus er livsens ord, Himmerigs kraft paa jord;
Tusind i dødens nat Venter paa livets skat,
Bringer Vi dem et bud, Gaar de fra mørket ud,
Synger rundt rigets bord: Herlige livsens ord!

Otto M. Haugan

I rapped at the door and an elderly lady opened it. I entered the room and looked around. I tried to speak but could not. Tenderly she asked me, "You knew him?" I nodded my head and then went out slowly.

In that room, his "den," back of his office at Fergus Falls, Minnesota, I had spent some wonderful hours with Otto.

He was a brother of B. B. Haugan, but they differed greatly. Otto was the stronger and steadier of the two. He thought it was enough to have one humorist in the family.

Otto made a deep impression on me the first time I met him. He came to Faribault as general agent for *Ungdommem Ven*. I was to serve as agent in that vicinity of the publication I later was to edit. Otto was tall, slender, graceful. He had a soft voice and gentle manners. The most remarkable thing about him then was his eyes. They were large and luminous, with hidden depths of mystery.

He taught one year at Red Wing Seminary while I was there, but I was not in any of his classes. The first day I met him he asked me into his room, showed me his books and said I might borrow any of them. That was just like him.

We were roommates two years at the university. We had several classes together. Some studies he cared for and some not. He was very popular with his professors and always passed in examinations whether he studied much or not.

After serving as county superintendent of schools in Ottertail county, Minnesota, he studied medicine and settled in Fergus Falls. He became exceedingly popular. On Christmas Eve he would send out a large number of Christmas baskets, but the poor families were not to know who gave them.

One winter about a dozen Red Wing Seminary alumni residing in Fergus Falls and vicinity had arranged a banquet and invited me to speak. Otto was the toastmaster, and an excellent one he was with that dry, delicious humor of his. He said that all of them could make good speeches, but only a few would be called on. He introduced me in that inimitable way of his, saying that he did not know what I was going to give them, but he knew it would

be good. When I said I was going to give the main address, he smiled and looked at me in a friendly way.

After the banquet, Joseph Norby, then superintendent of schools at Fergus Falls, and I spent a good deal of the night with Otto in his "den." It was the first time I met Mr. Norby. Haugan and he were intimate friends. That fact made it easy for Joe and me to become friends later on.

Years passed by and we corresponded once in a while. Then I heard that his health was failing. On the 24th of December, one year, as I was going to leave the office, I happened to think of Otto and that he would be spending Christmas alone in his "den." I knew that he very seldom wanted to go out to visit even his best friends. I sat down and wrote him a long letter, the kind of letter that one friend writes another only in a hundred years. Shortly after Christmas I got a brief letter from him, stating that he had read my letter many times. "I keep very few letters," he wrote, "but yours I shall always keep."

The next fall I was invited to be one of the speakers at a large outdoor meeting near Rothsay. When I came to Fergus Falls early in the morning I called up Otto and asked if we could breakfast together. He answered that he had had his breakfast, but told me to go to a certain hotel and he would join me. When I saw him, I was shocked. The dark wavy hair had become thin and gray; there were deep lines in his face, and his eyes had lost some of their light.

He was sorry that he was not able to go with me to the meeting. I had to promise to spend the evening with him before I took the midnight train. Together with Professor John Holvik, I went to Otto's room. I did not know Holvik very well at that time, and the conversation between Otto and my — self lagged somewhat at first, but gradually we all three talked freely and frankly. I was afraid that this would be the last time I would see my friend. I had begun to drift, religiously while at the university and so had Otto. I was not sure of his stand, but got the impression that he had again found his way back to a living faith. As the time drew nearer and nearer to midnight, there was something I wanted to ask him, but I could not make myself do it. Finally I turned to him and asked, "0. M., may I ask a favor of you?" He turned toward me, looked me steadily in the eyes, and said slowly while some of the old light came into his eyes: "N. N., there is not a thing in the world I would not do for you." I said, "Will you lead us in devotion?"

He turned to his table, opened the drawer and took out a New Testament, opened it, and said: “This Testament was given me by the dean of the medical school and it is worth its weight in gold to me.”

Then in that melodious voice of his he read, “Fear not little flock, for it is your father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” He closed the book, folded his hands, and offered, oh, such a wonderful prayer, thanking God for our friendship and pleading for God’s blessing upon us when we now were going to part.

I gave him my hand, he grasped mine, but we did not speak.

I know I should never have forgiven myself if I had failed to ask that favor of him. Why are friends so charry in sharing with one another the best?

When shortly afterward I sent him one of the first copies of my book, “Gutten fra Norge,” he wrote that he had received the book, and the first evening at his disposal he would read it. “I know it is good,” he said.

That was undoubtedly the last letter he wrote. The same night he felt death coming. He called up the hospital and in a barely audible voice asked them to send for him.

Someone else must have mailed the letter. Shortly after I received it I heard that he had passed away.

P. O. Larson

Had I told my friend Larson that some day I would write about him in my Great American Opus, he would asked me, "Who's crazy now? What could you write about a poor, ignorant farmer?"

The other day I came across a package of letters Larson wrote me during my first twelve years in this country. I read them with growing interest; I was amazed at the talents of the man and I was touched to tears with their pathos.

If he had received the proper training he would have gone far as a minister, teacher, lawyer or legislator. I have met few men who made a deeper impression on me the first time I saw them. There was something about him that set him apart. For some inexplicable reason he took a liking to me the first time we met. We became very close friends. I wrote more freely to him than to anyone else at that time, and some of these letters indicate that he turned to me when the night was darkest. I am sure that he helped me more than I helped him.

He looked like a man among men. Proud of bearing, with fine head, clear-cut features and large, steady eyes.

He lost his father as a mere lad. He always wanted to be a leader among playmates and was known for his ingenuity in planning and carrying out pranks. Pioneer life offered but the meagerest kind of schooling, but his mother saw to it that he received a good religious instruction. If there ever was a saint, his mother was one. When he expressed radical views she would stand in front of him, shake her head and say with a faint smile, "Aa, du Peter, du Peter." Then he winked at me, rogue that he was.

He married when he was a young man and raised a large family. The Larsons lived in an old loghouse at Little Chicago, some twelve miles from Northfield, Minnesota. Larson had a small farm, but his heart was not in farming.

In the spring of 1890 he invited me on behalf of the Solør congregation to teach parochial school. When I had returned to Red Wing Seminary, we began to correspond. That summer we had had many serious conversations. He had lost his faith, he said, and was very cynical. In his first letter he wrote, "We humans are earth-bound. In reality it does not make much dif-

ference if many of us grow up in ignorance concerning this life and the next. It is tragic how the dust can blind our eyes to the high and noble things in life. There is much ignorance among those who call themselves Christians. There is so much that hinders the growth of the young plants and chokes them."

The next summer when I taught parochial school near his home, he had become more settled in his views, but was eager to talk about life and life's problems. In a troubled hour I must have written him a letter for he answers: "You expect advice from me? 'Aa, du store verden!' No, my dear Nils, if there is no one else to advise you than I, you will never get good advice. You must bear in mind that I am an ignorant farmer. By the way, can you come and help us with the Christmas tree program?"

In another letter he criticized me sharply for my broodings. "You are conjuring up too dark thoughts. You shouldn't do it."

During September and October, 1895, Larson passed through deep waters. Returning from a journey he found his oldest daughter sick with scarlet fever and the rest of the children having whooping cough. "Oh, you can never imagine how I feel, I am afraid something is going to happen to me. My heart is beating so fast. I have made a failure of life. Life is a chain of humbug. Lena is very sick. She is an unusually gifted child. With proper education she would have made something of herself. I have been dreaming of the time when she would make the sound of the organ roll through my home.

"The play you took me to (Romeo and Juliet) was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, but when I got by myself I realized that it, too, is nothing but vanity.

"It is now nine o'clock in the night. I know this will not edify you, but I must write to somebody. With tears running down her face my wife just said, 'Nils should have been here now and comforted me as he did last summer.'"

The next letter was one of the most remarkable letters I ever received. "It is two o'clock in the morning," he writes. "It was my night to watch at the bedside of our sick children. A dark cloud hovers over our home.

"Bernhard and Frances have diphtheria, the rest of the children have whooping cough. Money for doctor! Money for medicine! A dark future faces me.

"It is strange in these quiet hours of the night to watch at the bedside of one's children and to look at their little bodies quivering and shaking in pain. So many queer thoughts assail a person at such an hour. My eyes are filled with tears. The thoughts take flight beyond the boundaries of time, but come back to the same point, 'Oh, that I had died as a child.'

"Come and look at my children at this quiet hour of the night. Bernhard lies in the south bedroom, writhing in pain, talking wild words. He must be given medicine every hour. In the cradle next to him is Frances, the doll, with the signs of diphtheria on her beautiful face. Every now and then I must lift her up that the whooping cough does not choke her. On the floor lie mamma and the youngest one in sweet sleep, disturbed now and then by the little one's coughing. In the north bedroom are Lena and Thea, both coughing. Upstairs the boys, Alfred, Oscar and Johan, must take care of themselves, though they need a helping hand…

"The doctor said yesterday that Bernhard might pass away any minute, but he might also recover. He has eaten nothing for a week. Now he is quiet.

"The night lamp casts its ghostly light on the death-pale faces…"

At this time of his life Larson had again become cynical, and he writes in the same letter: "The Christians are business folks. Sunday is their day of business. At their meetings they pray long prayers for the sinful world and that someone walking in the way of evil may be saved. What do they know about the evil world? They seem to think that to be a Christian is to deliver long sermons to the Highest about things they know nothing about. When it comes to practical life, there is nothing but hypocrisy. No tolerance toward those who have different views. There is no love, no forbearance. I'll say no more.

"You tell me that back of all, there is truth and love. I can't see it that way. There is much in your letter which is good. For instance where you refer to the One who once walked among men here on earth. There are times when I would like to see him. There was a time in my life when I was happy, when the sea was still. You are in the light; I am in darkness."

The children all got well. Peter came out of the harrowing experience a stronger, milder man. Shortly afterwards he rejoiced that a revival had started in the congregation. "Our soul is restless," he wrote, "until it finds Him from whom it came."

He was eager to improve himself and he wrote long articles in English which I corrected and returned him. I was often amazed at his brilliance; it was at times nothing less than that. There were very few in my class in literature who had his ability and certainly none who faced life more realistically than “the poor, ignorant farmer,” as he called himself.

A few more brief quotations: "I suppose I have to discontinue writing to you now when you graduate and get a high position. Then you will not find time to write to a nobody with no talents.

"Are you coming down here this spring? If you can, do come. Spring is soon here; then begins the hard work. Thus it is year after year… Every now and then somebody dies. Will then their worries come to an end? Will then the soul find rest and peace?

"When I let my thoughts glide over the boundaries of time, beyond death and grave, into eternity, a feeling of sadness comes over me, a feeling of utter loneliness and I am tempted to ask: ‘What is life but a continuous struggle for existence? Think of the numberless souls fighting a losing battle, finally to be plunged into the abyss and suffer forever. Can that be possible? The thoughts are lost in the infinite.’

"Spring is here again and green spears of grass push up through the soil. There is something soothing about spring, a sweet contentment fills the soul…

"I don’t think I have thanked you for what you have done for me. I am not sending you any more articles. I have become reconciled to my condition. I enjoy the companionship of my horses, cows, calves, chickens and turkeys. Fine fellows, all of them. The calves are so pleased when they get their milk; the cows are satisfied when they have enough to eat; the turkey gobbler struts about as were the world was his with a fence around it. No king could be prouder than he.

“The time was when I was happy in things close at hand. Then gradually they slipped away and I came in contact with things I could not master. My longings were for the mountain tops, but I overestimated my powers. That has been the cause of my restlessness. Wish that these longings had come earlier. Now there is nothing but frustration.”

I met him often after this. Whenever he heard I was coming to Webster he managed to meet me in Northfield. One farmer complained that Peter was monopolizing me. I did enjoy visiting the Larson family in the old log house. Larson sat smoking his pipe, philosophizing and winking at me

when either his mother or his wife would shake their head and say, but not without some pride, “Aa, du Peter, du Peter.”

Larson and his wife passed their last days in peace in California. Some time ago I had a letter from their daughter. She said that she cannot remember me, but that her parents often spoke of me.

In The Field Of Politics

My Republican friends — it seems that most of my friends are Republicans — cannot understand why I am a Democrat. I should not wonder but they suspect that I am a Democrat just because I want to be different. Politics is not a matter of understanding, anyway, it is a matter of blood and inheritance. I am a son of Telemark, and the Telers are often radical, usually independent.

Though I take pride in being a Democrat, I have voted for more Republican candidates than Democratic candidates. Now that should make you feel better.

Of course, that may mean that I have no fixed principles; it shows at least that I have no fixed habits like my Republican friends. If it were not for the independent voters, the minority party would never get into power except by increasing their birth rate.

Once when driving with a Norwegian farmer to his home where I was to room and board for several days while teaching parochial school, I asked him timidly what he thought of the Democrats. He pulled the horses almost back on their hind legs, shot an angry glance at me and shouted: "The Democrats are of the Devil; they were in favor of slavery and always bring hard times." I decided then and there that it would be safer to talk about the weather. We had a Republican administration at that time and therefore nice weather. Furthermore I had come to the community to help people fight the Devil.

At first the Norwegian pioneers usually voted for the Yankees or the Irish. Possibly because of the language and possibly because one Norwegian did not want another Norwegian to strut around as an office holder.

Well, it is different now. When we read the returns of the election in some counties we might be tempted to believe that all other nationalities with the exception of the Norwegians had been disfranchised.

Knute Nelson

Knute Nelson was the first Norwegian politician who gained national recognition. It took a hard-headed Vossing to do it. The name Knute Nelson was a name to conjure with in those days. As congressman, governor and United States senator he represented his race worthily and well. His countrymen were tremendously proud of him.

Knute was a Republican, but he did his own thinking and acted accordingly. When in congress he voted for the Mills' bill, and the Republican protectionists criticized him severely, but though the Norwegians were in favor of a high tariff, they reasoned that Knute must be knowing what he was doing.

When the "twelve willful" senators tried to crush Wilson in his attempt to have the United States Senate endorse the League of Nations covenant, Knute spoke in favor of the league. When the "wet" senators were speaking in favor of repeal of the prohibition amendment, he spoke against repeal.

I heard him many times. He was not a great orator, but his political addresses were crammed with facts and figures and common sense. He looked so dependable, this 'short, stocky "Little Viking." If I were to use just one term in describing him it would be the term "common sense."

In front of the state capitol in St. Paul, Minnesota, are two statues, one of Knute Nelson, Norwegian, and the other of John A.» Johnson, Swede. At the foot of the statue of the Norwegian and part of it, is a mother with a six-year-old son. That's the way they looked when they came to America in 1849. "Do not weep, mother, when I grow up I shall be next to the king," Knute is reported to have told his weeping mother. When on his way from Washington to Minnesota he almost invariably called on her at Deerfield, Wisconsin.

William Jennings Bryan

The first American politician who captured my imagination was William Jennings Bryan. I had become intensely interested in the struggle between the gold Democrats and the silver Democrats. I snatched every "extra" about the convention in Chicago in 1896. That was before the radio brought a national convention into the homes. It was a long-drawn out battle of ballots. Then young, handsome, eloquent William Jennings Bryan from Nebraska stepped on the platform and swept the convention off its feet with his crown of gold speech. I doubt if any political speech ever thrilled the American people as did Bryan's. I became an enthusiastic Bryan man. I got hold of a paper weight with his picture, which I kept on my table for more than a quarter of a century. Gradually the picture became more and more faint and finally there was no Bryan left.

Of course I did not understand all the talk about 16-1, but I felt that Bryan was right. I had come to admire the strong, sturdy Grover Cleveland, but now he was an obstructionist and in league with the capitalists and against the common people.

Mr. I. M. Hotvedt, then a medical student and later a missionary to China, and I were rooming and boarding at the Holter family, 912-21st Avenue, South, Minneapolis, that year, and both of us served as clerks election day. It would be fun to count the Bryan votes. Bryan carried the precinct and that was a good indication that he had carried the country. An old Irishman reported that Bryan was sweeping the country.

A Norwegian served as one of the judges in our precinct. He had carefully studied the instructions as to the duty of the judges, but was stumped when he came to the expression, "said judge." He thought that was the title of a judge. So when some voter came and asked him a question he would often say, "You go to said judge." Or when he spoke to this judge, he called him "Said Judge."

The returns next day were slow in coming in from the different parts of the country. The following morning I slipped on tiptoe down the stairs to get the morning paper. Mrs. Holter heard me, however, and she knew that if Bryan had been elected she would hear an Indian whoop. As she heard

none, but heard me coming slowly up the stairs, she knew the country was safe. She was a Republican.

Somehow I came to like William McKinley and when he was assassinated I wrote a glowing tribute to him, a tribute which was reprinted in a paper in Norway.

It's strange how we change our ideas concerning a president when he dies.

I voted for Bryan three times. "Three times and out." There was one thing I liked about Bryan; he was a good loser.

When we come to think of it — most of the reforms which Bryan advocated are now part of the law of the land. It's the old story — first we denounce a new idea, then if it spreads, we are puzzled and irritated. If it takes possession of a political party and our own party is licked a few times, we finally admit that the idea is good but our party can better put it across. Why didn't we have sense enough to see the value of the idea when it was first advanced?

Bryan was not only a reformer, he was one of the greatest Christian laymen this country has produced. I sometimes wonder why it is that we have so few outstanding confessing, witnessing laymen among the Lutherans in America. Is it the fault of the laymen or is it the fault of the clergy? It has been said that the Lutheran laymen in this country are the best fed and the least exercised of all laymen. There may be more truth than poetry in that wise-crack.

Woodrow Wilson

I came under the spell of Woodrow Wilson 42 years ago, 16 years before he became president of the United States, and the spell has never been broken. With the possible exception of Abraham Lincoln, the name Woodrow Wilson thrills me more than that of any other American.

This admiration cannot be due to lack of information, for I studied two of his textbooks in history in 1896, I read most of his speeches before and after he became president and have read since he passed away many magazine articles and several books about him, some praising him, some criticizing him. I have paid very little attention to what this or that individual has said in private about Wilson, because it was said either by rabid Republicans or by rabid pro-Germans.

Few historians equaled Wilson in grasp of essentials and hardly any surpassed him in literary skill.

I have just re-read the last article he wrote, in the Atlantic Monthly, 1923. I know of no other man, living or dead, who ever wrote anything better than the concluding paragraphs in this article:

"By justice the lawyer generally means the prompt, fair, and open application of impartial rules; but we call ours a Christian civilization, and Christian conception of justice must be much higher. It must include sympathy and helpfulness and a willingness to forego self-interest in order to promote the welfare, happiness, and contentment of others and of the community as a whole. This is what our age is blindly feeling after in its reaction against what it deems the too great selfishness of the capitalistic system.

"The sum of the whole matter is this — that our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually. It can be saved only by becoming permeated with the spirit of Christ and being made free and happy by the practices which spring out of that Spirit. Only thus can discontent be driven out and all the shadows lifted from the road ahead.

“Here is the final challenge to our churches, to our political organizations, and to our capitalists — to everyone who fears God or loves his country. Shall we not all earnestly cooperate to bring in the new day?”

I was deeply interested in the fight Wilson waged as president of Princeton University on behalf of the students of limited means. Then came his

spectacular struggle against the political bosses in New Jersey. As governor he stood them up against the wall and forced through one reform bill after another. The whole country watched the struggle. He was bound for the White House, and got there.

I shall not discuss the question whether this nation should or could have stayed out of the World War, but it seems to me that no man stated more clearly what issues were at stake in that war than did Wilson. Any fair-minded student of modern European history expected sooner or later an Open clash between Germany on one side and England and her allies on the other. Bismarck forged a powerful, ambitious, and aggressive nation out of several small states. Germany wanted a place in the sun, but wherever she turned for raw material and new markets, there was England in possession of material and markets. That is what Hitler is demanding now, and he is doing it in the same spirit and with the same brutality as the Prussians did then.

The world was not made safe for democracy. Would democracy, our own included, have been better off if the Central Powers had won and would the final peace treaty have been any more just and fair? If Wilson had had his way, conditions in the world might have been vastly different today.

What about his League of Nations? Well, there does not seem to be much left of it. But this I believe that if ever universal peace is established and maintained, it will have to be through some sort of a league or association of nations. Wilson painted a beautiful pattern in the sky and there it will remain until the common people of the world are mature enough and wise enough to take affairs into their own hands.

John A. Johnson

This Swedish-American, the son of a drunkard and a washerwoman, three times elected governor of Minnesota, would in all probability have become president of the United States had it not been for his untimely death.

No Minnesotan was ever more beloved than Johnson; never was the state plunged in greater sorrow than at his death.

There was not much interest in the Democratic state convention in 1904; the Republican party was in the heyday of power and there was no outstanding Democratic candidate. John A. Johnson of St. Peter, who had served as state senator without any great distinction, was given the nomination. Somebody had to be nominated.

I went to hear him at the mass meeting in the evening of the convention. The mass was not there, but it was a good sized audience of the faithful.

On the platform I noticed John Lind, Quist, Lars Rand and F. B. Nelson. Two or three nondescript addresses; then Johnson. There was some attempt at applause. He was tall, with a slight stoop, but with a prepossessing appearance. The voice was low and pleasant. He spoke with great ease and fluency. Before very long the audience became tense; this was no ordinary speaker, no ordinary political speech. The men on the platform vanished from View; there was but one man on the platform, Johnson. The applause became more and more frequent and sounded like a storm sweeping through a forest. I have heard only two men who aroused so great enthusiasm — William Jennings Bryan and the criminal lawyer, W. W. Irwin.

"His first campaign speeches were rather formal," wrote Frank Day, "but the game began to appeal to him. His ambition was aroused, and the latent fighting spirit of the Berserkers at last came to the top. His audience in size and enthusiasms were without parallel in the history of the party in the state."

Then something happened which made thousands rush to the support of Johnson. Someone put into form of an affidavit the wretched story of Johnson's father. Johnson had dread the exploitation of that story from the start. When it came he was for the moment overwhelmed.

"What have you to say?" the newspaper men clamored at Johnson.

"Nothing," he replied, sadly. "It is true."

Rallying from his despondency Johnson went to St. James the night the attack was launched, and there made the greatest speech of the campaign up to that time. His audience went wildly enthusiastic.

The half truth of the affidavits were answered with the whole truth — the whole sad story of misery and poverty, a father's disgrace, a mother's woe, a son's humiliation and sacrifice was told. It was terrible thus to have laid bare the whole family skeleton. Johnson himself ignored the whole affair, but his friends published the truth, every sad word of it.

When the votes were counted the Roosevelt majority ran to 163,000. It seemed as if no individual popularity or strength could overcome the terrific Roosevelt momentum. But as county after county came in with Johnson running ahead, there began to be hope of the impossible. And when the official count was made it was found that John A. Johnson had carried the state by more than 7,000 votes.

The son of a broken exile, the son of a washerwoman was governor of Minnesota.

He was reelected in 1906 and again in 1908. His great victory made him a national figure. And from all over the country came the cry that he must run for the greatest office in the country, that of president of the United States. He was undoubtedly headed for the White House when death beckoned him and he had to go.

In his commencement address, June 9, 1910, President Cyrus Northrop paid this eloquent tribute to John A. Johnson:

"I cannot close this address without making special allusion to the great sorrow which came to the University and to the state of Minnesota when Governor John A. Johnson died. He was ex-officio member of the Board of Regents, and all the other members of the Board, with the exception of the president of the University, were subject to his appointment. His influence in the Board was very great as would be natural in any case, but was especially great because he took a deep interest in the University and attended the meetings of the Board Whenever it was possible for him to do so. He was a man marvelously winning and attractive in his manners and personality. He was firm in adhering to his convictions. He was clean in his life. He was gentle and kind to those who were not the favorites of fortune. He was a foremost man among men — and when I saw him in the Convention of Governors of the various states called together at the White House by President Roosevelt, he was a foremost Governor among Governors. And the es-

pecially interesting fact connected with his prominence, the fact which gave special significance to his whole career, was that he was emphatically a self-made man. He was not largely indebted to schools, and not at all to the college for his training, but by the simple processes of reading and thinking he grew to the high stature of a most commanding public official, and multitudes believe, what no one with authority can deny, that if his life had not been cut short in the untimely way it was, he would at some time have become president of the United States. But we cannot tell what would have been. But we cannot but admire the patient process of self-improvement by which he advanced from obscurity to greatness, and cannot but feel that if he had lived to reach the highest office in the gift of the people, he would in character, in purpose, in ideals, in address and in courtesy have done honor to his office. His untimely death saddened the people of Minnesota and I hope sobered them as they were made to realize the uncertainty of life and of human destiny in the world."

Whence This Marvelous Universe?

I drank in the beauty of earth and sky the few days I spent in delightful idleness at a quiet lakeside, far from the dust and din of the cities.

One morning, invigorated by the silvery shock of a plunge in the lake, I strolled out into the open country. I did not care where I was going or if I never returned; I just walked on and on, along the winding road, mildly interested in what the next turn would reveal.

After a while I began to follow a trail alongside a meadow of sweet smelling clover. When I came to a slight elevation, I stopped. Gradually I became conscious of the plaintive notes of a meadow lark, the melody of a song sparrow, and a faint tinkling of cowbells floating across the fields.

A level landscape stretched in all directions to the far-off hazy horizon: green meadows, yellowing corn fields, dark-gray woods, steel-blue glimpses of water.

When I looked up into the sweet face of the sky I cannot remember that the mighty sweep of the blue, clean canopy overhead had ever made such a tremendous impression on my mind. How small and insignificant I was in the presence of this harmonious immensity. I walked home filled with a holy awe, but also with that peace which solitude alone can give a human soul.

During the night I awoke and listened to the gentle soughing of the breeze in the leaves. Glancing through the window I saw a few stars near the horizon. I got up and walked outside the cabin to obtain a better view. When one lives in a large city, the buildings and the street lights shut off or obscure the starry sky. Now the cloudless and moonless heavens lay bare to the eye. From horizon to horizon the whole mid — night sky was throbbing

and trembling with countless bright and brilliant stars. Oh, the glory of it all! Then I looked at the lake in front of me where the water had caught the reflection of the heavenly host above. I went slowly into the cabin but could not sleep for a long time.

It did not look a bit like Christmas. The weather could not possibly have been worse. All forenoon it rained. What can be more useless and out of place than rain in winter?

Dark pools formed on the lawns, muddy streams raced in the gutters; sidewalks and streets became slippery, making walking difficult and driving dangerous.

But while man was grumbling because of a spoiled Christmas, the mist and the moisture up in cloudland were preparing their magic, the magic of the snow.

When darkness had settled upon earth, large, fluffy flakes began to fall, softly and silently. They fell on slippery streets and sidewalks, on wet house tops, on dripping branches. The first flakes melted and added to the slush and mud. More of them fell, still more, an endless white host, and little by little everything on earth became lovely.

And when morning dawned, we looked out upon a new world; everywhere the all-forgiving, comforting snow.

Man builds stately cathedrals, paints beautiful pictures, chisels graceful statues, writes immortal poems, but the snow transforms a soiled world into a world of purity and beauty. All unsightly places disappear; all broken lines vanish. The shrubbery turns into white cascades, and when one looks into a wooded landscape he beholds a fairyland of such ethereal beauty that the sheer beauty stabs the heart with pain.

And you said, “Nothing can be more beautiful than this!” But the next day it was more beautiful. During the forenoon a slight thaw set in; later it grew colder and a thin film formed on branches and twigs, weeds and bushes. As the afternoon sun sent its slanting rays out of the west, the whole scene turned into sparkling, flaming silver. Again you said, as you stood there almost unable to move, “Nothing could be more beautiful than this.” You were right. Nothing could be more beautiful.

One cannot behold scenes like these without having the question leap up in the mind: Is there a thought, is there a design back of all this? Is there an architect of this marvelous universe?

From the dawn of history serious-minded people have asked questions about the origin of things. Philosophy makes conjectures, Science is silent, Atheism laughs and Agnosticism shakes its head.

A book has come to us down through the weary centuries; its pages are worn by much use; many passages are wet with human tears. Learned men have tried to tear it to pieces; the reading of it has at times been forbidden under penalty of dark dungeon. The book is still with us. We open it and read words of incomparable dignity, strength and beauty.

> In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. — Gen. 1:1.
>
> Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens. — Isa. 48:13.
>
> Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host. — Neh. 9:6.
>
> He stretched out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth upon nothing. — Job 26:7.
>
> He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them by their names. — Psa. 147:4.
>
> He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. — Psa. 147:16.
>
> He hath made everything beautiful in his time. — Eccl. 3:11.

A Tribute To Mother

With tender tact they had told me that mother was failing. Then one day I received a letter, beginning, “Now you must be strong, my brother.” I knew what it meant and for a long time my heart refused to be comforted.

Gradually there took possession of me a desire to visit her final resting place. There was so much I wanted to tell her. Then the last evening before I returned to America — it was such a lovely evening — I went alone to the kirkyard.

Just before the curtain falls in Maeterlinck’s “The Blue Bird,” a boy, standing in a cemetery at midnight, raises a radiant face toward heaven and cries joyously, “There are no dead!”

No, there are no dead, and therefore I could speak to mother in these simple words:

"Dear mother of mine, I had hoped to meet you again in our home, but our heavenly Father saw how weary you were, and so He beckoned to you to enter the eternal rest.

"You never thought of yourself; always of others. You were the first one to rise at the dawn of day, and the last one to retire. You had but one thought, one desire — to make it pleasant for us. It was your joy to pluck the sharp stones from our pathway, that our tender feet should not be hurt, though yours would often bleed. When fever flamed in our frail little bodies, how cool and soothing was your hand! Your hand was gnarled from hard work and your fingers were twisted with pain, but none had so soft and tender hand as you.

"There was none so wise as you. You had a solution for all our problems. And still you had read but few books and had never been outside the chain of mountains forming a wall around our parish. You knew very little of the big world on the other side of the mountains. You had never seen the thousand glittering lights of a great city after dark, but you loved to look at the starry sky and the flaming northern light. You had never seen any of the paintings by the great masters, but you were thrilled by the sunsets and the

beautiful blending of colors of the flowers in the fields and in your garden. You had never heard any of the great symphonies, but the laughter of your babes was sweet music in your ears, and often you stopped in your work to listen to the church bells or to the silvery song of the lark in the sky.

"You were so quiet, so meek and mild. The peace that passeth understanding was yours; we saw it in your eyes, and heard it in your voice. An undertow of sadness beat eternally against the shores of your soul. For that reason you could sorrow with the sorrowing, and weep with the weeping.

"No beggar ever asked you for bread and went empty handed away. You gave more than bread; the way you gave it made the beggar forget that he had been hungry, and he went away with a new light in his eyes. Not only your children went to you in hours of trouble. It seemed that everybody went to you. When you departed, people said, 'There was none like her'. No, there was none like you.

"I thank you, mother of mine, for all you have meant to me and will always mean to me. Your prayers during the quiet moments of the day and during the silent watches of the night followed us as guardian angels. You had faith to believe that your prayers for us in distant America and distant China would bring us immediately a blessing, and so they did. You knew that where your thoughts could go, there God's grace would go.

"How could you do so much and always do it so beautifully? I know; you loved the Lord Jesus; He was your life and your strength. And this, too, I know that as surely as He was crowned with immortality, you and I shall meet in His presence in the land that is fair as a day."

Poems

Night

I listen for your footsteps
As the lamplight floods the floor,
You'll come running up the stairway,
I shall meet you at the door.

Your sweet face will be glowing,
Your eyes be full of light,
You will ask me, "Were you lonely?"
But the night wears on, the night —

Where Is The Song?

Where is the song you used to sing,
The melody you played,
The laughter with its silvery ring,
The love that ruled and swayed?

Where is the smile, divinely sweet,
The tender touch of hand,
The light of eyes when eyes did meet —
No more on sea or land?

Oh, no, such love can never die,
Such things do not depart;
I hear them in the winds that sigh,
They dwell within my heart.

Sølvbryllupsdagen

Man sier femogtyve, nei det er da bare fem —
Ja kanske vi maa medgi det er ti,
De aar de gaar saa hurtig, vi kan neppe taelle dem —
Som den raske strøm de farer os forbi.

Ja, den gang var vi unge, stod i livets lyse vaar,
Og himlen var saa høi, saa blaa og ren.
Da sa vi til hinanden: “Hør hvor lerken triller slaar,
Se hvor blomstervangen ligger vid og ven.”

Men lerken var nok ikke den eneste som sang —
Du sang saa mange glade sange med,
Og mangen kveldstund spilte du saa hele huset klang
Og de tunge tvil og tanker fra mig gled.

For sang og spil hat evne at mane himlen ned
Til en verden fuld av vrede, had og splid,
Saa der saenker sig i sjaalen en dyb og stille fred,
Der git mod og magt i dagens kamp og strid.

Naar jeg i kampen tapte og blev syg og saar i sind,
Var det godt at komme hjem til dig, min Viv;
Naar andre tapte troen, du slap aldrig tvilen ind,
Og din tro blev sol og somrner i mit liv.

Høiere End Himlen

Høiere end himlen er din naade, o Gud,
Dypere end dypeste hav;
Laangere den rakker end tanken gaar ud,
Naaden er det største Gud os gav.

Ny er den hver morgen, ny sorn rindende dag,
Den høiner og helliger vort sind.
Den kroner os med seir i strideste slag
Og lyser os i himmerike ind.

Der Flommer Et Vaeld

Der flommer et vzld av klokkeklang
Ut over verden vide,
Der stiger mod himlen en jubelsang,
For nu er det juletide.

De tusener slegters tunge savn,
Al verdens den saare smerte
Forsvinder i Jesu velsignede navn —
Han bar det jo alt paa sit hjerte.

Nu blomstrer Guds rike som veneste vaar
Med løfte om sol og sommer,
Og lovsangen lydt gjennern landene gaar,
Hvor budskab fra Bethlehem kommer.

Vi Gender de tusener lys paa jord
Til glaede for barnesjzlen;
Og aldrig lyder der fagrere ord
End i sangen om julekvelden.

Books By The Same Author

English

- A Summer in Telemark
- Lars Lee
- A Servant of the Lord
- Jesus in Prayer
- Boy from Telemark
- Is There An Answer?
- The Acts of the Apostles

Norwegian

- En Sommer i Telemark
- Abraham Lincoln

- Gutten fra Norge
- Bare for Moro
- Naar Stjernene Sang
- Red Wing Seminar, Festskrift

Compiled

- The Living Word
- Words of Comfort

Edited

- "Folkekalender," three years
- Our Church at Work, three years.

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How Can You Find Peace With God?

The most important thing to grasp is that no one is made right with God by the good things he or she might do. Justification is by faith only, and that faith resting on what Jesus Christ did. It is by believing and trusting in His one-time *substitutionary* death for your sins.

Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

Suggested Reading: *New Testament Conversions* by Pastor George Gerberding

Benediction

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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"I want you to understand that I have never preached opinions from this pulpit; it is not a question of opinion; I have absolutely no right to stand here and give you my opinion, for it is not worth any more than yours; we do not come to church to get opinions; I claim that I can back up every sermon I have preached, with the Word of God, and it is not my opinion nor yours, it is the eternal Word of God, and you will find it so on the Judgment day. I have nothing to take back, and I never will; God does not want me to."

- *True Christianity* by John Arndt
- *The Sermons of Theophilus Stork: A Devotional Treasure*

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