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THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report

of

Committee on Examination

This is to certify that we the undersigned, as a committee of the Graduate School, have given Carl Edin Nordberg final oral examination for the degree of Master of Arts . We recommend that the degree of Master of Arts be conferred upon the candidate.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

June 5 1918

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Report

of

Committee on Thesis

The undersigned, acting as a Committee of the Graduate School, have read the accompanying thesis submitted by Carl Edin Nordberg for the degree of Master of Arts.

They approve it as a thesis meeting the requirements of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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The Influence of Peasant Life of Norway
on Björnson's Early Novels.

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A thesis submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Minnesota

by

Carl E. Nordberg

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

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INTRODUCTORY.

Amid the thousand beautiful fjords, through the long grassy valleys, and around the steep and rugged cliffs of Norway, there is one name which to all people of Norse extraction peals forth like a national anthem sung by a thousand voices, and that name is Björnstjerne Björnson.

He is the genius of his nation. He is a lyric poet, novelist, dramatist, orator, and politician. His lyric poems are the finest in Norse literature. His songs are loved, because they express the deepest and innermost emotions of the people of Norway. His well known song, "Ja vi elsker dette landet", alone is an imperishable monument to his name. He is inferior only to Henrik Ibsen as a dramatist, and his dramatic works are widely read, not only in Norway, but also in other countries of Europe, and in the United States. As an orator he stands without a peer in Norway. The two volumes entitled "Björnsons Taler" bear testimony to his excellence in this art, and yet they only contain a few of his many speeches and addresses. As a politician he is known, not only in the local and national campaigns of Norway, but also in foreign countries. While the two countries were under one King, foreign countries looked upon Norway as a dependency of Sweden, and therefore she had very little connection with other countries through officials. But Björnson, through his travels abroad, became widely known; and, being recognized as the leading Norwegian, carried on a large correspondence with foreign countries about matters pertaining to the welfare of his own country, and thus wielded a tremendous influence in foreign affairs. It can therefore be truly said

that prior to 1905, when Norway became a completely independent kingdom, Björnson was in reality, although not officially, Norway's representative in foreign countries.

In this thesis, however, we are concerned with Björnson as a novelist only; and as the author of one particular kind of novel, the "bonde fortællinger" (peasant stories) or, as they are also called, "the early novels", inasmuch as they are the first novels Björnson wrote.

Björnson's career as a novelist is divided into two distinct periods. The first period embraces the years 1856-1864; while the second period includes the later years of his life beginning in 1874.¹ The writings of his youth differ greatly from those of his mature age, both as to style and contents. While the early novels breathe the purity of a Synnøve Solbakken, the ambition of Øyvind Pladsen, and the patience of Marit Kampen; the later novels present such characters as the vicious Mary, the brutal Kaptein Mansana, and the shrewd Dr. Kallem.

No attempt will be made, however, in this thesis to give an estimate of the later novels, or of the influence which brought this great change in Björnson's work. We propose rather to show the influence of the peasant life of Norway on Björnson during the early part of his life, and to prove that this influence has left strong traces in his early novels. It is our purpose to show that there is a very close relation between the peasant life of Norway and the life portrayed in the early novels.

That we may do this as clearly as possible, it will first be

¹ Edmund Gosse - "An Essay on the Writings of Björnson",
in Novels of Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 7.

necessary to show how radically the Norwegian "bønder" differed from the peasants of the continent, and how closely the life of the "bønder" touched the life of Bjørnson. We shall then understand the very profound influence which the peasant life of Norway exercised on the early novels. The peasant life of Norway is the cause and the early novels the effect, and the personality of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson is the happy medium in which this influence is molded and crystallized.

Chapter 1.

The European Peasant and the Norwegian "Bonde".

We shall not understand the peasants of Björnson's stories unless we recognize them as free and independent yeomen; and in order that this may be brought out clearly we propose to draw a comparison between the peasantry of Europe and the Norwegian "bonde-stand".

1. The European Peasant.

a. Germany.

The peasants of Germany during the early history of the race, were free and independent. No doubt the picture of Germanic society in the "Germania" is overdrawn, but unquestionably Tacitus is right when he presents it as a society of free men owing only a personal allegiance based on personal loyalty to the chieftains.¹

But as feudalism developed the people were divided into two classes, the nobility and the peasantry. The power of the nobility increased, and all of Europe was eventually divided among petty sovereigns, dukes, earls, counts, and barons. They ruled by hereditary right, and their estate descended to the oldest son.

Under such conditions the peasantry was doomed to a life in drudgery and to continual insults from the nobility. Their corn-fields were trodden down by the baronial hunters, and they were compelled even to grind their corn in the landlord's mill and bake their bread in his oven. They had no redress of injuries, and were scorned as well as insulted. The noble and the unprivileged classes

¹Tacitus - Quoted in Benham's Eng. Lit. from Widsith to the Death of Chaucer, p. 14.

were not connected by any ties; there was nothing in common between them. Marriages seldom took place between the different classes. A beautiful peasant girl could never rise above her drudgeries; and she never dreamed of rising, for the members of the baronial family were looked up to as superior beings.

The peasant had no rights, only duties. He belonged to his master as completely as if he could be bought and sold. The condition of the peasants became at last unbearable and in their despair they sought to liberate themselves by force.

A period of continual agitation and strife followed. The spirit of the crusades strengthened the desire for liberation which had long been harbored deep down in the hearts of the peasants; but after the period of the crusades the large landowners and the nobility again tried to tighten their reins and draw the peasants back into bondage and slavery.

Several peasant wars and religious wars were fought during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the result of all these strifes was simply that the emancipation of the peasantry was buried for centuries.

It was not until the last half of the eighteenth century that the peasants of Germany could begin to look to a brighter future. The first step for their liberation was taken by Emperor Joseph II, in 1781. The change in peasant conditions in Germany came before the French Revolution, but there is a close connection between the two historical events, for the emperor had adopted his humane ideas from the French philosophers.¹

¹ Salmonsens's Konversations Lexikon, Vol. III, p. 336.

b. France.

The peasant conditions of France were also deplorable. Two-thirds of the French soil was owned by the church, the nobility, and the capitalists. Only one-third belonged to the smaller landowners. The church, which was itself exempt from taxation on its large possessions of land, took one-tenth of everything that the peasants' soil yielded. Besides the "tithe", the peasants also had to pay taxes to the church. The taxes to the state also became especially heavy for the peasants, for the nobility was exempt from the heaviest taxation. The peasants who owned their land were, however, more fortunate than the tenants. The latter simply led a life of misery. One-half of what their small tracts of land yielded, they gave to the landowners; besides this, they were pressed by debts for socage and tithes. Under such conditions they were doomed to starvation and misery.¹

Arthur Young says of the peasants of France, "They are fixed to a spot which they can not abandon without securing the cultivation, their skill and attention even are placed in requisition, they are bound to cultivate whether they will or not; nay, they are bound to take care of the land of a neighbor if absent on the public service, and they are tied to these exertions under severe penalties, at the moment that half their teams are in requisition for military duties. Of their crop, no part is free but that which is necessary for their own consumption, the rest is all in requisition by a formal decree of the convention, and every bushel and head of cattle and sheep is registered under severe penalties."²

¹ Montelius-"Sveriges Bönder" in Nordisk Tidskrift 1914, p. 75

² Arthur Young - An Idea of the Present State of France in Tracts, p. 4.

c. Denmark.

Denmark had for a long time free and independent peasants, commonly called "odelsbønder"; but even in Denmark peasant conditions changed very early. The number of "odelsbønder" decreased, because many sought protection against the lawlessness of the times, from the church officers and from the nobility. They soon became subordinate and even serfs (husmænd) on the land they themselves had owned. At last they also forfeited their personal liberty by the "vornedskab", a system under which the heir could be compelled to work the farm on which he was born. If the farm was very poor, the peasant had absolutely no chance for the future, and his whole life became a miserable slavery. There are also instances on record of peasants being sold directly as slaves by the landowners.

In Denmark, as in Germany, the peasants in their despair tried to liberate themselves by force, but in vain. They were soon overpowered by the King's army. King Christian II realized the conditions of the peasants of Denmark, and was very willing to do something for them; but after he was dethroned, the peasants were gradually subordinated until in 1702, when the "vornedskab" was abolished by Frederik IV. But their rejoicing was short, for in 1733 the "stavnsbaand" was introduced. By this the peasants were bound to the soil until they were through their military training. This compulsory service continued down to the close of the eighteenth century.¹

The pitiable condition of the peasantry of Denmark at the middle of the XVIII century has been vividly portrayed by Ludvig Holberg in his masterpiece, "Jeppe paa Bjerget".² The miserable Jeppe,

¹ Montelius - "Sveriges Bønder" in Nordisk Tidskrift 1914, p.75.

² Ludvig Holberg - Jeppe paa Bjerget, see especially Scene 5, Act V, Campbell's edition, p. 45.

plundered and oppressed by his master, seeking a wretched relief in bad whiskey, is, as Dr. Campbell has pointed out, a true type of the peasant of XVIII century Sjælland.¹

Having traced the development of the peasantry in other countries of Europe, we shall confine ourselves in the remaining part of this chapter to tracing the development of the peasantry of Norway.

II The Norwegian Bonde.

The conditions of the peasants in Norway have been easier than in any other country of Europe. This is due mainly to the natural conditions of the country and to the failure of the feudal system to get a footing. The Norwegians have been yeomen down through their whole history, and remain primarily such today. The peasants have not only made up the greater part of the population of the country, but their place in the social order has also given them a prominent place in the history of Norway. The historian R. Keyser says: "The Norwegian peasants have always been considered as the first representatives of the Norwegian people."² In the very ancient history of Norway the peasants were the only Norwegians. The peasants not only comprised the greater part of the people and the ruling class of the people, but the name "bonde" embodied in reality everything that pertained to the freedom and liberty of the Norwegian people; for the leading men of the country, from the chief man of a small community to the King, were tillers of the soil. The word "bonde" had therefore a peculiarly good ring in the middle ages. It was

¹Oscar James Campbell - Comedies of Holberg, Introduction p.13.

²Quotation by Visted in Vor Gamle Bondekultur, p. 6.

considered such an honorable title that one of the chieftains of Logna refused the King's offer to become a knight; he preferred rather to be a peasant and carry the title "bonde".¹

I. Failure of Feudalism in Norway.

The reason why the peasants of Norway have remained free and independent can be attributed largely to the failure of feudalism in that country.

"To judge from the statement in the 'Egilsaaga' that in every fylke Harald took all the odal, and all land, inhabited and uninhabited, even the sea and the waters, and that all freeholders (bønder) should henceforth be his tenants, one might be led to think that the king was the owner of all the land, and had introduced the feudal system into Norway. But this is a manifest exaggeration. The feudal system was not at that time developed anywhere in Europe, and it was never introduced in Norway.

"The statement in the 'Egilsaaga' referred to may indicate that King Harald tried to introduce the feudal system; but if he did, the attempt was a total failure; for there is no evidence that the people even had to pay a land tax. Harald left undisturbed the 'things' or courts, and the old legal system. The right of 'odal' was retained, and real and personal property was transmitted from parents to children by inheritance.

"What King Harald did was to levy a personal tax on the freeholders, possibly also a tax on certain income....." "As the people had never been accustomed to paying taxes, they regarded this as a sign of dependence, and as no great an encroachment on their lib-

¹Kristoffer Visted in Vor Gamle Bondeskultur, Introduction. p. 1.

erty, that it was tantamount to depriving them of their odel and their rights as freemen, and of reducing them as tenants under the king."¹

True it is that Harald through his strict discipline organized society and established the throne more firmly, but the peasants' liberty was not encroached upon. Thus it was that, while the peasants in other countries of Europe were carrying the heavy burdens of the Feudal system, the Norwegian "bönder" remained free and independent as before.

2. Norwegian Society during the Middle Ages.

Society in Norway during the Middle Ages comprised three distinct classes: the King, the chieftains, and the "bönder". At first these three classes lived harmoniously but later sharp contentions and struggles developed between the King and the chieftains, which finally led to the levelling of society.

a. Struggle between the King and Chieftains.

There are two periods of civil wars in Norway. The first is known as the Magnus the Blind, Harald Gille, and Sigurd Slembediaken period. The second is known as the period of Erling Skakke and Magnus Erlingsson. In both these periods the struggle was between the Kings and the Chieftains.

Of conditions during these periods Dr Gjerset says:

"Instead of great national kings, the period of civil wars ushers past with kaleidoscopic rapidity arrogant and incompetent heirs to the throne, contemptible pretenders, daring fortune-seekers, and worthless puppet kings who hold the throne for a day, to be

¹Gjerset - History of the Norwegian People, Vol. 1, p. 126.

powerful central authority, the King; on the other hand, the great mass of politically impotent, but socially and economically free "bonder".

3. Struggle between the Peasants and the Danish Officials.

The Norwegian peasants never lost out. They maintained their independence inviolate through the centuries. After the union with Denmark there came trying times for the Norwegian peasants. The Danish officials who came into the country to rule, were accustomed to look upon the peasant as a serf who had no rights whatsoever. They made bold attempts at suppressing the peasants and introducing conditions similar to those already existing in Denmark; but they were met with a powerful and stubborn resistance. As a result the following century of peasant history is a narrative of continuous struggles to maintain the old and much loved peasant liberty. This conflict had a deciding influence on the whole future of the Norwegian people.

Much could be said about the unjust encroachments of the officers upon the personal liberties of the peasants. There were innumerable complaints against the bailiffs and the sheriffs. An account is given about the bailiff in Trøndelagen, Ludvig Munk; he had several peasants executed by hanging in order to get their farms and other property.¹

But if the officers made many unjust encroachments upon the rights of the peasants, the peasants on their part also made many attacks and unjust assaults on the officials. This period of Norwegian history is filled with accounts of continuous revolts,

¹Chr. Visted in Vor Gamle Bondekultur, Introduction, p. 7.

and murders of officials.

These separate revolts in the communities were not at first prompted by a conscious national feeling on the part of the peasants. They simply wanted to maintain the old peasant liberty, whereby each individual was secure in his personal rights and privileges, and this the Danish officials were finally obliged to respect.

But these smaller revolts led to a further development. The struggles against the Danish officials gradually developed aspirations for Norwegian national independence, which later became a mighty factor in creating the independent Norway of 1814.

In this chapter, then, we have proved from history that the peasants of Norway were more free and independent than those of any other country of Europe. The term "bonde" therefore, has a meaning higher than and quite different from corresponding terms in other countries, "payson" in French and "bauer" in German. "Bonde" is a parallel form to Icelandic "buande" and referred originally to people settling and dwelling on farms; but in Norway the word "bønder" designates the free, independent, and leading class of people in the country. In English the term "yeoman" corresponds somewhat to the term "bonde".¹

In this thesis, then, when we speak of the peasants of Norway, it should be kept in mind that the word peasant embodies the whole and original meaning of the Norwegian "bonde".

¹

P. G. La Chesnais: Oeuvres Complètes de Henrik Ibsen,

Vol. 1, p. XXIV.

Chapter II.

Sketch of Björnson's Early Life with Special Reference to Peasant Influences.

1. The Influence of His Home.

a. Influence of his father.

Björnstjerne Björnson was born on a farm named Bjørgan, in Kvikne Parish, Østerdalen, Norway, December 8, 1832. His father, the pastor Peder Björnson, was of peasant stock and had himself been a farmer before he began preparing for the ministry. He was not a diligent student, but a strong and sturdy man. He led, or rather controlled, the people of his parish more by his strong personality and sturdy appearance than by his eloquence of speech. He maintained the strictest discipline in the home, and his oldest son Björnstjerne was not always handled with silk gloves. Björnson's father believed in the old method of subduing all evil tendencies in his child as soon as he detected them. All stubbornness must be crushed immediately. He also believed that exposing evil and its consequences in their most horrifying colors, would make the child abhor evil and avoid it. To this end he compelled his son, then only seven years old, to be present at the execution of a young man.¹ The execution was performed by beheading, and left an impression on Björnson's mind that was never obliterated. This impression was the direct influence which prompted him in writing "Et Stygt Barndomsminde".²

Björnson's quiet and modest father, with strong though subdued feelings, faithful, sometimes harsh to those around him, is

¹ Gerhard Gran - "Björnstjerne Björnson" in Nordmænd i det 19de Aarhundrede, Vol. III, p. 289.

² "Et Stygt Barndomsminde", Björnson's Samlede Værker, Vol. V. p. 343.

the model of Sæmund Granlien in "Synnöve Solbakken".¹ He is very quiet in his home, stern and vigorous with his children, with a special interest in his son Thorbjörn.

Grundede han da over, om ikke Gutten kunde opdrages slig, at han kom forbi den Skjæbnesten, Snakket havde lagt i hans Vei. Han var ikke rigtig vis paa det, men han syntes merke stridigt Sind hos Gutten; "det skal plukkes ud," sagde han til Moderen, og saa snart Thorbjörn var bleven tre Aar, satte Faderen sig stundom hen med et Ris i Haanden, tvang ham saa til at bære alle Vedtrær tilbage paa sin Plads, tage op igjen den Kop, han havde kastet, klappe Katten, som han havde klebet. Men Moderen gik gjerne ud, naar det Sind kom over Fadereh.

Sæmund undredes ved, at alt som Gutten blev større, var det mere at rette hos ham, og det nagtethan stedse blev strengere medfareh. Han holdt ham tidlig til Bogen og lod ham gaa med paa Marken for at kunne have et Øie med ham.²

There is also a striking resemblance between Björnson's father and Thord Overaas in "Faderen". "Den mand hvorom her skal fortæles, var den mægtigste i sit prestegjæld; han hed Thord Overaas. Han stod en dag i præstens kontor, høi og alvorlig."³

The personality of his father is no doubt reflected in all the strong characters of the Early Novels. Björnson has himself given us a splendid portrait of his father in the poem "Til Min Far", and he tells us that he saw in his father a type of the Norwegian "bonde".

Hvis Norges bonde, som jeg op ham maned
af bygdens arbeid eller sagas rader,
en gang vil mindes, - da du ogsaa fader:
ved dig at elske var det ham, jeg aned.⁴

¹Chr. Collin - Björnstjerne Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 129.

²"Synnöve Solbakken", Björnson's Sam.Værker, Vol.III, pp.118-19.

³"Faderen" - " " " " " p. 259.

³"Til Min Far" - " " " " VI, p. 112.

b. Influence of his mother.

Björnson's mother, Elise Nordraak, belonged to a musical family, and was of a brighter and more cheerful disposition than her husband. She was quick to act and talkative. She had a strain of the real artist in her soul.¹

Chr. Collin has preserved for us in one interesting paragraph Björnson's own words concerning his parents and their influence upon him in writing his first peasant story.

"Hun (his mother) havde det lyse og lette og flagrende. Han (his father) kunde ikke faa ord for, hvad han dybest følte - Jeg kan gjerne sige det: Jeg har tegnet dem begge, mor i konen paa Solbakken - hun sad paa et sted, som solen bærer straalene hen paa - og far i Sæmund, som levede i Granliens skygge." And Collin adds: "Det er betegnende for Björnstjerne Björnson at han havde begge sine forældre med da han første gang traadte seirende frem for alt folk, i 'Synnöve Solbakken'".²

The bright and cheerful disposition of Björnson's mother is clearly apparent in the character of Karen Solbakken. Her expressions in the following quotation from the conversation in the churchyard on confirmation day are characteristic.

"Det bliver bestemt et veksignet Veir idag," sagde Karen Solbakken og lod Blikket med Hast gaa fra den ene til den anden. Sæmund var den, som svarede: "Aa, ja; den Vind driver Skylagene væk." - "Godt for Kornet, som staar og trænger til Tørke," sagde Ingebjørg Granliden og begyndte at børste af Sæmund bag paa Trøien, ventelig fordi hun troede, han var støvet. - "Vorherre har givet os et godt Aar, men det kan være uvist, om altsammen vil i Hus," sagde Karen Solbakken igjen og saa hen til de to, som endnu ikke havde flyttet sig siden sidst. "Det kommer an paa Folkemagten," sagde Sæmund og vendte sig mod hende, saa at hun ikke

¹Gerhard Gran- "Björnstjerne Björnson" in Nordmænd i det 19de Aarhundrede, Vol. III, p. 269.

²Chr. Collin - "Björnstjerne Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 43.

godt kunde se did, hun vilde. "Jeg har tit tænkt, at etpar Gaarde kunde lægge sin Magt ihob; da gik det vist bedre."....."Det kan være slig, at de vil bruge Tørken paa en Gang," sagde Karen Solbakken og tog et Skridt til Siden. ¹

From his mother Björnson inherited the optimism which goes as a bright strain through all his writings, and especially the Early Novels. The hero in each story succeeds in the end. Björnson's mother is undoubtedly also responsible for the peculiarly cheerful ring in some of her son's poetic writings:

Løft dit hode, du raske gut!
Om et haab eller to blev brudt,
blinker et nyt i dit øie,
straks det faar glans af det høie!

Løft dit hode, og tag din daab
af det høie, straalende haab
som over verden hvælver
og i hver livsgnist skjælver! ²

2. Influence of Nature.

a. The scenes around Næsset Portrayed in the Early Novels.

When Björnson, during the winter of 1838, moved further south to Næsset in Romsdalen, he came in closer touch with nature. The cold and icy environment in Østerdalen, where Björnson had lived the first six years of his life, now became in his imagination the dark background against which the enchanting nature in Romsdalen stood forth in all its beauty. The savagery of Dovre was the one extreme; the mild beauty of Næsset was the other. The scenes around Næsset cannot be better described than in Björnson's own words:

"Here in Næsset parish, one of the most beautiful estates in the country as it lies there broad-bosomed between two confluent fjords, with the green mountains above, waterfall and farmsteads on the opposite shore, waving fields and life farther down in the valley, and

¹ "Synnöve Solbakken" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol.III,p.197.
² "En Glad Gut" - " " " " " " p. 72

out along the fjord mountains with promontory after promontory jutting out into the sea and a large estate on each. Here in Næsset parish, where I might stand during the evening hours looking at the play of the sunlight over mountain and fjord, until I wept as if I had done something wrong, and where I, when going down into the valley on my skis, suddenly might stop as if bewitched by a beauty and a longing which it was beyond my power to explain, but which was so strong that immediately upon the highest ecstasy of joy I might feel the deepest confinement and distress - here in Næsset parish grew my impressions." 1 2

The profound impression which the beauties of nature left upon his mind is shown clearly in the vividness with which he describes these scenes thirty years later in "Blakken". The scenes that filled his mind and heart in childhood are clearly reflected in his early peasant stories; most perfectly in "Synnøve Solbakken".

I en stor Dal kan der være et til alle Sider fritliggende, høit Sted, som Solen bærer Straaler paa, fra det den gaar op, til den falder, Og de, som bor tætere under Fjeldene og Skjeldnere faar Sol, kalder da hint Sted en Solbakke. Der lagde sneen sig sidst om høsten, der braanede det ogsaa først om vaaren.

Paa den anden Side af Dalen og tæt under det høie Fjeld laa en Gaard, som hed Granlien, saa kaldet, fordi den laa midt i en stor Granskog, den eneste i vid Omkreds. 3

The gentler touches in his description of landscapes and the enchanted scenes in which he places his lovers, sometimes playing hide and seek among the tall grass, and then again sitting together

¹ "Blakken" - Björnson's Samlede Værker, Vol. III, p. 245.

² Translation by G. T. Flom - Introduction to "Synnøve Solbakken", p. 13.

³ "Synnøve Solbakken" - Björnson's Samlede Værker, Vol. III, p. 117.

amid the sweet fragrance of flowers and trees, are all reproductions of his own experience in communion with nature during his early life.

I Fjeldet over Gaardene var der et Skard, og der gik Veien ind til Heidegaards-sætrene, store, græsricke Fjeldsletter. Oppe i Skardet stod i Dag en Mand og saa ned over Sletten, ret som om han ventede nogen. Bag ham laa et lidet Fjelvand, hvorifra den Bæk løb ned, som gjorde Skard i Fjeldet; omkring dette Vand gik paa begge Sider Kreaturveie indover omkring Sætrene, som han kunde se langt borte. De haukede og gjøde fremover mod ham, Bjeldene skingrede mellem Aasene; thi Kjørene skinede og søgte Vandet, Hunde og Gjøtere vilde samle dem, men forgjæves. Kjørene kom sættende med de underligste Fagter, gjorde nødtvungne Kast og løb med korte, olme Brøl og Halen i Veiret lige ned i Vandet, hvor de blev staaende; deres Klokker kimedede over Vandet, hver Gang de bevægede Hovedet.

Men Øyvind var det, som sat deroppe i Middagssolen og ventede. Han sad i Skjortærmerne tæt ved den bæk, som randt ud af Vandet. Ingen viste sig endnu paa Heidegaards-sletten, og han begyndte saa smaat at blive bange, da pludselig en stor Hund kom tungt dragende ud af en Dør i Nordistuen og efter den en Jente i Skjortærmerne; hun sprang bort over Voldene op mod Bjerget, han havde stor Lyst til at hauke ned, men turde ikke. Han saa opmærksomt paa Gaarden, om nogen tilfældig skulde komme ud og bemerke hende, men beskyttet var hun, og han reiste sig flere Gange af Utaalmodighed.

Saa kom hun endelig, arbeidende sig frem langs med Bækken, Hunden lidt foran og lugtende i Luften, hun med Tag i Smaabuskene og trættene og trættene Gang. Øyvind sprang nedover, Hunden knurrede, og der blev hysset paa den; men straks Marit saa ham komme, satte hun sig paa en stor Sten, rød som Blod, træt og forkommen af Varme. Han hidde sig op paa Stenen ved Siden af:¹

¹"En Glad Gut" - Bjørnson's Samlede Værker, Vol. IV, pp. 73 - 74.

3. Influence of Peasant Life in the Community.

a. Influence of the Peasant Children.

At his first home, Björgan, Björnson had very few people to associate with besides his parents; his associates were a colt called "Blakken", a little dog, a cat and a pig. Most important of these was Blakken. It filled such a large place in Björnson's fancy that he later wrote a sketch by that title in which he described Blakken's wonderful qualities.¹

When he came to Næsset, he made acquaintance with new playmates. Blakken was still his friend, but the peasant boys and girls became his intimate playmates. The "husmand", or tenant, on the farm where Björnson was reared, had two children, a boy and a girl. These two simple peasant children became his very best friends. They taught him to use skis, sled, and boat. They picked eggs of "maase" and "teist" with him on the cape hear by, and it was almost impossible to separate them even for meals or at night. Björnson, therefore, as a child, often ate his hearty meals and slept in this simple hut. Through his intimate acquaintance with them he gained an intimate insight into the peasant's view of life. ^{2, 3}

Björnson's experience with the peasant children proved of great value to him, when, later in life, he wrote his stories. We quote from "En Glad Gut" a part of that charming little story of Øyvind, Marit, and Bukken.

¹"Blakken" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, p. 241.

²J. B. Halvorsen - Norsk Forfatterlexikon, Vol. 1, p. 279.

³Chr. Collin - Björnstjerne Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 66.

Men ved Siden af Bukken laa en liden Jente paa Knæ. "Er den din, den Bukken?" spurgte hun. Øyvind stod med aaben Mund og Øine, stak begge Hænder i den Kjølebuxen, han bar. "Hvem er du?" spurgte han. - "Jeg er Marit, Mor sin Unge, Felen til Far, Huldra i Huset, Datterdatter til Ole Nordistuen paa Heidegaardene, fire Aar til Høsten, to Dage efter Frost-Nætterne, jeg!" - "Er du det, du!" sa han og drog Pusten, for han havde ikke turdet slippe den, saa længe hun talte.

"Er den din, den Bukken?" spurgte Jenten om igjen. - "Ja-ha," sa han og saa op. "Jeg har faaet saadan Lyst paa den Bukken; - du vil ikke gi mig den?" - "Nei, det vil jeg ikke."

Hun laa og spændte med Benede og saa ned paa ham, og da sagde hun; "End naar du faar en Smørkringle for Bukken, kan jeg saa faa den?" - Øyvind var af Fattigfolk; han havde spist Smørkringle bare een Gang i sit Liv; det var, da Bedstefar kom did, og sligt havde han aldrig spist hverken før eller siden. Han saa op paa Jenten; "lad mig faa se den Kringlen først," sa han. Hun var ikke sen paa det, viste en stor Kringle frem, som hun holdt i Haanden; "her er den!" sagde hun og kastede den ned. "Au, den gik i Stykker," sa Gutten; han samlede hver Bid op med Omhu; den allermindste maatte han smage paa, og den var saa god, at han maatte smage paa en til, og før han selv vidste af det, havde han spist op hele Kringlen.

"Nu er Bukken min," sa Jenten, Gutten stansede med den sidste Bid i Munden, Jenten laa og lo. Bukken stod ved Siden, hvid i Brystes, brunsort i Bagget, og saa ned paa Skakke. ¹

The charming simplicity and straightforwardness of speech of the peasant children is apparent in Thorbjörn's and Synnöve's chatter on the "kirkevolden" after services.

Thorbjörn gik da nærmere hen til hende og saa paa hende, og hun saa paa ham, og saadan stod de en lang Stund blot og saa paa hverandre. Endelig sagde hun: "Fy!"-- "Hvorfor siger du fy?" - spurgte han. - "Fy!" sagde hun endnu en Gang. "Fy, skamme dig!" lagde hun til. - "Hvad har jeg da gjort?"-

¹"En Glad Gut" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. IV, p. 4.

"Du har slaaes i Kirken, og medens Præsten stod og messede, - fy!" "Ja, men det er længe siden." Dette slog hende, og hun sagde om lidt: "Er det dig, som heder Thorbjørn Granlien?" - "Ja, og er det dig, som heder Synnøve Solbakken?" - "Ja. - - Jeg har bestandig hørt, at du var saadan en snil Gut." - - "Nei, det er ikke sandt; for jeg er den slemmeste af alle os hjemme," sagde Thorbjørn....."Du kan tro, jeg eier mange Sauer," sagde hun. - "Gjør du det?" - "Ja, tre gaar med Lam i Vinter, og den ene, tror jeg bestemt, faar to." - "Saa du har Sauer, du?" - "Ja, jeg har ogsaa Kjør og Grise. Har du ingen?" - "Nei," - "Kom bort til mig, skal du faa et Lam. Saa skal du nok se, at du faar flere af det." - "Det vilde være urimelig trøisomt." De stod lidt; "kunde ikke ogsaa Ingrid faa et Lam?" spurgte han. - "Hvem er Ingrid?" "Ingrid, vesle Ingrid?" - Nei, hende kjendte hun ikke. "Er hun mindre end du?" - "Ja vist er hun mindre end jeg, - saapas som du." - "Aa, nei! hende maa du tage med, hører du!" Jo, det skulde han da. "Men," sagde hun, "da du faar et Lam, kan hun faa en Gris." Det fandt ogsaa han var langt klogere, og nu fortalte de lidt om fælles Kjendinger, hvorefter de rigtignok ikke havde mange. Forældrene var færdige, og de maatte gaa hjem.¹

b. Influence of the Servants.

Besides the children, Björnson also associated with the servants on the farm. Concerning his intimate acquaintance with the servants, Björnson himself says: "Hele det umiddelbare bondesyn, hele den uvilkaarlige bevisthed om livsvilkaarene fik jeg da jeg blev tjenernes fortrolige, det mener jeg har spillet en stor rolle i mit liv."² He ran errands for the servants, wrote and transmitted love letters for them, and lived with them in their devoted life for one another. They revealed all their secrets to him. Björnson's

¹"Synnøve Solbakken" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, p. 133.

²Verbally preserved from Björnson by Collin in Chr. Collin - Björnstjerne Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 66.

pleasing personality, and the fact that he was the pastor's son, gave to him special privileges to enter everywhere. He entered into the peasants' joys and sorrows, talked their language, and thought their thoughts, and learned to know the inner life of their souls, so rich with emotions, heartaches, and joys. He saw that their life was a battle for existence, and that the rich gifts in many a peasant were crippled by his many hardships in life. "My well known native simplicity is not due to scant knowledge of life," says Björnson. "Early, entirely too early, I became acquainted with all the different circumstances in life. There were many different kinds of people at Næsset, tradesmen and other classes of workmen, because my father built up the place quite extensively. The knowledge of people I then acquired has since been a foundation for me to build on." ¹

It is on this foundation built up from childhood that Björnson has constructed all his early novels. Without this intimate knowledge of the very soul of the peasants, the peasant stories would have lacked those most important qualities which go to make them immortal masterpieces of literature. It is these childhood impressions of peasant life that Björnson has been able to put into his wonderfully delicate pictures of peasant romance in "Synnöve", "Arne," and "En Glad Gut".

"Du tør gjerne vente lidt," ytrede han uden at se paa hende. - "En anden Gang," blev der sagte svaret; - "Det kan blive længe til." Hun saa op; han saa nu ogsaa paa hende; men der var en Stund, før de sagde noget. "Sæt dig igjen," sagde han lidt forlegen. "Hei," svarede hun og blev staaende. Han følte Trodsen stige op; men da gjorde hun noget, han

¹ Chr. Collin - Björnstjerne Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 67.

ikke havde ventet; hun gik et Skridt frem, bøjede sig lige mod ham, saa ham op i øiet og sagde med et Smil: "Er du vred paa mig?" Og da han skulde se til, saa græd hun. "Nei," sagde han luerød i Ansigtet.

Han rakte Haanden frem; men da Øinene var fulde af Vand, merkede hun det ikke, og han drog den tilbage. Saa sagde han endelig: "Du har altsaa hørt det?" - "Ja," sagde hun, saa op og lo; men der var nu flere Taarer i Øinene end før; han vidste ikke, hvad han skulde gjøre og sige; der faldt ham derfor af Munden: "Jeg har kanske været for slem." Det var meget mildt sagt; hun saa ned og vendte sig halvt bort; "Du skal ikke dømmes om det, du ikke kjender." Dette var sagt med halvkvalt Røst, og han blev helt ilde derved; han følte sig som en Gut og sagde derfor ogsaa, da han ikke kunde finde noget andet: "Jeg beder dig om Forladelse." Men da brast hun ud i virkelig Graad. Det kunde han ikke taale, men gik hen og tog hende om Livet og ludede sig ned over hende: "Holder du ogsaa rigtig af mig, Synnöve?" - "Ja," hulkede hun. - "Men du er ikke lykkelig ved det?" - Hun svarede ikke. "Men du er ikke lykkelig ved det?" gjentog han. Hun græd nu mere end nogensinde og vilde drage sig unda. "Synnöve!" sagde han og tog fastere om hende. Hun lagde sig op til ham og græd meget. 1

c. Einar Veiten Portrayed in "Arne".

One definite example, at least, must be mentioned of Björnson's using one of his childhood acquaintances as a hero in his novels. Einar Veiten was the wittiest man Björnson had ever known. He laughed and joked all the time, but with no intent to hurt other peoples' feelings; and he always attracted attention. When Einar came to the parsonage, young Björnson was always with him. He followed him wherever he went. He loved him and worshipped him. This man Einar had a friend with whom he had always associated. This friend was a large and powerful man. They were always on the best of terms, but

¹"Synnöve Solbakken" - Björnson's Sam.Værker, Vol. III, p.148.

at a party Einar happened to pass a joke which angered his friend. In a fit of anger he caught Einar by the shoulders, bent him backwards and caused a derangement in his back, from which he never fully recovered. Einar Veiten's fate profoundly affected Björnson's childish sympathies; that the most gifted and most witty man that he had ever known should be made a cripple for life at the hands of his best friend, was to Björnson's young mind very sad.¹

Many years later, when Björnson writes his "Arne", it is easily discerned that he tries to give his old friend Einar Veiten redress. Arne Kampen, the hero of the story, is none other than Einar Veiten.

Arne's life begins sadly overshadowed by an inherited moral deformity.

Arne blev faamølt og folkasky; han
gjættede og lagede viser. Han blev nitten
i sit tyvende aar, og endnu gik han og
gjættede.²

But in spite of his very sad childhood, he overcomes all difficulties, and succeeds in the end. He wooes and marries Eli Bøen, the rich farmer's daughter whom he has loved since they were very young.

Da de den lyse sommernat gik hjem,
kunde de ikke tale stort i sin nyfødte herlig-
hed. De lod selve naturen føre tale imellem
dem, saa stille, lys og stor, som den fulgte.³

¹Chr. Collin - Björnstjerne Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 69.

²"Arne" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, p. 29.

³"Arne" - " " " " " p.110.

4. Influence of His School-days at Molde.

a. Sketch of the Town and School.

"Molde, Molde, blomstrende by, hvor Romsdalens stride fjelde med de hidsige kappende tinder, ligesom viger tilbage og ordner sig til en vidunderlig skjøn fjeļderække".¹ Thus Collin describes the town of Molde. It was a small town and a quiet town, but the scenery around it was some of the prettiest in Romsdalen, and, for that matter, in Norway.

Björnson's impression of the life in this little town is portrayed in "Fiskerjenten". Everything was quiet, too quiet for Björnson, until someone came in, and, like fiskerjenten, made a disturbance; but the quiet town did not want to be disturbed, it would rather ostracize the trouble maker.

The evening scene in Chapter IV of "Fiskerjenten" is a true picture of an evening at Molde such as Björnson had often seen it. "She opened the window and looked out; red warm clouds lay in a cluster over the mountains, but a cooling breeze came in and brought a message from the nearby woods."²

"Molde Middelskole", or, as it was later called, "Molde middel og realskole", was located in this little city. Björnson entered the school in 1844, and remained there five years. It had only two classes, and the attendance during Björnson's last year was twenty-eight. We infer, therefore, that the school was not a very thriving one. Björnson himself gives his impressions of the school in the following verse:

¹Chr. Collin - Björnstjerne Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 85.

²"Fiskerjenten" - Björnson's Sam.Værker, Vol. IV, p.134.

Jeg gik paa en liden, meget pyntelig skole,
paa hvilken baade kirke og stat kunde stole.
Den dreiet helt stilfærdig i statsmaskineriet,
og skjönt det kunde høres paa hjuleknirkeriet,
at skjelden den smurtes af aandens talg,
saa var paa hine kanter slet intet valg;
vi maatte gaa der, til vi blev store.
Jeg gik der ogsaa,- men læste Snorre. ¹

At the age of eleven Björnson was sent to Molde to attend this school. With his mind filled with impressions of the peasant life of his childhood environment, the half grown lad came to town, where one might expect that his meditations on peasant life would be checked, and early impressions obliterated. But the peasants were also in Molde, and he was given an opportunity to look at them from a distance; and "distance lends enchantment to the view".

Walking down to the dock one day, he watched the "Sömsöring" farmers as they were coming to shore with their boats loaded with apples, nuts, dried beef, and herring. He could not but sympathize with them as he saw their weather-beaten faces and their hands worn with toil. But here something happened which stirred his emotions. He saw the school-boys in large numbers gathering on shore to throw stones at the peasants, and to disturb them in their eager task of selling their precious little loads. Björnson could not endure that the peasants whom he had learned to love from childhood should be molested by a flock of gay school-boys. He protested in strong terms against this vulgar amusement, and finally persuaded the boys to quit.² This was Björnson's first defense of the peasants, but it was only the beginning of a life-long work in speech and writing for the peasantry of Norway.

¹ "Gamle Heltherg" - Björnson's Sam.Værker, Vol. VI, p. 130.

² Gerhard Gran - "Björnstjerne Björnson" in Nordmand i det 19de Aarhundrede, vol. III, p. 223.

b. Björnson's Studies of the Sagas.

Of far more importance than these incidental meetings with the peasants by the dock at Molde, was his acquaintance with the peasants in literature at school, the so-called Saga peasants. Björnson was not a bright scholar in his regular studies at school, but he found great pleasure in reading folkstories and novels. He read Asbjörnson's and Moe's "Eventyr", the romances of Walter Scott, and the Danish authors Holberg and Oehlenschläger, but, above all, he read Old Norse myths and heroic stories. In Snorre Sturlason's Kings Sagas, he found the real ancestors of his beloved peasants in Romsdal. These sagas he therefore read over and over. He was so absorbed in Snorre's account of the heroic age of Norway, that he was fairly lost to the rest of the work at school. Collin says that his acquaintance with the saga peasants was just as intimate as his acquaintance with the peasants in his home community in Bidsvaagbugten.¹

c. Merging of the Saga Peasants with the Peasant of Real Life in Björnson's Mind.

Björnson's new acquaintance with the peasants of the sagas gave him an opportunity to make comparisons between the Northmen of the heroic age and the sturdy peasants of his own day. Chr. Collin explains the fusion of the two impressions of peasant life in Björnson's mind in the following striking illustration:

"Naar en og samme fotografiske plade først faar et sterkt lys-indtryk af et billede, og derpaa opfanger et andet billede paa det samme sted, saaledes maatte indtrykkene af de to menneske grup-

¹Chr. Collin - Björnstjerne Björnson, Vol. 1, p. 89.

per i nogen grad forene sig i Björnson's sjæl; og de træk maatte komme til at træde stærkest frem, som var fælles for begge. Om nogen kunde anstille et videnskabeligt eksperiment for at fremkalde et sammensat billede af meneskene i Norges stolteste fortid og deres mest ublandede efterkommere i Norges nutid, kunde man neppe have opnaaet noget mere fuldkomment i sin art end de fortællinger, hvormed Björnson erobrede sig sin første navnkundighed over hele den germaniske verden."¹

The result of this fusion was to give to the Norwegian peasants in the Early Novels a greater vividness. After reading the sagas and comparing their peasants with those of the present time, Björnson was able, as perhaps no one else, to make real his sketches of the Norwegian bønder. His insight into human nature is rich and poetic and keenly correct. Björnson's peasants are real saga peasants, in the sense that they are the vigorous norsemen living in the nineteenth century.

Sæmund Granlien is a type of the vigorous Norwegian of Björnson's time; but he is also imbued with the spirit of the Vikings in the Saga period. One has only to read such an episode as the following to realize that.

Sæmund has a servant, Aslak, who is a bad character and whom Sæmund proceeds to punish exactly as Egill would have punished a thrall.

Sæmund var alt raset hen til Aslak, som satte Foden for. Den blev brudt ned Gutten grebet i den og Trøiekraven, løftet og saaledes sat imod den lukkede Dør, at Fældningen gik ud, han ud igjennem den paa Hovedet. Konen, Thorbjørn, alle Børnene skreg og bad for ham, og hele Huset stod i en Jammer. Men Sæmund ud efter ham, huskede ikke paa at lukke Døren.

¹Chr. Collin - Björnstjerne Björnson, Vd1. 1, p. 89.

ordentlig op, men spændte Resterne til Side, tog ham anden Gang, bar ham ud af Svalen, ud paa Gaarden, løftede ham høit og kastede ham med al Magt ned igjen. Og da han merkede, at der var for megen Sne til, at han kunde slaa sig tilgagns, satte han Knæet paa hans Bryst og for ham lige op i Ansigtet, løftede ham tredje Gang, bar ham til et mere snefrit Sted som en Ulv, der drager en Sønderreven Hund, slap ham atter, værre end før, knægik ham, - og ingen kunde vide, hvorledes dette havde endt, dersom ikke Ingebjørg var styrtet imellem med Spædbarnet i Armen. 1

The fight in "Arne" between Nils Skrædder and Baard Bøen over Berit whom they both loved, reminds us of the jealousies and feuds between two great "bønder" of the Saga period. These feuds were quite often over a sweetheart, and usually, did not end before one of the contestants was killed or crippled for life, just as Nils Skrædder was crippled for life by Baard Bøen. 2

The profound influence of the saga literature on Björnson's mind is again demonstrated by the close parallelism, which Collin has pointed out, between the Early Novels and his later heroic poems and plays.

Collin says: "In order to understand fully the peasant stories of Björnson, they should be compared with his historical works dealing with Saga times. He successfully effected that interaction between modern and historic material which Tidemand had in mind, but which he did not fully carry out, due in part to failing health. The ten works that make up the body of Björnson's youthful production form a cycle which, through the subconscious or at least not wholly reflective application of a comparative psychological method, are

1 "Synnöve Solbakken" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol.III, p.127

2 "Arne" - " " " " " " p. 78.

unique in the literature of the world. One and the same psychological and ethnological motif branches out into two widely different creations, one planted in the soil of saga times, one in that of modern Norway. The young poet-chieftain seems to be living at the same time in two different periods, one of war and one of peace, drawing lessons from both, comparing the life history of the strong, highly-gifted men and women in both. In this manner he produced four double studies: 'Between the Battles' and 'The Newly Married Couple'; 'Synnöve Solbakken' and 'Lame-Hulda'; 'Arne' and 'Sigurd Slembe'; 'A Happy Boy' and 'Arnljot Gelline'; besides the two partly parallel works, 'The Railroad and the Churchyard' and 'Sigurd Jorsalfar', both descriptions of rivalry and reconciliation between two opposing leaders.

"By parallels such as these Björnson won his way to a bright and hopeful view of modern as compared with ancient Norway. His predecessors and even to some extent his contemporaries, were prone to look with reminiscent idealism upon the glorious past of their country as 'romantic', and to borrow from it a shadow to throw over modern Norway which they regarded as tame and 'prosaic'. Björnson, however, maintained in one of his early literary criticisms that the history of the people since saga times had been one of advancement and progress. Although the commonplace tasks of the peasant might seem to the romanticist prosaic in comparison with the mighty battles of ancient times, the young Björnson by a penetrating psychological analysis convinced himself that the motive power in a life of toil is the same as that of old, but more richly complex and therefore stronger and more fraught with happiness. To him ambition did not seem less interesting because it had been guided

into fruitful channels. While the giant warrior Arnljot Gelline fails to win his bride with fire and sword, the cottager's son, Øyvind Pladsen, wins his Marit by 'besieging the old fellow (her grandfather) with good works, after an achievement so unromantic as to graduate from the agricultural college.

"This seems to me the most inspired feature of Björnson's youthful production; by a psychological analysis which pierces to the basic powers of humanity he wins a glamour from the saga battles to shed over the peaceful labor of our time."¹

Björnson himself considered his peasant stories, and especially "En Glad Gut", as a plea for the peasants in the social and political struggle of that time. By revealing the peasants to the peasants themselves, he wanted to awaken them to self-consciousness, and prepare them to fill the place in public life to which the constitution of Norway gave them a right. In this respect Björnson was a direct follower of Henrik Wergeland.²

Early in the year 1850 Björnson was sent to Christiania to attend Heltberg's "Studenterfabrik" from which school he was matriculated three years later. He took one course in Philosophy, but soon realized that he would not be able to study Theology in accordance with his father's wish. He therefore wrote his father that he did not wish his support in school work, as he expected to make a living with his pen.³

¹ Chr. Collin - "Tideman and Björnson" in the American Scandinavian Review - January-February, 1916, p. 20.

² Henrik Jæger - Illus. Norsk Literatur Historie, Vol. II, p. 598.

³ Gerhard Gran in Nordmændene i det 19de Aarhundrede, Vol. III, p. 297.

During the following years, until Björnson wrote his first "bondenouvelle" in 1857, he was influenced chiefly by life in the city of Christiania. His work as journalist and politician as well as public speaker ripened the impressions of his childhood and youth, until they shaped themselves into the characters and beautiful scenes arranged in such a masterly way in the Early Novels.

Chapter III.

Specific Conditions of Peasant Life in Norway about 1850, as they are Portrayed in Björnson's Early Novels.

It is our object in this chapter to show our readers the peasants of Norway as they appeared about the middle of the nineteenth century when Björnson learned to know them; and also to point out reminiscences of peasant life in Björnson's first novels. We propose to discuss separately political conditions and social conditions.

1 Political Conditions.

1. The Development of the Peasantry.

Through a gradual development the Norwegian peasantry was changed from the aristocracy of the Middle Ages to the democracy established by the constitution of Norway of 1814.

In the constitution of Norway the peasants were given the right to take part in political life, but they were not able to wield any direct influence, chiefly because of the lack of education and of training in political affairs.¹

But a change was soon to come. After 1830 the large farms were divided, the lands were sold, and thus the number of independent farmers increased. Several good crops were harvested in succession, and since the economic conditions of the peasants were bettered, they soon became interested in the affairs of the state. They began to use their constitutional rights. Without being urged, they met in large numbers at the "storting" to demand their rights. They were

¹ J. E. Sars, Norges Historie, Vol. V, p. 320.

no longer satisfied with rejoicing over what had happened at Eidsvold. What they wanted now was deeds. "Til handling" was their motto. The Norwegian "odelsbonde" was no longer to be praised at a distance; but he was to step forward as a representative of the common Norwegian people, and begin to manage the affairs of government himself.¹

2. The Peasants in the "Storting".

Later developments also proved that the peasants did take the management in their own hands. Henrik Wergeland, the first representative of young Norway, became the zealous spokesman of the peasant democracy. And with him as leader the peasants won one political battle after another. Most marked, however, were their victories at the "stortings" of 1845 and 1848 when they constituted the so-called "bonde opposition". With a strong representation they controlled this law-making body and passed several laws which deprived the official classes of some of their power and privileges and promoted almost unfairly the economic interests of the farmer.²

Two names at least must be mentioned in connection with the peasant movement. Their first leader was Ludvig Christianson Daa, who, however, soon left the movement. The greatest leader the peasants had at this time was Ole Gabriel Ueland. He was a strong personality, a very brilliant mind, a keen thinker, and a shrewd politician. He was a born diplomat, and knew very well how to go a round-about way to reach his goal.³ Björnson has characterized him in the following verses:

¹ A. E. Erichsen - Literatur Historie, p. 146.

² Overlands - Norges Historie, Vol. XI, pp. 510-536.

³ Sars - Norges Historie, Vol. VI, pp. 428-435.

Skjønt bonde bagom plojen,
Og sjømand i sin baad,
Han tænker fint som nogen,
I hele kongens raad.

3. The Influence of Political Conditions on Björnson's Early Novels.

This mighty movement for the liberation of the peasants could not but leave a deep impression on the mind of young Björnson. It was a time of radical changes and hard struggles. In Europe as a whole there were mighty battles fought during the years 1846 - 1848. Besides these struggles on a large scale in Europe came one in Björnson's home community. It was on a small scale, but for Björnson it was nearer home and the issue was the same, the peasantry versus the higher officials of the state.

Ohr. Collin finds that this struggle had a direct and deciding influence on Björnson's Early Novels. He says: "This struggle, which divided the district of Eidsvaag (Eidsvaag Bugten) into two parties, became very bitter. Björnson's visits at home during his vacations had a different character from now on. It was surely at this time especially that Björnson learned to appreciate his quiet and unassuming father. He learned to look upon him in these trying times as the hero of the simple people in their opposition to the well organized powers of the higher officials. Now when he saw his father suffering, he became attached to him as never before. I am not mistaken when I say that this struggle united the family in the old parsonage with new and strong bands, and in more than one sense laid down the kernel from which his peasant stories later developed." The brave peasant about which the long and tedious lawsuit was car-

ried on, became the hero in "Synnöve Solbakken", and Björnson's own father became in the story the father of the hero.¹

As the peasants proved to be strong men in the community, so Björnson has created strong characters in his novels. In the peasant stories there are three characters that are types of strong men among the peasants of his time: Arne Kampen in "Arne", Thorbjörn Granlien in "Synnöve Solbakken", and Øyvind Pladsen in "En Glad Gut".

Each one of these characters is taken through hard struggles.

Life is a struggle for Arne. At first he is ever longing for a richer and freer life in another part of the world, far away from home, as he sings:

Undrer mig paa, hvad jeg faar at se
over de høie fjelde?
Øiet møder nok bare sne;
rundt omkring staar det grønne træ
Vilde saa gjerne over; -
tro, naar jeg reisen vover. 2

He even plans a "reise" to go west and dig for gold, but his love for his mother draws him back to the old farm. Once more he takes up the struggles of a common "bondegut", and begins to fight for recognition in much the same way as the bønder in Björnson's time had to fight for political recognition. Arne succeeds at last and wins Eli Boen, a rich "gaardmansjente", whom he loved from childhood.

Life is a struggle for Thorbjörn Granlien. He delights in trying his strength with the strongest fighters in the community, but his love for Synnöve Solbakken is so strong that it draws him away from that which is vicious, and he takes up the struggle against his

¹"Synnöve Solbakken" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, p.117

"Arne " - " " " " " " p.96.

own hard nature on the one hand and the prejudice of the community against him, on account of his past life, on the other. And he succeeds. He wins Synnøve, and becomes the respected farmer at "Solbakken".

Life is a struggle for Øyvind Pladsen. He is a poor "husmandsgut", but he loves Marit the rich girl at Heidegaardene and he starts out to win her. He feels that he is looked down upon because he is only a cottager's son. At Marit's Christmas party, John Hatlen pushes him aside with the sneering remark, "Væk unge!", but this only spurs Øyvind on. He goes off to the agricultural school, and having graduated with honors returns home. But Ole Nordistuen, Marit's grandfather, steps in and prevents his getting Marit. The struggle becomes more intense, and he decides that he is going to besiege the "old man" with "good works". He is elected as "amtsagronom", and becomes known as one of the best agriculturists in the community. His struggle is finally crowned with success when Ole Nordistuen himself has to come to Øyvind and ask him to take charge of the farm. And with the farm he wins Marit.

Øyvind ser paa Faderen, denne paa
Moderen, hun fra dem paa Skolemesteren,
og saa alle paa ham.

"Ole mener, at han har en stor Gaard - "
Ole afbryder: "Stor Gaard, men ilde brugt;
jeg kan ikke mer, jeg er gammel, og Benene
gaar ikke Hovedets Erinder. Men det kan
lønne sig at tage i deroppe."

"Den største Gaard i Prestegjældet og
vel saa det," falder Skolemesteren ind. -

"Den største Gaard i Prestegjældet; det er
netop Ulykken; for stor Sko falder af; det
er bra, Geværet er godt, men det maa kunne
løftes. (Med rask Vending mod Øyvind). Du
kunde kanske tage et Tag i ned, du?"

"Jeg skulde altsaa være Gaardsbestyrer?"

"Netop, ja; du skulde faa Gaarden."

"Skulde jeg faa Gaarden?"

"Netop, ja; saa skulde du styre den."
 "Men - "
 "Vil du ikke?"
 "Jo, naturligvis."
 "Ja, ja, ja, ja; saa er det afgjort da,
 sa Hønen, hun fløi paa Vandet."
 "Men - "
 "Ole ser forundret paa Skolemesteren.
 "Øyvind spørger nok, om han ogsaa skal
 faa Marit?"
 Ole fort: "Marit paa Kjøbet, Marit paa
 Kjøbet!"
 Da slog Øyvind i en Letter og hoppede ende
 pp, efter ham saa alle tre, Øyvind gned Hænder-
 ne, foer frem og tilbage paa Gulvet og gjentog
 uophørlig: "Marit paa Kjøbet, Marit paa Kjøbet!"
 Thore lo med dybe Klunk, Moderen oppe i Krogen
 med Øisnens uafvendt paa Sønnen, til de fik
 Tæarer. 1

II Social Conditions.

The political situation in which the peasants found themselves had, however, little influence on Björnson compared with the influence that the social conditions at that time had upon his writings. His peasant stories are all pictures from every day life.

The Norwegian authors before Björnson's time had taken us about in the woods and the meadows, and at times had given us a glimpse of life among the common people, but Björnson's main object was to open for us the door of the peasant's hut, and let us take a look inside, yes! even more, his object was to open the heart of the peasant and give us an idea of his thoughts, his sorrows, his joys, his sufferings and heartaches.²

It will be of interest for us, then, to review briefly the social life among the peasants in the following order: The peasants at home, the peasants at school, and the peasants in church.

¹ "En Glad Gut" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. IV, p. 88.

² A. E. Brichsen's - Literatur Historie, p. 173.

1. The Peasants at Home.

The word "home" is a sacred word to every Norwegian. He loves the spot where he was born and where his cradle rocked, and he cherishes with fond devotion the recollections of his early childhood. He believes firmly the well-known phrase of one of our modern poets: "Be it ever so humble, there is no place like home." The mountains that so often shelter and encircle the farms are dear to him. Every tree, and cliff, and rock, and rill has a place in his fancy, and not least the "fjord" that lies near, reflecting the beautiful scenery.

a. Peasant Simplicity.

The first and most conspicuous trait of peasant life at home is simplicity. The house, the furniture, and even the clothes that the peasants wear are all very simple. Even the homes of the richest peasants in Norway can not be compared with the comfortable farmhouses in England and the United States.

In order that we may get a clear idea of peasant everyday life, let us, with H. K. Daniels, an English tourist, pay a visit to a peasant home. "When as a stranger, you arrive on the high stone steps leading to his inner dwelling, and after knocking on the door without any result, open it, you will seldom find him prominently in evidence, and you will experience some difficulty in differentiating him from other men in the "Stuva" or main room; for they are all in shirt sleeves, and looking as alike as peas in a pod. Incidentally, the room is very warm, the windows and doors are all closed and tobacco smoke pervades the place as densely as a skipper's cabin. In the one roomed house of the poorest "bonde" all cooking is performed on or in the stove and when the outside summer temperature is over

80 degrees in the shade, and the one window not practicable of opening, it is not always safe or even possible, to enter and pass the occupants the time of the day.

"Your refection, which will almost invariably consist of coffee, waffle cakes, flat bread, cheese, and perhaps a tin of sardines from 'landhandleriet', having been placed on a clean cloth on the massive, general table, you draw up your chair and fall to with what zest you may under the eyes of the smoking and regardant crowd. The women stand by ready to fill up your cup on the instant of your emptying it; and the best possible return you can make to them for their kindly and persistent entreaties that you shall go on eating, is to do so, and eat and drink as much as you conveniently can." ¹

The simplicity in the home life of the peasants is so prominent, that Björnson could not picture the peasants in everyday life without making it one of the marked features in all his peasant stories.

In Chapter VII of "Synnøve Solbakken" the delightful simplicity of the home life in that happy little family at Solbakken is described in a masterly way:

Guttern og Karen Solbakken havde alt spist, da Synnøve rød og andpusten trængte ind. "Men, kjære Barnet mit, hvor har du været?" spurgte Moderen. - "Jeg blev tilbage med Ingrid," sagde Synnøve og blev staaende for at tage et par Spiklæder af sig; Faderen ledte ind i Skabet efter en Bog. "Hvad kunde I to have at tale om som tog sliq lang Tid?" - "Na, ikke om noget." - "Saa var det da rigtig bedre, du holdt Kirkefølge, Barnet mit!" Hun roste sig og tog Med frem til hende. Da Synnøve havde sat sig ned for at spise, og Moderen havde sat sig lige overfor hende, sagde hun: "Var det kanske flere, du talte med?" - Ja, det var mange," sagde Synnøve. - "Barnet saa da faa

¹ H. K. Daniels. - Home Life in Norway, p. 241.

tale med Folk," sagde Guttorm. - "Vist maa hun det," sagde Moderen lidt mildere, "men hun burde dog følge sine Forældre." Herpaa svarede der ikke.

"Det var en velsignet Kirkedag", sagde Moderen; "Ungdommen paa Kirkegulvet gjør en godt." - "Man husker sine egne Børn," sagde Guttorm. - "Du har Ret deri," sagde Moderen og sukkede. "Ingen kan vide, hvorledes det vil gaa dem." Guttorm sad længe taus. - "Vi har meget at takke Gud for," sagde han endelig; "han lod os beholde et." Moderen sad og drog Fingeren efter Bordet og saa ikke op; "hun er dog vor største Glæde," sagde hun sagte; "hun har ogsaa artet sig vel." lagde hun endnu sagtere til. Der var en lang Taushed. "Ja, hun har gjort os megen Glæde," sagde Guttorm - og senere med blød Stemme; "Vorherre gjøre hende lykkelig." - Moderen drog Fingeren efter Bordet; der faldt en Taare ned paa det, som hun drog udover. - "Hvorfor spiser du ikke?" sagde Faderen, idet han saa op en Tid efter. - "Tak, jeg er mæt," svarede Synnøve. - "Men du har jo ingenting spist," sagde nu ogsaa Moderen, du har gaaet lang Vei," - "Jeg er ikke god til," sagde Synnøve og holdt paa med at drage op en Tørklædesnip af Barmen. "Spis, Barnet mit," sagde Faderen. - "Jeg kan ikke," sagde Synnøve og skar i at græde. - "Men kjære, hvorfor græder du?" - "Jeg ved ikke," og hun hulkede. - "Hun har det saa let med at græde," sagde Moderen; Faderen reiste sig og gik til Vinduet. ¹

In "En Glad Gut" (Chapter IX) we get a glimpse into the home of Thore Pladsen as Øyvind's mother is preparing for her son's homecoming from the agricultural school.

Moderen havde havt Leiekone flere Dage i Forveien, alt var rent og skuret. Kammeret var gjort istand for lang tid siden. Ovn var sat ind, og der skulde Øyvind bo. Idag har Moderen friskt Løv derind, lagde rent Linned tilrette, redede op Sengen og saa ud alt imellem, om nogen Baad skulde ro over Vandet.

Inde var stor Opdækning og altid noget, som manglede, eller Fluer at jage væk, og Kammeret var Støv, bestandig Støv. ²

¹"Synnøve Solbakken" - Bjørnson's Sam. Værker, Vol.III, pp.189-90

²

"En Glad Gut" - " " " " IV, p. 59.

And in Chapter XI of the same story is given a description of the farm life in Heidegaardene:

Midt i Middagshvilen var det: Folkene sov paa de store Heidegaarde. Høet laa kastet efter dem paa Volden, og Riverne stod stagede i Jorden. Nedenfor Laavekloppen stod Høslæderne, Seletøjet laa afsprøttet ved Siden, og Hestene gik i Tjør et Stykke derifra. Foruden disse og nogle Høns, som var komne borti Ageren, saaes ikke et levende Væsen paa den hele Slette.--

Her saa de begge Marits Bedstefader at komme ruslende ud paa Gaarden og at gaa hen til Klokkesnoren for at ringe Folkene op. Folkene drog sig frem af Laaver, Skjul og Stuer, gik søvnige til Hestene og Riverne, spredte sig paa Marken, og om en Stund var alt Liv og Arbejde paa nyt. Kun Bedstefaderen gik ud af det ene Hus og ind i det andet, tilsidst op paa den høieste Laaveklop og saa udover. En liden Gut kom. ¹

In "Arne" (Chapter X) we find a vivid description of the home life on Baard Bøen's farm.

Arne satte handsagen fra sig og gik ind i kjøkkenet; der var hvidt sand paa gulvet og smaa hakket ener strødt over; ned fra væggene skinnede kobberskjedler, og krustøj stod i række. De kogte til middag; han bad om at faa tale med Baard. "Gaa ind i stuen!" sagde en og pegede blot; han gik; der var ikke klinke i døren, men haandtag af messing; derinde var lyst og malet, taget med mange roser, skabene røde med eierens navn paa i sort, sengstedet lige saa, men med blaa striber paa kanterne. Borte ved ovnen sad en bredskuldret mand med et blidt ansigt og langt, gult haar, han lagde baand paa nogle bøtter; henne ved det lange bord sad en kone med skaut paa hodet, tætslutende klæder, høi og slank; hun delte en hob korn i to hobe. Foruden disse var der ikke flere i stuen.

"God dag og signe arbeidet!" sagde Arne og strøg huen af. Begge saa op; manden smilede og spurgte, hvem det var. "Han, som skal skjære med haandsag." - Manden smilede mere og sagde, idet han ludede med hodet og atter begyndte sit arbejde: "Naa, Arne Kampen." - "Arne Kampen?" ropte konen og nidstirrede. Manden saa kort op,

¹"En Glad Gut" - Bjørnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. IV, pp.73; 76.

smilede igjen: "Søn af Nils Skrædder;"
han gav sig atter til at arbejde.

En stund efter havde konen reist sig, var gaat bort til hylden, havde vendt sig, var gaat bort til skabet, havde atter vendt sig, og idet hun sist laa og grov nede i bordskuffen, spurte hun uden at se op: "Skal han arbejde her?" - "Ja, det skal han," sagde manden, ogsaa uden at se op. "Det er nok ingen, som byder dig sidde ind paa heller;" han vendte sig mod Arne, Denne gik til for-sædet; konen gik ud, manden arbeidede; Arne spurgte derfor, om ogsaa han kunde begynde. "Vi kan først spise til middag."

Konen kom ikke mere ind; men næste gang kjøkkendøren gik op, var det Eli, som kom. Hun lod først, som hun ikke saa han; da han reiste sig for at gaa til hende, stansede hun og vendte sig halvt om for at gi ham haanden; men hun saa ikke paa ham. De vekslede et par ord; faderen arbeidede. - Hun havde flettet haar, gik i trangærmet livkjole, var smækker og rank, rund om haandlede og liden i haanden. Hun dækkede bordet; arbejdsfolket spiste i den anden stue, men Arne med husbondsfolkene i denne; det traf sig nemlig saa den dag, at de spiste saerskilt; ti ellers spiste alle ved samme bord i det store, lyse kjøkken. - "Kommer ikke mor?" spurte manden. - "Nei, hun er paa loftet og veier uld." - "Har du bedt hende?" - "Ja, men hun siger, hun vil intet ha." - Der var en stund taushed. "Der er jo koldt paa loftet." - "Hun vilde ikke jeg skulde lægge i."

Efter middagen arbeidede Arne; om kvælden var han atter inde blandt dem. Da sad konen ogsaa der. Kvindfolkene sydde; manden stilledede med nogle smaating; Arne hjalp ham; der var timelang taushed; ti Eli, som ellers syntes at føre ordet, taug ogsaa nu. Arne tænkte med forfærdelse, at saa var det vel ogsaa ofte hjemme hos ham; men det var, som førte han det først nu. Eli pustede engang langt ud, som havde hun holdt sig længe nok, og saa gav hun sig til at le. Da lo ogsaa faderen, og Arne ogsaa, det var latterligt, og tog i med. Fra nu af talte de adskilligt; til-sist blev det især ham og Eli; faderen lagde ord ind. Men engang Arne havde talt længe, kom han til at se op; da mødte han moderen, Birgit; hun havde sænket arbeidet og sad og nidstirrede paa ham. Nu tog hun arbeidet fat, men ved de første ord, han atter sagde, saa hun op.

Det blev sengetid, og hver gik til sit. Arne vilde mærke sig den drøm, han havde havt første nat paa et nyt sted; men der var ingen mening i den.

Han havde hele dagen lidet eller intet talt med husbonden; men om natten var det kun om ham, han drømte. Det sidste var, at Baard sad og spillede kort med Nils Skrædder. Denne var saare vred og bleg i ansigtet; men Baard smilede og drog kortene over til sig. 1

And in "Fiskerjenten" (Chapter VIII) the home life in an old-time "provstegaard" is described:

Et Mildt efteraar kan undertiden netop inde mellem fjældene i Bergens stift, hvor der er lunt og frugtbart, gi halve sommerdage langt ud paa høsten. Da slipper man en stund midt om dagen atter buskaben paa marken, selv om den allerede var indsat paa vinterfodring; kreaturerne er da fede og kaade og gjør det livligt paa gaarden, naar de om eftermiddagen tages ind.

Saaledes kom de nedover raaket, kjør, sauer og gjeder, rautende, bækrende, dansende under bjældeklang, ind til en stor gaard, netop som Petra skulde kjøre gaarden forbi. Veiret var smukt, den lange, hvide træbygning lyste med alle sine høiemder i solen, og over husene stod fjældet, saa indpakket af furu, birk, hæg og rognetrær, og af vildklunger ude paa nabberne, at husene syntes lune deraf. Foran hovedbygningen paa siden mod veien laa en have; den stod i stærk vækst af søble, kirsebær - og morel træer, og langs gange og gjærder af ribs, stikkelsbær, og solbærbuske; men ud over den alle ragede nogle store, gamle asketrær med bred krone. Huset saa ud som et afgjemt rede inde mellem grenene og ikke til at naa for andre end solen. Men netop dette afgjente vakte længsel i Petra, og da solen lyste paa ruderne, og bjælderne lokkede lystig, og da hun hørte, det var en præstegaard, saa greb hun rask i tømmerne: "Nei! her maa jeg ind!" og vikede til siden, op langs haven.

Et par finnehunde fløi rasende frem mod hende, som hun kjørte ind paa gaardspladsen, der var en stor, indbygget firkant med fjøset lige mod hovedbygningen, en anden fløi af hovedbygningen til høire og bryggerhus og borgestue til venstre. Gaardsrummet var nu fuldt af buskaben; men midt inde blandt den stod en dame, temmelig høi og meget fint bygget; hun havde tætsluttende klæder og et lidet silketørklæde over hodet; rundt om

¹ "Arne" - Bjørnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, pp. 67-69.

hende samt opover hende var gjeder, hvide, sorte, brune, brogede gjeder, hver med sin lille bjælde, tilsammen stemt i treklang; hun havde navn til alle sine gjeder og noget godt til dem i et fad, som budeien gjentagende fyldte. - Men paa den lave trap, som fra hovedbygningen førte ud til gaarden, stod provsten med et fad salt i haanden, og foran trappen gaardens kjør, der slikkede saltet af hans haand og af stenhellen, hvorpaa han strøede.

Provsten var ingen stor, men en tætbygget mand med kort hals og kort pande; de buskede bryn laa ud over øiet, der ikke gjerne saa lige, men skjød nu og da til siden med stor glans. Hans kortklippede, tykke, haar var graat og stod op til alle sider, det vokste nedover nakken næsten ligesaa stærkt som paa hodet; han bar intet halstørklæde, men en skjorteknap, foran var skjorten aaben, saa det haarige bryst stak frem; ei heller var den tilknappet paa haandlederne, saa linningen laa ud over de smaa, stærke, nu slimede lænder, hvormed han gav salt; baade hænderne og armene opover var aldeles laadne. Han saa fra siden skarpt paa den fremmede dame, som var steget af og havde arbejdet sig frem mellem gjederne, til hun stod hos hans datter. Hvad de to talte om, var det ikke muligt at høre for kreaturerne, hundene og bjælderne; men nu saa begge damer hen til ham, og med gjederne omkring sig kom de mod trappen. En gjætergut maatte paa tegn af provsten jage kjørerne væk. Signe, hans datter, ropte, - og Petra maatte lægge mærke til hendes stemmes vellyd : "Far, her er en reisende dame, som gjerne vilde hvile ud hos os en dags tid." "Hun skal være velkommen!" ropte provsten til svar, gav fadet fra sig og gik ind i kontoret lige ved siden af til højre, formodentlig for at vaske og fli sig. Petra fulgte frøkenen ind i gangen, som egentlig var en forstue, saa lys og bred var den; gutten blev klareret, hendes tøj indbaaret, hun selv gjorde i et sideværelse lige med kontoret lidt omklædning og gik derpaa ud igjen i gangen for at føres videre frem i dagligsstuen.

Hvilket lyst, stort værelse! Næsten hele væggen ud mod haven var vinduer, det midterste fag tillige dør til haven. Vinduene var brede, høje og løb næsten helt til gulvet; men de var opfyldte af blomster; blomster stod paa forhøining-

erne helt frem over gulvet, blomster stod i vinduskarmene tilige, og i stedet for gardiner flettede vedbend nedover fra to smaa blomsterhække højt oppi karmen. Da der nu stod buske eller blomster udenfor, baade under, ved siden af og op efter muren, endelig foran, kunne paa plænen, saa var det søm at træde ind i et drivhus, bygget midt i haven. Og dog havde man ikke været i dette værelse et øieblik, før blomsterne ikke saaes; men kirken, frit liggende paa en høi til højre, var det, som saaes, og det blaaende vand, som optog dens billede og strømmede skinnende saa langt bort imellem fjældene, at man ikke vidste, om det var en indsejls eller arm af havet, som buede ind. Og saa selve disse fjælde! Intet enkelt, men kjæder af fjælde, den ene vældige ryg bestandig bagom den anden, som var her det beboedes grænse! ¹

b. Peasant Taciturnity.

The Norwegian "bonde" is not free in conversation. He practices the golden rule of talking as little as possible and using as few words as possible. E. E. Daniels, to whom reference has already been made, says of peasant taciturnity: "When, as a newcomer you have broken your fast and lit your pipe, it will have gradually dawned on your mind that the apparent rudeness of your reception was really nothing more than a cloak of natural shyness. A bonde will never under any circumstances vouchsafe a direct answer either in the affirmative or the negative and would, could, should, might and ought in all their exasperating conditionals and future potentials are as the very breath of life to him. This is generally termed 'bonde forsigtighed' or peasant caution." ²

Björnson had discovered this trait in the character of the Norwegian people which no one had pointed out before. ³ It is prom-

¹ "Fiskerjenten" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. IV, pp. 170-75.

² E. E. Daniels - Home Life in Norway, p. 242.

³ Henrik Jæger, - Literatur Historie, Vol. 1, p. 606.

inent in all of Björnson's peasant stories, but probably most in "Synnöve Solbakken".

Sæmund Granlien is pictured as the careful man who talks very little, but whose words, when he does speak, count.

Sæmund gik op og ned ad Gulvet, og Thorbjørn kjendte nok den Gang. Den noget lille, men undersætsige Mand saa en og anden Gang under de buskede Bryn saaledes hen til Aslak, at denne nok følte, hvad der laa i Luften; Aslak selv sad oppe paa Bunden af en stor Tønde, ned ad hvilken hans Ben dinglede eller krogede opover. Han havde som sædvanlig Hænderne i Lommen og Huen paa Hovedet trykket let ned, saa at det tykke, mørke Haar stak i Dusker frem under Skyggen. Den lidt Skjæve Mund var endnu skjævere, det hele Hoved holdt han lidt paa Skakke og saa til Sæmund fra Siden af under halvt tillukkede Øienlaag. "Ja, Gutten din er gal nok," sagde han; "men værre er det, at Hesten din er trolskraemt." Sæmund stansede; "du er en Gap!" sagde han, saa det drøned i Stuen, og Aslak lukkede Øienlaagene endnu tættere til. Sæmund gik paa ny.¹

Björnson's short story, "Faderen", is a marvelous portrait of peasant taciturnity. We quote the conversation between "præsten" and Thord Øveraas on his first visit to the pastor's office.

"Jeg har faat en søn," sagde han, "og vil ha ham over daaben." - "Hvad skal han hede?" - "Finn efter far min." - "Og faderne?" - de blev nævnte og var da bygdens beste mænd og kvinder af mandens slægt. "Er der ellers noget?" spurte præsten, han saa op. Bonden stod lidt; "jeg vilde gjerne ha ham døbt for sig selv," sagde han. - "Det vil sige paa en hverdag?" - "Paa lørdag førstkommende, 12 middag." - "Er der ellers noget?" spurte præsten. - "Ellers er der ingen ting;" bonden dreiede huen, som vilde han gaa. Da reiste præsten sig; "endnu dog dette," sagde han og gik lige bort til Thord, tog hans haand og saa ham ind i øienløse: "give gud, at barnet maa bli dig til velsignelse!"²

¹"Synnöve Solbakken" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, p. 125.

²"Faderen" - " " " " " " p. 259.

The conversation in this as in all his novels is above praise. A distinguished French critic, M. Ernest Tissot, has compared the peasant stories in this respect with the best work of Flaubert, "so prodigious is the art by which is produced, in a concise brevity, the talk of the peasant, with its apparent aimlessness, its reticence, its pleonasm, its frivolities and its tiresome repetitions. The personages of Björnson have upon their lips, not phrases learned out of some comedy, but simple, affectionate, obvious commonplaces, such as a phonograph might transmit it to us."¹

The conversation at the church door in the eighth chapter of "Synnöve Solbakken",² and the chatter in the hayfield in the tenth chapter of "A Happy Boy",³ are examples of Björnson's marvelous power in this respect.

"Her er mange Folk ved Kirken idag," sagde hun; det gjør godt at se dem søge Guds Hus." Ingen syntes at ville svare; da sagde Guttorm; "Jeg tror nok, det monner med Guds frykten; der er flere ved Kirken nu end i min Ungdom." - "Aa, ja; - Folket øges," sagde Sæmund. - "Det er vel dem iblandt, kanske Størsteparten med, som blot driver hidover af Vane," sagde Karen Solbakken. - "Kanske de yngre," mente Ingebjørg. - "De yngre vil gjerne træffe hverandre," sagde Sæmund.²

En Eftermiddag ud paa Sommeren, da Moderen og en Pige ragede Hø sammen, Faderen og Øyvind bar ind, kom en liden barfodet og barhovedet Gut hoppende ned over Bakkerne og bortover Marken til Øyvind, som han gav en Seddel.

"Du løber godt, du!" sa Øyvind.

"Jeg har Betaling for det," svarede

Gutten.

Paa Spørgsmaal, om han skulde have Svar, lød det nei, og han tog Veien hjem igjen over Berget; thi der kom nogen efter ham oppi Veien, sagde han. Øyvind aabnede

¹ M. Ernest Tissot - Quoted by Edmund Gosse in Introd. to "Synnöve Solbakken", p. 25.

² "Synnöve Solbakken" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, p. 197.

³ "En Glad Gut"

brydsomt Seddelen; thi den var først lagt sammen i en Strimmel, dernæst var den knyttet, saa forseget og tilhæftet, og i Seddelen stod:

"Nu er han paa Marsen; men det gaar langsomt. Spring paa Skogen og gjem dig!
Den, du ved."¹

c. Family Festivals.

Every important event in the family life of a peasant home was the object of a festive occasion. The Norwegian peasants as a rule have large families and the birth of each child was the cause of great joy and happiness. In connection with the infant's baptism, the "barsel", or baptism party was celebrated in the home. These parties sometimes were the occasion of much merrymaking and even cardusing. After confirmation at the age of 15, another party was usually given in honor of the son or the daughter. The young people were now made to understand that they had passed the age of childhood and were to take more part in the so-called pleasures and enjoyments of life. In Thord Øveraas' visits to the pastor's office at each of these occasions, Björnson has emphasized their importance in the home life of the peasants. The first time he comes to make arrangements for his child's baptism, the second time to arrange for confirmation, and the third time to engage the pastor to perform his son's wedding ceremony.

"Det er tredje gang du paa sønnen's vegne staar her nu Thord," siger presten.
"Men nu er jeg ogsaa færdig med ham,"
sagde Thord, lagde sin tegnebog sammen,
sagde farvel og gik."²

¹ "En Glad Gut" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. IV, p. 66.

² "Faderen" - " " " " " III, p. 260.

d. Christmas parties.

The Christmas season was an occasion of great merry-making among the Norwegian peasants. Great preparations were made for the occasion. Enough wood had to be gathered and split to last two or three weeks, and a great deal of food had to be prepared. Everyone was busy preparing for Christmas, the men out in the yard and in the barn, and the women in the house. On the afternoon of Christmas Eve all the work had to be finished. The cattle were given a larger portion of hay than usual, and the last thing that was done was to raise a sheaf of wheat or oats on a tall pole for the sparrows, for even the sparrows must know that it is Christmas.

The work done, every member of the household came in to wash and dress up for Christmas. About sunset the church bells would toll and Christmas began with a quiet festival at home on Christmas Eve. The Christmas meal on Christmas Eve was a sumptuous one. It consisted of "lutefisk", "ribbensteg", potatoes and gravy, "julekager", coffee, and above all, the delicious "julegröd". Even the poorest peasants did their best to have a good supply of food for Christmas. After the "julegröd" had been eaten, the father in the family, or "manden sjö", would read a sermon from some book of family devotion; the Christmas hymn was sung, and the gifts on the Christmas tree were distributed. A very simple but beautiful custom closed the evening's enjoyment, that of joining hands and walking in a ring around the Christmas tree. A hymn, such as "Jeg er saa glad hver julekveld", was sung in unison as the family circled about the tree. This was especially enjoyed by the children.

Christmas day was usually spent in church listening to the mass and the sometimes long but forceful sermon; but on the so-called "second day in Christmas", the Christmas parties began and con-

tinued in unbroken succession for thirteen days. These Christmas parties, or "julelag", were usually held on invitations from the different peasant homes, arranged so that the different families in the community were gathered at one home each day. Ten or twelve families in the community usually formed this circle. If there were more than thirteen, the parties would continue longer, but the thirteenth day after Christmas was considered the close of the holidays. The time was spent at these parties in eating and drinking during the daytime, while during the evening hours the older people would gather by themselves to play cards, and the young people would gather to play games or dance until the early hours of the morning. Quite often, especially towards the close of the Christmas festivities, the parties ended with a fight between some of the strongest young men in the community. The message of Him who came to bring peace on earth was, alas, too often forgotten at these Christmas parties.

Turning again to the peasant stories, we find a vivid description of a typical "julelag" in the fourth chapter of "En Glad Gut".

Fjerde Dag Jul stod et stort Lag
paa den øvre af Heidegaardene hos Marits
Bedsteforsældre, hos hvem hun var opdragen,
og som havde lovet hende dette Lag nu paa
tredie Aaret, men endelig den Helg maatte
ud med det. Hid blev Gyvind indbudet.

Ungdommen, den voksne og halvvoxne,
flokke sig sammen fra forskellige Kanter;
de færreste gik Veien eller forlod den i al-
le Fald, naar de kom nær Gaardene, og list-
ede sig da frem, en bag Fjøsset, et Par under
Stabburet, nogle foer længe bag Laaven og
skreg som Ræve, andre svarede langt borte
som Katte, en stod bag Ildhuset og gjødde
som en gammel, sint Hund.

Bygdens gode Spillemand kunde ikke
komme for senere, saa de indtil maatte
hjælpe sig med den gamle, en Husmand, som

de kaldte Graa-Knut.

Han kunde fire Danse, nemlig to Springere, en Halling og en gammel, saakaldt Napoleonsvals; men lidt efter lidt havde han maattet gjøre Hallingen om til skotsk ved at forandre Takten, og en Springdans maatte paa samme maade blive til Polka Mazurka.

Han spillede nu op, og Dansen begyndte.

Øyvind turde ikke gaa med strax, thi her var for mange voxne; men de halvvoxne slog sig snart sammen, puffede hverandre frem, drak lidt sterkt Øl til Hjælp, og da kom ogsaa Øyvind med; hedt blev der i Stuen. Lystigheden og Ølet steg dem til Hovedet.

Marit var mest paa Gulvet den Kveld, ventelig fordi Laget stod hos hendes Bedsteforældre, og det gjorde, at ogsaa Øyvind ofte saa til hende; men altid dansede hun med andre.

Han vilde gjerne selv danse med hende, derfor sad han over en Dans for at kunne springe bort til hende, strax den sluttede, og det gjorde han, men en høi, sortsmudsket Karl med sterkt Haar kaster sig foran ham, "Væk Unge!" raabte han og puffede til Øyvind, saa han naer var falden baglængs over Marit. ¹

Petty jealousies, such as in this instance between Øyvind and John Hatlen, were very common at these parties. Allusions to "Julelag" are found also in the second chapter of "Arne", and in the tenth chapter of "Fiskerjenten"; but in none of these does Björnson describe the Christmas parties in detail as he does in "En Glad Gut".

e. Peasant Marriage.

The Engagement:

"A public engagement, after the consent of the parents has been given, is considered almost as binding as the wedding ceremony. The wedding is performed by the pastor on a holiday, and relatives and friends gather to celebrate the wedding as well as the

¹"En Glad Gut" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol.IV, p. 22.

family can afford." ¹

"The Norwegian 'Jenter' or maids are very modest. One who knows the 'bonde' etiquette will know that he should never acknowledge an acquaintanceship, however slight, however intimate, with any young woman in a room where other people are present. A 'bondegut' on courting bent, knows that Saturday evening is the proper time to pay his visits to the fair maiden of his choice, for then she is expecting him." ²

After a considerable time had passed, the engagement was announced, quite often at a party prepared for that very purpose. Engagements in Norway were sometimes of long duration. Very often young people tried their love for eight or ten years before the ceremony was performed. The parents had a great deal to do with the choosing of a life mate for their children; especially did they keep a watchful eye that their children married into families of equal rank. This is brought out clearly in Björnson's portrayal of the negotiations between Solbakken and Granlien in "Synnøve Solbakken."

"Jeg tænkte, jeg skulde følge Thorbjørn hidover," begyndte Sæmund langsomt; "han kom nok sent hidover alene, - gjør ogsaa ellers daarlig Besked, er jeg ræd," - han skottede bort til Synnøve, som følte det. - "Det er nu sliq, at han har havt Hug til hende, Synnøve, fra det han var saapas til Karl, han kunde have Forstaaelse paa sliq; - og ikke er det vel frit, at hun ogsaa har lagt sin Hug til ham. Men da tænker jeg, det er bedst, de kommer sammen. - Jeg var lidet for det, den Tid jeg saa, han knapt kunde styre sig selv, endsige mere; men no tror jeg at kunne borge for ham, og kan jeg ikke, saa kan hun; thi hendes Magt er nok nu den største.-"

¹ Elmer Underwood, - En Sommertur i Norge - gjennem Stereoskopet, p. 106.

² H. K. Daniels - Home Life in Norway - p. 234.

Hvad mener I da, om vi saa til at faa dem sammen? Det kan vel ikke haste, men jeg ved heller ikke, hvorfor vi skal vente. Du, Guttorm, er ved god Magt, jeg rigtignok ved mindre og har flere at dele paa; men endda saa tænker jeg, det kan lade sig. I faar da sige, hvad I synes om dette; - hende spørger jeg sidst, for jeg tror nok at vide, hvad hun vil."

Saaledes talte Sæmund. Guttorm sad paa Hug, lagde vekselvis den ene Haand over den anden, gjorde flere Gange Mine til at reise paa sig, idet han hver Gang drog Veiret med mere Magt, men kom sig dog ikke til før den fjerde eller femte Gang, saa fik han endelig ret Ryg, strøg sig op og ned over Knæet og saa bort paa Konen, saaledes at Blikket af og til streifede Synnøve. Denne rørte sig ikke, ingen kunde se hendes Ansigt. Karen sad ved Bordet og stregede. - "Det er nu saa, - at det er et vakkert Tilbud," sagde hun. - "Ja, det synes jeg, vi faar tage tiltakke med," sagde Guttorm med høj Stemme, som var han betydelig lettet, og saa fra hende til Sæmund, der havde lagt Armene overkors og lænet sig op mod Væggen.¹

As the days of youth, and especially the days of engagement, are counted among the happiest in any person's life anywhere and in any land, so they were also for the peasants of Norway. Bjørnson himself wrote his second peasant romance, "Arne", during this happy period of his own life. It is but natural, then, that life among the young people, and especially peasant engagements, should have a large place in his stories; in fact, the engagement constitutes the climax in each of Bjørnson's longer peasant romances.

We recall Eli Bøen's engagement to Arne Kampen at the close of "Arne".

Arne trådte ind. Det fyrste han saa, var Eli i klokkekroen; han slap døren og blev staaende. Dette gjorde

¹"Synnøve Solbækken" - Bjørnson's Sam.Værker, Vol.III,p.210.

Eli endnu mere forlegen; hun reiste sig, angrede det straks og vendte sig mod væggen. - "Er du her?" sagde Arne sagte, han blev blussende rød, da han spurte. - Hun tog en haand op og holdt for sig, som naar solen falder for stærk' i øinene. "Hvorledes?" han fuldførte ikke, men han gjorde et skridt eller to imod hende; da sænkede hun haanden igjen, vendte sig mod ham, men bøjede hodet og brast i graat. - "Gud velsigne dig, Eli!" sagde han og tog omkring hende; hun lagde sig op til ham. Han hviskede noget nedover til hende, hun svarede ikke, men tog ham om halsen med begge sine hænder. ¹

Marit's engagement to Øyvind Pladsen in "En Glad Gut" is a most thrilling climax to the story so full of adversities to these two lovers.

Mens Øyvind hjalp ham ud af Vognen, og Tjenere og Leiefolk gabede paa dem, kom Marit ud i Gangen for at se, hvad Hunden gjøde saa vedholdende paa, men stansede som fasttryllet, blev sprudlende rød og løb ind. Gamle Ole raabte imidlertid saa forfærdelig paa hende, da han kom i Stuen, at hun maatte møde frem igjen. "Gaa hen og fli dig, Jvnte; her er han, som skal have Gaarden!"

"Er det sandt?" siger hun uden selv at vide af det og saa høit, at det klang. "Ja, det er sandt!" svarer Øyvind og klapper i Hænderne; dermed svinger hun om paa Taaen, kaster det, hun har i Haanden, langt fra sig og løber ud; men Øyvind efter.

Snart kom Skolemesteren, Thore og Konen; den gamle havde faaet Lys paa Bordet, dækket med hvid Dug; Vin og Øl bødtes, og selv gik han bestandig omkring, løftede Benet endnu højere end sædvanlig, men dog bestandig højre Fod længre op end venstre. ²

¹"Arne" - Björnson's Samlede Værker, Vol. III, p. 110.

²"En Glad Gut" - " " " " " IV, p. 90.

The engagement of Synnøve Solbakken to Thorbjørn Granlien is the last chapter in "Synnove Solbakken".¹ The closing scene is exceedingly beautiful. Sæmund proposes for his son, and after due deliberation, the engagement is sealed in the presence of both families. Thorbjørn is seated by the window, and Synnøve walks softly over to him, and puts her arm over his shoulder. "What are you looking at", she whispers. He turns his head, glances mildly up at her, and then looks out of the window again. "I am looking over at Granlien", he says. "It is so wonderful to look at it from here."

The Ceremony.

The marriage ceremony was performed in church. The invited guests gathered at the church about ten o'clock on the morning of the wedding day, and after all were seated, the bridal party entered to the strains of the wedding march called "brudeslaatten". The charm of "brudeslaatten" and the almost reverent respect paid to it by the peasants is brought out clearly in Bjørnson's short story of that name.

Sagnet fortæller - at ligesom Ole Haugens brudeslaat var den lykkeligste, de havde hørt, saaledes var det brudepar som for første gang kjørte hjem efter den, og som førtes til kirkedøren af den, og som der, efter endt vielse modtoges af den, det lykkeligste par de havde set. 2

The bridal party was met at the altar by the clergyman, who usually at each wedding could boast that he had also baptized and confirmed both the bride and bridegroom. The wedding sermon was generally long. The seriousness of life and the responsibilities

¹ "Synnøve Solbakken" - Bjørnson's Sam.Værker, Vol.III,p.213.

² "Brudeslaatten" - " " " " " IV,p.242.

of married life were emphasized in strong terms, and the old parish clerk led the congregation in the familiar hymns before and after the ceremony.

Førend denne lille Fortælling ender, kan meldes om, at fem Uger efter blev Øyvind og Marit viede i Sognets Kirke. Skolemesteren styrede selv Sangen den Dag, da hans Hjælpklokke var syg. Han var brusten i Maalet nu, for han var gammel; men Øyvind syntes, det gjorde godt at høre ham. Og da han havde givet Marit Haanden og ført hende op til Altaret, nikkede Skolemesteren mod ham fra Koret, akkurat som Øyvind havde seet det, da han sørgmodig sad ved hin Dans; han nikkede igjen, mens Taarerne vilde op.¹

After the ceremony the bridal party immediately left the church and hurriedly drove to the bride's home, where they made ready to receive congratulations from the guests.

The Wedding Feast.

The wedding festivities usually lasted three days, and were one continual scene of merry-making. Here the pastor was no longer the leader, but matters were left to the "kjøgemester" and the "for-gangskar" (a sort of master of ceremonies). Eating and drinking was indulged in quite heavily. The drinking of "øl" or beer was not considered more wrong than the drinking of tea or coffee or other mild beverages is considered in our days.

Omkring i de to-tre stuer gik kjøgemesteren og de to unge brudesvende, præstens søn og Eli's bror, og skjænkede folk, efter hvert som de kom til det store bryllup.²

Another very important person in the wedding festivities was the "spillemand" or fiddler.³ The wedding dance usually began late

¹"En Glad Gut" - Bjørnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. IV, p. 90;
²"Arne" - " " " " III, p. 113.
³"Arne" - " " " " III, p. 7.

in the afternoon. Tables and chairs having been cleared out of the largest room in the house, the "spillemand" seated himself in a conspicuous place in the room, and struck up the opening dance. Sometimes the older people joined the young people in their merry-making, and the room was filled with a crowd of continuously moving people. The air at times became very foul, reeking with the odor of the perspiring crowd.

The bride was the object of everybody's admiration. Every young man and even some of the older men were to have "en dans med bruden", a dance with the bride. The result was that brides often became exhausted and fainted.

The dancing continued until the early hours of morning, when the guests retired to bed, so far as beds were provided; many to haylofts and granaries. Others, too drunk to move, slept where they fell. Some did not sleep at all, but used the hours of the night to play pranks on those who were asleep, such as hiding the cook's kettles and the like. The same program was repeated during the two following days, and every large wedding almost invariably ended with one or probably several fights or wrestling matches, in which one or sometimes several young men were hurt.

Björnson's description of the wedding at Nordhaug in "Synnöve Solbakken" is so accurate and vivid even in the most minute details, that we quote it here in full.

Gjenlyd af Dans og Spil mødte den. Ansigtet gav sig til at se ud paa dem gjennem de saabne Vinduer i den store to Etages Bygning. Grupper samlede sig i Gaarden. Han saa, at de talte sig imellem om, hvem det kunde være, tillige, at han snart var kjendt, og at de lidt efter lidt fik øie paa Hesten dernede og Kopperne, som laa ud over Jordet. Dansen hørte op, den hele Sværm vælted^s ud i Gaarden.

netop som de to kom op. "Hid kommer Bryllupsfolk med sin Vilje!" raabte Aslak, da han endelig nærmede sig Kredsen, bag Thorbjørn. - Man hilste Thorbjørn og slog Kredsen om han.

"Gud signe Laget, godt gå på Bordet, vakre Kvindfolk på Gulvet og gode Spille-mænd på Krakken!" sagde Aslak og skjød sig i det samme midt ind blandt dem. Nogle lo, andre forblev alvorlige; en sagde: "Skrøppe-Aslak er altid ved godt Mod." Thorbjørn traf straks kjendte Folk, som han maatte fortælle om sin Hændelse; de tillod ham ikke selv at gaa ned igjen efter Heaten og Tøjet, men bad andre gaa. Brudgommen, en ung Mand og for-dums Skolekammerat, bød ham ind at smage paa Bryllupsbrygget, og nu drog det til Stue. Nogle vilde fortsætte Dansen, især Kvinde-folkene, andre vilde have en liden Drikke-stund og faa Aslak til at fortælle, siden han nu alligevel var kommen tilgaaede igjen. "Men du tør være lidt varere end sidst," lagde en til. Thorbjørn spurgte, hvor alt Folket var. "Ja," svarede der, "her gik ny-lig lidt urolig til; nu er enkelte gaaet til Hvile, andre sidder borte paa Laaven og spil-ler Kort; men nogle sidder ogsaa der, hver Knud Nordhang er." Han spurgte ikke efter, hvor Knud Nordhang var.

Brudgommens Far, en gammel Mand, der sad og røg af en Kridtpibe og drak øl til, sagde nu: "Kom saa med en Begle, du Aslak; det kan være gjildt nok at høre for en Gangs Skyld."

"Er det flere, som beder mig?" spurgte Aslak, som havde sat sig over en Krak et Styk-ke fra Bordet, omkring hvilket de andre sad. "Ja vist," sagde Brudgommen og gav ham et Glas Brændevin; "nu beder jeg dig." - "Er det mange, som beder paa denne Maade?" - sagde Aslak. - "Det tør hende," sagde en ung Kone borte paa Sidebænken og bød et Støg med Vin frem. Det var Bruden, en Kvinde paa tyve Aar, lyalet, men mager, med store øine og et stramt Træk om Munden. - "Jeg liker godt det, som du fortæller," lagde hun til. Brudgommen saa paa hende, og hans Far paa ham. "Ja, Nordhangfolk-et har altid likt mine Regler," sagde Aslak. "Åre være dem!" raabte han og tømte et Glas, som blev rakt ham af en Brudevend. "Kom saa med noget," raabte flere. "Om Sigrid Fante-kjerring," raabte en. "Hei, den er styg!" sagde andre, især Kvindfolk. "Om Lierslaget!" bad Svend Tamber. "Hei, heller noget trylsacut!"

sagde da en rank Gut, som stod i Skjorte-
ærmerne og lænede sig op ad Væggen, med-
dens hans høire Haand som hang slapt ned,
for vel ofte bort i Haaret paa nogle unge
Jenter, som sad der; de skjændte, men
flyttede sig ikke.

"Nu fortæller jeg det, jeg vil, jeg."
sagde Aslak. "Fa'n heller!" mumlede en
ældre Mand, som laa over Sengen og røg;
hans ene Ben hang ned, med det andet laa
han og sparkede til en fin Frøje, som hang
over Sengestolpen. - "Lad være Frøjen min!"
raabte hin Gut, som stod op efter Væggen. -
"Lad være Døtrene mine," svarede han, som
laa. Nu flyttede Jenterne sig. - "Ja, jeg
fortæller hvad jeg vil!" raabte Aslak;
"Brændevin i Krop skyder Hodet op!" sagde
han og slog de flade Hænder sammen med et
Klask. - "Fortæl hvad vi vil!" gjentog
Manden borte i Sengen; "thi Brændevinet er
vort."

"Hvad skal det sige?" spurgte Aslak med
ret åbne Øine. - "Åa, den Grisen, vi gjøder,
slagter vi ogsaa," sagde Manden, idet han
dingladede med Benet. Aslak lukkede Øinene igjen
men blev siddende i samme Stilling med Hovedet;
saa faldt det ned paa hans Bryst og han sagde
ikke noget.

Flere talte til ham; men han hørte det
ikke. "Brændevinet tager ham," sagde hin i
Sengen. Da saa han op, tog atter Smilet paa
sig; "jo, nu skal I høre en lystig Stub,"
sagde han. "Gud bevare mig, hvor lystig!"
sagde han om en Stund og lo med vid Mund, men
uden at de hørte Letteren. - "Han er rigtig i
Godlaget idag," sagde Brudgommens Far. - "Ja
det var Raad til det!" sagde Aslak; - "en Dram
paa Reisen åa!" sagde han og strakte Haanden
frem. Den kom, han drak den langsomt ud, holdt
Hovedet lidt bagover med den sidste Draabe i
Munden, svælgede den saa og sagde, vendt til
ham i Sengen; - "For jeg er nu Grisen eders,
jeg!" - og lag som forrige Gæng. Han spændte
sine to Hænder om Knæet og løftede saaledes
Foden op og ned, idet han selv med det samme
ruggede frem og tilbage.....
Her faldt Aslak baglængs ned af Krakken i
sterk Grad, som dog snart gik over; thi han
sovne. - "Du er Svinet fuld," sagde han i
Sengen; "da ligger han altid og fløber i
Søvne." - "Dette var stygt", sagde Kvinde-
folkene og reiste sig for at komme bort.
"Jeg har aldrig hørt ham fortælle andet
Slags Historier, naar han selv fik randa,"
sagde nu en gammel Mand, som reiste sig borte

ved Døren. "Gud ved, hvorfor Folk vil høre paa ham," lagde han til og saa hen til Bruden.

Nogle gik ud, andre søgte at faa Spillemanden ind igjen, at Dansen kunde begynde; men Spillemanden var sovnet i en Krog af Gangen, og enkelte bad for ham, at han maatte ligge i Fred. "Siden Lars, Kammeraten hans, blev slaaset fordaeruet her, har Ole maattet holde ud i over et Døgn." - Man var kommen tilgaards med Thorbjørns Hest og Greier; en anden Vogn blev spændt for, da han trods alles Anmodning vilde tage afsked igjen. Brudgommen var det issær, som søgte at holde ham tilbage; "her er kanske ikke saa stor Glæde for mig, som det synes," sagde han, og Thorbjørn tog en Tanke af det; men han foresatte sig dog at reise, før Kvælden kom. Da de saa, han var urokkelig, spredte de sig i Gaarden; der var mange Folk, men megen Stillehed, og det hele havde lidet Syn af at Bryllup.....

Længere frem i Gaarden stod Hesten og ventede; han satte sin Pinde fast og saa sig om efter Brudgommen for at tage Afsked. Han havde ikke Lyst til at søge ham, saa næsten helst, at han ikke kom, og satte sig derfor op. Da begyndte det at støie og rasbe fra den venstre Side af Gaarden, der borte, hvor Laaven laa. Det var et helt Følge, som drog ud fra Laaven; en stor Mand, som gik foran, raabte: "Hvor er han? - Har han gjemt sig? - Hvor er han?" - "Der, der!" sagde nogle. - "Lad ham ikke komme did," sagde andre; "der bliver bare Ulykke af det," - "Er det Knud?" spurgte Thorbjørn en liden Gut, der stod ved Siden af Vognen hans. "Ja, han er fuld, og da vil han altid slaas," - Thorbjørn sad alt paa Læsset og slog nu paa Hesten. - "Hei, stans, Kamerat!" hørte han bag sig; han holdt Hesten tilbage, men da denne gik alligevel, lod han den gaa. "Ho, er du ræd, Thorbjørn Granliden?" skreg det nærmere ham. Nu holdt han fastere igjen, men saa ikke tilbage.

"Stig af og kom i godt Lag!" raabte en. Thorbjørn vendte Hovedet. "Tak, jeg skal hjem," sagde han. Nu underhandlede de lidt, og imidlertid var den hele Flok kommen hen til Vognen; Knud gik foran Hesten, klappede den først, tog den dernæst ved Hovedet for at se paa den. Knud var ret høi, havde lyst, men strikt Haar og en but Næse. Manden var stor og tung. Øinene melkeblaa, men dristige. Han havde liden Lighed med Søsteren, kun var det noget om Munden, som var ligt, og havde den samme

Slags ret opstaaende Pande, men mindre, ligesom alle hendes fine Træk var grove hos ham. "Hvad vil du have for Gampen din?" spurgte Knud. - "Jeg vil ikke sælge den," sagde Thorbjørn. - "Du tror kanske, jeg ikke kan betale den?" sagde Knud. - "Jeg ved ikke, hvad du kan." - "Saa? du tviler om det? Det skulde du eller vogte dig for," sagde Knut. Hin Gut, som for stod op efter Væggen derinde i Stuen og rørte ved Jenternes Haar, sagde nu til en Nabo: "Knud tør ikke rigtig denne Gang."

Dette hørte Knud. "Tør jeg ikke? Hven siger det? Tør jeg ikke?" skreg han. Flere og flere kom til. "Af Veien, se Hesten!" raabte Thorbjørn og slog paa, han vilde reise. - "Siger du af Veien til mig?" spurgte Knud. - "Jeg talte til Hesten; jeg saa frem," sagde Thorbjørn, men veg heller ikke selv tilside. - "Hvad kjører du lige paa mig?" spurgte Knud. - "Saa gaa hert!" og Hesten løftede Hovedet i Veiret, eller havde den fat lige med Knuds Bryst. Da tog Knud den ved Bidslet, og Hesten, som huskede Taget fra Veien, begyndte at Skjælve. Men dette rørte Thorbjørn, der angrede, hvad han selv havde gjort med Hesten; nu gik det ud over Knud; thi han reiste sig med Svæden i Haanden og drog til Knud over Hovedet. "Slaar du?" skreg Knud af kon nærmere; Thorbjørn hoppede af Løsset. "Du er en ond Karl," sagde han ligblod og leverede Spathen til hin Gut fra Stuen af, da han kom og bød sig frem. Men den gamle Mand, som havde reist sig horte ved Døren, da Aslak var færdig med sin Fortælling, gik nu bort til Thorbjørn og rykkede ham i Armen. "Sæmund Granliden er for brav en Mand til, at Spathen hans skal drages med slige Slagskjæmper," sagde han. Det stilledes i Thorbjørn; men Knud raabte: "Jag Slagskjæmper? Det er han lige saa godt som jeg, og min Far er ligesaa god som hans. - Kon an! - Det er daarligt, at Bygdefolket ikke ved, hvem af os to egentlig er ved bedst Magt," lagde han til og tog Halstørklædet af sig. - "Vi prøver det tidsnok," sagde Thorbjørn. Da sagde den Mand, som før ligget i Sengen: "De er som to Katte; de maa først snakke Med i sig, begge to." Thorbjørn hørte det, men svarede intet. En og anden af Flokken lo, andre sagde, det var stygt med alle de Slagsmaal i dette Bryllup, samt at de abode sig inde paa en fremmed Mand, som vilde drage fredeligt alsted. Thorbjørn sad sig om efter Hesten; det var hans Agt at fare. Men hin Gut havde vendt den og kjørt den far-

øverlig langt bort; Gutten selv stod nu lige bag dem. - "Hvad ser du dig om efter?" spurgte Knud; "hun Synnøve er langt borte nu." - "Hvad rager hun dig?" - "Hei, slige skinhellige Kvindfolk rager ikke mig," sagde Knud; "men kanske hun modstjæler dig." Dette var for meget for Thorbjørn; de mærkede, han saa sig om for at prøve Pladsen. Nu lagde atter nogle ældre sig imellem og mente, at Knud havde gjort Ugang nok i dette Lag. - "Hig skal han intet gjøre!" sagde Thorbjørn og da hine hørte dette, taug de. Andre sagde: "Lad dem drages, saa bliver de Godvænder; disse har længe nok seet ondt over til hverandre." - "Ja," sagde en, "de vil begge være de bedste her i Bygden; lad os nu se!" - "Har I andre seet noget ligt til han Thorbjørn Granliden," mente Knud; "Jeg syntes, han nylig var her paa Gaarden." - "Ja, her er han," sagde Thorbjørn, og i det samme fik Knud et Slag over det højre Øre, saa han tumlede han i nogle Mænd, som stod der. Nu blev der ganske stilt. Knud reiste sig og for frem uden at sige et ord; Thorbjørn tog imod ham. Der blev nu en lang Hævekamp, da begge vilde hinanden ind paa Livet; men begge var vel vant og holdt hinanden væk. Thorbjørns Slag faldt noksaa ofte, og nogle sagde, de faldt noksaa tungt. - "Der har Knud fundet sin Mand," sagde hin, som havde taget Hæsten; "giv Plads!" Kvindfolkene flygtede; kun en stod høit paa en Trap for hedre at se; det var Bruden. Thorbjørn fik et Glimt af hendes og stansede lidt; da saa han en Kniv i Knuds Haand, huskede hendes Ord, at Knud ikke var god, og med et vel rettet Slag traf han Knuds Arm over Haandleddet, saa Kniven faldt, og Armen døvnede. "Au, hvor du slog," sagde Knud. - "Synes du?" spurgte hin og brød nu ind paa ham. Knud havde ondt for at bruge blot en Arm, han blev løftet og baaret, men det bar imod, før han blev lagt. Han blev flere Gange lagt alig ned Jorden, at enhver anden vel havde svigtet, men dette var en god Ryg; Thorbjørn flyttede med ham, Folk veg, men han kom efter med ham, og saaledes bar det rundt den hele Gaard, indtil de kom op under Trappen, hvor han hivede ham endnu engang i Veiret og truede ham ned, saa Knaerne gav efter, og Knud lags over Stenhellen, saa det sang i ham. Han blev liggende stilt, gav et dybt Støn fra sig og lod sinens synke i; Thorbjørn rettede sig og saa op; hans Øine faldt lige paa Bruden, der stod ubevægelig og saa paa. "Tag noget og læg op under Hovedet paa ham," sagde hun, vendte sig om og gik ind.

To gamle Koner gik forbi; den ene sagde til den anden: "Herre Gud! der ligger en igjen; hvem er nu dette?" En Mand svarede: "Han, Knud Nordhaug." Da sagde en anden Kone: "Saa kanske det liver paa med Slagsmaalene herefterdags. De maatte da ogsaa have andet at bruge sine Kræfter til." - "Der sagde du et sandt Ord, Randi," mente hin; "Vorherre hjælpe dem saa langt frem, at de kan se forbi hverandre og hen til noget mere."

Dette faldt Thorbjørn underlig paa Sindet; han havde ikke sagt et Ord, men stod der endnu og saa paa dem, som stilledes med Knud; - flere talte til ham, men han svarede ikke. Han vendte sig fra dem og faldt i Tanker. Synnöve kom frem i dem, og han blev meget skamfuld. Han tænkte paa, hvad Forklaring han skulde give, og han tænkte paa, det var ham nok ikke saa let at slutte, som han engang troede. I det samme hørte han bag sig: "Vogt dig, Thorbjørn!" men før han fik vende sig, var han greben ved Skulderen bagfra, blev bøjet ned og følte ikke noget mere end en stikkende Smerte, hvis Sted han ikke rigtig kjendte. Han hørte Stemmer omkring sig, fornam, at de kjørte, troede selv stundom, at han kjørte, men vidste det ikke bestemt....."Varlig, varlig, Sæmund!" hørte han og vaagnede som af en Slummer ved, at han blev baaren, og da han saa sig om, var han kommen ind i Stuen paa Granliden. ¹

¹ "Synnöve Solbakken" - Bjørnson's Samlede Værker,

2. The Peasants at School.

The rural school system of Norway in Björnson's youth was very different from that of America. It was different in subjects and methods of instruction.

a. The School System.

Religion was a compulsory subject in all the classes. The children had to commit to memory Luther's Small Catechism and a huge commentary upon it, both authorized by the State Church of Norway. Besides these, a long and sometimes cumbersome Bible History, containing a synopsis of all the books of the New and the Old Testaments of the Bible, had to be committed to memory word for word. Arithmetic, writing, and geography were all secondary subject, quite incidental to the religious instruction.

b. The School-Master.

The school was conducted by one teacher, the "skole-mester", who next to the pastor was the leading man in the community. He was the chief advisor of the peasants in the education of their children as well as in other temporal affairs. The school was not always conducted in school-houses, but often the teacher went around from farm to farm, and the children of the community gathered wherever the teacher was, a week or two at each place. When school was in session, the children were seated around a long table, and strict discipline was maintained by the ardent use of the rod.

No better description of a peasant school teacher and his school can be found in Norwegian literature, than Björnson's account of Øyvind Pladsen's first day in school. We quote it in part:

Da han kom ind, så der saa mange Børn
omkring et Bord, at der ikke var flere i Kir-
ken; andre så paa sine Nistekopper langs Væg-
gene, nogle stod i smaa Hobe omkring en Tabel;

Skolemesteren, en gammel, graahaaret Mand, sad paa en Krak nede ved Gruen og stoppede sin Pibe. Da Øyvind og Moderen traadte ind, saa de alle op, og Kværnhus-Surret stansede, som naar de dæmmede i Renden. Alle saa paa de intrædende; Moderen hilste paa Skolemesteren, som hilste igjen.

"Her kommer jeg med en liden Gut, som vil lære at læse," sagde Moderen.

"Hvad heder den Kroppen?" spurgte Skolemesteren og grov ned i Skindposen efter Tobak.

"Øyvind," svarede Moderen, "han kan Bogstaverne, og han kan lægge sammen," -

"Aa, nei da," sagde Skolemesteren, "kom hid, du Hvidehoved!"

Øyvind gik bort til ham, Skolemesteren fik ham paa Fanget og tog Huen af ham. "For en vakker liden Gut!" sagde han og strøg ham i Haaret; Øyvind saa ham op i Øinene og lo. "Er det ad mig, du ler?" han rynkede Brynene.

"Ja, det er det," svarede Øyvind og skratlo. Da lo ogsaa Skolemesteren, Moderen lo, Børnene skøjnede ogsaa, de fik Lov at le, og saa lo de allesammen.

Dermed var Øyvind kommen ind paa Skolen.

"Op, Unger!" raabte Skolemesteren; "idag er det første Dagen, saa skal I slippe tidlig; men først maa vi holde Bøn og synge." Der blev et Leven i Skolen, de hoppede af Bænkene, sprang over Gulvet, snakkede i Munden paa hverandre. "Stille Fantunger, Skarvunger, Fjorunger! - stille og gaa vakkert over Gulvet, Smaabørn! sagde Skolemesteren, og de gik rolige hen og stillede sig op, hvorefter Skolemesteren gik foran dem og holdt en kort Bøn. Siden sang de; Skolemesteren begyndte med sterk Bas, alle Børnene stod med foldede Hænder og sang med, Øyvind stod nederst ved Døren sammen med Marit og saa paa; de foldede ogsaa Hænderne, men de kunde ikke synge.

Dette var den første Dag i Skolen. ¹

In the "school-master" in "En Glad Gut", Björnson has produced a splendid character. He is the picture of a typical country school teacher such as they were found in the peasant communities in Björnson's time. The school-master himself is a peasant

¹ "En Glad Gut" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. IV, p. 10.

and at one time owned a farm in the community. Björnson had two such teachers in his youth, Jakobsen and Røed. Jakobsen conducted a school a short distance away from the parsonage, and was Björnson's first teacher. Björnson's first experience in school is given in the short story entitled "Bjørnejægeren".¹ Røed was a very pious man and often spoke to his pupils of judgment day and eternal punishment. Björnson has given us the impressions he received from this teacher in Edvard Kalle's "dommedagsrædsler" in Chapter I of "Paa Guds Veie."²

But Björnson has done more than honor his own teachers by producing the "school-master" in "En Glad Gut". In revealing the sad story of Baard's life and his patient and loving work with the children, he has raised a monument to the Norwegian "lærerstand", or teaching profession.³

It has been said that sympathy is the one great word which strikes the keynote in Björnson's life. Sympathy for his fellowmen has also become a prominent trait in the school-master. The tendency of his whole life is to unite all people into common sympathies and common activities. The motto of his life is expressed in that beautiful little song he taught the children in school:

"Elsk den næste, du kristen-sjæl,
træd ham ikke med jernskoet hæl,
ligger han end i støvet!
Alt, som lever, er underlagt
kjerlighedens gjenskabermagt,
bliver den bare prøvet."⁴

- 1 "Bjørnejægeren" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, p. 297.
 2 "Paa Guds Veie" - " " " " " II, pp. 6-7.
 3 "En Glad Gut" - Ch. 3, 6 & 7 " " " " " IV, pp. 13-21.
 4 "En Glad Gut" - " " " " " IV, p. 20.

c. Confirmation.

Confirmation day marked the close of school. Besides the instruction in the regular school courses, the confirmands, during the six or nine months prior to confirmation, received instruction once a week from the parish pastor. The greatest honor known to a Norwegian boy or girl was to be able to stand "Nummer en", at the head of the class, on confirmation day.

In "En Glad Gut" Björnson has pictured in the experience of Øyvind Pladsen the attitude of a young Norwegian to confirmation.

Da kom Skolemesteren. Enhver forlod sin Plads og stormede omkring ham.

"Hvad Numer har jeg?" - "End jeg?" - "End jeg, jeg?" -

"Hys, opløbte Unger, intet Spektakel her; - rolige, saa skal I faa høre det, Børn."

"Du er Numer 2," sagde han til en Gut med blaa Øine, der saa bønlig paa ham, og Gutten dansede ud af Kredsen. "Du er Numer 3", - han slog paa en rødhaaret, rask liden en, som stod og sled ham i Trøien; du er Numer 5, du Numer 8", o.s.v. Han fik se Marit: "Du er Numer 1 af Jenterne;" hun blev blussende rød over Ansigt og Hals, men forsøgte at smile. "Du Numer 12, har været doven, din Knegt, og en stor Skøjlerfant; du Numer 11, ikke bedre at vente, Gutten min; du Numer 13, maa læse dygtig, møde frem til overhøring, eller gaar det dig galt!....

Øyvind kunde ikke holde det ud længere; Numer 1 var vistnok ikke nævnt; men han stod den hele Tid saaledes, at Skolemesteren kunde se ham. "Skolemester!" - han hørte ikke; "Skolemester!" - - tre Gange maatte han gjentage det, før han blev hørt.

Endelig saa Skolemesteren paa ham; "Numer 9 eller 10, husker ikke sikkert hvilket," sagde han og vendte sig til en anden.

"Hvem er Numer 1 da?" spurgte Hans, som var Øyvinds bedste Ven. -

"Det er ikke dig, du Krushoved!" sagde Skolemesteren og slog ham over Hovedet med en Papirrulle.

"Hvem er det da", spurgte flere, "hvem er det, ja hvem er det?" -

"Den faar den vide, som har Numeret," svarede Skolemesteren strengt; han vilde ikke

have flere Spørgsmaal. - "Gaa nu vakkert hjem, Børn, tak eders Gud, og glæd eders Forældre! Tak ogsaa eders gamle Skolemester; I havde sid-det der net og gnaget Ben, havde ikke han været!"

De takkede ham og lo, de drog jublende afsted; thi i dette Øieblik, da de skulde hjem til Forældrene, var de alle glade. Blot en var igjen, som ikke strax kunde finde sine Bøger, og som, da han fandt dem, satte sig ned, som skulde han paany til at læse dem over.

Skolemesteren gik bort til ham. "Nu, Øyvind, skal du ikke gaa med de andre?"

Han svarede ikke. - "Hvorfor slaar du op dine Bøger?"

"Jeg vilde se, hvad jeg har svaret galt idag." -

"Du har vistnok ikke svaret noget galt." -

Øyvind saa da paa ham, Taarerne stod ham i Øinene, han saa ufravendt paa ham, medens en efter en randt nedover, men han sagde ikke et Ord.

Skolemesteren satte sig foran ham: "Er du ikke glad nu, at du er sluppen frem?" - Det bævede om Munden, men han svarede ikke. "Din Mor og Far vil være glade," sagde Skolemesteren og saa paa ham. -

Øyvind kjæmpede længe for at faa et Ord frem; endelig spurgte han sagte og afbrudt: "Er det...fordi jeg...er Husmandsgut..... at jeg staar Numer 9 eller 10?"

"Vistnok er det derfor," svarede Skolemesteren. -

"Saa nytter det jo ikke for mig at arbejde," sagde han klangsløst og sank sammen over alle sine Drømme. Pludselig løftede han Hovedet, hævede den høire Haand, slog den i Bordet med al sin Magt, kastede sig ned paa sit Ansigt og brød ud i den heftigste Graad. ¹

No less vivid is the account of the ceremony itself in the same story:

En ualmindelig stor Skare havde samlet sig omkring den fritliggende Kirke; men Konfirmationsungdommen gik strax ind i Kirken for at blive stillet op, før Gudstjenesten begyndte.

Da var det, at Skolemesteren i blaa Klæder, Frakke og Knæbuxer, høie Støvler, stivt Halsbind og Piben stikkende frem af

¹"En Glad Gut" - Björnson's Sam.Værker, Vol. IV, p. 39.

Baglommen kom nedover, nikkede og lo, slog en paa Skulderen, talte et Par Ord til en anden om at svare høit og tydelig og kom under alt dette nedover til Fattigblokken, hvor Øyvind stod og svarede paa alle sin Ven Hans's Spørgsmaal i Anledning af Reisen.

"God Dag, Øyvind, vakker Dag," - han tog ham ved Trøiekraaven, som vilde han tale med ham; "hør du, tror alt godt om dig. Nu har jeg talt med Præsten; du faar beholde Pladsen din; gaa op paa Numer en og svar tydelig!"

Øyvind saa forbauset op paa ham, Skolemesteren nikkede, Gutten gik nogle Skridt, stod, atter nogle Skridt, stod; jo vist er det saa, han har talt til Præsten for mig, og gutten gik fort opover.

"Du skal jo være Numer en alligevel," hviskede en til ham.

"Ja," svarede Øyvind sagte, men vidste endnu ikke rigtig, om han turde.

Opstillingen var færdig, Præsten kommen, de ringede sammen, og Folk holdt paa at strømme ind. Da saa Øyvind Marit Heidegaarden staa lige foran sig, hun saa ogsaa ham, men begge var saa bundne af Stedets Hellighed, at de turdes ikke hilse. Han saa blot, hun var skinnende vakker og havde bart Haar, mere saa han ikke. Øyvind, som i over et halvt Aar havde bygget saa store Planer paa at staa lige over for hende, glømte, da det kom til Stykket, baade Pladsen og hende, og at han nogensinde havde tænkt paa den.

Efter at alt var endt, kom Slægtninge og Kjendninger for at aflægge sine Lykønskninger, dernæst kom hans Kamerater for at tage Farvel med ham, da de havde hørt, at han skulde reise den næste Dag; saa kom mange smaa, som han havde aget med i Bakkerne, og som han havde hjulpet paa Skolen, og det var ikke frit, at de putrede lidt ved Afskedden. ¹

"Synnöve Solbakken", too, contains an illuminating sketch of confirmation Sunday.

De havde hørt Indgangsbeden, sunget en Salme, og Konfirmanderne stillede sig alt op, før han næste gang hviskede til ham: "Men Knud kan lidet med at være god; lad det bestandig være langt fra Granliden til Nordhaug."

¹"En Glad Gut" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. Iv. p.46.

Konfirmationen tog sin Begyndelse, idet Præsten kom frem, og Børnene istemte Konfirmationssalmen efter Kingo. At høre dem synge alle paa en Gang og alene, fortrøstningsfuldt og klingende, pleier gjerne røre Folk og helst den, som ikke er kommen længere bort, end at han husker sin egen Dag. Naar en dyb Stilhed følger paa, og Præsten, den samme nu i over tyve Aar, den samme, som gjerne har havt en eller anden liden god Stund, hvori han har talt til det bedre for hver enkelt af dem, - naar han nu folder Hænderne over Brystet og tager i, er der gjerne megen Bevægelse. Men Børnene begynder at græde, naar Præsten taler om Forældrene og vil, at de skal bede til Vorherre for sine Børn. ¹

3. The Peasants in Church.

The work of the church had a large place in the heart of the peasants. They endured the greatest hardships and had to overcome almost insurmountable difficulties to get to church. Sometimes braving the winds and waves on the fjords or walking on foot over the mountains, often a distance of three Norwegian, or twenty-one English miles, carrying their children, they made their way to church.

a. Church Services.

The services were sometimes long and tedious, with the lengthy and cumbersome liturgy of the old State Church, and long, but strong and forceful sermons. After the revival, known as the "Haugianske Vækkelse", because it was promoted by a peasant boy from Tune, Hans Nielsen Hauge, - the spiritual life of the Church of Norway was revived; and the clergy, inspired by the two leading theological professors at the University of Christiania, Gisle Johnson and Carl Paul Caspari, were at this time, with some exceptions however, leaders in spiritual life. One thing can be said

¹"Synnøve Solbakken" - Bjørnson's Sam.Værker, Vol.III, P.200-1.

for the clergy of Norway, they did not spare their people. The vices of the day were attacked and people were admonished in strong words to Christian living and discipline.

In Øyvind Pladsen's second letter to his parents, written from the agricultural school, he describes the clergy of Norway in the following words:

"Skolemasteren spørger, om jeg gaar i Kirken. Ja vist gaar jeg i Kirken, for nu har Præsten faaet en Kapellan, og han præker, saa alle i Kirken er meget rædde, og det er en Fornøjelse at høre. Han er af den nye Religion, som de har i Kristiania, og Folk synes, han er for streng, men det have de godt af." ¹

The three great festivals of the church year, Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, were celebrated with special ceremonies and large attendance at services. Everyone must be in church on these occasions; even those who were negligent and unconcerned about their spiritual well-being went to church on the great feast days to show their respect for the pastor and give an offering to him on the altar, "offre til præsten."

To give the reader an idea of the prominence of church festivals in the peasant communities of Norway, we quote J. B. Bull's description of the Christmas festival in Gæsterdalen.

"Early Christmas morning the chimes of church bells were heard through the clear, cold air, and aroused the people of the community and reminded them that Christmas was ushered in. Everyone who could walk or crawl had to be out for Christmas services.

"Those who lived far away from church came in large sleighs filled with people. The old people (sjølfolket) sat on the front seat, the servants and children in seats behind, or hung on as best

¹ "En Glad Gut"- Bjørnson's Sam. Værker, Vol.IV, p. 50.

they could, while the horses trotted on in rapid speed to the music of the sleighbells." ¹

And Björnson describes the church going in the Solbakken-Granlien community in Chapter VIII of *Synnøve Solbakken*. We notice the striking resemblance between Bull's description of real life in Østerdalen and Björnson's portrayal in fiction:

Bogle Uger efter, tidlig om Morgenen, lagede hele Solbakkenfolket sig til Kirkefærd; De ville ikke kjøre, da Veiret var klart, om ogsaa lidt koldt og vindhaart i Morgenstunden; Dagen tegnede til at blive vakker.

Der lod til at blive folksomt ved Kirken; den lange Bygdevei var sort af Folk, gaende, kjørende og ridende; Heftene var vælige nu i Høsttiden og lidet vante til at være sammen med flere, hvorfor der var en Gnæg og en Uro over dem, som gjorde Farten fareful, men meget livlig. ²

b. Church Rites.

The rites of the church, baptism of infants, confirmation of young people, the marriage ceremony, and rites of burial were all conducted in church. The Norwegian peasant believed implicitly that the place to worship God was in His house, and as such he had high respect for the church. The present idea of the churches as social centers was entirely unknown to the peasants of Norway. With the hymn book in his hand, the peasant went to church to worship. The shaking of hands and probably a little social chat about the news of the community followed outside of the church after the services were over, and the peasant again walked to his home to meditate on the sermon which he had heard.

¹ J. E. Bull in *Berge i det 19de Aarhundrede*, Vol. II, p. 26.

² "Synnøve Solbakken" - Björnson's *Sam. Værker*, Vol. III, p. 195.

The peasants had implicit faith in the rites of the church. To neglect having the children baptized or to neglect preparing the young people for confirmation, was considered a grave misdemeanor. Only church weddings were known in peasant communities. To have a wedding ceremony solemnized by a justice or a judge would have been considered almost a sacrilege; and to be buried in unconsecrated ground was punishment allotted only to murderers and suicides.

Björnson has seized upon this trait in his description of the care which Marit Kampen takes to have her mother buried in the churchyard.

Men i samme stund fik hun ogsaa sin
helset; hun vilde straks tilsenge og relate
sig ikke mere. Datteren gravede hende ned,
hvor plads var ledig paa kirkegaarden, og
en valker hovedstav fik hun, hvorpaa hendes
navn og alder stod samt et salmevers af
Kingo. ¹

c. Peasant Piety.

There are reminiscences of peasant piety in all of Björnson's Early Novels,² but they are most prominent in "Synnøve Solbakken."

Synnøve Solbakken's parents are Haugianers, the followers of Norway's greatest revivalist, Hans Nielsen Hauge, and as such they consider all so-called worldly amusements sin, and take great care lest their daughter be contaminated by them.

¹"Arne" - Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. III, p. 18;

²"En Glad Gut", Ch. 7, Björnson's Sam. Værker, Vol. IV, p. 48;

"Arne" Ch. 3. " " " " III, p. 21;

"Fidkerjenten" Ch. 3. " " " " IV, p. 117.

In Chapter II of this story, we have the peasant's high admiration for church expressed in the following sentences:

Kirken staar i bondens tanke paa et høiet sted, og for sig selv fredlyst med gravens høihed omkring, messens livlighed inde. Den er det eneste hus i dalen hvorpaa han har anvendt pragt, og dens spire rækker derfor ogsaa længere, end det synes at række. Dens klokke hilse langveis hans gang did den rene søndags morgen og han løfter altid paa huen til dem, som han vilde sige dem et Tak for sidst! Det er et forbund imellem ham og dem som ingen kjender. ¹

The tolling of the church bells had to the peasant's ears a strange charm, the chant (messe) and the sermon, was the sweetest message to his soul. In church his children were baptized and confirmed. The young people were married here, and at the same altar the old and the young knelt for holy communion. Into the same church they also brought their dead and heard the comforting words of life everlasting, before the bodies of their dear ones were laid to rest in the graveyard just outside the church. Indeed, there is a reason why "the church stands in the thought of the peasant in a high place."

Björnson's description of the peasant's admiration for the church affords an appropriate close for this chapter.

We have shown in this chapter that from whatever point of view we may look at the peasant life of Norway, Björnson has been able to catch a glimpse of it and to picture it in his peasant stories. He has followed with keen interest the peasant's political and social development, and from childhood he has, - through observation and the reading of the "sagas" - learned to know the peasants in the home, at school, and in church; and the impressions that

¹"Synnöve Solbakken" - Chapter 2, Björnson's Samlede Værker, Vol. III, p. 129.

he thus received have been clearly and sympathetically revealed in his early peasant romances.

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