

**GLEAMS: A
FRAGMENTARY
INTERPRETATION OF
MAN AND HIS WORLD**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649419029

Gleams: A Fragmentary Interpretation of Man and His World by Edwin Björkman

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EDWIN BJÖRKMAN

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GLEAMS

BY EDWIN BJÖRKMAN

GLEAMS

IS THERE ANYTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN ?

VOICES OF TO-MORROW

*Mr. Björkman is the authorized translator of the
Plays of August Strindberg now being published by
Charles Scribner's Sons.*

GLEAMS

A FRAGMENTARY INTER-
PRETATION OF MAN
AND HIS WORLD

Edwin Björkman



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New York and London

MCMXII

VIII

TO MY WIFE

*With seeing eyes, yet of all sight bereft;
No music heard by widely opened ears;
The world's book sealed—thus spent I lonely years,
A prisoner self-immured; and might be left
Still languishing within those walls unleft,
Hadst thou not come, and, in thy wake, of fears
And hopes a mighty host, and smiles and tears
Till then unknown, and lastly love, whose deft
Sweet hands broke down the jail my soul confined
And set the prisoner free to join his kind
In play at life's own feet. Since then each song,
And every sigh that rises from the throng
Of men, find to my heart unfailing way:
And deathlike night is turned in sunsteeped day!*

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MARGINAL

All but a very few of the aphorisms contained in this collection were produced within less than three months in the spring of 1906. I called them "gleams" because they seemed to be flashed at me from some source of light lying outside my own self, and in such manner that I was wholly unaware of any preparation. The truth of it was, of course, that subconscious processes had been in progress for years, while outwardly I appeared to be drifting thoughtlessly and aimlessly, and that some new circumstance—most probably the one suggested in my dedication—brought those processes into sudden crystallization. From those springtime weeks, that made me so drunk with creative fervor that I left a good position to abandon myself wholly to it, dates my entire subsequent development as writer, critic, and—using the word quite humbly—thinker. All that I have since seen more clearly was then visioned

vaguely as in a dream, but at the same time with a sense of conviction that I dare not hope to experience again.

When the fever subsided, I thought of giving to the public what had meant so much to myself. But for years my poor thoughts remained utterly scorned. At last a few of them appeared anonymously in "The World's Work." Later a considerable number of them found signed publication in the Friday Literary Review of "The Chicago Evening Post," through my faithful friends, Francis Hackett and Floyd Dell. Still later a few more were printed anonymously in "The Youth's Companion." And finally they came under the keen but kind eye of Mr. Norman Hapgood, with the result that what remained of the collection—about one-half—was acquired and published by "Collier's Weekly."