

**IN GOD'S WAY, A  
NOVEL. VOLUME  
I, PP. 1-200**

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In God's Way, a Novel. Volume I, pp. 1-200 by Björnstjerne Björnson

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**BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON**

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THE NOVELS OF  
**BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSON**

*Edited by EDMUND GOSSE*

VOLUME IX

**IN GOD'S WAY**  
**A NOVEL**

**BY**  
**BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSEN**

*Translated from the Norwegian by*  
**ELIZABETH CARMICHAEL**

**VOLUME I**

**LONDON**  
**WILLIAM HEINEMANN**  
1908

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## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

ON Björnson's return to Norway from Paris, he settled down at his country estate of Aulestad, in Gudbrandsdal. Here he composed another long novel, which he completed in the summer of 1889, and which was published in Copenhagen towards the end of that year, under the title of *På guds veje* ("In God's Way").

This novel was at once perceived to be among the best things that Björnson had composed, and to be superior in point of art and arrangement to any of his previous romances. While it was perfectly original in subject and treatment, the author's residence among the French had evidently given him a new lightness and sureness of touch. As, in the case of "The Heritage or the Kurts," some readers had complained of the excess of pedagogy, so in that of "In God's Way" there were some who objected to the insistence on medical detail, and the language of the sick-room, which gave a clinical character to the later sections of the book. Some one said that the last chapters "simply stink of antiseptics." But to say this was to misconceive Björnson's grave and sympathetic purpose, which was to display the hand of God, moving in a mysterious way, and guiding His children through the most perilous paths of manifold human suffering.



#### BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

This divine guidance is interfered with and frustrated in the course of the narrative by all manner of foolish and vain contrivances of man's invention, taking forms of fanatical intolerance and disturbing the sweet and innocent movements of human instinct. It was at once seen that Björnson was recurring in "In God's Way" to that attack upon social hypocrisy and religious persecution which he had made ten years before in his notorious drama of *Leonarda*. But time had ripened his views, and the novel is a much sounder and more valuable contribution to modern thought than the play which had raised so great a tempest in 1879.

The landscapes in this romance are among the most admirable which Björnson has painted. The story opens on the shores of the Atlantic, somewhere near the mouths of the great western fjords; it continues in the neighbourhood of Christiania or on the eastern frontier; and the final scenes are laid in the very heart of the country, deep in those almost impenetrable pine-forests which create in the far north a silence which seems to have been unbroken since the foundation of the world. All these, and other characteristically Norwegian scenes, are so picturesquely and so faithfully depicted in the course of this novel, that it would hardly be possible to point to another book which reveals in so faithful a manner and in so various a degree the very body and soul of Norway.

E. G.

**Author's Dedication**

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*TO MY BEST FRIEND  
ETATSRÁD FREDERIK HEGEL  
IN REMEMBRANCE*

THOU never hast been here ; yet I roam  
Often up and down and meet thee everywhere.  
Here is no room, nor road,  
But thoughts of thee stand forth  
Awaiting me from by-gone days,  
When thou by deeds of faithful friendship  
Brought comfort to my home in all its troubles.

And ofttimes, as I wrote this book,  
Thy kindly eye would beam on me ;  
We were alone then, thou and I, and  
All that silently grew into words—  
Here and there the book must needs  
Be like thy heart, thy simple faith,  
And therefore may thy name impart a blessing unto it.

AULESTAD, *September 11, 1889.*