

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCANDINAVIAN

THE Scandinavian is an idealist above all else; he believes in the ultimate triumph of the good and the true, and he recognizes the rights of his fellow-man; his honesty is proverbial, and his hospitality is a tradition; the long winters and the gloomy aspect of nature during almost half of the year have turned his thoughts inward to the contemplation of the problems of the soul; he has come to distinguish more strictly than many other peoples between the value of the inner essence of things and their external form; he has become a mystic after the heart of Emerson and a philosopher after the manner of Thureau; his convictions formed in the seclusion of maturist meditation are as tenacious and long-lived as a northern winter, and give way only when the bright summer's sun of truth and experience has disintegrated the old fabric; he is the greatest believer in the world (in no other country in Europe, except England, has religion relatively so many ardent followers as in Sweden), but his unquenchable thirst for truth leads him on to explore in the most forbidden fields of theology and dogma, and for a principle once accepted as true, he will fight with stubbornness and obstinacy, and sacrifice with enthusiasm and joy.

Just as the characteristics of the people will explain the tendencies in various lines that have manifested themselves in Scandinavian history, so, too, the forms of government, the education and culture of the people, the art and literature, the press and similar agencies will help us to understand the particular reform movements that have been inaugurated and carried to various stages of development.

The government in the Scandinavian countries has from prehistoric times been liberal and democratic. Only intervals of short duration are exceptions. The lowly man—the common people—has always had a large share in the management of local and national affairs. Some of the old-time freedom was lost in the period of decay which enveloped all Europe, but the ancient prerogatives have since been regained. The legislative halls of the three nations have been opened to both sexes—to the lowly burghers and the proud aristocrats on equal terms—and there are no freer citizens in the world today than the Scandinavians.

General education in the Scandinavian countries is of a high order and percentage of illiteracy is smaller than that of any other people. In 1645 Sweden adopted the best school system in Europe of that day, and compulsory education is 226 years old, dating from the Ecclesiastical Law of 1686. That the general education, with its accompanying high intelligence of the masses, has had its influence on the reform movements and made possible a more rapid advance along certain lines than in many other countries can not be denied.

The learned professions and the universities in Scandinavia stand in close touch with the progressive movements of the day, and nearly all of the statesmen and politicians are interested in and leaders of various reforms. Professors, as well as lawyers and men of affairs, take a keen interest in politics, studying earnestly the social problems, and it is not uncommon to see the greatest scholars of the country

occupying seats in the Diet or making speeches on labor problems, the peace movement, and the like.

Denmark's laws relating to the poor are famous and they have been studied and praised by almost every social worker of prominence. Mary Bronson Hartt, in speaking of this subject, says: "Denmark is all things to all men. It draws a sharp line between the man who can not support himself and the man who will not. The second it brands with the accursed name of pauper and proceeds to put him through a regenerative course of study. The first it shields from the very shadow of disgrace. To the honest working people in distress the Danish poor-law officer is a sort of special providence. He not only provides funds to put the embarrassed on their feet, but he helps find work and cheap lodgings. On the other hand, once the poor-law officer has convinced himself that a man is a ne'er-do-well, society turns toward that man quite another face. It will support him, and his wife and children, too, but on its own terms, the day he accepts the name of pauper by taking aid he ought to do without, that day the man signs away his personal independence. Society sets out to sicken him of his choice. At a stroke she takes from him his right to vote, his rights to marry without a poor-house permit, and his right to pawn his own goods. He can no longer choose his own occupation or his own dwelling. Stricter laws apply to him than to the honest man."

Ole Hanson's Book

Review By The Literary Digest.

A STRAIGHTFORWARD and naive narrative of what one American accomplished under trying circumstances is Ole Hanson's "Americanism Versus Bolshevism" (Doubleday, Page & Co.). It is a timely book—not so timely now as it would have been some months ago, when the exploits of Mayor Hanson were echoed from coast to coast, and the bugaboo of Bolshevism had not yet given place to half-dozen other bugaboos. The best part of the book is that in which Mr. Hanson tells the story of his own fight. This is interesting largely by reason of its revelation of a man with a single-track mind; it is a character portrayal, not a record; a portrait, not an interpretation.

"Nauseated by the sickly sentimentality of all those who would conciliate, pander, and encourage all who would destroy our government, I have tried to learn the truth and tell it in United States English of one or two syllables." Such is Mr. Hanson's aim.

Had Mr. Hanson been content to tell what he knew, had he confined himself to the relation of his own interesting activities, he would have written only a pamphlet, but that pamphlet would not have suffered—as does the book—from the intrusion of a long "history" of Radicalism. "In this book I have briefly sketched the history of syndicalism in France, Germany, England, Russia, and the United States. I have conclusively proved that the Syndicalist, whether called Bolshevik or I. W. W., is simply a revolutionary criminal," etc.

The reader is forced to decide whether or not Mr. Hanson has attempted too much. For one thing he had endeavored to generalize from his own experiences. His arguments are weak when he delves into the past; his own record of achievement loses in impressiveness as he hurls forth denunciations at the Radicals of the past three or four generations.

The Ole Hanson known to the public is the Ole Hanson who defied the I. W. W., and went about his daily business in the midst of danger. The following anecdote shows the sort of man who prides himself—and justly—on being, a "man of action."

"I received one message notifying me that I

would suffer the consequences unless I removed from my motor-car the small American flag that flew above the radiator. I answered this coward simply by covering the entire top of my car with a larger flag, and from that time on drove the streets of Seattle with Old Glory above me."

But the flag-waving Ole Hanson means what he says. He is not merely a flag-waver. The flag to him means law and order, and law and order he will maintain at all costs. All good people are "folks" to him; hair-splitting philosophical questionings are alien to him. It is significant that he shies at the very word "alien."

One of the last chapters—"Bolshevism in America; Its Causes and Some Remedies"—is replete with pertinent suggestions. Here Mr. Hanson shows a more mature judgment; one can not escape the conviction that this section of the book was thought out and written some time after the first part. Mr. Hanson very naturally can not quite maintain the balance of his logical faculties under the stress of immediate action and emotion.

Ole Hanson on the subject of remedies is worth reading. In his best judgment the "major causes of unrest and anarchy in our own country" are:

1. Unassimilated aliens.
2. Ignorant Americans.
3. Increased cost of living.
4. "Red" Employers.
5. Unthinking and dishonest adventurers and "Red" misleaders of labor.
6. Oppression of governmental employees.
7. Sickly sentimentalists.
8. Discontented failures and delinquents.

To eliminate these causes of unrest is by no means an easy matter, but Mr. Hanson is ready with a definite program of reform. Restrict immigration, he maintains, and take steps to assimilate those aliens who are permitted to enter the country. "Every facility should be provided to enable the aliens already here to assimilate our ideals."

No one will deny that this is common sense. Mr. Hanson does not meet the question, however, whether or not it is largely the fault of America that aliens have heretofore been offered little opportunity to become assimilated; or that immigrants have been imported in large numbers for purposes of exploitation and encouraged to segregate.

Says Mr. Hanson: "One of the greatest hindrances to the Americanization of aliens is the fact that during the past years so many thousands have herded together and established foreign centers or colonies in our great cities. I have visited these foreign settlements, and conditions are unspeakable. One would not believe how many of these people live herded together in crowded tenements, with only the pavement for playgrounds, with the foreign language press read almost exclusively, and with foreign modes of life and foreign methods of thinking prevailing almost exclusively." America might profitably face such a statement of her own faults as this: Foreigners segregate because we have made it easier for them to live in colonies; they live in tenements, not primarily because they wish to, but because they must. Poor housing conditions can not be blamed upon the alien. The alien reads the foreign language press because otherwise he can read nothing at all.

But in spite of minor errors in judgment or in fact, Mr. Hanson is on the right track. For one thing, he realizes that a problem almost as urgent as the Americanization of the aliens is the Americanization of Americans.

Our national problems can not be solved by force; they can not be solved by talk; they can be approached only after the facts are known. Education—in the broadest sense of the word—is the one road to a successful solution. Mr. Hanson once scored a temporary success, and issued from the conflict with flying colors. But Mr. Hanson's seasoned suggestions are of infinitely greater value than his spectacular fight. It is by brains and sympathetic understanding that we shall ultimately steer a straight course, not with ropes and kerosene, revolvers and raids.

When a thing's done and you can't undo it, there's no use in frettin' and worryin' yourself. Jest put it out of your mind, and go on your way and git ready for the next trial that's comin' to you.

Eliza Calvert Hall.

The words we speak and the things we do today may seem to be lost, but in the great final revealing the smallest of them will appear.

Lowell.

One Life; a little gem of Time between two Eternities; one second chance to us forevermore!

Carlyle.