

A wise man has said, "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." "The Master of the Magicians" is one of the few books that belong to the last named class. The first chapters are the appetizers; the main body, the plain substantial courses are made pleasing to the taste by a free sprinkling of savory seasoning, and the closing chapters correspond to the dessert of the meal. Over them we wish to linger, taking a taste, waiting for a few moments, and then taking another dainty bit. It is the last chapter of all that proves the daintiest, for in it is the character of Daniel most fully exemplified. As he climbs to the topmost point of the tower of Bel, in the rosy dawn of the early morning, to see the beautiful maiden whom he has learned to love borne by another far across the desert where lies his own fair native land—we are deeply moved in sympathy. Far across the plain, he sees the outline of the cavalcade. It falls into shape and crawls on like a serpent. He strains his eyes piteously, but the long line vanishes in the dreary waste. The sun rises and finds him kneeling with his palms extended outward, offering up in his loneliness a silent prayer to the throne of his living God. This picture will hang on memory's walls, one to which we can turn in our moments of trial and temptation, and gain strength as we behold the prayerful, kneeling figure of "The Master of the Magicians."

MASON B. JONES.

GUNNAR.

Among the many authors to whom we are indebted for contribution to our literature, perhaps none have bestowed upon us a richer dowry of pure, simple, vigorous prose than our Norwegian writer, Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen.

He was born at Fredericksvern, in September, 1848. In a most picturesque part of Norway the hours of childhood passed like a happy dream. When he was eleven years old, his father placed him in a gymnasium, where he remained until he entered the University of Christiania.

During Mr. Boyesen's childhood his chief delight was to write little stories; his one desire was to become an author. For many an hour he secretly worked over these childish outbursts of genius, but at last resolved to take into confidence his grandmother, who, it is said, shed many a tear over the tragic fate of his hero or heroine. When he grew older he disclosed his

plans to his father, who had just returned from the United States, full of enthusiasm for everything American. He gave the boy but little encouragement in his ambition to become a Norwegian poet, but said, "If you are strong enough to conquer a new language and make it so perfectly your own that you can mold and bend it rhythmically to your will, then I shall believe in your literary aspirations, but not until then." It was these words that made Mr. Boyesen resolve to come to America; these words perhaps that led him to become an author. He landed in New York in 1869, and so ardent was his desire to master our language that henceforth he never spoke in the Norwegian tongue unless forced to do so. At this period his literary life began. He first became a journalist, but soon greater works than mere editorials flowed from his pen, for it was but two years after his arrival when "Gunnar," a simple, beautiful, poetic story of the North, was published. It is such a book as he alone could write, one in which the grand Norwegian scenery and the simple life of the peasant are most vividly pictured in the best of English.

The story is a very simple but fascinating one. By the side of a swift-flowing river, in a deep, narrow valley, our hero, Gunnar, was born. He was of humble birth, the son of a "houseman." In Norway the people are divided into two classes, gardmen or landowners, and housemen, the poorer class. The latter were looked down upon by the others; and for a "houseman" to stray from the beaten track of his forefathers was an uncommon and unapproved occurrence.

When little Gunnar reached the age of eleven, his father thought it better for him to remain at home no longer, listening to grandmother's elf-stories and "Hulder" tales, but to be put to some occupation that would prevent his imagination from running away with his senses. Of course it was to some of the gardmen that he applied for employment for his son, and soon the child was watching the cattle of the wealthy widow of Rimul, at the "saeter," the mountain summer resort of the people of the valley.

From that day Gunnar commenced a new life. The fresh, crisp air of the highland seemed to infuse new strength and vigor into his veins, but it did not weaken his powers of imagination. While off watching the cattle he would while away the long hours by drawing pictures of those wonderful creatures that played such an important part in grandmother's stories.