

## GEORG BRANDES

(This article accompanies the first of a series of portrait studies of famous living European authors by Ivan Opffer, the American artist, now in Copenhagen.)

IT was Goethe who coined the word *Weltliteratur*, or world literature, and justified the existence of the expression by his own writings. It is Georg Brandes more than any other one man who has approached the study of literature from the world point of view. He is the greatest synthetic critic now living. Born at Copenhagen, February 4, 1842, he began his career, 1865, as a writer by a series of studies on Danish authors of whom Hans Christian Andersen is the most widely known. His first real book, on Hippolyte Taine, appeared in 1870. On November 3, 1871, he delivered at the University of Copenhagen the first lecture in a course that was afterward to be expanded and published, in six volumes, under the collective title of "Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature". It remains to this day the work by which Brandes is best known among those who frequent circulating libraries. The chief characters treated in it are Kleist, Châteaubriand, De Maistre, Byron, Shelley, Musset, Hugo, Balzac, Heine, and Feuerbach.

Of others on whom he has written books—the first books indeed that were written on them—Lassalle, Ibsen,

Nietzsche, and Max Klinger stand out. Brandes was the first to interpret Ibsen, just as he was the real and undisputed discoverer of Friedrich Nietzsche. The last letter Nietzsche wrote before his mental collapse was addressed to him. He has traveled widely, lectured in the principal cities of the world, and written no end of pamphlets, while his autobiography in many volumes and not yet complete is virtually a history of æsthetics since 1860.

Then there are his *magna opera*: "William Shakespeare" (1912), "Wolfgang Goethe" (1916), "François de Voltaire" (1917), "Julius Cæsar" (1919), "Michelangelo" (1921), each in two great volumes, documented, illustrated, informative, provocative, liberal always but radical never, though a half century ago exactly Brandes was asked to leave his country because his teachings were regarded as likely to undermine Danish society. The truth is, Danish society today rests largely on the foundation Brandes laid for it. And November last Denmark acknowledged this fact, publicly, officially, and fully.

ALLEN WILSON PORTERFIELD



*Ivan Opffer  
Agosto 1898  
Dopo la morte di Brandes.*

Georg Brandes

*Drawn from life  
for THE BOOKMAN  
by Ivan Opffer*

# BROADWAY, OUR LITERARY SIGNPOST

By Kenneth Andrews

SOME time ago we saw a movie with a most deceptive title. We have forgotten what the title was, but there was no suggestion in it that the picture was what is known as "western", or we should certainly not have seen it. It began in front of the same old saloon on the same old company street. The same old grocery store and post office were set up in their usual places; in the distance were the same old mountains. The conventional farm hands, smoking the well-known Bull Durham cigarettes, loafed about the swinging door of the saloon; the tidy little mustangs or burros stood patiently swishing their tails, waiting to make their customary dash up the street and out of range of the camera. We swore fervently under our breath and reached for our hat, overcoat, rubbers, brief case, and umbrella.

But a caption on the screen caught our eye. It said something to the effect that the old west was no more, that cowboys were not what they had once been, that they were now mostly a myth. We paused. Cowboys no longer wore chaps and loosely knotted bandannas, we read. The average herder of cattle, in this effete present, would consider a loaded .48 in his belt a great responsibility, would not be able to hit anything with it if he did carry it, which he did not. We scarcely credited our eyes, but there it was in black and white. Here indeed was enlightenment, progress. A deception which had been lucratively practised for years was exposed, and by the

movie magnates themselves. How extraordinary that we should, by chance, stumble upon this epoch-marking film which would no doubt sound the death knell of the two-gun man, and thus rid the casual movie goer, like ourself, of one of our gravest afflictions.

The star of the picture, a big he-man, for the first time permitted his admirers to see him in civilian clothes. He looked lumpy and surprisingly mature and ill at ease, his hands kept getting in his way and the stiff collar about his swarthy, muscular neck bothered him considerably. We were full of admiration for him; here surely was a sacrifice on the altar of artistic truth. The picture went on and we learned that a young lady from the east was coming on the next train and that she would expect all the old glitter and trappings of the west as she had learned to know them through the movies. It would be unmanly—unwestern—to disappoint her. The boys must get together and give her all the adventure and wild west stuff she was coming for. So they all dressed up in the same old costumes. The star got into his patent leather gauntlets, his spurs, his wide sombrero—and he was himself again. The story that followed was the old story. There was gun play, drinking of straight red-eye, the chase over hill and dale, and the fist fight. It was the same old hokum; by the end of the picture the actors on the screen, and the audience in the theatre, had forgotten all about the disclosures at the beginning, which