

I sent in a clean typescript but wasn't given a chance
proofread my article. I'm deeply disappointed that
any typographical errors cropped up.

Id read:

- 1, line 8: Skribent
- 4, 4th line from bottom: schooner; the days in the
- 5, line 20: Georg
- 10, line 11: achievements
- 12, line 9: picture
- line 15: especially
- 14, line 20: Wadsworth

GEORG STRANDVOLD: A Progress in Journalism

By Olga Strandvold Opfell



A bronze plaque that honors Georg Strandvold's memory hangs in Rebild's **Blokhus**, succinctly summing up the influence he had in his time on thousands of Danish Americans:

Skribent og redaktør i
i Amerika i 57 ar.

Trofast talsmand
for Danmark.

That long career was also versatile. During those 57 years Georg Strandvold wrote for the best known Danish newspapers in the U.S. — **Norden, Nordlyset,**

Den Danske Pioneer, Ugebladet, Dannevirke, Bien — and worked on two American dailies, the **Racine Journal** and the **Grand Forks Herald**. For 31 years he also sat on the editorial staff of **Decorah-Posten**, the largest of the Norwegian-American newspapers, with about 10,000 Danish subscribers. He was perhaps the only Danish "pressemand" in this country to write Danish, English, and Norwegian equally well. As Albert Van Sand, **Nordlyset** editor, noted in 1928: "Saa er der kun saa meget mere Grund for os hans Landsmaend i Amerika at vaere stolte herover." Aside from his newspaper jobs, Georg Strandvold lectured innumerable times to Danish-American and American audiences, and wrote poems, short stories (many for **Julegranen**); and articles about Danish literature (for American handbooks and encyclopedias).

Writing what he wanted and as he wanted, he showed a great enthusiasm for his profession. When he was 70, he still ran off to work like a young reporter. Recently his sister-in-law Medora Petersen recalled, "The most vivid impression I have of him is that he preferred doing his work to everything else — even when he was on vacation." When, for example, international news was breaking right and left,

he thought nothing of walking down to the office at 5 in the morning in subzero weather.

That office at **Decorah-Posten**, Decorah, Iowa, where thousands of his articles originated, was a small upstairs room wedged between the business office and the print shop. Somehow its endless traffic never disturbed him. To his job he brought his inborn Danish characteristics of punctuality, dependability, neatness, and helpfulness. With his shirt sleeves rolled up, the inevitable pipe or cigar between his lips, his mild blue eyes lighting up a gentle face, he sat at a heavy rolltop desk, the family dog at his feet. Reference books were crammed around him. A rather rickety table was piled high with papers, but everything was in such admirable order that he could instantly put his hand on whatever was needed. His typewriter, on a smaller wheeled table, he hit with two stabbing forefingers, never progressing to a better technique. As he worked, there were frequent interruptions, for over the years a ceaseless stream of callers sought advice and information he could glean for them from a huge filing cabinet of clippings and correspondence.

In no way could it be called an elegant office. Two windows overlooked a dismal alley, the walls were dingy, the little room in summer was stifling hot despite the groaning ceiling fans. But he frequently remarked that for him it was this side of Paradise.

Georg Strandvold was born in Roskilde on June 5, Grundlovsdag, 1883, and "den danske sag" lay at the heart of his work. Friends were often surprised at this loyalty because as a rather impecunious newspaperman he was able to return to Denmark only once, in 1920, to visit his parents, three sisters, and a brother. Behind the unrealized trips (so intensely longed for) lay many sacrifices, especially in the form of financial help to others.

That devotion found especially cogent argument during World War II, when many Americans were highly critical of the Danes' instant capitulation to the Nazis. He himself wrote, "There is no report to the effect that the Danes resisted by force; they evidently realized that it would have been suicide." But soon he was able to describe the growing Resistance Movement. Years later, Tyge Lassen, curator of Udvandrerarkivet in Aalborg, concluded: "Georg Strandvold was in the front ranks of our countrymen in America who

undertook the difficult and in the beginning thankless task of removing the stains from Denmark's shield by spreading information about the Resistance Movement. Let us never forget that this did unspeakably much to change contempt to admiration. [Others did the same kind of work in England.] By war's end Denmark was treated and considered as an Allied country, which was liberated, not occupied anew." With the peace, Georg Strandvold was awarded King Christian X's freedom Medal.

Eight years later, on his 70th birthday, which also happened to be the 50th anniversary of his entry into journalism, he became a Ridder af Dannebrog. On that occasion his good friend and fellow bibliophile, Dr. J. Christian Bay, head of the John Crerar Library in Chicago, sent the following telegram: "Friends are grateful to you, the faithful son of Northern genius and the inspiring interpreter of lofty ideals, for fifty years of unselfish achievement." As Bay later recalled, he was told that the honoree modestly "shook his gray head and said to his wife that those words were greatly exaggerated."

The memorial plaque at Rebild also carries the poem Georg Strandvold wrote as a young immigrant:

Hejste jeg Sejl og drog vesterpaa
for bedre Vilkaar at søge,
Jeg glemte dog aldrig den Bølge blaa,
som kranser de danske Bøge.
Jeg glemte dog ej over fundet Skat,
de dyre, de kaere Minder —
Jeg glemte dog aldrig den lyse Nat,
som henover Danmark skinner.

Those eight lines, which many other immigrants found particularly expressive of their own dual loyalties, were printed on the cover of the Rebild program for the celebration of America's bicentennial.

He was 19 when he arrived in New York, penniless and not at all fluent in English. Just three years later he would be hired as a reporter on an American daily in Racine, Wisconsin. Early on, to earn money for school, the young immigrant worked as a farm hand and thresher in Nebraska. Finally enrolled at Grand View College in Des Moines, Iowa, he studied English for as much as 16 hours a day. With plucky

determination he had already made up his mind what he wanted to be: a journalist. "Sit in an office, have a pen in my hand, write for the public, be well dressed, and associate with intellectual persons."

Through temperament and heritage he was suited for the newspaper world. He was the son of a talented and aspiring editor, who might have gone far. But Henrik Strandvold had a drinking problem, which gradually reduced his family, settled in Copenhagen, to poverty. At 14 Georg was sent out as a herd boy on the Jutland heath and already a year later had some little articles and poems accepted by provincial papers. His career, however, did not get its real start until as a Grand View student he answered Ivar Kirkegaard's advertisement for an assistant at **Norden**, the new Danish monthly paper in Racine. The next step was to show his fluency in Danish and English by translating President Theodore Roosevelt's speech at the laying of the foundation for the World's Fair in St. Louis. While Georg waited for an answer, the school term being over, he supported himself by digging ditches near Latimer, Iowa. One day he felt certain a telegram from Kirkegaard awaited him in his room 25 miles away. From standing in cold water up to his knees he had already caught cold, and a little vigorous coughing made his condition seem worse so that a rather naive ditchdigging boss allowed his ailing helper to start walking back to his distant lodgings. On part of the trek Georg pumped a handcar. At Latimer he found no telegram. But he did find a letter that accepted him! In his delight the twenty-year-old looked back on his life so far:

"Again I stood at a milestone in my winding way of life. I thought about that evening only six years before on Nylandsvej [in Copenhagen], where I saw my childhood's sun sink down. I remembered my life as a herd boy in Velling and at Nordlund; my flight to Himmelbjergsgaard; taking the cows and sheep to Vindum; my stay at the dairies on Mols and Schelenborg; my travels as a cabin boy and waiter on ships going to America, Germany, Norway, and Sweden; my vacation trips to the Hindholm manor houses; my desertion from **Valborg** [a schooner] in the days in this "Hostel for the Homeless"; the Nielsens in Østerlars [this kind Bornholm schoolmaster and his wife made it possible for the precocious young herd boy to continue his schooling]; ... the journey

to Troy; the foundry there; work as a hired hand in Marquette; the threshing in the neighborhood of Nysted; the studies at Grand View — and toward the last the drain ditches . . . Through it all the dream of being a journalist wound itself like a golden thread. And now I was employed on a newspaper — at ten dollars a week! Yes! They were probably right — all those fairy tale reports of young men who became something astonishingly big in America!"

The new "redaktionssekretær" worked for Kirkegaard for two years (1903-05), sometimes unhappy over assignments to solicit advertisements or sell subscriptions. His next step brought him to the **Racine Daily Journal**, where his unusual ad — "Newspaperman wants work no matter what it is, as long as it is work" — had caught the attention of the managing editor, Frank Starbuck. On probation for six months, Georg was a full fledged reporter by the end of the second week and writing a daily column as well. Always he remembered the crotchety Starbuck's adjuration: "Get the facts, all the facts, and nothing but the damn facts."

Around this time George Strandvold married Agnes Jensen, also a Danish immigrant. The young couple dreamed of spending their first Christmas back in their homeland, and to earn money for the trip Georg rashly decided to give up his job and to undertake an absurdly ambitious lecture tour through all the Danish communities in the Middle West and the East. Full of euphoria, he started out with five long lectures, one on Giralamo Savanarola, the fiery religious reformer of the Italian Renaissance. But his memoirs tell a sad story: "During the long trip I experienced so many disappointments in the form of snowstorms, train delays, cancelled lectures, and small honorariums that it soon became clear to me our Denmark plans could not be carried out."

The lecture tour ended in New York with the money all gone and Agnes pregnant. Fortunately at that very moment Emil Opffer decided to leave as editor of **Nordlyset**, and the disillusioned young lecturer let Karl Mathiasen, the publisher, know that he was available. Hired almost on the spot, he became co-editor of the paper with Knud Hartnack, and about a year later (at the age of 25) the sole editor. The Danish Greater New York, he would remember, stood then in a festive glow with a rapid succession of banquets, parties, balls, masquerades. The "young person" at **Nordlyset**

interviewed a stream of interesting personalities who moved among these entertainments — the ballet dancer Adelina Genée, the actress Oda Nielsen, the writer Johan Skjoldborg, Admiral Richelieu, Baron and Baroness Joost Dahlerup, the writers Karen and Sophus Michaelis, and Dr. Frederick Cook, who claimed to have discovered the North Pole. For the banquet the Danes in New York held in Cook's honor, Georg was asked to be the main speaker. Then sager heads decided he was too "spinatung". Promptly the distinguished old gentleman, who was chosen in his stead, asked the displaced speaker for a copy of his talk "to get a few ideas." When the speech was given, it turned out to be Georg's, word for word.

In 1911, "Den Danske Studentersangforening" arrived in the U.S. on tour, and Georg gained admission to the customs boat which met the Danish ship outside Sandy Hook. Clattering on board, he brought the group the first greeting from Danish America. After a highly successful concert at Carnegie Hall, the singers were invited to Washington D.C., and Georg, at Max Henius's request, accompanied them. At a White House garden party, "fat smiling" President Taft stood in the receiving line with his daughter Helen. The choir entertained with Danish and American songs. When the soloist, Helge Nissen, had sung "Den store, hvide Flok vi ser," Georg heard Mr. Taft say, "I didn't understand a word of it, but it was beautiful." Following the White House party, there was supper at the Danish legation. Georg later remembered the occasion: "In the garden, illuminated with colored lanterns, we drank punch. Most of the members of the 'corps diplomatique' were Grev Carl Moltke's guests at the garden soiree which now took place. The singers' voices sounded marvelous in the warm summer evening; in long rows of automobiles on either side of the street people sat quietly and listened to those tones from the far North. 'Det var festligt og stemningsfuldt.'"

Also during the **Nordlyset** days, Henrik Cavling, the editor of **Politiken** in Copenhagen, invited Georg Strandvold to become a "Marconi correspondent," sending short messages across the Atlantic every day. Thus the young journalist pioneered in the first transatlantic news service from America to Scandinavia. Unfortunately, his messages were sometimes garbled in transmission, causing him embarrassment and heaping criticism on his head.

All too many were ready to pour scorn on the young "Fløjs" out in New York. Many years later Georg conceded: "It was unavoidable that I stepped on other editor's toes — colleagues who felt angry that a young fellow . . . would make pronouncements about things they had long ago discovered and about problems they had already solved. But I was amused by their carping and with a certain almost vain satisfaction I noted that newspapers in Denmark quoted **Nordlyset** far more often than any other Danish-American newspapers."

Moreover, "It was not any paste-up stuff which found its way into the **Nordlyset** columns in those days. I put emphasis not only on reporting the news, but also on widening the knowledge about those Danes who among the Americans had risen to distinguished positions. Thus interviews and biographies could be found in every issue. Likewise, I put myself in touch with several Danish writers in America and asked them for articles, and finally I let the paper participate in the general discussion on Danish-American affairs."

The young man at **Nordlyset** relished controversy, and he particularly enjoyed writing polemic articles aimed at the flamboyant Opffer, who had assumed the editorship of **Dansk Amerikaneren**. The most notable controversy arose from the case of Axel Holm, an 18-year-old bricklayer's apprentice, who had crushed his spine in a work-related accident. He was subsequently defended in court by a lawyer, who kept more than one third of the damages awarded. Problems also arose with the accounting of the funds raised for Axel Holm. **Nordlyset's** editor went straight after the lawyer and funds keeper. **Dansk Amerikaneren** defended them. Eventually libel suits were filed. In the end a jury brought in a verdict "that **Nordlyset** in one way or another had committed a formal error and should be fined, not \$50,000, but six cents." After the case was appealed the higher court ruled it could see no reason to disturb the verdict.

Some fifty years later Georg Strandvold could still exclaim with gusto: "Readers like to be guided by men who have what is usually called the courage of their convictions . . . I am making a plea for more controversy in our public life. Isn't it so, that only when you familiarize yourself with other people's opinions are you able to form one of your own?"

Georg's memoirs from the **Nordlyset** years also mention an

unusual encounter. In 1906, he had written about Booker T. Washington and Tuskegee Institute for Zacharias Nielsen's **Søndagsbladet** in Denmark. To be sure his facts were accurate he had corresponded with Washington, who later asked for an English resume of the article. After Georg had sent off the translation, he received an autographed copy of Washington's autobiography, **Up from Slavery**. As he tells it, "About a year later I was walking one afternoon on the sidewalk outside Central Park and saw there a distinguished black man, who looked like the picture of Washington. I greeted him, asked if he was Dr. Washington. Smiling, he answered, 'Yes.' and when I gave him my name, the first thing he said was, 'Oh, by the way, did you get that book I sent you?' We walked up and down the sidewalk for a short while, talked about Denmark and the Danish folk schools which to a certain extent had been models for his Negro school (About two years later he went to Denmark and to the general amazement of 'white' America the Danish court had as little racial prejudice as Theodore Roosevelt had shown. Dr. Washington was the guest of King Frederik and Queen Louise.)"

In 1911, **Nordlyset** acquired a new publisher, who decided that its editor must simultaneously act as business manager. Since Georg never had any head for business, he had to leave the newspaper. For a while he thought he would find steady employment with Dr. Frederick Cook, whom the New York Danes earlier had honored at a glittering banquet. From time to time, at the explorer's request, he had transmitted in his "Marconigrams" stories about Cook's polar claims. Cook always maintained that he had discovered the North Pole in April, 1908. His story, however, began to be questioned when Robert Peary returned from his trek north in September of the following year, asserting he had been at the Pole in April, 1909. Subsequently, Danish scientists would investigate and declare that Cook could not produce sufficient proof, as could Peary. But before that happened, Cook set up an office, Polar Publishing Bureau, in the closing days of 1911 and offered Georg a position on the staff. The special assignment was to ascertain how the Scandinavian countries felt about Cook's claims and to figure out the costs of translating his book, **My Attainment of the North Pole**, into the Scandinavian languages, perhaps even make the Danish translation. The job, however, lasted only three weeks. One

day his staff was dismayed to receive a telegram from Cook announcing he had made arrangements with a travel bureau to schedule his lectures and with Lord and Taylor to distribute his book. Consequently, he was closing his own office. In spite of this brief employment, Georg continued to like the genial explorer and long afterwards made this assessment: "My good impressions of Cook do not prove, of course, that he ever was at the North Pole, but I am sure that deepest down he firmly believed that he had been closer to it than anyone else."

With a wife and two small sons to support (the first baby had died), Georg next took a job in the cataloguing department of the New York Public Library, where he earned extra money by translating doctoral theses from German, a language he had learned well from omnivorous reading and during his schooldays in Copenhagen. Although not actively associated with a newspaper, he could still call himself a journalist. Some of his English articles were accepted by the **New York Evening Post**. His Danish articles went all over the country. Meanwhile the lecture bureau of New York City's Board of Education sent him out to inform American audiences about Danish politics, customs, and literature.

In 1916, Georg Strandvold came to Minneapolis as editor of **Ugebladet**. The next year, for a more substantial salary, he signed on as night editor of the **Grand Forks Herald** in North Dakota. During the war years there came from his typewriter many pieces explaining how difficult it was for the Scandinavian countries to maintain their neutrality. Later he wrote that he considered these pieces the most valuable things he had done on the **Herald**, and he was pleased that the Danish-American press took note of them.

In the meantime he and his first wife had been divorced. As his second wife he chose Johanne Petersen, who graciously stabilized his life. The prairie writer Carl Hansen had brought about their first meeting in New York some years before.

A highly tempting offer came in 1923 from P.O. Thorsen, a publisher who stood ready to finance a new magazine, **Scandinavia**, with Georg Strandvold as editor. In a letter to a friend Georg described its goals: "You may have heard that I left my position at the **Herald** early in October and became editor of a new monthly magazine, **Scandinavia**, which will be of national scope; it will contain 96 generously illustrated

pages and will aim at cementing the relationship between Scandinavians in this country and Americans, so it will naturally be printed in English." In another letter he admitted he was pouring his heart and soul into the effort.

The magazine was launched in January, 1924, with a handsome colored cover proclaiming it was "devoted to the interests of Scandinavians everywhere." Over the next few months praise came quickly. One reader wrote, "**Scandinavia** was a happy thought. We who were born on American soil of Scandinavian parentage can now know what there is about our ancestry that accounts for the marvelous achievements throughout the entire world. Indeed, we are already learning from **Scandinavia** that the descendants of the Vikings have been active in a great many more fields than most of us have realized." Another letter said simply, "**Scandinavia** certainly makes me proud of being a Scandinavian."

In the April issue Georg touched on one of his favorite themes:

Wherever, in the north men and women left their old haunts for the new world, they carried with them a treasure, which has such enduring value that it is not lost even in succeeding generations. The language may die; memories of the old lands of the pioneers may fade; yet in the intellect and in the heart of every descendant of Scandinavians we might, if we had the necessary scientific equipment, discover that their character had been formed not only by the environments and experiences of America, their own native country, but also — and who knows — perhaps chiefly by the tradition of the lands their fathers and mothers left behind them.

Among the contributors to **Scandinavia** were such well-known writers as J. Anker Larsen, Johan Bojer, Martha Østensø, Kristian Østergaard, and Per Strømme.

Unfortunately, after only six issues, the publisher died suddenly of a heart attack, leaving no provision in his will for the magazine to continue. The day of **Scandinavia's** demise was one of the saddest in Georg Strandvold's professional life.

A few weeks later **Normanden**, also in Grand Forks, hired him as editor. To a friend he commented in a letter, "I cannot deny that I really would have preferred that the paper was American or Danish. As it is I feel like a misfit, but so far very

few readers have complained about a Dane's editing a Norwegian paper. The Norwegians can't get along without the Danes anyhow — when they needed a king in 1905, they had to import one from Denmark."

In 1926 **Decorah-Posten** made the most inviting financial offer Georg had ever received in his career. This Norwegian national biweekly, he noted, was built on a solid financial foundation and increasingly attracted new subscribers, many of them Danish. With his acceptance, he joined a staff of four other editors. He took charge of the Danish news and then over the years became an expert observer of the whole international news scene. Many of his columns also appeared in the Danish-American press. Readers especially appreciated the historical perspective he brought to his carefully written articles.

Axel Andersen of the **Midwest Scandiavian** offered this praise: "During a century of immigrational transplantation from Denmark there have been few editors indeed who possess the gift of constant interpretation of world events. Georg Strandvold stands at the top. He is filled with statistics, logic, and pros and cons of the world scene." And Peter Freuchen, the Greenland explorer, author, and journalist: "Calm, sober reflections and surveys are Georg Strandvold's specialty. Many are the readers of Danish language newspapers who from his articles have sharpened their interest in what is happening out there in the world."

Through the years he remained intensely loyal to "den danske sag." His pride in having been born a Dane is evident in this excerpt from one of his speeches:

In the veins of the Dane surges blood which can be traced back to the dimmest days; in his soul the life and impressions of unnumbered generations are crystallized. He is, for the moment, the sum total of the deeds of his forefathers, good and evil or evil and good; his character has been determined by many factors, chief among which is, perhaps, that of gentle Nature. Danish scenery, not particularly famed abroad because it offers little of dramatic or grotesque interest, is reflected in the mind, the general makeup of the Dane. One might say that he is a mirror of the silent sadness of the vanishing Jutland heath; the bright idyl of the summer beechwoods; the ever humming nearness of forest-wreathed lakes or of the

stormy omni-presence of angry seas. His forefathers have known, bloodily and directly, the madness of wars, the blessings of interludes of peace. There is in the Dane something irresistibly recalling the blue of the cornflower, the song of the nightingale, the dreaminess of poets and children yearning for reality which they might fear to face did it ever come into their presence.

But there is something else, too. There is, in the back of the mind of the Dane, a picture of a period when his country was one of the world powers and when its flag was triumphantly unfurled on all the seas from North Cape to the southernmost spheres of Africa and the Americas. There is in him a will to do things, and to do them on a scale vast in proportion to the size of the land from which he sprang. In modern times that particular will has been exemplified in scientific achievements of the first magnitude and in the creation of far-flung concerns like the Great Northern Telegraph Co., the United Steamship Co., the East Asiatic Co., the solving of tremendously difficult problems of railroad engineering in Iran, and in many other fields.

In short, the Dane bears on his brow the deep sign of H.C. Andersen, the dreamer, the weaver of stories — and that of H.N. Andersen, the doer, the man of wide ranging action. These two Andersens may, in a certain sense, be said to represent what the Dane is and what he has done . . .

What, then, about the American of Danish descent tomorrow?

He will be true to his prototype — it is unlikely that he will deviate much from it. For even though he is an American, and even though environment and impulses in this country have meant decisive things to him, he is still a Dane; Danish blood still courses through his veins, for how many generations to come, no one can say.

Just now, during the period of transition from settlement to complete assimilation, the American of Danish descent

is experimenting; he is trying to find his place, that is, the place which he in a special sense is destined to occupy in the scheme of things American . . . The American of Danish descent is, generally speaking, trying hard to build an arched bridge between the past and the future, between the dreams and ambitions of his forefathers and the energy and attainments of his own generation . . .

He is likely, dreamer and man of action that he will be, to keep always before him the fact that when his Tomorrow is his own Today, he must be thinking of a still further Tomorrow, and with that in mind he will do his work intelligently and thoroughly, as the traditions of the Danes of Yesteryear taught him to do it. (December, 1938)

The war years, 1939-45, were ceaselessly busy. Georg wrote widely for many papers as well as for **Decorah-Posten**; he spoke constantly at Rotary luncheons; and as a discerning commentator broadcast weekly international news reviews from the Luther College radio station in Decorah and from Station WMT in Waterloo, Iowa. Likewise, he recorded several speeches that were sent to Boston and broadcast from there to the underground in Norway and Denmark. Afterwards, he received many appreciative letters from abroad, one from the rector of Oslo University.

One year after the Nazi occupation of Denmark, Georg was moved to write:

I sin tusindaarige Historie har det danske Folk mange Gange vaeret udsat for store Storme, for Nationalulykker, som skar dybe Furer i Folkets Sind. "Svigtet af Venner og af Fjender" har det atter og atter vaeret haeret af Krig og andre Katastrofer — som f. Eks. da det for 600 Aar siden var lige ved at miste sin Selvstaendighed, eller som da det i 1813 maatte kaempe sig igennem en Statsbankerots forfaerdelige Bølger og i 1864 maatte afstaa Sønderjylland til Preussen.

Men aldrig sank Dansken i Knae, aldrig døde Smilet om hans Mund, aldrig forstummede Sengen paa hans Laeber.

Han havde en **anden** Modstandskraft end den som betrygges af **Vaaben** — en Styrke, som stod løndoms-

he continued international news columns — in Danish for **Den Danske Pioneer** in Chicago and in English for the **Askov American** (Minnesota). His last assignment was as co-editor with Dr. Paul Nyholm of **Dansk Nytaar, 1961**. He died of a heart attack on December 6, 1960, just a few weeks before the annual appeared. Coincidentally, the cover carried a photograph of Roskilde Cathedral, where he had been baptized.

Thus Georg Strandvold's long, energetic, and varied career, which touched the lives of thousands of his readers. At its end Dr. Nyholm would point out, "He made a contribution which [Danish-American] historians of the future will recognize as having been of the greatest importance."

*Olga Strandvold Opfell, the daughter of Johanne and Georg Strandvold, is the author of **The Lady Laureates. Women Who Have Won the Nobel Prize** [Scarecrow Press, 1978]. She received an MA at the University of Iowa, taught at Grand View College, and subsequently worked as a reporter on the Pasadena Star News and as an editorial assistant at the California Institute of Technology. Since December, 1960, she has continued her father's international news review column for the Askov American. Mrs. Opfell lives in Woodland Hills, California.*

Hands Across the Sea: Soren Qvist in Danish and American Literature, 1625-1947 by Otto M. Sorensen

Beheading of a clergyman

Anno 1632. Severinus Jani Qvist, pastor in Weilbye and Homme in Aarhus Bishopric, was innocently beheaded and his innocence afterwards established, and this transpired in such a way that the footprints of divine providence, as the precious stones of history, can clearly be perceived.

The manager of an estate belonging to a nobleman had a brother in the service of the pastor. The manager fell into disagreement with Qvist, which led to such bitterness and malicious spite, that he decided to seek revenge, in any way, indeed even to the extent of seeking the pastor's life. To attain this goal in good fashion and without danger, he induced his brother (who had recently received a box on the ear from the pastor, one which he had perhaps called forth intentionally) to travel unnoticed to Sweden, where his brother would support him generously, with one proviso: that he should leave behind his old clothes, those he used daily. Then the scoundrel orders that a half-decomposed corpse be dug up in the churchyard, dresses the corpse in the clothing of his departed brother and buries it in the manure pile on the pastor's farm. When this has been done, the manager wishes to know from the pastor the whereabouts of his brother. The pastor can only respond that he has disappeared. The manager alleges the pastor has killed him and secretly had him buried. The pastor attempts to refute this accusation as best he can, although he does admit to having given the good-for-nothing farmhand a blow on the head, and yet, he had harmed him no further, let alone killed him. Meanwhile, the manager takes legal action against the parson, obtains false testimony against him and accordingly verifies these statements when a corpse is pulled from the manure pile, unrecognizable by face but wearing the well-known clothing of the farmhand, who is assumed to have been murdered. In brief, the result is that the poor parson is condemned to death, the sentence is confirmed upon appeal, the parson is executed and his body buried in the cemetery in Aalsø.