

## OBITUARY

H. GRÜNER-NIELSEN

It is announced with deep regret that Hakon Grüner-Nielsen, co-director of the Danish Folklore Collection, born 1881, died on February 24th, 1953.

H. Grüner-Nielsen devoted his whole life to the study of folklore, especially Danish and Faeroese ballads and other songs, their texts and tunes. Having taken his degree at the University of Copenhagen, he immediately was appointed to the new Folklore Collection (1906), founded by Axel Olrik and others. In the field of text editing and investigation, Grüner-Nielsen was the pupil of Olrik, and he finished the standard ballad edition of Svend Grundtvig and Olrik, *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* (I-IX, 1853-1923, and Appendix X). In the study of folk music he collaborated with Hjalmar Thuren, after whose untimely death (1912) Grüner-Nielsen was for many years the only qualified scholar of folk music. He published Faeroese tunes, collected by Thuren, older folklorists, and himself, and wrote monographs on this subject. Post-medieval Danish folk songs of different genres were published in exemplary editions, and in 1935, Grüner-Nielsen began the great melody edition of our ballads (*Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, XI). This edition is a masterpiece of minute investigation and honest folkloristic editorial technique which, taking no liberties, publishes and comments on the material as it was taken down.

Many students and scholars in Denmark and abroad have drawn from his inexhaustible helpfulness. His reserved but warmhearted personality will be sincerely missed.

ERIK DAL.\*

## GEORGE PULLEN JACKSON

George Pullen Jackson (1874-1953), native of Maine, long resident in the South (where he accomplished his life work), was head of the Department of German at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. Also a lover and practiser of music, which had shared with linguistics his formal study in Germany, he was a member and guider of an astonishing number of musical organisations and ventures. His enduring and massive scholarly work, however, was in the field of folk song and music. Like John A. Lomax with the cowboy songs and Franz L. Rickaby with the lumberman's songs, Jackson was a pioneer in studying the general religious folk song of English-speaking North America.

But from being a pioneer he went on to become specialist and master in this complex subject. His own published books† still form the real bulk of its literature—alike in compilation, historical research and formal analysis. They first threw light on the so-called "white spirituals" and their background by making available material from sources which Jackson was the first to examine both comprehensively and in detail. Jackson was also the first deliberately to seek out and compare these sources: the old "shape-note" hymn compilations of the first half of the nineteenth century.

\* For a longer obituary notice in Danish, with bibliography, see *Danske Studier*, by Erik Dal (J. H. Schultz Forlag, Copenhagen, 1952).

† Jackson's important books about American religious folk song are these: *White Spirituals in the Southern Uplands*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1933; *Spiritual Folk Songs of Early America*, New York, J. J. Augustin, 1937; *Down-East Spirituals and Others*, New York, J. J. Augustin, 1939; *White and Negro Spirituals, Their Life Span and Kinship*, New York, J. J. Augustin, 1943; *Another Sheaf of White Spirituals*, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1952. Jackson's entire voluminous scholarly output is listed with an eloquent appreciation in *Southern Folklore Quarterly* XVII, No. 1 (March, 1953), 89-92.

To these tasks he brought his rich natural gifts, plus the accumulation of family traditions and his own extensive musical studies, culminating in a deep insight into the nature of western European folk music and its value in the history of our culture. Several outstanding results of his work may be cited. He established, for example, that the music of American religious folk song was to a great extent a continued use and direct development of British traditional melody imported into North America; that the negro religious song was guided by, and to some considerable degree formed and borrowed from, pre-existing white folk-religious material; and that our folk hymnody was mainly the creation and possession of "dissenting" American Protestant groups, and began its American development in the latter eighteenth century. One result of his distinguished labours he himself never emphasised: that his compilations revealed numerous British tune-versions which were recorded in print from (roughly) fifty to twenty years before their mass publication from British shires or counties. Such early recording obviously makes these American versions especially valuable to the folk-tune student.

Genial, fair-minded, unpretentious, generous both in giving and acknowledging help, scrupulous in dealing with others, Jackson is mourned by all who had the privilege of knowing him personally. He lived for worthwhile things, and he accomplished them. But while we regret his passing, we need not grieve for a career cut short. For his work he left done, and done well.

SAMUEL P. BAYARD.

#### JOHN MEIER

On May 3rd, 1953, Dr. John Meier, Professor *honoris causâ* at the University of Freiburg-in-Breisgau, died shortly before his 89th birthday.

A native of Bremen, he studied German under Eduard Sievers and Hermann Paul, went on to complete higher research work at Halle, and in 1899 was appointed to a Chair at Basel; from there he moved at the age of fifty to Freiburg, the city which was to become his second home.

For many decades he was a leading figure in the province of folklore, inspiring the collecting and publication of material in this field on a large scale, and fighting for the prestige of folklore as an independent branch of science. For 38 years he was active as the President of the *Verband deutscher Vereine für Volkskunde*, the leading representative body for folklore studies in Germany.

His name is especially closely associated with researches in folk song, and with the "Deutsches Volksliedarchiv," which he founded at Freiburg in 1914, and of which he was the Director up to the time of his death. Ever since the 1890's he occupied a prominent position in this special field with editions such as the *Bergreihen*, *Volkslieder von der Mosel und Saar*, and with various monographs; in these latter he set forth new and revolutionary views concerning the nature and origin of folk song. It was the final goal of his endeavours to provide for Germany a work which for breadth of scope and excellence of scholarship should be able to sustain comparison with Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. Once sufficient material had been assembled at his Archives to provide an adequate basis for the work, he embarked in 1928 on the realisation of this project and had managed before his death to complete six half-volumes of the *Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Melodien*. This massive work, carried out with the co-operation of a staff of musicologists and experts on German studies, traces the history of each single song, from the standpoint of both text and melody, far beyond the frontiers of the German-speaking peoples,