

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
HENRIK IBSEN

COPYRIGHT EDITION

VOLUME I
LADY INGER OF ÖSTRÅT
THE FEAST AT SOLHOUG
LOVE'S COMEDY

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY
WILLIAM ARCHER
AND
C. H. HERFORD, LITT.D., M.A.



LONDON
WILLIAM HEINEMANN
1919

**THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
HENRIK IBSEN**

VOLUME I

**LADY INGER OF ÖSTRÅT
THE FEAST AT SOLHOUG
LOVE'S COMEDY**

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
HENRIK IBSEN

*Copyright Edition. Complete in 12 Volumes
Crown 8vo, price 5s. net each*

ENTIRELY REVISED AND EDITED BY
WILLIAM ARCHER

- Vol. I. Lady Inger, The Feast at Solhoug, Love's
Comedy
Vol. II. The Vikings, The Pretenders
Vol. III. Brand
Vol. IV. Peer Gynt
Vol. V. Emperor and Galilean (2 parts)
Vol. VI. The League of Youth, Pillars of Society
Vol. VII. A Doll's House, Ghosts
Vol. VIII. An Enemy of the People, The Wild Duck
Vol. IX. Rosmersholm, The Lady from the Sea
Vol. X. Hedda Gabler, The Master Builder
Vol. XI. Little Eyolf, John Gabriel Borkman,
When We Dead Awaken
Vol. XII. From Ibsen's Workshop

LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

Collected Edition, First Printed 1908
Second Impression 1910
Third Impression 1919

Copyright 1908 by William Heinemann

GENERAL PREFACE

THE eleven volumes of this edition contain all, save one, of the dramas which Henrik Ibsen himself admitted to the canon of his works. The one exception is his earliest, and very immature, tragedy, *Catilina*, first published in 1850, and republished in 1875. This play is interesting in the light reflected from the poet's later achievements, but has little or no inherent value. A great part of its interest lies in the very crudities of its style, which it would be a thankless task to reproduce in translation. Moreover, the poet impaired even its biographical value by largely rewriting it before its republication. He did not make it, or attempt to make it, a better play, but he in some measure corrected its juvenility of expression. Which version, then, should a translator choose? To go back to the original would seem a deliberate disregard of the poet's wishes; while, on the other hand, the retouched version is clearly of far inferior interest. It seemed advisable, therefore, to leave the play alone, so far

as this edition was concerned. Still more clearly did it appear unnecessary to include *The Warrior's Barrow* and *Olaf Liliokrans*, two early plays which were never admitted to any edition prepared by the poet himself. They were included in a Supplementary Volume of the Norwegian collected edition, issued in 1902, when Ibsen's life-work was over. They have even less intrinsic value than *Catilina*, and ought certainly to be kept apart from the works by which he desired to be remembered. A fourth youthful production, *St. John's Night*, remains to this day in manuscript. Not even German piety has dragged it to light.

With two exceptions, the plays appear in their chronological order. The exceptions are *Love's Comedy*, which ought by rights to come between *The Vikings* and *The Pretenders*, and *Emperor and Galilean*, which ought to follow *The League of Youth* instead of preceding it. The reasons of convenience which prompted these departures from the exact order are pretty obvious. It seemed highly desirable to bring the two Saga Plays, if I may so call them, into one volume; while as for *Emperor and Galilean*, it could not have been placed between *The League of Youth* and *Pillars of Society* save by separating its two parts, and assigning *Caesar's Apostasy* to Volume V., *The Emperor Julian* to Volume VI.

For the translations of all the plays in this

edition, except *Love's Comedy* and *Brand*, I am ultimately responsible, in the sense that I have exercised an unrestricted right of revision. This means, of course, that, in plays originally translated by others, the merits of the English version belong for the most part to the original translator, while the faults may have been introduced, and must have been sanctioned, by me. The revision, whether fortunate or otherwise, has in all cases been very thorough.

In their unrevised form, these translations have met with a good deal of praise and with some blame. I trust that the revision has rendered them more praiseworthy, but I can scarcely hope that it has met all the objections of those critics who have found them blameworthy. For, in some cases at any rate, these objections proceeded from theories of the translator's function widely divergent from my own—theories of which nothing, probably, could disabuse the critic's mind, save a little experience of the difficulties of translating (as distinct from adapting) dramatic prose. Ibsen is at once extremely easy and extremely difficult to translate. It is extremely easy, in his prose plays, to realise his meaning; it is often extremely difficult to convey it in natural, colloquial, and yet not too colloquial, English. He is especially fond of laying barbed-wire entanglements for the translator's feet, in the shape of recurrent phrases for which it is absolutely impossible to find an equival-

ent that will fit in all the different contexts. But this is only one of many classes of obstacles which encountered us on almost every page. I think, indeed, that my collaborators and I may take it as no small compliment that some of our critics have apparently not realised the difficulties of our task, or divined the laborious hours which have often gone to the turning of a single phrase. And, in not a few cases, the difficulties have proved sheer impossibilities. I will cite only one instance. Writing of *The Master Builder*, a very competent, and indeed generous, critic finds in it "a curious example of, perhaps inevitable inadequacy. . . 'Duty! Duty! Duty!' Hilda once exclaims in a scornful outburst. 'What a short, sharp, stinging word!' The epithets do not seem specially apt. But in the original she cries out 'Pligt! Pligt! Pligt!' and the very word stings and snaps." I submit that in this criticism there is one superfluous word—to wit, the "perhaps" which qualifies "inevitable." For the term used by Hilda, and for the idea in her mind, there is only one possible English equivalent: "Duty." The actress can speak it so as more or less to justify Hilda's feeling towards it; and, for the rest, the audience must "piece out our imperfections with their thoughts" and assume that the Norwegian word has rather more of a sting in its sound. It might be possible, no doubt, to adapt Hilda's phrase to the English word, and say, "It sounds like the swish of a whip-lash," or

something to that effect. But this is a sort of freedom which, rightly or wrongly, I hold inadmissible. Once grant the right of adaptation, even in small particulars, and it would be impossible to say where it should stop. The versions here presented (of the prose plays, at any rate) are translations, not paraphrases. If we have ever dropped into paraphrase, it is a dereliction of principle; and I do not remember an instance. For stage purposes, no doubt, a little paring of rough edges is here and there allowable; but even that, I think, should seldom go beyond the omission of lines which manifestly lose their force in translation, or are incomprehensible without a footnote.

In the Introductions to previous editions I have always confined myself to the statement of biographical and historic facts, holding criticism no part of my business. Now that Henrik Ibsen has passed away, and his works have taken a practically uncontested place in world-literature, this reticence seemed no longer imposed upon me. I have consequently made a few critical remarks on each play, chiefly directed towards tracing the course of the poet's technical development. Nevertheless, the Introductions are still mainly biographical, and full advantage has been taken of the stores of new information contained in Ibsen's Letters, and in the books and articles about him that have appeared since his death. I have prefixed to

Lady Inger of Östråt a sketch of the poet's life down to the date of that play; so that the Introductions, read in sequence, will be found to form a pretty full record of a career which, save for frequent changes of domicile, and the issuing of play after play, was singularly uneventful.

The Introductions to *Love's Comedy* and *Brand*, as well as the translations, are entirely the work of Professor Herford.

A point of typography perhaps deserves remark. The Norwegian (and German) method of indicating emphasis by spacing the letters of a word, thus, has been adopted in this edition. It is preferable for various reasons to the use of italics. In dramatic work, for one thing, emphases have sometimes to be indicated so frequently that the peppering of the page with italics would produce a very ugly effect. But a more important point is this: the italic fount suggests a stronger emphasis than the author, as a rule, intends. The spacing of a word, especially if it be short, will often escape the eye which does not look very closely; and this is as it should be. Spacing, as Ibsen employs it, does not generally indicate any obtrusive stress, but is merely a guide to the reader in case a doubt should arise in his mind as to which of two words is intended to be the more emphatic. When such a doubt occurs, the reader, by looking closely at the text, will often find in the spacing an indi-

cation which may at first have escaped him. In almost all cases, a spaced word in the translation represents a spaced word in the original. I have very seldom used spacing to indicate an emphasis peculiar to the English phraseology. The system was first introduced in 1897, in the translation of *John Gabriel Borkman*. It has no longer even the disadvantage of unfamiliarity, since it has been adopted by Mr. Bernard Shaw in his printed plays, and, I believe, by other dramatists.

Just thirty years have passed since I first put pen to paper in a translation of Ibsen. In October 1877, *Pillars of Society* reached me hot from the press; and, having devoured it, I dashed off a translation of it in less than a week. It has since cost me five or six times as much work in revision as it originally did in translation. The manuscript was punctually returned to me by more than one publisher; and something like ten years elapsed before it slowly dawned on me that the translating and editing of Ibsen's works was to be one of the chief labours, as it has certainly been one of the greatest privileges, of my life. Since 1887 or thereabouts, not many months have passed in which a considerable portion of my time has not been devoted to acting, in one form or another, as intermediary between Ibsen and the English-speaking public. The larger part of the work, in

actual bulk, I have myself done ; but I have had invaluable aid from many quarters, and not merely from those fellow workers who are named in the following pages as the original translators of certain of the plays. These "helpers and servers," as Solness would say, are too many to be individually mentioned ; but to all of them, and chiefly to one who has devoted to the service of Ibsen a good deal of the hard-won leisure of Indian official life, I hereby convey my heartfelt thanks.

The task is now ended. Though it has involved not a little sheer drudgery, it has, on the whole, been of absorbing interest. And I should have been ungrateful indeed had I shrunk from drudgery in the cause of an author who had meant so much to me. I have experienced no other literary emotion at all comparable to the eagerness with which, ever since 1877, I awaited each new play of Ibsen's, or the excitement with which I tore off the wrapper of the postal packets in which the little paper-covered books arrived from Copenhagen. People who are old enough to remember the appearance of the monthly parts of *David Copperfield* or *Pendennis* may have some inkling of my sensations ; but they were all the intenser as they recurred at intervals, not of one month, but of two years. And it was not Ibsen the man of ideas or doctrines that meant so much to me ; it was Ibsen the pure poet, the creator

of men and women, the searcher of hearts, the weaver of strange webs of destiny. I can only trust that, by diligence in seeking for the best interpretation of his thoughts, I have paid some part of my debt to that great spirit, and to the glorious country that gave him birth.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

LADY INGER OF ÖSTRÅT

INTRODUCTION

HENRIK JOHAN IBSEN was born on March 20, 1828, at the little seaport of Skien, situated at the head of a long fiord on the south coast of Norway. His great-great-grandfather was a Dane who settled in Bergen about 1720. His great-grandmother, Wenche Dischington, was the daughter of a Scotchman, who had settled and become naturalised in Norway; and Ibsen himself was inclined to ascribe some of his characteristics to the Scottish strain in his blood. Both his grandmother (Plesner by name) and his mother, Maria Cornelia Altenburg, were of German descent. It has been said that there was not a drop of Norwegian blood in Ibsen's composition; but it is doubtful whether this statement can be substantiated. Most of his male ancestors were sailors; but his father, Knud Ibsen, was a merchant. When Henrik (his first child) was born, he seems to have been prosperous, and to have led a very social and perhaps rather extravagant life. But when the poet was eight years old financial disaster overtook the family, and they had to withdraw to a comparatively small farmhouse on the outskirts of the little town, where they lived in poverty and retirement.

As a boy, Ibsen appears to have been lacking in animal spirits and the ordinary childish taste for games. Our chief glimpses of his home life are due to his sister Hedvig, the only one of his family with whom, in after years, he maintained any intercourse, and whose name he gave to one of his most beautiful creations.¹ She relates that the only out-door amusement he cared for was "building"—in what material does not appear. Among indoor diversions, that to which he was most addicted was conjuring, a younger brother serving as his confederate. We also hear of his cutting out fantastically-dressed figures in paste-board, attaching them to wooden blocks, and ranging them in groups or tableaux. He may be said, in short, to have had a toy theatre without the stage. In all these amusements it is possible, with a little goodwill, to divine the coming dramatist—the constructive faculty, the taste for technical legerdemain (which made him in his youth so apt a disciple of Scribe), and the fundamental passion for manipulating fictitious characters. The education he received was of the most ordinary, but included a little Latin. The subjects which chiefly interested him were history and religion. He showed no special literary proclivities, though a dream which he narrated in a school composition so impressed his master that he accused him (much to the boy's indignation) of having copied it out of some book.

His chief taste was for drawing, and he was anxious to become an artist; but his father could not afford to pay for his training.² At the age of fifteen, therefore, he had to set about earning his living, and was

¹ See Introduction to *The Wild Duck*, p. xxiii.

² He continued to dabble in painting until he was thirty, or thereabouts.

apprenticed to an apothecary in Grimstad, a town on the south-west coast of Norway, between Arendal and Christianssand. He was here in even narrower social surroundings than at Skien. His birthplace numbered some 3000 inhabitants, Grimstad about 800. That he was contented with his lot cannot be supposed; and the short, dark, taciturn youth seems to have made an unsympathetic and rather uncanny impression upon the burghers of the little township. His popularity was not heightened by a talent which he presently developed for drawing caricatures and writing personal lampoons. He found, however, two admiring friends in Christopher Lorentz Due, a custom-house clerk, and a law student named Olë Schulerud.

The first political event which aroused his interest and stirred him to literary expression was the French Revolution of 1848. He himself writes: "The times were much disturbed. The February revolution, the rising in Hungary and elsewhere, the Slesvig War—all this had a strong and ripening effect on my development, immature though it remained both then and long afterwards. I wrote clangorous poems of encouragement to the Magyars, adjuring them, for the sake of freedom and humanity, not to falter in their righteous war against 'the tyrants'; and I composed a long series of sonnets to King Oscar, mainly, so far as I remember, urging him to set aside all petty considerations, and march without delay, at the head of his army, to the assistance of our Danish brothers on the Slesvig frontier." These effusions remained in manuscript, and have, for the most part, perished. About the same time he was reading for his matriculation examination at Christiania University, where he proposed to study medicine; and it happened that

Preface to the second edition of *Catilina*, 1875.

the Latin books prescribed were Sallust's *Catiline* and Cicero's *Catilinarian Orations*. "I devoured these documents," says Ibsen, "and a few months later my drama [*Catilina*] was finished." His friend Schulerud took it to Christiania, to offer it to the theatre and to the publishers. By both it was declined. Schulerud, however, had it printed at his own expense; and soon after its appearance, in the early spring of 1850, Ibsen himself came to Christiania.¹

For the most part written in blank verse, *Catilina* towards the close breaks into rhyming trochaic lines of thirteen and fifteen syllables. It is an extremely youthful production, very interesting from the biographical point of view, but of small substantive merit. What is chiefly notable in it, perhaps, is the fact that it already shows Ibsen occupied with the theme which was to run through so many of his works—the contrast between two types of womanhood, one strong and resolute, even to criminality, the other comparatively weak, clinging, and "feminine" in the conventional sense of the word.

In Christiania Ibsen shared Schulerud's lodgings, and his poverty. There is a significant sentence in his preface to the re-written *Catilina*, in which he tells how the bulk of the first edition was sold as waste paper, and adds: "In the days immediately following we lacked none of the first necessities of life." He went to a "student-factory," or, as we should say, a "crammer's," managed by one Heltberg; and there he fell in with several of the leading spirits of his generation—notably with Björnson, A. O. Vinje, and Jonas Lie. In the early summer of 1850 he wrote a one-act

¹ This is his own statement of the order of events. According to Halvdan Koht (*Samlede Værker*, vol. x. p. i.) he arrived in Christiania in March 1850, and *Catilina* did not appear until April.