THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

HENRIK IBSEN

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VOLUME XII

FROM IBSEN'S WORKSHOP

NOTES, SCENARIOS,
AND DRAFTS OF THE MODERN PLAYS

TRANSLATED BY

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WITH INTRODUCTION BY

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NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1924

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Copyright Edition. Complete in 13 Volumes

ENTIRELY REVISED AND EDITED BY

WILLIAM ARCHER

Volume I. Lady Inger of Östråt, The Feast at Solhoug, Love's Comedy
" II. The Vikings at Helgeland, The Pretenders
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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

Printed in the United States of America

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INTRODUCTION

THIS volume contains all the notes, sketches, drafts, and other "foreworks" (as he used to call them) for Ibsen's plays from *Pillars of Society* onwards. They were published in Scandinavia and Germany in 1909, under the editorship of those learned and devoted Ibsen scholars, Halvdan Koht and Julius Elias. They occupied somewhat less than one-half of the three volumes of the poet's *Efterladte Skrifter*, or (to use the consecrated but somewhat unfortunate English phrase) his *Literary Remains*. The other contents of these three volumes are of great interest for special students of Ibsen's biography; but not until the period of his modern plays is reached do his drafts and jottings assume what may be called world-wide importance. The papers here translated throw invaluable light upon the genesis of his ideas and the development of his technique. They are an indispensable aid to the study of his intellectual processes during that part of his career which made him world-famous.

The first volume of the Norwegian edition is very varied in its contents. About half of it is occupied by early poems, including the boyish verses to Hungary and to King Oscar, written about 1848, which were probably the "first heirs of his invention." Most of the contents of this section are occasional pieces—prologues,

student songs, etc.—but in some of the lyrics we find the germs of ideas to which he afterwards gave more finished form. Then come some miscellaneous prose pieces, ranging from one or two of his school themes, which have somehow been preserved, to the singularly laconic and unrhetorical speeches of his later years.[1] The remaining pages are given up to hitherto unpublished plays and dramatic fragments, dating from the 'fifties and early 'sixties. The most important of these is the romantic comedy *St. John's Night*, produced in Bergen, January 2, 1853. This very youthful but not uninteresting play was known to exist in manuscript, and had been described by Ibsen's biographers; but, during his lifetime, he had not suffered it to be printed. It is a vivacious and really imaginative piece of work, containing foretastes both of *Love's Comedy* and of *Peer Gynt*. Its culminating scene is a midnight revel of fairy folk, which is witnessed by two pairs of mortal lovers. The pair who are really in touch with nature and with things elemental, see it as it is, while the conventional and affected romanticists take it for a dance of peasants around a bonfire. We have here the germ of several passages in the poet's maturer work. Another item of interest in the first volume is a fragment entitled *Svanhild*, being the first sketch, in prose, of what afterwards became *Love's Comedy*.[2] Ibsen said that he abandoned this form because he had not yet the art of writing modern prose dialogue. I should rather be disposed to say that he had not a theme adapted

[1] Even his entries in the complaint-book of the Scandinavian Club in Rome are piously included.

[2] See Professor Herford's introduction to that play.

for treatment in prose. There is practically no action in the play—none of that complex interweaving of the past with the present, and of event with character, which afterwards formed the substance of his art. We have only a group of people expressing certain ideas on life and love—ideas which naturally tend to shape themselves in lyric or satiric verse. The form, in short, was indicated by the lack of substance. The theme was a very thin one, which needed the starch of metre.

The second volume of the Norwegian edition opens with the so-called "epic *Brand*"—the fragment of a narrative version of *Brand*, which is described by Professor Herford in his Introduction to that play.[1] Then come sundry chips from the workshop in which *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* were wrought to perfection. In the *Peer Gynt* fragments there are one or two points of interest, to which I have alluded in my Introduction.[2] The preliminary sketches for *The League of Youth* are of small importance, except in so far as they show that the play grew and developed very little in the course of incubation. Far more interesting are the long scenarios and drafts which preceded the final form of *Emperor and Galilean*. A pretty full account of them may be found in my Introduction to the "world-historic drama."[3] This brings us down to *Pillars of Society* and to the sketches and drafts included in the present volume.

Whatever he may have been in youth, Henrik Ibsen, in maturity and age, was the most reticent of artists. It is said, I believe with truth, that even his wife and son knew nothing of what he was meditating and hatching

[1] Vol. II., p. 4. [2] Vol. IV., p. 14. [3] Vol. V., p. 13.

out, until each new play was polished to the last syllable. In the Introduction to *An Enemy of the People* may be found an anecdote of his apparently disproportionate anger when he learned that some loose scrap of paper had revealed the fact that the hero of the play on which he was then engaged was to be a doctor. In his correspondence he never indicates or discusses the themes which are occupying him, except when he is asking for historical material to be used in *Emperor and Galilean.* So far as my own experience went, he never said more of his work than that he was "preparing some devilment for next year." I remember, too, that, when he was engaged on *When We Dead Awaken,* he told me that he thought of describing it as "An Epilogue."

It seems like an irony of fate that this ultra-secretive craftsman, so jealous of the privacy of his workroom, should, after death, have all his pigeon-holes ransacked, and even the contents of his waste-paper basket, one might say, given to the world. At first sight this may seem like a profanation; but on looking into the matter we find no just cause for sentimental regret. If Ibsen had been violently averse from any posthumous study of his methods, he had safety in his own hands—he could always have destroyed his papers. He seems, on the contrary, to have treasured them with considerable care. The drafts and experiments for his romantic plays (*Lady Inger, The Vikings,* and *The Pretenders*) were scattered in a sale of his effects after he left Norway, in 1864, and have not yet been recovered. He was very angry when he heard of their dispersal; but he was probably not thinking of the loss to posterity. What he re-

sented at the time, no doubt, was the thought that unknown and irreverent persons might be prying into his secrets while he lived. Was he, perhaps, recalling this experience when he made Lövborg, in *Hedda Gabler*, speak so bitterly of the possible profanation of his lost manuscript? Be this as it may, we find that not even the wandering life which he led for so many years interfered with his habit of treasuring up the chips from his workshop. It will be seen that this volume contains "foreworks" of more or less importance for all his plays from *Pillars of Society* onwards, with the single exception of *An Enemy of the People*. We do not know what has become of the sketches and studies for this play. He produced it in half the time that he usually gave to the ripening of a dramatic creation, and seems, indeed, to have thrown it off with unusual facility and gusto. Still, it is difficult to suppose that he dispensed altogether with preliminary notes and jottings. We must rather conclude that they have been accidentally lost or destroyed.

As he carefully preserved his papers, and as he left his executors a free hand to deal with them as they thought fit, they would have done the world a great wrong had they decided to suppress documents of such unique interest. Nowhere else, so far as I am aware, do we obtain so clear a view of the processes of a great dramatist's mind. There is something of the same interest, no doubt, in a comparison of the early quartos of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* with the completed plays; but in these cases we cannot decide with any certainty how far the incompleteness of the earlier versions represents an actual phase in the growth of the plays, and how far

it is due to the bad stenography of the playhouse pirates. In Ibsen's manuscripts we can actually follow the growth of an idea in his mind; distinguish what is original and fundamental in his conception from accretions and afterthoughts; see him straying into blind alleys and trying back again; and estimate the faultless certainty of taste with which he strengthened weak points in his fabric, and rejected the commonplace in favour of the rare and unforgettable. Not once, I think, is a scene or a trait suppressed which ought to have been preserved; not once is a speech altered for the worse. Sometimes, indeed, we find him using absolutely commonplace ideas and phrases which he must have known to be temporary makeshifts, awaiting transfiguration at a later stage. How much he relied upon the final revision of his work is apparent from a curious expression of which he makes use in a letter to Theodor Caspari, dated Rome, 27th June, 1884. "I have just completed a play in five acts," he says; and then adds: "that is to say, the rough draft of it; now comes the elaboration, the more energetic individualisation of the persons and their modes of expression." The play in question was *The Wild Duck*. Any one who compares the draft in the following pages with the finished play will see that what Ibsen called "elaboration" amounted, at some points, almost to reinvention.

In the Introductions to the various plays, in the Subscription edition, I have pretty fully compared the earlier with the final forms. As the reader has now before him the complete text of the sketches and drafts, and can make the comparison for himself, it will be sufficient if I briefly

direct his attention to some of the most significant features of these "foreworks."

PILLARS OF SOCIETY

Of this play we have three brief and fragmentary scenarios, two almost complete drafts of the first act, an almost entirely rejected draft of the beginning of the second act, and large fragments of a draft of the fourth act.

Here we at once discover that Ibsen was not one of the playwrights who have their plays clearly mapped out before they put pen to paper. Even in the second draft of the first act, he is still fumbling around after his characters and their relations. That the actual plot was still obscure to him while he was writing the first draft appears from several indications. It is only in the second draft that the reappearance of Johan and Lona causes Bernick to display any uneasiness. Moreover we find in the first draft that "Madam Dorf," Dina's mother, is still alive, and that Dina is in the habit of paying her surreptitious visits; whence we may assume that the light to be thrown on Bernick's past was in some way intended to proceed from her. While she was alive, at any rate, Bernick would scarcely try to suppress the scandal by sending Johan and his documents to sea in a coffin-ship. This could not occur to him while the best witness to the true state of affairs was living at his very doors. Thus we see that the actual intrigue of the play was a rather late after-thought.

A prominent character in both drafts of the first act is Bernick's blind mother, who has disappeared from the

finished play. Mads Tönnesen, nicknamed "the Badger," the father of Mrs. Bernick, Johan and Hilmar, was destined to drop out of this play, and to reappear, under the name of Morten Kiil, in *An Enemy of the People*. The business of the railway is taken up at a much later stage in the completed play than in the drafts —a good instance of the condensation to which Ibsen invariably subjected his work. Another instance may be found in the treatment of Johan Tönnesen and Lona Hessel. In the first draft they are not half brother and sister, but only, it would seem, distant cousins; they have not been together in America; and it is by pure chance that they arrive on the same day. The farcical scene at the end of the first act in this draft may perhaps be taken as showing that Ibsen at first thought of giving the whole play a lighter tone of colouring than that which he ultimately adopted. Perhaps he conceived it rather as a companion-piece to *The League of Youth* than as a new departure on the path that was to lead him so far.

A DOLL'S HOUSE

Of *A Doll's House* we possess a first brief memorandum, a fairly detailed scenario, a complete draft, in quite actable form, and a few detached fragments of dialogue. The complete draft is perhaps the most valuable of all the documents contained in this volume, since it shows us how, at a point at which many dramatists would have been more than content to write "Finis," the most characteristic part of Ibsen's work was only about to begin.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that all the traits

which have most deeply impressed themselves on the public mind, and which constitute the true individuality of the play, prove to have been introduced during the process of revision. This assertion the reader must verify for himself, by a comparison of the texts: I will merely enumerate a few of the traits of which the draft contains no indication. In the first act, the business of the macaroons is not even suggested; there is none of the charming talk about the Christmas tree and the children's presents; no request on Nora's part that her present may take the form of money, no indication on Helmer's part that he regards her supposed extravagance as an inheritance from her father. It is notable throughout that neither Helmer's æstheticism nor the sensual element in his relation to Nora is nearly so much emphasised as in the completed play; while Nora's tendency to small fibbing—that vice of the unfree—scarcely appears at all. In the first scene with Dr. Rank, there is no indication either of the doctor's ill health or of his pessimism: it seems as though he had at first been designed as a mere confidant. In the draft, Nora, Helmer, and Rank discuss the case of Krogstad in a dispassionate way before Nora has learnt how vital it is to her. An enormous improvement was effected by the suppression of this untimely passage, which discounted the effect of the scene at the end of the act. That scene is not materially altered in the final version; but the first version contains no hint of the business of decorating the Christmas tree, or of Nora's wheedling Helmer by pretending to need his aid in devising her costume for the fancy-dress ball. Indeed this ball has not yet

entered Ibsen's mind. He thinks of it first as a children's party.

In the second act there is no scene with Mrs. Linden in which she remonstrates with Nora for having (as she thinks) borrowed money from Dr. Rank, and so suggests to her the idea of applying to him for aid. In the scene with Helmer, we miss, among other characteristic traits, his confession that the ultimate reason why he cannot keep Krogstad in the bank is that Krogstad, as an old schoolfellow, is so tactless as to *tutoyer* him. When Rank enters, he speaks to Helmer and Nora together of his failing health: it is an immeasurable improvement which transfers this passage, in a carefully polished form, to his scene with Nora alone. Of the famous silk-stocking scene—that curious side light on Nora's relations with Helmer—there is not a trace. There is no hint of Nora's appeal to Rank for help, nipped in the bud by his declaration of love for her. All these elements we find in the second draft of the scene. In this draft, Rank says, "Helmer himself might quite well know every thought I have ever had of you; he shall know them when I am gone." If Ibsen had retained this speech it might have saved much critical misunderstanding of a perfectly harmless episode. Even when the end of the second act is reached, Ibsen has not yet conceived the idea of the fancy-ball and the rehearsal of the tarantella. It is not a very admirable invention, but it is at any rate better than the strained and arbitrary incident which, in the draft, brings the act to a close.

Very noteworthy is the compression and simplification to which Ibsen has subjected the earlier scenes of the