

In so far as he was a dramatist, Shakespeare wrote for the crowd; in so far as he was a lyric poet, he wrote for himself; and in so far as he was a sage and a stylist, he wrote for the individual.

**The Appeal
to the
Few**

In making sure of his appeal to the many, he earned the right to appeal to the few. At the thirty-cent performance of *Othello* that I spoke of, I was probably the only individual in the crowd. Shakespeare made a play that could appeal to the rabble of that Middle-Western town; but he wrote it in a verse that none of them could hear:

"Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday."

And no one cared but I!

The greatest dramatist of all, in writing for the crowd, did not neglect the individual.

Clayton Hamilton.

AFTER IBSEN?

BY JAMES HUNEKER

CRITICAL estimates and guesses about a dead genius usually recall the afternoon of a funeral when friends and relatives begin to gossip over the estate and the heirs of a departed rich one. When the apportionments are known there are ejaculations of surprise, incredulous shoulder-shrugs and lifted eyebrows. Things are never quite as they should be.

**The Legacy of
Ibsen**

So is it when a great dramatist, painter, composer or poet dies; great in the universal sense, one whose work has gone across the borders of his own land. If he has made a school, terrible is the struggle for his place. Sometimes his genius has been so comprehensive that there is no inheritance to be divided; this was the case with Richard Wagner, who said all he had to say, leaving nothing for his disciples to develop. He closed his epoch, the Romantic in music. His personality was so overwhelming that he crushed all hopes of reasonable imitation. There is another sort of genius that breaks paths, blazes trails, and to him we look for a school, for genuine disciples. Franz Liszt is the most notable example of this class in modern times. He did not perfect a form, he inaugurated a new one, the Symphonic Poem; from him Saint-Saëns, Tschaikowsky, Richard Strauss, the entire Neo-Russian school,

the Belgian, the new French and later German schools date their genesis. Without him modern instrumental music would be inconceivable.

Whether Henrik Ibsen will have a direct successor is of less importance than the question of his ultimate influence, and this influence during his lifetime was profound. It may be noted among the playwrights of all lands, without distinction of genres. We know that Ibsen was a severe formalist, yet it is not his form but his attitude toward life, his specific vision, that has worked upon the minds of his contemporaries, coloring their themes, their dialogues, their dénouements. This influence, none the less powerful because of its silent progress, extends to the lighter and more elastic varieties of plays. It gives to Bernard Shaw's farces and comedies their sub-acid flavor; it forms the somewhat sinister background for many pieces of the ultra-Parisian school:—Mirbeau, Hervieu, François de Curel, Eugène Brieux, Jules Lemaître, Georges de Porto-Riche; even the light-hearted Maurice Donnay has opened some doors through which the breeze blows from the North.

In
Germany
To Germany Ibsen has been a cruel master. He topsy-turveyed the old school of writers, and the new generation, headed by Hauptmann and Sudermann, has held the boards ever since. Wedekind, whose *Erdgeist* has had such an inexplicable success; Max Halbe, whose *Jugend* we saw here and were horrified—nor was *Der Strom* any less Ibsenish; Kalbeck, Johannes Schlaf, Voss (*Eva*), Von Wolzogen, Holz, Paul Lindau—a little old fashioned, as is Heyse—Heinz Tovote, Zabeltitz, Erich Hartleben—since dead—Felix Philippi, Wildenbruch and a host of younger men are all plastered with Ibsen's broad and pessimistic brush.

In
Italy
In Italy, in the country of Goldoni, where gloom is not supposed to have its abode, especially in the theatres, Ibsen has had a depressing influence. The more hardy northerners sup their artistic sorrow with a comfortable spoon. After a black soul-racking drama the German restores the psychical balance by way of his healthy hunger and thirst. He knows that after all it is only a play. A sufferer from *weltschmerz*, Hauptmann nevertheless contrived to give a poetic quality to Ibsen's philosophy of individualism; witness *The Sunken Bell*, in which both Ibsen and Nietzsche struggle through the music of the verse. However, not so in Italy. With the characteristic exaggeration of the southern temperament the ideas of the Norwegian are transformed into

something ferocious. D'Annunzio, who at times is a wonderful literary chameleon, has played with the Ibsen dramatic and ethical counters, dipping them into the glittering dye of his own brilliant poetic speech, but deforming their meanings almost beyond recognition. Nor is Marco Praga very different. The late Sicilian dramatist, Verga, author of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a man of dramatic ability, did not betray affinities to the northern school, though the realism of *Cavalleria Rusticana*—not the opera—is potent. The piece is a small masterpiece.

Russia has her own national pessimism and does not need to import much. The gay days of Gogol's *Der Revizor* have gone; instead we are given the underground drama of Gorky or the powerful preachments of Tolstoy, whose *Powers of Darkness* is truly a symphony in black—its blackness has the ebon and poignant quality of Tschaiakowsky's Pathetic Symphony. Gorky revels in cellars. His folk are generally used-up men and women and hurled upon the dramatic canvas. Vivid characterization, but no development, no plot, no beginning, no ending, is there in these impressionistic sketches. Gorky has read Ibsen and Nietzsche not wisely; his tramps spout philosophy at the most inopportune moments.

In Sweden there is Strindberg; in Holland, Herman Heijermans has the most promising talent. His *Good Hope*, *Kettenlieder* and kindred plays are anarchistic this far — they show the narrow, toilsome lives of fisher folk, of the crushed proletarians in Amsterdam, with little comment from the author. Heijermans has been unquestionably affected by Ibsen. He is an individualist; but he is also a humorist and his comedies with all their bitter tang are fresh and enjoyable. Hungary has first-class dramatic talent, but it has not been translated into other tongues, and it is the world-writers we must now discuss. But there are not many successors to Kisfaludy's *Tartars in Hungary*, *Irene*, and the rest; nor living poets like Alexander Petöfi or Vorösmarty. Francis Herezeg has written plays; yet it would seem that John Arany and Imre Madách still hold their own—the latter's epic, *The Tragedy of Man*, is Goethian in its ideals. Of Poland I can say little, with the exception of Sienkiewicz, because I know little. There is nevertheless a strong modern movement headed by the eccentric, gifted Przybyszewski, whose best plays are in one act—unlike his name. Austria succumbed to Ibsen from the first; that charming talent, Arthur Schnitzler, and the versatile Herman Bahr are among the best known of the younger men; the author of *Eckerman* is also an Ibsen epigone.

In Sweden,
Holland,
Hungary, and
Poland

Spain among the elder men has José Echegaray to show that this Catholic country boasts fierce dissidents. *El Gran Galeoto* — which New York saw in both its German and English garbs—is a strong study of jealousy, as are this Spaniard's recent efforts. Echegaray is realistic to the core and a first night with him is usually attended by demonstrations in the playhouse. England, ever disliking Ibsen—New York has seen more of his plays publicly performed—has been forced to listen to the great man in private, usually at the merciless hands of the enthusiastic amateur. We have been mildly reproached by an English critic for exhibiting enthusiasm over Ibsen—"he is *vieux jeu* for us in London." Precisely is he not an old jest, for he has never been rightfully performed in England. Long before Shaw wrote his brilliant challenge, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, there had been performances of *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* and other plays in a public New York theatre by competent actors. This, while London was holding its breath at secret performances of the Norwegian by stage societies and deadly propagandists of various kinds. Little wonder the Ibsen cult was called morbid. The morbidity lay in the method of producing him, in the attitude of the public toward him. On the continent there was no such hypocrisy. And Richard Mansfield and New York accepted Bernard Shaw before London. But the Ibsen lesson was speedily apprehended by several English playwrights, though I do not agree with those who read Ibsen into every play of Mr. Pinero.

Whatever else he is, Ibsen is first a poet, and poet-like he has strengthened his work by the artistic use of the symbol. Mr. Pinero is a man of intellect, of first-rate talent, but he is not a poet. Luckily he knows this. There are Ibsen passages in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, in *Iris* and in that rather futile piece, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*. But that is all. A general concision in the technique and a selection of subjects in sober middle class life may be set down to Ibsen's permeating influence; for example, Pinero's best comedy, *The Benefit of the Doubt*, is as caustic as Ibsen in its depiction of the bourgeois, in its unveiling of the pettiness of the pretentious. Yet it could be as well ascribed to Henri Becque as to Ibsen. And it is really Pinero's own. Henry Arthur Jones has written plays that are decidedly more Ibsenish than Mr. Pinero's. Mr. Jones admires the moral earnestness of Ibsen, for he is a morally earnest playwright himself. Of Mr. Shaw it is unnecessary to dilate upon in this gallery. He is all for Ibsen, though he

has admitted that he likes his own plays better. One may hardly cavil at this—he is certainly more amusing than the grim skald of *Brand*. Nevertheless, Shaw is of the Ibsen breed, plus Hibernian wit. His *Widower's Houses* is Ibsen transposed to another key; and I doubt if Ibsen himself could have handled with such skill and tact the difficult subject of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. But *Cæsar and Cleopatra* no man but Shaw could have conceived. *Man and Superman* is a blending of Ibsen, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, not forgetting the inevitable Shaw in the dialogue and dénouement.

There are many other writers of plays in England who are Ibsenian. Ireland has escaped him—excepting Shaw. Yeats is a poet of the mysterious; he shows more of Maeterlinck in his plays. The most gifted of living Irish dramatists is J. M. Synge, who is totally Celtic, more Celtic than Yeats, as Celtic as Tolstoy is Russian, or Carducci Italian. From Synge much may come. *The Well of the Saints*, *Riders to the Sea*, and *The Shadow of the Glen* point to a medium wherein the folk-element and a poetic psychology might be artfully and effectively combined. Synge's work is fairly odorous of Irish soil and character.

In America
Ibsen in America! Stop! Not the accustomed snakes in Ireland will I draw from the well-worn bag of metaphors, but I must simply evade the question. Americans are optimists at the theatre, pessimists in politics, idealists in love, and realists in business. We worship money more than art, and sentimentalism more than either. Let us be frank.

Ibsen may have affected the younger generation, but that generation has not yet knocked at our door (though probably it is knocking at managerial doors where it will never enter). Latter-day American literature is a series of evasions and compromises; its original drama is as yet non-existent. Therefore to discuss the influence of Ibsen would be as ineffectual as the training of great guns upon an empty, sandy shore. And, yet, I firmly believe that here in America are the greatest potentialities of a new and powerful literature and drama. When we shake off the puritanism that has strangled us mentally, emotionally and spiritually, when that welcome day arrives, may come the great awakening in our arts; but not until then.

And now, having superficially gone over the field of living dramatists, let us draw tauter the line and exclude all but a few representative names. Pinero has enjoyed, and still enjoys, a greater popularity in England and America and the English-speaking colonies than Ibsen ever did, or

doubtless ever will. But Pinero is no successor to Ibsen; he is admired in a general way on the continent, though he never created a big sensation. There is Ibsen's fellow-countrymen, the "genial" Björnson, who is a too copious and versatile writer to master even the dramatic form as did Ibsen. August Strindberg?

Has Ibsen a Successor?

I first printed the story that Ibsen in his latter years had Strindberg's photograph on his desk, which he occasionally apostrophized thus: "There is one greater than I." Since Ibsen's death I have been told another side of the story. What Ibsen did say was this: "I like Strindberg's picture; he looks so crazy." Which sounds like Ibsen, even if untrue. No, Strindberg is not crazy. Far from it. He is a man of genius, with a temperament so emotional that at one time he could hardly control its tumultuousness. Ideas and images are created by him in such intoxicating abundance that his helm does not always control the ship. Yet the man who constructed in logical cold blood such plays as *Countess Julie* or *The Father*, *Gläubiger*, the double dramas, the historic plays, the poems, novels and essays is hardly to be called a madman. He is a fierce Ibsen-hater and has written plays to contravert Ibsen. After *Ghosts* I know of few more terrible things than *Countess Julie*. Strindberg has the universal quality in his work, but it is a brave critic who would predict for him a repetition of Ibsen's domination of the drama.

In Germany the two names that come first to the lips are those of Gerhart Hauptmann and Hermann Sudermann. Hauptmann is a philosophic poet who happens to write plays; Sudermann is a dramatist and novelist. He is ultra-modern, a master of technique, and the thesis of his plays always deals with the present, though evolved from an idea rather than a fact; Hauptmann, however, has genius. It was a stroke of genius to have made the mob the hero of *The Weavers*; it was a poetic triumph to have written that exquisite *Sunken Bell*. Both these men are worthy to be leaders of the dramatic movement, yet one feels that Hauptmann is the worthier of the pair to wear the Ibsen mantle. He proved in *Rose Bernd* that he could touch the human heart by old-fashioned methods much more than Ibsen.

France and Belgium remain. Maeterlinck's name is usually associated with Ibsen's, as were Goethe and Schiller's, Schubert and Schumann's, Wagner and Liszt's—all of which conjunctions are indications of fatty degeneration of the brain. Maeterlinck is as unlike Ibsen as Mozart differs from Claude Debussy. With all his symbolism, his "interior,"

Maeterlinck,
and Recent
French
Dramatists

his "static" drama, Maurice Maeterlinck has composed the most poetic drama of the nineteenth century, *Pelléas et Mélisande*. It is as new in its form and speech as *Tristan and Isolde* was new in music. When Maeterlinck is summed up by the critical Button-Moulders after his death, his supreme achievement will be recognized as *Pelléas et Mélisande*. It is the apotheosis of the mystic forces of life set forth in exquisite diction. It charms, it exalts.

The Frenchmen of genuine dramatic force are Octave Mirbeau, Paul Hervieu, François de Curel, Eugène Brieux and a few others. Brieux's play, *Les Avaries*, with its ghastly thesis, is Ibsen in intent, though going far beyond that poet in its frankness and in its conclusions. It has been heartily praised by Mr. Shaw. All Brieux's dramas are built on a thesis: doctors, charity (*Les Bienfaiteurs*), art, universal suffrage. He is a drastic writer. M. de Curel has undoubted psychological powers, though he is careless in the construction of his very striking plays. *La Fille Sauvage*, *The New Idol*, *Les Fossiles*, and *L'Envers d'une Sainte*—this latter is replete with shattering irony and disillusion. Henri Lavedan is known here through *The Duel*. His *Le Prince d'Aurec*, however, is a better play. Mirbeau is a savage and tremendous writer, an anarchist of letters as well as by propaganda of deed. *Business is Business* was not adequately translated or interpreted in America. *Les Mauvais Bergers* gives a fair idea of this revolutionist's quality. He is a true artistic son of Ibsen, a man of gloomy imagination, a "reversed" poet. Paul Hervieu is more polished, though almost as bitter. He is a master of stage-craft, a cruelly logical thinker and in reality owes more to Dumas the younger and Henri Becque than to Ibsen. His new piece, *The Awakening*, is in a more romantic frame than *Les Tenaillles*, or *The Labyrinth*.

It is not necessary to consider in detail the men of Antoine's "Théâtre Libre"—Hennique, Camille Fabre, Jullien, Ancey, Donnay, Paul Adam and the rest. Sardou the prestidigitator still lives; Ohnet will never die, his enemies say; Rostand and his bon-bon art hardly counts except at the box-office (a necessary region, by the way); while Catulle Mendès, versatile ever, and his brother-in-law, Emile Bergerat, and Jean Richepin, are invincible Romanticists. Probably the influence of Dumas fils is still stronger in Paris than Ibsen's—but it has produced no replicas of that popular man.

After Ibsen? I am sure I can't say. It would not be a bad idea if we first mastered the meanings and technique of his plays before nominating his successor. So let me pose the case thus: After Ibsen?—Henrik Ibsen—which is begging the question. But can you make a better suggestion?

James Huneker.

LITERATURE

SHAKESPEARE AND SHAKESPEAREANS¹

To a layman the contrast between Professor Raleigh's volume and the writings of Shakespeare scholars generally is very astonishing. These worthy men to whom we owe so much in the matter of textual purification have, as is well known, left us another and most painful legacy. The Shakespeare "finds" seem small beside the Shakespeare rubbish heaps. And as to that broader criticism which Professor Raleigh here essays it depends less on learning than on natural gifts, and Shakespeareans usually have no other gift than pertinacity. Like Coleridge and Hazlitt, Professor Raleigh belongs to the class of men who would have discovered Shakespeare even if they had lived in Shakespeare's time, which would be an absurd thing to say of any other recent author of a "life" or an appreciation. Surely there is no warrant for the view that a Shakespeare scholar necessarily feels any interest in Shakespeare himself. That is the romantic assumption of Shakespeare worshippers, who will have it that all are drawn by the magic of the poet when many are drawn by the magic of his name.

It is just possible [says Professor Raleigh] that the store of facts concerning him may yet be increased. But it is not likely; now that antiquaries and scholars have toiled for generations, with an industry beyond all praise, in the search for lost memorials. These are the diligent workers among the ruins, who when the fabric of our knowledge has crumbled to atoms, still

As for seed of stars, stoop for the sand,
And by incessant labor gather all.

The enthusiasm which keeps them at work has been truly described by one of the chief of them, Mr. Halliwell-Phillips. "No journey," he says, "is too long, no trouble too great, if there is a possibility of either resulting in the discovery of the minutest scrap of information respecting the life of our national poet." By these ungrudging labors all that we are entitled to hope for has been achieved.

But both grammarians and antiquaries seem to the layman to have had their reward and he cannot be in the least sentimental about them.

¹*Shakespeare*. By Walter Raleigh. American Series of English Men of Letters. New York: The Macmillan Company.