

Christiania. It was first produced there in 1873 and remained in the repertory of the theatre till 1898. It has never yet been performed in this country; but a performance of it was given at the Hudson Theatre, New York, in 1908. Swedish, French, and German translations of it exist.

With *The League of Youth* Ibsen broke entirely fresh ground. This satirical comedy was more than a tilt at conventions; it had behind it a political animus which sprang from Ibsen's distrust of the group then known as the "Young Party." In this play the author for the first time found his proper medium of expression in prose dialogue of an easy naturalness that marked an astonishing advance on anything of his day in his own country. The play was, in fact, the first modern prose comedy from Norway. In the planning and development of the plot it smacks strongly of the French drama of intrigue—the drama of the school of Scribe—but in the matters of close observation and naturalness of dialogue it is a long way ahead of that school. Ibsen was in Italy while the comedy was planned, and in Dresden while he wrote it (in the winter of 1868-69); and it was undoubtedly this voluntary exile that enabled him to see Norwegian social life and politics in a new perspective.

The play was printed in September 1869, and was first performed, at the Christiania theatre, in the following month. As was to be expected, it caused a great fluttering in the doves of a society quite unused to satirical comedy. It also produced a practically universal impression of being an essay in political pamphleteering disguised as a play. The "Young Party," with whom Björnson was intimately connected, resented the obvious attack on them, and the first few performances were disturbed by violent demonstrations on the part of both opponents and supporters. The character of Stensgaard was taken to be a direct caricature of, and attack on, Björnson, who in consequence was estranged from Ibsen for a number of years afterwards, until Björnson's magnanimity led him to make an advance towards reconciliation which Ibsen as generously welcomed. The political controversy gradually wore itself out, and