

interested to hear this, for, of course, the *Morgenblad* is profoundly convinced that *Gengangere* is directly inspired by the study of Zola.

To my other meetings with him in Rome I find only general references in the papers before me, but they entirely bear out my recollection of his invariable courtesy and cordiality. And here let me ask how many great writers would have given so much time and patience to a wholly irrelevant youth who had no sort of claim upon them—not even that of a formal introduction? In after years Ibsen might—indeed, he did—consider himself under some sort of obligation to me; but in those far-off Roman days he knew nothing of me except that I could more or less imperfectly express myself in his language, and had made an unauthorised and partly garbled version of one of his plays. That he could be morose and even repellent on occasion is plain from well-authenticated anecdotes; but I think his treatment of me during these first months of our acquaintance ought absolutely to acquit him of any charge of systematic or habitual churlishness. He was never a man of many words; he always spoke slowly and (as George Eliot is said to have done) under a manifest sense of responsibility; but within the limits of his phlegmatic temperament I always found him not only courteous, but genial and even communicative.

Here, too, I cannot help touching upon a more delicate subject; for to avoid it would be to lend colour to idle and malicious reports. The often-repeated stories of his over-indulgence in stimulants were, to the best of my belief, such gross exaggerations as to be practically falsehoods. My personal observation on this point is confirmed by the report of one of his oldest and most intimate friends who, some years ago, discussed his character quite frankly with me, told me many anecdotes illustrative of his peculiarities, but wholly repudiated this slander. On convivial evenings at the Scandinavian Club I have seen him drink one or two small tumblers of thin Italian wine, but no more. At the Caffè Nazionale he would slowly sip a glass or two of vermouth—the most