

genganger!"—"that bald, loathsome ghost!" This was the only occasion on which I, personally, saw his temper ruffled, though rumour tells of many others. At the time, I thought the Dane's punishment excessive; but the Secretary told me afterwards that in "downing" him, as Johnson would have said, Ibsen had merely expressed the general sense of the Club.

## II

In those days, at the corner of the Corso and the Via della Mercede, there stood a very bright and well-managed café, known as the "Nazionale." The Corso has since been widened at this point, and the comparatively small "Nazionale" has expanded into "Aragno's," the rendezvous of all Rome. Entering this café on the afternoon of January 2, 1882, I observed in the inmost corner a huge, broad-brimmed wide-awake hat, and gleaming through the shadow it cast, the gold spectacles of Henrik Ibsen. In earlier days, when he was writing *Brand*, at Ariccia, he was known to the peasants of the Alban Hills as "Il Cappellone," the man with the big hat; and his friends, in allusion to the lining of the said headpiece, used to call it "The Blue Grotto." It was doubtless a successor to the original "Blue Grotto" that he was wearing, as he sipped his glass of vermouth and looked at the *Illustrirte Zeitung*. I took a seat, with a friend, near the door. Presently Ibsen rose to leave, and as he passed out he stared at me short-sightedly, without recognition. But apparently he recalled my face on reaching the street, for in a minute or two he reopened the glass-door, came up to my table, and entered into conversation. I again quote from a letter written at the time:

... He says he can read English with difficulty, but his son can read it quite well; and he spoke of Gosse's translations of some extracts from *Peer Gynt*. In the course of the talk, I elicited the melancholy fact that he has quite given up verse, so far as the drama is concerned, at any rate. I suppose another *Peer Gynt* was scarcely to be expected; but I must say I'm sorry to hear he is