

**THE COLLECTED WORKS  
OF HENRIK IBSEN.  
VOLUME III BRAND**

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The collected works of Henrik Ibsen. Volume III Brand by Henrik Ibsen & William Archer

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**HENRIK IBSEN & WILLIAM ARCHER**

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VOLUME III

B R A N D

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HENRIK IBSEN**

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VOLUME III  
**B R A N D**

TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION BY  
C. H. HERFORD, LITT. D.; M. A.

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1917

INTRODUCTION BY C. H. HERFORD  
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## BRAND.<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION.\*

*Brand* was written in the summer of 1865, at Ariccia, near Rome. Fifteen months before, Ibsen had left Christiania, a voluntary exile, eager to escape from the narrow Scandinavian world, and burning with the sense of national disgrace. Denmark was in the throes of the heroic but hopeless struggle to which her northern kinsmen had sent only a handful of volunteers. He had travelled southward, almost within hearing of the Prussian guns; and among the passengers on the steamer was that venerable silver-haired mother who, as his sarcastic verses tell, believed so firmly in the safety of her soldier-son, and with such good ground, "for he was a *Norwegian* soldier."<sup>2</sup> On arriving at Rome he turned resolutely away from these rankling memories, broke all the bonds

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of *Brand* the reader may be referred to the Introduction prefixed to the original edition of the present translation (London, 1894).

<sup>2</sup> The poem *Troens grund*. It is translated by Mr. Wicksteed, *Lect.* p. 24. This admirable little volume is indispensable to the English student of Ibsen's poetry.

that tied him to his country, plunged into the study of the ancient world, and made preparation for that colossal drama on the Emperor Julian which eight years later saw the light.

But the genius of the North held him in too strong a grip. "Never have I seen the Home and its life so fully, so clearly, so near by," he told the Christiania students in 1873, "as precisely from a distance and in absence."<sup>1</sup> Under the Italian sky, among the myrtles and aloes of the "Paradise of exiles," there arose before him more vividly than ever the vision of the stern and rugged Norwegian landscape, the solemn twilight of the fjord, the storm-swept glacier, the peasant-folk absorbed in the desperate struggle for bread, officialdom absorbed in material progress, "intelligence" growing refined, "humane," and somewhat effeminate; and, emerging here and there, glimpses somewhat futile and forlorn of heroic manhood. A summer tour which he had made among the western fjords in July 1862, on a commission from Government to collect popular legends, supplied a crowd of vivid local and personal reminiscences; a ruined parsonage under a precipice, a little mouldering church, a wild march across Jotunheim in storm and snow, and then the dizzy plunge down into one of those deep lowland valleys that strike up like huge rocky rifts from the fjord-head into the heart of the mountains. A few months of intense labour sufficed to organise these scattered images into a moving world of drama,

<sup>1</sup> Speech to the students, printed in full in Halvorsen, *Norsk Forfatter-lexikon*, art. "Ibsen."

penetrated through and through with Ibsen's individuality, and clothed in rich and many-coloured poetry. He had as yet written nothing at once so original, so kindling, and so profusely strewn with the most provocative brilliances of style; nothing which, with all its fierce invective against Norway, was so profoundly and intimately Norwegian in colouring and in spirit. Upon its publication, on March 15, 1866, at Copenhagen, the whole Scandinavian world was taken by storm.

The sale was from the outset immense, and has continued, though at a diminished pace, till the present day. Four editions appeared before the close of 1866; the eleventh in 1889. Ibsen was little accustomed to such success. It is said that immediately after the publication his sister-in-law drank to the "tenth edition"; the poet confidently shook his head and declared that the profits of the tenth edition should be hers. She took him at his word, and has not repented her prophetic gift.<sup>1</sup> Outside Scandinavia, too, the name of the author of *Brand* rapidly became famous. It was the beginning of his European fame. In Germany, its intellectual suggestiveness and philosophical mysticism were keenly appreciated; it was compared with *Hamlet* and with *Faust*. No less than four translations appeared there between 1872 and 1882.

Even on the stage, for which it was never meant, *Brand* has not been quite unknown. In Christiania the Fourth Act has repeatedly been played; but it was reserved for the Director of the New Theatre at Stockholm, L. Josephson, to

<sup>1</sup> Halvorsen, *Forfatter-lexikon*, u.s.