

THE PRETENDERS

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The Pretenders by Henrik Ibsen

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HENRIK IBSEN

THE PRETENDERS



THE YALE UNIVERSITY DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION.
1907.

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BY

HENRIK IBSEN

ACTING VERSION

OF

THE YALE UNIVERSITY
DRAMATIC ASSOCIATION

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

Lampson Professor of English Literature at Yale University



NEW HAVEN

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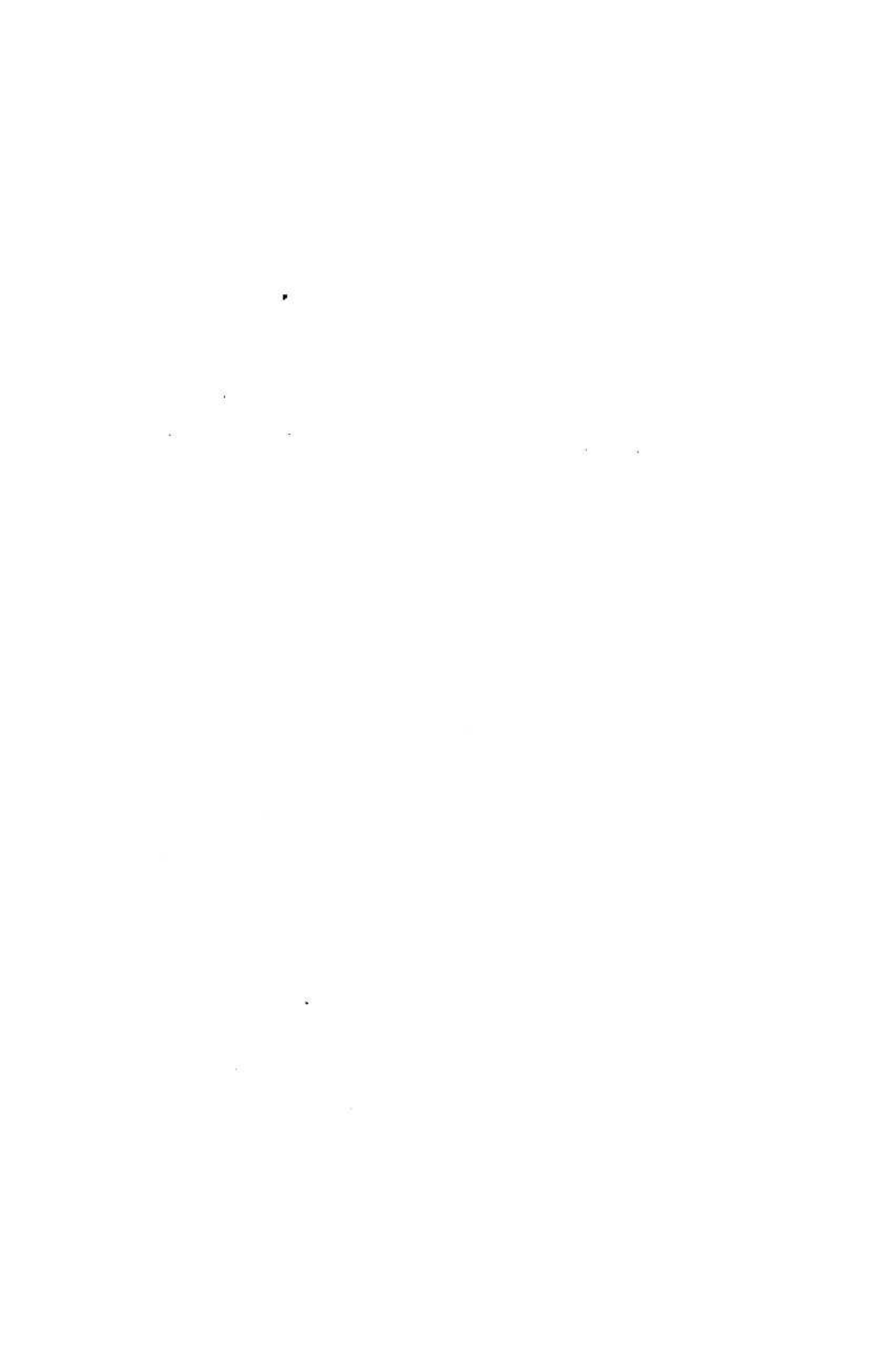
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PREFACE.

By the kind permission of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, the text of this acting version is based upon their copyright edition of the *Collected Works of Henrik Ibsen*, translated into English by William Archer. The Yale Dramatic Association takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Charles Scribner for his courtesy and kindness.

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HISTORY OF THE

Yale University Dramatic Association

The Yale Dramatic Association was founded by Harry D. Wescott, of the class of 1901. This simple statement of fact gives a very faint idea of the tremendous enthusiasm, energy, and capacity for hard work displayed by the founder. He belonged in college to that somewhat numerous class of students who have a positive genius for learning anything and everything except their lessons. His extra-curriculum activities in literature and athletics were manifold, but his heart was in dramatics. He could hardly have chosen a more unpropitious time to propagate his Idea. The Joint-Junior-Fraternity-Farces had proved a total waste of time and money, and had been recently annihilated by Faculty edict. The Yale student body—always heavily conservative—were opposed to any new dramatic scheme. But Mr. Wescott loved a fight against big odds. In the autumn of 1899, he summoned what he called "a committee of enthusiastic speculators," consisting of John Penn Brock, Shiras Campbell, Ezekiel Bronson, of the class of 1900, and Cyrus Field, of the Medical School, and broached the scheme of a Yale Dramatic Association. A notice appeared in the Yale "News," inviting all interested to attend a public meeting. About fifty men responded,

and gathered in the rear room of old Lyceum, where President Woolsey used to lecture, and where Chaucer and the Elizabethan Drama—the first literary quarry of the Association—were being taught. Mr. Wescott set forth the aims and ideals of the putative club. It was to be radically different from the dramatic societies in vogue at Pennsylvania, Princeton, and Columbia. No local farce or musical extravaganza was to be tolerated. The Association would produce only dramas of great literary value, and only those which were seldom or never played on the regular professional stage. The Club would therefore be a powerful ally of the English Department, and would receive the cordial support of the Faculty. The Dean of the College—Henry P. Wright—gave Mr. Wescott every encouragement, and after much discussion, and the surmounting of apparently insurmountable obstacles, the first performance of the Yale Dramatic Association took place in the Hyperion Theatre, New Haven, Wednesday, the 23d May, 1900. It was a double bill; first came Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*, dramatised by Mr. Wescott, followed by the Mystery Play, *Secunda Pastorum*. The most thrillingly dramatic of all Chaucer's narratives produced a wonderful effect on the boards, acted as it was with an earnestness and sincerity that more than atoned for technical shortcomings.

In the course of the rehearsals, it had become glaringly evident that a professional coach must be secured, and recourse was had to Mr. Franklin Sargent, President of the American Academy of the Dramatic Arts, at New York City. No account of the Yale Dramatic Association would be complete without a due tribute to this man. It was his production of Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman* at his