

**THE HOBBY-HORSE:
A COMEDY IN
THREE ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649529582

The Hobby-Horse: A Comedy in Three Acts by Arthur W. Pinero

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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ARTHUR W. PINERO

**THE HOBBY-HORSE:
A COMEDY IN
THREE ACTS**

THE HOBBY-HORSE

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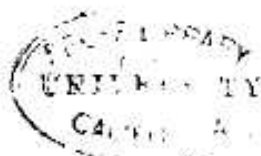
Times.—"The language in which this play is couched is a model of brevity, decision, and pointedness. . . . Every line tells, and there is not an incident that does not bear on the action, immediate or remote. As a corrective to the rapid, foolish writing with which the stage is deluged, 'Hedda Gabler' is perhaps entitled to the place of honour."

*THE HOBBY-
HORSE*

A COMEDY

In Three Acts

By ARTHUR W. PINERO



LONDON: WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

SIX years ago dramatic conventionality exercised, an even greater tyranny than it does to-day, and British playgoers were less prepared than now to look favourably upon any effort to resist it. That the persons in a play should be dealt with according to the probabilities of actual life, when these clashed with the dictates of theatrical custom and "poetical justice," was not to be endured. The expectations of an audience were held sacred, and were not to be tampered with. They were as inexorable as the laws of the Medes and Persians, and any dramatist who had the temerity to bring down his curtain without having first made all his sympathetic characters happy might expect little favour. But even at that time Mr. Pinero was always inclined to fly in the face of the theatrically conventional in some way or another, and he actually dared to write a play in which a young clergyman, for whom the deep sympathy of the audience was enlisted, was permitted to fall innocently and honourably in love with a married woman whom he had thought to be single, and to suffer pain on her account, without the husband being conveniently killed off in the last act to prepare the way for the clergyman's expected matrimonial happiness. And this play Mr.

Pinero, having his own dramatic purpose in view, described as a comedy.

"The Hobby-Horse" was produced at the St. James's Theatre, under the management of Mr. Hare and Mr. Kendal, on October 23, 1886, and it was acted until February 26, 1887, one hundred and nine performances being given in all. The following is a copy of the programme of the first representation :—

ST. JAMES'S THEATRE.

LESSEES AND MANAGERS, MR. HARE AND MR. KENDAL.

THIS EVENING, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23rd, 1886,

At 8 o'clock,

WILL BE ACTED

AN ORIGINAL COMEDY IN THREE ACTS, CALLED

THE HOBBY-HORSE,

WRITTEN BY

A. W. PINERO.

REV. NOEL BRICE	Mr. HERBERT WARING.
MR. SPENCER JERMYN	Mr. HARE.
MR. PINCHING	Mr. C. W. SOMERSET.
MR. SHATTOCK	Mr. MACKINTOSH.
MR. PEWS	Mr. HENDRIE.
MR. LYMAN	Mr. W. M. CATHCART.
MR. MOULTER	Mr. THOMAS.
TOM CLARK	Mr. FULLER MELLISH.
HEWETT	Mr. ALBERT SIMS.
TINY LONDON	Master REED.

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MRS. SPENCER JERMYN	Mrs. KENDAL.
MRS. PORCHER	Mrs. GASTON MURRAY.
MISS MOXON	Mrs. B. TREE.
BERTHA	Miss WEBSTER.
MRS. LANDON	Miss B. HUNTLEY.

ACT I.

A CHAPTER OF PHILANTHROPY.

At Mr. JERMYN'S.

Garden of Odium House, Over-Lessingham, near Newmarket.

ACT II.

A CHAPTER OF SENTIMENT.

Mr. BRICE'S Lodgings:

Overlooking the Church of St. Jacob's-in-the-East.

ACT III.

A CHAPTER OF EXPIATION.

Odium House again; the Morning Room.

THE SCENERY PAINTED BY THE ARTIST TO THE THEATRE,
MR. HARFORD.

Though it would be unjust to write this play down a failure it was not exactly a success. That large section of the playgoing public which expects only to laugh at a comedy, was puzzled between the comic and the sentimental aspects of the story, and therefore the attendance at the theatre gradually diminished. On the other hand, there were many who saw that this play was intended as a satire on those false philanthropic fads which are a sign of a sentimental age; who recognised in the