Chapter-VI

IBSEN'S INFLUENCE ON PINERO
Pinero was only indirectly influenced by Ibsen, even though there is a close affinity between them regarding their early theoretical history. From 1851 to 1862 Ibsen worked as dramatist, producer and a stage manager in the small struggling Norske theatre at Bergen and he was also a successful adviser to the theatres. From the early age of nineteen, Pinero was an actor. In 1874 he received his training in the actor’s craft at ‘Wyndhams Edinburg’, under ‘Sir Henry Irving’ in London. His role as Claudius and Rosencrantz in Irving’s Hamlet and his acting in several other classical and then modern plays, including two of his own, gave him valuable fame and knowledge in stage-craft. Ibsen produced 145 plays, in Bergen, and seventy five of them were in French. All these plays were produced under romantic inspiration of which Scribe was the leading exponent. Scribe had a complicated plot, moving at high speed around certain stock scenes: the confidential documents dropped in public, the abducted baby identified by a secret birthmark, the poisoned goblet. All the characters were set in a colourful, simple mould Plays did not deal with nuances, and realism was not the concern of the theatre. Even Ibsen bears direct traces of Scribe’s technique in his early plays.
A periodical named *Andhremner (manden)* was published in 1851 by Ibsen. It was a critical comment on Scribe’s insistence on a situation at the expense of Psychology. After that Ibsen wrote with animosity directed at the dramatic sweetness of Scribe, but later on his experience of actual stage conditions effect a modification of his view.

Ibsen’s ‘Lady Inger of Ostract (1855) is a typical intrigue drama. Lady Inger and ‘Nils Lykke’ talk of a poisoned goblet; the whole play makes no departure from the current theatrical conventions. In *The Feast at Solhavy*, Ibsen uses the favourite trick of coincidence, which device is seen at its most extensive in *The Vikings at Helgdand*. ‘Gunnar’ believes his son Egel to have been abducted and killed by Qrhulf and himself kills him and his sons. The return of Qrhulf is announced and Gunnar calls his men to arms. Qrhulf enters carrying Egil in his arms. His six sons have been killed in rescuing Egil from the real abductors. The killing of Qrhulf is itself based on misunderstanding, arising out of the Viking conception of honour. The Vikings is wholly based on French conceptions; and early plays of Ibsen show his inescapable inheritance from the intrigue drama of Scribe.
Like Ibsen's, all the plays of Pinero have a legacy of the school of well-made-play. There is a close relationship between them in their early career. Like Pinero, Ibsen was too great an artist to be satisfied with drama. He was satisfied with artificial devices; to him the communication of significant experience was the dramatist's primary concern. His next play Svanhild, was his first play of modern life, a love comedy. Ibsen is concerned with profound and lasting preoccupations, which was a revolution in theatre. He took over from Scribe and Dumas the mechanics but thrust the complication of the plot into the unseen pre-working of the play. Ibsen wrote plays with ideas. His art progressed, his stage constricted. One or two scenes, the action of a few hours, brought before the audience the whole spectacle of life.

Pinero took over the technique of the well-made play joining it to the technique of La Piece of These. Ibsen abandoned all compromise but Pinero in an insular world could create the atmosphere for higher drama only through an attempt at compromise. At a time when Ibsen's plays were received with an open hostility, no English playwright could write an Ibsenite play. An 'old hand' like Pinero who knew his London audiences, had to write cautiously.
Ibsen's indirect influence on Pinero is apparent. Though conventional in method, Pinero's plays are an advancement in the direction of realism. Ibsen did not confine himself to the realities of externals, of environment, costumes, manners and speech; he searched the depths of the human heart and extracted from common life the poetry that lurked in it. He learnt from France, Germany and Denmark the art of faithfully reproducing on the stage. The externals of life had been perfected in the sixties and seventies of the previous century.

Ibsen's A Doll's House proved the superiority of the new theatre over the old theatrical artificiality. Pinero's plays were cast in the new mould and they also abandoned the rhetorical, and while accepting the limitations of his times and recognizing that England had its own way of life and action, differing from that of other nation, Pinero still made an advance in the direction of realism.

Pinero in the Profligate and The Second Mrs. Tanqueray showed the same courage to deal with ugly facts, reflecting Ibsen's influence; in these two plays, he was not afraid to follow the plot to its bitter end; he had the boldness to allow the scope for the development of character, without the artificial
sentimentalisation of an earlier generation. In *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* and in *Iris* he rang down the curtain on a doubtful note. The substance of these plays is essentially tragic but the heroine is not killed in the end for the obvious reason that people work not from a single motive but from complex motives, and the business of the artist is to allow the scope for the development of character. In *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, Pinero allowed the characters to be responsible for their actions. Everything would depend on dramatic exigencies but simplicity would be the keynote. Of this an admirable example is furnished by *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.

*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* is perfectly simple; it relies upon action, gesture and facial expressions rather than on rhetoric. The most impressive scenes are those in which the words themselves are the least noticeable. When Paula springs upon the sofa to be sure to catch a glimpse of herself in the mirror, so that she may be looking her best before Ellean’s lover is brought in, there is a moment of silent suspense more telling than any verbal eloquence. As Wordsworth’s belief in regard to poetry, so here it is feeling that lends effect to words and not words that give importance to feeling. Similarly, in Act II, in six short sentences, Pinero, conveys the boredom, the loneliness, the utter dejection that has set in Paula’s life.
Aubrey : Sunshine! Spring!

Paula : (glancing at the clock) exactly six minutes.

Aubrey : Six minutes

Paula : Six minutes, Aubrey dear, since you made your last remarks.

Aubrey : I beg your pardon; I was reading my letters, have you seen Ellean this morning?

Paula : (Coldly) your last observation but one was about Ellean

Pinero’s thesis play bore Ibsen’s stamp. It was characterized by an almost classical severity and restraint of form. The technique was retrospective compression of the action, beginning at the denouement and the revealing of the plot in brief flashes with consequent tightness, and concentration of emotion.

Pinero achieved a happy compromise between the well constructed play and the thesis play. He blended the two techniques and thus acclimatized the audience to a higher drama. For this he can not be

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1 *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, Act II.
2 Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. 

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reproached, as Ibsen himself owed not a little to the French playwrights Emile Augies and Alexander Dumas, from whom he learned valuable lessons in dramatic technique. Ibsen learned some lessons from the School of Scribe in Paris and applied and transformed the Piece bien faite in his own fashion; so also Pinero learned from the French and from Ibsen, blending their techniques and creating a new atmosphere for higher drama.

Ibsen, however, is characterized by a severe economy of meaning and his technique is much more straightforward. Pinero felt that there was no antagonism between La piece bien faite and la piece a these: A well constructed play could embody elements of a thesis play. He, therefore, combined the virtue of each when he dropped the world of amusement and produced his serious play, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, in 1893. The blending of the technique was realized also because of the nature of the audience. The common attitude of average people towards serious drama was one of shocked resentment and callous indifference. Pinero felt that by taking over Ibsen’s technique in this entirely, the playgoer would be alienated and as one who knew something of the
theatre, he set himself to the task of creating conditions in which the New Drama already existed.

*Midchannel* portrays the tragedy of the wealthy middle class household devoid of intellectual interests and without even social ambition so that the husband and wife after fourteen years of married life are unable to tide over their matrimonial affairs and are frequently given to wrangling over petty details of their luxurious existence. Driven to degradation, the wife ends her life. This play is a cold, ruthless, criticism of the social system of which Zoe is a victim; in spite of all her native goodness, high spirits and ability she had to perish. The situation that brings about the tragedy is skilfully managed and appears to be inevitable.

In the *Thunderbolt* Pinero dealt with a crime perpetrated at a time when, the criminal did not know whom she would harm, which person she afterwards came to know so well that she confessed her crime and made things up as best as she could to the girl at whose expense she had planned to thrive. These two plays are intense and appealing. *His House in Order* is strong in character and right in feeling. Theophila Fraser, *In The
Benefit of Doubt, is a dramatic character whose crowded hours of disastrous life make the play tense and vivid.

The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, The Profligate, The Midchannel are plays dealing with the problem of marital disaster. Iris is the tragedy of a woman with sweet nature but with no moral stamina, and no backbone. Letty is the tragic comedy of a girl who had plenty of backbone; placed between two temperaments – a life of luxury with a man whom she loves but can not marry and a life of common security with a Bulgarian whom she despises but has to marry. She for a moment wavers, but has at last the courage to reject both. Thunderbolt is a study of provincial life; Trelawny of the Wells speaks of the theatrical conditions in the sixties; The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith seeks to raise the question of free love as opposed to conventional marriage. Even the farces are not without an idea and the comedies like The Time and The Hobby Horse raise some questions of social importance.

The blending of technique is seen as Ibsen’s influence on Pinero, both in matters of dramatic realism and the newer stage craft. Ibsen’s plots begin on the eve of a denouement and close on the tragic issue. The characters expound their parts in a serious and animated dialogue, making the characters
extremely vivid. The progression of the incident in Ghosts is the interaction between cause and effect; a distinct economy of effect is noticeable. Words are natural and easy so that the play can be as well read as seen.

Ibsen altered the older technique of making Act I, exposition; the second Act, development; and Act III climax and conclusion; and of inserting a minor crisis to lead through suspense to a major crisis, through strong suspense to the grand climax. In the well-made-play, characters were introduced in the opening scene and the whole process of their development was so leisurely as to make the play static. Ibsen dealt with the final culminating incidents of a long story and thereby brought about a degree of concentration that was unknown to earlier European playwrights.

This type of technique is noticeable is such serious plays as the Profligate, The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith, Iris and Midchannel. They are pseudo-Ibsenite plays. In The Second Mrs. Tanqueray the playwright attempts to portray the new woman. It shows signs of Ibsen’s Influence. Pinero had the courage to deal with the lives of profligates and harlots and allowed the characters scope for fullest development. In The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith he created a harassed but spirited character of some reality and force and even though her gesture of
rebellion was smothered by a neat denouement, it at least raised the question of free love in opposition to conventional marriage. In *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, Pinero drew the character of a woman with a past and he even sympathized with her effort to adjust herself to respectable society. At the same time the play provided moments when Paula’s vulgar part shows through her acquired veneer\(^3\) and this was realistic character-drawing. Again, the complication in the play and Paula’s unhappiness stem directly from her character. The application of the formula ‘Character is destiny’ must be set down as a sign of realistic dramaturgy. No sentimentalisation moved the play.

Ibsen’s plays had altered the conception of drama profoundly in the minds of many English dramatists, who felt that, with his breaking of the ice, they could also call ugly facts by their real names. The romantic tendency to gloss over brutal facts so as to paint pretty pictures of virtue and ideal character had led dramatists to exaggerate character and to transform them fancifully; the time was now ripe to portray character exactly as psychological analysis revealed them. Pinero in *The Profligate*, in The *Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* and in *Iris* rang down the curtain on a doubtful note. The substance of these plays is essentially tragic but the heroine is not killed in the end; for

\(^3\) See, *Second Mrs. Tanqueray* Act II (Paula’s meeting Mrs. Cortelyen)
the obvious reason that people work, not from a single motive but from complex motives, and the business of the artist is to allow scope for the development of character. In *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, The Profligate, Iris* and *Midchannel*, Pinero allowed the characters to be responsible for their actions. In these plays, character is destiny. Dunstan Renshaw bases his life on a miserable foundation and the outcome is that he takes poison; Paula Tanqueray's past stares her in the face, the result is again tragic. In both cases, tragedy arises out of defects of character as also the super-added coincidence which brings Ardale in to Ellean's life. It may be urged that, though improbable, it is not impossible. The verisimilitude of the plot is not disturbed and the so-called coincidence is here the logical outcome of Paula's past life. In *Iris* tragedy also springs out of the weakness of her character which makes it impossible for her to accept an impecunious suitor, she being fond of luxurious life.

*The Squire*, produced at the St. James Theatre, London, on 29th December, 1981, is notable for its study of character. In the choice of his themes Pinero does not show an obtrusive predominance of abstract elements over human, and concrete facts. He introduces characters at the earliest point in the development of the plot. The difference, therefore, between *The Squire*
and Sydney Gurndy’s Degenerates is the difference between a live play and a dead one. Archer says, “The difference between a live play and a dead one is that in the former the character controls the plot while in the latter the plot controls the character”\textsuperscript{4}. In the Degenerates, the situation depends on locks and theatrical thimble-rigging. In The \textit{Squire} Pinero presents, in the character of Kate Verity, a real study of a woman, secretly married to Lieutenant Thorndyke, and faced not only with scandal, but also with fury of the Lieutenant’s former wife in a dramatic scene.

In the comedies Pinero was attracted to the new development in drama the impulse for which came from the Norwegian dramatist. Judged by the earlier playwrights’ habit of rounding off their stories to make the end neat and satisfactory, Pinero’s attempt is a healthy sign in the direction of realism. He was not enslaved to the idea of a neat denouement; he followed more than any one else the logic of events without tampering with its truth; when he made alteration in a play, as in \textit{The Profligate}, he did so with the greatest reluctance. Ibsen had done so much for the resurgence of the modern drama. Still remote though, Ibsen had been discovered (1881) by British authors and Archer had written a series of important articles on him.

\textsuperscript{4} Archer, \textit{Play Making}, p. 17.
Ibsenism, however, was in the air and the time was slowly coming when the dramatist would be seized of the idea of transferring to the stage the discussion of problems of conduct and character. Pinero’s eyes were always turned to the future; he sought to record actual experience flowing in the natural irregular rhythm of life in *The Profligate*. In 1881 the Independent Theatre Society had been framed and somehow managed the anti Ibsen censorship Ghosts was staged and Pinero saw the play. He studied the other plays of Ibsen in which problems of sex and marital life were aired. Pinero must have been fascinated by Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* performed at the ‘Novelty theatre’ in 1889. The same year J.T. Griend produced Ghosts, Hedda Gabler, The Master Builder and Rosner’s Holm. The result was that through serious plays such as *The Profligate, The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, The Midchannel*, Pinero sought to deal with the problems of married life. Ibsen’s interest in the tragic conflict between the individual and his social environment influenced him at a time when the public taste stood low and could be tempted by such theatrical bills as who wants a husband; statistics show that ninety percent of women, when they have reached a marriageable age, are only awaiting the first opportunity in order to get married; yet hundreds remain old spinsters.
Ibsen’s indirect influence on Pinero is also seen in the latter’s choice of characters who are possessed of a mixture of agreeable and disagreeable qualities and some shades of goodness. The romantic tendency had been to create stage characters who always behaved perfectly because they were in no sense true to life. A realistic writer cannot create the conventional ‘readymade’ character of stage. If characters are life-like they must surprise by their unexpected action. In Pinero’s Profligate, Dunstan Renshaw is a combination of the good and the bad. Paula is by no means a detestable wretch but a woman, keenly sensitive and even responsible of decent behavior.

Once the vogue of the Norwegian dramatist was accepted, most of the contemporary playwrights, altered the method of their style. No sooner had Ibsen begun to compose his social plays than he found himself busy with tearing down conventions and exposing the fierce hypocrisies, which disguised the face of reality and truth. Nearly every one of his later plays is an exposure of humbug of some sort—it may be the case of a ship-owner who wants only to send a decayed old boat to sea for pure profit or it may be the false or abnormal marital relationship ‘covered over’ by social convention. In one of his most subtle plays, The Wild Duck, the same objective is obtained conversely with an aim to shock society by showing that, in its rotten state,
fanatical devotion to truth may cause just as much harm as its calculated suppression. The generic impulse of striving to attain the exact and veritable fact remains the chief inheritance which Ibsen bequeathed to the world of drama.

Pinero invariably achieves a degree of compression unknown to earlier English playwrights. Of this a good illustration is afforded by *Letty*. In Act I of *Letty* we are introduced to the bachelor apartments of Nevill Letchmere at Grafton Street. Nevill is giving a birthday part to Letty, a girl of great refinement; he is strongly attracted to Letty and there is nothing repugnant in this fascination. Letty with her friends Marion and Hilda, arrive at the party. It is evident that Letty and her friends know of Nevill’s feelings. At the end of the Act, Mr. Bernard Mandeville, whom Nevill knows to be one of Letty’s employers, arrives. The words put in the mouth of this character are at once characteristic – he is a loudly dressed, coarse-featured man with heavy moustaches and uneasy swagger.

“Mandeville: We are white men at Dagdule’s, sir, we take an active interest in the moral and general welfare of our girl – see what I mean?"
He then goes on to say how he has learnt through an office tale that Letty has "struck up an acquaintance with a young-swell". He says further: "It wasn't till yesterday that I moved in the affairs personally." The diction of this play is absolutely irreproachable. There is no beauty of phrasing in Congreve or Wilde or Synge that would be out of place in a work of such stern realism.

Pinero, for certain did not go to these lengths in his exposure of humbug or in the building up of a philosophy of life. Nevertheless, he did take up the issue of the anomalies of the contemporary state of married life and the condition of women. Through his influence on drama Ibsen's fondness not only for putting his emphasis on women but also for endowing them with remarkable qualities, played no mean part in the evolution of feminist ideas. In all the so-called 'modern' realistic plays of G.B. Shaw and Pinero, following this trend, women attained a degree of prominence far removed from the older conception which made them playthings. The women of Pinero are very carefully drawn, and in this again there can be seen the influence consciously or unconsciously exerted by Ibsen.

Leslie Brudenell in the Profligate, Paula Tanqueray in The Second Mrs. Tanqueray, Theophila in the Benefit of the Doubt, Zoe in Midchannel, Nina in his House in Order, Agnes, In The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith, and Iris – all are
representatives of some curious phase in a woman’s life. These characters are not weaklings. They are on the contrary endowed with a will. In the *Benefit of the Doubt*, the dour Scotsman Fraser of Locheen, who wears the kilt at dinner and insists on having his ‘deplorable’ bagpipes played on every occasion proves too much for his wife. She flies to Jack Allingham; there is a scandal, a divorce suit and then the benefit of the doubt by the judge. The noteworthy point is Fraser’s insistence that they must go abroad to escape malevolent public opinion and gossip. Like Torvald, in *A Doll’s House*, he wants to hush up the scandal. Theo refuses and is firm that they should face the situation and remain in town. Theo has a back-bone: she shows signs indeed of the ‘new woman’; the fact that she could not preserve her courage up to the end is an instance of Pinero’s technique of blending the two methods of *La Piec Bien faite* and *La Piece a These*. Theo is ultimately delivered into the hands of the wife of a worthy bishop who proposes to extend her immaculate reputation over Theo’s picadilloes and gradually restores her in the public eye.

*The Profligate* is a tragedy at a time when trivialities prevailed. Pinero, sought to raise the serious question of man’s profligacy vis-à-vis his happiness in life. He continued to be audacious; in Act III of *Gay Lord Quex*, Pinero put a bed, though this suggestion was not as direct and vulgar as in one of the
westend performances in which the sexual act was widely suggested on a sofa. In *The Enchanted Cottage*, Pinero made a clergymen speak of his wife’s pregnancy and imminent delivery in the clearest terms possible, so that the ground was prepared for a character in modern drama to say in clear terms, if need be. “I am going to have a baby”; reticence and coyness are things of the past.

*The Profligate* is the first great English experiment in serious drama in the nineteenth century. The attempt of the author is revolutionary and his honesty of purpose is clear. He is out to enforce strict standards of social morality, he pursues his theme to the bitter end.

*Iris* is the tragedy of a woman with a sweet nature but with no moral stamina. She is left a widow at a very early age, with a small fortune which she will have to relinquish if she re-maries. Round her are three men, Croker Havington, who perhaps does not count for; he is a faithful dog like creature, Lucerne Trenwith, an impecunious young man with whom she is in love, and Frederick Maldonado, a hard, wealthy, masterly financier. Iris wavers between Trenwith and Maldonado. She cannot face living in poverty abroad with Trenwith, so she drifts and drifts till she is caught up in the net cast by Maldonado. Confounded with poverty owing to the dishonesty of the solicitor,
she readily draws on Maldonado’s cheques until she is at his mercy Trenwith returns and she tells him the whole story. He is immensely hurt and she is left to the wealthy financier, who discovers the intrigue between her and Trenwith and turns her out into the street. Iris is punished and rightly so but the audience is sorry for her. The influence is felt of the feminist moment initiated by Ibsen. Iris lives in our memory, as does Sophy Fulgarnay. The latter becomes, in the sequel, a quite estimable character although she is in the beginning a mean and despicable spy and Iris too lives in our memory although she is quite non-moral.

Pinero was not a sincere feminist in the true sense. William Archer remarks, “Some of Arthur Pinero’s best work is marred by a failure to keep abreast of moderately enlightened political and philosophical thought.6

The *Hobby Horse* well illustrates the limitations of Pinero’s frame work. His criticism of life is coloured by that uninstructive, unthinking conservativism which prevailed in the English theatre. By his own testimony Ibsen, too was not a feminist.7 A Doll’s House is still cut to the pattern of the romantic drama. The childlike and innocent woman, involved in deception, the heavy insensitive husband; the faithful friend; the guilty secret, the sealed

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7 Ibsen’s speech to the Norwegian Society for the Women’s Cause, May 26, 1898.
lips; the complication of the situation involving Krogstad’s fatal letter…… all show the old underlying pattern. The characters are jerked into life and the play becomes important on account of its rejection of romantic morality. Pinero’s plays have similarity with an Ibsen-play. The characters here and there shoot forth into the cold and grim world of actuality. His plays are important due to their romantic framework and reflect the new idea of his age.

If the plays of Pinero are compared with those of Ibsen, they fall short of the ideal height but we must remember that the writer was circumscribed by the Ibsen controversy. In thought and subject, Pinero was courageous. In technique, too, his task was to steer a middle course…. not to write mere theatrical pieces and yet not to aim at the tightness of concentration found in Ibsen. He was greatly influenced by Ibsen’s interest in the conflict between the individual and his social environment. He studied the technique, but he preferred the straightforward technique of the French school to the introspective technique of Ibsen. In technique, therefore, the play was a departure.

Pinero dispensed with unsophisticated aids to exposition – soliloquies and asides. Ibsen had earlier dispensed with these labour saving devices. But in England Pinero was almost the first to discard these artificialities to which

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he himself had clung for so long. *Sweet Lavender* and *The Magistrate* contain plenty of them. Pinero cast off these things and made them look silly and old-fashioned. *The Squire* (1981), *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* (1895) and *Midchannel* (1904) are plays of this type. The theme of *The Squire* poses a problem which has the nucleus of his later serious plays such as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Pinero made the following entry in the note book about the Squire. "The notion of a young couple secretly married – the girl about to become a mother – finding that the former wife is still in existence. The heroine among those who respect and love her. The fury of a rejected lover who believes her to be a guilty woman. Two men face to face at night time, Qy…. Kill the first wife?" In *The Squire* the problem of love and marriage is dealt with in the characters such as Kate Verity. The aim of the play was the presentation of the duties of man as the play does not move on the metaphysical plane and as we are always kept conscious of the life around us. Ibsenite was a term of reproach and to write problem plays was to write oneself down. The greatest headache of the playwright was: how far will the public go in its liking for serious drama? Even an innovator has to ask that question unless, of course, he is a genius overstepping the bound of time and space. The notable point is that Pinero asked that question and within the

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8 Quoted by A. Nicoll, in the *Nineteenth Century Drama*, p. 174.
realms of possibility, answered the question by writing *The Profligate* in which he drew attention to a thing that was not as healthy and clear as the various fairy tales. The main argument of the play was set by Pinero thus:

It is good and soothfast saw

Half roasted never will be raw.\(^{10}\)

"Pinero’s plays are like perfectly woven-tapestries, they read brilliantly whichever side looked at or they are like perfectly proportionate muscles, each word perfectly placed in each sentence, each speech deftly thought out, exquisitely chiselled and always contributing to the whole, each act a combination of cumulative scenes and the whole moving like the inevitable march of fate, to a conclusion that is about as easy to deny as the total sum of a correctly added column of figure.\(^{11}\)

Pinero was indirectly influenced by Ibsen and his influence was superficial. No play can be said to bear direct lineaments of Ibsensim. Even G.B. Shaw, Ibsen’s strongest champion, does not imitate him. His thrust was indirect but his influence was more pervasive even than Byron’s. The dramatic output of Europe was coloured by Ibsen - The Theatre Libre in Paris, the Frele

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\(^{10}\) *The Profligate.*

Buhne in Berlin and The Independent Theatre in London drew inspiration either from Zola or from Ibsen. Pinero's plays were cast in the new mould and they also abandoned the rhetorical and while accepting the limitations of his times and recognizing that England had its own way of life and action, differing from that of other nations, Pinero still made an advance in the direction of realism.

The sum up, Pinero's plays are the mixture of the twin techniques of the well-made-play and thesis-play. None of his play proves theses nor are they as disturbing as Ibsen's plays. Ibsen's influence on Pinero may be classified under two main heads: its effect on the nature of experience as an artist; and the development of dramatic form. Being an artist Pinero is close to Ibsen, for the latter's interest does not lie purely in abstract problems. Whatever causes Shaw assigns to him, Pinero never loses sight of the traditional function of the dramatist. Being a dramatist Ibsen is not interested in heredity but in the experience and inheritance. Pinero was not a thinker as Ibsen was. He never arranges or rearranges experience that the audience may be thrilled before the spectacle of life. In an age of democracy, Pinero made his theatre dealing with artificial people involved in artificial situation: his Paula, his Zoe, his Agnes, his Iris are strangely turned out individuals;
external circumstance and chance cause tragedy, letters are planted and
discovered at a convenient time, suspense is maintained at all cost, and the
threads of the plot are firmly tied together. By combining these techniques,
Pinero created the necessary atmosphere for higher drama. The plays of Pinero
ultimately suffer from the want of a real philosophy, a thing which could be
achieved in his times in England only by compromise.