Chapter-VIII

CONCLUSION
The previous chapters of the study explore the mind and art of Pinero thoroughly. He was not only a great dramatist but also a very sensitive actor of the contemporary theatre. His works are characterized by some degree of realism, by sharp dialogue, by a progressive treatment of theme and by excellent craftsmanship and construction of high order. He was undoubtedly, the path finder of the nineties and the pioneer of the New Drama. He deserves the reputation of a great dramatist and actor of his age. His farce, comedies of manners, and sentimental comedies are famous for brilliant craftsmanship and a deep sense of contemporary British society. His plays deal mainly with the theme of love, sex, marriage and social problems of his age.

As each age has its particular problems in particular environments, certain tendencies become pronounced, there is a gradual development of new thought and feeling of which the contemporary dramatist takes cognizance. In fact, Pinero was in no way untouched with the contemporary England.

Sir Arthur Wing Pinero was a contemporary and, in a sense, a rival of Oscar Wilde. Really a Victorian at heart, he wrote his first-play at the time when Ibsenism began its assault upon the Albion. His later and more
noted problem plays represent an incomplete understanding of realism. Scribe, Augion, Sardou were his friends, technicians whom he emulated. His ability to construct plays was extraordinarily fine. His main difficulty lay in an insufficient ability to observe life and humanity and reveal what he saw. Later on he outgrew his early comedies which brought him fame and much money; he plunged into thesis plays which were successful in his age, but which seem childishly outdated today. These plays however, prove the fact that no English dramatist of that era has ever touched his amazing comprehension of play construction. It was George Bernard Shaw who said of Pinero that, "he had never written a line from which it could be guessed that he was a contemporary of Ibsen, Tolstoi, Meredith. He finds himself at the crown of the 20th century hailed as a man of new ideas of daring, originality of supreme literary distinction and even, which is perhaps oddest, of consummate stage craft."¹

A deep study of Pinero and his plays demonstrates that he had contributed much to the rise of the New Drama as the great pioneers of modern drama, Robertson, Arthur Jones, in their own way contributed much to the progress of modern drama. Robertson brought in to his

dramatic art contemporary realism. He employed advanced devices and
dramatic methods. In the same period Galsworthy had given to drama
naturalness, simplicity and decisive dialogues. Pinero followed closely in
the footsteps of Robertson. His plays are light comedies full of satire. In
his plays we find double tendency, one realistic and the other sentimental.
The old melodramatic, sentimental quality of the conventional drama was
still present. Pinero along with Robertson had paved the way for social
realistic problem play. Thus Robertson and Pinero had introduced a new
element of realism in to drama.

The last thirty years of the nineteenth century were marked by a
new tendency to realism in France; Balzac, Maupassant and Zola had
completely changed the drift of fiction. They were stalwart champions of
realism. The influence of Ibsen was tremendous on the drama of the late
nineteenth century. On account of the influence of Ibsen and a strong
wave of realism from France where Balzac, Maupassant and Zola had
become the ideals of French literature, a new form of drama had evolved
which is now called the 'New Drama'.

The 'New Drama' was a turning point in the history of British
drama which has been marked by creative urges and relapses into
decadence. The Elizabethan and Restoration periods were the glorious ages of the greatness of drama towards the close of the 18th century. There was a marked decay in the creative art of drama in the early nineteenth century which was great in poetry and criticism, but poor in dramatic output. There is no doubt that in this period there were great actors and actresses. The names of Edmund Kean, Rogercamble, Mrs. Siddons can never be forgotten. They gave commanding performances of the great Shakespearean plays, and characters. Under the long shadow of Shakespeare, no creative dramatist appeared on the scene.

H. A. Jones was, no doubt, an upholder of realism but his plays do not approximate to the realism of Ibsen or Tolstoi or Strindberg, he copies only their realism of externals. Pinero, though not a thorough realist, grasped some of the fundamentals of realism. He advanced the modern drama by accepting the conditions imposed by the times in which he worked, and the country in which he laboured. Borrowing from the French, he started writing English farces free from foreign influences, with English humour and expressive of the social climate of England. As a result, plays after him could be written on English subjects with English ideas—plays, moreover, that would not fail to bring money into the
managerial till; he had the courage to call ugly things by their real name, a departure from the earlier romantic tendency in which such facts were either glossed over or forgotten or at any rate not emphasized. At the time when the influence of French well made plays, pièce-bien-faite dominated the stage and were causing its degeneration into a cloud-of-cuckoo land of artistic and romantic adventure the revolt against the levity of the Scribe school came from Pinero. Pinero not only created women but also endowed them with virile qualities. His Paula, Agnes, Iris, Rose Trelawny, Sophy, and Leslie are no heroines of romance; they are more or less, full blooded creatures, exercising some influence upon their destiny. In the realistic modern drama since Shaw women attained an important role far removed from the older conceptions of playthings or goddesses.

A critical examination of some of his comedies will show that Pinero was an innovator. For the first time an English dramatist freed himself from French servitude. The native English humour had created English farces for the English public instead of following the prevailing vogue of translation and adopting ready-made farces from France. He had the eye to see that England had its own kind of life and an active way of its own; the characters talked and moved in a different fashion. His greatest
achievement, however, was that he did not raise a laugh for its own sake but for the sake of enlivening the characters in *The Magistrate* (1885), *The School Mistress* (1886), and the sentimental *Sweet Lavender* (1888). The following year he turned serious in *The Profligate*, which he topped with his piece about Paula Tanqueray's shame. The public and critic (except Shaw) went mad over the piece. No actress in London would touch the part of a woman with a past until 'Mrs Patrick Campbell' was found. Apparently it was her gloriously passionate performance which blinded the eyes of all to the deficiencies of Pinero's writing. He aimed at tragedy, but never achieved it because his serious plays were mundane affairs which never purged their audience. *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* (1896), *Iris* (1993) and *Midchannel* (1999) were in similar vein. They had commercial success, as indeed, did most of his plays until the outbreak of the First World War and a new crop of modern playwrights finally belatedly opened the eyes of the audience to the Victorianism of his plays. *Trelawny of the Wells* (1898) and *The Gay Lord Quex* in the same year were two popular starring vehicles; the first has known a number of famous revivals on both sides of the ocean.
Another important conclusion derived from the study of Pinero's plays is that modern drama owes a tremendous debt to the work of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero. He is the doyen of the present day theatre. He brings to fulfillment that which was prophesied by Robertson, and shows, progressive development in the broad tendencies of dramatic art from the eighties of the last century to the present day. One of the best of Pinero's works, *Sweet Lavender* shows the new style at an early period of his career, with a sure sense of the theatre. The author has told a story which may seem sentimental to the twentieth century, but which nevertheless proved popular in its own time and did much to accustom the audience to a better dramatic technique. The crude world of melodrama disappears in the face of the spirit of this play and the excitement which had of old been raised by the former are exploited in the interests of the newer style.

In *Sweet Lavender* the story is told of Element Hale, the adopted son of Geoffrey Wedderburn, who falls in love with Lavender, the daughter of the Laundress Ruth. He is about to be disinherited when Wedderburn discovers in Ruth the sweetheart of his early years and Lavender his own daughter. Needless to say, due to this discovery the plot
comes to an emotional and happy conclusion. This minor play enjoyed 683 performances. Actor Terry went to India for a holiday (leaving on October 4, 1890) but his return was marked by 54 performances bringing the total number of London presentations of this single play to 737.² A provincial tour lasting till 5 November, 1891, yielded another 697 performances.³ The play was not only performed in the United Kingdom, America, South Africa and the West Indies but was also expected to be staged in India. It was translated into Italian and into the Teutonic and Slavonic tongues for performance in Germany and Russia. The Hobby Horse, The Weaker Sex, The Lady Bountiful, saw 109, 197, 66 performances respectively whilst the more important plays The Profligate and The Second Mrs. Tanqueray created stage history. This success, in the context of the time, is not without lasting importance. After 1897, for seven years, there was little encouragement to the New Drama. “The highly experimental nature of this new drama involved questions of economic and professional interest, of theatrical habit. The actor-manager, who dominated the scene, wanted to use the drama for idle amusement. Pinero had the knowledge of theatre, achieved popular

² Vide, Introductory note by M.C. Salmon in Sweet Lavender.
³ Ibid.
success by deliberately 'watering-down' Ibsen; he did not much copy Ibsen."^4

In fact, no amount of destructive criticism can dislodge Pinero from his due place in the history of English drama, won by his brilliant craftsmanship. He was a competent craftsman with a sound knowledge of the theatre. He was a brilliant builder of plots and a fine creator of dialogues, though they were not infrequently divorced from maturity. The plays of Pinero were perfectly planned and so professionally written that actors had no difficulty. He worked out in several phases his industry of work so great as to be amazing.

The pattern of Pinero's work is almost like mathematical calculations. He scorned all distraction and lived through laborious days. Pinero remained very serious about the performance of his plays. He, himself, used to stay for the final dress rehearsal and till the end of the play he was keen to observe the performance of the actors. D.E. Oliver remarks that his work is a great improvement upon the poor stuff of the mid-Victorian period in construction and ideas, "though in the main it is

^4 Vide chapter VI Ibsen's Influence on Pinero.
artificial and cramped."\(^5\) He is called the master of stagecraft\(^6\) by *The Times* (London), and a story teller in drama of unrivalled reputation. Professor William Philips remarks; "Sir Arthur has earned his justly high reputation when he has given the best of his thought as well as his techniques."\(^7\) A. W. Walkley writes, "When Pinero is at his best you may reckon yourself as close upon the high watermark of the theatrical enjoyment."\(^8\) Archer also examined the scores of Pinero's plays and found them perfect in construction. George Jean Nathan in *Materia Critica* described Pinero "as a shrewd craftsman, a graceful penman and a considerable influence in theatring the years that marked the other side of the frontier of the present century."\(^9\) Nicoll comments, "Whatever the failings of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, he must be acclaimed as a master of his craft; once one of the most important figures in the dramatic revival of our time."

Pinero had written his plays with superb technical skill. Some critics have considered Pinero the most accomplished craftsman of the

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\(^5\) D.E. Oliver, *The English Stage*, p. 66.

\(^6\) *The Time London*, Saturday, November 24, 1934.

\(^7\) William Philips, *The Twentieth Century Theatre* quoted by Fyfe in *Sir Arthur Pinero Play's and Playwright*, p. 46.

\(^8\) Quoted by *Fortnightly* edited by W.L. Courtney, Vol. CXXIII, 1928.

English theatre since the time of Shakespeare and held that Shakespeare alone could match or surpass him in construction. In sheer suspense Pinero’s *Gay Lord Quex* brings echoes of The Merchant of Venice and the screen scene in The School for Scandal. His *House In Order* is considered a lesson in technical adroitness. Pinero had an eye for the actors as he had his early training in stage craft. He was the first English dramatist to craft plays to try to employ actors and actresses because they were physically and intellectually suitable to the parts they performed.

He was a versatile writer not of one mood but of many, writing within the space of a year or two such plays as *Sweet Lavender*, *The Profligate*, *The Gay Lord Quex*, *Iris*. It is, therefore, futile to find fault with the author that he did not seek to do a more profitable pursuit than to examine what he did achieve at a time when serious plays were either not written at all, or if written, were invariably lightened by some kind of comic relief. The value of *The Profligate* lies in its seriousness of purpose. Cunliff, however has something different to say “one can not take it seriously after condemning the Profligate to commit suicide. In the original version he accepted the suggestion of John Hare, the actor manager who produced the play, and let the sinner off with a happy
ending so that instead of being a reproof of virtues, the play as acted was really an encouragement of it. *The Profligate* instead of being a horrible example suggested rather the possibility of making the best of both the worlds.\(^{10}\) Cunliff does take in to account the courage of the author who has chosen such a theme. “His courage in writing *The Profligate* is noteworthy when we bear in mind that the serious play did not have it down on the stage till the year 1889. The pulpit, the press or the study were the only places where serious subjects could be discussed in a hush-hush voice. Even the birth of a baby had to be mentioned in coy whispers and amongst shouts of ribald laughters.”\(^{11}\) *The Profligate* instead of being a horrible example suggested rather the possibility of making the best of both the worlds.\(^{12}\)

Pinero cared for the taste of public; he was guided by the desires of the public. Pinero suffered “the better judgment to be over ridden by the demands of the actor based on the supposed traits of the public and wrenched the denouement in to a happy ending.”\(^{13}\) Pinero in his *The Big Drum* set out his reasons in the following words, “we live in depressing

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\(^{13}\) St. John Ervine, *Theatre in My Time*, p. 199.
times and perhaps in such times the first duty of a writer for the stage is to make concessions to his audience and above everything to try to afford them a complete if brief distraction from the gloom which awaits them outside the theatre.\textsuperscript{14}

It has been questioned and not unjustifiably whether mere excellence of construction is enough and that to technique must be joined ideas. "A study of \textit{The Second Mrs. Tanqueray} shows that Pinero achieved wonderful unity in this direction of the play."\textsuperscript{15} In this, Ibsen's influence on European drama has been significant for three things; simpler and direct stage craft, unreasoning worship of the boldest prose and drab representation of life's monotony. \textit{The Second Mrs. Tanqueray} is a more serious and determined attempt to write in the new vein. He made arrangements with George Alexander, "the actor manager, for a series of performances and even offered the play without fee.\textsuperscript{16} Alexander decided to give it a chance; it was an immediate success. The author appeared on the stage and there was more cheering. It had its London run extended to 28th July, there were tours in the provinces; it was back again in London.

\textsuperscript{14} Pinero's, \textit{Preface to The Big Drum}.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
from November to April. In all, three hundred performances were given in London alone.

Thus, it is obviously clear that *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* was a great play written in the English language for the English people. It is not a piece of shallow amusement; it deals with the real social problem of a woman with a past, owing its powerless to the plot and the moral than to the dramatists accurate characterization and fine technical skill; it infact, set the pace at the time for the problem plays and moreover placed contemporary English drama at par with continental drama.

Had Pinero written more plays in which his fine techniques were joined to ideas, had he used his great technical skill to take more social importance and personal experience, his place would have been that of the greatest master of the art of drama. *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* remained a milestone for Pinero. *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith, The Benefit of the Doubt*, and *Iris* had a clear path through the forest of prejudice against serious drama. *Letty, The Freak, The Big Drum, The Enchanted Cottage, Preserving Mrs. Panmure*, were for the most part inconsequential. His view of life was coloured by an unthinking conservatism found in stage land. William Archer rightly remarks. “Some of Arthur Pinero’s best

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work is marred by a failure to keep abreast of moderately enlightened political and philosophical thought.\textsuperscript{17}

The study of Pinero's plays shows that his mind was eccentric and that he was, in essence, a writer of drawing room comedy. He did not create normal human beings. His characters are vulgar neurotics with a comfortable income. \textit{A Wife without a Smile, The Weaker Sex, A Private Room, A Seat in the Park, Play-goers, Lady Bountiful}, are based on eccentricity. \textit{Lady Bountiful} contained in Roderick Heron an artificial figure who overflows with tiresome chatter. \textit{In The Weaker Sex}, Pinero claims that women are incapable of taking part in the non-domestic work of the world. Many of his characters appear to be mere stage puppets; particularly his servants and minor characters, appear and reappear with a dull monotony that never lightens.

Love is one of the major themes in the plays of Pinero. He is a strong preacher of love that is faithful, true and devoted. He favours those, entangled in love affairs, who are tortured and misled in love's complication. In the treatment of love, Pinero is sentimental yet his

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{The Old Drama and The New} by William Archer, an Essay in Revolution, by William Heinemann, 1923, p. 290.
sentimentalism has a quality of its own which is generally accepted. Out of his sentimental treatment of love grows the drama of real significance.

The tragedies of Pinero are thin in matter and have not the stuff of great chance. In *Iris* for example, the apparent tragedy is that the heroine exchanges wealth for poverty. His plays have superficial boldness. There is little or no intellectual honesty, the reason being that Pinero had been too long a Victorian to accept the new line of thinking. Nicoll reports that, "Many other dramatists of those years took up as their province Sir Arthur Wing Pinero's pathetic drama, H. A. John Harpers problem play, in the tragedy of social forces elaborated by John Galsworthy, the realistic drama of Harley Warker or the poignant domestic tragedy of Mr. Masefield. C. Hadden Chambers, who first appeared with one of them in 1886, is decidedly a follower of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero."\(^{18}\)

Pinero who ironically, set the new fashion, did not find congenial material either in such characters or in the great social, economic and moral issues raised by the first World War. He was too much taken up with the purely personal problems of a Paula or Agnes; he did not delve more deeply to question the fundamental bases of sex morality. He no

doubt sympathized with the revolt of a Nina or a Rose Trelawney but there is nothing in the play to suggest the arrival of the new woman. His somewhat sordid choice was to deal with the stereotyped themes of suicide and the love affairs of the middle aged. His experience as an actor manager deterred him from taking a really bold step.

Pinero was competent in small parts, exact and industrious, but he lacked the spirit and vivacity of mood which actors needed. The dramatic critic in Birmingham said of his King in Hamlet that “It was the worst Claudius the city had ever seen.”¹⁹ This did not depress Pinero. He knew that he was not an actor and that he had become a playwright only because he had been threatened in his early vocation. Pinero could console himself by the thought that the creator of Claudius had been a poor ghost in the same play. A study of his plays shows that the art of the actor manager takes him away from real life into a land of make-belief and whimsicality which ill accords with realism. It would not be difficult to form the impression that Pinero wrote for his actor managers John Hare, Alexander or Grossmith and though this suggestion has been contradicted by Fyfe, yet the fact is that it was Pinero who first began the

¹⁹ Marclo Borse, *The English Stage*, p. 75.
cunning practice of casting to types. It is true that his knowledge of stage
craft helped him to do away with the old historic acting and to usher in a
new style of production. Nevertheless, this did not amount to too much;
and Pinero himself was conscious of the cramping influence of acting on
drama. When asked whether his work was hampered or aided by his
experience as an actor, he replied; "that is a big question.....the dramatist
who has been an actor is better able than other hands; too intimate an
acquaintance with the theatre and its association is apt to narrow a man's
vision of life to beget more theatricalism."^{20}

It is clear after studying his plays that Pinero was not a thinker,
dramatist, nor a prophet or awakener or reformer. His plays are not the
product of study for he draws upon life and from life with greater
consistency than Ibsen. He is however restricted by the want of a larger
imagination and by his slender equipment as psychologist; within a
certain range he understands individual character. Beyond that range, he
uses the sighting of an admirable stage craft. His mind is practical rather
than imaginative; his themes, therefore, are direct and prosaic, sometimes
pleasantly sentimental, but never poetic. All his work is self conscious in

^{20} Pinero, quoted by Fyfe H. in *Sir Arthur Pinero's Plays and Players*, p. 254.
construction, although nearly impeccable in dialogue; swift and decisive, in characterization. But the whole drama of Pinero stands for no significant fact. However "it is an excellent mirror of change in public taste."^{21}

A comparison between Shaw and Pinero shows that Pinero, who rose at first fell and why Shaw, though immature in the beginning rose to heights. His contemporaries who used the naturalistic convention to discuss social problems are already out of date; much of Barrie or Coward is sentimental or frivolous while the work of Galsworthy, Brìddie or Preistley, though serious in intent, is already passé. At the same time a comparison with G.B. Shaw will bear out the truth that a dramatist, who found his work on the theatre alone cannot be a really intimate and accurate dramatist.

G. B. Shaw in London found his way in journalism as a critic passing from one concert to another, from a picture shown in Bond street to one at the new gallery, from a Shakespearean production at the Lyceum to a Pantomime at Drury Lane. He preached Wagner and Ibsen, and castigated the privileges of the Royal Academy. He was determined to get a hearing.

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He began with five (poor) novels between 1879-1883, from 1888 to 1889 he was a dramatic critic. Pinero, on the other hand had achieved eminence by the ‘eighties and in farce become an innovator. By the nineties he had shown his mettle in the more responsible vein of social satire. Pinero was at his summit and fully prepared for the role of dramatist en serieus. But the writer of The Quintessence of Ibsenism, ‘The Sanity of Art’, and The Perfect Wagnerite, a critic and a lecturer soon sailed into theatre beginning as an unknown playwright. Soon he achieved the fame which he deserved, the reason was that Shaw was a socialist thinker and an iconoclast; he did not care a pin for conventional dramaturgy but created a comedy of sheer discourse. The Shavian concept of heroism, its philosophy of a life force, Shaw’s social satire and exposure of humbug, earned for its author a fame that Pinero could not hope to achieve in spite of all his knowledge of stage craft. The greater potentialities were within Pinero’s reach, people watched with the greatest expectancy whether he would take the drama a stage ahead of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, but they were disappointed.

Pinero, undoubtedly, had in him the elements which could have taken him forward; he was capable of taking the drama ahead of his
times, if only he had been less tramelled by his own brilliant stage craft. Be that as it may he chose to remain an inveterate character actor,...a term denoting a clever stage performer who cannot act in the true sense of the work and therefore makes an elaborate study of disguises and stage tricks by which acting can be quickly simulated. When he had perfected his form and instrument, his efforts were supplanted by the new drama which came from Ibsen, and after a few years, he was content to relapse into his earlier vein and write unhesitatingly the farces with which he had begun his career. He could not free his version of the modern drama from streaks of fantasy and traditionalism. Strindberg once aptly castigated the hollowness of sentimental and romantic plays by attacking their patent leather themes played in patent leather shoes on Brussels’ carpets. To some extent the same destructive criticism could be made of Pinero’s neurotic themes.

In other European countries it was proving possible to create a new art of the drama by filling old forms with the contents of a newer age. But Pinero was so long and so intensely nurtured in the transition that he missed the chance of taking the English drama forward. The aroma of the new wine of ideas and ferment of society is sometimes made clear, but he
did not know how to put the new wine into the old bottles. Frank Vernon supports this view; social and moral problems were in the air and Sir Arthur Pinero made a tremendous bid for leadership by a plan which brought forward in Mrs. Patrick Campbell an actress of a wholly new type and startled the bourgeois by its subject. One feels that Pinero failed by inches to become the leader of the advancing drama.

After *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* there was a flood of problem plays about vulgar neurotics. The charming comedy of manners, *Trelawny of the Wells* is a masterly piece of theatrical story telling. Shaw was immature and struggling to get social performances of his first plays, "Sir Arthur was with his Tanqueray and Mrs. Campbell crowded at St. James, the ball was at his feet but Shaw indeed kicked it".\(^{22}\) Shaw indeed kicked the ball but even he could not hold the English theatre for long. He did his best to chasten morals with ridicule, his plays amused, stimulated, exasperated and shocked his contemporaries yet they do not still live as do the plays of Lawrence or Forster or Eliot. Many critics from A. B. Walkley onwards have held that something was wrong with the Shavian play, which wears less well than Ibsen's or Chekhov's productions.

\(^{22}\) Frank Vernon, *The Twentieth Century Theatre*. 
The social framework of Pinero's time shows that he was a great dramatist whose work was characterized by some degree of realism, some sort of progressivism, by courage and by craftsmanship of a high order. He was, undoubtedly, the path finder of the nineties. Sir Arthur Pinero was more than a pioneer; he kept abreast of the movement which he himself had been so largely instrumental in inaugurating, No amount of destructive criticism can dislodge Pinero from his due place in the history of the English drama, won by his brilliant craftsmanship. Pinero's days were the days when the playwrights were right at the bottom of the literary scale in England; in those days there was no real drama at all—Gilbert, Byron, Aubrey, Bernard, Wills, Tennyson and Swinburne indeed wrote plays but they belong only to the limbo of drama. At such a time, Pinero came forward to write semi-serious or at least convincing plays; had he attempted anything more ambitious for the stage of his times in England he would have been hounded out of the theatre both by the public and by the critics.

Pinero's was 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 cannot be
reproached. Ibsen himself owed not a little to the French playwrights Emile Augler and Alexander Dumas Fils, from whom he learnt, valuable lessons in dramatic techniques. Pinero too was not emancipated fully from the nineteenth century ideals of stagecraft with its artificiality and love of La piece bien faite; his characters were stage puppets and were a shade too stagey. Nevertheless, he evolved a method all his own; he took the well constructed play, made it more flexible than it had ever been, adopted it to suit the requirements of the new stage. What Ibsen was to the continent, Pinero was to England. As Ibsen learned some lesson in the school of Scribe in Paris and applied and transformed the Piece bien faite in his own fashion, Pinero also learned from the French and from Ibsen, blending their techniques and creating a new atmosphere for higher drama and a thing which could be achieved in his times in England only by compromise. In that lay his dramatic genius and foresight. Pinero even provided material for study in India, where tradition may have to yield place to ideas consonant with the modern world.

In England, however, there is no chance of his revival. The influence of contemporary realism, with its present trend towards expressionism the background of Freudian psychology and of the re-birth
of the poetic drama daringly re-introduced by T. S. Eliot have effectively sounded the death knell for 'Period' stage presentation. Yet it must be admitted that with his *The Second Mrs Tanquerary* and *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* Pinero succeeded in doing something more important than all that Henry Arthur Jones had accomplished. His theatrical skill is as assured as that of Jones and he brings to his themes some at least of those qualities which make for tragedy: conviction, deeper thought and fine sympathy. Here the sneering tone which vitiated the spirit of his other plays has been laid aside and he re-introduces to the stage that noble pity which had found hardly any exponent since the seventeenth century. It is a strange fact that whereas Jones, brought up in the melodramatic tradition, seemed to reach his finest achievement in The Rogue's Comedy and in The Liars, Pinero, whose training had been in farces, discovered his real strength in a kind of tragic drama which is a healthy and sound cult to the dramatists of the new age.