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REPORT
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THE undersigned, acting as a committee of
the Graduate School, have read the accompanying
thesis submitted by Thenia C. Josi
for the degree of Master of Arts.
They approve it as a thesis meeting the require-
ments of the Graduate School of the University of
Minnesota, and recommend that it be accepted in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts.

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Eugène Brieux
as a
Social Teacher.

A thesis submitted to the faculty
of the Graduate School of the
University of Minnesota.

by

Thenia Chilcott Josi

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.
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1728-1728

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Preface.

In the following pages I have attempted to point out the social teaching as set forth in the plays of Eugène Irieux, thereby showing Irieux as a social teacher. I have disregarded the chronological arrangement of the plays and have rearranged them in groups according to the themes handled in them. I have discussed all the twenty-nine plays, mentioning briefly even the five unpublished. In a final summary I have noted in succinct form the main teaching of every group.

Plays of Brieux:

1. Childhood.

- a. "Les Remplaçantes".
- b. "Maternité".
- c. "Simone".

Les Remplaçantes.

Pièce en Trois Actes. Le Théâtre-Antoine, Feb. 15, 1901.

M. and Mme. Denisart are wealthy bourgeois in Paris, who have many social duties pressing upon them. As a result, the strain is especially hard on Mme. Denisart who finds it too inconvenient to nurse her own child. As a consequence, the Denisarts get in touch with a wet-nurse broker named François. He says:

"Tu sais que je représente la meilleure compagnie de France."¹

François seems to have an almost inexhaustible supply of women, who, living in a small town near Paris, sell their own milk to Parisian babies.

The play opens in the humble home of a typical peasant family. The husband, Planchot, is the nephew of François. Mme. Lazerette Planchot has had two children. The death of the first when three years old, makes her unusually careful of the babe now four months old. She knows how many of her neighboring women, both married and unmarried, eagerly await the opportunity to go to Paris as wet-nurses. But her

1. "Les Remplaçantes", page 32.

fondness for her home and family renders the idea very repulsive to her.

When François comes, seconded by her father-in-law, Père Planchot, and finally by her husband, with the tempting offer of eighty francs a month to enter the Denisart home, she finally consents. Père and Mère Planchot are to care for her own child in her absence, for which service she is to pay thirty-five or forty francs out of her monthly salary.

Act II shows us the wealthy and chilly home life in the Denisarts in Paris. Lazarette has now become the wet-nurse of little Guy, but continually her heart strings are pulled toward her own boy at home. Planchot sends an urgent letter to M. Planchot, urging his wife's return because he has fallen and injured his foot. To quiet the man, Denisart sends him two hundred francs. Later a telegram arrives, stating that the Planchot child is ill. Lazarette does not wait even to remove her nurse's garb, but hurries home on a first-class ticket.

Act III shows her at home again. She learns that the report of the hurt foot and of the baby's illness was only a ruse to bring her home. Neighbors noticed the

weakness of Planchot in paying court to a Mme. Jean and decided to summon her home at once. After Planchot is forgiven and baby Planchot says "ma-ma" to her own mother, the final curtain falls. Lazarette has decided that her own family needs her more than those in ^{Paris} Paris; Planchot feels that he can now earn enough to support them all in fair comfort.

Les Remplaçantes abounds in pictures of men whose wives go to Paris as wet-nurses, thereby enabling them to live in ease, wearing good clothes and spending all their time at the inns.¹

"Bien manger, bien boire, bien dormir."²

One poor man is troubled and asks this question:

"Quand une femme ne vous donne pas d'enfants, est-ce qu'on peut divorcer?"³

The broker promptly answers:

"Oui."

The purpose of Brieux seems in this play to be to denounce the common custom in France of employing wet-nurses. One infers that the child is a phase of society close to the heart of Brieux. Here he pleads for the new-born infant and for

1. "Les Remplaçantes", Act 1., scenes 3,4,7.

2. Ibid., page 21.

3. Ibid., page 34.

its care only at the hand of its own mother: the babe born in wealth and society needs its own mother, not a remplacante; the babe from peasant poverty needs its own mother, not a biberon sale. At best, infant mortality is great enough.¹ Natural diet, Brieux implies, should not be denied, thereby increasing the rate; every effort should be exerted towards its decrease.

The theme is literally dragged in when Dr. Richon, the country doctor, in Act II, thrusts himself into a circle of fashionable lady callers in the salon of Mme. Denisart and launches forth in a tirade upon French mothers who encourage this injurious and disgraceful barter.

When asked if love exists in the peasant homes, he says pointedly:

"Sans cela, il n'y aurait personne pour nourrir les enfants des Parisiennes.²

"C'est un des plus grands malheurs parmi ceux dont vous êtes responsables. Vous avez mis au cœur de nos villageoises un tel besoin de gagner de l'argent qu'elles abandonnent leurs petits avec joie. Et elles savent cependant que ces petits sont trop souvent des condamnés à mort.³

"Si je suis ardent, c'est que depuis quarante ans, j'assiste à la démoralisation des paysans, qui vivent à côté de moi, démoralisation causée par la dépopulation de

1. "Les Remplacantes", page 119: "La mortalité des enfants de nourrices sur lieu est effroyable: trois fois plus forte que la mortalité ordinaire; ce qui revient à dire, qu'en réalité, on tue un petit paysan pour que trois parisiennes se décolleter pendant un hiver! "

2. Ibid., page 113.

3. Ibid., page 118.

la femme et le mari."¹

Then he minutely describes² the trials and dangers of mothers who come with their young babies, in third-class trains, either in the cold of winter or in the summer heat, seeking to sell

"quelque chose qui n'est pas à vendre."³

When employment is found, the first child is carried back home by the nurse-broker or friend, and its food is given, for money, to some hungry, unwelcome Parisian baby.

Finally the Brioux spokesman, Dr. Richon, turns from his small circle of listeners and says to the audience, au public:

"Alors vous comprenez bien qu'ils meurent, ces pauvres petits! vous le comprenez bien! Et vous comprenez bien que j'ai raison de faire appel pour eux à votre esprit de justice et à votre pitié!"⁴

As Dr. Richon discusses this question with these ladies, some explanations are made to support this neglect on the part of unnatural mothers. Some say that the year of social retreat would work havoc in the husband's and father's life.

1. "Les Remplacantes", page 110.
2. Ibid., page 120.
3. Ibid., page 43.
4. Ibid., page 131.

Mme. D'Alèze asserts:

"Le plus grand ennemi de l'allaitement maternel, c'est le mari." 1

Mme. Denisart adds:

"Nous avons peur, en allaitant nos enfants, de perdre nos maris!" 1

Another phase is presented:

"On se plaint déjà que la natalité diminue en France. Ajoutez cette obligation à la maternité, on ne fera plus d'enfants du tout." 2

In Act I Dr. Richon discusses the same question with the gay city physician, Dr. Tirelle:

"Ce pays est entretenu par la misère et le vice de Paris." 3

"Nos paysannes à force de considérer l'enfant comme un gagne-pain, ont perdu pour la plupart l'instinct de la maternité. Hier, une de ces malheureuses, fatiguées de voir ses petits s'en aller, me disait en pleurante: 'Mais enfin, monsieur, les médecins ne pourraient donc pas trouver le moyen de donner du lait à une femme sans qu'elle ait besoin d'avoir un enfant?'" 3

Strong hints are made in this play as to the diseases which are carried back to the innocent peasantry by these nurses⁴; hence we see that the theme of Les Avariés has invaded this play. Les Avariés and Les Remplaçantes both appeared the same year. In fact, the plain speaking

1. "Les Remplaçantes", page 117.

2. Ibid., page 124.

3. Ibid., page 60.

4. Ibid., page 61:

Dr. Tirelle. "Qu'est-ce que c'est que ce mendiant que je vois là-bas, et qui a passé là tout à l'heure, avec un bandeau noir sur la figure?"

(Con. next page).

in the latter play was only a stepping stone to still plainer speech six months later in Les Avariés and two years later in Maternité.

Repeated reference is made to the fact that Paris families prefer filles-mères, not mariées, first, because the former demand less wages:

François: "Vous êtes mariées toutes les deux, n'est-ce pas?"

Les Deux Femmes: "Oui, monsieur François."

François: "Vous ne faites pas mon affaire, c'est une fille-mère que je cherche. Vous savez bien qu'à Paris on préfère les filles-mères."

Première Femme: "Oui, mais pourquoi?"

François: "Pourquoi? D'abord parce qu'on les paie moins. Vous n'êtes pas filles-mères? Vous êtes mariées?"

2^e Femme: "C'est la faute aux curés."

1^{re} Femme: "Si j'avais su! " 1

or, in the second place, because unmarried women are not drawn to their own children so much nor are there so many schemes resorted to by relatives, who bleed the rich Parisians whenever possible. After M. Denisart reads Planchot's letter, telling of the latter's injured foot,

Dr. Richon: "Une victime."

Dr. Tirelle: "Je ne comprends pas."

Dr. Richon: "Vous y tenez? eh bien, voici. Un nourrisson de l'Assistance publique était atteint par hérédité, de la plus redoutée des maladies contagieuses. Vous savez laquelle. L'enfant l'a communiquée à la nourrice. Il paraît soixante ans, et n'en a pas quarante. Ses enfants sont contaminés également. Lui, il est perdu. Et malgré les examens les plus attentifs, un danger semblable plane sur toutes les maisons de nos compagnes."

1. "Les Remplacantes"? page 10.

Mme. Denisart says:

"Quand je te disait de prendre une fille-mère! "1

All in all, the evil of wet-nursing, Brieux shows, has the following deadly results: the peasant women, severed from their own children and home, continually long to return²; their husbands become fond of indolence, wine, cards, and women³; the death-rate of the babes is far too high.⁴

There are also two advantages, according to Brieux: first, the French society lady is relieved from the embarrassment of nursing her own child, thereby incurring the risk of losing the love of her husband;

"Oui, c'est le mari.**La vue du bébé à la mamelle lui répugne, il proclame la jeune mère fort respectable, mais il la délaisse pour aller voir des demoiselles qui ne le sont pas. Alors, nous avons peur, en allaitant nos enfants, de perdre nos maris! "5

in the second place, the declining birth-rate in France would fall still faster if women were forced to undergo the inconvenience of nursing after having endured the trials of pregnancy.⁶

1. "Les Remplaçantes"; page 68.

2. *Ibid.*, Act II., scenes 2, 3, 4, and Act III., sc. 1.

3. *Ibid.*; page 134:

Lazarette: "Parait que les hommes on ne peut pas compter sur eux plus de huit jours."

also cf. *infra*, page 3, foot-note 2.

4. Cf. *supra*, page 4, foot-note 1.

5. "Les Remplaçantes"? page 117.

6. Cf. *supra*, page 3, quotation 2.

Maternité.

Pièce en Trois Actes. Le Théâtre-Antoine, Dec. 9, 1903.

The first act shows us the home of Julien Brignac, a sous-préfet, and his wife, Julie. They have three children, all girls. In a conversation between Julie and Brignac, Brignac tells of his desire for at least one son. Lucie complains that since her marriage four years before, she has not known any relief from child-bearing.

Her pleading for a respite, however, falls on deaf ears; he, as a state official, with ambitions toward the Chamber of Deputies, must be in sympathy with the government policies. France, as a nation, with a declining birth-rate, must be saved by men, like Brignac, who can personally put into effect the orders for repopulation.

Lucie's sister, Annette, an attractive young woman, rushes in to announce that she is about to be sought as the wife of Jacques Bernin, a son of a prominent local family. But upon Mme. Bernin's personal visit, Lucie learns that Jacques, instead of wishing to marry Annette without dowry, is about to leave the city. As she learns this, Annette, heartbroken, confesses to her sister that she has been ruined by Jacques.

Act II shows the relentless Brignac, who upon learning of Annette's condition, plans at once to isolate her for a time somewhere so that the stain may not affect his social and political aspirations. Annette explains how she has sought in vain for assistance from Jacques, only to be scoffed at and rejected. Lucie is resolved to remain no longer with Brignac because, as she tells him:

"Dès ma première grossesse, tu m'as trompée.***
Seule, ma première maternité a été désirée par moi; les autres, tu me les as imposées, et à chaque tu l'éloignais de ce corps, enlaidi, c'est vrai, mais enlaidi par toi; tu me laissais seule à la maison, dans l'embêtement de ma difformité, et quand tu revenais, tu m'apportais, avec une odeur de fille, de faux apitoiements sur ma santé."¹

Act III shows only Lucie from the dramatic personae of the preceding acts. She is now one of several witnesses against a Mme. Thomas whose business is abortion or the relief of fallen girls and women. The scene is the trial of this woman, who is accused of Annette's death. She has also been guilty of aiding a school teacher, Marie Gaubert, who has been forced to resort to abortion because the united salaries of herself and husband, both teachers, amount to only 166 francs a month. With four in the family, she can barely provide; the arrival of a fifth would have meant ruin.

1. "Maternité", page 169.

The final curtain falls upon a rabble. The dramatist only infers that, while guilty, Mme. Thomas has been in many cases justified because of conditions surrounding the lives of unfortunate women.

A second version, one seemingly preferred by Brieux, accessible to me only as translated by John Pollock and included in the Three Plays by Brieux, is as follows:

The Brignacs have two children, one a deaf mute and the other subject to convulsions. Brignac is fond of liquor and the unhealthy children are the result of his debauch. He says ironically:

"I firmly believe that drink is a social evil, and I fight against it."¹

Whereupon he insults the physician who counsels against more children because of Brignac's own weakness, amplified by inheritance.

The physician, Hoartin, says:

"His children suffer from a cumulative degeneracy. The grandfather drank, the son suffers from alcoholism, the children are nervous invalids."²

Besides Annette, Lucie has a second sister, Madeleine, now twenty-eight and married for a second time,

1. "Three Plays by Brieux", Page 268.
2. Ibid., page 292.

whose married life is no happier than the other women's in the play. She says:

"My child cost me his (husband's) love. You can't be a wife and a mother at the same time. **He left me for another woman! ** I felt that if I nursed my baby, I should lose my husband for good, and to win him back I put my child out to nurse. He died** and I have now the agony of thinking that if I had kept him with me, he would be alive."¹

The curtain of Act 11 of this version is far bolder in subject matter. Brignac, returning, gaily worked up over some political meeting and intoxicated, argues with Lucie. When resisted, he drags her fainting body to an adjoining bedroom which shows the clean, white sheets of the bed, shouting,

"Then I'll make you."²

This repellent scene is a re-enactment, Brioux says, of the brutal cave man's treatment, who stunned his wife by a physical blow upon the head. We hear Brignac's and Brioux's ironic words:

"The world has changed,"
"Yes. Since the cave man hypocrisy has been invented."³

The final act varies in no material incident.

1. "Three Plays by Brioux", page 308.
2. Ibid., page 312.
3. Ibid., page 266.

Whereas in Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont Brieux has attacked the young husband who forces sterility upon his wife, herself eager for maternity, here in Maternité he portrays the opposite extreme in man, the tendency to force woman to bear a large family regardless of her personal health, his personal habits, and the financial means available for the proper education of the children. Not that he aims to contradict himself, to discontenance race-suicide in Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont and to advocate it six years later in Maternité, but he shows up conditions in both plays which bear upon race population and upon race destruction. In certain environment, with certain parents, with certain means, all favorably exemplified in Julie and Antonin in Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont, children should be brought into the world; in less favorable surroundings, as seen in Maternité,

"Children who cannot be kept ought not to be born."¹

In Maternité Brieux portrays six typical mothers, treats each fairly, and leaves the audience to draw conclusions. He presents Mme. Catherine Turpin, the mother of seven, so many that she, a hard working woman, cannot prevent their going wrong because of hunger and need²; Marie Gaubert, the teacher with her maternal tragedy³; Feschain's

1. "Three Plays by Brieux", page 372.
2. "Maternité", pages 207 et seq.
3. *Ibids*, pages 181 et seq.

wife, now about to bear the thirteenth, without food for the third¹; Madeleine, wealthy in husbands and money, but sterile through fear of losing both²; Annette, the unmarried prospective mother; and Lucie, forced to bear degenerate children by an alcoholic husband whom she cannot love.

Brignac, though a government official, is simply a parasite. His principles are low. To follow them brings him joy. His personal enjoyment for only a brief time means months of suffering to his wife. After each childbirth he denies her that recuperative period so essential to a mother's health and hence, to her offspring.

"Nous nous sommes mariés depuis quatre ans, c'est vrai, mais il y a trois ans, à cette époque-ci, Edmée venait de naître; il y a deux ans, j'attendais notre petite Louise, et l'année dernière, à la fin de l'allaitement, j'étais malade. Remarque de plus, que j'avais nourri la dernière, je ne serais pas encore là aujourd'hui, puisqu'elle n'a que trois mois."³

"J'ai bien droit à un peu de repos, allons. Réfléchis: nous n'avons eu le temps de nous connaître ni de nous aimer."⁴

This unlicensed brutality of the married male is encouraged by prevailing houses of prostitution.

"Tu me laissais seule à la maison, dans l'embêtement de ma difformité, et quand tu revenais, tu m'apportais, avec une odeur de fille, de faux apitoiements sur ma santé!"⁵

The question of Annette, the ruined girl, comes up. What prospects are there for her?

1. "Three Plays by Brieux", page 308.
2. Cf. *supra*, page 12, quotation 1.
3. "Maternité", page 29.
4. *Ibid.*, page 32.
5. *Ibid.*, page 169.

"Pas de maternité sans mariage et pas de mariage sans dot."1

"Her! A child brought up in the strictest principles, brought up at home,-- not allowed to read novels or to go to the theatre!"2

Brieux irony. Had she been allowed to see plays like Les Avariés in the theatre, she might have foreseen her danger.

"Perhaps if she had been less ignorant, she would have run less risk,"3

says Lucie. At any rate, having attempted suicide, Annette seeks escape at the hands of a sage-femme. Like many another, she meets death. Brieux does not offer the least hint of censuring her.

Lucie, too, justifies the murder of her unborn child: "I had two little girls. One is a deaf mute, the other had convulsions. She is dead now.** I consider that I had the right to refuse the task of motherhood when it was forced on me against my will."3

"On m'a demandé mon consentement pour me donner un mari, on ne me le demande pas pour me donner un enfant."4

Brieux does not sanction criminal abortion. But of two vile evils, the life of an innocent sufferer, as Lucie's unborn child would have been if like its two sisters, or child-murder, Brieux seems to imply, choose the less evil.

"Maternité", though strong in implied hints at social sores, is strongest in this:

1. "Maternité", page 166.
2. "Three Plays by Brieux" Page 296.
3. Ibid., pages 325 and 328.
4. "Maternité", page 24.

"S'il y a des coupables, les coupables sont deux, pourquoi ne frappez-vous que la mère?" 1

Mme. Thomas, the abortionist says:

"Vous me poursuivez, moi, mais les chirurgiens qui font de la stérilité définitive, on les décore!" 2

The double standard--man's freedom, woman's serfdom, man's transient pleasure, woman's prolonged suffering, is the vital question in Maternité. Mme. Thomas' last outcry closes the piece:

"Les coupables, ce sont les hommes. Les hommes! tous les hommes." 3

1. "Maternité", page 165.
2. Ibid., 211.
3. Ibid., page 227.

Simone.

Pièce en Trois Actes. Comédie-Française, April 13, 1908.

Act 1 which serves as a prologue, is the most successful of the three parts. Édouard de Sergeac, the father of Simone, then six years old, murders his wife Gabrielle after discovering her in the arms of a lover, a bosom friend of Sergeac's, Georges de Manchart. After killing her, he draws the revolver upon himself. Deeply wounded, he is found later in a senseless condition by Hermance, the servant-maid.

Lying very low for twenty days with brain fever, he finally regains his consciousness, but with no memory of the past since the evening of November 20, the fatal day. The play opens December 20, just two months later. Act 1 is taken up with the efforts of the physician, a lawyer-friend from Paris, and the fathers of Sergeac and of the murdered girl, to lead out from the young man's dormant memory the real facts of the case.

Doubt has existed as to whether death was caused by murder or suicide. Gradually, by means of questioning and by the intense interest of Sergeac himself to solve the mystery, the truth is out:

"Oui, j'en ai tuée! Et j'ai fait justice!"¹

Simone has been too young to be told any of the facts. During the years that follow, her interests and her education become the sole aim of her father's life. Freed by the Penal Code, Article 324,

"Le meurtre commis par l'époux sur sa femme ainsi que sur le complice, à l'instant où il les surprend dans la maison conjugale, est excusable,"²

Sergeac has lived a life of comparative freedom from remorse with Sergeac père and Simone. Sergeac exerts every effort to teach Simone profound respect for her mother, who, she believes, was accidentally killed by a fall from a horse. The only dread in Sergeac's heart is that some day Simone, learning the truth, will censure him. In the meanwhile she has become a beautiful young woman with all the attractive traits of her sex and with deep love for her father.

At the opening of Act II fifteen years have passed since the murder. We see Simone, her father, and grandfather all living peacefully and quietly on the shore of the Mediterranean. Sergeac has made several trips to the Orient and is about to publish a book, the result of his studies and investigations, "L'Histoire de l'Art religieux dans l'Inde".

1. "Simone", page 34.

2. "La Liberté de l'Adultère et du Meurtre", by Jacques Lux, Revue Bleue, 5, 9:543.

In gathering his material, Simone has been his constant companion.

But this peaceful suspense is about to be broken. A young neighbor, Michel Mignier, himself a philosopher with much in common with Simone's thoughtful view of life, requests her hand. A beautiful, pure love scene is portrayed.

Mignier père, however, has his suspicions and, making investigations into the family history, learns that Simone's father has been a murderer. He forbids the marriage. Simone, when told by her father, requests an explanation. He answers:

"L'heure est solennelle pour ta vie et pour la mienne, Simone, ** et je vais te demander un serment. Je te demande de t'engager à ne faire aucune démarche, aucune recherche dans la but de connaître les détails du drame que je te cache et que je veux que tu ignores toujours. Jure-le-moi." 1

Simone, slowly: "Je le jure." 1

But the opening of Act III shows Simone questioning the old servant, Hermance. Simone's oath is not so strong as her love for Michel and her desire to solve the overhanging mystery. By clever questioning she has drawn the truth from old Hermance. Simone now decides to leave her father's home, not because she censures him for the murder, but because he has falsely idealized her mother.

1. "Simone", page 99.

She does not leave, however, for young Michel appears, learns all the facts from Sergeac, and promises to win over the elder Michel. Sergeac shudders at this idea, for he feels sure that sooner or later then Simone will learn the facts from Michel.

Very soon father and daughter open their hearts to each other. All are reconciled and happy. Simone is very tolerant and forgiving toward her father.

Though the usual didactic element is lacking in Simone, the play leaves no doubt as to Brieux's conclusion: the murder of even an adultress is not without punishment. French laws exonerate the murderer when incensed to his deed by such an act on the part of a woman¹; in Brieux the law seems to be: murder is murder. Do not kill; forgive, as Simone finally did²: Punishment, Brieux implies, comes in the years of remorse and secret fear that past truths, becoming known, may sever one from the happy, innocent associations of life.

The happiest of the associations is that of parent and offspring. This play shows clearly the duty of children and parents; this same teaching comes out in Résultat des

1. Cf. supra, page 18, quotation 2.

2. "Simone", pages 126 and 127.

Courses. When the tables are turned and the parents commit a wrong, the children should be kind and forgiving, according to Brieux's implication in both these plays. Even after Arsène Chantaud spends all his money and incurs debts, his son Victor forgives and struggles hard to pay off these debts 1; here in Simone the father is likewise forgiven by his child.

1. "Résultat des Courses", page 217.

Summary--Childhood.

Les Remplacantes, Madeuxite, and Simone all have the child and its interests as their main idea, various aspects of this idea are handled, exclusive of the divorce problem and the child interests there. This latter is handled fully in the divorce group. ¹

1. Les Remplacantes shows that wet-nursing is injurious, because first, the babies concerned suffer from unnatural diet and this change in diet increases infant-mortality ², second, the wet-nurse, in leaving her humble home through the inducement of money, encourages idleness and thoughtlessness in her husband ³, as a consequence of this, lowe life among the peasants may be destroyed, fourth, the wet-nurse herself may contract disease from the Parisian child which is the offspring of unhealthy, pleasure-loving parents ⁵. There are, however, two redeeming features in wet-nursing: first, it allows the fashionable French mother release from her child and removes the embarrassment of nursing ⁶, it prevents the mother's isolation which, in turn, causes the husband to seek gratification elsewhere and which too often causes a permanent estrangement between husband and wife ⁸, finally, wet-nursing helps raise the birth-rate ¹⁰ France, at pr sent in dangerous decrease.

- 1. Cf. infra., page 43.
- 2. Cf. supra., page 4, foot-note 1.
- 3. Cf. supra., page 8, foot-note 3.
- 4. Cf. Lazarett's speeches in Act III., scene 1.
- 5. Cf. supra., page 6, foot-note 4.
- 6. Cf. supra., page 8, quotation 5.
- 7. Cf. supra., page 6, quotation 8.

3. Maternité shows the hardship of repeated maternity upon women whose strength will not permit large families, especially when immorality in the husbands causes these families to be unhealthy ¹; in the second place, the play shows the brutality of husbands who, like the ancient cave-dweller, drag their wives by sheer force to the marriage-bed ²; again, it teaches that the unmarried prospective mother has no recourse except abortion ³; and finally, it shows clearly a need for a single standard for men and women ⁴.

3. Simone, the last play in the child-group, emphasizes the child's point of view and allows the child to choose for itself. Simone shows; first, the fear felt during all the years following the crime of murder, lest past facts be revealed, thereby severing what, otherwise, remains a happy relationship between the father-murderer and his innocent and unsuspecting daughter⁵; second, the forgiving spirit needed in the daughter to overlook past sins and to exonerate her father for the murder of her mother ⁶.

1. Cf. supra, page 14, quotation 3.

2. Cf. supra, page 12.

3. Cf. supra, page 15.

4. Cf. supra, page 16.

5. Cf. especially Act I., scenes 6 and 9; also Act III., scenes 3 and 5.

6. "Simone", pages 126 and 127.

3. Parental Dictation.

- a. "La Couvée".
- b. "L'École des Belles-Mères".
- c. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont".
- d. "La Petite Amie".

L'École des Belles-Mères.

Comédie en Un Acte.

Le Théâtre du Gymnase, March 28, 1898.

La Coupée.

Comédie en Trois Actes.

Rouen, privately, 1893.

Paris, July 9, 1903.

These two plays may be considered at once since the one-act play, L'École des Belles-Mères, forms the second act of the three-act play, La Coupée.

Act I presents the family life of M. and Mme. Graindon, with their son Auguste, twenty-two, and their daughter Fifine, eighteen. André Meillet, a well-to-do and sensible young man, through his mother, obtains consent to marry Fifine.

The second act shows the young people after two months of married life. What seems their first quarrel results in open argument over the mother-in-law of Fifine. Her parents who occupy an apartment below hear the loud conversation and join the scene of action, meeting there also Mme. Meillet, André's mother. Voices become high-pitched, several are heard

at once, and, as the curtain falls, Fifine's little dog rushes in and barks loudly.

The last act gives the home of M. and Mme. Graindor two days later. In the meantime, André has been eating at restaurants and Fifine has been with the Graindors. André returning, aided with his mother, pleads for a reconciliation. Since there has been no real question at stake, a few embraces remove all difficulty. Graindor thus terminates the play:

"Nos deux, ma pauvre vieille, nous restons tout seuls; la couvée a grandi: les petits s'envoient!"¹

Such light material as the mother-in-law subject, really a mild phase of parental dictation, handled as it is here in a very humorous way², has not prevented Brieux from clearly implying his opinion. He presents in caricature two

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1. "La Couvée", page 112.

2. Ibid., page 88 and seq.: I here quote the last group of speeches out of ten which follow these stage directions:

(Ils se disputent deux à deux. Le morceau suivant aller crescendo, après avoir commencé assez fort. ** tous criant.)

Fifine: "Qu'elle (Mme. Meillet, André's mother) m'en fasse d'abord, ce n'est pas moi qui ai été la chercher. Non! je n'en ferai pas, non!" (apologize)

André: "On dira ce qu'on voudra, mais jamais je ne permettrai qu'elle soit impertinente avec ma mère."

Mme. Meillet: "Vous avez fait de votre fille une enfant gâtée! Oui! "

Graindor: "Vous allez vous taire tous et ne pas parler comme ça tous à la fois. Je veux qu'on se taise! "

Mme. Graindor: "Ma fille ne s'est pas mariée pour faire une esclave. Mon devoir est de la défendre et je la défendrai".
(La petit chien entre et aboie).

typical mothers-in-law, Mme. Graindor and Mme. Mellet. They
it is who meddle needlessly and thrust upon their married
children their inopportune suggestions.

Mme. Mellet says to her son:

"Je vois ce que c'est---. Il faudrait l'oeil de ta mère
là-dedans.**Et écoute bien ce que ta mère va te dire, je n'en
partirai pas avant tout y soit en ordre. ** J'arrangerai tout". 1

Later M. and Mme. Graindor enter.

Mme. Graindor: "Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?"

Graindor: "Qu'est-ce qu'il y a? On vous entend d'en bas".

Mme. Graindor: "J'ai cru qu'on se battait ici. Qu'est-ce
qu'ils t'ont fait, ma pauvre Fifine?" 2

With the mother-in-law present, Erloux shows how a marital
tilt leads to at least temporary separation.

Graindor: "Ça fait deux jours qu'André déjeune at dîne
au restaurant. ** Fifine est là".

Mme. Graindor: "Ah! certes oui. Il y a des moments où
j'ouoite presque qu'elle est mariée". 3

It is a curious fact that

"Toutes les grand'mères sont bonnes et toutes les
belles-mères méchantes, alors qu'une grand'mère est toujours
une belle-mère". 4

A secondary point is brought out in these two plays:

the question of children is of vital concern to André. His
mother-in-law suggests that he can well afford to wait a while

1. "La Couvée", pages 56 and 57.
2. *Ibid.*, page 87.
3. *Ibid.*, pages 91 and 92.
4. *Ibid.*, page 66.

because children are expensive in many ways:

"Si vous saviez les tracas, les chagrins que les enfants apportent avec eux. ** Ayez-en un. ** Ce sera suffisant".¹

To which André vigorously replies:

"J'en veux avoir bientôt, et j'en veux avoir beaucoup. La France en a besoin".²

When Mme. Graindor mentions the expense and difficulty of wet-nursing, he quickly says:

"J'ai encore des idées là-dessus: mes enfants n'auront pas d'autre nourrice que leur mère".³

In these plays Erioux treats in a light, superficial tone, the same theme, or one of the themes of Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont. The latter play presents a more serious handling on the part of the dramatist.

1. "La Couvée", page 67.

2. Cf. Erioux's statement on this point in "Les Remplaçantes", page 224: "On se plaint déjà que la natalité diminue en France".

3. "La Couvée", page 28. André is evidently familiar with "Les Remplaçantes".

Cf. Fifine's statement following André's last speech: "Et moi qui aime les corsages se boutonnant dans le dos----".

Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont.

Comédie en Quatre Actes. Le Théâtre du Gymnase, Oct. 8, 1897.

Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont is the story of typical French parents, M. and Mme. Dupont of the bourgeoisie, who have three daughters. At the opening of the play one, Angèle, has already gone the way of the courtesan and lives in Paris, having been forced from home by her conventional father; another, Caroline, is at thirty-three an unfortunate spinster who, without dot, supports herself by china painting. The third daughter, Julie, is dangerously close to the age limit and the play is mainly concerned with her conventional marriage and its results.

Act I is a bartering scene between the four parents and later the so-called wooing of Antonin Kalraut and Julie Dupont, in which she feigns a love for business life and Wagner, and for her, a fondness for children.

Act II shows the young couple after four months of married life. They are not happy; he censures her for her outspoken views on women's rights; she, in turn, feels that Antonin has failed to come up to her ideal.

In the next act Angèle is forced to return home to sign certain legal papers involved in an inheritance to her and

Caroline from an aunt recently deceased. Antonin and Julie show in an open quarrel the futility of such prearranged marriages as theirs. They mention the deceptions on each side, such as Julie's supposed fondness for banking and Antonin's desire for children. The curtain falls on overturned furniture and Julie sobbing, heartbroken, alone.

In the final act the parents are again meddling, this time in the divorce prospects. Dupont is more anxious for the return of his 30,000 francs than for his daughter's happiness. What Angèle says of her experiences induces Julie to return to her husband. Antonin appears, begs for forgiveness, and is received by Julie who resignedly says:

"Oui, comme tout le monde, j'avais rêvé mieux; mais il paraît que c'est impossible!"¹

Thus the play closes with a so-called "happy ending" which is, as a matter of fact, the most bitter part of the play. She like a cynic returns to duty.

This play deals with some of the evils which arise from the mercenary arrangement of marriage in France. Parental dictation never ceases. Marriage is prearranged by

1. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont", page 187.

parents ¹; divorce is advised or discouraged by parents ². In fact, the sons and daughters are mere clay in the hands of their elders. The tragedy of this condition is bitterly shown in La Petite Amie. Here in Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont the condition is less tragic but still pathetic.

M. Dupont typifies the bourgeois in financial struggle, who sees now an opportunity for a higher position with its attendant advantages ³. As parent-dictator he has marked out the various paths of his daughters' lives.

The three careers open to women are as Lemaître says:

"C'est bien simple: ou elles tournent mal, ou elles ne se marient pas, ou elles se marient mal. Et, dans le fond, celles qui se marient mal ou qui ne se marient pas ne tournent pas mieux que celles qui ont mal tourné". ⁴

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1. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont", Act I., sc. 9.

2. Ibid., Act IV., sc. 1.

3. Ibid., page 26:

"Voyons, mon enfant, il se présente une occasion unique, que tu ne retrouveras peut-être jamais, un jeune homme bien élevé qui a un oncle chef de bureau à la Préfecture, lequel oncle peut doubler mes bénéfices en me faisant avoir les travaux de l'administration, sans compter le reste".

4. "Impressions de Théâtre", vol. 10: 279.

Dupont's narrow outlook, hampered by convention, has already driven from home one daughter because of her childish mistake and fearing gossip, has destined her to a life of shame.¹ Angèle says of her class:

"On nous méprise tant. On n'a pas d'amis, pas de pitié, pas de justice. On est volée, exploitée; ** voilà la boue où je me suis débattue pendant dix ans". 2

Angèle's unhappy fate has found companionship since the beginning of the world. Brieux does not attempt here to offer any solution for this great sociological and moral question.

The second daughter, Caroline, desires to support herself, but meets with continual rebuff. Her father is mortified at her ambition and no one in her circle admires her.³ She is la femme seule, out of harmony with her environment,

"Un être à part, inutile, ridicule, et incomplet",⁴ as she says.

1. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont", page 39:
"L'autre s'appelait Angèle. A dix-sept ans, elle a commis une faute qu'il devenait impossible de cacher. J'ai chassées".
2. Ibid., page 185.
3. Ibid., pages 24 and 25:
"Recommencer l'histoire de cette grande bête de Caroline.
** Elle gagne sa vie, mais elle me reste sur les bras tout les même".
4. Ibid., page 182.

Julie is forced by her parents, even at the expense of deception and prevarication ¹, to enter the third available career for women. Open, frank at heart, she questions her father as to men. He replies:

"Mais, en général, les paris, c'est comme le reste: quand on veut avoir du beau, il faut y mettre le prix". ²

Julie with true womanliness loves children and to be a mother is her great ambition:

"Le jour où mon premier viendra au monde, ce sera le plus beau jour de ma vie". ³

With a feeling which, left to develop normally, might have resulted in love, she is forced within a few brief weeks to enter the marriage relations, which eventually she hates because love is absent. She becomes the tool of her father in

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1. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont", page 49:

"Ça ne dépend plus que de toi. On va vous laisser causer ensemble. N'oublie pas que c'est ta dernière ressource. Ne rate pas l'occasion." "Ne l'affarouche pas. Il est très pratique. Si tu pouvais lui donner l'espérance que tu l'aiderais dans ses travaux de langue."

2. Ibid., page 26.

3. Ibid., page 78.

was one business in her life in which she should have been allowed to act individually ¹. The disappointment when she learns of her husband's objections to a family leads her to return home.² She detests her husband because he has not given her free choice, because he has lied to her before marriage, and has refused since marriage to accede to her wishes.

A fairly good character with whom we sympathize usually, Julie makes one mistake in the wooing scene between her and Antonin. He asks her for a kiss. Her womanly reserve is shocked and she recoils. Then seeing his anger and remembering her mother's words:

"Entre fiancés, il y a peut-être des petites choses qu'il en croira permises", 3

she extends her bare arms to his lips. Afterwards Antonin

1. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont", page 127:
"Le mariage est considéré comme un des moyens de par-
venir." "Voilà ce qui a gâté notre vie à tous les
deux".
2. Ibid., pages 130 and 131:
Julie: "Nous n'aurons pas d'enfants?"
Antonin: "Nous n'aurons pas d'enfants."
Julie: "Pourquoi?"
Antonin: "Parce que je n'en veux pas, pourquoi?"
Julie: "Être femme, être mère, c'est le développement
naturel de son existence. Et il ne manquera aucune chose,
et sa vie sera complète: je n'aurai pas vécu, en un mot, si
mes bras n'ont pas servi un enfant né de ma chair, si je ne
l'ai pas allaité, si je n'ai pas pleuré, si je n'ai pas eu
toutes les inquiétudes et toutes les joies maternelles. Et
tu peux m'en priver!"
3. Ibid., page 50.

gives her his impression of the incident:

"J'ai voulu ^{prendre} ton bras et l'embrasser. Ton premier mouvement a été une révolte; mais ** t'es dit qu'un mari valait bien la capitulation de ta chasteté, et tu es venue, par calcul, me mettre sur les lèvres cette chair que tu me refusais d'instinct". 1

His true manhood spanned this in his future wife.

Brieux seems in this play to imply that French marriages are little more than a legalized form of prostitution. But he gives us La Française ten years later than Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont to show many happy features of French married life. In the earlier play he shows woman doing her best, against the odds of parental dictation. In the later play she has no such handicap.

Yet Brieux is not unfair to the other sex. M. Dupont, bourgeois-like, wants money at any cost. Antonin is deceived in his wife. We sympathize with him as much as with her.

In Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont Brieux implies his estimate of the importance of the home. To him home seems to be the foundation of the state and marriage, the vital cornerstone of that foundation, which must be laid on love. Love and mutual attraction, he implies, should determine selection. Unions made possible by external elements without internal promptings, he shows, must needs be unhappy.

1. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont"? page 195.

La Petite Amie.

Pièce en Quatre Actes. Comédie-Française, May 3, 1902.

The main scene of this play is the large wholesale millinery establishment in Paris, owned and managed by M. Logerais. The play clearly depicts the daily life of the hard working modistes, the relation between employée and employer; the making and packing of hats;-- all are shown in brief strokes. The manager, M. Logerais, is a hard man, whose life principle has been self-indulgence. He boasts of his youthful debauchery. When tired of this, he married and, with Mme. Logerais, lived a gay life of balls and theatre-parties for ten years, before he would consent to the presence of children. When finally a boy came, he sent him off to school as early as possible, always keeping a careful record of every financial expenditure in his behalf.

When the play opens, this son, André, is twenty-three, a social young man, entirely inexperienced in the licentiousness of his father. In real love he sought to marry Mlle. Sadety, but her dowry was not large enough to suit M. Logerais. In lonely despair, André happens to meet Marguerite, a young

woman of twenty, employed with several others as packers in the factory.

Act II shows a deepening feeling between the two. She seems to offer him the happy fellowship denied by other friends and parents. Logerais, ignorant of this friendship, meanwhile plans a match between André and a Mlle. Chéron, whose cent mille francs de dot appeal to the father.

Act III discloses dire facts, the result of this secret friendship. As Logerais pleads the case of Mlle. Chéron, André suddenly discloses his love for Marguerite and his determination to marry her. This petite amie, he announces, is now enceinte and in need of his support.

"Pauvre petite! Je l'aime! Si vous saviez comme je l'aime". 1

Marguerite-- true-souled, magnanimous that she is-- realized the incongruity of circumstances, accepts from Logerais two hundred dollars, and promises never to see André again. When Logerais tells André,

"Oui, elle t'aime et elle t'aime assez pour sentir que sa liaison avec toi ne pouvait être éternelle, et que ce serait faire ton malheur que de la continuer", 2

André thus replies:

"Quand même elle aurait, elle, le courage de se sacrifier ainsi, moi, je n'ai pas la force de l'imiter.3**

1. "La Petite Amie"? page 138.

2. Ibid., page 156.

3. Ibid., page 157.

Le devoir actuel est le seul impératif. 1 ** J'épouserai Marguerite dans un mois si tu t'accons; dans deux ans si tu t'y opposes". 2

The last act is full of Erioux pathos and logic. André and Marguerite, still devoted to each other, have faced every storm of denial and allegiance. André hopes for employment, but on every hand is refused help because of his immoral life. His father, to force him into subjection, has withdrawn his allowance and has guarded against his gaining employment. The couple are desperate; the morrow will find them penniless and without bread.

A final scene takes place between André and his parents. Mme. Logerais, at last awake to her duties, tries in vain to plead with Logerais in behalf of André. The father, too stubborn to yield an iota; the son, too faithful to duty and love, --- these two abnormal men meet and clash; cruelty is victor. The parents leave; André and Marguerite fall into each other's arms, with their unborn child as a stronger bond of union between them than any legal marriage ceremony could form. Suicide is left. Hand in hand, the unfortunate couple slip away toward the river bank. As the curtain falls, one hears the splash of water; André and Marguerite have ended their misery before their child is born.

1. "La Petite Amie", page 132.
2. Ibid., page 134.

In La Petite Amie Brieux has displayed an unusual singleness of theme, parental dictation. Logerais typifies the father who seeks even legal backing for every act of injustice ¹. He is the domineering père de famille who allows his wife no voice ² and his son no independence. The civil rights of the latter do not come until the age of twenty-five. André says to his father:

"J'épouserai Marguerite dans un mois si tu y consens; sans deux ans si tu t'y opposes. ³ ** Parce que dans deux ans j'en aurai vingt-cinq". ⁴

Whereupon Logerais boldly answers:

"Quand tu auras vingt-cinq ans, je saurai, par des oppositions, par des moyens que le Code donnera, retarder encore ton mariage d'un an. Alors, tu en auras vingt-six, et, là, je te tiendrai de nouveau. **Tu n'as fait qu'un an de service militaire, et si tu n'es pas reçu docteur avant vingt-six ans, tu es rapellé sous les drapeaux pendant deux ans; or, comme je ne te donnerai un sou, il te faudra bien travailler pour vivre et tu ne pourras pas continuer tes études. Tu vois que je puis retarder ton mariage jusqu'à ce que tu aies vingt-huit ans". ⁵

1. "La Petite Amie" page 167:

"par des moyens que le Code ne donnera".

2. Ibid., page 178:

"Quel malheur! Je ne puis rien pour toi! Quel malheur!
Je ne puis rien pour toi! "

3. Ibid., page 130.

4. Ibid., page 136.

5. Ibid., page 167.

Summary. Parental Dictation.

The four plays illustrating Brioux as a teacher of parental dictation are La Couvée, L'École des Belles-Mères, Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont, and La Petite Amie. With the first two grouped as one, these plays represent the three grades of severity shown by dictating parents.

1. La Couvée and L'École des Belles-mères show in a humorous manner some of the evils caused when mothers-in-law attempt to dictate 1. By the interference of the mothers-in-law in La Couvée a disagreement between the newly married couple results in temporary separation.²

2. In Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont the parents hold complete sway. The parents of Antonin and of Julie meet and bargain³; the couple first marry, later consider divorce⁴, and finally become reunited, all according to the dictation of the four parents.⁵

3. This same inter-relationship works a tragic havoc in the play, La Petite Amie. There the consequences are far more serious since the children are forced to encounter hunger, need, and finally death because of the absolute power of the father over son.⁶ In this case, the son has no redress of

1. Cf. supra, page 26, foot-note 2.

2. Cf. supra, page 27, quotation 3.

3. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont", Act I., Scene 9.

4. Ibid., Act IV., Scene 1.

5. Ibid., pages 186 and 187.

6. "La Petite Amie", page 188:

"Te quitter! te quitter maintenant! J'aimerais mieux mourir!"

any sort. He is deprived of financial aid, of any kind of remunerative employment, and finally of his civil rights.¹

In all the cases shown in these plays, the power of the parents seems to be exerted in matters over which such power should not extend. Prieux teaches in all four plays that sons and daughters in France are unfortunate and helpless tools in the hands of their parents.

1. Cf. *supra*, page 40, quotation 5.

3. Divorce.

- a. ("Le Bureau des Divorces")
- b. "La Rose Bleue".
- c. "Le Berceau".
- d. "Les Avariés".
- e. "La Déserteuse".
- f. "Suzette".

Le Bureau des Divorces.

Le Bureau des Divorces was a one-act vaudeville sketch written in collaboration with M. Gaston Salandri. It was published in 1880, but was never staged and is no longer accessible in book-form.

Its only significance in our study is its title which shows clearly that, even at this very early date, ten years before Erioux's first play was put upon the boards, he was already thinking of the divorce question and seemed to be planning an attack upon French divorce laws.

La Rose Bleue.

Comédie-Vaudeville. At Geneva, le Grand-Théâtre, July 26, '95.

This simple one-act comedy deals with the reuniting of le comte and la comtesse, sixty and fifty years old respectively. Ten years before, a separation came about because of some immoral act on the part of the comte, which the comtesse learns of through letters accidentally discovered. In anger she left home.

For the sake of companionship the count then became the god-father to a two-year old orphan girl, Juliette. Soon after this the count moved to a quiet, rural home several miles from Paris. Feeling a strong antipathy to women, he gave these orders to his gardener:

"Si jamais tu laisses entrer une femme dans la maison, j'te flanque à la porte". 1

In this rural association he kept the little Juliette with him, enjoying life and incidently spending much time in seeking to cultivate une rose bleue.

But upon Juliette's ninth birthday, he suddenly receives a message from the countess that she is coming to question him regarding Juliette's future education. He is thrown into

1. "La Rose Bleue", page 8.

great consternation; he feels a secret delight in seeing the countess again, but fears that Juliette's uncultured manners may offend her.

The countess arrives, is well pleased with Juliette, and plans to take her back to Paris with her. Juliette, learning of her schemes, proceeds to offend her in every way possible, for she loves the count too much to leave him.

Matters are happily adjusted, the countess promising to return one year later when la rose bleue blooms again.

Brieux here intends to introduce a bit of symbolic meaning into the rose bleue story, implying that the girl is really the only rose bleue that the count can raise and that in one year this rose will reunite the old couple.

Brief as it is, the play offers a latent suggestion that Juliette, though not the couple's own child but merely a common interest between them, will very soon unite them. This play is a pleasing stepping-stone to the four later pieces on the child-divorce question.

Le Berceau.

Comédie en Trois Actes. Comédie-Française, Dec. 19, 1898.

Laurence Marsanne before her marriage was sought by two men: one, Georges de Girieu, several years her senior, wealthy, and sincerely in love with her; the other, Raymond Chantrel, fifteen years younger than Girieu, less able financially, but with the masculine attractiveness which finally won the young woman. In due time, a boy, Julien, arrived. Laurence and Raymond were fondly devoted to the child and to each other. After a year or so, however, Raymond committed an act of treason which so disappointed Laurence that she took her child and fled home to her parents, M. and Mme. Marsanne. In due time the courts granted Laurence a divorce.

Meanwhile Girieu had not married. At the release of Laurence, he again sought her hand. Her parents who had always preferred Girieu now encouraged this second marriage.

This time all might have gone well, had not the child Julien from the first marriage been present. His presence was too vital a reminder of the former man. Girieu acknowledges this to his wife:

"Chaque fois que mes regards s'arrêtent sur toi, il s'évoque en moi de dououreux souvenirs et je pense au père, à votre intimité de jadis, aux baisers que vous avez donnés.**"

Cet enfant est l'apprentive vivante de l'amour que vous avez eu pour un autre, pour un autre qui est vivant, et qui vit avec des souvenirs et des secrets qui sont les mêmes secrets et les mêmes souvenirs que les miens". 1

Questions as to his education, whether he shall attend the public lycée or have private tutors, arouse discord. Girieu advocates the lycée mainly to bring about a separation of mother and son; Laurence prefers home instruction, thereby adopting her boy near her.

The play opens one year after this second marriage. Julien, now about six years old, has fallen suddenly ill at the home of the Marannes, where he and Laurence were visiting. Dr. de Girieu gently censures Laurence for her needless alarm, but realizes later that the case is serious. Dr. Rossiac, the family physician and personal friend of the first husband, Chantrel, requests Girieu to allow Chantrel to visit his sick child. Girieu at first refuses, jealous of the man, but later is overruled by the sympathy of the grandparents.

Chantrel, an open-hearted, frank man of thirty-five, is greatly worried over his child. This divorced man and his former wife are now united by a common solicitude over their child. The curtain of Act I falls as they bend over the

1. "Le Berceau", page 24.

litter discussions of the case. Girted quietly and slowly slips from the room, eyeing them closely and realizing that from force of circumstances, he is not within this little circle.

The second act opens three nights later after a very dangerous crisis in the child's illness has passed. Meanwhile neither Chantrel nor Girieu has left the Perceau of the boy. Then told that the danger is past, the happy father and mother slip from the bedroom and fall into each other's arms out of sheer joy and relief. Laws, advocates, tribunals avail naught when parental love is at stake.

"O'est l'enfant seul qui crée la famille". 1

The couple talk sanely together. Chantrel learns now that Laurence has remarried mainly for the child's sake, that he might have proper care and support. The curtain falls on them as they, hopeless, in despair, yet too noble to wish for illegitimate pleasure, face the future and realize their past mistakes, yet unable to remedy them.

The last act is sad but logically true. Laurence, still at her parents' home, has heard from Girieu that, if she returns to his house, she must consent to Julien's attending the lycée. Refusing consent to this, she cannot turn from Girieu, her legal husband, who sincerely loves her and who would make her happy without Julien. Neither can she turn to Chantrel with whom she now has no legal right to live.

Unselfishness and maternal love conquer. She abandons both men and spends the rest of her life for her son. She fully realizes how foolish she has been in allowing herself to be led by her parents. To her father she says:

"Tu as été coupable de me conseiller: j'ai coupable de ne pas te résister". I

Had her parents meddled less with the performance of her duty, Laurence would not now need to make such great sacrifice.

At the curtain of Act II a live question is left for solution: a woman, now remarried, loves her present husband and also her divorced husband, whom will she choose?

Such a question, according to Erioux, should never arise. Society should not encourage divorce, certainly not remarriage after divorce.

Seven years after Le Perceau copied the Erioux plot in initial details, but gave a very different conclusion, one more dramatic and less logical. Le Dédale portrays the two husbands, wife, and child. But in meeting the first husband again, the wife allows herself to fall, thereby becoming unfit for the second husband. Full of shame, she flees to

her parental home where later the two men meet. In a hand-to-hand contest they fight together and suddenly hurl each other over the steep precipice to be seen no more.

A cursory glance reveals the melodramatic theatricalism in this play of Hervieu. Less bold than Erioux, he dares not allow events to work themselves out logically.

Erioux by his title shows his grasp upon the important center of the home and divorce question. In divorce, if the marriages are childless, only the present generation suffers; but if there are offspring, the future of the race is at stake. As a word of warning, Laurence cries out to all other women, about to take a similar step:

"Faites ce que vous voudrez si votre union a été stérile, mariez-vous, remariez-vous, vous êtes libres, et vous ne pouvez faire du mal qu'à vous-mêmes. Mais si vous avez un enfant, si de vos baisers est né un petit être chétif et affaibli de caresses, vous n'avez pas le droit de détruire la famille fondée pour lui. Vous n'en avez pas le droit! Vous serez malheureuses? Tant pis! L'avenir d'un enfant vaut bien le bonheur d'une mère!" 1

Le berceau is the source and means of all family love, not the battling-ground of divorcés. The child is the innocent victim.

"Entre deux époux, l'enfant est un lien que la loi ne devrait pas pouvoir briser, et que d'ailleurs elle ne brise pas. * On ne devrait pas pouvoir désunir une famille, laisser aller le père ici, la mère là, et abandonner l'enfant au milieu de ces ruines". 2

1. "Le Berceau", page 89.
2. Ibid., page 5.

Brieux teaches that self-sacrifice, though externally
suffered, has its inward reward. Mme. Marsanne says, after
Laurence announces her decision:

"Oh, ma pauvre fille, crois-tu donc que nous sommes
sur terre pour être parfaitement heureux! Non. Nous sommes
ici-bas pour souffrir les uns par les autres, et nous ne pou-
vons pas diminuer cette souffrance que par l'acceptation de
~~xxx~~ quelques sacrifices et l'accomplissement de nos devoirs".¹

In the case of Laurence, however, even this sacrificing
of wifehood for maternal duties has its sadder aspect: in
spite of her denial, her child can never know that happy mem-
ory of a joyful fireside which typifies family union.

"C'est l'enfant seul qui crée la famille",²

but Julien is unfortunate,

"l'enfant au milieu de ces ruines".³

Brieux makes a further point: a woman loves deeply and
truly only once and this first love is indestructible..

"En général, une femme aime rarement son second mari
comme elle a aimé le premier." ⁴

"Lorsqu'entre un homme et une femme il a y des années
de bonheur et intimité, cette femme ne pourra jamais être
complètement, définitivement, séparée de cet homme".⁵

1. "Le Berceau", page 85.

2. Ibid., page 86.

3. Ibid., page 5.

4. Ibid., page 3,

5. Ibid., page 4.

Les Avariés.

Pièce en Trois Actes.

Rehearsed at le Théâtre-Antoine, Nov., 1901.
(forbidden by Censor.)

At Liège, le Théâtre du Gymnase, Mar. 3, '02.
At Bruxelles, Théâtre du Parc, Mar. 7, '02.
At Paris, le Théâtre-Antoine, Feb. 23, '05.
(Censorship withdrawn.)

Act I takes place in a doctor's office. The physician has made a thorough examination of a young man, L'Avarié, Georges Dupont, and, having discovered that he is dangerously afflicted with syphilis, advises him not to marry for at least three years. L'Avarié has money, reputation, position at stake. To wait more than six months means failure.

Act II shows us this man's home a year and a half later. He has now been married a year to Henriette Leches, daughter of a prominent member of the Chamber of Deputies. The couple have a child three months old, now in a provincial town at the home of a wet-nurse. The mother of L'Avarié, Mme. Dupont, having encouraged the marriage, is now happy in the thought of her granddaughter. She visits the child regularly. Upon one of these visits she finds the baby ill and returns with it and the nurse to the city.

The physician of Act I is called. He frankly tells the cause of the child's illness to L'Avarié and Mme. Dupont. The doctor urges the immediate meaning of the child because of its infection of the nurse. The nurse is offered generous sums to remain, but upon learning the truth, leaves at once. Her bold statements of the terrible truth give Henriette her first knowledge of the astounding facts.

Act III shows the doctor's office again. Henriette's father, Deputy Loches, enters to seek statements from the doctor, to be used in the prospective divorce proceedings. By sound arguments and repeated proofs of the evils of syphilis, the doctor induces in Loches a different state of mind. Loches is shown that the world, while sinful, needs forgiveness, but primarily needs open, plain speech on otherwise unmentionable topics. Knowledge, not ignorance, frankness, not secrecy, are the panacea for even the worst evils.

In Les Avariés Drieux has been more radical than the realist Ibsen in Enoch; Drieux has omitted the symbolic and aesthetic element of Ibsen. Without a single direct touch of politics, Drieux has presented the raw wood, allowing every streak of the grain and every seam in the joining to

show up clearly. The rainy, sunless atmosphere of the Alving home is replaced by le docteur's light and cheerful office. One feels that a single glance at Oswald will contaminate, one shudders at the thought of germs in every nook of the Alving home; in Les Avariés one sees the white, sanitary walls of the doctor's office and the sterilized surgical instruments lying neatly in their case. Ghosts is sickening, repulsive, pessimistic; Les Avariés is wholesome, open, full of hope and optimism.

The question of divorce is of primary importance in Les Avariés. Here the young father and husband has been discovered as afflicted with a venereal disease which many people consider as ample reason for divorce. The father-in-law thus excitedly addresses the physician, the only man who can set forth the truth regarding L'Avarié:

"Je m'étais promis de vous entretenir de cela avec calme, mais dès que ma pensée s'arrête sur cet homme dont l'ignominie rejaillet sur nous, et qui vient de me frapper, moi et les miens, si brutalement, si lâchement, je ne suis plus maître de moi. 1 ** Nous (ma fille et moi) voulons obtenir le divorce le plus tôt possible. Je viens donc vous prier de nous donner le certificate qui servira de base à notre instance". 2

But the doctor calmly replies:

1."Les Avariés"? page 137.

2.Ibid., page 138.

"La règle du secret professionnel me l'interdit.
** J'ajouterais pour éviter toute discussion, que même,
si j'étais libre, je vous refuserais encore. 1 ** Je
ne reprocherai de vous avoir aidé à obtenir ce divorce". 2

Out of sheer pity and sympathy for the wife of
L'Avarié, the doctor refuses to issue any statement re-
garding the afflicted young man. On the contrary, he
points out to the beau-père that the case of L'Avarié
is not fatal. He, or rather Brieux, takes as his theme
the world's hypocrisy, ignorance, and above all, its
prudery, that false modesty which blushes before the men-
tion of facts as vital as the air itself. 3 Open, frank
treatment for two years will cure L'Avarié. After that
time the family can be happily reunited. 4

Brieux shows that social life, family relation-
ship, conjugal intercourse must be participated in by
individuals of healthy bodies, clean habits, intellectual
and moral honesty 5. When these characteristics are
lacking *- Brieux in this play centers mainly upon the
health requirement--there can be no harmony in society.

1. "Les Avariés", page 169.

2. Ibid., page 170.

3. Ibid., page 303: "Il n'y a rien d'immoral dans l'acte
qui perpétue la vie au moyen de l'amour. Mais
nous organisons autour de lui, vis-à-vis nos en-
fants, gigantesque et rigoureuse conspiration du
silence".

4. Ibid., page 185: Je veux garantir que vous serez un
joyeux grand-père dans deux ans d'ici".

5. Ibid., Act III.

That essential asset to society, the family, must be composed of healthy father and healthy mother if healthy children are expected.

When that father or husband or prospective husband ascertains from a reliable source that his own body is polluted with a disease destined to ruin wife and offspring, he is a criminal if he does not wait the required time for the disappearance of this disease.

"Si vous vous mariiez avant trois ou quatre ans, vous serez un criminel". 1

Eighteen months later L'Avarié says:

"Je suis un criminel!" 2

Exieux hates the secrecy now prevalent in the world. He thus expresses his idea in his dedicatory note of Les Avariés to Professor A. Fournier, member of the Academy of Medicine:

"Je pense, avec vous, que la syphilis perdra considérablement de sa gravité lorsqu'on osera parler ouvertement d'un mal qui n'est ni une honte ni un châtiement et lorsque ceux qui en sont atteints, sachant quels maux ils peuvent propager, connaîtront mieux leurs devoirs envers les autres et envers eux-mêmes".

1. "Les Avariés", page 34.

2. Ibid., page 108.

Frankly Brioux teaches the following truths:

1. Syphilis is not ample grounds for divorce.

"D'ailleurs, vous ne l'obtiendrez pas ce divorce, puisque je vous refuse le certificat qui serait la preuve nécessaire." 1

2. Syphilis, alcoholism, and tuberculosis make up three world scourges. One in every seven persons of the world's population is infected with syphilis; there are one hundred thousand in Paris alone.

"La Trinité féroce qui supprime chaque jour des milliers d'existences. L'alcoolisme! ** La tuberculose! ** La syphilis". 2

"Sur sept hommes que vous rencontrez dans la rue, dans le monde ou au théâtre, il y en a au moins un qui est ou qui a été dans votre cas, un sur sept, quinze pour cent". 3

"Ce mal, si improprement appelé mal français, car il n'y en a pas de plus universel". 4

"Je vous dis qu'il y en a cent mille comme vous à Paris". 5

3. Syphilis is curable.

"Si vous vous traitez comme il convient, longuement, consciencieusement, vous aurez peu de chose à redouter. ** Quatre-vingt-dix-neuf fois sur cent. ** Vous pourrez vous marier, ** dans trois ou quatre ans". 6

1. "Les Avariés", page 172.

2. Ibid., page 187.

3. Ibid., page 7.

4. Ibid., page 8.

5. Ibid., page 4.

6. Ibid., pages 28 and 29.

4. The greatest danger of syphilis is ignorance.

"C'est l'éducation du public qu'il faut faire". 1

"Il suffirait qu'on eût un peu mieux ce qu'est la syphilis". 2

5. Syphilis not only affects the original victim, but is even more serious to wife and offspring.

"Vous n'avez pas le droit d'exposer votre femme à de telles détresses. Mais il n'y a pas qu'elle est que vous pouvez frapper, vous pourriez encore l'atteindre dans ses enfants, dans vos enfants. C'est au nom de ces innocents que je vous implore". 3

6. Society should require health certificates.

"Le fiancé, de même qu'il va chez le prêtre chercher un billet de confession avant d'aller à l'église, passerait chez le médecin prendre un bulletin de santé avant d'entrer à la mairie". 2

7. The father should demand freedom from sexual disease in his prospective son-in-law, just as he now demands financial status.

"Lorsqu'il a été question de ce mariage, vous vous êtes certainement informé de l'état de fortune de votre futur gendre, ** vous n'avez oublié qu'un point, le plus important, c'est de lui demander s'il était en bonne santé ".4

1. "Les Avariées", page 86.

2. Ibid., page 179.

3. Ibid., page 53.

4. Ibid., page 177.

8. The wet-nurse of a child from a syphilitic parent may become infected and, in turn, transmit it to her own family.

"Je ne suis pas certain qu'elle ait le droit de vendre sa propre santé, mais ce que je sais bien, c'est qu'elle n'a pas le droit de vendre celle de son mari et celle de ses enfants". 1

9. Sex-hygiene is needed in schools.

Le Beau-père: "on ne peut pas dévoiler aux enfants, dans nos établissements d'enseignement".

Le docteur: "Et pourquoi pas? ** Croyez-vous donc que vous les empêchez de naître, ces curiosités? Je fais appel à ceux et à celles qui ont passé les collèges et les pensions. Ces curiosités, on ne les étouffe pas et elles se satisfont comme elles peuvent, vilainement, basement". 2

1. "Les Avariés", page 153.
2. Ibid., pages 202 and 203.

La Déserteuse.

Pièce en Quatre Actes. (In collaboration with
Jean Sigaux.)

L'Odéon, October 15, 1804.

Gabrielle, the mother of thirteen year old Pascaline and the wife of Forjet, appearing to bear promise as opera singer, decided to leave her husband and child, and to seek success with Fasetty, an unscrupulous manager, who promises her many advantages in return for her virtue.

This unnatural mother plies her trade for three years or until a serious throat affection forces her to cease. She returns to the small town where her husband and daughter live. Here she finds Forjet remarried. His concern for Pascaline's needs has induced him to marry Hélène, the child's governess, a noble woman whose whole soul goes out in near-maternal love to this young girl. But the daughter, now allowed to spend two hours each week with her own mother, feels unkindly toward Hélène, for she thinks, in her utter ignorance of the past, that Hélène

has usurped the place belonging to her mother.

The mother, Gabrielle, now feels a love for Pascaline and a longing for the old association. Her tears of loneliness touch Pascaline deeply. Knowing that all the family except Pascaline are absent, Gabrielle arranges to visit the old haunts. She suggests to Pascaline a scheme for the two to live together. But Pascaline's love for Terjat intervenes at once.

"Mon père, alors. Je ne le verrai plus? **
Pourquoi ne puis-je pas vous avoir en même temps tous
les deux? " 1

The conversation is broken off abruptly by the unexpected return of Hélène. Gabrielle leaves, knowing the aversion and feeling unable to defend herself.

A few words pass between Pascaline and Hélène as the latter censures Pascaline for having admitted her mother.

Act III one year later presents Gabrielle's office. She is now a small manager herself, still followed by Zanetty. She threatens to sell out and to settle quietly somewhere with Pascaline. Zanetty says:

"Tu devrais me épouser. ** Si je ne t'en ai jamais
parlé, c'est que je savais que tu pensais à ta fille et
que tu conservais je ne sais quelle espérance". 3

1. "La Déserteuse", page 117.

3. Ibid., page 170.

The last act is only a brief scene at Forjot's home in which Gabrielle, now humbled, realizes her own fate and entrusts Pascaline to Forjot and Hélène.

La Déserteuse is not a typical Brieux play either in diction, characterization, or theme. In writing it, Brieux collaborated with M. Jean Sigaux. How far the pen of M. Sigaux has affected the piece, one cannot tell, but it is safe to infer that Sigaux's influence has had its effect. Since I cannot discriminate between the contribution of Brieux and that of Sigaux, I must treat the play as a single unit.

La Déserteuse, unlike the rest of the Brieux plays, offers no direct speeches upon the theme. The play teaches nothing clearly, but implies that the woman who deserts her child and husband is an unnatural member of her sex. After the first wife's desertion, her husband marries again. Brieux does not show whether this is legitimate or not. He implies that it is in the fact that the second marriage remains intact and reasonably happy.

Suzette.

Viùse en Trois Actes. Le Théâtre du Vaudeville, Sept. 23, '09.

Suzette is the twelve year old daughter of Henri and Régine Chambert. The couple have not had the happiest of married life. Henri is the son of a former magistrate, a narrow-minded, selfish man, whose wife is even more repulsive. Henri himself, while not a villain, is a weak, pleasure-loving man, influenced continually by his parents. Régine is the daughter of an old sea-captain, a man of humble rank, but sincere, fond of work, and refined in taste. Régine has a fondness for social life and yet is an average wife and mother. One day Henri, though no model of conjugal fidelity himself, is shocked to discover his wife in the loving embrace of a personal friend, Georges Livrain. He assumes too much and forces her to confess before the servants:

"Oui, j'ai un amant!" 1

This is not the strict truth. But Henri takes Suzette and rushes home to M. and Mme. Chambert. In his excitement Henri threatens a duel for revenge, but is fi-

nally persuaded by the old people to be content with a divorce and the possession of the child,

In the second act for the sake of contrast, we are shown the home to which Régine has fled. Her father, M. Guagagne, and two sisters, Myriam and Solange, are in any way attractive. All are at least ambitious. Both sisters are very different from the weak Monique Chambert, Henri's sister, whose main occupation is bonbon-eating.

Régine is interviewed, first by Henri, and later by his parents. But neither her humble pleading for reconciliation nor her threats to expose facts in his past life have any effect upon the divorce proceedings. Officers of the law enter and forcefully take Suzette from Régine.

The last act shows a natural, psychologic turn in Henri who, moved by Régine's kindness in not detailing unhappy facts in the legal proceedings, finally prevails upon his father to cease and to accept Régine as loving daughter-in-law.

Suzette forms the concluding piece in the group of plays touching the various phases of divorce. I have shown that as early as 1880, in fact, Brieux's second dramatic effort, was given at least a title indicative of its divorce theme. Following this several years later by a one-act curtain-raiser, La Rose Bleue, he finally developed four sound pieces on divorce. In Le Berceau he

shows the evil resulting from remarriage after divorce; in Les Avariés he teaches clearly that even syphilis in the male is not suitable or serious grounds for legal separation, in La Déserteuse he implies that the woman who deserts her child and husband is abnormal and that the husband is justified in re-marrying; finally in Suzette he portrays a home on the verge of divorce and the means of avoiding such a catastrophe.

These are his own words setting forth his purpose in Suzette:

"C'est pour attirer un peu de pitié sur ces pauvres enfants tirillés entre leur père et leur mère, entre les ennemis qui forment des époux réfléchissent au mal qu'ils font à ces pauvres petits écartelés, que j'ai écrit Suzette. La pièce n'est pas une pièce contre le divorce, elle est contre le divorce trop facile, elle est, sauf exceptions faites, contre le divorce lorsqu'il y a des enfants qui en souffrent. Ne mélanges pas ces pauvres êtres à nos lamentables histoires d'alcôve, et pensons que, pour la satisfaction de nos égoïsmes, de nos vanités et de nos passions, nous n'avons pas le droit d'imposer à nos petites souffrances dont leur vie entière sera empoisonnée".¹

Thus we see that the child is the great concern of Ibsen. He has never concerned himself about the Greekunities, his unitics are modern: the father, the mother, the child. These are his "eternal triangle". Chamberbert says:

1. Bordeaux: "La Vie au Théâtre", vol. II., Page 11.

"Vois-tu: le père, la mère, et leur petit enfant, c'est une trinité sacrée". 1

Brieux shows in Suzette that this child-link must be preserved: first, by mutual forgiveness and compromise on the part of parents 2, second, by the non-interference of grandparents 4.

As Laurence so vigorously asserts,

"L'avenir d'un enfant vaut bien le bonheur d'une mère", 5

so in Suzette the same maternal instinct is obeyed before too late. Régine endures every humiliation to bring about reconciliation, desiring her child above all else in the world.3

1. "Suzette", page 190.

2. Ibid., pages 103 and 105: "Je veux obtenir de toi ma pardon. ** tu peux le pardonner".

also, page 80: "Personne n'est libre. ** Qui, je sais 'le droit au bonheur'. On n'a pas droit au bonheur des autres. ** Quels autres? Vais son mari, sa fille, papa, toi, moi. S'il y avait un procès de séparation, crois-tu qu'il ne céderait pas bien des larmes? Et l'enfant! et Suzette!"

also, page 125: "Ne soyez pas inflexible. La religion commande l'indulgence et le pardon".

3. Ibid., page 115: "Mes parents ne me pardonneraient jamais de retourner avec toi. Cette entrevue que tu m'as demandée, ils ne voulaient pas que j'y consente. On m'a dit que, si je céderais, elle ne se reverrait plus. C'est maman. Tu ne peux pas savoir. Je l'aime beaucoup. Elle a été si bonne".

4. "Le Berceau", page 89.

5. "Suzette", pages 125-127, Régine's speech.

The single standard is again touched upon in this

play.

"Il y a peut-être des maris qui auraient le droit de parler sur ce ton à leur femme, mais pas toi, mon rebelle, pas toi". 1

"Tu m'as surpris étreassée par un monsieur: à cause de cela, je suis indigné de garder mon enfant. Toi, je t'ai pincé avec Marguerite Chermier sur les genoux. Va me te rendre pas indigne, toi? Et ton intrigué avec Marguerite Chermier ne t'a ignorée. Elle a été ta maîtresse pendant six mois. Je n'est pas la même chose non plus, n'est-ce pas? Et ça ne te rend pas indigne?" 2

1. "Bourgeois", page 107.
2. Ibid., page 118.

Summary. Divorce.

Brieux, in handling the divorce question, never once considers it apart from the child. In all five divorce plays--I cannot discover the content of the sixth-- the child is the "link", as Strindberg names his play on the same subject, between parents.

1. Of Le Bureau des Divorces we know nothing but the title which is significant of Brieux's early interest.

2. La Rose Blanche is only a one-act piece, but in it there is an implication that Juliette will be the means of admitting the count and countess. 1

3. Le Berceau is the earliest play of Brieux to handle the divorce theme. It shows clearly that, when there is a child, divorce should not be permitted², certainly not remarriage after divorce³. Furthermore, it shows that the wife cannot love her second husband as she has loved her first⁴. The play teaches that the only thing left

1. Cf. supra, page 16.
2. "Le Berceau", page 5: "Entre deux époux l'enfant est un lien que la loi ne devrait pas pouvoir briser, et que d'ailleurs elle ne brise pas. ** On ne devrait pas pouvoir désunir une famille, laisser aller le père loi, la mère là, et abandonner l'enfant au milieu de ces ruines".
3. Ibid., page 89: "Si votre union a été stérile, mariez-vous, démariez-vous, vous êtes libres. ** si vous avez un enfant, ** vous n'avez pas le droit de détruire la famille fondée pour lui".
4. Cf. supra, page 59, quotation 1.

for a woman to do, who has a child and who has been divorced and remarried, is to desert both men and to remain with her child ¹. Hence, life is to be spent in sacrifice for the purpose of reducing the world's suffering ².

4. Les Avariés teaches that: first, syphilis in the husband is not ample grounds for divorce ³; second, syphilis is, along with tuberculosis and intemperance, one of the three world scourages ⁴; fifteen per cent of the world's population is afflicted with syphilis ⁵; third, syphilis is curable ⁶; fourth, ignorance regarding syphilis is injurious ⁷; fifth, syphilis is contagious ⁸; sixth, health certificates should be required from the prospective husband ⁹; seventh, health as well as money should be demanded by the prospective father-in-law ¹⁰; eighth, sex-hygiene is needed in the public schools. ¹¹

1. "Le forçé", page 89: "L'avenir d'un enfant vaut bien le bonheur d'une mère!"

2. Cf. supra, page 58, quotation 1.

3. Cf. supra, page 58, quotation 1.

4. Cf. supra, page 58, quotations 2.

5. Cf. supra, page 58, quotation 3.

6. Cf. supra, page 58, quotation 3.

7. Cf. supra, page 59, quotations 1 and 2.

8. Cf. supra, page 59, quotation 3, also, page 80, quot. 1.

9. Cf. supra, page 59, quotation 2 under "2".

10. Cf. supra, page 59, quotation 4.

11. Cf. supra, page 80, quotation 2.

5. La Déserteuse contributes nothing to our study of divorce except to imply that a father is justified in being divorced and in remarrying if his first wife and the mother of his child has deserted him for another man or for a professional career.¹

6. Suzette is the last play in the divorce group. It presents a home on the verge of divorce and shows two main ways by which divorce may be avoided: first, by pardon and compromise on the part of the couple soon -
joined²; and second, by the non-interference of parents³.

1. Cf. supra, page 62.

2. Cf. supra, page 66, foot-note 2.

3. "Le Berceau", page 69.

3. Illicit Co-habitation.

a. ("M. de Réboval", not published.)

b. "Les Hannetons".

M. de Révoval.

Comédie en Quatre Actes. L'Odéon, September 15, 1832.

Since M. de Révoval was not a success, having been given only twenty-two performances, and has not been published, I can only briefly mention it here. The only information concerning it is obtainable in Thomas' book, entitled "Plays of Eugène Scribe" ¹. From the comments of Thomas who seems acquainted with the play, I judge that the theme of the play is that all duty, if well performed once, is sufficient. Because one family circle progresses well, M. de Révoval is in no way justified in duplicating this circle.

In maintaining a liaison with a second woman, Révoval encounters dire disaster, namely, the necessity, years later, of explaining to his daughter by legal marriage and to his son from illicit co-habitation the real reason why they, sincerely in love with each other, cannot marry.

1. Pages 26 and 27.

Les Nanretons.

Comédie en Trois Actes. Le Théâtre de la Renaissance, Feb. 5, '06.

In act I Pierre, a professor of natural history, age forty years, is supporting Charlotte, twenty years old, a bright, vivacious, fun-loving girl, entirely out of harmony with Pierre's serious, intellectual bent. Disagree-ments continually arise, they finally break out in open combat. Charlotte, in her mad desire to keep Pierre from leaving home to seek botanical specimens, locks the door of her apartment and quickly turns the key out of the window. A humorous scene results when a stranger, ushered in by the ^{old} apartment janitor, enters and accuses Pierre of attempting to injure him by turning dials at him on the revolving door. Matters are adjusted for all concerned.

Charlotte, by cajoling, temporarily wins over Pierre.
Act II one month later. The cause for dissa-

tisfaction. Pierre is suspicious that Charlotte is not entirely faithful to him. She, to frighten him into better treatment of her, orders the servant to open her trunk, expecting Pierre, when aware of the fact, to beg her to

stay. On the contrary, he feels the relief about to come to him, and says all that he can to provoke her. She leaves, scolding and huddling close to her little Pijou, her dog.

Act III three days later. Pierre, now at last free, refuses to read the letters which come thick and fast from Charlotte. He enjoys to the limit the opportunities of relaxation and freedom now offered him.

"J'ai mangé de la choucroute qu'elle se défendait avec son estomac, j'ai bu de la bière qui m'était aussi interdite, le résultat a été une indigestion, c'est vrai, mais comme elle n'était pas là pour me répéter: 'Je t'avais prévenu!' je n'en ai pas souffert. Je suis rentré à deux heures le matin et je suis couché dans mon lit tout seul, en pyjama, une jambe ici et l'autre là-bas avec un oreiller sous ma tête et le second dans mes bras".¹

But Charlotte has recently threatened self-destruction and now word is brought:

"J'irai me jeter à la Seine, ce soir, à cinq heures, au Pont-Neuf!"²

Pierre, moved slightly, will show no concern openly. In due time, however, Charlotte is brought in by several friends and a boatman who has rescued her from the river. Pierre is sincerely glad to have her back and feels that she is worth the two hundred francs that he

1. "Les Hammetone", page 97.
2. Ibid., page 112.

has carefully saved,

"sou à sou ** afin de me payer un voyage en Bretagne, où il y a des fougères extraordinaires".¹

In this, the lightest of comedies, Drieux has not forgotten to insert his theme. This is the theme as stated to Laurence Irving by Drieux:

"A study of free love and of the misery that is bound to ensue when a couple have nothing in common but their physical infatuation".²

In the play Drieux uses far plainer language.

Pierre says:

"En dehors des scènes quotidiennes, nous ne trouvons rien à nous dire. Quand nous avons fini ces batailles, qui ne cessent que lorsque tu es fatiguée et moi monteu, nous nous résignons à la réconciliation habituelle et nous ne trouvons à faire ensemble qu'une seule chose, toujours la même".³

Charlotte: "C'est même étonnant comme on peut être des étrangers tout en couchant ensemble".³

For Pierre and Charlotte existence is divided, as Paul Flat says⁴, into two periods: the day time, when disputes arise out of constant incompatibility, and night, when the caresses of Charlotte soothe and win over the foolish Pierre. With their disparity of age, birth, man-

¹"Les Hannetons", page 38.

²Forum, 43: 830.

³"Les Hannetons", page 81.

⁴Revue Eleve, 2, 5: 281., Feb. 17, 1908.

tality, and temperament, they have nothing in common but animal feelings. After these are gratified there is nothing left but contention and strife. Love even in the pure physiological sense is unknown to them, for in the lulls between periods of animation, heated discussions rage instead of the essential passivity ¹.

1. "Les Hannotons", Act I., sc. 5 and 9; Act II., sc. 1, and 5.

Summary. Illicit Co-habitation.

The subject of illicit co-habitation is such a popular and successful one among French dramatists that it is at once looked for in the Griekx writings. H. de Réceval and Les Hannetons are his only plays on this theme.

1. H. de Réceval has apparently not been successful enough to merit publication. From the few comments written about the piece, I judge that its teaching is somewhat obscure. The main point made seems to be that a man who supports one family in wedlock and one out of wedlock may, late in life, find himself forced to explain to his children that they cannot marry since they are half-brother and half-sister.

2. Les Hannetons, the other play, is slightly more definite in its meaning. It shows that a couple living together as man and wife usually have nothing in common but physical attraction. After passionate enjoyment is indulged in, there is no attraction left; the couple then quarrel until the next outbreak of animation.

5. Womanhood.

- a. "Blanchette".
- b. "La Française".
- c. "La Femme Seule".

Bianchette.

Comédie en Trois Actes. Le Théâtre Libre, Rev. 2, 1892.

Act I shows a quiet, lowly tavern in a rural com-
munity of France with its keepers, Père and Mère Toussot.
Their daughter Bianchette, twenty-one years old, has just
been granted a legal certificate to teach and is at home
awaiting an appointment. Her closest friend is Lucie
Quercq, the daughter of a wealthy landowner. Bianchette
knows with her broad education holds aloof from the village
peasants. Her great hope is to marry wealth, and is en-
couraged in this by Lucie's plan to bring about a friend-
ship between the latter's brother George and Bianchette.
A peasant, Morillon, in behalf of his son Auguste, asks
for the hand of Bianchette, but Père Toussot indignantly
refuses, planning on some big position for her by virtue
of her liberal education.

Act II seven months later shows the effects of
many of the reforms wrought by Bianchette who proudly
vaunts in her superiority over her parents and the friends
of her childhood. With her new ideas on life, many of
them thoroughly sound, she launches into a reforming cam-
paign. She re-naves the tavern Café de Césès, in which her
rubble parents have been glad to earn the money for her

education. To please her father she buys as a birthday gift for him an expensive lamp. He at once takes it outside and saws off the column, because

"Quand j'ai une lampe, c'est pour y voir là, sur la table, quand je lis mon journal ou que je joue aux dominos."* De n'est pas la peine d'user du pétrole pour éclairer la profonde. 1 ** J'ai enlevé ce qu'il y avait de trop. Comme ça, elle éclairera sur la table". 2

Blanchette tries to improve her father's simple mode of farming by inducing him to use a certain "fertiliser" which, she has learned at school, is very effective. Roussel rushes in sadly to tell her that his crops are all destroyed since the rain of the night before. Blanchette, at first puzzled, then referring to her books on agriculture, says suddenly:

"Je ne suis trompée d'un zero. C'est quatre-vingts kilos seulement qu'il aurait fallu mettre. Demain prochaine, tu essaieras avec quatre-vingts kilos".

In a similar way go many of her up-to-date and extravagant plans. She is too busy with her innovations to do the simple duties about the tavern. Finally when her father insists that she either consent to perform the menial duties or leave, she feels the insult and, after a few tense words between her and "M. and Mme. Roussel, she departs. She hopes to find an opportunity to use her

1. "Blanchette", page 83.
2. Ibid., page 86.
3. Ibid., page 70.

intellectual acility where it will be better appreciated.

After a year and a half spent in various efforts at self-support without sacrificing self-respect, she returns in humility to the Rousseau tavern. She says:

"Si tu savais ce que c'est, le travail, de la femme à Paris! On est dix à se disputer une journée, pour l'avoir, on offre son temps à des prix ridicules, et de cette façon on empêche les autres de vivre, sans vivre soi-même.** Il y a des gens qui attendent qu'on en soit à la dernière misère pour vous proposer des choses abominables.** A la fin, j'ai compris que c'était impossible".

Her father is moved by her story and makes her welcome. Blanchette in humble contriteness is now glad to live as a peasant and to become the wife of Auguste Morillon.

Brieux attacks the question of woman's education from two angles: the changes wrought in woman by education and the effects upon society of educated women. Even while still in school Blanchette began to feel above her family. Mme. Rousseau thus describes her reception upon visits to Blanchette's school:

"Mais chaque fois que j'allais te voir à ta pension, j'en revenais le cœur gros.** Je me les rappellerai toute ma vie! Quand j'arrivais au pailloir, je te voyais de loin jouant avec tes petites amies, tu étais gaie, heureuse. Lorsqu'on allait te dire que j'étais là, ta gaieté tombait toute de suite; ta figure devenait dure et ennuyée, et je me rendais bien compte que je te gênais en allant

"Blanchette", page 137.

te voir. ** Pendant que je te parlais, tu me regardais d'ès piéss à la tête.... tu comparais sa toilette à celle des mères de tes amies...et.. j'en'ai compris ça que plus tard-- tu avais honte de moi. ** tu aurais voulu que je ne vienne jamais". 1

Blanchette is "une demoiselle chez des paysans", as Parcey says ², the woman too well educated to harmonize any longer with the humble circumstances of her birth.

Alex implies that the public schools of France are fitting its women students for positions outside the home and are fitting more than there are positions for. Blanchette with excellent recommendations at first finds herself one of two thousand candidates. A friend says:

"Il y avait deux filles candidates à placer avant vous. J'ai employé toutes mes relations en votre faveur, et maintenant* vous n'êtes plus que la cinq cent quarantième". 3

While waiting for a position from the government, she is too pious to perform the usual duties at the tavern. She says to Blanchette who orders "une tasse de café " :

"à l'ère est partie, monsieur. Si vous voulez repasser----".

"Tu ne peux pas te servir---?"

"Non. Je ne sais pas où sont les objets #--". 4

Later, when her real lessons have been learned from a different and harder text book, she says:

1. "Blanchette", pages 35 and 36.

2. "Quarante Ans de Théâtre", vol. 3, page 26.

3. "Blanchette", page 33.

4. Ibid., page 43.

"Mais--je vais servir, mère. Donne-moi ton tablier".¹

Only now at this stage has her education any chance to influence society. Bonenfant now realizes and admires the change in her:

"Je suis servi comme un prince, moi!"²

¹"Blanchette", page 141.
²Ibid., page 147.

La Française.

Comédie en Trois Actes. L'Odéon,, April 18, 1907.

The play opens in the quiet home of Pierre and Martine Pontier. Pierre is the mayor of Trouvaille and owns a foundry. He is a typical bourgeois, originally fairly well-to-do, but now on the verge of bankruptcy.

Pierre and Martine have one boy, le Petit Jacques, seven years old, and a daughter Geneviève, eighteen. This family group is very happy. The play opens as Jacques is trying to recite his history lesson to his mother, but he much prefers that she tell him a story.

"Il était un fois---".¹

Several timely incidents take place to show the really harmonious family.

They are all excited over the expected arrival of a son of Pierre's brother, a young man, who, having lived in a Wyoming ranch in the United States ever since three years of age, is now returning to visit his French relatives.

Charles soon appears and with him Bartlett, his American guardian, a good natured man who speaks French only well enough to be very amusing. He is a typical

1. "La Française", page 1.

Westerner, he sits whittling wood with his jack-knife. In due time he learns of Pierre's financial embarrassment and studying the question thoroughly, offers ample assistance to Pierre.

Meanwhile the betrothal of Geneviève with Maxime Robert has been broken because of her insufficient dowry. She is a lovely, attractive young woman, fond of her parents and eager, if ever married, to marry for love. She deplores the present status when marriage was made only for prestige or money. She longs for the romantic kind of marriage:

"Le première, c'est la grande passion, le jour de fouire, les petites fleurs, les soufirs, les sanglots, l'extase, ce qu'on appelle le mariage d'amour, s'il est encore permis à une jeune fille de comprendre ces mots sans tomber dans le ridicule". 1

Later she says:

"Il y a beaucoup de mariages sans passion". 2

She finally realizes in Charles all the requisites of her ideal young man. When asked by him,

"Geneviève, voulez-vous être ma femme?" 3

is true, blunt American fashion without any of the customary French preliminaries, she quickly consents.

1. "La Française", page 17.

2. *Ibid.*, page 85.

3. *Ibid.*, page 148.

Why write this play because

"Les Parisiens ignorant ce qui se passe en France". 1

French novels are full of the "eternal triangle", but, as Martine says:

"Streville n'est pas la France et nos romans ne sont pas toute notre littérature". 2

The theatre, too, portrays nothing but illicit love. Bartlett thus tells of his visits in Paris to four different theatres on four successive nights:

"J'ai pu enfin que je voyais jouer la même pièce.

Je fais erreur, la dernière fois, j'ai eu du nouveau: 3
L'heroïne n'avait pas un amant, elle en avait trois". 3

Having read many French novels, Bartlett has a distorted idea of la française and foolishly makes advances to Martine. In reply she says:

"En bien, monsieur, il ne faut pas juger les femmes françaises d'après nos romans, d'après nos pièces de théâtre, ni d'après les demoiselles qui vous ont donné l'hospitalité. Et puisqu'il faut qu'on vous apprenne, sachez-vous-le, malgré ce que vous avez pu voir, malgré ce que vous avez pu lire, vous ne connaissez rien de la littérature ni des femmes de ce pays. ** Il y a encore de braves gens en France. Et il y a encore des honnêtes femmes. Ce sont toutes celles que vous ne voyez pas, c'est-à-dire l'immense majorité, ce sont toutes celles qui vivent entre leurs maris et leurs enfants, dans leurs foyers, dans ces foyers où vous ne pénétrez pas", 3

Bartlett, alone: "Si jamais je le retrouve, mon jeune homme de Grand-Hôtel!" 4

1. "La Française", page 148.
2. Ibid., page 16.
3. Ibid., page 120.
4. Ibid., page 122.

But besides this primary teaching that the typical French woman is modest and home-loving, Erioux takes the opportunity to make several minor observations. His introduction of the Americans has enabled him to offer several observations, favorable and unfavorable, of us as a nation. He says:

The American has self-control ¹, is never timid ², wears glasses to look old ³, is not ashamed of manual labor ⁴; sells and buys often in the commercial world ⁵, and is ever eager for the almighty dollar. He makes Charles say:

"A une petite gare où un signal avait arrêté notre express, un homme arrosait des fleurs, pour le seul plaisir de ses yeux et de ceux des passants. Je l'aurais embrassé! Il distribuait de l'eau sur les geraniums et les roses avec les gestes paisibles et attentifs de ceux qui rendent un culte. Pour la première fois de ma vie je voyais quelqu'un en plein air qui ne courait pas après le dollar". ⁶

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1. "La Française", page 28: "Le sang-froid est précisément une vertu américaine".
2. Ibid., page 33: "Un Américain n'est jamais timide. Je veux dire qu'il est un peu sauvage".
3. Ibid., page 82: "Seulement, sans mes lunettes, j'ai l'air trop jeune".
4. Ibid., page 112: "Chez nous, on ne rougit pas d'avoir travaillé de ses mains".
5. Ibid., page 135: "Liquidez et passez à autre chose.
* Chez nous cela se voit tous les jours, et paraît tout naturel! "
6. Ibid., page 100.

Of course considerable contrast is made between the French and the American marriage. Bartlett says:

"En Amérique, toute l'activité du mari s'emploie à faire de l'argent, et la femme applique toute sa science à dépenser. ** Plus la femme dépense, plus le mari aime, et réciproquement. ** Il faut être une pauvre femme américaine ne se préoccupant pas assez de ce que coûte à l'énergie et même à la santé du mari les affaires qu'elle achète à tous les vents! 1

Charles quotes the following as the words of Margaret, his American sweetheart, upon her refusal to marry him:

"Pour le flit, j'accorde, Charles, mais pas pour le mariage. J'ai de plus belles ambitions. J'ai reçu une instruction virile, sur les mêmes bancs que les hommes qui font un jour la richesse ou la gloire de son pays. Les frissons d'enthousiasme que j'ai ressentis aux récits des grands actes du passé ne m'ont pas préparés pour un avenir aussi terre à terre". 2

The Anglo-Saxon and the Latin might be profitably thus united:

"Si l'on pouvait associer l'énergie américaine et l'intelligence, la faculté de création française, on obtiendrait des résultats merveilleux". 3

Brieux says that France is fond of her traditions: "La terre, c'est littéralement la poussière de leurs os. Tous vivons sur nos morts, et c'est ça la patrie". 4

But "l'Amérique est une grande maison neuve et vide, où personne n'a encore pleuré ni souri". 4

1. "La Française", page 56.
2. Ibid., page 55.
3. Ibid., page 112.
4. Ibid., page 157.

Turning to France, he offers this criticism:

"Le plus grand malheur de ce pays, maintenant, c'est de douter de soi. La France s'est complu dans sa convalescence, et elle a besoin que quelqu'un lui frappe sur l'épaule en lui disant des qualités, qui d'ailleurs ne sont pas celles dont elle se vante, et lui rende conscience de sa force, de sa grandeur et de son honnêteté". 1

1. "La Française", page 131.

La Femme Libre.

Comédie en Trois Actes. Le Théâtre du Gymnase, Dec. 22, '12.

Thérèse, a clever, well educated girl of twenty-four, an orphan, lives with her adopted parents, the Guérets. Their fortune, as well as hers, has recently been squandered by a lawyer on the Bourse. When told of the difficulty, she braves the facts and declares herself capable of self-support in Paris.

But at once breaks her betrothal with René Charton, for she realizes René's inability to support her without his parents' assistance. She and René know the futility of repeating this since her dowry is now gone. Thérèse, having already met with slight success in the literary world, interviews M. Nérissé, the editor of the Revue de l'Art Féminin. From her Thérèse learns that Mme. Nérissé and her supposed husband, Nérissé, are soon to begin the publication of another bi-monthly, La Femme Libre.

On the editorial staff of La Femme Libre Thérèse meets with fair success, although encountering many unpleasant features such as long hours, hard toil, and above the ever-present antipathy to women. The new paper, in

spite of its popular department, "Beauty Hints", is unsuccessful. Expenses are cut by salary reductions. Thérèse finds herself forced to leave or to become the mistress of Fériesse. She leaves.

In the last act she has become the foreman of the women's department of M. Féliat's book-binding at Evreux. In an interview with Lucienne, an old friend of the Guéret circle, she tells of her various difficulties in finding employment in Paris after leaving La Femme Seule. In her present position she has organized the working women under her into a woman-syndicate against which the men's union, with headquarters at Paris, now aim their shot. A delegate from the Confédération Générale du Travail succeeds in frightening M. Féliat into submission. Thérèse perforce leaves for Paris, having in the meantime met René, now a self-supporting man. The couple still love each other and depart together.

In La Femme Seule Erioux portrays the present struggle of the unmarried woman as she attempts to support herself. I have shown in Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont

Dupont's estimate of Caroline who is self-supporting ¹. This same opinion is here extended more generally to every man in the commercial world. Thérèse is forced to leave, first, the newspaper field,² later, the factory of M. Féliat³, and finally she is forced to become either a tradesman in Paris or the mistress of René ³. She and René cannot marry, for René's father still refuses consent to the marriage since Thérèse is without dowry ⁴. We have already noted the tragic results of such unions against the father's consent in La Petite Amie.⁵

Like Blanchette, Thérèse is forced eventually to seek the companionship of a man.

This arrangement, however, seems to come as only a temporary solution of the femme seule question. In the closing speech of the play,

"Dans cette nouvelle guerre des sexes c'est eux, eux les hommes qui seront vaincus, parce que la femme travaille à meilleur marché, n'ayant pas besoin comme eux d'un supplément de salaire à porter au cimetière. ** les filles des bourgeois qui n'ont pas l'énergie d'épouser les filles sans dot les trouveront plus tard sur leur chemin, ces malheureuses qu'ils auront eux-mêmes contraintes au travail! Il faut en prendre votre parti. Des temps nouveaux sont venus. Dans tous les pays, dans les villes, dans les campagnes, chez les pauvres et les demi-pauvres,

1. Cf. supra, page 33.

2. "La Femme Seule", page 179.

3. Ibid., page 233:

"Si, je m'en vais. Je vais où suis contrainte d'aller".

4. Ibid., page 231 et seq.

5. Cf. supra, page 40.

de chaque foyer déserté pour l'alcool ou laissé vide par ceux qui n'ont pas le courage de mariage, se lèvera une femme qui l'abandonnera et qui viendra s'asseoir à côté de vous, à l'usine, à l'atelier, au bureau, au comptoir. Vous ne l'aurez pas voulu ménagère, et comme elle ne se verra pas courtisane, elle sera l'ouvrière, et la concurrente, et la concurrente victorieuse! " 1

Brieux does imply a freer outlook for woman. He shows that sooner or later she will not be thus compelled, even though dowryless, to become a courtesan.

Another phase of the femme seule question Brieux mentions, but volunteers no remedy. He says there are,

"Celles qui n'ont pas de mari. Les filles, les veuves, les abandonnées. Il vaut mieux leur donner un métier que de les forcer à prendre un amant". 2

1. "La Femme Seule", page 238.
2. Ibid., page 212.

Summary. Womanhood.

Brieux handles three phases of the woman question: first, woman's education, second, her position as matron in the home, and third, her position in the commercial world.

1. Blanchette teaches that the really educated woman is willing to do the humblest duties of life ¹. He leaves his reader to infer that he dislikes the present public school system in France, since it prepares women, not for better domestic life, but for the teaching profession, now overcrowded. ²

2. La Française teaches that the majority of French women today are

"Celles que vous ne rencontrez ni sur les boulevards, ni dans les promenoirs des concerts, ni dans les endroits où l'on la fête, dans les endroits de détente", ³

but rather, the home-loving wife and mother, whose influence often does not penetrate beyond the home circle. ⁴

Of the Americans as a people, he makes a few minute observations ⁵, and concludes by saying that the uniting of the American energy with the creative ability of

1. Cf. supra page 82, quotation 4 and page 83, quot. 1.
2. Cf. supra page 83, quotation 3.
3. "La Française", page 121.
4. Cf. supra, page 83, quotation 3.
5. Cf. supra, page 87.

the French would bring about wonderful results¹.

Last of all, he says that France has lost courage in herself and needs an awakening².

3. The last play in the womanhood group, La Femme Seule, teaches that the woman who plans to support herself will fail, first, in the field of journalism³ and later as foreman in a large industrial plant⁴. At present, he concludes that the only opening for her is in Paris as the unlawful consort of some man, because no man will marry her without dowry⁵. Trieux implies, however, a brighter future for the femme seule, when she can, shoulder to shoulder with man, work in the commercial world⁶. Victory will be here in this coming sex-war, for she, as an honest, temperate member of society, will surpass her alcoholic male antagonist³.

1. Cf. supra, page 88, quotation 3.

2. Cf. supra, page 89, quotation 1.

3. "La Femme Seule", page 79.

4. Ibid., page 83.

5. Cf. supra, page 82, foot-note 3.

6. Cf. supra, pages 82 and 83, long quotation.

6. Politics.

a. "L'Engrenage".

b. "La Robe Rouge",.

L'Engrenage.

Comédie en Trois Actes.

Le Théâtre de la Comédie-Parisienne,
par le Cercle des Échouillers, pay 18, '94.

L'Engrenage presents, in a series of pictures, the various moral stages, fall and rise, of a typical French provincial, M. Lémoussin. At first he is a quiet, honest manufacturer, forty-five years old. He is a self-made man, a son of toil and hence eager to do all possible for the uplift of the working class. As one means to this, he plans to erect a day-nursery near the factory where mothers, employed, may leave their children in safety.

But an ambitious wife, a twenty year old daughter, and the latter's prospective husband interrupt the calm life of this honest man by urging him to enter politics. Along with the family incentive comes the plea of an old friend, Senator Robin. Morin is a distillery owner who has been affected seriously by the tax on foreign wheat as voted for by M. Vaudrey, the present deputy. Morin's opposition to the re-election of Vaudrey finds vent in urging Lémoussin to become the opponent of Vaudrey. Know-

Rémoussin's sympathy for the poor people upon whom the wheat tax works a hardship by raising the price of bread, Morin urges Rémoussin to become a candidate and points out clearly how he may, if elected, vote against the tax, thereby aiding the poor. But the majority of voters in this small town are farmers who wish the tax since it will increase the price of their wheat; consequently, to aid his working people and to get elected, Rémoussin must pretend to be in favor of the tax.

Such persuasion is needed to induce Rémoussin to enter the field, for he has read statements about the Chambre.

"Le sang me bout, en voyant comment on perd son temps, comment on vote sans savoir pourquoi, sans connaître la question, en voyant la sottise et le cynisme de ces cinq cents inutiles!"

But Morin reminds him of the 5137 voters, les pères de famille, who are waiting to cast their ballot for an honest man.

Finally Rémoussin yields, at the same time assert-

"Jamais je ne voterai les droits sur les blés".

Six months later we see the Réoussin family in Paris. M. Réoussin at first attempted to stand alone in his fight against political corruption, but, derided on every side, he joins the tax-group.

The weakening process, now well under way, yields before one test after another. When M. Réoussin calls his attention to this fact, he says:

"Ah! mais tu es comme j'étais jadis: toute la progéniture des idées de ta province. Tu vois petitement".¹

"Tu as raison. Nous avons les préjugés qui sont d'un autre âge. A mesure qu'on s'élevé, vois-tu, toutes les choses s'expliquent et, malgré ce qu'on peut dire, on s'aperçoit bien que la morale n'est pas la même pour un petit usinier ou pour un homme de gouvernement".²

Finally the tempted enters in the person of the Marquis de Storn. Storn represents a company at Simplon, formed to undertake the building of a tunnel through the range of mountains between France and Italy. The company, through their representative, are to request over a hundred million francs from the government. Storn is now seeking to influence individual members to vote in favor of this appropriation when officially presented. Réoussin is interested in his country's welfare and promises his sup-
1. "L'Engrenage", page 74.
2. Ibid., page 78.

port. As Stoin leaves the room, he drops on the table a check of 25,000 francs, telling Mme. Bémoussin who enters at this crisis, that he offers the money as a contribution to charity in which Deputy Bémoussin is so deeply interested. She overrules the objections of her husband and thanks Stoin.

As soon as the oily man has left the room, the couple realize that they have accepted a bribe.

But at once news is brought that the workmen at the factory, left in the hands of his prospective son-in-law, are threatening to strike. Bémoussin and family return to the province to look after matters there.

The last act opens thus with a speech of Morin's:

"Je vous assure que la situation des ouvriers n'est pas gaie".¹

"Eh bien, et la Biennel! Est-ce que vous croyez qu'elle est gaie, la Biennel! Je voudrais bien les voir à sa place", Bémoussin rejoins furiously.

Later Morin comes again to say that the evening paper has just published a list of names of people who have been bribed by the Simplon representative.

"J'y suis. Vous aussi".³

Bémoussin is fazed.

1. "L'Engrainage"? page 94.
2. Ibid., page 95.
3. Ibid., page 107.

"Et vous êtes sur que mon nom: Rémoussin, est sur la liste public? j'avais ma voix au requies de Stern avant d'avoir rien reçu. Et d'ailleurs, j'ai donné aux pauvres. 1.** Je suis un honnête homme. J'ai toute ma vie d'honneur derrière moi! Est-ce que j'ai demandé à être député? Oui, c'est vous! tout ce qui arrive, c'est de votre faute!" 2

Then his old self is awakened, he realizes how gradually he has been led from the right. With effort he acknowledges his weakness to Morin. His confession, sincere and full of humility, ends with a cry of repentance. Only one thing is left for him to do. He writes a letter of acknowledgement to the newspaper, forwards the 25,000 francs to Paris, and resigns as deputy. Again he is an honest man.

The teaching of Brieux in this play is self-elucidating. At the very start, equivocal in the tax-question ³, Rémoussin allows himself to be ensnared by the engrenage of the big political machine; to continue the figure, there he is held tight by the pressure of other wheels about him; gradually the wheel on which he ^{is} riding runs so smoothly that he forgets what he is doing. ⁴ Come

1. "L'Engrenage", page 108.

2. Ibid., page 111.

3. Ibid., page 9: "Les ouvriers ne veulent pas du droit sur les blés, c'est vrai; mais les agriculteurs le demandent. Or, dans votre circonscription, il y a

(Continued next page).

4. (See next page).

time passes before a hitch occurs which stops the running-gear temporarily. When once outside the engine-room, that is, in the province again, and able to survey the work of l'engrenage without being deafened by the noise of the machinery, Rémoussin awakens to his true status ¹.

"Oui, je suis un honnête homme!" ²

Out of this noisy machinery, he becomes a new man.

"Si le suffrage universel n'était pas aussi bête, il ne serait nécessaire de le guider". ³

plus d'agriculteurs que d'ouvriers, donc vous devez soutenir les intérêts des premiers".

1. (From preceding page),

"L'Engrenage", page 73: "A mesure qu'on s'élève, vois-tu, toutes les choses s'expliquent et, malgré ce qu'on peut dire, on s'aperçoit bien que la morale n'est pas la même pour un petit usinier ou pour un homme de gouvernement".

2. "L'Engrenage", page 114:

"Malgré mes faiblesses de la période électorale, j'étais arrivé à la Chambre avec un reste de générosité. Dès que je l'ai pu, dès les premières séances, j'ai voulu tenir mes promesses. ** Ah! mes collègues! ** j'ai eu peur devant le ridicule. ** oui, j'ai été lâche! je la vois bien, maintenant, ma dégringolade! ** Et en effet, j'ai descendu toute la pente, et j'ai passé tout entier sans l'engrenage.** Vous avez bien deviné, vous, qu'avec quelques flatteries et quelque habilité, on ne ferait accepter le chèque!"

3. Ibid., page 113.

3. Ibid., page 31.

La Robe Rouge.

Plèce en Quatre Actes. Le Théâtre de Vaudeville, May 15, '00.

Vagret, le procureur de la République, or public prosecutor at Valaison, has the customary high ambitions of the entire French magistracy. Prompted by his wife and daughter, he is eager for a "case" by which he can win the applause of the Procureur Général, thereby attaining one more step toward la robe rouge of the conseiller. Mme. Vagret thus explains his eagerness to act when a message is brought to him at night of the murder of an old man at Irisarry:

"Il s'est habillé en moins de cinq minutes et il m'a dit, en se contentant, mais en se serrant fortement la main: "Cette fois, je crois que nous la tenons, ma nomination! " " 1

The "case" has come, but le juge d'instruction or examining judge, Delorme, is forced to relinquish the case, for he can find no party suspected of the crime. His colleague, Houzon, becomes interested in the case and accepts the dossier de l'affaires d'Irisarry. Houzon arrests a peasant named Pichepare who owed the murdered Père Coyetche money and unquestionably presumes the man's guilt and his wife's guilt as an accomplice.

1. "La Robe Rouge"? Page 7.

The second act takes place in the cabinet room of Mazou. In his examination of Etchepare, Mazou, by turns violent, kind, ingenious, captivating, puts into his efforts all the resources of his clever brain. He plays "the great game" finally of drawing from Etchepare and wife, Yanetta, a confession of the crime which they never committed. To do this he worms out of Yanetta an acknowledgement of a trivial theft committed long before her marriage for the sake of a lover who betrayed her.

In Act III the trial of Etchepare has progressed through the appeal for the defense. Wagret, in turn, in behalf of the state, delivers his long-practiced speech. His eloquence seems to overshadow everything. But suddenly feeling the falsity of his own ~~xxxixxxx~~^{acts} and the innocence of the man for whose death he is pleading, Wagret denies his statements and recoils before the cruel words of the président des assises and deprives himself forever of the realization of his high ambitions, la robe rouge. "Son devoir d'honnête homme" ¹ has been done; a guiltless man has gained freedom.

"Il vaut mieux laisser dix coupables en liberté que de frapper un innocent. ² Ces gens-là ont un cœur, comme vous et moi". ³

1. "La Robe Rouge", page 175.
2. Ibid., page 177.
3. Ibid., page 180.

Act IV. Although the trial resulted in the acquittal of Stolepore, it also brought to light facts of Vanetta's early life, until now unknown to Stolepore. Stolepore decides to leave her and, with his mother and children, to seek new openings in America. Vanetta is broken hearted. Because of some foolish foible, she has been kept in jail. In an interview with Mazon, she stabs him, thereby arranging herself.

La Robe Rouge portrays clearly that lawyers, judges, and officers of the law stop to any secret crime to obtain higher ranking and the insignia of power, la robe rouge.

La Bruzule has expressed the theme:

"Je suis guéri de la maladie qui change tant d'honnêtes hommes en mauvais juges.. Cette maladie, c'est la fièvre de l'avancement. Regardez ceux qui sont là. S'ils n'étaient infectés par ce microbe, ils seraient des hommes justes et doux, au lieu d'être des magistrats serviles et cruels". 1

Again he says:

"Plus rien à espérer, j'ai le droit de juger selon ma conscience", 2

as he resigns as judge at the age of seventy, after a

1. "La Robe Rouge", page 38.
2. Ibid., page 31.

life time spent in a vain attempt to dole out justice.

"Mais, monsieur, on m'avait dit que la justice était gratuite en France",¹

says la mère Stenopais.

La Bouzule answers:

"La justice est gratuite, mais les moyens d'arriver jusqu'à elle ne le sont pas, voilà tout".

This speech recurred a line written ten years before in "Ménages d'Artistes":

"C'est joli, la justice, mais c'est un objet de luxe: ça coûte cher".²

As a whole, Brieux touches this main fact in La Robe Rouge: the French judiciary will stoop to any means to gain advancement. There is, however, this one redeeming characteristic, not found, he implies, in the magistrates of other nations:

"La magistrature française, elle n'est pas vénale, voilà la vérité. Parmi nos quatre mille magistrats, on n'en trouverait peut-être pas un---vous entendez, pas un! --- même parmi les plus humbles et les plus pauvres--- surtout parmi les plus humbles et les plus pauvres--- qui acceptât de l'argent pour modifier son jugement. ça c'est la gloire et le monopole de la magistrature de notre pays".³

1. "La Robe Rouge", page 122 et 221.

2. "Ménages d'Artistes", page 10.

3. "La Robe Rouge", pages 22 and 17.

Summary. Politics.

In the two plays dealing, in general, with political conditions in France, Erioux portrays the experiences and temptations of a member of the Chamber of Deputies, or the legislative body in France, and the experiences and ambitions of a member of the French judiciary.

1. In L'Enfermage he teaches that a man, to become a Deputy, must sacrifice scruple after scruple, passing from at first an honest man, through the various stages, until he finally reaches the lowest point when he sells his vote for 25,000 francs¹. Then he awakens and becomes an honest man.

2. La Robe Rouge teaches that the judges and lawyers in France will stoop to any means to gain the robe rouge²; and that the main redeeming feature is that they are not open to bribes³.

1. Cf. supra, page 103, foot-note 1.
2. Cf. supra, page 105, quotation 1.
3. Cf. supra page 103, quotation 3.

7. Money.

a. "Résultat des Courses".

b. "L'Armature".

Résultat des Courses.

Jeûne en Six Tableaux. Le Théâtre-Antoine, Dec. 14, '38.

In Résultat des Courses Lileux has handled questions relative to the laboring man's life in the factory and in the home.

Arsène Chantaud is a bronze worker in the shop of M. Lestavel. Chantaud has a very harmonious home life. His wife is an open, frank woman who seems continually to help maintain the family. A son, Victor, a noble young man, has a position in the Lestavel establishment and later becomes a partner. Grand'mère Chantaud, almost eighty years old, is a typical woman of her class, whose life of toil has mellowed her outlook on life and has taught her patience, leniency, and love.

The first Tableau shows the laborers in the workshop. Wholesouled, careless toilers, they enjoy mostly the novelty of pay-day which allows a few extra verres. Chantaud has become interested in the races and stakes. Wagering a little on elle Petite, a horse which later wins, he has made enough to buy a silver watch and chain for Victor. Victor suspects the source of this extravagance and is displeased.

Le Deuxième Tableau shows us the dining room of the Chantaud home. The latent love and mutual confidence of the group is noticeable. Mme. Chantaud remembers, however, that her husband has given her only sixty-five of his eighty francs, his last salary. She searches through the clothes of her husband and finds, instead of the money, a bulletin de pari mutuel indicating that fifty francs have been wagered. Chantaud confesses at once his wager and his gain of one hundred and fifty francs. His luck seems to mitigate his offense.

The third picture shows Chantaud's discharge since he has used some of the Lesterei money at the races. Lesterei finally allows him freedom from arrest, but forces him to sign a statement acknowledging the sin and debt.

The fourth picture shows the chilly home now of the Chantauds. The debts have accumulated too fast for Mme. Chantaud; the furniture is removed because of unpaid rent, Chantaud can gain no work and finally leaves home, unable to endure the silent suffering of the women and Victor, who are struggling to pay off the debt.

Le Cinquième Tableau shows the Paris police handling their problem of the unemployed. Wagabonds by the

people crowd into the chief's office, hover, shivering, around the warm stove, and wait their turn to be sent to the Dépôt where they are sure of food and warm lodgings. Among the crowd are children from twelve years of age to Chantaud, sixty-two years old.

Chantaud's condition seems better than the rest, for he is forced to confess that he has relatives. The police decide to summon them at once.

Le Sixième Tableau most pathetically portrays the reunited family. Repentance and forgiveness are well portrayed. The old Chantaud has been induced to return because of the supposed illness of his daughter.

"Mon enfant. Mais on m'a menti. Tu n'es pas malade".¹
He seizes in turn wife, mother, daughter. They hand him a letter with the heading,

"Ancienne maison Lestereil. Lestereil et Victor Chantaud, successeur".²

The daughter picks up a note which has fallen from the envelope and as he recognizes it as a receipt for the Lestereil debt, he says,

"Qui est-ce qui a payé? C'est toi!"³

just as Victor enters the room and embraces his father.

1. "Résultat des Courses", page 211.

2. Ibid., page 213.

3. Ibid., page 217.

The main theme ~~is~~^{re} of this play is gambling. Elioux shows that this evil is common to old men and young ¹, that it spells loss of employment and financial failure, and that it is a wrecker of home-life ².

With this obvious lesson, ^{it} incidentally points out the evil of intoxicating liquors. There is also implied the lesson of forgiveness. Like Victor, the hopeful and strong youth, the world must, Elioux implies, commiserate and help the man who strays. While the strongest man, even a devoted husband and father, like Arsène, may err, he is worthy, if repentant, of forgiveness and encouragement. The advantage of forgiveness on the part of a daughter has already been shown ³ in my treatment of Simone.

1. "Résultat des Courses", Tableau I., scenes 3 and 5.
2. *Ibid.*, Tableau 4, scene 13.
3. Cf. *supra*, page 80, bottom.

L'Armature.

"L'Armature en Cinq Actes. Le Théâtre au Vaudeville, Apr. 18, '01.

Act I shows the guests of Baron Raffre at a formal evening fête. The Baron, though married, with at least three grown children, is seeking the attention of Clotilde d'Exireuil, wife of a local man whose wealth is threatened because of repeated squander. She is a noble woman and her only interest lies in her husband.

The second act gives the Exireuil home at which Exireuil is notified by his creditor, M. Ploche, that he must pay all indebtedness within one month. Exireuil explains to his wife:

"J'ai joué au club, j'ai spéculé à la Bourse!
Tout a tourné contre moi".¹

Yet in true womanly devotion she answers:

"Je veux souffrir comme toi où tu seras" to tenir,
te sentir là, être toujours avec toi et toujours t'avoir à
côté!²

When left alone, she ponders upon Exireuil's proposed trip to Australia in the hope of regaining his fortune. Her thoughts are interrupted by the visiting card of Baron Raffre. He plays his game skillfully, realizing her utter

1. "L'Armature", page 131.

2. Ibid., page 137.

despair and her husband's approaching failure. In apparent kindness, he offers to employ Exireuil in his own business and to encourage him in every way. She, in turn, with child-like simplicity, expresses her gratitude to him. When he hints that he may ask for personal recompense, she rebuffs the suggestion and shouts:

"De l'honneur! ** Vous êtes en être abject et lâche! Jamais J'aime mieux la mort? " 1

Coldly , prophetically he says:

"Je vous dis que vous ne céderez. 2 Vous réfléchirez", 3
and leaves.

As the curtain falls, she sits puzzled, divided between her love of purity and her desire to save her husband.

The next act takes place at the country house of the Saffres. Here we get a glimpse at the Marchess, whose married life has naturally been unhappy. She is now accosted by her son-in-law, Count de Crocnelain, who announces his intention to divorce his wife, daughter of the Marchess, because of unfaithfulness to the marriage bonds.

The fourth act resumes the Exireuil matter. In one strong scene Exireuil learns that his wife has yielded to the illicit requests of Saffre in return for which pleasure, Saffre has given employment to himself, Exireuil. For a

1. "L'Armature", page 159.

2. Ibid., page 159.

3. Ibid., page 160.

moment unforgiving, Exireull soon realizes that his wife's sacrifice has been made out of sheer love and devotion.

He becomes excited and says:

"Je vais la tuer". 1

Ciselle can only assent:

"Alléluia! Jacques, tue-le!" 2

The last act shows that now financial ruin threatens Baron Saffire. He struggles along against the impending fate when a stroke of apoplexy prevents public disgrace. He is in the last throes of death as Exireull quietly enters the room. Exireull realizes that he has come too late to commit murder or to gain revenge.

L'Armature is a dramatization of a novel by Hervieu and as such, of course, contains no original subject matter.

The key-sentence of the theme occurs early in the play:

"Oh bien! pour soutenir la famille, pour contenir la société, pour fournir à tout ce beau monde la rigoureuse tenue que vous lui voyez, il y a une armature plus ou moins dissimulée, ordinairement invisible, qui est faite de son argent!" 3

Money is the only unfailing armature, as it were, which holds together men and things. For money one will sell anything,

1. "L'Armature", page 272.
2. Ibid., page 273.
3. Ibid., page 18.

even virtue; with money one can buy anything, even virtue ¹.

Because Baron Raffie has wealth, the following facts obtain: first, he gains whatever he wishes, even the honor of a woman who, if not virtuous, is at least filled with good sentiments and devoted to her husband ²; second, one son-in-law, Count de Crommelain, allows himself to be basely deceived by his wife and relinquishes all plans for divorce, when told of the individual fortune of the Marchesa ³; third, another worthless son-in-law, Oliver Washant, has married Jullienne Raffie, a deformed, unhappy creature, only for her money, and is, in turn, in love with Princess Pajeau ⁴.

1. "L'Armature", page 269: "Moi, je ne pouvais supporter de te voir revenir chaque jour plus maltraité, plus dégradé, plus lamentable".

also: page 265: "Pour rester avec moi, tu t'es vendue à moi!"

2. Ibid., page 269.

3. Ibid., page 282.

4. Ibid., Act III., scenes 1 and 2.

Summary. Money.

The two plays dealing with the money-question, Résultat des Courses and L'Armature, are far from the clearest in Erioux in respect to their teaching. The latter is only an adaptation and hence, not a significant part of Erioux's writing.

1. Résultat des Courses has the one theme gambling. The play teaches that race-course betting in the father is destructive of home and position. Tableau three ¹ shows the father's loss of employment, due to gambling; Tableau four² shows the family furniture taken for debt; Tableau five ³ shows the father among the dozens of other unemployed, seeking shelter and food at the municipal Dépôt. The last Tableau shows the kind and forgiving spirit of the son; he has worked hard to pay off his father's debts and finally receives the old man in the reestablished home ⁴. A second minor teaching in the play is that of intemperance ⁵.

3. L'Armature shows the unique teaching:

"La puissance de l'argent est universelle". ⁶

This lesson is shown in concrete form in the cases of Mme.

1. Cf. supra, page 110.

2. Cf. supra, page 110.

3. Cf. supra, pages 110 and 111.

4. Cf. supra, page 111.

5. "Résultat des Courses", pages 97- 104.

6. "L'Armature", page 16.

d'Exireuil who sells her virtue to Baron Saffre to save her husband from financial ruin ¹; in that of Count de Crommelain, who gives up all plans of divorce from Baron Saffre's daughter because of her money ²; and finally, in that of another son-in-law, Oliver Brehant, who has married an ill-formed daughter of the count for her money .

1. "L'Armature"? page 265:

"Pour rester avec moi, tu t'es vendue à lui! "

Ibid., page 282.

8. Miscellaneous Social Criticism.

- a. ("Bernand Palissy", not published.)
- b. ("Papa Courtage", not published.)
- c. ("La Fille de Duramé ", not published.)
- d. "Ménages d'Artistes".
- e. "Les Bienfaiteurs".
- f. "L'Évasion".
- g. "La Foi".

Bernard Palissy.

Drame en un Acte, en vers. Le théâtre Cluny, Dec. 21, 1879.

Bernard Palissy was the first effort of Erioux to reach the boards. This was written in collaboration with M. Gaston Salandri. The play is in verse, the form so commonly used by aspiring novices;

The main character in the play is the historic person, Palissy, who struggled so long and hard upon his invention of pottery-enamelling.

So far as known Erioux and Salandri concerned themselves with nothing but the simple story of the man's life and ultimate success. The play enjoyed but one presentation and has never been published.

Papa Courtage.

All that can be learned of this play is its name and "Comédie en cinq actes en prose, de M. Brieux", which information occurs in a letter quoted by Sarcey¹ and written him by André Antoine, July 29, 1887. Papa Courtage was included in Antoine's prospective list of plays for the second season. But we conclude that it was never presented since it does not occur in the list of plays given in Thalasso, and no mention of it can be found elsewhere.

1. "Quarante Ans de Théâtre", vol. 8, pages 241 and 242.

La Fille de Duramé.

Drama en Cinq Actes. At Rouen, le Théâtre Français, Mar.25, '00.

La Fille de Duramé, probably written before Ménages d'Artistes, reached its Rouen audience four days later. Nothing can be learned of it except the following by Mr. H. L. Mencken:

" A melodrama of revolutionary days, with the usual outfit of brigands, spied, and gendarmes. ** It bears no sort of relation to the rest of Brieux' s works".¹

1. Preface to "Two Plays by Brieux"? page XII.

Ménages d'Artistes.

Comédie en Trois Actes. Le Théâtre Libre, March 21, '90.

Act I takes place July, 1889, in the dining room of Jacques Tervaux's home. The atmosphere created at once is that of persons struggling against poverty to become, in some way or other, literary artists. Louise and Gabrielle, wife and daughter of Tervaux, are joyful over the arrival of Mme. Legend, Louisel's mother. The three women anticipate much pleasure in viewing the sights of the Paris Exposition. Louise has some difficulty in impressing upon her mother the need for quiet speech since, in the adjoining room, Jacques is reading to friends some of his poems, "Les Flavescences". Mme. Legend, a woman of common sense, entirely lacking in the artificial refinement of her son-in-law's home, asks Louise the meaning of the woman's voice heard in the other room. Louise explains that Mlle. Vernier, an old school-friend, but eight years younger than herself, deeply interested in the new literary movement, has promised assistance to Jacques and that, as a consequence, Mlle. Vernier has temporarily rented the Tervaux salon. She plans the publishing of a new Parisian paper and has invited Jacques to act as its editor-in-chief. This position will materially aid his

artistic ambitions. He has already tried his hand at "spiritual" verses on such themes as "La mort et la naissance à la vie éternelle".

Mme. Legrand, however, out of sympathy with this aesthetic movement, sees only its material disadvantages, such as the absence of a four hundred franc silver service, her gift to Louise.

As the reading is concluded, Jacques and his friends, all men save Mlle. Vernier, enter, lauding vociferously the poetic talent of Jacques. Jacques enjoys especially whatever praise Mlle. Vernier offers. Gabrielle and Louise serve the party an elaborate banquet. Mme. Legrand, exhausted from her journey, drops off to sleep, but is suddenly awakened by the laughter of the party. Still dazed, she makes an unkind remark upon which everybody leaves.

When left alone, Jacques thinks of the success of the reading, but feels lonely. Mlle. Vernier suddenly drops in and invites him to attend the opera with her. Glad to escape the loneliness at home and to be so honored by this literary ^{quickly} light, Jacques ~~gladly~~ accepts, losing his head at such encouragement.

In Act II Louise chances to find the theatre tickets

carelessly dropped on the floor. Suspicious of the couple's actions, she now feels jealous of the younger woman. After seventeen years of married life, she fears her own inferiority.

"Elle est intelligente, jeune, élégante, moi, je suis simple, vieille, et sotte".¹

When face to face with the actual accusation of being Jacques' mistress, Mlle. Vernier truthfully insists upon her innocence. In a splendid scene between Mlle. Vernier and Jacques, she urges him to be more faithful to his wife, informing him that she herself is already married and unfit to become his courtesan.

Mme. Legrand, however, has not heard these remarks and her clear vision detects the snares into which Jacques is falling because of his infatuation for Mlle. Vernier. The "spiritual" affinity threatens to become less spiritual and more mundane. Mme. Legrand decides once for all to sever this friendship and comes in to announce to Jacques and Louise that she has removed all of Mlle. Vernier's possessions and that hereafter there will be no second woman on the premises. Enraged, Jacques rushes out to explain the predicament to Mlle. Vernier. The curtain falls as these suspicious words come from the lips of Louise:

"Mais vous m'avez peut-être fait perdre mon mari".²

1. "Ménages d'Artistes", page 48.

2. Ibid., page 68.

Act III takes place in November of the same year. The scene is the editor's office of Le Journal des Poètes Mondains. Mlle. Vernier has become the doubtful Muse, who has induced her Tervaux to become the chief editor of her paper. Playing false to Louise and Gabrielle, he has now paid court to Emma Vernier for four months. But her money is now gone. She calmly notifies him that she is going to leave. His entreaties fall on deaf ears. She rushes off to join M. Voule, her husband and an ex-convict at the railway station. Jacques has only one alternative. He contemplates the various methods of suicide and decided to plunge himself under the tramway wheels. Soon after he leaves the stage, a heavy, harsh cry is heard off-stage.

The play, at once "Une pièce médiocre et une excellente expérience" ¹, is only a series of pictures, grossly painted, yet with the merit of presenting the unhappy phases of Bohemian life. It shows that the symbolist poets, in spite of their apparent spirituality, were very mundane from a physical point of view. Because the spirituality of Tervaux did not meet all the longings of his heart, he was forced to seek illicit friendship for full gratification. ² His ménage was ruined because mundane affections overruled aestheticism.

1. Malpy: *Revue Bleue*, 4, 3: 290, Sept. 4, '97.
2. "Ménages d'Artistes", page 45.

Les Bienfaiteurs.

Comédie en Quatre Actes. Le Porte Saint Martin, Oct. 28, '96.

Act I shows the home of M. and Mme. Landrecy, owners of a large manufacturing plant. Out of kindness and sympathy for the workmen, the Landrecy couple accept the proffered money from Valentin Salviat, to set up a sort of Associated Charities' Association for the benefit of local labor. Landrecy has two working principles for the management of the factory: first, "pas d'autre discipline que la dignité même des ouvriers,"¹ second, "le salaire des ouvriers sera proportionné à leurs charges et non à leur travail"².

After one year's efforts Landrecy thus reports to Salviat who returns to make inspection:

"Ils touchent un salaire élevé; j'ai institué pour eux un service médical gratuit, un économat; une crèche et une école d'apprentissage pour leurs enfants".³

The third act gives a practical demonstration of what Landrecy's supposed charity is accomplishing. A specialist is called in to demonstrate the methods of interviewing applicants. One applicant is sent out to pump water. The water, when pumped, is allowed to soak the ground or to **evaporate**. Another, a woman, is refused money because her husband drinks and any money given her would aid only the wine merchant.

The last act shows how a strike is narrowly averted. In spite of all of Landrecy's kindness, the men threaten to

1. "Les Bienfaiteurs", page 56.

2. Ibid., page 57.

walk out unless a certain discharged man is reemployed.

While Landrecy has thus been acting as would-be philanthropist among his employes, Mme. Landrecy has been attempting the amelioration of her sex. She has been made president of an organization which, through the financial aid of Salviat, hopes to better conditions among working women and those of the town whose misstep has lowered their social rating. Various committees are appointed with prominent local society women as chairwomen. With such names as "Mères des Filles perdues", "Victimes du vice", and "Ménages Irreguliers", these committees plan to reach every woman in need.

A year later, at Salviat's request, the women leaders of these committees meet. As Salviat enters the room, he encounters only a noisy rabble, discussing what each woman shall wear at the coming charity ball, previously voted for. The excitement is temporarily stilled by the unexpected word that one of the women of the town, a mother of three children, has killed them and herself, because of the need for bread.

Landrecy and wife, too, realize that

"Entre ceux qui possèdent et ceux qui méritent d'être secourus, il y a un mur".¹

This mur must be broken down by a hearty handshake, by an innate love for the unfortunate, shown in outward manifestations of interest, kindness, and sympathy.

The play is a social satire upon present day methods

1. "Les Bienfaiteurs", page 483.

The teaching is:

"Il faut faire la charité avec discernement. ** Il faut la faire avec amour". 1

"Le coeur ne comprend que le langage de l'amour. Il faut aimer ceux qu'on veut soulager! Il faut les aimer et il faut les connaître". 2

is
Landrecy himself ~~xxx~~ shocked at his own feeling when he slapped the back of the workman, Pluvinage, and said:

3
"Donnez-moi la main".

Pluvinage is equally surprised:

"Alors, c'est donc vrai, que vous êtes un brave homme, vous? Je vous demande pardon de ce que j'ai dit tantôt. Je ne vous connaissais pas. Voyez-vous tout le mal vient de la, -- c'est qu'on ne se connaît pas". 3

1. "Les Bienfaiteurs", page 177.
2. Ibid., page 177.
3. Ibid., page 178.

L'Évasion.

Comédie en Trois Actes. La Comédie-Française, Dec. 7, 1893.

Act I shows the home of Dr. Bertry, a prominent Parisian physician and a specialist in neuropathology. His step-son, Jean Belmont, has inherited melancholia from his father and has been warned against marriage and the propagation of this disease. As a consequence, Jean's life has become morose and unhappy.

André Bertry, the physician's brother, years before the play opens, had married a well-known ^Icourtesan of that day. An illegitimate child, born to her soon after the marriage, was adopted by Bertry, out of sincere love for the unfortunate woman. When the play opens, this child, Lucienne, now a young woman, is struggling mentally over the blight in her life caused by the immorality of her mother. She is the copyist of her uncle and as such has read many of his articles on heredity. She believes herself preordained to vice. Sincerely in love with Paul de Raucour, she has been rejected by him because, rumor says, he suddenly learned of her past.

Jean, Dr. Bertry's son, has loved Lucienne for some time, but has been taught that the manifestation of any such love was wrong. Now, however, Jean and Lucienne reveal to each other their common handicap and both, sincerely in love,

decide to marry in spite of all opposition.

In the second act we see the young couple after six months of married life, living quietly at Ebreville, near Paris. Jean no longer gives any cause for fear; he has lost his gloomy mood and promises to thwart all rules of science in heredity. Fond of Lucienne, fond of home, he is now busy as a farmer with plenty to occupy his time. His will-power, once called into play, now directs him to higher aspirations.

Lucienne, on the contrary, is already growing weary of rural life and longs for the gaiety of Paris. The monotony is broken by a visit from Paul de Raucbur and his recent bride. Lucienne's former love for him is rekindled. Jean unexpectedly finds Paul and Lucienne chatting together.

Act III takes place in Paris again. After a conversation with several of her gay society friends, Lucienne addresses her father alone and gently unbraids him for the unhappiness between her and Jean. M. Bertry, in turn, tells her of her mother's deep love for her as a child. Lucienne begins now to appreciate Bertry's kindness to her and to her mother and to understand better about life's struggles. While she has been tempted to think of Paul as a more pleasing companion than Jean, she is now prepared to stand firmly for right;

she readily rejects his offers of illegitimate love. She calls out:

"Jean! Je te défends-moi, Jean, défends-moi!" 3

Leaning upon him, she knows that at last she is free from the chains of bondage handed down to her from her mother. The curtain falls as Jean says:

"Nous sommes libres, enfin!" 3

In L'Évasion Brioux shows how a couple may live down inherited tendencies. By the example of Jean and Lucienne, he seems to imply that people may overcome bad inherited tendencies, or in other words, that eugenics is not the only salvation of the race. He shows how self-control in Lucienne and strong will-power in Jean bring about happiness for themselves in spite of the teaching on heredity given them by Dr. Bertry. There is no single quotation in the play to show this. Brioux here implies his teaching from events.

1. "L'Évasion", page 173.
2. *Ibid.*, page 174.
3. *Ibid.*, page 179.

La Foi.

Pièce en Cinq Actes.

At Monte-Carlo, April 10, 1909.

At London, His Majesty's Theatre, Sept. 20, 1909.

At Paris, L'Odéon, May 23, 1912.

La Foi is the only piece of Brieux which deviates in setting from that of contemporary France. It takes place in ancient Egypt. The question handled, is, however, a vital one today.

The play centers about the belief of the Egyptians that the sacrifice of a beautiful virgin was necessary to win the approval of Isis and Ammon and thereby bring about the annual inundation of the Nile, so essential to fruitful harvests. The play opens in a large, exterior court of the house of Rhéou, a wealthy politician. Several beautiful maidens talk of the coming fête des prodiges, all silently wishing to be the fortunate young woman. Yaouma, one of the most silent in the group, peers eagerly toward the sea; she awaits the arrival of her priest-sweetheart, Satni, the son of Pakh, who has been gone from Egypt two years and is returning for the coming festival.

The mistress of all these young women is the wife of

Enbou, M'is. She is a blind woman, faithfully devoted to the Egyptian goddess Isis whom she continually implores for sight and for the privilege of seeing again in the next world her dead child.

Satni returns, meets his old father, Paku, and finds Yaouma. But as the lovers meet, she is all interest in catching the name of the maiden chosen by the god.

Satni: "As-tu donc cessé de m'aimer?"
Yaouma: "Non, non, je t'aime, Satni. Mais il me semble distinguer mon nom parmi tes cris. Si le dieu m'avait choisis, Satni?" 1

But Satni's allegiance to the gods is past. He realizes the fallacy of his native religion.

"Quel dieu? Ce sont les prêtres qui te font parler, **
Je suis pas dupé! Le Dieu n'est qu'une pierre.3 ** tu vas
refuser! ** tu ne sais donc pas. C'est la mort! " 3

Yaouma answers:

"Est-ce que vraiment, tu veux que je refuse? **
Que dirait-on de moi! Réfléchis. Le dieu m'a distinguée, moi,
dans mon obscurité, entre toutes, il m'a préférées. Il m'a
préférées à de plus belles, à de plus riches, et je me
déchèrelais! 4 ** C'est pour donner des champs fertiles à
toute l'Égypte. Si je ne répondais pas aux voix qui m'appellent
ont, ** une autre que moi revendrait la tunique éclatante
tissée de fils de lin et de fils d'or, une autre que moi
recevrait sur ses cheveux la couronne de lotus sacrés, une
autre entendrait les acclamations de peuple tout entier!
Une autre serait donnée au Nili! " 5

1. "La Toi", page 76.
2. Ibid., page 57.
3. Ibid., page 60.
4. Ibid., page 61.
5. Ibid., page 62.

Satni: "Les sanctuaires de nos temples ne sont occupés que par des animaux immondes et ridicules ou par des statues insensibles 1. ** Oh! Te perdre pour ce mensonge! 2 ** Je connais des dieux meilleurs, des dieux qui ne demandent pas de victimes. 3 ** Je viens, pour vous sauver de l'erreur, pour renverser les idoles, pour vous révéler des vérités éternelles" 4

In act II Satni has, in the past two months, unintentionally impressed upon the people that he is himself either a god or vested with divine power. He is beset on every side by people with requests:

"Fais-moi riche". 5

"Écoute, si tu peux me rendre grand comme toi, et solide sur mes jambes, voilà: J'ai quelque part bien cachée, trois anneaux d'or, que j'ai vus il y a longtemps: je te les donnerai". 6

The case of Miéria is most pathetic. She longs for the power to see and, grasping the straw of hope found in Satni, she urges Rhéou to intercede for her.

Satni is grieved by this misunderstanding which has come in regard to himself, but out of sympathy for the people, he encourages them to overthrow the statues of the gods.

"Frappez, ce ne sont que les images! Souffletez! Pillez! Tout cela n'est que la boue durcie!" 7

1. "La Foi", page 66.
2. Ibid., page 67.
3. Ibid., page 71.
4. Ibid., page 72.
5. Ibid., page 93.
6. Ibid., page 93.
7. Ibid., page 116.

In Act III Satni's father dies, after having become a convert to the new faith or to the absence of faith, advocated by Satni. Satni is helpless to grant the dying man's request:

"Guéris-moi tout de suite. ** Je souffre, soulage-moi! 1 ** Tout ton savoir, ce n'est donc que de savoir détruire? Mon fils, je t'en prie. ** Tu ne vas pas me laisser mourir? 2 ** Satni! Satni! Rends-moi foi, je le veux! 3 ** Toute ma vie perdue! Toutes mes souffrances inutiles?" 4

His father's death awakens in Satni a realization of the helplessness of the people. He longs to aid them, but has no substitute for the comfort of which he has despoiled them.

The fourth act takes place within the temple of Isis. Here for the first time we see le Pharon and le Grand-Prêtre, typifying respectively the political and the religious elements. Naturally they are at war with each other.

"La Fête des Prodiges" begins; the crowd surge in, blind, lame, deformed men and women who beseech the goddess to hear their cries and to nod her approval. Satni has been concealed by the chief-priest in a wing, behind the statue of the goddess. Moved by the prayers and the helplessness of the crowd, he pushes the lever, thereby causing the head of the goddess to nod and the people to rejoice because

1. "La Foi", page 161.
2. Ibid., page 162.
3. Ibid., page 163.
4. Ibid., page 165.

they think that the goddess has heard them.

Later, again moved to help the people, Satni tells some of them of this deception. They, exasperated at his action, kill him just as his sweetheart, Yacuma, is brought in, all ready to be sacrificed to the gods. Satni's cries to her are lost in the noise.

La Foi is an attempt to show the need in human life of faith, true or false. As Satni, the disbeliever enters their midst, the Egyptians are patiently toiling, buoyed up in their misery by faith in Ammon, Isis, and the rest. When Satni convinces them of their error, they temporarily accept him as a prophet. In this Erioux implies that man demands something upon which he can build his faith and to which he can look for comfort. After Miéris has given up her Egyptian faith and Satni has not refilled her^{soul} with any substitute, she says:

"Mon âme est comme une maison après l'incendie,
vide, noire, dévastée. Il n'y reste plus que des ruines.**
Oh! un mensonge, un mensonge pour remplacer celui qu'on
m'a enlevé! "1

.1. "La Foi", page 155.

Summary. Miscellaneous Group.

1. Bernard Palissy, so far as I have been able to ascertain, contained no social teaching.¹

2. Nothing is known of Papa Courtage except the name.²

3. Of La Fille de Duramé Mr. H.L. Mencken says: "It bears no sort of relation to the rest of Brieux's works".³

4. Ménages d'Artistes contains one teaching: the symbolist poet of France found his spirituality unequal to his mundane desires, hence he was forced to seek necessary pleasure in illicit relations.⁴

5. Les Bienfaiteurs teaches that many of the present methods of philanthropy are not beneficial. The following are, in general, a few of the evil results: because philanthropists themselves apply the following poor rule,

"Il faut apporter dans L'exercice de la charité le même sens pratique et le même sang-froid que dans les affaires";⁵ they consequently omit the element of love, so essential in charity-giving⁶. As a result of this, they encourage idleness in their beneficiaries⁷; they encourage illegitimate children by paying their mothers forty francs against the twenty-five given to honest mothers⁸; in spite of all the

1. Cf. supra, page 131.

2. Cf. supra, page 133.

3. Preface to "Two Plays by Brieux", page XII.

4. Cf. supra, bottom page 127.

5. "Les Bienfaiteurs", page 124.

6. Cf. supra, page 130, quotation 1.

7. Cf. supra, page 139, foot-note 3.

8. Cf. supra, page 139, foot-note 5.

benefits in the factory, the workmen strike ¹ and a hungry mother kills her three children and herself ².

3. In L'Évasion Brieux makes no definite, clear statements regarding his teaching, but he very well implies by this play that a couple may by combining forces live down inherited tendencies. The closing speech ³ indicates that l'Évasion has come at last.

4. La Foi contains only one teaching and that is rather implied than expressed. Brieux seems to be attempting to show how faith, be it false or true, is needed by everybody. Miéris says:

"Oh, une mensonge, une mensonge pour remplacer celui qu'on m'a enlevé ". ⁴

1. "Les Bienfaiteurs", page Act IV., scene 1.
2. Cf. supra, page 139, foot-note 6.
3. "L'Évasion", page 179:
"Nous sommes libres, enfin".
4. "La Foi", page 155.

Final Summary.

As I have tried to show in my handling of the twenty-six Brieux plays, whose published form or whose content at least was accessible to me, Brieux has, in every play, a distinct social teaching. Occasionally this teaching is implied rather than definitely expressed in key-sentences. The teaching may be summarized. It seems to group itself into eight sections.

1. Childhood.
2. Parental Dictation.
3. Divorce.
4. Illicit Co-habitation.
5. Womanhood.
6. Politics.
7. Money.
8. Miscellaneous.

Les Remplaçantes shows the evils of wet-nursing upon the child, upon the mothers, and upon the homes from which the wet-nurses come.

Maternité shows the effect of repeated maternity

upon women whose health will not allow it, especially when immorality in the husbands causes these families to be unhealthy.

Simone shows the child's point of view and gives an incident in which the child is given choice and responsibility. This play teaches that forgiveness is needed on the part of the child when the parent has erred.

In La Rose Bleue, the child, Juliette, although not the daughter of the Count and Countess, will within a year, be the means of reuniting the old couple. In Le Berceau the child's bedside is the battling-ground; the sick child absorbs the sole interest of the divorced father and mother. Suzette, in the play named from her, is the bond which reunites her parents.

I have shown how parental dictation is portrayed, first humorously, in La Couvée and L'École des Belles Mères, later, pathetically in Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont, and finally, with the most tragic results in La Petite Amie.

The social truths regarding the evil effects of divorce are shown in La Rose Bleue, Le Berceau, Les Avariés, La Déserteuse, and Suzette. Le Bureau des Divorces, not in book-form, implies from its title that it deals with some phase of the divorce court. What this phase is I cannot

determine.

In Le Berceau Brieux shows clearly the inevitable results of remarriage after divorce, especially when a child has come from the first marriage and when both husbands, still alive, come in contact and present equal demands from the wife. Brieux teaches that a wife and mother so situated should abandon both husbands, retain her virtue, and devote the rest of her life to her child.

In Les Avariés Brieux teaches that not even venereal disease in the male is justifiable reason for divorce. Since this disease is curable, he advocates treatment for the affected man and patience and encouragement on the part of wife, mother, and father-in-law.

La Déserteuse teaches that a woman who intentionally deserts her husband and child is an abnormal and unnatural being; further, it teaches that a man, deserted by such a wife, may divorce and remarry.

Suzette shows how a child is often the means of bringing together parents who are unfitted ^{for} ~~to~~ each other, yet who love their child. Brieux shows that this love for child is greater than the love of self.

Brieux teaches that illicit co-habitation may result in: first, the blighted hope and love of an innocent young couple who may awaken, some day, to the sad truth that they are brother and sister; second, a mutual, physical attraction in a man and a woman which the two cannot permanently resist and which, consequently, dooms them to continual quarrelling and even to attempted suicide.

On the matter of woman and her relation to the social, political, and industrial world, Brieux makes the following points:

1. The public education of woman should fit her to perform mental duties gladly. There is a hint in Bianchette that these should be done more intelligently than by an uneducated woman, that is, that she should apply her extraneous training to management within the home.

2. The proper and typical position of the French woman today is not that of the unfaithful wife and mother, but that of the devoted wife and mother who remains faithful to her domestic duties, without any desire for illicit or unnatural encounters with the opposite sex.

3. The woman in the industrial field today cannot hold her own. Though well educated, she will lose out,

first as a newspaper woman and later as an industrial manager. Eventually, she can do nothing else but marry or become the unlawful companion of some man.

In the field of politics Brieux shows the corruption present today in France. When once willing to become a candidate for a political position, even the most upright man finds himself at once ensnared. One step quickly succeeds another in the downfall. When one reaches the point where one can accept a bribe of twenty^{five}/thousand francs and when one's name appears as that of a bribed man in the daily issues of the local paper, then this same man, once honest, recovers his probity. He repents, confesses, makes good the losses, and is again an honest man.

In the judiciary, moreover, corrupt politics also obtains. To gain higher positions, many men will stoop even to the conviction of innocent victims. But whereas many such soulless judges exist, there is occasionally one honest judge who will, at the very last moment, listen to his conscience and plead honestly for the accused, if innocent or believed innocent. Brieux further shows that, although this heartless action may take place, yet the French judiciary

on the whole, are not subject to bribery, an evil which, he hints, is very prevalent elsewhere.

Money, or a desire for it, may result in two evils, according to Erioux: first, this desire may induce a man to gamble, thereby ruining his own prospects and working great hardship upon his family; or, in the second place, the desire for money may prompt a woman to sell her virtue to a man because of her sincere love for her husband who, she knows, must have money at once to escape financial ruin.

Ménages d'Artistes shows that the aesthetic life is not enough for men whose professed life as artist would seem to exclude physical pleasure. Erioux shows that the aesthetically inclined man will go so far as to seek pleasure in illicit marriage relations.

Les Bienfaiteurs teaches that modern philanthropy must be carried on with love and intelligence, otherwise, more harm than good results.

In L'Évasion Erioux implies that hereditary taints may be overcome by sane, healthy, self-controlled manners of life.

Le Foi shows the need of the human heart for some kind of unseen divine power of God upon which man can pin his faith.

Brieux is not a deep-thinking philosopher, but his observant eye has seen that the family is the real foundation of the whole structure of society. Family, home are words of inspiring and blessed connotation to Eugène Brieux. His parental home life was happy, as he himself says:

"On n'était pas riche, mais on était heureux. On travaillait ferme toute la semaine, et, le dimanche venu, on achetait un litre cacheté chez le marchand de vin, une galette chez le boulanger, et l'on se réjouissait en famille".¹

Later when he established a home of his own, the same harmonious life has prevailed among the members of that home. In looking beyond his own walls, however, he has not always been able to detect a similar harmony. His love for humanity has prompted him to study the reasons for this lack of agreement and happiness. In nearly every play Brieux has presented at least one reason of his for the present unhappy home life in France. He portrays evils which threaten to destroy or which have destroyed the French family. These evils, as found in Brieux, may be roughly classified as follows:

- I. Evils threatening the child.
- II. Evils threatening the woman,
- III. Evils threatening the man.

These, in turn, may be further divided:

- I. Evils threatening the child.
 - a. Wet-nursing.
 - b. Inherited ill health.
 - c. Divorcing of parents.

1. Bertrand: "E. Brieux", page 15.

II. Evils threatening woman.

- a. Unmarried.
 - 1. Wrong kind of education.
 - 2. Dowry requirement.
 - 3. Commercial disadvantages.
- b. Married.
 - 1. Wet-nursing.
 - 2. Excessive maternity.
 - 3. Denial of maternity.
 - 4. Diseases from husbands.
 - 5. Divorce.
 - 6. Tendency toward illicit relations.
 - 7. Attractiveness of money.
 - 8. Inherited evil tendencies.

III. Evils threatening the man.

- a. Diseases (syphilis, tuberculosis).
- b. Divorce.
- c. Temptation to illicit relations.
- d. Temptation to enter politics.
- e. Temptation to gamble.
- f. Inherited physical handicaps.

Or, these evils may be summarized differently thus:

I. Dangers threatening the home:

- a. Divorce.
 - 1. Effect upon children.
- b. Tendency toward illicit relations.
- c. Disease.
- d. Woman's unsettled status.
- e. Unjust parental authority.
- f. Prevailing tendency toward selfishness.

II. Dangers threatening the man outside of the home:

- a. Attractiveness of corrupt politics.
- b. Harmful social and financial aspirations.
- c. Temptation of money.

III. Dangers threatening the individual because of innate weakness:

- a. Inherited disease (syphilis, tuberculosis, melancholia).
- b. Fondness for acts, morally unsound (gambling, illicit relations). X X