The First Two Farces of Sir Arthur W. Pinero's Court Series

By

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"The Magistrate," "The Schoolmistress," "Dandy Dick," and "The Cabinet Minister" formed Sir Arthur W. Pinero's famous series of farces played at the Royal Court Theatre, London, making an epoch in the dramatist's career, and showing his creation of a really new and original order of English comic play. These popular farces, skilfully concocted for mere amusement, may be shallow and trivial for most of present audience, yet it is true that they charmed the playpoers in the post-Victorian period, and paved the way for his serious plays which stood brilliantly at the turning point of English social plays under the influence of Henrik Ibsen.

This paper aims at the study of the historical background in which the first two farces of Pinero's Court series were produced, and at the analysis of his mellowed stagecraft which might be favourably compared with that of Mokuami Kawatake, the most famous Japanese dramatist before and after the Restoration of Meiji.

There were some special reasons why Pinero's Court series of farces were welcomed by the audiences in Europe and America. Before describing them in detail, a survey of his forerunners and the historical background of their activities would give us some useful hints to the theatrical world in the transition from Romanticism to Realism, when Arthur W. Pinero, the most popular playwright was born in the capital of the United Kingdom in 1855.

The riots, battling, and shrill cries for welcoming Victor Hugo's Hernani staged at the Théâtre Français in 1830 marked the most brilliant victory of Romanticism, while the most disgraceful defeat in the theatrical campaign was recorded in 1861 at the Opera in the production of Wagner's Tannhäuser. During this turbulent period of three decades which witnessed the ups and downs of Romanticism on the stage, a dramatist of different type, named Eugene Scribe, gradually made his own way to quiet success by writing plays which amounted to hundreds, though they had no spectacular ideas or features. And at length the passion for his sort of playwriting spread like wildfire all over Europe and America.

England in the early period of Queen Victoria was not an exception to the influence of French tradition of pièce-bien-faite by Scribe and his follower
Victorian Sardou, who had nothing of character drawing and little of dramatic grip in the profound sense, though the latter carried the well-made-play a little of the way from mechanical Scribe toward the branch of journalistic realism. Adapters of Scribe and Sardou were so many in England, and John Maddison Morton, the comedy writer, for example, made the perennial Box and Cox out of two French originals. Thomas W. Robertson (1829-1871), in his early career, began to adapt the Scribe-Sardou sort of trifle, but through the influence of Augier and Alexander Dumas fils, he took a step forward in the direction of social play, in which “society and caste” were sometimes mentioned as landmarks on the way to Realism. However, London in those days preferring the superficial drama to the serious one could not satisfy him perfectly until the end of his life.

The Victorian age was an age of unimaginative art, a time of no extremities, and the age of drabness, which might explain the reason why such ambitious dramatic works by great poets were, as a whole, not fit for the stage. In 1819 Shelley wrote Cenci, the greatest poetry of the century, which proved a failure, while Tennyson was mercilessly under-valued in his dramatic poetry, though “Becket” (the same subject with T.S. Eliot’s “Murder in the Cathedral”) possessed a strong dramatic quality. Even Browning’s instinct for the dramatic rendering of life which stopped short with the monologue, and Swinburne’s genius for lyrical poetry ill-adapted to the individual character drawing could not bring theatrical successes for these great authors. Now is the time of prosedrama! For some time after the Restoration days through the culmination of the Puritan boycott of the stage, only two or three theaters in London sufficed the public that “cared or dared to attend shows,” and such large theatres as Drury Lane and Covent Garden under the protection of licensing system monopolized “patents” for legitimate drama. In the early 19th century the general people had awakened to find themselves interested in the plays and shows, demanding more playhouses where they could amuse themselves. With the increasing demand, lots of new theatres outside the law sprang up, and tried to avoid seeming competition with the licensed playhouses by disguising their shows with a sort of variety programme.

Sir Robert Peel’s Ministry passed a Theatre Regulation Act in 1843, and permitted an unlimited number of playhouses, under certain restrictions of censorship and building standards. This measure in favour of the populace should be remembered as one of the signal merits of Sir Robert Peel who could successfully terminate the period of private distress and public deficits. The time has come for popular taste ruling over the theatre!

For some years after the birth of Arthur W. Pinero’ Romanticism had been still dominant on the stage, and many well-made melodramas as well as
gallons of cheap claret were imported from France. "Literary and intellectual drama in England" in Modern English Writers by Harold Williams fully illustrates the condition of English theatre before Pinero came into being as follows.

"But if the drama of poetry has failed the drama of prose has achieved latterly a literary quality which has been much to seek throughout several generations of writers. A new spirit came first with Oscar Wilde, who owed his inspiration to his native wit, and after to Sheridan and, French models. But Wilde left no successor, and the strongest influence upon original English drama within the last quarter of a century has come through the realistic and intellectual drama of Ibsen, Hauptmann and Schnitzler, till this type of dreary realism found its culmination in the aridity of Mr. Galsworthy. Before this manifest change there had been, it is true, a movement among the dry bones, which may be accounted a reaction, in weariness and disgust, against the long-drawn age of adaptation from the French. The removal in 1843 of a monopoly in the production of legitimate drama granted to Drury Lane and Covent Garden led to a rapid increase in the number of theatres and a demand for new plays, a demand which was met for nearly forty years by adaptation from the French, an art in which Sydney Grundy was peculiarly proficient. During this period original English dramas ceased to exist."

We notice that the period from 1850 to 1880 was very eventful at home and abroad, and attracted the attention of the British people to many problems brought before them. In 1851 Louis Napoleon became emperor of the French. In 1852 Lord Derby's Ministry succeeded in framing and passing a bill for the reconstruction of regular militia, which obtained general approval. In 1854 the Crimean War broke out, and the allied armies landed in the Crimea. In 1859 the Chinese War arose from the seizure by the Chinese authorities of a small vessel named the Arrow, commanded by a British subject. And there followed a bloodshed series of struggle, namely, the American Civil War (1861), Prussian-Austria War (1866), and Franco-Prussian War (1870) fated to leave the fuse to ignite the powder magazines of the whole world.

Now we turn to the many significant home problems of United Kingdom after the Anti-Corn-Law Agitation, Free Trade, and Ten Hours Bill which provides for the education of children employed in factories and for limiting the hours of children's work. The first problem in the religious problem, namely, the Oxford movement under the direction of Mr., after wards Cardinal Newman who endeavoured to prove that the doctrines of the Church of England were identical with those of the primitive Catholic church, and the movement of the Presbyterian church in Scotland under the guidance of Dr. Chalmers,
one of the most eloquent preachers of the country, who was simultaneously engaged in a contest with the state on the subject of ecclesiastical patronage. These two movements had this in common, that not only did they indicate a revival of religious energy, but aimed at vindicating the authority of the church and resisting the interference of the state. (Refer to Pinero's "Dandy Dick" in which the Dean's dignity is miserably shattered.) The second problem is that of national budgets. The British Government under Gladstone undertook to sweep away the duties on all manufactured goods, and to reduce those on the wines imported from France. And the Prime Minister hoped to provide as many opportunities as possible for supplying the people with cheap literature by repealing the duties on paper. There was a dilemma for the Government's lenient policy of supplying her own people with cheap French claret and of risking her supremacy by giving the French people increased facilities for taking her iron, coal, and machinery. Really, many people had a complaint of the tax on tea 1 s. 5d. a lb., and thought that it would be wiser to reduce the tax on tea than to abandon the duties on paper. (Refer to "The Schoolmistress" Act 1. Miss Dyott: Ah Yes! Volumnia College is not equal to the grand duty imposed upon it. It is absolutely necessary that I should increase my income.) The third problem is concerned with labour problem. The alarm was created in the city of London by a grave commercial crisis and the labourer's interests injured. Consequently the working classes, at last roused from their long indifference, protested against Lord Russell's bill with the monster demonstration, but the Cabinet determined to prohibit a meeting of the Reform League in Hyde Park. This riot led almost directly to a new reform act, and to the transfer of power from the middle classes to the masses of the people.

So many trials at home and abroad had given the British people opportunities of reflecting upon their own nation and themselves politically and economically, and at the same time they managed to enjoy themselves with arts and sports. Wines, theatres, turfs, and other speculations were always woven in their fabrics of life. On the racing track of theatre leading to the goal of Realism over the hill of Romanticism suddenly appeared a signal of warning to the overproduction of melodramas, which well-made as they were, had many weak points. No doubt, there was a natural limit to some serious plays. At this opportune juncture "The Magistrate" by Pinero was staged on the Royal Court Theatre, London.

Now the present writer is willing to come back to the beaten track of criticism on the first two farces of Court series, which might be compared to a successful relay line-up with "The Magistrate" at the head. "The Magistrate" which was produced at the Court Theatre on Saturday, March 21, 1885,
was assumed to have been written for Mr. Terry, because Pinero had previously written "The Rocket," and "In Chancery," for Edward Terry, who performed them times out of number in London and the provinces with considerable success, but this was not the case. The circumstances are explained in Malcolm C. Salaman's introductory note to the play. He says,

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Pinero wrote the play quite independently, and on its completion he was to have read it to Mr. Charles Wyndham, but the necessities of the Court Theatre intervened. The management of the late Mr. John Clayton and Arthur Cecil was decidedly in low water in 1884 and the earlier part of 1885; play after play had been produced without success, when at length application was made to Mr. Pinero for a new piece. They had been performing serious plays, and he read them "The Weaker Sex," which he had written some little time before; but Mr. and Mrs. Kendal have since produced, and then Mr. Pinero, mentioning the new comic play he had just finished, suggested that perhaps an entirely new order of entertainment might serve to change the fortunes of the house. "The Mygistrate" was immediately accepted and produced, and his conjecture proved correct, for the luck of theatre turned.

The Magistrate

The First Act: The scene represents a well-furnished drawing-room in the house of Mr. Posket in Bloomsbury.

Mr. Posket, magistrate of Mulberry Street Police Court, London, met the pretty widow of late Farringdon (an army contractor in India), when he was at Spa on his holiday, and married her, who had a child named Cis by her former marriage. He is a mild gentleman of about fifty, and too good natured to say "Bo!" to a goose. His character is well illustrated by the following conversation between his wife and her sister Charlotte.

Charlotte: What sort of a man is Mr. Posket, Aggy?
Agatha: The best creature in the world. He's a practical philanthropist,
Charlotte: Um—he's a Police Magistrate, too, isn't he?
Agatha: Yes, but he pays out of his own pocket half the fines he inflicts. That's why he has had a reprimand from the Home Office for inflicting penalties. All our servants have graduated at Mulberry Street. Most of the pictures in the dining-room are genuine Constables.

Undervaluing Mr. Posket's love, in a moment of not unjustifiable meeting Agatha took five years from her total, which made her thirty-one on her wedding morning. Consequently as she is now thirty-one, instead of thirty-six as she ought to be, it stands to reason that she couldn't have married
twenty years ago, so she has had to fib in proportion, and worries herself about the precocity of her fourteen year old child in Eton jacket whose age should be nineteen. As Agatha tells Charlotte, the child believes his mother as a boy should, and as a prudent woman, she always keeps him in ignorance of his age in case of necessity.

It happens that Mr. Posket received a letter from Colonel Lukyn (from Bengal—retired) who had come home from India and met him at the Club the previous night, asking him to name an evening to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Posket. While in India, this old friend of Agatha's first husband stood sponsor to her child when he was christened at Baroda, so he knows them very well. The family skeleton is in danger of falling out of the cupboard. The manly child Cis has his own secret that he has run into debt for having kept his room at the Hotel des Princes, and is pressed to settle the arrears. Cis who must pay the debt without his mother's knowledge turns to his stepfather for help, and successfully takes him out to the hotel, while Agatha Posket wishing to shut Colonel Lukyn's mouth before he comes into her house, goes out with her sister Charlotte to secretly visit him, saying that they are going to inquire after Lady Jenkin's health.

The Second Act: The scene is a supper-room at the Hotel des Princes, Meek Street, with two doors—the one leading into an adjoining room, the other into a passage—and a window opening on to a balcony.

At the Hotel des Princes the colonel is just going to dine with Captain Horace Vale, when Agatha and her sister come round to the hotel to have a private interview with Colonel Lukyn, who is obliged to ask Horace to hide himself till the conversation is over. Some ten minutes past the time of closing, the two secret parties unknown to each other at the adjoining rooms still having their meetings, are raided by the Mulberry Street police and driven to be packed in the same room with the light turned off for evading assault, but at length the offenders are arrested except Cis and Mr. Posket, who have contrived to escape.

The Third Act: The first scene is the Magistrate's room at Mulberry Police Court, with a doorway covered by curtains, leading directly into the Court, and a door opening into a passage. It is the morning after the events of the last Act.

The next morning of the raid at the West End hotel, Mr. Posket, after a thrilling escape from the police, is placed in a very awkward position to judge the conspirators. Colonel Lukyn's effort to make the magistrate use his influence for the case, in which Agatha and her sister under false names
are involved, proves fruitless, and the magistrate who has dared to sentence
the offenders guilty, but collapses into Mr. Wormington's arms, when he finds
out the truth.

The second scene: The scene changes to Mr. Posket's drawing-room, as
in the first act.

On the release of Agatha and the gang of criminals by the discretion of
Mr. Bullamy, the fellow magistrate of Mr. Posket, the persons concerned
assemble at Mr. Posket's drawing-room. All the arrows of severe criticism
are concentrated on Mr. Posket, whose dignity is miserably shattered. Mrs.
Agatha Posket complains of her husband having sent them to prison for push-
ing a mere policeman, and blames him for his insisting on ignorance of his
own conduct when he requested two ladies to raise their veils and show their
faces in the dock. Her husband replies that it was his duty. She continues
her reproach by putting a crossfire examination as to the reason why her
husband clung to single life so long, and concludes that it was due to his desire
of having a dissolve bachelorhood. Mr. Posket explains that he enjoyed his
single life by playing whist every evening, and confesses that he is not such
an expert as her boy. Agatha finds fault with her husband for having selected
a table with a lady under it when he wished to conceal himself last night.
Her jealousy of her husband makes him so angry and declare, "No wife of
mine sups, unknown to me, with dissolve military men; we will have judicial
separation, Mrs. Posket." To his declaration she bluntly replies, "I shall send
for my solicitor at once." When Agatha warns her husband against having
the custody of her boy, he tells her that her son has made him a gambler at
an atrocious game, called "Fireworks," and caused him to cower before ser-
vants and to fly before the police. Then Cis appears, and confesses that he
has got his mother into difficulties and it is not his stepfather's fault. At
this Agatha realizes that this is all the result of a lack of candour on her
part, and says regretfully, "I led you to believe I had been married only fif-
teen years ago."

Then Mr. Bullamy enters quickly and discloses the secret that Mr. Posket
is the man who escaped from Meek Street last night, and cries out to him,
"You have brought a stain upon a spotless police court!" Mr. Posket's reply
to the reproach, "You will find your old friend a Man, a Martyr, and a
Magistrate!" is very pathetic. But his last declaration, "Gentlemen, bear
witness! I am his legal guardian. I solemnly consent io that little wretch's
marriage," is full of authority, though his wife denies it and says. "He's an
infant! I forbid it!"
The Schoolmistress

The First Act: The scene represents the Reception Room at Miss Dyott's Seminary.

Miss Dyott, Principal of a seminary for young ladies, known as Volumnia College, Volumnia House near Portland Place, London, is secretly married to the Hon. Vere Queckett, who could never face the world of fashion at the consort of the proprietress of a scholastic establishment. She has the honour of being employed in the gradual discharge of liabilities incurred by her penniless husband, and also engaged in the noble task of providing him with the elaborate necessities of his present existence. Her desire of making money during the Christmas season without the knowledge of her husband has driven Miss Dyott to make a contract with Mr. Bernstein, a German musician, by which she can make her début on the stage as comic singer under the professional name Miss Constance Delaporte.

In Volumnia House there is one more secret. That is a secret marriage of a 16 year old girl, Dinah Rankling with a young gentleman named Mr. Reginald Paulover of 17 years old. By order of Admiral Rankling, her father who refuses to give his consent, Miss Dinah has got to be locked up in the Seminary during the genial season. Miss Hesslerigge (an articled pupil) sympathizes with the unhappy young bride, and by taking advantage of the principal going out for a trip during the vacation, makes a plan to give a party for the new couple by squeezing money from the Hon. Vere Queckett, who is now under her control.

The Second Act: The scene represents a plain-looking school at Miss Dyott's.

At the party Miss Dyott's secret husband is introduced to Mr. Paulover, who feels rather jealous of the gentleman who calls himself Dinah's uncle and is kind enough to give the party for him and his young wife. Then Mr. Queckett's friend, Lieut. John Mallory (of H.M. Flagship Pandora) comes to the party with Rear-Admiral Aarchibald Rankling, and Mr. Saunders (Mr. Mallory's nephew, on the training-ship Dexterous), who have been to a big Navy dinner at the Whitehall Rooms. Admiral Rankling does not know where he is, for he has been brought here on a foggy night.

Admiral Rankling is introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Parkinson, who are Mr. Reginald Paulover and his own daughter Dinah. He is very surprised at the likeness of this young lady to some of his relatives, but cannot solve the mystery, though Mr. Queckett's strange attitude and equivocal introduction of his false nieces, makes him quite uneasy and suspicious. However, this old naval officer at the dinner table feels inclined to make a speech of congratulation for the young lady who takes her seat opposite him. After
dinner they dance a quadrille. When the dance is going on, Jane, the servant comes to inform that a fire has started down-stairs from the mishandled firework of the page named Tyler. A commotion follows, but the admiral orders the gentlemen to assist the young ladies in escaping unhurt. The sufferers of the fire are taken into Mrs. Rankling's house at Portland Place, which the sea veteran discovers to be only a hundred yards off from Volumnia College where he has locked up his undutiful daughter, and gets angry at Mr. Queckett's trick. Miss Dyott hurriedly comes home on an engine from Piccadilly.

The Third Act: The scene is a well-furnished, tastefully-decorated room in the house of Admiral Rankling. All is darkness, save for a faint glow from the fire and a blue light coming from the conservatory attached to the room.

Peggy and two other girls, Gwendoline and Ermytrude, who cannot sleep retreat into this dark room. Gwendoline puts herself upon the sofa, and drops off to sleep. Ermytrude and Peggy are anxious about Dinah who is locked up upstairs. Mr. Queckett is also locked up. Then Mr. Saunders enters the room, goes softly up to Gwendoline, and sits gently on the footstool, leaning against the sofa, drowsily. Mr. Mallory who cannot get a blessed wink of sleep enters the room, and discovers his nephew. Ermytrude lights the candles on the mantelpiece. Mr. Mallory explains why he remains in this house, and tells the girls that their host has forbidden the house for Mr. Paulover. They decide to rescue the unhappy bridegroom from being frozen to death in the snow. Peggy and Mr. Mallory who wish to brew something hot for poor Mr. Paulover, put their heads down close together and talk, looking at the lighted spirit-lamp. They feel themselves drawn closer to each other. The following conversation between them explains their bond of matrimony.

Mallory: What a jolly little sailor's wife you'd make—brewing grog like this.

Peggy: I hope I should do my duty in any station of life to which I might be called.

Gwendoline and Ermytrude lead Mr. Paulover to a chair before the fire, he uttering some violent but incoherent exclamations. He wishes to push a long letter under the door of the room where his wife is locked up, and inform her of his constant love. Peggy happens to open one of the small drawers, and finds duplicate keys of all the rooms in the house, so that Dinah and Mr. Queckett may be set free. Admiral Ranking, who now hates Uncle Vere like the reptile, enters the room in a dressing gown, his face pale and his eyes red and wild. Lying down and pulling the rug over him, he goes to sleep, saying, "I have been a very careful man all my life; so far as muscular
economy goes, Queckett shall have the savings of a lifetime." Miss Dyott dressed in her burlesque costume appears, carrying the head, broken off at the neck, of a terra-cotta bust of a woman. A dispute arises between her and Mrs. Rankling.

Mrs. Rankling: Oh, Mrs. Queckett, is there no end to the trouble you have brought upon us?

Miss Dyott: The trouble you have brought upon me.

Mrs. Rankling: What! Why didn't you tell us you had a husband?

Miss Dyott: Why didn't you tell me that Dinah had a husband?

Mrs. Rankling: We didn't know it.

Miss Dyott: Well, if you didn't know your own daughter was married how can you wonder at your ignorance of other people's domestic complications?

Mrs. Rankling: But that's not all. You have informed us that you are now actually contributing to a nightly entertainment of a volatile description—that you are positively being laughed at in public.

Miss Dyott: Isn't it better to be laughed at in public, and paid for it, than to be sniggered at privately for nothing!

Mrs. Rankling: Mrs. Queckett, you are revealing your true character.

Miss Dyott: It is the same as your own—an undervalued wife. Let me open your eyes as mine are opened. We have engaged to love and to honour two men.

This conversation turns out a microscopic criticism on their husbands, but on hearing the voices of Queckett and Rankling suddenly raised in the adjoining room, Miss Dyott and Mrs. Rankling leave the room. The two gentlemen enter the room and sit for a quiet chat on family matters. The admiral says, "Now I've discovered that Parkinson is really a charming young fellow of the name of Paulover; so that, as Paulover has married my daughter as well as Tankerville's, Paulover must be prosecuted for bigamy, and as you knew that Paulover was Parkinson, and Parkinson Paulover, you connived at the crime, inasmuch as knowing Paulover was Tankerville's daughter's husband you deliberately aided Parkinson in making my child Dinah his wife."

And at last Admiral Rankling declares that Mr. Queckett has told a lie. The former advances fiercely, and the latter retreats, when Miss Dyott enters the room and cries out "Stop, Admiral Rankling, if you please! Any reprimand, physical or otherwise, will be administered to Mr. Queckett at my hands." And his wife's dictatorial tone in the words, too, "Archibald Rankling, attend to me. Don't roll your eyes, but attend to me." Startle the admiral very much.
Mrs. Rankling makes her husband think of his past, in which she was stout while he was thin, and tells him that he has been less a husband and father than a tyrant and oppressor. At length he is reconciled with his family and forgives his daughter on condition that she doesn't see Paulover's face again for five years. Miss Dyott's words toward her husband are very severe. "Oh, you—you paltry little man! You mean, ungrateful little creature! You laced-up heap of pompous pauperism! You—you! I cannot adequately describe you. Wretch! To his wife's sad confession, "Oh, what could I have seen you!" Mr. Queckett's reply, "I take it, Caroline, that, in the language of the hunting field, you 'scented' a gentleman," hits the mark. The tit for tat between this man and wife still continues. Miss Dyott complains of Mr. Queckett's family having done nothing for him, while he regrets that he ought to have waited to marry a lady. She protests, saying, "You did marry a lady! But scratch the lady and you find a hardworking comic actress!"

Daylight appears through the conservatory doors. The other persons concerned gather in this room. Dinah is sobbing, for she is to be separated from her husband. But Mrs. Rankling comforts her daughter by proposing that she and Mr. Paulover are to be allowed to meet once every quarter.

Mr. Bernstein brings newspapers reporting Miss Constance Delaporte's great hit in the comic opera, and promises Miss Dyott that she shall get fifty pounds a week in his oratorio. Mr. Queckett is overjoyed with the wonderful news and says that he will be able to snap his fingers at his damn family. Mrs. Rankling announces that she will book stalls at once to her Mrs. Queckett's singing. Admiral Rankling corrects her announcement, saying, "No, Emma—dress-circle." There again the old couple's quarrel begins. Mrs. Rankling insists on booking stalls instead of dress-circle. Mr. Queckett arbitrates by offering them both a seat in his box, to which Miss Dyott protests, saying, "Mr. Queckett's private box, during my absence at night, will be lodgings, where he will remain under lock and key."

Mr. Mallory publishes his engagement to Miss Hesslerigge. At this happy end Jane tells that Tyler wants to know who is to pay him the reward for being the first to fetch the fire-engines last night. Miss Dyott replies that Tyler has demolished Volumnir College and from the ashes of that establishment rises the Phoenix of her career.

**Pinero's Stagecraft**

These two farces have so many similar plots in common. Besides the main motif of 'deception' on the part of Mrs. Agatha Posket in 'The Magistrate' who deceived her husband about her real age, and in the two secret marriages at Volumnia College and Miss Dyott's secret contract with Mr. Bernstein, a German musician in 'The Schoolmistress,' several incidents and
accidents for by-plots, and other theatrical devices might be classified into the following items for the study of Pinero’s stagecraft.

In its respective first act of these farces we find ‘The Family Skeleton’ or ‘The Mystery’ gradually developed into a vortex which swallows up all the persons concerned.

Mrs. Agatha Posket’s vanity of misrepresenting her age, which has been done by many a misguided woman, puts her 19 year old son in an Eton jacket, but the mentality of this precocious child has outgrown his uniform, and is better qualified for flirtation with Beatie, his piano teacher, and gambling with his stepfather than for Czerny’s exercises and playing marbles. Miss Dyott who worries herself about her secret marriage with the Hon. Vere Queckett and her contract for a comic singer talks to Mr. Bernstein as follows.

“Happy! Think of the deception I am practising upon Vere! Think of the people who in the rigid austerity of Caroline Dyott, Principle of Volumnia College. Think of the precious confidence reposed in me by the parents and relations of twenty-seven innocent pupils. Given an average of eight and a half relations to each pupil, multiply eight and a half by twenty-seven and you approximate the number whose trust I betray this night!”

The principal herself does not suspect her new pupil, Dinah’s secret marriage, but Peggy, an articled pupil coaxes the poor bride to read the letter reporting her father’s opposition to the marriage, and is determined to plan a wedding party for the young couple with the support of Mr. Queckett, who strongly wishes to see his friend Mallory in his wife’s absence. We notice that romantic unions, just like pretty flower vases with invisible cracks of deception on the surface are fated to crash. Such mishaps come from human weakness or carelessness, which makes a good contrast with man’s strong will likely to prove fruitless in the struggle against Destiny.

The love affairs in both plays from by-plots which serve to save the troubles or griefs caused by deception caused by otherwise being more serious. The triangle between Cis Farringdon, Beatie Tomlinson, and Popham, and the temporary estrangement of Captain Horace Vale’s love toward Charlotte Verrinder (Agatha’s sister) due to misunderstanding, in ‘The Magistrate’ are more vividly described than the love affair between Peggy Hesslerigge and Lieut. John Mallory, and that between Gwendoline Hawkins and Mr. Saunders. The former has a closer relation with the development of the main plot than the latter, which is a mere device for giving colourful effects upon the stage as is often seen in musical comedies. The use of by-plots in ‘The Schoolmistress’ is nothing but a symmetry in building up a cardboard
construction of laughter, which must be modeled after the techniques in such a farce as 'The Taming of the Shrew.'

1. Code of Ethics in Victorian Age

The moral life in the Victorian age seemed very faultless to casual observers, but it had various contradictions and weak points which might be broken to pieces by the reaction of their own experiences against the traditional wall of Puritanic doctrine. The chapter VII of V.F. Calverton's Sex Expression in Literature deals with 'the Viceless Victorians' very squarely.

"Victorian England is noted for its ferocious purity. Its clothes and literature gave it a puritanic unapproachability and violence of virtue. Its ladies cultivated chastity as an entrepreneur promotes investment. Without political rights, scarcely more than a chattel before the law, in fact as a wife a form of property almost unprotectedly subjected to her husband's disposal, woman had to deploy her virtues in invulnerable array. Her chastity not only gave her mystery and charm—it consecrated her to the role of individual possession. The whole technique of the private-property regime in developing and emphasizing woman's economic dependence considered her behavior, however unconsciously, in line with the property concept. The possession of wealth, its transference and inheritance, its accumulation and increase, necessitated strict private property regulations. The ruling class, which at this time was in large parts still working for its capital, now had an economic interest in morality that was present in times of feudal aristocracies when wealth was small and unearned by the class that wasted it.

Sexual expressions unreasonably twisted or kept secret in society happens to burst out in some domestic troubles or other fit for serious plays, but a cynical treatment of them would be the love affairs in the above farces.

2. Incidents or accidents

The secret interview between Mrs. Agatha Posket and her sister with Colonel Lukyn, and the weddeng party to which Miss Dinah and her young husband together with Admiral Rankling, Lieut. John Mallory, and Mr. Saunders, are invited and seated around the dinner table, not as enemies but as friends, seem so fantastic that their words and actions are as airy as in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream.' The raid at the Hotel des Princes and the fire at Volumnia College may be a mere coincidence, but they must be good tricks for carrying out the plots, the former hinting at the strict regulations to the public houses in London, and the latter serving to draw the people
closer together for the amicable settlement of the troublesome problem—a happy end of Gunpower Plot.

3. Theatrical Devices and Property

In a comic play, some theatrical devices are often used, and varieties of property on the stage serve to add striking effects to actions. In ‘The Magistrate’ the letters addressed to Mr. Posket, Cis Farringdon, and Miss Charlotte Verrinder urge them to have their secret meeting at the West End hotel, where the persons concerned are doomed to be caught in a trap of indignity and wretchedness. The letters in ‘The Schoolmistress,’ one for Dinah from Mr. Reginald Paulover and the other for Mr. Queckett from his friend Mallory, respectively illustrate their status, and hint at possible devices for the relief from their monotonous lives in the Christmas season. Thir common object finds a solution in a jont party, whose schemer is Miss Peggy Hesslerigge. She says to Mr. Queckett, standing over him with her arms.

"Listen, Mr. Queckett. (He starts.) We ladies are going to give a little party to-night to celebrate a serious event in the life of one of us. We have invited only one young gentleman; your friends will be welcome."

Mr. Queckett cannot spurn her proposal, because his secret telegram addressed to Mr. Mallory has been snatched by this smart girl. So, Peggy proudly says,

"Without us your party must fail, for we command the servants. Let it be a compact—your soirée shall be our soirée, and our soirée your soirée."

Admiral Rankling’s telegram addressed to Dinah makes a sharp contrast with the one of Mr. Mallory from Queckett, about which further explanation shall be given in ‘Character drawing.’ (Refer to Mokuami’s “NINGEN BANJI KANE NO YONONAKA” (Money is everything in human life), in which the first telegraphic communication established between Tokyo and Yokohama in 1867 is mentioned.

Some banquet scenes in tragic stories are very gloomy and symbolical, overshadowed with griefs and miseries in future. However, the dinner table, in general, is a place of merriment and laughter, where spontaneity and good humour are the very essence of good chats, but in a farce some hindrances or other may be thrown in the way of friendly conversation.

Foods and drinks, such as nuts, oysters, pudding, wedding cake, claret and champagne from a menu smartly arranged to stimulate the audience’s strong appetite for laughter. Especially in the first act of ‘The Magistrate’ the nuts scattered on the carpet of the drawing-room by Cis and Beatie make
Mr. and Mrs. Posket irritable and moody, and Mr. Bullamy, who has lost all his money by playing cards with Cis, treading on a nut, grumbles, “Confounded the nuts!” In the second act, the odour of cooking is maddening to hungry Charlotte, who is tempted to lift the covers from the dishes and inspect the contents. There is a clatter of knives and forks heard from the other room, then a burst of laughter from Cis, at which Agatha, his mother, starts, but Charlotte cannot recognise the voice. The only voice she can recognise is the voice of hunger. In the second act of ‘The Schoolmistress,’ the following conversation between Peggy and Mr. Queckett foretells an unsuccessful party.

Peggy: It is supper-time. Oh, what’s the matter, Uncle Vere?
Queckett: Well, in the first place, there are no oysters.
Peggy: I’ve seen them.
Queckett: I’ve gone further—I’ve tasted them.
Peggy: Bad!
Queckett: Well, I should describe them as Inland oysters. A long time since they had a fortnight at the seaside.
Peggy: Oh, dear! Then we must fall back on lark pudding.
Queckett: You’ll injure yourself seriously if you do.
Peggy: Tell me everything. It has not come small?
Queckett: It has come ridiculously small.
Peggy: It was ordered for eight persons.
Queckett: Then it is architecturally disproportionate.

3. Careless Mistakes and Absent-mindedness

In ‘The Magistrate’ Mr. Posket makes careless mistakes twice, firstly in giving his own servant Wyke two coppers for a tip by mistake, instead of as many silver coins, and secondly in sending Sergeant Lugg to get a necktie for him with a packet of money which contains very little. Mr. Posket opening the parcel, and finding a very common neckerchief, cries out,

“Good gracious! What a horrible affair!”

Lugg replies instantly,

“According to my information, sir—like Mr. Wormington.”

That morning Mr. Wormington happened to wear a red necktie in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his marriage, and confessed that he would be a little uneasy in case Mr. Posket should consider it at all disrespectful to the Court.

The absentmindedness of Admiral Rankling in the second act seems very fantastic, and reminds us of such a unique character as Sly in the induction of ‘The Taming of The Shrew.’ The old naval officer is quite mystified
when he finds himself among the young girls, one of whom is Dinah, but he cannot recognise her. He says,

"Mr. Mallory suggested that we should smoke our last cigar at your lodgings. I can't stay long, for I've a considerable distance to drive home. At least, I suppose I have, for I really don't know quite where we are. What quarter of London have you brought me to, Mr. Mallory?" Admiral Rankling doesn't know where he is. He isn't aware he lives a hundred and fifty yards off.

4. Foggy Night and Balcony

Both plays represent the foggy season, and the following expressions bring us the atmosphere of London clad in a milky mantle.

The Magistrate Act 1.
Charlotte: Aggy darling, aren't I late! There's a fog on the line—you could cut it with a knife.

Mr. Bullamy: No thank you! 'T'll walk. (Opening jujube box.) Bah! Not even a jujube left and on a foggy night, too! Ugh!

The Schoolmistress Act 2.
Mallory: The fog's as thick as a board outside.

The thrilling scenes of these two plays represent the raids of Mulberry Street Police at the Hotel des Princes, and the commotion at the fire in their respective second act, with a relief of balcony providing a spot of significance for comical performance.

Mrs. Agatha Posket and her sister, at last, notice that there is another gentleman behind the curtain, and cry out together, "Who's that?" Colonel Lukyn makes an apology for it. The following conversation gives a sketch of the scene.

Lukyn: Do, do hear me! To avoid the embarrassment of your encountering stranger, he retreated to the balcony.
Agatha: To the balcony? You have shamefully compromised two trusting women, Colonel Lukyn.
Lukyn: I would have laid down my life rather than have done so. I did lay down my friend's life.
Agatha: He has overheard every confidential word I have spoken to you.
Lukyn: Hear his explanation. Why the devil don't you corroborate me, sir?
Vale: (From behind the curtain.) Certainly, I assure you I heard next to nothing.
Charlotte: (Grasping Agatha Posket's arm.) Oh, Agatha!
Vale: I didn’t come in till I was exceedingly wet.

Lukyn: (To Agatha Posket.) You hear that?

Vale: And when I din come in—

Charlotte: (Hysterically.) Horace!

In the first scene of ‘The Scoldmistress,’ when they are bustling about to get their coats before escaping the fire, the door quietly opens and Jaffray, appears.

Jaffray: Good evening, gentlemen. Can you tell me where I’ll find the ladies?

Mallory: They’re putting on their hats and cloaks.

Jaffray: Thank you, gentlemen, I’m much obliged to you. (He goes to the window, pulls up the blind, and throws the window open; the top of ladder is seen against the balcony.) Are you coming up, Mr. Goff?

Goff: (Out of sight.) Yes, Mr. Jaffray. (Goff, a middle-aged, jolly-looking fireman, enters by the balcony and the window.)

Jaffray: Gentlemen, Mr. Goff—one of the oldest and most respected members of the Brigade, Mr. Goff tells some most interesting stories, gentlemen.

Rankling: (Impatiently.) Stories, sir! Call the ladies, Mr. Mallory.

(Mallory goes out.)

Goff: I shouldn’t hurry them, sir—ladies like to take their time.

Now I remember an instance in October ’78—

The people of the house in fire do not like to be entertained with the fireman’s anecdote.

On the whole Pinero’s tact of changing scenes from slow tempo to quick one and vice versa, which must have been attained by his own experiences on the board is, no doubt, worthy of the audience’s admiration. Harold William’s following remarks on this dramatist’s problem plays may hold good technically to his farces, too.

“His dialogue is neat, the interplay between the characters is rapid, the action moves unflaggingly, the characters are sufficiently pronounced to hold the attention of the average audience, but there is no attempt to treat them with the hyperpsychology of Mr. Granville Barker or Mr. Glasworthy. In a word, Sir Arthur Pinero is an excellent playwright, but there is nothing in his Theatre to justify the inclusion of his name with dramatists who are something more than competent society entertainers.”

We must admit that Pinero’s farces as entertainment can calm for their existence in commercial theatres especially for the audiences of English speaking world. Malcolm C. Salman’s introductory note reports that ‘The
Magistrate' enjoyed an exceptionally long run in New York, as well as in Boston, and has also been played throughout the United States. He also mentions in it that 'The Magistrate' has travelled more widely than most modern English plays, and besides being a stock piece in Australia, India, and South Africa. And the fact that under the title "Der Blaue Grotte" it is constantly played all over Germany and Austria, while in Slavonic language it is a favourite play at the National Theatre, Prague, is undoubtedly an eloquent testimony to the popularity of this farce which is refined in conversation and full of good English humour.

Character Drawing

The mention of Sir Arthur W. Pinero reminds us of his 'The Second Mrs. Tanqueray,' an emotional play so advanced as compared with previous English playwriting, that it is sometimes put down as the starting point of modern British drama. And especially Paula whom the rural life in England must have inevitably led to suicide is one of the memorable dramatic persons. In his Court series Pinero has not any original characters. The heroes in 'The Magistrate' and 'The Schoolmistress' have something common in their weakness, lack of determination, and are made the target of ridicule. Mr. Posket and the Hon. Vere Queckett represent the type of a genuine magistrate and that of a penniless dandy peer respectively. The former in court and the latter in society insist on maintaining their dignity, but their home life is as flimsy as a cardboard construction. Arthur Cecil is said to have been quite successful in performing the two characters.

Mrs. Agatha Posket and Miss Dyott are two different types of women, one being passive and the other positive. A gradual development of character can be discovered between the two ladies, from the study of their attitude toward life—namely the progress from Agatha's mere dependence on her husband economically, to Miss Dyott's protection of her secret husband. Georgiana Tidman (a widow, the Dean's sister) in Dandy Dick is a very progressive stout-hearted woman, somewhat similar to Miss Dyott, but Lady Twomley in 'The Cabinet Minister' who otherwise might be Paula in 'The Second Mrs. Tanqueray.' is rather tragical in character than Mrs. Posket.

Mr. Bullamy and Admiral Rankling are counterbalanced in the two farces as supporting parts to Mr. Posket and the Hon. Vere Queckett, but the latter is more important than the former for carrying out the main plot himself, and in some respects he may be equal to the hero, Queckett in the development of an ironical situation he finds himself involved in the settlement of his daughter's secret marriage, and furiated by Queckett's unintentional deception. Mr. Bullamy, partner of the magistrate acts as an instrument
for solving the petty case of violating the closing time of the West End hotel. Generally speaking, the heroes and heroines of these plays are well matched with the characters of ladies and gentlemen so common in our life, that we may find in them some reflections of ourselves who are likely be transformed into comic figures.

Cis Farringdon and Miss Peggy Hesslerigge are rather original figures in these plays, throwing their relation into a topsyturvy as schemers of the plots. Cis may be compared with Puck in ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ while Peggy with Becky Sharp minus shrewdness.

Two pairs of lovers, namely, Cis and Beatie, and Dinah and Mr. Paulover are happy enough to get the formal permission for their union from their parents. There is no use talking about these two brides, for they have not any particular natures to speak of here. Mr. Paulover, rather a quick-tempered man, is very jealous of other gentlemen who come in contact with his young wife. Such a jealous young fellow may grow up into Mr. Ford in ‘The Merry Wives of Windsor.’ Charlotte and Captian Horace Vale are another pair of lovers, and they are reunited after the temporary separation from Vale’s misunderstanding—jealousy toward Major Bristow.

Colonel Lukyn and Lieut. John Mallory represent army and navy respectively in their thoughts and actions, but the latter is not so well sketched as the former. In that respect Admiral Rankling is much more original than Lieut. Mallory or Colonel Lukyn. Admiral Rankling, seems to be a very careful man, as his daughter Dinah praised, because his ship, the Pandora, has never run into anything, but his quick temper is shown in his shortest telegram, “Bosh!” to Dinah from Malta. To such a heartless sea veteran, Peggy’s curse, “He ought to be struck into a Flying Dutchman!” must be recommendable. Colonel Lukyn can be compared with Admiral Rankling in the importance of his role. In the second act his comic nature is predominant over other persons, when he draws aside the curtain, and does not find Vale there, he staggers back, saying, “Gone—and without a cry—brave fellow, brave fellow!” And he further declares, “Decay of stamina in the army—pah! The young ‘uns are worthy of our best days.”

In Pinero’s farces persons of noble birth or the upper classes are dealt with more severely than those of the lower classes. In ‘The Magistrate’ Achille Blond and Isidore of Hotel des Princes, Mr. Wormington, Inspector Messiter, Sergeant Lugg, and Wyke and Popham, servants of Mr. Posket are to be grouped in the same categories, while in ‘The Schoolmistress’ Tyler and Jane Chipman, servants, Goff and Jaffray, firemen, belong to nearly the same grade.
Mr. Saunders and Gwendoline are a pair of lovers, but they lack originality, and are as insignificant as Ermytrude Johnson. Mr. Bernstein, a popular composer, is rather a peculiar character whose accent is German and may be compared with Doctor Calix, a French physician in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor.' His answer to Miss Dyott is very funny.

Miss Dyott: (Tearfully.) You don't know everything. Sit down. I can trust you. You are my oldest friend, and were a pupil of my late eminent father. Mr. Bernstein, I am no longer a single woman.

Bernstein: Oh, I am very bleased. I wish you many returns of the—eh—no— I congratulate you.

A sketch of the upper class people in Victorian age gradually disclosing their family skeletons in the light of code of ethics must be the key note of Sir Arthur W. Pinero's Court series of farces. They are surely a series of social pictures in gilded frames of comedy exhibited in the Art gallery of the 19th century.

In conclusion the present writer should like to make a quotation from T.S. Eliot's "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" for a brief reference to the relation between ethical motive and amusement in a social play. This part of the dialogue is participated by B, C, D, and E.

E: It is all very well to reduce the drama to "amusement." But it seems to me that that is just what has happened. I believe that the drama has something else to do except to divert us. What else does it do at the moment?

B: I have just given a list of dramatists. I admit that their intentions vary. Pinero, for instance, was concerned with setting, or, as is said in the barbarous jargon of our day, 'posing' the problems of his generation. He was much more concerned with answering than with 'posing.' Shaw, on the other hand, was much more concerned with answering than with 'posing.' Both of these accomplished writers had a strong ethical motive. This ethical motive is not apparent in Mr. Arlen or Mr. Coward. Their drama is pure 'amusement.' The excesses go together. The whole question is, whom does the drama amuse? and what is the quality of the amusement?

C: I should not for my part admit that any of these people are concerned to amuse. There is no such thing as mere amusement. They are concerned with flattering the prejudices of the mob. And their own. I do not suppose for a moment that either Shaw, or Pinero, or Mr. Coward has ever spent one hour in the study
of ethics. Their cleverness lies in finding out how much their audiences would like to behave, and encouraging them to do it by exhibiting personages behaving in that way.

D: But why should a dramatist be expected to spend even five minutes in the study of ethics?

B: I consent. But they need to assume some moral attitude in common with their audience. Aeschylus and Sophocles, the Elizabethans, and Restoration dramatists had this. But this must be already given; it is not the job of the dramatist to impose it.

Mr. Posket who has brought a stain upon a spotless police court used to lecture upon propriety and decorum, but finding himself guilty, he appeals to his laughing friends for their sympathy, saying, “You will find your old friend a Man, a Martyr, and a Magistrate.” No doubt, he appeals to the audience, too. Admiral Rankling, after reconciliation with his daughter and her husband, gives up his old commanding attitude, and becomes very kind toward his wife. When she says, “Stalls, Archibald, or I leave you for ever!” he does not insist on booking Dress-circle any longer, and mildly answers, “Very well, Emma. I have no desire but to please you.”

Miss Dyott declares with perfect truth that from the ashes of Volumnia College rises the Phoenix of her career. She says, “Miss Dyott is extinct—Miss Delaporte is alive, and, during the evening, kicking, I hope none will regret the change— I shall not, for one, which the generous public allow me to remain a Favourite!”

This closing speech of Miss Dyott seems to ask a favour of the audience for the sake of the playwright, rather than to teach a lasting lesson for the theatre-going public.