Theory of Mr. Paul Bourget

Mary Rourke
State University of Iowa

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THEORY OF MR. PAUL BOURGET

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by
Mary Rourke

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Outline

I. Introduction
II. Paul Bourget
   Life
   Writings
   Theories
III. Un Divorce
IV. Comparison of Novel and play
V. Comments
VI. Conclusion.
DIVORCE IN FRANCE.

For more than a hundred years, one of the questions which has been very much discussed in France, is the question of divorce. Forbidden by the Roman Catholic Church, it was not legally recognized under the old monarchy. To the legislators of the Revolution, hostile to any clerical interference in civil affairs, is due the introduction of divorce for the first time, in France. This was in 1792. (1) The new theory was, that marriage was to take its place in civil law as a contract, depending like other contracts upon the consent of the parties, and as such, was revocable by the consent of both. The law of 1792 (1) remained in force until 1803, when the framers of the civil code remodeled and systematized the law of divorce. They took a middle course, (2) so as not to thwart the convictions of those who were in favor of extreme freedom, and also those who favored the indissolubility of marriage. On the one hand, they allowed mutual consent to stand as a ground of divorce, but they surrounded its operations with so many stringent conditions and safeguards, as to satisfy the Church. They also reserved judicial separation for those who objected to divorce on religious grounds. On the restoration of the Bourbons, the Catholic Church became the national religion. One of the first changes made by the new rulers of France, to undo the work of the French Revolution,

(1) Law Quarterly Review 1885, Vol.I.
(2) History of French Private Law 1912.
was to repeal the "Title of the Civil Code on Divorce", which had been in operation since 1803. This was done by a law passed in 1816,\(^1\) and from that time until 1884, the only legal remedy for aggrieved married people, was judicial separation. For a long time the movement against this measure was a literary discussion. It was taken up as a moral question and fought out on the stage, through the instrumentality of some of the best writers of the nineteenth century. Among those, taking the lead, were Alexandre Dumas' fils and Augier who were followed by a host of others, "whose writings", says Sarcey, "had probably more to do with the passage of the divorce law in 1884, than anything else."\(^2\)

These men tried to show the innumerable evils that afflict the home where man and wife are bound together for all time. They tried to show that there can be no end to these evils. Sometimes it is the unexpected revelation of repugnant infirmity or dishonor that has been kept secret; the violent explosions of passions and vices hitherto cleverly restrained; faults rise up at the least contradiction and discourage the most enduring patience; degrading habits which cannot be concealed and sometimes public infamy which the law punishes; venomous hatred incessantly plotting and rage that bursts forth like thunder; insults, threats, quarrels, brutality, violence, abominable perfidy, infidelity developed in cunning and falsehood - all may be installed at the domestic fireside - all that can divide spirits and make

\(^1\) Law Quarterly Review 1885 Vol.I.
\(^2\) Sarcey's Quarante Ans de théâtre.
hearts desperate and kill love forever. In such prisons of moral misery and crime, those who are opposed to divorce would keep men and women chained to each other, like two convicts bearing the same burden. Both may be guilty, because they have met with deception each in the other but it is oftener the case, that the innocent is chained to the guilty. These writers felt and wrote that such a law is absurd and odious; that the barbarous tie of indissolubility, which condemns two beings to perpetual deprivation of happiness, should be broken. They had dreamed of this happiness and they had a right to expect it in conjugal society and since they have been deceived, the code or dogma which holds them is responsible for the sins committed by them as the result of the passions, which swell up in the depths of their exasperated souls.

The law permitting divorce was passed in 1884.\(^{(1)}\) Its advocates looked upon its restoration as a panacea for the ills of social life. But after a few years, it was found that instead of being lessened or banished, these evils had increased and at the same time the number of divorces had become greater than was anticipated. Since such has been the result of experience, it is not strange that many began to be in favor of reforming the institution or of abolishing it altogether. Again, a host of writers took up their pens to fight it, to ridicule it, or to propose means to make it more effectual for good. Many saw in divorce nothing except injustice, incon-

\(^{(1)}\) History of French Private Law 1912 Vol.III.
venience, and cruelty. It became rife, not only among the lowest classes and the nobility, but also among the industrial, commercial, and professional classes. (1) Some of these writers favored the traditional, moral, and religious conception of marriage; others interested themselves particularly with the children's relation to the divorced couple. Among those may be mentioned Mr. Brieux who wrote *le Berceau*; Mr. Fabre, *la Maison d'Argile*; Mr. Hervieu, *le Dédale*. But the most important contemporary writer of family life, the one whose mind has been open upon all the bearings and all the movements of the social body, upon all the catastrophes and vicissitudes of the moral world, the man who is most strongly opposed to divorce, the man, in fact, who stands among the greatest in the intellectual life of the latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, is Mr. Paul Bourget.

Mr. Paul Bourget's Life.

Mr. Paul Charles Joseph Bourget was born at Amiens, France, on the twenty-first day of September, 1852. His father was a Russian, a professor of mathematics. His mother was a native of England. Mr. Bourget is a cosmopolitan by instinct, by study and travel. He was educated at le Lycée de Clermont-Ferrand, where his father was professor, then at the Lycée Louis le-Grand; from l'École des Hautes Études he graduated with honors and likewise from the college of Saint Barbe. He took up the study of medicine in Paris, pursued


(1) *International Encyclopedia* (Am. ed.)
the course long enough to become an interne at the hospital. His study of medicine was of great service to him in his writings, making him not only medicinally accurate but also keen and accurate in observation, and it is to this keenness and accuracy in observation, that much of his success in writing is due.

Mr. Edward Delille, in the Fortnightly Review (1) gives an account of a visit he made to Mr. Bourget, which describes the man in his own home. This visit was made several years ago, but except that the hand of time has sprinkled white in the "abundant dark hair"(2) and traced a few delicate lines in the "handsome face", the picture of the great man, given by Mr. Delille, is just the same today. He says, "I found my way to the top of a winding staircase, in the right wing of a pavilion which stood in the unpretending dignity of its white façade, with its dark, green shutters systematically closed at the back of the traveled courtyard, whose gates opened on the Rue de Monsieur, smallest among the smaller thoroughfares of the Quartier Saint Germain. I was admitted into a minute ante-chamber, where reigned the usual sensation of fresh dimness. I was then ushered through a study, hardly less minute, but bright and cheerful in the warm whiteness of the walls and ceilings, and the rich, varied hues of many handsomely bound books. Some hangings were now drawn aside, and in a subtly decorated, tiny retreat, at the extremity of his bachelor apartments, I met Mr. Paul Bourget.

(1) Fortnightly Review 1892, Vol. V.
(2) Courier des États Unis, Dec. 1912.
A nature of extraordinary delicacy and charm was the impression left upon me after the first conversation. In Mr. Bourget there are, no doubt, all kinds of complications, nevertheless, he exercises, even upon a stranger, the attraction which can only arise from the union of fine brain, vivid feeling, and ardent spirit. It is possibly true as Verlaine says, 'Tout le reste est littérature'. The separate effect of different features and the diverse particularities of manner and speech, came in for secondary notice. As Mr. Bourget talks in a voice artistically inflected, one proceeds to remark, how becomingly the abundant dark hair, parted simply at the side, falls over the full and sufficiently high brow; how the round smoothness of the chin denotes gentleness of nature, and the strongly marked squareness of the jaw gives the intensity of the "will to live"; how the bold, yet fine curve of the nose, imparts to the entire face an expression of great power. The eyes are large, dark and soft and illuminated by a species of confused brightness, that lends to them their strange expression of mingled melancholy and ardor. The smooth, handsome face, and general demeanor, makes one feel at once that he is in the presence of the most "correct" and the most refined man of letters in Paris."

Mr. Bourget's parents were not wealthy. When he left school, he gave private lessons to gain a meager and precarious living. He was brought up in the mountains of Auvergne and it was there, without doubt, he derived his vein of sentiment as well as his tenacity of purpose. The ordinary enfant de l'Auvergne will work long, hard, and honestly, in order to
compass what he would call his "little sack", to which when
once amassed, he adheres like any limpet. Mr. Bourget, before
the age of thirty-five, had his "little sack" filled to over-
flowing and now with his princely fortune, at the age of sixty-
two, he may enjoy all the luxuries of life and cease to think
of the toils and hardships of those earlier years. By a
method not unlike that of piling up money, Mr. Bourget has
built up for himself a fine intellectual fortune, which in-
stead of dilapidating or fritterings away he guards vigilantly,
and admirably invests and unceasingly increases. He is con-
stantly renewing himself. For more than forty years, every
day, he has been enriching himself with impressions still un-
foreseen or not tested and exploring places still not thought
of or not known, and instructing himself by his experiences
of life and by knowledge derived from thought and study.
For years, France has not had a more careful, learned and
accomplished craftsman in verse and prose than Mr. Paul Bour-
get. Brunetière says of him, "No one knows more than he,
no one has read more nor read better, nor meditated so pro-
foundly, upon what he has read, nor assimilated it more com-
pletely." As has been said, he has reached the pinnacle of
fame accorded to him in the literary world by his contem-
poraries, only by long years of hard labor. Like Balzac, he
rose regularly at three o'clock in the morning and worked for
hours at a stretch, cultivating letters, anxiously elaborating
sketch after sketch, and study after study for publication
with no nourishment, except a few cups of strong, black coffee.
Mr. Bourget is a painter of the aristocratic class. Out of 310 individuals mentioned in his novels only 9 are of the *peuple* and 45 of the class *moyenne*. A bourgeois himself, some conventions placed him above the people of his own rank in the most fashionable hierarchy of Paris. First and foremost, he was a brilliant scholar and a psychological writer. It pleased the aristocrats to have a man like him one of themselves. Not all writers are as fortunate in this regard as Mr. Bourget. He has Claude Larcher say to René de Vincy, a writer giving promise of great distinction, and aspiring to mingle among the nobility, "Vous n'en serez jamais, non plus que moi, non plus qu'aucun artiste, eût il du génie" and Claude spoke from experience. Possessing talents of a high order and having received some attention from them, he is plainly told, "Tu ne seras jamais qu'un gourmand avec une tête de savant." But Mr. Bourget is different from these men. He has always been dignified in appearance, refined and delicate in manner, and especially polite at all times and under all circumstances. As for the still smaller question of dress and yet particularly important in those realms, all Europe perhaps knows by this time, that he is past master in the art of harmony in wearing apparel. To employ a term dear to Balzac, "Such little effects of grace and nicety of our modern male attire, as may be obtained with the meager spread of the palette, are one and all at Mr. Bourget's command." Mr. Bourget, too, has kept himself bright and up-to-date by

(1) Sageret.
(2) Mensonges, p.53.
constant study and by travel. He traveled in Italy, Spain, Germany, England and America. The fact that he knew England served as a passport for him to enter the society of the upper class. Many English terms, which are now used familiarly in French conversation were introduced by him. Among those used in his books may be mentioned, beef-steak, five-o'clock, modern style, high life, sleeping car, time is money, pale ale and forget-me-not. One finds in all his works innumerable English expressions, translated sometimes, but usually in the original language. "You know I shan't give you another chance,"(1) "Finir la nuit drunk as a lord:"(2) "Le vrai moyen est de take no notice comme disent les Anglais."(3) In Deuxième Amour, he employs the word steamboat for bateau à vapeur; in Le Disciple he has the watchman cry out: "Donner du pull up à cheval;"(4) in Le Coeur de femme, he says, "Tu es seulement ce que l'anglais appellent particular; in the novel Un Divorce is found, "Un grand portrait de Mme. Derras par le peintre attitré du high life; in Cruelle Énigme, Thérèse de Sauve asks Hubert Laurain, "Will you be so kind as to ask for a carriage." All through his novels we find, society ladies, particularly, making use of English words to such an extent as to lead Mr. Sageret to make the remark, "People desiring to learn the English language, have only to read all the volumes of the great society romancer after which they will know as much if not more than the bacheliers".

(1) Duchesse bleue, p.135.
(2) Coeur de femme, p.19.
(3) Berre promise, p.49.
(4) Le Disciple, p.223.
In addition to his introduction of English words and expressions, he has also brought into France, many English customs and articles of manufacture. The "five o'clock tea" and the "cold bath" are imported directly from England while samples of her superiority in all branches of industry are to be found in: la maroquinerie --- trois on quatre sacs de différentes grandeurs, en cuir anglais; (1) la céramique; Mme. Moraines a une baignoire de faience anglaise; (2) l'ébénisterie: tablettes de la mince vitrine anglaise; (3) les tissus: costume d'une étoffe anglaise à carreaux; (4) la carrosserie: un coupé anglais très profond; (5) des industries diverses: lampes anglaises à globes rosés; (6) globe rose encadré de verdure à l'intérieur duquel brûlait une invisible bougie-nouveau âge anglaise; (7) To buy English goods is the proper thing and Mr. Bourget, in his books, conveys the impression, that the possession of these articles made across the Channel, have a prestige that cannot be claimed by many people even in their own set. Besides he boasts much about the greatness of English poets, English institutions, English aristocracy and the English race. The secret of his successful entry and popularity among the nobility lay, too, in the fact that the women in "high life" liked him and went into ecstacies over him and his entertaining stories. In the minutest details he describes their clothing, their furniture, their homes, their tea-tables, their personal appearance.

(1) André Cornelis, p. 154.
(2) Mensonges, p. 163.
(3) Deuxième Amour, p. 167.
(4) Pastels, p. 321.
(5) Coeur de femme, p. 4.
(6) Deuxième Amour.
(7) Mensonges, p. 78.
All his plots are unfolded and all his characters are placed, in fashionable drawing rooms or in places full of expensive furniture, bric-a-brac, fine lace hangings, tapestries and other beautiful things dear to the heart of woman. His preference for le monde then is indisputable. These women are exquisite: "leurs toilettes jamais négligées" cover hearts where passion, even, remains distinguished. An elegant luxury characterizes the smallest objects they use such as, for example, their pen holders: Mme. Termonde, veuve Cornélis, née de Slane, en possède d'un, en or avec une perle blanche à son extrémité; (1) that of Madame Moraines is, "d'écaillè et d'or;" (2) that of Claire de Noirlys, "d'or à manche effilé sur lequel est gravé le nom de Claire." (3) Mr. Bourget knows these women - their loves, their hates, their intrigue, their foibles, their frivolities and inconsistencies - better than they know themselves. In L'irréparable he says "Les femmes ont un art, de tout dire sans rien articuler qui leur permet de parler des plus vilaines choses de ce vilain monde sans y salir la pudeur de leur conversation." Love is the sport, the leisure, the business, the luxury, the thought, the passion, the art, the elegance, the entire life of all the women and we can almost say of all the men in Mr. Bourget's new world. But in matters of passion and love his real key note is tenderness and grace and he always shows an inclination to adore as well as to adorn, yet in the physical aspects of passion there is a dark brutality which is exceedingly painful, if not repugnant.

(1) Andre Cornelis, p. 263.
(2) Mensonges, p. 195.
(3) Pastels, p. 209.
Much has been said about the pessimism of Mr. Bourget. He was old enough at the time of the Franco-Prussian war to realize the bitter humiliation of his country's defeat in that struggle. He doubtless knew something of the "Commune", that period of anarchy and bloodshed in Paris at the close of the war. At an early age, he must have learned of the small trickeries and treacheries, the base, foolish misinterpretations of motives, mean jealousies and insane intensity of spite between literary men of his own city at that time. A penniless, struggling, young man, though living in the Latin Quarter and having a chance to meet and associate with a few very congenial spirits among the poets and painters who were there assembled, these things of which he was an eye witness, may have helped to stamp upon his mind, which was always very impressionable, that pessimism which seems to be a prominent element in his character. Pessimism and perversity too, were characteristics of the age in which he lived. He saw a civilization very curious, complex and perhaps the most corrupt of modern civilizations. His sensibility disposed him to demand passionately from science, to which he was always devoted, peace, truth and love; but he was too much of a logician not to perceive that the realization of such a wish was impossible at least for years to come. The psychological curiosity and a taste for looking into the souls of others, with which he was gifted to an eminent degree, have a tendency to produce unrest and sadness.
But Mr. Bourget has recovered more or less from this pessimism which was characteristic of him in former years. He has not banished it from his nature, but he has put it in its place. (1) Everything has its place and one ought not to scorn anything. He has already told us "On se plaint d’analyse, de la raison, de la science. Elles ont leur difficultés et elles nous inquiétent. Mais je sais du moins un remède à ces difficultés et ces perplexités, c’est une intelligence plus complète une science plus avancée, une plus profonde analyse." (1)

**Writings.**

Mr. Bourget began his literary career in 1872 as a journalist. He has contributed articles to the *Globe Parliament*, *Renaissance*, the *Nouvelle Revue* and other magazines. Like most young writers in France, while preparing pieces for the periodicals, he tried his hand at writing poetry. At the present day, there is scarcely any form of literary expression that he left untouched. His first collection of verse written between 1872 and 1876 was published under the separate titles of "Au bord de la mer" and "Vie Inquiète". These "petits Poèmes" did not bring him to the goal of fame that he had probably marked out for himself. A further volume compiled between 1876 and 1882 containing the "Edel" and "Les Aveux" are better and they really mark the "high water level" of his poetry. The rhyme throughout is har-

(1) Revue de Paris 1895.
monious, and there is suppleness and variety in the meter. Some of the verses are very pretty and have all the charm of languor. "L'amour naissant est pur comme une piété" and this pretty romance:

"Le temps où tu m'aimes ressemble
Aux temps charmants, aux temps lointains
De mon enfance, Ah, gais matins!"

Another pleasing verse is sometimes quoted:

"Et rien n'est plus pareil au soir,
Au soir éteint au grand soir morne,
Que la fin d'un sublime espoir,
De l'espoir d'un bonheur sans borne."

In his verse and prose, Mr. Bourget is never happier than in describing certain, intimate aspects of nature. "Sur l'eau morte du lac de Windemère, he says in his Studies and Portraits "des îles surgissent, qui ne sont que des mottes de gazon. Le boucher a relevé les rames, et la muette beauté des choses est surnaturelle de coeur pénétrante." This delicate and beautiful evocation of one of the most beautiful scenes may well be used to show his love for nature.

When Mr. Bourget received the Prix Moutyon awarded to him when he had written Mensonges, Augier pronounced the memorable words, "C'est un cochon triste" which the International Encyclopedia translates, "The melancholy pig." This appreciation of a great man like Augier for a man like Mr. Bourget is certainly unwarranted and shows that even in Paris
the criticisms of literary men are often a mere depreciation which is, truth to say, very offensive. A talent such as that possessed by Mr. Bourget is not deserving of such a remark and when he speaks of the naïf despair this epithet caused him (1) as a writer, "chaste in his life" and "daring with his pen", he has one's sympathy at once. Mr. Bourget's verse was the original cause, that provoked this coarse expression from Mr. Angier; for there is a great deal that is certainly objectionable in his poetry and also in some of his earlier prose. But he was young then and his works show him to have been influenced by some of the eighteenth century writers, by Stendhal, Laclos, and others.

Although Mr. Bourget began writing in 1872, it was ten years before he found his field in the literary world. Those years of "dabbling" as he calls them were not without results. As a critic he at once won fame in his "Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine," brought out in the year 1883. To these he brought a general literary knowledge which was wider, deeper, and more varied than is usual among most men who propose to be critics. To this, was added a great familiarity with the scientific processes of reasoning, which enabled him to bring to the examination of a given work, a method of unsurpassed efficiency and effect. He had read the books and lectures of Taine and followed him; he knew Darwin and Spinoza and espoused their doctrines. The outcome of his study in literature, science, and philosophy was the

(1) Dorémic Écrivains d'au jour d'hui.
bringing to light ten admirable studies. "No such brilliant and sudden critical reputation has been made in European literary spheres, since Macaulay published his article on Milton in the Edinburgh Review."(1)

In these essays, Mr. Bourget is describing himself, his own feelings, his own genius, his own ambitions, his own theories and through the medium of these men, in each of whom he saw some tendency of which, a trace at least, existed in his own nature: Baudelaire, the man of the nineteenth century decadence, the pessimist, the man whose conceptions of love are mystic, sensuous and intelligent, is Mr. Bourget; Renan, the dilettante, the ideal aristocrat, the vigorous opponent of the principles of democracy, is Mr. Bourget; Flaubert, the Romanticist, the hater of the bourgeoisie, is no other than Mr. Bourget;(2) we see him, too, in Taine, the philosopher, who believed that every one is better off to remain in that milieu where time and circumstances have placed him. He makes these and all the others have something in common with himself. He says "To study one's own person in the moral and intellectual tendencies of a generation, is a system, which must be worth exactly as much as the man is, that employs it."(3) In his preface to the Essais Contemporains, in regard to them he writes, "My sole ambition has been to furnish a few notes which may be of service to the historian of moral life in France, during the

(1) Encyclopedia Brittanica.
(2) Fortnightly Review 1910.
(3) Essais, Vol.I.
latter half of the nineteenth century." The consensus of opinion seems to be that his *Essais de Psychologie Contemporaine*, upon the whole represents the finest, the most significant and the most valuable of his works and that they will always be read and appreciated. Mr. Charles Marras in the Revue de Paris says, "Les Essais et les Nouveaux Essais de psychologie contemporaine, n'ont rien été que d'excellents recueils de définitions. On y voit définis le pessimisme, le dilettantisme, l'esprit d'analyse et de goût de la décadence, le nihilisme et le cosmopolitisme, la pensée germanique et la sensibilité philosophique. C'est un beau médaillier de définitions bien frappant et on peut affirmer des aujourd'hui qu'elles resteront."(1) After he had written the *Essais*, doubtless, feeling he had reached the summit of literary work of this kind, he directed his attention to fiction.

Mr. Bourget has written a great many novels nearly all having to do with people in the upper walks of life. He was well prepared by nature, study, experience, and observation to speak of his times and the milieu into which the social and fashionable life of Paris gladly admitted him. He has been censured a great deal for employing his talents among this class which Mr. René Dorémic(2) defines "as the most empty of all modes of existence, a sort of community in which all frivolities are thrown into the common stock as well as all hypocracies. It is here that genuine humanity is least apt

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(1) *Revue de Paris* 1895.
(2) Contemporary French Novelists.
to be found. To a writer who wants to instruct himself in the science of humanity, there is no greater delusion than that which consists in scattering his observations over a great variety of social spectacles. The truths of humanity he insists, "is not to be picked up in salons or sleeping ears." It is too true that his earlier stories developed, to excess, on the mere frame-work of opulence, "but," says the Encyclopedia Brittanica, "The pathology of moral irresolution, also of complicated affairs of the heart, and the ironies of friendship, in which the writer revels, can be more appropriately studied, in a cultured and leisured society than amid the simpler surroundings of humbler men and women."

It is the general opinion that Mr. Bourget's novels are immoral and dangerous but he himself denies this to be the case. Mr. Saintsbury in Essays on French Novelists says "Mr. Bourget thought it necessary to write upon subjects, popularly know as 'forbidden', which in France means, that a popular writer is forbidden to take up any other; besides the analytical method he employed is to blame. "This method stands to the photographic method in the relationship of something that is almost always bad to something that is sometimes good. There are times and seasons when Zola's system produces for a brief space, at least, a work, that could hardly be surpassed in merit; but it is his indiscriminate choice of subjects and refraining from the use of other and better methods that the naturalist goes wrong." And René Doumio in Contemporary Novelists, discussing the immorality of Mr. Bourget's books says, "Any book is dangerous, which in the interpretation it gives of the play of human activities
diminishes the part played by our will. For in the moral order, and there alone, is verified the aphorism, that will is power. But if the conviction once gains possession of us, that all existence is vain and all efforts are illusory, our energy is dried up at its source. We are conquered simply by not having contended." Again he says, "Any book is dangerous, that stirs up the evil dregs of our nature, for as these bad elements rise to the surface, and we grow more clearly conscious of them, they become the more deadly. In reading medical treatises, we seem to discover in ourselves all the symptoms of the maladies described; but in case of maladies of the soul, to imagine them is to have them and Mr. Bourget in describing them should not disguise from himself that he may at the same time be propagating them.

His early novels are characterized by a somewhat vulgar pretense and an assumption of authority which he himself ridicules in later years, in his novels. The interest in them is placed in situation and environment rather than in character. Like everyone else, however, he became tired of frivolity, no matter how refined, and sought to build distinction on a more solid foundation. As he went on, he not only continued to describe the life among the nobles; but he also began to display the superior knowledge of the remedies applicable to modern woes, rightfully belonging to the philosophically trained mind. The first intimation of this was in le Disciple in the preface of which he makes a stirring
appeal to the young men of France to guard well their morals.
Since then a certain moral enthusiasm pervades his works,
which procured for him the name of "preacher". But in these
later novels the dominant interest is still a morbid "psychopa-
thology" and significantly peculiar "states of the soul,"
but showing increasing moral strength and maturity.

Mr. Bourget has never been successful in his attempts
to establish his tenets or prove his point and it is strange
that this learned man who never wanders from his text, when
he preaches, should forget it always when he tries to illus-
trate its purport. L'Etape proves nothing: Monneyon's son
might have been a swindler, even if his father was a duke
instead of a peasant. The novel, Un Divorce, proves very
little: It is of no consequence to the religious irregularity
of their marriage, if the son of Mr. and Mrs. Darras should
fall in love with a girl beneath them. The same is true of
Amédée Enigmé and his other works.

Mr. Bourget was over fifty years of age when he began
to write plays. It was thought that he would be unable to
compete in this field, with younger men who had devoted all
their lives to this class of literature alone. The brilliant
success of the play drawn from the novel, Un Divorce at once
showed the design of Mr. Bourget. One was no longer in the
presence of the novelist, who managed to give to his work the
theatrical form to increase its success, but before a writer
who wanted to impose his thoughts upon the public, in utilizing
all the strength of dramatic art, emotion, eloquence, the
relief of personages, order and clearness. He is criticised, (1)
as possessing none of those indispensable qualities or attributes
required of the playwright - an open mind, imagination and a
sense of humor. Then his sympathies having always undis-
guisedly rested with the classes he portrayed in his novels -
the languid worlding of the Faubourg St. Germain, the haute
bourgeoisie and the despotic châtelain, and not being inter-
ested in the vicissitudes, loves and miseries of the humble
people, his views on social questions would have no far-
reaching influence. And truly enough, it has been affirmed,
that however hard he may have tried to repress his aristocratic
proclivities and prejudices when writing for the stage, the
author of Un Divorce, La Barricade, Le Tribun, L'Émigré and
L'Apôtre has remained, despite his endeavors, "l'homme
autoritaire, l'homme correct." "Je ne connais pas idées
généreuses," he has announced. Je ne connais que des idées
vraies on fausses, et il ne vaudrait pas la peine d'écrire si
ce n'était pas pour énoncer les idées que l'on croit et que
l'on sait vraies." And in the press, in conferences, in
prefaces, the eminent Academician, has furthermore declared that
all his plays were written in a vigorously impartial spirit.
"Mon théâtre est un théâtre d'idées," he says, "mais pièce d'idées
on pièce à thèse, qu'importe que la thèse soit intéressant on
que l'idées soit justes et si l'accent de l'auteur n'est pas

(1) French Life and French Stage, 1899.
sincère et pénétrant. J'ai voulu dans l'émigré satisfaire ma passion intellectuelle pour les personnages traditionelles c'est à dire qui incarnent la durée, les droits, des morts contre les vivants tout ce que méconnaît la France d'aujour d'hui. Dans Le Barricade, je invite labourgeoisie à se défendre. Dans le Tribun un théoricien du socialisme est forcé de capituler devant les éternelles réalites morales."\(^{(1)}\)

\textbf{La Barricade} is his first original play. It is a chronicle of the social war of 1910. It shows the war between the classes. Mr. Bourget offers no solution to this problem, because he thinks it is unsoluble. In it he has been accused of defaming the workmen and embellishing the patrons, of giving all the vices to the Bourgeoisie and the virtues to the Pro-\-leteriaire\(^{(1)}\). But if his play has achieved nothing else, in writing it, Mr. Bourget has indirectly and involuntarily caused the downfall of a vain, unscrupulous agitator.

\textbf{Le Tribun}, though not a masterpiece, has won great success. Like every piece he has written of late, \textbf{Le Tribun} has a purpose, which is to show that the moral and social conditions brought about by the Revolution, are inferior to those previously existing and contrary to the essentials of human society. Ernest Dimnet in the Saturday Review,\(^{(2)}\) says that \textbf{Le Tribun} may be a dramatic success, but as an apologue, it is a complete failure; that while Mr. Bourget thinks the present age is a time of \textit{intransigent} individualism — fault of

\(^{(1)}\) Revue des deux Mondes, 1910.
\(^{(2)}\) The Saturday Review, 1911.
the Revolution - individualism is constantly having rights superior to society and one famous instance has been shown (The Dreyfus case could be turned against Mr. Bourget's principles) that hundreds of thousands are ready to give up society to anarchy rather than sacrifice a unit of it; that the individual does not go against society but against family relations and ultimately against the individual himself. It is an instance of a round-about development of this kind, that Le Tribun was intended to set forth, but in this part of his task, Mr. Bourget has failed."

In Le Tribun he wanted to write a drama with a latent lesson in it and he wrote a human drama. Portal, the champion of individualism, did his duty in giving up his son to justice. By so doing he ignored the family ties to which Mr. Bourget attaches so much importance and it is only by refusing to be a hero that he is of any use to the author's position. He began the play with the ambition of embodying philosophy in it and finished it, as he has done, all his plays, by making his characters life-like and his plot exciting. Whether or not Mr. Bourget can be called a great play-writer, certain it is, he gave a long and very earnest study to comparing the art of the novelist with that of the dramatic author.

Theories.

In early life Mr. Bourget believed in the principles of the Revolution. Later he changed his views and promulgated theories on religion, tradition, caste, class, government and
family life, more in conformity to the opinions and desires of the nobility. As a sceptic, a free-thinker, he becomes a believer, giving his reasons on pages 36 and 37 of L'Étape the summary of which is; that science proclaims itself powerless, when it comes to the problem of our origin and of our end and it leaves us in the presence of hypotheses, none of which can console us, when the hour of death comes. He claims the aristocracy saved him, the aristocracy whose sensuality characterized almost all his works. Their sensuality in its modern and refined variety, interested him and under this form it completely absorbed all the resources of his talents. His soul, in its entirety has been bound up in it so much, that even after his conversion, when he entered the Church, we should expect something entirely pure and elevating from his pen, this sensuality is still found, modified it is true, in all his books, even from that date. Mr. Bourget has lead a gay life among the corrupt ones, in the high places of earth; his pessimistic soul has never been quite comforted in it; old age was coming on, and like Armand de Querne, who after leaving Hélène Chasel, \(^{(1)}\) began to think of death and he sought out God to take the place of the mistress he had lost, so Mr. Bourget, too, felt the need of that peace, which "fine life" with all its splendor could not give him. The teachings of his early years came back and the hereditary influence of past generations acting upon him, he returns into the bosom of the church and calls himself

\(^{(1)}\) Crime d'Amour.
converted. For him, the step back was easy. From the highway along which, the fascinations of sensuality and vice were leading him, he returns and soon found the road where circumstances had placed him in the earlier part of his career; he readily accepted that which was part of his nature from the beginning. In the full maturity of his years, in this regard, he had no new impressions to make, he simply took up those which were molded into the plastic mind of his infancy; he received doctrines taught him, in good faith by those whose wisdom and devotion were the guide and reliance of his childish years. He seeks again for salvation in the same direction, in which he once, at least, sincerely believed. He enters the Catholic Church, because it is founded upon tradition, it goes back to the Apostles, it has received the sanction of experience of ages, it is the most complete, practical, and reasonable and therefore must be right.

In reference to his class theory, he maintains there should be only two — the aristocracy and the plebeian; the aristocracy consisting of the nobility and the upper bourgeoisie. To the latter Mr. Bourget belonged. He emphatically asserts that these two classes must be kept apart. "All the progress of the ages", he says, "came through the aristocracy."(1) Like the Church, it is based upon tradition. Each of these classes are adapted to certain conditions in life and in these there should be little disturbance.

(1) L'Etape.
The condition of the lower class may be changed, but in accordance with the laws of nature whose evolution is slow, it will take a long time. In his works, particularly in L'Étape, he shows us the disastrous results of abrupt déracinement, of changing caste, of changing environment, of changing moral and physical habits. France is now agonizing in the "throes of civil", moral and religious discord, because the plebeians were déracinés in 1789. (1) Mr. Bourget came to the United States in 1893. One of the objects of this visit was to make a special study of the déracinés which compose the entire people of this country. He speaks "avec une inquiétude profonde devant l'avenir social." (2) He admired the push and energy of our people; but he writes "Les milliardaire Yankees sont tous fils de petits fils de plébéiens, et les quatre cinquièmes (this was in 1893) au moins de leur compatriotes sont fils de petits-fils d'immigrés. Aux États-Unis, les jeunes filles elles mêmes se rendent indépendantes de leurs parents." (3) Over here Mr. Bourget observed a "complete collection of déracinements," without lessening for a moment his admiration for the democratic Americans. "Ce qui nous fait mourir la rend prospère. Il y a bien là un phénomène de race. The inferiority of the French race in this point of view is put in evidence in Idylle tragique, where Brion a French financier is compared with Marsh, an American railroad king. Both were plebeians; both could become rascals; but the Frenchman was the one that fell. "Il a

(1) L'Étape.
(2) Outre Mer Vol.II, P. 330
(3) Outre Mer I.
jeté son dévolu sur la viscountesse de Chéry, une bien gentille petite femme, l'épouse d'un spéculateur à la Bourse lié de jeu avec lui. Que fait donc notre Brion? Il trompe habilement le vicomte en matière de hausse ou de baisse, et le conduit à la ruine avec l'espoir que la viscountesse voudra bien laisser rétablir sa fortune moyennant quelques faveurs. Mais il comptait sans le terre-neuve Marsh, le bon Marsh, qui, tout à fait désintéressé offre au ménage une brillante situation.

We may say the Yankee besides having the advantage of vertu had also the advantage of being rich and managed the business with an amplitude that made Brion seem very small in comparison with him.

This comparative judgment upon the French race Mr. Bourget confirms also in his Essais. "Vous sommes les fils d'une contrée mixte, d'une passage habituellement médiocre, d'une civilization tout élément et modérée----peuple d'industriens travailleurs, de politiciens aiguisés----Les vastes spéculations intellectuelles comme les fécondes inventions artistiques veulent un autre milieu et d'autres hommes. Aussi les unes et les autres sont-elles chez nous l'apanage d'une élite. While other nations may see great artists and thinkers arise among them from the lower classes, the French, then, on account of an enforced mediocrity, furnish none of them from the same classes. Nor can they hope to better their condition by a general culture; for again he says, "L'ouvrier français---- est un civilisé de médiocre espèce, arrivé, sauf exception, au plein développe-
ment qu'il peut supporter." (1) It is easy to see, in reading Mr. Bourget's books, that all his sympathies are with the upper class alone. It is to this class, doubtless, he appeals in his preface to le Disciple where he tells the young men their moral life is the moral life of their country; that twenty years hence they will be the leaders in the destiny of their country. (2) The dangerous effects upon the individual of trying to rise in the social scale is apparent: Let them become intellectual or rich, he says, and the result of this déracinement is always the procreation of delicate beings with no vital stamina, or physical endurance, but every sign of early decay. "Le fils long et magriot, ayant déjà dans son torse étrique, dans ce pâleur, dans ses muscles appauvris, cette espèce d'épuisement sans aristocratie qui se produit des la troisième génération dans notre bourgeoisie issue de la plèbe,---cela n'empêche pas nos politiciens, qui se soucient du problème de la race comme de leur premier programme, d'esextasier sur la société contemporaine, et de considérer comme un progrès l'universelle accession de peuple à cet épuisement. (3) Again "chez ces ruraux mal alimentés depuis des générations, l'effort cérébral avait été tout de suit trop intense, l'énergie animale trop abandonnée, les lois de l'action méconnues dans l'ordre physique autant que dans l'ordre moral. (4) The peasant, too has an ungovernable temper, which he has never accustomed

(1) L'Etape, 104.
(2) le Disciple
(3) Physiologie d'Amour moderne, p. 80.
(4) L'Etape, p. 383.
himself to moderate, his life is compressed within very narrow limits and his feelings are not directed into noble channels. Men like these whose minds lack equilibrium, who are chimerical and odd, if let loose a little are apt to deliver themselves up to all kinds of harmful excesses. The coarse race to which Joseph Monneron, fils d'un cultivateur de Quintenas with les os trop gros de ses poignets et le caractère presque massif des traits de visage révélaient l'hérédité, has enriched itself conformably to the law of slow evolution; it has produced the old bourgeoisie, that Mr. Bourget, in eliminating the "parvenu" of too recent date, called "too high bourgeoisie", the small bourgeoisie and the plebeian being considered by him as descendents from the rural plebeian for two generations more or less.

Mr. Bourget's theory in reference to the family is along the same direction, as his theories about religion and class, race and government. He maintains, the greatest mistake the Revolution made, was in recognizing the individual as the social unit. Man cannot live apart. It is contrary to the law of nature. He is the result of many other men - his ancestry. He ought to be fixed to one land, to one house. Customs, manners, beliefs, traditions and business ought to be handed down, in the same family, from one generation to another. The family ought to be the social unit and not the family as we understand it alone, but the long, continuous chain of ancestors, of which those in life are only the part seen.
This visible part, however, of the family is the one that must be kept united, pure, clean, and holy under the protecting care of the Church. "Élever des enfants sans Dieu, sans milieu de famille," he says, in Physiologie de l'amour moderne est équivalent à préparer des prostituées, des déséquilibrés, des séparées dangereuses.

It is fortunate for the French theatre that in every epoch, there arise writers, who know how to combine truth, pathos and thought with the élan which is indispensable to the stage. Mr. Paul Bourget in our time is one of these. He has placed before us some of the most complex problems of contemporaneous society and has developed them according to the conditions of the theater. The most important of these, the one that affects the greatest number of people and is the hardest to solve is the question of divorce.

Mr. Bourget's theory of divorce is the Roman Catholic view of the indissolubility of the marriage contract. His opinion, of late years has been very decided upon this question. In Cruelle Enigme, however, published in 1885, we read, "Divorce! Il a du bon; mais c'est une solution beaucoup trop simple pour un problème très compliqué---ici comme ailleurs, le catholiciâme a fausseté toutes nos idées." The characteristic of advanced society, he says, here also, is to produce many men of very different species and the problem consists in making as many morals as there are species. The law ought to recognize marriages of five, ten, or twenty categories, according to the
degree of delicacy of the married couple. We should then have unions for life, designed for people of aristocratic scruples; for people with consciences, less refined, contracts could be made with facility for two or three divorces; for people still inferior, there could be temporary bonds of three or five years. In *Crime d'amour*, brought out later, shows Mr. Bourget strongly in favor of the preservation of the family.

But the work in which Mr. Bourget expresses his views on this subject most clearly, forcibly, and decidedly, the work which is most popular, in his own country, at least, of all his works, the work which sets forth many phases of the divorce question, and which gives or implies every argument against its practice, is his play, entitled, *Un Divorce*. The piece was drawn from a novel of the same name, written by Mr. Bourget in 1905 and in collaboration with Mr. André Cury, he arranged the romance to be acted upon the stage. January 28, 1906 it was presented, for the first time at the Vaudeville Theater, in Paris.

**Summary of Un Divorce.**

On being introduced to the Darras household, consisting of grandmother, father, mother, son, and little daughter, we learn that it is troubled, disunited. Gabrielle Darras, on account of the misbehavior of her first husband, the Comte de Chambault, obtained a divorce and with their separation she lost her religion. She consented to a civil marriage with Mr. Darras, a kind, upright, scrupulous man but a strong radical and free
thinker. Upon the birth of their daughter, Jeanne, who is now ten years old, she persuaded her husband into allowing the child to receive a Christian education. Mr. Darras adopted Lucien de Chambault, Gabrielle's son, whom he raised as tenderly as if he were his own child. The other member of the family is Mrs. Darras, mother of Mr. Albert Darras. She is a good Catholic, but tolerant in her views. Like many good Catholics, she knows very little about the rules of the Church, except such as are necessary for her, as a member, in carrying out and practicing her duties in relation to it. At the opening of the play, she has been very ill. A medical student, Berthe Planat has cared for her with professional conscientiousness and has, in fact, saved her life. The whole family feel for the young girl deep gratitude and respect. Lucien has frequently met Berthe at the bedside of the sick woman and it was very natural that his feelings for her should change to love. He has been studying law but in their first meeting before us on the stage, he informs her he will give up his law course and study medicine. Mr. And Mrs. Darras have certain prejudices upon the superiority of certain careers. Lucien is the son of a Count. They hope by means of this title he may obtain a governmental position and that some day, they can say, "Notre fils, le secrétaire d'embassade." Berthe knows this and tries to persuade Lucien not to disappoint his parents and not to act so unjustly towards Mr. Darras, who has so carefully and conscientiously marked out his path in life; but her efforts are in vain.
In this first meeting of the young people before us, no profession of love is made. They agree in parting to be always companions. Soon Mr. and Mrs. Darras become disturbed. They suspect Lucien's love for Berthe. He is changed. He came into the house, held a conversation with the nurse, and then went out without deigning to inquire after the health of the grandmother, to see his mother or to kiss his sister. They know that he has not been studying at the law school for more than a month. They know that he and Berthe, without their knowledge meet frequently outside the home. Mr. Darras was stupefied one day, in seeing them deeply interested in each other walking before him, along the street and into the Jardin des Plantes, where they sat down to talk. His concern was so great that he determined to make an investigation for they knew nothing of the girl. Mr. Darras sends one of his trusty agents to Clermont, the former home of Miss Planat, to find out who she is, who compose her family and what has been her past. They are anxiously awaiting the return of this messenger. Madame Darras and Gabrielle have a long talk about this matter. Gabrielle is pale and nervous and her mother-in-law guesses she has something else upon her mind. Gabrielle confesses that in educating her little daughter in the Catholic faith, in seeing the young mind developing in spiritual grace, her faith has gradually returned.

Though Gabrielle has concealed her changed feelings from her free thinking husband, he notices the change in her,
and that, that change commenced at the time she began to prepare the girl for her first Communion. If she had ceased to be a free thinker, she would have told him so. He observes, likewise the fervent piety of the little girl. She makes him uneasy for she looks pale, she is over excited, nervous and irritable. He attributes the child's unrest to the approaching First Communion, her reception into the Church. Her first Communion that picturesque ceremony, which often causes the physical and mental break down of sensitive and impressionable little girls, almost fills him with terror. He decides that the Catechism must be diminished because the child is becoming morbid, pale and nervous. Ardently Gabrielle disputes her husband's view.

Gabrielle: Et non, je te dis, que ce sont les autres études qui la fatiguent. Il n'y a pas que l'intelligence en nous il y a le coeur. C'est notre vie à nous autres femmes. Et Jeanne est déjà une petite femme. Morbides! ces émotions! Mais si tu y assistes! Comme moi, jour par jour, heure par heure, tu verrais ce qu'elles font de cette jolie âme, comme sa foi la purifie encore, elle déjà si pure: C'est une joie en elle, une lumière. Devant toi, elle ne se montre pas tout entière; on dirait qu'elle a comme une pudeur de ce miracle de perfection qu'elle sent s'accomplir en elle. Le jour de la première communion rien qu'à voir son visage, tu me donneras raison, tu ne regretter as pas d'avoir, en tenant ta parole, donné a la fille la plus grande joie de son enfance et la plus noble.

Albert: Je ne la verrai pas.
These few words were a sad blow to Gabrielle. She had counted so much upon Albert's being present on the great day, at the solemn ceremony.

Mr. Darras believing that Lucien loves Berthe Planat and wishing to crush this passion, proposes to send him on a voyage around the world. He and Gabrielle will accompany him as far as Italy. They will come back after the ceremony and the two crises will be over. Gabrielle thinks his refusal to go to the church is because he has a horror of this First Communion. She knows the hatred he has for this religion; He will satisfy this hatred by taking her away. He is too loyal to break the promise he has given her, he is too just, too human to use force to prevent her from being present at that ceremony.

It is not altogether hatred towards the Church that caused Mr. Darras to announce his intention of absenting himself from the Communion. Lucien has really fallen in love with Miss Planat, the young student. The messenger has returned from Clermont who informs Mr. Darras that the girl left her native town five years ago, with a lover, who abandoned her in Paris, with a child. Lucien must be saved from a scandalous entanglement. This news distracts Gabrielle. She does not know what to do, nor where-in lies her duty, nor to whom to appeal, in her trouble. With all her love for her son, with all her longing to protect him from her whom she believes to be an intriguing woman, how can she resist the sacred and supreme joy of seeing her little girl partake of the blessed Sacrament?
She consults Madame Darras who does not believe it is hatred of the Church, that impels her son to absent himself from the Communion. Madame Darras has suffered a great deal on account of the irreligion of her son who at a very early age had left the Church. On account of it, she had often shed bitter tears. She had consented to this marriage outside the Church, with sorrow, it is true, but she knew how much her son loved Gabrielle, what a charming woman she was, and she wanted above all to keep the heart of her boy, who had always respected her for her religion, who had never tried to force his views, upon her, who had permitted her, to receive Father Muvraud, his enemy, at his own house, and in every other way was a dutiful and loving son. A long, tedious dialogue between the two supplies no solution to the difficulty. The mother-in-law advises Gabrielle, however, to obey her husband, to go with him to Italy, to tell him of her change of heart, and of her desire to communicate with her little girl. If she does not do this she will alienate her husband forever. He will see by this act, prepared in secret, without his knowledge, and carried out in public before his very eyes, an abuse of confidence, or worse yet, an intrigue of the priest. The situation becomes interesting when le Pere Muvraud is announced. His visit at this time is perfectly natural and legitimate. With the plea of not feeling well, Madame Darras begs to be excused telling the priest, her daughter-in-law wishes to speak with him and then she discreetly leaves the room. Gabrielle relates her griefs
and implores him to help her out of her predicament. "Je veux revenir à Dieu. Je veux me confesser. Je veux communer," she cries. But the Abbé Emvrard silences her with a gesture: her divorce and second marriage, while her first husband was still living, have excluded her from all participation in the solemnities of the Church. Marriage blessed by the priest, is sacred and final. There is no breaking of it. Or, if broken it must be, there is no second marriage. On that point, the law of the Church is inexorable, absolute, eternal.

Gabrielle: Comment Monsieur l'Abbé, Le jour de la première communion de ma fille, moi, sa mère, je ne pourrais pas m'agenouiller à près d'elle et à la sainte table, de m'associer à son bonheur, à ses prières. Et cela quand je n'aurai pas à me reprocher que d'avoir, mariée misérablement, tentée de re faire ma vie avec un honnête homme."

Père Emvrard: "Ce n'est pas l'Église qui condamne le divorce, c'est Notre Seigneur, c'est Dieu lui-même et vous ne pouvez pas à la fois le recevoir à l'autel et rester en révolte contre lui."

"Then it is necessary for me to leave my husband in order that I may be able to confess and go to communion. In that case, the divine law would be less just, less pitiful than the human law which permitted me to re-make my life. All my doubts come back again. My husband's reasonings against the Church are true - the Church is oppression itself, it is obscurity of mind, it is darkness." L'Abbé conjures her not to judge thus harshly the action of God. It is a sin against the Holy Spirit, the
only one that may not be pardoned. She should think rather of God's pity and justice, that through his grace, he has given her back the faith, because she has been loyal, and if she did commit a mortal sin by marrying again, she should recognize that this human law, by which she has profited, is on the contrary, a hard law, an iniquitous law - hard because under its apparent goodness, it sacrifices the family and the family means the entire society, to the individual. The Abbé now brings arguments against divorce which are positively gloomy.

In his priestly duties he said, "J'ai vu des haines fratricides entre les enfants du premier et second lit; des pères et des mères, jugés et condamnés par leurs fils et par leurs filles; ici, des heurts meurtriers entre un beau-père et son beau-fils; là, le premier mari et son ancienne femme, autour des maladies de leur enfant, on une fois grandi, de ses folies de jeune homme, si c'est un fils, de son mariage, si c'est une fille.

Et toujours et partout, l'autorité du père et de la mère détruite dès le premier conflit."

Gabrielle: Arrêtez-vous, mon Père. Vous ne savez pas----Vous me faites trop de mal.

It so happens, that the tragedies described by the Abbé Éuvrard are repeated in the Darras household. The scenes between the step-father and Lucien are violent when the former, after forcing the confession out of the young man that he loves and intends to marry Berthe Planat, informs him of the young woman student's past. And still more violent do they become,
when Lucien, after hearing the story of Berthe's abandonment by her lover, from her own lips, expresses his resolution of remaining true to her. There are extenuating circumstances in her case. She does not know that she has committed a wrong. She feels neither shame nor remorse for having done as she did. She admits all that has been said against her to be true, but says what happened, happened because she wished it in her full responsibility, in the name of the principles she had then and which she should always have. Her marriage was a free union, founded upon the good faith of two beings, establishing a fireside outside the Code as well as outside the Church. She wished to start this home with one whom she believed sincere, but unfortunately, he was not. She made a mistake and the consequences have been lamentable, but she is willing to die before she will acknowledge that they have been shameful. This man, Méjan, by name, was intelligent, courteous, eloquent and he professed theories of integral socialism, which was her religion and is still. She believed not only in his honor, but she believed in accepting him to live with her, that he espoused her forever, in order to associate himself with her to a sublime work of justice and reform. After three months, he left her, to live with a girl in the Latin Quarter.

Lucien passionately in love with Berthe, insults and defies his stepfather when he attempted to reason with him. In the first place, he told Mr. Darras he had no need to question Berthe, that she put the questions and answered them at once. Mr. Darras now feeling that he was quite willing to
to give up the girl, took up the proposition of a years absence from home, spent in travel that his stepson might recover from his disappointment in his first love affair. Lucien, however, objected more strongly than before. To the chagrin of Mr. Darras, Lucien continues: "you say you have formed me; you have given me all my convictions; you have given me absolute faith in conscience; then you have given me absolute faith in justice; you have shown me religion, fanaticism, oppression to be conditioned the one to the other. Now in the case of Berthe, I will tell you the truth. "Berthe has been raised by free-thinkers. They have taught her that the origin of all crimes and miseries IS in the conventions of the world. She has been persuaded, that among these conventions, one of the worst is bourgeois marriage. For her free union is true marriage.

Thus Lucien spoke in the blindness and candor of passion making excuses for Berthe and expecting to conquer his father by his own weapons but he refused to be conquered. Mr. Darras's objections to his marriage at last provoke the retort from Lucien, that he regards Berthe in the light of a divorcée, and that therefore, in marrying her, he is but emulating the example of the step-father. The comparison infuriates Mr. Darras, that Lucien should mention his mother, in the same breath as Berthe Planat, is sacrilege; that he should put his projected marriage on equal footing with the Darras ménage, confounds, humiliates and stupefies the unfortunate step-father.

Darras: Et l'enfant? Qu'est ce que tu vas faire de lui? Tu vas le prendre?

Lucien: Tu m'as bien pris, toi, quand tu as épousé ma mère.
Darras: Encore cette comparison sacrilège. S'il te plaît de te comparer au fils d'un Méjan libre à toi. Tu ne peux pas comparer tu mère à ------------

Lucien: Eh bien, oui, je veux faire ce que vous avez fait. C'est ce que je pense.

Darras: Je vais chercher ta mère. Nous verrons si tu oseras répéter devant elle ce monstrueux blasphème.

Outraged and furious, Mr. Darras rushes to the door, throws it open and they see Gabrielle upon her knees, her head bent and her hands clasped in prayer. Challenged by his step-father to repeat in his mother's presence the "monstrous blasphemies" of a moment ago, Lucien does so, but gravely and with moderation. Yes, he cannot help considering Berthe in the position of a divorced woman and in-as-much as he loves Berthe and she loves him, he is the man who has the right to remodel her life. Mr. Darras then orders his step-son to leave the room; and when he and his wife are left alone, Gabrielle in many a long speech, interrupted by equally lengthy protests from her husband, confesses to the return of her Catholic beliefs, and with much weeping, she characterizes her second marriage as a sin. She insists she is no better than Berthe Planat, for in marrying Mr. Darras, she gave way to her passion; and the result has been the strife and misery described by the Abbé Euvrard. She knows she is not married to Mr. Darras; she is still the wife of her first husband, the Comte de Chambault. Her son's comparison of her to Berthe Planat, though it was a shock to her, was just. He no longer has any respect for her. Il y a deux hommes vivants qui out le droit de dire en parlant de moi: ma femme. Mon fils le sait, il le
sent. Il ne me vénère pas. C'est justice.

"Parents judged and condemned by their children,""the deadly collisions of opinion between step-father and step-son," the whole of the Abbé's terrifying discourse on the consequences of divorce, which has been constantly ringing in Gabrielle's ears, returns to her more forcibly than ever, when a letter from Lucien suddenly informs her, that he is at the home of Comte de Chambault, that he had gone there to obtain his father's consent to his marriage with Berthe Planat, but he has found the Count on his death bed. Comte de Chambault died that night. His death permits of Gabrielle's second marriage being blessed by the Church and she earnestly implores Mr. Darras to consent to the immediate solemnization of it. Without that she cannot live. There is a curse upon her and those near and dear to her. Lucien in a final interview announced to her his departure with Berthe Planat for Lausaune. For one year they will remain fellow-students, at the medical college; at the end of the year, they will enter into free marriage. With one of his long discourses Mr. Darras informs his wife, that their marriage is recognized by the law if not by the Church. To consent to a religious marriage after the twelve years, they have lived together would be an "outrage" on their past. He blames Pere Euvrard for influencing Gabrielle in these matters and is indignant that he should betray the confidence given, in permitting him, out of respect for his mother, to come to his house. These constant scenes are blighting their happiness
and he tells Gabrielle unless she promises to leave Paris with him the next day, and unless she promises never again to speak to him of a religious marriage he will forbid the solemnization of Jeanne's First Communion and take the education of his daughter into his own hands. Gabrielle replies, "Je ne peux pas plus obéir sur ce point-là que sur l'autre. Je quitterai la maison plutôt que d'y rester et d'y vivre en état de péché mortel. C'est mon devoir.

The timely visit of the Abbé Euvrard not only prevents Gabrielle from leaving her home, but also effects a reconciliation between her and her husband. Gabrielle proposes to leave the house and to take her daughter with her; but the Abbé points out to her that Mr. Darras would not fail to recover the child and in her father's care, her religious education would be abandoned; he will be revenged by taking away the faith from the young child's heart. "Son salut avant tout." So to save Jeanne's soul Gabrielle must leave Paris on the morrow, she must forego the joy of seeing her daughter's First Communion, she must never again refer to a desire for a religious marriage.

Père Euvrard: Si j'ai constaté dans cette courte entrevue ce que vous appeler sa haine de l'Église, et ce que j'appelle moi, son ignorance, j'ai constaté surtout qu'il vous aime passionnément. Il suffira, pour qu'il change à votre égard, qu'il ait compris trois choses: la première, c'est que votre foi est bien sincère aussi, bien vraie, bien profonde, et
qu'elle dérive d'un besoin intérieur et non d'une influence;
la seconde, c'est que vous faites à l'éducation religieuse de
votre fille le plus grand, le plus douloureux des sacrifices et
que le lieu entre vous est là, uniquement là: la troisième,
c'est que votre soumission est une martyre, dans le plein sens
du mot, et qu'il vous doit une compensation pour vous avoir
privée d'un fils qui avait des droits sur vous avant lui: Quand
il aura compris ces trois choses et il les comprendra, rien
qu'en vous voyant vivre, un travail s'accomplira en lui: cette
pitié que vous n'espérez pas du fanatique, je l'attends, moi
de l'honnête homme.

Mr. Darras had entered the room quietly and unobserved.
He listened attentively to the Abbé's speech and was deeply
impressed by it.

Darras: "Moi, aussi, je viens de voir l'honnête homme en vous,"
he says, "Voulez-vous me donner la main?" They shake hands and
the Abbé without saying a word leaves the room. Darras con-
sents to Jeanne's First Communion and the solemnization of
Gabrielle's second marriage and Gabrielle will be allowed to
witness the Communion.

Comparison of Play and Romance.

It is considered such a difficult task to make a drama
from a novel, that when an author succeeds in this operation,
he is justly worthy of respect; for it admitted that a romance
which comes upon the stage, without having been changed very
much, has every chance of proving a failure. It is not only often necessary to cut out some scenes and to insert others, to take away some episodes and phrases from it, and scrupulously to have regard for the parts that have pleased the reader, but the dramatic writer must also draw from the novel all the dramatic elements that may be found in it, and once separated from the rest, this principle in being developed, will create a new work. To do this, is only possible with certain kinds of novels. But Mr. Bourget has always looked upon life under a somewhat tragic aspect. The personages, in most of his novels, have a way of dramatizing everything and their hearts are the fields where interminable combats take place. Mr. Bourget, the psychological romancer knows when to choose the moment of the crisis. Each one of his books is the exposition of a drama of conscience. His later novels are loaded with much more material, a greater number of elements which compose the contemporary life is utilized in them. The individual is no longer, isolated in them, but he is considered in relation to the whole. Around him a struggle is going on, a struggle of great social forces, of those which preserve and those which destroy.

In the play outlined above, the personages appear before us as beings very familiar, whom we have seen for a long time and whose past is entirely known to us. Mr. Bourget has created those beings who by their passions, their contacts, and their words, have given to us the illusion of real life. It was no small task for Mr. Bourget and Cury to reunite these
individuals coming from so many different walks of life, to put
them upon the stage, where the free-thinker, the priest, the
young intellectual bourgeois, the young girl anarchist and the
divorced mother could meet one another naturally and without
inconvenience. To these personages of the romance, has been
added that of Madame Darras, the mother of the free-thinker.
This introduction was a happy thought of Mr. Curé. It per-
mitted one to see at once, the scenic form, that the work
would take. Her illness is the means of bringing Berthe Planat,
the medical student, into the Darras home where she and Lucien
first meet and love. Père Eduvrard, as spiritual counsellor
and administrator of the old lady, comes in quite naturally and
this furnishes Gabrielle an opportunity to consult him, in her
own home, in reference to her longings to re-enter the Church.

In the novel, Lucien meets Berthe Planat in a reading
room, where he had gone to take notes in a work of medical law,
for a thesis he was preparing upon the "Right to Punish". He
saw the young woman, poring over massive volumes and also taking
notes. He at once became interested in her. Day after day
he went to the same place, at the same hour, for the sole pur-
pose of seeing her. An opportunity came at last to speak to
her. They became friends. They took long walks and dined
together at the Café. Several months passed thus, when Mr.
Darras accidently saw them, walking before him down the street.
He became a spy upon all their movements; his suspicion, pre-
viously conceived, that Lucien was in love, lead him to make
an investigation upon Berthe's character.

On the stage there is more dignity, reserve and self-control, in the scene between Berthe and Lucien, when the latter tells her of the calumnies heaped upon her by her enemies. In the romance, both give way to their feelings. Lucien weeps long and bitterly before he is able to broach the subject to her. After Berthe admits all these things spoken about her to be true, an explanations follow by which she means to justify her actions before taking leave of Lucien forever, she swoons. Lucien's passionate declarations of love and repeated expressions of determination to defend her before the whole world, restores her to consciousness. They then deliberately form plans for a free marriage. On the following day Lucien goes to Clermont to see the child. Favorably impressed by the boy's appearance, in a later interview with Berthe, he tells her he will adopt Claude and treat him as his own son.

Lucien was twenty years old. According to the law in France, a young man can not marry, until he is twenty-five, without the consent of his parents. Mr. and Mrs. Darras refused to give this consent to Lucien. It was necessary for him to obtain it, then, from his father, Comte de Chambault. In the romance, the law in reference to eases of this kind, is fully explained, but only lightly touched upon in the play. Mr. Darras is indignant that society should recognize this in its courts, that when a father is incapable of raising his son, and when the mother alone has devoted herself to the education and care of the child, in crises as decisive as that of the
choice of a wife for the son, the paternal consent should remain intact, and the will of the unworthy father should decide the question, even if divorce has been pronounced against him. This is a remnant of the old law, which has been incorporated in the new. The old law maintained a family once founded, was founded forever. In fact, even with divorce, the family is not quite destroyed, since the right of inheritance continues. The paternal power corresponds to this right of inheritance. The legislature has foreseen the case where an infamous father, in order to be able to avenge himself, for having been deprived of the care of his child, might refuse to consent to his marriage desired by the mother. In that case, the law is, the consent of that one of the two, to the advantage of which, the divorce or separation, will have been pronounced, will suffice. If Mrs. Darras consents to Lucien's marriage and Comte de Chambault refuses, the consent of Mrs. Darras holds good and if Mrs. Darras refuses, the father's consent is valid, which was the result in Lucien's case.

Mr. and Mrs. Darras both felt, that Comte de Chambault, bad as he was, would not give his consent for his son to marry Berthe Planat, if he knew all the circumstances, connected with her life, and the kind of marriage desired by her. They were sure Lucien had deceived him. In the romance, Mrs. Darras wishes to go immediately to see her divorced husband and to state to him the facts; but Mr. Darras insists, it would be better for him to go. When he came to the home of Comte de
Chambault, Berthe Planat, installed as nurse and acting under the physician's order, refuses to let him enter the sick man's chamber. Comte de Chambault died that night. Lucien has given truthfully all the details connected with Berthe and their relation, to his father, before his death and has obtained his consent to their union. How Comte de Chambault, a Catholic, knowing all these details, and after having received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, could consent to this marriage—a marriage directly opposed to the laws of the Church, seems incredible. Upon that point, Mr. Bourget is silent in the play.

Mrs. Darras consults Père Euvrard in her own home, in the play. In the first chapter of the romance we find her on her way to his home. In a miserable room, she meets him, She tells him she is married; that she has not attended to her religious duties for thirteen years; that her little daughter, whom she accompanied, to the church, every day, to learn the catechism, has been the means of making her feel the need of returning to God. She ardently desires to go to Communion the same day that her little daughter makes her First Communion.

The priest thinking she has had a lover, and that the child is not her husband's, comforts her at first, in saying, "Votre fille vous devra le salut de son âme et d'avoir sauvé une âme effaçée bien des fautes, surtout quand ces fautes peuvent avoir eu, sinon pour excuse, un entraînement. "Reprendrez
courage, madame, je suis prêt à recevoir votre confession — ici — maintenant." As he spoke Gabrielle became confused, and the priest saw, at once, he was mistaken; that she was not the repentant heroine of a banal misdemeanor and he listened to her continuing her story. "Non, non, mon Père, je suis une honnête femme." She then told him she was divorced and re-married, while her first husband is still living. The priest stopped her. "Vous ne pouvez pas communier, vivant comme vous vivez. Je ne doit pas même recevoir votre confession — Je ne pourrais pas vous donner l'absolution —."

Gabrielle persisted, by asking if she could not receive a dispensation from the Pope, telling him, at the same time, the reasons she had to hope, since the Church compels her to submit to its laws, it ought to give her the means to do so. She was married to Comte de Chambault, by her parents, when very young. Her husband was a bad man and made her life very miserable. For five years, on account of their son, she endured his abuses and suffered so much from the hardness of her lot, that she then was obliged to separate from him. Le Comte de Chambault asked for, and obtained a divorce and re-married. She with her child, whom the law had allowed her to keep, was alone in the world. How to raise him she did not know. Just then appeared Mr. Barras, who had loved her as a girl, but he was a poor man, then, and did not dare to woo her. He worked hard to win her when she was free, and to forget her, if he could, when she was married. He had a fortune now and a brilliant position. He had remained true to her, and now that
she was free again, he asked for her hand and they were married.
In him, she had never found a fault. For her, he had been the
best of husbands, for her son, the best of fathers. "I know,
she says, "the conditions you are going to impose upon me, but if
it is to be the price of my eternal salvation, I shall never
leave him." "Then I do not understand what you want of me," said the priest. Your second marriage does not count in the
eyes of the Church and it never will. When you married you
broke with the Church. You want to persist in this rupture
with it, and at the same time, you want the Sacraments. That
is certainly very contradictory. You want to be in the Church,
and, at the same time, you want to be out of it. No priest
will lend himself to a compromise like that, Rome, itself, has
not the power to unbind the marriage bond. You cannot get out
at that door. It is closed. Gabrielle on her way home sadly
to herself communes; "I am very miserable, not to be able to
obtain that, which women, who have sinned more than I, can obtain.
Those who have had lovers go to confession and receive communion,
and I may not. Is it just? But I must obey Père Euvrard."

Mr. Bourget very carefully refrains from putting the
above conversation upon the stage. It might show too plainly
that there is some inconsistency in granting religious privileges
to a woman who had had lovers and refusing them to a woman, who
was divorced and re-married, but pure in life. Père Euvrard
does not here appear to be so loyal, tolerant and kindly sympa-
thetic as in the play.
In the novel Gabrielle did actually leave her husband, on his persistent refusal, after the death of Comte de Chambault, to have their marriage blessed by the priest, taking with her, the child, a domestic and the governess; but regretting the step she had taken, two days afterwards, she again sought counsel of Père Euvrard, as to what she should do. He agreed to see her husband; but before doing so, thinking Mr. Darras might not object to a private marriage, he obtained from the Archbishop a dispensation to marry them without any publicity. When he saw Mr. Darras and talked the matter over with him, Mr. Darras refused even to let his wife return, unless she promised to acknowledge her fault and never again to speak of a religious marriage. Père Euvrard, disappointed in not getting Mr. Darras to subscribe to the Marriage by the Church, yet feeling that the influence of Gabrielle and the child, would in time work a change in him, orders her to return.

In the romance, Gabrielle does not meet Berthe Planat. Mr. Darras meets her once, at the home of Comte de Chambault, where he was very much impressed by her beauty, womanly dignity and politeness. The short conversation he had with her, caused him some remorse. Her voice was clear, she employed only terms of extreme precision, as if, instead of addressing herself to the hostile step-father of her fiancé, to an adversary, mingled in such a dangerous way, in the drama of her life, she was formulating a diagnosis, among the students at the l'Hôtel-Dieu. He saw her look, so straight and penetrating;
he heard her voice so frank and felt that he had been unjust.

The play ends happily. When Mr. Darras says, "We shall not leave Paris," and Gabrielle throws herself into her husband's arms, one feels that the former peace and joy of the loving couple are restored, and that no trials such as those through which they have just passed, would ever come to them again. But there is a sad note in the ending of the romance. Although the "hard conditions," that Mr. Darras declared to Père Euvrard should be imposed upon Gabrielle, are lost sight of completely when she returns, and overcome by his great love for her, he says, "Il n'y a plus de conditions. Il n'y a plus que toi, toi que es là, toi que j'aime," yet she is not happy. "If she were to obtain this true marriage which she so passionately desires, and which now appears to be very probable, would Albert ever forgive her? And feeling herself a prisoner of this divorce, - as the priest had said so impressively, the mother of Luïen and Jeanne cursed again this criminal law, to the temptation of which, her weakness as a woman, had succumbed; a law so harmful to the family and religious life, a law of anarchy and disorder, which had promised her liberty and happiness, and after so many years, she had found in it, only servitude and misery."

Despite the fact that the play has been pronounced "too ponderous" and "too tedious", by the critics, it is still superior to the romance. The characters in both are nearly the same, the situations, in the main, are quite similar and the conflict of ideas is the principal thing in both works; but in the novel
the conflict is narrative in form, on the stage, the combatants are face to face with each other. Living and acting before our eyes, the interest never flags which is apt to be the case in the romance.

From the first act, the attention is caught and held to the end of the play. This first act so full of stirring events is an excellent preparation for what follows. In reading the play, and, without doubt, more vividly in seeing it upon the stage one cannot help feeling that the air is "saturated with electricity". The adversaries are ready for the battle. They establish their relations before us and show to us their characters, in scenes that are full, solid, and animated; and even if devoid of all theatrical artifice, the interest could not but be intense and sustained. Sometimes alternate statements are made; sometimes there are simple conversations coming from demands and responses, but all expressed with so much clearness, in a language so vigorous and eloquent, the whole work penetrated with thought and emotion, that one must take pleasure in praising it and acknowledging it to be a piece, worthy of being applauded. The time will come, when it will cease to be put upon the stage, but the manner in which the romance is exposed, developed and brought to the culminating point, with its philosophical and critical conclusion, will always make it a much more fascinating and readable work than the Novel.
Mr. Bourget is now a good Catholic. As soon as he was adopted by the nobility, he began to dream of extolling the splendors of that race. According to his works, he would reserve for them the government of France. In the fullest sense of the word, they are to be the elite of the earth. This brilliancy and glory, must be maintained at any price, all through the ages. Thus he reasons: That there can be no aristocracy, without hereditary culture, there can be no hereditary culture without moral tradition, and there can be no moral tradition without Catholocism. It was this logic that brought Mr. Bourget back to God, by his love for "le Monde where Satan rules." It is quite natural, therefore, that he should take the position he does, in reference to divorce.

In treating all moral questions, Mr. Bourget claims he is entirely impartial, which in some respects is true. But when we know the man, his life and works, we can readily perceive the undercurrent of opinion, and one cannot help feeling, that he is prejudiced, pedantic and even intolerant, yet he shows up both sides of the question and is very careful not to let the weight of the argument, at anytime, lean towards his views. This impartiality, that one notices in almost all his plays and which caused him to expose with the same vigor ideas opposed to each other, when the people who represent them enter into conflict, prove not only the scruples of the philosopher, but his will as a dramatic author
as well. In Un Divorce one side could applaud with enthusiasm the expressions of Lucien, proclaiming the right to free union. The party opposed to views like these, with equal enthusiasm, could endorse the words of Gabrielle. "We are not married. I can not be your wife, because I am the wife of another man before God."

When it is a question of coming to a conclusion then, in all these social questions, Mr. Bourget, is silent not through hesitation on his part, not through contradiction, there is no unbending of his critical spirit, but he feels that it is his business, as a dramatic author to create personages. As soon as these persons have received life, he is no longer master of them. He gives them up to passion and instincts with which he has endowed them. If they attack his preferred ideas, he does not stop them. If they are inconsistent, if they contradict themselves, it does not concern him. People listen, if it is a play, or read, if it is a romance and allow themselves, turn about, to be convinced by them, in spite of the antagonisms of their respective opinions, just as is seen in Un Divorce.

The time was opportune for Mr. Bourget to treat this subject upon the stage. The evils of divorce are probably no greater in France than in Germany or the United States; but there is no general, political conflict between civil and religious authority in these countries as there is in France. Besides Catholic countries look upon such questions from a
different standpoint, and there is always likely to be more discussion among the people when the ideas of a Church, of a country, of marriage and of a Bible are continually assailed or rejected. In a discourse given in 1908 before the Association of Catholic students of Paris, of which association Mr. Bourget is president, evidently in reference to these things, he says in substance: "Church, country, and marriage are traditional things. They have come down from antiquity and should unquestionably be adhered to and maintained. "You will not always be young," he says, "but you will always be traditionalists." Then he tells them they will escape one of the most dangerous errors of our age, which the greatest intellects have sometimes failed to escape; that the second admirable encyclical of the Holy Father, on the subject of "Modernism" teaches this. The error to which he referred, consists in believing that everything, even the most fundamental of verities must be subject to evolution. This is what is meant by keeping "abreast of the times", an exceedingly misleading expression, for it seems to mean that change is the sole condition of activity; it claims to be the Credo of hope and progress, but examined carefully it will be found to be infinitely dangerous.

Continuing, he says, "The people who speak of a new morality, a new church, a new gospel tell us to live is to evolve. If we take evolution in its primitive and biological sense, it implies a change, but it also implies something unchanging. In the hypothesis of Darwin, which is the idea,
followed by these evolutionists, we find that the evolution of a species only intended to affect its surroundings, that is to say, to safeguard certain, essential organs which never can be changed, for should they be changed, the end must be, not evolution, but death.

In taking up the evolution of society, he says there are certain elements or factors in life which cannot be changed, if life is to be preserved. These are the family, the institution of monogomy, paternal authority, marriage, fidelity and obedience to parents and with them all, the Church. "I may only repeat the words of the Bible," he concludes, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." A belief in these things, is what we mean to proclaim, when we call ourselves traditionalists; but this word is not synonymous with progressionists. No one retrogrades by saying one and two are four as the first man that ever counted used to say; but he who says two and two are five is a retrogressionist, indeed."(1) In this lecture, Mr. Bourget has given his views upon some of the problems, that are agitating the minds of his countrymen, and his Un Divorce is a further exposé of his deep-seated conviction on one of these burning questions.

The results of the law of 1884 re-establishing divorce and briefly spoken of in the first part of this paper as being by no means satisfactory, were rendered still more unsatisfactory by the passage of a law in 1906 by means of which legal

(1) Literary Digest 1908 and Revue de Paris 1906.
separation of a married couple, could change into absolute divorce, after a period of three years, at the request of either party. This made the obtaining of a divorce much easier than the law of 1884. To many men the results of the law of 1884 seemed disastrous, and did not justify the present augmentation of facilities in the way of marriage dissolution. It was felt, too, that those who advocated the law of 1884, made promises which have not been fulfilled. (1)

Contrary to predictions, it is stated, the proportion of illegitimate births have been increased, while the sum total of all births have decreased, and at the same time the number of divorces has not decreased. The defenders of 1884 asserted that the number of legal separations would be reduced to a minimum. But before 1884 there were about 5000 couples separated annually. From that time until 1906 there were more than 21000, who after having destroyed their own homes threatened, in many cases, to destroy the homes of others. In 1883 there were about 937,944 births, in 1906 the number was only 806,184. Divorce should have made the country more moral, but crimes against morality are many times more frequent than they were before. It was predicted that it would secure to the children concerned, a better condition, than was given by mere legal separation of the parents. The publicists, however, are uttering a cry of deep compassion over the dark plight in which these children find themselves, and sadder than all the number of children

(1) Literary Digest 1908 and Revue de Paris 1906.
without a family is steadily on the increase. (1) In a word, Mr. Bourget with many other Frenchmen basing there opinions upon observation, believe statements, like those just mentioned, and therefore conclude that divorce is a failure. It is hardly fair to attribute to divorce the cause of all the evils which have been enumerated or even as a cause of their increase. No law made by church or state can be considered a "heal-all". Measures advocated by men for the public good seldom come up to the standard which these men hoped to attain. All the evils, in a greater or less degree, existed before, in the indissolubility of marriage. Then, too, there were natural children, illegitimate among married people, "crimes of love" and "children without family". That the evils have increased may be due to other causes. It is indisputable that they have existed in times past, and through succeeding generations the tendencies, few checks being interposed, have only grown stronger. No one can positively assert that they would not have been just as great, were there no divorce laws. Some of these evils, too, may be traced back to the pernicious writings of fifteen or twenty years ago, but happily, in this regard, at the present time, the prospect, for the future, is better. Mr. Wilson, in Fortnightly, (2) says, "The madness, the poisin, the vice which bore their terrible blossoms, in literature even up to fifteen years ago, no longer, flourish. From the vile slough in which so many, not ignoble spirits were engulfed, the literature of France has since completely

(1) Cohn in Revue de Paris and Bigenwald in Literary Digest. (2) 1909.
Mr. Lawler Wilson has doubtless put this too strong but yet there is much truth in the statements made by him. The young writers, of today, in France, far from degrading their talents, by attempting to outdo a Baudelaire, Maupassant or Zola, seem rather to prefer manufacturing wholesome, ingenious, exciting, if somewhat foolish books, for the great army of youthful readers. On the list of books now published, which the excellent house of Plon Nourrit issues in vast numbers, there now appears this foot-note. "Les volumes, dont le titre est précédé d'un # peuvent être mis entre tous les mains." Of 98 recently published, 95 Mr. Wilson tells us bore the star of virtue.

Not one of those marvelous types of women and children which are to be met within the quieter French towns - women and children so delicate and fragile, from long generations of refined breeding, have ever found their way, into French literature. The grave, pure-loving beings, whom the Frenchmen revere, as types of their own mothers, wives, and daughters are, for the most part, found only in a very few books. Mr. Bourget, in only one of his works, Deux Coeurs, has caught and fixed something of this exquisite type. This is one of the reasons, that lead foreigners to misjudge true French society; for the opportunities to acquaint one's self with its corruptions, through the books published, have been much greater, than the opportunities, through the same mediums, to learn of its excellences. So far as higher fiction is concerned, these are no longer the days of mere passion, or the days of simple adventure. Nearly every novel at the present time has a
mission to serve; they are written not only to amuse and to
depict the times, but to prove theories, to satirize govern-
ments and institutions, to uphold cults and to propagate gospels.
This was true, also, of most of the novels in the past; but
many of them contained elements which could not fail to harm
young minds.

Mr. Bourget's play *Un Divorce* can almost speak for
itself. An episode of one of the great social factors, to
which allusion has been made, is here presented. It sets
forth the ideas of the different conceptions of marriage,
which are entertained in France today. There is first the
religious conceptions. For those who believe we are creatures
in the hand of God, it goes without saying, that marriage is an
act essentially religious. Those do not deny that the inter-
vention of the law may not be necessary: It is the law that
regulates conditions of fortunes, that settles questions of
interest, that states the rights of individuals, but it has no
power to unite souls. Marriage is a sacrament and outside
the sacrament, there is no marriage. Marriage thus divinely
constituted is indissoluble. Then, there is the conception
of the laity. They believe it to be a contract like all
those which rule social relations. Its object is to protect
ourselves against others but also against ourselves, and to
bind us to our engagements. It is a delicate and grave
contract, is conformable to all things human and is always
revocable. The individualistic idea, is that each person is
a free being. He is governed only by his conscience. When
two persons resolve to give themselves to each other it is no
concern of society or religion. They have the right, at any moment, to break the bond, that they themselves have made. They believe that anything that limits or takes away their independence, is contrary to nature. Behind Mr. Bourget's divorce, one may readily perceive Tradition, Revolution, Faith, Negation, Discipline and anarchy.

Lucien, son and step-son of people who are well-to-do would not have asked, at first, to found a fireside in accordance with the established order; but his passion suddenly overpowered him. This passion expected to draw from the principles advocated by Mr. Darris, conclusions in harmony with the situation, in which Lucien found himself, after knowing Berthe Planat's past. It was this passion, that developed, at once, the revolutionary spirit of the young man. He belongs to the category of youngmen, that one meets so often in Mr. Bourget's works. They examine themselves, and scrutinize every motive they have for acting. This critical spirit refines and exasperates their sensibilities. The antagonism which is indicated in Un Divorce only came to light on the subject of his marriage. This was very natural. Love often puts a son against his father and leads him to proclaim his independence. His claim that he was unhappy in his step-father's home and under his teachings, does not prove that he would not be unhappy, if his mother had not married Mr. Darris until after the death of her first husband. Had he been brought up by his own father, he would, in all probability, have been
much more unhappy and one can certainly think he would have had greater reasons to be so. Although the education given to him by Mr. Darras made him, unhappy, as he says, yet when carried away by the excess of passion, he understood how to make use of those teachings or to misconstrue their true meaning, to justify his union with Berthe Planat.

Berthe Planat is, in her way, a believer as well as Gabrielle, except Berthe's guardians have set before her another ideal. She is devoted to this ideal, with the same fervor, with this positive and exclusive power which characterized Gabrielle. She believes in medicine as, had she been raised differently, she would have believed in God. She adheres to the ritual of the faculty of the medical school as she would have done, to the teachings of the catechism. She is a true atheistic socialist. Her faith is a sincere faith and it is one that is alive and acts. She is remarkably eager to devote herself to the gospel of new times. The same instinct that would be eternally a sacrifice spurs her on to martyrdom for she is the martyr to free union to which she has sacrificed herself and would do it again.

One might look upon Berthe as playing a role different from that which is here presented. She had a taste for pleasure and followed a libertine who left her and instructed by experience she becomes very brave and thinks out a means of getting herself introduced into an honorable family. At the bedside of the sick grandmother, as skillful nurse, she
charms the son who is persuaded by her, to found a fireside outside the Code and the Creed. This would be the moralists view but it is better to take her just as she is presented to us. She has not been a dupe. She has believed in her doctrine with a belief not to be shaken. It is the psychological trait that all these people have in common who entrust themselves so completely and earnestly to an ideal. The code of convenience holds for them the place of the Creed.

In his character, Mr. Darras shows some contradictions. He wished to make his step-son one of his faithful followers in all that is just, true, pure and devoid of prejudice, and thus form a soul like his own; but he consents that his own daughter should be raised in the religion that he abhors, and that concession brought upon him great misfortunes. In permitting Jeanne to have a religious education, he wished no doubt, to show that he is tolerant. Besides, in religion, he thinks there is a moral part which is in accord with true philosophy and which, consequently, is very good. All he asks and insists upon is that this moral part should be taught and the sentimental part, as he called it, should be entirely ignored, because it is apt to produce a morbid, nervous state which is truly harmful. To carry out his generous free-thinking theories, Mr. Darras counts ardently upon the generation represented by Lucien and Berthe. The interest in these two rôles is to show to what point and how quickly, ideas, no matter what their nature may be, can go. One can see very
clearly, in this play, the form certain theories may take in young minds, that are deprived of the test of experience.

Gabrielle represents a character very superstitious and impressionable. The doctrines of science to which Mr. Darras had initiated her, are hard, severe and cold. The atmosphere of the Church is warm, caressing and exciting and better suited to her disposition. Many of those, like Gabrielle, or even Mr. Bourget, Brunetière, Huysmans, Coppée who left the Church early in life, lured away by its pleasures, or impatient of the restraints of religions, or it may be, impressed by the teachings of science and philosophy, are apt to hold their unbelief by a very uncertain tenure, and later in life, they become pessimistic, superstitious, a prey to tormenting conscience, they have a hereditary fear of dying without the pale of the Church and so they return to the practices of the old Faith.

The "dark, appalling scenes" witnessed by Père Euvrard in his priestly duties have been witnessed by hundreds of others and in families where there has never been a divorce and even in those homes where the indissoluble bond was the creed of every member. The newspapers of every land tell of "fratricidal hatreds" between children of the same parents; of "violent scenes" between a mother and her own daughter; of "horrible struggles" between a father and his own son, ending not infrequently in murder; "bitter quarrelings" between parents, not divorced, in reference to their own children; of
sons and daughters running away from their own kind, loving parents to marry against their wills or to lead a life of crime. Wardens of jails, reformatories and penitentiaries tell about fathers and mothers being judged and condemned by their own unfortunate sons or daughters, enclosed in these prison walls, attributing to their fathers or mothers, too indulgent or too lenient, as the case may be, the cause of all their misfortunes. To a susceptible, sensitive nature like Gabrielle's the words of Père Euvrard are very significant and convincing.

Mr. Bourget, in reference to the plays says, "Je me suis dans Un Divorce attaché à montrer que la France révolutionnaire est acculée à ce dilemme: ou revenir au mariage traditionnel et indissoluble ou aller jus qu'à union libre."

All admit there are evils in divorce. Mr. Bourget has shown some of these evils in his play but these same evils exist where there have never been divorces. If France were to go back to traditional and indissoluble marriage would society be free from them? There is nothing in the play nor in any of Mr. Bourget's works to show that such would be the case. It does not necessarily follow that all who leave the Catholic church become free-thinkers, anarchists or nihilists, who with a mad impulse, would uproot human society and destroy all that is best in human institutions. If Berthe Planat, instructed by a free-thinking uncle, who had left the Church, became likewise a free-thinker and a believer in free love, it
does not prove that all who forsake the Faith adopt the principles which she so strongly advocated and do not conform to the laws of human society. Even many free-thinkers, like Mr. Darras, Mr. Monneron in L'Etape and even Mr. Bourget, in his earlier years, were good, upright men and voluntarily subjected themselves to lawful authority but they refused to submit to that authority which they considered unjust, tyrannical, intolerant. If Mr. Bourget wished here to prove that law in contracts is less potential than creed, he has certainly failed in the demonstration. If he meant to show that divorce is a failure, he has not set forth irrefutable points to justify the fact.

Leaving aside what the author designed and what the moral to be drawn from the play may be, — there is real merit in it — in the frankness of action, the simplicity of means, and we may also say, in the nobleness of conception. The personages in the study are so brought out, that at once, we are as familiar with them, as beings with whom we have lived a long time and whose past is entirely know to us. Each one of their acts is interpreted for us, by our knowing their intellectual and sentimental formation and the circumstances which have affected their lives. Each word they speak is an evidence of an interior struggle, revealing some deep recess of conscience, opening up some perspective upon past reflections and sufferings. The play of Mr. Bourget and Gury may have other excellences, but from the stand point of art, probably
the most admirable part of it is this intensity of life given
to imaginary beings.

Of Un Divorce Mr. Macdonald in Revue des deux Mondes,
of 1910 says, "Critique et analyste d'une pénétration extra-
ordinaire, puis créateur d'une des formes les plus neuves de
notre roman contemporain, puis théoricien d'une véritable
doctrine politique et sociale. Mr. Bourget est arrivé au théâtre
chargé pour ainsi dire de toutes ces préoccupations. Il ne
pourvait pas s'en détacher pour envisager simplement les choses
au point de vue scénique. Il était trop critique pour faire
abstraction de son jugement; trop romancier, négliger les
aspects divers des événements et des hommes; trop sociologue
pour ne pas exposer à la scène résultats de son observation.
Il se trouve donc être sur ses intentions d'écrivain et sur le
but qu'il s'est proposé; plus lucide, et digne de plus de
créance qu'un auteur dramatique de profession. Likewise Mr.
Alfred Capus in the Revue de Paris 1910 gives to him the mead
of praise, "La théâtre de Mr. Paul Bourget par sa gravité, par
sa franchise, par l'autorité qui s'en dégage, par la noblesse
et intensité d'existence de ses personnages constitué aujourd'hui
un des points de réaction contre la fausse sensibilité, le faux
esprit et le faux pathétique."
Paul Bourget's works.

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Cruelle Enigme
Crime d'Amour
André Cornélis
Mensonges
Le Disciple
Pastels
Coeur de femme
Pastels nouveaux
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La Terre Promise
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Le Tribun, " " " " " ,1911
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