

calculate this belief by means of his dramatic art. His passion for public service is even stronger than his passion for the theatre. It is not inexact to call him, as he is usually called, a thesis dramatist; but very rarely, except in *Les Avariés*, has he permitted his thesis to override his drama.

The first act of *Damaged Goods* is merely a lengthy conversation between a young man suffering from syphilis and the specialist he has gone to consult; and the third act is nothing but an illustrated lecture, in which the same physician exhibits a series of his syphilitic patients. The essential drama of the composition is compacted into the second act, which rises, to be sure, to a sudden and abhorrent climax. But the fabric as a whole is lacking in narrative coherence. It has, in the proper sense, no plot; and the requirement of action is sacrificed by the author for the sake of what has seemed to him, in this instance, the higher requirement of talk.

Yet the talk is very interesting; and it is instructive to observe that the attention of the audience is held at every point by the intellectual earnestness of the discussion. But in fairness to the great art of M. Brioux it is to be hoped that some such play as *La Robe Rouge* may shortly be exhibited to the American public,—a play in which his dramaturgic craftsmanship is unhampered by the excessive insistence of his social theme.

"DAMAGED GOODS"

The astonishing success of *Damaged Goods* is very gratifying as a social phenomenon; but it is to be hoped that the emphasis thus cast upon this play will not lead a public not otherwise acquainted with the works of Eugène Brioux to accept it as a typical example of his dramaturgic method.

M. Brioux has nearly always taken as his subject some political or social or religious proposition of profound importance to the French nation of to-day, has built up a definite body of belief about this proposition, and has striven to in-