Galsworthy's treatment of Social Problems and Ideas in His Drama.

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THE BACKGROUND.

The long plain with periodic and rather uninteresting undulations, which might be said to represent the level of nineteenth century English drama, is broken by one central eminence, where T.W.Robertson introduced more modern stage methods and reality into the drama with plays like David Garrick (1864), Society (1865) and Caste(1867). Robertson had considerable dramatic power and his plays are undoubtedly interesting, but his noteworthiness is partly due to his treatment of certain social ideas upon the stage. After this eminence the long plain rises gently in the 1880's to the moderately impressive foothills of Henry Arthur Jones and Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, which lie before the escarpment of Shaw and the rolling hills of Wilde, Barrie, Granville Barker, Galsworthy and their contemporaries. The plays of all these men are high points, affording different prospects, and from the high ground of Galsworthy there are many long views.

Galsworthy's dramatic world ranged from the country houses and their leisured upper middle classes to the factories and their 'sweated' Cockney workers; from Africa with its fierce people of the Jungle and the city

of London with its equally fierce people of the Stock Exchange, to the countryside of Devon with its idealistic parish rector or the House of Commons with its equally idealistic member of Parliament. These people are as different from each other as chalk from Camembert but Galsworthy saw them all, without distortion, through the grave eye of a lawyer, who also happened to be a very sympathetic human being. He seems to have been tortured by an overflowing sympathy for the downtrodden of the working classes and the women of his own class, which has frequently been construed into a general charge of sentimentality not often justified by the facts. His imaginative sympathy was often tinged with pessimism and sometimes something approaching despair, yet he consistently criticised social wrongs believing, evidently, in the inevitable, though slow, progress of man, towards social justice. In his life and in his art he was a fighter, though admittedly not a prevailingly cheerful one, who was extremely affected by the wounds of that part of humanity needlessly condemned to suffer.

Socialism, towards the end of the nineteenth century, was becoming an increasingly effective sounding-board for the wrongs of humanity. These wrongs could not be ignored by the later nineteenth century Englishman,

no matter how much of a Forsyte he was, and no matter how comfortably he was bolstered by the general prosperity, because they were brought out into the daylight by an increasing number of searching, conscientious, and powerful minds and shown to him, whether he wanted to see them or not, as the grim reality underlying the Victorian paradise. As more and more people began to discover facts which demonstrated the reality of the miseries which the majority of the inhabitants of the most powerful country in Europe suffered, they began to lose their complacency and to look into the darker corners of the English social structure. They found many unpleasant things there which had to be faced. When complacency and blind optimism went, a desire to see and to understand conditions as they were, in their entirety, had to come; this was a move towards realism in life and it came, logically, in dramatic art as well as in life. Realism, used in a broad sense which we shall define later, before discussing Galsworthy's realistic treatment of social evils, is the closest single term, to label the drama of Galsworthy and the majority of playwrights who were his contemporaries.

Many scholars and critics have traced the debts of these realistic writers to Zola and Ibsen, and, with reference particularly to English drama, have shown how Henry Arthur Jones and Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, influenced to some extent, and even unwillingly, by Ibsen, made more

or less effective attempts in the new method. Sir Arthur Wing Pinero's The Second Mrs. Tanqueray (1893) and The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith (1895), are of particular interest to us as they introduce to the stage the social problem of woman's position in society; they also do it capably and in a way which to some extent foreshadows Galsworthy. At this time Shaw was satirically pricking consciences and attempting to puncture complacency with his plays Widowers' Houses and Mrs. Warren's Profession, dealing respectively with slum landlordism and prostitution. This was a new departure indeed for the London stage of the nineties. He was also undermining the romantic conception of the drama by tilting outrageously at Shakespeare, in the hopes of striking a blow for the realistic approach to drama. In Arms and The Man (1894) he showed a sad, dirty soldier who did not want to be killed and who hid in a lady's room eating chocolate and talking in a most unheroic but in a most sensible manner, and a hero who was a hero because his horse bolted with him towards the enemy lines. Shaw was also championing Ibsen and publicising his plays at every opportunity through the columns of The Saturday Review. This delayed influence of Ibsen - Peer Gynt was published in 1867 when T.W.Robertson's Caste was first performed - must have been very strong,as the beginning of the twentieth century saw a whole group of writers producing plays of

what has sometimes been called 'bourgeois realism'. The group included, besides John Galsworthy, whose Silver Box was produced in 1906, Granville Barker with Anne Leete (1902) and The Voysey Inheritance (1905) St. John Hankin with The Return of the Prodigal (1905) Stanley Houghton with Hindle Wakes (1912), and St. John Ervine with Jane Clegg (1913). These five playwrights, all writing of social problems of one kind or another, were the culmination of a theory of drama beginning with Ibsen and, in a less degree, T.W.Robertson, continuing through Henry Arthur Jones, Sir Arthur Wing Pinero and, with an unique accent, through the comedic genius of George Bernard Shaw.

It should be noted, particularly when considering the modern(1) realistic British drama, that social thought was constantly, and often painfully, in the public mind of England from the fourth decade of the nineteenth century,

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(1) The term'Modern' is used throughout to designate the drama from Ibsen up to the Great War as distinguished from the term 'contemporary'. Anita Block makes this distinction in Changing World in Plays and the Theatre, Little,Brown & Co., Boston, 1939.

through the teaching of Robert Owen; through the Chartists; through Marx, the author of the Manifesto, who fled to England in 1849 and published Das Kapital there in 1867; through the Second Reform Bill, passed the same year; through a whole host of 'socially conscious' mid-century novelists;(1) through the Socialist Democratic Federation, formed in 1880; through the renunciation of poetry, for active socialism, by William Morris, and his participation in the activities of the Fabian Society which was founded in 1880; through William Booth's In Darkest England and the Way Out, which reached an enormous public, and the formation of the Salvation Army; and towards the end of the century, through the Socialist activities, on and off the stage, of George Bernard Shaw.

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(1) e.g., Disraeli; Coningsby , 1844. Sybil, 1845.
Mrs. Gaskell; Mary Barton, 1847.
Disraeli; Tancred, 1847. Kingsley; Yeast, 1848,
and Alton Locke, 1851. Dickens; Hard Times ,1854.
Mrs. Gaskell; North and South, 1855.
Reade; It is Never Too Late To Mend, 1856.
Hard Cash, 1863. Also, to a less extent,
George Eliot, Thomas Hughes and Henry Kingsley.

In view of all these strong influences it is no wonder that the young men growing up in the second half of the nineteenth century should be led to look at the "foundations" and the "plumbing" and the "windows" of the existing structure of society, in which there were many dark dungeons and few sunny drawing rooms, and in which a huge majority of men, women and children were living in the cellars. Dickens showed these unhappy ones to the nation, and two of the men who read and honoured him were G.B.Shaw and John Galsworthy.

John Galsworthy was born in the year in which the Second Reform Bill was put through by Disraeli, and the number of voters was almost doubled, extending the suffrage to most of the wage workers. He read Dickens right through, as a boy, and loved him, and Dickens' view of society was that of one who had been a cellar-dweller. He heard his parents and their guests heatedly discussing Henry George's theories when he was fourteen years old. He read many of the mid-century novelists when he was seventeen years old, and would almost surely, therefore, have been interested when William Morris formed the Socialist League with Hyndman and Bax. The Fabian Essays caught his eye when he was twenty-two, and at twenty-five he saw, or read, Widowers' Houses . George

Gissing's Odd Women was published, when Galsworthy was twenty-six years old, and he may have read in it of aging spinsters who had neither money nor trained minds. Odd Women is suggestive of The Fugitive.

These are some of the influences in England itself and they perhaps indicate that spirit of social reform which was abroad in the land; there was also the considerable social influence of Ibsen and, at the very end of the century, that of Tolstoi, but the drama, reflecting the social conscience of the age, was increasingly inclined to show the failings of the out-moded institutions and traditions of an unequal society. Socialist thought must therefore be remembered if any intelligent examination is to be made of the social problems dealt with by Galsworthy in his drama.(1)

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(1) It is perhaps the most important single influence of the age.

"One is tempted to think that what brought them about was a strong sense of common humanity which overrode party and even class distinctions. It is odd that by the end of our period (1830-1914) the most individualistic country in the world, with the possible exception of the United States of America, had become one of the most socialistically advanced countries in either hemisphere."

The Victorians and After. E.Batho and B.Dobree. Cresset Press, London, 1938.

Striking, doubtless; but odd? Doesn't it seem logical that in a "civilized" country, humanitarian legislation would come when the social cancers approached malignant forms? E.g. a rural agricultural area would not lead the way with laws designed to cope with industrial grievances. An individualistic society is likely to resent conditions that menace the lives and happiness of individuals. Or is the word used in a different sense? England was not only individualistic; it was beginning to be overpopulated. Laissez-faire was no longer good medicine.

Another very important aspect of the period must be considered. Religious conviction was shaken as it had not been shaken even in the days of the French Revolution. Men began to feel the power of science affecting not merely their physical comfort but also their mental and spiritual tranquillity. Parts of the Bible seemed to have become fairy tales and established belief a mistake, when Darwin, in 1859, published his Origin of the Species. This followed upon Charles Lyall's Principles of Geology, which showed the far greater antiquity of man than was suggested in the Bible. T.H.Huxley upheld Darwin with his Zoological Evidences as to Man's place in Nature, and the battle was on. It seemed to be science versus religion, or free thought versus blind faith, and few of the leaders of either Church or science realized, or were willing to maintain, that science and faith were not incompatible. In any case religious doubt grew and the Church of England became alarmed, especially as this upsetting extension of knowledge followed upon Newman's conversion to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. Men were puzzled. Many old ideas were evidently wrong ideas. Perhaps old systems and institutions were equally wrong. Many felt that if this were the only existence it ought to be a fairer one. A conviction lost demands a new one, and the new one seemed to be that if man were wholly responsible

for this bad world he ought to remake it, or at least improve it. His doubts of Heaven gave him a new faith in himself. Perhaps man himself had more control over his destiny than he had previously thought and perhaps man, not fate, put the "rich man in his castle" and left "the poor man at his gate."

Further doubts must have been raised by the events and writings of the day. Bradlaugh, an atheist, was elected to Parliament, in 1880, and his subsequent refusal to swear an oath which he did not consider binding, attained wide publicity. Then Morris was known to look upon art, rather than religion, as the only possible saviour of the working man; "Mark Rutherford" wrote in his novels that religion among the non-conformists had become a mere relic of something that had been a burning faith to their fathers. Swinburne wrote pagan poetry. Hardy's novels were decidedly agnostic.

On the other hand General William Booth might be said to have been a symbol of reaction to this growing doubt; who proved, by going against it, how strong it was, because he declared war on irreligion with his Salvation Army, which, (admirable though it is, and was) seemed to appeal to men's emotions rather than to their intellects. People liked the excellent mass singing and the uniformed

camaraderie, which helped them to feel an emotional faith which they perhaps could not attain intellectually. Some of the people were, perhaps, believing with their hearts and doubting with their heads. God was no longer so certainly in His heaven and there was a great deal wrong with the world, and this wrongness necessarily caused a desire for reform. The drama of the moderns repeatedly expresses this religious doubt, though it often does so indirectly, and this doubt may conceivably have been a contributing factor to social reform, as religion, on the other hand, has always offered the consolation of a better world which is to come, and suggested the ultimate triumph of Good over Evil. When man began to question these ideas he felt that, if he were limited to sixty years or so of life, he ought to get as much, as he could, for his children and for himself, from those sixty years, as it was just possible that it was all that he might ever get.

The Imperialism which became such a force in England towards the end of the nineteenth century, and which found its expression, in poetry and prose, in the works of Rudyard Kipling, (1) seems to have had very little

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(1) Starting with Departmental Ditties, published in 1886.

influence upon the modern drama (1). One might very well expect Galsworthy to have imperialist sympathies as a representative of an old and wealthy family and as a man who had a public school education as Kipling had. But Stephen More in The Mob seems to represent Galsworthy's own view as much as any character in his plays. More is ambitious for the moral rather than for the worldly grandeur of his country. This is all the more admirable, and perhaps surprising, when one considers the age in which More (and Galsworthy) grew up,and the high ethical code behind the theory of British Imperialism; a code which many thoughtful ascetics and humanitarian Englishmen accepted as an ideal for which they could sacrifice their lives. The Pax Britannica meant law, order and justice to their minds,just as surely, and rather more humanely, than the Pax Romana had done to the Roman Consuls. Here was, one would think, a fertile field for dramatic treatment, even from the social point of view, and yet it seems to have been left fallow by Galsworthy and his contemporaries. Galsworthy deals with Imperialism only as secondary subject to the financial depravity of Bastaple in The Forest.

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(1) Galsworthy has only two imperialists in his plays. They are Strood and Beton in The Forest and neither are very admirable.

One feels that his view of Imperialism might have been expressed in Rhodes' supposed definition of it -- "Patriotism and five per cent."

This Imperialism, however, coloured the fifteen years before Galsworthy was writing and was a great influence for ten years after he was an established writer. It was looked upon favourably by those in power as a healthy counter-current to socialist ideas,which had all of the great writers of the time behind them in varying degrees. The more people who might be persuaded to think of England overseas the fewer there would be to think of Englishmen at home. Yet Kipling himself sympathises with the ordinary man to an extraordinary extent; as for instance, Tommy Atkins:-

"I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They give a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me;
They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls,
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls.
For it's Tommy this, and Tommy that, and "Tommy wait out-side";
But it's "Special train for Atkins," when the trooper's on the tide,
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, etc.

and again:

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barracks, most remarkable like you:
And if sometimes our conduct isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints.

"hile it's Tommy this an' Tommy that, an "Tommy
fall be'ind:"
But it's "Please to walk in front,sir," when there's
trouble in the wind.
There's trouble in the wind, my boys, etc.,

which goes to show that the spirit of the age had penetrated, and to no small extent, even the strongholds of imperialism. The soldier, Tommy Atkins, whose speech indicates his social standing, is a man "most remarkable like you."

Feminism, or the growth of the New Woman, was another powerful influence towards the end of the century. The campaign for women's rights took a new turn after the performance of The Doll's House, produced in London in 1889, and it became ever fiercer, resulting in the death of a suffragette under the hooves of one of the King's horses at the Derby in 1914.

The methods of the Feminists were often extreme and they occasioned great ill-will as well as great sympathy. The ill-will was indicated by such sobriquets as the 'Shrieking Sisterhood" and the 'Revolting Wife'(the latter probably used ambiguously), which were applied to these women by the anti-Feminists. The position of Woman, and the question of her rights, was brought forcibly before the eyes of all Forsytes, and it is one of the more obvious characteristics of the age. Sympathy was shown by most of the thinking men of the day from Shaw and Wells to

John Galsworthy, several of whose plays dealt with aspects of this question.

The cheap Press with its halfpenny papers became a conspicuous phenomenon towards the middle of the 'eighties'. Magazines, highly coloured in a double sense, such as Answers and Titbits, were seen everywhere. They contained miscellaneous articles few of which had any educational value, or any very bad effect either, but they did introduce sensationalism, advertising (1) and the newspaper competition. As a result their circulation grew by leaps and bounds and soon every man was reading his favourite magazine or cheap 'daily'. This meant the man-in-the-street had to be catered to, and his growing, often unhealthy, curiosity fed. The penny novelette exploited escapism and married the house-maid to the peer-in-disguise; much as the film today marries the honest waitress to the millionaire's son. The Daily Mail came into being by 1896, giving people the news they wanted to read

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(1) Uncle Ponderevo, in H.G.Wells' Tono Bungay made his fortune because he was able to avail himself of the growing newspaper circulations and to reach hundreds of thousands with his advertisements.

and a peerage to Mr. Harmsworth, (1) the owner. Popular journalism, or popular literature of any kind for that matter, must necessarily be aimed at the average intelligence and the average intelligence of half a million people is obviously not very high, nor educated; worse than this, to remain popular, journalism must be of interest to the average mind and the average mind is frequently attracted by sensational and superficial things (and morbid curiosities) which it has not been trained to distinguish as barren and vulgar. This journalism, was, however, part of the background of the age -- perhaps an indication of the final stage -- in the three, slow changes from aristocratic rule at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to middle class rule after the Industrial Revolution and, finally, to working class rule, or at least, power, which may be said to have begun about 1906 when the Independent Labour Party returned twenty-nine members to the House of Commons, and when Shaw, Wells and Galsworthy were writing.

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(1) Mr. Crosland suggested for the new peer's title, Lord Helpus. "For," he said, " if ever there was a man who, judged by his public acts, had need for a little of the grace of God, it is Alfred Harmsworth."

Whatever this new journalism stood for, serious people despised it, as did John Galsworthy. It was, to his mind, showy, only half-truthful and it required no effort. It was even a social evil in that it caused unnecessary suffering in its attempts to gratify the public gusto for other people's private affairs. His references to the Press in his dramas are always scornful and, in The Show, it is the part-villain of the story.

Chapter 11

Social Problems --- Method and Purpose.

Before discussing in detail Galsworthy's actual treatment of social problems and ideas in his drama, it would be as well to discuss his methods and purpose with regard to those ideas which were his main concern. Some of these social problems, as has been already indicated, were becoming increasingly evident in his impressionable years and earlier manhood, which was an age of enormous social change, and consequent pre-occupation with social ideas. He may be said to have reached his maturity as an artist at approximately the end of the 1914-1918 war, which so changed society that Galsworthy began to feel something of a stranger in the post-war world, and this point may fairly be taken, in most senses, as a marker for the summit of his intellectual, and socially critical, development.

The social ideas which were to the fore in these years, both in conversation and in literature, made their impression upon Galsworthy's mind and, allowing for the special interest which he had in those which affected his own life, such as the position and rights of woman and conventional morality, which he felt deeply through his involved and clandestine attachment for Ada Galsworthy,

most of them later found expression in his novels and, to a more limited extent, in his drama.

Some of these social problems are merely touched upon, as, for instance, the inferior quality of secondary school education as demonstrated by 'Little Aida', in The Foundations, reciting Blake with a Cockney accent and no understanding; yet, though Galsworthy does not offer any constructive social suggestion upon this problem, nor, it must be admitted, upon a great many others which are mentioned in his plays, he at least brings them to the notice of the public, generally thrown into relief with his admirable irony and, by his sympathetic treatment, shows that he personally finds something sadly lacking in the system and reminds the play-going, and reading, public, of the need for reform. This is perhaps the secret of Galsworthy's method with the social problems which do not touch him too closely.

His own statement of his dramatic purpose must also be remembered as given in Some Platitudes Concerning Drama:

"To set before the public no cut-and-dried codes, but the phenomena of life and character, selected and combined, but not distorted, by the dramatist's outlook, set down without fear, favour or prejudice, leaving the public to draw such poor moral as nature may afford. This third method requires sympathy with, a love of, and a curiosity as to, things for their own sake; it requires a far view, together with patient industry, for no immediately practical result."

Evidently then he does not set up to be a preacher with a faith, or a reformer with a plan, to reconstitute society. He 'photographs' shifting foundations, draws attention to dangerous roofs, and opens windows, rather than builds new walls. His aim is to show life (and therefore society) as he sees it, with none of its evils or injustices left out, and to leave it up to "the public to draw such poor moral as nature may afford."

It may be argued that this is a limited objective but Galsworthy considered himself an artist first and foremost, and not a social reformer; unlike Bernard Shaw who might be considered primarily a social reformer and an artist afterwards, or of course, in his own humorous opinion, perfect as both. Galsworthy had great faith in the inspiring power of art and it was always close to his conscience. He looked upon art, whether in painting, music or his own drama, as justifying itself, and effecting its own purpose. Art, as he defined it in Vague Thoughts on Art, was the "continual, unconscious replacement, however fleeting, of one self by another; the real cement of life; the everlasting refreshment and renewal." This view of his of the effects of art contains the germ of, and points the way to, Galsworthy's generally naturalistic dramatic technique --- the obvious one for presentation of social ideas.

The three separate statements contained in the quotation above can all be traced in his dramatic theory. The first is identification with the protagonists by the audience's selves; the second, the common fellow feeling we have with ordinary people when presented sympathetically; and the third might well represent the cathartic renewal we experience when touched deeply, and the refreshment we feel from the contact with bigger emotions and larger ideas. As he put it in his own words:

" The aim of the dramatist employing it (naturalistic technique) is obviously to create such an illusion of actual life passing on the stage as to compel the spectator to pass through an experience of his own, to think, and talk, and move with the people he sees thinking, talking, moving, in front of him." (1)

He therefore attempts to take down the 'fourth wall' and to show us the room in which the action is taking place, while making sure that the characters talk only of the dramatic action, and things relevant to it, and not of the weather, unless the state of the weather is pertinent, ironical or in any way necessary to the action, mood or idea of the play; nor does he allow them to indulge in irrelevant comedy, however tempting it may be. They must say what they would naturally say -- they must be consistently ' in character'. This means that they

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(1) Some Platitudes Concerning Drama.

cannot go off at a tangent and lecture each other on how to reform society or how to improve 'Little Aida's' secondary school miseducation, because ordinary citizens do not talk like that, except when they happen to be professional reformers or enthusiastic socialists. They must , on the other hand, listen to 'Little Aida', as they would listen to her in real life, and realize perhaps, as she speaks, that she is a very unfortunate, under-privileged little girl and that something ought to be done for her. They must be sympathetic, or half-interested in her, or irritated, as they would be in real life, and the audience, which is supposedly eavesdropping over their shoulders, will fully understand the social problem presented by the little girl; they will then "draw such poor moral as nature may afford" from her.

An excellent example of Galsworthy's cutting presentation of the social evil of slums, with absolutely nothing surplus added, is found in the conversation of Little Anne, the righ girl, with Little Aida, the poor girl, in The Foundations:

Little Anne. Have you ever seen a bomb?

Little Aida. Nao.

Little Anne. (going to the table and lifting a corner of the cover) Look!

Little Aida.(Looking) What's it for?

Little Anne. To blow up this house.

Little Aida. I daon't fink!

Little Anne. Why not?

Little Aida. It's a beautiful big 'ouse.

Little Anne. That's why. Isn't it, James?

Little Aida. You give the fing to me; I'll blow up our 'ouse -- it's an ugly little 'ouse.

This may be said to demonstrate both Galsworthy's method and purpose. The purpose is inherent in the conversation and the method is severe, yet entirely successful, naturalism. Little Aida's brilliant suggestion, that she blow up her own "ugly little 'ouse" rather than the beautiful big one, is as fine a piece of concentrated, socially constructive criticism as is to be found in modern drama. Almost any of Galsworthy's plays will show how far he succeeded in this purpose and method.

Such is Galsworthy's general method of treating minor characters and their attendant, and usually less dramatically important, problems; but he does not always keep so thoroughly to his own dramatic creed when dealing with his heroes, and, more particularly, his heroines, nor with the problems which worry him more deeply. His heart, or perhaps his conscience, gains control of his

There are several instances, usually when he feels very strongly about some social injustice, where Galsworthy fails to live up to his own artistic creed, which is a very strict one, and, verging upon didacticism or melodrama, he fails to achieve a completely natural scene. This has given rise to the two most general accusations levelled against him as an artist: that of sentimentalism, and that of selling his art, in Max Beerbohm's phrase, "for a pot of message". However, it is not very often that this jarring, or destruction of the "willing suspension of disbelief," occurs, and it may be partially pardoned on account of the author's tremendous sincerity, which is the main characteristic of the man and of the playwright.

The social problems which occur in Galsworthy's drama are legion. He touched upon contemporary social life from every angle and many characters express all shades of political and class opinion, and reaction, to these numerous problems. However, he had certain pet social problems which seem to run like typically grey Galsworthian threads throughout plays, satires, essays and letters to his friends, and, as they indicate the man, his character, his mind and his personal outlook

on life, they must be mentioned briefly, before going on to discuss his treatment of these ideas, the most important to him, from an emotional point of view, and those other social ideas,which were constantly niggling more at his social conscience than at his private peace of mind.

The position and rights of woman, particularly with regard to marriage, must take first place as Galsworthy's main preoccupation among social ideas. It is not,and was not,one of the gravest social problems of his age, though it must have seemed so to many women living at the end of the Victorian Age. It also obviously seemed so to John Galsworthy, the doubting idealist and undoubted gentleman, as the theme so constantly reappears in his work, with, in addition, the indefinable associations of the attitude of complacent pseudo-civilized man towards what he looked upon as his female property, which so galled and revolted him that he probably allowed this thought to over-dominate his mind. Harder spirits like Wells and Shaw refused to be unduly impressed, while kindred spirits like Conrad and Hardy understood.

The social problem, or aspect of a social problem, which seems to have appeared the next most important to

Galsworthy was in reality the father of the one just mentioned. It is very difficult to confine the idea, with all its ramifications, in a name, as Galsworthy was most evasive as to his own position, in a political or party sense, but the word which comes nearer than any other to expressing the general idea is Property. His precise stand on this subject was never taken, even to his own satisfaction. He always objected to being referred to as a Socialist. He abused the Liberal as a 'Mr. Facing-both-ways' and a cocoa-drinker. He almost always showed the Conservative as a hide-bound, unintelligent glorifier of the past frequently wanting even in gentlemanly qualities, and he considered the Labour Party as being as extreme in their radicalism as the Conservatives were in their Toryism. His exact beliefs on the principle of Property were impossible to get at; a guess, that his own property weighed upon his conscience considerably but not painfully enough to cause any revolution in his life, a man who was naturally against all extremes and who did not believe in personal survival after death, might be near the truth; he loved the good things of life and also the expensive things, but his conscience was always at work telling him that necessities were lacking elsewhere and that his property was a trust, as were his gifts, and that he must use both

towards the lightening of the human lot. Whatever was in his mind, and even though his drama and writing generally suggest a begging of the question, he was convinced that poverty, the minus to the plus of property, was injustice itself and a destruction to the soul. He had a horror of poverty which was odd in a man who had never known it. His main quarrel with Property, however, was when it grew so large as to take the place of the forgotten Sermon on the Mount and became a golden calf; he furiously and patiently protested when this religion of materialism spread and spread and drew everything within its power, so that even Art and Woman and Nature were tied up and imprisoned and owned by people who, by their very beliefs, were incapable of feeling a due reverence for them, as their reverence was already given to the golden calf of property which blinded their eyes to all other values. Mr. Builder (even his name suggests one who builds one concrete, solid possession upon another) in The Family Man is one well-known instance of the man who lives by property alone. Mr. Gilchrist and Mr. Hornblower, in The Skin Game lose their common humanity through their love of property. John Galsworthy and the word 'property' are indivisible.

'Caste' problems loom largely whenever

Victorian, Edwardian and pre-war Georgian England are discussed. It was a problem of the first magnitude and Galsworthy was fully aware of it at several different levels. He has said that he was a "young snob" when up at Oxford (1) but he would have been quite exceptional had he not been so, when the social hierarchy of England in the 'nineties'is considered. Both Wells and Wodehouse have told us of the caste system 'below stairs' where the butler took precedence over all the other servants, followed by the gentleman's gentleman, or if there were two gentleman's gentlemen their precedence depended upon the rank of their respective gentlemen. England was not exceptional in this division between the classes, but no Englishman could help being conscious of this problem and no Englishman given to thinking about the world around him could help feeling that something was wrong somewhere. Galsworthy did, and so this dark-hued thread runs through all his writing with its variant of the loyalties of various sets to themselves, as illustrated by such plays as Escape and Loyalties

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(1) Galsworthy's sister did not agree with him:

> "Snobbery in any form was totally lacking to his make-up. He may, indeed, have carried his horror of that almost to excess. A vein of nervous shyness, a genuine modesty - often unsuspected, because belied by his self-possessed manner- made every public appearance a severe ordeal .. . . .
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> Memories of John Galsworthy p. 45. By His Sister. Robert Hale, London, 1936.

and The Eldest Son.

The study of the law and the observation of the workings of Justice, with her supposedly infallible scales, caused Galsworthy to raise a query. Was Justice so infallible?(1) And if she were, might she not occasionally be fallible with profit? Might not the poor unfortunates, who were often in the dock because of circumstances which would have put many a solid citizen behind the bars, be benefitted by leniency not laid down in the Statute Book? These questions are asked again and again throughout Galsworthy's drama -- in The Silver Box, in The Pigeon and in Justice. He thought that there was one law for the rich and another, separate one, for the poor. It was one of his hobby-horses.

The end of the nineteenth Century saw the rise to power of the working classes, who rose to power by presenting a united front of Labour against their employers, who represented Capital. The two factions were old enemies with incompatible ambitions who met head-on towards the end of the century, when the dock

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(1) "I don't believe in them, no more than I believe in . . . . . or the cheap theory that there is anything in the nature of Justice other than what has been hardly wrung out of the life of man by man himself, from arboreal ape times onwards. There is balance in Nature but no more mercy or justice than the animal 'man' has evolved for his own benefit or luxury."
Letter to H.W.Massingham, Life and Letters. P.770
H.V.Marrot. Heinemann, London, 1935.

labourers got a raise of sixpence a day. This was the first taste of real opposition which Capital had felt. The atmosphere permeated all England and Galsworthy felt it. He was on the side of Capital by birth and interest but he wrote one of the most impartial plays ever written - Strife - on the futility of a clash between two powers which should be mutually helpful and co-operative. He was always a man for moderation and sweet reason. This social problem, closely linked to the question of property, of course, recurs in Galsworthy's drama. He deals with this question like the figure of Justice herself.

The final social problem, which occurs less frequently but still often enough to merit attention, is Galsworthy's treatment of the Church, or established religion, and its representatives. He was not sympathetic, generally speaking, to either. He makes Ronny Keith, in The Eldest Son , say "There's something about a parson which puts one's back up." It was Galsworthy's own sentiment. In The Foundations he makes the admiring butler say of Lord William Dromondy: "He's not a Christian. 'E didn't even 'ate the 'uns, not as 'e ought." This kind of remark is made frequently enough by various characters to suggest that not only Galsworthy was dissatisfied with the Church, and the Church's version of Christianity, but that a good number of the average London audience felt much the same way. The Church's so-called war-mongering and "fight-the-good-fight" attitude

during the war caused a great deal of religious doubt in addition to that caused by the war itself. Galsworthy's characters are reflecting the social problem of the age when they forsake the faith of centuries and attempt to go on living by civilized standards without Christian belief, though with Christian ethics, to support them.

Chapter 111

Treatment of Social Problems and Ideas.

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Galsworthy felt very strongly indeed about the limited rights and dignity allowed to women by the Law and he felt no less strongly about the fairly general Victorian attitude, which persisted up to the Great War, of male possessiveness toward that irrational and lesser creature, who was capable only of looking after children and easing the worries of a superior mind by playing the piano, delicately and without passion, of an evening. His sister said:

> "In his very first book From the Four Winds there is a short tale already illustrating his passionately chivalrous feeling towards womanhood in any state of oppression or distress and his loathing of that type of male mentality which extends the sense of property to its womankind. And hardly a book or play that followed but has dealt, more or less poignantly, in one form or another, with the same theme." (1)

Nearly two and a half centuries earlier John Dryden had spoken, in a song, in his Marriage a La Mode, condemning the hide-bound tradition of the irrevocable finality of the ceremony of marriage, though from the

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(1) Memories of John Galsworthy. p. 33, by His Sister, M.E.Reynolds. Robert Hale & Company, London, 1936

Restoration point of view. His lines are ambiguously suggestive of Galsworthy's outlook, though from an entirely different point of view:

> "Why should foolish marriage vow
> Which long ago was made,
> Oblige us to each other now
> When passion is decayed?"

Galsworthy felt strongly that the institution of marriage needed a little light and common sense brought to bear upon it; furthermore, he believed that marriage was made in two people's minds rather than in church.

In the twentieth century, however, there was still the same acceptance of age-old tradition which allowed for no exceptions and demanded the continuance of the form when the spirit had taken flight. Galsworthy's personal acquaintance with this social problem, through the unhappy first marriage of his wife, made him feel very strongly about it. His sympathy with the woman's point of view is perfectly logical, and not in the least sentimental, when one remembers that man was the superior being, at the beginning of the century, who was permitted, by the law, and by the unwritten law of social usage , almost to own his wife. It was moreover not considered a very serious offence when a man dallied on primrose paths outside his own garden, but a woman was limited to a straight line between the kitchen and the nursery.

Let us consider Galsworthy's treatment of this

idea. Several plays immediately spring to mind. The same question runs through The Fugitive, (1913) and The Family Man, (1921) and occurs in Old English (1924) and The Eldest Son, (1912) but The Fugitive is the best example of all.

Clare is married to George Dedmond and suffers from an inescapable aversion to him amounting, in the end, to loathing. She is of a finer nature with imagination and a spiritual quality in her make-up, whereas he is coarse-fibred and entirely prosaic, though passing as a reasonable man of the world (the original title of the play until just before production as The Fugitive) to his family and friends. She has tried her best for five years to live with him and has failed. Flesh and blood will stand no more. Finally, she tells him that it is impossible to continue. He, on the other hand, wishes to preserve the appearance of marriage to avoid being made to look a fool in front of his friends and acquaintances, and also because he still feels, strongly, her physical attraction.

Here is the painful point of the problem and Galsworthy leaves no doubt of the precise nature of it in the mind of the audience, purposefully showing that Clare's husband has been in the habit of entering her bedroom uninvited, and in spite of her open aversion to him.

There is nothing more distasteful from the point of view of a woman. It is, Galsworthy makes clear, a revolting situation and all Clare's instincts tell her that she is committing a graver sin in acquiescing in this loveless marriage than in rebelling against it; though all the laws of Church and State and morality seem to say that a woman must put up, to the end of her life, with a situation into which she has walked with her eyes open, though they may have been only eighteen-year-old eyes, at the time of choice. Law, religion and conventional morality say to Clare, in effect, that it is wrong to revolt against something which is physically nauseous and spiritually destructive to her, and which she feels she can no longer stand; they say, further, that they will be massed, in all the pomp and power of rectitude, against her, if she should be so abandoned as to do what she knows is right and to run away from her lawful husband. It is a paradoxical situation; the social code insists that she do herself a mortal wrong, on pain of punishment, in order that the rest of society shall not suffer by her example. But even on pain of punishment she can no longer force herself to this love-less love, which makes a sepulchre of her marriage. So, influenced by the bohemian Malise, she runs away,

thereby becoming a fugitive with society in full hue and cry after her. She has become a hunted creature by doing what any normal woman ought to do in her circumstances.

Galsworthy indicated, in his usual negative way, (1) that there are exceptions to every rule and that some allowances and rights should have been permitted by the law, religion and society to women who were defenceless, especially when they were dependent upon men. At the beginning of the twentieth century this theme had more significance than it has now.(2)

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(1) "My method is to suggest that the spirit of understanding and sympathy ought to be there by pointing out that it is not. I think that by this method one gets less on the nerves of one's reader. Moreover it's temperamental - to preach directly I am not able - however confirmed a moralist I may be by deduction;"

Letter to an unrecorded correspondent, July 16th 190? Memories of John Galsworthy, p. 79. by His Sister. Robert Hale & Co., London, 1936.

(2) A.".Nevinson wrote to Galsworthy the following criticism in1913: "My only real criticism is that the scene is hardly modern enough. Twenty years ago its truth would have been more overwhelming than it is now. I have no doubt in most cases it is true still, but I've known women in very much that situation who still have escaped the restaurant." (i.e.prostitution and suicide.)

Life and Letters. p.374. H.V.Marrot. Wm. Heinemann Ltd., London, 1935.

Divorces were too hard to get and they required two dissatisfied people. The Divorce Law was, and still is, a ridiculous distortion of justice. Surely, Galsworthy says, one dissatisfied person should be enough ground for divorce in any reasonable system of society?

George Dedmond, however, the 'man of the world' and the good citizen, who causes the tragedy by his possessiveness, is not painted as a black-hearted villain preying upon Beauty in distress. On the contrary he is just an ordinary man, but he has the weaknesses of the ordinary man and the limitations of the ordinary man's conventional ideas. He is possessive, he does not like the idea of being made to look a fool, he is jealous of Malise, his wife's friend, and worse than all these failings, he lacks imagination. He cannot sympathise with Clare nor can he put himself in her place. He sees the world from his own eyes and from his own eyes alone. He thinks she is slightly foolish and over-imaginative and he is quite incapable of seeing himself as a repulsive person. He lacks the imagination and perhaps the modesty to do so, but he is not a villainous character, though this situation rouses his possessive instinct and his jealousy, and makes him act like one. He is an average Londoner, though of the upper classes, who is bound by his conventional code, and this lack of imagination; to the point where he cannot see the common sense or the decent thing to do.

Our social codes, Galsworthy is saying, accepted without question by ordinary men, are at the root of a great deal of misery, which usually falls upon the helpless, especially, when they are without money.

One critic of Galsworthy said that the man on the stage might be anyone in the audience and quite frequently he was sitting in the very seat you yourself were occupying. This is often true and springs from Galsworthy's method. Many of George Dedmond's thoughts and actions are at least superficially representative of almost every man in the audience. It is difficult to see oneself as repulsive; it is difficult not to be jealous; it is difficult not to be angry when vanity is hurt, and it is difficult not to take revenge when it is in one's power. We therefore can feel, no matter with how many qualifications, the thoughts and emotions of George Demond, and this very fact is an indication of Galsworthy's social method, even when it is applied, as it is in this play to rather far-fetched actions and incidents. The situation was presented, not as something which might happen to a bad man and a weak woman but as a home-truth which would touch many a confident playgoer to the quick and cause the bones of family skeletons to rattle in the minds of many another. It was a 'slice of life', and a 1913 audience recognised it as such and identified itself with it.

There is a world of criticism of the ordinary well-bred, well-educated but unimaginative man in the presentation of George Dedmond's character. As he is a typical example of his society it is indirectly a criticism of that society. He is a man we nearly all of us know. The world wags well for him and it seems to him to be a good and just world, in which everyone merely has to live according to accepted values in order to be perfectly happy. When somebody is unhappy it is either his, or her, own fault or imagination (he or she is "just imagining it") and never the fault of the conforming people nor of the system, frequently an old one, requiring change, to which they conform. The well-educated man, Galsworthy says, is frequently a boor, guilty of the most dreadful sins against the spirit because he is unable to see, or feel, in what a sin against the spirit consists. He is limited to the stock of feelings and ideas which has been driven into his head and he judges other people and the world generally by these second-hand feelings and ideas because he is unable to get outside himself. George's point of view is society's point of view, and both are sure of their virtue, because they will trust conventional morality rather than use their imagination.

Galsworthy illustrates this by showing George, in the quarrel with Clare in the first act, stating an exact truth but remaining completely and absolutely

unconscious of its real truth:

Clare: Five years, and four of them like this! I'm sure we've served our time. Don't you really think we might get on better - if I went away?

George: I've told you I won't stand a separation for no real reason, and have your name bandied about all over London. I have some primitive sense of honour.

George, with all the assurance of one who has been brought up as a gentleman and who knows what honour is, apart of course from sickly girlish fancies, thinks that he is making an understatement and a ludicrous one at that. Galsworthy means the audience to realize that his sense of honour is indeed a 'primitive' one. It is a sense of honour which will allow him to chivvy a penniless and almost defenceless woman to her eventual suicide because she does not like him any more. It is also a sense of honour which is sure of its own rightness, and is an excellent example of that pharisaism of which Galsworthy was so certain in his accusations of his own class and age. This irony has been emphasized by several critics of Galsworthy, but it is so important a part of his treatment of social ideas that it can be seen in the presentation of almost any one of them.

This same 'primitive sense of honour' permits George to give Clare the pleasure of his company, after

she has made it quite clear that she does not want to see him, in exactly the same manner that Soames did with Irene. This is the final straw, and Clare goes home the next morning only to find that her lovable old father, a country rector, cannot quite see her point of view either. She then goes to seek advice from Malise, the unattractive radical who has first counselled her try her wings, and whom she likes, we feel, merely because he is the antithesis of George.

When Malise, just after Clare has left George, says to her, "God help all ladies without money", the modern reader of today has an illuminating flash-back to a world which, though only forty years younger, was an entirely different one. Many ladies today have no money except their earnings, but they are well able to help themselves and do not expect too much sympathy because of that necessity. However, in the world before the first Great War, a lady had few opportunities to support herself, and was usually completely incapable of taking them if they did turn up, because her entire girl-hood had almost certainly been spent in learning how to be an attractive wife and nothing else. She was often over-refined (like Clare), and helplessness was, if anything, an attraction as it served to flatter the male ego. This naturally resulted in large numbers of 'distressed

gentlewomen', as they could not all find husbands (or keep them alive after they had married them), and these ladies constituted a social problem which has greatly diminished.

That something should be done about these unfortunate, inexperienced and often helpless women Galsworthy was burningly conscious, and he emphasizes the point again and again. His first object, however, was to improve the society which produced them.

Twisden, George Dedmond's lawyer, visiting Clare at Malise's flat when she has just left her husband, says:

> "In your position, Mrs. Dedmond - a beautiful young woman without money - I'm quite blunt. This is a hard world. Should be awfully sorry if anything went wrong."

And a few sentences later, having warned Clare, he describes the position of dependent ladies who forsake their lawful husbands.

Twisden: What's open to you if you don't go back? Come what's your position? Neither fish, flesh nor fowl; fair game for everybody. Believe me Mrs. Dedmond, for a pretty woman to strike, as it appears you are doing, simply because the spirit of her marriage has taken flight, is madness. You must know that noone pays attention to anything but facts. If now - excuse me- you - you had a lover, you would at least have some ground under your feet, some sort of protection, but (he pauses) as you have not, you've none.

Clare: Except what I make myself!

Sir Charles: Good God!

Twisden: Yes! Mrs. Dedmond! There's the bedrock difficulty. As you haven't money you should never have been pretty. You're up against the world and you'll get no money from it. We lawyers see too much of that. I'm putting it brutally, as a man of the world.

Clare: Thank you ! Do you think you quite grasp the alternative?

Twisden is taken aback at this question of Clare's as he is obviously quite incapable of 'grasping the alternative', but then so probably was the audience - until directly asked. People did not ask themselves these questions, as they were speculative questions demanding sympathetic imagination - and there appears to have been a great dearth of imagination, and a terrifying desire to conform, in Galsworthy's day. Nevertheless the author tries to make the point, and in asking Twisden he is asking the audience.

He must often have succeeded less well, through sheer under-emphasis, when his irony was so much in tune with the mores of the times that the majority would always take it merely in its literal sense and miss Galsworthy's real meaning. There are two instances in the passage quoted above. The first is where Twisden says, "for a pretty woman to strike, as it appears you are doing, <u>simply because the spirit of her marriage has taken flight</u>, is madness."

A good majority of a 1913 audience would agree wholeheartedly with Twisden and miss Galsworthy's detestation of a marriage from which the spirit had taken flight. The second is where Twisden goes on to say, "You must know noone pays attention to anything but facts," thus voicing the creed to which the author objected so much and with which he was so constantly at war. It was the intangibles of life, and particularly of personal relationships, which Galsworthy considered all important. The spiritual accord, the unspoken mutual bond, was what sanctified two people living together; not the signing of names nor the vow in the church, nor the correctness in the eyes of the world, could make a marriage worthy of continuance once the spirit of it had taken flight. A vow is an admirable thing but it can often be a foolish thing. What man can vow that he will believe, or feel, the same thing after ten years of life have passed over his head? The only vow that a man should swear to should start with the words "I vow that I will try . . . . . ", because that is the most that he can do, being human. Galsworthy felt all this and, oppressed by the weakness of man, thought that all those mortals, who have changed within themselves after the passage of time, should be enabled to start anew, and to salvage something of the happiness, or at least the freedom, which might remain to them in their one, very short life. (He is always conscious that a man has only one life and

this consciousness is apparent in all his social thinking.)

It has sometimes been thought that John Galsworthy was such a literary 'gentleman' and so anxious to be impartial that he failed to illuminate his causes with a strong enough light. He would argue one side and then, with scrupulous fairness, present the other, and finish by leaving the audience in doubt as to what were his real feelings. It was like a judge summing up. Shaw is thought of as the man who shocked everybody, slashing out at abuses and rocking society to its foundations with his daring "not bloody likely's " and paradoxical nose-thumbings, and he has consequently thrown the rebellious and radical attacks of Galsworthy on society into the shade; yet where Galsworthy feels a 'savage indignation' he has power, and a power not dissipated by levity. This can be seen to perfection in the short dialogue between Lady Dedmond and Clare, on the subject of Clare's marriage and its connection with religion:

Lady Dedmond: . . . . . marriage is sacred, Clare.

Clare: Marriage! My marriage has become the - reconciliation - of two animals, one of them unwilling. That's all the sanctity there is about it.

Sir Charles: What!

Lady Dedmond: You ought to be horribly ashamed.

Clare: Of the fact - I am.

Lady Dedmond: (darting a glance at Malise) If we are to talk this out it must be in private.

Malise: (to Clare) Do you wish me to go?

Clare: No.

Lady Dedmond: I should have thought ordinary decent feeling - Good Heavens, girl! Can't you see that you're being played with?

Clare: If you insinuate anything against Mr. Malise, you lie.

Lady Dedmond: If you will do these things - Come to a man's house.

Clare: I came to Mr. Malise because he's the only person I know with imagination enough to see what my position is; I came to him a quarter of an hour ago for the first time, for definite advice, and you instantly suspect him. That is disgusting.

Lady Dedmond: Is this the natural place for me to find my son's wife?

Clare: His woman.

Lady Dedmond: Haven't you any religious sense at all, Clare?

Clare: None, if it's religion to live as we do.

These are the words of a woman suffering from a marriage which has been wearing her down for years - which she cannot bear to think of living through again, and which she <u>knows</u> is absolutely wrong. She is voicing a bitter condemnation of the marriage prolonged, for religious reasons, without love - of which there were so many in the days when the Victorian father pointed out to his submissive daughter that it was his 'wish' that she marry Mr. So-and-So; adding perhaps, after her halting objection that she didn't love him, that

she would'come to love him'and meanwhile could 'respect' him until the marriage had brought love. The land was full of these submissive daughters who had experienced the bitterness of an arranged cohabitation, in place of a marriage of inclination, and though Clare had made her choice herself she is speaking for these women. Galsworthy must have known several of these women. Many eyes must have become reflective in the audience as individuals remembered Aunt Jane (or perhaps their own mothers), and wondered whether she had been right in accepting (from a mistaken interpretation of her religion), her life with Uncle George especially after that scandal of the old boy's. Galsworthy raises the question mark but only one answer is expected.

Galsworthy makes it quite clear throughout Clare's desperate rebellion that the dice are loaded against her, and that they are, or were, against all women. Firstly, everbody, and every institution, is against her, and, secondly, human nature is against her. Man, seeing her helplessness, will, far from wanting to help and protect her, try to take advantage of her, for she is that prime mover of low desires, a pretty woman, without money or "visible means of support."

Malise points all this out to Clare in a short speech, every line of which bears the hallmark of truth; but anything is better than a return to her 'owner', as she

calls George Dedmond, and so she resolves to try to find work, and independence, in London. At this point her eventual fate seems to be closing in around her with the inevitability of a Greek tragedy. The gloom and hardness of London is suggested in Malise's description of the 'bull-necked brutes' and the 'senile swine' who will not let her be; these distorted images, the 'devils with hard eyes', raise a premonition of fate.

Three months later Clare is back. She has worked in a shop and found it a daily torture, which she concludes was worse because she had been brought up as a lady. The shop-girls were nice enough but they didn't really want her and she had that constant feeling of being out of place, that loneliness of working with uncongenial people. It has been a failure and she feels she cannot go on. She tells Malise that she has been thinking of him a great deal and that she loves him. (This is one of the weak links from a dramatic point of view but on the stage there is not time to develop these things gradually.) Malise sends for her suitcases and finds two private detectives eavesdropping outside the door, having tracked her to his door. "You've run her to earth; your job's done. Kennel up, hounds!" he says savagely, carrying along the comparison of Clare to a hart that is a fugitive from hounds. The inevitable end is foreshadowed by the two agents of George

Dedmond who can now bring a divorce action. This sense of an impending doom, heightened by the comparisons to a hunt closing in on its prey, is a deliberate artifice, but it shows exactly the way in which Galsworthy looked upon the persectuion of women in the days when they were more helpless than now. His sincerity in this is what prevents the play from touching bathos, as it very easily could do.

The second scene of this third act shows Malise becoming less interested in Clare and Clare slowly realizing it, through the advice of that admirably drawn character -- Mrs. Miller. Twisden then visits Clare and warns her that George Dedmond is taking an action against Malise which will ruin him, making Clare the unhappy cause of that ruin.

There is a bitter moment where Clare, child-like, offers a bunch of violets to Malise, which he almost ignores, thus showing her that he is growing indifferent. On being asked for a kiss he kisses her perfunctorily, and like one who has done something contrary to his mood; so she leaves 'cover' once again to find her fate in the city. She is once again one of the 'distressed gentlewomen'(for whom Galsworthy hoped for better things) but she now has in addition the burden of disgrace, the loss of hope, and the money and wounded vanity of her husband weighted in the scales against her. We now merely watch to see how society will get its revenge, for Clare was never a strong character and now she is without hope or the will to fight. Galsworthy shows Clare performing

a noble action in leaving the man she loves (to save him from bankruptcy, and because she would not hold on, unlike George, where she was no longer wanted) to illustrate the fact that she had fine qualities which might have been of service in the world had she originally been able to get a divorce. Her whole position is a false one because of the stupidity and antiquity of the divorce laws, and she is driven to the final tragedy by the enormous weight of a blind and fallible society.

The fourth Act adds nothing to our understanding of Galsworthy's treatment of the social problem involved in the character and situation of Clare, because it is just the inevitable representation, or if you like, ' the final act', of the tragedy following inexorably upon a woman who was 'fine but not fine enough', and who broke one of the rules of society.

She is 'broke' and enters an expensive hotel, on Derby night when a hunting party is in progress, resolved to sell her last asset which is her beauty. Armand, the humble, understanding waiter, is kind to her, contrasting with the crude, jungle urge of the males of her own herd from which she has been turned away. She is 'picked up' by one not-too-bad young man and one feels that she is to be converted into a prostitute by her unfortunate marriage of six years before; but she is then insultingly approached, on a

bet, by another and very unpleasant young man and the shame is too much for her. She takes poison as the last notes of a hunting song - "This day a stag must die" - hang on the air.

The Fugitive must have done a great deal for the cause of women, if not in precisely measurable ways, as was the case with Justice, at least in so far as it affected the general attitude towards the weaker sex. The play caused Galsworthy to be labelled 'feminist' and 'sentimentalist'. 'Feminist' he undoubtedly was, to his age, as he held the views on the position of women which practically all intelligent men hold today, forty years and two wars later; but it is difficult to find any false sentiment in The Fugitive.

The Family Man (1921) is the other play dealing with this problem though in a non-tragic manner and in a different way. It is a light-hearted comedy dealing with the rights of woman within the family and the question of divorce is not considered. The main theme running through The Family Man is freedom for mothers and daughters to lead their own lives, and, if necessary for their self-respect and happiness, to insist on complete freedom by leaving home. The other theme is Galsworthy's characteristic emphasis on the crudity of superior strength being brought to bear on womenfolk who disobey the tyrant of the hearth. One of Galsworthy's

favourite 'hates' was the employment of 'force majeure' to coerce any individual, and in this play he shows the coercer getting a taste of his own medecine and showing signs at the end of a change of heart. The themes are treated lightly, because The Family Man was after all entitled a comedy, but they are none the less rooted in real and distasteful family relationships, such as exist to this day and which were far more common when the 'New Woman' was chaining herself to the railings of Westminster Abbey to attract attention to her lack of freedom.

John Builder is a successful contractor and a family tyrant with a subdued and miserable wife and two rebellious daughters. One of them, Athene, has run off to study art and, unknown to Builder, to live with her love; but she will not marry him because of the dreadful example of married tyranny which her father has shown her. She thinks it is the institution of marriage which makes a man into a despot and does not wish to risk it. John Builder is likely to be the next Mayor and this would be the culmination of his ambitions, but there is one difficulty. His daughter, Athene, is living away from home, as a protest against his high-handed rule, but she is still in the district. He feels that this might damage his popularity and prestige and so he goes to visit her with the idea of

persuading her to return home. John Builder is not an admirable character, but a self-satisfied philistine with notions that "woman is the lesser man", and her temptations never sufficient justification for any violation of domestic decorum.

His wife knows that it was liberty, not art, which drew Athene, the eldest daughter, away from home and Mrs. Builder tries to persuade him not to call on her, but he over-rules her, as usual, and they go. Noone is there but Annie, Athene's maid, and as they can get no information from her, they wait for their daughter while Builder looks over the house. Suddenly his angry shout is heard, and he appears with a razor-strop and shaving - brush in his hands. Mrs. Builder remarks that Athene has the "beginnings of a moustache" but her husband is convinced the equipment is masculine. The fat is in the fire! The final shamelessness of the modern world, with its dreadful 'New Women' has tainted his own family and his daughter is 'living in sin'. (He has considered the idea several times himself but then he is a man, which makes it hardly a sin.) He is almost apoplectic as he grapples with an incomprehensible new idea, and sees his mayoralty slipping from him through the scandal this must cause. He demands an explanation from Athene immediately she arrives:

Builder: Now then!

Athene: Well, Father if you want to know the real reason it's -- you.

Builder: What on earth do you mean?

Athene: Guy wants to marry me. In fact, we -- but I had such a scunner of marriage from watching you at home that I --

Builder: Don't be impudent! My patience is at breaking-point, I warn you.

Athene: I'm perfectly serious, father. I tell you, we meant to marry but so far I haven't been able to bring myself to it. You never noticed how we children have watched you.

Builder: Me?

Athene: Yes, you and Mother, and other things; all sorts of things - -.

Galsworthy lets Athene tell what the younger generation of women think of the position of their mothers. She tells John Builder, J.P., and would-be Mayor of Breconridge, presumably a typical representative of a self-satisfied middle-class, what life with him must have been for her mother and succeeds in worrying him, though not in convincing him. He says that he has never grudged his family any comfort or pleasure(though he has beaten them):

Athene: Except wills of our own.

Builder: What d'you want with wills of your own till you're married?

Athene: You forget Mother.

Builder: What about her:

Athene: She's very married. Has she a will of her own?

Builder: (Sullenly) She's learnt to know when I am in the right.

Athene: I don't ever mean to know when Guy's in the right . . . . .

Athene's remarks are an illuminating sidelight upon what must have been a fairly common family relationship, the principle of which carried over from the days of Victoria and which was still governing many post-war (1) families in backwaters, especially where the "pater familias" was not a speculative man. It was probably for this reason that Galsworthy makes Builder a provincial from a small town in the Midlands where the back-wash from the ideas of London might be expected to be both slight and late.

John Builder is finally provoked into a towering rage and leaves Athene. Annie, the maid, decides she must leave as she is afraid of the consequences of working in such an unconventional household with regard both to her young man and her Father. The latter, she says, "can be 'andy with a strap," to which Athene replies: "There you are! Force Majeure!" It is Galsworthy emphasizing his dislike of the supposedly corrective powers of brute force employed to chastise, particularly when the wielder of the strap may himself be such a fallible mortal and so little qualified to judge a point of morality. One imagines a picture of

(1) A Family Man was first performed in London, May, 1921.

Annie's father, a hairy engine-driver, his face suffused with righteous rage, reaching for the strap to beat Annie, a pleasant little person, for having done nothing more than work unwittingly in a household where the master and mistress were not married to his satisfaction.

One can understand how Max Beerbohm saw "a pot of message" in Galsworthy but, if so, the message is mixed into a savoury English stew, and it is obvious that Galsworthy retained his birthright; especially when the author's point is brought out perfectly naturally and in the course of thoroughly human and plausible dialogue. The maid Annie's comments, for instance, are exactly the comments which half the maids in England might have made.

After Annie has gone Athene's would-be husband, Guy Herringhame, asks her, naturally enough, after having seen the temper of her father, whether he used to cane her:

Athene: Yes.

Guy: Brute!

Athene: With the best intentions. You see he's a Town Councillor and a Magistrate. I suppose they "have" to be "firm". Maud and I sneaked in once to listen to him. There was a woman who came for protection from her husband. If he'd known we were there he'd have had a fit.

Guy: Did he give her the protection?

Athene: Yes, he gave her back to the husband. Wasn't it -- English?

Guy: Hang it! We're not all like that.

Athene: (twisting his button) I think it's really a sense of property so deep that they don't know they've got it. Father can talk about freedom like a --- politician.

Traces of message are visible in dialogue such as this but nobody can deny that they are in keeping with the characters of Guy and Athene; though one suspects that Athene must have read The Man of Property.

In this play Galsworthy achieves a very difficult thing --- he makes a serious criticism of a social idea in the atmosphere of a scintillating, light-hearted comedy strongly reminiscent of Moliere. Mr. Builder is harassed very much in the manner of M. Jourdain. A Family Man is a refutation of the criticism that Galsworthy had little humour. As a comedy of character it stands high, discounting altogether the brilliance of its underlying social criticism.

11

The problem of Property, as has already been said above in the second chapter, is indivisible from the name of Galsworthy. If one were asked to name the literary man, among the moderns, who had made the greatest stir about the question of Property, one would almost certainly suggest John Galsworthy, and think of Soames and the Forsytes, before anyone else. Soames' ruminations as to the possibility of rising prices in the Goya market, while looking at one of his favourites of that artist's work, and while under the stress

of great personal emotion, have left an indelible memory, in the minds of readers all over the world, of the worship of Property among the late, middle class Victorians. Soames and the Forsytes considered as property their wives, their lands, their art works, and Galsworthy noticed that the size of their families coincided with the rate of interest on investment -- the modern age saw a drop to three per cent, in place of the golden days of Victoria when twelve or fifteen per cent was not uncommon, and the modern Forsytes had three children where their fathers had had twelve or fifteen. However, though Galsworthy drew so much attention to the question of Property and its influence upon the character of man he had few constructive views as to what could be done about it. His negative method succeeded in pointing out that it was a fact and a deplorable one; he showed the results of a 'property mentality' and by informing the public of the presence of this worship of Mammon, he suggested that it should be done away with while backing no particular 'ism or type of reform. His only suggestion seems to be a vague one encouraging more "good will among men", not from an orthodox Christian point of view as he could not accept the divinity of Christ, but from an intuitive, rather than a logical, belief in the perfectibility of man.

With such vague ideas, unsupported by any definite metaphysics or religious faith, he was unable to suggest any fresh ideas in the drama that he had not already discussed

through several hundred pages in The Man of Property. These ideas he was also to elaborate in over a thousand pages in the Forsyte Saga. He gives us a dramatic version of the case of Soames and Irene, in that of Clare and George, in The Fugitive. The problem of the rights of woman is seen to spring largely from the idea of the right of man to own things in toto. The idea of property has run wild. and, bad as it was, when it understood only the possession of houses and money, it is ten times worse when it embraces all that money can buy and every mortal contact that a man may have. The Fugitive adds nothing to The Man of Property except drama, and, as we have already attempted to show, this play is primarily concerned with an off-shoot from the Galsworthian idea of property and not with the idea of property itself.

Many of Galsworthy's plays have the idea of the 'property mentality' behind them but, owing perhaps to the vagueness, or the largeness, of the subject, it is nowhere the governing theme of any one play, though it invests many of them.

Strife has its fat and comfortable company directors worrying about their investments and the shareholders, in the background, reaching out for their dividends, and this element, representing Property, does indirectly cause the women and children of Wales to starve, go without fires and even to die -- but it is not the theme of the play, which is a condemnation of fanatical extremists who eschew moderation, the

golden rule of Galsworthy, and triumph in their own wills to conquer.

Old English presents us with Joseph Pillin, strongly reminiscent of James Forsyte, who though a 'warm' man worth a couple of hundred thousnads, is reduced to snivelling fears and a dishonest commission at the threat of old Sylvanus that he may lose a few thousand pounds on the sale of his six ships. Jo Pillin, peaked, nervous, and pitifully tolerant of insults from 'Old English',is an example of the man who has spent his life worshipping Mammon. .

The Forest shows the force of the Property idea at work, in the same very qualified way. Bastaple is after property but to him it means power and it is his way of life. He is the tiger of the 'City' of London and he demonstrates the "Cat Force" more than the Property idea. Imperialism, as represented by Beton, is a form of the urge to have things and to own them, but it is on a more selfless plane as he wisnes to get new land, not for himself but for his country.

The Eldest Son shows us Sir William Cheshire owning a great deal and looking upon the whole country as his in a sense. He administers his own property(owned by the family since the fourteenth century), with the greatest pride, and will not permit any looseness of morals

in it; until the looseness is found in his own son. Then it becomes a horse of a different colour. The idea of property is constantly at the back of his mind, as it is at the back of the minds of nearly all Galsworthy's upper middle class characters, but it is just a suggestion behind the real theme, which is that of 'island pharisaism;' but it does colour that theme.

A Family Man, again a play dealing with the rights of woman as menaced or defeated by the evils of the 'property mentality', has the same suggestion, but more strongly drawn, because on this point the two ideas over-lap, as in The Fugitive. Here, too, Galsworthy makes Athene say, in explanation of the hardness of magistrates, "I think it's really a sense of property so deep that they don't know they've got it." The idea is ubiquitous.

The Skin Game shows Hillcrist and his wife so fond of their ancestral property that they descend to a 'skin game', or a hand-to-hand battle without quarter or morals, in order to retain it. It is a worship of property grown so strong that the gentility of generations is lost in face of it. Galsworthy makes Hornblower act equally ferociously, through his worship of material success, but with more excuse as he was brought up in a hard school where the gentlemanly qualities were unknown, though a strange form of religion (from Galsworthy's point of view),

deriving from the teachings of Christ, has influenced him and still forces his respect.(1) It is, however, the will to possess which drives him on as it is the will to retain which impels Hillchrist to fight back with the same weapons.

One never quite forgets in any of these plays that leit-motif of the 'property mentality' , which runs through all Galsworthy's work. Galsworthy spoke of the 'peculiar flavour' of an art work which stamped it as the personal production of its author. If one were to try to find the essence of the Galsworthian 'flavour' perhaps that essence would be distilled from his thoughts on the 'property mentality'. It colours all his work. In his drama, though never blown up

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(1) Hornblower having expressed his philosophy of the survival of the fittest, in a most unchristian manner, says:

Hornblower: . . . . I'll answer to God for my actions and not to you young people.

Jill: Poor God!

Hornblower: (Genuinely shocked) Ye blasphemous young thing! (To Rolf) And ye're just as bad, ye young freethinker. I won't have it.

to the proportions of a major theme, it is always close beneath the surface periodically bubbling up and becoming noticeable as propaganda or 'message', but generally remaining below the surface, influencing the characters and giving that 'peculiar flavour' which we know as 'typical Galsworthy'.

111

Caste, which is defined by the Oxford dictionary as an 'exclusive hereditary class', may be taken also to mean an exclusive privileged class of any kind, which is privileged because its members have possessed money for at least two generations, and have therefore had the advantages of upbringing and education which money can supply and which lifts them into a superior 'caste'. The privilege of money and the indignities resulting from the lack of it, were always in Galsworthy's mind, and the class so privileged in England was the object of a great deal of his criticism. He understood 'caste' as a distinction of money quite as often as of blood.

In The Silver Box, perhaps the most famous of his plays, though his first (1), he enlarges upon the theme of the privileges of the rich man and his son before the law, and the parallel handicaps of the working man, before that same law. The latter is judged by one not of his own class and therefore not qualified to see his sins in

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(1) First performed London, Sept., 1906.

quite the same light as those of the higher caste. On the other hand the failings of the magistrate's own class, seen subjectively, tend to become peccadilloes. The magistrate , a middle class, educated man, censures Jones for drunkenness, when he is up in court for theft, and yet laughs in an avuncular manner when young Jack Barthwick, who ought to be up on the same charge, admits to having had enough champagne to render him entirely unconscious of his surroundings on the night of the theft, and sufficient to help a convenient loss of memory. It is all quite amusing to the magistrate who can doubtless remember similar jolly, middle-class festivities in his own youth, when champagne, the drink of privileged roysterers, was the means to gaiety. This amusement of the magistrate, however, is obstructing the course of justice for he might well have been insisting that Jack Barthwick find his happily elusive memory and reconstruct the circumstances of the crime, but instead he shares a 'caste' laugh with one of the two criminals.

Galsworthy makes many brilliant social criticisms in this exactly balanced play but, far from being over-emphasized, this incident, illustrating the intangible 'caste' affinity between even the most honest magistrate and his own class, was probably unnoticed, through its sheer

lack of emphasis (1) by most spectators, though they could hardly fail to appreciate the broad general idea of a law for the rich and another one for the poor. The Silver Box, is a play dealing more with the question of justice than with the more restricted problem of caste, so it will be dealt with later, from that point of view, in the next subsection.

The Eldest Son is the play which deals particularly with the question of a privileged class. The privileged class in The Eldest Son fulfil the complete requirements of 'caste' by being both hereditarily and financially distinguished, and they show by their actions in the drama that they really do expect to be governed by a broader code of morals than that by which the humble working people on their estate must live, though they would never admit it. Galsworthy advances one of his favourite convictions that human nature is fundamentally the same in all classes and that privilege, carrying responsibility, is a very dangerous thing, which will be abused, even if unconsciously, by the fairest-minded people once the

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(1) One line covers the entire point in the play:

Magistrate: (smiling) Oh! You'd had too much champagne?

Then the dialogue turns to a different subject. The actor playing the part of the magistrate must show by his attitude alone that he considers a champagne 'drunk' humorously reprehensible whereas a beer 'drunk' is disgusting.

question touches them personally. A strict code is an admirable thing for other people to live by. Galsworthy gives this ironic verdict again and again, in this play. However, with "judge not lest ye be judged" whispering through his mind, he makes Sir William Cheshire pass judgement on an offender and then have his judgement brought home to his own door. Irony is apparent in all Galsworthy's plays, yet, whether irony is paramount in all of them or not, (1) it is nowhere more bitingly employed than in The Eldest Son, which is the perfect example of a social problem revealed in a lightning-flash of clarity so that all may see it, even if they lose sight of it immediately afterwards.

The scene is the Cheshire's country house. Freda Studdenham, Lady Cheshire's maid, waits at the bottom of the stairs to give flowers to the various guests who are all introduced as they descend for dinner. Freda divulges in conversation with Dot, one of the daughters of the house, that Rose Taylor, a village girl, is going to have a baby and the young father is unwilling to marry her. Last of all comes the eldest son, Bill Cheshire, who has

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(1) From first to last Galsworthy has not written one single play in which the irony of things is not paramount. John Galsworthy. A Survey. Leon Schalit, p. 221. Scribners N.Y.1929.

It would seem that Leon Schalit has slightly over-emphasized this quality.

previously been away to the seaside with Freda, with the result that she is also in the same position as Rose Taylor. Freda hints to Bill that she has 'something to say' to him. The guests discuss a play which they hope to produce over the holidays. Freda's father, the head gamekeeper, brings word to Sir William that young Dunning is still unwilling to marry Rose; but Sir William says he must do so. "There's an unwritten law in these matters," he says, "they are perfectly well aware that when there are consequences they must take them." He overrides Dunning's attempts at explanation, and misgivings concerning the promiscuous tendencies of his future wife, and bluntly orders him to marry her or get out. As Dunning has an aged mother entirely dependent upon him this attitude seems rather autocratic, but Sir William does not wish to waste any time over the problem.

In the second act Lady Cheshire catches Freda and Bill kissing, and he lets out the terrible news. She is horrified and feels that the marriage would never be a success between her son, a gentleman, and Freda, a house-maid, admirable as Freda has always seemed in all other respects. It would be a marriage between the classes and it would never work out. At this point the amateur players appear and the play they have

appropriately chosen is T.W.Robertson's Caste. (1)

The third act, which is highly dramatic and very compressed, opens with the whole family in the secret except Sir William Cheshire, whose return they are apprehensively expecting. The conversation as they wait is illuminating; particularly the common-sense remarks of Dot who thinks Bill could do worse than marry Freda and disappear with her, and foresees an extremely bad parliamentarian in Bill if he should stay in England and go into politics in the casual way of his class. Sir William and Bill have their first meeting off stage and then Sir William enters the room. Everyone leaves and Lady Cheshire and he discuss the fantastic dilemma. He says that the marriage is impossible and that he won't stand for it. He asks Lady Cheshire to speak to Freda, and, when she says she has tried and could

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(1) It is interesting to note the remark of Dot, the girl who chose Caste for the family play.

Mabel: What ever made you choose Caste, Dot? You Know it's awfully difficult.

Dot: Because it's the only play that's not too advanced.

The implication here seems to be that the world of Sir William Cheshire(and the world of the country squirearchy generally) was about level with the ideas of T.W.Robertson -- the 1860's- and therefore was some fifty years behind the thought of 1912 when The Eldest Son was first performed(although it had been actually written three years earlier).

not get the words out, declares that he will deal with her himself. Lady Cheshire sends Freda to him and Sir William tries to tell her that she deserves no more sympathy than does his son and that he is completely against any idea of marriage. He does it half-heartedly and without delivering any ultimatum. Instead he tells Bill that he will cut him off from everything if he persists in going through with the marriage; which successfully reverses his philosopny of morality, as it had applied the day before to young Dunning and Rose Taylor. Bill, however, refuses to be coerced and insists on 'doing the right thing' even though he no longer loves Freda.

The climax comes as old Studdenham, Sir William's head gamekeeper, comes and announces that young Dunning has decided that he must bow to Sir William's decision and marry Rose Taylor. The whole scene is filled with irony and the tension of tremendous interest as the old gamekeeper tries to take in the dreadful news, which is like a kick in the face to him. He painfully absorbs the story, bit by bit, between bewilderment and anger, and then asks, in turn, Bill, Lady Cheshire and Sir William, what they have to say. Bill says he will marry Freda; Lady Cheshire makes no reply, and Sir William has to come into the open and declare that he intends to cut his son off without a penny if he fulfils the 'custom of the country' and marries Freda. Studdenham

resents this, but he first asks Freda what she is going to do. Freda, after a pitiful silence of self-questioning, covers her face and exlaims "No!" A great sigh of relief escapes Sir William, which infuriates old Studdenham who feels the sense of 'caste' superiority in the sigh of relief; furthermore he becomes aware that he and his daughter, the humblest, and perhaps the worthiest people in the room, have been sinned against, and that a different morality is being applied to Freda from that brought to bear on young Dunning. He exclaims: "Don't be afraid, Sir William! We want none of you! She'll not force herself where she's not welcome! She may ha' slipped her good name but she'll keep her proper pride. I'll have no charity marriage in my family."

It is noticeable that he makes no reference to the case of young Dunning, though he could have rubbed salt into Sir William's wound; and also that he keeps his dignity in front of the man who is his employer and whom he must have unconsciously thought of for years as a being apart, because of his superior 'caste'. (This sense of difference in 'caste' would be even stronger in the two protagonists, Studdenham and Sir William, than in the younger generation, as they were both born approximately in the 1850's.) Galsworthy makes the old gamekeeper stand solidly on his own pride and self-respect, and by doing so creates a bitter

indictment of the class which was so taken up with its position, its prestige and its snobbery that it was unwilling to submit to the penalties of a code of morality which it considered good enough to impose upon a lower 'caste'. The country gentry, or squirearchy, are suggested as being less honest and less sincere than the working man, who has no criterion by which to judge except his self-respect. It is the moral victory of self-respect over hypocrisy; though of course it is made clear that the hypocrisy is confined mainly to Sir William himself, and not his family, with his change of face from a feudal upholder of morality permitting no scandal in the village, to that of a man of ancient family refusing alliance with an inferior 'caste'. The question arises as to what Sir William would have said had Freda been of the same class as his son? Perhaps he would never have said "morality be damned", and might have insisted upon an arranged and loveless marriage since the important thing -- the class qualification -- was there? Or might he have thought that a lady had 'lost caste' through such an affaire and that his son had not?

It is just these questions which Galsworthy stimulates, and, though in this play he shows his sympathies with the Studdenhams, one feels that it is partly due to the fact that they are a necessary part of the machinery with which he is criticizing the unimaginative, self-satisfied country gentry, who have been known since the days of Arbuthnot for a lack

of speculation and an irritating smugness, or self-satisfaction, which has made the foreigner stigmatize the Englishman as a hypocrite. John Bull has no longer any associations with the famous Queen's musician, and had for some time been connected in everyone's mind with the choleric, well-fed country gentleman who, though short on ideas, was long on tradition, one of the foremost of which was undoubtedly the tradition of class distinction, which had made Disraeli refer to the English as the "two nations". Galsworthy twice makes reference to Sir William as being a 'John Bull' and we can assume that he had the limitations of the type of John Bulls in his mind when he did so, one of which undoubtedly was class consciousness. This is the more evident when one remembers that The Eldest Son was written in 1909 and that it took the Great War to bring the first real changes in this very definite social alienation between the classes in England.

Galsworthy is the critic of his own class. It is on criticism of his own class, and on his knowledge of his own people, that his major work, the Forsyte Saga, stands as the social history par excellence of literature. One can therefore assume that he knew the Sir William Cheshires of England and wished to bring their skin-deep

morality to public attention.

Another and different treatment of 'caste' is shown in Loyalties. As the title of the play suggests the subject goes further than a mere treatment of the caste problem and becomes an infinitely varied playing upon a series of loyalties which react and show their opposites -- prejudices. It is a very subtle play in which the skilful parallels and neat interweaving of similar, but different, ideas suggest, as do many of Galsworthy's plays, that the author had a mathematical mind.

The caste problem proper is that of the Jew in the society of the early twentieth century. It is cleverly demonstrated and there is always Galsworthy's umpire-like impartiality, (1) to put both points of view. He has been called an anti-Semite and he has been called a pro-Semite, as he was called a pro-Laborite and a pro-Capitalist after Strife, and yet, strong as the case might be made to appear for believing in his partisanship, anyone knowing Galsworthy's mind at all would be certain of his detachment, and his desire to give fair play. Leon Schalit said, "that

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(1) "Let me try to eliminate any bias and see the whole thing as should an umpire - one of those pure beings in white coats, purged of all the prejudices, passions and predilections of mankind. . . . . .Only from an impersonal point of view am I going to get even approximately at the truth.

Another Sheaf John Galsworthy. p.12.

Galsworthy had not the slightest intention of writing a 'pro-Semite' play. Apart from the cosmopolitan touch which most great artists possess, Galsworthy is so English in every fibre of his being that he would assert, indeed has asserted, that he is neither sufficiently interested nor competent enough, to treat of specifically Jewish problems." (1) A few lines further down he records that in "New York, in Vienna, Berlin and other German towns, this play, which has made Galsworthy famous everywhere, has roused the furious anger, the burning indignation of all extremists, Gentile or Jew, without however any effect on its triumphant career." (2) One could hardly have a better reason for supposing this play to have been written by one striving to be an "umpire - one of those pure beings in white coats." Galsworthy spent forty years of his life criticising the English, without ever drawing one single villain (Soames not excepted).
It seems the height of prejudice to cry 'Anti-Semite' when he criticizes one Jew, of a special type, and, far from making him the villain, brings him out of the play

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(1) John Galsworthy. A Survey. Leon Schalit. p. 295. Scribners N.Y.1929.

(2) Ibid.

with rather more credit (1) than most of the instruments of tragedy(in this case suicide) can usually claim, and certainly with more credit than his opposing English protagonist, Dancy, who is a thief, a philanderer, and a man who makes money on a 'certainty' by accomplishing a jump, for a bet, of which he knows he is capable. Dancy, incidentally, betrays the trust of his friends and his wife, and abuses the hospitality of another friend. De Levis, the Jew, is far from perfect, as is natural, and Galsworthy shows his weaknesses, and also in doing so, the prejudices of the English people who criticize him. In 1922, when he wrote Loyalties, Galsworthy knew nothing of this now general hyper-sensitivity concerning Jewish nature and character because, as far as he was concerned, it did not exist. He could look upon a Jew quite objectively and portray him upon the stage in almost as free a way as he could show Ferrand the Flemish 'bum', in The Pigeon, or Camille, the presumably immoral French maid, in The Family Man; furthermore these three characters are all used as means by which to criticize English people

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(1) For instance his penultimate speech in Loyalties:
Yes, I came to say -- that I overheard -- I am afraid a warrant is to be issued. I wanted you to realize it's not my doing. I'll give it no support. I'm content. I don't want my money. I don't even want costs. Dancy, do you understand?

(and of course English society), who react to them in their own particular ways, be they prejudiced or tolerant, foolish or philosophical. De Levis is not a bad character and he serves a definite purpose in the play, pointing the prejudices of English society. He is finally justified. Why all the outcry because he is not a loveable character?

The foregoing proves, at least that Galsworthy's treatment of this social problem is fair, and that it is as unbiased as a naturally impartial social observer could make it. The final proof must lie in the fact that extremists of both sides have taken it as attack against their own people.

Loyalties is so well-known and has so often been discussed from every point of view that it would be redundant here to discuss it again in detail, but there are several points, which serve particularly to illustrate the 'caste' problem, which must be mentioned. De Levis has lost £1,000 while staying in a country house and he suspects Capt. Dancy for a number of reasons, of having stolen it. He reports the "theft" to Winsor, the owner of the house, who tells General Canynge; both of the latter are friends of Dancy's and of the same 'caste' as Dancy. They are unwilling to believe that Dancy would

do any such thing and their unwillingness to entertain the idea goes a little too far, out of loyalty to a friend, and to a 'caste'. Moreover, although they do not say anything they disapprove visibly of various things in De Levis. They do not like his vividly-coloured dressing-gown and they do not like him hiding his money in his boot and locking his door, while he has a bath, because it is 'just not done'. It shows a low 'caste' suspicion. De Levis' money has been stolen however, and Galsworthy's inference is that De Levis is quite right in locking his door, to safeguard a large sum of money, and the 'caste' sense of honour is most obviously at fault since one of the elect has committed the theft! This sensible precaution of De Levis' in taking ordinary care of such a large sum of money as £1,000, his flamboyant dressing-gown and even his desire to get his money back, go against the inbred tastes of the upper middle class Englishman, but, after all is there anything wrong in any of these three things? They are all a matter of opinion, and a man who does these things and likes startling colours, though he may be just as good as the next man, is undoubtedly of a different 'caste' thinking so differently. It is precisely this point which Galsworthy demonstrates so clearly, illuminating the differences, prejudices and misunderstandings which separate the two kinds of peoples, and showing the weaknesses of both.

orthy does not make this sufficiently clear to some people it is only necessary to quote the character of Major Colford, who will frankly stand behind Dancy no matter what is proved against him. This is loyalty to one's friend, and indirectly to one's class, carried to the extreme where it is wrong, because it destroys justice. Major Colford almost believes that membership in the Army places a man above justice.

Galsworthy shows another caste -- that of the successful working-class -- and allows it to convict itself of prejudice and a certain dislike arising from envy.

Gillman: . . . I don't like -- well not to put too fine a point upon it -- 'Ebrews, they work harder; they're more sober; they're honest; and they're everywhere. I've nothing against them but the fact is -- they get on so.

Everyone knows this attitude but when Galsworthy shows it upon the stage, when he brings it to light so that it may be held up and looked at, in the person of a half-educated tradesman, then people are compelled to ask themselves, "is this right that a man should think like this?"

It is to be remembered that Loyalties is about loyalties to one's friends, wife, husband, club, profession (the Law, and the Police), the Army, to one's honour and to one's set, and it is only under the last loyalty that the 'caste' problem is demonstrated.

IV

Galsworthy was a lawyer, though he did not practise, and it is only natural that he should have a keen interest in the complicated workings of the Law in its efforts to arrive at Justice. It is also no wonder that he should consider the Law to be, like all human institutions, frequently fallible and unimaginative in its functioning, because the Law paid attention primarily to facts and he had a great disbelief in facts. Galsworthy's sympathy with his fellow-man was too great to maintain a perfectly legal cold-bloodedness and one pictures, as he studied for the Bar, his imagination giving life to the plaintiffs and defendants of long-dead law suits, before he had ever thought of using that imagination as a creative novelist and dramatist. The young clerk in Loyalties speaks for Galsworthy, when he says, "You see some rum starts, too, in a lawyer's office, in a quiet way." Galsworthy saw that Justice miscarried occasionally and he also discovered, in his own life as in the workings of the Law, the truth of the old saying - "Unto him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." In other words he realized that the rich man had a far better chance before the law than the poor man, even though, theoretically, all men are equal before the law. Another injustice was that the rich man also had not the "motive and the cue for passion" of the under-privileged and was able to solve many of the worries of his

personal life conveniently and legally by the ever-powerful means of money, where the underprivileged had either to go on suffering, or steal or break the law in some way, to relieve his anxieties.

It was from a background of this sort that there emerged two of the most powerful plays and scathing social comments of this century -- The Silver Box and Justice.

In The Silver Box the main theme is that the rich and the poor are not equal before the Law. Other minor themes are there, in abundance -- politics, unemployment, the "middle class morality" and the class problem, to mention the more obvious ones -- but its main theme is the same as the title of Justice, Galsworthy's other play upon a variation of the same subject, which is restricted tightly to two themes: that of the lack of imagination in the administering of the law and of the man-shattering system of solitary confinement. All the themes in both plays are worked out without sentimentality and with a grey realism which makes one feel, as one critic said of the court scene in Justice, as if one were actually witnessing a police court scene. The court is used to treat both social problems, (1)

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(1) "It is noticeable that the curtain rises no fewer than eight times on law courts, solicitors' offices, and the like. Four times we find ourselves within prison walls."

John Galsworthy as a Dramatic Artist, p.40,
R.H.Coats, Scribners, N.Y.1926.

and in Justice we are taken to the half-lit underworld, the prison cell itself, in case anyone might fail to understand the living death which is solitary confinement. One critic after watching the play, said it had realism.(1) This is worth mentioning as Justice was instrumental in bringing about prison reform, a considerable accomplishment for one play and, though an author's popularity frequently goes in cycles and Galsworthy is at the bottom of one now, the power of this play, as demonstrated by the effect of it, and its lasting popularity, must have been enormous.(2)

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(1) " A man who served a term of imprisonment was employed out of charity at the theatre, and after the first night of Justice the Manager, going his round, came across him sweeping out the theatre. The man stopped sweeping and said: "Thank you, Sir, for putting on that play." The Manager looked at him hard . . . . and asked: "Well is it true?" Every word."

Life and Letters p. 679. H.V.Marrot, Heinemann, London, 1935.

(2) "Winston Churchill, the new Home Secretary, and Ruggles-Brise, head of the Prison Commission, both witnessed it, the first with sympathy, the second with a sinking sensation. His eyes were observed to start out of his head, according to an eye-witness."

Extract from Galsworthy's Notebook, Life and Letters, p.261, Heinemann, London, 1935.

There are not many plays which have, directly and immediately, been followed by the alleviation of the evil at which the author was aiming. Mr. Churchill, who was then Home Secretary and who saw Justice, was gripped by it and said modestly that, in effecting prison reform, he had ploughed with Galsworthy's oxen.(1) His treatment, then,of this problem was one of tense realism, deep feeling and originality.

The opening scene of The Silver Box shows young Jack Barthwick, son of a liberal M.P., returning home intoxicated and being let in by Jones, a half-intoxicated out-of-work. Jack Barthwick has stolen a purse"out of spite" from a girl friend and, after he has given Jones a drink in lieu of payment for his help, he tells him of this incident. Jones, an embittered man without a job, despises Jack, and his class, and, affected to some extent by the whiskey, he takes the purse and a silver cigarette box, from precisely the same motive.

Next morning Jones' wife, who helps in the house,

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(1) "So far from feeling the slightest irritation at newspaper comments assigning to you the credit of prison reform, I have always felt uncomfortable at receiving the easily won applauses which come to the heads of great departments whenever they have ploughed with borrowed oxen and reaped where they have not sown."

Letter from Winston Churchill: Ibid, p.684.

is suspected of the theft; but first one hears that Jones beats her and drinks too much and that she has a struggle to feed her three children. The eldest of these children, incidentally, caused the Jones' marriage, which is very disgusting to Mrs. Barthwick's sensitive morality (though this sensitive morality does not oblige her to help the unhappy woman and her three children, who, through no fault of their own, are on the way to starvation). We also discover that Jack Barthwick is a thoroughly spoiled young man who has run into debt and given a cheque on an overdrawn account but, owing to his father's money, he is able to square this. The young lady of the night before turns up after breakfast demanding her money. Again Mr. Barthwick Senior is able to pay his son's debts and get him out of trouble. A conviction begins to arise that Jack Barthwick is worse than Jones because he at least should know better than Jones.

The next scene is the poverty-stricken room of Mr. and Mrs. Jones. Mrs. Jones is trying to make a stew with some vegetables and a small piece of bacon which the cook has given her. Jones is seen to be an ordinary man, who has been driven nearly out of his mind through unemployment, with weaknesses but with incipient good qualities too. Detective Snow comes in, sees the silver box on the bed and arrests Mrs. Jones for stealing it. Jones, furious at the accusation of his wife, attacks him

but is overpowered with the help of a policeman who arrests Jones, as well as his wife, though he confesses to stealing the silver box.

Meanwhile Mr. Barthwick Senior is on the horns of a dilemma, and he calls his solicitor to get him out of the dreadful situation. If Jones talks too much in court it will be made public that his own son had done exactly the same thing that Jones was being tried for. The lawyer, Roper, is one of those fox-like lawyers who is interested only in winning his cases and saving his clients, and has no ethical beliefs in the sanctity of Justice. His job is to get young Barthwick off, though he knows he is just as guilty as Jones, and he counsels the young man to make no effort to remember what happened on the night of the theft of the silver box. As the scene ends a child is heard sobbing outside the window. It turns out to be Mrs. Jones' eldest child who is waiting for his mother.(1) Mrs. Barthwick cannot stand the crying and asks the butler to shut the window. She does, however, suggest that they cannot go on with the prosecution, but

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(1) Galsworthy's hostile critics call this 'sentimentalism': but would not a child who had never known security, who had a drunken father and whose one comfort was his mother, come crying to her place of employment when she was inexplicably absent?

Mr. Barthwick says that it is too late to change their minds. He excuses himself with the remark, "it is out of our hands."

The final act opens with a scene in a London Police Court eight days later. Jones repeats that it was he who stole the box -- though he disagrees with the word 'stole'; which is an admirable touch, for every petty offender has the same horror of the word. Throughout the scene Jones makes attempts to describe the whole course of events, which would implicate young Jack Barthwick, but Roper, the skilled manipulator of the law, interrupts craftily on each occasion so that young Barthwick's share of the evening is never brought to light. The magistrate sentences Jones, who admittedly deserves some punishment, to a month's hard labour, while Jack Barthwick, who deserves it equally -- if not a trifle more -- gets off scot-free. His father's money (and position) have saved him for the third time. It has brought him a capable lawyer's services and the 'respectability' which turns away suspicion even when Jones' words have hinted that he knew more about the events than he would admit. Jones, furious, half-frantic with the injustice of it and his previous umemployment is led away, shouting with perfect justice: "Call this justice! What about 'im? 'E got drunk! 'E took the purse -- 'e took the purse but(in a muffled shout)

it's 'is money got 'im off! JUSTICE! " After Jones has been taken away young Jack Barthwick is immediately feeling very full of himself, in the manner of egotistical youth, but his father is subdued and nervous, perhaps thinking of the "prinicples" to which he always laid claim, and while he is in this mood the pathetic mother, who now has no job with which to feed her three children, approaches him in the hopes of retaining her employment. "Oh, Sir! " she asks, humbly. Barthwick hesitates, makes a shame-faced gesture of refusal and hurries out of court, reminding one of the words of another man who noticed that patient merit is often scorned by the unworthy.

The plot explains Galsworthy's treatment of the miscarriage of justice fairly thoroughly, without ever suggesting that the magistrate, who is the agent of justice is in the wrong.

The magistrate treats the case according to the book of rules and his smile at young Barthwick is perhaps not actually reprehensible because he feels a kinship with the youth, particularly with a youth of his own class, which is in fact part of himself and his past and which is quite unconscious. Furthermore, young Jack Barthwick is not accused of any crime and one cannot condemn a young man for having had a celebration when that revelry has not

resulted in a court charge. Jones is accused of a crime and the magistrate is probably tired of telling petty offenders that "drunkenness is no excuse." The drunkenness has contributed to the crime, so the drunkenness becomes a crime. Jack Barthwick also is young and without personal responsibilities, whereas Jones is older and is married and the father of three children. Jones should not get drunk while Jack Barthwick is only hurting himself in doing so. The magistrate, then, is not to blame, though he is handicapped from dispensing completely unbiased justice by this treatment (unconsciously) of the people in the dock as two different classes, instead of treating them all merely as people.

Even the policemen treat the Barthwicks as rather superior people, through their respect for position, education or class, or whatever it may be, and would look upon Jones as likely to be guilty where they would look upon young Barthwick as unlikely to be guilty. It is obvious that Jones has reason to steal and it is equally obvious that Jack Barthwick has no reason to steal. Justice, therefore, is slightly influenced by a man's money and position before the machinery of the law even starts to turn over. But the policemen are not to blame.

After the wheels start to turn the poor man has

difficulty in making himself heard above the noise but the rich man can hire himself a potent mouthpiece to state his case. He can also pay his mouthpiece a good deal of money in order to push forward creditable facts and to keep discreditable ones in the background or in complete darkness. Galsworthy knew that there were plenty of these vulpine lawyers and he showed us one in Mr. Roper, but Mr. Roper is not a villain. He is just the man living next door; or perhaps the man who is living in our house. But the point is that Galsworthy does not fix all of the blame upon Roper.

Galsworthy did not suggest that Mr. Barthwick Senior was a treacherous double-dealer either, but he made him a weak man who was a confirmed hypocrite without ever being aware of it. Galsworthy deliberately says that Barthwick "yielding to his nerves" makes a gesture of refusal and hurries from the court when Mrs. Jones implores him for a continuation of her employment. Nor is Mrs. Barthwick wicked. She is the slave of her conventions and of her class environment. She is of course narrow and self-satisfied. She is shocked at Mrs. Jones getting married because a baby was on the way, because it is not 'respectable', without realizing that Jones could not afford to get married before his marriage any more than he could afford to when he did get married. But in spite of her narrowness, willingness to judge other and her stupidity, she does have a moment of compunction and

suggests that they drop the prosecution. She is, then, not responsible for the disaster.

Young Jack Bartwick is perhaps the most unpleasant character of all but Galsworthy doesn't make him the villain either, because he is after all very young and just enjoying life like a young puppy without much thought for anything else. So, though he is entirely unimaginative and irresponsible, he is not altogether to blame.

The detective and the policemen are quite kindly and merely do their jobs, which are unpleasant ones, as inoffensively as possible. The result is that nobody is particularly evil and yet we have gross injustice done, in that two men equally guilty are treated in opposite ways--one gets a month's hard labour and a stain on his name for life and the other goes scot-free.

The question arises as to what Galsworthy thought might be done about the problem of the inequality of justice? The answer to that is the improvement of society through the improvement of each individual within himself. It is Galsworthy's rather vague, rather idealistic, creed. When each man has become aware of his shortcomings, he can take steps to eliminate them by using a little imagination and saying,"That, unfortunately, is just what I do." Galsworthy's peculiar merit is to show just what the ordinary man does do, and to inspire a dislike for it in the audience,

and therefore he can be called a moralist. He had no detailed or definite plans for the creation of an equal law for the rich and the poor because he knew that in this imperfect world there could be no such plan. "For him the task lies," said Leon Schalit, " in the unrolling of the problem, not in its solution. The unrolling of the problem should serve to make us think and reflect, to make us realize, to awaken our interest in what is hitherto unknown to us, or viewed in a wrong light. We ought to understand, not to condemn, to try to approach one another and be conciliatory." (1)

His treatment of this problem in The Silver Box is, as Leon Schalit put it, "the unrolling of the problem" so that it will "serve to make us think and reflect." He puts the routine of an everyday police court on the stage, and by the use of the selective powers of the artist gives us a coherent whole, all of which demonstrates convincingly that the rich man holds all the cards.

Galsworthy makes the children and their mother pathetic so that through sympathetic feeling we may come to intellectual enlightenment.

Any charge of sentimentalism brought against the

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(1) John Galsworthy. A Survey, p. 219, Leon Schalit. Scribner's N.Y.1929.

treatment of this problem in the Silver Box, must come from a man who is afraid of life because what we see is truth.

A further aspect of the problem is treated in Justice. If the problem treated in The Silver Box is the inequality of the law, then the question treated in Justice is that of its harshness, particularly when there is not a sufficient allowance made for the mind, character, temperament, and temptation of the culprit.

The subsidiary, and what was probably the original theme, is the torture of a man subjected to three months solitary confinement. Galsworthy's imagination was very powerful (perhaps the anti-sentimentalists would have it that because a novelist's imagination is always powerful he tends to suffer from an occupational disease in the form of an over-sensitive imagination) and he was appalled at the mental agony which a man must suffer through being left a prey to his own thoughts, without relief of any kind, for three months, particularly if he were a sensitive, neurotic or weak-minded person. He was of course quite right, and he knew whereof he spoke, because he had visited prisons in England and on the Continent, with the intention of finding out how much harm was being done and how it was being done. In these prisons he found evidence that some men were driven

to the verge of madness by solitary confinement.

Galsworthy realised that nearly every man enduring solitary confinement had had some strong reason for unhappiness which had driven him to commit the crime for which he was deprived of his liberty, and that his arrest and confinement had necessarily caused the unhappiness to remain unassuaged, with the result that his wife or children, or whoever it was he might have hoped to benefit from his breach of the law, were at the time of his solitary confinement suffering exactly as they had been before, with the misery of his imprisonment, and consequent powerlessness to help them, in addition. In other words, a man in the most unhappy frame of mind, deprived of his liberty, was compelled to sit and brood over his affairs when they were at the lowest ebb. It amounted to an order to worry, sanctioned by the law, and there could be no worse form of torture; unless, of course, a man had great reserves within himself, which was unlikely in a man who had been weak enough to give way and to commit a crime in the first place.

The condition of Falder, the young clerk who forged the cheque in Justice, when he was in solitary confinement, may be taken as a fairly typical case of what many young criminals (Galsworthy would have called him a'wrong-doer') might have suffered -- and it is melancholy to contemplate:' he was in love and that is apt to hit a

a man hard at any time; the woman he loved was suffering through lack of money and was in constant danger of being either beaten up, or murdered, by her drunken huband; she had three children to support; she felt that she had caused his ruin; she was worried about him as she loved him, and finally he was not allowed to communicate with her for the whole three months of 'solitary' or to find out how she was weathering the storm. These form an impressive list of worries for even a strong man, and Galsworthy's hero, or rather representative human being, was a weak young man. He was compelled by law, however, to sit in a small cell and to worry about them, which he did. The one worry which never entered his head was that she might turn to prostitution, and that was the one which materialized; so that he worried for three months about things that never happened, while a rather worse one did happen.

Ths subsidiary theme, which, again, must seem to have been Galsworthy's starting point, is demonstrated in the person of Falder after he reaches prison, in order to bring to attention an inhuman law.

This same law had been the cause of insanity among prisoners and it certainly did not cause an awakening of conscience in the average criminal, who was far more likely to become embittered and to turn into a thoroughly

anti-social being with a grudge against society and the world; or, there was always the danger that he would choose the way out which Falder chose, and commit suicide.

The main theme of the harshness of justice is a little unconvincing from the theatre of the arm-chair though it was evidently completely convincing in the real theatre, to judge from eye-witness accounts and from its effects.

But let us first consider a brief outline of the plot up to this point:

Falder, a clerk in a lawyer's office, forges a cheque in order to save Ruth Honeywill from a drunken and murderous hushand. He is in love and wishes to protect her and her three children. The forgery is done on the spur of the moment by adding a nought to a nine on one of the firm's cheques, but he makes his crime worse by allowing suspicion to fall on another, absent clerk. He is tried and there is an impassioned court scene in which the counsel for the defence urges Falder's temporary insanity at the moment of forgery, and has the whole story told in court in order to explain his temptations and his weakness. It does not seem to be convincing and the prosecution asks very justifiably, whether, "divested of the romantic glamour" which the defence is casting over the case", this is anything but an ordinary forgery?". And one feels inclined to agree with him, as do the jury and the judge.

The jury find that he was not out of his mind at the time of forgery and is therefore guilty, and the judge sentences him to three years penal servitude.

This embodies Galsworthy's conviction that the law did not make enough allowance for the individual, and that consequently it tended to make criminals where there were only incipient, or perhaps regretful, ones before. He did not, of course, believe that forgers should go unpunished but he did believe that the punishment should fit the crime, and the criminal too. He also believed that every possible allowance should be made to first offenders. It will be interesting here to look at his treatment of this point of view more closely. Galsworthy himself can be heard in the person of the counsel for the defence, and it weakens the speech as it is not well disguised.

Frome, the counsel for the defence, first of all mentions the motive, which was caused by the violence committed upon Ruth Honeywill, and suggests that this is enough to work Falder up into a highly nervous state in which he might easily act blindly,with complete irresponsibility and in a sense without sanity, and commit a crime in a moment which could never be undone. He says: "but I do contend that, just as a man who destroys himself at such a moment may be, and often is, absolved from the stigma attaching to the

crime of self-murder, so he may, and frequently does, commit other crimes while in this irresponsible condition, and that he may as justly be acquitted of criminal intent and treated as a patient. I admit this is a plea which might well be abused. It is a matter for discretion . . . . "(1)

This is Galsworthy himself speaking.

Frome then points out that young Falder, whom he wisely calls a 'boy', is a weak character but not a vicious one, and stresses that "there is nothing more tragic in life than the utter impossibility of changing what you have done."(2)

Owing to one short moment of weakness, Frome says, "the boy before you has slipped through a door, hardly opened, into that great cage which never again quite lets a man go -- the cage of the Law." (3)

Galsworthy is arguing here too as a propagandist -- cages were one of his aversions -- or as an artist, but not as a lawyer, for he knows that no honest jury can find Falder " Guilty, but insane."

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(1) Justice , Act 11, John Galsworthy.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid

Frome continues with his plea, in words which represent John Galsworthy's own opinions, demanding lenience, imagination and prison reform. (They fall strangely, be it said, from a lawyer's lips.) He pleads: " Gentlemen, men like the prisoner are destroyed daily under our law for want of the human insight which sees them as they are, patients and not criminals. If the prisoner be found guilty and treated as though he were a criminal type he will, as all experience shows, in all probability become one." (1)

Galsworthy here gives Max Beerbohm some justification for these ideas are very much out of place, in a court of law,and didacticism threatens realism. Frome might be delivering an impassioned speech to amend the Law, in the House of Commons, but it hardly seems to be his legitimate business in a law court to point out that some criminals are in reality "patients", and that some will," as all experience shows," become confirmed criminals after a term of penal servitude. It is all no doubt true, but it is a dramatic mistake immediately visible to a sophisticated

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(1) Justice, Act 11 John Galsworthy.

playgoer. Frome makes an even stranger statement a few lines later, when he asks, " .. . . is he to have another chance, to be still looked on as one who has gone a little astray, but who will come back?" One feels that the judge might well have mentioned to the jury and drawn to the attention of the counsel for the defence, that forging a cheque for ninety pounds, and allowing another man to be suspected of it, was going more than " a little astray."

However, though these are the sort of points which gave rise to the accusations of 'propagandist' and 'sentimentalist' against Galsworthy it must be remembered that the audiences if not the critics, have never failed to be gripped by Justice. A re-reading of the play also reveals this weakness but that is not quite fair to the playwright either.

Frome's defence ends with that Greek tone of tragic inevitability which sounds also in The Fugitive and Strife. He pictures to the stolid,unfeeling jury the remorselessness of that juggernaut which is the law: "The rolling of the chariot wheels of justice over this boy began when it was decided to prosecute him. We are now already at the second stage. If you permit it to go on to the third I would not give -- that for him." This is a dangerous speech from a dramatic point of view, carried off very well indeed, when one considers the

difficulty of putting Galsworthy's ideas into the mouth of Frome.

Cleaver, prosecuting, tears Frome's arguments to pieces in workman-like fashion, and in the very certainty of his actions, tone and manner Galsworthy shows the majesty and impersonality of the Law, looming over the apprehensive clerk in the dock. Cleaver arranges Falder's doom with quiet, cool detachment as if he were somewhat bored with a very ordinary, very common case and wished to hurry on to the next one. Falder shrinks to the tiny proportions of a fly caught in a gigantic web. Galsworthy's treatment of the theme becomes immediately different as he relaxes under the easy voice and manner of Cleaver saying exactly what Galsworthy had heard said a hundred times. For this speech, and for the judge's admirable summing up immediately afterward, he had merely to repeat,what he knew by training and by heart,with a few minor alterations. The fate of Falder lies in the tone of the judge and of Cleaver. They waste no time and sentence him, with absolute fairness, so that they may proceed with another day's work.

Falder, however, will not be free for the ordinary routine for another three years, and he will then be an ex-convict.

As the curtain falls cries of "Witnesses to the case

of John Booley" resound through the court, and the juggernaut rolls on.

V

The end of the nineteenth century had seen the emergence of a new power in England. Labour had become conscious of its strength, had united and was pressing for better conditions for the workers. The Independent Labour Party had been formed in 1893 and , cooperating with the F.U.C. and the Fabians, was developing a plan of campaign which was to result in twenty-nine members being elected to Parliament in 1906; or three years before the publication of Fraternity and Strife, which were respectively, the novel and the play by Galsworthy, most particularly emphasising the conditions of Labour, in contrast to his usual preoccupation with the Capitalist class. Labour, in other words,had just become a real threat to Galsworthy's class, or at least to the dividends of Galsworthy's class, but it must be added, in fairness, that they saw the threat to the status quo as the sure sign of anarchy, mob rule and violence.
It is liable to escape us that the middle classes of England, well into the beginning of the century, considered the lower classes as beings apart who were being very wicked when they presumed to raise themselves above "that walk of life into which it had pleased God to call [illegible] that as a cart-horse was

created to pull a heavy load so was a race-horse created to run a race, and that men were divisible into equally distinct classes -- the working man to wield the shovel and the upper class to wield the pen(ignoring completely the fact that the upper class were far more capable of wielding everything, from shovels to power, owing to their far better physique and training) and that any change from this established order would bring mob rule.(1) Superimposed upon this dominant upper class outlook in England which was to change largely by 1918, and immensely by 1945, the unconsciousness of new power in the amalgamating working class was the main characteristic of the social situation, at that particular time, when Galsworthy wrote Strife in 1909.

Strife was one of several plays of Galsworthy's which pleased people of conflicting ideas and even of opposite points of view. The treatment of the problem is fairer than one might well expect from anyone involved in the caste system to the extent that Galsworthy had been from birth. It is balanced, heavy weight for heavy weight and feather for feather, yet, one thinks, that indefinable sympathy for the unfortunates is there, particularly the women and the children, which makes one feel that Galsworthy was not quite impartial;

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(1) It is to be noted that, though he was as sympathetic to the working class as anyone, Galsworthy also had this horror of the mob, as is seen in the Forsyte Saga and The Patrician, The Mob and The Foundations.

but as soon as one reached that opinion one remembers the kindness and the moderation, the sympathetic quality, of Enid, daughter of the industrialist, old Anthony, of Underwood, the works manager, and of Edgar, old Anthony's son, all from the opposing camp of capital. The final result is that Galsworthy has written in Strife one of his greatest plays, by following one of his favourite axioms --"There are two sides to every coin." Furthermore, Anthony the obstinate, old-school fanatic, and Roberts the obstinate, new working-class fanatic, who, between them through their lack of tolerance and moderation, cause the misery of thousands of people, are both made to appear as sympathetic and even fine characters, but who create evil and suffering because of their refusal to see "that there are two sides to every coin." They do not follow the golden rule of moderation in all things, and so they lose themselves, and thousands with them.

It will be best to give an outline of this really excellent dramatic exposition of our major social problem today.

A strike in the Trenartha Tin Plate Works has been going on for six months. Roberts, the unbalanced 'iron' man of the workers has prevented settlement by asking for too high rates of pay, thus losing his men the support of

their Union. Anthony, the Chairman of Directors, is equally unbalanced owing to his failure to realize that times change. He has 'broken' the men every time they have struck the last thirty years and he is determined to break them again.

Roberts' men and Anthony's directors and shareholders are ready to agree, with both sides making allowances, when the curtain rises on a Board meeting in Wales, whither the directors have come to settle the dangerous situation, because the strike has so far cost the Company over fifty thousand pounds. Anthony, large, old and silver-haired, and first cousin to 'Old English', squashes all attempts at compromise among the directors. Several of them are in favour of reaching a compromise, including Underwood, the works manager, and Edgar, from humanitarian motives, and the other directors from financial motives, but Anthony overrides them all. "Better go to the devil than give in", he says, and when Wilder, the cadaverous, querulous director says that it may suit Anthony but that it doesn't suit him nor any one else, Anthony merely stares at him. Edgar then breaks a business man's golden rule and mentions the women and children who are starving. Everyone is very shocked. This is an unethical suggestion in a financial conference. Of course nobody would ever make profits if they worried

about sentimental ideas. Wilder complains,"we can't go on ruining ourselves with this strike; " understood is the implication that it was all well and good so long as only the men and their families were suffering but now the dividends are in danger a compromise must be reached. Anthony reiterates, "No caving in! " There is something commendable about this doggedness; Anthony at least, though not up with his times, is not afraid of losing a little money, unlike the others. At this point Galsworthy holds up to the light an old and corrupt practice which was considered merely as 'good business' in the days before patents became foolproof. Roberts, the leader of the strike, had invented a new industrial method and had been paid £700 for it but the Company had made a hundred thousand from it. Roberts not unnaturally complained of this. "The man's a rank agitator," says Wilder, on hearing this, and goes on with, "Look here! I hate the Unions. But now we've got Harness here, let's get him to settle the whole thing." Of course Wilder hates the unions, because they are, as their name suggests, unions of labour to prevent profiteers like himself from working the men on a starvation wage. The Union is in fact the just and equitable mediator in Strife, between the outrageous demands of both Labour and Capital. The Union refused to back the Trenartha men because they demanded more than Union rates of pay for two trades, and

Galsworthy probably thinks of the Union as a stabilizing force -- representing moderation-- and perhaps as the means to solution of Capital-Labour battles.

Harness comes in and the directors look at him, and draw together "like cattle at a dog." He is disturbing as the representative of a growing power in the land --- "The power of the dog," as Wilder and Anthony might well think of it or, as Harness himself might put it, "the power of the under-dog." Harness is at any rate very sure of himself and asks for some concessions for the men; he warns that the Union may any moment back them if the directors do not come half way. There follows a very amusing and also very enlightening little exchange between Harness, Scantlebury and Wilder. The points of view have not changed in forty years and perhaps never will:

Scantlebury: Cant you persuade the men that their interests are the same as ours?

Harness (turning ironically) I could persuade them of of that, sir, if they were.

Wilder: Come, Harness, you're a clever man, you don't believe all the Socialist claptrap that's talked nowadays. There's no real difference between their interest and ours.

Harness: There's just one very simple question I'd like to ask you. Will you pay your men one penny more than they force you to pay them? (at which Wilder is silent.)

Now, in the days of John L.Lewis, and the annual spring strikes we see the lasting truth of this remark. Force has more effect than idealism, in business, and man is a competitive animal who has to struggle for existence against his fellow man. This was the way Galsworthy looked upon the relations between Capital and Labour and so long as there was no hypocrisy he felt that even the oppressor had some sort of defence of his point of view. A favourite expression of both 'Old English' (Sylvanus Heythorpe), and old Anthony is "cant". (1) Anthony, dominating the directors, gives a refusal to the men's demands for all the directors, before the men are received.

The men come in equally dominated by Roberts. The opening remarks are plainly hostile. Roberts says bluntly that it is for the directors to say what they have to say and Anthony replies, " the Board has nothing to say." "In that case," replies Roberts, "we're wasting the directors' time." He starts to marshall the men out but there is first a short, bitter exchange in which Roberts refers to "champagne" for lunch, and "Justice from London," with an icy sneer in the accepted proletarian manner.

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(1) Harness asks "Barring the accident of money aren't they as good men as you?" To which Anthony replies "Cant". He doesn't think they are.

Anthony then says in the manner of any good Victorian: "There can only be one master, Roberts"; meaning undoubtedly himself, in the singular, and not the other directors. Roberts bursts out, "Then, be God, it'll be us," with an unconscious change of number showing that he thinks of the two opposing groups of Capital and Labour as the enemies. Finally Roberts exclaims to Wilder, supposedly something of a radical. "If you can get the God of Capital to walk through the streets of Labour, and pay attention to what he sees you're a brighter man than I take you for, for all that you're a Radical." This use of the word "God" (far more upsetting in 1909 than in 1949) was calculated to upset the audience as nothing else could. It was indicative, in a sense, of godlessness or blasphemy, hinting at the terible state to which the oppressed workers had been brought. Their faith in God evidently had been shaken. Thomas, the religious man, is shown to be divorced from reality and Roberts looks upon him as a near fool. This point leads back to the original quarrel. Anthony and Roberts then have the question out, paying no attention to the others. They represent the irresistible force and the immovable object. They are the two extremes who will always prevent common-sense from having fair play, according to Galsworthy's philosophy, and when they collide disaster will result automatically. He hates both of their philosophies but grudgingly respects the men themselves,

as he liked all men with the courage of their convictions. Either Roberts or Anthony would have won without the other in opposition but they both have their immoderate pride, which unfortunately carries others with it. This quarrel makes a fine scene. It is a case of Greek meeting Greek. Roberts declares that the men will not take back one demand from the list which they have submitted. Roberts warns Anthony that he knows the Company is in a bad way and he tells Anthony that he is fighting his last fight against the workers because this time the men will starve sooner than back down. He intimates that he has the men under an iron control. After the men have been marshalled out by Roberts, Enid tries to persuade old Anthony to compromise, but he has the outlook of a previous generation. When Enid argumentatively says she does not "believe in barriers between classes," old Anthony can only repeat her words, astounded, "You -- don't ---- believe --- in ----- barriers -- between the classes?" He had never expected to hear such tomfoolery from a daughter of his. The two, father and daughter, are of a different generation, and a generation apart is often a world apart. Enid is represented as one of the more open-minded new generation who is sympathetic to the idea of an equal chance for everyone, and Galsworthy expressly

portrays her as a sensible young woman, who still has her class inhibitions however. (1) Tench, the secretary, also tries to persuade Anthony and tells him that the Directors are not in agreement with him. Even Frost, the servant, tries to influence the old man. Anthony will not budge. He represents Capital, as Roberts represents Labour, and they are both unreasonable.

Act 11 opens with the gloomy contrast of Roberts'unheated, comfortless cottage, where his wife is dying of malnutrition, unknown to the workers' fanatical leader. The women who are visiting Annie Roberts

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(1) In the first scene of Act 11 the conventional arguments are put, with fine irony, in the mouth of the kindly Enid who comes out with a series of appalling platitudes and a faux pas while defending her own well-fed class to a starving woman.

Enid: You all seem to think the shareholders are rich men , but they're not -- most of them are really no better off than working men.

Mrs. Roberts smiles.
Enid: They have to keep up appearances.

Mrs. Roberts: Yes, M'm?

Enid: You don't have to pay rates and taxes and a hundred other things that they do. If the men didn't spend such a lot in drinking and betting they'd be quite well off!
Mrs. Roberts: They say, workin' so hard, they must have some pleasure.
Enid: But surely not low pleasure like that.
Mrs. Roberts: (a little resentfully) Roberts never touches a drop; and he's never had a bet in his life.

Enid: Oh but he's not a com- I mean he's an engineer -- a superior man.

are against Roberts as they realize that his extreme demands have caused their misery, and consequently many of the men are also discontent with his leadership. Enid comes in to bring Mrs. Roberts, who used to be her maid, some soup and jellies but Roberts won't allow her to accept them; he is barely polite to Enid and fiercely independent. Madge Thomas uses her influence over Rous, Roberts' right-hand man, to make him forswear his allegiance to Roberts and also urges her father to make a stand against him. The next scene shows the men meeting on a piece of muddy ground by the factory with a pair of idly interested bargees watching indifferently. Harness, the Union representative, gives them sound, sensible advice, demanding moderation, and arguing that they gain one point at a time. Undoubtedly Galsworthy thinks the way Harness thinks. They argue back and forth, half for the Union and half against, when suddenly Rous, Roberts' trusted lieutenant , leaps to the platform and calls for an end to the strike. Roberts is amazed and the crowd is brought around entirely to Rous' submissive point of view before Roberts can speak. When he does speak he gives one of the best speeches in any of Galsworthy's plays and it must have enlightened the upper class London play-goers of 1909 considerably. He probably aimed it at their heads, knowing that anybody with any wealth at all (and London theatre-goers had

generally a little more than enough) would be very likely to draw dividends, in one way or another, from the sweat of underpaid Welsh coalminers and factory workers who were an important part of the exploited, underprivileged mass upon which England's industrial wealth was built. Many collected money quarterly but very few knew how their money multiplied itself, and of course they had little reason to be interested. Galsworthy showed them a few of the facts of life, as Shaw had done, more journalistically, in Mrs. Warren's Profession. Galsworthy was often accused of having no solution for the evils he showed but, who has yet discovered a better solution than moderation, tolerance and fair play? He unrolled the problem and many London audiences were forced to consider it, and their consciences. Could it be that Max Beerbohm drew dividends from Wales? Roberts' speech would not have made good hearing to these people as home-truths never do, especially if they are edged with hate, but the speech was so convincing to the men that it caused a volte face in their attitude. "We've won the fight! " he says, because his intuition told him that this was true when he looked into the eyes of the directors and saw that they were frightened. Anthony was the only man(the other extremist) who was prepared to lose money for a principle. He too would suffer, as Roberts would, for a point which he believed was important -- that of saving the country from anarchy and

mob rule, and a nightmarish proletarian state, which he thought he saw coming if the workers were yielded to and given an inch. Roberts knows that Anthony will never yield but he is sure that the directors will make terms over his head. He knows that he is within an ace of winning the fight of his life against the man, Anthony, and the thing Capital, which he has hated all his life. He paints a ghoulish picture of Capital, "a white-faced stony-hearted monster," which they, the men,have succeeded in bringing to its knees, and he begs, in a half mystical exaltation, to be given a free hand to tell the Board to go back to London, empty-handed: "T'is not for this little moment of time ye're fighting-- (the murmuring dies down) not for ourselves, our own little bodies, and their wants, 't!is for all those that come after, throughout all time. (With intense sadness.) Oh! men! don't roll up another stone upon their heads, don't help to blacken the sky, and let the bitter sea in over them. They're welcome to the worst that can happen to me, to the worst that can happen to us all, aren't they? -- aren't they? If we can shake (passionately) that white-faced monster with the bloody lips, that has sucked the life out of ourselves, our wives and children since the world began . . . . . "

Here is the true revolutionary, dedicated to his

cause by a fanatic will to change the system of life which has been so bitter for him and his. Here is the part-mad firebrand, with the asceticism and the fervour of an ancient prophet,who can sway the men with his fierce, burning hatred to sacrifice their already starving wives and children, to further starvation and misery and household desperation. Roberts ranks with any dramatic creation of the revolutionary ever written, because he speaks with the tongues of men and of angels and , though he has not charity, he is absolutely and utterly convincing in every word he says. He is one of the lean and hungry men who does not sleep at nights because of the fury that has been growing within him since his bleak and barren childhood. This rage against the world's injustice, gnawing at his innards, has unbalanced him and condemned him to physical sterility, for he denied his right to bring children into a world which was so grotesquely unjust. Galsworthy has put a character upon the stage in Roberts who is a symbol of revolution, a grim warning, a type of labour leader and an unforgettable figure in all his personal mannerisms and thoughts. The positive effect of a play is hard to judge, because when a calamity is averted one is never able to tell whether it would ever have happened, but Strife must have had positive results, for the glass is held up to nature with a vengeance. One feels that even the phlegmatic nature of the British people must have been sorely tried by conditions such as

those exposed in Strife, and that therefore Galsworthy's timely warning may have eased the strain on them. The unhappy Roberts, however, is called upon to make good his words, that "they're welcome to the worst that could happen " to him, because he is told that his wife is dying in the moment of his fanatical exaltation of victory; whereupon he hurries off to her bedside and finds her dead. Even this does not beat him. He returns, in the final act, with his head unbowed, still fighting. The men after having been won over by his oratory are persuaded to desert him by his trusted right-hand man George Rous, whose motive is merely to satisfy a young woman -- his fiancée.

Act 111 opens in the Underwoods' house where Enid and Edgar are sitting in Enid's extremely comfortable drawing room discussing her visit to Mrs. Roberts, which has irritated her out of some of her broadmindedness towards the working classes. Enid says: " . . . people talk about sympathy with the working classes, they don't know what it means to try and put it into practice. It seems hopeless," she decides, repeating words which many would-be social workers have said. Edgar suggests that his father will be voted down because the directors are scared. Roberts' intuition of victory was right, but he too had ignored the golden rule and disregarded others.

An excited scene follows among the directors, one of whom has just insulted Anthony, upon the news of the death of Annie Roberts. They react differently, manifesting fear, nervousness and some guilt; Edgar is completely disgusted that they have managed, instead of starving the men out, "to starve one woman out", and insists that they hand the whole thing over to Harness to settle immediately. Before the delegation of the men is called in Anthony makes a convincing 'old Guard' defence of his policies with regard to strikes. He is badly out-dated in his views on labour relations but he has complete freedom form hypocrisy, and a courage, which command respect. One of his remarks sounds a warning against too hasty and revolutionary changes: " . . . . . I am thinking of the future of this country, threatened with mob-government, threatened with what I cannot see. If by any conduct of mine I help to bring this on us I shall be ashamed to look my fellows in the face." He is convinced that the future and health of the country lie in the brains who are the guiding power behind the great mass of ignorant men who must be dragooned into order and productivity and kept down with an iron hand. This is a point of view which has for us scarcely more than an historical interest, but to many employers in 1909 it was the clarion call of Capital.

Anthony is however outvoted by the four directors, including his own son, who thus symbolizes the speed with which the world is changing in its outlook on social problems. Then the men enter, without Roberts. Rous says that Harness will speak for them. As he is about to speak Roberts hurries in looking haggard. He throws down the gauntlet, telling the Board to go back to London because the men will not take back one single jot or tittle of their demands. Anthony does not answer but stares at him. Slowly Roberts realizes that he has been sold out by his own men while he was at his wife's death-bed. The directors sign. Roberts looks at Anthony unable to believe that "the old robber" himself has signed, and then realizes that Anthony himself has been outvoted and has resigned. He breaks into half-crazed laughter and then, getting hold of himself, stares at Anthony with a new respect in his face. Anthony stares back and half salutes Roberts before he is assisted from the room.

Tench, looks at the paper and says excitedly to Harness: "D'you know, sir -- these terms, they're the very same we drew up together, you and I , and put to both sides before the fight began? All this -- all this -- and what for?

After these closing lines of the play it would be

superfluous to add any comment upon the treatment of this problem -- Galsworthy has put it in a nut-shell.

Strife was the only play in which Galsworthy whole-heartedly dealt with the Labour -Capital problem, but it is perhaps his finest play. In Anthony and Roberts, and to a lesser extent in Harness, we have three new characters added to the list of stage immortals, with the twentieth century figure of Roberts talking and battling in our minds, shadowily and invincibly, long after we have experienced Strife.

VI

Religion itself can hardly be classified as a social problem and yet the condition of religion in a country, and the acceptance or non-acceptance of it, has undoubted effects upon all the other social problems of that country; which makes religion of the greatest social importance. All the other problems depend upon religion more than is generally thought.

If one agrees that the foregoing statememts are true, what then is Galsworthy's treatment of religion? It is evident that England had not been suffering from an extreme state of control by an organised, dogmatic religion since the days of Cromwell, but it did feel, in Galsworthy's

time, the intangible control (in its ways of thinking and its conventional morality) of generally accepted religion. The Church of England, according to Galsworthy, had reached a stage which was a variation upon the obvious interpretation of Christianity; it placed greater emphasis upon the Old Testament, oddly enough, than upon the far too simple teachings of Christ, which were quite impossible to follow out for any commercially successful nation. Lip service was often paid to the teachings of Christ and the institution of the Church was as frequently revered -- the result being the form of Christianity so strictly observed by the Victorians and so severely criticized by Galsworthy. He felt that this form of religion did not prevent men from saying, contentedly, "the poor are always with us," and laying up treasure for themselves, although they professed to believe that moth and rust would corrupt it. He felt that men spoke of God and thought of Mammon. He was convinced that most of the religious observances of his day had become empty ceremonials; that many of the representatives of the Church had lost sight of the simplest thing, which was the teaching of Christ, and were preaching a complicated and man-made variation of it, which they tried to reconcile with other loyalties; as for instance, the Dean of Stour, in The Mob, who saw a duty to 'chastise' a backward people on whom sentiment was 'wasted'. Galsworthy felt that many clergymen were not following Christ, although he usually

gave them credit for believing that they were: "the trouble with most christians," he made one character say, "is that they aren't." Galsworthy in short, thought that Christ's teachings, for which he had a great reverence although he could not believe in the divinity of Christ,(1) offered the solution to a better system of society and he felt that the men who attempted to spread the teachings of Christ upon earth were not often sincere enough. The 'drawing-room' parsons, for instance, who had not followed the injunction to "provide neither gold nor silver nor brass" in their purses and who moved in circles where they were better able to save the souls of the rich than minister to the poor, he thought had failed from the start. He considered also that the Church had failed in its main purpose -- teaching and upholding the doctrines of Christ -- and that its members who were not doing good were in all probability doing harm.(2)

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(1) "As to a Christian: You see to anyone who rejects as untenable the actual divinity of Christ it is, I think, impossible to do more than accept and reverence a certain proportion of his sayings."
Letter to an unrecorded Correspondent.
Memories of John Galsworthy.p. 81 by His Sister, M.E.Reynolds, Robert Hale, London, 1936.

(2) It must be admitted that he sometimes felt a personal irritation at the clergy as some of his letters show, and extracts like the one following indicate: "Deuced odd, the way a parson puts one's back up."

The Eldest Son, Act 1, Scene 11

As a social commentator he attempted to show the clergy who had no great Christian 'drive' or inspiration, thinking perhaps that criticism was as healthy for the church as it was for any other important part of our society; especially when that part holds an intangible control over the habits of mind of our society, which control, Galsworthy felt, was divorced in many respects from the teachings of Christ. It must not be forgotten that Galsworthy also admired some representatives of the Church; the ones who attempted, like the Devonshire rector in Escape, to do, as closely as possible, what Christ would have done.

Seven of the Clergy appear in Galsworthy's drama of whom two are sympathetically portrayed. They are Michael Strangeways in A Bit O' Love, and the Rector, in Escape. Five representatives of the Church are more or less unsympathetically shown -- The Rev. John Latter in The Eldest Son, the Chaplain in Justice, Canon Edward Berteley in The Pigeon, the Dean of Stour in The Mob and the Rector in Hallmarked.

It would be over-simplifying it to say that those two clergymen who attempt to live the Christian faith represent Galsworthy's idea of the good points of religion and the Church, while those who merely preach it represent the bad, but this is one method of getting at Galsworthy's treatment of religion.

The Rector in Escape is a wonderful character and he remains in the memory as the ideal churchman, like Chaucer's country parson, who "was to sinful man nat despitous." He is full of humanity and kindness and is perhaps the most loveable of all Galsworthy's characters. Captain Matt. Denant has found himself in Dartmoor prison because, in a scuffle with a plainclothesman to defend an unfortunate prostitute, he has accidentally killed him. He escapes from Dartmoor and, with the hunt pressing him hard, takes refuge in the Church, where the dismayed Rector discovers him. The Rector's first reaction is one of sympathy. "Poor fellow," he says, knowing Denant's history. Matt tells him he had just come from the home of the two sisters who live across the way. The Rector divines immediately that the church-going Miss Grace wanted to throw him out and that the non-church-going Miss Dora wanted to shelter him. "Something wrong there; or is it something right?" he wonders questioningly. He tells Matt he cannot help him to escape but that if wants rest he is welcome to it. Matt asks him what Christ would have done. He replies: "That, Capt. Denant, is the hardest question in the world. Nobdoy ever knows. The more you read those writings the more you realize that He was incalculable. You see --- He was a genius! It makes it hard for us who, try to follow Him." (Gazing at Matt, who is sitting forward

with his elbows on his knees and his head on his hands)
"Very tired?"

He is immediately in doubt as to what his proper course of action should be. He is obviously thinking of the instructions of Christ with regard to conflicts of duty between religion and state. He is not sure whether he ought to render Matt unto Caesar or give him sanctuary, which he has unconsciously intended to do from the start. When the hunt catches up with Matt and pours into the Church, the parson does his best not give Matt away, in conformity with his decision presumably, to render unto God the things that be God's, and he nearly succeeds in not doing so. One of the suspicious farmers finally asks him, on his honour "as a Christian gentleman", whether he has seen the convict? The parson is silent. Before he can tell a lie Matt gives himself up. The farmer breaks into hunting expressions in his excitement, and there is something terribly sincere about the Parson's fierce rebuke: " Be quiet in this place ; and go out -- you shame God! This parson lingers in the memory; furthermore he shows that Galsworthy was not a confirmed clergy-hater.

Michael Strangeway, in A Bit O' Love, is his only clergyman hero, and he too, like the Parson on Dartmoor tries to live the Christian faith. He is spiritual, ascetic,

poetic and tortured by a private unhappiness. Strangeway finds that living the Christian way is not all a bed of roses and reciprocal loving-kindness. He is misunderstood, as anyone would be who determinedly pointed out or took action against those things which he thought were wrong in ordinary life. Strangeway also is unable to retain the love of his wife, who probably thinks him odd, or perhaps thinks that a man so engrossed in the good of mankind can have little time left over for her. She may moreover suffer from that strange feminine attachment to the worse man of the two. Endless are the stories telling of women who prefer the bad man to the saintly one; it has been explained that the bad man is a better 'provider', because he has fewer scruples, and that therefore a woman may feel safer with the man who is likely to look after himself than with the man who is going to look after other people. At anyrate Strangeway's goodness seems to cause him nothing but misery. He is a country curate in a Devonshire village and his wife has left him to live with a previous love in a nearby town. As Act 1 opens he is playing a flute in front of a picture of his wife. He then takes a village confirmation class of girls, one whom(ironically her name is Mercy) has a caged skylark. Strangeway sets it free, giving Mercy sixpence instead of the three pence she had given for it, but she will not be comforted. As a result the villagers think him a little

high-handed, as they had cause to find him before. At this point the word gets around the village that Mrs. Strangeway is living in a nearby town. Mrs. Strangeway then calls and asks Strangeway, who loves her desperately, not to take action against her lover because it would ruin him. This seems, dramatically, a little weak, but it is possible as his wife, having lived with him for eighteen months, would know his completely Christian character. He tries to get her to return to him but when she will not he refuses to 'cage' her, any more than he would 'cage' a skylark, but he also wonders as a clergyman if he is doing rightly in letting her live in adultery. But he takes the way of complete self-denial and self-torture.

Next we see the villagers criticizing his extra-ordinary conduct which, of course,is quite beyond their comprehension. Jarland, Mercy's father, has a grudge against him. The villagers decide not to continue to go to a church where he is curate. Before the evening service Strangeway goes in to the village inn for a glass of brandy (another very unlikely touch but one which is just possible). Jarland insults his wife whereupon Strangeway flings him out of the window. (About this point one feels that the Bishop will be asking Strangeway for an explanation as to why he was drinking and brawling with the villagers five minutes before the evening service on a Sunday evening.) Strangeway goes to church and takes the service while the villagers

decide to demonstrate against him when he comes out. They do this and, in a Christian manner, Strangeway begs Jarland's pardon, which is of course interpreted as cowardice. He decides that he must leave the parish. It seems that Christianity followed to its logical conclusion means that a man will be unable to stay with his uncomprehending fellowmen even as their spiritual guide.

Then we hear the point of view of the church, as an Institution. Strangeways returns to his lodging in the farmhouse and gives up the key to Mrs. Bradmere, the Rector's wife. The Rector's wife says he must divorce his wife because the church "dare not foster immorality", and it seems a reasonable enough point of view. But Strangeway replies, only, "Break her heart! " He is more interested in kindness and love followed to the absolute end than in any set rules of the Church for governing morality. Mrs. Bradmere is at a loss what to say; she remarks that he ought to see a doctor. Strangeway refuses to talk of his wife and asks her to go; whereupon, she says, "Take care! --- God punishes! " Strangeway asks in reply,"Is there a God?" "Ah", says Mrs. Bradmere, with finality, "you must see a doctor." After she has gone Strangeway takes down the picture of his wife and looks distractedly at it. "Gone," he says, "What is there now?" Then again:

"Gone ! Taken faith -- hope -- life! "Galsworthy's point is that the tormented Strangeway, deeply in love, feels that he has lost his wife in the after-life, and for ever, and that therefore the after-life holds no charms for him. His loss of his wife has made him doubt God, which is not giving him a very profound faith in the first place, and perhaps indicates that Galsworthy thought that the best of Churchmen could be led to doubt by a personal misfortune. Strangeway finally tries to hang himself in the barn where the children had been dancing but they had left little Tibby Jarland behind, asleep in the hay. Tibby wakes up and sees his figure in the moonlight, which terrifies her so that he has to comfort her; the child brings him back to faith in the beauty of the world and the freshness of childhood. He even comes back through the child to his faith in God.

This play, particularly the ending, is certainly full of sentiment but, if it were acted and produced with artistry, there is no reason why it should degenerate into sentimentality. Galsworthy was a poet and this ending is important in showing that Galsworthy thought that beauty was one of the secrets of life and the inspiration for it. The play is something of a rural fantasy, with a quiet atmosphere of beauty in keeping with Strangeway's gentle and self-sacrificing, though doubting,Christianity.

It indicates the resentment of a crude, materialistic world against a man who tries to follow the teaching of universal love.

The Church is criticized in the persons of the Dean of Stour, in The Mob, The chaplain, in Justice, Canon Berteley, in The Pigeon, and The Rev. John Latter, in The Eldest Son. None of these clerics is made sympathetic and all of them advocate ideas which Galsworthy finds wrong. The Dean of Stour holds the stage for only a short time but he is in the strange position(quite common at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century) of advocating a war upon a backward, native people in order to bring the blessings of civilization, and of Cristianity, to them. He feels that they should be conquered for their own good, which revolts Stephen More. Some of his comments are illuminating as showing Galsworthy's opinion of the Church's point of view with regard to pre-Great War Imperialism.

> The Dean: The Government is dealing with a wild and lawless race, on whom I must say I think sentiment is rather wasted.

and again

> The Dean: They have proved themselves faithless. We have the right to chastise.

The logical deduction from the first quotation would seem to be that we should spend our sentiment on the advanced peoples of the world and withhold it from the backward peoples.

The second quotation would give the right to any stronger power to 'chastise' us whenever they felt we had not kept faith with them. Who is to decide whether or not faith has been kept? Why, of course, the person(or Government) who has most to gain from the decision. It is sheer hypocrisy and it was universal among all the countries who were competing to annex the world at the end of the last century. The Church hardly raised a voice for one reason or another, but mainly because of divided loyalties (incompatible , Galsworthy would have called them) and because it wanted to make Christians of people who did not want to become Christians. This argument, followed out logically, would entitle the men of Mars if they had a more powerful civilization , to convert us to the Martian religion after they had conquered us. It would perhaps be right for them, because the Martian God might well be Mars, but the God of a Christian society is revealed in Christ and He gave different instructions to His disciples. Galsworthy saw a divergence here from the teachings of Christ to the variation upon it created by the Church. Most of the audience of his day(1) would agree with every word the Dean had to say, owing, as usual, to Galsworthy's under-emphasis.

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(1) The Mob was first produced in March, 1914.

The Dean is not an exaggerated character and may be taken as a fair example of some of the clergy before the Great War. He is not a bad man.

The chaplain in Justice is another kind of man altogether and a most unpleasant type. He suffers from -- that great crime in Galsworthy's eyes-- a lack of sympathetic imagination. He is hard, and hardness to a prisoner amounts to cruelty. He says that nothing is to be done with some of the prisoners until their will-power is 'broken'. This man is supposedly a Christian and he talks of breaking men's will power. He also distinguishes between those who are 'Church of England' and the other less trustworthy types who are Roman Catholics and Noncomformists. Galsworthy's opinion is clear; it is a most bitter portrait of a clergyman.

Canon Berteley in The Pigeon is a figure of fun in a whimsical and fantastic play, and can hardly be taken as indicating any very serious judgement upon the church or any of its representatives. It does show that Galsworthy thought that the church was as far off the mark, in its treatment of social degenerates, as were the Law and the Professors of Scientific Social Work. Canon Berteley is a pleasant man who is entirely ineffective because he has no knowledge of human nature. He wants everything to be rearranged between Megan, the card-player and Mrs. Megan, his errant wife, the flower-girl, but he has

nothing but benign platitudes with which to suggest a new way of life. He is a pleasant but entirely impractical representative of an institution which Galsworthy thought was failing.

The Rev. John Latter, in The Eldest Son, is the most difficult and unsatisfactory character to understand of all Galsworthy's clergymen. One realizes that he thinks a wrong should be righted(i.e. Dunning, the gamekeeper, should marry Rose Taylor, when she is pregnant by him) but he does not appear in the final scene and we do not see his final reaction to the shelving of Freda's identical rights to marry Bill Cheshire. It is a weakness in this excellent play. If he had come out into the open and condemned the whole business we could not help admiring him. If he had connived in the shifty change in morality we should feel that he was letting his religion down and that he was a poor kind of parson. However Galsworthy does not bring him on stage again so he remains a character who is a shadowy symbol of the conventional clerical morality. All that we do know of him is that he condemns Bill out of hand for his immorality, as he does Dunning, and that he irritates Keith, Bill and Harold when they discuss the dilemma of Freda and Bill. This irritation is not to be fully appreciated from the written play as it would be from

a capable stage production. Something must be filled in for which Galsworthy has left insufficient guidance. Obviously Galsworthy does not like him; but this is the puzzle, because he says nothing unreasonable and he does condemn Bill; furthermore he states his point of view with some force. His attitude is suggested by Harold, when he says, "I can't stand your sort, John. When a thing like this happens, all you can do is cry out: Why didn't he - - ? Why didn't she? What's to be done -- that's the point!" To which Latter replies: "Of course he'll have to . . ."; and is interrupted with a derisive "Ha! " from Harold, who does not agree at all that Bill should marry Freda. Whether or not one agrees with Galsworthy's theory that nobody should marry unless they are in love, Latter is still suggesting fair play for Freda, in a family where few others are thinking of anything more serious than the damage their social position will receive from the obligations which wild oats sometimes bring. One gets the impression that Latter, expressing the orthodox morality, comes out better than Galsworthy meant him to. Galsworthy's treatment of religion is, like his treatment of every other question, fair; but he is not as fair to the clergy as he is to most other professions and persons. He feels a grudge against the profession because he suspects hypocrisy.

He does not, however show any clergymen who are

deliberately hypocritical; where they are, they are always men who are the victims of their code and who think they are doing their job -- like the chaplain, in Justice, the Dean in The Mob and Canon Berteley in The Pigeon.

Chapter IV

Other Social Ideas.

Many other social ideas are brought out into the limelight by Galsworthy but they are usually found to be near relatives of the six main problems which we have discussed in the previous chapter. Galsworthy was critically interested in the whole of the life of his day, and the smallest points which he notices, and considers a blot on the record of the supposedly advanced civilization of twentieth century England, he brings to the attention of his audience in an ironic or a sympathetic way, never putting forward a plan or cure, but conscientiously, and as a rule artistically, showing these weaknesses so that more constructive people than himself might become conscious of them and either eradicate or improve them. He sees the weakness, presents it dramatically and it is then up to the audience "to draw such poor moral as Nature may afford." An instance of this would be the mechanical and mournful reiteration of the ancient Mrs. Lemmy, in The Foundations, describing her precise field of endeavour in the slave market of 'sweated' clothes-making: "I putt in the buttonholes, I stretches the flies; I'ems the bottoms; I lines the crutch; I putt on the bindin'; I sews on the

buttons; I presses the seams --tuppence three farthings the pair." At each repetition of this the ear is offended at the mere sound of the old woman's deadly monotonous work and the eye pictures ancient fingers stitching cheap and shoddy trousers at the edge of the grave. It is a gloomy glimpse of poverty. For this labour of necessity old Mrs. Lemmy is paid twopence and three farthings! Her employers were not able to 'see their way' to paying the extra farthing, and Mrs. Lemmy and thousands like her were not protected by the Government from farthing-worshippers. The average London theatre-goer knew vaguely about the 'sweat-shops' but Galsworthy meant them to know exactly ; what the work was and what prices were paid for it and what kind of people did the work, so that something might be done about it. It does not seem to be a sermon, or 'message', because Mrs. Lemmy and Lemmy, the plumber, constituted the necessary dramatic contrast to Lord William Dromondy and Park Lane. If it had not been for social conditions of this sort Lemmy would not have ranted on about the 'foundations' and 'pipes' of society being in such urgent need of repair, and the mob chanting the marseillaise would have had no reason to gather outside Lord William's house. Nobody who has either seen or read the play will be able to forget Mrs. Lemmy's nerve-wracking sing-song. It is this uncomfortable quality in Galsworthy's drama which has made pleasure-bent play-goers, frustrated of

their relaxation, accuse him of preaching for the sake of *preaching*. One can do nothing more than disagree. The *emphasis* on the 'sweat-shop' system, explains both the presence of the mob and the philosophy of Lemmy.

It must be remembered that the play is a comedy and that serious questions are discussed in humorous dialogue. This play shows the definite influence of G.B.Shaw. The tone of the whole play, and the Cockney humour, when turned to thoughts of revolution, are compressed into Lemmy's : "Blood and kindness -- that's what's wanted -- 'specially blood." It is a light-hearted variation of Bismarck's "Blood and Iron."

Galsworthy considered prostitution as largely the fault of society, but he also thought that there were many types of character which might naturally gravitate to the bottom of the barrel, with scarcely any help from a hard world, through a sheer irresponsibility andlove of pleasure; such characters as Mrs. Megan, in The Pigeon, and Faith Bly, in Windows, represent the type and are real, young women. Ruth Honeywill, in Justice, becomes a prostitute because there is no other way of buying food for her three children. Wanda, in The First and The Last, and the girl in Defeat have taken to the same life, as did the girl in Escape who was the unwilling cause of Matt Denant's imprisonment.

All these women are kind and sympathetic and none of them are given the 'cracked laugh' and the drunken grossness which so many writers have foisted on all ladies of lost virtue with such gusto. The Galsworthian opinion is obvious. He felt sorry for them and he felt convinced that they were not such terribly bad women, but weak, and unfortunate; that furthermore, they were often the victims of a society which was full of injustice and which, contributing to their unhappy state, regarded them hypocritically and always without imagination. Clare Dedmond, in The Fugitive, contemplates prostitution and the question posed is, what should we have thought of Clare if she had actually carried out her purpose and become a prostitute? She was a loveable woman who was capable of being the happy centre of a family; but she was weak, and circumstances went against her. And we are left with a sympathetic view of the problem. A view, in fact, which is probably too sympathetic. All these women are not likeable at heart. Galsworthy could not bring himself to blame these women for being weak, but one might consider his gallery of submerged women more authentic if he had shown one thoroughly objectionable prostitute who justified herself by seeing no good in the rest of mankind.

Galsworthy's treatment of the question of unemployment, which caused the misery of the 'twenties' in Europe and the 'thirties' in North America, is a reproduction upon the stage

of the point of view of one of the unemployed who described what it feels like: "'Gov'nor', I says to the boss, 'take me on', I says. " I 'aven't done a stroke of work not these two months; it takes the 'eart out of a man', I says; 'I'm one to work; I'm not afraid of anything you can give me! ' ' My good man', 'e says, ' I've had thirty of you here this morning. I took the first two,' he says, ' and that's all I want.' 'Thank you, then rot the world,' I says. 'Blasphemin'' 'e says, ' is not the way to get a job. Out you go, my lad! (he laughs sardonically) 'Don't yer raise your voice because you're starvin'; don't yer even think of it, take it lyin' down; take it like a sensible man, carn't you? And a little way down the street a lady says to me (pinching his voice) 'D'you want to earn a few pence, my man? ' and gives me her dog to 'old outside a shop --fat as a butler 'e was -- tons o' meat had gone to the makin' of 'im. It did 'er good, it did, made 'er feel 'erself that charitable but I see 'er looking at the copper standin' alongside for fear I should make off with 'er bloomin' fat dog! " (1)

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(1) The Silver Box, Act 11.

The same point of view is expressed in the speeches of Roberts, in Strife. It is a problem which is constantly before the eyes of Galsworthy's audiences or readers. Falder, Lemmy,Ferrand and Faith Bly are all wrestling with the bitterness of unemployment and Hornblower, in The Skin Game, and Bastaple in The Forest, have become voracious, egotistical despoilers of their kind as a result of poverty-stricken years of childhood when unemployment, in all probability, gripped their homes. Beton, in The Forest , is driven on by his memories of a childhood spent in slums. Unemployment warps the mind. It tends to kill the moral sense in a Bastaple or to create an extreme character in a Roberts or a Hornblower. All are men incapable of pursuing the middle path, and all are therefore objectionable to Galsworthy. Unemployment has a long reach right into the character of a man or woman and consequently into their actions; Clare Dedmond is unemployed and it leads to her suicide.

Galsworthy does not, however suggest any plan to occupy the unemployed. He does not even suggest that the Government should make work for them. He merely states the case. They are there. It is very bad for them, leading to all kinds of excesses. It is very bad for the country. This is actually how they think about themselves and about you.

And he leaves it at that.

The treatment in these plays, of social degenerates, or the people who fail, is, if not pessimistic, at least melancholy. No illusions are fostered. One can help every man, Galsworthy says, to a certain extent, but one can never help a man who is incapable of helping himself. The man who cannot help himself is the saddest man in the world and it is a pity that he is often so likeable and, strangely enough, so gifted. He has, as John Buchan said of Lawrence of Arabia, a 'crack in his nature', which somehow, invisibly and inexplicably, prevents adjustment to life. Galsworthy would agree with Buchan that there is a strange flaw disrupting personality in many natures. He would cite, from his own experience, Ferrand, the Flemish vagabond and philosopher, who has failed to achieve success, or even a job lasting more than a few months. "I have done of my best. It still flies from me," he says resignedly to Wellwyn. These people, Galsworthy says, cannot be cured by police court methods nor by the Church nor by State Institutions; they cannot be cured by anybody because they are incurable. If the courts, the Church or any institutions try to do so "they waste their time trying to make rooks white," as Ferrand himself, the intelligent down-and-out put it. Galsworthy shows these characters -- the Tinsons, Mrs. Megans, Ferrands, Faith Blys -- as quite likeable and pathetic non-social units who are deserving of much lenience and sympathy because they are, after all,

comparatively harmless people; they must fulfil their natures because it is their nature, and they do so, much less harmfully to other people than do the Bastaples of the world, who are acclaimed though they are tigers who devour people, while the Mrs. Megans of the world are arrested and punished for being merely little cats who frisk and play and in their frolic tangle up society's balls of wool.

There is nothing constructive about this treatment of the problem beyond the suggestion that society be more sympathetic and have more insight. Galsworthy was sure that understanding would eradicate half of the evils of the world. "Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner;" Galsworthy's treatment of the problem at least helps us a little to understand and that is the first step. If you 'understand' you are 'seeing' more and the more you'see' the more you understand. Everyone, in Galsworthy's opinion, has 'windows' to see through, but if one keeps the 'windows' closed and dirty one can neither see nor understand and then there is no fresh air or nothing healthy, and therefore no forgiveness for human nature. Galsworthy uses this symbolism to illustrate the comprehension of social problems in Windows, in The Foundations, and in The Forest. Windows symbolize light and fresh air, or comprehension and pardon,

understanding and forgiveness. (1) It is a negative *method* which attempts to remedy social problems with the heart.

The popular press has nowhere received a good word from Galsworthy. He had a great contempt for it and he brings it into several of his plays as a vulgar, social nuisance.

There is little doubt that a 'yellow' or sensational press is debasing in its effects on society but the editor of a daily paper hurls the charge right back at society: "We do want to sell our paper of course, a press that doesn't pay its way, can't live. But if there's a villain in the piece, it's the Public, Lady Morecombe --- not us."

And a little later the Editor says: "I'm just a little fed-up, Kenting. The press gets all the blame for the natural instincts of mankind. I don't care what they say, curiosity is the greatest thing in the world." This is typically Galsworthy --- he is giving us the other man's point of view while believing firmly that many things are best

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(1) The opposite, in fact, of the use to which the nobleman's club window was put, according to Lemmy:
"Why -- as the nobleman said in 'is well-known wy;
' sit in me club winder and watch it ryne on the damn people.'"
The Foundations, Act 111

left unsaid and certainly unprinted. (1) He had a loathing for dragging other people's affairs out into the public gaze which was probably accentuated by his public school education and reserve, which also made him very intolerant of reporters with their professional curiosity. He shows them generally as very ordinary, half-educated young men who speak and think in cliches and who are devoid of taste. The reporter in The Family Man is of this type, and the reporter in The Foundations is a highly-exaggerated jack-ass who has a set terminology culled from the popular newspapers. He literally talks in newspaper language and Galsworthy shows the disparity between truth and popular reporting when he makes him jot down his observations in journalese. One of the few subjects which Galsworthy did not treat quite fairly was the Press. It irritated him too much.

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(1) cf. Col. Roland, in The Show, Act 11

> "What concern is it of the Public? What business have you to feed their confounded curiosity?"

Conclusion.

We have attempted to show the influence upon Galsworthy's social thinking of his early environment in Victorian England ; the influence upon his young manhood of the late Victorian environment with its increasing uncertainties and its growing preoccupation with social questions; and, finally his creative powers which were at their height in the Edwardian and the first years of the Georgian period, and which slackened somewhat in their grip upon the post-war world with its problems of the twenties.

The Great War shook the sensitive and humane Galsworthy to the depths of his being so that his powers were considerably dispersed among such movements for international understanding as the P.E.N. Club, (1) and a general preoccupation with the social evils of England. This led to a sense

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(1) It was on Oct. 6th of this year(1921) that the P.E.N. club was founded, at the Florence Restaurant, by the late Mrs. Dawson Scott, with Galsworthy as its President. It was no ornamental sinecure that he took up; from first to last of the thirteen years till his death he remained President, working for the Club with all the force of his sagacity, influence and conscientiousness, and proving its very real mainstay. In this work are included some of the letters he wrote enlisting the support of prominent literary friends; but these represent but a minute fraction of the time, energy and expense which he put at the Club's service.

Life and Letters of John Galsworthy p. 511. H.V.Marrot, Heinemann, London, 1935.

of doubt and frustration, which interfered with his purpose. He tended to work for his social conscience at the expense of his creative powers, and he himself blamed the war for his loss of confidence in his own work. In a letter to Professor Gilbert Murray he wrote: " the war killed a terrible lot--- I don't know what to call it -- self-importance, faith, idealism, in me; and I am not helped to the recovery thereof by seeing how far the 'leaders'(or some leaders) of thought are in the air. They play the game, but I doubt if they touch the real life of the world." Galsworthy's life had been lived at the full, reacting, of course, to the Victorian and Edwardian influences, and more frequently against them, from about the turn of the century up until the outbreak of the Great War. After the Great War his humane mind saw so much that was wrong in the world that he was led to a distrust of the future and a doubt of his own purpose which laid waste his powers. His incipient doubts of his ability to help mankind as a writer in all probability caused him to accept the Presidency of the P.E.N., and to devote his powers to an organisation whose purpose was the advancement of understanding between nations, through their writers, in order to satisfy his desire to accomplish some definite good in a world which he saw, rightly as it turned out, to be slipping downhill. No other reason can explain the acceptance of such a public post by such a retiring and even shy person as Galsworthy was.

He felt that his social writing had been a power in the land and had become, if not irrelevant, at least ineffective to cope with the immense questions raised by the war. He had dealt competently and artistically with the social ideas of the pre-war world -- the position of married women, the inequalities of justice and the folly of Labour versus Capital battles -- but he was at a loss in front of the mid-war world's Macchiavellian, international power politics, the prospect of mass-bombing from aeroplanes (1) and the apparent loss of conscience, sentiment and reverence among the new, post-war generation. He had had a solution to the pre-war social problems, all of which, he thought, could easily have been solved by moderation and a little imagination, but his basic philosophy, which was "moderation in all things," was upset by the new age. It was not, as he very clearly saw, a heavy enough iron to smooth out the wicked wrinkles of man who was also annually acquiring new powers of destruction. It is no wonder that the immense change in the world which the war brought was enough to make him feel out of touch with

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(1) It is interesting to note that as early as 1911 Galsworthy had reacted against the horror of the aeroplane being used to bomb cities. He got up a protest, against the use of the aeroplane in war, which he widely circulated. Shaw replied with a characteristic, " I can't sign that absurdity." Chesterton and Bennett answered in much the same vein, though less bluntly, and for much the same reasons -- that it was quite hopeless from a practical point of view. But, practical or not, it is indicative of Galsworthy's restless social conscience and the man's humanity to man.

"*the real life* of the world." He came of a more *gentlemanly* age which could afford to have more ideals. *It is* our change in outlook which makes it difficult for us *to see* Galsworthy's merits, for he is in a sense, two worlds away in time.

The change in outlook can be better understood if one looks at the use of words by Galsworthy's contemporaries and compares them with their uses and associations in the post-1918, pre-1939 England: the word 'rotter' is used quite seriously in Galsworthy to denote a ne'er-do-well or a man who had forgotten his gentility --- at an average public school in England the word 'rotter' was used ironically and humorously by the boys and seriously only by the older schoolmasters of a past generation; the expression 'it's not cricket', 'it's not playing the game' etc., which were used in good faith by Galsworthy's world had a satiric quality in the mouths of the new generation; the words 'cad' and'swine' suffered the same sea-change, becoming positively melodramatic to the younger generation, also the famous expression "it simply isn't done," with the emphasis on the last word, had become a joke to the younger generation; a man who 'bore the white man's burden' had changed into a 'flag-waver' or a 'jingo'; 'fair play' part of the English culture until the Great War, was adapted (to excuse the killing of a wounded German, in case he **should** continue shooting) into the Cockney's cynically humorous axiom, "the only good 'Un

is a dead 'un"; 'fair play' became, in 1940, the very thing the Commando recruit was warned against as the cardinal weakness, all of which constituted a reversal of Galsworthy's world and his values. Nearly every accepted loyalty and nearly every accepted sentiment came to be questioned, and a new, hard, sophisticated point of view was almost universal by the thirties. Now, at the end of the 'forties' we are preparing, quite cynically(but perhaps sensibly) for a third war with our newly acquired powers, and wondering quite seriously when the moon will be colonised. It is a long way back to 'Four in Hand' Forsyte, and Montagu Dartie, the last of the 'mashers'.

The post-Nazi, and post-Hiroshima world is a different, completely disillusioned and more frightened world than the pre-1939 world, which Galsworthy found so nerve-wracking and melancholy, and with which he admitted feeling out of touch. The pre-Great War world, however, was Galsworthy's world and he was to its manner born. He was its critic and its prophet and its reformer. He understood it, and felt it, and caught it in words; so that if the future holds any further generations their historians will always 'set' The Man of Property, Strife and Justice for their students 'required' reading so that they may have an insight into the world that existed before the real wars started. In that world he was a force and he was ahead of his time. He criticised the society of his age and he engraved

their characters with the artist's power, for future generations to wonder at and sometimes, perhaps, to say "Heavens! how dated ! " Galsworthy, who in the words of G.K.Chesterton, struck "so many splendid strokes against the deceit and cruelty of our society" (1) had come to be a little 'dated', in some respects, even before the end of his life, because he who had been ahead of his time, was in turn left behind by the succeeding generation. It is his misfortune that he wrote at the beginning of a century of which the first forty years were to span three worlds and three distinct ages. The great human qualities of Galsworthy have nevertheless surmounted this immense obstacle. Many of his works will stand on their own merits, even if their treatment of social problems and the social problems themselves, should become irrelevant. He will still be read as something more than an observant, ironic social commentator for the universality and technical artistry of such novels as The Forsyte Saga and Fraternity and of such plays as Strife , Loyalties and Justice.

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(1) Life and Letters, p. 700. H.V.Marrot, Heinemann, London, 1936.

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