Our study of The Way of All Flesh as a novel has been presented in the last chapter as a background for examining Butler's intellectual quest expressed in it. Like other representative writers of his age, Butler also attempted to analyse the social problems of his time and with a strong ideological bias he passed on from the particular to the general - from an ideological interpretation of the social changes to a wider ideological view of human life in general. This ideological approach to the contemporary social ferment constitutes the Kernel of Butler's intellectual quest. Imbued with a spirit of quest, he attempted to spiritualise the mechanistic aspect of Darwinism by his theory of panzoism and to reconcile science and religion. This was his intellectual quest which finds comprehensive expression in this novel, his most powerful creative production. In The Way of All Flesh Butler's intellectual quest puts the major aspects of contemporary life to test. This evaluation of contemporary life is done in a dialectical manner which consisted of
assessing everything from two angles — the positive and the negative, the synthesis of these two being left to the suggestion of the readers. Some of Butler's statements are rather paradoxical at the first impression. But they are simply truths put in a startling shape. He loved to turn familiar things inside out to show the preposterousness of much that we accept as rational. As a critic of life, as we shall presently see in course of our detailed examination of this work of fiction, his standpoint was unconventional, rational and scientific. Without any personal preoccupation of emotion, prejudice and superstition Butler passed his judgment on the facts and spectacle of contemporary life and interpreted them from the angle of his own standard of life.

The Victorian period was a period of paradox and in the Introductory Chapter of this dissertation the paradoxical character of the age has already been outlined. For our present purpose the essential ideas of the previous discussion are reiterated. As it is not possible, within this limited space, to show the whole world of contemporary paradox, I shall keep myself confined to show the paradox from three aspects — material, intellectual and spiritual.
The early Victorian Period was a period of unparalleled progress and prosperity in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. During this period the extension of the railways and the colonial expansion widened the market prospect of the industrial wares. The mercantile economy formed the doctrine of laissez faire on the principles of utilitarianism, dominated by rationality, directly derived from the philosophy of Hume and Locke. There was a general flourish of trade, industry and agriculture and Mammon, more and more, received unabashed worship. The concept of Progress received a general hymn of praise and generated a spirit of smug complacency. But the prosperity of the period was in inverse relation to the alarming increase of poverty. Cobden's fight for parliamentary reforms, Owen's lead in the Co-operative Movement, Francis Mere's services to trade unionism, Ashley's factory legislations, Chadwick's Public Health Act, the Chartist Movement and the laissez faire doctrine of Mill - all worked together for evolving an enlightened democracy ruled by the rising middleclass who made an alliance with the aristocracy. This middle class, sitting in the saddle of politics, through different reforms enacted in the parliament, tolled its own death-knell and brought the working people (Arnold's populace) to power and position.
In spite of all these changes, the rich became richer and the poor poorer. Industrialisation added to the amenities of life, but generated slums with insanitary conditions of life. Science became the artisan of joyless materialism. Trade and commerce were predominated by a profit-booming spirit of capital proliferation. God and Mammon co-existed and men mostly given to money-making made the loudest profession of religious sentiments publicly. This picture of material life is full of contradictory attributes. Liberalism and conservatism in politics, extreme affluence and stark poverty in economic field, flourish of democracy and absence of elementary education — all sorts of contradictory qualities worked simultaneously to impart a stamp of paradox to the material aspect of the age.

In regard to ideas and concepts, the age presented a confusion of conflicting ideas. The first part of the age was dominated by Utilitarianism with the motto of rationality. This was followed by the Spencerian doctrine of Evolution wedded to Empiricism and Rationalism. This Evolutionalism made way for the advent of an idealistic philosophy, known as Neo-Kantian or Neo-Hegelian and finally, as all these philosophical schools failed to
explain the contemporary social situations, the philosophy of Marx came to dominate the world of ideas during the last two decades of the last century. But Marxism in England, instead of bringing about a revolution, ended in the formation of a political party – the Labour Party of England. Apart from the temporary and feeble existence of the Idealistic School, the whole age was ruled in the field of philosophy by the principle of rationality which failed to find out a working hypothesis to eradicate the spectre of poverty. Theoretical recognition of poverty as a social malady and the failure in practice to cure the malady constitute a paradoxical aspect of the age in the social sphere.

The literature of the age mirrors faithfully this strange paradox. In the field of poetry Tennyson's Two Voices presents the two essential aspects of the age - a concept of unparalleled progress and an alarm on the score of unrestricted scientific advances. In the social field he was in favour of change, as change characterised nature, but his reaction to the social unrest was judicial and unimpassioned. His poetry reflects the cult of doubt, but his final faith was belief. Arthur Clough, opposed to the prevailing Benthamite creed, analysed the contemporary social situation in an unorthodox manner which exhibited
the potentiality of his turning into a socialist. Doubt and faith, paradoxically, existed simultaneously and this simultaneous existence gave rise to the pessimistic school of poetry of Arnold, Thomson, Hardy and Fitzgerald.

Carlyle, Ruskin and Arnold, opposed to the materialistic preoccupation of the age, analysed the social situation in their prose-writings. In Chartism Carlyle expressed his sympathy for the oppressed classes, but his solution of the problem reverted to the condition of the Middle Ages and was of reactionary nature. Ruskin also expressed his awareness of the social problem, but this awareness found expression in the form of abstract theories to effect a change of heart from moral standpoint. John Stuart Mill, the apostle of individualism, advocated a better distribution of wealth, provision of national education, restriction to be imposed on imprudent marriages, and alleviation of the misery of displaced workers, through increasing state intervention. This advocacy for state intervention is a paradox in Mill's thoughts. Arnold decried the faith in machinery of his age and talked a lot about the cultural regeneration, but the social muddle failed to provide him with a theme.
Paradox is equally evident in the field of prose fiction. A spirit of realism with uncompromising logic in the extension of scientific positivism prevails in the novels of Thackeray, Trollope, Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins. Side by side with this spirit of realism, a reassertion of emotional response takes place in the novels of Dickens. In the hands of Disraeli the novel becomes purposive - preoccupied with the problems of the working class. Kingsley's social novels voice a protest against the moral crime of indifference to social injustice. The novels of George Eliot seek to unify two apposite poles - evolutionary philosophy and the ardour of idealism - rationality and imagination. Meredith, a crusader against the encroaching progress of mechanisation, combines two apposite tendencies - the bias of rationality (imbibed from the Utilitarians) and an intuitive process of thinking.

In the spiritual field in the period under study the existence of the paradox is easy to see. The early part of the period was predominated by Evangelicalism which welded together disparate elements like Anglicanism, Non-conformism and encouraged the worship of Mammon. The Oxford Movement of the middle period had its origin in the attempt to free the Church from state intervention, but by asserting the
claim of medieval dogmas, it became ultimately a retrogressive movement. Christian socialism of Maurice was essentially an attempt to evade the social problem. The period following the publication of the *Origin of Species* was one of a bitter conflict between doubt and faith. During this period the premise of religion was called in question, but the conflict continued in the form of attempts to reconcile science and faith.

This spirit of compromise is prominently noticeable in all aspects of the life of this age. In all spheres of material life contradictory elements exist simultaneously—liberalism and conservatism in politics and education, unparalleled affluence and abysmal poverty, liberalism and dogmatism. In the intellectual field the spirit of rationality predominates, but its citadel is very frequently invaded by the assault of Idealism and imagination. The presence of compromise in the spiritual field has already been shown. Fast changes in all spheres of life of the age held the promise of an impending revolution, but this promise ultimately leads to a series of constitutional patchworks which fritter away the portentous energy implicit in the sweeping changes of the age.
In this age of paradox all idealists like Tennyson, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold saw through the hollowness behind the meretricious exterior of their age and voiced a note of warning and protest. Each one of these idealists had his own standard from which he judged his age and prescribed remedies. This evaluation of the age and prescription of remedies for curing the maladies afflicting the age constitute their intellectual quest. Samuel Butler was essentially an idealistic thinker and he extended his searching vision to his contemporary life, critically judged its values from his own idealistic standpoint and criticised all social deviations from his standard of normalcy. This evaluation of the social trends of the age forms an important aspect of Butler's intellectual quest.

An examination of Butler's intellectual quest expressed in *The Way of All Flesh* should be preceded by a consideration of the standard of his idealistic view of life which was of unconventional nature. Chapter XIX of the novel contains a lot of material to form Butler's standard of life.
from which he judged and evaluated his age. "Goodness is naught unless it tends towards old age and sufficiency of means." Butler commented through Overton following the death of George Pontifex. Again it was Butler who spoke through Overton - "morality and virtue are what bring men peace at the last." or "A virtue to be serviceable must, like gold, be alloyed with some commoner but durable metal." Again Overton wrote - "For most men, and most circumstances, pleasure - tangible material prosperity in this world - is the safest test of virtue." This eccentric view of morality is corroborated also by many of his entries in the Note Books - "The true laws of God are the laws of our well-being." "The question whether such and such a course of conduct does or does not do physical harm is the safest test by which to try the question whether it is moral or no." "Morality turns on whether the pleasure

1. The Way of All Flesh (Everyman's Ed. 1968) - Samuel Butler, p. 71

Henceforth references to this work will be presented thus : The Way of All Flesh, p.

2. Ibid, p. 72
3. Ibid, p. 73
4. Ibid, p. 74
6. Ibid
precedes or follows the pain. Morality is the custom of one's country and the current feeling of one's peers. These excerpts from the novel and the entries from the Note Books bring out Butler's Benthamite concept of morality. To Butler - "truth is what commends itself to the great majority of sensible and successful people." According to Butler "virtue is to be interpreted biologically." In one entry of his Note Books Butler viewed every change tending to unsettle men's mind as immoral and stagnation as absolute immorality. To Butler - "Instinct then is the ultimate court of appeal" and reason was misleading. This concept is essentially Epicurean in outlook and practical in nature. In Butler's idea of morality P.N. Furbank discerns - "a comprehensive manual of Stoicism." About Butler's attitude to life Furbank

1. The Note Books of Samuel Butler (H. F. Jones, 1919) p. 29
2. Ibid, p. 31
3. The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 247
4. Samuel Butler - C.E.M. Joad p. 149
5. The Note Books of Samuel Butler (H. F. Jones, 1919) p. 29
6. The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 247
finds — "the real substance is the doctrine of rejection, of avoidance of hurt rather than the courting of pleasure, of sitting quiet and not asking much, at least of the present life." The end of Ernest in The Way of All Flesh confirms this statement. Through a series of blunders Ernest finds out his evolutionary self and withdraws in a life of passivity. He cuts off his relation with his parents and intercourse with the known society to avoid any further cause of pain and unhappiness. All these exhibit clearly Butler's practical philosophy, characterised by Epicurianism and Stoicism, from the standard of which Butler tried to comprehend his age intellectually.

As an idealist Butler occupied a unique position and standing on this platform of amoral idealism he examined different aspects of the Victorian life like — Darwinism, religion, education, family life, upbringing of children, prudery, hypocrisy and priggishness of Victorian life. In this novel Butler's intellectual quest assumes the form of 'criticism of life' and this criticism is often tempered with mild or bitter irony.

1. Samuel Butler
   - P.N. Furbank (Archon Books, 1971) p. 40
Butler's intellectual quest, as stated in the earlier chapters of this dissertation lies in spiritualising the mechanistic concept of Darwinism and evolving the doctrine of panzoism, reconciling religion with the recent explorations of science and in satirising some prevalent conventions and institutions of society. This intellectual quest finds expression in *The Way of All Flesh*, as in other works, in a dialectical method. The interplay of levity and seriousness, consistency and inconsistency, reason and unreason characterises his intellectual quest. In one entry of his *Note Books* Butler wrote — "There is no such source of error as the pursuit of absolute truth."¹ Edward Overton writes about Ernest in the end of *The Way of All Flesh* — ". but 'no man's opinions', he sometimes says, can be worth holding unless he knows how to deny them easily and gracefully upon occasion in the cause of charity."² This dialectical approach lends a note of ambivalence to his attitude to life and this ambivalence offers a touch of duality to all the problems of life.

1. *Samuel Butler's Note Books* (Keynes & Hill, 1951), p. 120
SECTION III

Criticism of Darwinism

The theme of *The Way of All Flesh* is to offer a concrete illustration of the impact of heredity on an individual. This theme is evidently evolutionary. One of Butler's objects of attack in this novel was Darwinism which he held to replace blind and uncritical acceptance of religion. In his four books on organic evolution Butler attacked Darwin for his attempt to establish himself as the sole exponent of evolutionary theory, unjustly suppressing the role of the old evolutionists, including that of his grandfather. Butler could not support the fortuitous natural selection theory propounded by Darwin. In believing the evolutionary stream as a process in which individual species also had a deliberate and conscious role, Butler was a Neo-Lamarckian. His purpose in the field of evolution was to extricate from Darwinism the neglected Nietzsche element of the superman - that power of self-determination which must be immanent in all life, and which we human beings should tend, cultivate and worship as God, if we must worship anything. This doctrine that the first life evolved as a spark from The Tree of Life leads his theory from the
field of science to the field of metaphysics. Butler's theory of panzoism held interesting possibilities in terms of spiritualising evolutionism, but it could not attract the interest of those scientists who were engaged in the experimental field. They maintained a conspiracy of silence which Butler took as an affront to his understanding and this precipitated a long stretched controversy with Darwin and his supporters.

The first five chapters of the novel are exclusively devoted to the delineation of the ancestry of Ernest. Ernest's life is foreshadowed in the life of his grandfather and great-grandfather. The theme of heredity is explicitly present in the earlier part of the novel. The creed of Ernest was to get back the lost grace of his great-grandfather John Pontifex. It was George Pontifex who by taking to the profession of a businessman violated the canon of the ancestry and this going against nature was accepted by Theobald. Ernest had the fire to come back to his natural heredity and it was correctly discerned by her aunt Alethea who never attempted to effect an impossible and a violent change in Ernest's character. She taught him carpentry, encouraged him in toying with organs. This physical exercise, according to Alethea, was
expected to restore Ernest to the grace of his great-grandfather. The theme of evolution is evident in the lines:

All over lives long, everyday and everyhour, we are engaged in the process of accommodating our changed or unchanged surroundings; living, in fact, is nothing else than this process of accommodation; when we fail in it a little we are stupid, when we suspend it temporarily we sleep, when we give up the attempt altogether we die.

— *The Way of All Flesh*, p. 266

Ernest's imprisonment cut his life into two parts, the one of which could bear no resemblance to the other. Any sudden and violent change in terms of evolution comes as a shock to a species and takes off the unconsciousness and assumed self and exposes its real identity. The assumed self of Ernest was gradually contrived by his artificial upbringing and unnatural education. This departure from the normal self is going against the normal flow of life. According to Darwin, the switch-over from one stage to a different stage is fortuitous without any cunning or conscious effort on the part of the species in the process of mutation. Following his humiliating imprisonment Ernest's life undergoes a modification which is circumstantial
undoubtedly, but there is a deliberate effort on the part of Ernest for effecting it. It is clearly an illustration to demonstrate the insufficiency of the Darwinian theory of evolution. At the threshold of his new life Ernest was sick physically and mentally. Overton took him to a doctor who correctly diagnosed his ailment as no trouble of the body and identified it as a nervous prostration which was the effect of a long and severe mental suffering. He prescribed time, prosperity and rest as a remedy. Ernest, according to the doctor, was knocked down by the suddenness of the relief from tension. The doctor prescribed "crossing"\(^1\) as a remedy for Ernest's cure and described it as "the great medical discovery of the age."\(^2\) The doctor advised - "Shake him out of himself by shaking something else into him."\(^3\) He continued -

Seeing is a mode of touching, touching is a mode of feeling, feeling is a mode of assimilation, assimilation is a mode of recreation and reproduction, and this is crossing - shaking yourself

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   'Crossing' bears a Christian association and carries an ironical dig at Christianity.

2. Ibid
3. Ibid
The association of the animals, according to the doctor, was to act as a restorative tonic for the recuperation of his shattered health. So he prescribed for Ernest a course of association of the larger mammals - the hippopotamus; the rhinoceros, the elephants and the pig tribe. The theme of evolution is again touched upon in a book written by Ernest and it is quoted by Overton. The eugenic principle of breeding is upheld here. Ernest writes - "we set good breeding as the corner-stone of our edifice."¹

After Ernest's release from prison Overton is made to say - "Living, in fact, is nothing else than the process of accommodation."² This is a direct contradiction of the Darwinian theory of the Survival of the Fittest. The word 'accommodation' implies an adjustment of the contradictory elements or personalities. Through Overton Butler spoke - "extremes are alone logical, and they are always

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¹ The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 346
² Ibid, -p.266
absurd; the mean is always practicable and it is always illogical."¹ The same advocacy for the mean is expressed by Butler in an entry of the Note Books - "The one serious conviction that a man should have is that nothing is to be taken too seriously."² In another entry Butler again wrote - "He excels most who hits the golden mean most exactly in the middle."³ These excerpts, besides showing the essential dichotomy of his attitude towards life, bring out Butler's antagonism with Darwin. This theme of evolution is an important aspect of Butler's intellectual quest.

SECTION IV
Criticism of Christianity

As an honest doubter Butler sought to evolve a rational version of Christianity on the basis of the contemporary explorations and findings of science. This attempt to evolve a rational basis of religion is another important aspect of

¹ The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 267
² The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Keynes & Hill, 1951), p. 61
³ Further Extracts from the Note-Books of Samuel Butler - (Ed. A.T.Bartholomew, 1934), p. 139
Butler's intellectual quest. The title *The Way of All Flesh* contains an implied irony on religion which has encountered severe onslaught from Butler. In *Erewhon* Butler describes the Musical Banks with showy appearance, trading in obsolete currency. People, particularly elderly ladies, visit the Banks once a week as a custom. These Musical Banks, eliciting perfunctory service, stand for the Church of England. The ritualistic approach to religion without any feeling of ardour and sanctity on the part of the Victorian people has been exposed and bitterly attacked in *The Way of All Flesh*. George Pontifex made money by trading in the publication of a book of devotion. The old gentleman chose the profession of a clergyman for his son, as "this might tend to bring business."¹ Theobald's clerical profession was forced upon him by his tyrannical father. The manner in which he was driven to accept an ecclesiastical profession clearly accounts for the clergyman's lack of devotion and enthusiasm for work. The clergyman is enjoined by the necessity of his profession to live a life of perpetual pretension. This

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¹ *The Way of All Flesh* - Samuel Butler, p. 25
constant feigning tells upon his nerves and sours his temperament. This bitterness is ventilated in his household where he enjoys the liberty of a king. Theobald's domineering over his wife and bullying of his children point out to the evil effect of a profession in which preaching has no relation to practice. Through Overton Butler dwells upon this drawback in the following manner:

The clergyman is expected to be a kind of human Sunday. Things must not be done in him which are venial in the weekday classes. He is paid for his business of leading a stricter life than other people. It is his raison d'être. If his parishioners feel that he does this, they approve of him, for they look upon him as their contribution towards what they deem a holy life. This is why the clergyman is so often called a vicar - he being the person whose vicarious goodness is to stand for that of those entrusted to his charge.

- The Way of All Flesh, - p. 94 -

Overton further adds:

A clergyman, again, can hardly ever allow himself to look facts fairly in the face. It is his profession to support one side; it is
impossible therefore, for him to make an unbiased examination of the other.

(The Way of All Flesh, - p. 94)

The usual Christian practice of the General Confession twice a week has been criticised by comparing it to the wash of table clothes. In Chapter XLVII Butler gives an account of the upheaval in the field of religion following the upsetting explorations in biological sciences. This upheaval gave birth to a wave of scepticism in the public mind. The Evangelical Movement exhausted its force and ended in the Simeonite Movement for which Butler had little sympathy. To young and undergraduate Ernest the Simeonites "were a gloomy, seedylooking confrère, who had as little glory in clothes and manners as in the flesh itself."¹ The attitude to religion of the Victorian intellectuals is nicely summed up in Ernest's attitude - "he would not stand seeing the Christian religion made light of, he was not going to see it taken seriously."²

¹. The Way of All Flesh
   -Samuel Butler, p. 181

². Ibid, - p.182
Ordination frosted Ernest's "sense of humour and tendency to think for himself."\(^1\) This account also brings out Butler's irreverent attitude to the profession of a clergymen. A comparison between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism has been expressed through Prayer who says about the Bible - "A more unreliable book was never put up on paper."\(^2\) To the clergymen the Church is more important than Christ. The hypocrisy in the profession of a priest is sounded in Prayer's speech - "The priest must be absolutely sexless - if not in practice, yet at any rate in theory."\(^3\) After coming out of prison convalescent Ernest is made to muse on his indifference to Christianity:

> Very few care two straws about truth, or have any confidence that it is righter and better to believe what is true than what is untrue, even though belief in the untruth may seem at first sight most expedient. Yet it is only these few who can be said to believe anything at all; the rest are simply unbelievers in disguise. Perhaps, after all, these last are right. They have numbers and prosperity on their side.

\(^2\) The Way of All Flesh, - p. 246

\(^1\) The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 201

\(^2\) Ibid, - p. 207

\(^3\) Ibid, - p. 206
Ernest is a representative Victorian treading the path of agnosticism. Ernest's attitude to the account of the Resurrection is Butler's own attitude and it is a symptom of the Victorian compromise with religion. The Victorians had not the courage to repudiate religion altogether. Failing to accept the supernatural elements of Christianity they sought to find out a deeper symbolical interpretation of these. In spite of so much criticism of Christianity the final note is characterised by a compromise.

A spirit of compromise characterises all aspects of life of the Victorian Age. John Morley, the honest doubter, in his writing On Compromise directed his attack throughout on the Established Church fast moored by ancient formularies, but he realised that some kind of faith was essential for human existence and so "he wanted and expected a 'new' religion, one which should extract the permanent elements of the old faith to make the 'purified' material of the new."¹ This attitude of Morley towards the 'Established' Church

¹ More Nineteenth Century Studies
-(Basil Willey, 1956), p. 284
strikes the Keynote of the spirit of compromise characterising the Victorian period in all aspects.

While discussing the paradoxical character of the age, it has already been shown that in material, intellectual and spiritual aspects of the age completely contradictory elements co-existed and this co-existence brings out the spirit of compromise characterising the whole age. Chesterton in his book entitled The Victorian Age in Literature finds out the "simple Victorian rationalism" holding the centre of the age. The earlier part of the Victorian era was dominated by Utilitarianism of Mill which sustained the march of codification and enquiry till the scientific school of Darwin, Huxley and Wallace, in the later part of the era, overtook this responsibility. Rationalism, first under the control of the Utilitarians, and then under that of the scientific school, held the centre of the age and the whole history of the age lies in series of assaults on this fundamental, cold and codified rationalism in different forms in wave after wave.

1. The Victorian Age in Literature
   -G.K.Chesterton (1947), p. 26
The Victorian Period was a period of continuous flux and instability. It moved from form to form, and nothing stood. Almost every Victorian thesis produced its antithesis, as a ceaseless dialectic worked out its design. Besides, the "climate of opinion varied from year to year, from decade to decade; the seventies was perhaps as distant from the eighties..."¹ This absence of a stable standpoint, encouraging compromise, is noticed in almost all spheres of Victorian life - material, spiritual and intellectual.

According to Chesterton the movements and men who stood against the spirit of compromise were - the Oxford Movement; Dickens; Carlyle, Ruskin, Kingsley, Maurice and Tennyson. But in our discussion of the paradoxical character of the age it has been shown that these men and movement themselves were not free from paradoxical contradictions.

The age was characterised by varieties of tensions and there was an absence of complete spontaneity and singleness of purpose. But the age had a central basis - the basis of social morality - the basis of a unified stand of sentiment and rationality. It was an age of bewildering complexity

¹. The Victorian Temper - J.H. Buckley
(Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1966) p. 6
(the complexity has been explained in the Introductory Chapter) - Evangelicalism and Benthamism - muddled the situation. Both the isms ultimately gave way - but the impulse running across the age was in essence deeply religious. Some writers of the age are in revolt against the tendencies of the age, but this note of revolt does not characterise the age thoroughly. The ultimate frittering away of the occasional and individual spirit of revolt, apart from the co-existence of contradictory attributes, brings out the conformist outlook of the age.

Butler also, in spite of showing a rebellious attitude to some aspects of the age (the Victorian laudatory attitude to Darwin, prudery and hypocrisy of the age, perfunctory faith, hypothetical system of education etc), was essentially a conformist. This spirit of compromise is clearly evident in his acceptance of the age and in his satire of the shortcomings of the age for rectification. This reformist outlook brings out his spirit of compromise which is easy to be seen in his attitude to Christianity. Butler assailed it ruthlessly, but did not repudiate it. His final attitude to Christianity was of the highest spiritual realisation. Ernest after a voyage of doubt arrives at the sheltered haven of highest spiritualism -
Butler writes:

What is Christ if he is not this? He who takes the highest and the most self-respecting view of his own welfare which it is in his power to conceive, and adheres to it in spite of conventionality, is a Christian whether he knows it and calls him one, or whether he does not. A rose is not the less a rose because it does not know its own name.

-The Way of All Flesh, - p. 259 /

Again Butler says about Ernest:

He had lost his faith in Christianity, but his faith in something—he knew not what, but that there was a something as yet but darkly known, which made right right and wrong wrong—his faith in this grew stronger and stronger daily.

-Ibid, - p. 261 /

Butler's idea of the highest spirituality which has been called the Christ-Ideal in The Fair Haven finds expression in these two excerpts. His essential compromising nature is evident in his criticism of Christianity. Ernest's final attitude to Christianity finds expression in the following lines:

Then he [Ernest] saw also that it matters little what profession, whether of religion or irreligion, a man may make, provided only he follows it out with
charitable inconsistency and without insisting on it to the better end. It is in the uncompromising-ness with which dogma held and not in the dogma or want of dogma that the danger lies.

*The Way of All Flesh, p. 262*

Butler's dialectical method is clearly evident in the following lines:

Christianity was true in so far as it had fostered beauty, and it had fostered much beauty. It was false in so far as it fostered ugliness, and it had fostered much ugliness.

*Ibid, p. 346*

This preoccupation with evolving a concept of Christianity on a more rational basis is an important aspect of Butler's intellectual quest. Here also his fondness for contradiction is equally evident.

**SECTION V**

In the Introductory Chapter it has been clearly stated that Butler viewed the social problems of his age from a theoretical standpoint. He was equally indifferent to the Victorian prepossessing belief in the idea of Progress or in the problem of poverty of the age. *The Way of All Flesh* contains some generalised criticism of the contemporary
system of education, upbringing of children, the prevailing system of family and some drawbacks of late Victorian social manners like prudery, hypocrisy and priggishness.

**Criticism of education system**

Child-education and the education system in general have been held up to criticism in *The Way of All Flesh*. Education of children was generally neglected by the Victorian parents and was undertaken by unwilling parents who did their duties perfunctorily caring little for the children's psychology. Indiscriminate caning was resorted to as a sure means of giving education. Boy Ernest on account of his lisping habit as a child mispronounced 'come' as 'tum' and was mercilessly flogged for it. Education was thoroughly divorced from life and for this it was of little use in practical life. The futility of university education is brought out in the case of Theobald who made a proposal of marriage to Christiana in a language extremely frigid and discouraging to a young maid whose hands are sought in marriage. Upon the letter Theobald wrote to Christiana proposing for her hand Butler makes Overton remark - "And this was all that public school and
university education has been able to do for Theobald. Ernest also secured a first class degree in the classics from Cambridge. But this academic attainment and distinction did not help him much to distinguish between Miss Snow and Miss Maitland. This lack of practical experience of life for the time being brought a ship-wreck in his life and ended in landing him in prison. After coming out of jail he sold off his text books and invested that money in a business enterprise of old clothshop. His life following his imprisonment is a deliberate attempt to break away from his academic past, to unlearn what he so far learned and to come back closer to the soil.

The Victorian system of child-education received a bitter and an ironic attack in Chapter XX of the novel. The aim of child-education was to pluck out self-will and originality. Overton writes - "The first signs of self-will must be carefully looked for, and plucked up by the roots at once before they had time to grow." About Ernest's education during his childhood Overton describes—

1. The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 41
2. Ibid, - p. 77
"Before Ernest could crawl he was taught to kneel; before he could well speak he was taught to lisp the Lord's Prayer, and the General Confession."¹ and "Before he was three years old he could read and, after a fashion, write. Before he was four he was learning Latin, and could do rule - of - three sums."²

The public school system designed to impart exclusive education to the children of a handful of rich few has received severe attack from Butler. The first public school of this kind was the school at Shrewsbury where Butler's grandfather - Dr. Butler was headmaster and was succeeded by his worthy pupil Dr. Kennedy who has been satirised as Dr. Skinner in The Way of All Flesh. Dr. Skinner had a wild reputation for his imposing learning, but Overton impishly writes - "Dr. Skinner had learned everything and forgotten everything."³ The picture of the Doctor in his dingy library also is a caricature of his proverbial erudition. His spacious library was full of books, but whether he read all the books, Overton insinuates, is open to doubt. The public school practice of

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1. The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 77
2. Ibid
3. Ibid, p. 106
flogging boys and of unleashing a reign of terror in the name of education has been subjected to a severe satire. The room of Dr. Skinner bore witness to many scenes of cruelty and torture perpetrated over the tender-aged students of the school. "If the walls of that room could speak, what an amount of blundering and capricious cruelty would they bear witness to! ¹" Ironically Dr. Skinner has been described as "unquestionably a man of genius"² and the best test of his genius was, according to Overton, turning out so many pupils who succeeded at Oxford and Cambridge. Dr. Skinner was a lurking lion "always liable to rush out from behind some bush and devour some one when he was least expected."³ Ernest could not understand why the students of Dr. Skinner idolized him, or professed to do so even in after life. To Ernest to live with Dr. Skinner "seemed like living on the crater of Vesuvius."⁴

1. The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 101
2. Ibid, p. 106
3. Ibid, p. 110
4. Ibid
The ambivalence characterising Butler's general view of life is present here also. Dr. Skinner, as presented by Butler, was a humbug who succeeded in producing ill-roasted prigs like Ernest who obtained a first class in his academic life, but gained nothing from his education from the standpoint of practical life. But the turn out of some brilliant boys who fared equally well in their later life also and who idolized their teacher throughout life contradicts Butler's assertion that the system and the man at the helm of it were equal failures and proves Butler's own obtuseness of mind. Out of his own failure he appears to generalise and to let the illustrious scholar down to avenge himself of his own frustration. Butler is opposed to the present system of education which is divorced from practical life. Overton writes in the concluding chapter of the novel:

If universities were not the worst teachers in the world I should like to see professorship of speculation established at Oxford and Cambridge. When I reflect, however, that the only things worth doing which Oxford and Cambridge can do well are cooking, cricket, rowing, and games, of which there is professorship, I fear that the establishment of a professional chair would end in teaching
youngmen neither how to speculate, nor how not to speculate, but would turn them out as bad speculators.

- The Way of All Flesh, p. 305 -

Obviously Butler himself speaks here and the excerpt above brings out his attitude to the existing system of education. Dr. Skinner is caricatured partly as an individual, partly as a part of the faulty system of education.

SECTION VI

Criticism of the family system

Another target of Butler's attack in The Way of All Flesh is the existing family system. Butler nursed a very unfavourable impression about his parents, particularly about his father. He also did not like either his brother or his two sisters. This ill-feeling finds occasional utterance in his writings. In tracing the plight of Ernest under a domineering and tyrannical father and a mother who was ready to sacrifice even her maternal heart at the altar of her devotion to her husband, Butler is actually reminiscent of his early life. This ill-feeling
coloured his attitude to the family system which appeared to him like a cage containing some infighting members. This picture, as presented in the novel, is intensified by his entries on the family in his Note Books. In one entry he writes:

I believe that more unhappiness comes from this source than from any other - I mean from the attempt to prolong family connection unduly and to make people hang together artificially who would never naturally to do so. The mischief among the lower classes is not so great, but among the middle and upper classes it is killing a large number daily. And the old people do not really like it much better than the young.

( The Note Books of Samuel Butler (H.F. Jones, 1919), p. 32

Another entry writes:

He was really a happy man. He was without father without mother and without descent. He was a born orphan.

(ibid, p. 33

In another entry Butler writes:

I could stand my relations well enough if they would let me alone. It is my relations
that I sometimes find embarrassing.

Further Extracts from Samuel Butler's Note Books (Ed. Bartholomew, 1934), p. 19

His hostility to his father finds a clear expression in the entry -

Those who have never had a father can at any rate never know the sweets of losing one. To most men the death of his father is a new lease of life.

Further Extracts from Samuel Butler's Note Books (Ed. Bartholomew, 1934), p. 90

This strained relationship prevailing between the parents and offspring, according to Butler, was a biological phenomenon. In another entry of his Note Books he writes:

Whenever I am able to get behind the scenes I find a deep gulf separating successive generations; the instinctive antagonism between the two is far too general to be explained as due to abnormal incompatibility. Nor can it be explained on the ground of serious defect either in the older or the younger generation; the young of one generation becomes the old of the next, and both old and young always seem good sort of people enough to everyone except their own near belongings.

The explanation is, rather, that the antipathy between parents and children is part of the same
story with the antipathy that prevails throughout nature between an incipient species and the unmodified individuals of the race from which it is arising.

-/The Way of All Flesh, Intr. p. ix/  

In The Way of All Flesh the parent–offspring antagonism is shown in the relation between George Pontifex and his son Theobald. Theobald was forced to be ordained by his business man father as the son's ordination "might tend to bring business or at any rate to keep it in the firm." The story of Ernest is a representative story of parental tyranny to smother the growth of individualism in the character of offspring. The mechanical family life in which affection either did not exist at all and was forcibly stifled slowly made Ernest averse to the family as a system. His unfortunate imprisonment drove a final wedge into his attempt at clinging to the family. After his release from prison he resolved to break off with his old ties as he felt the family hanging like a millstone round his neck. Ernest felt -

1. The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 25
Achievement of any kind would be impossible for him unless he was free from those who would be forever dragging him back into the conventional. The convention had been tried already and had been found wanting.

The Way of All Flesh, p. 256

His antipathy towards the family was sharpened by the spite of Charlotte, his sister. The Ellen episode was another cause to embitter his feeling towards the family. As a result of all this cumulative bitterness Ernest, like his creator, felt happy not to be encumbered with a load of a family, hired a suite in a hotel for the rest of his life. This part of Ernest's life is directly drawn from Butler's own life. To spare his children his own misery Ernest decided to bring them up outside the family and away from parental interference. He said to Overton—

"I shall be just as unkind to my children, as my grandfather was to my father, or my father to me." It is followed by his long tirade against his father—

A man first quarrels with his father about three—quarters of a year before he is born. It is then he insists on setting up a separate

1. The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 307
establishment; once this has been agreed to, the more complete the separation for ever after the better for both.

[The Way of All Flesh, p. 307]

But this distrust in and opposition to the family system also is fraught with an ambivalence. In spite of his professed hostility to the family system, he could neither break up with it nor publish his novel for fear of wounding the sentiments of the members of his family. Butler's criticism of the family as an institution is not difficult to understand. But he fails to suggest any effective alternative. To continue the process of creation the role of parents is an imperative. What emerges from Butler's criticism is that parents should be sufficiently affluent, sagacious to die during the infancy of their children and leave behind the control of their money for the unhindered development of their individuality. The process in which Ernest attempted to save his children is subject to the possession of considerable affluence. What will be the end if all the rich people try to act as Ernest did? Malcolm Muggeridge in his book on Butler is very often unduly harsh to Butler, but in respect of Butler's attitude to the family his ironic comment cannot help receiving approval.
What would he have felt if his inheritance had been brushed aside as lightly as he brushed aside the bond between parent and child, man and woman, present and past, time and eternity?

"The Earnest Atheist" - Malcolm Muggeridge, 1971 - Intr. p. xx

SECTION VII

Criticism of children-upbringing

In many fields of thinking Butler was an avant-garde thinker. The problem of child-upbringing has received serious attention from the thinkers in the present century and as a branch of modern psychology it has assumed the dignity of science. Dickens in his novels for the first time endeavoured to explore the child psychology with sympathy and kindness. Dickens pointed out the problem, but the root of the problem was hinted only. But Butler devoted his attention to the problem of child-upbringing as a social problem and invested his treatment with psychoanalysis.

In Chapter V of The Way of All Flesh Butler devotes a wide space to "the relations between parents and
children. 1 The history of this relation in literature through ages, from the Elizabethan down to the Victorian Period, has been traced by Butler. In this background the ill-treatment of his children by George Pontifex has been delineated. George Pontifex, like the other Victorian fathers, was a bit stern with his children. "He thrashed his boys two or three times a week, some weeks a good deal oftener, but in those days fathers were always thrashing their boys." 2 Thrashing of boys was a common occurrence during the Victorian Age. The case of David Copperfield flogged by Murdstone and Creakle stands as a living example of this. Dr. Arnold also very often flogged boys and this is referred to by Strachey in his life of Dr. Arnold. Very frequently in those days boys received punishment from their parents for faults from which they themselves were not free. "At that time it was universally admitted that to spare the rod was to spoil the child." 3 A common practice current among the parents for exacting obedience from boys was to break their self-will. Overton writes on this:

1. *The Way of All Flesh* - Samuel Butler, p. 18
2. Ibid, p. 19
3. Ibid,
It consisted in checking the first signs of self-will while his children were too young to offer serious resistance. If their wills were 'well-broken' in childhood, to use an expression then much in vogue, they would acquire habits of obedience which they would not venture to break through till they were over twenty-one years old.

(The Way of All Flesh, p. 19)

The Victorian parents would use this early will-breaking as a protective measure for themselves and their money.

The parent-offspring relationship - a biological as well as a social problem - is an important aspect of Butler's intellectual quest in respect of his social preoccupation. George Pontifex's bullying of his children elicits Butler's further comments upon the problem of children-upbringing. Generally a genial atmosphere was conspicuously absent in a Victorian family. Children, usually foreign to this feeling of geniality, never felt its absence. Children were systematically taught to attribute their unhappiness to their own sinfulness. Butler writes about this ironically:
To parents who wish to lead a quiet life I would say: Tell your children that they are very naughty—much naughtier than most children. Point to the young people of some acquaintances as models of perfection and impress your own children with a deep sense of their own inferiority.

To parents who wish to lead a quiet life I would say: Tell your children that they are very naughty—much naughtier than most children. Point to the young people of some acquaintances as models of perfection and impress your own children with a deep sense of their own inferiority.

\textit{The Way of All Flesh, p. 23/}

Parents often conceal their moral lapse from their own children and usually try to present themselves as the exponents of good sense and moral goodness. They never allow themselves to be examined by their children. Upon this Butler comments ironically:

\begin{quote}
Tell them how singularly indulgent you are; insist on the incalculable benefit you have conferred upon them, firstly in bringing them into the world at all, but more particularly in bringing them into it as your own children rather than any one else's.
\end{quote}

\textit{Ibid.}

Children in the long run will find out the injustice done to them, but this finding will be of no use to them and will occasion no inconvenience to the parents.

Victorian parents very often made a show of freedom to their children. This comes out in George Pontifex's
imposing his choice of profession on his son Theobald. Publicly the father spoke of allowing his son to choose his profession, but privately he was not in favour of granting any luxury of indulgence to his son's wish. This difference of public preaching and private practice brings out the hypocrisy of the Victorian parents. About this hypocrisy of George Pontifex Butler writes through Overton:

"He would talk in this way when there were visitors in the house and when his son was in the room. He spoke so wisely and so well that his listening guests considered him a paragon of right-mindedness."¹

One important aspect of Butler's social awareness is evident in his criticism of the existing system of education and this criticism is expressed in Erewhon where education was hypothetical in nature, it operated in suppressing originality and taught the students not to form any definite opinion on any subject. In The Way of All Flesh Butler exposes a system of education without any bearing on practical life. An important aspect of the novel is its

¹ The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 26
examination of the problem of children's education. The depth and originality of Butler's ideas in this field can be fully comprehended only against the background of a cursory glance at education as a problem in Victorian society.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century the scope of education for the children of the urbanised 'new people' (created by the Industrial Revolution) was limited and insufficient. The unsparing employment of children in mills and factories made the offer of a complete provision of education impossible.

In the first half of the nineteenth century English elementary education was organised by voluntary schools maintained by different religious bodies. The Reform Bill of 1832 did not lead the state to assume any small measure of responsibility for public instruction. Persistent agitation was going on both in the parliament and among the people on the problem of elementary education. As a result, in 1870, the government introduced a bill to provide for public elementary education. In 1880 Gladstone government made attendance at elementary schools compulsory for all children up to the age of 13. The Free Education Act of 1891 passed by Ministry of Salisbury made elementary
education free in all public schools. But the Secondary education was still in a mess and Matthew Arnold had an important role in bringing the mess to an order. Universal compulsory education, formation of a ministry of education (assisted by a consultative body of persons), introduction of a system of school leaving certificate, bifurcation of the curricula - into literary and scientific - are some important measures suggested by Arnold for the improvement of Secondary education.

Public schools like Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Westminster, Winchester, Shrewsbury were ancient centres of long-standing reputation. But during the Early Victorian period Shrewsbury and Rugby under the two able headmasters - Dr. Butler and Dr. Thomas Arnold respectively - did pioneering work in public school reform. Popular tradition, supported by Stanley's Life (1844) and Hughes's Tom Browen's School Days (1857), regards Thomas Arnold as the universal reformer or recreator of public schools. But, so far as the purely professional side of school-keeping is concerned, he was anticipated by Samuel Butler, headmaster of Shrewsbury from 1798 to 1836. Dr. Butler raised Shrewsbury from a deplorable state to a flourishing school whose achievements and organisation became model for Eton, Harrow.
and Rugby. Periodical examinations, a carefully supervised scheme of marks assigned for merit and industry gave a new lease of life to Shrewsbury. The success of the system was manifested in the extraordinary success achieved by its boys in competition for university scholarship. Dr. Butler gave the lesson of initiative and self-reliance by attaching importance to 'private work', study done in the boys' leisure time and under no supervision. Stanley claimed for Arnold the credit of being the first to introduce modern history, modern languages and mathematics into the regular routine. But actually Dr. Butler did all these prior to Dr. Arnold.

Dr. Arnold's claim to greatness lies not in professional achievement. His moral earnestness and strong religious conviction worked an extraordinary change in the life of Rugby, and through Rugby, in public schools and in English education at large. He laid paramount importance to the claim of religion in education.

This was the general picture of education during the 19th century. In *The Way of All Flesh* Butler devoted a good deal of his attention to the problem of children's education which was administered without the least consideration for children's feeling and psychology. The child
Ernest's education is a glaring instance of this. His childish lisping appeared as naughtiness to his clergyman father who unjustly flogged him and this flogging was an indirect means to ventilate the ire and frustration springing from his dull and hateful profession of a clergyman. A Victorian child like Ernest had a miserable life on account of his father and naturally would turn to the mother as an oasis in his desert life. But the episode of the sofa-talks reveals the futility of such a fond expectation on the part of the child. The mother's occasional softness was a makebelieve to wheedle out the secret of the child's heart for its timely betrayal to the father. This taught the child to be secretive and the spontaneity of his feeling was nipped in the bud.

But it should be remembered that this picture of miserable childhood was not a general picture. There were many households which were not the inferno as presented by Butler. The existence of some happy households ruled by affection takes away the edge of Butler's criticism to a great extent.

The originality of Butler's treatment of the two problems - the problem of educating children and the problem
of parents - children relation - can be evaluated properly by examining the treatment of the problems by other writers of the period. Dickens and Meredith among the major novelists frequently portrayed cruel and incompetent fathers. In *Hard Times* and *The Ordeal of Richard Feveral* they satirized the omniscient father whose 'system' of raising his children nearly ruined their lives and eventually brought grief to the father himself. Edmund Gosse also in his autobiographical novel *Father and Son* (1907) drew a study of the relations between two temperaments. The chief difference between Butler and his fellow novelists was in the thoroughness with which he chronicled the life of a provincial Victorian family and revealed the effects of an upbringing based on the old school of the sinfulness of the child.

**SECTION VIII**

Miscellaneous Criticism

In *The Way of All Flesh* the social criticism in the form of a terrible indictment of cant, hypocrisy and prudery prevailing over Victorian society takes place. The parental pretension has already been indicated in the
characters of George Pontifex and Theobald Pontifex. The assumption of a false self with society's good impression in view is an indication of Victorian cant and hypocrisy. The incident of arranging a lottery among unmarried sisters for the hand of a young man in marriage is funny, but it painfully brings out the problem of daughter's marriage in families who lack in the means of offering a good dowry. The incident in which Theobald compels his newly-wedded wife to order for the marriage dinner reveals the male domination over women. Theobald's aversion to children was an indication of his self-centred character and his reluctance to assume added responsibility. At Roughborough Ernest was expected to mix with the High Ydgrunites, the advocates of deliberate priggishness. The colleges and universities imparting hypothetical training succeeded in fostering priggishness and diverting the natural and spontaneous self of a young man. Ernest was born of prigs and was trained in further priggishness by his university education.

In *The Way of All Flesh* Butler attacked the middleclass morality. The middle class concept of morality during the Victorian period was regorous in theory, though not in practice. John Henry Raleigh in *Victorian Morals and the Modern Novel* writes:
What Butler was attacking above all, was middle class consciousness, that is, the way the middle class mind operated, and he opposed this consciousness with another type or way of handling experience, which he associated with either the aristocracy or the lower class, for it was only these that had the famous Butlerian grace, the ability to act by instinct and by the unconscious.

In the relatively small aristocracy and in the immense lower class the puritanical code of the middle class did not prevail. Thus Towneley and Mr. Shaw, the tinker, free from this rigorous puritanic code, have the ability to do the right thing on the basis of instinct.

As an idealist Butler was opposed to some leading tendencies of his age. His social criticism, as sketched above, brings it out clearly. But Butler's temperament was a curious medley of contradictory qualities. A glaring instance of this contradiction is evident in his attitude to money. In extolling money he actually conformed to the excessive materialistic craze which has been termed Philistinism by Arnold while criticising the age. Butler attacked so many sides of his age, but he was all praise for money.
and this eulogy for money is to be attributed to the pinching poverty which plagued him in the earlier part of life. In praise of money he wrote - "Loss of money indeed is not only the worst pain in itself, but it is the parent of all others."¹ He further added - "Granted, then, that the three most serious losses which a man can suffer are those affecting money, health and reputation. Loss of money is far the worst ...."² In one of his entries in the Note Books Butler wrote - "Money is the last enemy that shall never be subdued."³ C.E.M. Joad in his book on Butler writes about Butler's attitude to money:

Poverty was for him a crime which no self-respecting community would tolerate. The poor man was wretched himself, and since he made others feel uncomfortable in his presence, he was immoral as well as wretched. Biologically he was not a success, and the sooner he faded away and made room for an organism better able to look after itself, the better for everybody concerned.

¹ The Way of All Flesh - Samuel Butler, p. 253
² Ibid.
³ The Note Books of Samuel Butler (Ed. H.F. Jones, 1919), p. 36
According to Furbank - "There has been a genuine transference of religious sentiment from its conventional objects to money."¹ and Furbank thinks - "Money is typical of the stolen birthright."² This leads Furbank to find out "Butler's strangely proprietary attitude towards his own likes in art and elsewhere."³ In spite of having an idealistic attitude towards life, Butler occupies a singular position by virtue of his idealism, as revealed in his view of money. Butler's strange and paradoxical attitude to poverty as a moral defect finds elaborate elucidation in the Preface to *Major Barbara* by Shaw. But Shaw preached Fabian socialism to back his theory up. But without any political or economic theory to support his stand, Butler's view of money and poverty is eccentric and this betrays his intellectual inability to understand a social malady.

*The Way of All Flesh*, written over a long stretch of time (1873-1885), embodies all of his ideas in the form of a creative writing. The two basic tenets of his intellectual quest - his evolutionary creed and his attempt to

1. **Samuel Butler** - P.N. Furbank (1971), p. 21
2. -Ibid.
3. -Ibid, - p. 22
find out a new version of Christianity - have been admirably presented in the form of a living novel of abiding aesthetic interest. The novel occupies a place of importance in another respect. It is followed by a dry-up of his literary inspiration which returns only once in the form of a fitful flame in *Erewhon Revisited*.

During his lifetime Butler was a lonely man languishing in negligence. The enthusiastic praise of Bernard Shaw rescued him from oblivion and brought him to public notice. Butler's 'criticism of life' in *The Way of All Flesh* reveals his penetrating vision and extra-ordinary insight. But the originality of his approach to life was appreciated only after the First World War when the established values of life were violently shattered in a welter of changes. The shattering of religious faith, the tremendous explorations of science and phychology gave birth to a new concept of individuality of which Butler was an unconscious exponent. He also anticipated the post-war disillusion and an open revolt against long-established standards and beliefs. His restlessness, resentment and irony are characteristics of the modern mind. Butler's creed of emerging evolution in place of religious faith became the watchword of modern men groping in the darkness.
of faithlessness. His open revolt against the family system became a gospel to the angry young men of the present century. The Way of All Flesh set the tradition of protest and in this tradition of protest this novel exerted notable impact on Bennett, Maugham, Lawrence, Forster and a host of other writers. Butler anticipated the modern writers in his distinct bias towards pathology, continuous insistence on problem of heredity, delineation of morbid or at least abnormal mentalities. He gave a new vitality to realistic fiction and this vitality was followed by H.G.Wells, Somerset Maugham, Sir Hugh Walpole, May Sinclair, Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.