Of the English dramatists dealing with the theme of social justice, we have so far considered only the three major writers, one of them very great indeed. But they had several companion playwrights who contributed not a little to the drama of social justice in England. The literary conscience of the early twentieth century was so strongly and widely stirred by the contemporary demand for social justice that a large number of plays exposing the various sources of social evil, were produced in the first two decades of the century.

It is noteworthy that J.M. Barrie who was Shaw's junior by only four years wrote *The Admirable Crichton* as early as 1902, about a decade before Shaw challenged the cultural prerogatives of the aristocracy with the accomplishments of his Cockney Galatea, Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion*. The play frolicked with the pretensions of aristocracy, which are revealed to be a matter of pure convention. We are shown an aristocratic family (the Earl of Loam, his three daughters, the Hon. Ernest Woolley, and others) with their multitudinous servants. The Earl of Loam has a theory that human beings are all equal, and compel the servants to come into the drawing room and have tea, waited upon by members of the upper classes. The butler, an intelligent man and a sound conservative, hates these monthly tea parties. The servants do not believe in equality; there is no equality in the servants' hall.

In the second Act we discover the same people in rather different circumstances. They have been yachting together, and the yacht having been wrecked; they are cast on an island. All the social distinctions which were so important in London now disappear, but there is still no equality. The best man must be the 'king' and issue orders to the rest. He proves to be Crichton, the butler,
and he is compelled to take the initiative, in fact, he is the only person in the company who has any practical ideas at all. One of the maids becomes as important as the daughters of the aristocracy. The Hon. Ernest Woolley reveals himself as useless in an emergency, and has to take orders from Crichton. The Earl of Loam himself is an utter failure, but he can chop sticks and draw water.

There is a slight rebellion against Crichton's kingship, but he gives them the chance to work under him or to remain independent. They are allured back by the odour of the soup which he is making, and submit to his authority. Thus the castes of civilization are turned topsy-turvy, the servant becoming the lord, and the lord becoming a servant. So much for the idea of all men being equal in a state of nature!

Lady Mary, the eldest daughter, proves to be the finest woman in the party. In London she was proud, cold, indolent and useless; but on the island she is brimful of energy, resource, and high spirits. She enjoys the experience as she had enjoyed nothing before. In Act-III Crichton proposes marriage to her, and she is overjoyed, but all the other women in the party are jealous of the honour which has come to her. Towards the end of the third Act a ship is sighted. Crichton has the terrible choice of summoning the crew to rescue them and returning to London, where he will be a butler again, or of remaining on the island, where he is a king and about to marry Lady Mary. He does not hesitate for a second. "Bill Crichton must play the game"! he shouts, and gives the signal.

The fourth Act is too pathetic, and is in the nature of an anti-climax. The party is back in London again. The Earl of Loam and the Hon. Ernest are now important people and Crichton is a servant once more. Lady Mary is about to marry Lord Brocklehurst and live the thoroughly boring life of a Society lady.
People who believe in the equality of man find much in the play to cause them furious thought. Was the Earl of Loam right in thinking that in a state of nature we should all be like brothers? And, most important of all, can we accept Sir James Barrie's idea that the wrong men are 'on top' in many cases, and that society would be better if it were based upon ability rather than upon birth and wealth? The idea seems certainly revolutionary and The Admirable Crichton is one of Barrie's few attempts to deal with the problems of the real world, although he much preferred to wander into the world of fantasy and imagination. What gives Barrie's works their chief charm and fascination is his power of conceiving changed conditions. In Dear Brutus (1917), a group of ordinary people are shown to us lamenting that they might, in other circumstances, have been this or that. Barrie places them all in changed circumstances, such as they might have lived in, had fate given them what they desired. But hardly anything is changed. After all they remain what they were. This may be interpreted to reflect the author's distrust of the efficacy of the rule of the Proletariat. But there is no denying the fact that he was drawn to the great movement for bringing about a better and more democratic order of society. What Every Woman Knows deals with a real problem and contains nothing of the fantastic. It is a study of an ambitious man who fights his way up from being a railway porter to a member of Parliament. The opening scene, showing the family lying in wait for a burglar, is excellent. In these plays there is a rich humour, frequently compounded with sadness, and his sense of the dramatic is keen. He has the gift of provoking thought in the audience, but he does not tell them what they should think or what he thinks himself.

St. John E.C. Hankin trod the paths of Shaw and Galsworthy. He was one of a group of 'uncommercial' writers whose plays were produced in Granville-Barker's Court Theatre. His five long and several short plays are of uneven merit, but of modern calibre.
The Two Mr Wetherby (1903) poked fun at sentimental codes of honour and throws searching light on the evils of marriage conventions. The good Mr. James Wetherby has a miserable time of it because he honours the marriage that binds him to an unsympathetic wife. He is faced with the problem of persuading his wife to stay with him. On the other side, the 'bad' Richard Wetherby is happily separated from his mate and even teaches James to assert his independence. But he is embarrassed by his wife's decision to return to him. The play drives home the lesson that there is no point in sticking to a heartless marriage. Marriage should be a mutual contract ensuring full justice to the rights of both the partners.

The Charity That Began at Home is a Nietzschean mockery of private philanthropy in the manner of Galsworthy's The Pigeon. It contains some shrew Shavian humour, as when the Cynic Verreker tells the woman he favours, "I love you as much as ever, more perhaps, now that I am going to lose you. But on every ground except love I'm quite unfit to marry you", adding, "Marriage is not a thing to be romantic about. It lasts too long". The Return of the Prodigal (1904) satirise middle-class virtues and poses the problem of spoilt children. The prodigal son who has squandered his patrimony in Australia claims that he has a right to be maintained by his father and brother. His claim is accepted and he goes off in triumph with his two hundred and fifty a year. In The Cassilis Engagement the story is one of caste or class. The engagement between young Geoffrey Cassilis and the designing adventurers Ethel Borridge is disapproved by the snobbish Mrs. Cassilis who breaks off the engagement by a clever plan because she does not like Ethel's shallowness and triviality. The world depicted by Hankin is a world of social vices and his lash falls equally on all. His satire is equally forceful in depicting the vulgarity and selfishness of Mrs. Borridge and the snobbishness
and deceitfulness of Mrs. Cassilis. Hankin in this play points out the tyranny of social customs and conventions which create an unbridgeable gulf between the classes. In The Last of the De Mullins, his last complete play, Hankin approximated Shavian surgery when he emboweled a quasi-feudal noble family which is shocked beyond endurance when one of its daughters, Janet, acquires an illegitimate child, refuses to marry its father who tries to live up to the code of honour, and goes into the millinery business. A spirit of revolt against the traditional role of women as mothers, already exemplified in Shaw's Vivie Warren, the unwomanly woman, is incarnated in Janet. She has won her independence having paid dearly for it, no doubt, in many privations and in many heart-burnings, but content and glad that she has cast off the fetters which she sees only too clearly binding the soul of her sister. The play also deals with the theme of caste and conventions. Once more we are introduced to what is dealt with by many other modern dramatists, the belittling and soul-destroying forces of social tradition. They are revealed here in the house of the De Mullins, where Hester lives a life of unmitigated mental depression. Hankin's cynicism imparts some flavour to his otherwise thin play as when Janet scorns the properly married Mrs. Bulstead who cannot overlook her conduct. "What right has she to look down that huge nose of hers at me! She's had ten children". Hankin's art is spoiled by an air of artificiality in dialogue as well as in character-delineation. His stage figures seem to us rather invented than felt. His attitude of cynical aloofness offers an interesting contrast to the stern-eyed kindliness of Galsworthy.

A penetrating analysis of the social evils of the time is evinced in some plays of Miss Elizabeth Baker (Mrs. J.E. Allaway). A working-girl familiar with "white collar slave" life, Baker created in 1909 a forceful naturalistic drama Chains. It is a tragedy of London suburbia, behind the all-consuming misery of whose
Charley Wilson, a clerk finds himself dissatisfied with his surroundings and tries to escape the lower middle-class routine by shipping to Australia. But he finds himself hopelessly trapped when his wife announces that she is to bear him child. The wild spirit of revolt and freedom that surged through his being is subdued by forces of social convention that dogs him to the continual daily grind at the dingy office-desk. Chains may be a slight play; but it was a praiseworthy attempt to represent the "little man" who was so often neglected equally by the writer of 'ideas' and the purveyors of popular entertainment. As in a Galsworthy play, here, not the characters but the circumstances and forces of society seem to play a more important part in bringing about the catastrophe.

A second play of Miss Baker which deserves mention here is The Price of Thomas Scott, composed in 1913 and originally produced at Manchester. The play deals with the problem of tainted money. The hero Thomas Scott, faces a dilemma when he finds that he has sold his property to what he hates most, a company financing a dancing hall. The conclusion of the play, unlike that of a Shaw-play, is not a compromise with a system which one is powerless to escape. The hard idealist flings back what he regards as tainted money, the money of sin.

Another talented woman Githa Sowerby (Mrs John Kendall) burrowed into middle-class life in Rutherford and Son, a drama of domestic tyranny centering around the granite figure of the industrialist Rutherford who, like Galsworthy's John Anthony, identifies himself with his glass factory at the cost of all tender feelings. Even to his own children he is hard and unfeeling and they escape his tyranny by drifting away from him. Dramatic power is exhibited by excellent characterisations of an old sister who fears him, a frustrated daughter Janet who runs away with his
foreman Martin, and a weak-willed son John who can only free himself by abandoning his wife and his child and breaking his father's cash-box. Only his son's wife Mary remains, and it is she alone who finally masters the hard old man now that he wants an heir to the house of Rutherford and is in need of such affection as he can find. The play dramatizes the theme of parent-child relationship in a manner different from Shaw's Misalliance, exposing the tyranny of an unfeeling father. It drives home the moral that to make family life happy and peaceful, there must be a reasonable consideration of the feelings of others. The elopement of Janet with an employee of her father mirrors the new social tendency to break the barrier of classes, already highlighted in Granville-Barker's The Marrying of Ann Leste.

Somerset Maugham who had little admiration for the 'theatre of ideas', himself contributed one of its best examples in The Constant wife. The Shavian problem-play note is sounded here with notable effectiveness. When Constance discovers her husband's infidelity with her married friend Marie Louise she prevents a scandal and then quietly goes into business. Soberly she asks herself the kind of question that Shaw would have raised—namely, what claim can she have upon her husband after fifteen years of marriage? Like other women of her class she has been, strictly speaking, a parasite having rendered no services to her husband. Once she possessed some physical usefulness; but the moment she ceases to please him as a woman she actually has no function and therefore no status in his house. Only by earning her livelihood can she recover her dignity, and then at last, she also has the right to enjoy an old admirer's love. The justification for the double standard vanishes when its economic base disappears, as it did when women entered business during the world war.

Among other dramatists who look up the theme of social justice Stanley Houghton deserves mention because his well-wrought
comedy *Hindle wakes gay* gave a new fillip to the usual 'revolt of youth' theme by making the lower-class girl Fanny Hawthorn refuse pointblank marriage to the rich weakling Alan Jeffcote because spending an illicit week-end with him is no indication of love for him. It men can enjoy a cursory passion, so can a woman. In her gesture of revolution against the rigid fetters of a conventional morality Fanny shows herself a woman of the modern age, a sister of some of Mr. Shaw's heroines, eager for independence of thought and action. She is the spirit of the twentieth century striving to fight out a way against the tradition of the nineteenth. She is of the kin of Magda in Sudermann's *Die Heimat*, of Mrs. Arbuthnot in Wilde's *A Woman of No Importance*, and of Freda in Galsworthy's *The Eldest Son*.

St. John Irvine stands well in the vanguard of those dramatists who have striven to give expression to the contemporary demand for social justice in different spheres of life. At an early age he had come to London where he fell under the influence of Shaw and the socialist Fabian Society. Like Stanley Houghton he exposed the hard conventions of a narrow society and that perverted idealism which gave dignity to Miss Baker's work. Often he included with these things the forces of the present day class-war which cut across and confuse many of the older prejudices. In 1911 he delivered the powerful problem play *Mixed Marriage*, a study of religious conflict as well as the struggle between master and labourer. There had been religious riots in Belfast (Ervine was born there in 1883) during which a girl was killed by a shot while standing at the door. Ervine, however, gave this incident a larger significance by setting her tragedy against a labour background. John Rainey whose influence over the Protestant workers makes him an important figure, speaks in favour of a strike which he knows is largely engineered by Catholics. But learning that his own son Hugh is engaged to a
Catholic girl, Nora Murray, he opposes a united front of the Protestant and Catholic labourers. Civil discord that breaks out and the death of Nora by a stray bullet of the soldiers called in, make the action tense. Despite a melodramatic touch in the last act, the denouement seems to be logically arrived at. The religious intolerance and antagonism between the Protestants and the Catholics sometimes intensified by that class war which is coming to assume ever greater and greater proportions in social life give the background to a tragedy of human passions and raises these passions to a high level. Faced with the catastrophe he has caused Rainey can only mutter: "A wuz right. A knew a wuz right". This has something of the majestic grandeur which is enshrined in the old father of Hebbel's Maria Magdalene.

Ervine followed the road of modernity even further and revealed a strong continental naturalistic influence in Jane Clegg (1913), a stark domestic tragedy of corruption and rebellion in an urban middle class environment. Jane Clegg, showed a wife, deceived and deserted by a weak, lying, gambling husband, who has embezzled a cheque belonging to his employer, rising courageously above the sordid circumstances of her lower middle class life to prefer life alone with her children. She is the "new woman", despising the convention that a wife exists only for her husband and therefore seeming to her husband and his mother `unnacharrel'; for she has a mind of her own and declares that "it does not seem right somehow to have a mind and not use it". The play encouraged, in a very competent manner, its audience to think seriously not only of the problems of the immediate story but of the industrial civilisation of which that story was a symptom. Its conclusion raised a wider issue still, that of the relationship between partners in marriage; for, in excusing himself, the husband asserts that "it does not do a chap much good to be living with a woman who's his superior..... I ought to have married a woman like myself, or a bit worse".
John Ferguson (1915) is Irvine's most realistic study of the depressing existence of the middle classes. Old John Ferguson, whose son Andrew is unfit to manage the farm, finds it hard to make both ends meet and mortgages the farm to the brutal and high-handed miller Henry Witherow who threatens to foreclose. Ferguson who can save it only by marrying his daughter Hannah to the obnoxious village grocer Jimmy Caesar, is too upright to take the advantage of Hannah. But afterwards Hannah is raped by Henry Witherow who is found dead. Finally Hannah's brother delivers himself to the police as his murderer. The play is a ruthless exposition of the evil system of mortgage and the high handedness and meanness of village leaders whose unfeeling attitudes and intriguing activities often disturb the happiness of innocent, peace-loving persons.

So far had the influence of Ibsen and Shaw, reinforced by that of Wells and E.M. Forster and others, made it possible for dramatists to criticise contemporary society and raise broad issues of civilised living. Arnold Bennett and Edward Knoblock approached the problem play in Milestones, published in 1912. It deals with the 'generations theme', the theme which had inspired Grenville-Barker's The Voice Inheritance, Miss Sowerby's Rutherford and Son and Turgenev's Fathers and Sons. The gradual progress from generation to generation with the retention of the same prejudices and the same emotions, even when expressed in widely different terms, is delineated with a sure touch worthy of the author of The Old Wife's Tale and the Clayhanger series. Mr. John Oswald Francis's widely-discussed play Change (1912) offers another example of a drama dealing with similar theme. Clemence Dane raised the question whether divorce was not justifiable on grounds of insanity in A Bill of Divorcement in 1921. Alan Monkhouse with First Blood (1924) followed in the kind of Galsworthy's Strife. An outstandingly delightful, but slight comedy was J.B. Fagan's And So To Bed, which brought the flirtations diarist Samuel Pepys to life again in 1926.