Chapter III

The Emergence of John Galsworthy as a dramatist

The Silver Box (1906)
Strife (1909)
Justice (1910)

In the year 1906, the British audience came to know of a new playwright who professed to use the stage as a pulpit to denounce the evils of the time and to advocate drastic reforms. On September 25 of that year, The Silver Box, a play written by John Galsworthy was staged in the Court Theatre under the management of J. E. Vendrenne and H. Granville-Barker. The play proved that its author was a great champion of the principle of social justice and a humanitarian dramatist, capable of presenting both sides of a problem in a compelling theatrical manner. Unlike his great contemporary George Bernard Shaw who had been an unsuccessful novelist before he turned a dramatist, Galsworthy took to playwriting after a successful debut as a novelist. But like Shaw, he was a preacher and he used the medium of drama to better contemporary life and society.

John Galsworthy was born at Kingston, near London, on August 14th, 1867, the son of a wealthy London Solicitor and property-owner. His ancestors belonged to Devonshire. John was educated at Harrow, one of the few exclusive English public Schools, and at New College, Oxford where he studied Law. He went on to Lincoln's Inn, one of the ancient legal societies of England, and in 1890 he was called to the Bar. But he practised little, evidently because he had no need to earn his living by labour and because as a theorist his temperamental attitude to law was so sensitive that he lacked that passionate one-sided view of a case which alone can give an advocate his success at the bar. He seemed destined to remain shut up in that self-satisfied little world to which most of the characters of his novels and plays belong. An aimless social
existence did not, however, long appeal to him. In order to see men and manners in the larger world, he went out of Europe, travelled for four years in America, the British colonies and the Pacific Islands. It was during his travels that he met Joseph Conrad, the Polish Seaman, who became a great English novelist and his life-long friend. Though we do not see much of his experiences as a traveller in his books, occasional realistic glimpses that he gives into different national temperaments and modes of expression for example, in *The Little Man*, point to his experience of different societies.

Galsworthy lived in a world of ease, security and prosperity. It was the heyday of British prosperity, when the savagery of the subsequent world-wars was almost unthinkable. Of course, he was a cautious, critical and judicious observer of the age in which he lived. His conception of his own little world and his observation of the unfortunate limitations of the English society of his time remarkably coloured and characterised his literary creation. He began to discover disquieting facts for himself which unsettled him. He came to know of the dreadful slums of London, from some of which his father drew rent and he was deeply horrified. The hypocrisy of his own class smote him, shaking his complacency.

At about this time when he was mentally disturbed by the contemplation of his society, he fell deeply in love with his cousin's exceptionally beautiful and accomplished wife Ada Cooper who was very unhappy in her marriage. The two loved each other secretly for ten years and waited. Divorce was a major social scandal in those days and John's father would have been greatly distressed by such a thing. They married in 1905 only after his death. John loved Ada most devotedly all his life. But the prejudice against a divorce haunted them. Ada was shunned by most of their acquaintances which finally made Galsworthy a rebel against his class and a relentless fighter against marriage conventions.
It was Ada again who made him a writer. She was absolutely convinced of his potentialities as a writer. She induced him to write, helped him and encouraged him constantly for the rest of his life. Together they discussed every detail of his work. She was a great helpmate. She typed nearly all his work, often three times over; for Galsworthy was a very meticulous writer and revised his manuscripts more than once. Both loved music and Ada played music on the Piano while he wrote. His first publication from the Four Winds published in 1879 under an assumed name John Sinjohn, was a volume of feeble and imitative short stories and a failure. Other failures followed. The tide began to turn with his third and fourth novels published in his own name, namely The Island Pharisses (1904) and The Man of Property (1906).

Galsworthy's novels are instinct with the social disquietude and they reflect his interest in contemporary sociological problems. They give an objective, ironical portrait of the upper middle-class to which he belonged. They are earnest and sincere analyses of its weakness and inadequacies and show him to be primarily a social critic. Galsworthy himself stated his aims as a novelist in "A Novelist's Allegory" (1), which were, of course, his aims as a dramatist. "A Novelist's Allegory" introduces a figure Cethru (see-through), who is charged by the Prince of Felicitas to go all his life up and down the dark street (via Publica) bearing a lantern, so that way-farers might see whither they are going and avoid danger in the darkness..... He is at length arraigned before the judges for continually disturbing good citizens by showing to them without provocation disagreeable sights and endangering the laws by causing persons to desire to change them. The defence of Cethru is that his lantern distorted nothing; it "did but show that which was there, both fair and foul, no more, no less". Evidently Galsworthy invented Cethru as a model for himself and intended to use his craft as a novelist (or as a dramatist) as Cethru used his

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1. Included in the Collection of Essays The Inn of Tranquility, published in 1912.
lantern. He intended an impartial presentation of the conflicts he saw around him.

Already dealing with the propertied classes in his novels, as a dramatist Galsworthy concentrated more sharply on certain aspects of their wealth and its making. In a Preface to the Collected edition of his plays he says:

A dramatist (obviously he means himself) strongly and pitifully impressed by the encircling pressure of modern environments.... will not write plays detached from the movements and problems of his times. He is not conscious, however, of any desire to solve those problems in his plays or effect great reforms. His only ambition in drama as in his other work, is to present truth as he sees it and produce in them a sort of mental and moral ferment, whereby vision may be enlarged, imagination enlivened and understanding promoted.

Galsworthy deluded himself into believing that he was a presiding judge engaged in a dispassionate summing up. His compassionate sympathy for the poor and the oppressed was never wanting. He did not belong to the working class or to the poor slum-dwelling class. But he tried earnestly and sympathetically to understand their problems and difficulties and to mitigate the same. He devoted much of his time and energy to such worthy reforms in the law of divorce, the right to franchise for women and better working conditions for the ponies in mines. The financial assistance which he gave privately to innumerable people was never published. He was, in fact, a typical representative of modern humanism. He had a Tolstoyan reverence for all life.

- II -

It was, in the autumn of 1905, when the famous management of J.E. Vandrenne and Harley Granville-Barker was making theatre history at the Royal Theatre in Solane Square, London, that Edward Garnett wrote to Galsworthy suggesting that he might write a play
For many years Garnett was a power behind the throne in literary circles. Possessing no creative gifts himself, Garnett was an indefatigable inspirer and adviser to authors. His admiration of Galsworthy's fiction was deep, but it was never uncritical. Garnett believed that the novelist's dialogue and his strong sense of construction fitted him to be a dramatist; and although Galsworthy refused his suggestion, he began to work almost at once on the play first known as The Cigarette Box, afterwards destined to make its author's stage reputation as The Silver Box. As early as March 1906 Galsworthy was thanking Garnett for his "invaluable criticism" in the light of which he revised the play and sent it off to Granville-Barker. It arrived on a Saturday, was read by him and by Bernard Shaw on the Sunday and accepted on the Monday. It made a profound impression upon critics and audiences when it had its first production on 25th of September, 1906. The Times had nothing but praise; The Sketch made a point of appreciating its technical novelties and The Bystander prophesied the great effect it was to have on the theatre of the future.

Galsworthy's legal training stood him in good stead to deal with legal situations. His first play is, therefore, a powerful dramatization of the justice-injustice issue. It is a clear indictment of the social operation of justice. It deals with the significant saying that there is one law for the other and another law for the poor. Two men, one rich and the other poor, commit the same crime of theft. But they are treated differently by law. While the poor man suffers, the rich man goes scot-free. The plot is very simple but dramatic. Jack Barthwick, the scapegrace son of a wealthy M.P. returns home late at night completely drunk. He has in his hand a lady's handbag which he has stolen from his girl-friend; apparently to pay her out. He is accompanied by a less drunk Workingman Jim Jones who helps him to find the keyhole. Barthwick fails to give him the tip, invites him to drink; but
readily falls asleep. Jim gets himself drunk on the whisky, takes the silver-box on the table and the silk-purse from the lady's handbag before leaving the house. Next morning Marlow, the butler discovers that the silver-box is missing. All suspicion falls on Mrs. Jones, the charwoman who denies any knowledge of the cigarette-box. Old Barthwick takes very serious view of the case and seeks the assistance of the police for detection of the theft. The missing silver-box is discovered by the detective Snow in the cottage of the Jones who are arrested. The case is tried in the London Police Court. Jack, tutored by his father's solicitor pretends forgetfulness. Jones gives a true account of the facts. The Magistrate makes a difference between the two accused. The happily born thief is acquitted, while Jones is put to prison. Mrs. Jones is publicly disgraced and she loses her job.

The simple plot of crime and punishment is dramatically presented through the different stages of action so as to fully bring out the central theme e.g. the discriminating function of law. Galsworthy writes a brilliant exposition in the first Act. William Archer pointed out the fulness of effect obtained by the utmost economy of means in the opening scene. The short speech of Jack Barthwick is fraught with dramatic action. The loose, incoherent words hardly making a sentence convey a lot of informations. It tells us that Jack Barthwick returns home after midnight 'benevolently drunk'. He carries home a lady's reticule snatched away in a state of revelry. He is helped to open the door by another fellow whom he likes to pay a tip. But as he takes out of his pocket the last shilling it drops and rolls away. This apparently unimportant action of dropping the last shilling sets the main spring of action in motion. Having no money to give the stranger who helped him in, he invites him into his room and offers him drink. Through the conversation that follows between the two Galsworthy skilfully puts in the main thesis of the play e.g. class-distinction and the discriminating function of law. Under the
influence of liquor Jack says:

I'm not a socialist myself; I'm a Liberal—there's ve-lill difference, because of the principles of the Lib-Liberal Party. We're all equal before the law—that's not, that's silly.

In a similar state of drunkenness Jones gives vent to feelings of distrust and envy for the scapegoat son of a Liberal Member of Parliament.

Fat lot o' things they've got 'ere! (He sees the crimson purse lying on the floor.) More cat's fur. Puss, puss! (He finges it, drops it on the tray, and looks at Jack) Calf! Fat calf! ....... I'll score you off too, that's wot I'll do.

Jones words are characteristic of the sentiments of twentieth-century have-nots who, unlike their forefathers, not only envy the wealth and affluence of the rich, but also claim their right to equal shares of it. Jones thus turns out to be a typical modern socialist who champions the cause of social justice.

The work of exposition is extended to the next scene that throws light on the family life of Mrs. Jones, her unhappy experience with a out-of-work, drunkard husband. Inspite of the ill-treatment of her husband, Mrs. Jones cannot leave him partly out of fear and partly out of some consideration for the miserable condition Jones has been driven into by unemployment. Wheeler and Marlowe, both servants to the Barthwicks advise Mrs. Jones to leave her husband. Wheeler says:

If I were you I wouldn't live with him. I wouldn't live with a man that raised his hand to me. I wouldn't set up with it. Why don't you take the children and leave him? If you put up with 'im it'll only make him worse, I never can see why, because a man's married you, he should knock you about.

This is not merely a piece of advice to a suffering woman, but the assertion of a woman's right to be honourably treated by her husband. It sounds a protest against the tyranny of husbands and a
demand for social justice in the sphere of married life. The scene ends with a suspense created by the butler's search for the cigarette-box which is found missing. This incident gives a push to the dramatic action to proceed.

The third scene of the first Act serves to reveal characters and brings complication into the action. The Barthwicks are exposed in their true colours through the tit-bits of talks round the breakfast table. The reference to the victory of the Labour Party in a by-election and the exchange of opinions between the husband and the wife highlight the trend of contemporary politics and government as well as the characters of the two. Mr. Barthwick is a well-meaning Liberal M.P. who welcomes the representation of all parties for proper reform and social policy. But his wife is a selfish narrow-minded woman who regards any talk of reform or social progress as nonsense. She is the prototype of the privileged class who are impervious to the idea of social justice. She thinks:

Those socialists and labour men are an absolutely selfish set of people. They have no sense of patriotism, like the upper classes; they simply want what we've got.

Mrs. Barthwick looks askance at the activities of the Labour Party and smells an intrigue in the policy adopted by them. Hating the socialists as "quite uneducated men", she wishes that their aim at coming to power must be nipped in the bud.

Wait until they begin to tax our investments. I'm convinced that when they once get a chance they will tax everything—they've no feeling for the country.

She is afraid of the rule of the Labour Party in near future when the rich will be deprived of the amenities they have been enjoying as special privileges of their class. She even opposes the spread of education among the common people:

Education is simply ruining the lower classes. It unsettles them, and that's the worst thing for us all. I see an enormous difference in the manner of servants.
In all these opinions and views Mrs. Barthwick is a typical conservative of the aristocratic class who are opposed to any change of social conditions for the betterment of the toiling and suffering mass and adhere to the system of class-cleavage. They are eager to keep the common people in perpetual want, misery and servitude so as to reap the harvest of comfort and luxury, honour and dignity. But in the utterances of Mrs. Barthwick there is a confession of the awakening of that social conscience that 'unsettles' the common people and prompts them to assert the principle of equality between man and man.

The gradual unfolding of the character of Jack Barthwick is also done here. Already in the first scene Jack appeared as a spoilt child of a rich man, addicted to drinking and rowing with street-girls. The letter revealing his unscrupulousness in cheating his tailors with a false cheque and the scolding of his father in most severe terms point to the depth of his degradation. Mr. Barthwick thinks that for this act "the boy might have been prosecuted". This is an offence of a serious nature and calls for prosecution and punishment of the offender. But for his father's wealth and status, Jack Barthwick would have to meet the trouble. As his father comments:

If you hadn't me to come to, where would you have been? It's the merest accident—suppose you had been the son of a poor man or a clerk. Obtaining money with a cheque you knew your bank could not meet. It might have ruined you for life.

The differential treatment of society to the rich and the poor which is the subject of Galsworthy's attack, is hinted at here. If the offender in this case were a man without money or reference, he would certainly be accused of forgery. But because Jack is the son of M.P., he is allowed to go unhurt while the money is paid off by his father. A similar occasion occurs when an unknown girl meets Jack in the presence of his father and demands the
return of her reticule and purse, snatched by him last night in a mood of revelry. Jack is accused of 'stealing' and threatened to pay back the money on pain of summoning by the court. This time also the father comes to the rescue of the son and silences the girl by meeting her demand. But his comment this time is more severe. While it exposes the character of Jack, the comment has a great bearing on the subsequent action of the play:

So this is the way that forty pounds has gone! One thing after another! Once more I should like to know where you'd have been if it hadn't been for me! you don't seem to have any principles. You—you're one of those who are a nuisance to society; you—you're dangerous! What your mother would say I know not. Your conduct, as far as I can see, is absolutely unjustifiable. It's—it's criminal. Why, a poor man who behaved as you've done.... do you think he'd have any mercy shown him? What you want is a good lesson. You and your sort are (he speaks with feeling)—a nuisance to the community.

Once again, the speech hints at the concessions society grants to men of wealth and position and the severity it exacts on the poor. The speech is charged with dramatic irony; for, at the end of the play, the judge brands Jones as "a nuisance to the community" and therefore punishes him.

The action becomes complicated when the missing of the silver cigarette-box is reported by the butler to Mr. Barthwick, who takes a serious view of the loss. Everybody's suspicion centring round Mrs. Jones, she is interviewed and the interview throws much light, once again, on the distressful life of Mrs. Jones with her ruffian husband. The justice-injustice theme is now announced and the readers' interest is concentrated to watch with curiosity the course of the action—how Barthwick deals with the particular situation of the loss of his son's cigarette-box. "It's not a question of one's feelings. It's a question of justice on principle—" that is what Mr. Barthwick thinks of the case. But this offers an opportunity to study the character of the man. A man of Mr.
Barthwick's position can easily afford to lose a cigarette-box. But then the established code of social ethics ingrained in him prompts him to think of social security. Should such losses or cases of theft be overlooked and the thief allowed to go scot-free? He must detect the thief and punish him. "On principle I shall make a point of fixing the responsibility; it goes to the foundations of security". The matter is reported to the police.

But while orthodox morality sneers at the thief and demands his punishment, there is a quite different way of looking upon the matter. It is the way in which Jones in the first scene of the second Act justifies his stealing the silver-box and the purse to himself as well as to his wife. Unemployment has brought him frustration and bitterness. Hence his queer logic:

I'll take it as wages for the time I have gone about the streets asking for what's my rights. I'll take it for what's overdue, d'ye hear?

The money that he discovers inside the purse belongs to him as a right. It should be a compensation for the time and energy wasted in search of a job. He makes society and Government responsible for this.

A man wants to sweat his soul out to keep the breath in him and ain't allowed—that's justice,— that's freedom and all the rest of it.

The account Jones gives of his vain search for an employment is a point attack on society that fails to provide its able-bodied members with work. In such a social system justice and freedom lose their significance. Politicians and leaders of the country are indulging in tall talks but doing practically nothing for the good of the poor. While one section of people roll in luxury and comfort without doing any work, another section can hardly keep body and soul together. Referring to the Barthwicks, Jones tells his wife:
I see this Barthwick of yours everyday going down to Parliament sung and comfortable to talk his silly soul out; an' I see that young calf, his son, swelling it about, and goin' on the razzle-dazzle. Wot'ave they done that makes 'em any better than wot I am? They never did a day's work in their lives. I see them day after day——

The glaring inequality between the rich and the poor is a grievous wrong that must be set right. In the present set up even a rich man's dog is treated better than poor men. While poor men starve, tons of meat go to the making of dogs. Jones therefore, thinks that picking up a purse and keeping it for his living is no offence in such a society. As to the silver box that drops from the pocket of his coat Jones says to his petrified wife:

I'ad it when I was in liquor, and for what you do when you're in liquor you're not responsible—— and that's Gawd's truth as you ought to know. I don't want the thing — I won't have it. I took it out of spite. I'm no thief, I tell you; and don't you call me one, or it'll be the worse for you.

He finds no difference between himself and Jack Barthwick in this respect. He has done nothing more than what that young man did:

I'm no worse than wot that young Barthwick is; he brought 'ome that purse that I picked up - a lady's purse—— 'ad it off 'er in a row, kept sayin' 'e'd scored 'er off. Well, I scored' in off. Tight as an owl 'e was! And d'you think anything 'll happen to him?

If Jones is guilty of stealing, so is Jack Barthwick. But as Jones sarcastically remarks, no harm will be done to that boy because he has money.

The arrest of Jones and his wife at the close of the scene marks the climax in the action. The dramatic story now reaches a stage at which the balance begins to incline decisively to one particular direction. With the assurance of the solicitor Roper to conduct the case in favour of young Barthwick whom he tutors to pretend forgetfulness of his night-revels, the growing suspense
and uncertainty are cleared off to a large extent. We have now clear indication of what is going to happen. Though the case is to be finally decided in the court by a judge and the fate of Jones depends on the final judgement, there is no difficulty to predict the conclusion. The money and high-connections of his father have purchased a lawyer's brain to help young Barthwick to get rid of the charges against him. But Jones has none to stand beside him or to plead for him. He is left alone to speak for himself. And what does a judge care for a thief's statement particularly when the latter happens to be poor and destitute?

The resolution of the dramatic conflict takes place in the third Act. It is a realistic picture of a trial scene in a modern court of justice. The grim realities down to the very appearance of the worn-looking Magistrate and the seedy looking men and women are set forth without the least touch of any colourful or imaginative departure for the sake of effect. The canopied seat of justice surmounted by the lion and the unicorn symbolical of protection of virtue against any wrong or injustice is mockingly referred to as defeating its own purpose. The term 'justice' in this Court of justice turns out to be a misnomer and thus exposes the hollowness of contemporary social norms. In summing up the case against Jones the Judge says:

Your conduct here has been most improper. You give the excuse that you were drunk when you stole the box. I tell you that is no excuse. If you choose to get drunk and break the law afterwards you must take the consequences. And let me tell you that men like you, who get drunk and give way to your spite or whatever it is that's in you, are— are— a nuisance to the community.

The judge may be right in taking a strictly legal view of the offence; but he is also concerned with the moral aspect of the case. The sentence pronounced by him— "one month with hard labour"— may be justified in view of the nature of the crime.
But when all is said and done, there remains the question which Jones indignantly mutters as he is helped by the constable from the dock.

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!

One can easily imagine the passionate contempt with which Jones utters the word 'Justice'. It is the most passionate utterance of a helpless man disillusioned in his faith on the impartiality of the judicial system which was expected to be his only protector. At the same time it is a grievance not of an individual but of a class fated to suffer on account of the discriminating function of law. Compared with the offence of Jack Barthwick, the offence of Jones is certainly lighter. If Jones has stolen a cigarette box and a purse in a state of drunkenness, so has Jack snatched away a lady's reticule and furthermore, he had cheated his tailors with a false cheque. But the treatment they receive varies from man to man. Guilty of similar and more serious offences Jack Barthwick goes unhurt while Jones is sent to prison. It is money that makes all the difference. A moneyed man and a member of Parliament Mr. Barthwick manages to suppress all the misdeeds of his son. What the Magistrate says about Jones can aptly be said about young Barthwick and it is a stroke of excellent dramaturgy that following the utterance of the Magistrate Jack reminds his father of his rebuking comment: "Dad! that's what you said to me?" If Jones is a nuisance to society, Jack Barthwick is no better.

But we live in a social system which makes the Jones suffer and helps the Jacks prosper. Our society overlooks the lapses of its rich and influential members; but is ever watchful of the least breach of law and morality by the poor. Even in a court of law all are not equally treated. But the principle of social justice demands that in the dispensation of law there should be no
discrimination between the rich and the poor. Again, there is the question of the propriety of legal justice as it is administered in a law-minded society. Is legal justice compatible with social justice and welfare? There can be no denial of the offence of Jones. But the circumstances that tempt him to commit his first crime need also be considered duly. While condemning Jones for his weakness, the cause of the same must be sympathetically judged. After all, he is not a deliberate or habitual criminal. Abject poverty on account of unemployment and loss of mental balance caused by excess of alcohol cripple his power of thinking and tempt him to steal the silver box and the purse. But to condemn him to imprisonment, bringing thereby disgrace on his wife and rendering her jobless and shelterless, is hardly just and conducive to social welfare. Unfortunately, the existing judicial system looks at the nature of a crime and not at the circumstances in which the crime was committed. This is an unfortunate deficiency of the legal system that imposes justice with severity but not with mercy. An impartial and sympathetic application of the principles of justice, both legal and social, can only set things right.

- III -

The issue of social justice outside the purview of the law court becomes the subject of Galsworthy's third play Strife which dramatizes the conflicting class-interests of the working class and the capitalists.

Galsworthy wrote the first draft in a few months, at various places in Southern England; but revised it several times with meticulous care, as he usually did in respect of all his writings. Then he sent the MSS. for comment, amongst others, to Edward Garnett and Joseph Conrad. The former suggested some improvements;
the latter prophesied that the play would be acclaimed and would counteract the failure of Joy. Several theatre managers refused to put it on the board on account of the failure of Joy which had been published between The Silver Box and Strife. It was, however, staged with some success in Manchester, an industrial town and therefore, a suitable place for such a play— and then in 1909, it was put on the Duke of York's Theatre on 9 March. It was an immediate success and it ran for many nights in different halls of London beyond the writer's expectation. With Strife, Galsworthy more than recovered his diminished claim on the attention of his audience.

There was almost a universal chorus of praise, the best being the remark of The Times:

If we are not mistaken, when an artist of Mr. Galsworthy's high endeavour, mental equipment and technical skill— writes a play like Strife he has done much more than write a play; he has rendered public service. (1)

Galsworthy had, indeed, rendered a public service by writing Strife. He foresaw, in the manner of a prophet, the grim struggle that was brewing between Capital and Labour. (2) His purpose evidently was to advocate the ideal of social justice in the form of more liberal and humane treatment of those who are less fortunate in society.

The problem of haves and the have-nots is as ancient as human society. The Capital-labour conflict which forms the staple of the plot in Strife, is a conflict which, over the last two centuries, especially during the last two hundred years, has been a common occurrence in a common pattern. In the 19th century with the speedy growth of large-scale production, British expanding world-market, quick turn-over of goods, and a host of allied features of

1. Quoted from N.Y. Marriot— Life and Letters of John Galsworthy.
2. British history records the bitter struggles involved in the great strikes of 1911 and 1925.
mechanised industrialism, the haves and have-nots opposition became equivalent to the opposition between Capital and Labour. This intensely vigorous tendency of the age was welded into drama when Hauptmann wrote *Die Weber* (The Weavers). By recording the history of the revolt of the Silecian weavers in this play Hauptmann, for the first time, linked naturalism plainly with direct social issues and cemented a new bond between the realistic theatre and the playgoing masses. Unlike Ibsen's plays that were directly relevant to the middle class only, *The Weavers* aligned the theatre with common people and with the contemporary social democratic movement. It gave an historical account of the early struggles of the working class and could be construed as a reminder that they might revolt again and this time in a more organised manner. The growth of Trade Unionism in England and the impact of Marxist philosophy gave new impetus to the capital-labour conflict. Galsworthy therefore, does not, like Hauptmann in *The Weavers*, represent the strike from the point of view of the elemental needs of the strikers and their rebellious spirit. The strikers in the Trenartha Tin Plate Works are actuated by class-consciousness which led them to think that instead of calmly accepting the present system of capitalism in industry, they should demand better wages and a fair treatment in conformity with the principles of social justice.

The story of the play does not offer us any very striking novelty of subject. What is remarkable is Galsworthy's handling of the story and his presentation of the two groups in opposition, one group force pitted against the force of a mass, producing thereby intensity of dramatic effect. The play opens with a meeting of the members of the Board of Directors of the Trenartha Works at the house of the resident-manager. The Directors have come down from London to meet Simon Harness, the union official and David Roberts and some other representatives of the labourers on strike. Apparently therefore, it is a conflict between labour and capital and the
continuing strike is a chapter of the unresolved conflict between the two. The Board represents the capitalistic interests; David Robert and others represent the labour interests; while Simon Harness strives for a compromise between the two conflicting forces.

The background of the action (e.g. why the strike has taken place, how long it has been going on, who are leading it and what suffering it has caused and is causing) is dexterously brought out in Act-I. Information trickles out little by little through tit-bits of life-like conversation. The machinery of the local newspaper (Trenartha News) is a happy invention. The resolution of the previous Board meeting also is extremely helpful. It comes naturally in a Directors’ meeting and quite concisely sums up the whole situation:

Tench. (Looking for the chairman’s assent, reads in a rapid and monotonous voice) "At a Board Meeting held the 31st of January at the company’s offices, 512 Cannon Street, E.C. Present—Mr. Anthony in the chair, Messrs. F.H. Wilder, William Scantlebury, Oliver Wanklin, and Edgar Anthony. Read letters from the Manager dated January 20th, 23rd, 25th, 28th, relative to the strike at the company’s works. Read letters to the Manager of January 21st, 24th, 26th, 29th. Read letter from Mr. Simon Harness of the central union asking for an interview with the Board. Read letter from the Men’s committee, signed David Robert, James Green, John Bulgin, Henry Thomas, George Rous, desiring conference with the Board; and it was resolved that a special Board Meeting be called for February 7th at the house of the Manager, for the purpose of discussing the situation with Mr. Simon Harness and the Men’s committee on the spot......

The dramatic conflict starts and the theme of social justice is introduced with the entrance of Simon Harness, the Trade union leader and a real friend of the workers. He appeals to the chairman to adopt a just and humane attitude to his employees who are as good men as their masters are:

Why don’t you recognise once for all that these people are men like yourselves, and want what’s good for them, just as you want what’s good for you—(Bitterly) your motor-cars, and champagne, and eight-course dinners.
Describing the conflict between capital and labour as "old-fashioned tug-of-war business", Harness points to the gross injustice done to the poor whom the rich people look down upon as a distinct class fated to be deprived of all amenities of life. When Edgar, the chairman's son and his co-director, with all the earnestness of his youthful sympathy, expresses his grave concern and deep sorrow for the state of the men, Harness icily remarks: "The men have no use for your pity, Sir, what they want is justice". Justice, as demanded by the union officer, on behalf of the working class people is no more than a fair treatment, a treatment that must be based on a liberal attitude towards these underdogs of society. The rapid spread of socialism in England during the late Victorian period brought the consciousness among the working people that they are entitled to lead a better life than at present. But the privileged class remain as callous and unmoved as ever to the distress of the poor. The sharp exchange of words between Anthony and Harness clearly brings out the clash of attitudes:

Anthony. Then let them be just.
Harness. For that word 'just' read 'humble', Mr. Anthony.
Why should they be humble? Barring the accident of money, are not they as good a men as you?
Anthony. Cant!
Harness. Well, I've been five years in America. It colours a men's notions.

Bred on class-distinctions Anthony believes that labourers and their employers belong to two different classes by virtue of birth and culture as well as by the possession of wealth. He therefore calls all socialistic talks as cant or mere slogans. But Harness argues that as men they are all equal. The only difference between the classes is that the employers, by accident of birth or otherwise, gained some money whereas the labourers are poor men. Harness's reference to America shows Galsworthy's preference for democracy of that country that guarantees equal opportunities for all. Elsewhere Galsworthy makes the American traveller say:
In America we believe in virility; we like a man to expand. But we believe in brotherhood too. We draw the line at niggers; but we aspire. Social barriers and distinctions we've not much use for. (1)

Galsworthy's sojourn in America must have coloured his notions about the principle of equality respected in America specially since the abolition of slavery by Abraham Lincoln. In England classes had become stratified; but in America there was no such distinction between man and man. People like Anthony cannot shake off their aristocratic outlook because their minds are impervious to any progressive socialistic idea.

The conflict reaches its final climax when the two leaders Anthony and Roberts stand face to face. The irresistible force meets the immovable object and the reader is only to watch the consequences of this confrontation with breathless suspense. Roberts emphatically declares:

There's not one sentence of writing on that paper that we can do without. ....(Anthony takes from Tench the paper and peruses it.) Not one single sentence. All those demands are fair. We have not asked anything that we are not entitled to ask. What I said up in London, I say again now: there is not anything in that piece of paper that a just man should not ask, and a just man give.

Anthony accepts the challenge with equal stubbornness:

There is not one single demand on this paper that we will grant.

Such opposing views make the two leaders unyielding and the forenoon meeting proves futile, leaving the situation stalemate.

An element of diversion is introduced in the conflict by the difference of opinion in both the opposing groups. The Directors get worried over the continued loss that the company is made to suffer on account of the strike and are eager to settle it at the

1. The Little Man, Se.(1), P- 917.
earliest opportunity. But no amount of argument can soften Anthony to change his attitude of no surrender. "No compromise"! "Can't be helped"! "We didn't seek the quarrel"! "Give way to the men once and there'll be no end to it"! "I have always fought them, I have never been beaten yet"! "Better go to the devil than give in"! "No caving in"! — these are some of the short answers with which the chairman meets the Directors' proposal for a re-consideration of his attitude. The Directors, as it is plain, do not see eye to eye with him but they are as yet not prepared to act differently. Wilder expresses his disgust at the chairman's attitude: "if that's the chairman's view, I don't know what we've come down here for". Again the workers who have come to the last point of endurance are eager to come to a compromise while their leader Roberts speaks uncompromisingly, "The men will send their wives and families where the country will have to keep them; an' they will starve sooner than give way".

The tussle between the two opposing groups becomes symbolised, as it were, in a tussle between two individuals, Anthony and Roberts. Of course, they do not fight for their own gains— they are identified with their class interests and act in their representative character, but they appear to be fanatically committed to it, because the parties concerned are not equally inspired to carry on the fight to the finish. Their very intensity of zeal separate them from their parties and they stand as lone individuals facing each other— and their groups are like so many helpless spectators. The dramatic conflict is thus narrowed down as also intensified.

In the first Act the exposition and the dramatic action proceed simultaneously. This process us into the heart of the controversy and gives us a full taste of the atmosphere of strife that dominates the play. So far as the characters are concerned they are not merely introduced, but they are also set in action. In
delineating characters Galsworthy has followed the dramatic principles of contrast and similarity. Anthony is contrasted with Roberts—both contrasted with Harness. The similarity between Anthony and Roberts has also got to be noted—in their position and relation to the interests they represent and their personal nature. Galsworthy also follows the principle of variety in characterisation. The members on the Board are distinguished from one another, so also the workmen's representatives though, of course, less elaborately than in the first case.

The central theme of social justice, a theme that pervades the social reality even beyond the arena of law, is strengthened in the first scene of the second Act which gives a concrete picture, a factual description of the miseries of the labourers on strike, only hinted at by some of the directors in the forenoon meeting. The scene is principally concerned with the womenfolk and children of the labourers in the household where we best see how the strike pinches. The dramatist concentrates his gaze on a particular household, namely, Roberts' household, where many other women have met. It is a remarkable example of the use of the unity of place as a principle of dramatic construction. The following conversation throws light on the severe hardship of the working men:

Mrs. Bulgin. We've had bread and tea last four days.
Mrs. Yeo. You got that Friday's laundry job?
Mrs. Bulgin. (Dispiritedly) They said they'd give it me, but when I went last Friday, they were full up. I got to go again next week.
Mrs. Yeo. Ah! There's too many after that. I send Yeo out on the ice to put on the gentry's skates an pick up what 'e can. Stopes 'im from broodin' about the house.
Mrs. Bulgin. (In a desolate, matter-of-fact voice) Leavin' out the men—it's bad enough with the children. I keep 'em in bed, they don't get so hungry when they're not running about; but they're that restless in bed they worry your life out.
Mrs. Yeo. You're lucky they're all so small. It's the goin' to school that makes 'em 'ungry.
The squalid misery of the labourers and their household—contrast glaringly with the cosy, warm, smug comfort of the dining room where the directors' meeting was held—the want of food and a cup of tea reserved for Mrs. Roberts contrasted with the luxuriant dinner that is proposed at the end of the Directors' meeting. No matter whether this misery was brought upon by the labourers themselves by their own stubbornness and refusal to compromise and by their improvidence. No question of hunting responsibility here. The picture of the abject misery is enough to overwhelm the audience and fully usurp their sympathy. The dramatist does another thing. In the background of extreme misery which is partly self-caused, he portrays the grim determination of the women folk to fight on their husband's fight—the determination displayed so far till it has reached the breaking point, their fellow-feeling and good-neighbourliness—and the self-deprivation of Mrs. Roberts which awakens not only sympathy but admiration for these poor labourers and their wives. Again this scene by itself, contrasts with the artificiality of the first Act where the directors talk on trivialities and when they come to grip with the facts—they talk their own selfish interests and are eager to finish in time. Here is this scene, it is a casual meeting of minds in a homely atmosphere, where much of the comforts of a home are reduced to a smouldering fire and a boiling kettle with no tea in it to serve. Both are deft exercises on the part of the dramatist in his favourite naturalistic style to give a slice of life on both the levels.

In his conversation with Enid Underwood Roberts once again proves himself as a relentless fighter and a formidable enemy of the capitalists. He treats her in a most discourteous and rude manner only because she is the daughter of the chairman and wife of the manager for whom he bears a malice rooted deep in his heart. This well-intentioned woman, out of purely humanitarian motive
came to persuade Roberts to agree to a compromise. But a diehard proletarian Roberts is uncompromisingly inimical towards the capitalists.

All these do not advance the action of the play; they rather hold it up. But the scene contains indications as to how the action is going to develop. It indicates three things—Harness is going to address the labourers to join the union by giving up their claims of higher wages for furnace men and engineers; Roberts will never give up even a single claim; Rous, under the influence of Madge, may turn against Roberts. But the whole outcome is in the womb of the future. Thus while indicating certain tendencies, the first scene of the second Act creates a suspense in our mind as to the future development of the action.

In the second scene of the second Act the action reaches its climax. It is here that the tide begins to turn to a definite direction. The entire scene is taken up with the speeches delivered at the workers' meeting and their reactions on the workers. The speech of the union officer Simon Harness is an effective dramatic device which supplies adequate impetus to the hesitating strikers to be united for compromise of the strike in the common interest of feeding their hungry wives and children. But while the speech thus helps the progress of action by preparing grounds for speedy end of the quarrel between labour and capital, it brings in an element of complication in the plot by creating a division among the strikers. The engineers and furnacemen are left out and as some say, it is treacherous to ignore the cause of engineers and furnacemen who have suffered equally with their fellow strikers during the five-month long strike. It is on this plea that the strike-leader Roberts dismisses the proposal of Harness with scorn and contempt. In a fine piece of oratory—'drove from the heart' as well as a matter of art,—comparable in both these features, as well as under the situation when he talks in Mark
Antony's language, (1) Roberts disarms his opponents and gets his
stand of no-compromise stuck to.

In course of his harangue Roberts expresses his bitterest feel-
ings against the capitalists. Incidentally it is a fine analysis
of the exploiting nature of capital. This fight, he goes on to say,
is not an isolated fight. It is part of a big struggle—a strug-
gle against capital.

The fight of the country's body and blood against a
blood-sucker. The fight of those that spend themselves,
with every blow they strike and every breath they draw,
against a thing that fattens on them and grows and grows
by the law of merciful Nature. That thing is capital!
A thing that buys the sweat of men's brows, and the tor-
tures of their brains, at its own price. Don't I know
that? Was not the work of my brains bought for seven
hundred pounds, and hasn't one hundred thousand pounds
gained them by that seven hundred without the stirring
of a finger? It is a thing that will take as much and
give you as little as it can. That's capital! A thing
that will say—"I am very sorry for you, poor fellows,
you have a cruel time of it, I know", but will not
give one six pence of its dividends to help you have a
better time. ...... That's capital! A white-faced,
story-hearted monster!

Roberts links up the battle at Trenartha with the world-wide con-
flict between labour and capital. He waxes eloquent and says that
they owe it not to themselves alone but to the future generations
of workers as well, to give capital a blow.

'T is not for this little moment of time we're fighting
(the murmuring dies), not for ourselves, our own little
bodies, and their wants, 'tis for all those that come
after throughout all time.

It is on account of their interest that he must shake that white-
faced monster with bloody lips, "that has sucked the life out of
ourselves, our wives and children since the world began". And with
the fierce tenacity of a desperate fighter to whom it is a fight
for existence, Roberts calls upon his fellow strikers "to stand
against it breast to breast, and eye to eye, and force it backward

1. Julius Caesar, III, ii,
till it cry for mercy". If this cannot be done, the present and future generations of workers will have to rot in the eternal bog of poverty and be victims of worst types of social injustice. Surrendering before victory may permanently seal the fates of the working people of all countries and for all times.

When with his eloquence Roberts has borne down all opposition and has regained the leadership which he seemed temporarily to have lost, comes Madge to announce the death of Annie. Madge works as the hand of Destiny. Roberts is called off at the right moment and the wife who was ready to sacrifice herself for the furtherance of her husband's cause dies and by dying causes a debacle to his cause beyond repair. The death of Annie Roberts turns the tide of events and brings the situation to a speedy close. It is the rubicon crossed—there was no alternative to the decision to wind up the quarrel after that. It is grave warning—graver than any previous symptoms or warnings. The workers could no longer be stopped from work for they would not see their wives and children die like that and the Directors would become sufficiently alert that the guilt may not taint them. The climax here is found to have developed naturally out of the previous events. It gives the action a push towards the catastrophe.

The third Act is the catastrophe or the end of the drama. The two parties are brought together once again at the meeting table where, having thrown off their erstwhile leaders, they choose to come to a compromise on the very same terms on which they started the quarrel. Galsworthy depicts the scene with wonderful skill. Anthony's reasoned speech asking the Directors to think twice before voting in favour of compromise, is calculated to bring out his conservative attitude which clashed with the progressive outlook of the work-leader. Justifying his own stand of no compromise the chairman says:
The men have been treated justly, they have had fair wages, we have always been ready to listen to complaints. It has been said that times have changed; if they have, I have not changed with them. Neither will I. It has been said that masters and men are equal! Cant! There can only be one master in a house! Where two men meet the better man will rule. It has been said that Capital and Labour have the same interests. Cant! Their interests are as wide asunder as the poles. It has been said that the Board is only part of a machine. Cant! We are the machine; its brains and sinews; it is for us to lead and to determine what is to be done, and to do it without fear or favour.

Speaking of the disastrous consequences of "the middle-class sentiment or socialism" advocated by the 'younger generation' Anthony says:

One fine morning, when you have given way here, and given way there - you will find you have parted with the ground beneath your feet, and are deep in the bog of bankruptcy; and with you, floundering in that bog, will be the very men you have given way to...... I am thinking of the future of this country, threatened with the black waters of confusion, threatened with mob government, threatened with what I cannot see.

An industrialist of the old school, Anthony believes that the distinction between the rich and the poor is as unalterable as a natural distinction and there is no use being sentimental over it. He becomes prophetic at the end of his speech and feels that he should not yield to this general trend of the softer 'half-and half measures' and hasten the doom of capitalism. He considers himself a representative of his class, and gives the present conflict a wider canvas by saying that it is a part of the conflict between Capital and Labour all over the world and defeat in this particular battle will endanger the interests of capital for all time to come. If the proposal for compromise is accepted,

..... it means that we shall fail in what we set ourselves to do. It means that we shall fail in the duty that we owe to all capital. It means that we shall fail in the duty that we owe ourselves.
But the scene of social justice outweighs Anthony's passionate appeal to vindicate the cause of capitalism and the chairman, being outvoted, resigns his position. His long career as a sturdy and successful industrialist is brought to an end and with a disgrace. He sits motionless—his head slowly dropping, as if his life was ebbing out. Then he gives out a heavy sigh and takes in fresh breath as though he has recollected all his vigour up—and prepares to meet the consequences. Roberts's acceptance of his defeat and overthrow is even more touching. He has returned from his wife's death-bed to see that the labourers have signed an agreement with the Directors. He understands that Anthony's chairmanship is gone and that the agreement is valid without his signature. The reaction to this understanding as portrayed by Galsworthy is psychologically acute and dramatically superb. Roberts now breaks into a half-mad laughter over the silent Mr. Anthony:

Ah! ha—ah, ha, ha! They have thrown ye over—thrown over their chairman: Ah—ha—ha!

Then dropping suddenly into a dreadful calm Roberts makes the comment as if from a sudden realisation of a fact which has so long escaped his notice, "they have done us both down, Mr. Anthony". For the first time perhaps, he addresses the chairman as Mr. Anthony, without animosity, rather with a comradely sympathy and pity in a common fall. In a piece of excellent dumb scene Galsworthy brings out the affinity between the two lost leaders. The stage direction serves the purpose:

Anthony rises with an effort. He turns to Roberts who looks at him. They stand several seconds, gazing at each other fixedly; Anthony lifts his hand, as though to salute, but lets it fall. The expression of Roberts's face changes from hostility to wonder. They bend their heads in token of respect, Anthony turns and slowly walks towards the curtained door.... Roberts remains motionless for several seconds, staring intently after Anthony, then goes out into the hall.
The final comment comes from the secretary Tench:

It's a great weight off my mind, Mr. Harness! But what a painful scene, Sir!

Harness sums up the entire situation by saying:

A woman dead; and the two best men both broken!

This gives the catastrophe a double character. It is an end to the trouble and miseries caused by the strike— but the gains on either side are almost nil. As Tench points out, both the parties could have accepted these terms at the beginning and cut out all this bother. Yet it is happy for the majority of workers as well as for the Directors simply because it is a stop to the continuation of undesirable conditions for either. But it comes through a grim tragedy—the death of Mrs. Roberts and the painful breakdown of two heroic souls namely Anthony and Roberts. Perhaps in deference to this double character of the drama Galsworthy calls it simply "a drama in three acts" to distinguish it from another drama Justice, which he calls "a tragedy in three acts".

Galsworthy, who professes to be a naturalistic artist, takes pains to represent the two protagonists with his usual impartiality— he tries to hold the balance between the two. He has drawn the two characters in their stubborn heroism— have tried to reveal their source of strength as well as their diehardism. Each is made to represent his class and vindicate the cause of his class, so that the dramatist seems not to have taken side with either. But emotionally Galsworthy is on the side of the underdogs. The pictures of distress and miseries of the labourers that he paints in Strife are breath-taking in their horrible reality. In Edgar Anthony, the chairman's son, he presents his own point of view. The death of Mrs. Roberts tilts the balance against Mr. Anthony and the capitalists. So if he is vowed to impartiality, yet there at least he could not maintain his impartiality. The
strife between the two parties and its consequences have been presented in such a fashion that we cannot deny that he is partial to the labourers.

But this sympathy which he could not hide does not make Strife a propaganda play. Galsworthy has nothing to propagate for the labourers, nor has he got anything to propagate for the capitalists. He holds brief for neither of the parties. If there be anything he propagates, it is his own humanistic attitude— that men are to be looked upon as men and not mere classes— and there is need for sympathy, compassion, fellow-feeling and mutual regard in every sphere of life. For a second thing, he advocates the principle of moderation and gradual progress. Perhaps he believes that even the cause of the labourers may be fought with better results in the way of Simon Harness. Perhaps social leaders with discretion and moderation are more welcome than the fanatical and die-hard types like Anthony and Roberts— and the world owes a good deal of its woes to the latter. Edgar Anthony, Enid Underwood, Simon Harness are characters who are not outstanding by any means— but they are the promoters of peace and happiness in social life, advocates of social justice.

- IV -

After finishing Strife, Galsworthy went down to live in a farm house of Devonshire on the edge of Dartmoor, one of the wildest and loveliest districts of England. He visited the grim convict prison there in September 1907. He was deeply moved by what he saw and heard there and took a solemn resolve to devote himself to mitigate the distress of the unfortunate convicts. He first began his campaign against the system of solitary confinement which was at that time, imposed for nine months on habitual criminals and for lesser periods on others. The star-class convicts,
however, had to serve solitary confinement for three months. He was in correspondence with Ives, an authority on prisons and Henry Salt, an influential member of the Humanitarian League. In a letter to Edward Garnett he wrote:

I spent last Friday and Saturday in Lewis Prison interviewing convicts undergoing solitary confinement—saw 49 in all—and thoroughly confirmed my impressions that it is a barbarous thing. (1)

A long open letter from him to the Home Secretary, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, appeared in the Nation in Feb. 1909. In September, the Home Secretary saw Galsworthy and informed him that the authorities intended to reduce periods of solitary confinement appreciably. While conducting the public campaign in full swing for the abolition of solitary confinement, he began to write a play on the theme of crime and disproportionate punishment under a rigorous and inhuman prison administration. The play was Justice. It was presented by Charles Frohmann during his celebrated repertory season at the Duke of York's Theatre, London, and was first produced there on 21st of February, 1910. It is a passionate plea for social justice in the operation of legal justice.

In his reply to Winston Churchill, the then Home Secretary, Galsworthy explained his objective in the composition of Justice:

This play was not written by me in any wanton spirit. It has been nothing but pain from beginning to end. It has cost me much peace of mind. I have written it believing that what I have seen and thought and felt ought to be made known, and that I shall be true to myself or my art, and cowardly into the bargain, if I had turned my back on the task. (2)

But the system of solitary confinement was not the only object of attack. Society, the heartless, hydra-headed giant also came in

1. Marrotf, Life and Letters, P-205.
2. Ibid, P-206.
for criticism. "Justice", wrote Galsworthy to W.L. George, "tried to paint a picture of how the herd (in crude self-preservation) gore to death its weak members— with the moral of how jolly consistent that is with a religion that worships 'gentle Jesus'!" (1) Galsworthy here aims at showing the mischief which Justice, can do, when administered in a mechanical and unsympathetic way, as is very often done in courts of law. The purpose of Justice should be to protect the weak and to reform the criminal. But often it fails to serve this noble purpose.

The simple plot of the play is worked out superbly by Galsworthy's craftsmanship and Justice becomes at once a tragedy and a problem play. The tragedy concerns the life of the unsteady, feeble-minded Falder. Again it raises a number of social problems through the gradual unfolding of the tragic situation. The play has a well-knit plot to which all problems and tragic circumstances converge. The Exposition or Introduction is the briefest possible. The fact that Cokeson sits adding up the figures in the bank Pass Book and checking them, is of immediate significance. The Pass Book is seen to be the main centre of interest, leading to the detection of Falder's crime. In thus introducing the Pass Book and Cokeson's dealing with it, Galsworthy makes the Exposition at once the starting point of the drama. Then the short interview between Falder and Ruth puts us in possession of several facts that form the staple of the drama. Falder, an unmarried young clerk in the solicitor's firm is determined to rescue Ruth Honeywill, a married woman with children, who is ill-treated by her drunken inhuman husband. He has planned to take her away to South America and live there as husband and wife. He has collected money for the proposed flight by forging a cheque of his employers.

The light in which Falder reveals himself in this brief conversation with Ruth significantly touches the problem that Galsworthy sets up in the play. First, Falder is not a habitual criminal, nor a conscienceless youth. He is worried by his conscience very much. He has forged only to take a woman out of her difficulties. Secondly, Falder is going to rescue a distressed woman from the hands of her brutal husband. Though he is open to the charge of social offence, his motive has a very noble humanitarian side. Thirdly, romance is no part of his love-affair; his love is realistic and matter of fact. But he is a weak character, yielding to what society calls crime and even sin for the sake of doing good to another whom society gives no protection. The problem is: Does such a character deserve our sympathy? Should society punish him strictly in keeping with law?

The problem is viewed from different angles making room for creation of dramatic conflict. James How and Walter How, father and son, both Falder's employers, differ in their opinions as to how to deal with Falder's crime.

Walter. I should like to give him a chance.
James. I can't forgive him for the sneaky way he went to work— counting on our suspecting young Davis if the matter came to light. It was the merest accident the cheque-book stayed in your pocket.
Walter. It must have been the temptation of a moment. He hadn't time.
James. A man does not succumb like that in a moment, if he's a clean mind and habits. He's rotten; got the eye of a man who can't keep his hands off when there's money about.
Walter. (Dryly) We hadn't noticed that before.
James. (Brushing the remark aside) I've seen lots of those fellows in my times. No doing anything with them except to keep 'em out of harm's way. They've got a blind spot.
Walter. It's penal servitude.
Cokeson. They're nasty places— prisons.
James. (Hesitating). I don't see how it's possible to spare him. Out of the question to keep him in this office— honesty's the sine qua non.
Cokeson: (hypnotized) Of course it is.

James: Equally out of the question to send him out amongst people who've no knowledge of his character. One must think of society.

The father and the son represent two finely contrasted opinions—two conspicuously different social viewpoints. The father takes his stand steadily on the provisions of the established law, and is acutely conscious of the responsibility that everyone owes to his or her society; he decides to prosecute Falder, for "honesty's the sine qua non", and because it is dangerous "to send him out amongst people who've no knowledge of his character". Walter takes a different stand. He does not at all like the idea of the prosecution of a man for his first offence. He pleads with his father for sparing this unfortunate, weak-willed youth. James's approach to the whole issue of Falder is from a law-abiding moralist's standpoint, while Walter's is from the sensitive and sympathetic outlook of broad-minded humanist. Walter's is the youthful warmth of love and humanity as opposed to his father's experienced devotion to law and order.

It is part of Galsworthy's technique to pose father and son in direct opposition to bring out the generation gap. The relationship between Edgar and John Anthony in Strife is paralleled in Justice where the father and the son are brought to bear upon each other. The two sons representing the younger generation in the two plays show their anti-victorianism. They exhibit a far more liberal attitude than their Victorian fathers could conceive of. Their liberalism is not of course, mere compassion, but also involves a sense of responsibility and social justice. Walter How and Edgar Anthony think that they, as a class, cannot escape the responsibilities for the tragedy of Falder or for the miseries of the workers and the death of poor Mrs. Roberts. Between father and son they thrash out the issue before the audience. Edgar has only
withering scorn for the extremely self-centred heartless profit-mongers as his own father and the other directors turn out to be. Walter argues strongly in favour of the victim of a severe legal justice and even tells his father to his face that Falder is not fully responsible for his suffering:

Walter. I think we owe him a leg up.
James. He brought it all on himself.
Walter. The doctrine of full responsibility does not quite hold in these days.

In the conflict between convention and conscience, the former triumphs and Falder is handed over to the police.

The Second Act takes up the cue from the first. The detection is followed by inevitable prosecution. The entire Act is devoted to the trial of Falder. A trial raises dramatic tension; in fact, a trial marks the sharpest angular point of dramatic conflict and it is well-known that without conflict there cannot be any drama. In a play dealing with the problem of justice, the trial scene, when and where it occurs, reveals the intensest form of dramatic conflict—conflict between mechanical law i.e. conventional justice on the one hand and the humane considerations that show justice as a decision beyond and above mechanical considerations. Incidentally, we may refer to some celebrated trial scenes in drama in particular and in literature broadly.

Shakespeare affords us an immediate reference. The Trial Scene in *The Merchant of Venice* bears out the truth of the remark that precise legal justice is often gross injustice. Abstract legal rights pushed to extremity become moral wrong. Bassanio requests the Duke not to follow the law to the letter but to twist it a little, if necessary—"to do a great right, do a little wrong". As opposed to this Shylock adheres to the very letter of law and is impervious to all kinds of entreaty. Portia saves the life of Antonio with the help of a 'legal quibble'; still it does
not offend against our sense of higher morality. Shylock cannot be allowed to cut off a pound of flesh and thus commit a murder. It is rather desirable that the sinister design of Shylock should be foiled by any means—by cunning, if necessary. Law should be guided by human considerations and not by considerations of abstract legal right only. The trial scene of St. Joan dramatizes rather than 'costly tension' which must be 'nobly maintained' between 'Regal, Sacerdotal and Prophetical powers' of which Shaw spoke in the Preface. The trial is presented as a fair examination of a heretic by an ecclesiastical court and the dramatic tension is raised by the clash of opposite views of Joan on the one side and Warwick and the Archbishop on the other. Shaw conducts the scene admirably and makes the arguments of both Joan and her adversaries convincing, while out of the whole process the realization dawns on the audience that a more sympathetic and tolerant attitude rather than a rigid adherence to the conventions of religion might have saved a precious life. The trial of Socrates (1) and the trial of Jesus (2) also point to the heartless mechanical legal procedure that ignored any other humane consideration.

Galsworthy had already depicted a realistic trial scene in his first play The Silver Box. The trial there occurs in the end of the play to indicate the close of the dramatic action. But in Justice, the trial is used to raise the dramatic tension. The dramatist takes great care to present the problem of justice from two opposite viewpoints through the mouths of the two lawyers. One view of the problem of justice—the one presented by Prome is that the law is a human institution and consequently imperfect.

1. The story of Socrates's trial, imprisonment and execution is told by his disciple Plato in three short dialogues: Apology, Crito, and Phaedo.
2. The story of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus is described in the Bible.
Justice does not consist in a literal and unimaginative application of the provisions of the law to a given case. Justice is no justice unless it is tempered with all possible considerations of the effect of any punishment on the offender.

Gentlemen, men like the prisoner are destroyed daily under our law for want of that 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.

He allows his imagination to picture the future of the once condemned criminal, especially when the criminal is a weak, nerveless creature, by conjuring up the havoc of the rolling of the chariot wheel of justice.

Justice is a machine that, when someone has given it the starting push, rolls on of itself. Is this youngman to be ground to pieces under this machine for an act which at the worst was one of weakness? Is he to become a member of the luckless crews that man those dark, ill-starred ships called prisons? Is that to be his voyage—from which so few return? Or, is he to have another chance, to be still looked on as one who has gone a little astray, but who will come back?

Frove demands that all the mitigating circumstances, age, temptation, weakness of character, momentary loss of mental balance should be taken into consideration to ensure the ideal kind of justice.

This defence plea is vehemently opposed by the prosecuting counsel Cleaver. A veteran, astute lawyer, he makes a clean sweep of all extra-judicial sentiments by proving from the very mouths of the witnesses that Faldor was not insane at the time of forging the cheque. He points out to the jury that forgery is a serious crime and Faldor behaved in a manner which might let suspicion fall on an innocent fellow clerk; and Faldor did all this to indulge in immoral relations with a married woman. With irony and
sarcasm he exposes the motive of the defence lawyer and establishes his point forcefully.

My friend has adopted this way of saying a great deal to you—and very eloquently—on the score of youth, temptation, and the like. I might point out, however, that the offence with which the prisoner is charged is one of the most serious known to our law; and there are certain features in this case, such as the suspicion which he allowed to rest on his innocent fellow-clerk, and his relations with this married woman, which will render it difficult for you to attach too much importance to such pleading.

As a prosecuting counsel, he cannot afford to have anything to do with pity, sympathy or with any mitigating circumstances of the offence. He demands of the jury a verdict of guilty on Falder.

I ask you, in short, gentlemen, for that verdict of guilty which, in the circumstances, I regard you as, unfortunately, bound to record.

The judge, in summing up the case and pronouncing the verdict, betrays the same convention-ridden, mechanical application of law. Explaining the factors he must take into consideration, the judge says to Falder:

I have to consider on the one hand the grave nature of your offence, the deliberate way in which you subsequently altered the counterfoil, the danger you caused to an innocent man—and that, to my mind, is a very grave point—and finally I have to consider the necessity of deterring others from following your example.

The judge does not see any reason in the defence plea that since the accused suffered a long-term of under trial lock up, he need not be punished further. He asserts that the law has a very significant role in society to ensure its stability and security and as a judge he should see to its proper administration.

The law is what it is—a majestic edifice, sheltering all of us, each stone of which rests on another. I am concerned only with its administration.
The judge looks upon himself as the watch-dog of social morality and regards law as the fort in which social morality can live secure against all threats. His crusted legalistic mind thinks that the institution called law is a perfect human device to secure the general weal against individual licence, he cannot conceive that law is as yet far from a perfect machinery to meet all exigencies, specially where deep human passions and human emotions are concerned. He cannot conceive that a woman who detests her brutal husband and throws herself upon the good service of a male friend can yet live a life free from all immoral connections with his male friend. He considers the defence Counsel's attack on law as rather unwise. By his long association with the administration of law he has come to regard an attack on law somewhat as a personal attack. His verdict therefore is,

I cannot feel it in accordance with my duty to society to exercise the powers I have in your favour. You will go to penal servitude for three years.

The judge represents the letter of the law while Home emphasizes on the spirit of law. It may be said in the judge's defence that if he is to guide himself by humane considerations promoted by a sympathetic understanding of the force of human passions which lie behind each criminal's actions, the court might as well shut up and the penal code burnt to ashes. Yet in the penal code itself, however, imperfect the code may be in view of the limitations of human wisdom, there are provisions for considerations on the grounds of age, intention, circumstances etc (1).

1. There are various opinions in criminal Jurisprudence as to the aim or purpose for which punishment is given to one who breaks the law: (i) The ancient theory was of revenge—evil for evil; "tooth for a tooth". (ii) Next the idea progressed into one of prevention; fine or imprisonment or whipping was intended to teach the criminal that he should behave well. (iii) The idea further progressed into the principle of protection given to society—which our judge has in mind. The criminal should be held up as an example to would-be criminals. (iv) The modern idea, hardly accepted in full as yet, is that prisons should be reformatories and jail-masters should be psycho-analysts.
The judge makes no consideration for any of these because of his crusted sense of social morality and narrow view of his office as a dispenser of law.

Falder is punished austerely by the prevalent legal system for his moral failing. Galsworthy makes no attempt to defend his crime, but simply indicates the awful results of the system that judges and punishes hard an individual for his weakness, and pays no heed to his human instincts. It is Sweedle, the office boy of James How, who sharply exposes this mechanical, cold process of judgement:

He ought to have given him a chance. And, I say, the judge ought to have let him go after that. They've forgot what human nature's like.

Galsworthy's criticism of the legal system is, however, more vigorously manifested through the arguments of the defence counsel Mr. Frome. He asserts through this young lawyer that the hard punishment meted out to the weak-willed, unintentional criminal like Falder, has a detrimental effect on the general interest of the community. The true role of justice in a progressive community is a much controversial point. But it is sure that the end of justice is to confer maximum welfare to the entire community. But this welfare end can hardly be realised if justice is not administered with mercy and humanity.

The Second Act occupies the pivotal position in the tragedy of Justice. It is a link between the exposition that detects the crime of the hero, committed under the temptation of human life, and the catastrophe that brings about the ghastly end of his life. It develops the tragedy of which there is a glimpse in the First Act, and it leads the action of the play to the ultimate catastrophe of Act-IV. The judgement passed in the Second Act against Falder is the root of the whole tragedy that engulfs him. Again it brings out fully the pathos of the tale of Ruth and Falder.
The fire of sex does not burn here with voracious desires. Instead, we find here something refined and chastened. Ruth's confession before the court that her affection for the prisoner is "the only thing" in her life, and Falder's eagerness even at the grave moment of his life, to keep undisclosed Ruth's name for her future safety, fully reveals the depth of their sincerity and the intensity of their devotion and, therefore, the nature of justice in this case is different. They never look like a pair, of romantic lovers—Romeo and Juliet—but their attachment is, in no way, less stirring, less warm. "He's ruined himself for me," "I would have done the same for him"—are expressions that spurt out of the molten lava of Ruth's heart. Galsworthy is not blind to the essential trait of passion and romance in such a woman; only he would not let that side of her character have the limelight in a realistic problem drama. None-the-less, the Second Act shows the background of life— the palpitating life—which lies behind the story of Falder's crime and punishment.

Act-III serves as the denouement. The three scenes of the Act depict Falder's life in the prison and incidentally give us Galsworthy's criticism of the jail-administration of the day. The picture of the crude and harsh prison system, especially in that aspect of it which is called cellular confinement and the criticism passed on that by such humane characters as Cokeson and the jail-governor and the presentation of the pitiful effects of the system on criminals of different types and ages, are so emphatically stressed that one is led to conclude that Galsworthy wrote Justice mainly as a protest against the inhumanities of the prison system of the day, with the motive of practical reform of the system.

The first scene is laid on the 24th of December, the day before Christmas. This particular day is chosen by Galsworthy to show how Christian charity proves meaningless to the unfortunate
criminals who are denied the benefits of both the religious and festive aspects of that great day. While much jollity and show of piety are going on in the world outside, the poor prisoners are doomed to suffer their miseries in solitary isolation as if they were outside the pole of humanity. Alas, for the rarity of Christian charity on earth. It is the criminals who require the help of human charity and the consolation of religion the most; and it is they who are carefully shut out from these. The prison chaplain is indifferent and callous towards the criminals and would have their perverted will broken by rude treatment. The jail-doctor mechanically certifies the physical and mental well-being of prisoners without any care for their mental and moral interior. Here we have an interview of Cokeson with the Governor and the Chaplain of the jail, which I quote below to understand its full significance:

Cokeson. He's all alone there by himself. I'm afraid it'll turn him silly. And nobody wants that, I s'pose. He cried when I saw him. I don't like to see a man cry.

The Chaplain. It's a very rare thing for them to give way like that.

Cokeson. (Looking at him - in a tone of sudden dogged hostility) I keep dogs.

The Chaplain. Indeed?

Cokeson. Ye-es. And I say this: I wouldn't shut one of them up at all by himself, week after week, not if he had bit me all over.

The Chaplain. Unfortunately, the criminal is not a dog; he has a sense of right and wrong.

Cokeson. But that's not the way to make him feel it.

The Chaplain. Ah! there I'm afraid we must differ.

Cokeson. It's the same with dogs. If you treat 'em with kindness they'll do anything for you; but to shut 'em up alone, it only makes 'em savage.

The callous indifference of men in society to criminals is typified by the Chaplain who, though a man of religion, has not a ray of charity in his heart and who thinks it best to break their perverted will. The view of Galsworthy himself, i.e. of enlightened
humanism is represented by Gokeson in whose view the hard, heartless jail discipline is quite ineffective in reforming the criminals; it rather makes them desperate and sink into criminality. He reveals the objectionable features in the prison system and the evils of prison life in a bold, realistic, almost photographic manner.

In the second scene Galsworthy gives a realistic view of the effect of imprisonment on the human mind, each mind reacting to it in a different way, but each so adversely affected as to be practically ruined for good. Four different cases are presented here as typical of the effects produced. Money, the maker of the saw, an old jail-bird, is made desperate and unfeeling. He is unrepentant because he feels that he can do nothing else than rob and steal again as soon as his term of imprisonment is over and be in jail again. Clifton, the "philosopher" suffering from eye complaints is a nervous wreck to whom sleep is the only comfort. He cannot stand any noise. O' cleary, the Irishman, is affected in an opposite manner. He wants a little noise to ease him. Silence tells on his vacant, listless mind. He bangs the door from an irresistible impulse to hear some noise, a poor substitute for human voice. Falder is nervous more than ever and cannot sleep; he feels he will never come out of prison and is morose, thinking of Ruth's condition. The third scene is a mute scene in which not a word is spoken; but the workings of a wretched, bleeding, blinded heart are carried alive into the mind of the spectators with tremendous effect by gestures and moments only. Alone in his cell Falder

.... is seen standing motionless, with his head inclined towards the door, his stockinged feet making no noise. He steps at the door. He is trying harder and harder to hear something, any little thing that is going on outside. He springs suddenly upright - as if at a sound - and remains perfectly motionless. Then with a heavy sigh, he moves to his work, and stands looking at it, with his head down; he does a stitch or two, having the air of a man so lost in sadness that each
stitch is, as it were, a coming to life. Then turning abruptly he begins pacing the cell.

Felder is not mad, but he is the very image of despair. He looks into a bright tin lid to seek the company of his own face. The sound of the fallen lid startles him, and he stands gasping for breath. Then the sound of a dull beating on the door comes from a distance. That terrifies him at first. But when the banging sound travels from cell to cell, his weak brain is overpowered. He begins creeping inch by inch nearer to the door and at last "flings himself at his door and beats on it". This is an excellent delineation of the hunger of a prisoner for social life, of the dogged way in which that hunger dies down for society's refusal to take him in, and of the gradual surrender of the prisoner's conscience to the slippery path of perpetual crime and perpetual punishment.

As a piece of dramatic art it is unique. It represents in a highly, developed, refined artistic form the crude method of dumb shows in old English plays, which enacted a silent scene by gestures only, before it was presented in dialogues. At the same time it is a modern-day substitute for a long soliloquy, which modern artistic standard regards as unreal and ludicrous. The dumb-show and the soliloquy are here blended into a nice artistic device, preserving the character of both, but refining both into a fineness which makes the art altogether new— the soliloquy losing its words, the dumb show losing its show. Modern dramatists have used such mute scenes, with great advantage, but none perhaps has done so with such heart-gripping appeal as Galsworthy in this little scene. It is a tragic hit made impressive in semi-dark atmosphere of the cell thickening into darkness and soul-racking by the silent agony of a soul crushed into nonentity. The absolute economy of details, the bareness of description, the jerking, spasmodic activity of the sinking soul, last of all, the
The catastrophe is reached in the Fourth Act with Falder's release from prison and his subsequent death by suicide. It reveals the effect that a criminal is bound to suffer in the hands of the society even after he has fully atoned for his crime for years behind iron bars. Falder feels the iron gone home into his soul. As an ex-convict he must be secretive, must lie again, must forge or misrepresent again to earn his living. What he says to Cokeson is a pathetic but very significant comment on the plight he has been reduced to.

The fact is I am struggling against a thing that's all round me. I can't explain it; it's as if I was in a net; as fast as I cut it here, it grows up there.

Then he adds,

They talk about giving you your deserts. Well, I think I've had just a bit over.

There may be some exaggeration in Falder's statement due to his notion that he was not quite so guilty as he was supposed to be in the matter of forging. But there is no gainsaying the truth that the treatment he received from friends and relatives, employers and acquaintances in his post-prison life sufficiently justifies his main contention. No one would believe him because he was an ex-convict; the job he secured through the good grace of the authorities could not be kept because his fellow clerks came to know of his past and eyed him askance. His poor nerves could not bear such look. Next, for giving a reference to his next employer, he had to forge a certificate; but he had not the pluck to stick to his post. He left for fear of detection. His brother-in-law would rid himself of the ex-convict of a relative by packing him off to Canada at the cost of twenty five pounds to himself. His old employer James would not give him a chance in the office.
A goal-bird in the office, Cokeson? I don't see it....
'weak character' 's written all over him.

If James at last relents so much as to give him his old job on condition that he must give up the company of "that" woman, that woman herself makes muddle of the whole affair. It is discovered that she has lived an immoral life with her employer during the absence of Palder. So her case for a divorce cannot be taken up by the firm even if the firm would agree to help her and Palder in that matter. And all these are the consequences of the condemnation of Palder by the court. At last, Palder is arrested for having forged a reference. This is the last straw on the camel's back. In shame and despair he commits suicide by jumping down the stairs and breaking his neck.

Apart from the question of the justice or the injustice of sending Palder to prison for so long a term for his first offence under peculiar circumstances the larger question that looms before our mind is this: Why should Palder be made to suffer so much in consequence of his imprisonment after he has done his full term of punishment demanded by law? The problem here is not merely of the dispensation of legal justice but of much wider social justice of which legal justice is supposed to be a form. Why should Palder be chased as a thieving dog and hunted down with inexorable fury of the pious-minded society, which thinks itself above the touch of any criminality? Why should an ex-convict be regarded as an outcast, lost to himself as well as to society? There remains the problem of the social and economic rehabilitation of the convicts, released from the prison. What a criminal needs, after the end of his term, is the appropriate scope for starting a new life. But he is actually pursued by the terror of his first offence and dragged into a bitter end either of death or of habitual criminality. Once again Galsworthy advocates the need for a sympathetic and charitable outlook. Cokeson says to Sweedle,
When a man's down never hit 'im. 'Tisn't necessary. Give him a hand up. That's a metaphor I recommend to you in life. It's sound policy.

The chance meeting of Ruth with Falder after his release, is contrived to throw light on the problem of livelihood of unhappily married women. With their lack of skill or sufficient education they have to depend on the caprice of their callous and cruel husbands for their bare living. Ruth is married to a drunkard who treats her with almost brutal ferocity. She cannot leave him, for the problem of the livelihood of herself and her children. When, after Falder's conviction she leaves him, she falls into a state of unbearable privation, and is compelled to lead a life of shame.

Ruth. (with a shrug) Tried the same as when I left him before.... making shirts.... cheap things. It was the best I could get, but I never made more than ten shillings a week, buying my own cotton and working all day; I hardly ever got to bed till past twelve. I kept at it for nine months. (Fiercely) Well, I'm not fit for that; I wasn't made for it. I'd rather die. Cokeson. My dear woman! We mustn't talk like that. Ruth. It was starvation for the children too—after what they'd always had. I soon got not a care. I used to be too tired. (She is silent) Cokeson. (With fearful curiosity) And—what happened then? Ruth. (With a laugh) My employer happened then—he's happened ever since.

Here is a poignant confession of Ruth which Galsworthy means to be an effective commentary on social justice and social morality. She is not allowed to get a divorce from her brutal husband; the youth who would rescue her was snatched off by the law; she was made a destitute. And then she was forced to live an immoral life to save herself and her children. And the 'chariot-wheel of justice' rolls on crushing not only the criminal Falder but such outlying creatures as Ruth. And then Cokesonian morality is horrified at her bold guiltiness, though he pities her. But the big-wigs like James and the judge do come down upon the poor "like a
cart load of bricks, flatten you out, and when you don't swell up again they complain of it", as Sweedle puts it in his own effective style.

Galsworthy had first thought of closing the drama with the rearrest of Falder by Wister and not of showing the gruesome, horrible suicide of Falder. (1) But he later thought that the suicide would be a more gripping and logical catastrophe of all that he had built up to the re-arrest of Falder. Of course, if the drama ended with the arrest, Galsworthy's purpose in setting up the full problem of legal justice would have been realised. Walter's words, "That finishes him. It'll go on forever" would have clenchd the point as a fitting climax and comment. And we may add, the gruesome, horrible scene of suicide and the display of the dead body might be spared. That might be artistic good taste. But the scene as it is with all its horror has been appreciated by competent students and men of letters. (2) The actual act of suicide, we must note, takes place off the stage. The dying body is only introduced; and the human passion that finds free play—the heart-broken whisper of Ruth, 'my dear', 'my pretty',—the gentle surrender of Cokeson, "He's safe with gentle Jesus"—these would have been lacking if the drama ended otherwise. A drama, is indeed, a thing of art; but it is more than an art—it is a piece of human passions at play. A tragedy, both from the

1. Galsworthy wrote in this connection in the Preface to the Manaton Edition of his plays: "I originally conceived a re-arrest only; then it seemed to me that by going beyond the re-arrest to the pure emotion of something elemental could the full value be extracted.... Only by giving him back to Nature can you get the full criticism on human conduct.

2. Gilbert Murray supported Galsworthy by saying: "Your play is not a Blue-Book or tract; it is a tragedy. And to cut the death because it is not relevant to the prison system would be to treat it as a tract". Quoted by H.V. Marrot, P-215.
artistic and human points of view, must have a chastening, elevating, calming influence on human passions through the agony of sympathy. By bringing in the suicide, Galsworthy has achieved this end. From the point of view of hammering on the hard crusted social conscience of humanity such an awful catastrophe is fitted to have greater appeal than the more subtle, more artistically perfect end with the re-arrest.

The tragic fate that overwhelms Falder and the hardship and privation that befall Ruth are not brought about by any deliberate intrigue or mischief. No one can be held individually responsible for this. All the vanguards of society—the judge, James, the Governor, and others—out of their best motives and conscience—act in a manner that proves hard and bitter for the weak-willed, nervous youth Falder. The very social institutions under which they live and work dictate and direct them all through. There is the tyranny of the social institutions which are elevated and abused rather blindly. The cold judicial system, the prison administration and the anomalous social situation—all vitiate the environments and adversely affect individual happiness and social advancement. It is, thus, society, and not individual failing or depravity, that lies at the bottom of the tragic motive of Justice. Like the malice of the gods in the Greek tragedies, like the power of unseen fates or uncontrollable situations in Shakespeare's tragedies, Galsworthy seems to recognise an impersonal blind force—the force of social faiths and conventions which today are the masters of men. Nicoll says, "The heroes of Galsworthy's dramas are the unseen fates of modern existence, against which we, poor mortals, can pitifully cry out in moments of horror and desperation(1).

But it must be admitted that the chastening of the passions by fear and horror, by bringing us face to face with the mystery

1. British Drama, P-370.
of fate and fortune, which was so effectively done by a Shakes-
pearean tragedy, is replaced in Galsworthy's tragedy by a dumb
feeling of helpless but intense pity only at the waste caused
by the inertness of the social system. When Balder commits sui-
cide, he does not awe us so much as excite our pity. There is
nothing of the awful and magnificent in his personality, as in
the personality of Macbeth or Othelo or Julius Caesar or even
Brutus. They overawe us by the inner conflict of their mighty
souls; and when they fall the heavens themselves blaze forth
their fall. Any such deeper conflict being totally absent in
Balder's case, his suicide turns us not inward but rather to
the outward—the social system which is responsible for the
tragedy. Pathos and not the conventional tragic feeling is per-
haps the aim of Galsworthy himself. He wants us to see the pitiful
smothering of individual prospects by the rude hand of soci-
ety and to realise the need for cultivation of the social
justice.