WRITERS OF THE DAY

GENERAL EDITOR: BERTRAM CHRISTIAN

JOHN GALSWORTHY

By **SHEILA KAYE-SMITH**

NOVELS

THE TRAMPING METHODIST
STARBRACE
SPELL LAND
ISLE OF THORNS
THREE AGAINST THE WORLD
SUSSEX GORSE

BELLES LETTRES

SAMUEL RICHARDSON

WILLOWS FORGE AND OTHER POEMS

JOHN GALSWORTHY

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INTRODUCTION

A CHARACTERISTIC of every age is its group of popular writers. These writers at once concentrate and give out the spirit of their age—they are representative. Literature has many names of pioneers and apostles, who were ahead of or out of sympathy with their times, but these were never popular. The popular writer is essentially a man who conforms to his period; it is true that his conformity must have life and vigour, it must have nothing in it of the echo or the slave, it may even be disguised rather transparently as revolt—but whatever enterprises and excursions he allows himself, he remembers that there are certain bases which he must keep, and to which after every expedition he must come back. These bases are either the conventional ideas of his time,

or the conventional methods of attacking them—the two are for such purposes the same.

So a glance at our most popular modern writers ought to give us a clue as to the spirit of to-day. But here there is something baffling—we find names as far apart as H. G. Wells and Florence Barclay, Arnold Bennett and Hall Caine. Surely the spirit of the age is not broad enough to include both Joseph Conrad and Marie Corelli. This brings us face to face with a modern complication: we have two publics. The spread of education, with other causes, has brought into being a mob-public, and the approved of the mob-public have a popularity which could hardly have been realised two generations ago. The most popular writer of to-day is he whose appeal is to the man in the street, and the largest sales are made by those who are most successful in catering for this newly enfranchised reader —with whom literature and art have not hitherto had much truck, but with whom

they will have to reckon more and more as time goes on.

There is, however, a public above the street, and this is large and important enough to allow those who write for it to call themselves popular. This public grants its favour on grounds literary as well as emotional—it is not enough to stir its feelings, one must tickle its taste. It is fundamentally the same as the mob in its ideas, but it is very different in its methods of criticism. The mob likes to see its prejudices upheld, this public above the street—which is the public that most writers of any "literary" aspiration supply—while holding the same prejudices as strongly at heart, rather enjoys seeing them overthrown on paper. At the same time it demands artistic quality, reality, and an occasional shock. While not actually *gourmet*, it is fastidious in the matter of literary fare, and it is characteristically split up into cliques or smaller publics, each swearing by a particular writer, just as men who

are nice as to food swear by a particular restaurant. There is a Wells public, differing slightly if not essentially from the Bennett public; there is a Kipling public —with democratic foundations; there is a Conrad public, and a Galsworthy public—and the Galsworthy public is perhaps the smallest of all.

Indeed Galsworthy can hardly be called a "popular" writer. I am not using the word in a contemptuous sense, but to describe a writer who is widely read. Galsworthy will never be widely read, for he alienates two important sets of readers—those who insist that a book shall teach them something, and those who with equal force insist that it shall teach them nothing. He fails the first class because, while supplying its demands, he does not satisfy the conditions it imposes. He undoubtedly has something to teach, but he avoids the direct appeal, which is what the public wants. Direct and open championship is the only way of making a cause popular—

let us be broad-minded, by all means, but agreeing that "there may be something to say on the other side" is very different from finding out what that something is, and saying it. Also he is too sensitive, too moderate, too well balanced to please the "improvement-above-all-things" reader, whose perceptions are not of the subtlest.

On the other hand, he puts himself out of touch with those who do not want to be taught, because he undoubtedly has a propaganda, and is not an artist purely for art's sake. Between himself and the numbers who would unhesitatingly admire him as a man of letters he raises the barrier of ideas which, while too subtly expressed to satisfy those who clamour for instruction, are quite decided enough to cut off those who object to it.

Thus Galsworthy's public is whittled down to those who either are in sympathy with his aims and methods—and there must be few who understand both—or are able to swallow a small amount of propaganda for the sake of art. He sets out to write

deliberately for no man—he does not recruit his readers, they are volunteers. They come to him from widely different camps, and concentrate in an admiration which is perhaps as full of reserves as its object.

He has deliberately rejected all public-snatching tricks, revealing his personality in his work alone, avoiding the light of popular curiosity and journalistic enterprise. He has treated his private life as his own concern, not as a bait for readers. A judicious use of his own personality and private affairs is, broadly speaking, indispensable to the seeker after popularity. Galsworthy, by disliking this, has necessarily limited his public to those who read him for his work's sake.

In the bare facts of his life that he chooses to give we shall find nothing so interesting as what we find in his books and plays. Born in 1867, at Coombe in Surrey, he was educated at Harrow and at Oxford. He was called to the Bar in 1890, but practised very little.

He has travelled a great deal, and widely —America and Egypt, Canada and the Cape, British Columbia and Australia, Russia and the Fiji Islands. It was on the sailing ship which carried him from Adelaide to South Africa twenty-two years ago that he made friends with a sailor who now, as Joseph Conrad, has a fame equal to Galsworthy's own. It is remarkable that, in spite of these wide wanderings, his plays and novels should almost invariably have an English background. Seldom, if ever, does he go afield, and then it is only to some place more or less known to everyone, such as Austria in *Villa Rubein*, *The Dark Flower*, and *The Little Dream*. He has never, like Conrad, given us the fruit of his voyagings on the far seas, or his tracks over Russian and Canadian plains.

Perhaps this may be due to the fact that no matter how far he may have wandered, his roots are English. Though born in Surrey, he is a Devon man. Galsworthy is of course a well-known Devon name, and

for many years now he has lived in Devon, on the eastern rim of Dartmoor.

Again and again he gives Devon to us—there is *A Man of Devon*, with its tender freshness of the Devon soil sweetening the strength of Devon hardihood; there is *A Bit o' Love*, with its living and poetic conception of Place; and there is *The Patrician*, with all the breadth of the moors in contrast with the littleness of human passion and human reasoning. Again, too, in *Riding in Mist*, we have a picture of a mood of the Devon tors which has seldom been equalled and never surpassed. Also his *Moods, Songs and Doggerels* is full of the county, its scenery, its men and women, its dialect, its rains, its "heather gipsy" wind. Though Galsworthy is certainly not an interpreter of place, though his great novels and plays deal with the mysteries of human nature rather than with local subtleties—and the atmosphere he sheds over his work is general rather than particular, the spirit rather than the ghost—one feels that Devon is the background of his dreams.

THE PLAYS

I

GALSWORTHY takes his place in modern literature chiefly by virtue of his plays. Criticism may to a certain extent damage him as a novelist, but the most searching critics cannot leave him anything less than a great playwright. His talents are specially adapted to the dramatic form, which at the same time does much to veil his weak points. His mastery of technique nowhere shows to greater advantage than on the stage, nor has he better scope for his true sense of situation; on the other hand, the stage is a legitimate field for propaganda, and the occasional failure of the human interest in his work can be made good by the ability of the actor.

For Galsworthy's plays have the advantage of acting well—unlike much literary

drama, they are as effective on the stage as in the study; in fact, they gain by acting, because, as I said, he has a tendency now and then to subordinate the human interest to the moral, and this the actor can make good.

He stands midway between the purely literary and the purely popular playwright, and he also occupies middle ground between drama which is entirely for instruction and that which is for amusement only. Poles apart on one hand from the light comedies of H. H. Davies and Somerset Maugham, he has very little in common with stage preachers such as Shaw and Barker. More polished and more subtle than Houghton, he is less clear-eyed and heroic than Masefield. Undoubtedly his most striking quality as a dramatist is his sense of form and craft, but he is far removed from that school of playwrights, of which Pinero and H. A. Jones are leaders, whose technique amounts to little more than a working knowledge of the stage.

Galsworthy loves, in his novels as well as his plays, to deal with situations. This is to a certain extent detrimental to the novelist, as it hampers development, and a novel which does not develop along some line or other has a tendency to stale or solidify. But it is obvious that a sense of situation is one of the first essentials of a dramatist, and Galsworthy has it in full measure. It shows pre-eminently in his central ideas, and subordinately in his apt management of his curtains, which in his best plays are situations in themselves, epitomising the chief issues of the act or scene.

His central situation is the moral or social problem at the bottom of the play. He carries on his propaganda almost entirely by situation, and this is what lifts his art above that of Shaw and other missionary dramatists. He practically never relies on dialogue for introducing his theories, except so far as dialogue develops and explains the situation. He depends on his

characters and their actions to enforce his moral, and it is to this he owes his artistic salvation.

Having chosen his situation, he proceeds to balance it with two contrasting groups, one on either side. Each group consists of various types, embodying various points of view, which, while differing to a slight extent, are yet subordinate to the Point of View of the group. The fact that his characters are types rather than individuals is all to his good as a dramatist, though we shall see later that it is a drawback in the novels. Types are always more convincing on the stage than individuals, the necessary personal touch being given by the actor. There is no use criticising a play apart from the acting—the two are inextricably bound together, so that the author is in a sense only the collaborator; a play which was not written to be acted can scarcely be called a play—it is a novel in dialogue.

Perhaps the best example of Galsworthy's technique, and at the same time his finest

achievement as a playwright, is *Strife*. Here we have the central situation, the contrasting of groups, the combination of types—the whole so perfectly balanced, and so smooth-working, that it does not creak once. The central idea is the dispute between the directors of the Works and their employees, but it is impossible to consider this in itself, apart from the attitude of the two parties towards it. Indeed we are given a very vague idea of the nature of the difference; all we know is that it has reduced many of the workers to starvation, while the directors have to face angry shareholders and failing dividends. Harness, the trades-union delegate, acts as a go-between, and gradually both groups begin to see the allurements of compromise. Various circumstances drive them towards it, with the exception of their respective leaders, Roberts, and old Anthony. The end is pitiful—for the two sides surrender to each other simultaneously, breaking their leaders' hearts. These men are of extraordinary character and ability,

and of the most splendid courage, but they are betrayed by their cowardly followers, who have not grit or faith enough to see that their only chance lies in "no compromise." There is a powerful scene between Roberts, the men's leader, and Anthony, chairman of the directors, when they have both been abandoned by their supporters:

ROBERTS [*to* ANTHONY]. But *ye* have not signed them terms! They can't make terms without their chairman! Ye would never sign them terms! [ANTHONY *looks at him without speaking.*] Don't tell me ye have! for the love o' God [*with passionate appeal*] I reckoned on ye!

HARNESS [*holding out the Directors' copy of the terms*]. The *Board* has signed.

ROBERTS. Then you're no longer Chairman of this Company! [*Breaking into half-mad laughter.*] Ah, ha—Ah, ha, ha! They've thrown ye over—thrown over their Chairman: ah—ha—ha! [*With a sudden dreadful calm.*] So—they've done us both down, Mr Anthony.

There is also a social problem at the bottom of *Justice*, but this time it is in connection with the English law. In *Justice* we have a bitter, tragic indictment of the penal system. We are given the psychology of a crime, but not so much of its committal as of its expiation. We are shown the effect of prison life on the clerk Falder, and of its consequences following him after his release, and driving him at last to suicide. It is a wonderfully temperate statement of cruel facts. Throughout it Galsworthy retains a perfect command of his art; above all he avoids any cheap identification of the ministers of a system with the system itself. The officials of the court and of the prison are all shown as wise and humane men; they do their best, according to their powers, for those wretches whose lives are harassed by the system they administrate. It is the system alone which is in fault.

Perhaps Galsworthy has made a mistake in choosing Falder as his victim. The man is of a type which would go under with a

very slight push, weak and changeable, an extreme case. On the other hand, he shows the effect of Law on the poor and weak it is ostensibly there to protect. He is one of those for whom Justice, as understood in this country, and indeed most countries, makes no provision. He is a special case, and it is characteristic of systems and institutions that they ignore—are to a certain extent forced to ignore—the special case, which is almost always better worth considering than the general mass to which the system is adapted. Galsworthy suggests no remedy, no alternative. He does not hint anywhere that Falder has been badly treated. He has been treated as well as Justice will allow; as many men are the victims of injustice, so is he the victim of justice itself.

The play is not quite so well constructed as *Strife*. The first and second acts cover mostly the same ground, and the action is not so compact or the climax so inevitable. On the other hand, there are some fine

scenes, and some particularly arresting characters. Cokeson, the little kind-hearted, humble-minded clerk, is a lovable person, and the relations between Falder and Ruth Honeywill are studied with exquisite delicacy and pathos. The scene of Falder's arrest, of his trial, and that terrible silent scene, in which not a word is spoken, but in which we are shown far more powerfully than by any words, the horror, the misery, the madness, of solitary confinement—are all memorable, and make us forgive a certain scrappiness in their succession. The play ends on a fine note of tragedy, when Falder, re-arrested for obtaining employment by a forged character, throws himself down-stairs rather than go back to gaol:

[RUTH *drops on her knees by the body.*]

RUTH [*in a whisper*]. What is it? He's not breathing. [*She crouches over him.*] My dear! my pretty! . . . [*Leaping to her feet.*] No, no! No, no! He's dead.

COKESON [*stealing forward, in a hoarse voice*]. There, there, poor dear woman.

[RUTH *faces round at him.*]

COKESON. No one'll touch him now! Never again! He's safe with gentle Jesus.

[RUTH *stands as though turned to stone in the doorway, staring at* COKESON, *who, bending humbly before her, holds out his hand as one would to a lost dog.*]

Justice and *Strife* both deal with social and economic questions in the larger sense, but in the majority of the plays the issues are more personal. *The Silver Box* and *The Eldest Son*, for instance, both show the different standards of morality expected from the poor and from the rich. *The Fugitive* is a study of the helplessness of a beautiful woman, not specially trained, when she is driven to make her own way in life. *Joy* shows the essential selfishness which we all bring into our relations both with one another and with problems of conduct.

The Silver Box runs *Strife* close as Galsworthy's masterpiece. There is a strong resemblance between its central idea and that of *The Eldest Son*, a far inferior play.

In *The Silver Box* the charwoman's husband is sent to gaol for stealing, whereas the M.P.'s son, who has also committed a theft, under far more unforgivable circumstances, escapes because of his superior position and wealth. . . . In *The Eldest Son*, the poor gamekeeper is threatened with dismissal if he will not marry the girl he has betrayed, while the eldest son of the house brings his father's wrath upon his head for standing by the lady's maid he has put in the same position.

The Silver Box is much the clearer-sighted of the two plays; in the second the issues are occasionally confused, and both the construction and dramatic effect are inferior. *The Silver Box* is practically flawless. The two contrasting groups, the rich and important Barthwicks, and the poor, good-for-nothing Joneses, are perfectly balanced. There is no crude over-emphasis of the situation, nor inopportune enforcement of the moral, though perhaps in the trial scene Galsworthy is a little too anxious to point out the similarity of the positions of Jack

Barthwick and Jem Jones, and the difference of their treatment: "Dad! that's what you said to me!" says young Barthwick, more pointedly than naturally, when the magistrate tells Jones he is "a nuisance to the community."

The characters are drawn with great vividness and restraint. Mrs Jones is particularly successful—pale, quiet, down-trodden, she has about her a certain dignified pathos which is perfectly human and natural. She does not pose as a martyr, she does not pretend that she would not leave her husband if she could and dared; the fact is not hidden from us that her sad-eyed silences must be particularly irritating to him. She does not complain over much, but she has nothing of stoical endurance—she endures rather because she has been battered into submission and sees the uselessness of revolt. She would revolt if she could.

One of the most direct and convincing scenes in the play is that between these two, in their home, when Mrs Jones discovers

that her husband has stolen the silver box.

JONES. I've had a bit of luck. Picked up a purse—seven pound and more.

MRS JONES. Oh, James!

JONES. Oh, James! What about oh, James! I picked it up, I tell you. This is lost property, this is.

MRS JONES. But isn't there a name in it or something?

JONES. Name! No, there ain't no name. This don't belong to such as 'ave visitin' cards. This belongs to a perfec' lidy. Tike an' smell it. Now, you tell me what I ought to have done. You tell me that. You can always tell me what I ought to ha' done.

MRS JONES. I can't say what you ought to have done, James. Of course the money wasn't yours; you've taken somebody else's money.

JONES. Finding's keeping. I'll take it as wages for the time I've gone about the streets asking for what's my rights. I'll take it for what's *overdue*, d'ye hear? I've got money in my pocket, my girl. Money in my pocket! And I'm not going to waste

it. With this 'ere money I'm going to Canada. I'll let you have a pound. You've often talked of leavin' me. You've often told me I treat you badly—well I 'ope you'll be glad when I'm gone.

MRS JONES. You have treated me very badly, James, and of course I can't prevent your going; but I can't tell whether I shall be glad when you're gone.

JONES. It'll change my luck. I've 'ad nothing but bad luck since I took up with you. And you've 'ad no bloomin' picnic.

MRS JONES. Of course it would have been better for us if we had never met. We weren't meant for each other. But you're set against me, that's what you are, and you have been for a long time. And you treat me so badly, James, going after that Rosie and all. You don't ever seem to think of the children that I've had to bring into the world, and of all the trouble I've had to keep them, and what'll become of them when you're gone.

JONES. If you think I want to leave the little beggars you're bloomin' well mistaken.

MRS JONES. Of course I know you're fond of them.

JONES. Well then, you stow it, old girl.

The kids'll get along better with you than when I'm here. If I'd ha' known as much as I do now, I'd never ha' had one o' them. What's the use o' bringin' 'em into a state o' things like this? It's a crime, that's what it is; but you find it out too late; that's what's the matter with this 'ere world.

MRS JONES. Of course it would have been better for them, poor little things; but they're your own children, and I wonder at you talkin' like that. I should miss them dreadfully if I was to lose them.

JONES. And you ain't the only one. If I make money out there——[*Looking up he sees her shaking out his coat—in a changed voice.*] Leave that coat alone!

[*The silver box drops from the pocket, scattering the cigarettes upon the bed. Taking up the box, she stares at it; he rushes at her, and snatches the box away.*]

MRS JONES. Oh, Jem! Oh, Jem!

JONES. You mind what you're sayin'! When I go out I'll take and chuck it in the water along with that there purse. 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 o' spite. I'm no thief, I tell you; and don't you call me one, or it'll be the worse for you.

MRS JONES. It's Mr Barthwick's! You've taken away my reputation. Oh, Jem, whatever made you?

JONES. What d'you mean?

MRS JONES. It's been missed; they think it's me. Oh, whatever made you do it, Jem?

JONES. I tell you I was in liquor. I don't want it; what's the good of it to me? If I were to pawn it they'd only nab me. I'm no thief. I'm no worse than what young Barthwick is; he brought 'ome that purse I picked up—a lady's purse—'ad it off 'er in a row, kept sayin' e'd scored 'er off. Well I scored 'im off. Tight as an owl 'e was! And d'you think anything'll happen to him?

MRS JONES. Oh, Jem! It's the bread out of our mouths.

JONES. Is it, then? I'll make it hot for 'em yet. What about that purse. What about young Barthwick.

[MRS JONES *comes forward to the table, and tries to take the box;* JONES *prevents her.*]

JONES. What do you want with that. You drop it, I say!

MRS JONES. I'll take it back, and tell them all about it. [*She attempts to wrest the box from him.*]

JONES. Ah, would yer?

[*He drops the box, and rushes on her with a snarl. She slips back past the bed. He follows; a chair is overturned. . . .*]

In *The Eldest Son* we have the same idea not quite so effectively handled—the contrast between the codes of ethics required from the poor and from the rich. There are some good scenes in the play, notably that between Bill and Freda in the first act, and that towards the end, when the whole Cheshire family is brought into action against Freda and her sturdy old father, who at last suddenly solves the difficulty by saying: "I'll have no charity marriage in my family," and leading his daughter away. Also the characters of Sir William Cheshire and of his wife are great achievements, both strong and delicate. But the play

has not the grip or the reality of *The Silver Box.*

The failure lies in a certain lack of cohesion and inevitableness in the whole. The rehearsal of *Caste,* which is introduced in the second act, points the moral rather too obviously. Also the central idea is hampered by the fact that the two illustrative cases are not really parallel. In *The Silver Box* the theft by young Barthwick is just as blameworthy as that by Jones. Their positions are quite the same, except that, indeed, it is the man of wealth who is the more despicable and deserving of punishment. But no one can say that Bill Cheshire and Freda Studdenham are in the same position as the gamekeeper and the village girl. There are objections to the marriage of Bill and Freda which do not exist in the other case. Certainly there are objections to that too, but the fact remains that the two examples are not parallel.

THE PLAYS

II

THERE are social and economic ideas at the bottom of *The Fugitive*, which is to a certain extent symbolical—a study of woman's position when, for any reason, she is separated from the herd. But in this, as in other of his later plays, Galsworthy's command of his art is not equal to his enthusiasm for his subject. Moving and forcible as it all is, it has not the balance, the inevitableness, of *Strife* or *The Silver Box*. We feel that events are being arranged to suit the basic theory. The career of Clare Dedmond, from her revolt to her downfall, is not a thing foreseen, a thing of fate. We feel somehow that her end is arbitrary—at all events we are not shown the steps that lead to it. The actual catastrophes we witness do not demand it.

None the less the study of Clare is arresting—the woman who is "fine, but not fine enough." She alienates our sympathies a little in the first act; there is no denying that she behaves childishly, and her husband, uncongenial as he may be, is not quite such a bounder as Malise, in whom, apparently, she finds satisfaction. But somehow that whole first act has an air of unreality about it, a remoteness from life, and a staginess we do not expect from Galsworthy. Later on the movement becomes swifter, and we have the sense of impending tragedy, which is realised in the scene where Clare leaves Malise, though she loves him and he is her only protector, because she discovers that she has become a drag on him and is spoiling his career.

The scene at the Restaurant, too, has its fine points, thought it is spoilt by a riot of symbolism and a tendency towards false sentiment. The continuous singing of "This Day a Stag must die" by the revellers at another table is rather an obvious and cheap

effect, so too the courtesan's kiss as the curtain falls. On the whole one feels that *The Fugitive* is a play in which the author's plan has been better conceived than carried out.

The central situations of *Joy* and of *The Mob* have nothing to do with any social or economic problem, even in a narrowed, personal sense. They deal with conduct, and special cases of conduct. *Joy* and *The Mob*, with *A Bit o' Love*, stand at the bottom of the scale at the top of which are *Justice* and *Strife*. The interest of the two latter is centred in the social and industrial problems they are built on; then come *The Silver Box*, *The Eldest Son*, and *The Fugitive*, in which the social problem undoubtedly exists, but which depend for interest on its personal variations; then come *Joy*, *The Mob*, and *A Bit o' Love*, in which the interest is purely personal and unconnected with any social idea.

Joy is a play built round an attitude rather than a problem. "A Play on the Letter I"

is the sub-title, and from first to last we see how the consideration of self is the governing motive of widely different characters. We see it working openly, in characters that are frankly and aggressively egotistic; we see it acting more subtly in characters of a different stamp. The one person who is free from it is the old governess, Miss Beech, who lives only in her interest in those around her. Somehow, as is often the case with characters purposely in contrast with his general scheme, Galsworthy is occasionally artificial in dealing with Miss Beech. Her "devilishness" is more than once a trifle forced—the author so obviously wants her to be original, unlike both the conventional stage governess, and the conventionally selfless person. She fills to a certain extent the position of Chorus, and her vocation takes from her humanity. She becomes, as the play goes on, more and more of a Voice.

On the other hand, there is a great deal of humanity about Joy herself and her mother.

Mrs Gwyn's lover, Maurice Lever, is also real enough, though the same cannot always be said of Joy's Dick. The scenes between the young people ring true, but the boy loses reality when away from Joy; he becomes more a part of stage machinery.

In spite of some languors, the play is quick-moving and closely knit, and the author keeps the central situation well in hand. There are one or two haunting scenes —the scenes of young love between Joy and Dick, the scenes of older, sadder love, more passionate and more disillusioned, between Mrs Gwyn and Lever—and one particularly good scene between Mrs Gwyn and Joy, after the girl has discovered her mother's secret.

JOY [*covering her face*]. I'm — I'm ashamed.

MRS GWYN. I brought you into the world; and you say that to me? Have I been a bad mother to you?

JOY. Oh, mother!

MRS GWYN. Ashamed? Am *I* to live

all my life like a dead woman because you're ashamed? Am I to live like the dead because you're a child that knows nothing of life? . . . D'you think—because I suffered when you were born and because I've suffered since with every ache you ever had, that gives you the right to dictate to me now? I've been unhappy enough, and I shall be unhappy enough in the time to come. Oh, you untouched things, you're as hard and cold as iron.

JOY. I would do anything for *you*, mother.

MRS GWYN. Except—let me live, Joy. That's the only thing you won't do for me, I quite understand.

JOY [*in a despairing whisper*]. But it's wrong of you—it's wicked.

MRS GWYN. If it's wicked, *I* shall pay for it, not *you*.

JOY. But I want to save you, mother!

MRS GWYN. Save me? [*Breaking into laughter.*]

JOY. I can't bear it that *you*—if you'll only—I'll never leave you . . . oh, mother! I feel—I feel *so awful*—as if everybody knew.

MRS GWYN. You think I'm a monster to hurt you. Ah! yes! You'll understand better some day.

JOY [*in a sudden burst of excited fear*]. I won't believe it—I—I—can't—*you're deserting me*, mother.

MRS GWYN. Oh, you untouched things! You——

[JOY *looks up suddenly, sees her face, and sinks down on her knees.*]

JOY. Mother—it's for *me*!

MRS GWYN. Ask for my life, Joy—don't be afraid!

[JOY *turns her face away.* MRS GWYN *bends suddenly and touches her daughter's hair;* JOY *shrinks from that touch, recoiling as if she had been stung.*]

MRS GWYN. I forgot—I'm deserting you.

[*And swiftly without looking back she goes away.* JOY *left alone under the hollow tree crouches lower, and her shoulders shake.*]

The Mob is rather an irritating, unsatisfactory play. It is meant to be a study in ideals, but it is astonishing how blunderingly and at the same time how coldly Galsworthy puts these ideals before us. The title is also a mistake. The attitude of the mob towards

Stephen More is merely of secondary and artificial importance. He meets his death at its hands, it is true, but it plays little part in the spiritual fight he wages. The exhibition, in a final tableau, of its changing fancy—in the statue it erects to his memory—is dangerously near anti-climax, and no integral part of the whole. One cannot see that the mob is anywhere a dominant force—it is an incident, far less important here than in *Strife*, though there is one scene in which Galsworthy shows again, as he showed in *Strife*, his power of dealing with stage crowds:

[More *turns and mounts the steps.*]

Tall Youth. You blasted traitor.

[More *faces round at the volley of jeering that follows; the chorus of booing swells, then gradually dies, as if they realised that they were spoiling their own sport.*]

A Rough Girl. Don't frighten the poor feller.

[*A girl beside her utters a shrill laugh.*]

More. Well, what do you want?

VOICE. A speech.

MORE. Indeed! That's new.

ROUGH VOICE. Look at his white liver. You can see it in his face.

A BIG NAVVY. Shut it. Give 'im a chanst.

TALL YOUTH. Silence for the blasted traitor?

[*A youth plays on the concertina; there is laughter, then an abrupt silence.*]

. . . and so on.

The whole of this scene is vigorous and convincing, so too the scene of More's death; but again and again we are irritated by the way Galsworthy misses his chances. Take, for instance, the scene in which Katherine uses her beauty and his love for her to tempt More from his ideal—it is full of magnificent opportunities, and there is some fine stuff in it, but somehow it misses fire. This may be partly due to the fact that in his later plays Galsworthy's restraint occasionally seems to lose its force. Economy of words and emotion is effective only when used to control the riches of both.

A Bit o' Love is in a sense the most personal of all the plays—I say in a sense, because, for the first time, we find Galsworthy definitely exploiting Place. The importance of Place in literature is a comparatively new discovery, for we must not count the descriptive and local novels which have been with us more or less from the first. Studies in Place, which set out deliberately to bring forward the personality—if I may use the term—of Place, are only just beginning, and Galsworthy, with *A Bit o' Love*, comes among the pioneers. It is his latest play, and it will be interesting to watch if he chooses to develop along this line.

We have the Devonshire village as a central character in the piece—the various types which compose it are just so many parts of the whole, and it would be a mistake to treat them as separate persons. The village is at once sturdy and sweet and foolish, it is curious, it is pig-headed—it is built of the wisps of moon-and-dew cobwebs, and of the sty-door stakes from which they

float. It is the common life of the village which is dealt with here, rather than subtleties of atmosphere—the actual locality has no definite existence apart from its inhabitants, which is a milder practice of the art of Place. But the central idea is the same as in all Place studies—the effect of the Place on the Man.

The man here is Michael Strangway, curate of the village, "a gentle creature burnt within," who plays the flute, and loves dumb animals, and acts St Francis without the adorable Franciscan coarseness. His wife pleads with him not to ruin her lover's career by bringing a divorce, and for love of her he promises. Unfortunately the interview is overheard by a little gossiping village girl who has a grudge against him because he had set free her imprisoned skylark. The news is spread, and the village is righteously indignant, wrath culminating when the curate crowns his impious toleration by falling upon the man who has used a few plain words about his

wife in a public-house. Attacked and shunned on all sides for his attempt at a literal gospel, and betrayed within by the ache and emptiness of his heart, the curate resolves on suicide, but is rather tritely saved at the last moment by the little che-ild of such occasions, who offers him "a bit o' love."

There is some good work in the play, an atmosphere of beautiful wistfulness, tenderly combined with the bumpkin clump and flit. The dance in the big barn has its full effect of mystic and rustic beauty; there is infinite pathos in Strangway and Cremer setting out for a long tramp together in the link of their bruised hearts—and Galsworthy has done nothing more kindly-humorous than the meeting at the village inn, with Sol Potter uneasily in the chair.

The play is beautifully written, but it would seem as if the author had scarcely a clear idea himself of Strangway, and a little more planning might have saved him from one or two banalities. The extreme

individuality, so to speak, of the curate's problem—for no one can deny that his was an exceptional case—is a bit in the way of a writer whose chief concern is the social and general. But we must give a particular welcome to *A Bit o' Love*, because it is Galsworthy's first real experiment in Place, and one has a feeling that here is a grand new road for him to tread.

There remain two plays, which are called respectively "A Fantasy" and "An Allegory"—*The Pigeon* and *The Little Dream.*

The first is a fantasy based on sober facts. Indeed it would be rightly called a satire. It is a study—carried through in a spirit of comedy, in spite of drunkenness, vice, poverty, and suicide—of three irreclaimables, and of those who would reclaim them. Old Timson, the drunkard; Mrs Megan, born light of love, who even while drowning thinks of dancing; Ferrand, the vagabond, the wanderer of quaint philosophy—they are a fantastic trio, because the sorrow and

sordidness of their lives is all hazed over by this half-comic, half-satiric glow in which their creator chooses to see them. In themselves more hopeless and tragic than any of the characters in *Strife* or *Justice*, they raise smiles instead of tears. It would seem almost as if the tragedy of the outcast had stirred in Galsworthy those depths beyond sorrow, which can find no expression save in laughter.

Various theorists argue about these three outcasts, and one good-natured man befriends them. Wellwyn is a kindly study, and his easy methods, however much his practical little daughter may blame him, do more to humanise the poor wretches than the sterner tactics of Professor Calway or Sir Thomas Huxton. But as a matter of fact no generosity will meet the case, no theory. We can only laugh, and through laughter learn a little more of pity.

There is some delightful humour in *The Pigeon*. As a rule Galsworthy's humour is too deeply tinged with bitterness to ring

true; when it is not embittered it is often ineffective or trivial, as in *Joy* or *The Eldest Son*. In *The Pigeon*, however, there are scenes of genuine humour and fine satire, both in situation and in dialogue. The various conceptions of character too are essentially humorous, which is seldom, if ever, the case in the other plays. It is a sharp stroke which right at the end of the play avenges the kindly Pigeon whom everyone has plucked.

CHIEF HUMBLE-MAN [*in an attitude of expectation*]. This is the larst of it, sir.

WELLWYN. Oh! Ah! Yes!

[*He gives them money; then something seems to strike him and he exhibits certain signs of vexation. Suddenly he recovers, looks from one to the other, and then at the tea-things. A faint smile comes on his face.*]

WELLWYN. You can finish the decanter.

[*He goes out in haste.*]

CHIEF HUMBLE-MAN [*clinking the coins*]. Third time of arskin'! April fool! Not 'arf. Good old Pigeon!

SECOND HUMBLE-MAN. 'Uman being, *I* call 'im.

CHIEF HUMBLE-MAN [*taking three glasses from the last packing-case, and pouring very equally into them*]. That's right. Tell you wot, I'd never 'a' touched this unless 'e'd told me, I wouldn't—not with 'im.

SECOND HUMBLE-MAN. Ditto to that! This is a bit of orl right! [*Raising his glass.*] Good luck!

THIRD HUMBLE-MAN. Same 'ere!

[*Simultaneously they place their lips smartly against the liquor, and at once let fall their faces and their glasses.*]

CHIEF HUMBLE-MAN [*with great solemnity*]. Crikey! Bill! *Tea!* . . . E's *got* us!

[*The stage is blotted dark.*]

The Little Dream is rather a bitter allegory of the adventures of the soul in search of life and happiness. Seelchen, the little mountain girl, hears the call of the Wine Horn, typifying the delights of the town and the world, and the Cow Horn, typifying the pleasures of her mountain home, but there is a strange resemblance in the hard disillusions they are bound to offer after their

gifts, and only the lonely Great Horn behind points to something finer and higher. There is really not much interest, or indeed, much originality in the little sketch, but there is some beautiful language, and Galsworthy is able to give free rein to his sense of words and poetic faculty. There is real poetry in some of the lyrics, and by them, rather than by his published volume of verse, one judges him poet as well as playwright.

" O flame that treads the marsh of time,
Flitting for ever low,
Where, through the black enchanted slime,
We, desperate, following go—
Untimely fire, we bid thee stay!
Into dark air above,
The golden gipsy thins away—
So has it been with love.

THE NOVELS

I

THOUGH undoubtedly Galsworthy owes his position as an artist and as a thinking force to his plays, he still carries considerable weight as both in his novels. That his novels have not the value, whether social or literary, of his plays—that indeed his position as a novelist is largely due to his fame as a playwright—does not make away with the fact that he has given us some half-dozen novels of standing, which are worth consideration in themselves, apart from anything their author may have done in other fields.

His lack of complete success as a novelist is partly due to those characteristics which have made him so successful as a playwright. The drama is a lawful means of propaganda, the novel is not—Galsworthy's plays gain

enormously from the social or moral problems at their base, while the same problems have a tendency to constrict or impede the development of his novels. A play is dependent mainly on its craft, for this is a point which lies solely with the author, in which no actor, however skilful, can help him; on the other hand, a novel depends chiefly on its human interest, and this the author must supply himself, since he has no intermediaries to make good where he fails. There is little doubt that abstract ideas do not help the human interest of a novel. It is remarkable how small a part the abstract plays in the lives of even the most thoughtful of us, and anything in the nature of a problem or an idea, of anything belonging to the brain rather than to the heart, has a tendency to destroy the illusion of real life which it is the chief object of a novelist to create.

Another reason why Galsworthy is more successful in his plays than in his novels is that most good plays are founded on a

situation, most good novels on the development of a situation, and development is not a characteristic of Galsworthy's art. He likes to take a situation, examine it from characteristic and conflicting points of view, and show the effect it has on different lives, but he never attempts to develop it, to start a chain of events from it, mould characters by it. Practically every character in a Galsworthy novel, with the possible exception of *The Dark Flower*, is the same at the end as at the beginning. This means that in his novels he is still a playwright as far as both situation and character are concerned. He develops neither, he never goes forward, he goes round. The result is that his novels are mostly plays in novel form, and they suffer in consequence.

In fact all the drawbacks of the novels may be said to arise from defects in the human interest so essential to a novelist. It is not that Galsworthy does not feel, and most passionately, for his characters, neither is it that they are not flesh and blood, nor

that their stories are not real and moving. It is rather because they are types, not individuals, and types chosen to fit some particular situation which has been already selected. They are never mere pegs or mere puppets, but somehow there is nothing creative about them; they lack the individual touch which the actor can impart to a character in a play, but which the author alone can give in a novel. Also they repeat themselves, there is not enough diversity; the same groups arrange themselves in different novels. Of course there are exceptions—Lord Miltoun in *The Patrician*, Mr Stone in *Fraternity*—but these, on examination, prove to be only a fining down of the type till it is almost an individual; there is no definite creation.

However, against this defect, which is due to the intrusion of the playwright into the novelist's sphere, we must set a wonderful and seldom-failing craft, which goes far to justify that intrusion. There are few novelists with a finer sense of form than

Galsworthy, few with a finer sense of style —the conciseness of the dramatist teaches him the need of arrangement and the full value to be wrung out of a word. In one point only does the dramatist fail the novelist, and that, strange to say, is in dialogue. Again and again the dialogue in the novels falls flat, or is stilted, or irrelevant —and it is curious, when we remember how strong the plays are in this respect.

There is a certain inequality about the seven novels: *The Island Pharisees*, *The Man of Property*, *The Country House*, *Fraternity*, *The Patrician*, *The Dark Flower*, and *The Freelands*. In every way the first is the weakest, but, on the other hand, the last is not the most successful. The finest are *The Man of Property* and *Fraternity*. Undoubtedly Galsworthy is at his best when his technique is at its highest pitch of excellence, and weakest when his sense of form most fails him. Form is never used by him to cover defects of interest, beauty, or reality. *Fraternity*, which is

very nearly his masterpiece, almost reaches technical perfection, while *The Island Pharisees*—which is as near as he can go to writing a thoroughly bad novel—is also the most faultily constructed.

The Island Pharisees shows perhaps more than any of the novels the raw edges of his art. He is burning with indignation at the self-righteousness of the British middle classes, and his power as a novelist is as yet too undeveloped to cope with his zeal as a reformer. He lacks too that subtlety of warfare which in the plays and later novels makes his propaganda so effective and at the same time is one of his truest safeguards as an artist—the exposure of a cause out of the mouth of its own champions. He attacks crudely—through a series of events which are not always above the suspicion of pre-arrangement, through dialogue which is often manœuvred and artificial. None of his characters, except Ferrand, the vagabond, has much of the breath of life, and over the whole hangs a fog of bitterness

which is scarcely ever dispelled by those illuminating phrases and flashes of insight into his opponents' cause, which elsewhere make him so appealing.

There is little doubt that if *The Island Pharisees* were Galsworthy's average instead of his low-water mark, his position as a novelist would be negligible. But his other novels, without exception, are so superior in technique, in human interest, in beauty, and in force, that we cannot consider *The Island Pharisees* as anything but the first uncertain step of one who is feeling his way. In *The Man of Property* we have the same idea—the satire of a class—but it is brought before us so differently that comparison is impossible.

The Forsyte family are representatives of that section of the middle class whose chief aim is Possession. The Forsytes possess many things—they possess money, they possess artistic treasures, houses, wives, and children, they even possess talents; but with them the verb "I have" is

of more importance than its object. "This interests me, not in itself, but because it is mine"—is their motto. In many ways they are less heartless, less hypocritical than the country Pharisees; the consciousness of possession brings a certain stamina, a worth and solidarity, which compel admiration. Also Galsworthy has been far more tolerant in their portrayal. The Forsytes are human, they are not like the Dennants; they are undoubtedly types, even their differentiations are typical, but they are types of flesh and blood, not merely of points of view. There is something in the grouping of them too which is impressive. These six old brothers whose god is property have a certain greatness; though they and their lust of possession are satirised in many telling episodes, we feel that nevertheless the nation would do badly without them.

The chief representative of Forsytism belongs, however, to one of the younger branches of the family. Soames Forsyte is essentially the Man of Property, because

we see the lust of possession working in him not only through the splendid house he is building, but through his wife Irene. It is in his attitude towards Irene that he declares himself most definitely the Man of Property. He is not unkind to her, he is not untrue to her, but she is his in the sense that the Robin Hill house is his, and it is this realisation which fills her with bitterness and loathing.

Irene belongs to the contrasting group which Galsworthy uses in his novels as in his plays. She and her lover Bosinney stand for all that is antagonistic to the Forsytes. In many ways Irene is one of Galsworthy's most vivid creations. She is a type we meet elsewhere in the novels, yet she has about her certain elements of originality. Something individual creeps into the magnetic softness, the passion-haunted quietness, which are characteristic of so many Galsworthy women. She is human, and she is in revolt—but not strenuously or effectively. Galsworthy has little sympathy for the strong successful woman, who either

defeats circumstances or handles them with capable cunning. In his delineation of June Forsyte, who belongs to this class, he is sometimes reluctantly admiring, but never sympathetic.

June Forsyte, with her decided chin and managing ways, is the antithesis of Irene, strong only in her softness. It is easy to understand how this very contrast would have switched Bosinney's love from one to the other, but the change itself is not very convincingly brought about. Perhaps this is partly due to the fact that Bosinney himself is not a success. He is the representative of the contrast group; property to him is nothing, he spends his time and talent—in the end risking his career—on the house which is Soames Forsyte's. On the other hand, it is his sudden knowledge that another also owns the woman of whom he had thought himself the sole possessor that drives him to madness and suicide. Property makes its appeal even to him.

There is throughout the book a depth of

gloom, as if the shadows of great possessions lay over it. None of the characters is really attractive, except, perhaps, old Jolyon Forsyte; there is something subtly caddish about them all, and the author's lack of sympathy sours the whole. Studied in the light especially of his novels, it is a strange error to call Galsworthy "detached." The side he takes is always apparent, in spite of what he says on the other, and his lack of sympathy with the human representatives of the opposite point of view is often so great as to put them out of drawing. Fine as the Forsytes are, they would have been much finer if the author had penetrated in some degree beneath their outer skin, shown sympathy with the springs of their nature as well as understanding of their mental attitude. His sympathies in *The Man of Property* are undoubtedly with Irene Forsyte and with Bosinney—though it would seem that this character sometimes repelled and baffled even his creator.

On the whole there is something haunting

about the book—something in the gloom of its ending which makes us shudder after it is closed. Property triumphs. Bosinney is beaten and killed by the Man of Property, and Irene is brought back to the slavery from which she revolted.

"Huddled in her grey fur against the sofa-cushions, she had a strange resemblance to a captive owl, bunched in its soft feathers against the wires of a cage. The supple erectness of her figure was gone, as though she had been broken by cruel exercise; as though there were no longer any reason for being beautiful, and supple, and erect."

Thus the curtain rings down on Irene Forsyte, crushed under the heel of prosperity, robbed of her love by a sudden awakening of the sense of property in the heart of the man she had thought clean of it. . . .

The Country House also deals with a class, and it is the country equivalent of the Forsytes. The Pendyces are big country

proprietors, but the property is to them a good deal more than material possession. It is their Position in the county that they think of, their Standing; Dignity is with them almost as important as Land, and more important than Money. Also they are not quite so much a type as the Forsytes—in certain broad characteristics they may be found in dozens of country manors, but in others they are unique. They do everything with the greatest amount of unnecessary trouble to themselves and other people. "Pendyce," says Paramor to Vigil, when discussing the threatened divorce, "he'd give his eyes for the case not to come on, but you'll see he'll rub everything up the wrong way, and it'll be a miracle if we succeed. That's 'Pendycitis'!"

Even George, who in some ways breaks free from the family tradition, is afflicted by it. It is largely owing to Pendycitis that he loses Helen Bellew. He tires her with that dogged quality of his, which spares neither himself nor her, but sends him

plodding and muddling on in the face of impossible circumstances. He cannot yield, and he is not really strong—he is a Pendyce; and it is with luxurious relief that she finds herself free of him at last.

Helen Bellew is only lightly sketched in, her presence is almost always merely physical. She has many of the outward essentials of the Galsworthy heroine, that particular dower of ripe, seductive, yet delicate, beauty which we find in Irene Forsyte, Audrey Noel, and Olive Cramier. But she is heartless—which those others are not—and hence we seem to find a certain reluctance on the author's part to probe into her. What is heartless cannot be truly beautiful, according to his creed, and he wants us to realise how beautiful Helen Bellew was, so that she became a force, a moulding-stamp, to the hard, unimpressionable George Pendyce.

The real heroine of *The Country House* is George's mother, Margery Pendyce, and she is, practically without exception, the most

charming character in Galsworthy's novels. She is the Mother—not the Mother in her elemental form, but the Mother as civilisation and education and pain have made her; not very different from the primitive type, perhaps, but dainty with a score of sweet refinements. Quieted by her long subjection in the school of Pendyce, she yet has the invincible courage of gentleness; accustomed for years to yield where her own comfort and happiness only are concerned, she takes an impregnable stand at last when her children's welfare is at stake. There is something heroic in this gentle, soft-gowned, lavender-scented figure, moving so peacefully among her roses, caring so dutifully for her household and her husband, and then suddenly putting them all from her, to take her place beside her outcast son.

"I have gone up to London to be with George" (she writes simply to Pendyce), "you will remember what I said last night. Perhaps you did not quite realise that I meant it. Take care of poor old Roy, and

don't let them give him too much meat this hot weather. Jackman knows better than Ellis how to manage the roses. Please do not worry about me. Good-bye, dear Horace; I am sorry if I grieve you."

Margery Pendyce is the chief of the contrast group in this novel; with her is Gregory Vigil, the idealist, who looks at the sky when it would be better if he looked at the street and saw where he was going. Unselfishness, quietness, and idealism are the contrasts of Pendycitis. The Reverend Hussell Barter, who is a kind of clerical Pendyce, is one of Galsworthy's most successful attempts at humour. He is drawn with many a memorable satiric flick, and doubtless this is a reason why he succeeds, for Galsworthy's humour without irony is apt to be trivial.

Another striking character is the Spaniel John—here Galsworthy has succeeded in giving a dog a very definite personality. John is not only a dog, he is a spaniel—the distinct psychology of the spaniel works in

him, and we could never think of him as a terrier or a collie. Indeed the author has taken as much trouble over the Spaniel John as over any character in the book, and been as successful.

THE NOVELS

II

ONE can say without much fear of contradiction that after *The Man of Property* the finest of Galsworthy's novels is *Fraternity*. Indeed it comes as near being a perfect work of art as any novel ever written. There have been many novels with a stronger appeal, a wider comprehension, a greater depth and force, but few of which it can be said that they fulfil more completely the canons of novel-writing. And this is to be understood not only of the letter but of the spirit—*Fraternity* is no mere triumph of technique, it is a moving, human and beautiful story, about people who are real, if drawn in pale colours, and situations which are Life, in spite of their elusiveness.

In its perfection of balance, *Fraternity*

reminds one of the plays. There is a central situation, flanked by two contrasting groups. It is not of mere industrial or moral significance, nor is it the satirisation of any particular class; it is a problem which has always occupied human minds, and will do so till the end of time—the problem of the rich and the poor. It is embodied in old Mr Stone, with his great unfinished—and, we suspect, ever to be unfinished—work on Brotherhood. "Each one of us has a shadow in those places—in those streets." Mr Stone is one of Galsworthy's finest achievements. In him the author shows what few have even attempted to show, the infinite pathos of moral greatness. There is no denying the greatness of Mr Stone, in spite of his mental kink, and his pathos is as evident. He is alone, it is his own doing; he cannot, if he would, bind himself up with others. He writes of Fraternity, but in life he never touches a brother's hand—he does nothing to unite those two brothers whose embrace he writes of, and his own

life is equally remote from either. They come near him, they put out tentative, appealing hands—and with a wistful sigh he turns to his book.

The Classes are represented by the two Dallison families, the Masses by the Hughes, Creed, and the little model. It is remarkable how tightly the whole fabric is drawn together—Hilary and Stephen Dallison have married two sisters, Bianca and Cecilia, and their Shadows live together under the same roof. We know what would be, with an average novelist, the result of such an effort at concentration, but nothing could be more natural, more inevitable, than the knitting up of these groups.

The little model is not a common Galsworthy type; in fact, she stands almost alone in his novels. Quiet and soft she undoubtedly is, like most of his women, but the meek vulgarity of her little mind is something new. She is drawn with a wonderful sympathy, as indeed are all the characters in the book; for in *Fraternity*, Galsworthy

does not seem to have been so much struck by the irony of his theme as by its pathos. There is one beautiful account of her, leaving Hilary's house, which sheds a tender light like a spring sunset over her figure, making it at once terribly pathetic and terribly young.

"She kept turning her face back as she went down the path, as though to show her gratitude. And presently, looking up from his manuscript, he saw her face still at the railings, peering through a lilac bush. Suddenly she skipped, like a child let out of school. Hilary got up, perturbed. The sight of that skipping was like the rays of a lantern turned on the dark street of another human being's life. It revealed, as in a flash, the loneliness of this child, without money and without friends, in the midst of this great town."

The Hughes group is in its units to be found in many of Galsworthy's works: the bullying husband, gross, selfish, an animal—but an animal broken—the meek wife who

complains and nags, but has at the bottom of her heart an unreasoning dog-like quality which will let her make no effective efforts for freedom; the poor old man, fallen on evil days, yet with a philosophy, and a self-respect which is almost pride. Galsworthy never sees the poor and outcast in an aureole of false idealism. If he sadly confesses that the classes do not know how to help the masses, he also confesses that the masses do not know how to help themselves. If the Dallisons are timid and inefficient, Hughes is an undeserving brute, and Mrs Hughes a scold who is largely responsible for her own ills. The little model is forlorn, but she is also designing. The result is that an atmosphere of deep depression hangs over *Fraternity*. One might say that its moral was " For rich is rich and poor is poor, and never the twain shall meet "—except in the unfinished book of a cranky idealist.

" Like flies caught among the impalpable and smoky threads of cobwebs, so men

struggle in the webs of their own natures, giving here a start, there a pitiful small jerking, long sustained, and falling into stillness. Enmeshed they were born, enmeshed they die, fighting according to their strength to the end; to fight in the hope of freedom, their joy; to die, not knowing they are beaten, their reward."

The Patrician is scarcely equal to *Fraternity*. In it the bitterness, which seemed to have slumbered for a while, awakes, and helps to distort the picture. Also in no novel, I think, is more obvious Galsworthy's lack of sympathy with certain of his characters. The book suffers in having for its central figure a man whom the author admires but does not really understand. Lord Miltoun is a noble conception, but Galsworthy does not get to the bottom of his struggle. One feels all the way through that he admires him, but cannot sympathise with him, and the result is that the real grounds of Miltoun's actions are seldom displayed. We never penetrate beneath the surface of

this character, whose inner mind we nevertheless would know rather than many whose workings are shown us.

There is also a group, the Valleys group, whom Galsworthy is passionately wanting to treat fairly, but for whom he cannot conceal a bitterness not unflavoured with contempt. Lord Valleys, his wife, his sons, his daughters, are drawn with a painstaking effort to hide his real feeling towards them, but the effort often breaks down; even Barbara, splendid and brave, has a repelling hardness in which stick one or two ironic arrows of her creator. Courtier, who represents the Other Point of View, is sometimes rather vaguely drawn, and suffers in the opposite way to Miltoun, for Galsworthy, while apparently sympathising with his attitude, does not seem to have the same admiration for his character.

The only person in the book who is both admired and understood is Mrs Noel. Here we have a very appealing figure, tragic yet quiet, courageous yet soft, made for love,

vibrant with passion, full of an infinite delicacy and self-respect. Self-respect is an unfailing characteristic of Galsworthy's good women; he has no sympathy with the woman who in times of stress loses her personal dignity, and forgets all those little trivial refinements of body which are part of her greatness. Audrey Noel "incorrigibly loved to look as charming as she could; and even if no one were going to see her, she never felt that she looked charming enough." He realises that for a woman who respects herself it is not enough to be merely clean and tidy, she must be as beautiful as circumstances will allow—it is not vanity but her dignity which demands it. Mrs Noel appeals because her courage is so infinite, and because it is so essentially a woman's courage, a thing of gentleness and soft endurance, not of the stiff but of the smiling lip.

There is a certain unsatisfactoriness in the tragedy of her relations with Miltoun. He falls from his ideal, but only half-way, so to speak—the rest of his difficulty is

solved by her abnegation. One is given the impression, in spite of much talking between the characters, that the vital heart of the matter has never been reached. "If the lark's song means nothing—if that sky is a morass of our invention—if we are pettily creeping on, furthering nothing—persuade me of it, and I'll bless you." That desperate cry of Miltoun seems to give more of the essence of his struggle than any arguments about Religion and Authority. One feels that both were only names on lips—it was not merely a respect for authority that made Miltoun first deny himself Audrey, and then when he had taken her, believe himself bound to throw aside his public life. The appeal of Authority is not made convincing enough, the appeal to Religion not spiritual enough, for a man of Miltoun's type—one sees him acting, generally at least, according to the dead letter of both; one knows there must have been a quickening spirit behind to drive such a man, but one is not shown it.

The Dark Flower is in some ways a departure from his usual methods. It lacks the central problem, with its balanced and contrasted groups. It is not a study of a situation nor of a class; it is a study of passion. There has always been plenty of passion in Galsworthy's books; he is not a cold writer, and though his central idea is often social or intellectual, in his treatment of it he never loses sight of the fact that human emotions are stronger than human intellects, and play a more important part in all situations, no matter how purely technical and general these may appear. But in *The Dark Flower*, passion is not an incident or a moulding force, it is the central theme. We are shown its growth in three different stages—its first kindling in the heart of a boy, its consummation in the young man and woman, its last flicker in the man who sees old age approaching and to whom youth calls.

To carry out his idea Galsworthy is forced to put aside much of that compactness which

is so effective in his other novels. Indeed *The Dark Flower* is really three separate stories, of which the hero, Mark Lennan, is the connecting link. A really fine character might have held these three episodes together, but Lennan is vaguely drawn. He is most convincing as boy and middle-aged man; in the central part he is swamped in the vehemence of his own love. Indeed the passion of Lennan and Olive Cramier is far the greatest thing about them—taken apart from it they are both a little colourless. Olive is much less life-like than Audrey Noel, Irene Forsyte, and others of her kind; she is vague and shadowy beside the heroines of the two other episodes, Anne Stormer and Nell Dromore.

These women are in many ways the best-drawn characters in the book. Anne Stormer, caught on the fringe of middle age by the gust of her passion for a boy of eighteen, swept by it, rocked by it, but conscious all the time of its hopelessness with regard to herself, its cruelty with regard to

him, in the end gives him up to the little girl of his own age, with whom he climbs trees, and in whose presence he forgets the dark flower whose scent in her bosom had given him his first staggering draught of life. She is a character fine through her pathos, through the inevitableness of her renunciation, which is not made from any high spirit of courage or self-sacrifice, but simply because she must.

Very different is Nell Dromore, who sends the mocking cry of youth after Lennan when, having passed through the storm of his love for Olive Cramier, and married his boyhood's playfellow, Sylvia Doone, he sees old age creeping towards him, passionless and adventureless. She is an extraordinary study of mingled abandonment and innocence. She leads him on by methods which would not disgrace a courtesan if they had not about them all the delicious shamelessness of a child. In the end he has the strength to wrench himself from her, knowing that she brings him but a false hope, for which his

wife's broken heart must pay. Sylvia, though winning and sweet in the first episode, is rather shadowy here, where she has such an important part. No doubt her ineffectiveness is to a certain extent deliberate, but for all that it should not be unreal, or we lose sight of it as a force in Lennan's struggle.

On the whole it must be said that Galsworthy is at his best when most characteristic, and here, where he turns to the methods of the more ordinary novelist, he loses some of his strength. There are, however, some impressive scenes in the book, and he has again shown his peculiar successfulness in dealing with youth and young love. There are delightful pictures of the boy Mark, in which his growing, half-understood infatuation is never allowed to drown the frankness of his youth; and the scenes between him and Sylvia remind us of similar scenes in *Joy*.

In *The Freelands*, Galsworthy reverts to the more characteristic mood; indeed the book is reminiscent—in a stimulating,

legitimate way. Its structure reminds one of *The Man of Property*, and its environment of *The Country House*. As in the first of these the web was spun over the framework of the six brothers Forsyte, so here we have the four brothers Freeland to serve as pegs —and they live in circumstances that recall the Pendyces and their problems. Not that they are all four country people—Felix is a successful author and lives at Hampstead, and John is in the Home Office; but the family meets at Becket, where Stanley who has made a fortune by exporting ploughs, has an estate, and Tod, the eccentric and revolutionary, lives the simple life, freehold.

Then there is the old mother, one of those tender, sturdy, odd patricians whom the author can draw so clearly, and there is the young genereration as represented by Nedda, Felix's inquiring daughter, and Tod's anarchistic Derek and Sheila—also the wives of three Freelands, especially Tod's Kirsteen.

These characters are not considered so

much in relation to each other as in relation to the central problem, which is The Land—and The Land with Galsworthy is, of course, not the good earth but the slaves that toil on it. He studies the labouring man in connection with his employers, the petty tyrannies of Manor, Parsonage, and Farm. Bob Tryst is evicted because his marriage with his deceased wife's sister displeases the Squiress, Lady Malloring, and the poor Gaunts are hounded from pillar to post because the daughter has "got into trouble." Galsworthy pillories Feudalism, which he sees rampant over English rusticity, and parts of *The Freelands* read like a Gladstone League pamphlet.

However, to any one who loathes "the People," whether of fields or streets, the central interest of *The Freelands* is Galsworthy's study of a modern English family. He is rather fond of this especial study—we have it in *The Man of Property*, *The Country House*, and *The Patrician*; we see it hovering near *Fraternity*. The combinations and

permutations of blood relationship seem to interest him enormously—the modern push and individualism, half attacking, half combining with old-fashioned ideas of kinship and unity. He shows how the family Idea survives, in spite of actual disruptions, and can outlive even an utter lack of common life, interest, or sympathy—so that the unloved brother must come somehow before the loved stranger, simply because he is One of the Family. It is probably a lurking of the primitive clan instinct, and one would like to see it treated of even more thoroughly than Galsworthy has done. It is interesting to watch him with these Freelands, linked by their family tie, and also, in this case, by the wise, kindly, foolish old mother of them all—who is, however, Tod's in particular.

In other matters *The Freelands* makes its predecessor, *The Dark Flower*, stand out even more as an exception or parenthesis. In his latest novel we have all his early, usual traits: all his old defects of too general a characterisation, too careful a

balance, too deliberate a sacrifice of the artist to the moralist, but at the same time the virtues of these defects—restraint, craft, and purpose, and, besides, those intrinsic qualities which are the real building-stuff of his work.

The characters of these four brothers, their wives and children and associates, are drawn with a firm touch lightened by much satire of the kinder sort. There is that sense and grasp of beauty which we find so inevitably in Galsworthy's treatment of even the stuffiest theme. We have, too, a sense of aloofness which, if it is sometimes irritating, is occasionally majestic, and lit by warm, sudden flashes of penetration into characters one would have thought, by other signs, to be beyond his sphere of understanding. The book may not be so good as *Fraternity*, it is certainly not so great as *The Man of Property*, but it is, nevertheless, among the best he has given us, which is encouraging, since it is, though only temporarily, one hopes, the last.

THE SKETCHES

VILLA RUBEIN and four short stories under the title of *A Man of Devon* were published anonymously. All early efforts, they are not on a line with Galsworthy's later work, but they have about them a certain beauty and individuality which makes them worth considering. Perhaps their chief characteristic is delicacy: they are water-colours, in many ways exquisitely conceived and shaded, but perhaps a trifle pale and washed out, a trifle —it must be owned—uninteresting.

Villa Rubein, describing with much sensitive charm the life of a half-Austrian household, is full of tenderness, but lacking somehow in grip. The characters are more attractive than most of Galsworthy's—in fact, in no work of his do we meet such a uniformly charming group of people. They

are sketched, even the less pleasing, with an entire absence of bitterness, and the heroine, Christian, and her little half-German sister are delightful in their freshness and grave sweetness. Miss Naylor and old Nic Treffry are also drawn with a loving and convincing hand. The book seems to have been written in a mellow mood which passed with it. Yet we pay for any absence of bitterness, propaganda or pessimism, by a corresponding lack of force. It must be confessed that Galsworthy is most effective when he is most gloomy, most penetrating when he is most bitter, most humorous when he is most satirical.

The short stories call for no special comment except *The Salvation of a Forsyte*, where we meet for the first time Swithin Forsyte, later to figure in *The Man of Property*. We are introduced to an early adventure of his, which is treated with some technical skill and an impressive irony. The tale has grip, and is not far off French excellence of craft. The other stories are too long for

their themes, which, if not actually thin in themselves, are dragged out in the telling.

Of very different stuff are the four volumes of sketches—*A Commentary*, *A Motley*, *The Inn of Tranquillity*, and *The Little Man*. In these, except, perhaps, in the last, we have some of Galsworthy's best work, much of it equal, in its different way, to the finest of the plays and novels.

A Commentary deals chiefly with the life of the very poor, showing the intimacy of the author's knowledge, and the depths of his sympathy. Some of the sketches are indictments of the social order which favours those who have money and tramples those who have none. *Justice*, for instance, is a fresh exposure of the oft-exposed inequality of the divorce laws where rich and poor are concerned. *A Mother* is a piteous revelation of those depths of horror and humiliation which form the daily life of many. Continually, in the plays and in the novels, Galsworthy reveals the utter brutishness of some of these submerged ones. He never

attempts to enforce his social ethics by glorification of those he champions. Such men as Hughes, in *Fraternity*, or the husband, in *A Mother*, are absolutely of the lowest stuff and, it would seem, unworthy of a hand to help them out of the mud in which they roll. But here lies the subtlety of the reproach—it is the social system with its cruelties and stupidities which is responsible for this. There is something more forceful than all the sufferings of the deserving in this grim picture of utter degradation, the depths of bestialism into which mismanaged civilisation can grind divine souls.

In other of the sketches we are shown the opposite side of the picture—the selfishness of the prosperous, their lack of ideals and imagination. Now Galsworthy becomes bitter; with a steely hardness he describes the comfortable life of the upper middle classes, of the fashionable and wealthy. The bias of *A Commentary* is obvious throughout, and throughout propaganda takes the first place. The fragments are held

together by the central idea, which is the exposure—ironic, indignant, embittered, infinitely pitying—of the inequalities between the poor and the rich. True, there is atmosphere, style, a sense of character; but in *A Commentary* the artist takes second place.

A Motley is, as the title implies, a collection linked up by no central view-point. Character sketches, episodes of the streets and of the fields, reflections on life, art, manners, anything, and all widely different in style and length, crowd together between the covers, without any definite scheme. They show extraordinary powers of observation and intuition, and at the same time a certain lack of grip, which is always the first of Galsworthy's weaknesses to come to light in a failing situation. Some of the sketches are too slight, over-fined. On the other hand, some have true poetry and true pathos in their conception. The style is more polished, the pleading less special, the knowledge less embittered than in *A Commentary*. Particularly successful is *A Fisher of Men*, in

which Galsworthy is at his best, giving us a sympathetic and tragic picture of a type with which we know he has little sympathy —there is no bitterness here, just pathos. *Once More* is a study of lower-class life slightly recalling *A Mother*, but here again is far more tenderness, due partly, no doubt, to the wistfulness of youth that creeps into the story. Then there are sketches of life and the furtive love of the London parks; no one has realised more poignantly than Galsworthy all the tragedy of hidden meetings and hidden partings with which our public places are filled.

The Inn of Tranquillity is also a mixed collection, and in it we see far more of Galsworthy the poet and the artist than of Galsworthy the social reformer. There are in the book fragments of sheer beauty which would be hard to beat anywhere in modern prose. Take, for instance, the painting of dawn in *Wind in the Rocks*:

"That god came slowly, stalking across

far over our heads from top to top; then, of a sudden, his flame-white form was seen standing in a gap of the valley walls; the trees flung themselves along the ground before him, and censers of pine gum began swinging in the dark aisles, releasing their perfumed steam. Throughout these happy ravines where no man lives, he shows himself naked and unashamed, the colour of pale honey; on his golden hair such shining as one has not elsewhere seen; his eyes like old wine on fire. And already he had swept his hand across the invisible strings, for there had arisen the music of uncurling leaves and flitting things."

Take also just this sentence from *A Novelist's Allegory*: "those pallid gleams . . . remain suspended like a handful of daffodils held up against the black stuffs of secrecy."

Galsworthy allows himself to play with words, blend them, contrast them, savour their sweet sound and the roll and suck of them under the tongue . . . he becomes a poet in prose. But it is not only words

that make his poetry. He seizes aspects of beauty and gives them to us palpitating, fresh from their capture, a poet's prey. Such is *Riding in Mist*, a consummate study of the misty moor, damp, sweet, and dangerous. There is, too, a wonderful sense of locality in *That Old-Time Place*—it throbs with atmosphere.

But we have many studies besides of words and place. There is *Memories*, in which Galsworthy uses his real understanding of dog-nature, faithful and true. There is *The Grand Jury*, in which he shows the fullness of his sympathy for the human dog, the bottom dog, so generally and necessarily ignored by laws which are inevitably made for the upper layer of humanity. We have, too, some illuminating comments on the world of letters. In *About Censorship* there is fine irony, and in *Some Platitudes Concerning the Drama* plenty of illumination. Indeed, in this article we are given a plain enough statement of the rules which evidently govern Galsworthy's own work. For

instance: "A good plot is that sure edifice which slowly rises out of the interplay of circumstance on temperament and temperament on circumstance, within the enclosing atmosphere of an idea." There could be no clearer definition of the plan governing *Strife* and *The Silver Box*. The pronouncement on dramatic dialogue, too, applies admirably to much of Galsworthy's own achievement:

"The art of writing true dramatic dialogue is an austere art, denying itself all license, grudging every sentence devoted to the mere machinery of the play, suppressing all jokes and epigrams severed from character, relying for fun and pathos on the fun and tears of life. From start to finish good dialogue is hand-made, like good lace; clear, of fine texture, furthering with each thread the harmony and strength of a design to which all must be subordinated."

In his last book of sketches—*The Little Man and other Satires*—Galsworthy has made a deliberate sacrifice of beauty. He has

left the luminous Italian backgrounds of *The Inn of Tranquillity*, the rustling English twilights of *A Motley*, for the midnight lamp on his study table. This is why, perhaps, *The Little Man* depresses me. Galsworthy has not stood the test—he has grown bitter. His satire is more akin to that of Swift than Samuel Butler, but without Swift's redeeming largeness, his tumbling restlessness. Galsworthy's bitterness is the well-bred bitterness of the pessimist at afternoon tea; Swift is the pessimist in the tavern, raging round and breaking pots.

However, an author's point of view is not a fair subject for criticism, any more than the shape of his head; he probably cannot help it. But it may be deplored.

The most striking thing about the book itself is the subdivision titled *Studies in Extravagance*. Here we have some remorseless, if only partial, truth—the fierce glow of the searchlight, more concentrated though more limited than the wide shining of the sun. We have *The Writer*, *The*

Housewife, The Plain Man, etc., all pierced through to their most startling worst. Galsworthy will make no concessions—he will not show us a single motherly redeeming virtue in that woman of schemes and covert horribleness whom he presents as a possible variety of British matron. So too with his Writer—those flickers of amiable naivety which occasionally humanise the writers most of us know are shut out from this portrait of an ape playing with the ABC. It is clever, fierce, vindictive, and partly true.

There are some gentler sketches in the book—for instance, the name-piece, in which we have a really witty and typical picture of an American, with his God's own gift of admiring good deeds he will not do himself. There is also *Abracadabra*, in which the satire is fundamentally tender, and with little significant bitterness—though in time one comes to resent Galsworthy's inalienable idea that every woman is ill-used in marriage. There is also such genuine wit, terseness, and point in *Hall Marked* that one can afford

to skip the humours of the parson's trousers. *Ultima Thule* is more in *The Motley* and *Commentary* vein. We are glad to meet the old man who could tame cats and bullfinches. But why sigh over him so much? He was happy and to be envied, even though he lived in a back room on a few farthings. This misplaced pity is becoming irritating in Galsworthy. His earlier works—*Strife*, *The Man of Property*—are innocent of it, but lately it has grown to be a habit with him. He cannot resist the temptation to weep over everyone whose clothes are not quite as good as his own.

It is scarcely surprising that a writer with Galsworthy's sense of words and atmosphere should have written a book of verse—the only surprise is that his solitary experiment in poetry should not have been more successful. When we remember the exquisite prose of his plays, novels and sketches, the admirable description, the sense of atmosphere, not forgetting also the genuine poetry of much of *The Little Dream*, we are surprised

not to find in *Moods, Songs and Doggerels*, anything of permanent quality, or worthy to stand beside his other work. There are some delightful songs of the country, of Devon, one or two little fragrant snatches, like puffs of breeze. But the more ambitious pieces, the *Moods*, are for the most part wanting in inspiration. They are just prose, and not nearly such fine prose as we have a right to expect from Galsworthy. One or two stand out as poetry, and these are mostly studies in atmosphere, such as *Street Lamps*:

"Lamps, lamps! Lamps ev'rywhere!
You wistful, gay, and burning eyes,
You stars low-driven from the skies
Down on the rainy air.

You merchant eyes, that never tire
Of spying out our little ways;
Of summing up our little days
In ledgerings of fire—

Inscrutable your nightly glance,
Your lighting and your snuffing out,
Your flicker through the windy rout,
Guiding this mazy dance.

O watchful, troubled gaze of gold,
Protecting us upon our beats—
You piteous glamour of the streets,
Youthless, and never old!"

GALSWORTHY THE ARTIST

GALSWORTHY is an artist before he is a social reformer. It is a mistake to consider him chiefly from the second point of view; for he is not so much a thinker spreading his propaganda by artistic methods as an artist whose excellence is grounded in ideas. *Strife*, for instance, was not written to expose the evils of our present industrial system so much as from the impulse to create, grounding itself in an economic problem—which the artist displays and analyses, just as others, and he at other times, would display and analyse any problem of love, manners, life, or human nature, in the name of "plot."

For this reason his propaganda interferes very little with his art. Moreover, it is a general propaganda, which lends itself more directly to artistic purposes than a particular

one. It would be far more difficult, for instance, to write a human and artistic novel on the evils of leaded glaze than it would be to write one on the selfish stupidity of which leaded glaze is the result. Galsworthy does not attack, at least in force, any definite abuses, he attacks those cruel and stupid powers which are at the bottom of them all—the love of property for property's sake, the false respectability of the unassailed, the lack of comprehension of one class for another, Pharisaism, materialism, selfishness, and cowardice. He is the champion of the bottom dog, whether human or animal. He pleads passionately for sympathy with the abused and downtrodden and outcast. His throbbing pity vitalises his propaganda, so that it not only ceases to constrict his art, but positively enriches it.

When he is at his best we find a perfect blending of art and idea. The second is bound up in the first, an essential part of it. As he himself says in *Some Platitudes concerning Drama*: "A drama must be shaped

so as to have a spire of meaning. Every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral; and the business of the dramatist is so to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of day."

This ideal is completely fulfilled in *Strife* and *The Silver Box*, also in *Fraternity*, *The Man of Property*, and some of the sketches —hence it is in these that we must look for his best work. Now and then the idea carries away the artist, warping his vision, and we have instances of special pleading, such as *Justice*, *The Fugitive*, and *The Island Pharisees*.

In a sense Galsworthy's propaganda is a part of his technical equipment. He uses it chiefly in laying his bases; the solidity and centralisation of his work is due largely to the economic and social ideas on which he rears the structure of human passion and frailty. He does not make Shaw's mistake of using dialogue, rather than situation, as a means of propaganda, neither does he rely much on character. His moral is inherent in

his situations, and he fails only when he lets it stray from the basic idea into the superstructure of character and dialogue.

As an artist pure and simple his chief assets are a sense of situation, a sense of atmosphere, and the power of presenting both beautifully. His sense of character is not particularly wide or profound. He deals with types rather than individuals, and the same types repeat themselves a trifle monotonously. Though he has great gifts of intuition, and occasional penetrating flashes, he does not work much below the surface. It is astonishing, when one considers the force and passion of so much of his work, to realise that it is all got from surface-workings—not that he ever suggests the shallow or superficial, it is simply a reluctance to dig.

Take, for example, Miltoun, in *The Patrician*; here he has attempted to draw a character whose actions spring from the inmost recesses of his being, and the result is a certain unconvincingness marring a fine

achievement, for Galsworthy can penetrate only in swift spasms of intuition, and the delineation of a character like Miltoun's requires no spasmodic descent, but a perpetual working in the buried and profound. Galsworthy is a psychological analyst of some skill; he is sensitive to psychological variations, but he catches these only in their exterior manifestations, and the result is not so much a lack of profundity as a lack of grip. For this reason his characters, charming as they sometimes are, interesting as they always are, never succeed in being absolutely Life—we never come to know them really intimately, they are more acquaintances than friends.

This surface-working in character is liable to impair situation, since the two are interdependent. Galsworthy is a master of situation, but occasionally, when the depths ought to be sounded, we are put off with a consummate skill of arrangement, a perfection of combination and interplay. This is so splendidly done that it is generally not till

afterwards that we realise the lack, and this only because Galsworthy's work so often leaves an after-taste of aloofness, that, as every lover of Galsworthy knows he is not aloof, one sees that something must be wrong with the art which gives such an impression.

Critics speak of Galsworthy's detachment, but the true lover knows this is not so. The sense of aloofness is due partly to his scrupulous fairness in examining every point of view, partly to an exaggerated restraint, and a shrinking from analyses which are not purely intellectual. One often wishes that he would give himself rein. It is not from lack of power that he holds himself in, it seems to be rather from a certain shyness, a fastidious shrinking from troubling the depths or breaking the gates. On the rare occasions he gives himself freedom, we are struck by the force and vitality of it all. Strange as it may seem in one who has been so often accused of coldness, he is masterly in conveying the charged atmosphere of passion. It is true that he writes with

restraint, with almost too much restraint, but he has a wonderful power of suggesting the heavy sweetness of passion, its joys, its languors, its delicacies rather than its ferocities.

Take, for example, the scene in *The Man of Property*, when Irene returns to her husband, after having for the first time met Bosinney as a lover:

"He hardly recognised her. She seemed on fire, so deep and rich the colour of her cheeks, her eyes, her lips, and of the unusual blouse she wore. She was breathing fast and deep, as though she had been running, and with every breath perfume seemed to come from her hair, and from her body, like perfume from an opening flower. . . . He lifted his finger towards her breast, but she dashed his hand aside. 'Don't touch me!' she cried. He caught her wrist; she wrenched it away. 'And where have you been?' he asked. 'In heaven—out of this house!' With those words she fled upstairs. . . . And Soames stood motionless. What prevented him from following her? Was

it that, with the eyes of faith, he saw Bosinney looking down from that high window in Sloane Street, straining his eyes for yet another glimpse of Irene's vanished figure, cooling his flushed face, dreaming of the moment when she flung herself on his breast—the scent of her still in the air around and the sound of her laugh that was like a sob ? "

Next to a sense of situation Galsworthy must be granted a sense of atmosphere. This is due to the extraordinary sensitiveness he brings into his work, as distinct from penetration.

" Strong sunlight was falling on that little London garden, disclosing its native shadowiness ; streaks and smudges such as Life smears over the faces of those who live too consciously. The late perfume of the lilac came stealing forth into the air faintly smeethed with chimney-smoke. There was brightness but no glory, in that little garden ; scent, but no strong air blown across golden lakes of buttercups, from seas of springing clover, or the wind-silver of

young wheat; music, but no full choir of sound, no hum."

This passage from *Fraternity* shows Galsworthy's peculiar grasp of subtleties, those pseudo-expressions of emotion in Nature, which only the sensitive can find in their less obvious aspects. For the more obvious aspects, he has not so much attention. He deals little with storms and furies, with nature as a power. Nature to him is rather an influence, a thing of crafty workings; and he loves above all others hours of pale sunlight, faint dawn, or, more still, twilight languid and hushed, full of troubled perfumes:

"All things waited. The creatures of night were slow to come forth after that long bright summer's day, watching for the shades of the trees to sink deeper and deeper into the now chalk-white water; watching for the chalk-white face of the sky to be masked with velvet. The very black plumed trees themselves seemed to wait in suspense for the grape-bloom of night. All things

stared, wan in that hour of passing day—all things had eyes wistful and unblessed." [1]

In the matter of style, Galsworthy is not a purist. One finds a split infinitive spoiling a procession of beautiful words, and one occasionally loses patience over a squad of panting verbless sentences all beginning with "And." But he has a gift worth more than grammatical perfection, and that is a real sense of words. In their combinations, contrasts, and values, he marshals them with a poet's strategy. He loves those words which hold their meanings as soldiers their weapons; one sees him apportioning the place of honour in a sentence, ranking the subordinates. He is so absolute a craftsman that we see in his occasional lapses more of a deliberate disregard than ignorance, and certainly nothing of the slipshod.

His dialogue in the plays is masterly—not always so effective in the novels. He is at his best in the dialogue of the lower classes.

[1] *The Dark Flower.*

Sometimes, even in the plays, the conversation of his "gentlefolk" is apt to be stilted or to drag. On the other hand, the speech of the poor is always both spontaneous and significant. He has a wonderful power of economy in words. Throughout the plays, and in the most memorable dialogues in the novels, there is not a word too much, and yet there is nothing jerky or scrappy in the general impression.

Galsworthy is not a writer who owes much to outside influence. The first thought of "influence" in his case calls up ideas of French and Russian literature, but it would be surer to say that the resemblance is due to French and Russian qualities in the author's outlook and state of mind than to discipleship either unconscious or deliberate.

Certainly he has that infinite pity, almost reverence, for suffering which characterises Russian ideas. But the same pity and reverence are not expressed in the large, straightforward manner of Tolstoy or Dostoevsky, but with Gallic subtlety and

irony, recalling Flaubert. The writer with whom he has greatest affinity, to whom he may be said to be to a certain extent indebted, is Turguenev. In Turguenev we see the meeting ground of French and Russian art. There is the breadth, the tenderness, the mysticism of the Slav, mingling with the Frenchman's sense of humour and sense of form. Every writer who sets store on form must expect to be credited with French influences. English art is essentially naïve in technique. Galsworthy has few, if any, English affinities. But, on the other hand, he has anglicised the foreign influences. The Russian pity is shorn of its mysticism, the French irony of its gaiety. These two combinations are characteristic of the countries of their origin, and Galsworthy splits them, choosing the pity and the irony, leaving the mysticism and the gaiety—thus asserting both his personality and his race.

Galsworthy is a pessimist—not in the spirit of fire and revolt, but in the spirit of

an artist, sad, rather hopeless, and compassionate. Everywhere he sees ills—the trampling of the weak and poor, the conflict of instinct and civilisation, the pariahdom of the enlightened, the tyranny of unimaginativeness, hypocrisy and greed. He suggests no remedy—in fact, he insists continually on the difficulty of finding any remedy which shall be at once permanent and adequate—he just exposes the sore, and shows at the same time his burning pity for it, kindling our own.

But if he realises with painful vividness the evil and sorrow of life, and if a certain tired hopelessness and dislike of interference keep him from dreaming a brighter future, his eyes are not blind to beauty, to tenderness, and charm. Though his fine characters are almost always in revolt, though his beauty is always softened with pathos, his rare humour twisted with satire, we must acknowledge that he has a true sense of the splendour, the loveliness, and the fun of life. He sees them, so to speak, through a

mist of tears, but he does not miss them altogether. It is because he is so much more than a social reformer, because he is an artist and a sensitive, that he cannot glibly set down remedies for the world's wrongs. The genuine reformer is never content with pointing out the evils of a system, he has an improving plan. Galsworthy only shows us the shadows, with the lights that lie beside them, not those lights which shall scatter them at last. He is an artist, and the artist's vision is not of the future, but of to-day.

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY OF JOHN GALSWORTHY'S PRINCIPAL WRITINGS

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