

Quotes and Images From The Works of John Galsworthy

John Galsworthy - Edited and Arranged by David Widger

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Author: John Galsworthy
Edited and Arranged by David Widger

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QUOTES AND IMAGES FROM JOHN GALSWORTHY

THE WORKS OF JOHN GALSWORTHY

QUOTES

Attack his fleas--though he was supposed to have none

Dogs: with rudiments of altruism and a sense of God

Don't hurt others more than is absolutely necessary

Early morning does not mince words

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Era which had canonised hypocrisy
Forgiven me; but she could never forget
Health--He did not want it at such cost
Is anything more pathetic than the faith
of the young?
Law takes a low view of human nature
Let her come to me as she will, when she will,
not at all if she will not
Love has no age, no limit; and no death
Never to see yourself as others see you
Old men learn to forego their whims
People who don't live are wonderfully
preserved
Perching-place; never--never her cage!
Putting up a brave show of being natural
Socialists: they want our goods
Thank you for that good lie
To seem to be respectable was to be
You have to buy experience

COURAGE

COURAGE Is but a word, and yet, of words,
The only sentinel of permanence;
The ruddy watch-fire of cold winter days,
We steal its comfort, lift our weary swords,
And on. For faith--without it--has no sense;
And love to wind of doubt and tremor sways;
And life for ever quaking marsh must tread.

Laws give it not; before it prayer will blush;
Hope has it not; nor pride of being true;
'Tis the mysterious soul which never yields,
But hales us on and on to breast the rush
Of all the fortunes we shall happen through.
And when Death calls across his shadowy fields--
Dying, it answers: "Here! I am not dead!"

SOME FAVORITE PASSAGES

The simple truth, which underlies the whole story, that where sex attraction is utterly and definitely lacking in one partner to a union, no amount of pity, or reason, or duty, or what not, can overcome a repulsion implicit in Nature.

The tragedy of whose life is the very simple, uncontrollable tragedy of being unlovable, without quite a thick enough skin to be thoroughly unconscious of the fact. Not even Fleur loves Soames as he feels he ought to be loved. But in pitying Soames, readers incline, perhaps, to animus against Irene: After all, they think, he wasn't a bad fellow, it wasn't his fault; she ought to have forgiven him, and so on!

"Let the dead Past bury its dead" would be a better saying if the Past ever died. The persistence of the Past is one of those tragi-comic blessings which each new age denies, coming cocksure on to the stage to mouth its claim to a perfect novelty.

The figure of Irene, never, as the reader may possibly have observed, present, except through the senses of other characters, is a concretion of disturbing Beauty impinging on a possessive world.

She turned back into the drawing-room; but in a minute came out, and stood as if listening. Then she came stealing up the stairs, with a kitten in her arms. He could see her face bent over the little beast, which was purring against her neck. Why couldn't she look at him like that?

But though the impingement of Beauty and the claims of Freedom on a possessive world are the main prepossessions of the Forsyte Saga, it cannot be absolved from the charge of embalming the upper-middle class.

When a Forsyte was engaged, married, or born, the Forsytes were present; when a Forsyte died--but no Forsyte had as yet died; they did not die; death being contrary to their principles, they took precautions against it, the instinctive precautions of highly vitalized persons who resent encroachments on their property.

"It's my opinion," he said unexpectedly, "that it's just as well as it is."

The eldest by some years of all the Forsytes, she held a peculiar position amongst them. Opportunists and egotists one and all--though not, indeed, more so than their neighbours--they quailed before her incorruptible figure, and, when opportunities were too strong, what could they do but avoid her!

"I'm bad," he said, pouting--"been bad all the week; don't sleep at night. The doctor can't tell why. He's a clever fellow, or I shouldn't have him, but I get nothing out of him but bills."

There was little sentimentality about the Forsytes. In that great London, which they had conquered and become merged in, what time had they

to be sentimental?

A moment passed, and young Jolyon, turning on his heel, marched out at the door. He could hardly see; his smile quavered. Never in all the fifteen years since he had first found out that life was no simple business, had he found it so singularly complicated.

As in all self-respecting families, an emporium had been established where family secrets were bartered, and family stock priced. It was known on Forsyte 'Change that Irene regretted her marriage. Her regret was disapproved of. She ought to have known her own mind; no dependable woman made these mistakes.

Out of his other property, out of all the things he had collected, his silver, his pictures, his houses, his investments, he got a secret and intimate feeling; out of her he got none.

Of all those whom this strange rumour about Bosinney and Mrs. Soames reached, James was the most affected. He had long forgotten how he had hovered, lanky and pale, in side whiskers of chestnut hue, round Emily, in the days of his own courtship. He had long forgotten the small house in the purlieus of Mayfair, where he had spent the early days of his married life, or rather, he had long forgotten the early days, not the small house,--a Forsyte never forgot a house--he had afterwards sold it at a clear profit of four hundred pounds.

And those countless Forsytes, who, in the course of innumerable transactions concerned with property of all sorts (from wives to water rights)....

"I now move, 'That the report and accounts for the year 1886 be received and adopted.' You second that? Those in favour signify the same in the usual way. Contrary--no. Carried. The next business, gentlemen...." Soames smiled. Certainly Uncle Jolyon had a way with him!

Forces regardless of family or class or custom were beating down his guard; impending events over which he had no control threw their shadows on his head. The irritation of one accustomed to have his way was, roused against he knew not what.

We are, of course, all of us the slaves of property, and I admit that it's a question of degree, but what I call a 'Forsyte' is a man who is decidedly more than less a slave of property. He knows a good thing, he knows a safe thing, and his grip on property--it doesn't matter whether it be wives, houses, money, or reputation--is his hall-mark."--"Ah!" murmured Bosinney. "You should patent the word."--"I should like," said young Jolyon, "to lecture on it: 'Properties and quality of a Forsyte': This little animal, disturbed by the ridicule of his own sort, is unaffected in his motions by the laughter of strange creatures (you or I). Hereditarily disposed to myopia, he recognises only the persons of his own species, amongst which he passes an existence of competitive tranquillity."

"My people," replied young Jolyon, "are not very extreme, and they have their own private peculiarities, like every other family, but they possess in a remarkable degree those two qualities which are the real tests of a Forsyte--the power of never being able to give yourself up to anything soul and body, and the 'sense of property'."

An unhappy marriage! No ill-treatment--only that indefinable malaise, that terrible blight which killed all sweetness under Heaven; and so from day to day, from night to night, from week to week, from year to year, till death should end it.

The more I see of people the more I am convinced that they are never good or bad--merely comic, or pathetic. You probably don't agree with me!

"Don't touch me!" she cried. He caught her wrist; she wrenched it away. "And where may you have been?" he asked. "In heaven--out of this house!" With those words she fled upstairs.

It seemed to young Jolyon that he could hear her saying: "But, darling, it would ruin you!" For he himself had experienced to the full the gnawing fear at the bottom of each woman's heart that she is a drag on the man she loves.

She had come back like an animal wounded to death, not knowing where to turn, not knowing what she was doing.

"What do you mean by God?" he said; "there are two irreconcilable ideas of God. There's the Unknowable Creative Principle--one believes in That. And there's the Sum of altruism in man naturally one believes in That."

She was such a decided mortal; knew her own mind so terribly well; wanted things so inexorably until she got them--and then, indeed, often dropped them like a hot potato. Her mother had been like that, whence had come all those tears. Not that his incompatibility with his daughter was anything like what it had been with the first Mrs. Young Jolyon. One could be amused where a daughter was concerned; in a wife's case one could not be amused.

"Thank you for that good lie."

Love has no age, no limit; and no death.

Did Nature permit a Forsyte not to make a slave of what he adored? Could beauty be confided to him? Or should she not be just a visitor, coming when she would, possessed for moments which passed, to return only at her own choosing? 'We are a breed of spoilers!' thought Jolyon, 'close and greedy; the bloom of life is not safe with us. Let her come to me as she will, when she will, not at all if she will not. Let me be just her stand-by, her perching-place; never-never her cage!'

....causing the animal to wake and attack his fleas; for though he was supposed to have none, nothing could persuade him of the fact.

"It's always worth while before you do anything to consider whether it's going to hurt another person more than is absolutely necessary."

EXCERPTS FROM THE FORSYTE SAGA

A thing slipped between him and all previous knowledge
Afraid of being afraid
Afraid to show emotion before his son

Always wanted more than he could have
Aromatic spirituality
As she will, when she will, not at all if she will not
Attack his fleas; for though he was supposed to have none
Avoided expression of all unfashionable emotion
Back of beauty was harmony
Back of harmony was--union
Beauty is the devil, when you're sensitive to it!
Blessed capacity of living again in the young
But it tired him and he was glad to sit down
But the thistledown was still as death
By the cigars they smoke, and the composers they love
Change--for there never was any--always upset her very much
Charm; and the quieter it was, the more he liked it
Compassion was checked by the tone of that close voice
Conceived for that law a bitter distaste
Conscious beauty
Detached and brotherly attitude towards his own son
Did not mean to try and get out of it by vulgar explanation
Did not want to be told of an infirmity
Dislike of humbug
Dogs: with rudiments of altruism and a sense of God
Don't care whether we're right or wrong
Don't hurt others more than is absolutely necessary
Early morning does not mince words
Era which had canonised hypocrisy
Evening not conspicuous for open-heartedness
Everything in life he wanted--except a little more breath
Fatigued by the insensitive, he avoided fatiguing others
Felt nearly young
Forgiven me; but she could never forget
Forsytes always bat
Free will was the strength of any tie, and not its weakness
Get something out of everything you do
Greater expense can be incurred for less result than anywhere
Hard-mouthed women who laid down the law
He could not plead with her; even an old man has his dignity
He saw himself reflected: An old-looking chap
Health--He did not want it at such cost
Horses were very uncertain
I have come to an end; if you want me, here I am
I never stop anyone from doing anything
I shan't marry a good man, Auntie, they're so dull!
If not her lover in deed he was in desire
Importance of mundane matters became increasingly grave
Intolerable to be squeezed out slowly, without a say yourself
Ironical, which is fatal to expansiveness
Ironically mistrustful
Is anything more pathetic than the faith of the young?
It was their great distraction: To wait!
Know how not to grasp and destroy!
Law takes a low view of human nature
Let her come to me as she will, when she will
Little notion of how to butter her bread
Living on his capital
Longing to escape in generalities beset him
Love has no age, no limit; and no death
Man had money, he was free in law and fact
Ministered to his daughter's love of domination

More spiritual enjoyment of his coffee and cigar
Never give himself away
Never seemed to have occasion for verbal confidences
Never since had any real regard for conventional morality
Never to see yourself as others see you
No money! What fate could compare with that?
None of them quite knew what she meant
None of us--none of us can hold on for ever!
Not going to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds
Nothing left to do but enjoy beauty from afar off
Nothing overmastering in his feeling
Old men learn to forego their whims
One cannot see the havoc oneself is working
One could break away into irony--as indeed he often had to
One who has never known a struggle with desperation
One's never had enough
Only aversion lasts
Only Time was good for sorrow
Own feelings were not always what mattered most
People who don't live are wonderfully preserved
Perching-place; never-never her cage!
Philosophy of one on whom the world had turned its back
Pity, they said, was akin to love!
Preferred to concentrate on the ownership of themselves
Putting up a brave show of being natural
Quiet possession of his own property
Quivering which comes when a man has received a deadly insult
Self-consciousness is a handicap
Selfishness of age had not set its proper grip on him
Sense of justice stifled condemnation
Servants knew everything, and suspected the rest
Shall not expect this time more than I can get, or she can give
She used to expect me to say it more often than I felt it
Sideways look which had reduced many to silence in its time
Smiled because he could have cried
So difficult to be sorry for him
'So we go out!' he thought 'No more beauty! Nothing?'
Socialists: they want our goods
Sorrowful pleasure
Spirit of the future, with the charm of the unknown
Striking horror of the moral attitude
Sum of altruism in man
Surprised that he could have had so paltry an idea
Tenderness to the young
Thank you for that good lie
Thanks awfully
That dog was a good dog
The Queen--God bless her!
The soundless footsteps on the grass!
There was no one in any sort of authority to notice him
There went the past!
To seem to be respectable was to be
Too afraid of committing himself in any direction
Trees take little account of time
Unfeeling process of legal regulation
Unknowable Creative Principle
Unlikely to benefit its beneficiaries
Wanted things so inexorably until she got them
Waves of sweetness and regret flooded his soul

Weighing you to the ground with care and love
Went out as if afraid of being answered
What do you mean by God?
When you fleece you're sorry
When you're fleeced you're sick
Where Beauty was, nothing ever ran quite straight
Whole world was in conspiracy to limit freedom
With the wisdom of a long life old Jolyon did not speak
Witticism of which he was not the author was hardly to his taste
Wonderful finality about a meal
You have to buy experience

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