

THE PERSONAL AND INTELLECTUAL RELATIONS BETWEEN  
THOMAS CARLYLE AND BENJAMIN DISRAELI

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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared  
under my supervision by MARGARET POTTER  
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## PREFACE

For more than half a century Thomas Carlyle and Benjamin Disraeli shared the honors of leadership in the brilliant and stirring life of Victorian England. In the main, they pursued different interests, and their activities reflect different phases of the national life and energy. The career of one is to be traced chiefly in the history of British politics; that of the other, in the history of English letters. But in interesting and significant ways these pursuits and interests meet and overlap. The statesman was something more than an amateur in literature, and the man of letters concerned himself from first to last with all matters of public policy relating to the general social welfare. Carlyle's influence upon the moral and social conscience of his time was profound and far-reaching. Did the brilliant and spectacular statesman come within the sphere of this influence, and if so, with what result? For many years these two eminent men were inhabitants of the same city; they moved in much the same circles; they had many friends in common; the name of one was frequently upon the lips of the other, usually in criticism and censure. They seem rarely to have met face to face, though at least once the course of events brought them into highly interesting

relations with each other. The connected story of these personal relations has not been told. The exact nature and extent of their intellectual contacts have not been clearly defined. It is for the purpose of bringing together from all available sources the information on these points that the present study is undertaken.

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to Dr. L. M. Ellison for the suggestion of the subject and for his assistance and cooperation throughout the study.

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## CHAPTER I

### CONTRASTED SOCIAL ORIGINS OF CARLYLE AND DISRAELI

Before considering the remoteness of the personal relations between Carlyle and Disraeli, the similarity in their thought, and the influence of the prophet upon the policies of the Young England leader, it will be necessary to study the contrast in their origins and to review the major facts of their lives, for a broad gulf lay between the racial, economic, and religious heritage of the stern Scotch Calvinist and that of the Hebrew dandiacal dreamer. Although one became the greatest thinker of mid-Victorian England and the other its greatest statesman, they began at opposite points of the economic scale.

Thomas Carlyle<sup>1</sup> was the first of the nine children born to James Carlyle, small farmer and master mason of Ecclefechan, Scotland, and his second wife, Margaret Aitken. The family belonged to the lower middle-class and for generations had lived at the level of utmost economy. Hard manual labor was necessary to provide even the oatmeal, potatoes, and eggs which composed their standard diet. James Carlyle had no time to engage in frivolity with his children; of necessity he was stern and exacting. Each child had to understand that he

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<sup>1</sup>December 4, 1795-February 4, 1881.

must contribute his efforts to the support of the family.

Although the Carlyles were seceders from the kirk, strict independent Covenanters, they hoped that their son would become a minister in the Church of Scotland, the highest and the most remunerative profession which they had had the opportunity to observe. Margaret zealously watched over the spiritual and mental development of her children, even to the extent of learning to write in order to continue her vigilance after they left home. With the same purpose in mind, she read every word Thomas Carlyle wrote during her lifetime. The family ties were always extremely close, each child sharing with the others whatever good fortune he received; likewise, whatever disappointments came were felt by all.

Carlyle entered the Annan Grammar School at ten years of age, and four years later walked to Edinburgh to attend the University as a ministerial student. Like the majority of his fellow classmates, he lived in humble lodgings and cooked his own meals, of food his mother sent him by the weekly carrier. Even so, the years spent there represented a distinct sacrifice on the part of his family. The other children, except John whom Thomas educated, received only the training offered by the Annan Grammar School. Although the professors at Edinburgh were some of the greatest minds in Europe--John Leslie, the mathematician; John Playfair, the scientist; and others equally eminent--the large classes of one hundred and fifty to two hundred students prevented any close personal

contact between teacher and pupil, and the meager library facilities hindered independent study.

After leaving the University in 1814, Carlyle was fated to undergo a long period of both financial and religious struggle. During the two years of his teaching at Annan, he continued to prepare for the ministry, but by 1816 he had become skeptical of orthodox Christianity. In this same year he became a schoolmaster at Kirkcaldy, where he formed a friendship with the fanatically religious Edward Irving. Persuaded by Irving to try free-lance writing and tutoring, he lived in Edinburgh and at the family home, Mainhill, intermittently from 1818 until 1822. His earnings in this period were not sufficient to sustain him even in the most frugal manner had not his mother continued to send him staple foods. The financial strain was relieved temporarily by Irving, who secured for Carlyle in 1822 a position for the next two years as tutor to Charles and Arthur Buller, well-to-do lads preparing to enter Edinburgh University.

The years in the Buller household benefited Carlyle both materially and spiritually. His annual income of two hundred pounds enabled him to send John to medical school, to lease a farm for Alick, and to provide occasional little luxuries for his father and mother. His leisure time there was spent translating Legendre's Geometry and Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, and in writing a Life of Schiller. His contact with German literature did more than anything else to revive his faith "in a living God of Nature, inspiring all human effort,

revealed by all reality and speaking in the hearts of men and women";<sup>1</sup> however, he never again considered the ministry as a profession nor believed in the historical fabric of Christianity. The turning point of his spiritual struggle is recorded in "The Everlasting Yea" of Sartor Resartus. As the ministerial profession was no longer possible and tutoring intolerably dull, he decided that, for him, the career of a writer was the only available vocation.

Although his spiritual conflict was over, the economic struggle lasted another decade. In 1826 Carlyle married Jane Baillie Welsh and settled at Comely Bank, Edinburgh, but finding city life too costly for their meager income, they moved after a few months to Jane's farm, Craigenputtock, in southern Scotland, where expenses could be reduced to a minimum. During the six years there, Carlyle wrote Sartor Resartus, which no publisher would accept in book form, and a number of articles for the Edinburgh Encyclopedia and the Edinburgh Review. His writings had improved in quality but he was losing touch with the publishing world. Besides, Jane's health was being impaired by the poverty and drudgery of Craigenputtock life and the severe climate of the moors. Another move was expedient. After trying Edinburgh again with little success, they settled in 1834 at Number Five, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, in order that Carlyle might do research in the

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<sup>1</sup>"Thomas Carlyle," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed., IV, 883.

British Museum for his History of the French Revolution. Its successful publication in 1837 marked the turning point in his career. Although Jane continued to manage her household economically, the financial strain of a dozen years had lifted.

The decade of the forties was the most important period of Carlyle's life, if judged by its contribution to the welfare of the English nation. At the time of the first Chartist agitation, Carlyle became deeply concerned over the condition of the working people. Being a peasant himself, he was able to sense the feeling of injustice and discontent smoldering among the lower classes. In 1839, he enumerated the grievances of the Chartists and put forward his conception of the needed reforms in a pamphlet, Chartism, followed in 1843 by Past and Present, another discussion of England's social disintegration. In the Life and Letters of Cromwell published in 1845, Carlyle reviewed the main features of the Puritan Commonwealth, which he considered an ideal government. His Latter-Day Pamphlets, written in 1850, prophesied internal revolution and the subsequent decline of England's greatness if the aristocracy continued to ignore the state of the poor. The fate he predicted was averted, chiefly, because one Jewish statesman heeded his warning and convinced Parliament that the need for social legislation was urgent.

Carlyle, believing that his discussions of the existing condition of England had fallen on deaf ears, turned his attention in 1851 to writings of the past. His monumental

Life of Frederick the Great occupied his time for fifteen years and necessitated two trips to Germany. Saddened by Jane's death in 1866, the elderly Scotchman spent the rest of his life collecting her letters, writing Reminiscences and reading. He died in 1881, and was buried in Ecclefechan, though Gladstone offered Westminster Abbey. He had spent his life as a "prophet denouncing a backsliding world."<sup>1</sup>

Because Jane Welsh Carlyle contributed to the success of her husband, and was besides, a decidedly interesting character, she deserves a brief comment. Mrs. Carlyle, though accustomed in girlhood to material comfort, was as austere in character and economical in expenditure as her husband. The possessor of an unusually quick mind, she wished to achieve distinction in the literary world. Before her marriage she had hoped that life with the brilliant Scotsman would provide the necessary mental stimulus. However, the years, devoted to domestic details, such as baking Thomas's favorite bread or negotiating with the neighbor for the execution of his crowing rooster, in order that her husband's material comfort might be complete, left her no time to work toward the realization of this ambition. Carlyle loved her devotedly, but it never occurred to him that such a self-sufficient person as Jane could be lonely or even ill. Her conversation was sprightly, though tinged with sarcasm; her home, a mecca for the intellectuals; her housekeeping and taste in furniture and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 884.

clothing were impeccable. All in all, she was a satisfactory wife for a man of genius.

Benjamin Disraeli's<sup>1</sup> family contrasted sharply with the family of Carlyle. Disraeli's paternal grandfather had come to England from Ferrara, Italy, in 1748, and before his death in 1817 had acquired a place on the Stock Exchange and a fortune of thirty-five thousand pounds. The grandmother, who possessed the noble blood of the Spanish house of Ibn Zaprut and the Portuguese Jewish Villareals, was a handsome, intelligent woman, silently rebellious against the stigma of her Jewish name. Their only son, Isaac, became a man of letters, much to the bewilderment of the commercial minds of the family.

In turn the quiet, scholarly Isaac, who spent his days in the British Museum taking notes on bits of paper and his nights in his study writing them into manuscript, found his son, Benjamin, equally incomprehensible. He could not sympathize with the boy's boundless ambition and romantic ideas. Benjamin's mother also found her son bewildering, and aside from seeing to his material welfare, she, too, left him to develop according to his own inclinations.

Although Isaac did not understand his son, unintentionally he made possible Benjamin's most improbable dream. In 1813 the Portuguese synagogue of Bevis Marks chose Isaac for Warden of the Congregation. He objected that such office

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<sup>1</sup>December 21, 1804-April 19, 1881.

was incompatible with his retiring nature; upon being fined for refusal to serve he withdrew his membership, and at the insistence of his mother, allowed his children to be baptized at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. Thus, with no Jewish affiliation, Benjamin was eligible at maturity to enter public life and to become at length, prime minister.

The Disraelis were fond of one another, but there was no close spiritual or religious harmony among them, such as bound the Carlyles, except between Benjamin and his sister, Sarah. The elder Disraelis, always indifferent toward the religion of their race, having renounced it, accepted no other, but professed tolerance of all doctrines. However, Benjamin and Sarah possessed temperaments that responded to the mystical and traditional elements of the Jewish religion. Although Disraeli remained an Episcopalian throughout his life, he expressed upon every occasion, even in Parliament, his toleration toward the religion of the Jews.

There was a great economic difference, too, between the Carlyles and the Disraelis. The large London house of Disraeli's childhood was far superior to the three room cottage of the Carlyles at Ecclefechan. As Isaac Disraeli's inheritance was sufficient to provide a comfortable, even luxurious, existence for his family, he could spend as much time as he pleased in writing each book. Only his race and his retiring nature kept the Disraelis from fashionable society. On the other hand, James Carlyle by steady industry could furnish his children only the bare necessities of life and the social

rank of the lower middle class.

Although the cause was racial rather than economic, as in Carlyle's case, Benjamin Disraeli's school days were also unsatisfactory. At Mr. Potticany's school at Blackheath there was only one other Jewish boy and at the Reverend Eli Cogan's there were no others. When Benjamin was reported for a minor infringement of the Reverend Cogan's rules, pupils and teacher alike denounced him as a foreigner and a Jew. Mr. Isaac Disraeli took his son home and, for fear of further unpleasant occurrences, refrained from sending him to one of the universities. Although he missed the formal training which Carlyle received, Disraeli had two distinct advantages, access to his father's library and, a few years later, foreign travel.

Like Carlyle, Disraeli was ten years deciding upon a permanent occupation, wavering between a life of action and a career as a novelist. After several years in a solicitor's office in the Old Jewry, and a trip to the courts of Germany with his distinguished father, Benjamin ventured into business. He interested Murray, the publisher of the Quarterly, in printing a Tory daily to be known as the Representative and to be financed by Powles, Murray and himself, and edited by Lockhart. Disraeli was beginning to feel that the success of the venture was assured, when a drop in South American mining stocks, in which both he and Powles had speculated, left them unable to put up their share of the capital. John Wilson Croker, one of the writers for Murray, enraged at not

having been consulted as to the newspaper, delivered scathing remarks against Disraeli. After a few gloomy weeks idling at home, Benjamin began a novel, Vivian Grey. A neighbor, Mrs. Austen, persuaded Colburn to publish it without disclosing the author's name. By tremendous puffing, he led people to believe that it was the work of an established writer and that the characters represented prominent people. Upon discovering the identity of the author and recognizing themselves as the originals of the caricatures, Murray and Croker denounced Disraeli bitterly. While the furor was dying down, the humiliated young man toured Italy with the Austens and wrote The Voyage of Captain Popanilla, a satire on utilitarianism.

Still he was undecided about his vocation, and for a long time he had also been mystified by the historical claims of Christianity. In 1830, upon receiving five hundred pounds for The Young Duke, a novel of society, about which he knew nothing, he left England with William Meredith for a two-years' trip through Spain, Greece, Turkey, and Palestine. In Jerusalem his spirit was exalted. He was proud of his race and had longed to visit the scene of its history and tradition. He believed he had some sort of mystic kinship with the East, for he had always felt "half alien in the land of his birth."<sup>1</sup> The tour was productive of two books, Alroy and Contarini Fleming, in which he expressed his decision to act what he

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<sup>1</sup>"Beaconsfield, Benjamin Disraeli," Encyclopaedia Britannica, III, 247.

wrote. There was no further hesitation as to the exact course to be pursued; he determined to enter Parliament.

The year The French Revolution was published, Disraeli, after four unsuccessful attempts to enter the House of Commons as an independent, aligned himself with the Tories and became a member in the first parliament of Queen Victoria's reign. His maiden speech which was greeted by the O'Connell faction with guffaws of derisive laughter, closed with these words: "Though I sit down now, the time will come, when you will hear me."<sup>1</sup> Two years later he married Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, the widow of his colleague from Maidstone. Her home on Park Lane and her annual income of four thousand pounds gave stability to Disraeli's position. By 1841 not only the opposition, but also the Free Trade Tories, recognized a formidable power in this Jewish Protectionist supported by his Young England Party. After weary, discouraging years he was at last attaining distinction.

However, more than three decades were yet to elapse before he acquired the power necessary to control the empire and its foreign policy. In the meantime he occupied himself with home affairs and the rejuvenation of the Tory party. During the eighteen forties, Disraeli wrote in rapid succession a political trilogy, Coningsby (1844), Sybil (1845), and

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<sup>1</sup>Andre Maurois, Disraeli: A Picture of the Victorian Age, trans. Hamish Miles (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1928), p. 126.

Tancred (1847), designed to inform the upper classes of their social responsibility for the injustices suffered by the poor.

In 1852 Disraeli received his first cabinet post as Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Derby's government. After the passage of the Reform Bill of 1867, he became prime minister but his government was speedily turned out. Seven years later, at the age of seventy, he was made premier a second time and was successful in forming an especially strong cabinet. During this administration he maneuvered measures of far reaching importance in both home and colonial affairs. In recognition of his services, Queen Victoria made him Earl of Beaconsfield and Viscount Hughenden of Hughenden. Acute agricultural depression and simultaneous South African uprisings caused the defeat of the Conservatives in 1880 and Disraeli's subsequent resignation. Early in life Disraeli had said, "I wish to act what I write."<sup>1</sup> He had finally succeeded in doing almost everything attributed to his heroes and had fulfilled the ambition to become prime minister expressed forty years before, to the astonishment of Lord Melbourne. His death occurred at Hughenden Manor in April, 1881, a few weeks after Carlyle had died at Cheyne Row.

Disraeli, as well as Carlyle, had been fortunate in having a most satisfactory wife, although she was twelve years his senior and had no intellectual aspirations. On first acquaintance he had described her as "a pretty, little woman, a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

flirt and a rattle, gifted with a volubility I should think unequalled."<sup>1</sup> Later, when George Smythe made bold to ask Disraeli whether Mrs. Disraeli's conversation did not annoy him just a little, he answered, "Oh no! I'm never put out by that." "Well, Diz, you must be a man of most extraordinary qualities," continued the irrepressible Smythe. But Disraeli objected, "Not at all. I only possess one quality in which most men are deficient: gratitude."<sup>2</sup>

He expressed his appreciation of Mary Anne by paying her the courtliest attention. She made home comfortable and pleasant, and in spite of her atrocious taste in furniture and dress, and her love of over-ornamentation, Disraeli was satisfied: ostentation was a characteristic he understood. Above all, she had great faith in him and helped him to succeed. Her acceptance in high circles was rather slow, but a person of such boundless good nature, entertaining though reprehensible conversation, and withal so absolutely devoid of pretention, could not be rejected forever. She became known by the wives of the great as "Mary Anne."

If opposition makes for attraction, Carlyle and Disraeli should have been most congenial, but such was not the case. In old age the Scottish writer and the Hebrew statesman

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

were still as far apart in spiritual harmony as the Ecclefechan and London homes of their childhood had been in religion and material wealth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The standard biography of Carlyle is that by James Anthony Froude, in four volumes. The standard "life" of Disraeli is that by W. F. Monypenny and G. E. Buckle.

## CHAPTER II

### THE CALVINIST VERSUS THE JEW: THE LIFE-LONG HOSTILITY OF CARLYLE TOWARD DISRAELI

The blasts of invective with which Carlyle habitually embellished the name of Disraeli on the slightest provocation made the personal relations between the Jewish statesman and the Scottish man of letters unnecessarily remote, as compared with the very definite and close affinity of their thought. Had Disraeli's belated acknowledgement of indebtedness to the Scottish prophet been expressed at intervals throughout his career, Carlyle's reserve and unwarranted prejudice against the Jews might have given way to the genuine kindness of nature, so often shown to those who successfully penetrated his mask of ferocity. But in the path of congeniality lay racial, temperamental, and intellectual antipathies of such depth and scope as to be insurmountable. Late in life Disraeli attempted to ignore these innate differences and to establish some degree of friendliness; however, Carlyle's prejudice had become too deep-rooted to be destroyed. After a few apologetic remarks, the Scotchman continued to denounce Disraeli's personal characteristics, his writings, his public policy and, most unjust of all, his race.

Carlyle condemned the Jews for their money-making faculty and their rejection of Christ. The fact that they

were capable of amassing great fortunes without adding anything to the wealth of mankind, "being mere dealers in money, gold, jewels or else old clothes, material and spiritual,"<sup>1</sup> especially vexed Carlyle. Had they been inventors, craftsmen, laborers, anything but money-changers, he could have shown them more justice. He had trouble reconciling his view of the Jews with his Calvinistic belief that each individual was put on earth to do a certain constructive piece of work. Surely the Lord did not consider money-changing a worth while endeavor; he simply could not understand the ways of the Almighty. Perhaps as a mere mortal he was expected to accept the world as he found it. With this idea in mind he reluctantly admitted:

It was God, I suppose, that made the Jewish people and gave them their hooknoses, obstinate characters, and all the other gifts, faculties, tendencies and equipments they were launched upon the world with.<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle made a similar denunciation in a conversation with Gavan Duffy in 1852. Duffy tried to defend the Jews, saying that it was wicked to persecute them for sins committed generations before, and that he for one, rejoiced to see the champion of their race, Disraeli, coming to power as

<sup>1</sup>James Anthony Froude, Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884), II, 449.

<sup>2</sup>From an unfinished article, "Spiritual Optics," by Thomas Carlyle, quoted by James Anthony Froude, Thomas Carlyle (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1882), II, II.

Chancellor of the Exchequer. Carlyle's prejudice could not be broken down so easily. Stubborn to the end, he retorted:

They are paying for sins of their own, as well as their ancestors. They are an impotent race who have never distinguished themselves in their entire history by an estimable quality. Some of them clamber to what they call prosperity, but, arrayed in the showiest garniture, there is always an odour of old clo' about them. They make great quantities of money up and down, and glorify the speculator who makes most as the most venerable of mortals. When of old any man appeared among them who had something to tell worth their attention, one knows how such a one was received by the Israelites, and their vices are intractable.<sup>1</sup>

Although Carlyle did not believe that Christ was divine, he thought that the Hebrews had sinned by their refusal to accept the ethical truths which Christ taught. A great teacher was the elite of mankind and altogether too rare a being to be allowed to pass through life unheeded. In his opinion the Jews had rejected the essence of religion and had retained its outward forms or "old clothes," as he termed them.

Besides the religious grounds for Carlyle's animosity toward Disraeli, there was also a temperamental difference which contributed to his hostile attitude. Carlyle, always so "dreadfully in earnest," could not have found Disraeli's oriental passion for color, splendor, and extravagance indicative of anything but frivolity and affectation. To appear

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<sup>1</sup>C. Gavan Duffy, Conversations with Carlyle, quoted by David Alec Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1927), pp. 451-452.

in public in a canary-colored waistcoat, green velvet trousers, ruffled, lacy shirts, buckle-adorned shoes and with every curl perfectly lacquered, as Disraeli did, was to Carlyle positive proof that the occasion demanded a cap and bells. Besides, such style plainly showed an effeminacy which might be pardonable as a frailty of woman but was inexcusable in man, whose mind was intended to be occupied with more serious matters than the current fads. If Disraeli's purpose was to attract attention, regardless of the kind, such action was still more despicable; poor judgment in matters of propriety was bad enough, but conscious folly was misuse of the God-given intellect. Carlyle himself had his suits tailored at Dumfries until the end of his life; dark, sober clothes they were, too, durable and inconspicuous, exactly alike year in and year out, regardless of both Prince Albert and the dandies. To Carlyle, clothes were only part of the necessary trappings of civilization. But to Disraeli, in whom the artistic sense was always very strong, attire was a matter of the utmost importance. In his novels he became so absorbed at times in recording the sensuality and voluptuous color of Moorish and Christian art that he almost forgot the plot. In his dress this love of beauty in extravagant proportions found expression in bright velvets, satins, and embroidery.

Disraeli was equally extravagant in matters of finance. He could not learn, like Carlyle, even the economy of doing without. His youthful speculation in South American mining stock with its subsequent debt of seven thousand pounds did

not deter him from borrowing five times that sum a few years later in order to own a country estate. The most unprecedented and yet the wisest of all his borrowings was the four million pounds with which he purchased, from the Khedive of Egypt, 175,000 shares in the Suez Canal for Her Majesty the Queen. This tremendous "deal" was made suddenly, secretly, and without consulting Parliament. As security he offered Rothschild "the British Government."<sup>1</sup> No enterprise was of sufficient magnitude to halt his daring or surprise the mask-like expression from his face. Carlyle's cautious use of money and his horror of debt conflicted with the spendthrift tendencies of Disraeli. Carlyle always lived within his income though it meant dreary years at lonely Craigenputtock as against an enjoyable life in Edinburgh, had he been willing to accept the annuity proffered by his friend, Lord Jeffrey.

In addition to the quality of extravagance, there was a decided romantic element in Disraeli's temperament which clashed with Carlyle's serious nature. Disraeli reveled in unusual adventures and in assuming imaginary personalities. On his tour through southern Europe and Asia Minor with William Meredith he did the unexpected and unconventional, from calling without invitation upon the governor of Gibraltar and sitting on the throne in the Alhambra, to entering the Mosque of Omar, from which he was instantaneously evicted by an excited mob of fanatical Mohammedans. In each place he did

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<sup>1</sup>Maurois, op. cit., p. 296.

as Rome did, and a little more than Rome did. In Spain he wore an Andulasian jacket and a sash of many colors; in Greece he decked himself out with a pirate's red shirt and a whole battery of weapons; in Venice, he hired Byron's gondolier; and in Turkey, he acquired a turban and a pipe six feet long. Even in old age, Disraeli was young in spirit. He sent flowery notes to the Queen; as Carlyle said, he laid flattery on with a trowel,<sup>1</sup> and to Lady Bradford, then about fifty-five years old he wrote the most ardent love letters. Certainly he was not in love--but life must never become prosaic. To Carlyle it had never been anything else. He believed that the earthly existence was not meant to furnish excitement or even happiness, but work. One had a duty to perform, the well-doing of which would occupy one's time and prevent boredom.

Over and above the racial and temperamental antagonism between Carlyle and Disraeli there existed an intellectual incompatibility. It is evident from the different treatments they gave, in their writings, to the same subject-matter. In Carlyle's hands the Chartist agitation became a dire sermon in pamphlet form, Chartism, but from Disraeli's creative intellect it emerged as the novel, Sybil, very readable even to a generation that never heard of the Chartist Petition. Had Carlyle possessed a talent for the writing of fiction he would not have used it to discuss the condition of the poor for fear

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<sup>1</sup>David Alec Wilson, Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1929), p. 300.

that his readers might become so engrossed in the story as to miss the social import.

Another intellectual difference was Disraeli's appreciation of what Carlyle called "the fatal oratorical faculty." Disraeli early recognized speech as an art, and declared that he would master both the style suitable to the House of Commons and that which was appropriate in the House of Lords. At times the astute statesman consciously used an intricate maze of rhetoric to mystify the gentlemen of the opposition, but again he explained his propositions in the clearest, most concise diction. Carlyle was most inconsistent in his objections to oratory. Although as a young man he had been extremely silent, living quite withdrawn from society, he delivered four series of public lectures in the eighteen and thirties and in old age dominated every conversation by launching forth into didactic monologues. Besides, he wrote his objections to oratory "in forty volumes of eloquent English Speech,"<sup>1</sup> more suited to oral delivery than to the printed page.

Considering their opposite social origins and contrary spiritual, emotional, and mental qualities, it is not surprising that Carlyle found much to criticize in Disraeli. With great volubility the Calvinist denounced the Jew, his writings, and his political measures. His first condemnation of the

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<sup>1</sup>Emery Edward Neff, Carlyle and Mill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1926), p. 231.

statesman for his Jewish heritage had its origin in 1846, when Sir Robert Peel, who had been a Protectionist Tory, right-about-faced, advocating Free Trade and the Repeal of the Corn Laws. Peel believed this action necessary to avert famine among the Irish and English working classes, but Disraeli thought it ruinous to the Tory agricultural interests and, backed by the Young Englanders, branded Peel a traitor. To Carlyle, Peel's stand represented heroic sacrifice of himself and his party for the welfare of the nation. In 1850, in the fourth of the Latter-Day Pamphlets, Carlyle, referring to the Repeal of the Corn Laws, said of Peel,

The largest veracity ever done in Parliament in our time was this man's doing and the "traitor Peel" can very well afford to let innumerable Ducal costermongers, Parliamentary adventurers, and lineal representatives of the Impenitent Thief say all their say about him and do all their do.<sup>1</sup>

Of course "the lineal representative of the Impenitent Thief" was Disraeli. The obnoxious epithet had first been applied to him by Daniel O'Connell, whom Disraeli had attacked after joining the Tories, although earlier he had requested and received from him an endorsement as a Liberal candidate. O'Connell, in replying to Disraeli's attack, had declared: "He possesses just the qualities of the impenitent thief who died on the cross, whose name I verily believe must have been Disraeli."<sup>2</sup> Even Carlyle, the "bonnie curser,"<sup>3</sup> could think

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<sup>1</sup>Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Maurois, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>3</sup>Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith, p. 261.

of no stronger expression of opprobrium.

In discussing Disraeli's budget with Gavan Duffy, Carlyle again delivered a tirade against the Conservative leader for characteristics generally attributed to his race. Duffy remarked that he felt a certain admiration for Disraeli and added that the chancellor must have great strength of character to fight for a party whose members showed almost as much distrust of his sincerity as the opposition. But Carlyle was certain that the only strength Disraeli possessed was the despicable oratorical faculty. "It is idle," said Duffy, "to complain that he struck daft blows at his opponents; that is his vocation!"<sup>1</sup>

Carlyle exclaimed,

The case is not a perplexing one at all, it seems to me. A cunning Jew gets a parcel of people to believe in him, though no man of the smallest penetration can have any doubt that he is an imposter, with no sort of purpose in all he is doing but to serve his own interests. He is a man from whom no good need be expected, a typical Jew, ostentatious, intrinsically servile, but stiffnecked in his designs.<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle made no attempt to discover through personal acquaintance whether Disraeli actually possessed the traits with which he credited the Hebrew race. Instead he continued his unfair denunciations. In a letter of 1854 to Lady Ashburton he deplored the fact that the Jew had become the

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<sup>1</sup>Duffy, Conversations with Carlyle, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith, p. 451.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 451-452.

leader of the House of Commons.

To be governed by imbecile Lords is a fate long since appointed us by the wisdom of our Ancestors and the immortal Gods; imbecile Lords fall on us from the sky like rain and influenza; but here we have been raging and reforming all the World, battling and screaming since 1789 for some new era; and the new era with its ballot boxes brings us--a pinchbeck Hebrew, almost professedly a son of Belial (skilled to make the worst appear better reason and to vend new-dyed old clothes and varnished falsities in a profitable manner.)<sup>1</sup>

Besides censuring Disraeli for his racial characteristics, Carlyle criticized him for his adventurous temperament, especially in matters of finance. When Disraeli became Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1852, Carlyle lamented in conversation with T. S. Baines that England was "now a weltering chaos of parties, a reeking cauldron of anarchical political strife, in which all the lowest elements, including a mouthing verbalist and a juggling adventurer like Disraeli, had come to the top."<sup>2</sup> Juggling was to Carlyle, a stronger term than its dictionary definition implied. Earlier, when his publisher, Davis Masson, flatly refused to print the expression "swindling politicians,"<sup>3</sup> Carlyle had grudgingly struck out the offending adjective and substituted "juggling." Ever after, when a similar phrase was needed he employed the milder word.

<sup>1</sup>Wilson, Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith, p. 419.

<sup>3</sup>David Alec Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1934), p. 140.

Again Carlyle characterized his enemy as an adventurer. The occasion was the publication of a "scourging article"<sup>1</sup> on Disraeli by Abraham Hayward, published in the Edinburgh Review. Shortly before, upon the death of the Duke of Wellington Disraeli had delivered a most touching and eloquent eulogy, but Hayward, having discovered that it was plagiarized, was exciting the reading public to uproarious laughter at Disraeli's expense. The fact that the original eulogy had been written by Thiers on the death of a rival was used with diabolical cleverness in comparing Disraeli's relation to Wellington. As Hayward had Jewish blood himself, Carlyle considered the article just another case of a dog yapping at a dog, but in a letter to his brother John, he said: "I agree with Hayward, however. There is hardly any uglier phenomenon in these times than the political history of that adventurer."<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle's intellectual antipathy toward Disraeli's oratorical ability incited him to make many harsh comments. In the fifth Latter-Day Pamphlet, "The Stump Orator," published in May, 1850, Carlyle strongly suggested that in his opinion a stump orator and Disraeli were one and the same thing. In this essay he astonished the public by condemning, not the soap-box radicals, but the eloquent members of Parliament, who though they knew how to speak, were incapable of action. As Disraeli

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<sup>1</sup>Wilson, Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

had already become the nation's greatest speaker, he was undoubtedly the major target of Carlyle's derision. Two years later Disraeli's bad budget, which he outlined as Chancellor of the Exchequer, called forth more definite hostility. At this time Carlyle wrote to Neuberg: "All men laugh hitherto at the new ministry with Disraeli for Chancellor King of the Money-bags; but to me it gives no laughter, only gloomy thoughts."<sup>1</sup> It was Carlyle's pessimistic view that as surely as the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast betokened the downfall of Babylon, the meteoric rise of this "Jewish stump orator"<sup>2</sup> forecast the ruin of the English nation.

On one point or another Carlyle managed to the end of his life to ridicule Disraeli. One day late in the eighteen seventies, upon seeing Disraeli from an omnibus, Carlyle turned to A. B. Mitford and exclaimed: "There's that Disraeli or Beaconsfield, or whatever he chooses to call himself. He thinks he's the wisest man on earth, and he's just about the foolishest thing that crawls."<sup>3</sup>

Carlyle thought no better of Disraeli's works than of his personality. His particular aversion was Tancred: or The New Crusade. In 1847 he wrote Robert Browning that this mystical romance, "a kind of transcendent spiritual Houndsditch,

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<sup>1</sup>Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith, p. 402.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>A. B. J. Mitford, Memories of Lord Redesdale, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age, pp. 451-452.

marks an epoch in the history of this poor country,"<sup>1</sup> but further remarked that it was readable to the end of the first volume. The fourth book did not please him at all; he told Espinasse that "the last chapter of Tancred convinced him that its author was a thorough quack."<sup>2</sup> He had no patience with Disraeli's desire to penetrate "the Asian mystery," whatever that might be. Carlyle thought the greatest reformation needed in religion was a stripping away of the Hebrew historical beliefs, or "old Clothes." Quite often after the publication of Tancred, he spoke of Disraeli as "Ou 'Clo'"<sup>3</sup> and asked "how long John Bull would allow this absurd monkey to dance on his chest."<sup>4</sup>

Far more than his personality and his literary works Disraeli's public policies antagonized Carlyle. For a time it was the do-nothing attitude which disgusted him with both Disraeli and his opponents. In 1859, when a change in ministry was pending over the foreign policy with the French, Carlyle wrote to Neuberg, "Dizzy versus Palmy is to be settled to-night, they say; I care not a whit how it goes."<sup>5</sup> Few

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Carlyle (ed.), Letters of Thomas Carlyle (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1923), p. 284.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Espinasse, Literary Recollections, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith, p. 401.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Maurois, op. cit., p. 201.

<sup>5</sup>Wilson, Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten, p. 344.

other people in the excitement of the times realized what Carlyle saw clearly: that there was only a slight shade of difference between the liberal Conservatives led by Disraeli and the conservative Liberals headed by Palmerston. In 1861 he was still reproaching Tories and Whigs alike, for their neglect of public welfare. He told Froude that there were countless important problems--distribution of population over the empire, legislation for the protection of labor, and slum clearance--still waiting to be solved, yet nothing was being done.<sup>1</sup>

By the close of 1867, Disraeli had done too much to please Carlyle. In fact, he was enraged by the second Reform Bill which he styled the betrayal of the duties of Government under the evil guidance of Disraeli. By extending the suffrage to all householders, the Conservative leaders hoped to unite the hereditary aristocracy and the working classes against the wealthy Whig oligarchy, which had persistently blocked all efforts at remedial social legislation. Carlyle did not understand Disraeli's motive, and disapproved of the method. His feelings found vent in "Shooting Niagara: and After?" which was published in Macmillan's Magazine in August, 1867, while the bill was being considered in the House of Lords. In the words of Carlyle, "He they call Dizzy, . . . this clever conscious juggler," by "grasping at votes, even

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 423.

votes of the rabble"<sup>1</sup> was selling England to "blockheadism." Disraeli was further denounced as

. . . . a superlative Hebrew conjurer spell-binding all the great Lords, great Parties, great Interests of England to his hand in this manner, and leading them by the nose like helpless mesmerized, somnabulant cattle to such issue! Did the world ever see a fleBILE ludibriUM of such magnitude before? Lath-sword and the Scissors of Destiny, Pickleherring and the Three Parcae alike busy in it. This, too, I suppose, we had deserved; the end of our poor old England (such an England as we had at last made of it) to be not fearful tragedy, but an ignominious farce as well!<sup>2</sup>

As the bill passed in spite of his protest, Carlyle was disconsolate. He was convinced that anarchy was inevitable. He could not see that England would weather yet a third Reform Bill and, finally, woman suffrage.

In the autumn of 1876 he found the prime minister's policies sufficient cause for ever more direct public opposition; this time Carlyle wrote letters to the leading newspapers. For several months Russia had been maneuvering for a portion of Turkey as an outlet to the Mediterranean, and Disraeli, determined to protect England's newly acquired interest in the Suez Canal, was now threatening war if the Russians marched on Constantinople. The situation indicated to Carlyle that England was on the verge of repeating the errors of the Crimean War. To the editor of The Times he

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Carlyle, "Shooting Niagara and After?" Critical and Miscellaneous Essays (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1904), V, 10-11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

termed Disraeli, "a cursed old Jew, not worth his weight in cold bacon,"<sup>1</sup> and followed this denunciation with a letter for publication in which he extolled the virtues of the Russians, "a good, and even noble element in Europe," and defamed the Turks, "a mass of the most hideous and tragic stupidity." He advised that the Turks be informed that they "must forever quit this side of the Hellespont and give up their arrogant ideas of governing any body but themselves."<sup>2</sup> According to Carlyle, Russian-Turkish affairs were none of England's business; the settlement of the disagreement should be left to the continental powers.

As the English race felt a natural antipathy toward the Mohammedan Turks, the letter found favor with the general public; however, one hostile and witty journalist stated that "the appearance of Carlyle as a guide in Eastern politics is almost as great and as pleasurable surprise as if the Apostle Paul were suddenly to rise from the dead and advise our countrymen as to the county franchise."<sup>3</sup>

After the Turks' atrocious treatment of Bulgarian women and children in 1877, Carlyle again felt called upon to enlighten the public with a protest against Disraeli. Early

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<sup>1</sup>See Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup>H. J. Nichol, Thomas Carlyle, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age, p. 393.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

that year he wrote his brother John:

Dismal rumours are afloat, that Dizzy secretly intends to break in upon the Russian-Turkish War, and supporting himself by his Irish Home Rulers, great troops of common place Tories, Jews, etc., suddenly get Parliament to support him in a new Philo-Turk war against Russia--the maddest thing human imagination could well conceive. I am strongly urged to write something further upon it, but cannot feel that I have anything new to say.<sup>1</sup>

The urge proved to be of sufficient strength to conquer any qualms he might have had as to his understanding of the foreign situation, and a few days later John received this message:

After much urgency and with a dead-lift effort, I have this day got issued through the "Times" a small indispensable deliverance of the Turk and Dizzy question. Dizzy, it appears, to the horror of those who have any interest in him and his proceedings, has decided to have a new war for the Turk against all mankind; and this letter hopes to drive a nail through his mad and maddest speculations on that side.<sup>2</sup>

The "feat" which Carlyle refers to in the following letter sent to James McDonald, editor of The Times, for publication was Disraeli's contemplated occupation of Constantinople.

Sir--A rumour everywhere prevails that our miraculous Premier, in spite of the Queen's Proclamation of Neutrality, intends under cover of care for "British interests," to send the

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<sup>1</sup>Froude, Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, II, 44.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 442.

English fleet to the Baltic, or do some other feat which shall compel Russia to declare war against England. Latterly the rumour has shifted from the Baltic and become still more sinister, on the eastern side of the scene, where a feat is contemplated that will force, not Russia only, but all Europe to declare war against us. This latter I have come to know as an indisputable fact; in our present affairs and outlook surely a grave one.

As to the "British interests" there is none visible or conceivable to me, except taking strict charge of our route to India by Suez and Egypt, and for the rest resolutely steering altogether clear of any copartnery with the Turk in regard to this or any other "British interest" whatever. It should be felt by England as a real ignominy to be connected with such a Turk at all. Nay, if we still had, as in fact all ought to have, a wish to save him from perdition and annihilation in God's world, the one future for him that has any hope in it is even now that of being conquered by the Russians, and gradually schooled and drilled into peaceable attempt at learning to be himself governed. The newspaper outcry against Russia is no more respectable to me than the howling of Bedlam, proceeding as it does from the deepest ignorance, egoism, and paltry national jealousy.

These things I write not on hearsay, but on accurate knowledge and to all friends of their country will recommend immediate attention to them while there is yet time, lest in a few weeks the maddest and most criminal thing that a British government could do should be done and all Europe kindle into flames of war. I am,  
T. Carlyle<sup>1</sup>

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea  
May 4th

How Carlyle had received his information was a subject of much speculation. Probably Lady Derby obtained the essential facts from her husband, who was then foreign secretary and much opposed to intervention in Turkish-Russian affairs, and passed them on to Carlyle. Froude's leaving town for a

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<sup>1</sup>John Nichol, Thomas Carlyle (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1909), pp. 142-143.

few days indicated that he might have learned the government's plans from his friend Lord Carnarvon, the colonial secretary.

Disraeli, determined to find out who was guilty of disclosing official secrets, considered calling a Parliamentary investigation. The result was told afterward by Carlyle to Erasmus Darwin:

Dizzy was on the point of sending a fleet to Constantinople. I wrote a letter in the newspapers. It was no merit in me. The information was given me from unquestionable authority, and his scheme was blown up like a torpedo! He thought of bringing me before the House of Commons to be questioned as to my authority; but I was very easy about this as I understood from a competent advisor that I had nothing to do but say, "I will not tell you."<sup>1</sup>

Instead of an investigation the cabinet met and assured the public that it would keep the peace. However, Disraeli kept up his bluff to Russia by the transport of native troops from India to Malta. Immediately, Lord Derby resigned from the cabinet, and Russia, convinced that Disraeli meant war, relinquished its claims at the Congress of Berlin.

Carlyle made no more public denunciations, but in private conversations he continued to disparage the Earl of Beaconsfield's Russian policies. To Madame Novikoff, the Russian aristocrat who came to England hoping to settle the Anglo-Russian disagreement, Carlyle explained that he seldom read the newspapers, for "with our damnable Premier one is

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<sup>1</sup>Allingham, A Diary, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age, p. 400.

ashamed of what is going on."<sup>1</sup> "The Russian M. P.," as Disraeli sarcastically referred to her, recorded in her autobiography, Russian Memories, "What Carlyle and I had in common was our distrust of Disraeli and our sympathy with the oppressed Slavs."<sup>2</sup>

In conversation with W. T. Stead, editor of the North-ern Echo, Carlyle delivered another diatribe against "Dizzy" and expressed his opinion of the Turk more forcefully than ever:

That has been Beaconsfield's idea from the first, to array this country in arms against Russia--the damnablest course that ever was suggested to the English nation in the whole of its history. The man was a mountebank in the beginning, a mere charlatan who would employ the strength of England to save the Turk. Sir, the Turk is on the verge of Hell. None but God Almighty can save him!<sup>3</sup>

Carlyle still believed that as a Jew Disraeli could have no true patriotism or interest in the future of England, aside from his own material interests. He lamented that Beaconsfield was ruining the Tory party and paving the way for Gladstone and his friends to come to power, and if any one displeased Carlyle more than "Dizzy," it was the self-righteous Liberal leader.

Later, Mary Gladstone's cousin reported to her great

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 443.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 434.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 416.

satisfaction that Carlyle styled Disraeli "an accursed being, the worst man that ever lived if lies are sins; who with all the strength of his cunning has tried to get his country into war and for the Turk."<sup>1</sup>

As an instance of the humorous light in which Carlyle's Disraelian prejudice was considered by his friends, Mrs. Anstruther relates an interesting episode. One day in the summer of 1874, she was having lunch with Carlyle at an inn in Annan. The service was very slow. Knowing Carlyle's impatience at delay, she sought to divert his attention by questioning him as to Disraeli and his policies. Immediately he launched forth into a summary of the shortcomings of that "Jew imposter":

How long he is to continue deceiving the people of England I do not know. . . . But it is a strange spectacle. It is chiefly among the fashionable people in London and at the clubs that the fashion sets to praise up this man. He is a good-natured sort of man, I believe, but troubled by no conscience. Ever since the days of Dan O'Connell, who said that he was presumably descended from the impenitent thief, he has been a curse to this country. . . . He has done great harm to the Queen, persuading her to believe anything. Then by giving her this title of Empress of India he has secured her good will. "Peace with honour" indeed! There is no peace at all. He has provoked the enmity of Russia instead of conciliating her and gaining a friend and a powerful ally.<sup>2</sup>

And so on until the lunch arrived. Evidently Carlyle approved

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Drew, Some Howarden Letters, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age, p. 424.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 429.

of nothing Disraeli had ever done in his forty years of public service.

Despite the profusion and violence of Carlyle's condemnations, Disraeli received them all with the utmost good nature and generosity. He made only one retaliation and even then in a spirit of fun. The occasion was the publication of Carlyle's essay "The Nigger Question" in Fraser's Magazine in 1849. In this article Carlyle observed that at the ballot-box Judas Iscariot with his thirty pieces of silver was equal to Jesus Christ, though no true equality existed between them any more than between the blacks and whites of America. This observation inspired Theodore Parker, an American Abolitionist, to declare that Northerners who returned runaway slaves for a fee, in accordance with the law, were no better than Judas Iscariot, whom he sarcastically described as "the great patriot" who obeyed the "law."<sup>1</sup> Though Parker was serious, Disraeli applied Carlyle's observation in a spirit of high comedy. He propounded "the unanswerable theory that Judas deserved canonization since he had performed a disagreeable function without which the Scriptures could not have been fulfilled, and there could have been no salvation for mankind."<sup>2</sup>

Disraeli had a better system for destroying his enemies than retaliation. Once when questioned about his

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<sup>1</sup>Moncure Conway, Autobiography, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle at His Zenith, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup>Maurois, op. cit., p. 284.

meechness toward Carlyle, he exclaimed: "I never trouble to be avenged. When a man injures me, I put his name on a slip of paper and lock it up in a drawer. It is marvellous to see how the men I have labelled have a knack of disappearing."<sup>1</sup> At least they usually disappeared from the ranks of the enemies, especially upon the occasions when Disraeli added to his creed of non-resistance the Biblical admonition to return good for evil.

At a meeting in 1862 of the trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, Disraeli clearly indicated a benevolent attitude toward Carlyle. On this occasion one of the trustees suggested that the rule forbidding the acceptance of pictures of living persons be broken in order to admit a portrait of Lord Brougham. As the other trustees seemed to be on the verge of silent acquiescence, Carlyle rose to his feet and said that since the rest hesitated he begged "leave to move that Brougham's picture be for the present rejected." He added--"Brougham is still living, and when he does die, he'll be speedily forgotten. . . . Brougham has done nothing worth remembering particularly; and at all events the rules of the Gallery. . . ." <sup>2</sup> and so on, until he gained his point. Later he mentioned to William Allingham that during his speech, Disraeli watched him "with a face of brotherly recognition--a

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Wilson, Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten, p. 476.

wholly sympathetic expression." Penitently Carlyle explained,

I found this look in his face although I had more than once said hard things about him publicly. I saw he entirely agreed with me as to Brougham.<sup>1</sup>

The most generous act of Disraeli toward Carlyle was his offer of the Grand Cross of the Bath, a baronetcy, and a pension. Carlyle was then nearly eighty and had not received any evidence of his country's esteem. Disraeli, sensible of the honor the Calvinist deserved, wrote him the following letter:

To Thomas Carlyle, Esq.  
(Confidential) Bournemouth: Dec. 27, 1874  
Sir,--

A Government should recognise intellect. It elevates and sustains the tone of a nation. But it is an office which, adequately to fulfill, requires both courage and discrimination, as there is a chance of falling into favouritism and patronising mediocrity, which, instead of elevating the national feeling, would eventually degrade and debase it.

In recommending Her Majesty to fit out an Arctic expedition, and in suggesting other measures of that class, her Government has shown their sympathy with Science; and they wish that the position of high letters should be equally acknowledged; but this is not so easy, because it is in the necessity of things that the test of merit cannot be so precise in literature as in science.

When I consider the literary world, I see only two living names which, I would fain believe, will be remembered; and they stand out in uncontested superiority. One is that of a poet; if not a great poet, a real one; and the other is your own.

I have advised the Queen to offer to confer a baronetcy on Mr. Tennyson, and the same distinction should be at your command, if you liked it. But I have remembered that, like myself, you are childless, and may not care for hereditary honors. I have, therefore, made up my mind, if agreeable to yourself,

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<sup>1</sup>Allingham, A Diary, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle to Threescore-and-Ten, p. 477.

to recommend to Her Majesty to confer on you the highest distinction for merit at her command, and which I believe, has never yet been conferred by her except for direct services to the State. And that is the Grand Cross of the Bath.

I will speak with frankness on another point. It is not well that in the sunset of life, you should be disturbed by common cares. I see no reason why a great author should not receive from the nation a pension, as well as a lawyer and a statesman. Unfortunately the personal power of Her Majesty in this respect is limited; but still it is in the Queen's capacity to settle on an individual an amount equal to a good fellowship; and which was cheerfully accepted and enjoyed by the great spirit of Johnson, and the pure integrity of Southey.

Have the goodness to let me know your feelings on these subjects.

I have the honor to remain, Sir,  
Your faithful servant,  
B. Disraeli<sup>1</sup>

Disraeli's comment to Lord Derby adequately described Carlyle's answer,

Alas, the Philosopher of Chelsea, though evidently delighted with the proposal and grateful in wondrous sentences, will accept of nothing.<sup>2</sup>

The "wondrous sentences" are as follows:

To the Right Hon. B. Disraeli

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea:  
December 29, 1874

Sir,--

Yesterday, to my great surprise, I had the honour to receive your letter containing a magnificent proposal for my benefit, which will be memorable to me for the rest of my life. Allow me to say that the letter, both in purport and expression, is worthy to be called magnanimous and noble, that it is without example in my own poor history; and I think it is unexampled, too, in the history of governing persons

<sup>1</sup>Froude, Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, II, 429-430.

<sup>2</sup>Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age, p. 346.

toward men of letters at the present, as at any time; and that I will carefully preserve it as one of the things precious to memory and heart. A real treasure or benefit it, independent of all results from it.

This said to yourself and repositied with many feelings in my own grateful mind, I have only to add that your splendid and generous proposals for my practical behoof, must not any of them take effect; that titles of honour are, in all degrees of them, out of keeping with the tenour of my own poor existence hitherto in this epoch of the world, and would be an encumbrance, not a furtherance, to me; that as to money, it has, after long years of rigorous and frugal, but also (thank God, and those who are gone before me) not degrading poverty, become in this latter time amply abundant; more of it, too, now a hindrance, not a help to me; so that royal or other bounty would be more than thrown away in my case; and in brief, that except the feeling of your fine and noble conduct on this occasion, which is a real and permanent possession, there cannot be anything to be done that would not now be a sorrow rather than a pleasure.

With thanks more than usually sincere,

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,  
T. Carlyle<sup>1</sup>

Lady Derby, whom Carlyle always greatly admired, tried to persuade him to accept Disraeli's offer. After his persistent refusal, she admitted that she was glad he had declined. She pleased Disraeli, too, by telling him of the interview:

I saw old Mr. Carlyle to-day, and he scarcely knew how to be grateful enough for the mark of attention you had paid him. I assure you it was quite touching to see and hear his high appreciation of the offer.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Froude, Thomas Carlyle, A History of His Life in London, II, 430-431.

<sup>2</sup>Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age, p. 346.

As it had never been England's custom to reward her literary people, Carlyle was humbly aware that a great compliment had been bestowed on him by his government through the generosity of Disraeli. To both family and friends he praised the prime minister and condemned himself. In a letter to his brother, John, he expressed amusement over the proposed baronetcy:

You would have been surprised, all of you, to have found unexpectedly your poor old brother converted into Sir Tom. . . . I do, however, truly admire the magnanimity of Dizzy in regard to me. He is the only man I almost never spoke of except with contempt.<sup>1</sup>

"The letter of Disraeli," he said to his friend, Sir William Fraser, "was flattering, generous, and magnanimous, his overlooking all I have said and done against him was great."<sup>2</sup>

Most humble of all his comments was a note written to Lady Derby:

It, [Disraeli's letter] reveals to me, after all the hard things I have said of him, a new and unexpected stratum of genial dignity and manliness of character which I had by no means given him credit for. It is, as my penitent heart admonishes me, a kind of heaping coals of fire on my head; and I do truly repent and promise to amend.<sup>3</sup>

Such confessions indicated that Disraeli's system for destroying

<sup>1</sup>Froude, Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, II, 432.

<sup>2</sup>Morris Edmund Speare, The Political Novel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 176.

<sup>3</sup>Froude, Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, II, 431.

his enemies had even been successful with his most caustic critic, but Carlyle's repentance was of short duration. The Russian-Turkish War, destined to produce in the Calvinist renewed hostility toward the Jew, was already looming on the horizon.

Disraeli, however, made yet another kindly overture toward Carlyle. In 1878, a friend of both men, probably Lady Derby, determined that they know each other better, asked permission to arrange an interview at her home. Disraeli readily agreed, but Carlyle consented reluctantly. The prime minister arrived on the appointed hour, only to find that Carlyle, deciding at the last minute he was too old to meet a stranger, had sent word that he could not come. The lady was not to be put off by such a flimsy excuse. While Disraeli waited patiently, she went after Carlyle, "and the two veterans had a friendly conversation" after all. When the interview was over, she could have recalled to Carlyle one of his favorite maxims to the effect that lack of acquaintance breeds misunderstanding, but this reminder was unnecessary. At parting, he had told Disraeli apologetically that had he known him sooner he might have understood him better and even "omitted certain things that he had written."<sup>1</sup> The commentaries of the Prophet of Chelsea upon the life and works of the Jewish statesman had closed on a quiet note after a half-century of hostility.

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<sup>1</sup>G. S. Venables, "Carlyle in Society and at Home," Fortnightly Review, quoted by Wilson, Carlyle in Old Age, p. 437.

CHAPTER III  
THE SIMILARITY OF IDEAS AND TERMINOLOGY IN THE  
EARLY SOCIAL WRITINGS OF CARLYLE  
AND DISRAELI

The close similarity of both the ideas and the terminology in the social writings of Carlyle and Disraeli indicates that one author borrowed freely from the other. It is a warranted assumption that Disraeli, realizing that many people who would not read abstract essays and generalized discussions could still be warned of the impending social disintegration of England, adopted Carlyle's ideas as expressed in "Signs of the Times," "Characteristics," Chartism, and Past and Present, for his social novels, Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred. The dates of all these works are significant: Carlyle's were all published by 1843, and Disraeli's were not begun until 1844. Although Disraeli had written several novels and political tracts prior to this date, he had not previously dealt specifically with the condition of England. His early books were stories of fashionable life, and his first political essays were chiefly concerned with foreign rather than domestic relations. Moreover, his use of Carlyle's phraseology further indicates his indebtedness to the Scottish man of letters. He might very easily have evolved similar ideas as to the nature and solution of England's problems, but

it is hardly plausible that, uninfluenced by Carlyle, he would have couched his thoughts in the same terminology.

Both men, alarmed by the economic situation of England during the "hungry thirties and forties," studied in detail the home and factory conditions of the masses, the reasons for those conditions, and the possible remedies, and incorporated their findings in their literary works. Carlyle's early environment had given him first-hand knowledge of the frugal yet sturdily, honest way of life of the lower classes; therefore, upon seeing his garden palings at Chelsea stolen by his neighbors for firewood, he instantly realized that famine was stalking the land. The reports of Michael Sadler's Committee on Factory Conditions had aroused Disraeli. In company with George Smythe, he travelled through all the industrial area to see for himself the utmost of human degradation. It is not surprising that both men believed disaster to be approaching; it is astonishing to note how similar are their descriptions of the situation. In 1842, Carlyle declared that "The condition of England. . . . is justly regarded as one of the most ominous, and, withal, one of the strangest, ever seen in this world."<sup>1</sup> Five years later Disraeli put into the mouth of Egremont, a character in Tancred, the same sentiment expressed in similar phraseology: He held that the state of England "was one of impending

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1903), p. 1.

doom, unless it were timely arrested by those who were in high places."<sup>1</sup> In Coningsby (1844), Disraeli had used Carlyle's compound term, "condition-of-England,"<sup>2</sup> in discussing the necessity for social reorganization.

Whereas, previously, English society had been a hierarchy, ranging from the peasantry and the yeomanry upward through the middle class to the nobility and the royalty, it had become divided, by the early years of Queen Victoria's reign, into just two hostile factions, the Rich and the Poor. According to Carlyle, "Rich and Poor, when once the naked facts of their condition have come into collision, cannot long subsist together"<sup>3</sup> unless some spiritual harmony is developed to bridge the distance between their material positions. He regretted the disastrous effect that opulence had had upon one group, and poverty, upon the other: "In Poor and Rich, instead of noble thrift and plenty, there is the idle luxury alternating with mean scarcity and inability."<sup>4</sup> Disraeli's view of these new divisions of society is expressed by Stephen Morley in Sybil. To the smug and youthful Egremont, who believed that Queen Victoria was reigning over the greatest

<sup>1</sup>Benjamin Disraeli, Tancred (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1924), p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>Benjamin Disraeli, Coningsby (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1924), p. 69.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

nation on earth, Morley dramatically announced that the Queen was the ruler of

. . . . two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are governed by the same laws. . . . the Rich and the Poor.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the important relation of Disraeli's thought to Carlyle's, there is evident also in this passage a kinship of slight consequence in the capitalization of abstract words.

Of the two nations, Carlyle and Disraeli were chiefly concerned with the living conditions of one--the Poor. Carlyle insisted that the members of the lower class were surely entitled to "such modicum of food, clothes, and fuel as will enable them to continue their work."<sup>2</sup> Yet all around he saw extreme poverty and squalor, even starvation. In contrast to the do-nothing aristocracy of his own time, Carlyle's medieval Abbot Samson, the model leader, built "fit houses"<sup>3</sup> for dwellings, hospitals, and schools, and "the roofs once thatched with reeds," in which disease germs multiplied rapidly, "he caused to be covered with tiles." The literary form which Disraeli used was even better adapted to the portrayal

<sup>1</sup>Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1924), p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

of the wretched existence of the working people. In the town of Marney (Sybil), surrounded by vast areas of rolling hills, were crowded lanes of tenements, two-room hovels with "leaning chimneys," "rotten rafters," "humid and putrid thatched roofs" and with no windows and no floors but the muddy ground. "Before the doors of these dwellings, and often surrounding them, ran open drains full of animal and vegetable refuse,"<sup>1</sup> a veritable breeding place for disease.

Besides the low wages which made the purchase of sufficient quantities of food impossible, the vicious system of "tommy-shops" furthered starvation. These factory commissaries, where employees were forced to buy on penalty of losing their jobs otherwise, sold the worst food at the highest prices. Disraeli describes the methods and the results accurately in Sybil, and adds that because of scarcity of food, "infanticide [was] practiced as legally in England as on the banks of the Ganges."<sup>2</sup> Carlyle had already deplored the equally appalling state of the independent hand-loom weavers who, by working fifteen hours a day, could not earn enough to buy sufficient plain food to prevent death from malnutrition. There was a sad state of affairs, too, he added, among the agricultural laborers; in countries noted for their dairy

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<sup>1</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

products, the farm workers could "procure no milk."<sup>1</sup>

Clothing was equally scarce. Carlyle objected that spun shirts hang in the warehouses "by the million unsalable; and here by the million, are diligent bare backs that can get no hold of them,"<sup>2</sup> and Disraeli reported that the "British peasant, . . . when drenched by the tempest, could not change his dripping rags."<sup>3</sup>

In the poorly lighted and inadequately ventilated factories and mines of the eighteen thirties and forties, the usual day lasted sixteen hours, but occasionally twenty. No precautions were taken to insure either the health or the safety of the worker. Fines, although illegal, were frequently imposed for tardiness and for mistakes in workmanship. But the worst aspect of the industrial system was the prevalence of child labor.

Infants of four and five years of age (are) entrusted with the fulfillment of responsible duties (opening and closing of the air-doors), the nature of which entails on them the necessity of being the earliest to enter the mine and the latest to leave it. Their labour indeed is not severe, for that would be impossible, but it is passed in darkness and in solitude. They endure that punishment which philosophical philanthropy has invented for the direst criminals, and which those criminals deem more terrible than death for which it is substituted. . . . On hands and feet an English girl,

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, IV, 141.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 62.

for twelve, sometimes for sixteen hours a day, hauls and hurries tubs of coal up subterranean roads, dark, precipitous, and plashy; circumstances that seem to have escaped the notice of the Society for the Abolition of Negro Slavery.<sup>1</sup>

According to Carlyle, not only the excess of labor, but also the lack of labor in the guise of unemployment, had escaped the attention of "Anti-Slavery fanatics."<sup>2</sup> Nor did he think the promoters of the New Poor Law understood the real import of the widespread idleness. They did not consider that because of power-driven machinery and Irish immigration the English laborers were unable to find work, but instead assumed that "if paupers are made miserable, paupers' needs will decline in multitude."<sup>3</sup> Acting on this assumption, they had erected workhouses which were virtually prisons, and had abolished outdoor relief. Such measures led Stephen Morley, a character in Sybil, to the conclusion that "poverty is a crime."<sup>4</sup> Carlyle, observing that "Crowds of miserable Irish darken all our towns,"<sup>5</sup> maintained that, for unemployment, a more satisfactory remedy than workhouses must be found. Disraeli, too, believed that "the annual arrival of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 278.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 130.

<sup>4</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 138.

more than three hundred thousand strangers"<sup>1</sup> was a matter demanding the immediate attention of the government unless the nation's rulers preferred to face civil war. Even more unemployment had been produced by the advent of new machinery than by Irish immigration. The industry of hand-loom weaving was most seriously affected. Carlyle observed that, "On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier, inanimate one."<sup>2</sup> Many of these thrifty, industrious craftsmen, in their bewilderment, must have said to themselves, as did Disraeli's hand-loom weaver:

It is not vice that has brought me to this, nor indolence, nor imprudence. I was born to labour, and I was ready to labour. . . . Then why am I here? . . . It is that the Capitalist has found a slave that has supplanted the labour and ingenuity of man.<sup>3</sup>

Having studied the plight of the poor, the two reformers proceeded to confute the optimistic statements of the statisticians. The current statistical reports which were being circulated among the upper classes stated that the general condition of the people of England was much better than it had been at any previous period. This erroneous conclusion was attacked by both Carlyle and Disraeli because they believed that any inference drawn from mathematical calculations

<sup>1</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, "Signs of the Times," Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, II, 59.

<sup>3</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 133.

could not include all circumstances, "and any circumstances left out might be the vital one on which all turned."<sup>1</sup> For instance, statistics proved that the poor rates were decreasing, but Carlyle countered by saying that there had been no report as to the increase of deaths by starvation. Other misleading articles insisted that the people were more prosperous because a "working man now has a pair of cotton stockings and Henry the Eighth himself was not so well off." Besides replying that the English peasant in the sixteenth century "ate flesh every day, never drank water, was well housed and clothed in stout woolens,"<sup>2</sup> Disraeli maintained that the condition of the classes must be judged by the standards of the age and by their relations to each other. Certainly, it was easy to prove that the wealth of England had increased, but did that show that any more good was obtained from the greater amount of wealth? Or did the fact that life lasts longer prove that "life must be less worn upon by outward suffering, by inward discontent, by hardship of any kind"?<sup>3</sup> Such were Disraeli's and Carlyle's inquiries into the fallacies set forth by statistical minds.

Before suggesting remedies for the social degradation of England, Carlyle and Disraeli considered what trends of

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, pp. 198-199.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 125.

thought, what elements of the population, and what institutions were to blame for this lamentable state of affairs. They agreed that the basic reason underlying all the nation's ills was its uncritical, unquestioning acceptance of the ideas advanced by the early nineteenth century political economists. The Utilitarians were especially to blame; the "greatest-happiness" principle which they had propounded had done immeasurable harm. Although they advocated "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," they believed this state could be achieved if each person endeavored to secure his own happiness and ignored the condition of other people. Carlyle objected that "The Duties of Man to himself, to what is Highest in himself, make but the First Table of the Law: to the First Table is now superadded a Second, with the Duties of Man to his Neighbor."<sup>1</sup> The mandates of the Almighty were surely truer than the ethics originated by human beings. Indeed the "enlightened gospel" which taught that "men are to be guided by their self-interest,"<sup>2</sup> Carlyle deemed intrinsically false. Disraeli had a similar concept of the Utilitarian doctrine. He, too, observed that although "Christianity teaches us to love our neighbour as ourself; modern society acknowledges no neighbour,"<sup>3</sup> and that the result of this

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, "Characteristics," Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, II, 11.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, "Signs of the Times," p. 67.

<sup>3</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 76.

pernicious teaching was the degeneration of communities into aggregations in which men were brought together solely by the "desire for gain."

New conceptions of Heaven, Hell, and God had been developed by implication in the teachings of these utilitarian philosophers. There would be no need for another life after the present one, Carlyle ironically said, because the Benthamites proposed to make a heaven on earth in a very short time simply by following their greatest-happiness principle. Hell had become only "the terror of 'Not succeeding'; of not making money, fame, or some other figure in the world--chiefly of not making money."<sup>1</sup> In Tancred, when the hero was asked by the Arabians just what was the major ideal or religious belief in his country and other northern nations, he replied: "My cheek burns while I say it; but I think, in Europe, what is most valued is money."<sup>2</sup> A foolish benighted people were being led by these false teachers to worship in spirit if not in ceremony a new God, Mammon, which Carlyle declared "is not a God at all; but a devil, and even a very despicable devil."<sup>3</sup> The term Mammon, which by frequent and clever usage, Carlyle unintentionally popularized, was employed by Disraeli in his summary of the evils resulting from

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Tancred, p. 194.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 67.

the materialistic ideals fostered by the political economists:

If a spirit of rapacious covetousness, desecrating all the humanities of life, has been the besetting sin of England for the last century and a half since the passing of the Reform Act, the altar of Mammon has blazed with triple worship. To acquire, to accumulate, to plunder each other by virtue of philosophic phrases, to propose a Utopia to consist only of Wealth and Toil, this has been the breathless business of enfranchised England for the last twelve years, until we are startled from our voracious strife by the wail of intolerable serfage.<sup>1</sup>

Another objection which Carlyle and Disraeli brought against the Benthamites was their belief that only the useful things of life were worthwhile. All arts and traditional customs, therefore, having no practical utility, should be discarded. Carlyle was led to conclude that there was no longer any admiration among men for "the Beautiful and the Good."<sup>2</sup> Disraeli repeated this observation in Coningsby: "In the minds of men the useful has succeeded to the beautiful,"<sup>3</sup> for the spirit of the age had become the spirit of utility.

The principles of the democratic philosophy, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, fared no better at the hands of Carlyle and Disraeli than Utilitarianism: "The notion that a man's liberty consists in giving his vote at election-husting

<sup>1</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, pp. 35-36.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, "Signs of the Times," p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 152.

and saying, 'Behold, now I too have my twenty-thousandth part of a Talker in our National Palaver,"<sup>1</sup> was an idiotic idea, according to Carlyle. "The liberty," he added, "turns out to be for the Working Millions a liberty to die by want of food; for the Idle Thousands and Units, alas, a still more fatal liberty to live by want to work."<sup>2</sup> Disraeli discerned that the "blessings of civil and religious liberty" were indeed doubtful blessings: "A mortgaged aristocracy, a gambling foreign commerce, a home trade founded on a morbid competition, and a degraded people."<sup>3</sup> As for fraternity, the Rich and the Poor with an impassable gulf between hardly constituted a brotherhood of man. The third factor in the democratic creed, equality, they held to be impossible. Carlyle contended that, according to all the laws of the universe, everything and everybody "has superiors, inferiors, equals."<sup>4</sup> Disraeli also believed that the only natural organization of people was a hierarchy. In his opinion, an "artificial equality"<sup>5</sup> was attainable but, like all shams, undesirable.

Carlyle's distrust of popular government is well-

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 219.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 170.

known; and in the eighteen and forties, at least, Disraeli seems to have agreed with him. Governments by all the people would be no better than monarchies, oligarchies, or dictatorships. Instead of the tyranny of one or a few, Carlyle held that there would be a multiplied tyranny; as Disraeli expressed it, "You would find a locofoco majority as much addicted to class legislation as a factitious aristocracy."<sup>1</sup> The masses of the people were not capable of passing wise, benevolent, and just measures. Carlyle declared that it was an impossible feat to produce an Honesty from the united action of a "World of Knaves."<sup>2</sup> Nor did Disraeli believe that remedial legislation would come from a "government carried on by a neglected democracy, who, for three centuries, have received no education."<sup>3</sup> The inability of the multitude to rule itself successfully had been amply proved, Carlyle held, by the French Revolution. The American democracy had not yet been given the crucial test; for as long as there were surplus lands and jobs, no government was needed anyway but a "parish-constable."<sup>4</sup> The extension of the suffrage in England had shown Disraeli that the people lacked the wisdom necessary for good government. They had

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 353.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, "Characteristics," p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 352.

<sup>4</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 158.

hailed the Reform Act as a panacea of all their woes, whereas it became the means by which

. . . . power had been transferred from the crown to a parliament the members of which were appointed by a limited and exclusive class, who owned no responsibility to the country, who debated and voted in secret, and who were regularly paid by the small knot of great families that by this machinery had secured the permanent possession of the king's treasury.<sup>1</sup>

Both Carlyle and Disraeli held the English aristocracy to be partly responsible for the sorry pass at which society had arrived. Through its dilletante ways, it had made possible the spread of democratic ideas, for it is only when the existing order of government proves ineffectual that the people will agree to try strange forms. Carlyle and Disraeli successively indicated the aristocrats as "a Governing Class who do not govern"<sup>2</sup>--"an Aristocracy that does not lead."<sup>3</sup> To Carlyle the Aristocrats presented a more mournful sight than the followers after Mammon, for the latter at least worked, whereas the dilletantes were idle. Disraeli's character, Lord Marney (Coningsby) was a generic example of aristocratic uselessness; he had contributed nothing to his nation in government, divinity, law, literature, or science, but he had nevertheless contrived to "monopolize no contemptible portion of public money and public dignities."<sup>4</sup> He was

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<sup>1</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 263.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

a social drone, "one who does no labour whether he wear a cowl or a coronet."<sup>1</sup> Both Carlyle and Disraeli charged the aristocracy with having forgotten the rights of the peasants, the chief of which was the right to true guidance and protection by an interested individual. In feudal times, the aristocrat had not regarded the peasant as an enemy but as a necessary associate, much as a captain regards a private; but now that cash payment had become the "sole nexus between man and man,"<sup>2</sup> the ties of friendship and loyalty had been broken. Chartism, according to Carlyle, was in essence a supplication for the restoration of the old order. The five points means simply "Guide me, govern me! I am mad and miserable, and cannot guide myself!"<sup>3</sup> In Coningsby, Disraeli declares that when the people found themselves without guides, "they went to the ministry, they asked to be guided, they asked to be governed,"<sup>4</sup> but the members of the ruling class, long accustomed to fulfilling only the administrative duties, were so frightened at being called upon to perform the function of government, that they "mistook disorganization for sedition." Therefore, they resorted to the New Poor Law and other strong measures designed to suppress the masses.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 168.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>4</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 69.

Observing this ministerial error, Disraeli warned that

. . . . it would never be well for England until this order of the peasantry was restored to its pristine condition; not merely in physical comfort, for that must vary according to the economic circumstances of the time, like that of every class; but to its condition in all those moral attributes which make a recognised rank in a nation.<sup>1</sup>

If the aristocracy persisted in neglecting the peasants' rights, a feeling of injustice would develop among the lower classes and would inevitably burst forth as a "thing of tinder bores, vitriol bottles, and second-hand pistols."<sup>2</sup> For revolution was produced by injustice and not economic conditions, as was generally believed. Said Carlyle:

Nakedness, hunger, distress of all kinds, death itself have been cheerfully suffered when the heart was right. It is the feeling of injustice that is insupportable to all men.<sup>3</sup>

In 1844, Disraeli also assumed the duty of apprising the governing class that "There is no error so vulgar as to believe that revolutions are occasioned by economical causes."<sup>4</sup>

Carlyle and Disraeli agreed further in fixing responsibility for the conditions of the people partly upon the church. The ministers spent their time preaching against "Original Sin and Such like," which, Carlyle admitted, was

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 170.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 144-145.

<sup>4</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 238.

"bad enough," but not so bad as "distilled Gin, dark Ignorance, Stupidity, dark Corn-Law, Bastile and Company."<sup>1</sup> The vicar of Marney, Disraeli tells us, was "an orderly man who deemed he did his duty if he preached each week two sermons and enforced humility on his congregation, and gratitude for the blessings of this life."<sup>2</sup> He made no effort to ascertain whether the members of his congregation had any blessings to be thankful for, or whether they were the victims of oppression. Nor were alms ever distributed by this vicar, for the "Holy Church at Marney had forgotten her sacred mission."<sup>3</sup> Religion in any real and vital sense had long since passed out of the churches; instead of reviving its spirit, the leaders, says Carlyle, only supplied new "Rituals, Liturgies, Creeds,"<sup>4</sup> which are not religion at all. Disraeli's Fakredeen (Tancred) expresses the same conviction when he explains to the Arabians that "the English are really neither Jews nor Christians, but follow a sort of religion of their own which is made every year by their bishops."<sup>5</sup> At any rate, they agreed that the English Church was failing

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 228.

<sup>5</sup>Disraeli, Tancred, p. 209.

miserably to supply the people either with material relief or spiritual light and leading.

By proclaiming to the public what the social ills of England were, and what false philosophies, ranks of society, and institutions were to blame for them, Carlyle and Disraeli had obligated themselves to go one step further and suggest what remedies were possible. In this aspect of the social problem, Disraeli continued to agree with his Scottish contemporary except on minor points. In general, both men advised the legislative body to enact remedial measures with provisions for strict enforcement, the industrial organizations to devise more humane ties than cash-payment to unite the employer and the employee, and the talented individuals to take the initiative in all phases of this progressive movement.

Perhaps because Carlyle remembered the effort with which his education had been obtained, and Disraeli realized from first-hand experience the inefficiency of the training received in the private schools, both men strongly advocated a state-supported system of public education. "Universal education," said Carlyle, "is the first great thing we mean."<sup>1</sup> It was undoubtedly the innovation most sadly needed, for in 1840 the average schooling among English adults did not exceed one full year. Carlyle maintained that "a right Education

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 192.

Bill" would be "the sure parent of innumerable wise Bills,"<sup>1</sup> for it would produce a thinking populace. As a great measure that would "affect the destinies of unborn millions and the future character of the people," Disraeli, too, advocated "a system of national education."<sup>2</sup>

However, twenty years, according to Carlyle, would have to elapse before any great benefits would accrue from the educational system; a whole generation would have to be freed from ignorance of all kinds, especially superstition and provincialism. In that length of time, if nothing more expedient were done, "the strangling band of Famine"<sup>3</sup> would produce anarchy; therefore, he urged the Conservative Party to repeal the Corn Laws immediately, so that food from foreign countries could be imported in large quantities and at prices that would permit the industrial workers to buy. Disraeli objected to this repeal because he did not believe it would provide the industrial population with any greater quantity of food than they were already obtaining. It would only make the middle class capitalists richer, for they would take advantage of cheaper grain prices to lower wages, and the employees would again be reduced to the lowest level of subsistence. Besides, the repeal of the Corn Laws would

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 43.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 185.

reduce, to actual pauperism, the agricultural classes whose plight was already serious even with the high tariff on foreign grain to protect them. In spite of the opposition of Disraeli and the Young England Party, Sir Robert Peel, the Conservative prime minister, heeded Carlyle's warning and in 1846 repealed the Corn Laws. Time proved the wisdom of the Scottish prophet. In a short while, living conditions were noticeably improved, and Chartism itself, after one more feeble effort, died away.

Another vast enterprise which Carlyle advised the national government to undertake was an Emigration Service. He insisted that it was foolish to tell people without employment to take themselves to another country, for the simple reason that they had no money for transportation. Yet there was the whole English fleet standing idle in the harbors; why not, he asked, put the British Admiralty to work on this project? If the people were once settled in the colonies, they would be able to support themselves by selling to the mother country food products which it sorely needed. Surely "an effective system of Emigration"<sup>1</sup> would be cheaper than work-houses and would produce, instead of Physical-Force Chartists, loyal British peasants. Disraeli, too, was convinced that economically "nothing can put this country right but emigration on a great scale,"<sup>2</sup> directed by the government,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 127.

but nowhere in his writings does he go into detail, as Carlyle did, to explain just how it could be financed and supervised. However, he cleverly satirized the warped idea, held by certain members of the landed nobility, that by destroying their tenant houses, they could force the unemployed to independent migration to the colonies.

Improvement of conditions in the factories and the homes would also require legislative intervention. It had already begun in a small way; there were newly appointed factory inspectors, whose chief duty was to see that the provisions of the Factory Bill limiting child labor were obeyed. Carlyle observed that they had found other matters that needed attention, and that perhaps mine and farm inspectors would be equally useful. "Baths, free air, a wholesome temperature, ceilings twenty feet high, might be ordained, by act of Parliament, in all establishments licensed as Mills."<sup>1</sup> Child labor should be reduced still more, or altogether abolished. Of course, there would be objections by the mill owners that such measures would take all their profits, but to these complaints, the English government could answer, "Yes, but my sons and daughters will gain health and life, and a soul."<sup>2</sup> Through the medium of narration, Disraeli proposed the same improvements. After picturing the

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

destitution of the oppressed factory workers in Marney and in Mowbray, he describes the factory owned by Mr. Trafford and the residences furnished to his employees. The mill, which was one immense room "lighted by ventilating domes," was "kept at a steady temperature." Every precaution had been taken to prevent accidents and illnesses. The homes were comfortable; every family had a garden; bath-houses were provided; and "schools were under the direction of the perpetual curate of the church."<sup>1</sup> Certainly, the initial expense in building this community had been great, but Mr. Trafford felt that he had been amply rewarded, not only by superior workmanship, but also by the "moral tone and the material happiness"<sup>2</sup> of his employees. Although, in his writings, Disraeli does not directly specify that factory inspection should be a duty of the federal government, he proved, in his Parliamentary career, that he agreed with Carlyle. He voted for every one of Lord Shaftesbury's bills for governmental supervision of industry, even though the majority of the members of his party opposed them.

Although the remedial work of the greatest scope must be accomplished by the central government, political measures could not possibly provide everything that was needed. Carlyle and Disraeli urged the industrial organizations to

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<sup>1</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, pp. 209-210.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

use part of their inventive genius in devising new bases of human relations. But there was one age-old basis that must not longer be disregarded: "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work."<sup>1</sup> Over and over Carlyle repeats the maxim. He wished to convince the capitalists that "money-wages"<sup>2</sup> sufficient to keep the worker alive and strong was undeniably a just demand, the disregard of which the gods themselves would punish. Likewise, one of Disraeli's characters observed that "Natur' has her laws, and this is one: a fair day's wage for a fair day's work."<sup>3</sup> The phrase appears almost as frequently in Sybil and in Past and Present. Disraeli, as well as Carlyle, contended that workers should be paid in "the current coin of the realm."<sup>4</sup> Too long the factory commissaries with their dishonest business methods had robbed the employees of the mere pittance they had been promised. What encouragement, Disraeli asked, could there be for thrift, if one never knew what payment he would receive?

The mill-owners must also come to the realization that men work better if there is some degree of permanency guaranteed to them. "The Principle of Permanent Contract

<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>3</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 429.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 167.

instead of Temporary," as Carlyle said, has been found more satisfactory in all phases of civilized society. If a man is employed only temporarily, he will hesitate to invest money in anything, even a home; therefore, he never acquires any degree of financial security. Nor does he become an integral part of the community, for its interests are not his interests. Gurth, the feudal swineherd of Scott's Ivanhoe, "had been hired for life to his master, Cedric, and Cedric to Gurth";<sup>1</sup> it was ever the better arrangement. Disraeli, also, regretted that permanent contract had disappeared along with the monastic order:

The farmer had a deathless landlord then; not a harsh guardian, or a grinding mortgagee, or a dilatory master in chancery; all was certain; the manor had not to dread a change of lords, or the oaks to tremble at the axe of the squandering heir.<sup>2</sup>

The captains of industry had not fully realized the intrinsic value of the conservative strain in the English race. The people liked to say, "We held under him, and his father,"<sup>3</sup> for they felt that long tenure was a proof of their worth. If the industrial leaders would only try the system of permanent contract, Carlyle and Disraeli assured them, they would find themselves repaid in both loyalty and in careful

<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, pp. 277-278.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

workmanship.

Perhaps, Carlyle said, though he would not definitely commit himself, it might be best for the master to grant his workers permanent interest in his enterprise, so that they would be "economically as well as loyally concerned"<sup>1</sup> for its success. Disraeli was more confident in the value of cooperative ownership: "The connection of a labourer with his place of work, whether agricultural or manufacturing, is itself a vast advantage."<sup>2</sup>

If society was to secure any of the innovations already suggested, it must have great leaders, in Carlyle's terminology, "an Aristocracy of Talent."<sup>3</sup> As intellect was not restricted to one social order, Carlyle concluded that the new leaders must arise from all ranks of society. Again Disraeli's expressions are a paraphrase of his predecessor's. The "natural aristocracy" which he advocates is virtually an "Aristocracy of Talent," and like it, is to be found "among those men whom a nation recognizes as the most eminent for virtue, talents, and property, and if you please, birth and standing in the land."<sup>4</sup> But neither writer was entirely consistent. Even though Carlyle had admitted that only the

<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 282.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Sybil, p. 210.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 179.

Wisest "have the divine right to govern,"<sup>1</sup> his middle-class background swayed him slightly in favor of the Captains of industry for the new leaders, and Disraeli, with his Jewish reverence for tradition, was partial to the landed aristocracy. He thought that since they had once governed successfully, they could do so again; yet he, too, had stated that power is "ideas, which are divine."<sup>2</sup>

Regardless of their social rank, the aristocrats of talent, unless they neglected their mission, would become great leaders early in life. Training was superfluous for a born leader; great men, as demonstrated by Abbot Samson, needed no "apprenticeship to the trade of governing." According to Carlyle: "First get your man; all is got: he can learn to do all things, from making boots to decreeing judgements, governing communities; and will do them like a man."<sup>3</sup> Disraeli's character, Sidonia, makes a similar observation to the effect that "Great men never want experience." He further explained that experience "is the best thing in the world, a treasure for you, for me, for millions. But for a creative mind, less than nothing. Almost everything that is great has been done by youth."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Tancred, p. 290.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 118.

Therefore, the two writers considered it their duty to stir these gifted ones to immediate action. The Captains of Industry who possessed great ability must cease to seek money in return for every effort. Carlyle advised them to give their lives away in service to the people. No longer should they contrive ways to produce cloth more cheaply in order to increase their own profits, but rather they should try to discover how cloth "at its present cheapness" could be "more justly"<sup>1</sup> divided among men. They should realize that only persons of common clay could be paid, in legal tender, what they had really earned. God-like characters could never be given enough of this world's goods to reimburse them for their work, but a Universe of Space and an Eternity of Time would be their reward.

To the gifted youths of the landed nobility, Disraeli preached through his novels and by personal contact in the Young England Party that their "great privileges" had been originally designed for "great purposes"<sup>2</sup> and that there was no merit in any conduct which did not involve self-sacrifice. As they neither made nor bought the land on which they lived, Carlyle contended that they were even more obligated than the Captains of Industry to promote the social welfare of the people. One specific duty which he thought they should again

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 183.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 311.

assume was the patronage of poor youths of genius. Such assistance to persons of superior endowment among the lower classes is not only a traditional responsibility of the aristocracy, but it is the only way whereby their gifts may be utilized for the national good; for much even of genius will be lost or turned into forces of disintegration and disorganization unless directed by education and guidance.

As for the people of ordinary ability, work and faith would be their contribution to the reconstruction of society. Whereas, Gurth, the Saxon thrall, "could only ten pigs," the modern day-labourer could "build cities and conquer waste worlds."<sup>1</sup> Disraeli predicted that when the goals of a people became "Work and Order,"<sup>2</sup> its state would be progressive. To work steadily and harmoniously, the masses must have faith in a God and in the wisdom and integrity of their earthly leaders, for "man never yields himself to brute Force, but always to moral greatness."<sup>3</sup> In Sybil, Disraeli proclaims eloquently the fundamental Carlylean doctrine that moral power is irresistible. Right, in the end, must and will prevail.

Such in brief was the social program outlined by

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 251.

<sup>2</sup>Disraeli, Tancred, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, "Characteristics," p. 12.

Carlyle and Disraeli: the inauguration of legislative and industrial reforms; the advancement to positions of leadership individuals of superior abilities--"heroes"--; and on the part of the people, the revival of a belief in the salient power of work and faith. The major points on which they agreed have been discussed; however, there are many other passages which give parallel ideas of a minor nature. In general, the similarity of terminology is obvious; one point of resemblance not previously mentioned is the satirical type of names given to certain characters. Mr. Jawster Sharp, Mr. Hoaxem Tadpole and Taper, names coined by Disraeli, are almost as clever appellations as Carlyle's Sir Jabest Windbag and Plugson of Undershot. The decided similarity in thought, in purpose, and in phraseology between the works of Carlyle and those of Disraeli can not escape even the casual reader. When Disraeli's social philosophy was taking form and finding expression in his famous trilogy, Coningsby, Tancred, and Sybil, Carlyle's fame was at its zenith and his influence was at flood-tide. It is natural, therefore, to conclude that the novelist was greatly influenced by the prophet. Undoubtedly, too, Carlyle fits Disraeli's definition of a great man--"One that affects the mind of his generation."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Disraeli, Coningsby, p. 123.

CHAPTER IV  
THE INFLUENCE OF THE PROPHET UPON  
THE POLICIES OF THE STATESMAN

Carlyle's influence upon the policies of Disraeli the statesman was as far-reaching and profound as his influence upon the social ideas of Disraeli the novelist. The periods in which Disraeli's indebtedness to Carlyle is most noticeable occurred at the beginning and at the end of his parliamentary career: during his leadership of the Young England Party in the eighteen-forties, and during his premiership of the eighteen-seventies.

Although the early history of the Young England Party was not in any way influenced by the life and policies of Benjamin Disraeli, it will be necessary to review its beginnings in order to understand its later development. Besides, it will be worth while to note in what respects Carlyle's social writings of the eighteen-thirties had the same effect upon the young England party as upon Disraeli, and, thus, helped to establish a basis for their congenial relations in the House of Commons.

The Young England Party inspired by Carlyle and officially directed by Disraeli through its short though influential Parliamentary regime began informally at Cambridge

University late in the year 1839. Its guiding spirit in its college days was the brilliant and charming George Smythe, whom Disraeli later portrayed as the hero of Coningsby and as Waldershare of Endymion; its most ardent supporters were a Scottish laird, Alexander Baillie Cockrane, and the second son of the Duke of Rutland, Lord John Manners. There were no officers, no constitution, and no by-laws. In fact, for several years it had no name. It had only ideas, and those were chiefly derived from Thomas Carlyle.

In point of time and in its fundamental nature the Young England Party was related to the whole of the nineteenth century Romantic movement, but it had a conservative character impressed upon it by the Scottish prophet. Like the early Romanticists, the Young Englanders were anxious for reform, and greatly admired the Past, but unlike their predecessors, they had no revolutionary tendencies nor any intentions of promulgating radical social ideas, organizing a new political party, or usurping power for their individual glorification.

Neither did the Cambridge group resemble in detail the continental Romantic organizations, Young Italy and Young Germany, begun in the eighteen-thirties and -forties. Whereas all three were youth movements with the ultimate goal of national unification and reconstruction, the last two were liberals and the first named was conservative. Their ideals were the same, but their methods were different. The

continental organizations believed that the first step in their social program should be the destruction of traditional institutions and customs; on the other hand, Young England advocated strict adherence to the established government and a rejuvenation of its historic principles.

Smythe, Manners, and their followers were much more closely related to the contemporary Romanticists that composed the Oxford Movement than to either the early English or the continental groups. The so-called Oxford Movement, begun in 1833 by the eminent Anglican divines, John Keble and John Henry Newman, sought to rejuvenate the English Church by reviving a spirit of faith and by re-establishing the beautiful and impressive ceremonies which had gradually fallen into disuse; Young England's desire to reconstruct the Tory Party upon historic principles shows the same deference to tradition and the same conservative nature, and had it not been for Carlyle's emphasis upon the seriousness of the condition of England, it might have followed in the same religious channels.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the romanticism in the hearts of these Cambridge students was the very quality which caused them to heed the stern admonitions of the Sage of Chelsea. The mercenary Utilitarian philosophy which had enjoyed great popularity during the eighteen-thirties had failed to supply them with the inspiration and the challenge ever essential to the spirit of youth, but they found that Carlyle

was fully capable of implanting in receptive minds a driving ambition and equally efficient in outlining a constructive program of work which would occupy them for at least one lifetime. Being Tories by heritage, they were particularly vulnerable to his attacks on the degeneration of the hereditary aristocracy, and being extremely acute mentally, they could not escape the conclusion that it was their duty as the new generation to redeem their class by alleviating the suffering of the poor. Carlyle never realized that he had aroused any portion of the upper classes, and perhaps the Young Englanders themselves after a time were hardly conscious of the origin of their ideas.

The date of their first decided interest in the national government occurring shortly after the publication of Chartism indicates that Carlyle's pamphlet itself, or the attention which it attracted among the members of the reading public, was the force which stirred them from their lethargy. If it did not give the initial impetus to the movement, it at least contributed some of the major ideas. Accepting John Manners' statement that the members read everything available on current affairs, one would conclude that they certainly read Chartism, for no problem was more urgently in need of solution than the Chartist agitation. Then, too, Carlyle was the only person of the early Victorian age who publicly advised the aristocracy to govern rather than police, to administer charity, both material and spiritual, rather than

delegate that duty to the Poor Law officials, and, above all, to set an example of true nobility of character, worthy of emulation by the lower classes. The fact that this pattern of conduct which he outlined was adopted by the Young Englanders in their individual lives is the most conclusive evidence of his influence.

In the beginning the Young England Party had no idea of becoming a formidable force in the governing halls of the nation. Carlyle had stated that an aristocracy should be "a corporation of the Best, of the Bravest,"<sup>1</sup> and accepting this definition they strove to become worthy of the rank which they had inherited. They spent long hours discussing their duties and the problems of the nation. They had reached the first stage of progress, which as Carlyle said, is "to know that a thing must needs be done."<sup>2</sup> The remedies for society's ills and the means of achieving them they did not know and scarcely expected to find; they only hoped that they might solve the social problems on a small scale in the management of their estates. Their position and education assured them parliamentary careers, but they hardly believed that four or five young men could achieve any far-reaching reforms. Yet they intended to remain true to their ideals and

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 160.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 166.

to remain aloof from the materialistic views of the Utilitarians. Their political creed, in so far as they had one, advocated "the revival of the old institutions and the reconciliation of the people with an aristocracy conscious of its powers."<sup>1</sup> There is a resemblance here both to the ideas already expressed by Carlyle in Chartism and other essays, and to the views Disraeli was to incorporate a few years later in his trilogy. If any great benefit was to result from their lives, they believed it would come not from an aggressive policy but rather from their true nobility of character. They agreed with Carlyle that the only way to teach an ideal was to live it in the hope that others would be inspired to do likewise.

In the autumn of 1841 Smythe, Manners, and Cochrane went down to the House of Commons to embark upon their Parliamentary careers and to discover for themselves a leader, Benjamin Disraeli. His speech on the reorganization of the British Consular Service, which, though long and detailed, had held the House in silent attention, won the unqualified admiration of Parliament's youngest members. According to Smythe, Disraeli had the eloquence of simplicity; "the voice not at all forced, the elocution distinct; a trifle nonchalant, and always with a tincture of sarcasm."<sup>2</sup> Besides he

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<sup>1</sup>Maurois, op. cit., p. 159.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

had the courage of his convictions even to the extent of single-handed opposition to his party leader. His experience and his sympathetic understanding were exactly what the Cambridge group most needed in a leader, but no advances were made to the Jewish statesman until the following year.

The alliance was formed in Paris in the winter of 1842. Smythe, Manners, and Cochrane, having realized that the need for a leader was imperative, decided that the only available person with similar ideas was Benjamin Disraeli. Accordingly, Smythe and Cochrane made a trip to the French capital, where Disraeli was spending the winter, in order to lay their propositions before him. The time was opportune. Having been refused a post the year before in Sir Robert Peel's cabinet, Disraeli felt that his powers were unappreciated, and he was disconsolate at the prospect of many years of inaction as one of the rank and file of the Tory party. Finding that he was admired by the young men, he determined to continue his efforts to secure remedial legislation rather than to submit unquestioningly to the prime minister's will. He enthusiastically agreed with their visionary ideas and straightway planned to make them realities.

Several points were settled as to their future course, but no name and no officers were selected at this Paris conference, or elsewhere, although naturally Disraeli, "by the

force of genius and longer experience,"<sup>1</sup> was recognized as their head. It was agreed that they would all don white waistcoats, as a symbol of purity in politics, and sit beside Disraeli at the sessions of Parliament. They would vote as a body, always accepting the decisions of the majority of their group. Tories they intended to remain, but upon all occasions when they disagreed with the prime minister's policy, they planned to explain their stand to the House of Commons and then to vote with the opposition. For their war-cry they adopted Carlyle's phrase, "the Condition-of-England."<sup>2</sup>

The little group of which Disraeli so suddenly found himself the leader was made up of remarkable young men. There was George Smythe, "a man of brilliant gifts, of dazzling wit, infinite culture, and fascinating manners," who Disraeli declared was the only person who had never bored him. A blend of cynicism and romanticism, Smythe was equally "capable of sacrificing all his feelings to worldly considerations or of forfeiting the world for a visionary caprice."<sup>3</sup> He had no illusions about himself; "my life," he said, "has

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<sup>1</sup>Willard Meynell, Benjamin Disraeli (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1903), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Edward George Clark, Benjamin Disraeli (London: J. Murray, 1926), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>William Flavelle Monypenny, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (New York: Macmillan Co., 1912), II, 162-163.

been made up of two blunders. I am a failure and I know it."<sup>1</sup> Actually he had only a brief opportunity in which to succeed, for he died of tuberculosis at the age of thirty-seven. If a failure in any sense of the word, his friends agreed that he was indeed "a splendid failure."

A Young Englander of less creative genius than Smythe but of greater religious earnestness and stability of purpose was Lord John Manners, afterwards seventh Duke of Rutland. He was portrayed by Disraeli as Lord Henry Sidney of Coningsby, who "devoted his time and thought, labour and life, to one vast and noble purpose, the elevation of the condition of the great body of the people."<sup>2</sup> Absolutely devoid of personal ambition, greed, and dilettante habits, he was an aristocrat with whom even Carlyle could have found no fault.

Other members of the group were Alexander Baillie, a man of great practical knowledge; William Busfield Ferrand, who had studied in detail the evils of the factory system; Henry Hope, a wealthy and honorable young nobleman; Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton; John Walter, the son of the proprietor of The Times; and the devout Roman Catholics, Frederick Faber and Ambrose Lisle Phillips. Monckton Milnes did not commit himself to the extent of donning a white waistcoat, but he participated in their private discussions and

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<sup>1</sup>Meynell, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Monypenny, op. cit., p. 165.

usually voted with the majority of the group. Being a close friend of Carlyle, he probably contributed much of the Scotchman's philosophy which is found in the Young England policies. Faber and Phillips were never members of the House, but they were members of the group even in its Cambridge days, and always contributed their sympathy and whole-hearted support to its program.

Young England could have discovered no more congenial leader than Disraeli. He had always had boundless faith in young men; he was never envious of their successes, and he understood their extravagant and generous ideas. Besides, he had the knack of making people feel that as individuals they were necessary to his personal happiness. He frequently told Lord John Manners that he considered him his dearest friend; and the one thing in life of which George Smythe was proud was the fact that Disraeli found in him the most interesting of companions. Whenever he was pleased with his proteges he praised them lavishly, knowing that the young thrive on commendation.

When, how, and where the group received its name "Young England" is not known. According to some authorities, Disraeli formed the habit of addressing new members of Parliament by that title as early as 1841. Previous to that time Monckton Milnes had used the term in a different connection; however, it is possible that he later applied it to the gentlemen of the white waistcoats. Then, too, as a

speech of Disraeli's suggests, it might have been first applied by old-line Tories in derision of the idealism of the Cambridge movement.<sup>1</sup> At any rate it was adopted by the young men themselves prior to the Parliamentary session of 1843.

The first action of the Young England Party was its propaganda campaign launched in the powerful Times newspaper with the aid of John Walter. Realizing the force of public opinion, Disraeli thought it necessary to acquire the sympathy of the people for the views of the party. Accordingly, the sentimental John Manners was set to writing verses in praise of feudal ideals. Like most poetry written with an ulterior motive, Manner's rhymes lacked artistic qualities, but it is easy to see that such lines as the following would awaken the sentiments of the people:

Each knew his place, king, peasant, peer, or priest;  
The greatest owned connexion with the least  
From rank to rank the generous feeling ran,  
And linked society as man to man.<sup>2</sup>

Evidently the social relationship he advocated was much the same as that which Carlyle urged as a supplement to "cash-payment." In prose tracts George Smythe also expounded the value of historic institutions and the need for an aristocracy conscious of its duties. However, Disraeli himself wrote the most powerful of Young England's political

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Speare, op. cit., p. 156.

treatises, Coningsby. Henry Hope, to whom the novel was dedicated, first suggested that a comprehensive treatment of the Young England ideas would be very valuable in converting the public.<sup>1</sup>

In its brief Parliamentary career Young England concerned itself with two problems, the condition of the working classes in England and the causes of the general disorder and discontent in Ireland. As early as the autumn of 1841, Smythe and Manners made an extensive tour through the industrial sections of northern England in order to study the actual state of affairs among the laboring people. Whether or not they had consciously in mind Carlyle's queries as to "what is the constancy of employment; what is the difficulty of finding employment; the fluctuation from season to season, from year to year,"<sup>2</sup> they returned to Parliament prepared to fight the Poor Law because they had found that jobs were not available for all who were willing to work. In spite of their efforts, the Act of 1834 was renewed in 1842 for another five years; however, their exposure of the corruption and injustice of its administration induced the home secretary, Sir James Graham to promise certain amendments designed to make life in the workhouses less like prison existence. When the Poor Law again came up for renewal in 1847, the Young Englanders,

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<sup>1</sup>Clark, op. cit., p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 127.

though no longer a distinct group, voted against it and Disraeli made an eloquent speech. Yet they were no more successful than before in abolishing the law against which Carlyle had fulminated in Chartism.

In 1842 and 1843 Disraeli accompanied Smythe and Manners on their visits to the manufacturing towns. With them occasionally were Alexander Baillie Cochrane and Henry Hope, at whose home, Deepdene, they made their headquarters. They talked to scores of factory owners, and Blue Book in hand, they examined many mills in which the working conditions were all but intolerable. Although some of the employees were flinty, avaricious men devoted to the one idea of making greater profits, they discovered that many of them were humane individuals willing to improve their organizations provided that in the interest of fair competition other factory owners were forced to do the same. All in all both capitalists and laborers treated them hospitably. In Manchester, which Disraeli later called the Holy City of the Utilitarians, the Young Englanders were greeted at the Athenaeum by the largest crowd ever assembled within its walls.<sup>1</sup> Their eloquent speeches, afterwards published in pamphlet form, enjoyed equal popularity; Young England was in the heyday of its glory. In a speech at Bingley, Disraeli emphasized the fact that neglect of social obligations on the part of all ranks had brought about the great divergence between the Rich and

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<sup>1</sup>Meynell, op. cit., p. 88.

the Poor, and added that Young England's purpose was to do its duty in regard to public welfare and to insist that other people do theirs.<sup>1</sup> This doctrine was a reiteration of that expounded by Carlyle; he had declared in Chartism and elsewhere that the greatest fault of the age was its adherence to a policy of laissez-faire in human relationships.

After these expeditions, the Young Englanders were able to support the factory reforms proposed by Lord Ashley (afterward Earl of Shaftesbury). They spoke with an embarrassing knowledge of the subject, especially William Busfield Ferrand, the most fiery orator of the group. Having lived in the Yorkshire district, he was able in some instances to cite the exact persons to blame for the existing evils, and although he refrained from disclosing names, certain of the wealthy middle-class members were noticeably uncomfortable during his speeches. Early in 1844, a factory bill restricting the labor of children to ten hours a day was passed, but an amendment requiring mill-owners to provide their youthful employees a minimum of two hours schooling per day was defeated, and later in the session Sir Robert Peel by a threat of resignation forced the House to repeal the entire act. For decades after the white waistcoats were discarded, Disraeli, Manners, and others were to continue their fight, sometimes separately and sometimes together, for better working conditions in industry. They made investigations; they

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<sup>1</sup>Monypenny, op. cit., p. 247.

followed their convictions, regardless of party and material interests; and they achieved success at last through popular education. Both their course of action and the remedy they found for the condition of England had been repeatedly prescribed by Carlyle in the eighteen-thirties.

The second problem with which Young England concerned itself was, according to Carlyle, "a deep matter, an abysmal one"<sup>1</sup>--the disorder in Ireland. Following their usual procedure, Smythe and Manners set out on a tour of investigation to ascertain for themselves in what measure the current reports were true. They returned very dissatisfied with the policy which the government had pursued in Ireland; and like the Scotchman, they charged that England by attempting to substitute police for guidance was guilty of great injustice toward the Irish people.<sup>2</sup> When the 1843 session of Parliament convened, Cochrane, Smythe, Manners, and Disraeli all spoke against the Arms Bill, an oppressive measure designed to quell the Irish agitation for independence; they further announced that they would vote with the opposition for an inquiry into the grievances which the Irish held against the administration. The measure was postponed until the following year, and at that time Disraeli resumed the attack. He maintained that Ireland needed "a strong executive

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 137.

<sup>2</sup>Monypenny, op. cit., p. 173.

and an impartial administration<sup>1</sup> to improve the material condition of the people and thereby restore a spirit of contentment. Five years earlier Carlyle had also reached the conclusion that neither the do-nothing principle nor martial law would suffice in Ireland. Instead, that county, he said, needed "management grounded on sincerity and fact, to which the truth of things will respond--by an actual beginning of improvement to these wretched brother-men."<sup>2</sup>

The Irish problems, together with the Corn Law debates, brought about the dissolution of the Young England Party in 1846. With Disraeli, the majority of its members opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws and the policy of Free Trade. They insisted that the government's proposal to end the famine in Ireland, which had resulted from the failure of the potato crop, by admitting foreign grain duty-free was a fallacy. Free trade would only provide quantities of cheap corn for people who had no money to buy it at any price; and at the same time, it would destroy their market for oats, the one crop with which they had been successful. Besides, Disraeli believed that the repeal of the Corn Laws would not result in Free Trade but only in free imports, which would be disastrous for home industries. In regard to this repeal he disagreed with Carlyle, who had declared, "If I were the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 140.

Conservative Party of England, . . . . I would not for a hundred thousand dollars an hour allow those Corn-Laws to continue."<sup>1</sup>

Carlyle's influence can be seen, however, in the action of George Smythe. Young England's most gifted member was convinced that the repeal of the Corn Laws would be beneficial to the masses of the people; accordingly, he went over to the Peel faction. In view of the fact that the prime minister had repeatedly heaped ridicule upon Smythe even to the extent of publicly urging him to vote with the opposition, one would hardly conclude that any great personal respect for Peel caused him to support the measure. Nor was Smythe influenced by his father, a staunch Tory but a mercenary man who never appreciated his son's nobility of character, yet constantly deplored the fact that George had no respect for his opinions. The only great voice, and from a monetary standpoint, probably the only disinterested one, raised in favor of the repeal of the Corn Laws, was Carlyle's. Undoubtedly Smythe, with his methodical habit of studying every Parliamentary measure, had read Carlyle's opinion of the Corn Laws expressed in Past and Present and had been convinced that repeal was necessary.

Although Disraeli had differed from Carlyle on the Corn Laws, his policy in regard to the Irish Coercion Bill, a revision of the Arms Act, showed similarity to Carlyle's

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 165.

ideas. The Jewish statesman opposed the measure, saying that he had never approved the hostile attitude of the English Parliament toward Ireland and had been able to find no reason of sufficient weight to justify it. The misgovernment of Ireland, he believed, had become injurious to both countries. Neither had Carlyle believed that the Celts were governed in a "wise and loving manner."<sup>1</sup> His earlier appraisal of the men and policies which had ruled that unhappy country was no more flattering to Parliament than Disraeli's subsequent remarks. Carlyle had said:

Violent men there have been and merciful; unjust rulers and just; conflicting in a great element of violence, these five wild centuries now; and the violent and unjust have carried it, and we are come to this;<sup>2</sup>

i.e., famine and unemployment throughout both England and Ireland. But Parliament had not heeded Carlyle; instead, eight years later it proposed the Irish Coercion Bill. The Protectionist Tories, by a coalition with the conservative element of the Whig Party, managed to defeat it. However, by doing this, they brought in a Whig ministry and at the same time dealt the final blow to Young England, whose members disagreed as to whether the condition of Ireland justified a split in the Tory Party.

Never again did Smythe, Manners, and their friends

<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

attempt to act as a group; however, as individuals they were influential in securing many social reforms. Through the columns of The Times, Walter continued to expose the evils of the industrial system, and in the House, Ferrand made as fiery speeches as ever upon the same subject. The efforts of Lord John Manners were still more important; during all the sixty-five years he served in Parliament he constantly strove to obtain justice for the people. Of course the greatest exponent of the program formulated by Young England was Disraeli himself, but through the ensuing twenty-five years of Whig rule, he had little opportunity to promote any radical social reforms.

Finally in 1874, the Jewish statesman became prime minister following a general election by which his party was returned to Parliament with an overwhelming majority. His premiership was noteworthy for its many acts of legislation passed in the interest of humanity rather than in the interest of a particular clique or class. These measures were the realization of the reforms advocated by Carlyle in Past and Present and the Latter-Day Pamphlets. Carlyle had insisted that "Time Bills, Factory Bills, and other such Bills" should be passed; "Sanitary Regulations" should be drawn up and enforced; "every toiling Manchester, its smoke and soot all burnt, [should] have a hundred acres or so of greenfield, with trees on it, for its little children to disport in"; and,

above all, "a right Education Bill"<sup>1</sup> should be enacted. He pleaded for "one true Reforming Statesman, one noble worshipper and knower of human intellect, with the quality of an experienced Politician."<sup>2</sup> A deliverer with the qualifications stipulated was granted to England in the person of Benjamin Disraeli, but Carlyle stubbornly refused to recognize him as anything but a despicable Jew.

One of the first measures enacted after Disraeli came to power was the Ten Hours' Bill limiting the labor of women and children to fifty-six hours per week. A similar bill had been passed in 1847 and repealed in 1850. For a quarter of a century Disraeli had favored its reenactment. Finally, in 1878 the entire group of factory laws was revised and amended by the Consolidation Act. The laboring classes were overjoyed; and Lord Shaftesbury who, unsupported by his own party, had promoted England's first factory regulation in 1848, expressed his personal appreciation in a speech before the House of Lords. Something of constructive nature and of great scope had at last been done about the problem which Carlyle considered the "largest of questions, this question of Work and Wages."<sup>3</sup>

Besides, labor, through Disraeli's legislation, was

<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, pp. 264-265.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Carlyle, Latter-Day Pamphlets (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1903), p. 120.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 209.

placed upon an equal footing with capital. Carlyle had said, "Labour will verily need to be somewhat organized,"<sup>1</sup> but according to the statutes of the time, organization was impossible. All the normal procedures and methods of trade unions constituted the crime of conspiracy; the promoters of such unions were liable to prosecution under criminal law. Disraeli succeeded in abolishing these vicious statutes and in substituting a measure which provided that "conspiracy" would no longer be an offense unless it were employed in "committing what would be a crime if committed by one person."<sup>2</sup> Another bill passed during 1874 made the punishment for breach of contract the same for workmen as it had always been for the employers. Previously the employees had been subject to imprisonment; whereas the employer was subject to fines only. By these two measures the working classes were enabled to secure fair treatment in the courts.

The health and sanitation program which Disraeli promulgated included the points emphasized by Carlyle--adequate light and ventilation in factories, good housing, and public playgrounds. Healthful conditions in mills and mines were required by the provisions of the Factory Acts already mentioned; better homes were made possible by the Artisans' Dwelling Bill, and playgrounds resulted from the passage of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>William Flavelle Monypenny and George Earle Buckle, The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (New York: Macmillan Co., 1920), II, 705.

the Enclosure Acts. In addition, the Rivers Pollution Act was immeasurably valuable in improving the health of the entire nation. Disraeli's motto during his premiership was "Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas."<sup>1</sup>

Having observed the wretched hovels in which people lived in the industrial towns and city slums, Disraeli urged his home secretary, Richard Cross, to introduce the Artisans' Dwelling Bill. The Prime Minister had reached Carlyle's conclusion that the "total abolition of many a foul cellar in our Southwarks, Saint Gileses and dark poison lanes"<sup>2</sup> was necessary to the health of England. The bill provided that homes too dilapidated or too poorly constructed to be repaired satisfactorily should be condemned by government officials and subsequently torn down. In their stead well-lighted, adequately ventilated, yet well ceiled dwellings were to be erected by the government. If the property owners were financially able, they were to be required to bear part of the expense incurred; otherwise, the building would be financed with federal funds. Disraeli must have followed the same line of thought which led Carlyle to inquire in regard to an Irish woman whose destitute state the public had ignored, "Would it not have been economy to help this poor Widow? She took typhus fever and killed seventeen of you."<sup>3</sup> As it is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 702.

<sup>2</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 264.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

indeed true that disease has a way of spreading from tenement to mansion, the Prime Minister felt justified in using public money to improve the artisans' dwellings. The bill was passed with no little difficulty during the Parliamentary session of 1875.

The following year the passage of the Enclosure Acts provided playgrounds by prohibiting the further enclosure of public lands except when such would be of benefit to the entire community. The commons were to be left open in order that the children might play there at will. The purchase of an immense tract of land on the verge of East London was authorized by the Epping Forest Act of 1876; the area was to be reserved forever as a playground for the people of London. At last "every toiling Manchester" had a public park in which its workers and their children might "take a breath of twilight air."<sup>1</sup>

Most important of the legislative measures intended for the promotion of health was the Rivers Pollution Act. This absolutely prohibited the introduction of solid matter or sewage into any streams of the British Isles. Furthermore it held factory owners responsible for the purification of liquids emptied from their mills into the rivers. The statistical reports of the next few years noted a sharp decline in the number of cases of diseases usually contracted from impure

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 265.

drinking-water. Evidently, "Sanitary Regulations," as Carlyle had predicted they would, were enabling the sons and daughters of England to "gain health and life."

Legislation in regard to the savings of the people was another Carlylean matter with which Disraeli concerned himself. The Scotchman had asked "whether the labourer, whatever his wages are, is saving money." Whenever the question could be answered in the affirmative, he concluded that the workingman must still have hope, for, by "laying up money, he proves that his condition, painful as it may be without and within, is not yet desperate."<sup>1</sup> However, Carlyle lamented the fact that the laborer usually "lent his money to some farmer, of capital, or supposed to be of capital--and has too often lost it."<sup>2</sup> Thirty-five years later Disraeli solved the problem of safeguarding investments by enacting the Friendly Societies Bill. This law provided for government supervision of private savings clubs in order to insure the adoption of sound rules, accurate audits, and reasonable yet safe interest rates.

Thrift in another form was encouraged among the farm labourers by the Agricultural Holdings Act. One object of the measure was to prevent ruthless landlords from forcing their tenants to move as soon as they had completed improvements,

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, "Chartism," p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

made at their own expense. This practice had become so widespread that whole class of farm labourers had lost their qualities of thrift and industry. The new law provided that tenants receive just compensation for any improvement which they had made if at the end of their tenure they had not exhausted its value.

Education, which Carlyle said was the "prime necessity of man" and "the first function a government had to set about discharging,"<sup>1</sup> was given great consideration by Disraeli during his second premiership. In order to understand the importance of the measures he sponsored, and their relation to the thoughts advanced by Carlyle, it will be necessary to review briefly the development of elementary education in England.

In 1839 the British government for the second time in all its history set aside a grant for day-school instruction, the paltry sum of thirty thousand pounds, which, as one indignant individual observed, was an amount no larger than the appropriation for the Queen's stable. At that time free, universal, compulsory education nowhere existed; yet Carlyle was declaring in Chartism his conviction that "penalties and disabilities, till they were found effectual, might be by law inflicted on every parent who did not teach his children to read." He urged the government "to send a Schoolmaster and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

Hornbook into every township, parish, and hamlet of England."<sup>1</sup>

National education had already been proposed in Parliament by a few progressive individuals, but one great obstacle, the dissension between the advocates of denominational schools and the advocates of secular schools, lay in its way. Carlyle especially regretted that, in this matter, "religion, of all things, should occasion difficulties."<sup>2</sup> He was scornful of the current ideas that religion could be taught by formal means and that the "Alphabetic Letters" had any innate relation to Christianity, which necessitated that they be taught simultaneously.

By the time Carlyle began Past and Present, the annual appropriation for education had increased to a hundred thousand pounds, but in proportion to the need, this was an insignificant sum. Therefore, Carlyle continued to declare that "If the whole English People . . . . be not educated, with at least schoolmaster's educating, a tremendous responsibility will rest somewhere."<sup>3</sup> As no one heeded this warning, he was still pleading, in 1850, for a "Minister of Education" with the courage to establish efficient schools in spite of the "moribund religions." In 1858, through the efforts of Lord Shaftesbury, Young England, Disraeli, John Forster, and

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 197-198.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>3</sup>Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 266.

others, the annual grant reached a figure six times higher than that of 1843; even so, only one child in seven received any education.

Finally in 1870 John Forster introduced and succeeded in enacting an education bill of a comprehensive nature. By this law, grants-in-aid were made available to all private schools which would conform to government regulations and submit to government inspection; rate-aid schools were established in the communities which lacked adequate elementary education facilities whenever the citizens voluntarily elected trustees to act in a supervisory capacity. While on the whole Forster's bill advanced education immeasurably, few children in the industrial sections were benefitted, because attendance at the schools thus established was neither compulsory nor free.

The Act which Disraeli advocated six years later provided for universal compulsory attendance; provisions were made for its strict enforcement by the appointment of attendance committees in areas where the schools were not already under government supervision. Before the end of Disraeli's premiership, the public school enrollment had doubled. While the Act of 1876 did not provide free education, the attendance committees were granted national funds with which to pay the fees of poor children. At last the boys and girls of England were being taught "the miraculous art of reading and writing," for Disraeli had put into practice what Carlyle had so long advocated.

All in all, Disraeli's ministry succeeded in enacting twenty or thirty measures which substantially contributed to the health, education, and social welfare of the nation; yet it did not burden the people with heavy taxes nor discriminate against any class or industry. It is not surprising that Alexander McDonald, the leader of the Labor Party, told his constituents in 1879, "The Conservative Party have done more for the working classes in five years than the Liberals have in fifty."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the "Reforming Statesman" had vastly improved "the Condition-of-England" by following the general course which Carlyle had so clearly charted more than thirty years earlier.

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<sup>1</sup>Carlyle, Latter-Day Pamphlets, p. 148; also, Monypenny and Buckle, op. cit., p. 709.

<sup>2</sup>It has been necessary to use two editions of The Life of Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield: the six-volume edition published in 1912 and the two-volume edition published in 1920.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study of the relations between Carlyle and Disraeli reveals extraordinarily remote and infrequent personal contacts between the two, and at the same time a notable similarity in the radical social ideas advanced by the man of letters and the measures for social reform which were either introduced or warmly supported by the statesman.

It is largely to the credit of these two that England was able to adjust itself to the age of industrialism without the civil wars and the social and political upheaval which marked its advent in all other densely populated European countries. Carlyle saw with the vision of a true prophet that by continued adherence to a policy of government by laissez-faire, England would eventually come to a state of social chaos. This dismal condition he attempted to avert by insisting upon the rights of labor to reasonable working hours, to sanitary living conditions, to permanent contract, and to equality with employers before the law. He further urged the need for free and compulsory elementary education and a secondary training largely vocational rather than academic. He endeavored strenuously to move the upper classes to a due sense of their social responsibilities. Radical as his ideas seemed to the English leadership of a

century ago, it was not so much what he said as the manner in which he said it that startled his countrymen from their complacency. Of the men who responded to his challenge, none followed greater fidelity in detail and with greater success the procedure he had prescribed than did Benjamin Disraeli. First, by personal investigation, Disraeli ascertained the extent of England's degradation, a procedure which, as Carlyle had said, was the preliminary step in the improvement of the condition of England; second, by example he inspired other men to act in accordance with the courage of their convictions, the only way, according to Carlyle, in which the rejuvenation of the national character could be effected; and finally, by securing the enactment into law of the reforms which Carlyle had advocated to relieve the pressing needs of the working people, Disraeli brought the English nation through the period of industrial adjustment with a minimum of violence and with the constitutional foundations of the nation unimpaired.

This marked resemblance of the policies of the statesman to the ideas of the prophet precludes the possibility of coincidence. Had Carlyle's views been the views commonly held, one might be justified in assuming that Disraeli absorbed them from various sources. But such was not the case; for a very long time Carlyle's was the only voice raised in favor of governmental intervention into, and regulation of private enterprise, for the spirit of the times was the spirit

of utilitarianism and laissez-faire. Nor may one conclude that Disraeli originated his ideas for himself; in the first place, there was nothing in the atmosphere of diletantism and luxury in which he grew to manhood conducive to humanitarian views; second, young men rarely have sufficient experience in living to provide themselves with a social creed; and third, in every case the reforms were advocated by Carlyle at least ten years prior to Disraeli's active efforts to obtain them. In 1830-31 Carlyle denounced the evils which had resulted from the introduction of machinery, but not until 1842 did Disraeli make any attempts at their eradication; although Carlyle was insisting in 1839 upon the need for national education, it was in 1847 that Disraeli championed an education bill of even limited scope; and the radical ideas concerning labor legislation which were expressed in Past and Present were not adopted by the statesman for a quarter of a century.

The conclusion that Disraeli drew the major part of his program of social reform from the writings of Carlyle is inescapable. The perfectly clear reflection of the Carlylean social philosophy in Disraeli's novels, Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred--the famous trilogy which he wrote to give concrete illustrations of his program--is convincing. But it was through a study of Carlyle's writings and not through personal contact with the man himself that the influence of Carlyle was brought to bear upon Disraeli. It is, indeed, regrettable

that the racial, temperamental, and intellectual antipathies of the Calvinist toward the Jew prevented the transfer of ideas through personal contact. Certainly, a harmonious relationship between them could not have failed to benefit England and mankind; but even without it the world they left in 1881 was an immeasurably better place in which to live than the world they had found in their youth.

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