

THE INFLUENCE OF THOMAS CARLYLE UPON THE  
SOCIAL NOVEL OF THE NINETEENTH  
CENTURY

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I hereby recommend that the thesis prepared  
under my supervision by Doris Claire Thompson  
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be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements  
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## PREFACE

In my study of the influence of Carlyle upon the social novel of the nineteenth century, it has been my purpose, first, to discuss the circumstances under which Carlyle's thought, - moral, social, and philosophical, - was developed. The life of Carlyle is largely typical of the intellectual and spiritual history of the age of transition into our twentieth century world. The agencies of transition were industrialism, democracy, and pure science, which effected an economic, a political, and an intellectual revolution. England was the birthplace of industrialism, - certainly the most potent influence in changing the social, and economic structure in society, and in raising the problems that called most imperatively for solution. It is therefore in England that the most violent psychological reaction to a transformation at once unforeseen, rapid, and irresistible, may be found. The son of a working man, Carlyle was intensely interested in, and sympathetic towards, the problems of labor. Therefore he was qualified to preach, and to prophesy concerning the social ills of his time.

How did the social problems arise? Did they result from an attempt to apply a false economic theory? Could these problems be solved through the application of the orthodox economic theories? Carlyle had absolutely no faith in political remedies, in parliamentary legislation, in extended suffrages, in the recognition of 'the rights of man,' in laissez-faire, - absolutely none. Carlyle believed that the social ills of his time were the result of the degradation of the once great English people, absorbed, all of them, in a rage for gold and pleasure. He held that the one law of faithful, ungrudging work, each according to his ability, was alike imperative upon us all, and that, for a real commonwealth to be possible, truth must be spoken, and justice must be done.

After reaching a conclusion as to Carlyle's remedies for the social ills of his time, it has been my purpose to prove that Carlyle transmitted a powerful influence to all men of his own time, and then to show how the social novelists of the nineteenth century reiterated Carlyle's ideas concerning social reform.

In pursuance of these purposes, the following English social documents and novels have been subjected to rigid analysis: Chartism, Past and Present, and Latter-Day Pam-

phlets, by Carlyle; Oliver Twist, Bleak House, and Hard Times, by Dickens; Yeast, and Alton Locke, by Kingsley; Mary Barton, and North and South, by Mrs. Gaskell; and Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred, by Disraeli.

To Dr. L.M. Ellison, Director of the Department of English, it is impossible to express adequately my sincere appreciation of his splendid coöperation in the production of this thesis. Grateful acknowledgment is made to Miss Era Boswell, who rendered me valuable assistance, and to my mother, Mrs. C.M. Thompson, who made this year of study possible.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF THOMAS CARLYLE

"The light of your mind, which is the direct inspiration of the Almighty," is the criterion, indifference to happiness the basis, and "work, not wages" the end, of Carlyle's philosophy. This substantially sufficed Carlyle in the way of philosophical baggage. But the energy with which he preached exclusively this gospel shows that it was the residuum of heroic, - and perhaps to most men unnecessary, - sacrifices. Energy, however, not intellectual complexity, distinguishes him, - energy even more than its direction. He never even addresses the intellect pure and simple. His appeal is to the heart, and to the soul. He arouses the sensibilities and the will directly by an energy of pronouncement, and by an irony that sets the sympathetic in responsive vibration with the definite ideal of duty, and of sacrifice. It is largely strenuousness that gives Carlyle's philosophy its special quality; and its quality conjoined with its character gives it a unique, even an isolated position.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>W. C. Brownell, Victorian Prose Masters, pp. 60-63. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1915.

Carlyle's social philosophy is directly related to the Calvinistic creed, which held that as long as men kept God's commandments, it was well with them, but that when they forgot God's commandments and followed after wealth and enjoyment, the wrath of God fell upon them. Commerce, manufactures, intellectual enlightenment, political liberty, outward pretenses of religiosity, - all that modern nations mean when they speak of wealth and progress and improvement, - were but Moloch or Astarte in a new disguise, and now, as then, it was impossible to serve God and Baal. In some form or other retribution would come, whenever the hearts of men were set on material prosperity.

To the simple Calvinistic creed Carlyle adhered as the central principle of all his thoughts. The outward shell of it had broken; he had ceased to believe in miracles. But to him the natural was the supernatural, and the tales of signs and wonders had risen out of the efforts of men to realize the deepest of truths to themselves. The Jewish history was the symbol of all history. All nations in all ages were under the same dispensation. Man did not come into the world with rights which he was entitled to claim, but with duties which he was ordered to do. Rights man had none, save to be governed justly; duties waited him everywhere. His business was to find what those duties were, and to fulfil them faithfully.

Thus, and only thus, the commonwealth could prosper. Constitutions, and Bills of Rights were no substitutes for justice, and could not further justice, until men were themselves just. The world was not made that the rich might enjoy themselves while the poor toiled and suffered. On such terms society itself was not allowed to exist. The film of habit on which it rested would burst through, and hunger and fury would rise up and bring to judgment the unhappy ones whose business it had been to guide and govern, and who had not guided and had not governed. The years which had followed the Napoleonic Wars had been a time of severe suffering in England. It had been borne on the whole, however, with silent patience, but the fact remained that hundreds of thousands of laborers and artisans had been out of work and their families starving while bread had been made artificially dear by the corn laws; and the gentry meanwhile had collected their rents and shot their partridges, with a deep unconsciousness that anything else was demanded of them. That such an arrangement was not just had early become evident to Carlyle, and not to him only, but to those whose opinions he most respected. His father, though too wise a man to meddle in active politics, would sternly say that the existing state of things could not last and ought not to last. His mother, pious and devout, though she was, yet was a fiery Radical to the end of her days. Radicalism lay in the blood of the Scotch Calvinists, a

bitter inheritance from the Covenanters. Carlyle felt it all to his heart; but he had thought too long, and knew too much to believe in the dreams of the Radicals of politics, for in them lay revolution, feasts of reason, and a reign of terror. For the sick body and the sick soul of modern Europe there was but one remedy, the old remedy of the Jewish prophets, repentance and moral amendment. All men, high and low, wise and unwise, must call back into their minds the meaning of the word 'duty', must put away their cant and hypocrisy, their selfishness and appetite for pleasure, and must speak truth and do justice. Without this, all tinkering with the constitution, and all growth of wealth would avail nothing.<sup>2</sup>

Carlyle's first most important social document, Chartism, is a very simple, direct, and business-like expression of Carlyle's social philosophy. Carlyle begins Chartism by calling attention to the practical condition of England. Chartism had, for the time, been put down, but the discontent, of which it was the expression, remained.

How did the social problems as depicted in Chartism arise? Did they result from an attempt to apply a false economic theory? Could these problems be solved through the application of the orthodox economic theories? Carlyle had absolutely no faith in political remedies, in extended

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<sup>2</sup> J. A. Froude, Carlyle's Life in London, Vol. I, pp. 12-15.

suffrages, in the recognition of 'the rights of man,' in laissez-faire:

To read the Reports of the Poor-Law Commissioners, if one had faith enough, would be a pleasure to the friend of humanity. One sole recipe seems to have been needful for the woes of England: 'refusal of out-door relief.' England lay in sick discontent, writhing powerless on its fever-bed, dark, nigh desperate in wastefulness, want, improvidence, and eating care, till, like Hyperion down the eastern steeps, the Poor-Law Commissioners arose, and said: Let there be workhouses and bread of affliction and water of affliction there! It was a simple invention; as all truly great inventions are.

If paupers are made miserable, paupers will needs decline in multitude. ... To believe practically that the poor and luckless are here only as a nuisance to be abraded and abated, and in some permissible manner made away with, and swept out of sight, is not an amiable faith. To button your pockets and stand still is no complex recipe. Laissez-faire, laissez-passer!<sup>3</sup>

Carlyle held that the one law of faithful, ungrudging work, each according to his ability, was alike imperative with us all. What appealed to his compassion more sorrowfully than almost any other sorrow was that a poor man in his utter guidelessness should be eagerly seeking for work, and have no one, anywhere, to help him to find it.

A man's 'rights', Carlyle thought, are of somewhat too intricate and abstruse a nature to be dealt with by mere statistics or any pecuniary balances of profit and loss:

It is not what a man outwardly has or wants that constitutes that happiness or misery of him. 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. ... The real smart is the soul's pain and stigma, the hurt inflicted on the moral self.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas Carlyle, Chartism (Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, IV), pp. 129-131.

<sup>4</sup>Chartism, IV, p. 144.

The people have the right to be governed by those who have the might to govern them:

The Working Classes cannot any longer go on without Government; without being actually guided and governed. ... 'Guide me, govern me! I am mad and miserable, and cannot guide myself!' Surely of all 'rights of man', this right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be, gently or forcibly, led in the true course by him, is the indisputablest. ... Not towards the impossibility, 'Self-Government' of a multitude by a multitude; but towards some possibility, government by the wisest, does bewildered Europe struggle.<sup>5</sup>

Carlyle believed that mankind is living in a New Era of the World, - an era more critical in its issues, and of more world-wide significance than any era since the Birth of Christianity. He had high, almost inexpressible hopes of the destiny of the English-speaking race. He even thought that perhaps there had never been a race of men in this world so palpably prepared by the Great Providence of the World, and so appointed from afar off, for a heroic work, not of military conquest, but of world-embracing social development and wisely organized industry. Carlyle a mere puller-down? He had one of the grandest dreams of social building-up that ever kindled a prophetic imagination; and he believed the united Anglo-Saxon race was destined to accomplish it.<sup>6</sup>

Carlyle's notion of an effective 'Emigration Service', not for the mere riddance of a troublesome superfluity of

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<sup>5</sup>Chartism, IV, pp. 155, 157-159.

<sup>6</sup>Henry Larkin, Carlyle and the Open Secret of his Life, pp. 107-108.

population, but for the planting and fostering of future Nations upon the waste spaces of the earth, is certainly very different from anything that would be considered at all practicable even yet. As a suggestion, however, Carlyle's emigration scheme as proposed in Chartism is significant.

Carlyle is also emphatic concerning education:

It (Education) is a thing that should need no advocating; much as it does actually need. To impart the gift of thinking to those who cannot think, and yet who could in that case think: this, one would imagine, was the first function a government had to set about discharging. Were it not a cruel thing to see, in any province of an empire, the inhabitants living all mutilated in their limbs, each strong man with his right arm lamed? How much crueler to find the strong soul, with its eyes still sealed, its eyes extinct so that it sees not!<sup>7</sup>

In Past and Present Carlyle, the prophet who first summoned literature to look with imagination on the spectacle of the new day, and to attack its problems with passionate earnestness, touches the heart, arouses the conscience, and compels reflection to a greater degree than in Chartism. Never, in all history, he declared, was the condition of the poor so desperate:

England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition. With unabated bounty the land of England blooms and grows; waving with yellow harvests; thick-studded with workshops, industrial implements, with fifteen millions of workers, understood to be the strongest, the cunningest, and the willingest our Earth ever had; these men are here; the work they have done, the fruit they have realised is here, abundant, exuberant on every

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<sup>7</sup>Chartism, pp. 192-193



hand of us: and behold, some baleful fiat as of Enchantment has gone forth, saying, "Touch it not, ye workers, ye master-workers, ye master-idlers; none of you can touch it, no man of you shall be the better for it; this is enchanted fruit!" On the poor workers such fiat falls first, in its rudest shape; but on the rich master workers too it falls; neither can the rich master-idlers, nor any richest or highest man escape, but all are like to be brought low with it, and made 'poor' enough, in the money sense or a far fataler one.<sup>8</sup>

Carlyle believed that the outstanding social ill of the England of his time was the worship of shams:

Thou there, the thing for thee to do is, if possible, to cease to be a hollow sounding shell of hearsays, egoisms, purblind dilettantisms; and become, were it on the infinitely small scale, a faithful discerning soul.<sup>9</sup>

In his insistence upon honest work, in his assertion that "Labour is Life", he was more in accord with the feeling of his day than with our pleasure-loving epoch:

We construct our theory of Human Duties, not on any Greatest-Nobleness Principle, never so mistaken; no, but on a Greatest-Happiness Principle. 'The word Soul with us, as in some Slavonic dialects, seems to be synonymous with Stomach.'<sup>10</sup>... 'Happy, my brother?' The only happiness a brave man ever troubled himself with asking much about was, happiness enough to get his work done. Not 'I can't eat' but 'I can't work', that was the burden of all wise complaining among men. It is, after all, the one unhappiness of a man, that he cannot work; that he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled.<sup>11</sup>

For there is a perennial nobleness, and even Sacredness in Work. Were he never so henighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works: in idleness alone is there perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean, is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work.

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<sup>8</sup>Past and Present, p. 34.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 190-191.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 193.

done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.<sup>12</sup>

But to get the right work done, "labour must become a seeing national giant, with a soul in the body of him, and take his place on the throne of things." A mere abolition of the Corn-Laws is but a temporary expedient. Listen to Carlyle's prophecy, which has been as singularly fulfilled as was Burke's prophecy in his Reflection on the French Revolution concerning the rise of a military despot fulfilled by the career of Napoleon:

Yes, were the Corn-Laws ended to-morrow, there is nothing yet ended; there is only room for all manner of things beginning. The Corn-Laws gone, and Trade made free, it is as good as certain this paralysis of industry will pass away. We shall have another period of commercial enterprise, of victory and prosperity; during which, it is likely, much money will again be made, and all the people may, by the extant methods, still for a space of years, be kept alive and physically fed. The strangling band of Famine will be loosened from our necks; we shall have room again to breathe; time to bethink ourselves, to repent and consider! A precious and thrice-precious space of years; wherein to struggle as for life in reforming our foul ways; in alleviating, instructing, regulating our people; seeking, as for life, that something like spiritual food be imparted them, some real governance and guidance be provided them! It will be a priceless time. For our new period or paroxysm of commercial prosperity will and can, on the old methods of 'Competition and Devil take the hindmost,' prove but a paroxysm, - likely enough, if we do not use it better to be our last. In this, of itself, is no salvation. If our Trade in twenty years, 'flourishing' as never Trade flourished, could double itself; yet then also, by the old Laissez-faire method, our Population is doubled; we shall then be as we are, only twice as many of us, twice and ten times as unmanageable!<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Past and Present, p. 243.

<sup>13</sup>Past and Present, quoted by Bliss Perry in Thomas Carlyle: How to Know Him, pp. 191-192.

There are certain concrete things that may be done, and here Carlyle is a modern of the moderns. He anticipates twentieth-century legislation in passages like these:

Again, are not Sanitary Regulations possible for a Legislature? The old Romans had their Aediles; who would, I think, in direct contravention to supply - and - demand, have rigourously seen rammed up into total abolition many a foul cellar in our Southwarks, St. Gileses, and dark poison-lanes; saying sternly, "Shall a Roman man dwell there?" The legislature, even as it now is, could order all dingy Manufacturing Towns to cease from their soot and darkness; to let in the blessed sunlight, the blue of Heaven, and become clear and clean; to burn their coal-smoke, namely, and make ~~flame~~ of it. Baths, free air, a wholesome temperature, ceilings twenty feet high, might be ordained, by Act of Parliament, in all establishments licensed as Mills. There are such Mills already extant; - honour to the builders of them! The Legislature can say to others: Go ye and do likewise; better if you can.

Every toiling Manchester, its smoke and soot all burnt, ought it not, among so many world-wide conquests, to have a hundred acres or so of greenfield, with trees on it, conquered, for its little children to disport in; for its all-conquering workers to take a breath of twilight air in? You would say so! A willing Legislature could say so with effect. A willing Legislature could say very many things! And to whatsoever 'vested interest', or such like, stood up, gainsaying merely, 'I shall lose profits', - the willing Legislature would answer, 'Yes, but my sons and daughters will gain health, and life, and a soul.' - 'What is to become of our Cotton-trade?' cried certain Spinners, when the Factory Bill was proposed; 'What is to become of our invaluable Cotton-trade?' The Humanity of England answered steadfastly: 'Deliver me these rickety perishing souls of infants, and let your Cotton-trade take its chance. God Himself commands the one thing; not God especially the other thing. We cannot have prosperous Cotton-trades<sub>14</sub> at the expense of keeping the Devil a partner in them!'

And how prophetic has Carlyle's vision of profit-sharing become!

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<sup>14</sup>Past and Present, pp. 264-265.

A question arises here: Whether, in some ulterior, perhaps not far-distant stage of this 'Chivalry of Labour,' your Master-Worker may not find it possible, and needful, to grant his Workers permanent interest in his enterprise and theirs? So that it became, in practical result, what in essential fact and justice it ever is, a joint enterprise; all men, from the Chief Master down to the lowest Overseer and Operative, economically as well as loyally concerned for it? - Which question I do not answer. The answer, near or else far, is perhaps, Yes; - and yet one knows the difficulties. Despotism is essential in most enterprises; I am told, they do not tolerate 'freedom of debate' on board a Seventy-four! Republican senate and plebiscita would not answer well in Cotton-Mills. And yet observe there too: Freedom, not nomad's or ape's Freedom, but man's Freedom: this is indispensable. We must have it, and will have it! To reconcile Despotism with Freedom; well, is that such a mystery? Do you not already know the way? It is to make your Despotism just. Rigorous as Destiny; but just too, as Destiny and its Laws. The Laws of God: all men obey these, and have no 'Freedom' at all but in obeying them. The way is already known, part of the way; - and courage and some qualities are needed for walking on it! <sup>15</sup>

The whole meaning of Past and Present is that the cash-nexus should not be considered as the only bond between master and man, by either party. The master should not be satisfied with providing good conditions for work and production; he should remember also that workmen have souls. The man should give the utmost quantity, and best quality of work that he is capable of producing, without regard to the money wage he is to receive.

Past and Present signals the turn not of Carlyle alone, but of Victorian literature in general from religious, and ethical to political, and social themes, from personal

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<sup>15</sup>Past and Present, quoted by Bliss Perry in Op. cit., pp. 196-197.

emotion to social welfare. Religion and morals remained, as they doubtless always will, burning questions, though they came to be treated more and more in their relations to society rather than to the individual, but the condition of the people was henceforth a theme that no young writer could overlook as outside the literary realm. There is no need of passing judgment upon Carlyle's remedies and criticisms in comparison with earlier or later practical reforms in order to credit him with a great share in forcing upon the imagination of his generation the problems and conflicts of industrial England. The themes of Past and Present soon found their way into fiction through Mrs. Gaskell, Dickens, and Kingsley; and the moral earnestness of Past and Present gave energy to various propagandists, especially to the Christian Socialists. Poverty, factory labor, and competition, rather than the personal fight with the devil, and reconciliation with God, and the expression of the accompanying emotional extravagances and subtleties, began to possess the imagination, and to cry for discussion in verse or story. Literature was henceforth very conscious of its new environment.<sup>16</sup>

The Latter-Day Pamphlets are Carlyle's strenuously faithful diagnosis of the social maladies of England, with practical suggestions for the beginning of cure, and for the final return to social health. Whoever would know

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<sup>16</sup>Ashley H. Thorndike, Literature in a Changing Age, pp. 81-82.

Carlyle, - his personal aspirations, and sometimes uncontrollable despair; his wonderful insight and strange ethical shortcomings; his ideal of a social organism; his far-reaching aims as a social reformer; and his true place in English social history, - will find it all in what Carlyle calls 'this offensive and alarming set of Pamphlets', or nowhere. Whatever else this portentous outpouring of his soul may have been, it was at least the truest and sincerest utterance of his deepest convictions that, in the full maturity of his powers, and of his influence, he knew how to make.<sup>17</sup> The Latter-Day Pamphlets compared the condition of Europe in 1850 to its condition at the fall of the Roman Empire. Outwardly, the old order held its own, but within, disintegration had become almost complete. Reaction had won only a Pyrrhic victory; the doom of the "order of Routine" was sealed by the inevitability of democracy. In England alone did a semblance of strong government still exist; England might still dam the rising flood of anarchy. But to attain the strength for this Herculean task, she must submit herself to drastic reform. She must let Peel be dictator and make possible a career open to the talents by calling into his cabinet the best and ablest men, irrespective of party or social rank, or

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<sup>17</sup>Henry Larkin, Op. cit., pp. 219-220.

ability to get elected to Parliament. This cabinet must, for a time, neglect Continental affairs as hopeless, and concentrate on the tremendous problems of domestic administration. The employment problem must be solved by collecting paupers and idlers into industrial regiments organized to make waste places productive. Any population thereafter found superfluous must then be cared for by a colonial office with a vision of empire. The Pamphlets provoked much protest, for they denied specifically the right of government by the consent of the governed. Peel was to use Parliament in a mere advisory capacity; he was to disregard the majority opinion when his own was supported by a respectable minority, for the popular course most commonly led to a precipice. The first of the eight Pamphlets, The Present Time, contained the famous metaphor of the ship doubling Cape Horn by ballot:

Your ship can not double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting. The ship may vote this and that, above decks and below, in the most harmonious exquisitely constitutional manner; the ship, to get round Cape Horn, will find a set of conditions already voted for, and fixed with ad amantine rigour by the ancient Elemental Powers, who are entirely careless how you vote. If you can, by voting or without voting, ascertain these conditions, and valiantly conform to them, you will get round the Cape; if you cannot, - the ruffian Winds will blow you ever back again; the inexorable Icebergs, dumb privy-councillors from Chaos, will nudge you with most chaotic 'admonition'; you will be flung half frozen on the Patagonian cliffs, or admonished into shivers by your iceberg councillors, and sent sheer down to Davy Jones, and will never get round Cape Horn at all! <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bliss Perry, op. cit., p. 225.

In the Pamphlets especially, Carlyle loosed against the House of Commons the full force of his magnificent power of vituperation. It was the "Talking Apparatus," not the thinking apparatus, of the nation. It was composed entirely of "Stump Orators," for no modest or honest man would stoop to exercise the odious arts necessary to win the suffrage of "Ten Pound Franchisers, full of beer and balder dash," who were even thus the better men among a nation of "twenty-seven millions, mostly fools." A democracy was clearly incapable of choosing a wise and able executive; the popular subscription of twenty-five thousand pounds for a statue of Hudson, a railroad magnate, unfortunately discovered to be a swindler on the eve of its erection, was a typical expression of the national Hero Worship. Only coercion could save England from worship of the Golden Calf.<sup>19</sup>

With Carlyle's aid, one sees, as it was never seen before, how much is assumed in the phrase "free competition"; but if the freedom be real, the law of competition is perhaps the safest of all laws. There may be a doubt whether Carlyle would have admitted this; and yet, he has stated the principle clearly enough in pointing out the possible effects of "benevolence".

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<sup>19</sup>Emery Neff, Carlyle and Mill, pp. 283-285.



Incompetent Duncan M' Pastehorn, the hapless incompetent mortal to whom I give the cobbling of my boots, - and cannot find in my heart to refuse it, - the poor drunken wretch having a wife and ten children; he withdraws the job from sober, plainly competent, and meritorious Mr. Sparrowbill, generally short of work too; discourages Sparrowbill; teaches him that he too may as well drink and loiter and bungle; that this is not a scene for merit and demerit at all, but for dupery, and whining flattery, and incompetent cobbling of every description; - clearly tending to the ruin of poor Sparrowbill! What harm had Sparrowbill done me that I should so help to ruin him? And I couldn't save the insalvable M' Pastehorn; I merely yielded him, for insufficient work, here and there a half-crown, - which he oftenest drank. And now Sparrowbill also is drinking! <sup>20</sup>

There is nowhere a better argument for really free competition.

And yet an instinct deeper than the Gospel of M' Croudy teaches all men that Colonies are worth something to a country! That if, under the present Colonial Office, they are a vexation to us and themselves, some other Colonial Office can and must be contrived which shall render them a blessing; and that the remedy will be to contrive such a Colonial Office or method of administration, and by no means to cut the Colonies loose. Colonies are not to be picked off the street every day; not a Colony of them but has been bought dear, well purchased by the toil and blood of those we have the honour to be sons of; and we cannot just afford to cut them away because M'Croudy finds the present management of them costs money. The present management will indeed require to be cut away; - but as for the Colonies, we purpose through Heaven's blessing to retain them a while yet! <sup>21</sup>

Strange language is this for the year 1850, though it is familiar enough to-day, or rather it has only ceased to be so, because the very success of its reproofs has now rendered them superfluous. It is not without a melancholy

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<sup>20</sup>Latter-Day Pamphlets, pp. 57-58.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

pleasure that one quotes it, if only as a relief from the general impression that the volume, with all its spirit, eloquence, and caustic irony, leaves behind it - namely, that the prophet's is one of the most perilous of all the professions, and that for turning the wisdom of the wise to foolishness, there is nothing so disastrously effective as the attempt to predict the mysterious course of the future.

As the Pamphlets draw to a close, Carlyle's bitterness increases. "We are a lost gregarious horde, presided over by the Anarch Old." "All art and industry is tainted." With the power of a Swift, he paints the Universe as an immeasurable Swine's trough, and composes a catechism of the whole duty of pigs. And yet, he does not end upon this note, but rather in the fundamental Sartor key, - namely, that "God did make this world, and does forever govern it;" that Time does rest on Eternity; that he who has no vision of Eternity will never get a true hold of Time, or its affairs." His final injunction, then, is to "Do Nobly, ere the night cometh wherein no man can work." Otherwise, humanity will remain under a curse.

It is discord that gave the enormous impetus to Carlyle's influence; it was optimism, tossed fitfully on a vast ocean of pessimism, that acted as a tonic on the national life of the Victorian Age. Carlyle's idealism,

whether in literature or in morals, was an impracticable creed, but idealisms, after all, are not there to be practicable, but, rather, to leaven the practice of life. It was this leaven that Carlyle brought to many who, in youth, fell under the spell of his teaching. Carlyle's influence penetrated deep into English intellectual life, at no time over-prone to impracticable idealisms; and it acted as a deterrent and antidote to the allurements held out by Benthamism, Saint-Simonism, and Comtism; it helped to counteract the secondary effects of the re-birth and advance of science, - a re-birth which made appalling havoc on intellectual idealism in Germany itself. To Carlyle, the first of all practical problems was for a man to discover his appointed activity. The life of the individual man passes, but his work remains. This was Carlyle's firm positive faith, his panacea for the temptations and despairs that assail human life; it stands out now as his greatest message to his generation. <sup>22</sup>

Carlyle's application of ethics to politics has perpetual value, so long as he adheres to his first principles. The most important of these is that the Rights of Man are altogether subordinate to the Duties of Man. "Would in this world of ours is a mere zero to Should."

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<sup>22</sup>A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller, Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. XIII, Part II, pp. 23-24.

In the sphere of practical politics, one must discriminate between the strictly political department of his ideas, and the social and economical. The moral influence of the political idea, in so far as it tended to lift men above party, and to fix attention on what was really vital in institutions, discarding the unessential or obsolete, was of supreme worth. Carlyle's panegyrics of masterful, strong-handed, unscrupulous authority are not bread to live by, but tonics to reinvigorate the system. They are also too contrary to the spirit of the age to be mischievous - massy stones athwart the current, able at most to provoke the waters into foam.<sup>23</sup>

Carlyle, who has done more than anybody else to fire men's hearts with a feeling for right and an eager desire for social activity, has with deliberate contempt thrust away from him the only instruments by which one can make sure what right is, and that the social action is wise and effective. A born poet, he has been driven by the impetuosity of his sympathies to attack the scientific side of social questions in an imaginative and highly emotional manner. Depth of benevolent feeling is unhappily no proof of fitness for handling complex problems, and a fine sense of the picturesque is not a qualification for dealing effectively with the difficulties of an old society.

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<sup>23</sup>Richard Garnett, Life of Thomas Carlyle, pp. 172-173.

Carlyle was a great moral and tonic force. Every line of his writing vibrates with moral earnestness. His influence in stimulating moral energy, in kindling enthusiasm for virtues worthy of enthusiasm, and in stirring a sense of the reality on the one hand, and the unreality on the other, of all that man can do or suffer, has not been surpassed by any teacher of his generation. One of Carlyle's chief and just glories is that for more than forty years he clearly saw, and kept constantly and conspicuously in his own sight and that of his readers, the profoundly important crisis in the midst of which the Anglo-Saxon race are now living. The moral and social dissolution in progress, and the enormous peril of sailing blindfold and haphazard, without rudder or compass or chart, were always fully visible to him. The policy of drifting had no countenance from him. Carlyle declared, boldly and often, that a society would not be likely to endure with hollow and scanty faith, with no government, with a number of institutions, hardly one of them real, with a horrible mass of poverty-stricken and hopeless subjects. Society was not promoting the objects which the social union subsisted to fulfil, nor applying with energetic spirit to the task of preparing a sounder state for the successors. The relations between master and servant, between capitalist and laborer, between landlord and tenant, between governing race and

subject race, between the feelings and intelligence of the legislature and the feelings and intelligence of the nation, between the spiritual power, literary, and ecclesiastical, and those who are under it, and the extreme danger resulting from the anarchy prevailing in these relations were with Carlyle a never-ending theme.<sup>24</sup> Carlyle's imaginative insight was in itself an instrument of revelation to the less happily gifted. He made men pause and see, after all, the limitations of their vaunted science in the presence of the infinite. He reopened the springs of wonder, and he taught that wonder, in the midst of boundless miracle and mystery, is itself the highest worship. He declared that idealism was not, and never will be, dead; that spiritual forces still dominate; that the Universe is not a machine, but an organism, alive, complex, and, above all, moral. Out of this grew his constant insistence upon action and his doctrine of duty. Action is the law of being, and the main-spring of righteous life. "Doubt of any sort cannot be removed but by action." "Not what I Have, but what I Do, is my kingdom." "Blessed is he who has found his work." For not happiness, he declared, is the goal of life, but blessedness, and blessedness is found only in the performance of duty. "Do the Duty which lies nearest thee; thy second Duty will already have become clearer." "Produce!

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<sup>24</sup>J. V. Morley, Critical Miscellanies, pp. 57-60.

Produce! Were it but in the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee; out with it, then up, up! . . . Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work." Through whatever mists of transcendentalism or clouds of error and perversity it came, such a clarion as this found men to listen in the nineteenth century social novelists, who employed the novel as a forum in which the wrongs of the laborious and worthy poor and the many remedies were debated.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE INFLUENCE OF CARLYLE'S SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY UPON CHARLES DICKENS

The most essential part of the present research is a study of the Influence of Thomas Carlyle upon the Social Novel of the Nineteenth Century. The specific objectives will be: (1) to prove that Carlyle, because of his unique social philosophy, transmitted a powerful influence to the social novelists of Victorian England, Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, and Benjamin Disraeli; and (2) to show how each social novelist reiterated Carlyle's ideas concerning social reform. In order that the specific objectives may be realized, it is necessary, first, to subject the social novels of Charles Dickens to rigid analysis, and to establish Dickens' principles in the light of Carlyle.

At the dawn of the modern industrial era, Scott's sovereign imagination had led the reading world back to earlier days, to past ideals, to feudal virtues, to a sympathy for all the associations that gather about place and family and lost causes, to a vision of mankind in the long procession of history, each marching in the



footsteps of those who have gone before. Carlyle reproached Scott for want of seriousness, and sneered at him as the "restaurateur" of Europe; Carlyle's sneer had a powerful influence in causing Dickens to write the social novel. At the full flow of democratic change, Dickens opened our eyes to the multitudes crowding about us, and said: "Here in this mercantile commercial struggle for existence is food for your sympathy; here in this demos I find a humanity to love and to trust." Every page of Dickens' novels proclaims that the men of the common herd are as good, as kind, as noble, as the upper classes. Everywhere there is the query, why should the people be deprived of the enjoyments and privileges of life, which they manifestly deserve? The cult of the lower classes might be traced back at least to the days of the French Revolution, and it found noble imaginative expression in Wordsworth's poetry; but Dickens certainly preached the creed with fresh vigor and an extended application. There is no mistaking his intention to say that the lower classes are better than the upper, that virtue rests at the base of the pyramid. During the nineteenth century, the demos came in for all kinds of adulation and denunciation, of sympathy and contempt, of analysis and interpretation. From the point of view of political economy, it was one thing; from that of sociology or

biology, or anthropology, or the Oxford Movement, or socialism, it had other and different meanings. Dickens did not define it; he imagined it. Out of those tireless walks through crowded London, from that enormous observation and memory, he drew the suggestions that he re-made into a demos of men and women, and especially of children, who live anew in the sympathies of their fellows. The individuals composing this demos are agitated by every emotion that humanity is heir to; they are not as simple and heroic as those of Homer and not so transcendent in their passions as those of Shakespeare, - but more numerous, not less varied, nor less extraordinary. No one else has given us - to employ Professor Saintsbury's happy quotation - anything like this -

"Great streams of people hurrying to and fro."

In spite of its crimes, its absurdities, and its sufferings, the nineteenth century demos is running over with the milk of human kindness.

The fact that Dickens possessed an intense love for, and trust in, humanity is closely related to his early environment, for his philosophy, like Carlyle's, was shaped by early circumstances, both having suffered the lot of the poor in youth. Two dark places in Dickens' early life may be emphasized for the light that they throw upon the mature man. One is his brief term of em-

ployment, at the age of ten, in a shoe-blackening establishment, where his task in a dank cellar was to fill bottles with the viscous fluid for a wage of six shillings a week - pay so poor that the midday meal was omitted at times. It was a loathsome job; Dickens felt humiliated even by the memory of it. That Dickens took it as he did would seem to accentuate a sort of natural refinement and longing for what was fine and beautiful and romantic which was ingrained in him. The other harsh experience was his early contact with the debtor's prison, the Marshalsea, where his father was immured for several years, and where the boy Charles visited him often. Here again, the effect of the place upon such a nature as his must have been one of poignant pain; bitterly shameful was the fact that his father was there as an enforced inmate. There is little doubt that at the base of the novelist's wonderful power of envisaging the odds and ends of humanity lay these early experiences, and that the sympathy which was the motive force of all he wrote was generated by the dark and stressful days of his youth and young manhood. A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.

That environmental factors played a most important part in shaping the social philosophy of Carlyle and Dickens has been emphasized. All his life, Carlyle, reared in a peasant home, had been meditating on the

problem of the working-man's existence in England during the nineteenth century; how wealth was growing, but the human toilers grew none the better, mentally or bodily - not better, only more numerous, and liable, on any check to trade, to sink into squalor and famine. Carlyle was not a revolutionist; he knew well that violence would be no remedy; that therein lay only madness and deeper misery. But the fact remained, portending frightful issues. The Reform Bill was to have mended matters, but the Reform Bill had become law and the poor were none the happier. The power of the State had been shifted from the aristocracy to the mill-owners, and merchants, and shopkeepers. That was all. The handicraftsman remained where he was, or was sinking, rather, into an unowned Arab, to whom 'freedom' meant freedom to work if the employer had work to offer him conveniently to himself, or else freedom to starve. Since Carlyle had no faith in political remedies, in laissez-faire, in extended suffrages, he felt the only remedy to be the old one - to touch the conscience or the fears of those whom he regarded as responsible. He felt that he must write something about the social ills of the time, though it was not easy to see how or where. Dickens was writing under the influence of Carlyle when he accepted as his aim - to make the world better by his work; while amusing it, to be a re-

former without being dull and repellently didactic.

The crowds of children growing up in London affected Carlyle with real pain; these small plants, each with its head just out of the ground, with a whole life ahead, and no preparation for that life! Dickens, too, lent all the might of his influence with his own generation to the reiterant idea that child is a tender plant needing, for proper cultivation and that chance for happiness, which is a human right, kindly understanding and the loving tendance which recognizes personality as something precious and therefore to be respected and cherished. Dickens does not prefer to portray prosperous childhood: the little ones who, favorably situated, are guarded and loved and dowered with the gifts of good fortune. No, most naturally his sympathy, like Carlyle's, is with the poor and lowly; his keen eye penetrates into dark and sordid corners. Wherever children in the festering slums and waste places of the city breathe the foul air, there is this big-hearted lover and observer directing our gaze, often through a mist of tears, but often, too, through smiles of kindness because of many a revelation of the loveliness and innocence and purity of these little unfortunates so that we may truly see and mark and learn to be wise when we come to handling the most delicate, important, and far-reaching of all social questions:

the best upbringing of the youths who are to become, for better or worse, the future citizens of the state.

Carlyle realized that the claim of the poor laborer is for something quite other than to be lodged in work-houses when distress overtakes him. Laborers need not only food for the body, but also social recognition and human fellowship. Dickens, like Carlyle, had an intense feeling for the poor. He depicts this feeling in Oliver Twist, which is an early illustration of Dickens' social sympathy, and of his desire so to present the life of both the abused poor and the criminal at large as to give a truer basis for their right handling by philanthropy and reform. With Oliver Twist the sterner side of Dickens was suddenly revealed: the side resenting social oppression. Dickens has taken the sword in hand after the manner of Carlyle; against what is he declaring war? It is just here that the greatness of Dickens comes in; it is just here that the difference lies between the pedant and the poet. Dickens enters the social and political war, and the first stroke he deals is not only significant, but even startling. The age of Carlyle and Dickens was an age of reform, and even of radical reform; the world was full of radicals and reformers; but only too many of them took the line of attacking anything and everything that was opposed to some particular theory

among the many political theories current at the end of the eighteenth century. Some had so perfected the theory of republicanism that they almost lay awake at night because Queen Victoria had a crown on her head. Others were so certain that mankind had hitherto been merely strangled in the bonds of the State that they saw truth only in the destruction of tariffs and corn-laws. The greater part of that generation held that economy, reason, and a hard common-sense would soon destroy the errors that had come in the wake of the superstitions and sentimentalities of the past. In pursuance of this idea, many of the men of the new century, quite confident that they were invigorating the new age, sought to destroy the old sentimental clericalism, the old sentimental feudalism, the old-world belief in priests, the old-world belief in patrons, and among other things the old-world belief in beggars. They sought among other things to clear away the old visionary kindliness on the subject of vagrants. Hence those reformers enacted not only a new reform law, but also a new poor law. In creating many other modern institutions, they created the modern workhouse, and when Dickens came into the fight, it was the first thing that he broke with his battle-axe.<sup>1</sup> In Dickens' view, the

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<sup>1</sup>G. K. Chesterton, Introduction to Oliver Twist, XI-XII.

pauper system was directly responsible for a great deal of crime. It must be remembered that, by the new Act of 1834, outdoor sustenance was as much as possible done away with, paupers being henceforth relieved only on condition of their entering a workhouse, while the workhouse life was made thoroughly uninviting, among other respects, by the separation of husbands and wives, and parents and children. Against this seemingly harsh treatment of a helpless class Dickens is very bitter; he regards such legislation as the outcome of cold-blooded theory, evolved by well-to-do persons of the privileged caste, who neither perceive nor care about the result of their system in individual suffering.

I wish some well-fed philosopher, whose meat and drink turn to gall within him; whose blood is ice, whose heart is iron; could have seen *Oliver Twist* clutching at the dainty viands that the dog had neglected. . . . There is only one thing I should like better, and that would be to see the philosopher making the same sort of meal himself, with the same relish.<sup>2</sup>

By "philosopher" Dickens meant a political economist; he uses the word frequently in *Oliver Twist*, and always in the spirit which moved Carlyle when speaking of "the dismal science" in his writings. Dickens is the thorough-going advocate of the poor, the uncompromising Radical. Speaking with irony of the vices nourished in Noah Clay-

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<sup>2</sup>*Oliver Twist*, p. 28.



pole by vicious training, he bids us note "how impartially the same amiable qualities are developed in the finest lord and the dirtiest charity boy".

The thought of exposing some national defect, of helping to bring about some real reform, was always paramount in Dickens' mind, just as social and political reform was ever the outstanding thought of Carlyle. To Carlyle, right was right and wrong was wrong, because God had so ordered. He demanded respect for justice:

"What is Justice?" The clothed embodied Justice that sits in Westminster Hall, with penalties, parchments, tip-staves, is very visible. But the unembodied Justice, whereof that other is either an emblem, or else is a fearful indescribability, is not so visible! For the unembodied Justice is of Heaven; a Spirit, and Divinity of Heaven, - invisible to all but the noble and pure of soul. The impure ignoble gaze with eyes, and she is not there. They will prove it to you by logic, by endless Hansard Debatings, by bursts of Parliamentary eloquence. It is not consolatory to behold! For properly, as many men as there are in a Nation who can withal see Heaven's invisible Justice, and know it to be on Earth also omnipotent, so many men are there who stand between a Nation and perdition. So many, and no more. Heavy-laden England, how many hast thou in this hour? The Supreme Power sends new and ever new, all born at least with hearts of flesh and not of stone; - and heavy Misery itself, once heavy enough, will prove didactic! <sup>3</sup>

Dickens, like Carlyle, was not inclined to view judicially any institution or course which impressed him as taking advantage of those who needed justice. Dickens' Bleak House, a truly great piece of fiction, which embodies

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<sup>3</sup>Past and Present, p. 19. (Complete Works, Vol. X.).

Carlyle's ideas concerning justice, is a brilliant, admirable, and most righteous satire upon the monstrous iniquity of "old Father Antic the Law", with incidental mockery of allied abuses which, now as then, hold too large a place in the life of the English people.<sup>4</sup>

Carlyle forcibly denounced the 'Idle Aristocracy':

"Again and again, What shall we say of the Idle Aristocracy, the Owners of the Soil of England; whose recognized function is that of handsomely consuming the rents of England, shooting the partridges of England, and as an agreeable amusement (if the purchase - money and other conveniences serve), dilettanteing in Parliament and Quarter-Sessions for England? We will say mournfully, in the presence of Heaven and Earth, - that we stand speechless, stupent, and know not what to say! That a class of men entitled to live sumptuously on the marrow of the earth; permitted simply, nay entreated, and as yet entreated in vain, to do nothing at all in return, was never heretofore seen on the face of this Planet. That such a class is transitory, exceptional, and, unless Nature's Laws fall dead, cannot continue. That it has continued now a moderate while; has, for the last fifty years, been rapidly attaining its state of perfection. That it will have to find its duties and do them; or else that it must and will cease to be seen on the face of this Planet, which is a Working one, not an Idle one.<sup>5</sup>

Dickens is writing under Carlyle's influence when in Bleak House he associates the subtler evils of an aristocracy sunk to harmful impotence with the glaring injustice of the Law, rotting society down to such places as Tom-all-Alone's:

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<sup>4</sup>John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens, p. 108.

<sup>5</sup>Past and Present, p. 178.

It (Tom-all-Alone's) is a black, dilapidated street, avoided by all decent people; where the crazy houses were seized upon, when their decay was far advanced, by some bold vagrants, who, after establishing their own possession, took to letting them out in lodgings. Now, these tumbling tenements contain, by night, a swarm of misery. As, on the ruined human wretch, vermin parasites appear, so these ruined shelters have bred a crowd of foul existence that crawls in and out of gaps in walls and boards; and coils itself to sleep, in maggot numbers, where the rain drips in; and comes and goes, fetching and carrying fever, and sowing more evil in its every footprint than Lord Coodle, and Sir Thomas Doodle, and the Duke of Foodle, and all the fine gentlemen in office, down to Zoodle, shall set right in five hundred years - though born expressly to do it. <sup>6</sup>

Carlyle pleads forcibly for greater sympathy on the part of the manufacturing class for the laboring class:

Why, the four-footed worker has already got all that this two handed one is clamouring for! How often must I remind you? There is not a horse in England, able and willing to work, but has due food and lodging; and goes about sleek-coated, satisfied in heart. And you say, It is impossible. Brothers, I answer if for you it be impossible, what is to become of you? It is impossible for us to believe it to be impossible. The human brain, looking at these sleek English horses, refuses to believe in such impossibility for Englishmen. <sup>7</sup>

Dickens was an eloquent pleader for a kindlier sympathy on the part of the upper classes for the lower classes.

In Bleak House, Dickens embodies Carlyle's ideas concerning the needs of human beings in the tragic story of poor Jo, the street-sweeper, Jo's story illustrates the poverty, the ignorance, the destitution, the hopelessness, the barrenness, and the dreadful environment of a London

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<sup>6</sup>Bleak House, XVI. p. 292.

<sup>7</sup>Past and Present, p. 29.

street boy. The world has done much better since, as Dickens prophesied it would do, and the good work is going on. Hundreds of thousands of the poor Joes of London are now in the public schools of London; Christian philanthropy of the world thought little of the poor Joes until Dickens told his stories.<sup>8</sup>

Dickens' Hard Times is an attack upon the orthodox political economy, a Latter-Day Pamphlet in the shape of a story. Dickens was bent on striking a blow for the poor; therefore, he set himself to remake Victorian England. The hopelessness of any true solution of either political or social problems by the ordinary Downing Street methods had been startingly impressed on him in Carlyle's Latter-Day Pamphlets; and in the parliamentary talk of the day Dickens, like Carlyle, had come to have little faith for the putting down of any serious evil. Dickens and Carlyle had not made politics at any time a study; politics had been for both an instinct rather than a science; but the instinct was wholesome and sound, and to set class against class they never ceased to think as odious as they thought it righteous at all times to help each to a kindlier knowledge of the other.

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<sup>8</sup>J. L. Hughes, Dickens as an Educator, p. 310.

Dickens reiterated Carlyle's belief concerning the inability of the laissez-faire theory to solve the industrial problems of the age. Carlyle declared that "all this Mammon Gospel, of Supply - and - demand, Competition, Laissez-faire, and Devil take the hindmost, begins to be one of the shabbiest Gospels ever preached, or altogether the shabbiest."<sup>9</sup> In Bleak House, Dickens' attack upon the orthodox economic theories and upon laissez-faire is forcibly expressed in the words of the weaver, Stephen Blackpool, outlawed by his union, but standing up for his fellows against the harsh employer, Bounderby:

"Sir, I canna, wi' my little learning an' my common way, tell the genelman what will better aw this - though some working men o' this town could, above my powers - but I can tell him what I know will never do 't. Agreeing fur to mak one side unnat'rally awlus and forever right, and toother side unnat'rally awlus and forever wrong, will never, never do 't. Nor yet lettin' alone will never do 't. Let thousands upon thousands alone, aw leading the like lives and aw faw'en into the like muddle, and they will be as one, and yo will be as anooother, wi' a black unpassable world betwixt yo, just as long or short a time as sitch-like misery can last. Not drawin nigh to fok, wi' kindness and patience an' cheery ways, that so draws nigh to one another in their monny troubles, and so cherishes one another in their distresses wi what they need themseln-like, I humbly believe, as no people the genelman ha seen in aw his travels can beat - will never do 't till th' Sun turns t' ice. Most o' aw rating 'em as so much Power, and reg'latin' em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines wi'out loves and likens, wi' out souls to weary and souls to hope - when aw goes onquiet, dragging

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<sup>9</sup>Past and Present, p. 228.

on wi' 'em as if they'd nowt o' th' kind, and when aw goes onquiet, reproachin' em for their want of sitch humanly feelins in their dealins wi you - this will never do 't, sir, till God's work is onmade. <sup>10</sup>

England having subordinated agriculture to industrialism, Carlyle thought, and in Past and Present said, that "captains of industry" should succeed to the responsibility and chivalrous code of the lord of the manor. These captains of industry must not only accept the welfare legislation initiated by the factory acts, but must make permanent contracts with their workingmen, assuming responsibility for their maintenance during so-called "overproduction" by becoming an insatiable home market for the goods they produced. Assuming the ethics of chivalry instead of the ethics of buccaneers, manufacturers should cooperate to abolish poverty, admitting workers to profit-sharing, if that were found not to interfere with necessary subordination. In Bleak House Dickens reiterated Carlyle's thoughts concerning the duty of the British manufacturer in Stephen's words addressed to Mr. Bounderby:

"Of course," said Mr. Bounderby, "now perhaps you'll let the gentleman (Mr. James Harthouse) know, how you would set this muddle (as you're so fond of calling it) to rights."

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<sup>10</sup> Hard Times, pp. 176-178.

"I donno, sir, I canna be expecten to 't. 'Tis not me as should be looken to for that, sir. 'Tis them as is put ower me, and ower aw the rest of us. What do they tak upon themseln, sir, if not to do 't?" 11

An entry made in Carlyle's diary during the years 1829-1830 reveals his contemptuous opinions of the entire group of utilitarians:

The Utilitarians are the 'crowning mercy' of this age, the summit (now first appearing to view) of a mass of tendencies which stretch downwards and spread sideways over the whole intellect and morals of the time. By-and-by the clouds will disperse, and we shall see it all in dead nakedness and brutishness; our Utilitarians will pass away with a great noise. You think not? Can the reason of man be trodden under foot for ever by his sense? Can the brute in us prevail for ever over the angel? 12

Throughout his social documents, Chartism, Past and Present, and Latter-Day Pamphlets, Carlyle reiterates his contempt for the utilitarians and their philosophy. Dickens is writing under Carlyle's influence when he attacks the meanness of utilitarianism in the following sentences:

Utilitarian economists, skeletons of schoolmasters, Commissioners of Fact, genteel and used-up infidels, gabblers of many little dog's-eared creeds, the poor you will have always with you. Cultivate in them, while there is yet time, the utmost graces of the fancies and affections, to adorn their lives so much in need of ornament; or, in the day of your triumph, when romance is utterly driven out of their souls, and they and a bare existence stand face to face, Reality will take a

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 177.

<sup>12</sup>J. A. Froude, Carlyle: First Forty Years, Vol. II, p. 64.

wolfish turn, and make an end of you.<sup>13</sup>

Carlyle had absolutely no faith in statistics; the condition of the working man is a question which can not be solved by statistics. Dickens, like Carlyle, was not a believer in statistics. In Hard Times he exhibits his scorn of the old-fashioned cold and cruel system of education whereby fact plays so important a part:

Fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the material aspect of the town; fact, fact, fact, everywhere in the immaterial. The M'Choakumchild school was all fact, and the school of design was all fact, and the relations between master and man were all fact, . . . and what you couldn't state in figures, or show to be purchaseable in the cheapest market and saleable in the dearest, was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen. <sup>14</sup>

Throughout his writings Carlyle pleads emphatically for sincerity in education; Dickens reiterates this plea in Hard Times, for he, like Carlyle, was an enemy of that over-emphasis upon the intellect in education which ignores the palpable fact that it is the chief business of the teacher to clarify and purify and make efficient the emotions, since the heart and soul play, always have played, and always will play, the leading roll in the development of all human beings. Our age, with its god

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<sup>13</sup>Hard Times, p. 192.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



of scientific knowledge, is a little in danger of forgetting this truth, so that Carlyle's and Dickens' attitude comes with special meaning to us.

In Dickens' works the proofs are not few of his readiness to accept the teachings of Carlyle, whom he declared he would "go at all times farther to see than any man alive." Dickens' most important significance is not that he shared in the philanthropic crusade, or that he showed up abuses. Above all, he has, like Carlyle, stimulated the national sensibility which was slowly wasting away in the dry atmosphere of a utilitarian age; he has re-established balance and a more wholesome order in the proportionate values of the motives of life. This psychological action is brought to its most precise and most effectual pitch in his impassioned attack on the frame of mind which supports the individualistic theory of the economists. Dickens has contributed to the salutary weakening of dogmatic egoism. On this point, also, his teaching comes into line with that of Carlyle; he takes up his stand with the prophets of sentiment against the harder advocates of rationalism. Carlyle's Latter-Day Pamphlets, like so much of the political philosophy, if it is to be dignified by that name, which in part Dickens derived from them, were at the time effective strokes of satirical invective.

The pamphlet on Model Prisons summarizes a theory which Dickens sought in every way to enforce upon his readers; that entitled Downing Street settles the question of party government as a question of the choice between Buffy and Boodle, or according to Carlyle, the Honourable Felix Parvulus and the Right Honourable Felicissimus Zero. The corrosive power of such sarcasms may be unquestionable; but the angry rhetoric pointed by them becomes part of the nature of those who habitually employ its utterance in lieu of argument; and not a little of the declamatory element in Dickens, which no doubt at first exercised its effect upon a large number of readers, must be ascribed to his reading of a great writer who was often more stimulative than nutritious.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### THE INFLUENCE OF CARLYLE UPON CHARLES KINGSLEY'S NOVELS OF SOCIAL PROPAGANDA

More than two thousand years ago, when the water-wheel was first introduced into Europe from the East, the Greek poet, Antiparos, sang this song of the triumph of labor: -

O Labourers! who turn the millstone  
Spare your hands and sleep in peace.  
In vain the shrill voice of the cock shall hail  
the day-light: sleep on!  
By order of Demeter, your labour shall be done  
for you by the water nymphs,  
Shining and light, they shall leap upon the wheel  
as it revolves;  
They shall drag round the axle with its spokes,  
and put in motion the great millstone which  
turns round and round.  
Live ye the happy life of your fathers, and enjoy  
without irksome toil.  
The blessings which the goddess showers upon you.

Early in the nineteenth century when applied science, our modern Demeter, was, by the application of steam-power to machinery, revolutionizing the manufacturing industries of England, and a new epoch of social happiness, one would have thought, was about to open for the world of labor, an English poet might surely be expected to sing the same song as that of his Greek brother, But after

more than two thousand years, the economic millenium was as far off as ever. The triumph-song of labor could not yet be sung. Machinery, it was true, had multiplied riches and created leisure. But who were those who were to enjoy them? Herein lied the great practical problem of modern life. How Carlyle and Kingsley faced that problem; how they challenged the modern consecrated regime of individualism and competition, refusing to accept as final the pessimistic dogmas of an economic science which forgot that in the last resort the problem was not about wealth but about men; how they endeavored to formulate a social science in which co-operation rather than competition should be the true law of industrial relationships; how they fought the early battles of sanitary reform, and laid down those principles of the science of public health, whose legal enforcement now forms so large a part of the administrative work of municipalities and other local authorities; and how, because the public remedy of social evils always runs up at last into moral considerations, they endeavored, and not altogether in vain, to awaken the conscience of both the English Church and the English people to regard all these great questions from the Christian point of view, - it will be the chief object in this chapter to make plain.

Charles Kingsley, a man of aggressive energy, intense enthusiasms, varied interests, and lofty ideals, is one of the first, after Carlyle, to feel the ground swell of social democracy which was to sweep later fiction on its mighty tide. In order to understand why Kingsley was so intensely interested in social questions, it is necessary to consider for a moment the circumstances under which Kingsley's thought, - moral, and social, - was developed. Of a family belonging originally to Cheshire, but settled for many generations in Hampshire, Charles Kingsley was born in 1819, at Holne Vicarage, in Devonshire. His father, at that time vicar of Holne, was a man of cultivation and refinement, a faithful parish priest, a lover of art, a keen sportsman, a good linguist, and an ardent student of nature. However, it was from his mother that Charles Kingsley no doubt directly inherited his enthusiastic, poetic nature. When Charles was only five years old, his father had moved from Devonshire to the parish of Barnack, in Northamptonshire. Here the next six years of Charles's boyhood were passed, amid all the weird, mysterious beauty of the great Fenland. It was at Clovelly - to the rectory of which his father had moved in 1830 - that Kingsley first came into touch with all the vigorous life and the manly qualities of a sea-faring people. Here

he learned to appreciate that spirit of adventure and romance which characterized the fisher-folk of the Devon and Cornish coasts, and not less to respect that quiet simplicity and godly piety which is nourished in the hearts of men who win their daily bread in the face of death and danger. Here, too, most probably, he developed those qualities of personality, born of his own unaffected nature, but cherished also by the fact that in early life he lived among the sons of toil on terms of natural equality and simple human dignity, which aided him greatly in later days when dealing with the Chartist and democratic workmen. In 1832 he was sent to the Helston Grammar School. In 1836, when his father had moved to London, to the rectory of Chelsea, Kingsley was entered as a day-student at King's College, and after a two-years' course there, was entered at Magdalen College, Cambridge. His life at Cambridge was undoubtedly one of "storm and stress". The period was one of much religious and political excitement. The Chartist agitation was in full force. Strange views, wild fancies, were fermenting in the minds of all, especially of the young, with a force which Kingsley not long afterwards aptly enough compared "yeast". In the summer of 1839 Kingsley met his future wife, Miss Fanny Grenfell. Her influence on Charles

Kingsley's mind is to be seen upon almost every page of his writings, for amid their manly strength and vigor there is a continual underflow of tenderness and sweetness which tells its own tale of a womanly inspiration. It was she who first introduced him to the works of Carlyle, Coleridge, and Frederick Maurice, the three writers who did most to mould the general bent of Kingsley's mind during the earlier part of his career. His wife testifies that Carlyle's French Revolution did much to establish and intensify Kingsley's belief in God's righteous government of the world, and Carlyle's writings generally were evidently a significant factor in Kingsley's intellectual development. Wide as the poles asunder in many things, Carlyle and Kingsley had yet marked characteristics in common. Both writers had, in fact, much of the spirit of the old Crusaders about them. They both thought of themselves as

"sent forth upon the field of life  
To war with evil."

In July, 1842, Kingsley was ordained, and then at the age of twenty-three settled down as curate of Eversley, little thinking that it was to be his home for thirty-three years. He married in 1844, and shortly after was appointed to the rectory of the parish.

It was in the autumn of 1848, five years after the

publication of Carlyle's Past and Present, that Kingsley's first social novel, Yeast, was published in Fraser's Magazine. Yeast, a story of village life and labor problems, is a powerful representation of the seething state of rural society in the middle of the nineteenth century. There is little plot in the novel. It has for hero, a devout and dashing fox-hunter, Lancelot; for heroine, a squire's daughter, a graceful ascetic, a ritualistic devotee, feeling herself the destined instrument of the hero's conversion; for chorus, a crowd of country gentlemen, parsons, sportsmen, landlords, farmers, laborers, poachers; and for leader of the chorus, Tregarva, the gamekeeper, "a stately, thoughtful-looking Cornishman, some six feet three in height, with thews and sinews in proportion,"<sup>1</sup> a village reformer, agitator, socialist, and poet. The essence of the novel is concentrated in the fierce lyric on the game-laws, written by Tregarva, and called "The Bad Squire".

There's blood on your new foreign shrubs, squire;  
 There's blood on your pointer's feet;  
 There's blood on the game you sell, squire,  
 And there's blood on the game you eat.

You have sold the laboring man, squire,  
 Body and soul to shame,  
 To pay for your seat in the House, squire,  
 And to pay for the feed of your game. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Yeast, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 151.



The verses assigned to Tregarva sum up Kingsley's diagnosis of the social disease with admirable vigor. Many scenes in Yeast are equally vivid in their presentation of the facts. The description of the village feast is a bit of startlingly impressive realism. The poor, sodden, hopeless, spiritless peasantry, consoling themselves with strong drink and brutal songs, open to no impressions of beauty, with no sense of the romantic except in lawless passion, are described with singular force. Kingsley's keen sympathy for suffering humanity, and his appreciation of the wrongs of the village poor, which his experience as a hard-working country parson forced on him, give a vivid intensity to words of bitterness and truth.

Alton Locke, published in the summer of 1850, is a more ambitious and coherent effort than Yeast. Alton Locke, which kindled afresh the spirit of revolt against class oppression, is the story of a young London tailor who, filled with yearnings, poetical and political, which his situation rendered hopeless, joined the Chartists, shared their failure, and in despair quitted England for the New World, only to die on reaching the promised land. All his misery and failure are ascribed to the brutal indifference of the rich and well-taught to the needs and aspirations of the working man.

Kingsley was a great imitative writer; his great model in prose was Carlyle. Everywhere in Yeast is apparent Kingsley's enormous debt to Carlyle. The very spirit of the novel is Carlyle's. Certainly Yeast was directly affected by Past and Present. In its abruptness, its eloquence, and its sincerity, it is Carlylean. Carlyle in particular helped Kingsley to become revolutionary, and afterwards to settle his ferment and grow Tory again; and to adopt that vehement master's description of another of his pupil's novels, Yeast is "a fervid creation still left half chaotic."

Throughout Yeast, references to Carlyle are frequent. In one of the earlier chapters of the novel, which is a "confession-book" of a young man of 1848, Kingsley makes a significant reference to Carlyle's Past and Present. "You may hunt all Surius," says Lancelot, "for such a biography of a mediaeval worthy as Carlyle has given of your Abbot Samson." <sup>3</sup>

Kingsley's sympathy, like Carlyle's, was directed toward the suffering poor. In Yeast, he pictures the villages as hotbeds of fever, of squalid penury, and dull discontent. His ideas concerning the working-man's lot are best expressed by Tregarva, the village social re-

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<sup>3</sup>Yeast, p. 76

former in Yeast. "Day labourer born, day labourer live, from hand to mouth, scraping and grinding to get not meal and beer even, but bread and potatoes; and then, at the end of it all, for a worthy reward, half a crown a week of parish pay - or the workhouse. That's a lively hopeful prospect for a Christian man."<sup>4</sup> Kingsley is reiterating Carlyle's demand for a "fair day's wages for a fair day's work." Kingsley longed to bring to the suffering poor the good tidings that the Ruler of the world was living and just, and would not long leave their wrongs unrighted.

To Kingsley, as to Carlyle, the outstanding social ill of the time lay in the fact that those who were capable of leading the ignorant classes would not lead. Kingsley's remedy for bad squires and parsons was not disendowment and division of the land, but the education of a better generation of parsons and squires. There is a superficial resemblance between this theory and that of the Young England school, who, like Carlyle and Kingsley felt that the country parson had a specific duty to perform. When from the village pulpit the parson is performing the Church's prophetic function of interpreter of Life, he must so learn to speak to his people that

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 173.

they shall come to feel it a point of honor and of Christian obligation to build up, as far as their influence extends, the life of the civic brotherhood to which they belong, the corporate life of the village, in justice, righteousness, and the fear of God. Kingsley also had a duty for the working-man to perform. What he most earnestly sought to enforce was that, if the condition of the working-class was to be permanently improved, it could only be by the nobler spirits of that class co-operating with those of a higher class to raise their fellows. Hence he taught, rather too absolutely, that the working-man who made it his ambition to become something else than a working-man was a traitor to his class. A rigid application of such a rule as this would result in a system of caste. If the working-man must always remain a working-man, is the working-man's son justified in seeking another career? And if not, was Carlyle a sinner because, being born the son of a stone-mason, he became a writer of books? Notwithstanding its errors, Yeast is sound at heart and full of life and energy.

Kingsley is writing under Carlyle's influence when he attacks indiscriminate and unthoughtful charity. The following passage will serve to illustrate the way in which Kingsley has acted upon suggestions from Carlyle:

And as for the charitable great people, when they see poor folk sick or hungry before their eyes, they pull out their purses fast enough, God bless them! for they would not like to be so themselves. But the oppression that goes on all the year round; and the want that goes on all the year round; and the filth, and the lying, and swearing and the profligacy that goes on all the year round; and the sickening weight of debt, and the miserable grinding anxiety from rent-day to rent-day, and Saturday night to Saturday night, that crushes a man's soul down, and drives every thought out of his head but how he is to fill his stomach, and warm his back, and keep a house over his head, till he daren't for his life take his thoughts one moment off the meat that perisheth - they never feel this, and therefore they never dream that there are thousands who feel this, and feel nothing else. <sup>5</sup>

Kingsley's close reading of Carlyle's Past and Present is attested by the fact that Kingsley has borrowed his educational ideas from Carlyle. Throughout Past and Present Carlyle emphasized the fact that both the so-called upper and lower classes must be trained to recognize true sovereignty; he believed sincerely that the means to achieve the realization was education. He recommended the establishment of an effective 'Teaching Service', including a "Captain-General of Teachers, who will certainly contrive to get us taught."<sup>6</sup> Kingsley insisted throughout Yeast that if man living in civilized society had one right which he could demand, it was that the State, which existed by his labor, should enable him

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<sup>5</sup>Yeast, p. 47.

<sup>6</sup>Past and Present, p. 266.

to develop his whole faculties to the utmost.

Kingsley is writing under Carlyle's influence when he diagnoses the social ills of the time as caused by the fact that "we have forgotten God." Behind everything in Carlyle lay an unalterable belief in the Law of the Universe, which was his Religion, and a conviction that this law was identical with Truth and Justice, - the only things capable of being conserved. No higher standard of truth than Carlyle's has ever been before the world. Neither by word, nor by action, nor by refraining from action, would he palter with the truth. Carlyle expressed the truth that the only thing to regenerate the world is more of the spirit of God. Kingsley's purpose in writing Yeast was " 'to turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the hearts of the children to the parents, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come,' - as come it surely will, if we persist much longer in substituting denunciation for sympathy, instruction for education, and Parisaism for the Good News of the Kingdom of God." <sup>7</sup>

In Carlyle and Kingsley are to be found the same admixture of humility and audacity, the charm of natural simplicity which attracts friends and attaches disciples,

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<sup>7</sup>Yeast, p. 10.

and the leonine defiance of falsities and wrongs. In Carlyle and Kingsley, too, may be observed the "passionate limitation of view" which looks on human affairs from the ideal standpoint of social reformers, rather than the realistic standpoint of social politicians or economists. This often impels Carlyle in Past and Present and Kingsley in Yeast to dwell on social wrongs with the forcefulness of undisciplined exaggeration.

The largest direct obligation which Kingsley owes to Carlyle is perhaps that of his character, Saunders Mackaye, in Alton Locke. Much of Carlyle's manner and conversation is reflected in Mackaye, "that wonderfully splendid and coherent piece of Scotch bravura", as he himself called it. All the essential elements of character are common to both: intrepidity, independence, steadfastness, frugality, prudence, and dauntlessness.

As long as there was evil in the world, Carlyle and Kingsley stood up to fight it; head downwards both charged at every red rag of doctrine, either in defense or offense. Like Carlyle, Kingsley attacked political economy most vehemently. In the fiery Chartist, Cross-thwaite, who is Alton Locke's chosen friend, Kingsley satirized political economy:

But you can recollect as well as I can, when a deputation of us went up to a member of parliament - one

that was reputed a philosopher, and a liberal - and set before him the ever-increasing penury and misery of our trade, and of those connected with it; you recollect his answer - that, however glad he would be to help us, it was impossible - he could not alter the laws of nature - that wages were regulated by the amount of competition among the men themselves, and that it was no business of government, or any one else, to interfere in contracts between the employer and employed, that those things regulated themselves by the laws of political economy, which it was madness and suicide to oppose.<sup>8</sup>

The closing words of Alton Locke are an echo of Carlyle's theory concerning the sacredness of work:

Weep, weep, weep, and weep,  
For pauper, doll, and slave;  
Hark! from wasted moor and fen,  
Feverous alley, workhouse den,  
Swells the wail of Englishmen:  
Work! or the grave!

Down, down, down, and down,  
With idler, knave, and tyrant;  
Why for sluggards stint and moil?  
He that will not live by toil  
Has no right on English soil;  
God's words our warrant!

Up, Up, up, and up,  
Face your game, and play it!  
The night is past - behold the sun! -  
The cup is full, the web is spun,  
The Judge is set, the doom begun,  
Who shall stay it?<sup>9</sup>

Carlyle's burning sympathy with the poor is to be emphasized. His distrust of contemporary Literary Philosophical and Parliamentary Radicalism served but to intensify his feeling that the poor were without

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<sup>8</sup>Alton Locke, p. 110.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 370.



a helper. He saw that the problem of poverty lay deeper than any mere measure of political reform. "Chartism", he declares, "means the bitter discontent grown fierce and mad, the wrong condition therefore or the wrong disposition of the Working Classes of England." Carlyle's chief contribution to the long Chartist agitation was in furnishing what may be called the "sociological" point of view. "Where the great mass of men is tolerably right, all is right; where they are not right, all is wrong." On the tenth of April, 1848, a Chartist revolution was threatened in England. One hundred thousand armed men were to meet on Kennington Common, and from thence to march to Westminster, there to compel, by physical force, if necessary, the acceptance of the People's Charter by the Houses of Parliament. The Charter contained six important points: universal suffrage, abolition of property qualification for members of Parliament, annual parliaments, equal representation, payment of members of Parliament, and vote by ballot at elections. However, on Kennington Common, the expected one hundred thousand men rapidly dwindled to a rabble of reckless partisans. The Chartist leader, Feargus O'Connor, an irresponsible Irish rhetorician, acted with the irresolute weakness common to his class in face of superior force. Torrents of rain completed the fiasco. And the day which had dawned with

all the possibilities of a great national tragedy, closed in burlesque and inextinguishable laughter. Kingsley has thus described the final scene in one of the last chapters of Alton Locke: -

The sun had risen on the tenth of April. What would be done before the sun had set? What would be done? Just what we had the might to do; and, therefore, according to the formula on which we were about to act, that might is right, just what we had a right to do - nothing. . . . It is a day to be forgotten and forgiven. . . . Every one of Mackaye's predictions came true. We had arrayed against us, by our own folly, the very physical force to which we had appealed. The dread of general plunder and outrage by the savages of London, the national hatred of that French and Irish interference of which we had boasted, armed against us thousands of special constables who had in the abstract little or no objection to our political opinions. The practical common-sense of England, whatever discontent it might feel with the existing system, refused to let it be hurled rudely down on the mere chance of building up on its ruins something as yet untried and even undefined. Above all, the people would not rise. Whatever sympathy they had with us, they did not care to show it. And then futility after futility exposed itself. . . . O'Connor's courage failed him after all. He contrived to be called away at the critical moment by some problematical superintendent of police. Poor Cuffy, the honestest, if not the wisest, speaker there, leapt off the wagon, exclaiming that we were all 'humbled and betrayed'; and the meeting broke up pitifully piecemeal, drenched and cowed, body and soul, by pouring rain on its way home - for the very heavens mercifully helped to quench our folly - while the monster-petition crawled ludicrously away in a hack cab, to be dragged to the floor of the House of Commons amid roars of laughter. . . .<sup>10</sup>

This description shows that Kingsley realized the futilities and absurdities of the agitation. But that he was

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<sup>10</sup>Alton Locke, pp. 309 -310.

profoundly moved at the time cannot be denied. It was a profound and passionate sympathy with what he knew of the real sufferings of the poor that caused Kingsley to act and write as he did.

Kingsley is writing under the influence of Carlyle when he states the principle neglected by the Chartists, the necessity that reform come from within an individual rather than from without. Kingsley, like Carlyle, emphasized the fact that the Charter would no more make men good than political economy, or any other Morrison's pill.

Kingsley's belief remains unchanged that true Christianity and true monarchy are not only compatible with, but require as their necessary complement, true freedom for every man of every class; and that the Charter was just as wise and as righteous a "Reform Bill" as any which England had had, or was likely to have. Kingsley's experience gave him, however, little hope of any great development of the true democratic principle in Britain, because it gave him little indication that the many were fit for it. Kingsley held that democracy meant a government not merely by numbers of isolated individuals, but by a Demos - by men accustomed to live in Demoi, or corporate bodies, and accustomed, therefore, to self-control,

obedience to law, and self-sacrificing public spirit; but that a democracy of mere numbers is a mere brute "arithmeticocracy." Kingsley, like Carlyle, urged the working-men of Great Britain to train themselves in the corporate spirit, and in the obedience and self-control which it brings, - as they easily can in associations, - and to bear in mind always that only he who can obey is fit to rule. Kingsley borrowed the following idea directly from Carlyle: happy is the man who does the duty which lies nearest him, who educates his family, and who performs his daily work as to God and to his country, not merely to his employer and to himself; for it is only he that is faithful over a few things who will be made ruler over many things.

The one remedy needed to renovate society, a remedy current throughout Carlyle's social documents, is reiterated by Kingsley in Alton Locke. Kingsley puts into the mouth of his heroine in Alton Locke the remedy; she is speaking of Christ as the great Social Emancipator, who alone can renovate human society.

She spoke of Him as the great Reformer and yet as the true Conservative: the inspirer of all new truths, revealing in the Bible to every age abysses of new wisdom as the times require: and yet the indicator of all which is ancient and eternal - the justifier of his own dealings with man from the beginning. She spoke of Him as the true demagogue - the Champion of the poor; and yet

as the true king, above and below all earthly rank; on whose will alone all real superiority of man to man, all time-justified and time-honoured usages of the family, the society, the nation stand, and shall stand for ever. . . . Look at the great societies of our own day, which, however imperfectly, still lovingly and earnestly do their measure of God's work at home and abroad; and say, when was there ever real union, co-operation, philanthropy, equality, brotherhood among men, save in loyalty to Him - Jesus who died upon the Cross. <sup>11</sup>

In the description of fetid and filthy workshops and fever dens of the sweaters, in its exposure of the causes which turned honest and peaceable working-men into conspirators, Kingsley, like Carlyle, did the work of half a dozen labor commissions, and did it much more effectually by appealing in fervid tones of passionate sympathy to the well-to-do people of his day, calling upon them to rescue their fellow-men from destruction of soul and body, and stimulating private and public philanthropy to set about and to face the social problem with honesty of purpose. It is too much to say that Alton Locke brought on the political reforms of England, - the demands of the Charter, the equal districts, the vote by ballot, the extended suffrage; it is too much to say that Alton Locke freed the apprentice. It is not too much to say that the novel notably advanced the cause of freedom. When the influences are summed up which have made for social and

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<sup>11</sup>Alton Locke, p. 339.

political enlightenment in England, no small share will be found due to this purposeful novel of Charles Kingsley.

In Alton Locke Kingsley expresses the fact that Carlyle's The French Revolution first recalled him to the overwhelming and yet ennobling knowledge that there was such a thing as duty, and first taught him "to see in history not the mere farce -tragedy of man's crimes and follies, but the dealings of a righteous Ruler of the universe, whose ways are in the great deep, and whom the sins and errors, as well as the virtues and discoveries of man, must obey and justify." <sup>12</sup>

In the great upheavings of 1848, when some men thought that the worst days of the French Revolution were returning, and others looked to a brief convulsion preceding the general establishment of peace and good will towards men, Kingsley was one of the observers who believed that so great and general a movement must be productive of good if it were only directed to a really good object, and not to some impossible ideal, the realization of which would not be desirable if it could be attained. Plunging with his leader, Frederick Denison Maurice, and others, including Archdeacon Hare, Scott, Ludlow, John Sterling, Charles Mansfield, J. W. Parker, and

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<sup>12</sup>Alton Locke, p. 104.

Thomas Hughes, into the social questions of the day, Kingsley aimed, as did the school which he followed, at introducing a Christian leaven into the half-formed and undigested schemes and aspirations of the working classes. The Christian Socialist movement sought not only to promote a more brotherly spirit between rich and poor - "the two nations into which", according to the well-known phrase in Disraeli's Sybil, "England was divided" - and to create a desire, at least on the part of the more cultured classes, to seek for a more Christian, and therefore more reasonable, solution of the social and labor problem, but also to foster the growth of the great industrial co-operative societies, whose success promises so much for the industrial future of the country, and points in all probability to the direction in which lies the ultimate solution of the problem of labor and capital.

The moral earnestness of Carlyle's Past and Present gave energy to the Christian Socialists. It is hardly too much to say that it was the doctrine of Maurice, rather than that of Pusey or Newman, which for forty years - Maurice began his work in 1835; he died in 1872 - "kept the whole of the forward movement in the social and political life of the English people in union with God and identified with religion." "If the Oxford tracts did

wonders", said Maurice, " why should not we?" <sup>13</sup> He proposed, therefore, a new set of real "Tracts for the Times." The issue of the Politics ran through seventeen weekly numbers, and came to an end in July, 1848. The contributions to the publication were writing under the influence of Carlyle when they denied the Chartist assumption that the greatest and deepest of social evils are those which are caused by legislation, or can be removed by it.

Kingsley was far less intense and theological than Maurice. He had a broader nature, which took in more of the variety and beauty of life. He had a far higher capacity of natural enjoyment. But he, too, in everything, - in his novel-writing, in his social efforts, in his history and science, as well as in his sermons, - was a witness to the divine. He did not glow as Maurice did, with a Divine radiance in all he did; he had neither Maurice's subtlety nor his profundity; but he was more intelligible, healthy, and broad-minded, and he carried the spirit of Christianity heartily into all his work. Maurice was more of the prophet both in his tenderness and occasional fierceness; Kingsley was more of the poet.

Kingsley's Yeast and Alton Locke have imparted to thousands of readers something of the generosity of

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<sup>13</sup>Charles William Stubbs, Kingsley and the Christian Social Movement, p. 104.



"Christian Socialism". In Yeast Tregarva interprets the misery of the country as in Alton Locke Sandy Mackaye depicts the anguish of the city. In Yeast Lancelot is merely a Socratic questioner, and Tregarva's long responses are like a Kingsleyan social pamphlet. The kinds of oppression are not wholly familiar, but Kingsley convinces by sheer vehemence and passion.

When the state of public opinion on economic morals at the time of the inception of the Christian Socialist movement is compared with the state of public opinion in the twentieth century, one is at least conscious of a marked increase of solicitude about all the problems of industrial and social life, and of sympathy with the struggles, sufferings, responsibilities, and anxieties which those problems involve. There has also been a new departure in economic thought, relaxing the dread of interference with natural laws, which at one time was so keenly felt by both economic teachers and the world at large. Above all, there has come an absolutely changed attitude on the part of the Church of England herself in regard to all these social problems, a recognition in the first place that the Church of Christ has a social mission, has a duty laid upon her, of harmonizing all the facts of human life - social, political, industrial, and as a consequence of that, an acknowledgment that many of the

ideas which are stirring in the world outside are the very same ideas which are to be found at the heart of the Christian religion.

Kingsley acknowledged the intellectual leadership of Carlyle. They agree in seeing facts through the medium of the imagination, and substituting poetic intuition for the slow and chilling processes of scientific reasoning. They also agree in rejecting the rigid framework of dogma, and in desiring to exalt the spirit above the dead letter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CARLYLE'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PHILOSOPHY AS REFLECTED IN THE NOVELS OF MRS. ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASSELL

The nineteenth century saw the field of the novel immensely widened, to keep pace with the growing complexity of life. Problems of science, religion, social reform, labor and capital, war and peace, were engaging people's minds. The new era of machinery had brought people into the cities, where they lived miserably under unsanitary conditions. Old laws no longer fitted new customs, and a new race of writers grew up to combat them. It was high time for the social novel to appear, for if fiction mirrors life, so considerable a segment of life as that of the laboring and industrial classes could no longer be ignored. The century, though yet but in its fifth decade, had witnessed changes as far-reaching as any that had taken place in the history of industry. The bent of literature toward the problems of the industrial classes was undoubtedly largely due to Carlyle. "A feeling very generally exists that the condition and disposition of the Working Classes is a rather ominous matter at present; that something ought to be done in regard to it."<sup>1</sup> Thus begins the brilliant

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<sup>1</sup>Chartism, p. 118.

picture of England as portrayed in Chartism. The "condition of England" question is the theme of a more complete and a more stirring document, Past and Present, which exerted a tremendous influence upon the humanitarian novels of Charles Dickens, Charles Kingsley, and Mrs. Gaskell. It will be the object of this chapter to show the relation of the social documents of Carlyle to the humanitarian novels of Mrs. Gaskell.

Before the social novels of Mrs. Gaskell are analyzed in the light of Carlyle's teachings, it will be necessary to state the concrete facts in Mrs. Gaskell's life with particular emphasis upon the origin of the sociological interests of her life. Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson was born at 93 Cheyne Walk, London, on September 29, 1810. She was the daughter, by his first marriage, of William Stevenson, a man of some mark, and of a versatility of mind sufficiently attested by his career. Her mother, Elizabeth Holland Stevenson, was connected with strong, well-to-do, middle-class families, for the most part Unitarian Dissenters. Soon after Elizabeth's birth, the Stevenson family moved to 3 Beaufort Row, Chelsea, and there shortly afterwards, Mrs. Stevenson died. The father, left with a baby to care for, and having duties which demanded much of his time, agreed to allow his daughter to be taken by her aunt, Mrs. Hannah Lumb, who was living at Knutsford.

At Knutsford, in the midst of a small society of relatives and friends, Elizabeth spent her childhood. The quiet routine of life in a small village was broken only by visits to Sandle Bridge, rides about the country with Dr. Peter Holland, and occasional trips to London to see her father. Life went on thus quietly for Elizabeth until June, 1825, when she was approaching her fifteenth birthday. By this time she had progressed in learning so far as to make it desirable for her to enter an advanced school; consequently, it was decided that she should attend Avonbank School, at Stratford-on-Avon. Here she spent two years, including holidays. On August 30, 1832, a new chapter in her life opened with her marriage, in the Parish Church at Knutsford, to the Rev. William Gaskell, then, and to the end of his life, joint minister of the Unitarian Chapel in Cross Street, Manchester. Mrs. Gaskell entered with zest upon her duties as the wife of a minister, visiting the sick, helping in the Sunday schools, and entertaining her husband's parishioners. Incidentally, she was learning through contact with life at first hand of conditions among the Manchester poor, and absorbing information about working people which before many years she was to use in her social novels. Manchester, as the manufacturing center of England, was quick to exhibit whatever ills arose in the social life of the people. The two decades before 1850

witnessed a bitter struggle between the capitalists and the working classes, and as a minister's wife in one of the cities most affected, Mrs. Gaskell had in some measure at least to take part in that struggle. Here she came into daily contact with workingmen and their families, witnessed their distress, especially in such years as 1840, when more than a hundred mills and manufacturing plants were standing idle, and did her part in alleviating suffering. Attracted, like all natures in which deep feeling is accompanied by a spontaneous flow of humor, she never dwelt in extremes. In dealing with those social problems with which she was brought face to face, and which became one of the chief interests of her life, personal as well as literary, she schooled herself into a sustained moral effort to be just.

During the twenty years of her literary life, Mrs. Gaskell wrote five novels, a biography, the group of sketches which she called Cranford, several poems, and more than forty articles and short works of fiction. To note her advance in these years, one has but to compare Libbie Marsh's Three Eras with Cousin Phillis, or Mary Barton with Wives and Daughters, a story which was still unfinished when the pen dropped from her hand on November 12, 1865.

Mrs. Gaskell's chief general contributions to literature were those she made in the social novel, and in the delineation of village manners and customs in Victorian

England. Her particular powers lay in her ability to characterize spinsters and doctors and servants, her excellent use of dialect, and her sympathetic understanding of the views of English workingmen. To have done any of these things would have been worthy of note; to have done ~~all~~ three, and to have done them well, will insure Mrs. Gaskell a lasting place among English writers.

To know precisely what Mrs. Gaskell's moral and social system included requires a brief summary of her first "novel with a purpose", Mary Barton, published in 1848. Mary Barton is concerned with the relation between the manufacturers and the weavers of Manchester, and shows the terrible distress among the poor caused by the scarcity of corn resulting from the bad harvests that from 1837 had followed four or five years of good harvests and general prosperity. This novel is based upon the National Convention of workingmen's delegates of 1839, among whom John Barton is represented as one. Before Barton leaves to present the Chartist petition to Parliament, his friends clamor about him; each suggests out of his own needs something that Barton should demand of Parliament, such as that all the machinery be broken, that shorter hours be enforced, that children be allowed to work in the mills, that people of the upper classes promise to wear calico shirts and dresses, that free trade be established, and that women be kept from working in the factories. This diversity of aim kept the operatives from securing their desires, and their

leaders, being suspicious, impetuous, ignorant, and incapable of directing the thought of the workmen exerted upon them a harmful rather than a beneficial influence. The rejection of the petition resulted in demonstrations of violence and attempts of intimidation on the part of the Chartists, reflected in Mary Barton in the account of the murder of Henry Carson. Mrs. Gaskell attempts not to justify, but to make intelligible the feeling of animosity of the weavers toward the wealthy mill-owners, just as Kingsley accounts for the bitterness of the Chartist toward the upper classes, in Alton Locke.

Though none of the characters in Mary Barton are mentioned in North and South, and even the place where the action of the latter novel occurs is disguised under a fictitious name, Milton-Northern, North and South is in theme a sequel of Mary Barton. North and South was written between the early part of 1853 and the first month of 1855. It continues the narrative of events and issues in a great manufacturing center. But now, instead of speaking chiefly for the employees, Mrs. Gaskell spoke for the manufacturers. In Mary Barton old Mr. Carson is, towards the end of his career, brought to an insight into the significance of all that remains to be done in order to humanize the personal relations between employer and employee. In North and South the whole course of the story shows how the hero,



Mr. Thornton, a man of true Lancashire metal, possessed of a firm will, a clear head, and a true heart, gradually finds for himself the true solution of a problem of which he has come to understand the conditions in their entirety. The intuition of Margaret, the refined and ardent daughter of the mill-owner's tutor, has from the first pointed to this solution. Through her Mr. Thornton comes to know Higgins; through Higgins, his fellow-workmen; and in the end the simple and self-evident conclusion, "God has made us so that we must be mutually dependent," is acknowledged true on both sides.

It will be well to consider the social and economic conditions of society during the time in which Carlyle and Mrs. Gaskell lived and wrote. From the very beginning of the nineteenth century, problems having to do with capital and labor assumed a place of high importance in politics and industry. As early as 1811, the Government under Lord Liverpool was turning its attention to social conditions. Widespread depression prevailed, especially in the Midland counties, so that formidable disturbances, detrimental alike to the progress of industry and to the welfare of society, broke out. There were many causes for this depression, but the laborers, knowing nothing of economic science, laid the blame chiefly upon the adoption of improvements in machinery, especially those made by Cart-

wright and Arkwright in spinning and weaving machines. In 1815, Parliament passed a corn law, which provided that no wheat could be imported without high duty until the price at home had reached eighty shillings a quarter, except that from British North America wheat might be imported after the price at home had reached sixty-seven shillings a quarter. The five years following the passage of this law were indeed lean ones. The people were in a state either of hopeless despondency or of active resentment, and their condition led to acts which changed materially the relationship between the classes. The next decade, however, was free of untoward events of marked import, but with 1830 another period of commercial and agricultural depression began. The harvest of 1829 was meager, and the winter that followed was the worst in sixteen years. The distressed operatives again vented their rage in a series of grave disturbances; and so acute did conditions become that Parliament began to consider relief-measures. The first relief-measure to become law was the Reform Bill, passed on June 4, 1832. In 1833, a law was passed limiting the hours of work for children employed in factories; and in 1834 the New Poor Law was passed, its aim being to eliminate abuses in extending aid to those dependent for support upon the State. For a time the sudden cessation of pensions among a population long dependent upon the Govern-

ment for support worked great hardship. This was especially true when the price of bread again went up in 1836. It was with the dire years following that Carlyle's Chartism and Past and Present, and Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton dealt, - years in which the wretchedness of the working classes perhaps surpassed any in the history of the nation. Society was in the disorganized condition which resulted from the substitution of machinery for manual labor and the extension of communication and transportation which enlarged the area of factory employment. Manufacturing industries were fast replacing agricultural and other rural industrial activities, and labor-saving machinery was fast accumulating wealth for the manufacturers, while it was depriving thousands of workmen of employment. More than this, the fashionable Benthamite philosophy of the time, seconded by the interests of the middle-class electorate, advocated the ultimate application of the law of competition. More than a million persons in a population of fifteen millions were receiving public relief before the inauguration of the New Poor Law, the purpose of which was to confine pauperism to the work-house.

But these are general observations of conditions at the time, reported from histories and doctrinaire articles, none of which give intimate pictures of individual experiences. The best accounts are to be found in Carlyle's

Past and Present and Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton. It should be remembered that Carlyle's denunciation both of the evils of the present and of all the "Morrison's pills" patented for their cure was accompanied by a full recognition of the dignity and the worth of manual labor, and by a sympathy for the white slaves of England, which rested not on mere sentiment but on an understanding of the realities of the factory system and its attendant poverty:

And this was what these poor Manchester operatives, with all the darkness that was in them and round them, did manage to perform. They put their huge inarticulate question, 'What do you mean to do with us?' in a manner audible to every reflective soul in this kingdom; exciting deep pity in all good men, deep anxiety in all men whatever; and no conflagration or outburst of madness came to cloud that feeling anywhere, but everywhere it operates unclouded. All England heard the question: it is the first practical form of our Sphinx-riddle. England will answer it; or, on the whole, England will perish; one does not yet expect the latter result! <sup>2</sup>

In Mary Barton, Mrs. Gaskell has left an undying picture of that section of smoky Manchester where the mill-workers live: its narrow lanes; small but not uncomfortable cottages, well supplied with furniture in days when work was plentiful, but destitute even of a fire when it was scarce; the undersized men and women, with irregular features, pale blue eyes, sallow complexions, but with an intelligence rendered quick and sharp by their life among

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<sup>2</sup>Past and Present, p. 18.

the machinery, and by their hard struggle for existence. The following passage will serve to illustrate the way in which Mrs. Gaskell has acted upon suggestions from Carlyle:

For three years past trade had been getting worse and worse, and the price of provisions higher and higher. This disparity between the amount of the earnings of the working classes and the price of their food, occasioned, in more cases than could well be imagined, disease and death. Whole families went through a gradual starvation. They only wanted a Dante to record their sufferings. And yet even his words would fall short of the awful truth; they could only present an outline of the tremendous facts of the destitution that surrounded thousands upon thousands in the terrible years 1839, 1840, and 1841. . . . The indigence and sufferings of the operatives induced a suspicion in the minds of many of them, that their legislators, their magistrates, their employers, and even the ministers of religion, were, in general, their oppressors and enemies; and were in league for their prostration and enthralment. . . . In many instances the sufferers wept first, and then they cursed. Their vindictive feelings exhibited themselves in rabid politics. And when I hear, as I have heard, of the sufferings and privations of the poor, of provision shops where ha'porths of tea, sugar, butter, and even flour, were sold to accommodate the indigent, - of parents sitting in their clothes by the fireside during the whole night for seven weeks together, in order that their only bed and bedding might be reserved for the use of their large family - of others sleeping upon the cold hearthstone for weeks in succession, without adequate means of providing themselves with food or fuel (and this in the depth of winter), - of others being compelled to fast for days together, uncheered by any hope of better fortune, living, moreover, or rather starving, in a crowded garret, or damp cellar, and gradually sinking under the pressure of want and despair into a premature grave; and when this has been confirmed by the evidence of their careworn looks, their excited feelings, and their desolate homes, - can I wonder that many of them, in such times of misery and destitution, spoke and acted with ferocious precipitation? <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Mary Barton, Knutsford Edition, pp. 94-5.

The anomalies of the distribution of wealth, which were brought about through the concentration of industry by the development of machinery worked by steam, could not fail to strike an observer situated as Mrs. Gaskell was. She was brought into daily contact with misery, destitution, and degradation among the workers; and, on the other hand, she clearly shows the influence of Carlyle, who believed the new industrial magnates to be worshipers of mammon and buccaneers of unregulated competition; she saw the wealth and luxury of the manufacturers, many of whom practically acknowledged no duty towards their "hands", and without concern saw them herding together like brutes rather than human beings. John Barton would hear nothing of the plea that the rich did not know how poor people lived. "I say, if they don't know, they ought to know."<sup>4</sup> With a touch of revealing insight Mrs. Gaskell laid bare the fallacy which embittered his life. He was going to help Davenport - "going on an errand of mercy; but the thoughts of his heart were touched by sin, by bitter hatred of the happy, whom he, for the time, confounded with the selfish."<sup>5</sup> Yet, as he himself confessed, there had been a time when he tried to "love" the masters; and towards the close of the novel,

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

one finds a strong implication that whatever the masters might have done, the men had on the whole tried to be just and charitable. Job Legh told Mr. Carson that they were ready to take the "will", even if it produced no "deed".

If we saw the masters try for our sakes to find a remedy - even if they were long about it - even if they could find no help, and at the end could only say, "Poor fellows, our hearts are sore for ye; we've done all we could, and we can't find a cure" - we'd bear up like men through bad times.<sup>6</sup>

Mrs. Gaskell is writing under the influence of Carlyle when she analyzes the point of view of the master and of the factory-worker, and shows the entire lack of sympathy within the classes.

An order for coarse goods came in from a new foreign market. It was a large order, giving employment to all the mills engaged in that species of manufacture; but it was necessary to execute it speedily, and at as low prices as possible, as the masters had reason to believe that a duplicate order had been sent to one of the continental manufacturing towns, where there were no restrictions on food, no taxes on building or machinery, and where consequently they dreaded that the goods could be made at a much lower price than they could afford them for; and that by so acting and charging, the rival manufactures would obtain undivided possession of the market. It was clearly to their interest to buy cotton as cheaply, and to beat down wages as low as possible. And in the long run the interests of the workmen would have been thereby benefited.

Now let us turn to the workmen's view of the question. The masters (of the tottering foundation of whose prosperity they were ignorant) seemed doing well, and, like gentlemen, "lived at home in ease", while they were starving, gasping on from day to day; and there was a foreign order to be executed, the extent of which, large as it was, was greatly exaggerated; and it was to be done speedily. Why were the masters offering such low wages under

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 449-450.

these circumstances? Shame upon them! It was taking advantage of their work-people being almost starved; but they would starve entirely rather than come into such terms. It was bad enough to be poor, while by the labour of their thin hands, the sweat of their brows, the masters were made rich; but they would not be utterly ground down to dust. No! they would fold their hands and sit idle, and smile at the masters, whom even in death they could baffle. With Spartan endurance they determined to let the employers know their power, refusing to work.

So class distrusted class, and their want of mutual confidence wrought sorrow to both. The masters would not be bullied, and compelled to reveal why they felt it wisest and best to offer only such low wages; they would not be made to tell that they were even sacrificing capital to obtain a decisive victory over the continental manufacturers. And the workmen sat silent and stern with folded hands, refusing to work for such pay. There was a strike in Manchester.<sup>7</sup>

Mrs. Gaskell clearly shows the influence of Carlyle in this respect: she, too, is animated by a spirit of revolt against leaving economic principles to work themselves out in their own way. An example of this fact is Job Legh's answer to Carson, who has just stated the stock argument of the political economists, - that "we cannot regulate the demand for labor. No man or set of men can do it. It depends on events which God alone can control. When there is no market for our goods, we must suffer just as much as you can do". Legh's answer is that the masters do not suffer as the men do, - "It's in things for show they cut short, while for such as me, it's in things of life we're to stint;" that the workman's life has been made a lottery; that with every blessing God gives to be

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 197-198.



enjoyed, He gives a duty to be done, and the duty of the happy is to help the suffering; that the feelings and passions of men can not be worked into the problem, because they are forever changing and uncertain.<sup>8</sup> Mrs. Gaskell makes the same charges against the existing economic system in North and South. Thornton explains the processes of competition "on sound economical principles." The consequences of the waxing and waning of commercial prosperity are entirely logical, and "neither employer nor employed had any right to complain of it because of their fate, - the employer's, to turn aside from the race he could no longer run, with a bitter sense of incompetency and failure, wounded in the struggle, trampled down by his fellows in their haste to get rich." Mrs. Gaskell explains her own point of view on the subject through Margaret. Her "whole soul rose up against him (Thornton) while he reasoned in this way, - as if commerce were everything and humanity nothing."<sup>9</sup> Again she expresses her own attitude in Margaret, when the latter says, in defending what Thornton has called the "dull and prosperous life" in the South, "If there is less adventure or less progress from the gambling spirit of trade, which seems requisite to force out those wonderful inventions, there is less suffering also. I see men

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 447-448.

<sup>9</sup>North and South, Knutsford Edition, p. 180.

going about in the street who look ground down by some pinching sorrow or care, who are not only sufferers but haters." <sup>10</sup>

In Mary Barton the operatives believed that much could be obtained by intervention of Parliament. Parliament intervened, but conditions did not improve. This was partly due to the failure of the masters to follow the laws made; but even had all the laws been obeyed, it is probable that no permanent good would have come. As it was, the laws only irritated the manufacturers without alleviating conditions. Mrs. Gaskell, living in Manchester, knew how the manufacturers felt towards Parliament for what they called its meddling attitude. When she wrote Mary Barton, she had felt that Parliament might help to some extent; but by now she began to feel as did Carlyle, who knew the hopelessness of passing laws to regulate abuses in the social system. Her conclusion was that salvation for the working classes lay with themselves and their employers, working together. It was to show this that she produced North and South. Her whole and only social doctrine is that the application of the Golden Rule will remedy all the ills of society. Closer relationships, better understanding based on more intimate acquaintance, - these are what she offers

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 93-94.

as a cure for the dissatisfactions and the distrust which had hitherto marked the attitude of the two classes towards each other.

Carlyle drove home as no European had ever done before the eternal fundamental right principles-that 'the great soul of the world is just', 'Justice was ordained from the foundation of the world.' He declared that all alive have a right to work and wages. Mrs. Gaskell reiterated Carlyle's demand that every one be given work and wages.

Not only must work be provided for all the workingmen of England, but the working-men must receive "'a fair day's wages for a fair day's work': it is as just a demand as Governed men ever made of Governing." This is not mere rhetoric. Carlyle put his philosophy of history into a nutshell when he added: 'The progress of Human Society consists in the better and better apportioning of wages to work.'" Mrs. Gaskell demanded 'a fair day's wages for a fair day's work' for the Manchester workers.

What is needed, says Carlyle, is a new type of leader, - very different from the successful British manufacturer of the day, "the indomitable Plugson of the respected Firm of Plugson, Hunks and Company, in St. Dolly Undershot." Like Carlyle, Mrs. Gaskell realized the tremendous responsibility to be placed upon the real leader of industry. In North and South, she pictures Thornton, a master, who, with

the roots of his own strength in his native ground, aware of his power and jealous of all interference with its legitimate exercise, yet comes gradually to realize the whole of his duty towards his workmen.

Interference between the workers and the master-workers had begun; there were already factory inspectors. Carlyle desired that the principle should be extended. He pleaded also for clean and airy factories, for baths, and for open spaces. Mrs. Gaskell repeated the demand Carlyle had made. In Mary Barton, she advocated changes which have since been realized in the field of industry. She demanded protected machinery as a requisite of the modern factory. John Barton relates an accident in a factory where this law is not observed:

She cotched (caught) her side against a wheel. It were afore wheels were boxed up. <sup>11</sup>

Mrs. Gaskell believed also that overwork produced fatigue which was largely responsible for industrial accidents:

I've gotten no head for numbers, but this I know, that by far th' greater part o' the accidents as comed in happened in th' last two hours o' work, when folk gotten tired and careless. Th' surgeon said it were all true, and that he were going to bring that fact to light. <sup>12</sup>

Another progressive measure which Mrs. Gaskell was among the first to advocate was the settlement of labor disputes

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<sup>11</sup>Mary Barton, p. 100.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

by means of arbitration.

Carlyle was the prophet of revolt against political indifferentism, and his imagined plea of the laborer might be written down as the motto of much of the labor fiction of the day: "'Guide me, govern me! I am mad and miserable, and cannot govern myself!'" Surely of all 'rights of man', this right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be, gently or forcibly, held in the true course by him, is the indisputablest." <sup>13</sup> Mrs. Gaskell looked for relief rather to the more feminine qualities of the heart. At the close of Mary Barton, the chastened master of men, Mr. Carson, now but a man himself, goes out to ponder on the causes of suffering and hatred, and becomes in his own way a reformer. His new desire was "that a perfect understanding, and complete confidence and love, might exist between masters and men; . . . and to have them bound to their employers by ties of respect and affection, not by mere money bargains alone; in short, to acknowledge the Spirit of Christ, as the regulating law between both parties." <sup>14</sup> How strangely old-fashioned the phrases sound; how far we have removed our theories from that simple trust!

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<sup>13</sup>Chartism, (Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, IV.), p. 157.

<sup>14</sup>Mary Barton, p. 451.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CARLYLE AND BENJAMIN DISRAELI - AN EXCEPTIONAL RELATIONSHIP

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth Disraeli's political and social philosophy as manifested in Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred, and then to show how Carlyle's social and political philosophy is reflected in the political novels of Disraeli. This, therefore, seems an appropriate occasion to tell the story of a literary form which was founded upon politics. The political novel, born in the prismatic mind of Disraeli, is a work of prose fiction which leans rather to "ideas" than to "emotions"; which deals with the machinery of law-making or with a theory about public conduct; and where the main purpose of the writer is party propaganda, public reform, or exposition of the lives of the personages who maintain government, or of the forces which constitute government.

Out of what traditions was the political novel born? In any general society, but in the English nation in particular, the influence of political institutions upon the ideas and customs of the people as a whole is of first rate significance. Hardly is a change in parliamentary life made before it is reflected in the ideas, the customs, and

the usages of the general body-politic. The government itself may change, the new law may be modified, but it is as certain as there is light which lingers for a considerable time after the sun has fallen below the horizon, that among the masses of people the influence of the old political law, retained as in England by the tenacity of the individual conservatism of character and the hallowing of custom, will stay on indefinitely in the lives of the people. As the seat of the power of government is broadened, and offers space to more representatives of the general order, or as the dominions over which the government forces function are widened, there are required not only a larger number of secondary officials to exercise the powers of the governing classes, but also a greater number of interpreters, secondary agents, writers, by means of whom the inspiration and the significance of the governors may be transferred to the common mind everywhere. More especially in early Victorian England, where the aristocratic classes still retained the maximum governing force, but where popular agitation and economic crisis began seriously to challenge the rights of that force, champions of the landed proprietors and interpreters of the ancient customs were needed to revive again those political habits of thought which had been implanted in them earlier by the aristocracy, but which, after 1832, were in danger

of becoming effaced, or at least changed, to the disadvantage of that once accepted authority. In England after 1832 two things were essential to preserve the old regime: first, that the people who were naturally respectful and unwilling to see bloody violence force a change, should be made to retain as long as possible their veneration for custom, to continue to respect traditions even after "the accident of 1832". In short it was necessary - from the viewpoint of the governing class - that the old political habits of thought should not be changed, but should rather be exercised the more vigorously in the indefinite future, in spite of the fact that the old day had gone forever and the new day of Democracy was about to dawn. Secondly, the nobility had to be made to see themselves as others saw them, in order that they might hasten to repair the breach before all was lost. Therefore, there was needed "a mirror held up to Nature" which showed them off to themselves in their stupidities, their selfishness, their unwillingness to recognize the new and powerful industrial and social forces which had been born: a mirror which revealed a decayed church, frivolous youth possessed of no sense of their coming responsibilities, an artificial society where men and women lived under the most ignorant notions of the nature of the stirring forces abroad. These things Disraeli's



novels accomplished. After that self-revelation, a vision was necessary to show the thoughtful youth what character and strength were needed in them if they were to be in their turn the natural leaders of the people as their great forefathers had been. This vision the political novels of Disraeli also presented.

In a country with such stability as England showed in the nineteenth century, controlled at first by a single class of society which had no great concern about its pocketbook, which enjoyed much leisure, the tastes of whose members were as often gratified in Parliament as they could be at the Derby or in the hunt, there developed unique political ceremonials, and a peculiar and idiomatic parliamentary language. A definite kind of oratory grew up well fitted for Parliamentary use; methods of address and even of personal appearance were encouraged. The common ideas of the members of the governing bodies developed party ties. Party ties grew tighter and more significant as competitive influences from without made themselves felt in the Chambers. Party spirit developed party discipline, which in turn had an effect upon the personal character of the representative and even upon the members of his family. One fact which still further distinguished the political coterie from every other group of persons

used by the novelists of the nineteenth century was the nature of the motive which controlled all action. Even among the journalists, and the "Tadpoles and Tapers", there was an aura surrounding the political life, a thought sometimes in them that they were more important than the dross of common humanity. The belief they had of their own importance - when they were seen against the background of their neighbors, citizens often far more valuable to the nation than they - produced material which the novelist might use for poignant tragedy if he had not more frequently chosen phases of this life for high comedy, farce, and caricature. In spite of the fullness of representation which the material allows the writer, the political novelist must, indeed, be the most selective of all novelists. The social writer deals with men and women as men and women. But the political novelist, if he is to be true to his craft, must be dominated, more often than not, by ideas rather than by emotions.

Since the stage upon which the actors were to be made to play their parts has been examined, it is necessary also, in order better to understand the unfolding of the plots later, to mark some of the technical difficulties which beset the political writer. To the ordinary writer the great groups of more active participants in politics

are usually too little known, to furnish him material for contemporary portraits of political manners, or of political psychology. The language of Downing Street, the jargon of Committee meetings, the interviews with the Crown, the scenes at great political dinners, and the life of the great political clubs could not even be observed. To be able to wed politics to art required not only an imagination of a particularly high order, but a knowledge of material which had been gathered at first hand, with the accuracy which only a participant himself could possess. One had to be able to think in political formulae, to adorn his thoughts in the natural imagery of the political life. Then only could he interpret it intelligently and interestingly to the reader.

By the time Disraeli wrote his great trilogy of novels - Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred, - the "novel with a purpose" was a form already well launched in the history of English letters, and the relation of this "novel with a purpose" to the form which Disraeli perfected was as the bed of a stream to the waters which pour through it.<sup>1</sup> From one point of view the political novel itself was a fusion of many varied motives, gathered to serve the interests of some single class of society, or to advance the interests of some particular political philosophy, or to present to some person a means of best commenting upon

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<sup>1</sup>M.E. Speare, The Political Novel, 29.

matters of great public import. In Kingsley's novels of social propaganda, and in Dickens' portraits of Gradgrind and Bounderby showing off doctrines of false political economy in Hard Times, one marks the strong moral emphasis, the peculiar didacticism, the ever-developing spirit of reform. By the great range of English novelists who wrote novels having an underlying purpose, by the diversity and complexity of interests within these novels, one sees how altogether unconsciously the bed was being deepened for the use of Disraeli, working in a new milieu.

A quite unique place in the history of English fiction will be universally allowed to Benjamin Disraeli. Biography may be used to elucidate novels, and it is only from this point of view that, in the following rapid survey of Disraeli's principal writings, reference will be made to the events of his life, the most striking of which form part, for better or for worse, of English national history. Disraeli was born in 1804. He was the son of a literary man of kindly character and much devious learning. The grandfather had been a moderately prosperous stockbroker, who had migrated to England from Italy in 1748. In his early years Disraeli was handicapped by the fact that, though a Christian himself, he was the son of Jewish parents. He was educated at the seminary of the Rev. J. Potticany, and later at the seminary of the Rev. Eli Cogan.

Disraeli first attempted to enter Parliament from High Wycombe in 1832. He was unsuccessful that year, failed again with the same electorate two years later, and was no more fortunate a third time when, in 1835, he tried to get in from Taunton. The Taunton canvass was important largely because in the course of it he had his famous quarrel with O'Connell, a quarrel not forgotten in 1837 when, a new election taking place over England at the death of William IV, and Disraeli being finally successfully returned from Maidstone to the House of Commons, he essayed his first now famous speech before a howling, mocking, and laughing audience stirred up by the O'Connell faction, and declared defiantly that the day should come when they would hear him. In 1839 Disraeli married Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, the widow of his colleague from Maidstone, and the event was one of first rate importance for his immediate political prospects. Her fortune helped him to buy at once the estate at Hughenden and to take his place in England as a country gentleman; her courage and sympathy inspired him to push forward to leadership. Already, in the two years preceding this event, he had taken steps ahead. He had made a brilliant and characteristic speech upon the repeal of the Corn Laws; he had made a great speech showing himself the friend of the Established Church; he spoke on education

wherein he praised the individual and the corporate methods used in England, as opposed to a centralized system of state education. It was in this speech defending England's customary methods, and as opposed to the introduction of State education, that one hears him strike the first note of what became later, in Coningsby particularly, the program of the Young England Party. England, he says in these speeches, and repeats in Coningsby later, must be saved by its Youth. From the years 1839 to 1841 there arose the so-called "condition-of-England question". Briefly, this "condition-of-England question" had, according to Disraeli in one of his speeches of this period (and he describes the situation later in Sybil), came about through the Reform Act which had brought in two new disturbing factors into the old social order, a large and wealthy class of manufacturing capitalists, and a multitude of workers. In 1841 the Russell Ministry were forced to resign and the Conservatives came in with Sir Robert Peel as Prime Minister. Peel's failure to include Disraeli in his Cabinet led, without doubt, to the eventual breach with him that practically forced Peel out of the party, when Disraeli had finished with his bitter attacks upon him, and it hastened the day of the reorganization of the entire Tory idea in politics. In the first years, however, Disraeli stood by Parliament. But in 1843 when he found that Peel

was "throwing the landed interest over" by so reducing the duty on corn from Canada that its admission both from Canada and the United States would affect the agricultural interests of Disraeli's constituency and Shrewsbury, he voted against the Government. From the moment when this defection was sounded, the "Young England" idea began to take shape in the minds of Disraeli and his friends. In 1844 with Coningsby, the thing was given a local habitation and a name. In 1845 with Sybil, it was given a still more definite basis. In 1848 Disraeli ended his career as member from Shrewsbury, and from that year on until his elevation to the peerage the Tory Chief was a member from Buckinghamshire. The years from 1848 to 1852 he gave over, as Tory leader, to attacks upon the policy of the Government under Lord Russell; he chastised its weaknesses mainly as these were shown in the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, and in the domestic program which relied upon the Manchester School of economists, and upon the "hopeless question of Protection." In 1852 the Tories went into office under Lord Derby, and Disraeli received his first Cabinet office as Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1867 Disraeli persuaded the Conservatives to "dish the Whigs" by carrying through a Parliamentary Reform Bill extending the right to vote even further than the Whigs (Liberals)

had suggested. Thomas Carlyle greeted Disraeli and the part he played in the passage of the Reform bill of 1867 with the following words:

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 somnambulist cattle to such issue! Did the world ever see a flebile ludibrium of such magnitude before? Lath-sword and scissors of Destiny, Pickle-herring 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>

Some six years after this was written, Disraeli, as Prime Minister of England, offered to Carlyle, in the Queen's name, the Grand Cross of the Bath (a distinction never before conferred upon any English author) with a life income corresponding to the rank. The act was one of the first of the new administration and was a tribute, from Disraeli, to one of the greatest influences upon his life. When one recalls all that Carlyle had said and done against "the superlative Hebrew conjurer" during his lifetime, and then measures the full importance of the Prime Minister's act, there is revealed a picturesque and dramatic episode unique in the history of the nineteenth century. Carlyle, sensible of the compliment that had been paid him, and touched by the source from which it came, nevertheless declined the honor on the plea of old age. However, much as Carlyle differed with Disraeli on the relative value of the Reform Act of

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<sup>2</sup>Carlyle: The Shooting Niagara: and After. Quoted by M. E. Speare in The Political Novel, p. 162.



1867 - and differences with parliamentary acts were after all congenital in Carlyle - history has since shown that the great measure of reform in 1867 which gave the artisans throughout England the power of the ballot, was but part of that mass of humanitarian and social amelioration for which Victorian England has gone down blessed by other generations. To that program of social reform the days of Disraeli's leadership contributed no small share. To the Act of 1867 Disraeli, when he became Prime Minister in 1874, tied a comprehensive series of measures for which history only now has seen fit to give him and his government a just meed of praise. Applying the act which furthered public education among the masses, the Artisans' Dwelling Bill which assured better housing conditions for the English poor, sound measures instituted for the protection of the peoples' savings, and two important laws which assured greater protection of the workingmen in court cases against their employers, and which secured for their unions greater freedom of action, were conspicuous humanitarian contributions of Disraeli's Ministry. The hours of factory labor for women and children, the policies for giving enjoyment to the masses of parks, commons, and playgrounds in congested quarters of the city, the whole intricate series of factory laws as they affected the working classes, the English sanitary code, measures affecting Irish education, laws

governing the extended usefulness of the Church of England, the protection of English merchant seamen from the dangers of unseaworthy vessels, -all these were carefully examined and in every case conspicuously, in some cases notably, bettered. What do these ameliorative acts of the Prime Minister Disraeli signify to the reader of his novels? They prove that with their author once in power, the aspirations of Sybil and of Coningsby had been converted into legislation. The key to the acts of the Ministry from the years 1874 to 1880, not alone of social and economic welfare but also as they concern foreign policy and English Imperialism, must be sought in the years 1844, 1845, and 1847 - in Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred.

What, precisely, did Disraeli's social and political system include? The answer to this question requires a brief summary of the first of the trilogy, Coningsby.

In 1832, Harry Coningsby, the ostensible hero, is summoned to London from Eton to have his first interview with his formidable grandfather, the Marquis of Monmouth, whom the crisis of the Reform Bill has brought over to England from his usual residence abroad.

Rigby, political adviser to Lord Monmouth, has had charge of Coningsby during his patron's absence abroad, but Lord Monmouth, until now indifferent to his grandson, is attracted when he sees him, and henceforth gives him a place in his ambitious calculations. At Eton, Coningsby is already the center of the group, his greatest friends being Lord Henry Sidney, Sir Charles Buckhurst, and Oswald Millbank, a manufacturer's son. Through Millbank, Coningsby becomes aware for the first time of the existence of a great class distinct from the nobility, but rivalling it in wealth,

and determined to acquire power; and in Millbank's crude opinions caught up from his father he finds materials for thought and a stimulus to a mind already predisposed to political inquiry.

The dramatic struggle between parties during the period of Peel's short administration raised to the highest pitch the enthusiasm of Eton for Conservative principles; but when the enthusiasm had subsided, Coningsby and his friends began to ask the question what Conservative principles meant. The final answer was only to shape itself in Coningsby's mind after several years of thought at Cambridge; but before he left Eton, he had attained to an earnest though rather vague conviction that the present state of feeling, both in politics and religion, was very far from healthy, that for the prevailing latitudinarianism of belief something deep, fervent, and definite would have to be substituted, and that the priests of the new faith must be sought in the ranks of the New Generation. With his mind in this condition, he is ready to profit by an adventure that befalls him in the interval between his leaving Eton and beginning residence at Cambridge. On his way to pay a visit to Henry Sidney at Beaumanoir, he meets a stranger in a forest inn. The stranger teaches Coningsby to have faith in the divine influence of individual character and in the power of the creative mind, dispensing with experience, to achieve greatness in youth. Almost everything that is great has, he asserts, been done by youth.

Among the incidents of Coningsby's visit to Beaumanoir is an expedition to St. Genevieve, the neighboring home of Eustace Lyle, a young and wealthy Roman Catholic, in whom is seen Disraeli's feeling for the "ancient faith". Lyle is one of the three people who do most to influence the ripening mind of Coningsby.

Coningsby had been told by the mysterious stranger at the inn that the age of ruins was past, and had been asked if he had seen Manchester; and he had also been told that "adventures are to the adventurous". To Manchester he accordingly goes on his way from Beaumanoir to Coningsby Castle, where his grandfather expects him; and there for several days he devotes himself to the wonders of industry and machinery. Among other things, he visits the model factory of Millbank, and makes the acquaintance of the father and beautiful young sister of his Eton friend Oswald. The elder Millbank has his own reasons for hating Lord Monmouth, and he has also peculiar opinions about the aristocracy as a whole, which he expounds to the astonished Coningsby.

At Coningsby Castle, a side of aristocratic life in which Disraeli finds scope for some of his most effective

satire - grandeur without heart or soul - is depicted. Here Coningsby finds abundant food for the thoughts that are fermenting in the depths of his mind, and the fermentation is stimulated by his encountering again the stranger of the forest inn, whom he now learns to know by the name of Sidonia.

When Coningsby reaches his twenty-first year, he makes another vacation visit to his grandfather, but now Lord and Lady Monmouth are living in Paris. In Paris Coningsby meets again, and falls in love with, Edith Millbank, his Eton friend's sister; but though his love is returned, the feud between Lord Monmouth and Mr. Millbank is a barrier. This feud is deeper than ever, for Millbank has just succeeded in thwarting the haughty noble in some of his most cherished ambitions, snatching from him a Naboth's vineyard close to Coningsby Castle, and winning from his creature Rigby the representation of the neighbouring borough. The lovers exchange vows, but Coningsby is dismissed by Millbank; and presently Lord Monmouth, ignorant of all that has happened, sends for his grandson, in anticipation of a general election, to arrange that he should come forward as Millbank's opponent. Coningsby refuses.

Coningsby remains firm in his resolution not to contest an election with Edith's father, and not long afterwards Lord Monmouth suddenly dies, leaving the bulk of his vast fortune to a daughter Flora. The disinherited grandson is consoled by Sidonia, who insists that mere possessions are one of the smallest elements in happiness. Coningsby is now free. There are two careers between which he can choose. One is diplomacy; but "a diplomatist is a phantom". There remains that other and noble career, the Bar, and Coningsby resolves to try for the Great Seal.

In the midst of the general election of 1841, in which all his friends are candidates, Coningsby finds himself a solitary student in the Temple, cut off from the chance of action. But suddenly his prospects change, and fortune begins to shower her favors. Millbank, coming to a better understanding of things which he had misconstrued, retires from the contest in which he is engaged with Rigby, and nominates Coningsby, who is triumphantly elected. He also bestows on Coningsby the hand of his daughter. Presently, the unhappy girl who had inherited the bulk of Lord Monmouth's wealth dies, and bequeathes the whole of it to Coningsby. Thus he is left with his friends on the threshold of public life.

The "Young England" idea was given a more definite

basis in the second of the trilogy, Sybil, which is summarized briefly.

In the company of youthful patricians assembled in the saloons of a sumptuous London club, obviously meant for Crockford's on the eve of the Derby of 1837, was Charles Egremont, the hero, a younger brother of the Earl of Marney, and heir presumptive to the title.

Egremont had a generous spirit and a tender heart. He had spent an idle youth; but a disappointment in love at the age of twenty-four had arrested him in his career of frivolity and pleasure, and though, after a period spent in travel and reflection, he had come back to his old life, it was with the difference that he was now conscious of wanting an object. It was not in Parliament, to which he was returned in 1837, that he was to find the object he was seeking, but in a chance meeting with three strangers in the ruins of Marney Abbey, - Walter Gerard, who was an adherent of the old faith, and though a leader of the people had a refinement of spirit and a feeling for the past which one should look for in vain in the typical utilitarian Radical; Stephen Morley, a socialist editor, eager, high-strung, and fanatical, who found so much to lament in the world in which he lived that he could spare no pang for the past; and Gerard's daughter Sybil, who stands for the people, for the nation of the poor, for the pity of their sufferings, for their hopes of redemption. Like her father, Sybil is refined and ennobled by her devotion to the old faith. Egremont first hears her singing, in tones of almost supernatural sweetness, the evening hymn to the Virgin from the Lady's chapel of the Abbey, and then sees her standing in a vacant and starlit arch in aëraph-like beauty. From that moment Sybil Gerard is all the world to him. Haunted by the memory of her voice and appearance, he pursues her to Mowbray, a manufacturing town, where her father is a mill-manager; and there, living for a time under an assumed name, Franklin, he finds in conversation with Gerard, with Morley, and, above all, with Sybil herself, the mission of his life - love of Sybil, and vindication of the wrongs of the poor; for the two things are one.

The scene shifts to London in the year of the Chartist petition, 1839. Walter Gerard is a leader in the Chartist convention, and Sybil is in London with him. In a round of visits to members of Parliament, Gerard meets with Egremont, and discovers that the man whom he had previously known as Franklin, and believed to be a journalist, is an aristocrat, the brother of the tyrant Lord Marney, and presumably, therefore, an enemy of the people. Egremont, however, has been pondering on all that he learnt at Mowbray, and is

now in ardent sympathy with the cause of the people.

Sybil, who at first is full of prejudice and suspicion in the presence of the newly-discovered aristocrat, and thinks that the gulf between them is impassable, is gradually won over by Egremont's devotion. It is Egremont's devotion to the cause she has at heart rather than to herself that awakens Sybil's interest.

When the Chartist crisis comes, Egremont is able to render great services to Sybil, as well as to her father, who has, however, to undergo a lengthy term of imprisonment. Though gratitude is now added to Sybil's other emotions, Egremont's suit still appears to be hopeless; but three years later he wins her consent, after rescuing her from imminent peril during a strike riot in Lancashire, in the course of which Gerard and Lord Marney are killed, and Mowbray Castle sacked and burned. Egremont by his brother's death has become Earl of Marney; and quite needlessly, Sybil is now herself proved to be of noble blood, and the real inheritor of the great estates attached to Mowbray Castle.

Let us now review briefly the plot of *Tancred*, the last of the trilogy.

*Tancred*, the hero, in conversation with his father, the Duke of Bellamont, reveals the fact that he must make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in order that he may ponder over the true meaning of the terms faith and duty. *Tancred's* mother, the Puritan Duchess of Bellamont, thinks that she can solve the mystery of her son brooding over eternal verities and the decay of faith, by appealing to her favorite Bishop; the Bishop, a man with very limited powers of thought, is a leader who was never a guide, and a man who was never able to supply society with a single solution for its perplexities. The man of the world, Lord Eskdale, urges the allurements of female society to dissuade *Tancred* from going to Jerusalem. *Tancred* at first thinks Lady Bertie and Bellair to be a beautiful prophetess, sharing only as a noble spirit can his divine enthusiasms, but she proves to be the most inveterate gambler in Europe!

The scene shifts to a beautiful garden in Bethany in 1845, where, overcome by the heat of the sun, *Tancred*, who is searching for "the great Asian mystery", falls asleep. When he awakes, he finds himself in the presence of a lady, exceedingly beautiful, clothed in rich Syrian costume. This is Eva, the Jewess, called the Rose of Sharon, who is also the daughter of Besso, the Croesus of Syria. Eva stands for the genius of Judaism.

Tancred then visits the Convent of Terra Santa. He descends next Mt. Sion, crosses Kedron, and mounts the road to Bethany. Here he meets a young Arabian chieftain, Fakredeem, the representative of Young Syria, as Tancred is the representative of Young England.

After a week of solitude and fasting, Tancred kneels at the sepulchre of Christ, but receives no message from heaven; therefore, he is determined to go to Sinai. On his way across a fearful desert, he and his little force are overpowered by a company of Arabs and held for an enormous ransom by the sheikh of sheikhs, Amalek. Eva rescues Tancred from Amalek, and nurses him during a serious illness.

Tancred visits the mysterious and isolated tribe in the northern fastnesses of Syria, called the Tribe of Ansarey, whose queen Astarte worships the Greek deities. Queen Astarte falls in love with Tancred, makes a distinct offer to him of her throne and her kingdom, and gives him the troops with which he battles against the Turks. But once Tancred's love for Eva is discovered by Astarte, she schemes to put both Eva and Tancred to death. Eva is freed by Fakredeem; and Tancred eventually escapes.

The last scene is a love scene in a kiosk on the margin of a fountain in the road to Bethany, in which Tancred says he is ready to trample to the dust all other ties that bind him to this world if Eva will unite her destiny with his; and Eva lets her head fall upon his shoulder.

Disraeli was remarkable in that he was intensely sensitive enough to absorb the complex and brilliant influences which lay around him, and yet practical enough to combine whatever of them he could to serve best his own ambitious ends. Nevertheless, upon first thought, one would hardly expect to find Carlyle in the list of Disraeli's creditors. In spite of the strangely differing personalities which Carlyle, the sturdy Scotch moralist, and Disraeli, the brilliantly ingenious politician, present at first thought, there is, in truth, an astonishing resemblance between them. Disraeli was a man of intellect, with a char-

acter sturdily independent and vigorous, and of a curiously religious nature. By inheritance, by his traditional apperceptions, and by the positive good that was in him, and by what he desired and accomplished for his contemporaries, he proved himself a sort of Hebrew seer converted into a Victorian statesman. The nobler side of Disraeli linked itself to the Carlyle of "sledge-hammer moral abstractions", of an intensely religious nature, contemptuous of mediocrity but with generous sympathies for the sufferings of the working classes and the peasantry, who hated Democracy, Utilitarian philosophies, and the contemporary doctrines of political economy. The nobler side of Disraeli also linked itself to Carlyle, the author of Chartism and Past and Present, where politics is shown to be the principal agent in making history; "and to Carlyle who believed in the leadership of an intelligent aristocracy. The philosophic side of Disraeli was attracted to the strength of Carlyle, and responded to his influence.

Carlyle's social and political views had found expression long before Disraeli published Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred. Signs of the Times, Characteristics, and Corn-Law Rhymes had appeared in the Edinburgh Review in 1829, 1831, and 1832, respectively. Chartism appeared in 1839, Heroes and Hero-Worship in 1841, and Past and Present in 1843. The first of Disraeli's trilogy did not appear



until 1844, while Sybil and Tancred followed in the next three years. The accounts of the existing social ills, noted in Carlyle's social documents, are presented again in Disraeli's trilogy.

The "condition of England question" was always foremost in Carlyle's mind. In Past and Present, he portrays graphically the wretched lot of the toiler:

And yet I will venture to believe that in no time, since the beginnings of Society, was the lot of those same dumb millions of toilers so entirely unbearable as it is even in the days now passing over us. It is not to die, or even to die of hunger, that makes a man wretched; many men have died; all men must die, - the last exit of us all is in a Fire-Chariot of Pain. But it is to live miserable we know not why; to work sore and yet gain nothing; to be heart-worn, weary, yet isolated, unrelated, girt-in with a cold universal *laissez-faire*: it is to die slowly all our life long, imprisoned in a deaf, dead, Infinite Injustice, as in the accursed iron belly of a Phalaris' Bull! This is and remains forever intolerable to all men whom God has made. Do we wonder at French Revolutions, Chartisms, Revolts of Three Days? The times, if we will consider them, are really unexampled.<sup>3</sup>

In Sybil, Disraeli depicts the wretched conditions under which the toilers lived:

The situation of the rural town of Marney was one of the most delightful easily to be imagined. In a spreading dale, contiguous to the margin of a clear and lively stream, surrounded by meadows and gardens, and backed by lofty hills, undulating and richly wooded, the traveller on the opposite heights of the dale would often stop to admire the merry prospect that recalled to him the traditional epithet of his country.

Beautiful illusion! For behind that laughing landscape, penury and disease fed upon the vitals of a miserable population.

The contrast between the interior of the town and its external aspect was as striking as it was full of pain. With the exception of the dull high street, which had the usual characteristics of a small agricultural market town,

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<sup>3</sup>Past and Present, p. 211.

some sombre mansions, a dingy inn, and a petty bourse, Marney mainly consisted of a variety of narrow and crowded lanes formed by cottages built of rubble, or unhewn stones without cement, and, from age or badness of the material, looking as if they could scarcely hold together. The gaping chinks admitted every blast; the leaning chimneys had lost half their original height; the rotten rafters were evidently misplaced; while in many instances the thatch, yawning in some parts to admit the wind and wet, and in all utterly unfit for its original purpose of giving protection from the weather, looked more like the top of a dunghill than a cottage. Before the doors of these dwellings, and often surrounding them, ran open drains full of animal and vegetable refuse, decomposing into disease, or sometimes in their imperfect course filling foul pits or spreading into stagnant pools, while a concentrated solution of every species of dissolving filth was allowed to soak through, and thoroughly impregnate, the walls and ground adjoining. <sup>4</sup>

"The author of *Sybil*," says Lord Morley, "seems to have apprehended the real magnitude, and even the nature of the social crisis (brought about by the rapid growth of an industrial population). Mr. Disraeli's brooding imaginativeness of conception gave him a view of the extent of the social revolution as a whole, which was wider, if it did not go deeper, than that of any other contemporary observer."<sup>5</sup> Disraeli diagnosed the "condition of England" in the same manner as Carlyle, who saw the full problem. Here was a country, this England, divided into Two Nations, the rich and the poor. Here were the nobles who should be the saviours of the State, standing by while the middle-class manufacturer held the poor in misery; standing by while the authority of the Crown diminished under steady depression

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<sup>4</sup>Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil; or The Two Nations*, pp.60-61.

<sup>5</sup>Lord Morley, *Life of Cobden*, I, p. 297. Quoted by N. F. Monypenny in *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, II, pp.265-266.

by the Whigs; standing by while Churchmen fought for preferment, neglecting the oppressed, for whom, by every teaching of Christ, a true disciple is a trustee.

For Carlyle and Disraeli, "the two nations", the rich and the poor, are separated not by a sort of sensibility, but by an unfortunate economic geography. Both see on the one side a refusal to recognize the virtues of an Aristocracy which had made England great; on the other a stupid unwillingness to mark the appearance of new industrial forces, with a consequent challenge upon them to face new responsibilities and to awaken to grave duties. The fact that the rich and the poor are separated by an unfortunate economic geography is presented in the conversation between Egremont and Morley in Sybil:

"Well, society may be in its infancy," said Egremont, slightly smiling; "but, say what you like, our Queen reigns over the greatest nation that ever existed."

"Which nation?" asked the younger stranger (Morley), "for she reigns over two."

The stranger paused; Egremont was silent, but looked inquiringly.

"Yes", resumed the younger stranger after a moment's interval. "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 not governed by the same laws."

"You speak of -", said Egremont, hesitatingly.

"The Rich and the Poor." <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Sybil: or The Two Nations, pp. 76-77.

Disraeli, like Carlyle, castigated the Nobility for their weaknesses, their dilettantism, their grotesque and time-consuming habits, the effeminacies of their "dandies", and the superficial knowledge of their great landowners about public affairs, and the phantom and mockery of their sense of responsibility to the body politic. He went farther even than Carlyle in satirizing the foibles of the Nobility.

For somewhat different reasons, both Carlyle and Disraeli opposed the Utilitarian philosophy and the political economists of their time. To Carlyle the "Professors of the Dismal Science", as he named the professional political economists, sinned against both God and human nature. To Disraeli the movement was based upon false principles of social psychology, and therefore produced a totally false political philosophy for a result. *Sidonius* teaches *Coningsby* that though the principle of Utility has been powerfully developed in England, it has failed because it is a principle founded on Reason; but the great achievements of mankind have been due not to Reason but to the Imagination. Just as Imagination once subdued the state, only the Imagination can now save it.<sup>7</sup>

Both Carlyle and Disraeli regretted the loss to the

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<sup>7</sup>Benjamin Disraeli, Coningsby; or The New Generation, pp. 239-240.

Church and the Crown of influence among the people. The following passage in which Tancred gives his father, the Duke of Bellamont, reasons for not entering public life, will serve to illustrate the way in which Disraeli has acted upon suggestions from Carlyle:

"You have proposed to me to-day," continued Lord Montacute, after a momentary pause, "to enter public life. I do not shrink from its duties. On the contrary, from the position in which I am born, still more from the impulse of my nature, I am desirous to fulfil them. I have meditated on them, I may say, even for years. But I cannot find that it is part of my duty to maintain the order of things, for I will not call it system, which at present prevails in our country. It seems to me that it cannot last, as nothing can endure, or ought to endure, that is not founded upon principle; and its principle I have not discovered. In nothing, whether it be religion, or government, or manners, sacred or political or social life, do I find faith; and if there be no faith, how can there be duty? Is there such a thing as religious truth? Is there such a thing as political right? Is there such a thing as social propriety? Are these facts, or are they mere phrases? And if they be facts, where are they likely to be found in England? Is truth in our Church? Why, then, do you support dissent? Who has the right to govern? The Monarch? You have robbed him of his prerogative. The Aristocracy? You confess to me that we exist by sufferance. The People? They themselves tell you that they are nullities."<sup>8</sup>

Coningsby, Sybil, and Tancred showed how close was Disraeli's thought with Carlyle's. There is, in these, first and obviously, the belief in the Great Man and the Hero in whose influence alone lies the hope of civilization. Only through Hero-worship can reform be brought about. "Man", says Sidonia to Coningsby, "is made to adore and to obey; but if you will not command him, if you give him nothing to

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<sup>8</sup>Tancred; or The New Crusade, p. 49.

worship, he will fashion his own divinities, and find a chieftain in his own passions."<sup>9</sup>

Carlyle and Disraeli meet on common ground in their passionate love of country, and their common belief in a well-ordered patriarchal society. "Gurth", says Carlyle in Past and Present, "a mere swineherd born thrall of Cedric the Saxon, tended pigs in the wood and did get some parings of the pork."<sup>10</sup> It is this character of Gurth, chosen for illustration by Carlyle from the first chapter of Ivanhoe, and used by him in his "Manchester Insurrection" to show its significance, that is multiplied in Disraeli's imagination, and made into a number of figures in Sybil; or the Two Nations.

Throughout Disraeli's novels there is the ingrained belief that the natural leaders of the people are to be found in the aristocracy - a rejuvenated aristocracy, indeed, established by their youth, and one fully conscious of their national duties to the common people, and of their responsibilities to the Throne. He did not, any more than did Carlyle in Past and Present, preach an actual return to the Feudal system. But, like Carlyle, he considered the aristocracy to be the least corrupted part of the commu-

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<sup>9</sup>Coningsby; or The New Generation, p. 240.

<sup>10</sup>Past and Present, p. 22.

nity. Stripped of their self-indulgences, the aristocracy alone could bring the necessary authority with which to deal with the Radicals and the problems of an industrial revolution. With Carlyle, whose Chartism shows a direct influence upon Sybil, he saw the danger in the rise of the Chartists, and preached with him that to the landed proprietors of his day there must return that grave sense of paternal duty which characterized the abbots over their country-sides in the days of the Past.

Prosperity, Carlyle and Disraeli believed, would come by the superior character of the English people, by excellent workmanship of artisans, and by the willingness of all classes in England to work harmoniously together. Therefore both recognized the tremendous power that lay in the new industrial class of England, and the need of coping with it if England was to realize a great future, a future not to be swamped by what Carlyle called Mammonism. To Carlyle Manchester was a comment upon the wastefulness and the lethargy of the noble classes, - it was a call of Power, Energy, which England had to heed if she would not face a 'Dilettantism' swallowed by 'Mammonism.' To Disraeli all that Manchester represented - its vast energy and daring and its inventiveness - became the lesson for the moral regeneration of the English Aristocracy through its younger sons. If the authority of the nobles

would but combine intelligently with the energies of the industrial class, and if both then worked for a common weal - over a contented peasantry and ruled by a Crown respected by all - there would never again arise a Condition-of-England question.



## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

"The Victorian Age" is a convenient term indicative of certain social, political, and industrial changes, which vitally affected both the people who wrote and the people who read, and therefore had great influence upon the literature that resulted from the unusual combinations of personalities and conditions then prevailing.

The most important event in the social history of modern Europe was the Industrial Revolution, paralleling in its influence the political force of the French Revolution. The discovery of the uses of steam by James Watt and the inventions of Arkwright, Cartwright, and Eli Whitney revolutionized industry, establishing the factory system upon the ruins of the ancient apprentice system and intensifying the social distinctions between capital and labor. Wealth was created faster than laws could be passed to control it. Thenceforth it came about that legislation was enacted in the interest of the capitalist, or captain of industry, rather than in satisfaction of the claims of rival monarchs, and a new struggle arose between the new social forces at the two ends of the industrial system. Inevitably grave

abuses crept into the working of the capitalistic system, and the reign of Victoria was mainly occupied with righting social wrongs. The passage of various mine and factory acts, the passionate but ineffective Chartist agitation, the formation of trades unions, and the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 were among the events in the industrial history of the period. In 1832 occurred the passage of the first Reform Bill, abolishing the "pocket" boroughs and widening the franchise, one of the steps toward political liberty which find a beginning in Magna Carta. In 1867 the Second Reform Bill was passed by the Conservatives under Disraeli. By 1892, a fair degree of political democracy had been obtained, but the industrial question remained an unwelcome legacy to the twentieth century.

Closely interwoven with the progress of democracy and the acute class struggle was the unprecedented advance in scientific inquiry and the application of science to modern industry. In religion, in politics, and in society, the old orthodoxy stood face to face with the new facts of science and industrial democracy. Social criticism took the place of creative effort. It was an age of literary and social confusion, expressing a transition to some kind of newer social order which has been hastened since the death of Queen Victoria and has become a real social disintegration under the influence of the Great War.

Victorious England settled down after the Battle of Waterloo to reap the fruits of her efforts. Increasing in prestige and power, she also increased enormously in wealth. The Industrial Revolution had done its work with the utmost thoroughness, and the cleavage between capital and labor soon began to appear. Great cities sprang up, and the wheels of industry began the inevitable transformation of England from an agricultural to an industrial nation. The problem of the cities - Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool - became the problem of how the factory workers should be cared for. By 1830 the common lands of the kingdom had been enclosed, further increasing the distinction between rich and poor. By the decade after 1840 an unchecked competitive system had created a wage slavery so intolerable that the voices raised in protest rang with a new social passion.

Among the writers who endeavored to make literature serve a social purpose, Carlyle is pre-eminent. His social documents had one effect the magnitude of which is immeasurable; they roused the minds of all thinking men throughout England to the real state of affairs, and created the new paths of social reform. The blazing vehemence of his style; the intense vividness of his pictures could not fail to arrest attention. He shattered forever the hypocrisy that went by the name of "unexampled prosperity". He

forced men to think. In depicting the social England of his time, he "splashed" great masses of color on his canvas, as he did in describing the French Revolution, and all earnest men were astonished into attention. The result has been, as Dr. Garnett puts it, that "opinion has in the main followed the track pointed out by Carlyle's luminous finger"; and a more nearly complete testimony to his political pre-science could not be desired.

Carlyle turned the novel of humanitarian propaganda, already popularized by Dickens, to the consideration of the problems of industrialism. His influence can be seen in Dickens' Oliver Twist, Bleak House, and Hard Times; in Disraeli's Sybil, one of the first novels to touch factory life, Coningsby, and Tancred; in Kingsley's Yeast, and Alton Locke, a portrayal of the horrors of London sweat shops in which Carlyle was adumbrated in the character of Sandy Mackaye; and in the better informed and balanced Mary Barton and North and South of Mrs. Gaskell.

The social novelists of the nineteenth century, Dickens, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, and Disraeli, clearly show the influence of Carlyle's political gospel in the following respects:

1. Each one was influenced by Carlyle's portrayal of the wretched condition of the working-men of England.
2. Each realized that the laborers need not only food

for the body , but also social recognition and human fellowship.

3. All agreed that the cash nexus should not be considered as the only bond between master and man, by either party.

4. Each one had no faith in the recognition of 'the rights of man', or in laissez-faire.

5. All denounced competition, and really paved the way for the great schemes of cooperation which have since been effected.

6. All attacked orthodox political economy.

7. All denounced the 'Idle Aristocracy.'

8. They appealed to the aristocracy of work, alive to their social duties, and justly powerful because nobly wise.

9. All advocated an effective emigration service and education.

10. All believed that the one law of faithful, ungrudging work includes all men in its scope.

11. They agreed in seeing facts through the medium of the imagination, and substituting poetic intuition for the slow and chilling processes of scientific reasoning; and

12. They agreed in rejecting the rigid framework of dogma, and in desiring to exalt the spirit above the dead letter.

Other influences could be pointed out, but perhaps enough have been given to prove that Carlyle exerted a tremendous influence upon the social novel of the nineteenth century.

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